

## Planning and Access Committee

Meeting: 29th November 2021

Agenda item: 4

### *Paper for decision*

#### **Summary**

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| <b>Submitted By:</b> | <b>Director of Place</b>                            |
| <b>Subject:</b>      | Strathard Framework – Planning Guidance             |
| <b>Lead Officer:</b> | Kirsty Sweeney, Development Planner<br>01389 722622 |

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|--|----------|
| <b>1. Introduction .....</b>                     | <b>1</b> |
| <b>2. Recommendation .....</b>                   | <b>1</b> |
| <b>3. Background .....</b>                       | <b>2</b> |
| <b>4. Summary of consultation comments .....</b> | <b>3</b> |
| <b>5. Summary of proposed modifications.....</b> | <b>4</b> |
| <b>6. Conclusion.....</b>                        | <b>5</b> |
| <b>7. List of Appendices .....</b>               | <b>5</b> |

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 This report seeks the Planning and Access Committee's approval of the final Strathard Framework, following the 6 week consultation period in May/June 2021. This Framework, which includes guidance to inform planning and land use decisions, was prepared in a new co-designed approach by the National Park Authority and a close working steering group including the Strathard Community Council, Strathard Community Trust, Stirling Council and Architecture and Design Scotland. The engagement work was facilitated by Planning Aid Scotland.

#### **2. Recommendation**

2.1 Members are asked to:

- a) **Note** the consultation comments and amendments made to the draft Framework and the SEA Screening Opinion.
- b) **Approve** the final Strathard Framework and Delivery Plan, as set out in Appendix 3 and 4; and

- c) **Agree** to delegate responsibility to the Director of Place to make any amendments to the design and formatting prior to final publication and sign off of the modified maps.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 As explained to Committee in April, this will be the third Rural Development Framework for the National Park (others cover [West Loch Lomondside](#) (Luss and its hinterland) and [Buchanan South](#) (south-east Loch Lomondside) but it will be the first place based development and land use framework for the National Park. It builds on previous activities that have supported community-led action planning and stakeholder engagement on land use (Strathard Initiative Project) and place making within Strathard.

#### *Engagement and consultation*

- 3.2 In the April Committee paper we set out the details of the engagement through 2019 and 2020 in order to develop the Framework, which involved a co-design steering group and two stakeholder workshops.
- 3.3 The last part of the development of the Framework has involved a formal 6 week consultation which took place in May and June 2021. As part of the consultation we asked people to fill in a smart survey online or submit their comments via email. We publicised the consultation in the local newspaper, on our website and on social media. Our website held a series of presentations to provide the background and links to the interactive map. We also ran a live webinar which was recorded and also posted on our website. The webinar had an interactive question and answer session and was well attended by 26 participants. Architecture and Design Scotland kindly supported the webinar session.

#### *Status and Statutory requirements*

- 3.4 As part of the consultation we also published a number of technical assessments, namely the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). Alongside the Equalities Impact assessment.
- 3.5 As part of the SEA process we consulted Scottish Government on our SEA screening opinion for the Framework. We received comments from NatureScot, Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) regarding the screening opinion.
- 3.6 In summary:
- SEPA agreed with the consultation of the screening report and that the proposed Framework is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.
  - HES also agreed with the screening report and that the proposed Framework is unlikely to have significant environmental effects. It was noted however that some indicative proposals were in the vicinity of historic environment assets and it was recommended that we ensure there is an understanding of potential effects informs any further consideration of development on those sites at the lower levels of the plan hierarchy.
  - Nature Scot agree that the Framework is not likely to have significant effects and an SEA is not required. However, Nature Scot has stated that should any

potential significant environmental effects emerge which have not previously undergone SEA, these should be appropriately assessed. It was noted that whilst projects included in the LDP are covered by the SEA of the LDP, it is unclear if projects such as peatland restoration, woodland creation have been covered by an SEA of other strategies – i.e. Trees and Woodland Strategy. If not Nature Scot recommend these undergo an SEA.

- 3.7 We do intend to change the screening opinion and following committee we will confirm our adoption of the opinion to the SEA gateway as required by the Regulations and acknowledge the comments as explained. The SEA already mentions that any woodland creation proposals have been assessed as part of the Trees and Woodlands Strategy SEA and that peatland restoration has been assessed as part of the National Park Partnership Plan SEA. The interactive maps hold information on cultural heritage.

#### **4. Summary of consultation comments**

- 4.1 As explained at the last committee, the Framework – attached as Appendix 3 to this report - covers Strathard Community Council's area. It is an integrated framework covering land use and development within a climate responsiveness context that provides clear guidance to those who live, visit and want to develop in the area as to what types of carbon considerate development and land use activity might be accommodated. It provides a section of the overall strategy for the area with four sub-area detailed strategies for The Forest, Aberfoyle, Kinlochard and Stronachlachar and Inversnaid.
- 4.2 We received a total of 30 responses, with the majority (36%) were from residents and a high number of community bodies and public bodies.
- Appendix 1 provides the verbatim comments from those that have indicated that they are happy for us to publish them.
  - Appendix 2 provides a summary of the responses including those that did not want their full comments published and also a National Park Authority response to the comments.
  - Appendix 3 provides full Strathard Framework with tracked changes to the text that officers recommend are made to respond to comments.
  - Appendix 4 is the redesigned delivery plan.
  - Appendix 5 is the list of modifications to the maps.
- 4.3 In order to determine the modifications that were required we held a number of steering group meetings and the changes were considered with the group – Stirling Council, Community Trust and Community Council. We have also sent copies to some key partners to enable them to comment on the modifications proposed, particularly where they made a specific request for a change. There was a lot of added value from this process and it highlights the benefits of co-design and co-production where partners agreed at the outset to work together within an agreed place based context to reach shared desirable outcomes.

## 5. Summary of proposed modifications

5.1 As explained Appendix 2 provides a summary of the responses and our analysis of those responses. In summary the main changes have been:

- **Timeline/Pathway** – This has been amended to reflect a number of new additions and also a few amended existing key points on the journey. One of the concerns from consultees was the mention of the ban on new diesel/petrol cars so this has been removed and there was an error in relation to the woodland creation target.
- **Decision-making framework** – This has been amended to reduce perceived ambiguity and by adding in clear wording that any departure from the Framework would have to be because there was delivery of significant landscape scale benefits to nature and climate.
- **Vision** – There have been some minor edits and the image has also been changed as some felt this did not reflect the landscape of Strathard. The new image is from Architecture and Design Scotland's Carbon Conscious Places report and was not a bespoke commission for the Framework.
- **Priorities** – There was a number of comments in relation to the priorities, particularly that the balance of priorities was more focused on nature and not community. There wasn't a disagreement of the importance of nature but the priorities required re-balanced. There was also concern raised that the priorities did not clearly link to the delivery plan. And finally the numbering was causing confusion and it was obvious that it wasn't clear to readers that these were not in order of priority but just a numbering system. The priorities have been modified to add in a new one on community self-sufficiency, economy and affordable housing and others have been re-worked to ensure they tie in closely with the delivery plan. See delivery plan amendments below.
- **Aberfoyle** – There are only some minor comments in relation to the Aberfoyle section, again in relation to the importance of community self-sufficiency and economy.
- **The Forest** – The main modifications to this section are responding to points from key partners such as RSPB and FLS and informal comments we received from Scottish Forestry. The main points being that the section did not include a priority on woodland management and creation. This was because this was an overall priority but we realise that to not include within the forest section does not allow the importance of this within this area to be known. The addition of this as a priority here also allows more detail to be added.
- **Kinlochard** – The main modifications to this section are responding to points from the community and acknowledging an important area that the Life Plan identified by mapping this within the framework. Appendix 2 also explains that there was a request from a landowner to identify this area as more favourable towards tourism development opportunity but given the sensitivities of the area this change is not recommended.
- **Stronachlachar/Inversnaid** – The main modifications here are a streamlining of the priorities to align with the overall priorities but also further information on the important role of the Loch Katrine and the routes across the loch in terms of sustainable/active travel networks.
- **Delivery plan** – The delivery plan has been redesigned to align closely with the 10 key priorities in the Framework, translating them into 10 key

projects. It also gives a short update as what has happened to date under each of the project and lists the actions. The delivery plan was sent out to the key partners for endorsement and will be used as the starting point for re-erecting a partnership group.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 This Framework is a really significant project, the first of its kind in the National Park, it trials a co-designed and co-led approach where land use and planning/development matters have been considered together in a holistic manner. Even though it will become planning guidance and used in a similar manner to the other existing frameworks (as a material planning consideration), it will also be able to influence land use change and build on the successful community and business led project delivery in the area.
- 6.2 Members are asked to consider the response to the consultation comments and the modifications proposed and then approve the Framework for publication.

## **7. List of Appendices**

Appendix 1: Verbatim comments

Appendix 2: Analysis of comments and responses

Appendix 3: Strathard Land Use and Rural Development Framework (Tracked)

Appendix 4: Delivery Plan

Appendix 5: List of Modifications for Static and Interactive Maps