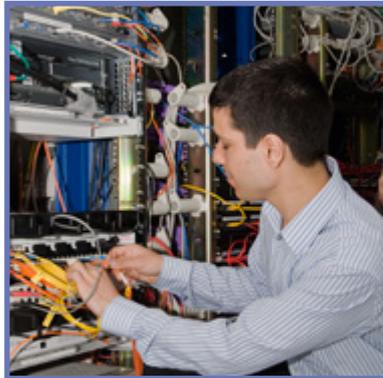Aberdeenshire Council

Corporate Asset Management Plan

2015 - 2020

Incorporating Capital Strategy

2015 – 2030

January 2015

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This is Aberdeenshire Councils Corporate Asset Management Plan 2015 – 2020 which supersedes the previous version which was approved and adopted by the Policy and Resources Committee in September 2010.

As with the Councils previous Corporate Asset Management Plan, this plan has been developed in line with "A Guide to Asset Management and Capital Planning in Local Authorities" published by CIPFA and includes Property, Open Space, Roads, Housing, Fleet and ICT assets.

This Corporate Asset Management Plan also outlines the Council's approach to Asset Management and how this links with: the Single Outcome Agreement, the Aberdeenshire Community Plan and its community planning themes; and the Council Plan.

The importance of Asset Management is contained within Core Outcome 4, Public Excellence, within the Council Plan

"We will effectively manage our resources and assets to ensure we are financially robust and our buildings, technology, roads, bridges, harbours, beaches and streets are in the condition they should be"

All asset types have, to some extent, clearly defined strategies for their delivery and management which are summarised within this document, along with high level commentary regarding the asset base.

The Corporate Asset Management Plan 2015 – 2020 is arranged as follows:

Section 1 Review of previous Corporate Asset Management Plan 2010 – 2015: provides an overview on progress on a number of key goals and actions included within the previous Corporate Asset Management Plan

Section 2 Corporate Overview and Background: provides an overview of Aberdeenshire and background towards its approach to asset management, its Corporate Planning framework and highlights links to other policies and strategies

Section 3 Organisational and Governance Structure: outlines the corporate governance approach towards asset management, along with the mechanisms in place for projects' inclusion within the Capital Plan

Section 4 Capital Investment Arrangements and 15 Year Investment Strategy: highlights funding sources, prioritisation framework and 15 year investment strategy. This also highlights key areas of expenditure across all asset types

Section 5 Property: outlines how we manage our Property portfolio

Section 6 Open Space: outlines how we manage our parks and open spaces

Section 7 Roads Structures, Lighting and Water Infrastructure: outlines how we manage our Roads and associated infrastructure network
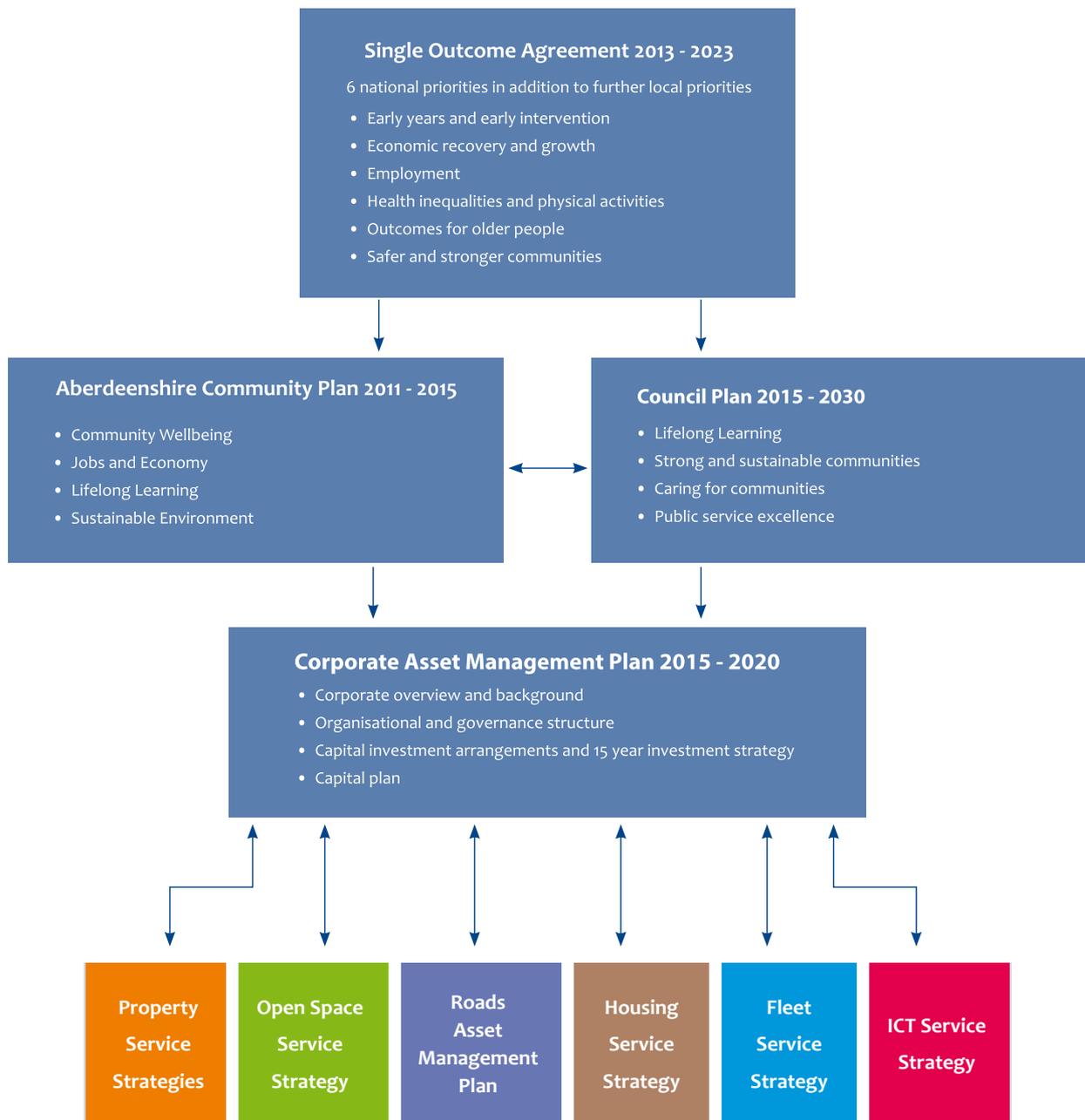
Section 8 Housing: outlines how we manage our Housing portfolio

Section 9 Fleet: outlines how we manage our Fleet and small plant assets

Section 10 ICT: outlines how we manage our ICT assets and associated infrastructure

Section 11 Future Developments and Arrangements

Section 12 Glossary of Definitions

Single Outcome Agreement 2013 - 2023

6 national priorities in addition to further local priorities

- Early years and early intervention
- Economic recovery and growth
- Employment
- Health inequalities and physical activities
- Outcomes for older people
- Safer and stronger communities

Aberdeenshire Community Plan 2011 - 2015

- Community Wellbeing
- Jobs and Economy
- Lifelong Learning
- Sustainable Environment

Council Plan 2015 - 2030

- Lifelong Learning
- Strong and sustainable communities
- Caring for communities
- Public service excellence

Corporate Asset Management Plan 2015 - 2020
- Corporate overview and background
- Organisational and governance structure
- Capital investment arrangements and 15 year investment strategy
- Capital plan

| Property Service Strategies | Open Space Service Strategy | Roads Asset Management Plan | Housing Service Strategy | Fleet Service Strategy | ICT Service Strategy |

The relationship of the Corporate Asset Management Plan to other strategies and plans.

1.0 REVIEW OF CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2010 − 2015

The previous Corporate Asset Management Plan adopted in September 2010 indicated a number of key goals and actions across all asset types to ensure that all of the Councils assets are effectively managed. Progress against these activities is noted below:

PROPERTY	
Activities identified in CAMP 2010 - 2015	**Progress to date**
Ensuring that outcomes of Service based asset strategies align with Community Plan, Strategic Priorities and Single Outcome Agreement.	Ongoing activity as assets are reviewed. To date the office portfolio has been reviewed with proposals contained within the workSPACE Strategy currently being implemented. The depot strategy has also been approved which ensures that these facilities support future service delivery. The Commercial and Industrial Strategy has been approved and is the catalyst for further economic development. The Council has also an approved Community Asset Transfer Policy. Further reviews are being programmed for other asset types.
Implementing a carbon management strategy	The Council has agreed new targets for carbon reduction. The Carbon Management Strategy is being reviewed and developed to reflect these new targets.
Implementing a fuel choice strategy for heating upgrades and new installations.	The Fuel Choice Strategy for non -housing assets was approved in September 2010, and considers whole life costs, carbon emissions and other important factors.

Implementing a maintenance strategy.	The Maintenance Strategy was approved in January 2013, and sets out the broad processes by which the Council's maintenance needs are identified, managed, monitored and reported on. The strategy also highlights key themes for capitalised maintenance programmes, a number of which also align with wider corporate objectives and statutory requirements/ obligations.
Implementing procedures to collate and assess utilisation across the operational portfolio.	Ongoing activity with utilisation collected and recorded as strategies are developed for various asset types.
Examining under utilised assets.	Asset utilisation reviewed during Service based asset strategies, with recommendations contained within proposals. A review of asset use is also undertaken on an individual asset basis where opportunities exist.
Developing and implementing common office space standards.	Space standards have been developed as part of the wider workSPACE strategy with these being adhered to as offices are upgraded.
Implementing programme to reduce office space by 25%	The workSPACE strategy was approved in September 2010 and is linked with the Worksmart initiative and Customer Service Provision which will reduce the number of facilities used for office purposes from 98 to 53 by 2017/18.
Implementing disposal strategy.	The Surplus Property Policy approved April 2011, and sets out principles and processes for the effective management of the Council's property assets. In addition, an Asset Disposal Group has been formed to implement strategy and monitor disposals.
Development of capital projects through gateway process.	The Gateway process has been established and is utlised for the delivery of major projects.
Developing and implementing high level option appraisal selection process for projects inclusion within capital plan.	An assessment appraisal model has been developed and is being implemented to determine projects' inclusion within the capital plan.

OPEN SPACE

Activities identified in CAMP 2010 - 2015	Progress to date
Develop a long term physical framework for each of Aberdeenshires main settlements	Completion of input and ratification of all maintained site data into Confirm System, including details and measurements of all identified features (grass, play areas, shrubs, etc). Annual Area revenue works programmes developed and approved by area committees based on identified local requirements and feedback from Elected Members & Community Councils.
To define the various potential roles or functions and essential qualities of each different type of open space	A revised Parks & Open Spaces Strategy was approved by ISC in January 2011, and details agreed changes to open space management.
Develop minimum standards and qualitative standards, Identify actions to allow adjustment to open space management regimes, improvement to co-ordination etc.	The Open Spaces Maintenance KDI review carried out in 2013 identified a number of amended and additional maintenance options to further increase scope for changes to suit local conditions & requirements. A proposed programme for increased promotion of Landscape services in conjunction with use of open spaces has been agreed.

ROADS, STRUCTURES, LIGHTING AND WATER INFRASTRUCTURE	
Activities identified in CAMP 2010 - 2015	**Progress to date**
Develop asset management planning and integrate it into daily tasks.	A Road Asset Management Plan was approved in November 2012 setting out the overall framework. A Road Asset Management Handbook approved in November 2012 setting out guidance for integrating asset management into daily tasks.
Manage, maintain, operate and invest in harbours to provide effective facilities which meet customer requirements and maximise income to the Council	Annual programmes of revenue works ensure that maintenance activities are prioritised according to need and take account of input from harbour advisory committees. Rates and dues are reviewed annually to take account of inflation and be competitive in the market place. Also, new charges have been established to draw income from emerging business in crew transfer and leisure/training activities. Quay side power supplies were installed at Macduff in 2013 to service berthed vessels and reduce pollution from running generators on boats.
Maintain existing council owned coastal assets to protect against flooding and erosion from sea, and construct new defences where there is a sound economic case.	An annual programme of revenue measures ensures that assets are regularly inspected and repaired based on priority need. Longer term effects of climate change on sea levels are being considered in the development of Local Flood Risk Management Plans required under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009. Outcomes will drive future capital investment.
Maintain council owned flood protection assets to protect against river and surface water flooding, and construct new defences where there is a sound economic case.	An annual programme of revenue measures ensures that assets are regularly inspected and repaired based on priority need. New flood protection schemes are being developed for Huntly and Stonehaven with the former planned for implementation in 2015 and the latter in 2016. Potential new assets are being considered during development of measures to reduce flood risk as required in preparation of Local Flood Risk Management Plans required under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009. Outcomes will drive future capital investment.

HOUSING

Activities identified in CAMP 2010 - 2015	Progress to date
We will continue to provide good quality affordable homes to people in housing need	The service has been successful in reducing the number of homelessness applications by ensuring that cases of potential homelessness are addressed at the initial contact, preventing homelessness by providing intervention at the earliest stage. The Service has recently reviewed the council house Allocation Policy to ensure that applicants with the highest housing need are prioritised accordingly for the allocation of available properties. The service is working to increase the sustainability of tenancies through the provision of support and assistance.
We will maintain council housing to a standard at least comparable with the SHQS	The service has a 30 year business plan linked to the 100% robust stock condition database which leads on all maintenance built into the detailed three year stock improvement plan. This has proved successful in ensuring that Council Housing is on target to meet the SHQS by the March 2015 deadline.
We will maximise use of existing and new housing	The Housing Service has had a successful and ongoing new build programme to deliver in the region of 50 new council houses every year until 2018. The service also optimises the provision of housing through the Council's Affordable Housing Policy, to provide a tenure mix within new developments.
We maintain a balanced portfolio through new build, acquisitions, sales, remodelling, tenure diversification, demolition and redevelopment	The Service recently developed an Asset Management System which pulls information from all systems to ensure the service is aware of the contribution from all resources and enables senior management to make informed investment decisions based on facts. The Housing Service is fortunate in that there is high demand for almost all of its assets. However, there is a small proportion of some sheltered housing schemes that are underutilised and a group has been established to review these assets at a strategic level.

We will contribute to neighbourhood regeneration	The service continues to build on the strengths in local communities through effective customer involvement working with communities to determine areas for regeneration and development, and has been successful with significant projects in Bridge Street, Banff and Barrasgate, Fraserburgh.
We will encourage a Council wide approach to investment	Housing works closely with other services utilising Keys Areas for Development funding to identify underutilised General Fund sites for the development of much needed affordable housing, such as the highly successful scheme New Build Council Housing project in Banff on a former education site.
We will ensure the stock complies with relevant regulatory requirements	The housing service has implemented a fuel choice strategy aligned with the corporate strategy, enhanced to take into account tenants' running costs and ease of use and the matrix is utilised for all new heating investment. The Service has recently appointed a contractor to undertake an Energy Audit of all its houses, producing Energy Performance Certificates, which will link directly to rent setting. The outcome will be robust energy efficiency data enabling resources to be focused on those most in need.

FLEET	
Activities identified in CAMP 2010 - 2015	**Progress to date**
Offering flexible workshop opening hours to suit our customers business needs.	Modernisation review currently ongoing which ensures sufficient cover at all times allowing repairs to be undertaken as quickly and efficiently as possible.
Consider the needs of our internal customers.	Ongoing major roll out of waste vehicles to support new waste collection system currently being implemented.

ICT	
Activities identified in CAMP 2010 - 2015	**Progress to date**
Comprehensive asset management information is collected, maintained, readily available and stored efficiently	The council's IT service management system is the central data store for ICT asset management information. The system is accessed and maintained by all ICT staff. This is integrated with the desktop management tool to maintain comprehensive information regarding the hardware specification and software installed on the PC and laptop estate.
Information is identified and maintained relating to system "roadmaps", lifecycles and replacement plans	All business systems were assessed in terms of functionality, performance, availability and resilience during the ICT review concluded in 2012. A programme of contract review and potential re-procurement of all business critical systems was agreed by Policy and Resources Committee in November 2013.
Centralising purchasing and supply contracts for hardware and standard software	All IT hardware and software is purchased through or in consultation with ICT. A central list of all ICT contracts is maintained and specific budgets identified for hardware and software annual licence, support and maintenance costs.

Exploiting appropriate e-procurement, legal and framework agreements for hardware and software	Scottish and UK procurement frameworks are used whenever they are available and provide best value. In particular, the majority of hardware is purchased from framework agreements including PCs, laptops, servers and network equipment.
Ensure all new hardware and software are thoroughly tested to ensure technical and operational compliance	Following the review of ICT a new structure was implemented during 2013. Roles and responsibilities are now clearly divided between operational and development teams. Industry standard change management processes are in place to ensure that all significant changes to the live operational environment are tested and approved before being deployed.
Minimising operational overheads and annual running costs	All contracts are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they continue to represent best value for the council. The recent ICT review identified the potential to reduce annual running costs by standardising on the Microsoft suite of office productivity software and desktop management tools. An implementation project is currently underway which will upgrade or replace a number of existing systems and tools including Office and the Lotus Notes email system.
Ensuring backup/recovery of systems and disaster recovery of critical systems	Comprehensive backups are available for all business critical systems. A secondary data centre is now in place, providing business continuity and disaster recovery facilities for a number of business systems and technical services. In particular secondary internet connectivity is now available.
Ensuring appropriate information security (availability, integrity and confidentiality)	The council complies with the requirements of connection to the Public Services Network (PSN). Policies, procedures, technical architectures and system security are assessed and accredited on an annual basis.

2.0 CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

2.1 Corporate Overview

Aberdeenshire is the 6th largest of the 32 local authorities within Scotland with a population of approx 259,000 and covering a predominantly rural area of 2,437 square miles, comprising a mixture of farmland, towns, coastline and mountains. Traditionally, it has been economically dependent upon the primary sector (agriculture, fishing and forestry) and related processing industries. Over the past 40 years, the development of the oil and gas industry and associated service sector has broadened Aberdeenshire's economic base, and contributed to a rapid population growth of some 50% since 1975. In recent years Aberdeenshire's population has increased by 11.5% since 2001, the highest population growth experienced by any Scottish local authority over this period.

Unemployment within Aberdeenshire is currently low with a significant proportion of Aberdeenshire's working residents commuting to work in Aberdeen City. Forecasts indicate that over the next 15 years the proportion of working age people within the area will decrease, whilst the number of retired people will increase, leading to greater demand on Council services.

Many areas of Aberdeenshire experience excellent quality of life with good employment prospects, high standards in health care and low crime levels. However, there remain pockets of deprivation both in urban areas and small or remote communities where lack of access to employment remains a problem.

Aberdeenshire's asset base at April 2014 extended to some 756 facilities which are used for operational purposes, 3,000 ha of parks and open space, 3,400 miles of carriageway, 1,400 bridges and culverts, 12,954 rented units for social housing, 782 vehicles/key plant plus a further 1,711 items of smaller plant and over 14,300 ICT installations (PC's and servers) along with a further 2,900 smartphones, tablets and phone systems.

Corporate Vision

The Council has clear aspirations for the future of Aberdeenshire which are reflected in the Aberdeenshire Council vision:

Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland

The best area

Helping to create and sustain the best quality of life for all through:

- happy, healthy and confident people
- safe, friendly and lively communities
- an enterprising and adaptable economy
- our special environment and diverse culture

The best council

Aiming to provide excellent services for all by:

- involving, responding and enabling
- finding new and more efficient ways of doing things
- providing elected leadership for our area
- working with our partners in the North East and beyond
- always looking to the future

2.2 Background

The Council's asset management process initially focused on the Education Estate in response to the Scottish Executive initiative "Building Our Future - Scotland's School Estate" in 2003. The Council commenced a data collection process and reported these findings in the form of Core Facts to the, then, Scottish Executive Education Department along with the preparation of the Schools Estate Management Plan.

Asset management for remaining assets was the Council's response to the introduction of the Prudential Code. This resulted in the formation of a Corporate Asset Management Group, the work of which was informed by the collection of data concerning assets which covered extent, value, condition, suitability, and, where applicable, maintenance and energy costs associated with the asset. This information is utilised to inform management decisions relating to assets.

Services produced initial asset based Strategies which identified key elements and needs required to fulfil the objectives within the Council and Community Plan whilst also meeting the need for additional community infrastructure within areas of population growth. The outcomes of these Strategies were incorporated within the Council's first Corporate Asset Management Plan 2008/09, which covered Property and Roads & associated infrastructure, along with funding requirements. The Corporate Asset Management Plan was further updated in 2010, in line with CIPFA guidance, to include Property, Open Space, Roads and associated infrastructure, Housing, Fleet and ICT assets.

Services continue to review asset based strategies to ensure validity of future requirements and investment. These future requirements and investment needs have been realigned to reflect current timescales, including deliverability, and available funding. This realignment is reflected within the amended Capital Plan.

2.3 Links to Strategies and Plans

The Corporate Asset Management Plan directly informs, and is informed by, a number of national agendas and local plans and outcomes.

The Single Outcome Agreement 2013 – 2023
The Single Outcome Agreement 2013 – 2023 highlights what Aberdeenshire Council and its partners will do during the 10 year period, with this plan outlining the Scottish Government's 6 national priorities that all community planning partnerships must focus on, these being:

- Early years and early intervention
- Economic recovery and growth
- Employment
- Health inequalities and physical activities
- Outcomes for older people
- Safer and stronger communities

Aberdeenshire Community Plan 2011 - 2015
The effective utilisation of the Council's assets and resources are fundamental in realising the Council's vision and in fulfilling the Council's community planning themes as outlined in Aberdeenshire Community Plan 2011-2015, developed with our partner agencies, these being:

- Community Wellbeing
- Jobs and the Economy
- Lifelong Learning
- Sustainable Environment

Council Plan 2013 – 2017
The Council Plan 2013 - 2017 is informed by the priorities of the Aberdeenshire Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement. The Council Plan sets out a vision, core outcomes and key priorities that are clear to communities and stakeholder groups, these being:

- Lifelong Learning
- Strong and Sustainable Communities
- Caring for Communities
- Public Service Excellence

Service Based Asset Strategies
Services have produced strategies, based on asset type, which outline requirements to enable Services to fulfil the delivery of the Strategic Priorities. These strategies form the basis from which projects identified within both the Corporate Asset Management Plan and Capital Plan are based.

The Council's largest single asset is the public road network with a gross replacement value of £5.8 billion. In line with nationally recommended best practice, the Council has developed and implemented a Roads Asset Management Plan which was approved by the Infrastructure Services Committee in November 2012.

The efficient use of public resources through improvement in the management of assets is fundamental to the effectiveness of this planning framework. The Council ensures a corporate approach to capital spending along with adopting a strategic approach to the management of its assets.

Corporate Planning

As a lead agency within the area, the Council has clear aspirations for the future of Aberdeenshire which are embodied within Single Outcome Agreement 2013 – 2023, the Aberdeenshire Community Plan 2011-2015 and Council Plan 2013 – 2017. The links between these key strategies and asset management have been assessed and are summarised below:

Single Outcome Agreement 2013 – 2023

Early years and early intervention	Develop learning environments through an informed and planned programme of estate development
Economic recovery and growth	Develop regeneration strategies Support business and key sectors Improve access to affordable housing Enhance broadband infrastructure Support replacement of minibuses for some A2B dial a bus services Strategic and local road safety improvements on key routes across Aberdeenshire Resurfacing/reconstruction on local and strategic routes and bridges across Aberdeenshire Improve transport infrastructure
Employment	Ensure sufficient supply of marketable employment land
Health inequalities and physical activities	Increase access and opportunities for leisure Develop libraries as customer service/information points Develop community sports hubs Maintain access to country parks, beaches and equipped play areas
Outcomes for older people	Influence future policy and investment priorities in relation to housing adaptations

Safer and stronger communities	Develop infrastructure to enable cycling and walking safely between communities
	Provide funding to and monitor projects agreed as part of the council administration 100 Day Pledge
	Assist community groups and social enterprise in taking over assets and services from the Council

Aberdeenshire Community Plan 2011 - 2015

Community Wellbeing	o Provide play areas within public open space
	o Invest in swimming pools and community leisure facilities
	o Ensure all public facing buildings in Aberdeenshire Council meet requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act by 2012
	o Invest in roads safety projects
	o Ensure our housing stock meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standards by 2015
Jobs and the Economy	o Prioritise regeneration in coastal regeneration areas of Banff and Buchan, Buchan and Kincardine and Mearns
	o Work with partners to deliver an integrated transport strategy
	o Manage and maintain the road network to a high standard
	o Invest in cycling and walking infrastructure
	o Support community owned halls and promote community-owned renewable energy projects
	o Ensure a sufficient supply of marketable employment land is available to support new and expanding businesses
Lifelong Learning	o Work with communities as we invest in our school estate
Sustainable Environment	o Deliver sustainable flood protection solutions
	o Encourage businesses and schools to develop and maintain travel plans
	o Identify projects and improved ways of working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
	o Retention and reuse of old buildings within Aberdeenshire to protect the historical environment
	o Support North East Climate Change Partnership to measure and reduce emissions
	o Develop parks and open space management strategies to reduce maintenance and encourage greater biodiversity

Council Plan 2013 – 2017

Lifelong Learning	o Support and enhance access to leisure and cultural opportunities
Strong and Sustainable Communities	o Promoting and sustaining an integrated transport network o Manage waste through a commitment to prevention
Caring for Communities	o Providing quality public spaces o Ensuring there is provision of quality affordable housing o Ensure vulnerable children, young people and adults are supported and protected
Public Service Excellence	o Effectively manage our resources and assets

Service Strategies

In addition to the Council's Strategic Priorities this Corporate Asset Management Plan is also informed by asset based Service Strategies. Through the Capital Plan and Asset Management Working Group, Services have produced asset based Strategies for all asset types within their control and are key documents referred to in the development of this plan. These asset based strategies generally cover, where applicable:

- Introduction and context
- Service asset policy
- Change in external environment and implication this may have on property
- Service delivery and accommodation needs, overview of accommodation requirements, alternative means of service delivery, alternative work practices
- Summary of future accommodation requirements
- Summary of existing portfolio and its performance
- Review and challenge including gap analysis, surpluses etc.
- Identification of strategic projects along with timescale requirements for the delivery of these projects.

Based on these asset based Service Strategies, the Council reviews asset management at a corporate level the result of which informs both the Corporate Asset Management Plan and Capital Plan requirements.

Links to Partners

The Council has strongly established links with partner agencies which continue to develop as greater efficiencies within the public sector are sought.

The North East Scotland Joint Public Sector Group (NESJPSG) and its sub group Public Sector

- Aberdeen City Council
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Police Scotland
- Moray Council
- NHS Grampian, including Community Health Partnerships

The Public Sector Property Group (PSPG) develops closer working relationships with all members relating to property matters whilst delivering an integrated property strategy which supports a fully integrated Public Sector within North East Scotland.

In addition to the above, the Council has developed strong partnership links with the following agencies and bodies;

- Scottish Government
- Community Councils
- Local Rural Partnerships
- Scottish Enterprise
- Voluntary Service Network
- NESTRANS

These organisations, in addition to those within NESJPSG, are key partners in the joint delivery of the Aberdeenshire Community Plan 2011 - 2015. The Council is also a key stake-holder within Aberdeen City and Shire which is developed to improve efficiencies between the two Councils. The group is also key in the promotion of the area as a destination for living, business, study and tourism.

The Council also has links with newly established North East Scotland College, created from merger of Aberdeen and Banff & Buchan Colleges, with this body delivering a number of outreach courses from Aberdeenshire Council facilities.

3.0 ORGANISATIONAL AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

3.1 Corporate Framework and Structure

Aberdeenshire considers asset management at a corporate level and has in place a structure to manage both asset management and the Capital Plan. This structure ensures that asset management matters are progressed cross service.

This structure consists of 3 strands, these being:

- Policy and Resources Committee
- Strategic Leadership Team
- Capital Plan Group

Policy and Resources Committee – The Policy and Resources Committee act as the approval body for asset management and capital investment decisions with the primary function of:

- approve the Corporate Asset Management Plan
- approve the Capital Programme
- approve project inclusion in the Capital Plan and subsequent spending

Strategic Leadership Team – The Strategic Leadeship Team essentially acts as the 'steering group' for capital works. The team, chaired by the Chief Executive, comprises Service Directors and meets regularly with items concerning asset management included within the agenda as necessary. Its primary tasks are to:

- manage Capital Plan Strategy
- ensure a culture of good corporate asset management
- undertake strategic resource management
- manage strategic performance
- consider and approve proposals for capital investment and recommend to the Policy and Resources Committee
- approve the senior responsible officer to progress where required

Capital Plan Group – The Capital Plan Group act as the 'project group' for capital works. The group is chaired by the Head of Property and Facilities Management also comprises Head of Service representation from each Service. Its primary function is to:

- act as Project Group for Capital Plan and Asset Management
- periodically review and challenge service based asset management strategies
- review the progress of the Capital Plan and Asset Management Strategy
- assess proposals for new projects
- Council's proposals for business plans for assets
- develop data systems for Council assets and manage data collection and analysis
- assess requests from Services to vary the scope of nature of projects in the plan
- recommend to Policy and Resources via the Strategic Leadership Team the prioritisation of projects
- implement agreed corporate capital and revenue programmes related to asset management
- manage asset related budgets on a corporate scale
- manage corporate capital and revenue programmes related to assets
- implement the procurement strategy for Capital Plan projects
- arrange review and periodically refresh the documentation of the asset management strategy for written and web based publication
- consider and approve proposals for the publication of the asset management strategy
- set up a Project Board to deliver major projects
- approve a Project Manager to progress where required/Lead Officer for each line in the Capital Plan programme
- approve in conjunction with Services, Project sponsor for major projects

The assessment of requests and proposals by the Capital Plan Group includes assessment of option appraisals, along with the examination and approval of business plans for assets, consideration of 'fit' with the Service Strategy plans agreed by Strategic Management Team and consideration of the impact on the Council's asset base.

4.0 CAPITAL INVESTMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND 15 YEAR INVESTMENT STRATEGY

4.1 Introduction

Aberdeenshire Council holds assets, including Housing Revenue Account (HRA), with a value in excess of £2.0 billion. This excludes the road network which is valued at a further £5.8 billion. The total spend on capital funded projects in 2013/14 was £134 million. The Council adopts innovative procurement methods, flexible approaches to financing capital projects and a robust and rigorous approach to the management of its capital and assets in order to deliver its key objectives, whilst treating funds as a corporate resource.

The Council recognises that demand for asset management funding outstrips supply and balancing this issue, and associated priorities, has been and continues to be a fundamental aspect of the asset management strategy.   The Council, in recent years, has increased the percentage of revenue resources it allocates to financing infrastructure investment and will continue to do so within the constraints of its overall budget strategy.

4.2 Sources of Funding

Borrowing - A large proportion of resources used to finance the Council's capital expenditure comes from borrowing, predominantly from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) with other borrowing coming from market loans i.e. bonds and mortgages. In managing the Council's borrowing, the objective is to arrange borrowing activities in order to minimise the average rate of interest payable on the Council's loan debt, while spreading the maturities of the debt over different timeframes to minimise exposure to interest rate movements. The Council receives an element of support for the costs of borrowing from the Scottish Government through the Revenue Support Grant mechanism.

The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code) introduced in 2004 encourages authorities to take a strategic view of capital financing requirements, which permits borrowing beyond previously capped levels on the basis the Council can demonstrate the borrowing decision is affordable, sustainable and prudent.

Capital Receipts - The Council generates its own capital resources through the sale of surplus land and buildings. These resources can be used by the Council to invest in new capital projects.

Capital Finance from Revenue - The Council can also use revenue resources to fund capital projects. This includes contributions from both current years' budgets and from balances and reserves.

Government Grants - A general government grant is received from the Scottish Government each year which is used to assist general fund capital expenditure. In addition, a number of specific grants are received to assist in the funding of specific capital expenditure.

Capital Fund - Under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975, Section 22 allows a local authority to establish a Capital Fund. This can only be used for the purposes of defraying expenditure to which Council established a capital fund in 2008/09

Project Specific Contributions from Third Parties - Where opportunities exist, funding from third parties is sought to assist in the funding of projects.

4.3 Alternative Sources of Capital Funding

The Council continues to examine the potential for alternative means of delivering the Asset Management Plan, these include;

PFI/PPP - PFI contracts are agreements to receive services, where the responsibility for making available the fixed assets needed to provide the services passes to the PFI contractor. Payments made by the Council under a contract are charged to revenue to reflect the value of services received in each financial year.

The Council has two PFI/PPP contracts, entered into in 2001 and 2004, for the delivery, including facilities management, of two Secondary and seven Primary Schools. PFI/PPP schools have been superseded by funding initiatives led by the Scottish Futures Trust.

Scottish Futures Trust Led Financing Solutions – The Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) has assisted the Scottish Government in identifying alternative funding vehicles to PFI and PPP. The main purpose of the SFT, as set out by the Scottish Government, is to act as a catalyst for investment into Scottish infrastructure programmes and projects and to deliver better, more efficient infrastructure in Scotland. Those solutions currently being used/evaluated are the Not for Profit Distribution Model (NPDM) and the National Housing Trust Council Variant (NHT variant).   The financing solutions identified by the Scottish Futures Trust as a method of capital project delivery and financing will be evaluated and utilised as appropriate.

Developer Contributions - Developer contributions in discharging planning obligations provide a means of ensuring that developers contribute towards the infrastructure and services needed to make proposed developments acceptable in land use planning terms. Contributions may be financial payments, land or indirect works. The Council currently uses these contributions on an ad hoc basis to fund capital expenditure where required as a direct result of such development. The Council continues to review these arrangements to adopt a strategic approach to future infrastructure and development needs.

Finance and Operating Leases – Finance and operating leases are entered into with third parties where savings in the cost of financing asset purchase can be achieved. The Council periodically evaluates this finance method which is generally undertaken in relation to the procurement of vehicles and ICT equipment.

The Council recognises that certain services have greater potential for attracting capital finance from external sources. By operating the principles of Best Value, the Council seeks to implement an appropriate mix of capital investment solutions to enable capital budgets to be aligned to meet all of the Council's priorities. An important aspect of this approach is the need to balance any risks identified with any single delivery vehicle while finding an optimum number of vehicles to avoid too many set up costs

4.4 Planning and Governance

Three plans underpin the capital expenditure of the Council, these being:

- the 5 year general fund revenue budget,
- the 15 year general fund capital plan,
- the 30 year HRA business plan which covers Housing projects.

These plans are regularly reviewed and updated taking into account the economic and funding outlook of the authority.

The development, control, management and delivery of capital investment programmes is of key concern to the Council to ensure that public money is used wisely, best value is secured and the responsibility for decisions is clearly understood and taken at the right level.

In managing the aspirations for capital expenditure from Council Services and its partners, it is inevitable that demands for capital resources to meet capital investment needs and ambition will exceed the resources available to the Council. The Council has established robust mechanisms for the approval and management of capital schemes.

4.5 Managing and Monitoring the Capital Programme

The Council maintains comprehensive and robust procedures for the management and monitoring of the Capital Plan which reflects the Council's proposals for capital investment. The Capital Plan is constantly reviewed by the Capital Plan Group comprising Head of Service representation from each Service. The group, chaired by the Head of Property and Facilities Management, reviews the Capital Plan and Asset Management strategy whilst also assessing proposals for new projects along with the management of asset related budgets at a corporate level.

The Capital Plan Group reports directly to the Strategic Management Team which, as the steering group, has overall responsibility for management the of Capital Plan strategy whilst ensuring asset management is addressed at a corporate level. The Strategic Management Team also considers and approves proposals for capital investment and recommends this investment need to the Policy & Resources Committee.

4.6 Business Case to Support Inclusion Within Capital Plan

The Council adopts a gateway process in the development and delivery of capital projects. This ensures projects have satisfied defined criteria in the early stages of project initiation for inclusion within the Capital Plan. These early stages, guided by effective asset management, in project identification and initiation, are:

- **Strategic Appraisal**

- Preparation of Service based asset strategies
- Links to Single Outcome Agreement, Community Plan and Council Plan
- Determination of overall funding of Capital Plan
- Prioritisation within the Capital Plan and Asset Management Plan
- Identification of individual projects

- **Stage 1 – Assessment Stage**

- Results in a Business Case being presented to the Capital Plan Group and Policy and Resources Committee for inclusion with the Capital Plan. Subject to approval, project progresses through the following stages with approval required at end of each stage:

- **Stage 2 – Develop Proposed Solution**

- **Stage 3 – Develop Preferred Solution**

- **Stage 4 – Construction**

- **Stage 5 – Handover and Review**

4.7 Option Appraisal

Included within the Business Case, projects undergo option appraisal, which considers best value options in fulfilling the project's objective. This option appraisal model, developed by the Council from the Scottish Government Schools Option Appraisal model, assesses a range of key elements which are considered against whole life costs.

4.8 Capital Investment Prioritisation Process

As highlighted above, projects included for capital investment require the preparation of business cases to ensure their inclusion within the capital plan. These business cases ensure that only projects which meet defined criteria, such as statutory requirement or required to fulfil strategic priorities, are proposed for capital investment.

Business cases are analysed and assessed to determine prioritisation for investment within the 15 year period.

Whilst the capital plan/investment strategy is projected for 15 years, business cases and assessments are to be produced for those within the early stages of the plan.

4.9 15 Year Capital Investment Strategy

Process

The preparation of the draft 15 year capital investment strategy/capital plan from 2015/16 – 2029/30 has been developed taking cognisance of available funding and existing approved committed expenditure. In addition, the draft capital plan has been realigned to highlight key projects and their alignment with the council's strategic priorities. These projects and the updated draft capital plan 2015 – 2030 are included as an Appendix to this document.

Available Finances

Projected available finances over the 15 year period are £ 712 million made up from a number of sources as highlighted below. These figures are subject to ongoing monitoring by the Policy and Resources Committee;

Available Financing – 2015/16 to 2029/30	£'000
Scottish Government – Capital Grant	324,684
Scottish Government Revenue Funding	4,550
Reserves	0
Other Grants	10,890
Prudential Borrowing	284,586
Capital Receipts	45,336
Revenue Funding	42,115
Total Projected Resources	**712,161**

Capital Investment Requirements

Capital investment proposals are incorporated within the proposed draft capital plan 2015 – 2030 as an Appendix to this document and are summarised below. These figures are subject to ongoing review by the Policy and Resources Committee:

Capital Investment 2013/14 to 2026/27	£'000
Strategic Priority Projects	752,134
Grants to Outside Bodies	17,580
Total Planned Expenditure	**769,714**

4.10 Key Areas of Expenditure

Detailed analysis and expenditure profiles for capital investment are incorporated within the proposed capital plan 2015 - 2030 attached as an Appendix to this document.

Key areas of expenditure are summarised below:

Property

Investment continues to be made within the property portfolio to ensure that statutory requirements are met and to maintain the portfolio in satisfactory condition in addition to improving the suitability of assets to ensure that facilities are suitable for their intended use.

Provision is made across all key community planning themes of Community Wellbeing, Jobs and the Economy, Lifelong Learning and Sustainable Environment, in addition to Corporate Improvement (Public Service Excellence). Key projects to be progressed in the short to medium term include:

Community Wellbeing

- Replacement Children's Home at Fraserburgh,
- Community hub at Westfield Fraserburgh,
- Replacement care home/care village Inverurie

Jobs and the Economy

- Investment continues to be made within the Industrial Portfolio to promote, and sustain, economic development within communities inline with the Commercial and Industrial Strategy

Lifelong Learning

- Replacement primary at Markethill Turriff,
- Replacement secondary at Ellon – part SFT funding,
- New 3 - 18 and community campus at Alford – part SFT funding,
- Extension and refurbishment at Kemnay Academy,
- Replacement primary at Kinellar,
- New primary at Uryside, Inverurie,
- New primary at Kintore,
- Replacement primary at Drumoak

Sustainable Environment

- Investment is made towards council wide carbon reduction objectives in line with the Council's Carbon Management Strategy, using Solar Photovoltaics, Solar panels and Air Source Heat Pumps with investigations to progress Wind Turbines, Ground Source Heat Pumps and Solar Farms

Corporate Improvement (Public Service Excellence)

- Investment is made in the depot portfolio to implement the Depot Strategy, approved in June 2013. This makes allowance for provision of new key multi service depots within Inverurie, Macduff and Stonehaven in addition to the upgrade or redevelopment of a number of depots across Aberdeenshire.
- Investment continues to be made in planned maintenance and Health and Safety projects to ensure compliance with statutory regulations whilst maintaining our assets in satisfactory condition.
- Investment is also made in the office portfolio through the implementation of the workSPACE Strategy. This makes provision for new single office within Peterhead, and upgrades to a number of offices within Banff, Fraserburgh, Aboyne, Banchory and Stonehaven. A review of the future Headquarters requirement for the Authority is nearing completion.

Open Spaces

Provision is made for continued investment in the upgrade of existing country parks, parks, play areas and pitches to ensure facilities are of acceptable condition and suitability. Further investment is also made in new and/or expansion to existing burial grounds.

Roads, Structures, Lighting and Water Infrastructure

Investment continues to be made in safety, cycling and walking initiatives, with investment in public transport also being a key element within the Capital Plan. Investment is also being made in a number of harbour, flood alleviation and structure/bridge projects, including major flood protection schemes at Stonehaven and Huntly. A key driver for investment in street lighting is the Council's carbon reduction target of 44% by 2020 and the council is implementing a phased programme of energy saving upgrades, targeting the oldest and least efficient lanterns for replacement in the early phases.

Investment also continues to be made within the roads network to ensure that these key assets remain safe and in an acceptable condition.

Housing

Investment in the housing portfolio continues to be made through the 30 year housing business plan, with key projects covering kitchen and bathroom replacements and electrical and heating upgrades along with reroofing and insulation works. Continued investment in new housing if further supported through Scottish Government grants with projects for new housing projects.

Fleet

In line with Best Value, fleet procurement is managed through the council's Commercial and Procurement Service. Investment in fleet and plant continues, with provision for quarry plant and vehicle replacement. This ensures that standards are maintained along with compliance with relevant regulations and licences. Delivery of new fleet is also aligned with the introduction of new waste collection methods being implemented.

ICT

ICT assets are managed corporately with additional and replacement equipment being administered by the ICT service. Roll out of new equipment is being delivered in tandem with implementation of the workSPACE project with investment also being made in the continued implementation of the hilltop wireless project.

In addition projects are currently being taken forward in the following areas:

- Upgrade to Microsoft Office 2013
- Replace firewall and web filtering services
- Increase capacity of internal wireless networks, particularly in schools
- Rollout further internal wireless networks and public internet access
- Enhance backup and disaster recovery provision for critical business systems
- Rollout managed mobile devices and develop use of mobile applications
- Replace planning business system
- Replace HR and payroll business system
- Upgrade financial management business system

5.0 PROPERTY

5.1 Context

Aberdeenshire Council holds a wide and varied portfolio of property that supports a range of services delivered by the Council. These are divided into two property types;

Non-Operational and Investment Property – Properties which are retained to support economic development within Aberdeenshire or used for investment purposes to generate a revenue income for the Council. This includes facilities like harbours of which there are six recreational and one commercial within Aberdeenshire.

Operational Property – Properties which are used directly to support delivery of services.

The Council's operational portfolio currently extends to 756 facilities in total, excluding cemeteries, graveyards, parks and playing fields etc. These are broken down into the following categories:

OPERATIONAL PROPERTY	No. of Properties
Business	
Training Centres	4
Communities	
Care Homes	8
Respite Homes	4
Hostels/Homes	38
Day Centres/Scoial Work Projects	31
Education and Children's - Education	
Primary Schools	151
Secondary Schools	17
Special Schools	4
Stand alone Nurseries, inc detached nurseries within school grounds	12
Education and Children's - Lifelong Learning and Leisure	
Community Centres	45
Sports Centres	7
Libraries	37
Museums	15
Swimming Pools	20
Sports Pavilions	53
Education and Children's - Children's Social Work	
Children's Homes	3
Family Centres	11
Infrastructure - Roads and Landscape	
Caravan Sites	2
Depots	47
Stores	18
Quarries	3
Country Parks	4
Cemetery Lodges	4
Infrastructure - Waste	
Household Waste Recycling Centres	18
Infrastructure - Transportation	
Interchanges/Park and Ride	2
Infrastructure - Property and Faclities Management	
Offices	69
Town Halls/Council Chambers	**13**
Halls	36
Public Conveniences	80
Total	**756**

Total excludes 213 Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

The majority of properties are owned by the Council, however a number continue to be leased, predominantly within the office portfolio, or have trust/community involvement in their operation, namely within halls, sports facilities and museums.

The overall management of the Council's property portfolio is in line with the key service objectives and themes with these being:

Property Asset Investment – made through the delivery of Capital Plans, acquisitions, maintenance, improving assets' condition and suitability and the supporting of regeneration projects.

Integrated Facilities Management – delivered through maintenance management, building cleaning, catering and caretaking along with provision of a network of public conveniences throughout Aberdeenshire.

Sustainable Development – through energy management, carbon reduction, use of renewables, implementing the Fuel Choice Strategy and the development of zero carbon buildings.

Maximising Property Asset Income and Economic Activity – through capital receipts, commercial and industrial activity, management and industrial development along with business development to benefit communities.

Property Asset Rationalisation – delivered through the implementation of workSPACE and Depot Strategies, wider challenge of asset use, asset disposals and Community Asset Transfer.

Targeted investment, coupled with improved monitoring and recording of completed works, has resulted in 83.2% of the operational floor area be assessed as being of satisfactory condition, whilst 60.2% of operational properties have been assessed as suitable for their current use, as reported in Audit Scotland SPI's. Continued targeted investment, along with greater challenge of underperforming assets, will ensure continued improvement within the operational portfolio.

5.2 Vision

"Support the delivery of the Council's Asset Management Plan through effective maintenance and management of the Council's property assets so ensuring that citizens and visitors to Aberdeenshire have the best possible facilities in which to learn, work and play."

5.3 Goals

To manage property as a corporate resource by adopting a strategic approach to asset management through:

- Managing property as a corporate resource which supports the delivery of services
- Maintaining established working relationships with Services
- Ensuring that the outcomes of Services' asset based strategies are aligned with the Single Outcome Agreement, the Community Plan and the Council Plan
- Corporately reviewing outcomes of business cases, in support of projects identified within strategies, to secure capital investment

Maintain an accurate asset register and database by:

- Maintaining the property register
- Recording key information centrally against assets within the property database, Confirm
- Regularly updating asset information as projects are completed, where changes occur to asset use, or as part of regular cycle of reviews

Minimise the impact on the environment from the construction and operation of properties by:

- Implementing the carbon management strategy
- Implementing the fuel choice strategy for heating in new council buildings and when heating is upgraded in council buildings
- Considering carbon management/reduction and energy consumption during development of project business cases, and when undertaking planned maintenance
- Considering sustainability within project business cases and option appraisals
- Managing and monitoring energy consumption and costs
- Ensuring building users understand and operate properties effectively to reduce energy consumption

To maintain properties in appropriate condition by:

- Undertaking planned maintenance activities in line with the Maintenance Strategy
- Regularly assessing, and reporting, the condition of the portfolio
- Targeting investment in assets with greatest need identified during condition assessments, which also continue to satisfy Business Case requirements for service delivery
- Undertake reactive maintenance to ensure portfolio remains safe and operational

To ensure the property portfolio is suitable for current use by:

- Regular assessment, and reporting, on the suitability of the operational portfolio
- Targeting investment in assets with the greatest need identified during suitability assessments, which also continue to satisfy Business Case requirements for service delivery
- Ensuring that, where required, properties are accessible for people with disabilities by ensuring compliance with relevant standards and best practice.

Ensure the property portfolio is effectively utilised across all levels by:

- Undertaking reviews which assess utilisation across the operational portfolio to map current and future demands
- Challenging asset use and where required identify proposals to either maximize asset use or to provide service by alternative means
- Implementing common office space standards to ensure efficient use of office accommodation in line with the workSPACE Strategy
- Implementing the workSPACE Strategy to reduce offices to 53 facilities by 2017 through further adoption of Worksmart and modern ways of working
- Encouraging co-location of property with partner agencies
- Reviewing use of temporary accommodation, and its removal where no longer required

Manage surplus property by:

- Implementing the Disposal Strategy to ensure that assets, that no longer satisfy service delivery, or within strategic locations, are arranged to be disposed of within a set period
- Considering all disposal options, which includes Community Asset Transfer
- Ensuring that disposal values are maximised

Report performance of the property portfolio by:

- Reporting asset performance to relevant statutory bodies
- Preparation of an Operational Property Performance Report which provides key data concerning the portfolio

By adopting a strategic approach to capital prioritisation, project initiation and procurement by:

- The development of capital projects through the Gateway process which requires a business case to be prepared to secure investment
- Ensuring necessary approvals are granted by appropriate corporate groups, management teams and committees at key stages to maintain corporate buy-in

Ensure that option appraisals are conducted to support investment and disinvestment proposals which consider whole life costs and sustainability by:

- Utilising a high level option appraisal/selection process to determine inclusion within the capital plan
- Utilising an option appraisal methodology which determines the best value option whilst considering whole life costs and sustainability
- Developing and implementing policy for underutilised assets

To manage the non-operational and investment portfolio by:

- Managing the non-operational and investment portfolio to maximise revenue income to the Council
- Maintaining the long-term performance of the non-operational portfolio
- Providing appropriate high quality premises which promote and encourage economic development within Aberdeenshire
- Developing a process to collect, record and maintain key asset information concerning the non-operational and investment portfolio

To promote joint planning, management and collocation of property with partner agencies by:

- Actively participating with members of the North East of Scotland Joint Public Sector Group to identify and implement opportunities for collocation
- Continued partnership with Government, Community and Voluntary bodies in the delivery of the Aberdeenshire Community Plan

6.0 OPEN SPACE

6.1 Context

Aberdeenshire has a wide variety of landscapes. Open spaces may be found in or adjacent to woodlands, in exposed coastal zones or along river banks or form part of the setting of historic buildings. They may have a 'natural' feel, or be more formal, with facilities designed across a wide range of age and user groups. In all, Aberdeenshire Council has around 3,000 hectares of maintained open space, encompassing a range of types, including urban parks, residential greenspace, playing fields and school grounds. Other public open space includes play areas, areas of natural habitat, community woodlands and shelterbelts, to which the public have access, as well as riparian and open water features. The protection, enhancement, management and delivery of open space underpins a range of public agendas, many of which inform our work with communities and public sector partners.

Aberdeenshire recognises that good quality, fit for purpose open space is key to delivery on a range of National Outcomes, as defined under the terms of the Single Outcome Agreement between Aberdeenshire Council and the Scottish Government.

Aberdeenshire Council's open spaces include:-

- Over 3,000ha of maintained Open Space
- 213 Burial Grounds & Cemeteries
- 4 Country Parks
- 21 Woodlands/Local Nature Reserves
- Over 300km of rural paths
- Over 60 town parks
- 429 Equipped Play Areas
- 18 Skateparks
- 36 recognised and maintained beaches (Including: eight identified bathing waters, six KSB [Keep Scotland Beautifu] Rural Award beaches, four KSB Resort Award beaches)

Aberdeenshire Council has completed a quantitative and qualitative Audit of open space within its settlements (as required by Scottish Planning Policy 11). The information gathered will be considered in three main ways:

- Alongside a standards-based approach in the determination of open space requirements, to ensure 'best fit' for the community to be affected by any new development.
- To ensure best value in public spending, both in the delivery and the care and maintenance of open space, taking into account both the findings of the audit and the objectives of the Strategy.
- To ensure targeted use of developer contributions available for open space and community facilities.

Findings of the open space audit have revealed key characteristics and qualities of Aberdeenshire's open spaces. More detailed findings from the audit and public consultation have been used in formulating the Action Programme and to identify priority areas for improvements in individual settlements.

The audit findings considered on an individual settlement basis have revealed some recurring issues raised by Community Councils. Overall, there is a widespread demand for relatively minor improvements, notably the provision of seating and bins, and the clearing of litter, which could nonetheless play an important part in improving access to open space.

Other common observations related to tennis court maintenance, provision of facilities for teenagers and the availability of paths to access local woodlands.

6.2 Vision

"To provide high quality multi-functional open space that is easily accessible, safe, welcoming, rich in biodiversity and sustainably managed for the future, which encourages a sense of belonging, and enhances the quality of life of those people who live in, work in and visit Aberdeenshire".

6.3 Goals

Our key objectives are:

- To develop a long-term physical framework for each of Aberdeenshire's main settlements, into which substantial further development can continue to be expected, and which will link with the developing network of countryside paths

- Identify the actions required to achieve the framework

- Set policies, standards and procedures to which the Council as a whole is committed to support (in particular with adequate and continuing funding) and provide training required, so that all the relevant Services can apply policies in concert, both to achieve the framework and to maintain it thereafter

- The settlement frameworks will double up as supplementary guidance to the Local Development Plan, and will also reflect/go in parallel with Capacity Studies

- To refine this Plan through consultation with each of the Services involved, other stakeholders and representatives of the general public

- To define the various potential roles or functions, and essential qualities of each different type of Open Space
    - public parks and town gardens
    - private ground/gardens
    - amenity greenspace
    - playspace – play areas
    - sports areas
    - woodlands
    - green corridors
    - natural areas
    - other functional greenspace eg cemeteries
    - civic space – town/village centres

- To develop minimum standards and qualitative indicators as opposed to solely quantitative measures of open space. Identify existing shortfalls, over-provision and divergence from qualities desired

- To identify actions, including those that are possible in the short term, eg interim adjustments to Open Space management regime, supplementary planning guidance, improvement to co-ordination etc; and target consultation to be carried out, as necessary

In order to deliver the vision, Aberdeenshire Council will be guided by the following Goals and proposed actions:

We will ensure that networks of green and open spaces are well located, designed, and managed, as well as being adaptable, appropriate and sustainable by:
- Linking all spaces into a network, connecting well-used routes via footpaths and green corridors
- Enhancing the quality of open spaces by creating diverse and attractive areas which will add colour and interest to the site, and protect biodiversity. Designing out crime and the fear of crime
- Following a management and maintenance regime attuned to the type of space and wildlife habitats present
- Maximizing the potential of open spaces to adapt to different uses, and to promote a range of benefits
- Considering the need for balance between different areas and types of open space within a settlement, ensuring spaces are fit for purpose
- Considering whether a site can be maintained over the longer term, minimizing any adverse effects on soil and water, as well as contributions to greenhouse gas emissions

We will improve policies and procedures in relation to the management of open space by:
- Develop a standards based policy for inclusion within the Local Development Plan (LDP)
- Provide justification within LDP settlement statements for detailed application of the policy, based on the findings of the open space audit
- Develop robust mechanisms for the funding and maintenance of the open space resource
- Review information from Section 75 monitoring spreadsheets (s75 Developer Contributions to communities)
- Take account of views of local communities in the above

We will encourage healthy lifestyles and wellbeing by:
- Providing recreational and exercise opportunities across all age groups
- Ensuring a range of appropriate options are available to male and female user groups
- Ensuring a range of open space types are accessible to all residents of Aberdeenshire
- Promoting an urban design culture in which green space is visually accessible from everyone's home
- Building in capacity for local food production
- Ensuring paths and cycleways provide functional links between community facilities and services

We will work to promote community identity and cohesion by:

- Providing gathering places for residents
- Building in capacity for local food production
- Drawing on and developing public art resource

We will improve the landscaping and visual appearance of communities by:

- Respecting the landscape setting of Aberdeenshire communities
- Maintaining and enhancing the identity and attractiveness of our communities through appropriate landscaping measures

**We will conserve, manage and enhance opportunities for wildlife by:**

- Incorporating natural spaces as valuable features in developments, and seek biodiversity gains
- Minimising pesticide use on managed open space
- Seeking to deliver BAP actions through developments
- Minimising use of non-natural surfaces
- Maximising potential of SUDS to enhance biodiversity
- Define minimum percentage of open space to be included on development sites (including SUDS), incorporating biodiversity in civic areas as well as within green infrastructure

We will promote integration between the location and management of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and the open space resource by:

- Maximising the potential of SUDS to incorporate biodiversity on developed sites (see above)
- Maximising the potential contribution of SUDS as a landscape feature, adding identity to communities
- Encouraging use of the development framework process to design in and agree maintenance of SUDS at pre-application stage, and to consider the potential for regional SUDS
- Ensuring proposed SUDS are both functional and safe eg through consideration within access statements, where appropriate

We will develop the resources and structures required to implement the Strategy & Plan by:

- Raising the profile of open space across the Council with reference to National Outcomes and related strategic priorities across the Services
- Increasing expectation of open space provision as part of a wider drive to improve the sense of place and design within our communities
- Appropriate utilisation of developer contributions in terms of delivering quality, functional open space
- Promoting cross-Service and partnership working on open space issues
- Seek to recognise and enhance the role of greenspace staff
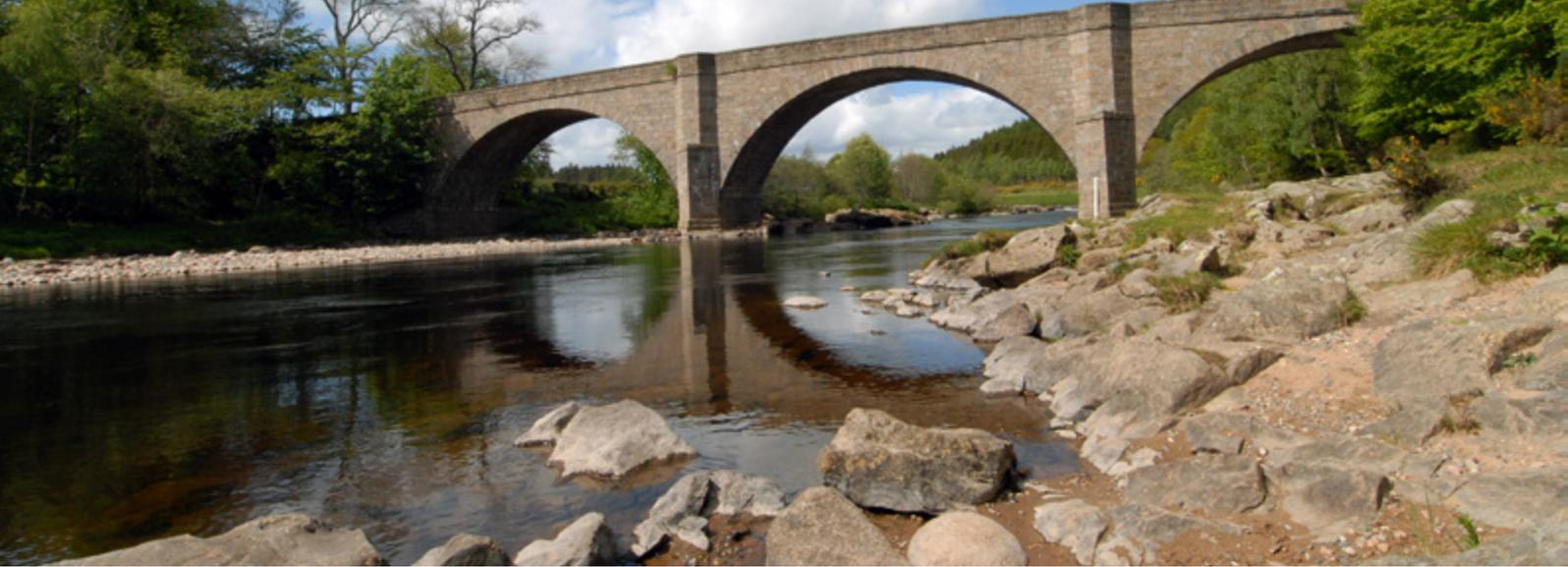
7.0 Roads, Structures, Lighting and Water Infrastructure

7.1 Context

The public road network plays a vital role in the movement of people and goods without which our society simply could not function and is the conduit for the delivery of basic utility infrastructure - water, sewage, electricity, gas and telecommunications. In one form or another, it is used daily by the entire community. It is the largest and most visible community asset in Aberdeenshire and comprises carriageways, footways, street furniture, bridges & culverts, retaining walls, traffic signals, lighting and drainage. An efficient and effective public road network is fundamental to delivering community well-being, economic prosperity and a sustainable environment.

On a replacement cost basis, the value of the Aberdeenshire Council road network is some £5.8 billion with a total route mileage of around 3,400 miles and some 1,400 bridges & culverts. The table below illustrates the diversity of public assets constituting the public road network. The table also includes water infrastructure managed by the Council as a harbours authority, a flood prevention authority and a coast protection authority.

Asset Group	Elements
Carriageways	Carriageways, kerbs, gullies, road markings
Footways	Footways, cycleways, hardened verges
Street Furniture	Signs, bollards, fences, pedestrian barriers, safety fences, bus shelters, litter bins, seats, trees & planters, street nameplates, grit bins, boundary walls (non-structural or height less than 1.5m)
Bridges & Culverts	Bridges (spans 1.5m or more), culverts (spans 1.5m or more)
Retaining Walls	Retaining walls (structural with height 1.5m or more)
Traffic Signals	Signalised junctions, pedestrian crossings, school crossing lights, interactive traffic signs
Lighting	Light columns, lamps, cabling, feeder pillars, illuminated traffic signs, illuminated bollards
Road Drainage	Gulley connections & pipework, road offlets, surface water drains, ponds, swales, detention basins, filter drains, absorption drains, culverts (spans less than 1.5m)
Water Infrastructure	Flood alleviation structures, coast protection structures, harbours and associated infrastructure

7.2 Vision

"To provide a safe, well-maintained and sustainable transport network that will enable a more economically competitive, sustainable & socially inclusive society and facilitate community well-being and a sustainable environment within Aberdeenshire."

7.3 Goals

Our key objectives are to ensure that the road network and civil engineering infrastructure:

- facilitate the Council's Strategic Priorities, "Community Well-being," "Jobs and the Economy" and "Sustainable Environment"
- contribute to achieving the Single Outcome Agreement
- achieve the objectives of the Regional and Local Transport Strategy
- continue to perform their function at minimum whole-life cost

We contribute to the safety of road network users by:

- taking action to reduce the number of casualties on our roads
- ensuring that our communities have an appropriate standard of street lighting
- ensuring that traffic signs are legible, clearly visible and appropriate
- regularly undertaking safety inspections and following up reports from the public to ensure that hazardous defects are identified and rectified promptly

And will in the future:

- ensure that improvement action is taken without delay wherever an unacceptable risk of road traffic accidents is identified
- further reduce the number and severity of traffic related accidents
- achieve increased use of active travel and improved air quality as part of wider strategies to

We manage and maintain the road network:

- to as high a standard as practicable
- to function as a fully effective road network
- to improve accessibility and support commercial, industrial and residential development
- to minimise delays and congestion

And will in the future:

- ensure a high standard of maintenance in town centres, at tourist attractions and on tourist routes to enhance visitor experience
- eliminate weight restrictions on bridges where to do so would remove constraints on economic activity or significantly reduce journey distances for commercial traffic, thereby reducing Aberdeenshire's carbon footprint

We will make infrastructure more sustainable in the future by:

- promoting sustainable construction
- moving towards more sustainable travel methods throughout Aberdeenshire
- preparing & implementing a coastal management plan

We respect and cherish our unique environment & heritage by:
- retaining old & historic bridges in use on the network and retaining & enhancing them when strengthening or improvement is necessary, in preference to replacement
- ensuring that our road network infrastructure is as unobtrusive & sympathetic to its surroundings as possible
- assessing the ecological impact of proposed works
- adopting soft sustainable solutions wherever possible

And will in the future:
- reduce the environmental impacts of transport in line with national targets
- reduce growth in vehicle kilometres travelled
- reduce the environmental footprint of transport services, infrastructure and networks by reducing harmful emissions, and consumption of non-renewable resources and energy

We promote jobs and the economy by:
- supporting NESTRANS in the delivery of the Regional Transport Strategy
- making the movement of goods and people within the north east and to and from the area more efficient and reliable
- managing and developing our harbours so as to meet local business needs
- setting appropriate standards for road construction consent and adoption and engaging with developers from an early stage in the planning process.

We ensure road network asset performance by:
- regular, systematic inspection
- targeted and prioritised maintenance

And will in the future:
- develop asset management planning and integrate it into the daily task
- minimise whole-life costs by long term financial planning
- set asset performance standards and report on asset performance
- provide regular asset performance and cost data to decision makers
- benchmark costs and performance wherever practicable

Our approach will be to:
- aim for the highest standards in design to achieve well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need
- provide public services of high quality which are continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs

8.0 Housing

8.1 Context

The council currently owns around 11,354 main stream rented housing properties and 1,549 sheltered homes and manages a further 38 homes owned by others. The stock is in good condition and, due to careful investment, should meet and exceed the requirements of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by 2015.

A summary of the type of housing is shown below.

Type of Housing	Number of houses
Mainstream Housing	11,354
Sheltered Housing	1,508
Very Sheltered Housing	41
Leased Housing	38
Temporary Accommodation Blocks	30 (3 blocks)
Total	**12,971**

(*Information from Stock Condition Database, correct as of 16th Dec 2012*)

The value of the housing stock as a disposable asset and in rental cash flow terms is very substantial. The value of the housing stock, in 2011, was approximately £1.131 billion (gross) and £554 million (net), with outstanding debt levels at 31 March 2013 of £129m. The Business Plan is constantly under review and updated should any major changes be identified and undergoes a major review every three years. The last major review, 2012 Housing Business Plan, demonstrated that the debt level was manageable and also allows for a limited provision to develop a new council house building programme of 50 each year until 2018.

In 2000 the council completed a detailed option appraisal exercise using independent consultants. The appraisal concluded that there is very heavy demand for the council's stock, with no low demand housing, and with tenant support it could be retained with confidence rather than be subject to voluntary transfer. Since this time demand has continued to increase and the Housing Service has limited the Right to Buy utilising the pressured area status legislation for a significant proportion of the settlements in Aberdeenshire. The Service also has a thirty year housing investment programme totalling £569m that will allow the continual investment and improvement of all council housing. Recently Councillors approved the Housing Asset Management Plan and all significant financial investment decisions are appraised through the Asset management System to assist the management team when making long term decisions.

Recently Councillors approved the Housing Asset Management Plan and all significant financial investment decisions are appraised through the Asset Management System to assist the management team when making long term decisions.

8.2 Vision

Working together to get housing right for everyone.

"We will work in partnership to provide the best quality of housing services and affordable housing for everyone in Aberdeenshire. To give people quality homes in healthy communities."

We have adopted as our key values:

Quality, affordable, inclusive, sustainable and accessible.

We are committed to serving the people of Aberdeenshire by:
- Acting to meet housing needs
- Providing warm and safe homes
- Listening to and involving our tenants in improving services

Our aims are:
- To build on our strengths
- To work in partnership
- To maximise customer satisfaction

8.3 Goals

We will continue to provide good quality affordable homes to people in housing need by:
- Allocating available homes to those in greatest housing need as determined by the recently reviewed Housing Allocations Policy
- Implementing statutory guidance in relation to homelessness
- Providing housing for particular needs provision as appropriate

We will maintain council housing to a standard at least comparable with the SHQS:
- Carrying out appropriate stock condition surveys
- Preparing a housing capital programme
- Preparing a planned maintenance programme

We will maximise use of existing and new housing by:
- Continuing to monitor the housing allocations policy to ensure it remains fit for purpose
- Continuing the Council Housing new build programme
- Working in partnership with other providers (eg Investigate mid-market rent through the National Housing Trust)
- Developing the private rented sector through support and advice to improve standards and access

We will maintain a balanced portfolio through new build, acquisitions, sales, remodelling, tenure diversification, demolition and redevelopment by:
- Utilise the new Asset Management Plan for all significant investment decisions.
- Undertaking housing needs studies
- Work to meet the needs of an aging population through housing with enhanced care and support by the conversion of strategically targeted sheltered housing to very sheltered housing, through Change Fund monies via health and social work
- Carrying out public consultation
- Being guided by strategic priorities

We will contribute to neighbourhood regeneration by:
- Using powers proposed in the Housing Scotland Act 2006
- Develop a Common Housing Repairs Procedure

We will encourage a Council wide approach to investment by:
- Implementing the Affordable Housing Strategic Outcome Statement
- Seeking to create balanced and sustainable communities
- Working in partnership with various interest groups

We will ensure the stock complies with relevant regulatory requirements by:

- Carrying out stock condition and full structural surveys
- Undertaking regular servicing contracts in line with legislative and good practice guidelines (eg annual gas servicing, electrical testing, lift servicing, fire alarm testing and chimney sweeping)
- Developing a comprehensive asbestos register of Refurbishment and Demolition surveys linked to all Stock Improvement, Planned Maintenance and Repairs works.
- Implementing detailed three year stock improvement programmes, led by a comprehensive 100% stock condition database linked to the 30 year Housing Business Plan and a robust Housing Asset Management System
- Investment to reduce carbon emissions, investigate opportunities to maximise the use of renewable energy and, as far as is reasonably practical, to eliminate fuel poverty by 2016 and meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing
- To undertake an Energy Audit of all council housing to produce Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) for all properties.
- To develop an Affordable Warmth Policy linked to EPC at the next review of the Rent Setting Policy.

9.0 Fleet

9.1 Context

The council has a fleet of 2,476 vehicles and plant that support delivery of services. They include:

- 177 vehicles over 3500kg
- 68 welfare and 17 seat mini buses
- 393 vans and tippers up to 3,500kg
- 54 Tractors/JCB's/Telehandlers
- 15 Heavy quarry plant Items
- 58 Ride on Grass Cutting Mowers
- 1,711 Various plant/trailers/Landscape Services Equipment

9.2 Vision

"To provide an efficient and effective Fleet Management and Vehicle Maintenance Service"

9.3 Goals

We ensure that all council services have the appropriate vehicles and plant to carry out their duties by:

- Having a ten year rolling vehicle and plant replacement programme
- Holding regular Service level meetings with all internal customers
- Providing a central in house and external vehicle hire desk facility
- Offering flexible workshop opening hours that suit our customers business needs and continue to monitor this
- Providing demonstrator vehicles and plant when required

- Centralising fuel payments to maximise discounts and control and issue of all fuel cards
- Reintroducing in house fuel bunkers at Inverurie and Mintlaw to reduce costs and improve resilience in period of tanker strikes
- Introducing a rolling program for the delivery of the new waste stream vehicles
- Carrying out Survey Monkey to all customers on various Fleet Management and workshop performance

We ensure vehicles are maintained to VOSA (Vehicle Operator Services Agency) standards by:
- Regular inspection as per manufacturer's warranty procedures for vehicles under 3,500kg and every eight weeks for vehicles over 3,500kg as defined by our Operators Licence OM0021117
- Ensure vehicles are fit for purpose and kept roadworthy and comply with Construction and Use regulations
- Provide in house Class IV, V & VII MOT facilities by VOSA trained mechanics

We ensure fleet asset and internal/external hire management information is collated and stored effectively by:
- Continually updating Tranman Fleet Management Software as and when new vehicles and plant arrive and are disposed of
- Updating individual files and maintenance history
- Rolling out the Fleet Web Portal for customer information and ease of accessibility including fuel, maintenance, servicing, asset register, out with contract charges, internal contract charges and spot hire charges
- Monitoring all charges from Tranman to the various financial ledgers within the council
- Introducing bar coding to all workshop stores
- Updating dashboard performance measures

We demonstrate Best Value by:
- Benchmarking through the APSE network
- Through our Central Procurement Unit and Scotland Excel procurement contracts
- Other Local Authorities and Tayside Contracts

We consider the needs of our Internal Customers by:
- Holding regular meetings with service users and understanding any changes on how they operate which may impact of the type of vehicles and plant we provide
- Drawing up appropriate specifications with the customer for all new vehicles and plant
- Advising on legislation and new technology
- Arranging vehicle demonstration

We will ensure vehicles are environmentally friendly (Best possible in class) by:

- Using the latest engine technology available (currently Euro 6)
- Electronically limiting vehicles 3,500kg and under to 60 mph and over 3,500kg to 50 mph to reduce both emissions and fuel consumption by up to 10%
- Carry out a Green Fleet review with assistance from the Energy Savings Trust
- Evaluating alternative fuels dependent upon local infrastructure

10.0 ICT

10.1 Context

Aberdeenshire Council owns and uses a significant range of ICT assets including:

- 5,000+ corporate PCs and laptops
- 10,000+ curricular PCs and laptops
- 1,800+ smartphones
- 1,000+ tablets
- 700+ servers
- 4,000+ telephone extensions
- 100+ telephone systems
- 450+ networked locations
- 2,000+ wireless access points
- two main data centres and a number of small data centres
- software licences
- network services
- security and disaster recovery solutions

ICT-related planning and operational management in the Council is undertaken on a whole life basis using the following techniques:

- Identification of need in light of Service and corporate strategic requirements
- Procurement, including ongoing maintenance
- Managed operation by the asset users
- Regular review of fitness for purpose and performance
- Disposal when the need no longer exists or it is no longer appropriate or financially advantageous for the asset to be retained

ICT purchasing is provided through supply and service contracts facilitated by the Council's Central Procurement Unit. The Council utilises framework agreements wherever appropriate, particularly for hardware and peripherals.

10.2 Vision

"We aim to support the Council to be the best in Scotland by providing our customers with ICT systems and services that enable greater efficiency, higher performance, improved customer service and innovation."

10.3 Goals

In general, we will:

- Provide the best ICT solutions and services to suit the agreed needs of our customers within the resources that are available
- Assist our customers to identify their ICT requirements and choose the best solutions to meet their needs
- Promote continuous improvement and appropriate innovation
- Provide an ICT infrastructure and information systems to agreed levels of functionality, performance, capacity, security, accessibility and usability
- Develop and maintain effective communications links with our customers and external partners
- Use best practice professional standards to underpin the services we provide
- Encourage and promote education and training relevant to the effective management and exploitation of ICT

Specifically, in relation to ICT assets:

We will ensure effective and efficient identification, management and operation of ICT assets:

- Comprehensive asset management information is collected, maintained, readily available and stored efficiently
- Information is identified and maintained relating to system "roadmaps," lifecycles and replacement plans
- Detailed information is maintained in relation to contractual obligations, leasing, warranties and software
- Asset management information is in line with all other Council processes and procedures eg financial planning, service planning and project management
- Robust asset management procedures appropriately inform ICT service delivery and management

We will ensure the effective planning, procurement and deployment of ICT assets solutions:

- Informing ICT Capital and Revenue budget planning, ICT service and workload planning
- Managing the deployment of ICT assets in accordance with Council project management procedures
- Identifying the optimum point for system upgrades, minimising operational impact whilst ensuring efficient delivery using appropriate deployment tools
- Minimising costs via efficient processes, partnership approaches and economies of scale

- Assessing affordability and determining priorities
- Centralising purchasing and supply contracts for hardware and standard software
- Ensuring an option appraisal framework is in place to clearly demonstrate benefit, best value and total cost of ownership
- Ensuring compliance with all other appropriate Council strategies including the Council's Strategic Priorities, Continuous Improvement Plan, ICT Strategy, Information Management Strategy and ICT Technical Framework
- Exploiting appropriate e-procurement, legal and framework agreements for hardware and software
- Ensuring a corporate approach to the exploitation of shared service/ infrastructure/ hardware/systems opportunities
- Ensure that all new hardware and software are thoroughly tested to ensure technical and operational compliance

We will ensure that assets are suitable, operational, accessible and maintained to required standards:

- Challenging the need for ownership/retention of under-performing assets
- Taking advantage of a corporate approach to ownership in a shared infrastructure
- Minimising operational overheads and annual running costs
- Better co-ordination of assets, management and budgets
- Ensuring effective capacity planning is undertaken
- Ensuring regular monitoring and reporting on the performance of ICT assets, including identifying redundant hardware and software
- Ensuring backup/recovery of systems and disaster recovery of critical systems
- Maximising interoperability opportunities between hardware, applications, systems and networks
- Ensuring appropriate information security (availability, integrity and confidentiality)
- Ensure compliance with internal and external audit requirements

We will ensure that new assets are sustainable and affordable for the whole life of the asset:

- Identification of operational sustainability including storage space and cooling
- Ensuring all new hardware is energy efficient in line with the Council's Energy Policy and associated targets
- Levering as much practical life out of assets as possible
- Working closely with hardware vendors to ensure maximum benefits are realised and support contracts are in place and fully documented
- Developing "roadmaps" and replacement plans for all ICT assets integrating opportunities for consolidation and the application of new, more economic technologies

We will ensure the effective retiral and disposal of ICT assets complying with legislative and operational requirements:

- Complying with the EC Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)
- Ensuring the information storage framework fulfils the statutory obligation of the Council in relation to Freedom of Information and the Council's own records management policies for the retention and archival of information
- Maintaining replacement plans for hardware, systems and networks
- Ensuring the efficient and safe removal of electronic data

11.0 Future Developments and Arrangements

The Corporate Asset Management Plan 2015 – 2020 outlines Aberdeenshire Council's approach to asset management to ensure that effective and efficient management and use of these resources is maintained. To ensure this process continues, the Corporate Asset Management Plan 2015 -2020 will be regularly reviewed and updated where necessary to ensure that best practice is being adopted and implemented.

In addition to regular review of the Corporate Asset Management Plan, annual Asset Performance Reports are to be prepared outlining the performance of the asset base with these forming regular updates to committee.

Reviews of assets are to be regularly undertaken, either through the development of asset based strategies, or challenging on an individual basis whilst updating core fact information. Assets that are classed as underperforming either in terms of physical performance or fulfilling the Councils key priorities are to be challenged by Property and Facilities Management and the holding Service. These reviews are a key activity for all Services in forthcoming years to ensure that facilities are efficiently utilised and meet Services' requirements.

Core fact information of the operational portfolio is to be updated to maintain the validity of this information to accurately inform the decision making process around investment and disinvestment process.

The 15 year Capital Strategy and Capital Plan extending from 2015 – 2030 and incorporated within the Corporate Asset Management Plan outlines Aberdeenshire's investment strategy. This has been developed through reviews of Services' asset based strategies and available funding along with ensuring that projects identified align with the Council's strategic priorities. These key documents and plans will be regularly reviewed through the Capital Plan Group to confirm validity of projects' inclusion within the plan along with monitoring of expenditure. Regular monitoring statements are to be presented to committee.

As the delivery of projects progresses, so does change within the public sector, with an emphasis upon sharing of resources and a collaborative approach towards service delivery, both with public sector partners and third sector agencies. This drive towards collaborative service delivery will require shared community assets from where a number of services and functions will be provided that meet community needs and aspirations.

In addition, a number of areas within Aberdeenshire have increasing populations applying pressure on the ability of existing facilities, and Services to meet this demand. In many instances this will require further additional investment, with budgetary constraints in forthcoming years to prove challenging following a reduction in available funding to deliver such projects.

12.0 Glossary of Definitions

APSE	Association of Public Service Excellence
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
HRA	Housing Revenue Account
LDP	Local Development Plan
NESJPSG	North East Scotland Joint Public Sector Group
NESTRANS	North East of Scotland Transportation Partnership
PFI/PPP	Private Finance Initiative / Public Private Partnership
PSPG	Public Sector Property Group (sub group of NESJPSG)
RICS	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
SFT	Scottish Futures Trust
SHQS	Scottish Housing Quality Standard
SOA	Single Outcome Agreement
SPI	Statutory Performance Indicator
VOSA	Vehicle Operator Services Agency