

## **BULLETIN TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 17 JUNE 2021**

### **2020/21 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 2020 to 31 March 2021 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 a Service Level Agreement, Angus Council, and via Shared Service Agreements, Aberdeen City Council and Moray 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 2020-23 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 2020/21

- 3.1 Despite the challenges presented by Covid-19 the Archaeology Service has continued, in the last year, to deliver its core business activities without interruption, with the only key impact being the temporary suspension of site visits. The existing robust processes and systems in place, prior to the lockdown, ensured the Service had good business continuity, and allowed the

team to provide ongoing advice and support to critical national infrastructure projects, contractors, and Police Scotland at the height of the restrictions, along with the usual planning and land management consultations. This advice and support continues as restrictions ease, and has expanded to include the usual community groups, local and national organisations, and universities, as and when they resume their normal activities.

- 3.2 **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 £22,341 was realised from consultancy work. Part of this income was used to wholly fund a 1.0 FTE Historic Environment Record Officer post within the team. In March 2021 Moray Council agreed to change from a Service Level Agreement, renewed every three years, to a permanent Shared Service Agreement beginning April 2021.
- 3.3 **Outcome 2 Supporting sustainable development:** During the course of the year, the Archaeology Service monitored all 52 Weekly Planning Lists for each Local Authority. It provided mitigation advice for 673 Planning Applications (with a response average of 98% within 14 days) and 400 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 60,594, an increase of 30% on the previous year). During the year, the online version of all four area Historic Environment Records was used by people from 122 different countries.
- 3.4 **Outcome 3 Better protection and management of the historic environment:** The Archaeology Service contributed £7,720 to projects which enhanced Council owned assets or provided opportunities for better understanding and promotion of the archaeological resource of the region. This funding raised an additional £650 of external funding. Both of these figures are significantly lower than previous years, but they reflect the impact of Covid-19 on project work, in particular community projects.
- 3.5 **Outcome 4 Enhancing community learning and participation:** The Archaeology Service supported 4 community projects, including a contribution of £3,899, a decrease on previous years which again is owing to the impact of Covid-19. Two of the projects supported preparatory work for voluntary groups along Deeside and at Aden Country Park ahead of them undertaking projects once more in late 2021. A further project, 'Strange Sickness', is the development of an online game based around the medieval records for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. All profits go to the Aberdeen Lord Provost's Charitable Trust which is raising funds for those impacted by Covid-19.
- 3.6 **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. While the pandemic stopped the physical programme of leaflet production and

distribution, the Service’s online impact increased as the public turned to digital resources during lockdown. The YouTube channel saw a 490% increase in viewers, while the website saw 67% more users from the previous year.

3.7 At a national level the Archaeology Service has continued to be involved in developing and implementing Scotland’s Archaeology Strategy by being the named local authority representative on Scotland’s Strategic Archaeology Committee. The Service has contributed to the new overarching national policy reviews being undertaken by Historic Environment Scotland, and the review being undertaken by Scottish Government for National Planning Framework 4. The Archaeology Service is considered a key partner in this work. In addition, the Service was a co-author for the new national documents ‘Transport Scotland Guidance Note on Archaeology and Trunk Roads’, NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland’s ‘Guidance on Designating Local Landscape Areas’, and the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers’ ‘Managing Lithic Scatters in Scotland Guidance’ through being a representative on the relevant National Boards and Groups that had input to these publications.

#### 4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

4.1 This Bulletin helps deliver the Strategic Priority “Economy and Enterprise” within the Pillar “Our Economy”, by having the right people, in the right place, at the right time.

The Bulletin helps deliver the Strategic Priority “Health & Wellbeing” within the Pillar “Our People”, by encouraging active lifestyles and promoting well-being.

The Bulletin helps deliver the Strategic Priority “Resilient Communities” within the Pillar “Our Environment”, by addressing issues raised by climate and sustainability.

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

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
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 the 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 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to the on-going delivery of the Archaeology Strategy this matter on a Corporate Level ([Corporate Risk Register](#)):

- *ACORP001 Budget Pressures:* The Archaeology Service has a Service Level Agreement with Angus Council, and Shared Service Agreements with Aberdeen City Council and Moray 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.
- *ACORP002 Changes in government policy, legislation and regulation:* The Council, via its nominated representative within the Archaeology Service, is a member of the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers.
- *ACORP005 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.
- *ACORP006 Reputation management (including social media).* The Archaeology Service promotes the work which it undertakes and engages with communities through social media. This is all undertaken in accordance with the Council's Social Media Procedure.

The following Risks have been identified as relevant to the on-going delivery of the Archaeology Strategy on a Strategic Level ([Directorate Risk Registers](#)):

- *ISSR004 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.

**Alan Wood**  
**Director of Infrastructure Services**  
Bulletin prepared by Bruce Mann, Archaeologist  
26 May 2021

**List of Appendices –**

Appendix 1 – Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Strategy Annual Report 2020/21

## **ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service has the job of understanding, evaluating, safeguarding, and promoting the historic environment within Aberdeenshire and other local authorities (Moray, Angus, Aberdeen City) with which it has an agreement. This involves partnership working across a diverse range of bodies including national agencies, academic institutions, public and private sector bodies, landowners, community groups and individuals. The core of the team's work is based around the sustainable development of the historic environment in the planning process.
- 1.2 The Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Strategy shows where the Archaeology Service clearly delivers, or contributes to, Scottish Government and Aberdeenshire Council Priorities. The Strategy is primarily an Aberdeenshire Council working document to help manage and deliver key objectives of the Archaeology Service. The Strategy also provides opportunities to improve efficiency, participation and collaboration with key stakeholders and partners and embed best practice in the delivery of the Archaeology Service.
- 1.3 The Strategy provides a structured approach to service delivery for the next three years. Through the period of the Strategy there will be a requirement to consider the challenges of our changing environment and the changing needs of our present, and potential, user groups. These challenges will include not only the effects of climate change, but also the necessary reactions to the arrival of Covid-19.
- 1.4 Despite the challenges presented by Covid-19, the Archaeology Service has continued, in the last year, to deliver its core business activities without interruption, with the only key impact being the temporary suspension of site visits. The existing robust systems and processes in place, prior to the lockdown, ensured the Service had good business continuity, and allowed the team to provide ongoing advice and support to critical national infrastructure projects, contractors, and Police Scotland at the height of the restrictions. This advice and support continues as restrictions ease, and has expanded to include the usual community groups, local and national organisations, and universities, as and when they resume their normal activities.

### **2.0 2020-23 Archaeology Strategy Aim 1 – Protect and Manage the Historic Environment**

- 2.1 The outcomes of this aim are to ensure a maintained record of all known archaeological sites, dating between 15,000 BC and 1945 AD, and 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.

- 2.2 The number of recorded sites within the Historic Environment Record database continues to increase, with significant new additions for all four local authority areas. This is a product of targeted work during lockdown to address both the backlog of new sites discovered during developer-led mitigation, academic research excavations, and gaps identified within recorded upstanding vernacular buildings.
- 2.3 The number of projects supported through funding and advice or delivered directly by the Service have been significantly reduced owing to the impact of Covid-19. Following approved expenditure, repairs and improvements were made to Easter Aquhorthies carpark, Garioch, to improve road safety and public access to the adjacent stone-circle. Further works were also undertaken at Aikey Brae stone-circle, Buchan, to improve public access and interpretation of the site. The three other projects involved progressing analysis of previously found artefacts, with the potentially most significant being lithics relating to a site in Bridge of Don, Aberdeen City, collected in the 1950s as part of a school project. This now forms part of a partnership project with the University of Aberdeen and will become, once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, a community project within that part of the City.

<b>Total Number of records in the Historic Environment Record Database (formerly SMR) (API No I)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	34,293	25,810
Aberdeen City Council	6,503	5,176
Angus Council	10,013	8,160
Moray Council	9,785	7,585
<b>Total Number of new records added to the Historic Environment Record Database (formerly SMR) (API No II)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	8,483	655
Aberdeen City Council	1,327	1,172
Angus Council	1,853	139
Moray Council	2,200	195
<b>Total Number of records updated in the Historic Environment Record Database (formerly SMR) (API No II)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	14,021	3,597
Aberdeen City Council	1,910	1,906
Angus Council	3,799	2,471
Moray Council	3,576	892
<b>Total Number of Historic Environment Management Projects Supported (API No III)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	3	8
Aberdeen City Council	2	3
Angus Council	0	1
Moray Council	0	1

<b>Total Funding Contributions to Historic Environment Management Projects (API No III)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	£2,819.80	£11,151
Aberdeen City Council	£4,900	£9,169
Angus Council	£0	£1,085
Moray Council	£0	£3,000
<b>Total Funding Raised Externally by Historic Environment Management Projects (API No IV)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	£250	£28,336
Aberdeen City Council	£400	£0
Angus Council	£0	£0
Moray Council	£0	£10,395
<b>Total No of Volunteer Days Created by Historic Environment Management Projects (API No V)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	1	80
Aberdeen City Council	5	3
Angus Council	0	0
Moray Council	0	10
<b>Total Economic Value of Volunteer Days Created by Historic Environment Management Projects (API No V)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	£91	£8,678
Aberdeen City Council	£455	£325
Angus Council	£0	n/a
Moray Council	£0	£1,085

### **3.0 2020-23 Archaeology Strategy Aim 2 – Promote and Support Sustainable Development**

- 3.1 The outcomes of this aim are to 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.
- 3.2 Overall, the number of planning applications dealt with has seen a significant reduction in Aberdeenshire, assumed largely owing to the impact of Covid-19. The Service continues to respond to consultations in a timely manner, with improvements resulting in 98% of all applications being responded to within 14 days, and an average response time of 7 days. For Aberdeenshire this represents 230 planning applications commented on out of 2,353, or circa 9.8% of the overall total received by the Council.
- 3.3 The input of the Archaeology Service into planning applications does not cease once the initial assessment and mitigation advice is provided and any Conditions are applied by Development Management to the Decision Notice.



The team continues to review and approve each stage of the archaeological mitigation process, from agreeing methodologies with developers and contractors, to overseeing works on site, to overseeing post-excavation analysis and eventual publication. These post-determination works for planning applications are often complicated and can extend to several years of input.

- 3.4 This last year has added new challenges to the support the team provides post-decision, such as ensuring Covid-19 compliant risk assessments and procedures are in place with contractors. Despite the lockdowns imposed under Covid-19 the Service continued to provide support and advice to critical infrastructure projects, ranging from the A96 dualling project through to electricity cable and gas pipeline developments.
- 3.5 During the same period the number of forestry, agri-environment, and utility consultations have increased, with utility companies in particular taking advantage of the lower levels of traffic and population movement to progress planned works. Furthermore, the Archaeology Service has continued to assist council policy teams in preparing the four Local Development Plans, developing policy, and advising on suitable mitigation for future developers.

<b><i>Up-to-date Local Development Plan Historic Environment Policies (API No VI)</i></b>	<b><i>2020/21</i></b>	<b><i>2019/20</i></b>
Aberdeenshire Council	Y	Y
Aberdeen City Council	Y	Y
Angus Council	Y	Y
Moray Council	Y	Y
<b><i>Total Number of Planning Applications dealt with (API No VII)</i></b>	<b><i>2020/21</i></b>	<b><i>2019/20</i></b>
Aberdeenshire Council	230	385
Aberdeen City Council	25	15
Angus Council	204	204
Moray Council	214	188
<b><i>Average Response Time to a Planning Application Consultation or Weekly List (API No VII)</i></b>	<b><i>2020/21</i></b>	<b><i>2019/20</i></b>
Aberdeenshire Council	8.92 days	7.74 days
Aberdeen City Council	2.72 days	4.26 days
Angus Council	8.09 days	8.22 days
Moray Council	8.22 days	7.68 days
<b><i>Total Percentage of Planning Application Consultations or Weekly Lists responded to within 14 days (API No VIII)</i></b>	<b><i>2020/21</i></b>	<b><i>2019/20</i></b>
Aberdeenshire Council	96.52%	95.84%
Aberdeen City Council	100%	93.33%
Angus Council	98.04%	95.59%
Moray Council	99.53%	94.68%
<b><i>Total Number of Archaeological Mitigations put into place (API No IX)</i></b>	<b><i>2020/21</i></b>	<b><i>2019/20</i></b>
Aberdeenshire Council	183	262

Aberdeen City Council	16	13
Angus Council	85	197
Moray Council	87	78
<b>Total Number of Pre-scoping, Masterplan, and Major Pre-Application Consultations dealt with (API No X)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	27	14
Aberdeen City Council	4	8
Angus Council	16	9
Moray Council	18	20
<b>Total Percentage of Pre-scoping, Masterplan, and Major Pre-Application Consultations dealt with within 14 days (API No XI)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	100%	100%
Aberdeen City Council	100%	100%
Angus Council	93.75%	100%
Moray Council	94.44%	90.48%
<b>No of CNPA planning applications dealt with</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	3	0
Aberdeen City Council	n/a	n/a
Angus Council	0	1
Moray Council	2	1
<b>Total Number of Felling, Forest Plans, and Forestry Applications dealt with (API No XII)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	79	76
Aberdeen City Council	1	1
Angus Council	7	14
Moray Council	21	28
<b>Total Percentage of Felling, Forest Plans, and Forestry Applications dealt with within 28 days (API No XIII)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	100%	100%
Aberdeen City Council	100%	100%
Angus Council	100%	100%
Moray Council	100%	100%
<b>Total Number of Scottish Rural Development Plan Applications (woodland creation) dealt with (API No XIV)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	51	37
Aberdeen City Council	0	0
Angus Council	9	2
Moray Council	15	13
<b>Total Percentage of Scottish Rural Development Plan Applications (woodland creation) dealt with within 28 days (API No XV)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>

Aberdeenshire Council	100%	100%
Aberdeen City Council	N/A	N/A
Angus Council	100%	100%
Moray Council	100%	100%
<b>Total Number of Utility Applications dealt with (API No XVI)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	103	58
Aberdeen City Council	20	6
Angus Council	6	7
Moray Council	18	23
<b>Total Percentage of Utility Applications dealt with within 28 days (API No XVII)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	100%	100%
Aberdeen City Council	100%	100%
Angus Council	100%	100%
Moray Council	100%	100%

#### 4.0 2020-23 Archaeology Strategy Aim 3 – Enhance Community Learning and Participation

- 4.1 The outcomes of this aim are to 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.
- 4.2 Of all the work activities undertaken by the Archaeology Service, this one has been the most challenging in the past year as a result of Covid-19. Owing to the restrictions there have effectively been no opportunities for volunteers to take part in projects, even allowing for the outdoor nature of most of them. Support has continued to be given to the ‘Mesolithic Deeside’ Project with funding for analysis of their finds from the start of 2020, and ongoing advice. The group has adapted to lockdowns by developing online content through a dedicated YouTube channel that has attracted thousands of viewers from around the world. They were recognised at the UK 2021 Marsh Awards with a deserved award for ‘Best Volunteer Led Project 2020’.
- 4.3 Another interesting approach to engaging people in a different way has been the development of an online game, ‘Strange Sickness’, based on the real-life medieval plague records for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. The game, led by the University of Aberdeen, has been largely crowd-funded, and all profits go to the City’s Lord Provost’s Charitable Trust which is raising monies for those impacted by Covid-19.

4.4

<b>Total Number of Community Projects Supported (API No XVIII)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	3	8
Aberdeen City Council	1	0
Angus Council	0	0

Moray Council	0	0
<b>Total Funding Contributions to Community Projects (API No XIX)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	£3,510	£10,835
Aberdeen City Council	£389	n/a
Angus Council	£0	n/a
Moray Council	£0	n/a
<b>Total Funding Raised Externally by Community Projects (API No XX)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	£185	£50,810
Aberdeen City Council	£14,111	n/a
Angus Council	£0	n/a
Moray Council	£0	n/a
<b>Total No of Volunteer Days Created by Community Projects (API No XXI)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	4	2,866
Aberdeen City Council	0	n/a
Angus Council	0	n/a
Moray Council	0	n/a
<b>Total Economic Value of Volunteer Days Created by Community Projects (API No XXI)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	£364	£310,903
Aberdeen City Council	0	n/a
Angus Council	0	n/a
Moray Council	0	n/a

## 5.0 2020-23 Archaeology Strategy Aim 4 – Promote Aberdeenshire as a Destination

- 5.1 The outcomes of this aim are to promote the rich history, heritage, and archaeology of the region to those who live and work here already, as a tourist destination for all, and to contribute to sustainable economic growth.
- 5.2 While the physical distribution of leaflets promoting themed trails around Aberdeenshire was suspended owing to the pandemic, along with the programme of replacing outdated or damaged information boards for Council owned historic assets, the Archaeology Service did continue to grow its online presence. As the public turned to digital resources during the lockdowns the Service's YouTube channel saw a 490% increase in viewers, while the website saw 67% more users from the previous year. Of these new website users, 78% of them were first time visitors.

<b>Archaeology Service Website Section Performance Indicators (API No XXII)</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Total Number of Users	39,400	23,533
Total Number of Pageviews	143,060	94,479

Total Number of Different Countries users come from	122	94
<b><i>Social Media Performance Indicators (API No XXIII)</i></b>	<b><i>2020/21</i></b>	<b><i>2019/20</i></b>
Total Number of Twitter Followers	5,483	5,224
Total Number of SketchFab views (online 3D models of assets)	7,600	6,200
Total Number of Instagram Followers	957	797
Total Number of YouTube Views	567	96
<b><i>Leaflet Distribution (API No XXIV)</i></b>	<b><i>2020/21</i></b>	<b><i>2019/20</i></b>
Total Number of Leaflets Distributed	n/a covid	31,845

## 6.0 2020-23 Archaeology Strategy Aim 5 – Share Good Practice, Skills and Knowledge

- 6.1 The outcomes of this aim are to 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 the management of archaeological sites.
- 6.2 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 have continued at the same levels as pre-pandemic with the obvious exception of visitors to the office.
- 6.3 The Archaeology Service in 2020/21 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
  - North East Scotland Heritage Network
- 6.4 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, Forestry and Land Scotland, VisitScotland, Historic Environment Scotland, Police Scotland, and several dozen individual researchers.
- 6.5 At a national level the Archaeology Service has continued to be involved in developing and implementing Scotland's Archaeology Strategy by being the

named local authority representative on Scotland’s Strategic Archaeology Committee. The Service contributed to the new overarching national policy reviews being undertaken by Historic Environment Scotland, and the review being undertaken by Scottish Government for National Planning Framework 4. The Archaeology Service is considered a key partner in this work. In addition, the Service was a co-author for the new national documents ‘Transport Scotland Guidance Note on Archaeology and Trunk Roads’, NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland’s ‘Guidance on Designating Local Landscape Areas’, and the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers’ ‘Managing Lithic Scatters in Scotland Guidance’ through being a representative on the above National Boards and Groups.

6.6 Furthermore, the Service delivered the national project ‘Before the Museum’ which generated an additional £13,115 of income. The project was identified by the Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee (SSAC) as a national priority for addressing specific concerns and issues within the heritage sector. Five workstreams were delivered under the project in 2020-21, all of which aim to provide a stronger bridge between archaeological fieldwork and museums, and in particular commercial archaeological fieldwork. The commercial sector effectively only exists because of the role of local authority archaeologists. As such the Archaeology Service has critical roles in ensuring fairness of approach, the meeting of industry standards, and ensuring public benefit is derived from the work that is generated. The role means local authority archaeologists form the largest critical link between fieldwork and museums and are seen as the best place to implement any changes to the current national processes, guidance and policies, which is why Aberdeenshire was approached to lead the project. The Chair of SSAC noted the project as being “...a power of work...and an astonishing example of partnership working.”

<b><i>Sharing Good Practice, Skills and Knowledge Performance Indicators</i></b>	<b><i>2020/21</i></b>	<b><i>2019/20</i></b>
Council is a member of Association Local Government Archaeological Officers: Scotland (API XXV)	Y	Y
Shared Services provided to neighbouring local authorities (API XXVI)	Y (3 LAs)	Y (3 LAs)
Total number of development management training events delivered (API XXVII)	0	2
Total number of attendees at training events delivered (API XXVIII)	n/a	18

## **7.0 2020-23 Archaeology Strategy Aim 6 – Continuous Improvement**

7.1 The outcomes of this aim are to ensure that the Archaeology team’s service is high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people’s needs.

7.2 The Archaeology Service has continued to review and revise its operational manual and procedures to ensure consistency in approach, and a robust approach to business continuity, an issue which has been brought into sharp



focus following the events of the last year. The biennial customer survey for feedback was sent to Moray Council in May 2020 with a 100% return of “Very Satisfied” across all elements of service provision. In addition, the team also completed a 3-year review of the delivery of the 2017-20 Archaeology Strategy and implemented a new 2020-23 Archaeology Strategy with the two documents being reviewed by the Planning & Environment Service Member Officer Working Group, all six Area Committees, and approved by Infrastructure Services Committee.

- 7.3 During the last year the Service has also undertaken preparatory work for moving its networked filing system to the new Aberdeenshire Records Centre within Office365, and the associated Document Management System for Infrastructure Services in SharePoint. This has involved review and consolidation of several tens of thousands of documents in line with the latest best practice.

<b>Continuous Improvement Performance Indicators</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Up-to-date Archaeology Service Action Plan (API XXIX)	Y	Y
Completed biennial feedback survey of customers (API XXX)	Y (Moray)	n/a

## **8.0 Finance**

- 8.1 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 £22,341 was realised from consultancy work including undertaking HER data extracts and responding to certain forestry and utilities consultations. Part of this income was used to wholly fund a 1.0 FTE HER Officer post within the team. In March 2021 Moray Council agreed to change from a Service Level Agreement with the Archaeology Service, renewed every three years, to a permanent Shared Service Agreement beginning April 2021.
- 8.2 As part of the contribution to resolving the Council’s budgetary pressures owing to Covid-19, non-staffing budget expenditure by the Archaeology Service was restricted to core elements of service delivery, urgent repair works and where works would have a direct positive impact on health and wellbeing. This included a minimal amount reserved for supporting community projects which add value to understanding the historic environment within the area. In total this approach achieved savings of over £44,767 for the Council from the original non-staffing budget allocated to the Archaeology Service.
- 8.3 In line with Infrastructure Services Modernisation Programme the Archaeology Service have been considering ways in which they could change the services which they deliver to work in a more efficient way, to help ensure future service provision with a reduced budget. This has included looking at getting additional Service Level Agreements in place with other organisations and where it is appropriate to charge certain users for services provided. This will continue in

2021/22 with it hoped that some changes can be implemented in the not too distant future.

<b>Total Income from commercial HER Data Extracts</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	£1,608.00	£392.00
Aberdeen City Council	£370.00	£196.00
Angus Council	£692.00	£261.00
Moray Council	£514.00	£927.00
<b>Total income from commercial HER Extracts</b>	<b>£3,184.00</b>	<b>£1,776.00</b>
<b>Total Income from Forestry-related consultations</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	£736.00	£632.00
Aberdeen City Council	£0	£0
Angus Council	£428.00	£81.00
Moray Council	£166.00	£162.00
<b>Total income from Forestry-related consultations</b>	<b>£1,330.00</b>	<b>£875.00</b>
<b>Total Income from Utilities consultations</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Aberdeenshire Council	£2,905.00	£2,916.00
Aberdeen City Council	£315.00	£81.00
Angus Council	£498.00	£567.00
Moray Council	£994.00	£972.00
<b>Total income from Utilities consultations</b>	<b>£4,712.00</b>	<b>£4,536.00</b>
<b>Total Income from consultancy/project work</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
<b>Total income from consultancy/project work</b>	<b>£13,115</b>	<b>£625</b>