



Neighbourhoods of the Future Creating a Brighter Future for our Older Selves

Introduction

The dramatically ageing population in Scotland is presenting significant challenges for older people, their families and public sector services, especially Health and Social Care, nowhere more so than in Perth & Kinross where the proportion of older people is greater than the national average – the percentage of over 65's is 21.5% compared to 18% across Scotland – a higher proportion of whom live in rural areas.

The Scottish Government recognises that older people want to remain living at home for as long as possible but that unsuitable housing, which leads to hazards and falls, significantly contributes to the annual 1.4 Billion pounds to the NHS of unplanned emergency admissions

It has also been estimated that 80% of the homes people will be living in by 2050 are already built and that only 7% of these existing homes are built to accessible standards which include:

- level access to the entrance
- a flush threshold
- sufficiently wide doorsteps and circulation space and
- a toilet at entrance level

Added to this reality is the fact that people with reduced mobility often make the decision to install equipment and adapt their homes too late, usually once they are in crisis such as after an injurious fall or a long period of struggling to move around their homes and carry out basic activities such as daily washing. This delay is exacerbated by the medicalised and industrialised design of the every day adaptive equipment on offer, which people find stigmatising and depressing.

The number of falls requiring hospital treatment is increasing. According to figures from the Local Government Association, the number of admissions due to an older person falling is expected to reach almost 1,000 a day by 2020. Recent research has demonstrated that fall prevention programmes run by local authorities – assessing people's homes and making the necessary modifications – reduce the number of falls that result in admission to hospital by 29% over two years.

Finally, research reveals that the process under which local authorities give information and support to help people make changes to their homes can be so complex and varied, even professionals working in the area struggle to navigate it. This, combined with understaffing, results in funding 'bottlenecks' and long waiting lists, with people in urgent need of support and funding to adapt their homes suffering long delays for equipment or 'going it alone' and getting inferior products and support from door to door sales people.

There are a growing number number of innovative entrepreneurs and enterprises in Perth & Kinross whose purpose is the care of older and less able people:

- [REDACTED] which offers new and innovative ways of providing care and support in rural communities.
- The [REDACTED], which is responding to the increasing demand for self directed support and change the way social care is delivered in rural areas
- [REDACTED], which is currently Scotland's only dedicated senior move management business, helping older people and their families move, downsize and age in place and [REDACTED] which is designing and manufacturing beautiful items of adaptive equipment – grab rails, shower stools and toiler frames – that help older and less able people stay safe and independent in their own home. Both founded and owned by sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Through their involvement in the [Agile Ageing Alliance](#) campaign 'Neighbourhoods of the Future', [REDACTED] have proposed combining forces with the [REDACTED] the [REDACTED] and others to kick start a retrofit revolution in rural Perth & Kinross.

The proposal

The retrofit revolution will be explored through two pilots, one of which has been confirmed as Alyth & one other location, still to be decided, but possibly Aberfeldy, or Blairgowrie, or Coupar Angus or Kirkmichael, which will explore new/different approaches to help people in rural Perth & Kinross future proof their homes so that they can stay there safely and independently for as long as possible. The pilots will seek to answer the following four questions in both locations:

- What are the barriers that are stopping people from adapting their home?
- What does a good retrofit/adaptation look like?
- How do people pay for the work?
- What are the broader outcomes for older people themselves, community resilience and the socio economic environment?

Drawing on relevant research, expertise and best practice elsewhere the pilots will be designed and co produced with older people themselves in both communities, cognisant of the following very challenging, though well recognised context that has been preventing innovation in this space for some time.

- The reality of deep seated ageism, a climate of economic and social uncertainty and commercial conservatism means the building related industries are unlikely to innovate in response to demographic change without some stimuli or active market disruption.
- Radical change will therefore need to be kick started with joint action by local, regional and national players, government and the building related, retail and technology sectors, all working alongside older people as co producers.
- no single model will work everywhere with some models very place based and/or closely tied to local policies or funding options. Many successful approaches do not require construction or large scale change, but focus instead on involving volunteers, increasing community engagement, and improving coordination and availability of services in entire neighbourhoods.

First steps to realisation

The inception group members (see below) are beginning to develop the project outline and seek the funding necessary to implement it.

The budget will need to cover the following aspects:

- Literature Review
- Community Engagement and Partnership development
- Pilot design
- Pilot execution
- Pilot evaluation
- Campaign for roll out of evaluation findings

Inception Group members

East Perthshire based Jackie has more than 35 years of experience in business, enterprise and policy development, including a period advising the UK Government's Small Business Service. Passionate about encouraging more women to start and grow businesses, she was CEO at Wellpark and co founded [REDACTED] in 2011. She has been CEO of [REDACTED] – in rural Perthshire – since 2012. [REDACTED] was a member of the Scottish Government's National Council of Rural Advisers. She is currently chair of the Perth & Kinross Rural LEADER programme. She was awarded an MBE in 2008 for services to enterprise.

East Perthshire based sisters [REDACTED] are award winning innovators in the field of successful ageing. [REDACTED], Founder Director of [REDACTED] has over 38 years of experience in marketing, project management financing and business model development in the creative industries where she is known for being a pioneer and visionary. [REDACTED], [REDACTED] sister, also a Founder Director of [REDACTED] has over 38 years' experience as a professional Occupational Therapist specialising in older people. She leads [REDACTED] sister company, [REDACTED], which helps older people move, downsize and age in place. Inspired by similar businesses in North America, it is the first business of its kind in Scotland. [REDACTED] is also a Founder Director of the [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] are winners of the Scottish Women in Business Innovator Award and The Home Straight won the Innovative Idea category at the 2019 Tay Cities Social Enterprise Awards.

[REDACTED] is an Associate of Dundee based [REDACTED] a long established, award winning architectural practice. Sustainability is at the heart of all they do, and their experienced staff have carried out access audits and home adaptations, designing projects to suit people of different abilities and with varying needs over time and enabling people to stay in their homes for longer, even in difficult circumstances.