



Planning and Access Committee

Meeting: 25 September 2023

Agenda item: 6

SUBMITTED BY:	STUART MEARNS Director of Place
SUBJECT:	Local Place Plans Update
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1. Summary and reason for presentation

1.1. This report provides members with background and an update on progress with the development and registration of Local Place Plans within the National Park.

2. Recommendation

2.1. That Members:

2.2. **Consider and Note** the registration of four Local Place Plans (Callander, Luss & Arden, Arrochar, Tarbet & Ardlui and Drymen) and the progress being made to validate and register others within the National Park.

3. Background

What is a Local Place Plan?

3.1 Local Place Plans were introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, which contains a new right for communities to produce their own plans as part of the new Scottish planning system. Local Place Plans contain the community's proposals for the development and use of land and provide a new opportunity for communities to feed into the planning system with ideas and proposals. One of the main differences between registered Local Place Plans and Community Action Plans (which most National Park communities are used to preparing and using) is that there is a new legal requirement for Local Development Plans to 'take account' of Local Place Plans. More information on Local Place Plans can be found on the National Park Authority website [here](#).

3.2 Regulations to support Local Place Plans came into force on 22 January 2022 ([Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans](#)). The Scottish Government requires planning authorities to establish, maintain and publish a register of Local Place Plans. For a Local Place Plan to be registered as valid it must comply with specific technical requirements around engagement and spatial content. A Local Place Plan can cover any defined geographic area and within the National Park all communities so far have based these on their Community Council area.

3.3 We will look to communities and their Local Place Plans to help us deliver the National Park Partnership Plan and to inform the content of the next Local Development Plan.

Status of Local Place Plans in Planning : Registration

3.4 Once complete, a Local Place Plan needs to be validated and registered by the Planning Authority (subject to meeting certain specified requirements including confirmation of the Community Body's legal status; consulting Councillors and Community Councils; detailing other plans the Local Place Plan 'has regard to' (for example Local Development Plan and National Planning Framework 4) (also in our case we have added the National Park Partnership Plan); any proposals to amend the Local Development Plan; and a participation statement). It must then be taken into account when preparing the Local Development Plan. Several communities Local Place Plans straddle the National Park boundary and we are advising communities of the need to engage with relevant Local Authority staff as required. We are currently in the process of advising Local Authority colleagues of any cross boundary issued identified or anticipated to be identified.

3.5 A *Validation Procedure and Officer Checklist* has been created to help us comply with the legislation when registering Local Place Plans. This includes a series of technical checks undertaken at officer level before then being and signed off as valid

by the Communities and Place Planning Manager. Whilst we don't consider or recommend that Committee approval is required to register a Local Place Plan we do think these plans should be sighted by Planning Committee and NPA Board Members, as detailed below, alongside other teams in the organisation as they are important documents that reflect community views and aspirations for their local places as well as help shape and inform delivery and service provision by a range of public agencies.

Local Place Plan Programme Progress

3.6 In order to support communities, we established a Local Place Plan Programme to coordinate community support, ensure legal requirements were met and maximise impact by integrating these plans with the National Park Authority's strategic plans review process. A steering group comprising community representatives and National Park Authority staff was established to guide and inform this work and all communities have been invited to prepare a Local Place Plan with in kind and/or financial support provided.

3.7 Planning Authorities are to inform communities of the cut-off date by which Local Place Plans are to be prepared in order for them to inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan. In our case, we are preparing our second Local Development Plan, which we aim to publish for statutory consultation in 2024. In order to ensure that the Local Development Plan is informed by our local communities we have extended the deadline for Local Place Plan submission until March 2024.

3.8 So far, all communities except for five either have prepared or are in the process of preparing a Local Place Plan and we are hopeful that the remaining communities will decide to do so. The table below illustrates the various communities in the National Park and their progress with developing their Local Place Plans:

4 Local Place Plans Completed	Arrochar, Tarbet & Ardlui, Callander, Drymen, Luss & Arden
5 Local Place Plans finalising validation process	Balquhidder, Lochearnhead & Strathyre (BLS), Killin, Strathard, Strathfillan, Trossachs
4 Local Place Plans in progress	Gartmore, St Fillans, Kilmarnock, Lochgoil
2 Local Place Plans in planning stages	East Loch Lomond, Croftamie

4 Community Council areas where progress is unknown/under investigation	Kilmun, Ardentinny, Port of Menteith, Balloch & Haldane
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3.9 The National Park Authority has been providing financial and/or in-kind support to each of these communities as they prepare their Local Place Plans.

3.10 Where financial support has been given this is primarily being used by communities to procure the services of experienced consultants who can support with coordination of the engagement process and also with the preparation of the final document. The National Park Authority does not have any influence on who the different communities decide to work with, and the communities are able to direct the consultant on how best to approach the development of the Local Place Plan. This ensures that the preparation of the Local Place Plan remains a democratic process with minimal influence from the National Park Authority.

3.11 The in-kind support being offered is largely advisory. Communities are not required to engage with the National Park Authority throughout the development of their Local Place Plan, however we have been encouraging them to do so and working closely with several of the communities to provide some GIS mapping support, planning support and helping with the preparation of the submission statements. Each community requires varying levels of support and therefore the National Park Authority has tailored its approach to suit the needs of the community and will continue to do so as further Plans are prepared. We are encouraging communities to also consider themes including climate, nature, land use and community wealth building as part of this process.

4. Summary of Registered Local Place Plans

4.1 As stated above the National Park Authority has validated and registered four Local Place Plans. Each community has taken a different approach to preparing their Local Place Plan and the outcome of this is four unique and carefully considered Plans that represent the communities who prepared them. Each of the Plans cover a range of topics from high level policy issues to on the ground action that is required. A summary of each of the Local Place Plans has been provided below:

Drymen [Local Place Plan](#)

4.2 Drymen’s Local Place Plan outlines several critical issues and key priorities aimed at enhancing the community’s infrastructure and connectivity. The plan focuses on:

- improving public transport
- enhancing active travel options
- ensuring pedestrian safety
- catering to the needs of those visiting the areas renowned walking and cycling trails.

4.3 The plan recognises the importance of a structured public transport system for both residents and visitors. Drymen community wish to establish improved transport links with Croftamie, Balfron, Killearn and larger cities such as Glasgow and Stirling. In doing so the community is looking to reduce car dependency and contribute to sustainable travel within the park and greater Scotland. In order to improve their connectivity between neighbouring villages and the RSPB Reserve, Drymen community have also highlighted the need for active travel infrastructure, including well maintained walking and cycling paths. Moreover, to ensure pedestrian safety Drymen has further highlighted the need for pedestrian crossings within the village centre.

4.4 As Drymen's local economy is reliant on tourism the community recognises the need to provide adequate facilities to cater to the needs of visitors. As a result, the plan emphasises the need for strategically located public toilets to enhance the overall experience for visitors and locals alike.

Callander [Local Place Plan](#)

4.5 Callander's Local Place Plan was produced after extensive community engagement which sought to gather the views of all residents of the local area. A collective vision for the future was then developed which demonstrates the communities desire for Callander to be a well-connected, vibrant place to live with access to good quality public services and affordable homes.

4.6 Improving connectivity through the town and beyond was a central theme within the Local Place Plan. It was noted that as the town has expanded, the active travel and public transport network have not grown in line with this. Improving residents' ability to access local services without the need for a car is a fundamental objective of the Local Place Plan. Several solutions to these issues have been suggested within the Plan and all will be taken into account when preparing the Local Development Plan.

4.7 The community also highlighted the need for enhanced community green spaces within the town. The existing green space – the Meadows – requires to be upgraded to better suit the needs of the community. It was suggested that this would help build community cohesion and ensure that Callander is a thriving local community which are two key objectives of the overall vision statement.

4.8 The need for more affordable housing was also raised as an issue. It was suggested that new housing should be of mixed tenure and that it should respect the historic nature of the existing built environment.

4.9 The Local Place Plan covers an extensive range of themes and will provide a useful insight into the community's needs as we move forward with preparing the Local Development Plan.

Luss and Arden [Local Place Plan](#)

4.10 Luss is a key tourist hub within the National Park and their Local Place Plan reflects on the realities of living in such a popular visitor destination and how it could be improved to suit the needs of the local residents.

4.11 The engagement that was carried out for this Local Place Plan highlighted five key priority areas for the community – these are:

- Life in the community
- Population and homes
- Visitor Management
- Getting about
- Jobs and Business

4.12 While many of the themes and issues raised within this Local Place Plan mirror the priorities within other communities – more affordable homes and improved connectivity – the need for improved visitor management is at the heart of this Plan. Several actions have been identified within the Plan to improve the experience for both visitors and locals. It has been suggested that restricting car access to the town and improving pedestrian and public transport networks would enhance people's quality of life. The need for improved visitor facilities was also highlighted as the existing offer is not considered to be suitable for the large number of tourists Luss experiences during visitor season.

4.13 It was also noted that investment in recent years has tended to focus on visitors and that more focus needs to be placed on the needs of the local community. This is a key theme throughout the Local Place Plan and will be noted as the Park Authority prepare their Local Development Plan.

Arrochar, Tarbet and Ardlui [Local Place Plan](#)

4.14 This Local Place Plan has been developed with several settlements working in partnership. While each settlement has its own unique set of issues and aspirations, this Local Place Plan seeks to thematically combine the three settlements and the wider Community Council area to produce an overarching vision for the area.

4.15 As with the other Local Place Plans, a set of priorities and areas for action have been decided on through multiple forms of community consultation. One of the key issues that has been identified is the need to focus on local facilities, particularly for young people and families in the area. It has been stated that over the years the number and quality of community facilities has decreased and there is concern that this results in the area being less desirable to live. It was suggested that there is a need to improve the community feel of the area by investing in better public spaces, community facilities and hosting events for all ages.

4.16 The environment was also a key theme raised throughout the Plan. This Community Council area is unusual within the National Park as it has a marine coastal area to consider. The litter that collects at the head of Loch Long was noted as a serious issue within this Local Place Plan area. Other environmental issues that were raised focused on reducing car usage in the area. It was noted that improved pedestrian routes and safer cycling networks would help reduce the emissions from local and visitor transport.

4.17 The Local Place Plan tackles several major issues but the other action point to note is the perceived need to improve the visitor infrastructure within the area. It was felt that there is a high volume of visitors to the area but this is not being translated economically. There is a need for better facilities to ensure that the local community can benefit from the tourism industry in the area.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Local Place Plans are more than just a plan: they increase community capacity, collaboration and enhance social capital. They help communities understand what they want to be like in the future and stimulate community-based change. We have already used available Local Place Plans to inform the preparation of the draft National Park Partnership Plan as they provide a rich source of detailed community-level information. They are also key tools to inform and influence work of partner agencies, such as Local Authorities.

5.2 The Local Place Plan Programme is making good progress and the majority of our communities are actively engaged in developing Plans for their area. This will prove to be an invaluable source of information when preparing the next Local Development Plan. It is also proving to be a valuable opportunity for us to connect with communities and engage a local level across the Park.