

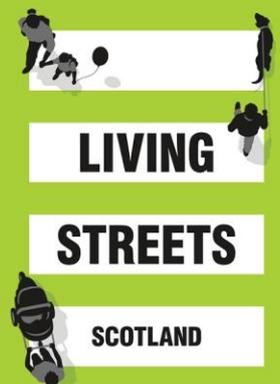
Living Streets

Summary Report

Westhill
March 2018



We are Living Streets Scotland, part of the UK charity for everyday walking. We want to create a walking nation where people of all generations enjoy the benefits that this simple act brings, on streets fit for walking.





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Summary of work

We are Living Streets Scotland, (LSS), a part of the UK charity for everyday walking. We are working with Aberdeenshire Council Transport team, to help develop the Integrated Travel Town Masterplan, (ITTM), specifically looking at walking. We have previously worked with residents, groups and organisations in Inverurie. This year we have been working in Westhill as part of a larger suite of work taking in Banff, Stonehaven, Banchory, Macduff and Oldmeldrum.

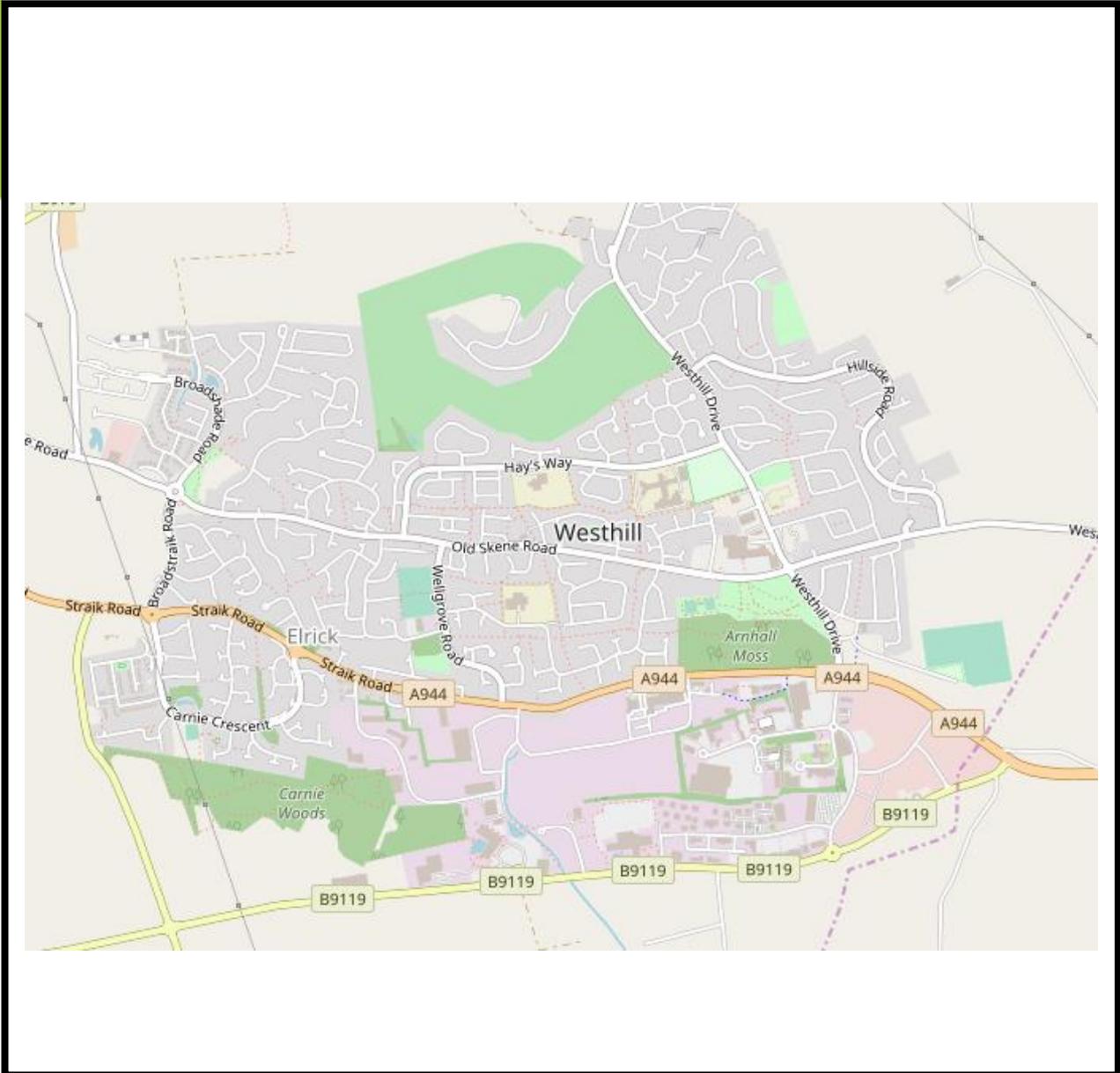
The Transport team are working to produce an ITTM and LSS is supporting this work by looking at barriers and assets to walking, especially for the more vulnerable pedestrian. We have considered routes to key local trip generators within a town including amenities such as shops, schools, post office and GP. We considered the ease of access to public transport links on foot, e.g. bus stops and Rail stations where applicable.

Background to Westhill work

The Living Streets Coordinator organised a workshop for November 27th 2017, after contacting local groups and organisations. Local stakeholders contacted included North East Sensory Services, Community Council, Community Centre, Westhill Men's Shed, Ashdale Hall and Aberdeenshire Council Officers. Despite best efforts to contact local stakeholders, turnout for the workshop was low, with only a community planning officer and transport planning officer from Aberdeenshire Council attending. SensationALL, a local organisation supporting residents with learning disabilities, was able to provide feedback on issue affecting their members; and the community planning officer was also able to identify issues reported by residents participating in a recent Place Standard ¹workshop.

¹ <https://www.placestandard.scot/>

Map of area



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Area Profile

Westhill functions more as a suburb of Aberdeen than as a clearly defined community in its own right. A lack of an historic town centre, with a small, modern shopping centre taking its place; and the prevalence of large modern warehouse facilities on the periphery, including large retail units and a business park, contribute to this sense. The area is largely residential in character with many residents reliant on nearby Aberdeen city for work, shopping, essential services, and leisure. Public transport links to destinations other than Aberdeen are limited; however, residents, and especially older residents, have family and other ties to other Aberdeenshire settlements, including Inverurie. For those without access to a car, travel to keep in contact with family and friends can be challenging.

Workshop findings

(including summary of Place Standard findings)

Westhill

- A lack of day services for older residents in Westhill itself;
- Lack of a bus service to Inverurie;
- Lack of office space in the town means essential services are located elsewhere; a lack of transport options to reach services for those without a car;
- Overall, residents feel Westhill is a safe place to live

Shopping Centre

- Privately owned; issues with layout and access to parking fees for those using some services i.e. Citizens Advice Bureau
- Parking is chaotic and poorly managed; residents feel the car park is unsafe and pedestrians have been involved in collisions with vehicles. There are no footpaths for people walking through the carpark. Any footpaths being added to the carpark would need to be agreed by the private owner.
- There are bus stops near to the shopping centre, which would allow access to the Citizens Advice Bureau and shops.

Lawsondale Playing Fields

- Improved access to public/pedestrians as currently restricted to local groups/clubs – potential to be better utilised

Arnhall Moss

- Route to Tesco from schools; potential to improve connections between school / Tesco for those on foot?

Blackhills Place

- Transport provision connecting facility to shopping centre?

Westhill Library/Primary School

- Issue with speeds/crossings (how do people travel to school)

Next steps

The areas to be addressed going forward.

- Accessibility of public transport from Westhill to Inverurie.
- Speed and volume of traffic through Westhill. There are a lot of cars using routes through Westhill as part of their commute, this leads to congestion at peak times, noise and pollution – all of which affect residents making journeys on foot, and can discourage residents from traveling actively.
- Distance from sheltered housing to town centre. This was felt to be too far for residents to walk,. Possibly adding benches and or shelters would make this more accessible for older residents. The addition of shelters at the 2 nearest bus stops may encourage use of public transport.
- Work with local Garioch Community Planning Officer, (Jill Sowden, jill.sowden@aberdeenshire.gov.uk, 01467 534455, 07979 708799)
To engage the local community and share information already gathered.

Contacts

This report is being submitted to:

- Aberdeenshire Council Transport team
- Local Councillors and workshop participants

Contacts:

Avril McKenzie, Living Streets Scotland

avril.mckenzie@livingstreets.org.uk

For further information on the findings of the recent Place Standard activity facilitated by Community Planning, please contact:

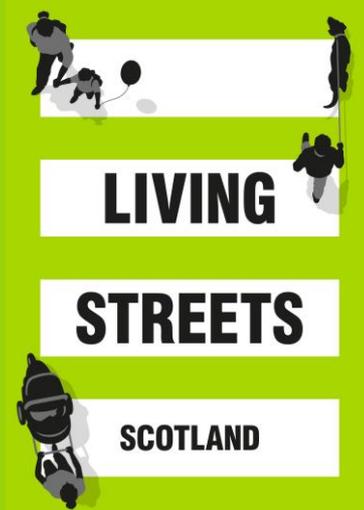
Garioch Community Planning Officer

Jill Sowden,

jill.sowden@aberdeenshire.gov.uk,

01467 534455

07979 708799



For more information contact Living Streets Scotland

Thorn House
5 Rose Street
Edinburgh
EH2 2PR

Telephone: 0131 243 2645
Email: Scotland@livingstreets.org.uk

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