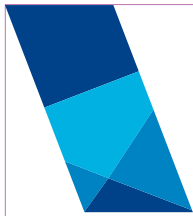


From mountain to sea

Economic Development Annual Review

April 2017 to March 2018





From mountain to sea

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, 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 areas
- working with our partners in the North East and beyond
- always looking to the future



Cover Image courtesy of Salt Street Productions

Filmed on location at Tarlair, Macduff, Aberdeenshire - June 2017

A crew of highly skilled urban athletes travel the UK on a mission to breathe new life into derelict locations with some epic stunts.

Made by Salt Street Productions for Channel 4, free to view on All4 Britain's Abandoned Playgrounds - Episode 3 Tarlair Outdoor Pool

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Collated by: Sheila Stuart

Economic Development Overview

Hello and welcome to the 2017/2018 Aberdeenshire Council overview of economic development activities.

As always, when reviewing what has happened in the last year, I recall many and recent achievements including approving the refreshed Regional Economic Development Action Plan which provides a strategic context for the work of Economic Development. It has been, as you will read, a packed year for the Council in supporting Aberdeenshire's economy.

In my role as the Chair of the Infrastructure Services Committee, I have the privilege of being involved in a number of groups and committees. It always strikes me how important to the economy the many services in the Council are, from transportation, improving digital connectivity through to the protection of the natural environment. In this context, I was really interested to learn that the future of our tourism industry also sees these areas of work as assets to support that industry to grow.

Getting away from the fast pace of everyday life by walking in a remote glen or beach or touring Aberdeenshire by car or bike are what many of our current and future visitors are looking for. The new Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Tourism Strategy 2018-2023, approved this year, highlights this and it also identifies how all the partners can support the area to maximise our potential.

I had the pleasure last year, of meeting many companies in businesses ranging from food and drink to energy. The sense of optimism and entrepreneurship is clear, along with plans to grow and expand. I was delighted to visit the new National Decommissioning Centre of Excellence in Newburgh, and to learn how we can use our innovation skills to maximise the opportunity in this field. We have also been working in partnership with many other groups and agencies this year including Opportunity North East, Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses as well as many sectoral bodies, so it's been great to see the creation of the regional inward investment hub - Invest Aberdeen - with Aberdeen City Council as our partner.

In the next year, there will be are many challenges for our economy, with Brexit at the forefront of our minds. However, the region's economy is once again improving across sectors and with strong economic leadership, we have good reason to be optimistic.



*Councillor Peter Argyle
Deputy Leader and Chair
Infrastructure Services Committee*

Introduction

I hope you will enjoy reading about the many areas that the Council has been working in to support Economic Development and Aberdeenshire as a whole over the last year. I am always pleased when I get to read my first completed copy of this document as it reminds me of how much the team and colleagues from other services have done, often quietly, to help individual businesses and the wider economy.

Among Aberdeenshire's many assets is its land and sea based industries – we have a thriving fishing and agricultural sector. Visiting the new Peterhead Fish Market it's clear that this industry, together with its associated support and processing sectors are here to stay, given its scale and importance in our region.

Within the agricultural sector, there have been some innovative approaches to diversification and sustaining farm units including vending machines for organic milk and agri- food tourism, showing farm visitors the provenance and variety of our produce and illustrating the journey from field to plate.

Aberdeenshire Council has been delighted to be part of the Opportunity North East Business Growth Programme for Food and Drink. This has supported companies from across Aberdeenshire to realise their potential and support them to grow.

As residents know, there has been a lot of construction work going on this year from roads to schools to high-end hotels. Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce's Investment Tracker has been a great tool to demonstrate the strength of the region and along with the newly formed hub, Invest Aberdeen, we can go out to the world confidently and say our region is open and attractive for business investment.

The Economic Development Service is here to support and advise businesses and social enterprises, so please get in touch with us.



Belinda Miller
Head of Economic Development and Protective Services

Economic Development

Our objective is for the Council to create the conditions for sustainable economic growth, diversification and regeneration within Aberdeenshire and the wider region

Aberdeen City Region Deal

The Regional Economic Strategy provides a shared vision and ambition for the future of North- east Scotland to align commitment, lead investment and co-ordinate action in pursuit of its economic growth and diversification objectives. Co-signatories are Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council and private sector partner Opportunity North East.

The Strategy is influenced and driven by a wide collaboration in North- east Scotland, including the national enterprise and skills agencies and regional economic partners. The partners have been reviewing the Regional Economic Strategy given significant and improving economic investment and outcomes across the region. This has resulted in the development of a new, revised and updated Regional Economic Strategy Action Plan for 2018-23.

The Aberdeen City Region Deal is a key part of ensuring we deliver the Region's Economic Strategy. The UK Government, Scottish Government with Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council and Opportunity North East are working together to address the challenges currently facing the Region and to capitalise on the substantial opportunities. Over the next 10 years, both Governments are committed to jointly investing up to £250 million. Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council and regional partners are committed to investing up to £44 million. These commitments form part of an overarching £826 million funding package for the Aberdeen City Region Deal.

One of the key projects is the Oil and Gas Technology Centre, which is now fully operational and working with the industry and Universities to develop innovative ways to support the industry both in the North Sea and worldwide. In 2018, they announced a collaboration with the University of Aberdeen to set up a National Decommissioning Centre of Excellence in Newburgh.

The two other innovation centres covering Food and Drink and Life Sciences are at an earlier stage of development. The Aberdeen Harbour expansion is well underway and will support both the energy industry and the anticipated Cruise industry. Work continues on the development of a Strategic Transport Appraisal and the Digital Infrastructure investment, which aims to provide the area with world class digital infrastructure.

Aberdeenshire Council's role as a partner to the Deal includes representation on the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee, approval of business cases for projects where Council funds will be spent, provision of resources and time for administration and development and delivery of projects.



Further information:

Website: www.abzdeal.com

<http://bit.ly/RESactionplan>

Twitter: #ABZdeal

Opportunity North East



*Sir Ian Wood KT GBE
Chairman, Opportunity North East*

Opportunity North East (ONE) is the private sector's response to the regional economic challenge of maximising the oil and gas opportunity and rebalancing the economy of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

ONE prioritised action and investment in oil, gas and energy; food, drink and agriculture; life sciences and tourism. Digital and Entrepreneurship were added in August 2017.

In 2017/18, the scope and scale of ONE's work increased as it worked with cohorts of businesses to accelerate their growth and progressed transformational projects for the key sectors. The year saw ONE increase its programmes and projects in delivery with that activity making a difference to the ambition and performance of participating companies and the further development of partnerships.

ONE's partners now include Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Scottish Enterprise, University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University, Quality Meat Scotland, SRUC, Scotland Food & Drink, and ANM Group Limited.

ONE's programmes to accelerate business growth include the Food & Drink Business Growth Programme and a bespoke accelerator for Life Sciences and these provide businesses participating with follow-on support and mentoring.

ONE developed and launched programmes for oil and gas supply chain SMEs with Scottish Enterprise to help them diversify and pursue offshore decommissioning opportunities.

ONE continued to be the single largest funder of VisitAberdeenshire. Network activity in food, drink and agriculture and life sciences provides platforms to share best practice and address growth activities. ONE committed to a major digital project for the beef cattle supply chain and supported the creation of the country's first agricultural shared apprenticeship scheme, which will place students with host farms in Aberdeenshire.

ONE led a major programme of regional engagement during the year, meeting with 1,700 business people and other stakeholders across 14 events to discuss the regional renaissance agenda and identify new projects. Some of the ideas that emerged are being tested and developed.

In March 2018, The Wood Foundation confirmed a significant extension to its funding commitment to ONE to enable longer term planning and delivery. The original £29 million of funding over five years was extended to £62 million over 10 years.

To date, ONE has approved project spend of £8 million and has leveraged match funding of £28 million into the region.

Looking ahead, ONE will invest up to £6 million in 2018/19 in activity and projects across its priority sectors, which is projected to secure more than £6 million of match funding from partners.

Further information:

Website: www.opportunitynortheast.com

LinkedIn: Opportunity North East Limited

Twitter: @OpportunityNE_1

Agriculture and the Land Based Sector



Mark Wattie leads the parade of Aberdeen-Angus at Tillyfour with commentary from Ken Howie (left)

The past year featured an unusually eclectic mixture of rural industry topics and engagement, ranging from the political – particularly Brexit - to the obscure, most notably the issue of brisket identification tags on cattle, where the council helped to broker an animal welfare-friendly procedure under which identification tags could be relocated on cattle without penalty.

Local dairy farmers continue to face challenging market conditions following the loss of local large scale processing facilities in 2016. The council is maintaining close contact with North East Milk Producers Association in partnership with Opportunity North East and SAOS to explore and evaluate alternative processing options.

The council continues to sponsor the Good Farming Practice awards. Administered by the Royal Northern Agricultural Society, the competition winner in 2017 was Farmlay Eggs, Cockmuir Farm, Strichen. Run to exemplary standards by the Chapman family, the business is Scotland's second largest egg producer, using robotics to pack over 4 million eggs per week – half from its own flock and half from 25 local producers with whom the business works very closely.

One prominent event, the internationally renowned Aberdeen Angus World Forum, returned to the UK after a gap of no less than 40 years. One of the highlights of the World Forum tour was the visit on 30 June 2017 to Tillyfour Farm near Alford, ancestral home of the Aberdeen Angus breed. Aberdeenshire Council sponsored a buffet lunch provided by a local caterer and major employer in the area, which was enjoyed by around 500 Aberdeen Angus farmers and enthusiasts from around the world. The day also included a re-enactment of the visit in 1871 of Queen Victoria to the farm.

The agricultural sector is proving to be an enthusiastic adopter of technology and as cost and power requirements of sensors continue to fall, remote monitoring of animal health and soil and crop condition will help farmers to better manage their assets as we move to a situation where production support is increasingly replaced by payments for environmental stewardship.

The Council is a key partner in City Region Deal Projects to develop a data collection and processing and analysing capability and a sensor network which benefits rural businesses.

Further information:

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/facingthefuture/

Business Development



Newly refurbished Station Hotel at Inch

Four Business Development Executives offer business support throughout Aberdeenshire from bases across the area. This generalist business support and advice complements the work of specialist industry advisors, the InvestAberdeen team and regeneration staff.

These Executives assist businesses by advising on sources of public and private funding, accessing expert help, supplying information on local projects and linking businesses directly into other Council services such as Planning, Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Property. Business support staff can also advise businesses of assistance offered by other agencies and the staff work closely with Business Gateway advisors to access the help best suited to the business involved.

One of the main tools that the Executives have is the Council's Support for Aberdeenshire Business (SAB) scheme which aims to strengthen Aberdeenshire's economy and encourage the expansion and development of local businesses as well as encourage businesses to move into the area and create jobs.

The scheme places importance on businesses selling outwith the area and the ultimate goal is to secure and expand the employment base and the economy of Aberdeenshire. SAB offers financial assistance in the form of loans and grants, to both new and existing businesses throughout Aberdeenshire.

In 2017-18 most of the 19 businesses assisted were in the food, drink and tourism sectors, reflecting the priority given to growing and diversifying these sectors in the Regional Economic Strategy. The businesses predicted that the support would help them to create 45 jobs and safeguard 37 jobs. In addition, the First Employee Grant scheme assisted another 15 businesses with a grant to take on their first employee thereby supporting the creation of 15 new jobs.

Case Study - Station Hotel - Inch

Jackie Cruickshank and her husband have invested their funds and time in bringing the Station Hotel at Inch back to life. Jackie is an experienced chef and has worked in the hospitality sector for many years. The business plan indicated 6 full-time and 20+ part-time jobs would be created but the investment needed to bring the old building up to an acceptable standard was substantial. Jackie worked with her local Business Development Executive to get advice on what assistance she could apply for and the subsequent application was successful. The Council SAB loan is now helping towards the working capital requirements of the business and the development grant will be used for staff training and website development. The business also received a SAB job creation grant to help with the costs of recruiting the new workforce. This development will bring new life to the heart of this Aberdeenshire community.

Further information

<http://bit.ly/EconDevAbshireBusinessDev>

Business Gateway



L-R Jacob Whitaker and Richard Kent of Greenman Woodworking found support in Aberdeenshire Council's, First Employee Grant Scheme

Businesses and individuals in the North East continue to gain valuable guidance and support from Business Gateway to help their ventures prosper and grow. In 2017/18 a number of additional services were introduced which meant Business Gateway could help even more businesses to expand.

Starting in April 2017, two new services were made possible by funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The main service, called 'Business Boost', allows existing businesses to access support services that would otherwise not be available to them. Businesses benefitting range from small charities to large engineering companies, with services tailored to suit their circumstances and business needs. The services include access to a business adviser, specialist consultants, targeted workshops and advice. Over 200 businesses have so far benefitted and the programme is expected to continue to 2023.

The second service supported 115 new businesses who plan to employ staff. Continuing the Boost theme the Digital training programme called 'DigitalBoost' delivered workshops and specialist 1:1 training in all things digital. Over 500 people

attended 76 workshops on topics such as increasing sales with Facebook or creating a digital marketing strategy. In addition, 37 businesses worked with our experts to improve the digital aspects of their business improving marketing and increasing sales.

Further to our direct work with businesses, a series of events were held throughout the year including the successful 'Women in Business' events. 'Women in Business' is a networking group for women who are developing a business idea, or those who have recently started their business. Although women are well represented in start-up businesses the proportion falls rapidly as businesses scale up. These events give women the opportunity to build a support network where they can test their ideas and build contacts increasing their chances of success as their businesses grow.

Additional events were held for Business Gateway clients to make connections with other businesses and professional service providers. Four events were held and speakers included presenter, Gyles Brandreth, round the world cyclist, Mark Beaumont and chef/broadcaster, Nick Nairn.

In 2017/2018 Business Gateway in the North-east achieved:

- New Start-ups supported 1,227
- Start-ups supported to employ staff 150
- Businesses supported with £200k+ growth 115
- Free workshops delivered 293

Further information
www.bgateway.com
or call 01224 289 700

Community Economic Development



The Smiddy: Centre of Excellence of Silversmith and Jewellery, Banff

In 2017/18 Aberdeenshire Council launched a new fund to support social enterprises.

The fund is available until 31 March 2019.

Social Enterprises are organisations that trade for the common good. They exist alongside the private and public sectors.

Aberdeenshire Council has a long history of facilitating the development and support of community/social enterprises through community economic development.

From the Scottish Social Enterprise Census 2017 the number of social enterprises recorded in Aberdeenshire was 291, an increase of 46 from the previous census in 2015.

The Social Enterprise Support Fund provides support under five distinct areas.

1. Salary Subsidy Grants for new permanent posts (full and part-time) with new employees. Posts should be for a minimum of two years.
2. Expert Help Grants for specialist, professional expert help for start-up and expansion to existing social enterprises.
3. Training Grants for individual board members and staff of a social enterprise. The fund is also keen to support training where a number of social enterprises can come together.
4. Feasibility Study Grants to carry out studies for a potential new social enterprise development or for an existing, established social enterprise to explore a new business development and new income stream.
5. Establishment Grant to assist in the creation and establishment of new social enterprises in Aberdeenshire.

Case Study

Braemar Care Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) was looking to establish a new social enterprise to meet the needs of social care for the communities of Braemar and Crathie. This was seen as a high priority for the community from the Community Action Plan that Braemar completed.

Social Enterprise Support Funding was awarded to the social enterprise for expert help, training for staff and carers and lastly an establishment grant was awarded to help to set up the SCIO.

Further information

www.bit.ly/EconDevAbshireCommunity

Employment Support Team



The Employment Support Team, March 2018

The Employment Support Team (EST) continues to assist Aberdeenshire citizens to get back in to work (full-time, part-time or self-employment), enter further education, or access sector-based training programmes that assist them in gaining employment. During 2017-18 the Team supported 420 clients with 203 subsequently gaining employment in the period.

Each Key Worker in the EST covers a specific geographical area, such as Formartine and works with clients until a positive destination or outcome is achieved, whilst also taking on new referrals which can come from Jobcentres, Library staff (a great source of local sign-posting), health, social work and self-referral.

For some clients, this journey can take years, as their personal circumstances determine how far removed from the labour market they are. The Key Workers assist each individual in areas such as self-esteem and confidence, then as they progress and feel ready the client will undertake practical training for employment. This can include building a C.V., interview techniques, personal presentation and finally, applying for and experiencing going for a job. During this time, they may have been placed on job experience to help them gain an insight into what the work entails or simply to experience what working means. In early 2018, the Employment Support Team launched its own Facebook page as a way of getting its message out to people and this is proving a successful social media conduit.

Nationally, the team represents Aberdeenshire Council interests on the Scottish Local Authority Economic Development Employability Group (SLAED) and comment on various Scottish and UK wide employability consultation documents. EST Chairs the Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership (Employment CONNECT) and has organised four Skills and Employment Events for the coming year and a joint Employment/Tackling Poverty Conference.

EST has been a partner in the Regional Skills Strategy which is a City and Shire co-ordinated approach to building a more balanced economic structure by addressing the impacts of the Oil & Gas downturn and ensuring appropriate skills are available for high volume sectors such as Construction and Care.

Other actions and initiatives are all designed to help ensure that North-east Scotland has the workforce to deliver on its economic aspirations.

Further information

E-mail: employmentsupportteam@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

“The SERI Scheme has been perfect for Toni. Having completed her CJS post, Modo were very keen to be able to keep her on. During the last year she has come on brilliantly. Support from the Employment Support Team will allow us to employ her for another year, to continue to develop Toni’s skills, and to make the most of her passion and enthusiasm.”

Martin Danzier

Creative Director, Modo - Circus with Purpose



Toni McGonigle performing in 'Confusion of Tongues'

Energetica – Scotland’s Energy Corridor



Energetica’s aim is to make the region the location of choice for high value oil and gas and renewable energy organisations and a first choice for organisations of all sizes operating in other high value, quality niche markets.

The Energetica Programme comprises a number of key projects and workstreams with the aim of delivering four strategic objectives:

1. To consolidate and grow the Region’s position as one of the world’s major energy centres and the energy capital of Europe;
2. To attract new high value investment and people to the region;
3. To grow the international trade of indigenous business; and
4. To create a location that seeks to maximise both quality of design/development and quality of life.

Progress and developments of note include:

- The final Energetica signage has been installed in Peterhead, sign-posting entry to the corridor.
- 8,424 attendees participated in the 2017 Energetica Summer Festival, with events spanning across the summer from May-August. This again represented continuous year on year growth, and was a significant increase on 2016 when 1,244 attendees took part in the Festival.
- Energetica visited the Offshore Technology Conference in Houston and exhibited at Offshore Europe with a stand on the Aberdeen City & Shire pavilion. This activity generated a great deal of interest in Energetica and resulted in various leads and follow up activity.
- Statoil (now Equinor) launched the Hywind Pilot Park at Buchan Deep in October 2017. The world’s first floating wind farm, it has gained international coverage and recognition.
- Energetica has worked with Vattenfall to design and host a supplier event for their European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre (EOWDC) to encourage local businesses to engage with the project. Energetica has also engaged and supported Pale Blue Dot Energy with their work on Carbon Capture & Storage at St Fergus.
- A report was presented to Infrastructure Services Committee marking 10 years of Energetica, where a digital animation outlining the corridor’s achievements was shown.

Energetica has now transitioned into an overall inward investment programme for the region, Invest Aberdeen; a collaboration between Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Councils. This will see Energetica promoted as part of a collective, alongside the Aberdeen City Region Deal, Developing our Northern Towns programme, the Renaissance Vision, and City Centre Masterplan, all led by the overarching Regional Economic Strategy.

Pulling together the expertise of both councils and partner agencies, the Invest Aberdeen team will deliver inward investment services for the Aberdeen City Region. They will react to investor enquiries, target efforts to attract investment and define and promote the Aberdeen proposition, showcasing the region as a world-class business location.

INVEST **ABERDEEN**

Further information:

www.investaberdeen.co.uk

www.twitter.com/invest_aberdeen

www.bit.ly/EnergeticaAnimation

Energy



Offshore Europe 2017

The energy sector remains a vital component of the Aberdeenshire economy despite a challenging few years. Encouraging signs indicate an improvement in trading conditions in the industry. The price of Brent rose above \$70 in early 2018 for the first time in three years and the reduction in jobs in the sector fell to 4%. This latter figure is still disappointing but it is an improvement on the 35% overall reduction since the downturn began and there are increasing examples of companies recruiting again.

Drilling activity remained low with just 94 wells drilled; 71 development, 14 exploration and 9 appraisal.

The future of the sector was boosted by the announcement that The Oil and Gas Technology Centre and the University of Aberdeen are joining forces to establish the Decommissioning Centre of Excellence based at the OceanLab facility in Newburgh, Aberdeenshire. With between 50% and 60% of the value of decommissioning contracts being made up of work below the waterline, the globally recognised centre of excellence in subsea engineering based in Westhill, is well placed to capitalise on business opportunities, supported by the work of Oceanlab.

The Acorn project is well underway at St Fergus gas terminal which aims to use existing assets in North-east Scotland to engineer a minimum cost, viable, full chain carbon capture, transport and offshore storage project.

Funding for Opportunity North East is more than doubling and extending to 10 years, to support action and investment in pursuing its renaissance strategy for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. ONE Oil, Gas and Energy's focus on anchoring the supply chain in the region will significantly benefit the whole sector.

Aberdeenshire Council supported Fraserburgh Harbour's offshore wind operations and maintenance ambitions.

The ongoing investment at Peterhead Port will ensure it has a long term role to play in serving the UKCS in addition to the fishing industry. Construction of Equinor's Hywind project, the world's largest floating wind farm off Peterhead, was completed successfully and is now generating higher than expected levels of power. Work is ongoing to link battery storage to the generation.

Aberdeenshire Council had a significant presence at Offshore Europe in September 2017 and was part of the Scottish delegation which exhibited at the Offshore Technology Conference in Houston in May 2017. Exhibition space was also taken at Subsea Expo, Europe's largest subsea exhibition, in Aberdeen in February 2018. Each exhibition provided a platform from which to promote Aberdeenshire as a place to work, live and invest in.

Aberdeenshire remains home to a number of the country's vital energy assets, including St Fergus Gas Terminal, Peterhead Power Station and Peterhead Port which is the North-east's leading deep sea harbour.

Further information:

<http://bit.ly/EconDevAbshireEnergy>

“The launch of Invest Aberdeen marks an exciting time for the Aberdeen City Region as we continue our diversification strategy to secure the long-term stability of our strong regional economy.

“This region makes its mark across the globe; 75% of the world’s sub-sea engineering capability is harboured here, more than 25 of Scotland’s top 100 businesses are headquartered or host major operations here, whilst National Geographic voted ours as one of the top 20 iconic coastlines in the world. We have all of the key ingredients for business success teamed with an enviable quality of life making this a great place to live, visit, work and invest.

“Invest Aberdeen fills a very important gap, providing a concierge service for investors and businesses the world over and showcasing the sound investment opportunities we have here. We look forward to working in collaboration with our partners to grow investment into our region.”

*Councillor Jim Gifford
Leader of Aberdeenshire Council*



“The significant investment made by Aberdeen City Council in the new Arena, Exhibition and Conference facilities at Bucksburn is good news for the City, Region and Scotland as a whole. The primary function of the new venue, recently named The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA) is to generate economic benefit through helping to diversify the regional economy. The centre will attract new events, conferences and exhibitions which will see a significant rise of both business and leisure visitors to the region.

In the conference sector specifically the key target markets align to the regional economic growth strategy and working in conjunction with Visit Aberdeenshire we are looking at a number of high profile opportunities which will fit well with Aberdeen’s areas of excellence.

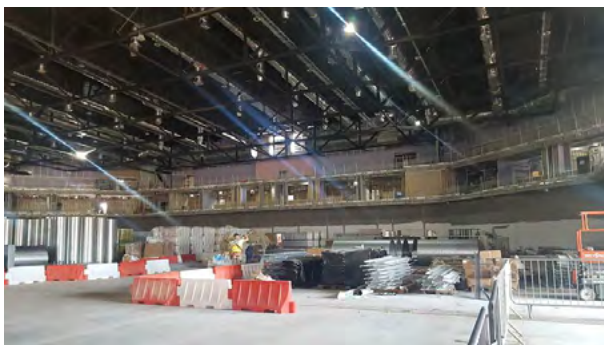
We should also not forget that whilst it is easy to measure direct economic benefits, something less tangible but potentially of even greater benefit is the effect these events can have on Foreign Direct Investment and the Knowledge Economy.

The new centre will be capable of holding concerts for up to 12,500 people, staging exhibitions up to 48.000 Sqm and hosting conference of up to 5,000 delegates. With state of the art technology, world leading design and excellent integrated transport links, TECA is set to announce itself on the world stage and we believe will be seen not only as a key asset to Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire but to Scotland as a whole.”

*Nick Waight
Managing Director, The Event Complex Aberdeen
(TECA)*



The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA)



The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA)



OVERALL TIMELINE



European Services



**Post-Brexit
Development Funding**
Aberdeenshire Council

15 March 2018



The European Team supports the delivery of European Union funding in Aberdeenshire, as well as facilitating Council engagement with European policies and partnerships. This year, policy work has focused on scenario planning post-Brexit. A position paper has been agreed by Aberdeenshire Council, calling for domestic funding to be made available to replace funding programmes presently provided by the European Union. These programmes presently provide support to rural communities; fishing communities; businesses and individuals requiring employability and poverty/social inclusion support.



Fund	Programme	EU Funding Awarded
European Social Fund	Inclusive Aberdeenshire	£717,077.68
	Aberdeenshire Employability Pipeline	£2,497,656.40
European Regional Development Fund	Aberdeen City and Shire Business Gateway +	£474,120.00
LEADER	North Aberdeenshire LEADER	£3,290,237.02
	South Aberdeenshire LEADER	£2,831,742.07
European Maritime and Fisheries Fund	North East Scotland Fisheries Local Action Group	£1,437,000.00
TOTAL		£11,247,833.17

The position paper has been sent to UK and Scottish Government Ministers as well as to local Members of the UK and Scottish Parliaments, asking them to consider the benefits of these programmes and continuing support post-Brexit. Further engagement has taken place through a meeting between Aberdeenshire Council and the Scottish Government Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe on the Council's Brexit position paper and providing evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee and Finance and Constitution Committee.

The Council also actively participates in partnerships such as the North Sea Commission, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development on European matters.

Further information

Post-Brexit funding position:

www.bit.ly/EconDevAbshireEuropeanServicesBrexit

www.bit.ly/EconDevAbshireEuropeanServices

Film Office



Image by Colin Tennant

The Film Office is a partnership between Aberdeenshire Council's Economic Development and Cultural Services. 2017/18 has been a fantastic year with a number of key national and international productions choosing to shoot here for film, television and online media projects.

The remake of Whisky Galore, filmed in Portsoy and the Banffshire Coast in 2015, went to UK cinematic release in May 2017. With Screen Tourism beginning to impact on our visitor numbers, Aberdeenshire Council, VisitScotland and the distributor Arrow Films, worked in partnership to create a Whisky Galore Film Map of the key locations.

The map was launched at a tourism focused regional screening alongside an autumn press visit hosted by Visit

Scotland and linked to the film's DVD release. Location Manager David Taylor was delighted to return to give a personal insight on filming Whisky Galore in the region.

The range of filming we have been able to support this year has been extensive and included welcoming back House Hunters International, developing new international relationships with American FX Network Production, the filming of Trust, a 10-episode TV Drama starring Donald Sutherland and the US feature film, Mary Queen of Scots which filmed on Poldulie Bridge, Strathdon and which has a UK release date of January 2019.

Other highlights from the year were:

- Salt Street Productions featured Tarlair Tidal Pool for a Channel 4 series, Britain's Abandoned Playgrounds.
- Arrow Media International visited Upper Deeside to film a 3-part historical series for Channel 5, Inside Balmoral.
- Wall to Wall Media chose the beautiful Forglen Estate, Turriff, to film a five-part, living history series for BBC 2, Filming a Secret Agent Selection: WW2.
- BBC Scotland filmed in Kintore for the series Scotland from the Sky, with James Crawford
- Back to Back Productions filmed an episode of a new series, Help! My House is Haunted! at Fyvie Castle.
- Ride with Norman Reedus, an American travel documentary that follows actor Norman Reedus (The Walking Dead), filmed in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen, with the extra bonus of fellow motorbike enthusiast and Walking Dead star Melissa McBride participating.
- In spring 2018 we welcomed Scott Graham's new feature film, We Don't Talk About Love, to shoot in Graham's native Fraserburgh.

The Film Office continues to support local creative businesses with advice and through working with 'Hit the ground Running,' to deliver an intensive and interactive two-day training course in the area for new entrants to film and television drama in Scotland.

During the year, the Film Office supported over 200 local people in becoming screen extras, with a number of our young people taking lead roles both in front of the camera and behind the scenes as location runners and production apprentices.

Further information

<http://filminginScotland.com/>

Production Links:

Mary Queen of Scots: www.bit.ly/FilmOfficeMaryQueenofScots

Whisky Galore www.bit.ly/FilmOfficeWhiskyGalore

Secret Agent Selection: www.bit.ly/FilmOfficeSecretAgentSelectionww2

Fisheries

Seafood Training Centre Project

The Scottish Seafood Association (SSA) is spearheading a 2-year pilot project to enhance seafood industry operating standards and deliver sectoral growth by upskilling the existing workforce and importantly, attracting and preparing new entrants for a career in seafood processing.

The project was approved by NE Scotland Fisheries Local Action Group (NESFLAG), in November 2017 and includes funding for training equipment and for the appointment of a part-time training specialist. Michael Sim - a highly respected and experienced figure in the field of seafood industry training, has been appointed to lead the project. Following additional financial contributions from seafood companies, Aberdeenshire Council, Seafish Industry Authority and Scottish Government, the reach of the project will be extended.

Under the project, SSA will deliver a range of specialised courses to the existing workforce certified to The Royal Environmental Health Institute Of Scotland (REHIS) and Seafish Industry Authority standards, including advanced food hygiene, seafood sensory assessment and fish smoking training, while new entrants will be provided with a structured induction programme covering health and safety, basic knife skills and food hygiene.

SSA Chief Executive Jimmy Buchan explained that in addition to meeting day-to-day challenges, the seafood sector must take a long term view and be prepared for opportunities arising from increased landings, for example by identifying knowledge and skills gaps and designing training provision to address needs. Michael Sim noted that trained and motivated staff improve productivity, reduce accident frequency and leads to an enhanced reputation.

A key component of the new initiative will be engaging with schools, colleges and the hospitality sector to promote seafood industry-related careers. This project aligns to with Scottish Government's Ambition 2030 strategy, which aims to double the value of the Scottish food and drink sector to £30 billion by 2030.



Further information

www.bit.ly/EconDevAbshireFisheriesReport

www.bit.ly/EconDevAbshireFisheries

Food & Drink



Certificates were presented to mark the completion of the 2017 food & drink Business Growth Programme.

I-R Dami Odugbemi - Succulento Ltd., Jane Mackie - rora dairy, Patrick Machray OBE - ONE Food, Drink & Agriculture Chair, Jimmy Buchan - Amity Fish Company

Image courtesy of Firstpix Photography

Achieving growth in the North East of Scotland's food, drink, fishing and agriculture sectors is fundamental to strengthening and diversifying the regional economy for the long term.

The inaugural food and drink Business Growth Programme (BGP), led by Opportunity North East (ONE) with support from Aberdeenshire Council, aims to accelerate growth in the sector by equipping owners and managers of businesses with the skills, knowledge and support to create and deliver ambitious growth plans.

Participating businesses in the highly practical, 11-month programme recorded increases in turnover of more than £150,000 during the period of the

programme alone and subsequently committed investment in product development, new employees, premises and equipment as they scaled up production to meet increased demand.

The 2018 North East Scotland Food and Drink Awards delivered in partnership by Opportunity North East and Aberdeenshire Council, attracted a record number of applications with 48 businesses submitting 89 entries. The 12 award categories highlighted the diversity of this ever-growing industry, recognising undisputed talent in innovation, skills development and entrepreneurialism, and celebrating new products in retail, foodservice, brewing and distilling. The judging panel for this year's awards included Paul McQuade, Head of Department (Food Buying), LIDL, Karen Ford, Foodhall Manager at Brodie Countryfare, Jason Robertson, Retail Development Manager, National Trust for Scotland and Sarah Mackie, Brakes.

Paul McQuade, Chair of the judging panel, said: "We were very impressed by the calibre of entries in the North East Scotland Food & Drink Awards this year. It made the judging process no easy feat but it's great to see brilliant businesses flourishing across the North East."

Building the North East Scotland Food & Drink Network continues to be a successful way to create connections across the supply chain, accelerate business to business commerce and encourage best-practice learning that allows businesses to grow. In 2017/18, more than 500 people attended dining events at Meldrum House Hotel, Barra Castle, Gordon Castle Walled Garden and the Chester Hotel, designed to provide opportunities for increased business within retailers, hoteliers and buyers for local food and drink producers.

Further information

Website: www.opportunitynortheast.com

LinkedIn: Opportunity North East Limited

Twitter: @OpportunityNE_1

<https://www.nesfoodanddrinkawards.co.uk/>

Infrastructure Developments

Digital Connectivity

The Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB), programme is nearing the end of its delivery phase with work likely to complete around Autumn 2018. Some additional work funded by Gainshare (a BT reinvestment in the programme triggered by high rates of uptake), is being delivered in Aberdeenshire with some subscribers receiving fibre to the premises upgrades, providing them with the future proofed solution.

Uptake of fibre enabled broadband in Aberdeenshire has been the best in Scotland to date, the area being the first to see the 30% and 40% thresholds exceeded.

A number of new cabinets were over subscribed and Openreach is responsible for creating additional capacity at these locations – in some cases this will be a simple card upgrade whilst in extreme cases a further cabinet may have to be built.

For those not benefitting from fixed infrastructure improvements, the offer of a Connection Voucher has been made and Aberdeenshire residents have shown the best appetite in Scotland for using these to access Ka band satellite services and alternative wireless services, where these are available.

Aberdeenshire has seen the biggest uplift in Scotland in the percentage of premises being able to access superfast services despite having twice the national average of exchange only lines, which are more expensive to upgrade.

Whilst there remains work to be done to provide better services to those households and businesses which did not benefit from the current programme, the huge service improvement gains and subsequent uptake rates are reward for the Council's decision to invest £16m in the DSSB project – the largest Local Authority contribution to broadband infrastructure improvements in the U.K.

Managers for the successor programme (R100), are currently in a process of competitive dialogue with potential bidders to deliver the offer of a 30 Mbps service to every address in Scotland by 2021.

The need for world class infrastructure to support public service delivery, roll out of 4G and 5G mobile services and the increasing number of Internet of Things devices is being addressed through the digital workstream of the City Region Deal. The first phase of infrastructure upgrades in Aberdeenshire should see gigabit capable fibre built into key strategic corridors, linking public buildings and providing infrastructure which can also be accessed by residential and business customers, who in turn will be able to access ultrafast services.

Significant improvements in both 4G coverage and services have been delivered in the area – these are very necessary for rural industries and householders and key to growing the visitor economy in Aberdeenshire.

Whilst much has been achieved, the focus remains on addressing the needs of those at the poor end of the respective service spectra and in ensuring that Aberdeenshire has the best possible digital connectivity.

Further information:

<http://bit.ly/EconDevAbshireDigital>

“Aberdeenshire, and the North East as a whole, is crying out for a robust digital network in order to take advantage of emerging opportunities coming from the likes of the Internet of Things and Blockchain. All industry sectors, from Food Drink & Agriculture through to Oil & Gas, will see a step change in productivity and efficiency when these platforms and technologies are embedded throughout their respective Supply Networks resulting in long term economic growth for our region”

*Sarah Moore
Founder, Managing Director, Core 29 Limited
Director for Projects and Innovation, Peterson*



LEADER Programme



Scottish Traditional Boat Festival

ENTRY FORM

Follow the Herring

10KM ROAD RACE
2KM FUN RUN



For more information or to enter go to www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk and search Portsoy 10K
Enquiries call 01467 530615

The LEADER programmes are funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Scottish Government. Local Action Groups, bringing together representatives of community, public and private sector organisations, have been established to develop and deliver Local Development Strategies.



Aberdeenshire Council acts as the 'accountable body' for the North and South Aberdeenshire LEADER programmes which have awarded the following funds in 2017-18:

- **Opening Up the Town House** – Up to £15,502 to commission architectural plans and studies for the restoration of Strichen Town House
- **Stores and Retail Outlet** – Up to £100,000 to provide a stores/spare parts building and retail outlet to facilitate the workshop needs of CC Powell Ltd., an agricultural dealership in Banff.
- **Effective Use of the Local Natural and Cultural Heritage Resources** – Up to £79,968.50 to facilitate co-operation and exchanges between the Portsoy Traditional Boat Festival and cultural festivals in Latvia and Estonia.
- **Udny Community Hub Feasibility Study** – Up to £6,804 towards the costs of a feasibility study for the redevelopment of the Dr. Spence Memorial Hall.
- **North East Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Project** – Up to £139,330 to co-ordinate the control of INNS such as giant hogweed throughout Aberdeen City and Shire.
- **Creation of a Fit for Purpose Learning Centre** – Up to £158,742 to provide an accessible learning centre at the Fly Cup Catering Ltd. social enterprise in Inverurie.
- **Huntly 2030** – Up to £44,873.75 towards the development of a strategy and action plan for Huntly.
- **Crathes Public Hall Redevelopment** – Up to £13,272 towards the costs of feasibility and design work.
- **Inchmarlo Community Workshop** – Up to £20,434.75 to fit out a craft workshop to be used for training and community projects.
- **Tornaveen Community Hub** – Up to £47,009.90 to extend community facilities and provide a playpark in Tornaveen.
- **Torphins Area Paths Feasibility** – Up to £9038.19 for a study to explore options to improve and develop accessible paths and a 'Torphins Way' path

Further information
www.local-development.eu

Regeneration



Enjoying a leisurely beach run during Active Fraserburgh Week

Fraserburgh is fast becoming a town known for its exceptional indoor and outdoor sports and recreation facilities. With the new South Links development (running, athletics, all abilities cycling and football), nearing final completion and inspirational plans to create state of the art competition standard squash courts at the Fraserburgh Fitness Centre, the town is the place to go for any sporting enthusiast!

To showcase the multitude of opportunities on offer, and to encourage people of all ages and abilities to lead more active and healthy lifestyles, 'Active Fraserburgh Week', has established itself in the town's events diary over recent years since starting in 2015.

2017 was the third year of events and activities across multiple sports and venues in the town. Growing year on year, with more people and more activities than ever – over 700 participants enjoyed a choice of over 120 different sessions at 17 different venues, ranging from surfing to wheelchair accessible cycling, from karate to outdoor bowls.

For 2017, there was a focus on activities that the whole family could enjoy together, such as a Family Fun Run and Family Yoga. Working together with NHS services, including Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy as well as GP surgeries, ensured that people were aware of low impact activities which may help their recoveries and which were suited to their health needs and abilities.

With around £7,000 of funding from Aberdeenshire Council's Regeneration programme and many hundreds of hours of volunteer time from club leaders, coaches and helpers, and despite the changeable weather, 2017 was bigger and better than ever before! We also piloted a new online booking system which was very popular and made it easier for people to receive reminders about their events.

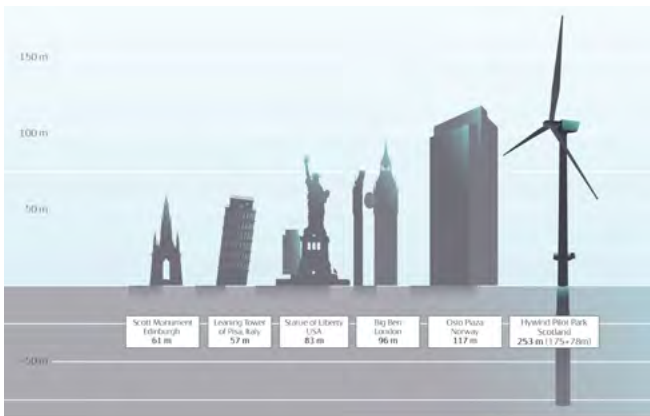
Plans are well advanced for Active Fraserburgh Week 2018 which will run from 13th -17th August. A new addition for 2018 will be The Highland Fames, a 10 minute Mini Opera for Soprano and Clarinet depicting a dramatic battle between "Sir Chris Hoy" and "Hannah Miley", who is in fact a mythical Kelpie. The audience will be exhorted to join in with singing, and a pleasingly operatic plot twist provides a resolution to the struggle between the characters.

Economic Development is the driving force behind Aberdeenshire Council's adoption of the 'Town Centre First Principle' which applies to all key towns in Aberdeenshire. Regeneration activity is currently focused on Banff, Fraserburgh, Macduff and Peterhead, each town having its own Vision and Action Plan.

Further information

www.bit.ly/EconDevAbshireRegeneration

Renewable Energy



Hywind illustration



Onshore Wind: Onshore wind showed a small increase in operational capacity from 445MW in April 2017 to 470MW in April 2018, distributed across 150 sites. It is the largest contributor to renewable generation in Aberdeenshire by a considerable factor, but with low or no UK Government subsidy only a small number of new schemes are progressing. As of April 2018 there were 3 sites under construction, totalling 12MW, with 76 projects (52MW) consented which may or may not proceed.

Offshore wind: The 30MW Equinor (formerly Statoil) Hywind scheme was fully commissioned in October 2017, and has been generating above

expectations. The world's first floating offshore windfarm, comprising five 6MW Siemens turbines, is positioned in the Buchan Deep, 13 miles off the East Aberdeenshire coast, with Peterhead as the base for operations and maintenance. The proposed 50MW Kincardine Offshore Windfarm Project (KOWL), located 8 miles east of Stonehaven, has planning consent from Marine Scotland but has yet to progress. These two projects will put Aberdeenshire at the forefront of world floating offshore wind development. At the time of writing, the 92MW European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre (Vattenfall) in Aberdeen Bay has completed construction and was due to be commissioned in July 2018. Fraserburgh is currently well positioned to host the operations and maintenance base for the proposed 950MW Moray East wind farm, scheduled for commissioning in 2022.

Hydro: There are eleven small scale hydro schemes operating in Aberdeenshire, with a total capacity of 367kW. Reductions in Feed-in Tariff support coupled with increased Business Rates mean that it will be increasingly difficult to develop financially viable new schemes. The Braemar Community owned Corriemulzie hydro scheme, commissioned in the summer of 2016, continues to perform well.

Biomass: Aberdeenshire has 447 Non-domestic RHI (Renewable Heat Incentive), accredited installations, totaling 132MW (April 2018). This is an increase of only 2MW from 2017, but is still just ahead of Highland and Dumfries and Galloway by installed capacity. The long winter put a strain on the wood fuel supply chain, and there are environmental issues from batch-fed boilers which are being addressed.

The Council continues to support the Grampian Biomass Working Group. There are now four anaerobic digestion schemes in operation with a total capacity of just under 2MW.

Geothermal: Although the Scottish Government has committed funding to a small number of geothermal schemes it is unlikely that the Hill-of-Banchory scheme, part of the original study in 2015, will progress further in the short to medium term (5 to 10 years).

Solar: Solar deployment at April 2018 was approximately 29MW, across 5,070 (mainly domestic) sites. Installations in 2017/18 totalled 98 (1.2MW), an eighth of the number installed in 2015/16, mainly due to falling Feed-in Tariff rates. Of 643 accredited installers in Scotland only 5 are based in Aberdeenshire.

Domestic Heat Schemes: As of April 2018 there were 1,022 boilers registered for the domestic RHI (Renewable Heat Incentive). This comprises a mixture of small biomass boilers, air-source and ground-source heat pumps.

Further information

www.bit.ly/EconDevAbshireHywind

<http://pilot-renewables.com/>

Sustainability and Climate Change



World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Runner-up award and Geddes the Panda

Scotland is committed to playing its part in honouring the Paris Agreement, the central aim of which is keeping global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

In February 2018, The Climate Change Plan 2018-2032, was published which details how the Scottish Government will continue to drive progress towards its emissions reduction targets.

Aberdeenshire Council recognises that all its functions and operations have an impact on climate change and is committed to reducing this by demonstrating clear leadership. The Council agreed new priorities for 2017-2022 for protecting our special environment, including tackling climate change by reducing greenhouse

gas emissions. A Sustainability Committee was established to monitor the work being done across the Council to ensure we are acting upon this priority. In addition, the Council's Environmental and Climate Change Policy was re-affirmed by the Chief Executive and new Council Leader in February 2018.

Aberdeenshire Council became the first Local Authority in Scotland to develop and approve a Carbon Budget. The 2017/18 Carbon Budget set a target reduction of 5% on the Council's greenhouse gas emissions from the previous year. Actions to reduce emissions were led by the relevant services and reported to the relevant Committees. Aberdeenshire Council reports its annual emissions to the Scottish Government as part of its Climate Change Duties. The Carbon Budget process further assists Aberdeenshire Council in meeting the Scottish Government's targets, as well as supporting the work required by the Council to reach its own reduction commitments. Rethinking how the Council maintains excellent services while lowering its emissions is an opportunity for positive change and innovation that can also reduce costs.

The Carbon Budget was awarded Silver in the Strong and Sustainable Communities category at the COSLA Excellence Awards in October 2017. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) also awarded Aberdeenshire Council the runner up Local Authority for its participation in Earth Hour in 2017.

Work is ongoing to ensure we have the correct governance in place for the final draft of the Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) for the Council and a North East Scotland Sustainable Energy Action Plan (NESSEAP) which is being developed in partnership with Aberdeen City, Moray and Angus Councils. This is a high level strategic plan document that covers all areas of sustainable energy with a detailed assessment addressing the future energy challenges of the region. It has reduction targets set in line with our commitment as signatories to the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.

Further information

A copy of the Environmental and Climate Change Policy can be found here:

www.bit.ly/EconDevAbshireEnvironment

A copy of the Carbon Budget for 2017/18 can be found here:

www.bit.ly/EconDevAbshireSustainability

“Aberdeenshire is host to many amazing sustainable businesses and community projects.

It is fantastic to see the power that comes from working together to find more sustainable solutions in the areas of recycling, travel, renewable energy, farming and food production. Aberdeenshire has and continues to achieve great things. Some examples include the work that has been done by Huntly & District Development Trust, Greener Kemnay, Keenan Recycling Limited, Tap o’ Noth Farm and Mackie’s of Scotland but there are many more, with much diversity in action.

Aberdeenshire Council has provided support where it can. It continues to assist partners to support sustainable living and projects associated with this. The Council is an enthusiastic partner in Climate Week North East and Earth Hour and we find their help, knowledge and expertise invaluable in the work that we do in raising awareness of Climate Change.”

*Alison Stuart
Director
Aberdeen Climate Action*



The North East of Scotland Fisheries Local Action Group (NESFLAG)

part of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)



Big Spring Beach Clean with Mill O' Forest School on Stonehaven Beach

The North East Scotland Fisheries Local Action Group (NESFLAG) provides support and funding to fishing communities and the fishing industry across Aberdeenshire and Angus. NESFLAG is a partnership of over 20 organisations representing the public, private and community sectors of fisheries communities. NESFLAG delivers and manages the Community-Led Local Development axis of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 2014-2020.



NESFLAG has a number of priorities which each project should fit within:

- a) Adding value and promoting innovation at all stages of the fisheries and seafood supply chain
- b) Creating jobs, attracting young people, encouraging lifelong learning and facilitating training in fisheries areas
- c) Supporting diversification inside and outside of commercial fisheries
- d) Enhancing and capitalising on the environmental assets of fisheries areas
- e) Promoting social well-being, cultural heritage and community development in fisheries areas

NESFLAG has been active since early 2016 and has so far awarded around £800,000 of funding to 20 projects. Some of the projects which have benefitted include:

- A new family-owned restaurant in Fraserburgh serving locally caught seafood
- A training facility for new entrants into the seafood processing sector
- A paddleboarding business in Stonehaven offering lessons and tours.
- A marine litter campaign which will organise beach cleans and deliver school talks
- Employment of a traditional boatbuilder who will work with volunteers in Portsoy

The FLAG continues to work with applicants including small businesses, community groups and third sector organisations to develop innovative projects which will provide widespread economic and social benefit to fisheries communities.

Further information

www.nesflag.org.uk

nesflag@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Tourism in Aberdeenshire

Visit Aberdeenshire - Beyond Words But Not Beyond Reach



Luxury cruise ship, Seabourn Quest hosted by Peterhead Port Authority

Visit Aberdeenshire, jointly funded by Aberdeenshire Council, Opportunity North East and Aberdeen City Council is the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for tourism in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen. The main objective of Visit Aberdeenshire is to drive sustainable growth of the visitor economy of Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen through strategic leadership and coordination of destination development and marketing and to improve the accommodation and service offering of hospitality providers and visitor attractions.

The main markets for Visit Aberdeenshire are Germany, Norway and the rest of the UK, particularly London, North east England and central and north Scotland and in country/region campaigns targetting these markets. Given the economic and infrastructure changes within the region since it was first written, a refresh of the 2013 Aberdeen City and Shire Tourism Strategy was commissioned in October 2017. This significant piece of work is due for completion and agreement with industry by the middle of 2018 and will shape future Visit Aberdeenshire activity. Much of Visit Aberdeenshire's focus in the last 12 months has been on ensuring that the sector is ready to take advantage of the opportunities offered by The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA) and the developments at Aberdeen Harbour.

Golf, castles and whisky remain key attractions for visitors and Aberdeenshire is fortunate to have fantastic examples of all of these for conference delegates and cruise visitors to enjoy. Visit Aberdeenshire has now employed dedicated staff to work on developing the conference in golf and cruise markets.

The Aberdeen City and Shire Film Office, managed by Aberdeenshire Council, works closely with Visit Scotland and Visit Aberdeenshire to maximise visitors to film locations. These include press visits led by location managers from film production companies. There has been a large increase in filming in Aberdeenshire over the past three years – visitors will follow.

Visit Aberdeenshire enjoys a strong working relationship with national tourism bodies ensuring marketing and service development activity is complementary.

Visit Aberdeenshire's team ran a number of business engagement events throughout Aberdeenshire to highlight opportunities for market and service development. With 120 businesses in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen now accredited with World Host recognition, the region has achieved "Destination Status".

Visit Aberdeen also promoted the area at a range of trade shows including Seatrade Global (Fort Lauderdale), Cruise Europe Conference (St. Petersburg), Visit Scotland Expo (Glasgow), IMEX (Frankfurt), Meetings Industry Association - Destinations Summit (Brighton), Meet GB (London), Associations World Congress (Vienna) and Greater Ambassador Network Group (Cardiff).

Further information:

www.visitabdn.com

“The Council has been proactive in building a sense of collective leadership and ownership around town centres, within which the principle has been adopted as a useful tool for informed decision-making. The Council has exercised national leadership in early adoption of the Principle as a way of working corporately, evidenced in the commitment to engage, train and develop thinking for communities, officers and members. What is particularly welcome is the commitment to sustainability around the town centre work, and a planned phased approach for the future to improvement and development of decision-making practices using the Town Centre First principle.”

*Diarmaid Lawlor
Architecture and Design Scotland*



Town Centres

Aberdeenshire's Business Improvement Districts (BID)

Since the "yes" vote in Inverurie last year, the We Are INverurie BID has made great progress in delivering its business plan first year actions.

- Three weekends of Christmas events took place
- A "more than a shop window" social media campaign was launched to highlight the retail offering in Inverurie
- A wedding weekend took place in April, which turned the entire town centre into a wedding fayre.
- A park and ride was put in place by the BID for the Taste of Grampian event, to encourage footfall through the town centre.
- The following partnerships have been supported: The Inverurie Business Association, the Inverurie Environmental Improvement Group and the Inverurie Events Group.

A number of initiatives are in the pipeline for the year ahead including a collective savings project on utilities open to all businesses, an extended Christmas festival for the month of December and plans are being put in place for a music festival for 2019.

Peterhead followed Inverurie's footsteps in November 2017, achieving a "yes" vote at their ballot and formed Rediscover Peterhead Ltd. Although it is still early days for the Peterhead BID, they have ambitious plans for some partnership projects around:

- Cleaning up Peterhead in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council
- Invest in Peterhead – a partnership project to tackle the vacant properties in Peterhead and to encourage enterprise and a new way of thinking for vacant space.
- Collective savings project to reduce utility costs for businesses
- Creating 3 new events for the town to increase footfall
- Instigating a free wi-fi town
- Working in Partnership with Police Scotland to introduce crime reducing initiatives

Town Centre First Principle

Following the launch of the Town Centre First Principle last June, the principle has been rolled out through all committees and has been considered within 94% of all committee papers. The second phase is well underway, embedding the principle into all council policy, strategy and area plans and discussions have begun on inviting our community planning partners to follow our lead, adopting the principle with a similar approach.



Further information

www.bit.ly/EconDevAbshireTownCentres

www.weareinverurie.co.uk/

www.rediscoverpeterhead.co.uk/

Town Centre First Principle Policy (pdf 49.9KB)

“Aberdeenshire’s Town Centre First initiative represents a major and innovative approach that is of strategic importance to regeneration across Aberdeenshire and specifically the development and sustainability of its town centres. It also demonstrates how effective multi-agency working and consultation...across a range of stakeholders can lead to lasting change.”

*Dr Martin McNally
Chester University*



Looking Forward

Despite significant uncertainty, there is much going on within the economy. Brexit, trade wars, political uncertainties and the increase in shopping online are all parts of the mix and there appears to be no early resolution to many of the factors involved, creating more questions and challenges than clarity and answers.

Within this setting, the regional business sector has strengthened with investment and development. Significant investment in the Fife Arms Hotel in Braemar will, when complete, deliver a fantastic beacon to attract visitors from far and wide to the Cairngorms National Park. Additional investment is also already in place for further high quality bed provision in both Donside and Deeside – much needed injections of capacity into the expanding tourism sector.

In the energy sector there are also more positive headlines – Subsea investment is strong with diversification, growth and innovation being levers to success.

The Oil and Gas Technology Centre, core funded through the City Region Deal, continues to generate collaboration projects that can and will transform the cost base of the oil and gas industry, extending the life of the North Sea and making businesses competitive on the global stage.

The 31st round of Licensing for exploration in the UK Continental Shelf will further accelerate opportunities around access to data and promote subsequent investment – both in new and existing energy infrastructure an encouraging prospect for the region's businesses.

Within our traditional industries, our role as a local authority will be the brokering of the right research and discussion to ensure these industries, encompassing agriculture, fishing and food and drink processing are being considered and supported allowing well informed decisions to shape the future of these important sectors.

The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) will be opened in Autumn 2018 and The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA) will open in 2019. The Aberdeen Harbour expansion will follow on fast – all contributing to an upbeat and evolving diversified economy for the North-east. City Region Deal investment continues with major projects focusing on further improvements to our transport and digital connectivity. Each investment complements the other – to create globally competitive enabling infrastructure for the region, which will help encourage inward investment and promote confidence and enhanced performance in our indigenous businesses.



*Stephen Archer
Director of Infrastructure Services*

A Closer Look at Aberdeenshire

The Inverurie Postcode

has the highest number of

**SOLAR PV
INSTALLATIONS**

per head of

**POPULATION
IN SCOTLAND**

In Aberdeenshire & City

the **120+**

World Host

registered

tourism businesses

enabled the area to be

designated

'Destination Status'

The North East of
Scotland Fisheries
Action Group

(NESFLAG)

has committed

around

£800k

to 20 projects

since 2016

After Glasgow, ABERDEENSHIRE

has seen the

**largest number of
households in
Scotland**

upgraded to access fibre

enabled broadband

(over 70,000)

Peterhead Port Authority

invested

£51m

during 2017/18

resulting in

**Aberdeenshire's
biggest port and
premier deep water
harbour**

The world's
first floating
offshore wind farm

Hywind Scotland

is situated off the coast of
Peterhead.

It began production in

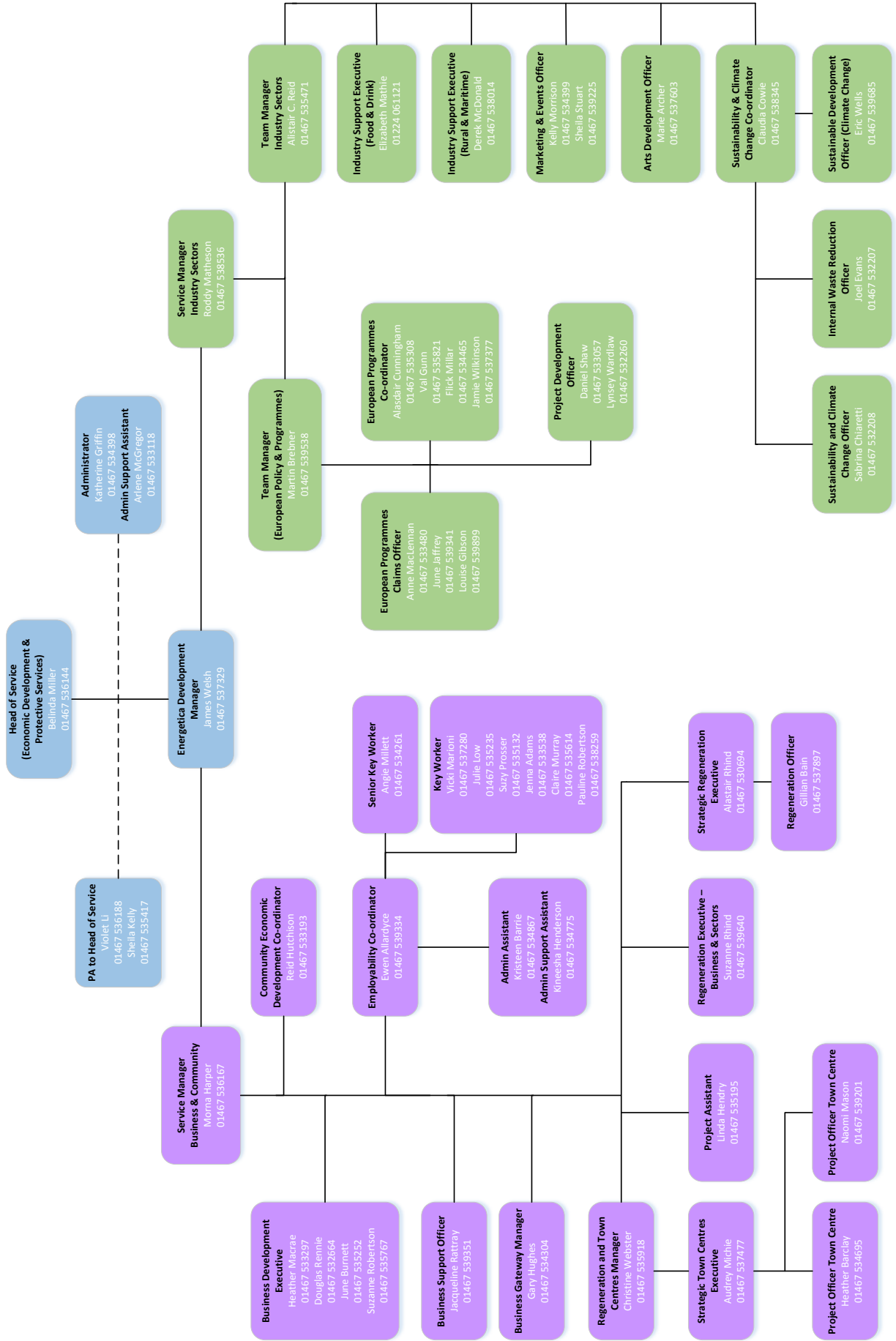
October 2107 and

powers around 22,000

households

Organogram

2017-18 Economic Development Organogram



Engage with Us

Economic Development
Supporting **Aberdeenshire's**
businesses and communities to
reach their economic potential

E-Update



Economic Development Update

Contents

Hello

Funding Opportunities

European funding opportunities

Sustainable Business Week

Partnership working

Achievements



Social Media



@EconDevAbshire

Events





Ballater Station officially re-opened 20 August 2018