

# Council Delivery Plan

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## ANNUAL REVIEW 2019/20





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# FOREWORD

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This Annual Report provides an overview of progress made in implementing the Council Delivery Plan 2019/20. Of course, the months since the end of 2019/20 have brought extraordinary change and challenges to both the City and the Council. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on every area of our society and this report serves as a reminder, both of the Council's commitments prior to the pandemic and that these priorities remain critical as we recover and rebuild in a post-covid world. For that reason, whilst this report primarily relates to 2019/20, it includes commentary on how services have been impacted during 2020.

The Council Delivery Plan is key element of our commissioning approach and brings together, at the beginning of each financial year:

- Details of the Council's strategy framework
- Relevant new statutory duties being placed on the Council;
- Outstanding commitments arising from the Council's approved Policy Statement
- Council commissioning intentions, through which we express the services we will provide; and
- a summary of "How we do our business" including details of our commissioning approach; our transformation portfolio; how we behave as an organisation; and our performance management arrangement.

Importantly, each of these elements of our Council Delivery Plan are aligned to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and represent a statement of how the Council will deliver on its contribution to the implementation of the LOIP.

As this report shows, we have made significant progress in many key areas during 2019/20 including the official opening of the TECA development and first events at the P&J Live Arena; the completion of the Aberdeen Art Gallery refurbishment and re-opening to the public; the official opening of Tillydrone Community Hub; the agreement of a contract for the operation of the Energy from Waste Plant; High profile events in the City through the 'Events 365' project, including the Cycling Tour Series; continued support for mental health with the appointment of a Mental Health Champion.

Looking ahead, of course 2020/21 has been a tumultuous year and the Council's plans have responded to meet the challenges. Our 2020/21 Council Delivery Plan was presented to Council in March 2020, just prior to the beginning of the pandemic and represented a continuation of our commitments from 2019/20. However, in the light of the impact of Covid-19, the Council's Urgent Business Committee considered a full review of our policy commitments, commissioning intentions, service standards and financial resilience in June 2020. At the same meeting, the Council approved an Aberdeen City Socio-Economic Rescue Plan, which builds on the strength of our community planning arrangements and has put in place measures to mitigate the negative impacts of Covid-19 and to prepare the city to grasp opportunities which will be present in the recovery.





# POLICY STATEMENT UPDATES

Progressing the delivery of the Council’s approved Policy Statement, approved August 2017, is a key part of the annual Council Delivery Plan. The table below gives an update on those included within the 2019/20 Plan, many of which have been delivered in collaboration with local and national partners.

## ECONOMY

Policy Statement Commitments	Update
<p>1. Assess the digital needs of the region, working with our partners to ensure the city has the required infrastructure</p>	<p>The Aberdeen City Region Deal is addressing digital infrastructure through the following projects:</p> <p><b>City Network Extension:</b> Work has been ongoing to extend the Aberdeen City Council fibre network to 57 additional sites across the City. This has successfully stimulated private sector investment of up to £40m by City Fibre and Vodafone. Building on the Council’s fibre network, City Fibre will extend and deploy 800km of fibre within Aberdeen City, providing the majority of the City with access to ‘fibre to the premises’ at gigabit speeds. This project was scheduled to be completed by December 2020, but due to Covid-19 the completion date is now June 2021.</p> <p><b>Full Fibre Infrastructure:</b> Building on what has been achieved in the City Network Extension project, an aggregated public sector demand approach is being taken to extend fibre further into the City Region. This will be primarily achieved by connecting Aberdeenshire Council sites (with NHS and City sites being a beneficiary) to dark fibre. This will enable public services to be delivered to the community to support improved delivery of education, health, transport and other services. The project may also act as a catalyst for further investment by commercial parties to build off this network to provide fibre to our homes and businesses. The project is progressing well and is due to be completed in 2020.</p> <p><b>Duct Network:</b> Construction has commenced on a duct network, initially for Council use, but followed by engagement with commercial organisations to encourage them to utilise the expanded network. The project will provide the opportunity for Aberdeen City to be used as a test-bed for autonomous vehicles and also support 5G installations.</p> <p><b>Future Needs:</b> A detailed gap analysis has been undertaken, mapping the digital infrastructure within the region, detailing broadband speeds, mobile network coverage, and other technologies. This is informing future planning.</p>

2. TECA, including digestion plant

TECA development construction was completed on 2nd August 2019. The venue has hosted numerous events since opening in September 2019 including, but not limited to, Offshore Europe, BBC Sports Personality of the Year, Disney on Ice, Strictly Come Dancing, PDC Darts and a number of big-named music artists. The complex and venue was classed as a resounding success.

In March 2020 the global pandemic Covid 19 enforced the closure of the venue along with the two hotels on site. This has impacted on mass gatherings and to date the venue has not re-opened for events.

The Hilton Hotel re-opened in August 2020 with Covid 19 restrictions in place and the Aloft Hotel is expected to open in early November 2020.

The AD Plant construction has been delayed due to the pandemic and is now expected to be completed late December 2020/ early January 2021.

3. Complete the refurbished Aberdeen Art Gallery

Aberdeen Art Gallery reopened to visitors on 2 November 2019, its most significant redevelopment since first opening to the public in 1885. The capital investment of £34.6m increased the footprint of the building by 27% and through careful conservation and restoration successfully linked three A-listed buildings (the Art Gallery, Cowdray Hall and Remembrance Hall) on a single campus. By the time the Gallery closed in March 2020 in response to COVID-19 over 140,000 visitors had been welcomed and the Gallery was on track to be the region's number one visitor attraction, exceeding the projected annual visitor figure of 235,000.

The redevelopment of Aberdeen Art Gallery received the Project of the Year 2020 award from the Aberdeen Society of Architects. In October this year it was also announced as the winner of the prestigious Art Fund Museum of the Year 2020 prize and will share equally the award of £200,000 with the other 4 winners.

The Art Gallery re-opened on Thursday 27 August 2020 with a number of Covid measures in place including hand sanitising stations, bookable free timed entry slots and new directional signage. Visitor numbers are steady and building as customer confidence returns. The prestigious BP Portrait Award opened on 10 October which is attracting increased audiences to the building.

<p>4. Increase city centre footfall through delivery of the City Centre Masterplan, including the redesigned Union Terrace Gardens</p>	<p><b>Union Terrace Gardens:</b> COVID-19 has impacted the project and programme timeline. Completion has been delayed from Summer 2021 to anticipated Autumn/ Winter 2021. Given the current climate, there are still unknowns and whilst steady progress has been made to date, the program detailed is caveated to reflect the current pandemic.</p> <p>Good progress has been made in respect of the on-site construction works within the period, with a number of critical elements now well underway.</p> <p>A procurement exercise was undertaken to appoint for the Commercial Marketing of the Buildings. This has now been awarded, with the contract being executed imminently.</p> <p><b>Broad Street:</b> The new lighting system for the external footprint of Marischal College is now complete, which is the final piece in the transformation of the public realm.</p>
<p>5. Support the Aberdeen Harbour expansion and work collaboratively to maximise tourism opportunities, including attracting high value cruises</p>	<p>Aberdeen Harbour South Expansion (AHSE) is a £370 million investment by Aberdeen Harbour Board to expand its marine facilities from its existing location in the city. As part of the infrastructure support provided by the Aberdeen City Region Deal, the Council and Aberdeenshire Council have contributed £11m to the Project.</p> <p>Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown has affected the scheduling of the construction of the new harbour with a 12-18month delay to the opening of AHSE. The economic benefits of the expansion will be realised when the new facilities become fully operational and will be against the backdrop of economic recovery from the wider global downturn.</p> <p>The delay however may also have a wider positive benefit in the sense that the new facility is not open during the current challenging trading environment. Further, the delay to the project is not anticipated to negatively impact on Aberdeen’s ability to maximise the opportunities from the current ScotWind licensing rounds, and in particular development of offshore wind production at the three East Region sites most accessible from Aberdeen. This development, and the supporting facilities for energy transition in the Energy Transition Zone, including offshore wind assembly, Operations and Maintenance (O&amp;M), marshalling and potential manufacture, as well as green hydrogen production, will be a main driver of demand for energy transition skills and provider of jobs. This is all in addition to activity under ‘business as usual’.</p>
<p>6. Review Council industrial estate to ensure it supports the Regional Economic Strategy</p>	<p>A review of the future land requirements to support the Harbour expansion and in turn the Regional Economic Strategy has been completed and land requirements are being identified through the Local Development Plan process. A soft market testing exercise of the council estate was also undertaken during early 2020. This was however suspended due to changing market condition and will be revisited as market conditions and future requirements stabilise.</p>

<p>7. Deliver Aberdeen 365, an annual calendar of headline and feature events</p>	<p>2019 was another successful year for the City's cultural and event programme, with the safe and successful delivery of the Council's 365 programme, increased footfall across the events, and with the City's events being recognised at three prominent industry award ceremonies - Aberdeen City Council were shortlisted in the Best Practice category at the National Outdoor Events Association Awards, for their recently introduced Event Guidance; the Tour Series was awarded the Best Public Sector Event at the Eventit Awards; and NUart was awarded the Best Cultural Event at the Aberdeen City &amp; Shire Tourism Awards.</p> <p>Aberdeen's Event 365 programme has been impacted by Covid-19 and subsequent restrictions on outdoor events and mass gatherings. Due to the impact and risks of Covid-19, a decision was made to postpone the 2020 edition of the Tour of Britain until September 2021 with the ambition to encompass the finish of the Tour of Britain in 2021 and the grand depart in 2022.</p> <p>Discussions regarding NUART are ongoing, with careful consideration to potential restrictions and requirements around covid-secure events.</p>
<p>8. Complete the refurbished Provost Skene's House</p>	<p>Notwithstanding the Covid-19 impact, good progress has been made with the refurbishment works for Provost Skenes's House. The external works are nearing completion with internal works well advanced. The intention is to commence the fit-out works for the 'Hall for Heroes' in Spring 2021 with an opening to the public in Summer 2021.</p>
<p>9. Maximise community benefit from major developments</p>	<p>Progress to raise the profile of community benefit clauses amongst procuring officers continues, with Community Benefit plans being developed for major capital projects. A community co-design approach was tested in developing the replacement Riverbank school project and further opportunities to test this approach are being sought. COVID-19 has impacted projects at the community benefits delivery stage. The council is working with contractors to devise alternative approaches to delivery to ensure the requirements are realised, for example where possible, moving delivery online.</p> <p>A Responsible Business Platform has been launched on the Community Planning Aberdeen website to promote opportunities for the wider business community, those not necessarily contracted by the Council, to engage in activities that will benefit communities. By highlighting ways in which businesses of all sizes can align corporate social responsibility activities with the priorities identified in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, opportunities for communities to benefit will be maximised.</p>
<p>10. Campaign for the reform of local government finance, including business rates and the replacement of Council Tax</p>	<p>Work continues through CoSLA and Scottish Cities Alliance in relation to local government finance and the funding of economic growth respectively. This work will continue particularly in the context of changing external funding programmes in relation to Brexit, the Scottish Government's Programme for Government, and in relation to the economic implications of Covid-19 and the commensurate impact on funding.</p>

<p>11. Open negotiations to secure funding for a second Aberdeen City Region Deal</p>	<p>The Council approved its Net Zero Vision and supporting Strategic Infrastructure Plan for Energy Transition in June 2020. Since then the Scottish Government ring-fenced £62m for energy transition projects, and officers are contributing towards the business cases for two of these projects – Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub programme and the Energy Transition Zone around Aberdeen Harbour Expansion South. At the same time, approaches are being made for support from relevant UK Government sources in support of the offshore renewables sector specifically.</p>
<p>12. Establish a business development fund to support small business</p>	<p>Officers continue to promote Business Loans Scotland to local businesses through the Business Gateway. In an immediate response to businesses as a result of Covid-19, the Council approved a Socio-Economic Rescue Plan in May 2020 and there is a specific programme to support businesses. As well as delivering wider business funding on behalf of the Scottish Government, a specific fund for Aberdeen businesses directly affected by local lockdown in August 2020 is being delivered. And, as part of the Rescue Plan, direct support to businesses will be provided through the Aberdeen Gift Card, Extension to Restaurant Week and through the Winter Festivities programme.</p>
<p>13. Use Business Loans Scotland to help lift the finance barrier for small and medium enterprises</p>	<p>Enquiries remain strong at 8-10 per month. Conversion to full applications is slowing and this could be due to school holidays and/or insecurities about the economy and the ability to repay any loan.</p>
<p>14. Work with both governments in order to unleash the non-oil and gas economic potential of the city</p>	<p>See 11. above. In addition, an inward investment focus on energy transition is being coordinated with Department of International Trade (DIT) and Scottish Development International (SDI) and Invest Aberdeen, with industry partners. Officers continue to support the inward investment work through Scottish Cities Alliance, and two projects were included in the latest Scottish Government prospectus.</p>
<p>15. Support the delivery of the three innovation centres envisaged by the Aberdeen City Region Deal</p>	<p>The Oil &amp; Gas Technology Centre (OGTC) was established in October 2016 with £180 million from the Aberdeen City Region Deal. The mission is to be the go-to technology centre for the oil and gas industry - both in the UK and internationally. Through seven solution centres - Asset Integrity, Wells, Marginal Developments, Decommissioning, Digital Transformation, Subsurface and Net Zero the OGTC is working with cross-industry organisations to support technology development that will solve key industry challenges.</p> <p>The BioHub, which will be built at Foresterhill and forms part of the £250 million Aberdeen City Region Deal, is being delivered by Opportunity North East (ONE). The aim of the hub is to double the number of life sciences companies in the north-east. In August 2020 the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee approved accelerated grant funding from the City Region Deal envelope to allow construction to start this year.</p> <p>The SeedPod project, a £21 million investment in Grampian's food and drink industry, will look to create a centre of excellence and double the value of the sector with a new industry development hub. A new company, Food Hub (NES), has been established to deliver the project. A £7.7 million contract to design and construct a new centre has been awarded. The new facility will be located close to Aberdeen International Airport and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.</p>

## PEOPLE

Policy Statement Commitments	Update
1. Completion of school estate review (P1) And development of estate strategy for next 5-10 years (P2)	Given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the provision of education, the completion of the school estate review has been deferred until Summer 2022. This will allow time to determine if Scottish Government guidance will be provided on how education will be delivered in the future and how a school estate may look in the light of this. This will be a significant part of an overarching corporate Estates and Assets Strategy.
2. UNICEF Child Friendly accreditation	A self-evaluation and Child Friendly Cities Plan has been approved by Community Planning Aberdeen and Community Planning Partners are now working together to deliver the Plan.
3. Work with the Scottish Government to provide flexible and affordable childcare for working families on the lowest incomes	The pandemic impacted on our Capital programme and the statutory requirement to deliver 1140 was suspended. The Programme continues to progress and will be ready for full implementation as the duty is enacted.
4. Support the implementation of Developing the Young Workforce, seek to gain the highest level of investors in young people accreditation and ensure there is a focus on supporting pupils excel in STEM subjects	The Council continues to work with a range of partners to support Developing the Young Workforce and are currently looking at how our senior phase should change to take account of the impact of COVID-19 on opportunities for young people.
5. Appoint a mental health champion	A Mental Health Champion has been appointed. We are focused on improving the Mental Health and wellbeing of children and young people. How this has evolved has understandably changed. Building on some initial work in Northfield to develop a multi-agency collaborative approach to improving mental health and wellbeing, this was overtaken by our response to COVID and the development of three Family Wellbeing Hubs. We have appointed a project lead – Clinician from Children & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to drive forward the development of the Hubs but simultaneously their approach focuses on building capacity at the universal level.
6. Explore how the successes of the Sistema project can be shared and spread across the city	The SISTEMA project at Big Noise Torry was commissioned for a further six years in February 2020. It has continued throughout the response phase to the Covid-19 Pandemic, with lessons for children and young people continuing via Microsoft Teams, and the opportunity for schools in other areas of the City to be involved through this development. Big Noise Torry will be delivering lessons from Lochside Academy and Tullos Learning Centre from November 2020 onwards.

<p>7. Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners across the city</p>	<p>A more refined approach to quality improvement and assurance is in place and helping to sharpen the focus on quality. A learning and teaching standard has been developed to help clarify expectations, however we have not yet been able to see the impact of this as it was launched just prior to lockdown. There has been some progress made in raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap, however this work is ongoing and being updated to reflect the changed needs of our children and young people.</p> <p>Over 5,000 chromebooks were issued over the period of lockdown to mitigate the risk of not being able to access the curriculum for those living in areas of deprivation. 93% of learners in early learning and childcare and schools regularly engaged with their Google classroom.</p>
<p>8. Review of local adult protection arrangements and implement an improvement programme</p>	<p>We have just completed our review of adult protection arrangements with a new team being established to screen all adult protection referrals and VPD's for vulnerable people. We are submitting a report to Scottish Government at end of October 2020 with the work around adult protection over the last 2 years with a new 2 year action plan now being drafted.</p>
<p>9. Promote diversion activities for youths and adults in our city with enhanced focused on our three locality areas.</p>	<p>Our Community Learning and Development team have been working in our priority locality areas to deliver high quality learning opportunities. 446 learning activities were offered in 2019/20; 822 people took part in these sessions across the year, and 1352 enrolments on to new classes. We have also yet again provided our award running Food and Fun programme, allowing children and young people to access food during school holidays while participating in organised events.</p>
<p>10. Build 2,000 new Council homes and work with partners to provide more affordable homes</p>	<p>In addition to the two new housing sites at Summerhill and Wellheads which are under construction and continuing with the Council buy-back, we have undertaken a procurement exercise via the Invitation to Participate in Negotiation (ITPN) process for Developer Led Schemes and secured actionable offers of circa 723 units.</p> <p>Work has also continued with the delivery of a number of Council led Direct Sites, along with consideration of other sites which have recently been identified. When all of the above are taken together we could potentially see circa 3,000 units under contract for delivery. Work will now continue to progress all of the above to identify the optimum options to meet the 2,000 new homes target.</p>
<p>11. Reduce fuel poverty across our most deprived communities through combined heat and power schemes including the Energy from Waste Plant</p>	<p>Despite the loss of almost 3 months due to the Covid-19 pandemic progress on site has been broadly on programme. Piling works are now complete and the main foundations for the boiler house is now being laid. The formation of the waste bunker is underway. The first major above ground structure, the bunker wall will commence in November 2020. Commissioning is anticipated to commence in Spring 2022 with the facility fully operational by the end of 2022.</p> <p>In tandem with the above a new district heating infrastructure project in Torry will be taken forward using the heat supply from the Energy from Waste plant. Phase 1 of this project will see connection with a number of Council buildings including the Torry Primary School, but more importantly it will connect to circa 150 Council Homes in Balnagask thereby reducing fuel poverty in these areas. We will also be looking to extend the heat network with future phases.</p>

## PLACE

Policy Statement Commitments	Update
<p>1. Build up our existing strength in hydrogen technology</p>	<p><b>Hydrogen refuelling infrastructure:</b> Early 2019 Aberdeen became the only location in Scotland with two hydrogen refuelling stations serving all types of vehicles including cars vans, lorries and buses. The ACHES station also moved to a green tariff alongside Kittybrewster depot resulting in all vehicles now being on a green tariff, using hydrogen produced from renewable sources, resulting in zero “well to wheel” emissions.</p> <p><b>Vehicle deployments:</b> 115 hydrogen double decker buses have been ordered as part of the FCH JU (Fuel Cell Joint Undertaking) JIVE project. These are due to arrive in Autumn 2020. Numerous other vehicles have also been delivered through the HyTrEc2 project including cars and vans which have been given to some our Community Planning Partners and placed on the Co-wheels car club fleet for members of the public and businesses to trial.</p> <p><b>Supply chain development:</b> In partnership with others, Aberdeen City Council ran the UK’s first week long Hydrogen Festival in October 2019. Over 600 participants attended various activities over the course of the week with a visit from the world’s first hydrogen boat.</p> <p><b>Renewable hydrogen production:</b> In October 2019 the Council commissioned a study to investigate the business case for a commercial supply of renewably sourced hydrogen, possibly offshore wind. This project has become known as the “Hydrogen Hub”. It is now contained within the Energy Transition Vision and Strategic Infrastructure Plan for the City and in early June was earmarked for £15m of Scottish Government Energy Transition Funding to progress.</p>
<p>2. Support efforts to develop the Energetica corridor</p>	<p>The Energetica corridor is one of many inward investment products that are supported through Invest Aberdeen. North of the city, development of the Hydrogen Hub (phase 1) will be included in material to promote the corridor.</p>
<p>3. Refresh the local transport strategy, ensuring it includes the results of a city centre parking review; promotes cycle and pedestrian routes; and considers support for public transport</p>	<p>A refresh of the Local Transport Strategy is due to commence later in 2020, following the revision of the National Transport Strategy earlier in 2020 and the Regional Transport Strategy which is currently out for consultation.</p>
<p>4. Cycle hire scheme</p>	<p>A feasibility study has been completed. An initial tendering exercise, carried out November 2019, was unsuccessful, however, a second tendering exercise has now been completed and officers are currently assessing bids. The appointment of a tender is in the final stages and should be complete within the next month.</p>

<p>5. Commit extra funding to resurface damaged roads and pavements throughout the city</p>	<p>The extra funding allocated in 2019/20 resulted in works being undertaken at an additional 28 sites across the city.</p> <p>We are now starting to see a gradual improvement in the Road Condition Index across the City. The pandemic has, however, impacted on planned projects at the beginning of 2020/21.</p>
<p>6. Increase the business community's resilience awareness</p>	<p>Throughout 2019/20 the Council continued to engage with local businesses across key sectors and provide support to strengthen economic resilience. Activity is coordinated across partners, including industry, through the Regional Economic Strategy steering group, the City Region Deal Joint Committee, and the Council's representation on the boards of Opportunity North East, Visit Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen Inspired.</p> <p>In an immediate response to Covid-19, and Aberdeen Business Resilience Group was established that has supported the coordination of a response by business to the changing external environment caused by the pandemic. This Group provides an efficient and immediate access to businesses to provide wider support – for example, environmental health, licensing, trading standards and to the regional Local Resilience Partnership where required. Members of the Group are also included in the implementation group for the Rescue Plan. Membership of the Group also includes Aberdeen &amp; Grampian Chamber of Commerce, Federation Small Businesses, Aberdeen Hospitality Together, Aberdeen City &amp; Shire Hotels Association, Aberdeen Inspired, Opportunity North East, Oil &amp; Gas UK.</p>
<p>7. Development of locality plans across the city in conjunction with communities</p>	<p>Locality plans are in place for those communities which have been identified as experiencing poorer outcomes than the rest of the City due to their socio-economic status. This is a requirement of the Community Empowerment Scotland Act 2015 and using SIMD data these communities have been determined as Torry; Northfield, Middlefield, Mastrick, Cummings Park and Heathryfold; and Seaton, Tillydrone and Woodside. The plans, developed in consultation with communities living in these neighbourhoods, were first published in 2017. Following the refresh of the Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan in 2019, the Locality Plans are now due for refresh.</p> <p>Locality Rescue Plans are currently being developed to underpin the Aberdeen Socio-Economic Rescue Plan published in July 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. These will be published by the end of 2020 and will supersede the existing locality plans to ensure the current focus is on ensuring our most disadvantaged communities receive the practical and emotional support they need in response to the immediate crisis. The city-wide Local Outcome Improvement Plan will be reviewed mid 2021 to refocus the Partnership on the longer term recovery and community planning ambitions following Covid-19. This will allow for a more substantial review of priority locality plans and development of locality planning across the City.</p>



# COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS

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## Supporting delivery of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan through Council commissioning intentions

As part of our commissioning cycle, the Council Delivery Plan sets out a series of commissioning intentions which define the contributions which the Council will make to the delivery of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and which frame the ask of our commissioned services.

These commissioning intentions define the Council's contribution, from a single agency perspective. It should be noted that partners will also have single agency intentions to meet their obligations derived from the LOIP.

The Council Delivery Plan also shows measures for each of the commissioning intentions. This annual report highlights progress against many of these measures and up to date progress is shown against all of the LOIP and Council Delivery Plan measures in the Aberdeen Outcomes Framework which can be accessed at: <https://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/outcomesframework/>

## ECONOMY

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### OUR KEY DRIVERS

- Diversification of the economy into other growth sectors including wider energy related sectors; tourism; food and drink; life sciences; health and social care and construction
- Developing the talent and future workforce necessary to support diversification of businesses and economy
- Improving investment into Aberdeen and Aberdeen businesses
- Promoting inclusive economic growth for our most disadvantaged communities
- Ensuring access for all employers to skilled labour

## ECONOMY HIGHLIGHTS



**2.3%**  
increase in people earning  
living wage and 5 more  
employers accredited



**8%**  
more people able  
to use digital tools



**140,000 visitors**  
to Aberdeen Art Gallery  
since re-opening in November 2019



**4.8%** more people in  
growth sectors and  
**45** new enterprises



**76** more young people  
completing a Foundation  
Apprenticeship or currently  
training since 18/19

## PROGRESS MADE DURING 2019/20

### DIVERSIFICATION OF THE ECONOMY INTO OTHER GROWTH SECTORS

Aberdeen City has one of the largest working age populations of any Scottish local authority areas at 69% compared to 64.5% for the rest of Scotland. The continued diversification of our economy from the prominent oil and gas sector into other growth sectors is vital to secure new and lasting employment opportunities for the people of Aberdeen. Latest data available at the end of 2019/20 showed that 79% of working age people in Aberdeen were in a job (up from 70% three years ago) and employment in growth sectors increased by 790 (4.8%), which is a continuing upward trend.

New companies can be the primary creators of new jobs and they also have an important role in sustaining jobs. This is why stimulating growth in start-up businesses across the nationally recognised growth sectors (digital/ creative; food and drink; life sciences and tourism) and our locally identified priority sectors (health & social care and construction) is a priority for the Council and our partners. We are delighted to see that the number of growth sector enterprises is increasing, with 45 new enterprises starting up since 2018/19, offering the potential for more employment opportunities in these sectors.

As part of our improvement work to increase the number of start-up businesses in growth sectors, this year Aberdeen held its first Annual Festival for businesses to: help business growth, challenge and stimulate, and draw attention to support available to new businesses. The event was held in October 2019 and attracted 451 people. Feedback from the event was very positive and it is our intention to run it again during 2020/21, if circumstances allow pending the COVID restrictions.

## SUPPORT DIVERSIFICATION OF THE CITY'S TOURISM SECTOR

Aberdeen Art Gallery re-opened in November 2019 with a comprehensive programme of exhibitions, events, performances and interactive opportunities for visitors. The range of in-venue activities have been reviewed to comply with COVID-19 measures with many, such as talks and music, moving online at [www.aagm.co.uk](http://www.aagm.co.uk). We have also launched the Smartify app which enables visitors to explore 100s of artworks on display in the Gallery at [www.smartify.org](http://www.smartify.org). Temporary exhibitions for 2021/22 includes the only Scottish venue of the prestigious British Art Show.

2019 was a prominent year for the Aberdeen 365 programme, the streets were lined with thousands of spectators to welcome the Tour Series for a third successful year, as professional cyclists raced around the city. The streets of Aberdeen were brought to life just a few months later as thousands of runners took on the unique experience of running around the city, taking in various landmarks as part of the Simplyhealth Great Aberdeen Run. Both events utilised Broad Street for the first time, offering an incredible focal point for the media against a backdrop of history and heritage with Marischal College on one side and the contemporary Marischal Square on the other. Intertwined with new events were the much-loved annual events of Armed Forces Day, Aberdeen Highland Games, BP Big screens, NUArt, Celebrate Aberdeen and the fireworks display. The year concluded with the winter festival, as the streets sparkled with festive cheer from the Christmas Village to the Christmas tree switch on parade on Union St. Bringing in the new year with live acts and to the backdrop of a spectacular firework display was the Aberdeen Hogmanay street party. The 2019 events programme concluded with the return of Spectra, Scotland's premier light festival, giving residents and visitors alike the opportunity to explore the granite city in a new light.



## DEVELOPING THE TALENT AND FUTURE WORKFORCE

Work with local public and private sector partners to support young people into positive destinations continues. The 2019/2020 financial year saw the Activity Agreements and SERI programmes replaced by No One Left Behind (NOLB), an all-age, all-stage employability programme, stretching the funding across people of all working ages as opposed to just for the 16-19 age group.

Positive Destination planning meetings have been arranged with secondary schools across the city. The Opportunities for All manager meets with school staff and Skills Development Scotland representatives to discuss opportunities for pupils identified as being at risk of leaving school without a positive destination and to enable early engagement with these young people to ensure, so far as possible, that they do not leave school without a positive destination. In 2019/20 93.7% of school leavers entered into positive initial destinations this is an increase from 91.3% the previous year. Participation in NOLB is regarded as a positive destination. This early engagement can and does, where appropriate, include being introduced not only to an NOLB keyworker, but also to commissioned providers which the young person may be referred to.

Aberdeen Foyer and SHMU have been commissioned to provide employability support to young people, many of them including school leavers furthest removed from the labour market. Working Rite has been commissioned to deliver a pilot project specifically aimed at care experienced young people to support them to secure accredited qualifications and work-based skills, as well as (where possible) work experience, with the aim of ultimately supporting them to secure employment or move into further education.

The Council's Creative Learning team is also supporting young people via NOLB to build confidence through using creative skills and tapping into young people's interests to engage them in employability activity at the early stages of the employability pipeline.

EC-PC has been contracted to deliver digital skills training, and Pathways has been contracted to deliver workshops focused on confidence-building, job seeking and interview skills. We have commissioned Roadwise to provide driving lessons. Because the employability programmes take a person-centred approach taking account of the needs and aspirations of individuals, some provision is commissioned on an off-the shelf basis using a quick quotes process.



In March 2020 the Council underwent an Assessment of the Investors in Young People framework having previously been awarded the Standard level. Following the Assessment, the Council was awarded the Investors in Young People Gold Status.

Employability keyworkers recently recruited into the Employability Team are providing a range of support and building programmes to support young people to move into a positive destination. Up to three-months of post-programme support is available to NOLB participants to help them to sustain their positive destination.

The advent of Covid created significant challenges, with the majority of providers unable to provide face-to-face support, or temporarily ceasing all activity, while others moved all activity online. A positive to come from the restrictions impacting commissioned providers has been the rapid development of "in-house" activities which have proven to be popular with participants and these have now been incorporated into the offering provided to our customers as they have provided positive results.

Aberdeen City Council is acting as a gateway organisation for the UK Government's Kickstart employer recruitment incentive scheme which will provide 16-25-year-olds at risk of long-term unemployment with six month work placements. The council's role is to support organisations which cannot meet the minimum of 30 jobs on their own, by combining jobs from a number of organisations to meet the minimum bid number, and to distribute payments to employers, including wages, from DWP.

The council is anticipating Young Person's Guarantee funding in 2020/21 which would provide further employability support to young people who are not currently in education, training, or employment.

The Council is working with partners through the Local Employability Partnership and Regional Strategic Employability Group to identify the areas of most need. This will be guided primarily by the LOIP and Socio-Economic Rescue Plan, as well as by emerging information about the economic impact of the pandemic on employment prospects of young people and will enable the most appropriate resources to deliver employability support to young people in Aberdeen to be commissioned.

## PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN OUR MOST DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

No-one Left Behind is being used to support Local Outcome Improvement Plan projects, including one which seeks to increase the number of people from priority groups in public sector employment, and another which seeks to increase the number of people with convictions securing employment on their release from custody or at the end of a community-based disposal.

The Employability Team is working with colleagues in housing, education, social work, financial inclusion team, community learning and development, the vulnerable persons resettlement team, Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership, and NHS Grampian, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, as well as with Skills Development Scotland, Department for Work and Pensions, Business Gateway/Elevator, and a number of third sector organisations to ensure that the support offered via the funding stream is accessible to people across the city. This serves not only to identify potential NOLB customers, but also to ensure that a full package of support can be put around them if required through onward referrals to partner services and agencies.

In normal years, a youth recruitment fair would be held in spring, and an all-age jobs fair in autumn. These events were highly subscribed to by employers and promoted to people across the city through a variety of means, including communication through schools, Job Centre Plus, Skills Development Scotland, mainstream and social media, and distribution of posters and flyers in community settings. Unfortunately the pandemic has prevented delivery of these events this year. The Employability Team attempted to take the youth recruitment event online, with very limited success. The Team is working with Job Centre Plus colleagues to explore the practicalities of delivering online jobs fairs.

Community Benefits clauses are being exploited to provide opportunities for NOLB customers, although the pandemic has had and continues to have some impact on the opportunities which can be delivered. It is clear through increasing referrals that the support is needed now more than ever.

Additional funding has been secured through the auspices of NOLB – for example commissioned third sector partners have been able to use NOLB funding as match to secure equipment or to fund additional activity for customers, or to secure funding the council cannot access to provide extra resources to NOLB clients. This includes monies to deliver a pilot employability programme for care experienced young people.

As detailed above, Covid-19 has had a limiting impact on the delivery of NOLB.

NOLB funding is being used to pay for employability keyworkers who deliver bespoke employability support to participants and who link in with other services to provide individuals with holistic support. This has included, for example, access to domestic violence counselling, financial advice and support, and childminding services to enable a young single mother to access training and mental health support as well as confidence building activities. NOLB is also being used to support delivery of a number of actions in the Socio-Economic Rescue Plan.

We are working with partners through the Local Employability Partnership and Regional Strategic Employability Group to identify the areas of most need and will direct resources accordingly. This will be guided primarily by the LOIP and Socio-Economic Rescue Plan, as well as by emerging information about the economic impact of the pandemic on employment prospects of the people of Aberdeen and will enable the team to maximise the benefits of the No One Left Behind Policy. Young Person's Guarantee monies are being made available to all local authorities by the Scottish Government and reporting on the spend and outcomes of these will be in line with No One Left Behind.



## **IMPROVING INVESTMENT INTO ABERDEEN AND ABERDEEN BUSINESSES**

Invest Aberdeen continues to engage with private sector leads, local partners including both Universities, local research institutions and Opportunity North East and will continue to seek ways to deliver ambitious outcomes in partnership and to identify areas of joint working and co-investment, where possible. There have been 78 inward investment and regional growth enquiries that have been managed by the team. Enquiries range from a major life science facility to the relocation of energy supply chain companies to Aberdeen, through to potential investors in the energy transition and hydrogen sectors. Potential investments cover all of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) priority sectors. With 41 investment and regional growth leads having been proactively generated by the team introducing potential investors to opportunities in the city region.

Stakeholder engagement has remained a priority, with a continued programme of one-to-one and team-to-team engagements to identify areas of common ground and scope for collaboration – with Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Development International, the Department for International Trade; Skills Development Scotland and local, regional and international stakeholders and industry groups. Sector Propositions were updated for Offshore Europe and proved popular with attendees. These propositions highlight Aberdeen's key sector capabilities and have been used by UK and Scottish stakeholders in supporting inward investment into the region.

The Invest Aberdeen Team have hosted multiple familiarisation visits from UK and Scottish Government agencies, delegations from the USA, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, and Ireland as well as businesses interested in various sectors in the region. The Invest Aberdeen website has continued to provide a resource hub for potential investors and for local stakeholder organisations and an updated Invest Aberdeen film is widely used to promote the area by local, national, and international partners and stakeholders. The development and publication of a second Invest Aberdeen property portfolio ('pitchbook') was created for use at MIPIM (Le marché international des professionnels de l'immobilier) 2020, promoting city and regional activity and investment opportunities through a range of specialist publications.

MIPIM is the leading global property investment expo and conference, whose attendance includes around 4,800 global investors. Invest Aberdeen was a lead partner to the Scotland Government led Pavilion at MIPIM in March 2019. For 2020 Invest Aberdeen had again partnered with the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise / SDI alongside Invest Glasgow and Invest in Edinburgh to attend MIPIM however the event was cancelled on the eve of travel due to Covid-19.

The first regional 'Team Aberdeen' response to an active investment enquiry was organised and managed by Invest Aberdeen over 4 visits by the international investor. 'Team Aberdeen' included participation from regional and national partners who have the potential to partner with the investor on various regional projects.



# PEOPLE (CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE)

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## OUR KEY DRIVERS

- Ensuring that families receive the parenting and family support they need
- Keeping young children safe
- Supporting early speech, language and literacy
- Improving health and reducing inequalities
- Improving the knowledge, understanding and skill of the universal workforce to recognise and respond to emerging mental wellbeing vulnerability
- Increasing children's and parents' knowledge and understanding of their own physical and mental wellbeing
- Early intervention and prevention of self-harming behaviours through timely and effective support for those with mental health issues
- Improving education outcomes for care experienced children and young people
- Supporting care experienced children and young people who sustain care placements which meet their needs and sense of identity
- Ensuring children, young people and families understand the pathways available to them and skills required for future
- Supporting children and young people to understand and access multiagency throughcare and aftercare services
- Improving physical and emotional health outcomes for care experienced young people
- Improving pathways to education, employment and training for identified groups (including Care Experienced Young People and those with Additional Support Needs)
- Supporting young people, families, carers and communities to better understand the opportunities available to their children upon leaving school
- Secure required six UNICEF badges to gain Child Friendly City Status Equality and Inclusiveness
- Young people receive the right help at the right time through provision of a strong universal offer alongside availability of multi-disciplinary targeted interventions (using a trauma-informed approach) to improve outcomes for young people at risk of becoming involved in the Justice System

## PEOPLE (CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE) HIGHLIGHTS



**Over 5000**  
**devices allocated**  
to children and young people  
during the lockdown period



**93%**  
**engagement** with on-line  
learning across the city



The number of care leavers who receive  
throughcare and aftercare support has  
increased by **18%**



**29.2%** more care  
experienced young people  
**attaining SQCF Awards Level 3** in  
Numeracy & Literacy



**16.2%** more care experienced  
young people leaving school  
and **going to an initial positive**  
**destination**

## PROGRESS MADE DURING 2019/20

### EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE PLACES

We are committed to ensuring that all parents who are keen to access Early Learning and Childcare centres are able to do so and we continue to work to provide a sufficient supply of early learning and childcare (ELC) places.

An extensive capital programme is underway comprising 27 projects, including 15 refurbishments; 4 extensions; 6 new build facilities; and 2 outdoor projects. We are planning to create additional capacity at 23 facilities through the indoor/outdoor model. The programme has focused on ensuring that the estate is fit for purpose and gives sufficient capacity to meet the differing needs of children and families in all localities. Each locality will have capacity to offer flexibility for families to choose the provision that best meets their needs.

In order to support all ELC settings to deliver provisions in line with the National Quality Standard, a team of Locality Lead Officers have been recruited and will work in localities across the city. As well as quality assurance, they will offer support and bespoke training to ELC settings and childminders to ensure that they meet the National Standard. The workforce development plan is well underway to support quality, with 30 trainee Early Years Practitioners having completed their course and in permanent positions. Two further training cohorts are embarking on this. The introduction of Locality Lead Officers has impacted positively on the level of support given to settings which is reflected in the improvement in inspection grades. The percentage of positive evaluations of quality reference indicators from Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate inspection reports have increased from 90% last year to 98.1% for 2019/20.

At present there are a total of 3,619 ELC places available in Local Authority settings, of these 2,960 have been allocated.

All of the above is supporting the statutory duty to deliver 1,140 hours of ELC for each 3 and 4 year old, however this universal national programme has been delayed as a result of the pandemic.

## KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

Numbers of children on the Child Protection Register (CPR) are slightly higher than the comparable period last year (142 compared to 119). The percentage of children on the Child Protection Register under the category of neglect has increased from 33% to 49% in the year to 31 July 2020; it is believed that this is directly attributable to a range of improvement activity focussing on neglect; multi-agency conferences, case review learning sessions, practitioner's guidance for all the children's workforce across the City and training specific to neglect. This is not to suggest that there is an escalating issue with neglect in the City but rather that it is now better identified and addressed. As time goes on, earlier intervention ought to see a decrease in these numbers relating to neglect on the Child Protection Register.



32% of children are registered in recognition of the impact of domestic abuse in their family lives. Up-to-date multi-agency guidance has enhanced professional understanding of the extension of domestic abuse to include coercive control across the partnership. Social media messaging from the Council and partners has led to increased referrals on the grounds of domestic abuse which indicates higher public understanding of their own role in contributing to the protection of children. Efforts to improve understanding of the impact of emotional abuse have led to earlier intervention and support by professionals and, after a peak, we have seen some reduction in numbers registered for this reason. Overall, conversion rates from case conferences to registration are high at >85% which indicates confident levels of understanding among professionals about child protection thresholds.

The Joint Children's Services Inspection conducted by the Care Inspectorate in 2018-19 found that "children and young people at risk of immediate harm were being kept safe as a result of effective recognition and response and increased staff confidence." In relation to strength-based and relationship-based practices, the Inspection found that these approaches "were embedded throughout interactions between professionals from all agencies and children, young people and their families. Relationships were characterised by trust, warmth and compassion and staff demonstrated a genuine desire to support families to the best of their abilities. The values of strengths and relationship based practice were evident from all staff we spoke to and reflected by almost all children, young people, their parents and carers."

Throughout the covid -19 pandemic children's social work services have continued uninterrupted, with professionals across the entire service adapting generously to provide services for children and their families. Over 95% of all children on the Register continued to receive weekly visits during the pandemic and those who did not were, for example, shielding. Education support hubs ensured the most vulnerable remained in sight. Youth Services maintained contact and provided practical support and supplies for care experienced young people.

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The mental health and wellbeing of our children and young people in Aberdeen is of paramount importance.

In order to gain insight and develop best practice for delivering interventions to improve mental health and well-being, we have been working in collaboration with the Pan-Grampian Child and Adolescent Mental Wellbeing Group, sharing intelligence and insights to deliver best practice interventions which can improve mental health and wellbeing. In response to a deeper understanding of challenges faced by secondary schools, as part of Aberdeen Community Planning we have invested in a permanent Immunisation Team to release capacity for school nurses to deliver mental health consultations to support children and young people with Tier 1 and 2 mental wellbeing concerns before they escalate. A more inclusive referral system is being developed to ensure that school nurses maximise the number of relevant referrals they receive for children and young people. This involves working with parents, pupils and teachers to increase their confidence to recognise and respond to young people with mental health concerns. This has led to the development of the resilience alphabet targeted at both Primary and Secondary Pupils. The Education Service led the development of a Resilience Alphabet and associated resource called 'The Journey' for older pupils. Both resources have been made available digitally and have been accessed widely nationally and internationally.

Testing of interventions has begun in 4 of our schools namely: Bucksburn; Bridge of Don; Hazlehead; and Aberdeen Grammar. An app which allows pupils to report how they feel, is also being tested. This will allow us to gather a much more effective picture of the needs of our young people in the area of mental wellbeing.

Children 1st has been commissioned to work in partnership with Community Planning Partners to offer support to children and families in three Locality Hubs. This initiative is resourced from across the Community Planning Partners and will help us respond positively to the challenges faced by many following the lockdown period.



## SUPPORTING CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN

2019 saw significant positive improvement across key measures for care experienced children & young people (CECYP). This includes a 16% rise in CECYP leaving school for a positive sustained destination; a rise in the % of CECYP supported to remain at home; a drop in the number of young people over 16 in care; a 19% rise in the % of CECYP school leavers attaining SCQF Level 3 in Literacy and Numeracy and a 2% rise in those leaving school with 4 or more SCQF awards at Level 3.

As corporate parents, all of the Council's services have a role to play in supporting our CECYP. The number of CECYP receiving a bespoke educational programme through the commissioned services of Sport Aberdeen increased during 2019/20, focusing on physical and mental wellbeing. This was achieved by building relationships with key professionals and increasing awareness of the support on offer. Group work was also established, particularly working in partnership with children's services, providing increased capacity for support and working with the pre-established relationships the children had formed with other workers. During 2018/19, Sport Aberdeen reviewed their structure, providing increased 1:1/group support and allowing the project activators to focus more on direct support of the CECYP. The increase in the number of CECYP supported, does not take into account the level of support offered to each individual. In some cases, support has been provided 2-3 times per week over a period of time. Key to the quality of support offered has been the relationships formed with each child and young person. The restrictions of the pandemic have caused the model of support to adapt, with no external group work being possible and support to external services reducing. This saw Project Activators support the Children and Family Service Hubs and allowed for additional CECYP to be supported in this way. 1:1 face to face and virtual support was also provided

throughout this time, often increasing in frequency to reduce the overall impact of the pandemic on both physical and mental wellbeing. The reach of the project has been far greater throughout 2019/20 as the support for CECYP has integrated into the wider Active Schools team, including the Active Schools Assistants who also provide 1:1/small group support during the school day. This saw 6 additional CECYP receive bespoke support as part of the education pathway. Although not directly part of their education support pathway, an additional 17 CECYP were offered 1:1 support throughout the Summer holidays, helping increase confidence, mental wellbeing and social skills, aiming to support the transition back into school. Furthermore, Sport Aberdeen have indirectly supported a number of families by providing free “Get Active” memberships for CECYP, their families, carers and support systems. This provides free access to swimming/gym sessions.

The number of care leavers who receive throughcare and aftercare support has increased by 18% over the last year, many of whom had become care leavers in the previous year. The data suggests that more care leavers have been receiving throughcare and aftercare for longer. Links have been progressed between Skills Development Scotland; No one Left Behind; Universal Credit staff; WhoCares? Scotland; and the Council’s Youth Team, to support children and young people to understand and access multiagency throughcare and aftercare services. A protocol has been established between housing and social care services to support those care leavers looking to have their own tenancy. Better use has been made of social media with a Facebook page being set up for the Youth Team to share their own and other relevant information about throughcare and aftercare services. There are improved processes for sharing information between the Youth Team and the rest of Children’s Social Work allowing earlier referrals and support.

### **IMPROVING PATHWAYS AND UNDERSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE**

We continue to improve the pathways for all children and young people to employment and training and provide support for identified groups including care experienced and those with additional support needs.

Planning for positive destinations meetings have been supported by the Virtual School, linking with Skills Development Scotland; the 3rd Sector; the No-one Left Behind team; and social work to ensure that all looked after children are considered for additional support. The Virtual School is an organisational tool which has been created for the effective co-ordination of support for care experienced children. Support for school teams has also been in place to have relevant information available to guide the planning. MCR pathways supports those young people that are part of the programme to understand what is available and also offer bespoke work experience ‘talent tasters’.



A portal that provides information to care experienced young people about possible pathways and opportunities available to them is currently being developed through the Champions Board. This is being developed in partnership with other agencies who have a Corporate Parent role, including the Further and Higher Education institutes who are reviewing information on websites and information sent to schools for parents / carers/ young people.

Information sessions for foster carers are provided every academic session, however, due to COVID this was suspended but will resume in 2020/21.

Collaboration with the Skills Development Scotland has improved and staff and children and young people have a greater awareness of the potential pathways available to them. There is a greater range of learning pathways being made available to young people across the senior phase. This work will now be reviewed in light of the impact of COVID on the local economy to ensure that our young people are well placed to secure a positive local destination.

Collaboration with the DYW (Developing the Young Workforce) Board has also improved and staff have a greater awareness of the data and the potential routes into work. The DYW's focus is about bridging the gap between employers and education to help all young people find fulfilling careers. This work will now be further developed by the provision of a DYW Coordinator in each secondary school. A 'shadow' board of young people from Northfield Academy will help share the direction of the DYW Board. We have worked with the DYW to offer a range of opportunities for families to hear about the transition from school to the world of work.

All secondary schools have increased the range of vocational courses available through partnership working with North East Scotland College and independent providers, with the number of young people involved with Foundation Apprenticeships increasing from 23 in 2018/19 to 103 in 2019/20.

All learners have an identified transition plan, whether that be at universal level or targeted. This is planned in collaboration with transitioning sectors, young people and their families where necessary and supported where appropriate by partner agencies.

During the pandemic all care experienced children and young people have had access to technology to enable them to continue to access education. The Scottish Attainment Challenge funding is being used to support individual young people to ensure that barriers to learning are removed. This work will be further developed through collaboration around the Regional Economic Plan.

### **REDUCING OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR**

As part of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) the Council is working in a partnership project to *'Increase by 20% the number of young people identified as being at risk of becoming involved in offending behaviour who are engaged in targeted community-based activities by 2021; and Reduce instances of anti-social behaviour as a result of appropriate and effective interventions in targeted areas by 10% by 2021'*.

The project is working to improve the collaborative response to anti-social behaviour (ASB) and provide early intervention support for young people at risk of offending and diverting them to community-based activities. Preventative work and ideas around changing attitudes towards young people (where the perceived anti-social behaviour could be regarded as normal behaviour of young people) are also being progressed. This project has tested ideas in two areas of the city identified for prioritisation of this work (Northfield and Torry). To-date this has included:

**Northfield** - a flagging system to report incidents/hotspots; action plans and a review process for multiagency response and Scottish Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (Sacro) interventions in Northfield Academy

**Torry** - a focus on young people through the introduction of Streetsport and North East Arts Touring as well as the establishment of an Early Intervention Worker project.



# PEOPLE (ADULTS)

## OUR KEY DRIVERS

- Taking an effective, trauma-informed, problem solving whole system approach to offending by 16- and 17-year olds
- Tackling antisocial behaviour in problem areas with appropriate and effective interventions
- Ensuring a targeted approach to diverting over-18s from prosecution to effective interventions aimed at reducing the likelihood of reoffending, where appropriate
- Changing attitudes about domestic abuse in all its form
- Taking targeted interventions aimed at specific offending
- Ensuring people on community sentences and liberated from prison have better access to services
- Ensuring people in the Justice System diagnosed with mental illness or suffering from mental ill health receive access to the right support at the right time
- Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families and groups
- Increase support for children and young people at risk of developing drug and alcohol problems
- Reduce levels of harmful alcohol consumption across the whole population through “making every opportunity count” approaches
- Enhance early intervention and preventative treatment for those at greatest risk of harm from drugs and alcohol
- Increase visibility and support of recovery in our communities

## PEOPLE (ADULTS) HIGHLIGHTS



Antisocial Behaviour instances **reduced by 11%**



**24%** decrease in repeated homeless presentations in a 12-month period



**40%** reduction in evictions from council housing



Homeless and Support assessment periods **reduced by 3 days**



Homeless Journeys **reduced on average by 20.2 days**

## PROGRESS MADE DURING 2019/20

### REDUCING OFFENDING AND CONVICTIONS

Evidence has found that the less contact an individual has with the justice system, the less likely they are to have further involvement in offending. In 2019/20 more children & young people were diverted from the criminal justice system than in the previous year. 2019/20 also saw a significant reduction in the number of anti-social behaviour incidents reported to the Council.



Continuing our success in this area has to be achieved together with our partners and the Council is working with partners to extend a multi-agency problem solving approach to all 16 and 17 year olds who are charged with an offence in order to reduce the likelihood of reoffending which could lead to a conviction and further increase the number of cases of people appropriately diverted from prosecution.

The project tested a number of improvement ideas including single points of contact within partner agencies; awareness-raising sessions for staff from across services; better use of data; and encouraging feedback from those individuals involved in diversionary activity. This work continues to raise awareness of diversionary options and their benefits, to increase the likelihood of this being considered when reports are submitted to the Procurator Fiscal and focus on increasing Fiscal Work Orders and Police Direct Measures, where appropriate.

One of our key drivers is focused on 'taking an effective, trauma-informed, problem-solving whole system approach to offending by 16-17 year olds'. Part of this refers to providing appropriate support to young people who go to court. The court based social work team have strengthened procedures to ensure that appropriate contact is made with young people who are appearing and they have receive the support they require. As a result of the pandemic, the court based social work team have not been in the court building and have been creative in how they continue to support young people, seeing them at Kittybrewster Police Custody Suite and meeting them on release to check their support needs.

### Domestic Abuse

In November 2019 Aberdeen Violence Against Women Partnership organised a number of events as part of '16 Days of Action'. This included a Civic Reception which involved speakers about Human Trafficking and coercive control, and which was very well attended by professionals, those affected, and members of the public.

The Justice Social Work Service continue to supervise those who have perpetrated domestic abuse who undertake the Caledonian Programme - a 2 year programme requirement as part of a Community Payback Order. A related women's service also offers support to women & children harmed. In addition, the Council Domestic Abuse Team continued to provide support to those harmed by domestic abuse.

There is a lot of work currently being implemented that is focusing on changing attitudes towards domestic abuse, one of which is implementing the Mentors in violence Prevention (MVP) scheme in our secondary schools.

We have committed to increase the number of secondary schools with mentors in violence prevention (MVP) scheme in place. 4 of our 11 secondary schools are already implementing the MVP Programme and a further 3 have agreed to implement the MVP Programme in 2020, COVID-19 has however slowed progress but schools will now be continuing with the programme. The remaining 4 secondary schools aim to implement the MVP Programme in 2021.

As part of the response to COVID, guidance for front-line staff about domestic abuse was published and circulated widely in June 2020. Circulation of the guidance was a priority given the potential for increased instances of domestic abuse, and reduced opportunities for people to access services/support due to COVID restrictions. Raising awareness in the workplace continues to be a priority for the Council and VAW Partnership. A Housing Domestic Abuse Policy is also in the final stages of being developed and agreed.

### **Cuckooing**

As part of the LOIP there is a project in place that aims to *'Increase the number of individuals who are involved in cuckooing incidents who undertake effective interventions or who are referred to relevant support services in priority localities by 2021.'*

The project aims to identify individuals who are 'victims' of cuckooing. Staff from the Council's Housing and Children's Services go on joint visits with Police to engage with individuals and offer them advice and support to help them get out of the situation they have found themselves in, and to try and protect and maintain their tenancy, by referral to appropriate services.

The following changes have been tested:

- Awareness-raising sessions for professionals/partners.
- Mechanisms for raising awareness with public/local communities (eg leaflet drops, SHMU radio/newsletters)
- Process for partners to refer individuals on to relevant support as appropriate
- 'Lead professional' approach for individuals involved
- Steps to protect individuals as relevant to individual circumstances, to increase chances of individual engaging
- Case Management Approach for challenging cases

Following on from testing the following changes have now been made permanent: 'Core Contacts' have been put in place these are single points of contact from partner organisations; Multi-agency visits have now been embedded; A Police document has been produced to record data/information about individuals (victims) identified as being involved; A multiagency group (Cuckooing Initiative Operational Group) has been set up, which holds regular 'operational' meetings to review incidents.

The overall engagement rate of 'victims' fluctuates between 45 and 50%, however this may decrease when the focus moves away from new victims to re-visiting those engaging, due to the victims' chaotic lifestyles. Police referrals to support services remain steady as it is often found that the support is already in place and work is then progressed to ensure the support continues.

### **Support for those liberated from Prison or on Community Sentences**

We want to ensure that people on community sentences and those released from prison have better access to services. In 2019 following an exit questionnaire 35% of individuals on release from prison, on community sentences indicated they had an issue relating to Housing. This was slightly higher than the previous year whereby 31% indicated an issue, however in 2019 our response in improving the issue was much higher, 88% indicated an improvement by the end of their Community Payback Order compared to 70% the previous year.

We are continuing to make our processes more effective in April 2020, we signed an information-sharing agreement with Scottish Prison Service via which information is received on a weekly basis regarding prisoners admitted to prison in the last 7 days, and prisoners to be liberated back to Aberdeen in the next 12 weeks. This enables Housing and Social Work services to liaise with prisons and prisoners as relevant to plan for their return to the community, in terms of accommodation and any associated supports needed. As well as housing needs it is important to provide support towards employment, this is aligned with the LOIP

Employability Project (My Way To Employment (MWTE)). The project aims to increase employment support to individuals in the criminal justice system. As part of this project, individuals are referred by Justice Social Work Service, as well as HMP Grampian. The following improvement ideas have been tested by the project:

- Both a 'Lead Professional' and a personal mentor identified for each individual, with regular meetings between these and individuals
- Improved initial assessment and better use of data
- Training/awareness-raising events for statutory partners and other employers
- A single point of contact identified by employer organisations
- Improved promotion and communications materials including flyer for individuals, a "My Way to Employment" Handbook for partners; and a briefing note for employers – with a tear-off slip

Of 17 individuals who commenced participation in the project to December 2019, 11 identified that they needed access to mental health supports, and this is something the project was aiming to focus on prior to cessation of activities due to COVID. Further planned projects will target mental health support for those in the Justice System to ensure that people with mental illness or suffering from mental health receive access to the right support at the right time.

An improvement charter which aims to *increase non-statutory prisoners (aged 21+) who are offered relevant voluntary support on release from HMP Grampian has been approved, but progress has been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.*

## **SUPPORTING VULNERABLE AND DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE**

One of our key commitments as set out within our 5 year Rapid Rehousing Transition plan (RRTP) is to prevent and reduce homelessness, ensuring that all homeless people are offered a home as quickly as possible and all those at risk of homelessness are provided the necessary advice and assistance to prevent homelessness from occurring.

Reducing demand throughout the 5-year life of the plan is a key strand to achieving rapid rehousing, whereupon a target to reduce homeless applications by 30% to approximately 1200 by the end of 2024 has been set. Since 2017/18, consecutive annual falls in the number of homeless applications received have been achieved, with a 4.5% decline recorded in 2018/19 and an 8.5% decline in 2019/20. The reduction in applications is in stark contrast to the national homeless landscape where a 0.2% increase was recorded in 2019/20, during which time Aberdeen City recorded the 5th sharpest decline in homeless applications across Scotland.

The fall in homeless applications has largely been driven by reducing the number of people becoming homeless either from parental/family home or from friends/partners. Targeted interventions have been taken providing housing advice & assistance' to support those at risk to remain in their current accommodation. Targeted interventions have also been introduced to support young people aged 16-25 leaving the family home, resulting in a 6.1% fall in homeless applications among this group.

The reduced levels in homeless demand also positively impacted the number of repeat homeless presentations which fell by 24% from 83 in 2018/19 to 63 in 2019/20, the 3rd highest fall across Scotland. Overall levels of repeat homelessness for Aberdeen City fell to 5.2%, 1.3% lower than in 2018/19 and now sit below the national average for the first time in three years.



The number of households placed in temporary accommodation also continues to fall. The number of homeless households exiting temporary accommodation during 2019/20 was 8% higher than the number of households placed in temporary accommodation. The average length of placement fell to 106 days and a snapshot of households accommodated in temporary accommodation on 1st April 2020 shows that Aberdeen City Council experienced the biggest fall across Scotland when compared with the same period the previous year (-24%).

The RRTP sets a target to reduce the temporary accommodation stock by 150 units during the life of the plan so that upon completion 95% of stock would be mainstream, furnished and set within the community. As a result of progress made the council has been able to reduce its temporary stock portfolio by 22% over the last 2 years, decommissioning 128 (85%) of the 150 targeted properties. On 1st April 2020 92% of stock is now mainstream, furnished and set within the community.

The primary aim of rapid rehousing is to secure settled housing for all unintentionally homeless households as quickly as possible. During 2019/20 all decisions resulting in a statutory homeless determination met target and were completed within 28 days. The average time taken to reach a decision was 14.6 days, on average 3 days less than in 2018/19 and one day less than the national average.

During the last 5 years the average homelessness “journey” time has fallen year on year from 198.9 in 2015/16 to 140.6 days in 2019/20 meeting the 140 days target set for last year. During 2019/20 Aberdeen City Council recorded the 4th best average homeless journey time across Scotland.

By taking a citywide approach to alleviating homelessness the council and their partners have facilitated better networks and joined up working to prevent recurring homelessness. This is evident where during 2019/20 we saw a 32% decline in applications from people leaving prison; a 29% reduction in applicants having previously been looked after by a local authority; a 17% fall in people becoming homeless from an L.A Tenancy and a plateauing out of applicants becoming homeless from Registered Social Landlord accommodation which had risen between 2015/16 and 2018/19. During 2019/20 the level of homeless tenancy sustainment showed a small increase of 0.6%. Of 747 homeless tenancies, 653 were sustained and 94 not sustained. Of the households that did not sustain their tenancy 2.1% were evicted a fall of 4.5%. The fall in evictions is an intended consequence of the council adopting a more person-centred approach to dealing with rent arrears and ensuring support is in place for all households to remain in their tenancy.

The percentage who abandoned their tenancy rose by 3.7% during 2019/20. In 2017/18 Aberdeen City and Shire were jointly named as one of five city pathfinders set up across Scotland to begin delivering housing first to homeless people with multiple and complex needs from 2018/19. The pathfinder programme will last until 31st March 2021. This type of intervention is crucial in supporting some of the most vulnerable clients and reducing the rate of pace at which this group are abandoning mainstream tenancies. Early indications show that during the first year of operations the City and Shire pathfinder programme is working well with a 90% level of tenancy sustainment recorded during 2019/20.

### **Priority Families**

The priority families service continues to deliver intensive support to families with complex needs and vulnerabilities. The service is a well-established partnership across ACC, Police Scotland and Action for Children, with robust inter-agency partnerships and embraces a multi-disciplinary approach. The low caseloads and relationship-based approach enabled a high success rate in securing a range of outcomes, including a reduction in anti-social behaviour and offending. Focused work was undertaken with schools to support attendance and parental engagement whilst intensive support in the home supported the establishment of positive parenting and routines. We now have 20 families achieving 3 or more improved Priority Family outcome measures this is an increase from 18 in 2018/19.



# PLACE

## OUR KEY DRIVERS

- Increasing food resilience at individual and community level by establishing self-governing community co-operatives to offer further supportive ways of providing food
- Developing and supporting community efforts in making our green space productive and resilient.
- Reducing emissions across the city through delivery of Aberdeen's Sustainable Energy Action Plan 'Powering Aberdeen'
- Developing a bottom up approach to community resilience to encourage greater ownership and independent action towards preventing and mitigating impact of climate change.
- Supporting different ways for active travel in everyday journeys, using partners and volunteers to address safety, infrastructure, fitness, well-being, and confidence.

## PLACE HIGHLIGHTS



**2.6%**  
increase in  
household recycling



Held the UK's first weeklong  
Hydrogen Festival with over  
**600 participants**



**New food distribution pick-up point,**  
up and running at Cummings Park.  
Open twice a week



**Over 4000**  
school children took part in  
food growing initiatives



**16500** partners and  
volunteers involved in Parks & Bloom  
Groups

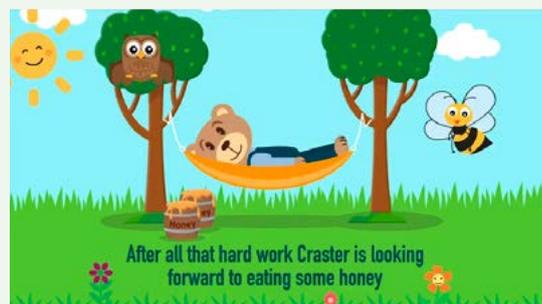
## PROGRESS MADE DURING 2019/20

### REDUCING FOOD POVERTY AND INCREASING FOOD RESILIENCE

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires every local authority to prepare a food growing strategy for its area, identify land that could be used to grow food and describe how provision for community growing can be increased. Granite City Growing: a community food growing strategy for Aberdeen was approved by the Council's City, Growth and Resources Committee in February 2020. The strategy was created through partnership working with a range of public and 3rd sector partners. It meets the requirements set out in the Scottish Government guidance and reflects local priorities and ambition.

Our Environmental Services work with many community partners including Friends groups, community groups, allotments, schools, businesses, and volunteers. Food growing is very much a key environmental theme for the service and every opportunity is taken to promote food growing and encourage community groups to become involved. There are many examples now of food growing in the community from community gardens to orchards. Schools have embraced the food growing theme and there are many schools participating in the Craster project.

Craster is a project which works closely with primary and early learning school children to teach the value and benefit of green space through the growing of fruit and vegetables. Since early 2019 when the project started over 4,000 school children have taken part. Rising numbers of schools are focusing on developing appropriate green spaces, allotments and greenhouse areas in and around school grounds, which enhances the learning opportunities and the understanding of a sustainable future for learners.



The demand for allotments continues to grow in Aberdeen. The waiting list for 2019/20 is at its highest ever. The service promotes and encourages food growing through allotments and community gardens. We are currently exploring options for adding new allotments/community growing sites throughout the city.

Community growing is a focus and ambition of many Friends and community groups. 2019/20 saw an increase of 9 new community growing places, seven of which are in priority localities.

Workplace growing has been a challenge but 20+ organisations have already shown their support and commitment to the project. 2020/21 and beyond will see workplace growing develop and grow.

### **Food Pantries**

Together with local volunteers, Community Development and Community Centre based staff with support from CFINE, we have set up 'The Cubby' at Cummings Park Community Centre. The aim was to develop a food distribution pickup point at Cummings Park Community Centre, open twice a week, 1 weekday morning and one afternoon by April 2020. This has been achieved with one room having been decorated and two commercial sized fridges and two freezers purchased to increase the variety of foods available. This is a well-equipped space to distribute Fareshare and other fresh, frozen and ambient (tins etc.) foodstuffs. Cummings Park area was chosen as there was no readily accessible food bank or Pantry in the neighbourhood. A registration scheme was used in order to ensure that availability went to Cummings Park area residents in the first instance. We currently have 34 households registered, this includes 65 adults and 63 children, with two further households on the waiting list.

The impact of Covid on the availability of fresh food impacted the community, who were articulating their need. Using CFINE fare share a Food larder was established, membership has been building from the local area and City. The development of the vulnerable hubs for safeguarding of children throughout COVID-19 was impacted positively by the availability of food to those children and families. Supported by CLD teams and volunteers the hubs ensured that each family got an appropriate food parcel to assist them during COVID-19. Food was distributed weekly and put home automatically - this gave parents the option to opt out should they wish. It was felt by staff that this allowed people to accept without fear of judgement or worry. Families have reported a massive impact on their financial capability during lock down related to the alleviation of food poverty through the parcels

Tillydrone Community Larder was set up during Covid to make use of the fresh produce being delivered in abundance by CFINE. Members of a closed social media page are sent a message showing the food available and suggested recipes. This has been accessed by people local to Tillydrone, but also in other parts of the city. So far, there has been 20 households regularly using the service per week, however demand is expected to rise as services begin opening up.

The 'Seaton Stores' continues to run at Seaton Learning Centre and the Woodside Pantry is also ongoing, with 120 members registered and 90 households per week using the service.

Rising numbers of schools are focusing on developing appropriate green spaces, allotments and greenhouse areas in and around school grounds, which enhances the learning opportunities and the understanding of a sustainable future for learners.



## **REDUCING EMISSIONS AND ADAPTING TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE**

The Aberdeen Adapts: Climate Adaptation Framework was approved by City, Growth and Resources committee in December 2019. The city-wide Framework was co-ordinated by Aberdeen City Council and was developed with input from 41 local organisations. It sets out goals and action areas, over priority areas for climate adaptation of: protecting buildings and infrastructure; safeguarding our natural environment; a healthy society and strong economy; building understanding; and collaborative working. Public consultation on the Framework took place in summer 2019 and received 70 responses.

2019/20 saw the development of a Council Energy and Climate Route map setting out commitments, indicative actions and a phased approach for a detailed plan to work to Net Zero emissions and build climate resilience across Council estate and operations. Adaptation actions specific to the Council are being developed and implemented as part of this work.

Also developed during 2019/20 was a Net Zero Vision for Aberdeen and a supporting Strategic Infrastructure Plan indicating direction for a wider transition to net zero and reflecting changes to Scotland's emission reduction targets.

The Council produces an annual Climate Change Report that reports on our corporate emissions and indicates our strategies and plans that include climate change. Work is also taking place to support the integration of climate mitigation and adaptation in the Council strategy template and guidance. Relevant strategic documents produced over 2019/20 embedded climate change (both mitigation and adaptation).

Several strategic documents were developed in this period and underwent the statutory environmental assessments, including consultation with public and statutory consultees:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Reports and Habitats Regulations Assessment screening for Granite City Growing, the new food growing strategy
- Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Reports and Habitats Regulations Assessment screening for Aberdeen Adapts the city Climate Adaptation Framework
- Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Reports and Habitats Regulations Assessment were completed for the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

Policy guidance was produced in this period which states the Council's policies are designed to reduce or eliminate areas of risk, this includes environment/ climate risk.

In order to improve awareness across all staff, a training module on climate change is currently being developed. Further development of training on climate change will be taken forward as part of thematic group working on awareness and behaviour change. A number of climate change workshops and briefing sessions were held over this period covering mitigation and adaptation.

A checklist was produced to support the integration of climate change in service planning. Cross service internal governance was established to support a transition to net zero emissions and climate resilience across Council estate and operations. Further work is taking place to develop green champions that could support embedding of climate change.

### **Waste and Recycling**

A new waste and recycling service was rolled out during 2017-18 across Aberdeen which saw mixed recycling and organics collections provided to all households across the city. Part of this new service included the provision of a smaller general waste bin to further encourage householders to recycle more and produce less waste.

These new services made recycling simpler, easier for residents as the development of the new materials recycling facility at Altens East meant that all materials are now collected together in one bin with no sorting required by the householder. The completion of the roll-out of the new services finished in late 2018 with the installation of mixed recycling and food waste collection facilities for all households served by communal bin collection services.



The first year of full impact of these changes has been seen during 2019 and has seen an increase in recycling rates by 2.6% in 2019. In addition, overall waste arisings (amount of waste produced) in the city have decreased by around 1%.

As part of 'Powering Aberdeen', the city's Sustainable Energy Action Plan, a contract was awarded to EfW NESS Limited for the construction and operation of the Ness Energy from Waste facility on 8 August 2019, with construction work commencing in September 2019. It is expected that the work will be completed by 2022. This will work towards further reduction of emissions across the city.

### **Improving Resilience to Flooding**

The risk of flooding, as the climate changes, is recognised within the Council Delivery Plan. A number of actions have been taken to mitigate this in the city including the development, in partnership with SEPA and Scottish Water, of Surface Water Management Plans. Studies have been commissioned for the Denburn and Peterculter catchments and a joint project for renaturalisation of the Denburn is being carried out with SEPA.

A flood warning system, using water level gauges, is being installed in the Peterculter area and along the Denburn and an app is being trialled for members of the public to report flooding issues. There is also a joint project with Scottish Water ongoing for the Merchant Quarter area.

Community resilience plans have been developed for Culter and Cults, Bielside and Milltimber.

We are also involved in a trial working with Scottish Water and SEPA on their Sustainable Growth Agreement to assist with the vision to "drive innovation in managing rainwater and waste water drainage in ways which can significantly reduce flows to the combined sewer, increase resilience and contribute to place".

## Promoting Greenspace and Playing Areas

Climate change is a key theme in relation to the work of our Environmental Services. The service works with many partners on initiatives, projects and campaigns relating to climate change. Aberdeen Communities Together (ACT) is an initiative, devised and led by Aberdeen City Council's Environmental Services. It is a partnership of 1,000s of inspirational partners and volunteers involved in parks and bloom groups, of all ages and backgrounds, who work together for the benefit of Aberdeen's green space.

Everyone is involved in a wide range of innovative, award-winning projects, including fund raising, tree planting, gardening, litter picking, food growing, beach cleans, bulb planting, path repairs and campaigning to name but a few. ACT is bringing people together and makes Aberdeen a better place.

In the last three years significant areas of wildflowers have been established with Scottish sourced wildflower seeds as part of flood alleviation schemes and community projects in local greenspaces.



The maintenance regimes of many of the greenspaces has been changed from close mown grass to annual cuts to promote biodiversity in general which also supports pollinating insects. This is likely to be further extended in coming years. The service actively supports local beekeepers by allowing them to keep hives on suitable allotment sites and parks where it is safe to do so. The Council is working in partnership with the NE Scotland Biodiversity Partnership to develop and promote pollinator friendly areas including work with schools to raise awareness and develop areas within school grounds.

Various path works and other green infrastructure across Aberdeen's green spaces have been improved. Working in partnership with Friends groups has seen additional funding raised which has allowed further investment in parks and green spaces.

Play areas continue to be a priority for the Council. 2019/20 saw a further £540,000 invested in new play areas across the city. Play areas continue to be well used by local communities and are an asset to the community and local schools are involved in consultation and designs of local play areas. Play value scores continue to rise, 35.21 compared to 35.19 last year. Annual play area refurbishment and a first-class maintenance and inspection team ensures that play areas continue to be improved and be well looked after.

The flood alleviation project on the Denburn project started in 2018 and is still in progress. The project is part of wider works to reduce flood risk in Aberdeen city centre by holding water back upstream in the catchment during storm conditions. This has been achieved through the building of a bund at Maidencraig to increase the flood plain capacity and create a larger wetland habitat. As part of the project a sand martin nesting wall is being built, paths upgraded, and new interpretation panels and a pond dipping platform are being built in the Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve. This project has been funded by the Council, Sustrans, and Bancon Homes.

This project has delivered a new wetland area just out with the Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve which has attracted more wetland and water birds including mallard, moorhen, grey heron, mandarin duck, snipe, jack snipe. Otters were known to use the area and otter passes have been included through the new bund to allow them to move between the two sides more easily. The sand martin nesting wall is being built to replace an area where sand martins nested before the recent housing development and associated works took place. The bund has created a safer route to school for children from the new housing development to the north of the valley and improved access from the Hazlehead side of the valley to Sheddocksley and the larger shops and supermarkets in that area for pedestrian and cyclists. The upgraded paths in the nature

reserve will make access easier for visitors and the new pond dipping platform will allow more people to make use of this facility. The improved signage and interpretation will help to promote the site and improve the visitor experience.

There was also a flood alleviation project started in 2017 at Heathryfold Park including the development of opening up the 'Scatterburn' which had coursed underground and the building of bunds. The major works are complete for this and are currently being tested and adjustments made.

Throughout the process a Greenspace Development Group made up of local residents and supported by local ACC Community Development staff have been influential with the design aspects of the development, this has included development of two play areas, the creation of a dog play area (one of the first in Scotland), new paths and walkways created, plus various planting opportunities for wild flowers, bulbs, various different grasses, and plants. This has created learning opportunities around planning, environmental issues, working in partnership and budgeting not only for the local people, but also for staff and workers involved.

The Steering Group also supported various engagements with the local community, from consultations on play spaces to historical walks and talks, bulb planting sessions and in the Summer of 2019 held an open week of activities that included bat exploration walks, science workshops, a family fun run and horse riding.

These projects demonstrate a partnership approach between different council departments, external funding streams, businesses, local communities, to resolve issues that have been brought about by climate change and increased urbanisation. They also demonstrate the commitment of ACC to sustainable solutions to climate change mitigation and supporting increased walking and cycling access to and through greenspace areas to reduce carbon footprints.

It is important for us to maintain a clean and beautiful city, 'Clean Up Aberdeen' has seen see a series of planned events led by inspired and passionate people from all places and all backgrounds that want a beautiful and litter free Aberdeen. 2019's campaign was fronted by local enthusiastic schools undertaking a range of litter focused challenges and events. Their main aim was to educate the public and promote the campaign through their school and their community, carried out through local events and messaging.

Clean Up Aberdeen 2019 was the most successful year to date. 1,000s of volunteers gave up their time to take part in clean ups and promote our message. The campaign was recognised locally and nationally and was key contributor to many of the environmental awards collected by the City in 2019. The campaign has collaboration at its heart, is sustainable and is improving and growing all the time.

### **ENCOURAGING ACTIVE TRAVEL**

The data from 2018 showed that fewer people were walking, (21% in 2018 compared to 28% the previous year) and cycling (1% compared to 2.4%) as their main mode of transport. Over the last year there have been a number of improvements being developed to encourage more active travel throughout the city.

Over the last year there was a new cycle lane created at Bridge of Don to encourage active travel across the city. We have a continuing programme of active travel events and promotional activities including the 2019 Tour Series cycling event in Aberdeen. The city also saw the completion of a new city centre traffic model to support Low Emission Zone planning.

The Revised Roads Hierarchy and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan was agreed in December 2019, setting the context for future active travel and public transport improvement on key transport corridors in the city, elements of which are due to be delivered in 2020/21.

An updated Active Travel Action Plan is in development, through a variety of infrastructure improvements, studies, and behaviour change and promotional measures. These projects work together to set the context for future active travel improvements. A number of multimodal corridor studies are underway to identify active travel and public transport opportunities on key transport corridors.

Earlier this year, £1.76 million was received by the Council to deliver temporary improvements to allow more space for walking and cycling in line with current physical distancing requirements – temporary improvements have been made in the City Centre, Torry, Rosemount, George Street and the beachfront, this includes pedestrianisation of roads, pavement widening and increasing cycle lanes.





# HOW WE DO OUR BUSINESS

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## TRANSFORMATION PORTFOLIO

The foundation for the Council's vision and strategic outcomes is our collective vision for the future of Aberdeen and our understanding of the outcomes we need to address as articulated in the LOIP.

The future operating model, and therefore the transformation of our organisation, is ensuring that the Council is a digitally enabled authority with an operating model that contributes to the outcomes and priorities of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and achieve the Council's objectives.

The transformation portfolio has been centred on the delivery of seven capabilities, with digital as a key enabler to support their delivery. The capabilities flow from the design principles of the Target Operating Model (TOM) and are listed below:

1. Managing demand through prevention and early intervention
2. Being flexible and adaptable
3. Ensuring accountability, transparency and openness
4. Becoming intelligence led
5. Encouraging inclusiveness, engagement and collaboration
6. Achieving consolidation and consistency
7. Focussing on outcomes that make a difference

Transformation is not only about delivering the necessary savings, organisational culture needs to be strategically oriented towards the capabilities envisaged by the TOM e.g. preventing customer demand, anticipating demand, supporting customers to manage their demand and ensuring that staff are working with a focus on outcomes. Work continues to influence the culture of the organisation as well as ensuring that all staff have the skills necessary to operate within the new operating model.

2019/20 represented Phase 3 of our Transformation Programme and highlights from this phase include:-

- The approval of a strategy and policy framework for the Council to ensure strategic alignment to the LOIP;
- The approval of a joint Aberdeen City Council / Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership Outcome Based Commissioning Approach;
- The development of an Aberdeen City Performance Outcomes Framework;
- The development and implementation of a systematic approach to identifying and managing demand, which has influenced the design and resourcing of services for 2020/21;
- Achievement of the CIPFA Governance Mark of Excellence;
- A revised Scheme of Governance to facilitate the strategic use of resources through commissioning;
- Development of the Managers Portal to track and monitor Council assurance and performance;
- The move from the transitional to permanent organisational structure;
- Multiple digital achievements, including the implementation of O365; increasing online customer services; joint working with Microsoft as a digital partner, and increasing digital capability;
- Approval and introduction of Guiding Principles and Behaviours across the organisation that were co-created with staff;
- Capability Framework and workforce plan developed and approved with a new approach to internal movement of staff;

- A new approach to performance appraisals, Continuous Review & Development, developed and launched;
- Customer Charter and Commitments developed and approved;
- Balanced budget with new commissioning approach and service redesign.

## COMMISSIONING APPROACH

As set out in the Council Delivery Plan, 2019/20 saw significant progress in the Council's implementation of our commissioning approach to service planning and delivery. The Strategic Commissioning Committee initially approved the Council's approach to outcome-based commissioning in November 2018. Building on this, the Committee reviewed the implementation of the approach and approved a joint strategic commissioning approach for both the Council and Aberdeen Integrated Joint Board in August 2019. The approved strategic commissioning approach has provided the basis for the development of the Council's planning and budgeting in 2020/21.

The adoption of our commissioning led cycle ensures that:

- agreed outcomes, and the strategies for delivering those outcomes, are addressing the needs of the city;
- annual planning and commissioning intentions focus on implementing our strategic priorities;
- the agreed levels of service to be delivered are affordable and reflect the demand for those services;
- a balanced budget is set which aligns to those commissioning intentions and service standards;
- the impact of the services we commission on outcomes is monitored, understood and drives future improvement and planning.

In line with the strategic commissioning approach, the 2020/21 planning and budgeting process was begun in early 2019/20 with a data led, analysis of service demand; statutory duties; workforce; digital transformation; contracts; assets and fees & charges. This provides the basis for designing future services which respond to these drivers and most effectively deliver improved outcomes.

The application of the commissioning cycle was also seen as the pandemic began to impact public services. The Council was able to quickly review its commitments and use of resources, at an Urgent Business Committee in June 2020, by adjusting, where appropriate, the delivery of policy commitments; commissioning intentions; service standards; and budgets to ensure that our resources were targeted where they were most needed.

Demand Management – During 2019/20, further work was done to develop a systematic approach to the analysis of demand. Our approach is providing a model to identify the nature of demand; gain a greater understanding of how to meet that demand differently; and reduce future demand upon services. This will result in a shift away from responsive “negative” demand to planned “value” demand.

Each of the Council's services have undertaken demand analysis which underpins the design of future services which will reduce negative demand and identify options for reducing cost to ensure the commissioned services, and the standards at which these are delivered, are affordable within available resources.