

Community Plan (2018-2028) Refresh: Consultation Summary of Feedback

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Introduction

The Community Plan, also known as the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) is Edinburgh's shared plan agreed by the Edinburgh Partnership (EP) to reduce poverty and inequality, as well as improve wellbeing across the city. Before refreshing it for its final two years, people from over 40 organisations across Edinburgh's third sector, youth work, Edinburgh Partnership and Edinburgh Poverty Commission were asked for their thoughts on how well the plans align with current community needs, what may be missing, what impact they would like to see, any risks of adverse effects, and any other relevant factors. Here's a summary of what we heard, and how any questions/concerns are being addressed. The full plan can be accessed here: [Edinburgh Community Plan](#).

What we heard, and how the Edinburgh Partnership have responded

3 priority areas, including **29** actions reviewed
30 themes identified from feedback

Following the above consultation, actions were significantly revised to incorporate feedback. We also grouped actions by priority and within that, according to where they sit on the prevention spectrum (rather than by theme), making clearer how our collective resources are being used. A full list of the actions and the indicators of both progress and impact (outcome) for each can be found in Sections 7-9 of the [revised Community Plan](#).

Priority 1: Enough money to live on

The single biggest concern people raised was housing.

1. Housing affordability and supply

People felt that "affordable" housing often isn't affordable, and that existing homes aren't well maintained. They also called for more short-term crisis housing, welcomed our Housing First approach, debated rent controls, and flagged how mixed housing standards can affect community cohesion.

The EP's response

The Council is investing over £100 million in bringing homes up to modern quality and safety standards, including work on damp, mould and fire safety. About 75% new homes built over the next decade need to be social affordable homes. Rent controls are now being introduced under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2025, and the council has suspended council housing allocation rules until March 2027 as an emergency measure to meet legal housing duties – over £1.5 billion has been committed over the five years to support this. Much of this is council business as usual work, rather than work of the Edinburgh Partnership.

2. Clearer actions and outcomes

People felt actions were too broad, vague, or overlapping with no clear "how" or timeline attached.

The EP's response

Actions have been rewritten and reorganised to be clearer, with every action tracked through quarterly progress reports against agreed measures.

3. Better joined-up working

People wanted better coordination between different partnership groups, less duplication, and a clearer, more formal way for the third sector and young people to have a say.

The EP's response

The Community Planning Management Group brings together the leadership of the seven strategic partnerships (thematic groups) that will deliver on the Community Plan. This ensures greater communication, alignment on cross cutting themes and problems solving across the Partnership.

A new Participation Strategy for the Edinburgh Partnership will be co-designed with partners to set out clearly how people, organisations and communities can get involved in decisions. A Children's Rights and Participation working group will be established to support this and ensure the participation of children and young people.

4. Income maximisation and welfare advice

People described long waits and being passed between advice services without getting help.

The EP's response

A review of advice services is continuing this year, alongside wider engagement with the third sector to improve how people access support.

5. Data sharing and evidence

People want decisions to be backed by shared, up-to-date evidence across housing, health and the third sector.

The EP's response

The work of the Edinburgh Partnership is underpinned by national and local data and intelligence, with key links to relevant data and reports collated on its [webpage](#). The Partnership also has a process for conducting Joint Strategic Needs Assessments on topics where additional insight is required.

In addition, the Council is working with the [Smart Data Foundry](#), NHS Lothian and the University of Edinburgh on some of Scotland's largest data-sharing projects to prevent homelessness before it happens.

6. Financial literacy – scope and delivery

People said financial literacy work needs to reach beyond young people, especially young parents, delivered in community settings rather than just schools, and with fresher language to engage young people.

The EP's response

This work is deliberately starting small so the partnership has a foundation to build from. The points raised are valid and will likely shape how the working group develops this action further.

7. Child health and wellbeing

People felt this action tried to cover too much at once, with young people's mental health a major gap and a need for a whole-family approach.

The EP's response

Actions have since been significantly revised for clarity. The refreshed plan draws on the newly published [Children's Services Plan](#), including a new action to strengthen community mental health support and inclusive youth and children's work.

8. Inclusion and equity

People said support was too narrowly focused on benefits, with families who have no recourse to public funds, and barriers linked to racism, language and employment access, inadequately supported.

The EP's response

As the statutory homelessness authority, the Council assesses everyone who presents as homeless and considers all relevant circumstances – including domestic abuse, substance use and mental health – when providing support, within what the law allows for people with no recourse to public funds.

Action 1.8 on the Community Plan focusses on a data led approach to tackling poverty in Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and migrant or refugee families and is being delivered with support from the Child Poverty Accelerator Fund. While this does focus on benefits uptake within the groups, the work will support identification of other gaps/support opportunities.

9. Third sector capacity

People wanted better upskilling for advice workers, a formal framework for working with public agencies, and stronger NHS involvement in the Edinburgh Partnership.

The EP's response

The [Edinburgh Advice Network](#) already brings advice providers together for shared learning and training. Should you think there is additional training they could offer they would be glad to hear from you. Work on the next full Community Plan (2028-2038) begins in 2026 and the third sector will be involved. There is also a role for the third sector in co-designing Neighbourhood Prevent Partnerships (NPPs).

NHS Lothian sits on the Edinburgh Partnership Board (its Director of Public Health is Vice Chair) and is involved across all seven Strategic Partnerships.

10. Accountability and measurement

People wanted a clear accountability framework, with named leads, milestones and review dates, and suggested indicators like foodbank use and in-work poverty rates.

The EP's response

Actions have been rewritten and reorganised to be clearer, with every action tracked through quarterly progress reports against agreed measures (Performance Framework). Each action is assigned to a strategic partnership (or the Community Planning Management Group) for delivery and reporting. Quarterly reports are included in Board papers, which are shared on our website.

The Partnership is currently reviewing options for a new website. The intention is to share the progress against the Performance Framework in a more visual way once the new site is launched.

Priority 2: Access to work, learning and training

The clearest message here was that mental health is a major, unaddressed barrier.

1. Mental health and wellbeing as a barrier

People said schools aren't equipped to support pupils' mental health, and that this affects attendance, learning and adults staying in work too.

The EP's response

Dedicated mental health actions will work alongside school attendance measures with a preventative focus on children's wellbeing from their earliest years, including the transition into Primary 1.

2. Youth work – recognition and funding

People felt youth work's real value, including soft skills and wellbeing support, was a risk of being reduced to numbers alone.

The EP's response

Youth Awards and actions related to training and capacity building for your work will capture the qualitative impact of this work, alongside a joint push to connect youth awards with local employers. Work is also underway to identify an appropriate set of

youth work outcome indicators that complement Edinburgh Children's Partnership indicators.

3. Clearer language and outcomes

Terms like "extended" and "pathways" were seen as vague, with actions needing a clearer rationale.

The EP's response

This feedback was used directly to refine the language and structure of actions in the refreshed plan.

4. Fair funding for the third sector

People said the third sector can't pay staff fairly without fairer, more joined-up funding from public partners, and called for joint commissioning and stronger links with the Job Centre.

The EP's response

In March 2026, the Edinburgh Partnership Board agreed [Fair Funding](#) principles for third sector commissioning across the partnership, and will explore further joint commissioning opportunities where appropriate. A new action also commits partners to meeting the requirements of the [Community Wealth Building \(Scotland\) Act 2026](#).

5. Gaps: disabled people

People flagged a lack of focus on training and work for disabled people of working age, untracked impacts of care package cuts, and quality of life – not just employment numbers – should be the real measure of success.

The EP's response

This area of work is business as usual for Capital City Partnership with spending increased to £2m per year to support demand. One of the biggest contracts they hold is for [All in Edinburgh](#). Should you be interested in further information about the employment support available for people who have a disability in Edinburgh, please contact [Capital City Partnership](#).

6. Homelessness and housing as a barrier to work

People said this was missing entirely from this priority: people experiencing homelessness, and people leaving prison, face unique barriers to training and work – "no job without a house, no house without a job."

The EP's response

We're making sure employability support and homelessness prevention work hand in hand, so people don't fall between the two. Where possible, getting people into work is treated as part of preventing homelessness — not a separate issue. Staff helping people find jobs are also trained to spot housing problems early and point people toward the right housing advice or support. The Ask and Act pilot is focussed specifically on homelessness prevention (Action 1.6).

7. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and ethnic minority pathways

People wanted ESOL classes tailored to job-searching and linked directly to employability services, with services available beyond the standard 9-5.

The EP's response

The Local Employability Partnership (LEP) committed £250,000 to English language classes (ESOL) specifically designed to support people into work, running in 2026/27. Some of these classes will be online or run in the evenings, to fit around people's jobs, childcare, or other commitments.

8. School engagement vs. attendance

People distinguished between getting young people through the school door and genuinely engaging them, and flagged a gap in care-experienced children and those who aren't in mainstream schools, as well as support for the 18-25 transition age between youth and adult employability services.

The EP's response

The Edinburgh Partnership agrees that genuine engagement is key. The Children's Partnership takes a preventative approach through its Best Start and Poverty subgroups, with Youth Work, Inclusion and Engagement teams collaborating with Community Learning and Development and the Youth Employability Partnership. Attendance and positive destinations remain high-level indicators alongside other indicators linked to specific actions.

9. Volunteering and alternative pathways as a route to work

People said volunteering isn't recognised as a valid route to work, that employability is too narrowly linked to formal education, and that substance misuse is an embedded barrier with no clear partnership response.

The EP's response

A programme called Access to Industry has been jointly funded by the Edinburgh Alcohol and Drug Partnership (EDAP) and the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) to carry out this work. Volunteer Edinburgh has been commissioned to undertake work regarding substance misuse. NHS Lothian is already working on enhancing their volunteering offer, as part of its normal ongoing work. It's also running a pilot to create supported routes into NHS jobs. There is also an action to support improved awareness of volunteering opportunities relevant to climate, nature and food growing (3.14).

10. Data and evidence gaps

People wanted benchmark data to measure effectiveness, a clearer picture of the scale of the 18-25 transition gap, and data gathered before actions are designed rather than after.

The EP's response

The work of the Edinburgh Partnership is underpinned by national and local data and intelligence, with key links to relevant data and reports collated on its [webpage](#). The Partnership also has a process for conducting Joint Strategic Needs Assessments on topics where additional insight is required.

The new community plan (2018-28) will be developed based on the latest available data and insights from community engagement/participation across the partnership and with communities.

Priority 3: A good place to live

The most discussed topic across the whole consultation was the Neighbourhood Prevention Partnerships.

1. Neighbourhood Prevention Partnerships (NPPs)

Most people hadn't heard of NPPs. There was concern they could add bureaucracy without real community voice, and that five pilot areas isn't enough when poverty exists city-wide.

The EP's response

Clearer communication about NPPs is being addressed. The plan is to develop actions and priorities alongside local communities and services, not add another layer of bureaucracy — resource is in place to support this, and no area has been given a fixed plan in advance. This approach is driven by a "liberated methodology", modelled on similar work in England, which aims to shift power toward frontline workers and local communities rather than top-down decisions. We've also heard concerns about the name, and each area will have room to shape its own identity within one overall programme. The five areas were chosen using clear evidence, including local poverty data – identifying those of most concentrated child poverty, with a central support and evaluation function sharing learning city-wide.

2. Power and genuine partnership

A theme across almost every topic: people feel the same voices are heard repeatedly, and that the relationship between the Council and communities isn't equal yet.

The EP's response

From an Edinburgh Partnership perspective, this is a central concern being addressed through the wider Participation Strategy work (Action 3.5 of the Community Plan), aiming for a genuine shift in how decisions are shaped with communities, not just for them.

3. Community centre investment

Investment was welcomed but seen as insufficient, with concerns about volunteer burden and opening hours not meeting community needs.

The EP's response

This is council business as usual work. The Council will continue investment in buildings, business support, and governance training for management committees, with no expectation that volunteers run centres without council support.

From an Edinburgh Partnership perspective, under action 3.8 we will provide targeted support to Community Centre Management Committees to maintain and improve local access to existing community centres.

4. Trauma-informed justice

People asked for trauma-informed language throughout, stronger links to addiction and mental health, and more support for people leaving prison.

The EP's response

A new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Community Safety and Justice, and a new Antisocial Behaviour Strategy, will address these connections, due by the end of 2026. We agree that a trauma informed approach really needs embedded into this work. That is not something that can simply be retrofitted into existing language, and we want to do this meaningfully as we develop the new 2028-38 Community Plan, ensuring that the right voices are included and trauma informed practise are embedded into the shared priorities.

Action 3.28 focusses on establishing sustainable housing pathways for people released from prison.

5. Youth provision as prevention

People felt our Bonfire Night response was too reactive and risked stigmatising young people – they wanted safe spaces and activities available year-round. Not just one-off interventions.

The EP's response

This work is evidence-led rather than reactive. A small grants programme for third sector youth work organisations complements the Connected Communities Edinburgh programme, which already provides three-year core funding to 37 organisations delivering youth work.

6. Baseline data, evaluation and accountability

People said most actions lack baseline data or a clear measurement framework, and want communities involved in designing how progress is evaluated.

The EP's response

For the Ask and Act housing duty specifically, this is a deliberate pilot – the aim is to understand a brand-new piece of legislation and how it might work in practice before fuller data is established. All actions in the refreshed plan have agreed measures of progress and impact. Communities will have opportunities to contribute to the design of actions and evaluation for the new 2028-38 community plan.

7. Climate actions – scope, resource and fairness

People felt climate actions were too narrow – questioning why flooding action focuses on one area only, flagging unaffordable energy retrofit costs, and noting transport and infrastructure were missing entirely.

The EP's response

We took these comments onboard. The updated community plan has 11 actions for the Net Zero Edinburgh Leadership Board, covering a wide range of issues across the city including transport and infrastructure and a just transition.

8. Homelessness prevention and transition pathways

People welcomed our work on predictive modelling and pathways, but wanted to see more detail. They highlighted key transition points — leaving hospital, prison, or a

period of rough sleeping — as critical moments where homelessness could be prevented and pointed to the need for more joined-up working across justice, housing, and homelessness services.

The EP's response

The Council is partnering with the Smart Data Foundry, NHS Lothian and the University of Edinburgh to understand the economic, health and housing-related drivers of homelessness, aiming to intervene earlier. A Housing Officer is based at HMP Edinburgh to meet Safe Housing on Release standards, and Simon Community Scotland commissioned to work with people who are rough sleeping. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2025's new Ask and Act duty is being piloted in Wester Hailes with third sector and housing association partners, with findings fed back to the Scottish Government.

9. Language and tone across the plan

People felt the plan was framed around stopping bad things rather than building good ones, written for professionals rather than communities, and asked for more positive, accessible language throughout.

The EP's response

We heard this, and it's a fair point. This refresh was meant to update the existing plan, not rewrite it from scratch, so there was limited room to change the overall framing and tone in the timescales. That's a real limit, not an excuse. The plan does still focus more on stopping bad things than building good ones, and it still reads like it's written for professionals, not communities. That doesn't fit well with what this Partnership is actually for: building relationships, with communities and between partners.

So we're committing to two things:

1. In this plan: Developing a simple summary sheet, tangible outcomes etc
2. In the next Community Plan (from 2028): this will be built from the ground up, with communities most affected by poverty and inequality helping shape it from the start. People told us clearly, through this refresh, that they want deeper involvement, and that will be at the centre of how we build the next plan.

3. Substance misuse and addiction

People said addiction connects to crime, poverty, housing and mental health but isn't imbedded in any single action, and called for it to be treated as a public health issue and addressed earlier, before it becomes a crisis.

The EP's response

A new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Community Safety and Justice, and a new Antisocial Behaviour Strategy will take these connections into account, expected by the end of 2026. The Edinburgh Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (EADP) is the primary lead on actions around addiction and is a member of the Community Safety and Justice Partnership, and more detail of their work is available in the [EADP Strategy](#) and on the [EADP website](#).

What happens next

Your feedback has already reshaped this plan. Here's what's coming:

- Actions are clearer, simplified and tied to regular public reporting.
- Work on the next full Community Plan (2028-2038) has begun.
- There will be opportunities for the third sector and communities to be involved throughout development of the next Plan.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Prevention spectrum	A way of categorising how and when services intervene to support individuals or families to ensure the most effective response. The Spectrum ranges from primary intervention; stopping problems happening to early intervention: reducing negative impact to mitigation: managing problems after they have arisen.
Housing First approach	Prioritises immediate access to housing for individuals with complex needs. It operates on the principle that housing and support should not be separated and flexible support is provided for as long as it's needed.
Housing (Scotland) Act 2025	The Act introduces long-term rent control frameworks, expands tenants' rights regarding pets and property personalization, and strengthens measures against evictions and homelessness. Housing (Scotland) Act 2025 .
Community Planning Management Group (CPMG)	The CPMG is comprised of leads from each of the Edinburgh Partnership's Strategic Partnerships and provides support to the Board. Acting as a collaborative planning group to drive progress against the priorities set out in the LOIP, it ensures a joined-up agenda and delivery model across all the Strategic Partnerships, monitoring activity and performance against agreed outcomes. The CPMG is also responsible for developing a new LOIPs and corresponding performance frameworks, as required.
Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA)	Carried out by NHS Lothian: Joint strategic needs assessment - Edinburgh Health & Social Care Partnership and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment — Children and Young People in Edinburgh The former covered an assessment of adult needs in relation to a range of aspects including adult social care, mental health, substance use, palliative care, carers support and disability. The latter included information on demographics and some key health outcomes for children, young people and families in Edinburgh as well as looking into three specific areas of Homelessness, Additional Support Needs and Universal Access to Healthy opportunities.
Youth Awards	Nationally recognised, credit-rated youth awards designed to accredit personal development, volunteering,

	and skills. These frameworks operate across youth work settings, schools, and sports clubs.
Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act 2026	Requires local authorities and public bodies to implement an economic development model focused on retaining wealth within local communities. Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act 2026 .
Ask and Act	New duties proposed in the Housing (Scotland) Bill that requires public bodies to ask about a person's housing situation early—and take action to prevent homelessness before it happens.
Community Learning and Development	The CLDP coordinates the development and delivery of the CL Plan, which focuses on adult learning, community development, and youth work. The Partnership brings together key stakeholders to ensure collaborative, needs-led approaches that support lifelong learning, reduce inequalities, and strengthen communities.
Youth Employability Partnership	In Edinburgh, the Youth Employability Partnership (YEP) operates under the Edinburgh Local Employability Partnership (ELEP) . It unifies key agencies and youth workers to support school leavers aged 16-24. By aligning with Scotland's Young Person's Guarantee , it provides tailored mentoring, job matching, and training.
Access to Industry	Helping parents towards work by providing education, training, vocational qualifications and employability advice, along with wellbeing and practical support.
Community Centre Management Committees	Voluntary charitable groups that hold leases on Community Centres owned by the City of Edinburgh Council
Connected Communities Edinburgh	3-year, £10 million grant programme managed by the City of Edinburgh Council which supports 68 community-based organisations around themes of learning outcomes, health and wellbeing and youth work.
Simon Community Scotland	Largest provider of homelessness services in the country. Their mission is to combat the causes and effects of homelessness by providing safe housing, emergency accommodation, street outreach, and compassionate, trauma-informed support.