



**Aberdeen &
Grampian
Chamber of
Commerce**

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Media Release

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Volunteers given ‘once in a lifetime’ chance to transform the North-east

People of all ages, experiences, sectors and backgrounds across the North-east business community are being asked to volunteer their time and expertise as part of a once in a lifetime opportunity to shape the future economic prosperity of the region.

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, together with Shell UK and other partners, are putting together a number of teams to compile business cases outlining what is required to achieve positive outcomes on a range of economic development projects that will create an amazing legacy for future generations.

These projects may include, but are not limited to: What it would take to establish food and drink tourism as a unique regional selling point, how best to galvanise a new generation of independent retailers at the heart of our town centres, what is needed to ensure that Aberdeen would be successful in a future Capital of Culture Bid; and how to re-invent Union Street as a shining, vibrant mile to be proud of.

They want to hear from anyone – regardless of sector of specialism – who is forward-thinking, unwilling to take no for an answer; and wants to step up and play a part in ensuring the North-east becomes a renaissance region and not a museum to what was once Europe’s oil and gas capital.

The call to action is the latest stage of the Vanguard series which launched in 2013 with the aim of capturing and progressing the key strategic issues for the North-east while creating an opportunity to deal tactically with emerging issues.

“To date Vanguard has helped shape what the future of our area could look like and provided the opportunity for our business leaders to understand some of the leadership techniques we will need to employ if we are to be successful,” said Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber chief executive Russell Borthwick.

“The Legacy phase is about action. There is a cohesive plan in place but it will take a collective effort if we are to drive economic development and achieve our ambition of a prosperous future for our area. It isn’t just the role of our local authorities and Opportunity North East, we all have a responsibility to play our part in making a difference and helping to achieve the things we need to make this an even better place to live, work, study, visit, invest and do business.

“We all need to contribute towards writing the next chapter in the success story of our region and delivering an outstanding legacy for future generations. This initiative is about providing a platform to make that happen.”

Vanguard – Legacy 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 a range of public and private sector investment projects valued in excess of £5billion which are either planned or already underway in the region.

“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. Most of all, we are beginning to demonstrate confidence and ambition, sending out the message that we are open for business,” added Russell.

“It is vital that this momentum is maintained and the pace increased but our new reality also needs new ways of thinking and acting. We want to engage not just existing business figures but our future leaders. This is an excellent opportunity to identify emerging stars who believe in the future of our region and challenge them to tackle a series of live issues.

The Chamber is seeking to enlist up to 50 individuals who will be allocated a specific project. Each sub-group will have a mentor appointed to support their efforts and will have three months, from September to December, to research and work on their set tasks. The results will be presented at a Regional Renaissance conference in December 2017 where each group will outline the next steps to take their project forward.

The closing date for applications is July 28. For more information visit www.agcc.co.uk/content/vanguard-legacy

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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 around 125,000 employees covering all industry sectors, ranging in size from sole traders to multi-national corporations.

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