

Community Council: Blairgowrie and Rattray

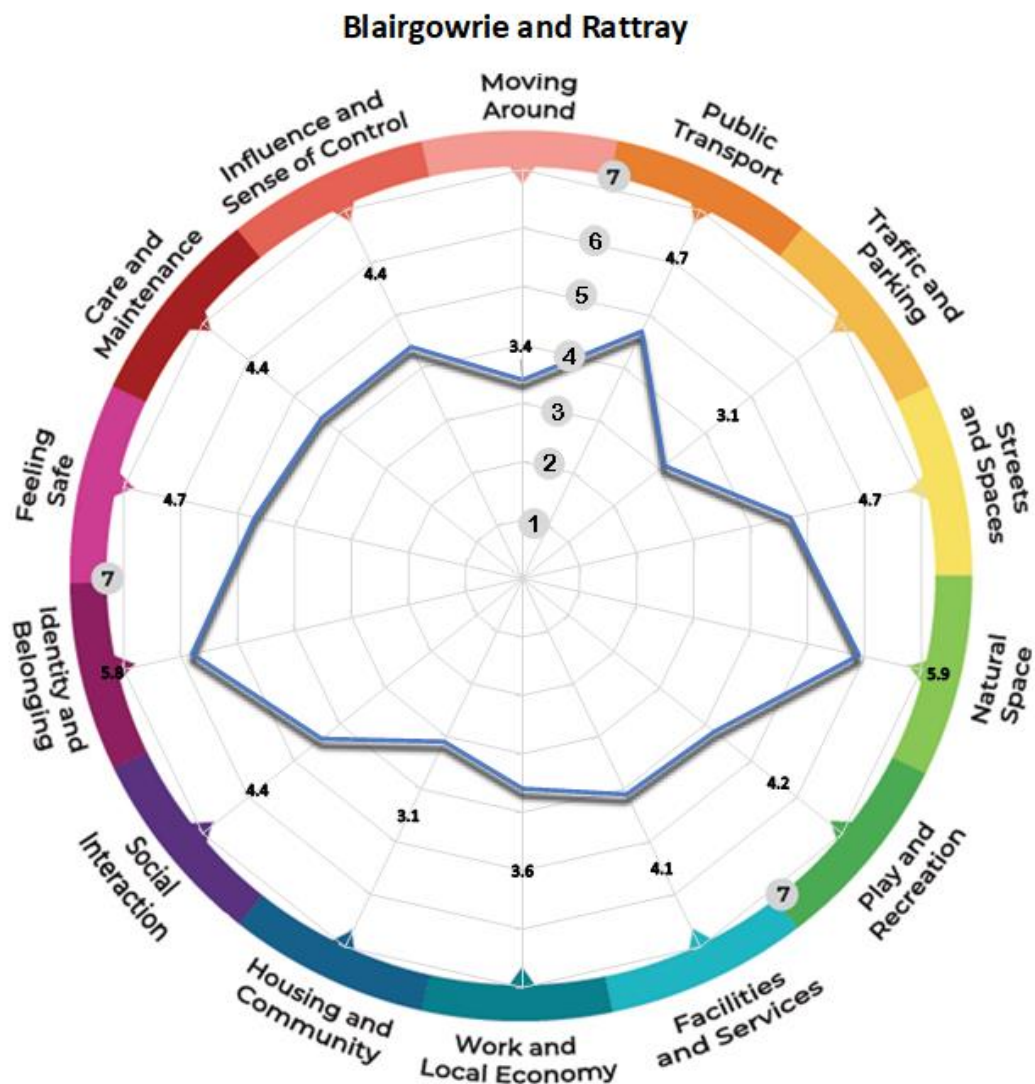
Blairgowrie and Rattray Community Council area is located to the north of Coupar Angus and west of Alyth. It encompasses Blairgowrie and Rattray, one of the largest towns in Perth and Kinross, and the main hub in the area. Two other designated settlements are found here, Kinloch and Carsie, however there were no responses from these villages.

[The Blairgowrie & Rattray Community Action Plan \(2021-2026\)](#) should be read in conjunction with the BPC summary for further detail on the community and their priorities.

There were 59 respondents from this area, 39 of which were young people. The Big Place Conversation in this area consisted of:

- Drop in events at Blairgowrie Library, High School and the Strathmore Centre for Youth Development (SCYD).
- A public event at Rattray Community Connect.
- A virtual event, and
- Online survey responses

Only 14 participants took part in scoring the place standard topics shown below.



Moving Around

Positive comments highlighted some good quality active travel infrastructure, and frequent use of Alyth Road by people cycling. The presence of street furniture to provide resting points was also noted.

A variety of negative comments were received. These focus on the low quality of footways, with insufficient width and the presence of excessive street clutter. These prevent safe movement for wheelchair users, prams and vulnerable users. Active travel infrastructure was also highlighted as a concern, either due to the lack of suitable infrastructure networks or issues with a design that provides unsafe conditions for people walking and cycling. This, together with high volumes of traffic, was thought to discourage cycling.

Other negative comments highlighted roads that feel unsafe. Cases focused on the high volume and speed of road traffic. These issues were identified within settlements, where they discourage active travel, and in rural roads where the National Speed Limit disrupts the enjoyment of some natural enclaves.

Suggestions received focus on provision of better active travel options. These include the provision of segregated infrastructure, adequate maintenance regime and general upkeeping. There was also mention of the lack of options to board bikes onto buses and trains.

Public Transport

Most positive comments received on this topic refer to the convenience of bus services for young people and the elderly, and good levels of patronage for key routes. Good frequency, useful mobile app and friendly service were highlighted, supporting a robust service to Dundee and Perth.

Negative comments highlighted unreliability and inconsistency in the provision of bus services, hindering the opportunity to reduce car ownership levels. Other comments also discussed a lack of public transport links for passengers travelling north, and mentioned Dunkeld, Spittalfield and Pitlochry as destinations that would benefit from reinforced services. There was also negative feedback around the insufficient frequency in the evening services, and concerns surrounding the reduced provision for some routes.

Other negative feedback received commented on the lack of sheltered bus stops, and issues with the live tracking service. The state of repair of some stops was also raised as a concern.

Suggestions for this topic included the creation of a car share scheme; improvements to the formatting of bus timetables and the availability of displays for bus tracking; consideration to the construction of a local train station; and the availability of paid taxi services to connect remote areas with public transport services.

Traffic & Parking

Positive comments received on this topic focus on the availability of free parking and the 20mph speed limit in the town centre.

The majority of comments received were negative. These include concerns about vehicle speeding and occurrences of parking in unsafe locations. These were thought to impact the perceived safety for road users, particularly people walking. Feedback also highlighted localised congestion issues, and disruption caused by vehicles parking in unregulated areas.

Other comments pointed at the need to provide more parking capacity. This was seen as an issue for visitors and a cause for concern for local residents.

Suggested improvements received proposed the construction of a Park & Ride in the outskirts to alleviate pressure on the town centre. Some comments suggested the increase of free parking capacity in key areas, including near educational facilities and local businesses. Other suggestions focused on improvements to road safety, including the use of speed cameras to reduce vehicle speeds, and signalised crossings in problematic locations.

Streets, Squares & Buildings

Positive feedback received highlighted the general aesthetic value of local buildings, and the attractiveness of local roads when approaching Blairgowrie. The positive impact of the Shop Front Improvement Scheme was mentioned. The availability of attractive spaces for community events and the provision of street furniture in public and natural spaces were also recognised.

Negative comments received focus on the estate of repair of some prominent buildings and streets around town, with a concern that a lack of maintenance might have a negative impact on the character of the area. The need to address vandalism was also highlighted. Feedback also pointed at vacant commercial units and their likelihood to deteriorate due to the lack of upkeep. Specific premises were thought to be diminish the aesthetic value of the area.

Improvements suggested included the reopening of some local shops that closed. These referred mainly to supermarkets and convenience stores. The possibility of redeveloping brownfield sites was mentioned as an opportunity. Improvements to shop frontages were thought to have the potential to enhance the aesthetic value of the area, and the installation of signage to facilitate access to local attractions could help visitors to navigate.

Natural Spaces

Positive comments in this topic highlighted a great appreciation for the quality of natural assets in and near Blairgowrie. The availability of attractive parks, open spaces and country walks was also recognised, with easy access from the town. There were also positive comments on the diversity of wildlife available in the area, and mention of the woodland between Heather Drive and Coupar Angus Road as a high-quality amenity space with valuable biodiversity.

Negative feedback included the loss of bluebell woodland areas and its impact on local biodiversity and wildlife habitats. Concerns were raised around a shortage of greenspace in Blairgowrie town centre, and how parking space requirements for new developments limit opportunities to establish natural spaces. There were also comments on the overall upkeep of open spaces, with a negative perception of the 'no-mow' position and the presence of litter.

Suggestions received focus on the protection and enhancement of existing natural spaces. This includes the restriction of development in specific locations, and the improvement of current facilities. Comments also refer to the need for more spaces to be made available, including the provision of dog parks, and the planting of mature gardens to encourage wildlife.

Play & Recreation

Positive comments on this topic highlight the range of available facilities for different age groups. The recreation centre, football pitches, play area and high school are thought to enable good socialisation and the participation in sporting activities. Opportunities for running and skating also received positive feedback.

There were some negative comments about the play & recreation facilities in the area. Older kids were thought to enjoy a wider range of opportunities when compared to younger ones. Comments also pointed at the lack of indoor facilities for primary school-age children, impacting the attractiveness of certain activities under wet and cold weather conditions. The Community Connect Space also received feedback, pointing at the high cost and premises not serving the needs of the local community.

Other negative comments point at a lack of opportunities for disabled users, the need for updates to leisure facilities, and the loss of facilities that were removed to accommodate housing developments.

Suggested improvements focus primarily on the construction of new facilities. These comments include a variety of premises, including a gym, bike tracks or badminton. Improvements to existing facilities were also suggested, with specific mention of the skate park and Leisure Centre needing upgrades. Other comments suggest the provision of more affordable options, as well as the design of premises that encourage inter-generational mixing.

Facilities & Services

Positive feedback on this topic point at the availability of a variety of services within the town. Retail services, supermarkets, healthcare and pharmacy are easily accessible, providing opportunities for locals to access the majority of daily needs. Comments also highlighted the presence of facilities such as the Town Hall in Blairgowrie and the Friendship Café that allow for community groups to meet.

Negative comments received describe a series of facilities or services that are not available and would be beneficial for the area. These include a police station, orthodontists and cultural facilities. With regards to healthcare provision, comments pointed at the lack of A&E services causing patients to be diverted to Perth or Dundee. Feedback also highlighted concerns about the capacity of existing healthcare services. Medical and dental practices were thought to offer limited same day appointments available.

There were also concerns raised about the impact of future development and increasing population on health and education services. Comments mentioned the shortage of GP coverage and lack of mental health support for young people.

Other negative comments point at the increase in empty shops, a lack of opportunities to access remote working spaces and limited food hospitality options.

Suggestions received focus on the addition of specific retail offers, or the diversification of existing outlets. These are also suggested for Rattray, in view of a lack of existing offer. There is also mention of the need to add remote work hubs in Blairgowrie, and the possibility of adding community premises similar to SCYD that are more widely available.

Work & Local Economy

Positive comments outlined the variety of opportunities for the local community to access employment. A series of key employers included Perth and Kinross Council, Castle Water and the fishing and tourism industries. There was also mention of a wide range of opportunities for volunteering and work experience.

Negative feedback highlighted some discrepancies between the skills available and market demand in the area. Despite the current opportunities, comments consider Blairgowrie and

Rattray acts as a commuter town. The majority of residents commute to Edinburgh or Perth. Another comment added that younger people tend to leave the town due to a lack of opportunities for work and training within the area. There was also mention of the difficulty to hire suitable local tradesmen. Other negative comments mentioned that local businesses often struggle to find the appropriate skills in the workforce, while the school system is considered not to equip pupils with employable skills.

Suggested improvements include a preference for smaller business to appear in the area, instead of large corporations. There was also mention of the need for more volunteering roles, with the possibility of running recruitment events.

Housing & Community

Positive feedback on this topic highlights that most neighbourhoods are quiet, with a good mix of families and people of different ages. The good sense of community created by the small size of the town was also raised.

Negative comments focus on the lack of suitable housing options. These include the provision of affordable housing, and places adapted for disabled users. Feedback raises concerns about new housing stock not being reflective of local needs but providing houses that are too large and expensive that focus on people that are not yet living in the area. There is also mention of how holiday lets restrict housing availability for locals.

Social Interaction

Positive comments received point at the range of opportunities to meet people in Blairgowrie, including cultural, religious and activity-based occasions. Feedback highlighted how these events cater for all age groups, with community events that are well organised and inclusive. Local pubs and cafes were also thought to provide good opportunities for social interaction.

Negative feedback pointed at a lack of a central register to inform residents and visitors of all available opportunities. Some groups and clubs are not shown in the directory, lacking visibility. There were also negative comments about the lack of free opportunities and the affordability of meeting spaces, with special mention to those owned by Perth and Kinross Council. Church Halls and other spaces were favoured due to the more accessible pricing. Comments received also highlighted a shortage of opportunities for disabled users relying on wheelchair access and young people without children.

Suggested improvements received focus on the addition of activities not currently on offer. A local farmers market was also suggested as a way to get the community together and to provide access to good quality food. With regards to facilities, some comments raised the possibility of adding sheltered areas to allow for outdoor social gatherings in all weather conditions.

Identity & Belonging

Positive feedback on this topic point at the sense of pride from local residents. The town's heritage and history were valued positively, and comments highlighted that new residents seem to be appreciative of the quality of place. The robust community spirit was also mentioned, with examples of strong collaboration in difficult times.

There were also negative comments with regards to the identity of the town and sense of pride. Feedback pointed at a change in the local atmosphere related to the growth of the town, and with new members of the community preferring not to engage in local life. It was also

commented that local residents appear to take less pride in their place, potentially impacting the way Blairgowrie is presented to visitors.

Feeling Safe

While most of the feedback received on the topic was negative, there were also positive comments regarding perceived safety. Some consider the town to be a safe place, supported by the presence of security cameras, community alarms and fire alarms.

Negative comments received point at issues of antisocial behaviour. Vandalism, robbery and drug and alcohol abuse were highlighted as a concern. These were perceived to be particularly concerning during the night, with insufficient lighting in quiet locations contributing to those safety issues. Comments also pointed at residents preferring not to leave their house at night to avoid those unsafe situations.

Other negative comments referred to potential issues caused by flooding in new development sites and near Rattray school premises.

Care & Maintenance

Positive comments on this topic highlighted an appreciation for the general upkeep of the town. There was mention of the Front Shop Scheme delivering positive impact, and the Blair in Bloom initiative encouraging locals to be proactive in keeping the area well maintained. The good overall condition of parks and public spaces was also valued.

Negative feedback also pointed at instances where maintenance is not as expected. Concerns include the lack of maintenance of important heritage buildings, footways, paths and some green spaces. Comments were also received about the poor service for littering and street bin collection, including dog fouling clearing.

Other negative comments included the amount of vacant commercial units, often in poor estate of repair, and the presence of potholes on the public road network.

Suggestions for improvement received focused on the need to raise awareness among the population, with special attention to younger generations to encourage a sense of ownership and better respect to the town's environment.

Influence & Sense of Control

Feedback on this topic presented a diversity of opinions, combining an appreciation for the role that public services and the Council play in the community with a need to improve mechanisms for locals to influence decision making.

Positive comments highlight the availability of council services to support the community through different activities. These include local council representatives being present, and help being available for residents to access specific services and tools. There were also comments on the variety of opportunities for the local community to provide input on relevant issues, both via formal participation forums and informal exchanges with representatives of the public sector. Specific members of staff working on social care and community facilities were praised for their role and support.

Negative feedback focused on a potential lack of clarity when trying to find the most appropriate contact. This appears to be source of frustration for local residents. Other negative comments highlighted the disconnect between opportunities to engage and effective change in the community. Responses recognised that, despite having several opportunities to provide input,

their opinion is not always taken into account, or fails to produce any significant change in decision making.

Suggestions for improvement were also received, with a focus on adding opportunities to establish a meaningful conversation with the local community. This includes the use of less formal ways engagement mechanisms. Examples of these were quoted, with the possibility of using light touch engagement such as local markets, assemblies, school canteens or youth centres, instead of more formal instances such as surveys. Additionally, comments pointed at the need to promote those engagement exercises better to increase participation rates.