

HEATHHALL LOCAL PLACE PLAN



2025 - 2035



A great place to live,
learn, work and play

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Our Vision

“In ten years time, we aspire for Heathhall to be a place where people of all different ages have access to good facilities for education, recreation, health and wellbeing.

A place where people will be able to access the surrounding green spaces via roads that will be safer for cyclists, pedestrians and motorists alike., and also utilising our network of cycle and pedestrian paths.

A place with a good public transport system which will enable residents to travel sustainably for work, higher education and access to the wider local facilities.

A place that welcomes new opportunities for growth and development.

A place with a vibrant community that will encourage families to settle and stay.

A great place to live, learn, work and play”.

Community Profile

For the purpose of the local place plan the boundary of Heathhall Community Council has been adopted as the subject area.

Heathhall has an area of 1.41 km², which is equivalent to 0.54 sq mi.



Historical Development and Heritage

Heathhall's beginnings are tied to early 20th-century industrialisation. In 1913, the ground-breaking Arrol-Johnston Car Factory; Britain's first ferro-concrete motor factory, was constructed on Edinburgh Road. Designed in the American "daylight factory" style by Albert Kahn, the complex offered modern amenities and flexibility, supporting both car and, during wartime, aircraft manufacture.

The factory's historical narrative includes major chapters in Scottish engineering, the female led Galloway car project, and city defining industry through the later Uniroyal, Gates' Rubber, and Interfloor periods. Following its closure in 2013, the now unused Interfloor Factory remains a Category B listed structure an architectural and community "landmark", but also a site of urban decay needing sensitive renewal.



Then



Now

Heathhall's evolution has also been defined by aviation. Heathhall airfield (RAF Dumfries) operated throughout WWII, with involvement in bomber and gunnery training as well as navigators and advanced flying units. Ultimately the increase in activity at the airfield brought its own dangers and it was attacked by German aircraft.

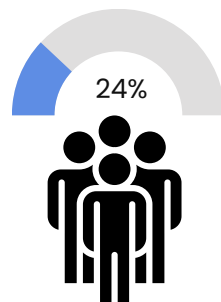
The original aircraft hangars are still in use by various industrial companies and the aviation control tower is now the focus of the Dumfries & Galloway Aviation Museum, preserving local air and military history, and contributing to tourism and education.



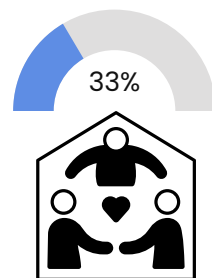
Demographic Profile and Trends

Recent census and statistical analyses paint Heathhall as a predominantly residential community of c.5500 people, with extensive outward commuting for work and services. Analysis of available 2022 data reveals:

Age Structure: The area is older than the national average. Roughly 24% are aged 65+, a concentration often associated with peaceful, settled suburban living—but also higher social care needs. There are 23% aged under 25, reflecting some family presence but an over-representation of retirees and older adults.



Household Composition: Majority are family households. However, 1-person households are common (33%); highlighting independent living among older people and potential for social isolation.

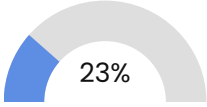


Ethnicity and Language: Overwhelmingly white and UK-born (near 100%). Scots language skill is modest, and very few, if any, have ability in Gaelic.

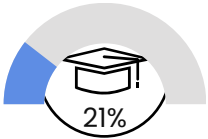




Health and Wellbeing: 80% report health as 'Good' or 'Very Good', similar to the UK average (81%).



Economic Activity: Higher-than-average retirement rates of 23% (Scotland 19%), limited unemployment, and a spread between caring/service and routine manual jobs. Key employment hubs are outside of Heathhall.



Education: 21% have a degree or similar, significantly lower in comparison to Scotland's average of 32%.

The community's relatively static, aging profile creates both strengths, in stability, deep local ties and challenges on service demand, risk of isolation, need for accessible infrastructure.

Asset-based Community Strengths

Heathhall is noted for its balance of independent local businesses with a Premier Shop, Rhodas Hair Design, Heathhall Garden Centre, The Little Bakery, Dalscone Farm Fun, larger commercial businesses with Tesco express and ESSO along with numerous businesses within the 3 local Industrial Estates providing the community well.

The area has strong educational provision with 2 partner run Nurseries, Heathhall Primary School with an attached nursery and the catchment Dumfries High School all within easy access. Locharbriggs Primary School; although out with the place plan boundary is also within walking distance.

The community centre provides a well-loved community facility, with a wide variety of clubs and sessions for all ages.

The proximity to Heathhall forest and various play parks, provide a variety of accessible outdoor spaces.

"We have wonderful green spaces, a thriving community centre, and a true sense of place. But we're worried the facilities aren't keeping pace with new development and the needs of older residents." –

Local stakeholder, May 2025



What is a Local Place Plan (LPP)?

A Local Place Plan (LPP) is a community led planning tool introduced in Scotland through the Planning (Scotland)

Act 2019. It gives communities a formal way to influence how land is used and developed in their area.

It is a document created by a community body; like a Community Council or a community controlled group, that sets out local priorities, aspirations, and proposals for land use and development.

Once submitted and registered by the local authority, it must be taken into account when the council prepares its Local Development Plan.

What Can It Achieve?

Empowerment: It gives communities a statutory voice in shaping their future.

Vision: It helps articulate what residents want their place to look and feel like—whether that's more green space, better transport links, housing, or community facilities.

Collaboration: It encourages dialogue between communities, councils, and other stakeholders.

Funding Leverage: A well crafted LPP can attract investment and support by showing a clear, community backed vision.

How Does It Fit into the Planning System?

LPPs are non-statutory, but once registered, they must be considered in the statutory Local Development Plan process.

They complement other planning tools and can help reduce conflict by reviewing community views early.

Why Create a Local Place Plan?

Identifying Strengths and Challenges: The LPP will help to highlight what works well in Heathhall and pinpoint areas that need improvement, supporting targeted action and investment.

Understanding Local Needs and Aspirations: Through inclusive consultation, the LPP will foster a deeper understanding of what residents want for their community, ensuring future developments reflect local priorities.

Attracting Support and Investment: A clearly articulated LPP can help funders and investors appreciate the cohesiveness of Heathhall's projects and the vibrancy of its community, encouraging greater engagement and resources.

Influence on the Local Development Plan: The LPP will be considered as part of the wider Local Development Plan, giving Heathhall a new platform to contribute ideas and proposals for land use, and to influence local planning at a fundamental level.

The Consultation Process

Public Engagement

Public engagement with Heathhall residents began in the latter half of 2023 and extended through to June 2025, reflecting a sustained commitment to understanding and supporting the community's evolving needs. This initiative was designed to reach people of all ages and backgrounds, collecting insights on current strengths as well as aspirations for the future.

Engagement Approach

The engagement process was built upon inclusivity, with volunteers actively collaborating with a diverse range of groups:

School and Nursery Pupils: Activities were organised to encourage even the youngest residents to share their perspectives, ensuring their voices contributed to the broader vision for Heathhall.

Local Older Adult Groups: Dedicated sessions focused on listening to older adults, who offered reflections on longstanding aspects of community life and highlighted priorities for future support.

The Wider Community: Engagement extended to residents of all ages and circumstances, through open forums and targeted outreach.

Public Engagement Diary

- Aug 2023 - Community Meeting.
- Sept 2023 - ECO Bites litter pick & visit to Friendship Group.
- Oct 2023 - Information sessions at local primary and nursery schools.
- Dec 2023 - Online consultation.
- Feb 2024 - Primary school information session.
- Mar 2025 - Online consultations.
- Apr 2025 - Public engagement within local pharmacy.
- Apr 2025 - Walk & talk public engagement.
- May 2025 - Walk & talk public engagement, 'Chips & Chat' public engagement.
- May 2025 - 'Our perfect Place' session at Heathhall primary school.
- Jun 2025 - Public engagement at local library.
- Nov 2025 - 3 public consultation events to preview and critique the draft document.



Community Outreach

Volunteers visited multiple key locations within Heathhall to maximise accessibility and inclusivity:

-Local school



-Community centre activities

-Community groups



-Pharmacy



-Library

These settings were chosen to ensure a comprehensive cross-section of the population could participate, including those who might otherwise be overlooked.

Participant Involvement

Over the course of the engagement period, approximately 900 people contributed their thoughts, experiences, and suggestions. This impressive reach was achieved by visiting varied venues and adapting approaches to suit different age groups and personal circumstances.



Feedback Gathered

Discussions and surveys focused on six themes:

- Outdoor spaces and Environment.
- Facilities and services.
- Housing and built environment.
- Safety and social wellbeing.
- Community inclusion.
- Communication and inclusion.

Within each of these themes respondents were asked to highlight 2 sub themes;

Current Positives: Residents shared what they value most about living in Heathhall, from the sense of community to the availability of local services and green spaces.

Future Needs: Participants identified areas for improvement and aspirations for the future, such as enhanced facilities, increased community events, and greater support for vulnerable groups.

What We Found

Heathhall stands as a community defined by its strong transport links and evolving neighbourhood landscape, yet recent feedback from residents – particularly young people – reveals pressing concerns and aspirations for the area's future.

Community Perspectives on Safe Travel and Amenities

The local cycle path is widely valued, especially by younger members of the community, as a safe and reliable route through Heathhall. The presence of the lollipop lady during school times is another cherished feature, ensuring secure crossings for children and families and reinforcing a sense of safety around local school and nursery.

Public Transport and Connectivity

Improved bus services have emerged as a top priority in community consultations. Many residents are dissatisfied with current public transport options, noting that enhanced facilities are vital for easier movement within the area.

Public transport primarily consists of the commercial bus 2 route Mon–Sat and bus 1 route on Sun (operated by Houston's) which provides a link to Dumfries train station and the national rail network. Stagecoach run X74 bus service to Moffat and onwards to Glasgow.

Heathhall's connection to broader transport networks is shaped by key routes;
A701 – the main trunk road north and access to the M74 for links to Glasgow, Edinburgh and the north.
A75, which is the main link to the West of our region and to Gretna and the south.

Walking and cycling infrastructure is supported by the Caledonian Cycleway and core local paths.

Maintenance, Cleanliness, and Environmental Concerns

General maintenance issues are frequently raised, including overgrown hedges, weeds along kerbs, and blocked drains. Residents emphasise the need for more regular and effective street and pavement upkeep. Information on how to report these issues is shared on Heathhall Community Council social media and website. Environmental cleanliness is also a recurrent theme with repeated request for more bins (emptied more often), campaigns to encourage responsible pet ownership, and a greater presence of the Resilience & Community Safety Team to maintain clean streets.

Traffic, Safety, and Community Changes

With 3 new housing developments completed in the consultation period, and a proposed build at Catherinefield Farm, there is rising anxiety about increased traffic, road safety, parking, and active travel needs.

Residents have observed a noticeable increase in traffic, attributed both to new homes and frequent vehicle diversions caused by roadworks.

A resident at May 2025 Ward Event remarked:

"The recent roadworks caused major delays. If we add hundreds of houses without improving roads and paths, it's going to be a nightmare."

This has led to calls for additional traffic calming measures and more safe crossing points to protect pedestrians.

Recent surveys and forums highlight several specific issues:

Congestion; particularly linked to roadworks and peak flows on the A701 and C7/Catherinefield Road

Replacement of former speed bumps with 20mph speed limits and repeater signs; prompting questions about their effectiveness

Poor traffic flow at junctions; visibility hazards, and illegal or inconsiderate parking near new developments

Strong demand for enhanced pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure; especially safer crossings, improved lighting, and more direct access to the Caledonian

Cycleway.

Policy Framework and Planned Improvements

The local council's strategy mandates robust Transport Assessments for all new major developments, with explicit consideration of all travel modes, safety, and accessibility.

The Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan and its design guides establish standards for permeability, street hierarchy, and active travel provision. Travel plans, including school bus routes and cycle path links, and street design prioritising people over vehicles, are required.

Physical interventions implemented in recent reviews include upright speed limit signs, new pedestrian crossings—particularly on the A701 and near new housing—and consideration of waiting restrictions such as double yellow lines where parking is problematic.

Despite these initiatives, community feedback underscores ongoing needs:

Further traffic calming and rigorous enforcement of 20mph speed limits

Restoration or rethinking of traffic sensors for speed control on the A701

Greater investment in public transport capacity, particularly during peak hours and for children travelling to school

Ensuring new developments comply with “20-minute neighbourhood” principles, so that core services, schools, and shops are within a short, walkable distance.

Mobility and Inclusion

Active travel (walking and cycling) is seen as both a health and sustainability priority. The Caledonian Cycleway and local paths constitute a strong starting asset, and plans seek to ensure that new developments connect directly to these. However, accessibility for disabled and elderly residents remains an ongoing concern—highlighted repeatedly in focus groups, especially regarding drop kerbs, smooth path surfaces, and continuous routes free from parked vehicles or obstacles.

Proposals for the next five years emphasize:

- Routine auditing of accessibility and mobility at street and path level;
- Engaging with regional transport planners for better integration of bus services;
- Encouraging safe, inclusive travel planning in new developments at design and build stages.

“The school run is getting busier every year. We need safer places to cross, not just for kids but for older people with sticks or wheelchairs.” –

Parent and local carer

Environmental Considerations

Heathhall, situated on Solway's low-lying ground, is subject to flood risk—highlighted both in the SEPA flood risk maps and in the council's LNG Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Recent flood defences put in place have slightly negated the risk from major flooding of River Nith and its tributaries around Heathhall, however the area remains particularly vulnerable to surface water issues from heavy rainfall, necessitating climate-resilient upgrading of paths, footways, and crossing points.

While Heathhall offers valuable amenities and strong links for safe travel, residents see clear opportunities for improvement in public transport, street maintenance, road safety, and environmental cleanliness.

As the community grows and evolves, embracing these priorities will be essential to maintaining Heathhall's quality of life and supporting its future development.



Outdoor Spaces & Recreation

Access to Greenspace and Natural Assets

Heathhall enjoys excellent access to greenspace—most notably, the 153-hectare Heathhall Forest, a key community asset. The forest is classified as a “hidden gem,” offering easy, family-friendly walking and cycling trails, abundant wildlife, and opportunities for picnics and informal play.

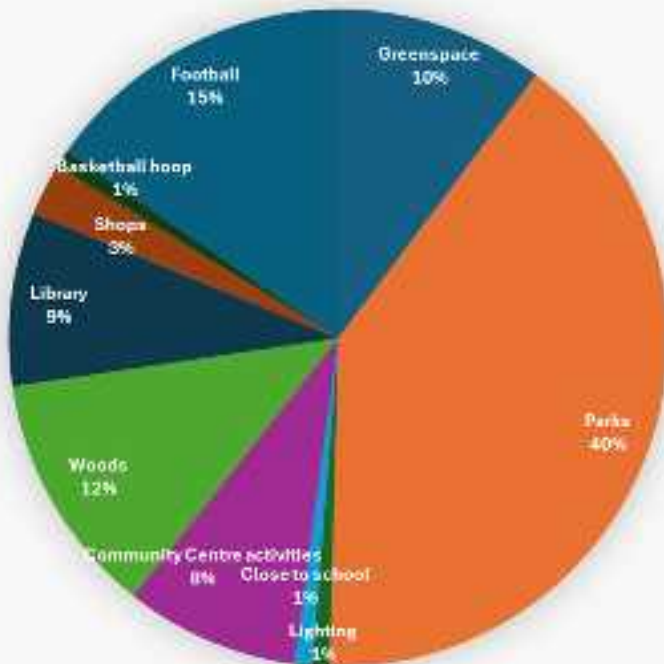
Feedback consistently indicates that residents value proximity to the forest and Auchencrieff Loch as spaces for relaxation, exercise, dog walking, and children’s exploration. Informal trails, as well as new and improved “formal” paths under the current land management plan, facilitate year-round access.

Heathhall Forest’s land management vision (2023–2033) is to further develop broadleaf-rich mixed woodland, increase access for all, and restore Lochar Moss wetland areas—aligning local recreational benefit with national carbon sequestration and biodiversity targets.

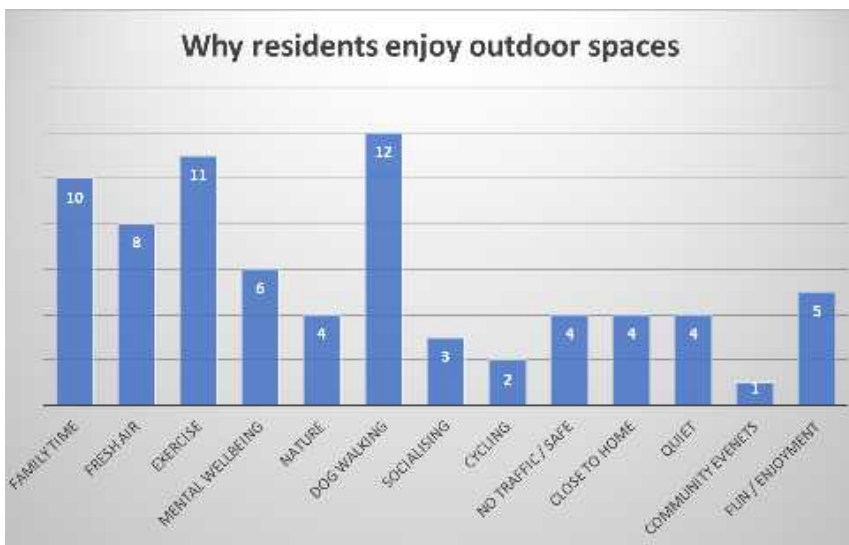
Community partners are explicitly invited to co-design recreation infrastructure, including improved interpretation panels, better signage, inclusive seating, and potentially sculpture or art trails.

Outdoor recreation plays a vital role in the life of Heathhall's residents, with several green spaces and parks cherished by both children and adults. The children, when asked, emphasised how significant the parks, football-friendly open areas, and accessible woodland are to their everyday happiness. These spaces not only encourage imaginative play and physical activity but also help foster a sense of freedom and adventure.

WHAT CHILDREN LIKE ABOUT OUTDOOR SPACES IN HEATHHALL



For families, these outdoor places provide valuable opportunities to spend time together, unwind, and enjoy simple pleasures, such as walking with children or taking the family dog for a stroll just outside their door. Many residents also make use of the green corridors and trails for running, cycling, or other more vigorous exercise, further highlighting the versatility of these places.



Sports, Play, and Informal Activity

**Heathhall has several play and sports spaces:
Community playparks (inclusive design is desirable,
and recent funding will support upgrades);
Short-mat bowls at the community centre;
Indoor and outdoor multi-purposes areas at the
community centre;
Informal football and games pitches, with scope for
upgrade as new development comes online.**

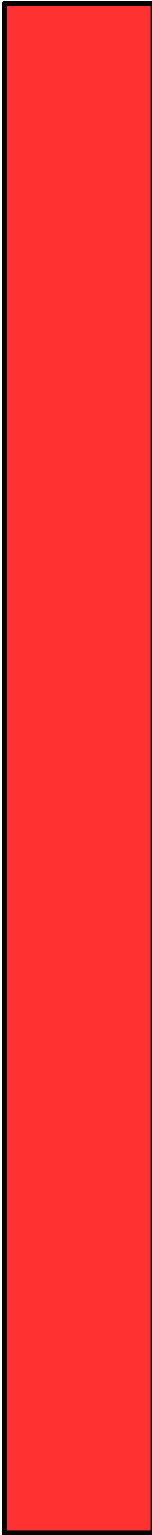
**Organised “sports activity sessions” and family events
through after school clubs and community centre.**

**However, feedback from the community has made it
clear that there is a strong desire for improvements
and better upkeep of the playparks. Concerns centre
around the need for regular maintenance—addressing
weeds, overgrown hedges, and inconsistent grass
cutting—as well as the desire for enhanced facilities.
Suggestions from locals include installing nets on
football goalposts, providing more seating, adding
toilet facilities, and improving lighting to make the
spaces more welcoming and safe, especially during
darker hours.**

**Litter, and in particular dog waste, is a recurring issue
that could be alleviated with the addition of more bins
and clearer signage. Residents recognise that the
quality of these shared spaces greatly affects the
enjoyment and wellbeing of the whole community.**

Most popular opinions on how to make outdoor spaces better





The rollout of community-led growing projects (such as those associated with the Grow Together fund and “Curries Yard” community garden) is seen as a high-impact way to build intergenerational social contact, grow food, and promote wellbeing.

Residents see value in more regular outdoor events in both Heathhall forest and Community Centre—seasonal fairs, guided walks, fun days, and inclusive exercise classes.

Inclusive, robust surfaces and clear paths for wheelchair users, visually impaired, and older walkers are a cross-cutting concern.

In summary, Heathhall's outdoor areas are highly valued, but ongoing attention to their condition and amenities is needed to ensure they continue to be inviting, safe, and accessible for everyone in the neighbourhood.

“Access to the forest is magic, but play equipment needs a refresh. Our kids need safe, challenging stuff—like climbing frames, sensory play and more for older children.” – **Parent at Community Centre event**



Facilities & Services

Mapping Local Facilities

Heathhall benefits from a well-distributed (though limited) network of services, including:

Community Centre (Barnett Road): The main hub, hosting youth activities, social events, clubs, and exercise classes.

Lochar Thistle Football Club: Junior, youth and adult sections with indoor and outdoor facilities.

Medical Centre: Lochthorn Medical Centre is located immediately to the north—critical for GP access, though there is community concern over appointment waiting times and general NHS “squeeze” with only one GP insitu.

Pharmacy: Situated within the Medical Centre building, the pharmacy is a small but very busy place. Locals appreciate it’s proximity to home, however, are frustrated with the length of waiting times when visiting.

Education: Heathhall Primary, with attached nursery, is within easy reach of most of the settlement, with Locharbriggs Primary; although out with the place plan boundary, is also within walking/cycling distance. Dumfries Academy and Dumfries High School serve older children. Education confirms Heathhall P.S. is close to or at capacity, with community perception of primary and secondary roll growth due to housing expansion. There are also 2 private nurseries.

Retail: Heathhall is modestly served by local shops (Premier store, Tesco express), but lacks a larger, multi-offer “convenience” centre. Proposals for new, larger retail within recent developments have been shelved due to doubts over commercial sustainability.

Other Community Assets: Library, hairdresser, small industrial and business estates.

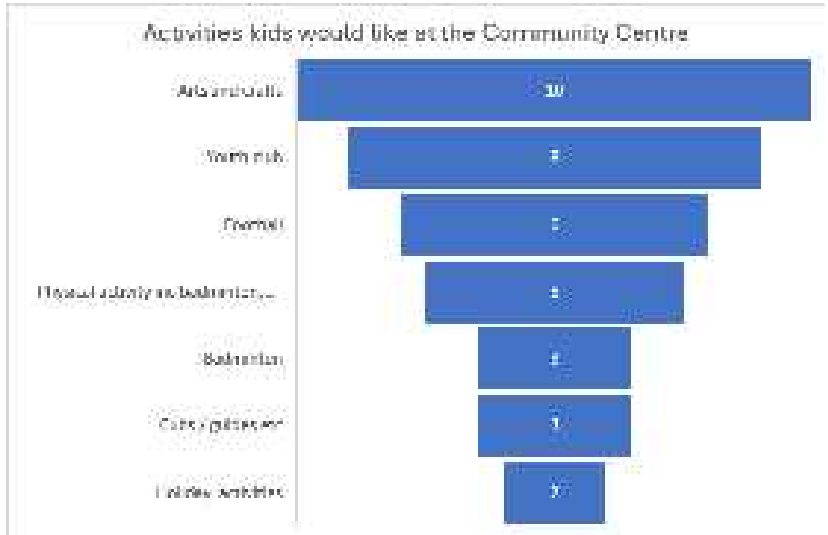
Other Medical and Social Provision: Nearest NHS hospital is ~2.5 miles, range of dentists, and pharmacies within 2–3 miles.

*“We’re lucky to have the basics, but services are stretched—the GP is hard to see, and the primary school is full. New people mean more demand—without investment, things will get worse.” – **Local parent***

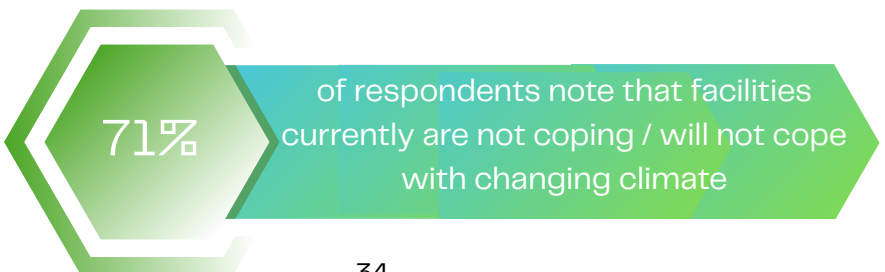


Facilities Gaps and Opportunities

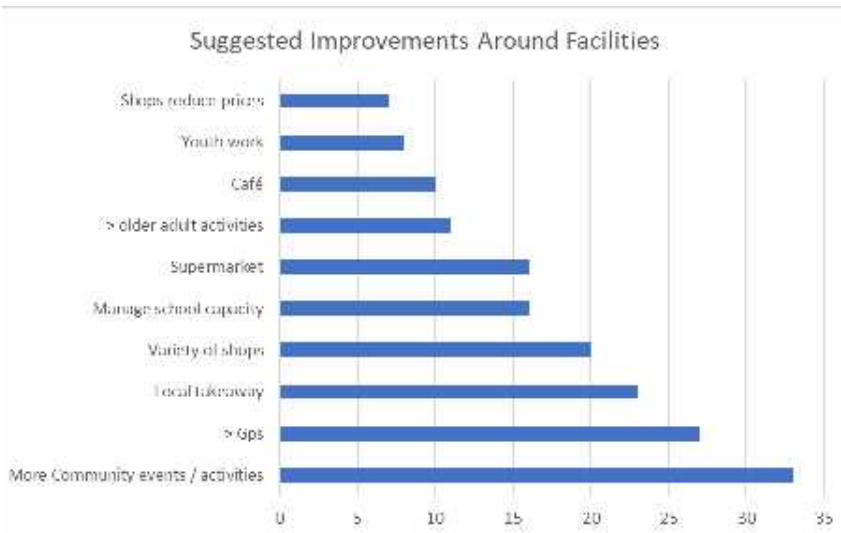
Children expressed a strong interest in more youth activities offered at the Community Centre. The main activities that attracted their attention were a youth club, arts and crafts, as well as various sports.



There is a clear consensus among Heathhall residents on the need for enhanced activities, facilities, and services within the community. In particular, many have expressed a strong desire for more community events and activities to be held at the community centre, which is seen as a vital hub for bringing people together.



Investment in healthcare has emerged as a key priority, with only one GP currently serving the area. Residents feel that expanded and improved GP services are essential to meet growing needs. Access to local shopping is also a concern, with suggestions that more shops and recreational facilities are needed nearby. There is a particular interest in seeing activities and amenities specifically tailored for both youths and older residents, to ensure all generations are supported and engaged.

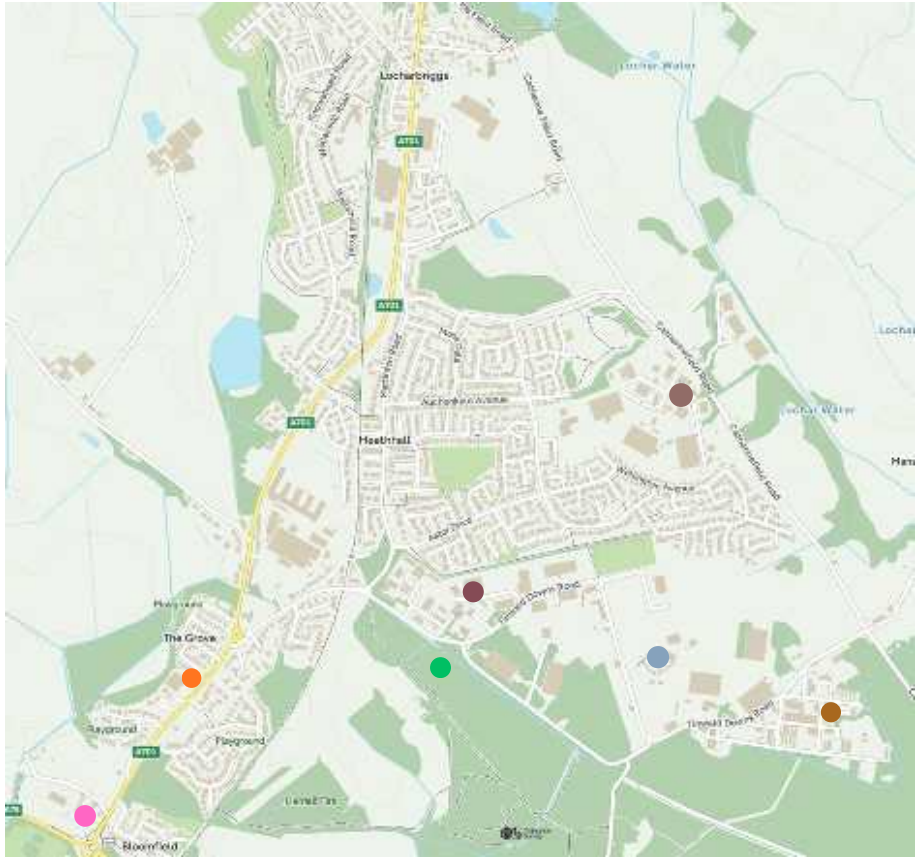


Despite above-average provision in some areas, residents highlight:

- Pinch-points in school capacity (significant for primary and secondary enrolment);**
- Under-supply or inconsistent provision of affordable childcare and wrap-around support;**
- Need for more social spaces (especially for youth and for cafes/sit-and-meet venues);**
- Pressure on health services from both retiree/elder care and young family populations;**
- Limited evening and weekend opening/activities (including for sports and culture).**

Introducing and improving such facilities is widely believed to foster a sense of safety, enhance community spirit, boost wellbeing, and provide valuable local employment opportunities. However, there is anxiety that current facilities are not equipped to handle the pressures of a changing population and climate. Residents point out that the local school is already at capacity, and with recent and forthcoming housing developments, increased traffic is leading to speeding issues, large vehicles, and significant road damage, including potholes.

Overall, the community feels that meaningful investment and proactive improvements are necessary for Heathhall to thrive and remain a welcoming, resilient, and inclusive place for all.



- Dalscone Farm Park
- Heathhall Garden Centre
- Dumfries Aviation Museum
- Downs Way Trading Estate with Bakery
- Heathhall Trading Estate with Bakery/Cafe
- Catherinefield Trading Estate
- Heathhall Forest



- Lochar Thistle
- Heathhall Primary School
- Community Centre
- Library
- Shop/Hair Dressers
- GP/Pharmacy
- Vets
- Tesco Express/ESSO

Housing & Built Environment

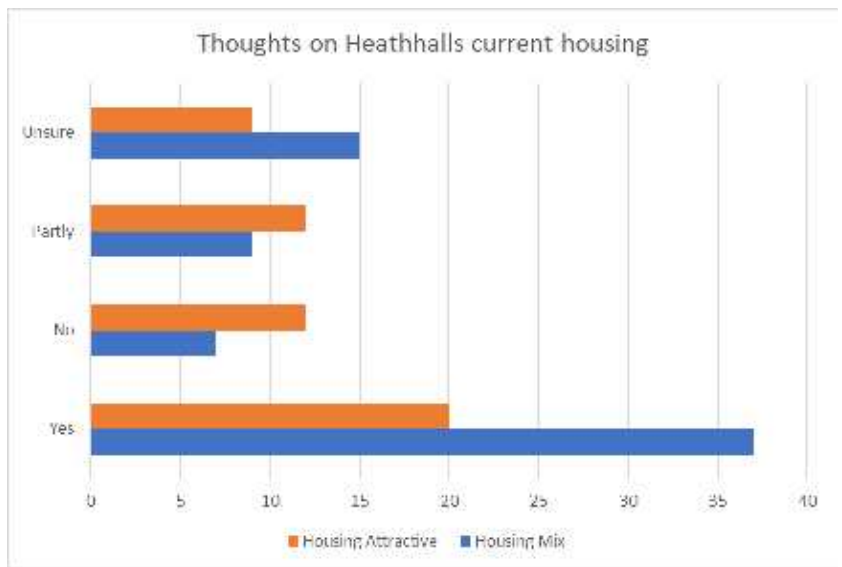
Housing Stock Analysis

The consensus among residents is that our area benefits from a diverse range of housing options.

There is a thoughtful mix of property sizes, price points, and tenure arrangements—including privately owned homes, rentals, adaptive accommodation, and spaces suitable for multi-generational households.

This variety ensures that the community's differing needs are largely accommodated, reflecting an inclusive and adaptable approach to housing provision.

In contrast, opinions were less enthusiastic regarding the visual and environmental appeal of residential neighbourhoods. Although the potential for attractive living spaces exists—through well-maintained homes, private and communal gardens, and thoughtfully designed communal areas—feedback suggests that the reality often falls short. Concerns were raised about insufficient maintenance, specifically the presence of overgrown hedges, weeds along the kerbs, and blocked drains. These issues, previously highlighted, seem to have tempered residents' perceptions and have negatively influenced responses to questions about the attractiveness of local residential areas.



Heathhall’s housing typology has been shaped by its 20th-century roots and continuing expansion. Key data:

Mix: No single housing type dominates; recent stock is a mixture of detached, semi-detached, and terraced, but with very few flats;

Tenure: Majority of properties are owned outright or with a mortgage; but with measurable social rented provision and some private rental;

Recent Developments: The last few years have seen major new social and accessible housing projects by Housing Association new homes, with a strong emphasis on insulation, sustainability, solar panels, and accessibility within 3 estates.

The ambitions for new development focus on multi-generational communities and inclusive design (amenity homes, wheelchair access, “living well” over-55s units).

Homes have been intentionally futureproofed for adaptation, e.g., with stairlifts and large wet rooms.

Housing tenure data suggest:

**74% owned outright or with mortgage
23% rented (council/housing association or private)
Minimal (1%) shared ownership or significant
flat/apartment development.
2% showing rent free.**

While the housing stock in the community is commendably varied and responsive to a range of needs, the overall appeal and upkeep of residential environments require greater attention.

By addressing maintenance issues and investing in communal spaces, there is an opportunity to create neighbourhoods that are not only functional but also inviting—fostering pride and well-being throughout the community.



The Dumfries and Galloway Local Housing Strategy (2025–2030) and LDP3 position Heathhall for continued growth, emphasizing:

- Building more homes to support economic and community needs;**
- Improving the private and social rented sectors, and making homes more energy-efficient (retrofit, insulation, heating);**
- Maximizing brownfield and regeneration opportunities—with substantial investment planned, in aggregate, up to £500 million in regional housing and infrastructure investment over five years.**

Recent and pipeline proposals for new housing developments factor in:

- A mix of bungalows, 2–4 bedroom family units, and some homes for private sale/mid-market rent;**
- Travel and transport plans explicitly connected to school and work destinations;**
- Developer commitments to affordable homes, sustainability, and “community benefits” (apprenticeships, supply chain contracts to local SMEs, support for playparks and social projects).**

With Heathhall having a high allocation of housing within LDP2, this means the availability of suitable sites for future development is limited. Revisiting of allocated housing sites in LDP2 will be essential within LDP3, with particular emphasis on road infrastructure around the sites as a priority.

Heathhall’s place in the wider “20-minute neighbourhood” vision is largely positive—accessible schools, shops, medical care and public transport fall within the recommended catchments—but continued expansion requires close monitoring of capacity, particularly for schools and healthcare.

Condition, Deprivation & Regeneration

The derelict Interfloor (Arrol-Johnston) Factory is the most prominent regeneration challenge—currently the subject of ongoing planning, with national attention and significant community concern as to blight, safety, and potential for heritage-led renewal.

“The eyesore factory is what people see coming into Dumfries from the North. We need it fixed—for jobs, for history, and just so we don’t feel forgotten.” – Petition, June 2024

- The factory’s status as an eyesore damages local pride and discourages inward investment;
- Safe-guarding and improvement are strongly featured in both Local Place Plan aspirations and the LDP2/LDP3 process;
- Council and community are united in seeing the site’s renewal as an opportunity to “reconnect” North Dumfries, celebrate heritage, and provide jobs, housing, and leisure amenities going forward.

Policy and Future Development

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Built Environment & Regeneration Sites

Interfloor Factory/Arrol-Johnston Complex;

The former Interfloor Factory stands as the region's most prominent vacant industrial heritage asset. Its future is critical for Heathhall and wider Dumfries.

Key facts:

- Category B listed; “first ferro-concrete car factory in Britain” and under the protection of Historic Environment Scotland.
- Sited adjacent to key road and cycleway arteries, close to existing housing and business areas.
- Empty and unmaintained since c.2013, with significant vandalism/damage.
- Subject to national and local regeneration interest; several partial masterplans tabled, but complicated by ownership and contamination issues.

Development scenarios under consideration:

1. Full restoration and adaptive re-use (mixed residential, commercial, and leisure);
2. Partial demolition (accepting loss of less significant later extensions, retaining main “spine” block);
3. Enabling development—cross-funding restoration through adjacent new-build housing or commercial units;
4. Last resort, controlled demolition and complete redevelopment (not currently supported given heritage significance).

*“We need to use our past as an asset. This building can't just sit here rotting forever—it should be a centre for innovation or a mix of homes and workspaces, showing our history isn't a thing to be ashamed of.” – **Community Council member***

Other Regeneration and Development Sites

- **Business and Industrial Estates:** We have 3 within the local area at Heathhall, Downs Way and Catherinefield Road. These provide small-to-medium sized industrial units which employ local people and provide opportunities for service, trades and logistics businesses. Redevelopment potential exists for “greening,” co-working/upskilling hubs, and further tie-in with emerging low-carbon business sectors.
- **Housing Sites at North/West of Factory:** Already supporting new affordable homes (63 by Cunninghame Housing Association), with pipeline for further mixed-use expansion.



Safety & Social Wellbeing

Crime, Safety and Antisocial Behaviour

Antisocial behaviour and noise disturbance emerged as the primary concerns during our consultation period. Many residents believe that a regular police presence would help deter such issues.

In addition, the introduction of youth activities and dedicated youth work was suggested, providing young people with constructive outlets and safe spaces within the community.

There is significant apprehension over the prospect of further housing developments. Residents expressed that, without investment in essential facilities and infrastructure—such as schools—the area simply cannot accommodate additional homes.

The community also proposed increased investment in local initiatives. Suggestions ranged from enhanced youth programmes, to litter-picking events, and campaigns promoting responsible pet ownership, such as 'pick up your dog poo.'

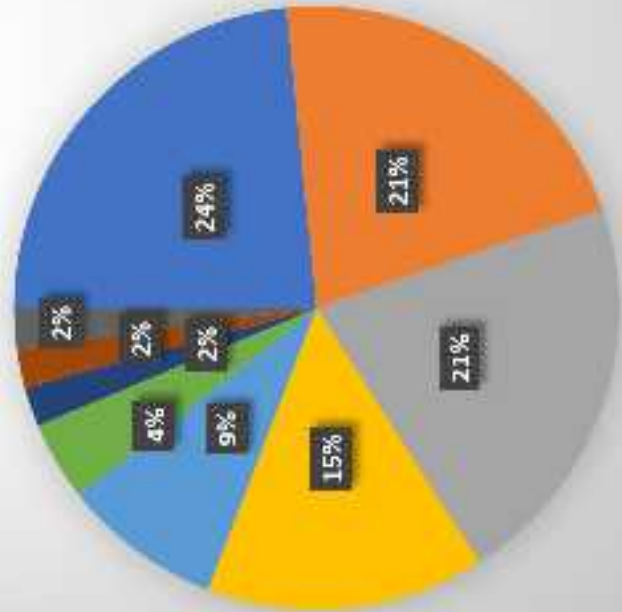
A recurring topic was the future of the old Gates (Uniroyal) factory.

For years, the derelict factory has not only blighted the local landscape but also posed ongoing health and safety risks.

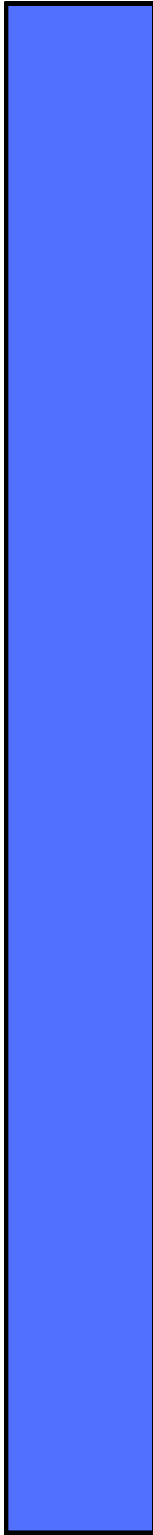
Residents advocated for either its demolition or its transformation into something beneficial for the community.

Collectively, these concerns and proposals reflect a strong desire for a safer, cleaner, and more sustainable Heathhall.

Ideas on how to manage challenges for Heathhall



- Police / warden presence
- Youth activities
- More care, build without infrastructure in place
- More care housing builds
- Community initiatives
- Develop old Coates building
- Supporting living accommodation
- Affordable homes
- Safe paths



Community Inclusion

Heathhall enjoys a generally low crime rate, aligning with wider regional statistics for Dumfries & Galloway (511 crimes per 100,000 people—below the Scottish and UK average).

Police data confirm that the area is considered safe, with only periodic spikes in low-level antisocial behaviour (often linked to peer groups travelling from other Dumfries neighbourhoods), and very limited violent or property crime.

**Residents' main safety concerns relate to:
Vehicle speeding, especially on the A701 and near school crossings and new developments;
Incidents of “boy racer” activity;
Occasional vandalism (often at the derelict Interfloor site);
Road safety at busy junctions during peak times.**

**Police and Council responses include:
Occasional speed checks and targeted campaigns by Police Scotland;
Addition of traffic-calming measures;
Partnership with schools and parent groups to address safe travel;
Prompting communities to report any antisocial behaviour through standard 101 and Crimestoppers channels.**

Health, Care & Social Inclusion

Provision of health and care is robust, though under stress:

Lochthorn Medical Centre; although geographically within Locharbriggs, remains sole GP in the local area, with reported waiting times an ongoing issue; Social and home care services are stretched to serve the large elderly population;

Accessibility and suitable housing for older adults are a priority—new developments make provision of amenity and wheelchair accessible homes.

Active efforts to provide neighbourhood “heat hubs” and winter warm spaces (e.g., at Community Centre) support inclusion and wellbeing.

“The best thing for older people is community: activities in the hall, support to stay independent, and knowing someone will spot if you haven’t been seen. We need to keep that as part of our identity, even as we grow.” – Local retiree

Mental health and social isolation is a recognized challenge as the population ages; clubs and activities at the Community Centre, garden and walking groups, and volunteering opportunities offer protection.

Tackling social isolation is listed as a community priority for grants and external funding support.

Youth, Family & Community Life

Provision within Heathhall is primarily provided at the community centre, with youth groups and summer activities;

Site visits, history sessions at local schools, and youth engagement in digital technology—notably at Heathhall Primary with the Digital Schools Award and ‘Young Digital Leaders’ programme to foster tech inclusion and confidence among young people.

Friendship group and various active sports groups aimed at a wide range of ages and abilities.



Family Race Night

Events are spread across the calendar year to allow a wide variety and access for the whole community both at the community centre and within the wider Heathhall area.



Community Fun Day



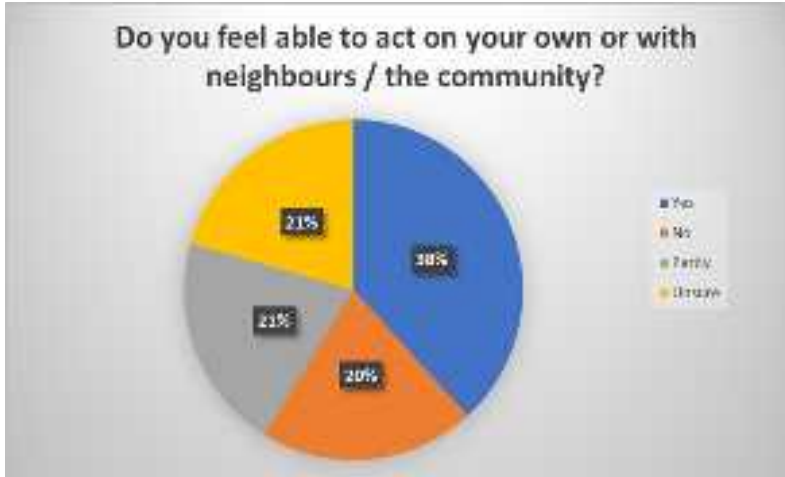
Santa Sleigh Ride



Dalscone Farm Park

Communication & Inclusion

Communication Channels



Heathhall Community Council serves as the principal point of democratic representation, meeting monthly, with wide engagement through social media.

- Multiple community-led channels enhance inclusion:**
- Facebook and WhatsApp groups (for local discussion, lost/found, notices);
 - Posters at local shops, facilities, community noticeboards and community centre;
 - Noticeboards established at new development sites (e.g., Curries Yard);
 - Engagement events with councillors and partner agencies.

"Not everyone is online, so we make sure to share information in print, at the centre, and by word of mouth."

– Community Council Secretary, Spring 2025

Digital Inclusion

Heathhall Primary’s award-winning approach has seen digital inclusion prioritized, with Young Digital Leaders helping to upskill peers and adults alike. Ongoing efforts in partnership with third sector organizations (and in future, national Digital Inclusion Innovation Fund grants) aim to ensure no resident is “left behind” as more services move online.

Aims and Challenges

Extending connectivity to elderly, low-income, or digitally excluded groups;
Making community communication accessible (large print, plain English, translation as needed);
Ensuring hybrid/in-person options for all key events and meetings.

Engagement & Inclusion in Planning

Community voice is not only sought but considered essential to the ethos of the LPP process—the recent Ward Events, school workshops, and action plan feedback have all ensured broad participation.

While some residents have found engagement events challenging—citing issues with audibility, lack of visual supporting materials, or confusion over format—the overwhelming feedback is that direct engagement strengthens community buy-in and trust.

Survey analysis (Ward Event May 2025):

94%

Opportunity to discuss local concerns “achieved.”

65%

“Views listened to.”

88%

Day and venue “convenient.”

65%

Know how to find out what happens next.”

71%

Fully involved in the discussion.”

82%

“A good way to connect with local councillors.”

Inclusive Communication Strategies for Accessing Local Information

Access to local information is a cornerstone of community engagement and empowerment. It enables residents to participate fully in civic life, make informed decisions, and access services and opportunities.

However, not all individuals are able to access information with equal ease, particularly as channels for dissemination become increasingly digital. The goal is to ensure that communication methods cater to the diverse needs of the community, leaving no one behind.

A significant barrier for many individuals, especially those who did not grow up with digital technology, is computer literacy. Navigating websites, social media platforms, and online forms requires a level of familiarity and confidence with technology that not all residents possess.

For some, the rapid pace of technological change only exacerbates this challenge, as platforms and interfaces evolve faster than they can adapt. Those with lower computer literacy may struggle to find accurate and timely information about local events, services, or public notices.

Complexity of Digital Platforms: Many official websites and social media pages are designed for convenience but often assume a baseline of digital proficiency.

Lack of Training Opportunities: Opportunities to learn digital skills are not always available or accessible, especially for adults or older residents.

Fear of Making Mistakes: Anxiety around making errors or falling prey to online scams can discourage individuals from engaging with digital information sources.

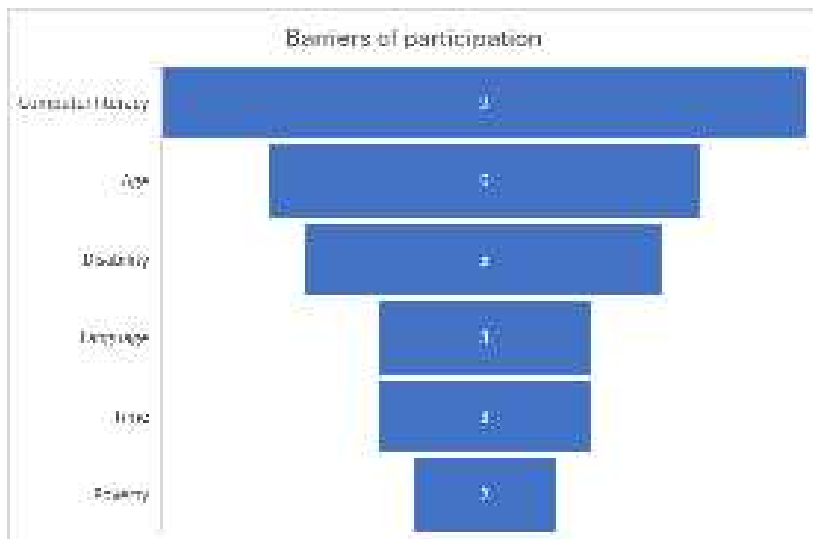
Age can be a major factor in both digital engagement and general access to information.

Older adults are less likely to use digital devices or the internet, and when they do, they may use it in a more limited fashion. Additionally, age is often associated with increased isolation, particularly for those with health and mobility issues, which further reduces opportunities to encounter and absorb local information.

Online Access and Usage: Research consistently shows that internet usage declines with age, often due to lack of interest, confidence, or exposure.

Health and Mobility: Physical limitations can restrict individuals' ability to visit community hubs, libraries, or information centres where they might otherwise learn about local events or services.

Isolation: Social isolation: whether due to health, mobility, or bereavement, can mean that older residents have fewer informal opportunities—such as conversations with neighbours or family members—to learn about what is happening locally.



Recognising these barriers, it is vital that all communication and information-sharing strategies are developed with inclusivity at their core. This means not only considering the needs of the digitally savvy but also ensuring accessibility for those who are not online, are less confident with technology, or who experience social isolation.

An inclusive approach involves:

- Identifying and understanding the specific needs and preferences of different community groups.
 - Providing information in multiple formats and through various channels to ensure wide reach.
- Ensuring physical accessibility of information for those who do not or cannot engage digitally.
- Actively seeking feedback from residents to refine and improve communication strategies.

Survey results and community feedback indicate that social media remains the most effective and widely used channel for sharing local information.

Platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter), and Instagram offer instant updates, can reach large audiences, and facilitate two-way communication.

For many, especially younger and middle-aged residents, these platforms are the primary gateway to local news, event announcements, and community alerts.

While social media works well for the majority, it is not universally accessible. The barriers discussed above mean that harder-to-reach groups may never see these updates.

Furthermore, reliance on digital platforms risks deepening existing inequalities in information access, further marginalising those already at risk of isolation.

To ensure that all residents are informed, especially those less likely to be reached via digital means, it is essential to diversify communication channels.

Several suggestions emerged from community consultations and studies:

Local Newsletters

Producing a regular local newsletter, available in print, is a practical and effective way to reach those who do not use digital media. These newsletters can be distributed:

- On community noticeboards in public spaces such as parks, community centres, and libraries.
 - In local facilities such as shops, medical practices, and religious or cultural centres.
 - Through door-to-door delivery, ensuring even the most isolated residents have access to information.
- Printed newsletters not only provide information but also create a tangible link between community organisations and residents, helping to foster a sense of connection and inclusion.

Noticeboards and Local Facilities

Well-placed noticeboards in high-traffic or strategic locations remain a powerful tool for sharing timely information. They can be regularly updated with event details, important announcements, and contact information for local services. Likewise, partnerships with local facilities—such as care homes, clinics, and post offices—ensure that information is visible where it is needed most.

Local Newspapers

Local newspapers remain an important communication channel, especially for older residents who may be in the habit of reading the paper daily.

Collaborating with local media outlets can help amplify important messages, reach new audiences, and provide more in-depth coverage of community issues or events.

Community Champions and Word-of-Mouth

Mobilising community champions—trusted individuals who can relay information in person—offers another route to reach isolated or digitally excluded residents. Word-of-mouth networks, informal gatherings, and community groups are all valuable in spreading messages and ensuring that information reaches everyone.

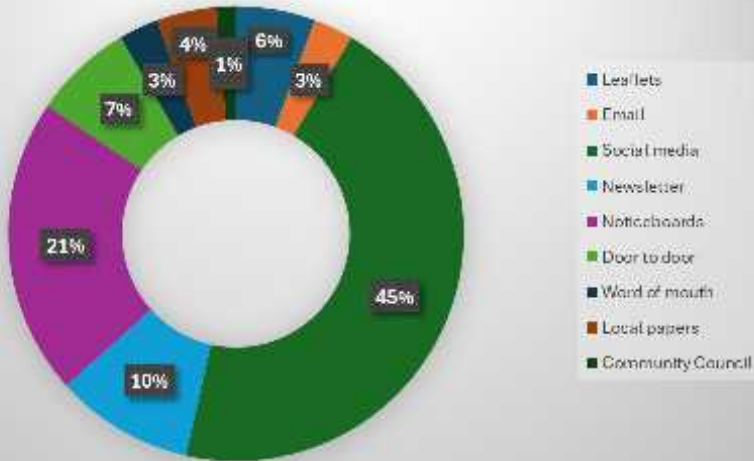
Recommendations for Effective and Inclusive Communication

Combining digital and traditional methods is the most effective way to ensure inclusive communication.

Some key recommendations include:

- **Layered Communication:** Use a mix of digital (social media, websites) and non-digital (newsletters, noticeboards, local papers) channels.
- **Accessible Formats:** Ensure that print materials use clear, readable fonts and accessible language. Consider large print or audio versions for those with vision impairments.
- **Community Feedback:** Continually seek input from residents—especially those who are harder to reach—to monitor which methods are most effective and where gaps remain.
- **Training and Support:** Offer digital skills workshops and one-on-one support to boost computer literacy and confidence.
- **Partnerships:** Work closely with local facilities, voluntary groups, and charities to extend the reach of information.
- **Personal Touch:** Encourage personal interactions, such as community volunteers visiting those who are housebound, to share information directly and check on welfare.

Best Methods for Sharing Information



Inclusive communication is more than a best practice –it is a responsibility. By recognising and addressing the barriers posed by computer literacy, age, health, and mobility, local authorities and community organisations can ensure that every resident remains informed, connected, and empowered. A tailored, multi-channel approach that values both digital innovation and the enduring importance of face-to-face and print communication is essential. With commitment and creativity, local information can become truly accessible to all, strengthening communities and supporting the wellbeing of every individual.

On the Go, In the Pipeline, For the Future

Following on from the consultation process, we identified the 5 main priorities for Heathhall residents,

**Outside Spaces & Recreation
Facilities & Services
Transport
Housing
Inclusion**

Each priority was looked at and assessed as to what we have on the go, in the pipeline or for the future based on the current landscape of the local area.

On the Go are things that have been put in place and continue since the start of the consultation period.

In the Pipeline are things that are currently in the process of being developed and hopefully completed within 2years.

For the Future are things that the LPP would aim to implement with its 10year term.

These priorities would be implemented in conjunction with D&G Council, Heathhall Community Council, Heathhall Community Centre Committee and local Heathhall volunteers and residents.

As well as these 5 priorities, the main challenge for Heathhall remains the eyesore that is the former Interfloor factory.

The future of this site is uncertain due its listed status which is currently in the hands of Historic Environment Scotland and Dumfries & Galloway council.

Outside Spaces & Recreation

On the Go...

More benches have been placed at the community centre play park and around the housing areas.

New bins have been provided by D&G Council.

In the Pipeline...

The main play park at the community centre is being redeveloped in conjunction with the community centre committee in partnership with D&G Council.

Area to the front of the library is currently being cleared and turned into a useable space for seating in partnership with D&G Council.

For the Future...

Wildlife signage and descriptions on the cycle path through Heathhall.

Development of more, better signed paths and trails within Heathhall forest, in conjunction with the forestry.

Exploring the possibility of using the land adjacent to the forest owned by Jones' timber yard for use and development into a useable car park for forest users.

Further development phase of the main park to include a bike shelter and multi use games area (MUGA) with lighting.

Heathhall residents aspire for the site of the former Interfloor factory (LDP2 DFS MU203) to remain as mixed use with an emphasis on Light industry and /or Leisure in LDP3 for future development.

Facilities & Services

On the Go...

Formation of a youth volunteers committee.

Weekly new adult exercise class.

Annual community fun day in conjunction with the community centre committee.

Annual Santa Sleigh route through the housing areas.

Development of a youth club aimed at the teenagers in the community.

In the Pipeline...

Developing an arts and crafts club aimed at younger members of the community in partnership with Heathhall Community Centre Committee.

Provision of goal nets for the current football goal post at the main play park.

For the Future...

Long term future of the community centre being finalised in conjunction with D&G council.

Encourage the provision of education, medical and shopping facilities within new developments.

Transport

On the Go...

Implementation of 20 mph speed limited for Heathhall.

Link road to Catherinefield Rd resurfacing completed.

Reinstated the school bus route around Heathhall.

In the Pipeline...

Safe crossing of the A701 from the new estate at previous Curries Yard site as dictated in their planning permission, in partnership with D&G Council and Wheatley Homes.

For the Future...

Provision of cycling proficiency instruction to assist with safer movement around the area.

Provision of more safe crossings linking to the new housing estates.

Provision of an increased level of bus service to the new housing areas.

Explore the possibility of further cycle/pedestrian path links from the Curries Yard housing to the education facilities and beyond to the Caledonian Cycleway.

Housing

On the Go...

3 new housing developments have been completed within Heathhall as allocated in LDP2. (DFS H265, DFS H205 & part of DFS H4)

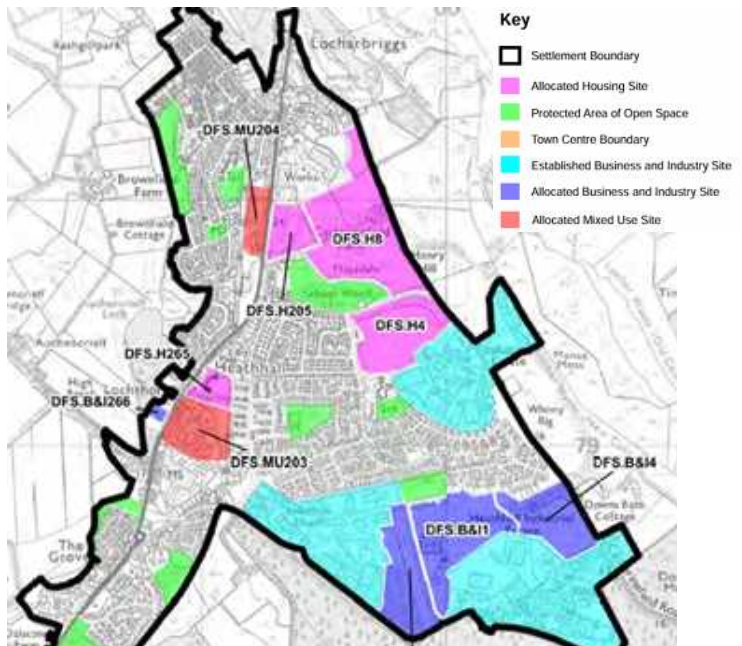
In the Pipeline...

Planning application for Catherinefield Farm. (DFS H8)

**Planning application for Herries Avenue.
(remaining part of DFS H4)**

For the Future...

Reallocation of Herries Avenue site (DFS H4) to be a greenfield site in LDP3 if planning application is unsuccessful. This will assist and aid the pressures on the local road network being incurred from recent and future developments.



Inclusion

On the Go...

Developed new Facebook pages for both Community Council and community centre.

Updated community noticeboards.

Developed a Heathhall residents Facebook page.

In the Pipeline...

Communication with housing partnerships to utilise noticeboards with their new areas. In conjunction with Wheatley Homes and Loreburn Housing.

For the Future...

Encouraging safe, inclusive travel planning in new developments at design and build stages to include dropped kerbs and tactile paving.

Provision of more noticeboards within the wider community areas of Heathhall.

Provision of computer literacy courses in conjunction with the community centre.

Possibility of producing a newsletter.

Conclusion – What Now?

The community of Heathhall has had the opportunity to come together and voice their opinions about where they live and the spaces and facilities within their area.

Residents have spoken and identified how they would like to see their area developed in the future and what changes they would like to see made in order to enhance it.

Moving forward, it is going to continue to be important for all community groups and individuals to communicate with each other in order to support development and implement the changes people desire.

Change for the better can be achieved by working with each other and with different organisations that can lend their support.

As things progress and different milestones are achieved, new working groups may be formed and if required supported by the Community Council with their projects and tasks.

The development and production of this Local Place Plan document has shown that through collaboration, community led change and development can happen and has already begun to happen.

There is still a long way to go and a lot to achieve, but with commitment, determination and support, the community can reach their goals and enhance the space in which we live making Heathhall a great place to live, learn, work and play.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Engagement and Consultation

This document provides an overview from the engagement that took place in the development of this Plan.

- Heathhall's Future: Community-Led Planning Report Towards a Local Place Plan for Heathhall
 - Engagement questions – Nov 2024, Mar 2025
- School engagement short reports – 2024, June 2025
 - Record of engagement

Appendix 2: Policy and Strategy Summary

The list below details the local and regional strategies, policies and plans that were used to inform the development of the Place Plan.

- National Planning Framework 4, 2023
- Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2 October 2019
 - Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2023–2028
- Dumfries and Galloway Housing Strategy 2025–2030
- South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy Delivery Plan 2022–2025
- SWestrans Regional Transport Strategy 2023–2042
 - 10,000 Voices Consultation 2023
- Dumfries and Galloway Active Travel Strategy 2 and Delivery Plan 2022–2032

THE ROAD TO
**LEVELLING
UP**

Leadership
Dumfries & Galloway



Funded by
UK Government

This Local Place Plan has been helped and supported by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Dumfries and Galloway Council and funded by the UK Government.

**Heathhall Local Place Plan can be found at:
<https://heathhallcc.wixsite.com/home/placeplan>**

This Local Place Plan was developed and written by Heathhall residents as a joint venture by members of Heathhall Community Council and Community Centre Committee.