

OUR COMMUNITY ... A WAY FORWARD

**DRAFT COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN
GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY**

2008

OUR COMMUNITY ... A WAY FORWARD

Background

Our Community .. A Way Forward was carried out as a pilot project in the communities of Grantown-on-Spey, Cromdale/Advie and Dulnain Bridge. The work involved gathering information on housing, social and economic issues; conducting a survey of all households; and organising a range of community consultation activities. Residents were asked to identify the best things about their community as well as improvements. Following an analysis of the information and community feedback obtained, priorities for action have been identified. Individual action plans have been finalised in discussion with the project Steering Group and each community.

Grantown-On-Spey – An Overview

Population

Grantown-on-Spey is one of seven major centres in the Cairngorms National Park with over 2,000 inhabitants occupying around 950 households. The population is increasing, with the number of households increasing at a faster rate. The population is ageing with a growing proportion of residents aged 60 and over.

Employment and the Economy

The local economy is reported to be relatively buoyant. Employment patterns are similar to the rest of Highland although there is a tendency for both male and female employees to work longer hours. The construction industry is a prominent employer, with relatively high proportions of skilled workers in the area, in addition to which the service sector and the manufacturing industry both provide significant levels of local employment. Tourism is important to the area, with a considerable number and range of small businesses aimed at the tourist market.

Housing

There are just over 1,000 houses in Grantown, most of which are occupied on a permanent basis, with just under 10% either empty or used as second/holiday homes.

There is a scarcity of social rented housing, added to which house prices have risen dramatically over the last few years, and continue to rise, making it increasingly difficult for people living and working locally to access affordable housing. The household survey identified an unmet need for affordable housing both to rent and to buy or part-buy through the 'Homestake' initiative.

There are plans to build new affordable housing for rent and low cost home ownership in Grantown but it is considered that this will be insufficient in number to meet the levels of need and demand identified. Because of the shortage of affordable housing, there is a growing reliance on private rented housing, which is in relatively short supply.

The household survey identified a number of residents who find it difficult to live in their home because of age, illness or disability. For some, problems would be solved if their home was adapted or improved. Others however said they needed to move, in most cases to housing without stairs.

Services in Grantown

Shops - for the size of the town there is a fairly extensive range of shops on the High Street.

Council Services - the Council's service point is used by people paying council tax and rent, registering complaints and raising general queries about council services.

Health Services - Grantown Health Centre has seen an increasing number of permanent patients registering. Ian Charles Hospital has 18 beds and provides A&E services. The acute shortage of NHS dental services will shortly be addressed, following the development of the long awaited NHS dental practice. Grantown Health Improvement Group is the local patient participation group and takes up issues and concerns, such as patient transport, home care services and out of hours services.

Schools - Grantown Primary School has 284 pupils. A nursery school attached to the school caters for 30 pre-school children in two separate sessions. Grantown Grammar School has 372 pupils. A small increase in the school roll is projected over the next few years.

Police - the new police station will be double the size of the old one. A revised shift pattern has been introduced to provide 24 hour cover although in effect this means that police are now spread more thinly on the ground. While there are concerns about the amount of police cover, there has been a substantial reduction in crime rates in the Grantown area since 2003.

Local Organisations

Grantown Community Council - community consultation feedback acknowledged the commitment and work of the Community Council. Events organised include: Motormania; Twinning Association; Festive Lights and Hogmany celebrations.

Grantown Initiative - Grantown Initiative is an umbrella organisation which aims to support and improve Grantown for local residents and tourists alike, particularly through its support for 'community celebrations'. Successful projects co-ordinated by Grantown Initiative have included the Six day orienteering event and associated entertainment; the Craig MacLean Leisure Centre opening ceremony; and setting up Grantownonline community website and Grantown and District Times community newspaper – both of which won awards. Funding for Grantown Initiative has recently run out, with the result that the Initiative may be wound up. It is considered that this will leave a gap that will be difficult to fill.

Grantown Business Association – the Association aims 'to improve the quality of life for the community generally and also for the business community'. Most members of the Association operate tourism related businesses.

Anagach Woods Trust - the Anagach Woods were bought and are now owned by the community through the Anagach Woods Trust. Membership of the Trust is open to all who live in and around Grantown.

In addition to the above a considerable number and range of community groups and clubs operate throughout Grantown. More than half of household survey respondents said that they or other members of their family regularly took part in organised activities and local events.

Facilities and Amenities

Young People - the YMCA Community Centre, which operated for many years as a village hall, was closed for a period of about four months. This meant that a key venue for facilities for young people and other community groups was no longer available. The lower floor of the YMCA building has recently re-opened as a youth drop-in. The building is large and lots of renovation works are urgently required. A sub-committee of the YMCA Management Committee has been set up to see what can be done with the building and if it can be opened up to other groups.

Craig MacLean Leisure Centre - the new, multi-purpose leisure centre, adjoining Grantown Grammar School, was opened earlier this year after more than 20 years of campaigning and fund raising. The target local membership has already been exceeded and the Centre is well used.

Other facilities and amenities in the Grantown area include:

- **Grantown Museum and Heritage Centre** – opened in 1999 the museum tells the story of Grantown's beginnings through photographic collections and audio visual display.
- **Cairngorms Farmers Market** – originating in Grantown, the market aims to be a 'travelling showcase' selling local produce and products.
- **Grantown Library** is located in the YMCA building, with a mobile library serving Cromdale/Advie and Dulnain Bridge.

- **Sports facilities** – including golf course, tennis courts, bowling green and outdoor curling pond, all organised and run by active local clubs.

Community Issues and Views

The community consultation and the household survey provided an opportunity for people to tell us what they thought about their community and what was needed for the future. Key findings are summarised below.

Living in Grantown

More than half of those responding to the survey said they had lived in Grantown for more than 20 years and in their current home for more than 10 years.

The things people most liked about living in Grantown were the scenery and the natural environment and living in or around a small town.

High Points and Successes

Asked to identify Grantown's successes and achievements, the Craig MacLean Leisure Centre and the Anagach Woods buyout were the firm winners for the large majority of community consultation participants and survey respondents. Other successes most frequently flagged up were local events and entertainment (in particular the orienteering event) and Grant House remaining in public ownership.

Grantown's Strengths and Assets

Friendly people were seen as the community's main strength, together with the extent to which people volunteer and give up their time to work on various committees and organise events etc. The household survey indicated that more than a third of local people are involved as organisers/volunteers in the community.

Things to Value/Keep

Consultation feedback indicated that the Square and the High Street was the main feature that should remain unchanged. Safeguarding the woods and the surrounding countryside and retaining facilities such as Grant House, Ian Charles Hospital and the YMCA building were also seen as important. There was also a view that growth, both in terms of the size of the town and future house building should be limited and carefully planned.

Change/The Future

Community consultation participants identified an extensive list of issues for the future. Those receiving the most support were the increased provision of affordable housing, the development of a new community facility, improved public transport and making sure the proposed extension of the steam railway went ahead.

Next Steps and Action Planning

The lengthy list of priority issues for the future was reviewed at the 'Next Steps' community consultation event. Each issue was allocated into one of three categories of importance: high, medium, low. A number of these issues were grouped into the following themes for discussion by four groups:

- Housing
- Tourism and economic development
- Community centre
- Young people

The draft Action Plan that follows has been developed by the project steering group. The Action Plan will be finalised in discussion with Grantown Community Council and Badenoch and Strathspey (Community Planning) Partnership.

Abbreviations used in Action Plan

Agencies/Organisations	
AoCC	Association of Cairngorms Communities
B&SHF	Badenoch & Strathspey Housing Forum
CCC	Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce
CMLS	Craig MacLean Leisure Centre
CNPA	Cairngorms National Park Authority
CS	Communities Scotland
DMO	Destination Management Organisation
GBA	Grantown Business Association
GCC	Grantown Community Council
GCCo.	Grantown Community Company
GGs	Grantown Grammar School
GGs – MT	Grantown Grammar School – Management Team
GGs - PC	Grantown Grammar School – Parent Council
GGs – SC	Grantown Grammar School – School Council
GI	Grantown Initiative
GPS	Grantown Primary School
HIE	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
HIE – INEH	HIE – Inverness and East Highland
OCWF	Our Community .. A Way Forward
RSLs	Registered Social Landlords
SIM	Strathspey in May Committee
THC	The Highland Council
VABS	Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey
YMCA – MC	YMCA – Management Committee

Service Section	
CLD	THC Community Learning and Development

Individuals	
FM	Fiona Munro
KD	Karen Derrick

ACTION PLAN – GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY								
THEME	AIM	ISSUES/OBSTACLES						
Housing	<i>To increase access to housing of all types and sizes at affordable prices for rent and home ownership over the next 5 years</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Unmet need for social rented housing – housing lists and household survey ◆ Demand for LCHO housing – household survey – but what is affordable? ◆ Proposed Mossie development – concerns that too many houses and risk of flooding ◆ Future housing development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Concerns about land availability, water and other services – Future sites should be identified with reference to Local Plan – East Station thought to be good location if adequate public transport provided – Needs to be carefully planned with houses of different types and sizes – Need ongoing involvement of local builders, not just big private developers ◆ Future development should not ‘ruin character’ of Grantown by making it too big. 						
ACTION		Lead Agency/ Section	Lead Individual/ Action Contact	Partner Agencies	Local Lead Organisation	Level of Priority	Funding: sources & est. costs	Time-scale
1.	Number, size, type, tenure and cost of houses proposed for the Mossie to be fully discussed and agreed by all parties, with the FULL involvement of the local community	THC (Housing & Property)	/FM & B&SHF THC – Murray Cochrane	CNPA Servite HA Muir Homes CS AoCC	GCC	High	CS THC	Short
2.	CNPA to work with partner agencies through Delivery Team/Housing Forum and with local community to develop appropriate and effective proposals to address unmet housing need and demand for housing. Proposals should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ include social rented housing for general and particular needs ◆ LCHO at costs affordable to people living and working locally ◆ be in keeping with the local area 	THC (Housing & Property) Go through Housing Developmnt Forum. CNPA would need to sign up.	/FM & B&SHF THC – Murray Cochrane	CNPA CS RSLs Local builders Landowners AoCC	GCC	High	CS THC	Medium – Long

ACTION PLAN – GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY								
THEME	AIM	ISSUES/OBSTACLES						
Tourism and Economic Development	<i>To build on current achievements to attract more tourists to Grantown-on-Spey</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Fragile economy, e.g holiday accommodation sector ◆ Need to attract more visitors and make town more accessible ◆ Grantown Initiative has played a major role - important that similar type organisation can support development of local events to boost tourism and local economy ◆ Concerns about reduced community development support for Grantown ◆ Concerns funding sources such as Highland 2007 may not be available in future ◆ Evidence needed of economic impact of community events 						
ACTION		Lead Agency/ Section	Lead Individual	Partner Agencies	Local Lead Organisation	Level of Priority	Funding: sources & est. costs	Time-scale
3.	Look at feasibility of Grantown Initiative becoming a community company with wider membership and close links with organisations e.g. GCC and GBA. Consider support options, e.g. VABS community development workers or a grant application for a consultancy project.	VABS	KD	CNPA THC/CLD CCC AoCC DMO	GCC + GI GBA	High	HIE DMO THC CNPA	Short
4.	Prepare and submit a formal response to Scottish Government consultation on community empowerment	VABS		CNPA AoCC	GCC + GI	Low		Short
5.	Develop mechanism to quantify economic benefits of cultural events organised in Grantown. Check if evidence available from Highland 2007 evaluation and/or consider small consultancy project.	HIE – INEH		THC/CLD DMO VABS	GCC +GI GBA GCCo.	Medium	HIE DMO THC CNPA	Medium

ACTION		Lead Agency/ Section	Lead Individual	Partner Agencies	Local Lead Organisation	Level of Priority	Funding: sources & est. costs	Time-scale
6.	Monitor proposals for new partnership arrangements for funding cultural activities in the Highlands post 2007 and seek to access funding			THC/CLD	GCC + GI GBA GCCo.	High		Short

ACTION PLAN – GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY

THEME	AIM	ISSUES/OBSTACLES						
Community Centre	<i>To provide a community hall in a central location for local groups and a youth facility developed with the involvement of young people</i>	Urgent requirement for a community facility. Potential options identified as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Extending Craig MacLean Leisure Centre ◆ Renovating YMCA building ◆ Looking at the possibility of acquiring, renovating and converting the Telephone Exchange ◆ Acquiring a site and building a new facility ◆ Developing a facility on the ‘foyer’ model 						
ACTION		Lead Agency/ Section	Lead Individual	Partner Agencies	Local Lead Organisation	Level of Priority	Funding: sources & est. costs	Time-scale
7.	Establish an effectively co-ordinated working group of interested parties, with representation from the Community Council, YMCA Management Committee, young people and possibly members of leisure trust, set up to take forward leisure centre project. Group to work closely with the local community to seek consensus on the most appropriate option to take forward	YMCA		CNPA VABS	GCC + YMCA - MC Youth drop-in GGs - SC CMLS GI	High	THC CNPA HIE Lottery LEADER+	Medium - Long

ACTION PLAN – GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY								
THEME	AIM	ISSUES/OBSTACLES						
Young People	<i>To improve the appearance of the grammar school building and the ambience of the school to make it a social place rather than just a ‘work’ place</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ School needs to be ‘bright and welcoming’ and blend in with new leisure centre. ◆ Landscaping/environmental improvements needed and better use made of space around school building, possibly via a funding bid to Eco-School Development initiative ◆ More community events in the school needed to break down barriers and integrate the school more into the community. 						
ACTION		Lead Agency/ Section	Lead Individual	Partner Agencies	Local Lead Organisation	Level of Priority	Funding: sources & est. costs	Time-scale
8.	Proposals to improve the school building and surrounding area to be developed, and sources of funding to be investigated, by the Pupil Council, Parent Council, School Management Team and Highland Council, with the community helping with fundraising from time to time	THC – Education Culture & Sport	ECS – Head Teacher, Irene Carson.	CNPA VABS THC – supported by area office.	GGS – MT + GGS – SC GGS – PC GCC Youth drop-in	Medium	THC CNPA ECO-SCHOOL FUND	Medium
9.	Proposals to improve the ambience of the school by organising more community events to be developed and taken forward by above organisations, with additional input from Strathspey in May Committee, drama club, youth drop-in and other local groups	THC– CLD	CLD – Facilities Manager Donna Reilly	GGS – MT CNPA VABS	As above + + SIM Cttee Drama club + other local groups	Medium	THC CNPA Local fund raising	Medium

ACTION PLAN – GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY								
THEME	AIM	ISSUES/OBSTACLES						
Young People	<i>To develop more youth groups in Grantown, with the objective of keeping young people in the area</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Urgent requirement to identify what groups are needed and build on those that currently exist – in doing this involvement of young people crucial ◆ Need for increased awareness among young people of groups and services available ◆ Need for more information and advice for young people. 						
ACTION		Lead Agency/ Section	Lead Individual	Partner Agencies	Local Lead Organisation	Level of Priority	Funding: sources & est. costs	Time-scale
10.	<p>Working group made up of young people, youth workers and community development workers, plus representation from schools and other partner agencies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ identify what ‘groups’ are needed and how they can link with the wider community ◆ develop a ‘youth map’ for Badenoch and Strathspey covering activities, issues and gaps ◆ prepare a readily accessible database of information and advice for young people and for those working with young people 	THC/ECS		CNPA VABS	Youth drop-in + GCC Other youth groups	High		Short

GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY – TOP PRIORITIES		
QUICK WIN	Priority identified by young people and during first round consultation	Upgrade of Dulaig Park Ivor Soutor (CLD) agreed to clarify what this is (goal posts/other equipment)?
FIRST PRIORITY		Appointment of project worker to implement actions in four communities involved in OCWF project.