

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

---

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children's Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	23 May 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	ABZ Campus
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CFS/23/141
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Shona Milne
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Mark Jones
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.2

---

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report updates Committee on progress made to date in establishing ABZ Campus in order to broaden the senior phase curriculum and align it with growth and volume sector industries.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 note the progress made in preparing for the launch of the first phase of ABZ Campus;
- 2.2 instruct the Chief Education Officer to launch Phase 1 of ABZ Campus in June 2023;
- 2.3 instruct the Chief Education Officer to prepare Phase 2 of ABZ Campus for launch in June 2024; and
- 2.4 instruct the Chief Education Officer to report back on progress within one calendar year.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

#### 3.1 BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 For the past eleven years, secondary schools in Aberdeen City Council have worked together on a model entitled City Campus. This model allows young people in the Senior Phase (S4-S6) to travel to central locations to access certificated courses that would otherwise not attract the numbers to make them viable. City Campus travel afternoons operate on Monday and Wednesday afternoons for some learners and a Tuesday and Thursday afternoon for others. The courses offered through City Campus use only two agreed afternoon timetabling blocks (known as columns) in the secondary senior phase timetable

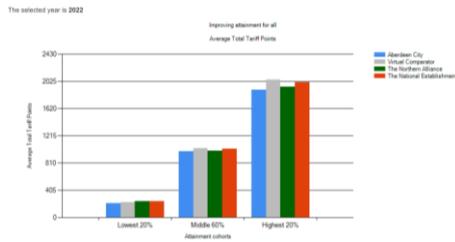
and all other school timetables run independently of each other. This lack of timetabling alignment limits the range of courses that can be offered and therefore opportunity to maximise curriculum choice to young people across the city. During the current session (the final year of this City Campus model) only 135 young people out of a possible 4,465 senior phase pupils are recorded as participating across 21 courses. This equates to only 0.03% of the Aberdeen City senior phase population accessing the City Campus with 3 courses made available from June 2022 attracting no interest from young people.

3.1.2 The City Campus model has succeeded chiefly in offering a way for young people to access North-East Scotland College for limited periods of time and also Advanced Higher courses, with host schools being Aberdeen Grammar School, Harlaw Academy, Hazlehead Academy and St. Machar Academy.

3.1.3 A review of the impact of City Campus drew a number of conclusions which required to be addressed through ABZ Campus.

- There has been no opportunity to map and direct courses towards the growth and volume sector industries for the North-East of Scotland. For City Campus 2022-23, 21 courses were offered and only 14 of these linked to growth sector areas. This lack of alignment to growth and volume sectors has done little to support the local economy and improve the employability of young people in the longer term.
- The City Campus programme has largely made offers which cater to the most academically minded young people rather than a more inclusive offer to support young people to access a range of courses across different Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels. For example, less than 10% of the courses available through City Campus for 2022-23 are at Level 5 or below with limited vocational pathways available.
- Only being able to operate in two columns means that partners are restricted in the type and number of courses they can offer and correspondingly how many places can be made available to young people. The impact of this lack of breadth in the timetable removes the opportunity for the same course to be offered by a provider at multiple times during the week. The restrictive time available also removes the opportunity for offering courses such as an HNC which requires a larger time commitment and attractive articulation routes into Higher Education courses.
- Although some aspects of attainment in Aberdeen City schools sit ahead of comparator measures, other aspects continue to require improvement. In Data Set 1 below, a review of Average Total Tariff Points shows that S5 and S6 leavers in ACC schools demonstrate attainment that is slightly behind the virtual comparator for the middle 60% and higher 20% groups particularly. In Data Set 2, it can be seen that young people from ACC schools do not reach the virtual comparator for some key benchmarks (five qualifications or more at Level 5, one qualification or more at Level 6, five qualifications or more at Level 6, one qualification or more at Level 7). This demonstrates the need to broaden the range of qualifications available to young people in our schools to an extended range of Level 5, 6 and 7 qualifications that do not rely on a single high stakes exam.

Data Set 1



Data Set 2

Breadth & Depth: Leavers					
	2022	Awards	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7
ACC Schools	1 or more		88.46%	63.38%	22.69%
Virtual Comparator			88.31%	64.82%	25.79%
ACC Schools	3 or more		77.15%	51.67%	5.24%
Virtual Comparator			77.79%	51.22%	4.91%
ACC Schools	5 or more		65.55%	36.29%	0.06%
Virtual Comparator			66.23%	38.21%	0.04%

- Finally, the City Campus model hasn't always provided the impetus for secondary schools to broaden their own individual course offers consistently to offer certification in National Progression Awards which are a key part of the offer in other parts of Scotland.

### 3.2 ACTIVITY

3.2.1 Secondary Head Teachers sponsored a meeting of the timetabling specialists from each of the eleven secondary schools in March 2022 to explore the rationale for greater alignment of secondary school timetables with the result that a broad alignment of columns was agreed for 2023-24. This means that courses can now be offered across four columns (increasing the ability to provide a broader range of courses) and all young people in Aberdeen City schools can access these courses (increasing the number of young people who can be supported through ABZ Campus).

3.2.2 A review and mapping exercise was carried out to ensure that new courses were aligned to the growth and volume sector industries of Construction, Digital & Entrepreneurship (incorporating Financial & Business Services), Early Learning & Childcare, Energy, Health & Social Care, Life Sciences, and Tourism & Hospitality. As this work was being undertaken, Further and Higher Education and partners were convened to consider how best to progress as a whole education system.

3.2.3 Focus groups were convened to gather the views of young people on the City Campus experience and a commitment was made to act upon the reflections of this critical stakeholder voice. Young people fed back that:-

- The quality of course information and publicity could be improved to support them making informed decisions about the best options for them.
- Young people would welcome a greater measure of consistency in the application process for these City Campus courses.
- When starting courses, young people highlighted that course and location induction was really important in giving them confidence.
- Finally, young people were keen that there was greater consistency in the quality of feedback, tracking and reporting of progress, and also in the learning and teaching experiences across the City Campus programme.

3.2.4 A set of cross-city working groups were created to develop citywide pathways across a large range of abilities and curricular areas. This work was aligned to early work undertaken to exemplify pathways through the [ABZ Works](#) site. A set of Higher National Certificate (HNC) courses were agreed with partners North East Scotland College (NESCOL) at Level 7. These courses offer

articulation into year 2 of local universities for those planning to progress into Higher Education. A broader set of Higher and Advanced Higher courses were mapped to be delivered across an increased number of 'host' schools. A group of Foundation Apprenticeships with partners NESCOL, Bon Accord Care and Aberlour Futures were planned, as well as an Employability Course organised in partnership with City Growth and People and Organisation to provide opportunities for work placements and a guaranteed job interview upon successful completion. The Phase 1 course offer can be seen in Image 1 below.

Image 1

Column A (Monday/Wednesday afternoons)	Column B (Tuesday/Thursday afternoons)
<p>SCQF Level 7: Advanced Higher Biology (Harlaw or St Machar) Advanced Higher English (Aberdeen Grammar) Advanced Higher Modern Studies (Harlaw) Advanced Higher Physics (St Machar)</p> <p>SCQF Level 6: Higher Computing Science (Aberdeen Grammar) Higher Dance (City Moves) Higher Health and Food Technology (Aberdeen Grammar) FA Social Services: Children and Young People (Lochside) FA Social Services: Children and Young People (Aberdeen Grammar) FA Social Services and Healthcare (St Machar)</p> <p>SCQF Level 5 or below: National 5 Dance (City Moves)</p>	<p>SCQF Level 7: Advanced Higher Chemistry (St Machar) Advanced Higher Drama (Aberdeen Grammar) Advanced Higher Geography (Harlaw) Advanced Higher History (Aberdeen Grammar) Advanced Higher Physics (Harlaw)</p> <p>SCQF Level 6: Higher Administration (St Machar) Higher ESOL (Harlaw) NPA Scientific Technologies (Oldmachar) FA Social Services and Healthcare (Bucksburn)</p> <p>SCQF Level 5 or below: National 4/5 ESOL (Harlaw) National 3/4 Gaelic (Hazlehead)</p>
Column C (Monday/Wednesday mornings)	Column D (Tuesday/Thursday mornings)
<p>SCQF Level 7: Business Management (Aberdeen Grammar) Engineering Science (Aberdeen Grammar) French (Aberdeen Grammar)</p> <p>SCQF Level 6: FA Social Services: Children and Young People (Bridge of Don) FA Social Services and Healthcare (Aberdeen Grammar)</p>	<p>SCQF Level 7: Advanced Higher Physical Education (AGS)</p> <p>SCQF Level 6: Higher Accounting (AGS) FA Social Services: Children and Young People (St Machar) FA Social Services and Healthcare (Oldmachar)</p>
Column E (Tuesday/Thursday middle of the day)	
Advanced Higher Computing Science (Virtual) (Bridge of Don)	
Column A AND Column C (all day Monday and Wednesday AND Friday mornings (all SCQF Level 7))	
<p>HNC Business (NESCOL) HNC Mechanical Engineering (NESCOL Altens) HNC Technologies in Business (NESCOL)</p>	

3.2.5 As part of discussions with Secondary Head Teachers, it was identified that an important part of ensuring the success of ABZ Campus was to raise awareness and understanding across the school staff teams, with a particular focus on

those involved in supporting choice processes in schools. In addition to meeting with Depute Head Teacher groups and partners such as *Skills Development Scotland (SDS)*, a launch event was held with key school staff to raise awareness of the activity and plans for ABZ Campus in November 2022. This event presented the rationale for change and included a series of sessions on specific courses offered by partners. This wider group has been used as an additional sounding board during the latter stages of development. Throughout the process of design and early implementation, it has been made clear that ABZ Campus will be developed across a series of Phases, with session 2023-24 being Phase 1. Planning is already under way for Phase 2 in 2024-25 (See Section 3.3) with further phases anticipated thereafter as we respond to learning from earlier phases.

- 3.2.6 Part of the voice of the young person (see 3.2.3) reflected the importance of quality publicity materials and information for schools, young people and families to inform choice into ABZ Campus courses. Between June and December 2022, work commenced to create simplified course guides and a promotional video for each of the courses. As an extension to this provision of quality information, a family information event was pre-recorded and launched in February 2023 (link [here](#)) to support understanding of the courses available to young people in Aberdeen City.
- 3.2.7 This promotional material is being housed in a new section of the ABZ Works website (link [here](#)) so that young people and adults have a one-stop shop solution to find out about and apply for ABZ Campus courses. Hosting the information on the ABZ Works site ensures that we are aligning this development with the work already undertaken to map and publicise pathways into growth and volume sector industries with partners. The 48 hour period following launch of the new pages and family information event saw more than 1,400 'hits' to the website.
- 3.2.8 There is a commitment to equity contained within the plans for ABZ Campus. All courses offered will carry an opportunity based on merit rather than where the young person has their 'home' school. There was also a recognition of a 'gap' in support for young people who are care experienced or on the edge of care. It was agreed that identifying a key member of staff to provide signposting, tracking and support around future course choices to help realise a positive destination would help ensure that those who are care experienced are well positioned to take advantage of ABZ Campus and to achieve at the highest level possible. In order to address this a new role of *Pathways Advocate* was designed. Secondary schools began internal recruitment of *Pathways Advocates* in October 2022 and many schools now have these staff members in place, working on a 0.2FTE basis alongside partners in school and those such as SDS to prioritise those who are care experienced. Pathways Advocates help provide the best possible opportunity for our care experienced young people to reach the right positive destination. A job description for the Pathways Advocate can be found in Appendix B, with the impact of the role due to be comprehensively evaluated as longitudinal data becomes available.

3.2.9 To improve the experience of application and administration for young people and schools, and to allow greater analysis, an application and management portal has been procured through partners *Pinnacle VL* and this will continue to be developed during session 2023-24 based on feedback from the first year of operation. The new application portal responds directly to the pupil feedback around consistency for applying, but also gives an opportunity for analysis of data on applications and withdrawals to/from courses. Finally, this system provides a stronger communication method from providers to course participants. Image 2 shows the login screen for young people accessing the ABZ Campus portal and Image 3 shows a screen allowing young people to see and apply for each of the ABZ Campus courses.

Image 2

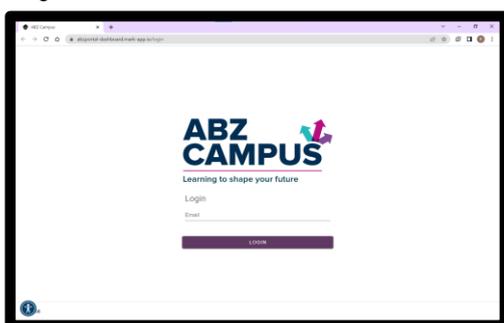
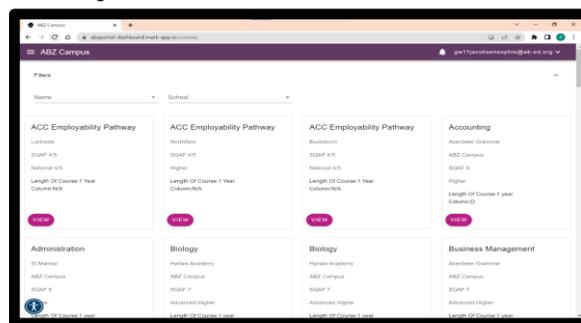


Image 3



3.2.10 An incredibly positive outcome of the work on column alignment is that there now exists an opportunity for schools to work together to provide even greater access to young people through a 'clearing' system. As young people make their choices during March 2023, schools will share where there is capacity in their schools and, if a course in one school is over-subscribed, it is quite possible that the same course will have spaces in another school and could be accessed by the young person. This is possible due to the aligned columns and even closer working arrangements between schools. Clearing will necessarily take place after the usual choice process window closes in April, and will continue into May prior to courses starting in June.

3.2.11 As part of thinking towards how ABZ Campus could be further developed in phase 2, a pilot connection has been made with a school in Aberdeenshire to open up access to some of the courses on offer.

3.2.12 37 courses will be offered as part of ABZ Campus for 2023-24, with a total of 970 places across this course offer. A set of quantitative and qualitative success measures have been set to determine progress and improvement. A copy of the ABZ Campus Course Choice Guide 2023-24 can be found [here](#) or in Appendix A.

3.2.13 Reference has already been made under Section 3.1.3 that there is a requirement for schools to broaden their own individual school offers. ABZ Campus, whilst an exciting and important development, can only be a part of the solution to support a broad curriculum offer in each of our schools. Through the collective efforts to bring forward ABZ Campus, discussions between and within schools have increasingly focused on new courses with the result that an impact has already started to be seen. In Session 2021-22, a total of 391

National Progression Awards were offered across the eleven secondary schools. For this current 2022-23 session, this is scheduled to increase considerably with the most recent number at 882. This represents a sign of positive progress that must be continued to ensure that young people in Aberdeen City schools have access to a broad and relevant curriculum.

### **3.3 FUTURE PLANS**

3.3.1 As explained earlier in this report (see 3.2.5), ABZ Campus will be introduced through a series of incremental phases with Phase 1 described in the body of this report. Successful implementation of Phase 1 will lay the foundations by establishing systems which enable measurement of impact and build confidence in the young people, parents and carers and staff. Further improvements are being developed for Phase 2 and beyond now that the foundations are in place. What follows below is a summary of some of the key elements of further progress already planned in Phase 2.

- Extend the number of courses on offer as part of ABZ Campus, with continued focus on pathways for young people in the lower 20%, middle 60% and higher 20% of our cohort.
- Extend the employability course offer, building on the success of 2023-24.
- Explore working with a greater range of partners, including extending the partnership pilot with Aberdeenshire Council and exploring working in localities to encourage equity of access for young people in Aberdeen City.
- Create a twilight column offer to support a more flexible understanding of course choice and timing with curriculum partners.
- Work with partners to create a bespoke pilot for extending opportunity for young people with additional and complex needs.
- In partnership with the City Growth Team, we will launch a Green Technology and Employability Project which aims to map and create broad pathways into the renewables sector.

3.3.2 It is anticipated that ABZ Campus development will continue well beyond Phase 2 as we continue to hear and act on feedback from our young people, monitor the impact of the changes on attainment data, and gain insights from the portal. The considerable investment in getting the foundations in place to help measure the impact of the changes will help drive a more responsive and appropriate curriculum over the coming years.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no financial implications. ABZ Campus is being delivered within existing budgets.

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no environmental implications.

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Risk of not focussing our offer on growth and volume sectors to support growth in the local economy.	Planning courses which are designed to support young people to access growth and volume sectors.	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Compliance</b>	As work to incorporate the UNCRC progresses, there is a risk of not being guided by young people to ensure they can claim all of their rights.	Establishing the monthly Pupil Group will enable us to hear directly from young people and give them a direct opportunity to shape our plans	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Operational</b>	Risk of low uptake resulting in no improvement in attainment	Mechanisms in place to monitor update and progress to ensure that we remain agile and responsive.	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Financial</b>	None identified.			
<b>Reputational</b>	Risk of young	Mechanisms in place to monitor update and	L	<b>Yes</b>

	people not completing courses	progress to ensure that we remain agile and responsive.		
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	Risk that the curriculum does not prepare young people to face the challenges ahead.	Focus on volume and growth sectors with plans for Phase 2 to look at a Green Technology and Employability Project	L	<b>Yes</b>

## 8. OUTCOMES

<u><a href="#">COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</a></u>	
<b>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</b>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The delivery of ABZ Campus is aligned with Stetch outcome 7 of the Children's Services Plan and Local Outcome Improvement Plan.
<b>UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes</b>	<p><b>The Education (Scotland) Act 1980</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Duty to provide adequate and efficient education for our area.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Duties regarding meeting the needs of children and young people with additional support needs.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising standards</li> <li>Requirement that education be provided in mainstream schools</li> </ul> <p><b>The National Improvement Framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education Authorities are under a duty to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of education of school education which is provided in the schools managed by them and to carry out the duty with a view to achieving the strategic priorities set out in the National Improvement Framework.</li> </ul>

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Not required

<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
--	--------------

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

## 11. APPENDICES

Appendix A – ABZ Campus Course Choice Guide 2023-24

Appendix B – ABZ Campus Pathways Advocate Job Description

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Name</b>	Mark Jones
<b>Title</b>	Quality Improvement Manager
<b>Email Address</b>	MaJones@aberdeencity.gov.uk
<b>Tel</b>	