

# Future Directions



## **The way forward for Clackmannanshire Council**

“Future Directions” offers a vision of how Clackmannanshire and its Council might develop over the next decade. It does not offer a detailed plan but instead, a sense of direction which should guide the day-to-day work of Council managers and staff. It aims to give a clear sense of purpose and establish strategic objectives.

# THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

The Council exists to promote the interests and well being of the people of Clackmannanshire. To do this it will ensure the effective delivery of local public services and represent the concerns and needs of the people of the area.

## The Council has two major roles:


- to provide a diverse range of services; and
- to represent and promote the interests of all of the people of Clackmannanshire


These twin roles of service provision and advocacy are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. However, the context in which the Council must carry out these functions is changing rapidly. If the Council is to remain effective in both of these roles, it needs to understand the changing environment within which it operates and develop its policies and practices to suit both current and anticipated needs.


# THE CONTEXT


Change is increasingly rapid and fundamental. Local government will not be immune but must respond positively to the powerful forces which are changing our communities. By seeking to understand these trends and their potential impact on Clackmannanshire, the Council and its partners can take advantage of the opportunities which are offered while countering the threats.

- Changing technology and global competition are bringing cheaper products at the cost of greater insecurity. Young people require from the education service the knowledge, skills and personal qualities needed for success in uncertain circumstances. Adapting to constant rapid change depends on lifelong learning networks in which the place of the public sector is yet uncertain. The community must show enterprise but also give security and a sense of belonging.

 Environmental Sustainability is a global issue which must be tackled locally. Sustainability is not just a matter of effective waste management or responsible use of energy but involves developing Clackmannanshire as a place where people will choose to live, work and bring up their children.

 Global Changes promote prosperity but risk increasing inequality. On public agencies, local and national, falls the responsibility for securing social inclusion. Raising the educational attainment level of the community as a whole to an internationally competitive standard provides the basis for future inclusion. Equally, however, the Council must be the moving force in directing the combined resources of society to tackle current inequality.

 Demographic Change means that Council services must change also. An ageing population, distributed among an increasing number of households, does not only require more resources for community care. The leisure requirements of the active elderly require attention. The housing needs of single-person households must be addressed.

 Above all, expectations, attitudes and values are changing. Public services must be shaped by customer need not provider interest. Clients expect an individualised service available at a time and place of their choosing. People attitudes require a shift from uniformity of provision towards a more customer-focused approach. Yet public agencies must help to shape the climate of opinion not merely respond to it. Voter turnout is at a low ebb although the need for active citizenship has never been greater.

# HOW THIS AFFECTS CLACKMANNANSHIRE COUNCIL

Such major issues must effect the way in which the Council goes about its business. However, to act effectively the Council must link its efforts with those of a wide range of partners. Community Planning and collaborative working thus lie at the heart of the Council's strategic direction. Within the Community Planning framework, four major themes have been identified, linking closely to the major forces for change described in the previous section.

## ENVIRONMENT

The quality of the environment in which people live, work and relax is fundamental to their wellbeing and quality of life. Clackmannanshire has an attractive environment, making it a pleasant place to live, but it is important that decisions made today take into consideration their future impact upon the environment. Environment priorities are to:-



- ❖ Protect and enhance the landscape and natural environment
- ❖ Ensure an attractive built environment
- ❖ Ensure effective transport links and access
- ❖ Manage waste and energy production and usage in sustainable ways
- ❖ Take local action on climate change.

## HEALTH

Good health is a key determinant of quality of life. The proportion of Clackmannanshire's population aged 65 years and over is growing while the proportion aged under 20 is falling. This has serious implications for the future of care services. Death from coronary heart disease is much higher than other causes of death in Clackmannanshire (although still below the Scottish average rate).



Priorities for improving health are:-

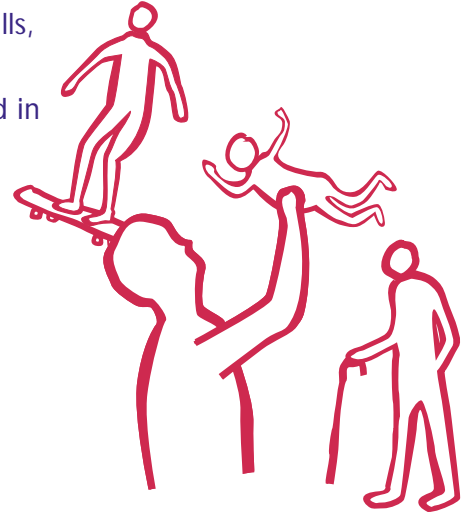
- ❖ Promoting healthy lifestyles
- ❖ Reducing health inequalities
- ❖ Caring for children, young people and families
- ❖ Supporting people in their communities.

## SOCIAL INCLUSION

Clackmannanshire has a strong sense of community and its compact size gives a sense of belonging. However, problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, the sub-standard housing, crime and the fear of crime, bad health and family breakdown affect too many people and are concentrated in certain areas.

Priorities for reducing exclusion are:

- Developing community engagement and capacity building
- Promoting community safety
- Tackling the causes of exclusion
- Learning from the experience of the Social Inclusion Partnership.



## THE ECONOMY

Job opportunities and secure incomes are important to most people. In today's rapidly changing markets, Clackmannanshire needs to move with the times to enable local people to fulfil their potential.

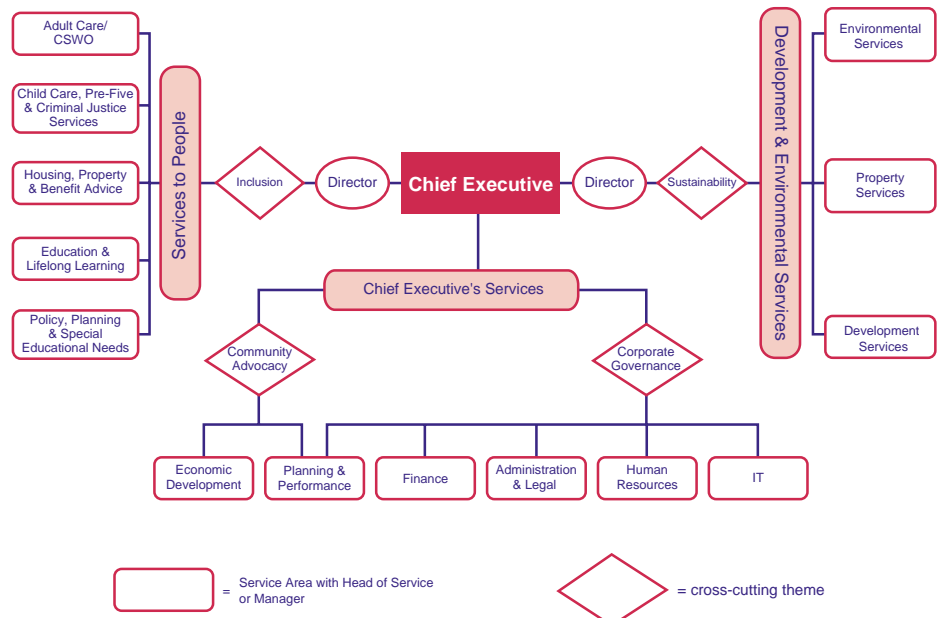
Priorities for the economy are:

- Innovation in learning and personal development
- Developing leisure and tourism
- Encouraging creative and enterprising people and communities
- Improving connections and communications
- Building smarter businesses within a competitive location.



These themes are also reflected in the Council's new structure where Social Inclusion and Health are combined within the cross cutting theme of Inclusion for which Services to People is responsible, Sustainability (including the environment) is the key responsibility of Development and Environmental Services and Community Advocacy (including Economic Development) falls within the remit of the Chief Executive's Service.

The Council also has the task of modernising its own services. The opportunity exists to create services which are more customer-focused and cost-effective than was possible in the past. There is a need to make appropriate use of new technology and create a corporate culture which is open to radical change. This requires nothing less than a fundamental re-evaluation of core purposes and a consequent reorientation of priorities and budgets. It involves also a sustained commitment to staff development and improved communication.



If the Council is to succeed in such a far-reaching programme of modernisation, a number of prerequisites must first be met.

- ✦ A vision has to be developed in collaboration with the community. This entails sustained and open consultation to develop shared objectives and an understanding of the inevitability of difficult choices.
- ✦ Such a consultation is only the first stage in developing a community willing and enabled to shape a positive future for itself.
- ✦ Within the Council, leadership and management capacity requires to be developed. The implications in terms of direct costs and member and officer time will need to be accepted.
- ✦ At all levels of the organisation, the Council's culture needs to become more open to change. At the heart of this process is improved communication.
- ✦ Collaboration with partners needs to become more effective. A shared sense of direction needs to be developed. Collaborative programmes of staff development, pooled budgets and joint planning all have roles to play.
- ✦ Overall, the Council requires to become a learning organisation capable of leading its community. The Council will not be accorded this leadership role as of right but only in recognition of the quality of its vision and the strength of its commitment.

# STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

In all its actions the Council needs to be guided by a realistic assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the local circumstances within which it operates.

## Clackmannanshire benefits from:

- A strong sense of community
- A convenient location in the centre of Scotland
- A manageable and compact area
- An outstanding natural environment complemented by aspects of a good built environment
- A track record of public agencies working in partnership
- Some recent signs of economic revival
- A cost-effective living and business location

## but Clackmannanshire is disadvantaged by:

- Unemployment rates above the Scottish average
- Pockets of persistent deprivation
- Rapid decline in traditional industries
- Slow growth in the knowledge economy
- Below average levels of skills and qualifications
- Poor transport infrastructure
- Unacceptable inequality

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The Council needs to balance an awareness of the likely scope of future change with a continuing commitment to its core values.

The boundary between public and private sectors is shifting and is likely to continue to do so. New technology is not only transforming the way in which services are delivered but increasingly calls into question traditional assumptions about purposes, client groups and funding.

On the other hand, there is a continuing recognition of the need to protect public as well as private interests. Furthermore, local authorities are not only a way by which such interests may be protected but are themselves an instrument for developing social cohesion and promoting the concept of community.

**In these changing circumstances, the Council's aims are to:**

## **SOCIETY/COMMUNITY**

Create strong, active, safe and caring communities

## **ECONOMY**

Achieve local economic prosperity and stability

## **ENVIRONMENT**

Make the most of Clackmannanshire's unique built and natural environment

## **PEOPLE**

Develop a culture of personal achievement where everyone is valued

## **HEALTH**

Improve the health of the people of Clackmannanshire

## **LOCAL ADVOCACY**

Represent and promote the interests of all of the people of Clackmannanshire

## **THE COUNCIL AS AN ORGANISATION**

Ensure that the people of Clackmannanshire receive the highest quality services for the public pound

## **The Council's corporate objectives are to:**

### **SOCIETY/COMMUNITY**

- Strengthen communities by building community capacity
- Increase community safety and public confidence
- Involve the community in more decisions and services affecting Clackmannanshire

### **ECONOMY**

- Increase the diversification of the local economy
- Create favourable conditions to encourage inward investment and retention of employees

### **ENVIRONMENT**

- Protect and enhance the local environment
- Promote the best standards of design and energy efficiency
- Limit pollution and resource consumption to sustainable levels

### **PEOPLE**

- Develop a culture of personal achievement where everyone is valued
- Enrich the life experiences of individuals
- Lessen hardship
- Raise skills levels

### **HEALTH**

- Provide care to those who need it
- Ensure people have a healthy living environment
- Promote healthy living

### **THE COUNCIL AS AN ORGANISATION**

- Enhance the Council's role as democratic community leader
- Raise the positive profile of Clackmannanshire nationally

### **LOCAL ADVOCACY**

- Provide progressive, efficient, effective services
- Make sure that action taken today does not compromise the interests of future generations
- Ensure services are designed around customer needs
- Work in partnership both with customers and other organisations

# ACHIEVING PROGRESS

This document sets out the broad direction for the Council. This, however, needs to be translated into practical actions, linked and co-ordinated where necessary.

Each year services will produce three year plans for their strategic activities. These plans, and all other strategies, policies and statutory plans will set out the actions that will be taken to address corporate priorities. Progress on priorities will be reviewed regularly, so that the Council can ensure that efforts remain focused upon its strategic objectives.

Information on corporate priorities, strategies and plans will be accessible on the Clackswab website and in hard copy.

[www.clackswab.org.uk](http://www.clackswab.org.uk)



## FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like further information on Council plans and strategies, or wish to make comment on this document, please contact the Chief Executive's Service.

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