



# COWDENBEATH Community Action Plan 2025-30



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With thanks to Mack Drone for the use of photos in this report.



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# SUMMARY



Cowdenbeath Community Action Plan (CAP) lists the priorities identified for improvements to our town following a public engagement exercise in 2024/25. This report outlines the ideas and proposals, as voted for by members of the public, from over 3,000 comments and suggestions received as part of My Cowdenbeath's research exercise, which saw 1,100 local residents complete their survey.

Across four broad themes, a number of specific and achievable suggestions were put to a public vote, with the aim of creating a steering group to co-ordinate local efforts to implement each suggestion within the next 5 years.

The Community Action Plan should be seen in partnership with the recently published Cowdenbeath Local Place Plan, detailing nearly 40 proposals for land use in the town, which taken together form a 'Masterplan' for the town over the next few years.

The plans have been built entirely with local input and co-ordinated by local residents, with no outside influence - the priorities from the people who live, work or visit here.

# OUR PLACE TODAY

Cowdenbeath has a rich and diverse history – we think it's the best small town in Scotland!

We have some fantastic facilities, we have a busy town centre, great parks and open spaces and have excellent transport links. These factors make Cowdenbeath a great place to live.

Like every aspiring town, we have our challenges too- not enough housing to match the demand, older infrastructure like schools and roads and frustrations around job prospects and educational attainment.

Cowdenbeath needs sustained investment and support to tackle generational poverty across a number of neighbourhoods.

Our biggest asset however, is our people – from local food banks to our brilliant Gala Day, the people of Cowdenbeath step up in a huge variety of ways to support their local community. Our people are passionate about improving this place and creating the best environment and opportunities for their families and loved ones.

This is a plan with people at its heart.



# YOUR VIEWS

*It's not safe anymore, I wouldn't consider walking alone. The High Street is terrible*

*I have no problems, good to have shops, dentist, library etc close by but could do with a kids play park*

*Elected councillors need to be interested in helping/representing local people*

*That green space is being used for absolutely nothing which is a huge waste!*

*I'd like to see more events designed to draw in folk from across Scotland, such as mini-conventions*

*The Gala has always been a huge success*

*Good shops and decent area. No issues where I live. It's quiet*

*Wish there was more for the elderly and disabled*

*Help to open new shops to bring people into our community*

*The murals are absolutely stunning*

*It's the people who make the place. Less anti social behaviour and maybe more support for those who have addiction issues would help make the place better*

*Decent High Street and stores on the outskirts, good transport links, although pot holes need fixed. Needs more social housing built*

*Cowdenbeath is a friendly place*

*There is a real lack of police presence in the community. The impression of non interest is a major concern*

*As an incomer from Kirkcaldy it's far friendlier here. People are willing to help others with an excellent community spirit.*

*Cowdenbeath wouldn't be the community we are if it wasn't for the miners!! Massive respect to them!!*

*Not enough done with the Town Square area. Just seems an empty space*

*Clean, tidy, and I live in a great street. Everyone talks and gets on well with each other*

*Needs A Staffed Hub or Drop In Centre Similar To Citizens Advice*

*Far too many empty shops*

*Cowdenbeath has better facilities than some other small towns*

*A total clean up and educating the community about pride of the town and it's mining history*

*The focus on the past is really important - mining, politics, education etc*

Comments taken from community insights report published by My Cowdenbeath CIC

# METHODOLOGY

The Community Action Plan was created as an output of a large scale research project conducted by the development group, My Cowdenbeath CIC, in 2023-24. The research sought to gather the views of local residents on a wide range of topics and asked more than 30 questions in an online and in-person survey.

More than 1,100 local adults took part in the survey and the results were published in late 2024 here:

[bit.ly/CBSurvey2024](https://bit.ly/CBSurvey2024)

The research helped us identify a number of areas where there could be significant improvements in Cowdenbeath – both in land use or building redevelopment, but also in smaller scale tactical projects which would have a shorter timeframe.

This work coincided with the end of the previous Community Action Plan 2019-2024, which had been developed in partnership with Coalfields Regeneration Trust.

The public were invited to have their say and get involved in the research through a number of public engagement days, with My Cowdenbeath holding stalls in the High Street at the Green Square, at Brunton Square and on the Gala Day to

reach as many people as possible.

A series of public 'Mapping Days' were held in the Maxwell Centre in 2024 to help us identify places and neighbourhoods, or particular assets, that people wanted to protect and improve across the town.

A series of 4 drop-in sessions were also held in the Maxwell Centre in 2025 to bring together specific tactical suggestions which would help form the shortlist for the new Action Plan across the 4 key themes of:

- **People & Culture**
- **Town Centre**
- **Neighbourhoods**
- **Parks, Green Spaces & Leisure**

The shortlist was then put to an open public vote, with over 600 votes being submitted through our website in 2025.

The outcome of the vote was publicised on social media and through our website.



# SCOPE

A community Action Plan is a tool for change in local communities. It helps evidence work done to assess improvement priorities in the local area, with input from residents and people who visit or work there too. It creates a specific and manageable plan for time-focussed small-scale developments and improvements in the community, usually driven by local people in partnership with public agencies in Fife such as Fife Council, Police Scotland, NHS Fife and local charities and community groups.

It has a specific scope, which focus on tactical short-term actions which can be achieved in a community to improvement the area for everyone to enjoy.

What's included:

- **Small improvement projects run by the local community**
- **Environmental improvements which benefit the town**
- **Community empowerment initiatives to help develop our people**

What's not included:

- **Changes to land use or land designation in Cowdenbeath**
- **Changes to planning zones in the town**
- **Major town developments like housing or transport infrastructure**
- **Types of shops in our town centre**
- **Policy decisions by community partners such as Fife Council or Police Scotland**

Cowdenbeath recently published a Local Place Plan which contains ideas and input from residents for land use in the town and where housing and other improvements

could be placed by potential developers in the future. The Cowdenbeath Local Place Plan includes more than 40 areas of land (or buildings) that we want to protect, such as parks and open spaces, as well as ambitious ideas for future developments to boost jobs and the local economy. Land and building use is therefore not in scope for this Community Action Plan, but together they form a 'masterplan' for Cowdenbeath based on community insights and ideas.

We are determined that Cowdenbeath will see improvements not just in the town centre, but across our town. Neighbourhoods are just as important to this plan since people care deeply about the immediate area where they live, so these neighbourhood objectives are a fundamental element in the successful delivery of the plan.

The Cowdenbeath Community Action Plan has been designed around 4 key themes:

- **Culture & People**
- **Town Centre Improvements**
- **Neighbourhood Improvements**
- **Parks, Green Spaces & Leisure**

*"There is no initiative to do anything in Cowdenbeath. It used to be thriving but now lacks variation, interest and attraction"*

From the 125 votes cast in the open round of community consultation, the results for Culture & People were:

- 44%** Improve youth provision in the town (possibly a youth café at the old Library)
- 41%** Create more events which bring people together
- 8%** Launch a Cowdenbeath Hall of Fame to recognise local heroes
- 7%** Introduce a Cowdenbeath Local Hero Award

Other project ideas within this theme include:

Creation of a youth forum for Cowdenbeath so the views of young people are acknowledged and valued

## RECENT IMPROVEMENTS

Cowdenbeath has seen several recent developments which improve the facilities and services available in the local area for the benefit of its residents and visitors.

These projects often take years to plan and to raise the investment to complete the project, so we should celebrate the achievements of everyone involved in these recent successful projects:

- Cowdenbeath Town House redevelopment (BRAG Enterprises)
- Dora Community Orchard (PICTS charity)
- Brunton Square Mining Memorial (Cowdenbeath Rotary Club)
- NCB Workshops Memorial Cairn (My Cowdenbeath & Community Council)
- Cowdenbeath Leisure Centre redevelopment (Fife Council)

A number of improvement projects are also in progress across the town, including:

- Recruitment of volunteers for a new community radio station
- Community noticeboards & Mining Heritage boards
- A Cowdenbeath mobile app
- Parking improvements at Cowdenbeath Community Woodland

From the 166 votes cast in the open round of community consultation, the results for Town Centre were:

- 30%** Better street lighting for a safer night-time feel
- 23%** Create a monthly outdoor market in the town square
- 22%** Reintroduce public toilets run by the community in an empty shop space
- 17%** Additional bollards and barriers to prevent pavement parking

8% Remove the red 'BE' sign in the town square

Other project ideas within this theme include:

Create a business-focussed entity to help boost Cowdenbeath's business and leisure offering, elevating the 'Love Cowdenbeath' brand.

*"There are no local facilities for entertainment such as in Lochgelly, Dunfermline, Glenrothes or Kirkcaldy."*

*"I feel for the kids as growing up we always had a youth club or club to attend, there is absolutely nothing for kids now"*

*"Lived here nearly all my life. People are very friendly and look out for each other and their community"*

*"Some of the town centre shops and buildings look really unpleasant and run down"*

*"We have a community centre thats not used to its potential."*

*"Make sculptures more visible in centre of the town. More celebrations in the garden square."*

## NEIGHBOURHOODS

From the 149 votes cast in the open round of community consultation, the results for Neighbourhoods were:

- 40%** Introduce a community clean-up crew to tackle nuisance hot spots
- 28%** Introduce a stock car / event parking plan
- 14%** Install community noticeboards around the town
- 14%** Reinstate the Drylie St playpark
- 3%** More seating in the Westburn Avenue park

Other project ideas within this theme include:

Creating ultra-local improvement groups for neighbourhoods around the town to co-ordinate small projects with residents at the helm.

Introduce Neighbourhood Improvement Plans to sit under this Community Action Plan, each with a local Co-ordinator to champion neighbourhood investments and changes.

*"More community police on streets to build relationships with young people"*

*"We dont all live in the High St or even visit every day, lets see amazing neighbourhoods too!"*

*"Friendly people. The neighbourhood where I live is great."*

## PARKS, GREEN SPACES & LEISURE

From the 145 votes cast in the open round of community consultation, the results for Neighbourhoods were:

- 44%** Invest in CCTV for our parks to improve public safety
- 37%** Invest in our Public Park to create a 'showcase' park experience
- 11%** Establish more community gardens and woodlands
- 7%** Tell the story of our heritage through more public artworks

Other project ideas within this theme include:

Creation of a Public Park Development Plan to focus investment on key improvements over the next 5 years.

Create a Playpark Development Group to spearhead private investment in new playparks to close gaps in the town (ref. Local Place Plan).

*"Public parks need major improvements to keep up with other similar spaces"*

*"The public park in Cowdenbeath is one of the nicest parts lovely to go a walk with the dog"*

*"Encourage people to have more trees, hedges, grass and small gardens"*

# LINKS TO THE LOCALITY PLAN

Themes from this Community Action Plan align to the Plan 4 Cowdenbeath and the Plan 4 Fife – these are strategic guiding principles and themes which help provide the framework for the Council, its partners and communities to take action to improve local outcomes.

All of the proposals in our Local Place Plan and Community Action Plan are aligned with the overall objectives and aims of the strategic vision for Fife and for the Cowdenbeath Area.

The one golden thread which runs through all our proposals and ideas is about community wealth-building for Cowdenbeath – turning local ideas into plans led by local residents who engage local businesses to carry out the improvement works.

### Plan 4 Fife Themes

**Opportunities for All  
Thriving Places - Inclusive Growth & Jobs  
Community-Led Services**

### Plan 4 Cowdenbeath Themes

**Tackling Poverty  
Raising Aspirations  
Community Engagement**

### Cowdenbeath Community Action Plan Themes

**People & Culture  
Town Centre - Neighbourhoods  
Parks, Green Spaces & Leisure**

[mycowdenbeath.scot/useful-information](http://mycowdenbeath.scot/useful-information)

## CULTURE & PEOPLE

PROPOSAL/ PROJECT	PLAN 4 FIFE	PLAN 4 COWDENBEATH
<i>Improve youth provision in the town</i>	<i>Opportunities for All &amp; Thriving Places</i>	<i>Raising Aspirations</i>
<i>More events to bring people together</i>	<i>Community-Led Services &amp; Thriving Places</i>	<i>Community Engagement</i>

## TOWN CENTRE

PROPOSAL/ PROJECT	PLAN 4 FIFE	PLAN 4 COWDENBEATH
<i>Better street lighting for a safer night-time feel</i>	<i>Community-led Services</i>	<i>Community Engagement</i>
<i>Outdoor market in the Green Square</i>	<i>Thriving Places</i>	<i>Tackling Poverty &amp; Raising Aspirations</i>

## NEIGHBOURHOODS

PROPOSAL/ PROJECT	PLAN 4 FIFE	PLAN 4 COWDENBEATH
<i>Introduce a community clean-up crew</i>	<i>Community-led Services &amp; Thriving Places</i>	<i>Tackling Poverty &amp; Raising Aspirations</i>
<i>Create a stock car / event parking plan</i>	<i>Thriving Places</i>	<i>Raising Aspirations &amp; Community Engagement</i>
<i>Create community noticeboards around the town</i>	<i>Community-led Services</i>	<i>Community Engagement</i>

## PARKS, GREEN SPACES & LEISURE

PROPOSAL/ PROJECT	PLAN 4 FIFE	PLAN 4 COWDENBEATH
<i>CCTV for our parks to improve safety and tackle crime</i>	<i>Community-led Services &amp; Thriving Places</i>	<i>Community Engagement</i>
<i>Invest in our 'showcase' Public Park</i>	<i>Community-led Services &amp; Thriving Places</i>	<i>Raising Aspirations &amp; Community Engagement</i>
<i>Establish more community growing spaces, gardens &amp; woodlands</i>	<i>Thriving Places</i>	<i>Tackling Poverty</i>
<i>More public art works</i>	<i>Community-led Services</i>	<i>Community Engagement</i>

# NEXT STEPS - GOVERNANCE & CAPACITY

Developing ideas and proposals has been the easy part! The challenge now is to bring some of these plans and projects into reality.

Cowdenbeath has a fantastic community spirit and most of this is built on the heroic efforts of volunteers, who give their time willingly to help run sports clubs, committees and groups every day of the week. So we know any additional ask for help is going to be difficult.

There are also practical considerations to take into account when pushing forward with some of these projects – a bank account, a constitution, incorporation as a group, insurance, reputation and volunteer capacity.

Since Cowdenbeath has no paid development staff outside of the local authority, it seems likely that any progress to be made in this plan will be down to the hard work of local residents organising their own response.

Having discussed the future capacity and governance of any development plan with Cowdenbeath Community Council, there were concerns about existing capacity and the ability to take on more work within our small but hard-working community council.

Our proposal is therefore to create a Cowdenbeath Development Board to launch in 2026.

This will be a combination of local interested residents, business people and representatives from community groups all working together. This would be a non-political, voluntary committee to co-ordinate efforts only.

The Board will undertake a co-ordinating role for the work to develop our town, using the Local Place Plan and Community Action Plan as a framework for local improvements. We are proposing that My Cowdenbeath would be the permanent secretariat for the group but that the members of the Development Board nominate a rotating Chair from amongst their numbers.

Individual projects would then be taken forward by lead organisations, such as the community council, with regular updates provided to the Development Board.

A 'Terms of Reference' would be circulated and adopted at the first Board meeting, which should be as flexible as possible while acknowledging the voluntary capacity available.

Members of the public and local business owners would be invited to join, but we would also hope to have the following established groups involved:

- **Cowdenbeath Community Council**
- **My Cowdenbeath CIC**
- **Love Cowdenbeath**
- **Radio Cowdenbeath CIC**
- **PICTS**
- **Cowden in the Community**

And many more.

We'd love your comments on this proposed governance structure to take forward plans for Cowdenbeath over the next few years. You can email us on: **feedback@mycowdenbeath.scot**

Created by:



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LINKS:

Cowdenbeath Community Survey  
Insights report  
[bit.ly/CBSurvey2024](https://bit.ly/CBSurvey2024)

Cowdenbeath Local Place Plan  
[bit.ly/CBLPP](https://bit.ly/CBLPP)

Cowdenbeath Area Strategic Assessment 2025  
[bit.ly/3Rn1doh](https://bit.ly/3Rn1doh)

Fife Council's Local Strategic Assessment 2025  
Cowdenbeath  
[bit.ly/3Rn1doh](https://bit.ly/3Rn1doh)

CRT Community Action Plan 2019-24  
[bit.ly/49vGlfh](https://bit.ly/49vGlfh)