

Case study: Scottish Enterprise

An action plan for Aberdeen City and Shire based on lessons from other successful city regions



The Learning from Small and Medium Sized City Regions Project has enabled Scottish Enterprise to benefit from the experience of other city regions that have successfully achieved an economic transition. The research has established an action plan for agencies in Aberdeen City and Shire (AC&S) to develop strategic learning relationships with agencies in other city regions based on the lessons learned from five comparator cities. Experian has provided Scottish Enterprise with fresh ideas on relevant policy approaches and physical developments that have been effective in other city regions.



Challenge

Scottish Enterprise is the main Enterprise, Innovation and Investment agency for Scotland. With the Aberdeen City Region economy on the brink of a period of significant economic transition, diversifying away from dependency on the UK oil and gas industry, Scottish Enterprise wanted to learn from similarly-sized city regions in order to better inform strategy and maximise the contribution of AC&S to the Scottish economy.

Solution

Experian identified a number of city regions that are comparable to AC&S and from this list selected five – Bristol, Aarhus, Calgary, Huntsville and Stavanger – to analyse in detail. This analysis revealed key lessons on initiatives, projects, programmes and approaches that have played a part in economic change in these city regions.

This allowed Experian to develop an action plan for agencies in AC&S to develop strategic learning relationships with agencies in other city regions.

The project proceeded in three phases with a report provided at the end of each phase.

Phase one summarised AC&S's economic performance relative to Scotland and the UK, setting the context for the rest of the research. This phase also highlighted key strengths and weaknesses and illustrated the themes that framed the analysis of comparator city regions (phase two) and the learning and action plan (phase three).

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“Aberdeen City and Shire is recognised as being one of the most buoyant economies in the UK. Much of our region’s growth stems from the energy sector, particularly the oil and gas industry, as our key economic driver. However, to sustain and grow our economy further we need to build on the energy sector’s expertise and skills, along with driving growth in our other key industry sectors. The Learning from Small and Medium Sized Cities research undertaken by Experian has identified a number of very relevant successful city region economies in the world. The lessons from the research coupled with the recommendations will inform the Aberdeen City and Shire’s Economic Action Plan and assist Scottish Enterprise and our public and private sector partners to collectively transform our economy.”

Jamie Bell
Scottish Enterprise

In **phase two**, five comparable city regions were identified through consultation with key agencies and businesses in the city region. These five cities were investigated in order to analyse economic performance; establish key transitions of the city region economy; understand the role of policy interventions in effecting these transitions; and highlight the lessons for AC&S.

Phase three of the study brought together all the key lessons on initiatives, projects, programmes and approaches that have played a part in economic change in the case study city regions and an action plan was developed in order to enable agencies in AC&S to establish contact with project managers, economic development agencies, industry fora and universities.

Results

Experian has provided Scottish Enterprise with best practice examples on city region change and recommendations based on the lessons from the five case study cities. The recently published Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Forum (ASCEF) ‘Building on Energy’ economic action plan for Aberdeen City and Shire highlights many similar themes to the research carried out by Experian. We have also provided Scottish Enterprise with a further set of recommended actions that should make a significant contribution towards achieving the Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Forum’s Economic Manifesto objectives.

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