

# Larkhall Community Plan



## Survey Report

*"Good community wellbeing is vital for us all.  
Communities that are happy, healthy, safe and secure  
allows us all to thrive and fulfil our potential."*

**Local Government and Communities Committee Convener**

# WHY A COMMUNITY PLAN

The Larkhall Community Plan project was embarked upon as a direct result of the change in focus of community engagement across Scotland and the success of previous local community engagement events.

The Community Empowerment Act's focus on local decision making and participatory budgeting helped to define the aim of the exercise, which was to give local people a voice in the design and delivery of the services they receive and the future development of the places they inhabit.

This report is the presentation of the information given by local people which we have sought to represent as accurately as possible.

## HOW IT HAPPENED

Local representatives from different sectors across the electoral ward, created an informal partnership, Larkhall Plan Partnership and agreed the viability of a Local Community Plan. They planned, organised and executed the entire consultation process.

The Partners are —

Larkhall Community Growers; Nancy Barr, Liz Law, Terry Paterson  
South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Forum; Margaret Moncrieff  
The Machan Trust; Hazel Shaw, Alan McCrone  
Larkhall and District Volunteer Group; Sandra McCrory, Anne Alston  
Community Links—Strutherhill Place Plan; Liz Jamieson  
Larkhall Community Council; Marcos Robson, Tommy McPhee  
YMCA; Willie Mowbray  
Councillors Burns, Nelson, Craig and Carmichael

Supported by Communities Connected and SLC Community Engagement Team  
We gained the support of the leadership of South Lanarkshire Council and other statutory organisations including, South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS, South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture Ltd.

A stakeholder event helped to create the questionnaire, which was tested prior to the consultation.

As a result of this exercise, people's views will help influence key decisions affecting life in our local communities.

# THE KEY PEOPLE

Local people responded to the social media campaign, banner adverts, posters, leaflets and cards, visits to groups and organisations, local newspaper articles, street work and word of mouth.

1812 people responded to the survey, either online or hard copy, the age split being:  
**11-15** 7%; **16-24** 6%; **25-34** 14%; **35-44** 22%; **45-54** 21%; **55-64** 15%; **65+** 15%,  
68% of respondents were female, 32% male.




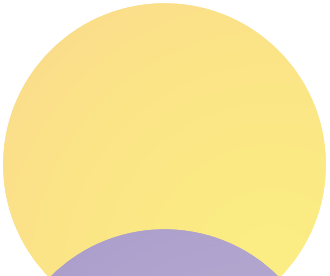

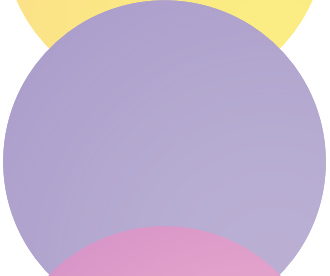







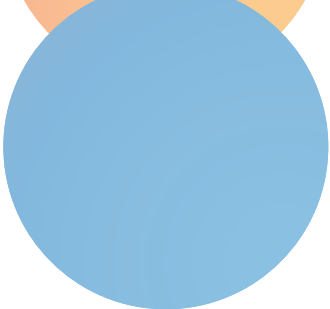
More than 600 people have asked to be kept informed of the process going forward.  
This outstanding response shows the desire of local people to be involved in future decisions that will ensure we can live in healthy, safe, supported and empowered communities.

# THE SURVEY RESPONSES



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# CONTENT

	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>Page 6</b>	
	<b>OUR COMMUNITY</b>	<b>Page 7</b>	
	<b>OUR HEALTH</b>	<b>Page 8</b>	
	<b>OUR SERVICES</b>	<b>Page 9</b>	
	<b>OUR PLACES</b>	<b>Page 10</b>	
	<b>OUR SPORT AND LEISURE SPACE</b>	<b>Page 11</b>	
	<b>OUR PRIORITIES</b>	<b>Page 12</b>	
	<b>OUR FUTURE</b>	<b>Page 13</b>	
	<b>THE VILLAGES</b>	<b>Page 14</b>	
	<b>WHERE TO NEXT</b>	<b>Page 15</b>	

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our community is defined by geography, the chosen target area being Larkhall, Netherburn, Ashgill and Dalserf, with a total population of 18,000, it is made up of interconnecting parts.

While the majority of people like living in the area, a range of improvements that would make life better for local people were identified.

Wellbeing is extremely significant and included community pride and spirit, and is seen in the support given to community events and activities such as the Gala Day and Christmas Markets.

Health services provision raised issues with GP services which seem to be stretched at the present time, raising the question about the ability to cope with the increase in population over the next 5 to 10 years.

Local clinic provision, older people's care, hospital exit, mental health and the behaviour of drug users were highlighted as issues needing urgent attention. Health and wellbeing also include the mix of social work, benefits, unpaid carers, disabled, local service provision, accessibility by public transport, young people's services and wheelchair access have all been identified as requiring better solutions. Future prosperity is a reasonable goal and the local economy, local employment, town centre regeneration, population growth and public and private investment require careful management to gain maximum impact.

Primary education received good reviews, although catchment areas need to be reviewed. The feeling is that the high school could do better, however, the trend appears to be moving upwards.

The litter issue around lunch time on the main street causes widespread annoyance to many people.

More affordable social housing is asked for, as well as sheltered and Additional Support Needs accommodation. The allocation policy could be improved and better mechanisms introduced to support tenants' issues. The public spaces and footpaths need better maintenance.

Safety / security is key to community health and issues relating to burglary, Anti-Social Behaviour, addiction issues within the community, needs attention.

While praise is given to the Cleansing Services, fly tipping, litter, glass and dog mess in parks and on paths could be improved. The litter on the approach road to Larkhall from the M74 was also mentioned.

Potholes on our roads, maintenance of footpaths, parking on pavements, street lighting not being fit for purpose, and the need for investment in cycling routes was raised.

Leisure and sport facilities are in great need of improvement and enhancement. Replacement of the Leisure Centre should include athletics/running track facility, a wider range of sports with particular emphasis on outdoors, including pitches and parks. Classes for all ages and families are needed.

Facilities to bring the Royal Albert Football Club back to Larkhall was requested. This famous Scottish team were relocated to Stonehouse some years ago.

Parks and the local environment have serious problems including lack of play equipment and inadequate maintenance. The natural areas need enhancement and, in some cases regeneration.

Morgan Glen is a magnificent asset and needs to be promoted and enhanced.

The area's external reputation has to catch up with the reality of the evolving community.

More and better means of communication is required to ensure key information, news and knowledge sharing is encouraged and disseminated to as many people as possible.

The town centre, while bucking the trend by performing better in comparison to others of similar size, needs a wider variety of type of shop. The street looks tired and could do with being brightened up.

Parking should be reviewed with the 1700 extra houses bringing opportunities we need to grasp. The creation of a natural, public centre space should be considered.

Transport frequency could be improved, with new services and earlier and later running being requested. The reliability of the train service is an issue. The impact of the new bus route to The Fort shopping centre will be interesting when the information is available.

## OUR COMMUNITY

Ashgill, Netherburn Larkhall and Dalserf are geographically connected, Larkhall providing local shopping, leisure facilities and services, with good transport links to Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Major housing development currently underway in Larkhall, could be a lever for economic growth in the area, and the catalyst for service improvement and regeneration. People were asked how happy they were living in their local community.

## STATISTICS

89% of respondents stated they are happy/very happy living in these communities

This included 80% of 11-15-year olds, 89% of 16-24, 35-44 and 45-54 year olds

And 91% of 25-34, 55-64 and 65+ year olds

This shows a consistent agreement across the age range.

## SPECIFIED NEEDS / ISSUES

Almost half of those who responded to this question said improvements to local facilities was key to making life better.

One quarter of respondents feel that improvements to the town centre and shopping areas would improve life.

Almost one fifth identified the provision of better leisure and sport facilities as their priority to make Larkhall a better place to live.

12% mentioned improvements to services, specifically highlighting the condition of roads and footpaths .

A small number of people mentioned the area's external reputation as something we must work towards improving.

## SUMMARY

Our community has a clear connection to place, culture and heritage, shown in the high level of satisfaction with the area as a place to live.

That said, specific improvements have been identified to deal with key issues that affect the lives of local people. The standard and lack of good facilities for health, sport, leisure and community use is a big issue. While the town centre is better than others, it needs to be spruced up. Removal of local services is a problem for many people.

## QUOTES

'a very friendly place' 'Family links' 'Insufficient resources'

'Happy memories' 'Good transport links' 'Good schools'

'Sense of Community' 'Welcoming place' 'we need more facilities like a new leisure centre'

# OUR HEALTH

Good health and the management of health conditions is fundamental to a fulfilled life, and the services that underpin this are crucial to the quality of life of every person.

Services must be accessible, flexible, personal, and reliable, with a focus on prevention and early intervention.

People were asked for their opinion on current services.

## STATS

81% feel Dentists are excellent/good;

66% feel Health Centres/Doctors are excellent/good/; while 31% said poor/very poor

26% find access to benefits poor/very poor;

24% find Care for people with a disability poor/very poor;

22% find Support for Carers poor/very poor;

19% feel support for business is poor/very poor;

## SPECIFIED NEEDS / ISSUES

Over 1/3 of people commented on the need for improvements to health centres and GP services, many specifically raising issues with capacity in view of new residential developments.

1/4 praised the work of the local voluntary organisations including LDVG, Machan Trust and YMCA.

6% mentioned lack of the provision of information relating to available services.

## SUMMARY

More than 30% feel the current health service provision does not meet their needs, some suggesting the pressure on GPs and the need for more customer focussed services is taking its toll. Information on services is not reaching the relevant people so better communication is needed. Support services for Carers and those with disabilities need improvement. The work of local community groups is greatly appreciated and identified as crucial to the health and wellbeing of local people in the future, including Larkhall and District Volunteer Group, The Machan Trust and the YMCA.

## QUOTES

'Doctors overstretched' ' takes 3 weeks to get an appointment'

'Health Centre in a more central site' 'No benefit or income support in area'

'no IT skills and no access to local help' 'carers get no support' 'more mental health support'

## OUR SERVICES

Services need to be appropriate for the needs of people living in the area. They are the safety net in hard times, and the support for individual growth, allowing people to reach their potential. These have a huge impact on life satisfaction and the ability of people to recognise and grasp opportunities as they arise. People were asked for their opinion on a range of services, public and other, including public transport, Recycling and Waste Collection, Social Work, Public Transport etc

## STATS

81% consider Recycling & Waste collection to be excellent or good  
74% find Public Transport excellent/good;  
61% stated Street cleaning was excellent or good  
54% consider Libraries to be excellent or good  
53% consider Schools to be good, 22% excellent  
52% state Sport & leisure provision is poor or very poor  
50% consider Housing to be excellent/good, but 20% poor  
48% said Parks and Open Space provision and condition was poor or very poor  
41% consider Community halls to be poor or very poor  
25% state Social Work for adults & Older People are excellent/ good, 24% poor/very poor, 20% consider Social Work for Children & Young People is excellent/good, 21% poor, very poor; 60% no opinion

## SPECIFIED NEEDS / ISSUES

The need for better and more sport and leisure facilities was raised by many people.

Specific comments on housing issues including improvements to SLC's allocation policy for social housing.

Social Work issues highlighted specifically the need for provision for the elderly.

The urgent need to review catchment areas in the light of increased population was raised with specific mention of Glengowan Primary School.

Over 1/5 commented on public transport, specifically the need for additional provision, and the reliability of the train service.

## SUMMARY

Future capacity of services is giving serious concern especially with the new housebuilding programme now underway.

Community halls are not fit for purpose. The Cameronian Hall closure was a blow and the age and state of repair of the Community Centre being a key issue.

Schools, Recycling and libraries are good. Local services having been moved out of the community has caused problems for some people.

## QUOTES

'Cameronian hall was closed' 'There needs to be more for kids to do great schools in the area'

'with all the new house building - will the schools be big enough'

'Bus services could be organised better' 'better help and facilities for elderly'

'academy pupils need to be more responsible for dropping their litter' 'more public transport in outlying districts i.e. Netherburn, Ashgill, Coalburn'

## OUR PLACES

The quality of the environment, public space and local infrastructure, is key to satisfaction, wellbeing and motivation. The capacity of our town centre, leisure facilities, and outdoor space to encourage visitors and lift spirits is fundamental to a healthy community. People were asked their views on local community facilities and services including parks and open space, roads, footpaths, community buildings and the town centre.

### STATS

39% consider town centre to be poor/ very poor

47% rated Public footpaths poor/ very poor, 10% of which said very poor.

56% consider Roads poor/ very poor, 14% of which said very poor

### SPECIFIED NEEDS / ISSUES

Almost one quarter of people commented on the quality of local roads, specific parking issues, high speed of vehicles in certain areas and poor street lighting.

One fifth of respondents commented on the need for improvements to the main shopping area, including parking and traffic management, and the need to brighten up the space.

Many people raised the issue of the poor condition of footpaths, specifically the maintenance, litter, glass and dog mess.

The requirement for wider wheelchair access was highlighted with particular reference to paths around the town centre.

### SUMMARY

There was general agreement that the sport and leisure space and facilities are in great need of improvement.

The condition of roads and footpaths are of great concern.

The shopping area is in need of regeneration and suggestions included street scape improvements, wider variety of shops, evening economy boost with consideration of young people's activities.

### QUOTES

'Better play facilities needed in our parks' 'Town centre would benefit from some aesthetic improvement'

'More parking. Less double lines' 'lack of variety in places to eat meals or evening entertainment'

'cracked and uneven footpaths' 'All green spaces are covered in dog poop and/or litter that includes broken glass and fly tipping' 'Roads have loads of pot holes'

'Footpath blocked by cars ,vans ,dog mess and litter'

# OUR SPORT AND LEISURE SPACE

Sport and leisure facilities have a key role in developing healthy bodies and minds with a wide range of activities and equipment being beneficial to giving more choice and bringing benefits to more people. Provision needs to consider all ages, from the youngest to the oldest in our community, encouraging the adoption of healthy habits. People were asked what provision they would like to have in a new leisure complex.

## LEISURE FACILITIES

81% of respondents have used the swimming pool,

53% the Sauna/steam room/plunge pool,  
61% the games hall,

62% the main sports hall, 53% the function suite with kitchen, 46% Gym 1 (weights), 51% Gym 2, 35% Studio.

57% have used the soft play area, 61% the café.

## NEW FACILITY

88% want to have a health suite, 86% café, 85% a swimming pool with viewing gallery, 83% main sports hall, 81% a games hall, 80% a cardio gym, 78% soft play, 77% gym with weights, 73% function suite with kitchen, 71% football pitches, 65% running track, 55% a studio.

## SPECIFIED NEEDS / ISSUES

**Other facilities people would like to see included:**

New accessible outdoor pitches for football and rugby, with specific mention of the return of Royal Albert FC.

Dojo/martial arts area.

Running track and athletics area

Squash courts, Soft play area, Dance studio

Skate park, tennis courts and a bike trail

Gymnastics facilities and trampolines

Obstacle circuit and table tennis facilities.

The majority of respondents mentioned the specific need for new improved sports and leisure facilities, including outdoors.

Accessible pitches and a running track are seen as essential.

## SUMMARY

New leisure provision is essential to encourage healthy individuals and should offer a wide variety of options.

Outside activities including a running track, pitches cycle and bike trails are needed.

Royal Albert back to Larkhall.

All facilities need to be flexible, fit for purpose and affordable.

## QUOTES

'Disability sports inclusiveness' 'Could we not have Health provision built in'

'Outdoor learning gym facilities' 'Clubs and groups for young and older people'

'More family classes that could be done together' 'Creche facilities' 'Outdoor play park'

'Larkhall swimming pool desperately needs updated with more facilities'

'Athletic track and floodlit AstroTurf football facilities'

## OUR PRIORITIES

People were asked to state their ONE most important issue they would like to see addressed, to make the area a better place to live.

More than 1/3 of respondents identified improvement to Services as the most important issue they would like to see addressed. This included health, social work, public transport, green space maintenance, housing, schools, roads and footpaths.

1/4 prioritised sport and leisure provision, with specific mention of the Leisure Centre facilities, parks, athletics, running and football facilities.

1/5 identified the need for more facilities and activities with specific reference to children and young people.

1/5 of respondents identified the town centre as a key issue, specifically mentioning the variety of shop type and the need for regeneration.

Better business support and changes to parking options were also raised. Cleanliness, specifically relating to fly tipping, litter and dog mess were prioritised by many people.

Safety and crime are seen as being in need of attention.

Many people highlighted the need for transport/roads/footpaths and lighting improvements.

A small number of people mentioned the town's external reputation, suggesting that this is a perception we need to work to change.

## QUOTES

'Appearance of town' 'Main street regeneration' 'Police walking the streets'

'That the services match the growth in population arriving in town from all the new build developments' 'more cycling infrastructure'

'Tidy the streets and kill the weeds' 'litter, dog poo, glass and fly tipping'

## OUR FUTURE

People were asked to state their hopes for the next 5-10 years Larkhall and the surrounding areas and the people who live there.

3/4 of respondents stated improvement to Services was crucial to the success of community life in the future.

And town centre improvements are important for the future.

Better leisure and sport facilities are essential going forward.

Almost 1/5 of people hoped for better general wellbeing, and continued good community spirit and pride, suggesting more community events and activities to bring people together.

The economy is seen as very important, including employment, prosperity, investment particularly in relation to the town centre.

Improvements to local facilities/activities/amenities is very important.

Safety and policing are crucial for future wellbeing.

Roads, footpaths and lighting need improved.

The state of cleanliness in the area is a key part of positive community life.

## QUOTES

'To see Larkhall continue to grow and develop'

'Diversity' 'retain heritage' 'Investment' 'encouraging local businesses'

'Improved health and well being' 'A safe environment'

'Provision of good modern community facilities' 'Better facilities for young people'

# THE VILLAGES

Specific points were raised by people, that affect the smaller villages in the target area.

## **ASHGILL**

Lived in Ashgill all my life I know everyone.

Good location but potential to be so much more.

Nice people, good place to bring up our daughter in safe quiet street.

More facilities in Ashgill for kids, better swing park, skate park/bike park.

## **NETHERBURN**

Earlier and better bus service to Netherburn at weekends.

Was better when services were still in Larkhall. No presence of police what so ever.

No sense of community as no hub for people.

Machan Trust is excellent for Children and Young people.

I hope the L.D.V.G keeps getting funding to keep it open it's the best place Larkhall has for the older generation.

## **DALSERF**

Larkhall has a good community ethos.

Improved community facilities needed.

# WHAT NEXT ?

Respondents asked for a range of changes to existing services, facilities and priorities and already the relevant data has been passed to teams who are developing projects that will bring improvements to the Larkhall area. These are -

- The design of the new Sports Facility being planned for Larkhall by South Lanarkshire Council and the Leisure Trust.
- South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership hub to be built in Blantyre, due to commence in April 2020 and supported by satellite provision for Larkhall and Stonehouse.
- Town Centre Strategy being produced for Larkhall by South Lanarkshire Council in partnership with Larkhall Community Council and due to be available in Spring 2020.
- Police Scotland Consultation on local policing.

Their ability to use the survey data will help to ensure the design, location and planned operation of these proposed facilities and services, has been informed by the views of local people.

The survey information will inform the creation of an Action Plan which will detail the priorities identified for the area. This will be used to engage, lobby and discuss future service provision and development proposals for the area, to achieve healthy, safe, supported and empowered communities.

We will continue to work with our partners and supporters South Lanarkshire Council, South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership, Police Scotland, South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture Ltd, local people, organisations and businesses.

If you would like to find out more or be involved in taking the actions forward, please contact [larkhallsurvey2019@gmail.com](mailto:larkhallsurvey2019@gmail.com) or telephone 07734876913

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Larkhall Plan Partnership

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