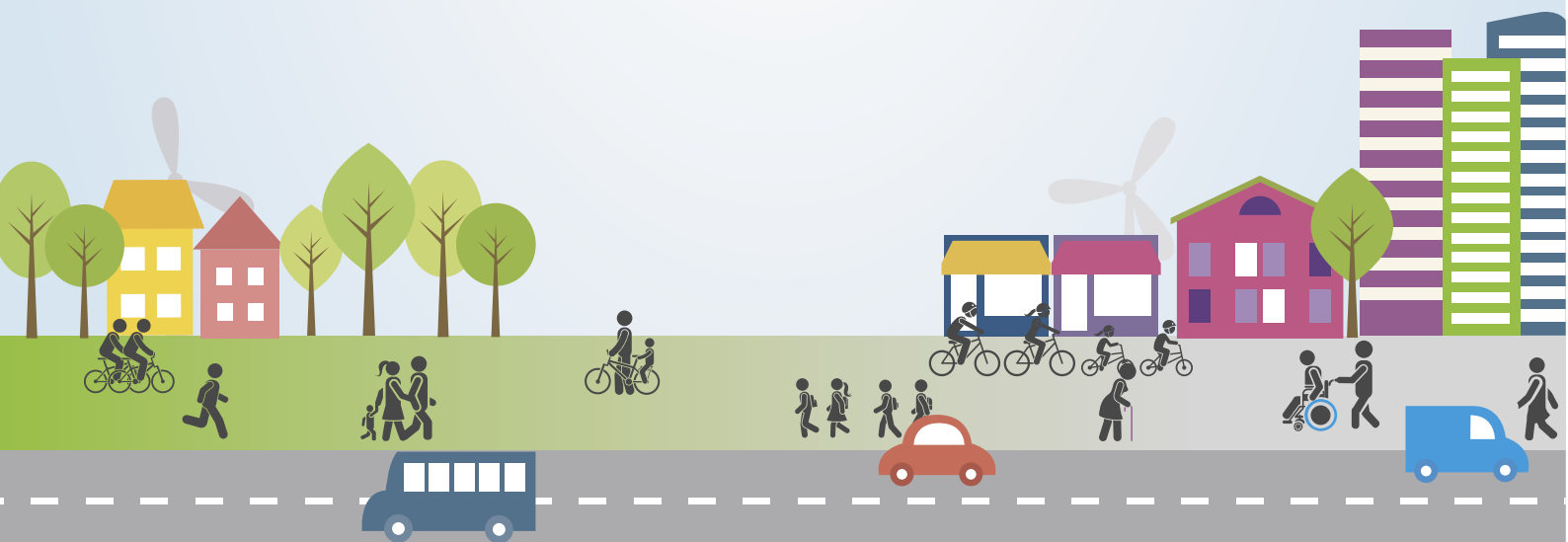# Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme

Clydebank Project Town

What We're Hearing in our Communities

A qualitative report on the findings from stakeholder conversations and a review of engagement documentation

June 2023 (including July 2024 update)

Index to Clydebank Community Link Lead Report

Introduction

About the report

This report presents the early findings of the Community Link Lead working on the [Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme](#) in Clydebank and builds on the initial quantitative data work carried out by the Clydebank Project Lead and Public Health Scotland's Local Information System Team to produce the Clydebank data profile.

The report reviews existing qualitative data and formal community engagement and gathers insights from conversations with local stakeholders to identify key priorities around place within the town. It adds local community perspectives to the programme's understanding of inequality, place and wellbeing in Clydebank and provides a sense check of the quantitative data findings for Clydebank.

Whilst outlining key findings in relation to the key inequalities identified, this report also details the processes the Community Link Lead undertook and provides further information on the key topics captured in this summary infographic available [here](#).

Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme

The Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme is a 3-year programme, running until December 2024, which is being delivered by Public Health Scotland and the Improvement Service jointly with local authorities and NHS local boards. The Programme has funding from The Health Foundation and Scottish Government.

The Programme is supporting seven Project Towns: Alloa, Ayr, Dunoon, Clydebank, Rutherglen, Fraserburgh and Dalkeith. Each Project Town has a Steering Group, made up of local authority and local health board representatives, to provide oversight and direction. In each Project Town there is a Project Lead and Community Link Lead.

The role of the Clydebank Community Link Lead is to facilitate connection between the community/third sector and the Programme, acting as a crucial bridge between being informed by data on health and wellbeing and a citizen focus on understanding the community's needs and aspirations.

The ambition of the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme is to improve Scotland's wellbeing and reduce inequalities through changing our collective approaches to the places where we live, work and play, enabling partnership-based, wide-ranging action at a local level, while addressing the health of our planet. The objective of the Programme is to deliver on these ambitions with a lens on [20 minute neighbourhoods](#) evidencing and addressing the health inequalities within Place, promoting the long-term strategies of prevention available and enabling people to make choices that improve their wellbeing. The work of the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme is anchored in using the [Place and Wellbeing Outcomes](#) to improve Scotland's wellbeing and reduce inequality. The

Programme aims to raise awareness of the outcomes and their use in achieving systems change.

Clydebank

Clydebank is the largest settlement area within West Dunbartonshire with 48% of the local authority's population. The Clydebank Locality defined by West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership is the area that quantitative data has been examined for and this has subsequently informed the focus for this report.

The eight Intermediate Zones included within the Clydebank Locality are shown in the map below.
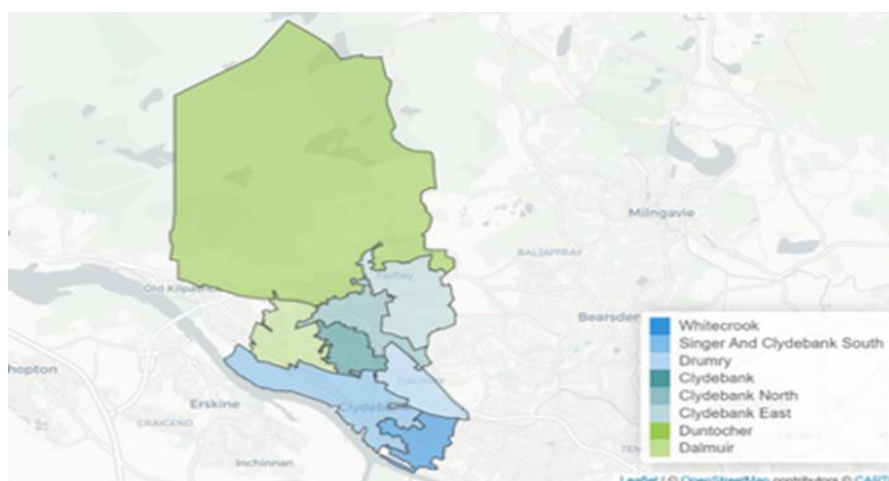
Inequalities identified from the quantitative data

Four key inequality areas were identified for the Clydebank data profile with our partners at Public Health Scotland's Local Intelligence System team from a range of data sources. These include:

- High levels of poverty and deprivation
- High levels of mental health issues (prescribed drugs for mental health and psychiatric hospital admissions)
- High levels of substance abuse (primarily alcohol)
- Early death

More information on this can be found in the Clydebank Profile Infographic

Community Link Lead Approach

Purpose

This report and accompanying [Qualitative infographic](#) aim to bring to life the above data. Taking a qualitative approach, we hope to understand Clydebank residents' experience of place.

The Community Link Leads were tasked with:

- Connecting with community organisations to understand the needs of the demographics most impacted by key inequalities to experience the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes.
- Undertaking a review of existing qualitative data to identify key priorities around place, for the demographic most impacted.
- Supporting ongoing qualitative and quantitative data gathering related to key inequalities to identify demographics most impacted.
- Connecting with community organisations to sense check this data.
- Promoting understanding of the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes amongst local organisations.

The narrative and experiential data gathered through this exercise has been valuable. It must be understood though that the Community Link Lead took an informal approach that prioritised building relationships with community stakeholders. This exercise does not constitute qualitative research, nor is it a piece of community consultation. It is hoped that this report may act as a starting point for teams taking a place-based approach to working in Clydebank to think about their communities' needs and assets. Further, more focussed, research, consultation or engagement would be necessary.

Methods

A variety of methods have been used to carry out this review including desk-based research, assessing local reports identified by local stakeholders, conversations with local people and groups, along with more formal place-based assessments and engagement processes.

- Desk-based research to identify previous local reports, formal engagement processes and consultations. (See Appendix 1)
- Following up and review on data and report recommendations from members of the Clydebank Steering Group, including West Dunbartonshire Communities Team and West Dunbartonshire Council Performance and Strategy Officer.
- Conversations with local groups and stakeholders to gather views, experiences and thoughts relating to the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes and the key inequalities identified for Clydebank.

- Smart Survey questionnaire with West Dunbartonshire Libraries to engage with their staff working in Clydebank and West Dunbartonshire Carer's Forum.
- Attendance and participation at key local networks and forums to develop an understanding on some of the recurring themes in local discussions.

Community Link Lead Feedback Process

Since January 2023, visits and meetings with a range of third sector organisations and statutory partners have taken place within Clydebank. Informal meetings with organisational management opened the opportunity to talk directly to their service users. Conversations with service users were less formal, relaxed and while question led, resulted in good qualitative information. These conversations were then typed up and sent back to the organisation to sense check. Identifying emerging themes began to appear and were discussed with the other project town teams. Initial engagement and follow up meetings are still underway.

Data Gaps

There was difficulty in gaining a response from some local anchor organisations, particularly those in recovery support and disability. Service re-design within West Dunbartonshire Council has seen a change in role profiles and areas of focus resulting in loss of data. Consultations have been focussed on the wider local authority area with a historically low response from Clydebank residents, resulting in negligible, qualitative information. Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) organisations within West Dunbartonshire have provided qualitative data on alcohol addiction and recovery (DACA)*, mental health support and impact (Stepping Stones). The Citizens' Panel online survey was revised this year by West Dunbartonshire Councils Equalities team to include a wider demographic of respondents within the local authority area. These results will be published in July 2023.

Emerging Themes

This section summarises recurring themes which have emerged through conversations undertaken with organisations and from local qualitative reports and surveys that had been actioned by both statutory and third sector organisations.

General

There were some general emerging themes that arose through conversations with key stakeholders and local community and third sector groups. These have been categorised into the following groups next to the relevant Shaping Places for Wellbeing Place and Wellbeing Outcome:

Decision Making and Collaboration (Stewardship: Influence and Control)

- There is need for joined up decision making.
- More collaboration between sectors is required.
- Improved communication is needed.
- There is a need for better use of evidence and research.
- Impact of service re-design at West Dunbartonshire Council needs to be addressed.

Community Empowerment (Stewardship: Influence and Control)
- Understanding and commitment to Community Empowerment in West Dunbartonshire amongst statutory partners is low.
- There is a need for more localised community engagement.
- More community involvement and participation is required in decision making.

Third Sector (Stewardship: Influence and Control)
- Third sector organisations overall do not feel valued or regarded as an equal partner by statutory partners.
- There are rising levels of apathy and disengagement amongst third sector and wider community.
- Tensions amongst sectors exist and appear to be growing.
- Communication and collaboration between the local Third Sector Interface and local third sector groups could be improved.

Needs and services (Resources: Services and Support, and Housing and Community Movement: Active Travel and Public Transport)
- In many of the services being provided locally, poverty, poor health, substance use (especially alcohol) are recurring themes.
- There is a need and demand for more localised service delivery.
- There is a need for improved connections across Clydebank.
- Concern exists over West Dunbartonshire Council budget cuts and reduced capacity.

General Themes Across All Project Towns

Community Link Leads discussed emerging themes from conversations with third sector and community organisations and across all seven project towns (Appendix 2) the following themes were identified from our conversations:

- Communities value joint working and partnership approaches
- Communities want strong communications between all stakeholders
- Collective decision making by all stakeholders will strengthen partnerships

Thematic Priority Exercise

Feedback from stakeholder discussions and survey often touched on more than one inequality group. The Clydebank team carried out a thematic priority exercise on all information captured so far. Key partners were identified who were engaged with in Clydebank and where they sat under the identified inequalities emerging for the quantitative data: Poverty and Deprivation, Mental Health, Alcohol Use and Early Death.

We identified which partners would be able to provide the most appropriate information through their support and identified where there was a lack of qualitative data on some of the identified key inequalities.

People

People are at the heart of the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes. This section captures the qualitative data that we collected through what we were hearing locally and the impacts of the health and wellbeing inequalities facing communities within Clydebank. Qualitative data was sense checked with those organisations providing the data.

Poverty: Emerging Themes and Issues

All service providers and groups contributing, all recognised that the causation of poverty is primarily out with local control and many suggested that it is a contributory factor to many issues within Clydebank, including food and fuel poverty, anomie, childhood poverty, long-term unemployment, alcohol use. Deprivation within Clydebank was also highlighted in discussions with some emphasising that this has been prevalent through generations.

The emerging themes relating to poverty have been categorised into the following:

Health and inequalities
- There is a recognised link between poverty and poor mental health
- This includes a link with despair and hopelessness and subsequently depression
- It impacts on access to healthy food and physical wellbeing
- It affects access to a wide range of activities

- Post Covid there is increased isolation linked with low income
- The importance of income maximisation is recognised as a way to address poverty
- The importance of employment is also recognised

Poverty and the symptoms have been exacerbated, as a result of:
- Impact of Covid
- Cost of living
- WDC (West Dunbartonshire Council) budget cuts
- Access to digital devices and Wi-Fi

Population groups
At this stage, the main population groups noted as being primarily affected include:
- Carers
- Children and young families
- People with disabilities
- Single men (18+)

Mental Health: Emerging Themes and Issues

- Strong connection with poverty (despair and hopelessness)
- Increase in need / demand for mental health support
- Covid related (bereavement, restricted services, continuing anxiety and risk)
- Wide ranging life pressures (family, caring, work, job insecurity, low pay)
- Importance of feeling safe (domestic violence, New Scots women)
- Reliance on prescribed medication and lack of knowledge on alternative treatments
- Connection between physical and mental wellbeing
- Frontline worker burnout
- Lack of understanding on mental wellbeing (stigma)
- Need for strong and connected communities

Substance/Alcohol Abuse: Emerging Themes and Issues

- Connection between poverty and alcohol
- Alcohol as a key factor in domestic violence
- Accessibility of alcohol in areas of deprivation is excessive
- Lack of positive pathways for ex-offenders
- Increased use of vapes in under 18s

Early Death: Emerging Themes and Issues

- Alcohol related early deaths
- Impact of early death on families due to substance use

- Suicide completion impact on families

Limitations of Emerging Themes

It is important to reiterate that the emerging themes reported on at this early stage have been identified through an informal approach that has prioritised building relationships with community stakeholders. This exercise does not constitute qualitative research, nor is it a piece of community consultation.

The full list of organisations and stakeholders spoken with at this stage (up until June 2023) is provided in Appendix 2. Importantly, there are other community groups and third sector organisations that have not yet had the time or the capacity to engage with the Clydebank Community Link Lead. Therefore, there will be additional themes to emerge and potentially differing views on a wide range of issues, in terms of both general themes and those specific to particular inequalities. These will be presented in future reports that will take a variety of formats as informed by the Clydebank Steering Group, local stakeholders and activity informed by Place and Wellbeing Assessment Recommendations.

Road Map for Moving Forward

Going forward, our future plans include reaching out to additional groups and re-engaging with groups who are interested in discussing the role of place in improving health and wellbeing within Clydebank.

In addition to gathering further input on both the general and identified inequalities, we will be looking in particular at a number of issues that follow on from Place and Wellbeing Assessments carried out to date in Clydebank and additional Assessments scheduled for the coming months. This will include a focus on:

- Open spaces
- Active travel
- Community health and wellbeing
- Clydebank Town Centre Development Framework Pipeline of Projects
- Safe Delivery & Improvement Group Strategy

The Clydebank Team are looking to prioritise taking forward recommendations from the Place and Wellbeing Assessments and how the Steering Group progress in actioning these.

At this stage it is anticipated that developing a series of additional infographics, reflective of the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Place and Wellbeing Outcomes, will further engage stakeholders in the shared learning and emerging themes from third sector participants within Clydebank. The Community Link Lead will deliver these infographics with a directed focus on key themes agreed by the Steering Group.

Additional Feedback based on Place and Wellbeing Outcomes

The Steering Group requested that the CLL Report (June 2023) be updated to include the 'What we heard from a range of communities, organisations and practitioners' section of the Clydebank Place and Wellbeing Outcome Briefings.

These have been extracted and can be viewed from pages 12-39. Alternatively, the full suite of briefings can be read in full below:

Movement
- Active Travel: Impact on Clydebank's Community Briefing
- Public Transport: Impact on Clydebank's Community Briefing
- Traffic and Parking: Impact on Clydebank's Community Briefing

Spaces
- Streets and Spaces: Impact on Clydebank's Community Briefing
- Natural Spaces: Impact of Clydebank's Community Briefing
- Play and Recreation: Impact of Clydebank's Community Briefing

Resources
- Services and Support: Impact on Clydebank's Community Briefing
- Work and Economy: Impact on Clydebank's Community Briefing
- Housing and Community: Impact on Clydebank's Community Briefing

Civic
- Identity and Belonging: Impact on Clydebank's Community Briefing
- Feeling Safe: Impact on Clydebank's Community Briefing

Stewardship
- Care and Maintenance: Impact on Clydebank's Community Briefing
- Influence and Control: Impact on Clydebank's Community Briefing

Movement - Active Travel

Getting around Clydebank

There's a disconnect between much of Clydebank and the town centre, with many of the streets and spaces not being well connected or adequately signposted.

With high levels of poverty and low car ownership, much of Clydebank's population is dependent on public transport, especially buses.

The availability of public transport has an impact on active travel, and the availability of active travel has an impact on the use of public transport.

For people on low incomes, active travel and affordable public transport provide access to essential services and support, plus employment, training and volunteering opportunities.

> *"There's an increase in people not having enough money to buy food or pay bills, so money for travel isn't even a consideration. Lots of people now miss out on important support and services as they can't afford to get to them and that's just how it is." (Local charity worker)*

Active travel to work and school

There is a low uptake of 'cycle to work' schemes supported by employers. Based on local conversations, suggested reasons for this include:

- concerns about safety and the lack of segregated cycle lanes
- the cost of bikes and safety equipment being a barrier
- employees not living locally and distance from home to work being too far to cycle
- a lack of secure and safe parking for bikes

Active travel engagement and training within schools is valued but has been inconsistent largely due to capacity and budget issues.

Lack of time was often mentioned as a reason for not walking to work or school, with people referring to pressures of work and family and caring responsibilities.

Safety concerns for cycling were also highlighted. The lack of safe routes and absence of segregated cycle lanes from many parts of Clydebank is a concern.

> *"I've had a couple of near misses from cars, the Council need to build segregated cycle lanes." (Live Well Forum member)*

> *"My friend walks my children to school and back on her days off. It has been great as the kids enjoy the walk and I save time and petrol." (West Dunbartonshire Council employee)*

Knowledge and confidence around active travel

A lack of knowledge on safe routes is affecting people's confidence on where they can safely walk or wheel about their local area.

In response to this and recognising the physical and mental health benefits of walking, there's been a growth in local walking groups and resources available to a range of people with different needs within the community.

Poorly maintained pathways, uncertainty about the state of paths and lack of lighting was also highlighted as discouraging active travel, particularly for older people, people using wheelchairs & mobility aids and people with young children.

> *"Our group walks for leisure and on the way, it builds confidence and skills as they plan their route. It's a gentle opportunity to get these vulnerable adults talking, sharing stories and helping each other out." (Walking Group for vulnerable adults facilitator)*

> *"Having the walking group go on a 'safe route' for me has been great as I wouldn't feel confident on my scooter on paths I'm not sure about". (Live Well Forum member)*

Collaboration and communication on active travel

From speaking with local stakeholders, we learned about a wide range of initiatives, activities and campaigns supporting active travel in Clydebank and beyond in West Dunbartonshire. This includes walking groups, access to bikes, employer cycle to work schemes, Operation Close Pass campaign and websites with useful information.

However, there's a lack of awareness of what's available amongst local people. It was suggested that improved communication between organisations and more awareness raising with the general public is needed.

> *"There's lots of interest amongst local partners to collaborate and increase rates of active travel by bringing together existing and new developments, whilst acknowledging that other key partners have an important role to play in improving local active travel infrastructure." (Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme Clydebank Project Lead)*

Movement – Public Transport

Dependence on public transport

A third of Scotland's households don't own or have access to a car. This increases to half of households in deprived areas. With high levels of poverty and deprivation across Clydebank, much of the population is dependent on public transport, especially buses.

83% of Clydebank's population live in areas that are well served by bus accessibility (availability and frequency of bus service) and are above the national average (2019). The population identified as being less well served by bus accessibility include those living in parts of Whitecrook, Drumry, Dalmuir, Radnor Park & Duntocher.

Cost as a barrier to use

Affordable public transport is crucial for people on low incomes to access essential services and employment. However, for people on the lowest incomes, the cost of public transport is no longer affordable, with some people now unable to travel within or out with Clydebank to access to services and support.

> *"People in Clydebank are much less likely to have access to a car. Along with affordability, other aspects of public transport, such as fares and trying to juggle work, childcare, etc, it puts a lot of stress onto parents." (Community Group Volunteer)*

The cost of both bus and rail fares, especially all-day tickets, are considered too expensive and unaffordable for people on low incomes. There's also concern that public transport doesn't provide value for money and that fares are often unfair.

> *"We have appointment cancellations due to patients being unable to walk to the Clydebank Health and Care Centre or afford a bus fare." (GP based in Clydebank)*

> *"Why is fare on a bus from Mountblow to Whitecrook, the same as a fare from Mountblow into Glasgow City Centre?" (Local group member)*

Concessionary fare and travel discount schemes are welcomed and recognised as crucial for people on low incomes to access public transport. Increasing awareness of eligibility and the advantages of these schemes is considered vital to increase uptake. However, concerns remain for people on low incomes not eligible for concessionary travel benefits.

> *"There is a large reliability on buses for those with concessionary fares. It is simply too expensive to travel without concessionary passes for those on pensions or unable to work." (Disability Support Worker)*

> *"My son uses his free concession card all the time to get to college, work and town. It has saved me a fortune in bus fares!" (Womens' Group member)*

Satisfaction with public transport

Although 77% of Adults in West Dunbartonshire are very or fairly satisfied with public transport in 2019, concerns around safety and connectivity were raised in local conversations.

Safety concerns

- Poor maintenance of pathways and streetlighting can make a short journey to or from a bus stop unsafe for people with mobility issues.
- Lack of signage from bus stops to key locations can contribute to a lack of confidence.
- Women feeling unsafe walking home from bus stops, especially at night.
- Feeling unsafe on public transport when there is anti-social behaviour.
- Accessibility of buses for people with mobility issues.

It is recognised that public transport may not be suitable for people with health and mobility issues. Local transport schemes exist to address this issue and enable people to access health services and other activities.

> *"When I got off the bus, I thought it was the new Clydebank Health Centre I was walking towards, but it was actually a sheltered housing complex. I felt foolish and confused." (Healthy Pathways Group member)*

> *"I feel unsafe on public transport sometimes because there are people who are drunk and unpredictable." (Group participant, female)*

Connectivity concerns

- Timetabling of bus services out with regular hours not meeting local employment needs.
- Infrequency of some route services resulting in long journey times for short distances.
- Lack of knowledge of public transport availability, particularly for bus connections.
- Lack of connectivity between public transport and active travel opportunities.

Current public transport provision doesn't accommodate everyone's employment needs, particularly early morning and late night. This is further complicated for people in employment with family and caring responsibilities, e.g. dropping off & picking up school children. This can result in having to find alternative means of transport that incurs additional, often unaffordable, costs to simply balance employment and family responsibilities.

> *"I had to pay for driving lessons and then for a car. It's expensive but it's the only way that I can manage to get to work on time.' (Women's Group member)*

Movement – Traffic and Parking

Traffic and traffic speeds

Speeding is a concern within Clydebank neighbourhoods. People within communities would like to see traffic monitoring (CCTV) and the installation of traffic calming measures, e.g. chicanes, road humps and reduced speed limits.

There are concerns that drivers disregard signage within Safe School areas (20mph speed limit) and that traffic congestion on local roads is often due the large number of 'drop offs' within school zones.

An increase in Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) due to the expanding online retail market is felt to have impacted on traffic within local neighbourhoods. There is concern that the 'time sensitive drop' pressure on delivery drivers results in speeding and illegal parking that causes obstruction to pedestrians and other road users. There are concerns that LGV delivery drivers do not have the same controls as other 'professional drivers' and that this impacts on their driving hours and competency.

> *'Glasgow are trialing banning cars from schools, maybe West Dunbartonshire Council should look at that as well, maybe save a kids life.' (Clydebank Parent)*

Impact near schools

Concern was expressed in relation to the volume of traffic and dangerous / inconsiderate parking around schools and early years centres in Clydebank which impacts on children and young people, including:

- Congestion, plus dangerous and inconsiderate parking causing poor visibility and increasing the likelihood of traffic accidents.
- The impact of air pollution on children's health, especially from engine idling.
- Safety concerns discourage parents from allowing their children to engage in active travel to school.
- Parents not engaging with traffic enforcement measures at schools reduces the effectiveness of road safety education messages for children and young people.

The work of West Dunbartonshire Council targeting local education hubs with awareness raising campaigns about air pollution caused by engine idling and implementing targeted, traffic calming solutions is valued by local people who are aware of it.

Car parking and priorities

There is no shortage of free parking within Clydebank town centre. Those with access to a car value the free parking opportunity, especially near transport hubs, as it enables them to access public transport to Glasgow city centre and other popular recreational and retail

destinations. However, this offers no financial benefit for people from households without access to a car, often on much lower incomes.

Poor maintenance of some car parks in the town centre was highlighted, and this was recognised as an important issue for people with a disability or limited mobility. Local discussions about travel to the Clydebank Health and Care Centre highlighted a demand for more disabled parking at this location and general support for parking to be prioritised for those with no other option.

The lack of maintenance and use of derelict land for car parking in the town centre was also considered to have an impact on feelings of safety at key locations, including travel hubs.

Reference was also made to parking issues concentrated within specific neighbourhoods, where housing was built at time of much lower car ownership. As a result of growing car ownership, the traffic management design no longer prevents the dominance of car parking within these neighbourhoods. This contributes to safety concerns for road users and pedestrians and local tensions, including:

- Congestion and parking cause poor visibility which contributes to older adults feeling less confident and parents being concerned for their children's safety around roads.
- Deterioration of central reservation greenspace due to illegal parking.
- Some residents with driveways park on the street contributing to reduced on street parking availability and tension with neighbours.
- Car school drop offs causing further congestion and inconvenience for people living in streets close to schools.

'The Clyde Shopping Centre multi-storey is in really poor repair. I don't feel safe using the lift or back stairwells. It looks neglected.' (Wellbeing Group member)

Parking enforcement

The need for parking enforcement was highlighted as an issue in local conversations, with both safety concerns and consideration for others being highlighted. It is felt that there is currently a lack of parking enforcement and uncertainty on who is responsible for parking enforcement.

> *'Pavement sandwich boards and illegal parking on the pavement have seen canes been caught in car undercarriages. There needs to be stronger local awareness to challenges on pavements for people with visual impairments.'* **(Visual impairment charity volunteer)**

Reference was made to dangerous and inconsiderate parking, including:

- Pavement parking presents barriers and dangers to pedestrians, especially wheelchair users, people with mobility issues and visual impairments, and people with prams.
- Parking in designated bays for blue badge holders impacts on people with mobility and health issues accessing support and services.

- Parking in taxi ranks impacts on those with no access to a car seeking to access a taxi and a loss of income for professional drivers.

Spaces – Streets and Spaces

Disconnect between town centre and much of Clydebank

A sense of disconnect between the town centre and much of Clydebank emerged in local discussions. This is considered to have an impact upon people's ability to access services and activities. However, it's unclear whether this is a longstanding issue or has emerged more recently with the development of Queens Quay and the opening of Clydebank Health and Care Centre, Clydebank Leisure Centre and the West of Scotland College campus.

Some of the factors cited as barriers include the cost of public transport to reach the town centre and the lack of well-designed and maintained routes from other parts of Clydebank that could encourage people to access the town centre by active travel.

> *"More and more people are cut off from the town (centre) because they can't afford to get there, never mind have anything to spend if they did." (Local volunteer)*

Town centre appearance

Conversations with groups generally indicated concern about the 'unattractiveness' of the town centre, with a worry that this drives the perception of Clydebank as a 'poor community' and encourages anti-social behaviour.

Whilst the town centre is recognised as a destination for numerous retail, leisure, health and support services, local conversations suggest that the appearance of the town centre discourages use and is a barrier to social interaction taking place amongst local people.

Suggestions on how the appearance of the town centre could be improved included:

- Maintenance of footpaths and pavements.
- Clearer signposting.
- Improved lighting.
- Addressing littering and dog fouling.
- Incorporating green space / gardens.
- Re-purposing derelict land for uses other than car parking.

Civic spaces

Local groups and organisations noted the potential for civic spaces within Clydebank to play an important role in encouraging social interaction and providing a positive sense of 'identity and belonging' amongst local people.

The civic spaces within the town centre are not currently viewed as attractive or appealing to use. However, groups indicated consideration of the following could change this:

- Include the opportunity to interact with heritage information to encourage local people to come to civic spaces and interact with others.
- Incorporate green spaces / gardens within them, providing a natural space to enjoy and connect with others.

- Regular maintenance and upkeep.
- Ensure civic spaces are affordable for hire to be used for activities such as concerts and marketplaces.

"We need to find a way to encourage local groups and organisations to make use of the town's civic spaces and for local people to be involved in designing and maintaining them, so they can develop a feeling of ownership and responsibility for the town centre." **(Local Charity worker)**

Spaces – Natural Spaces

Wealth of diverse natural spaces

A recognition of the wealth of diverse natural spaces across Clydebank emerged in local discussions, especially relating to parks and paths alongside both green and blue spaces.

Accompanying this was a common understanding that spending time outdoors in natural spaces is generally good for physical and mental wellbeing.

It was suggested that awareness of this grew during the pandemic and since then a notable increase in people participating in outdoor activities had been observed, particularly with walking groups.

Reference was made to recent improvements including the development of parks, gardens and food growing spaces which has further encouraged local people to access these natural spaces. Faifley Secret Garden and Growing Beardmore were some of the examples.

However, it was also recognised that the benefits of these developments haven't been experienced equally across all parts of Clydebank.

Some disappointment was also expressed in relation to recent developments and proposals that haven't met the aspirations of the community.

Reference was made to the accessibility and attractiveness of the canal and riverside noting that there has been no provision of water-based events and activities or amenities to support this.

> *"During covid and in 'bubbles' I would meet my sister for regular walks which got us out and into the park for a catch up. This experience has brought us closer together and find new walks we didn't know about." (Local Group member)*

> *"We could be doing so much with the canal if it was clean and maintained. You couldn't even get a canal boat through the town centre cause of all the shopping trollies dumped there." (Local shop owner)*

Barriers to accessing natural spaces

Whilst it was acknowledged that there appears to be an increase in people accessing natural spaces, reference was also made to a range of issues considered as potential barriers to access for some local people, including:

- People in some parts of Clydebank do not live within walking distance of good quality natural spaces and the cost of public transport may prevent people on low incomes accessing spaces.
- A lack of awareness about activities available or provided within natural spaces.
- A lack of signage for routes in suitable local natural spaces.
- A lack of segregated cycle lanes on routes to natural spaces discourages active travel by bike.

- Accessibility issues within natural spaces and pathways for people with limited mobility.
- Lack of well-maintained routes to natural spaces and pathways.
- Fear around anti-social behaviour in parks and quieter natural spaces.
- Concerns relating to water safety.

"Jaw Reservoir is a beautiful natural space that leads to great hiking trails, but it's a right muddy trek to reach. It's popular with young ones in the warmer weather and that can be off-putting, especially if they've had a drink and getting carried away."
(Local Group member)

Natural space for mental wellbeing

Many service providers noted concerns relating to the growth in mental health issues observed in local communities, that's associated with increasing levels of poverty. Encouraging and facilitating access to natural spaces was recognised as a useful way to address this.
Reference was made to a range of examples where accessing natural space is a vital part of activities aimed at generally maintaining mental health and wellbeing, supporting people experiencing mental health issues and those in recovery. This ranged from volunteering in outdoor maintenance activities to walking groups for people in recovery to outdoor photography clubs.

The multiple benefits of these types of activity were generally recognised as providing opportunities to connect with other people, be physically active, learn new skills, give to others and be present in the moment.

"Walking in nature helps us create more opportunities to share knowledge of what we spot and if we're not too sure we can look through our connecting with nature resources." (Group facilitator)

Community involvement and collaboration

A wide range of community groups and organisations outlined their involvement or interest in making use of or developing good quality natural spaces. The most frequently referred to activities in Clydebank and wider West Dunbartonshire included:

- Community food growing
- Community gardens
- Outdoor and social activities
- Litter picking
- Volunteering
- Social interaction
- Learning
- Community action

In most instances, a combination of activities were taking places with the aim of addressing several key issues, often tackling loneliness, encouraging physical activity and improving the local neighbourhood. Other than litter picking, very little maintenance work involving communities is taking place.

Some groups noted an interest in developing or maintaining natural spaces, but mentioned the following concerns that discouraged them:

- Lack of confidence and / or capacity to take on responsibility for spaces on a long-term basis.
- Lack of available support to develop their capacity and ensure sustainability.
- This could contribute to a reduction in council services and replacement of paid workers.

In contrast, successful activity around community food growing was referenced by numerous groups. Collaborative working was recognised as one the key factors contributing to success in this area with the development of Growing West Dunbartonshire being a strong element of this.

Concern was expressed that without the commitment to this partnership between local community groups and statutory partners that the hard work undertaken to establish and develop community growing, especially food growing will be lost and opportunities for local people to access these activities will decline.

> *"We desperately need a local partner or new organisation to champion Growing West Dunbartonshire and lead the way. With The Leamy Foundation no longer operating we're missing a driving force for community growing."* **(Community garden volunteer)**

Spaces – Play and Recreation

Local play and recreation activities

It was generally noted that there are good statutory leisure facilities available locally, including Clydebank Leisure Centre and a range of West Dunbartonshire Council run parks, pitches and community venues. Reference was also made to the range of play and recreational activities provided by third sector and community groups, including sports, cultural and creative activities for both adults and children.

> *"I'm tired in the evenings, but coming to sing with others on a Thursday night really makes me happy." (Community Choir member)*

The provision of play opportunities for children during school holidays was particularly valued. Parents welcome Active Schools play events, including activities they can participate in alongside their children, noting the physical and mental health benefits of this.

It was highlighted that local communities would welcome more play opportunities, particularly for families and young people. It was also noted that the town centre would benefit from having a wider range of recreational activities for young people. It was suggested that this could address current issues relating to anti-social behaviour amongst young people.

Several groups also noted that families and children with Autism spectrum disorder would welcome the opportunity of 'quiet' play spaces, out with a noisy environment.

> *"Having a playscheme here this summer has been so good for my family and myself. I had worried about how I was going to be able to pay for days out and activities during the school holidays." (Parent at local group)*

Cost is a barrier to play and recreation

Whilst people were positive about a range of facilities, there was concern that the cost of accessing play and recreation opportunities is a barrier for many individuals and families. In addition to the cost of classes or activities, the cost of the kit and equipment for some activities and the cost of travel to facilities based at Queens Quay was also highlighted as a barrier. This was of particular concern for families with more than one child, especially across a range of ages.

It was recognised that many people on low incomes cannot afford public transport to access Queens Quay and town centre play and recreation activities. The importance of local community facilities was therefore highlighted as essential to ensure that opportunities for play and recreation are both accessible and affordable for individuals and families on low incomes.

"I would love to be able to send my son to Mini Kickers, but I cannot afford the fees. There's a cost too for kit, boots and bus fares for myself to get him there." (Parent at local group)

Outdoor play and recreation

Feedback from local groups indicated that the health benefits of participating in play and recreation outdoors, particularly in natural spaces, is well understood amongst the local community. It was suggested that awareness of this grew during the Covid lockdowns, with West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust reporting a 62% increase in outdoor recreation activities in 2021/22.

It was fed back that local people who actively take their families to parks and playgrounds, also enjoy the adult interaction opportunities. Families have also welcomed the use of natural play and traditional play equipment within park re-developments and value affordable outdoor events throughout the seasons. The popularity of local events amongst families was frequently mentioned and were considered as inclusive to all, including being accessible to people on low incomes, with free, pay as you can afford or very low-cost entry and food. As the events are held within local communities, there is no need for transport costs.

Local groups noted the success of such events was largely due to local stakeholders working together to make this happen, also recognising the involvement of the local community through volunteering.

While these events have a positive impact on those who attend them, in community conversations there was an acknowledgement that these opportunities are not always known about. It was felt that more joined up communications to reach a wider audience would be beneficial.

Safety concerns

Concerns expressed about play and recreation tended to focus on safety issues, including:

- Damage to play equipment and seating areas in local parks contributes to people not feeling safe and discourages use.
- Anti-social behaviour in local parks can also contribute to people feeling unsafe, with parents in particular discouraging their children from using the space.
- Potential danger to children when traffic and parking is next to designated play spaces.
- Reduction in grass cutting and perception of reduced maintenance of pitches and public grass areas contributing to feelings of a space not being cared for and potentially not being safe.

Resources – Services and Support

Increased service demand

A recurring theme in local conversations was an observed increase in demand for services, particularly those relating to poverty and mental health issues. Examples of service demand relating to poverty included:

- Emergency food, fuel vouchers, clothing, toiletries and baby equipment.
- Support during school holidays for food and activities.
- Welfare and benefits advice.

Support providers highlighted seeing an increase in demand from working families and single men of all ages. They also noted experiencing a decrease in donations levels, which they attributed to the impact of cost of living on the local population.

Support providers also highlighted that an increasing number of the people accessing their services are needing support with their mental health, with much of this relating to anxiety arising as a result of not being able to afford food and fuel.

They also expressed concerns about the potential of growing despair and hopelessness resulting in more depression.

Mental health support providers noted seeing an increase in the demand for one to one counselling, bereavement and loss support services.

There is concern amongst local organisations that these increases in demand are playing a key part in frontline worker burnout, as they are unable to meet the need and demands for services and support from the community.

> *"I am more frequently assisting older people with evidence for pensions or DLA and PIP evidencing. Also, people are regularly needing assistance with Council Tax and Housing Benefit."* (Library Assistant)

Service location and delivery approach

The location of services within the town centre was frequently referred to as a barrier to access, with the following points highlighted:

- Cost of transport to town centre to access primary health care, employability support and welfare rights / benefit support.
- Poor public and active travel routes to town centre from many parts of Clydebank.
- Accessibility issues.

Whilst the rationale for locating services within the town centre to reduce the cost of service provision was generally understood, it was widely recognised that this is a barrier which adds further pressure to people experiencing poverty and those with mobility issues.

The provision of activities and services within local neighbourhoods was welcomed, however it was recognised that this is not consistent across all areas and is largely dependent on community and third sector activity and whether local authority run community facilities are fit for purpose. It was noted that this contributes to gaps in the provision of free access to leisure opportunities.

Local conversations also highlighted concerns regarding the shift in delivering services over the phone or online rather than in-person. The reduction in face-to-face appointment provision was understood to be part of cutting costs, however concerns were expressed about this for particular population groups:

- People with limited digital skills and confidence, including older people.
- Device and broadband affordability amongst people experiencing poverty.
- People experiencing mental health issues.

> *"(We) need a better understanding of cultural needs and mental health, which will impact on access to services."* (World Health Café participant)

Communication and collaboration

The need to use a range of communication methods across all sectors and groups was referred to in local conversations. The need to share and signpost resources in order to provide more robust services also emerged as a theme. Organisations expressed frustration at the lack of communication on new or existing services and resources, as this results in missed opportunities to signpost people in need. Reference was made to the value of regular networking forums that provide space for discussion, collaboration and information sharing opportunities facilitated by West Dunbartonshire CVS.

The benefits of organisations working together to offer a range of support was acknowledged, particularly where this related to supporting families, including those experiencing issues relating to substance use and recovery. It was also highlighted that community engagement and the involvement of people with lived experience is essential in developing services that will meet the needs and priorities of local people.

> *"Participants want to see targeted campaigns using appropriate, clear language, offering translated materials, promoting assets already out there and providing education at school. Essentially, we should be providing clear service information, so people don't need to search for it."* (World Café Report 2023, West Dunbartonshire Health Social Care Partnership)

Resources – Work and Economy

Location of work opportunities and importance of transport

Based on local conversations, there appears to be a common view that the majority of employment opportunities in Clydebank are located in and around the town centre and that many of these are low paid posts. Recognising this, the need for affordable transport connections for people living in areas out with the town centre is considered essential, especially given the high levels of poverty across much of Clydebank.

The cost of public transport and / or running a car was highlighted as a barrier for people accessing work and employment related support.

It was also suggested that low pay levels and the limited number of professional posts available locally for those with qualifications, results in people seeking employment opportunities out with Clydebank, often in neighbouring local authorities.

Quality of work and impact on health

Local groups and organisations highlighted observing an increase in mental health issues within the community, noting poverty as a key contributory factor, with this also being visible for people in employment.

Low quality work was generally considered to be a contributory factor, particularly in relation low pay, with the following highlighted:

- The need to work in multiple jobs to cover living costs.
- Being unable to reduce working hours to access training or education opportunities.
- An increase of in-work poverty.

Other aspects of employment related pressures were highlighted as having an impact on people's mental wellbeing:

- Job insecurity.
- Poor pay and conditions.
- Burnout for frontline workers.
- Balancing family/care responsibilities.
- Decline in work life balance.

"I see so many women absolutely worn out, juggling multiple jobs along with all their other commitments, just to get by." (Local Charity Worker)

Employment related support

In local discussions, frequent reference was made to the range of support available from West Dunbartonshire Council's Working4U service and local third sector organisations for

employability, welfare advice and broader services that enables people to prepare for accessing work, securing a job and remaining in employment.

The value of this support was widely noted and there was recognition that groups and organisations who have an established relationship with different population groups are often in a stronger position to provide employment related support to particular target groups. The importance of lived experience and knowledge of relevant issues was considered a key factor in providing support to a range of population groups including: people with long-term health conditions, people with disabilities, families with care responsibilities and people in recovery, amongst others.

Concern was expressed about previous and potential cuts to employability services despite the apparent growing demand. There was disappointment amongst some groups that Working4U support is no longer available from Clydebank town centre. However, it was suggested that with the cost of transport to the town centre being a barrier for many, that there is a growing need for support to be delivered within local neighbourhoods, especially in areas with high levels of unemployment and poverty.

Support to engage in volunteering opportunities was considered an important element of employment, recognising its value in overcoming social isolation, encouraging connections, providing a sense of purpose and feeling valued and ultimately improving mental wellbeing. This was noted by some groups as being a particularly important part of employability support for people in recovery.

> *"Better access to employment. Rather than just being proud of our history in Clydebank we need something to look ahead to." (Community survey respondent)*

Looking to the future

Despite concern about low levels of investment in the town centre, reference was made to potential opportunities worth exploring to develop a local economy that doesn't rely entirely on retail. This included recreation, tourism, the green economy and making use of local green and blue space, supporting local entrepreneurship, with involvement of the local community and third sector.

Resources – Housing and Community

Impact of poverty

The impact of poverty was a recurring theme in local conversations, with this playing an important role in relation to housing affordability. It was recognised that there is a reliance on social housing in Clydebank and that there is a growing demand for housing from the local authority and housing associations.

It was noted that private rents are having a negative impact on people's finances, despite West Dunbartonshire Council's scheme to support people to save a private rent deposit. It was also highlighted that buying a house is out with most people's ability.
Fuel poverty was recognised as a growing issue of concern and the importance of local organisations working together to address this and wider poverty issues.

Partnership working and community involvement

Reference was made to the positive way that social housing providers engage with local groups and organisations in seeking to address the needs identified amongst residents and local communities. Similarly, the involvement of local people, including Tenants and Residents Associations and the Housing Revenue Account was valued in identifying and addressing local issues.

The benefits of this were recognised in relation to a range of activities, including:

- Benefits and welfare advice for income maximisation.
- Access to emergency and affordable food.
- Improvements to housing, communal areas, parks and community spaces.
- Adult learning opportunities.
- Support for different population groups, such as gender-based support and addressing issues including recovery and bereavement.
- Affordable opportunities for exercise and physical activity.
- Social events and opportunities to connect with others.
- Addressing anti-social behaviour and contributing to communities feeling safer.

Disappointment was expressed that West Dunbartonshire Council housing support is no longer available from the town centre. Concerns were voiced by some regarding the potential barriers to accessing housing or homelessness support for people without access to devices or the necessary skills to digitally access support.

> *"With an aging population and predicted increase in dementia, we need to be thinking right now about the associated housing requirements if we are going to successfully enable people to live in their own communities for longer. A key part of this is ensuring that our local communities are dementia friendly and the necessary support is in place."* **Local charity worker.**

Further considerations

A range of stakeholders raised questions about potential issues relating to new housing developments planned for the town centre and other areas of Clydebank, including:

- Location and accessibility to employment, transport and services.
- Affordability issues.
- The need for a mix of tenure.
- Viability for housebuilders in delivering private housing.

Frontline workers from a range of organisations highlighted the need for consideration of particular housing needs for different population groups (e.g. older people and people with a disability), recognising the impact that people's homes can have on their health.

The importance of early planning to enable older people to remain in their own home and community as they age was highlighted. This was also referenced in relation to the anticipated increase in dementia amongst older people across West Dunbartonshire.

Civic – Identity and Belonging

History and culture

Clydebank having a strong sense of identity was often referred to in local discussions, with many suggesting this stems from the town's industrial history and identity. Whilst there's widespread recognition that many people have a pride in Clydebank's history, reference was also made to a sense of loss and sadness associated with deindustrialization and the negative impact of this on the local area.

It was acknowledged that a visual reminder of the sense of pride and identity is provided by the Titan Crane, River Clyde, some original town centre buildings and new buildings reflecting the importance of shipbuilding and the town's industrial past.

However, local groups and organisations highlighted that whilst there's much to recognise and acknowledge, these landmarks are accompanied by a run down town centre, lack of employment opportunities and high levels of poverty. They suggest this undermines the sense of pride and provides a constant reminder to what has been lost and a growing sense of despair.

The importance of looking forward to opportunities for Clydebank was highlighted to ensure that the town's industrial past and associated pride can be celebrated alongside hope and future opportunities for local people to positively interact with both the town centre and one another.

> *"Anger and sadness takes the shine off any remaining pride, especially for the older generation who see very little hope or local opportunities for future generations."* **(Local group member)**

Connecting to support and sharing information with others

It was also suggested in local conversations that it is local people or 'Bankies' that are at the core of a strong and positive sense of identity and belonging, with this often extending to people originating from Clydebank but no longer living there.

Reference was made to both local groups and online communities within Clydebank, actively connecting to support one another as members of the Clydebank community. Sharing information on employment, transport, service provision and housing is a key part of this, as is sharing stories and photos on Clydebank's history and memories of growing up.

The local Clydesider magazine was often referenced as a great example of a local third sector organisation encouraging sharing and promoting positive local stories and information that encourages others to connect with one another.

"People are aware of how tough it is just now and don't want to see others miss out. If they can help someone else by passing on an all day bus ticket, sharing a job ad or returning an important lost item, they will." **(Local charity worker)**

Volunteering and the third sector

It was widely recognised that connected communities is an important part of 'identity and belonging', with the local third sector having a particularly important role to play in this. In addition to providing activities and services that bring people together, often tackling loneliness, the third sector has an important role in supporting volunteers.

Local groups highlighted that volunteering provides a sense of belonging and purpose for many individuals, with it helping to make connections with people in the group and the local community.

"Until I started volunteering, to be honest, I felt largely invisible. It's so easy to go through life just getting by, not really connecting or participating. But volunteering changed that for me. It took a while and a lot of support but I now feel I am not just part of my community again but contributing to my community for the first time." **(Local volunteer)**

Welcoming people to Clydebank

There was recognition that it is also important to consider how people settling in the area can develop a sense of belonging to their local community. In particular, reference was made to Syrian resettlement and the efforts from West Dunbartonshire Council's Resettlement Team and local community groups such as Moments of Freedom to establish a sense of belonging for New Scots.

"It's important to have safe, welcoming community spaces where people can go to connect with each other and the wider community. Sense of belonging is a huge part of community integration – and it needs to be supported and resourced." **(Moments of Freedom Group)**

Civic – Feeling Safe

Different experiences of feeling safe

Local conversations highlighted that across Clydebank, experiences of feeling safe and perceptions of safety varies amongst different population groups. Reference was made to people living in deprived areas, women, people with physical disabilities and New Scots feeling less safe than other population groups, with a range of factors contributing to this.

Feeling safe at home

Two factors referred to by local organisations as to why people may not feel safe in their own home, include:

- Neighbours' anti-social behaviour was noted as an issue in areas with high levels of deprivation. New Scots were one of the population groups that made reference to this impacting upon their feelings of safety at home.
- Domestic violence was reported as a key factor impacting women's safety and feelings of safety at home organisations also making reference to the concerning high rate of domestic violence across West Dunbartonshire and Clydebank.

Substance use, particularly alcohol, was highlighted in local conversations, as being perceived to be a contributory element anti-social behaviour and domestic violence.

Feeling safe in the community

Various factors were frequently referred to by local groups as contributing towards people not feeling safe both within and moving around their local community, including:

- Uncared for and poorly maintained spaces.
- Poorly maintained pathways.
- Narrow pavements or those blocked by parked cars.
- Routes with inadequate lighting when it's dark.
- Routes with busy and high-speed traffic.
- Anti-social behaviour in public spaces and on public transport.
- A lack of CCTV or natural surveillance.

In addition to poorly maintained spaces contributing to perceptions of places feeling unsafe, there was concern that this creates a risk for people with disabilities and mobility issues. Inaccessible, poorly maintained or obstructed pathways highlight a barrier to people with physical disabilities or limited mobility ability to move around the local community independently.

It was also suggested that this will impact some older people's ability to remain independent and living in their own home as they age.

It emerged from local discussions that women in particular had safety concerns about routes and spaces without adequate lighting at night or a lack of CCTV or natural surveillance from housing.

Anti-social behaviour was also highlighted as a key factor contributing towards people feeling unsafe within the community. Again, reference was often made to the use of alcohol being a contributory factor.

In recognition of the factors and population groups identified in local discussions, the need to consider 'feeling safe' from a human rights and equalities perspective and the Public Sector Equality Duty was highlighted by key stakeholders. This was considered as essential to ensure these issues are addressed for both existing and emerging communities within Clydebank and wider West Dunbartonshire.

Impact on mental health and wellbeing

Local groups and service providers acknowledged the negative impact of not feeling safe on mental wellbeing. They noted that when people feel unsafe within their local community, this discourages them from interacting with others, engaging in outdoor activities and accessing services that could be beneficial for their health and wellbeing.

Representatives from local groups involved in delivering services to alleviate the impact of poverty also highlighted that experiencing poverty contributes to people feeling unsafe. It was highlighted that being unable to afford food and other basic necessities places a huge pressure on individuals, with this contributing to more people experiencing anxiety and depression.

Preventing anti-social behaviour

The role of substance use, particularly alcohol, emerged in many of the discussions in relation to anti-social behaviour. Several organisations made reference to the need to provide activities for young people to provide opportunities for them to engage in positive activities and discourage them substance use and anti-social behaviour. A range of groups and service providers welcomed the introduction of Planet Youth Scotland activity in Clydebank and recognised the value of this preventative approach in providing positive alternatives for young people and contributing towards creating safer local communities.

Importance collaboration and community involvement

There was recognition amongst local groups and organisations of several initiatives to address various factors that impact upon feelings of safety, including:

- Spring Clean Up initiative that provided free skips and an opportunity for the community involvement.
- West Dunbartonshire Council's Neighbourhood Services work with local housing associations) to address anti-social behaviour.
- Work between Police Scotland and partners to tackle anti-social behaviour on public transport.

- Planet Youth and other diversionary activities for young people to discourage substance use and anti-social behaviour.

However, it was generally suggested that more local action is required to increase feelings of safety amongst local people. It was also highlighted that no one service area or organisation can address all of these issues and that partnership working is crucial to ensure that people feel safe both at home and in the community. With recognition of limited resources, collaboration and pooling resources together is considered essential.

Several statutory partners made reference to the importance involving local communities and of increasing community resilience to increase feelings of safety within local communities.

Third sector organisations were also in support of this, emphasising the importance of community involvement to address safety concerns of different population groups, with solutions being developed that are based on their experience.

Stewardship – Care and Maintenance

A lack of Care and Maintenance

A perceived lack of care and maintenance across much of Clydebank was a recurring theme in stakeholder conversations. There was reference to lack of adequate service provision from West Dunbartonshire Council, which was often accompanied by safety or accessibility concerns, including:

- Lack of enforcement to prevent littering, dog fouling, graffiti or other anti-social behaviours within civic spaces that discourages access.
- Poorly maintained public sports fields for football and other activities create barriers to children and young people playing outside.
- Poor maintenance of town centre resulting in damaged pathways, derelict land used for parking and broken public seating all posing physical hazards, especially for children and people with mobility issues.
- Lack of grass cutting poses health and safety issues for both people and pets.

"All that money spent on improvements at the canal side and all the promised water events that haven't happened. It looks worse than ever; discarded shopping trolleys, seating areas in disrepair and really neglected. It's depressing." (Local Community Group member)

There was also concern that poor maintenance contributes to negativity about the town centre and local neighbourhoods. There was an emerging view that much of Clydebank is now considered as an 'undesirable' place to visit and that some neighbourhoods are becoming stigmatised as places to live.

> *"Clydebank is a poor area, but this makes it look so much worse. They never leave Dalmuir Park or the golf course uncut so why not keep the rest looking good." (Local resident, Parkhall)*

Reference to a lack of maintenance was often associated with council service budget cuts.

> **"Budget cuts have seen a reduction in greenspace maintenance… and there is local apathy in volunteering to help with this." (Community Council member)**

Community involvement

There was also discussion about the role of local communities in contributing towards the care and maintenance in local neighbourhoods. Whilst some concerns were raised about a minority of local residents' anti-social behaviour contributing towards uncared for places, it was generally suggested that people want to live in well cared for places, but that some people have given up trying, often feeling powerless to improve things on their own. Reference was made to several successful collaborative initiatives involving the community which brought positive results to local neighbourhoods, including:

- Repurposing of vacant and derelict land to create Melfort Park.

- 'Spring Clean Up Initiative' provision of free skips for residents to dispose of household / garden waste.
- Local community groups organising litter pickups.

Strong partnership working between local statutory partners and community groups and third sector organisations appear to characterise all of these and this is considered important in enabling community involvement.

Volunteering was generally considered as key to community involvement in care and maintenance. However, a range of issues were highlighted in relation to this:

- Low uptake in volunteering roles, particularly relating to environmental clean-up and maintenance.
- A sense that it is unfair to expect people to volunteer to undertake care and maintenance activities that were previously part of someone's paid employment.
- Health and mobility issues impacting volunteer capacity to undertake some activities, with this especially an issue with an aging population and increasing ill-health.
- Resources are required for local groups to recruit and support volunteers.
- Unfair expectation on people to volunteer when they have limited ability to influence decision making.

"This initiative (Spring Clean Up) has shown the positive outcome when we work together with our communities to make improvements and ensure they can feel a sense of pride in their area.'" (Local Councillor)

Communication

The need for improved communication on refuse collection and maintenance was highlighted in conversations. In particular, concern was expressed about:

- Difficulty accessing relevant service areas, with barriers to registering concerns and accessing support arising due to digital by default and a lack of information available in other formats and languages.
- Demand for face to face discussions, that could be facilitated through Community Council meetings with Council Officers in attendance.
- The need for a consistent approach to care and maintenance and clearly stated response times which can be expected.

"The opportunity to get good quality baby equipment and clothing for some of our families has had a significant impact on their mental health and allowed them to put stretched finances towards other essentials." (Local Charity Worker)

Refuse collection and recycling

Concerns relating to refuse collection and recycling tended to relate to accessibility and affordability, including:

- Location of recycling centre for most Clydebank residents requires access to a car or van.

- People with a health or mobility issue may be unable to move heavy items to a collection point.
- The cost of a domestic uplift is prohibitive for many families within Clydebank.
- The cost of replacing a damaged bin is not a priority for many families, potentially resulting in rubbish dumping.

There was positivity on the growing number of local third sector organisations providing an opportunity for local people to donate household items, clothing and toys that can be upcycled and re-used.

Reference was made to the multiple benefits of this, including:

- Increasing awareness of and encouraging recycling and re-using.
- Reducing amount of waste going to landfill.
- Providing affordable white goods, furniture, clothes and baby equipment to people experiencing poverty.
- Provides activities that connect people within the local community and addresses local issues.

The 'Spring Clean Up Initiative' was also recognised as valuable in encouraging recycling and discouraging fly tipping, through the provision of information and connecting unwanted items to upcycle projects, local charities, and schools.

Stewardship – Influence and Control

Community Empowerment

Many local community groups and third sector organisations feel that supporting and enabling community empowerment is inconsistent across service areas in statutory organisations. Lack of knowledge on the Community Empowerment Act and limited understanding on the benefits of empowering communities were cited as key factors for it not being enabled.

While there are some opportunities available through Asset Transfer and Participatory Budgeting, there is a perception that community empowerment isn't always valued and subsequently not factored into decision-making at a senior level.

A range of local organisations perceive West Dunbartonshire Council as being reluctant to relinquish any power to local communities and highlighted this undermines confidence that decisions are made in the best interests of neighbourhood communities.

Concerns were raised in particular to asset transfer activity, including:

- Very low numbers of asset transfers in Clydebank and generally across West Dunbartonshire.
- Lack of local awareness amongst the local community that asset transfer is a possibility.
- The need for a comprehensive and regularly maintained register of local asset ownership and bequeathments.
- Lack of joined up working between Council service areas to provide a cohesive approach to asset transfer enquiries and applications.
- Recent cuts in support and resources available for local groups to build capacity and comprehensively address sustainability issues in asset transfer proposals.

Community management of assets prior to and in place of asset transfer was highlighted as established locally. Groups not yet prepared to adopt a more commercial approach have welcomed this.

> *"Mainstreaming participatory budgeting, known as community budgeting locally, is key to helping us address long-standing inequalities in Clydebank." (WDC Team Leader)*

In contrast, there has been a high level of involvement in local participatory budgeting initiatives, with 459 local groups and over 17,950 local people participating. A total of £971,000 was allocated to 305 groups through this approach over the past seven years. Community budgeting has also encouraged collaboration across service areas, including the Communities Team, Greenspace, Regeneration and West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

Suggested improvements to local community budgeting initiatives include:

- That the quality of proposals is as important a determinant of success as the number of potential voters.
- Support is available for groups to develop proposals.

Decision making concerns

A wide range of representatives expressed concern about local decision-making processes and their effectiveness, suggesting they are not bringing about change that local stakeholders want. Two neighbourhoods in Clydebank don't currently have an active Community Council.

Suggested improvements to decision making:

- Promoting the importance of community involvement to local decision making.
- Reviewing current community involvement processes and how it's communicated.
- Collaboration between statutory and third sectors and joined up working between council service areas.
- More support to promote community councils, encourage involvement, support recruitment, recognise their statutory role and input into how public funds are spent.

"There is a poverty of aspiration amongst communities. They feel that they are not worthy of being part of the decision-making processes being made that directly impact them and their community." (Community Council Forum member)

"Communities are still considered from a deficit perspective, as a level of demand which we feel needs to be met. Recent initiatives exploring citizen involvement are offered in the context of financial challenges. That's understandable, but the message is not empowering. Opportunities for collaboration at service design stage would be a more positive way of underpinning an empowerment culture. This would probably mean giving more power to innovate to the front-line staff most engaged at community level." **(Third sector representative)**

Community engagement – fatigue and frustration

Whilst community engagement fatigue was often referred to, many went on to explain that this apparent apathy and reluctance to engage stems from a growing frustration and feeling of powerlessness which has emerged following years of perceived tokenistic consultation and limited opportunities for meaningful engagement from public partners.
Suggested improvements to encourage greater community involvement:

- Provide clear explanations of decision making through regular dialogue.
- Opportunities to engage are offered in-person, including localised neighbourhood level opportunities.
- Engagement offers the opportunity for meaningful discussion and the community feeling listened to.
- Reach out to 'seldom heard' voices and equality groups and ensure opportunities are fully accessible.

"Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT), the Council and West Dunbartonshire Community Transport Action Group developed a solution for citizens with health or mobility issues who need an alternative to public transport to attend health appointments. The Action Group provide volunteer drivers, the council supply a suitable vehicle and support, and SPT provide funding and expertise. A great example of how we can pool our resources." WDC Officer

The need for collaboration

The value of collaborating was mentioned by a wide range of stakeholders with concerns of a current lack of partnership working both within public bodies and with the community / third sector.

The need for collaborative approaches to tackle local issues at early planning stages was highlighted, especially with current budget constraints, with recognition that when all partners bring their knowledge, expertise and resources together, much more can be achieved.

The established relationships the third sector have with local communities is recognised as one of the key strengths they bring to collaborative working. Their ability to engage and involve local people in service design and delivery, identify and develop solutions to local issues and provide opportunities for people to connect was acknowledged by a wide range of representatives.

However, many third sector organisations do not feel valued or regarded as equal partners by the public sector, particularly relating to decisions that have an impact on the work they do.

Communication

The importance of communication featured in most of the local conversations.

There was positive feedback on opportunities to come together and exchange information (both online and in-person), with reference made to the Community Response Network previously facilitated by Clydesider Creative Ltd and the monthly Networking Forums facilitated by West Dunbartonshire Council for Voluntary Sector.

> *"The guest speakers from NHS service areas are really informative, particularly the patient transport engagement. Hopefully our points raised are taken forward.'"*
> *(Disability Charity Volunteer)*

There was a general appeal for improved communications, from raising awareness of community empowerment and the benefit it offers local communities to providing clear and accessible information on decision making processes and opportunities for local people to engage. The need for more signposting to both local and national sources of support for local groups was also highlighted, particularly in enabling them to build capacity to

confidently engage with community empowerment opportunities, such as asset transfer and participation requests.

Appendix 1

West Dunbartonshire Council Resources

- *West Dunbartonshire Community Learning and Development Plan 2021 – 2024*
- *https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/key-council-documents/cld-plan/*
- *West Dunbartonshire Council Strategic Plan 2017-22*
  https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4314005/strat-plan-2017-22.pdf
- *Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2017-27 Strategic Assessment*
  https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4313499/loip-strategic-assessment-draft-for-cpp-28-9-17.pdf
- *West Dunbartonshire Council- Benefit and Debt Information and Advice Service Three-Year Plan April 2022 – March 2025* *https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4322261/wdc-debt-and-benefit-service-3year-22-25-plan.pdf*
- *West Dunbartonshire Local Employability Partnership: Three Year Operating Plan 2022-2025* *https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4322262/west-dunbartonshire-council-local-employability-plan-22-25.pdf*
- *West Dunbartonshire: Local Child Poverty Action Annual Report 2022-2023.* *https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/miimtl5a/wdc-local-child-poverty-report-2022-2023.pdf*
- *Research and Equalities -Reputation Tracker Annual Report 2022-23* *https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/q1jniv0o/wdc-reputation-tracker-annual-report-22-23.pdf*
- *Citizen's Panel Spring 2022*
  https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/community/have-your-say/citizens-panel/
- *West Dunbartonshire Communities Team-*
  Community Empowerment Communications Plan Aug 2022 Results
  https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/q5xl3p4c/communications-plan-survey-rersults-ce-final.pdf
- *Clydebank Waterfront Plan for Place*
- *https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4313793/clydebank-waterfront-locality-plan.pdf*
- *Planet Youth lands in West Dunbartonshire*
- *https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/newsroom/news/2021/sep/planet-youth-lands-in-west-dunbartonshire/*
- *West Dunbartonshire Learn and Grow*
- *https://www.mylearnandgrow.com/growing-west-dunbartonshire.html*
  My Learn and Grow Community Map for West Dunbartonshire
  https://www.mylearnandgrow.com/food-growing-gardening.html
  Open Space Strategy Shaping our Future 2011 https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/1999212/os_strategy_august_2011_-_amendments_december_2011.pdf

West Dunbartonshire Health & Social Care Partnership Resources

- *Survey of Mental Health Service Users & Carers 2022 (WDCVS)*
- *West Dunbartonshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership (WDADP)Strategy 2020-2025* *http://www.wdhscp.org.uk/media/2556/wdadp-strategy-final-for-scotgov-21-sept-2020.pdf*
- Scottish Health *Survey https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-scottish-health-survey/*
- *Overprovision Evidence to the West Dunbartonshire Licensing Board from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership March 2023*
- *MacMillan Cancer Care Improving the Cancer Journey https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/jobs-and-training/working4u/money/cancer-support-services/improving-the-cancer-journey/*

Third Sector Organisation Resources

- *Stepping Stones Impact Report 2021-22 https://www.stepstones.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Impact-Report-2022web.pdf*
- *Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol- West Dunbartonshire's Community Alcohol Service Annual Report 2020-21 https://daca526319077.files.wordpress.com/2021/10/daca-annual-report-2021-compressed.pdf*
- *Carers of West Dunbartonshire Annual Report 2022*
- *https://carerswd.org/carers-of-west-dunbartonshire-annual-report-2022/*
- *West Dunbartonshire Citizens' Advice Annual Report 2022-23*
- *https://www.wdcab.co.uk/files/6116/9536/6542/ANNUAL_REPORT_2022-23_FINAL.pdf*

Other Organisations

- Development Trust Association Scotland *DTA Annual Review 2021-22* https://dtascot.org.uk/resources/publications

- *Stretched to the Limit: ALLIANCE report highlights cost of living pressures on the third sector* https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/blog/news/stretched-to-the-limit/ September 2023

- Scottish Canals *Scottish Canals Annual Report 2020-21* *Scottish Canals Annual Report 2020 2021*

- *Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT) A Call to Action: The Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland 2023-2038 https://www.spt.co.uk/media/nr2c0jjt/spt_regional-transport-strategy-2023-2038.pdf*

Appendix 2

Stakeholders listing for Community Link Lead

Contact	Designation	Organisation	Service Area
Margaret-Jane Cardno	Transformation and Strategy	WDHSCP	Statutory
Lauren McLaughlin	Health Improvement Lead	WDHSCP	Statutory
Rose Stewart	Health Improvement Lead	WDHSCP	Statutory
Bob Purdon	Health Improvement Lead	WDHSCP	Statutory
Chris Kelly	Health Improvement Lead	WDHSCP	Statutory
Joshua Doyle	Place-making Coordinator	WDC	Statutory
Clare English	Working 4 U Lead	WDC	Statutory
Elaine Troupe	Communities Team Lead	WDC	Statutory
Amy Sweeney	Corporate Services Officer	Knowes Housing Association	RSL
Angela McCann	Officer	SAMH	Statutory
Angela Ward	Housing Officer	Trafalgar Housing Assoc.	RSL
Anne Dyer	General manager	Alternatives	TS-Recovery
Anna Matthews	Housing Officer	Link Housing Association	RSL
Audrey Duff	Community Link Worker	Neighbourhood Networks	TS- Adult Learning/ASN
Carol Bell	Volunteer Coordinator	Scottish Canals	Statutory

Name	Role	Organisation	Category
Charlie Sherry	Officer	Inclusive Images	TS-Anchor Organisation
David Wilkie	Working 4U Officer	Housing and Employability	Statutory
Diana Collins	Community Link Worker	NHS Clydebank GP	TS- Scottish Alliance
Donnie McGilveray	Asst. General manager	Alternatives	TS-Recovery
Eleanor White	Sustainability Co-ordinator	WDC Libraries	ALEOS
Emma Kelman	Energy Advice Service	Collective with RSL	RSL
Emma Murray	Network Manager-West Duns	Neighbourhood Networks	TS-Adult Learning/ASN
Harry Mccormack	Secretary	West Duns Tenants & Residents (WDTRO)	TS
Issy Plunkett	Chair	West Duns Community Councils	TS
Jenni McNab	Marketing & Engagement Officer	Carers of West Duns	TS
Jenny Watson	Community Engagement Worker	Clydesider Media	TS-Anchor
Joanne McGinley	Operational Manager	Carers of West Duns	TS
John Donnelly	Support Worker	Improving Lives	TS-Disabilities
John White	Manager	Stepping Stones	TS-Mental Health
Katie O'Donnell	Community Engagement Officer	Keep Scotland Beautiful	Statutory
Katie Robertson	Community Officer	Moments of Freedom	TS-Syrian Womens' Group
Freya Young	Community Officer	Moments of Freedom	TS-Syrian Womens' Group
Khara Keogh	Support Worker	Blue Triangle Alexander St.	RSL
Kimberley Tennant	Tenant Panel Administrator	Dalmuir Park Housing Assoc	RSL

Lisa Marie Lees	Project Worker	Healthy Pathways	TS-Wellbeing support
Lisa-Jane Dock	National Development Officer	Breathing Space	Statutory
Lorna Jackson-Jamieson	Partnership Manager	SportScotland	Statutory
Louise Bacon	Project Officer	Community Links Scotland	TS-Regeneration
Maeve Dixon	Arts Development Officer	West Dunbartonshire Leisure	WDC ALEOS
Mandy Fearncombe	Health Improvement Senior	WDHSCP	Statutory
Margaret Maceira	Secretary Clyde Mobility	Clyde Mobility	TS-mobility support
Mary McCaig	Client Support Leader	Social Security Scotland	Statutory
Maryanne Richford	Officer	DACA	TS-Recovery
Sandra Buckley	Social Programmes Manager	National Autistic Society	TS-Autism
Selina Fitzpatrick	Volunteer	Improving Lives	TS-Disability
Sinead Farrell	Chief Executive	Clydebank HA	RSL
Ally Mailey	Manager Centre 81	Clydebank HA	RSL Community Centre
Suzanne Bunniss	CEO	Firecloud	TS-Faith based organisation
Toni Clark	Officer	Social Security Scotland	Statutory
Tony Ercoli	Project Manager	Flourishing Faifley	TS-Community Garden