

# **APPENDIX A) THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

## **1. Foreword by Co-Chairs of CPP Board**

**Councillor Grant Laing, Leader, Perth and Kinross Council**

**Lori Hughes, Acting Chief Executive, PKAVS/Third Sector Interface, Perth and Kinross**

Perth and Kinross Community Planning Partnership has a unique and collective statutory duty. Its role is to identify and reduce stubborn social and economic inequalities across the area which nearly 150,000 people, from many different backgrounds, call home.

Since we published our last Community Plan in October 2017, the world has dramatically changed in ways we could not have foreseen back then. At the time of writing, the immediate effects of the pandemic have eased, but the longer term impact will be felt for years to come: on household incomes, on mental and physical health, on learning and skills, on employability. There have been additional impacts on particular vulnerable groups. The current cost of living crisis is further exacerbating the daily reality and worry of poverty for many within our communities. The climate emergency creates additional challenges for us all and will, if not tackled with creativity and courage, create further inequality.

Nevertheless COVID also shone a light on the strength of our partnership working. This was evidenced by how we overcame the challenges of supporting thousands of people across the huge geography of Perth and Kinross, mobilising hundreds of volunteers, supporting community organisations to deliver food and other essential supplies, distributing digital devices to ease isolation and learning loss, distributing crisis support funds to people and local businesses. We learned and forged new ways of working during this time which, alongside our long-established CPP relationships, we will carry forward into the future. The partners involved in Community Planning across Perth and Kinross are united in the commitments set out in this new Local Outcomes Improvement Plan. The CPP exists for no other purpose – it is built on strong foundations and well placed to tackle the challenges and changes which lie ahead.

## **2. Community Planning**

Community planning in Perth and Kinross is about how we realise our ambition for our area to be the best place in Scotland **for everyone to live life well, free from poverty and inequality**. It is based on a shared understanding of what matters to individuals, families, neighbourhoods, wider localities and across our area as a whole. It is about what Perth and Kinross wants to become, with partners and communities collaboratively agreeing joint action to make change happen.

The Community Planning Partnership Board (CPP) leads this work through the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP). It has the collective statutory duty to reduce inequalities in Perth and Kinross both in geographic areas and within communities of interest. It must make sure: that local community planning works effectively through our Local Action Partnerships which report to the Board; that communities have an active voice and role in shaping their future and the future of the places they live in; and that action happens at both grassroots and strategic level which makes a tangible difference to people's lives.

### **3. The Future Challenge**

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out key statutory duties and powers for the CPP. That's the legislative framework. What matters in practical terms is how the CPP responds over the next 12 months and beyond to tackle the significant socio-economic challenges we are facing now and will continue to face in the coming years. Perth and Kinross has always had pockets of inequality and deprivation, alongside more affluent areas. Our six major towns and rural localities have always had strong pride in their different and unique identities with many self-supporting community networks and initiatives in place. These came to the fore during COVID when communities acted to support the most vulnerable people amongst them. Perth city is emerging strongly as a vibrant contemporary city, with major cultural regeneration programmes underway, wider public infrastructure investment by the Council and a huge ambition from the Perth City Leadership Forum to make Perth one of the most sustainable and environmentally responsible cities in Scotland and beyond.

However the ongoing impact of the COVID pandemic, continued pressure on public finances, and wider national/global factors are radically re-shaping our future. Many people and families in Perth and Kinross are already severely impacted by the cost of living crisis. Mental health and wellbeing has been impacted by COVID, by the various losses people have suffered and by worries about the future. This is happening in our communities, right now.

The Community Planning Partnership exists to serve those communities and for no other purpose. Its leadership role has never been more important. The actions we take in the next 12 months and beyond are what will make the difference to our area and the people who live here for decades to come. The LOIP sets out how we will make that happen. It is not about 'business as usual' – the day to day work of local public services. It is about collective action – what the CPP can only achieve by working in partnership to make a real difference to people's lives.

And it is also about our willingness to make the right decisions about how our joint resources – money, skills, people, time and physical assets – are best used to target the most vulnerable people and communities within Perth and Kinross, alongside community wealth building – helping to unlock local skills and potential which can shape a positive future for Perth and Kinross despite the upcoming challenges. If everything is a priority, nothing is a priority.

## 4. The National Strategic Context

Alongside the Community Empowerment Act there are other key policy drivers for how we go about the business of Community Planning:

- **National Planning Framework 4** which requires spatial and community planning to support the Place Principle: ***a shared understanding of what that place is for and what it wants to become with partners and communities collaboratively agreeing joint actions.*** In practice this means aligning the priorities of local community planning partnerships, focused on reducing inequalities; and Local Place Plans, which set out spatial priorities within a locality.
- **20 Minute Neighbourhoods:** these are a newer priority set out in the current Programme for Government and NPF4, which focuses on spatial planning and local living. 20 minute neighbourhoods is a concept which aims to ensure that the key needs of a local community can be reached within twenty minutes of non-motorised transport.
- The ongoing **Local Governance Review** has highlighted many current examples of and opportunities for better devolved fiscal, functional and community powers. A Local Democracy Bill is expected to enshrine some of these principles in the future.
- National policy continues to focus on **facilitating community empowerment** in other ways. For example the Scottish Land Fund, which can provide up to 95% of the costs of purchasing assets for communities, will grow to £20m per year by 2026 and the Investing in Communities Fund supports measures to tackle poverty.

## 5. Our Vision and New Strategic Priorities

In 2017 the purpose of the Community Planning Partnership set out in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2017-2027 was *“creating a confident, ambitious and fairer Perth and Kinross, for all who live and work here.”* Since then we have reviewed our strategic priorities in light of the ongoing impact of COVID and new/emerging challenges, particularly the cost of living crisis and its impact on our communities and the growing climate emergency.

From 2020 onwards we carried out self-evaluation and community engagement, including a Community Planning Conference in April 2021 and a series of workshops over the summer of 2021 to shape new strategic priorities for the LOIP from 2022 onwards. Our revised ambition for our area to be the best place in Scotland **for everyone to live life well, free from poverty and inequality.**

Our new priorities focus on inequalities which are stubborn and require new collaborative approaches. COVID has exacerbated a number of these issues and helped shine a light on the impact they have on our communities. It has also helped us to develop new and innovative ways of working with our communities.

**1. Reducing Poverty** – child, food and fuel poverty are significant inequalities in Perth and Kinross and ones which have been increasingly highlighted during the COVID pandemic and its aftermath. Evidence across the area shows levels of poverty increasing and all CP partners have seen demands grow for services which support those needing financial assistance and advice. New community food initiatives have rapidly evolved in the last 2 years including new foodshares and foodbanks to support people struggling to meet the cost of living. With the energy price cap rising again in October 2022, partners need to consider additional support that can be provided for households across Perth and Kinross.

**2. Physical and Mental Wellbeing** have been negatively impacted through COVID and its aftermath. Evidence from the Health and Social Care Partnership shows a major increase in demand for mental wellbeing support, demanding a cohesive and strongly aligned response from all CP partners in future, alongside NHS Tayside and adult/child social work and social care services. The recent independent inquiry into mental health services in Tayside (The Strang Report) highlighted a breakdown of trust and a lack of respect between service users and service providers and within service providers themselves.

**3. Digital Participation** is increasingly important and has highlighted issues with connectivity, technology and individual capacity, again exacerbated or brought to light during the pandemic. Perth and Kinross Council has allocated additional funding for Digital Inclusion since 2021/22 and established a multi-agency Digital Participation Working Group

**4. Skills, Learning and Development** is a priority for those in formal education who were impacted during COVID, and through Community Learning and Development provision to support individuals and communities to build their skills, confidence and resilience. Ways of delivering learning have also evolved and changed and new support is under development for the increasing numbers of asylum seekers and refugees being welcomed to our area.

**5. Employability** is about an enhanced focus on upskilling for those seeking employment and supporting young people in a fast-changing job market, enabling people to enter, sustain and progress in work. The CPP supports the Local Employability Partnership bringing key partners together to focus on this priority.

In addition to these five strategic priorities, the CPP has identified two **cross-cutting issues**. The Community Planning Partnership has established a **Climate Change** Working Group in response to national commitments and targets for a Just Transition towards reducing carbon emissions by 2030 and a net zero carbon Scotland by 2045. The remit of the Working Group is to address the specific inequalities which climate change brings and provide a forum for partners to collaborate on climate change related actions.

In 2019 the greenhouse gas emissions for Perth and Kinross (within scope of influence) were 926 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e (kilo tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent), which equates to a per capita emission of 6.1 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (Scottish average 4.6 tCO<sub>2</sub>e). This is a 30% reduction since 2005. In 2021, over 90% of residents surveyed reported noticing a changing climate. It is estimated there are 8,700 homes and businesses at risk of flooding in Perth and Kinross. This equates to 1 in 12 residential properties and 1 in 7 businesses. Climate change is expected to increase the number of properties and businesses at risk. Across Perth and Kinross, many of the areas at greatest risk of flooding are also some facing the highest levels of deprivation.

COVID, the global economic downturn and volatility in energy prices are all factors creating huge pressures on households, described as a **Cost of Living Crisis**. Current data suggests this may reduce an average family budget by as much as 50%, and an extra £65 a week will be needed by many households to maintain a decent standard of living. The CPP cannot control these factors, but it can take joint action to mitigate the impact on people and communities in Perth and Kinross. It can also work strategically to ensure the resources at its disposal – individual CP partner resources, access to national discretionary funds, and by using levers with the 3<sup>rd</sup> party organisations from which it contracts services, to ensure support to people and families who need it most is effectively targeted.

Part B of this Plan sets out the data and evidence we have drawn on to inform our new strategic priorities, and the actions we will take in year 1 of the LOIP as we face the future. How we use data and evidence will be critical for ensuring our collective resources are targeted in future at the right things, at the right time and in the right ways.

## 6. The Perth and Kinross Offer

The LOIP sets out **what** the CPP will do over the next 12 months and beyond to make Perth and Kinross a place where everyone can live life well. The Perth and Kinross Offer is about **how** we will work. It is an ethos to which the CPP is collectively signed up.

The Offer places people at the heart of everything we do and recognises that everyone has something to offer in shaping the future of Perth and Kinross. It builds on the community wealth of skills and commitment which already exists. It is our collective commitment to make sure local public services work hand-in-hand with the people and communities who rely on those services. It reflects the fact that communities have a wealth of skills, strengths and assets and are often better placed to identify the solutions to issues when they arise. And it reflects the CPP commitment to empowering frontline staff to ‘think yes’ and take the action they judge is needed to make positive change happen on a day-to-day basis.