



# Community Planning Aberdeen

<b>Progress Report</b>	7.1 Redesign of the Senior Phase Increase the number of accredited courses directly associated with growth areas by 7% by 2023.
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<b>Governance Group</b>	CPA Board – 15 <sup>th</sup> February 2023

## Purpose of the Report

This report presents the results of the LOIP Improvement Project Aim to *increase the number of accredited courses directly associated with growth areas by 7% by 2023* and seeks approval to end the project.

## Summary of Key Information

### 1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The impact of Covid-19 has demonstrated the vulnerability of our economy and the pandemic has accelerated workplace changes in a speed and manner we could never have envisaged. It is clear that the world of work has fundamentally changed and that school leavers will be facing a different workplace in the future. We can anticipate that in addition to job specific skills, young people and adults alike will need to have the ability to learn and update skills throughout their life so that they are able to take their place in an increasingly complex and competitive economic landscape.
- 1.2 Nationally, the Scottish Government has identified key sectors that have the potential to make Scotland more economically competitive. Locally, the Regional Economic Strategy outlines key growth sectors for the region to make Aberdeen more economically competitive. These include: Energy/Oil and Gas; Food, Drink and primary industries; Tourism, Life Sciences, Digital and Entrepreneurship. Additionally, we know that there are also growth opportunities in Health and Social Care and Early Learning and Childcare. Opportunities within construction are also evident given the infrastructure projects planned within our Economic Strategy.
- 1.3 In order to grow, these sectors need to have the right elements in place. A key element is a supply of people with the right skills and qualifications, and ongoing upskilling and future focused leadership within the sectors.

- 1.4 There is widespread agreement that school leavers over the next few years will be more negatively impacted than their peers who left school pre-lockdown. There are some groups of young people who will be impacted more than others. These include:
- Those who are disabled as a result of less extensive pathways being available to support transition and employment opportunities
  - Girls who are most likely to leave school and take up relatively low skilled jobs in sectors which have diminished
  - Those living in poverty as levels of poverty and all of the risk associated with living in poverty will have been exacerbated by the pandemic
  - Those who are people from ethnic minority communities, including Gypsy/Travellers and European minorities – a community more likely to be unemployed, on zero-hour contracts and occupying low paid and in ‘at risk’ roles
  - Care Experienced Young People who are already at a disadvantage in accessing employment, training, etc and sustaining that. There is a risk that this group will be pushed further down the labour queues.
- 1.5 Whilst other improvement aims are looking at specific improvements to support the impact experienced by the groups above, this aim looked at improving the number of accredited courses directly associated with growth areas.

## **2. IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AIM**

- 2.1 Against this background, in August 2021 the CPA Board approved the [project charter](#) for the initiation of an improvement project which aimed to Increase the number of accredited courses directly associated with growth areas by 7% by 2023.
- 2.2 Successfully achieving this aim would demonstrate that there was an impact being seen in changing the Senior Phase curriculum to meet the needs of the local economy through better alignment to growth sector industries. This wouldn't need to demonstrate the end of the journey, but signify an important milestone.

## **3. WHAT CHANGES DID WE MAKE?**

- 3.1 The multi-agency project team made the following changes:
- a. A new website ABZ Works was introduced in September 2021 to provide young people and families in the North-East of Scotland with direct information on growth-sector industries. The launch of the ABZ Works website provided access to a one-stop-shop online resource, easily accessible and available to a wide range of young people in school and post school. It provided information to all groups including those groups of young people who have been impacted more than others.
  - b. A Learner Pathway event was launched in June 2021 and ran for two years as an induction event for all S5 and S6 young people in Aberdeen City. Lift Off 2021 and Lift Off and Grow 2022 events provided a two-day induction experience for all senior phase students prior to starting their new NQ

courses. The two induction days were designed as an opportunity to switch the narrative to a much more positive tone and highlight the opportunities that are out there for our young people. The events were a collaborative effort involving Skills Development Scotland, City Growth, DYWNE, central officers and school lead staff and with other partners involved as key note speakers. These events which took place in June at the outset of a new academic session, underlined links between courses and growth-sector industries.

- c. An Aberdeen City Skills Framework has been launched to provide a foundational understanding of skills language for young people and staff to be used within the school community. This framework now forms part of a suite of quality improvement documents used routinely by schools. A skills steering group was introduced comprising a group of primary and secondary schools, members of the central team and partners Skills Development Scotland.

#### 4 HAVE OUR CHANGES RESULTED IN IMPROVEMENT?

- 4.1 From the time of measurement, there has been an increase in the number of certificated courses offered across Aberdeen City secondary schools which align with growth sector areas. In 2019-20, 37 growth sector aligned courses (out of a total of 89) were offered across secondary schools in the authority and by 2021-22, this had grown to 54 growth sector aligned courses out of a possible 109. This means that young people in the authority have access to more courses (meaning more available course places) with economic relevance to growth sector areas. Based on this improvement, the aim has been achieved and surpassed with an 8% increase in growth sector courses as shown in the chart below.



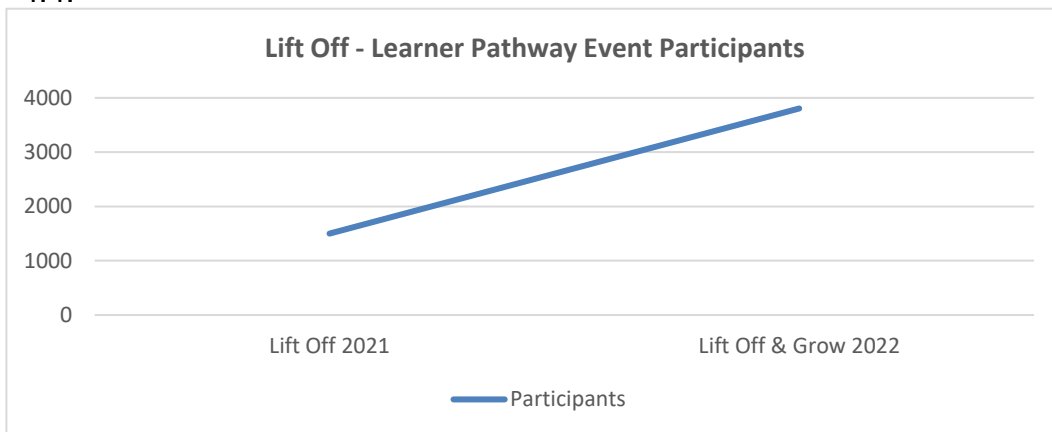
Increase in Growth Sector Courses				
Year	Total	Growth	Percentage	Change
2019-20 (Baseline)	89	37	41.6	
2020-21	81	35	43.2	
2021-22	109	54	49.5	8.0

- 4.2 Individual school course choice will offer courses in 2023-24 that link to growth sectors of Financial Services, Life Sciences, Digital, Construction, Tourism & Hospitality and Energy.

4.3 The change ideas listed at section 3 supported achievement of the aim, namely:

#### Lift Off

4.4 The Lift Off event was first held in 2021 virtually with 1500 participants, the event was then held again in 2022 and saw a 154% increase in participants. The outcomes from both events were positive and were captured in the [2021](#) outcomes report and comments from delegates for 2022 contained in section 4.4.



4.5 The Lift off events were well received with young people providing feedback such as:

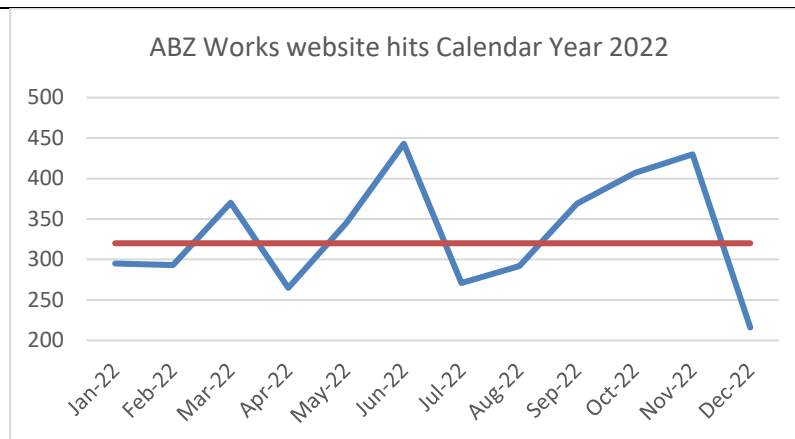
*'It was good to gain a sense of the skills that are generally required to work in these industries.'*

*'The talks helped to motivate me and told me what to strive for in the future.'*

*'Knowing the things that people did and what skills and qualities they needed to develop in order to get where they wanted to be was really helpful.'*

#### ABZ Works

4.6 The ABZ Works website is now an established tool used both by schools and employability teams to support increasing understanding of the opportunities that exist for young people moving into the world of work, and also the growth-sector related opportunities that exist in the North-East of Scotland. The site will be further developed to incorporate opportunities available through ABZ Campus. The site has shown steady usage (see data below) with a total 3996 hits in 2022. The months where website hits have fallen below the median align with the school holiday periods. Schools have reported the benefits of a one-stop show for supporting and referring young people to in order to access all employability information. Given the success of the website to date, and following review of the content and feedback from users, the site will now be further developed as described at section 8. The content and usage of the site remains under regular review to ensure that the site is being used and providing content required.



### Aberdeen City Skills Framework

- 4.7 An Aberdeen City Skills Framework has been created and this now completes an important suite of quality improvement documents available to be actively used by all schools. This framework will continue to shape the skills agenda across the local authority supported by a multi-agency steering group comprising local authority and Skills Development Scotland personnel. This steering group has used the framework to organise professional learning activities within identified schools to promote particular aspects of the language of skills. The Framework ensures all schools are aware of the skills needs and emerging growth sector industries and that courses are available as appropriate to support young people have the skills and qualifications required.

## **5 HOW WILL WE SUSTAIN THESE IMPROVEMENTS?**

- 5.1 This 8% improvement is very much seen as a first step on the journey to broadening the senior phase curriculum and aligning it with growth-sector industries. The changes that have been tested to date are now embedded as business as usual. As well as the embedding of the changes tested by this project, a major new initiative is to be launched in June 2023 called ABZ Campus which is to support the sustainment of the improvement achieved to date to further develop a link between curriculum and growth sector industries in Aberdeen City, and a chance to deepen partnership working with further, higher education and local industry. 45 courses will be offered through a bespoke application portal, with partnership engagement from Skills Development Scotland, North-East Scotland College, and a range of other delivery partners. This launch will be a continued sign of improvement with strategic plans already forming around the further developments for Phase 2 in 2024/25. This will include developing further employability places, creating three hub localities for course offers and beginning to create a regional offer with partners in Aberdeenshire Council.
- 5.2 Please find below a summary of work in progress for session 2023-24 which will serve to build upon much of the work described in the 7.1 Project. The finalised ABZ Course Guide will shortly appear in the ABZ Campus pages of the ABZ Works website, but has been included as an appendix for ease of access.

Total number of ABZ Campus Courses: **40**  
Total number of available student places: **930**  
Number of locations for course delivery: **12**  
Delivery Partners (not including schools): **6**  
Course Choice opens on: **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023**  
Percentage of ABZ Campus Courses linked to growth sector: **82.5%**  
*Financial & Business Services 12.5%*  
*Life Sciences 7.5%*  
*Digital 12.5%*  
*Construction 10%*  
*Tourism & Hospitality 12.5%*  
*Energy 2.5%*  
*Early Learning & Childcare 12.5%*  
*Health & Social Care 12.5%*

5.3 Work is well under way to ensure that there is not only a breadth of offer across growth sectors, but that the quality of these courses will be as good as it possibly can be.

5.2 The next phase of ABZ Works will be the inclusion of a section about ABZ Campus, the new growth-sector aligned courses available for young people in Aberdeen City schools.

## **6 HOW WILL WE MONITOR THESE IMPROVEMENTS?**

6.1 To ensure improvement continues, the ABZ Campus draft improvement measures have been identified as follows:-

- Positive Destinations at all eleven secondary schools will exceed the national average by 2026.
- Increase the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more at SCQF level 6 to 74% by 2026 (this is an ACC stretch aim).
- Increase the proportion of school leavers entering an initial positive destination to 97.8% by 2026 (this is an ACC stretch aim).
- Achieve a course completion rate of 85% across all ABZ Campus courses in 2023-24.
- Students will rate their satisfaction with ABZ Campus courses as 'good' or better by end of 2023-24.
- Joint observed visits will rate ABZ courses at 'good' or better across 75% of occasions.

6.2 As we move to the refresh of the Children's Services Plan and the refresh of the LOIP we are actively considering future improvement aims.

6.3 Should it be agreed that the project is ended, the data recorded will continue to be monitored and reported to the CSB, as well as added to the Outcomes Framework/Improvement programme Dashboard to ensure that performance continues.

## 7 OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCALE UP AND SPREAD

- 7.1 There are opportunities to spread the changes tested in section 3 to a wider groups/settings and the project are in the progress of this as follows:
- The ABZ Works website is being expanded to include a section to allow young people, schools and families to find out more about ABZ Campus courses, and then apply for these courses through a link provided as part of the ABZ Works website. ABZ Works model is also being explored by other LOIP improvement projects seeking to support people into employment.
  - The Learner Pathway event model is being replicated as part of ABZ Campus to provide parents and carers with an event to learn about the new courses available to young people.
  - The new Skills Framework has been shared with schools and collaboration is planned with an organisation *Gen+* to progress the skills contained in this framework with ACC schools. Skills Development Scotland continue to be a key partner in developing skills activity in schools.

### Recommendations for Action

It is recommended that the CPA Board:

- i) Agree that testing is concluded and that this Improvement Project is brought to an end on the basis that the project aim has been achieved and changes now embedded as business as usual and that plans to scale up the changes are in place as described at section 7;
- ii) Agree to recommend to the CPA Board that the Children's Services Board monitor the success of the ABZ Campus initiative and consider further areas of improvement activity as part of the refresh of the Children's Services Plan and LOIP; and
- iii) Note that the dataset for the overall aim will continue to be reported via the Improvement Programme dashboard to ensure progress is monitored.

### Opportunities and Risks

- There is a clear opportunity presented by the ongoing work of ABZ Campus to further develop a link between curriculum and growth sector industries in Aberdeen City, and a chance to deepen partnership working with further, higher education and local industry.
- There are no identified risks other than the risk of not continuing the good work started as evidenced by this Project.

### Consultation

The proposal to complete this Project End Report was brought to the Attainment and Transitions to Adulthood meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> October and met with approval.  
Children's Services Board – 16 December 2022 – approved  
CPA Management Group – Jan 2023

### **Background Papers**

The following papers were used in the preparation of this report.

CS LOIP Project Update 7.1 ([here](#))

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