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GLENROTHES AREA

LOCAL STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

2016

Fife Council Research Team
1. Overview

The Local Strategic Assessment provides an overview of how a local area is doing. It collates a wide range of information and, through facilitated sessions with a range of individuals involved in the Local Community Planning process, provides a key input for the refresh of Local Community Plans and an input into the wider Fife wide Strategic Assessment.

The current Glenrothes Local Community Plan is focused on delivering four key priorities. These are:

1. Reducing poverty and social inequality
2. Enterprise, the economy and jobs
3. Health and wellbeing
4. Educational attainment and learning

Many of these issues came through strongly in the Local Strategic Assessment and they remain key concerns for the area.

Around the themes of Reducing poverty and social inequality, housing is viewed as an important factor. The quality of private rented accommodation, the difficulties of young people in getting onto the housing ladder and the council stock available are all viewed as key points. In relation to employment, in-work poverty and the lack of disposable income for the ‘squeezed middle’ were identified as concerns. Rural workers, families and non ‘white collar’ workers are viewed as being particularly at risk, with fuel poverty highlighted as a growing issue.

Issues around Enterprise, the economy and jobs concern the changing nature of employment in Glenrothes and how this might be addressed. This relates to training a new workforce to take advantage of new employment opportunities, in tandem with encouraging businesses to come to the area, but also in utilising the skills and experience of older workers. The town centre is seen as needing regeneration and development, but there is recognition that its current use and changing future role need to be better understood.

Many of the issues around Health and wellbeing are driven by the projected increase in the elderly population, including the impact on infrastructure and housing concerns and the need to combat social isolation. Engagement with technology is viewed as a vital component in keeping people part of the community, with associated training needs but also opportunities. The quality of playparks in the area is variable, with a recognition that greenspace will need to be reflective of demographic needs. The cycle network has received substantial investment, but it is under-utilised and could be better promoted to potential users.

In addition to these existing themes, Community capacity building emerged strongly. The representativeness and effectiveness of community councils is one theme, alongside public perception of how funding changes will affect the distribution of responsibility between the council and communities in coming years.

Glenrothes Area Workshop, Fife House, Glenrothes, 1 June 2016

Facilitated sessions allowed us to combine analysis with local expertise. Four sessions were held, focussed on Place, People, Community and Horizons.

Above, one of the groups of people involved in Local Community Planning engaged in a discussion about people in Glenrothes

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2. Local Assessment Findings

GLENROTHES

Local Community Plan
- Reducing poverty and social inequality
- Enterprise, the economy and jobs
- Health and wellbeing
- Educational attainment and learning

Profile
- A 46% increase in older people by 2026 expected
- People see issues re health and health facilities
- Changing employment sectors

Place
- Work and economy is thought to need improvement
- Traffic and Parking is seen to be an issue
- Facilities and amenities require improvement
- Night time economy limited
- Town centre requires development
- Safety lighting in some public spaces
- Speeding is seen as a problem
- Need for greater connectivity to outlying parts of the town
- Cycle network under utilised

Community
- Areas of deprivation are seen within the area.
- Concepts of neighbourhoods are being replaced by communities of interest as people become more mobile
- Auchm City is an area of low outcome which is not showing a good rate of improvement

Local Strategic Challenges
- Tackling the changing employment sectors
- The changing demographic requirements
- Creating better connections to outlying areas

People
- ‘in work poverty’ and the ‘squeezed middle’ identified as a concern
- Suburban communities doing relatively well, but lag behind others in Scotland
- Some people in more rural parts not doing as well as expected
- Significant changes in the local economy are likely to require a different mix of skills

Horizons
- There may be a need to steer the workforce from traditional industry to new sectors or cottage industries
- Changing demographics will be a future challenge
Glenrothes area sits in the centre of Fife, around 30 miles north of Edinburgh and 25 miles south of Dundee. The town of Glenrothes is the third largest in Fife behind Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy. Glenrothes was one of Scotland first new town areas, and although established to house mainly mining workers and their families, it transformed into a centre for electronics and technical industries, particularly papermaking. The area now relies heavily on public services and the service industry sectors, as well as manufacturing. Due to the development of major industrial and housing estates, many of Glenrothes town’s boundaries merge with the neighbouring towns and villages.

In the Glenrothes area, local people identify the major issues as funding for public services, and the NHS/hospitals/healthcare. This is followed by issues relating to an increasingly elderly population and the economy. This is consistent with the pattern for Fife as a whole.

Figure 1 – Community perceptions of what is a major issue in the area (Fife People’s Panel, Survey 24, 2015)
4. Place

Place is an important element of Local Community Planning. Using the national Place Standard tool, local people were asked to consider aspects of the physical and social environment of where they live and to paint a picture of the place and what needs to improve.

The Place Standard facilitated sessions identified the following improvement areas:

**Town Centre** – is in need of regeneration and development, and lacks leisure facilities and restaurants, which limits its night time economy potential. More events held in the Kingdom Centre, and linked with Rothes Halls, would encourage greater use.

**Safety** – lighting in parks and pathways needs to be improved, and there should be more use made of speed cameras on the A92, along with improvements to speed bumps to reduce the speed of larger vehicles in and around the area.

**Industrial Sites** – better planning of industrial sites is needed to make them more accessible. There is also a need to remove or demolish disused and derelict buildings.

**Public amenities, parks and grounds maintenance** – the quality of playparks, including equipment and facilities is in need of improvement in the area. More cost effective approaches for the area’s grounds maintenance are needed, focusing on lower cost and less frequent maintenance.

**Transport and connectivity** – some of the communities and leisure facilities that are located on the outskirts of the town are not well served by public transport, and may benefit from more use of community transport to alleviate this problem. More appropriately sized buses in housing estates are needed to avoid congestion. Park and ride facilities to the south of the town would help with congestion and parking issues around the Fife House complex and neighbouring housing estates.

**Cycle Network** – has received substantial investment in the area, but is seen to be under-utilised and not effectively publicised or promoted to potential users.

![Figure 2 – Community perceptions of where improvement is needed in the area using the Place Standard. The outer part of the diagram (score 7) means little room for improvement, while the inner part (score 1) represents most need for improvement (Fife People’s Panel, Survey 26, 2016)](image-url)
5. People

All people are different, and simply looking at where they live only gives part of the picture. How well different groups of people are doing compared to others in the area and throughout Scotland allowed the following insights to be identified through a facilitated session.

Suburban communities are doing relatively well in the Glenrothes area, but are not doing as well as suburban communities living in other parts of Scotland.

Rural residents are also doing relatively well in the Glenrothes area, but there is a mixed picture as to how different types of rural residents are doing relative to similar types of people living elsewhere in Scotland.

The facilitated sessions identified the following issues:

**Housing**

A large proportion of the council stock has been lost through the right to buy. However, it isn’t known how much of this is now owned by private sector landlords. Some of the private rented accommodation in the area is seen to be in poor condition and expensive, with the services available for tackling problem landlords not widely known about or advertised to those people that might need them. Young people renting are finding it difficult to get onto the housing ladder as they are unable to save the required deposit. However house prices in the area are cheaper than in other areas, which attracts people to the area.

**Standard of living**

There is a mix of in-work poverty, with people who are working but unable to meet living costs, as a result of low pay and zero hour contracts, and the “squeezed middle”, where people are working hard but have little disposable income. Underemployment was identified in the area, with highly qualified people often stuck in lower level jobs and unable to move up the chain, so blocking the path into employment for lower qualified people. Whilst the retired population in the area, with pensions and low living costs are doing well, rural workers, families and non-white-collar workers are struggling, with rural fuel poverty seen as particular problem. Better communication between different cultural groups, along with better access to services, is needed, along with a need to learn from other areas. People were generally seen as being more transient in the area; less rooted and more inclined to move.

**Economy**

There are ample facilities and amenities for jobs in Glenrothes, but there is a difficulty in attracting employers to the area. The old industrial economy of the area has gone and a new type of workforce will be needed in the future, along with a need for more flexible accommodation for small businesses. Young people need to be taught the right skills for changing employment patterns, and there needs to be more local control over modern apprenticeship schemes, with the “one size fits all” approach across Fife not taking account of local issues. There is a need to make the most of technology and with a fifth of attendance at Fife job clubs being in the Glenrothes area. There is also a need for a more proactive approach to increasing internet and Wi-Fi coverage in public centres. The absence of a rail connection in the town restricts some people’s travel choices. Some parts of the area have become dormitory neighbourhoods, with many people outside the area to work.

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Figure 3 – How different types of people are doing within the area (based on Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2012 and 2011 Census Output Area Classification)
6. Community Insights into how communities are faring provide critical input when considering local places. Through facilitated sessions, the following issues were identified:

Volunteering – there is evidence in the area that people who have used voluntary services have then gone on to volunteer for these organisations and groups. For example, a number of people who have used food banks have then gone on to help run them.

Community councils and community groups – Community councils tend to work best in traditional towns and villages, or where there are clearly defined geographical boundaries in the area, but less well in the newer areas, or where a community is less well defined. People are generally reluctant to join community councils due to their formality, and some question whether they have sufficient influence or whether they represent the views of local people. Other groups with more of an ‘action’ focus may be better able to influence local decisions and take forward community activities.

Participatory budgeting – is seen as a useful tool for getting people involved in community activities, where they can see that there is money available to get something done.

Community engagement – is seen as important, but must demonstrate that it has actually achieved or influenced something if it is to be effective. In order to embed community engagement into people’s minds as a worthwhile concept, it needs to be introduced in schools and youth groups, so that it becomes an accepted practice.

Getting better at listening – there is a view that the Council doesn’t listen enough and act on community views, and that there are unnecessary obstacles that discourage people from getting involved in their communities.

Communication and support – the Council needs to put in place better ways of letting local people know what is going on in their area, along with the support that is available to people who want to get more involved in helping out in their communities.

Changing nature of communities – people are more mobile, work further away from their homes, and socialise in different ways than was the case in the past. This can reduce neighbourliness and integration. Communities are often defined by their areas of interest rather than by neighbourhood in which people live.
Local Outcomes

Local community planning requires a good understanding of differences within and between neighbourhoods. The table below shows the overall pattern of outcomes for neighbourhoods in the area, and whether local neighbourhoods are improving over time.

It identifies how different neighbourhoods within the area are faring in relation to key life outcomes. This includes outcomes across early years, older people, safer and stronger communities, health and wellbeing, employment and economy.

The neighbourhoods with the poorest outcomes in the Glenrothes area are in Auchmuty, Macedonia and Tanshall, and Cadham and Pitcoudie. Areas with better life outcomes include Markinch and Star, Balgeddie, and Stenton and Finglassie.

Areas doing better than expected when compared to similar neighbourhoods elsewhere in Scotland include Caskieberran and Rimbleton, Markinch and Star, and Pitteuchar. Areas not doing as well as expected include Balfarg, Pitcairn and Coul, Auchmuty and Thornton and Kinglassie.

Neighbourhoods showing the least improvement in life outcomes include Leslie and Newcastle, Auchmuty, and Balfarg, Pitcairn and Coul. The most improvement in life outcomes is seen in Macedonia and Tanshall, Stenton and Finglassie, and Balgeddie.

Neighbourhoods that have improved less than might be expected include Leslie and Newcastle, Balfarg, Pitcairn and Coul, and Auchmuty. Areas that have improved more than expected when compared to similar neighbourhoods include Macedonia and Tanshall, Markinch and Star and Stenton and Finglassie.

![Figure 5](attachment:image_url) - How different neighbourhoods are doing on key life outcomes relative to other comparable areas (Improvement Service, Community Planning Outcomes Profile Tool 2016)
8. Horizons

It is impossible to predict the future. However it is possible to identify challenges which are already on the horizon. Through a facilitated horizon scanning exercise a number of future considerations were identified for the area:

Demography
The ageing population in the area presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge will involve the need for the correct mix of care services, infrastructure and housing to accommodate a higher proportion of older people, while there will be opportunities for employment in a broader range of jobs, and a potential demand for “gated communities” rather than traditional sheltered housing. There is a need to encourage community participation across all age groups and not to pigeon-hole people, instead recognising them as assets.

Environment
Forecasting land use for housing demand needs to take into account an increasing elderly population (e.g. by building retirement communities) while also trying to influence the future population makeup of the area (e.g. by building more affordable homes and family homes to attract working age people). Use of greenspaces also needs to reflect future demographics needs, (e.g. fewer play parks/cycle paths and more sensory gardens and walks). Future infrastructure planning and design will also need to ensure that communities are connected to avoid social isolation.

Economy
Adapting to a changing work environment may involve steering the workforce away from manual labour and heavy industry towards a cottage industry of multiple small businesses or people working at home, or by facilitating greater community involvement in social enterprise. Glenrothes needs to become an attractive place to stay and visit so that people come to the area and remain, particularly people of working age. We need to harness the skills and experience of older workers in supporting younger generations. The changing nature of town centres needs to be better understood, for example if the town centre is mainly used by older residents, does it have the facilities to attract them?

Technology
Older people should be encouraged to engage with technology, and while many are already tech-savvy, the next generation of pensioners will be more comfortable using multiple forms of technology, creating new opportunities for services to engage with them. IT services need to be better integrated with community access points to encourage a change in the way people contact the Council and its partners.

Organisational
The changing realities of public sector funding will impact on how services are delivered. This will involve communities having to do more for themselves. A shift in mind-set will be needed along with a commitment to increase community capacity to promote participation from all parts of the community, rather than just the usual cohort of retired people who tend to have more time on their hands.