

REPORT TO BANFF & BUCHAN AREA COMMITTEE – 12 March 2024

DEVELOPING EXCELLENCE IN OUR NORTH COAST COMMUNITIES – FINAL PROGRAMME REPORT

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 This report provides the Committee with a final report on the regeneration strategy: Developing Excellence in our North Coast Communities for Banff, Macduff and Fraserburgh highlighting the progress achieved across the programme.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 Note the report and comment to ISC on the contents of the reports in Appendices 1 and 2.

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 On 17 March 2016, Infrastructure Services Committee (ISC) (Item 17), approved a new Regeneration Strategy, “From Strategy to Action: Developing Excellence in our North Coast Communities” which concentrates regeneration efforts in the four northern towns of Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh, and Peterhead. The Committee also agreed the plan for each town and budget allocations to the plans, summarised in the table in section 3.4 below.

2.2 Progress update reports have been submitted to the Banff & Buchan Area Committee every six months and to Infrastructure Services Committee annually, except for the period covering the height of the Covid-19 pandemic when the work of the Regeneration and Town Centres team was effectively refocused on business response and recovery tasks. The previous update report was discussed by the Committee on 23rd May 2023 (Item 9), and the Committee requested that officers report to Committee with a final report as the plans reach their concluding stages. At their meeting on 24th August 2023 (Item 6), ISC also requested that a final programme report be submitted by May 2024.

3 Discussion

3.1 Whilst this report completes this format of reporting on the Vision and Action Plans across Banff and Buchan, it does not mean that work to achieve outcomes stops. The success of this place-based approach as part of our Regeneration Strategy has led to a Place Policy being shaped that proposes to embed the approach taken, enabling services across the Council to be responsive to Place Based Approaches. This Policy will be submitted to Full Council for approval. There have been multiple plans in place over this period, not least of which are the Community Planning Plans and various Locality

Planning exercises. This move towards a Place Policy is proposed to simplify the plan landscape, and enable closer working towards improving outcomes across the Council and across our partnerships.

- 3.2 The Place Policy is proposed to be guided by a data dashboard, which will enable services to analyse the priorities across Aberdeenshire and respond appropriately in a more systematic way to needs and opportunities. It will encourage services to work together also in a more effective way towards change. Whilst this move towards a Place Policy may take time to embed, there are many developments started under this programme which will continue to drive progress.
- 3.3 Appendices 1 and 2 give a summarised report of programme progress for Banff, Macduff, and Fraserburgh. Of these many measures, the actions below will continue to develop throughout this transition to a Place Policy:
- The Fraserburgh Beach Masterplan is now complete, with the next stage of delivery discussions across services started via the Area Management Team. The Masterplan is expected to deliver benefits to the economic, social and physical fabric of Fraserburgh. It has been the subject of a Place and Wellbeing Assessment and therefore is a robustly developed series of interventions which will help deliver against future place outcomes.
 - Construction work is progressing for the re-development of the Pavilion at the Tarlair outdoor swimming complex in Macduff and is expected to be complete by autumn 2024. The project is supported by the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, Place Based Investment Programme, Garfield & Pilgrims Trusts, Muirden Energy, and Macduff Vision and Action Plan. Friends of Tarlair are also planning for the next phase of development to restore the function of the pools. These developments will anchor a significant tourism and community facility in Macduff and will be a platform for economic and social development over the next decade.
 - Further to the success of the joint funding application between Aberdeenshire Council & Macduff Shipyards to upgrade one of the four cradles at Macduff Harbour to support increased demand for dual-hulled vessels, the project is now delivered. The total project cost £74,400 with most of the funding secured through Coastal Communities Funding, Macduff Shipyards contributing £14,900, and £9,500 being awarded from the Macduff Vision and Action Plan. Investment in harbour infrastructure is key to supporting the development of the maritime industry in Macduff to adapt to technological developments and the changing dynamics of ships.
 - The funding application to the UK Seafood Infrastructure Fund for £1M investment in Macduff Harbour Shore Power and Water connections to the South Harbour was unfortunately rejected. Officers in the Harbour Service, assisted where appropriate, will continue to make applications to the relevant funders for this project.

- The Better Futures Fund has now been launched in Banff & Macduff with the aim of encouraging additional town centre footfall and bringing empty properties back into use. Applications have been received and dependent on eligibility checks, the outcomes will create events, interest, and footfall to celebrate the towns during 2024.
- North East Scotland Climate Action Network (NESCOAN) continues to engage with the communities of Banff and Macduff with a view to developing resilience, knowledge, skills, and expertise, empowering communities and assisting them in the design, development and delivery of climate focused projects. This work will be built into the new Place Plans.
- Continued delivery of the Place-Based Investment Programme (PBIP) across Aberdeenshire which has supported, in the Banff & Buchan area – Bridge Street (Banff) and Kirk Brae (Fraserburgh) public realm improvements, the Stag & Thistle (John Trail) hotel, and new skate park projects in Fraserburgh, the Macduff Cross enhancement scheme, the Tarlair Pavilion, and the Portsoy Green Travel and Fitness Hub. Applications for the 2024 / 2025 year are currently being assessed.
- The RGU (Robert Gordon University) Sustainable Futures programme is now complete and a review underway.
- Work on progressive procurement will continue, following the successful outcomes delivered as per Appendix 1. An application for Local Authority Economic Recovery (LACER) funds has been made which will look to extend the success achieved to date and widen and deepen Local Wealth Building across the Council. This work will continue to drive local economic wealth and be focused via the Place Policy and data dashboard.
- The success of the Fraserburgh Enterprise Hub model in developing an entrepreneurship community has been extended too. The Enterprising Aberdeenshire project is now live, funded through Shared Prosperity Funding. This project will drive interest in new business start ups and in developing the entrepreneurship community throughout Banff and Buchan. A session on this is scheduled with elected members for the 23rd April.

3.4 Funds were agreed for regeneration aligned with the plans for each town. These funds are held in the Council's Regeneration & Priority Town Centre Reserve and the current position is noted below:

	Indicative Allocation £	Committed £	Balance £
Fraserburgh	1,137,000	1,041,012	95,988
Macduff	901,000	457,692	443,308
Banff	710,000	534,418	175,582

3.5 Since the impact of Covid-19 and increased pressure on local authority funding models, there has been a positive effort to secure external funding for any pipeline projects. We have therefore brought significant external funding into

delivery through for example, Coastal Communities (seaweed project), LACER (local procurement and wealth building), Shared Prosperity (Enterprising Aberdeenshire) and Levelling Up (Macduff Marine Aquarium). This has saved having to commit all of the local authority funds available on new initiatives. The balance of funding from the reserve will be moved into a Place Strategy Reserve and will be available for projects aligned with the Place Strategy. It is anticipated that any future significant projects, for example on Macduff Harbour can be put forward for this funding on the basis of securing external match funding.

- 3.6 Each of the regeneration plans contain ambitious output and outcome indicators and targets to achieve over the lifetime of the plans. It is of credit to the partners involved in regeneration efforts – particularly in light of the disruption caused by the pandemic and more recent economic events - that most of the outcomes in each of the plans have been achieved or exceeded. Outcome summaries are contained within the town appendices. It should be noted that outcomes will continue to be developed by the key projects such as the Vinery, Vanilla Ink, Friends of Tarlair, and Macduff Marine Aquarium in addition to the ongoing work from economic projects such as Positive Procurement and partnership work with Banff Academy etc. as new plans develop.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 This report helps deliver the Strategic Priorities “Economic Growth” within the Pillar “Our Economy” and “Resilient Communities” within the Pillar “Our Environment”.
- 4.2 This report helps deliver against the Aberdeenshire Council Regeneration Strategy, “From Strategy to Action: Developing Excellence in our North Coast Communities.
- 4.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland		X	
Children and Young People’s Rights and Wellbeing		X	
Climate Change and Sustainability		X	
Health and Wellbeing		X	
Town Centre First		X	

- 4.4 There are no staffing or financial implications as a result of this report.

- 4.5 The screening section as part of Stage One of the Integrated Impact Assessment process has not identified the requirement for any further detailed assessments to be undertaken as this report is for information and discussion only. However, an Impact Assessment was conducted as part of the previous update and is attached for reference ([PDF 2023-05-23 IIA-001343 BBAC - Regeneration Update.pdf](#)). The outcomes and outputs contained within appendices 1 and 2 demonstrate a commitment to the IIA principles.
- 4.6 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:
- *ACRP005 Partnership policy. This report summarises partnership input to regeneration and the need for this to continue.*
 - *ACORP006 Reputational Management. This report provides good evidence that the council and its partners are delivering against previously agreed plans.*
 - *ACORP007 Social Change. This report takes into account demographic changes in Aberdeenshire's most vulnerable towns and considers improvements and changes to the plans as a result.*

[Corporate Risk Register](#)

The following Risk has been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level:

- *ISR002 – Regeneration. The Report illustrates that progress is being achieved in the regeneration plans and that they are being appropriately monitored and managed.*

[Strategic Risk Register](#)

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section B.1.9 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to updates on the delivery of the Regeneration Strategy.

Alan Wood
Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by Christine Webster, Place Economy Manager
19.02.24

List of Appendices –

APPENDIX 1 – VISION AND ACTION PLAN FINAL PROGRAMME REPORT –
BANFF & MACDUFF

APPENDIX 2 – VISION AND ACTION PLAN UPDATE FINAL PROGRAMME
REPORT– FRASERBURGH