

Council Delivery Plan

ANNUAL REVIEW 2022/23



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FOREWORD

This Annual Report provides an overview of progress made in implementing the Council Delivery Plan 2022/23.

The report reflects the situation of Aberdeen as a city in economic transition. A city which is well placed to manage the transition towards a low-carbon economy and is focused on diversity in its business sectors, but also one where the impact of national and international socio-economic factors is impacting on the city and its people.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are still being understood, but it is clear that it has increased poverty across the UK, whilst the “cost of living” is putting further pressure on many of our citizens, both employment and unemployed. However, this report shows that the Council, together with the city’s communities and our partners, are working hard to mitigate these impacts.

The achievements highlighted in this report stand as a testament to the resilience and dedication of the staff of both the Council and our partner organisations, as well as to the people of Aberdeen themselves.

The Council Delivery Plan is a 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 and Partnership Agreement
- Council commissioning intentions, through which we express the services we will provide; and a summary of “How we do our business”.

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 2022/23. Not least of these has been the ability of our staff to continue to deliver essential services and care to the people of Aberdeen as the impact of both the pandemic and the “cost of living” crisis continued to be felt, both operationally and through health, social and economic challenges experienced across the city. Specific highlights from 2022/23 include:

- the opening of Union Terrace gardens, following its refurbishment
- the launch of the ONE BioHub with laboratory space, office space, incubation facilities, hot desk & co-working space
- the launch of the National Subsea Centre, part of the Net Zero Technology Centre, in January 2023, providing advanced research to accelerate the transition to net zero
- the new Aberdeen South Harbour becoming operational, with the official launch planned by the end of September 2023
- £27million investment in ONE Seedpod to grow the north East Scotland food and drinks industry, with the aim to increase sector turnover by 5% per annum
- £1.9million allocated by the Council towards the Aberdeen Gift Card Scheme, resulting in 14,172 eligible citizens benefiting from £125 gift cards
- almost 19 thousand Scottish Child Payment Bridging Payments made by the Council, before the wider rollout of the Scottish Child Payment
- the opening of the new Countesswells School
- the introduction of Youth Workers, Family Learning and Money Advisors in all schools
- 65,840 free school meal vouchers delivered to eligible families; 14,564 chrome books; 500 Wi-Fi connections with dongles; and 210 data only SIMs
- welcoming over 300 children and young people who have been displaced by the war in Ukraine into the city’s schools
- the launch of the city’s cycle hire scheme in November 2022
- construction works completed for new council housing at Wellheads and Auchmill sites, with further ongoing construction at Summerhill, Kaimhill, Tillydrone and Cloverhill



Image © Ian Georgeson

POLICY STATEMENT UPDATES

The table below gives an update on progress with those elements of the Council’s Policy Statement, as it existed in March 2022, which were included within the 2022/23 Plan (others having been delivered in previous years). Many of these commitments 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>This work has been taken forward through the £27m Aberdeen City Region Deal investment in Digital.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City Network was the first project to be initiated, now complete it transformed Aberdeen into a Gigabit City. The project saw a public sector investment of £2m and a private sector investment of £59m. Approximately 84% of homes in the city have been passed to date (this equates to 92,000 ready for service homes in the City Fibre network) with further roll out by CityFibre continuing to the end of financial year 2023. The benefits to residents also extend to more internet provider choices and market competition, which helps drive down costs. • The final site in the Full Fibre project was connected and handed over for service in March 2023, with the project now officially closed. The Full Fibre project was designed as a public sector anchor tenancy model, meaning that by connecting the public sector through an approved framework it could stimulate commercial investment into the city and region, to rollout fibre to homes and businesses. The focus will now be on working with NEOS and the Digital Stakeholder Engagement Team to maximise opportunities for offering fibre services to residents and business using their network footprint across the region. <p>Aberdeen City Council already operates a duct network (containing fibre optic cables) in the city, and this will be expanded to cover key economic areas. Initially this duct network will be used by the Council, followed by engagement with commercial organisations to encourage them to utilise the expanded network to enhance their fibre offering in Aberdeen City, consequently stimulating the market. Phase 1 was completed in October 2022, Phase 2 will be completed in August 2023, Phase 3 has been approved design works completed, construction underway and due to be completed in December 2024.</p> <p>A digital infrastructure gap analysis was undertaken which developed a business case for continued investment and intervention within the region. The full business case was approved at the Joint Committee in November 2022 with the following recommendations approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 5G Network at Aberdeen Harbour - The provision of investment to Port of Aberdeen to procure a private 5G infrastructure in the new Aberdeen South Harbour to increase productivity and reduce operational costs, making Aberdeen comparable with leading ports across the world. o 5G Network Huntly - The provision of investment to ScotEID/SAOS (www.scoteid.com) to facilitate the delivery of industry leading Agri-tech applications and services and environmental monitoring in rural Aberdeenshire using Huntly as an initial area. o 5G “pop up” network coverage in the region to enable companies to test applications in a real-life environment. <p>To further address the gaps in digital infrastructure across the Region it is prudent to wait to hear how Project Gigabit will be rolled out in Scotland. It is anticipated that Project Gigabit procurements in Scotland will be developed jointly by the UK Government and Scottish Government through a collaborative approach, in which it is expected that the Scottish Government will be the lead partner on implementation management.</p>

<p>2. Increase city centre footfall through delivery of the City Centre Masterplan, including the redesigned Union Terrace Gardens, Provost Skene House and Queen Street development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan was approved in August 2022 and is a “live” document which will be updated annually. The document contains a number of SMART objectives focused around the key themes of Economy, Inclusion, New Zero and Quality. In relation to City Centre footfall the objective is a 10% increase in the daily average in the City Centre by 2026. Union Terrace Gardens opened in December 2022 following its refurbishment Progress continues to be made on City Centre Streetscape projects, with detailed design work and key stakeholder consultation ongoing. An updated Business Case will be reported back to Council in December 2023. Queen Street – a Strategic Business Case was approved by the Council in December 2022 and included a short list of future options for the site. An Outline Business Case to allow selection of a preferred option will be reported to Council in September 2023. Aberdeen Market – McGinty’s Group confirmed as the preferred operator of the site. A revised planning application has been submitted following discussions with the preferred operator. If permission granted than the project will proceed to RIBA Stage 4 Technical Design to allow production of all design information required to construct the new building. Visitor figures continue to rise post-Covid, increased take up for venue based events, reflected in increase in spend in venue cafes and shops. Visits to city centre venues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provost Skene’s House = 28,388 Maritime Museum (closed for essential maintenance between December and April) = 49,618 Art Gallery = 212,663 The Union Street Empty Shops Action Plan was approved in December 2022 identifying short, medium and long-term interventions, some of which are targeted at increasing city centre footfall. Short-term interventions are being commenced. The Union Street Empty Shops Grant Scheme was launched in July 2023 to support the reconfiguration of currently vacant units for reoccupation and new uses, increasing vibrancy and footfall on the street.
<p>3. Support the Aberdeen Harbour expansion and work collaboratively to maximise tourism opportunities, including attracting high value cruises and energy transition activity in offshore renewables</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first cruise ship was welcomed 2nd May 2023, and it is anticipated to have a positive impact on venue visitor figures in the city Cruise-ready packages have been developed and a shuttle bus transport from South Harbour on a trial basis The construction work at the South Harbour was completed in August 2023 Ongoing support is being provided for Visit Aberdeenshire and Volunteer programme to welcome visitors arriving by cruise ships and assist in events across the city

<p>4. Review Council industrial estate to ensure it supports the Regional Economic Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions continue over land requirements for the Energy Transition Zone with a council decision anticipated in September 2023, following the adoption of the Local Development Plan. This will support the development of the Hydrogen Hub and Harbour expansion. The review of Council investment assets is an ongoing process with a number of assets being brought to the market in 2023
<p>5. Continue to deliver Aberdeen 365 an annual calendar of headline and feature events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 saw the end of Covid-19 restrictions and a return to ‘business as usual’ for the Event365 programme. 2022 also saw the successful return of recurring events and ACC’s core programme, including Aberdeen’s Highland Games, NUART, and Aberdeen Christmas Village. There were also significant national touring exhibitions at the Art Gallery, which included: The Galloway Hoard: Viking Age Treasure; The Book of Deer; Jerwood Art Fund Maker’s Open. Regionally focussed exhibitions and displays included: Aberdeen Artists’ Society Open; Cabrach Re-Connections; re-display of two collection galleries exploring Love, and Imagined Landscapes The Bloomberg Connects App was launched and further developed to provide guided tours of the Art gallery (now available in Scots Gaelic)
<p>6. Continue to maximise community benefit from major developments</p>	<p>Community benefits have been delivered from several projects across the city:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hydrogen Hub JVP (BP), NESS Energy from Waste (Acciona/Indaver), Summerhill and Tillydrone housing (CHAP), Cloverhill (Bancon), Flat Roof Frameworks (MAC Roofing), Torry Hub (Morrison Construction – Hub North Scotland), Replacement Riverbank School (Robertson), City Vision (Balfour Beatty, Robertson Construction – Hub North Scotland) Community benefits delivered include work experience placements, apprenticeships, community timebank hours, fair work practices, school engagement activities and promotion of adoption and fostering. As of May 2023, BP are sharing volunteering opportunities sourced via Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations (ACVO) on their We Volunteer Portal with staff. This forms part of their community timebank community benefit delivery. Project Officer (Community Benefits) is working closely with ACVO and Improvement Officer to promote the Aberdeen Responsible Business Network and event planned for early 2024.
<p>7. Open negotiations to secure funding for a second Aberdeen City Region Deal</p>	<p>The Secretary of State for Scotland has invited the Joint Committee chair of Aberdeen City Region Deal to take part in an internal Scotland Office review of UK Government’s regional and local economic growth initiatives. This will include sharing the vision for the region’s ideal economic future, including the role for the UK Government in supporting this.</p>
<p>8. Use business loans Scotland to help lift the finance barrier for small and medium enterprises</p>	<p>Business Gateway continued to promote Business Loans Scotland (BLS) and during the last financial year BLS supported three businesses in the City.</p>

9. Work with both governments in order to unleash the non-oil and gas economic potential of the city	As part of the Regional Economic Strategy the City will continue to diversify into its key growth sectors including renewable energy, life sciences, food & drink, tourism and creative industries
10. Support the delivery of the three innovation hubs as part of the Aberdeen City Region Deal	<p>Net Zero Technology Centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZTC was recognised by Reuters in their first Top 100 Innovators Report Launched a new website which has increased engagement and dwell time by users Open Innovation Programme, aimed at technologies that will reduce offshore emissions, accelerate clean energy production and enable delivery net zero opened in January 2023 and winners will be announced September 2023 There were 12 game changing start-ups from the 2023 Clean Energy Start Ups <p>ONE BioHub:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ONE BioHub was formally launched in May 2023 with laboratory space, office space, incubation facilities, hot desk & co-working space and offers a space where academics and researchers can connect to the commercial world More than 200 people worked on the ONE BioHub and £17.4million was spent on the local supply chain <p>ONE SeedPod:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £27million investment to grow the north East Scotland food and drinks industry and aims to increase sector turnover by 5% per annum Construction began in late May 2023 and is due to open late 2024 It will create opportunities to pilot advanced manufacturing processes and technology, scale-up production and inspire new products

3. Incorporation of UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)	<p>A statutory Children’s Rights report was published in January 2022. In addition to a range of qualitative and quantitative data available to help review the impact of our work on the children’s rights agenda, a specific children’s rights survey was issued to children and young people in September 2022 to help determine progress and identify further priorities for action. Taking this holistic approach enabled ACC to triangulate evidence and more confidently report on progress and next steps. Their report cited a number of achievements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved use of data to help us support the children and families most in need of our help Establishment of our multi-agency Fit Like Family Wellbeing Hubs Successful delivery of Holiday programmes in keeping with the self-reported needs of children, young people and families Establishment of our first Wee Green Forest Establishment of our Youth Network to improve youth engagement in strategic decision making and increase cohesion between pre-existing participatory groups for children and young people across the city The introduction of community walkabouts with children and young people working alongside officers and Elected Members to jointly identify and act on concerns in local communities The introduction of Youth Workers, Family Learning and Money Advisors in all schools 65840 free school meal vouchers delivered to eligible families The Provision of 14564 chrome books, 500 Wi-Fi connections with dongles and 210 data only SIMs during periods of school building closure Updated child protection practices in keeping with updated national guidance Successful bid to develop a neurodevelopmental pathway with partners Commissioned Mental Health Aberdeen to offer year-round counselling for our children and young people Children and young people have directly influenced city master planning Further development of The Children’s Rights Service Appointment of a Pupil Climate Change President
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PEOPLE

Policy Statement Commitments	Update
1. Completion of school estate review (P1) and development of estate strategy for next 5-10 years (P2)	A full set of proposals around the school estate was taken to the Education and Children’s Services Committee in September 2022 with an associated work plan. Work has progressed in keeping with the approved workplan and progress continues to be reported to Committee.
2. Development of four new primary schools - Tillydrone, Torry, Milltimber and Countesswells	<p>The construction element of the new replacement Riverbank School has now been awarded which will allow works to progress over the next 12 months.</p> <p>The new Countesswells School welcomed pupils and staff in April this year and followed with the official opening in May.</p> <p>The new school at Torry has been renamed as Greyhope School and Community HUB, the project is planned to complete in Autumn 2023.</p>

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 to excel in STEM subjects

A number of areas have been successfully progressed over the year including:

- The roll out of phase 1 of ABZ Campus in June 2023. A set of quantitative and qualitative success measures have been set to determine progress and improvement. The ABZ Works website was developed to incorporate a section dedicated to ABZ Campus, enabling young people, parents and carers to learn more about the breadth of opportunities. Further improvements are being developed during Phase 2 and beyond now that the foundations are in place.
- Six secondary schools within the local authority are at different stages in engaging with the support of the Excelerate programme, a community-connected learning initiative supported by the Wood Foundation.
- The Aberdeen Computing Collaborative has been formed by Aberdeen City Council, in partnership with North East Scotland College, Robert Gordon University, the University of Aberdeen, and Opportunity North East. The collaborative's focus is on improving computing science education in the city, in line with the recommendations made by the [Scottish Technology Ecosystem: Review](#).
- Outreach programmes are currently being aligned and opportunities for e-sports being expanded. We recognise the benefits of esports in education, including promoting teamwork, problem-solving, and strategic thinking. Esports can engage learners with technology and act as a gateway to interest in computing science and the tech sector. An Esports hub is being developed at St Machar Academy, which will deliver a new National Qualification in Esports at SCQF Level 4 and 5 from August 2023. Collaborative partner, North East Scotland College, will support this development .
- To support professional development, ACC officers have created "grab and go" resources for staff supporting the youngest learners in our primary schools. A classroom teacher has been commissioned to continue production of these resources and will coordinate this development with partners.
- To address the local shortfall in computer science teachers, Aberdeen City has entered a separate partnership with University of Highlands and Islands (UHI), to provide a distance learning Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) to support those in the city with an interest in becoming a Computing Science teacher. Entrants to this course will be given placements in ACC schools to encourage them to seek employment locally when fully qualified.

5. Explore how the successes of the Sistema project can be shared and spread across the city

A collaboration agreement has been put in place to enable Sistema to continue to support families in Torry by accessing non-financial supports from Aberdeen City Council. The agreement, which came into effect on 1st July 2023, will be subject to yearly review.

After a few years of restrictions, the Music Service has now planned for the roll out of city-wide ensembles. In preparation, group performances at locality and city level resumed in 2022/23 with a Christmas concert at the Beach Ballroom involving over 500 learners and culminating in an exceptional finale. Our first Big Sing, organised in partnership with Robert Gordon's College and involving every P4 pupil in the city, was held in Duthie Park in June. Plans are now progressing to build these events into our yearly calendar.

6. Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners across the city

Following an extensive development period, a new broad, general education tracker has been established and is now in use by schools. The tracker enables the interrogation of data at school and local authority level by group and by SIMD and allows school to clearly identify 'the gap' at school level.

Work has also progressed to develop a consistent approach to the measurement of the added value of interventions put in place to help close the equity gap. Following engagement with other Local Authorities to learn from best practice and consultation with Head Teachers, the tool has been put in place for session 2023/24.

Following the success of previous programmes (Summer of Play 2021, Easter of Play 2022, Summer in the City 2022, and Easter in the City 2023) the Council allocated resource for holiday programmes to be delivered over school holiday periods (summer and autumn 2023 and spring 2024).

In line with the aims of the previous 'In the City' holiday programmes, the main focus remains to encourage participation and to maximise the positive opportunities available to young people and their families with a particular focus on those within the Tackling Child Poverty Plan priority groupings.

The programme continues to engage with the widest demographics, providing opportunities for both priority families and those who do not identify as part of a priority group to take part. The programme will also continue to target the 5-14 years age group with some activities still being made available for those not in this age range. Bookable opportunities for priority families will take the form of short, family, half-day and full-day session.

The Education Scotland Attainment Adviser has worked with an Education Support Officer to support 11 city schools' involvement with the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC) National Improving Writing Programme which aims to:

- Improve children's writing attainment.
- Spread a successful QI writing programme.
- Equip class teachers with QI knowledge so they can understand and apply tools and techniques that have been rigorously tested and work

Phase 1 schools began the process in October 2022, with Phase 2 commencing in February 2023. Phase 1 schools are already reporting encouraging progress with their first cohort.

Scottish Attainment Challenge funding has been used to support the provision of youth work and family learning workers. 2074 young people (aged 10-18 years) and 689 children (aged 5-9 years) have engaged in youth work this year with 1648 of those young people reporting improved mental health and wellbeing as a result of their engagement with the service.

2,459 young people have engaged with the Saltire Awards in Aberdeen. These awards, which are for volunteers aged 12-25 and co-ordinated by ACVO, continue to contribute positively to employability skills. 56 children and 16 young people were supported to complete nationally recognised awards.

Over 100 young people identified as unlikely to secure a positive destination benefited from targeted and carefully tailored youth work programmes.

The poverty-related attainment gap, which is measured by comparing the outcomes of learners in quintile one (Q1) and quintile five (Q5), has reduced from 2020-21. The gap decreased from 28 percentage points (pp) to 21 pp in 2021-22. This demonstrates a 7-percentage point improvement and is the local authority's best performance in this measure since comparisons between Q1 and Q5 learners were introduced. This latest figure is lower than the national attainment gap by 10.8 percentage points which outlines the considerable improvements which have been made when compared to 2020-21 data.

Financial inclusion advisors have been attached to schools as part of our approach to education recovery. Helping families achieve; financial gains, assisting households with debt issues, providing full benefit checks, assisting households to claim benefits and assisting households to challenge being turned down for benefits. The service continues to be promoted to ensure all parents have access to advice and support.

The Armed Forces Covenant was initially a 'promise' between the Nation and its people to ensure that military personnel who are serving, or have served, and their families, do not suffer any disadvantage as a result of their service. This agreement, recognised across all nations of the United Kingdom, was signed by all 32 local authorities in Scotland.

The Armed Forces Covenant legislation places a new duty of 'due regard' for the Covenant on **all** Scottish local authorities and health boards. It is important to note that the terms of the new Act are compatible with the existing body of Scottish educational law and existing statutory responsibilities. The Council is proactively reviewing current systems to help determine how to strengthen our response to the Covenant.

Over the course of 2022/23 our schools have welcomed and supported over 300 children and young people who have been displaced by the war in Ukraine. Most of these families have been living within hotel accommodation, ranging from at maximum 8 hotels, now reduced to 3 hotels either within the city centre or at Dyce. One of our primary schools welcomed over 110 children across all stages and one of the secondaries almost 50 young people. Almost all of these children have settled and remained within the schools they initially enrolled in throughout the session. In May 2023 some movement is now being seen with families being housed in more settled accommodation across the city. Early indications are that almost all families are choosing to remain in Aberdeen with their feedback on support from our schools and education providers being very positive.

7. Continue to promote diversion activities for youths and adults in our city with enhanced focused on our three locality areas

Mastrick Outdoor Hub continues to attract young people from the surrounding areas and antisocial behaviour has declined during the time the hub has been up and running. In addition to the activities provided by Street Sports young people are benefitting from their engagement with youth workers. A need was identified for children who were too young to attend the hub and from this a club for P6's and 7's was set up. In April this year club members took part in a residential at Cromdale Outdoor Centre during which they took part in activities such as canoeing and cycling.

Attendance at the Kincorth P6 and 7 group is at maximum most weeks. Group members can take part in activities such as art and crafts, games and baking or they can come along and just hang out with friends. Steet Sports visited the group to promote the new sessions they were setting up in Kincorth; these sessions are now being delivered and are an addition to the offer for children and young people in Kincorth.

Youth Workers continue to support the drop-in which takes place at Northfield Community Centre. As the older attendees move on a new and younger cohort has started coming along. The drop-in was set up to provide a safe and welcoming environment for young people to hang out in and in response to the lack of things for them to do in their area. Useful connections between the drop-in and the youth work staff at Northfield academy have been made.

PLACE

Policy Statement Commitments	Update
1. Build up our existing strength in hydrogen technology	The development of the joint venture with bp has continued and planning permission for the plant and solar farm with has been achieved. The Final Investment Decision (FID) is planned for September 2023 and production in April 2025. Other project activities in relation to mobility are ongoing and we are looking at opportunities in relation to H2 use for heavy goods vehicles, maritime, heating and exports. This is being undertaken with partners.
2. Support efforts to develop the inward investment opportunities including Energetica corridor	Working with a range of partners the activity of Invest Aberdeen seeks to build on the assets of the region including Energy Transition, Clean Energy, City Centre opportunities. This is targeted at both businesses looking to locate and institutions looking for investment opportunities. Using the offices of Scottish Cities Alliance to attend events as part of a Team Scotland approach to seeking Green Investment partners.
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	The draft Local Transport Strategy is now prepared and is due to be reported to the August Net Zero, Transport and Environment Committee for approval to go out for public consultation in the Autumn.

4. Cycle hire scheme	The cycle hire scheme was formally launched in November 2022, with officers now working with the operator to support ongoing growth and expansion
5. Continue to invest to resurface damaged roads and pavements throughout the city	All projects proposed in 22/23 were fully delivered
6. Build 2,000 new Council homes and work with partners to provide more affordable homes, ensuring future developments address the needs of a changing population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction work complete at Wellheads and Auchmill sites. • Ongoing construction at Summerhill, Kaimhill, Tillydrone and Cloverhill sites. • Design updates for Kincorth and Craighill sites in progress. • Planning Permission in principle progressing for Greenferns and Greenferns Landward sites. • We have engaged with a preferred contractor to proceed with 206 Union Street, likely to proceed Spring 2024. • Buy backs are continuing. • Planning permission granted for 8 complex care units at the former Stonewood school site in Dyce. • Currently engaged with 3 contractors to deliver 600 voids back to housing to meet the new lettable standard.



COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS

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

KEY DRIVERS

- Mitigating the causes of immediate and acute poverty
- Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families and groups
- Poverty affecting those with protected characteristics and in specific communities
- Supporting labour market to recover from impact of Covid-19 on employment
- Increasing the number of people in Aberdeen in sustained, fair work
- Promoting inclusive economic growth for our most disadvantaged communities
- Ensuring access for all employers to skilled labour

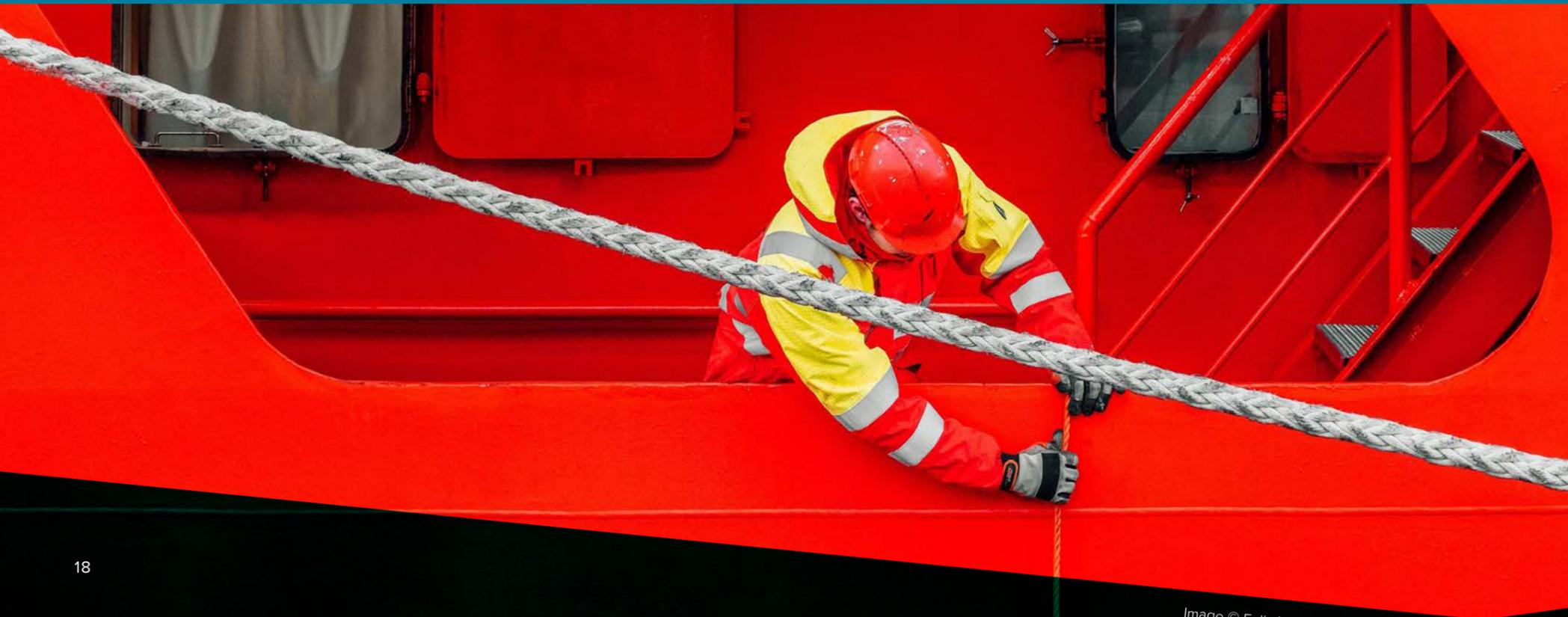
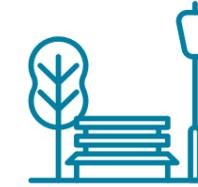


Image © Felix Mooneeram

ECONOMY HIGHLIGHTS



Union Terrace Gardens
reopened after over
2 years
of refurbishments



Aberdeen Arts Gallery & Museums saw
291,396 in-person visits
in the first full year of operation since
the Art Gallery's refurbishment and the
Covid pandemic



More than **3,900** individuals
and almost **1,000** businesses
were supported through the **North
East Economic Recovery Fund**



The Scottish Government funded
Long Term Unemployed (LTU)
scheme was **successfully delivered**,
supporting **94 people** who had
been unemployed for a year or more

PROGRESS MADE DURING 2022/23

SUPPORT THE ATTRACTION OF VISITORS TO THE CITY AND INCREASE FOOTFALL

Union Terrace Gardens re-opened in December 2022 following over 2 years of refurbishment. The Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan was approved in August 2022 and is a “live” document which will be updated annually. The first annual update was presented to Members at the adjourned Full Council meeting in September 2023. The document contains a number of SMART objectives focused around the key themes of Economy, Inclusion, Net Zero and Quality.

Queen Street – a Strategic Business Case was approved by the Council in December 2022 and included a short list of future options for the site. An Outline Business Case was reported to the adjourned meeting of Council in September 2023 and Option 5 (urban park with landscaping to north-west development area and development to south-east on site of former Police HQ) was selected as the preferred option to move to the next stage of design development, with an update to be reported back to Council in December 2023.

Aberdeen Market – McGinty’s Group confirmed as the preferred operator of the site. A revised planning application has been submitted following discussions with the preferred operator. If permission granted than the project will proceed to RIBA Stage 4 Technical Design to allow production of all design information required to construct the new building.

Beachfront - A Development Framework for Phase 1 of the Beachfront area was approved by Aberdeen City Council in May 2023, and was informed by both public and stakeholder consultation. A Development Framework for Phase 2 has been instructed and a draft will be reported back to Members before the end of 2024. Individual projects outlined within the Phase 1 Development Framework are currently being progressed, with an instruction given at the adjourned meeting of Council in September 2023 to proceed with appointments to deliver a number of medium-term interventions, including Beach park, Events Park and improvements to Broadhill.

Streetscape - Progress continues to be made on City Centre Streetscape projects, with detailed design work and key stakeholder consultation ongoing. An updated Business Case will be reported back to Council in December 2023.

Aberdeen Arts Gallery & Museums (AAGM)

Aberdeen Art Gallery has opened 7 days/week between April 2022 and April 2023 (excepting Christmas / New Year, Good Friday and the Coronation). This has been the first full year of operation since closing for redevelopment in 2015.

Aberdeen Maritime Museum opened 7 days/week from April to November 2022, with a closure period for essential maintenance over winter, reopening April 2023. Provost Skene’s House has opened 7 days/week between April 2022 and April 2023 (excepting Christmas / New Year, Good Friday and the Coronation). This has been the first full year of operation since closing for site redevelopment in 2014. Visitors were able to visit for free and take part in free concerts, talks, special exhibitions and events.



Work continues behind the scenes to enhance FREE digital access to collections, images, information and educational opportunities including publication of the entire gallery and museum collection online, additional archive records now online, blogs, films exploring stories, online exhibitions and downloadable school resources.

The gallery promoted free and inclusive access over the winter as part of the council’s Warm Places offer. All AAGM locations registered as Safe Spaces this year with staff training provided.

Work with partners WeToo! and Sound Play Projects has increased what we can offer for neurodivergent children and adults for free, and the dementia friendly sessions Our Aberdeen and Musical Memories continue to grow, supported by our volunteer team.

Major exhibitions:

- The Galloway Hoard: Viking Age Treasure (free entry, fully partnership funded)
- The Book of Deer (free entry, fully grant funded)
- Jerwood Art Fund Maker’s Open (free entry, grant supported)

This year we have had over 1 million visits to AAGM, this includes both in-person and online:

- 291,396 in-person
- 939,764 via social media
- 436,486 AAGM web page views
- 16,260 Aberdeen built ships page views

A marketing campaign was devised with particular focus on the Galloway Hoard - Viking-age Treasure exhibition.

VisitAberdeenshire boosted PR activity via London-based PR representatives to reach travel and lifestyle media in conjunction with promotion via a digital campaign, they also shared to their existing database and social media following. The campaign exceeded forecast expectations, the digital campaign achieved 442,013 impressions, there were over 39,000 social impressions and a 44.47% click through rate of their newsletter.

VisitScotland campaign - Publishing partnerships were established with The Stylist magazine where an Aberdeen advertorial was in circulation of 350,000 copies. A partnership email was also distributed along with cross promotion on various digital platforms, including a quiz highlighting Aberdeen’s cultural offering. Working with BBC History Extra - a podcast advert achieved 733,000 impressions, and a native advertorial achieved 16,034 views and 936,000 impressions. Digital displays and social media promotion was also conducted via Pinterest, Quantcast and Contextual Intelligence to target an audience in London, South East and North East England. This included promotion at key transport hubs, shopping centres, museums and targeting an audience who enjoys eating out or short breaks.

Events 365

The Events 365 returned to its full programme following Covid-19. Key highlights in 2022/23 were SPECTRA, which saw its highest footfall to date; the Tour of Britain Grande Depart and the associated Get About Aberdeen Cycling Festival, which picked up the Best Sporting Event award at the EventIT E Awards. As well as these, Aberdeen City Council approved the refreshed Event 365 strategy in February 2023, capturing the successes of the original plan and setting the strategic objectives for the future. This saw the commitment to deliver the European Pipe Band Championships in 2023 and the Tall Ships in 2025.



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY

Developing the Young Workforce

The roll out of phase 1 of ABZ Campus in June 2023 will see 37 courses be offered as part of ABZ Campus 23-24 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.

As of April 2023, **843** young people had registered for the courses. The ABZ Works website was amended to incorporate a section dedicated to ABZ Campus, enabling young people, parents and carers to learn more about the breadth of opportunities.

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 during Phase 2 and beyond now that the foundations are in place.

A pilot employability pathway is included in Phase 1 which includes a small number of pupils from 3 academies who have enrolled on this course to undertake a range of key skills workshop to prepare for the world of work, followed by a work experience placement with a specific area of the council. On completion of the course pupils will achieve an accredited qualification and a guaranteed interview for any apprenticeship opportunities / entry level roles with the Council.



Six secondary schools within the local authority are at different stages in engaging with the support of the Excelerate programme, a community-connected learning initiative supported by the Wood Foundation. This programme has included a number of collaborative visits to the XP Academy in Doncaster, and study visits to the Academies of Nashville. Supported by Excelerate, each school using their own unique context to identify the areas they seek to progress. These areas include Project Based Learning, Crew, School Leaver Profiles and Oracy to name but a few. A sharing event was held in May 2023 which allowed schools to showcase the impact of the programme. The event, which was learner focused and learner led, was well attended by staff from across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

The Aberdeen Computing Collaborative has been formed by Aberdeen City Council, in partnership with North East Scotland College, Robert Gordon University, the University of Aberdeen, and Opportunity North East. The collaborative's focus is on improving computing science education in the city, in line with the recommendations made by the [Scottish Technology Ecosystem: Review](#).

The collaborative aims to support a coherent, innovative, and skills-based computing science curriculum from early learning to senior phase and beyond. This includes creating multiple pathways for all learners to maximize access to computing science learning and qualifications in and out of school. Focussing on the development of computer science skills will ensure that pupils across Aberdeen City are well positioned to benefit from post school opportunities.

The collaborative plans to increase opportunities for young people, develop the skills of staff and promote the sector through engagement, curriculum support and professional learning. The collaborative held a successful launch event in September 2022, at ONE Tech Hub, which was attended by over 250 pupils and teaching staff. The event included practical computing science workshops and professional development discussions for teaching staff. Feedback indicates that almost all children and young people attending were more likely to consider a computing science career following the event.

Delivery of Employability Action Plan to support employment pathways

A Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for the procurement of employability services has been developed and tested, enabling a rapid response to emerging issues in the city. This has attracted new providers and broadened the range of activities available. A lessons learned exercise was carried out, with feedback gathered from providers and appropriate adaptations made. We are now in the midst of a full procurement exercise, with 17 mini-comps offered for the provision of a range of employability services.

[The Local Employability Partnership \(LEP\) Delivery and Action Plan](#) was approved by City Growth and Resources Committee and agreed by Aberdeen Prospers and Scottish Government in summer 2022. The LEP has identified target groups for support. These include women, parents, young people refugees, and people with disabilities. Delivery work is ongoing, the Action Plan has been updated with new actions, while several actions are complete. Quarterly reports are submitted to Aberdeen Prospers. Completed actions include creation of a Training Allowance for 16-17-year-olds, launch of an Employer Recruitment Incentive scheme, and development of the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS).

The Aberdeen Employability Training Providers Forum (ETPF) now has a representative on the LEP and in its own right has recently established a strategic group and an operational group, with a view to working collaboratively and feeding into the LEP. The ETPF are engaged in delivery of the actions identified in the Delivery Plan. Positive progress is being made towards a more aligned and strategic approach to employability services across the city. The inaugural ABZ Works Conference in April was used to map gaps, opportunities, and emerging needs. Provision mapping of activity across the city is underway, including grass roots activity.

A broad range of employability activity was commissioned so that support in finding work was available to city residents no matter their age (working age, 16-67), background, barriers faced or their level of work readiness. For young people, training providers including Aberdeen Foyer, Barnardo's, SHMU, Volunteering Matters and Working Rite delivered programmes offering activities such as 1:2:1 confidence building, group work, sector specific courses, accredited training, work experience and supported volunteering.

Young people aged 16-17 engaging in ABZ Works employability activity benefited from the Young Person's Training Allowance, a payment of £55 per week to incentivise participation and to mitigate the impact of the cost of living crisis.

A series of pilot employability projects was developed by the ABZ Works employability service and delivered in regeneration areas. These projects are in the evaluation stage, however the success of some has been so immediately obvious that they are being either rolled out more broadly or mainstreamed and offered via the DPS.

Focus support towards groups (women, young people and people from ethnic minority backgrounds) that have been disproportionately disadvantaged by the pandemic

The LEP has identified priority groups for employability support and a considerable amount of work has been undertaken to support them. This includes the delivery of pilot projects, co-designed with participants, in the regeneration areas; creation of a paid internship programme within the Council for care experienced young people; delivery of a transition into work grant for lone parents; a broad range of support for refugees and displaced people and publication of a report detailing the Council's employability response to the huge influx of displaced Ukrainians, alongside refugees and asylum seekers; delivery of a Year of Disabled Workers events to encourage recruitment of people with disabilities and follow-up jobs fair for people with disabilities; and commissioning activity.

A Fit Next programme for school leavers without a positive destination was rapidly developed to ensure available provision for young people, in the absence of commissioned services due to grant delays, over summer. This includes visits to training providers to support joint working and explore next steps for young people. Scottish Government has provided significantly increased Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) monies to tackle child poverty and a programme has been developed, with work underway.

The North East Economic Recovery and Skills Fund (NEERSF) projects have been successfully delivered. More than 3,900 individuals and almost 1,000 businesses were supported, and more than 1,500 short university courses provided. The NEERSF final report is due to be published by Scottish Government imminently, with lessons learned and recommendations detailed within it and the associated evaluation report.

A series of jobs fairs have been delivered over the year, including generic events open to all city residents, a jobs fair and redundancy support event for people affected by the Arjo Wiggins and Belmont Cinema closures, and we delivered Scotland's first jobs fair for refugees, displaced people and asylum seekers in partnership with the Refugee Employment Network.

Two 12-week paid work experience schemes offering incrementally increasing numbers of hours during the placement, paid at Real Living Wage rate have been launched. The first offers opportunities in the health and social care sector and includes a guaranteed job interview at the end of the placement. The second offers supportive placements within the authority for care experienced young people in roles they have expressed an interest in.

Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub

Work with the Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub is ongoing. The Energy Transition Zone (ETZ) Jobs and Skills Plan has been published, with input from Council officers and this in turn is being considered as part of the hub skills action plan. This includes working with city schools, and a mapping exercise to establish who is doing what in employability and skills terms in this space, with a view to the adoption of an aligned and collaborative approach across the city.



Work continues with BP on the Skills Action Plan linked to the Hydrogen Hub. A Jobs and Skills Action Plan for the Energy Transition Zone has been developed, providing a framework for future skills development and job creation, including for those further removed from the labour market and in line with Fair Work Principles.

Long Term Unemployment (LTU) Scheme

The Scottish Government funded Long Term Unemployed (LTU) scheme was successfully delivered, supporting 94 people who had been unemployed for a year or more, to engage in immediate labour market opportunities of up to six months in duration. Just over half of the participants were working within the Council, in a variety of roles across the organisation, with the rest securing opportunities in one of 10 third sector organisations taking part. Of the 94 participants, 80 successfully completed their placement developing confidence, knowledge and recent work experience to include on their CV and 37 of those sustained employment beyond their placement. The remaining 14 withdrew from their placement early and were offered ongoing support from employability keyworkers.

A Community Wealth Building Action Plan was approved by Finance and Resources in December and work on delivery of this is ongoing.

Seed funding was provided to 8 people through No One Left Behind, Parental Employability Support Fund and Young Person Guarantee to support them to start up their own businesses.

An Employer Recruitment Scheme has been launched, providing up to £6,000 of funding to an employer taking on eligible individuals, including young people and those meeting NOLB and PESF criteria. This includes a premium rate for employers paying Real Living Wage rate or more.

An employer skills survey has been launched to identify skills and training gaps needs across the North East.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS, INCLUDING EMPLOYABILITY BENEFITS

Contractors are supported to deliver community benefits, including employability benefits, such as attendance at ABZ Works Jobs Fayres, sharing vacancies and work experience placements. Closer working between Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations (ACVO) through meetings every two weeks have led to more opportunities to increase the value of community benefits donations and timebank hours to third sector groups and charities. For example the We Volunteer Portal and BP's Hydrogen Hub community benefits.

Construction on ONE SeedPod began in late May 2023 and is due to open late 2024. ONE SeedPod has received £27 million in investment to grow the north east Scotland food and drinks industry and expected to increase sector turnover by 5% per annum.



The ETZ Jobs and Skills Plan sets a framework for job retention and creation. It was published in March 2023 and noted by the Finance and Resources Committee.

Six weekly meetings have been scheduled between Project Officer (Community Benefits) and Communications and External Affairs Manager (Social Performance) at BP to support the development and delivery of Hydrogen Hub JVP community benefits action plan. The CWB Action plan was approved by Finance and Resources Committee in December. It is being taken forward by the CWB Working Group with members from Procurement, City Growth, Communities and Corporate Landlord. The key pillars we are focusing on in the short term is Spending, Workforce and Land and Property. A recommendation was approved at the Community Planning Aberdeen Board to integrate a Community Wealth Building approach into the refresh of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).

Regular meetings to support delivery of community benefits from the Hydrogen Hub JVP ensure monitoring and support with benefits including school and further and higher education activities. Opportunities for delivery of employability benefits such as mock interviews for clients in the 'Fit Next' Project have been shared with BP, with staff set to participate in upcoming sessions.

SUPPORT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE CITY

The ONE BioHub was completed April 2023 and formally launched May 2023. More than 200 people worked on the ONE BioHub and £17.4 million spent in the local supply chain.

The National Subsea Centre, part of the Net Zero Technology Centre, launched in January 2023, will provide advanced research to accelerate the UK's transition to net zero.

The new Aberdeen South Harbour is now operational with official launch planned by the end of September 2023. In June 2022 a consultant was commissioned to undertake the next phase of the Transport Links to Aberdeen South Harbour, namely the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) and Scheme Assessment where the preferred corridor is going through a more detailed design process. Following a Stage 2 Options Workshop the consultants (SWECO) have submitted a draft of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 2 Route Options Assessment report for review, the initial draft of the Outline Business Case (OBC) is currently being finalised, and a Structures Options Report has been submitted for approval.



The Digital Gap Analysis Business has been undertaken and 3 projects are now in progress; 5G in Aberdeen Port, Rural 5G and ONE are operating a 5G 'Pop-Up' to allow for testbeds. To further address the gaps in digital infrastructure across the Region it is prudent to wait to hear how Project Gigabit will be rolled out in Scotland. It is anticipated that Project Gigabit procurements in Scotland will be developed jointly by the UK Government and Scottish Government through a collaborative approach, in which it is expected that the Scottish Government will be the lead partner on implementation management. The Digital Engagement Team, funded by Aberdeen CRD, continue to support resident and help them apply for the connection voucher scheme. To date Aberdeen CRD has had the highest take-up.

The Full Fibre project has been completed and Duct Network Phases 1 & 2 have been completed and Phase 3 has begun.

Two Live Labs projects are now in progress, these are Hydrogen Refuellers (Aberdeenshire) and Transport Mobility Hubs (Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire).

The Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP) 2023 was adopted on 16 June 2023. The ALDP 2023 identifies three areas of land (OP56, OP61 and OP62) under Policy B5 – Energy Transition Zone and highlights the need for a joint Masterplan to cover the three sites. A Draft Masterplan for the Energy Transition Zone has been prepared by a consultant team on behalf of ETZ Ltd on this basis. The Draft Masterplan was endorsed by the Planning Development Management Committee in June 2023 for public consultation, with the final report expected to be reported back to Committee later in 2023.

A joint venture was established with BP in March 2022. The site for the hub and solar farm were identified and an application for planning approved by Council. Wider impacts in relation to supply chain, skills and employee benefits have commenced. A report setting out the baseline for skills activity was published in May 2023 and a supply chain action plan is being developed.

High Potential Opportunity (HPO) was developed in conjunction with a range of partners including Department of Business & Trade, Scottish Development International, ETZ, Scottish Enterprise and published during 2022. Subsequently distributed to all UK Government and Scottish Government offices to support investment propositions and discussions.

Regional Economic Strategy was reviewed and updated and to be adopted by partners in August/September 2023.

SUPPORT THE CITY TO BECOME A “SMART CITY”

Digital Infrastructure Programme

The Full Fibre project was completed in March 2023 and has now been closed with a presentation given to the City Region Deal Joint Committee demonstrating the numerous benefits to the Region.

Phase 2 of the Duct Network Extension will be completed in August 2023 and works have now begun for Phase 3. This project is intended to help enable traffic systems to be connected and provide a testbed for new technology.

Following completion of the City Network Extension CityFibre are continuing their private investment into Aberdeen City, investing an additional £19million into the city.

The Gap Analysis Business Case has been completed and was presented to City Region Deal Joint Committee. A further two projects are now about to be undertaken, 5G in Aberdeen Harbour as well as testing 5G solution for agri-tech. Further details are required to be known as to R100 North before undertaking any works to fill potential gaps.

IoT (Internet of Things) Programme

Aberdeen City Council is continuing to expand our Internet of Things network. This includes a pilot Water Monitoring project in two schools, the devices are due to be connected in August 2023. Officers are also investigating Life Ring Sensors which can help maximise resource time and notify Officers of vandalism to Life Rings.

Smart City Strategy and Action Plan refresh

During 2022/23 Aberdeen City Council procured Connected Places Catapult (CPC) to help benchmark our Smart City journey as well as create a Roadmap. The CPC is the UK's Innovation Accelerator for Cities, Transport and Place Leadership. They provide impartial 'innovation as a service' for public bodies, businesses and infrastructure providers to catalyse economic growth. The road map was completed in June 2023 and will be presented to Corporate Management team in quarter 3 this year.

PEOPLE (CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE)

KEY DRIVERS

Child Poverty

- Mitigating the causes of immediate and acute poverty
- Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families, and groups
- Poverty affecting those with protected characteristics and in specific communities

Early Years

- Ensuring that families receive the parenting and family support they need

Education – Improving Health and Wellbeing

- Ensuring that families receive the parenting and family support they need
- Keeping young children safe
- Improving health and reducing inequalities
- Improving timely access to support
- Increasing children's knowledge and understanding of their own physical and mental wellbeing and take an early intervention and prevention approach.

Education – Employability & Positive Destinations

- Improving pathways to education, employment and training for identified groups (including disability, ASN, term time leavers and those from priority localities)

Children's Social Work

- Improving education outcomes for care experienced children and young people
- Supporting attainment of balance of care where children are able to remain more often at home and or with kin

Child Friendly City

- Child friendly city where all decisions which impact on children and young people are informed by them

Youth Justice

- Young people receive the right help at the right time to improve outcomes for young people at risk of becoming involved in the Justice System

PEOPLE (CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE) HIGHLIGHTS



39,000 bookable opportunities were made available through the 'In the city' programme



The Easter in the City was given a **9.7 out of 10 enjoyability rating** by those who attended



2763 children & young people have **engaged** in youth work activity



8706 participants accessed Bookbug sessions



50% increase in the number of care experienced parents taking up eligible 2s places for their own children

PROGRESS MADE DURING 2022/23

REDUCING CHILD POVERTY

The child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 set a clear agenda for tackling child poverty. There is a duty for local authorities and health boards to report annually on activity they are taking, and will take to reduce child poverty. Some of the key achievements in the 2022/23 Child Poverty Action Report include:

- £1.9M allocated by Aberdeen City Council towards the Aberdeen Gift Card Scheme, resulting in 14,172 eligible citizens benefiting from £125 gift cards
- A 21% increase in the number of employers paying the real living wage in the last year, now covering 42,800 employees
- Year on year increase in the uptake of Best Start Grants and Foods
- 992 pupils active in Duke of Edinburgh Award Schemes across the city
- 2074 young people (aged 10-18 years) and 689 children (aged 5-9 years) have engaged in youth work activity
- 2314 adults have been engaged in adult learning activity and the city-wide family learning offer provided 250 activities to 481 adults (and their 389 children/young people)
- Our ABZ Works Employability site has received 6000 hits since the start of 2023 and 691 people have received employability support from the team
- 965 boxes of free sanitary products have been delivered to schools since January 2023
- The Fairer Aberdeen Programme funded 38 initiatives across community learning and development providers, tackling poverty and supporting 35,610 people. Allocated funding to support the distribution of 622 tonnes of free food (the equivalent of 1.72M meals)
- As of January 2023, over 22,500 young people have applied for and obtained a National Entitlement Card with free bus travel and are benefiting from this service

18,998 Scottish Child Payment Bridging Payments have been made by the Council. These payments ceased after the Winter payment in 2022 with the wider rollout of the Scottish Child Payment, administered by Social Security Scotland, from mid-November 2022.

Vouchers were provided during holiday periods for all families in receipt of free school meals due to low income and this is continuing. In the year to date, vouchers provided were equivalent to the value of £343,964 in school meals.

The Community Planning Partnership has worked hard to increase the uptake of social security and benefits in kind. There is a need to carefully track uptake so that corrective action can be taken if required.

Financial inclusion advisors have been attached to schools as part of our approach to education recovery. Over the period April 2022 to March 2023 the enhanced Financial Inclusion Team's advisors helped families achieve the following:

- Financial Gains of £1, 077, 325.24
- Assisted/Assisting 194 households with debt issues
- Helping with total debts of £1, 129, 447.58
- 381 household were given full benefit checks
- Assisted 57 households to claim benefits
- Assisting 12 household to challenge being turned down for benefits



The service continues to be promoted to ensure all parents have access to advice and support.

The number of children registered for free school meals has increased from 8277 in 2020 to 12,721 in 2022 (including those who are now automatically entitled in P1-P5). While there have been increases at schools in priority neighbourhoods, increases have been seen across schools in the city, including those in areas out with priority neighbourhoods.

All core curriculum charges have now been abolished. There is evidence that increasing numbers of young people from areas of deprivation are now accessing free instrumental music instruction. Uptake across Associated Schools Groups previously ranged from 1% (in areas of deprivation) to 25% (in more affluent areas). The range currently sits at between 5 and 9%. Data will continue to be closely monitored as we continue to address the equity agenda.

There is a collaboration agreement in place to support long term delivery of the Sistema programme in Torry.

The 'In the city' programmes for children and young people have continued to run and in 2022/23 thus far has provided 39,000 bookable opportunities, including weeklong/multiday camps and childcare camps, day long and short activities being offered, as well as numerous drop-in activities in parks, museums and galleries and local communities as well as bespoke programmes for those with complex additional support needs. The enjoyability rating as provided by children and young people for the most recent programme (Easter in the City, 2023) was 9.7 out of 10.

Aberdeen City Council has been successful in securing £309,000 capital investment in our out of school care facilities from Scottish Government. Three projects, in our 3 priority Associated School Groups (ASGs) – Lochside, Northfield and St Machar, will see outdoor spaces developed in order to increase capacity and offer holiday provision, supporting working families. A fourth project will see our flagship Additional Support Needs provision greatly enhanced, indoors and outdoors, again supporting working families who require wrap around provision.

EARLY YEARS

Encouragingly there has been an increase in the uptake of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in the city with 94.74% of our eligible population placed in 2022/23 compared to 91.22% in 2021/22. There has also been a 50% increase in the number of eligible 2s placed. In line with national policy, we will consider how best to extend provision for some aged 1 and 2 and consider how best to develop the provision of wrap around childcare for others of primary age.

There continues to be evidence that some young learners have gaps in early language skills and schools continue to address this through language interventions. The work undertaken in implementing the Circle Framework has ensured that schools are focussed on environment for learners at all levels. This work will be continued next session to ensure there are opportunities to share approaches to support schools working together to maximise impact of resources.

A number of schools and ELC settings helped those in care homes celebrate the coronation of King Charles by providing bunting and decorations.

A more proportionate model of quality improvement is helping to secure more positive inspection outcomes.



RAISE ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

Two pilot schools have been signed up to participate in the ACC transformation project with Microsoft. Early adopters will begin to use Microsoft tools from August 2023 with the remainder of staff and learners in schools onboarding in January 2024. All learners to be provided with Microsoft devices. All data will sit in the same digital environment for both staff and learners and support the implementation of a device per learner. Currently all learners P7, S1, S2 S4, S5 and S6 have chromebooks.

Following an extensive development period, a new broad, general education tracker has been established and is now in use by schools. The tracker enables the interrogation of data at school and local authority level by group and by SIMD and allows school to clearly identify 'the gap' at school level.

Work has also progressed to develop a consistent approach to the measurement of the added value of interventions put in place to help close the equity gap. Following engagement with other Local Authorities to learn from best practice and consultation with Head Teachers, the tool has been put in place for session 2023/24.

Implemented from September 2022, the ACC National Improvement Framework Plan for 2023/24 will take account of further refinements introduced for the new school session.

Improvements in school tracking and more robust evaluation of the impact of interventions being tested to help improve our decision making around commissioned services. This will be mainstreamed across the Council over the next year.

The Education Scotland Attainment Adviser has worked with an Education Support Officer to support 11 city schools' involvement with the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC) National Improving Writing Programme which aims to:

- Improve children's writing attainment.
- Spread a successful QI writing programme.
- Equip class teachers with QI knowledge so they can understand and apply tools and techniques that have been rigorously tested and work

Phase 1 schools began the process in October 2022, with Phase 2 commencing in February 2023. Phase 1 schools are already reporting encouraging progress with their first cohort.

ASN (Additional Support Needs) and Outreach Services

Following analysis of the effectiveness of ASN and Outreach services, the education service began transforming the management and delivery models of ASN and outreach services around 3 years ago. A generic request for assistance form was developed to function as a single access point for all ASN and Outreach services including the School Nursing Service, Children's Social Work, Autism Outreach, and the virtual school.

The data is used at three levels; at whole system level to help us determine the success of our current approaches, at category of need level to help shape approaches and at individual pupil level to help inform individual planning for children and young people. This approach is proving helpful in identifying emerging risks. This live data helps us target groups easily to help mitigate risk.

The system has helped transform working practices, resource allocation and our commissioning of internal services and is now being extended to include all services for children as we design our model of Family Support.

TRANSITION TO POSITIVE DESTINATIONS

A review of attainment data identified 3 problems to be addressed through ABZ Campus. These included the need to:

- map and direct courses towards the growth and volume sector industries for the North-East of Scotland to improve longer-term employability.
- shift the shared focus away from the most academically minded and develop a more inclusive offer to support young people to access a range of courses across different Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels
- Address restrictive secondary timetables to enable closer collaboration.

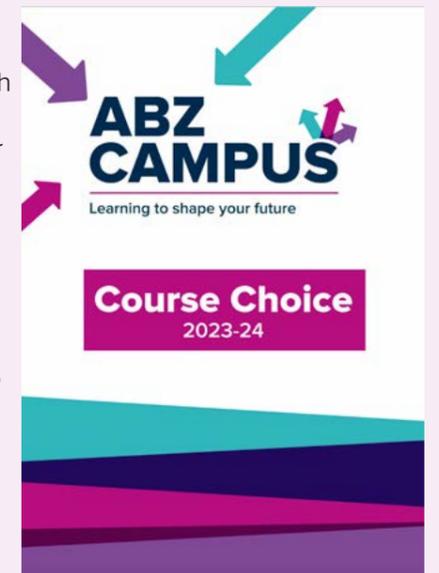
What did we do? Secondary Head Teachers:

- Aligned secondary timetables so that young people can access courses in different schools easily in order to have access to a broader range.
- Reviewed courses available 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.
- Convened Further and Higher Education and partners to consider how best to progress as a whole education system.
- Interviewed young people to learn from their lived experience. Young people told us that:
 - o the quality of course information and publicity could be improved.
 - o they would welcome a greater measure of consistency in the application process for courses.
 - o that course and location induction was really important in giving them confidence.
 - o that they are keen for greater consistency in the quality of feedback, tracking and reporting of progress

A set of cross-city working groups were created to develop citywide pathways across a large range of abilities and curricular areas. A set of Higher National Certificate (HNC) courses was agreed with partners North East Scotland College (NESCOL) at Level 7. These courses offer entry 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 a 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 the Council's City Growth and People and Organisational Development services to provide opportunities for work placements and a guaranteed job interview upon successful completion.

[Family information](#) as made available from February 2023. Promotional material is being housed in a new section of the [ABZ Works website](#) so that young people and adults have a one-stop shop solution to find out about and apply for ABZ Campus courses.



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.

An incredibly positive outcome of the work on timetable 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 possible that the same course will have spaces in another school and could be accessed by the young person. Clearing will take place after the usual choice process window closes in April and will continue into May prior to courses starting in June.

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.

CLOSING THE ATTAINMENT GAP

Scottish Attainment Challenge funding has been used to support the provision of youth work and family learning workers. 2074 young people (aged 10-18 years) and 689 children (aged 5-9 years) have engaged in youth work this year with 1648 of those young people reporting improved mental health and wellbeing as a result of their engagement with the service.

2,459 young people have engaged with the Saltire Awards in Aberdeen. These awards, which are for volunteers aged 12-25 and co-ordinated by ACVO, continue to contribute positively to employability skills. 56 children and 16 young people were supported to complete nationally recognised awards.



Over 100 young people identified as unlikely to secure a positive destination benefited from targeted and carefully tailored youth work programmes.

617 referrals for youth work have been received from across all secondary schools. Of those referrals:

- 26% sought support with health and wellbeing
- 20% sought support to manage relationships
- 16% sought support to improve communication with others
- 13% sought support to improve self-awareness

178 individual 1-2-1 sessions were delivered along with 421 group sessions.

Several Scottish and UK publications acknowledge the impact of the periods of lockdown on our children and young people. Of the 236 requests, Child's planning support received requests for assistance from 172 learners with communication difficulties. Use of the CIRCLE framework continues to support consideration of environmental factors and pedagogies to support learners.

As part of the Community Learning and Development Service for Aberdeen City Council, Family Learning are a 23 strong team, including 18 Development Workers aligned to each Associated School Group, Pupil Equity Funded primary schools, Edge of Care Pilots within two Aberdeen Secondary Schools, and a core city-wide provision. The service is also partially aligned with the Fit Like Family Wellbeing Service and has two Duty Workers dedicated to this referral pathway. The investment in Family Learning through the Education Recovery Fund, Pupil Equity Fund and Scottish Attainment Challenge has resulted in 275 learner activities in the year 2022/23, with a total of 542 participants and 12,043 total learner hours, an increase of 197% on 2021/22. Our evaluations, measuring health and wellbeing outcomes, show that 92% of our registered learners agreed that their confidence levels have increased since working with Family Learning, and 97% had gained new knowledge and skills.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The health and wellbeing of children and young people continues to be of local and national concern and the service has maintained and enhanced the range of interventions and approaches available. We are beginning to see a positive impact of these approaches in some areas as evidenced through the Health & Wellbeing Surveys undertaken by children & young people in November 2022, which gave us comparable data to those undertaken in March 2022.

As part of the work of the Children & Young People's Mental Health Task & Delivery Board, as a local authority we are currently piloting the 'One Good Adult' project. This allows us to focus on the voice of children and young people at the heart of our recruitment processes. This was an agreed approach at the Health and Wellbeing Summit in October 2022 and is now established within our recruitment processes for all education staff. This is to be extended to other services within the local authority and partner agencies for those supporting children and young people in their daily positions.

All schools continue to engage with the Compassionate and Connected Communities (CCC) programme. We have built the capacity of 11 further members of staff to act as trainers for the programme. Taking this approach of on-going training for trainers ensures that we maintain a full 64 trainers across the city with a trainer available in each city school when there is staff movement or retirement. This ensures an on-going focus on trauma informed practice.

SHINE

We continue to work with SHINE (Scottish Health Improvement Research Network) to undertake mental wellbeing surveys with learners from P6-S6 so that we can address any emerging needs within our schools and across the city. This year we have increased the level of reporting and now have access to reports at school, ASG (Associated School Group) and sector specific levels with additional reports focusing on affluence levels and gender reporting. This alongside the physical wellbeing survey, both undertaken in November 2022, have provided us with a clear picture at 2 data points, showing areas of improvement and highlighting some areas for further consideration. Outcomes from these surveys continue to be shared with the Mental Health Collaborative, established following the Mental Health Summit in October 2022 and the PEPAS (Physical Education, Physical Activity & Sport) Group established in April 2021, to support multi-agency decision making and areas of focus through the Children's Services Plan.

'Fitlike Aberdeen'

'Fitlike Aberdeen' continues to offer wellbeing supports to families, with one to one, group work and activities available to help address early indicators of distress in children and families. In April 2023 401 young people/families were engaging with the service and 146 of the 401 are families who were being supported for the first time. We see a higher number of males (229) being supported by Fitlike with current numbers of females lower (163) and 9 young people who identify as non-binary, transgender or gender fluid. Reasons for presenting also vary here, however greater support is required for those presenting with low mood, anxiety, emotional literacy/regulation and wider family support needs.

We are currently working in partnership with Fitlike Aberdeen and CAMHS colleagues to further develop our supports in LIAM (Let's Introduce Anxiety Management). This multi-agency collaboration will continue to build on the current supports we have in place across many schools in order to strengthen the universal offer to children and families. All school nurses are currently trained to deliver LIAM, as are a team of Fitlike staff and currently we have staff in **25** schools trained to deliver this support. A further round of training will take place in June increasing the number of trained staff by a further 23 individuals.

A range of additional interventions above and beyond the school curriculum continue to be in place. We continue to commission Mental Health Aberdeen to support all children from age 10+ with counselling support where required. This can be through referral by school staff or self-referral. Through our last reporting period October 2022 – December 2022, **330** young people were being supported and **100% of the 103** children who had completed an end of session questionnaire at that time, reported an improved wellbeing outcome following this support. Counselling has a higher percentage of females being supported with this approach and the divide between male and female is 225/96 with 9 young people who identify as transgender or non-binary receiving this support. Reasons for seeking support vary, however a high number of learners are receiving support for anxiety, bereavement, low confidence/self-esteem, low mood and relationship issues.

We currently have a small number of Primary schools building a partnership with Place2Be through a pilot project. Place2Be offer in person supports within the primary school setting for children aged 3 and up, families and staff. The impact of this new initiative will be evaluated in due course.

The pilot of DBI (Distress Brief Intervention) has extended to 6 Secondary Schools in partnership with CAMHS and Penumbra focusing on learners aged 14-16. This programme offers more targeted support for young people who have been identified or self-identify the need for support and helps some of our most vulnerable learners to access trained staff and a pathway to support through Penumbra and CAMHS if required. We are beginning to see early signs of improvement through our data report in relation to the Who-5 wellbeing index, which may suggest that earlier responsive intervention is supporting young people previously indicating low mood.

Educational Psychology Service (EPS)

Our EPS support schools through [Early Intervention Consultations](#) (EICs), which take place between staff at all levels of the school and the EPS. **424** EICs took place last year, and this academic year to date, **338** have taken place.

Other Programs

Between November 2022 and February 2023 all schools were visited in order to undertake an audit of Physical Health provision. This covered several areas including Free Period Products, Relationships, Sexual Health & Parenthood, Physical Education curriculum, extracurricular activities as well as physical space and resources.

Findings from these visits included low staff confidence in the teaching of PE and in particular the area of gymnastics. This is being addressed through our current professional learning offer and continues to inform the work of the Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (PEPAS) Group. Free period product awareness and provision was good in almost all schools with a small number receiving support to improve marketing with learners and parents.

25% of schools were taking significant steps to improve food and nutrition provision, ranging from free breakfast offers to bespoke cooking facilities. All schools were provided with individualised feedback and further analysis of visit findings will be supported directly by the Education Support Officer Team before the end of school session 2023/24.



SUPPORTING CARE EXPERIENCED AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

** Care Experienced is the collective term for anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked-after background at any stage in their life*

*** Looked After refers to children/young people who are currently 'legally' looked after.*

Support to care experience children is always delivered on a collaborative and partnership basis. Self-evaluation of progress is underway and will be reported to CPP Aberdeen in the later part of 2023.

Engagement with the Promise Scotland team recognises local progress with some areas being held up nationally. It is however recognised that on a multi-agency basis there is more we need to do to deliver on the aspirations of The Promise.



The number of LAC continues to gradually reduce. A focus on supporting children to remain within their family continues to be a partnership priority. Given the costs (financial and personal) 'shifting the balance of care' is always a consideration when assessing whether a children can safely remain within their family.

ADP (Alcohol and Drug Partnership) funding is supporting the provision of early and preventative support to young people who are exhibiting early concerns in relation to alcohol or drug use. These roles engage directly with schools to support the PSE educational input for young people. They are also moving to support the deployment of a Family Resource Worker (FRW) within the addiction service to better recognise the holistic needs of parents with addiction challenges.

A review of MCR is ongoing and will be reported to Committee in September. This is likely to recommend making some improvements to data collection approaches and planning a further evaluation to inform next steps in terms of a sustainable model.

In recognition that online access is increasingly viewed as a key utility, the planning for all young people who leave our care includes how we enable them to have online access.

Our contract with Who Cares Scotland has come to an end by mutual agreement. Work is progressing to develop internal capacity to lead our participatory approaches with young people with experience of care.

Growth in relation to the use of the Mind of My Own app has continued although not at the pace hoped for. Staffing and operational challenges have been barriers to progress.

Events to celebrate Care Day and Care Week continue to be planned. This year's event was well attended by partners and young people.

There has been a growth of UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) arriving in Aberdeen through the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). Community partners (sport & activity as well as learning needs) are continuing to support UASC adjust to life in Aberdeen.

The Housing protocol for young people with experience of care is well established. It is currently being refreshed to take account of learning and changing demography.

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

All school staff engaged in professional learning on the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) in August 2022 and children's rights feature in all school improvement plans.

The children's rights report details the increasingly diverse approaches used to elicit the voices of children and young people. 100% of school improvement plans prioritise embedding a child rights approach. Engagement with children and young people is at the heart of our Children's Services Plan.

Play Parks

The Scottish Government funding for play parks has been welcomed and has allowed further capital investment in Aberdeen's play areas. The 22/23 play area refurbishment programme saw 6 play areas successfully refurbished. Work has begun on 23/24 refurbishment programme and the funding in place will allow for play area investment over the next 2 years. This work will include children being consulted and working with the team on how their local play areas can be developed and improved.

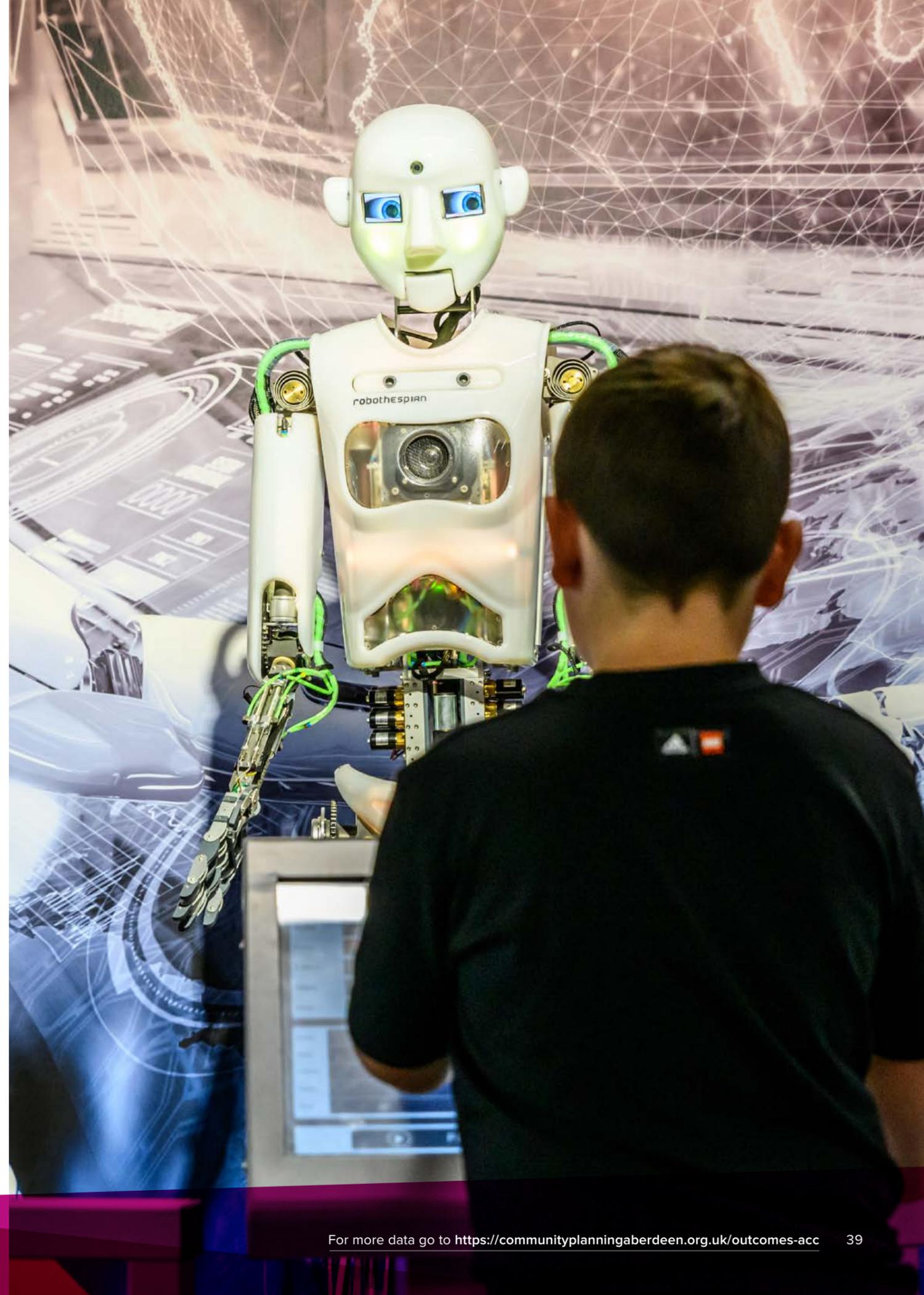


PREVENT CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE ENTERING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

All LOIP charter work under the Youth Justice Improvement Group were successfully completed in 2023. New aims and objectives are set out in the CSP and associated LOIP Stretch Outcomes.

Children referred to the reporter on offence grounds has seen reduction, we also have had no children going to a hearing on offence grounds for over a year. Children referred on offence grounds where there is assessment that compulsory measures may be required have gone to hearing on other, welfare based grounds. This is in recognition of the needs of this group of children and how we best support those needs to prevent any further conflict with the law. We continue to see most children jointly reported being retained within the hearing system, including our 16/17 year olds. This is attributed to the development work that was undertaken to ensure that children were supported in appropriate systems, the children's hearing systems rather than court system.

Charter work will continue to explore diversion from prosecution for under 18's, and will also look at assessments for children on initial court appearance from custody or on undertaking. We also continue with preparation work for the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill, which is currently at Stage 2.



PEOPLE (ADULTS)

KEY DRIVERS

- Mitigating the causes of immediate and acute poverty
- Ensure those experiencing in-work poverty have access to all appropriate benefits
- Ensure 100% of people presenting as homeless have a full financial assessment and access to all appropriate benefits by 2023
- Poverty affecting those with protected characteristics and in specific communities
- Tackling antisocial behaviour in problem areas with appropriate and effective interventions
- Those who are convicted are supported to engage with relevant services and reduce re-offending
- Changing attitudes about domestic abuse in all its forms and ensuring victims receive access to the right support
- Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families and groups
- Provide individuals and communities with the social resources needed to make informed decisions about health and lifestyle
- Encourage adoption of healthier lifestyles through a whole family approach
- 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



PEOPLE (ADULTS) HIGHLIGHTS



40% increase in the number of young people accessing domestic abuse support



Staff knowledge and confidence in identifying the signs of domestic abuse and knowing how to respond appropriately has **increased to 92%** compared to 30% last year as a result of in-depth training



5.4% decrease in antisocial behaviour complaints received by Aberdeen City Council



489 units of affordable housing **delivered** by ACC and our RSL partners

PROGRESS MADE DURING 2022/23

REDUCING OFFENDING AND CONVICTIONS

Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021

The Domestic Abuse (Protection)(Scotland) Act 2021 is a welcome piece of legislation which will further enhance and contribute to the current Domestic Abuse Council Housing Policy that ACC has in place. Our own policy allows families subject to domestic abuse to remain in the family home should they choose to do so with the perpetrator being removed if willing to do so. The Act introduces new forms of protection with Police Scotland and the courts being given powers to protect those who are most at risk by issuing Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPNs) and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs). Senior members of the police now have the power to issue a DAPN as a short-term, emergency protection where they have reasonable grounds to believe a partner or ex-partner has been abusive. Section 5 of the Act sets out an exhaustive list of prohibitions and requirements that may be imposed by a DAPN and these include stopping an abuser from entering the home of the person they have abused. The Act will also allow Social Landlords to remove perpetrators from a tenancy even when they are not willing to engage with support.

Refuge and Outreach Service for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse

Currently women fleeing domestic abuse can seek refuge accommodation from Grampian Women's Aid. Alternatively, safe accommodation can be offered via ACC's housing team in the form of temporary accommodation or discretionary moves. Recently, Aberdeen City Council Domestic Abuse Team increased its staffing from five Support Workers to seven. The purpose of increasing the staff was to allow the DAT workers to work more closely and collaboratively with our Housing and Support Teams. The Housing and Support Team has been designed to identify need and risk earlier and prevent escalation in need. By redesigning the domestic support service delivery to be integrated within the existing teams the aim is to identify and offer support before the need to rehouse individuals and before there is a risk of harm. This redesign is in the early stages and we will therefore be able to report on outcomes in next year's report.

"Safe & Together" project

40 staff have completed the Safe and Together E-Learning Core Training. Feedback is being sought at the moment. 1 staff member has now completed the Safe and Together Certified Trainer programme. They are now in a position to deliver Overview and Core training. Another staff member has recently completed the Certified Trainer programme with a further 2 staff members beginning the training in September.

In house Core Safe and Together training took place in May with 9 staff members attending. Further sessions are being organised for September and October.

Feedback from the S&T Core training was very positive with practitioners commenting the following:

'The training was fantastic. I've really reflected on my own practice, recognising my use of mutualising language and failure to hold the perpetrator responsible. It is so refreshing to be promoted to really highlight survivor strength and to partner with them. This training has really prompted my thought process with assessing and planning where domestic abuse is being perpetrated.'

'This is a practice changing and much needed. Using a child centred model is so useful in working with perpetrators and avoids much of the challenges of working with domestic abuse. It also keeps the child at the centre. The use of language and holding perpetrators accountable is also very useful.'

Further Core and Overview training will take place in September and October this year.

Reducing Anti-social Behaviour

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) continues to play a key role in tackling antisocial behaviour across the city. The partnership is supported by the wider functions of each of the key organisations (Aberdeen City Council, Police Scotland and Scottish Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS)). Partners meet daily responding to existing or emerging harms. The partnership is supported by Tactical and Strategic oversight with a prevention focussed approach to tackling underlying causes of community harms that ensures safer, stronger and cohesive communities.

There is a strong linkage between the partnership and the Outcome Improvement Groups overseen by Community Planning Aberdeen. There have also been a number of successful 'Test of change' projects completed through the Youth Justice Improvement Group, including the formation of the 'Tesco Hub' which saw high levels of Antisocial Behaviour reduced significantly within its area of operation. Using the Hub as a base, young people in the area quickly gravitated towards the facilities available there, allowing for adult led interventions and mentorship at that location.

Other 'tests of Change' under this project saw the Streetsport project more closely align to the partnership and strong co-ordination to work within areas of high ASB.

There has been a 5.6% decrease in Community Safety contacts received through the partnership in 2022-23 compared to last year and a 5.4% decrease in ASB complaints received by ACC.

Work continues to target key areas of anti-social behaviour in order to make our communities safer this includes work on a youth hub in Northfield, a new Improvement Project aimed at reducing by 15% the number of instances of youth anti-social behaviour calls to Police Scotland by 2025 which is in the early stages of planning and additional operations/projects within city centre.

HOUSING

Increasing the supply of affordable housing

Affordable housing continues to be delivered across the city which includes both ACC new build and our Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners. In 2022/23 the following was delivered:

Location	Developer	Type	No. of units
Council Buy Backs	ACC	Social Rent	109
Auchmill Road	ACC	Social Rent	92
Summerhill	ACC	Social Rent	186
Countesswells	Hillcrest	Social Rent	59
Falkland Avenue	Hillcrest	Social Rent	28
May Baird Avenue	Places for People	Mid-Market Rent	8
Charleston, Cove	Grampian Housing	Mid-Market Rent	1
Dubford Mews	Grampian Housing	Mid-Market Rent	5
Newton of Charleston	Muir Homes	Low-Cost Home Ownership	1
Total			489

We are continuing to incorporate adaptations into new build housing and are currently working towards the 15% target of all affordable new homes to be delivered as fully wheelchair accessible set out in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

The Housing for Varying Needs review is nearing completion with only a small number of outstanding items to be addressed with decisions needed regarding future models of care and support.

Work is ongoing with the council house new build programme. Summerhill, Craighill and Kincorth are on site and delivering new homes. Greenferns and Greenferns Landward are at the Masterplan stages. There is also discussion ongoing with local Registered Social Landlords in the city regarding increasing the number of lets to households experiencing homelessness and Section 5's.

Improve the quality of housing

In 2022/23 77% of ACC properties passed the Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS), 3% of properties were exempt from SHQS and 6.4% were considered abeyance. Looking at those which failed we are prioritising those under element 45 – Safe electrics and are putting a plan in place alongside our Building Services team to ensure all EICR(Electrical Installation Conditions Report) are up to date for the current year.

Reduce Homelessness

There is ongoing work with the Centre for Homelessness Impact who were one of the bid partners in Aberdeen's expression of interest to be part of The Royal Foundation's Homewards programme.

Aberdeen City Council commission Turning Point Scotland to deliver a Housing First city in the service.

The Private Landlord Support Officer has been liaising with landlords when tenant complaint forms are submitted. This has helped encourage landlords to action property repairs. If a tenant contacts the team regarding issues such as no tenant deposit returned, the Officer is then able to provide suitable advice to the tenant on how to proceed.

Particular areas of re-occurring issues have been highlighted in Landlord Newsletters to help raise awareness amongst landlords of rights and responsibilities. Examples include any changes in legislation, signposting tenants for Financial advice.

The Private Landlord Support Officer and Private Sector Housing Manager have presented to various Letting Agents across Aberdeen to raise awareness of tools that are available to tenants, especially providing details of the Financial Advice Team if a tenant cannot afford to pay rent/bills. Highlighting agencies that Agents can direct tenants to for money advice, may be one of the avenues that reduces the likelihood of a landlord serving a Notice to Leave and the tenant is then at risk of homelessness.

The Private Landlord Support Officer has been in contact with the Housing Options Team and a link has been created where landlords can be contacted regarding rights and responsibilities.

All households entering temporary accommodation are currently getting a check of their benefits on entry.

Aberdeen City Council has continued to support people to convert their temporary accommodation to permanent accommodation at the same property where it is appropriate to do so.



Youth Homelessness

Youth homelessness increased by 26% for 16/17 year olds in 2022/23 compared to 21/22. There were 95 applications received for the 16/17 year old population, this is the highest recorded since 2010/11. A 22% increase was reported among those aged 18 – 24 years old.

The increase in youth homelessness was impacted by a change in policy concerning care experienced young people where all planned referrals are now being managed under the legislative homeless framework.

Applications among care experienced young people known to be under the care of Aberdeen Youth Team increased from 6 in 2021/22 to 20 in 2022/23.

Applicants becoming homeless from the parental/family home were still most common in 2022/23. The increase last year could be a consequence of any protracted demand caused by the ending of Covid regulations.

Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council have jointly commissioned a Nightstop service run by Aberdeen Foyer to reduce the risk of young people coming into temporary accommodation. A small number of hosts have been identified and we have started a soft launch of the pathways with referrals able to come from our Housing Options Officers.

We have also recruited a further Housing Options Officers to support young people who leave the homeless process to ensure they find a sustainable next step in their housing journey.



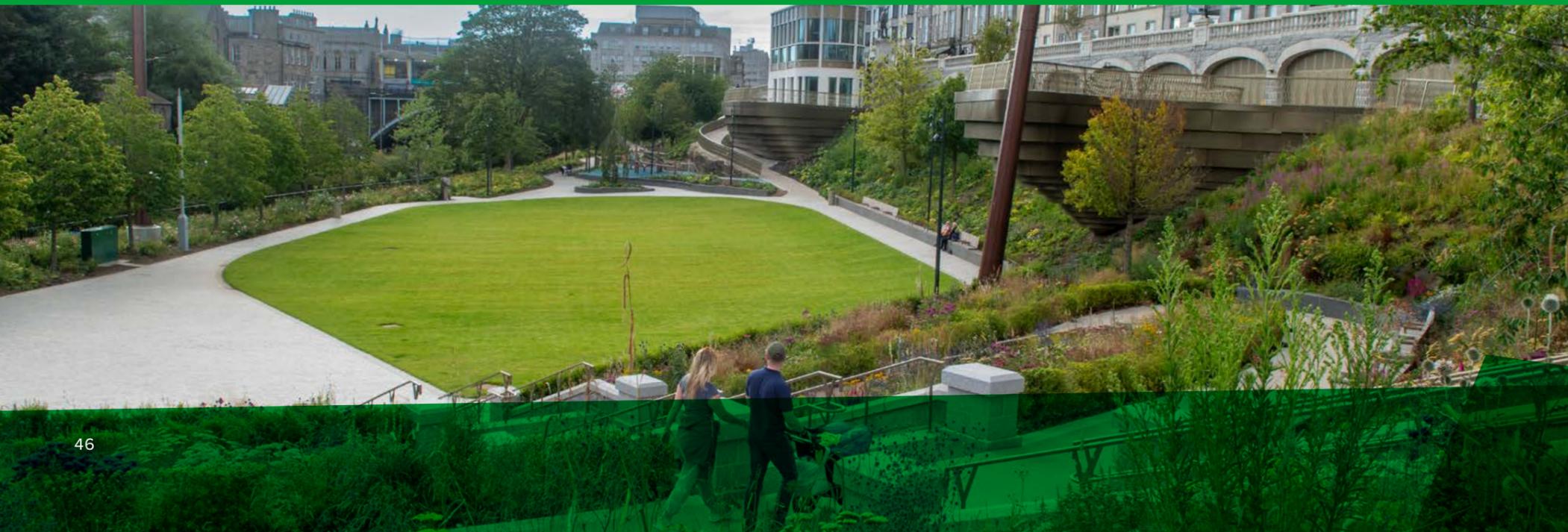
Community Learning and Development (CLD)

Our CLD teams continue to deliver learning across our communities through youth work, adult learning, family learning and healthy minds. This year we have significantly increased the total learner hours across groups, 164% increase across youth work, 332% increase in adult learning and 350% increase in family learning. These significant increases are as a response to changing need and the addition of fixed term funding.

PLACE

KEY DRIVERS

- Reducing emissions across the city through delivery of Aberdeen's Net Zero Vision & Route-map
- Provide individuals and communities with the social resources needed to make informed decisions about health and lifestyle
- Encouraging adoption of healthier lifestyles through a whole family approach
- Supporting different ways for active travel in everyday journeys, using partners and volunteers to address safety, infrastructure, fitness, wellbeing and confidence
- Increasing the diversity, quality and use of the Aberdeen's green spaces by facilitating community participation in them to restore nature and increase people's satisfaction, health, and wellbeing
- Increasing the area of public, private and community land managed for nature, in recognition of the nature crisis and in alignment with global and national ambitions to protect 30% of land and 30% of water by 2030 (30-30-30)
- Provide individuals and communities with the social resources needed to reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation
- Contributing to the delivery of Aberdeen Adapts by developing a bottom up approach to community resilience to encourage greater ownership and independent action towards understanding communities' risks from climate change and adapting to them
- Mitigating the causes of immediate and acute poverty



PLACE HIGHLIGHTS



E-bike rental scheme launched with **200 e-bikes** available across the city



289 community groups involved in community run **green spaces** across the city



7082 trees replanted at Carnie Woods, Hazlehead



9 Green Flags awarded to the city for it's **open spaces**

MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT

Reducing emissions

Air quality continues to improve throughout the city, although there are still some areas where pollution levels are above or near to objective limits.

A City Centre Low Emission Zone was declared in 2022, with enforcement due to commence from June 2024. A revised Air Quality Action Plan is being developed which will identify further actions to improve air quality and hopefully result in the revocation of the Air Quality Management Areas during the life of the Plan.



A programme of transport corridor studies are underway looking at opportunities for improved bus priority measures on key radial corridors between the AWPR and the city centre. These are currently at varying stages of the options appraisal and business case process, and are informed by the regional vision for Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART), a proposed high-frequency and high-capacity bus-based rapid transit solution.

All consultations on implementation of the bus related provisions of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 have been responded to and the regulatory provisions are in the process of being introduced by the Scottish Government.

The Council further considered the provision of Local Authority Bus Services and agreed not to introduce such measures at the present time and to develop Bus Service Improvement Partnerships and for Local Authority operated bus services to be assessed when implementing supported bus services.

Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs), are currently being progressed through the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance and the implementation of measures under the ongoing transport corridor studies and [Bus Partnership Funding](#).

Delivery of the transport elements of the Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan is ongoing, with traffic restrictions introduced on Union Street Central and Schoolhill/Upperkirkgate from Summer 2022. Further restrictions on Market Street, Guild Street and Bridge Street to create a bus priority route (and therefore improve bus journey times and reliability) are to be introduced later in 2023, while work is underway looking at improved walking and cycling provision and Union Street and between the city centre and beachfront.

First Aberdeen have introduced 'Tap On, Tap Off', using contactless payment to allow passenger to simply Tap on and off when boarding and alighting and the fare paid will be capped to the best value ticket for the journey, day or week. This is speeding up boarding times and in turn will contribute towards reduced bus journey times as the scheme grows.

Actions to support carbon reduction were progressed including:

- In the last few years, the transition of the Council fleet from fossil fuels, to low and zero carbon alternatives has included conversion of several large fleet vehicles to hydrogen – diesel hybrids (H2ICEd). Learning from this will inform the planning for further fleet transition.
- Continued roll out of the street lighting LED replacement programme.

Delivery of net zero and climate resilience actions for Council assets and operations continued through the Council Climate Change Plan. At city scale, to support the delivery of the place-based Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and Aberdeen Adapts: Climate Adaptation Framework, refreshed governance proposals for city net zero and climate adaptation were approved in February 2023. In addition, an Aberdeen Climate and Nature pledge was launched in November 2022 encouraging wider commitment from organisations and individuals to acting on climate change and joining the collective journey towards net zero and climate resilience expressed in Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts.

A preferred option for improved transport connectivity to and from Aberdeen South Harbour has been identified, with an Outline Business Case currently in development.

The cycle hire scheme was formally launched in November 2022, with officers now working with the operator to support ongoing growth and expansion. The scheme has expanded to offer around 200 e-bikes for use at 58 parking zones and these numbers are increasing as operations dictate.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Currently officers are reviewing the Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) within the city to assess if they are still appropriately designated sites. The review started in September 2022 and aims to be finished in 2024. Sites are currently being reviewed with a scientific panel and this will form the basis of the final assessments. The scientific panel includes local experts, county recorders, researchers and NESBReC (North East Scotland Biological Records Centre).

We currently have 3,191.59 hectares of protected land and sea in Aberdeen. This covers the full range of formal protections/designations for nature from international (E.g. Special Area of Conservation), to local (E.g. Local Nature Conservation) sites.

In December 2022 70% of respondents to the City Voice survey reported that they were satisfied with their local greenspace this was a 5% increase from March 2020.

Open Spaces

Environmental charity Keep Scotland Beautiful presented Aberdeen with nine Green Flag Awards in recognition of its quality open spaces in July this year. The nine flags exceed the seven awarded in 2022, with Westfield Park the recipient of its first flag, and Cove Woodland, managed by the Cove Woodland Trust, another new winner.

Seven others retained their green flag status: Hazlehead Park, Seaton Park, Victoria Park, Johnston Gardens, Slopefield Allotments, Garthdee Field Allotments and Duthie Park.

Keep Scotland Beautiful is an international project which highlights clean, safe, and well-maintained parks and green spaces across the country.

Bio-blitz events

Aberdeen City Council held two Bio-blitz events this year, these were free events held at Seaton Park and Duthie Park and are a fun & interactive way for wildlife lovers of all ages and abilities to come together to discover and identify creatures living in our parks. The Bio-blitz events are part of the Aberdeen Flagship Parks for Pollinators Project which aims to create and improve wildflower areas, woodland, wetland and pond areas for wildlife, focusing particularly on pollinating insects. Pollinators include bumblebees, bees hoverflies, butterflies, moths, flies and various other insects and beetles.



Trees

Thousands of trees have been planted across Aberdeen as part of a plan to replenish and grow the city's woods and other green areas. The Environmental Services team have been involved in many projects including; The Community Planting Scheme, Street Tree Planting, The Queen's Green Canopy Champion City and Woodside Wee Forest as well as storm recovery work.

It was estimated more than 15,000 trees were felled across the city during the storm in November 2021. There was a particular devastating impact on Carnie Woods at Hazlehead and the woodland surrounding Aberdeen Crematorium. We have now replanted a total of 7,082 trees at Carnie Woods these include a variety of species; Norway Spruce, Scots Pine, European Larch, Gean, Silver Birch, Rowan, Hazel and Oak. The work at Carnie Woods is part of the recovery and replanting of trees taking part across the city.

The Tree and Woodland Strategic Implementation Plan was approved by the former Operational Delivery Committee in June 2022. Work is currently ongoing to deliver Priority 2 of the Plan which aims to identify the best and most suitable sites for woodland creation in the city.

WASTE AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Progress has been hampered due to the fire at Altens East in July 2022 which has affected all services. However, recycling rates in the city are still above the Scottish average.

Highlight of the year was the opening of the Re-Use Shop at Hazlehead Recycling Centre which has increased awareness and availability of re-use activity and how it relates to waste reduction.



13 organisations attended 3 facilitated online Net Zero Aberdeen Circular Economy Workshops, in March 2023. The workshops were hosted by Zero Waste Scotland in collaboration with Aberdeen City Council. The aim was to build shared understanding of a circular economy and develop Project Programmes to deliver the Net Zero Aberdeen, Circular Economy Strategy by identifying circular economy initiatives in the city and opportunities for new circular economy projects. The workshops covered: Valuing our Resources, Business and Jobs for a Circular Future, Maximising Product Life.

The Ness Energy Facility began accepting the city's residual waste in February 2023 and is moving towards full services in autumn of 2023. Almost all of the city's residual waste is now being delivered to the energy from waste facility at East Tullos.

Installation of RFID tags to all communal bins is nearing completion and will allow for better vision and management of the way communal bins are used to allow better measurement of the performance of this service and to allow a more targeted approach to awareness raising in these traditionally lower performing areas.

The construction of new segregation bays at Sclattie Waste Transfer Station will also allow for improved recycling and segregation of bulky wastes collected at the HWRCs and kerbside bulky uplift service for re-use, recycling or recovery. These are due for completion in autumn 2023.

The Re-Use Shop, RFID tags and Sclattie Bay projects have all been funded from the Recycling Improvement Fund.

HEAT NETWORKS

There are currently 3966 households connected to the existing heat network, of which 3673 are Aberdeen City Council properties and 26 public buildings also connected. We are continuing to grow our networks with the final 170 properties at Summerhill due to be added to the Stockethill Network and 83 at Harris Drive due to be connected to the Tillydrone Network. The Sillerton Lane energy centre is almost complete with the Kincorth and Craighill residential sites to be added in due course. The new Riverbank Primary School is currently being connected to the Tillydrone EC as well as the Lighthouse family Centre.