



## Our vision

We want North East Fife to be a place where all residents enjoy a good quality of life, tourists are keen to visit, and opportunity exists for all. We want to join up communities, providing opportunities for all age groups and building on the vibrant community spirit that exists. We want to promote and increase access to our assets and facilities, including our natural heritage and renowned tourist attractions, with the resulting benefits spread across the area.

### *What puts us on the map?*

North East Fife is an area of great natural beauty, rich in natural resources. This mixture of coast and countryside – of heritage and innovation – characterises an area with much to offer residents and a wealth of attractions to draw tourists in. Award winning beaches; a respected University; the ‘home of golf’; cultural festivals and coastal paths; and, of course, the people.

### *What existing assets and opportunities could be built upon?*

- North East Fife is a key tourist destination, particularly the town of St Andrews. There are opportunities to build on this and on the area’s proximity to the V&A, with cruise tourism and international flights to Edinburgh airport being potential sources of visitors.
- The area has a rich heritage and its coastal and rural villages and the market town of Cupar are key assets, as are the communities who reside in them
- The natural heritage of North East Fife is a tremendous asset. The coastal path is a huge draw that could spur local spending, and woodland areas such as Tentsmuir offer great potential for increased promotion.
- There is much social capital in the area, with many examples of community led services. Volunteers play an important part in maintaining local facilities and it is important that they are given appropriate support from the council and community planning partners.
- Local food and drink, including the varied local produce and the growing number of distilleries in the area, is a tremendous asset for North East Fife, with collaborative efforts needed to help maintain and build on this.

### *What major future challenges do we need to address?*

- Poverty – both rural and hidden – remains a pressing challenge. Rural poverty is affected by the increasing cost of transport, low wages, fuel poverty and social isolation. While North East Fife is often portrayed as a more affluent area, poverty is not always visible – including fuel poverty, and the high cost of living.
- ICT connectivity remains an issue, with many rural areas particularly at risk from lack of fast Internet connections and good mobile phone coverage. This should be addressed to ensure there is access to essential services online and that such areas are viable for businesses and home working.
- Accessing services is a growing challenge – both for old people and other sections of the community. The cost of public transport, closure of local offices and people’s ability to access online services all increase the difficulty in providing universal provision. The geographical

makeup of North East Fife poses specific difficulties for the Care sector for providing home care for the elderly.

- Crime is increasingly moving from outdoors to indoors, with cyber-crime and bogus crime emerging as areas of key concern

### *What would we be proudest to achieve in years to come?*

- That everyone can benefit from being in a safe, attractive place to live and work. Central to this will be keeping people safe in their own homes and facilitating independent living, with more flexibility in the support being provided.
- That the differences in outcomes between urban and rural communities are reduced, through measures such as an affordable regional transport system, energy-efficient housing, and a reduction in poverty levels.

### *What do we want our children's future to look and feel like?*

- That children feel their future can be in North East Fife, and that there are opportunities for those that remain in the area. Central to this is affordable housing/family housing, and more local-employment opportunities that offer secure living-wage salaries.
- That they are connected to the world of work and training, with relevant school and further education opportunities, work experience opportunities, and the support to fulfil their aspirations.

### *What do we want visitors returning to the area in the future to say?*

- That there is more to North East Fife than St Andrews, with distinctive offerings in other towns and villages underpinned by a quality hospitality service. Easily accessible information makes it easier to seek out tourism opportunities, and there are a choice of options to stay, eat and drink.

### *How will we help people to feel emotionally connected to the plan?*

- We will ensure that we regularly communicate with communities to seek their views, engaging with people wherever they are and acting upon identified issues. Community consultation will come to be viewed as the norm, with participatory budgeting becoming a symbol of what is possible, forging improved links between the council and communities.

### *How are the community involved in this plan?*

- A robust community engagement plan will be implemented, taking advantage of North East Fife's community council network and wealth of community organisations and Community Development Trusts.

# Our aspirations



## Opportunities for All

The low level of deprivation in North East Fife in a Fife context means that communities suffering from inequality may be overlooked at a strategic level, particularly where affluent neighbouring areas may mask **hidden inequality**. Social isolation, poverty, ill health, poor transport links and access to employment and services all affect communities in North East Fife to varying degrees and should be addressed.

The **hospitality and tourism** sector makes up a large part of the North East Fife economy, with the result that a significant number of jobs in the area are seasonal, at unsociable hours, and pay below the living wage. Accessing these positions is particularly difficult for those who rely on **public transport**.

The importance of **educational opportunities** for local people has been highlighted, delivering appropriate support for pupils in local schools and ensuring that a range of opportunities are available for school leavers. Improved links with local employers would help increase the work experience and apprentice opportunities available, while relationships with SRUC Elmwood, Fife College and St Andrews University should be further developed, to ensure that there are appropriate learning opportunities for young people in North East Fife.



## Thriving Places

**Travel connections** between larger towns in North East Fife are generally good for both public transport and road networks, but rural areas are less well served. In particular, the road network in the East Neuk adds to journey times and is vulnerable to bad weather. For non-drivers in areas with reduced public transport, **access to services** is a growing problem, one that will be worsened by closure of banks and local facilities.

There is the potential to take advantage of North East Fife's **location** in order to link together each part, in the belief that "a rising tide lifts all boats." Although all five Wards in North East Fife have their own character, they are not in competition with each other and with better **linkage and publicity** could benefit each other (e.g. tourists staying in a village or farmhouse B+B as a base from which to explore other parts of North East Fife).

**Affordable homes** and good amenities would help encourage young people to stay within North East Fife, and avoid locals being unable to return to the area to raise their own families.



## *Inclusive Growth and Jobs*

**Tourism** is a significant contributor to the local economy, with St Andrews having an internationally-renowned reputation and playing host to large-scale sporting events. There is an opportunity to build on this potential, linking St Andrews tourism up with the rest of North East Fife and successfully marketing the wide variety of activity options available. Improved promotion, connectivity and accommodation options would help to achieve this.

There is the potential to lever North East Fife's **natural assets**, location and links with St Andrews University to spur new investment into the area. New distilleries and the development of the Eden Energy campus have attracted great publicity and may increase related opportunities for **entrepreneurship and employment**.

The establishment of improved broadband and mobile connectivity in rural areas would increase opportunities for home-working and business start-ups, helping to grow the economy of North East Fife and encourage businesses to stay or relocate in such areas.



## *Community Led Services*

Many areas within North East Fife report good community spirit and a high level of community involvement. **Volunteers** play an important role in many North East Fife communities and their time and efforts will only become more important as council budgets reduce. These individuals should be supported in sharing their skills and experience with the community. It is important that this is framed in such a way that it helps foster a greater sense of ownership in services, rather than create the impression that the council is looking to transfer responsibility.

There is a good track record of community involvement within the area, with over 30 active Community Councils and many residents volunteering with local organisations. **Community consultation** exercises should continue and be developed, and it is important that these seek the view of as wide a range of residents as possible. To improve participation, people need to see what difference it will make, and feel that any decisions made are the result of a collaborative process.

Loneliness and belonging is a concern for many people in North East Fife, and may be heightened by the poor connectivity associated with living outwith main population centres. There is potential to build on good community work already ongoing to ensure that all residents feel a part of their local community. Increasing opportunities for social activities are among measures that help create and maintain a feeling of neighbourhood togetherness.