

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee
DATE	8 th November 2017
REPORT TITLE	Aberdeen In Bloom
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/240
INTERIM DIRECTOR	Bernadette Marjoram
REPORT AUTHOR	Steven Shaw

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Committee of the success achieved by Aberdeen in this year's Beautiful Scotland and Britain In Bloom campaigns.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:

- a) Acknowledges Aberdeen's awards in this year's campaigns and gives thanks and congratulations to all those that took part and helped make Aberdeen's campaign such a successful one;
- b) Agrees that Aberdeen should take part in the 2018 Beautiful Scotland campaign; and
- c) Agrees for Environmental Services to continue to support and develop community partnerships and projects.

3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES / OTHER HEADINGS AS APPROPRIATE

3.1 Beautiful Scotland Awards 2017

Beautiful Scotland is an environmental campaign in Scotland for communities who are working to improve and enhance their local area. The Beautiful Scotland campaign has been running for over 50 years and until recently was known as "Beautiful Scotland in Bloom".

Entrants in the Beautiful Scotland campaign compete for prestigious trophies within 11 different categories. These are based on electoral roll population size, ranging from Wee Villages to Cities, and there are additional prizes for outstanding effort in specific areas, such as biodiversity, waste and tourism.

The communities are visited by trained volunteer judges who assess the work that has been done and award points accordingly.

It is important to note that the campaign is not just for the green-fingered, as the judging focuses on 3 main themes, namely Horticultural Achievement, Environmental Responsibility and Community Participation. The cleanliness of the area, the level of graffiti and the sustainability issues, such as recycling, are all taken into account and contribute to the entrant achieving either a Bronze, Silver, Silver Gilt or Gold medal.

The best entry in each category receives a trophy and entrants also compete for special awards in areas such as Biodiversity, Sustainability and Community Involvement.

The campaign is a programme of [Keep Scotland Beautiful](#) and is run by an Advisory Group consisting of representatives of entrant groups,

Beautiful Scotland has 50 plus years' experience of supporting groups within communities all across Scotland to improve and enhance their local environment.

3.2 RHS Britain in Bloom Champion of Champions Awards 2017

Organised by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), Britain in Bloom is one of Europe's largest horticultural campaigns, involving over a thousand communities each year and creating lasting improvements to local environments for the benefit of residents, workers and visitors.

Since 1964 Britain in Bloom has been part of the UK's cultural and horticultural landscape, impacting millions of people. Last year alone the campaign involved more than 200,000 volunteers across the UK, donating 4.4 million hours to projects that benefitted the wider community.

The ongoing popularity of the Britain in Bloom campaign can be understood through the real and lasting benefits that it provides to those taking part.

Participants see not only cleaner and greener environments, but also reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour, renewed economic activity and pride of place.

The RHS believes that Britain in Bloom, as a community-driven horticultural campaign, will continue to create lasting improvements which reach beyond the green spaces and in to the far corners of society. Despite the inevitably tough economic times ahead, the campaign is well placed to continue serving the UK's communities, and is an invaluable source of ideas-sharing and inspiration for all those taking part around the country.

The RHS Britain in Bloom Champion of Champions UK Finals brings together the highest achievers from all over the UK where selected communities, of all population sizes, who have demonstrated sustained high standards in the Bloom campaign, are invited to compete for the title of 'Champion of

Champions'. These entries are judged against the Bloom criteria relevant to their population, and then compared to determine the overall winner.

Aberdeen was competing against Elswick (North West), Harrogate (Yorkshire), Hillsborough (Ulster), Oldham (North West), Portishead (South West) and St Peter Port (Guernsey) for the title of Champion of Champions, the ultimate Britain in Bloom award.

3.3 Aberdeen In Bloom 2017 - Growing Smarter, The Granite City.

Aberdeen's in bloom campaign, 'Growing Smarter' is a 365 day campaign and covers In Bloom initiatives involving a wide range of people from within local communities. The overall aim is to ensure that the communities come together with the goal of enhancing their surroundings and creating a better environment.

The campaign includes all the inspiring and fantastic work done across the city by both our own staff and the many in bloom partners and volunteers.

This year Aberdeen was chosen to represent Scotland in the Britain in Bloom, Champion of Champion finals and the Beautiful Scotland finals.

In addition to running our own campaign we also support in every way we can the in bloom community groups that run their own campaigns, Dyce, Bucksburn, Cove, Powis and Aberdeen Inspired.

Beautiful Scotland judges visited Aberdeen on the 28 July, with Britain in Bloom judges visiting the following week on the 4 August. Both sets of judges were taken on a tour of green spaces around Aberdeen.

The judges met Aberdeen City Council officers and a number of the 100+ community groups and volunteers which have shaped the city's entry into the awards this year.

They were taken on a tour around many of the city's green spaces including Duthie Park, Union Terrace Gardens, Walker Dam, Hazlehead Nursery and Seaton Park.

Then judges were impressed with the colour and varieties on show at Hazlehead, Rubislaw and Queens Terrace Gardens and of course our Winter Gardens.

Several groups welcomed the judges at Duthie Park and others said goodbye at St Machar Cathedral with photographic displays of their work. These community groups included: Friends of Duthie Park, Garthdee Fields Allotments Association, Nether Loirston Growers Association, Cove in Bloom, Brighter Bucksburn, DA Recovery Project, Friends of Seaton Park, Dyce in Bloom, and Powis Residents.

Other horticultural achievements included the Garden In Bloom competition, displays of spring bulbs such as crocus and daffodils, window boxes, street

planters, sponsored roundabouts and beds, hanging baskets, school butterfly and bee friendly planters and the schools' Design a Bed competition.

The community groups include schools, churches, community gardening clubs, third sector organisations, community clean-ups, wildflower seed sowing, parks, and Aberdeen's Spring Flower Show.

Projects showing environmental responsibility included East Tullos Burn, wildflower strips on the A90, the return of the red squirrels, the RSPB Dolphin Watch scheme, the Scottish Seaside Awards and our Clean Up Aberdeen campaign, including the very successful 24 hour Glitter Pick.

Seaton Park was seen as a highlight as the judges viewed the newly completed wetland area and walked the formal gardens.

Other areas of particular mention included the team's various links to business sponsorship and its partnership with Aberdeen Inspired, in particular the work on the St Nicholas Centre rooftop garden.

The judges were very impressed by the overall campaign and made particular reference to the commitment of Aberdeen as a city, to the campaign, and its support of community groups. The judges stated that the community engagement / partnership focus was inspiring and that Aberdeen was leading the way nationally on this.

The Britain In Bloom judges were very impressed with the wide range of partnerships, groups and volunteers involved – from individuals to corporate teams.

Many positives were taken from this year's campaign that can only benefit and add to Aberdeen's overall greenspace and environment. The campaign provides a fantastic opportunity for everyone involved to celebrate In Bloom.

Our 2018 campaign is already under way and we are very confident of further success and good news stories for Aberdeen.

Details of campaigns and participation in awards will continue to be reported to Committee.

3.4 Awards - The Outcome

Britain In Bloom Awards

Aberdeen was awarded a Gold Medal in the Champion of Champions category at the prestigious Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Britain in Bloom UK Finals Awards held in Llandudno, North Wales, on 27 October.

The judges were very impressed with the city as a whole, the horticulture on show and Aberdeen's high environmental standards.

Aberdeen's gold medal, the highest available, confirms its position as one of the greenest and most beautiful cities in Britain.

Seaton Park won the Parks and Green Spaces award. The judges noted that in addition to the look and feel of a 'pristine park', Seaton Park includes a range of flood mitigation measures, 'an impressive range of trees and shrubs across the whole park, wide successional planting and some outstanding specimen trees.' It also hosts a suite of activities to suit people from all parts of the community.

This award is well deserved and recognition for all the hard work of the staff, Friends group and volunteers.

Beautiful Scotland Awards

Aberdeen received a resounding 11 awards at the 51st annual Beautiful Scotland awards.

Aberdeen City Council, Dyce, Cove, Bucksburn, Powis and Aberdeen Inspired were presented with awards which recognised the hard work carried out to clean up, green up and beautify Aberdeen.

The Glen Pavilion in Pittencrieff Park, Dunfermline hosted the annual celebration of national community environmental improvements on 7 September. The event saw 200+ people come together to celebrate the work undertaken in communities throughout Scotland to help deliver environmental improvements in their local areas - with 44 groups being recognised with medal certificates and awards.

Aberdeen received a Gold Award and was named as the City Category overall winner, and Aberdeen was also presented with the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society Award for our fantastic horticulture and green spaces.

Powis Residents Group received a Gold Award and were named as the Residential Community Category overall winner.

Dyce in Bloom also received a Gold Award and were overall Best Urban Community winners.

The other Aberdeen award winners were:

- Aberdeen Inspired - Silver Gilt Award
- Brighter Bucksburn - Silver Award
- Cove in Bloom – Silver Gilt Award

Aberdeen Inspired were also presented with the VisitScotland Award for Tourism for their Nuart Aberdeen Street art Festival.

The many awards and success of our campaign is due recognition for all the hard work of the many partners, community volunteers, schools and

Environmental Services staff, who all contribute greatly to the campaign, throughout the year.

The service is very proud of what has been achieved this year and the awards have allowed Aberdeen to showcase to the whole of the UK the horticultural excellence and community participation which makes Aberdeen such a wonderful place to live, work and visit.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Environmental Services will continue to pay the administration fee for all formal In Bloom entries to Beautiful Scotland. The total cost of this is currently less than £1000.

Where possible Environmental Services will assist with the funding of community based projects. This will only be undertaken when the project sits on land within the service's responsibility and will take the form of match funding or grant top ups.

There are no further financial implications as a result of this report and all In Bloom work undertaken is within existing budget levels.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

6.1 Financial (low risk)

There are no financial risks associated with the actual report.

6.2 Environmental (low risk)

In regards to this report, the impact on the environment is very positive with very little risk associated with our in bloom campaigns.

6.3 Technological (low risk)

There is no technological risk associated with our in bloom campaigns.

6.4 Employee (medium risk)

Environmental staff have a history and tradition of being involved in the in bloom campaigns. The staff thrive on being part of the campaign and get a list from Aberdeen's success. By not being part of the campaign it might mean

staff moral declines and staff lose the passion and care they show for their work.

6.5 Customer / Citizen (medium risk)

The impact on customers / citizens relating to in bloom is huge. In Bloom actively engages with and gets direct participation of Aberdeen's citizens in the sustainability / environmental agenda in Aberdeen. The campaign delivers benefits across the City at very little cost to the Council and helps communicate and support grass root actions and behaviour change towards a more sustainable city. It helps to meet our environmental objectives for a clean city, reducing carbon emissions and instils community pride, community cohesion and active citizenship. Participants see not only cleaner and greener environments, but also reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour, renewed economic activity and pride of place.

Not being involved in the in bloom campaign has the potential to put much of the above at risk.

6.6 Reputational (low to medium risk)

Aberdeen has a proud history and tradition of being involved and having success in the in bloom campaigns and competitions. Aberdeen is recognised across the UK for its incredible parks and green spaces. These spaces attract many visitors every year. Any decline in Aberdeen's participation in the in bloom campaigns could have a detrimental effect on our green spaces.

7. IMPACT SECTION

7.1 Economy

Our Growing Smarter campaign ensures Aberdeen is presented as a clean and green, beautiful city that will make its residents proud and be a place where tourists want to come. It forms the basis of a place that ensure a high quality of life for all people in Aberdeen.

7.2 People

It is the people that make the campaign the success it is. The campaign covers In Bloom initiatives involving a huge amount of people from within local communities from right across Aberdeen. These people all have the same goal to enhance their local environment and make a difference.

The in bloom campaigns contribute to staff development and knowledge. The staff feel part of something very special and it gives teams a lift to be involved.

Staff enjoy the partnership working and community engagement involved at a local and national level. It increases collaborative working with other council services and external organisations and encourages information and

knowledge sharing to contribute to the success of this campaign and other similar city wide projects and initiatives.

7.3 Place

Our Growing Smarter campaign enhances public and private green space. Aberdeen has a history and tradition of having fantastic green spaces and our campaign allows everyone involved to embrace and celebrate this.

Our involvement with communities and partners has been recognised across the UK and Aberdeen is now seen as leading the field in this area.

7.4 Technology

No significant impact.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

9. APPENDICES (if applicable)

None

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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