

everyone PKoffer
has something to offer



Recovery & Renewal Update



Recovery & Renewal – Phase 1

Feedback Analysis

Background

In adopting the 3 Horizon Planning Framework for Recovery & Renewal, the first phase of this approach was to review and evaluate the impact COVID-19 has had on residents of P&K, businesses and the economy, staff and the services the Council delivers.



The various surveys are aimed at identifying the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on the people of Perth and Kinross, the challenges that they faced and how we can learn from the experience to recover and inform opportunities to build an even better Perth and Kinross. The information from these (and other past and future consultation and engagement exercises) will be influential in developing our recovery and renewal plans and to form a platform for further engagement with our communities and stakeholders to create a long-term vision based around the Perth & Kinross Offer.

It is important to bear in mind that the responses have been received over the last 2 – 3 months and therefore reflect the situation and mindset of respondents at that time.

This update provides a summary of feedback received from the following:

- Public Survey on the impact of the pandemic
- Business Barometer Summary
- Ward meetings
- Staff survey
- Community Impact Assessment – PKAVS Third Sector Interface reflections

It is not the intention of this report to attribute emerging themes to each of the individual feedback sources but to pull together the **recurring** themes and linking them to the **4 key workstreams (Economy; Equalities, Empowerment & Fairness; Education & Learning; the Environment)**. Summary reports with more detail and analysis are available and it is these documents which will inform ongoing discussions with communities/partners in how we take forward the Perth & Kinross Offer. The emerging themes also resonate with some of the findings contained within the Fairness Commission's report: Fairer Futures (2017).

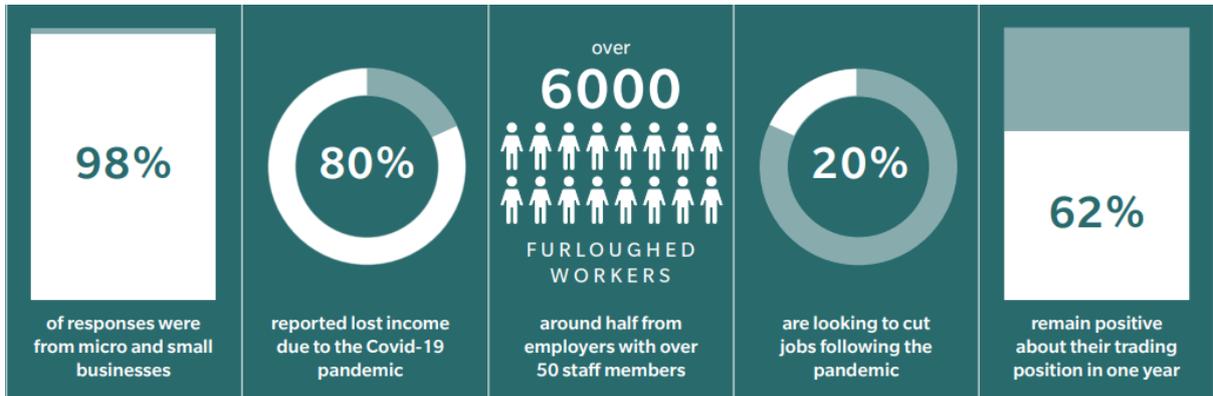
Public Survey - In relation to the public consultation exercise, this was open from 24 June 2020 to 31 July 2020 with 787 responses. **A third of all responses came from residents of Carse of Gowrie (30%), response from the other 11 wards in Perth and Kinross was fairly evenly spread (8% to 4% range)**. The age profile of respondents was skewed towards the **50+ demographic** with relatively few responses from those aged under 36 years with majority of **respondents being employed or retired**.

High level overview:

- Comments regarding impact of the pandemic on individuals and their families were dominated by comments that expressed negative sentiment related to missing friends/family and isolation/mental health and anxiety.
- In contrast responses around impact of the pandemic on their neighbourhood were predominantly positive and related to community spirit.
- Almost a half of comments said there had been no change in the Council's support for themselves/their family during the pandemic.
- Where change was mentioned, communication, continued provision of essential services and education/childcare were common topics.
- Communication and continued provision of essential services were most commonly viewed in a positive or neutral manner, there was more negativity around education and childcare.
- On the subject of what the Council could support communities to do more effectively and potentially stop doing itself, three key areas for consideration were identified. These were support for community-led groups, support for third/sector/volunteering and financial support.

Business Barometer – This survey closed on 3 June 2020 with the results reported to full Council on 24 June 2020. 1,048 local businesses completed the survey. Respondents represented every part of the region with **36% Perth City, 19% Highland Perthshire, 12% Eastern Perthshire and 10% Strathearn (i.e. Crieff, Comrie)** being the major contributors.

Tourism & Hospitality was the largest sector with 35% of total respondents. Retail businesses accounted for 17%, with other parts of the Service sector (from Legal and Education to Plumbers and Dog-walkers) accounting for almost 30%. Manufacturing and Agri-Food made-up some 5% each, with the remainder identifying primarily as the Third Sector or Clubs and other bodies.



A second Business Barometer Survey has been undertaken and closed 6 September 2020 with 215 respondents. Some key messages:

- Business confidence looking forward has dropped 4% from May/June Barometer.
- Over 50% rank future access to further grant support of key importance.
- 11% have already, or intend to, make staff redundant but over half are back at work with no job losses.
- Perth City**
- Rural Perthshire**



Ward Meetings – By mid-September 2020 there have been 5 ward events along with 3 Social Renewal Advisory Board Listening Events undertaken. The comments received at these events were typical of what was heard from the feedback received through the public consultation and have been included in the summary finding later within this report.

Some of these concerns included:

- Loneliness and isolation
- The loss of usual activities
- Lack of communication in other languages e.g. shielding letters only being in English)
- Limited volunteers who speak different languages
- Challenge to get on-line – confusing and hard to get connected. Digital inclusion and digital connectivity were particular challenges, as was the lack of having appropriate IT equipment.
- Lack of timely communication around the cessation of council services
- Concerns around the lack of communications and assistance for people with disabilities particularly as there were new layouts to streets and whilst shopping
- There was a desire from residents for more say in how services were delivered locally
- There was a recognition of the importance of local facilities. (e.g. village halls) and residents wanted to see them open again as quickly as possible.

Staff Survey - The survey was open for responses from all Perth & Kinross Council employees from 25 May to 8 June 2020 resulting in **1,472 responses which equates to 26% of the PKC workforce**. It is important to recognise that during the initial stages of the lockdown the Council reduced its activity across many services, maintaining 18 critical services and that this may have impacted on people’s ability to respond. Responses came from 26% of the workforce with **52% of the respondents being school based**.

The following table provides a high level summary overview from what staff said:

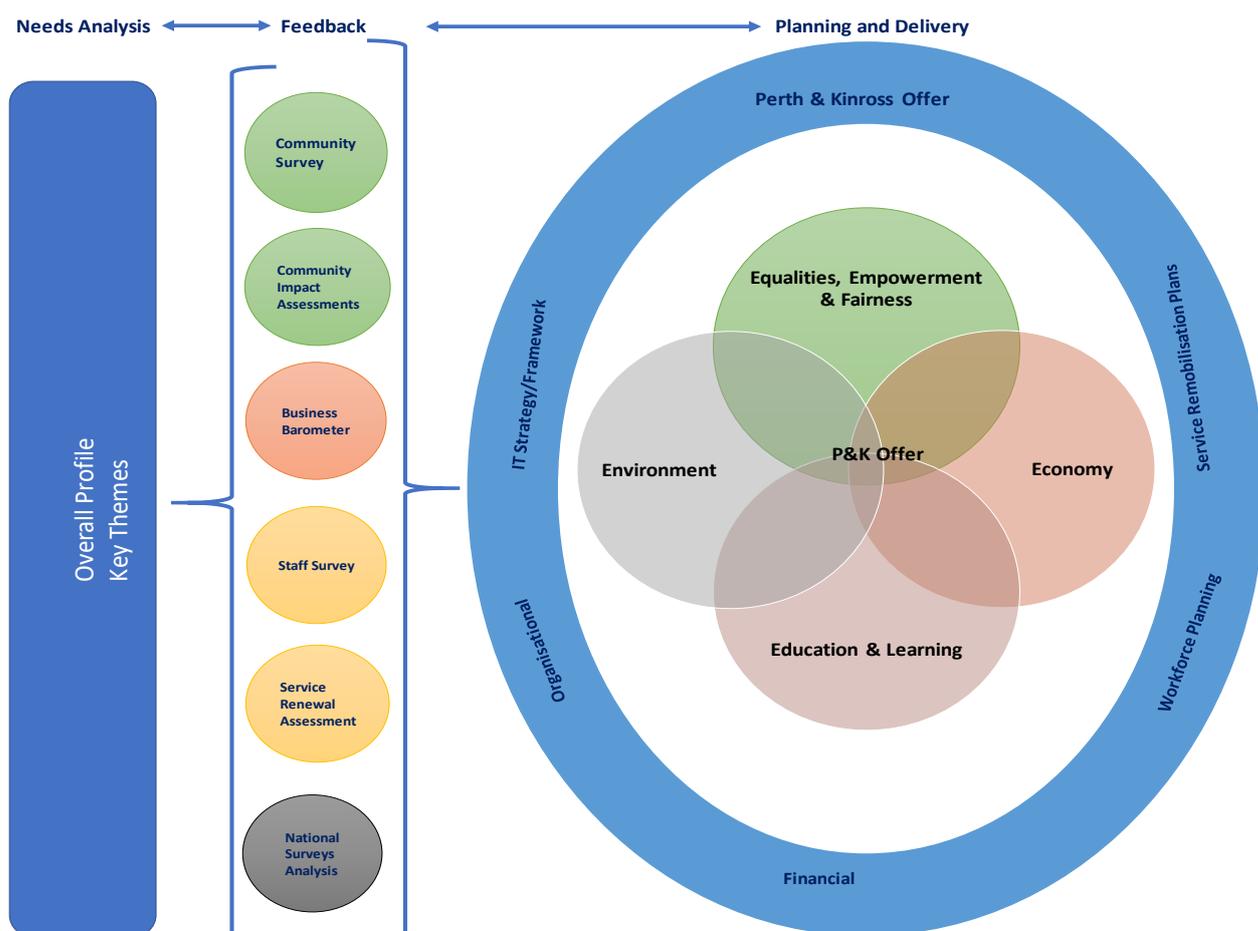
	Benefits of current working arrangements	Challenges of current working arrangements
To Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Flexibility in working hours and reduced time spent commuting ▪ developing new skills ▪ productivity and time efficiency ▪ collaboration ▪ MS Teams uptake ▪ Mental/ physical health and ability to focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication informally/socially/within teams ▪ Engagement with service users/ clients etc ▪ Learning new skills ▪ Adjusting to new circumstances ▪ Mental & Physical health ▪ overlap of work/ home life ▪ Restrictions to work/ volume of work
To Customers / communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Home learning, time with family, parental / pupil engagement (from school staff) ▪ More widely greater efficiency in getting things done and new ways of working and communicating, also new ways of engaging with communities in response to the pandemic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication: restrictions of face to face and issues with telephones ▪ Education and learning (for those normally at school); engaging with parents and pupils ▪ Restrictions / changes to services due to the pandemic ▪ Vulnerable people were mentioned as facing particular challenge. ▪ Wider awareness of the impacts of lockdown

Community Assessment – A survey is currently underway seeking the views of local community groups and closed on 20 September however due to the timing of this report these have not been included within this paper.

PKAVS Third Sector Interface has provided information on the engagement they have had with third sector groups. At present they have held 3 sessions which included 57 organisations the purpose of which was to listen and learn from how Covid-19 has affected their clients/service users, staff and organisations. Some of the points raised relate specifically to the organisations themselves and how, as a third sector, they could work better together. There were however specific observations made which have been included within the recurring themes section of this report.

Feedback Process

The Recovery and Renewal Framework includes 4 workstreams and in recognition that the feedback received could apply across different workstreams the following process will ensure that overlapping information is linked appropriately.



(Diagram 1)

Feedback received will be communicated across all the workstreams and considered in designing and developing plans with a focus on community engagement, consultation and empowerment putting Perth & Kinross Offer front and centre.

There will however be recurring themes, which sit across all groups and these will be pulled together to form overall frameworks e.g. the Perth & Kinross Offer, Finance, IT, Organisations Development and Workforce Planning.

Members of the public were asked about the Council's handling of the pandemic and, from those who made comment, this was, on the whole positive. However, many felt that they were unable to comment as they did not have sufficient knowledge of council services. There also appears to be a real desire for improved communication, greater community involvement, greater focus on local solutions and to move away from the Council bureaucracy. Comments included:

"I think the council did the best they could and it's not easy for anyone in the community who all face different challenges." "we are totally self-sufficient and thankfully have not required Council help"

"I don't feel that there has been much change in Council support to our family - but I have to say that the services we take for granted, such as refuse collection and recycling, have been wonderful"

"They have done well during the coronavirus pandemic to support those who need it. Prior to that, I could not say the same thing."

"Not informing people of changes happening in Perth and Kinross regarding Coronavirus, or previous changes which people may have had difficulty understanding. A regular newsletter not just for tenants would be useful where local information is better provided and explained."

What are the emerging key themes and suggested opportunities?

The following tables provide some highlights as well as any suggestions identified within the various surveys. These are intended only as an overview with the intention that these form discussion points and indeed further analysis within the specific workstreams/service areas.

 Equalities, Empowerment & Fairness	
Key Themes	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ An increased offer for volunteering ▲ Greater involvement and mobilisation of existing community groups ▲ Connections with neighbours and communities pulling together ▲ Provision of support to those shielding, food and pharmacy deliveries as well as wellbeing calls ▲ Stronger sense of community – new initiatives and services were established and existing ones expanded e.g. Community Fridge, Debt Counselling, Too Library ▲ Use of technology to maintain contact (Zoom/skype etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Social care - reprioritise spending to this area ▲ Plan for care and support should lockdown measures be reintroduced ▲ More mental health support ▲ Helping local foodbanks ▲ Support community-led groups to get established and funded ▲ Capitalise on community mobilisation ▲ Delegate to appropriate community services and remove silos ▲ Engage (properly) with well-established organisations and charities. ▲ Empower community groups – greater responsibility on activities to be funded ▲ Greater communication between council services and local communities with a focus on rural communities. ▲ Greater involvement from communities in developing processes and e.g. Pandemic Strategy ▲ Better engagement with Community Councils and Community Planning Partners ▲ More activities for teenagers – not just sport ▲ Focus on meeting the needs of people, not the system or environment operated within. ▲ Third Sector to be considered an equal partner and respected by statutory services. A commitment to collaboration and co-production. ▲ Digital inclusion for all
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Isolation, loneliness and mental wellbeing – Before, during and following relaxation of lockdown. ▼ Decrease in household incomes ▼ Cessation/reduction to social activities – particularly felt by those from ethnic minority groups and people with disabilities ▼ Some felt unsafe – increase in anti-social behaviour ▼ Families struggling with costs, home- schooling and access to IT equipment ▼ Overcrowded households ▼ Devolvement of decisions to local communities ▼ Desire to move away from council bureaucracy ▼ Lack of partnership working has been detrimental to the Covid response. ▼ Feeling that the need to operate at pace has been utilised as an excuse for not involving groups and organisations to the response ▼ Lack of communication – particularly where English is not the first language 	

“We are new to the street and we were able to meet neighbours we hadn’t had the chance to speak to until we were in lockdown.”

“Installed an emergency alarm, provided food boxes until supermarket deliveries set up. Contacted me when shielding started.”

“We’ve received funding for free school meals for my son which has been very helpful. Due to my benefit, I’ve now discovered I can apply for this for the coming school year also which would help a lot.”

“No ASN provision that was fit for purpose and met my autistic son’s needs.”

This resonates with what we heard within the **Fairness Commission** work - People wanted us to understand the different challenges people face at a local level, and their aspirations. The ask being that public, private and third sector organisations work more closely with local communities and encourage/support jointly created solution and opportunities. They also told us that work should be undertaken to further develop socially inclusive, inter-generational and cultural initiatives across the area to reduce social isolation, share skills and knowledge and increase the resilience of individuals and communities.

 Economy	
Key Themes	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Take up of business grants ▲ Confidence in trading position for manufacturing and those not involved in tourist/ hospitality/retail ▲ Developing wider markets ▲ Develop more on-line sales and diversification ▲ PKC Business Bulletin and response ▲ Referrals to a business adviser 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ More grants to close gaps and to help with re-start ▲ Clear guidance on re-opening ▲ Detailed plans for more outside hospitality ▲ More Park and Ride facilities ▲ Promote buy local – simplify procurement ▲ Streamline planning and licensing ▲ Aggressive marketing of the region ▲ Extension of business rates relief ▲ Open schools and ensure more childcare provision to help workers get back to work ▲ Support to tourism, the arts and to local restaurants and bars – support to open later and utilise outdoor spaces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Going out of business if restrictions continue ▼ Concerns on trading position for tourism/hospitality/retail ▼ Reduction in staff once restrictions eased (Tourism/hospitality/retail) ▼ More focus on events promoting the region ▼ Facilitation of access to finance ▼ More action around loyalty programmes ▼ Promotion of local goods and services ▼ Improved digital infrastructure and connectivity ▼ Connectivity issues when more than one person requiring broadband access ▼ Reduced turnover for self-employed 	

“PKC did a first-class job in getting help out to businesses quickly.”

“Grants have helped my partner and his business during this period and payments have been awarded very quickly which is a live saver.”



Education & Learning

Key Themes	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Benefits of children spending time with family ▲ Learning in different environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Standardisation of home learning approaches ▲ Easy to follow online lessons ▲ Provision of IT equipment for those who don't have (or hire) ▲ Consider approach to home and flexi schooling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Missed schooling ▼ Parental engagement as well as parents having to juggle carer/work/home schooling. ▼ Face-to-face contact with pupils and parents due to the COVID restrictions. ▼ Lack of child care for non-key workers ▼ Disruption to after school activities – children bored ▼ Variances across schools in approaches to home learning 	

“Home schooling - teachers have been fantastic.”

“Schools dealt very well with constantly changing goalposts.”

“Really disappointed no child care. Key workers are getting free childcare and I'm not so I may end up in debt now.”

As a result of the changes to school provision during lockdown many of the indicators of disadvantage such as free meal entitlement, additional support needs as well as access to extra-curricular activities particularly impacted on those most in need – these were all factors highlighted through the **Fairness Commission** work.



ENVIRONMENT

Key Themes	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Quieter roads and more people walking/cycling ▲ Spending more time and work in gardens ▲ Refuse collections ▲ Maintenance of open spaces – grass cutting ▲ Climate Change Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Use some kind of powers to encourage respect for the environment. ▲ Greater responsibility for Bloom Groups ▲ Communities involvement in developing the Climate Change Strategy and support the actions ▲ Improve bus services to villages ▲ Improve pedestrian and cycle routes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Closure of recycling centres ▼ Increase in litter and fly tipping ▼ Local parks and grass areas – access and aesthetics ▼ Public transport reduced ▼ New traffic light system ▼ Road maintenance 	

“Greatly appreciated the continuation of all services, despite the difficulties. Council workers

come with a wave and a cheery hello..... much appreciated.”

“I have been impressed by the service from PKC Refuse Collectors, who have managed to maintain services throughout the period of lock-down and beyond. Grass has also continued to be cut at the usual places, which keeps the village looking good.”

 Ways of Working within the Council	
Key Themes	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Productivity levels increased ▲ Quick roll out and use of Microsoft teams ▲ Flexibility and willingness of staff working across the Council through re-tasking ▲ Internal and external communication ▲ Greater work life balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ More live talk should have been available for online queries. ▲ Need to advertise consultations properly and ensure there is a wide representation of people when changes are planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Staff juggling carer/home school/working ▼ Connectivity issues and some not having the appropriate kit ▼ Processes for re-tasking ▼ Less social contact with both team members and missed the more informal work discussions ▼ Information/communication overload ▼ Public experienced difficulties trying to speak to members of staff ▼ Very confusing trying to make enquiries. ▼ Not everyone clued up or has online experience. ▼ Access and connectivity issues – as well as lack of IT skills as more and more on-line activities and services are developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Simplify customer processes ▲ Prompt replies to queries ▲ Greater flexibility in relation to working hours and work locations ▲ Different communication channels – internally and externally (awareness that not everyone uses social media) ▲ More on-line forms e.g. bus pass ▲ Locality working to support communities

“Work have been hugely supportive (I work for the council)”

“PKC should ensure relevant staff are advised of changes rather than reading it on social media”

“At the start of COVID staff members had to fill in questionnaire about whether they had ever been a grave digger, worked in care home etc. This was highly stressful sitting at home wondering if I was going to be called to do these things.”

Through the **Fairness Commission: Fairer Futures** we heard that people wanted family-friendly working practices and that these should be promoted across all sectors in the area, to ensure that more people with children can access and sustain employment. People also told us that digital approaches should be used appropriately and not create additional barriers for anyone, at any age or stage of life.

What was the outcome of the public consultation by locality?

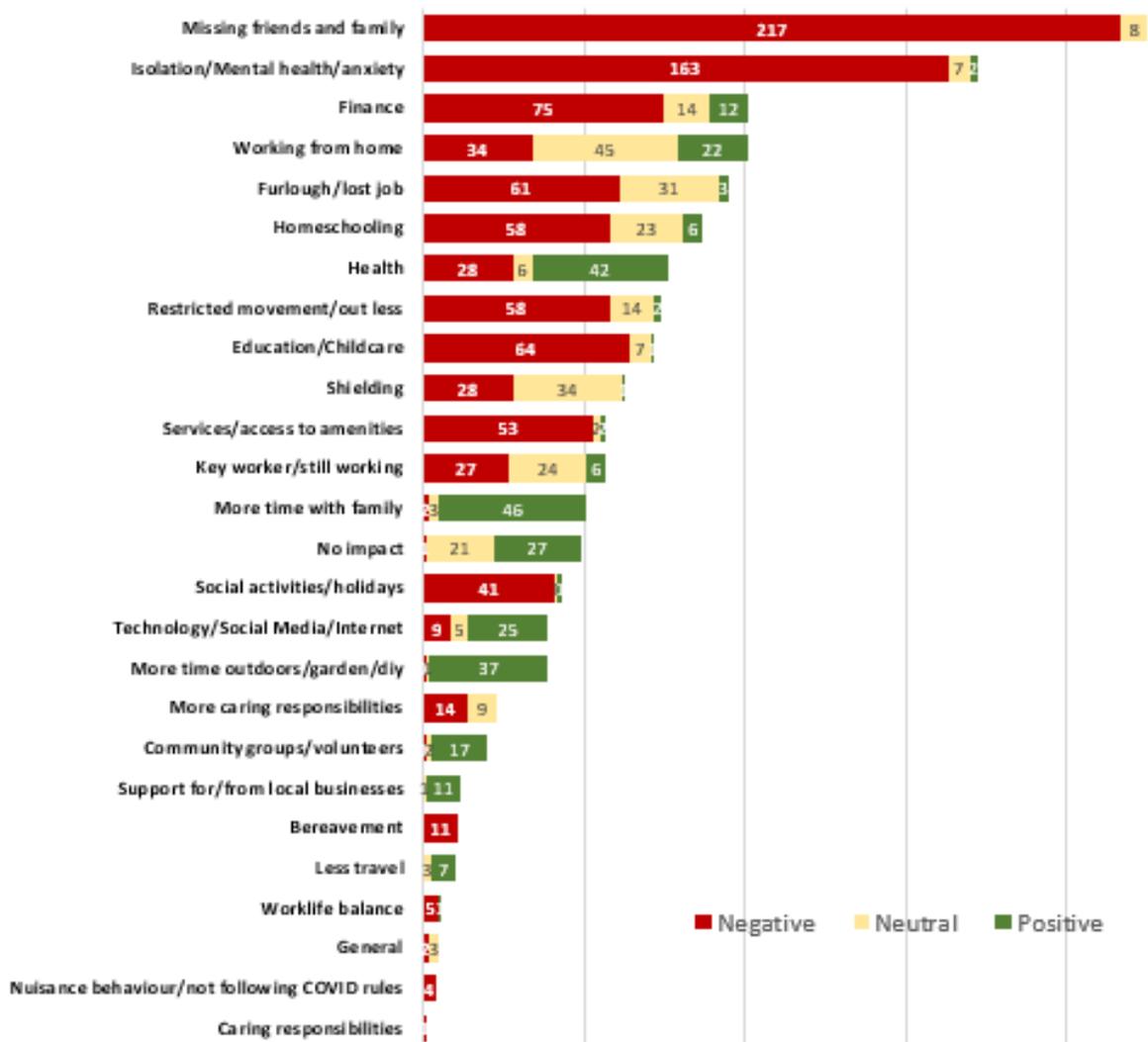
A third of all 787 responses came from residents of Carse of Gowrie (30%), response from the other 11 wards in Perth and Kinross was fairly evenly spread (8% to 4% range).

From the results of the public consultation we have some indication of areas which had the most impact on individuals and their communities. The nature of the survey was to gather individual

thoughts and concerns and therefore open questions were asked. The information received were then grouped into recurring themes.

The following provides an overview to one of the key questions within the summary:

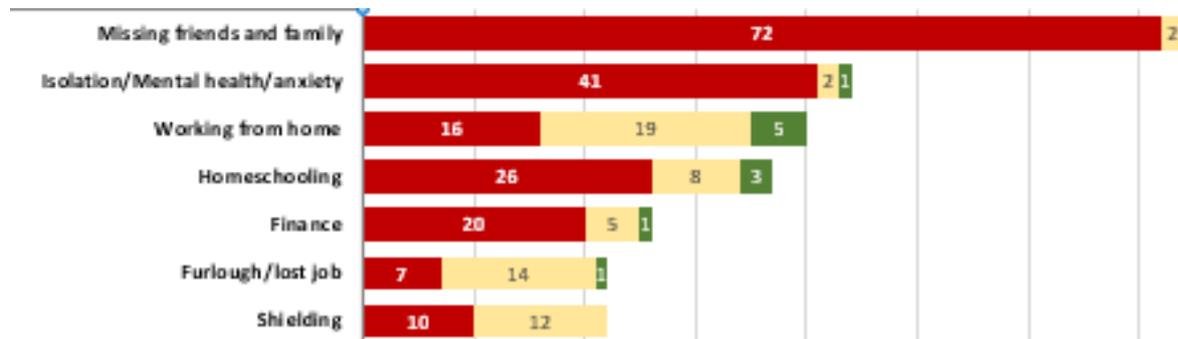
Q5. What has been the impact of the pandemic on you and your family? (All respondents)



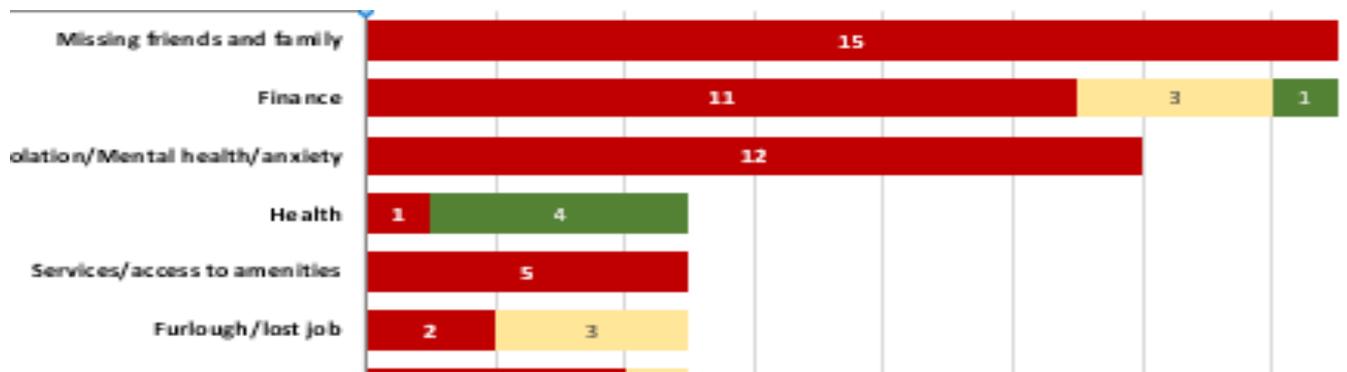
In relation to the same question the following provides a summary of the top six concerns across the different ward areas.

Key: ■ Negative ■ Neutral ■ Positive

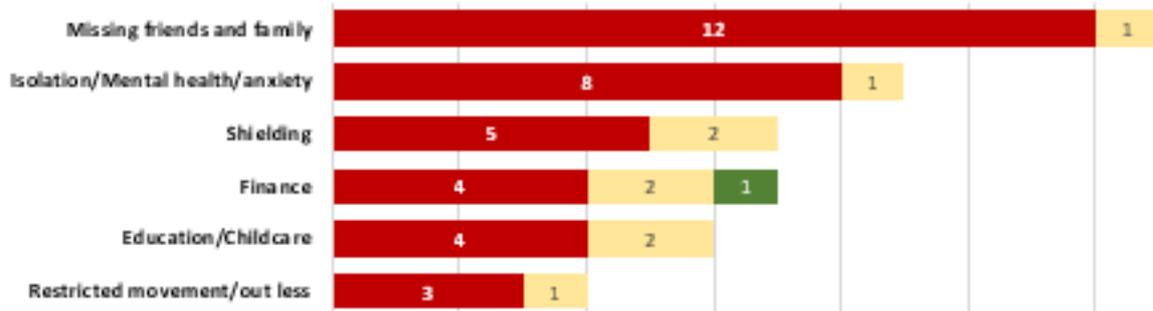
Carse of Gowrie



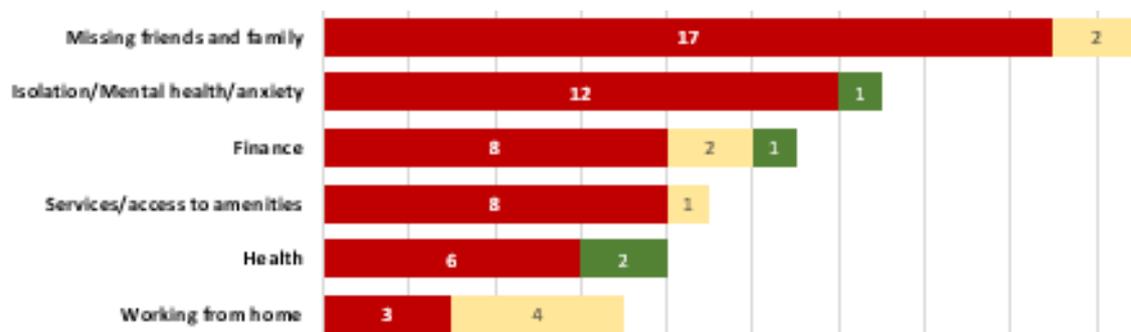
Highland



Kinross-shire



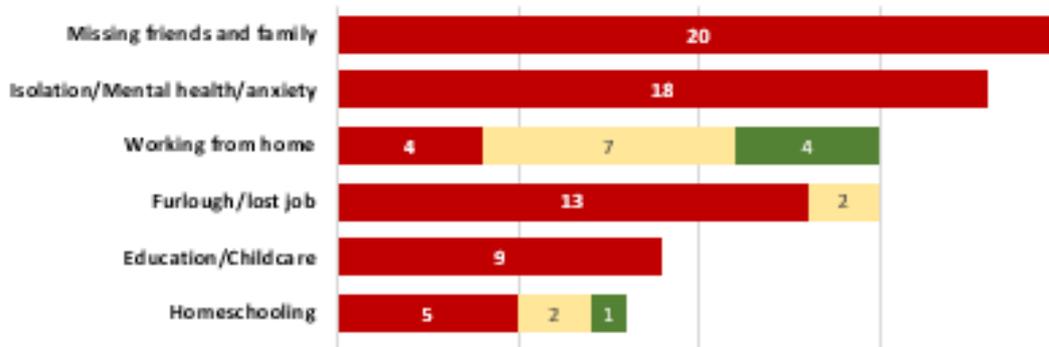
Perth City Centre



Perth City North



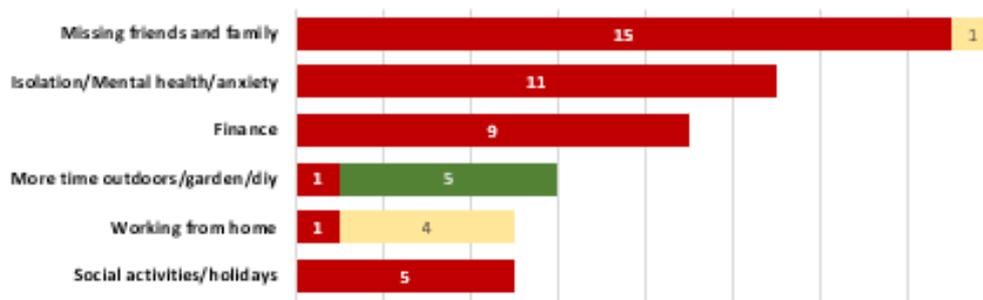
Perth City South



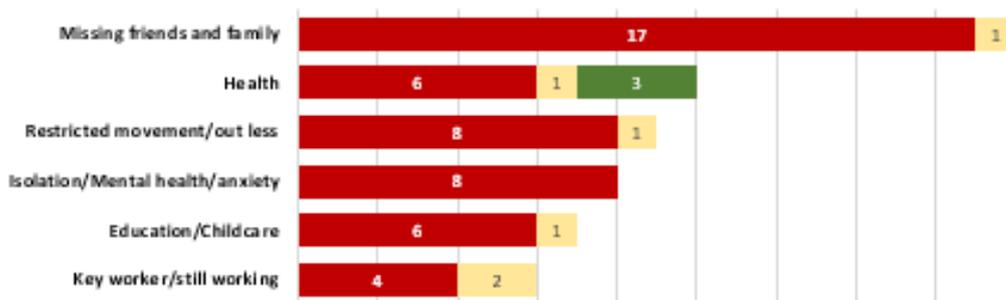
Strathallan



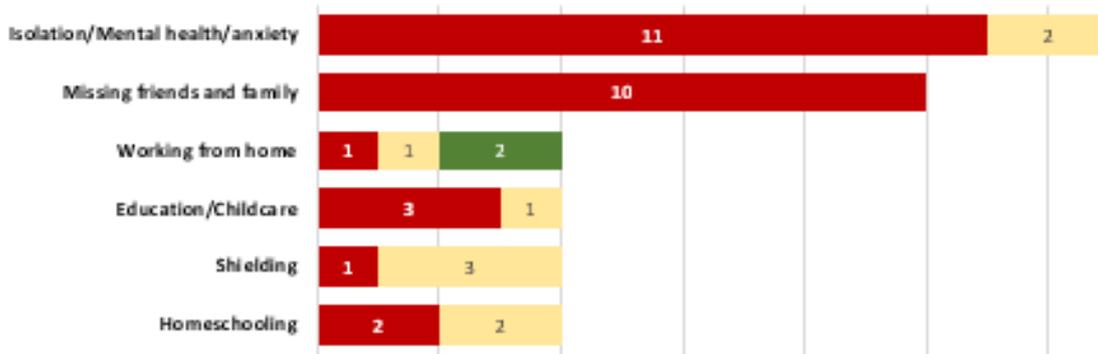
Strathearn



Strathmore



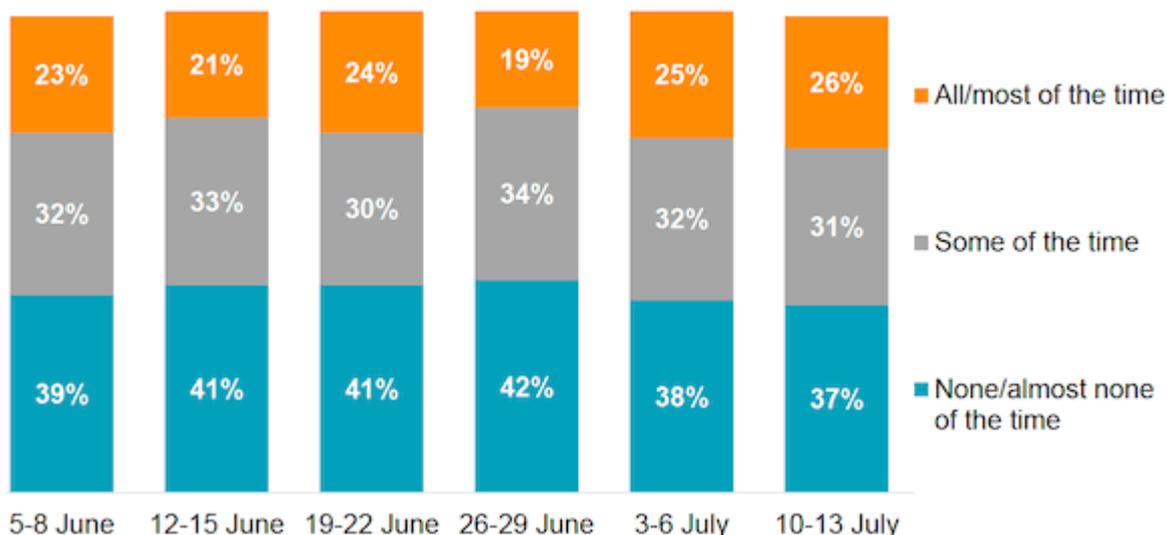
Strathtay



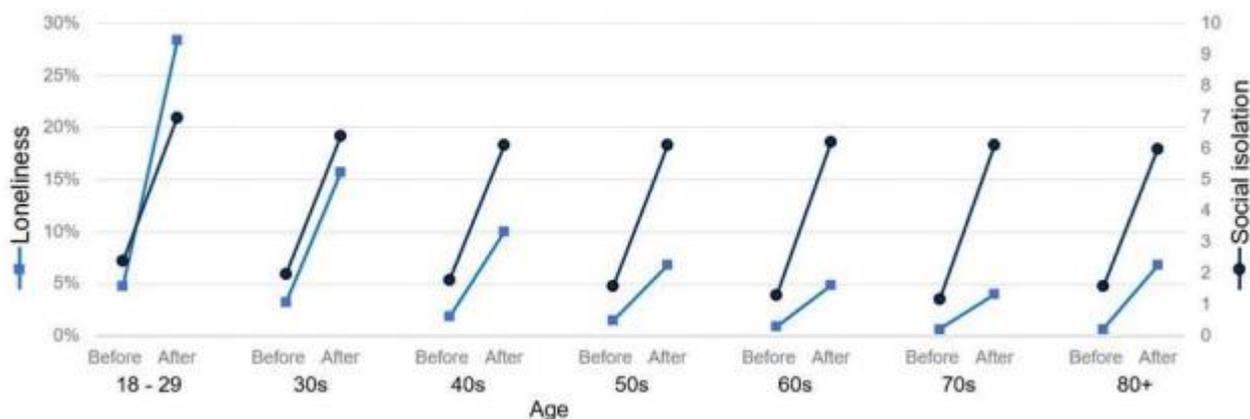
What other evidence are we aware of?

National surveys – A number of national surveys have been undertaken some of which will continue to further ongoing research particularly around health and wellbeing and the economy.

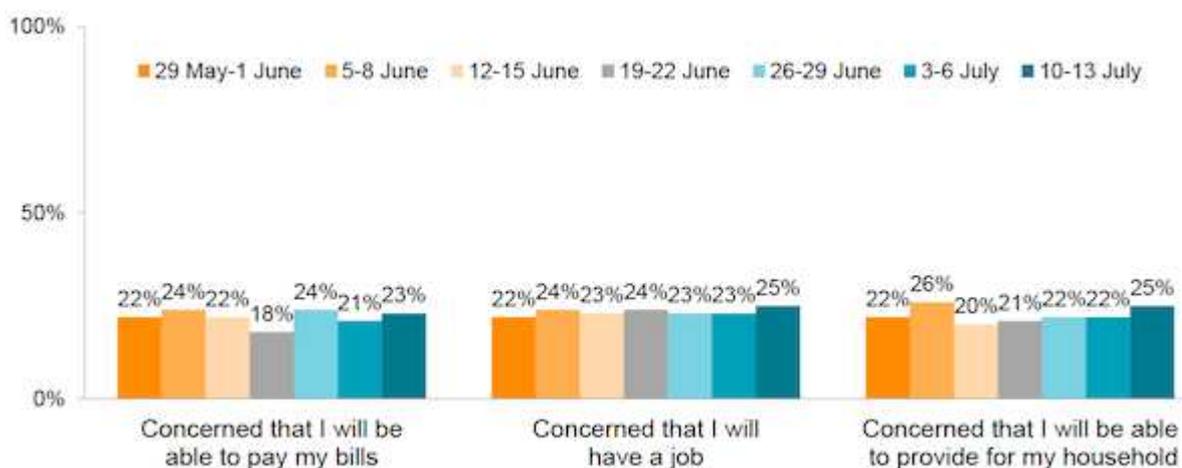
In relation to **Health and Wellbeing** the findings are not too dissimilar to the comments we received within our local surveys. Generally feeling stressed or anxious was the most common way adults experiencing some form of depression felt their well-being was being affected.



Scottish Survey on Lockdown – Loneliness and isolation - Feelings of loneliness and isolation before and during 'lockdown', by age group



Working and Finance - The national picture on the impact COVID has on people in relation to their income and finance is detailed in the chart below and again this resonates with what we heard from some respondents to our local survey.



Business – Some national data is detailed below and again these are not too dissimilar to the Perth & Kinross experience.

- 11% of the workforce remain on furlough leave, with 63% of furloughed employees receiving top ups to their pay;
- Of those businesses which had not permanently ceased trading, 36% of the workforce were working remotely
- The accommodation and food service activities industry reported the highest percentage of businesses reporting their risk of insolvency was severe to moderate, at 23%, compared with 11% across all industries.
- The arts, entertainment and recreation industry reported the largest percentage of businesses indicating that operating costs had exceeded turnover, at 40%.

Programme for Government 2021: “Protecting Scotland, Renewing Scotland”

The programme sets out measures to deal with the coronavirus as well as set programmes to aid recovery. The three themes are:

- A National Mission to Create New Jobs, Good Jobs and Green Jobs
- Promoting Equality and Helping our Young People Grasp Their Potential
- Promoting Lifelong Health and Wellbeing

These themes all linking into the four Recovery & Renewal workstreams.

Conclusion

Despite the situation that individuals, businesses, the third sector and the Council have experienced there has been some very positive feedback as well as some significant learnings for the four workstreams to consider in their planning processes.

What we heard across all the feedback received was the impact that the pandemic has had on peoples lives, their family, income and their mental health and wellbeing. There are a number of lessons for the Council and its’ partners to consider and improve, as well as a number of suggestions on how we can engage and involve communities more in decision making.

The findings and suggestions on how we can move forward with the Perth & Kinross Offer and to build a better Council are also echoed within the Fairer Futures report commissioned by the Fairness Commission in 2017.

- A Fairer Perth & Kinross: People, Place & Equality
- A strong start: An Equal Footing for Life – Chances, Choices and Confidence
- Fairer Working Lives: Opportunity, Security & respect
- A Thriving Third Age: Living Well, Belonging & Contributing
- Better Connected: Services, Transport & Digital Lives

The feedback we have received together with all our other intelligence, both local and national, will go on to inform discussions with communities, planning partners and staff on how we build back and even better council and taking forward the Perth & Kinross Offer.