

**Regeneration Development Partnership
Macduff Town Hall
28/05/2018 – 7-9pm**

Attendees: Cllr R Cassie (Chair), Cllr M Findlater,
Christine Webster – Regeneration & Town Centres Manager
Karen Wiles – Interim Area Manager
Stanley West – Macduff Heritage Group
Edward Acton – Macduff Heritage Group
Patricia Wain – Friends of Tarlair
Natalie Greenland – Project Officer Finance
Hugh O’Brien - Minister, Macduff Parish Church
Angela Keith – Housing Manager
David McCubbin – Visit Aberdeenshire
Ashley Isaac – Daniels Place
Philippa Gluckstein - Daniel’s Place

Apologies: Paul Thomas – All-in-House
John Watt – Macduff Shipyards
Hamish McLeay – Bachlaw Projects
Linda Hendry – Project Assistant
Dr Ian Brooker – Macduff Medical Practice
Jan Emery – B&B Area Project Officer

Item	Description
1	<u>Welcome and Apologies</u> All were welcomed and apologies given.
2	<u>Note of last meeting</u> Note of last meeting was noted.
3	<u>Impacts of Welfare Reform</u> Angela Keith, Housing Manager gave an overview of the changes expected soon for individuals receiving benefit support. On 27 th June 2018 new benefit applicants will transition to Universal Credit, a new benefits system which will replace multiple individual benefits. Many council housing tenants are in receipt of benefits and therefore there has been 2 years of preparation working with DWP to plan for these changes. There is now a shared customer portal with DWP to put information on, improve efficiency and speed up decisions. Aberdeenshire Council staff are now also working in the early evening to improve communications with tenants. Intensive support has also been offered to vulnerable clients. Ashley reported that food bank demand had doubled across Fraserburgh and Aberdeen and they were dealing with increasingly

frustrated and angry people. They have seen the demand for food parcels rise from 46 in January 2017 to 67 in January 2018 and is now at 100 food parcels / month. There are many returning customers and anecdotally, it appears sanctions and mental health issues are at the base of this rise in demand for food parcels. Many people find dealing with authorities stressful and frustrating and are more comfortable in environments like Daniels Place.

Natalie briefed the group that payments on Universal Credit are designed to reflect work and are 5 weeks in arrears. All front line partners dealing with benefits have taken part in training / awareness events and there has been specific events for landlords. Autonomy and responsibility in the new system lies with the client / applicant which can work well, although some need specific support through the system.

Action: all to share leaflet explaining changes

There was wider discussion about how groups could support people in the community facing these changes. Macduff Church has a Coffee Corner which is attended by 80-100 people which would be a good point to share information if needed.

Natalie offered any third sector staff to do awareness training about the new benefits system.

There was a discussion about the possibility of a housing officer coming to Daniels Place a day a week to access clients in need of support. A room might be available and this will be investigated after the meeting.

Action: Angela Keith to explore possibilities with Ashley, Daniel's Place.

Christine also mentioned that a new employability officer through Economic Development will be coming into post and there may also be the opportunity for that officer to contact clients at Daniel's Place.

Caroline reported that the Breakfast Club at Macduff Primary School and the Job Club at Aberchirder library were being supported by the Area Initiatives Fund. She explained that JCP, Employability Partnership, Community Planning and AVA are in the process of setting up some outreach advice and support in Aberchirder in preparation of the forthcoming roll out of Universal Credit (UC). This hopefully will be in place in the next week with the aim of providing access to IT equipment, information, advice on UC and support with online applications, it is hoped to duplicate similar outreach work in Macduff.

Action: Jan Emery to explore use of IT facilities for similar outreach work in Macduff.

4	<p><u>Updates on Key Projects</u></p> <p>Christine gave an update on the funding application for Macduff Harbour Ice Plant. Whilst confirmation was awaited, Aberdeenshire Council's application to EMFF for £281, 400 was believed to be approved. Until confirmation is received, this is confidential.</p> <p>Action: CW to confirm to group when confirmation received.</p> <p>It was also reported that the Macduff Harbour Deepening Study was completed and that it was being dealt with by the council's procedures for considering major projects.</p>
5	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>There was no other business.</p>
6	<p><u>Date and Time of Next Meeting</u> Monday 3 September, 1900 – 2100 Macduff Town Hall</p>