

Macduff Development Partnership

Meeting Agenda

Wednesday 10th May 10am – 11.30am

Attendees

Councillor Mark Findlater – **Leader**, Aberdeenshire Council

Councillor Ross Cassie

Councillor Richard Menard

Christine Webster (**Chair**), Place Economy Team Manager, Aberdeenshire Council

Suzanne Robertson, Regeneration Executive, Aberdeenshire Council

Jamie Wilkinson, Investments & Projects Executive, Aberdeenshire Council

Wincenty Sosna, Project Coordinator, Friends of Tarlair Community Group.

Nicola Twine, Senior Project Officer, NESCAN Hub.

Jane Emery, Area Project Officer, Aberdeenshire Council

Elaine Sinclair, Community Planning Officer, Aberdeenshire Council

Saskia Gibbon, Team Manager, Communities Wellbeing & Partnership, Aberdeenshire Council

Claire Matthews, Aquarium Manager, Communities Wellbeing & Partnership, Aberdeenshire Council

Duncan Mackie, Area Harbourmaster North, Aberdeenshire Council

John Watt, Director, Macduff Shipyards

Tim Dring, Project Assistant, Regeneration & Town Centres, Aberdeenshire Council (**NOTE**)

Apologies

Simon Jessel, Principal Officer Harbours, Aberdeenshire Council

Christine Wright, Senior Tourism Development Executive, Visit Aberdeenshire

Angela Keith, Area Manager, Banff & Buchan, Aberdeenshire Council

Wayne Stewart, The Knowes Hotel, Macduff

Debbie Robertson, Town Centres Project Office, Banff & Macduff, Aberdeenshire Council

1	Welcome & Introductions (apologies)	CW
	<p>CW opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.</p> <p>Apologies received from Simon Jessel, Christina Wright, Angela Keith, Debbie Robertson, Wayne Stewart.</p> <p>CW provided background information on the partnership noting transitional plans to a wider Place Strategy later in the year. CW added that the partnership was about collaboration aiming to achieve continued success for Macduff.</p> <p>Agreement made for an Officer to remain Chair of the partnership going forward.</p>	

2	<p>Regeneration Update:</p> <p>A) Financial Update (excel) Update Pg 1 Financial update & Pg 2 Activity Update</p> <p>B) Updated Regeneration Action Plan</p>	SR
	<p>SR circulated papers in advance of meeting. SR also noted that budgets are indicative and be flexible to suit circumstances and development opportunities. Update on Regeneration Action Plan also provided.</p> <p>SR provided an update on the procurement development officer's role. Three procurement development events were held with the Banff & Macduff event being hosted at the Fife Lodge. The business tended to be micro and small enterprises with fewer than 50 employees. The first three events focused on Business support available from partners, the role of the procurement development officer, the role of community wealth building, procurement and shared service overview and live tender opportunities. A procurement development officer has now been recruited and started at the end of March (Julie McLean). A 90-day plan has been developed which focuses on business engagement in the north using future and live tender opportunities. This will be shared with partners as soon as the details are finalised. Positive feedback on public sector procurement received.</p> <p>The Six-monthly update will be reported to area committee Tuesday 23rd May. Penultimate update on Regeneration Action Plans to be presented later this year or in early 2024, to be aligned with the implementation of the proposed Place Strategy.</p>	
3	<p>Tourism Development Macduff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Friends of Tarlair Project Update (WS) - Macduff Aquarium Extension Project Update (LLA/SG) 	WS LLA/SG
	<p>Friends of Tarlair (FOT) Project Update</p> <p>WS provided an overview of the Friends of Tarlair 'pavilion' project to the group, noting the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VG Willox have now been appointed for the build. • First site meeting held on 9 May with sub-contractors. • Discussed boundary and site plans, adding some concerns highlighted around boundary line which requires updating. • Area much larger than the site plan and number of challenges emerging over creation of safe working zone around the pavilion. • Few design issues e.g., balcony and the discovery of cracked / compromised concrete when pavilion opened. • In summary, good meeting, some challenges, progress to be monitored closely. <p>CLlr Cassie questioned if there is likely to be financial pressures as the build progresses, specifically relating to the concrete issues. WS provided a detailed description of the issues and the process for getting this repaired. Further work to do on this complex matter.</p>	

	<p>JW added there is a large area of land which was fenced off when the sewage plant was being constructed, noting it's still sealed off. Due to the size of this area the fence could be moved back to create additional car parking.</p> <p><u>Action Point – SR to investigate this and provide update at next meeting.</u></p> <p>CLlr Findlater noted two points. Agreed with JE that it's important for the coastal paths to be connected. JE confirmed work is underway and will link in with WS. Also, raised the concern over issues with stagnant water. WC responded by saying to his mind it's not stagnant due to fish being present. However, in times of heavy rain there may be issues with flooding.</p> <p>CLlr Menard asked if there was a Plan B from a financial perspective. WS responded by stating there is a small contingency plan and some savings have been identified on items such as the windows. WS also added that when additional expenditure is highlighted, it is noted and cost saving measures are discussed with the architect.</p> <p>JE confirmed to the group -for the avoidance of doubt- the FoT group had only taken on the pavilion under the Asset Transfer Process. They've not taken on the entire site.</p> <p>Macduff Aquarium Extension Project Update</p> <p>SG provided an update to the group on the Macduff Aquarium project. Combined project with PH Cultural Quarter. Aims to enhance the aquarium. Not based on an entire rebuild so important to be clear in future communications and publicity around this project. Key features to include extension, classroom learning area, community space and overall improved customer experience. Café/restaurant to be outsourced opportunity for local businesses. Outdoor element equally important to develop a stronger sense of place for the area. Project team in place. Added complexity will be managing the refit whilst ensuring the wellbeing of the live animals. Engagement plan being designed currently with Council comms team taking the lead. Public engagement planned for June. This project has close links with the Tarlair development project with lots of integration, with a keenness to maximise growth opportunities. Closure date for refit work not confirmed. Noted it is a very tight timeline, aim to complete Spring 2025.</p> <p><u>Action Point – SRob to take tourism topic back for discussion. Separate session to be planned with Visit Aberdeenshire.</u></p> <p>The team need to do some mapping of existing hospitality offerings in Macduff/wider area to understand potential opportunities, displacement and/or variant offerings. This work is being led by MMA project team with input from partners.</p> <p>CLlr Findlater noted these two projects are very exciting and represents a great opportunity to expand and increase the tourism offer.</p>	
4	<p>NESCAN (Northeast Climate Action Network). Shared energy schemes (presentation attached for information)</p>	NT

	<p>NESCAN has been in existence since end of 2021 and currently has ten members of staff. Vision and aims are to create a sustainable Northeast Scotland with connected, empowered active communities at its heart.</p> <p>3 Key themes – Community Development, Green Participatory Budgeting and Northeast Just Transition communities Project. Some community groups have been successful in developing shared energy schemes such as Udney community Trust. NESCAN are happy to offer support, advice and guidance and signpost accordingly.</p> <p>Large piece of work is the multiyear partnership bid, NE JT Comm Project. Trying to get people engaged with the programme and not just the ballot box. This is a research project, empowering them to train and upskill themselves, also building a DIY package to help communities raise their capacity.</p> <p>NT asked the group about what they were hearing on Shared Energy Schemes and what would the in-roads look like? ES commented that there could be link to Banff Academy with Project Based Learning. SR asked if an event in Banff & Macduff could be held to allow the community to hear more about NESCAN and discuss their ideas. NT confirmed they could host an event with partner.</p> <p><u>Action Point – SRob to connect Elaine Sinclair and Nicola Twine. And Lucy Hogan from Banff Academy.</u></p> <p><u>Action Point - NESCAN to host an event on ‘Knowledge into Action,’ for the Banff & Macduff area</u></p> <p>Would be keen to link up with Banff Academy so not a cold introduction. JE commented she could support with community groups and organisation link ups also. SRob added this could also support with the biodiversity links.</p> <p>JW added that additional training / education is required for the children of today. JE commented that the Waste and Environment Team have already started a piece of work on a ‘reuse network’ and are currently developing a pilot project.</p> <p>Cllr Findlater requested additional success stories from existing Shared Energy Schemes.</p> <p><u>Action Point – NT to provide Case Studies to TD to be circulated.</u></p> <p><u>Action Point – all partners to forward names of any formal or informal groups to Suzanne Robertson so these can be shared with NESCAN.</u></p>	
6	<p>Macduff Harbour update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Pier Electrics (UK Seafood Infrastructure Fund) • Marine Fund Scotland project opportunities • Harbour discussion & immediate priorities 	JW, DM, JW

Funding application submitted to UK Seafood Infrastructure Fund for North Pier Electrification February 2023. Outcome expected over coming weeks. Next round from UK Seafood Fund expected to be focussed on innovation rather than infrastructure projects. Second round of Marine Fund Scotland should become available later this year.

A contract has been awarded to create development plans for seven Aberdeenshire owned harbours. - The plans will act as a blueprint for future development and operation of the harbour and identify opportunities for growth. They will offer a robust economic assessment of investment opportunities and new business potential. Preferred bidder identified which is likely to attract significant consultation on how harbours can develop their working practices with local communities across the region.

DM noted that Macduff doesn't have a clear vision for the harbours. Hopefully, the report will deliver a clearer path of the future. JW noted this is part of the role of the consultant over the 6 months.

SRob are going to set up a working group to highlight Macduff product and servicing offer to include as part of Aberdeenshire prospectus product and servicing offer. Invest Aberdeen website. Cllr Menard asked about fish markets and what is happening? JW confirmed that a feasibility study had been completed last year the initial finding of that report was that a fish market wasn't viable at that moment in time. Continued investment is planned over the next 5 years with a view to opening the fish market, or even operate a hybrid model. Nothing ruled out at this stage.

DM also noted concerns on landing fees at Macduff, currently 2.5%, then having to pay transport costs to move the fish to Peterhead Fish Market, then additional charges on consigning fish there at a rate of 2%. This makes landing fish at Macduff non-viable. Clear vision and strategy are needed.

J Watt added that the electrification of the north pier harbour is the right course of action to take going forward. Plans are good but the resource needs to be made available. The project could double the capacity of the harbour. JW also noted the disconnect between the harbours team and the administration side of the shipyard. DM raised concern regarding the availability of spares and maintaining harbour equipment to prevent down time.

CW suggested this is subject to be taken offline. SRob to discuss internally across Officer groups.

DM wanted to see more landings at Macduff, seeing all the fishing boats off the coastline with only one landing in Macduff. Cllr Menard stated a 'hook' is needed, and suggested a significant reduction of landing charges to 0%? Shetland are actively marketing their harbours and Macduff should be doing the same. A Commercial Manager is needed like Fraserburgh. Elected Members set the landing fees.

Cllr Findlater added this is a question for Economic Development. Other harbours have Commercial Managers, and we need to make Macduff more commercially viable in terms of fishing. Is there anything else that could be done to incentivise this?

	<p>John Watt added there are still concerns over the depth of the harbour but also importantly the width of boats wanting to land. Some just get through. Is there an opportunity to review the commercial rates charged? JW raised the point that all boats are charged the same commercial rate regardless of risk e.g., higher insurance risk with newer larger boats is there is an opportunity to review this.</p> <p>Councillor Findlater requested that Macduff is included in the Regional Economic Strategy.</p> <p>CW closed the meeting at 12pm.</p>	
7	<p>Dates for 2023 meetings</p> <p>27th September</p>	All

Approved