

Architecture & Design Scotland

Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

Whole Place Collaboration

Alva Pathfinder - Report



 <p>NAME: AMAYA AGE: 14</p> <p><i>"I would like more for teenagers to do."</i></p>	 <p>NAME: JOE AGE: 32</p> <p><i>"Alva is a great point of access to the hills."</i></p>	 <p>NAME: MARY AGE: 74</p> <p><i>"I'd like to see improvements to aid accessibility."</i></p>	 <p>NAME: MICHAEL AGE: 44</p> <p><i>"I hope that we can be a part of a vibrant community of retailers."</i></p>
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Preface

Alva, Clackmannanshire Population 4,773

Alva is located in the central lowlands of Scotland, in the Hillfoots area of Clackmannanshire immediately south of the Ochil Hills, and between Tillicoultry and Menstrie. In the 18th and 19th centuries textiles were the main industry, however today Alva acts as a local service centre in the area, with a mix of shops and amenities in the town centre, and a busy industrial estate on its eastern edge. Alva Academy, the Hillfoots area's catchment secondary school is located in the town as is the entrance to Alva Glen which provides access to the Ochil Hills. Alva is a commuting town on the main A91 road between Stirling and St Andrews road. Regular bus services run to Stirling and Alloa, and less frequent services run eastwards to Kinross and St. Andrews. A bus service also connects the Alva and the Hillfoots communities to Forth Valley Royal Hospital in Larbert.

The town has a mixed demographic, with a wider range of people, housing and activities. The number of older couples with no children is higher than the Scottish average. There is a mix of professional and non-professional jobs and part-time and self-employment are important for many residents. Socioeconomic status is higher on average than in other similar types of towns in Scotland, and there is a mix of professional and non-professionals and of those with higher and lower educational attainment.

(Sources: Scotland's Towns Partnerships USP and Wikipedia)



1.1 Executive Summary

Building on recent work in the planning of Carbon Conscious Places, meeting the needs of an ageing population (Caring Place) and addressing health and wellbeing in Alloa (Place Standard), A&DS has brought all these strands together in a Whole Place Collaborative Approach to the regeneration of Alva.

The aim of the work is to meet housing needs whilst also supporting the improvement of local health outcomes, the wellbeing economy, addressing inequality, adaptation to climate change and community empowerment in the context of the Scottish Government Covid Recovery strategy.

The approach outlined seeks not to solve one problem at a time, but instead to find a range of solutions of varying sizes that are capable of providing multiple benefits. In doing so this work also supports key government policy drivers including a place-based person-centred approach, the Town Centre First Principle, the Place Principle and the 20 minute neighbourhood concept.

In this context, this report sets out a place-based vision and toolkit to aid Clackmannanshire Council manage the improvement of Alva town centre over time. It identifies specific opportunities for the re-use of the former Glentana Mill site on West Stirling Street as a catalyst for regeneration whilst illustrating potential for the physical, social and economic regeneration of the town.

We have worked closely with local people in Alva, with communities of interest and across professional boundaries. The partnership approach involved has turned a housing initiative at the vacant Glentana Mill building into a multi-faceted community project linked to a series of subtle stitching and repair projects across Alva town centre.

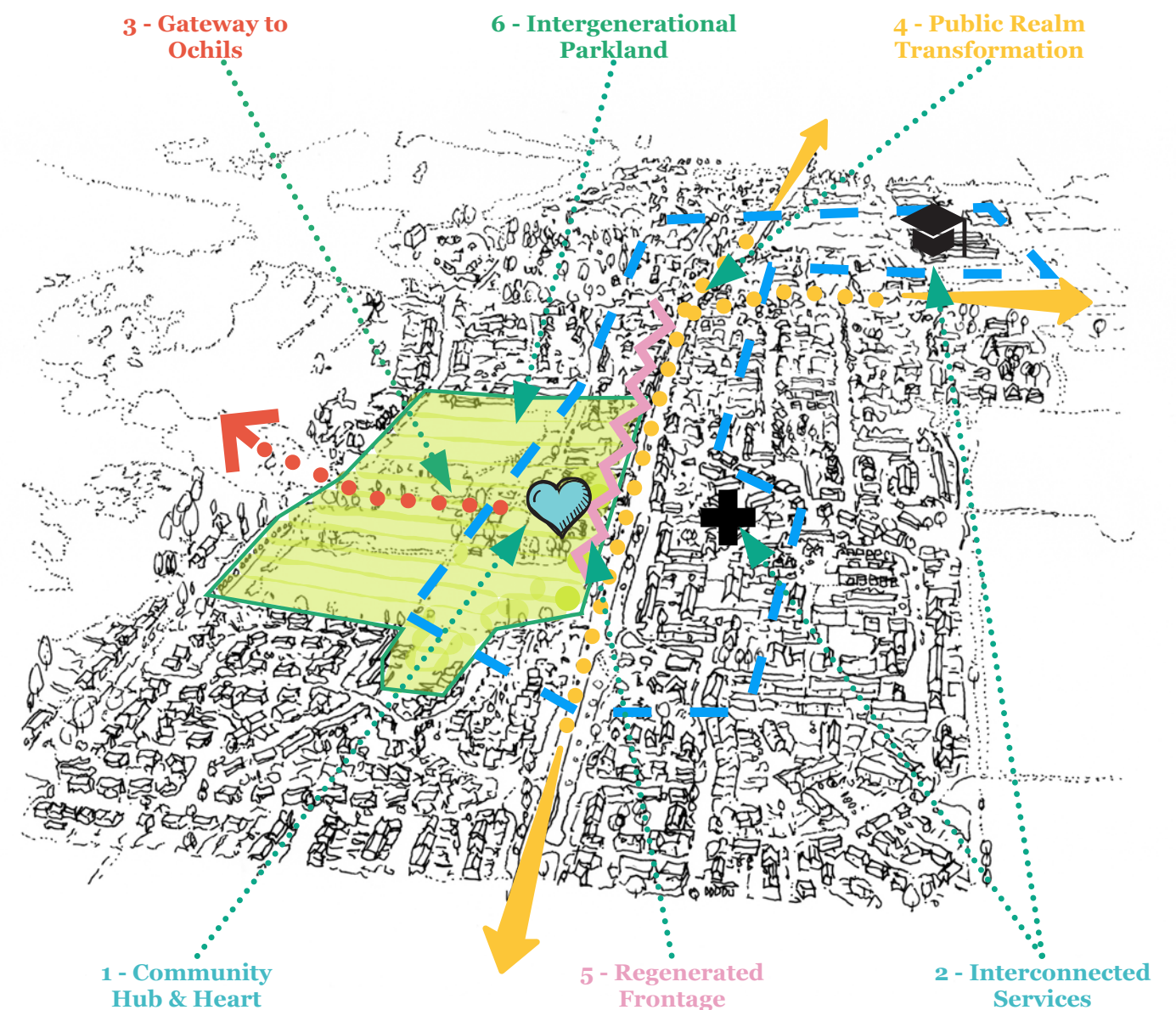
This pilot project was led by Architecture & Design Scotland (A&DS) working with Clackmannanshire Council, Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) and the Alva community. It has tested the role of collaboration in providing a 'whole place' brief and a catalyst for town centre regeneration, a pilot project for local authorities and communities across Scotland.

What Next? The content of this report provides a toolkit for the regeneration of Alva involving actions for a range of stakeholders such as Clackmannanshire Council, NHS Forth Valley, Alva Community Development Trust, businesses and residents. This work will be further supported by A&DS and Scottish Futures Trust as the pathfinder project develops.

Key moves for Alva:

- 1) A community hub and centre for services and facilities alongside Cochrane Hall
- 2) A zone of re-oriented local services linking from parks and health centre in the west to Alva Academy in the southeast
- 3) A gateway and arrival point for visitors and an active travel hub connecting to Alva Glen binding together walking routes and the local cycle network
- 4) Stirling Street public realm transformation prioritising walking and cycling, avoiding car dominance
- 5) A facelift linked to the regeneration of Stirling Street frontages
- 6) A multi-functional improvement of Cochrane and Johnstone Parks

Key Moves for Alva



1.2 A Vision for Alva: Needs

Stage 1: An online Place Standard consultation in early 2020. This identified local needs and perceptions of the current physical and social characteristics of Alva. There were 92 responses from residents (post lockdown) and 49 from Alva Academy pupils (pre-lockdown).

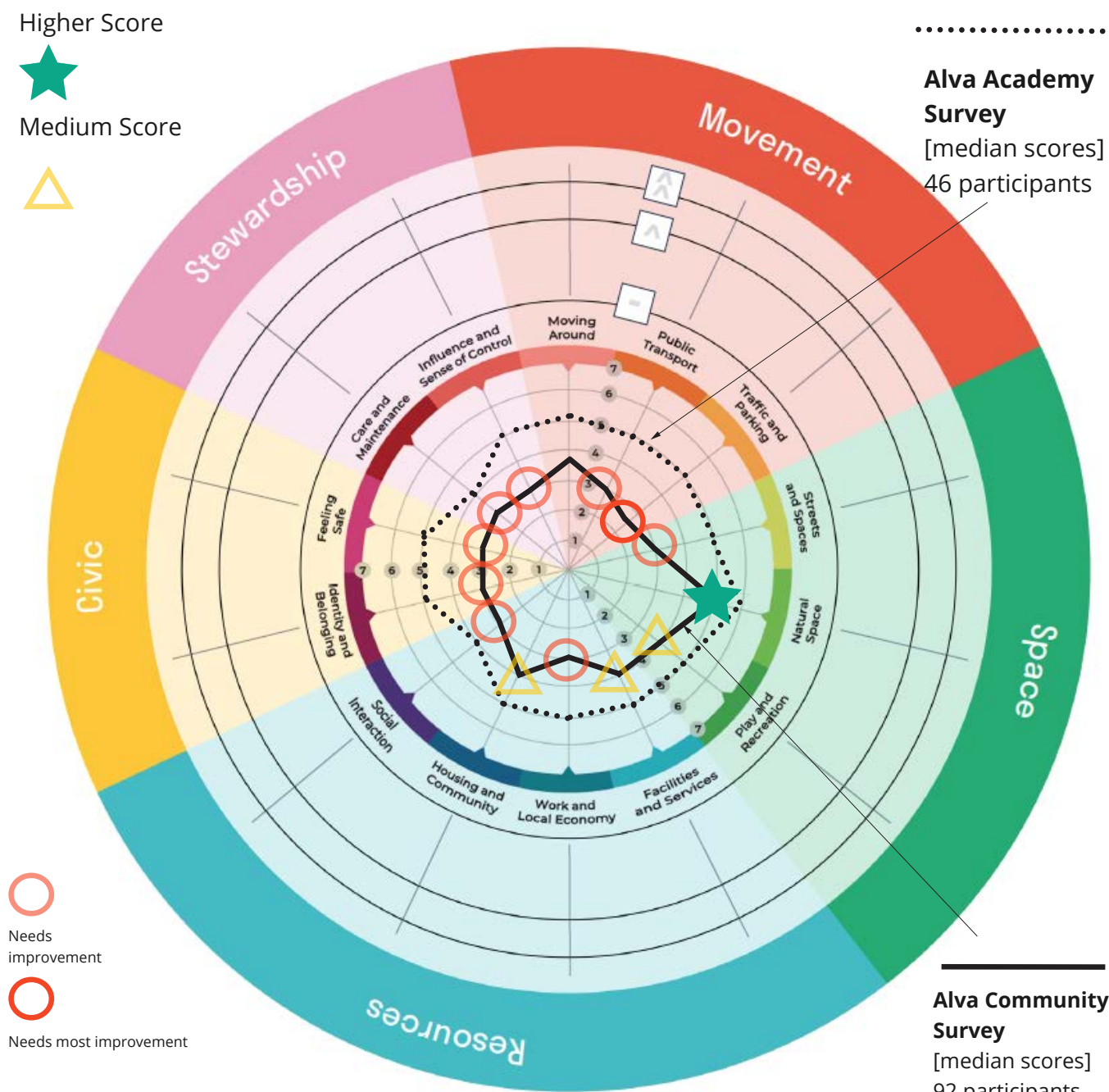
A shared vision for Alva was established in three stages:

- Understanding the **NEEDS**
- Mapping the **ISSUES**
- Setting **PRIORITIES**

The needs of the community were established through an online [Place Standard](#) consultation engaging the Alva community and Alva Academy pupils. This highlighted local perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of Alva as a place linked to physical and social characteristics affecting health and wellbeing. It identified opportunities for improvement under the 14 themes of the Place Standard.

The quality of natural, green spaces was a common positive for many participants. However, the analysis of the Place Standard scores and the written feedback indicated that there are many important dimensions that are in need of improvement, including Public Transport, Traffic & Parking, Streets & Spaces, Work & Local Economy, Social Interaction, Identity & Belonging, Feeling Safe, Care & Maintenance and Influence & Sense of Control.

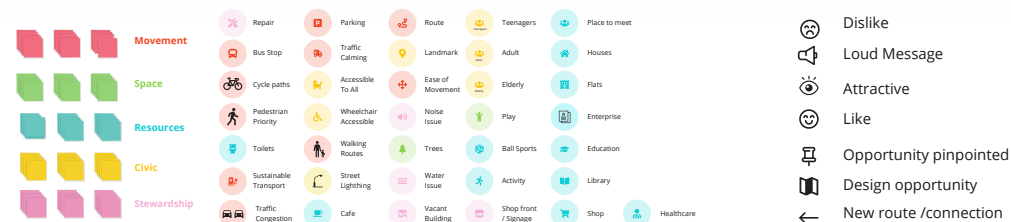
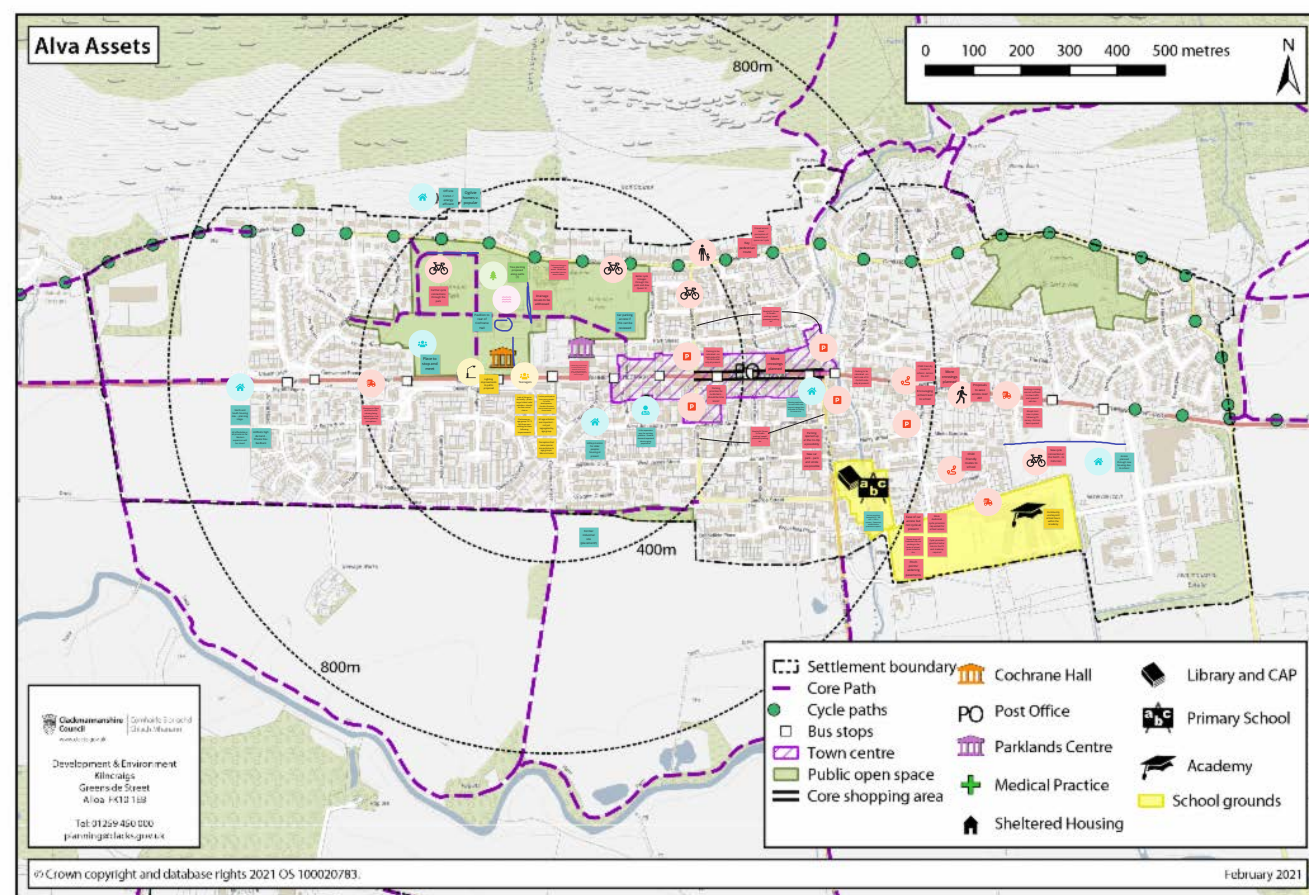
Extensive written feedback was analysed and this is summarised here indicating issues that the community wished to see addressed, as well as assets of Alva that are strengths to build on when planning improvements. (For results in full see Annexe A).



Assessment results for Alva by local people, shown using the Place Standard Compass diagram

A Vision for Alva: Issues

Stage 2: A&DS worked closely with council officers, health professionals, teachers, members of the community and school pupils in focus groups to test findings from the consultation and to identify and map existing assets and priorities for the improvement of the town centre including aspirations for the Glentana Mill site.



Sample of illustrative mapping done to record comments during the Asset Mapping workshop

Following a distillation of the Place Standard outputs, representatives from the Council and community (including schools, health and community groups) and other wider stakeholders including the Scottish Government, were brought together for an online workshop in early May 2020. Hosted by Clackmannanshire Council and facilitated by A&DS, the session aimed to review potential actions arising in response to the Place Standard survey through discussion and mapping - to identify opportunities and shared priorities for the town and Glentana site, and to test how the development of the site could support different opportunities, uses and models for town centre living.

A snapshot of key issues emerged from the Stage 2 asset mapping workshop building on the Stage 1 consultation. These include:

Parking pressures along Stirling Street and at Alva Academy obstructing pedestrians and cyclist and affecting neighbouring residents:

- East and West Stirling Street as a barrier affected by speeding and with limited crossings
- Absence of facilities and economic opportunities are detrimental for teenagers and young people with knock-on effects on other groups
- Local health facilities under pressure, particularly during Covid
- Vacant and derelict buildings/land and poor maintenance of buildings fronting main streets, detrimental to appearance and local identity
- Vulnerable groups are not well served by safe and accessible routes
- Cheaper, more direct bus services are needed
- Indoor spaces needed for adult health/fitness/recreation activities
- More safe/pleasant/inclusive social spaces are needed for most age groups and to address 'us and them' barriers to integration for socially disadvantaged groups
- Housing renovations are needed and new good quality, energy efficient, affordable housing for all generations/groups - with improved access to open space
- Call for a reduction of rates to bring more diversity of businesses
- Call for improved park maintenance and the addressing of anti-social behaviour
- The survey was welcomed, however, follow-up action is required and increased representation for community voices

To embed a place-based, person-centred approach a series of character studies (personas) were developed out of the Place Standard feedback. These personas represent a range of user groups for the site and surrounding area. (See Section 2.0 - Toolkit for more information).

A Vision for Alva: Priorities

Stage 3: A vision and priority actions were consolidated by A&DS, working with a cross-disciplinary group of council officers. This stage, A&DS also defined three potential scenarios for the regeneration of the Glentana Mill site.

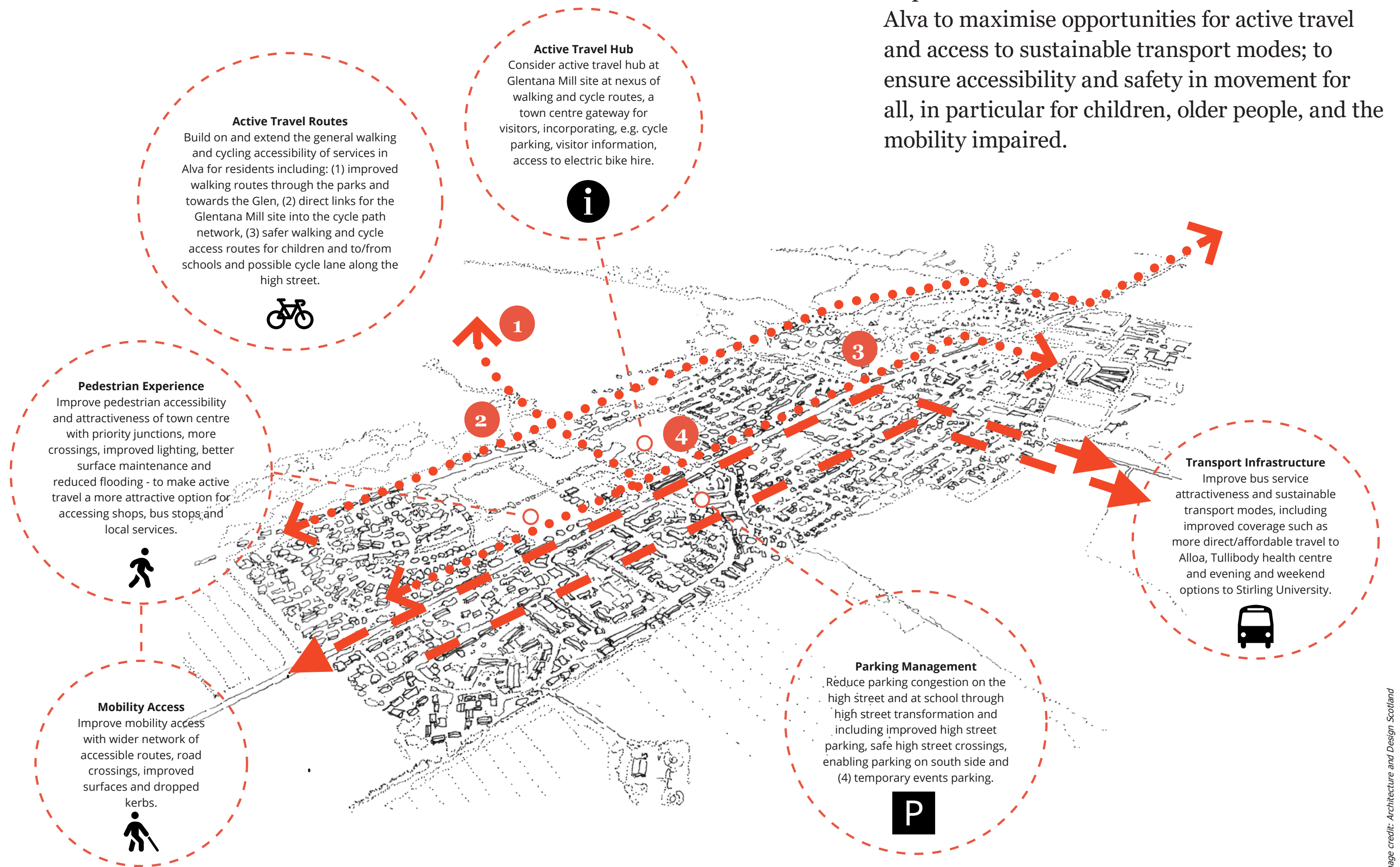
The Project Vision Statement for Alva responds to local perceptions, highlighting place quality and service improvements needed to bring benefits for health, equity and mitigating the impact of climate change through regeneration of the town centre. Priorities are shown under the 5 themes of the Place Standard Design Version.

Following the focus group workshops, a series of large and small actions have been identified for the improvement of Alva - linked to the vision themes. Tangible responses to the local issues identified are planned to provide multiple benefits whilst realising a voice for local people. They are intended to guide planned investment in the town centre by the council and other agencies.

Delivery on these actions can be evolved further using the Place Standard Design Version methodology.

MOVEMENT	Improve the movement network in and around Alva to maximise opportunities for active travel and access to sustainable transport.
SPACE	Capitalise on Alva's access to natural space. Enhance it to create high-quality green spaces for recreational activities, playing and enjoyment for people of all ages - particularly for children and older people.
RESOURCES	Create a programme of uses in existing and new buildings in Alva to support a better quality of life for people and visitors. Improve community uses, health facilities, housing provision, local enterprise and visitor facilities.
CIVIC	Build on a sense of belonging and local identity by preserving heritage, local and natural history by repurposing key buildings and vacant/derelict properties, fostering civic pride and improving community safety.
STEWARDSHIP	Implement improved collaboration between people in Alva and service providers; to maintain the quality and maintenance of public spaces affecting the community; creating sustainable and resilient places.

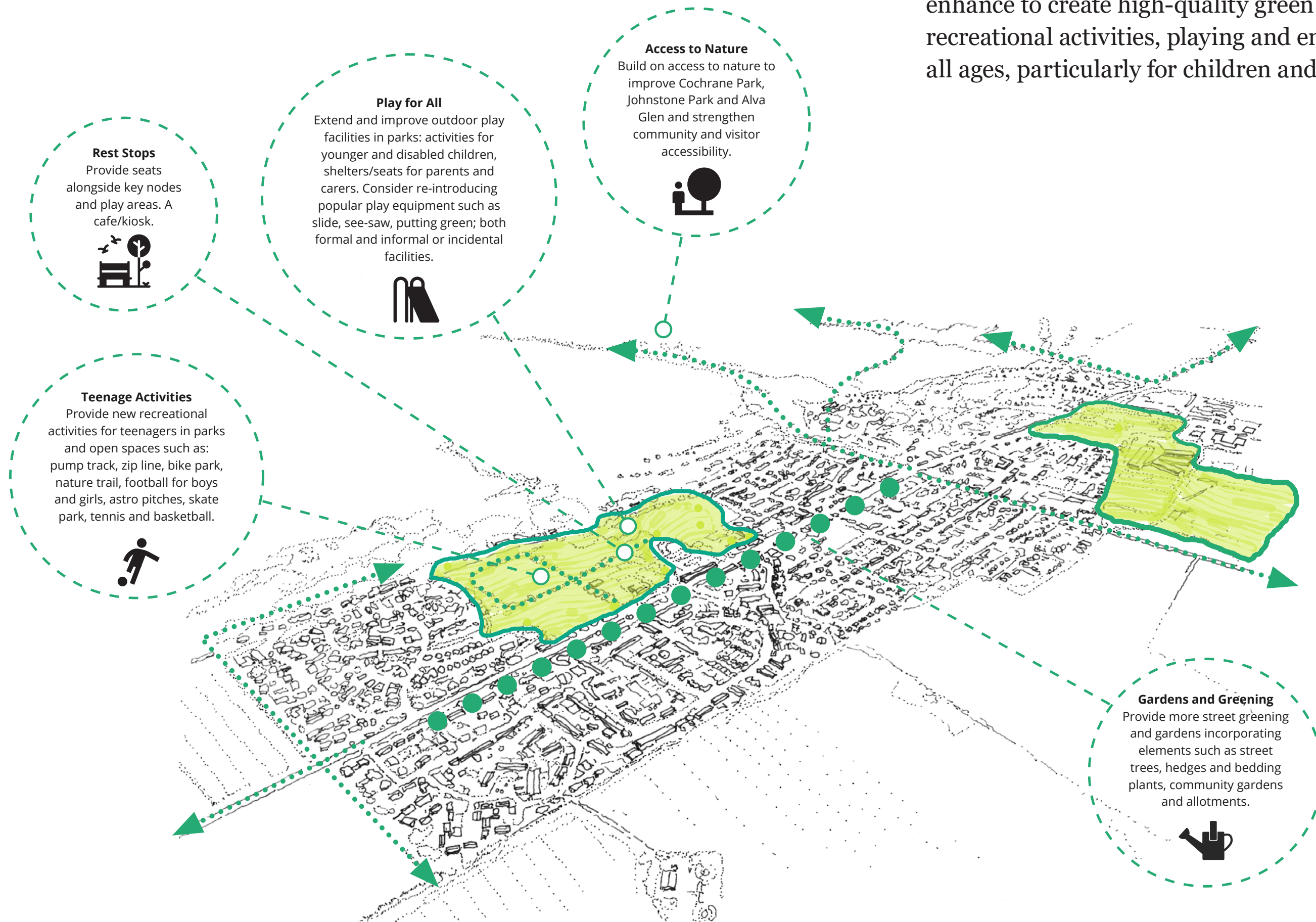
A Vision for Alva: Actions



Movement

Improve the movement network in and around Alva to maximise opportunities for active travel and access to sustainable transport modes; to ensure accessibility and safety in movement for all, in particular for children, older people, and the mobility impaired.

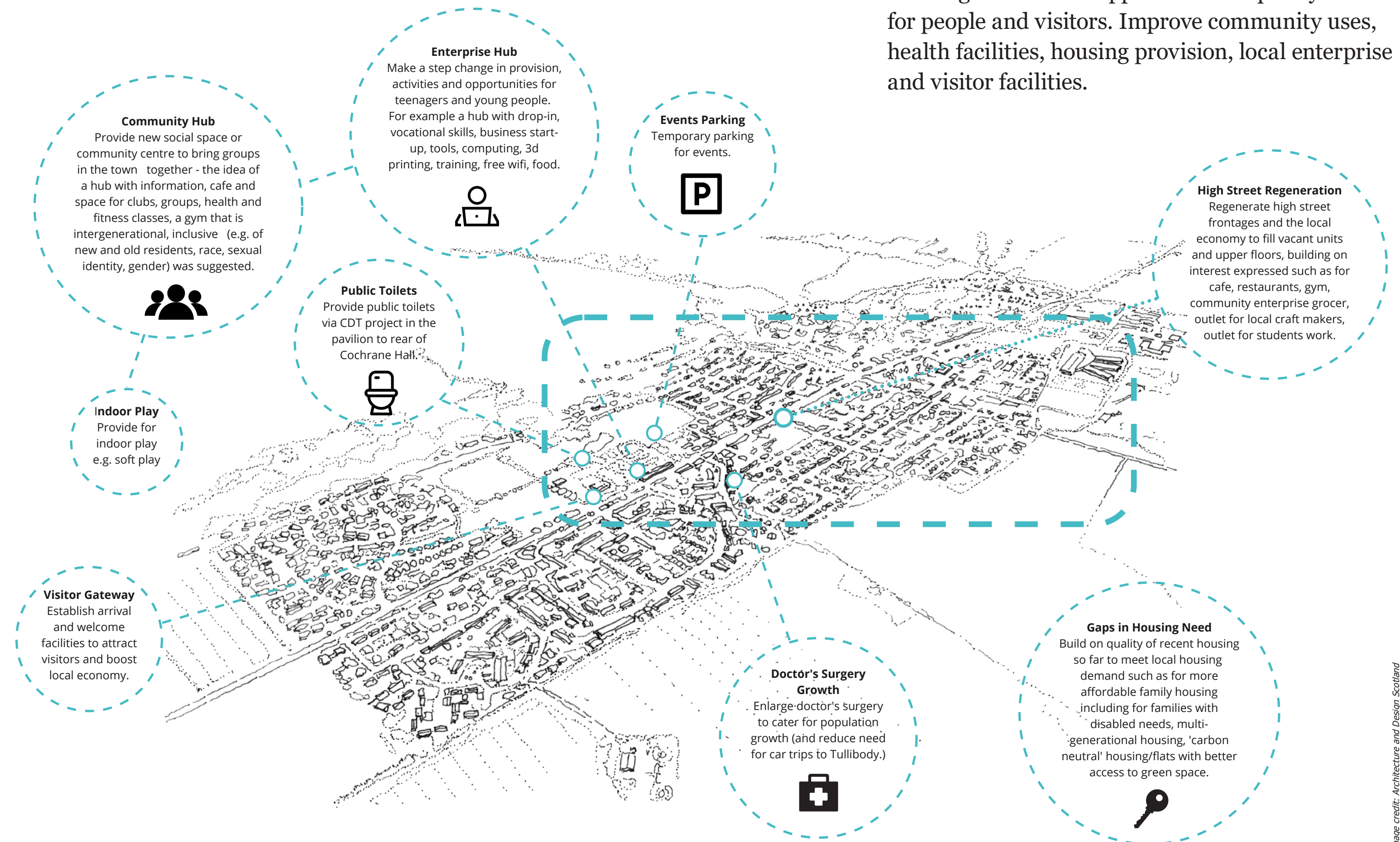
A Vision for Alva: Actions



Space

Capitalise on Alva's access to natural space; enhance to create high-quality green spaces for recreational activities, playing and enjoyment for all ages, particularly for children and older people.

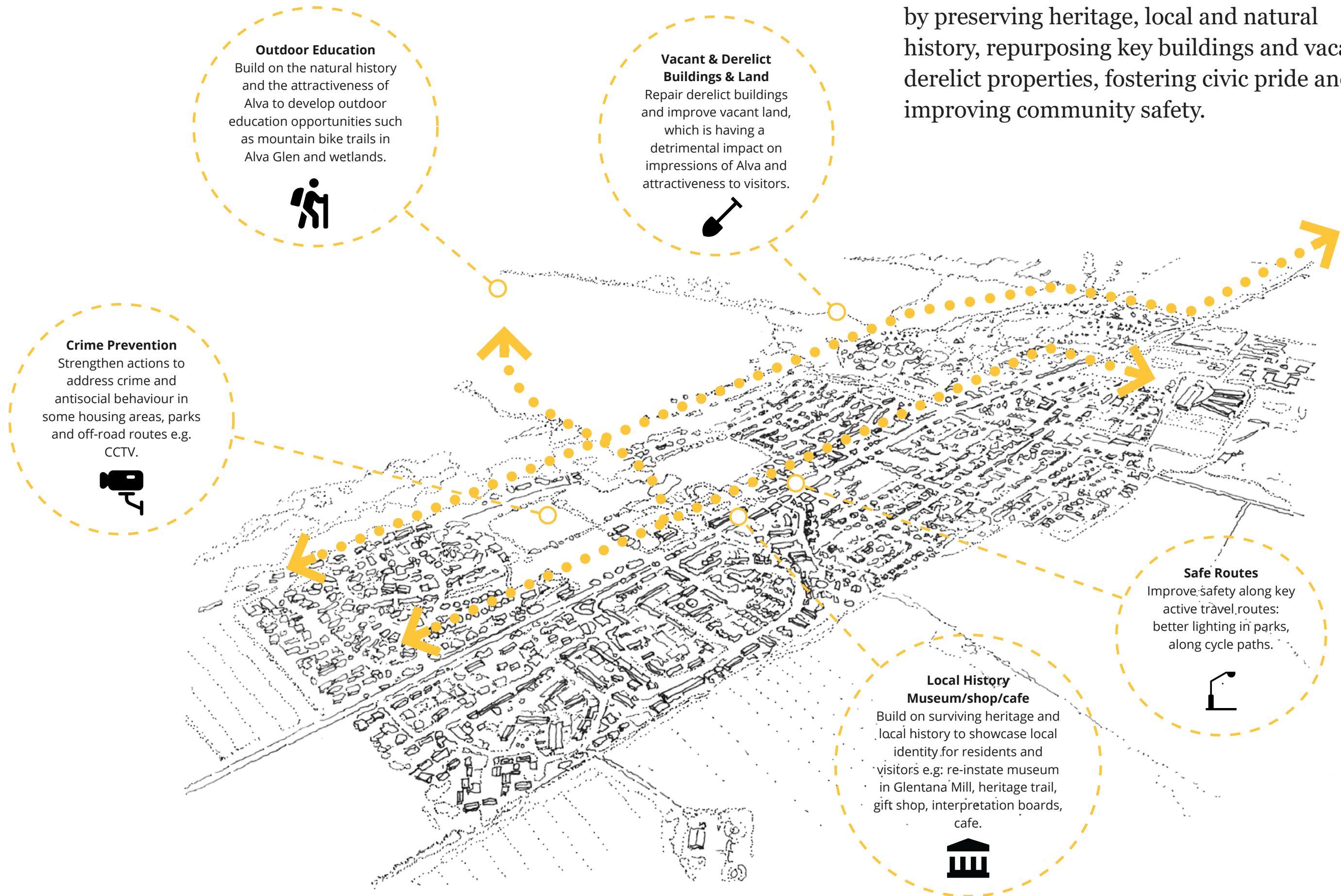
A Vision for Alva: Actions



Resources

Create a programme of uses in existing and new buildings in Alva to support a better quality of life for people and visitors. Improve community uses, health facilities, housing provision, local enterprise and visitor facilities.

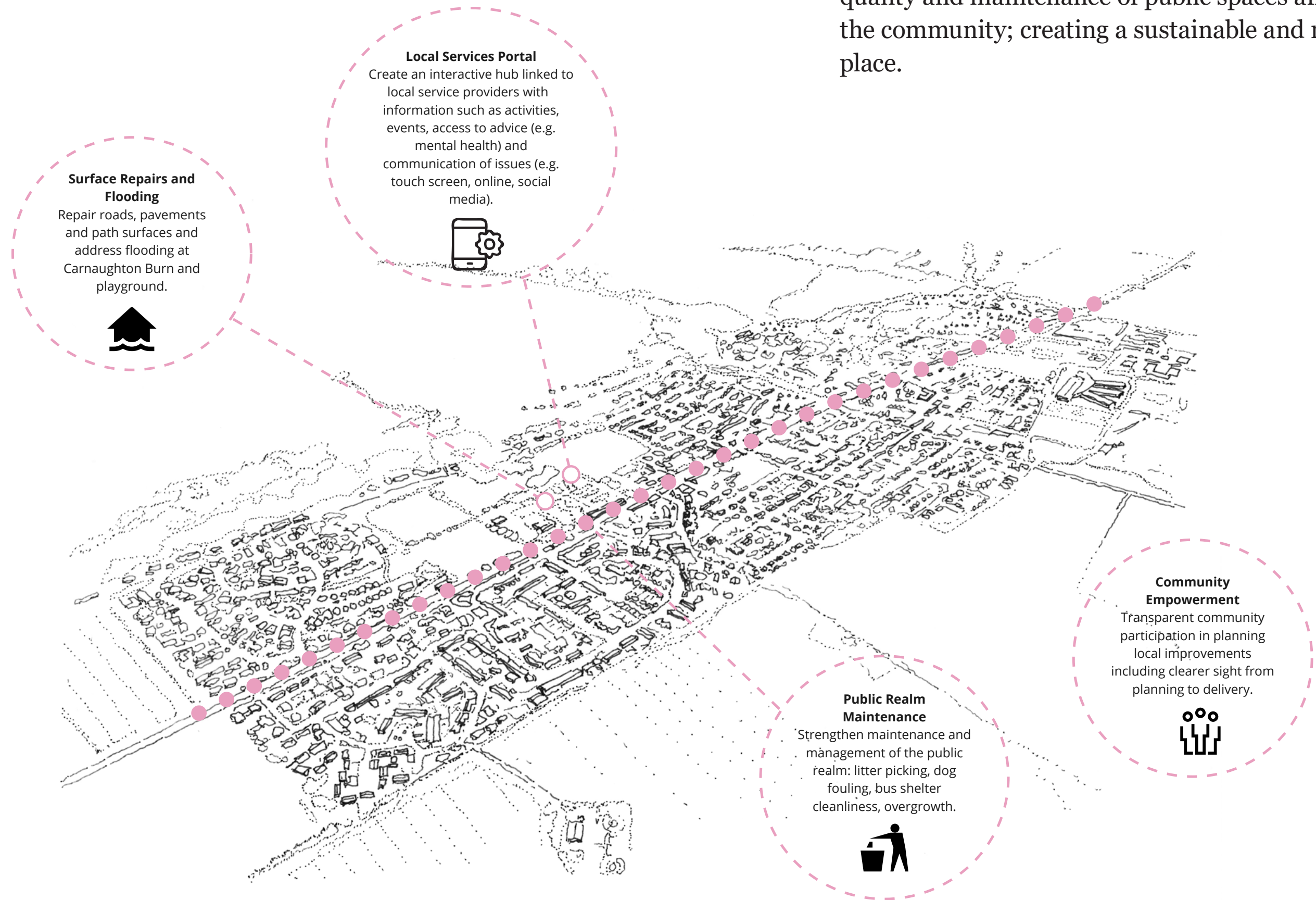
A Vision for Alva: Actions



Civic

Build on a sense of belonging and local identity by preserving heritage, local and natural history, repurposing key buildings and vacant/derelict properties, fostering civic pride and improving community safety.

A Vision for Alva: Actions



Stewardship

Implement improved collaboration between people in Alva and service providers; to maintain the quality and maintenance of public spaces affecting the community; creating a sustainable and resilient place.

1.3 Scenarios for Glentana Mill

A&DS worked with local stakeholders to focus on the opportunities created by regenerating of the vacant Glentana Mill buildings, the adjoining car park, main street, Cochrane Hall, Cochrane Park and Johnstone Park. Alternative uses for the site were discussed, considering the wide range of local needs in Alva that had come out of the Place Standard consultation, to test uses addressing local aspirations.

Coming out of this were three potential scenarios for the regeneration of the Glentana Mill area, each demonstrating a different mix of uses, alternative catalysts for the wider regeneration of Alva. These address the outcome of the Place Standard Assessment and the Asset Mapping Workshop, further developed with the Clackmannanshire masterplanning group.

These include:

- **Scenario 1 - Facilities for Young and Old**
A light touch conversion of the old Mill building | a youth centre alongside multi-generational housing.
- **Scenario 2 - A health and Community Services Hub**
A partial replacement of the old mill building.
- **Scenario 3 - Affordable housing for local needs**
Replacing the old mill building.

Common features include:

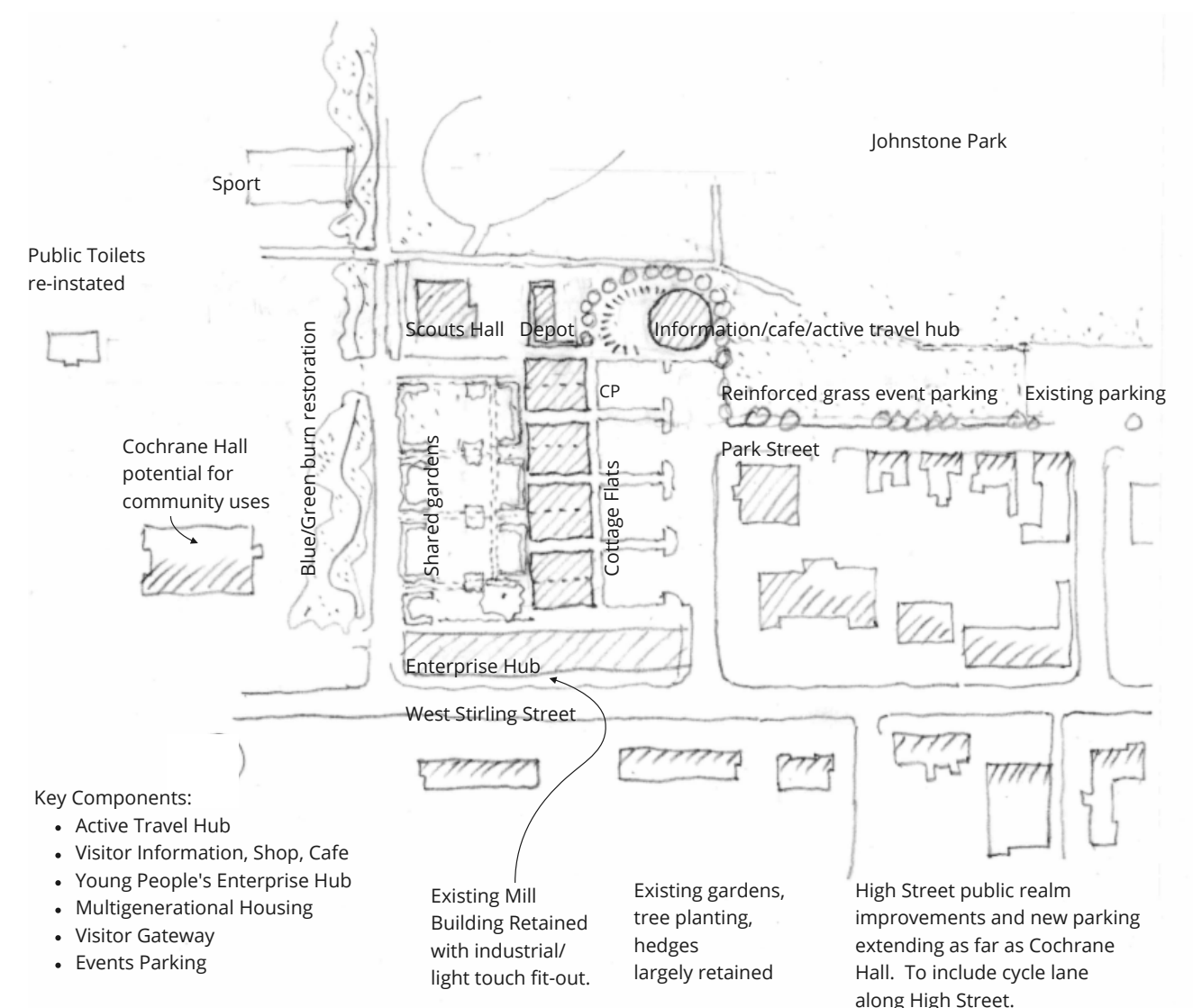
- The current main street transformation project is extended to include public realm improvements around the Glentana Mill site and Cochrane Hall, including improved road crossings, repaved streets and pavements to favour pedestrians and cyclists and access by vulnerable groups.

- The existing car parking on site is partially replaced by a combination of new parking provision along Stirling Street as part of the town centre transformation, provision for temporary event parking alongside Park Street and new provision for active travel in the form of a high street cycle lane and improved facilities for walking and cycling linking the village centre with areas of housing in Alva.
- New Blue and Green infrastructure is introduced as a flood prevention measure, including an opening up of Carnaughton Burn and bringing biodiversity into Alva.
- Elements of the existing mature hedges, planting and trees on the site are retained to a greater or lesser extent in each option.

These scenarios, illustrated on the following pages, demonstrate a place-based approach to the regeneration of the Glentana Mill site with wider community benefits. It is not anticipated that any one of these scenarios are a ready solution for the development of the site. A final combination of uses will be a different configuration again, combining those elements that are most effective in terms of meeting local needs, responding to the opportunities and qualities of Alva and tested in terms of economic delivery models. Complementary improvements are needed building on current and related initiatives including the role of Cochrane Hall, the Scouts Hall, new public toilets and facilities in the park more generally.

Scenario 1: Facilities for Young and Old

Scenario 1 features a young people's hub, an active travel hub and multi-generational housing. This scenario retains as much of the Mill building as possible for its distinctive character on Stirling Street.



How would the Glentana Mill area change?

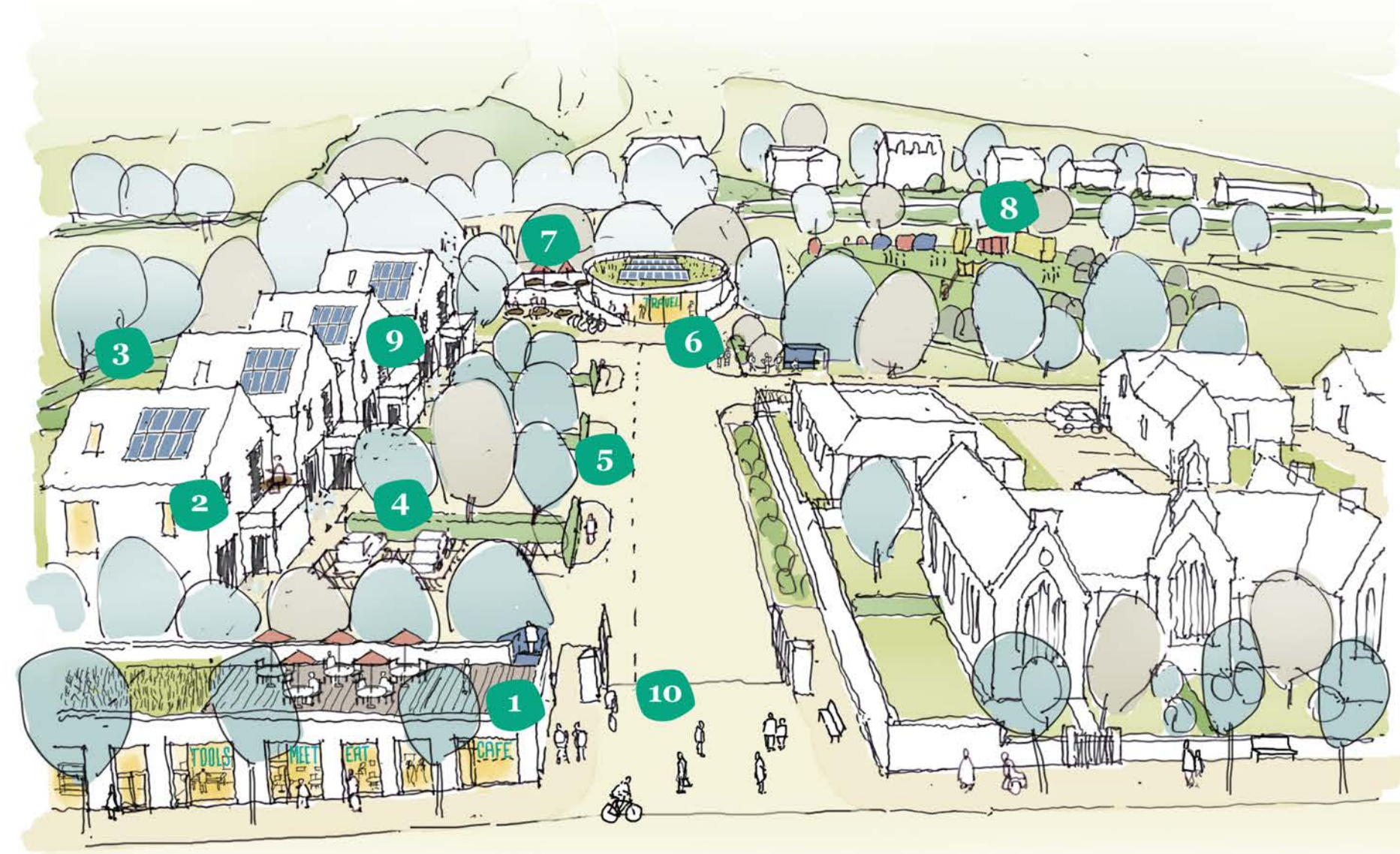


“There are so many activities on offer at the new Youth Hub. It’s a great place to hang out with my friends.”

Amaya - age 14

Key:

1. Conversion of Glentana Mill building fitted out as a new Young People’s Enterprise Hub comprising workspaces, learning spaces, cafe/social spaces/ meeting spaces.
2. Modern cottage flats with plenty of natural light and balconies to provide direct links to outdoors and views to the parks and landscape.
3. Shared gardens with growing spaces and attractive sheltered spaces to sit.
4. Cars parked in designated parking bays incorporated into enhanced public realm.
5. Quality walking routes connecting High Street with the parks and links to public transport.
6. Visitor gateway/active travel hub providing enhanced arrival experience to park for events.
7. Accessible café courtyard providing outdoor eating/ sitting space.
8. Enhanced parks include outdoor multi-generational activity spaces, sports, community allotments, spaces for outdoor learning, annual community events.
9. Sheltered main door access to cottage flats with adjacent storage space for mobility scooter/bike/ buggy – well integrated with parking/bin storage, footpath.
10. Cycle/pedestrian-friendly route from Stirling Street up to the travel hub.



Illustrative aerial view of Scenario 1 from Stirling Street towards the park

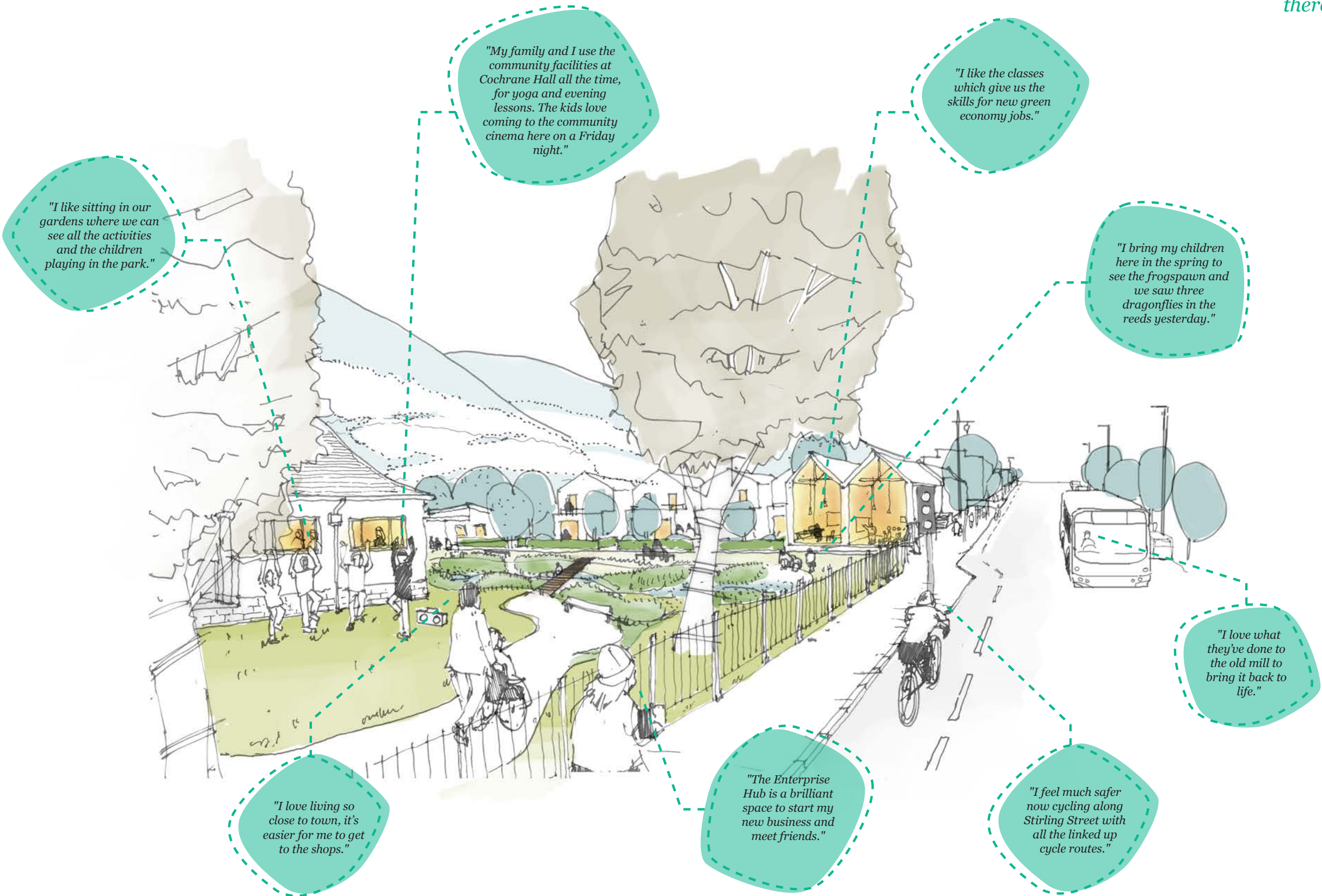
Image credit: 3D Reid

How would the Glentana Mill area change?



"The improvements to the streets and paths have made it so much easier for me to get into and around the park. I go there most days now."

Mary - age 74



Illustrative view of Scenario 1 looking east along Stirling Street towards Young People's Enterprise Hub and cottage flats Stirling Street towards the park

Scenario 2: Community Services Hub

Scenario 2 features a new health centre, library and Community Access Point (CAP) on the Glentana site and special needs housing on the existing Health Centre site. An active travel hub is located in Johnstone Park. This scenario retains the distinctive power loom shed of the original Mill building as the relocated library for Alva. Otherwise the Glentana frontage is replaced by a new public building.

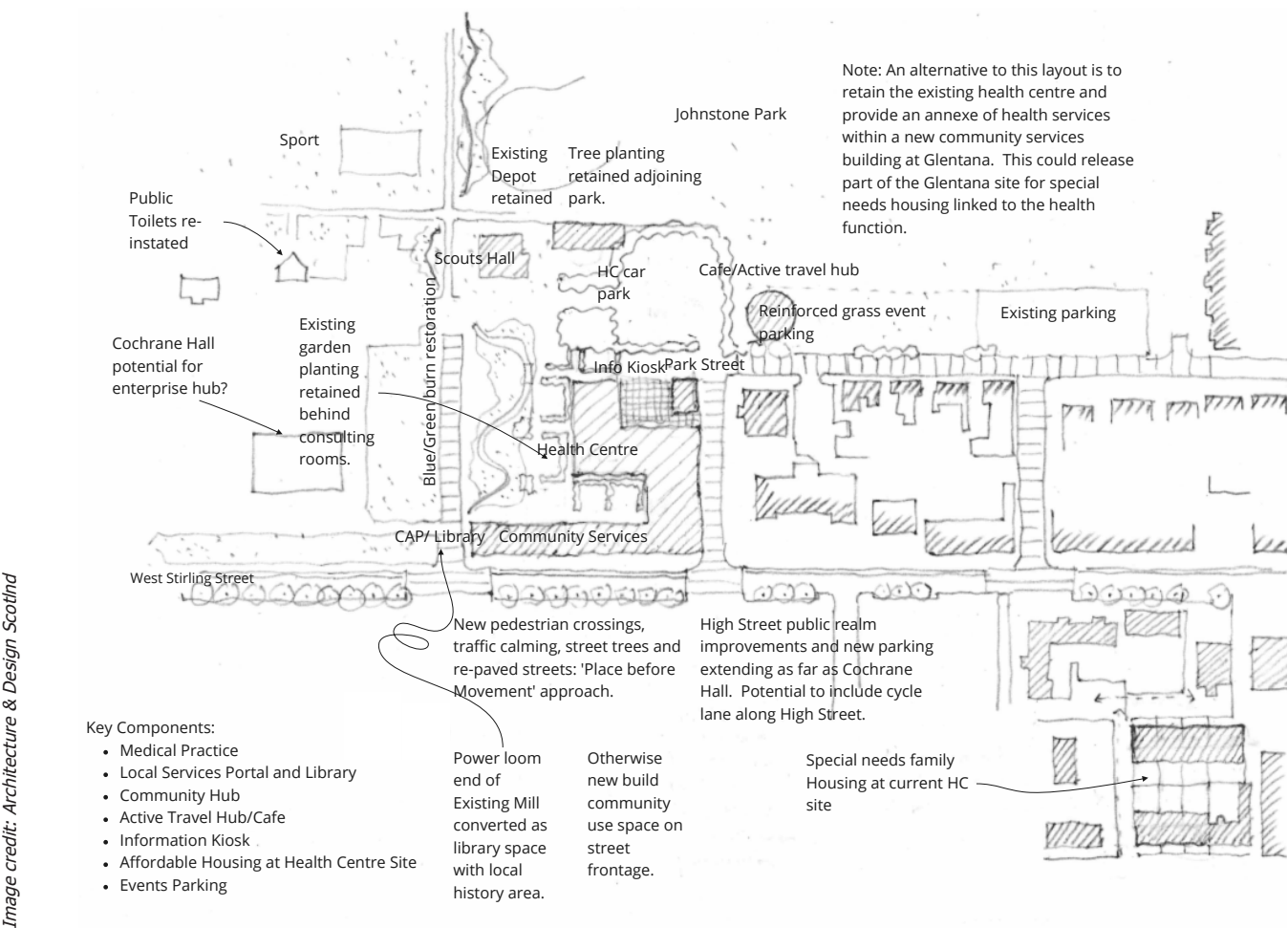
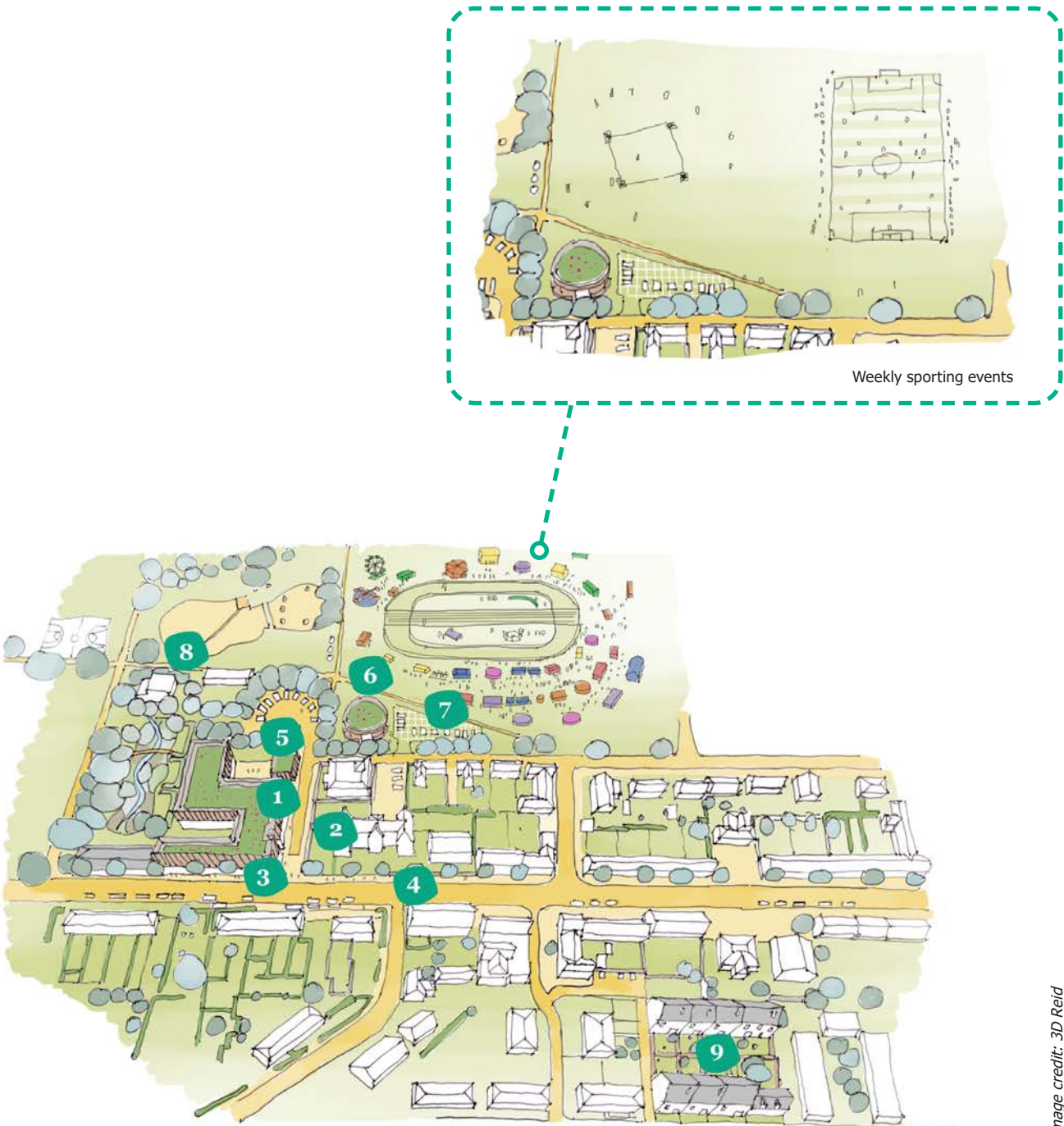


Image credit: Architecture & Design Scotland



Illustrative aerial view of Scenario 2 showing Johnstone Park in use hosting annual community events, eg. Alva Games

Image credit: 3D Reid

Key:

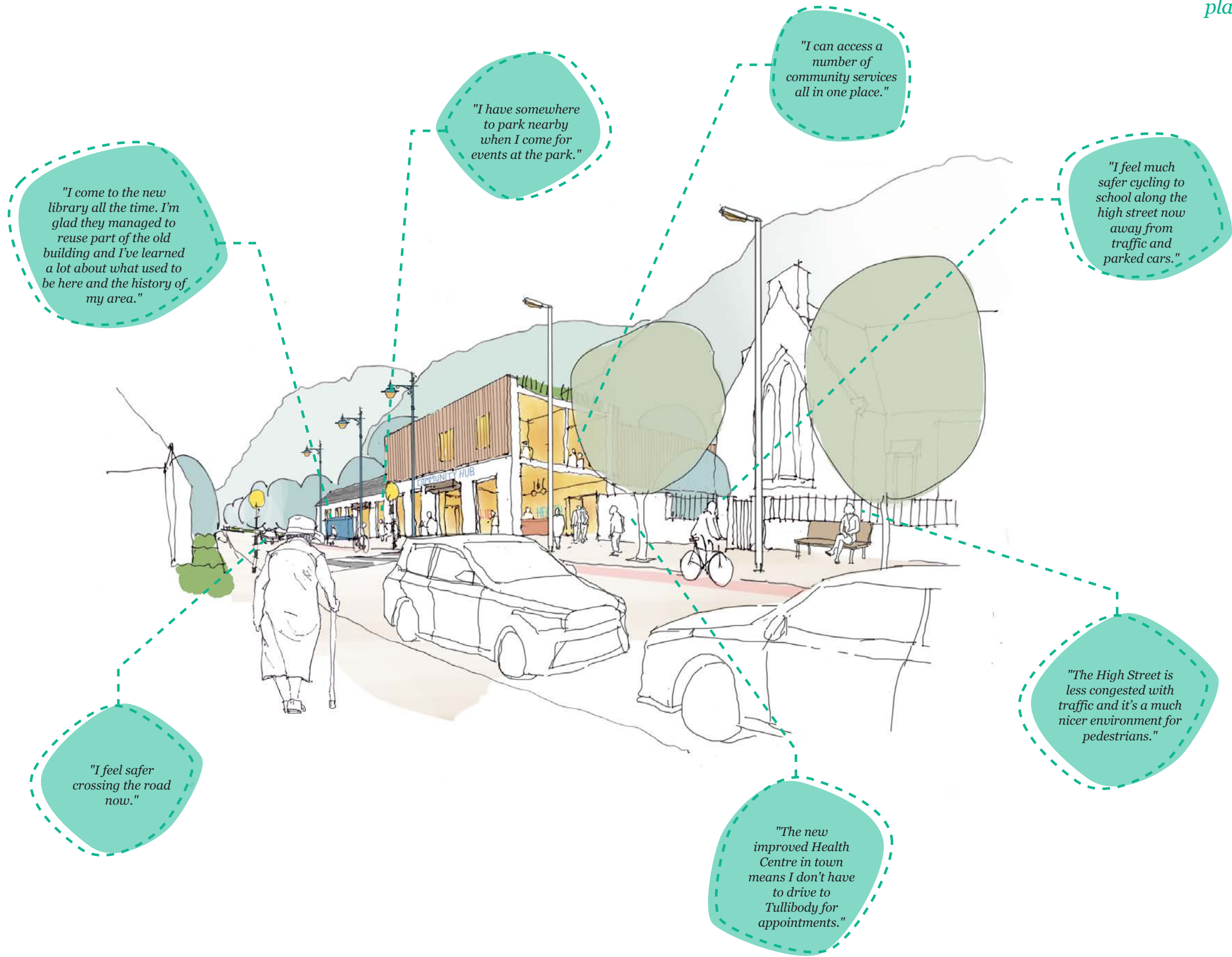
1. Community Hub - new extension to the partially retained Power Loom section of Glentana Mill building to the west. Community Services / CAP Library and Health Centre / Annex.
2. New enhanced accessible public realm / level crossing point over Stirling Street leading up to Community Hub.
3. Covered entrance to Community Hub providing shelter / seating.
4. Enhanced streetscape along Stirling Street. Benches, trees, lighting, bus shelters with touch screen information points.
5. Information kiosk with touch screen information.
6. Cafe / active travel hub. Secure parking for push bikes, tri-shaws and charging of e-bikes at charging stations, powered by PV panels on the roof.
7. Temporary 'grasscrete' parking linked to hub used for community events, eg. Alva Games or sports events.
8. Upgraded / reinstated public toilets.
9. New housing on health centre site.

How would the Glentana Mill area change?



"I enjoy visiting the new Community Hub in town. It's really helpful having the services I need in one place."

Ellen - age 85



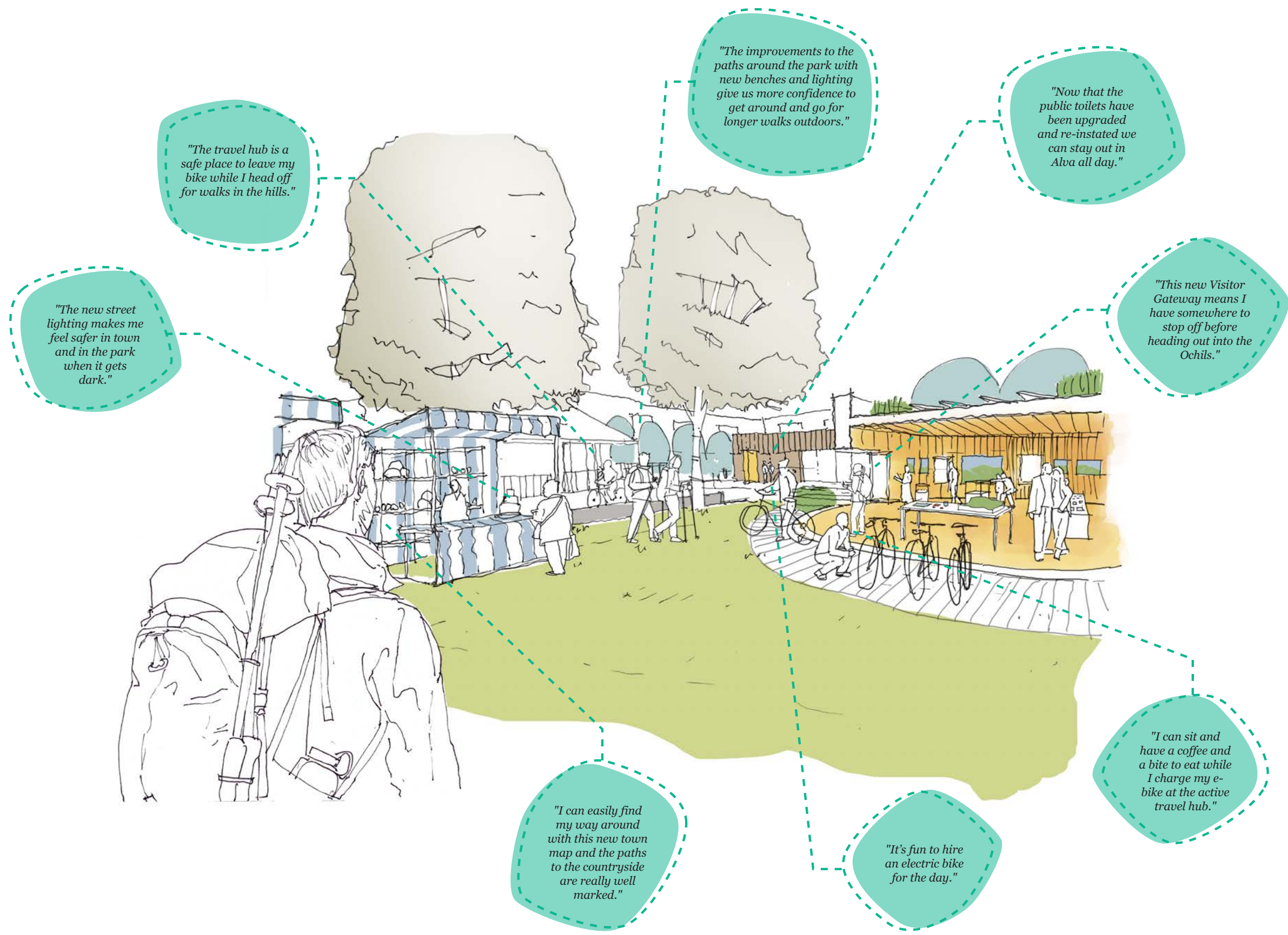
Illustrative view of Scenario 2 looking west along Stirling Street towards Community Hub

How would the Glentana Mill area change?



"My friends and I can meet at the new Travel Hub to plan our route over a coffee before we set off on our bikes."

Joe - age 32



"The new street lighting makes me feel safer in town and in the park when it gets dark."

"The travel hub is a safe place to leave my bike while I head off for walks in the hills."

"The improvements to the paths around the park with new benches and lighting give us more confidence to get around and go for longer walks outdoors."

"Now that the public toilets have been upgraded and re-instated we can stay out in Alva all day."

"This new Visitor Gateway means I have somewhere to stop off before heading out into the Ochils."

"I can sit and have a coffee and a bite to eat while I charge my e-bike at the active travel hub."

"It's fun to hire an electric bike for the day."

"I can easily find my way around with this new town map and the paths to the countryside are really well marked."

Illustrative view of Scenario 2 from park towards Travel Hub

Image credit: 3D Reid

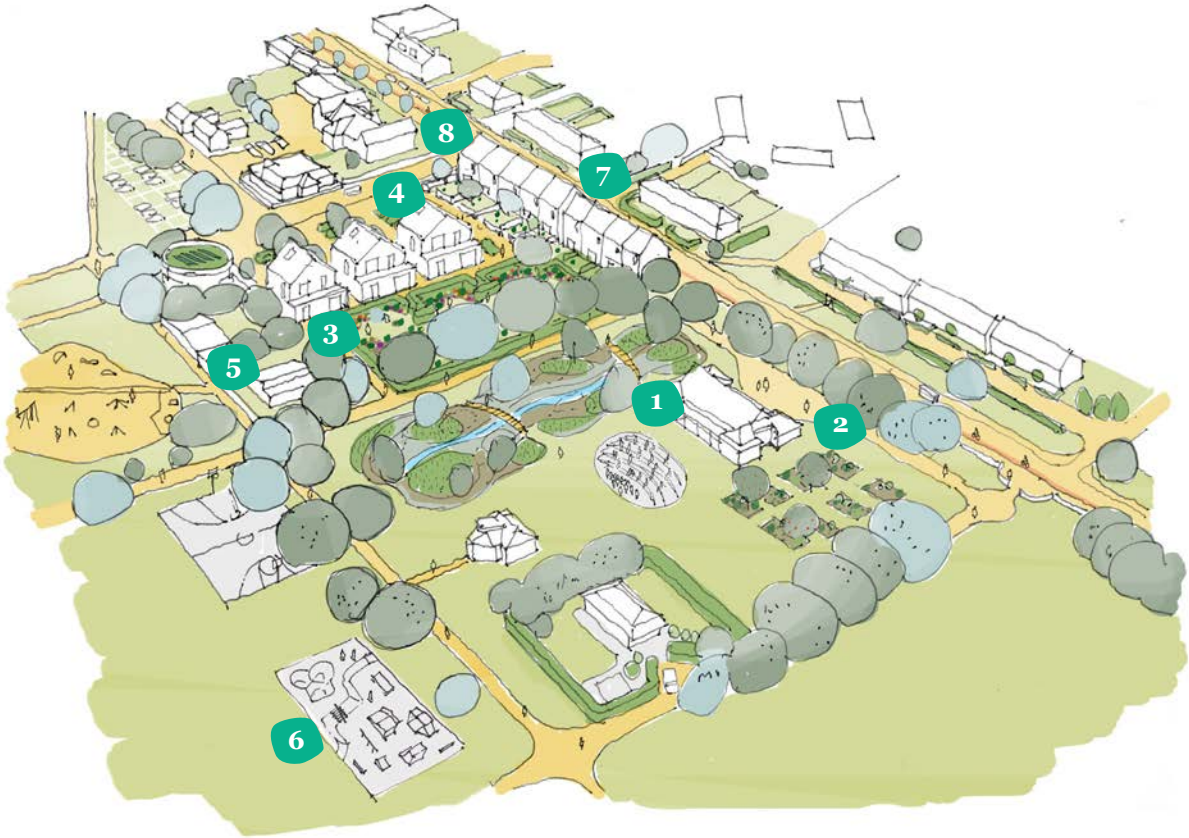
Scenario 3: Housing for Local Needs



“Having childcare near home has made it possible for me to start up my own local business.”

Rebecca - age 25

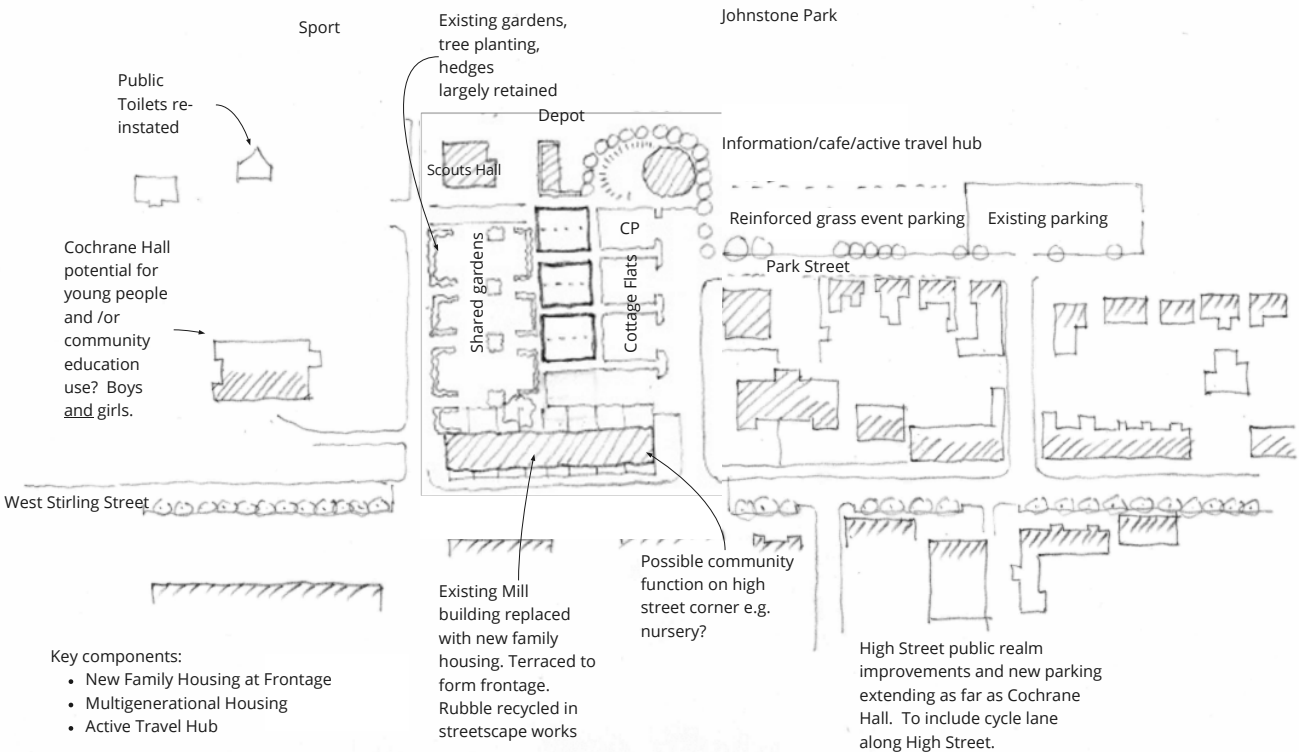
Scenario 3 features new special needs family housing on Stirling Street frontage, multi-generational housing and an active travel hub on the current car park site. This scenario replaces the existing Mill building with new housing.



Illustrative aerial view of Scenario 3 from park.

Key:

- 1. Cochrane Hall. Potential for outdoor learning space behind Hall, eg. Amphitheatre space/stepped seating, sheltered/covered areas etc.
- 2. Community garden/allotments in the park.
- 3. Shared gardens with activity, growing spaces and attractive sheltered spaces to sit.
- 4. Modern cottage flats with plenty of natural light and balconies to provide direct links to outdoors and views to the parks and landscape.
- 5. Scouts hall with linked space for outdoor activities.
- 6. Play areas for children with seating for parents.
- 7. Affordable, energy-efficient, new-build family housing along Stirling Street replacing old Mill building.
- 8. Enclosed play area in garden at back of nursery.

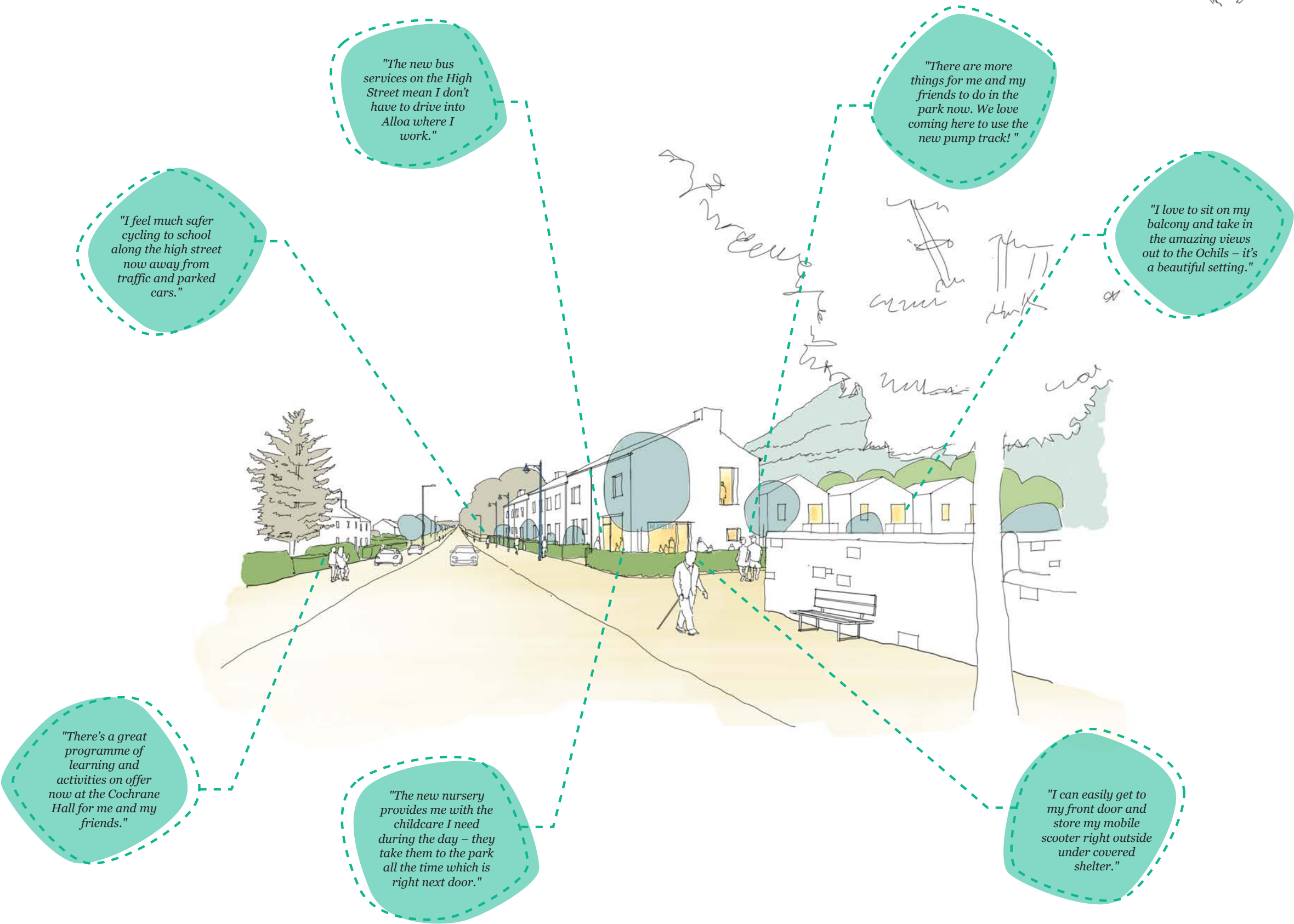


How would the Glentana Mill area change?



"The new family housing has made it possible for us to stay in the town centre where we can be on hand for our kids and looking after our elderly relatives."

Robert - age 51



Illustrative view of Scenario 3 looking west along Stirling Street towards Family Housing / Nursery

1.4 Place Procurement

Following the place-based analysis (as outlined in sections 2 and 3) prior to completing project definition or starting the procurement work, the rationale and need for each project should be considered, and from there a small set of project-specific objectives should be defined. The needs for the project should continue the interconnected perspectives of both Alva the place as well as Glentana the site. At this point the policy aspirations for relevant local and regional strategies should also be considered through a place-based approach for integrated services and activities. This will help to identify where and how the project can contribute to the aims and objectives of the Council and of other key stakeholders and potential funders.

The funding and delivery of a project at Glentana Mill will, to a large extent, be dependent on the mix of uses being taken forward. There is likely to be a need for public sector funding support, with an opportunity to bring in a private sector partner for some of the proposed elements e.g. housing. There is also a need to consider the extent of control, and therefore ownership, that the Council (and local community partners) wish to have in the development, delivery and possession of the completed asset.

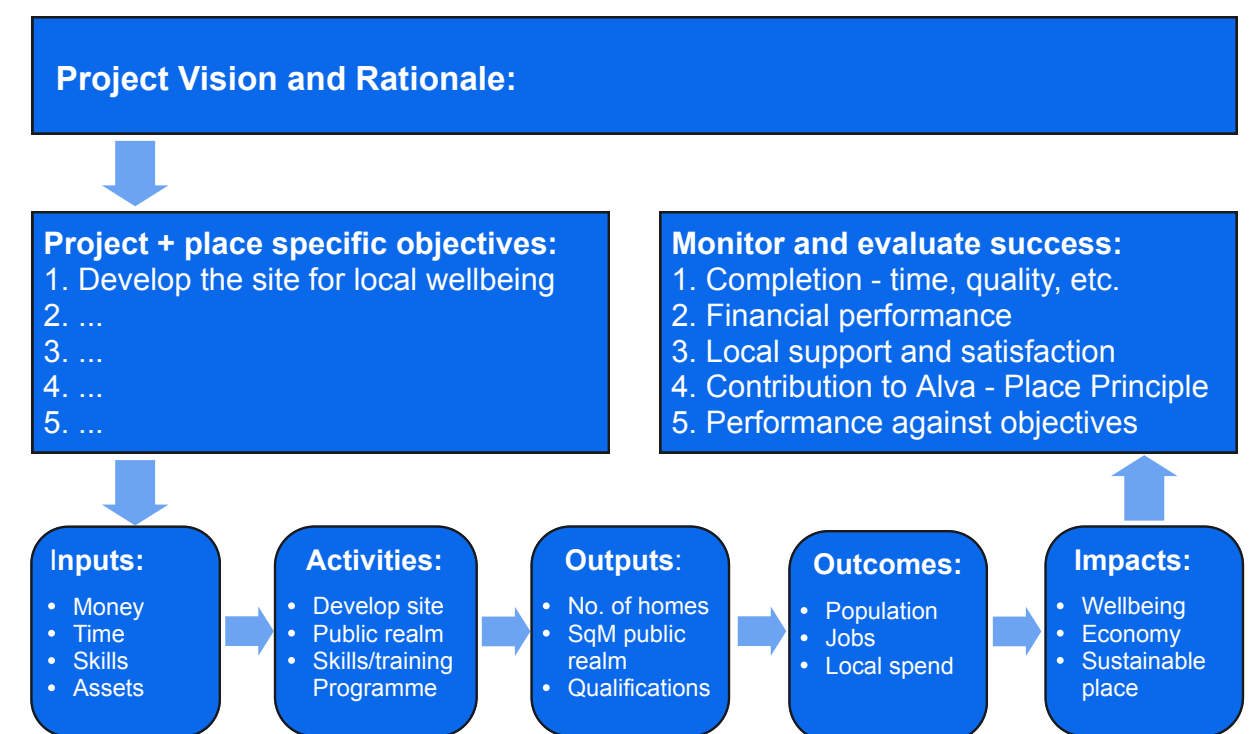
SFT will continue to work with the Council, in partnership with A&DS, to review delivery and funding options and define scenarios for delivery. This could include considering an appropriate procurement strategy (arising from the delivery approach) and whether there are any state aid/subsidy implications. Options may include:

- supporting the development of a masterplan brief for the site (in whole or individual plots) and offering the opportunity to the market – with or without planning and other permissions;
- creating a stand-alone delivery vehicle – a mix of

public and/or private and/or community ownership – to deliver the project and possibly own in perpetuity;

- securing a development partner (public/ private/ community) at an early stage to work in partnership for the design, development and delivery of the project – this might include different partners for different elements, e.g. housing association for residential, community group for the hub; and,
- the Council retaining ownership and securing funding (Council budget, external grant and private finance) to deliver the project, with the option of disposing of all, or part, on completion.

There are a number of external funding sources that may be available to deliver the project – including housing, regeneration and town centre funding. Depending on the mix of uses and the delivery model, SFT will support the Council to develop a funding package for delivery.



Example of what a logic model for development of Glentana Mill might include

1.5 Recommendations & Next Steps

“This report captures and illustrates the thoughts and ideas that consultation and asset mapping exercises have generated and provides the Council and its partners with an ideal platform from which to make informed decisions about the future of the Glentana Mill site and other actions in Alva.”

Grant Baxter, Principal Placemaking Officer, Clackmannanshire Council

A&DS and SFT propose to work with Clackmannanshire Council to establish the basis for implementation of the vision, projects and actions identified. The following recommendations are put forward for consideration by the council (supported by the toolkits provided in section 2 of this report).

- 1. Leadership:** A cross-agency/service approach to the regeneration of Alva has been established in support of community needs. This foundation can be used towards the implementation of a shared vision and actions defined collaboratively between community and stakeholders. We would propose council leadership in this through the establishment of a high-level steering group for Alva and involving community representation to oversee implementation.
- 2. A Holistic Approach:** The action plan and logic model (see Section 2.2) provide templates for implementation planning across one year, five year and ten-year timescales. The Place Standard Design Version can be used as a tool to test whether, for any one initiative, the wider vision is being maintained through delivery, to carry through a holistic place-based approach to delivery across a range of initiatives over time.
- 3. Community Voice:** The vision and actions set out here can be used as a basis for work between the council and community to prepare a mutually established Local Place Plan for Alva, to guide spatial planning in the longer term.
- 4. Site Brief:** The scenario illustrations can be used alongside the personas as a basis for further community stakeholder work when establishing a preferred development mix and site brief for the Glentana Mill site.
- 5. An Agile Approach:** For elements of community benefits identified that cannot be realised at the Glentana Mill site, other opportunities to provide these benefits should be tested elsewhere in Alva. This may include the role of Cochrane Hall, the health centre, the library and the regeneration of other vacant shops, upper floors or derelict sites.
- 6. Baseline Data:** There are a number of external tools and data sources available that will help people to understand the baseline context for Alva – in particular www.usp.scot. This data can be useful to inform community consultation and engagement work and help to further identify local needs/ opportunities.
- 7. Defining the Need:** The logic model approach, with aligned SMART objectives (see Section 2.2) and policy analysis, will help to clearly define the rationale and need for the project – what do you want to achieve, why this site, why this use, what difference will the project make?
- 8. Wider Benefits:** There is an opportunity to connect the physical development with wider place aspirations around community wealth building, wellbeing and economic inclusion through contract delivery – this might include local contracting, skills/training and on-site facilities.



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