



From mountain to sea

# **Aberdeenshire Council**

## **Archaeology Service Strategy**

### **2020-23**

“We will aim to provide the best protection, management and promotion of the historic environment of Aberdeenshire for the benefit of all.”



The Strategy is primarily an Aberdeenshire Council working document to help manage and deliver key priorities of the Archaeology Service for the next three years.

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**Visit** [aberdeenshire.gov.uk/archaeology/](https://aberdeenshire.gov.uk/archaeology/)

# 1 Introduction

From mountain to sea, Aberdeenshire boasts a rich and valuable resource in its historic environment. The archaeological sites, from the unique recumbent stone circles to castles, are internationally recognised for their importance and attract numerous visitors every year. The historic environment is an essential component of the character of Aberdeenshire and helps make it one of the most desirable places to live and visit. It is intrinsic to our sense of place and strong cultural identity. It contributes to our economy and everyday wellbeing.

However, our historic environment is also dynamic and constantly changing through natural processes, development, land management and climate change. The archaeological resource is finite, and as such must be carefully managed in a sustainable way.

## 1.1 Scope of Strategy

The Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service has the job of understanding, evaluating, safeguarding, and promoting the historic environment within Aberdeenshire and other local authorities 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.

This 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.

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. To reflect these changes and challenges, an Annual Action Plan will be prepared which will provide detailed actions on the delivery of the Strategy and reflect the new priorities both at a Council level and beyond, as stated within the Council Plan approved in October 2020.

## 1.2 Aberdeenshire Council's Vision for the Archaeology Service

It is Aberdeenshire Council's vision to be the best area and the best Council in Scotland.

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It is the vision of the Archaeology Service that the benefits gained from Aberdeenshire's unique historic environment should be available to those who live, work in and visit Aberdeenshire, and that the value of these resources, and the need to protect and enhance them for future generations through sustainable management, is 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."*

Careful management of our historic environment provides authentic and attractive places, which in turn increases a community's sense of pride, character and identity. This can lead to positive impacts such as improved wellbeing and community vitality, creating opportunities for increased prosperity through tourism, investment, skills, regeneration, and creativity.

## 2 Resources

Aberdeenshire Council's Archaeology Service is part of the Specialist Services Team within the Planning & Environment Service, Infrastructure Services. The Archaeology Service comprises 3.8 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff made up of 2.2 Archaeologists and 1.6 Historic Environment Record Assistant posts. The service extends beyond Aberdeenshire to serve Moray and Angus Councils via Service Level Agreements, and Aberdeen City Council via a Shared Service Agreement.

The Archaeology Service has an annual budget excluding staffing costs (for 2020-21 this was initially set at £30,700) but through commercial work, Service Level Agreements and other partnership working it generates an additional income. The allocated staffing budget for 2020-21 is £191,340.

In 2019-20 this additional income was £68,685 of which £55,563 (£28,840 income from Service Level Agreements and £26,723 from Shared Service Agreement) offset part of the original budget allocation, and all of the salary and on-costs of the 1.0 Full-time equivalent (FTE) Historic Environment Record Assistant post under the agreement with Aberdeen City Council. The estimated income for 2020-21 is £71,400 for service provision to neighbouring local authorities and day-to-day commercial activity.

Research undertaken in 2019<sup>1</sup> established that on average for every £1 invested into a local authority archaeology service, £15 is generated for the economy. This Strategy takes that research into account with an aim to at least maintain that level of economic return.

Looking ahead future budgets for the Archaeology Service will need to take into consideration the effects of local authority expenditure in dealing with Covid-19. This Strategy has been produced with this in mind, although it is assumed in terms of the staffing budget for the Archaeology Service there are no significant changes planned.

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<sup>1</sup>'Archaeology in Development Management' Report by Landward Ltd, 2019<sup>1</sup>

### 3 Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service Golden Thread

Scottish Government Purpose	To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all, increase wellbeing of people, create sustainable and inclusive growth, reduce inequalities, and give equal importance to economic, environmental, and social progress			
Scotland Performs  Scottish Government National Outcomes (A1)	National Outcome  We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe	National Outcome  We value, enjoy, protect, and enhance our environment	National Outcome  We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely	National Outcome  We are healthy and active
Scottish Government National Plans, Policies & Strategies (A2-4)	A2) Our Place in Time – The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland		A3) National Planning Framework 3	A4) National Tourism Development Framework
	A2a) Historic Environment Policy Scotland	A2b) Scotland’s Historic Environment Data Strategy  A2c) Scotland’s Archaeology Strategy	A3a) Scottish Planning Policy  A3b) Planning Advice Note 2/2011	
Aberdeenshire Council Vision	Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland			
Aberdeenshire Council Plans & Strategies (B1-5)	B1) Aberdeenshire Council Priorities (2020)			
	B3) Aberdeenshire Council Plan  2020-22			
	B2) Local Outcomes Improvement Plan			
	B6) Corporate Asset Management Plan 2015-20 (currently being amended)  B7) Town Centre First Framework			
	B4) Infrastructure Services Delivery Plan  B5) Local Development Plan 2017 / 2021			
Archaeology Service Vision	We will aim to provide the best protection, management, and promotion of the historic environment of Aberdeenshire for the benefit of all.			
Archaeology Strategy (C1)	C1) Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Strategy 2020 – 23			
Archaeology Plans (C1a-b)	C1a) Annual Team Action Plan  C1b) Annual Individual Workplans			

## 4 Archaeology Service Strategy Priorities, Aims, and Objectives

The Archaeology Strategy's aims and team objectives have been drawn together to reflect the strategies, plans and policies which form the 'golden thread' (see Section 3) between Scottish Government outcomes and delivery on the ground. The Strategy's team objectives provide a common framework for a customer and performance focussed service which works in partnership with stakeholders to deliver a high quality, efficient service for best value.

As part of this process key priorities have been identified which not only deliver cross-cutting outcomes over the aims of the Strategy, but which also deliver the most positive impact on the historic environment for the region in line with Aberdeenshire Council's Strategic Priorities which are underpinned by key principles under the three pillars of: Our People, Our Environment and Our Economy.

Section 5 of this Strategy provides the list of key performance indicators the Archaeology Service will use to measure how the core outcomes of the Strategy have been achieved. The Team will use the Strategy and Action Plans to develop individual annual work programmes which will reflect the specific historic environment needs and aspirations of the North East of Scotland.

### 4.1 Key Priorities 2020-23

**Table 1: Key Strategy Priorities 2020-23**

Key Priority	Success Measure	Impact
<b>KP1</b> Increase the positive impacts of the historic environment on people's wellbeing, especially in light of the increased need following the Covid-19 pandemic	Develop a Social Impact Toolkit for archaeology in the planning system	Increased public access to information
	Develop and embed Community Engagement Plans for archaeology in the planning system	Better public understanding of the historic environment
	Aberdeenshire-wide survey to understand importance of the historic environment to communities	Increased wellbeing amongst communities
<b>KP2</b> Improve the archaeological process within major infrastructure projects	Develop and implement best practice guidance for A96 Dualling Project	Better management of the historic environment
		Targeted resourcing
<b>KP3</b> Grow our online promotion of North East Scotland as a destination	Increase online audience by 20%	Increased public access to Information
		Increased public wellbeing
		Promotion of the region

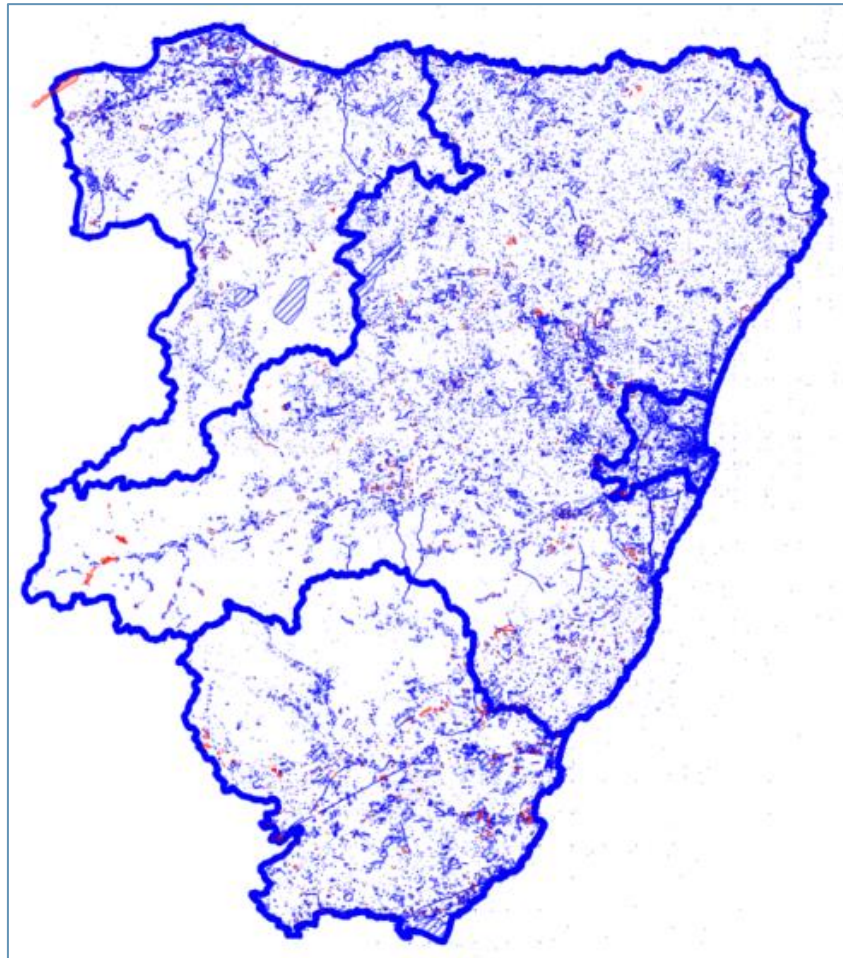
**Note: Social Media accounts and content are managed and delivered by 2 members of the Archaeology Service, without any additional support from internal or external sources.**

## 4.2 Aim 1 – Protect and Manage the Historic Environment

Maintain a record of all known archaeological sites, between 12,500 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.

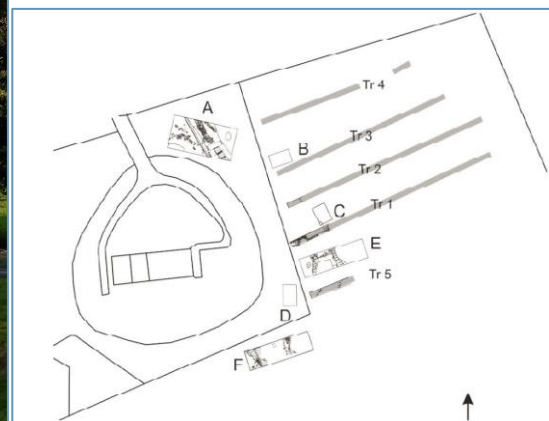
**Table 2: Aim 1 Team Objectives**

<b>Team Objective</b>	<b>Golden Thread (see Section 3 and Key Priorities)</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>1</b> Develop, maintain and update the Historic Environment Record (HER)	A1, A2a, A2b, A2c, A3a, A3b, A4, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B7, KP2, KP3	Greater public access to data Better management of historic environment
<b>2</b> Provide input into historic asset designation process	A2, A2a, A2b, A2c, B3, B7, KP2	Better protection of historic environment
<b>3</b> Develop and support projects that protect and/or increase our understanding of historic assets in the area	A1, A2, A2c, A4, B1, B2, B3, B4, B6, B7, KP1	Better protection of Council owned assets Better management of historic environment
<b>4</b> Provide advice and support for human remains discovery and reporting	A1, A2, A2a, A2c	Better management of historic environment
<b>5</b> Provide advice and support for artefact discovery and reporting	A1, A2, A2a, A2c	Better management of historic environment
<b>6</b> Provide advice and support to Scheduled Monument Consent process	A1, A2, A2a, A3, A3a, A3b, B5, B6, B7	Better informed decision making
<b>7</b> Provide advice and support for sites subject to heritage crime	A1, A2, A2a, A2c	Better management of historic environment
<b>8</b> Provide advice and support for climate change management	A1, A2, A2a, A2c	Better management of historic environment



**Image 1 Above:** All currently known sites in North East Scotland in the Historic Environment Record databases (2020).

**Image 2 Below:** The new shelter at Tullich, Ballater, for the Council owned Pictish symbol stones. The project was delivered in partnership with services across the Council following an expansion of the cemetery which unearthed evidence of Early Medieval activity on site (see adjacent plan), including the discovery of two new cross-incised slabs.





### 4.3 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.

**Table 3: Aim 2 Team Objectives**

<b>Team Objective</b>	<b>Golden Thread (see Section 3 and Key Priorities)</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>9</b> Provide input into national policy and guidance development	A1, A2, A2a, A2b A2c, A3a, A3b, B5, KP1, KP2	Better protection of historic environment Increased sustainable development
<b>10</b> Provide input into Local Development Plan process	A3, A3a, A3b, B5, B7, KP1	Better protection of historic environment Increased sustainable development
<b>11</b> Provide consultation advice and support to the Development Management process	A1, A3, A3a, A3b B5, B7, KP1, KP2	Better management of historic environment Increased sustainable development
<b>12</b> Provide consultation advice and support for forestry applications	A1, A2, A2a	Better management of historic environment Increased sustainable planting
<b>13</b> Provide consultation advice and support for agri-environment applications	A1, A2, A2a	Better management of historic environment Increased sustainable farming
<b>14</b> Provide consultation advice and support for utility applications	A1, A2, A2a, A3b	Better management of historic environment Increased sustainable development
<b>15</b> Provide consultation advice for property enquiries	A1, A2, A2a	Better informed decision making
<b>16</b> Provide training to Council Staff, especially Development Management and Local Members	A1, A2c, A3a, A3b, B4, B5, B6, KP1	Better informed decision making



**Image 3 Above Left:** The 2019 approved masterplan for the M1 site at Cruden Bay.

**Image 4 Above Right:** One of the archaeological contractors excavating the M1 site ahead of development work commencing (© Cameron Archaeology Ltd).



**Image 5 Above:** Overhead view of the prehistoric settlement that was discovered on the M1 site, consisting of at least 23 structures (© Cameron Archaeology Ltd).

#### 4.4 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.

**Table 4: Aim 3 Team Objectives**

Team Objective	Golden Thread (see Section 3 and Key Priorities)	Outcome
<b>17</b> Work in partnership with relevant individuals, groups and organisations	A1, A2, A2c, A4, B1, B2, B3, B4, B7, KP1	Greater community Engagement  Better understanding of the historic environment
<b>18</b> Develop and support projects which increase public participation and enjoyment of the historic environment in the area (both on site and online)	A1, A2, A2c, A4, B1, B2, B3, B4, B6, B7, KP1, KP3	Increased skills learning Increased volunteering opportunities Better understanding of historic environment Increase well-being

#### 4.5 Aim 4 – Promote Aberdeenshire as a Destination

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.

**Table 5: Aim 4 Team Objectives**

Team Objective	Golden Thread (see Section 3 and Key Priorities)	Outcome
<b>19</b> Develop, maintain and update Archaeology section of corporate website and social media presence	A1, A2b, A3b, A4, B1, B2, B3, KP3	Greater public access to Information Promotion of the region Greater community Engagement Increased public awareness and understanding of the historic environment

<b>20</b> Develop promotional material on the historic environment of the area, focussing on tourism opportunities	A1, A4, B1, B2, B3, B7, KP3	Promotion of the region Increased economic activity
<b>21</b> Participate in relevant promotional events which highlight the historic environment of the area	A1, A4, B1, B2, B3, B7, KP1, KP2, KP3	Promotion of the region Increased economic activity
<b>22</b> Work in partnership with relevant individuals, groups and organisations	A1, A2, A2c, A4 B1, B2, B3, B4, B7, KP1, KP2, KP3	Greater community engagement Increased joint project delivery

**Note: Social Media accounts and content are managed and delivered by 2 members of the Archaeology Service, without any additional support from internal or external sources.**





**Image 6 Above:** Aikey Brae stone circle, a Council owned asset.



**Image 7 Above:** Aikey Brae is one of ten stone-circles promoted by the Archaeology Service as a visitor attraction in Aberdeenshire. The Stone Circle Trail was the first in a set of themed leaflets produced by the Service.

#### 4.6 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.

**Table 6: Aim 5 Team Objectives**

Team Objective	Golden Thread (see Section 3 and Key Priorities)	Outcome
<b>23</b> Work in partnership with relevant individuals, groups and organisations at national, regional and local level to share knowledge and best practice	A1, A2, A2c, A4, B1, B2, B3, B4, B6, B7, KP1, KP2	Maintain Aberdeenshire as Best Practice example for Sector  Increased joint project delivery  Continuous improvement
<b>24</b> Establish and explore opportunities for sharing services with other local authorities	A1, A2	Consistent approach across local authorities  Best value  Secure funding streams
<b>25</b> Provide information and advice to colleagues, government, charitable, private, commercial and public individuals and organisations on the historic environment	A1, A2, A2c, A3, A4, B1, B2, B4, B5, B7, KP1, KP2, KP3	Better understanding of historic environment  Better informed decision making  Better management of historic environment

## 4.7 Aim 6 – Continuous Improvement

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

**Table 7: Aim 6 Team Objectives**

<b>Team Objective</b>	<b>Golden Thread (see Section 3 and Key Priorities)</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>26</b> Develop and maintain a Team Strategy and Action Plan	C1, C1a, C1b	Efficient working
<b>27</b> Ensure staff CPD requirements met as required by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA)	A2a, A3b, C1, C1b	Professional standards are maintained
<b>28</b> Maintain Key Performance Indicators	A2, B5, C1	Monitored work outcomes
<b>29</b> Produce performance reports	A2, B4, C1	Monitored work outcomes
<b>30</b> Maintain continuous service improvement	B1, B3, B4, KP2, KP3	Continuous improvement
<b>31</b> Explore opportunities to increase income for the Service	B1, B3, B4	Service expenditure reduced

## **5 Annual Performance Indicators**

### **5.1 Aim 1 – Protect and Manage the Historic Environment**

- I. Total number of records in the Historic Environment Record
- II. Total number of new and updated records in the Historic Environment Record
- III. Total funding contributions to projects
- IV. Total external funding raised by projects
- V. Total number of volunteer days created and their economic value

### **5.2 Aim 2 – Promote and Support Sustainable Development**

- VI. Up-to-date archaeology policies within the Local Development Plans
- VII. Total number and average response time to Planning Application Consultations
- VIII. Total percentage of Planning Application consultations responded to within 14 days
- IX. Total number of archaeological mitigations put into place
- X. Total number of pre-scoping, masterplan and major pre-application dealt with
- XI. Total percentage of pre-scoping, masterplan and major pre-application consultations responded to within 14 days
- XII. Total number of Felling/Forestry Application consultations dealt with
- XIII. Average response time and percentage of Felling/Forestry consultations responded to within 28 days
- XIV. Total number of Scottish Rural Development Plan Application consultations dealt with
- XV. Average response time and percentage of Scottish Rural Development Plan consultations responded to within 28 days
- XVI. Total number of Utility Application consultations dealt with
- XVII. Total percentage of Utility Application consultations responded to within 28 days

### **5.3 Aim 3 – Enhance Community Learning and Participation**

- XVIII. Total number of community projects supported
  - XIX. Total funding contributions to projects
  - XX. Total external funding raised by projects
  - XXI. Total number of volunteer days created and their economic value
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#### **5.4 Aim 4 – Promote Aberdeenshire as a Destination**

XXII. Total number of website users and countries they are from

XXIII. Total number of social media followers/views

XXIV. Total number of leaflets distributed

#### **5.5 Aim 5 – Share Good Practice, Skills and Knowledge**

XXV. Council is a member of Association Local Government Archaeological Officers: Scotland

XXVI. Shared Services provided to neighbouring local authorities

XXVII. Total number of training events delivered

XXVIII. Total number of attendees at training events delivered

#### **5.6 Aim 6 – Continuous Improvement**

XXIX. Up-to-date Archaeology Service Action Plan

XXX. Complete biennial feedback survey of customers