

# Wanlockhead Local Place Plan

March 2026



This Plan is also available online at [bit.ly/wanlockhead-plan](https://bit.ly/wanlockhead-plan)

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## Acknowledgments

Thank you to the local residents who gave freely of their time to shape the Plan.

This Plan was commissioned by [Wanlockhead Community Council](#) on behalf of the local community, thanks to funding from [Twentyshillinghill Community Benefit Fund](#).

The Plan was independently facilitated by [Nick Wright Planning](#).

Cover image courtesy of Historic Environment Scotland: [trove.scot/image/1218059](https://trove.scot/image/1218059)

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# 1 Introduction

1.1 About this Plan

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## 1.1 About this plan

This community-led Plan is our agenda for the future, guiding what we as a community do and influencing public services and private investment. The Plan contains our vision for the future (see section 3) and actions to make that a reality (see section 4), for the Wanlockhead Community Council area (see Map 1 overleaf).

Everywhere is unique, but Wanlockhead especially so: not just because we are the highest village in Scotland, but because of our history, heritage, scenery and identity. We are proud of our village.

Life in Wanlockhead is not without its challenges, due not least to our upland location (see section 2.1). This Plan explains how we will make the most of our opportunities so that young people, working families and older residents can all live healthy and fulfilling lives. Ultimately, the purpose of this Plan is to sustain a thriving community where everyone can access the services, facilities and opportunities they need.

The Plan is based entirely on our community's aspirations (see sections 1.2 and 2.2). It gathers our ideas into a positive and realistic way forward which, as well as achieving our own aspirations, delivers national agendas locally (see section 2.3).

More specifically, the Plan combines the functions of a Local Place Plan and a Community Action Plan in one document, with the aims of:

- **Build consensus** about priorities for the long term sustainability of the village, to help get things done rather than stuck in debate.
- **Support community action** by helping the local community to secure support and resources for the aspirations and projects in the Plan - including community benefit funds from wind farms.
- **Influence public services** including transport, infrastructure, facilities, housing, economic development and planning. Being a Local Place Plan, we aim to give a clear steer to planning policy in the next Local Development Plan (see section 5.4).

Implementing this Plan will require collaboration and commitment across the local community, public agencies, funders and the private sector (section 5.1). We look forward to working with everyone to make it happen.



*Wanlockhead from above, looking west*

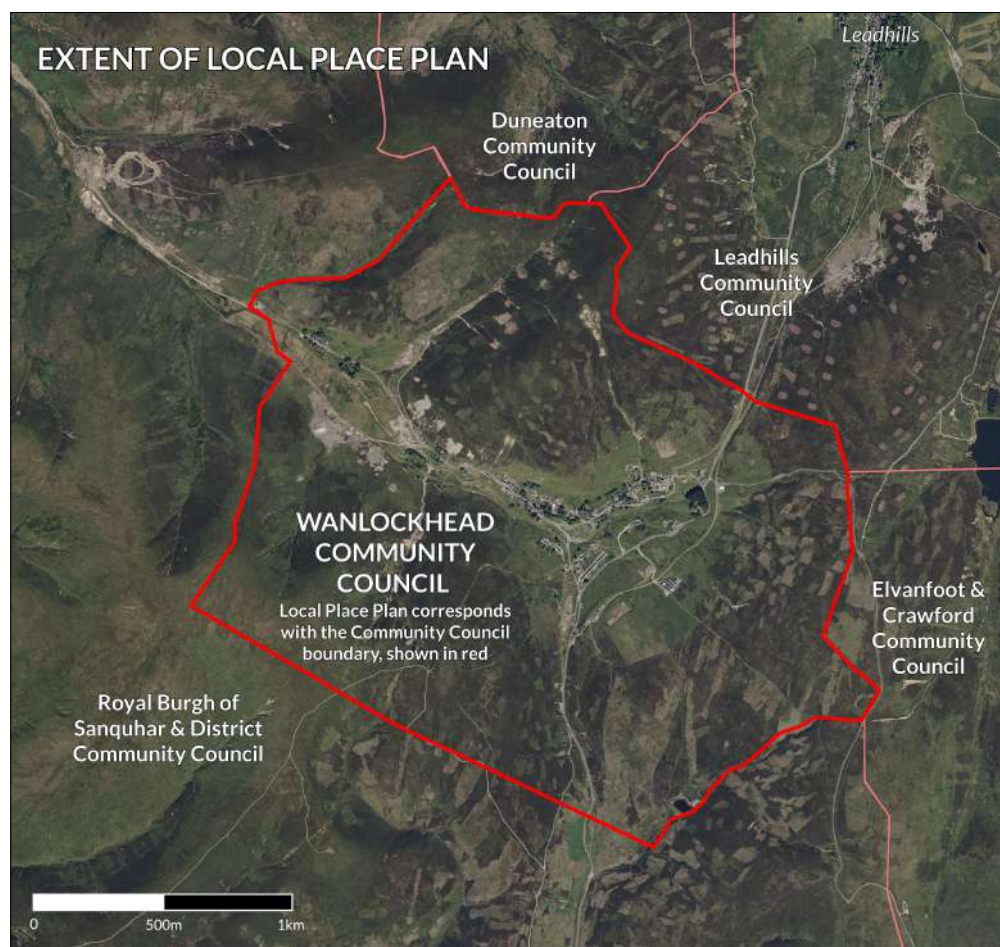
Image courtesy of Historic Environment Scotland: [trove.scot/image/1218059](https://trove.scot/image/1218059)

## 1.2 How this Plan was prepared

[Wanlockhead Community Council](#) was awarded funding by [Twentyshillinghill Community Benefit Fund](#) to prepare a combined Local Place Plan and Community Action Plan - in other words, a community-led plan which could influence future planning policy, community action, and public services and investment.

The Plan was prepared through a sequence of community engagement activities (described in section 2.2) and takes account of the bigger picture of national and local policy (described in section 2.3), in line with legal requirements<sup>1</sup> and guidance in Scottish Government [Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans](#).

To ensure that the Plan was representative of the community's aspirations, the process of preparing the Plan also took account of the Scottish Government's [draft How To Guide on Local Place Plans](#), the [National Standards for Community Engagement](#), and Planning Aid Scotland's [SP=EED framework](#) for engagement in planning and placemaking. Community engagement, background research and preparation of the Plan itself were facilitated by an independent external planner, [Nick Wright](#).



**MAP 1: Area covered by this Local Place Plan: Wanlockhead Community Council area**

Map courtesy of Dumfries and Galloway Council

<sup>1</sup> [Section 14 of the Town and Country Planning \(Scotland\) Act 1997](#) as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019; and the [Town and Country Planning \(Local Place Plans\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2021](#).

# 2 Context

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## 2.1 The village

Wanlockhead's recorded history extends back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when gold was found. Despite its often harsh climate at 1,500 feet (400 metres) above sea level, "God's Treasure House" grew to be a thriving village - such was the value of the gold, silver and lead to be found in the hills. Mining was the lifeblood of the village for nearly 400 years. In 1750, lead mining employed 350 men in the village.<sup>2</sup> The population remained at consistently 600 or more for at least a century, from 1830 to 1930.

In its heyday, the village boasted a Co-operative shop, church, school, hall, post office, railway station and long-established subscription library; Woman's Rural Institute and a Woman's Guild; a curling club, a bowling club, silver band, football club, badminton club, dramatic society and choir; horticultural society and annual flower show; and a ski club.<sup>3</sup>

But in 1934 the lead mines closed. Families left, and the outbreak of the Second World War led to a further exodus of young men. Between 1931 and 1951, the population dropped from almost 600 to roughly 350 - a collapse of 40%. Although one of the lead mines re-opened in 1951, viability was a constant challenge and the decision was taken to close the mine in 1958. By the end of that year, the population had dropped to 270. By 1971 it was down to 170, although it has since stabilised at around 150.

Although mining has ceased over 75 years ago, its legacy lives on. Physically, little has changed: the

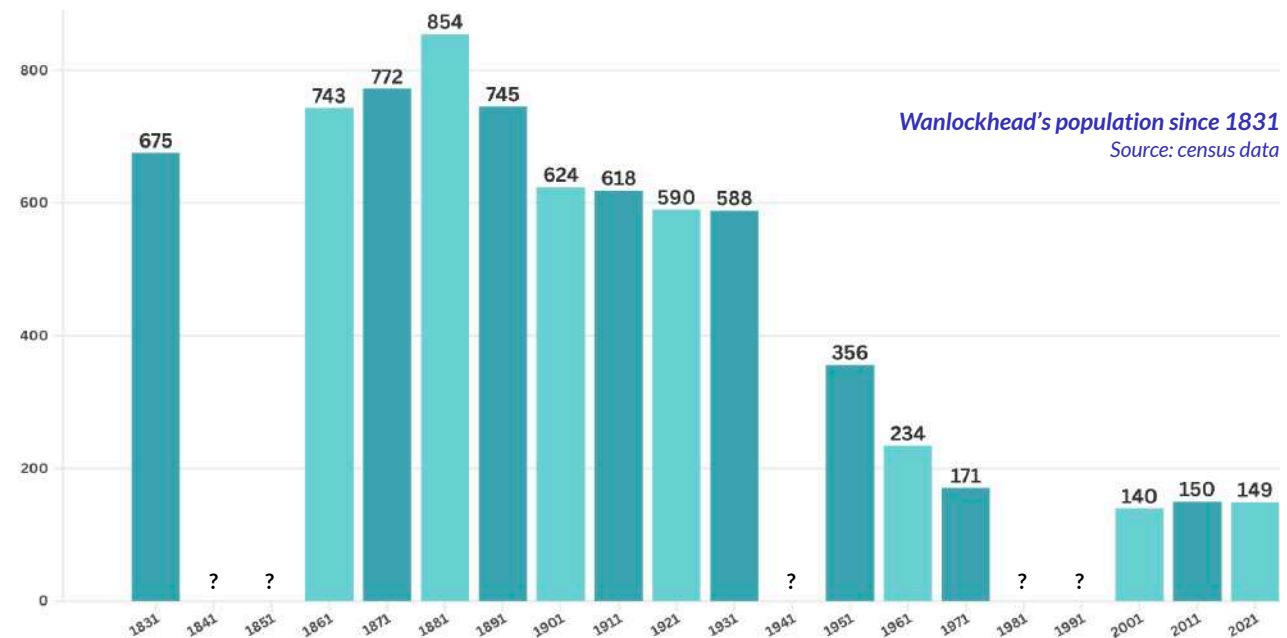
village's buildings, layout and landscape continue to reflect its mining heritage, and the description of the village from the Third Statistical Account of Scotland in 1962, quoted on the right, remains accurate today.

Visual reminders of mining abound: mining cottages, old mine workings, spoil heaps, the preserved beam engine, the old railway (partially reopened around Leadhills), and of course the Museum of Scottish Lead Mining which includes the [Miners' Library](#) dating from 1752. The village's industrial heritage is second to none.

*"The village of Wanlockhead, in the parish of Sanquhar, lies in the heart of the Lowther Hills, at an altitude of about 1,380 feet. Some eight miles by road from the town of Sanquhar, this upland village stands just outside the boundary line of Dumfriesshire. Less than a mile on the other side of the line, which here takes the form of an old turf wall known locally as the 'March Dyke', is the village of Leadhills in Lanarkshire.*

*"Wanlockhead is intersected by a small burn called the Wanlock, which five miles down joins the Crawick, a tributary of the Nith. The village straggles at different heights, slopes and angles for about one mile round the curve of a hill called the Dod, and in area is about 25 acres. Apart from the neighbouring village of Leadhills, it is an isolated community, and owes its existence solely to its once rich underground deposits of lead. The Lowther Hills which surround the village are, on an average, about 2,000 feet above sea-level, so that the general panorama is one of high, lonely, heather-covered moorland."*

P S Mackie, 1958, "The County of Dumfries: Third Statistical Account of Scotland" published 1962



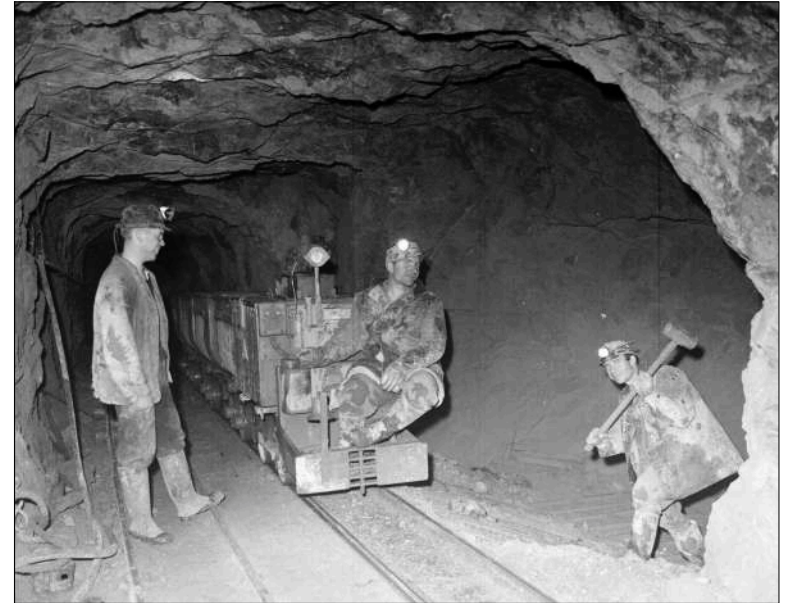
<sup>2</sup> J Crawford & J Stuart, "The Society for Purchasing Books in Wanlockhead 1756-1979", 1981

<sup>3</sup> P S Mackie, "The County of Dumfries: Third Statistical Account of Scotland", 1962 (chapter 26)

Roy Military Survey, 1750s: Wanlockhead is marked in light blue.  
Courtesy of the National Library of Scotland: [maps.nls.uk](http://maps.nls.uk)



Old photographs and postcards of Wanlockhead  
courtesy of Alex Young, "Old Wanlockhead", Stenlake, 2010



As the population declined during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the social fabric described on page 8 has been reduced, but evolved rather than disappeared. The village retains a community centre and pub with social and cultural activities, a play park, a sharing shed / community larder, a community garden, and a small swimming pool.

Like any modern rural community, the village relies on a larger network of places for facilities, services, recreation and employment: for example, primary school and shop in Leadhills, secondary schools in Sanquhar and Biggar, and petrol and diesel in Abington and Sanquhar. In that context, the village's proximity to the M74 and 1 hour travel time to Glasgow is important. Map 2 (overleaf) shows the location of Wanlockhead's nearest everyday facilities and amenities.

Although Wanlockhead no longer has a primary school or shop, those essential facilities are now just two miles away in Leadhills. The growing interdependence of Wanlockhead and Leadhills is an important part of Wanlockhead's story. Although the two villages may be in different local authority areas, but they share many facilities - including primary school, community centre, shop, hotel, pub and men's shed. Some of these facilities are in Leadhills, others are in Wanlockhead. The residents of each village visit the other for different community activities. "Two villages, one community" is how a number of local residents have described the relationship.

The two villages also share a common history and tourism interest around mining. So whilst Leadhills has a heritage railway, hotel and the larger of the two historic village libraries,

Wanlockhead has the Museum of Scottish Lead Mining. Visitor numbers at the Museum are currently around 5,500 people each year, a drop from pre-COVID figures of around 7,000-7,500 per year.

Both villages lie on:

- The [Southern Upland Way](#), one of Scotland's oldest and longest long distance trails. Approximately 64,000 people use the western section annually (west of the M74), a figure which includes day walkers in popular sections.

Around 1,000 people walk the entire 214 mile long route each year.<sup>4</sup>

- [South West Coastal 300](#) - Wanlockhead is one of the highlights of 'the road trip for lovers of Scotland' created in 2020.

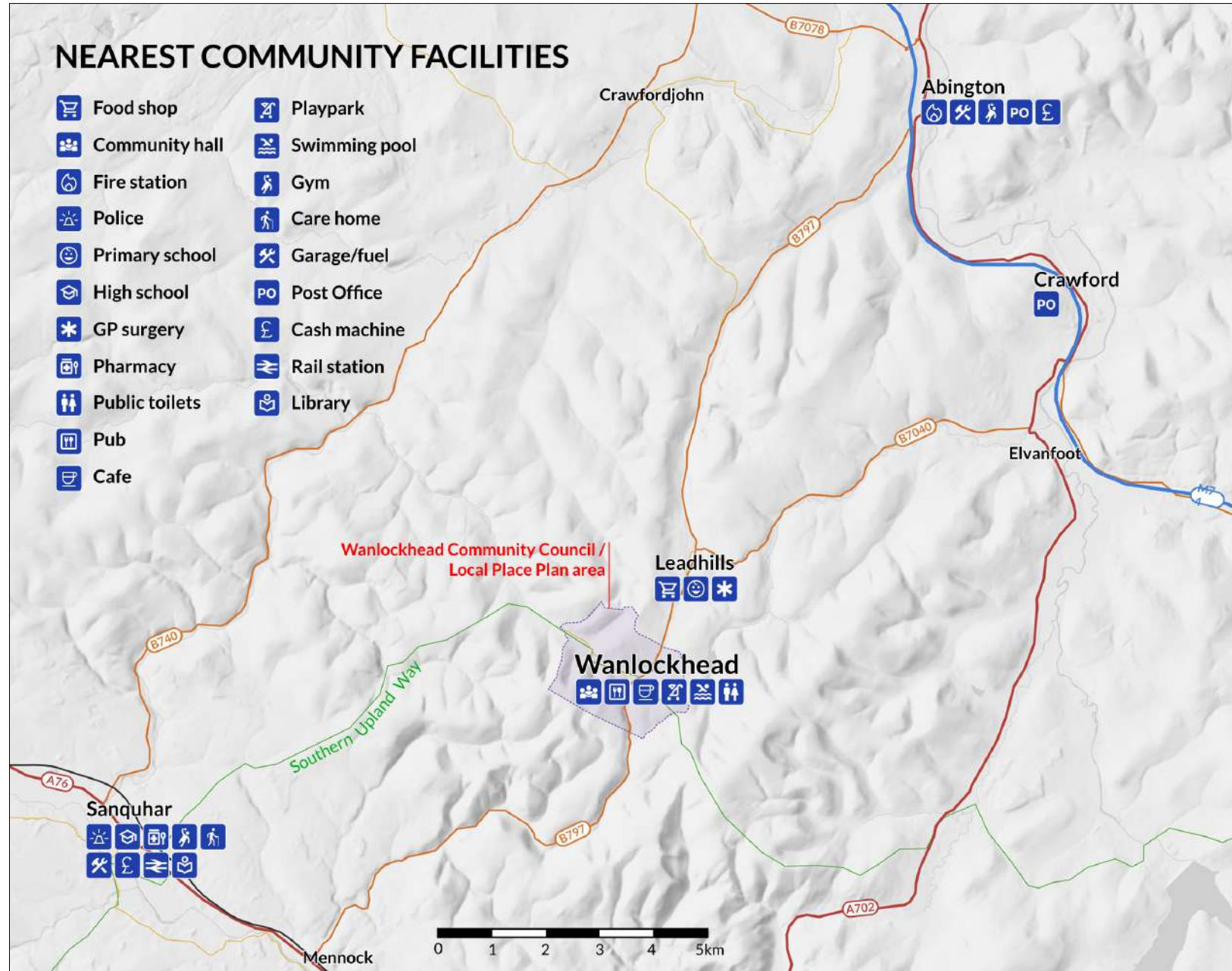
As well as tourism, windfarms are an increasing presence in the area, bringing community benefit funding. Further windfarms are proposed in the immediate vicinity of the village as this Plan was being prepared.

*Wanlockhead's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats*



<sup>4</sup> Southern Upland Way Western Section Route Development Plan 2019-24, online at [dgtrails.org/wp-content/uploads/Southern-Upland-Way-Development-Plan-HQ.pdf](https://dgtrails.org/wp-content/uploads/Southern-Upland-Way-Development-Plan-HQ.pdf)

**MAP 2**  
Wanlockhead's nearest  
community facilities





## 2.2 Community engagement

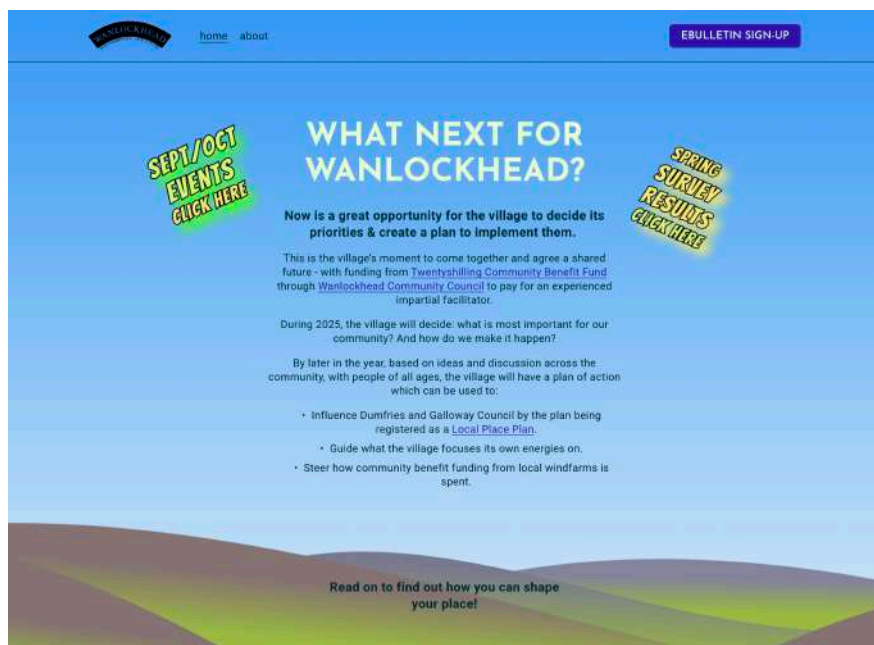
Like any community-led plan, this Plan is based on community aspirations gleaned through community engagement (see section 1.2 above).

The engagement process for the Plan is summarised in the timeline of activities on the right. It included a variety of engagement techniques to engage people in different ways, all branded “*What’s next for Wanlockhead?*” to stimulate interest.

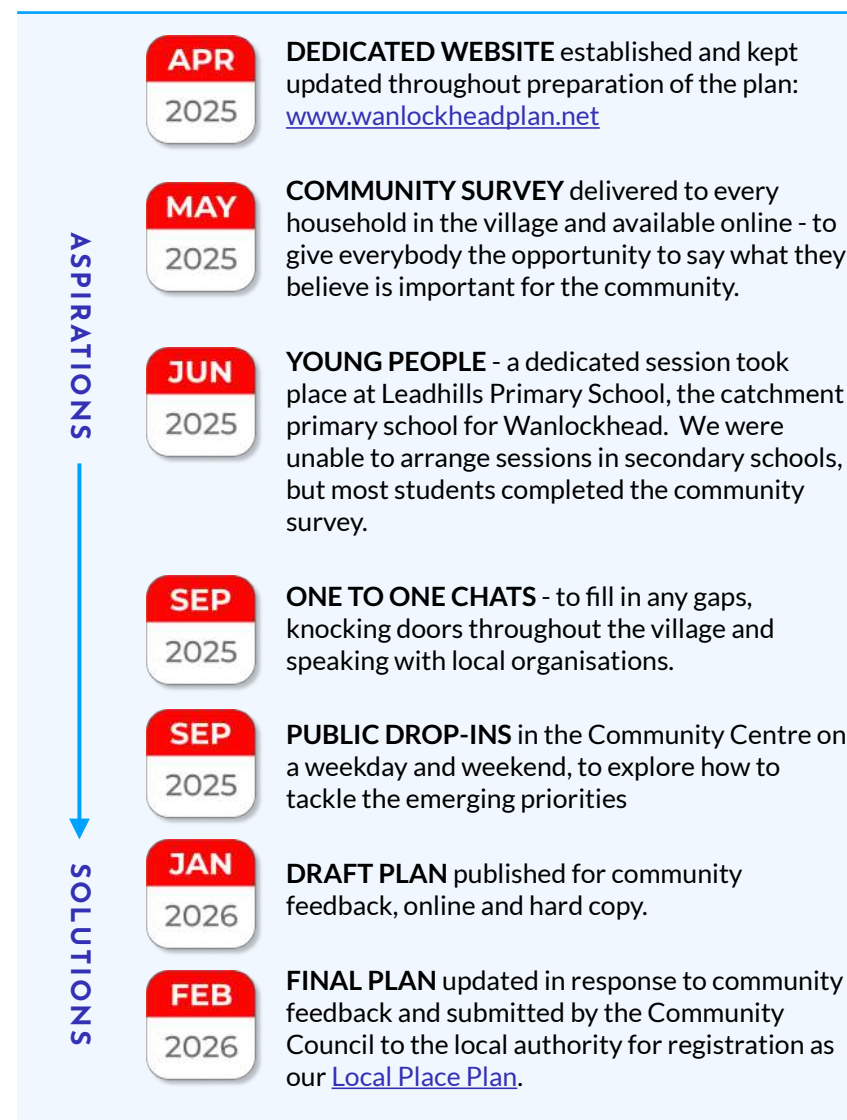
A dedicated website - [www.wanlockheadplan.net](http://www.wanlockheadplan.net) - was created specifically for the Plan and updated throughout the Plan’s preparation with news and information (see next page).

Every village household was leafletted about the preparation of the Plan three times: in connection with the community survey in Spring 2025, the public drop-ins in Autumn 2025, and the draft Plan in early 2026.

Screenshot of dedicated website [www.wanlockheadplan.net](http://www.wanlockheadplan.net)



Timeline of community engagement to prepare the Plan



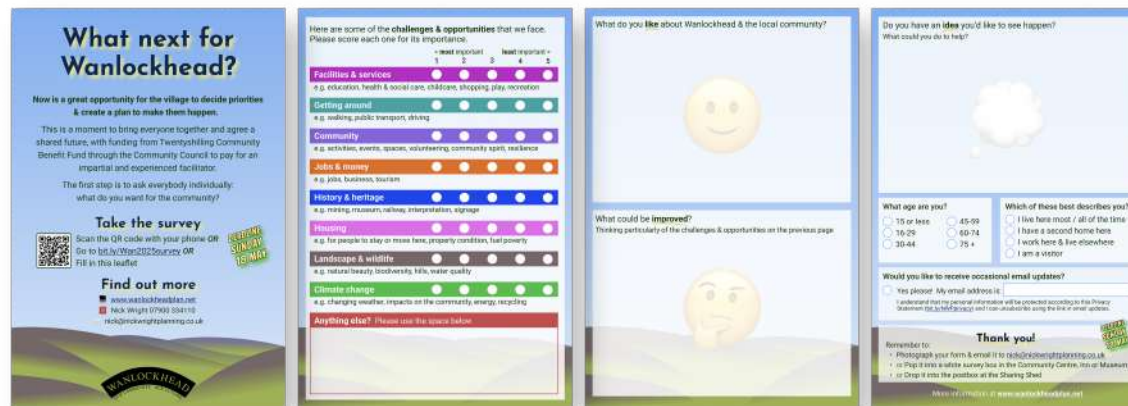
## Community survey

The first step was a community survey delivered to every household in the village and also made available as an online form. The intention was to give everybody the opportunity to say what they believe is important for the local community, the results of which would then form the foundation of the Plan. Of the village's permanent population of around 150 people, 43 responded to the survey (plus another 14 people who live nearby such as in Leadhills, have a second home in the village, or visit).

The composition of respondents is shown in the diagram below. There were a good number of responses from residents aged 45 to 75, but fewer from younger or older people (separate work was undertaken to understand young people's issues and aspirations, as explained later in this section). More detailed analysis of survey respondents can be seen in the survey report in [Appendix 1](#).

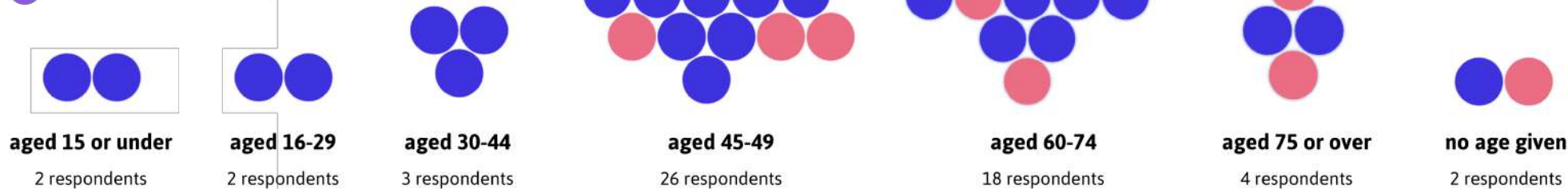
The survey asked a sequence of three questions, the responses to each of which are described on subsequent pages.

### Community survey (paper version) See Appendix 1 for detail



### Community survey respondents

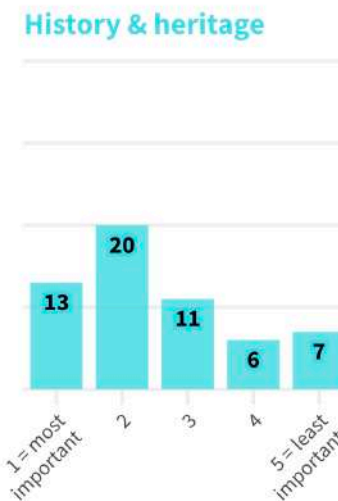
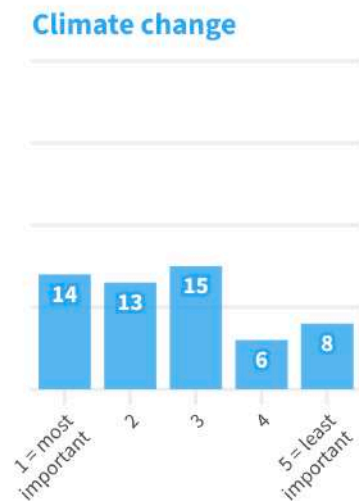
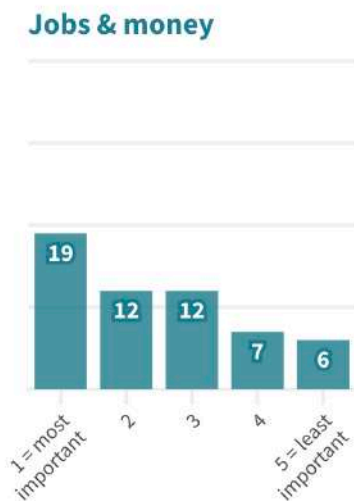
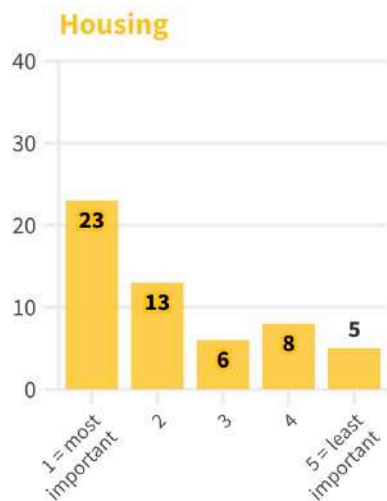
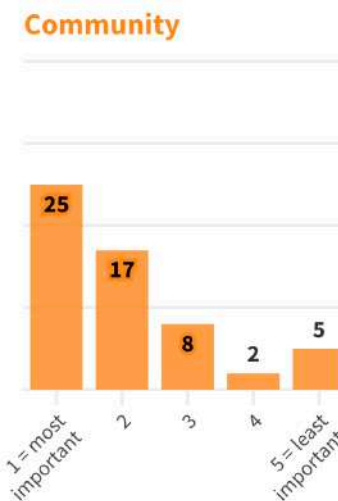
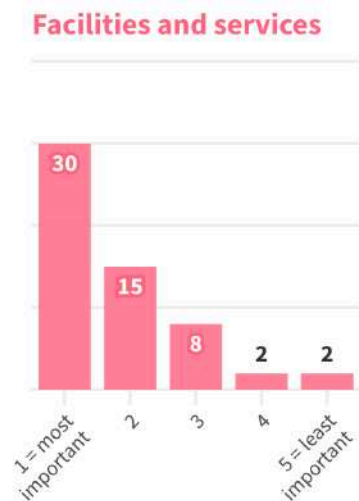
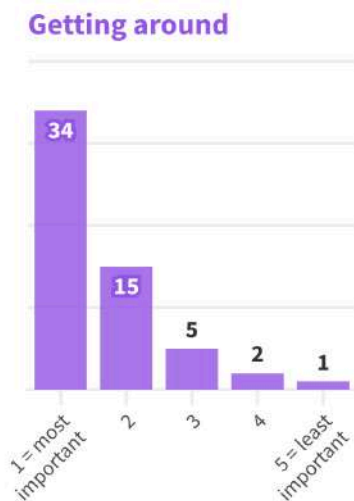
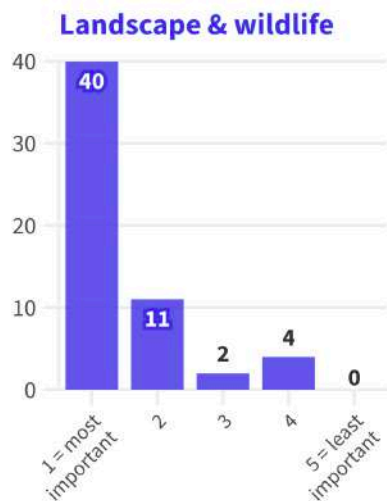
- I live here most / all of the time 43 respondents
- I am a visitor 12 respondents
- I have a second home here 2 respondents



### Question 1: Challenges and opportunities

The first main survey question asked people to state the relative importance of eight issues and opportunities for the local community. As the graph shows, landscape and wildlife came out top, followed by transport, facilities and services (for example, schools, healthcare and play parks), and housing.

Remember that there were fewer responses from people younger than 45, who often place greater importance on things like jobs, money and climate change.



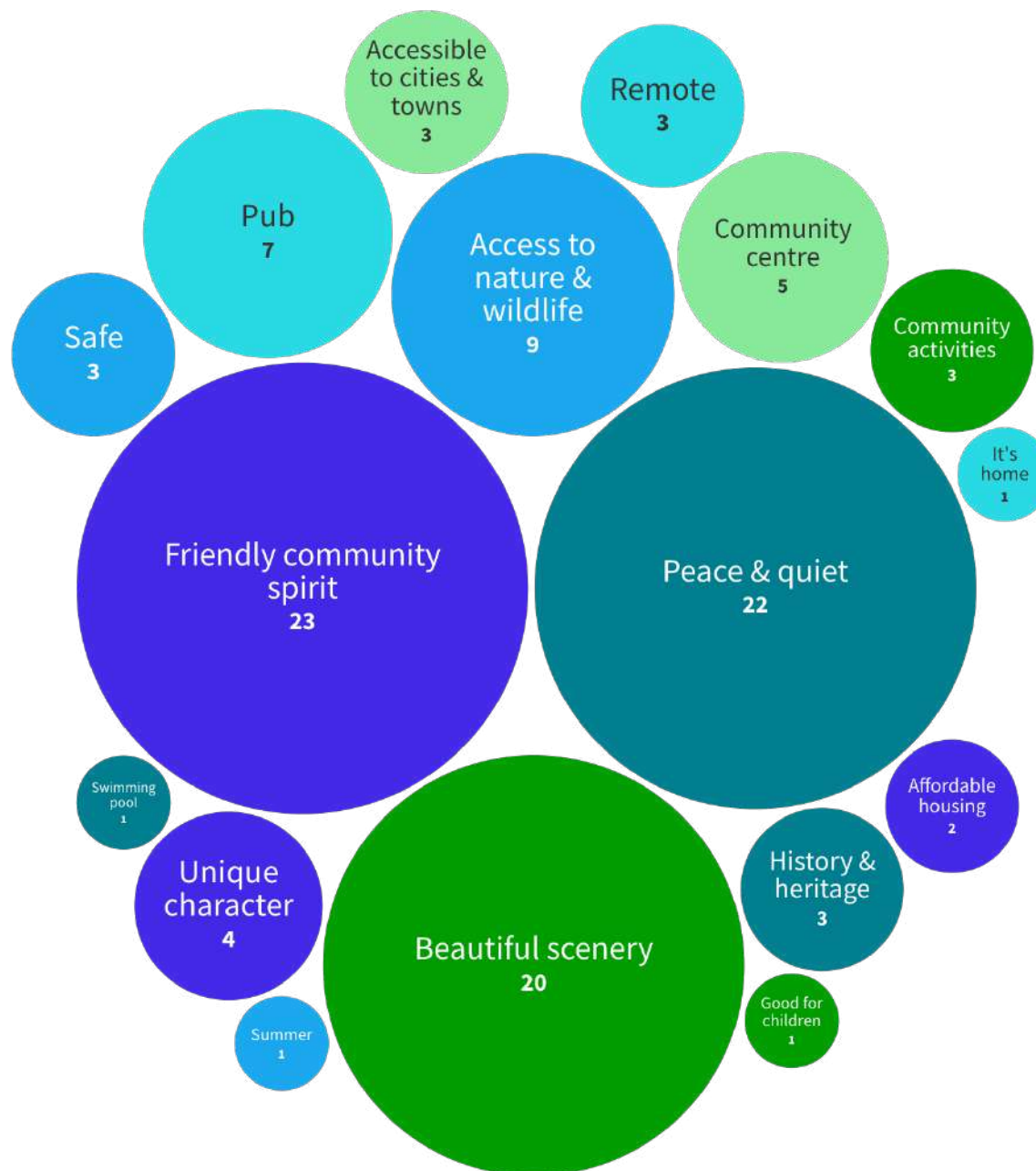
## Question 2: Good things about Wanlockhead

The second main survey question asked people what they like about Wanlockhead and the local community.

A full transcription of everyone's responses is contained in the full survey report in [Appendix 1](#).

The diagram on the right page summarises the main things people said they like. The bubbles are proportionate to the number of people mentioning a particular area, which is stated in each bubble.

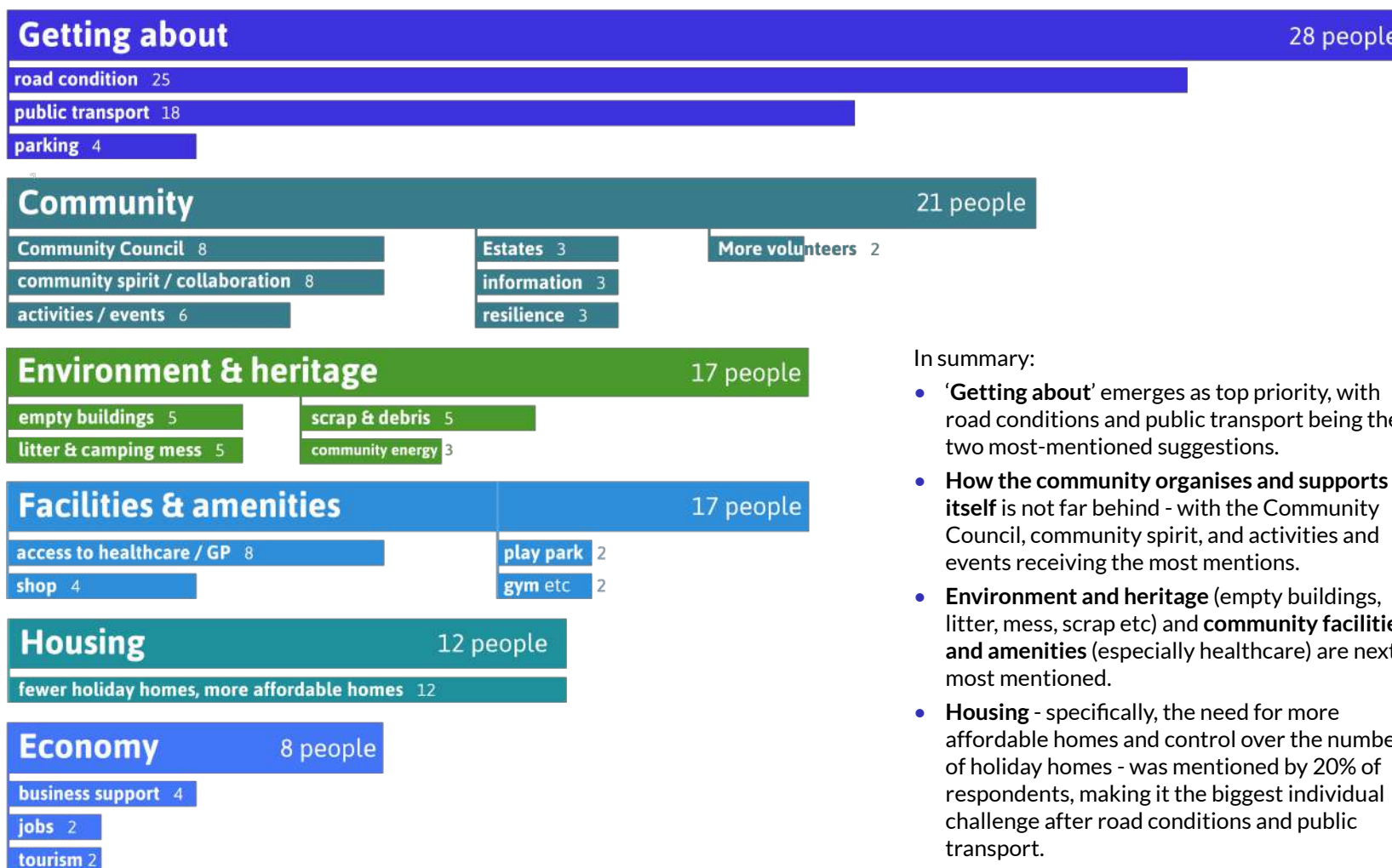
Friendly community spirit, peace and quiet, and beautiful scenery are the top "likes".



### Question 3: Ideas and improvements

Finally, the survey asked what could be improved in the community, thinking particularly of the challenges and opportunities in the first question (see page 13 above); and what ideas people would like to see happen, and what they could do to help.

This diagram summarises people's answers, grouped together to show the main themes emerging. Full transcriptions of everyone's responses can be seen in [Appendix 1](#).



In summary:

- **'Getting about'** emerges as top priority, with road conditions and public transport being the two most-mentioned suggestions.
- **How the community organises and supports itself** is not far behind - with the Community Council, community spirit, and activities and events receiving the most mentions.
- **Environment and heritage** (empty buildings, litter, mess, scrap etc) and **community facilities and amenities** (especially healthcare) are next most mentioned.
- **Housing** - specifically, the need for more affordable homes and control over the number of holiday homes - was mentioned by 20% of respondents, making it the biggest individual challenge after road conditions and public transport.

## Young people

The purpose of doing a Plan like this is to plan for the future. By its very nature, it is a long term activity. So the people who stand to benefit most from this Plan will be the community's youngest residents.

In June 2025, local primary school pupils spent an afternoon thinking about their priorities for the community and what they would like to see in the

Plan, then mapping those onto a giant map. The exercise included all pupils at Leadhills Primary School, whether they lived in Wanlockhead and Leadhills; all of them knew Wanlockhead well.

The children's suggestions are shown on the map on the next page.

Many of their suggestions mirror adults' survey responses (see previous pages), but there are also

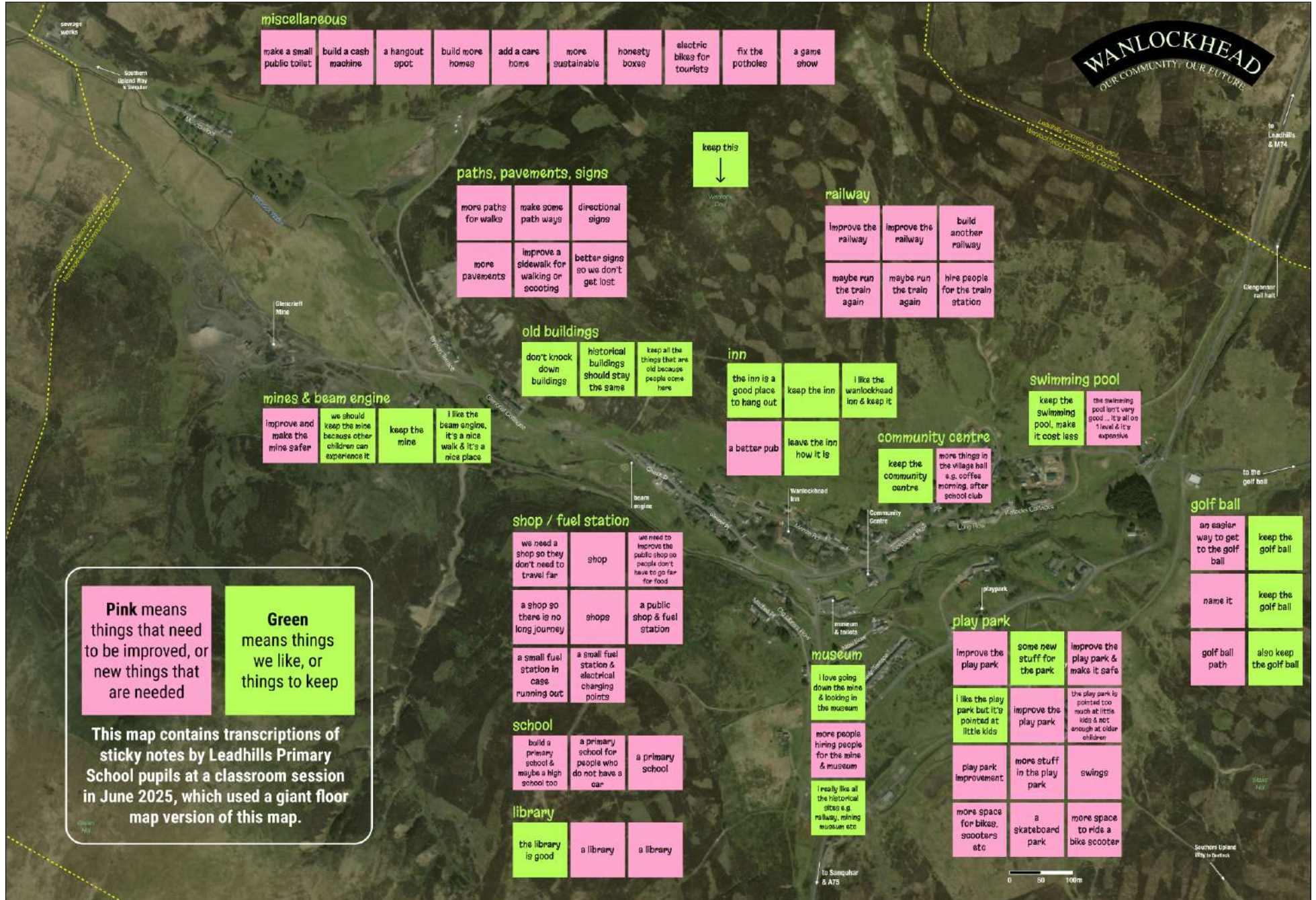
specific comments about improving the village play park - the one thing that every child suggested.

We were unable to organise sessions with the two secondary schools with have students from Wanlockhead (in Sanquhar and Biggar) but each of the students completed the community survey.



**MAP 4: Primary School children's comments**

Pink stickies indicate things that need to be improved or new things that are needed. Green stickies indicate things children like or want to keep. Click map for high-resolution image.





## 2.3 The bigger picture

Whilst this Plan is rooted in our community's aspirations, it also reflects planning policy aims in the two documents that combine to make up the statutory 'Development Plan':

- [National Planning Framework 4 \(2023\)](#)
- [Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan \(2019\)](#)

### National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

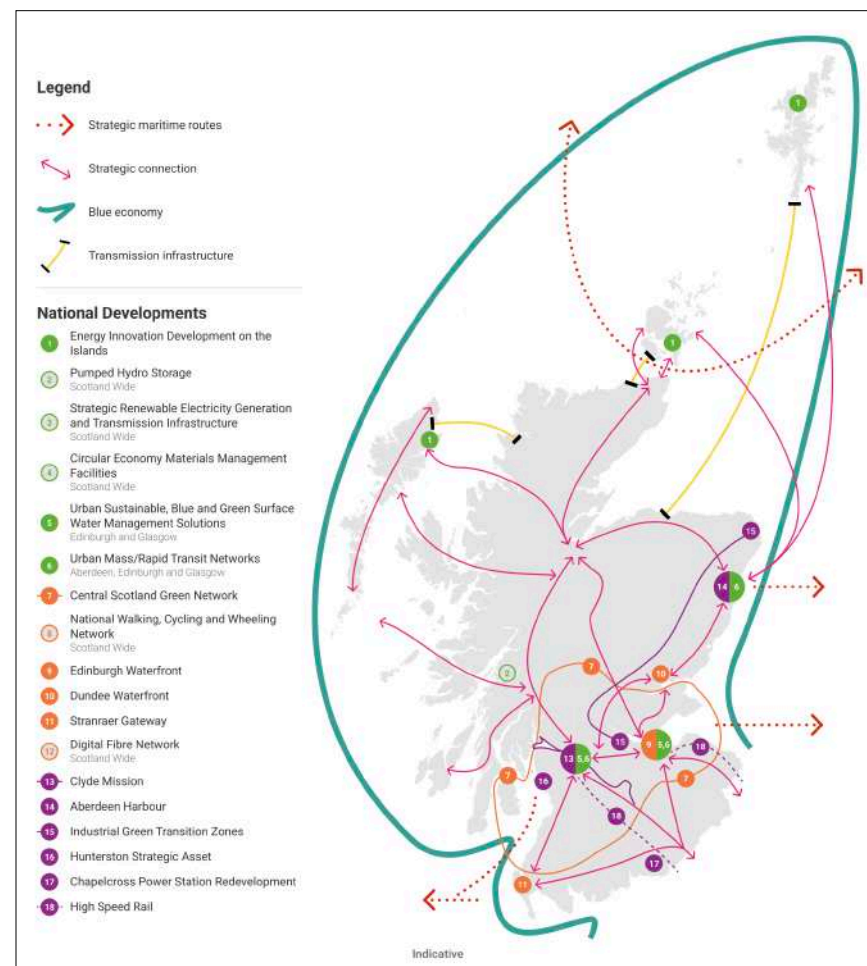
This Plan takes account of various elements of NPF4, including its six overarching spatial principles, which are quoted below:

1. **Just transition.** We will empower people to shape their places and ensure the transition to net zero is fair and inclusive.
2. **Conserving and recycling assets.** We will make productive use of existing buildings, places, infrastructure and services, locking in carbon, minimising waste, and building a circular economy.
3. **Local living.** We will support local liveability and improve community health and wellbeing by ensuring people can easily access services, greenspace, learning, work and leisure locally.
4. **Compact urban growth.** We will limit urban expansion so we can optimise the use of land to provide services and resources, including carbon storage, flood risk management, blue and green infrastructure and biodiversity.
5. **Rebalanced development.** We will target development to create opportunities for communities and investment in areas of past decline, and manage development sustainably in areas of high demand.
6. **Rural revitalisation.** We will encourage sustainable development in rural areas, recognising the need to grow and support urban and rural communities together.

**Regional spatial priorities** for the South of Scotland, including Wanlockhead, are:

- “Protect environmental assets and stimulate investment in natural and engineered solutions to climate change and nature restoration, whilst decarbonising transport and building resilient physical and digital connections.” Key statements in relation to this Plan include:
  - “Enhancing public transport and improving connectivity between communities in the east and west will help to support thriving and distinct communities.”

MAP 5 NPF4 National Spatial Strategy



- ▶ “Active travel should be supported with wheeling, walking and cycling within and between towns and other communities linked to strategic routes for residents and visitors.”
- ▶ “A need to secure better digital links to unlock the potential of rural living and home or hub working.”
- “Increase the population by improving local liveability, creating a low carbon network of towns and supporting sustainable rural development.” Key statements in relation to this Plan include:
  - ▶ “Quality of life for people living in the area will depend on the network of settlements in the future and existing communities should form the basis of a tailored response to the local living concept.”
  - ▶ “Housing provision will play a key role in supporting the area’s aspirations for economic development as well as in maintaining and growing a working age population.”
  - ▶ “Decarbonisation of existing homes will be required”
- “Support local economic development whilst making sustainable use of the area’s world-class environmental assets to innovate and lead greener growth.” Key statements in relation to this Plan include:
  - ▶ “More could be made of the area’s border location and attractions to ensure visitors make better use of local services and support the economy and communities.”
  - ▶ “Employment opportunities can support population growth, help to retain more young people and transition the area away from its current dependence on low wage sectors. New ways of working, including remote working could attract more people to live here, supporting the economy and sustaining local services and facilities.”

The document also includes:

- **18 national developments** - given interest from wind farm developers in the local area, the most relevant for Wanlockhead is Scotland-wide strategic renewable electricity generation (numbered 3 on Map 5).
- **33 national planning policies** which cover the full range of planning and development issues.

## Dumfries & Galloway Local Development Plan 2

[Local Development Plan 2](#) (LDP2, 2019) contains local planning policies which, although effectively superseded by the more recent NPF4, are worth noting:

- **Policy ED9: Tourism** - support for tourist attractions, recreational facilities and tourist accommodation subject to other policies in the plan (LDP2 p.30)
- **Policy H2: Development in Villages** - support for new housing subject to various caveats (LDP2 p.36 and [Supplementary Guidance on Housing Development in Villages](#), 2020). Wanlockhead is designated as a Village in the LDP Settlement Hierarchy (LDP2 p.235 and [Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper](#), 2018). Map 6 below shows the Settlement Hierarchy except for Villages.
- **Policy HE2: Conservation Areas** - support for development subject to various caveats (LDP2 p.41 and [Conservation Area Review](#) 2021 pp.122-126)
- **Policy HE4: Archaeologically Sensitive Area** - support for development that safeguards its character, archaeological interest and setting (LDP2 p.45 and [Archaeologically Sensitive Areas Technical Paper](#) pp.14/43).

MAP 6 Local Development Plan 2: Spatial Strategy from LDP2 p.12



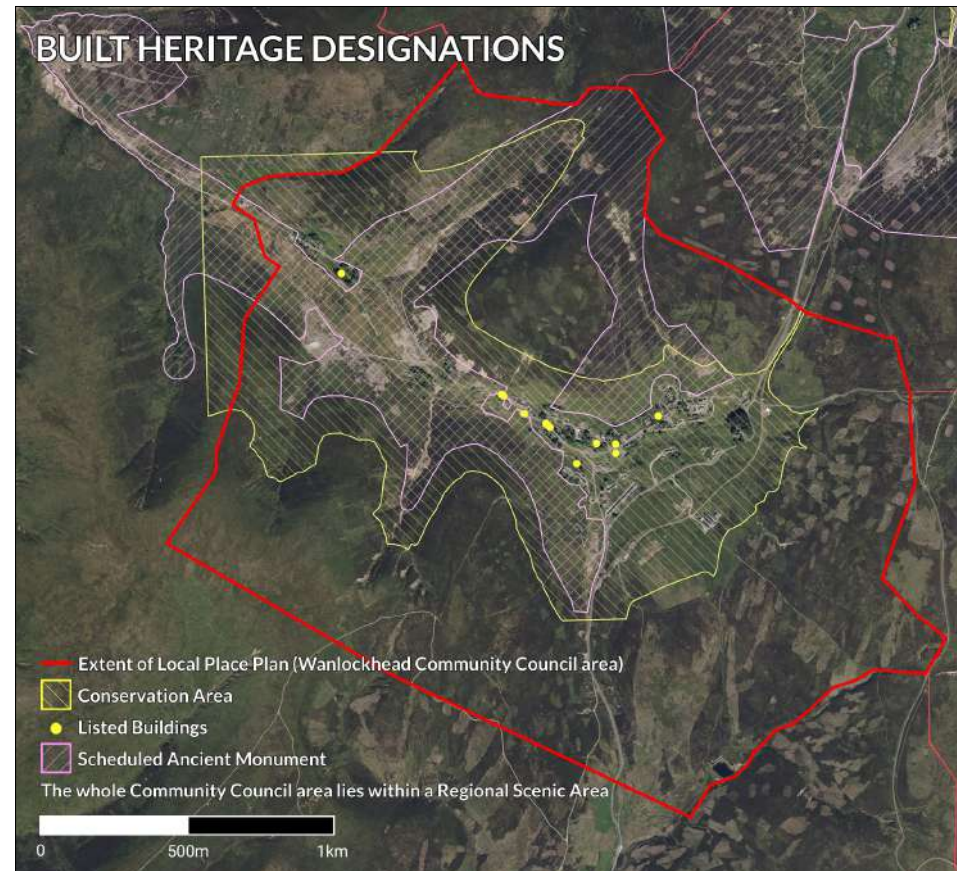
LDP2 also contains a number of specific local designations which this Local Place Plan takes account of:

- A **Conservation Area** covering the whole village, as shown on Map 7.
- 12 **Listed Buildings** comprising one Category A, three Category B, and eight Category C(S). Their locations are marked on Map 7.
- A **Scheduled Ancient Monument** (archaeologically sensitive area) covering much of the village and surrounding landscape, also shown on Map 7.

- A **Regional Scenic Area** (“Thornhill Uplands”) which covers an extensive area east of the River Nith including all of Wanlockhead Community Council area (see LDP2 [Regional Scenic Areas Technical Paper](#), 2018).
- A **Site of Special Scientific Interest** and **Geological Conservation Review site**, both of which are designated because of the mineralogical value of local geology. The SSSI is cited by NatureScot as “one of Scotland’s most important mineralogical sites” (see [sitelink.nature.scot/site/915](http://sitelink.nature.scot/site/915)). The extent of each site is shown on Map 8.

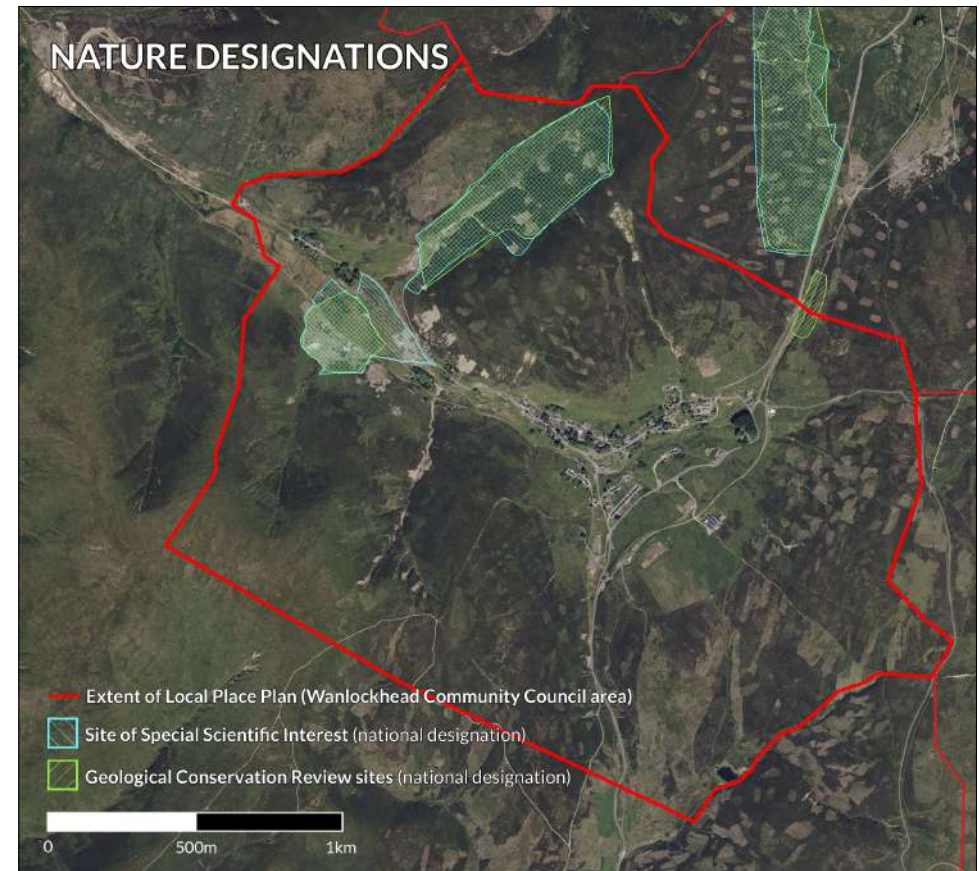
### MAP 7 Built heritage designations

Data courtesy of Historic Environment Scotland



### MAP 8 Nature designations

Data courtesy of NatureScot and Dumfries & Galloway Council



## Community Planning

This Plan must have “regard to (if applicable) any Locality Plan that exists for the Local Place Plan area”.<sup>5</sup>

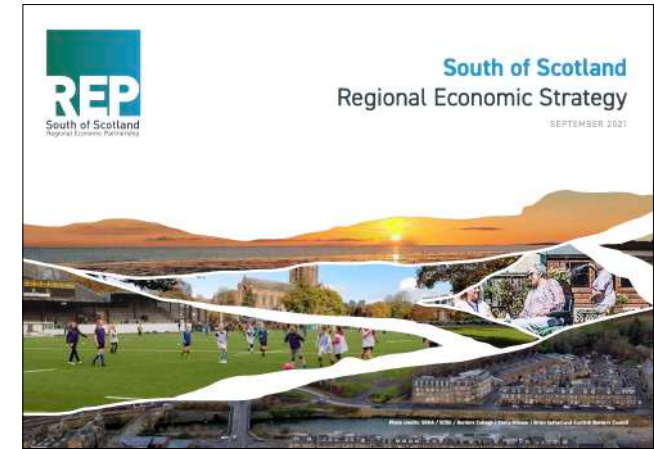
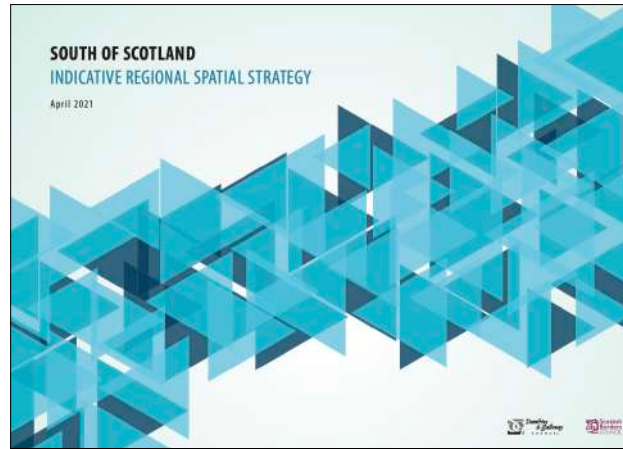
Although Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Partnership agreed to prepare a Locality Plan for Upper Nithsdale in 2023, no Plan has yet been published.<sup>6</sup>

## Other plans & strategies

This Local Place Plan also takes account of other relevant policy documents:

- [South of Scotland Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy](#) (April 2021) - top left image
- [South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy](#) (September 2021) - top right image
- [National Performance Framework](#) (updated 2024) - bottom left image
- [National Strategy For Economic Transformation](#) (2022) - bottom right image

Those documents share overarching objectives relating to climate change, health and wellbeing, community wealth building, and access to opportunity - each of which this Plan seeks to deliver.



<sup>5</sup> See [Scottish Government Circular 1-2022: Local Place Plans \(paragraph 28\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> See [communityplanning.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/local-outcomes-improvement-plan-and-locality-plans-loip/locality-plans](https://communityplanning.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/local-outcomes-improvement-plan-and-locality-plans-loip/locality-plans)

# 3 Vision for the future

## Vision

We want Wanlockhead to be a viable, sustainable and thriving community far into the future: a community where we celebrate, protect and share our unique identity, heritage, character and landscape.

Our village has survived and thrived for over 400 years, drawing on our local assets of environment, heritage and people. We will continue to conserve and use those assets to sustain our community, making the most of new opportunities that present themselves.

The diagram on the right shows the four **calls to action** that we will prioritise to deliver that agenda:

- Getting about (see section 4)
- Community life (section 5)
- Environment, heritage and tourism (section 6)
- Population and homes (section 7)

## Two villages, one community

Working jointly with Leadhills, just two miles away over the hill but in a different local authority area, is a fundamental building block of our vision. “Two villages, one community” is the reality of life in our two villages, as explained in section 2.1. That principle is essential to delivery of this Plan - which means working across Community Council and local authority boundaries.

This is nothing new: primary school pupils in Wanlockhead have gone to school in Leadhills (South Lanarkshire) for many years.

The “two villages, one community” principle needs to be extended to community action, transport, planning, resilience planning, visitor management and more - applying strategic cross-border thinking in the [South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy](#), [South of Scotland Enterprise](#) and the [Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal](#) down to the level of local action and delivery.



## Delivering national agendas locally

Our vision is not just about what we want. It aims to deliver national agendas at the local level. These include health and wellbeing, rural repopulation, sustainability, local living, and community wealth building, as summarised in the diagram on the right. National and local government and public agencies should support delivery of this Plan because that will help them to deliver their policy agendas.

Sections 4 to 7 of this Plan show how we intend to create the circumstances to realise the vision described on the previous page, to create a settlement which is sustainable in terms of:

- Population and community (see sections 5 and 7)
- Access to opportunities, services and facilities (see sections 4, 5 and 8)
- Health and wellbeing (see sections 4, 5, 6 and 7)
- Identity, heritage and environment (see section 6)

Sections 4, 5, 6 and 7 of this Plan describe what needs to happen to put this vision into action. As those sections show, there are some things that we as community can do ourselves, whilst other things will need action, support and sometimes investment by others.

		national aspirations		
		SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES Local Living Inclusive growth Sustainable demographics Community empowerment	HEALTH & WELLBEING Healthy lifestyles Active communities Health, social care & wellbeing services	CLIMATE CHANGE Net zero Habitat restoration
local aspirations	GETTING ABOUT Travel infrastructure, public / community transport	✓	✓	✓
	COMMUNITY LIFE Local facilities & services, collaborative working	✓	✓	✓
	ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE & VISITORS Hills, nature, history & tourism	✓	✓	✓
	POPULATION & HOMES A sustainable population, appropriate housing	✓	✓	✓

# 4 Calls to action



4.1 **Getting about**

page 31



4.2 **Community life**

page 34



4.3 **Environment, heritage and visitors**

page 36



4.4 **Population and homes**

page 39

This section of the Plan contains four priority action areas which directly reflect the community's concerns and aspirations (see section 2.2):

-  **4.1 Getting about:** infrastructure, public/ community transport
-  **4.2 Community life:** local facilities and services, collaborative working
-  **4.3 Environment, heritage and visitors:** hills, nature, history and tourism
-  **4.4 Population and homes:** a sustainable population, appropriate housing

Each of these four calls to action contributes to the vision described in section 3. This means that delivery needs to progress on all four of the calls to action. For example, creating a sustainable population for the future will require action on getting about, community life and environment, heritage & visitors, in order to continue to attract new people to the village so that the population does not decline.

The detailed actions proposed on the following pages should be seen as starting points. New opportunities will undoubtedly present themselves for additional actions, and should be supported if they contribute to delivering the Plan's overall vision.

Proposals that can be located geographically on a map are shown on Map 9 on page 30.



**GETTING ABOUT**  
Travel infrastructure,  
public / community transport



**COMMUNITY LIFE**  
Local facilities & services,  
collaborative working



**ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE & VISITORS**  
Hills, nature, history & tourism



**POPULATION & HOMES**  
A sustainable population,  
appropriate housing





## 4.1 Getting about

Given our rural location, where so many local facilities are in Leadhills or further afield, transport is vitally important - particularly decent roads, a safe walking route to Leadhills, and public transport.

### Current situation

The condition of the roads, particularly the B797 past the village and through the Mennock Pass towards Sanquhar, has long been in poor condition. And more locally, safe walking and cycling between Wanlockhead and Leadhills is essential because we are “two villages, one community” (see page 24).

Although we have bus services west to Sanquhar/Kirkconnel and east to Abington/Lanark, there are no evening or Sunday services and at other times services are infrequent. This reflects poor levels of public transport satisfaction across rural Scotland as a whole - only 41% in remote rural Scotland (including Wanlockhead) are satisfied with public transport compared to 75% in large Scottish urban areas.<sup>7</sup>

### Why we need action

Making it easier to get about locally and further afield will:

- Make it easier to get to education, work and social opportunities, access public services, and visit friends and family, in nearby Leadhills and further afield (in line with National Planning Framework 4 “local living” policy).
- Make the community more attractive as a place to live and visit, so helping our population to grow and the community to sustain itself into the future, in line with the “rural repopulation” policy in National Planning Framework 4.
- Support the local economy, for example by improving visitor access with reduced journey times and more convenient public transport.
- Enable more walking and cycling between Wanlockhead and Leadhills, with attendant health and wellbeing benefits.
- Improve community resilience by reducing the risk of closure of B797 due to erosion and lack of maintenance.

<sup>7</sup> See [Transport & Travel in Scotland: Scottish Household Survey 2024](#) page 18

Transcriptions of selected comments from community survey & events

Transport & roads are really important - essential for everything!

Lack of public transport early and later in the day reducing access for people that need to travel for work or to enjoy the area when visiting from other places. Very poor condition of roads an increasing danger to road users whether on 4 or 2 wheels.

Public transport is useless especially for a teenager or non-driver to get access to town, friends and employment opportunities.

Public transport - bus service to Glasgow & Edinburgh twice a day?

Transport links - last bus to Lanark 3:18pm

Sanquhar taxi costs £25 each way just to get to railway station

Bus reliability - don't turn up, don't run to timetable

D&G not doing their job on roads maintenance - need long term improvements as in South Lanarkshire

Improvement to road surfaces - pot holes are terrible on main road past village B797. Improved signage to parking to stop people parking where they shouldn't. Places to sit (more benches).

Need to fix B797 structural problems in Mennock Pass and at burn bridge by Hastings House

I think first impressions count and the state of the Mennock Pass could deter visitors and eventually cause issues for commuters. I think first impressions count and the state of the Mennock Pass could deter visitors and eventually cause issues for commuters

We need D+G commitment & a timescale for getting rid of the lights. 4 years now!

Need cross-boundary initiatives - gritting, minibus, active travel route.... 2 villages, 1 community!

## What we want to achieve

- **A better maintained local road network, especially the lifeline B797**- including tackling structural problems on the B797 Mennock Pass road, improving road surfacing and winter gritting, and condition of side roads in the village
- **More frequent and regular public or community transport** to Sanquhar/ Kirkconnel and Abington/ Lanark, including evenings and Sundays.
- **Safe walking and cycling between Wanlockhead and Leadhills**, including to and from the shop, Primary School, surgery and Mens Shed in Leadhills.
- **Improve poor condition of village roads**, many of which are unadopted.

## What needs to be done

Key partners

1. Repair and fully reopen Mennock Pass road B797	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fix structural issues where road is eroding within Wanlockhead and Royal Burgh of Sanquhar Community Council areas, including removal of traffic signals and restoration of two-way traffic</li> </ul>	D&G Council	
2. Closure of B797 / public transport in poor weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For snow events or other potential road closures, ask DGC and bus operators to confirm on social media whether the road is open and buses are running</li> </ul>	D&G Council, bus operators	
3. Evening/weekend transport to Sanquhar/Kirkconnel and Abington/Lanark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore community transport with nearby communities - e.g. Sanquhar, Kirkconnel, Leadhills, Duneaton, <a href="#">Thornhill</a></li> <li>• Could start with volunteer driver rota using their own vehicles (e.g. lifts to Abington/Sanquhar using WhatsApp group)</li> </ul>	D&G Community Planning Partnership, funders	
4. Better timed bus connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between bus/rail at Sanquhar and bus/coach at Abington</li> <li>• Extend last bus of the day from Lanark to continue from Leadhills to Wanlockhead especially for pupils and workers</li> <li>• Request support from regional transport partnerships (SWestrans and SPT) and public transport operators</li> </ul>	SWestrans, SPT, D&G Council/ CPP; Stuart's, Brownriggs; CityLink, ScotRail; funders	
5. Create safe walking and cycling route between Wanlockhead and Leadhills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on initial feasibility work to finalise route (including on-road section through Leadhills to the Primary School), costings, sources of funding and implementation</li> <li>• See Map 9, p.30</li> </ul>	Leadhills Community Council, SWestrans, D&G Council/ CPP, Leadhills Primary School, funders	
6. Continue to upgrade path network in and around Wanlockhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage, interpretation, benches / resting points, path maintenance/upgrades - to benefit local residents and visitors</li> <li>• Also included within 4.3: Environment, heritage &amp; visitors</li> <li>• Existing path network shown on Map 9, p.30</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Southern Upland Way Rangers</a> , <a href="#">Wanlock Visions</a> , landowners, SOSE, D&G Council/ CPP, funders	
7. Support driving tuition for young residents and others who wish to learn to drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To tackle a key barrier so people can access jobs and education</li> </ul>	funders	
8. Park-and-ride at Abington services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask Abington Service Station to introduce free or discounted parking for local residents</li> </ul>	Abington Service Station	
9. Improve condition of side roads within the village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage landowners and local authority to work together on improvements</li> </ul>	Buccleuch Estates, other landowners	

See next page for [Inspiration from elsewhere](#) 32

## Inspiration from elsewhere

### Islay multi-use paths

- Safe walking and cycling routes between villages, enabling car-free access to shops, schools etc
- Segregated from vehicle traffic



- *Loch Indaal Way*: 2 mile route linking Port Charlotte & Bruichladdich
- *Three Distilleries Way*: 3 mile route linking Port Ellen & Ardbeg



### Driving lessons in the Highlands & Borders

- Driving lessons for young people funded by windfarm community benefit, enabling access to education, apprenticeships and jobs
- Borders: [wwwFOUNDATIONSscotland.org.uk/our-impact/case-studies/case-for-driving-lessons-in-rural-scotland](http://wwwFOUNDATIONSscotland.org.uk/our-impact/case-studies/case-for-driving-lessons-in-rural-scotland)
- Highlands: [www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/driving-and-motorcycle-lessons-grant](http://www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/driving-and-motorcycle-lessons-grant)



### Black Isle Wee Bus

- Community-led electric minibus based in Culbokie on the Black Isle.
- Uses public sector subsidies previously directed to commercial bus operator Stagecoach for scheduled services.
- [Daytime & evening bookable service](#) locally & and to supermarket and other local services in Dingwall.
- Now being expanded to cover the whole of the Black Isle as proposed in the [Black Isle Local Place Plan](#).
- More information: [www.communitycouncils.scot/the-work-of-community-councils/rural-and-islands-community-councils/ferintosh-community-bus-tackling-transport-deprivation](http://www.communitycouncils.scot/the-work-of-community-councils/rural-and-islands-community-councils/ferintosh-community-bus-tackling-transport-deprivation)





## 4.2 Community life

As a community, we need places to come together, access to local services, and mechanisms to discuss community issues. Those things are our ‘community infrastructure’. Our relative remoteness makes them both vital and vulnerable.

### Current situation

The Inn and Community Centre are vital community hubs, each fulfilling vital social roles and complementing the other. Other village facilities - the play area, public toilets, museum / cafe and swimming pool - are also important, as are facilities in Leadhills such as the shop, school, surgery and Men’s Shed. One immediate concern is access to a GP, now 25 miles away in Moffat despite there being premises in Leadhills and another practice in Sanquhar.

How the community comes together to make decisions about its future is also important. The Community Council has key roles as a forum for discussion, to represent the community’s views to others, and as a decision-making body for local community benefit funding. To fulfil these roles well, it needs to grow to increase its volunteer resource and represent the community’s diversity.

### Why we need action

Maintaining and enhancing our community infrastructure will:

- Enhance “local living” in line with National Planning Framework 4 (see page 19 above), through improved access to day-to-day services and facilities.
- Improve health and wellbeing by creating more social opportunities, so tackling isolation and loneliness amongst people of all ages.
- Make the community more attractive as a place to live, so helping our population to grow and sustain itself into the future, in line with the “rural repopulation” policy in National Planning Framework 4 (see page 19 above and section 4.4 below).
- Help the local economy, by supporting employment in community facilities.
- Increase our ability to deliver this Plan, by having a strong representative voice working on behalf of the community.

Transcriptions of selected comments from community survey & events

The Community Centre could be the hub to go to in times of power cuts. Maybe a generator could be put there, then heating / food / drinks could be done (bring your own!)

Community workspace with desks, printer & refreshments. Introduce a climbing wall, dry ski slopes, small gym

place Community Centre at heart of the community

More evening entertainment in CC (music, quizzes, etc) and possibly monthly? coach day trips

link Community Centre garden & sharing shed with paths, seats

The Inn is a great place to hang out

Access to doctors more locally

let us join GP practice in Sanquhar!

Do we have our own Gala Day, a celebration of the village would bring in the community spirit & would be happy to help

local access to dentistry - nearest emergency treatment is Dumfries

2 villages, 1 community - shared facilities, stronger together, need better links

dedicated events & recreation group to be set up to highlight & help bring more opportunities to the village. I would volunteer some time to help set this up.

Not everyone has social media so it may be an idea to have a large notice board in an accessible location. (By the pub or bus stop)?

All in the village must work together

I like the play park but it's too pointed at little kids

A more peaceful, co-ordinated, connected and cordial relationship with the Community Council.

More non judgmental community engagement with better relationship with those who make decisions on the communities behalf

More open forums & chances for the community to air their questions

community benefit funds could double by 2030 with new windfarms

Fair distribution of Windfarm monies - approach here seems different to other areas- not clear why?

set up a community trust to own / run community housing, Community Centre, toilets etc

## What we want to achieve

- **Local access to GP and pharmacy services** at Leadhills surgery, Sanquhar surgery and/or visiting services at Wanlockhead Community Centre.
- **Retain and enhance the Inn and the Community Centre** as our twin community hubs.
- **Keep the public toilets.**
- **Encourage more community use of other facilities** such as the sharing shed, museum/cafe and swimming pool.
- **Expand the Community Council** so it is more representative and better resourced.

## What needs to be done

Key partners

<p><b>1. Upgrade and make more use of the Community Centre</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example: Community Council meetings, after school club, visiting health care professionals, Citizens Advice Bureau surgeries, community events, cinema nights, mini library, shop, vending machine, prescription pickup point etc (or at Inn, Museum and sharing shed if appropriate)</li> <li>• Secure long-term funding for development worker post</li> <li>• Improve building fabric, e.g. access from hall to garden for events / weddings</li> <li>• Seek funding support to enable more activities / events</li> </ul>	<p>funders, institutional users e.g. D&amp;G CPP, NHS D&amp;G etc</p> <p><b>QUICK WIN</b></p>
<p><b>2. More use of the Inn, Museum and swimming pool</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents should use these facilities more to help sustain them</li> <li>• Seek funding support to enable more activities and events for residents &amp; visitors, including enabling discounted use of facilities by the local community</li> </ul>	<p>funders, institutional users (e.g. schools)</p> <p><b>QUICK WIN</b></p>
<p><b>3. Enhance sharing shed and community garden</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create direct path connection between Community Centre community garden / sharing shed (see Map 9, p.30)</li> <li>• Sharing shed should be accessible to all with longer opening hours</li> </ul>	<p>funders</p> <p><b>QUICK WIN</b></p>
<p><b>4. Upgrade children's play park</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give young people a central role in design, planning and implementation</li> <li>• Ensure that there is equipment for older and younger children</li> <li>• See Map 9, p.30</li> </ul>	<p>D&amp;G Council, schools, funders</p> <p><b>QUICK WIN</b></p>
<p><b>5. Improve access to GP services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain Leadhills surgery with GP/nursing services</li> <li>• Enable Wanlockhead residents to register with GPs in Leadhills or Sanquhar</li> <li>• Utilise Community Centre for visiting peripatetic health services</li> </ul>	<p>NHS D&amp;G, D&amp;G CPP</p> <p><b>QUICK WIN</b></p>
<p><b>6. Review &amp; implement community emergency resilience plan</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review community resilience plan in line with guidance from <a href="#">ReadyScot</a> and <a href="#">Dumfries &amp; Galloway Council</a></li> <li>• Seek resources to implement it</li> </ul>	<p>D&amp;G Council/ CPP, SSEN, funders</p> <p><b>QUICK WIN</b></p>
<p><b>7. Maximise community benefit from windfarms</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use community benefit funds to support delivery of actions in this Plan</li> <li>• Request ownership / profit share from new wind farm proposals, without prejudicing the community's right to object to them in principle (see page 37)</li> <li>• More transparent decision making to ensure fair distribution in line with the Plan and across the whole village</li> </ul>	<p>funders, D&amp;G Council, wind farm developers</p>
<p><b>8. Expand the Community Council to its full complement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the number of elected members to the full complement of eleven, using co-option to expedite the process if necessary</li> <li>• Promote associate membership (see <a href="#">Dumfries and Galloway Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils</a>, para. 2.5.11), for example for youth involvement aged under 16</li> </ul>	



## 4.3 Environment, heritage & tourism

We are proud of our hills, nature and history. We should both conserve and capitalise on these wonderful assets - for our own health and wellbeing, for future generations, and to sustain the local economy.

### Current situation

Natural and built heritage, and our unique status as the highest village in Scotland, are our community's biggest assets: our peaceful setting nestled amongst the hills, biodiversity and mining heritage all combine to create the village's unique character, as well as offering opportunities for outdoor recreation including mountain biking, cycling, walking, skiing, fishing and swimming.

Those assets also create much needed economic and social opportunity, and have the potential to deliver more - not least through tourism.

But at the same time, we need to tackle threats to the village's character - from neglect and dereliction, mess and antisocial behaviour from a small number of visitors, and the threat of giant wind turbines overlooking the village.

### Why we need action

Conserving and capitalising on our natural and built heritage will:

- Sustain the local economy, and therefore also the community, by attracting more visitors to the village whilst encouraging sustainable and responsible behaviour (see page 19 above and section 4.4 below).
- Improve health / wellbeing by improving environmental quality and building community pride.
- Conserve the beauty and biodiversity of our special landscape, which is designated as a Regional Scenic Area and a Conservation Area, and is traversed by the Southern Upland Way and South West Coastal 300 - particularly given the threat of industrial-scale wind farm proposals.

Transcriptions of selected comments from community survey & events

Needs official signs to say we're the highest village in Scotland - to promote us to tourists & protect us from unwanted development

We need more local job opportunities separate from hospitality (meaning servicing air B&B and second homes); small business opportunities such as rental workspace & offices.

I really like all the historical sites, e.g. railway, mining museum

oral history - capture old stories (already starting!)

Improved marketing of village tourism. For example mining museum, gold panning & miniature railway.

create paying motorhome site at the bowling club car park

Heritage railway extension to Wanlockhead would be massive boost to tourism economy and should be supported

Museum needs to integrate better with the village - affordable prices for residents, open up the archive, use bowling club as study centre, fix messy museum bins by toilets, maybe more local staff

Mennock Pass - mess, campers, could make profit? More to do for tourists... e.g. farm/ animals, campsite, better park, walking trails

Litter left behind by visitors who camp - I thought wild camping was one night only not 6 weeks.

Think locally we could embrace our great position on the Southern Upland Way and use it to improve things like tourism etc

Scotland's highest scrapyards

Offering bulk cleanups of gardens/ driveways for older/ derelict properties with the owners consent to improve the appearance of the village. Lots of scrap cars, old machinery dotted about.

No more turbines, 220 metres is too high! Impacts on landscape, wildlife (goats, deer, foxes, eagles, red kites)

District heating should be considered utilising the considerable stored energy within the old mine workings, in the form of flooded excavations.

I am unable to improve the environment around my house with better surface drainage and smoother side roads because they are on Estate land.

## What we want to achieve

- **Protect our landscape setting** including biodiversity and natural beauty, particularly from industrial-scale wind farm proposals
- **Tackle inappropriate wild camping, litter, dereliction and windfarm development** which does or will damage local character and economy
- **Make more of our status as the highest village in Scotland** as an important economic driver
- **Encourage responsible visitors** by upgrading the visitor offer, building on our strengths

## What needs to be done

		Key partners
1. Stricter planning controls on scale, positioning and impacts of new wind turbines - none visible from the village, public roads or Southern Upland Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stricter planning controls on scale and positioning of new turbines (including construction, operation and decommissioning) including impacts on residents, village setting, Regional Scenic Area, Conservation Area &amp; Southern Upland Way</li> <li>• Apply precautionary principle because of presence of protected species including golden eagles, red kites, hen harriers, osprey and grouse, and consider applying precautionary principle</li> </ul>	D&G Council, landowners, developers
2. Reduce inappropriate 'wild camping' in Mennock Pass and Wanlockhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust management of sensitive areas (e.g. boulders, enforce compliance with the <a href="#">Outdoor Access Code</a>)</li> <li>• Consider requesting a byelaw to prohibit camping - see <a href="#">Managing informal camping under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003</a></li> </ul>	landowners, <a href="#">Southern Upland Way Rangers</a> , Police Scotland, Wanlockhead / Royal Burgh of Sanquhar Community Councils
3. Create campsite / motorhome 'aire'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complementary measure to reduce inappropriate 'wild camping' (action 2)</li> <li>• Potential location: former curling pond south of bowling green (see Map 9 p.30)</li> <li>• Community-led initiative would need an organisation to lead and operate it</li> </ul>	landowners/tenants, SoSE, HES, funders, Museum
4. Develop visitor management and marketing strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with adjoining communities on tourism (e.g. <a href="#">SCOTO Press Pause</a>)</li> <li>• Build on assets: Scotland's highest village, the Southern Upland Way, mining &amp; other heritage, landscape, biodiversity</li> </ul>	adjoining communities, SOSE, D&G Council, <a href="#">SCOTO</a> , VisitScotland, HES, funders
5. Enhance the Museum's offer and role in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage more community involvement, e.g. more volunteering and participation in social / oral history, to enable more access to cafe, museum, Library, study centre and Goldscaur Row archive</li> </ul>	Historic Environment Scotland, SoSE, funders
6. Extend/enhance Leadhills to Wanlockhead railway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend from Glengonnar halt to Wanlockhead</li> <li>• Associate investment in facilities at Leadhills</li> </ul>	Leadhills & Wanlockhead Railway, HES, funders
7. Make more of early heritage / social history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential Bronze Age/Roman history, Covenanting and social history</li> <li>• More interpretation and information for visitors and residents</li> </ul>	HES, SoSE, funders, Past Finders, Museum
8. Continue to upgrade path network in and around Wanlockhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage, interpretation, benches / resting points, path maintenance/upgrades - to benefit local residents and visitors</li> <li>• Also included within 4.1: Getting About</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Southern Upland Way Rangers</a> , <a href="#">Wanlock Visions</a> , landowners, SoSE, D&G Council, funders
9. Tackle water and soil pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop untreated sewage effluent from wastewater works entering the burn</li> <li>• Initiate <a href="#">Wanlock Water Restoration Project</a> to reduce mine-water pollution</li> </ul>	Scottish Water, SEPA, D&G Council, landowners, Museum, SoSE, Nith Fishery Board/ Trust
10. Village tidy-ups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bulk cleanups of neglected parts of the village</li> <li>• Better bin management</li> <li>• Clean up war memorial</li> </ul>	residents, landowners, HES, D&G Council, funders

QUICK WIN

QUICK WIN

QUICK WIN

QUICK WIN

QUICK WIN

## Inspiration from elsewhere

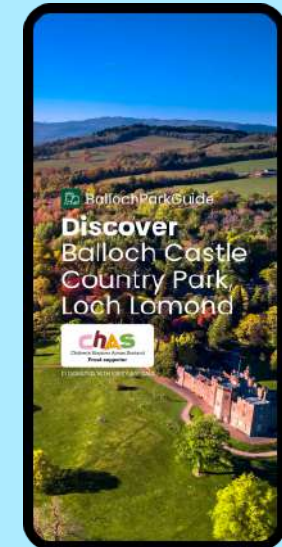
### Loch Lomond camping management byelaws

- Operate March-September in busy lochside areas
- Campers must use official campsites or, for wild camping, get a permit
- National Park introduced in 2017 and manages the bylaws
- More information at [www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/things-to-do/camping/get-a-permit/](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/things-to-do/camping/get-a-permit/)



### Balloch Park app

- App produced for popular Balloch Castle Country Park with visit planner and info on history, trails, facilities, nature, viewpoints and family fun
- Created by a local resident
- More information at [ballochparkguide.com](http://ballochparkguide.com)



### Kinlochleven motorhome 'aire'

- Affordable motorhome pitches (£20/night) with electricity, water, toilets and waste disposal
- Community-owned (as are adjacent public toilets) so all income goes to the community
- One of many community-owned sites across Scotland
- More information at [www.kinlochleven.co.uk/aires-site](http://www.kinlochleven.co.uk/aires-site)



### Easter Ross community tourism

- Community-led tourism initiative supported by SCOTO, HIE & SSE community benefit funding
- Created 'destination organisation' initiative & website: [www.easterrosspeninsula.com](http://www.easterrosspeninsula.com)
- More information at [www.scoto.co.uk/media/p0rjvp4u/scoto\\_easter-ross-case-study.pdf](http://www.scoto.co.uk/media/p0rjvp4u/scoto_easter-ross-case-study.pdf)



## 4.4 Population and homes

The village population is shrinking, we are older than the Scottish average, fewer than half our homes are permanently occupied, and living in Scotland's highest village means we have a greater challenge with heating than possibly anywhere else in the country.

In the century from 1871 to 1971, the village population fell from 771 to 171. At the 2011 and 2022 censuses, it was 150 (see graph on right).

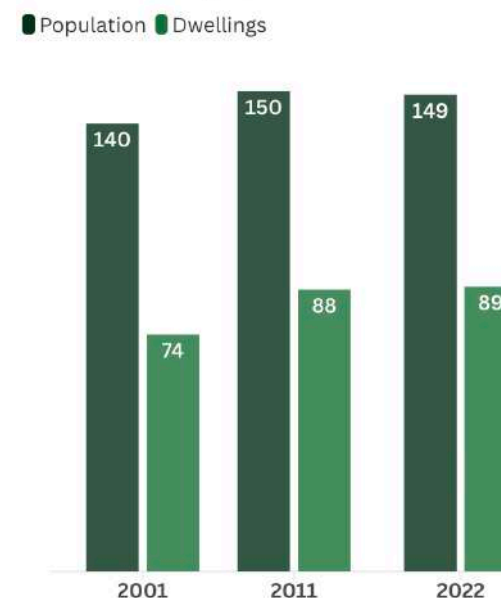
We are significantly older than the Scottish average: 33% of us are under 45, compared to 53% across Scotland as a whole (see graphs below). This has far-reaching implications for public services and the community.

In terms of housing stock, at the time of writing the village had around 90 occupied homes, 40 second homes or holiday lets, and 12 derelict or empty homes.

Of 50 village households responding to a [2022 housing survey](#) by SOSCH, 14% said they or someone in their household were in housing need or would be within five years. 44% of respondents knew someone who had left the area due to a lack of affordable housing, and a further 20% knew someone who had left for other reasons (mainly work).

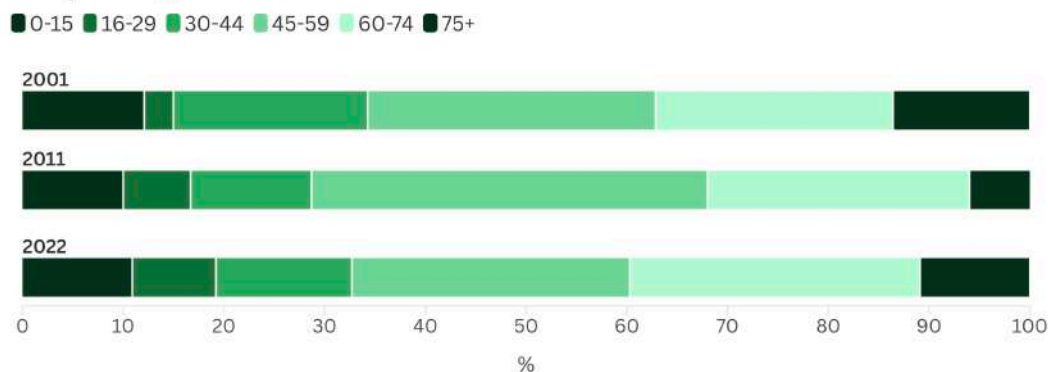
Most respondents who were looking to move house in the village indicated that rental property would be their preferred option. 85% were looking for 2-bed homes, ideally bungalows.

Wanlockhead population 2001-2022



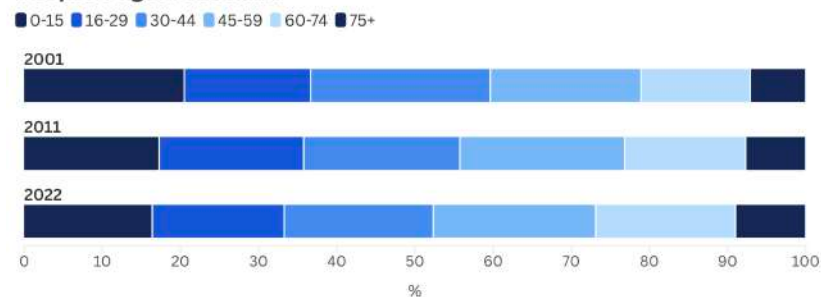
Source: Census data

People's ages: Wanlockhead



Source: Census data

People's ages: Scotland



Keeping our homes warm is a major challenge in Scotland's highest village.

2022 census data (see graph below) shows that nearly a quarter of village homes have two forms of central heating: 23% compared to 6% in Scotland as a whole.

We are also far more reliant on oil than other parts of the country, which is both more expensive and has more volatile price fluctuations.

(Fuel poverty data is unavailable at the village level.)

*Transcriptions of selected comments from community engagement*

**Population has dropped since 2022 census - due to holiday homes / airbnbs. Now at least 10-20 fewer adults and only 6-7 school children.**

**Concerned that the community is dying - we need more families & young people**

**Convert old houses to give homes to younger people and use windfarm community benefit money to train/ teach them new skills that would benefit the community**

**Less empty houses**

**Not selling homes that families or residents could live in as holiday homes or airbnbs.**

**Neglected and/or abandoned homes. They could be accounted for and keep in some repair.**

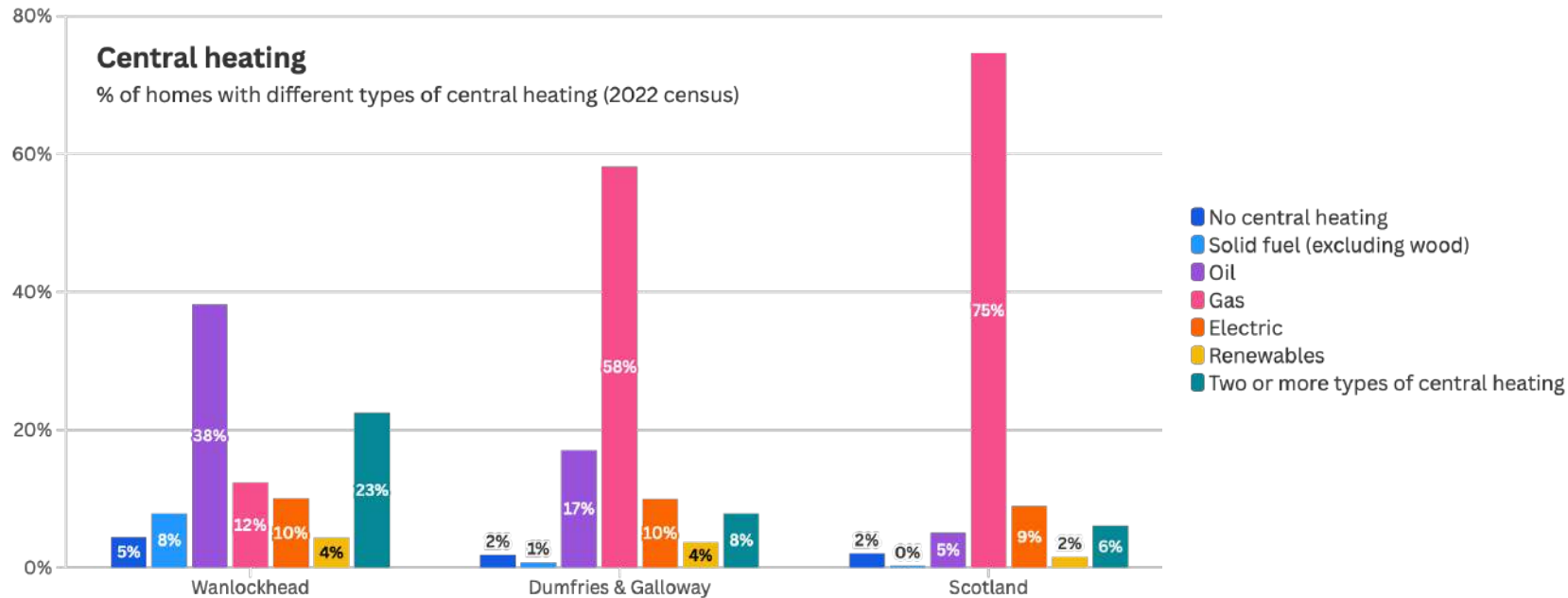
**Any renovation on old houses in the village should be done on the basis that a local trust benefits from the profits**

**Less airbnbs, more affordable houses for residents**

**Playpark on main road is not ideal. Move it to village gardens & add benches, paths to Centre & sharing shed, disabled play kit - redevelop existing playpark for housing**

**Free kindling & logs like DG Hub did until a couple of years ago**

**Draw heat from mine-water to heat the whole village, like the museum does. Once installed, the only ongoing cost is pumping.**



## Why we need action

Depopulation is local concern, with rented homes for working families and young people in short supply. It is also identified as a fundamental strategic challenge in the [South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy 2021](#), and rural repopulation is a national policy aim in [National Planning Framework 4 2023](#) (see section 2.3 above).

It is also emphasised in the [Just Transition Commission's 2025 report for Dumfries and Galloway](#) (page 13) which highlights the compounding effects as low demand leads to the closure of services, which in turn risks making the region less attractive for residents and deter potential arrivals. The report recommends that policymakers should consider strategic actions to support the long-term sustainability of core services in rural communities.

## What we want to achieve

- **Sustain and increase our population** and achieve a more sustainable balance of ages.
- **Expand our housing stock**, particularly affordable homes for rent by families and younger people.
- **Upgrade our ageing housing stock**.

## What needs to be done

### Key partners

<b>1. Convert empty property to affordable homes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For rent or purchase, with '<a href="#">rural housing burden</a>' conditions to ensure that they remain affordable in perpetuity</li> <li>• Should be energy-efficient and affordable</li> <li>• Focus on attracting families and younger people</li> <li>• See Map 9 for locations (page 30)</li> </ul>	<i>South of Scotland Community Housing, SoSE, D&amp;G Council, owners, funders</i>	
<b>2. More information &amp; advice on housing options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For people looking to acquire their own home</li> <li>• Focus particularly on younger / working age people &amp; families</li> <li>• Advise on housing finance, tenure and heating grants/loans</li> </ul>	<i>Citizens Advice, SoSE, D&amp;G Council/ CPP, funders</i>	
<b>3. Support home energy improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grants/cheap loans for insulation, energy and heating improvements to increase individual homes' EPC ratings &amp; tackle fuel poverty</li> <li>• Target homes on lower Council Tax bands, whether rented or owner occupied</li> </ul>	<i>funders, SoSE, D&amp;G Council/ CPP</i>	
<b>4. Energy discount scheme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise community benefit funding from local renewable power generation to assist with energy-related household bills and alleviate fuel poverty</li> <li>• See Carsphairn example on page 42</li> </ul>	<i>funders</i>	
<b>5. Explore local authority / housing association purchase of homes on open market for rent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Base on Highland Council's <a href="#">Property Purchase Scheme</a></li> <li>• Only applies to homes for sale on the open market (no compulsory purchase)</li> <li>• Once purchased, the property would be made available to the <a href="#">Homes4D&amp;G</a> waiting list for social rent</li> </ul>	<i>D&amp;G Council, Housing Associations</i>	
<b>6. Build new affordable homes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For rent or purchase, with '<a href="#">rural housing burden</a>' conditions to ensure that they remain affordable in perpetuity</li> <li>• Focus on attracting families and younger people</li> <li>• Potential areas of search for sites shown on Map 9 (page 30)</li> <li>• More population needs linked investment in facilities and services</li> </ul>	<i>South of Scotland Community Housing, SoSE, D&amp;G Council, landowners, funders</i>	
<b>7. Explore ground-source district heating for the village</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake feasibility study for community-owned district heating for the whole community, drawing heat from flooded mine workings, including assessing savings in heating costs for village properties &amp; community interest</li> <li>• Develop from "<a href="#">Sea-Warm</a>" <a href="#">demo project</a> at the Museum (see next page)</li> </ul>	<i>Museum, landowners, Historic Environment Scotland, D&amp;G Council/ CPP</i>	

See next page for *Inspiration from elsewhere*

## Inspiration from elsewhere

### Conversions of empty homes in Moniaive and new homes in Closeburn

- Specialist housing created by purchasing long-term empty property in small villages, Both projects led by [SOSCH](#) (formerly Dumfries & Galloway Small Communities Housing Trust) with local communities
- Moniaive: empty homes brought back into use at Sawmill Green: [sosch.org/sawmill-green-moniaive-whirlow-palnackie-dumfries-galloway/](https://sosch.org/sawmill-green-moniaive-whirlow-palnackie-dumfries-galloway/)
- Closeburn: three new award-winning eco-friendly affordable homes to tackle housing availability and fuel poverty. More information [here](#) (go to page 6).
- SoSCH have recently carried out a housing needs survey in Wanlockhead, essential to prove evidence of local housing need



### Local Energy Discount Scheme, Carsphairn

- £600 per household per annum financed by community benefit funds from renewable energy generation
- For homes in full-time residential accommodation
- Payments made under the scheme are intended to help alleviate fuel poverty and ensure residents are financially assisted in paying energy related bills (e.g. electricity, gas, heating oil, wood fuel, solid fuel, biomass, renewable energy)
- More information: [www.carsphairn.org/LEDS](http://www.carsphairn.org/LEDS)



### Using geothermal minewater to power domestic heating

- Cheap, clean & climate friendly
- Wanlockhead Museum has a demonstration project with Edinburgh University to use heat drawn from underground minewater
- Installed 2024, it currently powers 7 radiators in the museum cafe, kitchen and shop: see [sea-warm.co.uk/case-studies/wanlockhead-museum/](https://sea-warm.co.uk/case-studies/wanlockhead-museum/)
- Aspiration is to expand to the whole village, like larger scheme in Gateshead that provides 50% of heating requirements to 350 premises. More information at [tp-heatnetworks.org/mine-water-in-heat-networks/](http://tp-heatnetworks.org/mine-water-in-heat-networks/)



# 5 Making it happen

- 5.1 **Working together** page 44
- 5.2 **Funding** page 44
- 5.3 **Organising ourselves** page 45
- 5.4 **Planning policy** page 45

This Plan maps our community's future aspirations and how to make them a reality.

It is ambitious. It will need support from other organisations outwith the community, it will need resources, and it will take several years to implement everything in the Plan.

But it is achievable if everyone works together for common purpose.

## 5.1 Working together

Everything depends on the community, public and private sectors working together. Key partners are mentioned against each action in sections 4.1 to 4.4 above, and are summarised in the accompanying diagram.

### Local community

This Plan will only be delivered if it is led by the local community. This means:

- Key organisations within the village - including the Community Council, Community Centre and Museum - should work together to deliver the Plan, pooling their different skills and abilities to complement each other.
- Every local resident, landowner and business should think how they can help deliver the actions in the Plan, whether that is by individual actions and behaviours, or by supporting community organisations.
- Working closely with neighbouring communities, particularly in Leadhills because of the “two villages, one community” relationship.

### Public sector

Many of the actions in this Plan depend on support from the public sector - which means advice, influence and endorsement, not just money.

We suggest that good first steps would be:

- **Dumfries and Galloway Council** should register this document as a Local Place Plan to influence future planning policy and as a

material consideration in assessing planning applications.

- **The Council's Nithsdale Area Committee** should endorse the Plan and agree to use it as a tool to inform and support their decision-making, as has happened elsewhere in Scotland (for example, Highland Council's [Black Isle and Easter Ross Area Committee](#) in relation to the Black Isle Local Place Plan).
- **Dumfries & Galloway Community Planning Partnership and individual members including SWestrans, NHS Dumfries & Galloway and SOSE** should endorse the Plan, agree to use it as a tool to inform and support public sector decision-making, and agree to incorporate it into the CPP's forthcoming [Upper Nithsdale Locality Plan](#).
- **Dumfries and Galloway Council and Community Planning Partnership** should share the Plan with South Lanarkshire Council (given the reality of the “two villages, one community” relationship with Leadhills) and the Scottish Government to request their support in its delivery.

## 5.2 Funding

Although there are plenty of potential quick wins - some of which need little or no funding - the community will need resources for meaningful progress to be made on implementing the Plan as a whole.

We are in the fortunate position of being eligible for community benefit funding from renewable energy generation. We hope that funding will be available to support implementation of the Plan.

The Plan should also help secure other resources, by showing how individual actions contribute to strategic change and are rooted in community aspirations - helping South of Scotland Enterprise, Dumfries and Galloway Council, NHS Dumfries & Galloway, the Scottish Government and others to allocate future investment and services.

## 5.3 Organising ourselves

Delivery of this Plan is too big a responsibility to be left to one organisation.

An initial step would be the establishment of a dedicated, action-focussed working group to champion and advocate delivery of the Plan.

Their role would be to support the local community to deliver the Plan and work with external stakeholders to that end (such as the local authority, funders, landowners and businesses who are not members of the working group, and other nearby communities).

Membership should comprise individual residents and businesses. The three key community organisations of the Community Council, Community Centre and Museum should each be involved, but membership should be open to other individual residents and businesses.

Once established, a key role of that group would be to secure support from the public sector and community benefit funds to deliver the actions in the Plan.

Many communities across Scotland have quickly found that supplementing their volunteer time with paid support is essential to make progress (see Ardgour example in box below).

This could be one of the group's first tasks, funded by community benefit monies. The paid support could either be a dedicated part-time post for Wanlockhead or a larger role working with other communities.

## Inspiration from elsewhere

### Ardgour Local Place Plan implementation

- [The Plan](#) was completed in early 2024
- A key action in the Plan was appointing a paid worker to help deliver it
- The new part-time staff member was appointed within weeks of the Plan being completed, funded by community benefit funding
- The extra capacity has enabled much faster progress on delivering the Plan than if relying on volunteers alone - [over £100,000 worth of projects delivered in 12 months](#)



## 5.4 Planning policy

As required by [Schedule 19 of the Planning \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#), the table below summarises relevant actions contained in section 4 which we hope the Council will support in the next Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan (LDP). Please note that the table is **not** a complete list of every action.

In addition, we also request a specific change to the [existing LDP](#):

- **Upgrade Wanlockhead to a Local Centre in the Settlement Hierarchy** (page 235) because of the level of local facilities that it shares with Leadhills, in line with the “two villages, one community” principle (see section 3 above, page 26)

	Proposal	Reason	Plan references
	<b>Repair and fully reopen Mennock Pass road B797</b>	<i>To improve accessibility, Local Living, economic development, community resilience &amp; rural repopulation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 9 (page 30)</li> <li>• Getting About: action 1 (page 32)</li> </ul>
	<b>Create safe walking and cycling route between Wanlockhead and Leadhills</b>	<i>To improve active travel (including to primary school and shop), accessibility, Local Living, road safety, health &amp; wellbeing and rural repopulation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 9 (page 30)</li> <li>• Getting About: action 4 (page 32)</li> </ul>
	<b>Continue to upgrade path network in and around Wanlockhead</b>	<i>To improve health &amp; wellbeing, Local Living, active travel, economic development and rural repopulation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 9 (page 30)</li> <li>• Getting About: action 5 (page 32)</li> </ul>
	<b>Upgrade &amp; make more use of the Community Centre</b>	<i>To support Local Living, rural repopulation and local services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 9 (page 30)</li> <li>• Community Life: action 1 (page 35)</li> </ul>
	<b>More use of Inn, Museum &amp; swimming pool</b>	<i>To support Local Living, rural repopulation and local services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 9 (page 30)</li> <li>• Community Life: action 2 (page 35)</li> </ul>
	<b>Enhance sharing shed and community garden - including connection to Community Centre</b>	<i>To support Local Living and rural repopulation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 9 (page 30)</li> <li>• Community Life: action 3 (page 35)</li> </ul>
	<b>Upgrade children’s play park</b>	<i>To support Local Living and rural repopulation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 9 (page 30)</li> <li>• Community Life: action 4 (page 35)</li> </ul>
	<b>Improve access to GP services - including retention of Leadhills GP surgery and use of Wanlockhead Community Centre for visiting peripatetic health services</b>	<i>To support Local Living, rural repopulation and local services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 9 (page 30)</li> <li>• Community Life: action 5 (page 35)</li> </ul>
	<b>Maximise community benefit from windfarms - including a policy requirement for any new wind farms to include part community ownership</b>	<i>To empower the local community, enable delivery of this Plan and support rural repopulation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 9 (page 30)</li> <li>• Community Life: action 7 (page 35)</li> </ul>

**ENVIRONMENT,  
HERITAGE &  
VISITORS**

<b>Stricter planning controls on scale, positioning and impacts of new wind turbines - none visible from the village, public roads or Southern Upland Way</b>	<i>To protect landscape setting, heritage and biodiversity in a Regional Scenic Area and of the village Conservation Area</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment, Heritage &amp; Tourism: action 1 (page 37)</li> </ul>
<b>Reduce inappropriate ‘wild camping’ in Wanlockhead and Mennock Pass - NB the Mennock Pass is outwith the Wanlockhead Community Council area</b>	<i>To conserve nature and landscape setting in a Regional Scenic Area</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment, Heritage &amp; Tourism: action 2 (page 37)</li> </ul>
<b>Create campsite / motorhome ‘aire’</b>	<i>To support economic development and rural repopulation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment, Heritage &amp; Tourism: action 3 (page 37)</li> </ul>
<b>Develop visitor management and marketing strategy - building on local assets: Scotland’s highest village, the Southern Upland Way, mining &amp; other heritage, landscape, biodiversity</b>	<i>To support economic development and rural repopulation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment, Heritage &amp; Tourism: action 4 (page 37)</li> </ul>
<b>Enhance the Museum’s offer and role in the community</b>	<i>To preserve nationally important heritage and support economic development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 9 (page 30)</li> <li>• Environment, Heritage &amp; Tourism: action 5 (page 37)</li> </ul>
<b>Extend &amp; enhance railway from Leadhills to Wanlockhead</b>	<i>To support economic development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 9 (page 30)</li> <li>• Environment, Heritage &amp; Tourism: action 6 (page 37)</li> </ul>
<b>Make more of pre-mining heritage</b>	<i>To preserve nationally important heritage and support economic development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment, Heritage &amp; Tourism: action 7 (page 37)</li> </ul>
<b>Continue to upgrade path network in and around Wanlockhead</b>	<i>To support economic development and health &amp; wellbeing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 9 (page 30)</li> <li>• Environment, Heritage &amp; Tourism: action 8 (page 37)</li> </ul>
<b>Tackle water pollution in the Wanlock Water</b>	<i>To improve water quality, public health and biodiversity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment, Heritage &amp; Tourism: action 9 (page 37)</li> </ul>
<b>Convert empty property to affordable homes</b>	<i>To tackle the housing shortage and enable rural repopulation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 9 (page 30)</li> <li>• Population &amp; Homes: action 1 (page 41)</li> </ul>
<b>Build new affordable homes</b>	<i>To tackle the housing shortage and enable rural repopulation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 9 (page 30)</li> <li>• Population &amp; Homes: action 6 (page 41)</li> </ul>
<b>Explore ground-source district heating for the village - particularly important given the village’s lower ambient temperatures due to altitude</b>	<i>To improve housing quality and tackle fuel poverty</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map 9 (page 30)</li> <li>• Population &amp; Homes: action 7 (page 41)</li> </ul>

**POPULATION  
& HOMES**

## Appendices

Available online at [bit.ly/wanlockhead-plan-appxs](https://bit.ly/wanlockhead-plan-appxs)

Appendix 1 **Community survey**

Appendix 2 **Display boards used at drop-in events**

Appendix 3 **Responses to the draft Plan consultation**

## Notes



**WANLOCKHEAD**  
OUR COMMUNITY. OUR FUTURE