

Community Profile

Alyth and the glens of
Strathardle and Glenshee,
Perthshire

Scottish Community Foundation
October 2007

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1. INTRODUCTION

The area covered by this Community Profile has been determined by the area of benefit for the Drumderg Windfarm Community Benefit Fund. It is defined by the boundaries of two adjacent administrative areas represented by the community councils of Alyth and District, and Mount Blair. These lie within the area sometimes called Eastern Perthshire, itself part of the Perth & Kinross local authority area of central Scotland.



Alyth Market Square

The southern boundary of this area lies on the Highland Boundary Fault and separates the fertile lowland of Strathmore – a rich agricultural area renowned for soft fruit production – from the foothills of the Grampian Mountains to the north. The so-called Forest of Alyth and the Glens of Strathardle and Glenshee encompass wooded and farmed valleys with areas of upland moor, including Drumderg, the site of Scottish and Southern Energy's wind farm development, currently under construction, which sits near the intersection of the two community council areas.

ALYTH

Alyth is an attractive and ancient town in Perth and Kinross, situated on the Alyth Burn 5 miles east of Blairgowrie, 22 miles northeast of Perth and 17 miles west of Dundee. It lies at the foot of the Braes of Angus in the valley of Strathmore close to Perthshire's eastern boundary with Angus. Created a burgh with a marketing function in 1488, Alyth developed in association with cattle droving and the wool, jute and linen trades. Its Market Cross dates from 1670 and in the Parish Church (1839) there is a Pictish Stone. The Alyth Arches stand on the site of the 6th century church of St Moluag.

A small museum managed by Perth and

Kinross Council features displays on local agrarian history and the Alyth Hotel was the home of the inventor James Sandy (b.1766) who created the invisible hinge. Near the town is Bamff Castle, a former Ramsay stronghold, and to the north-east on Barry Hill stands an Iron Age fort that also has traditional associations with the King Arthur legend.

The much smaller planned village of New Alyth stands on the Blairgowrie-Kirriemuir road to the south-west.

MOUNT BLAIR

The area known as Mount Blair Community Council area is named as such by the mountain located on the border of Angus and Perth and Kinross Council Areas. Mount Blair lies to the east of Glen Shee and rises to a height of 744m (2440 feet). The peak separates Glen Shee from Glen Isla to the east (at the southern end of which is Alyth).



Mount Blair: Kirkmichael Session House

The area is distinguished geographically by the 'Y' shape of the two valleys Glenshee and Strathardle and the roads following their course – the A93 running north through Glen Shee, and the A924 branching northwest towards Pitlochry through Strathardle. The area is also sometimes referred to locally – and in this report – as 'the Glens'.

The valley Strath Ardle (also Strathardle) extends northwest from Bridge of Cally towards Straloch where it divides into Glen

Brerachan and Glen Fearnach. The glen carries the River Ardle from its formation to join the Black Water to form the River Ericht.

Glenshee ('the glen of the fairies') carries the Black Water from the hills to the north to its confluence with the River Ardle at Bridge of Cally.

The A93 through the Glen connects Blairgowrie to the south with Braemar and the Cairngorms National Park to the north, and is a popular tourist route from Perthshire to Aberdeenshire.

This large rural area encompasses a large number of hamlets, farms, homesteads and small settlements and the population is widely dispersed. Although we refer to three principal settlements in this report – Kirkmichael in Strathardle and the smaller settlements of Bridge of Cally (at the southern end of the two Glens) and Blacklunans in Glenshee – the reality is that there are a number of micro-communities within the Mount Blair Community Council area and there is often considerable diversity within them. For instance, Bridge of Cally has very few young children (although its primary school draws pupils from further afield), whilst Kirkmichael has a relatively large number of young families.

Main settlements

Kirkmichael is the largest village which is midway between the towns of Blairgowrie and Pitlochry. The village is split into two by the River Ardle. On the north side running

along the main street (the A924) are the Kirk and session house, the village shop and garage and Dairy. On the south side are the Primary School and the village hall.

Bridge of Cally lies at the junction of the A 93 and A 924 roads 5 miles northwest of Blairgowrie. Here the River Ardle combines with the Black Water to form the River Ericht. The village has a hotel a shop cum post office, primary school and a community hall. The A93 from Blairgowrie towards this point passes over a Bailey bridge. The bridge is single lane with traffic lights which have been in operation following a landslide in 1985. The bridge provides access across the dramatic Craighall Gorge. Perth and Kinross Council have plans to improve the route with a £5.4 million project to construct a new carriageway west of the gorge. This will provide improved access for local people, tourists and business and may provide the opportunity to develop recreational activities and access to the gorge.

Blacklunans is the smallest of the three settlements and is approximately 7 miles north of the Bridge of Cally on the A93 and is on the main route to the Spittal of Glenshee and the Glenshee Ski Centre. There is no defined centre to the settlement but there is a community hall (Blackwater Hall) and a number of private dwellings scattered along the A93. The B950 provides quick access to the amenities in the village of Kirkmichael.

Maps indicating the boundaries of each area are attached at Appendix I.

A note on data sources:

Unlike Alyth, consolidated data for the Mount Blair area is hard to find from published sources, due to the area overlapping a variety of other administrative districts and it not being identified as a single locality in census results. Depending on the source and the subject matter, the data we have used in this report to represent the Mount Blair area sometimes relates to a wider geographical

area or sometimes aggregated from a number of individual 'census output' areas.

Some of the data sources for the Glens include part (though not all) of Rattray in the same geographical unit. This is likely to skew the results somewhat, as Rattray – on the edge of Blairgowrie – differs considerably from the rural area of Mount Blair and is itself one of the most deprived areas within Perth and Kinross and one of the 15% most deprived in Scotland.

2. POPULATION

Table 1: Age structure at 2001 Census

	Alyth	Ratray & Glenshee*	Perth & Kinross	Scotland
Total Population	2,301	3,592*	134,949	5,062,011
<i>Age – proportion of population as a percentage %</i>				
0-15	18.69	21.0	18.96	19.20
16-29	13.21	14.6	14.21	17.46
30-44	21.64	20.3	21.80	22.97
45-59	20.30	20.9	20.93	19.29
60-74	17.25	14.6	15.55	13.98
75+	8.91	7.0	8.56	7.09

**The best available single statistical area relating to the Mount Blair community council area is the Census Area Statistic Ward of Ratray and Glenshee, which extends beyond the community council area and includes Ratray, a more urban settlement on the edge of Blairgowrie.*

Although a precise figure for the population of the Mount Blair area is not available, a reasonable estimate would be 1400.

By matching postcodes with smaller 'census output areas' some detail can be provided on the main settlements, which are broken down as follows; Blacklunans with a population of 122, Bridge of Cally 176 and Kirkmichael has a population of 350.

At the 2001 census, 2,301 people lived in Alyth, a slight decrease (3.4%) from 2,383 in 1991. This is in contrast to Perth and Kinross as a whole, where the population grew by almost 7% and which indeed is one of the 5 fastest growing local authority areas in Scotland, due to inward migration. However, Perth & Kinross Council's Eastern Area Local Plan records the building of 116 houses in Alyth between 1998 and

2004, suggesting the population is likely to have increased in recent years.

The rural areas of Eastern Perthshire outside the main settlements experienced a growth in population between 1991 and 2001 of 4.6%, with only the area around Straloch in Strathardle experiencing localised population decline.

Within the draft Local Plan, there is provision for additional housing development in Alyth. In recent years, however, developers have preferred to build in Blairgowrie, which has consequently experienced population growth of 7.6%. The Council is keen to see future growth in other areas, such as Alyth, however potential for this will depend on the interest of developers and provision of suitable drainage infrastructure (see Housing).

Table 1 shows the percentage of different age groups in the population at 2001 compared to Perth & Kinross as a whole and to the Scottish average.

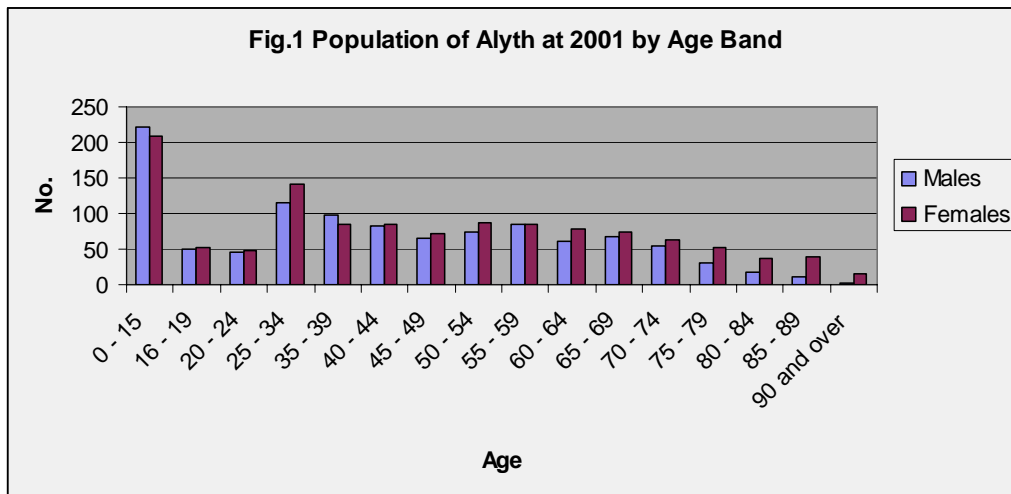
This shows that Alyth's demographic profile is similar to Perth & Kinross as a whole, differing from the Scottish average by having fewer young adults aged 16-29 but a greater proportion of elderly residents aged 60+. Whereas approx. 1 in 5 of Scotland's population is 60 or over, in Alyth more than 1 in 4 is.

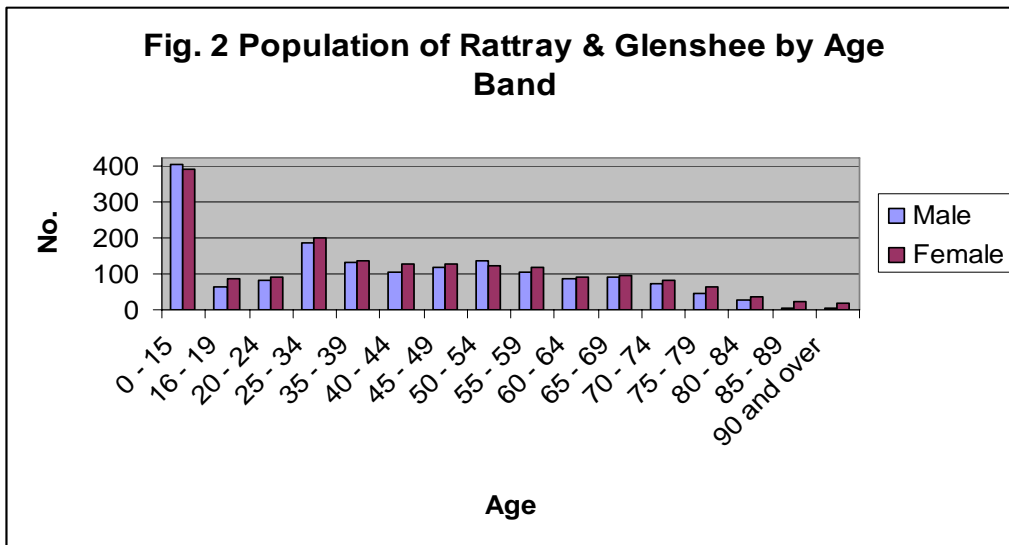
For Rattray & Glenshee, which includes the Mount Blair area, there are some differences, with a higher proportion of children under 16 and a proportion of elderly people closer to the Scottish average. However, the proportion of young adults aged 16-29 is still below the Scottish average.

This is consistent with data for rural Scotland, which generally has a lower proportion of people aged 15-34 and a higher population aged 40-69 than urban Scotland.

Generally, in Perth and Kinross, the population profile is changing, with an increase in elderly population and a decline in very young children. The number of residents aged 65 and over across the local authority area grew by 10% between 1991 and 2001.

Figures 1 and 2 show the population of Alyth and Rattray & Glenshee at 2001 by 5-year age bands (though note that the first and fourth bars on the chart relate to the wider age bands of 0-15 yrs and 25-34.)





An interesting statistic is that there are a relatively high number of residents whose origin of birth is England living in Kirkmichael (25%) in Bridge of Cally (31%) and Blacklunans (31%). The figure in Perth and Kinross as a whole is 11%. In Alyth, it's 9%.

In terms of ethnicity, the population is not very diverse, minority ethnic groups making up about 0.5% of the population across the two community council areas.

3. DEPRIVATION LEVELS

The Scottish Index for Multiple Deprivation provides a rating for deprivation for small areas, called data zones, throughout Scotland. There are 6505 such data zones throughout Scotland, each encompassing between approx. 500 and 1000 people.

The Index analyses data indicating deprivation levels across 7 domains. For each domain heading, e.g. Health, the Index assesses a basket of indicators to arrive at a general score for that heading for each datazone. The index then places each data zone in rank order from 1 (most deprived) to 6505 (least deprived) for each domain, as well as giving a composite ranking for

overall deprivation. It is important to note, therefore, that the Index ranking is a measure only of *relative* deprivation in Scotland. The Index has also received some criticism for masking the true degree of deprivation/need experienced in rural communities.

Alyth Community Council area is broadly equivalent to 3 data zones: SO100534, which includes the South of the town and New Alyth, SO1005135 encompassing the North West of the town, and SO1005138 encompassing the North East of the town and the rural hinterland around the Hill of Alyth.

The respective national rankings for the Alyth data zones are given in Table 2.

Table 2: SIMD rankings for the Alyth data zones

ALYTH			Domain rank out of 6505 (1 most deprived to 6505 least deprived)							
Data Zone	Total Population (2004 SAPE)	Working Age Population 2004 SAPE	SIMD overall Rank	Current Income	Employment	Health	Education, Skills and Training	Housing	Geographic Access and Tele-communications	Crime
I005134 (South, New Alyth)	933	523	3580	2734	3197.5	4685	2714	3162	4850	4053
I005135 (NW Alyth town)	749	448	4144	3508	4177.5	5332	2679	3799	5084	1597
I005138 (NE Alyth, Alyth Hill)	1132	676	3199	2806	3406	3639	3384	3227	1334	4500

The three datazones rank around the lower middle of Scottish datazones in terms of overall deprivation, suggesting this is not a particularly deprived town, although not the most advantaged either.

The relatively good provision of services within the town means that – with the

exception of the northern datazone that includes a wider rural area as far as Drumderg hill – the ranking is particularly low (i.e. low deprivation) for geographic access. The town also ranks well in terms of health. Employment, income and education and skills levels are close to the median for Scotland.

The lowest score (i.e. indicating the highest degree of relative deprivation) occurs for crime in the datazone that covers the northwest of the town, where the ranking places this area amongst the 25% most deprived in Scotland.

Mount Blair is contained within 2 datazones: I005137, which embraces the southern part

of the area, including Bridge of Cally (This datazone also extends west of Blairgowrie, including a rural area outwith the Mt Blair area.); and I005147, which encompasses the northern part of the area, including the rest of Glenshee and Strathardle, stretching west beyond the Mt Blair boundary towards Pitlochry.

Table 3: SIMD rankings for the Mt Blair data zones

MOUNT BLAIR			Domain rank out of 6505 (1 most deprived to 6505 least deprived)							
Data Zone	Total Population (2004 SAPE)	Working Age Population 2004 SAPE	SIMD overall Rank	Current Income	Employment	Health	Education, Skills and Training	Housing	Geographic Access and Tele-communications	Crime
I005137 (southern, Bridge of Cally)	907	558	3272	4210	3288.5	4702	3633	3293	214	5663
I005147 (northern, Kirkmichael)	937	557	4001	4842	5561	5895	3936	2842	56	6477

These 2 datazones both rank overall just below the median for Scotland, again suggesting this is not a particularly deprived area. However, it's worth noting that the overall ranking is affected by the very high degree of 'deprivation' in terms of geographic access, not surprising given the rural location and low population density. The scores for this domain place these datazones within the 5% most isolated in Scotland.

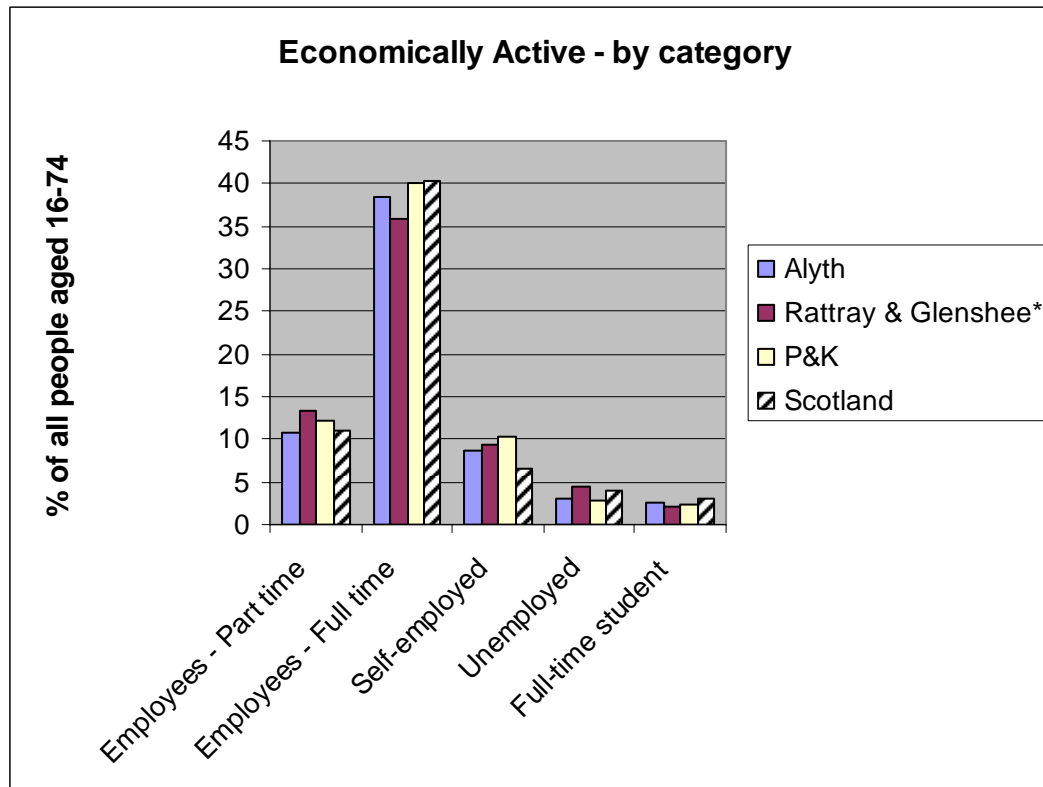
The northern datazone, representing the more isolated parts of the glens, including Kirkmichael, has particularly 'strong' scores for employment and health and particularly

crime, suggesting a relatively successful, safe and healthy community, despite the challenges of its very rural location. Scores for income and education, skills and training are also well in the lower half of the index, with only housing highlighted as an issue that affects this community more than most in Scotland.

The southern datazone, which includes Bridge of Cally also has a particularly low rating for crime, and scores reasonably well in most indicators, though noticeably less well than the northern datazone for employment.

4. ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYMENT

Figure 3: Economic Activity Rates, 2001 Census



*The best available single statistical area relating to the Mount Blair community council area is the Census Area Statistic Ward of Rattray and Glenshee, which includes Rattray, a more urban settlement on the edge of Blairgowrie.

Unemployment rates in 2001 were 4.5% in Rattray and Glenshee, which encompasses the Mount Blair area and 3.12% in Alyth. These are both slightly higher than the Perth & Kinross average of 2.79%. The figure for Scotland as a whole was 3.97%. It should be noted that the SIMD data suggests that the figure varies at a more local level across the 'Rattray and Glenshee' area and is lower in the northern part of that area.

A related statistic is that the proportion of children in workless households is twice as high in the Mount Blair area than in Alyth (Source: NHS Community Health Profile), though only marginally higher than the Scottish average.

Figures 4a and 4b overleaf show the distances people in each of the two areas have to travel to their place of employment.

(It should be noted that the high proportion in Rattray & Glenshee travelling less than 2 km may be skewed by people living in Rattray (outwith the Mt Blair area) and travelling to work in neighbouring Blairgowrie.)

The charts show that more than a quarter of working people in each area travel between 20-40 km to work, most likely commuting to Perth or Dundee. A smaller proportion commutes over 40km, including to Edinburgh. The similarly large proportion of people from Alyth travelling 5-10km are probably commuting to Blairgowrie.

A larger proportion of people in the Rattray & Glenshee area work from home, which is consistent with higher self employment rates for the area.

Fig 4a: Travel to work distance – Alyth residents

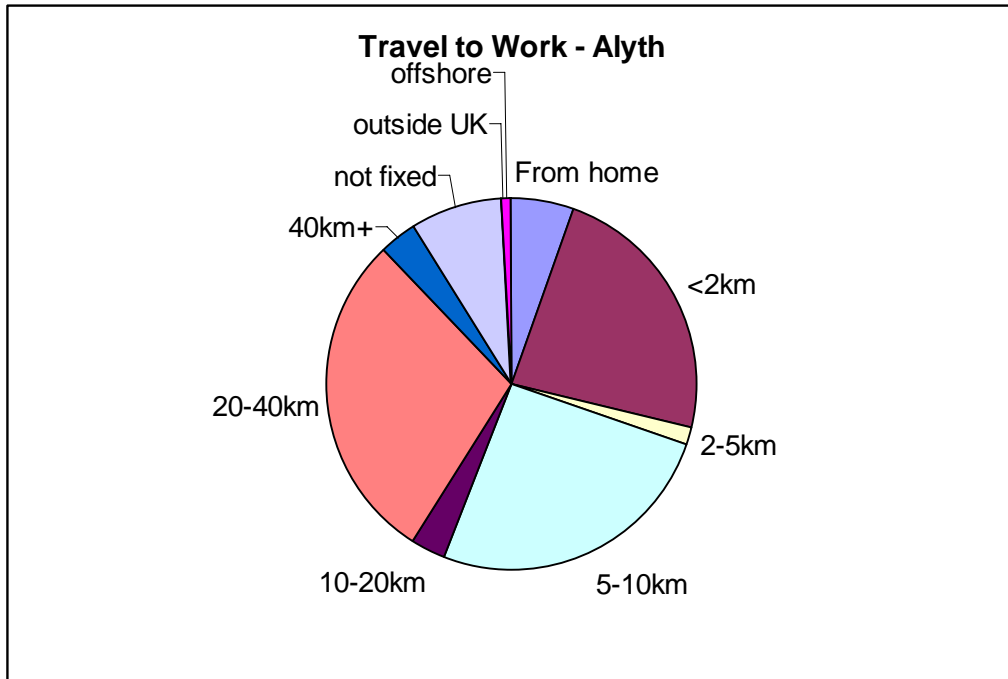
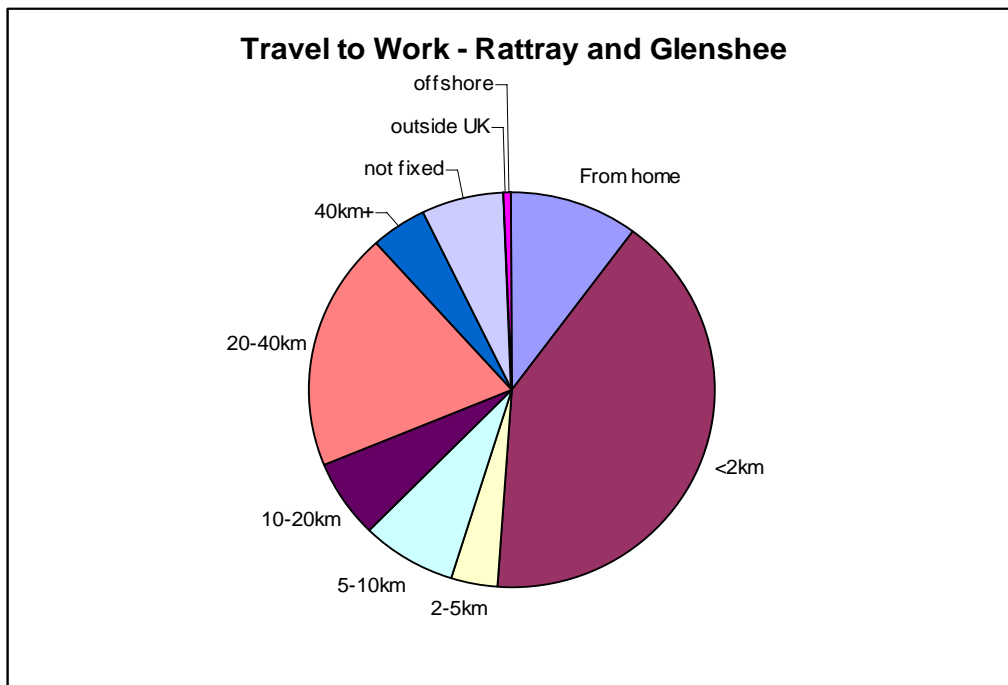


Fig 4b: Travel to work distance – Mt Blair residents



As Table 4 below highlights, the nature of employment in Perth and Kinross differ a little from Scotland as a whole, with less emphasis on manufacturing and more people

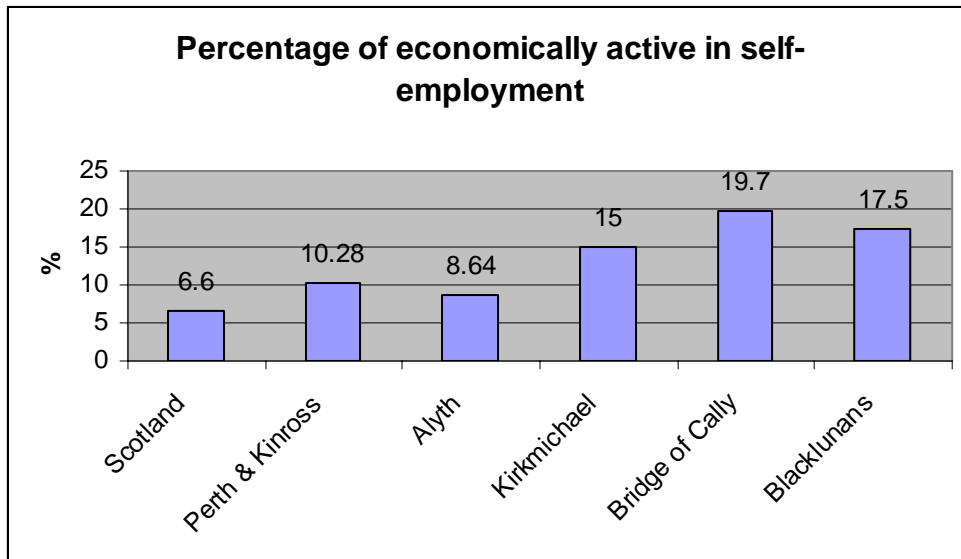
working in agriculture and forestry, wholesale and retail trading, and hotels and restaurants.

Within the rural Mount Blair area, there is a much higher proportion of people working in agriculture and forestry, although the number of jobs in this sector is declining. These traditional opportunities for employment are decreasing, and the emphasis for creating new employment

tends to be on tourism and the potential for those with niche skills to create home-based businesses, using IT technology to overcome the rural isolation from clients/customers.

This is indicated by the high number of self-employed people in the area:

Table 4: Self-employment rates



Source 2001 Census – Mt Blair settlement area figures achieved by aggregating smaller census output areas.

However, such self-employed occupations often require first achieving the skills and experience to run your own business. This makes it harder for people born in the area to

remain there during the early part of their career, requiring them to move away to gain experience and skills, a fact reflected in the low proportion of people aged 16-29.

Supporting new enterprise and employment opportunities is one objective of the Strathmore and the Glens Partnership, established as a development trust and serving the catchment area of Blairgowrie High School. It is developing a ‘Sirolli’ initiative to support new entrepreneurs and increase the success of new business initiatives, based on an established model:

Essentially the principle entails forming a network of local advisers, to whom entrepreneurs, budding or existing could approach for advice. This allows the fostering of local knowledge and experience without being held back or even discouraged by the dead hand of bureaucracy.

See www.strathmoreglens.org/sirolli

The employment patterns of the three main settlements within the Community Council area of Mount Blair have individual local nuances. In Blacklunans, the biggest single source of employment is agriculture, hunting

and forestry at 35.29%. In Bridge of Cally, 15.91% work in hotels and restaurants, while in Kirkmichael real estate, renting and 'business activities' account for 14.9% of the jobs.

Table 5: Industry of employment

<i>Industry of Employment</i>	<i>Percentage of people aged 16-74 working in the main industry sectors</i>					
	Scotland	Perth and Kinross	Alyth	Blacklunans	Bridge of Cally	Kirkmichael
Agriculture and forestry	2.20	5.19	4.67	35.29	18.09	14.8
Manufacturing	13.65	8.73	10.27	1.96	4.26	0.53
Construction	7.76	8.61	13.28	3.92	9.09	4.2
Wholesale retail, trade	13.30	15.37	17.22	13.73	11.36	7.9
Transport and storage	6.89	5.33	3.94	7.84	6.82	5.13
Hotels and restaurants	4.95	7.61	5.5	11.76	15.91	7.44
Real estate and renting and business activities	11.42	10.68	7.16	3.92	11.36	14.9
Public administration	7.23	5.39	4.56	0.00	6.38	2.12
Education	7.42	7.57	8.82	3.92	4.26	7.9
Health and social work	12.63	12.69	14	3.92	8.51	5.85

Tourism is already a key sector for Perthshire generally. Both the Alyth and Mount Blair areas boast a number of hotels (including the 4-star Lands of Loyal Hotel in Alyth) and a variety of accommodation providers from B&Bs to caravan parks.

Glenshee has had particular prominence, being on the tourist route from Perth to Braemar and with the UK's largest ski centre at Glenshee attracting a large number of winter tourists. Giving tourists a reason to stop in the 'Glenshee Corridor' on route to Glenshee or Deeside and the Cairngorms National Park has always been an aim for those involved in tourism in the Glens, but

the need to create additional tourism 'products' in the area is now particularly important as the decline of the Scottish ski resorts – due to unreliable snowfall and the accessibility of continental skiing – leads to a reduction in visitor numbers and associated employment opportunities. One focus is to maximise opportunities for year-round outdoor recreation, creating paths and waymarked routes for walkers and mountain bikers. After its worst winter season since the 1980s, the Glenshee ski resort this year is creating mountain biking runs alongside the pistes. The Forestry Commission is developing a mountain biking centre at Dunkeld and so not prioritising

developments in the Eastern Perthshire area, although potential has been identified by the community to develop routes at Blackcraig and Kindrogan forests in Strathardle.

The valley already features a couple of outdoor activity centres, one run by the Council and one by a Christian charity. VisitScotland Perthshire is talking of putting Perthshire at the forefront of so-called Adventure Tourism.

A 64-mile walking route, the CATERAN TRAIL has been developed as a circular route starting from Blairgowrie. Its route takes in most of the area covered by this report, from Kirkmichael to Alyth by way of Spittal of Glenshee. The Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust is also developing an Eastern Perthshire Paths Network of waymarked routes, again centred on Blairgowrie.



Information board for the Cateran Trail

Other than the general attraction of the scenery and environment, and a few eating places and tourism retail outlets, such as the Glenshee Pottery, the Mount Blair area lacks any real visitor attractions, such as visitor centres or outdoor activity hubs.

Two partnerships of local tourism operators exist in the area, seeking to work together to promote tourism development: The Glenshee Tourism Association (www.glenofthefairies.co.uk) and the East Perthshire and Blairgowrie Tourism Association (see www.bepta.com).

The only Tourist Information Centre in the area is at Blairgowrie.

The textile industry was formerly prominent in Alyth, along with the manufacture of glass, although today the largest single category of employer in Alyth is the wholesale/retail trade, which reflects the large number of retail outlets in this former market town. The town boasts a wide range of shops, including some specialist outlets such as an ironmonger and pet shop alongside butcher, bakers, mini-markets etc.

Alyth historically was the main market town for East Perthshire and the town are hoping to reinstate a local market as a regular event. Alyth Community Council and Strathmore and the Glens Rural Partnership recently piloted a market in the main square. The market was well received and provided the opportunity for local businesses and organisations to promote their produce. The textile industry flourished in the nineteenth century, with its most prominent period during 1861 when the railway was established. By 1870 Alyth's two mills employed a total of 350 people. Today, however, all that is left are the remains. To the north of the centre of Alyth town is the old Forfar Carpets works which ceased production in the 90s and has since been used by a company that specializes in the restoration of vintage cars. (Interestingly, a similar business is based at the garage in Kirkmichael).

The railway service was closed to passengers in 1951 and the line no longer exists.

There used to be a sawmill at the north-western edge of the town, although this has now ceased operation and the site is awaiting development. There are a couple of other vacant 'industrial' sites within the town centre: A former auction mart, which has been purchased for residential development, and another site to the north of the market square.

5. EDUCATION

Education services are provided by Perth and Kinross Council which has 10 secondary schools and 76 primary schools. Alyth and Mount Blair are within the catchment area for Blairgowrie High School which has a total of 11 feeder primary schools.

Blairgowrie High School has a school roll of 978 (2004/5). Perth and Kinross has identified 6 of its secondary schools as part of an investment in learning initiative which will result in the redevelopment to provide six new community campuses. Work at Blairgowrie is planned for January 2008 with a completion date of July 2009. The new community campus for Blairgowrie will include St Stephens RC and Newhill Primary School and will have a nursery on the site.

In 2006, 24% of leavers from Blairgowrie High School went on to higher education, some way below the Perth & Kinross average of 35% and the Scottish average of 30%. However, an above average number went on to further education (32%), and 30% went into employment, above both the averages for Perth & Kinross (28%) and Scotland (26%). The number becoming 'NEET' (not in education, employment or training) was too small to be recorded.

Attainment levels for schools in Perth & Kinross as a whole exceed the Scottish average, although figures for the proportion of pupils attaining one or more higher exams at Blairgowrie High School are below the national average and declined slightly over the years 2004-2006.

Pupils from Alyth and the Glens are in a minority at the school, with the majority coming from Blairgowrie and Rattray, which can result in divisions between groups of pupils and lead to problems around bullying or territorialism. Pupils from the small primary schools in the Glens face a particular challenge adjusting to High School life.

Mount Blair

The primary schools which serve the Mount Blair area are Strone of Cally in Bridge of Cally, Straloch at Enochdhu, and Kirkmichael. The Strone of Cally is located in the village just off the main A 924. The school roll was 11 in 2006. Straloch Primary School is in the village of Straloch and serves the surrounding area, it had a school roll of 9 in 2006 (Perth and Kinross Council).

Kirkmichael Primary School is located in the village of Kirkmichael and includes pupils from Glenshee and Blacklunans settlements. The school roll in 2006/7 was 44 pupils and in addition to the 3 teaching staff there are 6 support staff including classroom assistant, dining hall and cleaning staff. Specialist staff visit the school to provide support to the curriculum e.g. art, drama, PE and music. There is also a nursery class which can accommodate up to 10 children in both a morning and afternoon sessions. However, due to the small numbers (7) there is only a morning session being offered. Kirkmichael School has an all weather sports court which is located close to the school building and has recently been resurfaced. By the beginning of the new school session the school hoped to have the two new classrooms available. This would alleviate the demand on the current accommodation and would also mean that the pupils would no longer need to walk to the village hall for lunches.

A Parent and Toddler group has recently been re-established in Kirkmichael.

Alyth

Alyth Primary School is located in Albert Street in the village and in the 2007/8 school year has a school roll of 178 and 30 nursery places. There is a core of 10 teaching staff with 19 support staff including nursery staff, classroom assistants, cleaning and dining staff. The school has additional visiting specialists in the fields of art, music, PE, drama and speech therapy.

The school used to provide secondary education until 1994, since then older children have gone to Blairgowrie High.



Alyth Primary School Front Entrance

There is a community wing attached to Alyth Primary school which is part of the original school building. This provides space for community activities, such as the youth clubs organised by Alyth Youth Partnership, whose worker is based at the community wing.



Alyth Primary School from rear

Alyth Out of School Club is a voluntary sector organisation providing childcare at the school before and after school hours.

Alyth has a volunteer-run parent and toddlers group for younger children, meeting in the community wing of the school.

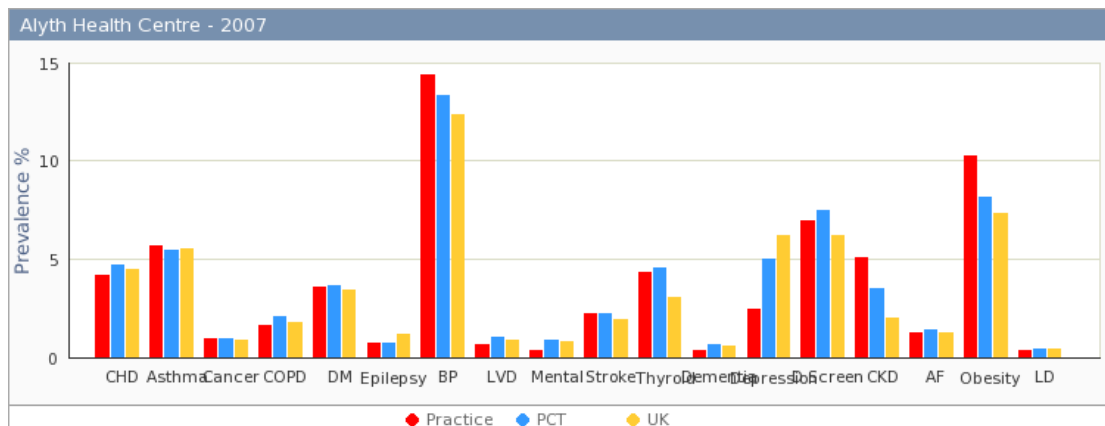
6. HEALTH

Tayside Health Board is responsible for the provision of health services to the Perth and Kinross Council area. Hospital services are available from Blairgowrie Community Hospital and Perth Royal Infirmary. No GP

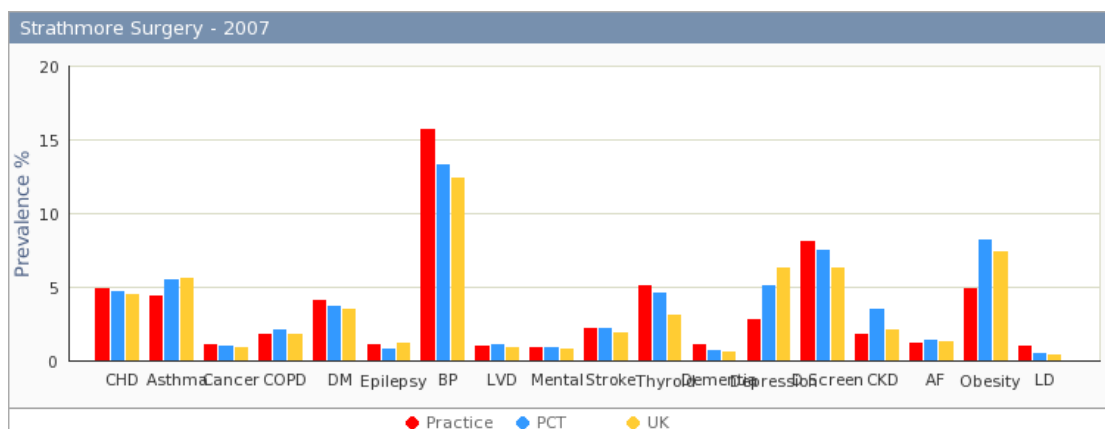
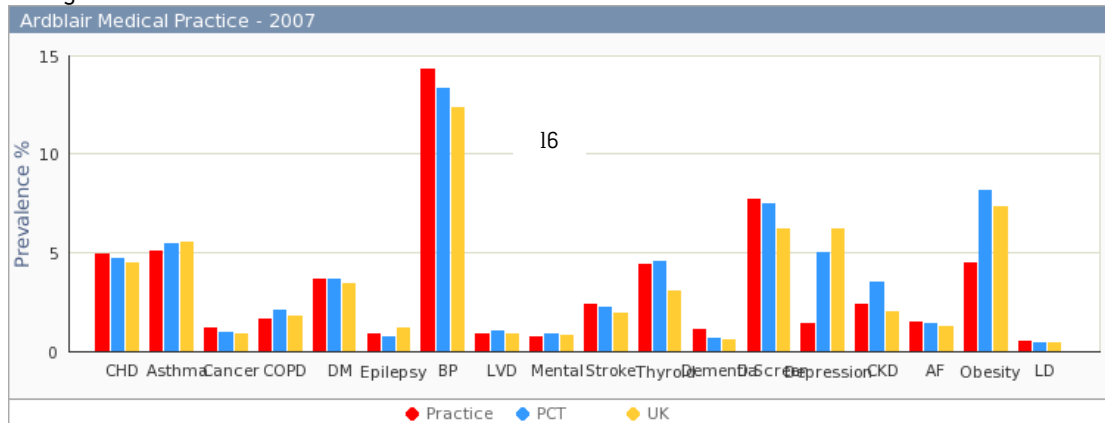
practices are located in the Mount Blair area. Residents from Mount Blair need to travel to Blairgowrie and attend one of the two health centres in the town. Alyth has its own Health Centre providing GP services. Data is available about the incidence of a number of key disease types for each practice:

Table 6: Prevalence of disease types, by GP Practice

Disease area	Prevalence		
	Alyth	Blairgowrie	
		Strathmore	Ardblair
Coronary heart disease	4.1%	4.8%	4.9%
Asthma	5.6%	4.4%	5.1%
Cancer	0.9%	1.0%	1.2%
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	1.6%	1.8%	1.6%
Diabetes mellitus	3.5%	4.0%	3.6%
Epilepsy	0.7%	1.0%	0.8%
Hypertension	14.4%	15.6%	14.3%
Heart Failure	0.6%	1.0%	0.9%
Mental Health	0.3%	0.8%	0.7%
Stroke and transient ischaemic attacks	2.2%	2.2%	2.3%
Hypothyroidism	4.3%	5.0%	4.4%
Dementia	0.3%	1.0%	1.1%
Depression	2.4%	2.7%	1.4%
Depression screening population	6.9%	8.1%	7.7%
Chronic Kidney Disease	5.1%	1.8%	2.4%
Atrial Fibrillation	1.2%	1.2%	1.5%
Obesity	10.2%	4.8%	4.5%
Learning disabilities	0.3%	1.0%	0.5%



Blaigowrie GP Practices:



Source: Quality and Outcomes Framework of the GP Contract UK

One distinguishing result is the relatively high incidence of obesity in Alyth.

The main cause of death in Tayside follows the national pattern of cancer, coronary heart disease (CHD) and stroke. The rates for Perth and Kinross are lower than both Dundee and Scotland but higher than Angus Council area.

The NHS published Community Health Profiles in 2004, showing a range of health-related statistics for local areas based on postcodes. The PH11 8 area corresponds well with Alyth community council area, while the PH10 7 area fits well with Mt Blair. Comparing these profiles highlights a few points of interest:

Life expectancy in Perth and Kinross is 75 for men and 80 for women. These figures are

higher than life expectancy in Scotland generally, but on a par with the UK. For Alyth, life expectancy is slightly higher than the Perth and Kinross average.

For Alyth, hospital admissions (and deaths) for most of the conditions examined by the profile are below the Scottish average (including CHD and cancer), with the exception of psychiatric conditions (23% higher). With the exception of above average rates for cancer, the situation is similar for Mt Blair. However, first hospital admissions for psychiatric conditions once again stands out – here the figure is 97% above the Scottish average! – while admissions relating to attempted suicide and self-harm are 37% higher than the national figure. This does suggest that mental health is an issue affecting both areas, but particularly the rural Mt Blair area, where isolation may well be a contributory factor.

Another startling statistic for the PH10 7 which is defined as Rattray and Glenshee area encompassing Mt Blair is that teenage pregnancies are 57% above the Scottish average, despite the figure for Perth and Kinross as a whole being below the national figure. Also, the number of mothers smoking during pregnancy is 66% higher than usual in Scotland. (In Alyth, teenage pregnancies are well below the Scottish average, as is the incidence of smoking in pregnancy.) However, it must be borne in mind that the PH10 7 area includes part of Rattray (with a total sample population of 5,000) which is likely to account to a large extent for this statistic.

Bridge of Cally has a relatively high percentage of young carers under the age of 16 years: 5.2% contrasted with 2.3% for Perth and Kinross and Scotland.

The relatively high proportion of elderly residents also brings with it a range of health

needs. Reducing isolation amongst lone pensioners can have an impact in improving the health of older people, and groups and services which address this will be important.



Mount Blair Drop-In Kirkmichael

A number of health-related voluntary sector organisations operate on a regional basis, although accessing their services may mean travelling to Blairgowrie, Perth or Dundee.

7. ENVIRONMENT

Mount Blair

The Mount Blair Community council area is situated in an area of natural beauty with a number of areas of scientific, archaeological interest and areas developed for outdoor pursuits. It is part of the main A93 route to the Cairngorms National Park and to the Glenshee Ski centre and Royal Deeside.

The outdoor pursuits available include walks along the 64km route of the Cateran Trail which can be accessed at various points. There are also a number of woodland walks and the Blairgowrie Walking Festival is an annual event in the area.

The Craighall Gorge is an area of special scientific interest and there is planned improvement with a road widening project. This will offer the potential to expand the access to the gorge and the development of visitor facilities.

The Lunan Valley is moorland with close proximity to the Forest of Clunie which are both conservation areas with special scientific interest in the variety of birds from ospreys to buzzards and is nationally important for black grouse. The areas are subject to a moorland management scheme developed by Scottish Natural Heritage which aim is to encourage positive management of the land by all parties and to help protect the habitat and species of special interest.

Other pursuits that are available include angling and trout fishing, cycling and mountain biking, field sports and golf at the Dalmunzie Golf Course, a 9 hole golf course reputed to be one of the highest in Scotland. There is also the Glenshee Curling Club and Strathardle Archers group located in the area.

The Land Reform Act 2003 places a responsibility on local authorities to uphold right of access to land, to publicise the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and to develop a Core Paths Plan. A plan for the Core

Paths network which would include the Cateran Trail has a consultation process underway with the final report due for February 2008.

A recent report highlighted that the area could benefit from a more coordinated approach to publicise and market the opportunities that the natural environment offers and has the potential to offer outdoor pursuits all year round.

The Field Studies Council, in conjunction with the Scottish Field Studies Association runs a residential field centre at Kindrogan near Enochdhu, which it describes as Scotland's National Centre for Excellence in Field Studies and Biodiversity Training.

The SEER centre at Enochdhu is run by a charity concerned with promoting eco-friendly gardening and farming.

Alyth

The Den of Alyth is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), lying to the northwest edge of the town and comprising 21.9 hectares of woodland either side of Alyth Burn. The Den provides an important and valued recreational resource and is relatively easily accessed by pedestrians from nearby parking facilities. It is linked by the Blairgowrie Core Paths Network to the Cateran Trail. Some paths have been upgraded with board-walk, though only small sections are wheelchair accessible. There is also a play park on the site. The site was gifted to the former town council in 1923 and is now managed by Perth and Kinross Council.

The burn was once dammed to provide a 'swimming pool' in the Den, though this was closed in the 1970s for safety reasons.

The Den is the location for an annual outdoor music festival, Jam in the Den.

There has been considerable community engagement with the Den, either in consultation on its use or as volunteers in its conservation.

It is managed in accordance with a woodland management plan 2007-12. The plan proposes a number of improvements, principally to promote access and foster biodiversity. The council has been working with Alyth Environmental Group on the proposals and hopes to continue to engage the community in its delivery.

Alyth Hill



Alyth looking towards Alyth Hill

Alyth Hill lies to the north of the town, rising to 966 feet. Previously in private ownership, and used for agriculture and grazing, the Forestry Commission has recently acquired the Estate and a farmhouse on the southern slope of the Hill, Kirklandbank House.

The Commission intends to plant trees on the Hill, but sought to dispose of the House. This raised two issues within the local community: the impact of planting on the hill – and the loss of what some believe to be grazing/common rights, and the future use of Kirklandbank House.

A proposed community buy-out of the House with a view to developing a facility possibly relating to outdoor activities/education has been stalled by the BIG lottery fund refusing to consider an application to purchase an asset that is already in public ownership. It seems likely that the House will now be sold on the open market, most likely for residential use.

The Forestry Commission is now working with a local user group to develop a Design Plan for planting on the hill. However, recognising the value placed by the community on access to the summit, the planting will be on the former agricultural land on the slopes only. The expectation is that the forest design plan will involve extending the native woodland of the Den and complementing it with high quality broadleaf – i.e. not the serried ranks of conifers which tended to characterise forestry plantations in previous years. Planting could commence at the end of 2008.

Under the current arrangement the Forestry Commission shoulder responsibility for managing the hill and have stated an intention to do so with recreation and access in mind and in consultation with the community. It is possible, however, that if the user group becomes constituted as a company limited by guarantee and receives community backing in a poll that action could be taken to buy the land for community ownership. However, this would leave the community responsible for management of the land, which would be a substantial commitment.

Alyth Climate Action Town

This is a partnership initiative spearheaded by Alyth Environmental Group. It describes its objectives as follows:

We propose that Alyth collectively recognises its role in this global challenge and the community commits its self to adopting a more climate change friendly life style, by initially adopting an Eco charter (signed on 20th May 2006) and work towards meeting green house gas reduction targets at a local level. By doing so Alyth will be the first community in the UK to adopt this collective attitude and we are sure it will have a knock on effect to with economic and social benefits as well as global environmental improvements. Our long term objective is for Alyth to be carbon Neutral!

In pursuit of this aim, Alyth has been selected as the Scottish location for an energy efficiency project sponsored by Scottish

Hydro Electric with support of the UK Government, Ofgem and the University of Reading. It will see residents using 'smart' meters to help them monitor energy use with a target of reducing energy use over 2 years. A £30,000 grant will fund awareness raising measures and activities. If the town reduces its consumption on target, a further £20,000 will be provided to be spent on a community project relating to renewable energy.

Countryside Ranger

Perth & Kinross Council operates a Countryside Ranger service. There are examples of communities in Scotland also employing a dedicated local ranger, hosted by a community organisation or development trust, to promote and facilitate access and conservation to their particular area's environmental riches. This may be worth considering in Mount Blair and/or Alyth.

8. HOUSING

As has been noted, the population of Perth and Kinross is growing. In common with the rest of Scotland, house prices have boomed recently. The average price of a house in Perth and Kinross is currently £159,201, making it the 10th most expensive local authority area in Scotland in which to buy a house (out of 32). Prices have increased 9.6% in the last year, although this is not as big an increase as in many parts of Scotland. (Source BBC News website)

The high cost of housing, and the strong demand from incomers, can make it hard for people to find a home, particularly first time buyers or young adults leaving home or returning from education.

Perth and Kinross council intends to increase the amount of affordable housing available in the area, and is exploring the feasibility of building council-owned properties on a site in Alyth to meet this need. Feasibility will depend on drainage and flood-prevention issues.

Although a number of sites in Alyth – and one to the west of New Alyth – have been

identified for potential development, generally, significant development in Alyth is likely to require an increase to the capacity of the sewerage system, which may be a barrier to significant expansion unless Scottish Water prioritise an upgrade, or the cost of this is supported by a developer.



Mount Blair Kirkmichael Cottages

In the Glens, development is more likely to be small scale or one-off building. A number of development zones are identified to allow this. In particular, the draft Local Plan proposes the construction of 8 properties in Kirkmichael. New housing in this area tends to be off the mains sewerage system and using septic tanks.

Table 7

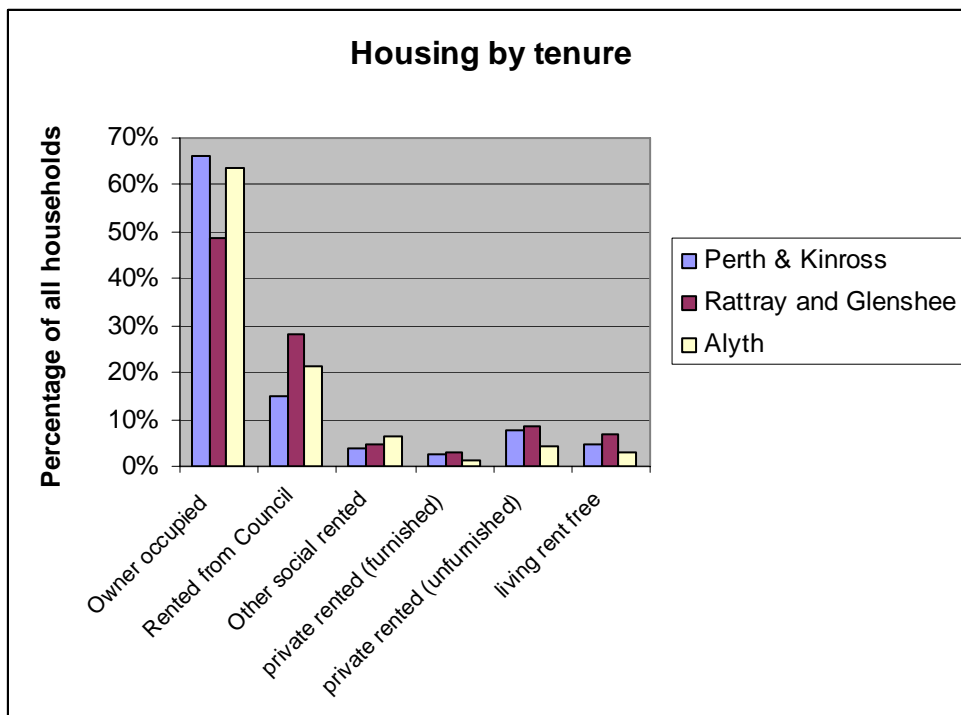


Table 7 shows that the Rattray & Glenshee area has a different pattern of tenure to Alyth, with fewer owner occupied properties than Alyth, or Perth and Kinross generally. However, it should be remembered that this area includes Rattray on the edge of Blairgowrie, which lies outwith the Mt Blair area, which is likely to have a different housing pattern than the rural Mt Blair area.

Both areas have a moderately high proportion of council-rented properties.

The number of lone parent households is higher in Mount Blair (18.3%) than Alyth (15.1%). Both are close to the Scottish average of 17.9%.

9. YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people are well represented within the population of the Mt Blair and Alyth community council areas, and services and facilities for them will be a key concern for the community.

Although rural life can be idyllic for children and young people, it can also be frustrating due to the lack of facilities, entertainment and social opportunities.



Run-down tennis court in Alyth

Small towns, such as Alyth, can also offer a good quality of life to families, but the phenomenon of young people 'hanging around' in public places tends to be a feature of such towns, as youth facilities tend to be limited, yet the small scale of the town focuses young people into central locations where they gather for want of 'anything to do or anywhere to go'. This in turn can be perceived as leading to antisocial behaviour – whether actual or implied, increase fear of crime and increase division between generations.

Mount Blair

Youth provision is provided mostly through the uniformed organisations; Brownies, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. The Cubs, Scouts and Beavers meet in Blackwater Hall on Tuesdays and the Brownies also meet on Tuesday evenings in the Kirkmichael village

hall. All of the groups are supported by leaders and parent helpers.

Kirkmichael Village hall has a youth club, funded by the Council, that meets between October and March and the summer months have no regular night but meet on specific dates for events. It is organised by local people and is open to children from 5 years of age. The club organises activities such as roller skating, football, painting and cookery. The Bannerfield is used in the good weather to run outdoor activities. The club has two sessions on a Friday night and each child contributes £1.50 each week.

Kirkmichael Session House organise a number of activities for the community and these can include specific events for young people but these tend to be organised on an ad hoc basis.

Transport is the main inhibiting factor to young people in the Mount Blair area in accessing youth activities and facilities. Blairgowrie has a number of opportunities available to young people, but those from Mount Blair are reliant on their parents to transport them to and from activities. There are no after school activities organised in any of the Primary schools in the area; the school bus is the only means of transport for pupils and is not able to offer a service outwith the core timetable.

The Compass Christian Centre which is an old hunting lodge located in their own grounds just off the A93 offers a range of outdoor activities. The youth club have in the past been able to organise some trips to the Centre but this requires the organisation of transport which can increase the cost to the participants and their families.

The area has a number of outdoor activities available to them including the Catechan trail, the Forest of Clunie and numerous sites of scientific and archaeological interest. The difficulty arises if local groups wish to access these locations as a group as transport is restrictive.

Alyth

Alongside active uniformed youth groups (see Appendix 3), Alyth boasts a well-established Youth Partnership. This is a voluntary group with the objective of:

providing quality, positive diversionary activities to the young people in Alyth and the surrounding area, in order to promote active citizenship.

One full time youth worker supports young people affected by drugs and/or alcohol, offering diversionary activities, education and personal development. There is a separate girl's group as well as a football club and a summer programme of activities targeting young people most at risk of becoming excluded from mainstream community activities.

The AYP regularly consults with the young people it works with, who have expressed a desire to see both improved facilities (leisure centre, skate park, ball courts) and services (improved public transport, food outlets etc.), but also better community

relations (with police, other generations) and a safer environment (better car parking, pedestrian crossing, reduced vandalism)

For youth groups in both areas, the cost of organised trips and excursions for young people is of course high, given the need to travel – even just to Blairgowrie. Regular mini-bus hire can be a significant cost for groups in this area, although Alyth Youth Partnership has recently acquired funding to purchase its own minibus.

A number of youth groups are based in Blairgowrie, including projects supported or organised by the Council. These include 'the Thrillseekers Club', a programme of diversionary activities taking place on a Friday night, and the Strathmore Centre for Youth Dialogue (SCYD), which operates a drop-in shop-front facility where young people can engage with a variety of agencies and support organisations or access information and advice relevant to their needs.

10. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Both the Mt Blair and Alyth communities depend on Blairgowrie for many facilities and services, although many leisure, shopping and recreation activities require a trip to Perth or Dundee, for example to access cinemas, theatres, art galleries and museums. There is no leisure centre in Blairgowrie, although the High School does have a Recreational Centre, including a swimming pool, which is open to the public at certain times.

Community Facilities can be defined as open spaces, leisure and cultural facilities, community centres, halls, youth centres and churches.

Mount Blair

For relatively small communities Mount Blair is well served by community facilities; three of the communities have their own hall, the other settlements have access to other meeting places within Churches or local facilities i.e. the Pottery Shop which can be used as an informal meeting place.

Blacklunans

Blackwater Hall is on the main route A93 and offers a large hall with bunk house and catering facilities. The Hall was previously owned by the YMCA but is now owned and managed by a local Committee. The hall is used for local functions (it can hold 150 people in the hall) and is let out for residential activities and can accommodate 38 people. The hall is well used by local WRI, Craft groups, Cubs and Beavers and for fundraising events.

Bridge of Cally

The hall is located on the main A93 and offers a large hall which can seat 110 people, a kitchen and a small meeting room. The hall is used by local groups including the regular Community Council meetings.

Kirkmichael

As the largest of the settlements Kirkmichael there are a number of facilities in the village; Session House, village hall, the school and the open space at the Bannerfield. The Session House is managed by a local Committee who employ a Development Worker to organise adult education and community activities. There is a mobile library bookswap that uses the lower hall on a regular basis and there is a small computer suite in the upper floor where they organise IT classes (which are supported by Blairgowrie Learning Centre and Perth College).

Kirkmichael Village hall is located on the south of the river and is close to the Bannerfield. The hall is in need of some upgrading but it is well used by local groups including the youth club, brownies and Scottish dancing. The hall is also used by the school for gym and school lunches. There have been discussions locally and an architect's brief produced on the future role of the hall and whether there is a need to consider refurbishment of the existing hall or to develop a new build on another site. To date no firm plans have been made on either option.

Kirkmichael School is mainly used by the pupils for lessons but it does have an outdoor sport court which is used both by the school and the community in general. There is a small play park on the hill above the school which has a limited amount of play equipment suitable for the 10 and under age group.

A new car park is also proposed for Kirkmichael.

Bannerfield is a large open space on the edge of the village but not far from the village hall. This open space is well used by the village for sporting activities and is the site for the annual Strathardle highland games.

Glenshee

Glenshee does not have a community hall but they do have access to the Church. The

Pottery Shop and the Fire station have rooms where small groups can meet.

Alyth

Again, for a small town, Alyth is well served with meeting spaces and halls. A full list is given at Appendix 5.

The Town Hall (with a number of separate spaces and facilities) and the Ogilvy Rooms are both managed by Alyth Halls Association on behalf of the local authority, which owns them. The Association is responsible for paying the caretaker and maintaining internal décor, while the Council is responsible for keeping the building sound and watertight. There is capacity to increase use of the Town Hall, and to find use for spaces within it. For instance the basement area might lend itself to a gym or informal youth/meeting space.



Alyth Town Hall

The Church of Scotland owns the Airlie Street Hall, which is a very popular venue for a range of community activities, from public meetings to country dancing and soft tennis. The Hall has recently been refloored and redecorated.

Other facilities include the Community Wing of the school, which is used as a base by Alyth Youth Partnership and activities co-ordinated by the Council's Community Learning and Development section.

There are separate Scout and Guide halls, although both have limitations in terms of the accommodation. The Guide Hut is used by other groups, e.g. a Tai Chi class.



Alyth Guide Hut

Sports facilities include the Diamond Jubilee Park playing fields (with sports pavilion) and the Bowling and Tennis club. However, the tennis courts are in a poor state and would benefit from upgrading.

Many Alyth residents cite a desire for better sports facilities in the town. There is also a feeling that – despite the relatively large number of halls and community spaces – a central hub which integrated services and activities for all sections of the community would be valuable.

Alyth has a very active community life, with many clubs and groups organising a range of learning, recreational and social activities. This abundance of local groups reflects the strong community spirit that residents often report. An example of this in action is the tradition of coffee mornings at the Airlie Street Halls. Almost every Saturday of the year, the Hall is used by a different group to hold a fundraising coffee morning, raising between £500 and £1200 a time! As well as providing valuable income for groups, these events are a fixture of the social calendar for many residents, particularly the elderly and otherwise potentially isolated.

11. TRANSPORT

The nearest train stations are Pitlochry (for Strathardle), or Perth or Dundee from where transport would have to continue by car or bus.

For the Mount Blair area, public transport is available via two local buses: there is a school bus which is operated by Stagecoach and transports children between Bridge of Cally and Blairgowrie and the post bus that collects along the A93 between Blairgowrie,

Bridge of Cally, Dalrulzion Hotel Blacklunans and Spittal of Glenshee. Both routes run approximately 4 buses per day and are dictated by school opening hours.

Alyth is served by a bus service between Perth (via Blairgowrie) and Dundee, with several services a day, and also a service to Kirriemuir.

The limited public transport creates a higher dependence on personal cars. The level of car ownership is as follows;

Table 8

Cars/Vans ownership	Scotland	Perth & Kinross	Alyth	Bridge of Cally	Kirkmichael	Blacklunans
- % No car or van	34.23	23.67	26.16	8.00	26.09	5.77
- % 1 car or van	43.35	46.06	47.97	42.67	45.65	53.85
- % 2 cars or vans	18.62	24.62	20.93	41.33	23.91	34.62
- % 3 or more cars or vans	3.81	5.66	4.95	8.00	4.35	5.77

The figures above show that the level of car ownership in the area tends to be higher than the average for Perth and Kinross Council and Scotland, and in Mt Blair many households own more than one car – essential if two or more adults are to be able to travel independently. Figures for Alyth are more consistent with the Perth and Kinross average.

Following the publication of plans by Perth and Kinross Council on the location of a proposed car park in the Kirkmichael Village a community consultation event took place in March 2007 on the location and lay out of the car park. There was strong support in the village for the development of a car park at the site near to the village hall. The general view was that a car park would be well used, could encourage tourism but should be in keeping with the rural nature of the location.

There are a few community transport options for groups in the area requiring mini-bus hire. Perth and Kinross Council's adult education centre at Rowanbank in Blairgowrie has a minibus that can be hired by local groups. However, this is not

particularly handy for groups in the Glens. A more local option for them is the Compass Christian Centre in Glenshee, which also makes its minibus available to local groups. Another voluntary sector scheme in Blairgowrie & Rattray is the Freedom Coach, which runs a wheelchair accessible 15-seater minibus, providing transport for the elderly and mobility-impaired within the community. The Perth & Kinross Community Transport Group is an association of community minibus organisations, community car scheme organisers, Volunteer driver organisers and as well as the Public Transport Unit, Perth and Kinross Council. It may be able to advise with provision of community transport solutions for the area.

Cycle routes have been under discussion in both communities; a cycle route in the Straloch area linking to the school is highlighted as part of the consultation on the Core Paths Plan. Alyth have discussed developing cycle paths to link Alyth and New Alyth with the view to encouraging school children to cycle to school.

12. COMMUNICATIONS

Both communities are well served by a local newsletter and website.

The Alyth Voice is in its 118th monthly edition. This free newsletter is distributed to all households in Alyth and edited and published by a volunteer team. Costs are offset with local advertising. It serves to promote awareness of community activities and events and as a debating forum for local issues. The current newsletter and back issues are available on-line at the website www.alythvoice.co.uk.

Across the Glens is a quarterly newsletter, distributed to 240 households in Strathardle and Glenshee. It is edited by the Development Worker based at Kirkmichael Session House,

who also maintains a sister website, www.the-glens.org.uk, which acts as a live community noticeboard, information resource and directory. The Development Worker also maintains an email mailing list which is used to disseminate regular bulletins and key information updates to anyone who subscribes.

Funding has recently been obtained by a youth project in Blairgowrie to establish a network of electronic noticeboards at shops and community venues in the Glens, though the project is in the early stages.

Broadband communications are available in the area by most providers.

13. THE COMMUNITY'S VIEWS

In parallel with preparing this community profile, and in support of the establishment of the Drumderg Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund, the Scottish Community Foundation undertook a range of public consultation activities during August 2007. The objectives of these activities were to raise awareness of the Fund and to elicit the views of residents on how it might best meet local needs.

Consultation involved holding a public meeting in each of the Alyth and Mount Blair

areas and running drop-in sessions for people to speak to Foundation representatives. Details and attendance figures are given at Appendix 2. As part of the dialogue at these events, attendees were asked to consider which of a menu of potential funding themes and project types they would most like to see the Fund used to support and to score them accordingly.

The themes and project types which attracted the highest scores are indicated in Table 9 below:

Table 9: Residents' priorities

	Alyth	Mount Blair
	Themes, groups etc.	
1	Young People	Community facilities, leisure and recreation
2	Community facilities, leisure and recreation	Young people
3	Environment	Infrastructure, housing, transport and communications
4	Sport and exercise	Arts, culture and heritage
5	Community capacity building	Older people
6	Older People	Families and young children
	Project types	
1	Small capital projects <£50K	Small-scale community activity
2	Small-scale community activity	Equipment for local groups
3	Equipment for local groups	Small capital projects <£50K
4	Large capital projects >£50K	Running costs for community facilities and services
5	Events, festivals and social activities	Salaries for community workers

Shared priorities

Both areas rate **young people** and **community facilities, leisure and recreation** as the top priorities. Both also rate **older people** as important, though not the highest priority.

Supporting small-scale community activity by funding **running costs and equipment for local groups** are high priorities in both areas. There is also a common desire to see grants made to support **small-scale capital**

projects such as renovations and repairs to community facilities.

Differences

Mount Blair residents would like to see the fund supporting **arts, culture and heritage** projects. While they rated this as the 4th highest priority, it was the *least* popular theme for Alyth, with a number of people seeing it as definitely not a priority for the Fund.

Whilst **environmental** projects were rated reasonably highly in Mount Blair, this is a definite priority for Alyth residents, ranking 3rd out of 12 themes.

In 3rd place for Mount Blair, was infrastructure – though it was clear that this related principally to **transport** – a key issue for this widely dispersed rural population. Otherwise, this was a very low priority in Alyth, and a number of people considered it inappropriate for the Fund.

In Alyth, funding **larger capital projects** would be relatively popular, although this was one of the least highly supported project types in Mount Blair. Perhaps linked to this kind of project, Alyth residents seem reasonably happy with the Fund supporting **feasibility studies, consultancy and research**, but this is clearly not as popular with Mount Blair residents.

14. CONCLUSION

Although the Alyth, Strathardle and Glenshee areas benefit from a high quality of environment, strong community spirit, and reasonable levels of affluence and health, a few issues emerge from this profile.

The issue of access to services affects both communities, and particularly the Mount Blair area. Transport provision – especially for young people – is a key issue. Projects taking place in the area must seek to address accessibility, and may face additional costs in providing or arranging transport for users/members. Community transport initiatives that seek to provide solutions to the issue would be valuable.

Alternatively, projects which provide services and facilities locally will be welcomed and are certainly cited as important by residents. However, any new service or facility will need to consider long-term feasibility and running costs and be sure that sufficient demand exists to sustain it or justify ongoing subsidy. This is particularly true of large capital developments, such as new sports facilities or community buildings. Feasibility studies and development plans will be necessary before committing funding to any major project like this.

Given the large number of existing community facilities within the area, it is likely that in years to come, some will require upgrade, refurbishment or even replacement. Capital projects like this which require significant funds to be raised may benefit either from initial contributions to help lever-in the majority from other sources, or from final top-ups to complete a necessary funding package. It is important to recognise the value of a community hall to a fragile and small community. Even though the investment may be significant it is often justified, even if the potential number of users is low. It will be important to consider

this when facing requests for potentially large capital grants from the small communities in the Glens.

Attainment levels at the local high school do not keep up with the high achievements of the local authority area generally. In Rattray and Glenshee, a surprisingly high number of young girls are falling pregnant, and there is a high incidence of smoking during pregnancy (although this may be concentrated in neighbouring Rattray rather than the Glens themselves.) This suggests that initiatives that raise aspirations for young people, increase opportunities for their educational and personal development and provide access to lifestyle and health information are needed.

Mental health also emerges as one area in which the area's otherwise good health statistics are not matched. The danger of isolation, particularly in the dispersed and small communities in the Glens, is high, particularly for those that do not have access to transport. Projects which provide social opportunities, regular personal contact and support for those at risk of exclusion or experiencing difficulties in their lives will be helpful to address this. It may be appropriate to work with regional mental health projects or support groups to extend dedicated information/support services into the area.

A sustainable community requires economic opportunities for residents. Projects which seek to nurture new opportunities for employment or strengthen and diversify the local economy – particularly in the fragile communities in the Glens – should be encouraged, provided these remain within the charitable purposes of the fund. Not-for-profit enterprises (social enterprises) would be particularly valuable, ensuring that income is reinvested within the community. The Strathmore and the Glens Partnership, which describes itself as a development trust, may be a suitable partner or vehicle for initiatives in this area.



Alyth Pack Bridge

Although these themes emerge, rather than singling out a limited number of priority themes, groups or areas to be supported by additional funds, it would be appropriate to allow the scope of any new funding programme to be reasonably broad – particularly at the outset. Within such a small community, many projects of community benefit will impact on a range of needs and issues and benefit more than one section of the population.

However, where possible, projects to be supported should be part of a strategic approach to meeting the community's existing and future needs. We are aware the Alyth Community Council is intending to carry out a programme of action research within the community to determine a vision and potentially an action plan for the community. If that is a successful exercise and succeeds in creating community consensus around some key priorities or plans then, in due course, it would make sense for funds to be used to support projects that contribute to that strategy.

There will also be opportunities for funding to add value to other strategic initiatives, such as Alyth Climate Action Town.

We have noted the strong community sector in the area and the large number of community and voluntary groups working for the good of the community. Although this is an indicator of a strong community, in order to maximise the benefit of the funds available, it will be important to encourage information sharing and co-operation between groups. Generally, groups applying for funds should be expected to have discussed their ideas with other local groups, where relevant and seek opportunities to work in partnership.

It is important that new sources of funding do not replace other resources that the community could tap into (see Appendix 6), nor relieve the public authorities of their obligations to ensure appropriate resources are directed to areas of identified need. Instead they should be used wherever possible to add to or lever-in other funding, or to support projects and activities for which funding is hard to come by.

A concern expressed by many residents is that the availability of local grants should not reduce the emphasis on local fundraising, since coffee mornings and fundraising activities help to build the community spirit that is a feature of the community.

Many initiatives and projects seeking funding will be led by groups and organisations based in the area itself, as is desirable to ensure the most sustainable and appropriate solutions to meeting local needs, but it is worth noting that other organisations with a county-wide, regional or national remit may have a role to play in meeting the needs of the community and should not be excluded from accessing funds.

Projects with ongoing revenue costs will benefit from secure, long-term funding, giving them the ability to recruit high quality staff (long term contracts attracting a larger pool of applicants including those who might relocate), plan and invest for the future, and divert less time and effort to fundraising. Both communities currently experience the benefit of workers employed by local voluntary sector organisations: the Development Worker at Kirkmichael Session House, and Alyth Youth Partnership's Youth

Worker. Supporting such posts will always require grant funding. Although other external sources of funding should always be sought, a contribution from ring-fenced local funds may be needed to complete a funding package, or sustain a post during a funding gap. Although there can be resistance to the employment of workers within small communities, having a dedicated staff resource to 'make things happen' is often essential. Other opportunities may be identified to develop new services or initiatives which require such a worker, and the fund should consider supporting them.

However, much of the area's community activity is on a small scale, requiring relatively small amounts of funding to maintain and develop social networks and community spirit. Although this kind of activity can be supported through local fundraising events, there is a limit to how much money can be raised for the various local groups within a small community – particularly in the small populations in Mt Blair. While small grants are also available from a range of sources, the costs associated with a dispersed rural community and geographical remoteness make activities expensive despite the inevitably small number of people involved, which can make grants harder to obtain.

Making some provision for small grants for community groups would therefore also be appropriate.

Finally, one of the key elements to ensuring quality of life for the community will be the building of community capacity – the growth of skills, confidence and social infrastructure that will allow the residents of Alyth, Strathardle and Glenshee to shape, organise and deliver the services and facilities they need, now and in the future.

This will require training, specialist support and consultancy, as well as initiatives to engage an even greater proportion of the community in voluntary activity. These activities may be general or linked to specific new organisations, activities or developments and will represent a good investment of funds.



Mount Blair Kirkmichael Shop

In conclusion then, it is suggested that additional funds for Alyth, Strathardle and Glenshee should be used to address some or all of the following broad aims:

- To build community capacity and foster the sustainability of local initiatives
- Support the acquisition, development and use of new community assets, and maintain and enhance existing ones
- Support community organisations to enhance quality of life for all local people, but in particular creating social networks and opportunities that support the growing number of older people in the community
- Address the effects of rural isolation, improving access to services and improving transport options
- Encourage healthy lifestyles and good mental health
- Assist young people to maximise their potential and improve their life chances and promote better relationships between different generations
- Support skills development and non-profit making initiatives that will help lead to job creation and a diverse local economy
- Involve local people in the sensitive and sustainable stewardship of the natural environment and increase awareness and participation in activities that promote sustainable development.

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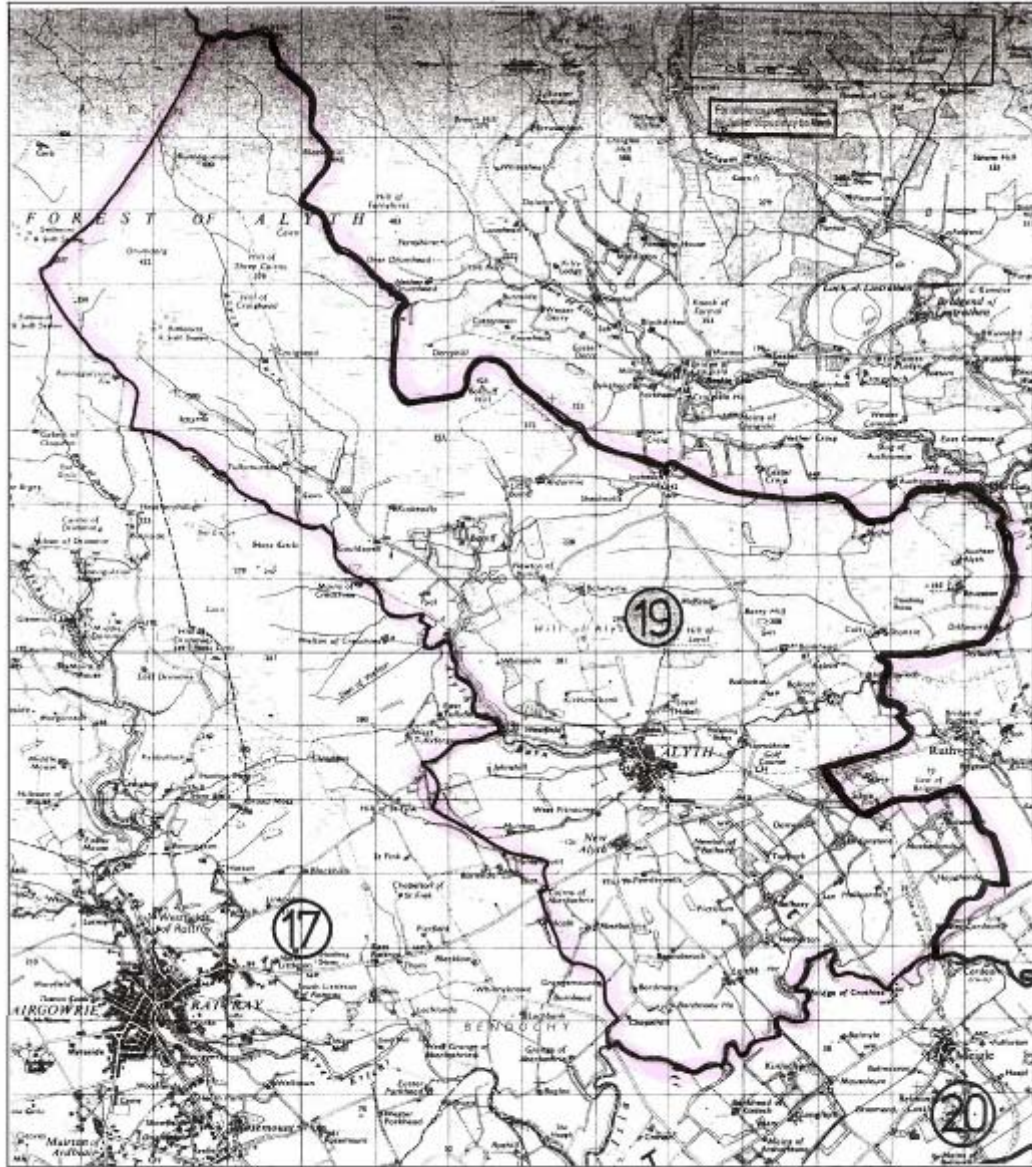
Alyth Voice, www.alythvoice.co.uk

The Glens: www.the-glens.co.uk

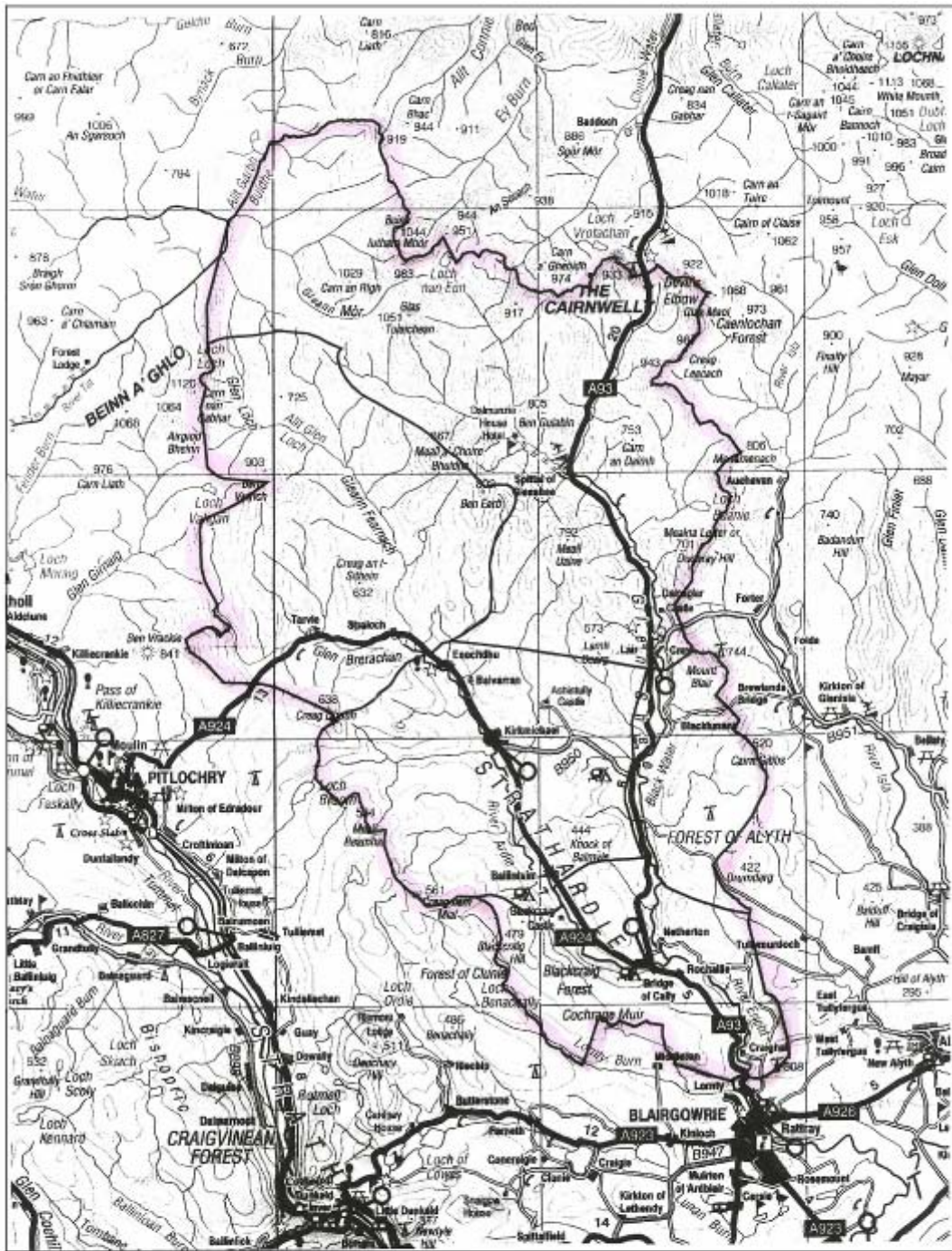
Appendix I

Maps

Map I- Alyth Community Council



Map 2- Mount Blair Community Council



Appendix 2

Public Consultation – attendance details

Drumderg Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund

Briefing Session & Open Forum

Briefing Session Bridge of Cally Village Hall Tuesday 21st August
Attendance: 17

Drop-in Session

Bridge of Cally Hall
Wednesday 22nd August
Attendance: 3

Kirkmichael Session House
Wednesday 22nd August
Attendance: 11

Over the 2 day consultation period the following organisations attended:

Strathardle 0-5's group
Enjukan Iaiado Club
Strathardle Archers
Kirkmichael Session House
Kirkmichael Hall Committee
Kirkmichael Youth Club
Strathmore Centre for Youth Dialogue
Blackwater Hall Committee
Scouts
Bridge of Cally Hall Committee
Mount Blair Community Council

Briefing and Open Forum

Airlie Street Hall
Thurs 30 Aug 2007

Attendance: 23

Drop-in sessions

Airlie Street Hall
Thurs 30 Aug 2007
Attendance: 18

Fri 31 Aug 2007
Attendance: 5

Over the two days, representatives of the following organisations attended:

Alyth Community Council
Tenants & Residents Association
Alyth District Business Association
Alyth Halls Association
Alyth Voice
Alyth Environmental Group
Alyth Climate Action Group
Alyth Out of School Care
Alyth Primary School Parent Council
Alyth Primary School Parents and Staff Association
Strathmore Arts Group
Alyth in Bloom
Alyth & District 50+ Group
Alyth Choral Union
Eco Church Committee
Royal British Legion
Alyth Parish Church
Alyth Youth Partnership
Scottish Country Dancing group
Ballroom Dancing Group

Appendix 3

List of groups meeting regularly

Alyth

- Alzheimer's Association
- Alyth Community Council
- Alyth Parish Church Congregation
- Parish Church Sunday School (Primary & 'Staircase' seniors)
- Alyth Parish Guild
- RC Congregation
- St Ninian's Church Congregation
- Tenants & Residents Association
- Alyth Badminton Club
- Alyth Crafts Group
- Alyth Writers Group
- Alyth Musical Society
- Alyth & District Pipe Band
- Alyth Christmas Lights Committee
- Alyth District Business Association
- Alyth Gala Association
- Alyth Halls Association
- Alyth Voice Committee
- Alyth Parent and Toddlers
- Alyth Environmental Group
- Alyth Climate Action Town
- Alyth Out of School Club
- Alyth Primary School Parent Council
- Alyth Primary School Parents and Staff Association
- Alyth Scouts and Explorers
- Alyth Brownies, Rainbows and Guides
- Strathmore Arts Group
- Alyth in Bloom
- Alyth & District 50+ Group
- Alyth Choral Union
- Eco Church Committee
- Royal British Legion (meets at Bowling Club)
- Bowling and Tennis Club
- Alyth Parish Church
- Alyth Youth Partnership, incl.
 - Skateboard group
 - Girls group
 - Under-13s football team
- Scottish Country Dancing group
- Ballroom Dancing Group
- Soft Tennis (Airlie St Halls)
- Alyth AFC (Amateur Football Club)
- Alyth & District Rambling Group
- Alyth Adult Education Association
- Alyth Community Youth Theatre
- Alyth Show Committee
- [There is no active Boys or Girls Brigade]

Mount Blair

- Cally Crafters
- Strathardle Brownies/Scouts/Cubs
- Kirkmichael Youth Club
- Country Dancing (Kirkmichael)
- Kirkmichael Village Hall
- Strathardle 0-5's (Re-starting soon)
- Kirkmichael SWRI
- Glenshee Women's Group
- Bridge of Cally SWRI
- Carpet Bowlers – Bridge of Cally
- Art Group
- SKYD – Blairgowrie but local children attend
- Glenshee Fire Brigade (Volunteer)
- Hip Hop and Dancing at Ballintuin Hall
- PTA's x3
- Glenshee Curling Club
- Mountain Rescue
- Kirkmichael in Bloom
- Strathardle Archers

Activities in the Kirkmichael Session House

- Wednesday Drop In/book swap
- Children's Games Night
- Bring and Buy
- Talks
- Children's craft classes
- Computer classes

Strathmore & the Glens Rural Partnership also covers the area and many of the above groups are members. It is established as a development trust group to facilitate the implementation of ideas which would improve the way of life across a broad sweep of the countryside and diverse communities in Eastern Perthshire. Strathmore and The Glens represents all communities covered by the Blairgowrie High School catchment area.

Appendix 4

Regular or annual events

Alyth

- Alyth Gala
- Jam in the Den (music festival)
- AYP Youth Festival
- Christmas Lights Switch-On
- Victoria Day
- Alyth Show
- Easter/New Years Day Walk Up Alyth Hill
- Bingo Teas/Coffee Mornings
- Quizzes
- Citizen of the Year Award
- Blairgowrie and East Perthshire Walking Festival
- Fancy Dress Victorian Day

Mount Blair

Kirkmichael

- Concerts
- Kirkmichael in Bloom
- Strathardle Games
- Summer Festival
- Strathardle Archers
- Bring and Buy

Bridge of Cally

- Concerts

Glenshee

- Glenshee Fire Brigade (Volunteer)
- Hip Hop and Dancing at Glenshee Hall
- PTA's x3
- Glenshee Curling Club
- Mountain Rescue

Blacklunans/Blackwater Hall

- Burns supper
- Easter Dance
- Summer BBQ
- Whist Drive
- Children's and pensioners parties
- Christmas Dance
- New Year Drop In
- Cally Crafters
- START Festival

Appendix 5

Physical facilities

Alyth

- Alyth Primary School – with Community Wing
 - Health Centre
 - Fire Station (retained)
 - Police Station
 - Library

 - Airlie Street Hall (Church owned)
 - Oglivy Rooms (managed by Alyth Halls Assoc.)
 - Alyth Town Hall (Alyth Halls Assoc.), incorporating:
 - Main hall, with stage and gallery seating area
 - PC-equipped office available for community use
 - Council Chamber
 - Two other meeting rooms (one allocated for Police use)
 - Cellar space (currently unused)
 - Guide Hut
 - Scout Hall

 - Alyth Parish Church (Church of Scotland)
 - St Ninian's Episcopal Church
 - RC Chapel

 - School sports field
 - Diamond Jubilee Park Playing Fields, incl. children's play area
 - Bowling and Tennis Club
 - 3 nearby golf clubs:
 - Alyth Golf Club
 - Glenisla Golf Club
 - Strathmore Golf Centre (9 and 18-hole courses plus driving range)

 - Range of shops including mini-markets, newsagent, baker, hairdresser, ironmonger, chemist, pet shop.
 - Sub post office
 - Royal Bank of Scotland branch

 - Alyth Museum (managed by P&K Council)

 - The Lands of Loyal Hotel (4 star)
 - Alyth Hotel*
 - The Bridges Café*
- * These provide publicly accessible toilets in lieu of public conveniences
- 3 or 4 pubs/bars
 - Chinese Take-Away; Fish and Chip shop
 - Number of B&Bs and self-catering establishments
 - Five Roads Caravan Park

 - Classic Restorations - Vintage vehicle repair workshop
 - Central Garage - filling station and vehicle repair workshop
 - Airlie Garage - vehicle repairs

Other venues for community activity

- Den of Alyth: Jam in the Den music event

Mount Blair

- Blackwater Community Hall
- Bannerfield, Kirkmichael – open spaces for sport/ highland games
- Kirkmichael Session House
- Kirkmichael Village Hall
- Kirkmichael Fire Station
- Glenshee Church
- The Pottery – Glenshee
- Compass Christian Centre – outdoor activities
- Glenshee Fire Station
- Kirkmichael School – sports/tennis courts
- Church of Scotland – Kirkmichael, Glenshee and Netherton
- Ballintuin Hall
- Ballintuin Episcopal Church
- Bridge of Cally Village Hall

Appendix 6

Local grant funding sources available

Name	Type of grants available	Notes
Gannochy Trust	Vary from £1K to £1M for wide range of projects. Some focus on youth and recreation, but supports wide range of causes.	Distributes c.£3M/yr across Scotland, but preference for Perthshire. Registered charities only.
<p>Perth and Kinross Grants Direct</p> <p>A number of local funders work in partnership through this initiative providing a 'One Stop Shop' for access to funding, and using a single application form. Collectively, in 2006/07, Perth and Kinross Grants Direct helped local funders to process 423 applications and distributed 314 grants totalling £1,081,088. The following funding sources are part of P&K Grants Direct</p>		
Alyth Common Good Fund	Small grants, e.g. c.£200 to Scouts, £100 to Gala Committee	Committee of elected members and Council officers.