

OUR GARNOCK VALLEY

YOUR IDEAS • PRIORITIES • ACTION



GARNOCK VALLEY LOCAL PLACE PLAN

June 2025

Acknowledgments

Preparation of this Local Place Plan was led by a Working Group of community organisations (see page 9 and logos on right).

A big thank you to members of the Working Group and to the wider public who contributed to the Plan.

The work was made possible with financial and staff assistance from North Ayrshire Council, supported by the Garnock Valley Local Partnership and many other local organisations, and facilitated by a consultancy team comprising [Austin-Smith:Lord](#), [Nick Wright Planning](#), [WAVEParticle](#), [Alex Docherty](#) and [Community Enterprise](#).

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BACKGROUND

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INTRODUCTION
THE BIGGER PICTURE

1 INTRODUCTION

The Garnock Valley is a great place, with a huge amount to offer residents, businesses, investors and visitors.

We have historic towns and beautiful countryside, lochs and hills. We are close to the city and the coast. We have award-winning community organisations with hundreds of members who provide excellent services and facilities. We have successful international, national and local businesses, many of whom are leaders in their fields. And we have bags of heritage and pride.

We also have persistent challenges including deprivation, the condition of our town centres, health and wellbeing, and access to employment and public services.

We want to be proactive and tackle those challenges on the front foot. That's what this Plan is for.

About this Plan

This Plan is the local community's manifesto for the Garnock Valley. It is ambitious. It is also entirely feasible.

The key to implementing the Plan will be local residents, community organisations and the public and private sectors working together positively. That's because the Plan should be seen as a shared agenda for the future -

delivering community priorities and public agendas such as community-wealth-building, community empowerment and inclusive growth. Read more in chapters 4 and 16.

Being ambitious, the Plan won't be implemented overnight. It could take 10 years to deliver. That's why the Plan focusses on the big priorities for the whole of the Garnock Valley, identified through community engagement (see chapter 2), so we have clear long term goals but also some quick wins and flexibility to respond to new opportunities.

WHAT MAKES THIS PLAN DIFFERENT?

- This Plan is the community's plan based on our priorities.
- The local authority has helped to prepare the Plan and will support its delivery.
- The Plan delivers national priorities locally.
- This Plan brings together [previous community engagement and plans over the last decade](#) and new community engagement, giving it extra kudos. Think of it is a "plan of plans".
- This Plan is also a [Local Place Plan](#), a new type of plan to influence future planning policy and guide future development.

Implementation and funding

Although there are no funds in place yet, the Plan will help us get resources. Think of it as a manifesto to put the Garnock Valley in a better position to secure funding, generate income and influence how budgets are spent. Chapters 4 and 16 have more information.

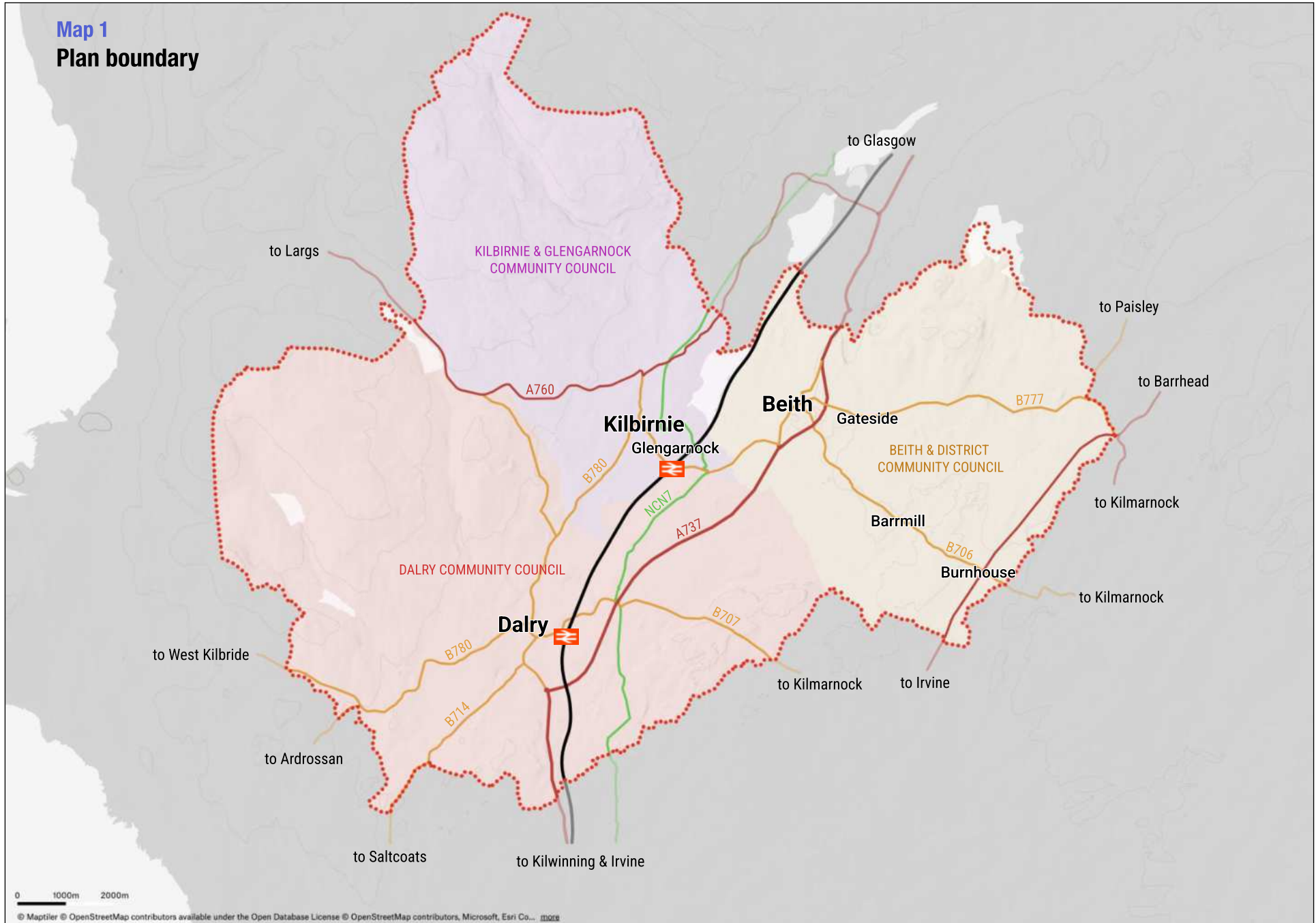
The Garnock Valley today

The area covered by the Plan is shown on Maps 1a and 1b on the next two pages. Administratively, the Plan covers the three [Community Council](#) areas of Beith & District, Dalry, and Kilbirnie & Glengarnock. The area also corresponds with the [Garnock Valley Locality Partnership](#) and [North Ayrshire Council Ward 2 \(Garnock Valley\)](#).

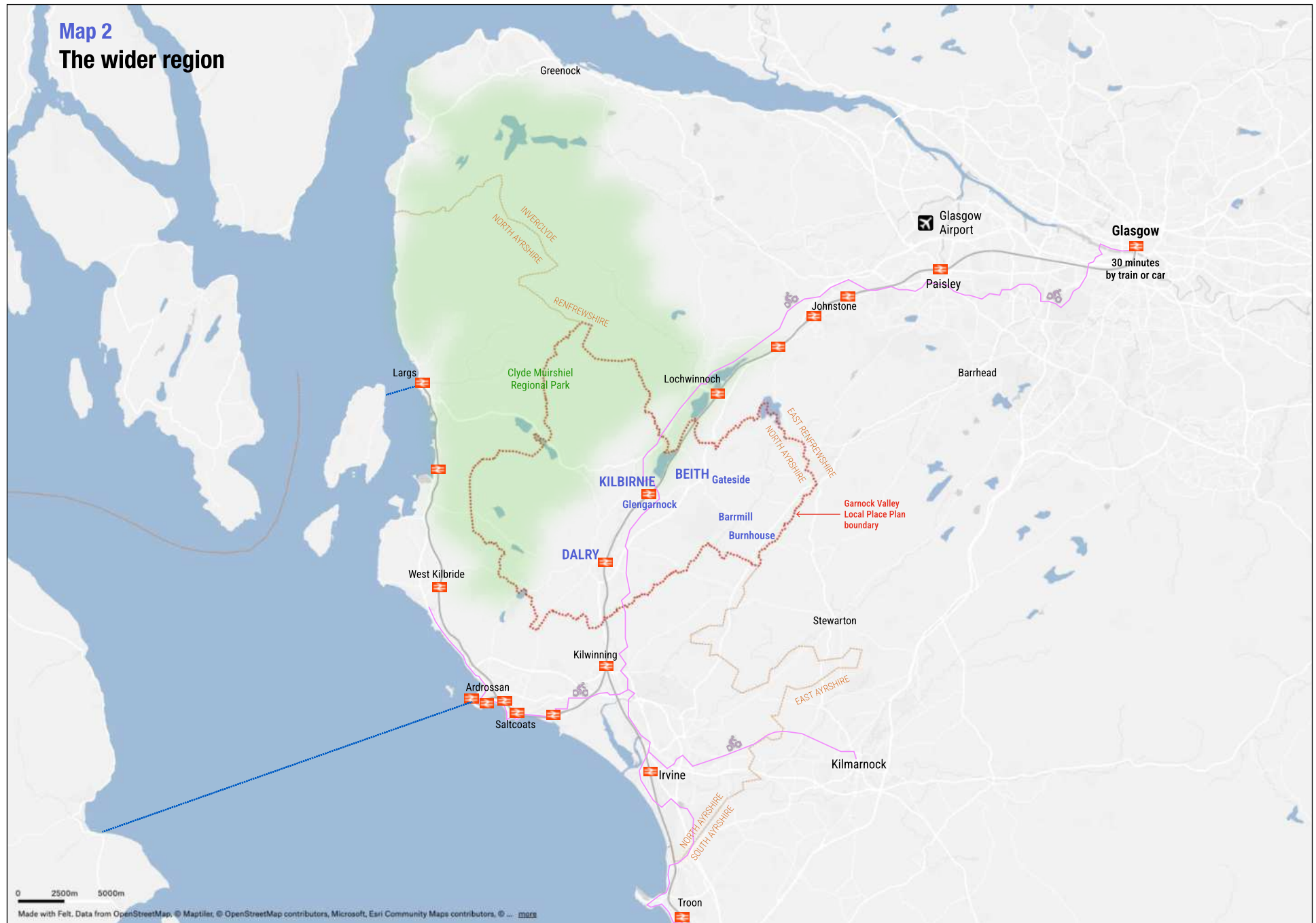
Our population is almost exactly 20,000 people, around 15% of the North Ayrshire total. Most of those live in the our main towns: 7,100 in Kilbirnie, 5,800 in Beith and 5,300 in Dalry. More facts and figures can be seen later in this chapter and in [Appendix 2](#).

A summary of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is shown on page 8.

Map 1
Plan boundary



Map 2 The wider region



By way of context, the diagram on the right contains a summary of the Garnock Valley's current strengths and weaknesses, and future opportunities and threats.

STRENGTHS

Progressive local authority: community wealth-building
Rail & road links to Glasgow city region & Ayrshire coast
Manufacturing & agricultural traditions
Committed community organisations
Improving educational outcomes
Affordable land & property
Good business location
Local pride & identity
Landscape setting



WEAKNESSES

Availability of businesses premises
Awareness of the Garnock Valley
Health, deprivation and poverty
Visitor facilities / information
Lack of hotels & restaurants
Bus, walking & cycling links
Apathy & negativity
Town centres



Lochshore and Geilsland
Community wealth building
Green economy: wind/solar power, agriculture
Visitors: nature, history, outdoor activities
Affordable land & property: commercial & residential
Proximity to Glasgow city region: jobs, education, leisure, commuting, investment, visitors, airport
Proximity to other economic opportunities: Hunterston Strategic Development Area, AMIDS, Ayrshire Growth Deal



OPPORTUNITIES



Climate emergency
Economic uncertainty
Political will and commitment
Low yield on property investment

THREATS

How this Plan was prepared

Preparation of the Plan was overseen by a Working Group which was formed in Summer 2023, as described below.

The sequence of community engagement stages to prepare the Plan are described on subsequent pages.

All community engagement complied with the [National Standards for Community Engagement](#) and the Scottish Government's draft 'How To' Guide on Local Place Plans.

Working Group

The Working Group's role was to manage how the Plan was prepared and ensure that it reflected community aspirations across the Garnock Valley. The Working Group has met monthly since Summer 2023 to plan and guide the process of community engagement - the aiming being to make sure that the Plan recognisably belongs to everybody in the Garnock Valley.

The community organisations which are currently members of the Working Group are shown on the right. Radio City Association (Kilbirnie) was also a member of the Working Group for part of the process during 2024, and the Group had two individual members (local residents). Support was provided by North Ayrshire Council.

If you're interested in joining or supporting any of these groups to help deliver this Plan, they would love to hear from you!

Working Group: community group members



Beith & District Community Council covers Beith, Gateside, Barrmill and Burnhouse. It meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Like other Community Councils, it is [the voice of the local community](#). More information and contact details on their [Facebook page](#).



Beith Community Development Trust regenerates local assets to improve community health, wellbeing, skills and resources. Volunteer-led with a strong staff base, they have delivered many significant projects and activities over the years. More information and contact details on [their website](#).



Dalry Community Council was reformed in 2024. It meets on the last Tuesday of each month. Like other Community Councils, it is [the voice of the local community](#). More information and contact details on their [Facebook page](#).



Dalry Community Development Hub was established in 2014. It is based in the town centre community garden and has delivered Lynn Glen path network, sports and arts activities, and much else besides. More information and contact details on their [Facebook page](#) and [website](#).



Dalry Community Sports Club was set up to increase access to sports and leisure opportunities in and around Dalry. Over the years, it has created new opportunities to participate in many different sports and improve their health and wellbeing. More information and contact details on [their Facebook page](#).



Garnock Valley Youth Forum aims to make the Garnock Valley better for young people. They meet every Wednesday 6-8pm in the Walker Hall in Kilbirnie, and are supported by North Ayrshire Council's youth development team. More information [here](#); contact details on their [Facebook page](#).



Kilbirnie & Glengarnock Community Council meets on the third Monday of each month. Like other Community Councils, it is [the voice of the local community](#). More information and contact details on their [Facebook page](#).

Stage 1: Aspirations

The first foundation of a good plan is work that’s already been done. The Garnock Valley has had lots of surveys, consultations and plans over the last decade. They were brought together [in one place](#), with analysis of the persistent challenges and local assets highlighted in that work (see [Appendix 3](#)).

To complement that with an up-to-date picture of community aspirations for the new Plan, a **survey** was delivered to every household and business in the Garnock Valley in summer 2024. The results identified clear priorities. See page 12 for more information.

Through stages 1 and 2, interviews and group discussions also took place with young people (through the Garnock Valley Youth Forum), a range of local businesses, Garnock Valley Disability Forum and other organisations, and visits to community events.

All this created a strong foundation to explore how to tackle community aspirations.

Stage 2: Priorities

Attention shifted to community events to share the aspirations revealed in the first stage and identity priorities for the Plan.

The main activities were:

- **Town events** in Kilbirnie, Beith and Dalry (see page 13).
- **Village events** in Barrmill/Burnhouse, Gateside and Glengarnock (see page 13).
- **Schools workshops** (see [Appendix 7](#)).

The Plan does not include every single aspiration heard from every person as it was prepared. If something is in the Plan, it has been identified as a priority—identified through the three engagement stages.

Stage 3: Plan

Based on all the information outlined in sections 1 and 2 of this report, a draft Plan was prepared in Spring 2025 and shared for public feedback (online, hard copy and at community events).

[Appendix 8](#) explains that consultation process in more detail. It also contains transcriptions of all responses from the local community, and explanations of how they influenced the final Plan that you are reading.

The photographs on the next page give a flavour of the community engagement activities that helped to prepare the Plan.

1. ASPIRATIONS  Summer 2024	Audit of previous work over last decade Community survey
2. PRIORITIES  late 2024-early 2025	Share survey results Town & village events to agree priorities Meet businesses, Youth Forum, Disabled Forum & others
3. PLAN  Spring 2025	Community review of the draft Plan Finalise the Plan Get on with making it happen!

750 survey responses

500 ebulletin signups

200 people at 6 town & village events

50 pupils from 8 schools



Community survey

The community survey was completed by nearly 750 people. It aimed to get a sense of community priorities across the Garnock Valley as a whole and in individual towns and villages, building on all the [previous work](#) undertaken in the previous decade.

Persistent challenges

The survey identified nine persistent challenges which have come up again and again over the last 10 years, and asked people which should be priorities for action by scoring each one from 1 (least important) to 5 (most important). 742 people scored the priorities, which gives a sense of the persistent challenges faced by local communities:

Quality of our town centres	4.6
Better public transport	4.6
Health and wellbeing	4.5
Safe walking and cycling	4.3
Jobs and business opportunities	4.3
Access to local facilities and services	4.3
Local identity and community pride	4.0
Lack of community influence over decisions	3.9
Art, culture, heritage and tourism	3.2

Tackling those challenges

The survey also asked how to tackle those persistent challenges - across the Garnock Valley as a whole, and within individual towns and villages.

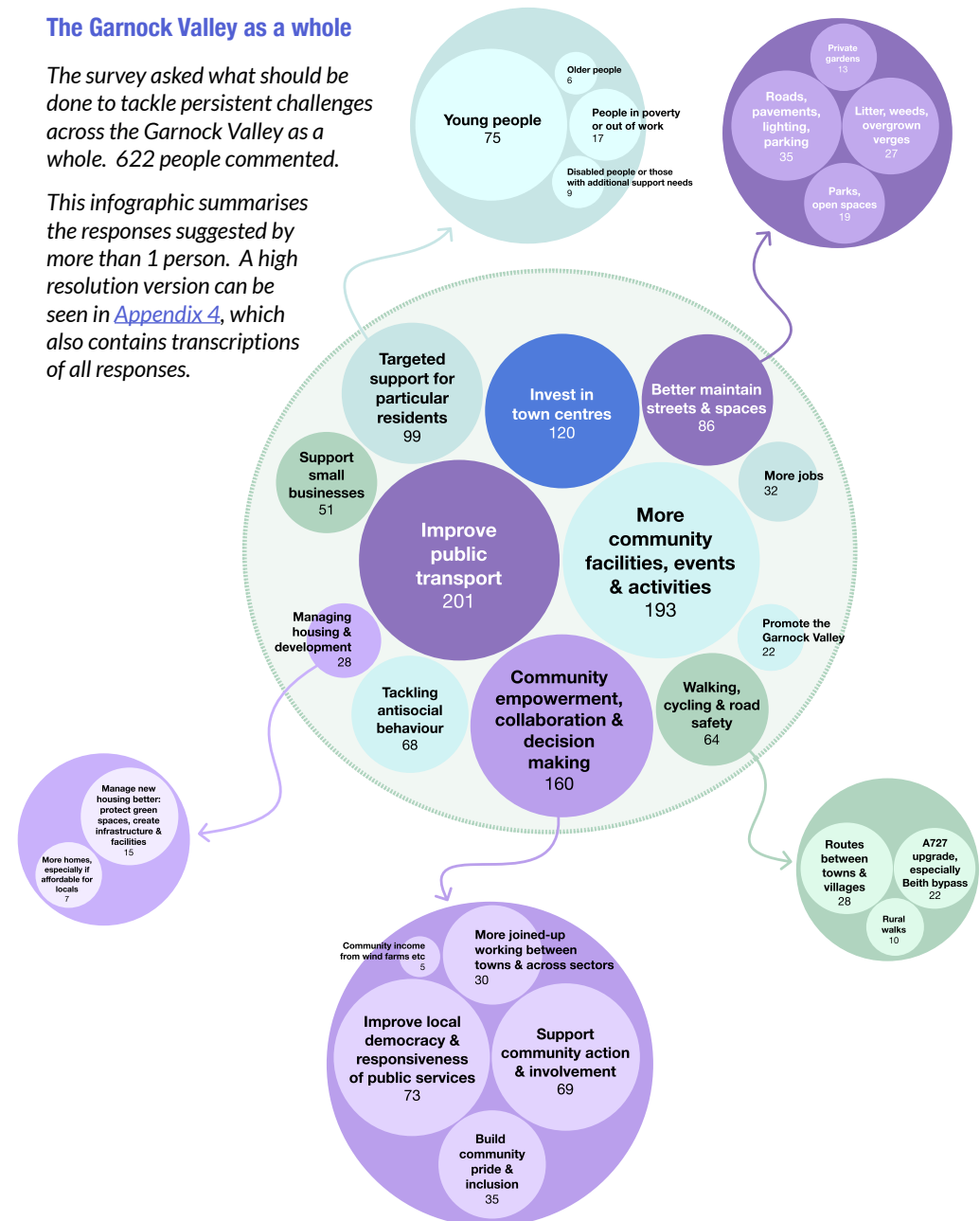
The results are an essential source of information for decision-makers about the community's lived experience, as well as clear indicators of priorities for the actual Plan - as the example graphic on the right shows.

Similar infographics for each town/village and full transcriptions of people's survey responses can be seen in [Appendix 4](#) or online at www.ourgarnockvalley.net/home/#survey-results.

The Garnock Valley as a whole

The survey asked what should be done to tackle persistent challenges across the Garnock Valley as a whole. 622 people commented.

This infographic summarises the responses suggested by more than 1 person. A high resolution version can be seen in [Appendix 4](#), which also contains transcriptions of all responses.



Town and village events

The town events in November 2024 and village events in January 2025 were an opportunity for discussion on how to address the priorities that emerged from previous work and the community survey.

Analysis of all the Stage 1 results identified seven community priorities:

TOWN CENTRES How they look and what they offer

GETTING ABOUT Public transport, walking and cycling - within the Garnock Valley and to other places

COMMUNITY LIFE Better community spaces, shops, cafes and restaurants - and more events & activities: e.g. sport, crafts, history, family-friendly, music

YOUNG PEOPLE More opportunities for our young people: work, play and having their say in the future of their place

ACTION AND DECISION-MAKING Stronger community action and pride, more local decision-making, more responsive public services

PARKS, STREETS AND SPACES Managing, maintaining and making the most of what we have - particularly Lochshore, Geilsland and Dalry public park

JOBS AND BUSINESS Support local business and jobs

(Housing emerged as a potential additional priority during the events.)

Various activities took place during the events to ask people how those those priorities should be addressed, as illustrated on page 11. To help people make informed comment, display boards with key facts and figures about the Garnock Valley were available (see right).

More information about the local area is available in North Ayrshire Council's [Garnock Valley Locality Place Profile](#) (to which people were signposted at the events and from [www.garnockvalley.net](#)) and [Garnock Valley Travel Needs Analysis](#).

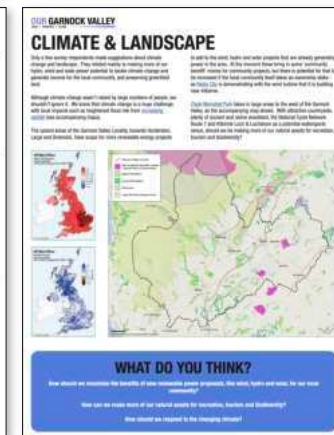
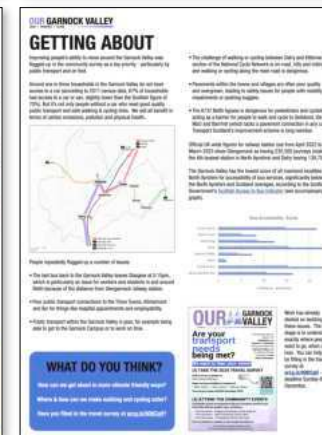
Full transcriptions and images of everyone's suggestions from the town and village events can be seen in Appendices 4 & 5 and online at [www.garnockvalley.net](#). Like the community survey results, they are an essential source of information about lived experience and aspirations for decision-making in the Garnock Valley.

Garnock Valley facts & figures

To inform people's discussions and input, information with key facts and figures about the Garnock Valley was on display at the town & village events and at [www.garnockvalley.net](#).

Thumbnails of the panels are shown adjacent. High-resolution versions are in [Appendix 2](#).

People were also signposted to more detailed information in North Ayrshire Council's [Garnock Valley Locality Place Profile](#).



2 THE BIGGER PICTURE

Whilst this Plan is rooted in our community's aspirations, it also helps to deliver bigger goals, for North Ayrshire and for Scotland - the overall aims of national and local policy.

This is because:

- It is a legal requirement for [Local Place Plans](#) to “have regard to” national and local planning policy and locality plans.
- If this Plan aligns with overall national and local policy aims, it is more likely to be successful in influencing future policy, investment and public services.

This Plan's vision, calls for action and proposals in chapters 3 to 15 have therefore been framed as **tackling community aspirations** and **delivering national and local policy agendas on the ground**.

This chapter provides a brief overview of those national and local policy agendas. It also constitutes the statement required by Local Place Planning legislation¹ explaining how the Plan has regard to national and local planning policy and locality plans.

Government priorities

Government policy priorities that this Plan delivers at the community level include:

- **Community wealth building & empowerment**
- **Climate change**
- **Health & wellbeing**
- **Sustainable and resilient communities**

The vision, calls for action and proposals in chapters 3 to 15 of this Plan all seek to deliver those agendas in the Garnock Valley. The box below identifies many of the key documents.

KEY GOVERNMENT PLANS & STRATEGIES

Click on the titles below for more information:

[Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy](#)
[NHS Ayrshire and Arran Delivery Plan](#)
[National Performance Framework](#)
[National Strategy For Economic Transformation](#)
[North Ayrshire Community Learning & Development Plan](#)
[North Ayrshire Community Wealth Building Strategy](#)
[North Ayrshire Council Plan](#)
[North Ayrshire Financial Inclusion Strategy](#)
[North Ayrshire Regeneration Delivery Plan](#)
[North Ayrshire Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy](#)
[North Ayrshire Youth Participation & Citizenship Strategy](#)
[Safer North Ayrshire Strategy](#)
[Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy](#)

Land-use planning & locality planning

As explained on the left, Local Place Plans must take account of existing national/local land-use planning policy and Locality Plans.

In terms of land-use planning, this Plan aims to deliver the **national planning agendas of creating sustainable, liveable and productive places** as expressed in the two parts of the 'statutory development plan':

- [National Planning Framework 4](#) (NPF4, adopted 2023)
- [North Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2](#) (LDP2, adopted 2019)

The vision, calls for action and proposals in chapters 3 to 15 of this Plan will create "sustainable, liveable and productive places" as defined in the statutory development plan.

This Local Place Plan also reflects the content of 2023/24 and 2024/25 [Garnock Valley Locality Plans](#), as required by Local Place Planning legislation. The Locality Plans prioritise moving around, work and community, and facilities and amenities - all of which are also prioritised in this Plan. The Locality Plans also propose a Place Plan for the Garnock Valley (this document) to influence future strategic policy and investment.

¹ [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Place Plans\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2021](#), paragraph 5(d)

The Place Principle

The Place Principle is, according to the Scottish Government, “[the overarching context for place-based working in Scotland](#)”.

The Principle was adopted by the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) to guide collaborative working by the public sector, service providers and communities. The panel on the right explains more.

Linked to the Place Principle are the [Place & Wellbeing Outcomes](#), which provide “a focus for where place impacts on the wellbeing of people and planet”.

This Plan seeks to put the Place Principle and Place & Wellbeing Outcomes into practice in the Garnock Valley. We hope that the Plan and its delivery are recognised as being at the forefront of the collaborative and holistic working described by the Place Principle and the Place & Wellbeing Outcomes.

What does the Place Principle say?

The Principle recognises that:

- Place is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose, and is at the heart of addressing the needs and realising the full potential of communities. Places are shaped by the way resources, services and assets are directed and used by the people who live in and invest in them
- A more joined-up, collaborative, and participative approach to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place, enables better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives.

The Principle requests that:

- all those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in a place need to work and plan together, and with local communities, to improve the lives of people, support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and create more successful places.
- there is a commitment to a collaborative, place-based approach with a shared purpose to support a clear way forward for all services, assets and investments which will maximise the impact of their combined resources.

Source: Scottish Government
www.ourplace.scot/about-place/place-principle

Future policy reviews

Appendix 1 of the Plan contains suggestions for the next reviews of local and national planning policy, as required by Local Place Planning legislation.

The most imminent of these reviews is the preparation of North Ayrshire Local Development Plan 3.

We trust these suggestions will be taken into account by national and local government in their reviews.

WHAT WE'RE AIMING FOR

3 OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Our vision reflects aspirations expressed through community engagement, and chimes with government agendas.

It builds on our many strengths and opportunities - including our proximity to Glasgow city region & the Ayrshire coast, our strong manufacturing heritage, our lochs, hills & natural resources, and the commitment of local organisations from all sectors (see pages 7 & 8).

Vision

In 10 years' time, the Garnock Valley will be a positive, forward-looking, connected community of towns & villages which:

- Has a **thriving local economy**.
- Has **active, empowered communities**.
- Enables residents to **Live Well Locally**, with key daily needs easily accessible in each of our towns without a car & for people with reduced mobility.
- Is a **place of choice to live, invest and visit** within Ayrshire & the West of Scotland, particularly for **young people & families**.
- Is at the forefront of **tackling climate change** and supports residents to make **climate-friendly** lifestyle choices.
- Has **good links** locally and to opportunities further afield in Glasgow & other Ayrshire towns.
- Has **strong identity & local pride**.

To deliver that vision, this Plan contains eight **Garnock Valley-wide “calls to action”**. These are summarised on the right and explained in more detail in chapters 4 to 11. Other projects are likely to emerge during the 10 year lifetime of the Plan; if they contribute to the Plan's vision, they should be supported.

The Plan also contains proposals for each town & village, showing how the calls to action should land on the ground in each community. Highlights are summarised on the next page, with detailed maps for each town & village in chapters 12 to 15.

Garnock Valley-wide calls to action



ACTION & DECISION MAKING

Stronger community action and pride, more local decision-making, more responsive public services



TOWN CENTRES

How they look and feel, & what they have to offer: facilities, services and opportunities



GETTING ABOUT

Public transport, walking and cycling - within the Garnock Valley & to other places, accessible to all



COMMUNITY LIFE

Better community spaces, services, shops, restaurants etc - accessible to all, with more events & activities



PARKS & PUBLIC SPACE

Managing, maintaining & enhancing our assets - including Lochshore, Geilsland & Dalry park



HOMES

Good quality, affordable, sustainable homes for everybody - existing & new-build



YOUNG PEOPLE

More opportunities for our young people: work, play & participating in the future of their place



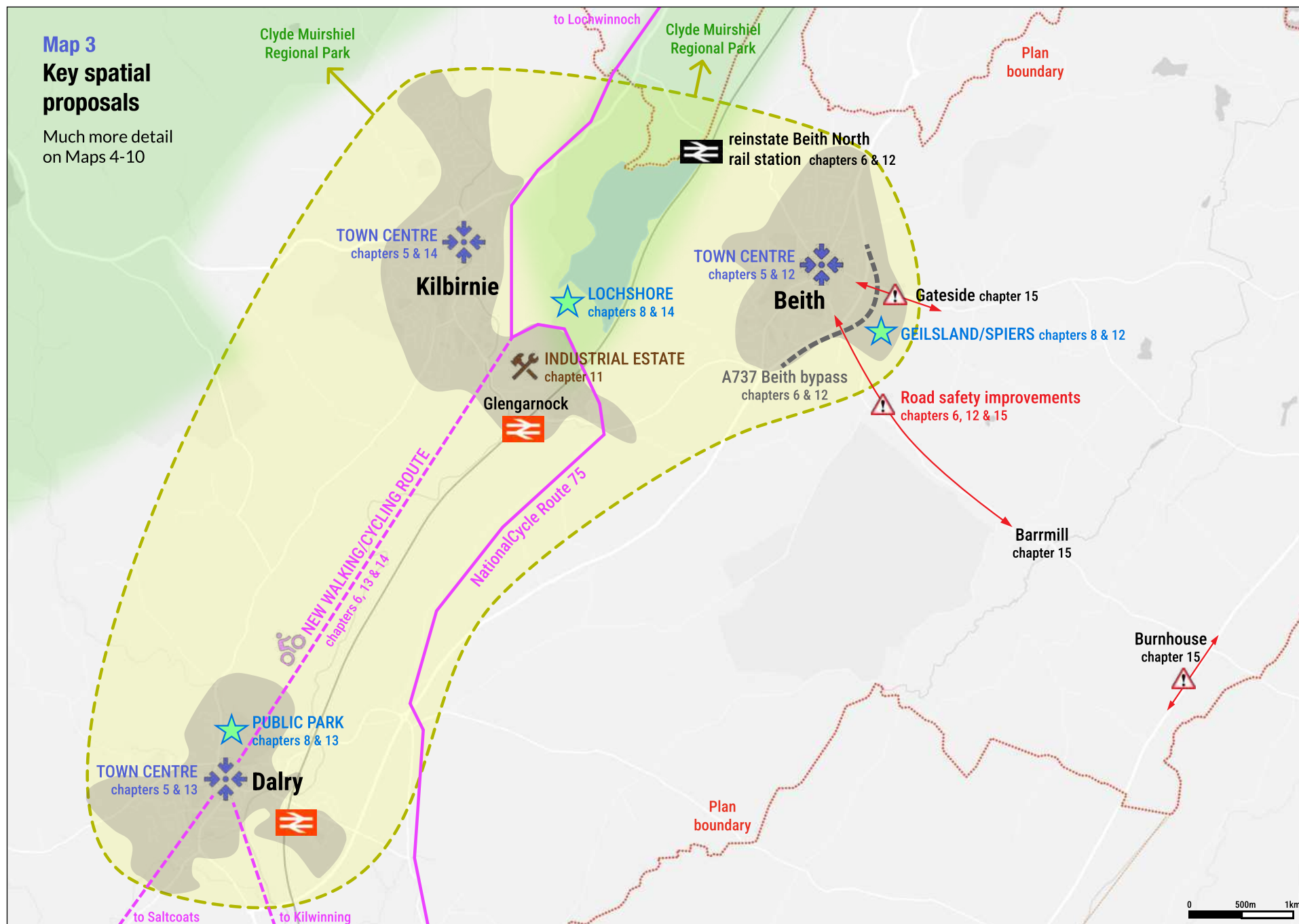
JOBS & BUSINESS

Support local business & jobs, modern manufacturing & the visitor economy

Map 3

Key spatial proposals

Much more detail on Maps 4-10



CALLS TO ACTION



Chapter 4 ACTION & DECISION MAKING

Stronger community action and pride, local decision-making, responsive public services



Chapter 5 TOWN CENTRES

How they look and feel, and what they have to offer: more homes and more facilities



Chapter 6 GETTING ABOUT

Excellent public transport, walking and cycling - within the Garnock Valley and to other places, accessible to all



Chapter 7 COMMUNITY LIFE

Top quality community spaces, services, shops, restaurants etc - with more events and activities



Chapter 8 PARKS & OUTDOOR SPACE

Managing, maintaining and enhancing our parks and the outdoor spaces for health and wellbeing



Chapter 9 HOUSING & POPULATION

Good quality, affordable, sustainable homes for everybody - existing and new-build



Chapter 10 YOUNG PEOPLE

More opportunities for our young people: work, play and participating in the future of their place



Chapter 11 JOBS & BUSINESS

Support local business and jobs, modern manufacturing and the visitor economy



4 ACTION & DECISION MAKING

Why we need action

We want and need to put [Community Wealth Building](#) and [community empowerment](#) into practice (see page 14). That's because the [old ways of doing things](#) haven't shifted the dial on the challenges described in chapter 1.

Action needs to be community-led, working in collaboration with authorities - bolstering local identity, community pride and empowerment, all of which are important to us (see survey results on page 12).

What we want to achieve

We need to build capacity, collaboration and leadership from the ground up.

Decision-making and action needs to be community-led and take place in a spirit of genuine partnership and collaboration between communities and local authorities.

More specifically:

- We need to strengthen the ability of community groups and small businesses to act, grow and shape their local areas. This means fostering collaboration and shared planning across sectors, laying the groundwork for long-term community-led regeneration.
- The community's capacity to generate income and disburse resources should be built up so that we become more reliant on

our own assets such as renewable power (see [Appendix 9](#)).

- This Plan should guide decisions on public service delivery and investment in the Garnock Valley over the next 5-10 years.
- The public sector and community organisations should work together to deliver services, with resource allocation, empowerment and shared decision-making to match - putting [Community Wealth Building](#) into practice.

On the ground, this would mean:

- Support for the Garnock Valley's many smaller community organisations to deliver this Plan, such as Beith Cultural & Heritage Society (the Townhouse), Dalry She Shed & Garnock Valley Mens Shed.
- Bigger local community-led organisations being encouraged & supported to take on a bigger role in delivering this Plan & supporting smaller organisations.
- Creating Community Development Trusts or equivalents in each town with paid capacity to deliver this Plan, similar to the role that Beith Trust already has in Beith.
- Continued support for our three Community Councils and other representative groups like Barrmill Community Association to champion and deliver this Plan.

What needs to happen

The rest of this chapter contains specific actions to make these things happen.

Specific priorities for each of our towns and villages are identified in chapters 12-15.

Everybody will need to work together to make these things happen (see chapter 16), and we will need to secure support and resources. This Plan will help with that.

[Appendix 9](#) contains findings on potential models for a community-led delivery organisation, work which was undertaken as part of preparation of this Local Place Plan.

Quotes from
survey
responses
(see page 12)

Please follow up plans with actions!
Recognising public sector funding/budget challenges, work together to submit bids for external funding (and build capacity in the community to support this).

Prioritise funding through
community engagement

More ways to engage people in
community & shape services

Create a
guaranteed income
stream, e.g.
community
ownership of
renewable energy
generation



4.1 Garnock Valley Community & Business Infrastructure Partnership



What is it?

Establish a structured, resourced programme to build infrastructure for long-term, community-led change across the Garnock Valley. The Partnership would support community groups, social enterprise & small businesses, recognising the challenges they face & the potential for mutual support. It should be a strategic partner of North Ayrshire Council & the Garnock Valley Locality Partnership.

What will it do?

Support smaller organisations:

- Mentoring, governance support, insurance hosting, funding guidance, venue access
- Shared resources (e.g., communications, finance systems, volunteer recruitment)

Develop delivery capacity:

- Staffed coordination team to support programme design, monitoring and reporting
- Facilitate joint delivery of food, employability, well-being and place-based programmes
- Deliver training for staff and volunteers across the sector

Explore and prototypes new structures:

- Test what a Garnock-wide community-led delivery organisation could look like in practice (federated vs single body) - see 4.8 on page 23
- Develop shared values, working agreements and strategic planning tools

Who would be involved?

Local community anchor organisations would lead, drawing on their collective expertise, in partnership with other existing and emerging community organisations across the Garnock Valley.

INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust

[Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust](#) works across three Community Council areas in mid Sutherland. Since it was formed in 2011, the Trust has secured over £10 million from investors and windfarm community benefit funds.

With 16 staff (9.5 full time equivalents), it has delivered several large capital investment projects and other activities. Every four years, the Trust secures core funding from community benefit funding for its staff team and operations. Projects delivered in partnership with other local organisations include:

- A new [business centre](#) in Ardgay, redeveloping a derelict hotel and old barn
- Acquisition, refurbishment and reopening of the derelict [Falls of Shin Visitor Centre](#)
- The [Kyle of Sutherland Hub](#) - repurposing an old coal yard by creating a purpose-built community centre with gym soft play area, cafe and community spaces.
- Acquisition and retention of Bonar Bridge Post Office and adjacent house, retaining existing jobs.
- Thirteen affordable homes, in partnership with a local Housing Association.

For more detail, see [this independent evaluation](#) (chapter 4).



4.2 Community Group Start-Up Support

Help new and emerging grassroots organisations get going.

- Governance support, funding advice, insurance cover, policy templates.
- Training for trustees, directors, committee members and volunteers.
- Light-touch mentoring programme.

4.3 Micro & Start-Up Business Incubator

Support for small businesses, traders, and social enterprises.

- Partnership with North Ayrshire Council's Business Gateway and Business Growth Team.
- Training in marketing, finance, digital presence.
- Affordable space-sharing models in vacant units.

4.4 Shared Back Office Services

Help groups and businesses focus on delivery, not admin.

- Pooled access to communications, finance tools, HR templates, volunteer recruitment.
- Coordinated volunteer bank for local projects.

4.5 Training for Change Programme

Valley-wide training programme for staff, volunteers, and business owners.

- Delivery in partnership with North Ayrshire Council Community Learning & Development and training providers.
- E.g: governance, safeguarding, digital, finance, budgeting, first aid, customer service, food hygiene etc
- Delivered locally, with low or no cost.

4.6 Community Delivery Pilot Fund

Funding and support for collaborative, local community-led activity.

- Seed funding for co-designed programmes (e.g. food, wellbeing, employability).
- Support with programme design, delivery, and evaluation.
- Coordinated reporting to reduce admin burden.

4.7 Local Collaborative Commissioning

Test new ways of commissioning services through community partnerships using Community Wealth Building principles.

- Co-design and delivery services with North Ayrshire Council, the Locality Partnership / Community Planning Partnership, NHS etc.
- Build delivery capacity amongst local charitable community-led organisations to deliver services **and** invest in the local community.
- Pilot joint funding arrangements and shared impact reporting.



4.8 'Garnock Valley Community Development Trust' Model Exploration

Explore the creation of a Garnock Valley-wide Community Development Trust or equivalent.

- Test federated vs single-entity models.
- Host workshops, consultations, and study visits.
- Develop shared values, governance, and strategic planning tools.

INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

9CC Group, Cumnock & Doon Valley

- Nine Community Councils working together to receive and disburse community benefit payments from local windfarms.
- Launched in 2023 with a single vision covering all 9 Community Councils across the Doon Valley.
- £100m over the lifetime of the windfarms, spent in line with an overall community-led plan.
- More information at 9ccg.co.uk.



INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

Point & Sandwich community windfarm

[Point & Sandwich Community Trust](#) in the Western Isles has developed the UK's biggest community-owned commercial-scale windfarm - which now produces £900,000 a year in net income for the local community.

It has already enabled investment of £2m in island projects. Once capital costs have been repaid, it will enable investment of that amount every year.

More information at www.hie.co.uk/knowledge-library/case-studies/pointandsandwick/





5 TOWN CENTRES

Why we need action

Our town centres in Beith, Dalry and Kilbirnie are the physical hearts of our communities: the most accessible points in each town with history, character, facilities and services.

But they are in a sorry state with neglect, dereliction, vacancy and poor choice of shopping, entertainment and amenities.

We need to up our game to boost investment, growth, quality of life, health and wellbeing, and community pride.

We want to bring new life to our town centres so that they are the focus of sustainable local communities, in line with the Scottish Government's 'Town Centre First' policy (see [National Planning Framework 4](#), Policy 27) and [local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods guidance](#).

What we want to achieve

Our vision is of our town centres being smarter, tidier and thriving places, with more people living in our town centres, public services and small businesses.

Priorities:

- Reduce the amount of vacant and derelict property, particularly prominent buildings and sites in each town centre (specific buildings are identified in chapters 12-14).

- Increase business activity and investment, particularly small businesses.
- Flexibility for more town centre living: high quality flats and houses in central, accessible locations.
- Focus public sector services and investment to town centres, in line with the Scottish Government's [Town Centre First Principle](#).
- Improve the condition of streets, buildings and spaces - their look and feel, to make them more attractive to spend time in and move around on foot.

What needs to happen

The rest of this chapter contains specific actions to make these things happen. They focus on activating the built environment in ways that benefit both residents and local enterprise. They rely on the skills, confidence, and collaborative capacity developed in the previous chapter to ensure change is rooted in local needs and community leadership.

Specific priorities for each of our towns and villages are shown in chapters 12-15.

Everybody will need to work together to make these things happen (see chapter 16), and we will need to secure support and resources. This Plan will help with that.

Quotes from survey responses
(see page 12)

Create a pride in the area by removing empty and derelict properties from the town centre. Potential incomers cannot be impressed with the current state of the towns.

compulsory purchase orders on vacant properties and either returned to community ownership or developed as social housing

Make the owners of the empty units accountable for their upkeep. Offer incentives to businesses to want to invest and set up shop in the valley

Need shop fronts painted and tidied up. The Garnock valley is very run down. Beith was a lovely wee town when we moved here



5.1 Town Centre Spring Clean Festival

Community-led improvement of public spaces and streetscapes.

- Volunteer-led clean-ups in Beith, Dalry, Kilbirnie and Glengarnock.
- Activities include litter picks, planters, signage refresh, painting, pressure-washing / soft washing buildings.
- Involve schools, men's sheds, gardening groups.

5.2 Shopfront Boost Grants

Small grants for facelifts of shopfronts and public-facing buildings.

- Grants available to active and vacant properties, like the £1.5m CARS repair scheme in [Millport town centre](#).
- Focus on conservation, good design, and aesthetic uplift.
- Deliver jointly with NAC & Historic Environment Scotland's [Heritage and Place Programme](#).

5.3 Vacant to Vibrant Property Reuse Scheme

Turning empty or unloved buildings into community and business assets.

- Live register of vacant buildings with ownership/contact details.
- Support reuse with feasibility studies and small capital grants.
- High level condition reviews of buildings in Conservation Areas.
- Focus on key sites including Walker Hall, Anderson Hotel/Merchants Yarn, St Margaret's Church, Geilsland House & Estate.
- Explore varying business rates to encourage property reuse.

5.4 Landmark Sites Programme

Strategic focus on key underused or symbolic buildings.

- Bring together partners to create reuse plans.
- Apply for larger capital grants (RCGF, THI, etc.).
- Host public visioning events to co-design future uses.
- Phased approach of feasibility studies leading to capital projects.

5.5 "Love Garnock Towns" Communications Campaign

A shared identity and PR campaign for all towns.

- Develop brand identity (e.g. "Love Beith", "Love Dalry").
- Launch dedicated website, social media, and print materials.
- Share positive stories, promote projects, and build engagement.

INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

Vibrant Gala

Galashiels has a population of around 12,000. A former industrial town, it shares some challenges with the Garnock Valley - including a town centre with high levels of vacancy and neglect. [Energise Galashiels Trust](#), a community organisation, was established in 2014 to tackle the situation by creating a more vibrant and welcoming community.

Since 2020, its energies have focussed on the Vibrant Gala Project, with support from South of Scotland Enterprise and Scottish Borders Council. Individual initiatives have included:

- Marketing [Galashiels: Heartland of the Borders](#) with digital support to enterprises including branding, website and social media. The website lists over 125 businesses and attracts 1,500 visitors a month.
- Improvement of 35 town centre properties with grants totalling £120,000, focussing on long term vacant properties and new & expanding businesses.
- Galashiels Heartland Awards for local businesses and organisations, with a popular public vote.
- Tapestry Way Feasibility Study and associated development activity to maximise the positive impact of the [Great Tapestry of Scotland](#).

For more information, visit [this webpage](#).





5.6 Community-Led Cultural & Regeneration Programme

- Gala-style festivals as a route to increased footfall, civic pride and business income.
- Promote and support cultural re-use of buildings (inspired by CentreStage, Kilmarnock; see right) – especially key town centre buildings like Beith Town House and Anderson Hotel, St Margaret's Dalry and the Library opposite, and the Walker Hall in Kilbirnie as multi use spaces hosting enterprise, hospitality, performance, learning and/or creative activity.

5.7 Destination Towns

Develop complementary brands/identities for each town based on authentic local culture and heritage, for residents and visitors, and working with educational institutions, local businesses and creative organisations. The branding/identities could reflect the Garnock Valley's agricultural heritage (e.g. local produce and farmers' markets), and the industrial, manufacturing, crafts and Robbie Burns heritage of the towns:

- **Beith:** furniture, cabinet making.
- **Dalry:** weaving, mining, ironworks, brickmaking.
- **Kilbirnie and Glengarnock:** steelworks, rope making.

This should include creative workshops, mural trails, exhibitions & markets to showcase local talent, encourage participation & attract visitors.

INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

West Kilbride Craft Town

The Craft Town Initiative was born in 1998 to use local arts and crafts to tackle the 50% vacancy rate in the town centre's shops.

Nine empty premises were purchased and turned into studios. The Barony Centre opened in 2012 with exhibitions, classes and a cafe. New businesses have followed, including shops and a bistro.

Find out more in [the Scottish Town Toolkit](#), which also tells the stories of Wigtown Book Town and Kirkcudbrightshire Artists' Town.

INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

CentreStage, Kilmarnock

Since it opened its doors in 2006, [CentreStage](#) has been bringing people of all ages and backgrounds together through arts activities: classes, musical theatre, dance, acting, singing, Get Happy community activities and much more.

1,200 people get involved in activities every week, bringing joy and happiness to individual lives - and helping people to fulfil their potential, improving wellbeing and tackling poverty in the process.

The team is also out and about in prisons, in care homes and in harder to reach areas. And it is not just the performance arts that are learned and honed at CentreStage. Prop-making, lighting, stage management, reception, hospitality outreach and catering - the list is endless.

As well as supporting people across Kilmarnock and Ayrshire, CentreStage also plays a big role in the town's regeneration as a place.

The former Kilmarnock Academy - a prominent 1.8 hectare vacant site on the edge of the town centre - has been repurposed into a multimillion pound 'neighbourhood' with a new state-of-the-art theatre that won [Scotland's Best Theatre 2022](#).

The site as a whole is home not only to CentreStage but to other social enterprises - quite something for two teachers Fiona McKenzie and Paul Matheson who left the security of their profession in pursuit of a dream 20 years ago.



6 GETTING ABOUT

Why we need action

Transport emerged as the top priority in our community survey (see page 12 above).

Better transport will increase access to jobs and key services like hospitals, help tackle social isolation, increase footfall in our town centres, tackle inequality and help each of us make sustainable transport choices - as the recent [Travel Needs Analysis](#) shows.

Buses are a lifeline for many of us, but they don't provide the services we need - [an issue across Strathclyde](#). Beith is particularly poorly served: the town has no rail link and the last bus back from Glasgow is at 5:15pm.

Although we have good trains to Glasgow and Irvine, our railway stations are not centrally located and are poorly integrated with buses.

We want to be able to walk and cycle safely - for our own health and wellbeing, so we can move around more cheaply, and so we can do our bit for climate change. But pavements are often in poor condition. Key links are missing, such as between Dalry and the rest of the Garnock Valley, and across the A737 Beith bypass to the villages. And over two-thirds of the National Cycle Network through the Garnock Valley is on roads with no segregated provision for cyclists.

What we want to achieve

Map 34 overleaf shows the network of connections we are aiming for within and beyond the Garnock Valley.

Making that happen will mean that:

- People can use public transport to get to work, study, healthcare and recreation opportunities in the Garnock Valley and further afield in Glasgow, Irvine, Kilmarnock and the Three Towns.
- People can walk and cycle safely within and between our towns and villages - including to access daily needs such as shops, schools and public services.
- We can tackle climate change, inequality, health & wellbeing and community wealth-building through less car use.

What needs to happen

We have already made a good start: the community-led Garnock Valley [Travel Needs Analysis](#) provides an evidence base about the improvements and actions needed.

The rest of this chapter contains specific actions to make these things happen.

Specific priorities for each of our towns and villages are identified in chapters 12-15.

Everybody will need to work together to make these things happen (see chapter 16), and we will need to secure support and resources. This Plan will help with that.

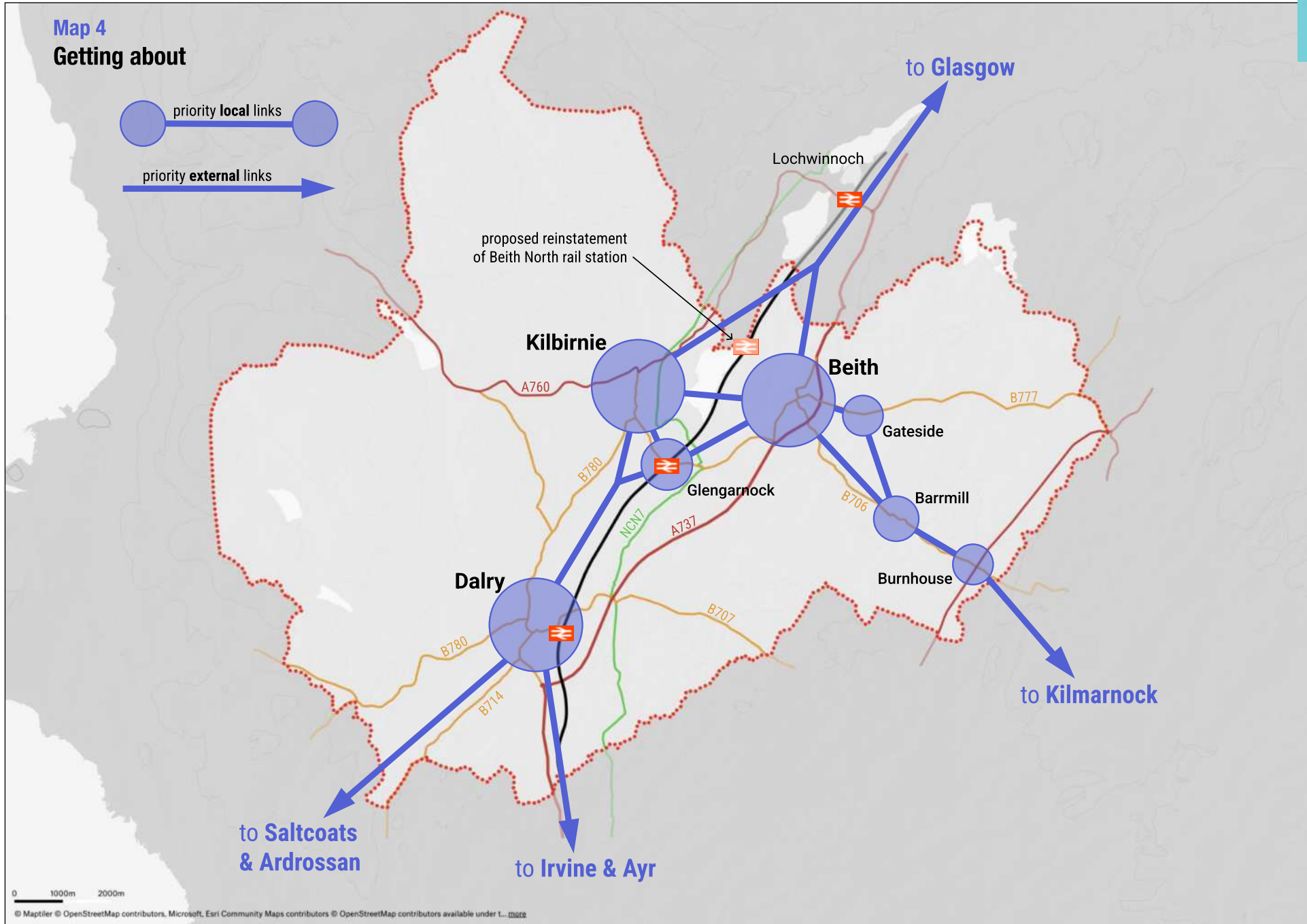
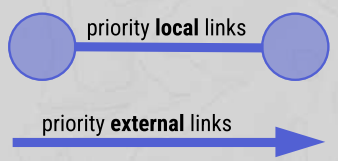
Quotes from survey responses
(see page 12)

More frequent local bus service that integrates with rail timetable. Bus service to and from Glasgow in the evening

Bus services slowly being removed, reverse decline. Trains ok but too dear and don't run with buses.

5 mins in the car and over an hour to get a bus to the next town, with no safe way to walk. No use! The pavement between Beith and Glengarnock is brilliant. We need more ways to get about.

Map 4 Getting about





6.1 Community Bus

- Frequent local services linking towns, villages, rail stations, Garnock Campus, Lochshore and Geilsland.
- Smaller vehicles with disabled access.
- Plenty of similar examples to learn from across Scotland.
- Develop with [SPT](#) and the [Community Transport Association](#).
- More details: [Garnock Valley Travel Needs Analysis](#) (page 79).

6.2 Bus Improvements



- Timetable updates for existing services, particularly bus/rail connections at Glengarnock station and access to big employers.
- Additional bus subsidies to provide better routing and timetabling, e.g. alter bus 337 to Crosshouse Hospital to serve Kilbirnie and Dalry as well as Beith.
- More details: [Garnock Valley Travel Needs Analysis](#) (pages 79-80).

6.3 Real-time Bus Information



- Live bus tracking app.
- More details: [Garnock Valley Travel Needs Analysis](#) (page 80).

6.4 Garnock Valley Zoncard

- Investigate Garnock Valley Zone so passengers to travel on bus/rail services run by different operators under the one ticket.
- More details: [Garnock Valley Travel Needs Analysis](#) (page 80).

6.5 Beith North Railway Station

- Reinstate former railway station at bottom of Kings Road, with walking and cycling connections (see chapter 12, Map 4a).



6.6 A737 Beith Bypass Upgrade



- Implement [A737 Beith bypass improvements promoted by Transport Scotland](#), including safe pedestrian crossings and junction safety.
- Will improve walking/cycling safety between Beith, Geilsland/Spiers, Gateside and Barrmill.
- An urgent priority which has been shovel-ready for many years. Consider phasing to accelerate its implementation.
- See also chapter 12, Map 4a.

INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

Black Isle Wee Bus

- Community-led electric minibus based in Culbokie on the Black Isle.
- [Daytime & evening bookable service](#) locally & and to supermarket etc in Dingwall.
- Uses public sector subsidies previously directed to commercial operators.
- Now being expanded to cover the whole of the Black Isle as proposed in the [Black Isle Local Place Plan](#).
- More information [here](#).



INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

South Ayrshire Community Transport

- Bigger community initiative covering a larger area
- Multiple modes of transport: scheduled buses, minibus hire, excursions, ebikes
- More information at www.sacommunitytransport.org
- Uses public subsidies previously directed to commercial operators
- Another example is [Annandale Community Transport](#) in Lockerbie, established 1999





6.7 Dalry Connections

- Link Dalry with Kilbirnie and Kilwinning with traffic-free cycling/walking route as shorter rerouting of hilly on-road section of National Cycle Route 7 (see chapter 12, Maps 5a and 6a).
- Dalry-Saltcoats: reinstate proposals for pedestrian & cyclist provision in [proposals for B714 upgrade](#).



6.8 Lochshore Connections

- Reopen Ladeside Park footbridge to give access from Kilbirnie.
- Better walking and cycling links to/from Kilbirnie, Glengarnock and Beith, including signage.



6.9 Towns & Villages Road Safety Programme

- Village and town centres: reduce vehicle speeds and improve pedestrian safety (see chapter 15, Maps 8 and 9).
- Safe walking/cycling routes between Beith and Barrmill/Gateside (see chapters 12 and 15).



6.10 Parking

- Lack of public parking is a challenge in residential areas, town centres and railways stations across the Garnock Valley. It impacts on emergency & public services and is made worse by poor public transport.
- A comprehensive analysis of parking management, public transport and active travel is needed in each town.

6.11 Cycle Storage

- Secure cycle storage at rail stations, key bus stops, town/village centres, schools and other hubs like Garnock Campus, Lochshore and community centres.

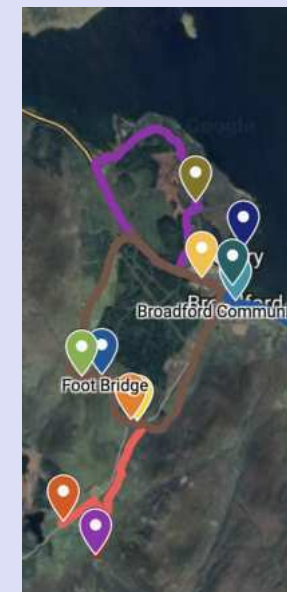
6.12 A737 Contingency Plan

- Put in place contingency arrangements for when A737 is closed for accidents or repairs, to ensure traffic and economic activity still flows.

INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

Broadford & Strath path network, Skye

- Network of paths built up project by project by Broadford & Strath Community Development Company since 2000
- Provide safe walking routes off roads for locals and visitors
- Includes heritage trails involving restoration of historic pier & links to other historic sites
- Latest phase is safe cycle route from Skye Bridge to Broadford, itself part of larger Isle of Skye Cycle Network project
- More information at www.broadfordandstrath.org



INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

Roadside walking/cycling routes, Islay

- Loch Indaal Way: 2 mile route linking Port Charlotte & Bruichladdich
- Three Distilleries Way: 3 mile route linking Port Ellen & Ardbeg
- Example for proposed Dalry-Kilbirnie National Cycle Route realignment; similar to Beith-Glengarnock roadside path





7 COMMUNITY LIFE

Why we need action

Sense of community is important to us in the Garnock Valley. We are proud of our identity and heritage.

To keep our communities alive and thriving, we need local services, facilities and amenities in our towns and villages:

- Indoor and outdoor spaces where we can meet and do things such as cinema nights, youth cafes and farmers' markets.
- Groups and organisations where we can do things together and look after each other, whether we have lived here a long time or have recently moved here.
- Events and activities to bring us together and tackle social isolation.

And we need to make sure that young people and families opportunities and reasons to stay here - because they are the future of our communities.

Quotes from survey responses
(see page 12)

Local farmers
markets, night time events.
Places for teenagers to go,
maybe cafes opening for
kids

Making the area look
better would go a long
way to improving
morale and
encouraging people to
have more pride in their
community

More community activities at an
accessible price for families

What we want to achieve

- A network of **community hubs** giving affordable and good quality space for community activities in each of our towns and larger villages.
- More **events and activities** - things to join in, watch and participate, including family-friendly, sports, exercise, music, performance, crafts, history, learning, indoor and outdoor, culturally sensitive... anything that brings people together!
- Retain & enhance **local services, facilities and amenities** in each of our towns, in line with the Scottish Government's [Local Living / 20 Minute Neighbourhood guidance](#). This should include health & social care, toilets, libraries, parks, recreation & community safety.
- **More choice of shops, cafes, restaurants, accommodation** & other services.
- Ultimately, a more active community with better **health and wellbeing** outcomes, more **social inclusion** and greater **community pride**.

What needs to happen

The rest of this chapter contains specific actions to make these things happen.

Specific priorities for each of our towns and villages are identified in chapters 12-15.

This should be read in conjunction with the actions elsewhere in this Plan which will support community life, particularly:

- Community action (chapter 4)
- Town centres (chapter 5)
- Parks and public spaces (chapter 8)
- Young people (chapter 10)

Further actions will need to be developed to deliver the intended changes over the 5-10 year lifetime of the Plan.

Support and resources will be needed, and we know it will be challenging to deliver everything. Equally, cherry-picking one or two actions and hoping to achieve success will not be enough. A combination of actions will be needed to deliver positive change, and others will emerge beyond those listed overleaf.

Chapter 16 contains more information on how everyone involved needs to work together to implement the Plan.



7.1 Matching Community Activity to Community Spaces

We want to retain and enhance indoor community spaces in Beith, Dalry, Kilbirnie, Barrmill, Burnhouse, Gateside and Glengarnock—and support and encourage a range of affordable community activities and events in each town and village (indoor and outdoor; daytime, evening and weekend; for different age groups; sport and exercise, arts and crafts, recreation, biodiversity and learning).



The way that is done is really important: it must be community-led. Existing organisations and venues that are well-positioned to lead community hub activities need to be supported. For example:



- **Beith:** Beith Community Association and Beith Community Development Trust, with its strong track record of engagement and delivering projects such as Beith Astro and Geilsland, are well placed to lead revitalisation of community spaces in Beith.
- **Dalry:** As an established central point for activity in Dalry, the Community Development Hub could be further supported to broaden its reach and impact. The forthcoming closure of St Margaret's Church is an opportunity to consolidate existing spaces and create a larger central contemporary community space, including using key buildings around the square.
- **Kilbirnie & Glengarnock:** With the right support, local community organisation(s) could co-ordinate and drive improvements in community facilities and a joined-up programme of activity.
- **Barrmill & Gateside:** replacement of Community Association's life-expired Community Centre will enable it to continue as the community hub for Barrmill and Burnhouse, potentially also enabling redevelopment of adjacent prominent derelict land.



(See chapters 12-15 for site-specific information in towns and villages.)

Rather than focusing solely on buildings, it is the activity, energy and purpose within a space that ultimately builds success—like Kilmaronock's CentreStage (see page 26). By investing incrementally over time in the people, ideas and programmes that bring places to life, we can allow activity to lead the way—ultimately creating vibrant, well-used community spaces that are responsive to local needs and which evolve organically. Using this approach, it is the activity and energy of people that drive the development of place, not the other way around.

INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

Inverclyde Shed

The Inverclyde Shed is an award-winning 100% volunteer-run grassroots organisation with the aim of providing spaces for people to come together, be involved, grow and share their skills & experiences. It operates a workshop in Greenock and growing spaces in Port Glasgow, Greenock & Gourock.

The Shed reduces social isolation & loneliness through activities where people can build genuine lasting friendships, improve their physical & mental wellbeing, and develop their capacity to share their skills and knowledge with others in the community.

Activities take place all day every day—making, arts, crafts, sewing, carving, music, creative writing, gardening, growing spaces, bee keeping, hydroponics and much more.

The Shed is a registered Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation. When people join, they are joining a community of over 450 members who work together, take shared responsibility, and have a say in what they do.

"I was aware of the Shed, but I didn't realise the enormous impact it makes for the residents in this area. I became a member about 9 months ago when I signed up for the creative writing class and it's been a fantastic experience. ... I'll be a member for life now." —Iris Potter

More details: www.inverclydeshed.co.uk





7.2 Garnock Campus & Lochshore

- This Valley-wide facility needs enhanced community access:
 - Greater community role in management and programming.
 - Bigger range of activities e.g. watersports at Lochshore, leisure classes.
 - Valley-wide public transport & walking/cycling access (see chapter 6).

7.3 What's On Garnock Valley

- Digital diary of events and organisations.
- Start small by using social media.
- Could develop to include digital signage in town centres.
- Complement with contact list of community organisations and volunteers.

7.4 Tour de Garnock 2027

- Public ride event from Lochshore to showcase our scenery & heritage with permanent route signage for the future.
- Link with the Tour de France 2027 Scottish start and build on the success of Dalry's annual [Skirt the Skeith](#) road run.

7.5 Local Living

- Retain, provide & enhance key public services in each town, including health centre, community centre, library, play areas and green spaces, toilets, childcare and banking hub.

INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

Kilwinning Banking Hub

- Shared banking space on the high street: counter service operated by the Post Office with cash transactions for all major banks and building societies, access to bank representatives
- For personal & business customers
- Enables local access to cash following closure of bank branches
- Funded by high street banks through [Cash Access UK](#) not-for-profit company
- [Kilwinning Banking Hub](#) in former Clydesdale Bank is a local example





7.6 Beith Health and Wellbeing Centre

- Replace existing sub-optimal health centre with new fit-for-purpose hub; NHS Ayrshire & Arran is awaiting funding.
- Options appraisal needed to consider:
 - Refurbishment of existing premises.
 - New build on existing site.
 - Relocation elsewhere in the town centre.
 - Co-location with other services (e.g. community centre, library).
 - Re-use existing premises for affordable housing or community space.

7.7 Action on Mental Health

- Develop programme to tackle mental health issues and loneliness, including increased social prescribing and health advocacy in local hubs.

7.8 New Scots

- Supporting New Scots to make the Garnock Valley their home, including access to facilities like swimming pool & gyms in line with their cultural requirements.

7.9 Community digital infrastructure

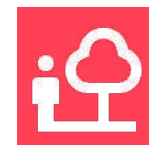
- Explore public or community ownership of fibre broadband networks, public wifi, cloud/data infrastructure, digital services, AI infrastructure, smart grids etc as a strategic utility.
- The aim is to create a replicable model of energy transition and economic empowerment.

INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

Renfrew Health & Social Care Centre

- Social Work, 3 GP Practices, dental practice, NHS services (physiotherapy, podiatry, speech & language therapy, learning disabilities services, District Nurse & Health Visitor, audiology)
- Award-winning NHS/Council project
- Catalyst for regeneration of Renfrew
- An ideal model for Beith— with a lead role for the local community like [community-owned medical centre in Fort Augustus](#)?





8 PARKS & OUTDOOR SPACE

Why we need action

Our parks and outdoor spaces, like our town centres, are the heart of our communities. They are places to meet, recharge our batteries, and enjoy the outdoors. They also have a vital role in making the Garnock Valley a more attractive place to live by improving our health, wellbeing, economy and pride.

But, like our town centres, they need some tender loving care.

Communities are often best placed to improve parks and open spaces—as witnessed by excellent community-led initiatives in parks in Beith, Dalry, Barrmill, Gateside and Glengarnock in recent years. But they do need support.

Similarly, our wider public realm of streets, footways, verges and other public spaces need positive action to tackle worn-out surfaces, encroaching vegetation, accumulated litter, damaged drains and so on.

What we want to achieve

- Maintain and enhance our valued parks and open spaces identified in chapters 12-15, developing a new community-led model. As explained in chapter 4, focus on people first: better places will follow.
- Ensure that Beith and Dalry meet [Fields in Trust standards](#) for open space (see [North Ayrshire Open Space Audit 2022, section 5.2](#)).
- Make more of the potential of Geilsland/ Spiers and Lochshore to foster closer relationships between community, heritage and nature - and to generate a new level of recreational and economic opportunities.
- Smarten up the wider public realm around the Garnock Valley so that it contributes positively to the community.

What needs to happen

The rest of this chapter contains specific actions to make these things happen.

Specific priorities for each of our towns and villages are identified in chapters 12-15.

Further actions will need to be developed to deliver the intended changes over the 5-10 year lifetime of the Plan.

Support and resources will be needed, and we know it will be challenging to deliver everything. Equally, cherry-picking one or two actions and hoping to achieve success will not be enough. A combination of actions will be needed to deliver positive change, and others will emerge beyond those listed overleaf.

Chapter 16 contains more information on how everyone involved needs to work together to implement the Plan.

Quotes from survey responses (see page 12)

Better play equipment and lighting in parks

Go back to basics and get on top of keeping the towns well maintained, somewhere people can be proud to live and proud to walk through

Clear litter from main roads, thrown by drivers. Not the councils fault but the litter is shocking across the Garnock valley. Better education/ fines/ signs encouraging to take litter home.

8.1 Dalry Park

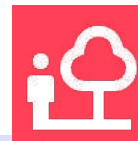
- Support selective community acquisition and management of the public park by Dalry Community Sports Club.
- Extend the public park eastwards towards DSM, including new/ repaired footbridge (see chapter 13).

8.2 Geilsland, Spiers & Lochshore Living Heritage Project

- Reimagine Geilsland Estate / House, Spiers Old School Grounds and Lochshore Park as a layered site combining heritage, learning, education and nature-based activity (see chapters 11, 12 & 14).
- Lochshore: must be viewed as a strategic asset for the whole Garnock Valley. It must not displace activity from elsewhere in the Garnock Valley, and existing activities must not be encouraged to move there from elsewhere in the Valley. Initiatives at Lochshore must be implemented in that context, and must cascade benefits out across the GV as a whole, as originally envisaged.
- Lochshore should be developed as a day-visitor attraction for Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and Glasgow. This should include developing watersports facilities and activities on Kilbirnie Loch with Kilbirnie Loch Management Group and others.
- These sites have a deep connection to cultural heritage, education and landscape with great potential for recreation, access to nature, green employability and training.
- Put in place appropriate signage, wayfinding and PR for people to easily find Lochshore, Geilsland and Spiers.

8.3 Walking the Valley

- Connect all of these spaces—Spiers, Geilsland, Lochshore, Dalry Park and more—through storytelling trails, Interpretive Art local guides, and participatory mapping. Create a network of meaning, memory, and movement across the Garnock Valley.
- Map/audit rights of way / Core Paths and keep them clear.



INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

Super Slow Way, Lancashire

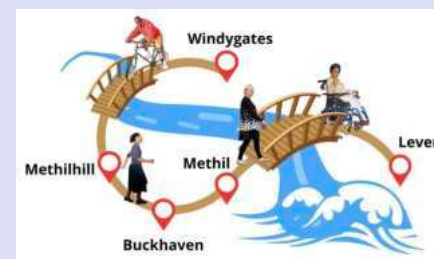
- Started 2015, shaped by the local community working alongside artists
- Supports people with no arts experience to weave the fabric of a future cultural landscape along the Leeds & Liverpool Canal using its rich assets of environment, heritage & community
- Free family friendly activities from canoeing & growing projects to arts & music - more info at www.superslowway.org.uk



INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

The Leven Programme, Fife

- Series of [connected projects](#) along the River Leven in Fife, from Loch Leven through Glenrothes to the coast at Leven and Methil
- All linked to environment, heritage and people
- Government, businesses & communities working together to deliver environmental improvements in and around the river, and maximising the social and economic opportunities the improvements bring
- The Garnock Valley offers an opportunity to do something at similar landscape scale but more community-led
- Started 2018, runs to 2030
- More information at www.theleven.org





8.4 Festival of Parks and Places

- Host a rolling programme of creative, low-cost events across Dalry Park, Lochshore, Geilsland / Spiers, and rejuvenated Orr Park in Beith and Kilbirnie Public Park—tying each event to a seasonal theme and inviting community co-creation.
- Building on existing activities, organise a programme of community activities in parks and greenspaces across the Garnock Valley.

8.5 Living Parks & Playable Places

- Bring together local gardeners, artists, families and schools to shape pockets of activity in each public park—from grow spaces and story poles to play trails and pop-up repair cafés. Start small and build up.
- Ensure that every community has well maintained and accessible play parks, greenspace and path networks. As well as spaces already mentioned and those shown on the maps in chapters 12-15, priority areas should include [Dalry community garden](#), Lynn Falls at Dalry, Glengarnock, Beith Astro and Place Woodland, Kilbirnie.

8.6 Spring Clean Festival



- Community-led improvement of public spaces and streetscapes—see chapter 5 (proposal 5.1)

8.7 Nature Networks

- Encourage linking up of habitats and greater access to natural environments.

INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

Zetland Park, Grangemouth

- Community-driven, local authority-enabled regeneration of the main public park—led by community group [Friends of Zetland Park](#) with support from Falkirk Council, £1.2m National Lottery Heritage Fund grant & Sustrans
- Capital works included cycling pump track, tennis courts, community orchard, path improvements, performance space, wildlife pond in the derelict boating pond, war memorial and fountain renovations & heritage-themed play park
- £130k activity programme includes oral histories, annual science festival, event days, flag design, sports, photography, cycling/bike activities & performing arts





9 HOUSING & POPULATION

Why we need action

We are a popular place to live, and rightly so.

Demand for housing in the Garnock Valley is on the rise. That's good: more households and residents will help sustain and build our communities and the facilities and services described in this Plan.

As we attract more people, we need to:

- Create homes that are affordable for local people on lower incomes and those with particular needs, like older people, young families and disabled people.
- Make sure people have access to the facilities they need like healthcare, parks and transport.
- Improve our town centres by redeveloping vacant property there into new homes.
- Avoid building on assets which the local community uses and values, like valued green spaces.

We must also upgrade existing homes which are energy inefficient or below tolerable standard, particularly rented homes and those on lower Council tax bands.

What we want to achieve

- Build new homes where they encourage residents to use local facilities and be part of communities—rather than drive elsewhere for shopping, work and recreation by developing away from town centres next to the A737, for example.
- Use new housing to help deliver other elements of this Plan, like community facilities and infrastructure—and prevent new development without appropriate supporting infrastructure.
- Offer a mix of tenures and price points in new housing developments, so that there are opportunities for existing local residents to rent or buy.
- More 'town centre living' with more residents and activity in our town centres.
- Ensure that existing homes are energy-efficient and up to [tolerable standard](#), particularly for people on lower incomes.
- Local residents, especially young people, should enjoy training and job opportunities from local development and construction.

What needs to happen

The rest of this chapter contains specific actions to make these things happen.

Beyond a focus on reuse of vacant or derelict property in town and village centres (priority sites are identified on the maps in chapters 12-15) and sites already identified in the Council's [Housing Land Supply 2023-24](#), we have only suggested a few potential sites for new homes. They will need more technical work on things like, for example, drainage, ground conditions, biodiversity and development viability.

Chapter 16 contains more information on how everyone involved needs to work together to implement the Plan.

Quotes from survey responses
(see page 12)

Warmer homes
and energy
futures.

You cannot continue to build houses (which is good) without improving infrastructure, access to GP's, transport, dentists, schools, town centres, housing, investment is needed in these areas

Vacant shops and
businesses turned into
homes.- support from
the planning
department for this to
happen

"Restore town
centres, keep
lovely facades but
internal new
homes - no need
to demolish,
recycle big time!"



9.1 Key Sites Programme

- Redevelop key town and village sites in chapters 12-15 for affordable or specialist housing

9.2 Town Centre Living

- In town & village centres, reuse vacant property and tackle landmark sites (see 5.3 & 5.4)

9.3 Fuel Poverty Programme / Housing Retrofits



- Promote existing home energy initiatives & grants
- Upgrade homes on lower Council Tax bands (esp. if [below tolerable standard](#)) to higher EPC ratings with grants / low-interest loans & streamlined consenting
- Retrofit existing homes for people who are older, disabled or in care to live more healthily, affordably and independently

9.4 Community Wealth Building in Construction



- Apply Community Wealth Building principles to benefit local construction industry and create local training & employment opportunities

9.5 Community-led Planning Gain

- Ensure that 'planning gain' funds linked to new development give residents access to the community facilities that they need and support delivery of this Plan, whilst complying with [statutory requirements](#)

9.6 National Planning Policy

- Statements of Community Benefit (required by [NPF4](#) Policy 16b for developments of >50 homes) should contribute to delivery of this Plan (see Appendix 1, item 5)
- Implementation of [NPF4](#) Policy 16e should require at least 25% of new housing developments to be affordable (see Appendix 1, item 4)

9.7 Population retention & youth recovery strategy

- To bring together & complement various initiatives in the Plan around housing, education and careers

INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

Chapelpark, Forfar

- Conversion of derelict school building and site in town centre into 29 social rented homes—including new build
- Funded by the local authority and Scottish Government
- More detailed information in www.towntoolkit.scot
- Example for former Glengarnock Primary School site and re-use of town centre derelict buildings



INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

Hope CoHousing, Orkney

- A community interest company started by local residents in St Margarets Hope, Orkney
- They want to stay in their community but need adaptable, accessible homes
- Six community-led homes for older people are being developed
- The group formed in 2018, construction due to start shortly
- Supported by a housing trust, Scottish Government funding & local authority helping to find land
- More information: hopecohousing.org & in [The Guardian](#)





10 YOUNG PEOPLE

Why we need action

Our young people are the lifeblood of our community. We need to offer them more opportunities to have a rewarding youth, remove barriers to their participation in community life, and ensure they want to stay in the area when they leave education.

Over 10% of respondents to the community survey (see page 12) suggested that we need to do more for our young people.

What we want to achieve

- Remove barriers to young people's participation in community life.
- Support young people to make more of opportunities available to them locally.
- A dedicated youth space in each town which young people can call their own and where they can meet for free.
- A variety of sporting and non-sporting activities and facilities for young people, building on local skills and interests.
- Training and work opportunities for young people leaving school, particularly for those with fewer academic qualifications.
- Tackle the climate emergency, a particular concern of young people.

What needs to happen

The actions below should evolve and be delivered with young people, Garnock Valley Youth Forum, the Council's community learning and development team, schools & Ayrshire College:

10.1 Planning for Youth

- Deliver youth aspirations through every element of this Plan, including:
 - Getting about (chapter 6)
 - Community life (chapter 7)
 - Parks and public spaces (chapter 8)
 - Jobs and business (chapter 11)

10.2 Youth Spaces

- A dedicated youth space in each town that young people can call their own: good quality, equipped and free to access.
- Implement as part of the Community Life proposals in chapter 5.
- Create a Youth Shed for practical application of STEM/creative skills such as carpentry & photography—making things and sharing skills between age groups.

10.3 Activity Programmes

- Ensure that there is a good range of youth activities, especially creative activities in Dalry and Kilbirnie (e.g. music, arts).

10.4 Youth Forum

- Continue to support Garnock Valley Youth Forum as a space outwith formal education for young people to meet and develop, create opportunities, and speak on behalf of young people.
- Support equalities, inclusion and neurodiversity, such as organising LGBT drop-ins in schools.

10.5 Partnership Working

- Ensure good joined-up working & resourcing across organisations working with young people in the Garnock Valley, including NAC education, community learning and development, & schools.

10.6 Climate Action

- Actions led by young people to tackle climate change. Ideas include an artistic climate posters trail, wildflower meadow, conservation groups and edible planters.

Quotes from survey responses (see page 12)

More free music & sports for children to access everything has got really expensive for kids & it shouldn't be

encourage young people to start businesses to benefit the local community

Provide more opportunities for young people, this needs to be consistent as often projects run for a just short while



11 JOBS & BUSINESS

Why we need action

Traditionally, the Garnock Valley has made things: iron, steel, bricks, textiles and furniture, as well as agriculture of course. Although manufacturing has suffered setbacks, we still make things: from steel and rope to pharmaceuticals, green energy and hi-tech munitions.

Our active business sector has willing entrepreneurs keen to build the local economy and support communities. They enjoy great locational advantages - close to Glasgow Airport, the Central Belt and strategic transport links, and much cheaper land and premises than in Glasgow.

Being on the doorstep of the Central Belt with lochs, hills, heritage and good links, we have potential for a bigger visitor economy.

To make the most of this potential, we need more land and premises for growing companies, a skilled and experienced staff pool, better public transport, and over-dependency on the A737.

Our biggest asset is our 20,000 residents and their potential - with the right support - to create more jobs and businesses. Realising that promise would be putting community wealth-building (see page 14) into action.

What we want to achieve

- More local enterprises.
- More firms moving to the Garnock Valley.
- Existing businesses expanding and creating more jobs.
- Better connections between local business and schools, to give more opportunities to young people and help recruitment
- Easier for employees to get to work without a car.
- More day visitors enjoying what the Garnock Valley has to offer.
- Tap into the potential of the green economy and digital innovation.
- Deliver the [National Strategy For Economic Transformation](#) locally.

Quotes from survey responses (see page 12)

invest for the future of the GV. Much has been spent to improve areas of Irvine, which is great, but other areas of NA are also in desperate need of the same level of investment and support for regeneration

More free music and sports for children to access everything has got really expensive for kids and it shouldn't be

What needs to happen

The rest of this chapter contains specific actions to make these things happen.

Specific priorities for each of our towns and villages are identified in chapters 12-15.

Further actions will need to be developed to deliver the intended changes over the 5-10 year lifetime of the Plan.

Support and resources will be needed, and we know it will be challenging to deliver everything. Equally, cherry-picking one or two actions and hoping to achieve success will not be enough. A combination of actions will be needed to deliver positive change, and others will emerge beyond those listed overleaf.

Chapter 16 contains more information on how everyone involved needs to work together to implement the Plan.

Better engagement with education. More employment opportunities. Outreach from FE colleges/ higher education.

local initiatives giving 6 months of employment to gain vital experience and qualifications



11.1 Local Business Support

- Community-led support for private/social enterprises (see chapter 4), including in town centres (see chapter 5)

11.2 Enterprise Network

- Establish a Garnock Valley enterprise network / forum, to champion local businesses and co-ordinate community / Corporate Social Responsibility activities
- Include manufacturing, green technology, services and tourism

11.3 Enterprise Ladder

- Identify sites and premises to create a ladder of accommodation, from small to large, for private and social enterprises to grow and locate in the Garnock Valley
- Lochshore Industrial Estate offers good opportunities for sites and buildings of all sizes (see Chapter 14)

11.4 Spiers/Lochshore Living Heritage

- Develop employment & training opportunities for environment/nature restoration/visitors, with the two sites working in partnership (see proposal 8.2)

11.5 Beith Crafts & Skills Centre

- Skills initiative based on Beith's heritage of woodwork and cabinet-making
- Could be located in former United Presbyterian Church on Head Street, relocating Scout Group to Geilsland or elsewhere (see Chapter 12)

11.6 Garnock Valley First

- Garnock Valley First procurement initiative in favour of local suppliers for all Garnock Valley Locality Partnership partners

11.7 Garnock Valley Pitch Book

- Create Garnock Valley Pitch Book to target and encourage business investment, including hotel/hospitality

11.8 Garnock Valley Transport Improvements

- Transport improvements to help staff get to work without a car (see chapter 6)
- A737 contingency plan to keep economic activity flowing in case of closure (see chapter 6) 

11.9 Childcare

- Tackling barriers to childcare providers across the Garnock Valley, essential to support parents get work & earn money

INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

Kirkconnel & Kelloholm Local Place Plan

This 2023 community-led plan includes employment initiatives for the community, local businesses & the public sector, many similar to our aspirations:

- Realise the training and employment potential of green energy
- Develop a new skills, learning and innovation centre
- Develop small workshop/industrial units
- Prepare Upper Nithsdale visitor strategy

More information in the [Local Place Plan](#).

11.10 Agriculture

- Recognise the importance of agriculture to the Garnock Valley and the challenges that the farming community faces in terms of economics, rurality and climate change
- Develop specific initiatives such as local food procurement supporting Garnock Valley farmers (as in East Ayrshire for schools meals) and support for carers in the agricultural sector.

INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

“Kickstart”: MacTaggart Construction, Dalry

Dalry-based MacTaggart Construction, one of Scotland's biggest builders of social housing, has supported over 100 young people annually through employment, education and training initiatives since 2018.

In 2021, McTaggart began the UK Government Kickstart Scheme to support young people aged 16-24 to gain a 6-month paid work placement.

In the first year, 47 young people progressed to permanent employment or registered apprenticeships; 11 to college or further training; and 21 to paid jobs elsewhere using the skills and training. 19 decided the industry was not for them and were helped with further support.

McTaggart's model shows that the construction can offer effective training and development. More information on the [McTaggart website](#).

TOWN & VILLAGE PRIORITIES

Chapter 12 BEITH
Chapter 13 DALRY
Chapter 14 KILBIRNIE & GLENGARNOCK
Chapter 15 BARRMILL, BURNHOUSE & GATESIDE

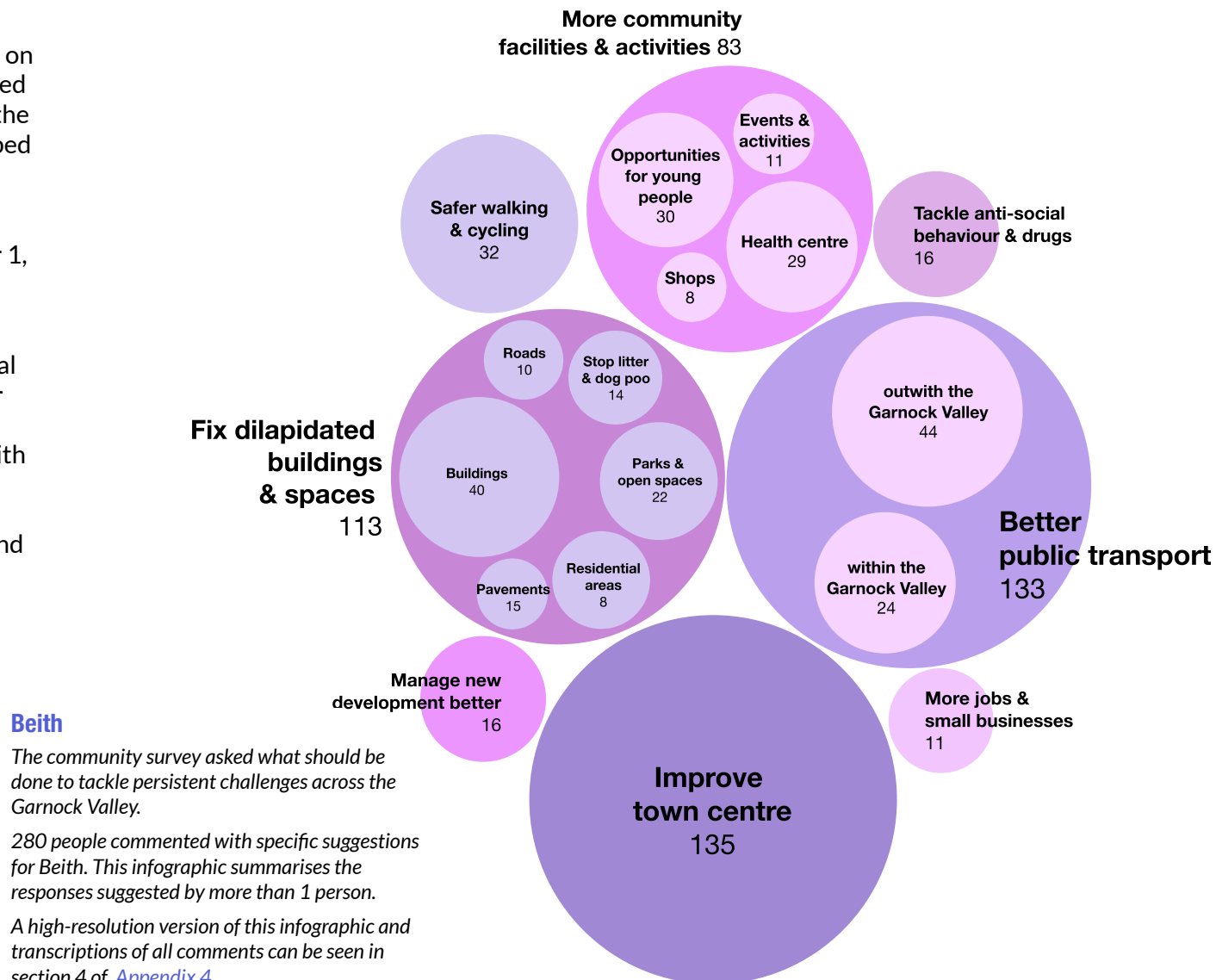
also refer to overall map in chapter 3

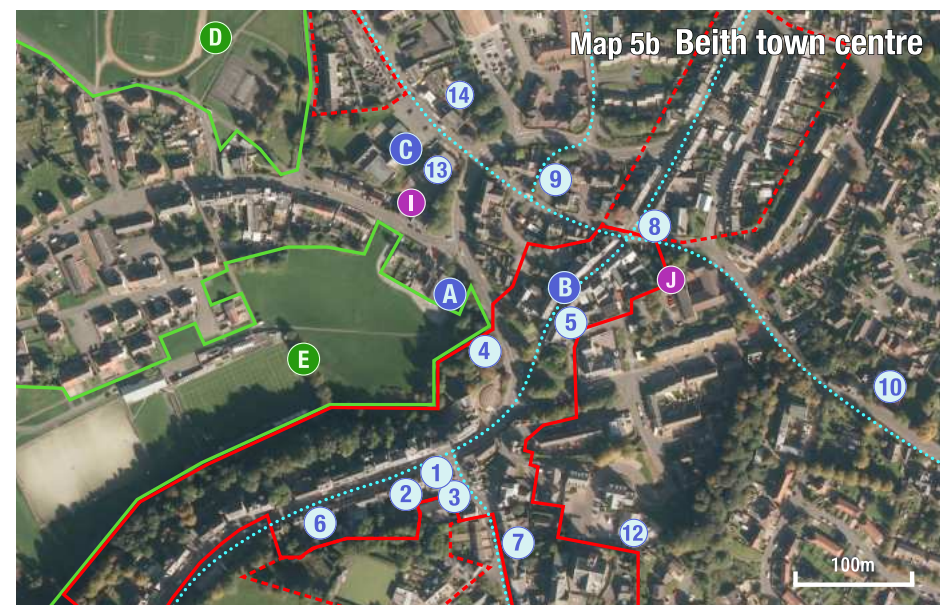
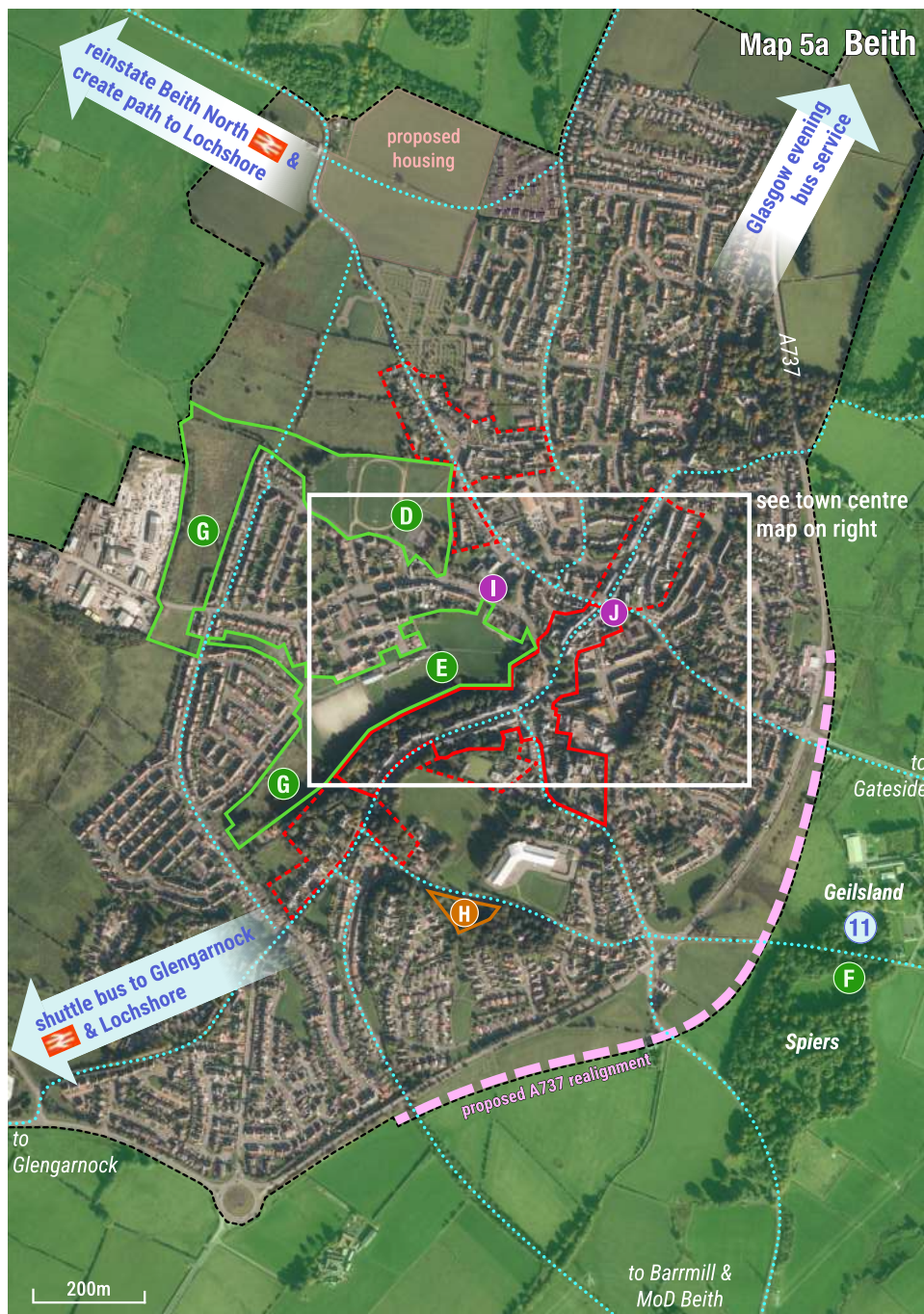
12 BEITH

Responses to the community survey (see page 12) offer an insight into people's priorities for Beith. The summary diagram on the right summarises the responses received about Beith. There is a wealth of detail in the comments themselves, which are transcribed in [Appendix 4](#).

Together with comments from the town events and other work outlined in Chapter 1, this gives a good basis to identify local proposals to deliver the Plan's priorities.

Maps 5a and 5b on the next page show local priorities for Beith, with starting points for action on the subsequent page. The proposals should be read in conjunction with the Garnock Valley-wide proposals in chapters 4 to 11, and pedestrian/cycling connections across the A737 to Barrmill and Gateside in chapters 8 and 15.





LEGEND FOR BOTH MAPS

Priorities for renovation / reuse

e.g. community facilities or town centre living

- ① Townhouse
- ② Anderson Hotel
- ③ Merchants Yarn
- ④ Auld Kirk
- ⑤ Rajas
- ⑥ gap site opposite Eglinton Inn
- ⑦ 5 Townhead
- ⑧ Wilson St/Mitchell St corner
- ⑨ EU church
- ⑩ Scout Hall craft skills/heritage centre
- ⑪ Geilsland House/Estate & Spiers retirement co-living
- ⑫ former respite centre by High Church
- ⑬ telephone exchange
- ⑭ potential redevelopment site, Kings Road

Key community facilities

- A** Health centre replace/upgrade; consider co-locating with other community facilities or elsewhere in the town centre
- B** Library retain - or relocate with other community facilities & redevelop for town centre living
- C** Community Centre upgrade - or relocate with other community facilities & redevelop for town centre living

Priority greenspaces

- D** Orr's Trust Park implement recent upgrade proposals
- E** Astro / Bellsdale continue to enhance, tackle drainage
- F** Geilsland / Spiers continue to upgrade
- G** Other regenerated or expanded parks & nature areas
- H** Potential nature conservation area boggy undeveloped ground, successive planning consents have lapsed, appears to be undevelopable
- I** Community garden at Community Centre
- J** Community garden at Mitchell Street corner gap site, potential for affordable housing

Conservation Area:

- existing boundary
- proposed extensions

Proposed A737 realignment

- Proposed active travel network (on roads & old railways where possible)
- Proposed 'green belt' to be protected from urban development

BEITH Starting points

Key partners

PRIORITIES FOR RENOVATION / REUSE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14



- Identify owners of individual sites, then approach to establish and encourage their redevelopment plans, particularly for community facilities and town centre living
- Work collaboratively on development or marketing packages, including community acquisition and/or use of statutory powers as appropriate (see chapter 5)

North Ayrshire Council
Landowners
Garnock Valley Locality Partnership
N Ayrshire Community Planning partners

KEY COMMUNITY FACILITIES A B C

- Health Centre: specify facility requirements for a replacement building, identify potential town centre sites, work up development proposals for Health Centre and/or shared hub with other community/public services
- Town House: consider community acquisition
- Library: protect from closure or co-locate with other uses and redevelop for town centre living
- Community Centre: put on sustainable financial footing; refurbish, or relocate & redevelop for town centre living
- Geilsland Estate/House and Spiers: continue to develop as community hub for social and economic activity

North Ayrshire Council
NHS Ayrshire and Arran
community bodies
Garnock Valley Locality Partnership
N Ayrshire Community Planning partners

PARKS & GREENSPACES D E F G H I J

- Parks and green spaces: secure funding for proposed improvements, including new parks / greenspaces shown on map

community bodies, North Ayrshire Council

CULTURAL ASSETS: GEILSLAND CREATIVE ENTERPRISE & BEITHCRAFT

- Geilsland Creative Enterprise Hub: new purpose-built enterprise village at Geilsland Estate with rentable units for businesses, makers, and social enterprises, to support a vibrant creative economy
- BeithCraft Initiative: reimagine Beith's rich woodworking heritage via a community-driven craft programme, providing training, workspace & retail opportunities, celebrating traditional skills, & using culture & heritage as economic drivers
- Retirement living at Geilsland Estate to support new enterprise units and renovation of Geilsland House

community bodies
North Ayrshire Council

OTHER ACTIONS



- Masterplan approach to future expansion of Beith. 400 homes are consented with a larger number likely to follow. A strategic approach to infrastructure & facilities is needed (including active travel, rail, bus, roads, drainage, greenspace).
- A737 Beith bypass upgrade: implement Transport Scotland scheme
- Bus improvements: pursue recommendations in Garnock Valley [Travel Needs Analysis](#) (see chapter 6 of this Plan)
- Walking and cycling: audit existing urban and rural routes, identify priority gaps, improvements & funding
- Extend Conservation Areas (see map); review Tree Preservation Orders to ensure valuable urban trees are protected
- Protect green belt around Beith as shown on map

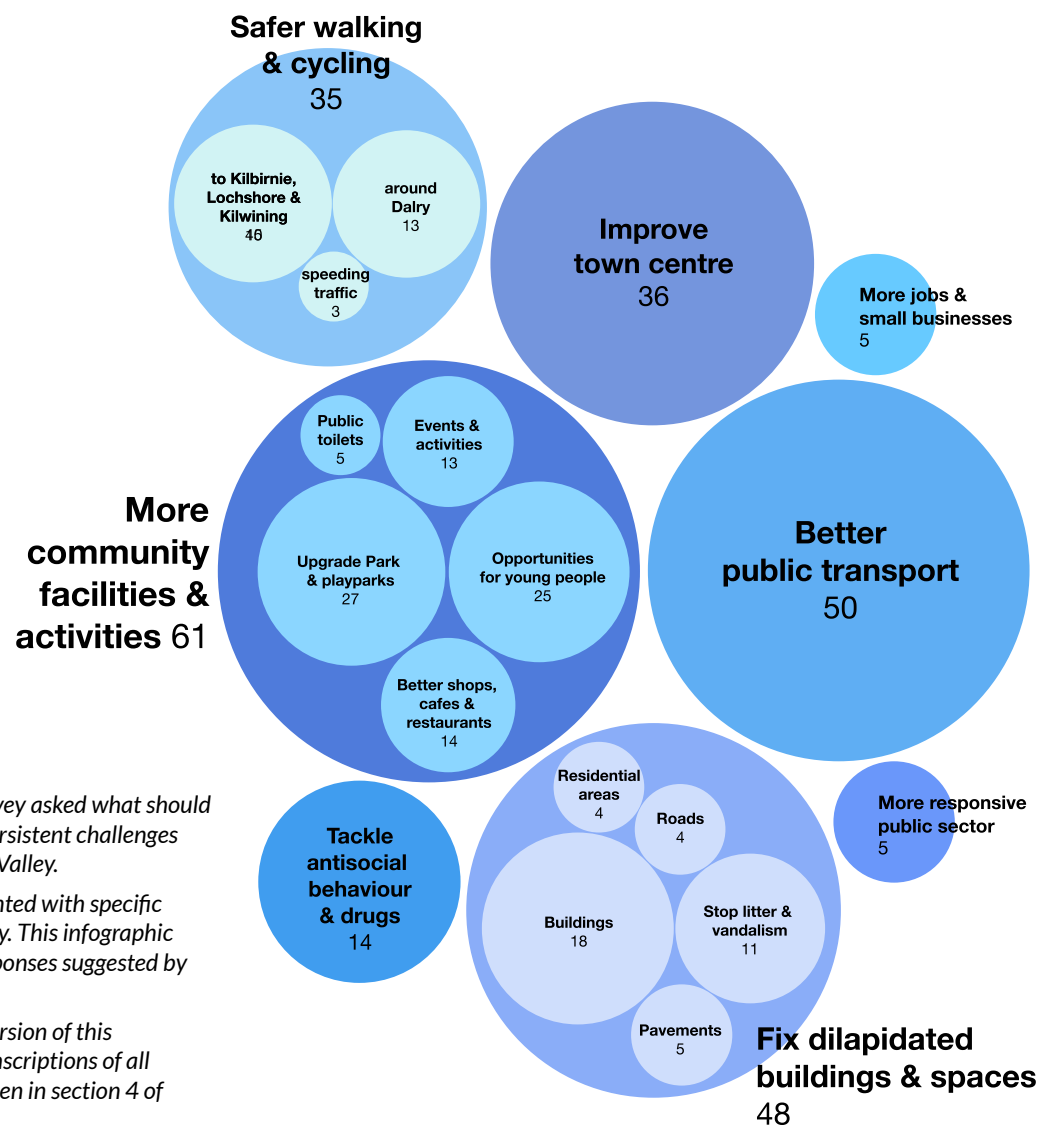
Transport Scotland
SPT
North Ayrshire Council
community bodies
Garnock Valley Locality Partnership
N Ayrshire Community Planning partners
Paths for All
Sustrans

13 DALRY

Responses to the community survey (see page 12) offer an insight into people's priorities for Dalry. The summary diagram on the right summarises the responses received about Dalry. There is a wealth of detail in the comments themselves, which are transcribed in [Appendix 4](#).

Together with comments from the town events and other work outlined in Chapter 1, this gives a good basis to identify local proposals to deliver the Plan's priorities.

Maps 6a and 6b on the next page show local priorities for Dalry, with starting points for action on the subsequent page. The proposals should be read in conjunction with the Garnock Valley-wide proposals in chapters 4 to 11.



Dalry

The community survey asked what should be done to tackle persistent challenges across the Garnock Valley.

158 people commented with specific suggestions for Dalry. This infographic summarises the responses suggested by more than 1 person.

A high-resolution version of this infographic and transcriptions of all comments can be seen in section 4 of [Appendix 4](#).

DALRY Starting points

Key partners

PRIORITIES FOR REUSE, RENOVATION OR REDEVELOPMENT 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

-  Identify owners of individual sites, approach them to establish and encourage their redevelopment plans, particularly for community use or town centre living
- Work collaboratively on development or marketing packages, including community acquisition and/or use of statutory powers as appropriate
-  The Cross: masterplan to understand ownership, and generate proposals that match potential uses to available buildings
-  St Margaret's Church and Hall: support community acquisition as a community space
- Former "Graze" at the Den: encourage reuse of this prominent site on the A737

North Ayrshire Council
Landowners
Community bodies
Garnock Valley Locality Partnership
N Ayrshire Community Planning partners

KEY COMMUNITY FACILITIES A B C D

-  Sports Hub (public park): enable Community Asset Transfer from North Ayrshire Council
- Library: protect from closure, increase its use as a local community hub
- Community Centre: invest in the building and put on a sustainable financial footing

local community
North Ayrshire Council
Garnock Valley Locality Partnership
N Ayrshire Community Planning partners

PRIORITY GREENSPACES E F G H J

-  Public Park: support community-led improvements to the park, extension to east, and upgrade connecting footbridge
-  Lynn Holm: continue to upgrade as outdoor event venue

community bodies
landowners
North Ayrshire Council

OTHER ACTIONS

- Cyclepath links to Kilwinning and Kilbirnie (NCN7): progress collaboratively involving local community, Sustrans and North Ayrshire Council
- Bus and cycle route to Saltcoats: reinstate as part of B714 upgrade proposals
- Path surfacing from River Garnock to Kilwinning Road: prepare specification and costs

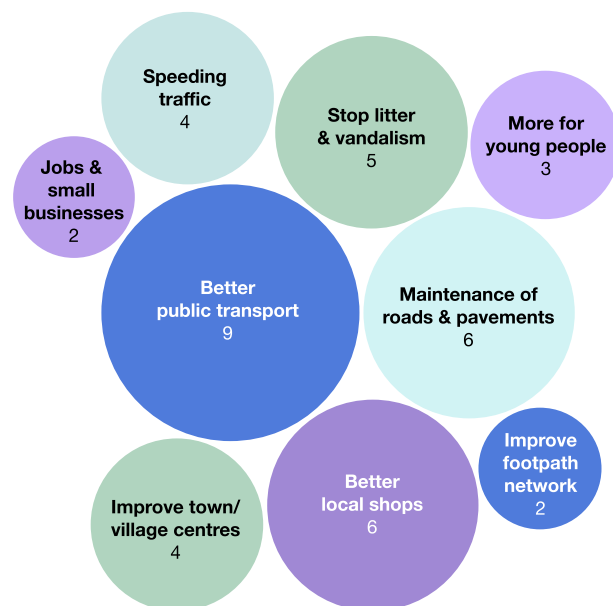
community bodies
North Ayrshire Council
Scottish/UK Governments
Garnock Valley Locality Partnership
N Ayrshire Community Planning partners
Paths for All
Sustrans
SPT

14 KILBIRNIE & GLENGARNOCK

Responses to the community survey (see page 12) offer an insight into people's priorities for Kilbirnie. The summary diagram on the right summarises the responses received about Kilbirnie. There is a wealth of detail in the comments themselves, which are transcribed in [Appendix 4](#).

Together with comments from the town events and other work outlined in Chapter 1, this gives a good basis to identify local proposals to deliver the Plan's priorities.

Maps 7a and 7b on the next page show local priorities for Kilbirnie and Glengarnock, with starting points for action on the subsequent page. The proposals should be read in conjunction with the Garnock Valley-wide proposals in chapters 4 to 11.



Fix dilapidated buildings & spaces 82

Glengarnock (left) **Kilbirnie** (right)

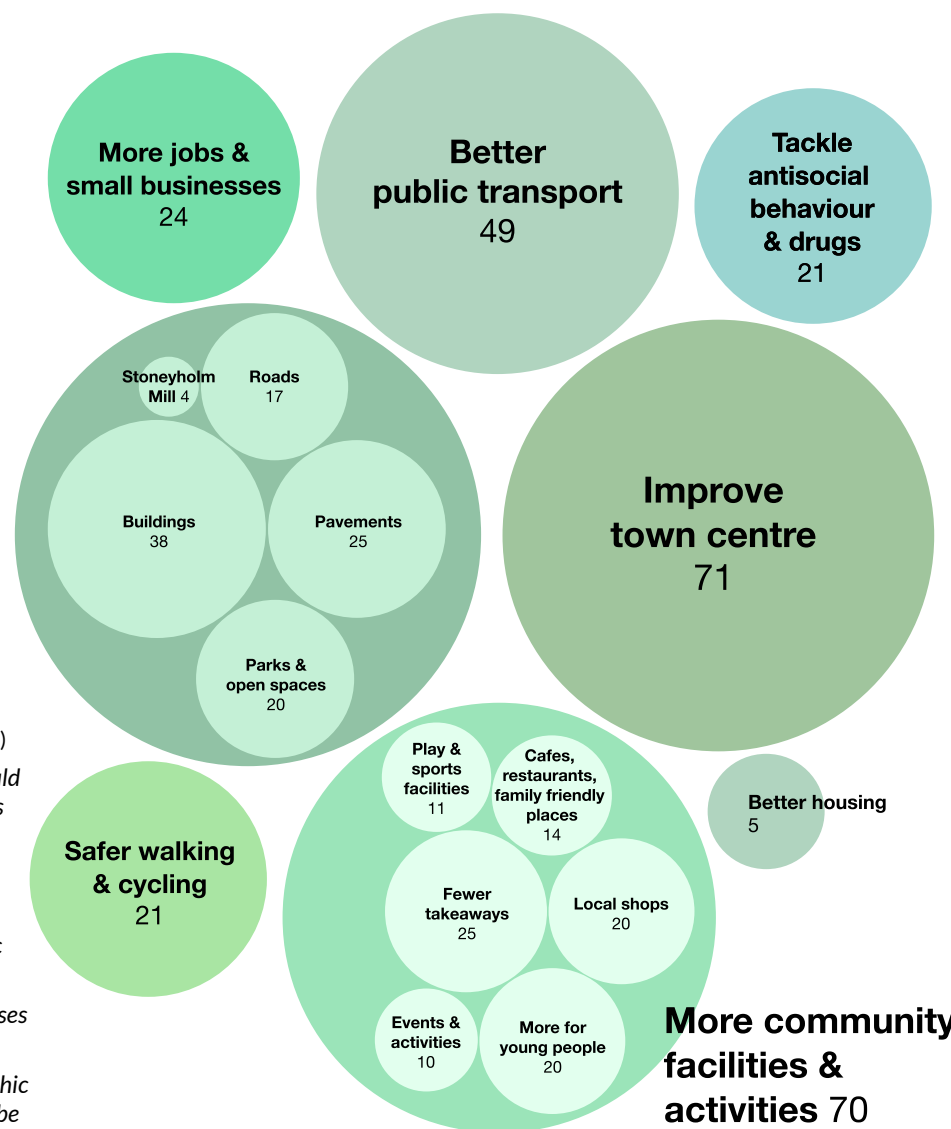
The community survey asked what should be done to tackle persistent challenges across the Garnock Valley.

Kilbirnie: 180 people made specific suggestions, summarised on the right.

Glengarnock: 23 people made specific suggestions, summarised on the left.

Each infographic summarises the responses suggested by more than 1 person.

A high-resolution version of this infographic and transcriptions of all comments can be seen in section 4 of [Appendix 4](#).



**Map 7a
Kilbirnie & Glengarnock**

see town centre map on right

reopen / enhance path links to NCN7 & Lochshore

enhance riverside walkway

traffic-free path to Dalry connect to NCN7 & Lochshore

shuttle bus to Kilbirnie

shuttle bus to Lochshore

shuttle bus to Beith

to Largs

to Glasgow

Kilbirnie Loch

Industrial Estate

Glengarnock

to Dalry

to Beith

400m

Map 7b
Kilbirnie town centre

Radio City

Tesco

Conservation Area

100m

Key community facilities

A Library & JobCentre *retain & enhance*

- ## Priority greenspaces

- H** Valefield *reopen bridge to NCN7/Lochshore*
- J** Glengarnock park

① *gap site/vacant building at 2-4 Main Street

- ### Other priorities

- ★ **The Cross roundabout** *make more pedestrian friendly (especially road crossings) and increase public space*

KILBIRNIE & GLENGARNOCK **Starting points**

Key partners

KEY COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Library & Job Centre: protect from closure, increase use as a local community hub
- Bridgend Community Centre: retain as a Community Centre, put on sustainable financial footing
- Walker Hall: relocate gym to Community Campus, invest in building as a community hub

local community
North Ayrshire Council
Garnock Valley Locality Partnership
N Ayrshire Community Planning partners

PRIORITY GREENSPACES

-  Public Park: progress proposals in [Project Kilbirnie](#) (2017)
-  Place Woodland: support community-led activity
-  Lochshore: must be viewed as a strategic asset for the whole Garnock Valley. Lochshore must not displace activity from elsewhere in the Garnock Valley, and existing activities must not be encouraged to move there from elsewhere in the Valley. Initiatives at Lochshore must be implemented in that context, and must cascade benefits out across the GV as a whole, as originally envisaged (see section 8.2).
-  Valefield Park: repair and reopen bridge connecting Kilbirnie with NCN7, Industrial Estate and Lochshore

community bodies
landowners
North Ayrshire Council
Garnock Valley Locality Partnership
N Ayrshire Community Planning partners

PRIORITIES FOR REUSE OR REDEVELOPMENT 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

-  Identify owners of individual sites, approach them to establish and encourage their redevelopment plans, particularly for community use or town centre living
-  Work collaboratively on development or marketing packages, including community acquisition and/or use of statutory powers as appropriate
-  Former toilet at Bridge St roundabout: community-led arts project
-  Former Glengarnock Primary School site: tidy, temporary use as greenspace or for nature, agree long term future use
-  Lochshore Industrial Estate: develop strategy for ladder of industrial property (small < medium < large premises)

North Ayrshire Council
Landowners
Community bodies
Garnock Valley Locality Partnership
N Ayrshire Community Planning partners
Scottish Enterprise

OTHER ACTIONS

-  Bus improvements: implement recommendations in Garnock Valley [Travel Needs Analysis](#)
-  Cyclepath link to Dalry (NCN7): progress collaboratively involving local community, Sustrans and North Ayrshire Council
-  Extend Lochshore path network to Beith: identify potential route and potential funding/delivery model
-  Riverside walkway improvements in town centre: prepare specification and costs
-  Pedestrian friendly improvements at The Cross: design, specify and cost
-  Extend Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park to include Kilbirnie Loch

community bodies
North Ayrshire Council
Scottish/UK Governments
Garnock Valley Locality Partnership
N Ayrshire Community Planning partners
Paths for All
Sustrans
SPT

15 BARRMILL, GATESIDE & BURNHOUSE

Village events held in Barrmill/Burnhouse, Gateside and Glengarnock provided insights into the local priorities for people living there, to supplement responses to the community survey (see page 12). Transcriptions and summaries of all comments can be seen in section 4 of [Appendix 4](#).

The maps on this and the next page show priorities for Barrmill, Burnhouse and Gateside, with starting points for action on the stage 55. (Glengarnock priorities are included on the Kilbirnie maps in Chapter 14.)

This section should be read in conjunction with the Garnock Valley-wide proposals in chapters 4 to 11, and proposals for links across the A737 to Beith in chapter 12.



LEGEND

Road safety, walking & cycling

- 1 Create safe walking/cycling route to Beith
 - No footway on B706 from MoD junction to Barrmill, dangerous to walk because of lack of verges and blind bends
 - Safe walking and cycling route could be adjacent to road or along disused railway (see also 2 below)
 - Include A737 crossing (see Map 3a)
- 2 Safer road crossing at roundabout
- 3 Create walking/cycling routes on disused railways
 - Initially: off-road link between Park & Millbarr Grove - solid line
 - Longer term ambition: network linking to Beith, Kilwinning (south-west) and Barrhead (north-east) - dotted lines
 - See also Map 3a

Derelict land

- 4 Derelict site / Community Centre
 - Develop for housing, potentially including new Community Centre to enable access from north

Community facilities & green spaces

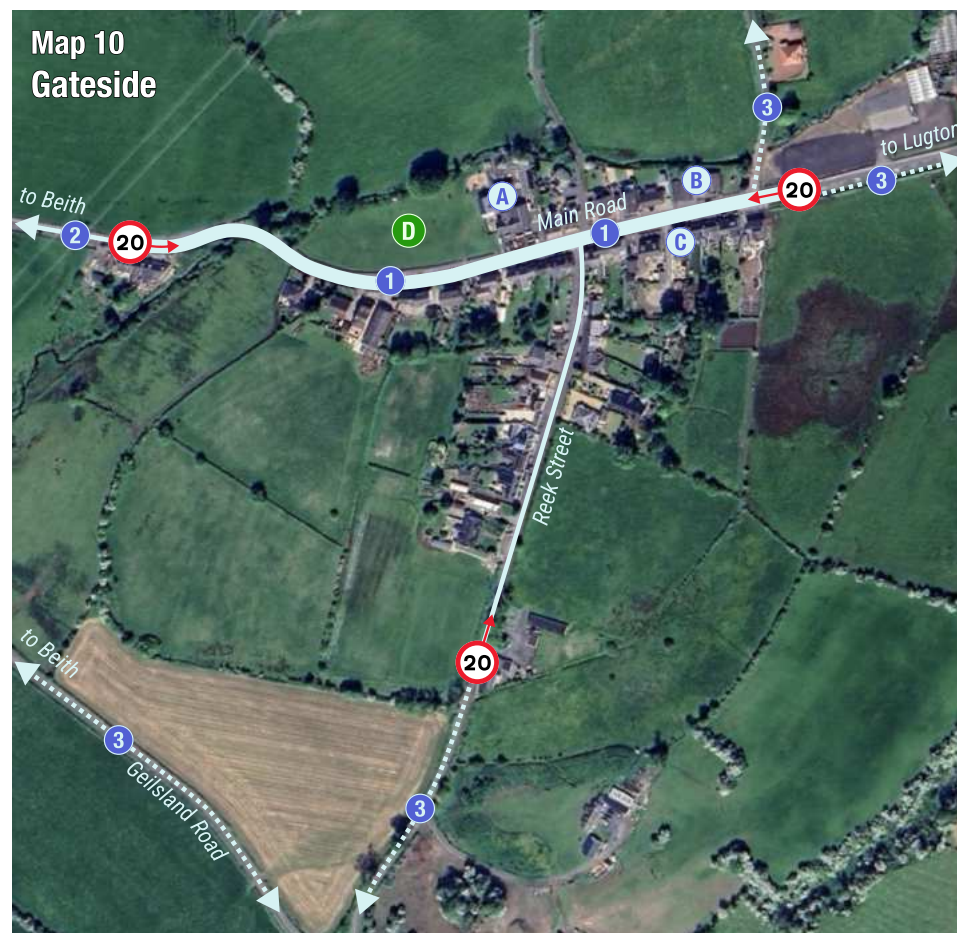
- A Community Centre renovate or replace, improve parking for Centre & Park (see also point 1 below)
- B Barrmill Park continue to enhance
- C Millbarr Grove playpark upgrade
- D Green space at end of Millbarr Grove explore opening up for public access

A high-resolution version of this infographic and transcriptions of all comments can be seen in section 4 of [Appendix 4](#).



LEGEND

- 1 **Improve road safety A736 and B706** 
 - Lower traffic speeds (e.g. 20mph speed limit in village, 40mph to Barrmill on B706, traffic calming, enforcement)
 - Other safety improvements: A736 pedestrian/cycle crossing, delivery/visitor parking on A736)
 - Create less traffic-engineered and more community-friendly aesthetic on A736 through village
 - Advance signage on A736 for low bridge at Barrmill
 - Co-design with local community
- 2 **Address issue with septic tank south of Willow Park** 



LEGEND

Road safety, walking & cycling

- 1 **Improve road safety on Main Street**
 - Lower traffic speeds (e.g. 20mph speed limit, traffic calming, enforcement)
 - Improve pedestrian safety (wider pavements, safer road crossings for children & less mobile people)
 - Co-design with local community
- 2 **Improve footway safety to Beith**
including A737 crossing (see Map 3a)
- 3 **Rural path network**
link up existing footways, roads & paths; improve pedestrian safety on road sections

Key community facilities

- A Primary school *retain*
- B Community hall *retain*
- C Pub *retain*
- D Park & playground  *upgrade equipment*

BARRMILL, BURNHOUSE & GATESIDE Starting points

Key partners

BARRMILL 1 2 3 4 A B C D

- Road/footway improvements: design, specify and cost
- Walking/cycling routes on old railway lines: design, specify and cost
- Refurbishment of Community Centre: Community Association and North Ayrshire Council continue to work together to upgrade the buildings and outside space
- Adjacent derelict site: approach owners to encourage their redevelopment plans, work collaboratively on development package, consider incorporating Community Centre to enable site access and construction of replacement building

local community
North Ayrshire Council
Garnock Valley Locality Partnership
N Ayrshire Community Planning partners
Paths for All
Sustrans

BURNHOUSE 1 2

- Road safety: design, specify and cost improvements with community input

North Ayrshire Council
Garnock Valley Locality Partnership

GATESIDE 1 2 3 A B C D

- Retain school
- Upgrade park and playground: specify and cost improvements with community input
- Footway improvements: specify and cost
- Rural path network: specify and cost with community input

North Ayrshire Council
Landowners
Community bodies
Garnock Valley Locality Partnership
N Ayrshire Community Planning partners

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Chapter 16 IMPLEMENTATION

16 IMPLEMENTATION

This Plan is our community's "to-do" list for the next 5-10 years. It's ambitious. Not everything will be achieved—but everything is possible. Some things may seem impossible to deliver now, but circumstances may change and resources can appear.

Making it happen will take collaborative effort across the public, private and community sectors, with everyone working together for common purpose.

As explained in chapter 1, this Plan is different. That means it will need to be delivered differently too. This final chapter explains how.

Delivering national agendas locally

The Plan aims to link community aspirations and national agendas - and deliver national agendas locally. As described in chapter 3, those agendas include the [Place Principle](#), [National Planning Framework 4](#) and [Community Wealth Building](#).

Delivering this Plan delivers those agendas.

North Ayrshire Council and its Community Planning Partners have been moving in this direction for a number of years in their [pioneering work on Community Wealth](#)

[Building](#). What we suggest is to deepen and extend that work, within North Ayrshire and with national agencies such as the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland.

Working together

Delivering this Plan cannot be achieved by local community organisations and Third Sector alone. It will rely on:

- The public, private and third sectors working together, collaboratively, for common purpose.
- The local community sector being strengthened and empowered to lead delivery, as described in chapter 4.

For that reason, we invite North Ayrshire Council and the Garnock Valley Locality Partnership to endorse and support delivery of the Plan. In working out how to do that, the basic aims should be to:

- Use the Plan as evidence in designing and delivering their public services.
- Take every opportunity to support its implementation.
- Work with local community organisations in a spirit of equal partnership.

Immediate actions by North Ayrshire Council and the Garnock Valley Locality Partnership could include:

- **The Plan should be registered by the Council as a Local Place Plan for planning purposes:** to steer planning policy, be a material consideration in determining planning applications, and to guide planning activity.
- **Garnock Valley Locality Partnership should approve this Plan, commit to its implementation,** and report publicly every quarter on how the Partnership has supported the Plan's implementation.
- This Plan should be **endorsed by the Council and the Locality Partnership** to guide budgeting, investment and policymaking in the Garnock Valley over the 5-10 year lifetime of the Plan.
- **Each Council department and Community Planning Partner should be encouraged to explain how it aims to support delivery of the Plan,** and then monitor and report progress regularly through the Locality Partnership.

Those suggested actions are entirely focussed on taking Community Wealth Building to the next level, and could in due course be rolled out to other Localities in

North Ayrshire, learning from the Garnock Valley as a pilot.

These suggested actions will need to be considered by the Council and its partners. That will involve innovative thinking about how public resources are used, but it does not necessarily mean that more resources are needed. Members of the Local Place Plan Working Group (see page 9) are happy to support those discussions.

Capacity and resources

Capacity and resources will be needed by everybody who will be involved in delivering this Plan - public, private and Third sectors.

The Plan is not simply asking for more resources. Instead, the starting points are:

- **What can be achieved with what is already available?** How can existing budgets and resources be targeted to deliver the priorities in this Plan?
- **What additional resources can be accessed?** For example from community income generation, national governments or other external funders.

Part of the purpose of this Plan is to help answer those questions and secure whatever resources are needed for delivering the Plan, whether they are existing or new.

From the community's perspective, we need more capacity and resources to deliver this Plan. Work is already underway to create a development officer post to support delivery of the Plan.

The Community and Business Infrastructure Partnership proposed in chapter 4 is also vital. Most of our community organisations are staffed and run by volunteers, which is not a sustainable model to deliver this Plan.

The public sector will also need resources to help deliver the Plan. We hope that the Plan will help to secure those resources.

Roles and responsibilities

As explained on the previous page, many different partners need to work together to make this Plan a reality.

The local community

- **Community Councils** are the voices of the local community across the Garnock Valley and have key roles liaising with the local authority and other public bodies.
- **Local community organisations**, including members of the Working Group who led preparation of this Plan (see page 2) and others, do great work on the ground to bring people together and deliver projects, services & activities. The Plan should help to guide future activities and secure resources, so helping to deliver the Plan.

National and local government

Public agencies have a fundamental role in supporting and delivering many elements of the Plan, working together with the local community and with each other - as noted in the tables in chapters 4 to 15.

Scottish and UK Governments have a vital role. They set policy and resource allocation for every aspect of this Plan, including:

- Biodiversity and climate change
- Community empowerment
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Planning
- Transport

It is critical that the Scottish and UK Governments also use this Plan to influence their spending and policymaking, and we hope that North Ayrshire Council will take every opportunity to seek their support in implementing the Plan.

North Ayrshire Council, the Garnock Valley Locality Partnership and Community Planning partners also have critical roles:

- [**Garnock Valley Locality Partnership**](#)'s stated role is to support the communities of the Garnock Valley to help them do what is needed to tackle the issues that they have identified as priorities for their local area - in other words, the content of this report. We hope that they and other [**North Ayrshire Community Planning partners**](#) will be proactive in delivering and championing the Plan.
- **North Ayrshire Council** has provided vital support to get the Plan to this stage. We hope that support and collaborative way of working will continue to strengthen as the Plan is implemented - in relation to services that the local authority itself provides and also to champion the Plan with others.

Other organisations

We will need help from many other organisations to deliver specific elements of the Plan. They include:

- Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce
- Ayrshire College
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Home Energy Scotland
- Housing Associations
- KA Leisure
- Paths for All
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran
- NatureScot
- renewable energy developers & investors
- Skills Development Scotland
- Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
- North Ayrshire Council
- North Ayrshire Third Sector Interface
- property developers & investors
- Scottish Enterprise
- SEPA
- Scottish Futures Trust
- Scottish Water
- Sustrans
- Transport Scotland
- VisitScotland

We recognise that many of these organisations, particularly those in the public and third sectors, will themselves require resources. We hope that this Plan helps them to secure those resources.

We hope that each of the organisations referred to, plus national and local government, use the Plan as part of their

evidence base when setting budgets and reviewing policy. The Plan is, essentially, a comprehensive statement of community aspirations which should be an invaluable part of their decision-making. The community responses in the appendices to the Plan are a rich source of information about community aspirations.

We hope that businesses, landowners and investors use the Plan to inform their decision-making too. Whether based locally in the Garnock Valley or further afield, they have vital roles in generating jobs, economic activity and managing land and buildings. They will find the Plan a useful source of information about community aspirations and to think how they can help deliver the Plan.

Action planning

Every numbered action listed in chapters 4 to 11 should have a custodian to lead and facilitate its delivery. Identifying those custodian for each action should be a priority for the paid support and community-led delivery body proposed in chapter 4, working closely with key partners in the local community, local authority and Locality Partnership.

Monitoring & review

Life won't stand still over the 5-10 year lifetime of the Plan. New aspirations and challenges will appear, and adjustments will be needed.

To guide how to respond to new challenges or ideas, the Plan includes an overall vision in chapter 3 and statements of "what we want to achieve" for each call-to-action in chapters 4 to 11. Basically, if a new proposal helps to deliver the overall vision and one of those statements, it should be supported.

At some point, the Plan will however will need to be updated as circumstances change. The community-led delivery body proposed in section 4 should be responsible for facilitating the Plan's review. To guide that process, we suggest:

- An annual report celebrating what has been achieved over the previous 12 months in delivering the Plan, which could usefully be accompanied by community discussion and networking about the Plan and its delivery.
- A review of the Plan after 5 years.

Planning policy

This Plan is intended to function as a [Local Place Plan](#) and therefore contains suggestions that the local community would like to see supported in the next Local Development Plan.

Those suggestions are summarised in Appendix 1, to comply with the requirements of [Section 14 of the Planning \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#) and in line with [Scottish Government Circular 1/2022](#)

APPENDICES

- 1 Planning policy recommendations
- 2 Facts and figures about the Garnock Valley
- 3 Audit of previous work
- 4 Community survey results
- 5 Town events
- 6 Village events
- 7 Schools workshops
- 8 Draft Plan consultation responses
- 9 Potential models for community-led delivery organisation

Appendix 1 Planning policy recommendations

Although this Plan is not solely focussed on statutory land-use planning, it contains a number of proposals that the local community would like to see supported in the next Local Development Plan or tackled through Development Management.

This appendix summarises actions relating to land-use planning and reasons for them, as required by [Section 14 of the Planning \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#) & in line with [Scottish Government Circular 1/2022](#).

Please note that this Appendix **only relates to statutory land-use planning** and is not a complete list of all actions in the Plan.

PROPOSAL	REASONS
1 Town Centres First: strengthen the range of policy and implementation actions to revive our town centres, including the actions outlined in Chapters 5 and 9 and the maps in Chapters 12-15	<i>To facilitate Local Living and strengthen our town centres, which are significant for the local community (see Planning Circular 1/2022, paragraph 43).</i>
2 Vacant and Derelict Property: strengthen policy and delivery actions to tackle derelict land, including the actions outlined in Chapters 5 and 9 and the maps in Chapters 12-15	<i>To improve health and wellbeing, improve our environment, and support sustainable development.</i>
3 Local Living: protect and enhance the community facilities shown on the maps in Chapters 12-15, and locate development sites so that they are within easy and safe walking, cycling and/or public transport connectivity to town centres and community facilities (see Chapters 9 and 12-15)	<i>To facilitate Local Living, and identify locations which are significant for the local community (see Planning Circular 1/2022, paragraph 43).</i>
4 Affordable Housing Plus: - Require that 25% of new housing developments should be affordable in line with NPF4 Policy 16e; but, if that target cannot be met, then the commuted sum / financial contribution in lieu of affordable housing should be spent <i>either</i> on providing affordable homes elsewhere in the Garnock Valley <i>or</i> on delivery of this Local Place Plan. - Enhance existing affordable housing policies by encouraging different tenure types (e.g. shared equity and co-living), low-medium price points, and access for local, younger, older & disabled people and young families (see Ch 9).	<i>To support delivery of this Plan and sustainable, vibrant local communities.</i>

5	Community Benefits: • Reinstate developer contributions policy • Ensure that 'planning gain' funds related to new development give residents access to the community facilities that they need and support delivery this Plan, whilst complying with statutory requirements (see Chapter 9) • Ensure that Statements of Community Benefit (required by NPF4 Policy 16b for developments of >50 homes) should contribute to delivery of this Plan.	To support delivery of this Plan and sustainable, vibrant local communities.
6	Beith Expansion Masterplan: take a masterplanned approach to the expansion of Beith, to identify future housing sites & ensure that active travel links, greenspace, drainage, public transport and other facilities / infrastructure are co-ordinate & implemented with residential development (see Chapters 6 & 12)	To support delivery of this Plan and sustainable, vibrant local communities.
7	Reinstate Beith North Railway Station: identify as a long term aspiration, including active travel connections from the town to the site of the station, as part of a masterplanned approach to expansion of Beith (see previous point and Chapters 6 & 12)	To improve connectivity to Glasgow city region, Ayrshire coastal towns and other locations.
8	Beith A737 Bypass Upgrade: identify this as a priority delivery project, based on the land take proposed in Transport Scotland's 2015 proposals (see Chapters 6 and 12)	To improve road safety and access to community facilities for Local Living .
9	Conservation Areas and town centre Tree Preservation Orders: review Tree Preservation Orders to protect key town centre trees, extend Beith Conservation Area (see Chapter 12), enable building murals	To better protect the built and natural heritage of the town
10	Kilbirnie Cross Placemaking: identify as a location placemaking and pedestrian safety enhancements (see Chapter 14)	To identify areas significant for the local community (see Planning Circular 1/2022 , paragraph 43), improve public safety, support the local economy, Local Living and community sustainability.
11	Parks and Public Spaces: protect and enhance our town and village parks as outlined in Chapters 8 and the maps in Chapters 12-15.	To identify areas significant for the local community (see Planning Circular 1/2022 , paragraph 43) and support health & wellbeing, biodiversity, Local Living etc.
12	Community Event Space at Lynn Holm, Dalry: identify as an outdoor community event space (see Chapter 13)	To identify areas significant for the local community (see Planning Circular 1/2022 , paragraph 43), reflect the established use of the site, and support health & wellbeing, Local Living etc.

13 Enterprise Ladder: identify sites and premises to create a ladder of accommodation, from small to large, for private and social enterprises to grow and locate in the Garnock Valley (see Chapter 11)	<i>To support the local economy, Local Living and community sustainability.</i>
14 The Place Principle and Community Wealth Building: encourage development proposals to explicitly support implementation of the Place Principle and Community Wealth Building (see Chapters 3 and 16)	<i>To support delivery of this Plan and creation of sustainable, vibrant local communities.</i>
15 Vacant and Derelict Land: update the register of sites (at the time of writing, this was last updated in 2022)	<i>To ensure that sites are correctly designated when planning applications are submitted, and enable access to funding</i>

Appendix 2 Facts and figures about the Garnock Valley

Reproductions of display boards presented at the town and village events - online at www.ourgarnockvalley.net/s/GV-boards-challenges.pdf

Appendix 3 Audit of previous work

Audit of previous work over the last decade - online at
www.ourgarnockvalley.net/previous

Appendix 4 Community survey results

Full report of the community survey and transcriptions of all comments received - online at www.ourgarnockvalley.net/s/GVLPP-community-survey-report-Nov-2024.pdf

Appendix 5 Town events

Full report of the town events and transcriptions of all comments received - online at www.ourgarnockvalley.net/s/GVLPP-Nov-2024-town-events-report.pdf

Appendix 6 Village events

Full report of the village events and transcriptions of all comments received - online at www.ourgarnockvalley.net/s/GVLPP-Jan-2025-village-events-report.pdf

Appendix 7 Schools workshops

Report of the schools workshop held in February 2025 at Garnock Campus - online at www.ourgarnockvalley.net/s/Our-Garnock-Valley_-Schools-Workshop-Report_ISS_26th-March-2025.pdf

Appendix 8 Draft Plan consultation responses

Report of the public consultation held on the draft Plan in June-July 2025, including transcriptions of all responses and explanations of how they have influenced the final Plan. Online at bit.ly/4m5b1xL

Appendix 9 Potential models for community-led delivery organisation

Report produced by Community Enterprise during preparation of the Local Place Plan to initiate discussion about potential models for that organisation - online at bit.ly/3CT5F7E

OUR GARNOCK VALLEY

YOUR IDEAS • PRIORITIES • ACTION

