

A LOCALITY ACTION PLAN FOR PLEAN



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INTRODUCTION

We know that some communities in Stirling don't do as well as others in important ways.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires Stirling Community Planning Partnership to identify the areas where people experience significantly poorer outcomes which result from socio-economic disadvantage. Plean is one of these communities.

The Act also requires Stirling Community Planning Partnership to prepare and publish plans which set out what the partners are going to do to make a difference to the inequalities in outcomes that people experience in these areas.

This Locality Action Plan sets out how we are going to work together to change things in Plean.

Who are the Community Planning Partnership?

The Community Planning Partnership is where the public sector service providers come together to jointly make decisions about the services you use every day. This helps to coordinate things and make best use of the funds that they each have. In Stirling, the executive board of the Community Planning Partnership are

- Stirling Council
- Police Scotland
- Forth Valley College
- Skills Development Scotland
- Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise
- Stirling and Clackmannanshire Health and Social Care Partnership
- NHS Forth Valley
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- University of Stirling
- Scottish Enterprise
- Scottish Government

In addition to Plean, we've also prepared and published Locality Action Plans in

- Bannockburn and Hillpark
- Cornton
- Cowie
- Fallin
- Mercat Cross & City Centre
- Raploch
- St Ninians

A LOCALITY ACTION PLAN FOR PLEAN

WHAT ARE THE INEQUALITIES FOR PLEAN?

There are more crimes per 1,000 population in Plean than in Stirling or Scotland.

Crimes per 1,000 population



The number of alcohol related hospital stays in Plean are almost double that of Stirling and higher than the Scottish average. Early deaths from cancer are higher than Stirling or Scotland.

Alcohol Related Hospital Stays per 100,000 population

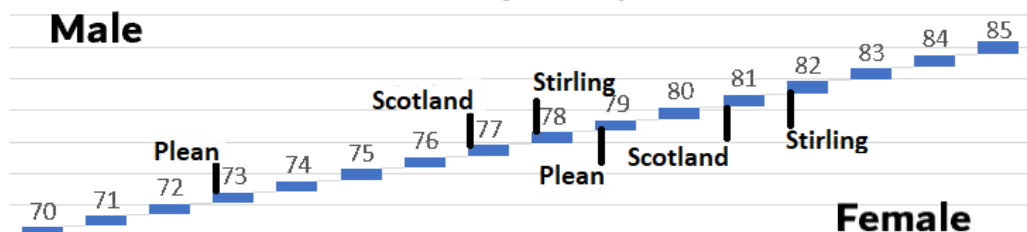


Early Deaths From Cancer per 100,000 population



Life expectancy for males and females in Plean is lower than the Stirling and Scottish averages.

Life Expectancy



15% of Plean residents are income deprived; higher than the Stirling Council average of 9% and the national average of 12%. 14% of working age Plean residents are classed as employment deprived; higher than the Stirling Council average of 8% and the Scottish average 11%.

The percentage of children in low income families is higher than both Stirling and Scotland.

Percentage of Children in Low Income Families



30% of residents rent their property from Stirling Council, double the Stirling average of 15%.

A LOCALITY ACTION PLAN FOR PLEAN

HOW DID WE GO ABOUT MAKING THIS PLAN?

People in Plean have been consulted with and have made their views known about the things that their community needs for many years. A Place Standard survey in 2018 attracted 156 responses.

We know that people are fed up of being asked again and again for their views and we know that this can feel frustrating, particularly if people don't see things improving as a result. We wanted the views of Plean people, but we wanted to build on what they had already told us. To do this we went to community groups, youth clubs, coffee mornings, school groups and other places where people gather to have detailed and considered conversations, focused on the inequalities they see and experience and on their ideas for change. We also recruited local people to have peer to peer discussions – to go out to public places – libraries, community centres, hairdressers, etc - to talk to other local people and report back what they heard.

We took this information and supplemented it with the data on inequality in Plean, and with the evidence of what has worked elsewhere. We then set aside time as a partnership to consider how we were going to do the things that people were asking for, taking competing priorities and the availability of resources into account.

When we went about setting the actions in this plan, we had a few principles which guided us:

- Actions have to be targeted at communities where there are poorer outcomes and delivered locally. In 2012, an Audit Scotland report on health inequalities noted that policies designed to improve the health of the whole population can actually increase inequalities. The same may be said for any action on any kind of inequality.
- Actions have to have the potential to make a difference to outcome inequality in Plean. There are things that might be desirable, but which won't make a real difference to health, income, crime, etc. These things can still be done but are not for this Locality Action Plan.
- Actions have to be within our power to deliver. There might be things which would make a difference, but if the community or the Community Planning Partners can't do them or influence others to do them, then we'll be setting ourselves up to fail.
- Actions don't have to make a difference immediately. Inequality can take a long time to change. We can get action going quickly, but we should measure the impact over the long term.

Lastly, while we were working on all 8 plans, we noticed that across all of the communities, similar themes came up again and again. This meant that we had the opportunity to design actions that we could take forward across multiple communities, but which would still be delivered locally in each community.

A LOCALITY ACTION PLAN FOR PLEAN

WHAT DO LOCAL PEOPLE THINK ABOUT PLEAN?

People in Plean are concerned about many things. They like their community and the quality of their lives in Plean, but they fear that there has been a long-term continuing decline in the availability of services, and in the capacity and resilience of the community. There is a widespread view that Plean has been overlooked by and underinvested in by Community Planning Partners.

There is a feeling that there has been an ongoing decline in the availability of activities that had previously been provided through local people organising things for themselves, or by Community Planning Partners. Community groups also report low levels of participation in activities and events. This observation is echoed by service providers who note that, in comparison to more affluent areas, services obtain low rates of uptake, sometimes resulting in them being withdrawn after a short period.

For a brief period Plean Community Spirit organised a series of events but the capacity of the group has reduced recently and there is little activity. Community organisations in Plean report challenges in attracting volunteers to governance/management/organising roles. They also feel that there is limited support from Community Planning Partners and that the burden of compliance with legislation and regulation can mean that planned activities are cancelled. There is no Community Council in Plean, and a sense that communication on local developments proposed by Community Planning Partners is inadequate.

The hire costs for the Balfour Centre are regarded as prohibitively expensive and a barrier to community use. The closure of the Tavern public house has meant that there are no facilities in the village suitable for parties, fundraisers and celebratory events. Events have been displaced to venues in Cowie and Bannockburn, a situation which is regarded as unsatisfactory. There are mixed views on the Balfour Centre; some feel that reduced costs and upgraded facilities will attract more users; others point out that there needs to be more active community groups first, or there will be no users for the improved Balfour Centre. The library appears to act to some extent as a de facto community café but otherwise there are few places for people to meet informally and this limits opportunities for community interaction and contributes to the social isolation of the elderly and infirm.

Although the retail offer is more varied than some other Eastern Villages, the local availability of affordable groceries is poor, and costs are high. This impacts more severely on people on low incomes and the limited choice contributes to the risk of poor diet. It may be noted that recent changes in management of one local shop has improved the range of groceries available, and the new management are reported to be more supportive of community activity. There is a strong view that the Main Street is unattractive and that some retail premises are poorly kept.

There is widespread fear of crime, and a belief that police numbers are insufficient for crime prevention or effective emergency attendance.

A LOCALITY ACTION PLAN FOR PLEAN

A great deal of fear of crime is associated with the visible presence of people who appear to be under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating or controlled substances. Young people are more fearful than adults about the presence of people who appear to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances in public places.

There is a perception that there is little for young people to do and that this contributes to anti-social behaviour, including underage drinking, and fear of crime. Children and young people are concerned with the quality of the recreation offer available in Plean but are interested in this as recreation and informal association with peers rather than as physical activity. The site formerly occupied by Plean Miners Welfare Club has been undeveloped for many years despite reported plans for a new park on the site.

There is an awareness of poor health and a need for intervention to encourage and enable people, particularly those at risk of ill health, to make use of any facilities provided. Friends of Plean Country Park have expressed interest in using a review of the park masterplan to shift the aims of the park to better support healthy physical activity and employability.

People in Plean feel that they are geographically isolated from other areas. This amplifies concerns about the frequency, destinations and reliability of public transport. Unlike other Eastern Villages, there are mixed views on the quality of public transport; most people feel that the bus service is very good, albeit that some of these people do not use it, others feel it is unreliable and infrequent. Poor public transport impacts on:

- household income as travel costs, particularly for families, can be high.
- availability of employment as it limits the nature of the employment opportunities people can accept.
- health as people may not attend or decline medical appointments which require multiple stop journeys on public transport.
- quality of life as access to services and opportunities in other locations is limited.
- health and income as access to good quality, inexpensive food and groceries is limited.
- isolation for older people who may not receive visits from family/friends who live elsewhere.

There is limited explicit recognition of low income for adults, but there is demand for income maximisation advice for vulnerable people. There is anecdotal evidence that people in Plean and other Eastern Villages were more likely to be self-employed in micro-enterprise initiatives, i.e. work which generated sufficient income to cover living expenses, but very little more. This is regarded as a pragmatic response to the limited local employment opportunities, and the challenges of accessing employment in other locations. It is regarded as a 'best available' option, rather than a positive choice of self-employment.

There is awareness of child poverty and the impact of child poverty on health, educational attainment and family stability.

A LOCALITY ACTION PLAN FOR PLEAN

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO TO ABOUT THIS?

Making a difference to outcome inequalities in Plean won't be easy, simple or quick. It will require a long term, considered and complex set of actions and interventions from Community Planning Partners. The ongoing participation and contribution of the community in the detailed design and delivery of these actions is essential, but the limited capacity of the community will mean that we need to invest partnership resources in supporting the community and in building community capacity if any of this is to be successful.

Building Community Capacity

A high number of community organisations, and a high level of community activity are among the vital signs of healthy, thriving, resilient, capable communities. There is extensive evidence of the impact of social connections on physical and mental health. Good quality dedicated support to building community capacity has the potential to impact on outcomes through the enhanced social capital it creates, and also through the kind of community activities supported. Partners will resource staffing, dedicated to Plean and located there, to support existing community groups, encourage and enable local people to form new groups, and coordinate joint working between community groups and with Community Planning Partners.

Improving Local Facilities

We will invest in improving how parks contribute to social capital in the community and to improving health, including working in partnership with the Friends of Plean Country Park to maximise how the park contributes to health and employability outcomes. We will work with community organisations to prioritise and plan appropriate improvements to building facilities, and to explore options for informal, café-style, drop-in space. The Building Community Capacity Officer will lead on the establishment of new services and the development of user groups. We will identify local building resources which may be made available at reduced or nil cost to community organisations in Plean who are delivering activity which contributes to reducing outcome inequalities.

Improving Physical and Mental Health

Active Stirling and NHS Forth Valley will invest in the delivery of a programme of interventions to encourage and enable local people, particularly those at risk of ill health, to increase their level of physical activity. This programme will be long term – taking the challenges of attracting local people into account - delivered in Plean and with priority access for local people. NHS Forth Valley will seek to increase the variety of clinical and preventative medical services available in Plean.

Reducing Fear of Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

Police Scotland, Stirling Council, NHS Forth Valley and social housing providers will work with the community to more clearly understand, and then mitigate or eliminate, the factors that create fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. Police Scotland will explore opportunities to establish a more visible policing presence.

Connecting Plean

Stirling Council and TACTRANS will work with the community to improve public transport options, including bus shelters. Opportunities for remote access to services through online communication tools will be explored and implemented where appropriate.

Tackling Child Poverty

Partners in delivering the Child Poverty Action Plan will target initiatives and prioritise resources for work which takes place in and maximises income and improves health for families in Plean.

A LOCALITY ACTION PLAN FOR PLEAN

Increasing Income Security

Stirling Council will work with partners to increase the capacity of benefits advice services. We will explore and action options to enhance and develop food poverty services, e.g. community kitchen, food pantry, help yourself cooperatives etc. We will put in place measures to identify people in persistent food and fuel poverty and offer targeted, tailored support. Child poverty and family support services will explore opportunities to address in work poverty.

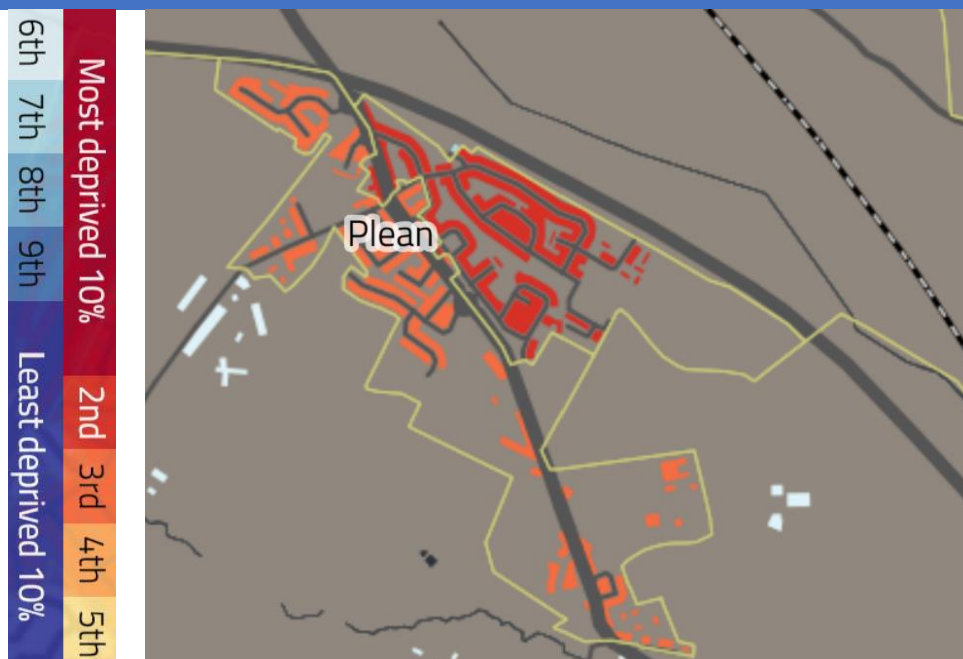
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

This plan was published in April 2020. Although we expect it to take up to 10 years to a difference in outcome inequality, we will begin work on doing something about it as soon as possible.

One of the key things about Locality Action Planning is that it challenges Community Planning Partners to use their resources differently to do something different or something more, and to target these resources in Plean and the other communities in Stirling where there are poorer outcomes. This means that Community Planning Partners need to consider the actions set out in this plan and the plans for the other Locality Action Plan areas in Stirling, and prioritise their resources to deliver on them, even if that means choosing to stop doing other things in other areas.

The Community Planning Partnership Executive Group make the major decisions on resource priorities. This group has a standing item on their meeting agenda for Locality Action Planning. Once they have made decisions on the resources to be allocated to delivering on Locality Action Plans, then Partner staff will begin work on how these resources are applied – how the plans are implemented – in Plean and the other communities in Stirling where there are poorer outcomes. In some cases, this will simply be a matter of Partners making things happen, in others there will be a need to work closely with the community on the detail of how we take things forward.

PLEAN LOCALITY MAP



This plan was prepared by Colin Duff of SKS Scotland CIC on behalf of Stirling Council.