Love Letham

Placing children's wellbeing at the heart of local decision making



WELLBEING
ECONOMY
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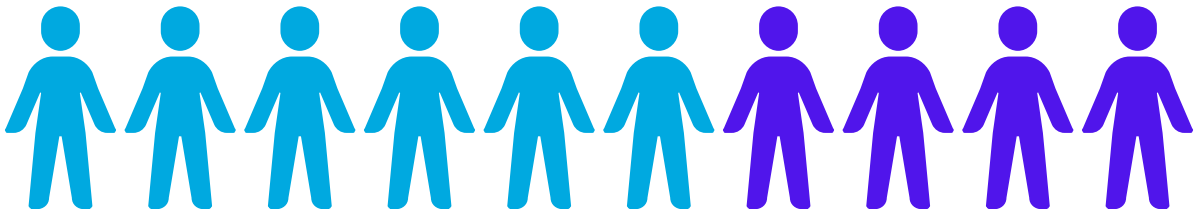
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Executive Summary

1.1 Summary of findings

Love Letham was an innovative children's participation project led by WEAll Scotland that ran in Letham, Perth and Kinross from 2021 to 2024. The project placed children's wellbeing at the centre of local decision making through engaging with children and young people in the community to identify problems and co-create solutions.

Through the second phase of Love Letham we engaged with 878 people in the local community including 677 children, 15 young people, 81 adults, 55 families and 50 babies and toddlers.



We created three Commissions: Children's Commission, Young People's Commission and the Adults Commission. The role of the Commissions was to research priority areas identified in phase one of the project: **frightening behaviour in the community**.

The research methods used in Love Letham included surveys, focus groups, and creative engagement activities, culminating in a comprehensive action plan with recommendations for Perth and Kinross Council.

Key findings revealed that safety for children and young people is multifaceted, encompassing people, behaviour, environment, and access to spaces and places to play. People emerged as the most significant factor that made them feel safe or unsafe in a variety of spaces.

For children, the presence of trusted adults (73%) and friends (81%) were primary factors that made them feel safe. While people drinking alcohol in public (68%) was the leading factor in making them feel unsafe.

The project also identified inadequate housing, insufficient employment opportunities and barriers to accessing services as significant challenges facing families in Letham. Despite these challenges, a strong sense of community and belonging was evident in Letham, demonstrating the community's commitment to creating positive change.

1.2 Lessons learned

Children and young people are capable of engaging with complex issues, taking long term, upstream views that result in robust solutions

Community engagement must be consistent and ongoing to build trust and meaningful participation

Anchoring research in lived experience and co-creating solutions resulted in policy recommendations that avoid unintended consequences

Community based research must result in tangible action on co-created solutions as prioritised by the community

Long term solutions are more important than quick wins or temporary fixes

Multiple data collection methods ensure everyone has the opportunity to share their views

1.3 Recommendations and conclusions

Three key areas for action emerged through the research:
Tackling frightening behaviour: recommendations included increasing the presence of Community Wardens (which Perth and Kinross Council has implemented), improving street lighting, and supporting local drug and alcohol support services (with £5,000 allocated from the Early Action Fund).

Creating spaces and places to play: actions included developing sensory play packs for families (with £3,000 from the Early Action Fund), increasing activities for early years families, improving park cleanliness, and expanding affordable childcare options.

Access to money and services: recommendations focused on increasing community based health services, improving affordability of public transport, and providing employability support and financial advice services in the community.

The project has successfully influenced Perth and Kinross Council, who have taken ownership of the action plan created and are responsible for taking it forward. As a direct result of seeing the positive impact of the approaches undertaken in this project, Perth and Kinross Council have launched a new project exploring wellbeing budgeting approaches to tackling poverty in partnership with WEAll Scotland. WEAll Scotland will continue to work with Perth and Kinross Council to develop practical tools and frameworks that translate Wellbeing Economy principles into concrete budgeting practices.

Throughout Love Letham, it was clear that ensuring children and young people are listened to and heard is vital in building strong, resilient communities. Their ability to address complex issues and co-create solutions helped embed a long term, preventative approach that will have a lasting, positive impact on Letham.

Introduction

2.1 About Love Letham

Love Letham was an innovative children's participation project led by WEAll Scotland that ran in Letham, Perth and Kinross. The main objective of the project was to put children's wellbeing at the heart of local decision making.

To deliver this groundbreaking project funded by Cattanach, we worked in partnership with Perth and Kinross Council, Northern Star, Early Years Scotland and Starcatchers. Our key aim was to make Letham the best place it can be for children to grow up in.

Working together with children, young people, families and the wider community, we developed a shared vision of what children and young people need to flourish, as well as a plan to deliver it. By bringing children and communities together with decision makers, we created a shared roadmap that captures what matters most to people.

This innovative programme was part of a growing movement of people, organisations and businesses across Scotland who are working to build a Wellbeing Economy.

The first phase of Love Letham ran from September 2021 until December 2022, and involved deep engagement with decision makers, frontline workers, children and young people. Together, we considered what wellbeing means for children and young people in Letham.



Key features of the first phase of Love Letham included:

- **Community engagement:** using a range of creative, age appropriate activities, we consulted with as many children, young people and families as possible taking care to ensure we included voices that are seldom heard in policy conversations.
- **Children's participation:** children play a central role in discussions about how to make Letham a good place to live. Their input highlighted issues such as housing, safety, and access to local amenities.
- **Wellbeing Economy approach:** the project integrated wellbeing into economic development by focusing on equity, sustainability and community strengths.
- **Action plan:** central to the project was the development of an action plan that outlined community priorities and recommendations for future development in Letham.
- **Partnerships:** collaboration between WEAll Scotland, local authorities and community groups enabled us to create a collective vision for Letham.

The three priority areas identified in phase one of Love Letham were: **places and spaces to play**; **access to healthcare** and **frightening behaviour in the community**. Of these priorities, **frightening behaviour in the community** was identified as the area of greatest need with no current work underway. As such, the decision was made to take this priority area forward into phase two of the project.

For the purpose of this project we defined frightening behaviour as behaviour that causes alarm or scares children.

From the first phase of Love Letham, eight recommendations were developed to tackle frightening behaviour in the community:

1. **Provide clubs and activities for families and children**, including after school clubs, parenting support, sports facilities and safe spaces to play.
2. **Build relationships and engage people on the street**, reduce red tape around services and offer out of hours support to people. Deliver services in a collaborative way that builds trust among those at risk of engaging in frightening behaviour.
3. **Deploy drug and alcohol risk management services**
4. **Encourage reporting**
5. **Display posters with prevention messages** in hotspots. These should include children and young people sharing how frightening behaviour makes them feel.
6. **Use a restorative justice approach** where victims share their experiences.
7. **Improve mental health support**, including proactive sessions on stress and anger management in schools and beyond.
8. **Increase the presence of Community Wardens, Police and other known adults** in hotspots.

Alongside this, the first phase of Love Letham developed five key recommendations for improving spaces and places for young people:



Overall, the first of Love Letham evidenced the importance of co-creation. It highlighted the value of working with a community to build trust, identify challenges and generate solutions. We learned a huge amount through phase one of Love Letham about techniques for engaging children in visioning work and realistic timescales needed for a project of this nature. We implemented these learnings in our approach to the second phase of the project, narrowing down our focus as well as employing someone locally as Project Manager.

At the end of the first phase of Love Letham a full report was published outlining all the learnings and recommendations from the work undertaken.

Building on the success of the first phase of Love Letham, the second phase sought to: **establish the Love Letham Commission** as an ongoing partner to Perth and Kinross Council; **deepening the Wellbeing Economy policy design work** happening in Letham; and move our thinking further upstream by **developing a commission for infant wellbeing**.

We ensured that the people of Letham could continue to meaningfully engage with Perth and Kinross Council. Through the work of the Commissions, children and young people were able to:

Raise issues that impact their wellbeing

Create a powerful vision for the future

Establish dedicated champions that are listened to by policymakers

Apply a long term systemic lens to service provision and spending decisions

2.2 Purpose and aims of project



Love Letham was designed around three core aims. These aims formed the basis of the project and were used to inform decision making and measure success within the project. In order to achieve these aims, we developed a series of objectives and the approach we would adopt to achieve them.

Objective 1: Centre the visions and needs of children and young people living in Letham in the policy design process

Approach:

- Continue to involve children and young people in the Commissions in local settings which enabled deeper research into the issues and hopes identified. This also anchored the project in the lived experiences of the children and young people and allowed us to co-produce solutions.
- Resource frontline workers with children in early years, school and youth work settings to:
  - Deliver sessions with school children and early years practitioners
  - Research policy questions as the Commissions formulated their position
  - Ensure meaningful involvement of children and young people throughout the policy design process, including occasional engagement with the Adult Commission and Letham Locality Group
- Develop a process to continually feed the outputs of the work with children and young people into the policymaking process with Perth and Kinross Council utilising the Letham Locality Group

Objective 2: Uphold and advocate for the visions for a thriving future articulated by children and young people in Letham.

Approach:

- Renew the Love Letham Commissions with a fresh round of recruitment and updated terms of reference
- Establish a working relationship between the Love Letham Commissions and the Letham Locality Group, where the Commissions hold the Locality Group to account in relation to upholding the vision of children and young people, taking a long term, upstream approach
- Connect the outputs of the work with children and young people with policymakers and the local community, supporting them to create policy asks and campaign for meaningful change.

Objective 3: Amplify the learnings and outputs from Love Letham to influence policymaking in Perth and Kinross.

Approach:

- Communicate regularly with local stakeholders, sharing progress and learnings from Love Letham, utilising existing relationship with Perth and Kinross Council
- Create a series of recommendations for Perth and Kinross Council that can be implemented in Letham and beyond
- Develop a Love Letham webpage and integrate it into the wider WEAll Scotland website to bring greater visibility and awareness of the project learnings

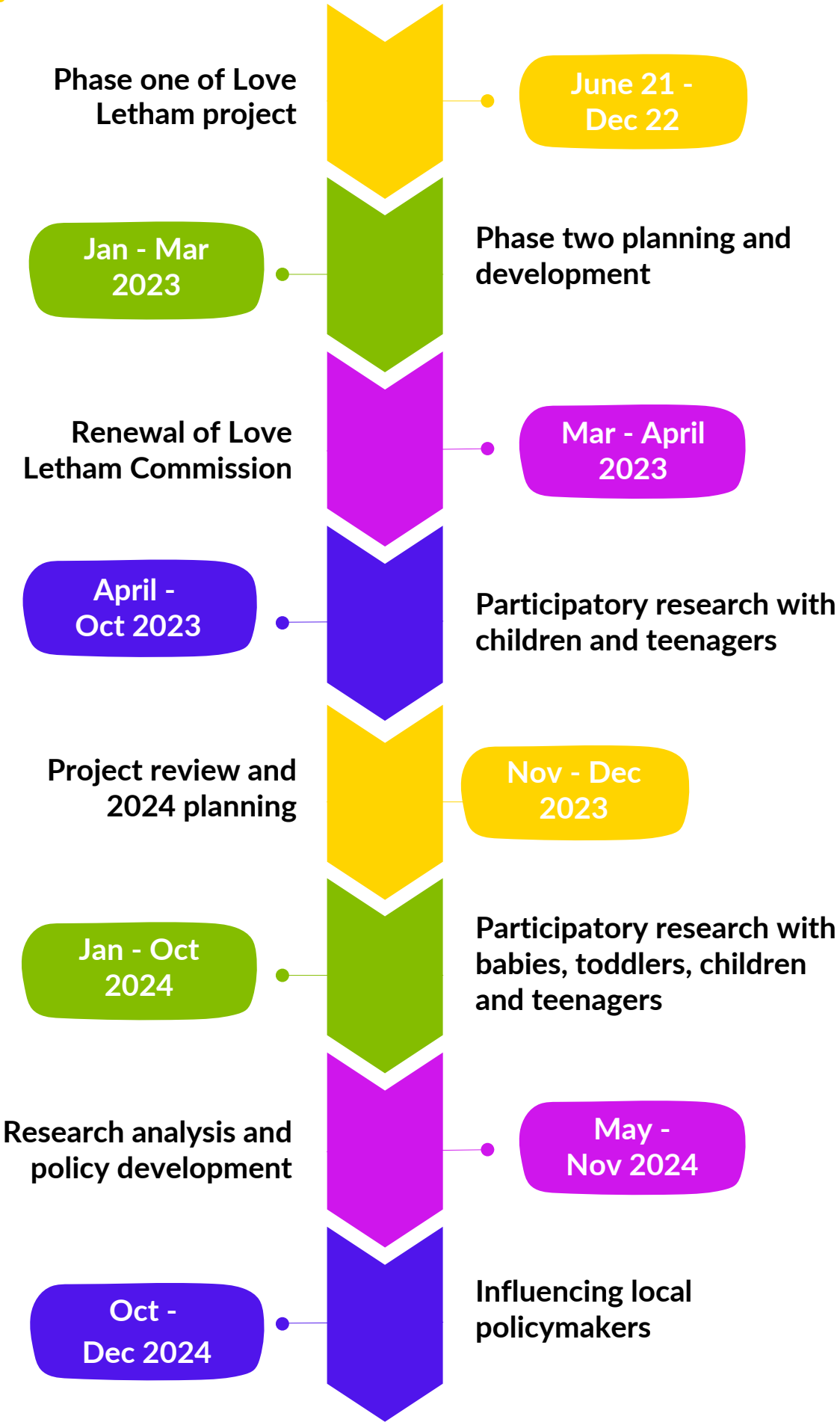
2.3 Planning

In order to meet our objectives for the second phase of Love Letham, we followed a robust process of planning and preparation throughout November 2022 - January 2023. We developed a full project plan, governance paper and project management framework.

We conducted community mapping and identified key stakeholders enabling us to ensure we adopted a collaborative approach from the start of the second phase of the project. We worked with Early Years Scotland and Starcatchers to facilitate an initial engagement session in January, allowing us to build relationships and engage with families in the local community.



2.4 Project timeline



The first phase of Love Letham began in June 2021 and ran until December 2022. Building on the success of phase one, the second phase of the project began straight away in January 2023 with a robust project planning and development process.

One of the first tasks identified and undertaken at the beginning of phase two, was to recruit a Project Manager. In line with the values and ethos of the project which was rooted in local relationships, we prioritised recruiting from the local area. We successfully recruited a Project Manager from Letham who was pivotal in maintaining and developing relationships within the community.

Participatory research with children and young people, which was central to the first phase of the project, resumed in April 2023 as we renewed the Love Letham Commission. In January 2024, the participatory research was extended to include babies and toddlers, enabling us to build a stronger evidence base.

While the participatory research was underway, we began our analysis and policy development. This enabled us to: **co-create policy recommendations with the children and young people**; **share policy recommendations with Perth and Kinross Council to influence local decision making**; and **identify key priorities for the early action fund**.

In the final stage of the project, from October 2024 onwards, we collated all the evidence from the Commissions and finalised a detailed action plan for Perth and Kinross Council. The action plan is filled with recommendations both co-created with the children and young people and based on the evidence gathered across all the Commissions. In December 2024, the action plan was shared with Perth and Kinross Council to take forward and implement.

2.5 Methodology

Letham is a vibrant community with people committed to making a difference for themselves and their neighbours. It is an **area of high indices of multiple deprivation** and where people have been heavily consulted with in the past.

Love Letham brought together local people and decision makers in the Letham area of Perth, to influence policy design and development. It was grounded in the vision for living well articulated by children and young people in Letham.

The methodology adopted in Love Letham was based on the participatory policy design process set out in the Wellbeing Economy Design Guide. As such, the following key principles informed the work undertaken in Love Letham:

Goal oriented

policies were designed to promote the wellbeing of children and young people in Letham

Participatory

policy was created through open, co-creative and transparent processes where the community was able to meaningfully engage and contribute

Contextual

policy design was embedded in local values, culture, context and objectives

Experimental

the project adopted a continuous learning process to find innovative solutions that foster wellbeing

Holistic

the economy was recognised as part of the local community and environment

Evidence based

policy design was informed through a systematic use of qualitative and quantitative evidence

Strength based

policy design recognised the strength of the local community and focused on achieving the positive aspirations of Letham rather than purely mitigating negative outcomes

The methodology adopted in Love Letham was also informed by original research conducted by Dr Katherine Trebeck and Amy Baker, that was commissioned by Children in Scotland, Cattanach and Carnegie UK. Their report, ***Being Bold: building budgets for children's wellbeing***, lays out the steps towards developing wellbeing budgets that were incorporated in the Love Letham project. This included:

- Holding conversations with the local community about budget setting to absorb lived experience
- Ensuring policy development was properly connected to evidence on what would change outcomes for children
- Ensuring policy development addressed the root causes of what undermines wellbeing

To deliver on the key aims and objectives of the project, and ensure we upheld best practice in engaging with children and young people, we partnered with three specialist organisations: Early Years Scotland, Starcatchers and Northern Star.

Starcatchers and Early Years Scotland focused on engaging with families, early years settings and third sector organisations with in the community. Together, they identified priorities for the wellbeing and development of babies and young children.

Both Starcatchers and Early Years Scotland worked closely with WEAll Scotland to identify and map key stakeholders and designed an engagement plan that would gather comprehensive and diverse insights from the community.

Northern star built on their visioning work from phase one, working with children and young people at three local schools, through the Love Letham Children's Commission. The work focused on deepening their research on one of the three priority areas identified during the first phase of the project.

The three priority areas identified in phase one of Love Letham were: **places and spaces to play**; **access to healthcare** and **frightening behaviour in the community**. Of these priorities, **frightening behaviour in the community** was identified as the biggest area of need with no current work underway in this area. As such, the decision was made to take this priority area forward into phase two of the project.

For the purpose of this project we defined frightening behaviour as behaviour that causes alarm or scares children.

For more detailed information about the methodology adopted by our partners, you can read their full reports: Starcatchers, Northern Star, Early Years Scotland

Evaluation

3.1 Project delivery

The work for this project came under three areas: **planning**, **delivery** and **influencing change**.

At the start of the project we undertook a robust planning process, as outlined above. On top of this, at key stages throughout the project we conducted progress reviews so we could implement learnings as we progressed.

In the delivery phase of the project we conducted both qualitative and quantitative research and engaged with the local community which enabled us to develop policy recommendations. For our quantitative research, we conducted surveys that gave us a breadth of evidence from across the community. Our qualitative research consisted of direct engagement sessions through the Commissions, drop in sessions at the Letham Hub, focus groups and face to face surveys all of which enabled us to conduct in depth research.

Early Years Scotland and Starcatchers delivered 14 early years and babies sessions while Northern Star conducted six sessions with both the Young People's Commission and the Children's Commission. WEAll Scotland led five sessions with the Adult's Commission.

While each organisation had clearly defined roles, responsibilities and age appropriate methods to gather research, we worked collaboratively to ensure we implemented an overarching joined up approach. The project steering group met monthly throughout the project and was made up of representatives from WEAll Scotland, Perth and Kinross Council, Starcatchers, Early Years Scotland and Northern Star.

At these meetings project partners shared learnings and progress from each area of the project. This enabled us to implement learnings in each area of the project, creating opportunities for collaboration and influence. On top of the monthly meetings, the project steering group were in regular contact throughout the project.

To recruit people for the Commissions we proactively engaged with community members through a variety of methods including:

- Reaching out to phase one participants
- Sharing information on local Facebook groups
- An email campaign
- A digital campaign with engaging graphics
- Running community events

To engage with early years and babies in the research, Starcatchers and Early Years Scotland adopted a variety of creative approaches. Artists Amy Hall-Gibson and Rachel Drury, led sessions where early years and babies were able to create self portraits, record sounds, engage with imaginative play, create a cardboard version of Letham and much more. Play and creativity were central to capturing insights using the Kite Model[5] and Starcatchers used their *They Said, How We Know, What We Did* framework to draw out their findings which will be explore in more detail later in this report.



Early Years Scotland engaged with families, early years settings and third sector organisations in the local community to identify their priorities for the wellbeing development of babies and young children. They utilised a variety of approaches for engagement including a questionnaire, focus group and visiting local nurseries in the area. This enabled us to analyse information collected from various sources to identify common themes.

Supported by Northern Star, the Children's Commission chose to explore where in Letham children felt safe or unsafe to play, including what factors made children feel safe or unsafe. They focused on spaces outside the home such as schools, parks, community spaces, shops, streets and closes.

The Young People's Commission developed a survey for young people in Letham to identify where young people feel safe or unsafe and why. The survey was then shared at a local youth group, through secondary schools and Perth College.

Northern Star worked with the Children and Young People's Commissions to collate and analyse the data. The children and young people were then able to share their findings at a community engagement event in June 2024 where schools, local decision makers, community leaders and police were all present.

The Adult's Commission consisted of people from Letham and Perth and Kinross Council, bringing together the community and local decision makers. Love Letham was firmly established as a children led project, the role of the Adult's Commission was to review the learnings from the children and young people and take forward learnings. It was not the role of the Adult's Commission to approve or sign off decisions and recommendations made by the children.

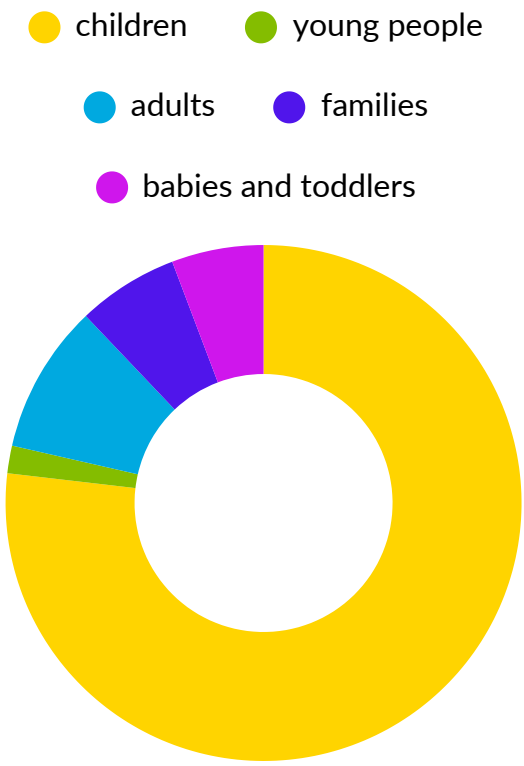
The Adult's Commission met five times over the course of phase two of Love Letham. At two of the meetings, the Adult's Commission were able to meet with the Children's Commission and the Young People's Commission. At these larger meetings, the children and young people did a fantastic job of presenting their research and findings in an interactive format to the adults. This enabled the adults to hear directly from the children and young people, to ask them questions and kept children at the forefront of our research and development.

The Adult's Commission were able to pull together all the research from and create an action plan incorporating the recommendations from the children and young people.

3.2 Data analysis

In phase two of Love Letham we engaged with 878 people through our Commissions. This is made up of 677 children, 15 young people, 81 adults, 55 families and 50 babies and toddlers. The set up of the Commissions allowed us to conduct deep, qualitative research.

Alongside this we conducted a questionnaire in partnership with Northern Star that had 642 responses across three local schools. This enabled us to widen our understanding through quantitative research. The questionnaire was in the style of a 'living survey' that was interactive anonymous and voluntary.



The living survey consisted of four stations, each with a facilitator, where the following questions were explored:

1. Where in Letham do you feel safe to play with your friends?
2. What makes you feel safe in these places?
3. Where do you feel unsafe to play with your friends?
4. What makes you feel unsafe in these areas?

All the Commissions played a key role in analysing the data to draw out key findings and create an action plan with recommended next steps.

3.3 Key findings

One of the most inspiring takeaways was the **strong sense of community**. Across all the Love Letham Commissions, we found people to have a deep sense of belonging and commitment to Letham as well as being actively involved in their local community. This sense of community and belonging is key in fostering wellbeing for children, young people and families.

3.3.1 Babies and early years

In the sessions conducted by Early Years Scotland, parents and carers frequently referenced the comfort and reassurance they felt from having a reliable support system close at hand. This included both extended family members and broader social networks within the community. Through these connections, families received practical and emotional support as well as social interaction through shared activities and the opportunity for collective problem solving.

Local institutions also played a key role in supporting and building community. For example, schools, early learning centres and the new Letham Hub, provide opportunities for families to gather, participate in activities and access resources and support.

However, their research also highlighted a number of challenges for local families in accessing services and attending activities. Many families were in precarious financial positions, living on a low income which meant that even activities that could be considered low costs, were inaccessible. This was exacerbated by the high cost of public transport which created a barrier for families with babies and young children and prevented them from accessing essential services such as healthcare.

Another barrier identified through the research conducted by Early Years Scotland was the cost and availability of childcare services in Letham. Many families expressed concern around the challenges in returning to work due to these barriers. The high cost of childcare provision is especially difficult for low income families. On top of this, many parents in the community work non-traditional hours, such as shift work.

The findings from the research conducted by Starcatchers is aligned with the evidence gathered by Early Years Scotland. Starcatchers ran 10 interactive play sessions, using the methodology referenced above and detailed in their report. Utilising creative tools, babies and young children were able to identify and explore topics that were important to them. From these sessions, four main themes emerged: **access and opportunity**; **slow and sustained practice**; **connection** and **safe, creative, non-judgemental places to play**.

Access and opportunity was highlighted through the inclusive nature of the creative play sessions. For example, this enabled children with additional support needs to engage in the sessions.

Participation in sessions and activities was holistic and slow. Adopting this **slow and sustained practice** enabled participants to build trust over time and allowed for deep reflection to take place with the families. This also created time and space for families to celebrate what they created.

The design of the sessions fostered a sense of community with the little ones taking part. From this place of community, the importance of **connection** was apparent as a recurring theme: connection to the local area, to their neighbours, to local family members, and to parents who are forced to work outside of Letham due to lack of employment opportunities.

A repeated theme we heard from families was a concern over a lack of safe spaces for young children and babies. Access to **safe, creative, non-judgemental places to play** would enable caregivers to have quality time with their little ones and engage with age and stage appropriate activities.



Within these four main themes, Starcatchers also identified sub-themes that were observed in play or through feedback received: **multi-generational play**; **housing and employment**; **community** and **yes space**.

There were several instances of grandparents participating in sessions which highlighted the need for **multi-generational play**. This sub-theme is linked to **access and opportunity** and **connection**, it highlights the importance of quality time together.

Also linked to **access and opportunity** and **connection**, is **housing and employment**. It became evident through the creative play sessions that a lack of housing and employment opportunities in Letham is a key issue facing families. This leads to families having to move away from the area or caregivers being forced to seek employment further away, both of which create barriers to **connection** and have a negative impact on families.



The importance of **community** emerged during a creative activity which involved building a cardboard version of Letham. The interactions between children while they built cardboard houses demonstrated the importance of neighbours and feeling part of a community. This sub-theme is linked to **connection** and **safe, creative, non-judgemental places to play**.

Through observing the children, families and practitioners interact, it became clear that children sought freedom to play and explore - a **yes space**. Through incorporating a **yes space** Starcatchers were able to gain valuable insights into the interests and needs of the children and families. This sub theme links to both **safe, creative, non-judgemental places to play** and **slow and sustained practice**.

3.3.2 Children

In the questionnaire conducted by Northern Star with each of the primary schools in Letham, children were given stickers so they could vote on a number of questions. Firstly, the children were asked to identify where they felt safe or unsafe to play with their friends in Letham.

Question 1: where do children feel safe or unsafe to play with their friends in Letham?			
Safe areas	Number of stickers	Unsafe areas	Number of stickers
Seven Acres Park	188	Rannoch road shops	89
Tesco	115	Seven Acres Park	78
Our Lady CPS	114	B&Q	78
Jeanfield Park	101	Jeanfield Park	69
Rannoch road shops	93	McDiarmid Park	67
McDiarmid Park	79	UHI Perth College	64
Goodlyburn PS	72	Letham PS	61
Struan road playground	54	Crieff road	58
Letham PS	51	Tesco	55
UHI Perth College	50	Goodlyburn PS	52

From the data, we can see an overlap between areas where children felt safe and unsafe to play highlighting the need for further exploration. In the discussions facilitated by Northern Star, it became clear that personal experience and physical features were both important factors for the children. However, the most significant factor in whether children felt safe or unsafe in a particular space was people.

The importance of people and relationships was echoed through the second question in the living survey, which explored what factors made children feel safe when playing in their community. Again, children were able to vote for different factors and they were able to vote for as many factors as they wanted.

Question 2: what factors make children feel safe when playing in their community?		
Factor	Number of votes	Percentage of school population
My friends	521	81%
An adult I trust	467	73%
Clean place to play	447	70%
Nature, flowers and trees	426	66%
Good lighting	364	57%

Interestingly, in adult led discussion around community safety, lighting featured as a prominent factor. However, while this was important for children, it was not the key driver for them feeling safe. This shows the importance of children being included in design and decision making for their local community.

During the research, children were able to add comments if they wanted to write down anything else that made them feel safe. There were a total of 273 comments from the children, almost half (49%) were related to factors they had already been voting on. For a full breakdown and analysis of the remaining comments see the Northern Star report.

Following the same methodology as question two, question three examined the factors that led to children feeling unsafe in Letham.

Question 3: what factors make children feel unsafe when playing in their community?		
Factor	Number of votes	Percentage of school population
People drinking alcohol in public	438	68%
People shouting	400	62%
Broken glass on the floor	393	61%
Dark places not having much light	374	58%
Teenagers hanging around	369	57%
Adults I don't know hanging around	354	55%
Being by myself	342	53%
Dog poo on the floor	255	40%

Through discussion in the Children's Commission when analysing the data from the questionnaire together, it became clear that there were links between the top three factors identified. For example, people drinking alcohol might lead to people shouting or to broken glass.

For this question, there were significant differences between answers from children at each of the three schools involved - Our Lady's, Goodlyburn and Letham Primary. Gender also played a role in how children answered the questions with a higher proportion of girls than boys saying these factors made them feel unsafe. A full breakdown and analysis of these differences are included in the report by Northern Star.

As with question two, children had the opportunity to add comments to identify other factors that made them feel unsafe. There were 189 comments made by children that identified the following themes: adults I don't know, violence and aggression, alcohol and drug use, the space, dangerous situations, being by myself, teenagers I don't know, dark places. A full breakdown and analysis of these findings are in the Northern Star report.

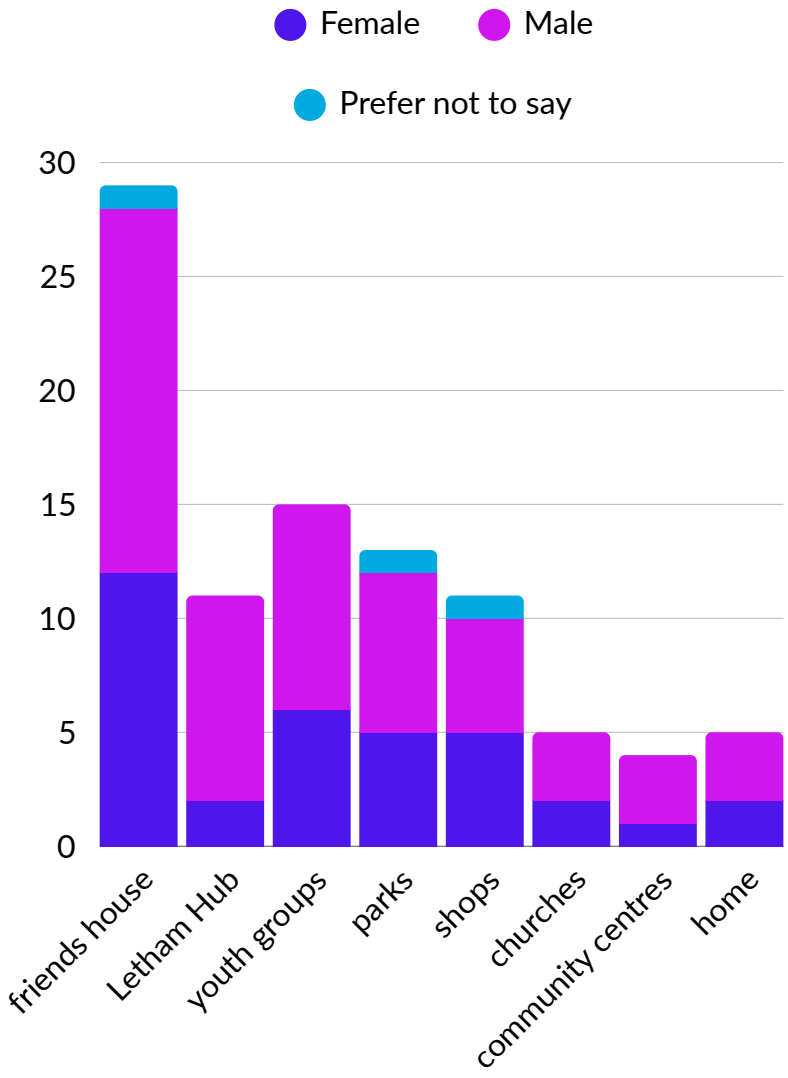
An interesting finding from this question is the impact of adults on children. A risk identified through the data is the potential for messaging around 'stranger danger' and warnings around identifying threats to go too far. The stories adults often tell children, around not talking to strangers or warning children not to wander off in case someone takes them, may play a part in the significant concern identified around 'stranger danger'.

What is clear from the evidence gathered is that people have the potential to make children feel either safe or unsafe. Supporting adults to understand the impact of their behaviour and presence on children, and increasing the pool of trusted adults that children have access to when out playing, could help children to feel safe in their community.

3.3.3 Young people

The Young People's Commission chose to carry out an online survey of young people aged 11-26 living, studying or working in Letham. Following the same questions as the children, 47 responses were received from young people which is approximately 5% of the young people population of Letham.

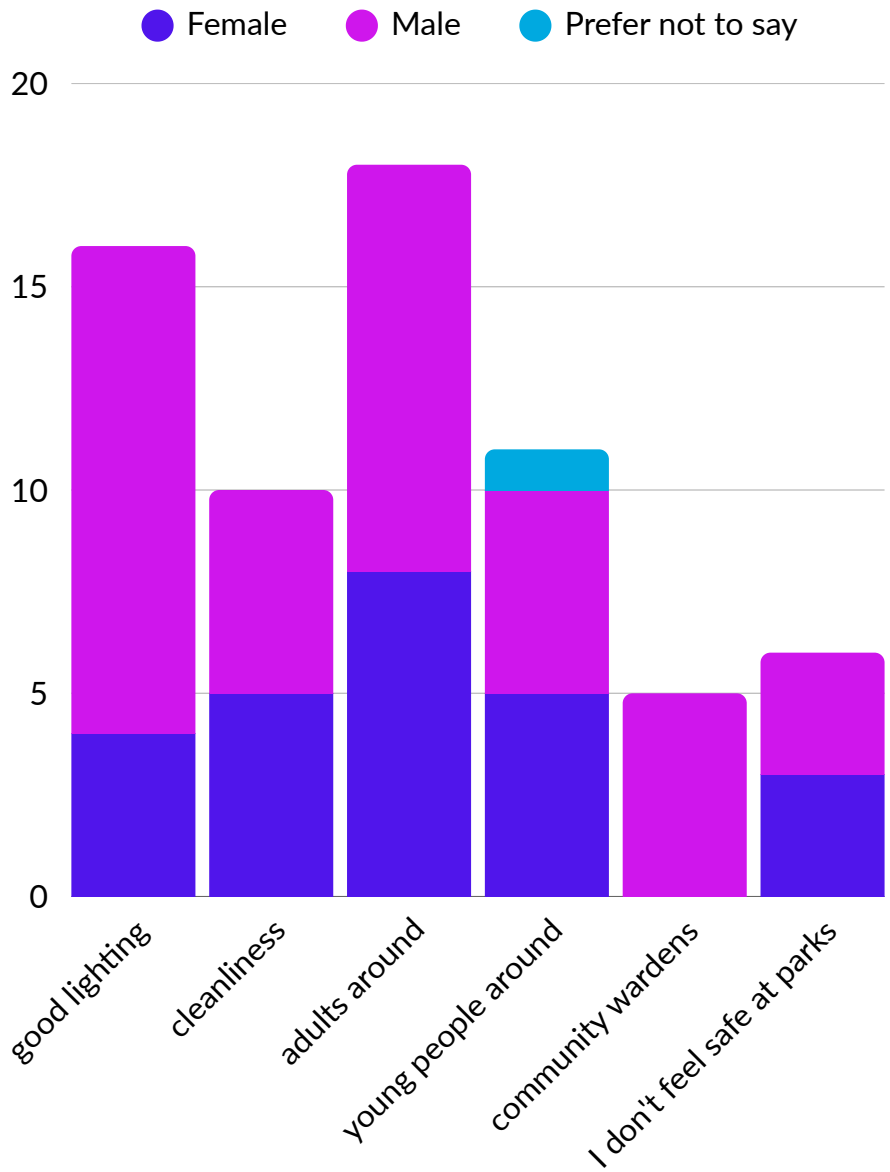
Question 1: where in Letham do young people feel safe to hang out with their families?



The most common answer for where young people feel safe is at friends houses. The main area of difference between male and female respondents was the Letham Hub with more males feeling safe there than females. In the second question, we were able to draw out more information about what factors make young people fee safe.

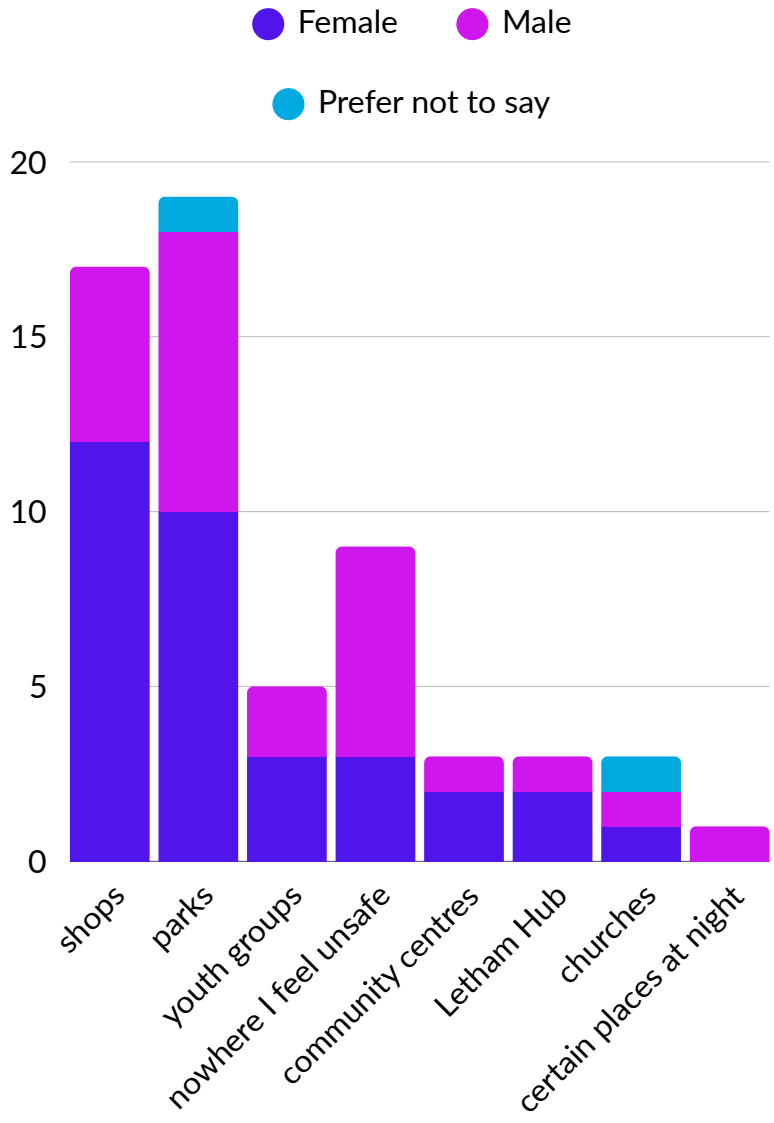
Young people were asked to consider a range of places, whether they felt safe there and what factors made them feel safe. Respondents could pick any of the factors that made them feel safe when they visited each place. Similar to the children, the young people identified people as playing a significant role in their feeling of safety. The key factors identified across the different locations were having other young people around and having other adults around.

Question 2: what makes parks feel safe to hang out with friends?



The places young people most often identified as feeling unsafe were the park and the shops at Rannoch road.

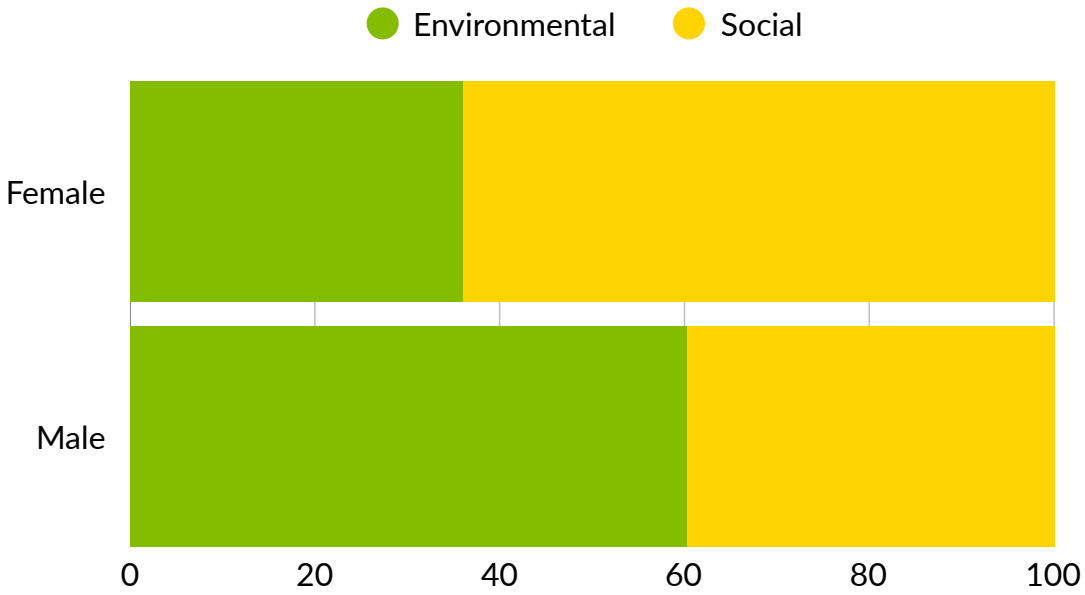
Question 3: where in Letham do you feel unsafe to hang out with friends?



As before, we were able to draw out more information about what factors make young people feel safe. Again, we asked young people to consider a range of places but this time focusing on what made them feel unsafe there.

Factors that made young people feel unsafe varied depending on whether the place was inside or outside. For example, at parks broken glass was most often chosen as making young people feel unsafe. Whereas, at the shops teenagers hanging around was most often chosen as making young people feel unsafe. As with the data from the children's questionnaire, people drinking alcohol was another signifcant factor making young people feel unsafe.

Grouping factors into **environmental** (broken glass, dog poo and poor lighting) and **social** (people drinking, adults and teenagers in the space) there is a clear difference between genders.



When analysing the data from the survey, the Young People's Commission identified three key findings:

Young people are choosing to hang out at their friends houses rather than to out as they feel safer there

Young people feel safer when there are responsible adults around

For females and males, there are different experiences of places feeling unsafe

3.4 Lessons learned

Through our work in Letham we were able to learn some rich and valuable lessons that will inform our ongoing work building a Wellbeing Economy in Scotland.

1. Engaging with children and young people in the community of Letham was invaluable and central in harnessing positive change and creating community buy in.
2. When conducting community engagement, it is essential that engagement is consistent and ongoing.
3. Children and young people are capable of engaging with complex issues taking a long term, upstream view that results in robust solutions.
4. Anchoring research in lived experience and co-creating solutions with the local community resulted in policy recommendations that avoid unintended consequences.
5. Community based research must result in tangible action on co-created solutions as prioritised by the community.
6. Long term solutions are more important than quick wins or sticking plaster solutions.
7. For children and young people, safety is a multifaceted issue that encompasses people, behaviour, environment, access to appropriate spaces and resources to overcome or remove barriers.
8. Inadequate housing makes it harder for families to meet the needs of their children, from babies and early childhood through to teenage years.
9. A shortage of job opportunities in the community has a negative impact on families as it results in less time together.
10. Gathering data and evidence must be done through a variety of methods to ensure everyone has the opportunity to share their views. For example, through group discussions, observations, surveys, feedback postcards and one to one conversations.



Outcomes

4.1 Recommendations and action plan

The Adult's Commission compiled the research from each Commission to create an action plan incorporating the recommendations from each of the Commissions. Three areas for action emerged: **tackling frightening behaviour**; **creating spaces and places to play**; and **access to money and services**.

From this action plan we have been able to track progress on a number of the recommendations and worked with the Commissions to identify actions to take forward.





Action plan: promoting positive behaviour and tackling frightening behaviour			
issue identified	**recommendation**	**evidence**	**action taken**
Adults drinking alcohol in public is one of the biggest factors in children feeling unsafe	The Young People's Commission recommended a donation from the Early Action Fund should be made to a local drug and alcohol programme	68% of children surveyed said that people drinking alcohol in public makes them feel unsafe	We worked in partnership with Perth and Kinross Council to identify a local drug and alcohol programme and donated £5,000 from the Early Action Fund
A shortage of available trusted adults in the local area makes children feel unsafe to play at the park	Having Community Wardens present locally has had a positive impact, we recommend the number of Community Wardens is increased	73% of children surveyed said having an adult they trust in the area makes them feel more safe	In direct response, Perth and Kinross Council increased the number and presence of Community Wardens locally
Children feel unsafe to play outside when there is not enough street lighting	Improve street lighting in key areas such as Struan Road Park and the surrounding areas	58% of children surveyed said a lack of suitable lighting makes them feel unsafe. Young people surveyed identified good lighting as one of the top factors that makes them feel safe in public spaces	We would recommend Perth and Kinross Council invest in improvements to street lighting in Letham

Action plan: creating spaces and places to play			
issue identified	**recommendation**	**evidence**	**action taken**
Families in over-crowded housing have no space to engage in big, physical play creating a need for accessible play options	Increase availability of resources for families to facilitate sensory play	In the sessions run by Starcatchers the demand and desire for increased sensory play was identified alongside families sharing their challenges at home	Utilising £3,000 from the Early Action Fund, Starcatchers created sensory play packs for each of the families to facilitate sensory play at home
Families in over-crowded housing have no space to engage in big, physical play creating a need for accessible play options	Increase activities for early years families available in the community	In the sessions run by Starcatchers and Early Years Scotland, families raised this as a key need in the community	Recommendation for increased activities for early years families has been put forward to both Perth and Kinross Council and the Letham Hub
Litter on the ground, including broken glass and dog poo, is making children feel unsafe to play in local parks	Increase the number of bins at the park and place them in areas where litter is being dropped	70% of children surveyed said having a clean place to play made them feel safe	A request has been made to Perth and Kinross Council for an increased number of bins in key areas of Letham

Action plan: creating spaces and places to play			
issues identified	**recommendation**	**evidence**	**action taken**
Lack of access to accessible and affordable childcare is creating a barrier for parents and carers accessing employment	Increase availability of flexible, affordable childcare that is co-designed with families to ensure it fits their needs	This was a significant concern raised by families that took part in the sessions run by Early Years Scotland	Recommendation for co-creating flexible and affordable childcare solutions has been made to Perth and Kinross Council
A shortage of available parks and spaces for children to play	Increase availability of parks and spaces for children to play safely	At an early stage in the project our research across all ages identified a shortage of parks and spaces where children and young people felt safe to play	We influenced the design and delivery of the Letham Hub to ensure places and spaces for children to play was at the heart of it. This resulted in a new outdoors play park as well as free indoor soft play.



Action plan: access to money and services			
issue identified	**recommendation**	**evidence**	**action taken**
Lack of access to local healthcare services affecting the wellbeing of children and families	Increase availability of community based health services, utilising the Letham Hub to bring health care professionals to the community	In sessions with Early Years Scotland, families raised concerns over lack of access to healthcare services such as health visitors, baby clinics and dentists	Recommendation has been shared with Perth and Kinross Council, local NHS services and the Letham Hub
Expensive public transport is creating a barrier for families to engage in activities outside their immediate community	Improve affordability of local public transport and roll out free public bus travel to include low income households	In sessions with Early Years Scotland, families shared they were unable to access activities that would be beneficial for their children due to the cost of public transport	Recommendation shared with Perth and Kinross Council. WEAll Scotland supports a national campaign run by The Poverty Alliance calling for an expansion of free bus travel
Many families are trying to survive on an insufficient income and lack access to financial advice services	Offer employability support to help families access secure employment that has sufficient pay and bring financial advice services to the local area	The research conducted by Early Years Scotland highlighted prevalent levels of low income households in Letham	The Letham Hub now hosts a number of public services including Skills Development Scotland, Perth Citizens Advice Bureau and Christians Against Poverty debt help.

4.1 Wellbeing budgeting

Perth and Kinross Council has identified tackling poverty as a key strategic priority. Through the Love Letham project, Perth and Kinross Council has been introduced to Wellbeing Economy principles and witnessed the positive impact of putting them into practice. In particular, Perth and Kinross Council are interested in exploring the potential of wellbeing budgeting approaches to deliver better outcomes on tackling poverty.

Following on from Love Letham, WEAll Scotland will continue to work in partnership with Perth and Kinross Council to develop and implement a shadow wellbeing budget focused on tackling poverty. This pioneering project will create practical tools and frameworks to help translate Wellbeing Economy principles into concrete budgeting practices for local authorities.

Building on the success of Love Letham and the Councils existing work on tackling child poverty, improving economic wellbeing and community engagement. It aligns with national policy directions around Wellbeing Economy approaches and local strategic priorities.



Conclusion

Throughout the lifetime of Love Letham, it was clear that placing the voices of children and young people at the heart of policy development is of vital importance in building strong, resilient communities. Children and young people can explore complex issues and co-create solutions.

Being directed by children and young people in the community enabled us to embed a long term, preventative approach throughout the project. This resulted in co-created solutions, with community support, that invest in future generations and in the future of the community.

Ensuring people from the community were included in decision making for the community, enabled us to avoid unintended consequences. Together, we have created a robust set of recommendations and an action plan that will have a lasting, positive impact on Letham.



Love Letham was an innovative children's participation project run in Letham, Perth and Kinross. The project was run by the Wellbeing Economy Alliance Scotland (WEAll Scotland) and funded by Cattanach.

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