

DELIVERING FOR ABERDEEN



ROBERT
THE
BRUCE
KING
OF
SCOTS
1306 - 1329

**Aberdeen
Conservatives**



MANIFESTO 2022



**OUR PLAN TO
DELIVER FOR ABERDEEN**

£67.8M ROAD INVESTMENT

**OPPOSE SNP/GREEN
PARKING TAX**

TRIPLE EV CHARGING POINTS

**SUPPORT THE OIL & GAS
INDUSTRY**

**INVEST £100M TO HELP
FIGHT FUEL POVERTY**

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Introduction

Aberdeen is my home. For many, it's the city and the place they were born and raised, for others it's where they moved to, perhaps to study, and have fallen in love with it. However you came to Aberdeen, if you live here, it's your home too. Getting it right for each one of its citizens is our priority as councillors

Over the last five years we have delivered the new exhibition centre in Dyce, refurbished, and reopened the award-winning art gallery, completed the restoration of Provost Skene House, started work on four new schools and contracted for delivery of over 2,000 affordable homes. But we know Aberdeen needs more.

Our promise to the people of Aberdeen for the next five years is to accelerate our investment in our city to bounce back from the economic downturn. We will work to protect the thousands of jobs our energy sector supports, not turn our back on it.

In this manifesto you'll see our commitment to deliver the £150M City Centre and Beachfront redevelopment which has attracted £20M of UK Government funding. Part of this vision includes the delivery of a new football stadium by Aberdeen Football Club at the beach. Putting local priorities first we've committed to a £39 Million fund for roads and pavements, delivering £3M for each of the council's 13 wards.

Speaking to people in every community in Aberdeen the rising cost of living concerns everyone. We know the council has a role to play. In March we committed £1 Million

for the Aberdeen Fuel Poverty Assistance fund supporting those not helped by national schemes. A Conservative led administration will invest £100 Million directly in improving energy efficiency, tackling fuel poverty and making life more affordable.

Transport and connectivity will be a vital part of a greener more connected city. To help with the modernisation of our sustainable transport networks, I'm delighted to confirm that the council's electric bike scheme will be in place by Summer this year. Making Aberdeen more accessible for all is incredibly important and will be a guiding principle for a Conservative led administration.

We will introduce a pilot scheme of subsidising night-time bus travel to help the economic recovery of the city centre and build consensus for business rates reform which has crippled Aberdeen more than anywhere in Scotland. These are a handful of our commitments that Conservative Councillors will work to deliver over the Council's next term. All the ideas we've put forward in this manifesto are designed to create an Aberdeen which is a better place to enjoy, live, work, visit and study. Working collaboratively and setting aside national petty politics, we can deliver for Aberdeen.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan Houghton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ryan Houghton

Leader of the Scottish Conservatives on Aberdeen Council



Backing the local Economy

Campaigning for a Freeport

Conservatives were the first in Aberdeen to raise the prospect of a Freeport for our city and region. With application details unveiled recently, we'll work with Aberdeen Harbour, the Airport, Peterhead Port Authority, and other partners to put the strongest possible bid forward to bring jobs and economic security to our city.

Supporting Aberdeen's Energy Excellence

The SNP/Green coalition want to shut down our successful Oil & Gas industry. That would be devastating for thousands of families in Aberdeen and at a time when energy security is at risk, this is not a sensible position. Conservatives delivered the first Aberdeen City Region Deal working with all levels of government. The energy transition will need continued collaboration to ensure highly skilled and highly paid jobs stay in Aberdeen for the new renewables industry.

Opposing an energy windfall tax

The Labour & SNP windfall tax proposal on energy companies at the very time we're asking them to invest in renewable energy is a regressive step. We oppose a windfall tax and believe investment in jobs and renewable technologies for Aberdeen is the best way forward.

Calling for a level playing field

Aberdeen International Airport is a strategic asset for the North East and for future economic development, including our Freeport bid. Flights from Aberdeen cost more than other airports in Scotland due to the current Air Passenger Duty arrangement and the subsidy the SNP/Green Government gives to other airports. We need a level playing field and we support calls from business groups like Aberdeen Grampian Chambers of Commerce to deliver this.

Fighting for fair business rates

The SNP Government business rates regime has had a crippling effect on Aberdeen businesses. The sight of companies knocking down buildings because of the punitive effect of business rates should be a wakeup call for the Government, but their Barclay review only tinkered round the edges. If elected, we will support Aberdeen Grampian Chamber of Commerce's call for a 2-year rate relief scheme for those worst affected. Further, we'll seek a commitment from all MSPs that represent our area to legislative reform, regardless of party. The business rates system doesn't work for Aberdeen and must be changed.



Building up our City Centre

Supporting the City Centre & Beach Masterplan

By investing £150 million in partnership with the UK Conservative Government, we will help give our city centre back the buzz it once had. Delivering the New Aberdeen Market, enhanced public spaces, café culture infrastructure, a new leisure centre and working with Aberdeen Football Club on options for a new beachfront stadium.

Keeping the granite shining

Encourage planning officials to take a sensible approach, working with developers to help bring back vacant units into use, particularly derelict buildings. We will also build on the work undertaken as part of the City Centre Masterplan to keep up to date information on who owns the different buildings in Union Street and communicate with owners when buildings fall into an unacceptable standard for Aberdeen's main street.

Supporting the night-time economy

Boosting the night-time economy is a critical part of Aberdeen's economic recovery. New businesses looking to open in the city centre want to know it's accessible. We'll instruct plans for a pilot scheme of subsidised bus travel on weekday evenings to help stimulate the night time economy.

Cleaning up Union Street

Keeping our main street shining will require a sustained financial commitment, one off cleans are not enough. As part of the City Centre redevelopment plans, we'll create a Union Street Strategy that will work to keep Union Street clean all year round. We will also actively monitor the condition of street infrastructure to ensure broken or damaged facilities are replaced.

Museums & Culture

Our Administration invested tens of millions into the culture sector in the city. From funding the upgrade of venues to supporting local arts groups, we know the vital role it plays. Our award-winning Art Gallery has become the cultural heart of our city. We commit to continue funding and facilitate great events like SPECTRA & Nuart with our partners and look to attract new festivals and events to bolster our cultural offering.



Levelling up our Infrastructure

£67.8 Million Roads & Pavements Fund

Cracked pavements, deep potholes, every part of our city has them, that's why we're going to commit £3 Million for each of the city's 13 wards, leaving no community behind. The largest roads investment in decades reflects the scale of the challenge. We'll instruct officers to explore all options to get a significant programme of repairs underway. Furthermore, we will look to restore trees across the streets of Aberdeen where they have been felled due to storm damage.

Airport-TECA Rail Link

Linking up the city centre with the airport and the new £370M exhibition complex in Dyce would make moving around Aberdeen easier. Greater public transport will also help ease congestion on our roads and reduce emissions. A Conservative Administration in the council will engage with Transport Scotland and key stakeholders to develop a business case and funding options.

Tripling available EV charge points

More and more people in Aberdeen are using electric and hybrid vehicles. These are great; however, we know making the switch away from petrol vehicles can only happen if the infrastructure is there to support it. We'll double the number of charging points within the first 18 months and then double it again by the end of the next council term, taking the total in the city to over 300.



Preserving our heritage

Supporting the restoration of Bon Accord Baths

We Aberdonians are passionate about our heritage. Bon Accord Baths is an excellent example of a city asset that evokes fond memories and has the chance to create many more. While the council cannot fund the whole project, we'll support the work of the Bon Accord Heritage Charity. By helping to open up funding streams as well as giving expert advice and support as the project's vision is realised.

Conservation and Regenerations

As part of the City Centre Masterplan investment championed by the Conservative group on the council, we will see over £12 Million invested in restoring the frontages of Union Street. Working with building owners we'll help bring back pride into our city centre. Signs, railings, statues, and other features will be restored to the way people expect as part of our heritage plan.

Castlegate

Few locations in Aberdeen are as iconic as the Castlegate. As part of our £150M investment in the city centre, we'll take forward plans to bring life back to the Castlegate and create a buzz as the gateway to the newly redeveloped beachfront.



Tackling Climate Change

Electrification of the North Harbour

Aberdeen Harbour is an iconic part of our city. The harbour's £350M commitment to expand and transition to a low emission harbour is a key part of our region's economic transition. The UK Conservative Government Clean Maritime Demonstration project awarded funding to the harbour to explore electrification. We'll investigate supporting the plans to electrify the quayside, help cut pollution in our city centre, future proofing a city asset.

Cycling Lane Review

More and more people are taking to their bikes to get around Aberdeen. In our first year of a new administration, we'll bring forward a cycling lane review, taking into account changing cycling habits and the impact of the city centre masterplan development projects. We'll work with groups, including the Cycling Forum and Student organisations, to develop a cycle lane plan that works for Aberdeen.

Green spaces & pocket parks

Throughout the lockdown, people in Aberdeen came to value their parks and greenspaces like never before. Being able to spend time outside in a clean and beautiful open space should be available to everyone in our city. We'll continue to invest in our 14 public parks and over 3,000 acres of accessible woodlands. Moreover, we'll look to create new pocket parks, particularly in built up areas.



Investing in our young people

Increasing school staff numbers

Over the last 5 years we've worked hard to attract new teaching staff to our city schools. Closing the gap by hiring over a hundred more teachers has had a real impact on our capacity, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. We want to go further in the next council term. We will work with partners to offer attractive incentives for new teachers who commit to working in our schools.

Investing in our Schools

With four new schools in development, our commitment to education and the school estate is at the highest level in years. In Summer 2022 we will review the school estate strategy brought by officials and make decisions on the future of our primary and secondary schools across Aberdeen. Where further investment is needed, we will make it, to deliver our education offering. At the heart of our education ambitions is closing the attainment gap and raising standards, ensuring our young people have the best possible chance at future success.

Protect our libraries

Providing access to well-equipped and pleasant spaces for learning and cultural experiences is crucial. Under our Administration we have maintained the level of library provision and we'll make the same commitment for the next council term.



Making Aberdeen a better place to live

City Centre Living

In the last council term, we waived contributions for city centre living accommodation making it more affordable to create new high-quality homes for those who want to live in our city centre. We'll review extending this scheme to ensure more of our empty city centre properties become quality residential accommodation.

Improving Council Homes

As well as continuing to deliver new homes, we will launch a task force to review our current housing stock and implement a strategy to reduce turnaround time for repairs. While there is pressure on labour markets and materials, people should expect important repair in a reasonable time to be completed to a high standard. We will instruct regular reports to committee to monitor performance and track the improvement in turnaround times.

Helping with fuel bills

When the Conservatives moved the Administration budget in March, we committed to a £1M fuel poverty assistance fund helping over 6,000 households with the surge in energy prices. With the plan due back in June, we'll ensure this is delivered effectively to benefit as many people as possible.

Helping with the cost of living

With local government poorly funded by the SNP our ability to deliver the same level of services with shrinking resources remains challenging. We have protected fortnightly bin collections and will ensure this service is protected. We will instruct a comprehensive review of current fees and charges to find ways to make the cost of living easier for residents.

Improving energy efficiency in homes

The cost-of-living crisis is affecting everyone. Tackling it and easing the burden requires a focused and dedicated approach to take on a challenge that'll be with us for some time.

We will appoint a dedicated lead to work with residents, stakeholders and the private sector to recommend simple and innovative measures to help residents. Our commitment is to invest £100 Million of council funds over the next 5 years to deliver the home upgrades people need. We will work to unlock further public and private sector funding to ensure as many people in Aberdeen as possible can afford to heat their homes.



Our Candidates

Ward 1: Dyce / Bucksburn / Danestone

Avril MacKenzie

Braiden Smith

Ward 2: Bridge of Don

Sarah Cross

Matthew Watt

Ward 3: Kingswells / Sheddocksley / Summerhill

John Wheeler

Ward 4: Northfield / Mastrick North

Nestor Carlsen-Devereux

Ward 5: Hilton / Woodside / Stockethill

Freddie John

Ward 6: Tillydrone / Seaton / Old Aberdeen

Vish Archer

Ward 7: Midstocket / Rosemount

Emma Farquhar

Ward 8: George Street / Harbour

Shane Painter

Ward 9: Lower Deeside

Gillian Tebberen

Duncan Massey

Ward 10: Hazlehead / Queens Cross / Countesswells

Lars Frevert

Ken McLeod

Ward 11: Airyhall / Broomhill / Garthdee

Ryan Houghton

Ward 12: Torry / Ferryhill

Michael Kusznir

Ward 13: Kincorth/Nigg/Cove

Richard Brooks

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