



Banchory
THE PLACE TO BE

Banchory Community Action Plan

June 2017



Introduction

This Community Action Plan (CAP) has been prepared by a steering group under the auspices of Banchory Community Council (BCC). It sets out to try and resolve the series of issues which have been identified as the most pressing by the Banchory community.

The issues were identified following a thorough and inclusive consultation programme carried out throughout 2016 and into early 2017. That process is outlined in more detail below.

Having identified the main issues, the plan then seeks to highlight the actions and projects which will assist in resolving the issues, along with the key partners whom it is anticipated will help to facilitate their delivery.

A fuller understanding of the issues can perhaps be appreciated by looking at the setting and history of the town.

BANCHORY

The Area

Banchory lies on a bend in the River Dee and stretches along its northern bank. Housing extends up the slope of the valley and there is a splendid outlook over the largely undeveloped, wooded, and highly picturesque southern bank.

The area served by Banchory Community Council is chiefly the town itself. This is illustrated by the map contained in the the separate profile available on line at marrareapartnership.org.uk. For the purposes of the Community Action Plan,

however, Banchory has been regarded as stretching from the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) policies of Crathes Castle in the east to those of Inchmarlo Continuing Care Community in the west and from the Loch of Leys in the north to the slopes of Scolty Hill in the south. This area is the main focus for the action plan.

The Steering Group, however, also recognises the importance of the relationship between the town and its surrounding environs. Other neighbouring communities such as Crathes, Durris and Strachan depend on Banchory for many of their needs and services. These include shops, restaurants, health centre, library and associated employment opportunities. The secondary school, for example, serves the wider community.

Comments were, therefore, welcomed from residents of both the town itself and from a wide surrounding area. Visitor contributions were also encouraged.

History

Banchory's heritage stretches back many centuries and artefacts from the Stone Age and Pictish times have been found in the area. The first documented settlement was founded in the 5th century Current Era (CE). It was established on the north bank of the River Dee where there was a natural ford at the junction with the River Feugh. During the Middle Ages, this site became the location of the annual St. Ternan's Fair.

Over time the town gradually developed westwards along the north bank of the river. In 1853 the Deeside Railway

arrived and this made the town a popular destination for holidaymakers and day-trippers from nearby Aberdeen. Guest houses and hotels were established, accompanied by a wave of Victorian and Edwardian residential development.

Recent Growth

The town's picturesque setting fuelled further residential expansion during the oil boom of the 1970s and in the last forty years Banchory has expanded substantially to become a popular commuter town. The final years of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st have seen major new housing developments at Hill of Banchory and the loss of some of the town's green spaces. In the 2001 census, the population was numbered at 6034 and it is estimated at well over 8000 today.

Current Challenges

Although a prosperous and expanding town, Banchory is not without its challenges.

The recent housing developments have encouraged major supermarkets to invest in the town. These, however, are not centrally located and have thus had a negative impact on the vibrancy of the High Street area.

Services and social facilities have been unable to keep pace with the rate of population expansion. Education, health care, community, and cultural facilities are all under pressure, and there is concern that the town's reputation as a desirable destination is being gradually eroded.



The Community Action Planning Process

The last Community Action Plan (CAP) for Banchory was created some years ago and in 2015 a real need to re-evaluate the community's current requirements and aspirations was identified.

Discussions between Marr Area Partnership and Banchory Community Council (BCC) in early 2015 led to the setting up of a steering group to undertake this work. The steering group first met in November 2015, and comprised members of BCC along with representatives of a diverse range of community groups.

The steering group's role was to encourage and enable the involvement of local people in the CAP process so that their needs and aspirations would be fully reflected in the Action Plan.

To assist in this process, the steering group:

- **designed a questionnaire and made it available to a wide sample of community groups and individuals;**
- **highlighted the process in the Press, on local community radio and at local presentations in an attempt to maximise the number of responses;**
- **analysed the responses to the questionnaire;**
- **organised three Community Open Days in Banchory Town Hall and Hill of Banchory Primary School;**
- **visited the local primary schools to seek the views of the children on their priorities for Banchory;**

- **reached out again to senior citizens and youth groups;**
- **collated and analysed all the information and drew up a thematic outline of the issues and potential projects which emerged from the questionnaire and Open Days;**
- **prepared a draft Plan on the basis of this analysis;**
- **organised further community involvement liaising with potential partners who could assist in delivering the CAP;**
- **prepared the Final Plan.**

KEY FINDINGS

The analysis of the public preferences from the community engagement days showed that the top issues which Banchory residents felt were important were:

1. **A new or improved Academy.**
2. **A new or improved Health Centre.**
3. **A revitalised High Street with rent incentives for retailers.**
4. **Assured delivery of the Banchory Sports Village.**
5. **Protection from development on the south bank of the River Dee.**
6. **Improved mobile phone and internet reception.**
7. **A new cinema.**
8. **A wide range of adult education classes.**
9. **New pedestrian crossings on the High Street and near Morrisons.**
10. **A wider variety of shops on the High Street.**

11. **Affordable housing.**
12. **Improved play parks.**
13. **Provision of an improved skateboard / BMX park.**
14. **The position of the taxi rank.**
15. **More activities for teenagers.**
16. **Better advertising of events and activities.**
17. **A 3G football pitch.**
18. **A community hub.**
19. **Better public transport.**

As there are some overlapping areas of interest within the priority list, it was decided that the priorities emerging from the survey could be presented as themes which would ensure that a wide range of issues was addressed in the Final Plan. It was seen as important that the list of projects should be achievable and not simply be a wish list.

THEMES

The themes that emerged were as follows:

1. Education
2. Health and Wellbeing
3. The Local Economy (Business and the Town Centre/High Street)
4. Recreation
5. Communication
6. Housing and Domestic Services
7. Access for All



Education

I. Education

The main project which the Community wishes to see taken forward is the replacement of the current Banchory Academy. There is very significant concern that with a growing community, the existing premises are not adequate, either in capacity or quality, for the current and future roll of the school.

To accommodate recent growth, it is felt that social spaces within the building have been sacrificed. There is no assembly hall and the canteen can no longer cope adequately with the numbers involved. Although there is expected to be some investment when the swimming pool is decommissioned, there is concern that the building will remain cramped and outdated, and that losing the pool will further restrict pupils' opportunities and well-being.

Although a site for a new academy has been identified in the Local Development Plan (LDP), Aberdeenshire Council has made no allocation in their capital plan to take this project forward. An important objective of the community is to lobby the Council both to upgrade the existing premises and to make the new build project a high priority which is included in the Council's Capital Plan.

In addition, both the primary schools in Banchory require improvement and enlargement to accommodate recent and projected growth in pupil numbers.

A further significant issue raised by residents is the limited range of community education opportunities such as conversational language classes, art and music classes, local history and core employment skills - including English as an Additional Language (EAL) - and digital competence skills.

The Key Projects for Action emerging from this Theme are:

- **replace the Academy in the medium / long term;**
- **upgrade the Academy in the short term;**
- **upgrade Banchory Primary School in the short term;**
- **consider adding capacity to Hill of Banchory Primary School in the short term;**
- **improve adult education opportunities in the short / medium term.**

The current position is as follows:

- **The replacement of Banchory Academy** is not currently on Aberdeenshire Council's capital programme. The lobbying process to give it sufficient priority for inclusion has already started with concern expressed by the Academy Parent Council and the Local Councillors. It is suggested that a lobbying group is established with these as primary partners.

- **Banchory Primary School** is already recognised by Aberdeenshire Council as requiring significant upgrading. This has followed lobbying from the school's Parent Council. Pressure needs to be sustained so that an action programme is established for improvement works. It is hoped that the Parent Council will lead a lobbying group.
- **Hill of Banchory Primary School** is acknowledged in the Aberdeenshire school roll forecasts to be operating at capacity. An action could be to make contact with the Parent Council to discuss the extent of issue and potential actions.
- The improvement of **Adult Education opportunities** needs to be discussed with Aberdeenshire Council. Council funding may be an issue. Other bodies involved in providing adult education opportunities include Number One Community Hub and Woodend Barn.



Health and Wellbeing

2. Health and Wellbeing

The replacement of the existing health centre at Bellfield is the second most important issue for Banchory residents. It is seen as 'not fit for purpose' and lacking in capacity for a growing population. Residents would like to see a new purpose built facility in an accessible location. This should include space for additional health, social care, and wellbeing related activities and services.

Since the various consultation events, the report into the new Local Development Plan has confirmed that a site has been identified as suitable for a replacement facility at Silverbank playing fields, on Station Road. NHS Grampian has confirmed that this is a priority project and is actively developing plans for the site in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council and Banchory Group Practice. It is understood that a community based project group will be established to be closely involved with the process.

The range of health services locally available has also been highlighted. There is a desire within the community to maximise locally available diagnostic facilities and locally available services thus minimising the need to travel extended distances to access these.

The Key Projects for Action emerging from this Theme are:

- **replace Health Campus in short / medium term;**
- **review range of health services and staffing provided, including for nutrition advice;**
- **provide various outreach services including for mental health.**

The current position is:

- **The replacement of the Health Centre** has been prioritised by NHS Grampian. A site has been identified within the LDP. Initial work has begun looking at the needs of the population. Community involvement will be at various levels including direct involvement in the development process.

- Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership is leading/co-ordinating **the development of the new facility** and will finalise the service specification following the aforementioned consultations.
- Whilst NHS Grampian has identified and prioritised the need to replace the existing premises, there is no available funding to progress the project meantime.
- Banchory Group Practice is piloting **the national Modernising Primary Care programme** looking to redesign local services through increased population involvement. This will increasingly develop more appropriate avenues to access information and local services.



Local Economy

3. The Local Economy (Business and the Town Centre / High Street)

The vitality of Banchory High Street is a major concern for many residents. High rents and rates are seen as contributing both to the closure of traditional independent stores such as a butcher's and a fishmonger and also to the increased number of empty shops. Competition from the two major supermarkets is a contributory factor to the decline of the town centre in the eyes of residents and visitors. Although the monthly Farmers' Market is valued, a better mix of permanent shops is seen as desirable.

The strength of feeling indicates that a strategy is needed for the regeneration of the High Street. This might include measures to encourage localism, attract visitors, and support sustainable businesses.

The image, environment and appearance of the town centre is seen as an important factor in attracting visitors who contribute to the local economy. There is a clear desire to see the look of the High Street including the Town Hall improved.

Additional ideas for enhancement include: a community cinema, a community hub, a heritage centre, the regeneration of Bellfield Park, temporary window displays, pop up exhibitions in empty shops, support for the work of 'Bonnie Banchory' in floral displays, and lighting up key features and attractions on dark evenings. An improvement to the signage in the town is also seen as being necessary.

Activities and events are seen as adding to the tourist 'offer', and suggestions put forward are: outdoor concerts, a winter festival with skating rink, and a 'fun run'.

Banchory's new logo is reasonably well established. A few, however, are keen to see the re-introduction of a Banchory Coat of Arms to highlight Banchory's history and heritage and appeal to tourists. In contrast, some people feel this would be a retrograde move. This perhaps highlights the need for further consultation on the issue.

Looking at the wider local economy, many noted that there are few well paid opportunities for young people, and it was suggested apprenticeships could be encouraged. There were suggestions to promote the communication of job opportunities via the Community Hub.

While concerns about the current downturn in the oil industry were highlighted by only a few respondents, some suggested that a better understanding of the impact on the town was desirable in order to devise a strategy to mitigate its effects.

On a positive note, many feel that Banchory Business Centre works well and others value the support of Banchory Business Association (BBA). Support for innovation and further small business start-ups would be welcome to provide greater diversification of employment opportunities in the town.

Key Projects for Action emerging from this Theme are:

- **action on Rent and Rates to make the High St more attractive and attract a better mix of shops;**
- **investigate the feasibility of developing plans for a new Cinema;**
- **upgrade the Town Hall;**
- **develop a Community Hub;**
- **refurbish Bellfield Park;**
- **pop-up exhibitions;**
- **develop an events calendar;**
- **consideration of signage;**
- **the possible re-introduction of a Coat of Arms.**



Local Economy

The current position is:

- **Business Rates** are set by the Scottish Government and are currently subject to much dispute. It is hoped that BBA will co-ordinate action, with support from Chambers of Commerce, in dialogue with the Rating Assessor and perhaps Scottish Enterprise. Individual businesses have the right to appeal against their recent rating revaluation.
- **Rents** are set by building owners, and generally reflect local demand. With a high vacancy rate in Banchory High Street, rent levels would be expected to fall. Aberdeenshire Council is currently carrying out a 'gap analysis' to identify the extent of the problem, and will explore, along with BBA, methods of attracting new occupiers. A discussion with the landlords and main letting agents could provide focus for this action, as well as identifying the potential for **'pop up' exhibitions**.
- As regards a new **Cinema**, the Community Centre at Aboyne and Woodend Barn currently run film nights, but they often tend to be more specialist interest films. BDI have already initiated a discussion on this topic with Woodend Barn, but timetabling is an issue. Further investigation is required.
- **The Town Hall** is seen as having potential for use as a Cinema, but it requires significant upgrading (disabled access, toilets, kitchen etc.) for any sustainable community use. Aberdeenshire Council is now looking a refurbishment plan and suggests discussions are initiated with user groups, including youth groups.
- Aberdeenshire Council would also need to be involved in any project to refurbish the approaches to **Bellfield Park**, including the car park.
- The 'Town Co-ordinator' would be responsible for managing and re-invigorating the **events calendar** on the Visit Banchory website.
- BDI has recently established a **Community Hub** - Number One - at Scott Skinner Square. It is undertaking training in cookery and running the café as well as providing formal and informal meeting accommodation for various community groups, including Youth Industries. Its activities are, however, constrained by lack of space.
- Since the close of the initial consultation, Banchory Heritage Society has revealed preliminary plans for developing a new heritage centre for the town. This is potentially a large project, and would include new tourism and community facilities including meeting rooms and lecture space. It is understood that they are in discussion with various groups, including Aberdeenshire Council and Banchory District Initiative (BDI) regarding funding and potential sites for this development.
- Aberdeenshire Council recently undertook a review of **signage** in Banchory, and has carried out a community consultation on the proposals. At the same time the Heritage group is promoting the re-introduction of a **Coat of Arms** for Banchory. This was seen as a good idea by most attendees at the final consultation event. The Heritage Society is preparing a proposal for the consideration of BCC, and Aberdeenshire Council has also agreed to consider the possibility of retrofitting the coat of arms to signage in the town. This would be dependent upon finance being available.

BANCHORY SPORTS VILLAGE



Recreation

4. Recreation

Many issues have arisen on the subject of recreational facilities in Banchory. A primary concern is the progress of the proposed Banchory Sports Village and the timeline for its delivery. A site start is planned for summer 2017 with completion in 2018. There is concern that the process is taking too long and that the footprint for the facility may not meet Banchory's needs. There is unease about access for various community groups having to compete with school groups for access to the swimming pool. It will not be possible for trampolining, gymnastics and some other clubs to be accommodated at the new facility and this is a cause of concern for those involved.

With reference to Bellfield Park there is a need to improve facilities for children and young people. Facilities might include a modern skateboarding and BMX park. There is a desire to improve playparks within Banchory and to create a 'soft play' indoor facility for families with young children. The further development of paths, cycle-ways and bike trails is also seen as desirable.

Numerous established and highly valued recreational facilities are mentioned as requiring improvement or development to give potential for growth and ensure that facilities are fit for purpose. Particular issues include the maintenance of the bowling greens and added capacity for football including an all-weather, flood-lit pitch. There is a strong demand for the increased availability of venues bookable for sporting activities.

Key Projects for Action emerging from this Theme are:

- **early delivery of Banchory Sports Village;**
- **better play parks;**
- **develop skate boarding / BMX Park;**
- **Investigate feasibility of a 3G football pitch;**
- **Better facilities for teenagers, including a mountain bike trail network.**

The current position is:

- The construction of the **Banchory Sports Village** is being managed by Aberdeenshire Council assisted by a Trust and user group made up of representatives from local organisations. The project is currently out to tender and construction is planned to start in summer/autumn 2017 with completion scheduled for late 2018 / early 2019. Progress requires to be monitored.
- A group has already been established to promote better **skateboarding / BMX facilities** in Bellfield Park. BDI is already assisting with this, as well as with the creation of a mountain bike trail network, and **facilities for teenagers** generally.
- A site for a **3G football pitch** has been identified at Lochside, and is being discussed with Banchory Boys Football Club. Further improvements to footballing facilities are being considered at King George V Park while the pitches at Silverbank (opposite Morrisons) will require to be replaced when the new health facilities suggested for part of that site proceed.



Communication

5. Communication

It is felt that there is a lack of high quality broadband. Broadband cover is very patchy in rural areas around Banchory and within the town itself. Households and businesses experience slow and inconsistent speed.

Mobile phone signal is poor and this raises serious concerns as does the lack of mobile broadband. Public access to broadband in all public spaces would be valued.

There are other topics of interest with regard to local communication and a desire to see a more co-ordinated approach to the sharing of information.

Details that could be shared might include:

- What is on in Banchory
 - Plans for the future of Banchory
 - How to access local services such as bus timetables, library opening hours
 - Banchory Sports Village promotions.
 - Details about local groups, attractions and activities for residents and visitors
- The co-ordination and promotion of information, events and activities and a shared community hub would be welcome as would a more visible tourist information centre.

Key Projects for Action emerging from this Theme are:

- **improve Broadband Connection;**
- **improve Mobile Phone reception;**
- **better Communication of events and activities;**
- **investigate Community Hub.**

The current position is:

- The Scottish Government is currently promoting improved broadband throughout Scotland. They have entered into a contract with BT to deliver specified improvements by March 2018. Aberdeenshire Council is involved with BT in reviewing this 'service standard agreement', and pressing for timely improvements.
- The improvement of Mobile Phone reception is already an issue which is under discussion in the area, and an action group has been formed.
- As discussed above, better communication of local events and services can perhaps best be addressed through the activities of BDI and the Community Hub, and co-ordinated by the Town Team/Co-ordinator using the 'Visit Banchory' website. This might also include improved distribution of the 'Banchory Fly' community newsletter.



Housing and Domestic Services

6. Housing and Domestic Services

A sixth major issue for residents is a perceived mismatch between local housing needs and the type of housing that is available in the town. It is thought that too many larger homes are being built, not enough mid-market or starter homes, and certainly not enough retirement or sheltered housing. Further, many private or rented properties are widely seen as being unaffordable for many, including young local people wishing to stay in the area or those affected by the oil downturn.

Smaller and affordable homes for young people, young families, single people and retirees are identified as a need. Expanding the offer for social, rented, and sheltered housing is also seen as a priority.

The delivery of local services by Aberdeenshire Council is also seen as a major issue for some sections of the community. In particular waste collection and recycling services are seen as unreliable. The Crow's Nest Recycling Centre is difficult to access for some. A more reliable and sustainable waste collection service is seen as a priority.

Key Projects for Action emerging from this Theme are:

- **protect the south bank of the river from development;**
- **achieve a better balance of housing provision, including affordable housing for young people and first time buyers;**
- **action to improve waste services.**

The current position is:

- * The prospect of **development to the south of the River** at Auchattie has now been ruled out both by a Scottish Government Reporter following an appeal and by the Reporter appointed to review the proposed new Local Development Plan. The area has also been designated a Special Landscape Area. It is accordingly very unlikely that this proposal will be promoted further for the foreseeable future.
- **The type of housing provided** in any settlement is dictated by market demand (in respect of private housing), and by Aberdeenshire Council in respect of social housing. As regards private housing, there are 2 sites currently under construction. Both sites are offering a range of 2 - 4 bedroom, terraced, semi-detached, and smaller detached houses. In reflection of current market conditions, fewer large 'executive' houses are now being proposed.

- Social housing recently built has been in the form of 'low cost home ownership', constructed (as required by planning policy) as a percentage of private developers' offer. The housing mix for all social housing developments is dictated by Aberdeenshire Housing Service. It is required by the Scottish Government to carry out a 4 yearly 'housing needs and demand assessment', and it is on this basis that the Housing Service decides on the appropriate mix. It was suggested that pressure needs to be placed on the Scottish Government to increase funding for affordable housing, and that meetings should be held with the Housing and Planning Services to see what more can be achieved on this issue.
- **Action to improve Waste Collection Services** needs to be discussed with Aberdeenshire Council Waste Service. The potential for community involvement in recycling also needs to be discussed more fully and an Action Plan agreed.



Access For All



7. Access For All

A final main issue raised relates to the ability of all sections of the community to get around Banchory safely. For members of the community who are vulnerable through age, restricted finance, or mobility issues, access to what Banchory has to offer is restricted. Using health care, shopping or social activities can all be adversely affected. A number of issues around getting from A to B were reported, including lack of safe crossing points and maintenance of footpaths and pavements. Car parking features heavily: issues include a need for more disabled parking spaces, the problem of parked cars blocking safe core routes and lack of visibility at crossing points. Lighting of pathways in the evenings would also help some feel safer and more able to venture out on dark evenings.

Some of these issues are already being highlighted by established groups representing older residents who have been lobbying to secure improvements.

Concerns were expressed about the reliability of the bus service and the condition of vehicles. There is a desire for an expanded range of routes to other Aberdeenshire communities such as Westhill and Inverurie and also for a direct bus service to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.

Key Projects for Action emerging from this Theme (in addition to the items covered under Theme 5 Communication) are:

- **improve pedestrian safety across the A93;**
- **explore moving the Taxi Rank from the High St;**
- **improve Public Transport;**
- **improve street lighting on footpaths.**

The current position is:

- The potential for additional **pedestrian crossings** across the A93 (in the High Street and at Morrisons) will need to be looked at in detail with Aberdeenshire Roads Service.
- The proposal to **re-locate the taxi rank** from the High Street should be discussed with Banchory Business Association (BBA), local taxi operators, and Aberdeenshire Roads Service. If relocated, proposals for alternatives need to be developed.
- **Improved public transport** will require to be discussed with bus operators Stagecoach Bluebird and Aberdeenshire Public Transport Unit as well as user groups.
- **The lighting of publicly adopted footpaths** is generally agreed and then maintained by Aberdeenshire Roads and Lighting Service. Improvements to the lighting of other (non-adopted) footpaths need to be agreed with the landowners involved (around Banchory this may often be Leys Estate) and perhaps also Banchory Paths Association.

ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

The Action Plan Summary, printed on the next few pages, outlines how the issues detailed above could be taken forward by the community.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

A Community Action Plan is not a wish list: it is a tool which allows a community to identify and work towards the fulfilment of the changes its residents wish to see happen. It is a working document which can be amended and updated as circumstances require. New projects and ideas can be added; ideas which are no longer relevant can be removed or altered. The successful completion of any project listed will depend on the willing assistance of people living in the community. This could involve people volunteering to join a group to lobby for new facilities such as a new secondary school or to plan and raise finance for a particular project such as a bike track. Marr Area Partnership can provide advice and support as can other groups such as BDI, but it is the people of Banchory who will ensure the success of any of the action points.

Banchory Community Council has agreed to review the progress of the CAP annually and report back to the community. Anyone interested in being involved with any of the ideas listed can register their interest by emailing BCC at banchorycommunity@hotmail.com

This Table summarises the main issues and potential projects identified from the analysis of the public response to the CAP consultation exercise. It encapsulates the narrative relative to the seven Key Themes set out in the Section above. It is however work in progress and will be adjusted and amended as work on the delivery of the CAP develops. As the organisation charged with organising the CAP Process, Banchory Community Council (BCC) will be responsible for monitoring progress on the delivery of the plan, which will be reviewed annually.

Theme 1: Education

Projects	Issues / Need	Initial Action	Short to Medium Term Actions	Long Term Goal	Potential Key Partners
Upgrade and eventually Replace Banchory Academy	Academy is seen as requiring significant upgrading, and eventual replacement.	Issue has started to be addressed Convene forum to discuss	Establish Action Plan to lobby to improve existing building, and include a new building in the AC Capital Plan.	Replacement of Academy	Banchory Academy Parent Council Aberdeenshire Council (AC) and elected members
Upgrade Banchory Primary School	BPS is acknowledged as requiring significant upgrading and repair.	Issue has begun to be addressed Convene forum to discuss	Establish Action Plan	Effect significant improvement to building fabric	BPS Parent Council AC and local Councillors
Investigate capacity of Hill of Banchory (HoB) Primary School	HoB PS is operating at capacity.	Convene forum to discuss	Establish Action Plan	Allow for increased school capacity	HoB Parent Council AC and local Councillors
Improve Adult Education Opportunities	Perceived lack of adult educational opportunities e.g. Conversational French, DIY, employment training.	Convene forum to discuss	Establish Action Plan	Improve range of opportunities	AC, Community Hub, Woodend Barn, CLD, Scolby Centre, BDI

Theme 2: Health and Wellbeing

Projects	Issues / Need	Initial Action	Short to Medium Term Actions	Long Term Goal	Potential Key Partners
Replace Health Campus	Site at Bellfield seen as 'not fit for purpose' and lacking in capacity. However, some concern over location of new site.	Issue has begun to be addressed Site identified in Local Development Plan (LDP).	Establish forum to monitor progress and timetable for delivery.	Delivery of new expanded health centre.	NHS Grampian, Integrated Joint Board, Medical practice and patient group. Community based project group
Review range of health services available in Banchory services.	Issues with staff shortages, lack of appointments, including nutritional and mental health advice and services.	Review already underway, associated with planning for new facilities.	Explore possibility of collaborative services to reduce dependency on traditional services.	Capacity for an expanded staff and range of services.	As above, plus voluntary sector and NHS specialist

Theme 3: The Local Economy (Business and the Town Centre)

Projects	Issues / Need	Initial Action	Short to Medium Term Actions	Long Term Goal	Potential Key Partners
Action on Rates and Rents	High levels of rates and rents are seen as discouraging occupancy in High Street. Convene forum to discuss	Issue has begun to be addressed	Undertake 'gap' survey, and research on rates / rent levels. Prepare Action Plan.	Create an environment where investment in Banchory High St. is more attractive.	Banchory Business Assoc., local landlords, AC, Rates Assessor, Scottish Govt., Scottish Enterprise.
Develop plan for new Cinema	Lack of cinema seen as important social issue, particularly for younger residents.	Issue has begun to be addressed Continue to investigate feasibility	Establish viability.	Establish cinema in town, may have to be on a part time basis.	Community Hub, Woodend Barn, BDI, AC
Improve Town Hall	Seen as requiring significant upgrading internal and external, including disabled access.	Issue has begun to be addressed Convene forum to discuss	Prepare plan for improvement involving user groups.	Improve facilities at Town Hall, so it is again seen as an asset to the High St.	AC, BDI
Belfield Park (See also under Recreation)	Poor initial visual impact, seen as requiring upgrading; resolution of parking issues.	Issue has begun to be addressed Convene forum to discuss	Prepare Action Plan.	Improve attractiveness of park, as visitor attraction and local amenity	AC, BDI, BBA
Develop Community Hub	Seen as a potential focus for meeting a range of community needs, but needs expansion.	Issue addressed in part with opening of No 1 Scott Skinner Square. Convene group to discuss expanded facility.	Prepare Action Plan.	Delivery of commodious HUB facility providing a range of community facilities, including heritage facilities.	BDI, AC, Banchory Heritage Society (BHS)
Banchory Coat of Arms	Use of Coat of Arms could be a positive influence in attracting heritage visitors.	AC has already initiated discussions on whether community feel this is a significant issue. BCC and BHS to take forward.	BHS to develop proposal and investigate costs.	Possible adoption of a Coat of Arms if community is supportive.	Banchory Heritage Society (BHS), BCC

Theme 4: Recreation

Projects	Issues / Need	Initial Action	Short to Medium Term Actions	Long Term Goal	Potential Key Partners
Banchory Sports Village	Although project has been initiated, there is concern that its delivery is uncertain and about the range of facilities to be provided.	Establish forum to monitor progress. Build start currently planned for Autumn 2017, completion early 2019.	If required, lobby MSP and AC.	Deliver BSV on programme.	AC and local Councillors, BSV User Group
Belfield Park Improvements	Seen as needing refurbishment, with inclusion of BMX / Skateboarding park, and more facilities for teenagers.	Issue has begun to be addressed with CLD and BDI involved with skateboarding group. Business Plan being written.	Develop Action Plan, including for funding.	Establish programme of improvements. Deliver BMX / Skateboard Park	AC, CLD, Skateboard Group, Youth Industries
All Weather Football Pitch	Seen as much needed facility for variety of groups, particularly to facilitate winter training.	Issue has begun to be addressed. Convene forum to discuss.	Develop Action Plan, make planning application.	Provide a 3 G football pitch in town.	AC, BDI, Banchory Boys Club, Sports Scotland, SYFA
Mountain Bike Trails	Trail network seen as required.	Issue has begun to be addressed, business plan being developed.	Develop plan for funding, planning and site acquisition.	Create a network of mountain bike trails around Banchory.	Deeside Bike Collective, Forestry Commission Scotland, BDI.

Theme 5: Communication

Projects	Issues / Need	Initial Action	Short to Medium Term Actions	Long Term Goal	Potential Key Partners
Improve Broadband Service	Lack of high quality broadband	Issue has begun to be addressed with Scottish Gov / BT contract. Convene forum to discuss.	Establish lobbying group to speed up delivery of planned improvements.	Provision of reliable broadband service to whole BCC area.	LocalAction Group, BT, AC and local Councillors, Scottish Govt.
Improved Mobile Phone reception	Mobile phone and data services seen as patchy, throughout the area.	Convene forum to discuss	Establish Lobbying Group	Provision of reliable mobile phone signal over whole BCC area.	Phone providers, local action group, AC.
Improve communication of local events and services	Dissemination of information about local events and services seen as un-coordinated.	Convene forum to discuss	Prepare Action Plan and guidance for event holders.	Better dissemination of local events and services.	BDI, No 1 Community Hub, Town Co-ordinator, River Dee Radio

Theme 6: Housing and Domestic Services

Projects	Issues / Need	Initial Action	Short to Medium Term Actions	Long Term Goal	Potential Key Partners
Balanced Housing Provision	Correlation between housing need and provision seen as out of step	Convene forum to discuss.	Develop Action Plan including further Govt. funding for affordable housing.	Provision of new housing more in line with community needs.	AC, local house builders, Scottish Govt., local councillors.
Improved Range of Low Cost Housing	Significant need for various forms of low cost housing identified, including social, rented, young and first time buyers, and sheltered.	Convene forum to discuss.	Prepare Action Plan	As above	AC and local Councillors, local Housing Associations, Banchory Older People's Forum, H&SC.
Improve waste collection services	Waste collection and recycling service seen as unreliable; Crow's Nest cannot be accessed by some users.	Seek interested and affected parties to explore the issue further.	Discuss possible solutions with AC.	Improve waste collection services.	AC and local Councillors.

Theme 7: Access for All

Projects	Issues / Need	Initial Action	Short to Medium Term Actions	Long Term Goal	Potential Key Partners
Provide additional Pedestrian Crossings	Getting across A93 seen as hazardous, particularly in High St and at Morrisons.	Convene meeting to discuss.	Investigate practicality of additional crossings.	Provide additional crossings on A93.	AC and local Councillors, Community Safety Partnership (CSP), BCC.
Relocate Taxi Rank	Taxi rank seen as taking up too much space on High St.	Convene meeting to discuss.	Prepare Action Plan, including for alternative provision.	TBD	AC, Taxi Operators, Banchory Older People's Forum.
Improve Public Transport Services	Bus services seen as unreliable, with old vehicles: more routes welcome incl. ARI	Convene meeting to discuss.	Discuss improvements with bus operators.	Improved, more reliable bus service in more attractive, up to date vehicles.	AC Passenger Transport Unit, BCC, Stagecoach, Marr Area Bus Forum.
Footpath improvements	A range of issues were highlighted, including maintenance and lighting.	Convene meeting to discuss.	Prepare Action Plan to address various issues highlighted by meeting(s).	Improved and safer pedestrian network around Banchory.	AC, Banchory Paths Association, Older People's Forum & other users.
Parks and Open Spaces	Not all easy to access, particularly for those with disability.	MAP to convene group, and feedback results.	Prepare Action Plan, including publicity.	Improve access arrangements.	Potential Youth Group to look at Banchory as a whole.

NOTE: ABBREVIATED TITLES

BA	Banchory Academy	CSP	Community Safety Partnership
BBA	Banchory Business Association	DBC	Deeside Bike Collective
AC	Aberdeenshire Council	H&SC	Health and Social Care
BCC	Banchory Community Council	LDP	Local Development Plan
BDI	Banchory and District Initiative Ltd	MAP	Marr Area Partnership
BHS	Banchory Heritage Society	PTU	Passenger Transport Unit
BPS	Banchory Primary School	SYFA	Scottish Youth Football Association
BSV	Banchory Sports Village	ARI	Aberdeen Royal Infirmary
CAP	Community Action Plan	TBD	to be decided
CLD	Community Learning and Development		

This booklet is one of a series produced by Local Rural Partnerships for a number of communities in Aberdeenshire.

This initiative is sponsored by Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership and run by Aberdeenshire Local Rural Partnerships. The aim is to provide community action plans in an attractive, easy to read, professionally printed format.

This information can now guide the community and Community Planning Partners in drawing up detailed action plans to implement the top priorities as well as addressing the other issues which have been identified. For each priority or issue this will involve agreeing who should be involved, what resources will be needed and target dates for completion. It is hoped that this process will be driven by representatives of the community with support - moral, technical and financial - from the relevant Partners.

It is important that this booklet is seen by all concerned as an account of the community's views at the time of the latest consultation, and that it will have to be regularly reviewed and updated. As some projects are completed, other issues will arise and take their place in future versions of the community plan.

We recommend that this Plan has a maximum life of three years.

Thanks are due to all the individuals and organisations who contributed to the development of this Action Plan: to all Banchory residents and visitors who completed the survey and attended open events; to the Marr Area Partnership which provided support and funding; to Community Learning and Development who helped with issuing invitations; to all those who contributed to the writing of the plan, provided the photographs and proofread the final draft; and of course to all the members of the Steering Group who worked so hard to produce the final document.

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