

# Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme

## Care and Maintenance: Impact on Clydebank's Community



### Care and Maintenance can have a positive impact on people when everyone has access to:

- Buildings, spaces and routes that are well cared for in a way that is responsive to the needs and priorities of local communities.
- Good facilities for recycling and well organised refuse storage and collection.

This is why it is one of Scotland's Place & Wellbeing Outcomes.

## The evidence tells us<sup>1</sup>:



Poorly maintained neighbourhoods with high levels of incivilities can lead to lower levels of mental wellbeing and poor health.



If places are regarded as not being maintained this can lead to perceptions of it being unsafe and reduced social capital.



Poorly maintained neighbourhoods can lead to reduced social connections and neighbourliness and increased isolation.



Vacant and derelict land can negatively impact on health.



If a place isn't well maintained this can lead to negative perceptions, which can lead to investors disinvesting and people not wanting to go to that place.



Deprived areas are more likely to be exposed to environmental incivilities, vacant and derelict land, and poor maintenance.



If people are involved in helping to design and maintain the places they live, this can build a sense of ownership, belonging and attachment.



Volunteering can help increase feelings of self-esteem and provide a sense of purpose.

1. Source: [Evidence Behind Place Standard Tool & Place and Wellbeing Outcomes](#)

## Indicators for Care and Maintenance in West Dunbartonshire and Clydebank<sup>2</sup>

Satisfied with street cleaning (2019-21)

- 63% of adults in West Dunbartonshire
- 59% of adults in Scotland
- Satisfaction levels with street cleaning have decreased in West Dunbartonshire since 2013, but is consistently higher than Scotland.

% People saying a problem is very / fairly common in their neighbourhood in West Dunbartonshire. (2019)

- 47% Animal nuisance (15% increase since 2010)
- 36% Rubbish / litter lying around
- 10% Vandalism / graffiti / damage to property

Respondents very or fairly satisfied by local refuse collection. (2019)

- 80% West Dunbartonshire
- 74% Scotland

Household waste recycled and diverted from landfill. (2022)

- 38.8% West Dunbartonshire
- 43.3% Scotland

Population living within 500 metres of a derelict site (2022)

- 52% in West Dunbartonshire (5% decrease since 2019)
- 46% Clydebank (9% decrease since 2019)
- 58% Dumbarton / Alexandria (no change since 2019)

## What we heard from a range of communities, organisations and practitioners in Clydebank in 2023

### 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.

2. Data Source: [Explore the data - Benchmarking; Scottish Household Survey; Scottish Government; Household Waste Data – SEPA.](#)

“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 & 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.

**Community involvement in care and maintenance featured strongly in local discussions and links strongly with issues relating to community empowerment. Find out more in the accompanying [Influence and Control: Impact on Clydebank’s Community Briefing \(1 of 2\)](#).**

Visit the [website](#) for more information on [Clydebank Project Town activity](#). Follow us on X (Twitter) [@place4wellbeing](#) to keep up to date with our latest news and place-based resources.