

Key themes - identified at the Musselburgh Area Partnership meeting 12th May 2014

Cross Cutting theme

A key theme linking many of the topics discussed was **'aspiration'** or more specifically lack of aspiration across the area – both individually and collectively for the future of the town. What are the communities' aspirations, or has there become a pattern in the area of settling for 'good enough' or 'better than it was'?

Some key areas of concern:

- 1. Poor attainment patterns for children and young people** – from early years to school leavers (and while easy to illustrate a simple east-west divide is not really enough to understand what is going on). Overall the schools in our area have a great ethos and are working hard with their communities to build links and support pupils, and families are getting more involved with schools. But is there something bigger underpinning the increased reports of disruptive behaviour (leading to higher rates of suspension /exclusion)? Is there a risk of young people being 'born to fail' – being part of a cycle of 'poverty of aspiration' in communities where there are fewer people with formal qualifications, a higher proportion of working age adults needing support with core skills and a prevalence of lower tier employment? What can be done to foster a 'culture of achievement' across the area?
- 2. Health inequalities within our communities** – particularly in relation to life-style dependent illnesses and child health and well-being indicators. Traditionally ex-mining communities have had poorer overall health outcomes due to the particular nature of the work that sustained them, but is this the reason for the current situation or is it more to do with poverty, education and aspiration?
- 3. Town Centre / High street regeneration** – what is the Town Centre Strategy (approved in November 2013) going to do to help create more reasons for visitors and local people to 'stop and stay' and enjoy Musselburgh, support small independent businesses and develop local employment? What else needs to be done?
- 4. Tourism offer** - How is Musselburgh presented to the wider world? East Lothian has a growing tourism industry – but what is Musselburgh's unique selling point? Can Musselburgh, as the gateway to East Lothian, be making more of our tourist offer – the river Esk, historic harbour, roman heritage, golf course, racecourse, Brunton, world class bird watching and even charity shops (they are a tourist draw in some areas!)?
- 5. Community Safety** – while fear of crime is generally low and rates of crime falling - and it was acknowledged that here has been some really good diversionary and partnership work in the area to address anti-social behaviour and community safety - Musselburgh West, particularly around North High St, has more than double the rate of reported crimes per person than average across East Lothian. What can help maintain the good progress on safety figures and what is/could be done to address the high rates of reported crime in some areas?
- 6. Transport and travel** - Transport to and from the centre of Musselburgh is probably the most extensive and affordable in East Lothian, and the park and ride is generating increased passenger use of Wallyford station. There are however still areas (particularly Whitecraig) with real public transport issues that affect people's ability to take up employment, access services and participate in activities within this community. Connections between communities not only relates to public transport but also to safe cycle and walking routes as well – where are the gaps that restrict these active forms of transport.
- 7. Inclusion** – across Musselburgh (particularly in Musselburgh West) the make-up of the population is changing – becoming younger, more likely to live alone and have moved to East Lothian from elsewhere. In this area too the proportion of people identifying themselves as coming from minority ethnic backgrounds is growing faster than across the rest of county and approaching the average rate across Scotland. Is our community (and the services, recreation options and support available) adapting to, and making the most of, these changes?