



**Media Release**

**Monday, October 30, 2017**

**The case for transformational change pitched to investors at Vanguard conference**

HOW to attract more European tourists to the North-east, re-invent Union Street and retain our most talented people in the region will be among the projects put to council leaders, chief executives, business leaders and potential investors in December during a conference focused on shaping the future economic prosperity of the region.

Since September, around 100 volunteers of all ages, sectors and backgrounds have been working to develop business cases for eight key projects designed to create an amazing legacy for future generations of Aberdonians.

The teams will present their recommendations as part of *Route to Renaissance*, a Vanguard conference, at the Belmont Filmhouse on December 5. Each group will have 15 minutes to pitch their game-changing ideas to the audience of key influencers in the hope of securing the backing to take their ideas forward.

The Vanguard Legacy initiative aims to have a direct positive impact on Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire across the next two to five years, building on the momentum created by the city region deal and a range of public and private sector investment projects valued in excess of £8billion which are either planned or already underway in the region.

Organised by Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, together with Shell UK and other partners, the conference is latest in a series of events aimed at challenging norms and inspiring bold, new ways of thinking in order to write the next chapter in the success story of the region.

In addition to the group presentations, the conference will hear from speakers including Adrian Webster, motivation speaker and author of the best-selling book 'Polar Bear Pirates', who will deliver a presentation on ordinary people doing extraordinary things; and Jennifer Craw, chief executive of Opportunity North East, who will give an update on progress towards the renaissance region vision.

The event will also feature audience participation including interactive voting and a lively Q&A. Further speakers will be announced shortly.

Russell Borthwick, chief executive of Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, said: “We have an economic diversification plan that is gathering pace, our strength in innovation is being further developed through city region deal investment and there is real progress with the city centre masterplan. Critically however, there is a growing passion to redefine our future.

“The time for energy, passion and fresh thinking is now. Vanguard Legacy aims to build on the momentum and finding new ways of thinking and acting to ensure we become a renaissance region, not a museum to what was once Europe’s oil and gas capital.

“A rich, vibrant and diverse environment is something which impacts each and every one of us. There is real drive and enthusiasm among the workgroups for how we can transform the North-east and I for one am eager to hear what they have come up with.”

The projects the groups are taking forward are:

- What will it take to get this region on the map as a serious European short break destination and what iconic attraction would help us to achieve this?
- How could a world class events programme in the region drive in-bound tourism as well as making this an even better place to live and what might this look like?
- How do we make sure we retain graduates and our very best talent in the North-east?
- What would be required to make sure any future capital/city of culture bid was successful?
- How do we make Aberdeen a ‘cool’ place for residents, students and visitors?
- The North-east is already Scotland’s capital for food and drink production; how do we bring this to life for local consumers and visitors?
- What will it take to make the people of the area fall back in love with Union Street?
- How can we build on the success of Buy North-east to promote a culture of local procurement?

The one-day conference is open to everyone. All-day parking and refreshments are included in the fee. For more information visit [www.agcc.co.uk](http://www.agcc.co.uk)

## **Ends**

### **Notes to editor**

- Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce (AGCC) is North-east Scotland's leading private sector, member-focused, business organisation. The Chamber represents more than 1,250 businesses with almost 125,000 employees in the private sector covering all industry sectors, ranging in size from sole traders to multi-national corporations.

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