



THE BIG PLACE CONVERSATION

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout 2023 Perth & Kinross Council carried out a large scale community engagement called the Big Place Conversation. We asked communities what is good about their place and what could be improved. The main purpose of these conversations was to help shape the next Local Development Plan and our [Mobility Strategy](#). The evidence however is valuable for teams throughout the Council and for communities to help them with their own local plans.

This report provides a summary of area wide and common ideas across the community councils that make up the Strathearn Ward. Summary reports are also available for the whole of Perth and Kinross and for each Community Council. Community Council reports provide greater detail of specific issues, often to settlement level. All reports are available on the Big Place Conversation [Results Page](#).

WARD – STRATHEARN

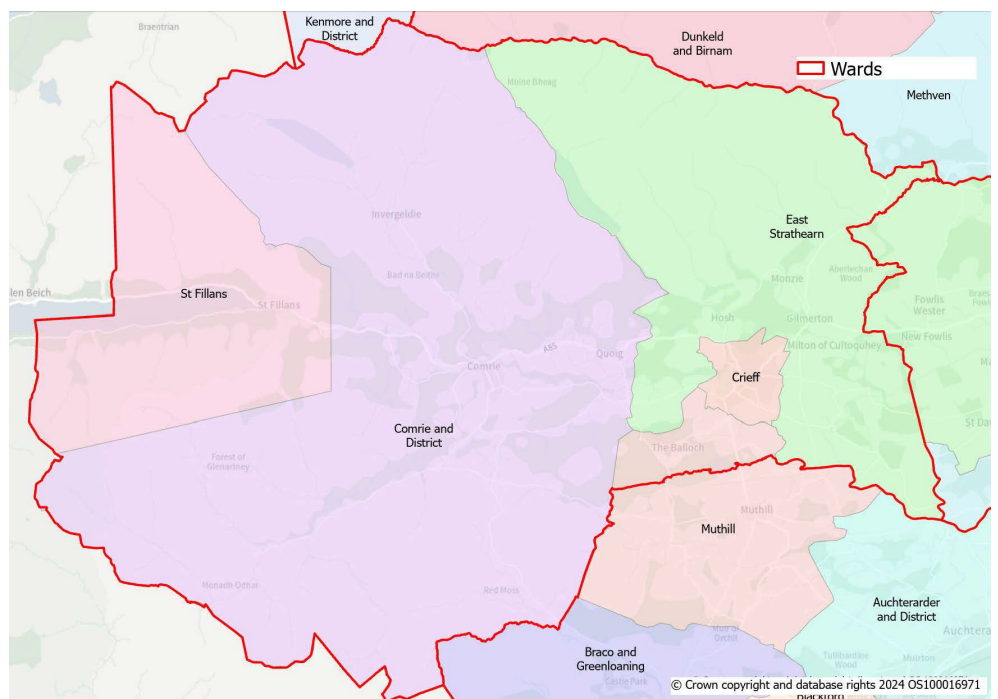
The Strathearn ward covers a primarily rural area to the west of Perth and Kinross Council area. There are two main settlements within the ward, with Crieff and Comrie accumulating a majority of population, facilities and services.

This ward includes the community council areas of Comrie and District, Crieff, and parts of East Strathearn, Muthill and St Fillans community councils. The whole of the East Strathearn community council area is included as comments centred on the relationship between the area and Crieff. We have summarised comments for each of the Community Councils in the following reports available on the Big Place Conversation Results Page at www.pkc.gov.uk/bigplaceconversation.

- [Comrie and District](#)
- [Crieff](#)
- [East Strathearn](#)

We received a total of 20 responses through a combination of 2 in-person events, organised in Comrie and Crieff, and online surveys. Responses include input from the public at large, and the following groups:

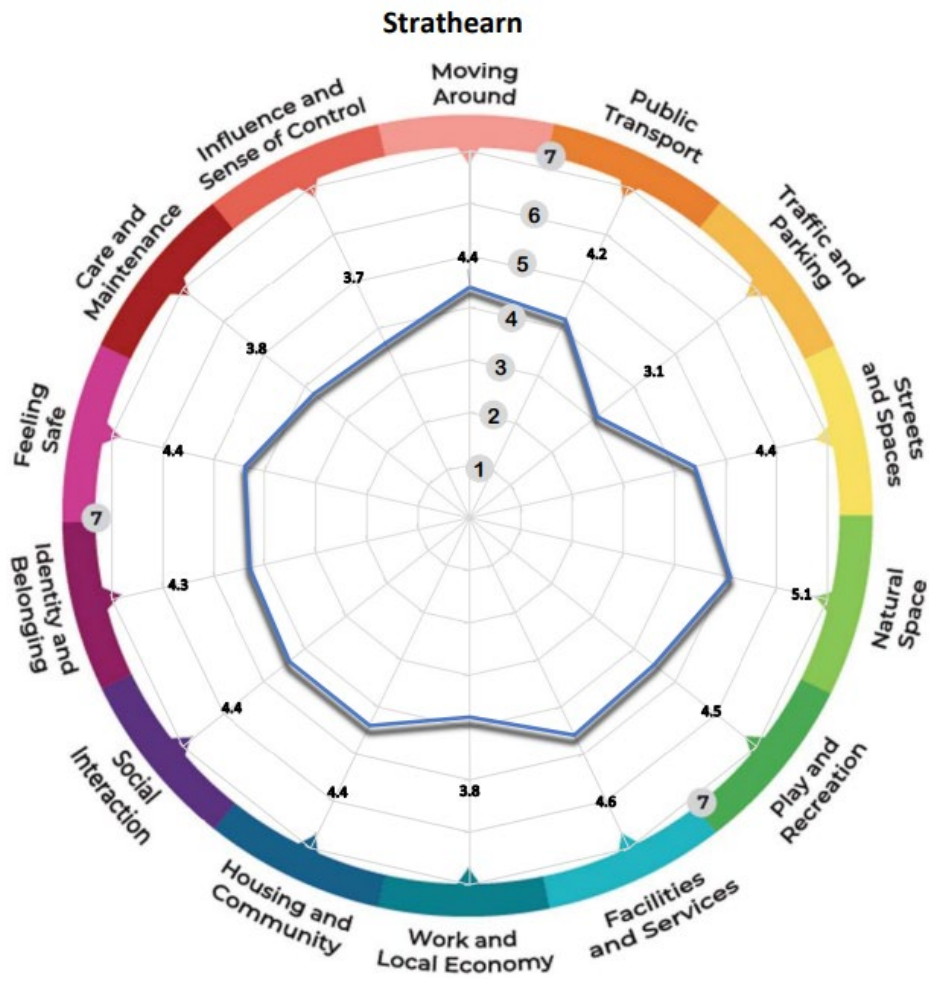
- Young people
- Elderly
- Women issues
- Disabled
- LGBTQI



2. AREA WIDE SUMMARY

PLACE STANDARD SCORES

We used the [Place Standard](#) approach for our community engagement, a tool widely used across Scotland. The Place Standard includes questions on 14 themes. Participants provide comments and scores out of 7 for each theme. Seven is where the least improvement is needed, and 1 the most. Note that due to the tailored nature of conversations not all participants completed scores.



STRATHEARN WARD SUMMARY

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK AT WARD LEVEL

This section includes a summary of issues noted that relate to the wider area of the Strathearn Ward and issues common across the community council areas. Place standard scores are given for each category. Comments are recorded as positive (+), negative (-) or suggestions (o).

1. MOVING AROUND (4.4)

HOW EASY IS IT TO WALK, WHEEL OR CYCLE TO PLACES I NEED TO AND WANT TO GO?

- + Good opportunities for cycling
- + Extensive network of walking routes available
- + Some locations in Crieff offer good environment for people walking

- Need to develop additional active travel paths
- Traffic and vehicle speed make it difficult to walk or cycle on carriageway
- Poor maintenance of existing facilities
- Lack of pedestrian crossings in Comrie
- Vehicle speeds through Comrie create dangerous environment
- Footways are often not suitable, with poor maintenance, uneven surfaces and obstacles discouraging users
- Topography in Crieff creates difficult environment for cycling
- o Enhancements to active travel network, specially outside of settlements
- o Improvements to maintenance regime to ensure infrastructure remains usable and safe
- o Creation of crossing points within Comrie
- o Traffic calming measures within settlements

2. PUBLIC TRANSPORT (4.2)

HOW EASY IS IT TO GET TO WHERE I NEED TO OR WANT TO GO BY BUS, TRAIN, OR OTHER FORMS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT?

- + The Crieff town bus service offers high quality, reliable service
- + Buses with hourly frequency allow users to rely on them to plan their day
- + Live bus tracking improves experience
- + Buses are well maintained
- Complaints about the frequency and reliability of local bus services
- Bus connections to Stirling do not offer robust enough service, with reduced frequency since COVID
- Lack of suitable connections to useful destinations such as Auchterarder, Perth Royal Infirmary or Gleneagles train station
- WiFi on buses is usually not available
- Some vehicles are not heated in winter
- o Improvements to public transport links to destinations such as Edinburgh or Glasgow
- o Stronger public transport offer, providing a service that allows for commuter use in rural areas and supporting connections with rail services

3. TRAFFIC & PARKING (3.1)

HOW DOES TRAFFIC AND PARKING AFFECT ME WHEN I AM OUT AND ABOUT IN MY PLACE?

- + New electric vehicle charge points are being installed in public car parks
- Parked vehicles obstruct circulation, specially for larger vehicles
- Residential areas in Crieff struggling with the number of parked cars on street
- High levels of road vehicle traffic within settlements
- Vehicle speeding
- Poor condition of some sections of road, often damaged by heavy vehicle traffic
- Disruption caused by roadworks
- Concerns about dangerous driving by motorbikes within Comrie
- Lack of parking capacity hindering local businesses
- o Possibility of restricting length of stay to encourage turnover
- o Traffic calming measures, including additional crossing points, to reduce speeding
- o Introduction of 20mph speed limit through built areas
- o Comprehensive enforcement of illegal parking

4. STREETS, SQUARES & BUILDINGS (4.4)

WHAT ARE THE STREETS, SQUARES, AND BUILDINGS LIKE IN MY PLACE?

- + High quality historic buildings
- + Local landmarks and monuments appreciated
- + Recent work to convert buildings into residential considered a positive addition
- + Presence of attractive streets and public spaces in Comrie and Crieff
- The condition of some prominent buildings in key streets detracts from the experience for residents and visitors
- Vacant units and derelict sites damage the vitality of Crieff High Street
- Antisocial behaviour has damaged some important local sites such as the Roman Fort in Dalginross
- The enforcement of Conservation Area regulations is seen to be deficient
- Some shop front appear neglected
- The presence of waste bins on footways worsens the appearance of the area
- o Better upkeep of buildings, including vacant ones
- o Mitigate the impact that traffic and parking have on public spaces
- o Encourage new occupants to take on vacant commercial units
- o Add greenery and street furniture

5. NATURAL SPACES

HOW WELL AM I CONNECTED TO NATURE IN MY PLACE?

- + Attractive green and open spaces available in both Comrie and Crieff
- + Spaces offer street furniture for visitors to enjoy
- + Good accessibility of parks and other green spaces
- Some green spaces in Comrie feel disconnected from the village due to the river, would benefit from bridges to improve accessibility
- The enjoyment of natural spaces can be spoilt by road traffic, specifically loud motorbikes
- The eastern part of Crieff is perceived to offer fewer paths to enjoy natural spaces
- Housing development to the east of Crieff is taking green spaces further away from the town, and harder to access
- o Licenses for forestry and carbon capture should be subject to a percentage of native tree species being planted and left to grow
- o Shooting estates should have to pay higher business rates as a 'green levy'
- o Green space should be designed within new housing developments, and it should be delivered prior or during the construction of houses
- o Some premises would enjoy better maintenance and cleaning, with bins not always being emptied
- o Increase tree planting
- o Develop paths connecting to natural spaces on Dollerie Terrace in Crieff
- o Parks should include signage to encourage dog owners to keep their pets on a leash
- o A reduction in traffic volume and vehicle speed would improve the enjoyment of spaces
- o Reduce the use of pesticides to allow wildflowers to grow, and encourage farmers to preserve hedgerows

6. PLAY & RECREATION

WHAT ARE THE SPACES (PARKS, PITCHES ETC) LIKE FOR PLAY, RECREATION, SPORT, AND SPENDING TIME WITH FRIENDS IN AND AROUND MY PLACE?

- + Good opportunities available in Crieff, including MacRosty Park and the Leisure Centre
- + The skate park at Comrie is well appreciated
- + Men's shed in Comrie offers good recreation facilities
- + Lack of opportunities for children in Comrie between 8 and 12 years of age
- o Possibility of using the field behind Ruchill, Tomnagask for recreation
- o The development of tennis courts in Comrie would be desirable
- o Upkeeping and maintenance of existing premises such as sporting facilities at MacRosty Park or path surfaces
- o More investment in Laggan Park in Comrie, with the possibility of creating a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) facility

7. FACILITIES & SERVICES

WHAT IS MY PLACE LIKE FOR ACCESSING SERVICES WE NEED?

- + Good healthcare and dentistry services in Comrie, with appointments easily available
- + Appreciation for the number of facilities available for a village the size of Comrie, including local library
- + Recent upgrades carried out by Scottish Water have improved the sewer system
- + Premises in Crieff, including the library and the swimming pool, are good
- + Convenience and hardware stores available at Crieff High Street
- Not enough electric vehicle charge points available
- Difficulty to get appointments for the local dentist
- Crieff Community Hospital no longer does out of hours service
- No real opportunities for retail shopping in Crieff, particularly clothing
- Limited food shopping options in Crieff
- o Possibility to increase opening hours for the library in Comrie
- o Housing developers should increase contributions to local services
- o Need for a new, larger Post Office in Crieff
- o Need for a banking hub in Crieff
- o Improvements to public toilets in the area

8. WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY

ARE THERE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE TO WORK, TRAIN OR VOLUNTEER LOCALLY?

- + Good range of local businesses
- + Shared workspace in Crieff is good
- Constrained local economy prevents businesses from securing staff
- Many residents are economically active but work elsewhere
- Limited range of opportunities in Comrie
- Local job market in Crieff restricted to hospitality and construction
- o Better transport options and lower housing costs in Comrie would help younger workforce to move to the area

9. HOUSING & COMMUNITY

DO THE HOMES IN MY AREA SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY?

- + Good range of houses available in the area
- + Community premises and events available in Crieff, including MacRosty Park, Highland Games and junior football
- Lack of affordable housing for working families in the area, both in buy and rent options
- New houses are generic and unattractive in style, lack character
- o Connecting local hamlets could be an opportunity
- o Local community groups rely excessively on older members, with limited input from younger families and residents
- o There is a good range of ages in the local community in Crieff, but limited visibility of minorities
- o More community events available

10. SOCIAL INTERACTION

ARE THERE PLACES WHERE I CAN GO TO MEET AND TALK WITH FRIENDS AND OTHER PEOPLE?

- + Venues and activities available in the area are considered to provide good opportunities for social interaction
- + Local cafes are good
- + Public spaces such as the Town Square in Crieff are viewed positively
- + Elder people in the area have a range of opportunities to socialise locally
- Market Place in Crieff does not currently offer an attractive location
- Lack of collective activities being organised, with schools not running social activities
- Strong religious influence can impact how welcoming spaces feel in rural areas, particularly for certain groups
- Lack of opportunities for young people to socialise
- No sheltered spaces in Crieff town centre
- Lack of options for over 60s outside of church-related activities
- o The local library in Comrie should open more often
- o Improvements to social spaces in Crieff to make them more modern and uplifting
- o Encourage more local businesses to open
- o The gazebo in the Town Square in Crieff was removed, and could be reinstated

11. IDENTITY & BELONGING

HOW PROUD DO I FEEL ABOUT MY PLACE, AND DO I FEEL I BELONG?

- + Strong community feeling in Comrie
- + Comrie feels like a welcoming place to incomers
- + The river Earn is a key part of the identity of Crieff
- o A more inclusive local community could help people feel like they belong
- o Possibility to modernise how local monuments are presented, adding information to Melville Monument on the role that Henry Dundas played in the abolition of the slave trade
- o Improvements to Crieff High Street would help

12. FEELING SAFE

HOW SAFE DO I FEEL IN MY PLACE?

- + A strong overall sense of safety in the area
- Some areas in Crieff are avoided after dark due to antisocial behaviour
- Some issues with vandalism, with damage to public spaces, private property and planting

- The removal of the local police presence has been a negative change
- o Better management of antisocial behaviour and minor misdemeanours

13. CARE & MAINTENANCE

ARE THERE SPACES OR BUILDINGS THAT NEED CLEANING UP OR FIXING IN THE AREA?

- + Some responses consider the local area in Comrie and Crieff to be well maintained
- Comments show a negative perception of the overall level of care in the area
- Presence of unkempt public spaces, footways and buildings
- Waste bins are kept on the pavement permanently, and litter is seen in public spaces
- o Improvements to local shop frontages
- o Prioritise improvements to local buildings, including windows, insulation and solar roofs over conservation

14. INFLUENCE & SENSE OF CONTROL

WHEN THINGS HAPPEN IN MY PLACE, HOW EASY IS IT FOR ME TO SAY WHAT I THINK AND BE LISTENED TO?

- + Comrie Community Council was seen as a good organisation that represents the interests of the local population
- + Several good local groups in Crieff, including young parent group at the Community Hospital, Strathearn Campus, the Old Library and Logos area
- Numerous consultations and surveys are not seen to provide visible change
- No change seen in the affordability of housing
- Some residents find it difficult to participate without access to digital options
- Lack of consultation and participation at individual level, with campaigns targeting local groups
- Comments feel the more affluent areas of Crieff are consulted more often than the rest of the town
- o Community Council should be more open to have discussions about inclusivity, gender and race issues