

**BANCHORY COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
**LOCAL PLACE PLAN**



**MARCH 2025**

## Contents

List of Figures	4
Key learnings and proposed actions	6
1. Background and Introduction	7
2. LPP preparation	8
3. Review of current /planned frameworks and initiatives	10
2023 Aberdeenshire LDP	10
2020 Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan	10
2023 NPF4	11
2017 Community Action Plan	13
4. Public event outputs summary	16
Strengths, challenges	16
Vision	16
5. Place Standard Tool questionnaire results	19
Public transport	20
Influence & sense of control	20
Facilities & Services	20
Traffic & Parking	20
Housing & Community	21
Work & Local Economy	21
Streets & Spaces	21
Play & Recreation	21
Moving Around	21
Identity & Belonging	22
Care & Maintenance	22
Social Interaction	22
Feeling Safe	23
Natural Spaces	23
6. Banchory Schools feedback	24

Banchory Primary	24
Hill of Banchory Primary	26
Banchory Academy	28
7. Data analysis results	30
History	30
Housing	30
Developers' Obligations/Contributions	31
Population	32
Green spaces	33
Deprivation	35
Local economy	35
Volunteering	37
Public transport and moving around	37
Roads and moving around	38
Education	40
Health	42
High Street and shops	44
General strain on services	44
Aberdeenshire Infrastructure Audit 2024	45
8. Conclusions	47
9. Local Place Plan	48
Non Place-based actions	49
Place-based actions	50
Vibrant inclusive community actions	52
Connected Place	53
Liveable Place	55
Productive Place	60
Sustainable Place	61
10. References	62

## List of Figures

- Figure 1: BCC outline area
- Figure 2: BCC area 2023 LDP
- Figure 3: IBGCC area 2023 LDP
- Figure 4: Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Strategic Development Plan overview. The areas outlined in red dashes are the Strategic Growth Areas where 75% of all homes built and employment land should be developed. They will attract new and improved infrastructure.
- Figure 5: LPP themes
- Figure 6: Summary progress on 2017 Community Action Plan, reviewed in 2023
- 
- Figure 7: Summary “What do we like/What don’t we like?”
- Figure 8: Summary vision for Banchory
- Figure 9: Questionnaire heat map
- Figure 10: BCC questionnaire ranked results
- Figure 11: Banchory Primary map and priorities
- Figure 12: Hill of Banchory Primary map and priorities
- Figure 13: Banchory Academy map and priorities
- Figure 14: Housing types 2001-2022 (census data)
- Figure 15: Percentage change in house types in Banchory
- Figure 16: Summary Developers’ Obligations over past 10 years (Aberdeenshire Council Developer and Obligations department)
- Figure 17: Population age profile in Banchory (2022 census)
- Figure 18: Population by age range 2001-2022
- Figure 19: BCC area habitat map (NESBReC)
- Figure 20: Habitat map overlain with 2023 LDP plan
- Figure 21: Habitat areas removed or under threat from development
- Figure 22: Community Asset Transfer proposal for Corsee Wood. The pink areas as a 1<sup>st</sup> tranche as an amenity woodland replacing timber with hardwood and developing the woodland as a social space, including outdoor forest learning etc. The yellow areas would be a 2<sup>nd</sup> phase as a managed timber woodland with possibly recreation or tourism.
- Figure 23: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2012
- Figure 24: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020



- Figure 25: Banchory West and East economic data
- Figure 26: Banchory West and East income data
- Figure 27: Car journeys from Banchory East showing key destinations
- Figure 28: Bus/coach journeys from Banchory East
- Figure 29: Banchory potholes (November 2024)
- Figure 30: Walking and cycling Strava heat map (August 2024)
- Figure 31: 2024 Banchory Academy catchment area (see [here](#))
- Figure 32: Banchory Academy school roll, showing school capacity (various data sources)
- Figure 33: Summary infrastructure assessment, 2024 Summary infrastructure assessment, 2024. Top row: [Infrastructure Audit](#) assessment; bottom row: BCC assessment
- Figure 34: LPP themes
- Figure 35: LPP themes linked to vision of Banchory
- Figure 36: Summary Non Place-based actions
- Figure 37: Summary Place-based actions with rough cost estimates
- Figure 38: Place-based Actions 1-2 for Vibrant Inclusive Community
- Figure 39: Place-based Actions 3-6 for Connected Place
- Figure 40: Place-based Actions 7-11 for Connected Place
- Figure 41: Place-based actions Principles 12-15 for Liveable Place
- Figure 42: Place-based Actions 16-20 for Liveable Place
- Figure 43: Place-based actions 21-26 for Liveable Place
- Figure 44: Place-based actions 27-30 for Productive Place
- Figure 45: Place-based actions 31-32 for Sustainable Place

## Key learnings and proposed actions

Banchory has grown significantly since 2001. According to census data, the number of houses has increased by 35% between 2001 and 2022. Including the considerable developments planned in 2023 LDP this will increase to 65%, despite Banchory not being in Aberdeenshire's Strategic Growth Area, or in the NPF4 growth corridors.

Rapid development in Banchory has led to a fracturing of the community, and a feeling of "us and them" both geographically and in terms of community cohesion.

Services and infrastructure have not kept pace with the town's growth; secondary education and health provision are particularly under strain, and roads and transport are poor.

Many households use a car to commute to work outside of the town. Deprivation in sections of the town is increasing.

**We call for a period of consolidation to allow services and infrastructure to catch up with the population growth, resulting in very limited new development for the next LDP plan.**

The most valued aspect of living in Banchory is living close and having access to nature. Recent developments are removing and splintering areas of green space and increasing biodiversity loss.

**We call for safeguarding of all remaining green spaces from development, and encouragement of more wildlife and native tree planting.**

The schools and health centre are at the heart of the town. Maintaining central locations for both is important to provide easy access and bring the community together.

**We call for**

- **Banchory Primary and Banchory Academy to be refurbished/redeveloped on their current premises as a Community Education Campus.**
- **a Health Centre to be developed in Bellfield, expanding the current Banchory Surgery and including access to a wide range of health and wellbeing support.**

Public transport is very poor. Despite this, Banchory is included in Aberdeen's Housing Market. Cars are not a luxury; they are needed to get around. The growth in population has led to significant increase in car ownership, against Scottish Government's policy on reducing car-based commuting. Cycling and walking are popular but need more support to manage the busy roads, in particular for children. Roads are in a poor state of repair.

**We call for better public transport and a park and ride/share hub to include EV charging stations, bike sheds potentially a bike rental scheme and showers. We want a 20mph speed limit in the town centre, more Quiet Roads, safe crossings of the A93, and dedicated cycling and walking routes through the town and linking to local communities nearby (e.g., Inchmarlo, Crathes, Torphins, Strachan, Finzean).**

Employment is moving away from the oil and gas sector. This will accelerate and it's important to develop more local industry to create jobs, e.g., in the tourism and education sectors.

**We call for investment in tourism and education facilities and for a Town Co-ordinator to support businesses.**

Banchory needs to mitigate and adapt to the Climate and Nature crises, by investing in net zero projects and becoming more resilient.

**We call for Communication and Resilience Hubs to be set up in Banchory West and Banchory East along with Resilience Plans, as well as investment in net zero projects.**

**Our Local Place Plan work has resulted in 10 short-term actions and 12 medium/long term non-placed based actions led by the Community, and 32 place-based proposals, split over 5 themes: Vibrant Inclusive Community, Connected Place, Liveable Place, Productive Place and Sustainable Place.**

## 1. Background and Introduction

The Scottish Government has recently introduced the development of a Local Place Plans (LPP) as a means of encouraging communities to give early input to a Local Development Plan (LDP).

An LPP determines **what** people want for their community and **where** they want it, with the outcome comprising as a minimum a map summarising land and building use proposals and a list of potential community projects. It helps communities to think about how to make the place better, agree priorities and take action. It can also support funding applications for community-led projects. It is an official document which local planning authorities, in this case Aberdeenshire Council must take into consideration in preparing the LDP.

An LDP contains details of how Aberdeenshire Council will manage future developments in Aberdeenshire and guides the determination of land zoned for development or protection in an area. It is also key for determining planning applications. Until now, an LDP has consisted largely of commercial housing and other development proposals, with communities only able to respond retrospectively and often unsuccessfully without due hearing.

The current LDP dates from 2023 and Aberdeenshire Council is now working on the 2028 plan.

This LPP will be submitted to Aberdeenshire Council in March 2025 as part of the data collection or “Evidence Report” stage of the LDP process. Aberdeenshire Council is expected to revert and engage with communities in 2025 as part of the “Call for Ideas” stage, which should provide further dialogue around exactly how the LPP will be integrated in the LDP.

From March 2024 to February 2025, Banchory Community Council (BCC) engaged widely across our community to produce this LPP.

BCC also worked closely with neighbouring Community Councils in Inchmarlo, Brathens, Glassel (IBGCC) and Crathes, Drumoak and Durris (CDDCC) to ensure full alignment. Work is also ongoing with Feughside Community Council (FCC). This is because, as the main town in this rural area, Banchory provides access to health, education and retail facilities to local villages and settlements. Any major changes in surrounding areas will therefore have a knock-on effect for Banchory.

This document summarises the work done and the proposed actions. Our expectation is that this is a living document, to be built on and enhanced in future.

## 2. LPP preparation

Figure 1 shows the outline of the BCC area covered by this LPP, comprising Banchory, a town located on the River Dee some 20 miles west of Aberdeen.

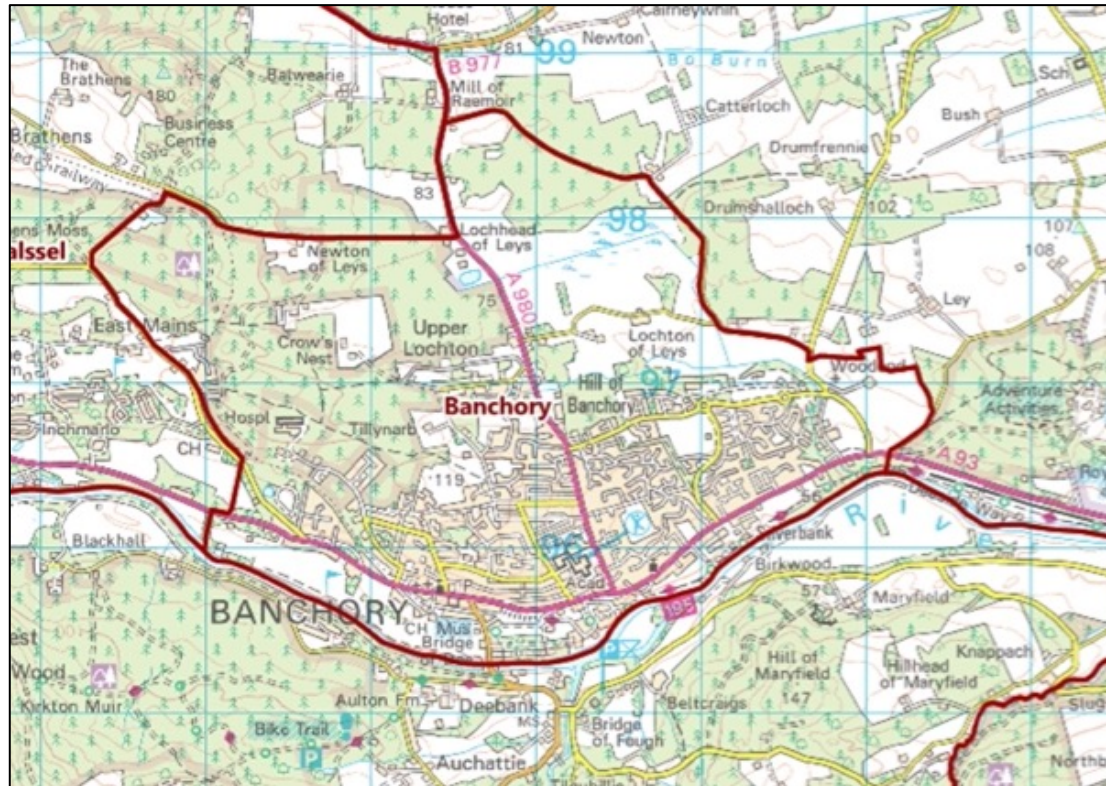


Figure 1: BCC outline area

In preparing this LPP we wanted to make sure that we:

- Linked in with the National Planning Framework 4 (Scotland) ([NPF4](#)) and Aberdeenshire local planning policies, as well as the current and planned initiatives.
- Engaged the community widely and effectively so that their views could be properly represented.
- Proposed a realistic and achievable set of projects for further development that could be supported by individuals or groups willing to take them on.

- Subsequently engaged with key stakeholders, so that there were no “surprises” in the final LPP.

The project had six phases:

- 1) Review of **current and planned frameworks and initiatives** – including [NPF4](#), [2023 Aberdeenshire LDP](#), the [2020 Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan](#), and the [2017 Banchory Community Action Plan](#). These are summarised in Section 3.
- 2) Ten **public events** were held between March and September 2024. Invitations were sent out directly to businesses and voluntary groups and the events were advertised on Facebook and on leaflets placed around the town. The format of the events focused on four questions:
  - a. What’s your vision of the future of Banchory?
  - b. What’s great about where you live? What do you want to keep? Where?
  - c. What do you want to change? Where?
  - d. Are there any community projects you would like to see happen? Where?

Around 100 people attended the public events; discussions were lively, informed, and insightful. Comments were compiled and themes defined; these were analysed and are summarised in Section 4 of this report.

- 3) The Scottish Government’s **Place Standard Tool** was issued as a [questionnaire](#). This was advertised at the public events, on Facebook and on leaflets around the town. Respondents were asked to score 14 questions from 1 (poor) to 7 (great) each relating to a different aspect of life in the local area, and to give comments on their scores. Some 155 responses were received. Scores and comments were compiled and analysed, and the summary results are shown in Section 5.
- 4) Aberdeen for a Fairer World (AFW) arranged **engagements at the three schools** in Banchory in October-November 2024. The output is summarised in Section 6.
- 5) **Data** were analysed to ensure a robust basis for the LPP, challenging perceptions with facts. The conclusions are summarised in Section 7.
- 6) **Other engagements** included landowners, developers, schools, medical staff, NESBReC, Nestrans, Forestry & Land Scotland and neighbouring Community Councils.

The conclusions of our engagements and data analyses are presented in Section 8.

**Five themes emerged from our engagement and data analyses, and we have identified 10 short-term and 12 medium/long-term Non Place-based Actions as well as 32 Place-based Action within these themes which form the Banchory LPP. These are summarised in Section 9.**

Our thanks to all those who attended the public and school events and completed the questionnaires, to AFW, NESCAN and Go Deep who facilitated the engagements to happen, and to Rhona Bowie for compiling the results of the questionnaire.



### 3. Review of current/planned frameworks and initiatives

#### 2023 Aberdeenshire LDP

Significant developments were proposed in the [2023 Aberdeenshire LDP](#) for Banchory, totalling some 524 houses, Figure 2. Major developments were also proposed in the IBGCC area adjacent to Banchory, and these add another 265 houses (which includes 60 in the Inchmarlo Continuing Care Community) to the total impacting BCC, Figure 3, giving a total of 789 new houses to be built. Proposed developments in both figures are highlighted in pink/red.

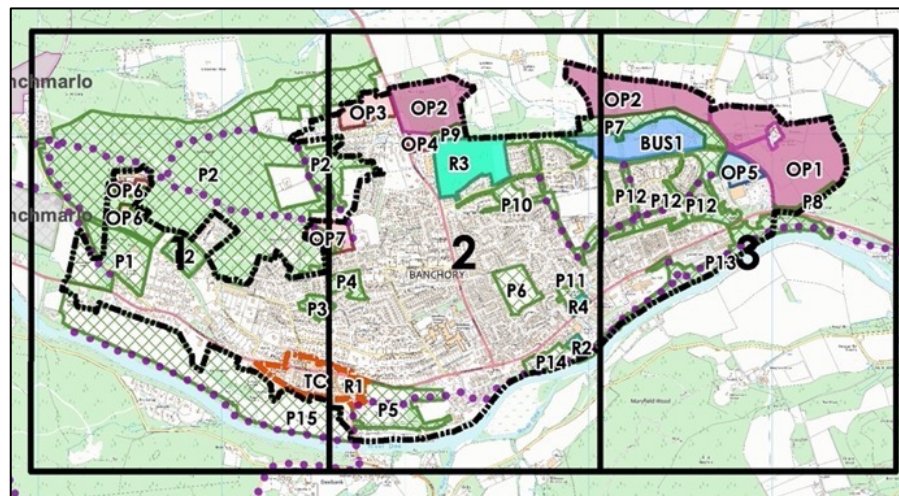


Figure 2: BCC area 2023 LDP

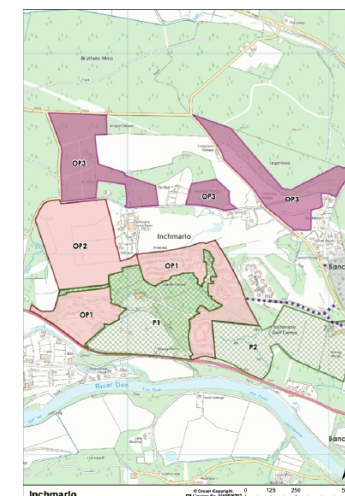


Figure 3: IBGCC area 2023 LDP

Reserved land has been identified in this and previous LDPs over many years for new educational facilities (R3) and a new health centre (R4) in Banchory, but no progress has been made. Given Aberdeenshire Council's financial constraints and the lack of priority given to Banchory in the strategic plan, these new facilities are unlikely to materialise in the short to medium term, despite the significant increase of 789 houses in Banchory and adjacent areas.

No additional transport facilities or infrastructure were included in these LDPs to support the significant growth of the town.

#### 2020 Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan

All this development proposed in the 2023 LDP occurs in spite of Banchory being in the Local Growth and Diversification Area of the [2020 Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan](#) (Figure 5). These areas are outwith the Strategic Growth Areas (Figure 5) and are expected to grow related to local needs only. They do not attract investment for new and improved infrastructure. This has resulted in Banchory being a lower priority for investment over the past few years.

The strategic plan has however now been superseded by the [National Planning Framework 4](#) (NPF4) published in 2023, see below.

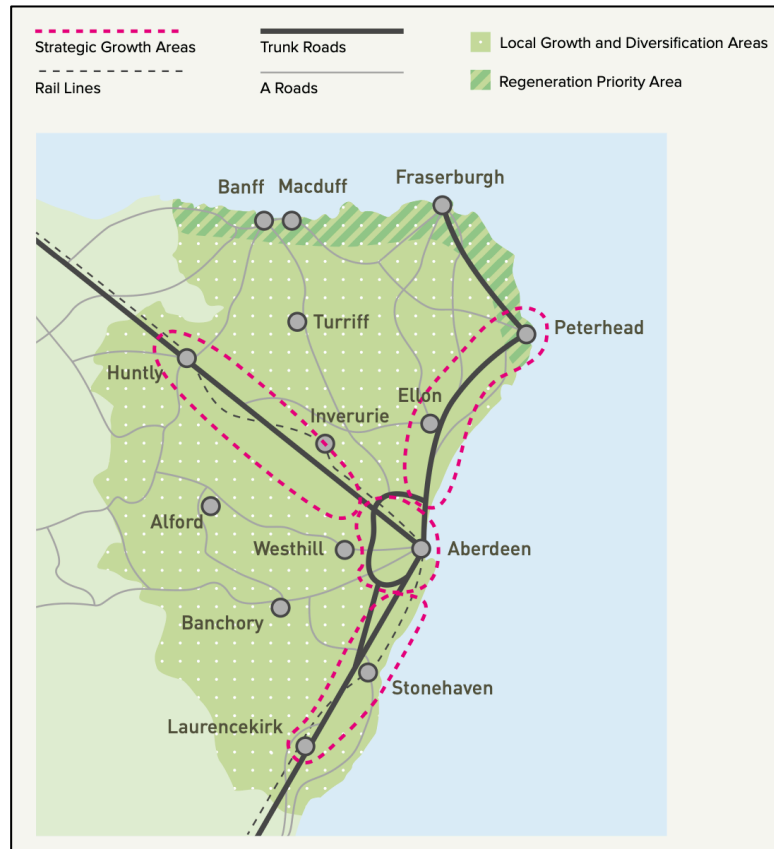


Figure 4: Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Strategic Development Plan overview. The areas outlined in red dashes are the Strategic Growth Areas where 75% of all homes built and employment land should be developed. They will attract new and improved infrastructure.

**Moreover, Banchory, with its poor public transport links, has been placed within the Aberdeen Housing Market Area. This is in direct contravention of government policy regarding the reduction of car-based commuting and the creation of sustainable communities.**

*National Planning Framework 4 (Scotland) (NPF4)*

[NPF4](#) is based on achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, and aims to produce outcomes of Sustainable, Liveable and Productive Places as well as Vibrant and Inclusive Communities.

**We have used these 4 national outcomes as themes for our analysis and added in one more, Connected Place, giving 5 themes for our LPP (Figure 5).**

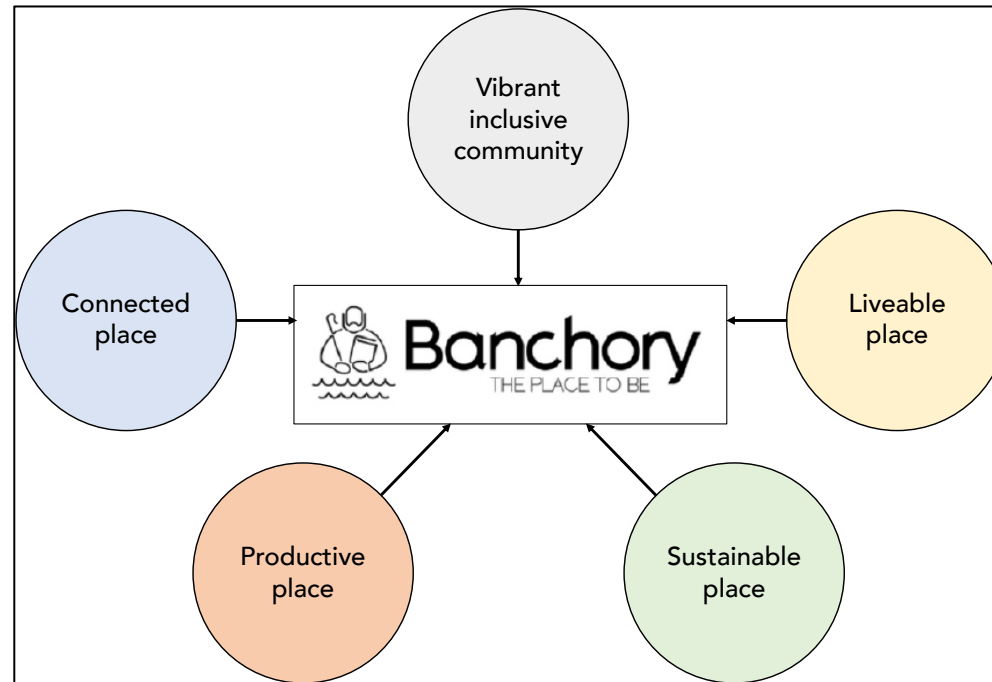


Figure 5: LPP themes

For Northeast Scotland, the focus of NPF4 is the **transition to net zero**, as the region moves away from the oil and gas sector (see Annex C: Spatial Planning Priorities for North East Scotland).

Another focus for the area is on **improving local liveability** to help reduce the high levels of car ownership and respond to the area's dispersed settlement pattern. **Growth corridors are confirmed to extend from Aberdeen to Peterhead, Huntly and Laurencekirk for future development**, with strategic sites including new communities at Chapelton, Grandhome and Countesswells. **This will once again mean that Banchory will not be a priority for investment.**

Access to good quality open space and opportunities for local food growing including allotments and community orchards are encouraged in NPF4.

The area's growth strategy includes a commitment to **building with nature** by creating multifunctional [blue and green networks](#) and improving green spaces in and around settlements, as well as connecting with the long distance cycling and walking network and facilitating active travel.



## 2017 Community Action Plan

The latest [BCC Community Action Plan was prepared in 2017](#) and reviewed in 2023. Figure 6 below is a summary of progress achieved by 2023. This is a very disappointing result and needs follow up. Most of the projects are proposed in this LPP.

Current status of 2017 Key Findings - Summary		Status	Priority	Summary
<b>1. Education</b>				
1.1	Replace Banchory Academy in the medium/long term		93%	No prospect in medium term
1.2	Upgrade Banchory Academy in the short-term		81%	Partial upgrade has been completed
1.3	Upgrade Banchory Primary School in the short term		75%	Minor upgrades have been completed
1.4	Consider adding capacity to Hill of Banchory Primary School in the short term		71%	No prospect in medium term
1.5	Improve adult education opportunities in the short/medium term		71%	Some community led improvements in place
<b>2. Health and Wellbeing</b>				
2.1	Replace Health Campus in short / medium term		83%	No prospect in short term
2.2	Review range of health services and staffing provided, including for nutrition advice		–	AHSCP Strategic Needs Assessment completed
2.3	Provide various outreach services including for mental health		87%	Community led project in development
<b>3. The Local Economy (Business and the Town Centre/High Street)</b>				
3.1	Action on Rent and Rates to make the High St more attractive and attract a better mix of shops		92%	Some improvements in place
3.2	Investigate the feasibility of developing plans for a new Cinema		42%	No community interest forthcoming
3.3	Upgrade the Town Hall		60%	Access and kitchen facilities upgraded
3.4	Develop a community hub		72%	Some community led improvements in place
3.5	Refurbish Bellfield Park		69%	Some community led improvements in place
3.6	Pop-up exhibitions		41%	No community interest forthcoming
3.7	Develop an events calendar		70%	Possible community project under discussion
3.8	Consideration of signage		–	Completed
3.9	Reintroduction of a coat of arms		–	Completed
<b>4. Recreation</b>				
4.1	Delivery of Banchory Sports Village		–	Completed
4.2	Better play parks		69%	Accessible play equipment project underway
4.3	Develop skateboarding/BMX park		–	Completed
4.4	Investigate feasibility of a 3G football pitch		70%	Community led project under discussion
4.5	Better facilities for teenagers, including a mountain bike trail network		89%	Bike trails complete, other projects unknown
<b>5. Communication</b>				
5.1	Improve broadband connection		92%	R100 project underway
5.2	Improve mobile phone reception		93%	No co-ordinated action group in place
5.3	Better communication of events and activities		89%	Community led project in discussion
5.4	Investigate a community hub		76%	Community led project in discussion
<b>6. Housing and Domestic Services</b>				
6.1	Protect the south bank of the river from development		82%	Current LDP protects area, future TBD
6.2	Achieve a better balance of housing provision, including affordable housing for young people and first time buyers		80%	Local Place Plan to address these issues
6.3	Action to improve waste services		74%	New household waste scheme in place
<b>7. Access for All</b>				
7.1	Improve pedestrian safety across the A93		69%	No co-ordinated action group in place
7.2	Explore moving the Taxi Rank from the High St		54%	No co-ordinated action group in place
7.3	Improve public transport		86%	No co-ordinated action group in place
7.4	Improve street lighting on footpaths		74%	No co-ordinated action group in place

Figure 6: Summary progress on 2017 Community Action Plan, reviewed in 2023

Summary comments made by the community made during the 2023 review of the Community Action Plan are as follows:

*Education:*

Current schools are inadequate and cannot support a growing community. There is a need to prioritise new school buildings before approving more housing development

*Health and wellbeing:*

New housing developments should not strain healthcare services. There is a need for better communication and planning for future needs.

*Local economy:*

There is a strong desire to maintain a vibrant High Street with a variety of shops and services. Residents are concerned about the impact of out-of-town centre developments and would like a clear plan to ensure that the town centre remains vibrant and viable.

*Recreation:*

The community values its green spaces and wants to see them protected and improved. There is a strong demand for better sports facilities, particularly an all-weather football pitch, a central hub for events, activities and information sharing, and a need for more activities for teenagers and older adults.

*Communication:*

The community desires a more comprehensive and accessible way to find out about events and activities, with a mix of digital and traditional communication methods is preferred to reach all demographics. Alongside this is the need to for improved internet and mobile phone connectivity across Banchory and projects which address digital exclusion.

*Housing and domestic services:*

There is a strong desire for thoughtful development that meets the needs of the community while preserving the character of Banchory. Residents prioritise creating a sustainable and inclusive community with a mix of housing options, green spaces, and improved infrastructure.

*Access for all:*

Residents desire a more connected and accessible Banchory, with a focus on pedestrian safety, improved public transport options, and a shift towards more sustainable modes of transportation like cycling and walking. There are concerns about the current state of public transport, lack of connection between villages, and dominance of car use.

*Other:*

Residents prioritise environmental sustainability alongside social equity in Banchory's development. They desire a balance between protecting green spaces and building a community with essential services and infrastructure. There is a strong focus on walkability, cycling, and public transport to reduce car dependence. Concerns include overcrowded schools, limited healthcare access, and a lack of activities for young people. There is a general sense that any new housing developments should be accompanied by investment in infrastructure and social services.

4. Public event outputs summary

Ten public events were held in Banchory from March-September 2024 at which the community was consulted about the current situation and future vision for Banchory and many suggestions for improvements were collected.

Strengths and challenges

Figure 7 shows a summary of Banchory’s **strengths and challenges** as defined by the 2 questions we posed: “What do we like/want to keep?” (strengths - upper green part of the figure), and “What don’t we like/want to change?” (challenges - lower red part).



Figure 7: Summary “What do we like/What don’t we like?”

Vision

Figure 8 shows the main elements of a **vision for Banchory**, as expressed by our community in response to the question “What is your vision of the future of Banchory?”

The vision articulates how to keep Banchory an attractive place to live, safeguarding nature, community, and employment, particularly in the context of the transition away from oil & gas to renewables, which is of great concern. Ideas to create local jobs include Banchory becoming a centre for eco-activity tourism and education provision in trades and skills. To ensure a Just Transition, this will require investment, which needs to start now.

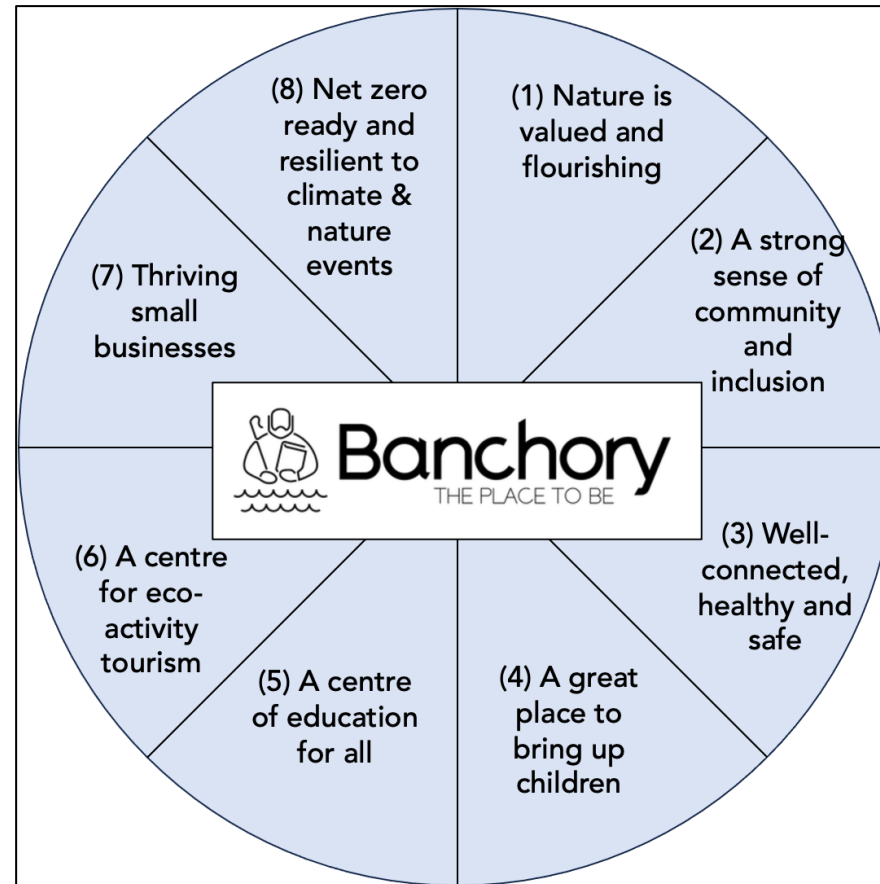


Figure 8: Summary vision for Banchory

There are eight elements of the vision for Banchory:

- (1) Nature is valued and flourishing.** Banchory is at the heart of a Royal Deeside community and wildlife corridor, with the Dee River catchment area as a focal point. There is more community involvement in the management of the river, woodlands, Loch of Leys, etc. Green spaces and natural habitats in the town are preserved and there is more food growing and allotments, tree planting and wildlife friendly areas.

- (2) A strong sense of community and inclusion.** There are meaningful connections and collaborations across Banchory. People get involved, are thriving and happy. The community is vibrant, is more equitable with equal opportunities for all. The housing mix considers requirements of first-time buyers and the elderly as well as families, and there are sufficient facilities and services to support everyone. Houses are accessible. There is plenty to do for all.
- (3) Well-connected, healthy, and safe.** Banchory is a walking and cycling friendly town. Communities nearby are joined up with off-road walking/cycling paths, and signposting is excellent. There are proper cycling lanes and a 20mph limit in the town centre. There are Quiet Roads where pedestrians, cyclists and motorists share the roads safely. There are numerous safe crossings of the A93, especially for children. There are community transport initiatives. A park and ride/share hub is established on the East side of Banchory and includes EV charging stations, bike sheds and a bike rental scheme. Public transport is first-rate, connecting local villages and settlements, work locations outwith Banchory and key facilities like ARI, Aberdeen airport and Stonehaven train station. There is great health and social care provision locally, based in a community well-being hub in the centre of town.
- (4) A great place to bring up children.** There are good schools and facilities for children and teenagers. Education facilities are fit for purpose and fully utilised. There is a 3G-astro football pitch and play parks are improved in Bellfield Park and Burnett Rd area.
- (5) A centre for education for all** - There is education provision in trades and skills for young people as well as for adults, for example centres for Rural Skills, Regenerative Agriculture, Renewable Energy in rural areas, and ScotCAT, a centre for alternative technology.
- (6) A centre for eco-activity tourism** – Many activities are encouraged for residents and visitors alike including, e.g., cycling, walking, golf, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, a bike hub. There are improved walking and cycling trails and more accommodation, e.g., youth hostel/bunk house for young people.
- (7) Thriving small businesses** - improved public and commercial facilities support a working town and small businesses, e.g., a microbrewery. There is a Town Co-ordinator who supports shops and landlords across Banchory. People can work remotely due to excellent fast broadband throughout the town.
- (8) Net zero ready and resilient to future climate and nature crises events** – Communication and Resilience Hubs and Resilience plans are set up for both Banchory West and Banchory East. Projects to support the transition to net zero are underway, including retrofitting of older homes, community energy and EV charging.

## 5. Place Standard Tool questionnaire results

Question scores in the survey are summarised in the heat map below (Figure 9), with each question represented by a row and the 155 respondents by columns. Scores are colour-coded from 1=red to 7=green. The last column is the average score for each question. The table has been ordered with the lowest average at the top (Public Transport) and the highest score at the bottom (Nature).

[illegible]

Figure 9: Questionnaire heat map

The themes discussed below are ranked in order of the questionnaire, starting with the theme having the lowest average score, and ending with the theme with the highest average score, as shown in the graph below (Figure 10).

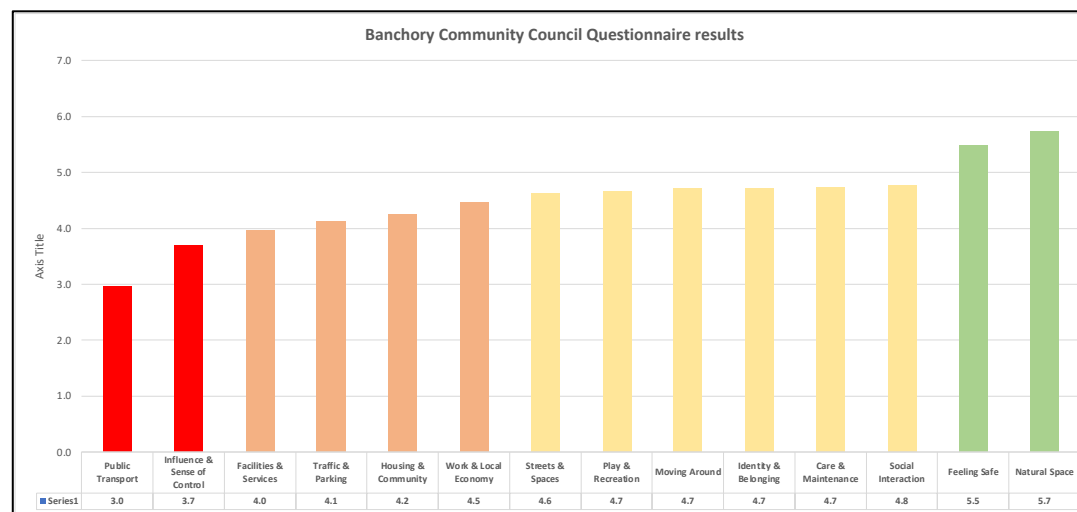


Figure 10: BCC questionnaire ranked results

### *Public transport*

Public transport scored the lowest in the questionnaire. The bus service to Aberdeen is viewed as infrequent, slow, unreliable, and expensive, to the extent that people are unable or do not want to use the buses. They feel obliged to drive instead. Connections to nearby villages, including those within the catchment area of the schools, and important destinations such as ARI, Aberdeen airport and Stonehaven railway station are very poor/non-existent. There are not enough buses to cater for the increase in population. There is a huge desire for cheaper, more reliable, and more frequent buses. Bus GPS does not work well on Deeside.

### *Influence and sense of control*

Our community's sense of influence and control scored the second lowest in the questionnaire. Whilst they are asked for their views many times, they feel that it is a paper pushing exercise and views are usually ignored. In particular, the community is not listened to when it comes to local services and housing developments; consultations are 'tick box' exercises and views and needs are ignored. People are often not made aware of what is being proposed until it is too late. Infrastructure (education, medical, transport) has not been keeping pace with development for years. Valued green spaces and important local biodiversity are being destroyed. Aberdeenshire Council budgets and housing targets as well as developers' profits appear to be more important. People feel like they aren't taken seriously, or their feelings truly taken into account, and are being let down/ignored by Aberdeenshire Council. BCC is however appreciated for being a voice for the community.

There is also an issue with major development applications which are outwith the scope of local authority control. The application for a very prominent wind farm on the Hill of Fare and the installation of giant pylons to the East of Banchory are current examples. The Hill of Fare windfarm would (if approved) have an enormous detrimental impact on local amenity. However, in this case the application is being dealt with under the Energy Regulations, rather than being judged against agreed Local Development Plans, and the community are deeply concerned about the lack of local democracy.

### *Facilities and services*

There is a lot of appreciation for the facilities in Banchory, for example the Sports centre, sports pitches and courts, Alexander Park, the Library, the Museum, Glen o' Dee, Town Hall, Scout Hut, Guide Hut, the Barn, Deeside Way, Farmers' Market, Men's Shed, Number One, Churches, etc. There is also much appreciation for the youth, sports and volunteer groups that contribute so much to the community.

Many public buildings are in a poor state and require investment (e.g. the Town Hall).

Services however are stretched to breaking point. There are calls for an updated surgery and more access to GPs, and there were many pleas to update the Banchory Primary and Academy (not Hill of Banchory Primary) and for more community-based spaces for young teens. There is a need for more affordable services and a desire to have facilities open later in the evening in the work week so those who work full time can support local businesses.

### *Traffic and parking*

Free parking in Banchory is vital for supporting local businesses and amenities, but on a busy day, parking can be nearly impossible. There is a need to increase the free parking allocation.

A93 safe crossing points are required especially for school children going into town for their lunch breaks.

There is no bike hire scheme although many people are keen, but there would need to be improved access and infrastructure for bikes if this were to happen. At present there are only 10 covered cycle spaces and 6 motorcycle spaces.

#### *Housing and community*

There is a strong feeling that excessive development is destroying Banchory, and that this should not be allowed. Paths/walks/trees are making way for more houses. There are also not enough affordable houses being built, or smaller houses for 1<sup>st</sup> time buyers and downsizing retirees. All houses should be as low carbon as possible.

#### *Work & local economy*

Banchory is a commuter town for Aberdeen, and there is significant concern about the future of Banchory's economy "after oil" when many jobs will be lost. Discussions included encouraging small local businesses, education for trades/skills, and tourism that bring in people, jobs, and money.

It's very hard to come by full time, permanent work in Banchory. Most jobs are seasonal, temporary, or zero-hour contracts, and not well-advertised. It would be good to have more full-time employment in Banchory so that people can rely less on commuting for work.

There needs to be improved hours for business access as many are only open on a limited basis and usually during normal working hours, so they are hard to access without taking a day off work.

There are many opportunities for volunteering, and a great core group of volunteers.

#### *Streets & spaces*

People are very keen to keep businesses local and continue to support the High Street.

Some buildings need upgrading, including the doctors' surgery, Banchory Academy and Banchory Primary. Green spaces need to be safeguarded from development. The protected woodland is vitally important to maintain greenery and biodiversity within the residential areas. There are numerous potholes around the town.

#### *Play & recreation*

There have been great new additions such as the skate park, bike tracks at Inchmarlo and new accessible swings. However, parks could be utilised more for children, and permanent football pitches are needed. Spaces are available in the town; they just need investment. There are very few free activities for young people to do in the evenings.

#### *Moving around*

There is a strong request to reduce developers' ability to impact on existing walking routes and local wildlife/green spaces. Examples are the proposed developments at Upper Lochton, next to Raemoir garden centre and at Upper Arbeaide where large housing developments are going to remove long standing woodland and remove existing trails and green space for current residents and those who enjoy the area.



The Banchory Paths Network is great, and those who have helped to create/maintain paths through wooded areas are much appreciated – the paths are used every day and people love the access to nature. There needs to be more general upkeep of paths like trimming overhanging trees, wider pavements for prams, wheelchairs, etc.

Banchory is one of the busiest areas in Deeside for road cyclists, yet there are no cycle lanes. There is also a lack of EV charging points.

#### *Identity & belonging*

Many people do feel a sense of community and belonging, especially because of the rich history of the place and opportunities for volunteering. However, with the population growing so quickly, there now seems to be a lack of cohesion in the community. For minority groups, the community does not feel all that inclusive.

There is an existing community spirit, but Banchory feels like it is becoming a satellite of Aberdeen.

The core of volunteers is mostly elderly long-standing residents. It is a friendly town but is becoming more remote as people grow apart from community involvement.

There was a strong feeling to stop further development which will destroy the character of the area. Development should be happening along transport corridors not here. Tourism will decline (especially when the High Street dies and if the Hill of Fare windfarm is built) and Banchory will fall into decline. People fear Banchory will end up a soulless dormitory town with no community feeling.

#### *Care & maintenance*

There could be more innovation and working together with Aberdeenshire Council and private businesses. The area is reactive and not proactive. Situations get to crisis point before they are addressed instead of using early intervention or prevention measures. Publicly maintained buildings (e.g., Town Hall, schools, medical centres) and landscaped areas are not well looked after and detract from Banchory being an attractive place. Aberdeenshire Council needs to do a lot more to protect and promote this area.

Private and public spaces could be better utilised e.g., for food production - not for essential growing but as a shared activity which builds community capacity and civic pride.

Good Council green spaces in residential areas, clean pavements, low level of vandalism. Good recycling facilities.

#### *Social interaction*

There is an excellent local Facebook group (Banchory Rocks), and plenty of interest groups, e.g., churches, craft, heritage, walking, bridge, sports, u3a, guides, scouts, cadets, book groups etc. People are generally happy with the selection of activities that provide social interaction such as sports and youth clubs, but there is demand for clubs not just related to sport (e.g., arts and culture) and for more spaces to meet after 5pm that are not the pub, especially for young people.

New investment is required to upgrade or replace public buildings where social events are held (e.g., schools, Town Hall).

### *Feeling safe*

Feeling safe scored the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in the questionnaire. In general, this is a safe and friendly community which is highly valued.

There is however the occasional vandalism on public property and theft of bicycles. Vandalism could possibly be curbed by providing more options for teenagers to meet up and be occupied, e.g., a games room or hall. There are also cases of antisocial or illegal behaviour (loud noise from cars, intimidation, drug use). A sweep of recent break-ins, drug dealing at the Banchory Business Centre car park and children drinking and making a noise in the woods make it slightly less appealing, but the youth have nothing to do elsewhere so until we provide spaces for them to use, this is going to continue. Police appear to do little to prevent the obvious drug dealing that is increasingly visible in Banchory.

### *Natural spaces*

Natural spaces scored highest in the questionnaire and came up top in every public event we had. Everyone agreed that Banchory is a beautiful place to live, and they have a desire to allow that to continue and to flourish. They enjoy the views, fresh air, outdoor space, and walking/cycling trails. Voluntary groups like Banchory in Bloom, Deeside CAN and Bonnie Banchory are much appreciated. The community wants to maximise the benefit from natural spaces and to protect them from excessive development and vandalism, etc., e.g., designate areas for “no change”. Any new developments need to include plenty of green spaces and provide linkages to footpaths.

## 6. Banchory Schools feedback

### Banchory Primary

This feedback was developed by a group of 7 Children from P5 - P7 in October 2024 and shared across the whole school (ca. 400 pupils) in November 2024. A summary is shown in Figure 11. The pictures can be better viewed by accessing the links: [Banchory Primary map](#) and [Banchory Primary priorities](#).

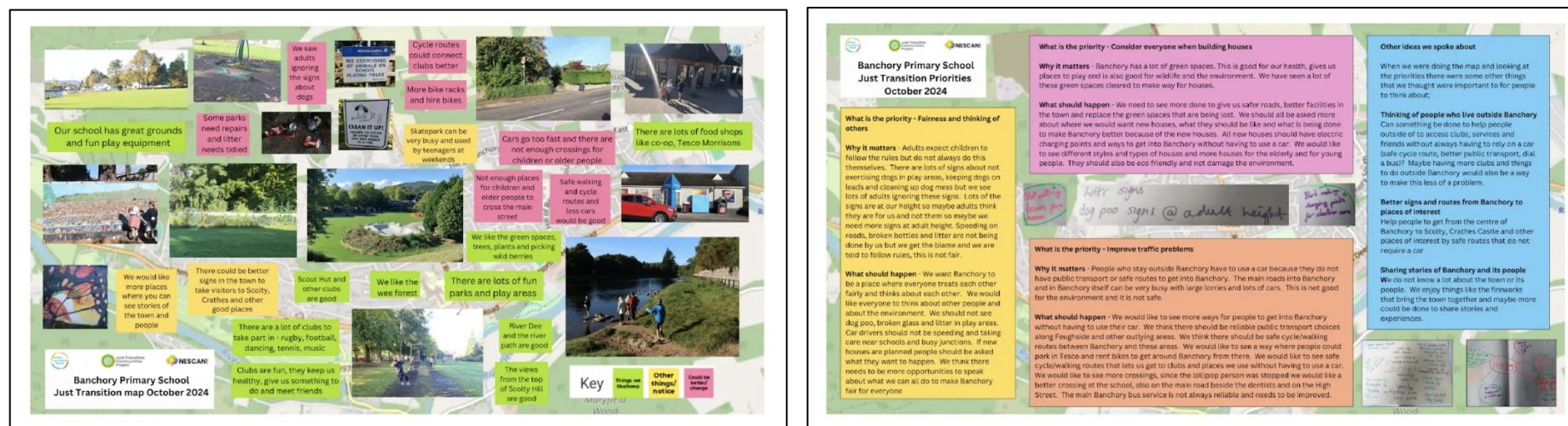


Figure 11: Banchory Primary map and priorities

We agreed there were **things we liked about Banchory**, and this included green spaces and areas where we could enjoy playing and being outdoors; lots of clubs and activities we could take part in; plenty of shops in the town; people were friendly, and it felt safe.

We also agreed there were **things we did not like** including busy roads, lack of crossings, heavy lorries, and fast traffic; green spaces being lost and more houses getting built; adults not following rules about litter, dog poo; feeling cut off if we stay outside of Banchory.

The children identified several priorities and have drawn up plans for the first 3 of these:

#### *Improve traffic problems*

The roads in Banchory can be busy and there are not many crossing points. Since the crossing patroller has gone, we do not feel as safe crossing outside the school. We would also like a crossing at the main road beside the dentist. It would be good to have more ways to cycle safely, especially to clubs and parks, and we have a plan for people to leave their car outside the town and walk or cycle more. We also have a plan to improve the bus service for people outside Banchory so that people do not feel so cut off but also do not need to make so many car journeys.

### *Consider everyone when building houses*

There are a lot of houses being built in Banchory and this is taking more cars onto the roads and taking away places where we like to play and where animals live. We don't think this is fair because we do not know why it is happening, who is deciding what happens and what is being done to replace what is being lost. Lots of the houses are empty and they all look the same. If there are to be more houses they should be customised for younger & older people, but not all of us agree that more houses should be built at all. There are also some buildings in the town that are old and might need to be repaired.

### *Fairness and thinking of others*

There are lots of signs saying "clean up dog poo" or "keep dogs on a lead" but we see lots of adults ignoring these. We also see cars speeding on roads and adults dropping litter. We are told we have to follow the rules but because others ignore the rules, we have litter and poo bags in our play areas. We do not think this is fair and we want everyone to do more to think about others.

### *Other ideas we spoke about*

We also wanted to make a note of some of the other things we spoke about or were raised when we asked others, but we did not do detailed plans for. These included:

- **Thinking of people who live outside Banchory** - can something be done to help people outside of Banchory to access clubs, services, and friends without always having to rely on a car (for example safe cycle routes, better public transport, dial a bus)
- **Better signs and routes from Banchory to places of interest** - help people to get from the centre of Banchory to Scolty, Crathes Castle and other places of interest by safe routes that do not require a car
- **Doing more to tell the stories of Banchory and its people** - we do not know a lot about the town or its people. We enjoy things like the fireworks that bring the town together and maybe more could be done to share stories and experiences. We also think that places like Banchory Museum and library should have a higher profile so we can learn about our town.
- **Better lighting and clearing paths** - There should be clearer paths to help us get places and better lighting. How good are the street lights? What about adding some flood lights to the parks to practise sports in the darker evenings.
- **Accessibility and access** - We would like better access for older people or people with disabilities in places like the park. We don't all agree that only teenagers are the problem in the skate park - some parents let young children run around which is dangerous and gets in the way. Maybe we need more skateparks or a limit on numbers? Safety equipment should be mandatory. Could the skatepark be given times for different age groups? We would like to try and encourage younger children to use the skatepark as well. Maybe more signage would help?
- **King George V park** - sometimes it can be quite difficult for playing sports on as it is all bumpy and gets wet. The toilets at the park are often very dirty.
- **Dark skies** - We thought about an area for star gazing away from light pollution.

## Hill of Banchory Primary

This feedback was developed by a group of 14 Children from P2 - P7 in October 2024 and shared across the school (ca. 320 pupils) in November 2024. A summary is shown in Figure 12. The pictures can be better viewed by accessing the links: [Hill of Banchory Primary map](#) and [Hill of Banchory Primary priorities](#).

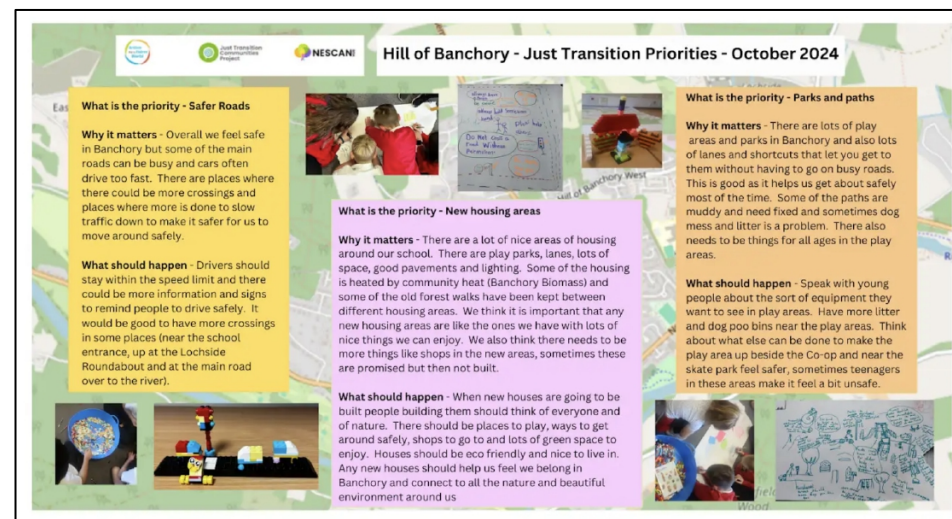


Figure 12: Hill of Banchory Primary map and priorities

We agreed there were **a lot of things we liked about Banchory**, and these included green spaces and being surrounded by nature; lots of areas where we could enjoy playing and being outdoors; having short cuts that allowed us to move around away from the busy roads; lots of clubs and activities we could take part in; feeling safe.

We also agreed there were **things we wanted to improve** including busy roads and cars which went too fast; more play equipment and things to do for older children; making sure that new houses do not spoil Banchory.

The children identified 3 main priorities to do more work on:

### Safer roads

Overall, we feel safe in Banchory but some of the main roads can be busy, and cars often drive too fast. There are places where there could be more crossings and places where more is done to slow traffic down to make it safer for children, people with pushchairs and older people to move around safely. We would like drivers to go slower and it would be good to have more crossings in some places (near the school entrance, up at the Lochside Roundabout and at the main road over to the river). A crossing patrol person near the school would keep us much safer. It would also be good if more people used their car less, but we know this is not always easy for some people or if you need to get to some things. There are not many buses to get you around Banchory and the ones to

Aberdeen and to Aboyne are not always reliable if you need to be places on time. We feel there could be more signs and information to help improve these things. Safe spaces for wildlife away from roads would be good, more houses mean more roads and less safe places for people and wildlife.

#### *New housing areas*

The housing areas around the school are really nice and we can get to most of them by shortcuts keeping us away from main roads. They feel safe, they have play areas and lots of space. Many of the houses are eco-friendly, with solar panels and some get their hot water from a community scheme. Sometimes things like shops were supposed to be part of the new housing but these were not built. We would like to know when the new shops and things promised beside Tesco will happen. A new Academy, health centre and more public toilets are more important than more housing. More vegan and vegetarian options in cafes and maybe one of the bigger coffee chains. We want any new houses to fit in with nature and the environment and we want to keep the woodland walks, green spaces between areas of houses and places for people to play safely. If there were more shops to look around, we would not go into Aberdeen so much.

#### *Parks and paths*

There are lots of play areas and parks in Banchory and lots of lanes and shortcuts that let you get to them without having to go on busy roads. This is good as it helps us get about safely most of the time. Some of the paths are muddy and need fixing and sometimes dog mess and litter is a problem so more litter and dog poo bins would be good. There needs to be things for all ages in the play areas and more needs to be done to make the play area up beside the Co-op and near the skate park feel safer, sometimes teenagers in these areas make it feel a bit unsafe. More equipment for older people and more equipment designed to be friendly for everyone (see ideas at <https://www.makespaceforgirls.co.uk/>). There are also not many good areas to play games, the Astro-pitch at the school is locked at times and some of the other areas with pitches are often wet. More all-weather play areas and pitches are needed. We would like a new bin at Lochside (by Bancon) as there is litter everywhere. Parks and paths, and shops, need to have better access for disabled people and people with prams. More benches and planting at parks and more paths through the forests and more trees planted to replace those lost to housing.



## Banchory Academy

This feedback was developed by a group of 28 Young People from S2 in October 2024 and shared across the school (ca. 350 pupils responded) in November 2024. A summary is shown in Figure 13. The pictures can be better viewed by accessing the links: [Banchory Academy map](#) and [Banchory Academy priorities](#).

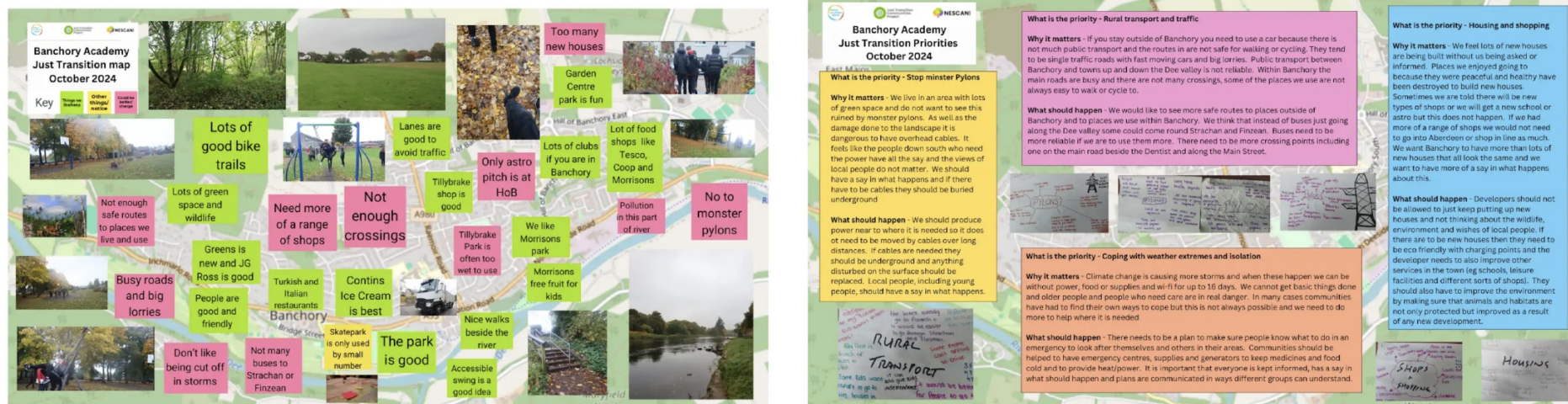


Figure 13: Banchory Academy map and priorities

We agreed there were **things we liked about Banchory** and this included lots of clubs and activities; green spaces and areas to hang out with friends; the town feels safe for young people.

We also agreed there were **things we did not like** including monster pylons and new houses spoiling our surroundings; being cut off by rural transport and when storms cause problems; traffic and busy roads; shops and shopping options.

These ideas were put onto a map and from this we identified themes we wanted to speak about more. The themes were:

### Monster pylons

We do not want to see monster pylons being built. They would spoil the landscape and they are dangerous. We would prefer electricity cables to be underground and we would want to have a say in what happens. It feels like the people down south who need the power have all the say and the views of local people do not matter.

### Housing

Green space is being taken away all the time to build new houses. This not only damages places plants and animals lived but it also takes away green spaces we visited and enjoyed. Sometimes building companies say they will build new shops or services, but this does not happen. Schools are full and roads are

busier, and we need to improve services before building more new houses. We are never asked what we would like to see happen we are just told new housing is going to get built and have to put up with it.

#### *Rural transport*

There is supposed to be a bus into Aberdeen every half hour, but it is not reliable because of this most people use cars to get about. There are also not many buses up to Strachan or Finzean so if you stay outside of Banchory you can feel really cut off from activities and friends. We think if you changed some of the bus routes up Deeside this could be improved. There are also not really any good options for cycling between places even if you wanted to.

#### *Storms and rural isolation*

Last winter if you stayed outside Banchory some areas were cut off for 16 days. Without electricity or wi-fi people feel very isolated. We could not cook, fridges and freezers did not work, food deliveries stopped, and it is really worrying. Without wi-fi you could not keep in contact with people and fell behind with schoolwork. We think a lot more needs done to support outlying communities to cope with storms, things like generators and food centres are in place in some communities but something needs done to make sure it happens everywhere and especially for people who are older or need cared for.

#### *Traffic and busy roads*

Main roads in Banchory are very busy with lots of cars and big lorries. It would be good to have more crossings on the Main Street and at the bottom of Arbeadie Road beside the dentist. The lanes are good because they let us avoid the roads, but we need more safe routes that connect to the places we use. It would also be good to have safe routes to the communities which are outside of Banchory.

#### *Shops and shopping*

Banchory has a lot of shops for food and household shopping (Morrison, Tesco, Co-op) but not so many other sorts of shops. Places like Inverurie and Stonehaven have more clothes shops and shops for our age, but we cannot really get to them, so we have to go to Aberdeen or shop on-line. When some of the new houses were being built, they said there would be new types of shops, but this did not happen.

#### *Other ideas we spoke about*

When we did the map, we spoke about some other things but in the end, we did not have them as priorities to speak more about. They included:

- **Health** - Banchory has a medical centre, dentists, opticians but sometimes you need to wait a long time for an ambulance particularly if you live in outside of Banchory.
- **Leisure** - The tennis courts and bowling green at the town centre are a bit run down. There are better courts, but these are not as easy to get to. The leisure centre and Astro-pitch at Hill of Banchory are good but the next nearest Astro-pitch is at Drumoak. The field at Tillybrake is not used a lot because it gets too wet. Although there was a good skatepark it was only used by a relatively small group. Access to leisure particularly for those who lived outside of Banchory was an issue.
- **Jobs** - The young people we spoke with were looking to go on to study or work either in the Aberdeen area or elsewhere in Scotland. As they were currently not long into S2 few had given a lot of thought to the sorts of jobs which may exist for them in the future.



7. Data analysis results

History

Banchory’s origins lie in an early Christian settlement which developed in AD 500 to the east of the current town. This site saw continued development including a new church built further to the west. In 1798, a bridge was built over the River Dee, and the northern side became the natural growth point for the town. Banchory grew quickly through the 1800’s, amalgamating nearby settlements at Arbeadie and Upper Arbeadie. With the arrival of the railway in 1853, economic activity increased including the opening of new hotels. The railway closed in 1966. As the oil industry grew in Aberdeen from the 1970s onwards, Banchory continued to develop as a tourist destination as well as a commuter town for Aberdeen.

Housing

The town has grown significantly and is continuing to grow rapidly.

According to [census data](#), the number of houses in the town has increased by 35% between 2001 and 2022 to a total of 3,777. Detached houses have increased by 632 (55%) in Banchory, and semi-detached ones by 210 (35%), see Figures 14 and 15. There has been very little increase in other types of housing, and the housing mix is as a result unbalanced. Many of these houses will not be Net Zero ready.

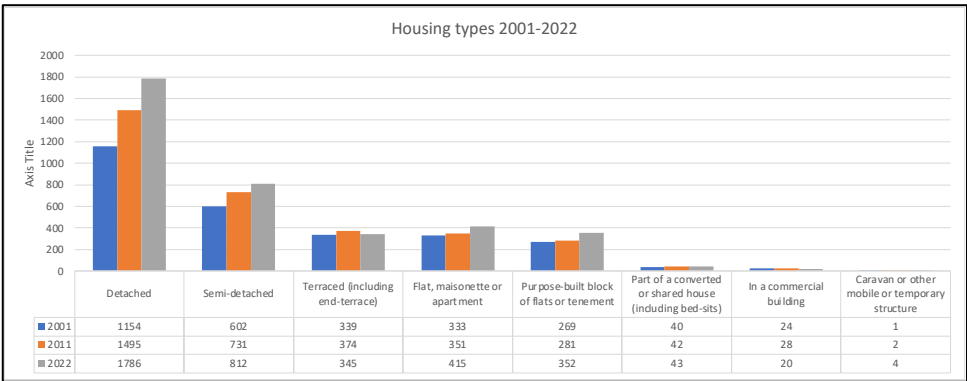


Figure 14: Housing types 2001-2022 (census data)

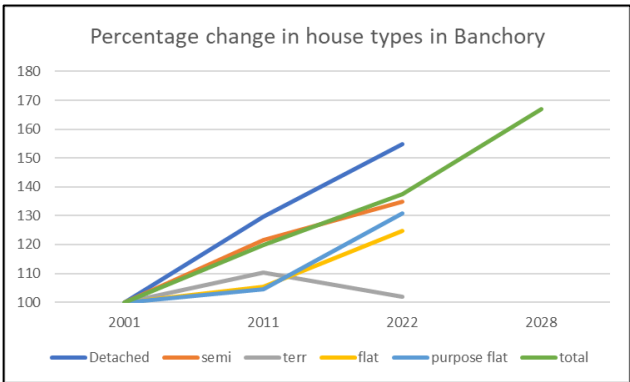


Figure 15: Percentage change in house types in Banchory

The 2023 LDP (see above) includes plans to build an additional 789 houses within Banchory and on its western extension in the IGBC area, most of which are not included in the 2022 census data, but which are shown in the total in Figure 15 (green line).

**Including the 2023 LDP housing allocation, the number of houses in Banchory and adjacent areas will have grown by 65% since 2001, without any substantial increase or improvement in secondary schooling, health, other services, or transport facilities.**

In their 2024 paper “Suffering Quietly”, researchers [McArdle and Biggs](#) summarise how Aberdeenshire Council’s cost cutting has resulted in a significant deterioration in services for Mental Health and Well-Being in Banchory. These services have either been closed altogether, or moved to other locations which, due to the poor public transport, are difficult to access.

### Developer Obligations/Contributions

According to Aberdeenshire Council's [FAQ on Developer Obligations](#), "when a development takes place there is a need for infrastructure and services to accompany it, which can include roads, schools or a wide range of facilities depending on the scale and location of the development. Developer Obligations are intended to ensure that developers make appropriate provision for any losses or supply additional facilities that are required to mitigate the impact of a development in the local community".

There are 5 tests which must be met to determine what obligations there may be for a particular development:

- Necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms
- Serve a planning purpose and where it is possible to identify infrastructure provision requirements in advance, should relate to development plans
- Relate to the proposed development either as a direct consequence of the development or arising from the cumulative impact of development in the area
- Fairly and reasonably relate in scale and kind to the proposed development
- Be reasonable in all other respects

[Guidance published in February 2024](#) provides the Aberdeenshire Council methodology for calculating developer obligations or contributions, covering transportation, education, healthcare facilities, waste and recycling facilities, community halls, sports and recreation facilities, and affordable housing.

Figure 16 shows the developers' contributions received and spent in Banchory over the past 10 years, according to Aberdeenshire Council's Developer and Obligations department:

Item	Funds received	Funds spent	Funds reserved	Comment	Funds available
Banchory Academy	£84,290.00	£84,290.00	£0.00	Spent on additional teaching and learning space	£0.00
Hill of Banchory Primary	£112,136.84	£0.00	£112,136.84	Reserved for HOB Primary extension	£0.00
Banchory Primary	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00		£0.00
Banchory Medical Centre	£500,385.28	£10,813.02		Spent on internal reconfiguration works	£489,572.26
Community Halls	£424,057.98	£126,455.11		Spent on HOB Sports Centre Community rooms	
		£5,446.99		Spent on Library/Museum Community area	
			£292,155.88	Reserved for Town Hall	£0.00
Recreation/Sport	£56,736.89	£32,428.01		Spent on HOB Sports centre	
			£2,340.09	Reserved for HOB pitches	£21,968.79
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,177,606.99</b>	<b>£259,433.13</b>	<b>£406,632.81</b>		<b>£511,541.05</b>

Figure 16: Summary Developers' Obligations over past 10 years (Aberdeenshire Council Developer and Obligations department)

A total of £1,177,606.99 has been received in the past 10 years, 42% of which was allocated to the Banchory Medical Centre. We note no allocation has been made to make improvements to Banchory Primary.

Some 22% of the funds received have been spent, almost half of which was on the Hill of Banchory Sports Centre. A total of 35% of the funds received are reserved, the bulk of which is for the Town Hall. About 43% of funds received are still available to spend, mainly on the Banchory Medical Centre.

We understand that the Developers' obligations are insufficient to provide a significant extension or a new Health Centre in Banchory, and that additional funding is required. To access Scottish Government funding, NHS Grampian and the Health and Social Care Partnerships are currently working on a Programme Initial Agreement (PIA) which sets out a deliverable, whole-system service and infrastructure change plan for the next 20-30 years. The PIA will be submitted to the Scottish Government by January 2026. It is not clear that Banchory will be included in the proposal.

Developer Obligation spending has not kept up with development over the past 10 years. It is not clear to the community how Developer Obligations over the past 20 years of significant development in Banchory have mitigated the impact on local infrastructure due the expanding population.

### Population

The 2022 age profile is shown in Figure 17, highlighting a big drop in people aged 18-25. This is likely due to school leavers going to University/College and/or finding employment away from Banchory, or it may be due to lack of local housing and/or employment for young people. The largest group in the population is of working age, between ca. 30 and 65.

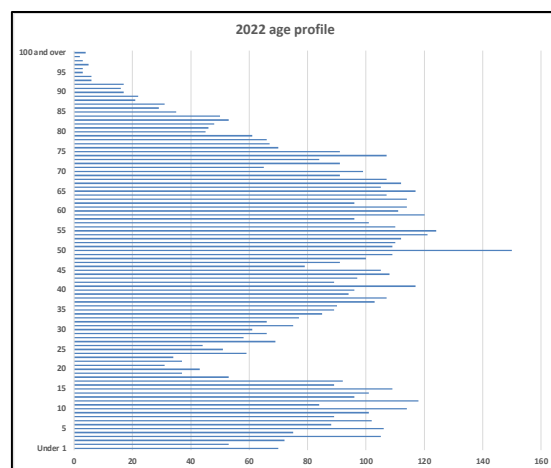


Figure 17: Population age profile in Banchory (2022 census)

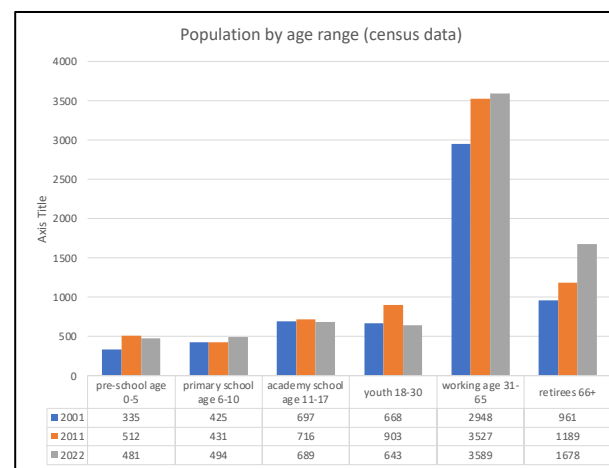


Figure 18: Population by age range 2001-2022

Between 2001-2022, the census data shows that the population has increased by 26% to a total of 7,574 (Figure 18). The fastest growing population between 2001 and 2022 is aged over 66, which has grown by ca. 75%, albeit from a small base (see Figure 18). The next largest increase in population is pre-school

children aged 0-5 (44%) followed by working people aged 46-65 (22%), and primary school aged children aged 6-10 (16%). Increases in numbers of Academy children aged 11-17 and youth aged 18-20 are all <10%. Apart from retirees, the largest increases happened between 2001 and 2011 when the Hill of Banchory was developed.

There is a discrepancy between the 26% increase in population and the 35% increase in housing between 2001 and 2022. This is because there are on average fewer occupants per house in 2022 compared to 2001. Whilst larger, detached houses make up almost half of all houses in Banchory in 2022, about 1/3 of all households were 1-person households, 1/3 were 2-person households and 1/3 were >3-person households.

**There is a mismatch in housing types available to meet local needs, specifically a lack of smaller houses to attract first time buyers and for the rapidly increasing population of retirees.**

### Green spaces

One of the characteristics that is most appreciated in Banchory is local access to green space. The town has local access to a wide variety of natural habitats (Figure 19). Figure 20 is an overlay of the current Local Development Plan which shows that some of these areas of green space have been removed already or are at risk. These areas are highlighted in Figure 21. **Every effort must be made to preserve and enhance the natural habitat areas in the town.**

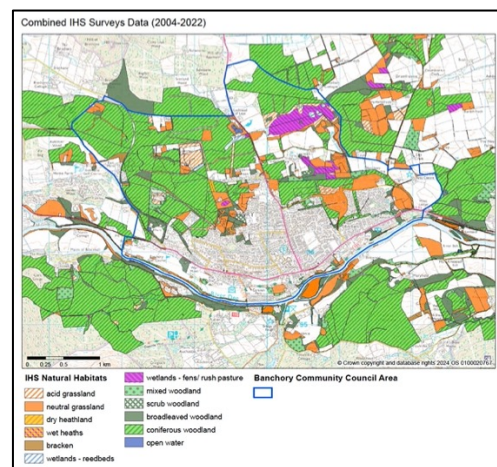


Figure 19: BCC area habitat map (NESBReC)

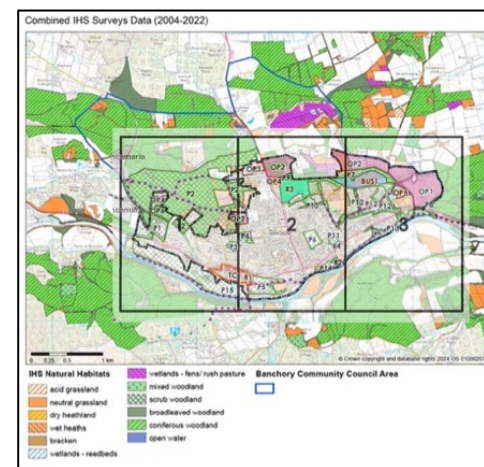


Figure 20: Habitat map overlain with 2023 LDP plan

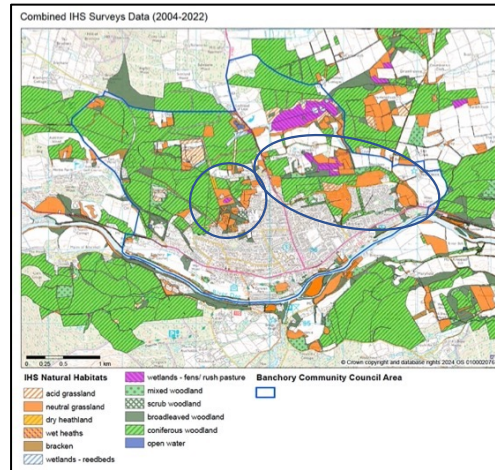


Figure 21: Habitat areas removed or under threat from development

One option to safeguard valued green space is to apply for a Community Asset Transfer, for example in Corsee Wood (Figure 22).

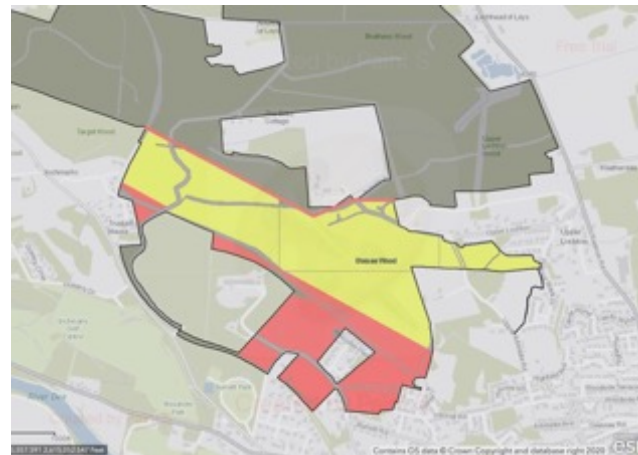


Figure 22: Community Asset Transfer proposal for Corsee Wood. The pink areas as a 1<sup>st</sup> tranche as an amenity woodland replacing timber with hardwood and developing the woodland as a social space, including outdoor forest learning etc. The yellow areas would be a 2<sup>nd</sup> phase as a managed timber woodland with possibly recreation or tourism.

## Deprivation

According to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), deprivation has increased in Banchory since 2012, particularly in the central parts of town around Raemoir Rd, and in Banchory East (Figures 23 and 24).

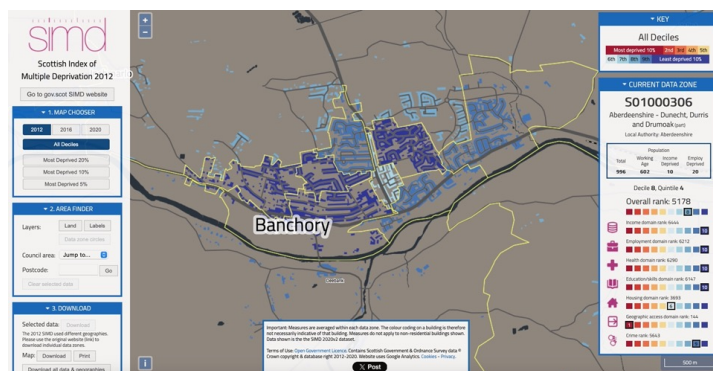


Figure 23: [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2012](#)

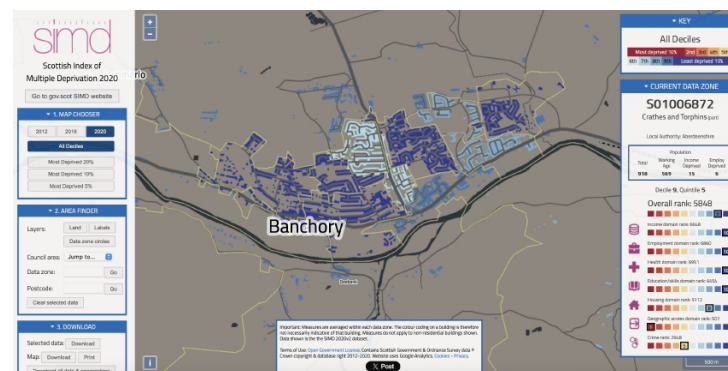


Figure 24: [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020](#)

Banchory East and areas near the Raemoir Rd also have higher levels of households claiming Universal credit. Both Banchory West and Banchory East are above the Aberdeenshire average for claiming Universal Credit. The number of children in low-income families is also high in Banchory East.

**Whilst the perception is that Banchory is an affluent town, there are areas of real deprivation and difficulty which are not acknowledged or taken into account in planning. A wide range of people still need affordable housing and services.**

## Local economy

In Banchory West, the top two industries in order of employment are Accommodation & food services, and Education (see top left charts in Figure 25). Professional/scientific/technical jobs (likely related to the oil & gas sector) are not in the majority, ranking 3<sup>rd</sup>.

In Banchory East, the top two industries in order of employment are Retail and Construction. Employment in the Professional/scientific/technical and Health sectors lag significantly behind these (see top right charts in Figure 25).



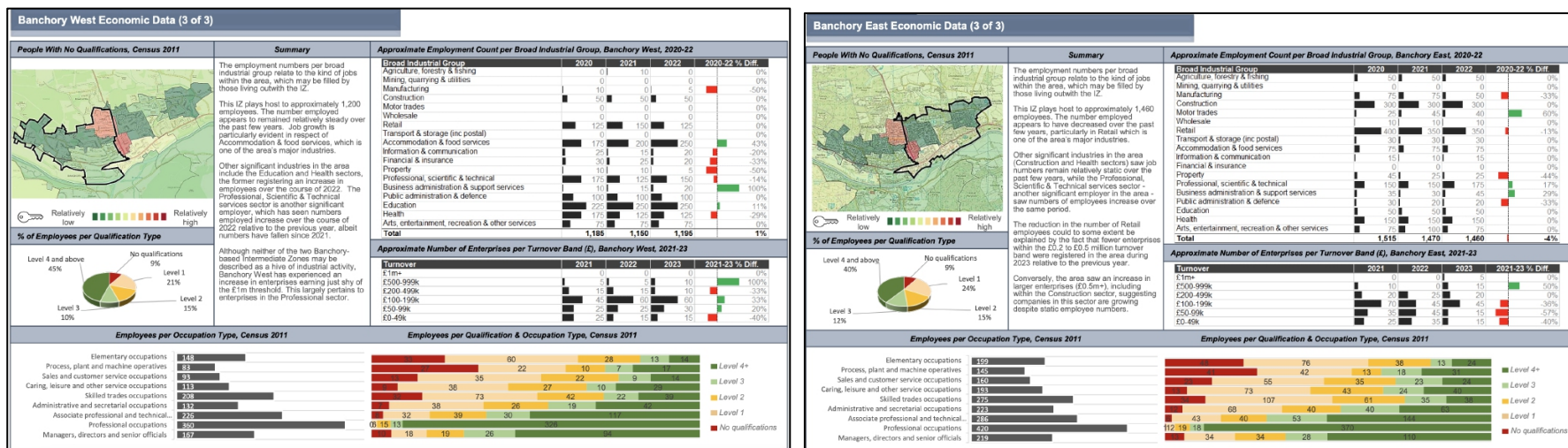


Figure 25: [Banchory West](#) and [Banchory East](#) economic data

It is likely that many of these jobs support the oil & gas industry in some way. As the oil & gas sector declines, this will change. Renewable energy opportunities are unlikely to offset this decline. The picture will be very different in 10 years' time, and the town needs to prepare for that now.

It is also likely that many of these jobs support the tourism industry.

The vision for Banchory in the future suggests encouraging employment opportunities in the tourism and education sectors. To ensure a Just Transition and a prosperous future, it is important to start investment and development in these sectors now, and to safeguard natural assets which underpin these opportunities.

On average, those living in Banchory East and near the Raemoir Rd earn lower incomes than those in Banchory West (see Figure 26). Most incomes are in the £10-30,000 range.

The median figure is influenced by the spike of earners in the £100-120,000 range, most likely related to the oil & gas sector. As the population ages and the oil & gas sector declines, this will change.

In addition, there are around 150 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Banchory.

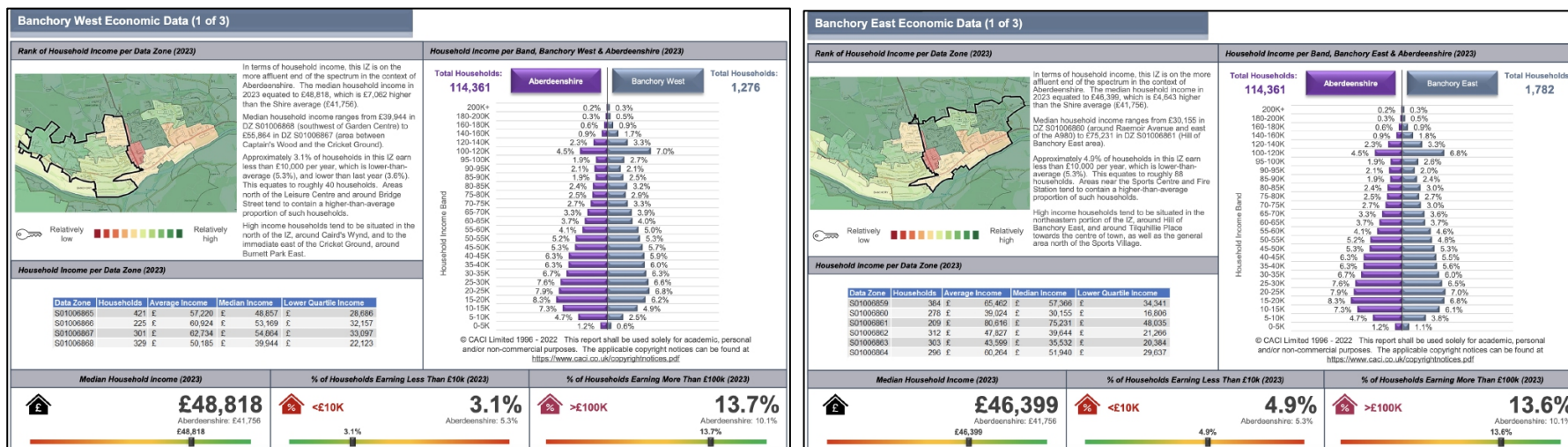


Figure 26: [Banchory West](#) and [Banchory East](#) income data

## Volunteering

Volunteering is thriving in the town, with around 150 active volunteer and sports groups. There is concern however that some of the long-established groups are run by older people who will wish to retire and there is no clear succession plan in place.

## Public transport and moving around

Public transport in Banchory is poor or absent. In the draft 2025 Aberdeenshire Passenger Transport Strategy, Banchory is assumed to be a 'service' town provider, although its population is <10,000 and some key services are not available and/or have been moved to other locations.

Unlike Inverurie which is also a service town, Banchory is not a public transport hub for local settlements. The only bus services available are to and from Aberdeen, not to local towns and villages, including the Primary and Academy catchment areas in Strachan, Finzean and Durris.

Travel times to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary (ARI) or for work in Aberdeen by bus are estimated to be 95-120 minutes in the Transport Strategy, compared to 30 minutes by car. There is no direct service to ARI, Aberdeen airport or Stonehaven railway station, and none to the employment centres in Westhill, Kingswells, Bucksburn or Cove N.

[Data](#) shown in Figure 27 shows car journeys taken from Banchory East, and Figure 28 shows the bus or coach journeys taken in the same period. The bus service is clearly not meeting need. It is often reported that frequency of buses is inadequate, and that the service is expensive and notoriously unreliable.



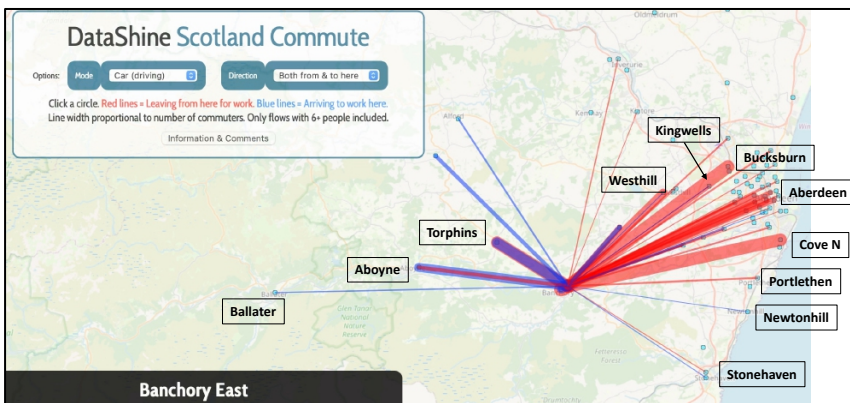


Figure 27: Car journeys from Banchory East showing key destinations

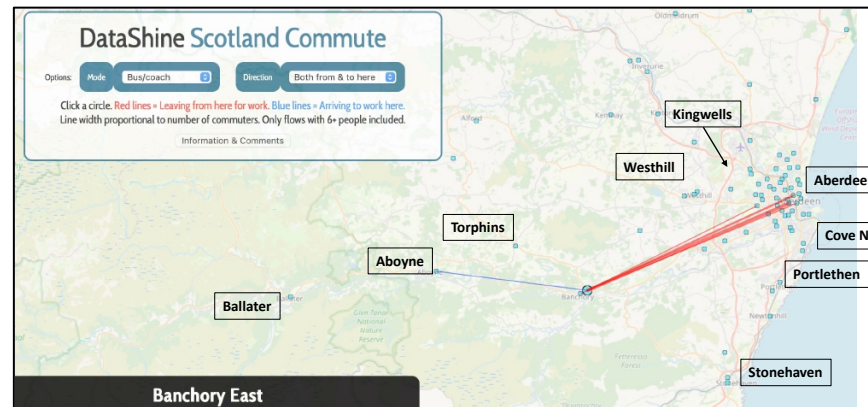


Figure 28: Bus/coach journeys from Banchory East

A minibus service, A2B, operated by Aberdeenshire Council provides travel within the town for shopping or other local services and facilities. The service is free to use but is only available for people who have difficulty walking, people with other disabilities or those who don't live near a regular bus route. It is very popular in the Inchmarlo Residents' Village. The buses can be booked up to 7 days before travel or 14 days for health-related trips but no later than the day before travel.

### **A car is not a luxury in Banchory, it is essential to get around.**

According to the 2022 census, there has been a 53% increase in cars in Banchory since 2001, more than double the increase in population. This excludes the significant increase expected due to 2023 LDP developments. In 2022, there were 4,940 cars in Banchory for a population of 7,574, which is **approximately 2 cars for every 3 people in the town.**

### *Roads and moving around*

The state of roads in Banchory is highly variable, with numerous potholes being reported (Figure 29).

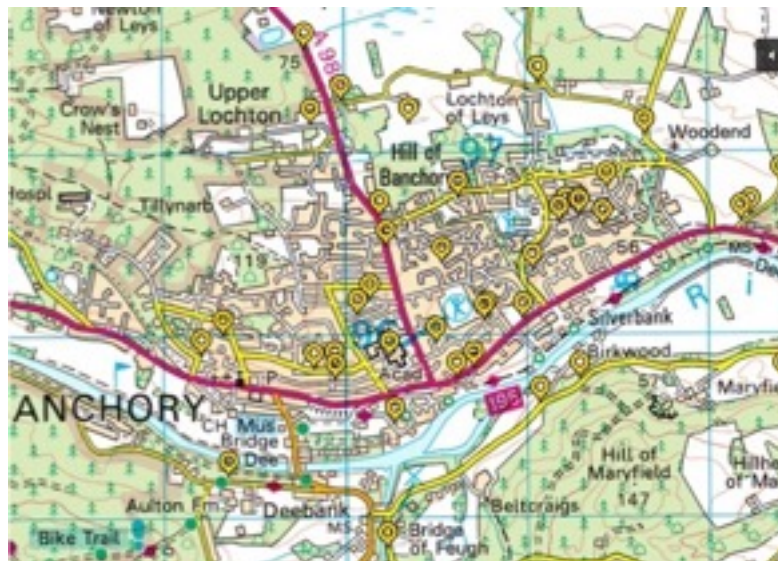


Figure 29: Banchory potholes (November 2024)

Banchory is one of the busiest areas in Deeside for road cyclists, yet there are no cycle lanes. Key routes used by walkers, runners and cyclists are shown in the Strava heat map in Figure 30 (August 2024). Note however that the Strava map is for recreational use and does not reflect paths used by people going to work or shopping, or those who do not use Strava. The Banchory Paths group have produced a useful [walks around Banchory leaflet](#).

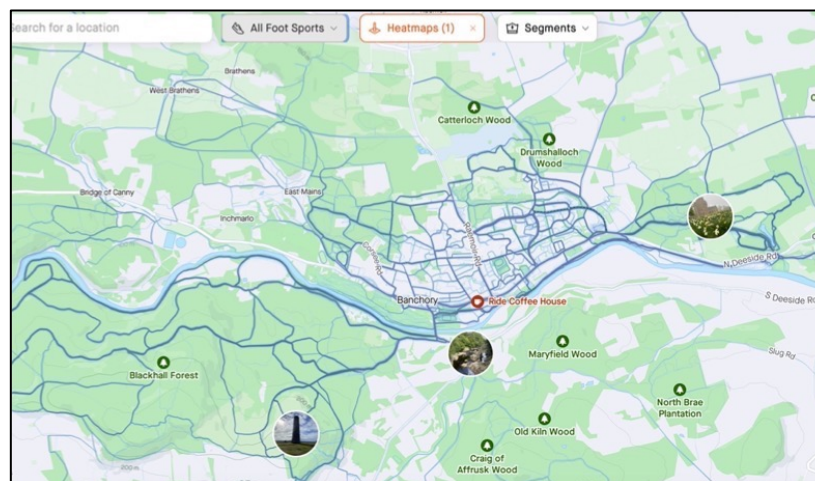


Figure 30: Walking and cycling [Strava heat map](#) (August 2024)

## *Education*

There are three schools in the BCC area: two Primaries (Banchory and Hill of Banchory) catering for children aged 5-10, and one Academy (Banchory) for children aged 11-18. There are also two private nurseries and two out of hours school care centres.

The Grammar parochial school in Banchory was originally founded in 1651, with an endowment from Sir Thomas Burnett. Dr Alexander Reid provided a further endowment. The original building was destroyed by flooding in 1799, when it moved to a new site on the north of the turnpike road. It moved again in the 1820s and was then removed to a site opposite the East Parish Church in 1854 as a result of the construction of the Deeside Railway.

In 1878 the Grammar School and the Loanhead Public School combined to form the new Central School on Raemoir Road, which opened 16 September 1878. Loanhead Public School was formerly the Free Church School. It changed its name on 6 October 1873 when taken over by the School Board.

In 1911, Lady Burnett's School combined with the Central School and became the junior department of that establishment. Lady Burnett's School was located in the building in the square opposite Banchory Town Hall. It was originally founded in 1750, but the building at the square was built and paid for by Lady Burnett in 1838 (as noted by a plaque on the side of the building). It was originally a Female School but seems to have admitted boys from c. 1880s. After the school closed the building was later used as Burgh offices, then Aberdeenshire Council offices.

In 1925 the Central School became a Senior Secondary School. It was renamed Banchory Academy in 1946. The school separated into primary & secondary departments in 1978.

The current **Banchory Primary School** has a capacity is 550, and with pupil numbers at 414 in 2022, the school is not full. Despite this however, the pupil to teacher ratio has increased as have class sizes since 2019. The facilities and fabric of the building is poor with frequent leaks from the flat roof disrupting lessons. Portacabins have been used for many years on the site and are in a poor state of repair.

The **Hill of Banchory Primary School** was opened in 2006. The school capacity was originally 387 in 2017 and was increased to 434. Pupil numbers have steadily increased since 2009 as have teacher numbers. With pupil numbers at 362 in 2023, the school is not full. As it's a relatively new school, the fabric and facilities of the school are excellent.

The existing **Banchory Academy's** main building was built in 1983, with the remaining blocks completed in 1986.

The catchment area for the Banchory Academy covers six primary schools, two within the BCC area (Banchory and Hill of Banchory), three within the CDDCC area (Drumoak, Crathes and Durriss), and one within the FCC area (Strachan) though this closed in 2017, Figure 31.



Figure 31: 2024 Banchory Academy catchment area (see [here](#))

The original school capacity was for 780, and in the years to 2015, the school was well over capacity (Figure 32). Some classroom reclassification and refurbishment of the sports hall increased the school capacity to 900 pupils in 2016, and a rise in class sizes resulted in an increase in capacity to 930 in 2021. Portacabins have been a feature of the school for many years.

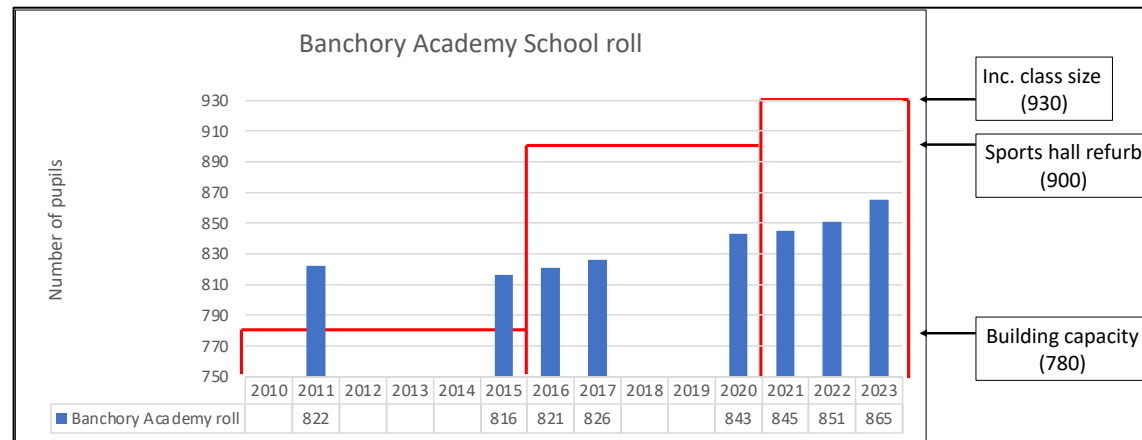


Figure 32: Banchory Academy roll, showing school capacity (various data sources)

Whilst the school can be said to be below capacity (the school, with 865 pupils, was 94% full in 2023 using the latest capacity), the facilities of the building (e.g., canteen, assembly, toilets, corridors, playing areas, etc.) remain suitable for the original 780 and **the school feels significantly over-capacity**. There are ca. 5 classes in portacabins which are about 30 years old. Children report difficulty getting to classes on time as the corridors are so crowded.

The building is over 40 years old. The fabric of the school and portacabins is poor and the school requires updating. In 2016, calls for the “outdated” school to be replaced were made by local Councillors, citing that Banchory Academy was ranked the worst in Aberdeenshire in the annual assessment of overall suitability ratings in terms of its ability to deliver the current curriculum. No progress on this has been made since then.

Banchory Academy was in the top 10 schools in Scotland between 2003 and 2013, dropping to below the top 20 since 2020. The ranking in 2023 was 37<sup>th</sup>, and the latest published ranking in 2024 was 48<sup>th</sup>.

**The Academy’s reputation is key to Banchory being an attractive town to live in and the fall in ranking is of great concern.**

### *Health*

In 2009, the **Banchory Group Practice** had 12 part-time and full-time GPs, corresponding to 8.7 Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) GPs.

They covered a population of 12,155 across Banchory, Echt, Torphins, Strachan, Finzean, Kincardine O’Neil, Durris, and Drumoak. The population in Banchory (approximately 7,030) comprised about 58% of the practice list.

This list size was well above the Aberdeenshire and Scottish averages. In Aberdeenshire, the average list size was just over 8,000.

Today, the Banchory Group Practice serves a population of over 13,340 patients, an increase of approximately 10% since 2009. The population in Banchory (around 7,600) still comprises about 57% of the list.

The role of GPs changed in 2018 when the GP contract redefined the GP as the “Expert Generalist” and called for practices to create a team of trained professionals to take on roles previously undertaken by GPs.

The practice now has 13 part-time and full-time GPs, corresponding to 9 WTE GPs an increase of about 3% since 2009.

However, in line with the 2018 GP contract, there is now 1 Physician Associate, 2 Urgent Care Practitioners, 3 First Contact Physiotherapists, and 3 pharmacists working in the practice alongside the GPs. These pharmacists are in addition to those in the local chemists. Overall, this corresponds to a total of 14.9 WTE clinicians.

Looking at the number of WTE clinicians alone does not provide the full picture, however. Each GP has additional commitments such as ultrasound, community hospital cover, coil clinics, implant clinics, and injection clinics. Due to the withdrawal of funding or changes to services, the practice has lost a number of specialised services, including a dermatology clinic, antenatal scanning, and community endoscopy work. As a result, these sessions are now incorporated into the standard appointment schedule.

The practice also has a long-standing reputation as a hub for medical education, hosting medical students, junior doctors in training, and GP registrars, an area we have worked hard to expand in recent years.

Although the diversification of the workforce has been welcome, the ambitions of the 2018 contract have been severely curtailed by a shortage of staff in all areas, set against a backdrop of funding cuts and a steady decline in GP numbers over the last decade.

This is a nationwide issue, as illustrated in this recent [report](#). Since 2013, the GP WTE workforce in Scotland has fallen by 5% whilst the average patient list sizes have increased by 18%. Patients are also consulting their GPs more frequently, with the average number of consultations rising from 4.8 to 5.4 per year during this period (see e.g., [Long-term trends in English general practice consultation rates from 1995 to 2021: a retrospective analysis of two electronic health records databases - PMC](#)).

The decline in GP numbers, coupled with rising patient demand and an ageing population, has placed unprecedented pressure on primary care and GP partnerships. Between 2012 and 2022, the number of GP partners in Scotland fell by 14%, with 42% of practices in Scotland reporting at least one GP vacancy. Despite these challenges, the practice has successfully maintained a strong partnership model and a high staff retention rate.

**However, the cramped and outdated premises continue to restrict the ability to host additional services, such as visiting consultants or tertiary clinics.** We have been unable to source data to confirm how serious this is.

**Although the Practice has been near the top of NHS Grampian's premises priority list for many years, it is unlikely that funding for a new building will be available soon due to lack of central funding.**

Banchory Group Practice regularly conducts patient surveys. The latest results indicate that while experiences within the practice itself are highly rated, patient experiences of trying to book an appointment or speak with a healthcare professional remain negative.

Since the most recent survey, access to the practice has improved through an updated phone system, which has reduced call waiting times. The practice continues to offer eConsult and provides patients with the choice of face-to-face or telephone appointments, depending on their needs. All patient contacts are triaged, ensuring that appointments are scheduled with the most appropriate clinician at the right time, rather than simply offering the next available appointment.

The **NHS Health Centre** also houses several essential NHS services, including Community Nurses, Midwives, and Health Visitors, all of which are highly valued but under-resourced.

Data from 2007 showed that the top five health issues in Banchory were depression, hypertension, obesity, asthma, and coronary heart disease. Depression rates were higher compared to Grampian, Scotland, and the UK.

Since then, trends have shown significant increases in cancer-related deaths, which are now higher than the national average in Scotland. While asthma hospitalisations initially declined, they have been rising again since 2019 and are now among the highest in Scotland. Early deaths from coronary heart disease are generally trending lower compared to Marr, Aberdeenshire, and Scotland as a whole.

There are two **Dental practices** in Banchory, Deeside Dental Care and Fountain Dental Group. These are well attended although they have high waiting lists for NHS dentists.

Services at the **Glen o' Dee Hospital** include physiotherapy, occupational therapy, retinal screening services, orthotics, geriatric outpatient clinics, community oncology clinic, Macmillan advisory service, lymphoedema clinic and a community psychiatric nurse. The facility is highly regarded.



The **Scolty ward** was used as the dementia assessment unit for most if not all of Aberdeenshire and was highly regarded and valued by the local community and beyond. It was temporarily closed in 2022 due to the need for renovations. The decision has now been taken to permanently close the facility due to the difficulty in adequate staffing (numbers and qualifications). Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be a willingness to use the ward for a different purpose.

It appears that the kitchen at Glen o' Dee has also been closed with food being delivered from elsewhere in Aberdeenshire. There is a real fear that the Glen o' Dee hospital will all close without investment. This will be a loss to overall health provision in Banchory and add more pressure on the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.

There are several **physiotherapist** practices, all in demand.

Within the BCC area, there is one **care home** (Bellfield house), with another, Inchmarlo Residential Village in the adjacent IGBCC area. There are several private home care agencies and a council run service. With the increasingly aging population demand is growing significantly.

**Bennett House** is a day care for dementia and the **Dalvenie Centre** is a very sheltered housing development with 24-hour carers. It is also a social care resource centre with a few day services. **Hanover Court** also provides sheltered housing.

### *High Street and Shops*

According to the [2023 Banchory Town Centre Health Check](#), there is a good distribution between independent and chain retailers within the town centre, defined as being around the High Street (Banchory West). The majority (73%) are independent retailers, and there are 4 charity shops. Cafes, restaurants, or takeaways comprise 19% of businesses in the town centre. The vacancy rate at that time was around 13%, with many residents expressing a strong desire to see these units becoming occupied.

Retail in the centre of Banchory East is limited to a Co-op supermarket and there is high demand for more retail units in this area, especially a Post Office.

Out-of-town, there is a large Tesco supermarket and plans to establish other national retail outlets. Public transport to this area is poor and access is generally by car.

### *General strain on services*

The recently published report, Summary Suffering Quietly (McArdle and Biggs, 2024) summarises the considerable strain on services due to the fast-growing town:

**“The town is growing, and it was clear that residents felt the services to meet the new needs were not being provided and undue pressure was being placed on doctor and school facilities, for example. For what is perceived to be a wealthy location, a need for rural regeneration is indicated with lost services being reinstated with the same or another facility and no further closures of social support systems should take place. The local authority Local Plan needs to take into account the needs of a hidden population and how services can be provided to relatively small populations in rural communities to prevent quiet suffering.”**

“Due to the perception of an affluent town, support from Aberdeenshire Council has significantly reduced, and there is evidence of ‘circling the wagons’ through volunteering and through commissioning studies. More needs to be done. To support mental health and well-being there is a need for a range of local services and approaches in Banchory, including improved signposting beyond social media; social prescribing; additional youth work services; support



for those with children in early years; early intervention counselling; adult learning to tackle social isolation; community development activities to bring people together from the different communities in Banchory.”

“Some of these services exist already in part, across multiple sites, but are fragmentary. Consideration should be given to securing a community space to house these services in an accessible, readily identifiable, and cohesive hub. This would also provide a locus for public services that are increasingly being offered through outreach elsewhere.”

#### *Aberdeenshire Infrastructure Audit 2024*

Aberdeenshire Council completed an [Infrastructure Audit](#) in 2024, engaging key infrastructure stakeholders to identify infrastructure capacity. A simple RAG categorisation was used, as follows:

- Green indicates that for a certain type of infrastructure, there is capacity, and no constraints exist for future development.
- Amber indicates that there may be capacity constraints for certain type of infrastructure, but there may be possible future investment plans to resolve these.
- Red indicates that there are major constraints and no or very little capacity exists to support future developments.

Aberdeenshire Council’s assessment for Banchory results is shown in the upper part of Figure 33. We have done our own assessment, shown in the lower part.

Note our conclusion that, with reference to Banchory Academy, there **ARE** major constraints in Education provision to support future development. We are also concerned about the wastewater system, which is near or at capacity, with wastewater reported to be being discharged into the river. Digital connections are very patchy in the town. Care homes are also insufficient, particularly with the rapidly growing older population.

Furthermore, Aberdeenshire Council have identified Banchory as a possible high priority settlement with increased housing pressure, based on the [Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024-2029](#), which assumes Banchory to be within the Aberdeen Housing Market. This has led to the significant ongoing housebuilding. **This should NOT be extended into the 2028 LDP. We propose no new housing development in the 2028 LDP until services and infrastructure catch up with the current increased population and make provision for any future increase.**

	Local transportation infrastructure	Trunk roads	Local road network	Public transport	Healthcare provision	Waste water provision	Water provision	Education provision	Energy supplies	Gas supplies	Digital connectivity	Community Halls facilities	Community sports & recreation facilities	Waste transfer station provision	Household recycling	Housing & estates	Care homes	Very sheltered housing	Care & support	Learning disabilities extra care
Aberdeenshire Council assessment		no RAG analysis undertaken								no RAG analysis undertaken						identified as possible high priority settlement with increased housing pressure			no info provided	no info provided
Our assessment																no new housing development in LDP2028 until services and infrastructure catch up				

Figure 33: Summary infrastructure assessment, 2024. Top row: [Infrastructure Audit](#) assessment; bottom row: BCC assessment

## 8. Conclusions

The results of consultation and data analyses all lead to one strong conclusion: the community feels that there should be no significant new development until the facilities and services in Banchory catch up with recent population growth both within the town and nearby settlements that rely on Banchory. Provisions must also be made for future population increase. There is a need for a period of community cohesion because so many new residents have joined the community.

Improvement in education and health provision is seen to be essential and has been so for several years. Public transport is poor and has led to a dramatic increase in car use. This has resulted in busy roads and a lack of safe crossings, especially for school children.

Green space within the town is also of great importance to the populace and this is being eroded by the building programmes carried out in the last 20 years.

We appreciate that there is very little funding for community facilities, but residents have expressed a wish not to have funding linked to more development as the facilities are always playing catch up. The community feels that they may need to provide for themselves through creative funding which may not be linked to development.

According to recent training given by Aberdeenshire Council, Developer Obligations are “to ensure that developers make appropriate provision for any losses or supply additional facilities that are required to mitigate the impact of a development on the local community”.

Developer Obligations spending has not kept up with development over the past 10 years. It is not clear to the community how Developer Obligations over the past 20 years of significant development in Banchory have mitigated the impact on local infrastructure due the expanding population.

Developer Obligations is not seen as the only way for the community to expand services provision.

The fundamental belief is that there needs to be a break in the link between unsuitable development and funding. The community believes that the current developments do not meet the needs of the town’s residents. There is little provision for affordable housing, starter homes or accessible homes and homes for the elderly on one level. Development has been for the most part privately driven, not community driven. Therefore, profitable larger detached family homes dominate, with concomitant loss of green spaces and no heed to possible biodiversity loss on the fringes of the town.

Public investment from Aberdeenshire Council or the Scottish Government have also not kept pace with development.

Site selection for any short to medium term development in the town should take into account these strongly held views of the local community. **Development should be minimal and focused on brownfield sites until infrastructure and services have been improved sufficiently to accommodate more growth in the town and nearby settlements that rely on Banchory. Protection of woodlands and other green spaces is paramount.**

NPF4 strongly advocates infrastructure first, which is where the community is coming from now.

There is also concern about the transition away from the oil and gas sector and the resulting economic impact in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. The community would like to see investment in diversifying the local economy, for example in tourism and tertiary education facilities, and more support for local businesses.

The community is also aware that the town needs to prepare for the climate and nature crises, and there is support for Communication and Resilience Hubs being established as well as investment in net zero projects.

## 9. Local Place Plan proposal

Our work, described above, has resulted in a recommendation of 10 short-term and 12 medium/long-term Non Place-based Actions as well as 32 Place-based Actions. We have based our LPP on 5 themes as illustrated in Figure 34. Figure 35 shows how these themes link into our community's vision of Banchory.

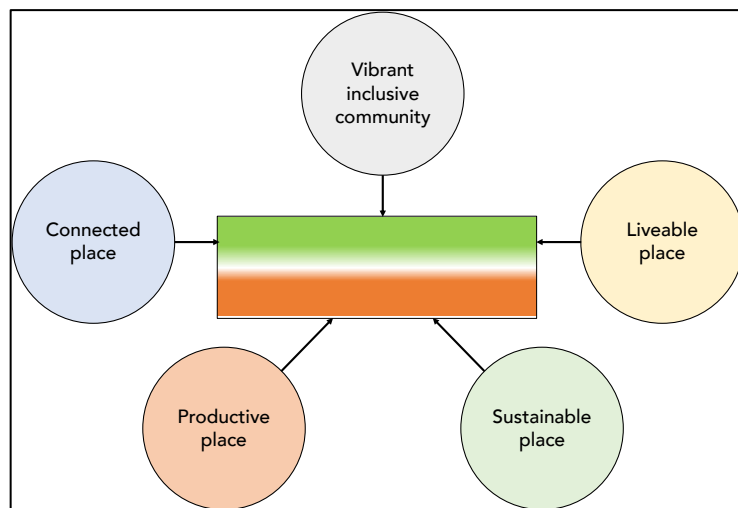


Figure 34: LPP themes

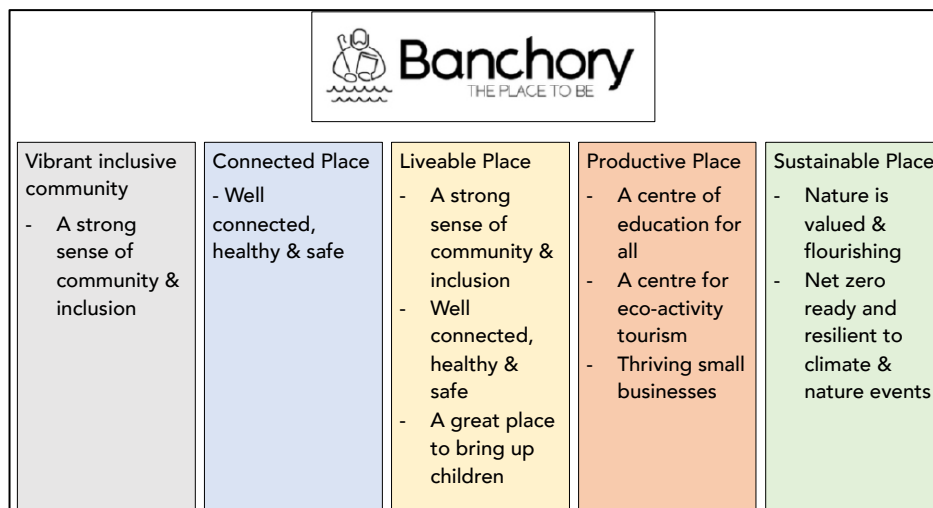


Figure 35: LPP themes linked to vision of Banchory

In summary, we call for the following:

- **Very limited new development:** a period of consolidation to allow services and infrastructure to catch up with recent population growth
- **Safeguarding of all remaining green spaces:** encouragement of more wildlife/native tree planting

The following actions to be delivered as soon as possible (aspired timeline 2-5 years):

- **Community Education Campus:** refurbishment/redevelopment of Banchory Primary and Banchory Academy on their current central premises. There could be an option to investigate a potential alternative location for Banchory Primary.
- **Health Centre:** expansion of the current Banchory Surgery including access to a wide range of health and wellbeing support.
- **Improved public transport and a park and ride/share hub.**
- **Safer traffic measures:** 20mph speed limit in the town centre, more Quiet Roads, safe crossings of the A93, dedicated cycling and walking routes through the town and linking nearby communities.
- **Investment in tourism and tertiary education facilities and a Town Co-ordinator to support businesses.**
- **Communication and Resilience Hubs in Banchory West and Banchory East.**
- **Investment in net zero projects.**

## Non Place-based Actions

The Non Place-based actions are summarised in the table below (Figure 36) with 10 short-term actions, and 12 medium/long-term ones.

**We suggest that these actions are to be led by the community, supported by the Community Council.**

NON PLACE-BASED ACTIONS					
	VIBRANT INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY	CONNECTED PLACE	LIVEABLE PLACE	PRODUCTIVE PLACE	SUSTAINABLE PLACE
SHORT TERM ACTIONS	(1) Improve working together with Aberdeenshire Council. (2) Strengthen Community governance and participation by encouraging people to join the Community Council and help run community projects. (3) Keep community spaces open for longer, especially in the evenings.	(4) Improve signposting in town and along the Deeside Way. (5) Work with the Council to fix the potholes. (6) Explore opportunities for car sharing and car-pooling. Research best practice, including mobile apps, etc.		(7) Employ a Town Co-ordinator to support businesses. (8) Provide support for entrepreneurship, especially for young people.	(9) Save Aberdeenshire Council money and support biodiversity by encouraging initiatives such as switching off streetlights after midnight, no mow months and stopping use of weed killers. (10) Arrange regular community litter picking.
MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM ACTIONS	(1) Organise more Community events, e.g., volunteer festivals, fairs for new residents.	Work with the Council, NESTRANS, and other nearby Community Councils to: (2) Improve public transport to local villages (Drumoak, Strachan, Durris, Torphins, Lumphanan, Westhill, Kingswells) and Stonehaven train station. (3) Set up express buses to Aberdeen, Airport, ARI, and evening buses to events in Aberdeen. (4) Improve and extend the Deeside Way.	Encourage and give support for: (5) Ensuring all new houses are Net Zero ready. (6) Improving the mix of housing to cater for 1 <sup>st</sup> time buyers and downsizing retirees. (7) Including social and affordable housing within developments not on the edges of town. (8) Focussing on facilities and services for residents and tourists rather than more housing developments.	(9) Work with others to improve mobile signal/4G/fast broadband.	(10) Encourage more community food growing projects. (11) Investigate retrofitting insulation in older homes. (12) Investigate options for a community energy project.

Figure 36: Summary Non Place-based actions

## Place-based actions

Figure 37 shows a summary of the Place-based actions, shown on maps in more detail in Figures 36-43 below. We have given a very rough estimate (Low/Medium/High) of potential costs of each action.

We understand that there is limited funding available in Aberdeenshire Council to deliver these projects, and that Banchory is unlikely to be a priority for investment in the near future. We will therefore look for innovative ways to do the work as a collaboration between the community, Aberdeenshire Council and other partners. We have already seen projects successfully achieved in Banchory by small groups of people using this approach, e.g., the skatepark, Banchory Paths, and the Deeside Bike Collective trails.

Many of these projects need to be defined in more detail, and to attract groups of people to get involved and make them happen. One of the purposes of this document is to summarise the opportunities and encourage people to take part to make Banchory a better place to live.

<b>VIBRANT INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY</b>		<b>EST COST</b>
1) Install a Communications Hub where people can find out what's going on, and volunteer groups can improve communications between them. Use the current Phone box on the High Street and install another one outside the Sports Centre or Co-op.		1) Low
2) Increase use of community assets, especially the Community Hub located next to the Hill of Banchory Primary School.		2) Low
<b>CONNECTED PLACE</b>		<b>EST COST</b>
3) Set up a park and ride/share hub on the East side of Banchory to include a bus stop, EV chargers, bike sheds, potentially a bike rental scheme, and showers.		3) High
4) Develop safe road crossings of the North Deeside Road at (from E to W) (a) Tesco, (b) Morrisons, (c) Arbeadie Road and (d) Mount Street along with better access to the Deeside Way.		4) Medium
5) Investigate/consult proper car parking alongside King George V Park.		5) Medium
6) Investigate/consult car parking on the High St.		6) Medium
7) Set up 20mph speed limits within the town.		7) Low
8) Establish Quiet Roads on local country roads used by pedestrians, cyclists, and cars for safer travel, e.g., (a) Upper Lochton Rd, (b) road between the Cowshed and Lochside of Leys (c) Glassel Road, (d) Corsee Road to Glen o' Dee.		8) Low
9) Upgrade core paths.		9) Medium
10) Develop dedicated cycling & walking routes through the town. Link these with local communities, e.g. (a) Inchmarlo, (b) Torphins, (c) Crathes.		10) Medium
11) Install more covered cycle spaces across town, e.g., in Scott Skinner Square		11) Low
<b>LIVEABLE PLACE</b>		<b>EST COST</b>
12) A period of consolidation to allow services and infrastructure to catch up with the population growth resulting in very limited new development for the next LDP plan period.		12) N/R
13) Removal of Banchory from the Aberdeen Housing Market.		13) N/R

14) Safeguard all remaining places of natural heritage from development (see map).	14) High
15) Encourage more wildlife to the area and maintain biodiverse wildlife corridors in town. Encourage native mixed tree planting in zoned areas.	15) Med
16) New houses to be built on brownfield sites only. Examples include the current Police and Ambulance locations, and the BT exchange building on the High Street.	16) High
17) Protect key town assets, e.g., (a) Alexander Park, (b) Burnett Park, (c) Glen o' Dee Community Hospital, (d) Town Hall, (e) Library, (f) Scout Hut, (g) Guide Hut, (h) Tillybrake, (i) Sports Centre, (j) Silverbank, (k) Barn, (l) rugby pitches, etc.	17) High
18) Develop a new Post Office and accessible retail in the Hill of Banchory area.	18) Medium
19) Improve playparks in (a) Bellfield Park and (b) Burnett Road.	19) Low
20) Develop an outdoor gym in Bellfield Park.	20) High
21) Refurbish/redevelop Banchory Academy and Banchory Primary on their current premises as a Community Education Campus. Investigate potential alternative location for Banchory Primary.	21) High
22) Develop a Health Centre in Bellfield, including access to a wide range of health and wellbeing support.	22) High
23) Co-locate Police and Ambulance services with the new Health Centre in Bellfield.	23) High
24) Build a teenagers' and events space in Bellfield.	24) Medium
25) Upgrade and redevelop the Banchory Bowling Club and recreational grounds.	25) Medium
26) Install permanent football changing facilities in King George V Park.	26) Medium

PRODUCTIVE PLACE	EST COST
27) Encourage more local apprenticeships in the Business area, e.g., develop Centres for Rural Skills, Regenerative Agriculture, Renewable Energy in rural areas, ScotCAT (Centre for Alternative Technology)	27) High
28) Set up a Tourism Hub to develop tourism, e.g. at Scott Skinner Square	28) Medium
29) Develop more accommodation for tourists, including good quality B&B's, guesthouses, and a bunkhouse/hostel e.g., at the Woollen Mill.	29) High
30) Develop a Cycling and Walking Hub to encourage more active visitors, e.g., at Woollen Mill.	30) High

SUSTAINABLE PLACE	EST COST
31) Community Asset Transfer of part of Corsee Wood.	31) High
32) Set up Resilience Hubs, including generators and Starlink internet, in (a) the West Church and (b) Dance Centre (TBC).	32) Medium

Figure 37: Summary Place-based actions with rough cost estimates



## Vibrant Inclusive Community Actions

Two proposals are linked to Banchory becoming a Vibrant, Inclusive Community (Figure 38).

Action (1) focusses on the need to improve communication in the town, using small, publicly accessible, locations where posters, leaflets, etc., can be left and easily accessed at any time, e.g., the current phone box on the High Street and a similar one installed in the centre of Banchory East near the Sports Centre or Co-op.

Action (2) proposed more frequent community access to the Community Hub located next to the Hill of Banchory Primary School.

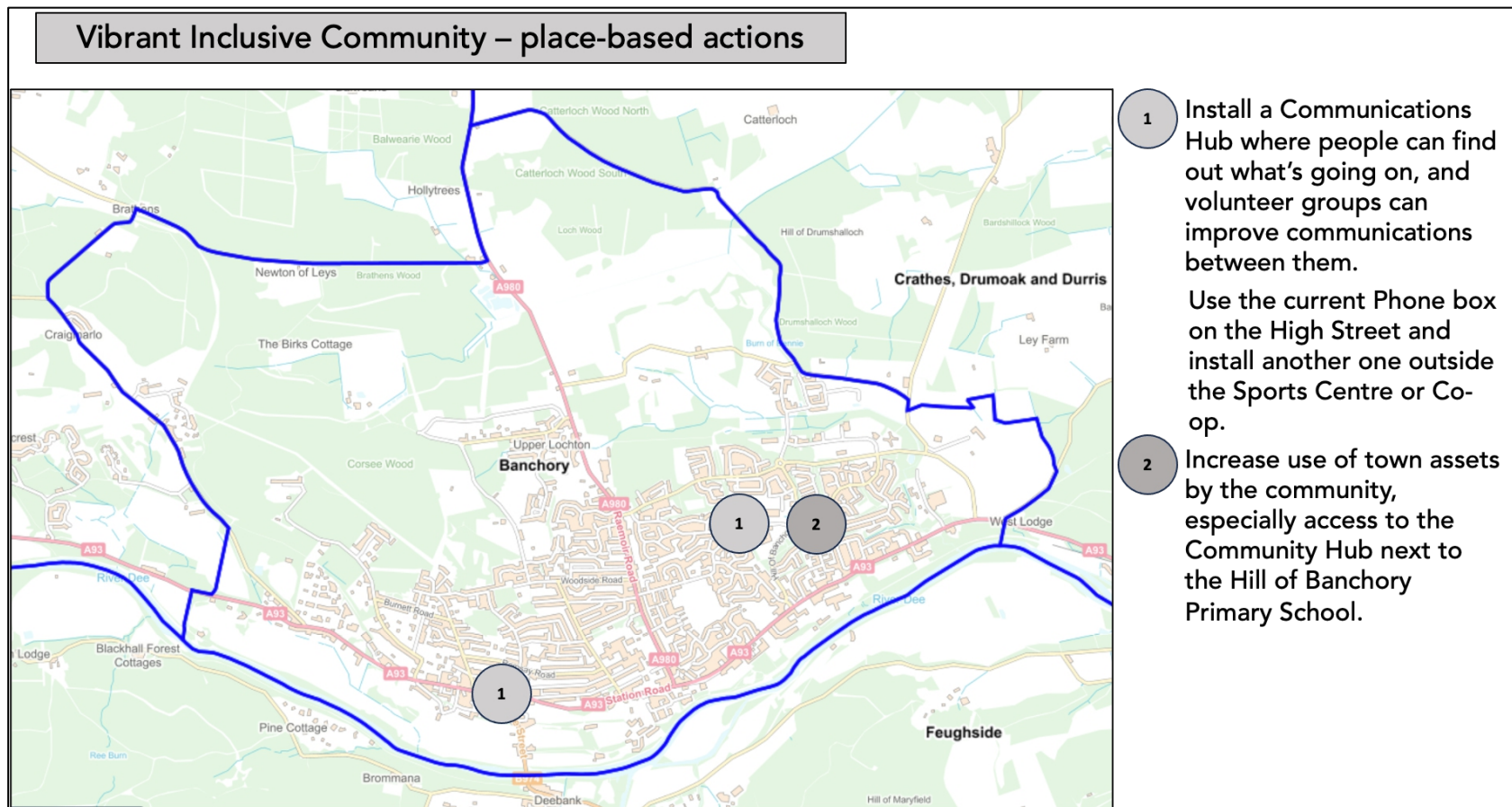


Figure 38: Place-based Actions 1-2 for Vibrant Inclusive Community

## Connected Place Actions

Nine proposals are linked to Banchory becoming a more Connected Place (Figures 39 and 40).

Action (3) is about setting up a park and ride/share hub to the East of the town near Woodend. It should include a bus stop, EV chargers, bike sheds, and potentially a bike rental scheme and showers. Safe road crossings of the A93, especially for children leaving school to go into town on their lunch break, is proposed in Action (4).

Car parking in the centre of town was an issue raised by many. Actions (5) and (6) suggest investigating and consulting on installing proper car parking alongside King George V Park without removal of any trees, and car parking on the High St.

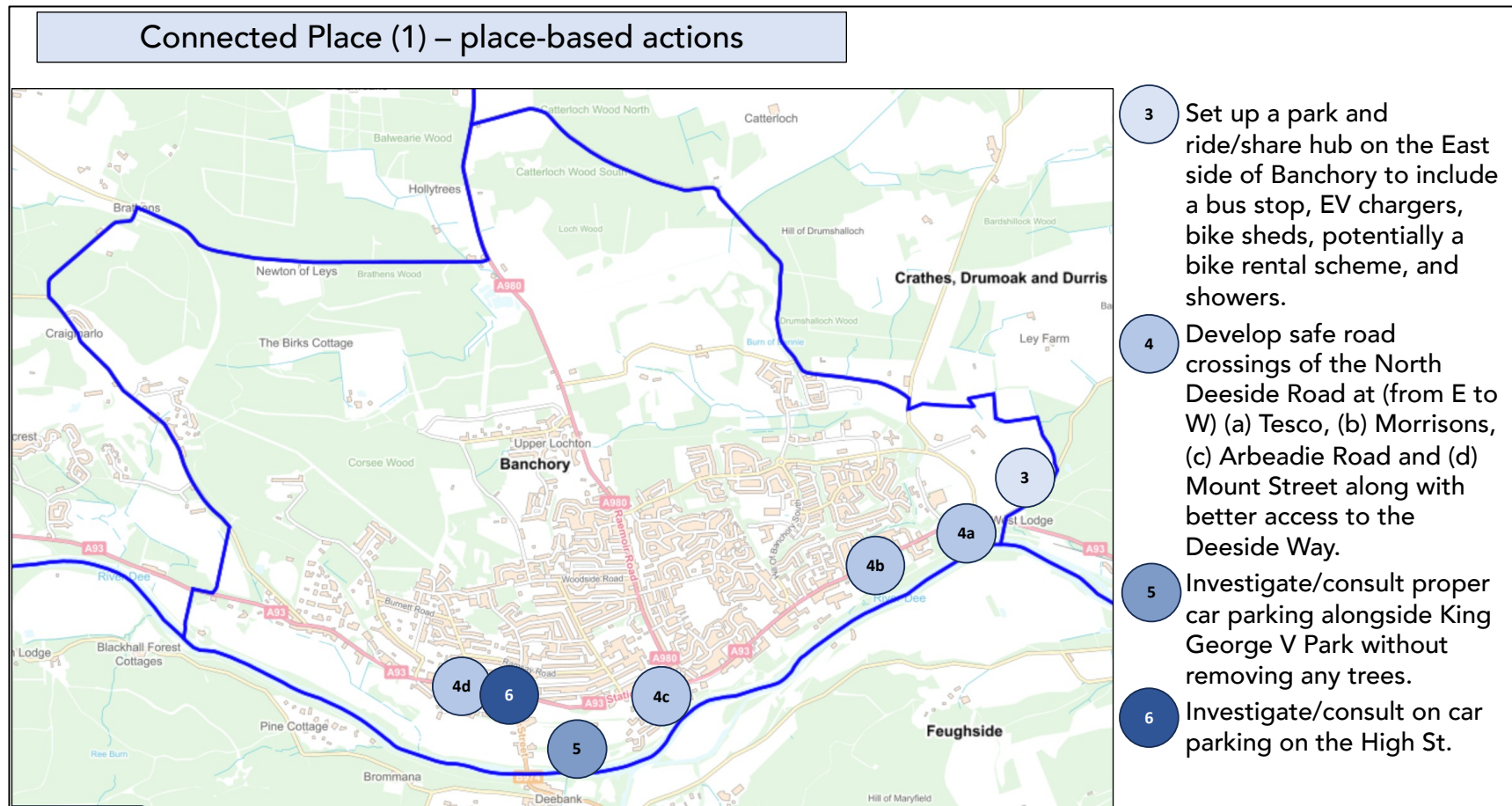


Figure 39: Place-based Actions 3-6 for Connected Place

Actions (7) and (8) address the concerns expressed by many residents on the speed and significant increase of traffic in the town, including on narrow lanes. Action (7) proposes 20mph speed limits within the town, and Action (8) calls for the establishment of Quiet Roads, as defined in the [Highway Code](#), along key narrow roads which are extensively used by cars, pedestrians and cyclists.

Actions (9) and (10) are related to improving paths for active travel (cycling and walking) within the town, as well as links to nearby settlements. Routes to nearby communities are to be developed jointly with their Community Councils. Locations on the map are placeholders only.

Action (11) is about improving the infrastructure in the centre of town for cyclists by providing more covered cycle spaces.

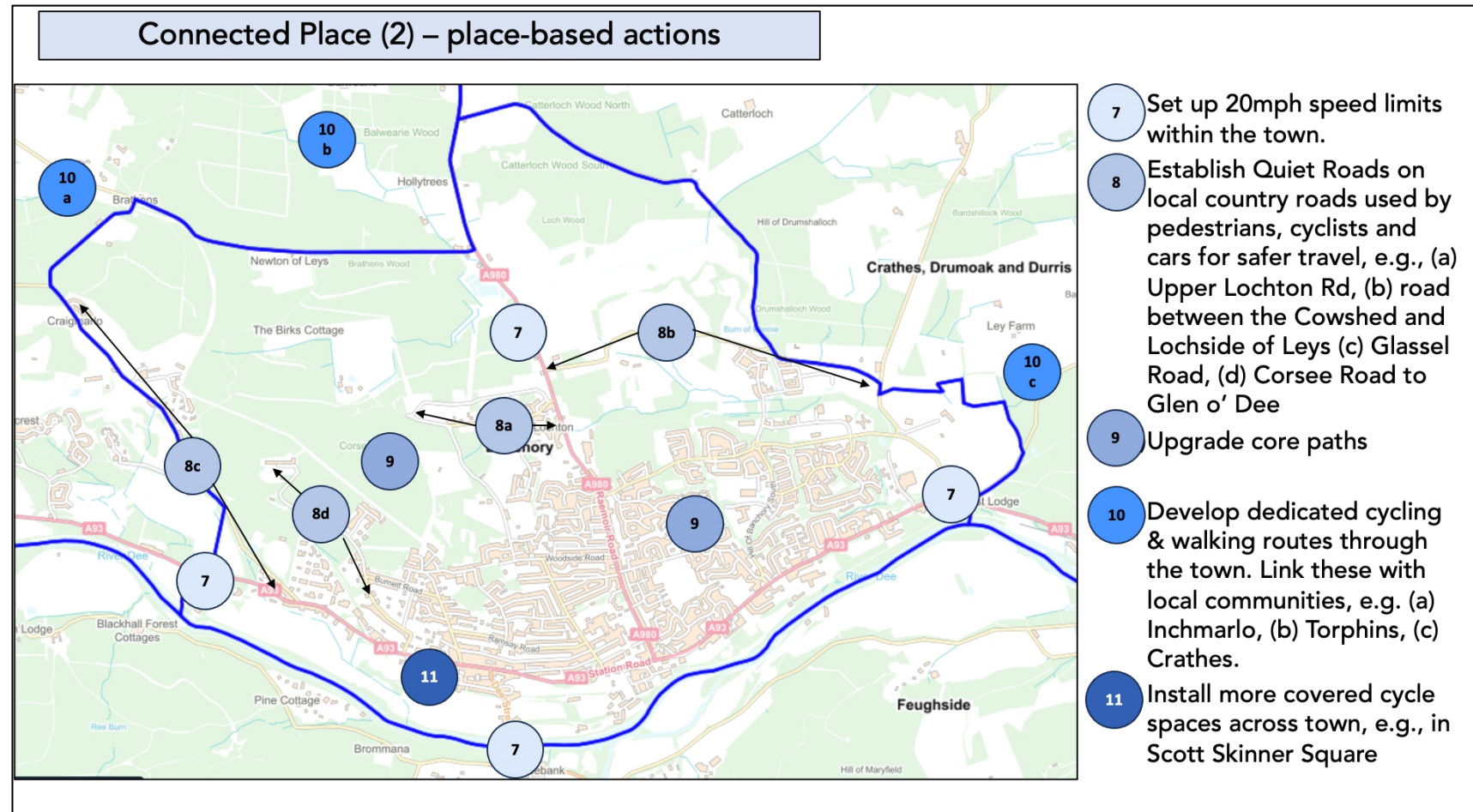


Figure 40: Place-based Actions 7-11 for Connected Place

### **Liveable Place Actions**

A total of 15 actions are linked to Banchory becoming a Liveable Place (Figures 41-43).

Actions (12) to (15) describe the key principles for Liveable Place actions (Figure 41) and apply to the town as a whole (Figure 41).

Actions (12) calls for a period of consolidation and limited new housing development throughout the town in LDP 2028, to allow services and infrastructure to catch up with the growth that has occurred over the past ca. 20 years.

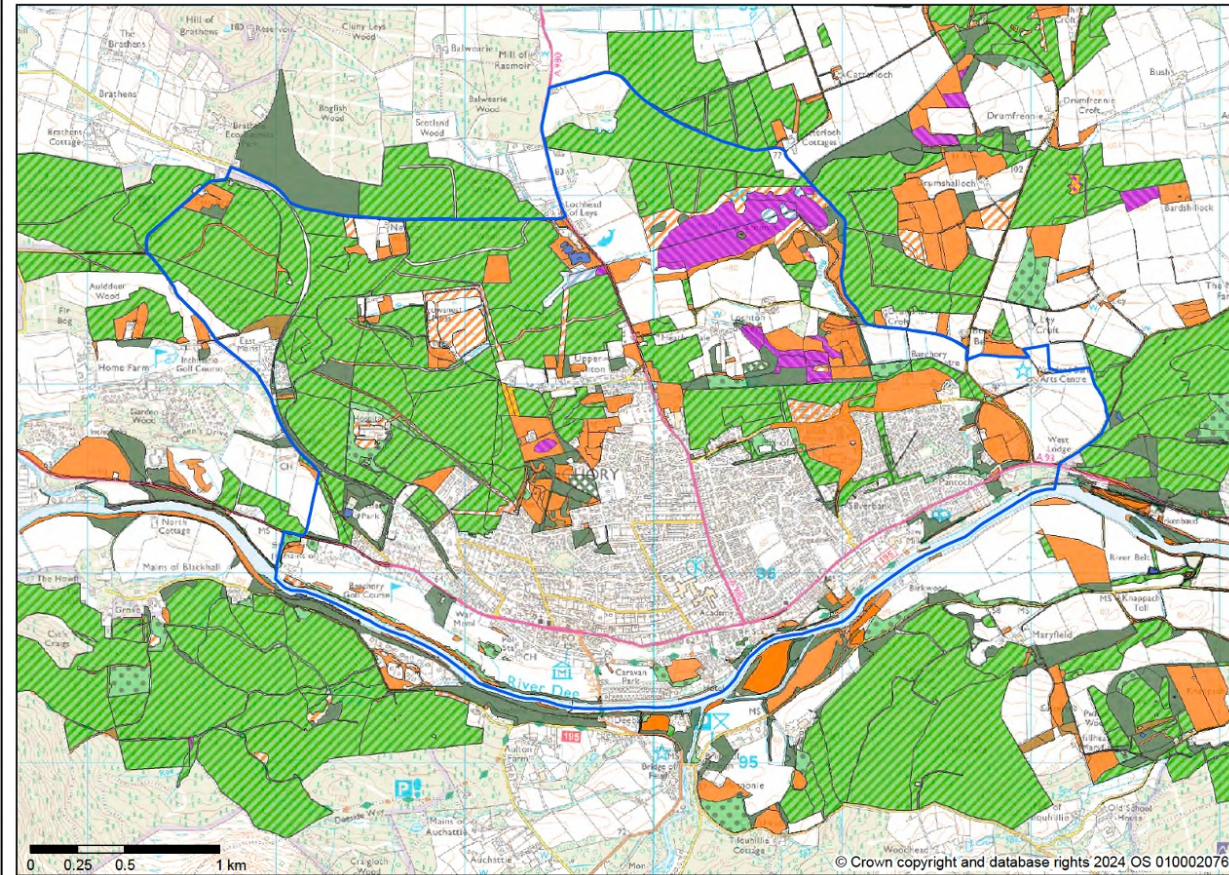
Action (13) proposes that Banchory is removed from the Aberdeen Housing Market in recognition that the town is not part of the Strategic Growth Areas in the Aberdeen and Shire Strategic Development Plan, nor is it in the Growth Corridors specified in NPF4 and so does not attract infrastructure investment required to support the large housing growth that has taken place.

Residents highly value nature and access to natural spaces in Banchory and have expressed dismay at the removal of natural habitats due to development over the past few years. Actions (14) and (15) propose safeguarding all remaining places of natural heritage as mapped by NESBReC and encourage more wildlife into the town by developing biodiverse corridors and planting mixed native trees.



## Liveable Place (1) – place-based action principles

Combined IHS Surveys Data (2004-2022)



- 12 A period of consolidation to allow services and infrastructure to catch up with the population growth resulting in very limited new development for the next LDP plan period.
- 13 Removal of Banchory from the Aberdeen Housing Market.
- 14 Safeguard all remaining places of natural heritage from development (see map)
- 15 Encourage more wildlife to the area and maintain biodiverse wildlife corridors in town. Encourage native mixed tree planning in zoned areas.

### IHS Natural Habitats

	acid grassland		wetlands - fens/ rush pasture
	neutral grassland		mixed woodland
	dry heathland		scrub woodland
	wet heaths		broadleaved woodland
	bracken		coniferous woodland
	wetlands - reedbeds		open water

Figure 41: Place-based actions Principles 12-15 for Liveable Place



Action (16) proposes that new houses are built on brown field sites only, and Action (17) calls for protection of key town assets (Figure 42).

Residents in the Hill of Banchory area have requested a new Post Office and accessible retail, Action (18).

Improved outdoor public facilities are proposed in Actions (19) and (20). Action (19) proposes improved playparks for children, and Action (20) suggests the development of an outdoor gym in Bellfield Park.

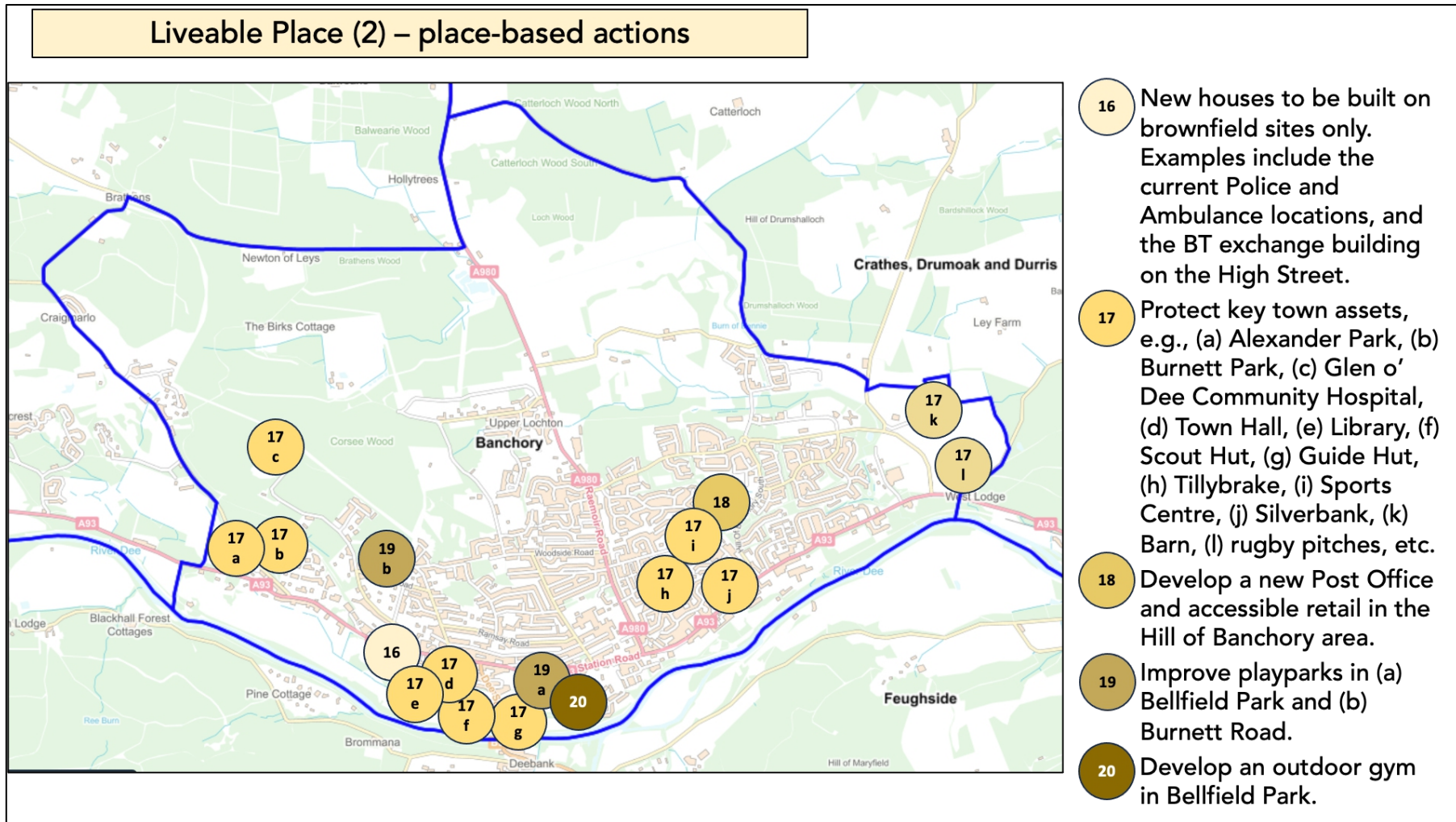


Figure 42: Place-based Actions 16-20 for Liveable Place

Actions (21) and (22) are central to improving services and infrastructure in Banchory and have been requested by the community for years (Figure 43). **These actions were proposed at every public event, in most questionnaire returns and were also suggested by the school children.**

Action (21) proposes a refurbishment or redevelopment of the Banchory Academy and Banchory Primary on their current premises as a Community Education Campus. This proposal is cheaper and more achievable than building a new campus. The Campus should be available for use by the community as a lifelong learning centre. There is also a suggestion to investigate an alternative location for Banchory Primary.

Action (22) proposes an extended development of a Health Centre in the current Banchory Surgery area in Bellfield. The Health Centre would include a wide range of health and wellbeing support and be sufficiently staffed to properly support Banchory and surrounding areas.

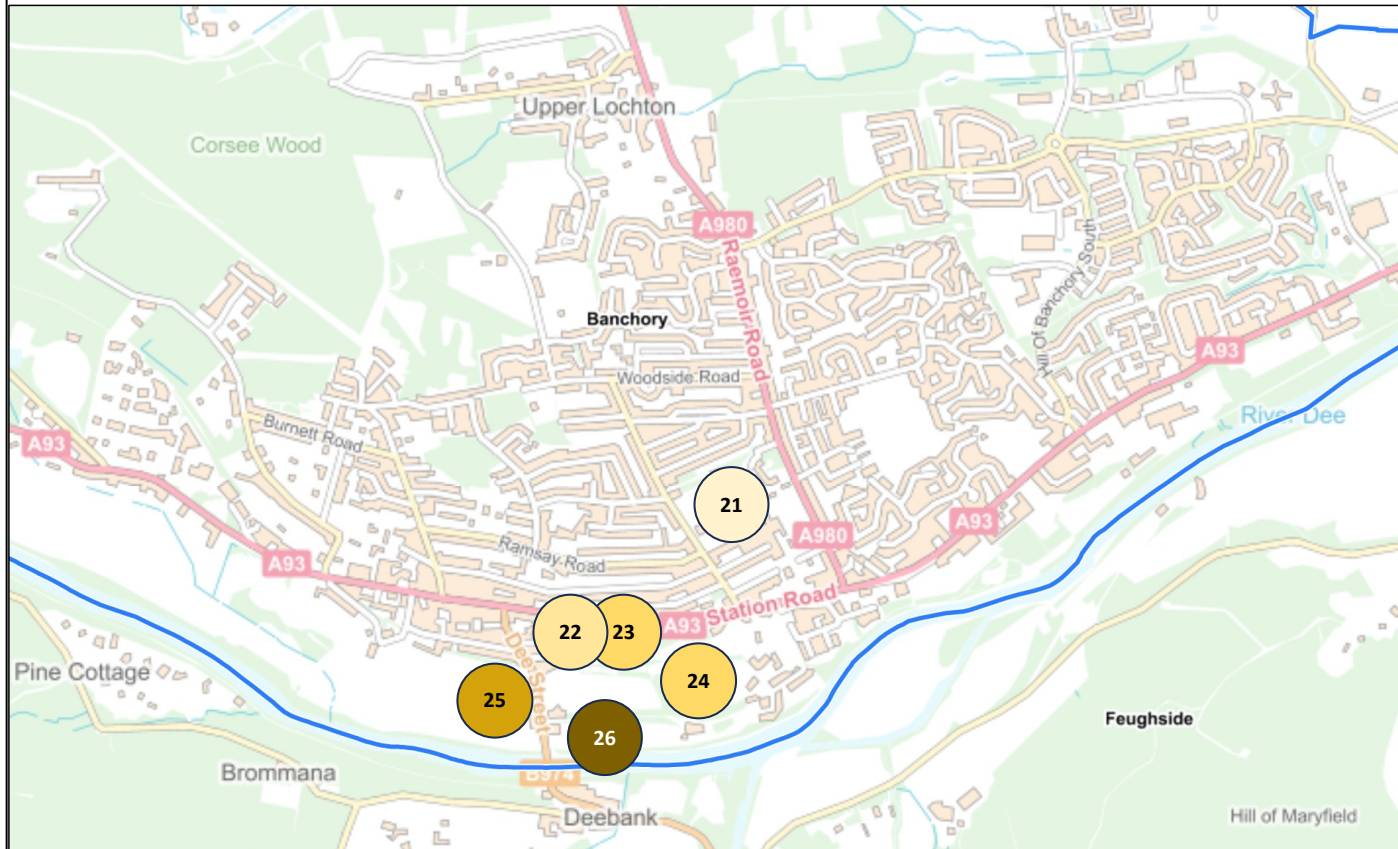
We suggest co-locating the Police and Ambulance services with the new Health Centre in Bellfield, Action (23), freeing up space on the High Street for new housing.

Further development of the Bellfield area is proposed in Actions (24) to (26). Young people really need a safe, covered dedicated space to go to in the evenings, and Action (24) proposes a teenagers' and events space to be located centrally in Banchory, for example near the Cadona area.

Action (25) proposes upgrade and redevelopment of the Banchory Bowling Club and recreational grounds, and Action (26) proposes permanent football changing facilities in King George V Park.



### Liveable Place (3) – place-based actions



- 21 Refurbish/redevelop Banchory Academy and Primary schools on their current premises as a Community Education Campus. Investigate alternative location for Banchory Primary.
- 22 Develop a Health Centre in Bellfield, including access to a wide range of health and wellbeing support.
- 23 Co-locate Police and Ambulance services with the new Health Centre in Bellfield.
- 24 Build a teenagers' and events space in Bellfield.
- 25 Upgrade and redevelop the Banchory Bowling Club and recreational grounds.
- 26 Install permanent football changing facilities in King George V Park.

Figure 43: Place-based actions 21-26 for Liveable Place

## Productive place Actions

A total of four Actions are linked to Banchory becoming a Productive Place (Figure 44). These are all linked to supporting employment in Banchory to transition away from the oil and gas sector, and establishing businesses in the education sector, Action (27), and tourism sectors, Actions (28) to (30).

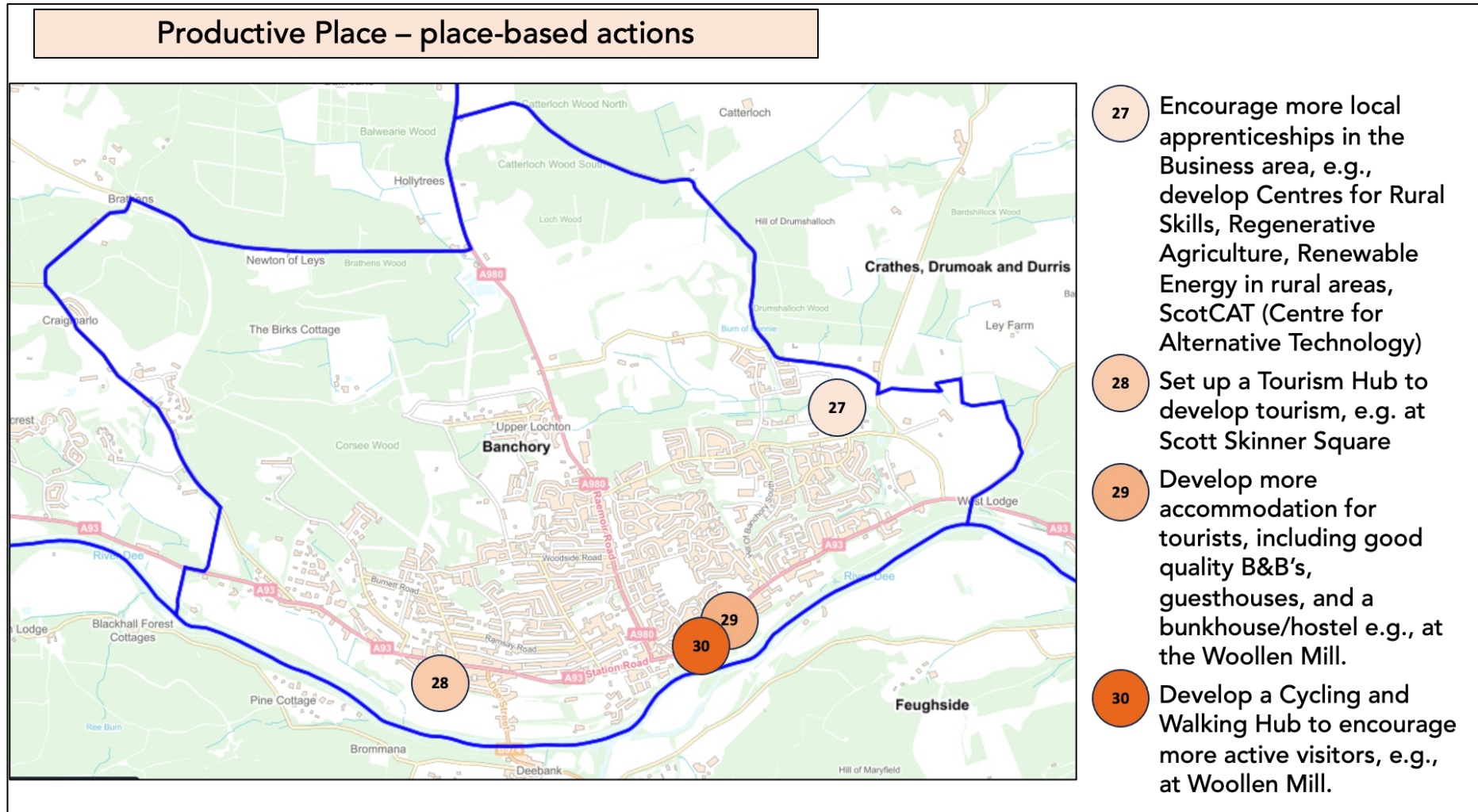


Figure 44: Place-based actions 27-30 for Productive Place



## Sustainable Place Actions

Two Actions are linked to Banchory becoming a Sustainable Place (Figure 45).

Action (31) proposes a Community Asset Transfer of part of Corsee Wood, and Action (32) suggests setting up of Resilience Hubs in Banchory West and East, to include generators and Starlink internet. These Resilience Hubs are essential for Banchory to manage future severe climate events.

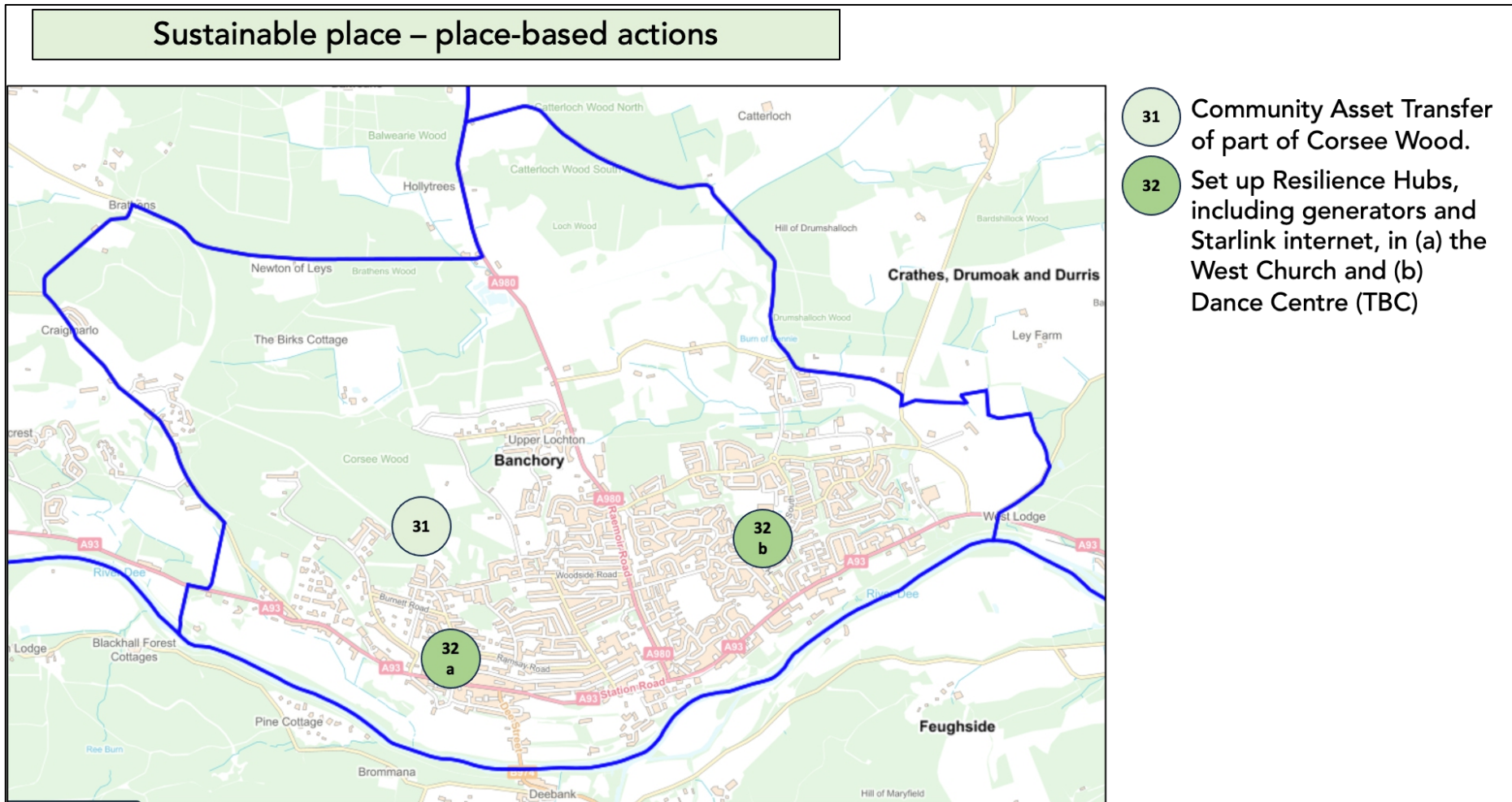


Figure 45: Place-based actions 31-32 for Sustainable Place

## 10. References

[McArdle, K., and Biggs S., 2024](#), Suffering Quietly, wellbeing of individuals and community in the Banchory Area, Research report for Banchory Community Trust