



Encouraging more people to walk, wheel and cycle in the Levenmouth area.

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Table of contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 4 |
| Aims and objectives | 4 |
| The study area | 4 |
| Methods and tools | 6 |
| The ISM model | 6 |
| Understanding who is in the community | 7 |
| Commonplace website | 7 |
| Community events and consultations | 8 |
| Online survey from SEPA | 8 |
| COVID19 | 8 |
| Sustrans Communities Team online survey | 8 |
| Semi-structured interviews | 10 |
| Online survey of motorbike users | 10 |
| Results | 10 |
| Black and ethnic minority groups | 18 |
| Discussion and interpretation | 19 |
| Perceptions of bad behaviour | 19 |
| Friluftsliv – being in nature | 19 |
| Caring for the area | 20 |
| Easy movement | 21 |
| Recommendations | 22 |
| Appendix 1: Scope of consultation | 23 |
| Appendix 2: ISM categories associated with key themes | 24 |
| Emerging themes according to ISM categories | 24 |
| Appendix 3: Proposed path layout as of June 2020 | 27 |

Executive summary

Sustrans has been working with SEPA and their partners on the Connectivity Project to improve active travel opportunities in the River Leven area in Fife. The area covered is from Cameron Bridge down to the sea. The Connectivity Project aims to create an award-winning network of paths and cycle ways along a 5km stretch of the river, along with a network of approximately 20km of paths which will weave through and between the local communities of Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Leven and Windygates.

This report summarises engagement work in the community that has taken place from late 2019 through to July 2020. The focus of this work was to understand what needs to change in order to make the area more attractive for people to walk, wheel or cycle. Initially engagement was through a range of activities, which included face-to-face contact, visiting groups, attending their events and meetings. However from late March 2020 onwards the consultation moved to using online surveys and remote meetings because of the restrictions imposed by COVID19.

The project team has talked to many groups from the area (see appendix 1) who have highlighted barriers and suggested improvements that will encourage more people to use the network. These have led to recommendations around four key aspects:

- Enabling people to enjoy the area.
 - E.g. fishing, picnicking, accessing nature
- Helping people move through the area.
 - E.g. improved signage and paths
- Looking after the area.
 - E.g. a community management plan
- Addressing antisocial behaviour.
 - E.g. addressing vandalism or fly-tipping

Working with the community is going to be an important ongoing aspect of making future plans work and their input will be needed to develop plans, in particular to address anti-social behaviour, to enable people to enjoy the area and to establish viable plans to look after the area going forward.

Introduction

The Leven Programme is a regeneration initiative with the environment and people at its heart. It aims to breathe life back into the River Leven and improve the areas surrounding it, making them great places to live, work and visit. Reconnecting people and place is a key focus of the Programme.

These plans start with The Connectivity Project, which focuses on improving the 5km stretch of the river from Levenmouth to Cameron Bridge. This will involve creating a network of paths and cycle ways, which will connect the local communities of Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Leven and Windygates. Part of The Connectivity Project is to identify parts of the River Leven route from Cameron Bridge to Levenmouth that need improving, both in terms of access to and along it, as well as its attractiveness as a place to spend time.

SEPA has secured money from Places for Everyone to deliver this multi-agency project and as part of the funding package, Sustrans is supporting community engagement and behaviour change. This is initially through understanding what needs to change in order to encourage people to use the area.

Aims and objectives

The aim of this study is to understand what needs to change to encourage more people to walk, wheel and cycle. This is broken down into three objectives:

- Understanding why people do not use the project area for wheeling, walking and cycling.
- Finding out what needs to happen to encourage more people to wheel, walk and cycle.
- Suggesting how these changes can be made.

The study area

The study area concentrates on areas around the Leven River in Fife, from Cameron Bridge down to the river mouth. It includes the former industrial communities of Buckhaven, Methil to the south of the river and the seaside town of Leven to the north.



The key demographic and study area information was collated by SYSTRA in their 2019 report: Active Travel Baseline and Behaviour Change Plan for Buckhaven, Methil and Leven, ref: GB01T19C20 June 2019. Their main points about the project area are repeated in the following paragraphs.

The area has high levels of households with dependent children (71% c.f. national average of 41%), with the highest proportions in Methil. The area also has a higher than average incidence of bad or very bad health (8% c.f. 6% for Scotland) with a similar lower than average incidence of good health with poor health outcomes exacerbated by drug and alcohol misuse.

The area includes a new secondary school, Levenmouth Academy and seven primary schools. However over a third of the population have no qualifications (38% c.f. 27% for Scotland) with areas where the numbers with no qualifications rises to over 60%. Most people in education live within 2 km of their place of education.

Economic activity traditionally focused on the docks and on coal mining, both of which have significantly declined. There are local employers such as Diageo's bottling plant, employing around 1,250 people and the Energy Park Fife where DF Barnes and Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult are based. In addition there are two local hospitals, a distillery and a range of retail businesses that serve the community.

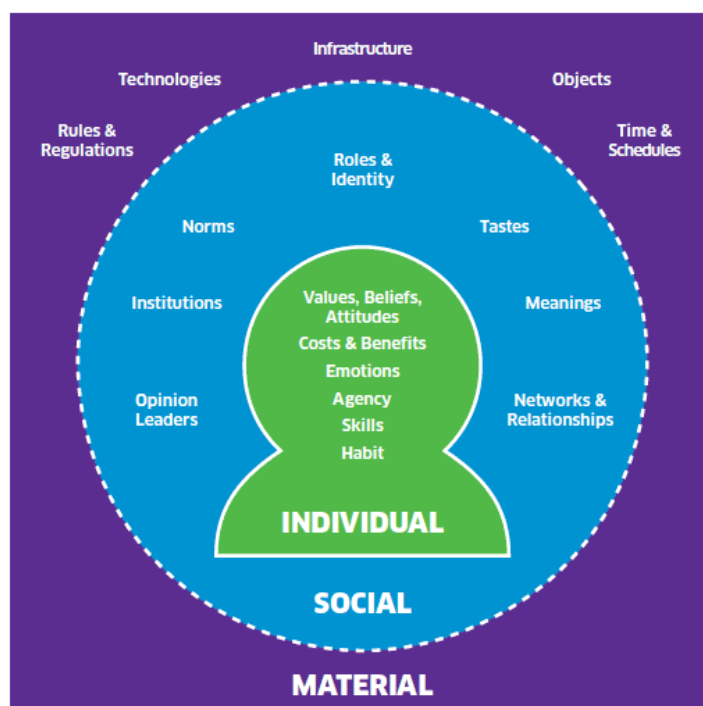
28% of households have no access to a vehicle and rely on active travel or public transport. 46% of people work within 5km of their home. According to the 2011 Census data, 72% of local trips for work are done by car or van. Cycling accounts for less than 1%.

Overall, the Leven has areas of serious deprivation (14% of people live in areas within the 5% most deprived areas of Scotland). However, the prevalence of people doing local journeys and the low levels of car ownership suggest that there is plenty of scope for making active travel more accessible.

The area around Levenmouth is predominantly made up of people who identify as White Scottish. Compared to Scotland the area is less ethnically diverse. The table below shows results from the most recent census (2011).

| | Levenmouth | Fife | Scotland |
|-----------------------------|------------|-------|----------|
| White: Scottish | 92.5% | 85.7% | 84.0% |
| White: other | 6.1% | 11.9% | 12.1% |
| Asian | 0.9% | 1.6% | 2.7% |
| Other minority ethnic group | 0.5% | 0.8% | 1.3% |

Methods and tools



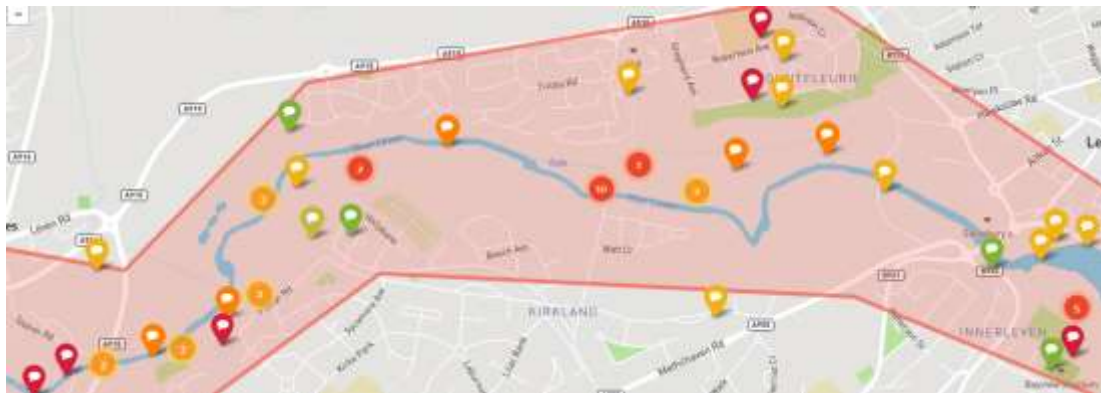
The study addresses three questions, outlined in the aims. To understand the questions about barriers and what needs to change we have used the ISM¹ model to help sort responses and provide a framework for understanding and categorising responses.

The ISM model

We have used the ISM model to help understand the different issues that have been highlighted. We have done this by putting them into the

¹ www.gov.scot/publications/influencing-behaviours-moving-beyond-individual-user-guide-ism-tool/

comments about the area and provides a resource for capturing people's thoughts and at the same time see what others are thinking.



Community events and consultations

Community events and consultations were a way to meet local people and hear their views and opinions. These included a variety of events from formal consultations in local community halls to informal activities, such as joining in with a walking group, where it was possible to chat to local people whilst they went on a walk.

The consultation events allowed us to ask people what they considered to be the barriers to more people walking and cycling, and what needed to be put in place to help more people travel actively in and around the area.

Online survey from SEPA

The initial online survey delivered by SEPA asked a number of questions relating to behaviour change. This has been drawn on extensively, providing opinions from over 400 members of the public who have an interest in the Leven area. The survey closed by April 2020, with further online surveys then used to reach a more representative sample.

COVID19

In March 2020, Scotland went into lockdown. This ended all physical meetings with community groups and attendance at events. From there on the project worked remotely, using online surveys, telephone calls and video conferencing to continue engagement with people.

Sustrans Communities Team online survey

This online survey was used towards the end of the period of data gathering, in May 2020 when the Covid19 lockdown was in place. The team had identified that a number of groups had not been sufficiently represented in the consultation so far, who fell into the following categories:

- Poor health/alcohol dependency/other issues
- Health conditions
- Physical disabilities
- Community prescribing
- Unemployed – (37% of population economically inactive, 32% in rest of fife 31% in Scotland)
- Elderly – (19% of the population over 65)

An online survey provided the opportunity to reach out to these groups and invite their participation. David Paterson, Levenmouth Community Manager, from Fife Council was able to speak to a number of different organisations who agreed to invite their contact groups to participate. These included:

- FASS - Drug and Alcohol Advice
- FEAT - Mental Health Support
- Levenmouth Foodbank - support to clients with vulnerabilities
- MyBus - older Persons Support
- Clued - Up - Younger Persons Support for Substance Misuse
- Autism Rocks - Autism Support
- Homelands Trust- Disability Support
- Homestart - Vulnerable Family Support
- East Fife Community Support Service - General Advice and Support
- Restoration - Drug Advice and Support
- DAPL - Drug and Alcohol Support
- Bums off Seats - Encouraging people with vulnerabilities , disabilities and everyone else to be more active
- Disabilities Fife - Disability Advocacy and Support
- Social work department - Older Persons Team
- Social work department - Criminal Justice Services Team
- Young people through Levenmouth Academy

Path quality

“Getting to the river Leven is easy enough however there are no proper walkways in which to travel from Methil to Aldi without crossing the old railway which has been turned into a mud bath by motorbikes. We usually have to take the long way around as crossing this area with a pushchair can be troublesome.” – Local person, online consultation

Path quality is a theme that many people raised from a range of different interest groups. The difficulties that people talked about were:

- Unevenness, often due to tyres churning up ground and poor surface quality (e.g. gravel or mud rather than tarmac).
- The dangers of trips and slips because of poor surfaces.
- Mud.
- Lack of maintenance and paths getting overgrown.
- Paths being dangerous because they ran right next to the river.
- Barriers, which made paths difficult for less able bodied people.

Poor path quality will make it difficult for people who are less mobile to walk or cycle. Many elderly people worry they will be at greater risk of falling because of uneven surfaces. Surfaces may also be unsuitable for wheelchairs, prams, scooters and some cycles. This reduces the numbers of people who can use the area in safety and discourages people who do not have the necessary agility or are encumbered by items which mean they cannot use the current paths. Similarly, some of the current paths are unsuitable for non-standard vehicles such as trikes used by people with disabilities.

Paths through the area will need to be suitable for everyone to use. The Sustrans design principles provide guidance on what this means for paths constructed using money from Places for Everyone. In these instances one of the key requirements will be to have paths that are bound and therefore suitable for all walkers, wheelers and cyclists.

Motorbikes

“My concern with any of this project is fly tipping, quad and motorbikes using any path thus rendering it unsafe for the public.” – Local person, online consultation.

Across every data source people raised the use of off road motorbikes as a concern when asked about the Leven and what barriers exist for people who wish to use the area around the river. They have pointed out that motorbike use can be threatening, churns up the ground making it difficult to walk on, creates a lot of noise and many people find them intimidating.

On the other hand some people have pointed out that people on motorbikes need somewhere to enjoy themselves and that there is a historical association with motorcycle use in the area that goes back about 100 years. Motorcycling in the Leven and Kirkcaldy area has a long history. For instance; sand racing at Kirkcaldy, road racing at Beveridge Park and Supercross at the old steel works at Methil. In many ways, young people riding bikes around Leven can be seen as a continuation of this heritage and part of the area's culture.

Through talking to young people who ride motorbikes off-road, we learnt they are looking for somewhere to use their bikes off-road in peace. They are not looking for trouble but they enjoy the adrenalin rush of the sport. They might end up being chased by the police, to avoid detection, but they are not going out looking for trouble.

There is much recognition that the motorcyclists need somewhere to ride their bikes. Their motorbikes offer community and connectedness for the people involved. Kingdom Off Road Motorcycle Club – based at Sailors Rest community centre (Methil)² is a major focal point for addressing antisocial motorcycle behaviour. It provides access to equipment and off-road riding for young people from the disadvantaged areas; its main objective being to contribute to safer communities by reducing the current anti-social and illegal use of off-road motorcycles. Kingdom Off Road are very keen to see local facilities that young people can use within the local area.

Discussions with young people who use motorbikes off-road locally revealed that they use the Leven area because it is close and convenient. Many of their bikes will not be licenced for road use, and the riders are not old enough to hold a licence to ride on the public highway, so they seek out local facilities that can be accessed without going on roads and use paths to travel to these places. The Leven area fits this need.

There is very clearly a need to provide a space where young people can use off road motorcycles and to work with the motorcycling community and wider local community to find ways that they can exist alongside each other.

This could include:

- identifying a suitable local site where people can ride off-road motorcycles;
- identifying routes that motorcyclists can use;
- encouraging responsible use of off road motorcycles;
- raising awareness of the area's motorcycle heritage.

² Conversations with Corra Foundation 14 January 2020

While this project is concerned with encouraging active travel, there is a threat to its success in not accommodating motorcyclists who also use the area, because motorcycling is unlikely to go away as a local activity. If motorcyclists continue to use the Leven area in an uncontrolled manner it will discourage some from using an amenity that is for everyone.

Litter and fly tipping

“The illegal dumping does not get cleaned up properly with glass being left behind and various other things.” – Local person, online consultation.

Litter and fly-tipping has been mentioned in the SEPA survey and come up in conversations with members of the public at community events (e.g. event at the Pantry Food Co-Op, 14/2/20). The area around the river gets used as a place where unwanted items like mattresses or tyres are dumped. Sometimes these items are then set fire to which can lead to noxious fumes being released in the area. People also commented that bins, where provided, get set on fire.

There is a need to improve the litter problem and this is an area where the local community could play an important role in advising how best to solve the problem. Things that need to be discussed with the community include:

- Overall, what needs to happen to discourage and manage littering?
- How do we educate people to not litter?
- How do we keep the place looking nice? How can we ensure fly-tipping and other litter or graffiti is reported and cleared up swiftly?
- Who is fly tipping? Why are some people fly tipping? (Is it because it is a cheap way of disposing of unwanted materials?)
- What facilities are available for disposal of materials that are fly tipped and how do we ensure people know about and use them?
- Is there adequate provision for litter disposal in the immediate vicinity? If not what needs to change?

Making the Leven a destination to do things

“Some nice new paths, benches and toilets would make such a difference. After that (& when it's used more) I'd love to see food trucks, ice cream shops and cafes. Some BBQ areas & a wee park would be amazing. Stick an outdoor gym in and plant lots of wildflowers! Dream come true

The whole river walk would be enhanced by public art works along the route with poems displayed next to the art works. The poems could be written by professional writers, school children from the local schools, and members of the local community.” – Local person, online consultation

From young school children to pensioners, people have said they want the Leven to be a place that they go. It needs to be a destination in itself, it shouldn't just be a place to pass through, transiting from one settlement to another. This is a point that has come across strongly across the different data gathering exercises.

Children from Montfleurie Primary School want to fish, play games, move about on scooters and roller blades and look for animals, or just have a picnic. Other suggestions have been for outdoor exercise areas, kayaking down the river, places to visit that reflect the area's heritage, a café, a swing park or adventure playground and toilets so that people (particularly women and disabled or older people) are not limited in how much time they are able to spend in the area.

Making the area around the river a place to come and do things presents a big opportunity for community groups who wish to use the area as an outdoor amenity. Currently this happens to a certain extent with the area being used for some outdoor activities like walking and angling but this could be widened out to offer much more, especially if some basic facilities such as public toilets were available.

Pollution

“Problem with red ore pollution from the opencast mining site.” – Local person, online consultation

Discussions with the River Leven Angling Club have highlighted that there is an ongoing issue of pollution in the river caused by iron entering the river from an opencast site further upstream, which oxidises causing the river to turn red. Our understanding is that this is a problem which has been raised with SEPA who will have the statutory responsibilities for monitoring and overseeing issues of water pollution.

Personal safety

“Safety, too many young men hanging about area, feel very vulnerable as a female walking on own.” – Local person, online consultation

The area has a poor reputation. Across the data gathering exercise people have raised concerns about personal safety. At community events people explained that most of them have been told since a young age that the river isn't a safe place. Because of the water and other trouble (hinting at drug taking, dealing and motorbikes), the area's reputation is bad and that is why relatively few people go there. Friday and Saturday night are considered particularly bad times, as is after dark. Many women say they are concerned about personal safety.

A woman cyclist explained that she was happy cycling through the area during the hours of daylight, but considered it unsafe to cycle at night because the area was unlit.

Of the people who answered the question in SEPA's survey asking why they didn't travel along or visit the Leven (155 people), 31% gave their primary reason as being because they did not feel safe.

In discussing how this situation can be improved a number of suggestions have been offered:

- A greater public presence would make the area feel safer. In the semi-structured interviews everyone who was asked agreed this would be the case.
- Improved lighting would make areas safer after dark.
- Addressing the fears people have of running into groups of people who may be drinking, taking drugs or engaging in other illicit behaviours.

In part, the very perception that the area is unsafe makes it unsafe. This is because people consider the area unsafe so avoid it. This means fewer people are around so there are less people about. This in turn reduces public scrutiny of the area making it less safe.

Further community engagement to discuss public safety might provide more insights and develop other ideas that could help make the area safer.

Routes, navigation and signage

“When I was a youngster 45 years ago you were able to walk along the length of the river from Cameron to Leven , it’s all overgrown at the riverside from Cameron to Methilhill dam now , could do with getting cut back and the path put back in.” – Local person, online consultation

“Even our teacher doesn’t know (which paths to use).” As this quote from a primary school pupil illustrates, one of the difficulties people face is knowing how to get from one place to another. This is something that is further borne out by the SEPA online survey where people were making similar comments. Routes need to be signed so people know which paths lead where.

Similarly, across the wider Leven area, people commented that routes for cycling are too fragmented, lacking the coherence which allows them to be seen as a route in their own right. Paths sometimes stop, curbs don't drop and there are often currently gates or wig-wag bars that make routes unsuitable for non-standard cycles.

Overwhelmingly, people said they would visit the River Leven if it were easier to access. (Yes: 56%, No: 7%, Maybe 16%, Not answered: 21%).

Dog walking and exercise

“While it is a lovely walk with my dog, I am heartily sick of people on illegal motorbikes and quads using the area, tearing up the ground, giving verbal abuse and showing absolutely no consideration for anyone in the vicinity.” – Local person, online consultation.

Exercise is a big reason people visit the Leven River, both for themselves and for their animals, especially walking dogs. However, paths can be poorly maintained and where broken glass is not cleared up it can be dangerous for children and animals in particular. As has been said before, many people are also put off by the use of motorcycles and other illegal activities.

The online survey by SEPA showed that, of those who answered, the two most popular main reasons to visit the Leven were as a place to go for a walk (22%) and to walk the dog (19%).

A place of nature

“This is a stunning place to walk. The wildlife is fab, it’s peaceful except from quads and motorbikes which is more at weekends. The illegal fly tipping needs sorted but a group of us contact councillors and the safer community to deal with this. There are grey herons, kingfishers, greatest spotted woodpeckers there as well as the more common tits and other birds. Different species of ducks live there. Just brilliant.” – Local person, online consultation

It seems that everyone likes the Leven for its peace and quiet. It is considered a place of natural tranquillity. The area contains a variety of nature with otters, deer, trout, salmon, badgers and kingfishers to name but a few star attractions. Doubtless many other species will be present. People place great value on the area as a place of nature and there is a strong desire to retain this aspect in any future improvements.

Suggestions to enhance it as a place of nature have included:

- Viewing platforms allowing people to see the river.
- Information boards that inform people about the wildlife and nature in the vicinity, what to look out for and how to spot it.
- Bird hides.

Ensuring the area can be used by everyone

“I know for sure that anyone with any mobility problems will be prevented from using this path for this reason - which means potentially hundreds of elderly/mobility impaired folks cannot use this quiet, otherwise flat, pleasant walk to Windygates.” – attribute

The area should be a place that everyone can use. This means that everybody, especially people with protected characteristics, should be able to use and enjoy the area. One example of the present difficulties is given by a respondent to the online survey

From the site of the old steelworks, (heading towards Cameron) is a large concrete structure about 1m high that is difficult to get over. I can manage now, but as I get older (I am already in my 50's), it will become more difficult. I know for sure that anyone with any mobility problems will be prevented from using this path for this reason - which means potentially hundreds of elderly/mobility impaired folks cannot use this quiet, otherwise flat, pleasant walk to Windygates...

This example points to the need to ensure that people with impaired mobility, whether through age, disability or simply because they have a pram to push, need to access the area and designs must take account of their needs.

In addition to path quality (discussed previously) people have mentioned other important requirements:

The need for toilets: this has been raised by women who point out that women need access to toilet facilities more frequently than men and if toilets are not available are less able to 'go behind a bush'. Elderly or disabled people will be similarly disadvantaged if no toilet facilities are available during the times when they would wish to visit the area. This would be likely to include weekends and summer evenings.

Signage (directions and distances): people have commented that it isn't clear where paths lead. This restricts access to regular users of the area. To enable a wider user group of people from the local area and visitors, signs that indicate where paths go to and their distance will help people navigate the area.

Signage (suitability): some non-standard paths may not be suitable for all users (for example a board walk). If such paths are to be incorporated into the network of paths, they need to be clearly identified so that people do not expect them to be suitable for everyone.

Crossing the Leven and crossing the railway line

"A path or road between Diageo and the river Leven at Aldi would be great as it makes it difficult to walk in that area when the weather is bad, i.e. mud uneven ground and having to cross the old railway line." – Local person, online consultation

The new railway line to Leven will run along the north (left) bank of the river. The railway will be fenced off from the public. This will provide a barrier for people that they will not be able to cross without suitable bridges or underpasses.

People use routes across the old railway line, or would if the way had an adequate path. Any bridge or underpass will need to be suitable for both walkers and cyclists.

Similarly, crossings of the river will need to provide connectedness between both banks with crossings that will take people across the current and potential routes they might wish to use.

Support to encourage more walking, cycling and wheeling

“This is right on my doorstep so it would be amazing if this could be turned back into a suitable place to take my grandson for a walk just like I used to with my dad.” –

Local person, online consultation

There is clearly public appetite for more walking wheeling and cycling in and around the Leven area. Online surveys have demonstrated this. For example, the communities survey demonstrated strong support that would encourage more active travel choices:

- 95.3% of people supported physical changes to improve roads and pavements
- 70.0% supported access to cycles
- 82.5% supported ways to find out about quiet ways and existing path networks
- 64.1% supported walk / cycle buddy schemes
- 63.2% supported cycle repair / maintenance classes
- 72.9% supported group walks and cycles
- 70.2% supported secure cycle storage
- 48.6% supported adult/family/women only cycle training or groups (but only 8.1% disagreed).

Some of these facilities already exists through organisations like CLEAR (Community-led Environmental Action for Regeneration Buckhaven and Methil) and Greener Kirkcaldy. However there will be a need to ensure people in the Leven area are aware of these opportunities, that missing opportunities can be developed in the area and that this forms part of a range of opportunities that will encourage active activity in and around the Leven.

Black and ethnic minority groups

The survey has little information on ethnic diversity. Information was not recorded on the larger SEPA online questionnaire, while in the communities survey only 1 person (2% of the respondents) identified as being White (Other) rather than White (British) or White (Scottish).

Ongoing work is needed to ensure that the voices of ethnic minorities can be incorporated into this work and this is included as a recommendation. Discussions

with Fife Equalities Centre pointed out that it is important to make sure BME communities are able to access the area, that they feel welcome and safe. The Fife Equalities Centre promoted the Communities Team online survey to groups they had contact with, but in this case, the diversity of responses did not increase.

Discussion and interpretation

Talking to the public and interest groups has shown there are a number of reasons why people do not use the Leven area. People talked about a wide variety of issues that, were they addressed, they would make the area a more desirable place to visit.

It seems that, while people commented on many different things, they boil down to a few fundamental issues which will need further community involvement and consultation to resolve.

Perceptions of bad behaviour

Many people are worried about the use of motorcycles, either directly because of concerns over being on a path which may be used by someone on a motorcycle, because of the damage motorbikes can do in making surfaces uneven, the noise they make or because of what they think people with motorbikes might be like.

As well as being worried about motorcycle users, many people expressed concern over other forms of anti-social behaviour that they associated with the area around the river. These concerns are about (i) gangs of youths (ii) drinking alcohol (iii) drug use (iv) theft (v) assaults / sexual assaults.

Much could be done to reduce the perception that the area is dangerous. Encouraging more people to use the area will lead to greater public surveillance and a sense that there are other people about. Better lighting and paths will make the paths available to more people. Encouraging people not to litter the area and removing items that are fly-tipped should mean the area looks more cared for.

It will be important to involve young people so they are brought together with other generations and can develop a sense of ownership over the area.

Friluftsliv³ – being in nature

There have been many comments from people who want to use the area, or already value the area and use it. It should be more than a place for people to pass through and more of a public garden that everyone can use to relax and enjoy themselves. Perhaps the test of a successful place is that you can answer yes to the

³ Friluftsliv, pronounced free-loofts-liv, means “open air life.” It was popularized by Norwegian poet Henrik Ibsen in the mid-1800s when he described value in spending time in nature to increase a person’s spiritual and physical wellbeing.

following question: 'If I were to get married, would the Leven be a nice place to hold an outdoor ceremony?'

It should be noted that while many people have concerns about youths around the Leven, the young people themselves are saying they like the area because it is peaceful and people don't bother you. It seems, on a fundamental level, everyone wants to same thing.

The Leven is already a venue for some activities; walking, exercising dogs, cycling, fishing and observing nature. There is much scope to both develop these activities and to add new activities that will complement this peaceful location. Outdoor activities such as kayaking have been suggested and it would make a fantastic location for people to meet for outdoor classes, exercise, cycle repair, fitness, yoga, nature watching, guided tours and many other opportunities could all take place within the area. Schools and nurseries could use the area for outdoor classes.

To encourage better use of the area there is a need to talk to the people and groups that can support these activities. This will include community organisations, sporting groups, schools, youth groups.

Caring for the area

How can this area be maintained as a pleasant place for people to visit? There are potentially many aspects to keeping a place nice which will require involvement from both the local community and from statutory bodies like Fife Council and SEPA.

There already are some community based organisations that have an interest in the area. Fife Council's Bums off Seats encourage walking and the River Leven Angling Club have an interest in the river area, while more broadly community members and other organisations that use the area will all have an interest in how the area can be cared for.

There are a number of issues that need further discussion, these could be held with a view to developing a plan to care for the area. Immediate considerations would be:

- How can the area be monitored to ensure it is kept as a pleasant environment? How can this be done through a mixture of design, community involvement and statutory involvement?
- What future improvements will people want to see?
- What budget will be needed?
- Who would like to be involved?
- What broader interventions are needed to encourage the general public to look after the area?

- How can any unnecessary maintenance be avoided, can this be built into designs?

The suggestion of this report is to develop an action plan to manage the local area which uses local community resources wherever possible, both in its development and implementation.

Easy movement

Ease of movement is something that has been expressed in a number of ways. Some have said that the current routes are too churned up. Others have highlighted barriers. Yet more have pointed to the lack of signage and coherence that means they are not able to make their way through the area easily.

It seems that fundamentally people want to be able to move through and around the area easily, in a way that gives them confidence that they know where they are going, have an idea about how long it will take and can do so in safety and with reasonable ease.

This theme is very complimentary to the Sustrans Places for Everyone design principles which include:

1. Develop ideas collaboratively and in partnership with communities.
2. Facilitate independent walking, cycling, and wheeling for everyone, including an unaccompanied 12-year old.
3. Design places that provide enjoyment, comfort and protection.
4. Ensure access for all and equality of opportunity in public space.
5. Ensure all proposals are developed in a way that is context-specific and evidence-led.
6. Reallocate road space, and restrict motor traffic permeability to prioritise people walking, cycling and wheeling over private motor vehicles.

In particular, principle 2 seems particularly relevant in that everyone should be able to move about an area independently from the young to the elderly. The 12-year old child representing someone who while being physically able to travel independently may not have a good appreciation of risk.

Recommendations

Throughout this report, a number of recommendations have emerged. These are summarised below.

1. Infrastructure needs to be built to a high quality that will allow people of all abilities to move around the area. Paths need to be clearly signed, coherent and well lit
2. Infrastructure and layout should be designed to avoid any unnecessary maintenance
3. Provision needs to be made so that people will be able to stay in the area rather than just pass through
4. Further engagement is needed with the local community to discuss
 - a. Addressing anti-social behaviour
 - b. Keeping the area in good condition
 - c. Providing activities in the area, which community groups are willing to engage with
5. A number of organisations have been identified that are keen to continue working and feeding into this project, and should be given a stake in the future development and management of the area. The following list suggests some of the key groups of users, but is not exhaustive.
 - a. Corra Foundation
 - b. Anglers
 - c. Motorbike users
 - d. Walking groups
 - e. Cycling groups
 - f. Equality groups and groups representing minorities
6. The project should seek out and engage with minority ethnic groups to ensure they have an opportunity to comment on the proposals.
7. Create an action plan to care for the area

Appendix 1: Scope of consultation

The report engaged with a range of stakeholders in the Leven in Methil area. These included:

Online consultations

- Commonplace map of the Leven - 59 comments
- SEPA online survey – 533 responses
- Communities online survey – 49 responses
- Motorbike users online survey - 12 responses

Semi-structured interviews - carried out by phone or Zoom

7 carried out with individuals, 1 with angling club representative, 1 with group of young men who use motorcycles

Community group consultations focus groups and meetings with the following groups

- Corra Foundation
- Clear Buckhaven & Methil
- Levenmouth community cycle club
- Levenmouth Together
- Good Company - community group
- Bums off seats -Levenmouth (ActiveFife)
- Methil Mums Coffee Morning
- Buckhynd community bakery
- People's Pantry Leven
- Forth Rivers Trust (project partner)
- Communicating with Methil Group
- Drop in event 1 for the public
- Fife Centre for Equalities (online meeting)
- (subsequent events cancelled because of COVID19)

Appendix 2: ISM categories associated with key themes

Emerging themes according to ISM categories

Emerging themes have been categorised according to their ISM categories. This is useful as a way to think about what people are saying and what interventions may be needed to encourage more people to move their behaviour to walk, wheel and cycle more often.

| | Individual | Social | Material | Comments |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Path quality | Agency | | Infrastructure | Sustrans design principles will mean high quality surfaces suitable for everyone |
| Motorbikes | Values, Beliefs, Attitudes Emotions | Norms Roles and Identity | Infrastructure | Everyone acknowledges there's a problem with the current lack of arrangements. Motorcycle users want a place to practice their sport and the Leven area is the best local option. For many other people this creates a high degree of nuisance. Community consultation needed |
| Litter and fly tipping | Emotions | Norms Tastes Meanings Institutions | Rules and regulations Objects | Reducing littering will require a wide range of interventions and input from the local community will help understand why this happens and how it can be resolved. Community consultation needed |
| Making the Leven a | Emotions Values, Beliefs | Tastes Meanings | | Many ideas have been presented. How these are |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| destination to do things | and Attitudes | Norms Opinion Leaders Institutions | | taken forward will need community involvement. Community consultation needed. |
| Pollution | | Institutions | Technologies Infrastructure Rules and Regulations | Community consultation needed |
| Personal safety | Emotions Skills Agency Values, Beliefs and Attitudes | Institutions | | Community consultation needed |
| Routes | | Networks and Relationships | Infrastructure | Community consultation needed |
| Dog walking and exercise | Habit Costs and benefits | Norms | | Community consultation needed |
| A place of nature | Values, Beliefs and Attitudes Emotions | Meanings Networks and Relationships Institutions | | Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a high quality of nature in the river and surrounding area. The questions are around maintaining and enhancing this in a way that people will continue to enjoy, preserve and protect. Community consultation needed |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Ensuring the area can be used by everyone | Values, Beliefs and Attitudes | Norms | Rules and Regulations Infrastructure | This will be achieved by adhering to Sustrans design principles and continued engagement with a wide range of people with an interest in the area. |
| Crossing the Leven and crossing the railway line | Values, Attitudes and Beliefs | Networks and Relationships | Infrastructure | <p>The issue of how the new railway line will be crossed and how people will maintain access to the river bank has already been raised with the Connectivity Project. The project is currently waiting for further information on the railway line.</p> <p>Crossing points for the river and the railway will directly affect how the area is used and the social networks this could create.</p> |
| Support to encourage more cycling, walking and walking | Skills Agency Costs and Benefits | Opinion Leaders Institutions Norms Roles and Identity | Infrastructure | <p>Need to work with the local community to understand and develop suitable support mechanisms</p> <p>Community consultation needed</p> |

Appendix 3: Proposed path layout as of June 2020

