

CAP Steering Group

Report of the meeting of 5th May 2022

Context

We held our first full meeting of the reconstituted CAP SG in early May. There was a full attendance and a very lively, good natured and engaged debate which ranged across a wide range of topics relevant to our communities.

Our key role is to be custodians of the Glenkens & District Community Action Plan and the Terms of Reference of the group can be found here

https://www.glenkenstrust.org.uk/files/ugd/a7a70d_098d8507ba3a4e20b88708944828cabcb.pdf.

We are supported by Helen Keron, the Executive Manager at GCAT, in carrying out our activity, and the bulk of the meeting was reviewing and discussing her report to us and agreeing the areas of focus going forward. We also receive updates from the Glenkens and District Trust about their funding strategy and plans, so that the local context that the Community Action Plan sits in is continuously updated.

Progress against the Community Action Plan

We were pleased to see progress by community groups on a number of projects highlighted in the CAP, including the development of a community wide communications tool led by GCAT, the youth project led by Local Initiatives in New Galloway and the plan for a collaborative production and distribution network for local produce by Propagate. We also noted the current campaign by the Scottish Childminding Association and welcomed their focus on our area. Helen is in contact with them with the aim of understanding how their project will deliver benefits and what can be learnt from it.

There are too many CAP-related projects to list individually, but we will keep an eye on them all as they progress, as it is important to celebrate what has been achieved and to learn from them, as well as support organisations to deliver going forward.

Prioritisation and timelines

We discussed the priority areas in the CAP and how we can support these to move forward. We are all aware that the CAP is ambitious and will take time, energy and funding to progress. We felt that it was important that we and our wider community did not create a false expectation on what could be achieved in the short/medium term with the available resources. We agreed we should encourage realistic planning and timescales for projects supported by communication on what is

happening. Theme 4, a Carbon Neutral Community, is a particular priority at present, with the main challenge being how to balance short-term delivery with really ambitious projects.

We also recognised the interconnectedness of many of the projects and agreed we should endeavour to assist organisations to 'join the dots' as we have oversight of a number of projects. For example, planning on the next stage for the work on community assets is progressing but there are key linkages from that project into Theme 4 on a Carbon Neutral Community and the communication project. We also recognise that one of the barriers to progress in the area is the lack of suitable trained people to do the work and the lack of affordable housing. Our focus over the next few meetings will be to support and concentrate on delivery of these existing priorities with a view learning from them. This should leave us in the position in 2023 to better assess the needs of the community going forward and then update the CAP. We also noted the recent publication of the Loch Ken Plan, with a number of priorities that complement the CAP. We intend to work closely with Loch Ken Trust, where appropriate, on delivering together, to amplify each other's efforts.

Helen, with support from her Connecting in Communities team, will work across communities to support this work and is planning to get out and about over the next few months to meet as many as possible. We also asked Helen to contact other groups across the country to share information and to learn what has gone well and not so well for them.

Glenkens Forums

We also discussed and agreed the approach to the proposed Glenkens Forums which will take place quarterly and the annual Glenkens Summit. We want them to be engaging, thought provoking and interesting but also to lead to specific actions to move the topic forward. We plan to have the first Forum in June and agreed that it will focus on Food and Farming, with updates on the relevant projects in action, discussion groups on the current community priorities and clear outcomes of who / what we want to influence in this sphere. The second Forum will be in the autumn and our current thinking is that it will focus on what work opportunities will be available within the community over the next decade or so from wind farm developments and forestry. This will help the communities understand better how all of us can maximise the benefit from these opportunities and retain the benefits from this within our area to build its longer-term sustainability. Community Wealth Building is an area of particular focus for policy makers etc at the moment and we want to see how we can best grab these opportunities.

We are ambitious but realistic and focussed on building solid foundations and good plans. To facilitate this, each of the Steering Group Members will have particular areas of focus. We will say a bit more on that as we update from future meetings.