

Draft Council Priorities

In May 2017 Aberdeenshire elected its 70 councillors, and with that a new council term began. That provided an opportunity to develop a new set of council priorities.

New priorities mean direction. Once the priorities are agreed, they form the Council Plan, a document which gives Members, council staff, residents, businesses and our partners a clear understanding of what the key issues for Aberdeenshire are and will be the focus of long term action.

Officers have undertaken data collection and analysis, resulting in the creation of a "Strategic Assessment", a document which identifies the issues that are affecting, or could affect, Aberdeenshire over the coming years. We took that data and fact-based research, along with political direction from the manifesto of the Administration of Aberdeenshire Council, to develop these draft priorities. We need your ideas and views to make sure we are on the right track.

Subject to approval, the strategic priorities will form the basis of the Council Plan which will run from 2017 up to 2022. Aberdeenshire Council will use this as a way of setting direction, working out what is important and will budget accordingly.

As a result of the work so far, four themes have been identified, each with priorities attached to them.

Successful and Sustainable Communities

- Support a strong and successful economy

Making sure our economy stays strong

- Connected communities – transport and digital

Ensuring Aberdeenshire has appropriate transport and digital links to support people and businesses.

- Promote sustainable development within planning policy

When we plan developments such as community spaces or business parks, they need to support the wider community.

- Protect and enhance our natural landscape and public open space, protect and enhance our built and historic environment

Doing everything to make the very most of our environment

Aspirational People

- Raising levels of attainment, ensuring equity and excellence

Making sure pupils leave school having achieved the very best, no matter what their background.

- Deliver increased hours of pre-school childcare and education in a range of flexible settings

Increasing the number of free hours that children can get in nursery each week, and making the nursery system more flexible.

- Work with parents and carers to support children through every stage of their educational journey

Helping parents and carers to contribute to their children's learning

- Build a sustainable workforce through an innovative teacher recruitment strategy

Making sure we attract and keep excellent teachers

- Achieve positive destinations for all our young people

Making sure that all school leavers have the opportunity to go into a job, training or further education

- Address child and young people health issues, based principally on obesity and mental health

Supporting schools and the wider community to tackle mental health and obesity

- Promote lifelong learning

Ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to learn new skills, no matter what age they are

- Celebrate the work of volunteers

We will make our volunteers the 'stars' of their communities

- Encourage active lifestyles

We want to make sure that everyone has access to exercise and places that they can be more active

Caring for Communities

- Continued support for health and social care strategic plan

Our Health and Social Care plan, which focusses on person-centred care, sets out how we will deliver care where it is needed.

- Enabling the provision of appropriate housing

Making sure Aberdeenshire has a good supply of affordable housing

- Partnership working to tackle the causal factors of deprivation

Tackling poverty by working with experts to work out what is really causing the poverty in the first place.

- Support delivery of the Local Outcome Improvement Plans

Tackling the identified issues at a local level (Alcohol, Child Poverty & areas of inequality)

Public Service Excellence

- Long term, responsible financial planning

Making sure that the right priorities have the right financial support in place for the coming years

- Innovation in delivering council services

Finding new and different ways to do things

- Good governance and local scrutiny

We will plan, consult and check appropriately before taking decisions

- Enabled and participating communities

People in all our communities will be empowered to have their say on what we are doing, and where we can work together

- Manage assets that maximise benefits for communities

To ensure that our buildings (schools, care homes, community centres) are run for the benefit of our communities, in the most cost effective way

- The right people in the right places doing the right things

We will make sure that we have staff in the places that they need to be, doing the things that make a difference

- Minimising Aberdeenshire's carbon footprint

In everything we do we will make sure we are reducing our impact on the environment.

We will, of course, continue to do everything required of us, in terms of our duties and responsibilities. Focussing on dealing with the above issues will not stop us from delivering essential front-line services. However, this could support a change in

how we provide those services in new and better ways. The priorities give us direction to make clear exactly what sort of council we want to be, and you need us to be.

With all that in mind, what do you think? What does this mean for your town, your street or your home? How does this translate locally? We are keen to hear what the draft priorities mean for you. We also really want to get your views on the opportunities that these present.

There are opportunities to make your views known either face to face or digitally. Or both.

We will be reporting the results back to a full meeting of Aberdeenshire Council in November, posting the results online and ensuring that the results are passed back through each of the face-to-face sessions.