

CULBOKIE ACTIVE TRAVEL PROJECT 2020/2021

Community Engagement Report



June 2021

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sustrans
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About this Report

This report provides a summary of the progress of the Culbokie Active Travel Project during the Developed Design stage. The information gathered during this stage is being used by the project team to inform the final developed design prior to Technical Design and Construction Stages.

This report aims to show an overview of the 2021 consultation feedback and the consultation and development of the design leading to that stage.

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Project Overview

Aims and Objectives

In 2019 Culbokie Community Trust secured funding through the Sustrans Places for Everyone scheme for the Active Travel Project.

The initial project aims were to provide an Active Travel connection between Culbokie and the A9 in addition to creating an environment that encourages more people to walk, wheel and cycle by improving road safety in and around the village.

CCT appointed Pell Frischmann to undertake a feasibility study and options appraisal and then go on to develop concept designs for the route.

During the concept design stage the decision was made to phase the route to ensure deliverability of phase 1 within the village. Phase 2 for the extended route to the A9 and is currently paused with a view to revisit this in the future.

Project Area - Phase 1

The route extends from just north of the Mount Eagle junction in the north east of the village to just south of Carn Mor in the south west as shown, running along the B9169.



Figure 1. Map showing the extent of Phase 1

Design and community engagement

Community feedback highlighted the main factors currently deterring people from walking, wheeling and cycling are safety related.

Measures suggested to improve safety include widened footways, increased footway provision, lower speed limit, more crossings, and improved physical and visual traffic calming measures.

Enhancements to the community spaces on the route have also been proposed to improve the place function of the village and to reinforce to drivers that speeds of 20mph or below are most appropriate throughout the village.

Culbokie Community Trust have a dedicated project group made up of volunteers leading the project and aim to ensure that the long term direction of the project represents the needs of the community.

The design stages of the project have been led by Scott McGarva on behalf of Pell Frischmann. The project has progressed from feasibility study, through concept to developed design and is in the final stages of completing the deliverables agreed for the project stage.

The visualisations for the enhancement of the community spaces have been developed by Horner & MacLennan.

Community engagement and the design process has been ongoing since May 2019, and despite a pause in project work as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, has progressed well, has secured indirect match funding and is considered deliverable.

The following pages outline a summary of the community engagement that has taken place throughout the project.



Figure 2. Community Engagement activities

Community Engagement

Design development

Feedback from the community during the feasibility study stage in 2019 was used by the project team to build on design ideas to produce a set of proposals and recommendations for concept design.

In August 2020 the community were then given the opportunity to provide feedback on these proposals prior to finalising concept design.

Due to restrictions in place as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, it was not possible to engage with the community face-to-face. The project team were able to adapt and used a combination of online engagement activities, such as online drop in Q&A's, an online interactive presentation and online survey.

With restrictions remaining in place into 2021, the following round of consultation was also delivered online through an interactive online presentation and survey. A slight easing in restrictions also allowed for a worksheet activity to engage with the primary school children and for incorporating safe face to face drop-ins through the community market.

Table 1 shows a summary of the communication and engagement methods used in the engagement period of the feasibility and design stages.

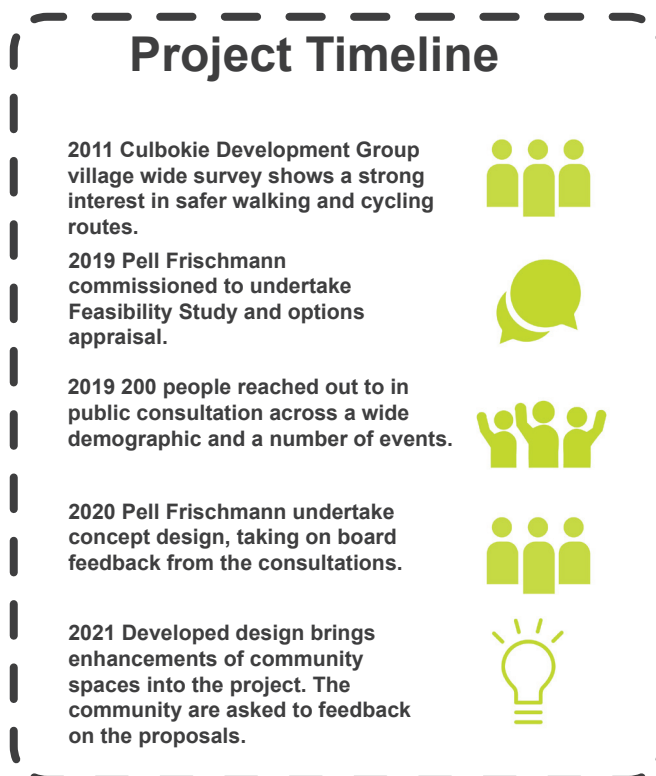


Figure 3. Summary of the project timeline

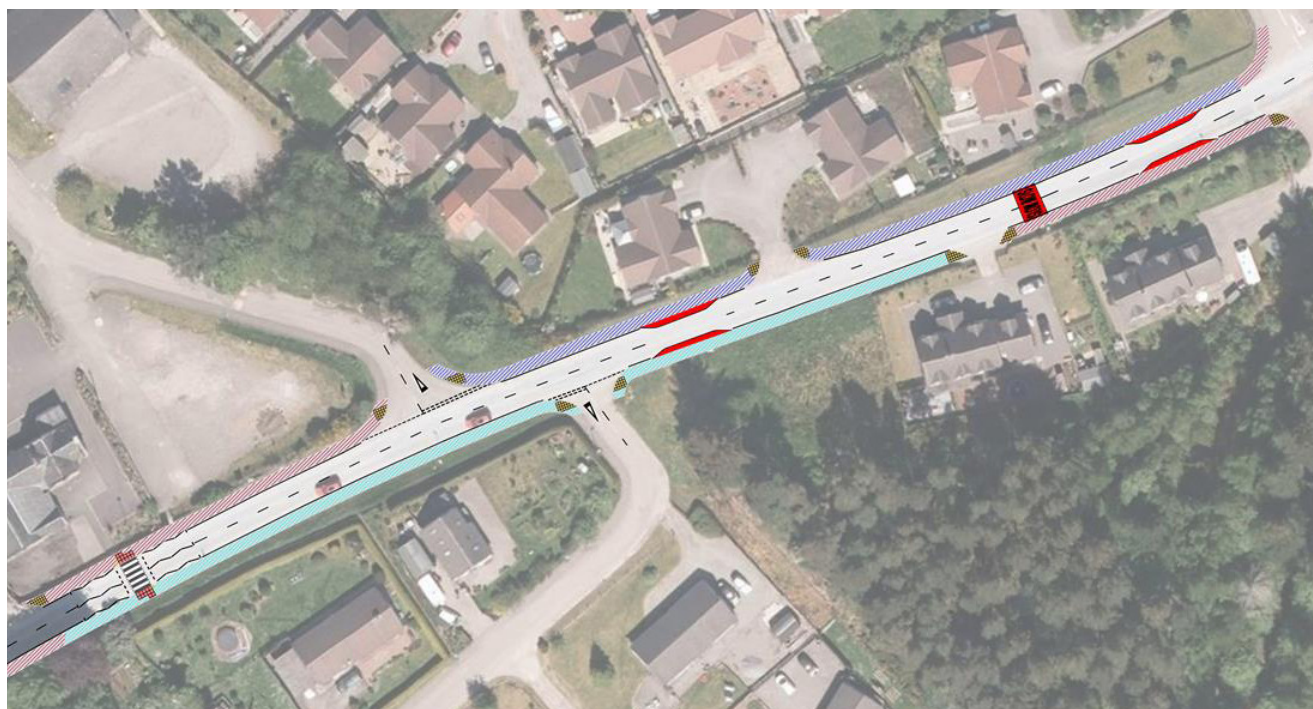


Figure 4. Plan view of section 2 of the project area showing a section of the design proposals including widened footpaths, extension of the footpath provision, visual narrowing, additional crossing point and changes in surface treatment

	Event/Activity	Participants	Online Comms	Offline Comms
November 2019	<p>Pell Frischmann hosted four separate public consultation events across a range of days and times to capture as many people as possible.</p> <p>Dedicated Consultation sessions with teachers and students from both Culbokie Primary and Fortrose Secondary School.</p> <p>Community Led Walk to provide the opportunity to review the proposals on the ground.</p> <p>CCT attendance at Christmas Market to provide an additional opportunity to gather feedback and local information.</p>	<p>In summary, the consultations reached circa 200 people from a very diverse section of the community, ranging from primary school children, secondary school children, teachers, parents and people who worked outside of the village and commuted every day and the church groups who were generally very supportive.</p>	<p>CCT Newsletter to provide project update and promote the engagement opportunities.</p> <p>Social media promotion via CCT, TBI Million Miles and Culbokie Cycling Club</p> <p>CCT website</p> <p>FCC Mailing List</p>	<p>Flyers delivered to houses throughout Culbokie.</p> <p>Presentation to Community Council</p> <p>Guided Walk to discuss proposed measures at each location.</p> <p>Posters</p> <p>Community Market</p>
August 2020	<p>Online PDF presentation and feedback form. The presentation outlined the scheme and proposed measures.</p> <p>Online Q&A sessions x 2</p>	<p>The consultation material webpage was visited 172 times during the month-long window, however there were only 15 survey responses and attendance at the Q&A sessions were limited.</p> <p>It is worth noting there has been a lot of consultation carried out on the scheme and those who wanted to make representation may feel they have already done so.</p>		
May 2021	<p>Online ArcGIS Story Map - Online Interactive consultation and survey focussed on Community Space Placemaking and route updates since previous consultations.</p> <p>Primary School Engagement Worksheet</p> <p>CCT 1:1 conversations with community spaces stakeholders</p> <p>CCT attendance at three community markets to present the proposals and gather feedback</p>	<p>53 survey responses.</p> <p>87 worksheets from all primary school years P1 - P7.</p> <p>25 responses of 1:1 feedback from stakeholders and members of the public.</p>		

Table 1. Events and activities delivered throughout the Design stage of the project.

Stage 3 Feedback

Summary of feedback from the community, gathered during the engagement period of Developed Design, regarding the community spaces design and additional traffic calming proposals.

OVERALL DESIGN

-  **73%** of respondents support the aims to make it safer and easier for people to walk, wheel and cycle for everyday journeys
-  **83%** said they would like to be able to walk, wheel or cycle to the village shop and post office.
-  **80%** of respondents support enhancement of the community spaces to increase biodiversity and create playful spaces for all ages.
-  **80%** feel that nature and trees enhance a feeling of safety, comfort and enjoyment.



GATEWAY FEATURES

- Increased driver awareness
- A focal point
- Artwork
- Shouldn't detract from the views
- Material should be weatherproof and maintenance free

VIEWPOINT

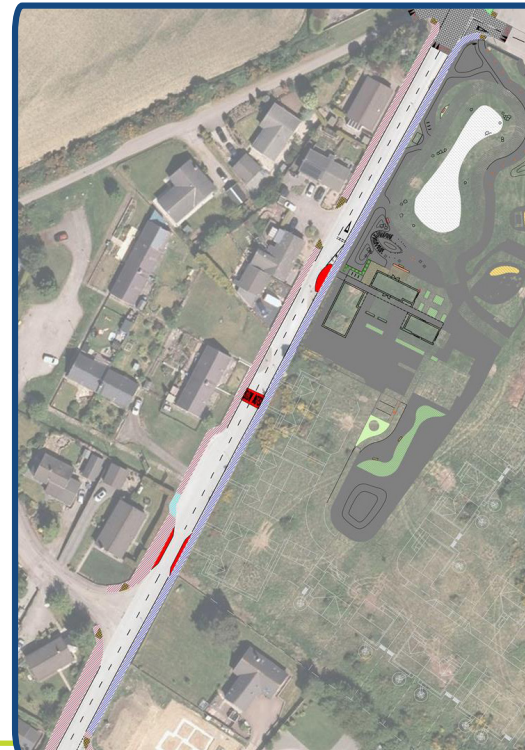
- Improved look and feel overall
- Planting and seating to improve screening
- Improved access for people walking, wheeling and cycling
- Maintenance of planting
- Upkeep & cleanliness of seating
- Litter

LINEAR SECTION AND SHARED USE PATHS

- 20mph speed limit
- Improved safety for less confident cyclists
- Removal of chicane
- Reduced traffic noise
- Pedestrian and cyclist conflict
- Enforcement of 20mph limit
- Avoid confusing road layouts
- Centre Line Removal

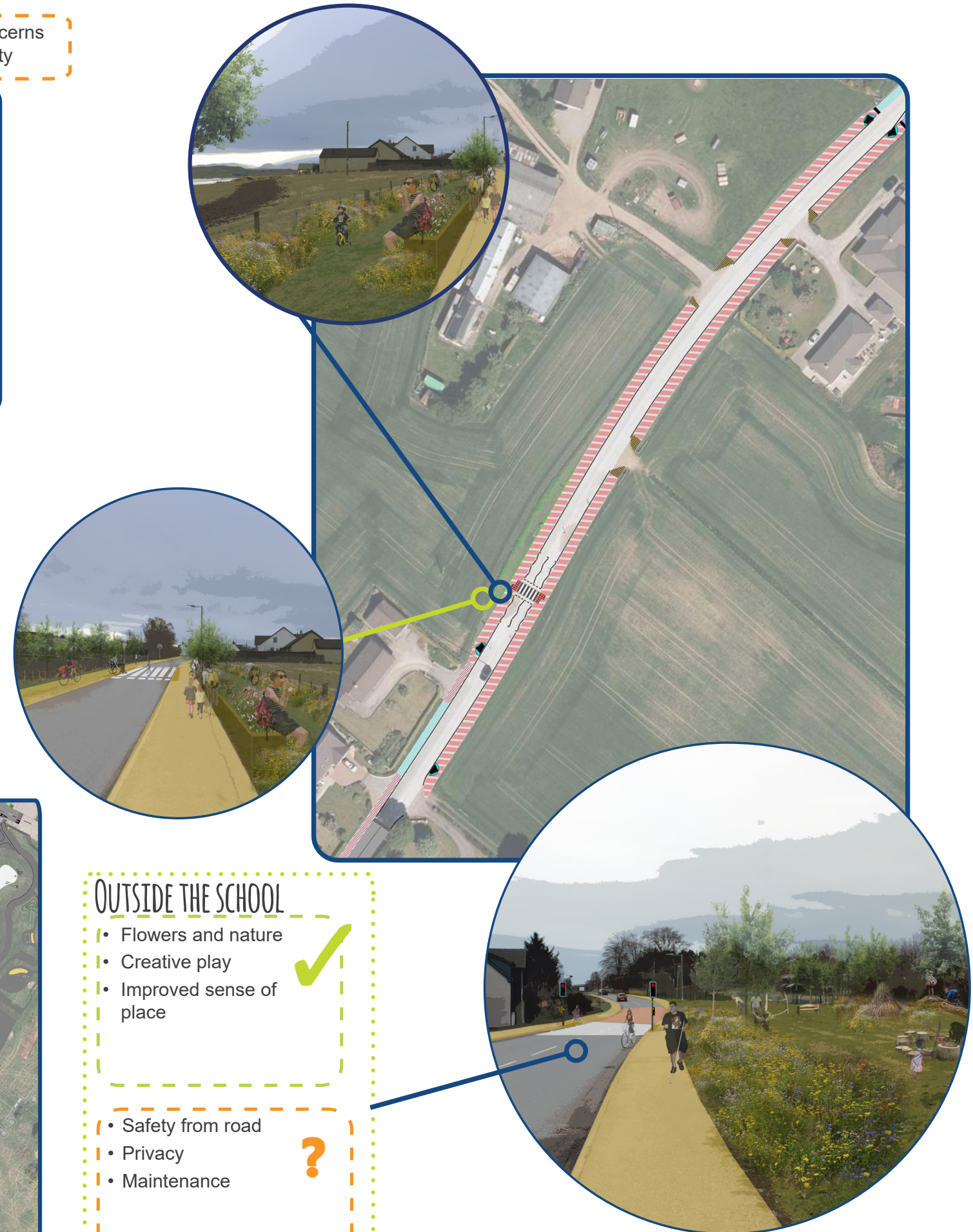
TRAFFIC CALMING PROPOSALS

- Wider footways
- Extension of footway provision
- Traffic calming
- 20mph Zone
- Additional crossings
- Visual narrowing and large vehicles
- Needs to be an improvement on current chicanes



OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

- Flowers and nature
- Creative play
- Improved sense of place
- Safety from road
- Privacy
- Maintenance



Addressing Feedback

This page summarises the changes the project team will consider based on the community feedback to finalise developed designs.

COMMUNITY SPACES

Maintenance and increased litter were two major concerns in all aspects of the community spaces enhancements.

Low maintenance and self-cleaning features for street furniture, materials or planting will be investigated.

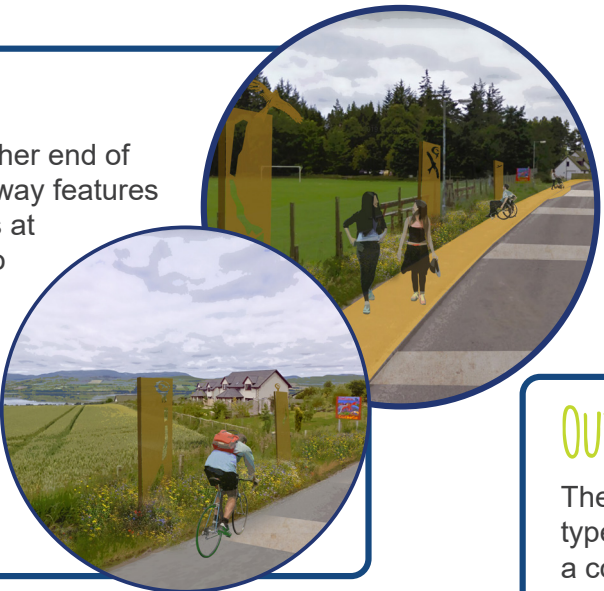
A maintenance agreement with the Highland Council, together with local groups will need to be agreed to ensure the best mechanism for maintenance and litter prevention.

Litter picking can also be arranged with local groups as part of the maintenance of the spaces.

GATEWAYS

55% of respondents welcomed the ideas for gateway features at either end of the village, however concerns were raised in relation to large gateway features competing with the stunning views over to the Firth and Ben Wyvis at the west side of the village. Choice of materials were also raised to ensure any features withstood weathering long term.

We believe a clear threshold into Culbokie could be an effective feature in reducing vehicle speeds as drivers enter the village but will look to ensure the above concerns are incorporated and the project team will look to reduce the impact of any gateway features on landscape scale views.



TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

65% of respondents are in favour of the traffic calming measures.

Visual narrowing was in general supported, striking the balance of promoting more appropriate speeds but also accommodating the agricultural and other large vehicles which frequent the village.

The Build Out at Glascairn was also largely welcomed, proposed as an informal crossing - the suggestion was raised if this could be a pedestrian crossing to increase pedestrian priority.

The shared use path had many positive responses but concerns were raised around pedestrian and cyclist conflict. Education and clear signage were suggestions put forward to help minimise conflict. Education on shared use paths could be incorporated in cycle training initiatives and share with care type signage can be effective in ensuring mutual respect of the space.

Centre Line removal - most responses were opposed to this measure, with concerns about driver safety and keeping priorities clear, there were however others welcoming the measure as a contributor to making road users aware they are in a village and should drive with appropriate care. The centre line removal will not be taken forward to the next stage of the design.

THE VILLAGE PUMP

Feedback on enhancement of the area around the village pump was generally that it was not required. Opinions were split between being in agreement of the enhancements, neutral opinion or disagreement.

The junction and road beside the village pub was raised as a concern and gradual speed reductions will be incorporated into the design along with a stop line at the junction rather than give way to improve junction safety.



OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

There was general support for provision of 'play on the way' type features near the school, however safety was raised as a concern particularly at the boundary to the road – given the proximity to the road there needs to be an effective containment of any play provision.

Seating, planting and play that fit with the nature and environment were welcomed but a light touch is preferred, avoiding overcomplicating the space and trying to fit too much in.

Being conscious of the adjacent houses and sensitive to privacy, planting can be used to reinforce the privacy of the space and avoidance of any tall structures.

The responses we received as part of a workshop with the School are truly wonderful and have a number of great ideas from children across the year groups. We were very impressed by some of the creative ideas imagined!





Next Steps

Design Stage Completion and Construction

As the design stage continues, community feedback will be incorporated into the technical designs by investigating the considerations and making adjustments.

Discussions are underway with The Highland Council to ensure the next steps in the design stages align with their requirements for the project in the lead up to the construction stage of the project.

Project updates will be communicated through the Culbokie Community Trust newsletter, website and social media