

BULLETIN TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 18 JUNE 2020

2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT ON ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL'S ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

1 Purpose of the Bulletin

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the activity of the Archaeology Service for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 through the presentation of the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service Annual Report, as shown in **Appendix 1**.

2 Background

- 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 the Planning and Environment Service.
- 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. Furthermore, this 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.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 The Annual Report has been brought to this Committee as it is the policy reporting Committee for the Service in order to inform members of the activity the Archaeology Service has undertaken in relation to the above strategies and frameworks.

3 Discussion

Summary of Annual Report for 2019/20

- 3.1 **Outcome 1 Increased stability of resources:** The Archaeology Service generated a basic income of £60,673 from Shared and Service Level Agreements with Aberdeen City, Moray and Angus Councils. An additional £8,648 was realised from consultancy work. Part of this income was used to wholly fund a 1.0 FTE Historic Environment Records Officer post within the team.

- 3.2 **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 792 Planning Applications (with a response average of 96% within 14 days) and 316 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), a database of all known archaeological sites in the area (currently 46,731, an increase of 5% on the previous year) which underpins all of the above work. During the year, the online version of all four area Historic Environment Records was used by people from 94 different countries.
- 3.3 **Outcome 3 Better protection and management of the historic environment:** The Archaeology Service contributed £24,405 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 £38,731 of external funding. The Service also worked closely with Police Scotland on four cases involving the discovery of human remains of an unknown date.
- 3.4 **Outcome 4 Enhancing community learning and participation:** The Archaeology Service supported 8 community projects which allowed local volunteers, and a further 494 school children, 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 and Bennachie, but also provided opportunities for people to develop new skills and become more active within the area. In Aberdeenshire these projects delivered 2,866 volunteer days, equating to an economic contribution of £310,903 to the local economy.
- 3.5 **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, Instagram, SketchFab and YouTube. An enhanced programme of leaflet production and distribution via a 3rd party company allowed targeting of all accommodation and tourist venues in Aberdeenshire. This saw the successful distribution of 31,845 leaflets, an increase of 677% on the previous year.
- 3.6 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 the new overarching national policy reviews being undertaken by the Scottish Government such as Planning Advice Note 2/2011 'Planning and Archaeology', and National Planning Framework 4. The Archaeology Service is considered a key partner in this work.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 The Bulletin helps deliver Council Priority 1 – Support a strong, sustainable, diverse and successful economy.

The Bulletin helps deliver Council Priority 5 – Encourage active lifestyles and promote well-being with a focus on obesity and mental health.

The Bulletin helps deliver Council Priority 10 – Having the right people, in the right place, doing the right thing, at the right time.

The Bulletin helps deliver Council Priority 11 – Protect our special environment, including tackling climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

4.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply in relation to this Bulletin.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		x	
Staffing		x	
Equalities		x	
Fairer Scotland Duty		x	
Town Centre First		x	
Sustainability		x	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		x	

4.3 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required because this Bulletin is only to inform the Committee on the performance of the Archaeology Service and does not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.

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

4.5 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.

4.6 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.

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this Bulletin and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the Bulletin complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 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 the Bulletin allows scrutiny and review of the activity of the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service.

Stephen Archer
Director of Infrastructure Services

Bulletin prepared by Bruce Mann
Date: 15 April 2020

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service Annual Report 2019/20

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

1 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 Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen is largely the result of including all remaining 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, projects ranged from undertaking forestry felling and vegetation removal at Aikey Brae Stone Circle (Buchan) to help protect the monument and improve access, to an options assessment for the future management of the Pictish carved stones at Rhynie (Marr). Furthermore, a guidance document for the management of lithic scatters was created in a joint project between the University of Aberdeen and the Archaeology Service, resulting in a guidance document which will be adopted as national best practice in Autumn 2020.

<i>Total Number of records in Historic Environment Record formerly known as the Sites & Monuments Record Database (KPI No I)</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2018/19</i>
Aberdeenshire Council	25,810	25,155
Aberdeen City Council	5,176	4,004
Angus Council	8,160	8,021
Moray Council	7,585	7,390
<i>Total Number of new records added to the Historic Environment Record formerly known as the Sites & Monuments Record Database (KPI No II)</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2018/19</i>
Aberdeenshire Council	655	142
Aberdeen City Council	1,172	444
Angus Council	139	1,160
Moray Council	195	21
<i>Total Number of records updated in Historic Environment Record formerly known as the Sites & Monuments Record database (KPI No II)</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2018/19</i>

Aberdeenshire Council	3,597	2,881
Aberdeen City Council	1,906	2,039
Angus Council	2,471	1,448
Moray Council	892	1,486
Total Number of Historic Environment Management Projects Supported (KPI No III)	2019/20	2018/19
Aberdeenshire Council	8	4
Aberdeen City Council	3	1
Angus Council	1	0
Moray Council	1	2
Total Funding Contributions to Historic Environment Management Projects (KPI No III)	2019/20	2018/19
Aberdeenshire Council	£11,151	£17,675
Aberdeen City Council	£9,169	£2,200
Angus Council	£1,085	n/a
Moray Council	£3,000	£200
Total Funding Raised Externally by Historic Environment Management Projects (KPI No IV)	2019/20	2018/19
Aberdeenshire Council	£28,336	£40,599
Aberdeen City Council	£0	£0
Angus Council	£0	n/a
Moray Council	£10,395	£1,500
Total No of Volunteer Days Created by Historic Environment Management Projects (KPI No V)	2019/20	2018/19
Aberdeenshire Council	80	0
Aberdeen City Council	3	0
Angus Council	0	0
Moray Council	10	226
Total Economic Value of Volunteer Days Created by Historic Environment Management Projects (KPI No V)	2019/20	2018/19
Aberdeenshire Council	£8,678	n/a
Aberdeen City Council	£325	n/a
Angus Council	n/a	n/a
Moray Council	£1,085	£24,516

2 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.

While the performance indicators below show an increase in average consultation response times during 2019/20 in most instances, this has coincided with an increase in the number and complexity of applications being dealt within Aberdeenshire especially. Nonetheless, the percentage of applications responded to within the required consultation period remains high, at over 93% in all local authority areas. The slightly reduced average response times are also a reflection of other Council wide project work which has been time consuming for the Service such as the Electronic Document Record Management System. Beyond the planning process, the Service continues to maintain an excellent level of response times across forestry, rural development, and utility work applications.

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.

<i>Up-to-date Local Development Plan Historic Environment Policies (KPI No VI)</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2018/19</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>2019/20</i>	<i>2018/19</i>
Aberdeenshire Council	385	349
Aberdeen City Council	15	18
Angus Council	204	291
Moray Council	188	210
<i>Average Response Time to a Planning Application Consultation or Weekly List (KPI No VII)</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2018/19</i>
Aberdeenshire Council	7.74 days	4.39 days
Aberdeen City Council	4.26 days	5.11 days
Angus Council	8.22 days	4.45 days
Moray Council	7.68 days	4.26 days
<i>Total Percentage of Planning Application Consultations or Weekly Lists responded to within 14 days (KPI No VIII)</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2018/19</i>
Aberdeenshire Council	95.8%	96.5%
Aberdeen City Council	93.3%	100%
Angus Council	95.6%	98.6%
Moray Council	94.7%	98.6%

Total Number of Archaeological Mitigations put into place (KPI No IX)	2019/20	2018/19
Aberdeenshire Council	262	295
Aberdeen City Council	13	16
Angus Council	197	145
Moray Council	78	107

Total Number of Pre-scoping, Masterplan, and Major Pre-Application Consultations dealt with (KPI No X)	2019/20	2018/19
Aberdeenshire Council	14	19
Aberdeen City Council	8	1
Angus Council	9	11
Moray Council	20	13

Total Percentage of Pre-scoping, Masterplan, and Major Pre-Application Consultations dealt with within 14 days (KPI No XI)	2019/20	2018/19
Aberdeenshire Council	100%	89.5%
Aberdeen City Council	100%	100%
Angus Council	100%	91%
Moray Council	90.5%	92%

Total Number of Felling, Forest Plans, and Forestry Applications dealt with (KPI No XII)	2019/20	2018/19
Aberdeenshire Council	76	98
Aberdeen City Council	1	6
Angus Council	14	2
Moray Council	28	34

Total Percentage of Felling, Forest Plans, and Forestry Applications dealt with within 28 days (KPI No XIII)	2019/20	2018/19
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)	2019/20	2018/19
Aberdeenshire Council	37	33
Aberdeen City Council	0	0
Angus Council	2	0
Moray Council	13	8

Total Number of Utility Applications dealt with (KPI No XVI)	2019/20	2018/19
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Aberdeenshire Council	58	50
Aberdeen City Council	6	2
Angus Council	7	0
Moray Council	23	13
Total Percentage of Utility Applications dealt with within 28 days (KPI No XVII)	2019/20	2018/19
Aberdeenshire Council	100%	100%
Aberdeen City Council	100%	100%
Angus Council	100%	n/a
Moray Council	100%	100%

3 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 a trend of external funding to our own seed funding of projects of a ratio of circa £5 external funding for every £1 funded. The most successful projects over the last year have been the continuing 'Mesolithic Deeside' Project, which has seen ever increasing numbers of volunteers involved in it, and the joint work with the Aden Country Park HLF Project, which has seen 494 school children from both primary and secondary levels taking part in archaeological surveys and excavations.

Total Number of Community Projects Supported (KPI No XVIII)	2019/20	2018/19
Aberdeenshire Council	8	9
Aberdeen City Council	0	1
Angus Council	0	0
Moray Council	0	0
Total Funding Contributions to Community Projects (KPI No XIX)	2019/20	2018/19
Aberdeenshire Council	£10,835	£9,510
Aberdeen City Council	n/a	£800
Angus Council	n/a	n/a
Moray Council	n/a	n/a
Total Funding Raised Externally by Community Projects (KPI No XX)	2019/20	2018/19
Aberdeenshire Council	£50,810	£57,124

Aberdeen City Council	n/a	£2,900
Angus Council	n/a	n/a
Moray Council	n/a	n/a
Total No of Volunteer Days Created by Community Projects (KPI No XXI)	2019/20	2018/19
Aberdeenshire Council	2,866	2,582
Aberdeen City Council	n/a	57
Angus Council	n/a	n/a
Moray Council	n/a	n/a
Total Economic Value of Volunteer Days Created by Community Projects (KPI No XXI)	2019/20	2018/19
Aberdeenshire Council	£310,903	£280,096
Aberdeen City Council	n/a	£6,183
Angus Council	n/a	n/a
Moray Council	n/a	n/a

4 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.

For the first time the Service engaged Take One Media to handle the collection and distribution of the archaeology leaflets the team produces, allowing for a significant increase in the number being produced, the number of locations being targeted, and the number being picked up by visitors (there were no returns of unused leaflets from the 26,025 initially provided). In addition, Landmark Press was engaged to distribute a 'bedroom folder' advert for the leaflets in all participating accommodation outlets (over 1,100) within Aberdeenshire, Moray, the Cairngorms National Park, Dundee and Angus, thereby pushing the option to access the content digitally.

The Archaeology Service's online presence continues to grow at a steady rate, with a particularly strong growth in users viewing 3D digital content available via SketchFab, where 3D models of the Tullich Stones have been a popular addition.

Furthermore, the Service continues to deliver an ongoing programme of replacing damaged/outdated information boards for Council owned historic assets and other sites of historical interest. During 2019-20, 15 interpretation boards were produced with 13 of them being installed on site.

Archaeology Service Website Section Performance Indicators (KPI No XXII)	2019/20	2018/19
Total Number of Users	23,533	17,987
Total Number of Pageviews	94,479	90,193

Total Number of Different Countries users come from	94	102
<i>Social Media Performance Indicators (KPI No XXIII)</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2018/19</i>
Total Number of Twitter Followers	5,224	5,089
Total Number of SketchFab views (online 3D models of assets)	6,200	3,955
Total Number of Instagram Followers	797	686
Total Number of YouTube Views	96	62
<i>Leaflet Distribution (KPI No XXIV)</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2018/19</i>
Total Number of Leaflets Distributed	31,845	4,100

5 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 the number of such enquiries are continuing to rise.

The Archaeology Service in 2019/20 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, Treasure Trove Unit, Aberdeen University, Reading University, University of Dublin, University of Stirling, University of Bradford, Forestry and Land Scotland, National Trust for Scotland, VisitScotland, Historic Environment Scotland, Police Scotland, and several dozen individual researchers.

Sharing Good Practice, Skills and Knowledge Performance Indicators	2019/20	2018/19
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)	2	0
Total number of attendees at training events delivered (KPI XXVIII)	18	0

6 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.

Continuous Improvement Performance Indicators	2019/20	2018/19
Up-to-date Archaeology Service Action Plan (KPI XXIX)	Y	Y
Completed biennial feedback survey of customers (KPI XXX)	n/a	Y