

BULLETIN TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 20 JUNE 2019

2018/19 ANNUAL REPORT ON ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL'S ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

1 Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 **Acknowledge the continuing work of the Archaeology Service to manage the historic environment of the region, as shown in the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service Annual Report in Appendix 1.**

2 Background / Discussion

Background - Archaeology Service

- 2.1 The Archaeology Service has the role of protecting, managing and promoting the historic environment of not only Aberdeenshire but also, via Service Level Agreements, Angus and Moray Council areas, and via a Shared Service Agreement, Aberdeen City Council. The Archaeology Service has 3.8 full-time equivalent staff, forming part of the Specialist Services Team, within Planning and Building Standards.
- 2.2 The work of the Archaeology Service is driven by Aberdeenshire Council's Archaeology Strategy 2017-20 which provides a structured approach to service delivery over the three-year period. Central to the work is that the benefits gained from Aberdeenshire's unique historic environment should be available to those who live, work in, and visit Aberdeenshire. The value of these resources, and the need to protect and enhance them for future generations through sustainable management, should also be understood. This vision for the Archaeology Service can be summarised:

"We will aim to provide the best protection, management and promotion of the historic environment of Aberdeenshire for the benefit of all."- 2.3 The Archaeology Service enables the Council to satisfy the relevant requirements of Our Place in Time – The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland (2014), Scotland's Archaeology Strategy (2016) and National Planning Framework 3.

Summary of Annual Report for 2018/19

- 2.4 The Annual Report covers the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019.
- 2.5 **Outcome 1 Increased stability of resources:** The Archaeology Service generated a basic income of £60,253 from Shared and Service Level Agreements with Aberdeen City, Moray and Angus Councils. An additional

£12,001 was realised from consultancy work, representing an overall increase in income of 4.4% on the previous year. Of this income £40,000 went back into the Council's corporate finances, part of which was used to wholly fund a 1.0 FTE SMR Officer post within the team.

- 2.6 **Outcome 2 Supporting sustainable development:** During the course of the year the Archaeology Service monitored all 52 Weekly Planning Lists for each Local Authority, provided mitigation advice for 868 Planning Applications (with a response average of 98% within 14 days) and 290 other consultations, provided advice to staff, developers and the public as required, and represented the Council on 3 National Groups & Boards. The Service also continued to maintain and develop the Historic Environment Record (HER) (formerly known as the Sites & Monuments Record (SMR)), a database of all known archaeological sites in the area (currently 44,570, an increase of 4% on the previous year) which underpins all of the above work. This included the launch of the new HER for Aberdeen City online, making it freely available to anyone. During the year the online version of all four area Historic Environment Records was used by people from 102 different countries.
- 2.7 **Outcome 3 Better protection and management of the historic environment:** The Archaeology Service contributed £20,075 to projects which enhanced Council owned assets or provided opportunities for better understanding and promotion of the archaeological resource of the region. This funding facilitated the raising of an additional £42,099 of external funding. The Service also worked closely with Police Scotland once more on two cases involving the discovery of human remains of an unknown date.
- 2.8 **Outcome 4 Enhancing community learning and participation:** The Archaeology Service supported 10 community projects which allowed local volunteers to take part in archaeological excavations, surveys and training days. This work not only provided valuable information for the future management of sites, such as Aden Country Park, but also provided opportunities for people to develop new skills and become more active within the area. In Aberdeenshire these projects delivered 2,639 volunteer days, equating to an economic contribution of £286,279 to the local economy.
- 2.9 **Outcome 5 Promotion of our historic environment:** The Archaeology Service continued to deliver a social media campaign across the four Local Authority regions via Twitter and Instagram. This was enhanced with targeted outreach opportunities such as engagement with local schools using digital resources following the laser scanning of Tullich Kirk (Marr). The Service also produced and distributed a new Historic Churches Trail Leaflet adding to the existing Pictish Stones and Stone Circles trail leaflets.
- 2.10 At a national level the Archaeology Service has continued to be involved in developing and implementing both Scotland's Archaeology Strategy with Historic Environment Scotland, and new overarching national policies such as the Historic Environment Policy Scotland (HEPS). The Archaeology Service is considered a key partner in this work.
- 2.11 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this Bulletin, had no comments to make

and are satisfied that the Bulletin complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

3 Scheme of Governance

- 3.1 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section F.7.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to the scrutiny of the activity of the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service.

4 Implications and Risk

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required because the Bulletin is to inform the Committee on performance and there will be no differential impact as a result of this Bulletin on people with protected characteristics.

- 4.2 There are no specific staffing or financial implications arising from this Bulletin, but trends are used to inform future budget planning.

- 4.3 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level ([Corporate Risk Register](#)):

- *Budget Pressures:* The Archaeology Service has Service Level Agreements with Angus and Moray Council areas, and a Shared Service Agreement with Aberdeen City Council, for the provision of archaeological services. If any of these contracts were terminated there would be a financial impact through a reduction in income.
- *Working with other organisations:* As above, if existing agreements were to cease the result would be a reduction in income. The Archaeology Service has good working relationships with Angus, Moray and Aberdeen City Councils, and the shared approach offers enhanced protection of the historic environment of North East Scotland through the consistency it affords.

- 4.4 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level ([Directorate Risk Registers](#)):

- *Climate Change:* Conserve the natural and historic environment by protecting and enhancing landscape, biodiversity and historic assets. It is recognised that there is a heightened risk of historic assets and the historic environment being damaged or lost as a result of climate change. The Archaeology Service will continue to record and monitor historic assets and the historic environment, and to advise on best practice management solutions.

Stephen Archer

Director of Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by Bruce Mann, Archaeologist

Date: 09 May 2019

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

1.0 Archaeology Strategy 2017-20 Aim 1 – Protect and Manage the Historic Environment

Maintain a record of all known archaeological sites, between 15,000 BC and 1945 AD, to use that record as a basis to provide expert advice and information on those sites, and to ensure that all sites are protected where possible for future generations.

The number of site records being created and updated continues to rise as results of finds made during development works and academic research projects are fed back into the databases. The significant increase in Angus is largely the result of including all Listed buildings within the records for the first time.

Funding for projects relating solely to better understanding or protection of archaeological sites has continued. In particular for Council owned assets, ranging from undertaking assessment work at Aikey Brae Stone Circle (Buchan) for improving access, construction of a new shelter for the Pictish symbol stones in Inverurie Old Churchyard (Garioch), to laser scanning and conservation of the Pictish stones collection from Tullich Kirk (Marr).

Total Number of records in Historic Environment Record formerly known as the Sites & Monuments Record Database (KPI No I)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	25,155	25,013
Aberdeen City Council	4,004	3,560
Angus Council	8,021	6,861
Moray Council	7,390	7,369
Total Number of new records added to the Historic Environment Record formerly known as the Sites & Monuments Record Database (KPI No II)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	142	4,429
Aberdeen City Council	444	11
Angus Council	1,160	348
Moray Council	21	62
Total Number of records updated in Historic Environment Record formerly known as the Sites & Monuments Record database (KPI No II)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	2,881	7,860
Aberdeen City Council	2,039	3,390
Angus Council	1,448	1,489
Moray Council	1,486	2,449
Total Number of Historic Environment Management Projects Supported (KPI No III)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	4	8
Aberdeen City Council	1	1

Angus Council	0	1
Moray Council	2	2
Total Funding Contributions to Historic Environment Management Projects (KPI No III)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	£17,675	£18,076
Aberdeen City Council	£2,200	£500
Angus Council	n/a	£500
Moray Council	£200	£3,483
Total Funding Raised Externally by Historic Environment Management Projects (KPI No IV)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	£40,599	£16,299
Aberdeen City Council	£0	£460
Angus Council	n/a	£460
Moray Council	£1,500	£460
Total No of Volunteer Days Created by Historic Environment Management Projects (KPI No V)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	0	0
Aberdeen City Council	0	0
Angus Council	0	0
Moray Council	226	316
Total Economic Value of Volunteer Days Created by Historic Environment Management Projects (KPI No V)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	n/a	n/a
Aberdeen City Council	n/a	n/a
Angus Council	n/a	n/a
Moray Council	£24,516	£34,280

2.0 Archaeology Strategy 2017-20 Aim 2 – Promote and Support Sustainable Development

Provide advice, support and expertise to ensure that conservation and change within the historic environment is managed in a considered, sustainable way, in line with national and local policies.

Overall the number of planning applications dealt with has seen an increase over the last year. Last year monitoring was put in place to record the number of responses that were within the required consultation period. Aberdeenshire at 77.6% was the lowest and had been identified as the key area for improvement in 2018/19. That improvement has been achieved with a response rate within the required time period being increased to 96.5%.

As part of the ongoing work for the next Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City, Angus and Moray Local Development Plans the Archaeology Service has continued to assist the Policy Teams in assessing bid sites for their potential impact on the historic environment, developing policy, and advising on suitable mitigation for future developers.

By far the biggest project that the Archaeology Service has been involved in has been overseeing the mitigation works for the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route/Balmedie to Tippetty Project. The results have been published following the formal opening of the road this year, both in an academic monograph and as a freely available online pdf booklet. In addition to the online version, 750 printed copies of the free booklet celebrating the discoveries was distributed to schools, libraries, councillors and interested groups across Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City.

<i>Up-to-date Local Development Plan Historic Environment Policies (KPI No VI)</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2017/18</i>
Aberdeenshire Council	Y	Y
Aberdeen City Council	Y	Y
Angus Council	Y	Y
Moray Council	Y	Y
<i>Total Number of Planning Applications dealt with (KPI No VII)</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2017/18</i>
Aberdeenshire Council	349	352
Aberdeen City Council	18	31
Angus Council	291	179
Moray Council	210	222
<i>Average Response Time to a Planning Application Consultation or Weekly List (KPI No VII)</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2017/18</i>
Aberdeenshire Council	4.39 days	8.14 days
Aberdeen City Council	5.11 days	3.94 days
Angus Council	4.45 days	6.04 days
Moray Council	4.26 days	5.5 days
<i>Total Percentage of Planning Application Consultations or Weekly Lists responded to within 14 days (KPI No VIII)</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2017/18</i>
Aberdeenshire Council	96.5%	77.6%
Aberdeen City Council	100%	100%
Angus Council	98.6%	89.4%
Moray Council	98.6%	99.9%
<i>Total Number of Archaeological Mitigations put into place (KPI No IX)</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2017/18</i>
Aberdeenshire Council	295	293
Aberdeen City Council	16	14
Angus Council	145	101
Moray Council	107	102

Total Number of Pre-scoping, Masterplan, and Major Pre-Application Consultations dealt with (KPI No X)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	19	35
Aberdeen City Council	1	5
Angus Council	11	10
Moray Council	13	17
Total Percentage of Pre-scoping, Masterplan, and Major Pre-Application Consultations dealt with within 14 days (KPI No XI)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	89.5%	100%
Aberdeen City Council	100%	100%
Angus Council	91%	100%
Moray Council	92%	94%
Total Number of Felling, Forest Plans, and Forestry Applications dealt with (KPI No XII)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	98	104
Aberdeen City Council	6	6
Angus Council	2	8
Moray Council	34	31
Total Percentage of Felling, Forest Plans, and Forestry Applications dealt with within 28 days (KPI No XIII)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	100%	100%
Aberdeen City Council	100%	100%
Angus Council	100%	100%
Moray Council	100%	100%
Total Number of Scottish Rural Development Plan Applications dealt with (KPI No XIV)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	33	24
Aberdeen City Council	0	3
Angus Council	0	0
Moray Council	8	5
Total Percentage of Scottish Rural Development Plan Applications dealt with within 28 days (KPI No XV)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	100%	100%
Aberdeen City Council	n/a	100%
Angus Council	n/a	n/a
Moray Council	100%	100%

Total Number of Utility Applications dealt with (KPI No XVI)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	50	49
Aberdeen City Council	2	2
Angus Council	0	8
Moray Council	13	23
Total Percentage of Utility Applications dealt with within 28 days (KPI No XVII)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	100%	100%
Aberdeen City Council	100%	100%
Angus Council	n/a	100%
Moray Council	100%	100%

3.0 Archaeology Strategy 2017-20 Aim 3 – Enhance Community Learning and Participation

Create and support opportunities for everyone to understand and enjoy the historic environment, and to ensure it is at the heart of community wellbeing and sense of place.

The Archaeology Service continues to develop and support projects that involve local communities. This support has allowed groups to become more self-sufficient in terms of resources, with an upward trend being seen in terms of how much external funding is being raised in response to our own seed funding of projects (a ratio now of circa £6 external funding for every £1 funded).

The most successful projects over the last year has been the continuing 'Mesolithic Deeside' Project which sees ever increasing numbers of volunteers involved in it, and the 'Book of Deer' Project which initially received £1,000 of funding from the Archaeology Service, before going on to receive £10,000 HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) funding.

Total Number of Community Projects Supported (KPI No XVIII)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	9	8
Aberdeen City Council	1	0
Angus Council	0	0
Moray Council	0	2
Total Funding Contributions to Community Projects (KPI No XIX)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	£9,510	£10,235
Aberdeen City Council	£800	£0
Angus Council	n/a	n/a
Moray Council	n/a	£1000

Total Funding Raised Externally by Community Projects (KPI No XX)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	£57,124	£33,450
Aberdeen City Council	£2,900	£0
Angus Council	n/a	£0
Moray Council	n/a	£17,603
Total No of Volunteer Days Created by Community Projects (KPI No XXI)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	2,582	1,435
Aberdeen City Council	57	0
Angus Council	n/a	0
Moray Council	n/a	426
Total Economic Value of Volunteer Days Created by Community Projects (KPI No XXI)	2018/19	2017/18
Aberdeenshire Council	£280,096	£155,452
Aberdeen City Council	£6,183	£0
Angus Council	n/a	£0
Moray Council	n/a	£46,212

4.0 Archaeology Strategy 2017-20 Aim 4 – Promote Aberdeenshire as a Destination

Promote the rich history, heritage and archaeology of the region as a tourist and work destination for all, and to contribute to sustainable economic growth.

The Archaeology Service's online presence continues to grow at a steady rate. Furthermore, the Service continues to deliver an ongoing programme of replacing damaged/outdated information boards for Council owned historic assets.

The Archaeology Service produced and distributed a new Historic Churches trail leaflet to add to the existing Pictish Stones and Stone Circle trail leaflets. The trail highlights 12 of the most interesting and accessible historic churches in Aberdeenshire – 2 from each administrative area. The Service also produced a desktop calendar for 2019 that could also be used as a pocket leaflet of the Historic Churches trail which was distributed to Councillors, the Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Service and Service Managers.

Archaeology Service Website Section Performance Indicators (KPI No XXII)	2018/19	2017/18
Total Number of Users	17,987	16,288
Total Number of Pageviews	90,193	84,311
Total Number of Different Countries users come from	102	97

Social Media Performance Indicators (KPI No XXIII)	2018/19	2017/18
Total Number of Twitter Followers	5,089	4,716
Total Number of SketchFab views (online 3D models of assets)	3,955	2,700
Total Number of Instagram Followers	686	509
Total Number of YouTube Views	62	52
Leaflet Distribution (KPI No XXIV)	2018/19	2017/18
Total Number of Leaflets Distributed	4,100	2,500

5.0 Archaeology Strategy 2017-20 Aim 5 – Share Good Practice, Skills and Knowledge

Support and develop national, regional and local understanding of the historic environment, to continue to provide a shared service to neighbouring local authorities, and to share best practice for management of archaeological sites.

While indicators are not recorded in terms of overall public use of the Service (including telephone calls, emails, visitors to the office, direct messaging via social media) there is a staff perception that such numbers of contacts are continuing to rise.

The Archaeology Service in 2018/19 represented the Council on the following Local and National Boards and Groups, allowing Aberdeenshire to maintain its role as an exemplar Service and helping to establish its approach as best practice at a national level:

- Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO: Scotland) (currently ALGAO UK Vice-Chair)
- Scottish Historic Environment Record Forum
- Scotland's Archaeological Research Framework Advisory Board
- Scotland's Strategic Archaeology Committee
- Aberdeen University Archaeology Department Programme Board

In addition to the formal groups supported above, the Service has also worked in partnership with the principal museums of Aberdeenshire, Moray, Angus, and Aberdeen City, the National Museum of Scotland, Aberdeen University, Reading University, University of Dublin, University of Stirling, University of Bradford, Forestry Commission Scotland, National Trust for Scotland, VisitScotland, Historic Environment Scotland, Police Scotland, and several dozen individual researchers.

Sharing Good Practice, Skills and Knowledge Performance Indicators	2018/19	2017/18
Council is a member of Association Local Government Archaeological Officers: Scotland (KPI XXV)	Y	Y
Shared Services provided to neighbouring local authorities (KPI XXVI)	Y (3 LAs)	Y (3 LAs)
Total number of development management training events delivered (KPI XXVII)	0	1

Total number of attendees at training events delivered (KPI XXVIII)	0	48
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6.0 Archaeology Strategy 2017-20 Aim 6 – Continuous Improvement

Ensure that the Archaeology Team's service is high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

A feedback survey of Aberdeenshire Council's Development Management staff was undertaken in 2018/19 as they represent a core set of customers for the Archaeology Service. The responses were overwhelmingly positive in terms of advice given, quality of advice, the availability and approachability of the staff, and level of satisfaction with their experiences of working with the team.

Continuous Improvement Performance Indicators	2018/19	2017/18
Up-to-date Archaeology Service Action Plan (KPI XXIX)	Y	Y
Completed biennial feedback survey of customers (KPI XXX)	Y	n/a