

Kinross-shire Local Committee Evaluation

Final Report

June 2023

Perth and Kinross Council

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Local Committee powers and effectiveness.....	3
3	Local decision making.....	9
4	Local democracy.....	14
5	Resource and structural implications.....	19
6	Conclusions and recommendations	25



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1 Introduction

Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) commissioned Iconic Consulting to evaluate the Kinross-shire Local Committee pilot from January 2022 to March 2023. This is the Final Report of the evaluation which builds on the Interim Report completed in December 2022.

Background

In March 2021, PKC agreed to pilot Kinross-shire Local Committee as a new approach to explore how decentralised decision-making and local democracy could be strengthened. Councillors and officers jointly developed a pilot [Scheme of Administration](#) over several months, and it was approved by Council in October 2021 with a budget of £40,000 to support administration and evaluation of the pilot. Kinross-shire Local Committee is a part of PKC's formal Committee structure and its remit and powers have been summarised as follows:

- **Decision-making powers** extend to placemaking policy (subject to wider Council policy and statutory duties and powers); funding allocations related to functions devolved to the Local Committee; capital funding devolved to the Local Committee; and grant funding for local community projects devolved to the Local Committee including the Community Investment Fund and Common Good.
- **Policy direction and priority-setting** on infrastructure, economic development, roads and environment services delivered by the Council in Kinross-shire.
- **Scrutiny and recommendatory powers** relating to wider Council policy and delivery as these affect Kinross-shire plus capital projects delivered by the Council in the ward.

Kinross-shire Local Committee membership consists of the four Ward Councillors and a representative from each of the six Community Councils covered by the ward: Cleish & Blairadam, Fossoway, Glenfarg, Kinross, Milnathort & Orwell, and Portmoak. Ward Councillors are voting members of the Local Committee and fulfil the roles of Convenor and Vice Convenor; the six Community Council representatives are non-voting members. Two of the Ward Councillors did not stand for re-election to PKC in May 2022 and two new Councillors were elected. In total, six individuals have been involved in the Local Committee as Kinross-shire Ward Councillors. Three of the Community Councils also changed representatives during the pilot period.

Six Local Committee meetings took place during the pilot - in January, April, June, August and November 2022, and February 2023. All meetings were held on a Thursday at 5 or 5.30 pm. The first five meetings were held virtually via Microsoft Teams. The sixth, in February 2023, was a hybrid with in-person and online attendees. Overall, the meetings have been well attended.

	Jan '22	Apr '22	Jun '22	Aug '22	Nov '22	Feb '23
Ward Councillors present	4	4	4	4	3	3
Community Councils present	6	4	0	5	4	6
PKC officers in attendance / observing	12	9	7	9	9	10
Others	1	0	0	0	1	3
TOTAL	23	17	11	18	17	22

Evaluation

The evaluation aimed 'to assess initial impact on local decision-making and community empowerment, and identify wider potential democratic, resource and structural implications for the Council'. More specifically, PKC stated that the evaluation should assess:

- How the Local Committee discharges its powers during the pilot period and any barriers / enablers to its effectiveness.
- The impact on strengthened local decision-making through the representative / voting structure of the Local Committee.
- Wider impact on local democracy through enhanced community empowerment, participation and community leadership.
- Wider resource and structural implications for the Council to consider, including the key relationship with Local Action Partnerships.

The evaluation involved:

- A review of Council documents covering the development of the Local Committee, as well as agenda papers and minutes of the six meetings during the pilot. We also watched the recording of the PKC Committee meeting in October 2021 that agreed to pilot the Local Committee.
- Observation of all six Local Committee meetings held during the pilot. In addition, we observed three pre-agenda meetings involving PKC Officers and Ward Councillors.
- Interviews conducted between January and March 2023 with three Ward Councillors, three Community Council representatives, eight PKC Officers and five community representatives from Kinross-shire Action Partnership. These interviews were in addition to those conducted for the Interim Report which involved six former and current Ward Councillors, four Community Council representatives, and four PKC Officers.
- A review of local democracy and community engagement in other local authorities in Scotland including the Area Committees and Community Planning Partnership arrangements in Aberdeenshire, Argyll & Bute, Dumfries & Galloway, Fife, Highland, South Lanarkshire, and West Lothian.

Report structure

This report directly addresses the evaluation brief and is therefore structured as follows:

- Section 2 assesses how the Local Committee discharged its powers during the pilot and identifies barriers and enablers to its effectiveness.
- Section 3 examines the Local Committee's impact on local decision-making.
- Section 4 considers the Local Committee's influence on local democracy.
- Section 5 assesses the resource and structural implications for the Council, including the relationship with Local Action Partnerships.
- Section 6 presents our overall conclusions and recommendations.

2 Local Committee powers and effectiveness

This section examines how Kinross-shire Local Committee discharged its powers during the pilot period and identifies the enablers and barriers to its effectiveness.

Discharging Local Committee powers

It should be noted that Kinross-shire Local Committee first met in January 2022 and has therefore had a relatively short amount of time to discharge the extensive powers assigned to it in the Scheme of Administration. It is therefore understandable that the Committee has discharged a relatively small proportion of the powers at its disposal during the pilot period. The powers that have been discharged have tended to be used on isolated occasions and in a light touch manner, as discussed in more detail below. Several consultees reported that the Local Committee focused, during the pilot period, on matters that were important to communities in Kinross-shire.

The Scheme of Administration set out the Local Committee's General, Decision Making, and Scrutiny and Recommendatory Powers. We assess the use of these powers by examining the items covered at the Local Committee meetings (see Appendix 1) against the powers set out in the Scheme of Administration. Our findings are summarised below with further details provided in Appendix 2. The subsequent section on barriers and enablers examines the factors that contributed to the powers that were discharged during the pilot.

General Powers

Kinross-shire Local Committee discharged three of the four General Powers (see Appendix 2). Attendance by other persons and outside organisations (Power 2.2) has been limited to a deputation from the public on a road safety issue in January 2022, a presentation from a third sector organisation in November 2022, and a presentation from a community-based sports club in February 2023. Iconic also presented the findings of our Interim Report in February 2023. There have been some items covered which, it could be argued, fall under Power 2.4, such as the potential community asset transfer of the former Blairingone Primary School which has been debated at several meetings, and consultation on UK Parliament constituency boundary changes which was considered at the April and November 2022 meetings.

Decision Making Powers

Kinross-shire Local Committee has discharged relatively few of its Decision Making Powers over the pilot period. These powers covered overall decision making (Section 3.0), as well as specific powers related to Infrastructure and Economic Development (Section 3.1), Roads (Section 3.2), Environment (Section 3.3), and Communities (Section 3.4).

The Committee discharged two of the four general decision making powers. In February 2023, the Committee discharged Power 3.0.3 to agree a grant of £30,000 from a revenue budget of £40,000 as a contribution towards a pavilion extension, changing facilities and car parking at King George V Playing Field in Kinross. The Committee also discharged Power 3.0.4 to allocate expenditure from the Community Investment Fund and Kinross Common Good Fund. Although decisions regarding the Playing Field and localised funds were within the Committee's powers, there were aspects of the decision making process which merited further attention which we present in section 3.

The Committee discharged two of the four Infrastructure and Economic Development Powers. Power 3.1.1 was used in April 2022 when the Committee identified two issues related to Loch Leven that were to be reported to the Strategic, Policy and Resources Committee for approval and adoption as non-statutory Supplementary Guidance to support the Local Development Plan. The November 2022 meeting included a report on supply and demand for serviced employment land in the Kinross-shire ward which discharged Power 3.1.3. It should be noted however that the Local Committee minutes state the contents of the report were observed and the Committee did not make any decisions that would support or promote economic activity in the ward.

Roads have been a recurring feature of Kinross-shore Local Committee meetings reflecting the importance of this issue to the Ward Councillors and Community Council representatives. The Committee has the power to promote Road Traffic Orders (3.2.2) and this has been the most relevant power to the road safety discussions that have taken place at the Committee meetings. The most notable example has been community concerns about the A911 in Scotlandwell which was raised at the first meeting in January 2022 and at several subsequent meetings. The January 2022 minutes show that the Committee agreed that a temporary 40mph speed limit be introduced, and information gathered to form part of a Route Action Plan. PKC Officers have included the scheme among several others in a Road Traffic Order that was being prepared in March 2023. Officers highlighted their limited capacity and heavy workload, and the legislative process that needs to be followed to apply for a Road Traffic Order, for the time taken to implement the Local Committee's decisions, which had been highlighted by community representatives. The Committee has not discharged any of the other four decision making powers it has in respect of Roads.

The Local Committee has discharged two of the nine Environment decision making powers. Climate Action Through Community Heating (CATCH) made a presentation in November 2022 which utilised Power 3.3.5. Although members welcomed the presentation it does not appear to have led on to further action at this stage. Power 3.3.8 was discharged in January 2022 when the Committee agreed to put forward a motion to Council including the extension of the Lomond Hills Regional Park to include Loch Leven and the establishment of an Ochil Hills Regional Park. In addition, the February 2023 meeting included a verbal update from a PKC Officer on proposals for a windfarm at Burnt Farm. Although this item did not fall within the Committee's environment powers it was requested by the Ward Councillors and falls within the Committee's General Powers. This is a good example of how the Local Committee has, on occasions, focused on issues raised by Ward Councillors and Community Council representatives.

The Local Committee has discharged one of six Communities decision making powers. The former Blairingone Primary School has been a recurring agenda item which falls within Power 3.4.2; as noted earlier this item is also relevant to Power 2.4. The Local Committee agreed to allow the community 12 months to establish a Development Trust and consider community management of the building. The implications of this decision are discussed in other sections of this report.

Scrutiny and Recommendatory Powers

Kinross-shire Local Committee has not discharged either of the Scrutiny and Recommendatory Powers at its disposal. Our review of Area Committees in other local authorities found the tend to use their scrutiny and recommendatory powers on a regular basis. In several local authorities,

Council services present a report outlining their work in the area and seek the views of Committee members on local issues and priorities. This tended to be a rolling programme of Service Performance Reports presented by senior officers. There were also examples of Area Committees reviewing specific issues in their area, such as Clydesdale Area Committee in South Lanarkshire scrutinising an inspection report produced by Education Scotland on a local primary school at their January 2023 meeting (see [minutes](#)). There was some support among consultees for Kinross-shire Local Committee to do likewise and we recommend this is discussed at a future meeting.

Recommendation 1: Kinross-shire Local Committee members discuss greater use of the Committee's Scrutiny and Recommendatory Powers. This could include specific Council services outlining their work in Kinross-shire and seeking the views of Committee members on local issues and priorities.

Enablers

The factors that have enabled Kinross-shire Local Committee to discharge its powers have been:

- **Ward Councillors identifying relevant items** and, where necessary, ensuring their inclusion on the agenda. Councillors reported that many of these items had been raised at Community Council meetings or other local meetings they had attended and this demonstrated that the Local Committee was addressing issues that were important to communities.
- **PKC Officers fully engaging with the Local Committee** from the outset, for example, with regard to road safety and the former Blairingone Primary School. Officers produced reports to accompany agenda items and progressed actions after the meetings.
- The **current Convenor** who took on the role for the February 2023 meeting, having served as the Vice Convenor following election to the Council in May 2022, has a vision for the Local Committee which has given it greater purpose. This has translated into an increase in agenda items at recent meetings utilising more of the powers at the Local Committee's disposal, and a more inclusive approach to the meetings.
- The **identification of a Lead Officer** – PKC's Head of Environment and Consumer Services – in autumn 2022 has also helped and will enable the Convenor to take forward their plans for the Local Committee. The Lead Officer is planning a series of service specific presentations at future Local Committees which should also stimulate discussion and potential actions, and has suggested Community Planning Partners are also asked to present to the Committee (as is the case in other local authorities with Area Committees).
- **PKC Committee Services** have ensured the Local Committee meetings have been well planned, operated effectively, and accurately minuted. This has ensured the Local Committee functioned effectively as a PKC Committee.
- **PKC Legal and Governance Services** has provided guidance on the Local Committee's powers which has ensured agenda items are within the Local Committee's powers. The Head of Service has taken an active interest and role in the Committee and assisted the evaluation throughout the pilot period.

Barriers

As described above Kinross-shire Local Committee has discharged relatively few of its powers during the pilot period, and where powers were used they tended to be on isolated occasions and in a relatively light touch manner. The following barriers have contributed to this situation:

- The **relatively short time** period covered by the pilot - January 2022 to March 2023 - which limited the items the Local Committee could cover. Several consultees suggested this was the main reason the Committee had not utilised more of its powers during the pilot period.
- **Fewer Local Committee meetings** took place during the pilot period than anticipated which also limited the items the Local Committee could address. As noted previously, there were six Local Committees during the pilot period. The Scheme of Administration set out that meetings would be held on an eight-weekly cycle and if this had been the case there could, potentially, have been two additional Local Committees during the pilot. PKC Officers highlighted Council elections in May 2022, Officer capacity and the summer recess as reasons for fewer meetings taking place than planned.
- Two of the Ward Councillors did not stand for re-election in May 2022 and two new Councillors were elected. These **changes in Ward Councillors** affected the number of meetings (as noted above) and led to changes in the Convenor and Vice Convenor positions. The two former Ward Councillors had been strong advocates of the Local Committee and played a significant role in designing the Scheme of Administration. One of the new Ward Councillors took on the Vice Convenor role and latterly that of Convenor. The new Convenor has a different vision for the Local Committee and a different style of chairing the meetings.
- **Changes in Community Council representatives** which meant some experience and understanding of the Local Committee was lost. Three of the Community Councils changed their representative during the pilot period.
- **Limited capacity among PKC Officers** to produce written reports for agenda items proposed by Ward Councillors. This issue is discussed further in section 5.
- **Limited forward planning** of the Local Committee agendas. This was an agenda item at the first Local Committee meeting in January 2022 but the planning meeting was postponed until after the local elections in May 2022. As a result the meetings in June and August 2022 had very limited agendas.
- **Disagreement regarding agenda items** between PKC Officers and Ward Councillors. Some items proposed by Ward Councillors in the summer of 2022 were not included on subsequent agendas as PKC Officers stated that only items requiring a decision from the Local Committee members could be considered. We do not share this interpretation of the Scheme of Administration and highlight that the items proposed by Ward Councillors were similar in nature to those on previous agendas, such as the report on 20mph Speed Trials discussed at the January 2022 meeting.
- **PKC Officers not proactively raising agenda items** with Ward Councillors that fall within the Local Committee's powers and seeking the Committee's views to inform their work. Several consultees including PKC Officers and Ward Councillors commented that some Officers did not support the creation of the Local Committee and their subsequent engagement has been limited, for example, one consultee reported "there was no will among Officers to make it work" and another felt "there has been huge resistance from Officers". Some PKC Officers highlighted that limited capacity among Officers was also a

- factor in their reluctance to raise agenda items.
- The **absence of a Kinross-shire Community Plan** that identified priorities in the ward or how the priorities in the Perth & Kinross Community Plan 2022-32 could be addressed in Kinross-shire.
 - **Limited awareness of the Committee's powers** among members, particularly Community Council representatives. This is discussed further in section 4.
 - A **narrow focus on a small number of issues** among Ward Councillors. Some consultees suggested Ward Councillors were raising issues identified by Community Councils which also had a narrow focus on issues such as road safety.
 - **Limited opportunity for Community Council representatives to identify agenda items.** This situation has improved over the pilot period, particularly after the current Convenor took on the role, although there is still room for further improvement, in our view, as discussed in section 4.
 - Several PKC Officers noted that the **Local Committee's powers were quite limited** as it was mainly restricted to making recommendations to other Council Committees that retained primacy on most issues.

Summary

- Kinross-shire Local Committee first met in January 2022 and has therefore had a relatively short amount of time to discharge the extensive powers assigned to it in the Scheme of Administration. It is therefore understandable that the Committee has discharged a relatively small proportion of the powers at its disposal during the pilot period.
- The powers that have been discharged have tended to be used on isolated occasions and in a light touch manner.
- The Local Committee made good use of its General Powers to request Ward Councillors, PKC Officers, other persons and outside organisations attended meetings, responded to questions and submitted reports in response to relevant matters.
- The Local Committee did not discharge the majority of the decision making powers related to Infrastructure and Economic Development, Roads, Environment, and Communities. The main use of decision making powers focused on the power to promote Road Traffic Orders and to make proposals to Council on community participation requests and the transfer of functions to community management and ownership subject to Council policies.
- Kinross-shire Local Committee has not discharged its Scrutiny and Recommendatory Powers. These powers are regularly used by Area Committees in other local authorities in Scotland.
- The factors that enabled the Local Committee to discharge its powers effectively included:
 - Ward Councillors identifying relevant items that reflected community concerns;
 - PKC Officers engaging well with the items raised by members;
 - the added impetus provided by the current Convenor;
 - the identification of a Lead Officer; and
 - the support and guidance provided by PKC's Legal and Governance Services.
- Barriers to the Local Committee's effectiveness include:
 - the relatively short time covered by the pilot;

- changes in Local Committee membership;
- PKC Officer capacity;
- limited forward planning of the Local Committee agenda;
- disagreement between Ward Councillors and PKC Officers about proposed agenda items;
- limited awareness of the Local Committee's powers;
- PKC Officers not raising potential agenda items with Ward Councillors that fall within the Local Committee's powers;
- the absence of a Kinross-shire Community Plan setting out local priorities; and
- limited opportunity for Community Council representatives to propose agenda items.

3 Local decision making

This section assess the impact on strengthened local decision-making through the representative / voting structure of Kinross-shire Local Committee. The most significant decisions made by the Local Committee are identified and this is followed by a discussion of the decision making process.

Decisions made

During the pilot period, Kinross-shire made the following decisions:

- To introduce a temporary 40mph speed limit on the A911 near Scotlandwell and produce a Route Action Plan at the January 2022 Local Committee meeting.
- A 12 month grace period before progressing options for the disposal of the former Blairingone Primary School to allow the exploration of community ownership / management options and establishment of a Development Trust at the January 2022 Local Committee meeting.
- A motion to Council to engage with neighbouring Councils regarding planning and management in the Lomond and Ochil Hills at the January 2022 Local Committee meeting.
- For PKC Officers to progress preparatory work on public realm improvement in Kinross Town Centre at the January 2022 Local Committee meeting.
- Common Good Fund awards at the January, August and November 2022 meetings.
- Community Investment Fund awards at April 2022 meeting.
- To highlight issues related to Loch Leven to the Strategic, Policy and Resources Committee for approval and adoption as non-statutory Supplementary Guidance to support the LDP at the April meeting.
- Agree to a submission by the Local Committee Convenor to The Boundary Commission objecting to proposed changes to the UK Parliamentary constituency at the November 2022 meeting.
- An award of £30,000 to King George V Playing Field at the February 2023 meeting.

The above shows that the Local Committee made a limited number of decisions during the pilot. It also shows that the number of decisions made at each meeting decreased throughout the period - this mainly reflected the number of items on the Local Committee agendas. Several consultees including PKC Officers, Ward Councillors and Community Council representatives commented on the limited number of decisions made, for example one reported “the Committee has been distinctly lacking in action”, a second commented “there’s not been many decisions really, which is slightly depressing”, and a third suggested “it’s difficult to say what decisions it has actually made, it’s a bit of a talking shop and an expensive one at that”. On the other hand, some consultees highlighted that the Committee has existed for a relatively short period of time during which it utilised comparatively few of its powers. They therefore suggested it was understandable that a limited number of decisions were made during the pilot period.

Several Local Committee members commented that they were unaware what action had subsequently been taken on the decisions made at the meetings. Although the agenda includes matters arising updates on progress have been patchy and tend to relate only to the previous

meeting. We therefore recommend that an action log is established and maintained by Officers and reviewed at Local Committee meetings.

Recommendation 2: An action log is established and maintained by PKC Officers and reviewed at Local Committee meetings.

Decision making process

It is worth noting that the decision making process at Kinross-shire Local Committee has been straightforward. Decisions have been made by consensus and without the need for votes. Ward Councillors have not brought their political allegiances into any of the discussions and we commend them for this.

The Community Council representatives we consulted throughout the evaluation very much welcomed their involvement in the Local Committee. They reported that, generally, they supported the decisions made and they did not highlight their non-voting status as an issue with regard to the decision making process. It is our observation that the Community Council representatives contributed constructively to the discussions at times, however the Ward Councillors had a more prominent role in the discussions and the decision making process. At the most recent meetings the Convenor has made a notable effort to engage the Community Council representatives in discussions and we commend them for this proactive approach. Nonetheless, it is our view that overall the Community Council representatives have had a subordinate role to the Ward Councillors in the discussions and decision making process during the pilot period. We discuss below how this was evident in the Local Committee's decisions to fund the King George V Playing Field and in the allocation of CIF grants.

Our consultation with PKC Officers and Ward Councillors suggest that the Local Committee's decisions could have been reached using the structures and process that existed before the Committee was established. The added value of the Local Committee could therefore be questioned. One benefit of the Local Committee highlighted by some consultees was that decisions were made at the local level involving Kinross-shire Ward Councillors and Community Council representatives. The decision to allow the community time to develop proposals for the former Blairingone Primary School is an example of how the Local Committee may have strengthened local decision making. Some consultees suggested without the Local Committee the Council may have progressed with plans to dispose of the site. On the other hand some consultees suggested the resource implications of the Local Committee - discussed in section 5 of this report - should also be considered when considering the Local Committee's added value. Consultees also noted that the decision making process for [Community Asset Transfers](#) is unaffected by the establishment of the Local Committee as the final decision still rests with the Property Sub-Committee of Finance & Resources Committee. We also suggest that some of the decisions made by the Local Committee potentially weakened the local decision making process rather than strengthened it. This view was formed from our assessment of the decisions made regarding the CIF and the funding awarded to King George V Playing Field, discussed below.

CIF decisions

Prior to the establishment of the Local Committee, a Ward Panel assessed CIF applications and decided which applications to fund in all wards in Perth and Kinross including Kinross-shire. The Kinross-shire Ward Panel consisted of approximately a dozen people including Ward Councillors, members of the Kinross-shire Action Partnership (KAP) and Community Council representatives. Section 3.0.4 of the Scheme of Administration unequivocally gave the Local Committee the power to allocate CIF grants. Community members of the KAP consulted during this evaluation acknowledge that the Scheme of Administration assigned the power to allocate CIF funding to the Local Committee, although they suggested communicating this decision could have been clearer.

During the pilot period the CIF decision making process in Kinross-shire was as follows.

- For the year 2021/22, seven CIF awards were made totalling approximately £16,000. The minutes of the Kinross-shire Local Committee meeting in April 2022 state that voting members of the Committee (i.e. Ward Councillors) were contacted, and the decisions were agreed via email due to the urgency of the request. Community members of the KAP confirmed that they were involved in a Ward Panel in March 2022.
- For the year 2022/23, the KAP community members raised concerns that the Ward Panel planned for late 2022 was cancelled at short notice and without satisfactory explanation, and questioned the robustness of the CIF application assessment process. We understand Ward Councillors took the decision to cancel the Ward Panel against Officer advice. The minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting in February 2023 state that “In Kinross-shire, the four ward Councillors assessed the applications and sought input from the Local Action Partnership before finalising their commitments”. It is our understanding that the decisions were made by the Ward Councillors and the community members of the KAP were asked via email to ratify the decisions and make a small financial contribution from the KAP’s budget as the proposed awards exceeded the CIF budget.

The CIF decision making process in 2022/23 is a concern in terms of strengthening local decision making, and community participation. The decisions were made by Ward Councillors, not the full Local Committee as set out in the Scheme of Administration, and this replaced the previous process which involved a Ward Panel consisting of a wider range of stakeholders, including the community, undertaking a robust and transparent assessment of bids. In the absence of the Local Committee it is reasonable to conclude that CIF decisions in Kinross-shire would have continued as they had previously i.e. by the Ward Panel.

King George V Playing Field decision

We have similar concerns about the decision by the Local Committee in February 2023 to award King George V Playing Field £30,000. The organisation was awarded £1,000 by the Local Committee in August 2022 from the Kinross Common Good Fund having applied for £50,000 when the Fund only had £5,000 available. The input of some Community Council representatives was important in questioning suggestions by Local Committee members to allocate more funding from the Common Good Fund at that time. We understand King George V Playing Field was one of 12 applications for CIF funding in 2022/23 and had sought £30,000 from the £35,000 available at that time. The minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting in February 2023 show that King George V Playing Field was not among the 11 awards made. The £30,000 awarded by Kinross-shire Local Committee in February 2023 came from £40,000 allocated to the Committee in the

2022/23 Council budget; a similar award had been included in the 2021/22 budget for administration and evaluation of the pilot. The purpose of the £40,000 funding for the Local Committee in 2022/23 was not specified but it was assumed by some PKC Officers that it would contribute to the ongoing administration of the pilot as it had previously. There had been no reference at any Local Committee meetings that there was a budget to allocate to local projects until the February 2023 meeting when the agenda included an item to award King George V Playing Field £30,000. Members of the King George V Playing Field Management Committee addressed the Committee and following a short question and answer session, the grant was approved for the full £30,000.

Our consultation with the Community Council representatives raised a number of points which lead us to conclude local decision making was not strengthened by the existence of the Local Committee in this instance. The key points were that Community Council representatives were unaware that the Local Committee had a budget to allocate to local projects and felt they were not well informed or involved in the process of deciding how the money should be allocated. While they agreed the King George V Playing Field was a good project which would benefit local people they reported they would not necessarily have funded it, or at least not at the same level, if it had been made clear that the Local Committee had funding that could have been used for other local priorities or projects. It is acknowledged that the Convenor did invite questions from the Community Council representatives at the meeting and they asked about incorporating energy efficiency measures in the development. However, the Community Council representatives reported they did not feel in a position to question whether this specific project should be awarded funding. In our view, this situation reflects the Community Council representatives' subordinate membership of the Local Committee. This was reinforced by suggestions from Ward Councillors that Community Councillors could have known in advance of the meeting that this issue was to be discussed as the agenda was available online. We would urge Ward Councillors to compare the information they received on this issue, and the timing of the information being shared with them, to that of the Community Council representatives. We therefore recommend that decisions regarding any future budgets devolved to the Local Committee are transparent and inclusive, taken at the meetings by all members who have equal access to information and input into the discussions.

Recommendation 3: decisions regarding any future budgets devolved to the Local Committee are transparent and inclusive, taken by all members at the meetings. Community Council representatives should have equal access to information prior to the meeting and equal input into the discussions at the meetings.

In the absence of Kinross-shire Local Committee the budget Ward Councillors used to award £30,000 to King George V Playing Field would not have existed. It is therefore possible that the project would not have been funded. Alternatively, the organisation may have sought funding from PKC and Councillors may have looked to support this from another budget, however, this is open to conjecture. We are therefore not in a position to comment with any certainty about funding for the King George V Playing Field if the Kinross-shire Local Committee had not been established.

Summary

- Kinross-shire Local Committee made a limited number of decisions during the pilot. However, it should be noted the pilot covered a relatively short time period and the agenda at some meetings was also limited.
- Decisions have been made by consensus and without the need for votes.
- Ward Councillors have not brought their political allegiances into the decision making process.
- Community Council representatives welcomed their involvement in the Local Committee and did not highlight their non-voting status as an issue in the decision making process.
- Community Council representatives contributed constructively to the discussions at times but, overall, they were subordinate to the Ward Councillors in the decision making process, in our view.
- The new Convenor has made a notable effort to engage Community Council representatives in discussions at recent meetings and we commend them for this proactive approach.
- It appears that the Local Committee's decisions could have been reached using the structures and processes that existed before the Committee was established. This led some consultees to question the added value of the Local Committee and highlight the resource implications. On the other hand, other consultees felt the benefit of the Local Committee came from the fact the decisions were being made at a local level by Kinross-shire Councillors and Community Council representatives.
- The decisions made by the Local Committee regarding the allocation of CIF grants and the awarding of £30,000 to the King George V Playing Field weakened rather than strengthened the local decision making process, in our view.

4 Local democracy

This section assesses Kinross-shire Local Committee's impact on local democracy through enhanced community empowerment, participation and leadership.

Community participation

Kinross-shire Local Committee has enhanced the community's participation in the democratic process - if the community is viewed as the Community Councils in Kinross-shire. This has arisen as the six Community Council are members of the Local Committee and their representatives have attended the meetings throughout the pilot period (see Table 1). Our review of local democratic structures elsewhere in Scotland showed that Community Councils are members of the Area Committees in only one other local authority (West Lothian). The Kinross-shire Community Councils therefore have a greater opportunity to participate in local democratic structures than their counterparts in most other areas of Scotland, including the rest of Perth and Kinross. The Community Council representatives welcomed their participation in the Local Committee, for example, one commented, "It has been extremely positive and amazingly useful, not least in understanding what the Council can and cannot do, what budgets allow and what is reasonable".

If however, the community is viewed more broadly as the general public then it is our view that Kinross-shire Local Committee has had a more limited impact on community participation during the pilot period. There has been no promotion or awareness raising of the Local Committee beyond the Community Councils and these bodies have a relatively narrow reach in terms of community participation. As a result the wider community in Kinross-shire appear largely unaware of the Local Committee judging by the low numbers observing the meetings online, attending the February 2023 meeting in person (0 members of the general public), or viewing the YouTube recordings (an average of 41), as well as the absence of directly raised issues or petitions brought to the Committee by members of the public. If PKC wish to increase community participation in Kinross-shire Local Committee in the future then we recommend the Communications team promotes and raises awareness of the Committee.

Recommendation 4: PKC promotes and raises awareness of Kinross-shire Local Committee.

We highlighted in our Interim Report the online nature and formality of the earlier meetings - compounded by the lack of explanation and support for community representatives - as barriers to community participation. We recommended future meetings were less formal and took place in-person as well as online. It was therefore reassuring to observe the enhanced role the community had in February 2023 which was a hybrid meeting where the Convenor proactively sought to engage the community representatives in the discussions. There was a consensus among consultees that the February 2023 meeting was a marked improvement on previous meetings in terms of community participation. Area Committees in other local authorities are mostly using a hybrid approach at present, with the exception of Highland where online meetings are used given the distances involved in travelling to venues.

Several PKC consultees questioned, with some justification, how representative Community Councils are of the wider population. The current Convenor has suggested that membership of the

Local Committee could be widened to allow a broader range of community representatives and other interested parties to participate in the meetings, such as Kinross-shire Action Partnership, prominent community and voluntary sector organisations and business interests such as Kinross Partnership. While there was some support for this idea, there were also concerns about the membership becoming unwieldy and we are minded to agree with this view. There are several other options available to PKC including, but not limited to, the following:

- Inviting other interested parties such as Kinross-shire Action Partnership or Kinross Partnership to all future meetings and they could attend if there was an agenda item that they wanted to observe and potentially contribute to.
- Creating a flexible membership model where other interested parties are designated as members of the Committee but not expected to attend every meeting. Similar to the above, they would only attend when there was relevant business, however, they would benefit from the more formal position as Committee members. This should help in terms of their status and ability to contribute to discussions, as well as ensuring they had the opportunity to request agenda items and received relevant paperwork and communications.
- Inviting specific interest groups to future meetings on an ad-hoc basis when relevant items are on the agenda. For example, if the Committee had an agenda item related to young people (discharging Power 3.4.4) or history / heritage (discharging Power 3.4.5) it could be beneficial to have local youth or local history organisations attend and actively encouraged to contribute to the discussion, or to have submissions in advance from relevant organisations, as they would bring knowledge and experience that the Committee members may not possess.

We recommend Local Committee membership is included as an agenda item at a forthcoming meeting so all members can share their views and try to agree a way forward.

Recommendation 5: Local Committee membership is included as an agenda item at a forthcoming meeting so all members can share their views and try to agree a way forward.

The above options could also be considered by PKC in other wards in Perth and Kinross without a full complement of Community Councils where Local Committees are to be established in the future. For comparison, we found that membership of the Area Committees in other local authorities in Scotland tended to consist solely of Ward Councillors. The exceptions to this were Community Council representatives in West Lothian (as noted above) and Youth Council representatives in Dumfries and Galloway.

In other local authorities with Area Committees, Community Planning Partners (CPP) make regular presentations with Performance Management Reports outlining their work in the area and, on occasions, seeking input from members on local issues/priorities. This tends to consist of a set programme with one CPP partner presenting a report at each meeting over the year. Kinross-shire Community Council representatives reported they would very much welcome the involvement of CPP partners, and there was some, more muted, support among Ward Councillors. The minutes of meetings in other areas suggest they focus predominantly on updating members about service performance. For example, the [minutes](#) of Stewartry Area Committee in Dumfries and Galloway in March 2023 show the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service presented a [Service Performance Report](#)

[for Stewartry](#) which members noted. There were some examples of more meaningful engagement by CPP partners with Area Committees although they were less common. For example, the [minutes](#) of the Stewartry Area Committee in November 2022 show Dumfries and Galloway Integrated Joint Board (IJB) submitted a [Health and Social Care Performance Report for Stewartry](#) which members were asked to review, consider whether the actions proposed were adequate to improve performance, and make recommendations on any matters back for consideration by the IJB where appropriate. Inviting CPP partners to present to Kinross-shire Local Committee would, we suggest, need to be mindful of CPP representatives' capacity and the added value from attending. If they are happy to agree to a programme of regular performance reports there could be benefits in terms of shared knowledge and understanding on local issues, particularly when members are asked for their views on specific issues or proposed actions. An alternative option would be for CPP partners to be invited to attend Kinross-shire Local Committee on an ad-hoc basis when relevant agenda items arise or when they are seeking views/insight on specific issues.

Recommendation 6: The involvement of Community Planning Partners in Kinross-shire Local Committee is included as an agenda item at a forthcoming meeting so all members can share their views and try to agree a way forward.

Community leadership

Kinross-shire Local Committee has enhanced community leadership as the Community Council representatives have taken on the important role of representing the views of the community across Kinross-shire. The low profile of the Local Committee however means that this leadership role will be limited to those involved in the Community Councils and not particularly widespread across the community as a whole.

The four Ward Councillors are elected representatives of the community and their membership of the Local Committee enhances their role as community leaders.

Community empowerment

Kinross-shire Local Committee has enhanced community empowerment although we suggest the impact has been mixed to date. The Local Committee has helped the community to consider ownership and management options for the former Blairingone Primary School and this was one of the aims of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. In addition, the Community Council representatives have contributed at times to the Local Committee discussions and raised relevant points. However, it is our view that the Community Council representatives are not empowered as equal members of the Local Committee and this is based on our observation of the Local Committee meetings, the pre-agenda meetings, and consultations. The recent example of the King George V Playing Field demonstrated this as the Community Council representatives were presented with what several consultees described as a "fait accompli" by the Ward Councillors. The non-voting membership of Community Council representatives contributes to this imbalance as it creates a two-tier membership although we suggest it is not the only factor. We, and the Community Council representatives, understand the legal reasons why only Ward Councillors can vote given the Local Committee's status as a formal Committee of Perth and Kinross Council. As noted earlier, Local Committee decisions have never come down to a vote so it is not the case that the community have raised concerns but Ward Councillors have nonetheless voted through a decision against the wishes of the non-voting members. Our concern - highlighted by the King

George V Playing Field decision - is that Community Council representatives are not fully respected as equal members of the Local Committee by Ward Councillors and Officers as they are not provided with the same level of information and input before and during the meetings. We therefore recommend in the future PKC ensures Community Council representatives are provided with the same level of information and input before and during the meetings as Ward Councillors.

Recommendation 7: PKC Officers and Ward Councillors ensure Community Council representatives are provided with the same level of information and input before and during the meetings as Ward Councillors.

The formality of the Local Committee, particularly in the earlier meetings, was another factor that hindered community empowerment. It limited the Community Council representatives ability to contribute during meetings as they were unfamiliar with Council Committee processes. This situation has improved in recent meetings - which have been less formal and the Convenor has been specifically asked the Community Council representatives for their views.

We recommended in the Interim Report that Community Councils are contacted by PKC before every Local Committee meeting to put forward potential agenda items. We understand this was not actioned prior to the February 2023 meeting - although the Convenor did inform members at the meeting that they could put forward ideas - and we therefore repeat the recommendation in this report.

Recommendation 8: Community Councils are contacted by PKC to put forward potential agenda items before every Local Committee meeting.

We also recommend a future meeting of Kinross-shire Local Committee includes an agenda item on the Committee's powers and decision making process with a presentation from PKC Legal and Governance Services followed by a question and answer session. We feel this would greatly benefit the Community Council representatives, particularly the newer members, and potentially enhance their participation in future meetings. It would also remind Ward Councillors that the Community Council representatives are equal members of the Local Committee.

Recommendation 9: A future meeting of Kinross-shire Local Committee includes an agenda item on the Committee's powers and decision making process with a presentation from PKC Legal and Governance Services followed by a question and answer session.

Changes to the way CIF funding has been allocated since the Local Committee was established, described in section 3, have also weakened community participation and empowerment, in our view. We therefore recommend a Kinross-shire Ward Panel is re-instated for future CIF awards.

Recommendation 10: A Kinross-shire Ward Panel is re-instated for future CIF awards.

Summary

- Kinross-shire Local Committee has enhanced the community's participation in the democratic process if the community is viewed as the local Community Councils.
- If however, the community is viewed more broadly as the general public then it is our view that the Local Committee has had a more limited impact on community participation.
- There was a marked improvement in the contribution from Community Council representatives at the February 2023 Local Committee which was a hybrid meeting at which the Convenor proactively sought to engage community representatives.
- Kinross-shire Local Committee has enhanced community leadership as the Community Council representatives have taken on the important role of representing the views of the community across Kinross-shire. The low profile of the Local Committee however means that this leadership role will be limited.
- The four Ward Councillors are elected representatives of the community and their membership of the Local Committee enhances their role as community leaders.
- Kinross-shire Local Committee has enhanced community empowerment to a degree although the impact has been mixed to date. It has enabled the community to examine community ownership options for the former Blairingone Primary School which was an aim of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. However, it is our view that the Community Council representatives are not empowered as equal members of the Local Committee. This is partly due to their non-voting status but also due to the limited information and input they are afforded before and during meetings.
- Changes to the way CIF funding has been allocated have also weakened community participation and empowerment, in our view.

5 Resource and structural implications

This section highlights the resource and structural implications for PKC to consider, including the key relationship with Local Action Partnerships, following the establishment of Kinross-shire Local Committee.

Resource implications

There have been considerable resource implications for PKC during the pilot period. These include, but are not limited to, the administration, attendance at meetings, and the production of reports for the Local Committee. In total, we estimate these tasks led to at least 204 hours of additional work for PKC Officers, as summarised in Table 2 below.

Tasks	Hours
Committee Services staff administration and attendance at pre-agenda and Local Committee meetings	101
Other PKC Officers' attendance at pre-agenda and Committee meetings (exc. Committee Services staff)	63
Additional report production and review by PKC Officers	40
TOTAL	204

In addition, PKC Officers undertook other tasks that we have not been able to quantify and show in the above table. For example, the identification of a lead officer in autumn 2022 created additional work for the senior officer who took on the role and this will be an ongoing time commitment, particularly in liaising with and supporting the Convenor and forward planning the agendas. Other officers including senior officers from Legal & Governance and Communities & Culture for example, have also been involved throughout the pilot period contributing to the implementation and review of the Local Committee.

Recommendation 11: PKC Ward Councillors and Senior Officers consider the resource implications of maintaining Kinross-shire Local Committee and establishing Local Committees in other wards.

Further details on the resource implications shown in Table 2 are provided below.

Administration

PKC Committee Services staff have undertaken a number of tasks related to Kinross-shire Local Committee including arranging the meeting schedule, setting up online meetings and the hybrid meeting in February 2023, sending out invites, producing the agenda pack, and taking minutes. A Committee Clerk was assigned to the Local Committee at the outset. The Clerk and two other members of the Committee Services team have attended all six of the Local Committee meetings. The Head of Service has also attended the meetings to provide advice and guidance where required. The meetings varied in length from two hours to 25 minutes, with an average of 1 hour 15 minutes.

In total, we estimate PKC Officers accumulated 101 hours in the administration of Kinross-shire Local Committee. A breakdown of this estimate is shown below in Table 3.

	Committee Clerk	Committee Support Officers (x2)	Democratic Services Manager	Head of Service	Total
Arranging meetings, IT & venues	12.0	-	-	-	12.0
Producing agenda pack	24.0	-	-	-	24.0
Attending pre-agenda meetings	4.5	-	-	4.5	9.0
Attending Committee meetings and minute taking	7.5	15.0	2.0	7.5	32.0
Producing minutes	6.0	18.0	-	-	24.0
TOTAL	54.0	33.0	2.0	12.0	101.0

Additional resources of £40,000 were allocated from the 2021/22 Council budget for administration and evaluation of the Local Committee pilot. As noted earlier, a further £40,000 was allocated in the 2022/23 budget of which £30,000 was awarded to the King George V Playing Field. PKC Committee Services confirmed that additional funding had increased staff resources although it is not clear whether the funding has covered all of the additional staff time summarised above.

Attendance

As shown in Table 4, several PKC Officers attended the Local Committee meetings. On average there were nine PKC Officers including Committee Services. In total, PKC Officers accumulated approximately 76 hours attending Kinross-shire Local Committee meetings during the pilot period. The total is approximately 53 hours if Committee Services staff are excluded as their time is already accounted for in Table 3.

	Jan '22	Apr '22	Jun '22	Aug '22	Nov '22	Feb '23	Total
PKC Committee Services staff in attendance	4	3	3	3	3	3	-
Other PKC Officers in attendance/ observing	8	6	4	6	6	7	-
Length of meeting	2h 4m	1h 25m	23m	30m	1h 20m	1h 55m	-
TOTAL hours	24h 48m	12h 48m	2h 42m	4h 30m	12h	19h 12m	75h 54m
TOTAL hours exc. Committee Services staff	18h 36m	8h 30m	1h 30m	3h	8h	13h 24m	53h 6m

The number of PKC Officers attending is broadly similar to the number recorded in the minutes of Area Committees in other local authorities in Scotland that we reviewed.

Pre-agenda meetings have also taken place before the Local Committee meetings, as is the case with most PKC Committees. We understand, on average, four PKC Officers attended these meetings including two from Committee Services. These meetings tend to be relatively short although there have been some longer meetings such as one we observed in January 2023 which lasted about an hour. We estimate PKC Officers spent approximately 20 hours in total attending

pre-agenda meetings, or 10 hours excluding Committee Services staff. In total, PKC Officers excluding Committee Services staff, accumulated 63 hours attending pre-agenda (10 hours) and Local Committee meetings (53 hours).

We also understand meetings have taken place before some Local Committees to review the draft reports which adds further to the time committed by PKC Officers to the Local Committee. It has not been possible to estimate the time involved in these meetings as the number and length of meetings is not known.

Kinross-shire Ward Councillors have also spent a substantial amount of time on Local Committee business which has been in addition to their existing commitments. This time has arisen from attendance at the Local Committee meetings and in some cases pre-agenda meetings, as well as preparation time such as reading the agenda pack and discussions with relevant Officers and other stakeholders. The time commitments from the Convenor and Vice Convenor will have been substantially greater than the other two Ward Councillors given their involvement in pre-agenda meetings and discussions with senior officers. We are also aware that PKC Ward Councillors and Officer undertook a joint visit to Kinross Town Centre in January 2022 to review a number of road safety issues. This followed the inclusion of Kinross town centre as an agenda item at the first Local Committee in January 2022 and discussions at subsequent Local Committee meetings.

Recommendation 12: PKC Ward Councillors consider the additional demands on their time, particularly the Convenor and Vice Convenor, in maintaining Kinross-shire Local Committee and establishing Local Committees in other wards.

Reports

PKC Officers presented 14 written reports and 7 verbal updates to Kinross-shire Local Committee during the pilot period. 12 of the written reports were produced specifically for the Local Committee as two reports had already been prepared for other Committees. The 12 reports written for the Local Committee were relatively short being between 2 and 6 pages long with an average of 4 pages. Some of the PKC Officers who produced Local Committee reports stated that they were not particularly time consuming reports and estimated they took 2-3 hours. We therefore estimate that report writing has taken up approximately 30 hours of PKC Officer time during the pilot period. PKC Officers noted that reports are reviewed and signed off by senior Officers and we estimate this could have added a further 10 hours to the total. In total, PKC Officers accumulated 40 hours producing (30 hours) and reviewing reports (10 hours) for Kinross-shire Local committee.

Table 5 – Report -estimated additional hours	
	Hours
Producing 12 additional reports	30
Reviewing 12 additional reports	10
TOTAL	40

The current Convenor has stated a preference for verbal updates or short reports where appropriate in a bid to minimise PKC Officer input. We very much endorse this approach given the limited capacity Officers have highlighted throughout the evaluation.

Recommendation 13: Local Committee reports are presented verbally or as concise written reports to minimise the demands on PKC Officer time.

Roads

The establishment of the Local Committee has increased the workload of PKC Officers responsible for road safety more than any other service. Attendance at Local Committee meetings, pre-agenda meetings, and producing reports has been additional to their existing workload. In all wards in Perth and Kinross including Kinross-shire, Ward Councillors meet regularly with road safety officers and highlight concerns raised by Community Councils and the wider community. It is therefore questionable what added value the Kinross-shire Local Committee arrangements have brought other than issues being discussed at a local rather than authority-wide Committee. Some Kinross-shire Community Council representatives also questioned the relevance, and use of time, of the Local Committee discussing specific road safety issues that were of interest to only one Community Council. We therefore recommend that specific road safety issues in Kinross-shire are dealt with outwith Local Committee meetings, as they are in other wards. This would also have the benefit of freeing up Local Committee meeting time for ward-wide roads issues and other non-roads issues.

The prominence of road safety at Area Committees in other local authorities in Scotland varies. In some areas such as Fife road safety is a recurring agenda item and members consider several site proposals at each meeting, see for example [North East Fife Area Committee](#) and [Caithness Committee](#) in Highland. However, in other areas such as [South Lanarkshire](#) and [Aberdeenshire](#) roads appear to be very infrequent agenda items.

Recommendation 14: Site-specific road safety issues in Kinross-shire are dealt with outwith Local Committee meetings, as they are in other wards in Perth and Kinross. This would also have the benefit of freeing up Local Committee meeting time for ward-wide roads issues and other non-roads issues.

Structural implications

The evaluation considered the structural implications of the Local Committee pilot in two ways. Firstly, in terms of the Council's Committee structure, and secondly, regarding the Council's operational structure.

There have been no noteworthy implications for the Council's Committee structure from the establishment of Kinross-shire Local Committee during the pilot period. The Local Committee's remits and powers are clearly set out and there have been no occasions during the pilot period when issues have arisen with regard to any other Council Committee. We are however mindful of the relatively short timescale and small number of items considered by the Local Committee during the pilot period and it is possible that more significant structural challenges could have arisen in different circumstances, or could in the future. Some of the Ward Councillors raised concerns about the possibility of recommendations made by the Local Committee being over-ruled by other Committees with decision making powers although this scenario has not arisen during the pilot period.

It is our view that Perth and Kinross Council's operational structure could have unintentionally contributed to the Local Committee's limited impact described in this report. The other local authorities in Scotland with Area Committees tend to have an area-based approach to service delivery with an Area Manager leading area-based staff. In contrast, Kinross-shire Local Committee is currently the only Area Committee in Perth and Kinross and the Council's operational structure is therefore justifiably service-based rather than area-based. An area-based approach is more likely, in our view, to generate items for the Local Committee to consider and equally the Local Committee would be more likely to raise issues that could be taken forward by an area-based operational structure. If additional Local Committees are established, as proposed by PKC, there may be a greater focus on area-based issues rather than service-based issues and this could potentially have structural implications in the way the Council plans and delivers its services in the future.

Local Action Partnership

We understand Kinross-shire Action Partnership (KAP) only met twice during the Local Committee pilot period. Both meetings occurred in October 2022. The first was a formal meeting of the KAP held on 5th, the second a special meeting focused on local priorities and a Community Action Plan held on the 28th. At the outset of the Local Committee, PKC Officers and Ward Councillors tried to ensure the Local Committee and the KAP had distinct roles with the former focusing on environment and infrastructure, and the latter on inequality. The Local Committee Scheme of Administration reflected this. There have not been any items considered by the Local Committee during the pilot period that we consider to be outwith this focus and therefore encroaching on the KAP's remit. If the Local Committee and the KAP had been more active during the pilot year there may have been some examples where the remits of the two bodies were tested to a greater degree than has been the case. There is therefore limited evidence on which to draw conclusions on the relationship between the two.

As noted earlier there have been concerns raised about the diminution of the role community members of the KAP have been afforded in the CIF allocation process during the pilot period. This issue however relates to the Ward Councillors decision to proceed without a Ward Panel and is not an unavoidable consequence of establishing the Local Committee.

PKC is undertaking a transformational review of community engagement which includes the role of Local Action Partnerships and its findings will help inform, and potentially strengthen, the future relationship with Kinross-shire Local Committee. There was a view that the distinction between the Local Committee and KAP is an artificial one with issues crossing over between the two. Several of the consultees interviewed for this evaluation had quite a narrow view of the KAP which focused on its grant giving role and it was not seen as the local Community Planning Partnership for Kinross-shire. Attendance at KAP meetings by Community Planning Partners has also been patchy. Our review of Area Committees in other local authorities in Scotland showed they tended to have an authority-wide Community Planning Partnership but not local Community Planning Partnerships such as the KAP. The Area Committees in other areas also tended to have a Community Action Plan and we recommend that PKC progresses work to compile such a plan in Kinross-shire as the Local Committee could have an important role in taking forward the issues prioritised in the Plan.

Recommendation 15: PKC progresses work to compile a Community Action Plan in Kinross-shire as the Local Committee could have an important role in taking forward the issues prioritised in the Plan.

Summary

- Kinross-shire Local Committee has had resource implications for PKC Officers including, but not limited to, the administration of the Committee, attendance, and the production of reports for the Committee. We estimate these tasks have required an additional 204 hours of work for PKC Officers, although we suggest this is a conservative estimate.
- In addition, PKC Officers undertook other tasks that we have not been able to quantify. This includes the additional work undertaken by the lead officer since autumn 2022, and other officers including senior officers who have contributed to the implementation and review of the Local Committee.
- The Committee also required additional time from Ward Councillors, particularly the Convenor and Vice Convenor.
- There have been no noteworthy implications for the Council's Committee structure from the establishment of Kinross-shire Local Committee during the pilot period. However it is possible that more significant structural challenges could have arisen in different circumstances, or could in the future.
- It is our view that Perth and Kinross Council's operational structure - which is focused on services rather than areas - could have unintentionally contributed to the Local Committee's limited impact described in this report.
- If additional Local Committees are established, as proposed by PKC, there may be a greater focus on area-based rather than service-based issues and this could have implications for the way the Council plans and delivers its services in the future.
- Kinross-shire Local Committee and Action Partnership have distinct roles and there have been no examples during the pilot period of the Local Committee encroaching on the KAP's remit.
- There have been concerns about the diminution of the role community members of the KAP were afforded in the CIF allocation process however this related to the Ward Councillors decision to proceed without a Ward Panel and was not an unavoidable consequence of establishing the Local Committee.
- Area Committees in other local authorities in Scotland tend to have an authority-wide Community Planning Partnership but not local Community Planning Partnerships such as the KAP. The Area Committees in other areas also tended to have a Community Action Plan.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, this evaluation has shown that Kinross-shire Local Committee has impacted, to a degree, on local decision-making and community empowerment during the pilot period. There have been some successes in strengthening local decision-making and community empowerment, however they have been relatively minor and this leads us to conclude the Local Committee has not, at this relatively early stage of its existence, fully justified the resources involved. Some PKC Officers questioned the overall benefits of the Local Committee given its restricted powers, limited agendas, the additional resources it has required from Officers, and the limited impact it has made over the pilot period. However, it was noteworthy that other Officers, Ward Councillors and Community Council representatives acknowledged some challenges had, not unexpectedly arisen, during the pilot period, and felt it was still finding its purpose, but nonetheless remained strongly committed to the concept of a Local Committee for Kinross-shire. Their view was that the Local Committee was a welcome addition that would continue to evolve and be more impactful over time. We understand PKC is planning a Development Day to address some of the issues raised in this report which could contribute towards this process.

Powers and effectiveness

The evaluation highlighted that Kinross-shire Local Committee discharged a relatively small proportion of the General, Decision Making, and Scrutiny and Recommendatory powers during the pilot period and the powers that have been discharged tended to be used on isolated occasions and in a light touch manner. However, it should be noted that the Committee met for the first time in January 2022 and has had limited time to utilise its powers. The main use of decision making powers by the Local Committee related to the power to promote Road Traffic Orders and to make proposals to Council on the transfer of functions to community management and ownership. The Local Committee did not discharge the majority of the decision making powers related to Infrastructure and Economic Development, Roads, Environment, and Communities. There were no examples of the Local Committee using its Scrutiny and Recommendatory powers, which have been regularly used by Area Committees in other local authorities.

The factors that enabled the Local Committee's effectiveness included: Ward Councillors identifying relevant items and ensuring they were included on the agenda; PKC Officers engaging well with the Local Committee and the items raised by members; the added impetus provided by the current Convenor; the identification of a Lead Officer in late 2022; and the support and guidance provided by PKC's Legal and Governance Services throughout. A number of barriers to the Local Committee's effectiveness were identified including: the relatively short time covered by the pilot; changes in Local Committee membership among Ward Councillors and Community Council representatives; PKC Officer capacity; limited forward planning of the Local Committee agenda; disagreement between Ward Councillors and PKC Officers about proposed agenda items; PKC Officers not raising potential agenda items with Ward Councillors that fall within the Local Committee's powers; the absence of a Kinross-shire Action Plan setting out local priorities; limited awareness of the Local Committee's powers; and limited opportunity for Community Council representatives to propose agenda items.

The following recommendation was made regarding powers and effectiveness:

Recommendation 1: Kinross-shire Local Committee members discuss greater use of the Committee's Scrutiny and Recommendatory Powers. This could include specific Council services outlining their work in Kinross-shire and seeking the views of Committee members on local issues and priorities.

Decision making

Kinross-shire Local Committee made a limited number of decisions during the pilot although this mainly reflected the relatively short pilot period and the limited number of items on the agendas. It was noted that decisions have been made by consensus and without the need for votes. It was also noted that Ward Councillors have not brought their political allegiances into the decision making process. Community Council representatives welcomed their involvement in the Local Committee and did not highlight their non-voting status as an issue in the decision making process. Community Council representatives contributed constructively to the discussions at times but were subordinate to the Ward Councillors in the decision making process, in our view. The new Convenor has made a notable effort to engage Community Council representatives in discussions at recent meetings and we commend them for this proactive approach. The Local Committee's decisions could have been reached using the structures and processes that existed before the Committee was established. This led some consultees to question the added value of the Local Committee particularly when taking the resource implications into account, although others felt the benefit of the Local Committee came from the fact decisions were being made at a local level by Kinross-shire Councillors and Community Council representatives. The decisions made by the Local Committee regarding the allocation of CIF grants and the awarding of £30,000 to the King George V Playing Field weakened rather than strengthened the local decision making process, in our view.

The following recommendations were made regarding decision making:

Recommendation 2: An action log is established and maintained by PKC Officers and reviewed at Local Committee meetings.

Recommendation 3: decisions regarding any future budgets devolved to the Local Committee are transparent and inclusive, taken by all members at the meetings. Community Council representatives should have equal access to information prior to the meeting and equal input into the discussions at the meetings.

Local democracy

The evaluation found the Local Committee impacted on local democracy - through enhanced community empowerment, participation and leadership - although this was mixed. The impact on community participation depends on how community is defined. If the community is viewed as the local Community Councils then the Local Committee has enhanced the community's participation as the representatives have a direct involvement in a new democratic structure. If however, the community is viewed more broadly as the general public throughout Kinross-shire then it is our view that the Local Committee has had a more limited impact on community participation given the relatively low profile of the Local Committee and limited reach of the Community Councils. In terms of community leadership, the Community Council representatives have taken on the important role of representing the views of the community across Kinross-shire.

The low profile of the Local Committee however means that this leadership role will be limited. The four Ward Councillors are elected representatives of the community and their membership of the Local Committee enhances their role as community leaders. In terms of community empowerment, evidence is again mixed. Kinross-shire Local Committee has enabled the community to examine community ownership options for the former Blairingone Primary School which was an aim of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. However, it is our view that the Community Council representatives are not empowered as equal members of the Local Committee. This is partly due to their non-voting status but also due to the limited information and input they are afforded before and during meetings. Changes to the way CIF funding has been allocated have also weakened community participation and empowerment, in our view.

The involvement of Community Council representatives sets Kinross-shire Local Committee apart from the majority of Area Committees in Scotland. To date they have had a limited role and had limited impact. Community Council representatives could have a more prominent role that would make the most of their membership. To do so we have suggested they are invited to a session on the Committee's remit and powers, have direct input to agendas, have access to information before meetings in order to contribute to debates, and make a greater contribution to discussions including being specifically asked for their views if not already given.

The following recommendations were made regarding local democracy:

Recommendation 4: PKC promotes and raises awareness of Kinross-shire Local Committee.

Recommendation 5: Local Committee membership is included as an agenda item at a forthcoming meeting so all members can share their views and try to agree a way forward.

Recommendation 6: The involvement of Community Planning Partners in Kinross-shire Local Committee is included as an agenda item at a forthcoming meeting so all members can share their views and try to agree a way forward.

Recommendation 7: PKC Officers and Ward Councillors ensure Community Council representatives are provided with the same level of information and input before and during the meetings as Ward Councillors.

Recommendation 8: Community Councils are contacted by PKC to put forward potential agenda items before every Local Committee meeting.

Recommendation 9: A future meeting of Kinross-shire Local Committee includes an agenda item on the Committee's powers and decision making process with a presentation from PKC Legal and Governance Services followed by a question and answer session.

Recommendation 10: A Kinross-shire Ward Panel is re-instated for future CIF awards.

Resource and structural implications

The evaluation also considered the resource and structural implications of the Local Committee and its relationship with Kinross-shire Action Partnership. We found the Local Committee has led to resource implications for PKC Officers. We estimated at least 204 hours additional Officer time was related to the administration, attendance, and production of reports for the Committee over the pilot period. The Committee has also led to additional time, were unable to quantify, for the lead officer and other officers, including senior officers, in PKC. Funding for the pilot has offset

some of the administration costs however other tasks have had to be absorbed by existing resources. The Local Committee has also required additional time from Ward Councillors, particularly the Convenor and Vice Convenor. The additional time demanded of PKC Officers and Ward Councillors should be a key consideration in discussions about maintaining Kinross-shire Local Committee and establishing Local Committees in other wards in Perth and Kinross.

There have been no noteworthy implications for the Council's Committee structure from the establishment of Kinross-shire Local Committee during the pilot period. However it is possible that more significant structural challenges could have arisen in different circumstances, or could do so in the future. It is our view that Perth and Kinross Council's service-based operational structure could have unintentionally contributed to the Local Committee's limited impact. If additional Local Committees are established, as proposed by PKC, there may be a greater focus on area-based rather than service-based issues and this could have implications for the way the Council plans and delivers its services in the future. Kinross-shire Area Committee and Action Partnership have distinct roles and there have been no examples during the pilot period of the Local Committee encroaching on the KAP's remit although this may have simply been the result of the limited activities of the two. Concerns about the diminution of the role community members of the KAP were afforded in the CIF allocation process related to the Ward Councillors decision to proceed without a Ward Panel and was not an unavoidable consequence of establishing the Local Committee. It was noteworthy that Area Committees in other local authorities in Scotland tend to have an authority-wide Community Planning Partnership but not local Community Planning Partnerships such as the KAP. The Area Committees in other local authorities also tended to have a Community Action Plan and the absence of such a Plan in Kinross-shire contributed to the limited items covered by the Local Committee, and its limited impact, during the pilot period, in our view.

The following recommendations were made regarding resource and structural implications:

Recommendation 11: PKC Ward Councillors and Senior Officers consider the resource implications of maintaining Kinross-shire Local Committee and establishing Local Committees in other wards.

Recommendation 12: PKC Ward Councillors consider the additional demands on their time, particularly the Convenor and Vice Convenor, in maintaining Kinross-shire Local Committee and establishing Local Committees in other wards.

Recommendation 13: Local Committee reports are presented verbally or as concise written reports to minimise the demands on PKC Officer time.

Recommendation 14: Site-specific road safety issues in Kinross-shire are dealt with outwith Local Committee meetings, as they are in other wards in Perth and Kinross. This would also have the benefit of freeing up Local Committee meeting time for ward-wide roads issues and other non-roads issues.

Recommendation 15: PKC progresses work to compile a Community Action Plan in Kinross-shire as the Local Committee could have an important role in taking forward the issues prioritised in the Plan.



Appendix 1: Kinross-shire Local Committee agendas January 2022 – February 2023

January 2022	April 2022	June 2022	August 2022	November 2022	February 2023
1. Welcome and apologies					
2. Declarations of interest (elected members only)					
<p>3. Kinross-shire Local Committee - pilot Scheme of Administration Report by Head of Environmental and Consumer Services</p> <p>5. A911 east of Scotlandwell Report by Head of Environmental and Consumer Services</p> <p>6. Former Blairingone Primary School Report by Head of Culture and Communities Services</p> <p>7. Co-ordination of planning and management in the Lomond and Ochil Hills Verbal update by Convener</p> <p>8. Kinross town centre Report by Head of Planning and Development</p> <p>9. Boundary Commission for Scotland - 2023 review of UK Parliament constituencies - initial proposals Report by Chief Executive</p> <p>10. Kinross Common Good Fund - applications for financial assistance - December 2021 Note the position and homologate decisions taken by Voting Members of the Committee via email.</p> <p>11. Committee forward planning Verbal update by Vice-Convener</p>	<p>3. Minutes of previous meeting</p> <p>4. Matters arising</p> <p>5. Road safety update Report by Environment and Consumer Services</p> <p>6. Loch Leven Guidance Report by Head of Planning and Development</p> <p>7. Kinross-shire Community Investment Fund</p>	<p>3. Minutes of previous meeting</p> <p>4. Matters arising (i) Road safety Verbal Update by Traffic and Network Manager</p> <p>(ii) Blairingone Primary School Verbal Update by Service Manager (Communities)</p> <p>5. Sale of 82m² of land, private parking at [address withheld], Kinross Public and press excluded</p>	<p>3. Minutes of previous meeting</p> <p>4. Matters arising (i) Road safety Verbal Update by Traffic and Network Manager</p> <p>(ii) Blairingone Primary School Verbal Update by Service Manager (Communities)</p> <p>5. Kinross Common Good Fund financial applications Report by Head of Cultural and Community Services</p> <p>6. Kinross Common Good Fund financial statements 2021/22 & 2022/23 Report by Head of Finance</p>	<p>3. Minutes of previous meeting</p> <p>4. Matters arising (i) Road safety Verbal Update by Traffic and Network Manager (Communities)</p> <p>(ii) Blairingone Primary School Verbal Update by Service Manager (Communities)</p> <p>5. The proposals of The Boundary Commission for Scotland</p> <p>6. Climate Action Through Community Heating (CATCH) External presentation</p> <p>7. Supply and demand for serviced employment land in the Kinross ward Report by Head of Planning and Development</p> <p>8. Kinross Common Good Fund Applications for financial assistance</p>	<p>3. Minutes of previous meeting</p> <p>4. Brunt Farm Windfarm Verbal Update by Development Manager and Building Standards Service Manager</p> <p>5. Road Safety Update</p> <p>6. Former Blairingone Primary School Report by Head of Culture and Communities Services</p> <p>7. King George V Management Committee Report by Head of Culture and Communities Services</p> <p>8. Interim Evaluation Report of Kinross-shire Local Committee Report by Head of Culture and Communities Services</p>

Appendix 2: Kinross-shire Local Committee Powers Discharged

General Powers	Discharged
2.1 - To request that the committee convener or relevant executive director or head of service attend meetings and respond to relevant questions or submit a report or written evidence on any relevant matter.	✓
2.2 - To request that elected members, officers, other persons, and outside organisations attend meetings to give evidence or advice.	✓
2.3 - To receive petitions relating to the Kinross-shire ward in accordance with the Council's petitions policy where the matter falls within the remit of the Committee in line with the Council's standard petitions policy.	✗
2.4 - To initiate local community engagement in relation to Council business in the Kinross-shire ward; supporting existing engagement delivered by the Council; and, 1 where possible to be consulted on larger-scale Council engagement insofar as it relates to Kinross-shire	✓
Decision Making Powers	Discharged
3.0.1 - To agree local policies in relation to implementation of the specific placemaking powers devolved to the Committee subject to compliance with any statutory requirements and Council policy.	✗
3.0.2 - To agree the allocation of funds to individual functional areas devolved to the Committee to meet local priorities in the Kinross-shire ward within a devolved revenue budget.	✗
3.0.3 - To determine business cases for and agree any local capital project priorities within a devolved capital budget for the Kinross-shire ward or by allocating funds from a devolved revenue budget towards borrowing costs in line with approved capital investment governance arrangements.	✓
3.0.4 - To allocate and monitor expenditure from agreed localised funds, e.g., the Community Investment Fund and the Kinross Common Good Fund.	✓
Infrastructure and Economic Development Powers	Discharged
3.1.1 - To make recommendations to Council on the formation of any Local Development Plans, strategies and supplementary guidance insofar as they relate to the Kinross-shire ward.	✓
3.1.2 - To support the development of community-led Local Place Plans.	✗
3.1.3 - To develop local measures to support and promote economic activity in Kinross-shire.	✓
3.1.4 - To work in partnership with VisitScotland, other agencies and local organizations to plan, promote and oversee the implementation of a tourism and events strategy for Kinross-shire	✗
Roads Power	Discharged
3.2.1 - To determine local priorities for maintenance programmes for roads and bridges, and for surfacing and surface dressing schemes.	✗
3.2.2 - To determine a local policy on road safety.	✗
3.2.3 - To promote local Road Traffic Orders, including those where there are statutory objections that the Committee believe can be overcome, and make recommendations thereon where the Council is acting as planning authority.	✓
3.2.4 - To approve the stopping up of roads and private means of access and the deletion of roads from the list of public roads and the adoption of roads (that are not constructed under the Road Construction Consent procedure) onto the list of public roads and make recommendations thereon where the Council is acting as planning authority.	✗
3.2.5 - To agree local priorities for winter road and footpath maintenance.	✗

Environment Power	Discharged
3.3.1 - To agree local priorities for community greenspace and grounds maintenance activities.	x
3.3.2 - To agree the establishment and maintenance of local footpaths, including additions and alterations to core path routes.	x
3.3.3 - To make recommendations to Council on trees that should be considered for tree preservation orders based on local assessment criteria within legislation.	x
3.3.4 - To approve and support local initiatives to encourage waste minimization, reduce litter and increase recycling.	x
3.3.5 - To lead on and engage with community groups on initiatives to tackle the climate emergency.	✓
3.3.6 - To approve new Perth & Kinross Council Comfort Scheme providers according to Council policy within the Kinross-shire ward.	x
3.3.7 - To support community-led local flood prevention and resilience initiatives.	x
3.3.8 - To recommend to Council proposals for the establishment of any regional parks within the Kinross-shire ward and agreements with other councils where these cross local authority boundaries.	✓
3.3.9 - To make recommendations to Council on local landscape designations for the Kinross-shire ward.	x
Communities Powers	Discharged
3.4.1 - To support the work of the Kinross-shire Community Transport Group on public transport and community transport initiatives in collaboration with the Council's Public Transport Unit.	x
3.4.2 - To make proposals to Council on community participation requests and the transfer of functions to community management and ownership subject to Council policies.	✓
3.4.3 - To engage with Community Planning Partners regarding the delivery of their services in the Kinross-shire ward.	x
3.4.4 - To support local youth organizations and to promote the engagement of young people in local democracy.	x
3.4.5 - To support local initiatives that promote and support the history and heritage of Kinross-shire.	x
3.4.6 - To facilitate and, where appropriate, make arrangements in relation to Town Twinning and ceremonial matters in consultation with the Civic Services.	x
Scrutiny and Recommendatory Powers	Discharged
4.1 - To consider and make recommendations on matters which do not fall within the decision-making powers of the Committee, including: Proposals made by the Chief Executive to review Council service delivery insofar as it affects the Kinross-shire ward; and The impact of policy on the local service delivery and performance of Council services in the Kinross-shire ward. Council or the relevant committee must give due consideration to these recommendations during the decision-making process.	x
4.2 - To receive assurance on progress of Council capital project delivery in Kinross-shire.	x