Upperton is a village in North Lanarkshire, Scotland, near Airdrie and Cumbernauld, about 20 miles north-east of Glasgow.

Upperton was formerly a part of the neighbouring village of Longriggend, but changed its name in 2013 to Upperton to become a separate village in its own right; the name of 'Upperton' was adopted from a local farm. This was done to reduce the village’s associations with a formal penal establishment, the Scottish Prison Service’s Longriggend Remand Centre, which originally led to the development of the village to house staff.

During the 1900’s a tuberculosis sanatorium was operational on the site that the village now occupies, operating until 1958 when the hospital was converted into Longriggend Remand Centre which closed in 2000 and was demolished in 2007.

Maintenance disputes between the Scottish Prison Service and North Lanarkshire Council have left residents angry about the neglect of the infrastructure around the 75 or so houses and flats built in the 1960s to house prison staff. As the vast majority of the village is privately owned, and there has been ongoing problems relating to the responsibility of upkeep of spaces and properties within Upperton over the years. The lack of clarity has led to continual deterioration of much of the village infrastructure, compounding the challenges already facing residents in trying to bring infrastructure up to a suitable standard.

Upperton previously had a community action plan prepared for Upperton Residents’ Committee which has been superseded by this Plan. The findings of the previous action plan showed that local priority areas for the community were demolition of disused garages in the area; the better maintenance/tidying of green areas; and a safe area for the children to play.
Much of the community action within Upperton is led by the Upperton Residents’ Committee who recently secured funding to build a MUGA in the village which has provided much needed space for young people to play in the village. The MUGA is owned by the committee; the structure has now been completed with work on associated landscaping for the MUGA ongoing. Clydesdale Community Initiatives have recently installed benches on the site of the MUGA in an effort to engender more interest and positive use from residents.

A small outdoor space in Upperton with seating and planting is well maintained by the community, and offers an excellent recreation area and has great potential for enhancement.

In November 2013, full planning permission was granted to Equinox Homes to build 58 new houses on the site of the former remand centre. Planning permission for this proposed new development recently lapsed without any construction work being undertaken. Equinox Homes own a number of sites throughout Upperton for which they are responsible for ongoing maintenance. Many sites however are not currently well maintained.

There are around 40 garages in Upperton, many of which are unused and in a seriously dilapidated condition. Ownership disputes relating to these garages has prevented repair and demolition work from being undertaken; many of the garages are owned by absentee landlords. Absentee landlords including Ahuja Holdings also own and rent a number of flats in the village which they are responsible for maintaining.

Road, pavement, and storm drainage infrastructure have for a long time been priority issues as they remain unadopted by North Lanarkshire Council (NLC), however they require significant upgrading to meet the NLC standard to be adopted. A previous proposal from NLC and Scottish Prison Service (SPS) to support the community to upgrade local infrastructure was rejected by the previous Longriggend Residents Association, NLC have so far supported the community by upgrading and adopting the street lighting in the village. Upperton Residents Association did manage, with support from NLC, to put the adoption of the roads and storm drain to a council vote last year, however councillors voted against the decisions.

Upperton has no other amenities or facilities within the village which means that residents need to travel elsewhere to access all services and activities. This is hindered by a lack of public transport with only an hourly bus to Airdrie available. The closest GP practice is now located in Airdrie after the practice in Caldercruix closed down.

### Population
- The population of Upperton is estimated at around 163
- 20% of residents are under 16; 75% are working age; and 5% are ages 65 or over
- The working age proportion of the population is significantly higher than what is seen across North Lanarkshire and Scotland (both 66%)
- The average age is 34.2 years old

### Health
- Male life expectancy is 76.3 years, lower than the Scottish average of 77.1 years
- Female life expectancy is 83.2 years, higher than the Scottish average of 81.1 years
- 83% of people rate their health as good or very good; only 4% rate it as bad or very bad
- 17 people in Upperton are carers

### Income & Employment
- The level of income deprivation in Upperton is 14%
- 52% of people work full time, 11% work part time, and 4% of people are self employed
- 4% of residents are retired
- The unemployment rate is 9.6%, compared to 4.8% across Scotland

### Housing
- 30% of households are made up of families with dependent children; 6% higher than the Scottish average
- 75% of homes are owned; compared to 62% nationally
- The average number of persons per household is 2.6; higher than the Scottish average of 2.2

### Education
- 75% of 16-17 year olds are in education; compared to 80% across Scotland
- 8% of 17-21 year olds enter in to full time higher education
- 10% of people aged 16-19 are not in full time education, employment or training
- Wider educational attainment is similar to the Scottish average; 46% of residents have achieved qualifications at Level 2 or higher compared to 50% nationally

### Access to Services
- 100% of the population live in the 25% most access deprived areas of Scotland
- The average number of cars per household is 1.4
- 87% of people travel to work by car compared to 62.4% nationally; 11% use public transport to get to work
- Average drive times to GP surgery, primary and secondary schools, Post Office, and a petrol station are all below 10 minutes; public transport travel times are higher
The community consultation carried out in support of this plan used a three-stage approach; this allowed us to draw out priority themes and issues early on, then test the popularity of potential actions focused on those themes with the community over the next two stages.

The Place Standard is a tool that is used to assess the quality of a place by providing a simple framework to structure conversations about place. In Upperton’s case we used the tool to help identify priorities for development in the village. This was delivered as a workshop with Community Plan steering group members where, after a discussion around each aspect of Upperton, we were able to identify some of the key issues affecting the village and where village priorities were most likely focussed.

Using these identified priorities as a starting point a survey was created which asked community members to say how important they felt a number of potential actions were, this was the second stage of the consultation. These actions related to the priority themes identified in the Place Standard. This process allowed for an effective prioritisation of all activities and actions listed in the survey. The survey was posted to every household in Upperton, and an online version was also made available.

The third stage of the consultation involved hosting a pop-up community drop in event in the village which all community members were invited along to. The drop in was designed to ask questions which built on the actions identified by residents as most important to them during Stage 2; allowing us to flesh out actions and activities into more viable and detailed project ideas. The drop in also offered a chance to discuss the Plan with community members face to face, allowing them to see how their priority issues were being actioned as the consultation progressed, and offering residents an opportunity to input their own ideas and suggestions directly. This approach enabled us to develop more robust projects which better reflect what people living in Upperton want to see.

We received 36 survey responses from the community; 24 of these were paper surveys returned via post and 12 were online responses. This was a response rate of 49% of households and approximately 22% of the total population of the village. You can see below each of the activities listed in the survey and the percentage of the population who thought they were either very important or important.

### Transport & Traffic
- Improve quality of roads and pavements: 97%
- Introduce community bus initiative: 75%
- Traffic calming measures on local roads: 67%
- Lower kerbs for wheelchair access: 63%
- Increase parking availability in the village: 50%
- Improve walking route to bus stop: 50%
- Address unnecessary heavy ton vehicles on roads: 47%

### Local Activities
- More activities for young people in local area: 75%
- More community events: 67%
- Set up community development trust: 67%
- Increase availability of evening classes/ clubs: 42%
- Create a miners memorial in village: 33%

### Sports & Leisure
- More play facilities for young children: 61%
- Introduce community allotments: 56%
- Create a community garden: 44%
- Outdoor gym equipment: 28%
- Regular activities/ sports at new MUGA: 28%

### Environment
- Address fly tipping issues: 100%
- Better maintenance of village’s outdoor spaces: 92%
- Address derelict sites in village e.g. prison fence: 89%
- Address dog fouling in village: 83%
- Better tree/ hedge maintenance on road to Upperton: 81%
- Improve access to local natural space: 64%

### Infrastructure
- Address derelict garages: 92%
- Improve surface drainage: 83%
- Improve entrance features in the village: 75%
- Take local land into community ownership: 67%
- Enhance local cycling infrastructure: 53%
Other Comments from Residents

“If there is any spare land, build a park because there will be young children coming to village.”

“Dog walking area with bins supplied”

“More buses e.g. to Cumbernauld and buses on until later at night”

“To have the local authority adopt the roads and footpaths within the village”

“More playparks, community hall, shop etc.”

“Vehicle mirrors across from the crescent and the farm road to allow traffic to be able to see other cars coming down from old Longriggend”

“I think we should have the speed limit reduced to 40 from the bottom of the hill to the top”

“Walking/cycling path to Greengairs. Raised junctions as traffic calming measure, road improvement and disabled friendly crossing.”

“The maintenance/ improvement of roads and being adopted by North Lanarkshire council. Getting rid of the lock ups to free much needed car parking spaces.”

“Landscaping and floral display area”

“Either improve the practicality and appearance of the garages or replace them with parking spaces”

“Use this space for a community garden”

“Remove derelict garages and create tarred parking areas.”

“Ensure owners maintain garages to a serviceable standard.”

“I would want them removed because they are dangerous.”

“Pulled down and rebuild.”

“Allotments”

“Either refurb to rent them out if there is demand or remove and make extra parking or wider road for the flats”

“Secure car park for residents.”

“Demolish and turn into car park spaces.”

“Lined parking spaces for cars and bikes.”

“Garages demolished and a swing park for the smaller kids”

“We also asked community members if they had any ideas for how the underused garages could be repurposed or improved.”

“Secure car park for residents.”

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“Garages demolished and a swing park for the smaller kids”

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“Garages demolished and a swing park for the smaller kids”

“We also asked community members if they had any ideas for how the underused garages could be repurposed or improved.”
Findings on the most popular activities and actions identified by the community in the survey.

Where would you like to see a community bus route from Upperton to?
What time of day would you be most likely to make use of a community bus?
The most popular destinations were Glasgow, Airdrie, and Cumbernauld, with the main additional suggestion being Falkirk. The bus service was a big issue for residents with the limited service only running between 9am-6pm. This means people have to pay for expensive taxis (£20 one-way) in the evening to get to Airdrie; residents were keen to have a later service which would allow people to go into town for dinner and drinks etc. Evenings and weekends were therefore the most popular choices for times of day for a community bus to run.

What activities for young people would you like to see in Upperton?
The most popular activities for young people were sports clubs, arts/music club, volunteering/training, and ‘chill out area’. The similar level of interest in a number of options showed that residents are keen to see any kind of activities happening in Upperton that benefit young people.

What type of village entrance features would you prefer to see in Upperton?
There was an equal level of support for all suggested village entrance features; signage planting and artwork were the suggested improvements and residents responded positively to them all. Comments were made about the primary importance of having a sign however, with artwork being indicated as less of a priority.

Priority Actions
- Taking flat into community ownership
- Addressing vacant and derelict land (garages and former prison site)
- Maintenance and upkeep of roads and public spaces
- Provision for young people
- Addressing speeding
- Maintaining and building sense of community
If a Community Development Trust was set up in Upperton, what sort of projects would you like to see them undertake locally?

- Community flat - if a flat became available services could utilise it e.g. GP, etc outreach work, activities for kids
- Supporting and encouraging young people
- Recycle bins
- Get rid of garages then use as car parking or ones that can be saved to be used by the community for storage
- Grocery van to come round village once or twice a week. Already have a weekly fishmonger van but would like a similar grocery van
- Need heritage info about local area & history
- People want to know what is happening with the vacant site where the prison was
- General maintenance of the area - dumped material/rubble, especially as you come into village
- Garages need to come down - derelict areas
- Community litter pick and small scale maintenance
- Create new / enhance existing cycle paths between villages
Community Priorities

Parking
Addressing limited parking availability in the village was another key priority for residents. Currently there is significant on-street parking in Upperton, particularly at the top end of the village on Dervaig Gardens where the flats are located. While there are garages available, most of them are in a state of disrepair and are effectively unusable meaning that the households who would use them are instead having to park in the street. Many of the households in the village have driveways, however as many have more than one car, additional parking spaces are required.

Garages
There are currently approximately 40 garages/lock ups in Upperton, many of which are seriously dilapidated with doors missing, roofs collapsed and exposed wiring; many have been fenced off however a small number are maintained and used for storage. The garages are also prone to fly tipping with unwanted rubbish and furniture being dumped inside them. The overwhelming consensus among residents during consultation was to demolish all the garages in order to make space for the provision of painted parking bays. Uncertainty over the current ownership of all garages however could prevent this as all owners would need to be in agreement before works could be undertaken on the sites.

Outdoor space
Improved maintenance of the various outdoor spaces within the village is another priority within Upperton. North Lanarkshire Council do not maintain any spaces within the village as it is all private land, however maintenance issues were also identified on the unnamed approach road to the village with hedges and trees overgrown onto the road and pavements; responsibility for these should be identified and improvements made. Currently maintenance of the outdoor space on Dervaig Gardens and The Crescent is undertaken communally by the community and residents themselves take responsibility for their own gardens. Common outdoor areas between the blocks of flats are the responsibility of the flat property owners and residents felt there is scope for these spaces to be better maintained.

Young people's activities
This was one of the top priorities in the community survey responses, and many community members who attended the drop in were very keen to see more things for young people. It was felt however that young people would be best placed to decide for themselves what they want to see happening in Upperton. The recently completed MUGA in the village has been very popular and offers an excellent opportunity to build on youth engagement locally. Residents also discussed their desire to see better availability of the Stanrigg Centre in Greengairs for delivering activities for young people, as currently they felt it was difficult to access and there was little on offer. Community groups like the Residents' Committee should engage with young people, and perhaps set up a youth sub-committee, to find out what they support and what young people would like to see happening.

Speeding
Speeding on the unnamed road which goes round the village was identified as a major issue and residents were in favour of traffic calming measures on the approach to the village, particularly given the poor visibility caused by the corner at the entry junction to the village. North Lanarkshire Council should be engaged on this issue as they have responsibility over this road. Speeding within the village was also raised by a number of residents, should the issue persist it could be beneficial and appropriate to introduce traffic calming measures as part of the road and pavement improvements whenever they are undertaken.

High Tenant Turnover
Many local residents discussed the high turnover of tenants in the flats in Upperton as something they would like to see improved. Any improvements or enhancements made within the village could encourage more people to live here longer term creating an even stronger community; projects delivered through this plan could help with this regeneration. To achieve this it is essential for all stakeholders, including North Lanarkshire Council to engage with landlords to ensure appropriate high standards of maintenance within their properties. There is also potential for exploring a social housing buy-out of any properties which are not of an acceptable standard; this would ensure that all properties are being properly maintained and residents supported by a regulated body.

Site of former prison
Residents were keen to see improvements made to the site of the former prison as there are still significant issues with the site in its current state including safety concerns, leftover debris, and regular fly tipping. The remand centre was closed in 2000 and demolished soon after however very visible traces of the building still remain including the perimeter fence which was recently removed; however the concrete base and a very small section of the metal fence connecting it to the base were left. The jagged remnants of the fence are potentially very dangerous and the community want to see these removed along with all other parts of the prison’s footprint, however uncertainty over ownership and responsibility have meant work to repair these issues has stalled. Proposals from Equinox Homes Ltd. to build 58 houses on the former site were granted planning permission in 2013 however this has since lapsed; many residents indicated during the consultation that they were keen to see these proposals taken forward. A housing development would address the issues apparent on this derelict site and bring more people to live in the community which would be a boost for advocating for the provision of more services and better support.
The following sections of the Plan provide details on a number of potential projects and action points for the community to take forward. They have been designed to address the demands and aspirations of local people identified during the community consultation.

There are four project outlines. These are ideas which the community could take forward themselves, with support from partner organisations.

- Community Garden
- Play Park
- Community Flat
- Environmental Action Group

There are three joint projects. These are ideas which may be more feasible for neighbouring communities to undertake in partnership, sharing resources and benefiting a larger number of residents, making the project more viable in the long run.

- Development Trust
- Development Worker
- Community Bus

There are four action points. Action points are things that the community are unlikely to be able to deliver themselves, but which the community can advocate on their own behalf, using the plan as evidence, to organisations who are better places to affect that specific type of development.

- Adopting Roads and Pavements
- Demolish Garages
- Fly Tipping & Littering
- Outdoor Maintenance

The projects outlined in the following pages have been designed to meet some of the demands identified by the local community. The onus should be on local people to take these ideas forward as a community; identifying suitable leader groups and organisations, as well as local volunteers who can to help make activities happen. Any community members who want to take these projects forward or to start new community groups should feel encouraged to do so, and can use this plan as a starting point.

Windfarm Monies

Upperton is due to begin receiving circa £25,000 every year for 25 years from 2020 up until 2045 through community benefit funding from Muirhall Energy windfarm. This will be paid directly to Upperton Residents’ Committee and will provide an excellent source of funding for any projects that the community want to take forward.

Other communities that have received community benefit money from windfarm developments have used the money to fund projects including staff costs for development trusts, community farms, provision of crisis and homelessness support, community swap shops, Scout groups, and gala days.

Any decisions about how community benefit monies should be spent should be made by the whole community, ensuring that there is consensus about how funds are distributed. All community organisations are eligible to apply for a portion of any community benefit monies. Applications should be made to the Upperton Residents’ Committee, the board of which will make the decision on how monies are allocated.

Community Development Trust

Setting up a Community Development Trust would offer an excellent means of delivering the various action and projects detailed within this plan, as a Community Development Trust could provide support to the Residents’ Committee to carry out certain tasks which the Committee would not be able to such as employing staff. The development trust would combine community-led action with an enterprising approach to address and tackle local needs and issues. The aim of the development trust would be to create social economic & environmental renewal within Upperton, creating wealth within that area & keeping it there.

Contact: Development Trust Association of Scotland (DTAS) www.dtascot.org.uk info@dtascot.org.uk

Rural Development Trust www.ruraldevtrust.co.uk info@ruraldevtrust.co.uk

Community Land Ownership

Through engaging with Community Land Scotland, the Upperton Community will receive support and advice to assess the options relating to the garages (and any other specific areas) and, if viable, undertake a community wide ballot to get agreement to buy these and take the garages and the land they sit upon into community ownership.

Contact: Community Land Scotland www.communitylandscotland.org.uk info@communitylandscotland.org.uk
**Community Garden**

**Summary Proposal**
This project will enable the development of a community garden or communal allotment site for food growing for Upperton. The space would also enable local residents to take part in other activities which could be delivered on site such as gardening training and composting, as well as providing an area for formal planting. The garden would create a greenspace for people to come together and socialise which could also host community events with benches and tables provided to encourage people to use the space, with the potential for other resources to be included such as a gazebo and shed. The garden would provide a valuable community resource which, dependent on size, could also accommodate other amenities (play park, outdoor gym equipment etc.) which are popular among the community. The garden could become a focal point for ongoing village development, providing a starting point and introduction for residents to community action, through which they can feel more empowered to get involved in other local regeneration activities.

**Existing Provision**
Upperton benefits from a rural location however lacks a public park or a formal communal greenspace. There is a small informal outdoor space which is maintained by the community, and has the potential to be enhanced to provide a better greenspace for Upperton. With the majority of residents living in flat properties with access to only limited or no garden space this project is recognised as a priority.

**Supporting Evidence**
The need for improved Sports and Leisure facilities was a priority with the 2nd highest priority in this category for the introduction of community allotments (56%) followed by creation of a community garden (44%). When residents were asked what they you like to see in a community garden allotments were the most popular choice among community members followed by community events, gardening training, formal planting and benches, which all saw similar levels of support among residents.

**Funding Options**
- North Lanarkshire Council Community Grants
- Scottish Landfill Communities Fund (FCC Scottish Action Fund, Landtrust, Viridor)
- Peoples Post Code Lottery
- Climate Challenge Fund

**Potential Partners**
- Community Action Lanarkshire
- Central Scotland Green Network Trust
- Clydesdale Community Initiatives (CCI)
- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- North Lanarkshire Council Environmental Services
- Keep Scotland Beautiful

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**Play Park**

**Summary Proposal**
This proposal would be to develop a new public play park for Upperton. With such a development there needs to be a formal arrangement in place to protect the safety of the public and children and young people using play equipment through public liability insurance and systems for inspection, management and maintenance of facilities. The provision of play facilities is most commonly provided through the local authority which would require the play equipment selected to fit with appropriate and certificated safety standards. This then enables councils to adopt play equipment and include within their duties for management and maintenance. Alternatively a community owned park could be developed, led by a constituted community organisation which can provide a means to secure funding and to build the park and take on management duties. For smaller organisations and ones with limited income streams this can be challenging for a voluntary group to have the capacity and resource to manage facilities. Another option is for a partnership arrangement to be developed where a community organisation takes lease or ownership of an area of land, secures funding for build of the park and installation of play equipment and North Lanarkshire Council take responsibility for public liability and management, or the community engage a contractor to deal with inspection and maintenance. This partnership can identify and allocate shared duties where the community group may take on duties for inspections, tidy ups and grass cuts and the council takes on public liability and more major repairs and replacement works. Further community consultation particularly with children and young people can determine the details of the play facilities, the type of play equipment to be installed and the preferred location, design and layout of the park. The proposed play park could be located in the grassy area adjacent to Luckenhill Drive. If this area was able to be purchased by the community, as it would offer excellent access from both ends of the village.

**Existing Provision**
There are no play parks and a general lack of safe open public greenspaces in Upperton would at least provide space for informal play. There are several derelict spaces in the village including derelict garages and their surroundings which pose a hazard to the safety of children and young people. The nearest formal play park is in Greengairs 2.5 miles from Upperton and Pallaceriggs Country Park (2.6 miles) offers a range of play and recreation facilities.

**Supporting Evidence**
The consultation survey identified the need for better sports and leisure facilities as one of the key priorities to enhance Upperton. Within this category, the survey identified the most important action was to provide more play facilities for young children (61%). There are a number of young families living in Upperton that would benefit from access to a safe public play park and with a large proportion of residents living in tenements with no private gardens there is a need to provide such a resource.

**Funding Options**
- Scottish Landfill Communities Fund (FCC Scottish Action Fund, Landtrust, Viridor)
- North Lanarkshire Council Countryside and Park Department
- Morrisons Foundation

**Potential Partners**
- Community Action Lanarkshire
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire
- Greengairs Primary School / PTA (Upperton children’s inclusion in planning and build of the park)
Summary Proposal
Upperton is lacking in the provision of community facilities for the delivery of activities and services, this has negatively impacted on the ability of local people to address some of the other issues which affect the community such as social isolation and poor health. The resulting lack of opportunities has contributed to the physical and social decline of the village which has in turn made it difficult to attract new people and families to move to Upperton. This has led to many of the housing units in the tenement blocks either lying vacant or having a high turnover of tenants. This proposal is to bring at least one of these flats back into use for the benefit of the community by creating Upperton Community Flat. This flat will become a new community space and asset for the village which will provide a social hub accessible to residents of all ages and to provide a base for small events and outreach services. The community would be able to use the flat free of charge to run classes and activities which are of interest and benefit to the community in a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment, as well as being able to host meetings and events. The flat would be run by a voluntary management committee who would work with local residents and young people, encouraging them to become involved in community projects and activities, helping to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and working together to promote a sense of pride back into the area. The project could be supported by a staff post that would coordinate the day to day running of activities in the flat and reduce the pressure and responsibility on the voluntary management committee.

Existing Provision
Upperton is a small isolated village with no community facilities, churches or shops which can provide either formal or informal hubs to benefit the social life of the village. Current community meetings often take place in the homes of local people which doesn’t offer the most suitable premises for the variety of community needs in Upperton. The nearest community facility available is Stanrigg Community Centre in Greengairs which residents noted had limited availability and was difficult to book.

Supporting Evidence
The lack of any facilities for the community to host activities was raised by the community throughout the consultation. Lack of facilities and amenities was raised by the Steering Group during the Place Standard workshop as a major weakness of the village. Discussion with residents during the drop in event identified local support for a community flat to create a small accessible hub for people and groups to meet which could also be made available for service delivery e.g. GPs, outreach work, activities for children.

Funding Options
- Clothworkers Foundation
- Tudor Trust
- Coalfields Regeneration Trust - Coalfields Community Investment Programme
- The National Lottery Community Fund (Scotland) - Community led activities

Potential Partners
- North Lanarkshire Council
- NHS Lanarkshire
- Men’s Shed
- North Lanarkshire Youth Work

Environmental Action Group
Summary Proposal
Upperton has been badly affected by the decline of the village following closure of the former remand home as one of the main employers locally and with a lack of investment in streets, land and property which has left much of the village and surrounding environment in a poor state of repair. There are several eyesores in the village including a large number of derelict garages and the cleared site of the former remand homes. This project would be to stimulate the community to set up volunteer initiatives to enhance the environment and streetscape of Upperton and to engage local people so residents and groups take pride in their community and their environment. The Action Group would have a dual role: firstly to put pressure on the council, property owners and partners to take steps to improve the environment including delivery of statutory responsibilities or owner responsibilities to the repair and upkeep of space; the second being taking the lead in local action projects to achieve practical environmental improvements. The Action Group could take care of and enhancing the natural areas surrounding the village, bringing about improvements to the appearance of the village where needed, encouraging local people to take part in environmental activities in the village and surrounds. The work of the Action Group would support general upgrades around the village. Other similar groups in the area have created village entrance features, planting barrels and community gardens.

Existing Provision
There are no existing community action groups in Upperton that would be best placed to instigate this type of project i.e. hands on environmental works; Upperton does however have a Residents’ Committee who advocate on the community’s behalf. NLC responsibility is limited, with the Council only carrying out refuse-collection and maintaining lighting; NLC do not undertake any maintenance of outdoor areas within the village. Disputes over land ownership in Upperton have inhibited development of the land and led to ongoing maintenance issues. Absent landowners have been unwilling to upgrade sites and the community have had to undertake ad hoc litter picks and environmental improvements, such as the raised beds at The Crescent, themselves.

Supporting Evidence
The community consultation identified that improvements to the Environment and Infrastructure were key priorities to enhance Upperton. The most popular action among residents in the community survey was to address fly tipping, with better maintenance of village’s outdoor spaces identified as the second most important action for residents. During the community drop in event there was a similar level of interest for all of the suggested improvements which could be made in Upperton such as flower planting and entrance features; these are all activities which a well organised Environmental Action Group could undertake. In terms of specific areas people felt needed improved, it was clear that improvements of various sizes throughout the village were needed, from small scale litter picks to complete redevelopment of the vacant remand centre site; some of the small actions could be delivered by an Action Group.

Potential Partners
- Keep Scotland Beautiful
- Community Action Lanarkshire
- Clydesdale Community Initiatives (CCI)
- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)

Funding Options
- North Lanarkshire Community Grants
- Awards for All
- Volunteering Matters - Action Earth Awards
Joint Projects

These projects could potentially be undertaken in partnership with other communities in the local area. By pooling resources multiple communities could support the development of beneficial projects which one single community would likely be unable to support long term.

Development Trust

Setting up a Community Development Trust (CDT) could potentially cover a number of communities in the local area including Upperton. The CDT would have an open membership to all people living and working in the area, with the purpose to achieve a broad range of community renewal objectives for Upperton. As a charitable organisation (SCIO) the CDT would be managed by a local voluntary management committee drawn from this membership. This Community Action Plan would inform the CDT of the main priorities for area regeneration. The CDT would have powers to raise funds, acquire land and employ staff in order to achieve community renewal goals. There is no existing CDT for Upperton or covering this wider rural district of North Lanarkshire.

Development Officer

A development officer could be employed by the community, through a Community Development Trust or through a strategic partner, to help coordinate and deliver the projects detailed within this community plan. The development officer would be funded by external grant funding and could work across multiple communities in the area, each of whom would contribute financially to the staff costs; windfarm community benefit monies could support this post would alleviate the responsibility on the community to deliver the projects that are important to them, and would help to coordinate community action meaning that local residents could be involved in projects without having to commit an unrealistic amount of time to develop, monitor, and evaluate projects. Currently there is no development worker for the local community to coordinate action, meaning that residents have to undertake all activity independently, or rely on North Lanarkshire Council and VANL to support them. This has placed a significant amount of pressure on the Residents’ Committee to engage with the council and to bring projects to fruition.

Community Bus

The development of a volunteer led transport initiative could offer a more accessible and responsive transport option to local communities that helps people to stay independent, participate in their communities and access vital public services and employment. The project would provide a flexible and community-led solution in response to the currently unmet local transport needs of local people, particularly vulnerable and isolated people, often older people or people with disabilities, who do not have access to private transport, and for the wider population who would benefit from an alternative to expensive taxis in evenings and at weekends to nearby town centres.

The community would benefit from a community bus initiative as it would provide much needed support to local residents who feel isolated due to a dependence on limited public transport to visit relatives, hospitals for appointments, leisure activities or shopping. This type of project could operate on a taxi bus type service, an option which other rural communities have taken forward whereby local taxi firms do fixed rates to popular destinations subsidised by wind farm funding.

Another option would be to work with Getting Better Together (GBT), based in Shotts, who run community minibuses which cover the Upperton area, as well as a volunteer driver scheme whereby drivers are paid per mile to take people for hospital appointments etc. The community bus service is available to all non-profit making groups (Schools, Voluntary groups, Churches, Youth Groups etc.) and they come with a fully qualified Pats and Midas trained driver. This service operates on a paid basis.

Adopting Roads and Pavements

Poor quality of roads and pavements was the main issue for residents in Upperton during consultation, and they were vocal about the need to ultimately have all roads and pavements adopted. Most were aware of the issues preventing this aspiration, specifically the current poor quality preventing North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) from adopting them. A feasibility study, specifying all details of works to be undertaken as part of the upgrade to a standard for adoption, would be required before any funding is secured. The feasibility study would also incorporate the wider issues raised by the community about roads and paths, including walking route and flooding issues. With this study, the community could go out to market to get competitive quotes for the work, which could potentially bring the price of the job down.

The community have expressed interest and have been in discussions with Muirhall Energy about receiving a lump sum payment to allow them to undertake the road and pavement improvements which are needed in the village. While significant, the amount would not be enough for the works to be undertaken.

Previously, an agreement in principle had been made by NLC and Scottish Prison Service (SPS) to make a significant contribution towards the cost of upgrading Upperton’s Road and pavements with the remaining cost to be covered by residents. This was rejected by the previous Longriggend Residents Association at the time, therefore it fell through. SPS now no longer own the site and have no responsibility to contribute towards the cost of upgrade. A possible course of action however could be for the community to attempt to renegotiate such a deal with NLC and the new housing developer, Equinox Homes Ltd., to contribute towards the cost of upgrade, and use the community benefit funds from Muirhall Energy to cover the deficit. This would require agreement from the whole community.

Demolish Garages

Ownership of the garages/ lock ups should be identified in the first instance and contact made with all owners in order to present the community’s wishes to demolish. It would then be necessary to have agreement from all owners to demolish the garages to make way for something else. Consensus on the garages future could be difficult to achieve and one option may be to take garages into community ownership in order to repurpose the space to benefit all Upperton residents. Some owners who still use and maintain their garages have expressed reluctance to give them up. For those individuals an incentive could be offered, such as provision of a new garage as part of the overall redevelopment.

The demolition of the garages could free up space to provide other improvements the community were supportive of, namely painted parking bays, children’s play park, or a community garden and allotments. Funders that may provide grant funding for such a project include Scottish Landfill Communities Fund, Climate Challenge Fund, Postcode Local Trust, Jewson Ltd - Building better communities, and Scottish Land Fund who support land purchase.

Action Points

The following Action Points are priorities identified throughout this community planning process which will require support of strategic organisation to support delivery.

Adopting Roads and Pavements

The feasibility study and funding will be required before any works can be undertaken. The community could explore other options such as a lump sum payment from Muirhall Energy, or a negotiation with NLC and the new housing developer, Equinox Homes Ltd., to contribute towards the cost of upgrade, and use the community benefit funds from Muirhall Energy to cover the deficit.

Demolish Garages

Ownership of the garages/ lock ups should be identified, and contact made with all owners in order to present the community’s wishes to demolish. If agreement is reached with all owners, the garages could be repurposed for other community uses, such as a laundry or a community garden and allotments. Funders that may provide grant funding for such a project include Scottish Landfill Communities Fund, Climate Challenge Fund, Postcode Local Trust, Jewson Ltd - Building better communities, and Scottish Land Fund who support land purchase.
Outdoor maintenance

Upperton Residents’ Committee have been in contact with North Lanarkshire Council about maintenance of local outdoor spaces; however, NLC maintain that responsibility lies with the community themselves as the Council do not own the land. Residents should continue to engage with NLC to identify options for future maintenance agreements including partnership with Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire and The Conservation Volunteers who could support the community with this issue.

Should a voluntary village environmental group be set up, then they would be able to undertake small scale environmental improvements within the village such as flower planting and maintaining entrance features and the community garden. If those projects came to fruition, the group could help to make communal outdoor spaces more attractive and help to support more local people to take an active role in maintaining the village; for example, a community litter pick could be organised.

A tool library or sharing scheme could also be established within the village to help residents to access tools and equipment for maintaining their own gardens. This would help to reduce the cost of every household purchasing their own equipment; it could also help to engender more community cooperation and a greater sense of community spirit, and there would also be the environmental benefits of sharing tools compared to buying new ones required.

Fly tipping / Littering

Significant engagement with North Lanarkshire Council environmental services will be needed to improve this issue. The Council’s Street Smart scheme should be promoted to the community to help them to take a more active role in reporting of any issues.

Where waste has been dumped in abandoned lock-ups or on the former prison site, as was identified as a common issue by residents, it may be more difficult to have waste removed as land ownership must be factored in.

Coordinating a community clean-up day may be an option for addressing littering issues, which NLC would be able to support with provision of litter pickers, gloves etc. This could also involve hiring a skip to allow all residents to get rid of unwanted household items, preventing future fly tipping in the village.