



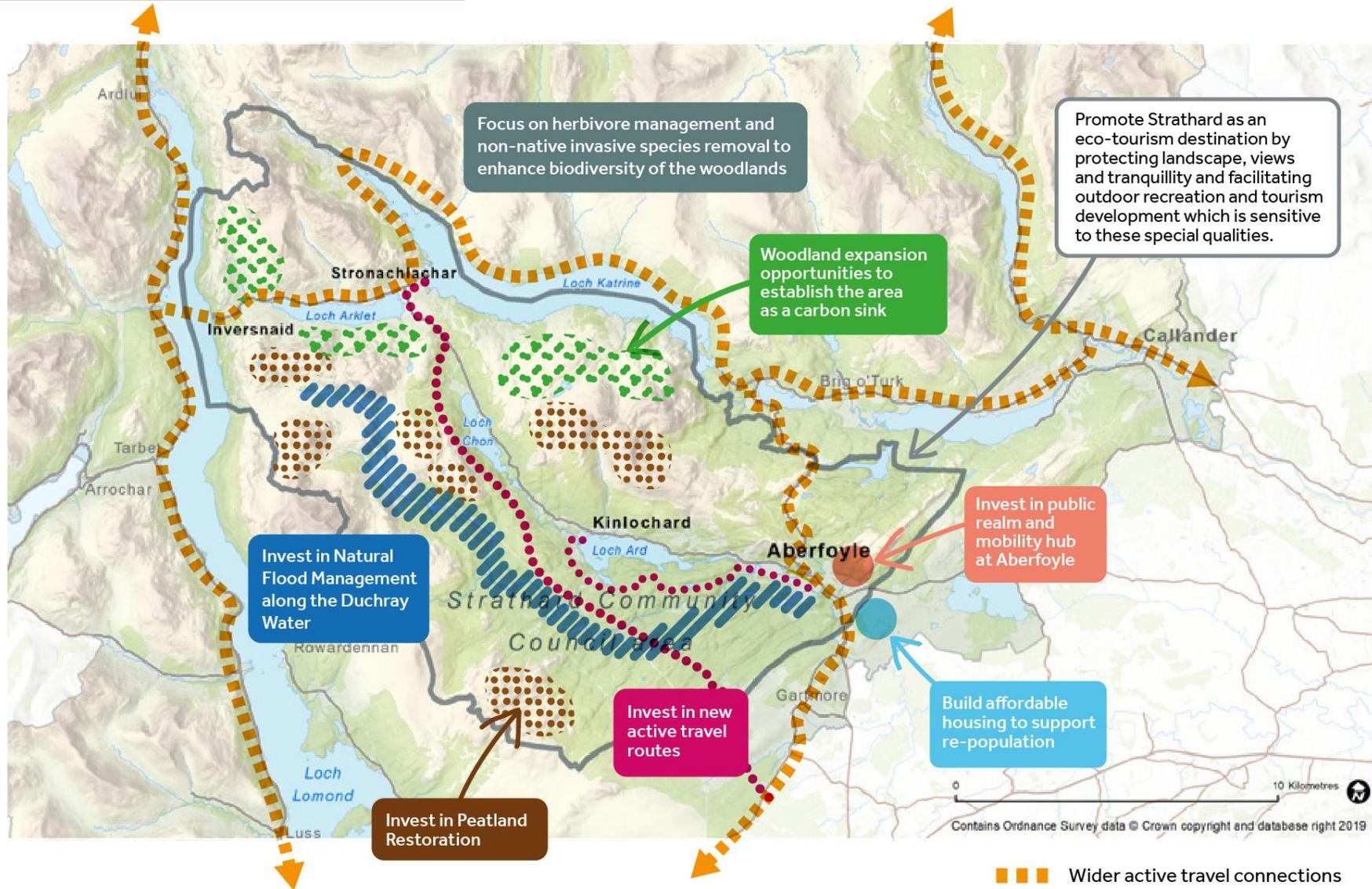
Draft
**Strathard
Framework**
LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT



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Map 1 – Area covered by Framework and overview



1 Introduction

What is this Framework?

This draft framework provides a long term shared vision and strategy for the Strathard area of the National Park up to 2040. It trials a new approach by integrating land use management and development planning at a local scale – for the Strathard Community Council area, shown on Map One.

It is intended to guide and influence appropriate land use change and future delivery of development and infrastructure. It is about sustainable land use in its widest sense – about how land could be used and managed and the benefits this could provide through promoting nature based solutions and restoring nature. It is also about ensuring we meet the development needs for people living and working here, and for the many people who visit the area to enjoy its awe inspiring landscape and special qualities.

By considering land use opportunities jointly with development and infrastructure needs, the area can be considered holistically, enabling a clearer understanding of the value and significance of the area’s rich natural capital (its natural assets, e.g. clean air, soil, water, plants, animals) as well as the benefits this delivers for

people and place. In so doing, there is scope to identify stronger integration between different land uses in this area, for example forestry, recreation and cultural heritage or natural flood management upstream alongside flood alleviation measures in the village of Aberfoyle and the rest of the river catchment.

This draft framework is ambitious and clear on the changes that are needed in Strathard. It illustrates the actions identified through stakeholder engagement and shows the aspired key milestones in Strathard’s journey of change to 2040. These reflect the targets set by the Scottish Government to address the climate and biodiversity crises and to support a just transition to a net zero carbon society. It is therefore the basis for initiating, guiding and delivering change and will require to be reviewed and updated regularly.

Delivery is key to the success of this draft framework and requires an ongoing commitment to the partnership working that has recently been established, as well as identification of a funding strategy. This draft framework is therefore the starting point from which partners can begin to coordinate delivery.

How has it been prepared?

This draft framework trials a new approach towards developing place based guidance within the National Park and has been prepared collaboratively between the National Park Authority working with representatives from the local community, businesses, land owners and partner public bodies. Further information is within the section - How did we get here? on Page 10.

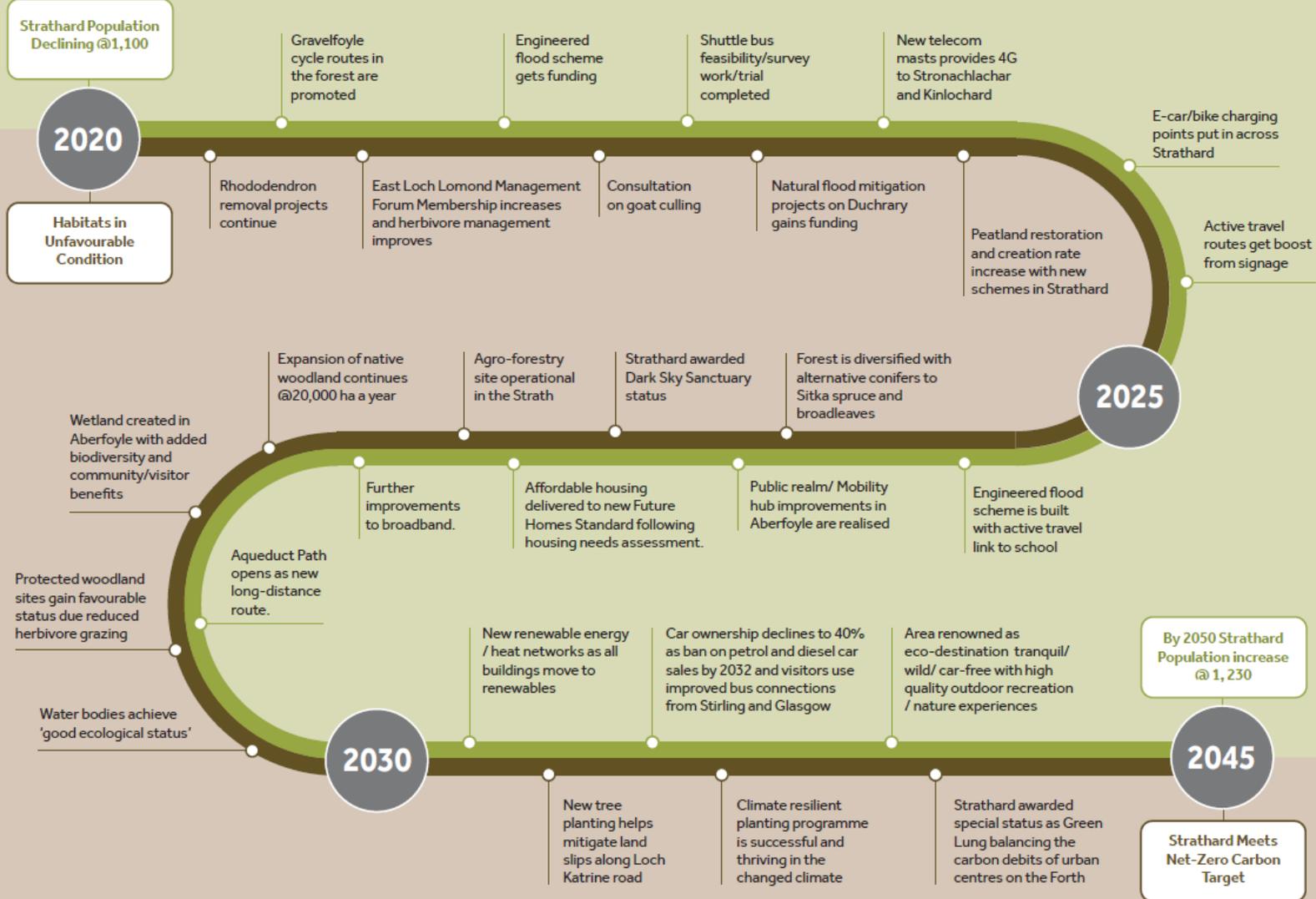
What is its status?

This draft framework has been approved for consultation by a sub-group of the [Strathard Strategic Partnership](#) and the [National Park Authority Planning and Access Committee](#). It is now subject to six weeks formal consultation. Once consultation has been undertaken, it will be reviewed and amended where necessary and re-submitted to the National Park Authority Planning and Access Committee for formal approval as planning guidance. Once approved as planning guidance it will have weight in terms of influencing investment and development decisions in the area. The Strathard Strategic Partnership will also be asked to endorse this framework to act as the principle basis for agreeing priorities and coordinating delivery of the actions identified within it. More detail on this can be found on Page 10 – How did we get here?

We want to hear views on this draft framework and implementation of the changes identified. A range of consultation techniques will be used in order to share and encourage responses including social media and digital engagement techniques.

Pathway to change - for consultation

■ Development / Infrastructure
■ Land Use



Strathard Framework – Draft

How it is intended to be used?

This draft framework sets the context and direction over the next 10 years by identifying the short/medium term issues and opportunities to enable and achieve the longer term objective of becoming a carbon conscious and climate resilient place in the next 20 years.

As described below, it is intended to be used to (a) inform land use decisions and future funding priorities and (b) as Planning Guidance to accompany the adopted [Local Development Plan](#) for the National Park and help inform development decisions.

Influencing land use decisions and future funding priorities

This draft framework is an integrated approach to land use, considering all the land use issues in a holistic way. It seeks to enable more informed and integrated decisions to be made about how land is used in Strathard by making information available to everyone that can inform plans and strategies which others are responsible for. It is intended that the Framework informs and inspires individual land management decisions, by owners and managers, and the decisions and funding support from public sector bodies, other funders and private investors.

Whilst decisions rest with individual owners and managers, the framework provides a steer as to what the wider stakeholders in Strathard would most like to see in relation to land use choices and conservation projects in the area. This includes a mandate for taking forward projects that are already underway but also to encourage and facilitate changes in land use such as farm diversification, new woodland creation and expansion, peatland restoration that provides carbon storage, enhancement of natural habitats by removal of invasive species, and natural flood management that benefits the local communities and those in the River Forth catchment. It could be used for informing an application

for Scottish Rural Development Programme, developing landscape and biodiversity projects and ensuring that the land use change benefits the community, biodiversity loss and/or carbon reduction. Ultimately all coming together to enhance and protect the area's tranquillity and shape how the place should look and feel in future.

Use as Planning Guidance to accompany the Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan provides place specific guidance for Aberfoyle and includes an overall Park-wide development strategy and a set of policies which currently guide and inform development decisions in the wider Strath area.

Since the time of adopting the Local Development Plan, there has been various agency and community led plans published and partnerships established, with much activity on the ground (see 'How we got here' section on Page 10 for further information on this). This framework builds on this work and provides more detailed and coordinated place based guidance on development and land use for the Strathard Community Council area. The intention is that, following consultation, it will be approved as Planning Guidance by the National Park Authority.

The Framework sets out the strategy for Strathard as a whole and for four identified sub areas. Within each area the types of changes identified are described, alongside priorities for action that were agreed through stakeholder engagement. Where potential locations are identified, these are also illustrated spatially on maps. These are indicative only and will need to be tested and confirmed through the planning process. Other opportunities may come forward over time, and the intention is that by setting out a shared vision and strategy for each sub-area, these will be used to guide and inform future decisions. The decision making process is set out below.

Use of the Strathard Framework as Planning Guidance

Development proposals within the Strathard Community Council area will be guided and determined by using the following planning policy approach:

- (a) Development proposals will be supported where they accord with the policies in the Local Development Plan, or*
- (b) That will help fulfil the area based strategy established in this Framework (Section 6) or the detailed sub-area strategies (Section 8)*
- (c) Where a proposal represents a departure from (a) or (b) above, support may be given, where the proposal demonstrates:*
 - (i) That there are positive land management, visitor management or biodiversity enhancement gains that will be delivered as identified in the strategy; and*
 - (ii) That any open market or commercial elements of the proposal help cross subsidise the delivery of the gains.*

Either a planning condition or obligation may be used, depending if gains are being delivered on or off-site and whether proposals need to be tied.

All proposals should support the long term objectives of decarbonisation of the area, climate change adaptation and tackle biodiversity loss in accordance with Local Development Plan Overarching Policies One: Strategic Principles and Two: Development Requirements.

New development should firstly seek to redevelop existing buildings and brownfield (previously developed or used) sites, then aim to be 'net zero carbon'¹ development – i.e. use less energy, use reusable materials, supply energy efficiently, use renewable energy and off set carbon emissions.

¹ Net Zero refers to achieving a balance between the amounts of greenhouse gas emissions produced balanced between the amounts removed from the atmosphere. A gross-zero target would mean reducing all emissions to zero, and this is not realistic – net zero recognises that there will be some emissions but that these need to be fully offset, predominately through natural carbon sinks – woodland, peatland etc.

2 Context

Strathard lies at the heart of the National Park. Covering approximately 100km² the area lies within The Trossachs and is part of the far headwaters of the River Forth catchment, stretching from the village of Aberfoyle westwards towards Ben Lomond. With numerous lochs, flanked by heavily forested hill sides and mountainous peaks and ridges, the area - although relatively sparsely populated, is a popular tourist destination lying just 40 km north of Glasgow. Within easy reach of the central belt the area, it is an attractive outdoor recreation day trip destination providing health and wellbeing benefits to locals and visitors alike. Tourism drives the local economy and is the major employer in the area.

Despite the scenic beauty and popularity of the area, there are specific localised issues that require to be addressed. These include:

- Woodlands that are being damaged by overgrazing and invasive species.
- Peatlands that are degrading and releasing carbon into the atmosphere.
- Degraded water bodies.
- Anticipated changes to land use due to the nature and climate emergencies and changes in agricultural support.

- Aberfoyle has been periodically affected by flooding events leading to damage to homes and businesses along the Strath floor.
- Businesses have been revitalising Aberfoyle but there are long standing issues of limited transport choices for visitors and the public realm is generally of poor quality.
- There is an ageing and declining local population and a lack of affordable housing. Opportunities to provide more affordable housing are hampered due to flooding and/or other constraints within Aberfoyle.
- The COVID-19 pandemic effects experienced in 2020 have exacerbated visitor management issues and impacted on local businesses, with some closing. The area was overwhelmed with day visitors and the associated pressures from car parking, littering and other damaging visitor behaviours.

There are many opportunities for action to address these issues and enhance the environment, halt population decline and nurture sustainable communities living and working in the area, supported by services and facilities that can increasingly be accessed locally and digitally. These are captured in the area based strategies that follow.

3 How did we get here?

The [Strathard Initiative](#) was an environmental project that formed in 2015 to create a multi-agency, ecosystem services approach² to explore how the integration of natural land and water management practices could benefit the wider environment, at a landscape scale. This involved a range of stakeholders, including the community who also produced their own local [Community Action Plan](#) in 2017. This Plan was broad ranging and in 2019 the community prepared more detailed, area focussed Community Life Plans for two sub-areas – Kinlochard and Inversnaid & Stronachlachar which are available on the community's website: <https://www.ccstrathard.org/community-life-plans/>. The community are currently preparing a Community Life Plan for Aberfoyle.

The Strathard community was shortlisted for a SURF award (Scottish Urban Renewal Forum) in 2019 in recognition of the role and strength of community led action and leadership in promoting heritage, revitalising business growth and establishing a local business hub, regenerating Aberfoyle Main Street, village enhancements and recruiting new members to both the Community Council and Community Development Trust, with a commitment to driving forward priorities and strengthening partnership working.

This enabled the [Strathard Strategic Partnership](#) to be set up towards the end of 2018. This was established primarily to aid

communication between community representatives, businesses and public sector agencies and organisations and to coordinate delivery of the various plans and strategies. From this, a steering group was set up to co-design and steer this draft Framework, bringing together the two strands of work around land use and development.

The National Park Authority, Strathard Community Council, Strathard Community Development Trust, Stirling Council and Architecture and Design Scotland all sat on the group and appointed consultants, Planning Aid Scotland (PAS), to review all the previous work and facilitate two stakeholder workshops to inform preparation of this draft framework.

The workshop events were run in 2020 by PAS gaining a wider range of views from public sector agencies, Stirling Council, businesses and land managers but also have a meaningful discussion alongside the community. There was a strong desire to have a more coordinated approach to land use and development decisions. Architecture and Design Scotland also used the work as a rural case study on how to create a carbon conscious place. Their full report: Designing for a Changing Climate: Carbon Conscious Places, can be read [here](#).

² Ecosystem services are the processes by which the environment produces natural resources utilised by us all, such as clean air, water, food and raw materials.

4 Vision

Strathard is a tranquil landscape and climate resilient place of outstanding natural beauty, with strong cultural heritage and cohesion. The area acts as a carbon sink while supporting biodiversity, recreation and local communities' self-sufficiency. Outdoor access and eco-tourism work alongside a balanced visitor management approach and a diverse local economy to support the protection and promotion of this diverse and connected ecosystem and the well-being of local people and visitors. Nature based solutions are used to manage flooding, improve and enhance infrastructure and facilities.



5 Strategy Summary

Strathard and The Forest areas

- Improving the **ecological status** of the existing woodlands through invasive species removal (mink and rhododendron, riparian species) and herbivore management (deer and goats), diversifying species to increase native species, enhancing habitat networks to help key species (e.g. wetlands for water voles) and restoring degraded peat and plant more trees to **store carbon**.
- Use **natural flood management methods**, alongside engineered solutions in Aberfoyle, to reduce the impact of flooding.
- Provide **effective infrastructure** – communications, nature based water solutions such a drainage ponds, renewable energy (run-of-river hydro, biomass, heat pumps) and shared / low impact heat supply.
- Connect communities to **high quality network of signposted paths** for cycling, walking, wheeling and other active travel modes and supporting potential for longer distance visitor routes – such as the Aqueduct path and long distance biking routes.
- Introduce **innovative transport and parking solutions** to try and shift reliance on cars – support shuttle bus and electric charging.
- Enhance **local viewpoints and tranquil landscapes**, particularly the lochs and promote dark skies.
- **Diversify the local economy** in terms of providing space for people to work from home including community/business hubs and diversification of land use to support community growing, local food production (honey, wild venison) and other employment opportunities in sustainable travel, education, childcare, essential community facilities/provision.
- Encourage the local tourism industry utilise the area's assets (dark skies, tranquillity, outdoor recreation) and help improve and maintain visitor infrastructure as well as help to restore and enhance natural capital, and realise benefits to the community.

Aberfoyle

Reimagine **Aberfoyle as a central hub for tourism economy and local services**, including enhancement of public realm, addressing flooding, consideration of potential to create a new wetland, considering management of on-street parking and open space, regenerate brownfield sites, improved community facilities, affordable housing, discouragement of car based travel by developing a transport / mobility hub with **sustainable transport options** – shuttle bus service, e-car/e-bike hubs, e-car share.

Kinlochard

Protect the tranquil qualities of Kinlochard and shores of Loch Ard, with support for more community facilities and infrastructure to support visitors whilst not attracting greater numbers. Some potential for small-scale camping around Kinlochard.

Stronachlachar and Inversnaid

Reinvigorate these remote communities where the feeling of isolation and resilience is being exacerbated by the effects of climate change resulting in road closures due to flooding and, in recent years a landslip cutting off the community. Invest in digital infrastructure and resilience planning. Support development that encourages a modest increase in population to live and work in this area to support it to become more self-sustaining. Removal of invasive rhododendron and expanding native woodland, local food growing will enable the creation of a carbon sink but also an asset for employment and recreation.

6 Strathard – Key Land Uses and opportunities for change

Key Characteristics, Issues and Opportunities

The Strathard area contains many important designated sites, including both the Loch Lomond Woods and Trossachs Woods Special Areas of Conservation, The Great Trossachs Forest National Nature Reserve, upland habitats at Ben Lomond Special Site of Scientific Interest, as well as the head of the River Forth.

The area is dominated by productive woodland, with 50% of the land managed as part of the Forest Estate by Forestry and Land Scotland. There are also areas of native woodland, including significant areas of upland oak woodlands and wet woodlands as well as scattered remnants of scrub woodland and lone trees in steep gulleys and on crags that could form the starting point for restoring sub montane scrub.

Important peatland habitat covers 15% of Strathard. Lochs are located in the wider glens, and the main communities are found along the loch margins and the River Forth where the floodplain widens out. Although farming has declined significantly in recent decades, the influence of farming still shapes the landscape. Several of the land managers in Strathard are still engaged in active farming on varying scales, predominantly a mixture of extensive hill sheep and cattle grazing, and there are important areas of in-bye grassland around the loch sides. The land also provides other opportunities for food produce including foraging of wild berries and mushrooms, honey production and game (venison/goat/fish).

The [Strathard Initiative](#) mapped habitats, and undertook an ecosystem condition assessment and hydrological assessments.

The group also prepared opportunity maps for natural flood management, woodland planting, peatland restoration and water vole habitat. The East Loch Lomond Land Management Forum have prepared management plans for both deer and feral goats. Other collaborative projects in the area include the removal of invasive rhododendron in woodland in designated sites and surrounding land and riparian Invasive Non Native Species control. The land managed by Forestry and Land Scotland is also covered by various 10 year land management plans – including Beinn Bhan, East Loch Ard, West Loch Ard and Loch Katrine.

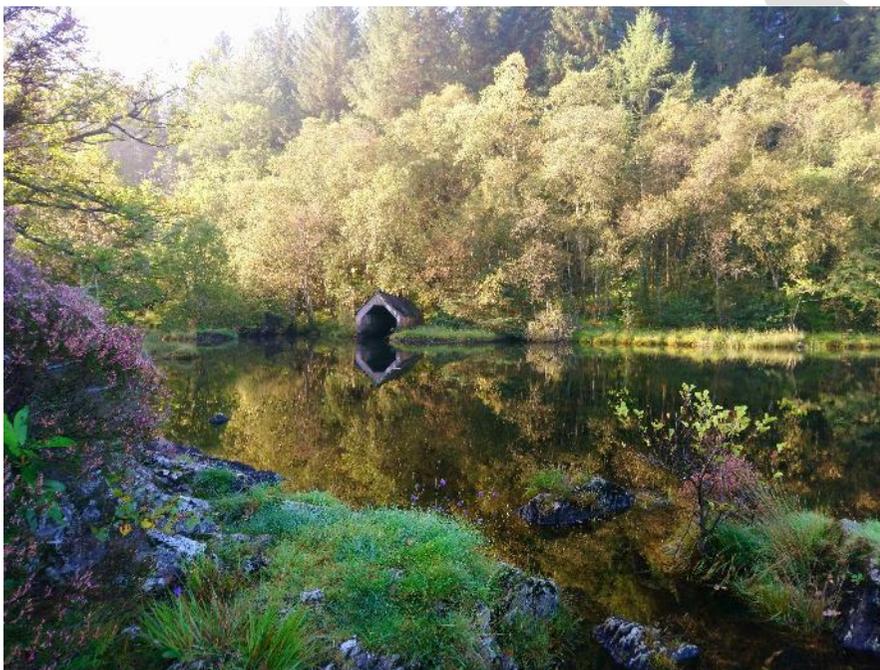
Natural flood management techniques in the Duchray catchment and wider Strath can complement the hard engineering flood alleviation solutions in Aberfoyle (for which funding is currently being sought by Stirling Council) to help to address flooding issues on the Main Street.

Woodland creation is a high priority for the Scottish Government; the current target is to increase woodland cover from 19% to 21% by 2032. Although Strathard has a high proportion of woodland cover, there is scope to increase this in areas such as Comer and around Loch Arklet in the north west area of Strathard. There are also opportunities to continue to improve woodland condition by reducing the impact of grazing from deer and feral goats, and by removing invasive non-native species. A [Deer Management Plan \(2019-2024\)](#) developed by East Loch Lomond Land Management Forum has established collaborative management of the deer population in this area.

Peatland restoration by physical works such as hag re-profiling and by keeping hill sheep and hill deer at environmentally sustainable levels, is important in mitigating climate change and can play a role in flood alleviation.

Degraded water bodies have been identified across Strathard, and a combination of both public and private initiatives can help to address this.

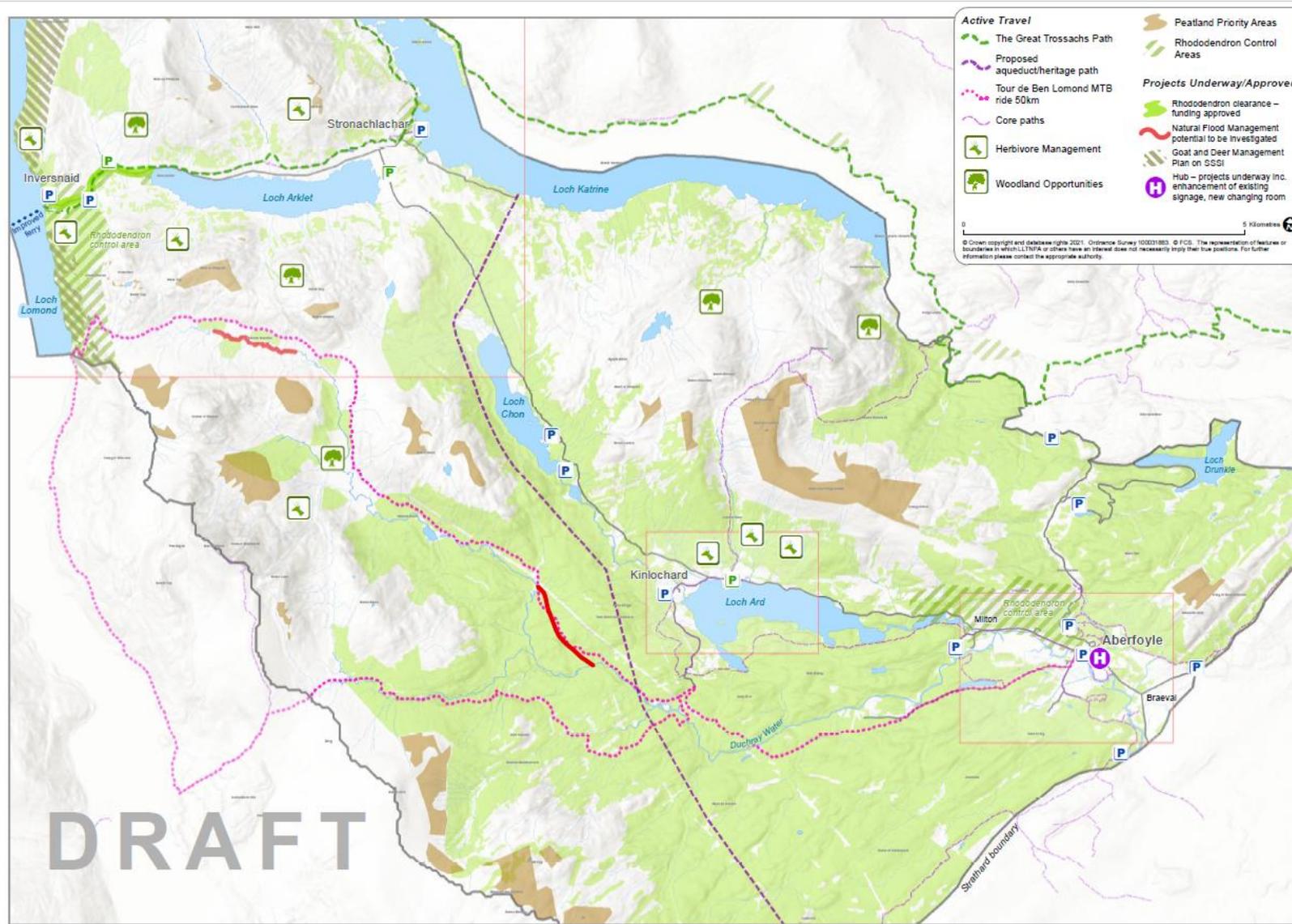
There are opportunities for farms to diversify, and to play an important role in delivering solutions and sustainably managing the land in Strathard. All of these actions help to improve habitats for native flora and fauna.



There are also opportunities to promote and nurture the tranquillity of the Strathard landscape by encouraging sustainable visitor management and active travel in the wider Strath. The various sub-area sections in this draft framework identify short and longer-term objectives for visitor management. For instance, there are opportunities for Aberfoyle to become a mobility/visitor hub with improved public realm and an opportunity to fully explore the area as a potential 'car-free' visitor destination where visitors can travel around the area with ease on regular and efficient shuttle buses, e-taxis, bikes, on foot, and e-bike or e-scooter with exemplar facilities and infrastructure that support these services.

Map Two illustrates the priorities and opportunities in a spatial holistic context and is interactive so if you wish you can delve into more of the detail and add other layers of data to help you make decisions about your land or form new proposals/projects. The priorities are not shown in any particular ranking of importance. The delivery plan in Appendix One begins to consider the anticipated timescales in which these actions could be delivered.

Map 2 – Detailed Strathard Area Strategy (interactive)



Priorities for overall area

Priority One: Visitor Management and Infrastructure

Address immediate visitors pressures created as a result Covid pandemic and more people visiting the area due to restricted travel outwith Scotland. Opportunity for Aberfoyle to become a mobility hub³ (see further details in the Aberfoyle sub-area strategy) and create a network of mini-active travel hubs for visitors at Loch Katrine, Inversnaid, Stronachlachar, Loch Ard/Milton and possibly at Comer (for mountain bikers), where visitors can find a variety of facilities including but not inclusive of - e-charging, bus shelters, drop off points for e-bikes/e-scooters, storage boxes for drop off and pick up of recreational items (paddle boards, wetsuits), toilets, bike maintenance (more info under each sub-area). There is also the opportunity to grow and develop visitor recreational walking and cycling routes with links to heritage such as developing a long-distance mountain bike route via Comer to Loch Lomond, and improving the Aqueduct trail, alongside continued maintenance/enhancement of hill paths such as Ben Venue. Opportunities for collaboration and partnerships with community, and to promote community access and recreational use of woodlands.

Priority Two: Natural Flood Management:

Opportunity to develop natural flood management solutions in upper Duchray, e.g. woody debris dams, timber bunds and tree planting, particularly at Comer as shown on Map 2. Wetland areas could also be created across various sites in the wider Strath, in collaboration with key stakeholders.

Priority Three: Woodland Management and Creation

Enhance the quality of productive and native woodlands by reducing the grazing impact of deer and feral goats, and continue work to remove invasive non-native species, such as rhododendron. Encourage expansion of native woodland as shown on Map 2. Consider opportunities to promote skills development as well as diversification to develop services that support the local economy, through both tourism and enterprise.



³ Mobility hubs are spaces designed specifically to support public transport, alongside, active and shared mobility modes whilst improving the public realm. The redesign and reallocation of space from the private car, is intended to enhance the experience of visitors as well as benefiting local residents and businesses.

Priority Four: Landscape tranquillity, recreation and dark skies

The community and visitors derive benefit from the Strathard landscape and its overall sense of tranquillity and relaxing atmosphere. This tranquillity value should be promoted and protected so that both the community and visitors can connect with and appreciate nature. There is an opportunity to develop a dark skies project that can explore options for Dark Sky Sanctuary status. The lochs are an important asset for quiet recreational enjoyment and loch shore areas are highlighted as sensitive areas where the introduction of new/intensified formal recreation development and other forms of development will be resisted. There are opportunities to consolidate and enhance facilities at Loch Chon and Loch Ard to support low impact recreational activities such as camping, kayaking, paddle boarding, open water swimming, fishing and picnicking.

Priority Five: Improve Water Quality

Improve water quality of Duchray Water, Loch Ard and Loch Chon from 'moderate' to 'good' ecological status by working with key stakeholders to reduce diffuse pollution.

Priority Six: Peatland Restoration

Restore peatlands to help reduce impacts of climate change, as well as for the benefit of biodiversity, and flood management.

Priority Seven: Renewable Energy

Identify opportunities for further small scale run or river hydro schemes, small-scale solar in connection with existing and new buildings, biomass, energy centres – heat networks, heat pumps (both air and water) and small-scale wind turbines.

Priority Eight: Farm and Estate Diversification

Existing small farms in the glen floor could diversify and/or expand, where there is agreement found with neighbouring landowners to help with biodiversity enhancement. Diversification opportunities could include agroforestry, renewable energy, camping/glamping sites and/or off grid recreational huts which could aim to support non car based recreation and tourism stays that make the most of the tranquil environment and dark skies. The area is valuable in terms of timber production and food production (beef/lamb) but there are opportunities in wild food harvesting (mushrooms, berries), wild food products (venison, trout) and honey production.

For the larger estates and public land holdings (including RSPB, Drumlean, Comer, Ledard and Scottish Water and Forest and Land Scotland), there could be an enabling role for development to help finance significant natural capital enhancements– such as woodland creation, natural flood management and peatland restoration but also visitor infrastructure such as paths or e-bike charging points. There is support already given by the Local Development Plan for diversification of farms to provide small-scale tourism and economic development but where commercial or housing proposals do not comply then the decision making process would be used (as set out on page 8).

8 Sub-Area Strategies

Introduction

The Sub-Area Strategies set out the opportunities and issues set within four key sub-areas: The Forest, Aberfoyle (The Hub), Kinlochard, and finally Inversnaid and Stronachlachar.

The maps show possible locations for development opportunities. These are suggested locations identified through engagement so far. They have not been subject to any formal assessment nor has formal landowner agreement been sought or agreed. It is important to note that the identification of these potential development sites will not preclude any future development brought forward outside this process – for example on alternative sites which will be considered within the context established in this draft framework. Any proposal would require to be considered through the formal planning application process, including consideration of any potential impacts on designated European sites.

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The Forest

Vision – *The forest is a place with important woodland, wetland habitats and recreation opportunities for both the local communities of Strathard and Scotland to benefit from. Continuing a strong heritage of managing resources, the place provides clean air, habitat for wildlife, raw materials for use and livelihoods for people. The area offers watershed protection, prevents soil erosion and mitigates the impacts of climate change both locally and nationally. The area is recognised as a carbon sink, acting as green lungs for Scotland and climate adaptation assets.*

Key Characteristics

The forest area is dominated by the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park (established in 1953 and under the ownership of Forest and Land Scotland) and managed for commercial forestry and recreation. There are a scattering of private properties including 16th Century Duchray Castle, thought to have been used as a hunting lodge by the Kings of Scotland. From coppicing and fairies to Rob Roy, the area is steeped in history, and further information can be found [here](#).

The [East Loch Ard](#), the [Beinn Bhan](#) and the [West Loch Ard](#) Land Management Plans (prepared by Forest and Land Scotland) set out how the forestry will be managed and restructured. This framework provides guidance on recreation and tourism development, conservation and natural flood management opportunities.

In terms of natural flood management (NFM), the Duchray Water has already been a pilot area for wood debris dams and creating wetted areas as part of a trial. There are further opportunities to explore NFM solutions and enlarge the scheme. Forest and Land Scotland (FLS) is already exploring funding options for this.

During the pandemic of 2020/21 the area was used heavily by visitors and car parks were overflowing at places including Milton and The Lodge at Aberfoyle. The main priority is to encourage visitors to leave their cars at home, or park in Aberfoyle, and explore the area by foot or bike to allow the forest to be a safe car free zone. Gravelfoyle - which consists of waymarked routes for bike users of dirt and gravel trails - will allow more visitors to feel safe in the forest. However, coordinated signage remains a key priority. There is limited scope for further development mainly due to vehicle access, conflicts with forestry operations, topography, protected woodland, lack of servicing (water, drainage).



Map 4 – The Forest Sub-Area Strategy



Top 3 Priorities for The Forest

- **Priority One: Active Travel – Walking/Cycling Routes**
- Improve off-road waymarked active travel link from Aberfoyle to Kinlochard. This link will not be tarmacked but be a good surface and follow existing forest roads. Use way marking and signage to resolve any potential conflict between recreational users, e.g. mountain biking and walking. Link this into the development of wider heritage path network to provide walks of interest within the area, and connect to longer routes.
- **Priority Two: Heritage Paths/Aqueduct Path/Signage**
- Develop and promote heritage paths in the area, with a specific focus on an Aqueduct pathway connecting Loch Katrine to Milngavie. Link this into the Strathard Museum initiative being led by the Kinlochard Local History Group. Also improve signage in the forest with focus currently being on gravel bike signage, but further review and signage plan required.
- **Priority Three: Renewable Energy**
- Develop a small-scale hydro and/or solar power scheme in the area, in collaboration with Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS). Also, there is an opportunity to look at feasibility of land for coppicing for biomass.

Land Use Priorities:

Natural Flood Management – Using knowledge from wood debris dam trials, develop other dams and wetland areas with the added benefit of enhancing habitats for water voles and other animals.

Peatland restoration – The land at Drumlean Estate has an opportunity to become part of a priority peatland restoration scheme.

Other opportunities

Tourism accommodation – There are limited opportunities for tourism development given it is a commercial forestry, with extensive recreational activity (i.e. potential conflict of development with cyclists/walkers) and sensitive ancient woodland. However, there may be opportunities for low impact and off-grid development that supports recreational activities within the forest, such as south Loch Ard, subject to a suitable access point and biodiversity benefits. The Visitor Experience Policy 1 of the Local Development Plan also supports a strategic tourism opportunity in the Aberfoyle area and the land around Duchray Castle may offer an opportunity for this type of medium to larger scale tourism accommodation subject to having no adverse impacts.

Aberfoyle

Vision - Aberfoyle is the hub, providing local services and enterprise opportunities with good access and carbon neutral transport options to other places. Visitor accommodation is managed and affordable housing supported to ensure housing meets the needs of all generations of local people. Nature based solutions connect and enhance the local environment and flooding is managed in a holistic way. Aberfoyle is recognised as one of the most thriving and climate resilient gateways in the National Park.

Key Characteristics

Aberfoyle is situated with the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park with the position of 'Gateway to The Trossachs'. The village sits alongside the River Forth. There is a riverside picnic area and path next to the main car park, a recently reinvigorated main street with newly opened of tourist shops and café, business hub and a small supermarket for essentials.

During the 19th Century, the area became a popular tourist destination for wealthy Victorians. This is where Aberfoyle draws its main character from, its Victorian buildings built of stone and natural 'local' slate. Any new developments should respect this original character if situated alongside such historic buildings. The village can accommodate higher density accommodation up to three storey high in some places. New housing on the edge of the village could use timber and slate as principle materials to fit in with the wooded setting of the village. The village also has 1960s architecture including the Rob Roy Motel and the Forestry 'Lodge', a key visitor centre, and a listed building built of distinctive Lake District slate.

Strathard Heritage Archive provides a collection of photographs, postcards of the area, in particular Aberfoyle that may be of use when considering developing in the village <https://strathardheritage.org/>



The key priority of the Framework is making Aberfoyle the hub and improvements could help unlock economic development potential of the town. Building on the successful recent tourism and economic development work led by the Strathard Community Trust and the development of a Tourism Strategy, Strathard is now being promoted as a cycling destination, with significant opportunities identified for gravel routes in the forest.

Map 5 – Aberfoyle Sub-Area Strategy



Top 3 Priorities for Aberfoyle

- **Priority One: Mobility/Visitor Hub** – Building on Aberfoyle’s assets (bike hire, village wi-fi, bike racks, toilets, riverside picnic area, co-working space) there is an opportunity to redevelopment the main street and riverside car park to address the quality of the pavements/surfacing/benches, safer crossing points, step free access, provide changing place for cyclists/bike cleaning, e-bike/car charging, one-way bike hire service, hub for bus with covered waiting space, improved planting, artwork, lockers, mini play area, and improve the active travel links to Milton/Kinlochard along B829 and to The Lodge. The location of this project is shown on the map as the Hub and Placemaking Priority and the interactive map has further details on opportunities.
- **Priority Two: Flood Management** - Flood management is key to the success of Aberfoyle. A proposed engineered scheme has the opportunity to protect the businesses in a 1 in 100 year event – a decision on funding for this scheme is expected in 2021. There is also an opportunity to create a new wetland to accommodate flood waters along Manse Road which has added benefits of enriching the biodiversity and providing an area for quiet enjoyment and wildlife watching.
- **Priority Three: Affordable Housing** - Potential opportunities for three sites for affordable housing have been identified on the interactive map (see map and click on each site further details). These should provide a mix of housing types, particularly addressing the needs of young people and local residents seeking smaller sized homes. Should these sites not prove feasible other options within the wider Strathard area will require to be investigated and informed by further needs analysis, market research and discussion with stakeholders.

Land Use opportunities:

Ecological enhancement: Priorities as shown on the map include rhododendron removal in the protected woodlands, riverside invasive control and native woodland protection and potential new areas.

Other opportunities:

Renewable Energy: Feasibility of district heating could be explored – using air/water heat pumps, biomass, hydrogen, solar thermal technology.

Economic Development: Potential redevelopment sites are shown on the map – **click on each site for further info**. Other sites may come forward for redevelopment and may be more suitable for affordable housing.

Kinlochard

Vision - Kinlochard is a tranquil place with the community at its heart. Community-led development, improvements to the digital connectivity and a low carbon transport and active travel network, have reinforced social cohesion. The surrounding landscape is climate resilient and has been respected and enhanced to support a balanced approach to managing visitors so that local people and visitors are able to enjoy the tranquil recreational and scenic qualities of the area. Kinlochard has been recognised for its strong sense of community, guardianship of the environment and continued support of access to the surrounding landscape.

Key Characteristics

Kinlochard is a small community on the edge of Loch Ard. It has been home to the Forest Hills Resort since 1937 following conversion from a large home and more recently Altskeith Hotel which, alongside the community owned village hall, is popular with weddings. The principle character of the place is white render or stone buildings with slate roofs and traditional features such as chimneys. New development should follow this style of white wash or timber and slate could be used if in a wooded setting.

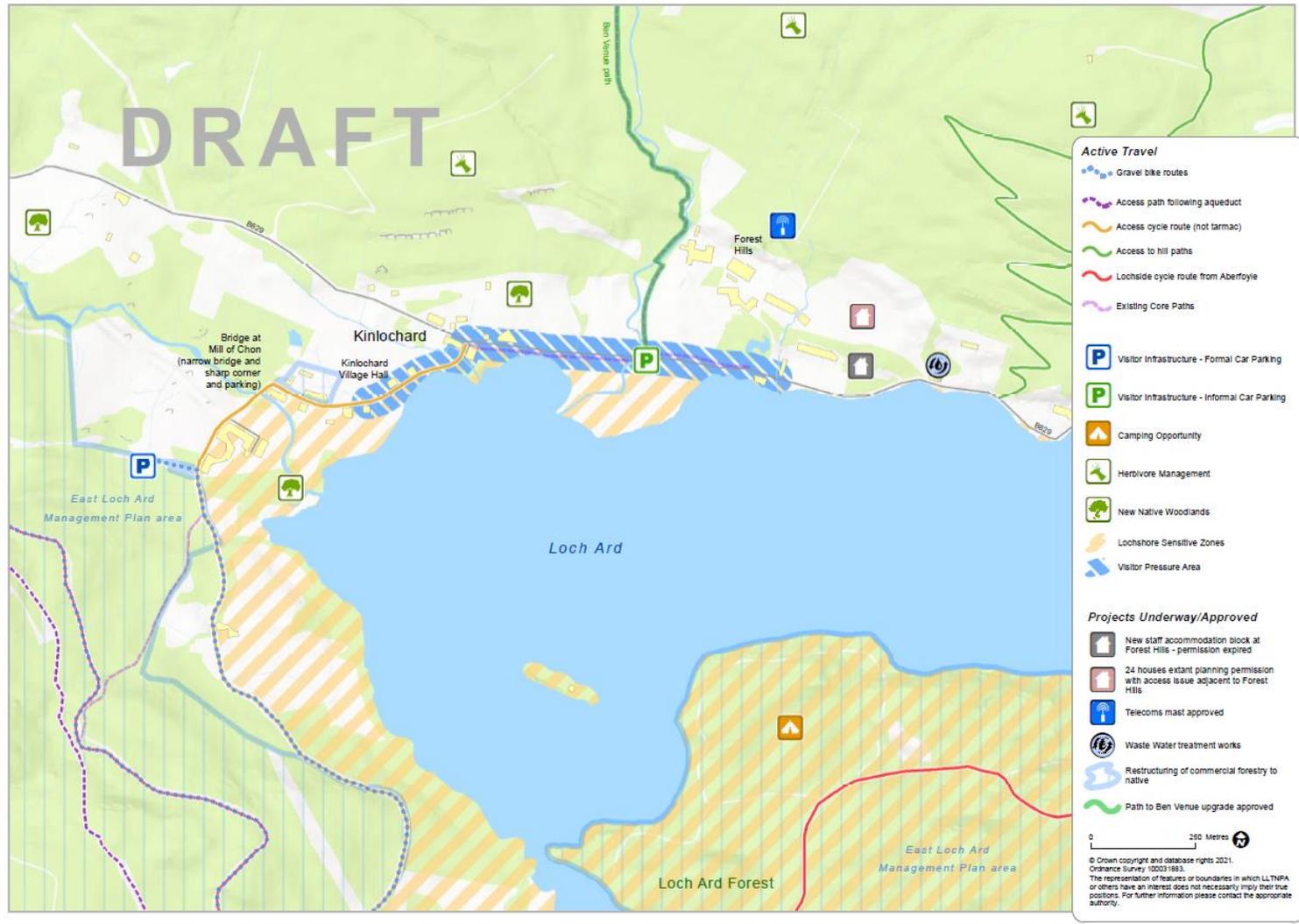
Loch Ard has grown in popularity for water based recreation including open water swimming, paddle boarding and kayaking. The village is situated on the loch within limited visitor infrastructure and limited parking.

Any development should protect the tranquillity of Kinlochard and sensitive lochshores. New development opportunities are very limited and should demonstrate how they can contribute towards improving facilities and infrastructure, in particular community facilities (childcare and essential shop), active travel, bus service, waste water and broadband, as well as small-scale recreational infrastructure, tourism accommodation and facilities. Feasibility of district heating could be explored – using air/water heat pumps, biomass, or solar thermal technology.

The community website provides further information on the history of Kinlochard: <https://www.kinlochard.org/history-of-kinlochard> and the [Community Life Plan](#).



Map 6 – Kinlochard Sub-Area Strategy



Top 3 Priorities for Kinlochard

- **Priority One: Visitor Management –**

Opportunity to enhance and consolidate provision for quiet recreational enjoyment of Loch Ard whilst carefully considering the impact of any proposal on community life and the ecology and tranquillity of the area. Explore solutions with the community and landowners to address the pressures from visitors (area shown on the map) through a variety of mitigation methods – information and engagement, infrastructure and services and regulation and enforcement.

- **Priority Two: Affordable Housing -** Affordable housing shall be directed to Aberfoyle, as mentioned above and its surrounds in the first instance, but where sites cannot be found and are ruled out for consideration due to constraints, then consideration will be given to Kinlochard to help meet the housing needs for people living and working within Kinlochard and the wider Strathard area. This will be informed by a housing needs survey and community engagement would be undertaken to establish potential sites.

- **Priority Three: Infrastructure First -** There are various infrastructure improvements required in relation to any new build development in Kinlochard. Either an upgrade to the existing Waste Water Treatment Works (capacity currently for around 10 more houses/tourism units) or providing private systems, investment in digital connectivity (broadband), upgrading the play park and improvements to the B829 from Aberfoyle to Kinlochard.

Land Use Opportunities:

Native Woodlands – Opportunities to further protect, manage and preserve existing woodland setting of Loch Ard and new woodland on areas shown. The openness of the loch shore is an important characteristic of Kinlochard and any tree planting or natural regeneration that blocks key views should be avoided.

Other Opportunities:

Small scale tourism – There may be opportunities for small-scale camping/glamping around Kinlochard. A potential site is identified to the south of Loch Ard (see map) but other locations may be suitable.

Economic Development – Potential opportunities for small scale economic development could include small workshops/units for locally produced goods, retail, café or restaurant. Priority will be given to re-purposing existing buildings and sheds and at the Village Hall.

Renewable Energy – Feasibility of small-scale hydro, air/water heat pumps, biomass, solar thermal technology.

Stronachlachar and Inversnaid

Vision - *Inversnaid and Stronachlachar are places rich in history, tranquil wilderness and community spirit. They provide year-round local economic activity through balancing facilities for everyday use and visitors. The repurposing of disused and underused buildings has helped to provide small scale development and affordable accommodation that provides live/work places. The surrounding landscape is holistically managed, less vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and provides opportunities for local self-sufficiency. Inversnaid and Stronachlachar have been recognised for their celebrated cultural and natural heritage, self-sufficiency and dark skies.*

Key Characteristics

Until around 20 years ago the Stronachlachar and Inversnaid area was a thriving diverse community built upon an economy split between Western Europe's largest sheep station and the care of Glasgow's water supply from Loch Katrine. Further information can be found on the [Scottish Water website](#) regarding the history and recent refurbishment project. The area is characterised with the buildings of this legacy with a now converted school house and church. There is also a lot of history pre-dating this and further information is available in the [Community's Life Plan](#).

Loch Arklet and Loch Katrine provide a stunning setting for Stronachlachar and Inversnaid, alongside Loch Lomond. The buildings are similar to Kinlochard with white render and slate being the prominent materials. The area is now dominated by self-catering accommodation and scattered tourism businesses – steamship on Loch Katrine, a few guest houses, bunkhouse, Inversnaid coaching hotel, and the pier café. There are limited community and visitor facilities and affordable housing opportunities.

Any new development must protect the tranquillity of the area and the sensitive lochshore. The rich cultural heritage (Rob Roy home and birthplace, inspiration of Sir Walter Scott's works) and rich mythology offer opportunities to promote the area to visitors. Development must demonstrate how it can contribute towards improving the facilities and infrastructure, in particular community facilities, active travel, bus service, waste water and broadband, as well as consolidating the existing tourism facilities but no scope for new isolated and sporadic tourism development. There is some limited scope for new affordable housing with work places either using existing building stock or new build.



Map 7 – Stronachlachar/Inversnaid Sub-Area Strategy



Top 3 Priorities for Inversnaid and Stronachlachar

- **Priority One: Signage Plan** - Develop a signage scheme which helps residents and visitors navigate between key points of interest and encourages active travel. Implement a scheme to facilitate positive use of access rights where it may currently be misunderstood by visitors to the area.
- **Priority Two: Infrastructure** - Improve connectivity – both physical and digital – including condition and reliability of road network in the area and ensure there is broadband connectivity to support local based living and working.
- **Priority Three: Renewable Energy/Carbon Neutral Transport** - Develop an electric bike scheme for the area, with charging points linking to electric car charging points at key locations. Promote greater use of Loch Katrine waterbus connecting Stronachlachar and Trossachs Pier and wider transport modes. Support existing hydro scheme and promote as a positive exemplar for other areas of Strathard.

Land Use Priorities:

Ecological improvements: Focus on rhododendron removal at remaining colonies, including those at Inversnaid and Stronachlachar, preserve the existing woodland in the area and plant new native woodland/allow natural regeneration to connect woodland in Great Trossachs Woodland NNR.

Other opportunities:

Housing/Economy: Promote the development of small number of low impact live/work spaces and affordable homes in and around the building groupings of Stronachlachar and Inversnaid, with a focus on re-using existing buildings and brownfield sites. Promote development of shared community workspace/hub with high speed broadband, and tie this into the existing business centre in Aberfoyle. Sites to be confirmed through further discussion with stakeholders.

Visitor Management Explore opportunities to enhance visitor offering connecting to the wildlife and ecology of the area as well as its rich history (Rob Roy, Sir Walter Scott). The RSPB visitor centre and the National Park owned Rob Roy car park could be explored for further development opportunities. Enhance Inversnaid and Stronachlachar as sub-mobility hubs linking to Aberfoyle, with opportunities for a one-way e-bike scheme/shuttle bus connecting to the ferry, waiting areas, storage. There is no support for new tourism accommodation apart from small-scale enhancement of existing facilities.

Stronachlachar/Loch Katrine: Promote loch and pier and collaborate with Scottish Water and Steamship Company to enable more opportunities for biodiversity and active travel opportunities and small-scale expansion of local businesses. For example; small-scale motorhome and camping to provide an alternative to the self-catering provision already catered for in the area. The area around the existing parking area at Stronachlachar pier and the existing car parks at Inversnaid that could present opportunities.

Appendix 1 – Indicative Delivery Plan

The delivery plan sets out indicative timescales and first steps for initiating the delivery of the projects identified in this draft framework. It will be reviewed and updated regularly and monitored as part of the Local Development Plan Action Programme.

The **Strathard Strategic Partnership's** main role to date has been on communication and coordination of the work of public sector bodies and community bodies of Strathard. Members of the Partnership currently include:

Scottish Environment Protection Agency, NatureScot, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority, Forestry and Land Scotland, Stirling Council, Strathard Community Development Trust and Strathard Community Council.

This draft framework will provide a focus for the Partnership going forward and be used as a tool to prioritise and support delivery on the ground. A fundraising strategy will be required as part of the delivery plan for which a programmed approach should be established.

There are also various other sub-groups operating in the area that may be involved in steering groups set up for the following projects. The groups include:

Strathard Heritage Network, Strathard Business Hub, Resilience Group, Outdoor Classroom, School community in PTA, Business, Aberfoyle Village People, Aberfoyle Traders, Residents Association, First Responders, Community Enterprises, Life Plan working groups, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Countryside Trust.

There are three potential larger steering groups grouping together projects listed on the following table. A steering group would be able to guide and push forward topics that may or may not become projects. These include:

- Placemaking Priority/Mobility Hub – *Stirling Council potential lead*
- Tourism Strategy/Branding and Shuttle Bus/Active Travel Infrastructure – *Community Trust potential lead*
- Eco-system enhancement and Flooding – *Strathard Initiative grouping plus community involvement*

Project	Timescale	Year expected to start	Potential Lead	First Steps
Activating Aberfoyle				
Masterplan village centre improvements / mobility hub	Short-med	2021/22	Stirling Council	Set up a steering group and commission consultant to prepare a design options for a mobility hub/public realm improvements, undertake consultation and funding.
Tourism strategy/branding	Short-long	2021	Strathard Community Trust	Using Tourism Strategy, developed by Vis a Vis, working in partnership with business to realise opportunities and continue events, website and heritage guide book.
Visitor Management				
Visitor Management Pressures	Short	2021	National Park Authority	Set up steering group to formulate a short term plan to tackle the pressures from day visitors in the Strath, particularly Kinlochard, Milton, working with Stirling Council on solutions for the 2021/22 season.
Housing/Tourism/Economic Development				
Affordable housing	Med	2021	Stirling Council and Rural Stirling Housing Association	Investigate development sites, if site found, set up project group, explore options for affordable housing and community ownership.
Site and building audit	Short-Med	2022	National Park Authority	Undertake audit of vacant sites, buildings, housing stock, tourism accommodation to understand need and demand for both housing and tourism.
Infrastructure				
Forest School	Med	2022-2024	Stirling Council	Scope out feasibility
Signage Plan	Short	2021	Strathard Community Trust	Scope out walking and cycling marketing plan alongside a signage plan – what would it include – branding, rationalising signs, directional signs for car parks and other visitor facilities and waymarking of walks and active travel routes.

Project	Timescale	Year expected to start	Potential Lead	First Steps
Aqueduct path and heritage routes	Med	2022/23	TBC	Undertake feasibility study to identify path connections required, improvements to existing path, costings and funding opportunities.
Aberfoyle to Stirling cycle network	Long	2024-2030	Stirling Council possible lead	Scoping exercise completed by the council, challenges identified include flooding, engineering challenges, 3 rd party agreement, lack of verge on roadside) so first step is to revisit route options if funding becomes available.
Network of EV charging for cars/bikes	Short	2022	Stirling Council possible lead	Map out existing EV charging and bike charging and potential for new sites and review local grid capacity – speak to tourism businesses and investigate funding opportunities.
Shuttle bus service (electric/hydrogen) – combined with parking management	Med-long	2022-2025	Strathard Community Trust	Seek funding, then undertake a feasibility study and survey people who might use the service – investigate route options – in Strathard linking to route from Aberfoyle to Callander, costing framework, in tandem with assessing parking management systems.
Renewables / Heat Networks	Med-long	2022-2025	TBC - Kinlochard local working group could be expanded to Strath wide group with public agency involvement.	Set up a project group, undertake feasibility study looking into energy heat hubs, coppice for biomass, heat pumps, district heating, run-river hydro.
Broadband = connection for all households in Strathard	Med-long	2022-2025	Strathard Community Trust (Funding Stirling Council)	Trial to be completed 2020/21. Continue work with Stirling Council to secure installation of broadband infrastructure, investigate further funding and partnership provider.
Eco-system enhancement and flood management				
Natural Flood Management – Wood Debris Dams/Wetland Trial	Med	2021	Forest and Land Scotland	Gain funding for Natural Flood Management measures on the Duchray catchment in partnership with other Strathard Initiative group members and the community.

Project	Timescale	Year expected to start	Potential Lead	First Steps
Natural Flood Management – Aberfoyle Wetland	Med	2025	Stirling Council	Await outcome of funding bid for flood scheme (wetland is part of the proposal) by Stirling Council, if not successful, explore other funding options. Develop alongside masterplan and then develop detailed plans for consultation.
Peatland Restoration	Med	2025	National Park Authority	Work with landowners to investigate opportunities and funding.
Herbivore management (feral goats)	Short/Med	2021	Steering group of Landowners	Feral Goat Management Plan developed, FLS/Glen Falloch will cull goats in accordance with this plan. RSPB to develop a communications plan before culling goats.
Herbivore management (deer)	Med	2021	NatureScot	Support Drumlean and Ledard Estates to join the East Loch Lomond Management Forum. NatureScot have the lead role in relation to the designated sites and statutory powers in relation to deer.
Invasive Non-native species removal – Rhododendron, mink and riparian INNS	Med	2021	National Park Authority	NPA currently leading on rhododendron removal to eradicate complete colonies, focussed round protected sites and their buffer zones and adjacent to areas tackled by FLS. FLS have undertaken extensive clearance from the National Forest Estate and have a programme for follow-up control. LLTNPA, Forth Rivers Trust and FLS are working on riparian INNS and mink control
Dark Skies	Med-long	2023	TBC - Kinlochard local working group could be expanded to Strath wide group with public agency involvement.	Establish new group and investigate funding options. Aspects of project could include raising profile with the community, working with businesses, investigating Dark Sky Sanctuary status or Discovery Sites, updating sky quality/darkness survey, lighting management plan and light replacement.

Projects underway

There are a number of projects that are underway or that would be led by the public bodies/community/land owners and reported on at the Strathard Strategic Partnership:

NPA	Stirling Council	Nature Scot	FLS	Community Trust	Community Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate Visitor Management Pressures (underway) • Invasive Non-native species removal (underway) • Peatland Restoration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberfoyle Flood Alleviation Scheme inc wetland and active travel link to the school (underway/awaiting funding outcome) • School refurbishment (underway), investigation into Forest School • Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbivore management in designated sites (underway) • Supporting East Loch Lomond Land Management Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Flood Management on the Duchray • Land Management Plans for FLS holdings involving the community. • Landowner on the East Loch Lomond Management Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberfoyle Business Hub • Tourism Strategy inc walking cycling marketing plan and heritage guide book, explore trial of shuttle bus • Managing website – goaberfoyle.co.uk • Continuing events • A trial study for 4G (funded by Council) at Stronachlachar and Inversnaid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating community buy out of the old co-op • Development of Community Life Plans • Supporting Trust projects