

# WICK LOCALITY PLAN CONSULTATION SUMMARY

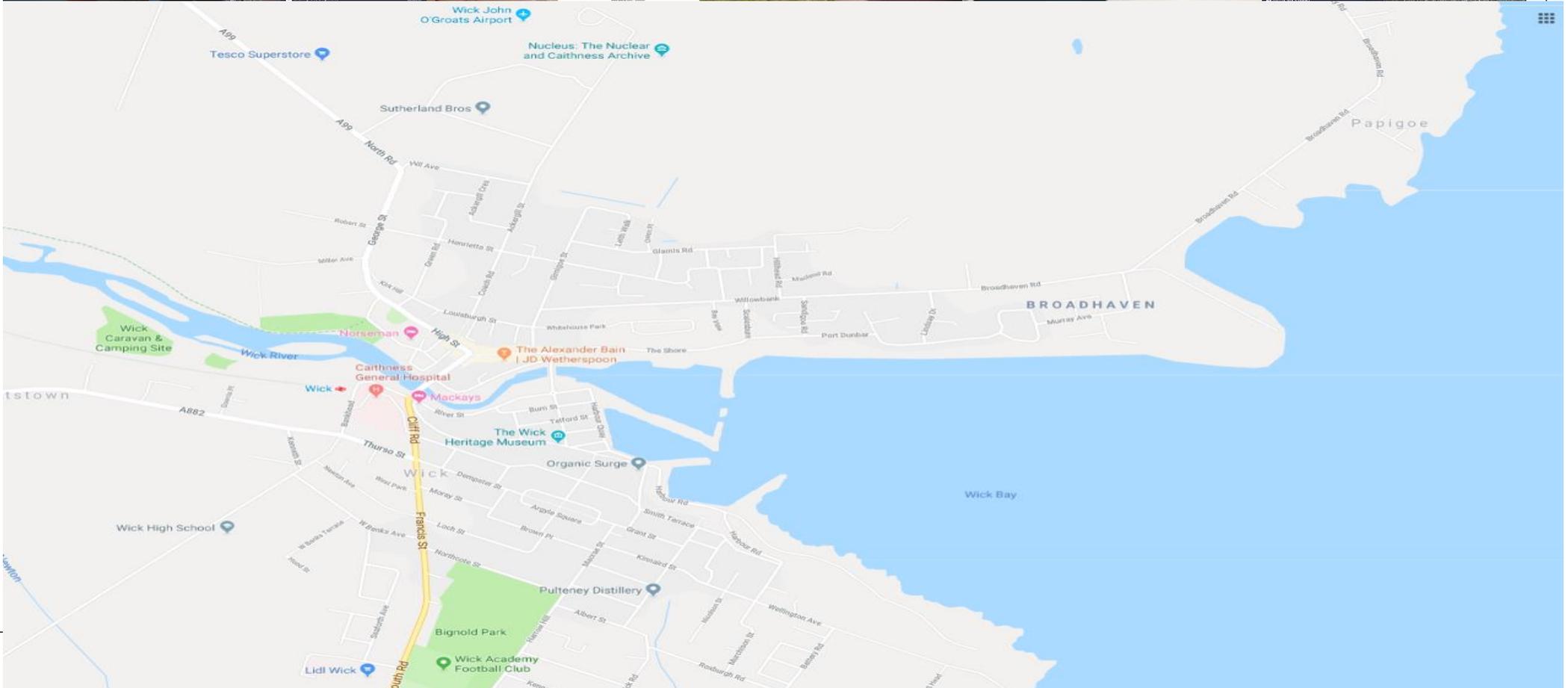
JAN –JUNE 2019

By Jennifer Harvey

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***“The Aspiring Communities Fund helps enable community bodies and third sector organisations in our most deprived and fragile communities to develop and deliver long-term local solutions that address local priorities and needs, increase active inclusion and build on the assets of local communities to reduce poverty and to enable inclusive growth”. (Scottish Government 2018;3)***

***Wick is one of areas identified in Caithness as being most deprived according to the Scottish index of Multiple Deprivation SIMD***



**SIMD maps show large areas (red and orange) of Wick as being socially deprived, we are all experiencing inequalities geographically through excessive fuel costs, postal charges, employment opportunities, medical Services, training and education, unemployment and limited transport links**

***I want everyone in Wick to feel that they have been consulted about living in our town and that they have had their voice heard. So we need to look at local issues and solve them at local level.***

***All information collated will be fed back to the Wick Local Plan and the appropriate individuals will look at ways to address these issues.***

***We want to act on issues as soon as we identify them to make the most of the 12 months project our hope is to quickly involve people to address these issues and to solve some of these inequalities at a local level with local people.***

***There are already some fantastic agencies, groups and Individuals doing great things in Wick. Some of these inequalities identified may just need sign posting and others we will need to work together as a community and form partnerships to solve.***

## Open Consultation Workshop on Drugs, Alcohol and Mental Health

**The centre has a footfall of between 1500 and 1800 per week and with staff being increasingly concerned about where to signpost people under the influence or in crisis to receive help.**

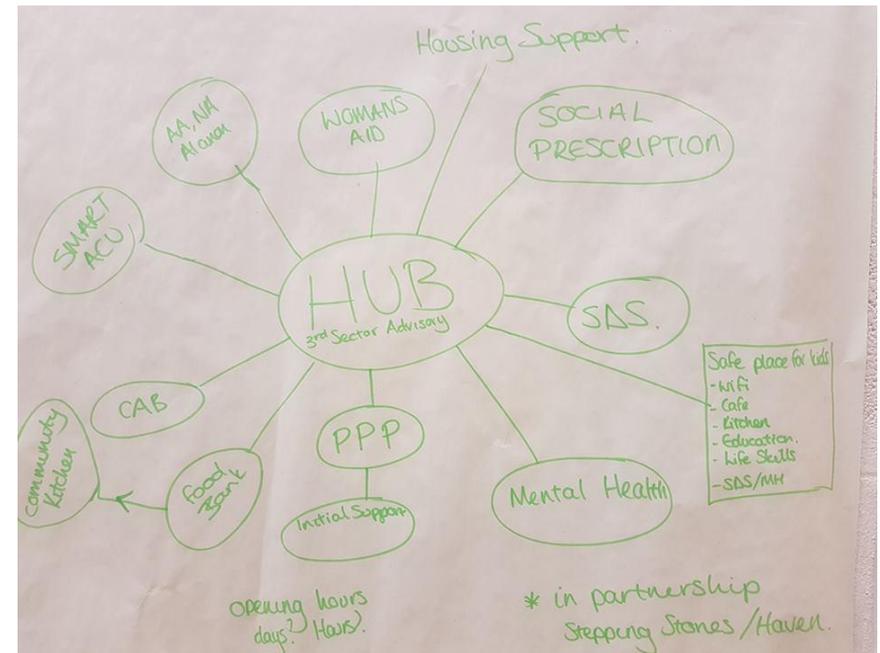
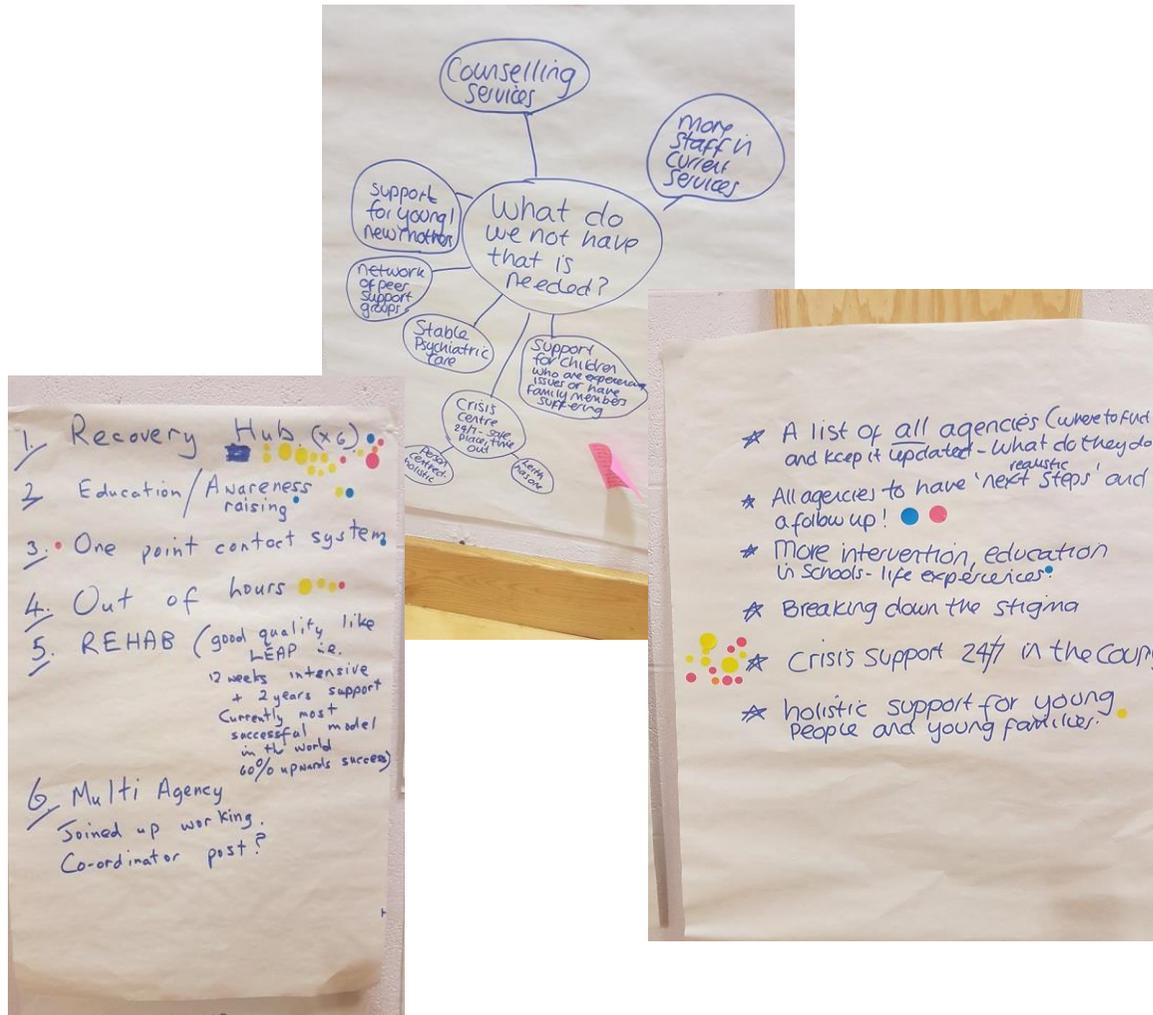
An open consultation workshop was arranged and held in the Pulteney Centre which was seeking ideas about how to best support those with drug, alcohol or mental health issues in our community. The open consultation was publicised through social media, notices in local shop windows and the local newspaper. As well as this, I spoke with local pub owners and invited local agencies, such as the criminal justice team, mental health team, citizens' advice, housing officers and other community support agencies to attend.

In total 55 people attended and 20 agencies were represented. We invited local guest speakers to share their experiences with drugs, alcohol and mental health issues. We set up three stations, one representing each of the areas, and then asked the attendees to select one area they felt they could contribute to, discuss and feedback on. The discussions focused on what services are available, what is working well and where there are gaps in provision. Below is a summary of the discussion and examples of feedback; however, **a comprehensive report is available on request from Jennifer Harvey.**

## Summary of Open Consultation Feedback

From a long list the attendees voted using stickers to identify what they felt were the most important and urgent needs in Wick and identified the following top four needs:

- Multi-agency recovery Hub
- Crisis support 24/7 (Mental Health)
- Break down stigma surrounding drug, alcohol and mental health issues
- Service based in Caithness (not Inverness)



Examples of different groups- list of needs

A mind map created by one of the groups that outlined what they think a Multi-Agency Recovery Hub should offer and look like.

### **What's been happened since consultation; -**

PPP has lead with a second meeting this time with agencies that currently deliver support to people who use drugs and alcohol. Which included representatives from: -Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Team, CDAF, Criminal Justice, Homelink, Health Visitors and holistic healers

Outcome of consultation was again a multi-agency approach so that people suffering from drug and alcohol related issues, along with their families and friends could access information and support from qualified and confident staff to support early intervention. They want people living in the community to be informed and have access to services and support that can answer their questions and inform them of services available within the community.

***Identified actions; -Same point of contact, help for families as well as individuals, practical help and support, sense of belonging, purposeful achievements for individuals, help with relapse, help for children and delivery of advice within school.***

Ideas are for PPP to work in partnership with agencies to provide a holistic approach to services providing support from the first point of contact with Acupuncture or other holistic approach, information sessions from professionals, SMART and drop in sessions within the community with consistent staff so they build up a relationship with the staff. No waiting list, or lengthy referral process, you need the help/support and you get it. It provides instant support and information while the specialist support from the NHS team is put in place or available. Support when NHS intervention is complete to provide a transition back into the community, work and family life. A contact if a relapse is likely to gain early support to minimize impact. Agencies have agreed that this approach will be useful as not everyone is in crisis and often need a listening ear and keep people engaged in support and minimize crises.

### **Other proposed developments; -**

CDAF are hoping to set up a community café in Wick similar to the one in Thurso in the near future – they hope to find suitable venue soon. The café will be run by volunteers who are all in recovery, people can leave a donation for their meal and leave money for someone to have a free meal. They will assist and support anyone who needs help.

**It's been noted that between The Haven, AA, Drug and Alcohol Drop ins and PPP there is something for people to attend every day of the week. This gives people choice and varied support in their community.**

## Questionnaires to collect Inequalities

An information display was installed in the Pulteney Centre foyer which outlined the five areas in which we were seeking feedback. A large number of the general public in Wick access the Pulteney Centre on a daily basis and several organisations, agencies and groups use the Centre. As well as this the Centre is located in one of Wicks areas of deprivation. Therefore, due to the high volume and variety of people using the Centre, I felt that this allowed us to gather feedback that represented the population of Wick. Using a physical questionnaire meant that residents could complete the questionnaire regardless of their access to technology and the internet and also allowed those with poor literacy skills to ask for clarification on any questions.

The questionnaire was available to the public at the information display and was completed anonymously by the Centre's users. The questionnaire sought to gain feedback from the five key areas:

- Health and wellbeing
- Getting around
- Work and local economy
- Facilities, services and amenities
- Community identity and spirit

The questionnaire focused on three questions for each of the five key areas:

- What is good?
- What is not so good?
- What can we do to improve?

These open questions gave respondents the opportunity to share their view on the strengths and weaknesses of the town, highlight areas for development but also identify things that they are proud of as a community.

**I have also been out in the community with these questionnaires a big map of Wick and Post-its where people can post on map their own inequality**

## Health and Wellbeing

**What's good** ;-We have a Hospital, Medical Centre, great medical staff and lots of third sector agencies, Haven, Enablement and Home Care, nice open spaces, community spirit, kindness and friendliness of general public, pace of life.

**What's not good**; - having to travel to inverness to see consultants for 10 min appointment, Transport unsuitable for disabled travelers. No out of hours Crisis support, locums, having to go to inverness to have a baby, lack of health and wellbeing groups, stigma, drug related deaths. Children having to go to inverness for tooth extraction and accessing transport home, no mental Health services for children in Caithness, poor uptake on cancer screening with general public.

### **What we can do to improve;** -

- Bring more specialists to Wick
- More video conferencing with specialists
- Attract full time GPs
- Multi Agency recovery Hub
- 24/7 Crisis support
- Caithness Services based in Caithness
- Break down stigma
- Stopping drugs going into high school
- Mental health services for children needed on same day as crisis
- Need a pediatrician based in Caithness
- Promote cancer screening in more public spaces and agencies to promote with service users. Have leaflets and posters in public spaces.

## Health and Wellbeing

### **What's Happening currently to reduce these concerns**

Need to encourage more people and GPs to request a video conference with specialists and use the facility in place for this at CGH. This would cut some unnecessary travel to Inverness

CDAF and PPP intend to work with groups of teenagers about awareness of drug and alcohol use with sessions where they attend informative talks and info about drug use and support to address any difficulties they may speak about.

PPP new one stop initiative for people with mental health issues, drug and alcohol users to receive support.

Children's mental health concerns been sent to child's plan for action

Cancer screening to be promoted within the workplace with training for work place ambassadors. More information on screening in public places to be made readily available. PPP have received first initial training session and hope to have an information point within the centre soon. It's hoped that more of these will be in public places to make information readily available.

Concerns about accessible and suitable buses been sent to transport forum for action

RRAD working group and Ripples are setting up safe places at local events throughout the summer

***"I suffer from extreme anxiety. I waited three months for an appointment to see psychiatrist. On the morning of my appointment, I was overwhelmed with anxiety and could not leave the house. I got new appointment after my mother explained to them however, the same thing happened on second appointment. I was struck off the list and told to get my GP to refer me again. Feeling that no one cared I overdosed that night "***

## Getting Around

**What's Good;** -lots of small parking areas, Parking is free, Local train service, Local Airport, Nice parks open areas, church and voluntary transport, newly resurfaced paths all around wick by path committee and volunteers.

**What's not so Good;** - Roads and pavements uneven, potholes, not enough disabled crossings. Service Bus; -Timetables, reliability, accessibility, breakdowns, cost, Buses to Inverness accessibility for disabled users big concern.

***"I was going to Raigmore to see my consultant. I am currently using a walking crutch as my hip is worn and I requested a disabled seat for my journey- however on the bus arrival there were no seats and no one in a position to free one up for me. This meant that I had to return home as I couldn't climb the stairs to upper level. I had to cancel my appointment and wait for a new one to be issued. I was upset missing hospital about but also missing the chance to see my specialist means Im still not on list for a hip replacement if only the bus had more seats on lower level or a more accessible buses going to Inverness"***

No bus service from Staxigoe before 10am

No bus service between Wick to Groats at the weekend and limited service during the week ;-***Im 14 and my best friend and I like to do gaming or play football after school. We take it in turns to go to each other's homes once a week and usually stay for tea. If going to Groats we take school bus. However, to get home my parents or his have to drive us as the last bus leaves groats at 18.20 or Wick at 17.30 which leaves us no time to do anything. There is no service at the weekends so if we meet up our parents need to make that 32 mile round trip which can take up to 50 plus minutes.***

## Getting Around

**What we can do to improve;** -

- Hold Bus company accountable and get more suitable buses and structure to service they provide.
- Repairs to pavements, roads and parking areas.
- Double yellow lines on bridge street and High Street

**What's happening currently to reduce these concerns:** -

Locality Group to see what other buses are in the community and are they all used all of the time; - could any be used to bridge the gaps in the service.

Aarons Bus company a local private company is looking at delivering a new service in September which will be a daily run from Caithness to Inverness. The bus will be accessible for disabled drivers and mothers with push chairs.

Caithness Transport forum been given amalgamated concerns from all 4 localities to bring forward to bus companies. HITRANS are looking at distributing bus time tables at all stops.

Double yellow lines to be implemented on Bridge Street. Traffic regulations will allow for a 10-minute pick up and drop of time. Less parking on the street will clear traffic and allow pedestrians to cross safer. ***Pedestrians on pavement in Bridge street fear for their safety as Lorries mount the pavement, whilst maneuvering past parked cars on Bridge Street.***

20mph restrictions in residential and school areas around the town, traffic calming measures.

Visiting traffic reinforcement officers to be monitoring illegal parking and unlicensed vehicles in Wick as from 14<sup>th</sup> May

Car park at Norseman to be repaired to a satisfactory condition – local councilors have been leading on this and are in talks with Council Chief executive. ( a small parking fee is being proposed to offset costs for future repairs.

## Work and Local Community

### What is good

- Small business owners, local shops
- New businesses' coming into the town like B & M and Beatrice offshore wind farm Ltd
- Development s at the harbour- marina breathing life into the harbour again, Nucleus (archive)

### What's not so good

- High Street shops vacant and boarded up premises spoiling trade
- Lack of employment for young people to return to after college
- Job opportunities not published in local papers
- Town drab and uninviting no signage.
- The rent of local shop outlets in town centre excessive and new businesses' folding under the financial pressure.
- Locals just drive through the town from one retail park to another not franchising the shops in the town centre (tourists ask where is town centre)

### What can we do to improve?

- More employment opportunities that are not zero hour contracts
- Job clubs to help with CVs and job searches, help for universal credit claimants to complete their work searches
- More apprenticeships in all trades including adult apprenticeships
- More advertisement of jobs – not just on FB
- Make town centre more inviting Indoor market place for local artisans
- Full time posts for local teachers who want to stay or get back to Wick. local girls who have come through their training and want home find it difficult to get full time posts.
- Computer access and classes for all ages.
- Affordable out of hours' childcare for single unsociable hour workers.

***"I was a fisher man all my life- an injury has meant that I can no longer go to sea. They want me to sign on for Universal Credits and upload my CV- I don't know how to work a computer or write a CV"***

## Work and Local Community cont;-

### What's happening currently to solve some issues

Cllrs have held consultations about their vision for town centre with local traders and wider public. Their vision is to make the town centre more inviting with seating, trees, better signage and grants for retailers to spruce up their frontages. They are in talks with owners of derelict buildings currently. They have applied for funding and are hoping to set up a development trust and gathered names of interested parties to be part of the trust.

Wick town center has recently had a deep clean to clear spills on the slab paving and pavements (identified by Council Chief Executive Donna Manson on a recent visit around the town with Cllr's)

SSE offering manpower on bad weather days where staff can't get out to windmills they can help with small projects around the town.

## Facilities, Services and Amenities

### What is good

- New Primary Schools and Campus, Library and swimming pool
- Youth club being refurbished and more activities
- Pulteney Centre for childcare facilities, room rentals and Post Office counters and supporting services
- Marina at harbour

### Whats not so good

- Not much for teens to do out with school hours
- Social clubs closing down
- Too much drugs getting into the hands of teenagers
- Things that are on are not well publicized out with Facebook
- Teenagers hanging out in children's play parks damaging equipment, leaving behind broken glass.
- Dog fouling in play parks
- Not much for 2-5 year olds to do
- Services not speaking to each other about what they do

### What we can do to improve

- Have facilities open later at night
- More activities for young children of pre-school age
- Safer play areas and policing of play parks
- Repurposing or demolition of old buildings
- Public noticeboard and interactive map in town centre
- Improve our skate park at grizzly to attract more appropriate play

## Facilities, services and Amenities cont.:-

- Dog bins and general bins need to be increased and impose fines where someone doesn't pick up. Have main street and high street clear of bins with retailers storing them out back instead of in alleys where they can be seen.
- Somewhere for Teenagers to Hang out at night with free Wi-Fi
- Computer access and classes to help with CVs , UC work searches and online access to keep in contact with DWP and for older people as everything is done online
- Electric hook ups for caravans in car parks to encourage people to stay the night
- Identify a suitable space for a community notice board or display to publish local attractions for tourists and locals (preferably in the town Centre) An interactive MAP would be a great addition to the town and especially if this could incorporate a system to show where services as well as tourist attractions.

**“Older people have said that they don't know how to engage with others online, send emails, apply apps etc they would like to stay abreast of technology as they feel excluded as more and more information is accessed line”.**

### What's been happening

Some concerned parents have set up a committee and cleaned up and repaired equipment in the green road park area. This is now a safe environment for children to play.

The Grizzly Park and Nord parks committee are also looking at a face lift and have approached SSE for manpower to help transform parks.

***Broken equipment removed from parks need to be repaired and returned quickly to their original site, which is currently cordoned off, but a potential hazard to children as metalwork is exposed and could cause injury. Parks are uninviting and vandalism***

## Community Identity and Spirit

### What is good?

- Strong community spirit where people rally to help when a problem is identified and try to solve things locally  
Great community of volunteers making our town look better and cleaning up areas which have been forgotten about.
- Gala, Wicks got Talent, Pipe Band, life boat day, duck race, wick rocks events
- Local identity
- Area and surroundings
- Floral displays in summer by volunteers and path clear ups

### What is not good?

- Too many Inverness factors, feel excluded in local decision making
- Nothing for teenagers to do out-with school
- Empty buildings let street down,
- Too many drug related deaths - people not reacting to them anymore
- Fear for children they can't play safely in the streets or parks
- Fear of walking around town at night
- Vandalism to local play parks and recreational areas
- Drug related behavior
- Not enough volunteers to help at Hogmanay bash

### What can we do to improve?

- Community would feel safer if there was a stronger police presence on streets at night, more CCTV cameras around the town
- Encouraging more people to get involved in community projects especially the younger generation
- More investment in our community
- Encourage more volunteers for community events – include young people to get more involved
- Drug related deaths are everyone's problem we need to all act to prevent more, random drug tests at social events
- Community wardens to impose fines for dog fouling and litter
- Tourism marketing to promote our town
- Have events throughout the year not just in the summer or gala week
  - Vandalism in the town needs to be addressed and things for teenager's top attend at night
  - Have more entertainment of a local level for Tourists all year round. Cash in on Northcoast 500 by publishing whats available in Wick

## Community Identity and Spirit

CDAF have had a meeting to pull together ideas about finding a suitable place for teenagers to hang out. They have a community café in Thurso and want to implement one in Wick that could be café during the day and a Hangout for teenagers at Night. A group has been set up and they are trying to get public and agencies involved.

PPP are getting agencies together to see if there is a group that can be set up for Drug and Alcohol users where they will receive support and alternative therapies whilst they have lengthy wait to get referred to NHS. PPP working in partnership with agencies in the town to deliver this. Agencies are networking more and solving issues together.

Wick High school along with Hi Life have secured activities for teenagers after school and encourage them to get involved in community events. They would like to clean up areas of the town and have a summer concert and have asked the community to get involved in a joint venture.

Community led clean ups of the town by PATHS committee where several areas have been cleaned up making the town look much better. Play parks are receiving the same treatment where individual teams of volunteers are helping to cut grass, clean up and refurb equipment. Criminal Justice team getting more involved on clearing steps and path and painting halls.

Hanging baskets and floral displays being prepared and reinstated around the town by volunteers are looking really colorful and

Police have been more actively patrolling the play parks, HI Life have also launched a program where they have a hot line for public to use if they identify groups of teenagers loitering – where the public can phone it in and Hi Life coordinators can engage with them and see if they can get them to take up on activities available.

## Visit to Caithness House

Caithness House is the local council building located in the town centre and houses several agencies such as the Job Centre, Registrars, Children Services, Planning Office, Housing Officers and Housing Services. The aim of this visit was to distribute questionnaires to users of the Job Centre and housing to seek views on work and local economy and services and amenities. This also provided an opportunity to gather the views of more residents of Wick.

However, most people who approached me were passionate to discuss what was wrong with the town centre in regards to the local economy and

## Summary of Feedback from Caithness House

People were very upset that the town centre has been allowed to get into such a state of disrepair and how people don't take pride in their surroundings. They felt that too many buildings have been left vacant and boarded up. Neighbouring trading shops feel that their businesses' are suffering as a direct result. People feel that the town centre is dirty, lots of cigarette butts, chewing gum and litter on the streets, dog fouling, moss is in abundance on roofs and pavements. The business owners feel that they are losing trade as a direct result of the towns appearance.

### What public would like to see improved; -

- Owners to be contacted and held accountable for leaving their premises in derelict state.
- They would like to see shops in town painted as some are in poor state of repair.
- Street sweepers to keep pavements clean or make business owners responsible for their area.
- Empty premises- if owners are not going to use them could we use windows as advertising space  
Like Marina pictures, local events, maps of Wick, History of Wick in windows on roller blinds
- Could we get an advertising board to publicize events- perhaps in Caithness House?

### Whats been Happening: -

The local Councilors have been in consultation with retail outlets in the town centre and have brought forward extensive plans to regenerate the town centre. They have now held three meetings and set up a FB page Wick Town Centre Regeneration and hope to form Development Trust and are working towards getting a committee set up to enable them to apply for funding in a view of breathing life back into the town centre



## Key Concerns from Specific Groups

Through informal discussions with members of the community, a few areas of concern were raised from parents and older adults using the hobbies group. I was also invited to attend a focus group discussion held by the Rector of Wick High School and have summarized key points from teenagers.

### Parents Quote

That they cannot purchase shoes or have their children's feet fitted for shoes in Wick. Many were worried that badly fitted shoes may affect their children's feet later in life

Whats Happened since; -

Development officer has contacted retailers in Inverness advising that there is a potential market that they are missing out on. Maybe someone local could start up a new business

***"I'm ordering shoes for my 5-year-old son on line and having to pay for them up front – he is in between sizes and this is impossible to know without trying shoes on. Im currently waiting on third set to come and had all the hassle of returning goods and refunds"***

***Parents attending little stars***

### What teenagers want

***"The group stated that they have nowhere to go to Hang out at night and weekends. They want somewhere to hang out that has free Wi Fi and a tuck shop ". They want activities to do after school but can't afford to attend things, struggle to get transport home if live rurally as no service.***

**I then spoke to a group of 13-14 year olds to ask them what they do at night:-**

Several are going to the Youth Club on a Friday night and enjoying taking part in organized activities there as there is a varied program of activities

Several do sports after school and dancing.

Several were using Hi Life new free spaces to do a host of activities after school

Several were going to the High Schools Step Forward Wick Youth program

**14 teenagers**

### Hobbies Group reported on Public Bus Service and uneven pavements

Some reported on being unable to get on a bus as bus steps were too high and felt that low line buses would solve this.

Concern that bus timetables keep changing and several pick up stops removed from the original route without notification.

Buses are repeatedly late due to breakdowns etc

***"We are standing waiting at bus stops wondering if a bus will arrive"***

Links between Wick and Inverness mean that those attending hospital appointments are having a long wait for next bus home.

Pavements are in poor state of repair and one lady fell after tripping on an uneven pavement only yards from her home which resulted in an injury.

***Participants 14 Elderly Ladies***

**Identified inequalities for children and families;** - evidence gathered from Little stars, health Visitors, Child Smile, Parents, foodbank.

Childcare; -Cost of childcare. With families where both parents are working large chunk of second wage paying for childcare costs. No registered Out of hours' childcare. Finding that its grandparents/ family / friends that bridge the childcare gap. That is fine if you have someone but for other parents it limits their working day.

We are seeing more home carers than ever before due to ageing population where people are looked after in their home. There are younger people getting into this area of work but they cannot access childcare. (Husbands / partners may be away working or be an out of hours' worker or they could be a single parent).

Families on low income slow on uptake of free childcare spaces with childcare providers – they are entitled to 200 free hours

Homework and technology; -Some parents have not been educated themselves and struggle to help their children to do homework and others struggle to use computers.

Internet access for those with computers find there is back of teatime dip between 6 and 8. BT although it has been upgraded families have quoted that if someone streaming on line on one room – others in the same household struggle to get connected.

income; - More families working are using food banks, as their wage does not cover utilities and food. Families are struggling to provide hot meals. They are not so bad when kids are at the school. Lots will struggle within the school holidays to entertain and feed their kids.

**Play;** -There is a need for activities and a safe hangout area for teenagers to use. Currently they are hanging out at play parks and generally making nuances of themselves. This would safeguard younger children as the older ones are intimidating and leave rubbish and broken glass making the environment not fit to play in.

**Mental Health;** -Children with Mental Health difficulties are waiting a long time to get assessed and having to travel to Inverness for therapy. There is a need for counselling within the school for teenagers and more awareness for families to recognise when a young person is having feelings of self-worth or feeling so low that they may harm themselves

**Drugs and Alcohol;** -Teenagers have quoted that they can access drugs cheaper and easier than alcohol. They need educating on the effects of substance misuse and support to not feel peer pressure to use something just to remain in with the in crowd.

**Shoe shops;** - No facilities everything done on line resulting in wrong sizes being repeatedly ordered by parents. Some parents worry that their children will have problems with their feet in later life.

**Oral Health;** - Children having to go to Raigmore for tooth extraction under general anaesthetic, parents can't afford transport or get time off work and are repeatedly cancelling appointments meaning children suffer with poor oral health – some reported to waiting up to a year to get extractions.

Families travelling to Inverness to get braces fitted and altered taking less than 10 minutes. Families need to take time off work, organise transport. One parent who does not drive doing round trip on train as it's the cheapest as long as you have a travel concession card. It has also been brought to our attention that a lot of these families are not being reimbursed for their journey costs as the treatment they receive is through private dentists contracted by NHS

**Nutrition Fresh Fruit and Vegetables** Some children are not getting fresh fruit or vegetables at home and some children don't know how to cut up food on their plate. This has been identified at a school lunch group.

The full report of children's inequalities has been given to the children's plan where they will address these issues and look at ways around improving difficulties. Other agencies will also be looking at ways to bridge these inequalities.