

VASLan East Kilbride & Strathaven Locality Strategy 2026–2029

Empowering Communities in East Kilbride & Strathaven through Local Networks

Purpose

To enable and empower the third sector in East Kilbride and Strathaven to thrive through strong collaboration, sustainable funding, and effective advocacy that ensures community voices influence strategic decision-making.

Vision

A resilient, connected, and visible third sector that supports compassionate, inclusive, and well-resourced communities across East Kilbride and Strathaven.

Local Context

East Kilbride and Strathaven represent one of South Lanarkshire's largest and most complex localities, a mix of new-town infrastructure, rural reach, and high population density. Workshop participants described an area rich in community activity yet challenged by fragmented communication, shrinking funding, and transport barriers.

Key themes emerging from the locality workshops:

- **Transport barriers:** Disconnected bus routes, unaffordable fares, and a lack of community transport prevent residents from accessing services.
- **Volunteer shortages:** Recruitment, retention, and training are major concerns; volunteers often require support themselves.
- **Funding insecurity:** Short-term and inconsistent funding cycles undermine staff continuity and sustainability.
- **Communication gaps:** A lack of centralised information and underused digital tools make it hard for residents and organisations to navigate local support.
- **Infrastructure decline:** Loss of community halls and spaces limits access, particularly for smaller groups and people with additional support needs.
- **Health & wellbeing pressures:** Increasing loneliness, mental-health challenges, and food insecurity, alongside cuts to statutory provision.
- **Opportunities:** A strong appetite for partnership, shared learning, and local advocacy through the East Kilbride & Strathaven Locality Network.

Pillar 1: Locality Network Strength

Aim: Strengthen the East Kilbride & Strathaven Locality Network as a collaborative and trusted platform for partnership, coordination, and shared learning.

Outputs	Outcomes	KPIs
Relaunch and formalise the East Kilbride & Strathaven Locality	Increased collaboration and shared strategic priorities.	25% rise in active network participation by 2029.

Network with quarterly themed meetings.		
Create a “ <i>Who’s Who</i> ” directory of local third-sector contacts and services.	Improved communication and connectivity across the sector.	Directory produced by 2027 and updated annually.
Strengthen representation within CPP and TSCOG.	Local priorities influence decision-making.	Locality representation at all CPP meetings by 2028.

Pillar 2: Sector Engagement & Voice

Aim: Amplify the voice of East Kilbride and Strathaven’s third sector, ensuring its expertise shapes local and national policy.

Outputs	Outcomes	KPIs
Develop a Third Sector Charter for East Kilbride & Strathaven, reflecting shared values and priorities.	A unified and confident third-sector voice.	Charter signed by 30+ organisations by 2028
Deliver community showcase and marketplace events to connect the public, funders, and partners.	Greater visibility of the sector’s impact.	Two annual events with 40 participating organisations.
Provide advocacy and impact-evidencing support for local organisations.	Better data to influence statutory partners.	Annual impact report evidencing sector contribution.

Pillar 3: Collaboration & Impact

Aim: Foster collaboration across organisations and sectors to maximise resources, reduce duplication, and improve outcomes.

Outputs	Outcomes	KPIs
Establish a Collaboration Forum to coordinate consortia and joint bids.	Increased partnership funding and shared delivery.	Two joint funding applications per year.
Pilot thematic working groups (e.g. transport, mental health, poverty).	Joined-up local solutions.	Three cross-sector pilots by 2029.
Develop a Shared Spaces & Assets register linking organisations with underused venues.	Optimised community infrastructure.	Register launched by 2028 with 30 venues listed.

Pillar 4: Communications & Visibility

Aim: Enhance communication and visibility of third-sector activity across East Kilbride & Strathaven.

Outputs	Outcomes	KPIs
Create a local information and signposting platform (digital and printed).	Residents can easily find local support.	Platform live by 2028 and distributed through libraries and GPs.
Offer social media and marketing training for community organisations.	Improved digital literacy and reach.	20 organisations trained by 2029.
Launch a “ <i>Connected EK & Strathaven</i> ” communications campaign.	Raised profile of community achievements.	25% growth in engagement year-on-year.

Pillar 5: Organisational Capability

Aim: Build resilient and sustainable organisations with skilled people and strong governance.

Outputs	Outcomes	KPIs
Deliver training and mentoring on funding, governance, and succession planning.	Sustainable organisations with future leadership pipelines.	Four training programmes per year.
Establish volunteer recruitment and support initiatives, including shared volunteer pools and mentoring.	Strengthened volunteering culture and retention.	Volunteer database operational by 2027 with 100+ registrants.
Provide VASLan surgeries and locality drop-ins.	Improved access to support and advice.	Bi-monthly surgeries across both areas.

Local Outcomes Framework

Theme	Desired Outcome	Indicators of Success
Collaboration	Stronger partnership and coordination.	Increased joint projects and shared bids.
Capacity	Sustainable and well-governed organisations.	More multi-year funded organisations.
Visibility	Clearer understanding of the sector’s role.	Greater media and public profile.

Participation	Increased community involvement and volunteering.	More people engaged in network activity.
Impact	Tangible improvements in wellbeing and inclusion.	Annual impact reports show positive change.

Additional Focus: Transport & Health Wellbeing Infrastructure

Transport and access to wellbeing support are defining challenges for East Kilbride and Strathaven. Bus services are fragmented, community transport is under-resourced, and residents struggle to access both physical and mental-health services. There are also growing concerns about food insecurity and isolation among older adults and people leaving hospital (Home from Hospital reestablished).

Focus Area 1: Transport and Access

- Advocate for coordinated community transport across the locality.
- Work with SLC and SPT to explore joint use of council fleet vehicles after hours.
- Pilot volunteer driver schemes with expenses reimbursement and shared training.

Outputs	Outcomes	KPIs
Conduct a Transport Audit across the locality.	Clear evidence base for service improvement.	Audit completed by 2027.
Create a Community Transport Partnership to deliver shared solutions.	Improved mobility and service access.	Partnership operational by 2028.
Pilot a Volunteer Driver Programme.	Increased transport options for vulnerable residents.	10 active drivers by 2029.

Focus Area 2: Health & Wellbeing Resilience

- Support peer befriending, loneliness reduction and mental health projects.
- Promote community food and nutrition initiatives to tackle insecurity.
- Encourage cross-sector collaboration on early intervention and prevention.

Outputs	Outcomes	KPIs
Establish a Wellbeing Collaboration Hub linking health and community partners.	More joined-up preventative support.	Hub launched by 2028.
Develop befriending and peer support initiatives.	Reduced loneliness and social isolation.	500 beneficiaries by 2029.

Coordinate food partnership projects to address insecurity.	Improved nutrition and local food access.	Two pilot projects funded by 2028.
---	---	------------------------------------

Delivery and Review

- **Local Delivery Plan:** Developed annually by the East Kilbride & Strathaven Locality Network.
- **Monitoring:** Quarterly KPI and case-study reporting to VASLan central team.
- **Learning Loop:** Insights shared across all South Lanarkshire localities.

Review Points:

- **Year 1 (2027):** Review engagement and collaboration.
- **Year 2 (2028):** Evaluate funding and transport outcomes.
- **Year 3 (2029):** Refresh priorities through community consultation.

Summary

The East Kilbride & Strathaven Locality Strategy 2026–2029 establishes a clear framework for collaboration, communication, and community resilience. By focusing on transport, wellbeing, and sustainable partnerships, VASLan and its partners will build a stronger, more inclusive locality where everyone has the means and opportunity to connect, contribute, and thrive.