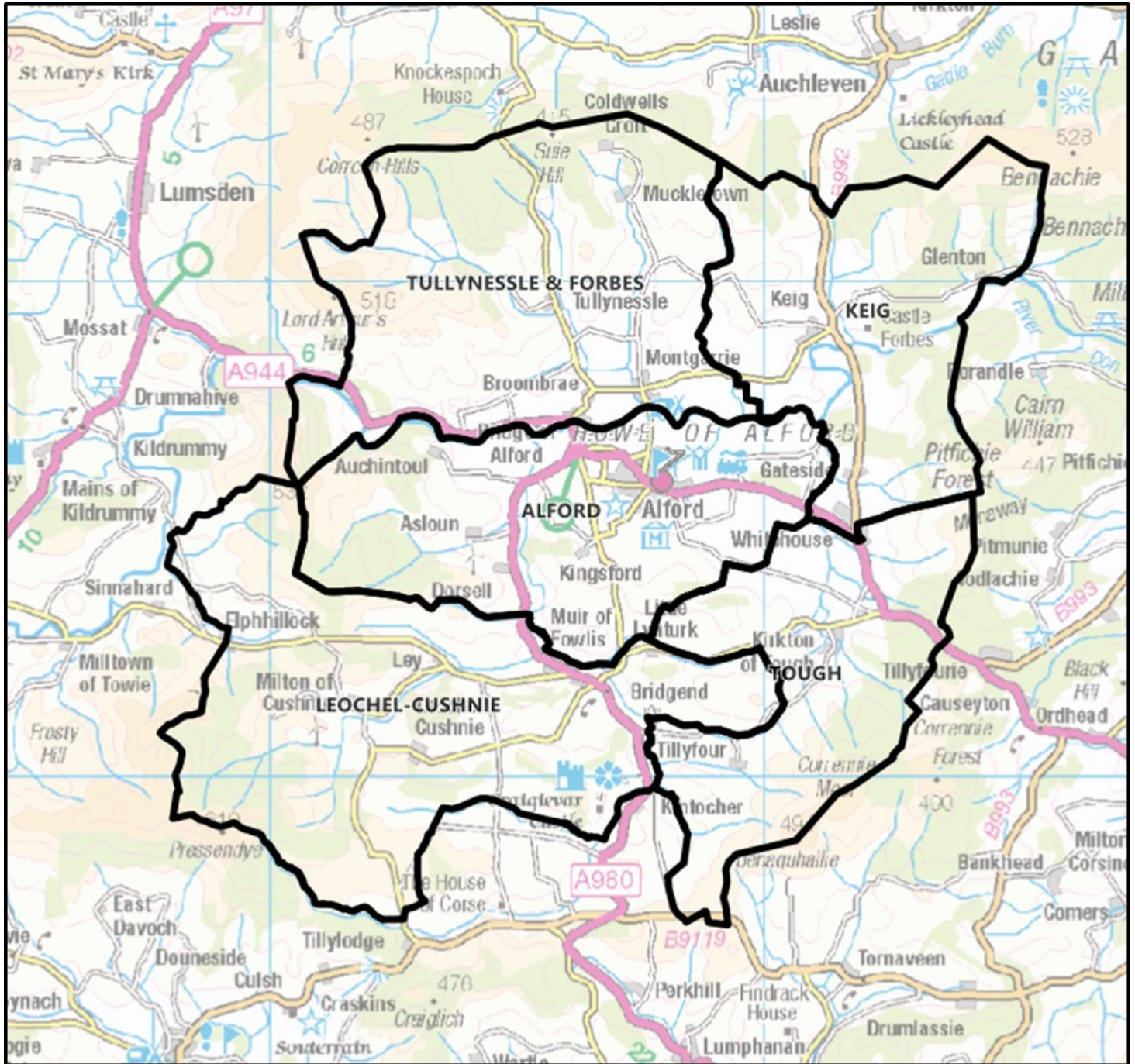




Howe of Alford Community Action Plan 2018



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This Community Action Plan (CAP) has been prepared by a Steering Group under the auspices of Donside Community Council (DCC) and addresses a series of issues which have been identified as the most pressing by the Howe of Alford community.

The issues were identified following a thorough and inclusive consultation programme carried out throughout 2017. That process is outlined in more detail below.

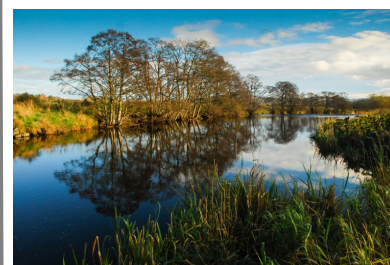
Having identified the main issues, the plan then seeks to highlight the actions and projects which, it is hoped, will assist in resolving the issues, along with key partners.

A fuller understanding of the issues can perhaps be appreciated by looking at the setting and history of the area.

The Howe of Alford The Area

The Howe of Alford comprises the village of Alford and the communities of Tough, and Keig to the East, Montgarrie and Tullynessle to the North and, to the South, Cushnie, Muir of Fowlis and Craigievar.

While much of the plan focuses on Alford, the Steering Group also recognises the importance of the relationship between the village and its surrounding environs. Other neighbouring communities depend on Alford for many of their needs and services. These include a wide range of retail, commercial and leisure opportunities and associated employment. The Community Campus, which encompasses Alford Primary and Academy, for example, serves a wide catchment area including the area of this Plan. The plan drew on contributions from the wider hinterland of Alford and not just the village itself, along with comments from visitors to the area.





History

Historically Alford was a rural community with limited settlements at Bridge of Alford and around the old West Kirk. With the coming of the railway to the area in 1854 a village grew up around the terminus of the line. The line was originally planned to terminate at the Bridge of Alford, however the funding ran out and so the village of Alford as we now know it, was born.



The economy of the village grew from the railway, which was originally brought from Aberdeen to provide manpower for the five local quarries in the area and to transport the granite produced back into the city and further afield to create bridges and buildings across the world. Agriculture has always been a mainstay of the local economy and the local Mart allowed local farmers from across the Howe to transport livestock across the country.

Recent Growth

With the coming of the Oil Boom in the 1970s Alford quickly became a very desirable residential area and has grown steadily to become a popular commuter village. In the 2001 census, the population was just over 2000 and it is estimated at over 2800 today, out of a population of the wider area of the Howe of Alford covered by this Plan of over 5000.



Current Challenges

Although a popular and expanding village, Alford, along with the surrounding settlements, faces a number of challenges.

Since the last Community Action Plan was written, significant new housing developments have taken place. The inevitable increase in population and resulting changes in demography, coupled with the significant downturn in the regional economy, has resulted in a fresh range of challenges for the area and community.

Some services and social facilities have been unable to keep pace with the rate of population expansion. Health care, community, and transport facilities are all under pressure. There is concern that the village's economy and businesses are suffering due to regional and national economic challenges.

The last Community Action Plan (CAP) for the Howe of Alford - "Oor Alford" - was developed in 2010. While a number of key issues were identified and delivered, the primary focus was the creation of the Alford Community Campus which would provide a 21st century learning experience for all senior school pupils within the Howe along with replacement Nursery and Primary schools for Alford itself. The Campus, which opened in October 2015, has brought wider educational opportunities as well as leisure and recreational facilities for the use of the wider community.

Discussions between Marr Area Partnership and Donside Community Council (DCC) in 2016 led to the setting up of a steering group to undertake the development of a new Plan. The steering group first met in April 2016, and comprised members of DCC along with representatives of a diverse range of community groups.

The steering group's role was to encourage and enable the involvement of local people in the CAP process so that their needs and aspirations would be fully reflected in the Action Plan.

To assist in this process, the steering group:

- designed a questionnaire and made it available to a wide sample of community groups and individuals
- highlighted the process in the press, on community websites and at local presentations in an attempt to maximise the number of responses
- analysed the responses to the questionnaire
- organised two community open days in Alford Community Campus and the Heritage Museum
- visited the local primary schools to seek the views of the children on their priorities
- reached out again to senior citizens and youth groups
- collated and analysed all the information and drew up a thematic outline of the issues and potential projects which emerged from the questionnaire and open days
- prepared a draft plan on the basis of this analysis
- organised further community involvement liaising with potential partners who could assist in delivering the CAP
- prepared the final Community Action Plan.





Howe of Alford Community Action Plan

The main issues and aspirations raised by the community have been grouped into six themes summarised below with proposed actions outlined in the table at the end of this plan. These reflect the situation that was current as the action plan was developed, but will be supplemented by further actions as these are identified over time. Community action planning is a dynamic and progressive process that will reflect the priorities of the various subgroups within the community as they evolve. It is also dependent on the involvement and energy of the community to enable action to be achieved.

THEME 1 Alford Community Campus

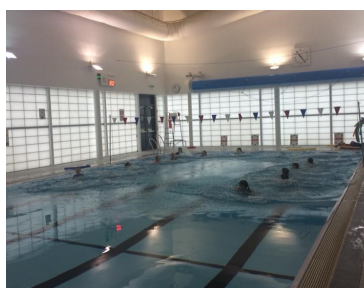
THEME 2 Transport, Recreation and Leisure

THEME 3 Community Health, Well-being and Social Care

THEME 4 Sports and Recreation Facilities

THEME 5 Alford Village Amenities

THEME 6 Housing, Domestic Services and Telecommunications



THEME 1 Alford Community Campus

Background

In the Community Action Plan of 2010 the community called for commitment from Aberdeenshire Council to the design and development of a new 'Education, Learning and Leisure all through Campus,' for the Community. The Campus would be an appropriate building for the site and look and feel as if it belonged to Alford, with an eco-friendly environment fit for the 21st Century.

In many ways this brief has been fulfilled. We have a beautiful Campus which is a pleasure to visit. The Campus facilities include a theatre, sports hall, swimming pool, library and dance studio in addition to all-weather sports pitches. As a new educational hub for the community this is a clear success although concerns persist around the issue of capacity, given the recent and continuing expansion of housing in the area.

While the Alford Community Campus has increased both the quality and quantity of facilities, a primary concern is access to the facilities for individual members of the public and for groups. There is strong demand for increased availability of bookable sport facilities for individuals and groups. In some cases the design of the building and lay-out of facilities in relation to the location of the main reception desk provided access issues.

A number of issues identified at the Community Open Days in Alford Campus and the Heritage Museum focused around community access and facilities.

These include:

- **Physical Access** – The location of the Campus – at one end of the village – is seen as a particular challenge for the elderly and those with mobility issues. It would be advantageous to schedule activities in line with transport to and from the Campus.
- **Community Café** should be developed as a social hub for the community through increased opening hours and improved seating capacity.
- **Insufficient capacity** for Community groups to meet during the day.
- **Improved public access and booking procedures** to specific Campus facilities should be addressed, specifically to the Dance Studio, Climbing Wall, and Badminton Courts. Enhanced and extended access to the swimming pool was sought by many along with access to a gym/fitness suite.
- **In particular the use of the Theatre** as a Community Cinema and locus for wider cultural engagement was felt to be an exciting opportunity. The possibility of a Drama Group was also raised.
- **The increasing costs of using Campus facilities** were felt by many to be excessive and an undoubted negative impact on future use.

Key Projects for action from this theme are:

- Develop a Campus Users Group to liaise on these issues
- Develop better transport links to Campus from Alford and surrounding area
- Create a Café Culture in the Campus with extended hours
- Make the Campus Sports and Arts facilities available to the Community
- Bring the cost of using the Campus to an affordable level.

THEME 2 Transport, Recreation and Leisure

Background

Alford's position on the A944 and its proximity to Aberdeen, Huntly and Inverurie makes transport issues in the Howe of Alford a high priority. The residents of the area may either work locally or be required to travel to a wide variety of destinations for employment. Vehicle ownership is above average, and the surrounding roads vary in size and state. Agricultural and commercial vehicles are larger than in the past and this, in association with our rural network of narrow roads can lead to difficulties for all road users. Concerns have also been expressed about speeding in the area.





THEME 2 Transport, Recreation and Leisure (cont)

Public transport, although supported in some circumstances, is subject to market forces. The majority of the population has access to private transport which limits the use and ultimately the profitability of the public service. However some population groups are dependent on public transport. The commercial nature of public transport makes it difficult to offer a flexible and responsive service within the Howe of Alford and between the Howe of Alford and other centres. There is a lack of opportunity for local service linkage to rail and air travel. The highly valued Alford Car Transport Service (ACTS) is a charity that enables people to attend health and similar related appointments.



Aberdeenshire Council, in previous strategy documents, suggested that Alford would be developed as a recreational area. In the past, the Council have, for example, developed a dry ski slope in the village and received Countryside Commission support to develop the Haughton Park. These facilities are well used by locals and visitors alike. Cycling and walking are leisure activities undertaken in the area with the former leading to an increasing use of surrounding roads. Safe walking paths are abundant in the area but are not linked and may have to be accessed by areas where no safe walking route is possible.



This can require the use of private transport to access the areas. While there are some settlements in the area with adequate pavements, others are less well served and require walkers to share roads with vehicles. The lack of safe walking routes to schools may lead to the use of private transport.

The survey has highlighted a number of aspirations for the area related to transport, recreational and leisure issues. Some, such as connected walking and cycling paths, should receive active consideration in future planning while others, such as a bypass of the village, are unlikely to be achieved because of geographical factors and fiscal restraints. The wide variety of comments provides a valuable resource when considering future developments in the area. In this document it is not possible to highlight every expressed opinion, but the opinions of respondents have been collated for inclusion in the action plan.

Key Projects for action from this theme are:

- Traffic control and speeding
- Improved Public Transport within the Howe and links to other areas
- Safety of road users

- Walking paths for leisure, and to and from schools
- Cycle lanes, cycle paths and cycling related facilities
- Improved signage
- Maintenance and development of community resources

THEME 3 Community Health, Well-being and Social Care

Background

Capacity of GP Practice

Since the last Community Action Plan was completed the area has seen a large increase in population from 5424 to 5808 due to increased commuting, and an aging population. However, the local health services and associated services have not expanded at a level proportionate to the increase in population.

The health issue that appears to be having the biggest impact on the community is the lack of 'other services' at the medical practice. There is a reduction in key services including Physiotherapy, Antenatal classes, Dentistry, Mental Health and Substance Misuse support.

The Medical Practice currently has four (4) Doctors, one full-time and three part-time (3.25 full time equivalent). For the number of patients registered with the practice this is classed as 'fully staffed'. The Medical Practice is contracted to the NHS and the contract is based on the weighting of patients at the practice.

The Medical Practice has now also employed an Advanced Nurse Practitioner, who can alleviate some of the strain on the doctors by carrying out minor medical treatments.

In addition, there is now a Practice Pharmacist and five (5) further nursing staff including a Phlebotomist. District Nurses also work with the practice but these are NHS employees.

There is a need to develop a local Health and Social Care Policy which does not depend on travel to larger centres to access services; which provides integrated services; and which uses co-location of services wherever possible.





THEME 3 Community Health, Well-being and Social Care (cont)

The CAP survey has highlighted the lack of a Day Care Centre for the elderly and those with physical disabilities. The previous Centre which closed due to sudden increase in costs is greatly missed.

Safety within the Howe of Alford

From figures taken in 2014, the overall crime rate in the Marr area is the third lowest in Aberdeenshire and has reduced by almost 33% over the last ten years (2004 – 2014).

The crime rate in the Howe of Alford is traditionally low, and has fallen recently. Although Marr is a very safe area to live in, there is a strong demand for a police presence in the community.

Although there have been recent discussions regarding possible closures of local police stations, Alford is not currently one of those under consideration for closure.

Befriending service

Some work has been undertaken to set up a "Befriending" service and a number of individuals have shown interest. Initial discussions with the CHiP (Community Health in Partnerships) officer will be further developed.

Very Sheltered Housing

Despite recent investment at the Hamewith Court sheltered housing complex in Alford to develop Very Sheltered Housing, this has not materialised. It is however subject to review by the Marr Area Committee.

Key Projects for action from this theme are:

- Develop a Health and Social Care policy which delivers care locally
- Safety within the Howe of Alford
- Speeding
- Community care, including a Befriending Service
- Very Sheltered Housing



THEME 4 Sports and Recreation Facilities

Background

Participants in the consultation recognised both strengths and weaknesses in the current recreation and leisure facilities in the Howe of Alford. Concerns about the new Alford Community Campus are addressed under Theme 1 above.

Elsewhere, the existing facilities including the pitches and bowling club at the Pleasure Park, dry ski slope, Haughton and Murray parks were highly valued but there were concerns that these must be maintained and in some cases improved. In particular a deterioration in paths, tracks and facilities in the Haughton Park has been noted and this is detrimental for both residents and visitors. There was a desire for specialised tracks, BMX/mountain bike in the area and suggestions for facilities in Haughton park. During the process of community action planning, a Friends of Haughton Park group has been developed and is in early discussions with Aberdeenshire Council about a specialised bike track.

The Scout and Guide organisations make a significant contribution to the community and this contribution was contrasted with the deteriorating state of their main meeting point, the Scout Hut in Greystone Road. The possibility of developing the old Rangers' Hut in the Haughton Park is still under discussion.

The development of the Men's Shed and associated facilities is eagerly awaited, along with the provision of community spaces such as allotments and an orchard on the 'old' academy site. The replacement clubhouse for the Vale of Alford Curling Club Hut also received support in the consultation.

Children's play facilities in communities across the Howe of Alford vary in quality and range of equipment.

There was also some mention of a gym facility in the area where residents were disappointed that these hadn't been included in the new Community Campus. However over the course of the action planning process no community action was suggested to address this.

Key Projects for action from this theme are:

- Re-development of the Haughton Park
- Development a specialised bike track in the Haughton Park
- Delivery of the ongoing projects of the Men's Shed and Curling Club Hut
- Replacement of the Scout Hut
- Better play park facilities





THEME 5 Alford Village Amenities

Background

Despite a rise in the population since the previous Community Action Plan there has been a decrease in the number of banks, shops and businesses in the village of Alford. The declining vitality of the Main Street was of major concern for many residents. Signage and publicity was seen as inadequate. Existing car parking facilities required to be upgraded and increased parking capacity is needed to serve the Heritage Centre and the Public Hall.

Greater access to the Public Hall on Saturday evenings for events was requested in the consultation. It was perceived as a venue for activities that would appeal to residents and visitors.

There was recognition that activities and events at the Grampian Transport Museum and the Heritage Centre were attractive to both visitors and residents. The programme of events at the Ski Centre; recent short-course triathlons; and the KT Bike run were examples of events which were also important to the community.



There were a number of requests for activities and events that would unify the village, attract visitors and emphasise its unique identity and character. There was also a demand for better publicity and communication about community events, for example the production of a coordinated events calendar. The village would benefit from a coherent branding exercise to emphasise the considerable positive aspects to residents and visitors. A revitalised Haughton Park was seen as providing a focus for activity under this theme.

Key Projects for action from this theme are:

- Provide aesthetic improvements to the village to enhance the visual impact and improve signage
- Improve car parking facilities, specifically the main village care park, and at land adjacent to the Alford Heritage Museum
- Bring greater coherence by improving communication about community events through an events calendar
- Re-develop the Haughton Park

THEME 6 Housing, Domestic Services and Telecommunications

Background

The Alford waste and recycling centre, which serves the wider Howe of Alford community, is recognised widely as requiring significant redesign, particularly around accessibility. The Community Council has been aware of these concerns and has engaged in dialogue with the local authority over a number of years. It is understood that improvements are on the horizon but there is frustration that much needed improvements have not been realised. A number of people would also value garden waste collection. Failing provision by Aberdeenshire Council, a community solution would need to be considered.

Concerns were expressed regarding the expansion of housing that has taken place in the village over the last few years. A "re-balancing" of the housing stock has been suggested by some, specifically for more affordable housing and smaller houses appropriate for the elderly or those with reduced mobility.

Although there have been some localised improvements, issues of poor broadband speed and weak mobile phone coverage were frequently raised, particularly in the wider community outwith the village of Alford. Lack of public Wi-Fi access in the Community Campus is another point of frustration.

Key Projects for action from this theme are:

- Better access to recycling centre in terms of capacity, opening times, facilities, layout and access
- Consideration of community options for the collection of garden waste
- Improvement of telecommunication facilities, specifically broadband speeds and public access wi-fi at the Alford Community Campus
- Housing strategy within the village needs to be revisited given the changing demographics of the area as well as the economic climate within NE Scotland



THEME 1: Alford Community Campus					
Projects	Issue/Need	Short to Medium Term Actions	Long Term Goal	Potential Key partners	
Transport to and from Alford and the Howe to Alford Community Campus.	Due to the location of the Campus it is inaccessible to the elderly and people with disabilities.	Reschedule activities in line with present transport to the Campus. Contact Bus Company and try to increase the frequency of the service bus.	A regular bus service to and from the Community Campus.	Aberdeenshire Bus Forum Alford Older Peoples' Forum Stagecoach Bus Company Aberdeenshire Council	
A Community Café accessible to both young and old.	To extend the opening hours of the Community Café and improve seating capacity.	Contact Aberdeenshire Council leisure team. Extend Café opening hours during the week and advertise them.	To have the Café open when the Community are using the Campus facilities.	Aberdeenshire Council Campus Users Group	
Improve the accessibility of the campus sports/arts facilities to the community.	Although there are many Sports/Arts facilities in the Campus they are not readily available to the Community.	Contact Aberdeenshire Council leisure team. Have specific hours available to book for the Community.	Establish an effective Campus User Group Have better access to the climbing wall, Dance Studio, Theatre, Badminton Court. Gym access	Donside Community Council Aberdeenshire Council Campus Users Group Active Aberdeenshire	
Affordable levels of charges	The increasing costs of using the Campus facilities are felt by many to be excessive	Discuss charges with the Aberdeenshire Council leisure team and users of the campus Measure impact of charges	To have affordable facilities	Donside Community Council, Campus Users Group Aberdeenshire Council	

THEME 2: Transport Recreation & Leisure					
Projects	Issue/Need	Short to Medium Term Actions	Long Term Goal	Potential Key partners	
Traffic control and speed-ing	Non-adherence to speed limits Driving behaviour Traffic routing Appropriate parking	Promote adherence to speed limits Encourage safe driving Highlight specific areas of concern	Speed limit observance Reduction in accidents Review signage and markings	Aberdeenshire Council Roads Department Police Scotland Local Press Schools Parent Councils	
Safety of road users	Multiple mixed road use Improve signage and circulation of traffic	Highlight issue to Aberdeenshire Council for incorporation into planning process Promote use of car parks to reduce roadside parking	Protection of vulnerable road users by walkway and cycleway development Ensure adequacy of car parks	Aberdeenshire Council Roads Department Police Scotland Local Press North Marr Community Safety Partnership	
Improved public transport within the Howe of Alford and links to other areas	Perceived inadequacy of public transport Lack of integration of public transport Requirement for public transport by groups	Contact with Aberdeenshire Council Public Transport Unit Support ACTS (Alford Car Transport Service) Review other rural area provision including car clubs and carpooling.	Clear and appropriate timetables Develop opportunities for ad hoc transport Support and further develop Alford Car Transport Service	Aberdeenshire Council NESTRANS Bus Companies Alford Car Transport Service (ACTs)	
Walking paths for health and leisure. Paths that enable safe routes to school.	Promote safety of walking within and between settlements Protect children travelling to and from schools	Identify existing walkways Signpost routes Link existing walkways	Develop comprehensive network of walking routes around and between settlements Safe paths to schools	Aberdeenshire Council Murray Park Trustees Police Scotland Local Schools Parent Councils	
Cycle lanes, cycle paths and cycling related facilities	Safety of cyclists Promotion of cycling activities Development of cycling related activity	Consult with cycling clubs Warning signage Educational articles Route cycling to quieter roads where possible.	Develop comprehensive network of cycle routes with paths and lanes where possible Develop cycle trails and tracks	Aberdeenshire Council Murray Park Trustees Police Scotland Local Schools NESTRANS Friends of Haughton Park Local Press	
Improved Signage	Support for road users Maximise utilisation of existing resources Promote local knowledge	Seek specific feedback from population Identify any local knowledge deficiency Focus websites on Alford resources	Review and amend signage after consultation Well publicised local facilities, e.g. local directory Local directory	Aberdeenshire Council Police Scotland Local Press	

THEME 3: Community Health, Wellbeing and Social Care				
Projects	Issue/Need	Short to Medium Term Actions	Long Term Goal	Potential Key partners
Capacity of GP Practice and NHS services	Ability for increased capacity at GP Practice to cope with population increase Be able to access rooms for use by other practitioners Regular turnover of staff at the practice Need for NHS services to be delivered locally e.g. physiotherapy	Consult with doctors as to how this can be improved. Identify why the other services are not using the rooms available. Identify why staff retention is an issue. Identification of NHS service provision and need in this area	Smoothen patient flow with reduced waiting times See own doctor for appointments Access for community to other clinical practitioners Stability of team at practice which gives patients more confidence Improved delivery of NHS services within the locality.	AHSCP* NHS Grampian Partners at the practice Donside Community Council AHSCP – Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership
Safety within the Howe of Alford	Concerns over crime levels in area Perceived lack of police presence	Identify the actual figures for crime to see if there is an issue Discuss with the police how we can improve this perception Visibility within the community	More officers on duty per shift Reduced crime rates Greater police presence around the area Stable neighbourhood watch scheme Community feels safe	AHSCP Police Scotland Donside Community Council Local community P&J, local papers, other media
Befriending service	Provide friendship opportunities for those who would otherwise be house bound Keep people out of care homes and hospitals	Provide afternoon tea sessions Provision of various clubs to get people out of the house to prevent isolation Provide better assistance and response within the community	Increased number of clubs / activities throughout the year Better assistance in the community for the elderly Set up a 'drop in centre' where our older population can feel appreciated and not alone, this could include the Men's Shed	Donside Community Council AHSCP Community Health Improvement Officers Alford Academy Men's Shed Befriending services
Very Sheltered Housing	To provide housing for those in need or who are vulnerable Make people feel more valued	Identify the needs and what resources are available Identify what housing is available, where and how much	An appropriate level of sheltered housing available in the Howe of Alford	AHSCP Donside Community Council Care management Sanctuary Scotland
Mental Health	Improve access to support for those with low/medium mental health issues	Identify lead partners and service users and form action group Identify the local need/issues and available resources. Identify areas for improvement	Cohesive plan for improving mental health across the area Improved mental health	AHSCP Aberdeenshire Council Community Learning & Development schools & other services GP Practice Third sector organisations including the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) Local support groups

THEME 4: Sports and Recreation Facilities					
Projects	Issue/Need	Short to Medium Term Actions	Long Term Goal	Potential Key partners	
Better play park facilities	Some communities out with Alford do not have access to local play park facilities.	Local groups; Parent Councils, playgroups and others to audit existing facilities and establish need	Access to existing facilities such as school playgrounds. Support for those groups that wish to improve/develop facilities. Secure Montgarrie Playing Field for community use	Aberdeenshire Council Marr Area Partnership Parent Councils Local groups Tullynessle Hall and Community Association	
Redevelop the Haughton Park and Murray Park	Rejuvenation of existing facilities; paths, bridges etc. Development of new facilities including a BMX track	Establishment of a group to co-ordinate activity. Sub groups taking forward aspects of activity.	Secure long-term future of the park for leisure and recreation.	Aberdeenshire Council Infrastructure Services Friends of Haughton Park Murray Park Trustees BMX track cyclists Marr Area Partnership	
Replacement of the Scout Hut	The Scout Hut Committee wish to relocate the uniformed organisations to the re-developed Park Ranger Station.	A long term lease has been agreed and planning permission granted. A major community fund raising drive is required	Relocation to a new facility that is fit for purpose.	Scout Hut Committee Users Parents of users Grant making bodies	
Rebuild the Vale of Alford Curling Club Hut	The Hut was burned down in June 2015, destroying much equipment and memorabilia	Planning permission has been granted for a replacement hut. Some equipment has been replaced. The majority of the funds are in place. To do this and replace the lights	The re-establishment of an excellent outdoor curling facility in the Howe of Alford. Restoration of the curling memorabilia.	Vale of Alford Curling Club.	
Development of a Men's Shed	The development of place that provides acceptance, a sense of purpose, increased wellbeing and improved health	Committees, plans and funding are in place for the development for the Men's Shed	A vibrant active group of people benefit from the facility	Alford Men's Shed Aberdeenshire Council Funding bodies	
Maintenance and development of community resources	Maintain and develop well utilised current resources Safe and appropriate leisure areas	Highlight areas of concern regarding maintenance of resources Review existing facilities Prioritise future potential	Agreed sustainable maintenance schedule Well utilised facilities throughout area Programme of future developments awaiting funding streams	Aberdeenshire Council Charitable funding sources Local Developers	

THEME 5: Alford Village Amenities					
Projects	Issue/Need	Short to Medium Term Actions	Long Term Goal	Potential Key partners	
Improve the attractiveness, vibrancy and visual impact of the village and signage	There has been a decline in the vibrancy and commercial activity in the village.	Formation of group to promote the Howe of Alford as a place to live, work and visit. Improve village signage. Development of a town team	More shops and businesses. Increased visitor numbers	Business group Donside Community Council Visit Aberdeenshire Aberdeenshire Council Marr Area Partnership	
Improve the car parking	The main car park requires upgrading. There is a need for additional parking to serve the Heritage Centre & Museum and the village hall.	Redevelop the main car park (project funding has been secured for this).	Develop a car park near the Heritage Centre & Museum to serve both the Centre and the Public Hall.	Aberdeenshire Council Donside Community Council Village Hall Committee Alford Heritage Centre & Museum	
Improve communication about what is going on in the Howe of Alford	Improve communication and awareness of activities and events in the Howe of Alford. Develop community building and place making activities	Support the development of existing resources such as the Alford community website Development of a town team	Develop a of programme events and activities that improve the vibrancy of the Howe of Alford for community.	Alford community website Business group Donside Community Council Aberdeenshire Council	

THEME 6: Housing, Domestic Services and Telecommunications					
Projects	Issue/Need	Short to Medium Term Actions	Long Term Goal	Potential Key partners	
Access Recycling Centre	Improvements needed to address Capacity and improve access: Facilities Layout Parking Opening Times	Community Council continue to liaise with Aberdeenshire Council to ensure planned improvements progress.	Improved Facility Improved Access	Aberdeenshire Council Kirkwood Homes Donside Community Council	
Garden Waste Services	Need for Garden Waste Collection	Develop Group Investigate Community Compost Scheme Investigate Collection Scheme	Sustainable, accessible local garden waste disposal facility/service.	Aberdeenshire Council	
Housing Development	Perception that housing development is at odds with housing need Need for low cost smaller housing. Sheltered Housing Provision Audit	Highlight issue Local Development Plan Aberdeenshire Council Housing Team Develop Housing Group Investigate issues & options	Appropriate housing provision	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Associations Developers	
Broadband	Improved Service/Access	Convene forum to discuss Local Action Groups to address problem areas	Improved Service/Access	Aberdeenshire Council Scottish Government Private Service Providers Community Broadband Scotland	
Mobile	Mobile phone and data services patchy, throughout the area.	Convene forum to discuss Local Action Groups to address problem areas	Improved Service/Access	Aberdeenshire Council Scottish Government Private Service Providers	

This booklet is one of a series produced by the Local Rural Partnerships for a number of communities in Aberdeenshire.

This initiative is sponsored by Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership and run by Aberdeenshire Local Rural Partnerships. The aim is to provide community action plans in an attractive, easy to read, professionally printed format.

This information can now guide the community and Community Planning Partners in drawing up detailed action plans to implement the top priorities as well as addressing the other issues which have been identified.

For each priority or issue this will involve agreeing who should be involved, what resources will be needed and target dates for completion. It is hoped that this process will be driven by representatives of the community with support - moral, technical & financial - from the relevant Partners.

It is important that this booklet is seen by all concerned as an account of the community's views at the time of the latest consultation, and that it will have to be regularly updated. As some projects are completed, other issues will arise and take their place in future versions of the community plan.

It is recommended that this plan has a maximum life of five years.

Thanks are due to all of the Howe of Alford Community who submitted their views, contributed to the validation of priorities and helped finalise the actions.

Thanks to all those who provided photographs including the Donside Camera Club. Also thanks to Marr Area Partnership and Aberdeenshire Council for supporting our Community to undertake this process

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