

© Photo: 'An overlook viewing an area of wooded land in The Trossachs and part of Loch Katrine,' Hobbes the Great



Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park

Strathard & The Trossachs

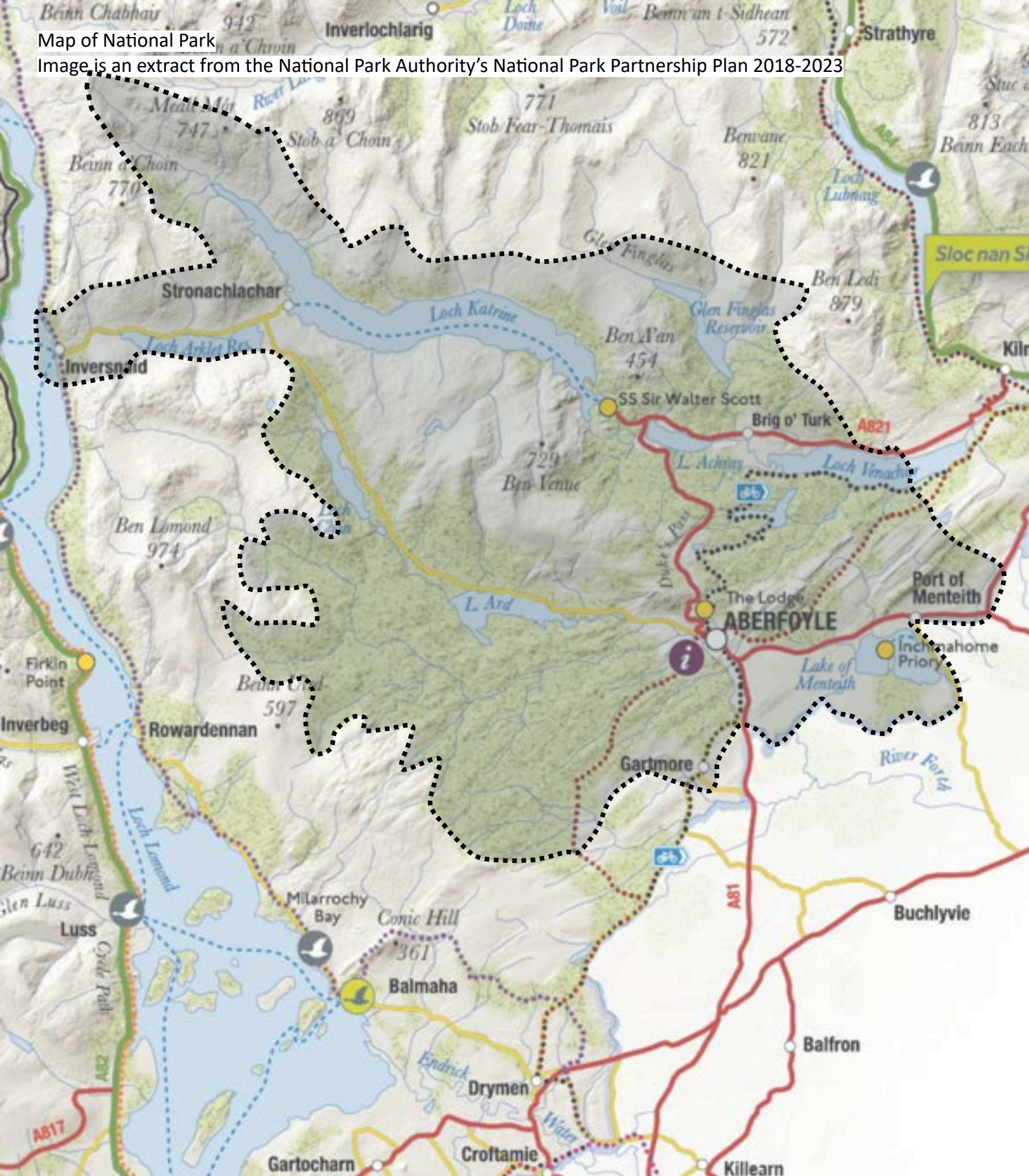
Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Framework

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Introduction



Introduction

This section describes the purpose, aims and objectives of this study, and describes how the study is set within the context of national and local policies.

The Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority has commissioned this study to identify high level requirements for strategic tourism infrastructure development in the Strathard & Trossachs area of the National Park.

This study dovetails with a parallel study of the Callander area.

This study has been developed through a design-led review and assessment of current known information, including existing survey data; review of current site provision; and other recent publications such as Strathard Framework and the Port and Menteith Visitor Management Strategy. The study incorporates infrastructure opportunities identified by the National Park Authority and the Strathard and Trossachs Visitor Management Group; and has been informed by stakeholder and targeted community engagement, workshops and discussions.

The study has proposed a Visitor Management Strategy for the area which seeks to manage visitor access & promote visitor dispersal to achieve:

- Controlled or reduced access to sensitive sites & areas (e.g., Strathard wilderness & lochs)
- Expanded access to, and promoted use of areas of lesser sensitivity/greater capacity (e.g. the Forest Parks)
- Improved car free access to core destinations and improved facilities within core hotspots

Concepts have been developed for all sites identified as being strategic for the National Park Authority & Partners within the area Strathard & Trossachs area.

The study will be used as a framework and starting point for detailed examination of the projects identified within, and a tool for use, alongside engagements, in applying for funding.

Aims & Objectives

This Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development study is being advanced to identify areas of opportunity and identify actions to strengthen tourism infrastructure supporting place, addressing the needs of both residents and visitors and to create a framework to secure additional funding for projects to support the Strathard & Trossachs area. The strategy and projects identified consider a multi-year work programme enabling short to medium term strategic planning and development at areas experiencing high levels of visitor pressure.

It responds to the hierarchy and principles of the National Park Place Programme, helping to deliver the Vision and Strategy by addressing the plan's five thematic priorities

- Supporting sustainable development – people and place
- Supporting sustainable development – climate and nature
- Supporting inclusion and improved accessibility
- Supporting more sustainable ways of travel, both to and within the National Park (Modal Shift)
- Supporting visitor management and dispersal

Study Objectives

This Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Study (STID) is being advanced to identify areas of opportunity and actions to strengthen tourism infrastructure supporting place, addressing the needs of both residents and visitors and creating a framework to secure additional funding for projects to support the Strathard & Trossachs area.

Strategic Study Supporting Sustainable Tourism



The National Park Authority with the support of Scottish Government are seeking to develop a multi-year work programme, with capacity to draw-down on the Scottish Government Funding delivered through the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) administered by Visit Scotland.

Environmental Capacity Promoting Place Based Assets



The National Parks have experienced significant additional visitor demand during Covid highlighting challenges to the current provision of visitor infrastructure and creating a range of challenges and risks around environmental stewardship, visitor management and sustainable use of our place assets. This includes water as well as land-based assets and their management.

Site Audit & Analysis Based on Problems/Opp's/Issues/ Constraints



The Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Study for the Strathard & Trossachs area has been developed through a Steering Group and with stakeholder partners, closely engaged to capture the problems/opportunities/issues/challenges (POIC) and to identify appropriate and proportionate responses that support the National Park Authority strategic objectives.

Concept Ideas Aligned with Stakeholder Engagement



Concept ideas have been developed with a focus on Placemaking and on protecting place quality, an approach that respects how the landscape, its form, and qualities contribute to 'a sense of place'. Initial engagement with stakeholders explored the fit with wider initiatives and landowner interests. Projects have been prioritised to create a programme of works that, with funding, can be developed and implemented over time.

Concept Development Feasibility Cost & Programme

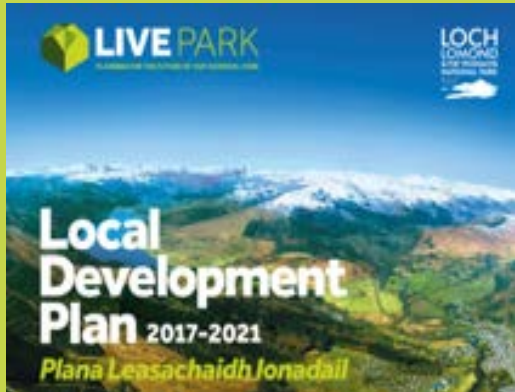


Concepts for priority actions will be developed into Outline Design Briefs sufficient to define the scope of the project and allow budget costs to be defined and projects prioritised and programmed to create a programme of works that can be developed as a basis to bid for funds and advance planning and design in conjunction with local stakeholders and communities.

Integrated Plan & Programme Consistent with LDP & Partnership Plan, & Strathard Framework



The National Park Authority will use the Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Study as part of funding submissions to assist rural visitor locations and communities to make improvements that help with increased visitor pressures, to offer enhanced visitor experiences, promote responsible tourism (land and water based) with carbon conscious approaches supporting partnership programmes. Future Development of concepts will follow to develop area masterplans/detailed designs.



Context

The study responds to and works within the context of The National Park Partnership Plan, Local Development Plan and wider national/regional/local policies, with the National Park Partnership Plan a foundational document to this study. Visitor management requires close integration with the resident and community needs within settlements building on wider programmes and engagement around Destination Development and Place-Plans.

The following information sets the context for this study:

- National Context
 - National Park Place Programme
 - Climate Emergency Plan
 - Visitor Experience – Tourism Development Plan
 - Design & Placemaking (Scottish Government)
 - Development Framework (Scottish Government)
 - Design & Placemaking Guidance (Scottish Government)
- Regional Context
 - National Park Biodiversity Action Plan & Programme 2018-2023
 - National Park Website – Project / Action Plan Updates
 - National Park Authority Geographic Information System (GIS) Database
 - Strathard Framework
 - Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal & Modal Shift Report
 - Partnership Plan 2018-2023
 - Trees & Woodland Strategy
 - Core Paths Plan
- Local Context
 - Local Development Plan 2017-2021
 - Local Place Plans
 - Community Life Plans
 - Port of Menteith Strategy
 - Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas

Additional references have been taken from wider policy frameworks including:

- Place Principle (Scottish Government) / Place Standard Tool 2020-2030
- Designing for Climate Change (Architecture & Design Scotland)
- Sustainable & Responsible Tourism in Scotland (Visit Scotland)
- Other Design & Planning Guidance – National Park Authority & Partners

The study complements other Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies that the National Park authority have either developed or are currently working on which look at other areas of the National Park that are experiencing increasing and unsustainable visitor pressures.

This study identifies high level requirements for strategic tourism infrastructure development in the Strathard & Trossachs area of the National Park. The National Park Authority intend to ensure that any proposed improvements in the Strathard & Trossachs and wider area connect into Park-wide visitor services planning currently under development. For the visitor, this would provide improved, integrated services. For example, requirements for car parking and public transport will link into the sustainable transport planning park wide.

The study therefore seeks to dovetail with other transport and facility planning, currently underway.

The Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal & Modal Shift Report, commissioned by the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority provided an evidence-based report, with an assessment and appraisal of the options available for improving sustainable transport coverage and patronage around the National Park area, for both visitors and local residents. The following study seeks to highlight the opportunities Strathard & The Trossachs can offer in supporting modal shift and potential future sustainable travel initiatives.

This study seeks to align itself to the National Park Partnership Plan, seeking to secure the 'right visitor facilities' in the 'right place', ensuring visitor activities deliver benefits and are compatible with the vision for place.

Alignment with the National Park Partnership Plan

The Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Study seeks to align itself with the vision and all the challenges and opportunities, outcomes and priorities identified within the Partnership Plan. A key element is seeking to secure the 'right visitor facilities' in the 'right place' to ensure visitor activities deliver benefits and are compatible with the vision for place.

National Park Partnership Plan 2045 Vision and Outcomes

Restoring Nature

Restoring Nature for Climate

- 2045 Outcome: A natural carbon sink
- Reduce Peatland Emissions
- Increase Tree Cover
- Restore the Water Environment

Restoring Nature for Healthy Ecosystems

- 2045 Outcome: A restored landscape for nature
- Connecting Nature at Landscape Scale
- More Land Managed for Nature
- Reduce key pressures on Nature

Restoring Nature for Sustainable, Regenerative Land Use

- 2045 Outcome: An exemplar of regenerative land
- Support more Regenerative Land Use
- Invest in Nature Restoration
- Encourage Land Use that Benefits Everyone

Creating a Low Carbon Place

Connecting Everyone with Nature and Climate

- 2045 Outcome: A place for all to enjoy safely and responsibly
- Inspiring Action for Nature and Climate
- Supporting Diversity and Inclusion
- Support Safe, Responsible Access

Improving Popular Places and Routes

- 2045 Outcome: High quality visitor infrastructure and facilities
- Deliver a Multi-Year Place Programme
- Improve Travel Infrastructure
- Provide a High Quality Recreational Path Network

Low Carbon Travel for Everyone

- 2045 Outcome: An inclusive, low carbon, travel network
- Develop a New Strategic Transport Partnership Approach
- Make Sustainable Travel Choices More Attractive
- Improve Travel Routes and Services

Designing a Greener Way of Living

Transitioning to a Greener Economy

- 2045 Outcome: A greener, more diverse, rural economy
- Increase Sustainable Tourism
- Support Low Carbon Businesses
- Grow Green & Nature-based Jobs and Skills

Supporting Thriving Rural Communities

- 2045 Outcome: More resilient rural communities
- Enable more Local Living and Working
- Meet Housing Needs
- Build Community Wealth

Developing and Investing in the National Park

- 2045 Outcome: A responsible approach to new development
- Deliver Strategic Development Needs
- Help Adapt to Climate Change and Restore Nature
- Make the Best Use of Land and Assets

Study Focus

This study has reviewed existing recreation planning strategies and, through engagement and site assessments, has sought to identify established areas of activity, areas at capacity where visitor activity levels create significant challenges and areas with potential for development. Infrastructure investment has been focused on areas that can offer sustainable travel accessibility (public transport/active travel).

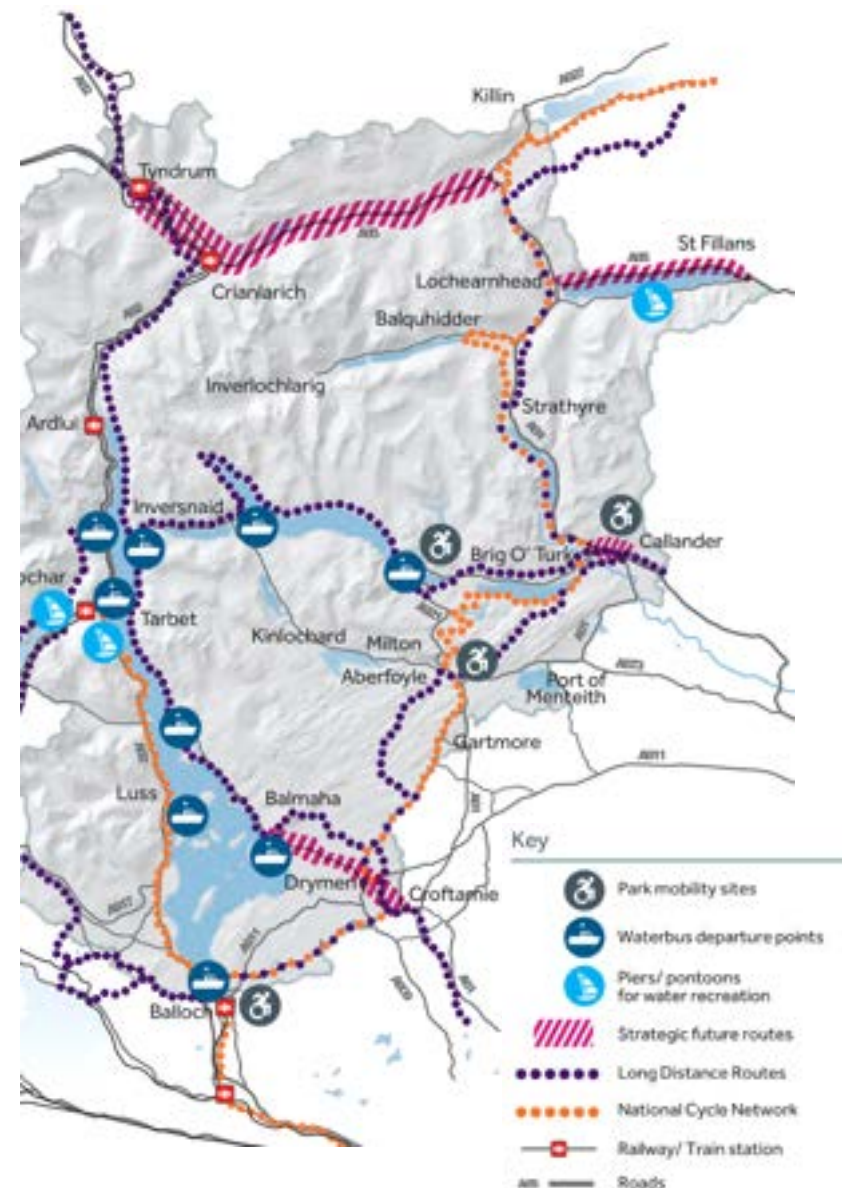
The study builds on National Park Partnership Plan and Local Development Plan (extracts plans to right)

Visitor management will promote development of/greater use of the National Walking and Cycling Network (LDR/NCR) for recreation and active travel and importantly promote better linkages from existing public transport hubs and services to support sustainable travel choices.

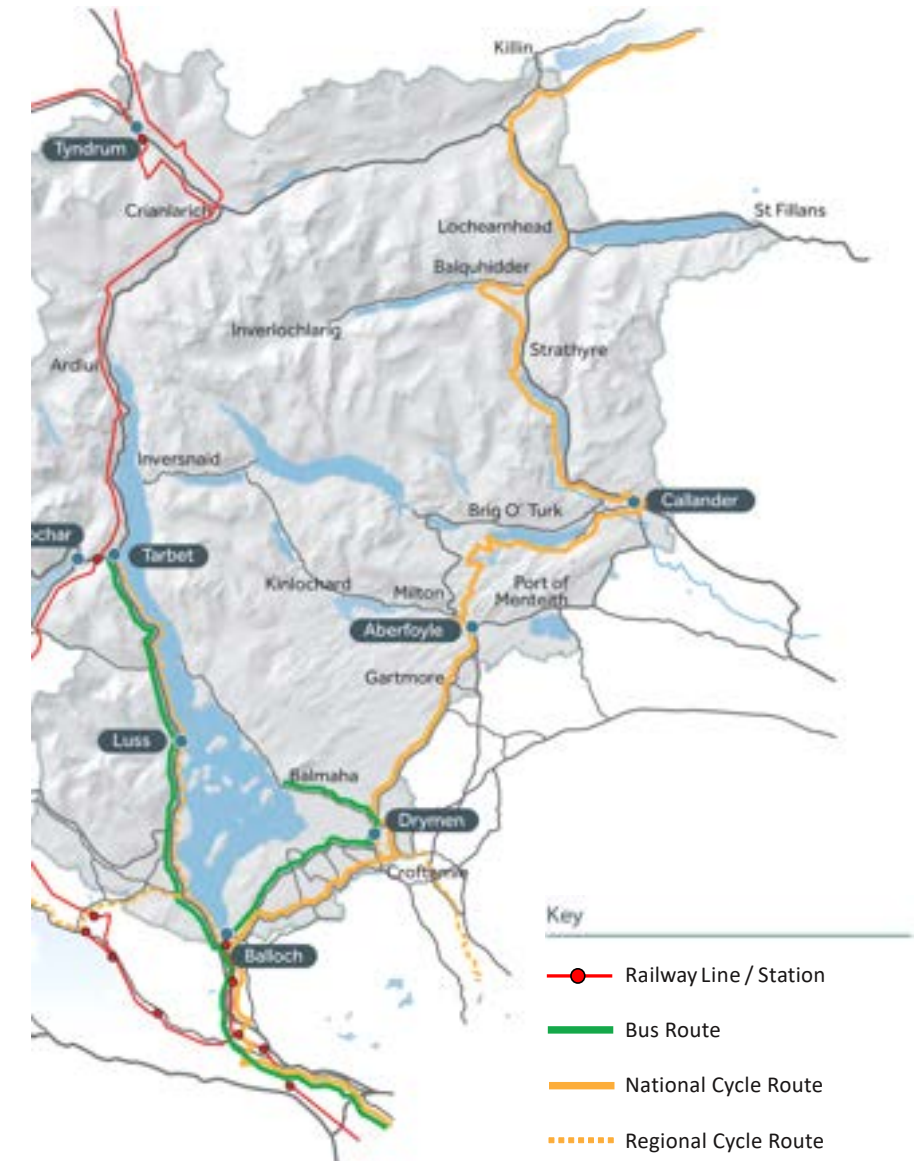
Important in the recreational network and transport network are bus, active travel and water-based connections that give non-car-based access to the Strathard & Trossachs areas. Extending travel choice by supporting sustainable modes through the development of a comprehensive interlinked sustainable transport system (Shuttle bus/ Water bus) are proposed by the National Park Authority to help deliver wider elements of the Partnership Plan and commitment to net zero.

This commitment to offer an attractive alternative mode of transport/ access to support reduction to visitor reliance on car journeys is intrinsic to the development of the Strategic Tourism Infrastructure set out in this study.

Strategic Recreation Network

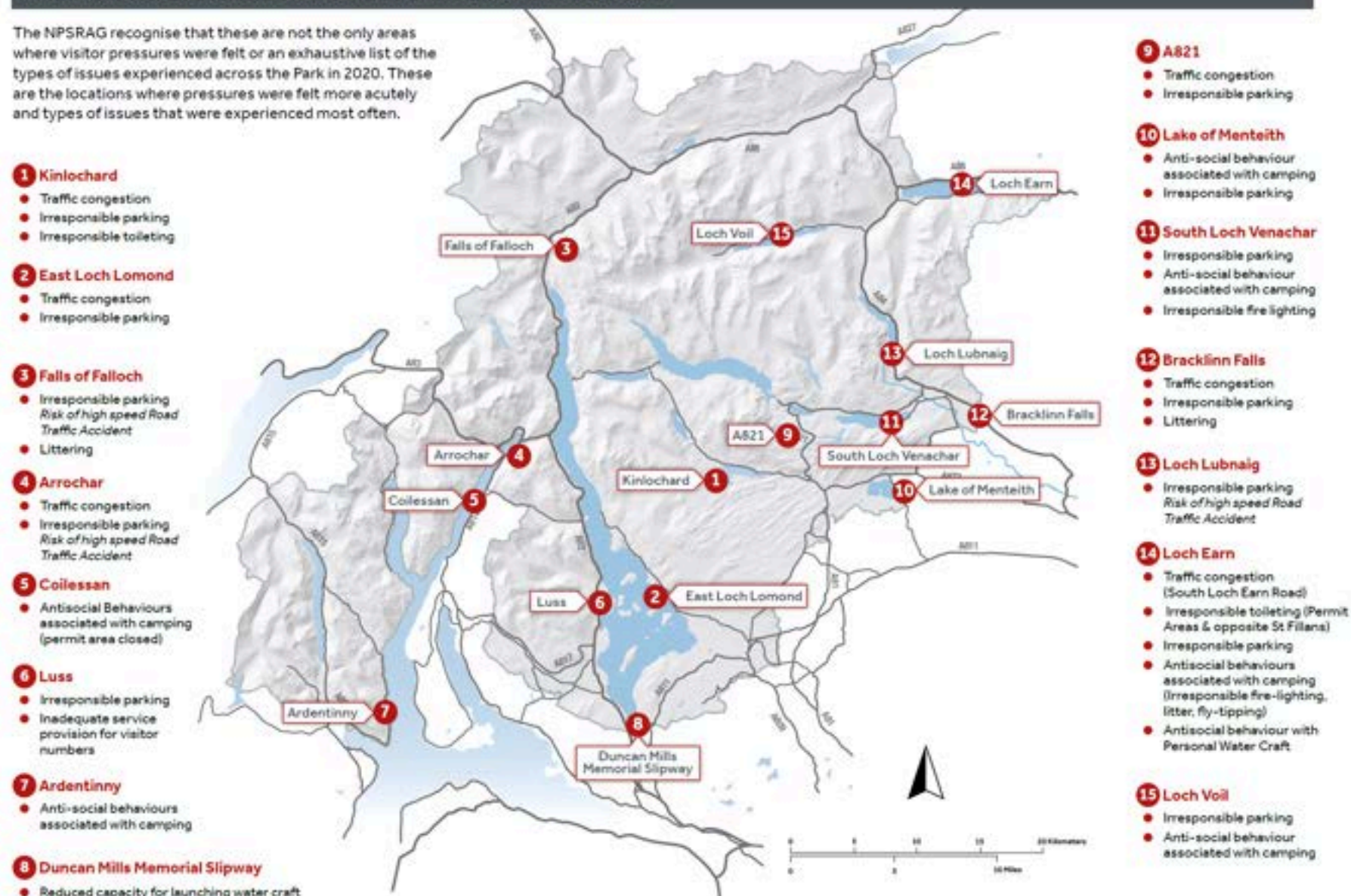


Access & Transport Network



Identifies additional pressures and need for improvement

The NPSRAG recognise that these are not the only areas where visitor pressures were felt or an exhaustive list of the types of issues experienced across the Park in 2020. These are the locations where pressures were felt more acutely and types of issues that were experienced most often.



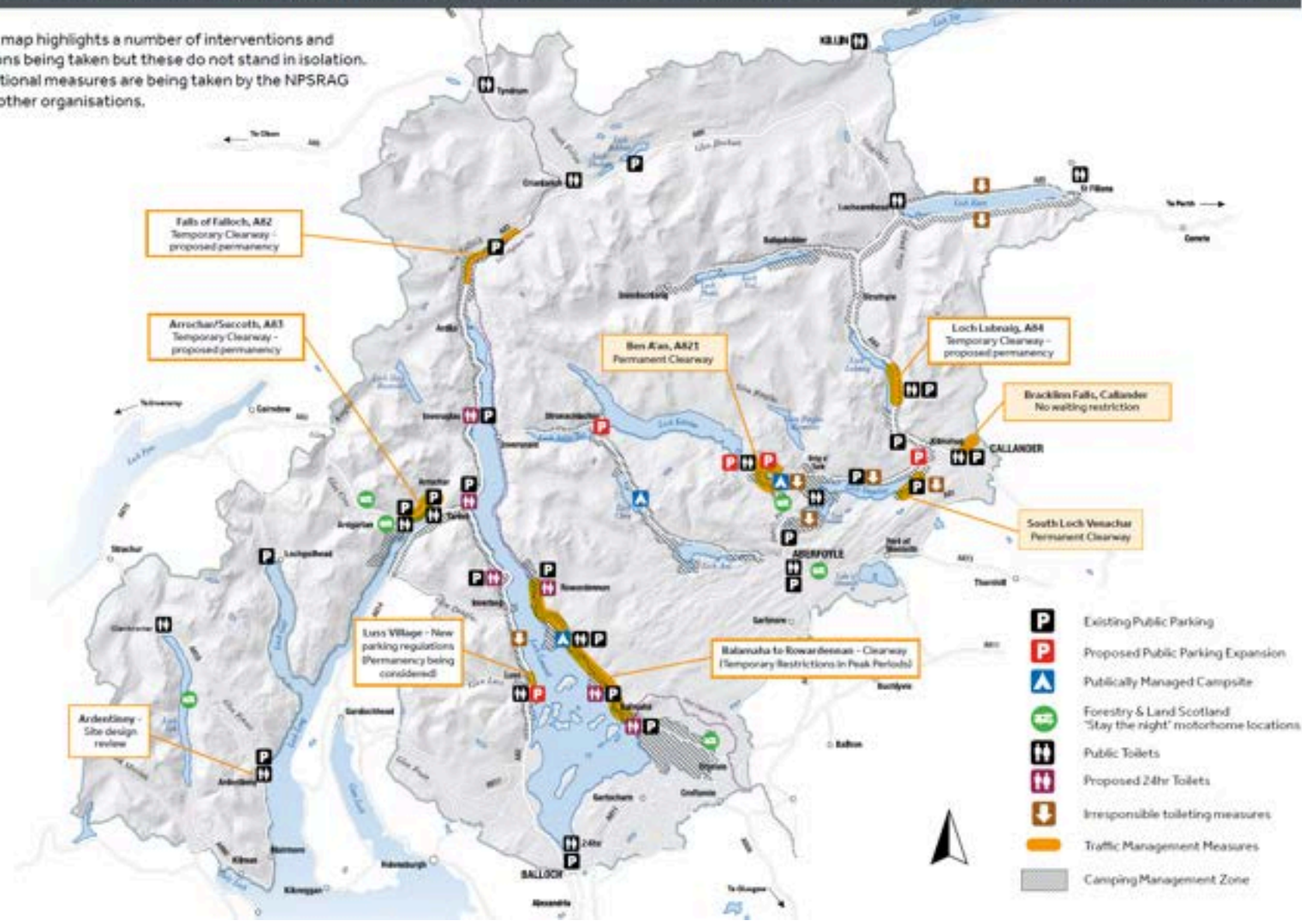
The Plan responds to the Covid global pandemic with its increase in visitor pressures and address local issues and concerns.

The National Park Authority has a duty to balance the needs of visitors with the protection of the environment and quality of life for the people who live and work within the area. Additionally, other public bodies that cover the National Park area have related statutory responsibilities to maintain the safety and integrity of the public and the public infrastructure networks.

Extracts from the National Park Authority's National Park Safe Recovery Action Group Covid Response Plan , which identifies issue of high visitor pressure for which investment in infrastructure seeks to support sustainable long term solutions.

MAP 2: MANAGING KEY VISITOR PRESSURES IN LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK

This map highlights a number of interventions and actions being taken but these do not stand in isolation. Additional measures are being taken by the NPSRAG and other organisations.



This study recognises that Covid has had, and continues to have, a significant effect on the National Park and its communities, local businesses, land managers, visitor facilities and destinations and those impacts are likely to continue for some time.

Creating a sustainable tourism model looks to improve the visitor experience whilst also protecting local amenity and enhancing access and facilities for the wider community. Many sites and locations have come under significant pressure during Covid (levels of activity/ irresponsible use/ anti-social behaviour/ congestion/ littering/ etc). These are not comprehensive and many locally specific issues for the Strathard & Trossachs area that have been highlighted need to be addressed in the planning and future development of the visitor infrastructure at specific sites.

Extracts from the National Park Authority's National Park Safe Recovery Action Group Covid Response Plan , which identifies issue of high visitor pressure for which investment in infrastructure seeks to support sustainable long term solutions.

Alignment with the Strathard Framework

The Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Study seeks to align itself with the vision, strategies, views and priorities highlighted within the Strathard Framework.

Alignment with Strathard Framework

The Strathard Framework provides a long-term vision (up to 2040) and strategy for the Strathard Area of the National Park. With a focus on sustainable land use, nature-based solutions the needs of residents and visitors and the special qualities of place, it is intended to guide land use change in the delivery of infrastructure. The framework is therefore the basis for delivering change in the Strathard area of the National Park, which forms a study area within this study.

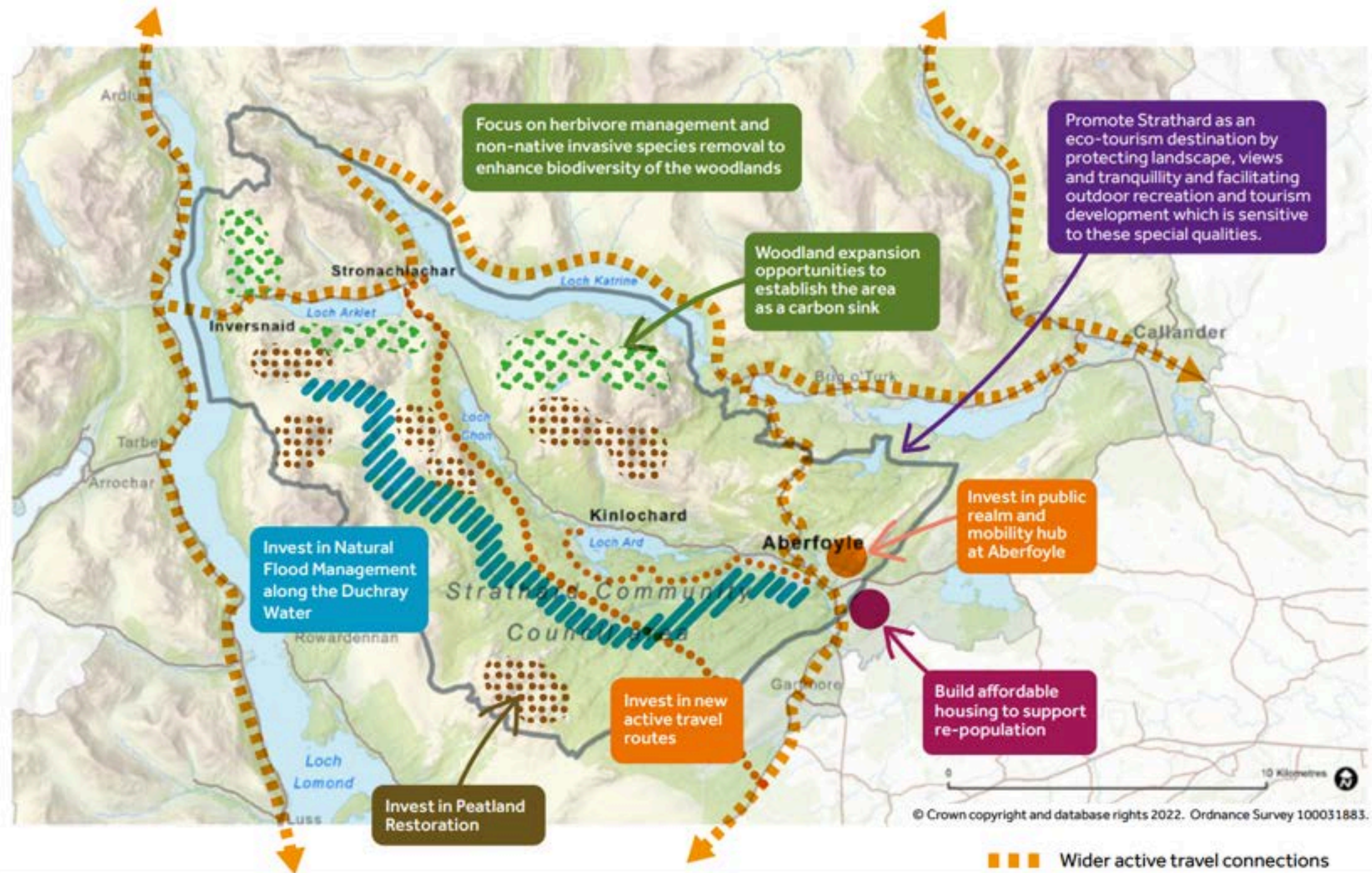
This study aligns with the Strathard Framework and seeks to explore a specific Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure Development strategy which supports the framework, is compatible with the framework and builds on the issues and opportunities identified by the framework.



The study aligns in the following specific areas

- Infrastructure is proposed which connects communities to a high-quality network of signposted paths for walking, wheeling and cycling
 - Proposed routes will follow existing forest tracks where possible.
 - Milton is identified as a strategic location on this network requiring infrastructure improvements to support active travel and sustainable transport
- Innovative transport solutions will be supported.
- The special qualities of tranquil landscapes, distinctive lochs and promotion of dark skies is recognised, and these are approached as assets to tourism
- Aberfoyle is considered as a central hub for the tourism economy and local services – as well as hub for supporting exploration of the National Park by sustainable transport options and active travel
- Kinlochard is recognised as having special tranquil qualities which should be protected
- Stronachlachar and Inversnaid are strategic locations where greater use of ferries as a sustainable mode of transport can be promoted with opportunities for enhanced facilities supporting walking, wheeling, cycling and shuttle bus travel.

MAP 1 – AREA COVERED BY FRAMEWORK AND OVERVIEW



High-Level Policy

The STID reviewed the vision, challenges and opportunities, outcomes and priorities as identified within the Partnership Plan and through engagement with the Strathard & Trossachs Visitor Management Group. The Visitor Management Group highlighted the critical importance of local engagement in the development of future plans

Problems

- Sustainable management of an environment of high value and sensitivity offering quality visitor experiences in an area with increasing visitor pressures
- The development of 'hotspot' locations which attract large number of visitors and place pressures on local communities
- Challenges of recreational water management. Critical issues associated with use/misuse and antisocial behaviour
- Avoiding a 'predict & provide' strategy that simply responds to visitor pressure through greater provision and is ultimately unsustainable.
- Damage to sensitive landscapes and nature
- Need to address Climate Change and Net Zero commitments by reducing car dependency and extending choice, facilitating modal shift and limiting demand
- Limited public transport access (no rail/ limited bus) with need to develop a 'hub' based on sustainable modes
- Awareness of wider opportunity (education/ facilities) and investment requirements takes time to build a sustainable network
- Flooding issues to be addressed through natural flood management solutions; and tackling isolation issues in Stronachlachar and Inversnaid due to flooding

Opportunities

- Capitalise on the capacity of the Queen Elizabeth Forest to accommodate visitors
- Make use of lesser visited locations which offer a visitor experience and facilities to mitigate pressure at hotspots through dispersal
- Extend recreational opportunity to offer a more inclusive and diverse range of experiences across the Park
- Grow tourism activity and enterprise support in partnership to ensure high intensity use areas offer complimentary visitor facilities
- Secure greater access by public transport securing Net Zero benefits strengthening service support at Hubs
- Capitalise on the benefits of nature
- Improve quality / diversity and distinctiveness of the visitor experience
- Use good design and better provision to encourage more responsible behaviours
- Secure barrier free / inclusive access meeting the needs of all users
- Develop Active Travel Networks between 'Hubs' allowing integrated routes
- Use of good design and better provision to support more responsible behaviours
- Benefits for nature, landscape, place
- Capitalise on water-based transport connection and cross Loch inter-connectivity and access i.e. on Loch Katrine and on Loch Lomond at Inversnaid

Issues

- Visitors and communities have a sense of appropriateness relating to scale / character of facility requiring sensitive integration within settlements/sites
- Carrying capacity of sites/ locations (water and land) are not necessarily aligned to visitor demand/ levels of use & misuse and sustainable management
- Water bus arrangements offer a distinctive additional visitor experience but have significant operational and user cost
- Shuttle bus arrangements offer a sustainable alternative to personal transport and would allow traffic to be limited but have significant operational cost
- Park and ride and parking facilities required to support interchange between personal and public transport require significant masterplanning, public engagement, resolution of ownership issues
- Active travel routes and connections to a central hub (e.g. Aberfoyle) offer opportunities to provide car parking capacity and mitigate pressure at hotspot locations but rely on good path infrastructure, signage and promotion
- Active travel routes are not suitable for all visitors and tourism experiences (e.g. short day trips, family trips, visits with elderly or disabled people, experiences requiring equipment)

Challenges

- Visitor demand in the National Park grew by 14% (2014-2017) with consistent growth and additional Covid related uplift – demand is growing faster than capacity
- Securing early wins / additional infrastructure /new model for visitor management is time critical.
- Developing and implementing the strategy findings of the Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal & Modal Shift Report
- Identifying mechanisms to provide more robust control, enforcement & management of the water-based leisure
- Supporting modal shift and working for climate and nature
- Developing a visitor infrastructure as a resilient network of facilities, places, & routes needs education/awareness alongside infrastructure provision
- Securing community support and resolution of ownership issues
- Revenue costs, operational management and maintenance generated by capital investment in infrastructure

Place-Level Design

The STID reviews the vision, challenges and opportunities, outcomes and priorities as identified within the Partnership Plan and identifies the following place & site level issues

Problems

- Demand exceeds local carrying capacity
- Congestion devalues visitor hotspots
- Large area with long travel times between potential hub locations and more remote destinations (e.g. Aberfoyle to Inversnaid)
- Peak day congestion/over-use
- Changing visitor needs
- Inadequate car parking
- Need for motorhome servicing
- Camping facilities/ uncontrolled camping
- Lack of safe road crossings
- Management of Waste Facilities
- Fragmented Active Travel Networks
- Inadequate infrastructure
- Environmental degradation impacting on landscape and nature
- Adverse impact on place quality & community/residential amenity
- Potential conflicts residents/landowners
- Potential conflicts visitor/user groups
- Lack of Signage/Information
- Limits to capacity sustainable management
- Limits to enterprise & Community Wealth

Opportunities

- Infrastructure that supports a nature-centred approach, green recovery and modal shift (supporting climate action)
 - A catalyst for recovery
 - Supports additional place capacity
- Aberfoyle capacity to act as Hub
- Connect to and benefit from the neighbouring hub location in Callander
- Extend visitor experiences/value
- Facilitate inclusive access
- Extend unique/special experiences
- Extending Public Access/Trails
 - Capitalise on success of Gravelfoyle trails, accessible to all (walking, wheeling, cycling, etc.)
 - Connect with established long distance walks
- Promotes Health & Well-being
- Promotes Hubs with Public Transport
- Disperse peak visitor numbers
- Improves connectivity/Active Travel
- Successful water based Recreation/Leisure at Loch Ard, Loch Katrine, Loch Venachar, Lake of Menteith, Loch Achray, Loch Lomond, others
- Developing a B829 & Loch Ard road corridor strategy
- Working with Transport teams (National Park Authority / Transport Scotland) on road-based/active travel measures
- Supports Community Place Plans

Issues

- Local capacity and 'predict & provide' challenges National Park Authority purpose
- Impact of water-based activity on place
- Protecting residential amenity & local communities
- Challenges 'Best Practice' management
- Conflict with Net Zero targets
- Unsustainable without action
- Creates conflict with local communities
- Devalues visitor experiences
- Impacts on nature (Environmental Capital)
- Impacts on delivery of National Park Authority vision

Challenges

- Meeting visitor needs whilst conserving and enhancing the National Park
- Developing Sustainable Land-use Model
- Integration of land and water management
- Securing land availability
- Securing Funding
- Building and maintaining agreements with Landowners & 3rd Parties
- Integrate wider project dependencies
- Delivery Programme

Sustainable Planning

In the development of a programme which needs to address the complex challenges and opportunities of Visitor Management, a number of approaches can be considered. The need to adopt a positive, carefully planned and pro-active response is recognised as essential to deliver infrastructure capable of addressing long term needs, capacity and promotion of sustainable destinations

Addressing Needs / Capacity / Promotion of Destination

Option 1 Do Minimum

- Do minimum
- Engage and seek to minimise conflicts
- Adopt measures to address/resolve/mitigate
- Seek wider National Park dispersal

Option 2 Positive - Re-Active Responses

- Respond to local issues as they arise
- Respond to access /Emergency Services issues
- Discussions with wider partners / communities
- Manage sites
- Create additional capacity
- Develop & trial short-term & pilot solutions

Option 3 ADOPTED Positive - Pro-Active Responses

- Monitor & review pressures
- Assess long-term carrying capacity
- Engage to understand detailed issues/challenges
- Local communities
- Business/enterprise activity
- Benchmark/review comparable visitor management approaches
- Establish Destination Strategy – Area Based
- Managed Access (Sustainable Modes)
- Enhanced facilities
- Align visitor management with area's carrying capacity
- Develop Place & Access Strategy
- Seek support through engagement
- Seek partner funding support
- Develop Business Case – Mission Zero Case
- Promote seasonal trials/pilots
- Integrate with wider Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority plans
- This level of intervention supports tourism businesses

Vision

Promotion of responsible tourism, ensuring local communities meaningfully benefit from visitor activity and adverse impacts of visitors on local communities and the environment are minimised and mitigated

Strategic Tourism

Infrastructure Investment Vision

The National Park Authority and its partners invest in higher quality, facilities that reflect a sustainable balance between local needs and amenity and visitor demand. A hierarchy of destinations is developed to offer more sustainable capacity. Enhanced facilities are provided that promote sustainable travel and offer improved accessibility, whilst protecting and enhancing natural capital, resident's amenity, place quality and the visitor experience.

Strategy

Investment over the period 2022-2032 needs to focus on sustainable management of resources, support modal shift and promote sustainable transport choice by developing a network of well connected key outcomes for 2032 delivering:

- Stronger infrastructure supporting tourism, rural economy, place & amenity for local residents/communities
- A hierarchy of visitor destinations based on capacity/facilities and other pressures
- A Transport Strategy aligned with Visitor Management to deliver objectives and targets (Visitor Management, Mission Zero / Climate Change objectives, others)
- Modal shift with greater uptake of public transport choices (bus / cycle / boat)
- Managed limitation of private vehicle use, for visitors, on Loch Ard road during peak season
- Provision of a Shuttle Bus, from Aberfoyle, a new Primary Hub, connecting to other hubs in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park area identified in other studies (e.g. Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal & Modal Shift Report)
- Capitalise on Gravelfoyle, Dukes Weekender, promoted trails (e.g. The Trossachs Trail) and other way-marked routes to build on the connection of Aberfoyle to the National Cycle Network with enhanced active travel infrastructure and to other hubs identified in similar studies of the area (further exploration through The Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal & Modal Shift Report conducted by the National Park Authority)
- Dispersal of visitors to reduce pressures on sensitive environments and to enhance visitor experience
- Improved facilities and management of visitor destinations and locations
- Better management of land / water assets and control over visitor activities
- Well designed infrastructure to support behaviour change, encourage investment and income generation and thereby reduce the need for enforcement by influencing more positive use.
- Pilot innovative visitor management arrangements (land & water)
- Protection of and enhancements to biodiversity and conservation of landscape character

Strategy

The study will prioritise a strategic approach that seeks to promote responsible tourism and a quality visitor experience, structured around interventions which support managed dispersal of visitors, encourages modal shift from car to sustainable and/or active travel, and ensures the needs of residents, businesses, landowners, and visitors are addressed. The key elements of the strategy are:

- **Supporting Visitor Dispersal & Management**

- ✓ **Hierarchy of Visitor Hubs/Destinations:** offering appropriate site capacity & consistency of facilities and services appropriate for levels of use and activity at each location
- ✓ **Transport Intervention:** creating additional public transport capacity
- ✓ **Reduction of car dependency:** infrastructure and park management to support access to Strathard & The Trossachs via sustainable transport, and to promote onward journeys beyond Aberfoyle into Strathard and the forests by walking, wheeling, cycling, shuttle bus and taxi
- ✓ **Place Improvements:** promoting quality & appeal, encouraging exploration/ use of wider facilities at destinations/ reduce intensity of use/ increase dwell time/ mitigation of damage, habitat destruction, harm to biodiversity/ erosion/ overuse
- ✓ **Signage:** Strengthen Park identity and connectivity, provide suite of Real Time Information/ Area Mapping/ Orientation/ Exploration & Wayfinding seamlessly linked to online information
- ✓ **Dispersal:** identifying additional locations capable of accommodating visitors – wider Park locations/ divert high footfall/ use away from sensitive landscapes/ areas of high habitat value

- **Supporting Inclusion**

- ✓ **Resident Amenity:** Address needs of local communities to reduce conflicts with visitor activities and create opportunities for local enterprise supporting place resilience
- ✓ **Place improvements:** Better access & connections to local centre through physical measures
- ✓ **Transport Intervention:** Developing Pilot/Trials with capacity to scale – Park & Ride/Cycle - Shuttle & Booking Arrangements
- ✓ **Infrastructure:** Accessible parking/ inclusive & safe routes/ cycle hubs/ inclusive changing facilities/ signage; welcoming and supporting needs of all users
- ✓ **Facilities:** Natural play (incidental & natural play)/ seating/ picnic areas for diversity/ multi-generational use & activity

- **Supporting Modal Shift**

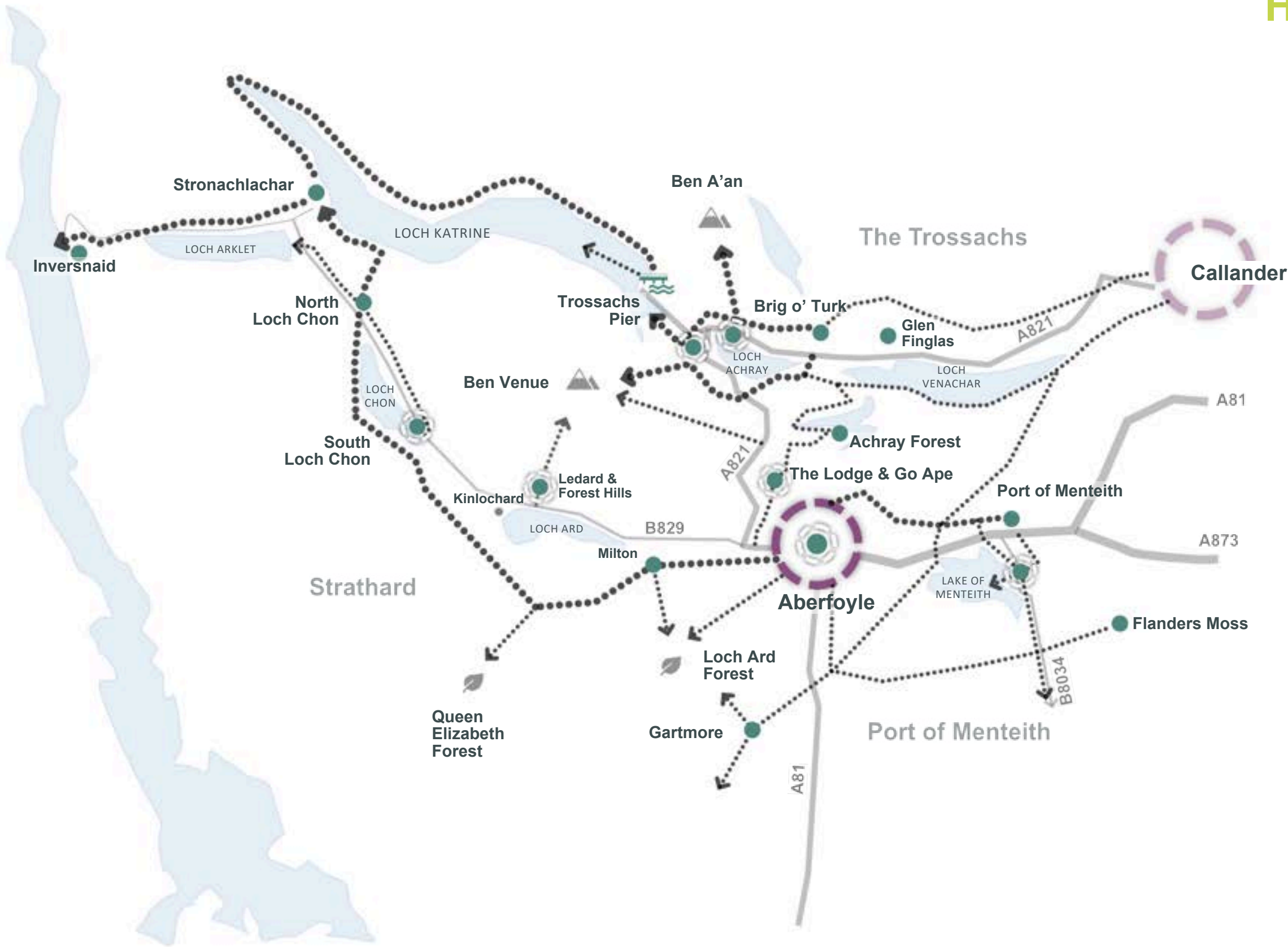
- ✓ **Shuttle Bus facilities:** Fully accessible infrastructure centrally positioned and well connected and integrated into visitor hotspots with turning circles/ layover space/ signage/ shelters/ WiFi & Real Time Info
- ✓ **Cycling:** Comprehensive network of safe & appealing routes supported by clear signage/ secure parking & service hubs / hire & drop off opportunities / & repair points
- ✓ **Car Park Management:** assumes parking charges and book-ahead requirement to manage numbers and to encourage modal shift/ backed up with Variable Message Signage/ network of Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points supporting better travel choice
- ✓ **Mitigate loss of private vehicle travel advantages:** interventions to mitigate loss of comfort and convenience by providing better quality facilities e.g. changing/shower facilities/shelters; supporting sustainable transport - promotion of quality experiences

- **Supporting Sustainable Development**

- ✓ **Low Carbon Development:** adopt simple, low cost, energy efficient approaches to build development, management and maintenance
- ✓ **Reduction of car dependency:** infrastructure and park management to support access to Strathard & The Trossachs via sustainable transport, and to promote access to the forest, hill and loch destination beyond an Aberfoyle hub by walking, wheeling, cycling, shuttle bus and taxi (except for access)
- ✓ **SuDS:** Sustainable Drainage Strategies providing mitigation of impacts of site development through rainwater catchment/ storage/ treatment and reuse
- ✓ **Green Infrastructure/ biodiversity:** enhancing environment & habitat value, promoting maintenance/ management regimes supporting development of species-rich green infrastructure/ green roofs/etc.
- ✓ **Education and Advocacy:** ensure all visitor infrastructure addresses sustainable objectives where viable, include on site advice and information to promote visitor awareness, demonstrate success, encourage behaviour change, identify easy to achieve targets in day to day living







Hierarchy of Place



The strategy is to develop Aberfoyle as a 'primary hub' with capacity for more intensive use (services/ economy/ etc). The Hub will offer public transport and active travel accessibility with connected spokes forming a strengthened and enhanced network of connections to important destinations. *Strategic locations* are identified where investment in infrastructure, described in this study, can support exploration of the National Park without car or can provide improved facilities which would mitigate pressure on nearby 'hotspot' locations.

Nearby Callander is an important hub location with connections to Loch Venachar, The Trossachs, Ben A'an, Loch Katrine and Aberfoyle. Callander is the subject of a separate Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development study. Inversnaid provides a connection to the East and West Loch Lomond Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development studies.

Key

-  Primary Hub
-  Active-Travel Connections
-  Primary Destinations
-  Secondary Destinations

Visitor Infrastructure Investment Priorities

Priority Assessment Outcome 8 Visitor Management Visitor Infrastructure Investment Priorities

The National Park Partnership Plan 2018 – 2023 concluded that the most popular parts of the National Park which experience pressures should be managed to ensure that the quality of environment, visitor experience and community life are protected and enhanced. The Visitor Management proposals focusing on visitor facilities, identified 8 elements of visitor infrastructure which should be prioritised for improvements, and identified the requirement for each across 12 of the most popular locations throughout the National Park.















This strategy recognises the importance of this objective and seeks to build on the 2018 investment priorities by considering a wider range of elements which support

visitor dispersal & management, inclusion, modal shift and sustainable development. Additional elements expand the focus to include resident amenity, place improvements, sustainable transport infrastructure (active travel, public transport, water & land), improved toilet/ changing facilities, signage and information, and electric vehicle charging.

Elements from the National Park Authority Visitor Infrastructure Investment Priority Assessment:

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Paths |  Camping |
|  Visitor facilities |  Toilets |
|  Parking |  Commercial Opportunities |
|  Motorhomes |  Loch Access |

Proposed Additional Elements for Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure :

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Public Transport/ Shuttle Bus |  Showers |
|  Active Travel Infrastructure |  Wastewater Disposal |
|  Visitor Signage & Information |  Natural Play |
|  EV-Charge Stations |  Water Supply |
|  Pier (Water bus Access) |  Picnic |
|  Shelter |  Wi-Fi |
|  Changing Room |  Biodiversity improvements |

Visitor Hubs and Destinations

The strategy establishes the need to develop a hierarchy of destinations with a central Aberfoyle hub. The destinations hierarchy is structured around size, capacity and appeal of the destination.

The Strathard and Trossachs area can be served by a ‘Primary Hub’ for tourism, travel, and local services.


- Aberfoyle can be promoted as a sustainable transport and active travel hub with enhanced visitor reception and orientation
- Direct connections into the forest, hills and local destinations should be developed to support visitor access and greater exploration of the area from the Aberfoyle base
- Callander is a similar hub, outwith this study area and the subject of a separate study.

The most popular destinations in the Strathard & Trossachs area which experience pressures should be managed to ensure that the quality of environment, visitor experience and community life are protected and enhanced. The pressure points are concentrated where existing car parks are the arrival or entrance point to a popular destination and their capacity is insufficient for the visitor numbers, or where the facilities are not provided to accommodate significant visitor numbers.

Many of the destinations in the Strathard & Trossachs area, such as lochs, forests, hills, walks, and cycling routes, are accessible from

multiple entrance points. The entrance points should be developed to provide arrival as part of a sustainable transport system, as well as strengthened to enhance place quality, improved visitor capacity and offer facilities which accommodate the peak visitor numbers, and facilities which enable exploration of the area by sustainable means (e.g. walking and wheeling paths, cycling links, shuttle bus and water bus). The capacity of destination will be enhanced by developing the entrance points with improved facilities.

The following gives a guide to the role and facilities that might be expected for each:

Primary Hub	
Gateway facilities and National Park arrival point providing strategic sustainable access to the Strathard & Trossachs destinations	
	Transport interchange
	National Cycle Route
	Hotels & accommodation
	Food & beverage
	Business infrastructure
	Active travel infrastructure
	Walking, wheeling and cycling connection to Strathard & Trossachs destinations

Destinations		
Primary: With capacity for defining and enhancing place and quality, and improving visitor capacity. Secondary: Sensitivity of place and moderate capacity limiting opportunity		
Primary	Secondary	
		Visitor centre / visitor orientation / cafe / rangers
		Toilets / changing / shower
		Sustainable transport
		Monitored car parking & variable message signage
		Cycle infrastructure
		Signage, orientation and visitor information
		Shelter
		Potential camper waste disposal
		EV charge points
		Accessible parking
		Drinking water
		Wi-fi
		Litter bins & recycling
		Picnic and natural play

Area Strategies

A Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Strategy has been developed which seeks to manage visitor access & promote visitor dispersal to:

- Enhance tourism facilities & enable sustainable tourism
- Create more ways to disperse existing hotspots
- Promote projects which are ‘future proofed’ and compatible with the National Parks wider objectives

This study sets out the strategy for the Strathard and Trossachs area by considering four locations:

Aberfoyle

The Aberfoyle village has been considered as a single location. Aberfoyle should be developed as a central ‘Hub’ for tourism, travel, and local services.

- The village should be promoted as a sustainable transport and active travel hub with enhanced visitor reception and orientation
- Direct connections into the forest should be developed to support visitor access and greater use of the Forest from an Aberfoyle base

Strathard to Gartmore

The Strathard area accessible through the extensive forest paths (from both Aberfoyle and Gartmore), by boat at Stronachlachar and Inversnaid and by car along the limited capacity B829 road is considered as a location.

Entrances to the Forest and the lochs should be developed to protect the wilderness and mitigate pressures on existing hotspots

- Active travel connections should be strengthened to promote car free exploration of Strathard and the Forest areas
- The wilderness should be protected by focussing footfall and recreational activity within the Loch Ard Forest
- Walking, wheeling and cycling connections from Forest Park locations should be developed e.g. strengthened connections to Gartmore, Cobleland and Trossachs Holiday Parks

The Trossachs

The Trossachs area including the destinations around Achray Forest, Loch Achray, Trossachs Pier, the Great Trossachs Forest and the west of Loch Venachar is considered as a location. Connections to Loch Venachar, The Trossachs, Ben A’an, Loch Katrine and Aberfoyle are explored, with the role of Callander as an important hub, in a separate Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development study.

The path network and destinations in The Trossachs area should be better connected to mitigate congestion issues, and promote visitor dispersal from

hotspots

- Off-road connections should be developed to support improved parking dispersal and reduced congestion
- Area connections & place enhancements should be developed to attract visitor footfall to Brig o’ Turk
- An Achray hub should be developed with connection to Loch Achray, Ben A’an, the Forest Drive, Achray Forest, the Loch Achray Hotel, the Great Trossachs Path and Ben Venue
- Accessibility to the area facilities at Glen Finglas and Trossachs Pier should be improved through a strengthened network of paths to support greater visitor dispersal. RTIF R3 funded improvements at Loch Katrine have improved visitor facilities.

Port of Menteith

The Port of Menteith area, centred on the settlement and considering the Menteith hills, nearby Flanders Moss and the surrounding road and path network is considered as another location.

Port of Menteith could be developed as a hub for nature walks and cycling, if the village’s lake-side location could be coupled with improved paths and links to the Aberfoyle Hub and Flanders Moss.

- The village could be promoted as a gateway with strong active travel connections to the park to capitalise on the location, celebrate arrival at the National Park and to promote active travel in the Park
- New lake-side campsites with car parking to address congestion should be developed to mitigate the antisocial behaviour and on-road parking issues associated with informal camping at the lake-side Kate’s Brae locations
- Local circuits should be developed and the Port of Menteith area should be promoted as a visitor destination which supports dispersal and economic benefits for the area

The following three key elements are considered and described for each of the four locations:

Location Strategy – review of Pressure Points informed by assessment of pressure points (National Park Authority collected data/monitoring & management); Principles for Development identifying future strategic role of visitor destination & setting out future requirements; Key Elements setting out key infrastructure requirements of location to fulfil future role

Concept - site schematic indicating key elements and arrangement.

Prioritisation – assessment of impact reviewing benefits (impact to visitors /community/enterprise); sustainability/climate change attributes & benefits; complexity – reviewing issues/ barriers to delivery. These are considered and inform prioritisation which are then considered alongside order of cost and timescales for delivery.

Aberfoyle

Strategy



Description

Principles for development

Key elements/ projects

Develop as a primary hub for exploration of the area, point of visitor arrival and entrance to Strathard & The Trossachs

The paths, roads & public transport networks place Aberfoyle as the point of visitor arrival to the area from south (Glasgow) and East (Stirling) and it is the main access point to the Strathard Area. Being the largest of the area's settlements, it is a popular destination for services/retail/food and beverage. Aberfoyle is home to important tourism destinations such as the David Marshall Lodge, Go Ape, Gravelfoyle and the Scottish Wool Centre.

The place assessment identified that Milton & Loch Ard provide the main points of access to the forest and loch in the Strathard area, and has identified the opportunity for Aberfoyle to build its role & reputation as a visitor hub/base of outdoor activity and become the primary place to leave the car for onward travel to the Forest by alternative means of transport (walking, wheeling, cycling, shuttle bus, etc.). To achieve this there is a need to better connect and promote the adjacency of, and direct access to, the forest by paths and trails from the village core as a means of relieving pressures on the roads and hamlets particularly within Strathard. Travel further afield, deeper into both the Strathard and Trossachs areas will, due to distance, rely on sustainable transport options to encourage modal shift with a secure & convenient place to leave the car, safe onward routes, easy access to e-bike hire/shuttle bus from a central and well connected village hub location (riverside car park).

Village Green & Hub:

Promote and broaden appeal of Aberfoyle as outdoor base

- Public realm works to the riverside car park to reshape as an attractive and appealing arrival location with a riverside Village Green and strengthened connections to both the Main Street and the local walking, wheeling and cycling paths
- Existing car park developed as an Active Travel Hub with cycle parking, orientation points and links to tourist information, and developed with an improved bus terminus facility to enhance as a base for shuttle bus services
- Parking to the rear of the Wool Centre promoted, with potential to expand as required to provide additional capacity. Potential extension associated with sustainable transport strategies (i.e. new park & ride type infrastructure).
- Opportunities for new/overflow car park developed in parallel with new habitat & wildlife areas, riverside walk and integration of the existing bike skills area
- Expansion of car park would be in response to a demonstrated need, and result of Aberfoyle being accessed by car, and functioning as a hub. Car park expansion would therefore be tied to an operational sustainable transport system, e.g. shuttle bus and reduced parking in other parts of the Strathard and Trossachs area. It would need to be seasonal and part of an excellent proposal for the whole site, with a net increase in biodiversity, improved visitor experience, integration with NCN7, with safe access to the riverside and bike park.

Forest Entrances:

Promote greater use of the Forest Park & manage hotspots

- Explore a forest road connection from the Lodge to the 3 Loch Forest Drive, with the location enhanced in terms of forest access
- Investigate the need and role of seasonal 'all day parking' locations located out of the village

Paths:

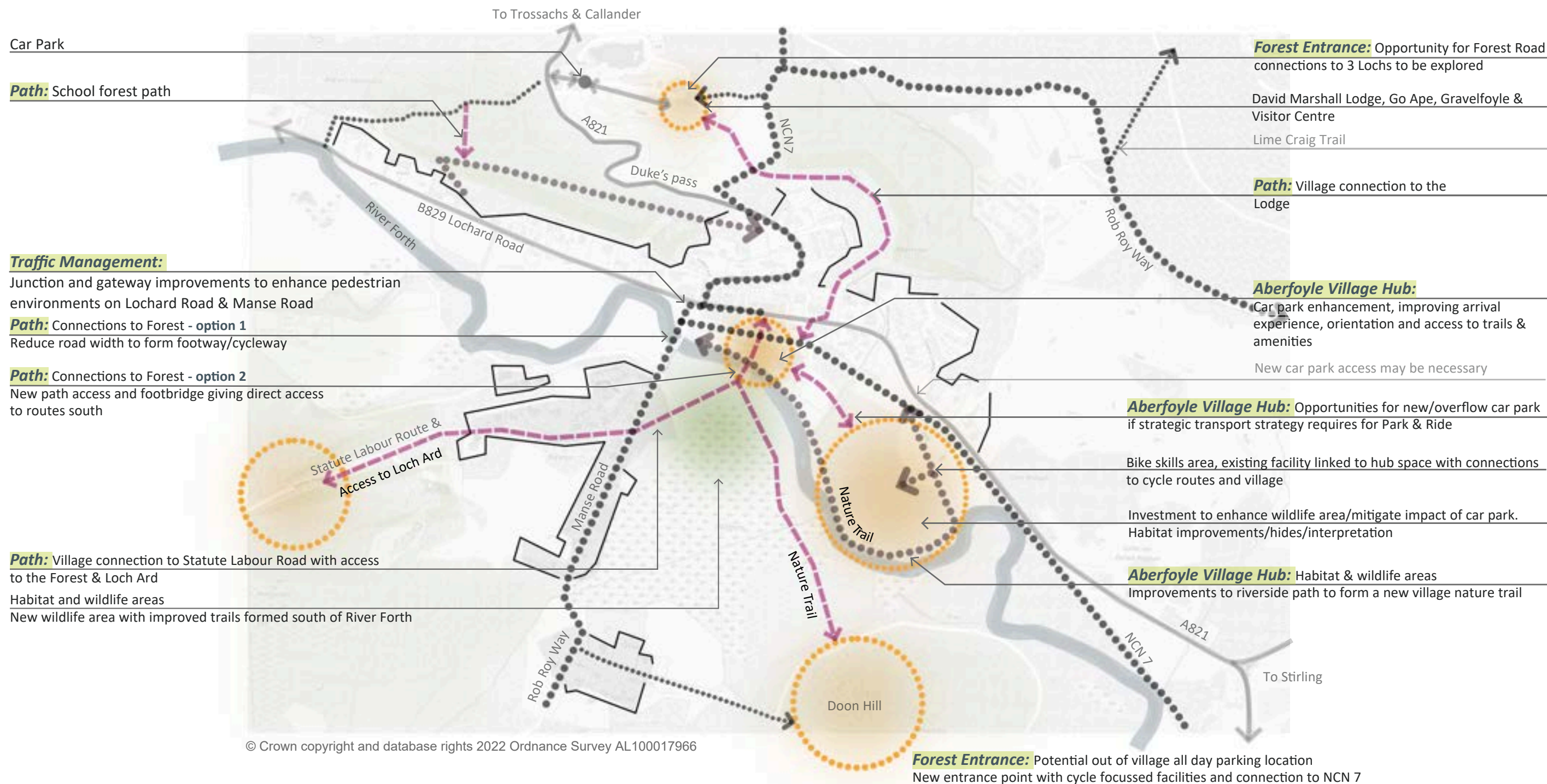
Develop the Active Travel Network

- Develop Aberfoyle paths
 - Visitor centre to village
 - Nature trail, village side north of Forth
 - Nature trail, south of Forth, to Doon
 - Village connection to Manse Road
 - Connection to Statute Labour Road
- Explore potential new footbridge crossing of Forth
 - Strengthen active travel connections
- Explore potential new school path (safer routes to schools, connections north, path lifted out of flood plain)

Traffic Management:

Protect the 'wilderness' with controlled access and Manage hotspots

- Junction arrangement alterations to enhance the pedestrian environments on Lochard Road and Manse Road
- Explore Seasonal restrictions to some traffic on Lochard Road



Aberfoyle Projects

1. Aberfoyle Village Hub

Promote and broaden appeal of Aberfoyle as outdoor base and hub for exploring the area

- Public realm works to car park to reshape the village and National Park arrival point as an attractive and appealing arrival location with a riverside Village Green and strengthened connections to both the Main Street and the local walking, wheeling and cycling paths
- Active Travel Hub with cycle parking, walking, wheeling and cycling orientation points and links to tourist information
- Developed bus terminus facility to enhance as base for shuttle bus service
- Connection to bike skills area
- Connection to enhanced habitat & wildlife areas
- Connection to riverside car park and extension to parking capacity associated with sustainable transport strategies (i.e. new park & ride type infrastructure)

Village Green

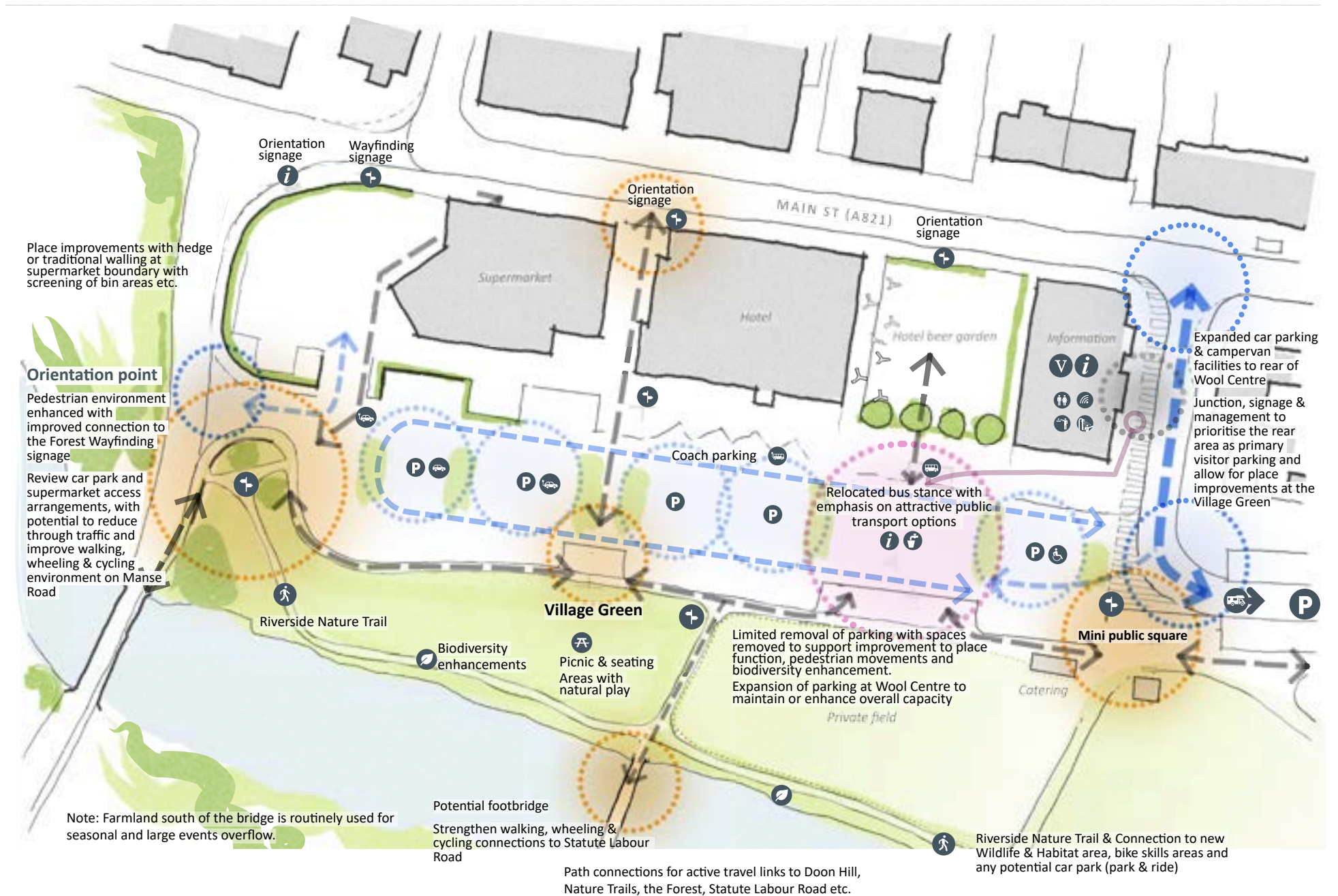
Aberfoyle is well served with parking capacity and can be promoted as an access point and starting location for exploration of the Queen Elizabeth Forest, nearby lochs, active travel routes and the surrounding Strathard, Trossachs or Port of Menteith areas.

Investment in establishing Aberfoyle as a primary hub is a priority for Sustainable Transport and is a core element of the strategy of facilitating car free exploration of the Strathard & Trossachs area from a central easily accessed base with a good capacity for car parking, attractive facilities and a strong sense of arrival at the National Park. This will contribute to mitigating pressures on 'hotspot' locations.

The main riverside car park areas in Aberfoyle should be developed to promote and broaden the appeal of Aberfoyle as an outdoor base. The existing smaller riverside element of the car park does not contribute significantly to a sense of arrival in the National Park. With limited reduction to parking in this area, investment in the public realm and setting, and enhancement of the pedestrian environment, the space can be reshaped as a village green and hub. An emphasise on placemaking and public realm works seeks to improve the place quality, the pedestrian and cycling environment and the landscape fit.

The hub should be developed to enhance facilities supporting sustainable transport, such as cycle parking, cycle charging, cycle repair, left luggage, visitor info, bus shelters, a shuttle bus terminus facility and improved information signage and orientation points.

Facilities could include: visitor hub with information and bus shelter; lockers for left luggage/water sports equipment; information, orientation and itineraries; bus pickup/drop-off; toilets/changing/showers; cycle parking; picnic or camping areas; campervan waste disposal; recycling and litter disposal.



Village Green & Hub Concept

Car Park Capacity, Park & Ride opportunity

Enhancements to the car park are required to provide the increased capacity that would facilitate greater use of Aberfoyle as a base and support lesser use of other hotspot parking locations in Strathard & The Trossachs. Aberfoyle is a hub location capable of supporting Park & Ride type infrastructure with additional facilities and further increased parking capacity.

The car park to the rear of the Wool Centre is neighboured by a site which offers opportunity for parking expansion and development of facilities. This expanded car park would be seasonal, with excellent quality and sensitivity to biodiversity, complementing a sustainable transport system, improving visitor experience, integration with NCN7, and providing a safe access to the riverside and bike park.

Expansion of parking in this area should be developed to provide improved facilities for visitors including coach parking, electric vehicle charging, and campervan overnight stops (plus associated facilities).

The site is currently characterised by the expansive and natural riverside environment. Development in this location therefore should seek to strengthen these qualities with improved access, biodiversity, and habitat.

Bike skills area

The appeal and value of the hub can further be developed by building on connections to the wide active travel network through integration of the existing bike skills area/pump track.

Habitat & wildlife areas

Investment to enhance wildlife areas surrounding the car park will mitigate the impact of the car park element of the hub. These would include habitat improvements/hides/interpretation and improved pathways and connection. Wildlife areas can be developed on each side of the river.



2. Forest Entrances

Promote Greater Use of the Forest Park & Manage Hotspots

Forest Road connection from the Lodge to the 3 Loch Forest Drive

Existing popular car park locations in the Aberfoyle area could be developed to be positioned as *entrance points* within a network of interconnected sites offering access to the Forest. The *entrance points* will increase accessibility of the National Park to all; allowing visitors to explore the park by foot having arrived by an Aberfoyle shuttle bus, by bike or having parked and found orientation.

The Lodge car park could be developed to support arrival by active travel or shuttle bus, with improved facilities and better active travel connections to Aberfoyle. The opportunity to develop a forest road connection from the Lodge into the Three Loch Forest Drive network could be explored to Promote Greater use of the Forest Park.

Investigate seasonal out of village ‘all day’ parking - with cycle focussed facilities

More remote sites with adjacency to the National Cycle Network could be explored to provide ‘all day’ parking, to provide additional capacity if required at peak season. The need for additional parking should be investigated where its role would be seasonal and ideally benefiting from connectivity to the national cycle network and strengthened routes to the Active Travel enhancements described in this study.

This type of project would provide all day parking and facilities and would be promoted for use by cyclists, with the intention of providing car parking capacity and seeking to allow short term parking to be freed in the village centre car park location, coupled with seasonal restrictions to Lochard Road (see Traffic Management below).

3. Paths

Develop the Active Travel Network

To strengthen Aberfoyle’s appeal as a base for exploration of the Strathard and Trossachs areas, the footpath, and cycle path connections to the village core should be strengthened.

Cycle routes in the Aberfoyle area, known as Gravelfoyle are successfully encouraging exploration of the area by cycling from the Aberfoyle base.

Investment in the pedestrian environment, orientation points and signage should be developed to encourage exploration of the National Park from Aberfoyle (mitigating pressure on other hotspots). Developing local walking, wheeling and cycling routes by investing in path connections will develop Aberfoyle’s offer and appeal as a hub and destination.

Paths to develop are:

- **Village to the Lodge, or vice versa**
 - Active travel connection to the Lodge and north to The Trossachs
- **Village connection to Manse Road**
 - Connection to Statute Labour Road
 - Potential footbridge crossing of Forth
- **Connection to the forest** (Strathard, Loch Ard Forest, Queen Elizabeth Forest)
 - Manse Road and Statute Labour Road connection
 - Either via reduced road width and improved pedestrian environment on the existing bridge
 - Or with new path and footbridge with access to routes south
- **School forest path**
 - Safer routes to school
 - Connections north with path lifted out of flood plain



Bridge over the River Forth, Richard Sutcliffe (Creative Commons BY-SA 2.0)



© Stephen Sweeney / Road sign and the River Forth (Creative Commons BY-SA 2.0)

4. Traffic Management

Protect the 'Wilderness' & Manage Access and Manage Hotspots

Lochard Road Junction Works

In peak periods access to the Strathard area by road and private vehicles can contribute to pressures on the road network. The road and car park network in the Strathard area can have visitor numbers which exceed capacity.

Alterations to the Lochard Road - Manse Road junction arrangements can promote Aberfoyle as the base and change the character of the Lochard Road. A switch in priority and works to the carriageway widths can prioritise the pedestrian environment on Lochard Road and prioritise vehicle movements which emphasise Aberfoyle as the arrival point to Strathard and the base for further exploration by active travel.

Car park entrances

Similarly, the car park entrances are designed to accommodate two way traffic and large paths for vehicle turning. Alterations to these junction could be made to enhance the pedestrian environment whilst accommodating vehicle movement. An enhanced pedestrian environment, with expanded street space at the Main Street entrance would support improvements to the car park setting, sense of arrival and quality of the streetscape. An enhanced pedestrian environment at the Manse Road junction would support a strengthened connection to the Loch Ard forest and Gravelfoyle paths.

Seasonal Restrictions

Additionally, Lochard Road may require seasonal restrictions to access (with permitted access managed). The Sustainable Transport Strategy will explore this option. Works at Aberfoyle's junction with Lochard Road can support the management of this through priority changes and permanent variable signage (i.e. communicating restrictions, advising of car park capacities etc.)

Season restrictions would create a pedestrian and cycle friendly, low flow road connecting to Strathard.

Aberfoyle Prioritisation

Impact
(visitor experience/ responsible tourism)

- High**
- Aberfoyle provides the base that facilitates visitor dispersal from Strathard & Trossachs hotspots and supports shift towards sustainable transport
 - Enhancements to the car park and arrival facilities are essential in ensuring the appropriate facilities and capacity to support Aberfoyle’s ‘hub’ role is provided
 - The Village Green project ensures that the hub arrival is an attractive visitor experience with fitting place qualities and sense of place for the village and the National Park. The arrival point should contribute to the visitor experience and resident amenity and therefore includes car park and bus transfer infrastructure, placemaking, orientation, activity areas, habitat enhancement, orientation.
 - Path infrastructure can provide a direct connection to the National Park (loch-side, walks, forest, wilderness) which from the village centre currently experiences barriers, which encourage car use
 - Hub provides improved facilities at parking for visitors and residents
 - Improved visitor information & quality of experience is provided

Sustainability/ Mission Zero

- High**
Hub facilities enhanced
- Public transport infrastructure (bus shelters and waiting points, information signage, nearby toilets, connecting paths) which supports the use of public transport and supports the development of better/more frequent public transport connections
 - Access to active travel opportunities in Strathard & The Trossachs
 - Sustainability initiatives and projects throughout S&T, both through visitor dispersal and enhancement of Aberfoyle as a destination and as hub as centre of wider sustainable system
 - Core path and signage improvements supporting active travel routes and access for all
 - Integrated variable messaging signage supports the overall sustainable visitor transport system

Delivery Complexity
(issues/ barriers)

- Moderate**
Barriers include
- Cost of public realm improvements
 - Cost of river crossing improvements
 - Ownership challenges
 - Changes to parking can be contentious
 - Flood plain challenging for development
 - Local Development Plan does not include out of village car parks

Timescale

Project suitable for immediate start: development of hub is central to wider strategy

Priority project: Hub

Impact	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	5
Sustainability	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	4
Complexity	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	3
Timescale	Short term	

Priority Level

Priority Score	12
Village Hub: High priority (high impact, high sustainability, moderate complexity) Paths: High priority (moderate impact, high sustainability, moderate complexity) Traffic management : Low priority (high impact, moderate sustainability, high complexity) Forest entrance : Low priority (low impact, low sustainability, high complexity)	

Delivery Agents

- National Park Authority
- Landowners
- Bus operators
- Stirling Council
- Community Development Trust
- Forestry and Land Scotland

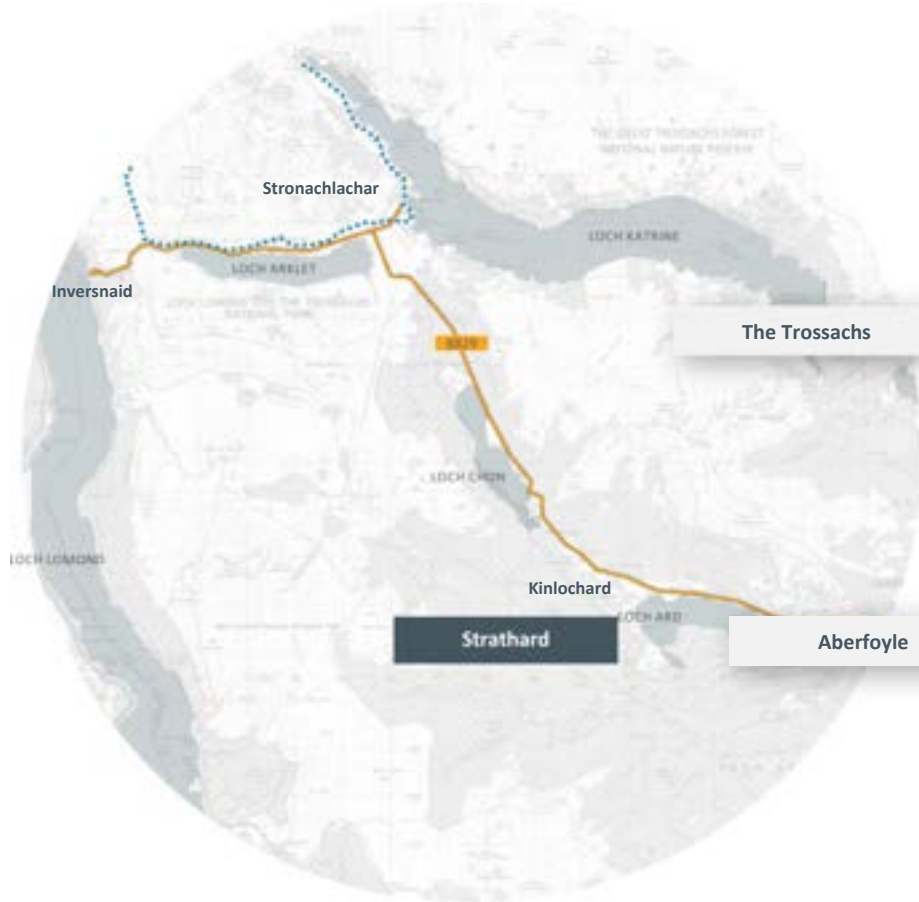
Dependencies

- National Park Authority implementation of Sustainable Visitor Travel System
- Local community engagement & support
- Significant FLS buy-in required

Note	Prioritisation	Impact:	1 low - 5 high
	Scoring is based on	Sustainability:	1 low – 5 high
		Complexity:	5 low – 1 high



Strategy



Description

Develop infrastructure in strategic locations which supports managed dispersal of visitors, encourages modal shift from car to sustainable and/or active travel, and ensures the needs of residents, businesses, landowners, and visitors are addressed.

Build on the recommendations of the Strathard Framework and Kinlochard Community Life Plans to develop access to Strathard, the lochs and the Forest which protects the 'wilderness', supports communities, concentrates footfall and activity within Loch Ard Forest, improves connections to the Aberfoyle hub and develops infrastructure to support visitor dispersal.

Principles for development

Why is this important?

Our place assessment identified the need to support local communities, protect the 'Tranquillity & Dark Skies' & 'Wild Shores' of the Strathard region and seek to disperse visitors from hotspot locations. Management of access and mitigation of high visitor pressures will alleviate associated littering and antisocial behaviour issues, particularly focussed around Loch Ard. The assessment recognised the importance of the expansive forest park and the potential it offers in its capacity to absorb public access and recreation; the need for modal shift to mitigate visitor access to the region currently highly reliant on private car travel; and the need to support sustainable transport & modal shift and better management of connections between destinations and the Aberfoyle hub.

Key elements

Protect the 'Wilderness' & Manage Access

- Reduce/mitigate impact of cars
- Encourage exploration by foot/cycle
- Encourage routes in less sensitive areas and protect the National Nature Reserve

Promote Greater Use of the Forest Park

- Promote and broaden appeal
- Improve accessibility
- Diversify offer

Manage Hotspots

- Mitigate pressures at Kinlochard and Lochard Road through dispersal to other locations
- Manage pressures at limited access points to water
- Manage road corridors

Support Communities/Local Centres

- Promote Aberfoyle as local centre and hub
- Explore community benefits

Develop the Active Travel Network

- Promote walking, wheeling and cycling route from Stronachlachar to Aberfoyle
- Promote bike hire and enhance facilities

Paths: Develop the connection to the Great Trossachs path to connect Glen Arklet and the Inversnaid Nature Reserve

Path: New off-road walking, wheeling and cycling connection to Royal cottage & Loch Katrine

Wayfinding and orientation points enhancing Aberfoyle-Loch Ard forest-Stronachlachar connection

Paths: Newly defined off-road connection: Stronachlachar-Aberfoyle with connection to Loch Chon car parking and camping sites which create new forest entrances, access to water and a new circular route around Loch Chon

Forest Entrance: North of Loch Ard Forest & Loch Chon
Explore options which develop access to the north of Loch Ard Forest and Dark Skies areas with strengthened connections to Stronachlachar, Loch Katrine and Loch Chon

Wilderness

Forest Entrance: Loch Chon
Could be promoted as an alternative to Loch Ard, with similar accessible water suitable for non-motorised water-sport activities, natural beauty, similar accessibility and fewer residential neighbours. Through collaboration and support of Forestry and Land Scotland, enhance the existing campsite and car park locations, facilities, and connection to paths

Forest Entrance: Ledard Farm / Forest Hills Hotel
Exploring options around Ben Venue access via Ledard Farm to address current visitor pressures, including parking and toilet provision. Explore opportunities to site toilets at the B829 Ledard Burn layby

Kinlochard
Mitigate the significant pressures on the Kinlochard community & preserve the special qualities of the settlement

Traffic Management: B829 Seasonal Interventions
Explore peak period road closures, Park & Ride access (shuttle bus) &/or car park booking systems. Reference: Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal & Modal Shift Report

Forest Entrance: Loch Ard
Forestry & Land Scotland's (FLS) Loch Ard Forest Car Park in Milton is the primary car park providing access to Loch Ard Forest. Through collaboration and support of Forestry and Land Scotland, infrastructure and facilities could be enhanced to support the site operating as the primary access to Loch Ard e.g. strengthened path access to water, toilets with changing facilities etc.

Path: Develop enhanced pedestrian environment from the Aberfoyle to Milton offering footpath to Loch Ard forest

Strathard Projects

Concept

1. Paths:

Develop the Active Travel network

The Strathard area offers visitor experiences in forest locations, at multiple lochs including Loch Ard, Chon, Katrine & Lomond, areas of wilderness, access to hills including Ben Lomond and Ben Venue and facilities at hotels and settlements such as Forest Hills, Inversnaid and Stronachlachar. Access to Strathard is primarily made by private car or coach with all vehicular traffic entering on the B829 road. The road is narrow and at peak times, where the capacity of car parks at popular destinations is exceeded, parking on the roadside causes traffic jams, prevents access and creates a risk of accident.

The forest tracks offer alternative access to Strathard for walkers and cyclists with a strong connection to the Aberfoyle hub and connection too, to Gartmore, The Trossachs and East Loch Lomond. Ferry and cruise services provide access from East & West Loch Lomond and Trossachs Pier.

Developing the path network, improving existing paths, strengthening cycle trails and developing paths to complete links in the network would give visitors the option to take day trips to Strathard via the forests and lochs without generating road traffic.

Community Life Plans have documented support for this strategy, identifying, these opportunities as the project *Cycle Trail from Aberfoyle, and Public Footpaths*.

Develop strengthened connections to Aberfoyle hub with routes, connected gaps, and enhanced wayfinding, orientation and interpretation:

- **Aberfoyle - Stronachlachar:** New path and path improvements to strengthen routes and connect the gaps
 - Off road connection from Stronachlachar to Loch Arklet (1km). Network then connected to existing tracks running parallel to the B829.
 - Queens Elizabeth Forest Park: Statute Labour Road, Aqueduct trail - strengthen, promote and enhance interpretation

- **Royal Cottage:** New path
 - Connect the Statute Labour road path: Path from Loch Katrine shore at Royal Cottage, to the Statute Labour Road at the north of Loch (1.5km)
- **Milton pedestrian paths:**
 - Enhanced pedestrian environment from the Aberfoyle - Milton footpath to Loch Ard forest
- **Arklet trail & RSPB:**
 - Develop the connection to the Great Trossachs path to connect Glen Arklet and the Inversnaid Nature Reserve

- **Explore opportunities to make connection to the water at Loch Ard from the Ledard and Forest Hills area**
 - Mitigate pressures at busier times of the tourist season where visitors and tourists frequently park on the road through Kinlochard. This project would develop connections to the potential opportunities for new parking (provided in line with Kinlochard Community Life Plan exclusion zones)
 - Coordination and consultation with stakeholders and landowners would be required to inform the project and ensure support



2. Forest Entrances:

Promote Greater use of the Forest Park & Manage Hotspots

With access to Strathard primarily made by private car or coach with all vehicular traffic entering on the B829 road, the capacity of car parks at popular destinations is at peak visitor times, exceeded. This results in parking on the roadside causing traffic jams, prevents access and creates a risk of accident.

Forest Entrance projects are required to mitigate pressures at existing hotspots such as Kinlochard where parking pressures contribute to road side parking, congestion and hazardous conditions on the roads. Providing attractive parking at alternative locations, offering opportunities to explore the forest, access walks and allowing access to the lochs will encourage visitor dispersal, lessening pressure on other locations. For locations to be attractive and draw visitors from hotspots, Forest Entrances should offer excellent facilities. These could include toilets, enhanced accessibility and inclusiveness, facilities supporting cycling, overnight stay options, orientation & wayfinding, left luggage and watersports equipment storage, shelter, natural play, cycle charging and cycle repair. Additionally these locations should strengthen the sense of place associated with the National Park and be an enhancement to Strathard.

The Forest Entrance model therefore offers enhanced facilities, or enhanced accessibility that distinguishes the site from a parking facility and from existing 'parking-only hotspots'. The locations offer a multi-modal, innovative transport and parking solution with a focus on shifting reliance on cars – e.g. through supporting shuttle bus and electric charging, and facilitating exploration of Strathard by cycle etc. As Park-wide sustainable transport strategies (e.g. a Strathard shuttle bus) are implemented, the role of the Forest Entrance is anticipated to phase out parking whilst maintaining or enhancing the orientation, active travel and visitor experience facilities.

Community Life Plans and Community Action Plans prioritise improvements to *better manage traffic*, *explore better public transport provision* and to *improve parking*. These priorities align with the *Forest Entrances* strategy which seeks to mitigate road and parking pressures at hotspots through dispersal of visitors by providing alternative locations to arrive at the forest and explore the Strathard area.

Locations to develop are:

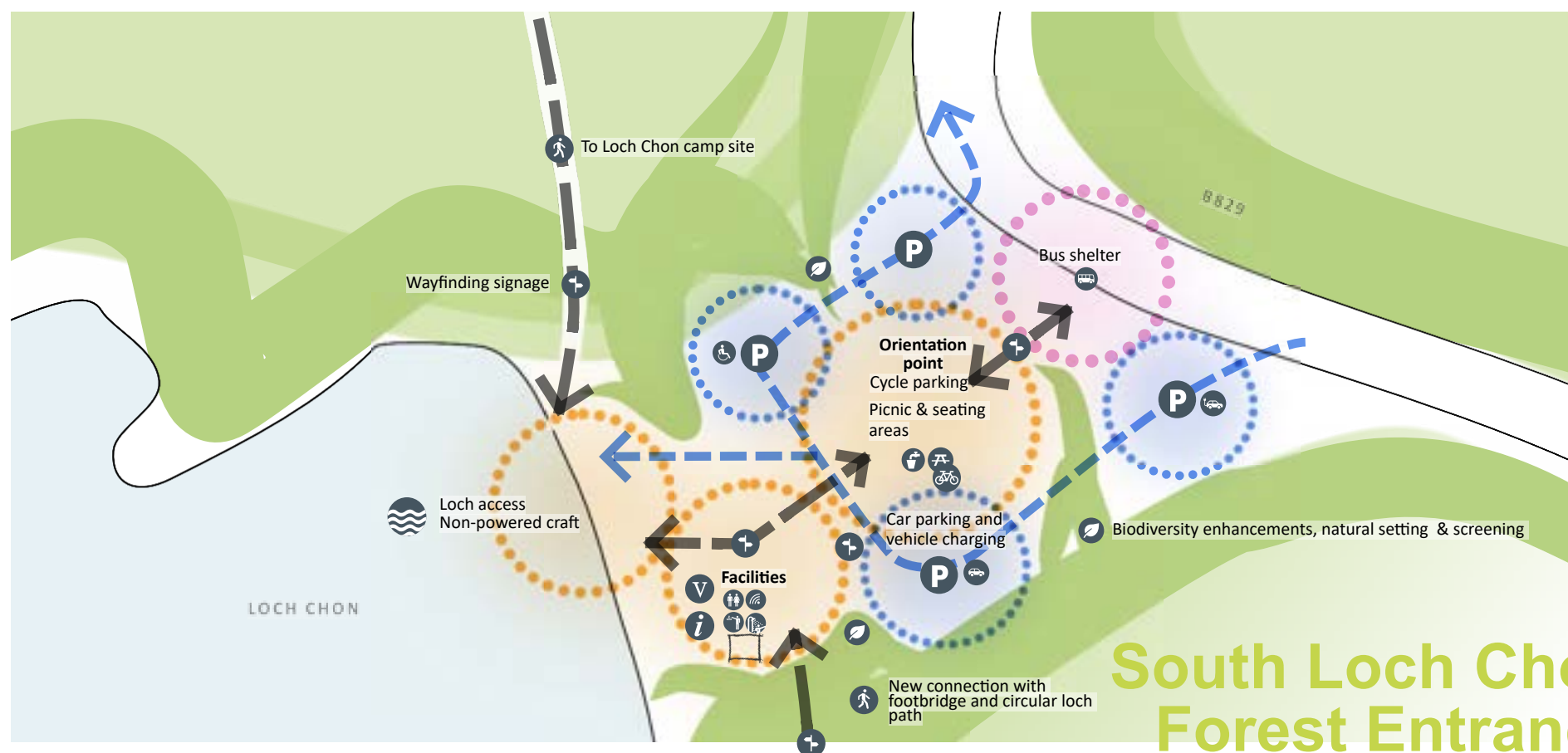
- **Loch Ard Forest Car Park in Milton**
Primary car park providing access to the forest and Loch Ard. Facilities should be developed here to promote this car park as the primary Loch Ard access, e.g. strengthened path access to water, toilets with changing facilities etc.
- **B829 / Ledard Burn Layby**
The layby provides parking with access to Loch Ard. The opportunity

to sit a public toilet at the layby should be explored. This supports the strategy of providing facilities to encourage responsible toileting.

- **Ledard Farm/Forest Hills Hotel**
The general location is an access point to Ben Venue. Enhancement of facilities in this location can mitigate pressures in Ben Venue car parks in the Loch Achray area, through dispersal of visitors. Public toilets in this area would support the strategy of providing facilities to encourage responsible toileting.
- **Loch Chon**
Loch Chon is an alternative destination to Loch Ard, with similar accessible water suitable for non-motorised watersports activities (swimming, SUP, kayak etc), similar natural beauty, similar accessibility and without as many residential neighbours. Existing sites at Loch Chon are a small car park at South Loch Chon and the Loch Chon campsite. The car park site can be improved with active travel infrastructure and enhanced facilities, benefiting from potential synergies with the campsite location. Loch Chon can mitigate pressures in Kinlochard, through dispersal of visitors. Development would need to be a part of an operational sustainable transport system, supported by the Aberfoyle hub.

For Loch Chon to be an attractive alternative to Kinlochard for watersports and loch side access, facilities to develop, across the two sites, could include:

- Water access: e.g. space at waters edge, seating, SUP launch, shower, change, signage/info/safety
- Accessibility: infrastructure to support arrival by car, shuttle bus and cycle e.g. path connections, shuttle bus shelter, parking space, cycle lock points, cycle maintenance points
- Toilets
- Placemaking: seating, picnicking facilities, setting
- Nature: setting, biodiversity, habitat, beauty
- **North Loch Chon at Faery Knoll**
Exploring options which develop access to the north of Loch Ard Forest and Dark Skies areas with strengthened connections to Stronachlachar, Loch Katrine and Loch Chon.
 - A site north of Loch Chon, e.g. in the forest at Faery Knoll, could provide alternative access to the forest, with parking, walking, wheeling and cycling connections to Loch Chon and Loch Katrine, better utilising the forest capacity for visitors and encourage visitor dispersal from 'hotspot' locations.



- Facilities might include car parking spaces, signage and wayfinding, motorhome overnight spaces.
- **Loch Arklet East**
A small orientation point and stopping location focussed on wayfinding and strengthening the Aberfoyle-Stronachlachar routes. Potential for limited parking or layby
- **Drum Wood**: a small orientation point location focussed on wayfinding and strengthening routes into the Loch Ard forest. Drum Wood near Gartmore can offer a visitor experience with potential advantages for local hotels, food and beverage etc. Potential for limited parking.

Coordination and consultation with stakeholders and landowners would be required to inform these projects and ensure support

3. Traffic Management:

Traffic issues on the B829 can be managed through implementing integrated interventions for parking and access on the road. The National Park Authority's ongoing Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal & Modal Shift Report is exploring strategies which could include seasonal interventions.

Specific road side parking issues at hotspots in The Trossachs area have been addressed through traffic management measures including parking restrictions in the form of a clearway. This strategy should be explored for Strathard hotspots.

- Explore seasonal interventions such as a peak period restriction to vehicle access to limited traffic on the B829 (subject to findings of Sustainable Transport study)
- Improve lay-by infrastructure to ensure safe, short-term stopping points are available on the B829



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Strathard Prioritisation

Impact
(visitor experience/ responsible tourism)

- Moderate**
- Strathard experiences significant visitor pressures at peak times. Measures to mitigate the impacts of tourism through visitor dispersal, integration with an Aberfoyle Hub and strengthened connection to an active travel network supports shift towards sustainable transport
 - Path infrastructure enhancements can make exploration of the Strathard area by active travel methods more attractive and appealing. The opportunity to travel car free, from, for example, the Aberfoyle hub, can be better promoted with the availability of legible, high quality walking, wheeling and cycle connections. The area is well served by forest tracks. Relatively modest additional lengths of connection can deliver significant improvements to the utility of the active travel network.
 - Facilities enhancement provide amenity at parking locations which support a model seeking to promote alternative methods of travel and improve the experience for visitors and residents. Lack of facilities currently contribute to littering, toileting and parking issues in the area.
 - Improved visitor information & quality of experience is provided

Sustainability/ Mission Zero

- Moderate**
- Core path and signage improvements support active travel use and access for all
 - Sustainability initiatives and projects throughout Strathard, both through visitor dispersal and enhancement of facilities support a sustainable transport system
 - Developing existing car parks and destinations to support public transport infrastructure (bus shelters and waiting points, information signage, nearby toilets, connecting paths) supports the use of public transport and supports the development of better/more frequent public transport connections
 - Integrated variable messaging signage supports the overall sustainable visitor transport system

Delivery Complexity
(issues/ barriers)

- Moderate**
Barriers include
- Ownership challenges and agreement
 - Sustained community buy-in and support
 - Development of new facilities, especially where including parking can be contentious
 - Cost of maintenance etc. associated with enhanced facilities
 - Flood plain challenging for development

Timescale

Project suitable for immediate start: development of path network and area facilities will mitigate pressures at hotspots by supporting active travel, and through synergy with the Aberfoyle hub project, will support the overall strategy for Strathard & Trossachs

Priority project: Paths

Impact	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	3
Sustainability	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	5
Complexity	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	4
Timescale	Short term	
Priority Score	12	

Priority Level

Paths: High priority (moderate impact, high sustainability, low complexity)

Entrances: Medium priority (moderate impact, moderate sustainability, moderate complexity)

Kinlochard community support: Medium priority (high impact, low sustainability, moderate complexity)

Traffic management : Medium priority (moderate impact, high sustainability, low complexity)

Delivery Agents

- National Park Authority
- Landowners
- Stirling Council
- Community Development Trusts
- Forestry and Land Scotland

Dependencies

- National Park Authority implementation of Sustainable Visitor Travel System
- Local community engagement & support
- Significant FLS buy-in required

Note

Prioritisation Scoring is based on	Impact: Sustainability: Complexity:	1 low - 5 high 1 low – 5 high 5 low – 1 high
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The Trossachs

Site Strategy



Description

Address road congestion and better integrate Brig o’ Turk into the network of places and destinations with completed Loch Achray circular walking, wheeling and cycling routes, improved connections between existing car park locations and an unfragmented active travel network with connections to an Aberfoyle and a Callander hub

Principles for development

Why is this important?
Our place assessment identified significant pressures on the road network around Loch Achray and the car parks, contributed to by large visitor numbers attracted to the destination offer in the region (Trossachs Pier, Ben A’an, Ben Venue, Lochs, Glen Finglas, Hotels, Achray forest etc.). We identified that car parks and destinations, notably Brig o’ Turk and the Loch Achray car parks are not well connected by active travel routes; addressing the gaps in the path network will develop a better network and contribute to visitor dispersal, mitigating road corridor pressures.

Key elements

- Ben Venue & Forest Entrances:**
Promote Greater Use of the Forest Park & Manage Hotspots
- Develop Forest Entrance locations which seek to provide needed facilities to support active travel (e.g. toilets, cycle parking, orientation & wayfinding, litter points) and, over time, redevelop car park focussed locations into active travel hubs (with Aberfoyle & Callander bases) for exploration by foot or bike
 - Ben Venue & Ben A’an – at Clach an t-Suidhe
 - Ben Venue & Ben A’an – at Bruce’s Bay
 - Ben Venue – at Leannach
 - Explore potential Ben Venue access at Ledard Farm / Forest Hills
- Trossachs Connectivity:**
Promote Greater Use of the Forest Park & Manage Hotspots
- Develop connections that connect car parks to multiple destinations e.g. to Ben A’an, Ben Venue, Loch Achray, Trossachs Pier & Brig o’ Turk
 - Support connection to Aberfoyle and Callander hubs
 - Development of active travel hub to support sustainable transport and encourage exploration of The Trossachs area by active travel and shuttle bus - Achray West Hub
 - Enhanced connections to Forest Drive campsite facilities
- Brig o’ Turk:**
- Explore opportunity for visitor/community synergies to develop Old Trossachs School to offer enhanced community facilities and provide a location for an orientation point to strengthen the active travel network
- Paths:**
Develop the Active Travel network
- Develop strengthened routes, connect gaps, and enhance wayfinding, orientation and interpretation
 - Ben A’an to Ben Venue connection
 - Brenchoile trails
 - Off road to Trossachs Pier from Achray North
 - Glen Finglas circuit
 - Achray North to Brig o’ Turk
 - Achray West, Loch Achray Circuit

Path: Explore opportunities to create circular walks

Trossachs Pier: Loch Katrine cruises & accommodation, visitor facilities & cycle hire

Path: Support Brenchoile trails improvements to add destination offer

Path: Explore new off-road path connections, linking existing car parks, connecting Achray to The Trossachs Pier and completing a Achray loop

Achray West: Enhance connectivity between areas of existing car parking capacity, and with links to the existing Ben Venue and Ben A'an car parks, develop a hub to support access to The Trossachs and the west of Loch Achray. Hub infrastructure can support an Achray loop

Ben Venue Car Park
Promote for access to Ben Venue

Ledard and Forest Hills Hotel, access point to Ben Venue - see *Strathard*

Trossachs Connectivity:

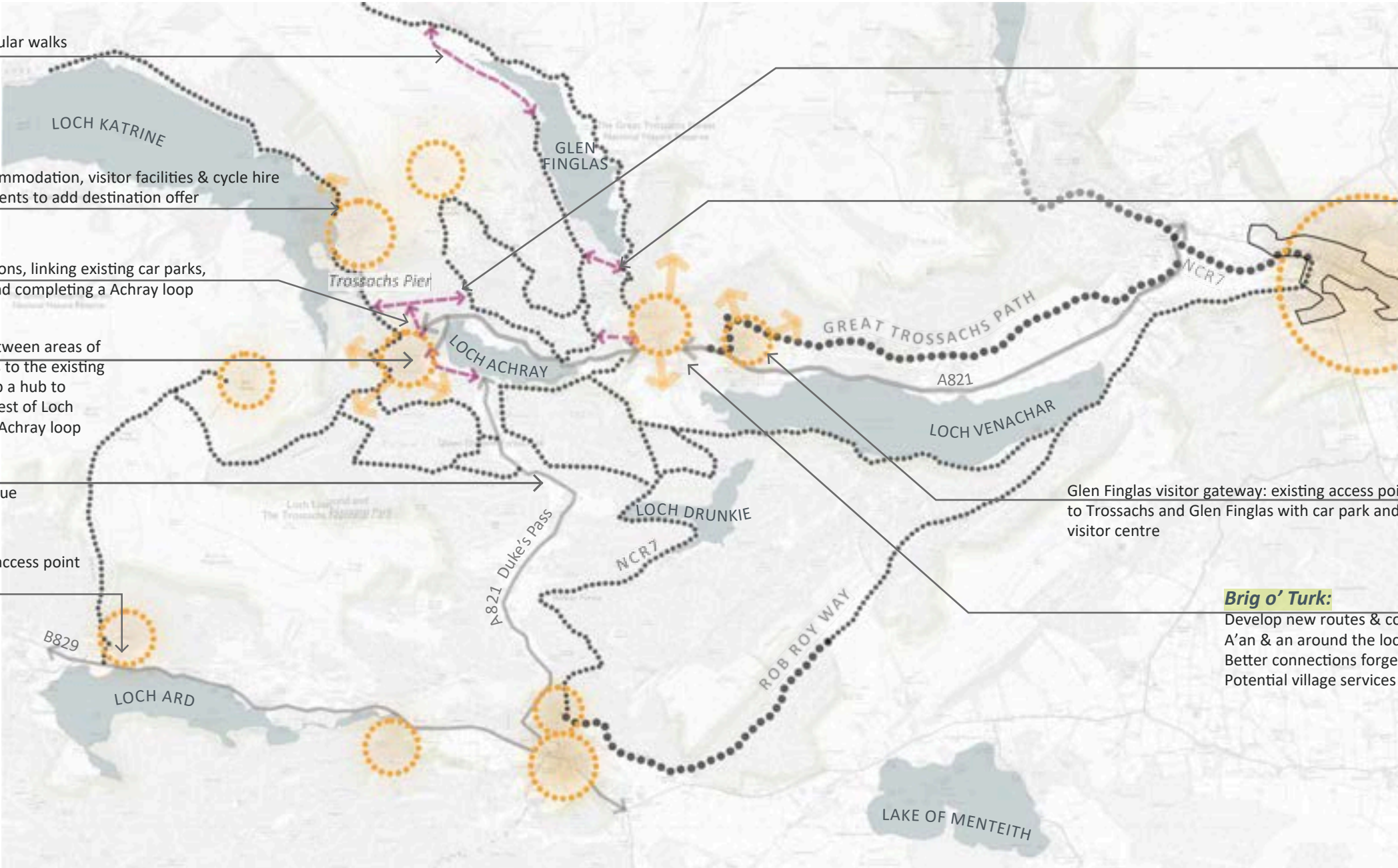
Ben A'an/Ben Venue car park with signage & off road connection to Brig o' Turk, strengthened footway connections between existing car parks

Path:

Seek to connect Brig o' Turk to the destinations and car park sites at the west of Loch Achray with connecting paths and existing forest tracks

Brig o' Turk:

Develop new routes & connections from Brig o' Turk to Ben A'an & an around the loch circuit
Better connections forged with National cycle route NCN7
Potential village services include cafe and toilets



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Trossachs Projects

1. Trossachs Connectivity

Promote Greater Use of the Forest Park and Manage Hotspots

Visitors come to The Trossachs area to experience natural beauty, hiking trails, access Loch Katrine, Loch Achray and Loch Venachar waters, or embark on scenic drives. The area has popular destinations for visitors, particularly catering to arrival by car:

- The 3 Loch Forest Drive which provides a unique route along forest track open to motor vehicles, providing access to Achray forest and Loch Drunkie
- The Trossachs Pier with car parking and accommodation at the shore of Loch Katrine. Cruises to Stronachlachar operate and a cycle hire facilities supports cycling in the area particular on the car free north shore of Loch Katrine
- Ben A'an and Ben Venue are popular day trips with parking at walk starting locations
- The Glen Finglas Visitor Centre is a destination and orientation point promoting way marked walks in The Trossachs area
- Hotels & Coach trips

With access to Trossachs primarily made by private car or coach, the A821 road can become busy and parking locations exceed capacity. The road at peak times, where the capacity of car parks at popular destinations is exceeded, traffic can become congested. A clearway seeks to prevent hazardous roadside parking.

The Ben A'an & Ben Venue car parks, providing car parking and a starting point to popular and accessible mountain walking are major hotspots which experience issues with exceeded parking capacity, irresponsible parking, toileting and littering.

The Trossachs strategy seeks to develop the existing car park locations into a network of interconnected entrance points offering access to the Forest, the lochs and pathways to the mountains.

The existing car parking locations should be better connected, through wayfinding signage and orientation and through off road active travel paths (path projects described below). The car parks should provide capacity for each other and be positioned as Trossachs car parks as opposed to having specific connection to popular hills and attractions.

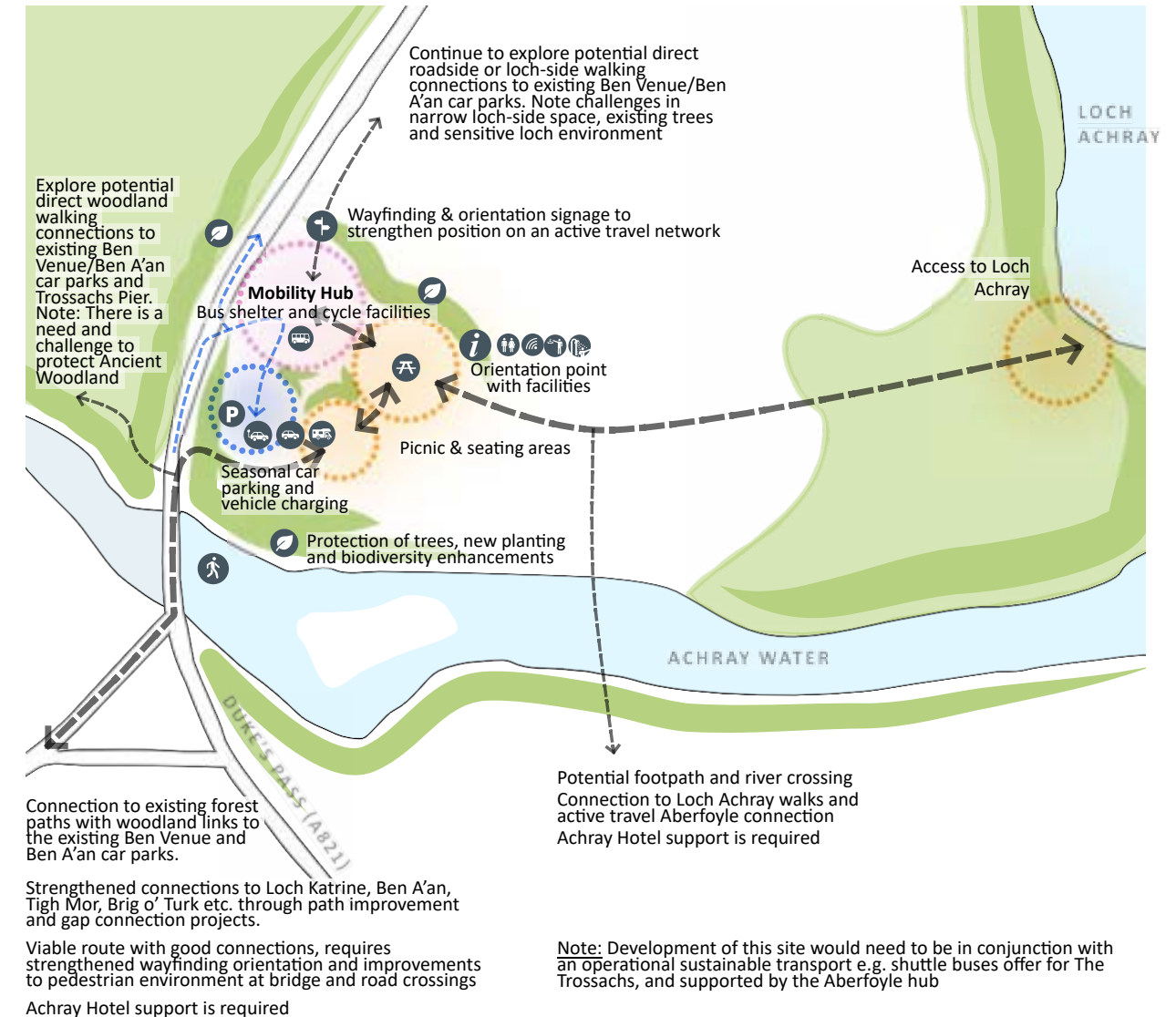
2. Achray West

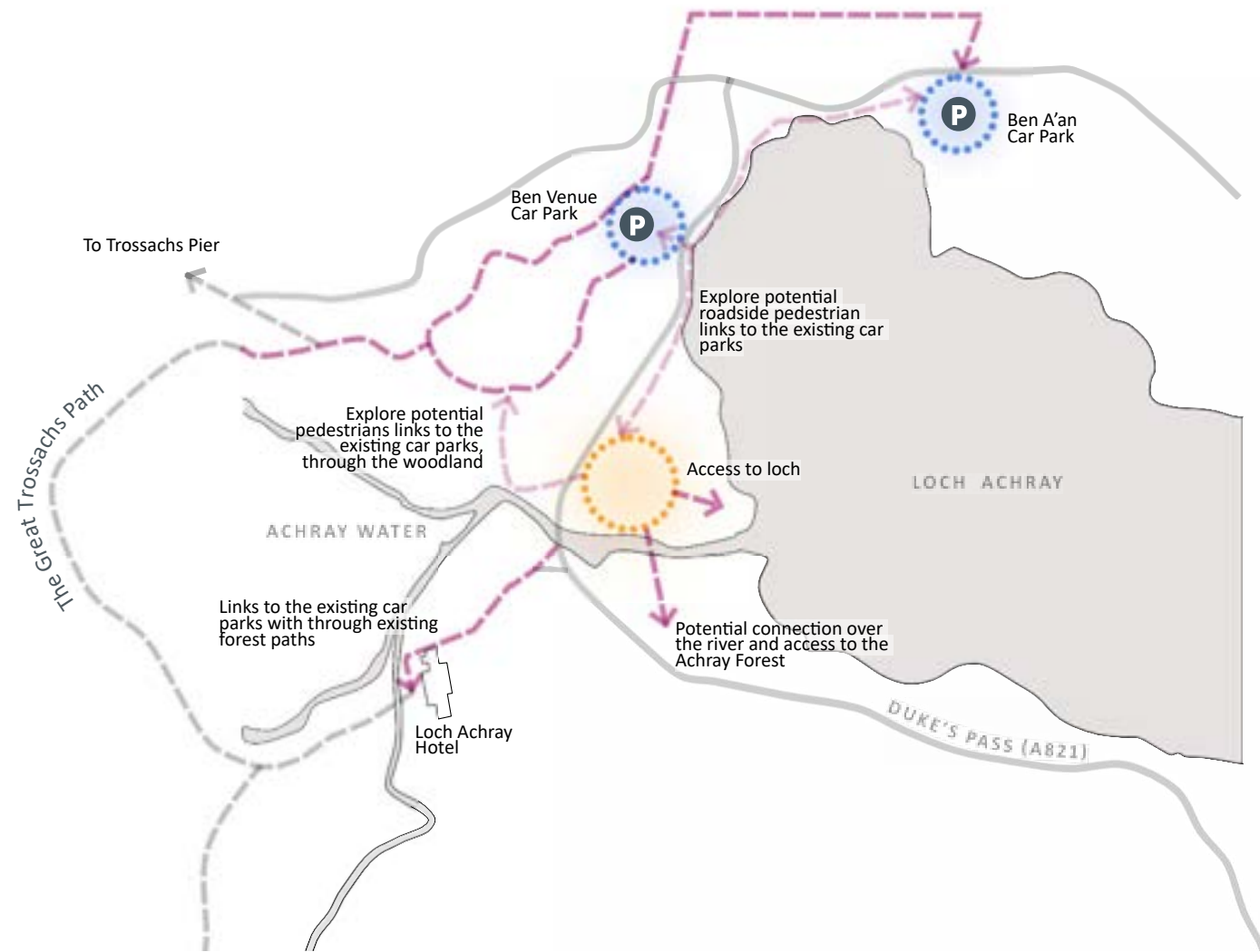
Promote Greater Use of the Forest Park and Manage Hotspots

As well as better connectivity between areas of existing car parking capacity, the strategy promotes the development of an additional hub which could support sustainable access to The Trossachs and the west of Loch Achray. This hub should be developed to provide improved connectivity from the car park locations to Achray Forest, creating a circular connection around the loch. The access point would seek to support shuttle bus and active travel connection to The Trossachs, with facilities to improve the visitor experience. Development of this site would need to be as part of an operational sustainable transport e.g. shuttle buses offer for The Trossachs and supported by the Aberfoyle hub.

The hub facilities could include: information, orientation and itineraries, bus pickup/drop-off, toilets/changing/showers, cycle parking, picnic or camping areas, campervan waste disposal, recycling and litter disposal.

The model establishes the access point, which, as the a Sustainable Transport Strategy & traffic demand management are implemented, and lower capacities for parking are required, allows a future shift in emphasis to providing additional facilities (e.g. sustainable transport hub, EV charging, toilets and changing or campervan facilities. Associated car parking in this location would therefore initially be seasonal, available to mitigate pressures at peak times.





3. Paths

Develop the Active travel network

Develop circular routes and invest in path connections to form circular routes around Loch Achray and Glen Finglas.

Path connections should build connections to Brig o' Turk and the village as a destination accessible from Achray Forest, Glen Finglas & Ben A'an car parks.

Orientation points and signage should be developed to encourage alternative start points to walks to Ben Venue and Ben A'an, and promote additional circular routes, access to Achray forest and active travel connection to Aberfoyle.

Paths to develop are:

- **Car park connections**
 - Ben A'an to Ben Venue, connections between existing car parks. A connection through existing forest tracks, via the Achray Hotel can be developed.
- **Trossachs Pier & Brenchoile trails**
 - Off road route to Trossachs Pier from Achray North e.g. Ben A'an, Tigh-Mor etc.
 - Signage & Wayfinding enhancements to Brenchoile trails
- **Glen Finglas circuit**
 - Two lengths of new path (c. 2km) and one small river crossing
- **Tigh Mor to Brig o' Turk, off road**
 - New off road path utilising some existing forest track, forest breaks and field boundary (1.7km)
- **Loch Achray Circuit**
 - New path connecting network gaps i.e. at Achray West (0.7km) with one river crossing

4. Brig o' Turk

Support communities and local centres

Brig o' Turk is a small rural village, well positioned to benefit from the footfall of tourists and offer visitor facilities such as shuttle bus and public transport stops and shelter, accommodation, food and beverage, toilets, wayfinding or orientation. The village does not offer capacity for additional parking and would not benefit from increased vehicular traffic. Brig o' Turk can be better integrated to The Trossachs network through development of other car park sites, and a strengthened path and signage network. Community assets such as the Old Trossachs School can contribute to the strategy by providing visitor facilities e.g. a small centre with orientation information, or toilets providing a community facility with benefits for walkers and cyclists .

The Trossachs Prioritisation

Impact
(visitor experience/responsible tourism)

Low

- The Trossachs’s appeal as a destination is strengthened, improvements to the facilities will enhance appeal further
- Shuttle bus infrastructure will facilitate modal shift, providing positive impacts for sustainable access
- Visitor experience is improved through mitigation of congestion pressures and mitigation of litter issues

Sustainability/Mission Zero

High

- Infrastructure promotes shift to visitor access to The Trossachs by sustainable transport methods, or active travel e.g. from Aberfoyle hub
- Infrastructure to support car park management allows the implementation of booking systems
- Improvements to the site facilitate shuttle bus drop off and pick up

Delivery Complexity
(issues/barriers)

Low

- Coordination and buy-in with land owners, car park operators e.g. Forestry & Land Scotland

Timescale

Short

- Improvements to signage and orientation
- Quality improvements to promote sense of arrival at a hub location incl. picnic, recycle points
- Cycle parking facilities
- Infrastructure for shuttle bus

Medium - Long

- Reduction in parking
- Introduction of additional facilities (toilets, changing, showers, EV, campervan waste disposal)

Priority project: Connectivity

Impact	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	3
Sustainability	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	5
Complexity	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	3
Timescale	Short	
Priority Score	11	

Priority Level

Trossachs Connectivity: High

Forest Entrances: Low

Paths: High

Brig o’ Turk community support - long term

Delivery Agents

- National Park Authority
- Stirling Council (Roads authority)
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- Woodland Trust
- Walter Scott Steamship Trust
- Brig o’Turk Community Groups

Dependencies

To support long term modal shift: National Park Authority implementation of Sustainable Transport Strategy and Traffic Management measures



Port of Menteith

Strategy



Description

Promote Port of Menteith as a gateway & park arrival point, with a role as a destination with strengthened connections to the Aberfoyle hub

Principles for development

Our place assessment identified that Port of Menteith is geographically positioned as a gateway to the national park and could be better promoted as both arrival point and destination. The active travel connections, destination offer and community facilities could be developed to support this ambition. The assessment also identified management issues relating to camping, irresponsible parking and antisocial behaviour which require management to support the promotion of Port of Menteith and mitigate anti-social behaviour at the existing lake-side hotspots

Key elements / projects

- Port of Menteith Gateway Hub:**
Develop the Active Travel Network & Manage Hotspots
- Promote arrival in the National Park at the Port of Menteith gateway and encourage the use of Port of Menteith and area as day trip destination
 - Develop Port of Menteith as a base for exploration by walking, wheeling and cycling
- Flanders Moss:**
Explore opportunities to develop access to Flanders Moss and new viewpoints with approach from the National Park and Port of Menteith
- Paths:**
Develop the Active Travel network
- Develop connection to Aberfoyle
 - Via Cobleland and new connections at Stable Point & Arntamie (9km) or Gartur & Dykehead (13km)
 - Via Rob Roy Way (10km) (also Callander and NCN7 connection)
 - Develop the connection to Rob Roy Way & Menteith hills
 - Develop active travel circuits
 - Port of Menteith - Rednock House circuit (5km)
 - Port of Menteith – Arntamie – Stable Point (potential ferry connection to priory & Jetty Wood) (5km)
 - Cobleland - Gartur - Dykehead - Port of Menteith circuit (16km)
 - Long loop: Cobleland – Holiday Park – King’s highway / disused railway, potential connection to Kippen (23+km)
- Traffic Management:**
Consider camping management on east shore of lake on B8034

Path: Develop new & strengthened connection: Near Port End Farm towards Glenny Hills, Menteith Hills & Connecting to Rob Roy Way & NCN 7, to develop an active travel network, mitigating pedestrian and vehicle conflict on A81

Path: Explore potential role for connection via ferry from Stable Point to Priory Landing

Path: Explored developing & enhancing existing route connecting Gartmore to Port of Menteith.
Note challenge in developing new connection, particularly in sensitive and protected environments

Path: Enhance off-road route connection to Aberfoyle via Easterhill

Path: New off road connection along A8:
Connecting Rob Roy Way into Port of Menteith

Port of Menteith Village Hub

Promote role of Port of Menteith as a National Park Gateway Support Village Hall role as a hub for motorhome/campervan permit parking with visitor facilities

Path: Develop off-road connection: Rednock House to Port of Menteith

Traffic & Camping Management

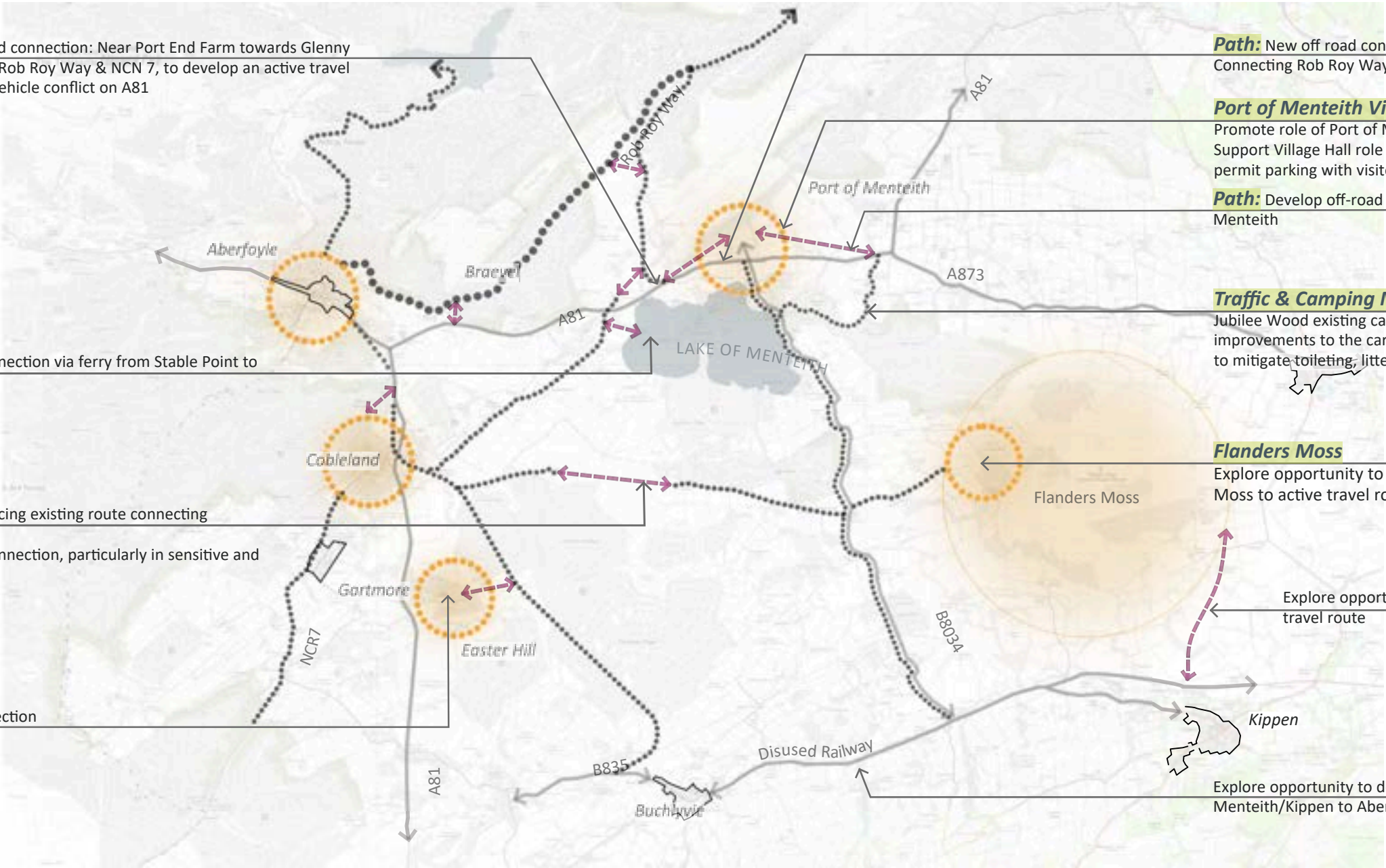
Jubilee Wood existing car park retained - explore opportunities for improvements to the car parking capacity supported by facilities to mitigate toileting, littering and antisocial camping behaviour

Flanders Moss

Explore opportunity to connect Flanders Moss to active travel route

Explore opportunity to connect Flanders Moss to active travel route

Explore opportunity to develop circuit connecting Port of Menteith/Kippen to Aberfoyle via the south and disused railway



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Port of Menteith Projects

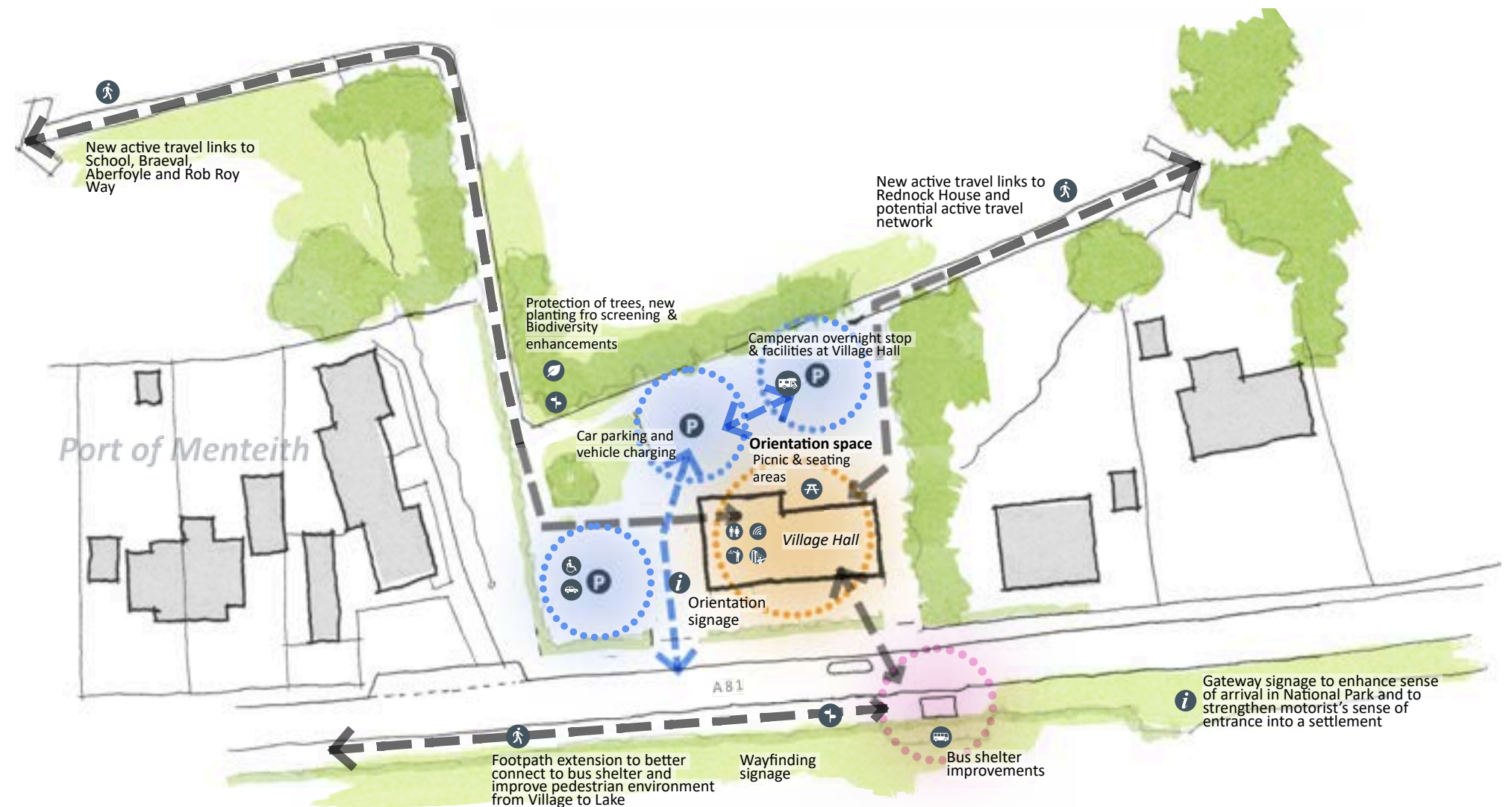
1. Port of Menteith Village Hub

Develop the Active travel network & Manage Hotspots

- Promote village as an arrival point in the National Park at the Port of Menteith gateway and encourage use of Port of Menteith and area as a day trip destination
- Develop village hall as a base for exploration by foot/cycle
 - Develop as orientation point
 - Develop toilet and changing facilities
 - Provide Aires type campervan point and waste facilities
 - Support commercial opportunities e.g. cycle hire

The Port of Menteith Village Hall can be a village location which can be developed to position the village facilities that encourage visits to Port of Menteith by sustainable means of transport and which encourage use of the village's existing facilities to mitigate some of the issues at existing hotspots near the lake. The village hall can be developed to be an arrival point in Port of Menteith with off road cycle paths converging at the hall and the external space at the hall becoming an orientation point and attractive arrival location. The hall facilities e.g. toilets, changing, showers, could be made available and help to mitigate toileting issues locally.

The 'arrival point' can provide campervan overnight spots which would be attractive to some campervan users, particularly where campervan facilities are offered, e.g., waste disposal, showers, laundry. This could be a source of revenue.



Port of Menteith Hub

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2. Paths

Develop the Active Travel Network

Port of Menteith has strong road connections to Aberfoyle and locations outside of the National Park, positioned as it is on the National Park’s eastern boundary line and located on the A81 and B9034. These road connections are untreated for active travel and therefore to support modal shift and encourage exploration of the national park destinations with less reliance of private car use, a better active travel network in the area is required. An off-road walking, wheeling and cycling route connecting Port of Menteith to Aberfoyle will support the strategic positioning of Aberfoyle as a base for exploration of the area. Safe and attractive paths, and particularly circular routes, can be destinations in their own right, which encourage dispersal of visitors from other existing hotspots. Circular routes which take in attractions/destinations and settlements can benefit the communities and businesses. Port of Menteith’s role in this network can be as an orientation point, base and landmark location with facilities.

Paths that should be developed to provide an active travel connection to an Aberfoyle Hub include:

- Connections to link to Aberfoyle and build an unbroken network of paths
 - **Aberfoyle, off road via the Menteith Hills**
 - Route improvement with 300m of new path shortening climb
 - Connection to Arntamie, 400m
 - Connection to Stable Point, 400m
 - **Aberfoyle, off road via Cobleland & west of lake**
 - **Aberfoyle, off road via Cobleland & Gartur**
 - Gartrenich to Gartur connection, 1.8km

Paths that should be developed to enhance safety in the village, providing links from the Village Hall and public transport stops are:

- **Village Hall to lake footpath**

Long term paths projects to explore that would strengthen the network include:

- New destination circuits capitalising on Aberfoyle (hub for Strathard & Trossachs), NCN7 and Rob Roy Way (also Callander or Trossachs)
 - Potential connection at Auchyle where new forestry development offers potential link to other forestry tracks and roads at Letter, and onward connection into the Callander path network
 - New path on dismantled railway from Woodend to Station Wood, 3.9km
 - Footway/ foot path to south edge of village street, Arntamie to Rednock House Lodge (3.8km), potential onward links to Blairhoyle
 - Aberfoyle- Cobleland- Stable Point & Arntamie-Port of Menteith (9km)
 - Stable Point (potential ferry connection to priory & Jetty Wood)
 - Aberfoyle-Gartur & Dykehead-Port of Menteith (13km)
 - Connection to Easterhill at Barbadoes
 - Aberfoyle-Rob Roy Way-Port of Menteith (10km)
 - Port of Menteith-Rednock House circuit (5km)
 - Cobleland-Gartur-Dykehead-Port of Menteith circuit (16km)
 - Cobleland-Easterhill-railway, potential connection to Kippen (23+km)

3. Flanders Moss

Promote Greater Use of the Park & Manage Hotspots

- Develop access to Flanders Moss for new viewpoints with approach from the National Park and Port of Menteith

A core strand in the strategy to mitigate pressures at existing hotspots is to encourage better dispersal of visitors by promoting lesser known or otherwise hard to access destinations. The Flanders Moss nature reserve could be accessed from the National Park direction with strengthened active travel connections to Port of Menteith and a new western Flanders Moss arrival point.

The destination would provide a similar offer to the Thornhill Flanders Moss destination, with interpretation, walks and viewing locations – with a focus on active travel connection over car-based arrival.

The Thornhill approach to Flanders Moss could also be connected to an active travel network, connections to the disused railway could be explored.



4. Traffic & Camping Management

Protect the 'Wilderness' & Manage Access and Manage Hotspots

Car parking locations near the lakeside are limited. With the attractiveness of the lake for visitors, in peak times the existing car parking locations can reach capacity leading to unsafe parking on the B8034 verges. Improving the accessibility of the lakeside by foot or cycle or from the village can mitigate the issue by reducing demand for parking; developing additional parking spaces can mitigate the issue by increasing capacity.

- Improved pedestrian route from the village to the lake destination (i.e. from the Village Hall hub and parking, the school, the wider path network and the bus stop location)
 - Enhanced footpath connections from the village to the lakeside
 - Speed reduction in the village
- Explore opportunities for increased parking
 - Seek to develop additional parking locations
 - Explore opportunities for the Priory car park to be made available for visitors
- Explore opportunity to establish a clearway on the east shore of the lake on B8034 to prohibit stopping on the road side
- Explore opportunity to introduce active travel route along the full length of the B8034, with opportunity to connect the communities and business of Arnprior and Port of Menteith

The lakeside is a popular location with wild campers. There have been issues with toileting, littering, irresponsible parking, vandalism, and damage to the environment associated with the camping. Camping management could be considered for the lakeside to manage camping numbers and behaviours.

- Consider camping management on east shore of lake on B8034
- Development of facilities, including toilets, showers and campervan waste disposal facilities, at the village hall will provide some alternative to irresponsible camping behaviours, albeit at an inconvenient distance from the lakeside
- Development of an additional car parking location near the lakeside should include provision of facilities to support responsible camping. This could include toilets, showers and waste disposal, as well as marked tent camping locations.



Lake of Menteith

Port of Menteith Prioritisation

Impact
(visitor experience/
responsible tourism)

Moderate

- A suite of facilities at the Port of Menteith Village hub targeted at supporting active travel and encouraging responsible campervan overnight stays will enhance the visitor experience in Port of Menteith
- The lakeside hotspots for camping and parking contribute to a hazardous environment on the B8034. Measures to manage the car parking to address this will improve the visitor experience .
- Developing a comprehensive networks of cycle and walking will make the Port of Menteith area, the lake-side and local businesses accessible as part of a car free exploration of Strathard and Trossachs. An Aberfoyle base will not easily serve the Port of Menteith area without an effective active travel network and infrastructure.
- The Port of Menteith area has attractive destinations for visitors including unique wilderness environments, hills, settlements, and access to water. Promoting these destinations supports visitor dispersal from existing hotspots.

**Sustainability/
Mission Zero**

Moderate

- The Village Hall facilities and development of an active travel hub will support sustainable tourism.
 - Public transport infrastructure (bus shelters and waiting points, information signage, nearby toilets, connecting paths) which supports the use of public transport and supports the development of better/ more frequent public transport connections
 - Improved access to active travel opportunities in Strathard & The Trossachs
- Core path and signage improvements supporting active travel routes and access for all
- Integrated variable messaging signage supports the overall sustainable visitor transport system

**Delivery
Complexity**
(issues/ barriers)

Moderate

Barriers include

- Ownership challenges
- Cost of developing long paths and work in sensitive environments
- Camping management is challenging and contentious

Timescale

Project suitable for immediate start: development of path networks is essential for the promotion of the area as accessible by active travel and without car use.

**Priority project:
Paths**

Impact	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	4
Sustainability	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	4
Complexity	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	1
Timescale	Short term	

Priority Score	9
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Priority Level

Village Hub: Low priority (low impact, moderate sustainability, moderate complexity)

Paths: High priority (high impact, high sustainability, high complexity)

Flanders Moss access: Low priority (low impact, moderate sustainability, high complexity)

Traffic management : Low priority (moderate impact, moderate sustainability, high complexity)

Delivery Agents

- National Park Authority
- Landowners
- Bus operators
- Stirling Council
- Community Development Trust
- Forest and Land Scotland
- NatureScot

Dependencies

- National Park Authority implementation of Sustainable Visitor Travel System
- Local community engagement & support

Note	Prioritisation	Impact:	1 low - 5 high
	Scoring is based on	Sustainability:	1 low – 5 high
		Complexity:	5 low – 1 high

Project Priorities

The prioritisation exercise concludes that the sites which offer the highest impact, greatest sustainability & climate change benefits, and that are capable of delivery in the short to medium term, offer the highest priority for action.

The top priorities are:

- 1. **Aberfoyle Village Hub**
- 2. **Paths:** the **Aberfoyle**, and **Strathard & Trossachs** active travel network
- 3. **Forest Entrances:** at **Loch Ard** and **Loch Chon** in the Strathard area
- 4. **Traffic management on the B829**

The following assessment identifies Aberfoyle to be the highest priority project. Aberfoyle is a key strategic Primary Hub and a Primary destination to be developed.

Investing in establishing Aberfoyle as a primary Hub is a priority for Sustainable Transport in the Strathard and Trossachs area, which will have significant impact on traffic management, mitigation of road congestion, enhancement of the visitor experience, and bringing benefits to the local community.

Promoting Aberfoyle as a hub location which allows car-free exploration of the Strathard & Trossachs area is a central element of the area strategy. The Aberfoyle Hub project seeks to mitigate pressures in all areas of Strathard and Trossachs. The **Aberfoyle Village Hub** project considers the capacity and facilities requirements of an enhanced Hub and the place-making and public realm requirements of a successful National Park arrival point focused on accessibility, sustainability and qualities of place.

Enhancements to the village car park are required to provide appropriate increased capacity, shuttle bus/ park & ride infrastructure, and facilities to enable this. Investment in the site’s public realm, visitor experience and improvement of the sense of place and sense of arrival at the National Park is important in establishing Aberfoyle as an attractive hub and

destination within the National Park, capturing the sense of arrival required to encourage visitors to begin journeys to Strathard, The Trossachs and Port of Menteith from the central hub.

Assessment identifies **Paths** and inter-connectivity projects to be high priority. Investment in the active travel network will support modal shift and support measures which encourage visitors to begin journeys from the Aberfoyle Hub. The successful promotion of cycle tracks in the Aberfoyle demonstrates the opportunity here. Improvements to the network to complete missing gaps, improved pedestrian environments and enhanced wayfinding and orientation points will improve the attractiveness of modal shift.

Investment in the car park locations in Strathard and Trossachs, seek to provide in the short term, car parking capacity and enhanced facilities in known hotspots (or developed locally to mitigate hotspots pressure). These **Forest Entrance** projects are subject to demonstrated need, operational business cases and appropriate and well located sites being identified for infrastructure. In the longer term, investment in the facilities at a Forest Entrance will shift such that car parking is reduced and with an increase in facilities supporting shuttle bus transport, active travel and activities that generate revenue (e.g. camping, motorhome facilities, cycle/water access equipment hire). Forest Entrances seek to support the anticipated findings of ongoing Sustainable Transport studies, the programme for this shift will be informed by this strategy.

Traffic Management on the B829, including potential seasonal interventions to limit traffic at periods of peak visitor numbers should be explored as a priority. This project would require coordination with other measures to provide accessibility to Strathard, such as a viable Aberfoyle hub , improved active travel infrastructure and facilities and the potential provision of a shuttle bus or similar. This project would be subject to and informed by the findings of the National Park Authority's ongoing Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal.

Prioritisation Summary

Projects	Category	Evaluation Score	Rank	Cost	Timescale (Short / Medium / Long Term)	Comments	Priority
Aberfoyle							
Aberfoyle Village Hub	Greater Use of the Forest Park	12	1	£££££	Short	High impact project, supporting sustainable transport strategy for wider area	High
Paths	Active Travel Network	11	2	£££££	Medium		High
Traffic Management	Managed Access	7	4	£££££	Long		Low
Forest Entrance	Greater Use of the Forest Park	7	4	£££££	Long		Low
Strathard							
Paths	Active Travel Network	12	1	£££££	Short		High
Forest Entrances	Greater Use of the Forest Park	9	3	£££££	Short		Medium
Kinlochard	Supporting Community	8	3	£££££	Long*	*Long term requirement, suitable for immediate start	Medium
Traffic Management	Managed Access	11	2	£££££	Long		High
The Trossachs							
Trossachs Connectivity	Active Travel Network	11	2	£££££	Short		High
Achray West	Greater Use of the Forest Park	6	5	£££££	Medium		Low
Paths	Active Travel Network	9	1	£££££	Short		High
Brig o’ Turk	Supporting Community	7	4	£££££	Long*	*Long term requirement, suitable for immediate start	Low
Port of Menteith							
Port of Menteith Village Hub	Supporting Community	7	4	£££££	Short		Low
Paths	Active Travel Network	9	3	£££££	Medium		Medium
Flanders Moss	Greater Use of the Forest Park	7	4	£££££	Long		Low
Traffic & Camping	Managed Access	6	5	£££££	Medium		Low

Order of Cost

Budget costs are estimated as follows. A range is given to address the indicative nature of proposals at this time. Costs shown are for capital works and exclude all fees and costs associated with design development/consenting etc.

A total investment of between £6.125m - £8.025m ex VAT can be anticipated, spread over a 5yr+ period.

Projects	Cost Low Range	Cost High Range	Priority
Aberfoyle	£2,000,000	£2,800,000	
Aberfoyle Village Hub	£1,000,000	£1,500,000	High
Forest Entrance	£450,000	£550,000	Low
Forest Road connection	£250,000	£300,000	
Out of village all day parking	£200,000	£250,000	
Paths	£400,000	£550,000	High
Village Hub to Lodge, off road	£150,000	£200,000	
Village Hub to Loch Ard Forest, incl. bridge	£250,000	£350,000	
Traffic Management	£150,000	£200,000	Low
Strathard	£1,225,000	£1,600,000	
Paths	£575,000	£750,000	High
Aberfoyle Stronachlachar (new path & improvements)	£150,000	£200,000	
Royal Cottage (new path)	£300,000	£350,000	
Milton pedestrian paths (path improvements)	£100,000	£150,000	
Loch Arklet trails (signage, orientation, wayfinding)	£25,000	£50,000	
Forest Entrances	£650,000	£850,000	Medium
Arklet East	£50,000	£100,000	
Loch Chon South (incl. Path connections)	£250,000	£300,000	
Loch Ard Ledard (incl. Path connections)	£250,000	£300,000	
Drum Wood (incl. Path connections)	£100,000	£150,000	
The Trossachs	£1,325,000	£1,625,000	
Trossachs Connectivity	£250,000	£250,000	High
Achray West	£75,000	£100,000	Low
Paths	£1,050,000	£1,275,000	High
Car park connections	£75,000	£125,000	
Connection to Trossachs Pier & Brenchoile Trails	£250,000	£300,000	
Finglas circuit	£375,000	£400,000	
Tigh Mor to Brig o’ Turk, off road	£250,000	£300,000	
Achray Circuit	£100,000	£150,000	
Port of Menteith	£1,575,000	£2,000,000	
Port of Menteith Village Hub	£350,000	£400,000	Low
Paths	£1,000,000	£1,300,000	Medium
Aberfoyle, off road via Menteith Hills	£350,000	£500,000	
Aberfoyle, off road via Cobleland and west of lake	£250,000	£300,000	
Aberfoyle, off road via Cobleland & Gartur	£300,000	£350,000	
Village to Lake, off road footpath	£100,000	£150,000	
Flanders Moss	£200,000	£250,000	Low
Traffic & Camping Management	£25,000	£50,000	Low

Projects with out capital works are not costed:
Kinlochard community engagement, Strathard Traffic Management options
exploration and Brig o’ Turk Community Support

Project Elements

The initial thinking and concepts in this study consider how sites could be organised to improve resident amenity, place, sustainable transport infrastructure (active travel, public transport, water & land), toilet/changing facilities, signage and information, and electric vehicle charging. A wide range of project elements therefore support visitor dispersal & management, inclusion, modal shift and sustainable development. These include:

- Parking Reorganisation
 - Surface/drainage renewal
 - Electric vehicle charging infrastructure
 - Orientation points & place-making
 - Pre-booking systems & parking controls
- Toilets
- Commercial opportunities: food van location, cycle hire drop off
- Motorhome facilities
 - Parking
 - Water supply
 - Waste disposal
 - Laundry
 - Orientation, campervan overnight location mapping & itineraries
- Loch access
- Shuttle Bus Infrastructure
 - Drop off and pick up
 - On road bus lay-by
 - Shelter
 - Orientation & wayfinding
- Cycling infrastructure
 - Parking
 - Repair points
 - Path network
- Public realm, setting and gateways
- Signage
 - Visitor Signage
 - Variable Message Signage
 - Digital timetables
 -
- Enhanced Visitor Facilities
- Natural play
- Picnic
- Shelter
- Visitor Centres

1. Visitor centre at the National Park
2. Picnic in the park
3. Orientation point
4. Cycle paths
5. Play parks
6. Wild camping in the National Park
7. Signage



Strategy & Recommendations

This study concludes that the strategy for Strathard & Trossachs should be to

- Protect the wilderness and manage access
- Mitigate pressures on existing hotspots through promotion of greater use of the forest park
- Support communities and local centres
- Develop the active travel network

A series of projects have been identified to support this strategy:

- The promotion of Aberfoyle as a hub
- The development of Forest Entrance locations
- A strengthened and better inter-connected active travel networks
- Potential traffic management or restrictions on the B829

Aberfoyle Hub

Promoting Aberfoyle as a hub location which allows car-free exploration of the Strathard & Trossachs area is a central element of the area strategy. The Aberfoyle Hub project seeks to mitigate pressures in all areas of Strathard and Trossachs. Investment in Aberfoyle should be focused on the car park locations, the strategy for these areas is twofold: firstly increasing capacity and enhancing facilities, and secondly, developing, through placemaking and sense of arrival, the identity of Aberfoyle as the base for exploration of Strathard & Trossachs for day trips.

Forest Entrances

Existing car park locations in Strathard and Trossachs have become hotspots as they provide access points to the expansive forests, wilderness, and waters, that attract visitors. The car park locations are relatively few, with at peak times insufficient capacity. The strategy to investment in the car park locations in Strathard and Trossachs seeks to provide in the short term, car parking capacity and enhanced facilities in known hotspots (or developed locally to mitigate hotspots pressure). These sites are described in this study as Forest Entrances. A Forest Entrance is a location, currently characterised by car parking which subject to demonstrated need, operational and business cases, can be enhanced to support modal shift through development of facilities. Facilities would include toilets, changing places, showers, wayfinding, electric vehicle charging, drinking water, shuttle bus infrastructure and orientation points. In the longer term, investment in the facilities at a Forest Entrance will shift such that car parking is reduced and

facilities supporting shuttle bus transport, active travel, and activities with revenue potential (e.g., camping, motorhome facilities, cycle/water access equipment hire) predominate. Forest Entrances seek to support the anticipated findings of ongoing Sustainable Transport studies, the programme for this shift will be informed by this strategy.

Paths & active travel network

Active travel connections to the Aberfoyle hub are essential to capitalise on the base location, support modal shift and support measures which encourage visitors to begin journeys from the Aberfoyle Hub. The successful promotion of cycle tracks in the Aberfoyle area demonstrates the opportunity here. Improvements to the network to complete missing gaps, improve the pedestrian environments and enhance wayfinding and orientation points will improve the attractiveness of modal shift.

Traffic management

Traffic Management on the B829, including potential seasonal interventions to limit traffic at periods of peak visitor numbers should be explored as a priority. This project would require coordination with other measures to provide accessibility to Strathard, such as a viable Aberfoyle hub, improved active travel infrastructure and facilities and the potential provision of a shuttle bus or similar. This project would be subject to and informed by the findings of the National Park Authority's ongoing Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal.

Next Steps

This study has identified high level requirements for strategic tourism infrastructure development in the Strathard & Trossachs area of the National Park.

It is recommended that this study is continually reviewed and updated to maintain relevance and coordinate with other developing studies and frameworks as they emerge and develop.

In addition to this, the following specific actions are required:

- Establish the Sustainable Transport Strategy - the operational strategy and business case for development of sustainable transport is necessary to verify all assumptions made in this study to do with viability, delivery, and operational needs of future transport services for which infrastructure is to be provided. This is essential and should be prioritised as an early action.
- Strengthen Partnership Working and extend Engagement Future - success of capital investment relies on participation of stakeholders in delivery, management, operation, and maintenance, which confirms critical need and provides opportunity to further strengthen and consolidate partnership working as a priority to support and in some cases pilot the lead in delivery of these projects. The Visitor Management Group is a successful forum for engaging with stakeholders, membership should be expanded wherever possible to maximise participation.
- Progress Community Engagement - This study is the initial step in a process, and as such has relied on workshops with key stakeholders and representatives on the Visitor Management Group for feedback and steering. Community engagement therefore needs to be given early focus in the initial stages of any project. Meaningful engagement is needed to secure in principle support and buy-in.

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