Project town Ayr – what we heard in our communities

As part of the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme's data journey in 2022-2024, a Community Link Lead in each Project Town connected with local practitioners and representatives of local groups, organisations and services.

In our Ayr Project Town, a comprehensive quantitative data exercise had already indicated that some groups face particularly significant inequalities. Those groups are:

Geographic split of up to 12.5yrs of life expectancy if living in North or South Ayr.

Premature mortality in those aged 15-44 years living in North Ayr.

People experiencing poverty with a focus on children.

People who experience a substance use disorder.

The data gathered by the Community Link Lead aimed to bring the above data to life and understand Ayr communities' experience of the place they live, work and relax, with a focus on those facing the greatest inequality. The information gathered was shared with our Steering Group, key decision makers and brought into four Place and Wellbeing Assessments undertaken in Ayr.
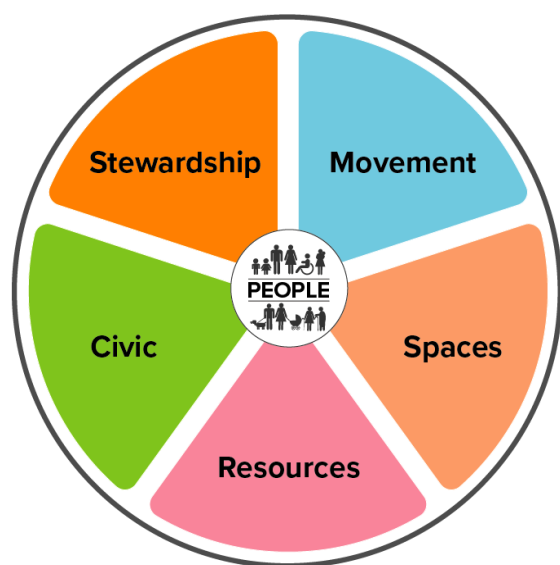
This infographic summarises some of the key things we're hearing as they relate to the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes.

The principles of equality, net-zero emissions and sustainability underpin all of these themes.

PEOPLE

Mental health and social isolation are key issues experienced by people.
Sense of belonging and identity experienced by people who attend community groups.
Lack of trust in formal services, community groups viewed as safe space.
Poverty (food, energy and in-work) has worsened since inflation crisis

Movement

Public transport

Active travel

Traffic and parking

Public transport/Active travel - bus routes and cycle routes need improved in Ayr North. Cycle routes do not connect well with schools. Transport/travel costs are associated with work opportunities, in-work poverty and accessing services.
Traffic and Parking - Not viewed as a priority for group attendees with other inequalities being a priority.

Spaces

Streets and spaces

Natural spaces

Play and recreation

Natural Spaces/Play and recreation – people feel that they have green spaces and play areas in their community. Community groups make use of green space for activities, events and gardening clubs. Finance is a barrier in accessing leisure activities out with community groups.

Resources

Services and support

Work and economy

Housing and community

Services and support – lack of trust in formal services; community groups viewed as a safe space. Formal addiction services accessible Monday-Friday this causes gaps in service provision; requirement for 7-day service.
Housing and community – stigma attached to living in poor housing; awareness that housing impacts health and wellbeing.
**Work and economy** – increase in in-work poverty; increase demand on foodbanks.

"People don't access services due to feeling dismissed or stigmatised".

Civic

Identity and belonging

Feeling safe

Identity and belonging – there is a sense from people who attend community groups. Opportunity for volunteering, training and skills development. Attending the groups supports mental health and reduces social isolation. Often projects and staff are funded short-term through various funding sources.

Feeling safe – people in North Ayr do not feel safe in their community due to anti-social behaviour and issues related to drugs. Impacts on mental health
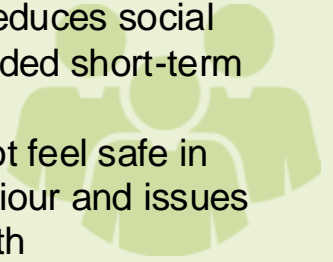
Stewardship

Care and maintenance

Influence and control

Influence and control – people feel their voices are unheard. Lack of trust in council services to make changes. People often do not know how/where to access services and seek support from community groups for issues. Community groups support/signpost people to appropriate service. Requirement for improved partnership between formal and community organisations.
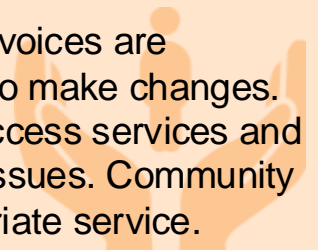
"Access to mental health services for people with addiction issues is challenging as CMHT and Addiction Services sit separately".

Learning

Across the seven Shaping Places for Wellbeing project towns, we have identified some key messages from stakeholders about ways of working:

- Communities value joint working and partnership approaches.

- Communities want strong communication between all stakeholders.

- Collective decision making by all stakeholders will strengthen partnerships.

You can read more, including the process for identifying the ideas captured in this infographic, in a report here.
You can find out more about the quantitative data profile here.

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