



LIVE PARK

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR NATIONAL PARK



West Loch Lomondside

RURAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AREA



Supplementary Guidance

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WEST LOCH LOMONDSIDE RURAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AREA

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1. Status

This Supplementary Guidance forms part of the statutory Local Development Plan and supports the delivery of the core Local Development Plan policies on Economic Development, Housing and Visitor Experience.

2. Aim of this guidance

This guidance applies to the Luss and West Loch Lomondside area of the National Park, shown on Map 1 on page 5. It sets out the strategy for new development in this area and provides guidance on how planning policies will be applied, or varied, within Luss and the surrounding area.

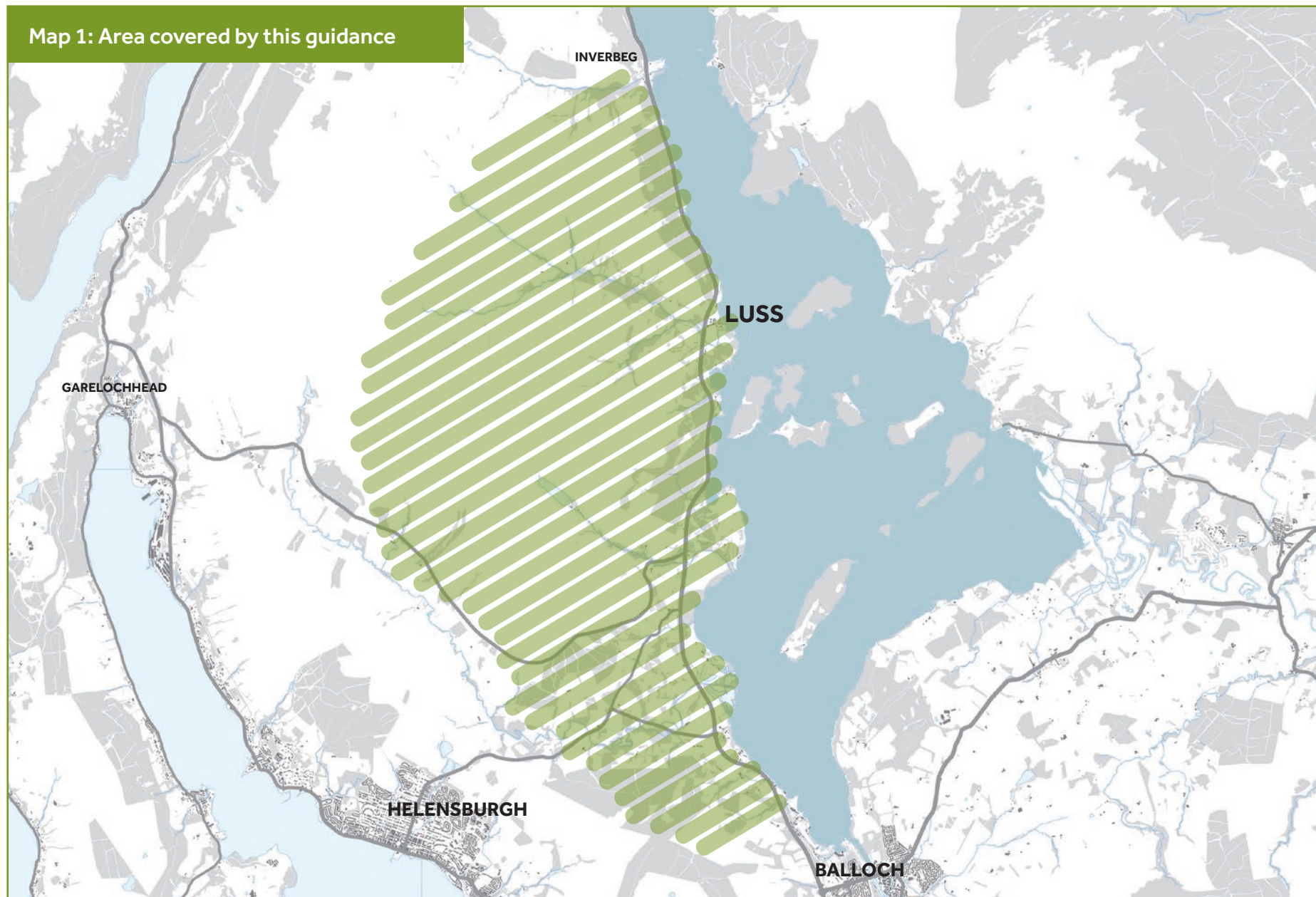


The area covered by this guidance is largely in the ownership of one main landowner; Luss Estates Company. Apart from the village of Luss, all of this land is located within the countryside, and is guided by criteria based planning policies in the Local Development Plan.

This is a pilot approach being trialled to better coordinate and deliver sustainable rural development within a pressured rural area of the National Park. It allows us, the landowner and other partners to think strategically about how different sites and development types can be packaged together to help cross fund and bring forward development that helps stimulate and strengthen the rural economy and sustain the local population.

Essentially, this means not looking at proposals in isolation, nor at the area as being 'settlement' and 'countryside' with a separate planning approach for each, but treating it as a whole, as a community, and applying planning policy more flexibly where this helps achieve an agreed overall development strategy for this area of the Park.

Map 1: Area covered by this guidance



LIVE Park
West Loch
Lomondside

Supplementary
Guidance

**RURAL
DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK
AREA**

3. Area Strategy for West Loch Lomondside

In October 2013, Luss Estates Company published a Strategic Development Framework for the land under its ownership, following a period of consultation with stakeholders, including the local community. This identified how the Estate, local community and planning objectives for the area can best be addressed and delivered.

This supplementary guidance builds on the Strategic Development Framework prepared by Luss Estates Company, integrating this with the aims and aspirations of the Local Development Plan strategy, the National Park Partnership Plan and visitor management priorities for this area.

Luss Estate's Strategic Development Framework states that:

"In developing a new strategy for the area there is a delicate balance to be achieved between:

- a) the need to accommodate settlement growth to sustain the local services
- b) the provision of housing to local residents at affordable levels
- c) Luss's ongoing tourism development
- d) Attracting more higher spending custom to the village
- e) Visitor management (including car parking facilities)."

Whilst some of these issues also apply to other communities within the National Park, they are very acute in Luss, and are explained more fully in Section 5.

The Area strategy comprises three main strands

- *Increase Economic Activity*
- *Increase the Supply of Housing*
- *Improved and New Infrastructure*

1. Increase Economic Activity

Increase Economic Activity within the village, through high quality tourism offering alongside commercial and economic development in Luss, and appropriate rural diversification and economic development in the wider rural area.

Opportunities for commercial and economic development within Luss will help generate more income to the rural economy and enhance the visitor experience. This includes provision of village retail and commercial activity serving the village and wider rural area.

Opportunities identified in the Local Development Plan include:

- Growing the commercial and retail offering focussing around a new village square at the post office site and garage site
- Improve and expand existing commercial and business provision within Luss on sites identified – for example old post office unit.

Within the wider rural area, opportunities may include renewable energy projects, conversion of redundant rural buildings to alternative uses, provision of infrastructure to enhance the visitor experience (for example new infrastructure for motor homes or for camping).





2. Increase the Supply of Housing

Increase the Supply of Housing, especially family and affordable homes. This will help retain and attract population through a mix of open market and affordable housing provision.



Options for new housing are limited within Luss village due to limited number of sites, impact on the conservation area and in some instances, flood risk. The Local Development Plan identifies one site for 4 homes within the village boundary. There are potentially additional small gap and infill development sites that could be developed within the village, and these will be considered under the Local Development Plan Housing Policies. An additional site for 10 homes is identified on a site located outwith the village boundary but within walking distance to the village.

Luss Estates consider that there is also potential for around 16 new homes on Estate land outside the village but located within the local catchment area for Luss primary school. As well as sustaining the local community these would allow people to live in the Luss area and access employment opportunities within the surrounding nearby area which may help attract new families to the area. These sites are located at farm steadings, land within an established building group (Muirlands) or are conversions of existing buildings.

Policy guidance in the Local Development Plan, requires these sites to provide the following types of housing:

Site location & Number of Homes (total 30 Homes)	Proposed Plan zoning	Policy Requirement
LUSS H1: Land north of Loch Lomond Arms (4 homes)	Within Village	50% open market and 50% affordable
LUSS H2: Land north of Hawthorn Cottage (10 homes)	Edge of Village	100% Affordable
Various sites in the Countryside area: including farm steadings, land within building group at Muirlands, conversion of existing buildings in countryside (16 homes)	Countryside	100% Affordable or linked to land based business.

Of the two sites identified in the Local Development Plan LUSS H1 is likely to proceed with public subsidy and in partnership with Argyll & Bute Council and LINK Housing Association. However, the likelihood of the Estate being able to deliver this housing mix at other sites is considered low, particularly in the absence of public subsidy for affordable rural housing, and highlights the need for cross-subsidy from open market housing or other commercial activity.



Flexibility in the application of the Local Development Plan housing policies within this area will therefore be supported in order to allow variance of the policy requirements at each site. This will enable individual sites to be developed within a wider strategic context as part of a package of development for the area as a whole.

3. Improved and New Infrastructure

Improved and New Infrastructure within the village to better manage and orientate visitors and achieve better balance between local residents way of life and coping with influx of large volumes of visitors.

Examples of the types of improvements that are needed include:

- Pedestrianisation of the historic village core, exclusion of visitor parking and access reserved for residents only (except for disabled, service and emergency vehicles).
- New car parking provision to the south of the village to aid and deter on street parking within the village.
- An improved sense of arrival will be supported at both the northern and southern edges of the village.

At the northern edge of the village through:

- Creation of a more formal landscaped approach into the village,
- A village square with visitor facilities and information, supported by commercial development adjacent to this and on the former petrol station site.
- Redefining and improving the car park, and its links to the village.

At the more sensitive southern edge of the village through:

- Establishing community amenity space, such as a village green, improved play area and new footpaths to link the land between the Loch Lomond Arms Hotel and the Village Hall.
- Supporting additional car parking on land south of the Loch Lomond Arms Hotel in order to enhance car parking provision and reduce on street parking within the village.

Streetscape Improvements will be supported within the village, such as improving the quality of surfaces, which would improve overall amenity as well as help conserve and enhance the qualities of the Conservation Area.

Surfaces of pavements and road, lighting, benches, bins, bollards within the core historic streets should be upgraded to quality materials and designed in accordance with Scottish Government policy document 'Designing Streets'.



4. Area Strategy: Delivery

In order to achieve the Strategy outlined above co-ordinated activity is required from all partners, particularly the landowner, Luss Estates Company.

To aid delivery a short action programme will be developed in partnership with Luss Estates and partner organisations to coordinate and govern. This will identify options for cross-subsidy between different sites and the programming for delivery. This will be updated annually and linked to the local development plan action programme.

Where a new proposal or opportunity arises and which is not identified in the development framework, this will be guided by the Local Development Plan policies and the Strategy outlined in this guidance.

The sequence of applying the above approach on individual applications is set out opposite:

Delivery of the Area Strategy for Luss and Loch Lomondside

Development proposals within Luss and the West Loch Lomondside area shown on Map 1 will be guided and determined via the following planning policy sequential approach:

- (a) Development proposals will be supported where they accord with the policies in the Local Development Plan.**
- (b) New housing will be supported on the basis that the overall provision within the Framework area, as shown on Map 1, will collectively deliver 50% affordable housing and 50% open market housing.**
- (c) Where a proposal represents a departure from (a) and (b) above, support will be given, where the proposal demonstrates:**
 - (i) That it will help fulfil the Development Strategy identified in Section 3 above, and
 - (ii) That there are other public/community gains that will be delivered as part of the development strategy; and
 - (iii) That any open market or commercial elements of the proposal help cross subsidise the delivery of the gains.

Applications that are related in terms of delivery will be tied legally through a Planning Obligation.

5. Area strategy: background, reasons and justification

Luss is an attractive estate village originally built in the early 1800's for workers from the nearby slate quarry. Located on the banks of Loch Lomond, it has been cited as the 'prettiest village in Scotland'.

Its distinctive rows of neat, single storey stone cottages, narrow streets and lochside location, set against the backdrop of the Luss Hills, creates a unique character and distinctive sense of place. It was designated as a Conservation Area in 1971, which was then extended in 1984.

Planning policy to date has sought to protect the unique historic and built conservational value of Luss by limiting development to tourism and recreational infrastructure whilst restricting new housing development to that demonstrated as necessary to support the housing needs of the local population.

The community is now experiencing an ageing and declining population, regarded as being a key aspect threatening the ongoing sustainability of the local community and rural economy.

Lack of housing and severe housing affordability pressures are considered to be a key contributory factor to this. The Estate and the local community wish to provide new housing to attract inward migration, especially to bring new families into the area.

Luss and its environs are identified in the National Park Partnership Plan (2012-2017) as an area that experiences significant visitor pressure and which requires more intense management to reduce the impacts of high levels of visitor pressure and recreation use. This will require joint working across a range of partner agencies, local businesses and the community.



Its distinctive rows of neat, single storey stone cottages, narrow streets and lochside location, set against the backdrop of the Luss Hills, creates a unique character



There is a need for continued visitor management alongside improvements in existing, and investment in new, visitor infrastructure.

Most recently and presently ongoing, visitor management initiatives are being implemented through the National Park YourPark campaign – this identifies West Loch Lomondside as part of a new Camping Management Zone within which investment in camping provision and motorhome/caravan sites is required to help meet and better address visitors needs and expectations. The future outcomes from this work will form part of the future development strategy for this area.

This highlights the continued and ongoing aspirations for, and to some extent, expectations placed upon, this area of the Park and the need for more joined up thinking on approach.



Summary of issues within Luss and West Loch Lomondside area

The following pages give a summary of the key issues which need to be addressed in this development strategy.

Population

- Declining and ageing population with few families.
- Concern over potential closure of the primary school due to declining school role.



Jobs and Economy

- Tourism and agriculture dominate the local economy and relative to other parts of the Scottish economy, remuneration in these sectors is relatively low.
- Whilst the village is small, it acts as one of the key employment centres for the wider area. The majority of employment is in the tourism and leisure sector with around half of all residents employed in hotel, restaurant retail sector. A survey of local businesses undertaken to inform the Luss Strategic Development plan found that 85% of all people who work in Luss village do not live there.
- It is felt that the commercial and employment opportunities resulting from visitor numbers are not being fully exploited. In addition business generated by visitor is seasonal.

Homes

- Limited housing opportunities within village, high house prices, lack of family sized homes, high numbers of second and holiday homes.
- Strong housing pressure from external buyers for commuting, second, holiday and retirement homes, resulting in affordability issues for local people.



Summary of issues within Luss and West Loch Lomondside area (continued)

Infrastructure & Flooding

- Insufficient/poor quality infrastructure (see below)
- Scottish Water will be able to increase water and sewerage capacity once the developer provides evidence of planning permission.
- Localised Flooding, particularly affecting the southern half of the village.

Parking

- Lack of, and poor management of, parking within the village with visitors parking along village streets, creating problems for local people and impacting on the visitor experience and perception of Luss.



Public Realm

- Generally poor quality public realm and a perception that the village looks tired and run down.
- The arrival to the village to the visitor car park leaves the visitor poorly orientated and remote from the village and unsure where to go. The sense of arrival is poor. Parking within the village detracts from the village and setting, and introduces significant conflict between pedestrian and vehicular movements.
- Whilst some significant improvements in the environment have been achieved (e.g. new toilet block) the edges of the village are not clearly defined and spaces and treatments don't promote the anticipation of the delights of the village.

Visitor Experience and Management

- Luss is a popular destination for day visitors, arriving by car, coach or boat and can experience extreme visitor pressures at peak times (e.g. bank holidays).
- Village feels swamped by visitors. There is a sense that the village bears the brunt of major tourist invasion without being rewarded with economic benefits.
- The quality of the visitor experience could be improved, for example, the gathering of refreshment and other facilities adjacent to the car park, and poor interpretation and directional signage from the car park to the village do not encourage longer stays' or optimise visitor spend.





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