Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL

From mountain to sea

Aberdeenshire Strategic Assessment

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INTRODUCTION

The strategic assessment is a high level, long term review and assessment of issues affecting Aberdeenshire and their impact on the area.
These issues have been assessed using risk methodology (CASE), and those areas / issues which have the greatest impact on Aberdeenshire have been identified as strategic priorities.

Aberdeenshire Council will focus on tackling these strategic priorities to ensure optimal, best value service provision for the whole community.

ABERDEENSHIRE PROFILE

Aberdeenshire is a predominantly rural area in North East Scotland, traditionally economically-dependent upon the primary sectors of agriculture, forestry and fishing. Over the past 40 years, the development of the oil and gas industry and associated service sector has changed Aberdeenshire's economic focus, and contributed to a rapid population growth of 50% since 1975. However, a recent sharp fall in oil prices indicates that Aberdeenshire faces fresh challenges that could significantly change the area in the years to come.

Aberdeenshire extends to 6,313 sq km (2,437 square miles), representing 8% of Scotland's overall territory. In 2015 Aberdeenshire's population was estimated to be 261,900, approximately 5.9% of Scotland's total population of 5,373,000.

Over the 10 years from 2005-2015 the population increased by 10.3%, the fourth highest increase in Scotland's 32 local authorities and more than twice the national average of 5.1 %. An estimated 4% of Aberdeenshire's population are non-UK EU citizens[1].

Aberdeenshire's economy maintains a close link with that of Aberdeen City. In 2015, the area was estimated to have contributed 3.7% to Scotland's total GDP.

For 2014-15 Clackmannanshire (2.5%) was forecast to deliver the highest increase in GDP amongst all 32 Scottish local authorities. However, Aberdeen City was forecast to have the lowest growth rate and Aberdeenshire the second lowest, such is the impact of the oil and gas downturn on the city-region.

Aberdeenshire is Scotland's foremost fishing area. In 2014 the region accounted for over half (56.4%) of all fish landed into Scotland by value. Together with Aberdeen it provides nearly a third (31%) of Scotland's regular fisheries employment. Moreover, since 2010, the quantity of fish landings in the North East has increased by 23% and total employment by 5.4%.

[1] Aberdeenshire Census Profile 2011

Aberdeenshire has 9% of Scotland's land area but 26% of the national arable total. Almost 6,000 people are estimated to be employed in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry in Aberdeenshire. Also, Aberdeenshire is perhaps best known for its livestock sector, finishing (the process of fattening calves prior to slaughter) over one third of Scotland's beef herd.

Aberdeenshire's tourism industry continues to contribute to the overall economic well-being of the area. In 2013 visitors spent over £220 million and 2.5 million nights in the North East region. There were 441,000 overnight trips made to Aberdeenshire by both domestic and international visitors, with 3.8 million tourist day visits. Domestic spend was down 4.8% in Aberdeenshire in 2012-13, however international spend increased by over 70% during the same period.

A selection of high level demographic information is shown below.

ABERDEENSHIRE DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

19.7% - the increase in population between 2014 and 2039, the 3rd highest in Scotland. The 65+ age group is expected to increase by 64%, to 75,000 (or 24% of the projected population).

In 2039 the worker-to-pensioner (or dependency) ratio may fall to **2.4 to 1** in Aberdeenshire and to 2.2 to 1 in Scotland from a base of 3.6 to 1 in both cases.

RACE & RELIGION

94.5% of Aberdeenshire's residents are White British. Most (61.3%) identify as Scottish. Approximately 43% have no religion (2011 Census).

FERTILITY RATE

62.2 births per 1,000 women aged 15-44 years in 2015, the 2nd highest rate in Scotland and Aberdeenshire's highest rate since at least 1991.

BIRTH, PARENTS & MOTHERS

2,891 births in 2015. Approx. 22% of babies are born to mothers aged over 35 years - almost triple the figure recorded in 1991.

38.9% of babies in 2015 were born to parents who were not married, the 3rd lowest proportion in Scotland.

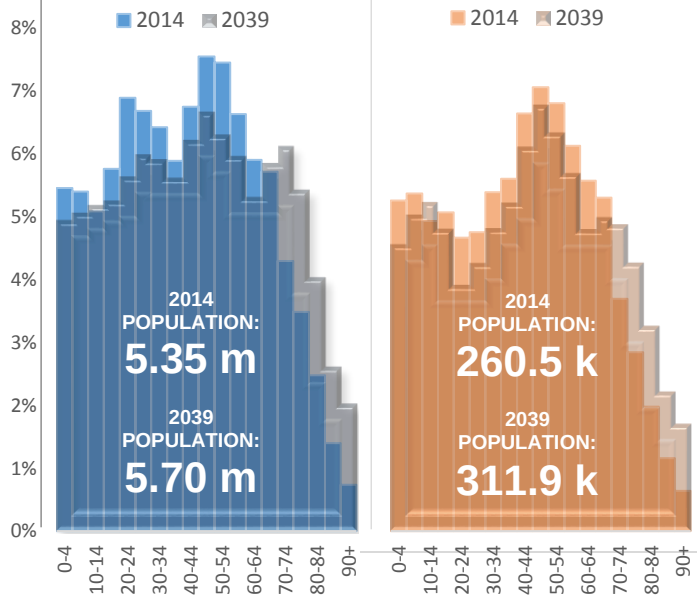
85.0% of mothers were born in the UK, and 9.1% in the EU (the 6th highest proportion of EU mothers in the country).

DEATHS

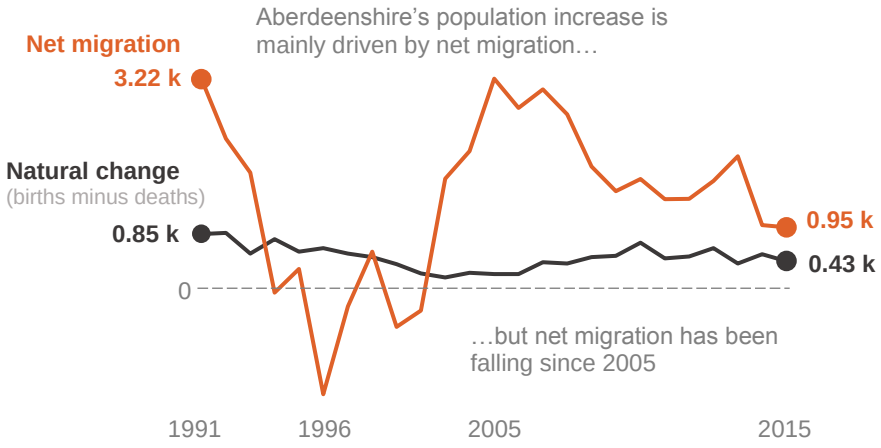
2,458 in 2015. Main cause of death – neoplasms (cancer), which accounted for 29.7% of total deaths, a slightly higher rate than for Scotland (28.4%).

Region	SCOTLAND		ABERDEENSHIRE	
Year	2014	2039	2014	2039
Projected population change	+ 6.6%		+ 19.7%	

Relative percentage of population by age group, 2014 and 2039

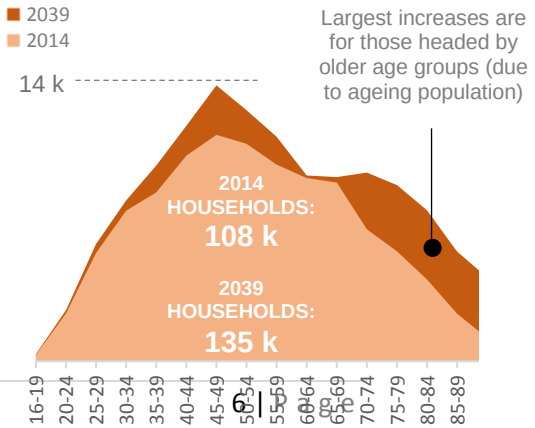


NET MIGRATION & NATURAL CHANGE IN ABERDEENSHIRE SINCE 1991



Migratory flows between Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire continue to be strong. Historically, a higher proportion of Aberdeen City leavers tend to settle in Aberdeenshire than *vice versa*. The net Shire intake in 2015 from the City was over 2,000, which is higher than average. The figures have been rising over the past few years, peaking in 2013/14 (start of oil price decline).

HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS (AGE GROUP)



SALIENT POINTS

Aberdeenshire is projected to experience the 3rd highest population increase in Scotland between 2014 and 2039. Older age groups will see the greatest proportional increases.

Net migration has tended to propel growth in the past. High fertility rates and increasing numbers of females of child bearing age may contribute proportionately more in the years to come. This latter development may have implications for health partnerships, education services, and childcare provision.

Aberdeenshire households are expected to increase to 135,000 by 2039, from 108,000 in 2014 (+25%). The area is also expected to have one the highest proportions of households with children. Therefore, there will likely be challenges at both ends of the age spectrum in future years.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is the national approach to improving outcomes through public services that support the wellbeing of children and young people. GIRFEC is applied in single-agency, multi-agency and inter-agency working across the whole of children's services in Scotland.

Children's Services in Aberdeenshire are delivered through the GIRFEC partnership. The local GIRFEC partnership's governance arrangements were revised in 2016 to better reflect responsibility for strategic and operational approaches to early intervention, prevention, and targeted or specialist support.

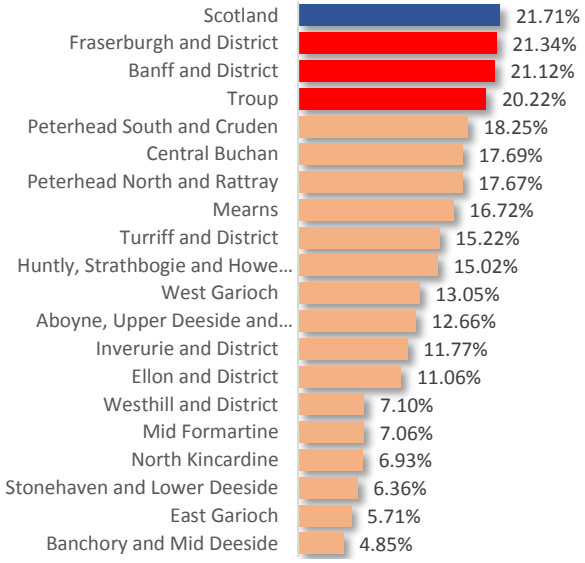
A key task for Children's Services is to ensure that processes and reporting mechanisms are as streamlined and as closely aligned to the overall objectives of GIRFEC as possible. Colleagues have intimated that a simplified approach will best serve children and young people in Aberdeenshire.

Most recent data suggests Aberdeenshire's children and young people experience a relatively good start in life, from the ante-natal period through to their secondary education and beyond, the main exceptions being:

- average tariff scores (points based on SCQF level and credit points),
- P7 dental health (a Grampian-wide issue) and,
- the proportion of P1 pupils at risk of being obese or overweight

Whilst Aberdeenshire has amongst the lowest rates of child poverty in the United Kingdom, figure 1 illustrates a number of areas within Aberdeenshire approaching the Scottish average for child poverty. Fraserburgh & District; Banff & District and Troup are three of the most affected.

Relationships between childhood poverty & subsequent life quality are well documented. Tackling child poverty in these areas ensures children in these areas have equal chances in education, health & employment in their future years.



Future / Emerging Trends

ELC Expansion Programme

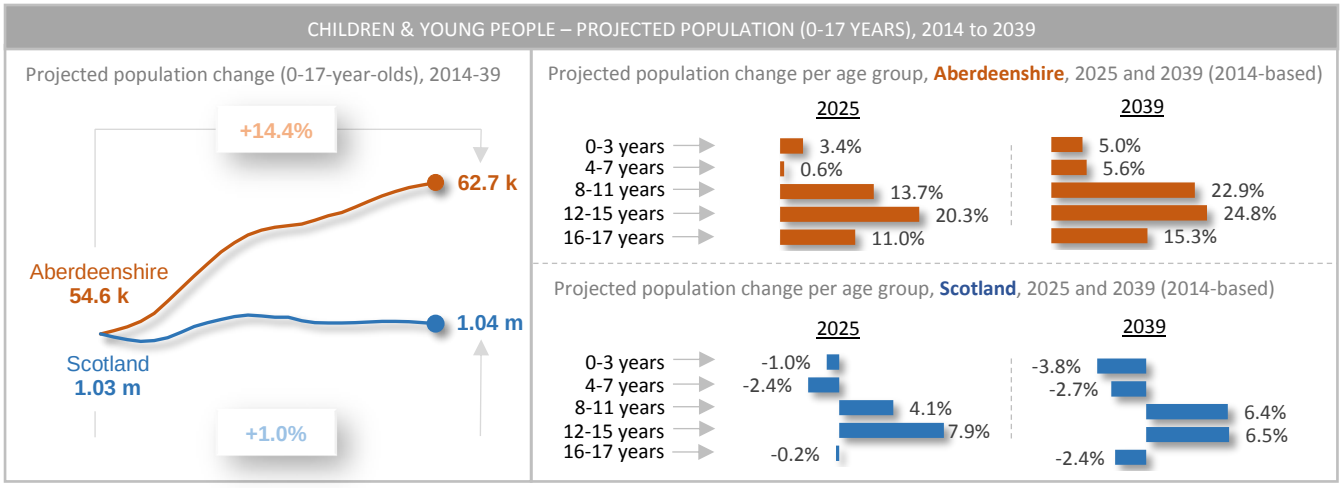
The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 increased the entitlement to free early learning and childcare (ELC) from 475 to 600 hours per year for all three and four-year-olds, as well as eligible two-year-olds. The Scottish Government has pledged to increase this entitlement to 1,140 hours per year by 2020.

Whilst extending ELC entitlement has the potential to transform the lives of children and families, the resource and infrastructure required to deliver this requires careful consideration.

Demographic change

The young population of Aberdeenshire is projected to increase by over 14% by 2039 compared to an increase of just 1% for Scotland as a whole.

This increase will have an impact on service provision and the capital and revenue available to support this change.



Mitigating factors include the extensive capital project delivering new educational establishments such as the Peterhead and Inverurie Campuses. Education and Children's Services have also developed a robust process to monitor and forecast school rolls. Strong working relationships have developed between the team and planning, property and developer obligations teams, thereby ensuring a consistent response to future developments and strategic planning across Aberdeenshire.

Childhood Obesity, Dental Health, School Attainment

Current research[i] suggests there may be a relationship between obesity and poor educational attainment. It is likely that obesity and poor school performance are elements of a broader picture of inequalities in health and education, whereby disadvantaged socio-economic groups tend to have poorer health and lower levels of education.

Business Rates / Financial Viability of Pre-School Nurseries
A recent increase in business rates and the costs of delivering funded childcare places may mean some pre-school nursery businesses are no longer viable. According to a recent survey by the National Day Nurseries Association, a number of providers are fearful that funding rates may fall short of the costs of delivery of funded places[ii]. This may prompt some pre-school establishments to close.

Aberdeenshire Council's Business Rates Relief Scheme may mitigate some of the potential issues associated with a general national rise in rates. In March, 2017, councillors agreed a local relief scheme after they set aside up to £3m of 'enabling money'[iii].

Intelligence / Information Gaps

Poverty data are available at national level but few datasets are available at a local authority level. Disaggregating child poverty data further than Parliamentary Constituency level would provide a basis to understand potential issues at a local level, particularly as it is an overarching priority for Aberdeenshire as per the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).

Recommendations

Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) Expansion Programme
To support the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 increased childcare entitlement, consideration should be given to the creation of an implementation programme to ensure appropriate resources and infrastructure are planned and available.

Streamlined process for partnership working
Review processes associated with governance and reporting mechanisms to ensure they are as streamlined as possible. This ensures Children's Services are as closely aligned to the overall objectives of GIRFEC as possible

Young person's health
Address child health issues principally children in P1 at risk of being overweight/obese and P7 dental health due to an inability to educate children/parents. Evidence indicates a direct link to poor educational attainment.

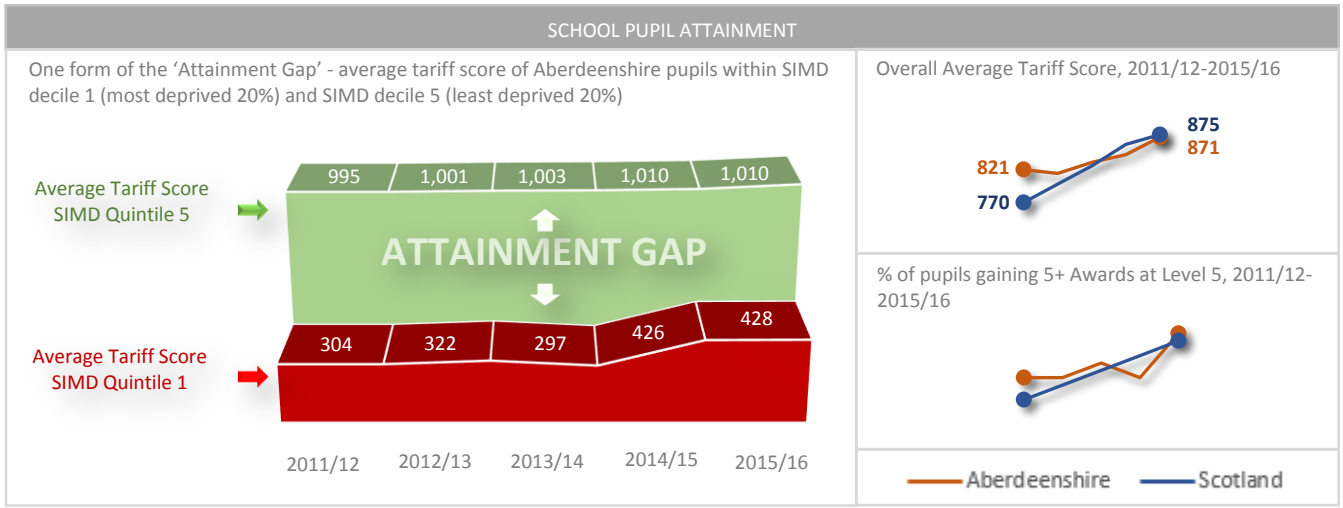
EDUCATION, SKILLS & TRAINING

The education sector is currently undergoing a number of changes nationally which have had major implications for local service delivery. The Scottish Government advised more changes are likely particularly with regards to the qualifications system[iv] and the school inspections remit[v].

Aberdeenshire's residents are relatively skilled, qualified and well-compensated, and our children appear to be educated in appropriate surroundings with the vast majority ultimately securing a positive destination upon leaving school.

Areas for improvement are in relation to the proportion of people who do not possess any form of recognised qualification, this proportion increased considerably last year relative to the previous year.

The diagram below shows the attainment gap narrowing but average tariff scores, although rising, are now lagging behind Scotland as a whole.



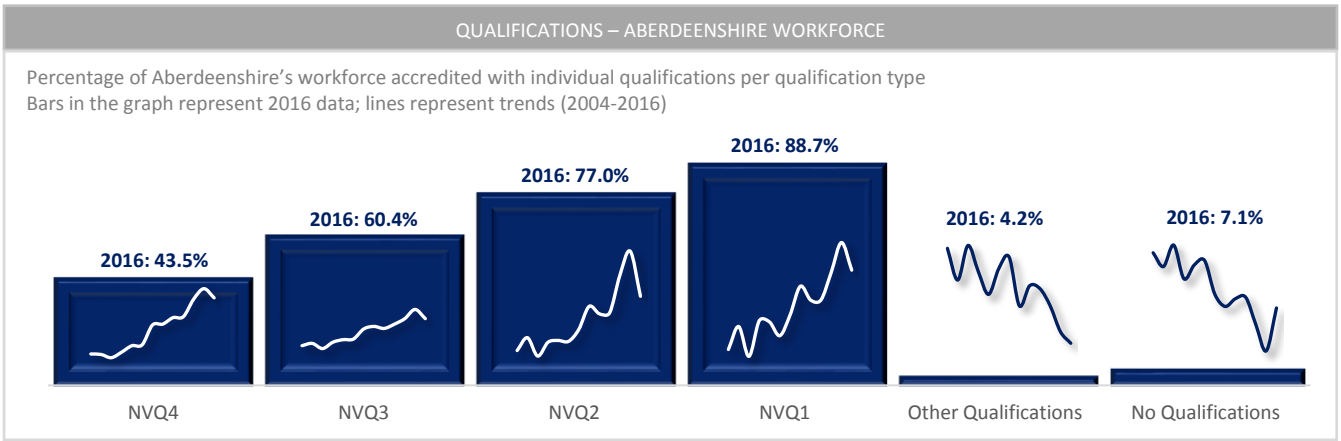
The improvement is likely attributable to a number of initiatives implemented in Aberdeenshire.
Attainment review meetings were instigated at every Aberdeenshire Academy designed to track progress of pupils and forecast outcomes for schools and the Local Authority as a whole.
Teacher Learning Communities have also been established across clusters allowing collaboration on Learning and Teaching.

Colleagues are keen to explore opportunities for regional collaboration via the Northern Alliance, a partnership between seven local education authorities in the North of Scotland.

Future / Emerging Trends

Skills & Qualifications

An increasing proportion of Aberdeenshire's workforce have gained qualifications since 2004, however a decrease is noted in 2016. This is especially marked for the proportion of the workforce attaining at least an NVQ2 qualification. In tandem with this development, the proportion of the workforce with ***no*** qualifications increased quite significantly last year, from 4.3% to 7.1%, which equates to approximately 11,800 people. Reasons for this are unclear, however it may be that some individuals are deferring expending financial resources on qualifications until the economic climate improves.



Skills development and skills shortages have been an ongoing concern for the City & Shire region and are mirrored in other world energy regions. The challenge for our area is not only the direct impact on the oil and gas industry but the indirect impact on the ability to recruit and retain a skilled workforce in areas ranging from teaching to catering.

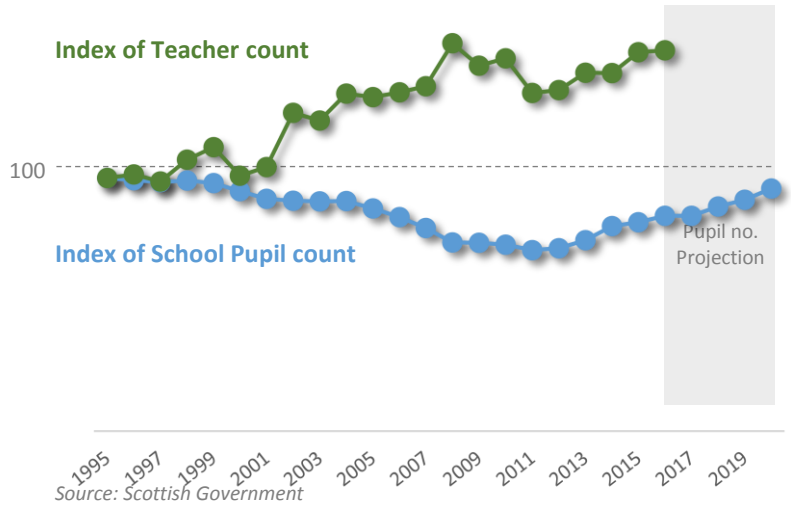
Teacher Recruitment

Teacher recruitment is a recognised issue in Aberdeenshire. Recruitment pressures for permanent and supply staff in schools have been more acute in north Aberdeenshire, however schools across the authority, both primary and secondary, have been affected[vi].

The graph illustrates teacher numbers have been increasing over the past couple of decades while pupil numbers, having dipped, are projected to approach 1995 levels by 2020.

The graph also suggests Aberdeenshire Council is sensitive to movements in pupil numbers (particularly since 2011), with an increase in teacher numbers moving in tandem with an increase in the number of school pupils. This is indicative of smart planning measures.

Index of Aberdeenshire Teacher & School pupil numbers, 1995-2016 (School Pupil Projections to 2020)



A number of initiatives have been undertaken to address the recruitment issue, including engaging with recruitment agencies; implementing a Relocation Incentive Scheme; positively engaging with current probationers; offering financial support to utilise the skills, experience and qualifications of those from the oil industry, allowing them to move into secondary teaching posts (The Ties programme); and initiating a flexible approach to working, including child support and extended nursery provision for teachers and probationers with children.

There are also moves to build specific microsites to fill vacancies in geographical areas that are experiencing greater difficulties in filling vacancies by promoting them as attractive places to live and work.

As a result of employing more teachers than originally budgeted for there may be a financial pressure on the Education budget, likely a result of the success of recent recruitment campaigns. However, the greater benefit of recruiting high quality permanent teachers is to be welcomed[vii.]

Teacher Age Profile

The age profile of teachers in the area is changing. Over a third (35%) of all Aberdeenshire teachers are over the age of 50 and 11% are over the age of 60. Forecasts show that, unless new staff are recruited, by 2021 nearly half of all teachers will be over the age of 50 and 20% will be near retirement age[viii.] However, the measures already undertaken to boost teacher numbers in the area appear to be working.

Aberdeenshire Council has suggested to the Scottish Government that initial teacher education could be improved by devolving responsibilities to local authorities or regions along with related workforce planning for teachers.

Parental Engagement
In future, HMIe Inspectors will look at Parental Involvement/Parental Engagement as part of the inspection of a school. Areas such as the development of family learning, work undertaken in partnership with parents and surveys or satisfaction data, will be part of the evidence base to evaluate parental engagement. Whilst engagement to meet everyone's expectations will be challenging, parental involvement in schools is key in raising general attainment and closing the gap between the highest and lowest achievers.

After a series of self-evaluation exercises in Aberdeenshire, areas for improvement were identified to ensure service delivery is equitable and consistent and that the quality of parental engagement is uniformly better. Improvements include:

- building positive relationships and communicating effectively with parents;
- supporting all stakeholders to ensure a shared understanding and appreciation of parental involvement/engagement and family learning; and
- undertaking collaborative actions with internal/external agencies which, among other things, should allow good practice throughout the region.

Recommendations

Teacher recruitment
Continue to develop the strategy for achieving the full complement of teachers (and teachers with correct skills) to resolve an aging teacher population & teacher attrition.

Parental Engagement
Develop and implement the parental engagement programme to ensure all parents have the opportunity to contribute to their child's educational development.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

The health of the Aberdeenshire population has improved. Whilst cancer and heart disease are the area's two biggest killers, fewer people are dying prematurely as a result of these diseases. This is in part due to better treatment and measures like the smoking ban which are now taking effect.

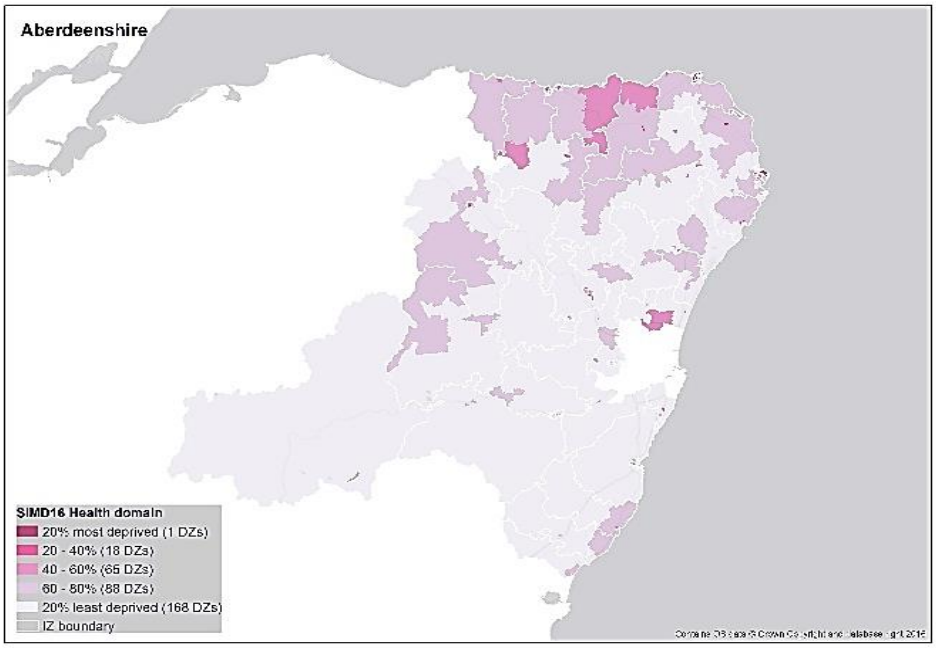
Overall male life expectancy in Aberdeenshire is 79 years (Scottish average is 77 years). This has been consistently better than the Scottish average and increasing since 1981.

Boys born in the 15% most deprived parts of Aberdeenshire, can expect to live on average to 75 years, five years less than the average life expectancy of boys born in the 15% most affluent areas. This is a significant difference. The lowest life expectancy is seen in boys born in Peterhead harbour, an average of 71 years.

Women's life expectancy in the most and least deprived parts of Aberdeenshire does not differ significantly.

Whilst disabilities like hearing loss and visual impairment are fairly evenly distributed through the Aberdeenshire population, physical disabilities, and learning disabilities and in particular the prevalence of mental health conditions shows a positive association with deprivation. The inference from this is that deprived communities in Aberdeenshire are spending a considerable period of their lives in a poor state of health and if they are men, their lives are significantly shorter than their wealthiest neighbours.

The map below indicates in general Aberdeenshire does not have many geographic areas denoted as falling into the category of deprivation. However there are two: Peterhead and Fraserburgh.



Source: SIMD 2016

The inequalities that are seen in life expectancy are reflected in the trends in mortality of people aged 15-44 years in Aberdeenshire. Our rates are not so different from the Scottish average, perhaps of greater concern is the lack of progress or improvement in this indicator in recent years.

Behaviours detrimental to health

At an individual level there are five risk factors that are prejudicial to the health of the Aberdeenshire population and widen inequalities:

- Smoking,
- Alcohol consumption,
- physical activity
- mental health &
- obesity

All have an impact on our health. The relationships between these are complex and not fully known.

Smoking – Approximately 18% of our population smoke and there has been no real improvement in this in recent years.

Alcohol consumption – Nearly a third (30%) of Aberdeenshire men and 14% of women drink over the recommended guidelines which contributes to poor health, diseases like breast cancer and heart disease.

Physical inactivity – Trends in active travel to work (e.g. walking, cycling) by Aberdeenshire adults lag behind improvements in the rest of Scotland. This suggests that it more difficult for Aberdeenshire adults to use opportunities like commuting to improve their health, therefore there is a need to consider other avenues by which these opportunities can be provided.

Mental health - Stressful experiences and situations occur throughout life and include poverty, poor housing, family conflict, unemployment, childhood adversity and chronic health problems. These all contribute to a greater risk of mental health. 4.4% of Aberdeenshire adults said that they were living with a mental health condition (census 2011).

Obesity – About 10% of Aberdeenshire children in P1 are obese, this has been rising in recent years and exceeds the Scottish average. Over two thirds (68%) of adults in Aberdeenshire are overweight. Those of working age and early retirement age are particularly affected.

The greatest gains (for the population as a whole and for reducing inequality) are in creating conditions in Aberdeenshire that make these risk factors less likely.

Future / Emerging Trends

Our population is ageing, as it is across the whole of Scotland. This is the result of better health care and treatment with individuals being fit, active and healthier for longer. By the year 2035, the number of people aged over 65 will have increased by 65%.

Recommendations

Alcohol
Full partnership working to develop, implement and deliver actions, and achieve outcomes, to change Aberdeenshire's relationship with Alcohol.

BUSINESS, ENERGY & ENTERPRISE

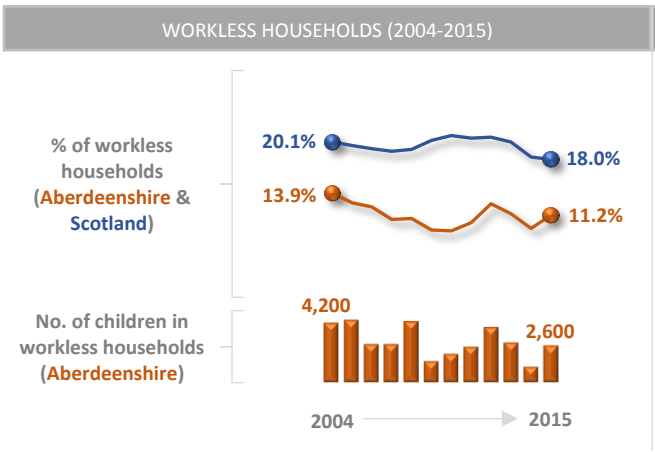
Low oil prices impacted negatively on investment and employment in the production sector in Scotland over the last few years. Sectoral analysis highlights that the slowdown in Scotland's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) performance since the end of 2014 can be attributed in part to a contraction in the sectors most closely associated with the oil and gas supply chain in Scotland.

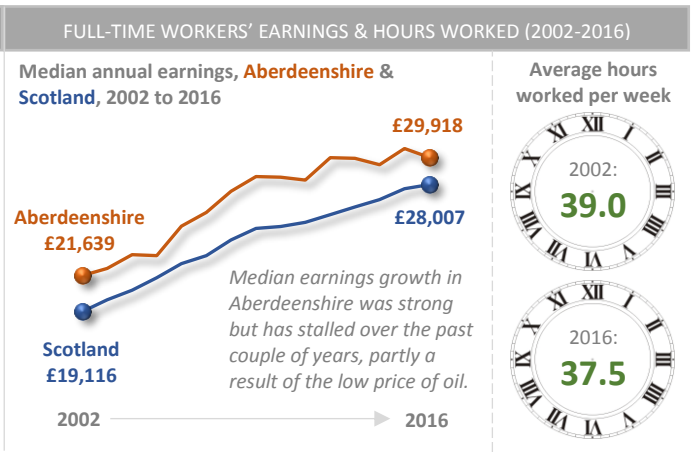
Whilst conditions remain challenging for North Sea producers, there are indications that companies believe they are approaching the bottom of the cycle, and that business confidence is starting to slowly increase. This may indicate that the sector will see an improved outlook in 2017, which should in turn benefit overall economic growth, both for the North East region and Scotland as a whole.

Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire together form one of the most prosperous regions in the UK. It is recognised world-wide as a centre of the oil and gas industry. It has also consistently experienced above average rates of population growth, business growth and enterprise growth compared to most major UK city regions, and the rest of Scotland.

From a business perspective, active enterprises in Aberdeenshire are increasing year-on-year, as is the total turnover of registered enterprises with business survival rates remain among the highest in the country.

A number of indicators, illustrated below, suggest a greater proportion of our working age population is economically active relative to Scotland. Aberdeenshire residents also tend to be well-qualified, earn higher wages, and claim fewer benefits as a proportion of the working age population (e.g. ESA and Incapacity, Lone Parent, Carer, Disabled, or Out-of-Work benefits).



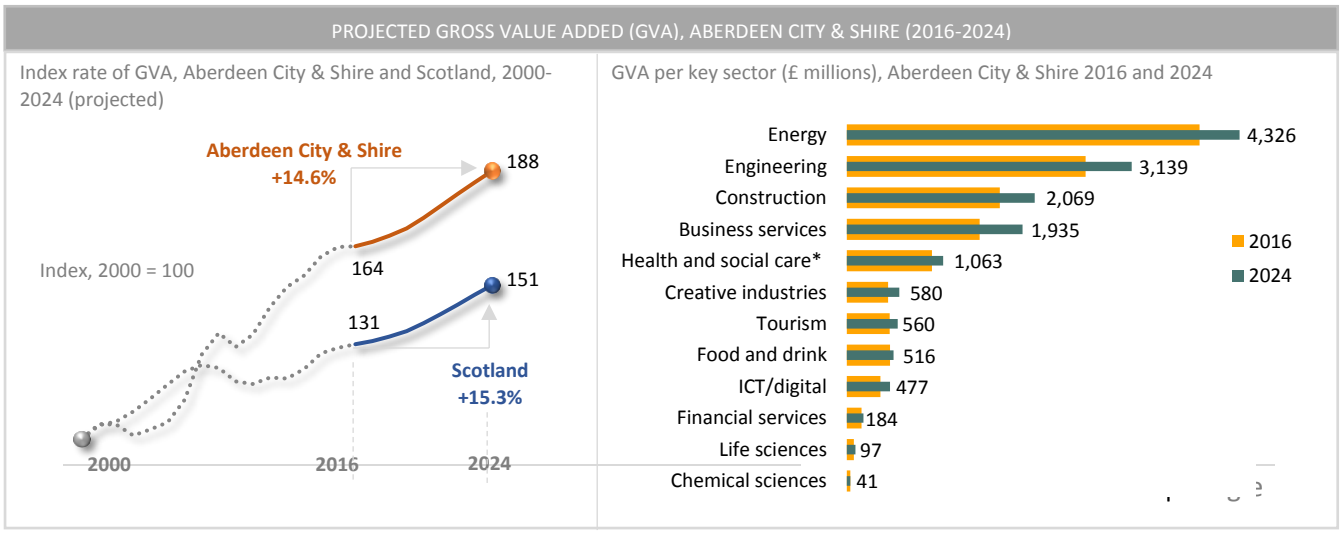


Aberdeenshire also has proportionally fewer workless households, and fewer workless households with children under 16, than Scotland as a whole. Latest data show there are approximately 2,600 children living in a workless household in Aberdeenshire (December 2015), up from 1,100 the previous year. If the trend continues to rise into 2017, it may have implications for Aberdeenshire in terms of its Child Poverty priority as reflected in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

Future / Emerging Trends

Projections suggest the economic future of the North East Region is relatively bright. Since 2008 there has been an increasing divergence with Aberdeen City and Shire showing greater relative growth compared to Scotland, a gap that is forecast to remain fairly stable over the forecast period. By way of comparison, Aberdeen City and Shire is projected to be the third largest contributor to the national economy, behind only the two main population regions of Glasgow (Glasgow City, East Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire) and Edinburgh, East and Midlothian (Edinburgh City, East Lothian and Midlothian).

Looking at Key Sectors, Energy is forecast to contribute most to overall GVA in Aberdeen City & Shire in both 2016 and 2024 (although jobs will be lost) followed by Engineering and Construction. All key sectors in 2024 are projected to increase from their 2016 baseline.



Low Price of Oil and Lack of Investment / Future Opportunities

Although recent data suggest the oil industry recession may have 'bottomed' out, rising levels of debt across the industry are likely to result in a lag between oil price recovery and an upturn in investment as companies will use free cash-flows to rebalance their corporate finances by servicing debt[ix].

The lack of discretionary capital investment being committed to the UK is perhaps the biggest threat to the long-term health of the basin. In the North Sea, for instance, oil investments fell to less than USD 25 billion in 2016, about half the level of 2014. Coincidentally, this is now approaching the level of spending in offshore wind projects in the North Sea, which has doubled to about USD 20 billion in the same period[x].

With global demand expected to grow by 1.2 million barrels of oil a year in the next five years, the IEA has repeatedly warned that an extended period of sharply lower oil investment could lead to a tightening in supplies. Therefore, the North East region may not be in a position to adequately take advantage of the future upswing in the oil price.

The recent downturn in the global oil and gas sector highlights the challenges facing the region, but also offers opportunities for the future. On top of the opportunity represented by continued oil and gas production (with up to 22 billion barrels of oil yet to realised), the deep pool of applied science and engineering expertise in the region is well placed to capitalise on a number of emerging complementary opportunities meantime, many of which have strategic value to both Scotland and the UK.

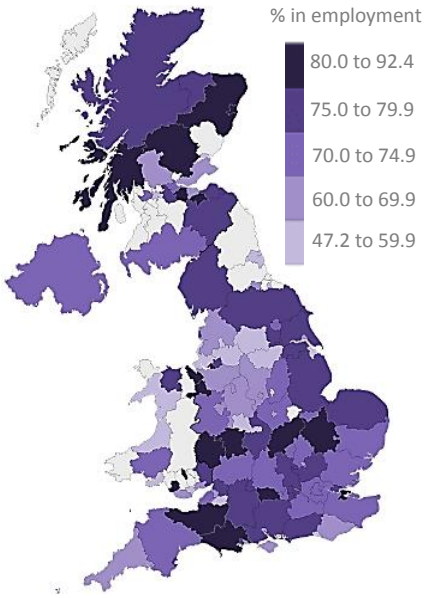
Brexit

Most colleagues highlighted the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union (Brexit) as a significant risk. Aberdeenshire's EU funding grant to 2020 amounts to approximately £22.5m, although half of that sum has already been awarded as part of the Common Agricultural Policy (two tranches - 2014 and 2015). How the funding shortfall will be addressed post-Brexit is not yet clear.

Myriad rights and laws have been created by EU membership over the 40 years the UK has been a member. Over the long-run (i.e. 15+ years), most economists predict that the decision to leave the EU will damage trade, labour mobility and investment. Any economic benefits that Brexit might bring are as yet unclear and by no means certain.

Aberdeenshire's economy has benefited from the free movement of people which has helped to address skills and labour shortages in the area, sustaining sectors such as agriculture and fish processing. Similarly, the public sector is dependent on migrant labour to fill key

Percentage of 16-64 year old non-UK nationals in employment by council area, 2013-2015



Aberdeenshire had 2nd highest employment rate of non-UK nationals in the UK (88.9%)

posts and still faces significant difficulties in attracting key workers in the medical, care and teaching professions.

The economic and demographic reality facing areas such as Aberdeenshire is that EU labour is necessary to maintain economic competitiveness and deliver public services, particularly as Aberdeenshire's population is projected to age. It is important that areas such as Aberdeenshire can continue to attract workers from EU Member States in a post-Brexit world.

Regional Economic Strategy and associated Action Plan

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) – "A 20-year vision for the wellbeing of the place and our people" – provides a long term plan for the economic development of the North East of Scotland to 2035. There are four key strands to the strategy, in keeping with the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy:

- Investment in Infrastructure;
- Innovation;
- Inclusive Economic Growth; and
- Internationalisation.

The ambition is to build on the region's reputation as an international operations base for oil and gas and to become a world-leading offshore technology base while at the same time broadening our economic base by supporting our other economic sectors of tourism, food and drink, fisheries, agriculture, life sciences and the creative industries[xi.]

Digital Connectivity

Access to broadband and mobile services has improved in recent years, however Aberdeenshire still lags behind Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow in access to superfast broadband.

The challenge of delivering fibre broadband in Aberdeenshire has been significant as the area has around twice the national average of Exchange Only (EO) lines, which are more expensive to upgrade. The rural nature of Aberdeenshire has led to less interest from suppliers in providing fibre as they tend to be led by private sector demand.

An estimated 30% of the oil and gas businesses in the North East of Scotland are located in Aberdeenshire. Our large rural economy produces around 20% of Scotland's agricultural outputs and lands over 50% of the country's fish landings by value but is significantly disadvantaged in terms of transport. We therefore look to other avenues to remain competitive with digital connectivity being the most important.

These industries are increasingly reliant on good quality internet access for transacting with commercial service and goods providers.

House developers have been slow to adopt Fibre to the home which suggests that regulation is required to avoid the burden of future upgrades to fibre falling on the public purse. An exception is the new town of Chapelton is being constructed with 100% Fibre To The Home (FTTH) and residents there are enjoying download speeds of around 80 Mbps as a norm.

The author of a recent UK study of internet usage (Jan-March 2016) by the Office for National Statistics identified that although there has been a notable increase in internet usage across all age groups in recent years, “many older and disabled people are still not online, with two-thirds of women over 75 never having used the internet”.

Since this survey began in 2011, adults aged 75 years and over have consistently shown the lowest rates of internet use. It has however almost doubled since 2011 rising from 19.9% to 38.7% in 2016, up from 33% in 2015. A higher proportion of men than women aged 65 and over are recent internet users.

The gap in internet use between the most and least deprived areas of Scotland had fallen to 16% by 2015, with Scotland enjoying the highest level of basic digital skills in the UK. Businesses that are taking advantage of high speed broadband and those that have built a strong presence on line are growing more than twice as fast as those that are not.

There is now a Scottish Government paper: ‘*A Digital Strategy for Scotland’*, with a clear message that in future ‘going digital’ will happen. The mygov.scot will be the portal through which people in Scotland access public services including those provided by Aberdeenshire Council.

Digital Services have a key role and input to the efficiency agenda by providing new ways for customers to access and use services, facilitating new internal working practices which can improve both the quality of service and staff efficiency whilst contributing to the overall efficiency savings for the Council.

With a need for a robust digital infrastructure across the whole of Aberdeenshire there will be opportunities for the council to work with suppliers to improve coverage and capacity. Without this it will become more difficult to encourage businesses to the area.

To ensure that all residents can access services, employment opportunities, health and social care information the Council should work with its communities to identify and improve Digital literacy skills.

Intelligence / Information Gaps

The outcome of Britain’s exit from the European Union is unclear until the official negotiations have concluded, which may take several years.

The likelihood and result of another Scottish Independence Referendum (“IndyRef2”), and the subsequent impact on Scotland.

The Barclay review group has been set up to make recommendations that seek to enhance and reform the business rates system in Scotland to better support business growth and long term investment and reflect changing marketplaces. The outcome of this review will not be known until July 2017.

Recommendations

- **Digital connectivity**
  Improve access to digital services, particularly in rural areas allowing businesses to remain competitive.

- **Economic Diversification**.
  Support major strategic initiatives such as Opportunity North East, Energetica & the City Region Deal in our efforts to grow the regional economy, this includes aligning skills & qualifications to the needs of employers and making the region an attractive place to live & work.

TRANSPORT & TRAVEL

Aberdeenshire comprises Scotland's second largest population of people living in small settlements and experiences critical accessibility challenges that create real issues. A robust, accessible transport network is crucial both to Aberdeenshire's economic growth and the connectivity between communities.

An increase in the number of new houses and a rise in economic growth has led to more pressure on the existing transport infrastructure. A high number of Aberdeenshire residents 'out' commute to other local authority areas with approximately 40% commuting to Aberdeen City and 26% others 'in' commuting.

The majority travel to work by car which has an impact on air quality and congestion. In the most rural areas households are more likely to have 2 or more cars.

Households with below average incomes or no access to a car are more likely to be dependent on bus services.

There is an appetite for rail travel with 1.46 million journeys made in 2015/16 but there are only 6 stations. A new station is due to open in Kintore in 2019 which should benefit the business community based there.

There is access to national and international destinations and the heliport for offshore workers via Aberdeen International Airport on the outskirts of Aberdeen.

In general more people are cycling and its popularity in the tourism sector is growing. For the purposes of commuting the barriers to active and sustainable transport have been identified as perceptions of safety, distance and weather. The Council is working with communities to deliver targeted travel plans through its Integrated Travel Town project. .

Aberdeenshire is supporting more sustainable and active travel through its Active Travel programme. Its aim is to encourage adults and pupils to make more journeys on foot or bicycle rather than by car or public transport, and to contribute to a healthier population through healthy lifestyles, access to green spaces and wellbeing.

Future / Emerging Trends

Aberdeenshire will benefit from the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and the reopening of the Kintore railway station.

Aberdeenshire Council has become the first local authority in Scotland to implement a carbon budget. For 2017/18 the council will need to reduce emissions by 5% (compared to the 2014/15 baseline). This will have an impact on how decisions need to be made such as buying and disposing of fleet and business mileage, among other things. In order to achieve significant progress, day to day operations will need to change to become more energy efficient, with each service being held accountable for their emissions. This will include a reduction in CO2/vehicle emissions associated with passenger transport services (contracted-in and in-house)

A miscellaneous Transport Bill has been announced as part of the legislative programme for the current session of parliament. This is expected to come into effect from 2019 and amend the current legislation in the following three areas, all of which would have potential impacts on Aberdeenshire Council: road works, decriminalised parking enforcement and bus services.

Many of the current transport related strategies are due to be renewed over the next two years: National Transport strategy, Regional Transport strategy and Local Transport Strategy. This may provide an opportunity to revise current plans and ensure appropriate service provision for a predominantly rural area.

The Strategic Transportation Fund which is part funded through developer obligations is subject to a legal challenge and the case will be heard by the Supreme Court in June. Developer obligations have until now funded strategic transport interventions for projects such as the Kintore rail station. A ruling is expected by the end of the year (2017).

The Scottish Government have made recommendations in terms of restructuring regional planning. If it goes ahead then regional partnerships involving the functions of the SDPA, Nestrans and the City Region Deal could be merged.

Recommendations

- **Accessible transport**
  Explore opportunities to develop a Regional Transport Hub with cross service fleet utilisation, to service rural communities whilst ensuring effective resource management.

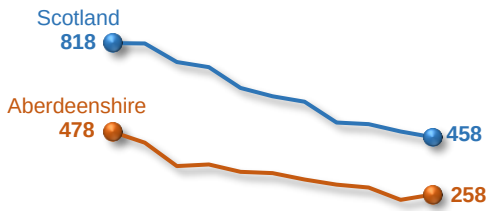
COMMUNITY SAFETY

Aberdeenshire is one of the safest places in the country. This evidence spans the various dimensions of community safety, with road casualties being the main exception.

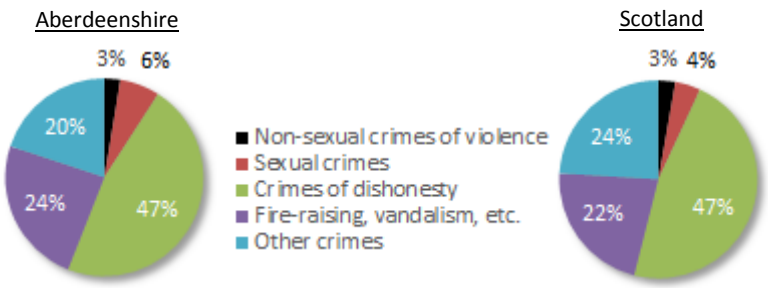
Aberdeenshire Council is a committed partner in tacking the issues that affect the quality of life of the residents here.

CRIME DATA

Total crimes per 10,000 population, Aberdeenshire & Scotland, 2006/07-2015/16



Breakdown of Total Crime, Aberdeenshire & Scotland, 2015/16



Feeling of Safety	Racist incidents	Reconviction Rate	Domestic Abuse
98% feel Aberdeenshire is safe place to live (2015). And 75% believe crime and disorder is only a slight problem or no problem at all.	**2.3** incidents per 10,000 pop. in 2013/14 – far lower than Scotland (9.0) and generally one of the lowest rates in the country.	**26.6%** of Shire & City offenders re-offended in 2013/14, lower than Scotland's figure (28.3%).	**540** incidents per 100,000 pop., half the rate of Scotland but is on an upwards trajectory.

The crime data supports Aberdeenshire being amongst the least crime-affected areas in the country, with a crime rate 44% below that of Scotland on a population basis.

SIMD data, along with local surveys, supports official crime data with 98% of Aberdeenshire residents stating they feel Aberdeenshire is a safe place to live. However, there are areas that tend to experience elevated levels of crime and disorder, most notably Peterhead and Fraserburgh. Banff & Buchan and Buchan have together accounted for over half the total number of recorded crime in Aberdeenshire since 2010/11.

Alcohol and Crime

There is a direct correlation between excessive alcohol consumption and various types of crime, particularly antisocial behaviour, violence and disorder[xii]. Overall, fewer offenders in Aberdeenshire appear to be intoxicated at the material time of the crime. The proportion reduced from overall third (35.6%) of total offenders in 2010/11 to just over a quarter (27.3%) last year.

Those who commit crimes in the most deprived quintile are far more likely to be intoxicated than those who commit crimes in the least deprived quintile (41% *versus* 24%). This may in part be down to the fact that a greater proportion of the crimes in

the most deprived quintile are also those most likely to be associated with an intoxicated offender, e.g. 'non-sexual crimes of violence', and 'other crimes'.

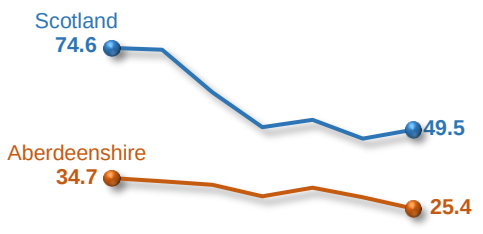
The evidence in the context of crime and alcohol, and drug-related crime, tends to substantiate other data sources where more deprived areas generally experience poorer outcomes relative to less deprived areas.

Fire Safety

Provisional data show Aberdeenshire recorded the lowest rate of fires per head of population in the country during the most recent fiscal year (2015/16).

FIRE DATA

Total fires per 10,000 population, Aberdeenshire & Scotland, 2009/10-2015/16



Breakdown of Total SF&RS Incidents, Aberdeenshire & Scotland, 2015/16

False Fire Alarms

48% of total incidents in Aberdeenshire last year related to false alarms, mostly a result of the apparatus – an avoidable drain on human & financial resources.

Deliberate Fires

14% of Primary Fires last year were deliberate, lower than Scotland's equivalent (23.5%). Both Shire fatalities resulted from such fires.

Casualties

42 casualties were recorded in Aberdeenshire during 2015/16, of which 2 were fatal. (In keeping with average.) The absence of fire alarms may be a factor, as may misuse of alcohol and/or drugs.

Road Safety

Road safety remains an issue for the area despite casualty numbers reducing. Aberdeenshire continues to record among the highest number of Killed Serious Injured (KSI) casualties in Scotland. Traffic volume continues to increase from 2012 levels.

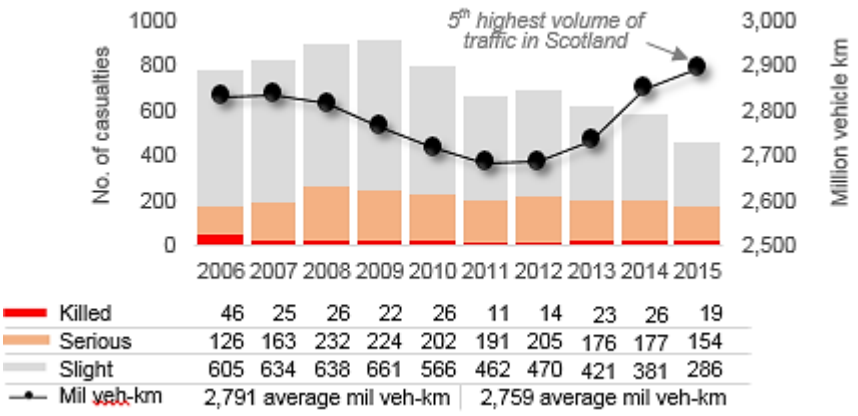
459 individuals sustained an injury in a road collision in Aberdeenshire during 2015, the latest year for which comparable data are available. This is almost half the total of 2005, and 21% lower than 2014 – one of the greatest year-on-year reductions in Scotland. Aberdeenshire recorded the 3rd lowest casualty rate per head of population in Scotland.

Fatalities /serious injuries, whilst showing a downward trend, remain relatively high.

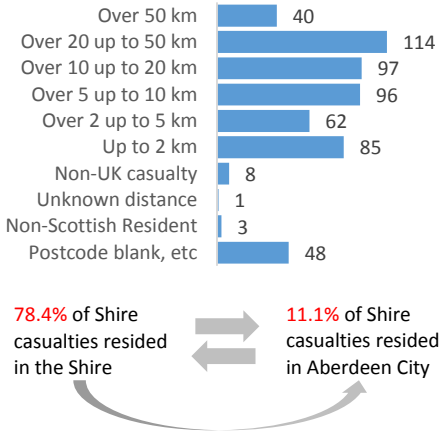
As with Scotland as a whole, the majority of collisions are a result of injudicious actions on the part of the driver or driver error.

ROAD CASUALTY / ROAD CRIME DATA

Road casualties per severity & estimated million kilometres travelled, Aberdeenshire, 2006-15



Distance between the home of the casualty and location of collision, Aberdeenshire, 2015



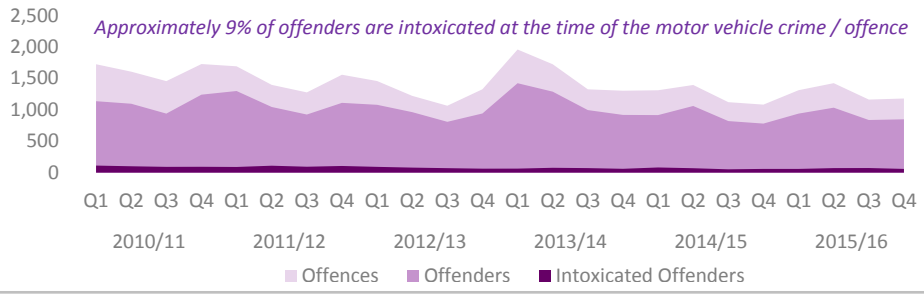
Financial/Social Costs per Severity

Fatal	£2,119,521
Serious	£248,350
Slight	£24,952

£87.7 million

(Aberdeenshire total, 2015)

Number of motor vehicle offences, offenders & intoxicated offenders, Aberdeenshire, 2010-16



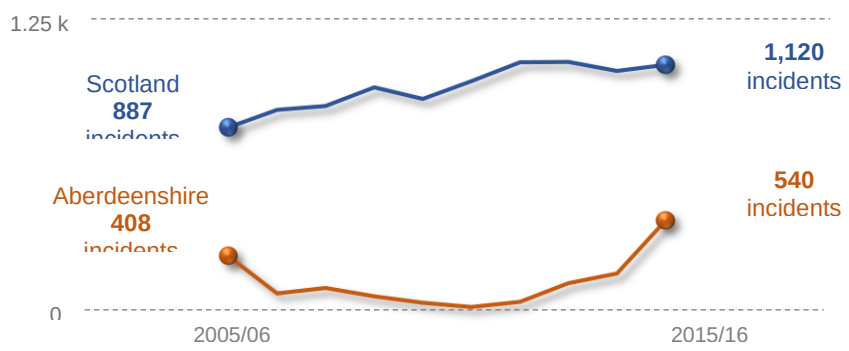
Future / Emerging Trends

Domestic Abuse

Reported domestic incidents show an upwards trend in both Aberdeenshire and Scotland albeit the Aberdeenshire rate remains low on a population basis.

This Aberdeenshire increase may in part be down to increased confidence on the part of the individual suffering abuse to come forward and seek help.

Domestic Abuse Incidents per 10,000 population, Aberdeenshire & Scotland, 2005/06 to 2015/16



Source: Scottish Government

Given the long-term negative impacts of Domestic Abuse on the victim, and children who witness or are aware of the abuse, it is important that legal and other safeguards are in place to negate the potential for harm.

To that end the Scottish Government have proposed a new criminal offence of domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill will also ensure that a course of conduct of entirely non-physical abuse of a person's partner or ex-partner is criminalised[xiii].

Community Justice
The main strategic initiatives for 2017/18 are set out in the recently published Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan for Aberdeenshire. This is a one-year plan in recognition that this is the first year of operation under the new model for community justice, and that Aberdeenshire's approach to improving outcomes locally may need to be refined in future years.

The Plan is based largely on the National Strategy for Community Justice, which contains suggested actions / activities for improvement based on an analysis of evidence of what is known to reduce reoffending.

Intelligence / Information Gaps

Access to data generally appears to be an issue for those in the community safety sphere, specifically data in relation to: Health (particularly A&E), the Scottish Ambulance Service, the Scottish Prison Service, Licensed Trade information, and council datasets across education; housing; social work; transportation; environmental health.

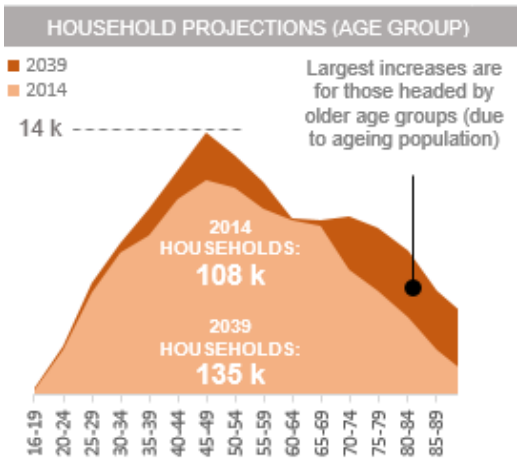
Recommendations

- **Quality of Life**

Continue as a committed partner in initiatives tackling Quality of Life issues in affected communities (specifically identified areas of deprivation), ensuring appropriate engagement with those communities to apply appropriate initiatives.

HOUSING

Demand for new housing overall is largely driven by the scale of population and household growth in the area. This in turn is dependent on a range of factors, including the current population and household structure as well as rates of economic growth, migration and incomes. Just as importantly there are direct links between good quality housing, health outcomes and life chances.



Aberdeenshire is projected to have significant population increases of 22% (above the Scottish growth rate). The previous 25 years saw an increase of 16%.

Not all age groups are projected to grow at the same rate. Growth in the 75+ population is expected to increase by 115% whereas the working population is expected to increase by only 12% which is still higher than the Scottish projection of 4%.

The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan has identified a requirement for 36,000 new households by 2030 with much of the wider development focussed in the Huntly-Laurencekirk and Aberdeen - Peterhead corridors. Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City are currently finalising the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) which provides the common evidence base to enable them to meet their statutory obligations in relation to Housing.

In April 2016, the Health and Social Care Partnership came into being with the aim of providing a more joined-up and person centred approach to health and social care, enabling independent living where appropriate. Housing is at the heart of independent living and can improve the lives of vulnerable and older people and significantly reduce health and care costs.

Net migration into Aberdeenshire has been positive for every year since 2004/05 as it has been in Scotland as a whole. However, more recently net in-migration in Aberdeenshire has dropped and is at its lowest for a decade, falling by 50% (to +986).

This fact and the recent fall in house prices has in turn led to a reduction in market rent levels and an increase in supply of residential property to lease.

A lack of affordable housing has in the past made the recruitment and retention of teachers, social workers, emergency services and health professionals, difficult. However the need for key worker housing has lessened compared to previous years.

The lack of affordable housing means that young first time buyers are priced out and have to leave the area. This out migration of young working people increases the dependency ratio (the number of people aged 65 or more per a hundred people aged 15-64). If low income workers are unable to afford housing, small businesses and service providers which rely on a low-income workforce are unable to source staff.

There is a high demand in Aberdeenshire for social housing. As of 31 December 2015, there were 8,760 applicants in Aberdeenshire on the waiting list. The greatest pressure is in Garioch with 28% waiting for a home and 56% of those (1,412) require a one-bedroomed home. A total of 56% of the Council's housing list is for a one-bedroomed flat and 37% is for a 2 or 3 bedroomed properties.

Aberdeenshire Council Waiting List on 31 December 2015

Area	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	Other	Total
Banff and Buchan	**650**	263	138	48	23	30	1,152
Buchan	**685**	305	186	48	19	87	1,330
Formartine	**707**	250	149	60	22	20	1,208
Garioch	**1,412**	580	332	90	35	34	2,483
Kincardine and Mearns	**767**	432	237	80	21	23	1,560
Marr	**592**	216	143	42	14	20	1,027
Total	**4,813**	2,046	1,185	368	134	214	8,760

The National Records of Scotland highlights that 5,000 properties in Aberdeenshire are vacant or are second homes. However, the local Council Tax Registers show 1,872 long-term vacant properties. Returning some of these properties into the housing supply could help to reduce the backlog of housing need.

The provision of social housing is expensive and dependant on Scottish Government grant funding. Over the past twelve months a total of 247 affordable homes have been built including 169 council homes built in conjunction with partners and support from the Scottish Government through the City Region Deal. Securing sufficient land for the level of affordable house construction required would also be challenging given the constraints of the market and Scottish Planning Policy.

The 2014 Housing (Scotland) Act ended the right of Council tenants to buy their homes on 1 August 2016 so all Council owned housing will remain as social housing.

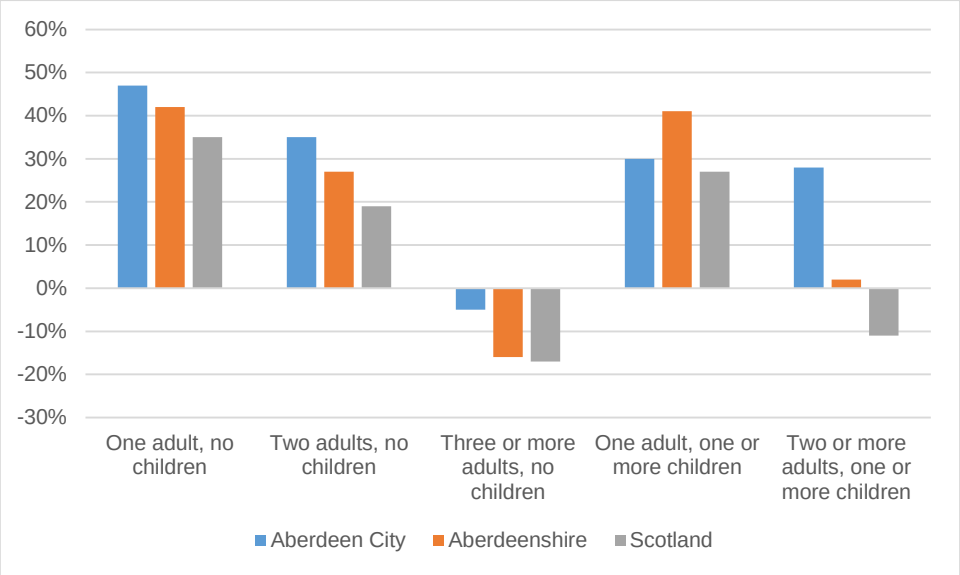
Aberdeenshire has a substantially greater owner occupied sector than either Aberdeen City or Scotland and correspondingly smaller social and private rented sectors.

New houses are being built in Aberdeenshire (in the top three local authorities for house building) with an average of 1,221 homes being completed each financial year. These levels of house building relate to historic levels of economic activity and migration are not indicative of future levels of construction.

With the changing demographic profile of an increase in the older population the authority needs the right housing provision to meet the requirements of the population. In an aging population older people are more likely to live alone or in a household with other persons aged 65 or older.

The older generation are more likely to require smaller housing and there is a requirement for local authorities to ensure that there is an adequate supply of sheltered, very sheltered and amenity housing.

Projected percentage change in household type, 2012 - 2037



Source: 2012-based Household Projections, National Records of Scotland

The council is participating in the Syrian resettlement programme. Between 2015 and 2019, Aberdeenshire Council committed to resettling 50 families through the Syrian Resettlement Programme. As of December 2016, Aberdeenshire Council has resettled 19 families. To date, accommodation has been provided via the private sector (70%) and Registered Social Landlord (30%). Many of these families have high levels of health, education and literacy needs and it is important that they are resettled where they can access services. Typically intensive levels of support are required and families are being resettled on a phased basis to ensure that they receive the necessary coordination and support. The local authority is continuing to work with services across the public and voluntary sectors to support new families and sustain tenancies.

Over a period of many years Aberdeenshire Council has been working towards identifying areas of land with the potential to be developed as stopover sites for

Gypsies/Travellers. In 2016 planning permission with conditions was granted to form a 10-stance permanent halting site and 20-stance touring site in South Aberdeenshire and more recently Aberdeenshire Council agreed that a planning application should be submitted for a 10-pitch stopover site in North Aberdeenshire.

Future / Emerging Trends

The fall in oil price and impact on the local economy may significantly reduce in-migration to the area affecting future growth in population and households. Aberdeenshire Council have developed a strategic housing investment plan for 2017-2022 which has been submitted to the Scottish Government. It identifies opportunities for the following levels of new affordable housing supply:

New affordable housing supply by year

	Aberdeenshire
2017/18	205
2018/19	780
2019/20	416
2020/21	130
2021/22	604
Total	2,135

These projections are likely to vary and will be subject to the build out rate of the development industry. There are opportunities for long term vacant properties to be brought back into use.

Discussions are ongoing at Scottish Government and UK Government levels regarding the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Schemes. The housing response to any involvement in these schemes will depend on the nature of the client group which cannot be accurately identified at this stage. A range of supported housing, hostel and HMO-type accommodation will need to be considered in light what staffing resources are available to provide support where required.

In looking at the provision of appropriate housing for the demographic of Aberdeenshire, a number of factors should be considered:

- High levels of housing needs projected across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire (approximately 1,000 units per year for both areas).
- Ageing population to increase demand for very sheltered housing stock and create greater pressure on aids and adaptations budgets to keep people living independently for as long as possible.
- Long-term shift in household composition with requirements for increasing number of one-bedroom properties and one adult / one or more children homes (40% rise projected between 2012 and 2037).

- The need to meet national carbon reduction targets manifesting through significant investment to improve the energy efficiency of housing stock in Aberdeenshire.

The review of developer obligations within Aberdeenshire will have an impact on the delivery of affordable housing to public sector services (subject to legal challenge by the Council in June 2017).

Intelligence / Information Gaps

Integrating datasets across services and partners has significant potential to improve joined-up evidence gathering and service delivery.

Recommendations

Appropriate demand led, affordable housing.
Ensure appropriate housing for population's needs including one-bedroom properties and affordable housing.

ENVIRONMENT

Average temperatures in Scotland have increased in line with global trends, with average annual temperatures around 0.7oC higher than they were a century ago. Annual rainfall over Scotland has increased since the 1970s, to a level 13% above the average for the early decades of the 20th century. All seasons contribute to the increase in rainfall. Long-term monitoring of sea level at stations around the UK including Aberdeen shows the mean sea level for 2006 - 2008 was more than 100mm higher than during the 1920s.

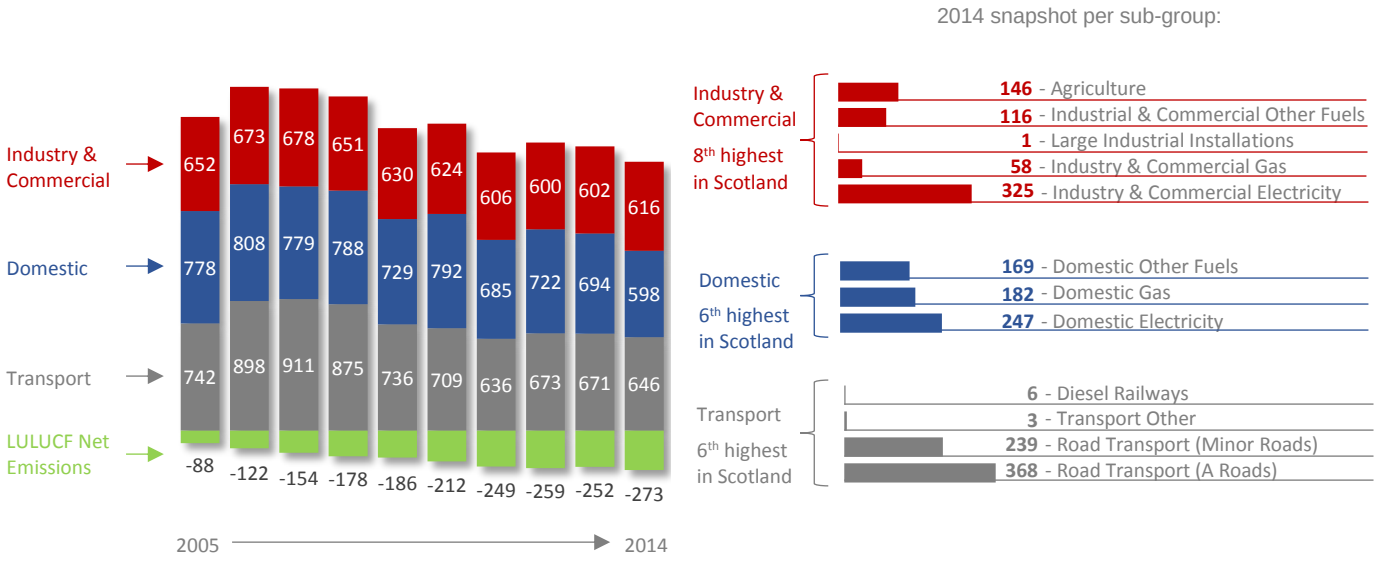
The Evidence Report for the second UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA2), published in July 2016, highlighted the need for more action to manage flood risks, the potential for water scarcity, heat-related impacts on health and wellbeing, risks to the natural environment, and risks of food price volatility. More research is also needed to understand new and emerging pest and disease risks, especially for the forestry industry.

Aberdeenshire CO_2 Emissions Estimates

CO_2 emissions in Aberdeenshire are on a downwards trend, however, the area is among the highest emitters of CO_2 in relation to road transport, agriculture and domestic use in Scotland.

The following diagram presents latest CO_2 emissions estimates for Aberdeenshire, broken down by the major source of the emission (the 2014 snapshot is further broken down into each source's constituent parts). "LULUCF Net Emissions" is a greenhouse gas inventory sector that covers emissions and removals of greenhouse gases resulting from direct human-induced land use, land-use change and forestry activities (i.e. it effectively subtracts CO_2 from the overall estimate).

Figure – Aberdeenshire Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) emissions estimates, 2005-2014 (Kt CO_2) per sector



Source: UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005-2014

Relatively high transport emissions may be explained by the size of Aberdeenshire, the extent of car ownership and the relatively high volume of traffic in the area (5th highest volume in 2015). Similarly with regards to agricultural emissions given Aberdeenshire's farming heritage.

Regarding domestic emissions, the area emitted the 6th highest concentration of CO2 from the "Domestic" sector in Scotland. Aberdeenshire households consume domestic petroleum products to a greater extent than most other areas in the UK, as opposed to gas which is a 'cleaner' energy source, which may account for the relatively high CO_2 emissions. However, more research is required before such a conclusion may be drawn.

The Council recognises that it must take steps to adapt to likely changes and move to a low carbon future. The Council is committed to becoming a carbon neutral organisation in the short to medium term.

Current and future activities include:

- The 2016-2020 Climate Change Action Plan and enhanced Environmental and Climate Change Policy.
- The Carbon Budget
- A North East of Scotland and Aberdeenshire Sustainable Energy Action Plan (NESSEAP and SEAP) with an associated governance arrangements.
- A Renewable Energy Reserve to fund carbon reduction projects.
- Work with Equalities and ICT to develop an electronic evaluation/screening procedure for reports on the basis of the climate change act, health inequalities, equalities and human rights so as to inform decision making in management meetings and committees.

Carbon Budget

Aberdeenshire Council's Carbon Budget, a first for a Scottish local authority, is a tool to ensure that each service is made accountable for reducing its own carbon emissions and allows the Council to better manage how it works towards meeting its emission reduction targets[2].

Energy Efficiency

A strong advocate of energy efficiency, Aberdeenshire Council promotes higher-than-national standards in building construction and thermal efficiency, recognising the importance of reducing demand through design as a starting point for all processes[xiv.]

Renewable Energy

Aberdeenshire has an installed capacity of 543 MW of renewable energy, which equates to approximately 5.1 MW per 1,000 households – one of the highest rates in the country (ranked 24th out of all UK local authority areas). The vast majority relates to onshore wind (94%). To put this into context, Peterhead Power Station generates approximately 1,300 MW of energy, or just under 2.4 times more energy than the total output from renewable energy sources.

[2] 74,007 tonnes CO2e for 2017/18, which is a 5% cut to the Council's emissions relative to the 2014/15 base

Aberdeenshire's geographical location gives considerable opportunities for expansion of the wind energy sector either through development of domestic renewables or the expansion, upgrading or development of new wind farms.

Future / Emerging Trends

Extreme Weather Events

In late December 2015 into early January 2016, Storm Frank (and two subsequent periods of persistent rainfall) resulted in unprecedented rainfall across Aberdeenshire causing widespread and large scale flooding for multiple areas. Significant damage was caused creating long term and high cost infrastructure and community impacts. Climate change is likely to increase the frequency and magnitude of severe coastal, river and surface water flooding events with rainfall extremes generally projected to increase, particularly during winter.

There are 23 areas that have been identified as being potentially vulnerable to flood risk across the North East Local Plan District and these have been designated as Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVAs). The North East Local Plan District contains approximately 13,000 residential and 3,600 non-residential properties at risk with an estimated Annual Average Damages of £29 million.

The table below shows the number of properties at risk and the Annual Average Damages caused by flooding in the main towns and cities within the Local Plan District. This includes damages to residential properties, non-residential properties, transport and agriculture.

Settlement	Residential and non-residential properties at risk of flooding	Annual Average Damages
Stonehaven	860	£980,000
Inverurie & Port Elphinstone	340	£460,000
Ballater	230	£220,000
Peterculter	200	£310,000
Dyce	190	£2.6 million
Huntly	150	£440,000
Ellon	110	£290,000
Banff & Macduff	100	£280,000
Peterhead	90	£580,000

Source: North East Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2016-2022

The main source of flooding is from rivers which accounts for approximately 81% of the Annual Average Damages. The Annual Average Damages caused by river floods are £24.5 million with those caused by surface water and coastal floods being approximately £5.2 million and £270,000 respectively.

Aberdeenshire Council is Lead Local Authority for the North East District under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009. This has been a successful collaboration to deliver the North East Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2016 -

2022, working with SEPA, Aberdeen City Council, Moray Council, Scottish Water, Cairngorms National Park and the Forestry Commission. This is ongoing and we are working to deliver the actions set out in the Plan and beginning to work towards the next North East Local Flood Risk Management Plan for the next planning cycle in 2022-2027.

Flood Schemes currently receive 80% funding from the Scottish Government's General Capital Grant (currently £42M per year for the next 10 years). There is a risk that in the next flood risk planning cycle there will be insufficient available budget for schemes likely to be developed in Aberdeenshire (Ballater, Ellon, Insch, Inverurie, etc). The Grangemouth Flood Scheme at £90 million (80% eligible costs) has the potential to limit funding available to another flood schemes, and Aberdeenshire Council may have to decide to delay potential flood schemes or bear the full costs itself.

Intelligence / Information Gaps

While there are numerous renewable energy schemes consented, planned, under construction or operational there is no collated source of information to know how much renewable energy is or could be produced in the north east in both the commercial and private sectors.
There is a degree of uncertainty in relation to future climate change projections and how that will impact coastal, river and surface water flooding events in the future.

Recommendations

Consider innovative strategies for increasing recycling in communities, diverting from landfill.

Investment in fuel efficient programmes to curb carbon emissions from domestic properties.

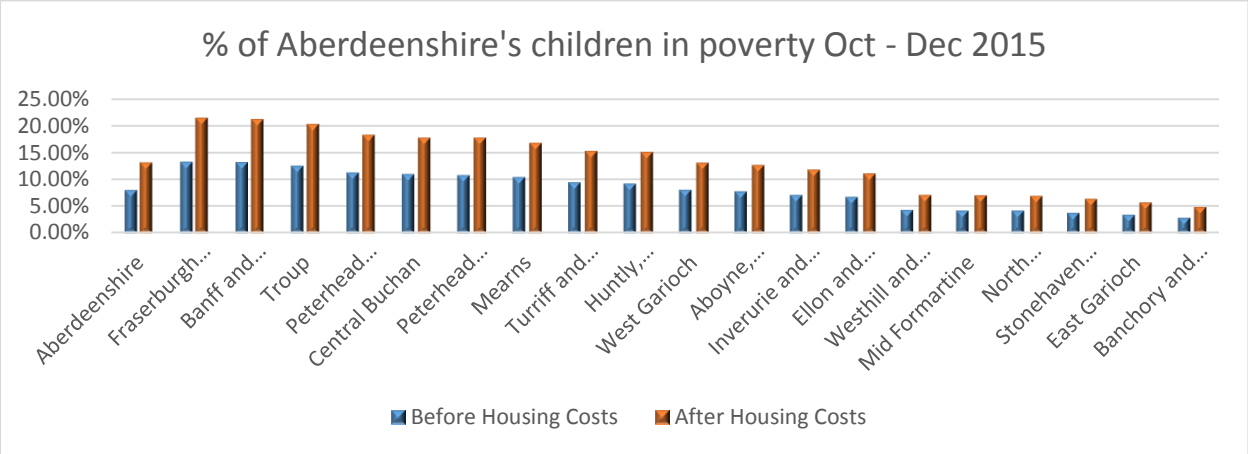
Develop strategy to ensure 2021 regulatory requirements are achieved

POVERTY & DEPRIVATION

Deprivation is the consequence of a lack of income and other resources, which cumulatively can be seen as living in poverty.
Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities, and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary patterns, customs and activities.

After a period of stability in levels of poverty over the past decade most rates have risen in 2015/16 there is evidence to suggest that low income households, especially families with children, are falling further behind. There are now a larger number of lower income households in employment but this does not guard them against poverty. In-work poverty has shown a long term rising trend since 2009/10. This is explained by changes in the employment market with many low income households working part-time. For working families who also receive benefit income, especially families with children, increase in earnings were balanced against withdrawal of benefit income, combined with a one per cent cap on benefit up-rating.

Aberdeenshire is in the top 20 local authorities with the lowest levels of child poverty across the UK with 13.1% of children in poverty (after housing costs, 2015). Across the local authority there is a marked difference with values ranging from 21.34% in Fraserburgh and District to 5.71% in East Garioch.



As referred to elsewhere in this document the Scottish Index of Multiple deprivation is an official tool for identifying small areas of multiple deprivation. 'Deprived' does not just mean 'poor' or 'low income'. It can also mean people have fewer resources and opportunities, for example in health and education.

Studies suggest that deprivation is experienced differently between people living in rural and urban parts of the country. Aberdeenshire has both rural and urban areas with 149 of Aberdeenshire's 340 Data Zones among the most geographically deprived in the country.

A large proportion of geographically deprived areas actually experience some of the best outcomes in the country. The exception to this is in those Data Zones in Peterhead and Fraserburgh that rank as more deprived than others over a wide range of indicators – they tend to experience far poorer outcomes.

Supporting communities, families or individuals in these identified areas of deprivation requires a true multi-agency, partnership approach. Understanding the reason for poverty and deprivation are key to putting in place short, medium and long term solutions.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 provides a formal mechanism by which we can further support those identified areas of poverty and deprivation, with focussed activity and initiatives to improve their overall wellbeing.

Recommendations

Full partnership working to develop, implement and deliver actions, and achieve outcomes, relating to Locality plans to impact on issues of deprivation.

Full partnership working to develop, implement and deliver actions, and achieve outcomes, to impact on child poverty in Aberdeenshire

Continued support, through awareness and guidance, to ensure Communities are empowered to request direction of resource to issues that impact on their quality of life (e.g. Community Asset Transfer).

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