



# **New Local Development Plan**

## **Appendix 2: Evidence Report Part B**

**National Park Authority Board Meeting**  
**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

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Throughout the Evidence Report and its topic papers, we have provided links to relevant data sources and supporting evidence wherever possible. In a number of cases, the data used has been obtained from larger national or regional data portals. As a Planning Authority, we have interrogated these datasets to extract information specific to the National Park area.

Due to the way some of these data portals operate, it is not always possible to provide direct links to the exact filtered datasets used in our analysis. Where this is the case, links have been provided to the main data source or portal. Board members wishing to explore the underlying data in more detail may need to navigate within these external portals or reapply filters to view the relevant information.

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>Topic Paper 1 - Climate Change and Land Use</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p><b><u>Policy 1 – Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises</u></b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15 (5): The principle physical and environmental characteristics of the district.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Policy 2 – Climate Mitigation and Adaptation</u></b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15 (5) the principal physical and environmental characteristics of a district'</li> <li>• Policies 3 (F) 'policies regarding low and zero-carbon generating technologies in new buildings'</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Policy 5 – Soils</u></b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15 (5): The principle physical and environmental characteristics of the district.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Policy 10 – Coastal Development</u></b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15(5) 'the principal physical and environmental characteristics of a district'</li> </ul> <p>Under Regulation 9, have regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Marine Plan</li> <li>• Any Regional Marine Plan</li> </ul> <p><u>Other relevant legislation</u> The Aims of National Parks in Scotland (as set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000)</p>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b><u>Interactive Map</u></b></p> <p>For any data that is not linked in this topic paper, these can be viewed on the National Park Authority's <a href="#">interactive GIS map viewer</a> under 'A Nature Positive Place' layer.</p> <p><b><u>Overarching Policies, Strategies and Reports</u></b></p> <p><u>National Park Partnership Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan 2024 – 2029</a></li> </ul>

### National Context

- [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#)
- [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)
- [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#)
- [Update to Scotland's Climate Change Plan 2018 - 2032 - Securing a Green Recovery on a Path to Net Zero](#)
- [Scottish National Adaptation Plan \(SNAP3\) 2024-2029](#)
- [Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019 - 2024](#)
- [Scotland's National Marine Plan 2015](#)
- [Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy and Delivery Plan 2024](#)
- [Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy 2021- 2026](#)
- [UK Climate Change Risk Assessment \(CCRA3\) Summary for Scotland 2021](#)

### **Other relevant Policies, Strategies and Reports**

#### National Context

- [NPF4 Planning Guidance: Policy 2 – Climate Mitigation and Adaptation 2025](#)
- [SEPA Planning Advice Note for Planning Authorities – LDP Evidence Gathering: Water Scarcity 2025](#)

#### Regional Context

- [Clyde Regional Marine Plan Draft \(pre-consultation draft\) 2019](#)
- [RLUP Phase 1 Process Evaluation Final Report](#)

#### Local/National Park Context

- [Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Carbon Footprint Assessment and Proposed Pathway to Net Zero 2023](#)
- [Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Climate Change Risks and Opportunities Assessment Report 2024](#)
- [The Met Office – Local Authority Climate Reports](#)
- [Stirling Council Draft Climate Adaptation Strategy 2025](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Decarbonisation Plan 2022-2025](#)
- [Stirling Council's Climate and Nature Emergency Plan 2021-2045](#)
- [West Dunbartonshire Council's Climate Change Strategy 2021](#)
- [Perth and Kinross Council Climate Change Strategy 2025](#)
- [Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park - Peatland Action Delivery Programme 2024-2030](#)
- [Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority Future Nature Programme](#)
- [DMG Deer Management Plans](#)

### **Links to Existing Data**

- [SEPA Flood Maps 2025](#)
- [SEPA Flood Management Maps 2025](#)

- [SEPA Drought Risk Assessment Tool 2025](#)
- [Dynamic Coast Future Erosion 2023](#)
- [Scotland Soils Map](#)
- [NatureScot Carbon and Peatland 2016 Map](#)
- [James Hutton Institute Land Capability for Agriculture 2010](#)
- [Landscape Character Assessment 2023](#)

Flood related datasets referred to in this topic paper can be viewed on the [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment \(SFRA\) interactive map](#).

## National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context

Acknowledging that reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a cross-cutting theme within multiple policies of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and its overarching spatial strategy, this evidence paper summarises the individual policies, their intent and anticipated outcomes below:

**Policy 1 - Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises** gives significant weight to development that directly responds to the global climate emergency and the nature crisis. It emphasises that Local Development Plans should incorporate strategies to mitigate emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. This involves promoting nature recovery and restoration within the area, ensuring that spatial planning aligns with environmental sustainability and resilience. The intent is to create a framework that supports both ecological health and community well-being and explores land use tensions in the face of ongoing climate challenges.

**Policy 2 - Climate Mitigation and Adaptation** focuses on encouraging and promoting development that minimises greenhouse gas emissions and adapts to the impacts of climate change. Local Development Plans (LDPs) should be strategically designed to reduce, minimise or avoid emissions while following six spatial principles that guide sustainable location and development. The spatial strategy must consider the implications of proposed developments on greenhouse gas emissions and prioritise adaptation to current and future climate risks. This includes directing development away from vulnerable areas and ensuring that communities can effectively adapt to climate-related challenges. The overall intent is to foster resilient, low-emission environments.

**Policy 5 - Soils** aims to safeguard carbon-rich soils, restore peatlands, and minimise soil disturbance from development. Local Development Plans (LDPs) are required to protect soils that hold local, regional, national, and international significance, as well as areas of lesser quality that are culturally or locally important for primary use. The intent is to ensure that soil resources are preserved, protected and/or enhanced, promoting environmental benefits, sustainable and regenerative agriculture and carbon sequestration while recognising the value of all types of soils in the landscape.

**Policy 10 - Coastal Development** focuses on protecting coastal communities and assets while enhancing resilience to climate change impacts. Local Development Plans (LDPs) should incorporate strategies for adapting coastlines, recognising the significant risks posed by rising sea levels and extreme weather events. A precautionary approach to flood risk, including potential inundation, is essential. The policy encourages the use of nature-based solutions to strengthen the resilience of coastal areas, acknowledging their diversity and specific challenges. Additionally, LDP spatial strategies must identify both developed and undeveloped coastal regions and align with national, sectoral, and regional marine plans. The overall intent is to foster sustainable and resilient coastal development.

## National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2024 – 2029 Context

To support Scotland's target of becoming a Net Zero Nation by 2045, the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) sets out a clear and ambitious programme of action. The Plan outlines priorities to address the climate and nature crises while delivering tangible benefits for local communities and the economy.

A key outcome is for the National Park to reach Net Zero emissions by 2035 and become carbon negative by 2045. This will be achieved through land-based carbon sequestration, nature restoration, low-emissions infrastructure and sustainable development. The Plan also aims to ensure the National Park becomes a carbon sink – absorbing more carbon than it emits – through climate-conscious land management and policy alignment with the Paris Agreement. In response to increasing climate-related impacts such as flooding, landslips and rising temperatures the Partnership Plan prioritises building climate resilience. Key actions include improving infrastructure to withstand extreme weather events, enhancing emergency response planning and implementing nature-based solutions, such as wetland restoration, to mitigate flooding and soil erosion.

Recognising the risks posed by sea level rise and increasingly frequent storms, the Plan highlights the need for adaptive coastal management to protect both natural and human environments. It outlines actions such as monitoring erosion in vulnerable areas to inform decision-making, implementing nature-based coastal defences that work with natural processes to reduce risk, and supporting community-led initiatives aimed at adapting local infrastructure and land use in response to changing coastal conditions.

To address the growing threat to ecosystems and biodiversity, the Plan sets out a programme of large-scale habitat restoration. This includes expanding woodland coverage and creating connected habitat networks to support species movement and resilience. It also prioritises the restoration of degraded peatlands, which play a critical role in carbon storage and biodiversity enhancement. In addition, the Plan calls for better management of unsustainable grazing levels in sensitive upland and woodland areas to enable natural regeneration and long-term ecological recovery.

Transport is a major contributor to the National Park's carbon emissions, and the Plan outlines a series of actions to reduce car dependency and support the shift to low-carbon alternatives. This includes investing in active travel infrastructure, such as walking and cycling routes, and enhancing sustainable public transport options to serve both residents and visitors. The Plan also supports the development of electric vehicle infrastructure and aims to improve access for people without cars, promoting greater equity while easing traffic pressure on local communities.

The Partnership Plan supports a transition to regenerative land management practices that improve soil health, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and strengthen the resilience of rural businesses. Through an integrated Regional Land Use Framework, the Plan advocates for the adoption of regenerative farming techniques, alongside strategic land-use planning that maximises carbon sequestration and enhances habitat quality. It also emphasises the importance of protecting soil through measures that reduce erosion and increase organic matter content, ensuring long-term environmental and economic sustainability.

## Summary of Evidence

This paper addresses key policies outlined in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), including:

- Policy 1 – Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises,

- Policy 2 – Climate Mitigation and Adaptation,
- Policy 5 – Soils, and
- Policy 10 – Coastal Development.

The vital role that sustainable and regenerative land use plays in enhancing soil health and supporting climate and nature restoration is acknowledged. Although there is no specific NPF4 policy on land use, this topic paper incorporates this critical evidence to highlight its significance in achieving broader climate and nature goals. As set out in the National Park Partnership Plan, an integrated approach to land use and development is essential.

It is also important to acknowledge that there is overlap between the Infrastructure First paper and NPF4 Policy 22 – Flood Risk and Water Management. However, this policy will be explored in more detail in Topic Paper 4. Similarly, the overlap and relationship between climate and nature is recognised in light of the need to address both the climate and nature crises: we face twin reinforcing crises: a decline in biodiversity will exacerbate the climate crisis – and a changing climate will accelerate the rate of biodiversity loss. However, NPF4 Policy 3 – Biodiversity will be considered in more detail in Topic Paper 2.

The summary of evidence section below is structured in the following order:

- Climate Change: Mitigation and Adaptation
- Land Use

## **CLIMATE CHANGE: MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION**

### National Context

#### Scotland's Climate Change Legislation

The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 is part of Scotland's effort to tackle the climate crisis. It builds on the Paris Agreement by aiming to limit global warming to well below 2°C, ideally to 1.5°C. The Act updates the previous 2009 Climate Change (Scotland) Act by setting stricter emissions reduction goals, with targets to reduce emissions by 75% by 2030, 90% by 2040, and to reach net-zero emissions by 2045, all based on levels from 1990.

More recently, the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2024 builds upon the framework set by the 2019 Act, with a key shift towards a carbon budget system. This replaces the previous approach of annual emissions reduction targets, offering a more flexible, multi-year framework for achieving Scotland's goal of net-zero emissions by 2045.

#### Update to Scotland's Climate Change Plan 2018 – 2032 – Securing a Green Recovery on a Path to Net Zero

The Scottish Government publishes a strategic delivery plan every five years to meet emissions reduction targets. The 2020 update to the 2018 Climate Change Plan outlines a pathway to reduce emissions by 2032. Work is ongoing for the next plan, covering 2026 to 2040, which will be published in draft after receiving advice from the Climate Change Committee and setting Carbon Budget levels through secondary legislation.

## **Scottish National Adaptation Plan (SNAP3) 2024-2029**

The Scottish National Adaptation Plan outlines actions to enhance Scotland's resilience to climate change, focusing on supporting communities, businesses, public services, and nature in adapting to a changing climate in a fair and inclusive manner. It sets a long-term vision and defines priorities for the next five years, in line with the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, which imposes a legal duty on the public sector to support adaptation goals. The Plan aims to help people adapt and thrive in a changing climate.

The vision for Scotland is one that is resilient, inclusive, and well-adapted to climate change. Over the next five years, critical actions will lay the foundation for this future, where:

1. Nature is connected across the land, settlements, coasts, and seas, supporting biodiversity, providing shelter from extreme weather, and enhancing physical and mental health, with urban areas benefiting from green spaces.
2. Communities create climate-resilient, healthy, and equitable places, where people are empowered, buildings are safe from flooding and overheating, and communities contribute to making their environments attractive and resilient.
3. Public services work collaboratively, ensuring people have reliable access to essential services like health, education, and transport, with climate adaptation benefiting health, wellbeing, and equity.
4. Economies and industries adapt and seize opportunities within Scotland's Just Transition, creating a wellbeing economy that is resilient to climate shocks. Sectors like farming, forestry, fishing, and aquaculture are adapting to sustain livelihoods, with secure supply chains.
5. Scotland's international role supports climate justice and global adaptation efforts, offering practical solidarity with the Global South, contributing to global climate goals, and advocating for climate justice for the most affected countries.

In essence, the Adaptation Plan aims to ensure Scotland is well-prepared to face climate change while fostering a fair and sustainable future for its people, economy, and the environment.

## **Scotland's National Marine Plan 2015**

Scotland's National Marine Plan addresses climate change and coastal change by emphasising the need for adaptive management of marine and coastal environments. It acknowledges the risks posed by rising sea levels, increased flooding, and extreme weather events, advocating for strategies that enhance resilience in coastal communities and ecosystems. The plan encourages the use of nature-based solutions to mitigate these impacts, promote biodiversity, and support sustainable economic activities. By integrating climate considerations into marine planning, the NMP aims to ensure the sustainable use of marine resources while protecting coastal areas from the adverse effects of climate change.

## **Scottish Government Planning Guidance: Policy 2 – Climate Mitigation and Adaptation 2025**

Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) guidance on Policy 2: Climate Mitigation and Adaptation sets out clear expectations for how Local Development Plans (LDPs) and planning decisions must address climate change. LDPs are expected to embed climate mitigation and adaptation at all levels, including policies that promote long-term monitoring of



low-carbon and resilience measures, and the integration of nature-based solutions such as biodiversity networks, flood risk management, and sustainable infrastructure. The guidance reinforces the need for a plan-led approach, ensuring that future development supports Scotland's net zero targets and is resilient to current and future climate risks. In determining planning applications, proposals must demonstrate how they reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to climate-related impacts (e.g. flooding, overheating), and incorporate measures that conserve, restore or enhance natural assets, following a mitigation hierarchy. This guidance is a key material consideration in both plan-making and decision-making and will directly inform the development of our proposed plan.

### **SEPA Planning Advice Note for Planning Authorities – LDP Evidence Gathering: Water Scarcity 2025**

Creating climate-resilient places is a central aim of NPF4, and understanding the challenges and opportunities presented by the water environment is essential to achieving this. Water scarcity, driven by climate change and increasingly frequent and prolonged dry periods, poses significant risks, including pressure on water supplies, reduced water availability for agriculture and businesses, ecological impacts, drier soils that increase flood and wildfire risks and complications in water discharge processes. With additional demands such as water use for hydrogen production expected, effective water resource management is becoming even more critical. The planning system plays a key role in responding to these challenges by guiding land use and development in ways that mitigate climate impacts. Through a planned and collaborative approach, Local Development Plans can contribute to water scarcity resilience by prioritising infrastructure-first development, supporting sustainable water management, maximising blue-green infrastructure and nature networks, protecting land that delivers multiple ecosystem benefits (such as peatlands and natural flood management) and avoiding reliance on private water supplies in vulnerable areas.

### **SEPA Drought Risk Assessment Tool 2025**

The SEPA Drought Risk Assessment Tool is an interactive platform that provides real-time insight into drought potential across Scotland. It highlights trends in prolonged low flows and assigns water scarcity levels, ranging from normal to significant by hydrometric area between May and September, to help detect evolving drought conditions.

As of the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2025, the water scarcity levels are largely at normal conditions throughout the National Park. However, early warning levels have been recorded in the Upper Earn area (covering Lochearnhead and St Fillan's) and the Glen Lochay and Glen Dochart area (covering Killin, Crianlarich and Tyndrum).

### **Scotland's Soils Map**

[Scotland's Soils Map](#) offers a detailed overview of the soil types and characteristics within Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park reflecting the diverse geology and topography. Understanding the soil distribution within the National Park helps in the following ways, to protect peatlands and other sensitive soils for climate and nature, to promote sustainable farming and regenerative practices to ensure soil health and productivity and also by selecting appropriate tree species for planting based on soil characteristics promoting healthy and successful woodland environments.

The Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park straddles the Highland Boundary Fault dividing it into two distinct regions as characterised in Nature Scot's Landscape Character Assessment. Blanket peats and gleys (wet clay soils deprived of oxygen) dominate the soils above 200m and are widespread on gentler hills, slopes and rounded summits. Soils become thin on upland slopes, and rock outcrops, boulders and screes can be extensive. Unsustainable levels of wild and domesticated grazing and browsing animals in some upland and woodland areas are leading to reduced tree cover and the erosion of soils.

South of the Highland Boundary Fault and in sheltered glens, soils are primarily Brown Earths, which are well-drained and have high natural fertility. They often support better quality grassland or are cultivated for fodder crops.

### **Carbon and Peatland 2016 map**

Carbon-rich soils are important for carbon storage and biodiversity in Scotland. Carbon-rich soils consist of peat soils and peaty soils (also known as an organo-mineral soil). In Scotland, peat soils are defined as soil with a surface peat layer with more than 60% organic matter and of at least 50cm thickness. Peaty/organo-mineral soils have a shallower peat layer (<50cm) at the surface. Peat is found in naturally cold, highly acidic and waterlogged environments, which provide ideal conditions for a slow transformation of peatland vegetation into peat material - a form of soil organic matter stable over long period of time if undisturbed.

Carbon-rich soils are the main reservoir of terrestrial organic carbon in Scotland and when degraded are a significant contributor to Scotland's annual CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions. Scotland's soils are an important carbon store containing more than 3,000 Megatonnes (Mt), for context this is more than half the UK's soil carbon store and 60 times more than Scotland's vegetation, it is mostly held as organic carbon in peat and peaty soils.

Peatland habitats can be divided into four broad classes (blanket bog, upland raised bog, lowland raised bog, and fen) depending on the types of plants that formed the peat. Priority peatland habitats are sub-sets of these broad habitats which have been recognised under the Scottish Biodiversity Framework as being important to protect for their conservation and biodiversity value.

The [Carbon and peatland 2016 map](#) shows the distribution of carbon and peatland classes across the whole of Scotland. It gives a value to indicate the likely presence of carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat for each individually mapped area, at a coarse scale. The map shows five different classes of peat soils. Class 1 and 2 are solely, or are dominated by, land with peat soil and peatland priority habitats. Class 5 is peat soil >50cm but currently without peatland habitats. Class 3 is peaty soil with some/mostly peat forming vegetation.

Within the National Park, carbon and peatland classes 1, 2, 3 and 5 are predominantly found in upland areas above 200m aside from a handful of raised bog sites between Balloch and the River Endrick.

### **SEPA Flood Maps 2025**

SEPA's coastal flood maps show a high risk of flooding along the coast from Kilmun to Arrochar and Succoth along Loch Long, as well as Loch Goil and surrounding villages. As a planning authority, the National Park Authority must ensure through the planning process that people and

property are protected, and new development in these areas at high risk of coastal flooding is appropriately controlled.

The SFRA (see Appendix) analysis also highlights areas vulnerable to coastal erosion and flooding, particularly along the Cowal Peninsula. Based on the [Dynamic Coast Future Erosion](#) data, parts of settlements such as Ardentinny, Lochgoilhead, Carrick Castle, Kilmun, Strone, and Blairmore are most at risk by 2050 under a high emissions scenario. Some areas, including Loch Long, Loch Goil, Gairletter Point, and settlements like Ardentinny, Kilmun, Blairmore, and Strone, already have artificial coastal defences in place.

Coastal Change Adaptation Plans (CCAPs) are vital for understanding both current and future coastal erosion and flooding risks. While Argyll and Bute Council's CCAP status is still to be confirmed, plans are under development for locations identified in Cycle 2 of the Local Flood Risk Management Plan. Ongoing engagement will help improve the approach to coastal risk management.

While this topic paper focuses specifically on coastal flooding and defence, it is important to recognise the need to consider both climate resilience and sustainable land management in wider flood mitigation strategies; a more comprehensive overview of all types of flooding within the National Park is provided in Topic Paper 4 and the associated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

### Regional Context

#### **Draft Clyde Regional Marine Plan 2019**

Once adopted by Ministers, the Clyde Regional Marine Plan will provide a statutory policy framework to support decision-making and inward investment. The plan will also support Scotland's National Marine Plan and UK Marine Policy Statement at a regional level.

Around the Clyde region, the mean sea level is projected to be at least 47cm higher in 2080 than it was in 2008. Thus, with increased frequency of extreme weather events, the management of existing and proposed developments and activities along the coastal areas of the National Park is crucial.

### Local/National Park Context

#### **Argyll and Bute Decarbonisation Plan 2022-2025**

Argyll and Bute Council's Decarbonisation Plan for 2022-2025 aims to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote sustainability, with a target of achieving net-zero by 2045. Key initiatives include enhancing energy efficiency in public buildings, increasing investment in renewable energy sources, and developing sustainable transport infrastructure to encourage active travel. The plan also emphasises community engagement to foster local participation in climate action and prioritises biodiversity through the enhancement of natural habitats. Overall, it takes a comprehensive approach to integrate environmental, economic, and social factors for a sustainable future in the region.

### **Stirling Council's Climate and Nature Emergency (CaNE) Plan 2021-2045**

Outlines five pivotal objectives designed to address the interconnected challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss. The first objective is to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2045. This ambitious goal encompasses a comprehensive set of strategies aimed at reducing energy consumption, enhancing the utilisation of renewable energy sources and promoting sustainable transportation options throughout the region.

The second objective focuses on biodiversity enhancement and habitat restoration. Recognising the critical importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems, the plan emphasises the need to protect and improve local biodiversity. Initiatives aimed at restoring habitats and expanding green spaces are central to this objective, supporting wildlife and contributing to overall ecological health.

Community engagement and empowerment constitute the third objective of the plan. By fostering robust participation in climate and nature initiatives, Stirling Council aims to raise awareness and encourage local actions that contribute to sustainability efforts. This community-centred approach empowers residents to take an active role in addressing environmental challenges.

The fourth objective promotes sustainable practices across all council services, encouraging both businesses and residents to adopt environmentally responsible behaviours. By embedding sustainability into daily operations and community life, the Council seeks to create a culture of environmental stewardship that extends beyond its own activities.

Finally, the plan emphasises the importance of building resilience to climate impacts as its fifth objective. Enhancing the resilience of communities and infrastructure is crucial in preparing for the adverse effects of climate change. This involves implementing adaptation strategies that address risks such as flooding and extreme weather events, ensuring that the region is better equipped to handle future challenges.

To support the CaNE Plan, [Stirling Council's Draft Adaptation Strategy](#) is currently out for public consultation. Appendix 1 of the Plan outlines a range of climate-related risks and opportunities specific to the Stirling Council area, offering a helpful evidence base to inform the development of the National Park's Proposed Plan.

### **West Dunbartonshire Council's Climate Change Strategy 2021**

West Dunbartonshire's Climate Change Strategy presents a comprehensive framework aimed at addressing climate change through targeted mitigation and adaptation efforts. A key component of the strategy is the establishment of ambitious carbon reduction targets. These targets are designed to significantly decrease carbon emissions across the council area, aligning with national objectives for achieving net-zero emissions.

In support of these carbon reduction goals, the strategy promotes sustainable energy initiatives. This includes a strong emphasis on increasing the use of renewable energy sources and implementing energy efficiency improvements in buildings and infrastructure. By reducing reliance on fossil fuels, the strategy aims to foster a more sustainable energy landscape within the region.

The strategy also highlights the importance of enhancing local biodiversity and preserving green spaces.

Protecting and restoring habitats is essential for supporting wildlife and maintaining ecological health. By prioritising green spaces, West Dunbartonshire seeks to create a more resilient natural environment that benefits both the ecosystem and the community.

Community engagement is another crucial aspect of the strategy. The Council actively seeks to involve residents in climate initiatives, raising awareness about climate change and encouraging local actions that contribute to resilience. By fostering community participation, the strategy aims to empower residents to take meaningful steps toward sustainability.

Finally, the Climate Change Strategy outlines specific adaptation measures to address the impacts of climate change. This includes strategies for flood management and improving the resilience of infrastructure to withstand extreme weather events. By integrating these adaptation measures, West Dunbartonshire aims to ensure that its communities are better prepared for the challenges posed by climate change.

### **Perth and Kinross Council Climate Change Strategy 2025**

Perth and Kinross Council's Climate Change Strategy encompasses key objectives aimed at addressing climate change comprehensively. These include reducing greenhouse gas emissions across various sectors, promoting renewable energy development, and enhancing energy efficiency in buildings and infrastructure. The strategy emphasises community engagement to involve residents and local stakeholders in climate action initiatives. Additionally, it focuses on adaptation and resilience by identifying measures to protect vulnerable areas and enhance community infrastructure against climate impacts. Supporting biodiversity and nature recovery is also a priority, contributing to ecosystem health and sustainability. Collectively, these objectives aim to foster a sustainable and resilient future for the region while aligning with national climate goals.

### **Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Carbon Footprint Assessment and Proposed Pathway to Net Zero 2023**

In May 2023, a carbon footprint assessment and proposed pathway to net zero for the National Park was published. Commissioned by the National Park Authority, prepared by Small World Consulting, this report is part of a wider initiative to assess carbon emissions across all 15 of the UK's National Parks and chart a clear path towards achieving net zero.

The Report provides a consumption-based assessment of greenhouse gas emissions. The baseline year for the assessment is 2019, and it also includes Paris-aligned target recommendations for transitioning the region to net zero and beyond. The details can be found in the report linked above.

It highlights planning as a key tool to address GHG emissions, specifically through decarbonising the built sector and informing what types of renewable energy technology that will be appropriate and where within the National Park. There is also scope for Planning to increase new green infrastructure through its natural capital enhancement strategies, with policies on Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity Net Gain having the potential to deliver biodiversity and climate change adaptation benefits through development.

## Carbon Footprint Assessment

The results of the GHG assessment are shown in Table 1 below. In 2019, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs residents emitted a total of 217,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. In comparison to the national averages, the per capita carbon footprint of residents in Loch Lomond & the Trossachs is 17.6% higher. Key contributors to this higher footprint include driving, which produces emissions 36% above the UK average, and flying and other transport, which are approximately 30% higher. Household fuel emissions (excluding driving) are about 12% higher than the national average, while household electricity emissions are significantly higher, at 61% above the UK average. These factors indicate a relatively higher environmental impact in the National Park compared to other regions in the UK.

*Table 1: Results of the Carbon Footprint Assessment for Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park*

<b>Loch Lomond &amp; The Trossachs National Park</b> (See Figure 2 – Figure 5)	
Annual emissions from residents	<b>217,433 tCO<sub>2</sub>e</b> (14.5 tCO <sub>2</sub> e per person per year)
Annual emissions from visitors while in the National Park	<b>95,712 tCO<sub>2</sub>e</b> (21.2 kgCO <sub>2</sub> e per visitor-day)
Annual emissions from visitors travelling to/from the National Park	<b>290,978 tCO<sub>2</sub>e</b> (106.8 kgCO <sub>2</sub> e per visit)
Annual industry emissions	<b>52,938 tCO<sub>2</sub>e</b>

Visitors to the National Park generated 387,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in emissions, with 290,978 tCO<sub>2</sub>e attributed to travel to and from the National Park and 95,712 tCO<sub>2</sub>e produced during their stay. Emissions from visitor travel are primarily driven by personal flights (51%) and vehicle fuel (35%), with other public transport accounting for just 5%. While in the National Park, the majority of visitor emissions come from food and drink (42%), followed by accommodation (18%) excluding food.

The industry-related GHG emissions in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs total 52,938 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. The largest source of emissions comes from Accommodation and Food Services, which account for 41% of the total emissions (21,735 tCO<sub>2</sub>e). This is followed by Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing, contributing 19% (9,819 tCO<sub>2</sub>e), and Production (manufacturing) at 11% (5,981 tCO<sub>2</sub>e).

## Proposed Pathway to Net Zero

The Report sets out the pathway to reach a consumption-based net zero by 2033 and beyond, to become a carbon sink as one of the “lungs” of Scotland contributing to the UK’s Net Zero target. It establishes a 2019 baseline for the National Park for the purposes of achieving net zero of 301,367 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year, and provides tailored, Paris-aligned emission reduction targets across six categories. These are energy-related greenhouse gas emissions, food and drink consumption by residents and visitors, other goods purchased, visitor travel to and from the National Park, and land use-related carbon dioxide and non-carbon dioxide emissions. More detail on the rationale and scope of target categories is found in section 6 of the Report.

The proposed emissions reduction and carbon sequestration targets call for immediate and ambitious action across all six emission categories, with each component being the minimum required in order to align with the IPCC’s recommendations for limiting global temperature change to 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial conditions.



Land use change measures, particularly peatland restoration and new woodland creation, are noteworthy as contributing the largest proportion of the annual net reduction in GHG emissions of the footprint categories (see Figure 20 of the Report). The Report also notes the importance of managing agricultural land sustainably, both to enhance soil carbon sequestration and to achieve co-benefits such as biodiversity gains and flood risk mitigation. The dominance of car travel is a major contributor to carbon emissions and is covered in more depth in Topic Paper 6 – Sustainable Transport.

Based on the target-setting of the Report, the National Park would achieve a total cumulative reduction in the net annual GHG emissions of 1,003,990 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year between 2019 and 2050. The net estimate includes both reductions in emissions and carbon sequestration.

### **Climate Predictions: The Met Office - Local Authority Climate Reports**

Temperature increases are expected across Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, with summer maximum temperatures projected to rise by between +4.7 degrees Celsius and +5.6 degrees Celsius under a 4-degree Celsius global warming level. Annual average temperatures are also expected to rise significantly by up to +3.2-degree Celsius. Winter temperatures will also become markedly milder, with minimum winter temperatures by +5.3 to +7 degrees Celsius, reducing the frequency and severity of frost and snow across the National Park.

In terms of precipitation, the National Park is projected to experience drier summers and wetter winters. Summer rainfall could decrease by 15-24%, increasing the likelihood of seasonal water stress and drought. Meanwhile, winter precipitation could rise by +10-11%, raising flood risk and pressure on existing drainage and water infrastructure.

These projected climate changes highlight the importance of integrating robust climate mitigation and adaptation policies. The National Park Authority will need to plan for significantly warmer conditions, increased heat stress, water scarcity and increased flood risk.

### **Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Climate Change Risks and Opportunities Assessment 2024**

In January 2024, LUC was appointed by the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority to conduct a strategic climate change adaptation risk and opportunities assessment for the National Park. The assessment covers the entire park, which has been divided into nine areas to facilitate analysis and future adaptation planning. These areas were determined using Community Council boundaries, taking into account the locations of the main settlements so that each area includes at least one settlement. Localised climate projections and hazard identification results were used to pinpoint the primary climate hazards most likely to cause damage or impact activities and services within the National Park. The following key hazards were identified:

- Wildfire
- Flood risk
- Storms
- Increased temperatures and extreme temperature events
- Reduced water availability/drought
- Increased precipitation
- Landslides

Additionally, a list of the main receptors - elements that can be harmed by these hazards was identified and agreed upon in collaboration with the National Park Authority. These receptors were categorised into infrastructure, habitats, visitor and recreational destinations, settlements, historic assets, and agriculture and forestry. They were selected based on their critical importance in supporting nature, communities, local economies, visitors, and the National Park Authority's operations.

Finally, the risks identified were scored and assigned a risk rating based on an assessment of the severity of the risks for each receptor in relation to each hazard. It is important to note that the use of this risk assessment for future planning must be supplemented by further locationally specific research and ground truthing to determine the exact nature and severity of the risks. The details of the in-depth climate change risk assessment and mapping for each of the areas can be found in the assessment report linked above.

Informed by the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3) Summary for Scotland, the report also identified a small number of opportunities. However, it is important to recognise that these opportunities are influenced by various factors and may come with uncertainties and new risks. Additionally, some opportunities may be linked to specific adaptation responses rather than directly arising from the changing climate.

### **Climate Change and Bracken Control**

Within the context of climate change risks and opportunities, bracken may present a particular challenge for the National Park. A [paper](#) written by the James Hutton Institute on the Implications of not controlling bracken with asulam in Scotland highlights how warmer temperatures, longer frost-free periods and drier conditions are expected to increase bracken biomass substantially, by more than 30% in the central Highlands and over 15% across much of the north and west of Scotland, including upland areas. This expansion could allow bracken to spread into higher altitudes, forming dense stands that suppress other species and reduce biodiversity. Long-term monitoring in southern Scotland already shows bracken growth increasing in line with these projections, indicating that similar pressures are likely to arise within the National Park and may require adaptive management responses.

### **Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park - Peatland Action Delivery Programme 2024-2030**

It is estimated that 68,000ha of land within Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park is covered by peatland, including four Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) that are designated due to their peatland component.

The 68,000 hectares of peatland within the National Park are estimated to store around 20 million tonnes of carbon. However, a significant portion of this peatland has been degraded over time due to historical agricultural practices, forestry, and other forms of land management. In addition, natural processes - such as erosion and drought - have also contributed to its decline. To support climate goals and enhance carbon capture, the National Park Authority must prioritise the restoration of degraded peat, ensuring these vital ecosystems are protected and their condition significantly improved.

Within the National Park, this amounts to approximately 11,000ha of peatland. These areas of broken peat within the National Park are shown in map 1, attached in the Appendix, alongside the restoration projects that have been completed up to the end of 2023/24 financial year. Of the 57,000ha that is not visibly degraded, national estimates suggest that up to 45,600ha (80%) of



that peatland will also be degraded, but not to an extent that it will be visible from aerial imagery. This 45,600ha represents peatland that is likely to require changes in land management practices such as reductions in grazing pressure by sheep and deer or changes in forestry such as forest to bog conversion. The remaining 7,054ha of degraded peatland is suitable for physical restoration via National Park Authority Peatland ACTION funding, 1,887ha of which has been restored from 2015 to March 2024.

In addition to storing carbon, healthy peatlands also play a key role in regulating water flows. Intact peatlands act as natural sponges - soaking up rainfall and slowly releasing it over time - which can help reduce the severity of both flooding during heavy rain and drought during dry periods. By restoring and maintaining healthy peatland, the National Park can strengthen its resilience to climate impacts and protect downstream communities and habitats from water-related extremes.

## **LAND USE**

### **National Context**

#### **Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy and Delivery Plan 2024**

Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 acknowledges the intertwined nature of the climate and biodiversity crises, emphasising that addressing one necessitates tackling the other. The Strategy also emphasises integrating nature-based solutions to combat climate change, recognising that health ecosystems play a crucial role in carbon sequestration and climate resilience. The strategy sets ambitious goals to be Nature Positive by 2030 and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity across the country by 2045.

Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 also emphasise the critical role of land use change and soil management in enhancing biodiversity and combating climate change through peatland restoration, sustainable land management to improve soil health and soil conservation.

#### **Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy 2021-2026**

Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy integrates climate change and soil health into land use decisions to encourage sustainable, climate-resilient land management, such as afforestation and regenerative farming. Soil management through restoring and protecting soils is promoted through actions like peatland restoration. The strategy encourages land use that enhances resilience to climate change through activities such as maintaining and enhancing wetland areas. The strategy advocates for a more integrated approach to deliver multiple objectives, incorporating actions for climate and soil conservation to benefit climate, nature and local communities.

### **Regional Context**

#### **Regional Land Use Partnerships: Phase 1 Process Evaluation Final Report**

The Regional Land Use Partnerships: Phase 1 Process Evaluation Final Report highlights Scotland's commitment to integrating land use planning with climate change mitigation and soil health. It underlines that land use is essential for achieving net-zero targets and fulfilling future actions of Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy. The report emphasises that balancing various land

demands is crucial for a just transition to net-zero, with regional approaches offering a balance between local needs and national goals. The evaluation recognises the importance of the development of Regional Land Use Frameworks (RLUFs) to identify land use opportunities that support climate and nature targets, foster collaborative delivery and establish data tools for natural capital assessment to inform land use decisions.

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park as an established pilot region will integrate where possible their Regional Land Use Framework and Local Development Plan.

### **Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority Future Nature Programme**

The Future Nature Programme is an ambitious initiative aimed at halting and reversing the decline of nature within the National Park and emphasises the importance of restoring habitats and enhancing biodiversity to create a resilient, nature-rich environment. It acknowledges the intrinsic link between climate change and biodiversity loss and emphasises the restoration of peatlands for their significant role in carbon storage. It promotes sustainable land use practices that align with nature restoration and climate objectives.

#### **Local/National Park Context**

### **Deer Management Group (DMG) - Deer Management Plans**

Deer Management Plans can play a significant role in land use planning to deliver for climate and soil health by planning for managing deer numbers to address overgrazing, allow the widespread natural recovery and expansion of native woodlands, and the protection of fragile soils, at a landscape and collaborative scale. Management of deer across a landscape can support and restore healthy habitats vital for carbon sequestration.

Within Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park there are nine active Deer Management Groups or Forums supported by Nature Scot and other agencies. The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority Herbivore Action Plan is currently in draft and once finalised it will co-ordinate an annual action plan across the landscape going forward.

### **James Hutton Institute - Land Capability for Agriculture Map 2010**

The Land Capability for Agriculture map is a tool to help guide sustainable land use policies, ensuring that land is used efficiently to deliver for carbon storage, biodiversity and sustainable food production.

Within the boundaries of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, land use is categorised with 65% of predominant land use for agriculture primarily involving extensive livestock farming of hill sheep and beef cattle. 7% of land use is categorised as water with the remaining land use being woodlands including commercial forestry, ancient broadleaf woodland, wood pasture and farmland with trees.

Understanding land use classifications can help in considering land use opportunities, for example by identifying land with high potential for afforestation or reforestation and areas suitable for habitat restoration and conservation. The map can also provide detailed information on soil types and their capabilities guiding the selection of crops best suited to specific areas as well as identifying areas prone to soil erosion and where soil conservation practices could be applied.

Prime agricultural land (classes 1-3) can be more intensively farmed and sustainable and regenerative practices can reduce emissions. For lower-quality agricultural land (classes 5-7) considering mixed land use can deliver multiple benefits supporting agriculture and biodiversity. The National Park Authority are currently in the process of commissioning a report on the Value of Farming and Land Use which will seek to quantify and explore further the classifications for the National Park Authority.

## Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

As part of the Evidence Gathering process for the new Local Development Plan (LDP), the National Park Authority developed a suite of Topic Papers and Area Summaries to explore key planning themes and local issues across the National Park. These documents form the technical and spatial foundation for the new LDP and were central to the targeted community engagement process between May and July.

Ten Topic Papers were drafted, aligning with the relevant policies in NPF4. These papers summarise national, regional, and local data, providing a detailed evidence base on subjects such as climate change, biodiversity, housing, infrastructure, and the rural economy. They were developed by National Park officers, incorporating input from key public bodies including SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot, Transport Scotland, and local authorities.

A draft of this topic paper was sent to:

- Historic Environment Scotland
- NatureScot
- SEPA
- Scottish Water
- Scottish Forestry
- Marine Scotland
- West Dunbartonshire Council
- Argyll and Bute Council
- Stirling Council
- Perth and Kinross Council
- Crofting Commission
- Scottish Government RLUP Team
- Scottish Government RPID

Six Area Summaries were also produced to provide a more accessible, place-based and spatial view of the evidence. These summaries incorporate mapped information alongside key content from the registered Local Place Plans, highlighting key opportunities, challenges, and priorities for specific areas within the National Park. The spatial presentation was intended to support more informed and locally relevant discussion during in-person workshops.

As part of the engagement activities, a series of in-person workshops were held in May and June 2025 across the National Park to present the Area Summaries and gather feedback directly from local community organisations and stakeholders. To ensure wider participation, complementary online surveys were also made available, allowing people to review and comment on both the Topic Papers and Area Summaries over a six-week period (May – July 2025). In addition to public engagement, input was actively sought from key statutory agencies and partner organisations throughout the preparation process to help shape and strengthen the evidence base.

Summary of Responses	
Respondent	Summary of Comments and Response
Historic Environment Scotland	<p>Historic Environment Scotland are content with the accuracy and completeness of data relating to the historic environment in the paper.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Noted.</p>
NatureScot	<p>NatureScot highlighted the need to strengthen links between the biodiversity and climate papers, in line with NPF4's emphasis on addressing both crises together. They suggested expanding discussion of biodiversity, nature networks, woodlands forestry, particularly their roles in climate mitigation, carbon sequestration and connectivity. Greater clarity and evidence were requested on peatland figures, as well as recognition of the importance of non-peat carbon-rich soils and carbon sequestration from woodlands and forestry. The feedback also stresses the need to address land management pressures, including bracken control, grazing, invasive species and the growing risks to tree health from pests, diseases and pathogens driven by climate change. They also recommended drawing on SNAP3, to evidence the role of nature-based solutions.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> A stronger link has been established between the biodiversity and climate papers. In consultation with NatureScot, it was clarified that the peatland figures are drawn from the National Park Peatland Action Delivery Programme and were calculated using NatureScot's Carbon and Peatland Map (2016). SNAP3 has also been summarised within the paper. While further evidence on biodiversity, nature networks, and land management pressures is primarily covered in Topic Paper 2, the paper now incorporates information on the impacts of climate change on bracken control.</p>
SEPA	<p>SEPA highlighted their PAN on water scarcity has now been published and can be used to inform the Evidence Report. Additionally, they noted there is no link to the Scottish National Adaptation Plan 3 (SNAP3) document.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> SEPA's Water Scarcity PAN has been summarised in the paper and a link to SNAP3 included.</p>
Scottish Water	<p>Scottish Water supports the content of the Topic Paper.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Noted.</p>
Marine Scotland	<p>Marine Scotland confirmed there were no further comments at this stage.</p>
Stirling Council	<p>Stirling Council highlighted additional policies, strategies, and reports.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> A link to Stirling Council's Draft Climate Adaptation Strategy has been incorporated in the paper.</p>
Kilmarnock Community Council	<p>Kilmarnock Community Council highlighted the need for the National Park Authority to address carbon impacts in non-residential developments by making construction emissions visible in planning applications and environmental reports. It was suggested that the National Park Authority encourage mitigation measures, promote low-carbon materials and waste reuse, and begin accounting for the carbon impact of planning decisions to better align with Net Zero goals.</p>

	<b>Response:</b> Comments have been noted. However, as the comments received do not identify gaps in evidence, data, or information, but instead reflect views on requirements, it is considered that these are best addressed at the next stage during preparation of the Proposed Plan.
Homes for Scotland	Homes for Scotland highlighted Climate Change related data for the National Park Authority to consider as evidence and raised points regarding new house building's contribution to sustainability, climate change and local living objectives and also the Local Development Plan's role in delivering a development strategy and policies/guidance that helps deliver sustainable new housing on greenfield sites selected to protect important soils. <b>Response:</b> All comments noted and will be considered as part of the preparation of the new Local Development Plan. All relevant data sources are considered to have been included in this Paper.

## Summary of Implication for the Proposed Plan

The implications of the evidence for the Proposed Plan may be summarised as follows:

- **Climate Mitigation and Adaptation** - In line with National Planning Framework 4, the National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029, national legislation and international agreements the National Park Authority is required to take urgent and effective action to address the risks of climate change and meet crucial carbon emission reduction targets by 2035. As such, the new Local Development Plan (LDP) will need to consider the reduction, minimisation and avoidance of greenhouse gas emissions within the spatial strategy, while also supporting adaptation to and mitigation of the current and future impacts of climate change.
- **Sustainable Development Strategy** - The new LDP should prioritise sustainable locations for the majority of development. This would promote local living and working and reduce car travel distances through increased opportunities for modal shift, including for visitors when in the National Park, thereby directly contributing to addressing the climate crisis. In several communities this will require to be considered carefully through a rural lens as there are significant challenges when considering land allocation (for small housing sites for example) where flooding is a significant constraint and alternative locations may be required. This is particularly the case for Aberfoyle and Strathard where bespoke place based local policies will most likely be needed to facilitate agreed local solutions for future development needs.
- **Renewable Energy and Heating** - Opportunities as outlined in Topic Paper 5 – Energy & Heat and Cooling, and directly relevant to tackling climate change, the new LDP should explore and maximise the area's potential for renewable, low-carbon, and zero-emission energy opportunities to meet the needs of National Park residents and businesses as well as promote community-scale energy and heat generation in areas of high energy demand. The new LDP should consider providing locational guidance to direct appropriate renewable energy development within the National Park.
- **Peatland Restoration** - To reduce the significant amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced from exposed, damaged and drained peatland soils across the National Park, the new LDP should protect carbon-rich soils, the restoration of peatlands and minimise soil disturbance from development activities.
- **Increased Flood Risk** - The new LDP must ensure that site allocations are based on comprehensive flood risk information, being cognisant of coastal erosion, coastal flood risk

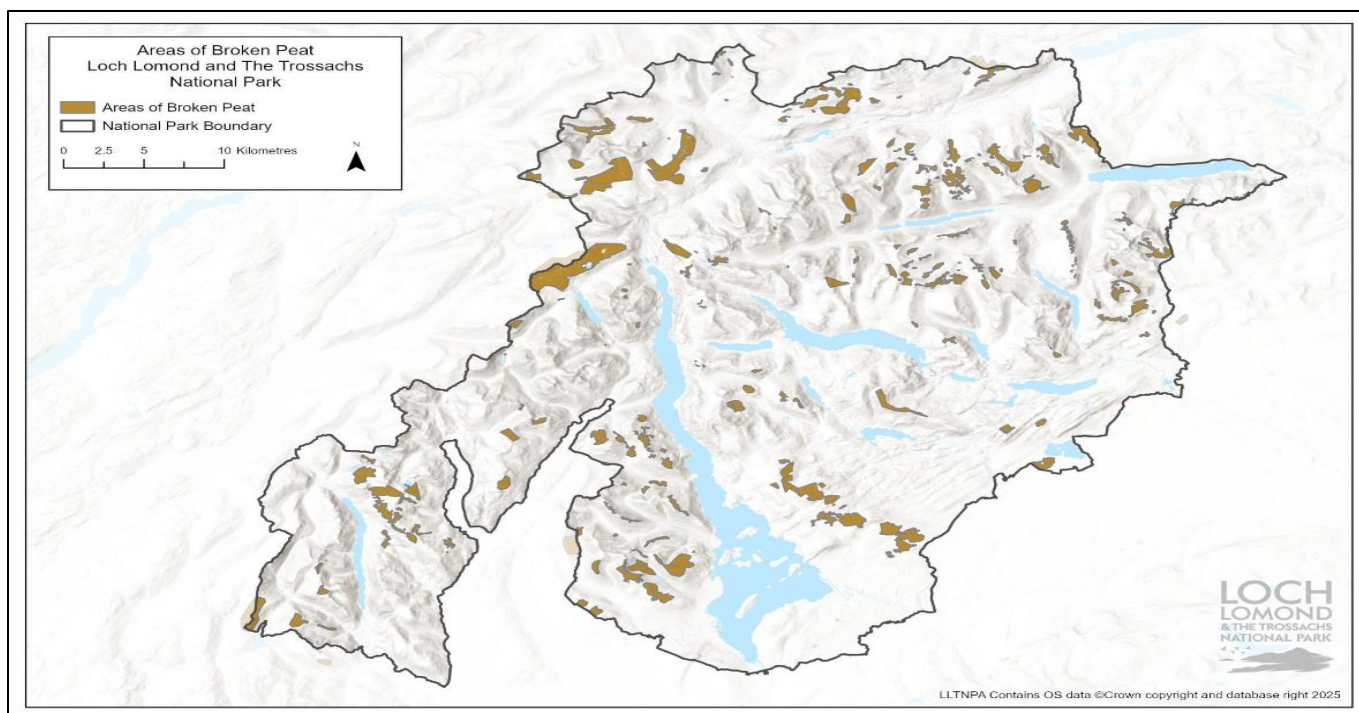
and climate change in accordance with NPF4 Policy 22, and in doing so refer to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) to support flood risk management and site suitability assessments.

- **Land Identification for Flood Management** - Additionally, the new LDP should consider identifying and safeguarding land for flood management.
- **Soils** - The new LDP should seek to identify soils that hold local, regional, national, and international significance, as well as areas of lesser quality that are culturally or locally important for primary use. This shall be informed by the Value of Farming and Land Use report that has recently been commissioned by the National Park Authority. These soils should be protected and enhanced in line with the requirements of NPF4 Policy 5.
- **Integration of Land Use and Spatial Planning** - There is an aspiration to integrate land use change within the new Local Development Plan (LDP) to allow it to also function as a Regional Land Use Framework for the National Park. The new LDP will also identify opportunities for land use change to provide an integrated delivery framework. By highlighting existing constraints and opportunities, whether environmental, infrastructure, policy or regulation, the plan can enable informed and constructive discussion, helping to identify development needs and potential with the proactive land management delivering for multiple public benefits.

### Statements of Agreement / Dispute

There are no substantive areas of disagreement on the evidence in the paper. Feedback from respondents to the Topic Paper consultation have largely been addressed in the Evidence Report. NatureScot, Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Water and SEPA have confirmed they are content with the paper.

## Appendix



**Map 1: Map showing the areas of Broken Peatland within the National Park**



<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>Topic Paper 2 - Biodiversity, Natural Places, and Forestry, Woodland and Trees</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p><b><u>Policy 3 Biodiversity</u></b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 15 (5): The principle physical and environmental characteristics of the district.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Policy 4 Natural Places</u></b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 15 (5): The principle physical and environmental characteristics of the district.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Policy 6 Forestry, Woodland and Trees</u></b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 15 (5): The principle physical and environmental characteristics of the district.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Other Relevant Legislation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &amp;c.) Regulations 1994</a>: European Sites - Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)</li> <li><a href="#">Convention on Wetlands of International Importance</a>: Ramsar sites</li> <li><a href="#">The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000</a>: National Parks and aims</li> <li>The Town and Country Planning (National Scenic Areas) (Scotland) Designation Directions 2010: National Scenic Areas</li> <li><a href="#">Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended</a>: Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves</li> <li><a href="#">National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 as amended</a>: National Nature Reserves</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Other Statutory Requirements</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report – a requirement on the preparation of a Local Development Plan</li> <li>Biodiversity Duty Report – an organisational requirement on the National Park Authority</li> <li>Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) – a requirement on the preparation of a Local Development Plan</li> <li><a href="#">Forest and Woodland Strategy</a></li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b><u>Interactive Map</u></b></p> <p>Key spatial datasets for this topic paper can be viewed on the National Park Authority's <a href="#">interactive GIS map viewer</a> under the 'A Nature Positive Place' layer. This includes data from the National Park Authority and a number of partner organisations including Scottish Government, NatureScot and Scottish Forestry.</p>

## **Relevant Policies, Strategies and Reports**

### **National**

- [Edinburgh Declaration on Post: Biodiversity Framework 2020](#)
- [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045](#)
- [Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024 to 2030](#)
- [Scottish Government Draft Planning Guidance: Biodiversity 2023](#)
- [Scotland's Forestry Strategy](#)
- [UK Forestry Standard](#)
- [The Scottish Government's Policy on Control of Woodland Removal](#)
- [Scottish Forestry Phytophthora Ramorum Action Plan 2022](#)
- [Scotland's National Peatland Plan: Working for our future 2015](#)
- [State of Nature Scotland Report 2023](#)
- [Scotland's Natural Capital Asset Index 2025](#)
- [Scotland's Geodiversity Charter 2025](#)
- [Scotland's Landscape Charter](#)
- [The Plant Health \(Official Controls and Miscellaneous Provisions\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2019](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/2031 of the European Parliament of the Council 2016- 2031](#)
- [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2019- 2072](#)

### **Regional/National Park**

- [National Park Partnership Plan 2024 - 2029](#)
- [National Park Future Nature Route Map 2023](#)
- [National Park Trees and Woodland Strategy 2019-2039](#)
- [Forth Climate Forest 2024](#)
- [Tree Preservation Orders in the National Park](#)
- [The Special Landscape Qualities of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park 2010](#)
- [Special Landscape Qualities - Guidance on Assessing Effects 2025](#)
- [Nature Scot Special Landscape Qualities – Guidance on assessing effects](#)
- [Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park - Peatland Action Delivery Programme 2024-2030](#)
- [National Park State of Nature Report 2023](#)
- [National Park Biodiversity Duty Report 2021 - 2023](#)
- [Condition of Protected Nature Sites 2024](#)

### **Local**

- [National Park Strathard Framework](#)

## **Links to Existing Data**

[NatureScot Open Data](#)

### **NatureScot Protected Areas**

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Special Protection Area
- Special Areas of Conservation



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance</li> <li>• National Nature Reserves</li> <li>• Marine Protected Areas (Nature Conservation)</li> <li>• Geological Conservation Review Sites</li> <li>• Country Parks</li> <li>• 30 x 30 Dissolved Protected Areas</li> </ul> <p><u>NatureScot Habitats and Species</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ancient Woodland Inventory</li> <li>• HabMoS EUNIS Base layer</li> <li>• CSGN IHN – Woodland network</li> <li>• CSGN IHN – Woodland hotspots</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSGN IHN – Wetland network</li> <li>• CSGN IHN – Wetland hotspots</li> <li>• CSGN IHN – Neutral grassland network</li> <li>• CSGN IHN – Neutral grassland hotspots</li> <li>• CSGN IHN – Heathland network</li> <li>• CSGN IHN – Acid grassland network</li> <li>• HabMoS - Mountain Woodland 2023 - Wild, relict or remnant</li> <li>• National Vegetation Classification</li> <li>• Scotland Land Cover Maps</li> </ul> <p><u>NatureScot Landscape</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wild Land Areas 2014</li> <li>• Landscape Map of Scotland</li> <li>• Loch Lomond and Trossachs NP Landscape Character Assessment<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Landscape Character Assessment</li> <li>• Special Landscape Qualities report for Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park</li> </ul> <p><u>NatureScot Renewables</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon and Peatland 2016 map</li> </ul> <p><u>Scottish Government - National Scenic Areas</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Scenic Areas</li> </ul> <p><u>Scottish Forestry Open Data</u></p> <p><u>Surveys and inventories</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Native Woodland Survey of Scotland</li> <li>• National Forest Inventory 2021</li> </ul> <p><u>Forestry Grant Scheme Target and Eligibility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FGS Target Woodlands For Riparian Benefits</li> </ul>
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<sup>1</sup> The Loch Lomond and Trossachs NP Landscape Character Assessment dataset sits alongside the National Landscape Character Assessment dataset and is captured at a higher resolution

### Tree Health

- Statutory Plant Health Notices – Scotland
- *Phytophthora ramorum* SF Policy Zones

### SEPA Data publication

- Main river and coastal catchments
- River and loch water body nested catchments
- Scottish Wetland inventory
- Water Classification Hub
- RBMP3
- Riparian Vegetation Planting Opportunities
- Recommended Riparian Corridor
- SEPA Flood Risk Management Maps
- Obstacles to Fish Passage
- Geomorphic Risk Buffer

### Historic Environment Scotland Datasets

- Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes

### Woodland Trust

- Woodland Trust - Ancient Tree Inventory

### Buglife

- B-Lines

### National Park Authority

- Local Gardens and Designed landscapes
- Biodiversity Audit 2012 – UKBAP Priority Habitats
- Geodiversity audit 2022
- Geodiversity of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park: Statement of significance and identification of opportunities 2007
- Riparian INNS data
- National Park Nature Networks Study 2023
- National Park Wildness Study Report
- National Park Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas

### National Biodiversity Network Atlas Scotland

### Clyde Marine Planning Partnership

- Seascape Character Assessment of the Firth of Clyde

### Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland

- Plant Atlas: Mapping Changes in the Distribution of the British and Irish Flora 2020

- Birds of Conservation Concern 5 - 2021
- Breeding Bird Survey Report 2024

## **National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context**

Securing positive effects for biodiversity is one of the six statutory outcomes of the National Planning Framework (NPF4) that were introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. Improving biodiversity is a cross-cutting theme which runs throughout NPF 4. NPF4 rebalances the planning system so that climate change and nature recovery are primary guiding principles for all plans and decisions. NPF4 strategy and policies support development that helps to secure positive effects for biodiversity.

### **Part 1 – A National Spatial Strategy for Scotland 2024**

The NPF4 spatial strategy identifies that the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park has landscape-scale opportunities to restore and enhance nature and respond to climate change, including through woodland creation and peatland restoration, as well as natural flood risk management alongside other areas of central and northern Highlands of Scotland. More integrated planning and land management offers opportunities to support land use change and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The spatial strategy also highlights the Perthshire Nature Connections Partnership (PNCP), a long-term, nature-based vision for Perth and Kinross that aims to create a distinct connection between the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Parks.

### **Part 2 – National Planning Policy**

This topic paper covers several policy areas related to biodiversity, natural places and forestry, woodland and trees. The individual policies, their intent and anticipated outcomes are summaries below:

**Policy 3: Biodiversity** – Aims to protect biodiversity, reverse biodiversity loss, deliver positive effects from development and strengthen nature networks. In order to meet this intent, Local Development Plans should protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity in line with the mitigation hierarchy. They should also promote nature recovery and nature restoration across the development plan area, including by:

- facilitating the creation of nature networks and strengthening connections between them to support improved ecological connectivity;
- restoring degraded habitats or creating new habitats; and
- incorporating measures to increase biodiversity, including populations of priority species.

**Policy 4: Natural places** – Aims to protect, restore and enhance natural assets making best use of nature-based solutions. In order to meet this intent, Local Development Plans will identify and protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally important natural assets, on land and along coasts. The spatial strategy should safeguard them and take into account the objectives and level of their protected status in allocating land for development. Spatial strategies should also better connect nature rich areas by establishing and growing nature networks to help protect and restore the biodiversity, ecosystems and natural processes in their area. This policy covers the following assets that are relevant to the National Park, European Sites (Special Areas

of Conservation and Special Protection Areas), National Park, National Scenic Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves, Ramsar sites, Protected Species, and NatureScot Wild Land Areas. Policy 4 also provides specific protection for Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) but there are no LNCS identified within the National Park at present. No explicit protection is given to Geological Conservation Review (GCR) Sites that are not covered by an SSSI designation in NPF4.

**Policy 6: Forestry, woodland and trees** – Aims to protect and expand forests, woodland and trees. In order to meet this intent, Local Development Plans should identify and protect existing woodland and the potential for its enhancement or expansion to avoid habitat fragmentation and improve ecological connectivity, helping to support and expand nature networks. The spatial strategy should identify and set out proposals for forestry, woodlands and trees in the area, including their development, protection and enhancement, resilience to climate change, and the expansion of a range of types to provide multiple benefits. This will be supported and informed by an up-to-date Forestry and Woodland Strategy.

### National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2024 – 2029 context

In line with NPF4, tackling the twin nature and climate crises lies at the heart of the National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2024 - 2029. The NPPP recognises that it is not enough to continue to do what has always been done, a step change in approach is required to secure a positive future for the National Park. As a result, this NPPP goes beyond the usual five-year timescale of previous Partnership Plans and includes long-term vision that:

- *“By 2045 Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is a thriving place that is nature positive and carbon negative”.*

Nature positive means that nature loss has been halted and reversed so that nature in the National Park is more abundant. Through the work set out in the Future Nature Route Map (see below), the National Park Authority has committed to ensure the decline in nature has been halted by 2030 and that there is widespread restoration of nature across the National Park by 2040.

The NPPP identifies the following key steps to achieve the goals in the Plan that are relevant to this topic paper:

- Connect nature at landscape scale
- More land managed for nature
- Reduce key pressures on nature
- Invest in nature restoration
- Support more regenerative land use
- Adapt to climate change and restore nature
- Make the best use of land and assets
- Encourage land use that benefits everyone
- Deliver Strategic Development Needs

The NPPP highlights that the preparation of a revised integrated spatial land use and development strategy, through the new Local Development Plan, provides an opportunity to proactively guide new development and infrastructure within the National Park that is more closely aligned to facilitating the land use change required to deliver for climate and nature, while also meeting the needs of those living and working here. Nature recovery can be secured

through identifying opportunities for investment in natural capital, strengthening nature networks and enhancing biodiversity on site as part of development delivery. As a result, the NPPP closely aligns with the NPF4 goals in relation to biodiversity, natural assets and trees/woodland.

## Summary of Evidence

This topic paper is divided into three sections, each pulling together the relevant obligations, policies and information / datasets which will shape policy in this area for the new Local Development Plan (LDP).

The three policy areas are:

- Policy 3 – Biodiversity
- Policy 4 – Natural Places
- Policy 6 – Forestry, Woodland and Trees

It is also important to acknowledge that there is overlap between this topic paper and NPF4 Policy 1 - Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises, Policy 2 – Climate Mitigation and Adaptation, Policy 5 – Soils, Policy 10 – Coastal Development, Policy 20 – Blue and Green Infrastructure and Policy 22 - Flood Risk and Water Management. However, these policies are explored in more detail in the following papers:

Topic paper 1 - Climate and Land Use

- Policy 1 - Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises
- Policy 2 – Climate Mitigation and Adaptation
- Policy 5 – Soils
- Policy 10 – Coastal Development

Topic paper 4 – Flooding, Water Management, Green Blue Infrastructure

- Policy 20 – Blue and Green Infrastructure
- Policy 22 - Flood Risk and Water Management

## Policy 3 and 4 – Biodiversity, Natural Places

### National Context

#### **Edinburgh Declaration on post-2020 global biodiversity framework**

The National Park Authority is a signatory of the Edinburgh Declaration. This Declaration, which the Scottish Government published in August 2019, is a statement of intent outlining how subnational governments and local authorities will work together to take bold action on tackling loss of biodiversity. It commits to standing with other public bodies to deliver transformative actions on nature by increasing resources and building capacity for nature-based solutions, raising public awareness, working locally with partner bodies and private businesses, and aligning with national plans and strategies.

The Park Authority Board agreed to sign up to the declaration and to use the commitment as a platform for building on the Authority's Conservation and Land Management work and to create a stronger identity and common purpose for all those with a stake in nature in the National Park, through a shared 'Future Nature' route map.

#### **Scotland's Natural Capital Asset Index – 2025 (data to 2022)**

The Natural Capital Asset Index (NCAI) is a human-focussed look at how well nature can contribute to people's wellbeing through a range of ecosystem services and ecosystem

characteristics. Natural capital is made up of the environmental resources that combine to yield a flow of benefits to people, such as materials (e.g. food and water), regulating services (e.g. climate regulation and air pollution removal) and non-tangible cultural benefits (e.g. aesthetics and recreation).

The main findings of the analysis of the data up to 2022 show that overall, the NCAI has remained stable for 2022 over the short term (2019 to 2022). Over the long term, the NCAI is 2.8 percentage points above the year 2000 baseline. This follows a deterioration in Scotland's natural capital between the 1950s and 1990s.

Between 2019 and 2022, the ability of agriculture and cultivated habitats to contribute to well-being improved. This change is largely driven by a decrease in fertiliser and pesticide use (note: this is measured by weight and not active ingredients)

Woodland natural capital values are increasing, although this is largely driven by an increase in habitat area rather than an improvement in habitat quality. Overall woodland condition is poor. Habitat extent, woodland birds, and certified woodland are driving the increase in woodland natural capital values, overshadowing the overall poor site condition of Scottish woodlands. A back casting exercise was attempted to backdate the Index to 1950 to understand the longer-term trends of natural capital in Scotland. Unfortunately, this exercise could not use the same detail of habitat quality data that has been available since around the year 2000. However, using more coarse datasets it was possible to demonstrate the longer-term trends of natural capital in Scotland. The trend suggests that natural capital was in decline from 1950 to 1990 and efforts to recover natural capital in Scotland still have some way to go to return to historic levels.

Whilst the stabilisation of natural capital over the short-term is welcome, further work is required to address the longer-term decline in natural capital that occurred between 1950 and 1990. It is also important to note that the increase in the area of woodland has masked the overall poor condition of woodland and this emphasises the importance of improving the condition of existing woodland as well as increasing the extent of woodland.

As detailed in the National Park State of Nature Report 2023 below, the National Park is not immune from these trends and the evidence suggests that it will be necessary to protect and restore natural capital in order to address the declines that occurred between 1950 and 1990. In terms of woodland condition, 51% of woodland designated site features within the National Park were classed as being in unfavourable condition based on the [Protected Nature Sites](#) data from Scotland's Environment website last updated 11 September 2024.

### **State of Nature Scotland Report 2023**

Produced by NatureScot, the State of Nature Scotland 2023 report is the most precise review of how nature in Scotland is faring. It provides compelling evidence of the twin biodiversity and climate crises.

Scotland's nature has been under pressure and changing for many centuries. The trends in this report span the last 30 to 50 years of reliable data. Scotland ranks amongst those countries where habitats and species have been most depleted by human impacts through history. Since systematic monitoring of 407 species began in 1994, the abundance of those species has declined on average by 15%. While some of these species have seen increases, in the last decade alone 43% have declined.

As a result, the ability of Scotland's environment to provide benefits to people, such as reducing the impacts of extreme weather or removing pollution from our air and water, has declined, with quantified evidence of deterioration going back to 1950. Efforts to recover natural capital in Scotland still have a long way to go to meet the needs of people and nature.

Declines in biodiversity may be driven by the intensive use of our land for agriculture and forestry, overgrazing and the use of our seas for fishing. These impacts are exacerbated by climate change, pollution, inappropriate development, invasive non-natives and disease. However, some species are benefiting from some of these factors, expanding their ranges with climate change or taking advantage of intensively managed habitats. What is clear, is that despite progress to restore ecosystems, save species and move towards nature-friendly land and sea use, Scotland's nature and wider environment continues to decline and degrade. These national trends are also reflected in the National Park, a more detailed picture of the situation within the National Park can be found in the National Park State of Nature Report 2023 (see below).

### **Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and Delivery Plan**

The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, prepared by Scottish Government, sets targets for halting biodiversity loss by 2030 and restoring and regenerating biodiversity by 2045. It recognises that *"We face twin reinforcing crises: a decline in biodiversity will exacerbate the climate crisis – and a changing climate will accelerate the rate of biodiversity loss"*. The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy is accompanied and supported by a Delivery Plan which sets out ambitious actions to help deliver important projects such as the delivery and growth of nature networks and the commitment to protect at least 30% of our land and sea for nature by 2030 (30x30). The forthcoming Natural Environment Bill will put in place key legislative changes to restore and protect nature. Securing positive effects for biodiversity, creating and strengthening nature networks and investing in nature-based solutions are some of the key steps needed to respond to the global nature crisis.

### **Scottish Government Draft Planning Guidance: Biodiversity 2023**

The Scottish Government published Biodiversity: Draft Planning Guidance in 2023, setting out the Scottish Ministers' expectations for implementing NPF4 policies which support the cross-cutting NPF4 outcome of 'improving biodiversity'. NatureScot's Developing with Nature Guidance and ongoing work to develop a biodiversity metric for Scotland's planning system also support the delivery of NPF4 Policy 3 and are referenced in the draft Scottish Government guidance. NatureScot have also recently published Guidance on the use of existing biodiversity metrics in the Scottish planning system to provide good practice advice on the use of metrics in advance of a Scottish biodiversity metric being published. The National Park Authority has also commissioned consultants to produce guidance on biodiversity enhancement for local developments to help applicants identify *"appropriate measures to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity"* in line with the requirements of NPF4 Policy 3 and to contribute to the restore nature objectives of the National Park Partnership Plan.

### **Scotland's National Peatland Plan: Working for our future (2015)**

This is Scotland's first National Peatland Plan and it recognises the wide range of benefits provided by healthy peatlands, including a rich biodiversity, good water quality and carbon storage. However, much of our peatland is in poor condition and requires suitable management and, in many areas, restoration.



Managing and restoring our peatlands to get the best we can from them requires a joint approach involving landowners and managers, scientific and technical expertise and appropriate levels of funding, together with the necessary policies and guidance to steer activities in the desired direction.

### National Park Context

#### **National Park State of Nature Report 2023**

As part of the National Park Authority Future Nature Route Map (see below) a commitment was made to set a clear baseline for the State of Nature in the National Park within the first year of the delivery plan. Assessing an overall State of Nature is complex, requiring assessment of a wide range of factors and indicators. The report therefore pulled together a wide range of sources and analysed datasets in order to give an overview of the baseline for nature in the National Park. It took two points of comparison:

- It looked at datasets which allowed comparison of progress within the National Park over approximately the last ten years
- It also looked at comparisons between the National Park and the rest of Scotland

The National Park is not immune to the global biodiversity crisis and nature is still in trouble here. As a result, the overall assessment of a mixed picture for nature was not a surprise:

- On some indicators the National Park has seen improvements for nature over the last ten years, and again, on some measures is doing somewhat better than the rest of Scotland
- However, the report clearly states the context for those positive signs – that *“although Scotland is renowned for its wonderful wildlife, it is still one of the most nature depleted countries in the world and experiencing major declines in biodiversity: the 2019 Scottish State of Nature report found that 49% of Scottish species have decreased in abundance in the last two decades.”* And headlines from the 2023 Scotland’s State of Nature report, highlighted above, conclude:
  - Scottish wildlife has decreased on average by 15% since 1994
  - Since 1970 the distribution of 47% of flowering plants has decreased
  - 11% (One in nine) Scottish species are threatened with extinction
  - 49% Scotland’s seabirds have declined by 49% between 1986 and 2019
- In this context it is clear that doing a little better (on some measures) than the rest of Scotland over the last ten years does not match the aspirations to restore nature and deliver a resilient, nature-rich National Park and therefore *“although the park may be performing relatively well compared to some benchmarks, it still falls significantly short of the ambitious goals set for a National Park”*
- The report highlights in particular Invasive Non-Native Species, peatland erosion and drainage and deer grazing pressure, particularly in wooded areas as major challenges to the State of Nature in the National Park
- It also highlights considerable data gaps which need to be addressed to build as full a picture as possible to steer delivery in the years to come. In particular, key data gaps exist in woodland, peatland analysis, herbivore impact and long-term species monitoring, where open-source national datasets are inconsistently updated and lack contemporary



data. Some of these data gaps will be addressed by actions identified in the Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024–2030 (e.g. the development of the new Register of Ancient Woodlands and national peatland monitoring framework).

### **Condition of Protected Nature Sites**

8 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), 2 Special Protection Areas (SPAs), 1 Ramsar site and 56 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are situated within the National Park. These designated sites host 184 features and, based on the [Protected Nature Sites](#) data from Scotland's Environment website last updated 11 September 2024, 129 features were classified as being in favourable condition, 44 were classified as unfavourable, and 9 were classified as recovering. A further 2 features within the National Park had not been assessed. Excluding the 2 features that have not been assessed, 75.8% features within the National Park are in favourable/recovering condition and 24.2% features are in unfavourable condition. These figures are broadly equivalent to the condition of features across Scotland as a whole with 75.3% of features in favourable/maintained condition and 24.7% features in unfavourable condition.

Of the 44 features in unfavourable condition, 7 have no feasible remedy in the short to medium term. This includes the breeding capercaillie features of the Loch Lomond SPA, Inchtavannach and Inchconnachan SSSI and Inchcruin SSSI which are not considered recoverable due the local extinction of capercaillie.

Based on the Protected Nature Sites data from Scotland's Environment website, overgrazing and invasive species are the most common pressures affecting the condition of designated site features within the National Park (see Table 1 below for further details of the other pressures that were identified).

*Table 1: Overview of designated site pressures within the National Park*

<b>Pressure</b>	<b>Number of designated site features affected</b>
Overgrazing	58
Invasive species	51
Recreation/ disturbance	20
Undergrazing	18
Water management	16
Forestry operations	12
Other	7
Water quality	6
Agricultural operations	5
Trampling	5
Climate change	4
Game/Fisheries management	4
Development	2
Grazing – other	2
No proactive management	2
Conservation activities	1
Extraction	1

There are several large mammalian herbivore species resident in the National Park, including deer, sheep, cattle, and goats. These can be classified as wild, domesticated, and feral. All herbivore species impact habitats but precise effects will vary as individual populations are often spatially distinct due to natural behaviour and land management.

Herbivore pressures on designated sites include those from wild deer (native and non-native), domesticated sheep/cattle and feral goats. A Herbivore Position Statement is due to be published by the National Park Authority later this year and this is being produced in response to 1) the status of some designated sites in the National Park, which are being adversely affected by grazing impacts of herbivores, and 2) the recommendations of the Deer Working Group report and the subsequent response by Scottish Government indicating the need for higher levels of deer management to reduce negative impacts on sensitive habitats. The overall aim of the Park Authority position is to reduce detrimental herbivore pressure in the National Park where current levels are unsustainable, allowing widespread natural recovery and expansion of native woodland habitats, and the protection of fragile peat soils, wetlands, and productive forests.

The Herbivore Position Statement will be the first stage in the delivery of the Park Authority's Herbivore Programme. Stage two will be to facilitate the production of a Herbivore Delivery Plan. The Herbivore Delivery Plan will fulfil the function of the Priority Area Action Plan, which was originally proposed by the Operational Delivery Workstream (ODW) of the Strategic Deer Management Board. The Herbivore Delivery Plan will include all large herbivores to meet the aims of both the ODW and Priority Area Action Plan. The Herbivore Delivery Plan will be written in collaboration with delivery partners and external stakeholders and will detail how sustainable herbivore management will be delivered in the National Park. Several actions from the Delivery Plan are already being progressed (e.g. Deer Managers Training Grant, Deer Management Incentive Scheme and various deer larder infrastructure projects).

The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland used Woodland Habitat Impact Assessments to evaluate the overall impact of herbivores on woodland. Herbivore impacts are rated on a scale of low to very high, with a low or medium impact required for sustainable woodland ecosystems and a low level necessary for natural regeneration of tree and shrub species. This data, although dated, provides an indication of areas in the National Park that have had high herbivore impacts or might be less likely to naturally regenerate.

Only 8% of the native and nearly-native woodland assessed in the National Park was in the low impact category, which is the ideal level for optimum long-term woodland condition. This does not mean complete removal of herbivores by fencing or culling. Without some browsing, ground vegetation can become too dense, which can affect populations of some species, such as lichens or butterflies. Conversely where grazing and browsing levels are too high in woodlands there can be a loss of ground flora species, simplified woodland structure without shrubs or climbing species, and reduced tree and shrub regeneration. Overall, 30% of native and nearly-native woodland assessed in the National Park could be at these unsustainable levels of grazing (high and very high impact); similar to that in the rest of Scotland at 33%.

Both the Herbivore Position Statement and Delivery Plan will be taken into account when preparing the Proposed Plan.

The principle invasive non-native species affecting the condition of designated sites within the National Park are rhododendron, Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam, American skunk cabbage and Canadian pondweed. Other non-native species impacting on designated sites include beech trees and exotic conifers. Some native species can also be considered invasive in certain circumstances and may negatively affect the condition of designated sites. Within the National Park this includes species such as bracken, gorse and the regeneration of native tree species on protected open habitats.

Both overgrazing and invasive species are examples of pressures that often require action outside designated site boundaries in order to be adequately addressed. This emphasises the importance of the wider management of land in order to improve the condition of designated sites.

It should be noted that only around half of these features have been assessed by NatureScot within the last 10 years and the results should be treated with a degree of caution as a result. It is understood that a new approach to protected area monitoring is currently being developed by NatureScot.

A Habitats Regulation Appraisal (HRA) shall be undertaken of the LDP in accordance with the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 (as amended) and NPF4 Policy 4. The HRA will address potential impacts on European sites (SACs and SPAs) and Ramsar sites<sup>2</sup>.

### **National Park Biodiversity Duty Report 2021 – 2023**

Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act (2004), all public bodies in Scotland are required to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act (2011) requires public bodies in Scotland to provide a publicly available report, every three years, on the actions which they have taken to meet this biodiversity duty.

The latest report covering the period 2021-23 was finalised in February 2024 and this covers the development and delivery of the National Park Future Nature Strategy which replaced [Wild Park](#) as our Biodiversity Strategy in 2023.

In relation to specific planning measures, the report highlights the significant contribution of the National Park Authority Nature and Land Use Team in providing advice to the development management team on approximately 291 planning cases between 2021 and 2023. This advice has secured the implementation of mitigation measures to avoid or minimise impacts on protected species and priority habitats. Where impacts have been unavoidable, suitable compensation and restoration measures have been secured.

The report also highlights that the Park Authority has sought to secure biodiversity enhancement from development in line with the current Local Development Plan and more recently National Planning Framework (NPF) 4. This has included providing substantial input on National, Major, and EIA developments at the application and pre-applications stages to ensure that these

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<sup>2</sup> In line with the updated Scottish Government policy on protecting Ramsar sites -

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/updated-scottish-government-policy-protecting-ramsar-sites/>

proposals deliver significant biodiversity enhancement that will contribute towards the objectives of the National Park Authority Future Nature Route Map. The outcome of this work will be reported in the next Biodiversity Duty Report, and it is anticipated that this will result in a step change in the amount of enhancement delivered by development.

### **National Park Future Nature Route Map**

Future Nature is an ambitious programme, led by the National Park Authority to tackle the effects of the global nature crisis happening here and now in Scotland's first National Park. It aims to stop the decline and restore nature on a large scale.

The Future Nature Route Map was developed in partnership with a number of organisations and it sets out how Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park can become an exemplar where people can understand, experience, and contribute towards a shared vision for restoring nature - *A resilient nature-rich National Park, where abundant wildlife and a healthy natural environment provide a wealth of benefits through an extensive, well-connected living network.*

The Route Map was launched in May 2023 and it echoes the targets of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy in seeking to reverse the decline in nature in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park by 2030 and the widespread restoration of nature across the National Park by 2040 (5 years earlier than the 2045 target in the SBS).

The Route Map includes 'Nature positive development' as a key workstream with the aim to *"Explore enhanced opportunities for the promotion and application of nature based solutions, natural infrastructure, nature networks and 'nature positive development' in new development through the preparation of our new Local Development Plan, ensuring the application of NPF4 reflects the role of the National Park"*. Embedding Future Nature in the new NPPP and LDP is identified as a specific action in the Route Map.

Three key habitat networks are highlighted in the Route Map, peatland, woodland and water. These habitat networks are mapped at a very high level in the Route Map and this informed Map 3 of the subsequent NPPP (see appendix) which illustrates the main priority areas for nature restoration within the National Park. An important part of the strategy is addressing the key threats to biodiversity within the National Park, such as herbivore pressure, invasive non-native species (INNS), water quality, and climate change. Addressing these key threats is crucial to delivering our objectives of reversing the decline in nature by 2030 and ensuring widespread nature restoration by 2040.

A core element of Future Nature is to work at landscape scale, embedding nature restoration across all the National Park to develop a well-connected living network. Three key landscape scale projects are identified in the Future Nature strategy, The Great Trossachs Forest, Wild Strathfillan and Loch Lomond Rainforest.

- The Great Trossachs Forest is a landscape-scale woodland restoration project involving the RSPB, Forestry and Land Scotland and Woodland Trust Scotland. In the past 15 years, around 3000ha of woodland has been created through planting and natural regeneration along with INNS control, conservation grazing, deer management and peatland restoration. More recently funding has been secured from Scottish Water and the other project partners for a Coordinator post to carry out an extensive review of progress so far and plans for the next phase of this flagship landscape partnership.

- Wild Strathfillan is an ambitious nature restoration project across 50,000 hectares of the National Park. The project is led by Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Countryside Trust working with over 30 land managers, community groups, NGOs, local businesses and statutory bodies. This project will build a nature recovery network, helping to restore natural processes and ecological function, creating a healthier, more resilient, and better-connected landscape. Nature will thrive alongside the rural industries that underpin the local community.
- Funding has recently been secured from the Scottish Government Nature Restoration Fund for the Loch Lomond Rainforest project which aims to re-establish a resilient and well-connected temperate rainforest habitat within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. Led by the National Park's Future Nature Partnership, the £93,600 award will be used to carry out surveys to confirm the extent of rhododendron encroachment and grazing pressures and to devise a plan to tackle these major threats to the rainforest habitat.

In addition to these existing landscape scale projects, the National Park Authority is working alongside Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Countryside Trust and RSPB Scotland to prepare a multi-year National Lottery bid to address shared threats and opportunities across three National Park landscape partnerships: Loch Lomond Rainforest; Wild Strathfillan; The Great Trossachs Forest. Activities to address shared threats and opportunities are being scoped, including invasive non-native species, herbivore pressures, woodland restoration, green economies, green skills & jobs, community benefit, and nature experiences & engagement. These will form part of an 18-month development phase involving further evidence gathering and consultation.

### **Key Species**

The National Park is home to over 300 national priority species<sup>3</sup>. Whilst the National Park Authority primarily takes a landscape scale and habitat approach in its delivery and monitoring – some key species are identified as important indicators and targets for specific action.

#### **Red squirrels**

Monitoring and trapping work by Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels shows that the National Park is almost a red only zone – with the exception of Callander and the Loch Lomond Islands. Efforts continue to protect the important red squirrel populations of the National Park by focusing grey control on the National Park boundary, particularly to the south. Squirrelox has not been confirmed within the National Park but the project continues to monitor the situation in the grey squirrel populations in the surrounding area.

#### **Beavers**

Beavers are established and consolidating their presence in the upper Forth & Teith, Earn and Fillan/Dochart catchments, and starting to colonise the Lomond catchment including the first translocation into the National Park being carried out in 2023.

More recently, a further 20 beavers have been released into the Loch Ard Forest by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) in partnership with the Beaver Trust. Beavers arrived on FLS sites in the Trossachs through natural dispersal almost 10 years ago and Aberfoyle was naturally colonised by dispersing beavers around two years ago. The releases in Loch Ard Forest help to support and increase this new, naturally expanding population. It also contributes towards the delivery

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/park-authority/publications/biodiversity-habitat-audit/>

outcomes and overall vision of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan of which FLS is a delivery partner.

The population is expected to continue to expand and to continue to undertake wetland ecosystem restoration in the National Park and continued monitoring of their spread and the ecological changes they make is required. The Beaver Mitigation Scheme is in place to assist land managers with any problems that beavers may cause.

### Waders

Glen Dochart is one of the best places in the National Park to see farmland wading birds including curlew, lapwing, oystercatcher, and snipe. As a result of their efforts, land managers involved in the Glen Dochart Waders Project saw an 86% increase in the population of breeding waders between 2010 and 2015. The wader population has fluctuated since then and ongoing habitat management is being undertaken by land managers to try to retain the birds at their current levels. Active management for farmland waders is also underway at the RSPB Loch Lomond reserve where these species are currently benefitting.

### Black grouse

Black grouse surveys in 2017 and 2018 show estimated number of males at 125 and 121 females respectively with the most important area being around Loch Katrine and The Great Trossachs Forest. Black grouse populations in other parts of the National Park have remained at low levels or have continued to decline despite various management interventions to restore suitable habitat, reduce collisions with deer fences and legal control of predators.

### Salmon and brown trout

In the Forth and Teith river catchments within the National Park, salmon continue to have excellent population densities in a very few highly productive tributaries. However, in the upper catchment salmon are struggling to regain their once strong foothold. Historical land use changes, lack of upstream population pressure from the lower river and barriers to migration take a heavy toll on migratory fish species. Without conservation measures in areas such as the nutrient-poor River Larig and the dammed Eas Gobhain, viable populations of salmon are unlikely to persist.

The situation is not quite as bad for brown trout as a species, as there is a component of the population that doesn't migrate. Nevertheless, for those that do migrate, dams prevent them from accessing good quality habitat in the upper reaches of the catchment, and for those that do make it upstream, their offspring are likely to be starved by the lack of vegetation now characterising the upper catchment.

### Other notable species

Aside from the species highlighted above, there are a number of notable species present within the National Park that require consideration when devising development proposals. These include species protected by [law](#)<sup>4</sup> and those listed on the [Scottish Biodiversity List](#). Depending on the nature and location of proposals, potential impacts on raptors, geese and wading birds; lamprey, freshwater pearl mussels and Atlantic salmon; beaver, red squirrel, pine marten, bats, otter, water vole and badger may need to be considered. The [NBN Atlas Scotland](#) is a useful

<sup>4</sup> e.g. [European protected species](#) (such as bats, otter and great crested newt), species listed on Schedule 5 of the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#) (e.g. red squirrel and water vole), badgers – protected under the [Protection of Badgers Act 1992](#) and [birds](#) – most species of birds and their nests are protected under the [Birds Directive and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#).

source of species data aggregated from multiple sources that can be used in conjunction with the site characteristics to identify the need for specific survey work, mitigation measures and to inform the design of the proposals to avoid negative impacts and provide enhancement.

### **Strathard Framework**

The Strathard Framework was a pilot project that trialled integrating land use and planning in the Strathard area of the National Park. The Framework was prepared jointly by the Strathard Community Council, the Strathard Community Development Trust, the National Park Authority and Stirling Council. It has been adopted by the National Park Authority as planning guidance and there is a strategic forum which reviews and discusses the delivery action plan. It identifies the development and infrastructure needs for the area alongside opportunities for investment in natural capital such as woodland management/creation and peatland restoration. This approach has helped test and consider how the new LDP could incorporate an integrated spatial land use and development strategy that would deliver better outcomes for nature and climate. These lessons shall be carried forward into the new LDP.

### **National Park Peatland Action Delivery Programme 2024 – 2030**

This document sets out the strategic overview of peatland in the National Park. It then gives the detailed operational plans for the next 1-5 years. It is updated periodically. A detailed annual work plan and budget is agreed each year. Current peatland information held by the National Park Authority is used to provide a strategy that optimises peatland restoration within the National Park from 2024 to 2030.

Around 36.5% (68,000ha) of land within the National Park is covered by peatland and this peatland is estimated to hold up to 20 million tonnes of carbon. Preliminary assessments by the National Park Authority's Peatland ACTION team identified:

- 45,600ha of degraded peatland for which restoration is likely to require changes in land management such as reductions in grazing pressure rather than physical works to the peat.
- 7,054ha of degraded peatland suitable for physical restoration via National Park Authority Peatland ACTION funding, 1,887ha of which has been restored from 2015 to March 2024.
- 800ha of degraded peatland on land under management by Scottish Water (SW) or Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS), where scope for restoration will be assessed and delivered where it is practical to do so via their work as Peatland ACTION partners. As of July 2024, a feasibility study on restoring 400 ha of peatland in the Loch Katrine water catchment has been completed by SW with a further 400 ha being scoped by FLS across the wider National Park area.

The peatland restoration opportunities identified in the Future Nature Route Map and in Maps 1 and 3 of the NPPP (see appendix) have been informed by this assessment work.

### **Scotland's Geodiversity Charter 2018 – 2023**

The National Park Authority is a signatory to Scotland's Geodiversity Charter. The shared vision of the signatories to this Charter is that Scotland's geodiversity is recognised as an integral and vital part of our environment, economy, heritage and future sustainable development, to be managed appropriately and safeguarded for this and future generations.

As a signatory we have committed to maintain, promote and enhance geodiversity as an integral part of our natural heritage, recognising its contribution to:

- Scotland's remarkable geoheritage
- historical and cultural development, intellectual growth and creative expression
- sustainable economic development and essential benefits for society
- informing nature-based solutions for adaptation to changes in climate and sea-level
- supporting biodiversity
- public health, quality of life, national well-being and reconnecting people with nature.

A revised and updated Charter is currently being prepared, reflecting the need to build a resilient and sustainable future in a rapidly changing world. Scotland's Geodiversity Charter 2025-2030 will encapsulate the vision that Scotland's geodiversity is universally recognised as an integral and vital part of nature, our economy, heritage and future sustainable development.

### **Scotland's Landscape Charter**

Launched by Scotland's Landscape Alliance, the updated Scotland's Landscape Character has been endorsed by the Scottish Government, NatureScot, Historic Environment Scotland and the Scottish Land Commission. Fifteen years after the publication of the first Landscape Charter, the updated charter highlights Scotland's continued commitment to the European Landscape Convention, and focuses on the commitment required to sensitively manage the significant landscape change needed to address the climate and nature emergencies.

The Charter's vision is that as a nation we will all cherish our landscapes and recognise them as a vital resource, fundamental to our prosperity and wellbeing - and that we will play an active part in decisions that affect them. It has three principles:

- Collaboration between sectors and organisations to achieve a joined-up approach;
- Dynamic management of landscapes, taking account of changing needs, circumstances and challenges;
- Diversity in our landscapes alongside good planning, thoughtful design and active collaboration to positively manage change is key to resilient landscapes for the future

### **Special Landscape Qualities**

In 2010 the '*Special Landscape Qualities of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park*' commissioned report identified the qualities that make the landscape and scenery special here, and hence underpin the National Park landscape designation. Special Landscape Qualities are defined as the characteristics that make a designated landscape special in terms of landscape and scenery, both individually or combined. They are qualities that are perceived and experienced by people, affecting the sense of place. This report is a key document in the assessment of planning applications and will be a consideration in the preparation of the new Local Development Plan.

New guidance has been prepared by NatureScot, the Cairngorm National Park Authority and the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority which sets out how to assess effects on the Special Landscape Qualities of Scotland's National Scenic Areas and National Parks: *Special Landscape Qualities – Guidance on assessing effects* (2025). This guidance aims to help deliver sympathetic and design led approaches to managing change and development in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park's special landscapes, and provide conclusions on significance of effects for the National Park Authority to inform judgements in relation to planning and land use policies.



## **Nature Networks**

NPF4 defines a Nature Network as “a joined-up system of places important for wild plants and animals, on land and in water. It allows plants, animals, seeds, nutrients and water to move from place to place and enables the natural world to adapt to change, providing plants and animals with places to live, feed and breed. Effectively functioning nature networks will connect existing nature rich areas through habitat corridors, habitat ‘stepping stones’, or habitat restoration areas”.

The National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) and Future Nature Route Map identify the three key habitat networks within the National Park, peatland, woodland and water/wetland. Map 3 of the NPPP illustrates the priority areas for nature restoration across these habitat types at a strategic scale (see appendix). The peatland restoration and woodland expansion priority areas identified on this map are based on analysis carried out for the National Park Peatland Action Delivery Programme and Trees and Woodland Strategy. The priority areas in Map 3 of the NPPP will form the starting point for identifying a Nature Network for the National Park but other habitats, such as grassland and upland habitats, will also be considered. The network will be refined further through additional analysis and consultation with relevant stakeholders including the Future Nature Operational Group (which oversees the implementation of the Future Nature delivery plan), neighbouring Planning Authorities and wider strategic partnerships that extend into or border the National Park (e.g. Perthshire Nature Connections Partnership, Forth Climate Forest, and Glasgow City Region Green Network). This will ensure that there is a shared vision and coordinated approach to the delivery of Nature Networks across boundaries.

Table 2 below highlights the key existing datasets that will be used to inform the development of the Nature Network. This includes analysis and mapping that was commissioned by the National Park Authority in 2023 to identify existing Nature Networks and priorities for the enhancement of Nature Networks in the National Park prior to the publication of the NatureScot Nature Networks Framework. The National Park Biodiversity Audit 2012 identified 38 UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats within the National Park. It is intended that this data will be used to locate high value habitats beyond the three key habitat networks identified in the NPPP and Future Nature Route Map and the need for any further additional survey or assessment work.

Other factors that will be taken into consideration when defining the Nature Network include the location of invasive non-native species and species considerations such barriers to movement identified on the Wildlife Connectivity Map element of the Nature Network Tool (NatureScot/ AECOM).

*Table 2: Key existing datasets to inform the development of the Nature Network*

Scale & Type	Data
<b>National &amp; International Protected Nature Sites</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sites of Special Scientific Interest</li><li>• Special Protection Area</li><li>• Special Areas of Conservation</li><li>• Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance</li><li>• National Nature Reserves</li><li>• Marine Protected Areas (Nature Conservation)</li></ul>
<b>Other Protected Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Scenic Areas</li><li>• Gardens and Designed Landscapes</li><li>• Geological Conservation Review Sites</li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country Parks</li> <li>National Park Local Garden and Designed Landscapes</li> <li>National Park Geodiversity audit sites - 2022</li> </ul>
<b>National – Habitat data &amp; Network Opportunity mapping</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HabMoS EUNIS Base layer – NatureScot</li> <li>National Vegetation Classification - NatureScot</li> <li>Ancient Woodland Inventory – NatureScot</li> <li>Carbon and Peatland 2016 map - NatureScot</li> <li>Native Woodland Survey of Scotland – Scottish Forestry</li> <li>National Forest Inventory – Scottish Forestry</li> <li>Ancient Tree Inventory - Woodland Trust</li> <li>HabMoS - Mountain Woodland 2023 - Wild, relict or remnant - NatureScot</li> <li>FGS Target Woodlands For Riparian Benefits – Scottish Forestry</li> <li>Nature Network Tool - NatureScot/AECOM</li> <li>RBMP3</li> <li>Recommended Riparian Corridor – SEPA</li> <li>Buglife B-Lines</li> <li>FGS Woodland Creation – Claims</li> <li>Geomorphic Risk - SEPA</li> <li>Natural Flood Management Maps - SEPA</li> </ul>
<b>Regional – Habitat data &amp; Network Opportunity Mapping</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Park Future Nature Route Map</li> <li>National Park Trees and Woodland Strategy</li> <li>National Park Peatland Action Delivery Programme 2024 – 2030</li> <li>National Park Nature Networks Study 2023</li> <li>National Park Biodiversity Audit – UKBAP Priority Habitats</li> <li>National Park Riparian INNS data</li> <li>CSGN 2011 Integrated Habitat Networks – NatureScot</li> <li>Tree Preservation Orders in the National Park</li> <li>Forth Climate Forest Connectivity Mapping</li> </ul>
<b>Local - Habitat Network Opportunity Mapping</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Park Strathard Framework</li> </ul>

Table 3 below highlights the data gaps that will be addressed to assist in the development of the Nature Network.

*Table 3: Nature Network data gaps*

<b>Data gap</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>Extent of land managed primarily for biodiversity outside of protected areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm extent of NGO managed land that lies outside protected areas and the management objectives for these areas</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm the areas of UKWAS<sup>5</sup> certified woodland managed primarily for biodiversity (All FLS woodlands are UKWAS certified)</li> </ul>
<b>River catchments outside current range of beavers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the results of the ongoing NatureScot, Beaver Trust and University of St Andrews beaver survey to confirm the current distribution of beavers and determine scope for further expansion.</li> </ul>
<b>Herbivore impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will use any relevant existing and emerging data and insights to inform our understanding of herbivore densities, impacts, and management</li> </ul>

### **Habitat Restoration**

‘Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites’ (PAWS) and ‘Nearly-native woodland’ identified in the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland are likely to be a focus for native woodland restoration whereas “wild, relict or remnant” mountain woodland identified in the HabMoS - Mountain Woodland 2023 will be a starting point for identifying restoration opportunities for mountain woodland. Areas of visibly degraded peatland, identified as areas of ‘broken peat’ in the National Park Peatland Action Delivery Programme 2024 – 2030, are priorities for restoration under Peatland ACTION.

### **Local Nature Conservation Sites**

There are no Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) identified within the National Park at present. Efforts to date have focussed on protecting the widespread priority habitats and ecosystems of the National Park rather than identifying LNCS for protection. This approach was considered to be more effective in the context of the National Park.

### **Geological sites**

No explicit protection is given to Geological Conservation Review (GCR) Sites that are not covered by an SSSI designation in NPF4. There are 11 of these ‘un-notified’ GCR sites within the National Park along with a further 11 potential sites of geological importance that were assessed as part of a focussed audit in 2022.

## **Policy 6 - Forestry, woodland and trees**

### **National Context**

#### **UK Forestry Standard (5<sup>th</sup> edition 2023)**

The (5<sup>th</sup>) edition of the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) was published in 2023. It is the technical standard for forestry across the UK, providing the foundation for sustainable forest management. Endorsed by all UK governments, the UKFS balances environmental, economic, and social objectives.

The standard sets out the approach of the UK governments to sustainable forest management by defining requirements and guidelines and providing a basis for regulation and monitoring – including national and international reporting. The standard ensures that international

<sup>5</sup> A minimum of 15% of UKWAS certified woodland requires to be managed for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity as the primary objective.

agreements and conventions on areas such as sustainable forest management, climate change, biodiversity and the protection of water resources are applied in the UK.

Scottish Forestry is the main body responsible for implementing the UKFS in Scotland and assesses forestry proposals against the UKFS before giving approval and undertakes checks to ensure woodland owners and managers comply with forestry regulations.

### **Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029**

The strategy vision is that:

*"In 2070, Scotland will have more forests and woodlands, sustainably managed and better integrated with other land uses. These will provide a more resilient, adaptable resource, with greater natural capital value, that supports a strong economy, a thriving environment, and healthy and flourishing communities".*

More specifically, the strategy aims to increase forest and woodland cover to 21% of the total area of Scotland by 2032 and to increase the use of Scottish wood products in construction from 2.2 million m<sup>3</sup> in 2018 to 3 million m<sup>3</sup> by 2031/32. With regards to native woodland, the strategy included the following aims:

- Increase the amount of native woodland in good condition
- Create 3000–5000 ha of new native woodland per year
- Restore approximately 10 000 ha of new native woodland into satisfactory condition in partnership with private woodland owners through Deer Management Plans
- Ensure protected sites are under good conservation management

The National Park Authority Trees and Woodland Strategy guides the local implementation of Scotland's Forestry Strategy (see below for further information) and the NPPP includes a target to double the average annual rate of woodland expansion from 200ha year to 400ha, focusing on priority areas.

As highlighted above, woodland will form a key component of the National Park Nature Network.

### **The Scottish Government's Policy on Control of Woodland Removal**

Woodland removal is defined as the permanent removal of woodland for the purposes of conversion to another type of land use. It does not include the removal of trees associated with the internal re-design of woodlands to meet the UK Forestry Standard.

In Scotland, climate change and human activities such as housing or wind farm developments has led to extensive woodland removal. To support and add to Scotland's forests and woodland resources, inappropriate woodland loss needs to be stopped.

The Scottish Government's policy on control of woodland removal gives direction for decisions on woodland removal in Scotland. Guidance on how to apply the Scottish Government's policy on control of woodland removal has been published by Scottish Forestry. The guidance applies to both consenting authorities and applicants.

This policy underpins NPF4 Policy 6 which states that *"Development proposals involving woodland removal will only be supported where they will achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits in accordance with relevant Scottish Government policy on woodland*

removal. Where woodland is removed, compensatory planting will most likely be expected to be delivered”.

### **Tree Health**

The threat to our trees from pests and diseases is growing. Climate change, global travel and imported plants and wood can increase pests and diseases and their impacts. In the National Park, there have been outbreaks of various *Phytophthora* and ash dieback is now established. In addition, the risk of introducing *Dothistroma* needle blight (DNB) to Caledonian pinewoods restricts the planting of Scots pine within 600m of Caledonian pinewood sites within the National Park. Further threats are likely to emerge in future years. The National Park Authority manages tree health issues in line with Scottish Forestry guidance and associated legislation.

### **Scottish Forestry *Phytophthora ramorum* Action Plan (Revised July 2022)**

*Phytophthora ramorum* (*P. ramorum*) was first found in Scottish plant nurseries in 2002 and in gardens and parks in 2007. The first infection on Scottish larch trees was confirmed in 2010. *P. ramorum* is capable of causing extensive mortality in larch trees, particularly in the wetter west of Scotland. It is currently the biggest threat to trees in Scotland. There is no cure for *P. ramorum* and it is nearly impossible to remove from an area once it takes hold. The only thing that can be done to try and slow the spread of the disease is felling the infected trees and those around them.

*P. ramorum* is regulated under the retained EU Plant Health Regulation 2016/2031, the retained EU Phytosanitary Conditions Regulation 2019/2072 and the retained EU Commission Decision 2002/757. Retained EU plant health legislation is implemented in Scotland by the Plant Health (Official Controls and Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Regulations 2019. Official controls include the use of Statutory Plant Health Notices (SPHNs) requiring the felling of infected larch by landowners by a specified date.

Between 2018 and 2021, in large parts of southern and western Scotland, particularly in Dumfriesshire and parts of the Cowal peninsula, infection levels had reached a scale where the necessary actions from ground surveys through to forest operations, that would be required to control local outbreaks, was greater than the capacity of the local resources of the sector to deliver on the swift timescales required for successful control of local infections. Such areas are identified as the Risk Reduction Zone in the Scottish Forestry *Phytophthora ramorum* Action Plan. The aim in this zone, where *P. ramorum* is now considered endemic, is to reduce the risk of *P. ramorum* to the sector. Statutory actions in the form of SPHNs continue to be used as the main tool to ensure consistency of control efforts across the range of land ownerships. Within the National Park, Cowal is situated within the Risk Reduction Zone.

The remainder of the National Park lies within the Priority Action Zone identified in the Action Plan. Actions within this zone will have the greatest impact on controlling spread of *P. ramorum*. Outbreaks to date have been limited in scale and control efforts have been successful at eradicating infections on larch. Prioritisation of survey and regulatory efforts will ensure Statutory Plant Health Notices (SPHNs) are issued quickly, with felling needed, wherever possible, before the end of August in the year it was found. In recent years, *P. ramorum* infections have been identified on the eastern side of the National Park (e.g. around Callender and Loch Lubnaig) and SPHNs issued to address outbreaks. FLS are undertaking extensive felling of uninfected larch within the Priority Action Zone as part of the effort to maintain a ‘firebreak’ in front of the leading edge of the *P. ramorum* infections.

It should be noted that due to the difficulties of terrain, topography and risk of windblow, it is not always possible to fell larch (whether via SPHN or not) in isolation; often adjacent crops must be felled to facilitate access or to avoid windthrow which would occur once the larch is removed. As a result, several FLS-owned forests are going through significant short-term restructuring which had not been foreseen when Land Management Plans (even relatively recent ones) were produced.

The need to fell larch trees infected with *Phytophthora ramorum* and reduce the risk of further spread is driving significant forest restructuring in the west of the Park, with a range of impacts and considerations – landscape, ecology, drainage and operational implications for forestry works. Some are short term and others are longer term.

### **Ash dieback**

Ash dieback is a serious disease of ash trees caused by a fungus called *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (previously called *Chalara fraxinea*). The disease causes leaf loss and crown dieback and is usually fatal in younger trees whereas mortality in older trees is more often associated with the combined impact of root pathogens such as the honey fungus (*Armillaria mellea*). Ash dieback caused widespread damage to ash populations across Europe, and was first discovered in the UK in a Buckinghamshire nursery in February 2012.

Ash dieback is present across Scotland including the National Park. Management efforts now focus on mitigating safety risks from diseased trees, while allowing for natural regeneration of potentially disease-tolerant or resistant trees wherever possible.

### **National Park Context**

#### **National Park Authority Trees and Woodland Strategy 2019 – 2039**

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires the National Park Authority to prepare a Forestry and Woodland Strategy which sets out policies and proposals for the development of forestry and woodlands.

The National Park Authority Trees and Woodland Strategy 2019 – 2039 sets out our vision for how trees and woodlands in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park are to be protected and enhanced over the next 20 years. The strategy guides woodland enhancement and creation within the National Park to help meet important local and national targets that will deliver wider social and economic benefits, such as increasing the number of forestry sector jobs and encouraging community management or ownership of woodland.

There are seven strategic objectives in the Strategy:

- Increasing woodland cover to help tackle biodiversity loss and the global climate emergency.
- Improving woodland condition and diversifying woodland management.
- Protecting and enhancing the landscape.
- Maintaining and enhancing economic sustainability through forestry-related skills and business development.
- Promoting cooperative woodland management and creation as part of an integrated land management approach.
- Improving community empowerment and resilience through active engagement in woodland management.

- Encouraging and promoting public access to woodlands for recreation and improving people's quality of life.

The strategy is a key document to be used by landowners, land managers, residents and forestry professionals when formulating forestry proposals in the National Park.

As part of the Strategy, a spatial analysis was undertaken to identify Preferred and Potential area for native woodland creation. Preferred Areas are where native woodland creation would have the greatest impact in improving woodland connectivity, providing a more suitable climate for tree growth and contributing to expansion of the woodland resource in the Bryophyte Important Plant Areas. Potential Areas are those where native woodland creation would contribute to the wider strategy's objectives. Sensitive Areas with limited capacity for native woodland creation due to higher value nature conservation or landscape objectives were also identified as part of this exercise.

This analysis formed the basis of the native woodland creation opportunities illustrated in Map 2 of the NPPP and woodland expansion priority areas shown in Map 3 of the NPPP (see appendix). This analysis will also be the starting point for identifying the native woodland creation component of the Nature Network for the National Park.

The native woodlands of the National Park represent a wide range of priority woodland habitats as defined in the Scottish Biodiversity list. However, the extensive tracts of Atlantic woodland with internationally important bryophyte (mosses and liverworts) and lichen assemblages along with small remnants of Caledonian Pinewood are considered key woodland habitats and therefore are a priority for protection and expansion in the strategy.

NPF4 Policy 6 (d) protects "*land identified in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy as being suitable for woodland creation*" and proposals "*will only be supported where the enhancement and improvement of woodlands and the planting of new trees on the site (in accordance with the Forestry and Woodland Strategy) are integrated into the design*".

### **Forth Climate Forest**

The Forth Climate Forest (FCF) Initiative was created in response to the Climate and Ecological Emergencies, with its overarching purpose being to help deliver a substantial increase in tree planting across the Forth Valley Area. The FCF was developed as a partnership initiative, with the key partners being Woodland Trust, University of Stirling, Scottish Forestry, Clackmannanshire Council, Falkirk Council, Stirling Council, and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority.

The initiative aligns closely with a number of national and local strategies and policies, such as the National Planning Framework 4, Forest and Woodland Strategies and Biodiversity Strategies. In particular, FCF provides a means to deliver the requirements of NPF4, by:

- Protecting and expanding forests, woodlands and trees.
- Protecting biodiversity, reversing biodiversity loss, delivering positive effects from development and strengthening nature networks.

The FCF will also create opportunities for the partner organisations to:

- Deliver their economic, social and environmental aims.



- Make the Forth Valley Area more resilient to the impacts of a changing climate, helping to achieve 'Net Zero,' and repairing our damaged ecosystems and adapting the built environment to create more liveable places for the future.

The National Park Authority is a signatory of the Forth Climate Forest Concordat which includes a commitment to *“Ensure the FCF is integrated and trees are embedded, as appropriate, into development plans, development frameworks, masterplans, design briefs along with corporate policy and investment documents”*.

### **Tree Preservation Orders in the National Park**

A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) affords a tree, a group of trees or a woodland protection from felling or any other works i.e. removal of branches etc. unless prior formal consent for the felling or tree works has been granted by the National Park Authority.

The National Park Authority maintains an up-to-date register of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) within the Park. A review of TPOs is ongoing and the register will be updated accordingly. There are currently 37 TPOs in place across the National Park.

## **Summary of Stakeholder Engagement**

As part of the Evidence Gathering process for the new Local Development Plan (LDP), the National Park Authority developed a suite of Topic Papers and Area Summaries to explore key planning themes and local issues across the National Park. These documents form the technical and spatial foundation for the new LDP and were central to the targeted community engagement process between May and July.

Ten Topic Papers were drafted, aligning with the relevant policies in NPF4. These papers summarise national, regional, and local data, providing a detailed evidence base on subjects such as climate change, biodiversity, housing, infrastructure, and the rural economy. They were developed by National Park officers, incorporating input from key public bodies including SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot, Transport Scotland, and local authorities.

A draft of this topic paper was sent to:

- NatureScot
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)
- Scottish Forestry
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Scottish Water
- Argyll and Bute Council
- Perth and Kinross Council
- Stirling Council
- West Dunbartonshire Council
- Marine Directorate
- British Geological Survey
- Scottish Government – Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate
- Homes for Scotland

Six Area Summaries were also produced to provide a more accessible, place-based and spatial view of the evidence. These summaries incorporate mapped information alongside key content from registered Local Place Plans, highlighting key opportunities, challenges, and priorities for

specific areas within the National Park. The spatial presentation was intended to support more informed and locally relevant, discussion during in-person workshops.

As part of the engagement activities, a series of in-person workshops were held in May and June 2025 across the National Park to present the Area Summaries and gather feedback directly from local communities and stakeholders. To ensure wider participation, complementary online surveys were also made available, allowing people to review and comment on both the Topic Papers and Area Summaries over a six-week period (May – July 2025). In addition to public engagement, input was actively sought from key statutory agencies and partner organisations throughout the preparation process to help shape and strengthen the evidence base.

Summary of Responses	
Respondent	Summary of Comments and Response
NatureScot	<p>NatureScot provided detailed feedback on a number of issues including, the links to the other topic papers, Local Nature Conservation Sites, Nature Networks, condition of designated sites, species considerations, condition of habitats, tree health, invasive non-native species and existing/proposed guidance on securing biodiversity enhancement from developments. A meeting was also held with NatureScot to discuss their feedback on this and other topic papers.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> A number of amendments/additions have been made to the paper to address the feedback from NatureScot and they subsequently confirmed that they agree with the content of the paper.</p>
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)	<p>SEPA highlighted additional evidence sources that should be included in the Evidence Report.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> All relevant additional data sources were added to the paper.</p>
Scottish Forestry	<p>Scottish Forestry were generally content with the draft paper but highlighted a couple of opportunities to strengthen the paper.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Amendments were made to the draft topic paper to address this feedback along with clarification of the planned collaborative approach to the development of Nature Networks with neighbouring Planning Authorities and wider strategic partnerships.</p>
Historic Environment Scotland	<p>Historic Environment Scotland confirmed that they are content that the paper provides sufficient evidence to support the preparation of the new LDP.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Noted.</p>
Scottish Water	<p>Scottish Water support the content of the paper.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Noted</p>
Argyll and Bute Council	<p>Argyll and Bute Council did not respond to this paper. However, there have been initial discussions about the development of Nature Networks across boundaries and a commitment for further discussions and information sharing.</p>
Stirling Council	<p>Stirling Council highlighted the need for a coordinated approach to the development of Nature Networks between the National Park Authority and neighbouring Planning Authorities. The need to reference the Forth Climate Forest was also highlighted by Stirling Council.</p>

	<p><b>Response:</b> A commitment for further consultation with neighbouring Planning Authorities was added to the paper to ensure that there is a shared vision and coordinated approach to the delivery of Nature Networks across boundaries. Reference to the Forth Climate Forest was also added to the paper.</p>
West Dunbartonshire Council	<p>West Dunbartonshire Council were generally supportive of the paper. They highlighted ongoing work on Nature Networks in West Dunbartonshire and a desire for further discussions with the Park Authority as this process develops. A new management plan for Balloch Castle Country Park, scheduled to be published by the end of summer 2025, was also highlighted.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> A commitment for further consultation with neighbouring Planning Authorities was added to the paper to ensure that there is a shared vision and coordinated approach to the delivery of Nature Networks across boundaries. The new management plan for Balloch Castle Country Park will be added to the topic paper provided if it is published prior to the finalisation of the topic paper.</p>
Marine Directorate	Marine Directorate did not provide comments on this paper.
British Geological Survey	<p>British Geological Survey highlighted that there are no specific policies concerning geodiversity in NPF4 and the updated Scottish Geodiversity Charter that is due to be published later this year.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> The Implications for the Proposed Plan section below highlights the need for further consideration to be given to how 'un-notified' GCR sites and those assessed as part of the 2022 audit will be addressed in the new LDP. This section was subsequently updated to highlight the potential inclusion of a specific policy to protect 'un-notified' GCR sites and any additional sites of importance identified through an audit. Reference to Scotland's Geodiversity Charter was also added to the paper.</p>
Homes for Scotland	<p>Homes for Scotland encouraged the National Park Authority to consider other factors alongside Biodiversity, Natural places and Forestry, woodland and trees when devising the spatial strategy and site assessment/selection process for the new LDP. The scope for mitigation to address potential impacts when allocating or consenting developments was also emphasised along with a request for greater clarity on compensatory woodland planting requirements. Homes for Scotland also highlighted additional evidence sources that should be included in the Evidence Report.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> All comments noted and will be considered as part of the preparation of the new Local Development Plan. All relevant additional data sources were added to the paper.</p>
Stirling Area Access Panel	The Stirling Area Access Panel suggested that the paper could be strengthened by including information on the status of capercaillie, Greenland white-fronted geese and white fallow deer. Greater clarity was also requested on the costs for the delivery of habitat recovery projects.

	<p><b>Response:</b> The current status of the Loch Lomond Capercaillie population has now been clarified in the paper and further information provided on large mammalian herbivore species resident in the National Park. The condition of the wintering Greenland white-fronted goose population of the Loch Lomond Special Protection Area and Ramsar site is already covered by the summary of the 'Condition of Protected Nature Sites' included in the topic paper.</p> <p>The delivery of Nature Networks will require a collaborative approach involving communities, land managers and public bodies. Costed plans for the restoration of nature are not necessary as part of the Evidence Report but will be required during the development of individual projects.</p>
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## Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

As highlighted above, 'inappropriate development' is identified as an exacerbating factor contributing to declining biodiversity in Scotland in the State of Nature Report (2023). Whilst the National Park State of Nature Report 2023 recognises that the National Park has seen some improvements for nature over the last ten years and, on some measures, the National Park is doing somewhat better than the rest of Scotland, this does not match the ambition of the National Park Partnership Plan to halt the decline in nature by 2030 and ensuring widespread nature restoration by 2040 or the equivalent Scottish Biodiversity Strategy targets for halting biodiversity loss by 2030 and restoring and regenerating biodiversity by 2045.

Bold action is required to accelerate and up-scale efforts to increase nature recovery in order to meet these ambitious targets for protecting and restoring biodiversity. The planning system has a critical contribution to make towards achieving this and this is recognised in NPF4 which seeks to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, natural assets, trees and woodland whilst facilitating the creation of nature networks to improve ecological connectivity between these assets. This may mean working differently, including taking an integrated approach to development and land use, and will require concerted action from all parties to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2030 and restore and regenerate biodiversity by 2045.

The implications of the evidence for the new Local Development Plan (LDP) may be summarised as follows:

### **Policy 3 Biodiversity**

In order to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2030 and promote the restoration biodiversity by 2040/2045 in line with the targets of the NPPP, Future Nature Route Map and Scottish Biodiversity Strategy:

- **Protecting and enhancing nature when determining planning applications** - The National Park Authority shall continue to protect and enhance biodiversity in line with the requirements of NPF4 Policy 3 and relevant inter-related policies when determining planning applications. This will include the use of the Scottish Government's Draft Planning Guidance: Biodiversity 2023 and NatureScot's Developing with Nature Guidance to assess applications.
- **LDP Spatial Strategy** – The LDP Spatial Strategy shall protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity in line with the mitigation hierarchy by steering development away from key assets, promoting the restoration of degraded habitats and improving

connectivity between nature rich areas. This principle shall underpin the assessment and selection of sites in the new LDP.

- **Nature Networks** – The new LDP should identify Nature Networks incorporating the three key habitat networks identified in the NPPP and Future Nature Route Map – namely peatland, woodland and water/wetland. The priority areas for nature restoration identified in Map 3 of the NPPP (see appendix) will form the starting point for identifying a Nature Network but this will be refined further through additional analysis and consultation with relevant stakeholders including the Future Nature Operational Group (which oversees the implementation of the Future Nature delivery plan) and neighbouring Planning Authorities. This will help to facilitate better connections between nature rich areas by establishing and growing nature networks. The Nature Network shall be a key component of the spatial strategy of the new LDP and it will inform the assessment and selection of sites.
- **Enhancing biodiversity through new development** - The new LDP should help applicants identify the most appropriate biodiversity enhancement measures that would deliver most for nature in the National Park and contribute to the restore nature objectives of the National Park Partnership Plan.
- **Enhancing biodiversity through national and major developments** - The new LDP should secure significant biodiversity enhancement from national/major/EIA developments through the use of best practice assessment methods including the Scottish biodiversity metric that is currently being developed by NatureScot.

#### **Policy 4 Natural places**

In order to protect, restore and enhance natural assets whilst facilitating the creation of Nature Networks to improve ecological connectivity between these assets:

- **Protecting natural assets** - The National Park Authority will continue to protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally important natural assets in line with the requirements of the underpinning legislation and by considering the objectives of these designations in planning decisions. This includes the use of the recently published *Special Landscape Qualities - Guidance on assessing effects* (2025) to ensure that the objectives of the National Park designation are not compromised.
- **Safeguarding and enhancing natural assets** - The spatial strategy of the new LDP should safeguard the objectives of locally, regionally, nationally and internationally important natural assets by steering development away from key assets and facilitating better connections between nature rich areas by establishing and growing nature networks. This includes consideration of priority species protected by law and those listed on the Scottish Biodiversity List. The spatial strategy shall also promote land use priorities including the restoration and enhancement of nature by identifying native woodland creation/restoration, peatland restoration and river/wetland restoration opportunities as well as the key threats that require to be tackled at a strategic scale (e.g. herbivore pressure, invasive non-native species and water quality). The development of the spatial strategy shall also be guided by the three key principles detailed in Scotland's Landscape Charter - collaboration, dynamism and diversity.
- **Habitats Regulation Appraisal** – A Habitats Regulation Appraisal of the new LDP shall be undertaken in accordance with the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations

1994 (as amended) and NPF4 Policy 4. The HRA will address potential impacts on European sites (SACs and SPAs) and Ramsar sites.

- **Protecting geological sites** - Further consideration will be required to determine how 'un-notified' Geological Conservation Review (GCR) sites and those assessed as part of the 2022 audit will be addressed in the new LDP. Options include incorporating these sites into the Nature Network and/or the inclusion of a specific policy to protect 'un-notified' GCR sites and any additional sites of importance identified through an audit.
- **Assessing the need for Local Nature Conservation Sites** - Consider whether identifying Local Nature Conservation Sites for protection in the new LDP would be more effective than the current approach of protecting the widespread priority habitats and ecosystems of the National Park.

### **Policy 6 Forestry, woodland and trees**

- **Protecting trees and woodlands** - The National Park Authority shall protect trees and existing woodland in line with the requirements of NPF4 Policy 6 when determining planning applications. All woodland creation and management should comply with the UK Forestry Standard (2023) and support the delivery of the National Park Authority Trees and Woodland Strategy 2019 – 2039.
- **Woodlands as part of the new LDP Spatial Strategy** - The spatial strategy of the new LDP should consider identifying existing trees and woodland for protection, focussing on those given strong protection under NPF4 Policy 6 including ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, and native woodlands<sup>6</sup>, hedgerows and individual trees of high biodiversity value. Opportunities to restore, expand and improve woodland connectivity will be identified as part of the Nature Network. The analysis carried out for the National Park Trees and Woodland Strategy and the subsequent opportunities identified in the strategy and NPPP will be the starting point for identifying the native woodland creation component of the Nature Network for the National Park.

### **Statements of Agreement / Dispute**

There are no substantive areas of disagreement on the evidence in the paper. Feedback from respondents to the Topic Paper consultation have largely been addressed in the Evidence Report. NatureScot, SEPA and Scottish Forestry have confirmed that they are content with the paper.

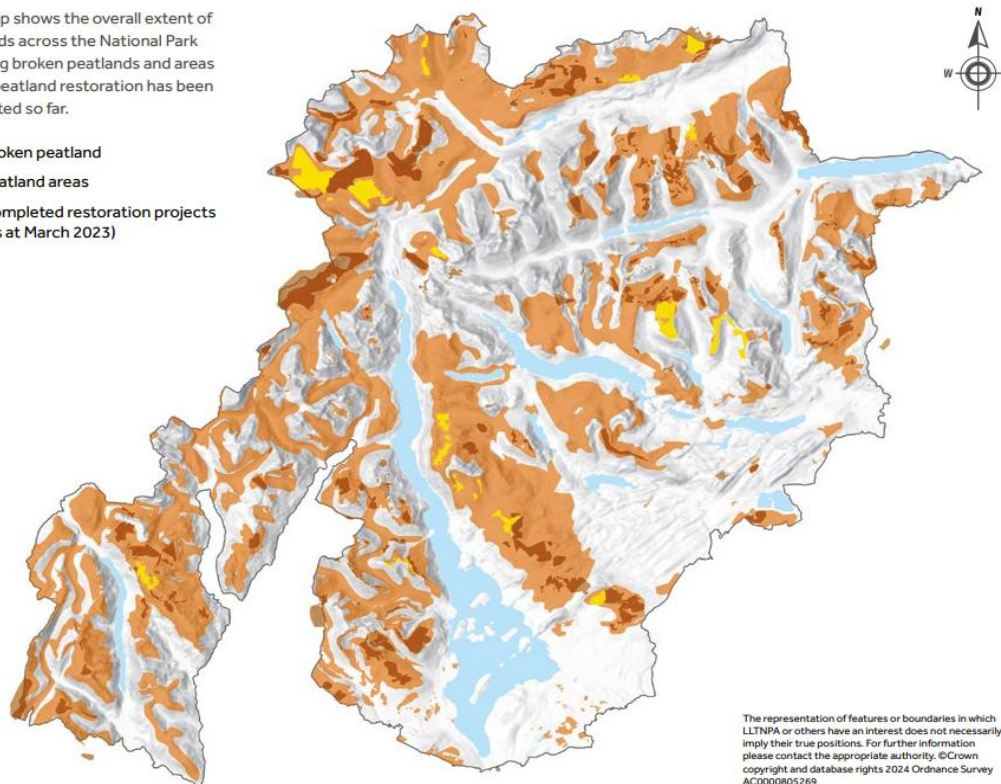
<sup>6</sup> Priority woodland habitats identified on the Scottish Biodiversity List are of principal importance for biodiversity conservation in Scotland. This list is in the process of being updated by NatureScot as a priority action of the Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024–2030 and the development of the Proposed Plan will take into account the most recent version of the list available at the time of writing.

## Appendix

### MAP 1: PEATLAND COVER IN THE NATIONAL PARK

This map shows the overall extent of peatlands across the National Park including broken peatlands and areas where peatland restoration has been completed so far.

- Broken peatland
- Peatland areas
- Completed restoration projects (as at March 2023)



RESTORING NATURE  
Challenges

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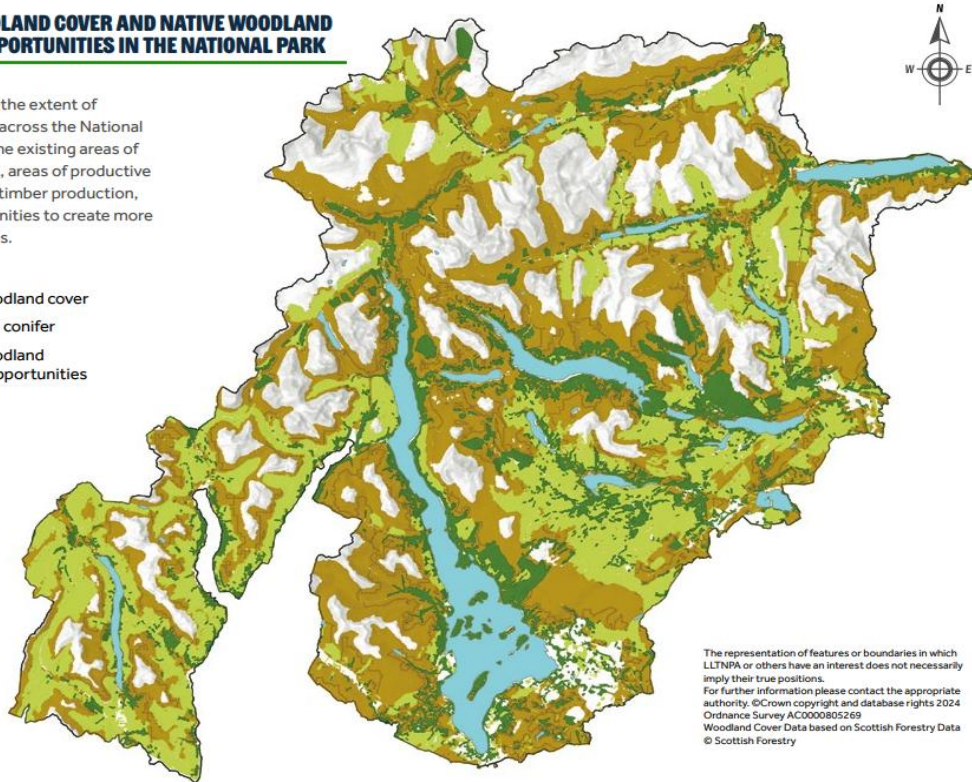
Map 1: Peatland Cover in the National Park



## MAP 2: WOODLAND COVER AND NATIVE WOODLAND CREATION OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NATIONAL PARK

This map shows the extent of woodland cover across the National Park, including the existing areas of native woodland, areas of productive conifer used for timber production, and the opportunities to create more native woodlands.

- Native woodland cover
- Productive conifer
- Native woodland creation opportunities

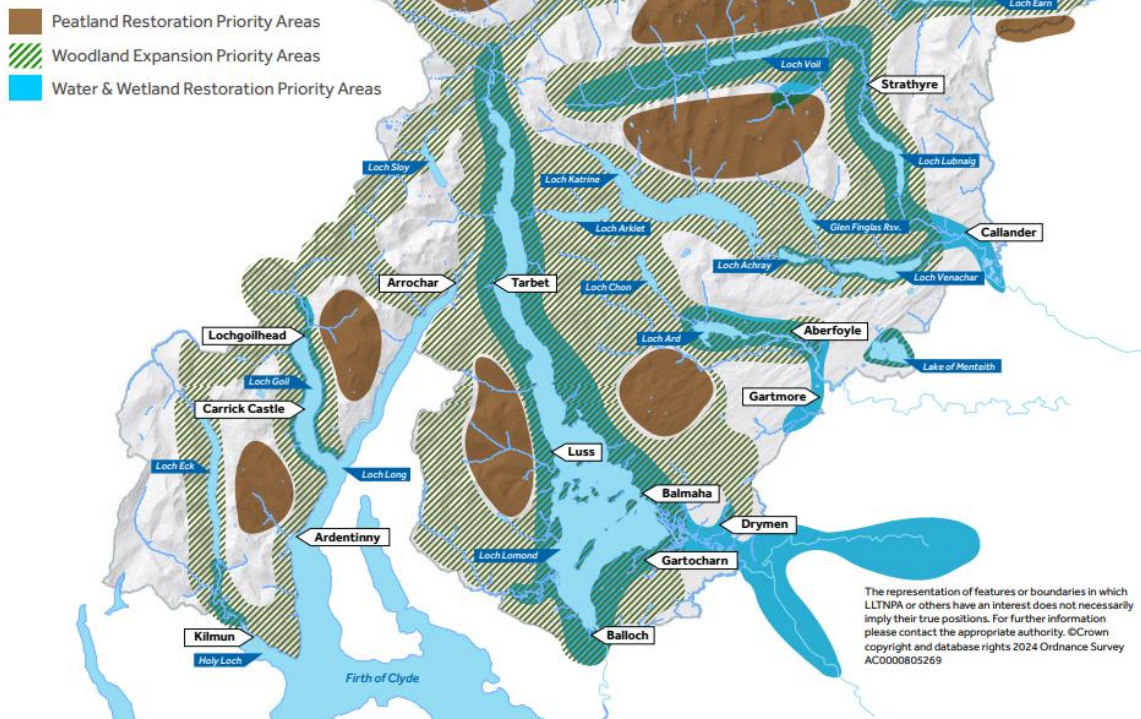


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**Map 2: Woodland Cover and Native Woodland Creation Opportunities in the National Park**

This map illustrates the main priority areas for nature restoration efforts across three key habitat types, as part of a Nature Network approach.

-  Peatland Restoration Priority Areas
-  Woodland Expansion Priority Areas
-  Water & Wetland Restoration Priority Areas



### Map 3: Habitat Recovery Priority Areas in the National Park

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>Topic Paper 3 - Infrastructure First</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p><b><u>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997</u></b>, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15 (5) (cd) the health needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and use of land on those health needs.</li> <li>• Section 15 (5) (ce) the education needs of the population of the district; and</li> <li>• Section 15 (5) (cg) the capacity of education services in the district.</li> <li>• Section 15(5) (d) the infrastructure of the district (including communications, transport and drainage systems, systems for the supply of water and energy, and health care and education facilities);</li> <li>• Section 15 (5) (e) how that infrastructure is used</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023</u></b></p> <p>Under Regulation 9, must have regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The national waste management plan</li> <li>• Any regional transport strategy; and</li> <li>• Any local transport strategy.</li> </ul> <p><u>Other relevant legislation</u></p> <p>The Aims of National Parks in Scotland (as set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000)</p>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b><u>Interactive Map</u></b></p> <p>For any data that is not linked in this topic paper, these can be viewed on the National Park Authority's <u>interactive GIS map viewer</u> under 'A Thriving Place' layer.</p> <p><b><u>Overarching Policies, Strategies and Reports</u></b></p> <p><b><u>National Park Partnership Plan</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029</u></li> </ul> <p><b><u>National Context</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021/22- 2025/26</u></li> <li>• <u>Realising Scotland's Full Potential in a Digital World a Digital Strategy for Scotland: 2017</u></li> <li>• <u>The Shared Rural Network</u></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Local/National Park Context</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Commissioning Plan 2023-2033</u></li> <li>• <u>West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2023-2026</u></li> <li>• <u>Perth and Kinross Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2024-2027</u></li> </ul>

- [Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#)

### **Other relevant Policies, Strategies and Reports**

#### **National Context**

- [SSEN Distribution Future Energy Scenarios Report 2024](#)
- [Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution PLC \(SHEPD\) Network Development Report 2024](#)
- [Connected Nations Scotland report 2024](#)

#### **Local/National Park Context**

- [West Loch Lomond Strategic Infrastructure Development Study \(STID\) 2022](#)
- [East Loch Lomond Strategic Infrastructure Development Study \(STID\) 2022](#)
- [Strathard and the Trossachs Strategic Infrastructure Development Study \(STID\) 2024](#)
- [Callander Strategic Infrastructure Development Study \(STID\) 2024](#)
- [Place Programme Delivery Route Map 2024](#)

#### **Links to Existing Data**

- [Scottish Government – School Estates Supplementary Statistics 2024](#)
- [GP Practice Contact Details and List Sizes 2020 and 2025](#)
- [SSEN Transmission Network Map – Generation Availability and Capacity](#)
- [SSEN Transmission Projects Map 2025](#)
- [SPEN Transmission Generation Heat Map](#)
- [SPEN Distributed Generation Heat Map](#)

The following datasets are not publicly available but can be viewed on the National Park Authority's [interactive GIS map viewer](#) as part of the Evidence Report:

- Scottish Gas Network (SGN) – Low Pressure Gas Lines 2022
- Scottish Gas Network (SGN) – Medium Pressure Gas Lines 2022
- Scottish Water Assets – Drainage Operational Areas 2024
- Scottish Water Assets – Water Operational Areas 2024
- Scottish Water Assets – Water Treatment Works Capacity
- Scottish Water Assets – Wastewater Treatment Works Capacity

## **National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context**

*Core NPF4 Policies addressed in this Paper:*

**Policy 18 – Infrastructure First** requires Local Development Plans (LDP) to be informed by evidence on infrastructure capacity, condition, needs and deliverability within the plan area, including cross boundary infrastructure. LDP's should set out the infrastructure requirements to deliver the spatial strategy, informed by the evidence base, identifying the infrastructure priorities.



In addition, indicating the type, level and location of financial or in-kind contributions, and the types of development from which they will be required.

**Policy 24 – Digital Infrastructure** requires LDP's to support the delivery of digital infrastructure, including fixed line and mobile communications connectivity, particularly in areas with gaps in connectivity and barriers to digital access.

*Other relevant NPF4 Policies:*

**Policy 11 – Energy** aims to unlock the areas full potential for electricity and heat from renewable, low carbon and zero emission sources through identifying a range of opportunities for energy development. This includes energy generation, storage, new and replacement transmission and distribution infrastructure and emerging low-carbon and zero emissions technologies.

**Policy 13 – Sustainable Transport** seeks for LDPs to prioritise locations for future development that can be accessed by sustainable modes. The spatial strategy in an LDP should reflect the sustainable travel hierarchy and sustainable investment hierarchy by making best use of existing infrastructure and services. LDP's should promote a place-based approach to consider how to reduce car-dominance and should be informed by evidence of the area's transport infrastructure capacity, and an appraisal of the spatial strategy on the transport network.

**Policy 23 – Health and Safety** requires LDP spatial strategies should seek to tackle health inequalities particularly in places which are experiencing the most disadvantage. They should identify the health and social care services, and infrastructure such as the buildings, facilities, digital systems, transport access and other physical and organisational structures needed to support the delivery of those services in the area. This includes exploring opportunities for the co-location of complementary services, in partnership with Health Boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships.

### **National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2024 – 2029 Context**

The National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2024 – 2029 sets out the challenges facing the National Park and what action needs be taken to set the National Park on course to a more positive future. The NPPP serves as the overarching vision for the National Park and outlines the key priorities for the new LDP.

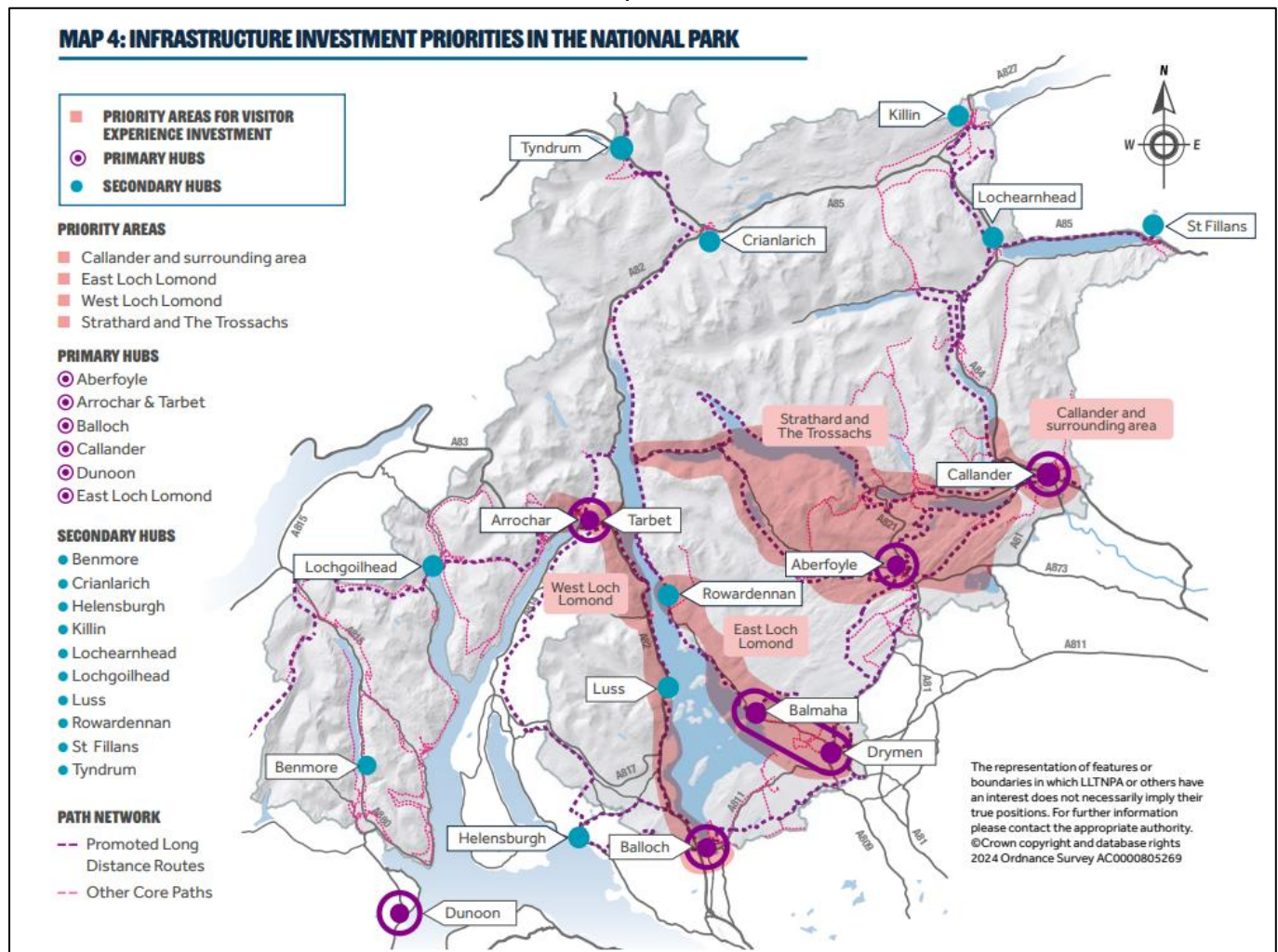
In terms of infrastructure, Chapter 2 of the NPPP, *Creating a Low Carbon Place*, outlines the National Park Authority's goal to deliver high-quality visitor infrastructure and facilities by 2045. The aim is to ensure that visitors have an outstanding experience while minimising their impact on nature and climate change. To achieve this, we will focus on several key objectives regarding infrastructure. The first of these being the implementation of a multi-year place programme to enhance the quality of assets across publicly managed sites. This programme will strike a balance between local needs and visitor demands, while also delivering for nature and climate. Additionally, we aim to improve travel infrastructure, making more of the National Park accessible to people from all backgrounds. This will be achieved through the development of sustainable and active travel options, offering a diverse range of travel choices and itineraries. Notably, infrastructure investment at key visitor hubs, such as at Balloch, Callander and Arrochar/Tarbet can provide more sustainable ways for people to travel to, from and within the National Park.

Chapter 3 of the NPPP, focuses on fostering *Thriving Rural Communities*, with the vision that by 2045, National Park communities will be at the forefront of net-zero, nature-friendly living and working. Their needs will be met locally, supported by a robust rural economy that benefits all. To achieve the goal of increased local living and working it is crucial to preserve local infrastructure,

public services and facilities, while encouraging innovative solutions for rural service delivery recognising the challenges service delivery organisations and communities are experiencing.

The NPPP has identified visitor infrastructure investment priority areas within the National Park, and these are illustrated in the map below. This map in Figure 1 below will become a key consideration for the new LDP and forms part of the evidence base.

*Figure 1: Map showing Infrastructure Investment Priorities in the National Park, taken from the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan.*



- Transport Network
- Community Facilities
- Sports and Recreation Facilities

It is also important to acknowledge that there is overlap between the Infrastructure First paper and NPF4 Policy 13 (Sustainable Transport), Policy 19 (Heat and Cooling), Policy 20 (Blue and Green Infrastructure), Policy 21 (Play, Recreation and Sport), and Policy 30 (Tourism). However, these policies will be explored in more detail in the following papers:

Policy 13 – Topic Paper 6  
 Policy 19 – Topic Paper 5  
 Policy 20 – Topic Paper 4  
 Policy 21 – Topic Paper 8  
 Policy 30 – Topic Paper 10

Infrastructure refers to the physical and natural systems that are essential to the functioning of communities. Physical infrastructure includes utilities (such as water, drainage, energy, and digital connectivity), public facilities (including education, healthcare, and community buildings), and transport networks (such as roads, paths, and public transport). These systems are critical for supporting daily life, enabling sustainable development, and enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

In contrast, natural infrastructure refers to water systems, trees and woodlands, and natural habitats that provide vital ecosystem services, support biodiversity, and contribute to climate resilience. Natural infrastructure is primarily addressed in Topic Papers 1 (Climate and Land Use), 2 (Biodiversity and Nature), and 4 (Flooding, Water Management and Blue and Green Infrastructure).

This paper focuses specifically on physical infrastructure and the role of the Local Development Plan (LDP) in ensuring that new development is supported by infrastructure that meets current and future needs. The LDP plays a key role in guiding the efficient use of existing infrastructure and the sustainable delivery of new systems, helping to shape growth that is achievable, resilient, and beneficial to communities.

This chapter outlines the policy framework for infrastructure planning and delivery, and provides detail on the availability, condition, capacity, demand, and investment requirements for different types of infrastructure. These include education, healthcare, digital infrastructure, energy, water and drainage systems, and community facilities. Other key areas such as transport, housing, blue and green infrastructure, waste, and energy are covered in separate topic papers.

### National Context

#### **Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021/22 to 2025/26**

The Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland (2021–22 to 2025–26) provides the national policy foundation for an infrastructure-first approach. It establishes the overarching priorities, funding commitments, and decision-making principles that guide how infrastructure should be planned and delivered across Scotland. As such, it forms the logical starting point for this paper, setting a strategic framework within which regional and local infrastructure planning, including that for Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, can align with national investment priorities.



The Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland (2021-22 to 2025-26) aims to boost economic growth by increasing annual infrastructure investment by 1% of Scotland's 2017 GDP by 2025-26. It focuses on three key goals: transitioning to net-zero emissions, driving inclusive economic growth and building resilient, sustainable communities. The plan outlines around £26 billion in investment over five years, targeting key sectors such as transport, health, housing, education and digital infrastructure. Major priorities include decarbonising transport, modernising public facilities, improving digital connectivity and increasing affordable housing.

A strong emphasis is placed on sustainability, with projects aimed at reducing emissions, promoting renewable energy and enhancing energy efficiency. This includes initiatives to decarbonise heating systems and support green transport options such as walking, cycling and public transit.

The plan also addresses economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, aiming to create jobs, support innovation and help workers adapt to emerging industries like renewable energy. A key element of the plan is the introduction of a new Common Investment Hierarchy to aid planning and decision-making. This hierarchy prioritises enhancing and maintaining existing assets over building new ones, with four key steps: determine future need, maximise the useful life of existing assets, re-purpose and co-locate, and finally, replace, create or build new assets.

Annex D of the IIC outlines Major Projects and Programmes, and the following regional and sub-regional projects are relevant to Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park:

- Peatland ACTION – Capital investment as part of the National Park authority's 10-year £250 million commitment to restore 20,000 ha annually, and 250,000 ha by 2030.
- A82 Tarbet to Inverarnan – The design, assessment and construction of improvements to the A82 between Tarbet and Inverarnan.

## EDUCATION

Education facilities, including those for early years, primary, secondary and tertiary levels, are a crucial part of the area's infrastructure. Unlike the typical trends observed across Scotland, the pressure on education facilities within Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park is primarily driven by a continued decline in demand, reflecting a long-standing trend of an ageing population (with 55.3% of residents aged over 50, based on [2022 census data](#)). This is further compounded by the out-migration of families, who are increasingly moving outside the National Park in response to growing housing pressures. While the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority oversee planning in the area, it does not have responsibility for education. The relevant education authorities are West Dunbartonshire, Argyll and Bute, Perth and Kinross and Stirling Councils. Consequently, the following information regarding the capacity and condition of education facilities within the National Park has been sourced from these respective authorities.

### Local/National Park Context

#### **Overview of Education Facilities**

Below is a summary of the main education facilities within the National Park, see the appendix for the background data:

- 7 Early Learning and Childcare Facilities
- 14 Primary Schools
- 1 Secondary School
- 2 Additional Support Needs (ASN) Facilities
- 3 Higher Education Facilities

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park spans across four local authorities, meaning some education facilities serving park residents are located outside the National Park's boundaries but remain crucial for the local community. While we cannot directly plan for these external facilities, their influence, including that of private schools outside the National Park, is an important factor to consider. As a result, the following information on the capacity and condition of education facilities includes both those within the National Park and those on its edges, as they are vital to meeting the educational needs of the local population.

#### Early Learning and Childcare Facilities

There are seven nurseries within the National Park, along with an additional four located outside the National Park that serve the communities and residents within the National Park boundary [table 1]. Croftamie nursery facility has recently been permanently closed and relocated to Drymen nursery and Crianlarich nursery is currently being amalgamated with Killin nursery. For residents in St. Fillan's, the nearest early learning facility is the nursery at Comrie Primary School, located approximately 7.6km east of the village. There is currently no Council childcare for under 3 in the West Dunbartonshire areas of the National Park. Although there are no council-run childcare facilities within the West Dunbartonshire area of the National Park, services are available in the wider Vale of Leven area, which may support the needs of National Park residents.

#### Primary Schools

There are 18 primary schools that serve the communities within the National Park. Of these, 14 are located within the National Park boundary, while five are situated outside it. As mentioned above, Comrie Primary School serves residents with children living in St. Fillan's. Regarding the physical condition of primary schools within the National Park, the majority (12) are rated B, indicating they are in satisfactory condition. Strathyre Primary School holds the highest rating of A, signifying good condition, whereas Callander Primary School is rated C, indicating it is in poor condition [table 2]. However, in December 2024, planning permission was granted for the replacement of Callander Primary School due to its condition, suitability, and the need for changes that could not be accommodated on the current site due to spatial constraints. Stirling Council has secured funding from the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP), with construction now underway. The project will relocate the primary school near McLaren High School, creating a new community campus and education hub for Callander.

#### Secondary Schools

There are six secondary schools that serve the communities of the National Park [table 3]. One of these, McLaren High School, is located within the National Park, while the other five are out with. All the secondary schools, except for Crieff High School, have a condition rating of A, indicating they are in good condition. Crieff High School is rated B, meaning it is in satisfactory condition.

#### Independent Schools

As mentioned above, although there is no need to account for or consider independent school provision that serves the National Park, it is important to acknowledge their influence on students who reside within the National Park. This includes those who attend Lomond School in Helensburgh, as well as Ardvreck School and Morrisons Academy in Crieff and some of the private schools in Glasgow.

#### Additional Support Needs (ASN) Schools

There is ASN provision located within the National Park boundary at Katrine House within McLaren High School and Trossachs House based in Callander Primary School. On the outskirts

of the National Park area, ASN provision is provided by three schools, Etive House in St Modan's High School, Parklands Primary School in Helensburgh and Choices School in Jamestown [table 4]. McLaren High School are both in good condition. Parklands and Choices School are in satisfactory condition. Callander Primary School is in poor condition however, as noted above, a replacement school is under construction.

In order to make access to ASN Learning Centres more equitable across Argyll and Bute, the council has invested in Secondary ASN provision within Hermitage Academy in Helensburgh. This project is currently under development.

### Religious Schools

There are no religious schools within the National Park itself. However, on the outskirts of the National Park, there are three Roman Catholic schools: St. Kessog's Primary School, St. Modan's High School, and Our Lady and Saint Patrick's High School [table 5]. St. Kessog's Primary School, located in Alexandria, offers primary school education for those in the National Park, while both St. Modan's, in Stirling, and Our Lady and Saint Patrick's, in Dumbarton, offer high school education for National Park residents. All of these schools are in good condition, each holding an A rating.

### Higher Education

Residents of the National Park have several opportunities for higher education, with institutions both within and outside the National Park. Within the National Park itself, the Scottish Agricultural College has a facility in Crianlarich. The University of Edinburgh operates the Firbush Outdoor Centre on the southern shore of Loch Tay, providing residential and field-based learning experiences near the National Park. The University of Strathclyde also has a presence in the National Park, with Ross Priory, a conference and research facility on the banks of Loch Lomond, and the Scottish Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment (SCENE), which supports environmental research and teaching just outside Rowardennan.

Beyond the National Park, residents can access the University of the Highlands and Islands' facilities, including campuses in Helensburgh, Dunoon, and Oban. Additionally, Stirling offers further educational options, including the University of Stirling and Forth Valley College. For those in the southern part of the National Park, several major institutions are within reach, including the University of the West of Scotland, the University of Glasgow, the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow Caledonian University, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and the Glasgow School of Art.

### Outdoor Education Centres

There are several outdoor centres that support the delivery of outdoor education programmes for the education authorities covering the National Park. These centres play a key role in promoting outdoor learning, personal development, and environmental awareness among young people. Notable examples include Ardroy Outdoor Education Centre near Lochgoilhead, Dounans Outdoor Centre in Aberfoyle, and Ardmay House Outdoor Centre near Arrochar, all of which provide tailored programmes for school groups from across the region.

### Capacity of Education Facilities

School capacity refers to the number of pupils a school can accommodate based on the available teaching spaces, not the overall size of the school building. It specifically excludes ancillary areas such as staff rooms, offices, toilets, and catering or dining facilities in its calculation. The following evidence provides a summary of the education capacity at various levels: early learning and childcare, primary, secondary and religious schools.

### Early Learning and Childcare Facilities

As illustrated in table [1], Crianlarich Nursery, located within the Stirling Council boundary of the National Park, is temporarily closed due to low enrolment in recent years and a staffing shortage in the area, however the nursery has been amalgamated with Killin Nursery. A formal consultation process took place in July 2024 regarding the potential closure of Crianlarich Nursery, and it is confirmed the nursery will permanently close in August 2025.

### Primary Schools

The data in table 2 indicates that most primary schools within the National Park are operating below capacity, with 50% of these schools functioning at less than half of their optimum capacity. Notably, Luss Primary School, Strone Primary School, and Port of Menteith Primary School are operating at under 25% of their capacity, with Luss Primary School having as few as 11 pupils enrolled. In contrast, Callander Primary School is currently operating over its optimum capacity by five pupils. However, as outlined above, Callander Primary School is in the process of being rebuilt and, with its expanded facilities, will be able to accommodate a larger capacity.

### Secondary Schools

As seen in table 3 in the appendix, the only secondary school within the National Park is McLaren's High School which is currently below capacity at 79.1%. Although outwith the National Park area, it is worth noting that St Modan's High School in Stirling has limited capacity, with school roll currently above 90% of total capacity.

### Additional Support Needs (ASN) Schools

Capacity data for additional support need schools is not calculated by education authorities, as it is not a suitable measure due to the specialised nature of these facilities and the diverse needs of their pupils, which can vary significantly in terms of space requirements.

### Religious Schools

There are no religious schools within the National Park however, those that's catchment areas cover areas of the National Park are largely operating below capacity. Although, as noted above, St Modan's High School has limited capacity, with school roll currently above 90% of total capacity.

### School Roll Projections

School roll projections in Scotland are used by local authorities to estimate future pupil numbers and help plan for school capacity, staffing, and infrastructure needs. These projections are typically based on factors such as birth rates, housing development, and migration patterns. Within Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, school roll projection data is currently only available for schools located within the Argyll and Bute and Stirling Council areas as seen in table 6 -11 in the appendix.

Based on the available future school roll projections, there are no concerns about working capacity being exceeded within primary schools located in the Argyll and Bute, Perth and Kinross and West Dunbartonshire Council boundary areas of the National Park between now and 2034/35. However, projections for schools within the Stirling Council area of the National Park indicate that Drymen Primary School is expected to exceed its working capacity from the 2027/28 school year onward. This projected increase reflects planned significant housing growth in the surrounding area, which is likely to lead to a rise in pupil numbers over the coming years.

Regarding secondary school roll projections, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority acknowledges a data gap for Perth and Kinross Council and West Dunbartonshire

Council. However, as data is available for McLaren High School, the only secondary school located within the National Park boundary, the National Park Authority considers the current evidence sufficient for the Evidence Report stage. The National Park Authority will continue to actively engage with the relevant local authorities within the National Park boundary during the Proposed Plan stage to further inform the next Local Development Plan.

## HEALTHCARE

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is covered by four NHS Health Boards: NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, NHS Highland, NHS Tayside and NHS Forth Valley. The following evidence from NHS Inform highlights the primary care services serving the National Park's communities, organised by the local authority area which matches the Health Board areas.

### Local/National Park Context

#### **Health and Social Care Partnerships**

Across the four NHS Health Boards that cover the National Park, there are four also Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs), which are collaborations between local authorities, Health Boards, and other third sector organisations. Their primary responsibility is to improve the delivery and integration of care by ensuring that services are coordinated, efficient, and responsive to the needs of the population. The HSCPs that cover the National Park are Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership, West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership, Perth and Kinross Health and Social Care Partnership, and Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership. The key priorities of relevance to the National Park are summarised below.

#### **Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership**

The Stirling and Clackmannanshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) has developed a Strategic Commissioning Plan for 2023 – 2033. This 10-year plan aims to reshape health and social care services in the region, emphasising the delivery of person-centered care and support within local communities.

The plan outlines five key strategic aims, but the two key aims related to development and land use in the National Park are:

- Aim 2: Promoting Independent Living – Supporting individuals to live independently and make informed choices about their care, which may influence the development of accessible housing and infrastructure.
- Aim 3: Achieving Care Closer to Home – Enhancing services to enable more care to be delivered within or near people's homes.

#### **West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership**

The West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) is a collaboration between the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and West Dunbartonshire Council. It manages and integrates health and social care services to improve wellbeing, focusing on prevention, early intervention and reducing health inequalities. The Strategic Plan for 2023 – 2026 outlines four strategic outcomes to guide the region's health and social care services: *caring communities*, *safe and thriving communities*, *equal communities* and *healthy communities*. These outcomes focus on improving the quality of life, health and wellbeing for residents, with an emphasis on prevention, personalisation, resilience and community engagement.

Of the four strategic outcomes highlighted in the plan for 2023 – 2026, the outcome most relevant to the National Park is *Safe and Thriving Communities*. This outcome aims to promote self-care and longer, healthier lives by supporting home-based health, reducing hospital

admissions and protecting vulnerable individuals from harm. It is closely linked to land use, as the focus on home-based care could influence the development of housing, transport networks and care facilities within the National Park.

#### Perth and Kinross Health and Social Care Partnership

The vision and priorities outlined below are part of the Perth and Kinross Health and Social Care Partnership's Strategic Plan for 2024-2027. This plan seeks to create a supportive, healthy environment where everyone has access to the care they need and is part of a caring community. It builds on previous efforts while addressing key challenges, such as increasing demand for services, financial pressures, and recruitment issues. Over the next three years, the focus will be on investing in health and social care services to improve well-being, through innovative approaches, early intervention, and integrated care.

The key priorities that align with the National Park's issues and strategic vision are *simplifying access to services* and *providing care closer to home*.

#### Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership

The Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership's third Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 embraces the challenges of its rural geography and demographics as an opportunity to innovate, particularly through digital technology and new ways of working. The plan focuses on four key priorities: choice, control and innovation; prevention, early intervention and enablement; community co-production; and Living Well and Active Citizenship.

Of the eight strategic objectives outlined, the priority to *support people to live fulfilling lives in their own homes for as long as possible* is particularly relevant to future development and infrastructure improvements within the National Park. Ensuring that homes are suitable for long-term, independent living will influence the design and accessibility of housing, as well as the development of local services and facilities. This focus on creating environments that support independent living could shape future planning decisions, such as the integration of accessible housing, healthcare facilities, and transportation networks within the National Park.

### **Overview of Healthcare Facilities**

#### General Practices (GP)

As highlighted in table 12 in the appendix, there are 14 GP practices that serve the communities living within the National Park. Seven of the practices are located within the National Park whilst the remaining seven are located outside the National Park area but serve the communities of Strachur, St Fillan's and Croftamie.

Across Scotland, GP practice list sizes have generally increased in recent years, influenced by factors such as practice closures and growing patient demand. Within the National Park, while some General Practices have experienced modest increases or decreases in patient numbers between 2020 and 2025, overall service provision and list sizes have remained relatively stable, with no significant changes over the past decade.

#### Argyll and Bute:

In the Argyll and Bute area of the National Park, Arrochar Surgery has experienced an increase in patient numbers. Conversely, Lochgoilhead Medical Centre and Riverbank Surgery in Kilmun have seen a decrease in patient numbers. Strachur Medical Practice, located outside the National Park, serves many National Park residents and has seen an increase in its patient list.

### Perth and Kinross:

Comrie Medical Practice and Crieff Health Centre, located outside the National Park boundary, serve as key healthcare providers for residents of St Fillan's and the surrounding areas. In recent years, Comrie Medical Practice has experienced growth in its patient list whereas Crieff Health Centre has noticed considerable decline.

### Stirling:

All GP practices within the Stirling Council boundary of the National Park have seen growth in their practice list sizes since 2015. Aberfoyle has experienced a significant rise in patient numbers, with the practice list more than doubling. Callander has also seen a substantial increase, while Drymen and Killin have had more moderate increases in their patient lists.

### West Dunbartonshire:

In the West Dunbartonshire Council area of the National Park, there are no GP practices directly within the National Park. However, four practices serving the wider Balloch town are located just outside the National Park boundary. Loch Lomond Surgery has experienced a decrease in patient numbers, with a reduction of 681 patients, while both Oakview and Lennox practices have seen growth in their patient lists.

### Pharmacies, Dentists and Opticians

*For the following section, see appendix, table 13, 14 & 15 for background information.*

### Argyll and Bute:

For communities within the National Park located in the Argyll and Bute council area, access to healthcare services such as pharmacies, dentists, and opticians is largely outside the National Park boundary. There are no pharmacies within the National Park itself, but seven are located in the nearby town centres of Dunoon, Helensburgh, and Garelohead.

In terms of dental care, there are eight dentists serving the communities within the Argyll and Bute council area of the National Park, with one located in Lochgoilhead and the remaining seven situated outside the National Park.

For optician services, residents of the Argyll and Bute area within the National Park have access to four opticians in Helensburgh and two in Dunoon.

### Perth and Kinross:

For those living within the Perth and Kinross Council boundary of the National Park, healthcare services such as pharmacies, dentists, and opticians are largely found outside the National Park. The nearest pharmacy is in Comrie, while residents in Tyndrum and Crianlarich can access a pharmacy in Dalmally, located in the Argyll and Bute area, or in Callander.

Dental services are provided by three practices located outside the National Park, in Crieff and Comrie, which serve the communities within the Perth and Kinross area of the National Park.

As for opticians, residents in the Perth and Kinross part of the National Park can access their nearest optician in Crieff.

### Stirling:

In the Stirling Council area of the National Park, residents have relatively good access to healthcare services, though many are located near the National Park's boundaries. There are seven pharmacies available, with five situated within the National Park's communities and two located on the edge of the National Park.



When it comes to dental care, four dental practices serve the Stirling Council area within the National Park. Three are located within the National Park, in Callander, Drymen and Killin, and the fourth is in Balfron, just outside the National Park.

For optician services, there is one optician located within the National Park in Callander and one on the outskirts of the National Park in Balfron, which also serves residents in the Stirling Council area of the National Park.

#### West Dunbartonshire:

In the West Dunbartonshire council area of the National Park, there are four pharmacies serving the southern communities. One pharmacy is located in Balloch, within the National Park, and the other three are situated on the outskirts in Alexandria.

For dental care, five dentists serve the southern areas around Balloch, all located outside the National Park in Alexandria.

The nearest opticians for residents in the West Dunbartonshire area of the National Park are also located in Alexandria.

#### **Hospitals**

Access to hospital and NHS Accident & Emergency (A&E) services for residents and visitors of the National Park is provided through several main hospitals. The National Park is served by the Golden Jubilee Hospital in Clydebank, Perth Royal Infirmary in Perth, Ninewells Hospital in Dundee, Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow, Paisley Royal Alexandra Hospital and Forth Valley Royal Hospital in Larbert. At the district level, residents have access to Vale of Leven District Hospital and Lorn and Islands Hospital, while community-level hospitals include Crieff Community Hospital and Cowal Community Hospital.

As highlighted by the [Travel Time to NHS A&E services datamap](#), in the National Park, residents in the southern areas, including Balloch, Luss, Arden, and as far north as Port of Rossshdu, are within a 30-minute drive of an A&E department. The southeastern edges of Croftamie and Callander also fall within this 30-minute radius. However, many communities in the central and northern parts of the National Park are located more than 30 minutes from the nearest A&E department.

#### **Elderly Residential Care**

With the National Park's population predominantly ageing, providing adequate care and services for the elderly is essential. These are provided in managed facilities, such as care homes, and also through support provided in homes. However, delivering care at home in remote rural areas is difficult due to infrastructure constraints, accessibility issues, staffing shortages, and higher delivery costs. Within the National Park, there is one privately operated care home: South Peak Care Home near Arrochar. Additionally, the Falls of Dochart Care Home in Killin is managed by the Killin Charitable Trust. Outside the National Park's boundaries, there are several other private and public care homes that also serve local residents (see table 16 of the appendix).

Overall, the quality and condition of care within the National Park is high. However, for the elderly residents living within the Perth and Kinross council boundary of the National Park, the three care homes located outside the National Park, Balhousie Dalnaglar Care Home, Wardside House, and Dalginross House are in adequate to weak condition as reported by the Care Commission.

## **Capacity of Healthcare Facilities**

### **General Practices (GPs)**

The size of patient lists across healthcare facilities plays a crucial role in determining the level of pressure on services within local communities. As patient lists grow, many healthcare providers face increasing strain, leading to longer wait times, reduced appointment availability, and overall stress on resources.

*For the following section, see appendix, table 12.*

### **Argyll and Bute:**

As shown in table 12, Strachur Medical Practice within the National Park has seen its patient list grow by 15.7% over the past 5 years. Arrochar Surgery, located outside the National Park, has experienced a smaller increase of 3.9%. In contrast, Lochgoilhead Medical Centre and Riverbank Surgery, also outside the National Park, have seen a decline in their patient lists since 2020.

### **Perth and Kinross:**

There are no general practices within the Perth and Kinross Council boundary of the National Park, though Comrie Medical Practice and Crieff Health Centre serve park residents. Over the past 5 years, Comrie's practice list has grown by 4.8% however, Crieff Health Centres practice list has declined by 39.7%.

### **Stirling:**

The data in table 12 shows that all general practices within the Stirling Council boundary of the National Park, including Aberfoyle, Drymen, and Killin, have seen an increase in patient list size over the last 5 years. Notably, Callander Medical Practice has experienced a growth of 12.9%.

### **West Dunbartonshire:**

The general practices outside the National Park serving Balloch residents have seen changes in their patient list sizes between 2020 and 2025. Inchcruin Practice, Oakview Medical Practice, and Lennox Practice have all experienced moderate increases of less than 5%. However, Loch Lomond Surgery has seen a significant decrease in its patient list size, with a drop of 5.8%.

### **Elderly Residential Care**

In the Stirling Council area of the National Park, the Falls of Dochart Care Home in Killin provides 12 registered places. Ashlea House in Callander (20 beds) has closed though the service provider is exploring options for reopening. Planning permission also exists for a 50-bed care home in Callander, but the development has not progressed. Stirling HSCP considers the current provision, including the approved but unbuilt home, sufficient to meet present demand, reflecting the preference for people to remain living at home.

## **DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **National Context**

### **Digital Scotland R100 Strategy**

The Scottish Government released Scotland's Digital Strategy in 2021. This strategy aims to ensure that Scotland can fully harness the transformative power of technology. Improving superfast broadband coverage and maximising the availability of gigabit-capable broadband infrastructure are critical components, as digital connectivity is essential for economic growth and resilience.

The Reaching 100% (R100) programme aims to provide superfast broadband with speeds of at least 30 megabits per second (Mbps) for all homes and businesses in Scotland. Funded by the Scottish Government and BT, the programme has three components: over £600 million in R100 contracts, the Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme (SBVS) for homes and businesses with sub-30Mbps speeds not covered by the R100 contracts and ongoing commercial coverage efforts.

### **The Shared Rural Network**

For the rural areas across Scotland where access to a mobile network is limited, the Shared Rural Network is a programme introduced by the UK Government alongside the four mobile network operators: EE, Vodafone, Three and Virgin Media O2 to deliver 4G coverage to 95% of the United Kingdom landmass by the end of 2025. In particular, the programme is stated to improve geographic coverage of National Parks to 74% from 41%, serving residents and millions of visitors annually.

Between 2020 and 2024, the National Park received approximately 36 applications for telecoms infrastructure through the Shared Rural Network. However, as the UK Government's goal is to achieve 95% geographical coverage for 4G by December 2025, it is unlikely there will be any new applications for the project within the National Park.

### **The Connected Nations Scotland Report 2024**

Ofcom's goal is to ensure communications work for everyone by supporting reliable, widely available, and high-quality networks. The *Connected Nations Scotland 2024* report tracks progress in broadband and mobile service availability across Scotland and the UK, with updates on the rollout of full fibre, fixed wireless access, and 5G networks.

Over the past year, Scotland has seen significant improvements in both 4G mobile geographic coverage and the availability of full-fibre fixed networks. These developments are helping to expand connectivity options across a wider portion of the population and across more of the country's diverse geography.

Despite this progress, Scotland remains the least connected of the UK's four nations by several key measures. Connectivity challenges are particularly pronounced in rural and island communities, where limited infrastructure often results in slower speeds for both fixed and mobile services. This is particularly relevant for Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, which encompasses a broad rural area with scattered communities, significant visitor numbers, and important public services that increasingly depend on reliable digital infrastructure.

Although 4G broadband and mobile coverage continues to be the most common for consumers, both outside and inside premises across Scotland, the availability of 5G services continues to grow steadily with 5G coverage outside of premises from at least one Mobile Network Operator (MNO) now at 91% for High Confidence measure.

As initiatives aimed at improving rural mobile connectivity continue to advance, there is likely to be an increasing need to expand 5G infrastructure within rural towns and villages to ensure these communities are not left behind in Scotland's digital development. However, this comes with challenges, particularly in integrating new mast infrastructure sensitively within the protected and visually sensitive landscapes of the National Park. There are also ongoing difficulties in encouraging mast sharing among network operators, which can lead to duplication of infrastructure and further pressure on the landscape.

## Local/National Park Context

### Broadband Access and Capacity

The predominantly rural nature of the landscape within the National Park poses issues to both broadband and mobile network access for those residents, visitors and businesses in the National Park. To highlight the broadband and mobile network capacity across the National Park, a series of maps have been produced by the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park using Ofcom 2025 data. This data focuses upon assessing the proportion of a postcode population who have access to broadband over different download speeds. The maps have been produced in relation to various degrees of broadband access (download speed) – Unstable (2 Mbps), Minimal (5 Mbps), Operational (10 Mbps), Satisfactory (30 Mbps).

Large areas of the Cowal Peninsula, including Strachur and the Rest and Be Thankful (A83) corridor, as well as parts of the north and northeast of the National Park – such as Killin, the Trossachs and Ben Lomond – have between 50% and 100% of premises receiving broadband speeds below the Universal Service Obligation. This information can be viewed on the interactive map.

In contrast, the southern and eastern parts of the National Park, as well as the larger towns and villages, have widespread availability of superfast broadband. Between 75% and 100% of premises in the following towns and villages are served by superfast broadband: Balloch, Luss, Arrochar and Tarbet, Carrick Castle, Ardentinn, Tyndrum, Lochearnhead, Strathgryre, Callander, Aberfoyle, Gartmore and Drymen. In Crianlarich, no premises have access to superfast broadband. This information can be viewed on the interactive map.

### Mobile Network Coverage and Capacity

Figure 3 illustrates mobile coverage 'not-spots' - postcode units where at least one property cannot receive a reliable voice service from any mobile network. This data highlights areas within Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park that experience significant connectivity challenges. Notable 'not-spot' locations include Carrick Castle and extensive parts of the surrounding Cowal peninsula, the northeastern area of Succoth, Benmore, Inversnaid, Kinlochard, large parts of the Trossachs such as Stronachlachar and Brig O' Turk, and the northern side of Callander village. The information is sourced from Ofcom's Connected Nations Report, which maps mobile network coverage across the UK. This is spatially represented in Figure 3 in the appendix.

### Approved Telecommunication Masts in the National Park

As shown in Figure 2 in the appendix, several telecommunications mast applications have been approved across the National Park as of April 2025. In total, 94 applications have received approval, with the development status of these masts ranging from completed to not yet started. This reflects ongoing efforts to improve digital connectivity within the National Park.

## **UTILITIES**

### Electricity

#### National Park Context

### SSEN Distribution Future Energy Scenarios Report 2024

The 2024 Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES) report for Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) outlines projected changes in electricity demand and generation

across the North of Scotland licence area, supporting long-term planning toward the UK's clean power and net zero targets. Under the Holistic Transition scenario, several major developments are expected by 2050.

Renewable energy capacity in the region is projected to reach nearly 12 GW, over three times the current level driven by the continued growth of onshore wind and solar PV. Fossil fuel generation is phased out entirely, with diesel and gas sites either decommissioned or converted to low-carbon alternatives such as biodiesel or hydrogen. Waste incineration is removed from the energy mix, while sewage gas remains in limited use.

Decarbonisation of heat is supported through a widespread rollout of heat pumps, and a core hydrogen network enables commercial-scale hydrogen production and distribution. Battery storage continues to expand, although growth shifts toward smaller-scale systems as the large-scale market reaches maturity. Meanwhile, the pace of new domestic and non-development slows, reflecting a more stable demand outlook.

### **Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution PLC (SHEPD) Network Development Report 2024**

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Distribution (SSEN-D) has published its 2024 Network Development Report (NDR) for the SHEPD licence area. This report outlines SSEN-D's long-term plans for its electricity distribution network over the next ten years, focusing on infrastructure at 11kV and above.

The NDR helps users and stakeholders understand where there are opportunities to connect to the network, where upgrades may be needed, and how the network will evolve. It covers:

- Areas of the network best suited for new connections and additional electricity distribution
- Parts of the network likely to need reinforcement to support new demands
- Information that supports the efficient, coordinated development and operation of the wider electricity system
- Expected needs for flexibility or energy efficiency services as alternatives to traditional network upgrades

In terms of planned interventions in the SHEPD licence area that may affect distribution networks within Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, there are two interventions that are set to positively impact supply, in particular to those residing in Callander and Tyndrum.

The Braco GSP is located within the Perthshire and Stirlingshire region of the SHEPD licence area and supplies approximately 20,575 customers. The area partially covers the National Park, in particular, Callander. The primary substation in Crieff is due to have both the 7.5/15 MVA transformers replaced in the year 2026/2027. However, the size of the new transformers is still to be confirmed.

The Rannoch GSP is located within the Perthshire region of the SHEPD licence area and currently supplies approximately 506 customers. The area partially covers the National Park, particularly Tyndrum. The primary substation in Bridge of Gaur is due to have the single 0.5 MVA transformer replaced with a 1MVA unit in the year 2025/2026.

## Local/National Park Context

### **SSEN Transmission Infrastructure**

SSEN Transmission (SSEN-T) is a responsible organisation for operating, maintaining, upgrading and reinforcing the high-voltage electricity transmission networks. These networks transport electricity over long distances from power stations to substations, utilising steel towers, underground cables and overhead lines.

There are three electricity transmission grid supply points (GSP) within the National Park, one at Sloy (132kV), Killin (132kV) and St Fillans (132kV). There is also a transmission substation at Inverarnan and a switching station at Sloy which are integral to the operation of the transmission network. In terms of network capacity, the GSP at Killin is constrained, meaning the network doesn't have the capacity to transport electricity required or produced from a new connection. In terms of SSEN-T generation availability. Both GSPs at Sloy and Killin are constrained, meaning there is limited capacity for new electricity generation to be connected to the electricity grid. However, at St Fillans there is generation availability.

Both Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) and SSEN-T are currently upgrading the electricity network to meet net zero targets. SSEN-T is also expanding the national transmission grid in northern Scotland including Argyll and Bute, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and the Western Isles, to handle increased capacity and support new renewable energy generation. The outstanding and complete SSEN-T projects within the National Park are listed below:

- The Killin Visual Impact of Scottish Transmission Assets (VISTA) project was completed in 2023 and involved undergrounding 7.8km of OHL and removing 32 steel lattice towers.
- The Glen Falloch and Sloy VISTA project has been complete and is in its operational phase.
- The overhead line from Sloy to Windyhill requires reconductoring and refurbishing due to deterioration. Planning permission for access tracks was granted in April 2023.
- Transformers to the south of the existing Sloy Substation are required, however, there have been delays due to onsite ground contamination. A planning application is due to be submitted in future but the timescale for submission is currently unknown.

### **SSEN Distribution Infrastructure**

SSEN-D is responsible for delivering electricity from the transmission network to homes and businesses across the north of Scotland. The distribution network transports lower voltage electricity through overhead lines, underground cables and service lines. There is a SSEN-D grid supply point in the National Park, located at St Fillan's (33kV). In terms of generation availability, the GSP at St Fillan's is constrained meaning there is no room for more electricity generation in the St Fillan's area.

### **SPEN Transmission and Distribution Infrastructure**

There are two overhead SPEN Transmission lines that run through the National Park, a 132kV line from Dumbarton to Craggan Hill and a 132kV line from Glasgow to Cruachan via Inverarnan. SPEN Distribution is responsible for delivering electricity to those within a small area at the south of the National Park, particularly those who live in Balloch and on the Westside of Loch Lomond as far as Arden. As highlighted by SP Energy Networks Distributed Generation Heat Map for those living within the above-mentioned areas of the National Park, at least one factor in the network is close to its operational limit and so installation of most levels of distributed generation and local connection is highly unlikely.

## Gas Network

### **Scottish Gas Networks (SGN)**

In the National Park, only a small proportion of properties are connected to the gas grid. The areas with gas connections are primarily the larger settlements such as Balloch, Callander and Drymen, which are linked to the SGN low-pressure lines. Smaller villages such as Croftamie and Buchanan Castle also have connections to these low-pressure lines. Additionally, there are two SGN medium-pressure lines: one running from Croftamie to the southern edge of Drymen and the centre of Buchanan Castle, and another passing through the centre of Callander.

This limited connectivity to the gas grid is largely due to the National Park's geographic remoteness, low population density and the high costs of extending infrastructure into more rural or difficult-to-reach locations. This is in keeping with rural Scotland. As a result, many areas rely on alternative heating sources.

## Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment

### **Scottish Water**

The information below offers a high-level snapshot of Scottish Water's current treatment works capacity in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, intended for initial screening and development planning purposes. However, factors such as the overall number and scale of proposed developments, along with their proximity to treatment facilities, may influence the ability to accommodate them, potentially necessitating future investment in growth. Scottish Water is obligated to identify and provide new strategic capacity to meet the demands of new housing developments, as well as the domestic needs of commercial and industrial sectors. Consequently, ongoing collaboration with Scottish Water will be crucial to gain a deeper understanding of upcoming developments (in terms of scale and location), which will inform their strategic plans and help identify areas for future investment.

Scottish Water's water and drainage operational areas have been provided as data for inclusion in the Evidence Report for the new Local Development Plan and will be made available through an interactive map layer in the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Local Development Plan viewer. While the map viewer is not currently publicly accessible, it will be available prior to submission of the Evidence Report to the Scottish Government.

Scottish Water's assessment of Water Treatment Works capacity across the National Park can be seen in Figure 5 in the appendix. This capacity information refers to the works capacity only. The maximum amount of water that a treatment works (the treatment plant) can reliably process while still meeting quality standards. There is currently capacity available at the following water treatment works:

- Belmore WTW
- Blairlinnans WTW
- Carron Valley WTW
- Loch Eck WTW

However, the following water treatment works are considered as potentially requiring future investment:

- Carrick Castle WTW
- Lochgoilhead WTW
- Tyndrum WTW



- Crianlarich WTW
- Killin WTW
- Balquhidder WTW
- Lochearnhead WTW
- Brig O'Turk WTW
- Strathyre WTW
- Stronachlachar WTW
- Katrine Pier WTW
- Turret WTW
- Alexandria WTW

Scottish Water's assessment of Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) capacity across the National Park can be seen in figure 6 in the appendix. It is important to note that the capacity information relates to works capacity only. Works capacity is the designed and licensed ability of a wastewater treatment works (WWTW) to treat incoming flows and loads of sewage to an acceptable standard before discharging effluent to the environment. There is currently capacity available at the following waste-water treatment works:

- Aberfoyle WwTW
- Ardoch WwTW
- Arrochar Church Road ST
- Gartocharn STW
- Killin WwTW
- Lochgoilhead WwTW

However, the following wastewater treatment works have been noted as potentially requiring future investment:

- Ardenfield North (Ardentinnny) ST
- Ardenfield South ST
- Balmaha STW
- Brig O'turk STW
- Buchanan Castle WwTW
- Callander WwTW
- Callander Trean ST
- Carrick Castle Sep
- Crianlarich WwTW
- Croftamie STW
- Drymen WwTW
- Gartmore WwTW
- Glen Loin Cres Sep
- Inversnaid WwTW
- Kilmun Alderburn Sep WwTW
- Kilmun Hillrig Sep WwTW
- Kilmun Lagganbhuie Sep WwTW
- Kinlochard WwTW
- Loch Katrine WwTW
- Lochearnhead WwTW
- Luss STW

- Portanstuck Sep
- St Fillans WwTW
- Strathyre WwTW
- Stronachlachar WwTW
- Strone Place ST
- Strone Sep WwTW
- Tyndrum STW

It is important to note that the final level of investment will be determined as we move forward into the proposed planning stage. As the LDP progresses towards adoption and there is more certainty regarding the scale and location of developments, the demand on water and wastewater treatment infrastructure will become clearer

## VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE

### Local/National Park Context

#### **Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies (STIDS)**

In recent years the National Park Authority has made infrastructure upgrades and improvements a priority and has developed a team to manage this process – The Place Projects Team. As part of this process, the Place Team have commissioned Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies (STIDs) for four areas of the National Park. The STIDs were developed to identify areas of opportunity and to identify actions to strengthen tourism infrastructure and place quality. The visitor sites are in different ownership underlining the need for a partnership approach.

At the start of this new programme, it was recognised that the current visitor infrastructure in the National Park is in many places outdated and in need of significant upgrades. It struggled to meet peak demand, fails to adequately address user needs and does not fully support the local communities. Additionally, it lacks alignment with nature conservation and climate change adaptation goals, including the National Park Authority's Mission Zero initiative.

The overall vision for the Place Programme is that the National Park Authority and its partners will invest in high-quality facilities that strike a sustainable balance between local needs, amenities and visitor demand. A network of well-connected destinations will be developed to support sustainable capacity, with enhanced facilities that encourage sustainable travel, improve accessibility and protect nature, landscape and resident amenities, while enriching the visitor experience.

Each of the STIDs provide specific detail on the four areas of the National Park and highlight where improvements could be made which would enhance the quality of the place while improving the experience for both visitors and residents.

The four STIDs cover:

- West Loch Lomond
- East Loch Lomond
- Strathard and the Trossachs
- Callander

Many of the placemaking priority areas detailed in the section above are included within these STIDs and they have been taken into consideration during their preparation.

West Loch Lomond STID 2022 – This STID focuses on the West Loch Lomond area and specifically interventions at Arrochar and Tarbet which are both Placemaking priority areas. The

proposal for Tarbet is to develop a visitor hub with improved accessibility by sustainable forms of transport. This is in line with the Placemaking priority guidance within the LDP and is currently in the process of being implemented. The proposal for Arrochar is similar and it is suggested that Arrochar could benefit from improved visitor facilities and transport access. This work has not yet been started, however the outline brief included within the STID would accord with the Placemaking priorities set out in the LDP.

East Loch Lomond STID 2022 - This STID focuses on the area to the east of Loch Lomond and includes suggested interventions for Drymen which has been identified as a Placemaking priority area within the current LDP. The suggested improvements for Drymen are in line with those set out within the LDP and focus on improving a sense of place through enhancements to the Village green. The STID has also noted issues with traffic congestion and active travel access which are suggested areas for infrastructure upgrades. There are no timescales set for this piece of work currently but once it is underway it will fulfil the brief set within the LDP.

Strathard and The Trossachs STID 2024 – This STID focuses on the Strathard and Trossachs area of the National Park which includes Aberfoyle, Strathard, The Trossachs and Port of Menteith. Aberfoyle is also an area designated as a placemaking priority area and the proposal within the STID is in line with the suggested focus areas from the LDP.

Callander STID 2024 – This STID focuses specifically on the settlement of Callander and the surrounding area. The study provides an in-depth review of the area and proposes interventions which could improve the area for the local and visitor community. Callander has also been designated as a placemaking priority area within the current LDP and the suggested areas for improvement have been captured within the STID. The STID goes beyond the current LDP and includes suggested proposals.

In support of these STIDs and the broader Place Programme, the National Park-Wide Delivery Route Map has been developed as a strategic tool to coordinate and guide multi-year public sector investment across the National Park. Created by the National Park Visitor Management Group (NPVMG), it aligns with the *National Park Partnership Plan 2024–2029* and reflects learning from the initial years of capital investment. The Route Map focuses on delivering high-impact improvements to public assets that enhance the visitor, community, and business experience, particularly in priority hubs and visitor areas.

The National Park-Wide Delivery Route Map outlines clear local and Park-wide priorities, indicative timelines, and investment needs. It is designed to support coordinated planning and delivery and to facilitate engagement with government, funders, communities, and businesses. It should be read in conjunction with the *Place Programme Approach* and the *Partnership Plan*, and it includes an indicative extension to 2034.

## **TRANSPORT NETWORK**

Many of the challenges surrounding travel are not unique to the National Park. However, the scale of visitor travel within the National Park presents a unique opportunity to create a low-emission rural transport system that is both inclusive and attractive, meeting the needs of both visitors and residents. At present, large parts of the National Park remain inaccessible without a car due to the limited and fragmented nature of public transport. This not only affects visitor mobility but also presents issues for residents, for example when accessing health facilities in rural areas where alternative public transport and active travel options are limited. While active travel can play an important role, it is not a holistic solution for all in society, particularly for those with mobility challenges or when essential services are located at a distance. As a result, private

vehicles continue to be the dominant and often essential mode of transport for residents and a key enabler of access for visitors. Tackling this lack of choice in rural public transport is a critical step toward achieving Net Zero status for the National Park. As the National Park Authority is not the transportation authority, it is highly dependent on action by partners, including Regional Transport Partnerships, Local Authorities and transportation operators, with the National Park Authority depending on their collaboration to bring this vision to life.

It is important to recognise the issues and trends surrounding transport within the National Park as part of the Infrastructure First approach. While transport is a key factor in this approach, Topic Paper 6: Sustainable Transport will provide an in-depth examination of the current transport landscape within the National Park, covering existing infrastructure, its condition, capacity and any ongoing investment projects aimed at improving infrastructure, access and availability.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

Community facilities play a vital role in supporting the well-being and resilience of residents within Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, aligning with the National Park's Infrastructure First approach by ensuring that development is supported by the necessary services and amenities. These facilities are essential to sustaining vibrant, inclusive communities and enabling long-term growth in a rural context. A more detailed exploration of community facilities within the National Park is provided in Topic Paper 8, under the Community Wealth Building section.

## **SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

Sports facilities within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park are sparse and unevenly distributed. Most are clustered around southern and eastern settlements such as Balloch, Drymen, and Callander, where golf courses, sports pitches, and sports halls are common. Facilities include a mix of public, council-owned, and private provision, which must be considered when assessing community needs.

Provision declines in the north and west. Remote communities such as Crianlarich and those on the Cowal Peninsula have limited access, while Lochgoil's facilities are mostly within the privately owned Drimsynie Holiday Village.

Although nearby towns and cities, Stirling, Helensburgh, Dumbarton, Clydebank, and Glasgow offer a wide range of facilities that partially offset the shortfall, accessing them requires travel. A more detailed analysis of sports facilities is provided in Topic Paper 8.

## **Summary of Stakeholder Engagement**

As part of the Evidence Gathering process for the new Local Development Plan (LDP), the National Park Authority developed a suite of Topic Papers and Area Summaries to explore key planning themes and local issues across the National Park. These documents form the technical and spatial foundation for the new LDP and were central to the targeted community engagement process between May and July.

Ten Topic Papers were drafted, aligning with the relevant policies in NPF4. These papers summarise national, regional, and local data, providing a detailed evidence base on subjects such as climate change, biodiversity, housing, infrastructure, and the rural economy. They were developed by National Park officers, incorporating input from key public bodies including SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot, Transport Scotland, and local authorities.

A draft of this topic paper was sent to:

- Scottish Water
- SEPA
- Transport Scotland
- NHS Forth Valley
- NHS Tayside
- NHS Highland
- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
- Scottish Southern Energy Network Transmission (SSEN-T)
- Scottish Southern Energy Network Distribution (SSEN-D)
- Scottish Power Energy Network (SPEN)
- West Dunbartonshire Council
- Argyll and Bute Council
- Stirling Council
- Perth and Kinross Council

Six Area Summaries were also produced to provide a more accessible, place-based and spatial view of the evidence. These summaries incorporate mapped information alongside key content from registered Local Place Plans, highlighting key opportunities, challenges, and priorities for specific areas within the National Park. The spatial presentation was intended to support more informed and locally relevant discussion during in-person workshops.

As part of the engagement activities, a series of in-person workshops were held in May and June 2025 across the National Park to present the Area Summaries and gather feedback directly from local community groups and stakeholders. To ensure wider participation, complementary online surveys were also made available, allowing people to review and comment on both the Topic Papers and Area Summaries over a six-week period (May – July 2025). In addition to public engagement, input was actively sought from key statutory agencies and partner organisations throughout the preparation process to help shape and strengthen the evidence base.

Summary of Responses	
Respondent	Summary of Comments and Response
Scottish Water	Scottish Water requested that Water Treatment Works and Wastewater Treatment Works which currently have capacity be included and Scottish Water refill stations be mapped. Scottish Water also provided an update to the status of Callander Wastewater Treatment Works and provided some text to be incorporated in the paper. <b>Response:</b> Water and Wastewater treatment works with current capacity have been included, along with an update on Callander Wastewater Treatment Works. Data on Scottish Water refill stations is covered in Topic Paper 8: Local Living.
Transport Scotland	Transport Scotland stated that the link to Topic Paper 6: Sustainable transport is sufficient. <b>Response:</b> Noted.
NHS Health Boards	Each of the four NHS Health Boards covering the National Park boundary were consulted as part of the process, and follow-up emails were issued. No responses were received from the Health Boards;

	however, responses and additional data were received from both Forth Valley and Tay Health and Social Care Partnerships and have been incorporated in the paper.
Scottish Southern Energy Network Transmission	SSEN-T provided additional Grid Supply Point (GSP) data and requested acronyms to be used. <b>Response:</b> All suggestions and data were incorporated in the paper.
Scottish Southern Energy Network Distribution	SSEN-D highlighted several reports, strategies and plans for consideration. <b>Response:</b> SSEN Distribution Future Energy Scenarios Report 2024 and SHEPD Network Development Report 2024 were summarised and incorporated in the paper.
Stirling Council	Stirling Council highlighted the need to update the development status of Callander Primary School and provided additional data on Additional Support Needs provision. <b>Response:</b> The development status of Callander Primary School was updated and additional data incorporated in the paper.
West Dunbartonshire Council	West Dunbartonshire Council provided additional data on Early Years Childcare provision and School Roll projections. <b>Response:</b> The data provided by West Dunbartonshire Council was incorporated in the paper.
The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (ScotWays)	ScotWays highlighted additional strategies and policies which are pertinent to Visitor Infrastructure and Transport Network sections in the paper. <b>Response:</b> Active Travel Strategies are in Topic Paper 6: Sustainable Transport, and the Scottish Government Active Travel Vision 2030 and our Core Paths Plan has been incorporated in Topic Paper 6.
Stirling Area Access Panel	Stirling Area Access Panel suggested the paper should expand on healthcare access by addressing service gaps in remote areas, GP and emergency care availability, transport challenges for those with limited mobility or income, and the continued reliance on cars due to poor public transport. <b>Response:</b> Evidence on access to hospitals, emergency care, and GP services is provided in the topic paper and appendix. Information has been incorporated in the Transport Network section of the topic paper to highlight the continued reliance on cars and acknowledges that active travel alone cannot meet everyone's needs.
Kilmaronock Community Council	Kilmaronock Community Council suggested reviewing the core path scoring criteria. They highlighted the suitability of the John Muir Way/NCN7 and the A811 path for active travel, noting ongoing improvements in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council. They recommend promoting sustainable building materials and call for better infrastructure, including improved public transport, litter management, and public toilets with changing facilities at key access points. <b>Response:</b> Comments have been noted. However, as the comments received do not identify gaps in evidence, data, or information, but instead reflect views on requirements, it is considered that these are best addressed at the next stage during preparation of the Proposed Plan.

Homes for Scotland	<p>Homes for Scotland highlight Local Living, Population and Healthcare related data for the National Park Authority to consider as evidence and raised points regarding the need for policy to support new house building to support the housing crises and offer digital ready housing. Points raised request that the next Local Development Plan supports new housing and addresses infrastructure constraints through policy measures and that Planning Obligations for infrastructure investment/provision should only be utilised where underpinned by sufficient evidence.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> All comments noted and will be considered as part of the preparation of the new Local Development Plan. All relevant data sources are considered to have been included in this Paper or otherwise addressed by the data and responses obtained from the education and health authorities.</p>
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## Summary of Implication for the Proposed Plan

The implications of the evidence for the Proposed Plan may be summarised as follows:

- Spatial Strategy and Scale of Development Envisaged** - The most significant scaled development in the National Park is expected to be to trunk roads, electricity generation at Sloy and the electricity transmission networks. Callander, Balloch and Arrochar & Tarbet are the main strategic locations for growth with a more proportionate scale of growth to the rest of the National Parks villages that is commensurate with the size, nature and development pattern of the host community. The new Local Development Plan will consider how to account and plan for this infrastructure and strategic development.
- Infrastructure Constraints in Rural Villages** – An implication for the next Local Development Plan will be the constraints of capacity and provision of infrastructure and visitor locations to support new development. In preparing the new Local Development Plan, a review of development priorities should be undertaken alongside an updated assessment of infrastructure capacity, including water, waste water, energy, and other key services. This should include, in consultation with SEPA and Scottish Water, consideration of known areas of constraint for private wastewater drainage and where additional investment in water treatment and wastewater treatment infrastructure may be required. Of the 17 water treatment works serving the National Park four have capacity available and 13 potentially require future investment. Of the 34 waste water treatment works serving the National Park, six have capacity available and 28 potentially require future investment.
- Developer Contributions** - The current LDP and associated developer contributions should be reviewed to assess the need, type, and scale of contributions required to support infrastructure delivery within the new LDP, including with healthcare and education services.
- Digital Connectivity** - The new LDP should support the delivery of new telecommunications infrastructure that enhances digital connectivity, while safeguarding the National Park's wild land, special qualities, and natural heritage. This should include a review of existing digital infrastructure policies in light of increasing applications for development in wild land and remote rural areas where there is currently no digital signal improvement, as well as consideration of the potential expansion of 5G within the towns, villages, and settlements of the National Park.



- **Electricity Transmission** - There are three electricity transmission (132kV) grid supply points (GSP) within the National Park at Sloy, Killin and St Fillans. There is a transmission substation at Inveranan and a switching station at Sloy which are integral to the operation of the national transmission network. Both the GSPs at Sloy and Killin are constrained, meaning there is limited capacity for new electricity generation to be connected to the electricity grid. Both Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) and Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (SSEN-T) are upgrading the electricity network to meet net zero targets, handle increased capacity and support new renewable energy generation on and offshore nationally.
- **Infrastructure Priorities identified in the National Park Partnership Plan** - The new LDP will be informed by, and reflect, the strategic infrastructure and development priorities identified in the National Park Partnership Plan on Map 4: Infrastructure Investment Priority areas for visitor experience investment and at primary gateways on the edges of the National Park and at villages within the National Park with good facilities and infrastructure that function as secondary hubs and Map 5: Strategic development and investment showing planned improvements to nationally strategic infrastructure and locations for strategic development and investment.
- **Improving Visitor Infrastructure** - A National Park-Wide Delivery Route Map has been developed to coordinate and guide multi-year public sector investment across the National Park. It outlines clear local and Park-wide priorities, indicative timelines, and investment needs and will support coordinated delivery. This will inform the Proposed Plan and associated LDP Delivery Plan for investment in visitor infrastructure across the National Park. The Route Map focuses on delivering high-impact improvements to public assets that enhance the visitor, community, and business experience, particularly in priority hubs and visitor areas and improvements to travel infrastructure to create more sustainable and active travel options and infrastructure. Investment is needed at key visitor hubs Balloch, Callander and Arrochar/Tarbet to support more people travel to, from and within the National Park.
- **Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies (STIDs)** - have been prepared for four areas of the National Park to identify areas of opportunity and actions to upgrade tourism infrastructure and place quality whilst also supporting more sustainable travel options. The four areas are West Loch Lomond, East Loch Lomond, Strathard and The Trossachs and Callander. West Loch Lomond STID – focusses on Tarbet and Arrochar. East Loch Lomond STID focuses on the area to the east of Loch Lomond including Drymen. Strathard and The Trossachs STID focuses on Aberfoyle, Strathard, The Trossachs and Port of Menteith. Callander STID focuses on Callander and its surrounding area.

### Statements of Agreement / Dispute

There are no substantive areas of disagreement on the evidence in the paper. Feedback from respondents to the Topic Paper consultation have largely been addressed in the Evidence Report. Scottish Water, SEPA and Transport Scotland have confirmed they are content with the paper.

# Appendix

## Education

### Early Learning and Childcare:

Table 1: Existing Early Learning and Childcare Facilities that serve residents of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, including their capacity.

Name of Childcare Facility	Town/Village	Within or Outside the National Park	Age (years)	Registered Capacity	Registered Children	Capacity (%)
Argyll and Bute Council Area						
Arrochar Primary Pre 5 Unit	Tarbet	Within the National Park	2-5	17	10	58.8%
Lochgoilhead Primary Pre 5 Unit	Lochgoilhead	Within the National Park	2-5	16	7	43.8%
Strachur Primary Pre 5 Unit	Strachur	Outside the National Park	2-5	18	8	44.4%
Perth and Kinross Council Area						
Comrie Primary School Nursery	Comrie	Outside the National Park	3-5	24	17	70.8%
Stirling Council Area						
Killin Nursery	Killin	Within the National Park	0-5	27	21	78%
Aberfoyle Nursery	Aberfoyle	Within the National Park	3-5	32	24	75%
Crianlarich Nursery	Crianlarich	Within the National Park	3-5	0	0	0%
Callander Nursery	Callander	Within the National Park	2-5	58	53	91%
Drymen Nursery	Drymen	Within the National Park	2-5	32	29	91%
West Dunbartonshire Council Area						
Balloch Nursery	Balloch	Outside the National Park	3-5	56	56	100%
Carousel Nursery	Alexandria	Outside the National Park	0-5	73	N/A	N/A
Levenvale Nursery	Alexandria	Outside the National Park	3-5	80	80	100%
Gartocharn Nursery	Gartocharn	Within the National Park	0-5	30	37	81%

### Primary Schools:

Table 2: Existing Primary Schools that serve residents of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, including school roll, condition rating and capacity.

Name of School	Town/Village	Within or Outside the National Park	Number of Pupils	Condition	Capacity
Argyll and Bute Council Area					
Luss Primary School	Luss	Within the National Park	13	B	26%

Hermitage Primary School	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park	366	B	74%
Rhu Primary School	Rhu	Outside the National Park	172	B	68%
Garelochhead Primary School	Garelochhead	Outside the National Park	87	B	27%
Arrochar Primary School	Tarbet	Within the National Park	38	B	39%
Lochgoilhead Primary School	Lochgoilhead	Within the National Park	26	B	54%
Sandbank Primary School	Dunoon	Outside the National Park	100	B	51%
Strachur Primary School	Strachur	Within the National Park	20	B	27%
Strone Primary School	Strone	Within the National Park	12	B	10%
Perth and Kinross Council Area					
Comrie Primary School	Comrie	Outwith the National Park	101	B	51.3%
Stirling Council Area					
Gartmore Primary School	Gartmore	Within the National Park	33	B	75%
Callander Primary School	Callander	Within the National Park	259	C	102%
Killin Primary School	Killin	Within the National Park	54	B	62.1%
Port of Menteith Primary	Port of Menteith	Within the National Park	10	B	22.7%
Strathyre Primary School	Strathyre	Within the National Park	32	A	49.2%
Drymen Primary School	Drymen	Within the National Park	117	B	89.3%
Aberfoyle Primary School	Aberfoyle	Within the National Park	65	B	74.7%
West Dunbartonshire Council					
Balloch Primary School	Balloch	Outside the National Park	286	A	66.8%
St Kessog's Primary School	Alexandria	Outside the National Park	153	A	71.5%
Levensale Primary School	Alexandria	Outside the National Park	183	B	52.1%
Gartocharn Primary School	Gartocharn	Within the National Park	85	B	67.5%

## Secondary Schools:

Table 3: Existing Secondary Schools that serve residents of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, including school roll, condition rating and capacity.

Name of School	Town/Village	Within or Outside the National Park	Number of Pupils	Condition	Capacity
Argyll and Bute Council Area					
Hermitage Academy	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park	1,313	A	74%
Dunoon Grammar School	Dunoon	Outside the National Park	756	A	74%
Perth and Kinross Council Area					
Crieff High School	Crieff	Outside the National Park	643	B	67%
Stirling Council Area					
McLaren High School	Callander	Within the National Park	641	A	79.1%
Balfron High School	Balfron	Outside the National Park	893	A	85%
St Modan's High School	Stirling	Outside the National Park	1005	A	95.7%
West Dunbartonshire Council Area					
Vale of Leven Academy	Vale of Leven	Outside the National Park	982	A	89.3%
Our Lady and Saint Patrick's High School	Dumbarton	Outside the National Park	1013	A	72.9%

## Additional Support Needs (ASN) Schools:

Table 4: Existing ASN Schools that serve residents of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, including school roll and condition rating.

Name of School	Town/Village	Within or Outside the National Park	Number of Pupils	Condition
Stirling Council Area				
Trossachs House – Callander Primary School	Callander	Within the National Park	12	C
Katrine House – McLaren High School	Callander	Within the National Park	12	A
Etive House - St Modan's High School	Stirling	Outwith the National Park	29	A
Argyll and Bute Council Area				
Parklands Primary School	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park	45	B
West Dunbartonshire Council Area				
Choices School	Jamestown	Outside the National Park	25	B

## Religious Schools:

Table 5: Existing Religious Schools that serve residents of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, including school roll, condition rating and capacity.

Name of School	Town/Village	Within or Outside the National Park	Number of Pupils	Condition	Capacity
Stirling Council Area					
St Modan's High School	Stirling	Outside the National Park	1005	A	95.7%
West Dunbartonshire Council Area					
St Kessog's Primary School	Alexandria	Outside the National Park	153	A	71.5%
Our Lady and Saint Patrick's High School	Dumbarton	Outside the National Park	1013	A	72.9%

## School Roll Projections

### Primary Schools

Table 6: Future School Roll Projections for Primary Schools in the Argyll and Bute Council boundary area of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

Argyll and Bute Council Area										
School	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
Luss Primary School	10	8	9	10	8	6	5	6	7	7
Hermitage Primary School	374	368	363	360	345	344	340	324	323	324
Rhu Primary School	164	161	170	169	167	160	158	151	147	141
Garelochead Primary School	73	72	76	71	67	63	67	68	67	64
Arrochar Primary School	37	37	32	30	29	28	29	27	26	29
Lochgoilhead Primary School	27	25	23	19	18	14	11	8	9	8
Sandbank Primary School	74	71	66	65	62	66	66	63	60	62
Strachur Primary School	27	24	24	21	22	23	21	16	16	16
Strone Primary School	2	2	4	2	2	3	4	5	6	5

*Table 7: Future School Roll Projections for Primary Schools in the Stirling Council boundary area of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.*

Stirling Council Area										
School	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
Aberfoyle Primary School	68	61	59	57	56	50	41	41	41	37
Callander Primary School	243	239	232	209	203	193	187	188	174	176
Crianlarich Primary School	23	21	18	16	12	10	12	10	6	7
Drymen Primary School	107	116	132	136	139	142	145	147	152	149
Killin Primary School	55	58	58	60	65	66	67	65	61	63
Strathyre Primary School	34	31	32	31	32	26	28	27	27	26

*Table 8: Future School Roll Projections for Primary Schools in the Perth and Kinross Council boundary area of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.*

Perth and Kinross Council Area							
School	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33
Comrie Primary School	103	97	95	94	99	97	96

*Table 9: Future School Roll Projections for Primary Schools in the West Dunbartonshire Council boundary area of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.*

West Dunbartonshire Council Area										
School	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Balloch Primary School	234	227	217	199	191	192	196	200	200	203
Gartocharn Primary School	78	74	71	69	67	70	70	70	70	70
Levenvale Primary School	208	225	236	247	270	269	273	277	277	280
St Kessog's Primary School	122	126	118	120	116	118	120	122	122	123

## Secondary Schools

Table 10: Future School Roll Projections for Secondary Schools in the Argyll and Bute Council boundary area of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

Argyll and Bute Council Area										
School	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
Hermitage Academy	1320	1341	1324	1294	1307	1279	1229	1207	1194	1166
Dunoon Grammar School	752	733	701	689	678	630	608	614	583	568

Table 11: Future School Roll Projections for Secondary Schools in the Stirling Council boundary area of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

Stirling Council Area										
School	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
McLaren High School	656	674	701	688	683	673	647	641	603	561

## Healthcare

### General Practices (GPs):

Table 12: Existing GPs that serve residents of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, including change in practice list size between January 2020 and January 2025.

Name of General Practice Facility	Town/Village	Within or Outside the National Park	Practice List Size - 2020	Practice List Size - 2025	Difference between Practice List Size (2020-2025)
Argyll and Bute Council Area					
Arrochar Surgery	Arrochar	Within the National Park	1105	1148	+43
Lochgoilhead Medical Centre	Lochgoilhead	Within the National Park	493	461	-32
Riverbank Surgery	Kilmun	Within the National Park	1559	1517	-42
Strachur Medical Practice	Strachur	Outside the National Park	888	1027	+139
Perth and Kinross Council Area					
Comrie Medical Practice	Comrie	Outside the National Park	2581	2705	+124
Crieff Health Centre	Crieff	Outside the National Park	6630	4000	-2630
Stirling Council Area					
Aberfoyle Medical Centre	Aberfoyle	Within the National Park	2367	2382	+15



Callander Medical Practice	Callander	Within the National Park	4399	4593	+194
Drymen Medical Practice	Drymen	Within the National Park	1530	1556	+26
Killin Health Centre	Killin	Within the National Park	1507	1571	+64
Killlearn Health Centre	Killlearn	Outside the National Park	4478	4610	+132
West Dunbartonshire Council Area					
Inchcruin Practice	Alexandria	Outside the National Park	3597	3730	+133
Loch Lomond Surgery	Alexandria	Outside the National Park	8020	7555	-465
Oakview Medical Practice	Alexandria	Outside the National Park	9260	9463	+203
Lennox Practice	Alexandria	Outside the National Park	4834	5004	+170

### Pharmacies:

Table 13: Existing Pharmacies that serve residents of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

Name of Pharmacy	Town/Village	Within or Outside the National Park
Argyll and Bute Council Area		
Davidsons Chemist	Garelochhead	Outside the National Park
Boots	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park
Gordons Chemist	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park
Rowlands Pharmacy	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park
Boots	Dunoon	Outside the National Park
Right Medicine Pharmacy	Dunoon	Outside the National Park
Well Dunoon	Dunoon	Outside the National Park
Perth and Kinross Council		
Davidsons Chemist	Comrie	Outside the National Park
Stirling Council Area		
Aberfoyle Pharmacy	Aberfoyle	Within the National Park
Davidsons Chemist	Drymen	Within the National Park
Davidsons Chemist	Killin	Within the National Park
M Farren Pharmacy	Callander	Within the National Park
Trossachs Pharmacy	Callander	Within the National Park
Balfron Pharmacy	Balfron	Outside the National Park
Killlearn Pharmacy Ltd	Killlearn	Outside the National Park
West Dunbartonshire Council Area		
Well Pharmacy	Balloch	Within the National Park
Boots	Alexandria	Outside the National Park
Boots Pharmacy	Alexandria	Outside the National Park
Gordons Chemist	Alexandria	Outside the National Park

## Dentists:

Table 14: Existing Dentists that serve residents of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

Name of Dentist	Town/Village	Within or Outside the National Park
Argyll and Bute Council Area		
PDS Dental Clinic	Lochgoilhead	Within the National Park
The Hollies Dental Practice	Dunoon	Outside the National Park
PDS Dental Clinic	Dunoon	Outside the National Park
Argyll Smile Dental Care	Dunoon	Outside the National Park
Clyde View Dental Practice	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park
Helensburgh Dental Practice	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park
PDS Dental Clinic	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park
SP Dental Care	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park
Perth and Kinross Council		
Spring Grove Clinic	Comrie	Outside the National Park
Infinityblu Dental Care	Crieff	Outside the National Park
Care Dental	Crieff	Outside the National Park
Stirling Council Area		
Infinityblu Dental Care	Callander	Within the National Park
Drymen Dental Practice	Drymen	Within the National Park
Killin Dental Practice	Killin	Within the National Park
Cherrybank Dental Surgery	Balfron	Outside the National Park
West Dunbartonshire Council Area		
APCO Dental Care	Alexandria	Outside the National Park
Bridge Street Dental Practice	Alexandria	Outside the National Park
Lomond Dental Care	Alexandria	Outside the National Park
The Old Post Office Dental Care	Alexandria	Outside the National Park
Vale Smile Care Limited	Alexandria	Outside the National Park

## Opticians:

Table 15: Existing Opticians that serve residents of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

Name of Opticians	Town/Village	Within or Outside the National Park
Argyll and Bute Council Area		
20 20 Opticians	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park
Boots Opticians	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park
Helensburgh Eyecare	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park
Specsavers	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park
L and D Eyecare	Dunoon	Outside the National Park
Stirling Opticians	Dunoon	Outside the National Park
Perth and Kinross Council Area		
P&A Eyecare	Crieff	Outside the National Park
Stirling Council Area		

Balfron Eyecare	Balfron	Outside the National Park
Baird Optometrists	Callander	Within the National Park
West Dunbartonshire Council Area		
Gray Opticians	Alexandria	Outside the National Park
Wilkie's Eyecare	Alexandria	Outside the National Park

### Care Homes:

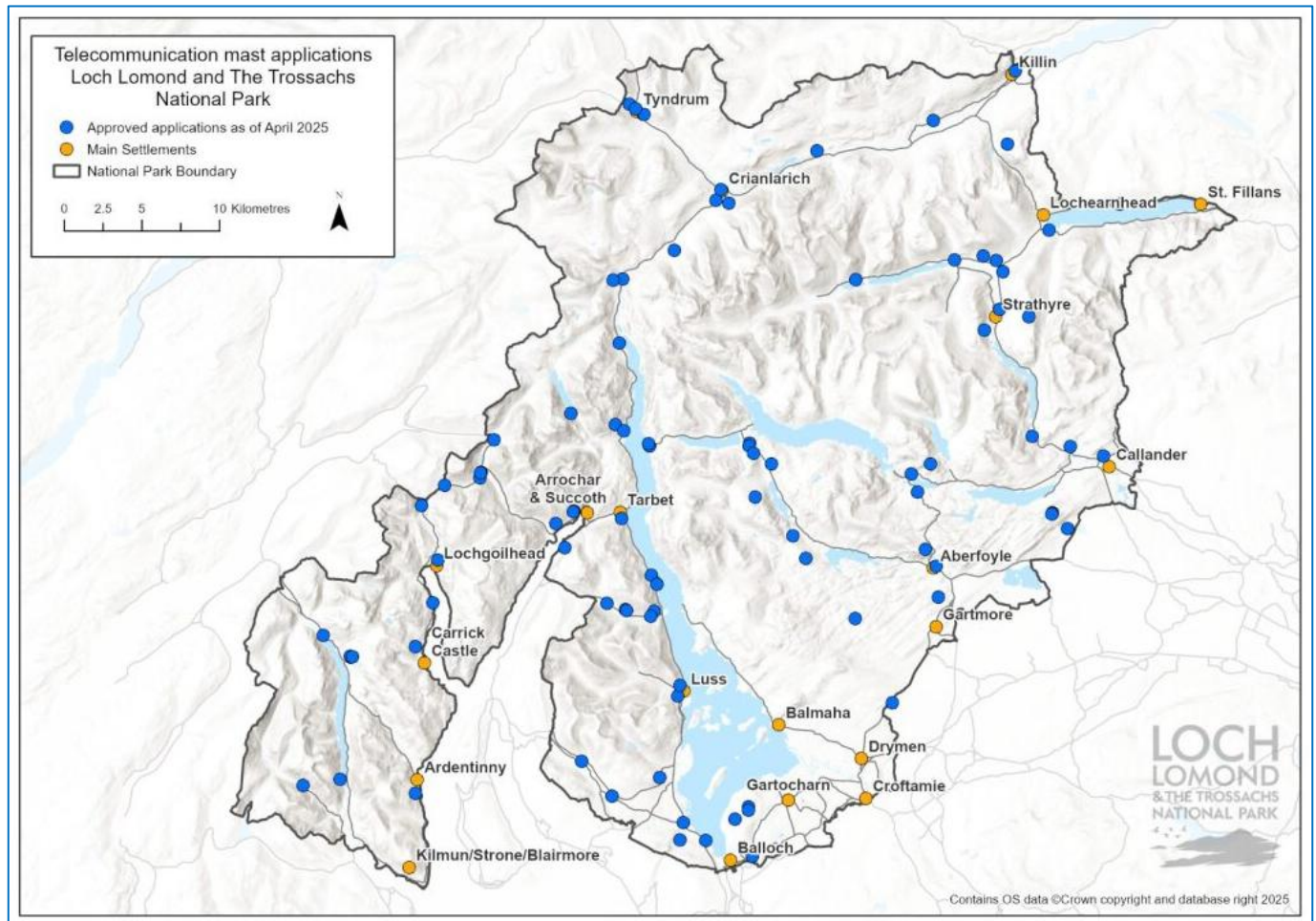
Table 16: Existing Care Homes in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, including quality and registered places

Name of Care Home Facility	Town/Village	Within or Outside the National Park	Quality	Registered Places
South Peak Care Home	Arrochar	Within the National Park	Good/Very Good	6
Falls of Dochart Care Home	Killin	Within the National Park	Excellent/Very Good	12
Ashdene House	Crieff	Outside the National Park	Good	17
Ashdene Court	Crieff	Outside the National Park	Good	20
Balhousesie – Dalnaglar Care Home	Crieff	Outside the National Park	Adequate	40
Richmond House	Crieff	Outside the National Park	Good	19
Wardside House	Crieff	Outside the National Park	Good/Adequate	32
The Birches	Crieff	Outside the National Park	Very Good	31
Dalginross House	Comrie	Outside the National Park	Adequate/Weak	17
Northwood House Care Home	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park	Very Good/Good	20
Hermitage House	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park	Very Good/Good	64
Morar Lodge Nursing Home	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park	Good	33
The Argyle Care Centre	Helensburgh	Outside the National Park	Very Good/Good	58
Struan Lodge	Dunoon	Outside the National Park	Very Good	12
Ardenlee	Dunoon	Outside the National Park	Adequate/Weak	33
Ashgrove Care Home	Dunoon	Outside the National Park	Good/Adequate	65
Balquhiddier House Care Home	Alexandria	Outside the National Park	Good	65
Crosslet House Care Home	Dumbarton	Outside the National Park	Very Good	84

## Digital Infrastructure

### Telecommunication Applications:

Figure 2: Map showing Approved Telecommunication Mast Applications in the National Park as of April 2025



<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>Topic Paper 4 - Flooding, Water Management and Blue and Green Infrastructure</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p><b>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997</b>, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15(5) (a) - ‘the principal physical and environmental characteristics of the district’.</li> </ul> <p><b>Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023</b></p> <p>Under Regulation 9, must have regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River Basin Management Plans</li> <li>• Flood Risk Management Plans</li> <li>• Local Flood Risk Management Plans</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Other Relevant Legislation:</u></b></p> <p>The Aims of National Parks in Scotland (as set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000)</p> <p>The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009</p> <p><b><u>Other Statutory Requirements:</u></b></p> <p>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report is a requirement on the preparation of a Local Development Plan</p> <p>Habitats Regulations Appraisal is a requirement on the preparation of a Local Development Plan</p>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b><u>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – Interactive Map</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u><a href="#">Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Interactive Map</a></u></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Overarching Policies, Strategies and Reports</u></b></p> <p><u><i>National Park Partnership Plan</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u><a href="#">National Park Partnership Plan 2024 - 2029</a></u></li> </ul> <p><u><i>National Context</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u><a href="#">The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009</a></u></li> <li>• <u><a href="#">The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021 -2027</a></u></li> <li>• <u><a href="#">National Flood Resilience Strategy (2024)</a></u></li> <li>• <u><a href="#">Climate change: Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029</a></u></li> </ul>

	<p><u><b>Local/National Park Context</b></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report</u></li> <li>• <u>Stirling Council Flood Protection Schemes 2024-2025</u></li> <li>• <u>West Dunbartonshire Council Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2022- 2028</u></li> <li>• <u>Loch Lomond Climate Change Risks and Opportunities 2024</u></li> <li>• <u>Future Nature 2022</u></li> </ul> <p><u><b>Other relevant Policies, Strategies and Reports</b></u></p> <p><u><b>Regional Context</b></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Clyde and Loch Lomond Flood Risk Management Plan 2022 - 2028</u></li> <li>• <u>Forth Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2022 – 2028</u></li> <li>• <u>Tay Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2022 - 2028</u></li> <li>• <u>Highland and Argyll Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2022 – 2028</u></li> <li>• <u>Loch Lomond And Vale of Leven Flood Risk Management Study Feasibility Report - December 2019 (document not available online, will be submitted to Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals Division at Gate check stage)</u></li> <li>• <u>Vale Of Leven Surface Water Management Plan - 21 October 2022 (document not available online, will be submitted to Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals Division at Gate check stage))</u></li> </ul> <p><u><b>Existing Data</b></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVAs) 2022 - 2028</u></li> <li>• <u>Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVAs) 2028-2034</u></li> <li>• <u>SEPA Flood Hazard Maps</u></li> <li>• <u>SEPA Flood Risk Management Maps</u></li> <li>• <u>Dynamic Coast Webmap</u></li> <li>• <u>SEPA Water Classification Hub 2020</u></li> <li>• <u>SEPA River Basin Management Plan (RBMP3) Pressures Data 2020</u></li> </ul> <p>The following data has been analysed using <u>SEPA’s Data Publication – Map Viewer</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEPA Scottish Wetland Inventory</li> <li>• SEPA Obstacles to Fish Migration</li> <li>• SEPA Geomorphic Risk</li> <li>• SEPA Riparian Corridor</li> </ul>
<p><b>National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context</b></p>	
<p><b>Policy 22 - Flood Risk and Water Management</b> outlines the policy intent to enhance community resilience to flood risk by prioritising avoidance and decreasing the susceptibility of both current and future developments to flood risk. It is stated that Local Development Plans (LDPs) should enhance community resilience to climate change by avoiding development in flood risk areas as a first principle. They should support adaptation through the reuse of previously developed sites, incorporation of blue-green infrastructure, and natural flood risk management. Plans must consider flood risk from all sources using the</p>	



best available data, applying a precautionary approach. Where future flood risk becomes unmanageable due to climate change, alternative sustainable land uses should be explored.

**Policy 20 - Blue and Green Infrastructure** emphasises the importance of protecting, enhancing and expanding blue and green networks, recognising their vital role in flood prevention and water management. Local Development Plans (LDPs) should be guided by current audits and strategies that reflect the multiple benefits of blue and green infrastructure. They should identify, protect, and enhance existing assets and networks, and support expansion, including through retrofitting. Plans should prioritise connectivity within and beyond their boundaries and promote the use of under-used land, permanently or temporarily, as green infrastructure. Access rights, core paths, and active travel routes must be safeguarded, with new and improved access opportunities encouraged.

**NPF 4 Spatial Planning Priorities** for the Central Region notes that Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park has landscape-scale opportunities to restore and enhance nature and respond to climate change, including through woodland creation and peatland restoration, as well as natural flood risk management.

## National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2024 – 2029 Context

Residents, workers and visitors in the National Park are facing substantial challenges due to climate change, including more frequent floods and landslides that damage buildings, infrastructure and isolate entire communities. The National Park and its partners, through the National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP), will support communities in identifying and implementing locally tailored measures to increase resilience to the impacts of climate change, with a focus on flooding and its effects on vulnerable areas, buildings, and infrastructure. They will continue to promote and apply natural flood management techniques, such as woody debris dams, to slow water flow and reduce flood risk. In parallel, land managers will be supported through public and private funding to adopt regenerative land management practices that improve soil stability, enhance water retention, and contribute to broader landscape-scale climate adaptation.

## Summary of Evidence

This paper covers National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Policy 22 (Flood Risk and Water Management) and Policy 20 (Blue and Green Infrastructure). The following summary of evidence section is structured in the following order:

- Flooding
- Water Management
- Blue and Green Infrastructure

Also included is a high-level summary of the findings of the National Park Authority's *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report 2025* and its associated interactive map. Additionally, this paper outlines the methodology that will be followed in the preparation of the Park Authority's blue and green infrastructure audit.

These policy areas are closely connected to NPF4 Policies 1 & 2 - Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises and Climate Mitigation and Adaptation, Policy 3: Biodiversity, Policy 10 - Coastal Development, Policy 11 - Energy and Policy 18 - Infrastructure First and often act as constraints or key considerations in development activities more broadly. This paper consolidates information across these areas while acknowledging their interdependencies



and the relationships between them. However, these topic areas are explored in more detail in the following papers:

- NPF4 Policy 1 & 2 – Topic Paper 1
- NPF4 Policy 3 – Topic Paper 2
- NPF4 Policy 10 – Topic Paper 1
- NPF4 Policy 11 – Topic Paper 5
- NPF4 Policy 18 – Topic Paper 3

## **FLOODING**

### **River Basin Management Plan for Scotland**

On behalf of the Scottish Government, SEPA produces River Basin Management Plans for Scotland. While these plans indicate that much of Scotland's water environment is in generally good condition, pressures remain in some areas, particularly in relation to water quality, physical condition, water availability, and barriers to wild fish migration. The plans set out a range of actions to address these challenges and support the ongoing protection and enhancement of the water environment, recognising its vital role in supporting biodiversity, ecosystem health, and climate resilience.

### **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Report**

The Scottish Government's Local Development Planning Guidance identifies a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) as being a relevant source of information for the Evidence Report. This topic paper provides a short summary of the full report, which is included in the appendix. It is accompanied by the National Park Authority's SFRA map, an ESRI Web map which presents the information spatially to support easier navigation.

The inclusion of evidence relating to flood risk is needed to successfully deliver the policy intent and outcomes of NPF4 Policy 22, Flood Risk and Water Management, to strengthen resilience to flood risk by promoting avoidance as a first principle and reducing the vulnerability of existing and future development to flooding. The SFRA will also provide evidence for the implementation of other NPF4 policies where they address the climate and nature crises and the delivery of infrastructure, including blue and green infrastructure.

This SFRA has been prepared in accordance with Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) SFRA Guidance V1 October 2023 as updated by Version 2 (May 2025) and the Planning Advice Note for Planning Authorities on LDP Evidence Gathering: Achieving sufficiency of evidence relating to flood risk and the water environment published in December 2024. It has been developed in consultation with SEPA and the flood risk officers from the four Local Authorities that cover the National Park, who are the designated local flood risk authorities with statutory responsibility for managing flood risk within their respective areas. The National Park Authority does not have its own separate Flood Authority, so we work with the Flood Authorities that cover the National Park (Argyll and Bute, Stirling, Perth and Kinross and West Dunbartonshire).

### **National Flood Resilience Strategy for Scotland**

The National Flood Resilience Strategy is the Scottish Government's comprehensive approach to addressing the escalating risks of flooding, particularly as a result of climate change. By 2080, the number of properties at risk of flooding in Scotland is projected to rise

from 284,000 to nearly 400,000. This strategy, part of the Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024–2029 (SNAP3), aims to build a flood-resilient Scotland through a collaborative, community-focused approach.

- The strategy calls for a proactive approach to flooding—designing places to be resilient from the start, rather than just responding to issues after they arise.
- It takes a community-focused view, recognising that flood resilience is key to overall community wellbeing and climate adaptation.
- A commitment to fairness ensures that all communities benefit from resilience efforts, with an emphasis on inclusion and equity.
- Finally, the strategy highlights shared responsibility, stressing that everyone has a role in creating flood-resilient places.

### **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Interactive Map**

The SFRA Map is an ESRI web-based mapping resource that sits alongside the SFRA report. It is an interactive high-level overview, where layers can be switched on and off and areas can be explored in more detail. The SFRA map has been prepared in line with SEPA Guidance for planning authorities on Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as noted above. The SFRA will be used as a screening tool as part of the Site Assessment Methodology to help understand whether a candidate site may need more detailed information, for example a site-specific flood risk assessment, to fully assess flood risk.

Datasets on the public viewer include:

Reference layers:

- SEPA River and Coastal Catchments
- National Park (Planning Authority) Boundary
- Local Authority Boundaries
- Settlement Boundaries

Flood Prevention Schemes and Past Flood Events:

- Existing Flood Protection Schemes
- Proposed Flood Protection Schemes
- Flood Studies
- Historic Flood Events (West Dunbartonshire and Perth and Kinross)

Flood Risk Management:

- Flood Warning Areas
- Local Plan Districts
- Target Areas 2021
- SEPA Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVAs) 2022 – 2028
- SEPA Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVAs) 2028 – 2034

Scottish Government Dynamic Coast:

- Mean High Water Springs
- Artificial Coastal Defences
- Artificial Coastal Defences buffer
- Future Erosion 2050 High Emissions Scenario
- Future MHWS for High Emissions Scenario

## SEPA Flood Hazard Maps

- High Likelihood
- Medium Likelihood (plus climate change)
- Medium Likelihood
- Low Likelihood

The following data will be used within the Planning Authority; however, they are not included on the public map:

- Reservoir inundation Reservoirs Map
- SEPA's Observed Flood Events and Historic River Flood Extents Data
- SEPA Natural Flood Management
- Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Climate Adaptation Study – High Risk Areas
- Local Authority Flood Study Outputs – Balloch

The reservoir inundation data, information on past flooding events, SEPA's Observed Flood Events (OFE), and historic river flood extents cannot be published by the National Park Authority, as they remain the property of SEPA and can only be released by them. Due to licensing restrictions, the National Park Authority is also unable to publish SEPA's Natural Flood Management data. Additionally, the High-Risk areas identified in the National Park Authority's Climate Adaptation Study should be interpreted within the full context of that report.

Building on these restrictions, it is important to note that flood risk and incident data across the National Park is generally limited. Incidents are only recorded when properties are affected, meaning many localised events are not captured. While extreme weather events are documented in the Climate Adaptation Study (March 2024), there is no corresponding dataset of flood events. Local Authority Flood Study outputs – Balloch (West Dunbartonshire), Callander and Aberfoyle (Stirling) are available through Flood Authority websites referenced in the SFRA report. Outputs from any work undertaken by Stirling, Perth & Kinross, Argyll & Bute or West Dunbartonshire councils should be used as an additional data source when assessing flood risk.

As a result, there are a number of key data gaps still to be addressed. We will aim to add the following datasets to the internal map resource as they become available:

- **Historic flood events:** Argyll & Bute and Stirling data is not available as a standalone resource.
- **Flood study outputs:** Aberfoyle is nearing completion and Vale of Leven surface water data not yet available.
- **Flood protection schemes:** Argyll & Bute's defence layer is still in development.
- **Coastal impacts:** Further evidence is needed for Cowal.

Given these gaps, the SFRA should be regarded as a snapshot in time and will require regular review as new or updated information becomes available. In addition, site-specific flood risk assessments may be required in areas known to be at risk of flooding and coastal erosion, using SEPA's climate change allowances for land use planning guidance (February 2025).

*A more comprehensive gap analysis, with supporting detail and datasets, is provided in the main SFRA report.*

## **Flood Risk Management Plans**

Flooding in Scotland is being managed through 14 Local Plan Districts which are based on river catchments and cross various administrative and institutional boundaries. Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs), published by SEPA, cover the areas listed below and are illustrated in Figure 1 of the SFRA report, which intersect with the Park Authority's administrative boundary. The most recent set of plans were adopted in 2022 and will remain in effect until 2028.

- LPD1 Highland & Argyll
- LPD8 Tay
- LDP9 Forth
- LDP11 Clyde and Loch Lomond

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority is not responsible for coordinating or publishing a Local Flood Risk Management Plan, as this is the responsibility of the four Local Authorities noted below, which intersect the National Park. These Plans complement the overarching Flood Risk Management Plan developed and published by SEPA, which outlines the objectives and actions to reduce flood risk from rivers, the sea, and surface water. The four responsible authorities are:

- Argyll and Bute
- Stirling
- Perth and Kinross
- West Dunbartonshire

The following section will identify the Potentially Vulnerable Areas outlined in the Flood Risk Management Plans for each relevant Local Plan District, highlighting the target areas located within the National Park boundary. Although, in doing so recognising that the PVAs data has been updated in December 2024 for the next Flood Risk Management Planning Cycle.

### **Potentially Vulnerable Areas (2022-2028)**

In the current cycle of flood risk management planning (2022-2028) there are catchment based PVAs and community-based areas at risk known as target areas.

Potentially Vulnerable Areas (2022-2028) are set out in the SFRA and comprise Aberfoyle, Comrie, Callander, Helensburgh to Loch Lomond and Loch Lomond and Vale of Leven. As outlined in the Flood Risk Management Plans, the section below details the target areas that are of relevance to the National Park. Target areas are smaller, more specific locations that have been identified for focused flood risk management actions.

Aberfoyle - This area is designated as potentially vulnerable due to flood risks to Aberfoyle and the A821, primarily from the River Forth and Duchray Water, with additional surface water flooding risk. Aberfoyle has a long history of flooding, including recent river and surface water floods. Aberfoyle is the only target area in this PVA.

Comrie - This area is designated as potentially vulnerable due to flood risks from the River Earn, River Lednock, Water of Ruchill, and surface water. Comrie is the only target area within this PVA.

Callander - This area is designated as potentially vulnerable due to flood risks to Callander, Strathyre, and the A84, primarily from the River Teith and its tributaries, with an additional risk of surface water flooding. The area has a long history of frequent flooding and includes two target areas: Strathyre and Callander.

Helensburgh to Loch Long - This area is designated as potentially vulnerable due to flood risks to Garelochhead, Helensburgh, and Kilcreggan, with flooding from coastal, river, and surface water sources. There are three target areas in this potentially vulnerable area, with Garelochhead being the relevant target area within the national park.

Loch Lomond and Vale of Leven - This area is designated as potentially vulnerable due to flood risks to several communities, including Balloch, Bowling, Cardross, Dumbarton, Old Kilpatrick, and areas within the Vale of Leven. Flooding occurs from river, coastal, and surface water sources. The area has a long history of flooding, with recent events caused by coastal, river, and surface water. There are five target areas in this potentially vulnerable area, with the Vale of Leven covering the parts of Balloch within the National Park.

### **Potentially Vulnerable Areas 2028-2034**

The next flood risk management planning cycle (2028-2034) will use community based PVAs. This change from catchment to community based PVAs has been the result of a consultation process involving the public, local authorities, and Scottish Government.

Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVAs) 2028-2034 are areas identified by Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) using information from the National Flood Risk Assessment and in consultation with others. The development of the new Local Development Plan will be undertaken using this new dataset.

Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVAs) 2028-2034 are shown in the SFRA and comprise:

- Aberfoyle
- Callander
- Strathyre
- Vale of Leven (Balloch)

The descriptions associated with the updated PVAs will be published in the next Flood Risk Management Planning Cycle.

### **Flood Warning Areas**

There are seven Flood Warning Areas within the National Park, identified on the SFRA interactive map. They are managed by different Flood Authorities:

- **Argyll and Bute Council:** Loch Lomond & River Leven – West Lomond Shores
- **Stirling Council:** Loch Lomond & River Leven – East Lomond Shores; Teith – Callander; Aberfoyle and Lower Endrick
- **West Dunbartonshire Council:** Loch Lomond & River Leven – South Lomond Shores, Balloch

## **Historic Flood Events**

Historic flood event data is available for Perth & Kinross (1997–2019, including surface water flooding in St Fillans) and West Dunbartonshire (1823–2023, mainly around Balloch and east towards Gartocharn in the PVA 2022–2028). At this stage, data from SEPA's river, coastal and surface water and small watercourse flooding datasets are being drawn on for Argyll and Bute Council and Stirling Council as we have been unable to obtain historic flood event data. However, we are satisfied that the available evidence at this stage is sufficient to inform the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the preparation of the Evidence Report. We will continue to engage closely with the relevant Flood Authorities as we progress towards the Proposed Plan stage. It is also important to note that the SFRA interactive map is an evolving data inventory, and any additional data that becomes available will be incorporated into our GIS interactive mapping in due course.

## **Coastal Erosion and Artificial Coastal Defences**

Drawing on the analysis carried out for the SFRA, it is important to highlight the areas at risk of coastal erosion and subsequent flooding along the coastal regions of the National Park, particularly the Cowal Peninsula. As shown in the SFRA, based on the Dynamic Coast Future Erosion data, the settlements most at risk of coastal erosion by 2050 under a high emissions scenario are Ardentinny, Lochgoilhead, Carrick Castle, Kilmun, Strone, and Blairmore.

Further to the areas at risk of coastal erosion within the National Park, there are areas along the Cowal Peninsula where artificial coastal defences are already in place. These defences are located at the head of Loch Long and Loch Goil, Gairletter Point, as well as in the settlements of Ardentinny, Kilmun, Blairmore, and Strone.

Coastal Change Adaptation Plans play a crucial role in improving the understanding of the risks of coastal erosion and flooding in Scotland, both today and in the future. Currently, the status of Argyll and Bute Council's Coastal Change Adaptation Plan is to be confirmed, but CCAP's are currently being developed for locations identified in Cycle 2 of the Local flood Risk Management Plan. Through ongoing engagement, the National Park Authority aim to gather further information to better inform the Park Authority's approach to coastal risk management.

## **Flood Protection Schemes and Studies in the National Park**

The National Park Authority is not a Flood Authority. Four Flood Authorities cover the National Park, this section sets out the evidence base for flood studies and flood defences for the council areas of Stirling, West Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute. There are no studies or defences applicable to the National Park area in Perth and Kinross.

### **Stirling Council**

Stirling Council have undertaken extensive exploratory work in the National Park's most at-risk communities including Aberfoyle and Callander. Much of this work involves flood modelling which aims to measure flood risk and identify possible solutions for flood risk reduction. Hydraulic model updates are currently underway for Callander and Aberfoyle, including the 'flood zone' event relevant to the National Planning Framework 4 (1 in 200-year event + 56% climate change allowance).

Callander is complete and considered in the SFRA, Aberfoyle is underway, but the 2019 iteration will be used with 40% climate uplift as it was at the time, we will replace this with the 2025 update as soon as it becomes available.

### Callander

There is a long history of flooding in Callander ranging from travel access routes being cut off, to flooding of homes and businesses. Stirling Council have invested in several reports to gain a better understanding of the causes and potential solutions to flooding in Callander.

Stirling Council are working on identifying a preferred option for Callander flood protection scheme. This seeks to reduce flood risk from river flooding. Updates on this project are on the Stirling Council dedicated [Callander Flood Protection | Stirling Council Flood Protection Schemes](#) and the [Callander flood protection scheme webpage](#) is platform to share information about the ongoing projects to mitigate impacts of river flooding to Callander and any engagement events with the community of Callander.

Callander is also subject to surface water flooding and a [surface water management plan](#) is currently entering stage 2 and will likely be complete early in 2026. Current data can be viewed on the SFRA interactive map viewer.

### Aberfoyle

Aberfoyle, particularly the areas of Main Street and Lochard Road, often experiences flooding from the River Forth. Notable floods include two major events in December 2015 caused by Storm Desmond and Storm Frank. Storm Frank, on December 30, 2015, was the largest recorded flood in Aberfoyle's history. More recently, Aberfoyle experienced extensive flooding in October 2023 resulting in widespread flooding to properties on the Main Street, impacting both local businesses and residences. Aberfoyle and the wider Strathard area are particularly sensitive to flooding due to the solitary access route beyond the A821, the B829, being regularly cut off due to flood water.

The [Aberfoyle scheme](#) was submitted for cycle 2 funding but was deemed a low priority by SEPA due to its low cost/benefit ratio, resulting in its removal from cycle 2 funding. Stirling Council are in the process of identifying other suitable measures to reduce flood risk and enhance flood resilience in Aberfoyle.

The Forth Flood Risk Management Plan includes an action for Stirling Council to progress a surface water management plan for Aberfoyle (Action Ref: 18405), when progressed and available this will be included.

### Balloch - West Dunbartonshire Council

Within West Dunbartonshire a flood study in relation to Balloch within the National Park has been developed. This is the Loch Lomond and Vale of Leven Flood Risk Management Study Feasibility Report December 2019, that West Dunbartonshire Council commissioned to identify the flood risk associated with Loch Lomond and the River Leven including its main tributaries, then assess options (including economic viability) for the alleviation of future flooding. *Due to the format in which the data was provided by West Dunbartonshire Council, we were unable to upload the information to the GIS interactive map. However, both the Vale of Leven Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) Report and the Leven Feasibility*



*Study Report have been included in the appendix of this SFRA report for reference. If shapefiles for the Vale of Leven Surface Water Management Plan become available, they will be added to our internal GIS mapping.*

Within the study, Flood Cell 4 – River Leven, Flood Cell 7 - Carrochan Burn and Flood Cell 8 - Ballagan Burn relate to the National Park affecting the areas of Balloch and west of Balloch towards Gartocharn. This study notes receptors and risk and sets out both grey and green potential control measures for flooding with preferred options and recommendations.

Within Balloch, just outside the National Park boundary there is an existing barrage, the Lomond Barrage, which forms part of the Loch Lomond Water Scheme. The barrage controls the outflow from Loch Lomond when the loch level is between approximately 7.0m AOD and 7.9m AOD. If loch levels are above or below this range, the gates of the barrage stay in their lowered position and river flows are unrestricted.

### Argyll and Bute Council

Within the National Park in Argyll and Bute, there are no flood studies relating to Cowal (planned, in progress or completed). Coastal Change Adaptation Plans are currently being developed for locations identified in Cycle 2 of the Local Flood Risk Management Plan.

### **Natural Flood Management Maps**

Natural flood management sits alongside hard infrastructure, better flood warning and policies to avoid building in the flood plain in an integrated approach to flood risk management. It seeks to store or slow down floodwaters through measures such as the planting of woodlands, wetland creation, river restoration, or the creation of intertidal habitats. In addition to reducing flood risk, natural flood management measures can also provide many additional benefits, including enhanced biodiversity, improved water quality, and opportunities for recreation.

Invasive Non-native Species (INNS) also affect flood resilience. For example, Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed can weaken riverbanks, leading to increased flood-related erosion and sedimentation. They can also complicate maintenance due to associated health and safety concerns.

The SEPA Natural Flood Management Maps as referenced in the SFRA identify areas where nature-based solutions could be most effective for sustainable flood risk management. These are to be further investigated in conjunction with the broad-scale habitat recovery priority areas in the National Park Authority's National Park Partnership Plan to support Flood Risk Management planning and sustainable land use at the Proposed Plan stage.

### **WATER MANAGEMENT**

#### **Water Quality – Condition of Water Bodies – SEPA Water Environment Hub 2020**

The Water Classification Hub provides an overview of the status of water bodies across Scotland, categorising them into five classifications: bad, poor, moderate, good, and high.

The goal is for all water bodies to reach good or high status.

Within Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, there are 97 identified water bodies. The most recent 2023 assessments indicate that the majority of these surface waters are classified as moderate (39) or good (46). However, 47 water bodies remain in moderate, poor, or bad condition, highlighting ongoing environmental challenges.

The primary factors affecting water quality in the National Park include:

- Hydroelectricity generation, which alters water flows and levels due to abstraction and storage, while also creating barriers to fish migration.
- Physical modifications to beds, banks, and shores, impacting natural habitats and hydrological processes.
- Ecological pressures on aquatic species, including unknown environmental stresses and the presence of invasive species in some areas.

Water bodies in the northern areas of Loch Lomond, particularly around Cairndow, Inveruglas, and Inverarnan, are more likely to be classified as poor or bad. This is largely due to the hydroelectric schemes in these regions, which disrupt water flows and levels through extensive water abstraction and storage operations.

Efforts to improve and restore the water bodies will require targeted actions, delivered through collaborative stakeholder partnerships, focusing on mitigating hydroelectric impacts, enhancing ecological conditions, and addressing physical modifications to surface waters.

In addition, RBMP3 pressures data from 2020 highlights key factors affecting surface waters and water bodies across Scotland. Within the National Park, surface waters are subject to a range of pressures primarily linked to rural land use and management.

One of the most widespread issues is rural diffuse pollution, which impacts a significant number of water bodies. Affected sites include Goodie Water, Duchray Water, Carrochan Burn, Loch Lubhair, Loch Lomond South, Loch Lubnaig, Loch Achray, Loch Chon, Loch Drunkie, Loch Ard, and the Lake of Menteith.

Physical modifications have also altered the natural condition of several rivers and lochs, such as Carrochan Burn, Burn of Mar, River Finart, Loch Earn, Loch Chon, and Loch Ard.

Other notable pressures include water abstraction and wastewater discharges, particularly affecting Fruin Water. Fish migration is hindered by man-made barriers in watercourses like Drunkie Burn, while aquaculture operations contribute additional pressure on Loch Earn.

The spread of invasive non-native species poses further challenges, especially in the River Teith, River Forth, and Loch Lubnaig. Meanwhile, hydropower development impacts 21 surface water bodies across the park through water use for energy generation.

Together, the National Park's water environment faces a complex array of pressures, from pollution and physical alteration to species introductions and resource exploitation, all of which threaten its ecological health and long-term resilience.

## **BLUE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

Blue-Green Infrastructure refers to water-related and vegetated features within both natural and built environments that collectively provide a wide range of ecosystem services. Blue features include rivers, lochs, wetlands, canals, ponds, coastal and marine areas (such as beaches), as well as sustainable drainage solutions like porous paving, raingardens, and sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS). Green features typically encompass parks, green roofs, street trees, and vegetated landscapes. Together, these elements support biodiversity, improve water quality, manage flood risk, and enhance the overall resilience and liveability of urban and rural spaces.

### **Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority – Blue and Green Infrastructure Audit**

The NPPP fully incorporates the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) National Developments relevant to BGi, specifically National Development 5 on Urban Sustainable, Blue and Green Surface Water Management Solutions, and National Development 8 on the National Walking, Cycling, and Wheeling Network. The NPF4 Regional Spatial Strategy for Central Scotland highlights the National Park's potential for large-scale restoration and enhancement of nature in response to climate change, through initiatives like woodland creation, peatland restoration, and natural flood risk management. It also identifies the potential of long-distance active travel and rail routes to promote sustainable tourism.

The 2024 NPPP includes goals that align with the National Park Authority's "Future Nature" programme, launched in 2022, which aims to halt nature's decline and restore biodiversity on a grand scale. This programme focuses on transforming the green and blue networks of the park. Its vision is to establish the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park as a resilient, nature-rich area, where abundant wildlife and a healthy environment offer numerous benefits through an expansive, well-connected living network. Projects like Wild Strathfillan and the Loch Lomond Rainforest are already making significant strides at a landscape scale, showing the positive impacts of this initiative.

Together, the NPPP and Future Nature programme outline a broad set of principles and goals to greatly enhance and expand BGi over the next 15 years. To support the preparation of the next Local Development Plan and ensure the greatest benefits across various areas, the NPA is also working on a BGi study. The first stage of the study, which involved a detailed audit of the Blue Green Infrastructure (BGi) networks across the National Park, has been complete, though it is currently being used for internal purposes only.

SEPA's Geomorphic Risk and Riparian Corridor data, the Scotland River Basin District Inventory and Obstacles to Fish Migration data will be incorporated and used to inform BGi considerations at the Proposed Plan stage for the next Local Development Plan.

## **Summary of Stakeholder Engagement**

As part of the Evidence Gathering process for the new Local Development Plan (LDP), the National Park Authority developed a suite of Topic Papers and Area Summaries to explore key planning themes and local issues across the National Park. These documents form the technical and spatial foundation for the new LDP and were central to the targeted community engagement process between May and July.

Ten Topic Papers were drafted, aligning with the relevant policies in NPF4. These papers summarise national, regional, and local data, providing a detailed evidence base on subjects such as climate change, biodiversity, housing, infrastructure, and the rural economy. They were developed by National Park officers, incorporating input from key public bodies including SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot, Transport Scotland, and local authorities.

A draft of this topic paper and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment were sent to:

- NatureScot
- SEPA
- Scottish Water
- Scottish Forestry
- Marine Scotland
- West Dunbartonshire Council
- Argyll and Bute Council
- Stirling Council
- Perth and Kinross Council

Six Area Summaries were also produced to provide a more accessible, place-based and spatial view of the evidence. These summaries incorporate mapped information alongside key content from registered Local Place Plans, highlighting key opportunities, challenges, and priorities for specific areas within the National Park. The spatial presentation was intended to support more informed and locally relevant discussion during in-person workshops.

As part of the engagement activities, a series of in-person workshops were held in May and June 2025 across the National Park to present the Area Summaries and gather feedback directly from local community groups and stakeholders. To ensure wider participation, complementary online surveys were also made available, allowing people to review and comment on both the Topic Papers and Area Summaries over a six-week period (May – July 2025). In addition to public engagement, input was actively sought from key statutory agencies and partner organisations throughout the preparation process to help shape and strengthen the evidence base.

Summary of Responses	
Respondent	Summary of Comments and Response
NatureScot	NatureScot advised including evidence on river obstacles to fish migration and a clearer statement on joint working with neighbouring authorities and the National Park Authority. They also recommended further discussion of data on run-off reduction, floodplain storage and sediment management to support comparison with habitat restoration priorities and natural flood management objectives. In addition, they noted that the paper gives limited attention to biodiversity and nature networks and suggested strengthening this by clarifying existing development policies and guidance, including how flood risk is assessed and mitigated.

	<p><b>Response:</b> The SEPA water environment data on barriers to fish migration has been added to the Water Management section, and a statement on joint working with neighbouring authorities has been included in both the topic paper and the SFRA. In response to SEPA's feedback, the SEPA Natural Flood Management and Geomorphic Risk maps have been incorporated into the Nature Networks section of the biodiversity topic paper. The effectiveness of the previous plan and policies will be set out in the introductory chapters of the Evidence Report.</p>
SEPA	<p>SEPA advised that baseline evidence should include RBMP3 status and pressure data with associated implications for the Proposed Plan and sought clarification on the external availability of GIS outputs from the BGi audit, also suggesting an associated plan implication. They further requested that key water environment evidence sources be added to the BGi section of the topic paper.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> RBMP3 data and suggested implications have been incorporated. Key water environment evidence sources have been included under the BGi section. SEPA have also been notified that the BGi audit work will not be externally available at the Evidence Report stage.</p>
Scottish Water	<p>Scottish Water supports the content of the topic paper.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Noted.</p>
Marine Scotland	<p>Marine Scotland confirmed that they have no further comments at this stage.</p>
West Dunbartonshire Council	<p>West Dunbartonshire Council supports the content of the topic paper.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Noted.</p>
Argyll and Bute Council	<p>Argyll and Bute Council highlighted that they are currently developing an FRM system and that a historic flood event layer will eventually be available.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Noted and the FRM system has been referenced in the SFRA report. When the data becomes available, it will be incorporated in our interactive GIS mapping.</p>
Stirling Council	<p>Stirling Council recommended considering flood-free access/egress for emergency services as a planning constraint. Stirling Council also notified us that they are unable to share historic flood event data for confidential reasons.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> An implication was updated to reflect the issues around flood free access and egress. We will continue to engage closely with Stirling Council's Flood team as we progress towards the Proposed Plan stage. If the historic flood event data becomes available, it will be incorporated in our interactive GIS mapping.</p>
Perth and Kinross Council	<p>Perth and Kinross Council had no comments to make on this topic paper.</p>
Kilmaronock Community Council	<p>Kilmaronock Community Council highlighted their concerns of water quality in Loch Lomond reducing and the need for collaboration with stakeholders and partnership working is essential.</p>

	<b>Response:</b> Data on the water environment and quality of water bodies within the National Park have been incorporated in the topic paper. In addition, additional text has been included to highlight importance of collaboration and stakeholder partnership working in efforts to improve and restore water bodies.
Stirling Area Access Panel	Stirling Area Access Panel mentioned there is no proposal for mitigating the historical flooding of Aberfoyle and Callander. <b>Response:</b> Information on current plans and projects to mitigate flooding in Aberfoyle and Callander have been included in the topic paper and SFRA Report.

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was also included in the engagement period between May - July 2025 and the responses are summarised below:

Summary of Responses	
Respondent	Summary of Comments and Response
NatureScot	<p>NatureScot asked the SFRA to reference the role of community councils, clarify the National Park's authority in intertidal and marine areas, and include examples of current projects. They also recommended mapping opportunities for runoff reduction, floodplain storage and sediment management, alongside further evidence on how sedimentation affects flooding. In addition, they advised that the evidence base should cover the role of invasive non-native species in flood resilience and include information on existing flood defences.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Collaboration with communities is now referenced through the Future Nature programme and Flood Authority work in Aberfoyle and Callander. Case studies are signposted via Future Nature but not set out in full, in line with national guidance. The SFRA now clarifies the National Park's authority over intertidal and marine areas. Some additional mapping requests could not be met due to SEPA data restrictions, but links are provided to view them online. Information on sedimentation is included in the area summaries and Topic Paper 2, and further evidence on INNS has been added, along with details of existing flood defences now shown on the SFRA map.</p>
SEPA	<p>SEPA requested explicit reference to their climate change allowances guidance and noted missing historic flood records for the Stirling and Argyll &amp; Bute areas. They advised separating proposed flood protection schemes and flood study data into distinct map layers, incorporating outputs from flood studies and Surface Water Management Plans, and illustrating the spatial extent of Flood Warning Areas within the National Park.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> SEPA's climate change allowances guidance and revised uplifts for peak flows and rainfall have been incorporated by river basin region. In the absence of standalone historic flood records for Argyll &amp; Bute and Stirling, SEPA's Observed Flood</p>

	Events and Historic River Flood Extents data are referenced internally. Flood protection schemes and flood study information are now mapped as separate layers on the public SFRA map, with Callander study outputs included internally and Aberfoyle forthcoming. Links to Stirling Council's data are provided, and the Vale of Leven SWMP will be added when available. Flood Warning Areas have also been added to both the SFRA report and public map.
Marine Scotland	Marine Scotland confirmed that they have no further comments at this stage.
West Dunbartonshire Council	West Dunbartonshire Council supports the content of the SFRA. <b>Response:</b> Noted.
Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll and Bute Council informed us that they are currently developing a flood risk management system, and a historic flood event layer will be included in this system. <b>Response:</b> Noted and the FRM system has been referenced in the SFRA report. When the data becomes available, it will be incorporated in our interactive GIS mapping.
Stirling Council	Stirling Council are largely content with the accuracy of the flooding information. However, they notified us they are updating the hydraulic models for Callander and Aberfoyle. Callander is also subject to a surface water management plan, expected to be completed by 2026. The council offered to share additional flood data. However, notified us that they are unable to share historic flood event data for confidential reasons. <b>Response:</b> Flood study data outputs for Callander have been included on our internal SFRA resource, and the Aberfoyle study is nearing completion. The SFRA report provides direct links to the appropriate Stirling Council webpages to view the data. We will continue to engage closely with Stirling Council's Flood team as we progress towards the Proposed Plan stage. If the historic flood event data becomes available, it will be incorporated in our interactive GIS mapping.
Perth and Kinross Council	Perth and Kinross Council had no comments to make on the SFRA.
Homes for Scotland	Homes for Scotland highlight SEPA Flood Risk guidance and Homes for Scotland site assessment related data for the National Park Authority to consider as evidence and raised points regarding flood mitigation and blue/green infrastructure and the balance, and factors, to be addressed in new policies and site assessments/allocations to deliver sustainable housing development. <b>Response:</b> All comments noted and will be considered as part of the preparation of the new Local Development Plan. All relevant data sources are considered to have been included in this Paper from responses obtained from SEPA and Flood Authorities or otherwise



	addressed by the data contained in the supporting Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
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## Summary of Implication for the Proposed Plan

The implications of the evidence for the Proposed Plan may be summarised as follows:

- **Areas of Identified Flood Risk** - The National Park is exposed to a combination of coastal, fluvial, and surface water flood risks. The new LDP must prioritise avoiding flood risk on site allocations in accordance with NPF4 Policy 22. It will ensure a comprehensive understanding of flood risks in vulnerable areas such as Aberfoyle, Balloch and Callander and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), including flood risk constraints, will inform the spatial strategy and site allocation process for the new Local Development Plan (LDP).
- **Adaptation in areas known to flood** - In line with the implication above and evidence presented in the SFRA, the new LDP needs to carefully consider how to approach development needed to support sustainable rural communities where access roads are vulnerable to flooding. This is particularly relevant where there is no other alternative route for safe access or egress, and further stakeholder engagement will be required at site assessment.
- **Coastal Flooding and Erosion** - In line with SEPA's update and the increased focus on coastal flooding in the SFRA, the Local Development Plan should consider identifying areas at risk of coastal erosion and subsequent flooding, particularly along the Cowal Peninsula area of the National Park, to inform effective planning and mitigation strategies.
- **Flood Management Projects** - Additionally, the new LDP should ensure land is protected for any flood management projects outlined in the relevant Flood Risk Management Plans.
- **Natural Flood Management** - The LDP should explore the identification of areas suitable for natural flood management in collaboration with the habitat recovery priority areas identified in the NPPP, to support Flood Risk Management planning and promote sustainable land use.
- **Blue Green Infrastructure** - The audit outcomes will be used to inform the preparation of the new LDP, including opportunities and requirements for enhance or new blue and green infrastructure through the spatial strategy and site allocation. The spatial strategy should identify, protect and enhance blue and green infrastructure assets and networks, while expanding existing provisions to ensure the National Park has a well-designed, high quality, accessible and inclusive green network.
- **Green Infrastructure to manage Flood Risk** - The new LDP should explore opportunities to integrate green infrastructure for managing surface water, reducing flood risk, improving natural water retention, and ensuring alignment with flood risk management guidelines.
- **Water Quality** - Based on RBMP3 and evidence from SEPA's Water Classification Hub regarding the pressures and condition of the water environment, the LDP should aim to support the protection and enhancement of water bodies across the National Park,

supporting their achievement of good ecological status and preventing any further deterioration.

### **Statements of Agreement / Dispute**

There are no substantive areas of disagreement on the evidence in the paper. Feedback from respondents to the Topic Paper consultation have largely been addressed in the Evidence Report. SEPA, NatureScot and Scottish Water have confirmed they are content with the paper.

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>Topic Paper 5 - Energy and Heat and Cooling</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p><b><u>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997</u></b>, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15(5) (d) The infrastructure of the district (including systems for the supply of water and energy)</li> <li>• Section 15(5) (e) How that infrastructure is used.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023</u></b></p> <p>Under Regulation 9, must have regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Marine Plan</li> <li>• Any Regional Marine Plan</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Other relevant legislation</u></b></p> <p>The Aims of National Parks in Scotland (as set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000).</p>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b><u>Overarching Policies, Strategies and Reports</u></b></p> <p><i><u>National Park Partnership Plan</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan 2024 - 2029</u></li> </ul> <p><i><u>National Context</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan 2023</u></li> <li>• <u>Heat in Buildings Strategy 2021</u></li> <li>• <u>Onshore Wind Policy Statement 2022</u></li> <li>• <u>Pathway to 2030: A Holistic Network Design for Offshore Wind – National Energy System Operator 2022</u></li> <li>• <u>The Scottish Governments Hydrogen Action Plan 2022</u></li> </ul> <p><i><u>Local/National Park Context</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Perth and Kinross Council's first Local Heat &amp; Energy Efficiency 2024- 2045</u></li> <li>• <u>Stirling and Clackmannanshire Regional Energy Masterplan 2023</u></li> <li>• <u>Argyll and Bute Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) 2024</u></li> <li>• <u>West Dunbartonshire Council Local Heat And Energy Efficiency Strategy 2024-2029</u></li> <li>• <u>Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Carbon Footprint Assessment and Proposed Pathway to Net Zero 2023</u></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Existing Data</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>SSEN Transmission Network Map – Generation Availability and Capacity</u></li> <li>• <u>SSEN Transmission Projects Map</u></li> </ul>

- [SSEN Transmission Open Data Portal](#)
- [SPEN Transmission Generation Heat Map](#)
- [SPEN Distributed Generation Heat Map](#)

## National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context

**Policy 11 - Energy**, as outlined in NPF4, supports and promotes the development of renewable energy sources both onshore and offshore, including grid enabling upgrades to both transmission and distribution infrastructure. It seeks to maximise the areas potential for generating electricity and heat from renewable, low carbon and zero emission sources by identifying numerous opportunities for energy projects through the Local Development Plan.

**Policy 19 - Heat and Cooling** in NPF4 aims to encourage development that uses decarbonised solutions for heating and cooling, ensuring readiness for extreme temperatures. Local development plans should incorporate the areas Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and consider regions with potential for heat networks, including designated heat network zones.

As a designated National Park, Policy 4c of NPF4 is a key consideration for all development proposals. It states that development proposals affecting a National Park, National Scenic Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest, or National Nature Reserve will only be supported where: (i) the objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the areas will not be compromised; or (ii) any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental, or economic benefits of national importance.

As Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is a designated landscape, there are numerous environmental constraints and considerations regarding energy infrastructure and generation within the National Park. Policy 11 recognises that certain impacts are inherent to some renewable energy forms. These include impacts on residential amenity (such as visual, noise, and shadow flicker), public access routes, aviation, telecommunications, road traffic, historic sites, water resources, biodiversity, and forestry, as well as the need for robust decommissioning and restoration plans and consideration of cumulative impacts. These issues must be addressed through careful project design and mitigation to ensure impacts are minimised as far as practicable.

In addition, Policy 11b of NPF4 specifically addresses wind farm developments, stating that: "Development proposals for wind farms in National Parks and National Scenic Areas will not be supported." Various international and national designations, such as National Scenic Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, and Special Protection Areas will also be pertinent in evaluating renewable energy proposals within the National Park. Further information on these designations is provided in Topic Paper 2.

## National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2024 – 2029 Context

The National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) highlights key priorities for energy under the theme of *Supporting Thriving Rural Communities*. One of the outcomes is to increase the resilience of rural communities by encouraging more local living and working. This can be achieved through reducing carbon emissions via individual and community-led actions. The Plan emphasises the importance of reducing the National Park's carbon footprint over the next few years. The National Park Authority aims to reach Net Zero as an organisation by 2030, with the wider National Park becoming a Net Zero place by 2035. While many businesses and communities are already adjusting their energy use and supporting local supply chains, there is a need to expand community-scale energy and heat generation. There is a specific focus on the

promotion of increasing community-scale energy and heat generation, with opportunities for district heat networks and the retrofitting of renewable micro-technology to community buildings also identified.

## Summary of Evidence

This paper covers National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Policy 11(Energy) and Policy 19 (Heat and Cooling). The summary of evidence section is structured in the following order:

- National Context
- Local/National Park Context
  - Existing Energy Generation in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park
  - Opportunities for Energy Development
  - Energy: Use, Transmission and Storage

It is also important to acknowledge that there is overlap between the Energy and Heat & Cooling Paper and NPF 4 Policy 1 – Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises, Policy 2 – Climate Mitigation and Adaptation and Policy 18 – Infrastructure First. Although the link between these policies is noted in this paper, there is more detail in the following papers:

Policy 1 & 2 – Topic Paper 1

Policy 18 – Topic Paper 3

### National Context:

## **Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan 2023**

In January 2023, the Scottish Government published their Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan 2023 (SESJTP), setting out their priorities and policy direction for realising their climate change and Net Zero ambitions with regards to energy. This looks to transform the way that Scotland generates and uses energy until 2030 and sets out several key ambitions, including:

- Deploying more than 20 GW of additional renewable electricity on and offshore by 2030.
- At least the equivalent of 50% of Scotland's energy across heat, transport and electricity demand will come from renewable sources by 2030.

The draft SESJTP does not include any policy that specifically relates to small-scale renewable energy. However, it does support communities to ensure they derive maximum benefit from the energy transition, including outlining support for regional hydrogen hubs, community ownership and supporting schemes such as Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES).

The SESJTP document remains in draft form following a consultation period from January to May 2023 and is yet to be adopted but it illustrates the key priorities and draft policy direction of the Scottish Government on the energy transition.

## **Heat in Buildings Strategy 2021**

Scotland's Heat in Buildings Strategy aims to decarbonise heating systems in homes and non-residential buildings to achieve net-zero emissions by 2045. Key points include enhancing energy efficiency through retrofitting and stricter building standards to reduce energy consumption and improve insulation. The strategy also promotes expanding the use of heat

pumps and other low carbon technologies, such as district heating and hydrogen for heating buildings. New regulations and standards will be implemented to ensure this transition, including phasing out fossil fuel heating in new buildings from 2024. The Heat in Buildings Bill provides the regulatory framework for zero emissions heating and energy efficiency, and it is currently in the consultation phase.

### **Onshore Wind Policy Statement 2022**

Scotland's Onshore Wind Policy Statement outlines a strategic approach to develop onshore wind energy in alignment with climate targets. It emphasises supporting projects that contribute to Scotland's renewable energy goals while ensuring sustainable development. This includes harnessing the potential of onshore wind to significantly reduce carbon emissions and transition towards a cleaner energy future.

Community engagement is a cornerstone of the policy, aiming to involve local communities in the development process. It encourages consultation and offers opportunities for communities to benefit economically from projects through ownership or shared revenue schemes. This approach not only enhances local acceptance but also ensures that communities directly affected by wind developments have a stake in their outcomes.

Environmental considerations play a crucial role in the policy, particularly concerning national parks, rural landscapes and other sensitive areas. The policy sets criteria to minimise visual and environmental impacts, requiring rigorous environmental assessments before project approval. This ensures that onshore wind developments are located and operated responsibly, safeguarding Scotland's natural heritage and biodiversity.

### **Pathway to 2030: A Holistic Network Design for Offshore Wind – National Energy System Operator (July 2022)**

The Holistic Network Design (HND) outlines a recommended onshore and offshore transmission network to support the UK Government's target of delivering 50 GW of offshore wind capacity by 2030. It includes connections for 23 GW of offshore wind (with the remaining capacity delivered through other existing or planned projects outside the scope of the HND). The HND is designed to ensure that the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS) is economic, efficient, operable, sustainable, and well-coordinated, enabling the effective transfer of power from offshore wind generation to areas of demand.

Given Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park's location between the major anticipated offshore wind developments along Scotland's east and west coasts, there could be implications for grid capacity within and around the National Park. Further information on grid capacity is provided in Topic Paper 3 – Infrastructure First, under the Electricity section.

#### **Local/National Park Context:**

### **Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES)**

Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies take a localised approach to improving energy efficiency, decarbonising heat and ensuring that efforts are aligned with the specific needs and circumstances of each local area. At present, two of the local authorities that cover the National Park boundary have published their strategies: Perth and Kinross Council and Stirling Council.

### Perth and Kinross Council (2024)

The LHEES for Perth and Kinross was developed in Q3 2024 to align with NPF4. The strategy is guided by Scotland's statutory goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and alleviate fuel poverty. In terms of renewable energy priorities, the LHEES focuses on two main strategic priorities: first, decarbonising heat within the evolving energy system by emphasising heat networks and heat pumps; second, enhancing building energy efficiency to achieve affordable warmth and meet regulatory needs. As such the Council is considering a district heating policy to enhance energy efficiency in local communities, although rural impracticalities have been highlighted.

### Stirling and Clackmannanshire Regional Energy Masterplan (2023)

Stirling and Clackmannanshire's Regional Energy Masterplan details the steps needed to transform local energy systems and provide zero-carbon, affordable energy for everyone. The plan is structured around five key objectives and follows the energy hierarchy through four main work streams: sequestration, energy generation, heat management, and energy efficiency. Stirling Council's current focus for renewable energy initiatives is on heat networks alongside investigating ways of receiving funding for community-led renewable projects.

In the energy efficiency workstream, Balfron and Drymen are identified as priority area five for Stirling Council area, with a 24.7% average household risk of fuel poverty. Callander and the Trossachs are ranked 14<sup>th</sup> with a 21.4% risk. This means that within the National Park, communities such as Balfron, Drymen, Callander and the Trossachs are recognised as priority areas where higher-than-average levels of fuel poverty linked to poor energy efficiency need to be addressed through targeted interventions. Among nine potential district heating network sites, Callander High School is ranked fifth with a score of 3.65 out of 5. This score is based on factors such as carbon emissions, fuel poverty, finance, local economy, environment, societal factors and resilience.

For energy generation, no Council-owned sites within the National Park boundaries are deemed suitable for renewable energy projects. However, land east of Callander is recognised as having significant potential for re-wetting, the process of restoring water levels in previously drained wetlands or peatlands, often by blocking drainage channels or ditches, to return the area to a more natural, waterlogged state. There are several additional suitable sites within the National Park. Peatland restoration is identified as an important implication arising from the evidence base in Topic Paper 2: Biodiversity and Nature and there is also further information on peatland restoration targets and broad locations contained in this topic paper.

### Argyll and Bute Council (2024)

Argyll and Bute Council's LHEES was approved in October 2024. A key component of the strategy is the introduction of heat networks, particularly micro heat networks.

Looking forward, Argyll and Bute plan to place greater emphasis on solar energy storage technologies, viewing them as essential for meeting energy demands and reducing dependence on conventional power sources. However, a major challenge identified is grid capacity, which is why battery storage is being given priority. The current infrastructure is unable to support large-scale renewable projects without significant upgrades, presenting a key obstacle to expansion in the near term.



The local authority is prioritising community benefits, aiming to ensure renewable energy projects provide not only environmental gains but also create green jobs and long-term employment for residents, beyond traditional financial compensation.

#### West Dunbartonshire Council (2024-2029)

West Dunbartonshire's LHEES was approved in 2024 and is a five-year strategy. It sets out a framework to decarbonise heat and improve energy efficiency across all building types, supporting both Scotland's net zero targets and fuel poverty reduction. The central priorities include exploring opportunities for new heat networks and piloting air source heat pumps to test wider roll-out potential. The strategy also emphasises energy efficiency upgrades, particularly insulation improvements for off-gas and harder-to-treat homes and identifies strategic "heat decarbonisation zones" to guide investment and delivery. Of direct relevance to the National Park, the LHEES highlights Balloch as an area where poor building energy efficiency is a key driver of fuel poverty, and where heat pump installations and energy efficiency interventions are needed. Lomond is also identified as an area where there is high potential for achieving on-gas grid decarbonisation. A detailed Delivery Plan will follow, supported by ongoing stakeholder engagement and monitoring to ensure actions are effectively targeted and aligned with local and national priorities.

#### **Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Carbon Footprint Assessment and Proposed Pathway to Net Zero 2023**

To support evidence-based climate action, a carbon footprint assessment was commissioned for the National Park. This assessment has been referenced in other topic papers where relevant, particularly in relation to climate adaptation, land use and transport. The findings are cross-cutting and support a range of planning considerations, but this section focuses specifically on the energy-related aspects of the assessment and their implications for reducing emissions and achieving net zero within the National Park.

A detailed carbon footprint assessment of the National Park was commissioned to explore pathways to reaching net zero, with specific targets aligned to the Paris Agreement. The research identified six key areas for emissions reduction, with energy-related emissions emerging as particularly important. These include direct emissions from heating, electricity, and transport used by residents, businesses, and visitors, as well as indirect emissions from the production and delivery of that energy, such as those embedded in supply chains. While the largest opportunity for emissions reduction lies in land use change, particularly through peatland restoration and woodland expansion, the report makes clear that decarbonising energy consumption across all sectors is a critical part of meeting the National Park's net zero ambitions.

#### **Existing Energy Generation in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park**

*The following data has been finalised and extracted from commissioned research to provide accessible evidence of existing energy generation within the National Park.*

For the existing and consented renewable energy developments presented in Table 1, the data is sourced from several key databases. This includes the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero's (DESNZ) Renewable Energy Planning Database (REPD) from July 2024, which lists renewable electricity projects over 150kW. However, projects below 1MW before 2021 may not be included. Additionally, data from the National Park Authority on small-scale hydroelectricity

projects is used, as it is considered more accurate than the DESNZ data. The research also incorporates data from the [Local Energy Scotland Projects Index \(2024\)](#), which covers community and locally owned renewable energy projects. Only operational and consented developments are included in the table, as consented developments are expected to be operational in the future, providing the most current information on emerging renewable energy projects within the local planning authority.

*Table 1: Existing operational and consented renewable development in the National Park, including capacity, output and CO2 savings.*

Source	Technology	Estimated total capacity (MW)	Electricity output (MWh/year)	Potential CO2 savings (tonnes/yr)
<b>Operational</b>				
REPD and Local Energy Scotland	Biomass (dedicated)	5.98	29,722	3,953
LLTNPA data and Local Energy Scotland	Hydro (LLTNPA data and Local Energy Scotland)	27.59	92,312	12,278
<b>Consented (permitted/under construction)</b>				
REPD	Solar Photovoltaics - Roof	0.18	142	19
<b>Total operational and consented</b>		<b>33.76</b>	<b>122,176</b>	<b>16,249</b>
<b>Abandoned</b>				
REPD	Hydro	2.00	6,691	890
<b>Withdrawn</b>				
REPD	Wind Onshore	4.00	8,924	1,187
<b>Planning permission refused / appeal refused</b>				
REPD	Wind Onshore	20.00	44,621	5,935

The total operational and consented electricity output from renewable energy development in the National Park is 122,176 MWh per year. The individual electricity output for each type of renewable technology is detailed below:

### Hydro

There is currently 92,312 MWh per year of electricity output from operational hydro developments within the National Park. This includes generation from community-owned hydro schemes such as Buchanan Community Hydro, Callander Community Hydro and An T Sreang Community Hydro Scheme in Arrochar.

### Solar Photovoltaics (PV)

142 MWh per year of electricity from roof mounted solar photovoltaics is permitted in the National Park and due to be operational in the future.

### Biomass

There is currently 29,722 MWh per year of electricity output from dedicated biomass developments within the National Park.

### Hydrogen

The [Scottish Government's Hydrogen Action Plan 2022](#) outlines Scotland's strategy to become a leading producer and exporter of renewable hydrogen. Key goals include developing 5GW of hydrogen production by 2030 and 25GW by 2045. The plan focuses on economic growth through job creation, infrastructure development, and fostering innovation. It also emphasises international collaboration and creating a supportive regulatory framework to drive the hydrogen economy and help Scotland achieve its net-zero targets by 2045.

In Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park there are currently no major hydrogen projects in the area or identified in the Scottish Government Hydrogen Action Plan.

### Heat Networks

Due to licensing constraints, data on Heat Network Zones and Heat Network Potential has not been available. However, the Authority will seek to address these data gaps through continued engagement with the relevant Local Authorities and by drawing on the findings set out in their Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES).

### **Opportunities for Energy Development**

The research highlights the national ambition of delivering a coordinated approach to climate change mitigation and renewable and low carbon technologies and the National Park's objectives for creating a low carbon place and greener way of living. While many businesses and communities are already adjusting their energy use and supporting local supply chains, there is a need to expand community scale energy and heat generation. Although the National Park's special qualities and sensitivities can place certain limitations on the deployment of such technologies, the National Park's planning function can play a key role in identifying and guiding communities and stakeholders towards the relevant considerations, appropriate scales of and locations for these technologies.

Within the National Park context, the research highlighted the following opportunities and considerations for each type of existing renewable energy development:

#### Solar

If, within the National Park, full technical capacity for rooftop solar and thermal photovoltaics (19.07MW & 24.22MW respectively) could be achieved there is a potential for approx. 2,750 tonnes of carbon emissions to be saved each year from roof-mounted solar. Whilst this represents a small percentage of overall emissions, this cannot be discounted as the increasing affordability of solar technology could further encourage the adoption of these technologies. There may be opportunities for ground mounted solar within the National Park, however assessing technical capacity and potential at strategic levels was not possible, compared to roof mounted options. Both technologies have their own physical and technical space requirements and environmental constraints that require to be considered.

#### Heat Pumps

There is a significant opportunity in the National Park for the inclusion of heat pumps (i.e., air source, ground source) to new and existing building stock to secure the decarbonisation of heating emissions from existing fuels. Both technologies have their own physical and technical space requirements and environmental constraints, but subject to criteria may not always require planning permission. The research highlighted that across all domestic and non-domestic building stock, there is potential for approximately 32,500 tonnes of carbon emissions to be saved per year in the National Park from the integration of heat pumps, which could be delivered through privately, publicly, or community-owned projects.

## Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

Broader trends have shown a rise in demand for BESS across the country to support the increased efficiency of the grid in the transition of renewable energy production. Establishing technical potential for the National Park was not possible as part of this study, due to demand being dependent on the sources of renewable energy potential and grid capacity. The research does identify that, subject to environmental and locational considerations, there could be scope for the co-location and deployment of batteries, proportionate to the scale of renewable energy development.

## Hydro

It is expected that schemes coming forward in the National Park are likely to be relatively small-scale 'run-of-rivers' schemes. However, in April 2025 SSE launched a planning application with the Energy Consents Unit for the new Sloy Pumped Hydro Storage scheme which is a larger scheme that is currently under consideration.

## Wind

Only small-scale wind development is supported by planning policies in the National Park (i.e., single turbines with a height to blade tips of no more than 30m). As supported by existing planning policy, there is a place for small-scale wind development within the National Park and evidenced demand for this to be part of the energy mix, including co-located with other technologies. Most small-scale wind turbines have potential where they can be sited and designed to have minimal adverse environmental impacts. All proposals should be assessed on a case-by-case basis and cumulatively with other developments.

## Biomass

With regard to the technical potential for biomass within the National Park, it is assumed that most properties could incorporate a domestic-scale biomass boiler. Larger scale proposals may require a dedicated boiler room or separate fuel store. Overall, the future role of biomass within the National Park is likely to align with the Scottish Government's position that bioenergy should only be used in those applications where its carbon reduction is maximised and where alternative options are not available.

## **Energy: Use, Transmission and Storage**

This section on energy use, transmission and storage reiterates the electricity-related information detailed in Topic Paper 3 – Infrastructure First, offering insights into the current and future capacity of energy infrastructure within the National Park.

NESO (National Energy System Operator) is the energy system operator for the United Kingdom. Within the National Park, SSEN Transmission is the primary Transmission Operator (TO) and SSEN Distribution is the Distribution Network Operator (DNO). However, for the Balloch area of the National Park, the TO and DNO is Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN).

## SSEN Transmission Networks

SSEN Transmission (SSEN-T) is responsible for operating, maintaining, and upgrading and reinforcing the high-voltage electricity transmission networks. These networks transport

electricity over long distances from power stations to substations, utilising steel towers, underground cables and overhead lines.

There are three electricity transmission grid supply points within the National Park, one at Sloy (132kV), one at Killin (132kV), and one at St Fillan's (132kV). There is also a transmission substation at Inverarnan and a switching station at Sloy which are integral to the operation of the transmission network. In terms of network capacity, the GSP at Killin is constrained, meaning the network doesn't have the capacity to transport electricity required or produced from a new connection.

In terms of SSEN-T generation availability. Both GSPs at Sloy and Killin are constrained, meaning there is limited capacity for new electricity generation to be connected to the electricity grid. However, at St Fillan's there is generation availability.

### SSEN Transmission Projects

SSEN-T are currently upgrading its electricity network to meet net zero targets. SSEN-T is also expanding the national transmission grid in northern Scotland including Argyll and Bute, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and the Western Isles, to manage increased capacity and support new renewable energy generation. The current and completed projects within the National Park are listed below:

- The Killin VISTA project was completed in 2023 and involved undergrounding 7.8km of overhead line and removing 32 steel lattice towers.
- The Glen Falloch and Sloy VISTA project has been complete and is in its operational phase.
- The 132kV overhead line from Sloy to Windyhill requires reconductoring and refurbishing due to deterioration. Planning permission for access tracks was granted in April 2023, and these works will be progressing soon.
- Transformers to the south of the existing Sloy Substation are required, however, there have been delays due to onsite ground contamination. A planning application is due to be submitted in future but the timescale for submission is currently unknown.

### SSEN Distribution Networks

SSEN Distribution (SSEN-D) is responsible for delivering electricity from the transmission network to homes and businesses across the north of Scotland. The distribution network transports lower voltage electricity through overhead lines, underground cables and service lines.

There is a SSEN-D grid supply point in the National Park, located at St Fillan's (33kV). In terms of generation availability, the GSP at St Fillan's is constrained meaning there is no room for more electricity generation in St Fillan's.

### SPEN Transmission Networks

There are two overhead SPEN Transmission lines that run through the National Park, a 132kV line from Dumbarton to Craggan Hill and a 132kV line from Glasgow to Cruachan via Inverarnan.

## SPEN Distribution Networks

SPEN Distribution is responsible for delivering electricity to those within a small area at the south of the National Park, particularly those who live in Balloch and on the Westside of Loch Lomond as far as Arden. As highlighted by SP Energy Networks Distributed Generation Heat Map for those living within the above-mentioned areas of the National Park, at least one factor in the network is close to its operational limit and so installation of most levels of Distributed Generation and local connection is highly unlikely.

## **Summary of Stakeholder Engagement**

As part of the Evidence Gathering process for the new Local Development Plan (LDP), the National Park Authority developed a suite of Topic Papers and Area Summaries to explore key planning themes and local issues across the National Park. These documents form the technical and spatial foundation for the new LDP and were central to the targeted community engagement process between May and July.

Ten Topic Papers were drafted, aligning with the relevant policies in NPF4. These papers summarise national, regional, and local data, providing a detailed evidence base on subjects such as climate change, biodiversity, housing, infrastructure, and the rural economy. They were developed by National Park officers, incorporating input from key public bodies including SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot, Transport Scotland, and local authorities.

A draft of this topic paper was sent to:

- Historic Environment Scotland
- NatureScot
- Scottish Water
- West Dunbartonshire Council
- Argyll and Bute Council
- Stirling Council
- Perth and Kinross Council
- Scottish Southern Energy Network Transmission (SSEN-T)
- Scottish Southern Energy Network Distribution (SSEN-D)
- Scottish Power Energy Network (SPEN)

Six Area Summaries were also produced to provide a more accessible, place-based and spatial view of the evidence. These summaries incorporate mapped information alongside key content from registered Local Place Plans, highlighting key opportunities, challenges, and priorities for specific areas within the National Park. The spatial presentation was intended to support more informed and locally relevant discussion during in-person workshops.

As part of the engagement activities, a series of in-person workshops were held in May and June 2025 across the National Park to present the Area Summaries and gather feedback directly from local community groups and stakeholders. To ensure wider participation, complementary online surveys were also made available, allowing people to review and comment on both the Topic Papers and Area Summaries over a six-week period (May – July 2025). In addition to public engagement, input was actively sought from key statutory agencies and partner organisations throughout the preparation process to help shape and strengthen the evidence base.

Summary of Responses	
Respondent	Summary of Comments and Response
Historic Environment Scotland	Historic Environment Scotland are content with the accuracy and completeness of data relating to the historic environment in the paper. <b>Response:</b> Noted.
Scottish Water	Scottish Water supports the content of the Topic Paper. <b>Response:</b> Noted.
Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll and Bute Council highlighted that their LHEES had been approved and provided several policies, strategies and reports for consideration. <b>Response:</b> The title and link to the LHEES was updated in the paper to reflect approval. No additional policies, strategies, and reports were added due to proportionality.
Stirling Council	Stirling Council requested the paper to mention the potential noise, smoke nuisance and air quality impact aspects of renewable energy projects in the paper and highlighted that their Regional Energy Masterplan (REM) had been approved. <b>Response:</b> The title of the REM was updated, suggestions were incorporated, and implications were updated to reflect environmental considerations.
Scottish Southern Energy Network Transmission	SSEN-T highlighted additional reports, provided additional GSP data and requested acronyms be used. <b>Response:</b> All suggestions and data were incorporated in the paper.
Scottish Southern Energy Network Distribution	SSEN-D highlighted additional policies, strategies, and reports. <b>Response:</b> Relevant additional policies, strategies, and reports were incorporated in the paper.
Stirling Area Access Panel	Stirling Area Access Panel suggested further recognition of the use of community owned ground source heat pumps and hydro schemes. <b>Response:</b> Further information was added to the paper to address these suggestions.
Kilmarnock Community Council	Kilmarnock Community Council encouraged the National Park Authority to provide technical support, funding and guidance to promote the use of sustainable insulation materials over less environmentally friendly options. They also highlighted that by identifying sustainable sources to support applicants, the Authority can help drive a circular economy and contribute to Net Zero goals in the built environment. <b>Response:</b> All comments have been noted. Where they can be addressed through the Local Development Plan, they will be considered in its preparation. Comments relating to delivery support are outwith the scope of the Evidence Report stage.
Summary of Implication for the Proposed Plan	
The implications of the evidence for the Proposed Plan may be summarised as follows:	



- **Local scale renewable energy and heat generation** - To support the NPPP and our ambition to be a net zero place by 2035, the new Local Development Plan (LDP) should promote small scale renewable energy and heat generation to meet the needs of National Park residents, communities and businesses in locations where there is high energy demand and these measures can be effectively implemented, such as public buildings or residential clusters.
- **National Park context** - NPF4 Policy 11 recognises that certain impacts are inherent to some renewable energy forms. The new Local Development Plan should consider the requirements and opportunities for local policies for new renewables development. The Local Development Plan will set out what types of renewable energy technology will be appropriate and where within the National Park, supporting communities and businesses to transition from fossil fuels. As new technologies emerge and demand evolves, the new Local Development Plan should consider how these can be delivered in ways that are sensitive to the National Park's Special Qualities. Policies and guidance should remain flexible to accommodate future technological advancements, while taking account of scale and potential impacts on the National Park's natural and cultural assets.
- **Energy-efficient buildings** - The Local Development Plan should consider opportunities for increased energy efficiency in new developments and consider the role it will play in tackling energy efficiency of existing stock through retrofitting solutions.
- **Heat network potential** - The spatial strategy should be informed by areas of heat network potential and any designated District Heat Network Zones identified in the relevant Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES). For example, Callander High School has been identified in Stirling and Clackmannanshire's Regional Energy Masterplan as having district heat network potential. Although it is recognised that there are some rural impracticalities to the development of district heat networks in the National Park and so the LDP should consider alternative solutions.
- **Run of river hydro** - There is an established hydro-electric presence within the National Park, which could offer opportunities for further small-scale run-of-river electricity generation.
- **Grid capacity** - The Local Development Plan should acknowledge that the connection of new renewable energy generation developments to the electricity grid may require prior upgrades and/or expansion of the grid infrastructure. As part of the planning process, the LDP should ensure that potential renewable energy projects are assessed for their compatibility with existing and potential grid capacity.

### Statements of Agreement / Dispute

There are no substantive areas of disagreement on the evidence in the paper. Feedback from respondents to the Topic Paper consultation have largely been addressed in the Evidence Report. Historic Environment Scotland and Scottish Water have confirmed they are content with the paper.

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>Topic Paper 6 - Sustainable Transport</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p><b><u>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997</u></b>, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15(5)(d) the infrastructure of the district (including transport systems); and</li> <li>• Section 15(5)(e) how that infrastructure is used</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023</u></b></p> <p>Under Regulation 9, have regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any regional transport strategy; and</li> <li>• Any local transport strategy</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Other relevant legislation</u></b></p> <p>The Aims of National Parks in Scotland (as set out in the <b>National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000</b>)</p>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b><u>Interactive Map</u></b></p> <p>For any data that is not linked in this topic paper, these can be viewed on the National Park Authority's <u>interactive GIS map viewer</u> under 'A Low Carbon Place' layer.</p> <p><b><u>Overarching Policies, Strategies and Reports</u></b></p> <p><b><u>National Park Partnership Plan</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan 2024 – 2029</u></li> </ul> <p><b><u>National Context</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019</u></li> <li>• <u>National Transport Strategy 2 2020</u></li> <li>• <u>Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 2022</u></li> <li>• <u>Transport Scotland's 'A Route map to a 20% reduction in car kilometres by 2030 2022</u></li> <li>• <u>Transport Scotland's 'Achieving Car Use Reduction in Scotland: A Renewed Policy Statement 2025'</u></li> <li>• <u>A Network Fit for The Future: Vision for Scotland's Public Electric Vehicle Charging Network 2023</u></li> <li>• <u>Cleaner Air for Scotland 2 2021</u></li> <li>• <u>Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030 2021</u></li> <li>• <u>Let's Get Scotland Walking: National Walking Strategy 2014</u></li> <li>• <u>Transport Scotland's Rail Enhancement &amp; Capital Investment Strategy 2018</u></li> <li>• <u>Scotland's Railway: Sustainable Travel to Stations 2023</u></li> </ul>

- [A Long-Term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland 2030 2014](#)
- [Climate Change Plan: Third Report on Proposals and Policies 2018-2032](#)
- [Securing a Green Recovery on A Path to Net-zero: Climate Change Plan 2018–2032](#)
- [Cycling by Design 2021](#)
- [Cycling Framework for Active Travel 2023](#)

#### **Regional Context**

- [TACTRAN Regional Transport Strategy 2024 – 2034](#)
- [SPT Regional Transport Strategy 2023 -2038](#)
- [SPT Regional Active Travel Strategy for the West of Scotland 2024 – 2038](#)
- [SPT Regional Bus Strategy \[Draft\]](#)
- [Hitrans Regional Transport Strategy \[Draft\] 2024](#)

#### **Local/National Park Context**

- [Stirling Council's Local Transport Strategy 2017 - 2027](#)
- [Stirling Council Towns, Villages and Rural Areas Transport Plan 2017 – 2027](#)
- [Perth and Kinross Mobility Strategy 2024](#)
- [West Dunbartonshire Council Active Travel Strategy 2024](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Active Travel Strategy \[Draft\]](#)
- [Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal and Modal Shift Report 2023](#)
- [Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Sustainable Travel Options appraisal and Modal Shift Background Research Report 2023](#) (document not yet available online, will be submitted to Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals Division at Gate check stage)
- [Aberfoyle Community Active Travel Action Plan 2020](#)
- [Callander Community Active Travel Action Plan 2020](#)
- [Community Active Travel Action Plan Drymen 2021](#)
- [Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Core Paths Plan 2023](#)

#### **Other relevant Policies, Strategies and Reports**

#### **Local/National Park Context**

- [Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Carbon Footprint Assessment and Proposed Pathway to Net Zero 2023](#)
- [The Trossachs Explorer Evaluation Report 2025](#)
- [Living Well Locally – Drymen and the Villages of East Loch Lomond](#)
- [Lochearnhead Active Travel and Placemaking Project 2020](#)

#### **Existing Data**

- The data below is from the following report: [Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal and Modal Shift Report 2023](#)

- Travel to work, study and/or school data – Datashine Scotland Commute
- Online Sustainable Travel: Community and Business Survey (November 2022 – December 2022)
- Visitor Profile Survey 2019 - 2020
- Traffic Flow Data
- Commute Journey Flows Data
- Scotland Census Data 2022 – Distance Travelled to Work
- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation – Geographic Access Domain
- EV Charging Facilities – Traffic Scotland
- Office of Rail & Road – Estimates of Station Usage
- Stirling Council OpenData Platform – Road Accident Data

## National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context

**Policy 13 – Sustainable Transport** promotes sustainable travel methods in new development such as walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. The policy seeks to reduce the need for unsustainable travel practices. To meet this intent, Local Development Plans should undertake the following actions:

- **Location Prioritisation:** Future development locations should be chosen based on their accessibility by sustainable transport modes. This involves ensuring that new developments are conveniently accessed by walking, cycling, and public transport to reduce car dependency.
- **Spatial Strategy Alignment:** The spatial strategy of the LDPs should reflect the principles of the sustainable travel hierarchy and the sustainable investment hierarchy. This means making the best use of existing infrastructure and services, prioritising developments that support sustainable travel.
- **Place-Based Approach:** LDPs should adopt a place-based approach to minimise car dominance in urban areas. This can include implementing low traffic schemes, offering shared transport options, designing roads with speed controls, creating bus and cycle priority lanes, pedestrianisation of certain areas and minimising space allocated for car parking.
- **Development Considerations:** When planning developments, LDPs should consider factors such as the type and mix of developments, the concept of local living, the 20-minute neighbourhood principle, car ownership levels and the overall accessibility of proposals for all users, including those with disabilities.
- **Transport Appraisal:** LDPs should be informed by comprehensive transport appraisals conducted according to relevant transport appraisal guidance. These appraisals should provide evidence of the capacity of the area's transport infrastructure and assess the impact of the spatial strategy on the transport network. They should identify any potential cumulative transport impacts and propose feasible mitigation measures to support an infrastructure-first approach.

## National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2024 – 2029 Context

The National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) outlines a coordinated strategy to deliver a more sustainable, inclusive, and low-carbon transport system across Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. The overarching aim is to reduce dependency on private cars, support modal shift toward more sustainable options, and ensure residents and visitors can access the Park efficiently and equitably.

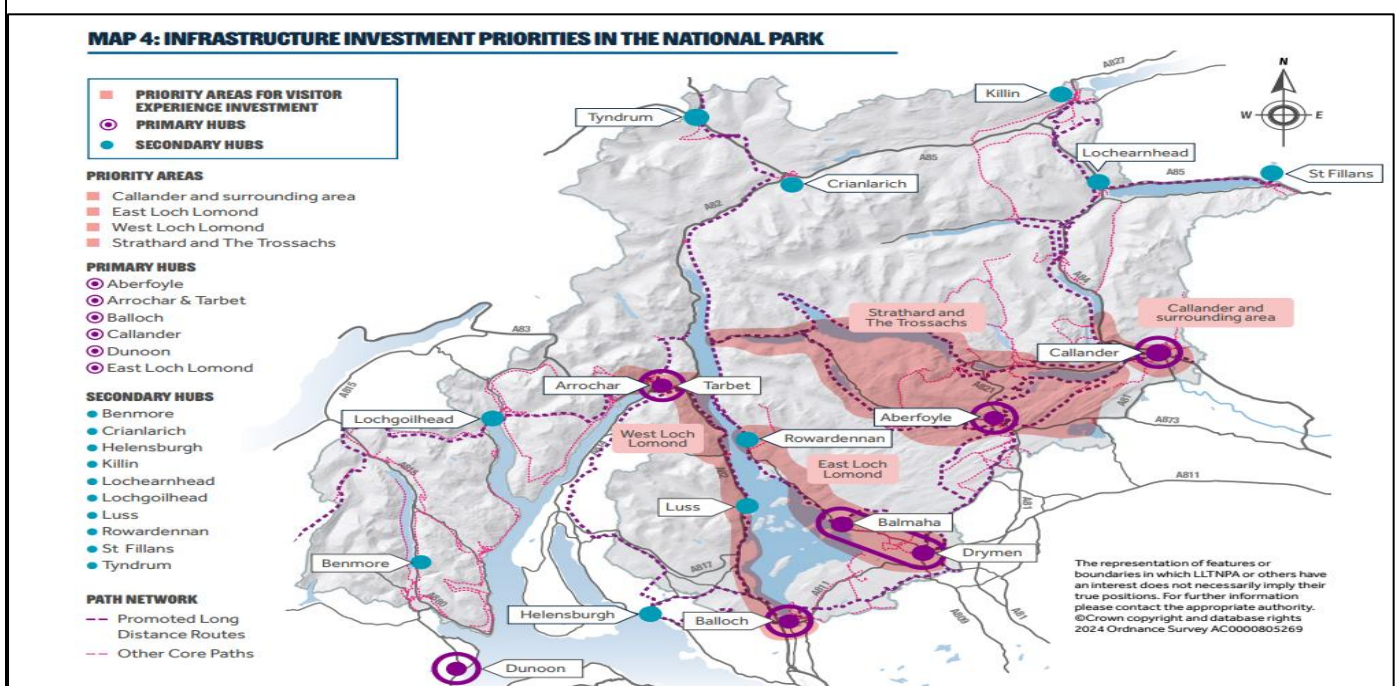
Key actions include delivering connectivity projects in Tarbet, Balloch, and Callander to enable seamless multi-modal journeys, and developing a strategic approach to public transport and EV infrastructure, including EV car sharing schemes. A programme of active travel infrastructure, such as paths for walking, cycling, and wheeling, is being developed to integrate active travel into everyday life.

To support system-wide change, the Plan proposes the establishment of a National Park Mobility Partnership, a new governance model where partners pool resources and expertise to expand low-carbon mobility options. The Plan also calls for the development of integrated ticketing, marketing, and communication packages to promote sustainable travel, as well as the introduction of targeted transport services (including on-water travel) to meet local and visitor demand.

Finally, the Plan recognises the importance of strategic pricing policies for travel and parking to encourage more sustainable behaviour and aims to strengthen transport hubs that support public transport, EV use, cycling, and walking, creating a joined-up network of low-emission travel choices.

*Figure 1, extracted from the National Park Partnership Plan 2024 – 2029 highlights infrastructure investment priorities across the National Park, as well as key primary and secondary hubs and long-distance routes and other core paths. This map in Figure 1 below will become a key consideration for the new LDP and forms part of the evidence base.*

*Figure 1: Map showing Infrastructure Investment Priorities in the National Park, taken from the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan.*





## Summary of Evidence

This paper covers National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Policy 13 (Sustainable Transport). The summary of evidence section is structured in the following order:

- National Context
- Regional Context
- Local/National Park Context
  - Existing Transport Infrastructure
    - Active Travel
    - Public Transport
    - Private Transport

It is also important to acknowledge that there is overlap between the Sustainable Transport paper and NPF 4 Policy 15 – Local Living and 20-minute Neighbourhoods and Policy 18 – Infrastructure First. Although the link between these policies is noted in this paper, there is more detail in the following papers:

Policy 15 – Topic Paper 8

Policy 18 – Topic Paper 3

The transport pressures faced by Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park are broadly consistent with those experienced across rural Scotland. These include limited public transport options, a reliance on private car travel, dispersed communities, and sharp seasonal peaks in visitor numbers. These factors create unique challenges for both residents and visitors. A few of these pressures are highlighted below:

Travel to, from, and within Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is currently shaped by a strong reliance on private car use. This reflects the rural nature of the area and the existing transport network, which presents challenges in offering viable alternatives. During peak visitor periods, this can lead to increased traffic levels, parking demand, and localised pressure on infrastructure and the environment, which may affect the visitor experience and place added strain on communities and businesses.

Public transport provision across the National Park is varied and reflects the priorities and service patterns of the constituent local authorities. While services play a vital role, particularly for commuters and essential travel, they are not always aligned with the Park's unique visitor patterns or geographic spread, which can limit the appeal and accessibility of sustainable travel options.

Car parking provision within the National Park is managed by a range of organisations, leading to variation in ownership, charging approaches, and enforcement practices. In some cases, this can make car travel more convenient and cost-effective, potentially reducing the incentive to use more sustainable modes.

It is important to recognise that Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority is not a transport authority. Responsibility for public transport and transport infrastructure lies with the constituent local authorities, West Dunbartonshire, Argyll and Bute, Stirling, and Perth and Kinross, each of which has statutory duties in this area. The Local Authorities boundaries within the National Park can be viewed spatially on the web-based interactive map.

The National Park Authority plays a key coordinating and influencing role, supporting efforts to enhance sustainable transport through collaboration with transport providers, local authorities, and regional and national partners. It also has a statutory role in planning, ensuring that transport considerations are appropriately addressed in development proposals in line with national and local policy, and in consultation with Roads Authorities.

### National Context

#### **The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019**

The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 sets out the legal framework to modernise transport services, make them more sustainable, improve accessibility, and empower local authorities to have more control over transport planning in their areas.

#### **National Transport Strategy 2 (2020)**

National Transport Strategy 2 is Transport Scotland's comprehensive plan and detailed policy framework for transforming the transportation system to address current challenges and future needs. The strategy sets out a vision for sustainable, inclusive, safe and accessible transport system that contributes to the well-being of Scotland's people and communities.

It is advocated that all forthcoming plans promote and adhere to the ambitions and policies within NTS2. Embedded within policy making should be the sustainable travel and the sustainable investment hierarchies. The sustainable travel hierarchy (figure 2) promotes walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options in preference to single occupancy private car use for the movement of people, with the sustainable investment hierarchy (figure 3) ensuring transport options maintain and safely operate existing assets, taking due consideration of the need to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Figure 2: Sustainable Travel Hierarchy

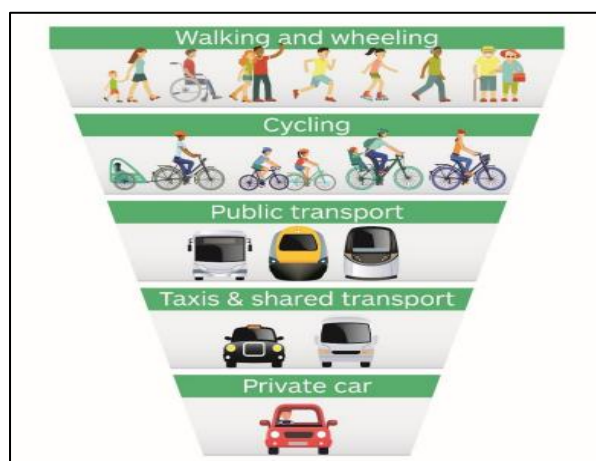


Figure 3: Sustainable Travel Investment Hierarchy



NTS2 states “*Planning and development have a major influence on our transport system. We will continue to work collaboratively to ensure that, when planning decisions are made, as a priority they will consider the impacts on transport.*” Furthermore, “*transport accessibility will influence the location and design of future development. Transport will help planning and development and also ensure our communities are sustainable.*” Thus, transport accessibility should be a key consideration in determining the location of development.



## **Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (2022)**

Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) prepared by Transport Scotland details how it will help to deliver the vision, priorities and outcomes for transport set out in the National Transport Strategy (NTS2), aligning with other national plans such as the [Climate Change Plan 2018 – 2032](#) and the fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4). It sets out 45 recommendations which will help inform Scottish Ministers on a programme of potential transport investment opportunities for the period 2022-2042. The recommendations relate to transport investment in Scotland over the next 20 years to improve active travel infrastructure, influence travel choices and behaviours, enhance access to affordable public transport, decarbonise transport, increase safety and resilience of the strategic transport network and enhance strategic connections.

Of the 45 recommendations described above, those of relevance to the National Park are as follows:

- 1.Connected Neighbourhoods*
- 3.Village-town active travel connections*
- 4.Connecting towns by active travel*
- 5.Long-distance active travel network*
- 6.Behaviour change initiatives*
- 7.Changing road user behaviour*
- 8.Increasing active travel to school*
- 9.Improving access to bikes*
- 10.Expansion of 20mph limits and zones*
- 20.Investment in Demand Responsive Transport and Mobility as a Service*
- 22.Framework for the Delivery of Mobility Hubs*
- 23.Smart, integrated public transport ticketing*
- 29.Access to Argyll (A83)*
- 30.Trunk road and motorway safety improvements to progress towards ‘Vision Zero’*
- 31.Trunk road and motorway climate change adaptation and resilience*

The recommendations above encompass various themes, such as enhancing active travel infrastructure, shaping travel choices and behaviours and boosting safety and resilience on the strategic transport network. It is important to note, however, that several other strategic recommendations, while not directly related to the National Park, will still positively impact it.

## **Trunk Road Investment Programme**

Transport Scotland continues to invest in several infrastructure projects across the country, including a number within the National Park. These projects aim to enhance facilities and services for both residents and visitors, supporting the region's growth and accessibility. The projects specific to the National Park are listed below:

- A83 Rest and Be Thankful – Delivering an alternative route to the existing A83 (in preparation).
- A82 Crianlarich Bypass – A new bypass has been constructed where the A82 and A85 meet, to tackle the congestion experienced during the busy tourist season (complete).
- A82 Pulpit Rock – The removal of traffic signals and the re-introduction of two-lane carriageway (complete).

- A82 Tarbet to Inverarnan – Jacobs Fairhurst Joint Venture are looking at options to upgrade the road between Tarbet and Inverarnan (in preparation).

### **Transport Scotland's A Route map to a 20% reduction in car kilometres by 2030 (2022)**

The route map is in response to the Scottish Government's [Climate Change Plan update](#) and the commitment to reduce car kilometres by 20 per cent by 2030, to meet Scotland's statutory obligations for greenhouse gas emissions reduction by 2045. However, it also recognises the benefits that re-thinking the way people travel can have on individual and community health and wellbeing, as well as the fairness in society and the inclusiveness of the economy.

The route map builds on the vision for Scotland's transport system set out in the second National Transport Strategy, aimed at protecting the climate and improving people's lives. However, it acknowledges that people's travel behaviours are shaped by the wider context in which they live and services they need to access. This route map therefore includes a range of non-transport policies interventions, including the provision of good connectivity and digital access to services; planning and investment in public places; location of key services such as healthcare; and supporting young people to make healthy, fair and sustainable travel choices from an early age.

The route map does not aim to eliminate all car use. Rather, the route map encourages all people to reduce overreliance on cars wherever possible and identifies four key behaviours for people to consider when planning a journey:

- make use of sustainable online options to reduce the need to travel;
- choose local destinations to reduce the distance travelled;
- switch to walking, wheeling, cycling or public transport where possible; and
- combine a trip or share a journey to reduce the number of individual car trips made, if car remains the only feasible option.

The route map sets out the interventions to make it easy for people to take these actions and is applicable in both rural and urban settings as well as for those with a variety of mobility needs. Although it recognises that rural communities may face challenges in reducing car travel at the same rate as urban areas. As the National Park is predominantly a rural area, where car dependency is higher due to limited public transport options and longer travel distances between communities, services, and employment. It also highlights the need for tailored transport solutions that consider the realities of rural living, rather than applying urban-focused expectations across the board.

### **A Network Fit for The Future: Vision for Scotland's Public Electric Vehicle Charging Network (2023)**

*A Network Fit for the Future: Vision for Scotland's Public Electric Vehicle Charging Network* sets out the Scottish Government's long-term vision for developing a high-quality, accessible, and reliable public electric vehicle (EV) charging network. It is designed to support Scotland's wider climate commitments, including the aim to phase out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030, and to reach net zero emissions by 2045. The strategy recognises that a well-planned public EV charging network is critical to enabling this transition, particularly for

people who cannot charge at home, as well as for businesses, visitors, and communities across the country.

The strategy focuses on several key goals to guide the development of the charging network. First, it aims to expand the availability of public EV chargers in line with rising demand, ensuring that charging is convenient and reliable. It also emphasises the importance of fair and equitable access, especially for rural, remote, and island communities, so that no area is left behind. A core goal is to attract greater private sector investment to help scale and maintain the network sustainably. Finally, the strategy supports a just transition, ensuring that the environmental and economic benefits of the shift to electric vehicles are shared fairly across all parts of society.

### **Cleaner Air for Scotland 2 (2021)**

Over the last 50 years, air quality has improved beyond all recognition. Although air quality in Scotland's towns and cities is improving year on year, there are still areas across the country where air quality standards for human and environmental health are not being met. Road transport remains the significant contributor to poor air quality. Air pollution especially impacts on the more vulnerable members of society – the very young and the elderly or those with existing health conditions such as asthma, respiratory and heart disease. This makes air quality an important health inequalities issue.

This revised policy is shaped around 10 general themes, which largely reflect the high-level recommendations arising from the Cleaner Air for Scotland (CAFS) review:

1. Health – A Precautionary Approach
2. Integrated Policy
3. Placemaking
4. Data
5. Public Engagement and Behaviour Change
6. Industrial Emissions Regulation
7. Tackling Non-Transport Emissions Sources
8. Transport
9. Governance, Accountability and Delivery
10. Further Progress Review

### **Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030 (2021)**

The Framework sets out a vision for Scotland to have the best road safety performance in the world by 2030 and an ambitious long-term goal where no one is seriously injured or killed on the roads by 2050.

The Framework builds on what has already been achieved here in Scotland over the last decade. It sets out new strategic outcomes for road safety, built around the safe system approach, coupled with a comprehensive performance management system to monitor progress. For the first time, mode specific targets are being created to focus attention by partners on priority areas. Transport Scotland will also establish new Local Partnership Forums to expand and grow the connections between national and local road safety across Scotland.

### **Let's Get Scotland Walking: Scotland's National Walking Strategy (2014)**

Scotland's National Walking Strategy aims to make walking a key part of daily life, promoting it as the easiest and most attractive option for short trips and recreation. The strategy focuses on creating a culture where walking is encouraged by people of all ages and abilities, emphasising its health benefits like reducing obesity and improving mental well-being. It also seeks to improve walking environments by making the streets safer and more accessible. This includes developing pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, better signage and safe routes in both urban and rural areas.

A key focus is reducing inequalities, ensuring everyone, regardless of age or background, has access to safe, enjoyable walking spaces. By breaking down barriers for disadvantaged groups, the strategy aims to create a more inclusive walking culture. It also contributes to broader goals such as lowering traffic congestion, cutting carbon emissions and enhancing community health and well-being.

### **A Long-Term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland 2030**

Scotland's *Long-Term Vision for Active Travel 2030* sets out a national ambition for walking, wheeling and cycling to become the most convenient and preferred choices for short everyday journeys. Central to this vision is an infrastructure-first approach, where active travel is embedded in transport and spatial planning from the outset. Rather than being considered a secondary option, walking and cycling infrastructure are treated as essential elements of Scotland's long-term goals for public health, climate action and sustainable communities. The vision aligns with key national frameworks such as the National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2), National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and the Cycling Framework for Active Travel, all of which reinforce the need to prioritise people and place in how we design and manage transport systems.

While much of the public focus on active travel often centres on urban areas, the vision makes it clear that rural Scotland is equally part of the national ambition. People living in rural communities should have the same opportunities to make short everyday trips on foot, by bike, or by wheeling. However, delivering this in rural contexts requires a tailored approach. The infrastructure first principle remains key, but the type and scale of interventions must reflect local conditions, such as dispersed settlements, limited public transport, narrow roads, and higher traffic speeds.

In rural areas, active travel infrastructure is likely to focus on upgrading minor roads, developing safe off-road paths, and creating links between villages and key destinations such as schools, shops, health centres, and public transport hubs. Core paths, quiet routes, and former railways can often be repurposed to form part of a strategic network. Route design must account for longer travel distances, variable demand, and the need for resilience in more remote or exposed environments.

### **Transport Scotland's Rail Enhancement & Capital Investment Strategy (2018)**

Through this Rail Investment Strategy, Transport Scotland are setting out a new approach to planning and funding rail projects. The Strategy looks beyond the traditional 5-year railway industry planning cycle and takes a strategic approach to all rail capital investments with a particular focus on making best use of the opportunities presented by major renewals.

The approach to investment remains within the context of the Government's overarching ambitions for Scotland which are encapsulated in our Economic Strategy with its two mutually supportive goals of increasing competitiveness and tackling inequality in Scotland.

### **Scotland's Railway : Sustainable Travel to Stations (2023)**

The vision of the Sustainable Travel to Stations (STtS) strategy is to grow the number of journeys passengers make to, and from, local neighbourhoods to the railway station by healthy and sustainable modes of transport: walking, wheeling, cycling, on-demand transport and the bus. Integrating stations into the communities they serve sits at the heart of this strategy: improving access to public transport, increasing opportunity to travel sustainably and delivering improved safety and social justice. Sustainable Travel to Stations is a practical guide for everyone interested in growing passenger numbers, delivering integrated transport, and creating a healthy, connected net zero economy.

The strategy is a practical guide for all statutory bodies, and private developers planning developments on or near the rail network. In addition, it is written as a guide for communities served by rail where the station could be better integrated.

It sets three key outcomes:

- Increasing passengers
- Net zero economy
- More people living locally

Delivering the strategy will better integrate railway stations into the communities they serve, anchoring them to their station, and increasing passenger numbers getting to the station actively and sustainably. Its practical delivery will reduce driving to stations and increase active and sustainable travel, assessed by a monitoring plan. STtS will help improve neighbourhoods, deliver local living, increase every day active travelling and bus patronage, improve air quality, and help deliver the target of a 20% reduction in driven car kilometres by 2030.

### **Regional Context**

### **Tayside and Central Scotland Regional Transport Strategy (Tactran RTS) 2024 – 2034**

The Tactran RTS 2024-2034 aims to meet local and national climate goals through significant behaviour changes from individuals, businesses and delivery agencies. It emphasises the need for fair, timely and proportionate measures.

The strategy focuses on supporting locations and groups that need the most help accessing facilities or changing behaviours. It encourages coordinated efforts among partners to create integrated solutions that provide real alternatives to car use and explore new models for bus services.

To reduce car usage, the strategy promotes improved alternatives in high-traffic areas, national fiscal measures and potentially local charging mechanisms. It also advocates for a shift towards electric and low-emission vehicles. Overall, the strategy seeks a sustainable, efficient and inclusive transport system.

Tactrans RTS outlines a number of actions that must be considered by the National Park Authority throughout the development of the new LDP. These are as follows:

*Action 1: Planning Authorities will reduce the car dependency of new developments.*

*Action 12: Roads and Planning Authorities will improve the accessibility and security of the street environment.*

*Action 15: Tactran, the Councils and the National Park Authorities will improve walking, wheeling and cycling opportunities.*

The Tactran RTS Delivery Plan is currently being prepared and is expected to include key activities identified by the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal and Modal Shift Report.

### **SPT Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2038**

Strathclyde's Partnership for Transport Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2038 addresses urgent challenges like climate change, the COVID-19 aftermath and the cost-of-living crisis. It shifts focus from traditional commuting to broader travel demands, such as local living, leisure trips and increased walking and cycling.

The strategy aligns national goals to meet climate targets, create an inclusive economy, reduce inequalities, improve health and foster prosperous communities. Strathclyde's diverse region, featuring urban and rural areas, presents ongoing transport challenges, which the strategy aims to address through five key issues: transport emissions, access for all, regional connectivity, active living and public transport quality and integration.

Key initiatives include setting measurable targets to reduce car use and emissions, enhancing public transport and active travel networks and ensuring accessibility, affordability and safety. The strategy calls for strong partnerships and political will to create a high-quality, integrated sustainable transport network across the region, focusing on reducing the need to travel and managing car demand to achieve climate goals and improve quality of life.

As the Planning Authority, the following policies are of relevance to the National Park:

*1: Ensure accessibility is considered in the application of the sustainable travel hierarchy and is a core objective in transport innovations and new forms of transport services and infrastructure including Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure.*

*6: Support development of 20-minute neighbourhoods through improved integration of transport, land use and service planning whilst recognising that the concept and how it should be applied will vary across the region particularly in rural, island and remote areas.*

*16: Increase and enhance integration of walking, wheeling and cycling networks and facilities with other sustainable transport.*

*43: Support increased integration of transport and flood risk planning.*

*44: Protect and enhance biodiversity by integrating sustainable transport and green networks in the planning and delivery of transport strategies and infrastructure.*

*45: Protect and enhance the built environment. Support placemaking and the creation of high quality, people-centred places that prioritise the movement of people over vehicles.*

*47: Strengthen sustainable inter-regional transport links for passengers and freight to support a resilient, competitive regional economy, including improved connectivity between Strathclyde and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park.*

*48: Improve, increase and enhance sustainable connectivity of regional strategic economic development and investment locations and intra-regional travel to work and freight corridors such as HMNB Clyde / Faslane, Helensburgh Growth Area and Helensburgh/HMNB Clyde - Balloch/Dumbarton - Clydebank - Glasgow.*

*50: Improve, increase and enhance transport connectivity for rural, remote and island communities particularly to nearest town centres and key transport hubs.*

The SPT RTS Delivery Plan is currently being prepared and is expected to include key activities identified from the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal and Modal Shift Report.

### **SPT Regional Active Travel Strategy for the West of Scotland 2024 – 2038**

SPT's draft Regional Active Travel Strategy for the West of Scotland outlines a long-term vision to enhance active travel in the Strathclyde region. It aims to transform how people travel by creating a well-connected, continuous active travel network that crosses boundaries and includes measures to encourage and enable active travel.

Building on previous work with partners, the strategy proposes a high-quality network with infrastructure that prioritises segregation from vehicular traffic and integrates with public transport, schools, workplaces and green spaces like parks and playing fields.

Key to the strategy's success is comprehensive behaviour change initiatives designed to provide practical tools and programs to encourage active travel, especially in areas with low current uptake. The strategy prioritises interventions based on evidence and community input from across the region.

### **SPT Regional Bus Strategy [Draft]**

SPT's Regional Bus Strategy (RBS) sets out a clear policy statement with the aim of a world-class passenger-focused public transport system. The RBS recognises the need to invest in transformative public transport, ensuring a sufficiently attractive 'offer' to move more people by more sustainable transport modes rather than by car. Therefore, a key theme within the strategy encompasses enhancing the quality and integration of public transport with a specific objective to make public transport a desirable and convenient travel choice for everyone.

The need for the development of a Strathclyde RBS was recognised with the new powers and opportunities available through the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. The draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy is currently out for consultation until the end of May 2025.



## **Hitrans Regional Transport Strategy [Draft]**

Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership is in the process of producing a new Regional Transport Strategy for the development of transport in the region over the next circa 20 years with the aim of delivering a transport system that reduces inequalities, takes climate action, helps deliver inclusive economic growth, and improves the health and wellbeing of people in the region.

The overarching vision underpinning the Strategy is that the transport networks and services will act to realise the economic potential of the HITRANS region through reducing the actual and perceived impacts of distance, poor resilience and low population density. By doing this, they will facilitate economically and socially valuable activities for all, provide equality of opportunity, enable people to live active and healthy lives and allow our region to contribute fully to the national net zero emissions target.

The following policies are of relevance to the National Park Authorities duty as a Planning Authority:

*ST1e: The RTS recognises the challenges presented by the impacts of increasing abnormal load movements across the region. It calls for a coordinated approach to be taken to ensure that appropriate planning and mitigation is put in place as part of the planning process for new developments that will generate such movements.*

*ST1h: The RTS supports the prioritisation of new development in locations that are in proximity to key services and already well-served by active travel and public transport.*

*ST1j: The RTS supports the integration of active travel, public transport and shared mobility into the planning of all new developments.*

*ST1l: The RTS recognises the centrality of environmental considerations, particularly biodiversity enhancements and nature networks, within the planning and decision-making process.*

*ST2e: The RTS supports the integration of active travel and public transport connections within our communities.*

## **Local/National Park Context**

### **Stirling Council's Local Transport Strategy 2017 – 2027**

Stirling's Local Transport Strategy, published in 2017, outlines the Council's goals for how people and goods move around the area. It focuses on creating a public transport system that is both efficient and sustainable. The strategy includes three main sets of objectives:

- Social – which seek to ensure everyone can access jobs, services and opportunities, promote healthier lifestyles and ensure that transport is safe, secure and accessible for all.
- Economic – which focuses on helping businesses run more efficiently, attracting investment by improving travel times and market access, supporting tourism.
- Environmental – which seek to minimise the negative effects of transport on air and noise pollution, lower carbon emissions and protect natural habitats.

The [Stirling Council Active Travel Action Plan](#) helps deliver the Local Transport Strategy's goal of creating a more active and sustainable Stirling by promoting and supporting increased use of walking, cycling, and public transport.

In line with the National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2), both the Local Transport Strategy and the Active Travel Plan are currently being updated. The existing Local Transport Strategy will be replaced by Stirling Council's new Sustainable Mobility Strategy, due to be published in 2025.

### **Stirling Council Towns, Villages and Rural Areas Transport Plan 2017 - 2027**

The Stirling Council Towns, Villages and Rural Areas Transport Plan seeks to address the key transport issues affecting the rural areas of Stirling, a number of which are located within the National Park boundary. The issues are summarised below:

- Impact of Traffic on Communities vs. Supporting Freight and Tourism Industries – Traffic in rural areas, including those within the National Park, affects communities in several ways. Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), essential for industries like timber, often pass through towns and villages, leading to issues such as safety concerns, poor air quality, noise and disruption of local life. Tourism contributes to traffic congestion and parking problems in popular spots, impacting local infrastructure and residents. Additionally, the growing number of commuters increases overall traffic. Despite these challenges, rural industries and tourism are vital for the local economy, providing jobs and economic benefits. Managing traffic effectively while supporting these important sectors is crucial, as cars remain the main transport option for both locals and visitors in these areas.
- Quality of Streetscape, Carriageways and Road – There are concerns about the condition of roads and road infrastructure, including issues with maintenance and the appearance of streetscapes. Problems with hedges, verges, footpaths and signage are particularly notable in tourism areas. The overall quality of the journey significantly affects how visitors perceive the region.
- Ensuring access to jobs, services and opportunities – The number of jobs and services in these areas is declining and while the council can control the location of its own services, it has limited influence over others. Public transport connections between rural areas and major centres for work, healthcare, shopping and education are decreasing, with issues related to service frequency, coverage and cost. Most public transport is provided by commercial companies, leaving the council with limited options to support local services. Many rural households lack car access and elderly, or low-income residents often face transportation challenges. The growing and aging population further complicates these issues.
- Opportunities to walk and cycle – Reliance on cars is linked to health issues, while walking and cycling offer healthier alternatives for both leisure and practical travel. However, rising traffic volumes are making it unsafe to walk or cycle to local amenities. There are also obstacles in the street environment for people with mobility challenges. In rural areas, there are few pedestrian and cycle facilities, leading to a lack of safe and appealing routes. Communities are focusing on improving paths and access to address these problems.

### **Perth and Kinross Mobility Strategy (2024)**

The draft Perth and Kinross Mobility Strategy seeks to enhance transportation across the region by emphasising sustainability, efficiency and inclusiveness. It promotes reducing reliance on private vehicles by encouraging cycling and walking and supports the development of green technologies such as electric vehicles. The strategy aims to build infrastructure that facilitates active travel, including bike lanes and pedestrian pathways.

Public transport improvements are a core focus, with plans to expand and enhance bus and train services to improve connectivity and upgrade facilities like bus stops and train stations. The strategy also emphasises the integration of different transport modes – such as buses and accessible train stations, alongside improved transport links to prevent isolation in less-served areas.

Innovation is key, with the strategy supporting the use of digital tools for real-time travel information and online ticketing. It also includes developing multimodal transport hubs to streamline travel across different transport modes.

Overall, the strategy seeks to create a modern, sustainable and efficient transportation system that supports the region's growth and addresses current transportation challenges.

### **West Dunbartonshire Council's Active Travel Strategy (2024)**

The West Dunbartonshire Council's Active Travel Strategy was approved by the Council in November 2024 and is soon to be published.

The Strategy aims to improve public health, reduce traffic congestion, support environmental sustainability, and enhance the overall quality of life in West Dunbartonshire.

In regard to actions outlined in the Strategy of relevance to the National Park Authority, the following have been outlined:

*R-05: A811 route connecting Balloch to Drymen has been highlighted as a priority, while it is a rural route, it connects settlements such as Gartocharn with Balloch. The route links to Balloch railway station, as well as key land uses such as Gartocharn Primary School and retail. The route currently has a low cycle friendliness score and was mentioned by stakeholders as a route they'd like to see improved.*

*In-07: To promote sustainable travel to Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, explore opportunities to better integrate Balloch railway station with active travel infrastructure, making it easier and more attractive for visitors to use public transport and active travel options*

*In-11: Balloch to Tarbet Active Travel Route, to improve and extend route on the western shore of Loch Lomond to serve communities as well as promote leisure trips.*

*BC-06: Work with the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority to encourage active tourism through ways to access the park by active modes, as well as opportunities to explore the park actively once visitors have arrived.*

These actions reinforce the role of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority as a key delivery partner in promoting sustainable and active travel. They highlight the need for the Authority to work collaboratively with transport and community partners to improve active travel infrastructure along key routes such as the A811 and the western shore of Loch Lomond, including the Balloch to Tarbet corridor. The Authority is also expected to support efforts to better integrate Balloch railway station with active travel connections, making it easier for visitors to access and move through the National Park sustainably. More broadly, the Authority has a role in encouraging active tourism by enabling and promoting opportunities for visitors to explore the Park by walking and cycling once they have arrived.

### **Argyll and Bute Council Active Travel Strategy [Draft]**

The Active Travel Strategy establishes a long-term, high-level direction of travel to provide the context and reasons for the development and promotion of active travel opportunities across Argyll and Bute. The timescale for this Strategy is deliberately set in the longer term to provide the policy stability that is required to deliver a long-term, infrastructure led change in behaviour and travel options. This 30-year Strategy, from 2024 to 2054, will be reviewed at least every 10 years to ensure it remains relevant and appropriate.

The strategy will be delivered by the Active Travel Delivery Plan (ATDP), a subsidiary 10-year prioritised plan, which will develop the direction set in the Strategy into deliverable projects.

The overarching vision for the strategy is: to make active travel the most attractive, accessible and useable mode of travel for everyday local journeys to work, education, essential services, retail and leisure.

The Argyll and Bute Council Active Travel Strategy was approved by the Council's Committee in December 2024 and is subject to a period of public consultation.

### **The Trossachs Explorer Evaluation Report**

This report evaluated the pilot sustainable transport initiative launched by the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park (LLTNP) Authority in partnership with local stakeholders. The initiative aimed to reduce car reliance and its environmental impact, particularly carbon emissions, by promoting sustainable transport solutions. With 79% of the park's millions of visitors traveling by car, contributing significantly to congestion and emissions, the Trossachs Explorer sought to alleviate these issues and provide convenient travel for those without cars. The pilot project, the Trossachs Explorer, operated from July 1st to September 30th, 2024, providing car-free access between key locations such as Aberfoyle and Callander. It offered up to eight daily services and unlimited daily travel for £5.95, with free travel for those under 22 and over 60. The project was funded by BMW UK, the Scottish Government, and Transport Scotland.

Following the pilot, the University of Strathclyde conducted a thorough evaluation using a mixed-methods approach, including interviews, surveys, and observational data. A total of 29 interviews were conducted with 32 participants, and 195 respondents completed a survey. Additionally, a Ketso workshop provided insights from Volunteer Rangers.

Key strengths of the initiative included enhanced access to nature for non-drivers, reduced reliance on cars, and stronger community connections. The service also received positive feedback for its professional branding and visual appeal. Looking ahead, recommendations for

improvement focused on expanding service coverage, refining marketing efforts, boosting reliability, and improving integration with other transport options to ensure the continued success of future iterations of the Trossachs Explorer.

Following on from the successful pilot, a second year of the initiative has been delivered between July and October 2025 in response to strong demand and the need to gather further evidence on sustainable transport use within the National Park. The 2025 service introduced a number of improvements, including an extended route now starting from Drymen, better connections to existing public transport services, a new local operator, and more accessible buses. Timetables were coordinated to provide travel links with wider transport networks, improving connectivity to and from Killin, Stirling, Glasgow, Alexandria, and Balloch, as well as aligning with Loch Katrine sailing times to support multi-modal journeys.

The enhanced service not only sought to address congestion and parking pressures but also trialled further route expansions to test demand and practical delivery. These enhancements form part of the National Park Authority's ongoing commitment to offer sustainable travel options that protect the special environment of the National Park while enabling residents and visitors to connect more easily with key destinations.

Importantly, the strong uptake of the Trossachs Explorer has highlighted both the appetite for such services and the wider gaps in public transport provision across the region. While demand for the current route has been substantial, there has also been significant interest from settlements not yet served by the Explorer, including Gartmore, Balfron, Buchlyvie, Milton of Buchanan, Port of Menteith, and Thornhill. This demonstrates the pressing need for improved transport connectivity across the National Park and suggests clear opportunities for further service expansion and integration in future years.

### **Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal and Modal Shift Report [2023]**

In July 2022, Ansons Consulting was commissioned by Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority to create a report evaluating ways to improve sustainable transport for both visitors and residents in the park. This report followed a previous study highlighting the urgent need to reduce visitor car journeys due to traffic congestion, parking issues and high greenhouse gas emissions. These problems have been exacerbated by the rise in tourism to natural areas, especially during and after COVID-19, and by the current limited public transport network. Additionally, inconsistent car park management, with some charging low fees or none, contributes to these challenges.

The report assessed various strategies for improving transport, including a "business-as-usual", a more proactive approach and a "step-change" approach. The recommended strategy was the "step-change" option, which includes developing gateways and hubs, enhancing public transport, promoting active travel, improving parking and traffic management and strengthening visitor communications through new governance and financial arrangements. Gateways are entry points where visitors first arrive at the edge of the National Park, typically served by direct, high-quality public transport and offering opportunities for those arriving by car to switch to other modes of travel. Hubs are focal points within the National Park that provide a range of visitor amenities and activities, well connected to gateways by good public transport. To encourage a significant shift from car travel to sustainable transport, the network must be convenient, affordable and add value to the visitor experience. A map of the suggested locations for

gateways and hubs within the National Park can be found in the Modal Shift Report, with the proposed locations also listed below:

Primary Gateways:

- Balloch
- Drymen
- Aberfoyle
- Callander
- Dunoon

Secondary Gateways:

- Helensburgh
- Arrochar
- Tyndrum
- Killin
- St Fillans

Primary Hubs:

- Balloch
- Balmaha
- Aberfoyle
- Callander

Secondary Hubs:

- Drymen
- Luss
- Benmore
- Tarbet
- Killin
- Lochearnhead
- St Fillans

Other recommendations included better infrastructure for walking and cycling, standardised parking policies and promoting the park as a sustainable travel destination. The goal of this sustainable transport strategy is to increase the number of visitors using public transport and encourage active travel within the park, such as walking, cycling or taking buses and water transport. This approach would reduce parking and congestion problems while benefiting local communities and businesses by improving transport services and boosting local spending. Ultimately, it aims to protect the park's natural beauty while making it a more accessible and inclusive destination.

*The following sections present data collected as part of the background research for the Travel Options Appraisal and Modal Shift Report. This evidence helped to inform the analysis and shape the recommendations aimed at improving sustainable travel within the National Park. The National Park Authority has been engaging with Transport Scotland on the transport appraisal process, and there is a shared understanding that further discussions will be required as the work progresses to the Proposed Plan stage. The Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal and Modal Shift Report, alongside supporting datasets, will form a key evidence base to guide the transport appraisal approach and ensure alignment with national policy and Transport Scotland's Development Planning and Management Transport Appraisal Guidance.*

### **Travel to work, study and/or school data – Datashine Scotland Commute**

Travel to work data has been collected from DataShine Scotland Commute. The most popular mode of transport for commuter journeys for both journeys in to and out of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park was driving a car. Over 50% of journeys were made by car drivers with the second most popular mode of transport being on foot.

### **Online Sustainable Travel: Community and Business Survey (November 2022 – December 2022)**

When asked about the challenges that need to be addressed to achieve a ten-year vision for transport within the park, residents highlighted the need to extend bus routes to provide more comprehensive coverage, including the expansion of active travel paths. Specifically, they mentioned the development of the Kings Highway path, which runs from Stirling Castle to Dumbarton Castle and serves as a key corridor to the park. Additionally, residents suggested better promotion of public transport options for accessing the park, along with the introduction of multi-day passes for integrated transport options.

When residents were asked to rate various aspects of travel in their local area, the highest dissatisfaction was with park-and-ride facilities, indicating that these services are underprovided. Low satisfaction was also expressed regarding the integration of public transport and the availability of routes.

### **Visitor Profile Survey 2019-2020**

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park carried out a survey between May 2019 and March 2020. Information was collected through face-to-face interviews with visitors to Loch Lomond in 23 different locations. A total of 2,265 interviews were achieved, 3% of those interviewed were residents.

When asked what form of transport they used to travel to the park, the most common mode of transport to Loch Lomond and the Trossachs identified in the visitor survey was by car (79%). Four percent of visitors travelled to Loch Lomond using active travel, with 3% of those walking and 1% cycling. Seven percent of visitors surveyed travelled to Loch Lomond and The Trossachs using public transport, with a further 7% using a motorhome.

When asked if they had travelled to the area using their preferred mode of transport, 95% (2,152) respondents said that they had. Of those who would have preferred to travel by a different mode of travel, 40% (21 respondents) would have travelled by train and 36% (19 respondents) by car, while 32% (17 respondents) would have preferred to walk.

### **Traffic Flow Data**

*The following Traffic Flow data is based on Transport Scotland's Land Use and Transport Integration in Scotland (LATIS) data from 2022.*

Throughout the park, the busiest traffic routes are primarily to the south and west. The A82 is the most heavily used road, with over 7,000 vehicles travelling north to Luss and more than 5,900 heading south from Luss each day. Between Luss and Tarbet, the A82 sees over 4,300 vehicles daily, with traffic decreasing north of Tarbet to around 1,500 vehicles between Tarbet and Ardlui and over 2,000 between Ardlui and Crianlarich. Northbound traffic on these sections is slightly



higher than southbound. Beyond the traffic volumes, the A82 is recognised as a key pinch point in the wider transport network, with regular obstruction and slow-moving conditions, particularly during peak visitor periods, causing delays for both through traffic and local journeys.

The A83 between Arrochar and Tarbet has over 2,100 vehicles daily, with slightly more traffic heading east to Tarbet. The A811 between Balloch and Drymen averages over 2,800 vehicles daily in each direction. Other busy routes include the A85, which sees over 1,000 vehicles eastbound and 1,500 westbound between Crianlarich and the A827 junction, increasing to over 1,800 between the A827 junction and Lochearnhead. The A81 to Aberfoyle and the A809 to Drymen both average over 1,700 vehicles daily in both directions.

Overall, the data points to growing pressure on key trunk roads, particularly the A82, underscoring the need for coordinated planning to manage congestion and ensure long-term connectivity.

### Commuter Journey Flows Data

An analysis of commuter destinations for residents in the park was conducted, dividing the origins into four geographic areas: Callander and Trossachs, Cowal North, Highland and Balloch. In the Callander and Trossachs area, 50% of commuters work locally with most others travelling to Stirling and its surroundings. In Cowal North, 42% of commuters stay within the area, while those who leave primarily head to locations on the Cowal Peninsula, such as Hunter's Quay, Dunoon and Garelochhead. Most commuters from the Highland area also work locally, but those who travel farther often go to Callander and Trossachs or Stirling. In contrast, commuters from Balloch have more varied destinations compared to those from other areas.

Cars are the main form of transport for commuting journeys from the areas mentioned, making up 70% to 80% of the journeys. Walking is the next most common method, particularly in the Callander and Trossachs and Highland areas, where it accounts for about a quarter of the commutes. Walking is less popular among Balloch commuters, likely due to their more diverse travel patterns. Public transport usage varies, but it is lowest in the Callander and Trossachs, Cowal North and Highland areas.

An analysis of commutes to destinations within the four areas showed that 64% of commutes to Callander and Trossachs started within that area. Those coming from outside mostly originated in the Stirling area, the southeast, or the Highland area. In Cowal North, only 43% of commutes originated locally, with significant numbers coming from other parts of the Cowal Peninsula – 19% from Hunter's Quay, 17% from Dunoon and 6% from Cowal South. The Highland area had the highest local commuting rate, with 75% commutes starting and ending there. Most of the remaining commutes came from the south and southeast. For Balloch, many commutes started nearby, but only 23% originated within Balloch itself.

Cars were the primary mode of transport for 60% to 80% of commutes, with the highest car usage in Cowal North and Balloch, and the lowest in the highland area, where walking made up the rest of the commutes. Walking was also the most popular alternative in Callander and Trossachs, far surpassing public transport use. Public transport usage for commutes to destinations within the park was generally low, making up only 7% in Cowal North, and there were no recorded public transport commutes to the Highland area.

These commuting patterns suggest a strong reliance on local employment and car travel across most areas, highlighting the need for improved active travel and public transport options, especially in more remote and car-dependent regions.

### Trip Generators in the National Park

Like other rural areas, the National Park itself is a trip generator for leisure journeys. People come to the National Park for sightseeing, to access holiday accommodation, to take part in organised tourism offers and for active recreation in the hills and forests and in the water. Whilst there are many promoted walking routes in the National Park, these are predominantly used for recreational rather than functional purposes and therefore act more as a 'destination' than as a part of the transport infrastructure. Similarly, many of the promoted cycling routes in, to and through the National Park are used predominantly by leisure cyclists, however, they are also used for functional journeys and are therefore described below.

Ultimately, travel demand in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park varies significantly by location and season. Some areas, like those along the A82 corridor, consistently generate high volumes of traffic, particularly due to commuting and tourism, while others, especially more remote communities, generate fewer trips and have limited transport options. Seasonal peaks are common in visitor hotspots, placing pressure on infrastructure. Throughout the development of the Proposed Plan these patterns should be taken into consideration, focusing on how new development aligns with existing demand or can be supported through improved transport connections.

### Road Safety

Based on road accident data published on Stirling Council's OpenData platform, the following summary outlines recorded incidents within the Stirling Council area of the National Park between **2020 and 2025**.

The data reveals a varied pattern of road safety across the main trunk routes:

- **A811:** Seven casualties have been recorded, six of which occurred at the two entry and exit junctions to Drymen.
- **A84:** Fifteen casualties have been reported in the vicinity of Callander, Kilmahog, and Loch Venachar.
- **A821:** Four casualties have been recorded along this route.
- **A82:** Twenty-one casualties and two fatalities have been recorded, making this one of the most affected roads in the area.
- **A85:** Eleven casualties and one fatality have been noted, particularly around Lochearnhead, St Fillans, and the road towards Killin.
- **A81:** Ten casualties have been recorded around Gartmore, Braeval, and at the junction between the A81 and B822.

This data helps to identify key areas of concern, particularly along the A82, A84, and A85, and will inform future considerations around road safety improvements within the National Park.

Although this topic paper highlights key verge parking hotspots and identifies areas where road safety is a concern due to these trends, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority acknowledges a gap in the availability of road safety data at the National Park Authority level for Perth and Kinross, Argyll and Bute, and West Dunbartonshire Councils. To address this, we will continue to actively engage with the relevant Local Authorities within the National Park boundary to obtain data. This information will be used to inform the Proposed Plan stage and support the development of future planning and road safety measures.

### **Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation – Geographic Access Domain**

An analysis of the SIMD geographic access domain highlights the scale of transport accessibility challenges across the National Park's 21 settlements. Notably, 16 of the 21 settlements fall within the most deprived category (rank 1) for geographic access, underlining the structural difficulties residents and visitors face in reaching key services and destinations without reliance on private cars. Among the remaining five settlements, Balloch ranks 4, St Fillans 2, Drymen 6, Callander 10, and Aberfoyle 9. These relatively higher scores reflect their stronger public transport connections and proximity to regional service centres, though they still experience varying levels of seasonal demand and connectivity gaps.

This pattern of accessibility aligns with observed travel demand across the National Park:

- High-volume, year-round generators include Callander, Balloch, and Aberfoyle, where good connectivity and their roles as gateways to the National Park make them focal points for both visitors and residents.
- Seasonal hotspots such as St Fillan's and Drymen experience significant peaks during the summer months, reflecting tourism-driven travel that places pressure on limited transport options.
- Remote settlements (the 16 ranked 1) generate fewer trips overall but are disproportionately affected by poor accessibility and transport poverty. These areas highlight the need for targeted solutions that improve equity of access, not just capacity in high-demand locations.

Taken together, this evidence suggests that sustainable transport planning in the National Park must address both the consistently high travel demand of gateway settlements and the acute accessibility challenges in more remote communities. Any future development should therefore consider not only where volumes of trips are generated, but also how the distinct travel demands of different settlement types can be met in an equitable and sustainable manner.

### **Scotland's Census Data 2022 – Distance Travelled to Work**

Census 2022 (and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal and Modal Shift Report 2023) contains data on commuting patterns, provides insight into travel demands and the extent to which existing infrastructure may be under pressure. Of the 6,873 residents of the National Park aged 16 and over who were in employment the week before the census, 2,571 (37%) mainly work from home. A further 1,019 (15%) reported having no fixed place of work or being employed outside the UK, reflecting the area's reliance on flexible or mobile work patterns.

Among those with a regular commute, 679 individuals (10%) travel less than 2 km, while 335 (5%) and 365 (5%) travel 2 - 5 km and 5 - 10 km respectively, suggesting a notable proportion of short, localised trips likely made within or between nearby settlements. In contrast, 631 (9%)

travel 10 - 20 km and 577 (8%) travel 20 - 30 km, indicating significant demand for mid-distance regional connectivity, often toward larger service centres. Longer-distance commuting is also notable, with 264 people (4%) travelling 30 - 40 km, 220 (3%) travelling 40 - 60 km, and 212 (3%) travelling 60 km or more.

Taken together, these figures show that while remote and flexible working now accounts for over half of employment patterns, there remains a substantial cohort reliant on daily commuting. Travel demand is split between short local trips within the National Park and longer regional journeys to urban centres such as Stirling and Glasgow. This dual pattern places different pressures on infrastructure: local road networks and limited public transport options must accommodate short trips, while major transport corridors into and out of the National Park bear the weight of longer-distance commuting. Identifying and strengthening connections to major destinations, as well as supporting sustainable options for both local and regional travel, will therefore be central to meeting current and future infrastructure needs.

### **Community Active Travel Action Plans – Aberfoyle (2020), Callander (2020) and Drymen (2021)**

In their active travel plans, the communities of Aberfoyle (2020), Callander (2020) and Drymen (2021) raised several key concerns and issues related to active travel, particularly regarding road safety and the need to encourage more cycling and walking. One major concern is the lack of promotion and awareness of the existing infrastructure which means that residents and visitors may not be fully aware of the available routes and facilities for walking and cycling.

Another significant issue is the limited network of segregated active travel paths, which restricts safe and accessible options for cyclists and pedestrians. This lack of dedicated routes also means that there are insufficient connections between key destinations within and between these communities, making active travel less convenient and less appealing.

Additionally, the communities identified several barriers to active travel, including the challenging topography of the area, which can make cycling and walking difficult, especially for those who are less physically fit or have mobility issues. Accessibility is another concern, as existing routes may not be easily navigable for everyone. Finally, the weather was highlighted as a deterrent to active travel.

These concerns underscore the need for a more comprehensive approach to improving active travel in these communities, with a focus on enhancing safety, expanding and promoting the active travel network and addressing the physical and environmental barriers that currently limit the appeal and feasibility of walking and cycling.

*Although these Community Active Travel Action Plans remain an important part of the evidence base, it is important to note that since their development, a number of actions have already been completed by local communities. For the most up-to-date and detailed actions now being taken forward, please refer to the associated place-based topic papers and Local Place Plan content, which reflect current community priorities around travel and transport.*

### **Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Carbon Footprint Assessment and Proposed Pathway to Net Zero**

To support evidence-based climate action, a carbon footprint assessment was commissioned for the National Park. This assessment has been referenced in other topic papers where relevant,

particularly in relation to climate adaptation, land use, and transport. The findings are cross-cutting and support a range of planning considerations, but this section focuses specifically on the energy-related aspects of the assessment and their implications for reducing emissions and achieving net zero within the National Park.

This greenhouse gas emissions assessment provides important evidence for shaping transport priorities in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. It analyses emissions generated by both residents and visitors, with a particular emphasis on the significant impact of travel to, from, and within the National Park. The findings directly inform efforts to develop a low-carbon transport system aligned with national net-zero targets and the Paris Agreement.

The report reveals that resident emissions are 17.6% higher than the UK average, primarily due to higher reliance on car travel, which alone produces 36% more emissions than the average UK resident. However, the impact of visitor travel is even more substantial, with journeys to and from the National Park accounting for 81% of all visitor-related emissions, three times higher than emissions generated within the National Park. For residents, travel still makes up a significant 30% of their total emissions. In addition, through-traffic on strategic road corridors such as the A82, A83, A84, A85, and A811 contributes 90% of emissions from these routes within the Park's boundary.

The assessment also identifies international visitor travel as a key challenge. Although beneficial to the local economy, the short average stay of just over three days results in high per-trip emissions from flying. The report recommends encouraging longer visits and promoting alternative low-carbon travel options, such as rail or coach travel for shorter-haul trips.

To support the National Park's net-zero pathway, the report calls for a 13% reduction in visitor travel emissions (excluding flights) by 2050. These findings reinforce the need for targeted interventions such as sustainable transport infrastructure, behavioural change campaigns, and better integration of travel options to reduce transport emissions and support climate goals.

### **Living Well Locally – Drymen and the Villages of East Loch Lomond**

The National Park Authority commissioned Forth Environment Link to work with organisations and individuals across Drymen and the Villages of East Loch Lomond communities to pilot a rural framework for a 20-minute neighbourhood or 'living well locally'.

The communities of Drymen and the villages on the east of Loch Lomond identified a range of opportunities and challenges related to living well locally:

- Walking and cycling routes: footpaths are unusable in some parts for people wheeling, pushing buggies or with mobility issues. Non-car access to facilities in Drymen from the surrounding villages is particularly challenging. Shared use paths through and between villages would allow people to make more short journeys actively and they would welcome the opportunity to use their cars less. There is a demand to prioritise pedestrians over cars in all villages. Speeding cars are seen as a risk to safety.
- Public transport: Bus service improvement is a priority for most people involved in the project, who highlighted the need for more frequent services, new fit-for-purpose routes and more public transport options to meet different needs and travel distances. Better synchronised bus and train services at Balloch and shuttle buses or a boat bus to Balloch were also suggested as means of making public transport a more appealing option and reducing traffic moving between villages. A

park-and-ride scheme to reduce congestion and an electric vehicle share scheme to reduce the parking burden on Drymen were also put forward.

- **Traffic and parking:** Concerns were raised about the quality and quantity of off-road dedicated parking, and the lack of electric vehicle charging points and pedestrian crossings. Related to the previously mentioned demand to prioritise pedestrians over cars, were suggestions for shared-use paths through and between villages, and part pedestrianisation of Drymen to reduce traffic and increase safe movement along with improved traffic calming measures to replace the existing ones. In Drymen, there were also calls for the enforcement of parking rules, particularly around SPAR and the Primary school, or the banning on-road parking altogether in the village centre.

### **Lochearnhead Active Travel and Placemaking Project 2020**

The Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority, working with Sustrans, engaged consultants to engage with residents of Lochearnhead about their future needs and aspirations particularly around walking, cycling and increasing opportunities to improve the infrastructure to enhance, improve or provide more facilities for the village. Following a programme of community and stakeholder consultation, several key themes and initiatives were identified. These included steps towards safer roads and paths - namely new pedestrian crossings and traffic calming on the A84 and A85, improved street lighting and an extended and improved pavement on the A85 – and improved connectivity and access, specifically improved path connectivity to link village with NCN7, community and visitor loch-side access and improved public transport links.

### **Existing Transport Infrastructure in the National Park**

#### **Active Travel**

#### **Destinations and Path Links**

Functional walking and wheeling journeys, for example between home and work, or home and public transport, are mostly confined to roadside footways (pavements) in and around the Park's small towns and villages. Whilst footway provision is relatively good in the larger centres of population, such as Balloch and Callander, it becomes increasingly poor to non-existent in and between villages and hamlets. Additionally, the footways that do exist are often below current acceptable standards, being overly narrow and poorly maintained. Some off-road paths between centres of population will also support functional journeys on foot, but their use will predominantly be recreational. In this respect, existing off-road, local path networks between villages offer a significant opportunity for future active travel, where they need to be upgraded to facilitate wheeling and cycling. Such routes could thereby offer a sustainable mode of transport to facilities in neighbouring settlements (e.g. GP, school, shop) thus supporting the 'living well locally' agenda.

The National Park's existing [Core Paths Plan 2023](#) provides an essential foundation for this. The current network includes approximately 732km of designated paths made up of cycle tracks, hill paths, historic routes, pavements, forest tracks, short sections of quiet minor roads and off-road paths within towns, villages and the wider countryside. Many of the key walking and cycling routes references in this section are part of the Core Paths network, highlighting the significant overlap between recreational and functional travel opportunities. With appropriate upgrades, maintenance and wayfinding improvements, this existing infrastructure could play a vital role in enabling active travel across the National Park.

As noted above, the National Park hosts a number of longer-distance promoted cycling routes, including National Cycle Route 7. These routes are both a recreational and functional resource, and certain sections are used by small numbers of commuter cyclists.

Commuter cyclists, and others making functional journeys by bike, predominantly use the roads network, particularly in and around centres of population. However, during the tourist season and in periods of good weather, the roads in the National Park can be extremely busy and congested with both fast and slow-moving traffic, making cycling unpleasant and in some cases unsafe. A project to introduce an on-road cycle route between Drymen and Balmaha was welcomed by local cyclists but remains unfinished due to lack of funds, and now no longer meets Transport Scotland's Cycling by Design Standards.

The West Loch Lomond Cycle Route, running from Balloch to Tarbet along the A82 corridor, is popular with both pedestrians and cyclists, and could provide greater active travel opportunities, but is not built to current standards and is in very poor condition due to lack of maintenance by responsible parties. A significant amount of upgrading along the whole route is required.

An ongoing project to provide a high-standard off-road cycle link between Lochearnhead and St. Fillans also promises to be well used for functional walking, wheeling and cycle journeys, taking vulnerable users off the busy A85. The route is currently half-complete, but the completed sections are already being used by all non-motorised modes.

### *e-bike Charging Facilities*

Bosch E-Bike Charging Points are available at the following sites in the Trossachs, around the National Cycle Network Route 7 in the National Park (funded by Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER):

- Drymen (Village Square)
- Balmaha (St Mocha Coffee Shop)
- Croftamie (The But and Ben)
- Callander (Deli Ecosse)
- Gartmore (Black Bull Inn)
- Aberfoyle (Bike Hire)
- Stronachlachar (Pier Café)
- Loch Katrine (Pier Kiosk)
- Loch Ard (Forest Hills Hotel)
- Brig o'Turk (Tearoom)
- Brig o'Turk (Achray Farm)
- Strathyre (Broch Café)
- Kinghouse (Roll Outdoors Bike Hire)
- Balquhidder Glen (Monachyle Mhor Hotel)
- Invertrossachs (Wheels Cycling Centre)

### **Public Transport**

#### Waterbus Service

There are several waterbus services that depart from Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine, offering transportation options across Lochs. These services are provided by Cruise Loch Lomond,



Sweeney's Cruise Co. Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine Cruises. Cruise Loch Lomond provide the following services across Loch Lomond:

- Tarbet to Rowardennan (Weekends Only/May – September)
- Rowardennan to Tarbet (Friday, Saturday and Sunday/May – September)
- Tarbet to Inversnaid (Daily/March – October)
- Inversnaid to Tarbet (Daily/March – October)
- Luss to Rowardennan (Friday, Saturday and Sunday/May – September)
- Rowardennan to Luss (Saturday, Sunday and Monday/May – September)
- Luss to Inchcailloch (Daily/March – November)
- Inchcailloch to Luss (Daily/March – November)
- Tarbet to Luss (Saturday, Sunday and Monday/May – September)
- Luss to Tarbet (Friday, Saturday and Sunday/May – September)
- Balmaha to Luss (Daily/March – October)
- Luss to Balmaha (Daily/March – October)

Sweeney's Cruise Co. provide the following services across Loch Lomond:

- Balloch to Luss
- Luss to Balmaha

Steamship Sir Walter Scott – operated by Loch Katrine Cruises carries passengers with daily scheduled services (March to October) on Loch Katrine, departing from Stronachlachar Pier to Trossachs Pier. On all of the waterbus services, bikes can be transported for a small surcharge.

### **Bus and Coach Services**

A variety of operators provide both subsidised and commercial bus and coach services throughout the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, connecting communities within the park as well as linking them to major cities and transport hubs. *Further data on bus stops within settlements across the National Park can be viewed on the 'A Thriving Place' layer under the Local Living data on the interactive map.*

#### **Local Bus Services:**

- McColl's Buses
  - Route 305: *Alexandria – Luss*
  - Route 306: *Alexandria – Helensburgh*
  - Route 309: *Alexandria – Balmaha*
  - Route 340: *Helensburgh – Vale of Leven – Paisley Royal Alexandra Hospital*
- Garelochhead Coaches
  - Route 302: *Helensburgh – Luss – Inverbeg – Tarbet – Arrochar – Rest and Be Thankful – Lochgoilhead – Carrick Castle*
- Stirling Council
  - Route C60: *Killin – Callander*
- Sweeney's Buses (*Perth and Kinross area*)
  - Route 115: *Comrie – St Fillans*

- Docherty's Midland Coaches (*Perth and Kinross area*)
  - Route 890: *Crieff – Killin*
- Stagecoach
  - Route 15: *Perth – Crieff*

#### Regional Bus Services:

- First Group
  - Route 1E: *Balloch – Glasgow*
- Midland Bluebird
  - Route X10A: *Stirling – Glasgow*
  - Route 59: *Stirling – Doune – Callander*
- Scottish Citylink
  - Route 912: *Edinburgh – Oban (via the National Park)*
  - Route 978: *Edinburgh – Fort William (via the National Park)*
  - Routes 975, 976, 977: *Glasgow – Oban / Western Isles*
  - Routes 914, 915: *Glasgow – Fort William – Uig Pier (via the National Park)*
- West Coast Motors
  - Routes 484, 486, 489: *Dunoon and Cowal Peninsula services*
  - Joint operator with Citylink on routes 975, 976, and 977

Within the Stirling Council boundary of the National Park, available data relates only to contracted bus services (C60, S60, X10 and X10A). None of these services currently experience capacity issues. The only exception noted was the C60, which has reached full capacity (16 seats) on a small number of occasions.

In the West Dunbartonshire section of the National Park, reporting systems have recently changed to PowerBI, so data is only available from July onwards. Despite this, contracted services 302, 305, and 306 are operating with no capacity issues. Service 309 is busier than the others but is still rarely at full capacity, indicating that demand remains manageable across the network.

As part of the modal shift report commissioned by the National Park Authority, an evaluation of bus and rail services identified several key opportunities for improvement. Extending routes to Balloch Pier is necessary, with the route 1 service potentially expanding to include this destination at weekends and on bank holidays. Coordinating routes 305 and 309 at Balloch could establish comprehensive 'round the loch' services. Additionally, promoting local Citylink journeys more effectively would enhance connectivity. Lastly, conducting a review of park and ride facilities based on parking studies should be considered for areas such as Aberfoyle, Arrochar, Balloch, and Luss to better accommodate visitors.

#### Bus Catchment Areas

Catchment maps were developed as part of the Modal Shift report to illustrate bus and coach accessibility around Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park on a Saturday morning between 9:00 and 12:00. These maps revealed that coach travel within the park is quite limited. From Drymen, Balloch and Tarbet, travel is restricted mostly to areas in the western part of the

park. Bus and coach travel from Dunoon does not provide access to locations within the park within 180 minutes. From Callander, bus and coach services can reach Aberfoyle but no other areas within the park. However, from Aberfoyle, areas east of Loch Lomond are accessible, with travel to Callander taking 60 – 120 minutes and locations like Lochearnhead, Killin, Crianlarich and Tyndrum reachable within 180 minutes. From Crianlarich, both eastern and western parts of the park are accessible, with Tyndrum, Tarbet and Strathyre reachable within 60 minutes by bus and Callander and Balloch accessible within 120 minutes.

### **Rail Services**

Two main train lines offer access to the National Park, with a total of six stations located within the park's boundaries. ScotRail runs a direct service from Glasgow Queen Street to Balloch. Additionally, the West Highland Line, which connects Glasgow with Oban and Fort William, has five stations within the park: Arrochar and Tarbet, Ardlui, Crianlarich, and both Tyndrum Lower and Upper.

#### **Glasgow Queen Street to Balloch:-**

This service operates around twice an hour and takes approximately 50 minutes when making all stops. However, its frequency is limited by infrastructure constraints, particularly the single track from Dalreoch Junction. Balloch serves primarily as a commuter station, with 72.9% of its traffic heading to stations in and around Glasgow. In the opposite direction, 78.6% of journeys begin from stations beyond Glasgow.

The current trains on the line are not ideal for tourism, and with peak hour demand still not fully recovering after the pandemic, there is an opportunity to replace them. Passenger numbers at Balloch Station were relatively stable from 2005 to 2019 but dropped sharply in 2020 due to lockdown measures and increased telecommuting. In the year 2021- 22 the total number of passengers per year remained at half the peak level of passengers in 2008 - 09.

#### **West Highland Line: -**

The West Highland Line is known as one of the most scenic train routes in the country, with stops both within and near the National Park. This includes Tarbet and Ardlui, where passengers can connect to a waterbus service that crosses to the eastern shores of Loch Lomond, offering access to the West Highland Way, Ben Lomond and Balmaha.

Most trips on the West Highland Line involve travel between stations within the park and Glasgow, with only about 20% of journeys originating from beyond Glasgow. Crianlarich station stands out as a key destination because it serves both branches of the line, making it more appealing than other stations within the National Park.

The five stations, like others on the line, are unstaffed and lack step-free access, which poses challenges for travelers. Additionally, the absence of nearby cycle hire options makes it harder for visitors to explore the National Park. Another limitation is that the stations are generally located far from key tourist villages, making access to popular sites more difficult.

The West Highland Line's rolling stock features Highland Explorer cycle carriages, which were utilised by 2,000 cyclists in 2021. A review of the service, focusing on access for cyclists, showed that the time allocated at stations within the National Park wasn't fully optimised to enhance rail-cycle connectivity. For example, at Crianlarich Station access for cyclists was provided for 3 hours 24 minutes on Mondays to Fridays, and 5 hours 41 minutes on Sundays.

### Rail Catchment Areas

The Modal Shift report also included catchment maps to show train travel times to Balloch, Tarbet and Crianlarich – key hub stations within Loch Lomond National Park. These maps illustrate the areas accessible by train within 180 minutes on a Saturday between 9:00am and 12pm. For example, Glasgow to Balloch can be reached in under 60 minutes, while travel from Tarbet and Ardlui takes 60 -120 minutes. Locations east of Loch Lomond, such as Dunblane, Stirling and Alloa takes 61 – 180 minutes and Balloch is accessible from Crianlarich, Tyndrum, Edinburgh and Perth within 180 minutes.

Traveling from Helensburgh to Tabet takes under 60 minutes, while trips from Glasgow and Balloch range between 61 and 120 minutes. Areas like Edinburgh, Stirling, Alloa, Dunblane and southern locations such as Prestwick can reach Tarbet within 180 minutes.

Train access to Crianlarich is more restricted than to Balloch and Tarbet. Journeys from Tyndrum and Tarbet take under 60 minutes, while travel from Dumbarton and Clydebank takes 61 – 120 minutes. From Glasgow to Balloch, it takes 121 – 180 minutes to reach Crianlarich. The catchment maps also indicate that areas east of Loch Lomond, like Stirling, Edinburgh, Perth cannot access Crianlarich by train within 180 minutes.

### Office of Rail and Road – Estimates of Station Usage

Between April 2023 and March 2024, Balloch station saw the highest number of journeys, with 125,272 trips, primarily originating from Glasgow Queen Street. As a major gateway to the National Park, Balloch experiences significant demand and pressure, particularly during peak periods like the tourist season and commuter hours, leading to potential crowding on platforms and trains.

Crianlarich station, with 2,948 journeys, and Tyndrum (Upper and Lower), which saw 3,102 journeys combined, have moderate traffic, mostly from Oban. While not as busy as Balloch, these stations still play important roles in connecting passengers to and from the park. They may experience occasional congestion during busy seasons but are less pressured overall.

Arrochar and Tarbet station recorded 8,200 journeys, primarily from Glasgow, reflecting steady demand, particularly from tourists visiting Loch Lomond. Though less busy than Balloch, this station could face pressure during peak travel periods, especially in summer.

Finally, Ardlui station had the lowest usage, with only 678 journeys. Serving a small number of passengers, it faces minimal pressure, though it may still see spikes in demand during tourist peaks.

In summary, Balloch faces the greatest pressure due to its high usage, while other stations like Crianlarich, Tyndrum, and Arrochar and Tarbet experience moderate demand, requiring potential adjustments during peak periods. Ardlui sees low traffic and minimal pressure but should be monitored for future growth.

### Community Owned Transport Schemes

Several communities within the park operate their own transport services. In Killin, a community bus run by local volunteers serves residents and is the only village bus within a 4-mile radius. Killin also has a volunteer car scheme, where drivers use their own vehicles to help people

reach appointments, day centres and clubs, offering a door-to-door service for those who struggle with public transport. Passengers pay 20p per mile, with the cost subsidised to keep it affordable. Following the introduction of reduced operating hours at the Aberfoyle GP surgery, the Strathard local development action group received approval to launch a similar community transport service, connecting patients with volunteer drivers at a cost of 25p per mile.

## **Private Transport**

### **Parking**

Tourism plays a vital role in the economy of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, but it also puts pressure on the landscape and infrastructure, particularly parking facilities. According to the STEAM 2019 report, 79% of the 2.7 million visitors traveled by private vehicle in 2019. The shuttle bus pilot report from 2022 highlights that car parks in the East and West Loch Lomond and Trossachs areas reach over 70% capacity during peak times, a situation worsened by the rise of staycations due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Ansons' audit found 9,515 parking spaces in the park: 564 managed by the National Park Authority, 376 by Forestry and Land Scotland, 838 by Argyll and Bute Council, 1385 by Stirling Council, 253 by West Dunbartonshire and Helensburgh and 138 by Perth and Kinross Council. There are also 3,935 spaces in authorised private car parks, these figures exclude laybys and other informal parking areas. Additionally, an estimated 600 unauthorised parking spaces, especially around key visitor attractions, present a significant issue across the park.

As highlighted in the modal shift report, a list of the main areas where verge parking is a problem in the National Park is summarised below:

- Inveruglas (A82 Northbound at Sloy Hydro Electric Power Station)
- Millarochy Bay, Balmaha
- Balmaha to Rowardennan (C6 Road)
- A83 Loch Long
- Trossachs – Dukes Pass neare Ben Venue Car Park
- Callander, South of Loch Venachar
- Callander, Callander Craggs Car Park to Bracklinn Falls
- Loch Lubnaig North Car Park entrance
- Inverlochlarig, North of Loch Doine
- Lochearnhead, Loch Earn
- Falls of Falloch

*For further information on car parks that experience high demand during the summer season and are consistently full, refer to Figure 52 of the Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal and Modal Shift Report background research report. Additional details on the capacity of off-street parking across the four Local Authority areas can be found in Tables 32-37 of the same report.*

### **EV Charging Facilities**

The automotive industry has been rapidly responding to climate targets and emerging technologies, with significant growth expected to continue in zero-emission vehicles and electric vehicle purchases by households and businesses in the coming years. In response, there has been a corresponding rise in investment in electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure.

Currently, from the data that the National Park holds, there are 17 EV charging points distributed across the National Park. Most of these are strategically located in the larger towns of Balloch,

Aberfoyle, Callander and Killin, which serve as key entry points to the park. Additionally, the national park is served by several charging facilities located on its outskirts. However, given the park's rural nature, it is crucial to expand this infrastructure further, particularly in the wider Trossachs area, to better accommodate the growing number of electric vehicles.

Similarly, the Cowal Peninsula within the park faces limited access to charging facilities, highlighting the need for additional investment in these areas. Ensuring that residents and visitors to these more remote regions have adequate charging options is essential for supporting the ongoing shift towards electric and hybrid vehicles. Recent infrastructure improvements, such as the transformation of Tarbet Pier picnic site to include charging points for both electric vehicles and e-bikes, demonstrate a positive step in this direction. However, continued investment is necessary to meet the future demands of a more electrified transportation system throughout the park.

Currently, the National Park does not have specific policy on EV charging infrastructure. However, consultations with the Roads Authority on planning applications help determine the EV charging requirements for new development proposals.

## Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

As part of the Evidence Gathering process for the new Local Development Plan (LDP), the National Park Authority developed a suite of Topic Papers and Area Summaries to explore key planning themes and local issues across the National Park. These documents form the technical and spatial foundation for the new LDP and were central to the targeted community engagement process between May and July.

Ten Topic Papers were drafted, aligning with the relevant policies in NPF4. These papers summarise national, regional, and local data, providing a detailed evidence base on subjects such as climate change, biodiversity, housing, infrastructure, and the rural economy. They were developed by National Park officers, incorporating input from key public bodies including SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot, Transport Scotland, and local authorities.

A draft of this topic paper and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment were sent to:

- Transport Scotland
- Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership (TACTRAN)
- Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HiTrans)
- NatureScot
- Scottish Water
- West Dunbartonshire Council
- Argyll and Bute Council
- Stirling Council
- Perth and Kinross Council

Six Area Summaries were also produced to provide a more accessible, place-based and spatial view of the evidence. These summaries incorporate mapped information alongside key content from registered Local Place Plans, highlighting key opportunities, challenges, and priorities for specific areas within the National Park. The spatial presentation was intended to support more informed and locally relevant discussion during in-person workshops.

As part of the engagement activities, a series of in-person workshops were held in May and June 2025 across the National Park to present the Area Summaries and gather feedback directly from local community groups and stakeholders. To ensure wider participation, complementary online surveys were also made available, allowing people to review and comment on both the Topic Papers and Area Summaries over a six-week period (May – July 2025). In addition to public engagement, input was actively sought from key statutory agencies and partner organisations throughout the preparation process to help shape and strengthen the evidence base.

Summary of Responses	
Respondent	Summary of Comments and Response
Transport Scotland	<p>Feedback called for clearer structure, full referencing, and better context on the Park Authority's transport role. The paper should clarify responsibilities for LDP2 transport appraisal and cross-boundary issues and include maps showing LDP2's scope. Stronger links to strategies (e.g. STPR2, CoMoUK, WDC Active Travel, Mobility Route Map) are needed, along with lessons from the previous LDP. More evidence is required on journey types, traffic flows, accident data, rail patronage, infrastructure, public transport, parking, and EV/e-bike charging. Case studies should clarify if findings are local or Park-wide.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> The Transport Topic Paper has been updated with page numbers and clear statutory roles of the Park Authority and local councils. Local authority boundaries are now on the interactive map, and Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plans are covered in Topic Paper 3. A transport appraisal commitment and Transport Scotland engagement are included. Most data sources are linked, with dates and added recommendations from STPR2 and the WDC Active Travel Strategy. The Mobility Route Map's development is noted. New evidence covers transport beyond East Loch Lomond, 2022 Census data, rail patronage, road safety, and parking analysis. Bus capacity data from SPT and Stirling Council is included. Gaps remain for e-bike charging and EV demand, though relevant Local Place Plan data is noted.</p>
TACTRAN	<p>The response notes Stirling's Sustainable Mobility Strategy (Draft) isn't public and questions if the 2017–2027 Local Transport Strategy remains current. It suggests adding Scottish Government EV charging guidance and referencing Policies 15, 18, and Transport Scotland's 2022 Route Map to cut car travel. The paper should explain how key strategies affect the LDP, including development, travel demand, and network capacity. Regional and Local Transport Strategies must be included, per legal requirements. Projects like the Trossachs Explorer should clarify their planning impacts. Evidence should show travel demand by area, where infrastructure supports development, where new provision is needed, and where constraints exist. More detail on infrastructure pressures, pinch points, and public transport access is advised.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> In response to feedback, the topic paper was updated to reflect the current status of Stirling's Local Transport Strategy (2017–</p>

	<p>2027) and added Scotland's 2023 EV charging vision under National Policies. References to Policies 15 and 18 were included. Although no update was received on the 20% car reduction route map, Transport Scotland reviewed and engaged with the paper. The Summary of Implications covers overall impacts rather than detailing each strategy. Relevant policies from Regional and Local Transport Strategies were added. Updates on the Trossachs Explorer include pilot evaluations and route extensions. SIMD Geographic Access data and 2022 Census travel-to-work info were added to strengthen evidence on travel demand, destinations, and network pinch points. Bus catchment analysis was expanded with locality-specific details in Area Based Summaries.</p>
NatureScot	<p>NatureScot recommends the paper address greening and maintenance of active travel routes. More walking and cycling data from counters, surveys, and Cycling Scotland would strengthen evidence. The potential expansion of the Trossachs Explorer to more drop-off points should be explored. Community travel plans and studies (e.g., Living Well Locally, Active Travel Action Plans) should be referenced, noting gaps where absent. The paper should assess environmental impacts of improved travel facilities, balancing biodiversity benefits with habitat disturbance. Including maps of EV charging points and popular walking/cycling routes is also suggested.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Biodiversity is mainly covered in Topic Paper 2, aligned with NPF4 and key strategies. Additional cycling data comes from the Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal and the Trossachs Explorer pilot. Gaps in community data are addressed via Area Based Summaries and Local Place Plans. Detailed evidence is in the Modal Shift report and Area Summaries. Map 4 of the National Park Partnership Plan sets the strategic context for long-distance routes, with more detail and EV charging points to be shown in Area Summaries and the upcoming interactive map.</p>
Network Rail	<p>Network Rail would like to see some mention of rail freight opportunities within the National Park. Whilst these are likely to be limited due to constraints on the West Highland line – there may be future rail freight opportunities at Crianlarich Station.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Due to the lack of any current rail freight opportunities, and also the stated limitations, it is considered that this is not key evidence for this Topic Paper but could be considered further at the Proposed Plan stage, where specific opportunities are identified by Network Rail.</p>
Persimmon Homes	<p>Persimmon Homes feedback suggests the paper should more clearly address the role of new development in enabling transport improvements. It highlights limited discussion on how housing developments can be designed to support walking and cycling and recommends including design principles or best practice examples to show how developments can be better integrated with local path networks, cycle routes, and public transport nodes.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> The comments are largely outwith the scope of the Evidence Report stage and will be considered at the Proposed Plan stage. However, the implications section does support facilitating transport improvements through new development.</p>



West Dunbartonshire Council	West Dunbartonshire are supportive of the proposed document. <b>Response:</b> Noted.
Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll and Bute council notes that the information about First Group Bus 59 is incorrect, as the bus travels through Doune rather than Dunoon. They also highlight that the suggestion to create a link to the Dunoon ferry via routes 484 and 486 is unnecessary, since the Gourrock foot passenger ferry already connects with these bus services. <b>Response:</b> Route 59 information has been updated and sentence referring to Dunoon ferry has been removed.
Balmaha Bunkhouse	Balmaha Bunkhouse suggest that current plans for public transport to East Loch Lomond overlook the potential for a new water transport link from Balloch to Balmaha and Rowardennan, paired with a park-and-ride at Alexandria. It argues that existing tourist services are inadequate for actual transport needs and recommends exploring a new vehicular water service, including the use of hovercraft. <b>Response:</b> Noted. The modal shift report referenced acknowledges the limitations of current public transport provision. However, these comments are outwith the scope of the evidence report and will be considered at the Proposed Plan stage.
Port of Menteith Community Council	Port of Menteith Community Council notes that while the paper references many policy and strategy documents, it largely overlooks the needs and aspirations of local residents and visitors, with minimal use of Local Place Plans or evidence of direct engagement. <b>Response:</b> The Area Based Summaries provide locally specific evidence, primarily drawing on key information from each of the registered Local Place Plans. The link between the summaries and the Topic Paper have been highlighted.
Kilmarnock Community Council	Kilmarnock Community Council emphasises that the plan should prioritise improving connectivity, reliability, awareness, and public transport usage, with LLTNPA monitoring usage and collecting user feedback. While national vehicle and fuel technology trends should be acknowledged, the immediate priority is managing excess traffic. Key measures to encourage public transport include reliable services with clear timetables, provision of shelters, litter bins, and toilets at key stops, and protection of parking at bus and train interchanges. <b>Response:</b> Noted. While not for this stage of the Plan Preparation, the scope of the new LDP will be on the planning role for new development.
Stirling Area Access Panel	Stirling Area Access Panel highlighted that mobility device users rarely engage in leisure activities like wheeling due to difficulty, and that cycling on footways compromises pedestrian safety, especially for disabled and neurodivergent individuals. It raises concerns that National Transport Strategy 2's (NTS2) provision for compulsory land purchase could affect wildlife and food production. Suggestions to improve the paper include adding data on accessible parking and EV charging points, noting inaccessible locations like Crianlarich Train Station, and acknowledging practical barriers to bus access. <b>Response:</b> Potential impacts from wheeling and NTS2 projects are addressed during the permission process, not in this paper. We have data on key EV charging locations (to be shown in updated maps)

	but not all small-scale chargers or accessible parking bays. This missing data is unlikely to affect the Proposed Plan, as such facilities are managed through planning permissions under policies like NPF4 Policy 13. Accessibility barriers to public transport are acknowledged and covered by relevant national transport laws and agencies.
The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (ScotWays)	ScotWays suggested additional strategies and reports which are pertinent to the Active Travel section of the topic paper. <b>Response:</b> The Scottish Government Active Travel Vision 2030 and Core Paths Plan 2023 have been summarised and incorporated in the topic paper.

## Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

The implications of the evidence for the Proposed Plan may be summarised as follows:

- **Supporting modal shift** - Due to limitations in local public transport options, private cars remain the primary mode of transport within the National Park. Consistent with national, regional and local policy, the new Local Development Plan should aim to encourage a significant shift in travel behaviour by carefully locating new development and supporting the provision of sustainable transport services and infrastructure through appropriate requirements on new development.
- **Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Carbon Footprint Assessment and Proposed Pathway to Net Zero** - reveals that resident emissions are 17.6% higher than the UK average, primarily due to higher reliance on car travel. The impact of visitor travel is even more substantial, with journeys to and from the National Park accounting for 81% of all visitor-related emissions. To support the National Park's net-zero pathway, the report calls for a 13% reduction in visitor travel emissions (excluding flights) by 2050. These findings reinforce the need for targeted interventions such as sustainable transport infrastructure, behavioural change campaigns, and better integration of travel options to reduce transport emissions and support climate goals.
- **Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal and Modal Shift Report 2022** – evaluated ways to improve sustainable transport for visitors to the National Park and an increase in active travel. A strategy recommending a 'step-change' includes developing gateways and hubs, enhancing public transport, better infrastructure for, and promoting, active travel, opportunities for water-based transport, improving parking and traffic management and strengthening visitor communications through new governance and financial arrangements. These recommendations will all inform the Proposed Plan.
- **Transport Gateways and Hubs** - Primary Gateways are identified in the Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal as Balloch, Drymen, Aberfoyle, Callander and Dunoon and are the main entry points to the National Park where there are opportunities to switch transport modalities. Secondary Gateways are located at Helensburgh, Arrochar, Tyndrum, Killin and St Fillans and provide a similar role. Primary Hubs are places where there is a good range of visitor amenities and where there could be stronger connections to the main gateways and include Balloch, Balmaha, Aberfoyle and Callander. Secondary hubs are located at Drymen, Luss, Benmore, Tarbet, Killin, Lochearnhead and St Fillans.
- **Public Transport** – The Regional Transport Strategies include implications for consideration in the Proposed Plan. Tayside and Central Scotland Regional Transport Strategy (TACTRAN) identifies actions for reducing the car dependency of new developments, improving the

accessibility and security of the street environment and to improve walking, wheeling and cycling opportunities. Strathclyde Partnership for Travel (SPT) Regional Transport Strategy provides a policy to improve connectivity between Strathclyde and the National Park through strengthening and investing in inter-regional transport corridors including with HMNB Clyde/Faslane, Helensburgh Growth Area and Helensburgh/HMNB Clyde – Balloch/Dumbarton - Clydebank – Glasgow. It also seeks to improve connectivity for rural communities to nearest town centres and key transport hubs.

- **Bus and Coach Services** – The Modal Shift report identified opportunities to extend bus service routes, enhance connectivity and provision of park and ride facilities at areas such as Aberfoyle, Arrochar, Balloch and Luss to better accommodate visitors.
- **Rail Services** - Two main train lines offer access to six stations within the National Park. A direct service operates from Glasgow to Balloch and the West Highland Line connects Glasgow with Oban and Fort William. All stations are unstaffed and lack step-free access, which poses challenges for travelers. Additionally, the absence of nearby cycle hire options makes it harder for visitors to explore the National Park.
- **Trunk Road Investment Programme** - Projects are identified for the A83 (alternative route at the Rest and Be Thankful) and the A82 upgrade between Tarbet and Inverarnan.
- **EV Charging** – Currently, there are 17 EV charging points distributed across the National Park. Tarbet, Balloch and Callander are identified in the National Park Partnership Plan as locations where connectivity between different transport modes and infrastructure can be improved to support EV and active travel options to support visitors to use alternative means of travel to the car when visiting the National Park.
- **Active Travel** – Implications for the Proposed Plan are identified in local authority Active Travel plans and strategies as well as local level action plans prepared for some National Park villages. Key themes arising include the locations of some active travel routes being close to busy Trunk and main roads (safety and health implications), the poor condition of some routes, requirements for new routes, extensions to routes and connections between villages, lack of awareness of active travel routes and the disincentives of active travel due to challenging topography and weather.

Existing off-road, local path networks between villages offer a significant opportunity for future active travel, where they need to be upgraded to facilitate wheeling and cycling to access facilities in neighbouring settlements or connect with friends and family. The current network identified in the 2023 National Park Core Paths Plan includes approximately 732km of designated paths, many are part of the Core Paths network, and there is significant overlap between recreational and functional travel opportunities. There are opportunities to use and upgrade this existing infrastructure to better enable active travel within the National Park.

- **National Park Mobility Partnership** - To complement the spatial planning approach outlined in the previous implication, the National Park Authority will, throughout the development and implementation of the new Local Development Plan informed by a Transport Appraisal, continue to collaborate with local, regional and national transport bodies to establish a Mobility Partnership. Focused on service provision, this partnership will be informed, where appropriate, by relevant transport strategies and will aim to:
  - Develop a five-year Mobility Route Map

- Deliver proof of concept pilot transport options with a view to delivering new transport services in the longer term.
- Commission transport-related studies and research
- Secure external funding resources and develop alternative funding models.

### **Statements of Agreement / Dispute**

There are no substantive areas of disagreement on the evidence in the paper. Feedback from respondents to the Topic Paper consultation have largely been addressed in the Evidence Report. Transport Scotland and Tactran have confirmed they are content with the paper.

<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>Topic Paper 7 - Housing</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p><b>Quality Homes</b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland)(Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15(5) - the housing needs of the population of the area, including in particular, the needs of persons undertaking further and higher education, older people and disabled people; and</li> <li>• Section 15(5) - the availability of land in the district for housing, including for older people and disabled people.</li> <li>• Section 16(2)(ab) - in preparing the LDP the planning authority are to have regard to the list published under section 16E of persons seeking to acquire land in the authority's area for self-build housing.</li> <li>• Section 16B(3)(b)(i)) - the Evidence Report must set out a summary of the action taken by the planning authority to support and promote the construction and adaptation of housing to meet the housing needs of older people and disabled people in the authority's area, and an analysis of the extent to which the action has helped to meet those needs.</li> <li>• Regulation 9 – have regard to any local housing strategy (LHS)</li> <li>• Regulation 24 - A Delivery Programme is to set out the following matters: the expected sequencing of, and timescales for, delivery of housing on sites allocated by the LDP</li> </ul> <p><b>Rural Homes</b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15(5)- the housing needs of the population of the area, including in particular, the needs of persons undertaking further and higher education, older people and disabled people;</li> <li>• Section 15(5) - the availability of land in the district for housing, including for older people and disabled people</li> <li>• Section 15(5) - the desirability of allocating land for the purposes of resettlement</li> <li>• Section 15(5) - the extent to which there are rural areas within the district in relation to which there has been a substantial decline in population.</li> <li>• Section 16(2) (ab) – in preparing the LDP the planning authority are to have regard to the list published under section 16E of persons seeking to acquire land in the authority's area for self build housing.</li> <li>• Regulation 9 – have regard to any LHS</li> </ul> <p><u>Other relevant legislation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Aims of National Parks in Scotland (as set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000)</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b><u>Interactive Map</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">LLT LDP Evidence base experience builder</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>National Park Partnership Plan</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan 2024 - 2029</a></li> </ul>

### National Context

- [Tackling Scotland's Housing Emergency](#)
- [Housing to 2040](#)
- [Housing Statistics for Scotland - June 2025](#)
- [Existing Housing Need in Scotland 2024](#)
- [Ending Homelessness Together: Updated action plan, October 2020](#)
- [Improving the Lives of Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers 2 - Action Plan 2024 - 2026](#)
- [Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2020](#)
- [Existing Housing Need in Scotland](#)

### Regional Context

- [Stimulating Housing Development in the Highlands and Islands](#)
- [Clackmannanshire and Stirling Integration Joint Board Strategic Commissioning Plan 2023 - 2033](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Joint Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025](#)

### Local Context

#### *Argyll and Bute Area Context*

- [Housing Emergency Summit Report](#)
- [Local Housing Strategy 2022 - 2027](#)
- [Argyll and Bute HNDA 2021](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Strategic Housing Investment Plan](#)
- [Arrochar, Tarbet and Ardlui Community Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2025](#)

#### *Stirling Council Area Context*

- [Stirling Local Housing Strategy](#)
- [Stirling HNDA](#)
- [Stirling Strategic Housing Investment Plan](#)

#### *West Dunbartonshire Area Context*

- [West Dunbartonshire Council Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027](#)
- [West Dunbartonshire HNDA 2024](#)
- [West Dunbartonshire Strategic Housing Investment Plan](#)

#### *Perth and Kinross Area Context*

- [Perth and Kinross Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027](#)
- [Perth and Kinross HNDA](#)
- [Perth and Kinross Strategic Housing Investment Plan](#)

### National Park Context

- [Population Projections NRS 2018](#)
- [Household Projections NRS 2018](#)
- [Housing Market Pressures Report 2022](#)
- [Self-build register](#)
- [LDP 2024 Monitoring report](#)
- [Local Place Plan Register](#)

## National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context

Policies 16 (Quality Homes) and 17 (Rural Homes) of NPF4 have been brought together within a single evidence paper because they are closely interrelated in the context of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. Both policies address the need to deliver new housing that is sustainable, well-designed, and responsive to local needs, while also recognising the particular challenges and opportunities presented by rural and protected landscapes. Grouping them allows the evidence to be presented in a more coherent way, avoiding duplication and ensuring that the distinct but complementary issues of quality and rural context are considered together in shaping housing delivery across the National Park.

NPF4 actively supports the delivery of good quality homes and proactively steers development to appropriate locations in line with the Local Development Plan's spatial strategy, informed by an infrastructure-first approach. It includes all tenure housing requirements for all planning authorities in Scotland. The target for Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority is a minimum of 300 homes over 10 years (Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement – MATHLR – Annex E) – this equates to 30 homes per annum.

**Policy 16 Quality Homes** seeks to ensure the delivery of more high-quality, affordable, sustainable and energy-efficient homes in the right places, providing choice across tenures to meet the diverse needs of communities. It aims to place good quality housing at the heart of successful places, support health and wellbeing, tackle inequalities, and contribute to net zero targets.

Local Development Plans are required to set a *Local Housing Land Requirement* that exceeds the national *Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR)*, and to allocate sufficient, deliverable land to meet this need over 10 years. It is expected that phasing of deliverable land is set out – short (1-3 years), medium (4-6 years) and long (7-10 years) and de-allocation should be considered where sites are no longer deliverable. LDPs must also identify longer-term opportunities, ensure housing sites align with local living principles (including 20-minute neighbourhoods and an infrastructure-first approach), and take account of diverse housing needs and delivery models. In rural areas tailored approaches to housing are to reflect locally specific market circumstances and delivery approaches. A pipeline of deliverable housing land is to be identified in the Delivery Programme.

**Policy 17 Rural Homes** supports the delivery of new homes in rural and island areas where they contribute to the viability and sustainability of communities. The policy seeks to enable people to live and work in rural places, while protecting the character and special qualities of the countryside. Local Development Plans should set out tailored approaches for rural and island housing that reflect local market circumstances and delivery challenges. They are expected to identify opportunities for new homes in appropriate locations, consistent with the spatial strategy, and to ensure that land is available to support rural repopulation, local living, and a mix of housing types and tenures.

## National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2024 – 2029 Context

The National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) is structured around three chapters, each addressing a key challenge for the future of The Park. The third chapter, *Designing a Greener Way of Living*, focuses on how people live, work, and experience the National Park. It highlights the need for change in response to the climate and nature crises, while also supporting resilient and thriving communities.



A central theme of this chapter is the complex housing landscape within The Park and the rising pressures driving demand for homes. The NPPP identifies several significant challenges:

- The Park has a lower proportion of young and working-age residents than the national average, raising concerns about demographic balance and workforce sustainability.
- Affordability is a major issue, with 75% of households unable to afford average house prices, and 43% unable to afford even lower-value homes.
- The Park remains one of the most expensive places in Scotland to buy a home, further intensifying housing pressures.

In response, the NPPP sets a clear Objective 2: Meeting Housing Needs – to ensure that people who need to live and work in the National Park are able to do so by increasing the availability of housing that meets community and workforce needs. To achieve this, the Plan outlines key actions:

- Supporting the delivery of affordable rural housing, including exploring a *Rural Housing Enabler* initiative to establish a pipeline of projects and overcome barriers to delivery.
- Improving the use of existing housing stock by limiting the loss of homes to second and holiday use and enabling communities and businesses to acquire and manage homes for local benefit.
- Ensuring sufficient land is allocated for housing in the forthcoming Local Development Plan, guided by Local Place Plans and aligned with the needs of the rural economy.
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To measure progress, the NPPP sets measures for up to 2029, including: tracking the number of affordable new homes built, monitoring homes brought back into use for local residents, and assessing the scale of second homes, holiday lets, and short-term lets.

Alongside this, National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) identifies a minimum requirement of 30 new homes per year for The Park. The NPPP recognises that this figure may need to be exceeded where evidence supports doing so, in order to meet local housing needs and strengthen the rural economy.

Through these actions, the NPPP seeks to improve housing opportunities, retain and attract working-age residents, and ensure that the National Park remains a place where people can live, work, and thrive sustainably.

## Summary of Evidence

This Topic Paper covers two National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) policy areas and outlines the relevant policies and data for the National Park area.

The two policy areas are:

- Policy 16 – Quality Homes
- Policy 17 – Rural Homes

It is also important to acknowledge that there is overlap between this Housing paper and policy areas explored within other Topic Papers. The relevant Topic Papers that should be read in conjunction with this paper are:

- Topic Paper 3 – Infrastructure First and Digital Infrastructure
- Topic Paper 8 – Living Well Locally
- Topic Paper 10 – Rural Economy



## Scope of Evidence

This paper explores the housing sector within the National Park by presenting a mixture of national and local policy alongside statistics and figures gathered from research into the specific housing dynamics within the National Park. This includes:

- National policy which will influence the policy direction of the new Local Development Plan
- Summaries of the Local Housing Strategies of each of the four local authorities
- Summaries of the Strategic Housing Investment Plans of each of the four local authorities
- Summaries of the housing need estimates derived from the housing need and demand assessments of the four local authorities although more detailed analysis is included in the supplementary paper.

In an effort to consolidate the length of this paper, a separate supporting technical report has been prepared which provides more detail on the population and housing figures – this is titled **‘Population and Housing Background Paper’** which is attached as an appendix. This report also includes more detail on:

- The housing need estimates derived from the housing need and demand assessments of the four local authorities.
- A summary of key issues related to specialised housing provision, including accommodation designed for specific needs such as wheelchair users, older people and gypsy/travellers.
- The minimum all-tenure housing land requirement (MATHLR) established through the adopted National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4).
- The process of translating these figures into the indicative Housing Land Requirement (iHLR) for the Proposed Plan.

## Statutory Responsibilities for Housing

It is a statutory requirement for Evidence Reports, which this Topic Paper will form part of, to include a Housing Need and Demand Assessment for the local authority area. Since the National Park is not a housing authority, a dedicated document has not been prepared specifically for it. However, to address this, the Population and Housing Background Paper carefully consolidates the Housing Need and Demand Assessments (HNDAs) from the four local authorities covering the National Park – Stirling, Argyll and Bute, West Dunbartonshire, and Perth and Kinross. This comprehensive approach provides a considered view of housing needs within the National Park, ensuring a clear understanding of demand. As such, the paper will effectively serve as our Housing Need and Demand Assessment, supporting informed decision-making for The Park's future. In preparing the Population and Housing Background Paper, careful consideration has also been given to the local housing strategies and other relevant data obtained from the Local Authorities. This ensures a comprehensive and well-informed approach that reflects the diverse housing priorities across the area.

## National Park Authority Role in relation to housing

As a Planning Authority, we play an active role in supporting the delivery of rural housing within the National Park through both our National Park Partnership Plan and Local Development Plan (LDP). However, monitoring of the LDP shows that achieving this objective is highly challenging. High development costs, often linked to the small scale of sites and the expense of delivering supporting infrastructure, can constrain viability. At the same time, elevated property prices, driven by external market pressures, continue to undermine the delivery of affordable and sustainable housing.

In response to these challenges and the clear evidence of unmet housing need, our current LDP adopts a highly ambitious approach of 75 new homes per year. This proactive approach is designed to stimulate more housing delivery, with a strong focus on affordable homes that can attract and retain younger and working-age residents. To achieve this, we work closely with both public and private sector housing providers, seeking innovative and practical solutions that can overcome barriers and deliver homes that meet the needs of our communities.

### National Context

This section outlines the Scottish Government's policy position on housing. Scotland's housing sector is currently facing significant challenges, with the Scottish Government and many local authorities declaring housing emergencies. Notably, Argyll and Bute – one of the local authorities covering the National Park – was the first to formally recognise this issue. West Dunbartonshire Council also declared a Housing Emergency at the beginning of 2025.

The National Park's policy approach for the new Local Development Plan will be directly shaped by the key documents summarised below.

### **Scottish Government Housing Emergency Action Plan 2025**

Tackling Scotland's Housing Emergency – Housing Emergency Action Plan (September 2025) sets out the Scottish Government's response to the national housing emergency declared in May 2024. It highlights progress to date in affordable housing delivery, with over 139,000 homes built since 2007, but stresses that more urgent and systemic action is needed.

The plan focuses on three key objectives: ending the use of unsuitable temporary accommodation for children, supporting the housing needs of vulnerable communities, and maximising investment across the housing sector. Actions include doubling investment in housing acquisitions, improving rental standards (including tackling damp and mould), piloting private sector leasing schemes, and expanding rent controls. For vulnerable groups, measures include a permanent national "Fund to Leave" to help survivors of domestic abuse, expanding Housing First, and strengthening rapid rehousing.

The plan also emphasises building long-term housing capacity, with up to £4.9 billion of investment planned over four years, increased delivery targets across all tenures, and stronger roles for the planning system, the Scottish National Investment Bank, and local development plans. It commits to unlocking rural and island housing, reusing empty homes, and supporting both public and private sector delivery.

The closing call to action stresses collaboration across the housing sector to accelerate affordable housing, end unsuitable accommodation for children, support vulnerable groups, and unlock land and investment. It frames housing as a shared mission tied to eradicating child poverty and ensuring everyone has a safe, secure, and affordable home by 2040.

### **Housing to 2040**

The *Housing to 2040* strategy is the Scottish Government's long-term national housing plan, setting out a vision for what housing should look like by the year 2040. It provides a comprehensive framework to ensure that everyone in Scotland has access to a warm, safe, affordable, and energy-efficient home located within a thriving, sustainable community. The strategy recognises housing as central to achieving equality, climate goals, and economic resilience, bringing these priorities together under one long-term vision for people and places.

At the heart of *Housing to 2040* is a commitment to equality and sustainability. The strategy seeks to end housing inequality and homelessness, deliver affordable and high-quality homes for all, achieve net zero carbon emissions from homes, and strengthen communities and local economies. It promotes a collaborative approach to housing policy that reflects Scotland's changing population, environmental commitments, and economic circumstances.

A key focus of the strategy is delivering more homes in appropriate locations. The Scottish Government aims to build at least 100,000 affordable homes by 2031/32, with 70% of these for social rent. The approach emphasises the creation of well-designed, place-based communities where homes are integrated with transport, green spaces, and essential services. National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) will play a central role in directing development to sustainable locations, prioritising the reuse of brownfield land, promoting 20-minute neighbourhoods, and addressing the distinct needs of rural and island communities to counter depopulation.

The strategy also focuses on affordability and choice, underpinned by the principle that everyone has the right to an adequate home. The Scottish Government will continue to implement the *Ending Homelessness Together* action plan, aiming to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurrent. Reforms to the private rented sector will include stronger tenant protections, fair rent controls, and improved housing standards. Targeted actions will also address the specific housing inequalities faced by women, disabled people, ethnic minorities, and Gypsy/Traveller communities.

In tackling the climate emergency, *Housing to 2040* places strong emphasis on achieving affordable warmth and zero-emission homes. All new social and affordable homes, delivered by RSLs and Local Authorities, will be built to zero-emission standards by 2026, and large-scale retrofitting programmes will improve the energy efficiency of existing housing. These measures form part of a £33 billion investment in decarbonising Scotland's homes and buildings. The strategy also establishes the Green Heat Finance Taskforce to attract private investment and support innovation in low-carbon heating systems and modern construction methods.

Improving housing quality across all tenures is another central aim. A new Scottish Housing Standard will be introduced between 2025 and 2030, ensuring consistent quality, safety, and energy-efficiency requirements for every home, regardless of tenure. The government will also introduce a "Help to Improve" programme to support homeowners and landlords with upgrades. Promoting independent living is a key priority, with commitments to increase accessibility, adapt homes for older and disabled people, and embed universal design principles. Digital connectivity will also be treated as a basic housing standard to support participation in work, learning, and community life.

Overall, *Housing to 2040* represents a comprehensive and ambitious plan to transform Scotland's housing system. Through long-term investment, stronger rights, sustainable design, and inclusive planning, it aims to ensure that everyone in Scotland can live in a high-quality, affordable home that supports wellbeing and contributes to a fairer, greener, and more prosperous nation.

### **Housing Statistics for Scotland – June 2025**

The *Housing Statistics for Scotland: Quarterly Update to End June 2025* provides the latest official data on new housebuilding and affordable housing supply across Scotland. The report shows a general slowdown in both private and social sector construction compared with the previous year. In the year to June 2025, 18,869 homes were completed (a 6% decrease) and 15,202 homes were started (a 3% decrease). Of these, the private sector delivered the majority – 14,274

completions – representing around three-quarters of all new homes, while the social sector accounted for 4,595 completions, marking a 14% drop and the lowest level since 2017.

The Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) also saw declines, with 4,680 approvals, 5,313 starts, and 6,851 completions – down 33%, 22%, and 27% respectively from the previous year. These levels are notably lower than the 2020 peak and reflect the slowest progress in approvals since 2013. Despite this, the Scottish Government continues to make progress towards its target of delivering 110,000 affordable homes by 2032, with 29,680 homes completed by June 2025 – 77% for social rent, 14% for affordable rent, and 9% for affordable home ownership.

Geographically, the report highlights significant variation in housing delivery across Scotland. Midlothian, East Lothian, and West Lothian achieved the highest new build rates (over 60 homes per 10,000 population), while Argyll and Bute and Stirling, among others, recorded some of the lowest rates (20 or fewer homes per 10,000). In the private sector, Argyll and Bute, Stirling, and West Dunbartonshire were among the weakest-performing areas, each with 15 or fewer completions per 10,000 population. Social housing construction also varied significantly – Argyll and Bute completed the fewest with 6 or fewer completions per 10,000 population, Stirling and Perth and Kinross completed between 6 and 12 per 10,000 population and West Dunbartonshire completed between 12 and 18 per 10,000 population.

Overall, the report shows that while Scotland continues to outperform other UK nations in housebuilding per capita – 36 completions per 10,000 population compared with 34 in England, 28 in Northern Ireland, and 15 in Wales – the pace of both private and affordable housing delivery has slowed considerably. The findings underscore ongoing challenges facing the housing sector, including high construction costs, economic uncertainty, and reduced public sector capacity, all of which may impact Scotland's ability to meet long-term housing and affordability targets.

### **Existing Housing Need in Scotland**

The *“Existing Housing Need in Scotland”* was commissioned by Homes for Scotland and conducted by The Diffley Partnership and Rettie & Co. It provides a comprehensive assessment of housing needs across Scotland, based on a large-scale survey of 13,690 households conducted in August 2023. The findings reveal that 28% of Scottish households – equating to approximately 693,000 households – experience some form of housing need. This encompasses a wide range of issues, including overcrowded households, concealed households (where individuals or families live within another household but desire independent accommodation), unfit properties, financial struggles due to high housing costs, and homes lacking necessary specialised adaptations or support.

Key findings highlight that 373,000 households contain at least one concealed household, 185,000 households struggle with unaffordable housing costs, 123,000 households live in overcrowded conditions, 85,000 properties lack required adaptations, and another 85,000 are classified as being in very poor condition. When accounting for those able to address issues through in-situ repairs and those who can afford market solutions, the net housing need drops to around 330,000 households requiring affordable housing, while 220,000 households could potentially resolve their needs through the market.

The report considers that existing measures, such as the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), significantly underestimate the true extent of housing need, as they focus narrowly on the most acute cases like homelessness and overcrowding with concealed families. This broader survey reveals that housing issues are more complex and widespread, affecting both physical living conditions and mental well-being. The findings advocate for a more inclusive and

comprehensive approach to housing policy, urging local authorities and the Scottish Government to incorporate this evidence into planning and development strategies. The report concludes that addressing Scotland's housing crisis requires not only new housing developments but also better regulation, maintenance of existing housing stock, and targeted support for vulnerable populations.

### **Ending Homelessness Together 2020**

The *Ending Homelessness Together: Updated Action Plan (2020)* outlines the Scottish Government and COSLA's renewed commitment to ending homelessness and rough sleeping. It incorporates lessons from the COVID-19 response, which showed that rapid, coordinated action can move people from the streets into safe accommodation. The strategy aims to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurrent by focusing on prevention, rapid rehousing, and person-centred support.

Key priorities include preventing homelessness through early intervention, strengthened tenant protections, and financial assistance to help people remain in their homes. The plan expands the *Housing First* model, ensuring those with complex needs are supported to sustain permanent housing, and commits to ending the use of night shelters in favour of rapid rehousing welcome centres. It adopts a trauma-informed, equality-focused approach that addresses the specific needs of women, families, and other vulnerable groups.

Overall, the plan sets out a coordinated, rights-based approach to ensure everyone in Scotland has access to a safe, secure, and permanent home, with local and national partners working together to achieve lasting change.

### **Improving the Lives of Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers 2 – Action Plan 2024 - 2026**

The *Improving the Lives of Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers 2: Action Plan 2024-2026* is a strategic framework developed jointly by the Scottish Government and COSLA to address longstanding inequalities faced by Gypsy/Traveller communities. Building on the 2019-2021 action plan, this new plan continues the commitment to improving outcomes in accommodation, education, health, social security, employment, and community empowerment, with the overarching aim of tackling systemic discrimination and promoting human rights. Informed by extensive community engagement and evaluation of past efforts, the plan outlines 31 targeted objectives backed by measurable actions and deadlines.

The 2024-2026 plan sets out detailed actions in five key areas. On accommodation, it focuses on funding culturally appropriate sites, improving planning guidance, and updating housing standards. In education, the plan supports more flexible learning, anti-bullying efforts, and cultural awareness among educators. Health initiatives aim to embed community health worker insights, address mental health inequalities, and enhance cultural competency in service delivery. Under social security and work, the strategy seeks to remove systemic barriers, support self-employment, and promote anti-racist employment practices. Finally, the plan strengthens community voice and representation, combats racism, and increases digital inclusion and data collection.

A Ministerial Oversight Group and local authority networks will ensure accountability and community involvement throughout the plan's implementation. Overall, the strategy reaffirms a strong national commitment to ensuring Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers can live with dignity, equality, and opportunity.

### **Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2022**

The Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification provides a consistent way of defining urban and rural areas across Scotland. The classification is based upon two main criteria – population and accessibility. The classification is available in multiple forms, including a 6-fold classification which distinguishes between urban, rural and remote areas through six categories and an 8-fold classification which further distinguishes between remote and very remote regions.

Figure 1 in the appendix, based on the 6-fold Urban Rural classification, illustrates the varied settlement pattern across Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park and its implications for housing delivery. The northern and western part of The Park is predominantly classified as *Remote Rural*, with around ten small settlements such as Tyndrum, Lochgoilhead, Killin, and St Fillans. These communities face particular challenges in sustaining services, attracting investment, and delivering viable housing developments.

In contrast, the southern and eastern part of The Park is categorised mainly as *Accessible Rural*, with approximately nine settlements – including Aberfoyle, Luss, Arrochar and Drymen. Housing pressures are influenced by stronger market demand and greater connectivity to larger urban areas. Additionally, Callander is identified as an *Accessible Small Town* and Balloch as an *Other Urban Area*, both experiencing growth and affordability pressures linked to their accessibility.

This distribution underlines the diverse housing challenges within the National Park: remote northern communities struggle with viability and service provision, while southern and more connected areas face affordability and demand pressures. Tailored approaches are therefore essential to ensure housing policies meet the distinct needs of these different areas.

In preparing the new Local Development Plan (LDP), the 6-Fold Urban Rural Classification will be used to meet Scottish Government requirements for identifying remote rural areas. Within the National Park, these areas are concentrated primarily in the northern and western parts of The Park.

This classification will be an important tool in shaping the LDP's spatial strategy and in developing housing policies tailored to the Park's diverse rural contexts. Consistent with the direction set out in NPF4, the proposed plan will consider whether different levels of support for new housing should be applied within the remote rural areas, informed in part by their classification using the 6-Fold framework. This approach will help ensure that housing policies are responsive to the specific needs, pressures, and opportunities across the National Park's varied landscapes and communities.

### **Regional Context**

#### **Stimulating Housing Development in the Highlands and Islands (2017)**

The Stimulating Housing Development in the Highlands and Islands report (Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), 2017) examines how housing shortages constrain population growth, economic sustainability, and community vitality in fragile rural and remote areas. HIE covers the Cowal area of the National Park. The report identifies a persistent gap between need and supply – around 1,800 new homes per year are required across all tenures (including 1,071 affordable homes), but Strategic Housing Investment Plans currently fall short. Barriers include limited developable land, high infrastructure and transport costs, planning delays, fragmented funding, and a lack of developer interest due to low profitability in remote areas. Capacity shortages among local authorities, housing associations, and the construction sector exacerbate these issues.

The report highlights innovative approaches – such as community-led projects, self-build schemes, and flexible funding like the Rural and Islands Housing Fund – but notes they are often slow and resource-intensive. It calls for stronger partnerships between Scottish Government, local authorities, HIE, private developers, and communities, using a place-making approach to align housing with local economic needs. Key recommendations include improving housing needs assessments to reflect community aspirations, linking investment planning to true demand, making more development-ready land available, broadening infrastructure funding to smaller sites, and ensuring strategic leadership to overcome risk-aversion and fragmented decision-making. Overall, the report argues that coordinated action and tailored investment are essential to reverse depopulation, stimulate local economies, and deliver sustainable housing growth in rural areas in the Highlands and Islands.

### **Clackmannanshire & Stirling Integration Joint Board Strategic Commissioning Plan 2023 - 2033**

The Clackmannanshire & Stirling Integration Joint Board Strategic Commissioning Plan 2023 - 2033 is a ten-year framework for planning and delivering integrated adult health and social care services. Co-produced with local communities, staff, carers, and partners, it sets out a shared vision: enabling people to live full, positive, and independent lives within supportive communities.

The Plan aligns with national legislation, policies, and the National Care Service reforms, responding to challenges such as an ageing population, health inequalities, financial pressures, and lessons from COVID-19. It identifies five strategic themes: prevention and early intervention, independent living through choice and control, achieving care closer to home, empowering communities, and reducing loneliness and isolation.

The Plan emphasises partnership working, self-directed support, and service design shaped by lived experience. It seeks to rebalance service delivery toward prevention and community-based care, ensuring sustainability, best value, and improved health and wellbeing for the 145,000 residents of Clackmannanshire and Stirling over the next decade.

### **Argyll and Bute Joint Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025**

The Argyll and Bute Joint Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025 outlines how the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) will deliver integrated, person-centred care to help people live longer, healthier, and more independent lives. Building on lessons from COVID-19, the plan focuses on prevention, early intervention, community-based support, and improving access to care across the area's remote and island communities.

The strategy responds to major local challenges, including an ageing population, workforce shortages, rural isolation, and persistent inequalities. It aims to tackle these through closer collaboration with communities, better use of digital technology, and investment in sustainable, locally delivered services.

Key priorities include improving mental health and wellbeing, supporting unpaid carers, enhancing services for children and young people in line with *The Promise*, and promoting independent living through joined-up housing, health, and social care planning.

Overall, the plan provides a clear roadmap for recovery and reform, emphasising prevention, partnership, and inclusion to build stronger, more resilient communities across Argyll and Bute.

### Local Context

The National Park is not a statutory housing authority and works in partnership with the Local Authorities for housing data for an understanding of housing need and demand. This section of the evidence report provides a high-level summary of each of the Local Authorities:

- Local Housing Strategies,
- Housing Need and Demand Assessments,
- Strategic Housing Investment Plans, and
- Other relevant strategies

These form a key part of the evidence needed to set the National Park's housing target and policies. Further detail and analysis of each of the relevant documents can be found in the Population and Housing Background Paper which has been prepared to support this Topic Paper.

### Argyll and Bute Local Context

#### **Argyll and Bute Housing Emergency Summit Outcomes Report 2024**

In June 2023, Argyll and Bute Council became the first local authority in Scotland to declare a Housing Emergency, marking a critical call to action designed to unite partners, stakeholders, investors, and communities in addressing the region's housing shortage. This declaration highlighted critical housing shortages driven by rising property prices, reduced household incomes, increasing construction costs, a shrinking private rental sector, and an ageing, declining population. This declaration was intended to be a catalyst for collaborative efforts, prioritising and committing to the bold, collective action needed to tackle this pressing issue.

The Argyll & Bute Housing Emergency Summit Outcomes Report (February 2024) outlines the key actions, responses, and partnerships formed following the declaration of a Housing Emergency and the following Housing Emergency Summit.

The Housing Emergency Summit, held in November 2023, brought together 92 delegates from public bodies, housing associations, community organisations, and the private sector. The Summit aimed to foster bold, coordinated actions to address the housing crisis. Pre-summit workshops and community surveys, which gathered 688 responses from residents and community groups, informed the discussions. A striking 92% of respondents indicated that housing shortages negatively impacted their communities.

The Summit focused on four key themes:

- Enabling the Delivery of More Market Homes
- Enabling the Delivery of More Affordable Homes
- Enabling the Delivery of More Workforce Housing
- Making the Best Use of Existing Homes

Key outcomes included:

- 39 priority housing emergency actions identified through workshops and option appraisals.
- Over 400 partnership pledges made by attendees to support these actions.

For market housing, priorities included flexible planning for rural areas, increasing construction skills training, and repurposing vacant buildings. Affordable housing initiatives emphasised faster planning processes, ring-fenced infrastructure funds, and increased mid-market rental options. Workforce housing strategies focused on seasonal accommodation, public land repurposing, and



reintroducing rural home ownership grants. Efforts to optimise existing housing stock involved reforming Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs), expanding the Empty Homes Officer program, and doubling council tax on second homes.

### **Argyll and Bute Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027**

The Argyll and Bute Local Housing Strategy's overarching vision is for *"Everyone in Argyll and Bute has access to a suitable, high-quality home which is affordable and located within a vibrant, sustainable and connected community"*.

Underpinning this is four key priorities:

- Housing supply and placemaking – to facilitate access to sufficient, suitable and affordable housing across all tenures.
- Housing condition, energy efficiency, and poverty – to regenerate communities by improving the quality, condition and energy efficiency of housing and by tackling fuel poverty.
- Specialist provision & Independent living – to enable people with particular needs to live independently in their own homes and to remain in their communities.
- Housing options, information and support – to promote individual housing options to meet housing need and ensure everyone has access to appropriate, accurate and timeous, information, advice and assistance.

The LHS identifies nine Housing Market Areas (HMAs) across the local authority, two of which are within The National Park – Cowal and Helensburgh & Lomond.

In 2020, Helensburgh and Lomond contained around 25% of Argyll and Bute's total housing stock (approximately 12,171 dwellings), while Cowal accounted for about 18% (8,722 dwellings). Cowal's housing market faces notable challenges: 11% of homes are "ineffective" (second or vacant homes), affordability pressures persist, and the area has an ageing population with limited affordable housing supply. In contrast, Helensburgh and Lomond has the lowest level of ineffective stock (5%), reflecting stronger market activity but also greater demand for family housing and affordable options close to Glasgow's commuter belt.

- Cowal Key Issues: High levels of second and holiday homes exacerbate affordability challenges for permanent residents. Despite a declining population suggesting surplus housing, unmet demand persists due to long waiting lists, homelessness, and the need for specialist accommodation.
- Helensburgh and Lomond Key Issues: This area has higher-than-average house prices and lower proportions of second/holiday homes overall, though these are more common in the Lomond area. Housing demand is significantly influenced by the expected growth from the MOD naval base at Faslane, where incoming families will further strain the local housing supply. Increasing affordable housing remains the top priority.

**Remote rural communities** – While many rural communities demonstrate resilience and self-reliance, a significant number remain isolated and fragile, facing long-term population decline. An increasing trend of retirees relocating to or returning to these areas has driven up house prices, reducing affordability and limiting the availability of permanent housing stock. Rural homelessness often goes unnoticed or unreported, and pockets of deprivation can exist alongside areas of affluence. Additionally, rural development costs are frequently prohibitive due to the challenges posed by remote locations, high transport expenses, and inadequate infrastructure.

**Crofting** – In Argyll and Bute, there were 1,105 recorded crofts as of 2019/20. Legislation permits crofters to construct houses on their crofts. Since its launch in 2007, the Croft House Grant Scheme has provided over £22.5 million in funding. However, none of this funding has been utilised within the National Park area, with only two grants awarded in Argyll and the majority allocated to the Highlands and Western Isles. Parts of the Cowal area of the National Park are designated as Crofting Areas.

**Empty homes** – The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) includes information on empty homes. The LHS emphasises the importance of bringing empty homes back into use and highlights the support provided by the Council, including advice, assistance, and grant funding. The council has also indicated plans to integrate the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) into their empty homes policy. Rather than being treated solely as a last resort, CPOs will be adopted as a standard practice to address the most challenging cases where no alternative solutions exist. This approach is set to be formalised as a specific action within the LHS.

**Self-build** – The LHS summarises the self-build completions for Argyll and Bute which has slowly risen from around 40 a year in 2011 to 60-80 units a year in 2018-2020. There are still many households struggling to secure finance and there has been 153% rise in public interest in the Self-Build Loan Fund administered by Communities Housing Trust.

**Private rental** – The LHS will continue to promote the private rental sector and support landlords and tenants. Build to rent have been considered but not taken forward. A strategic priority is the provision of mid-market rental properties and this will be evaluated at a local settlement level.

**Fuel poverty** – Fuel poverty is more prevalent in Helensburgh and Lomond (21-30%) than in Cowal (<20%). Fuel poverty is exacerbated by factors such as homes in disrepair, poor energy efficiency, lack of central heating, and a high proportion of properties off the gas grid – 43% of homes in Argyll and Bute are not connected to the gas network. Additionally, low household incomes contribute significantly to this issue. The projected ageing population could further intensify fuel poverty issues, as many pensioners live on limited incomes, spend more time at home, and are often reluctant to undertake energy efficiency improvements due to the disruption involved in such work.

**Ethnic minorities** – The HNDA household survey found 1% identified themselves as being other than Scottish and this is in line with the 2011 census. The majority were Polish (85%) and only a few being another category – Indian, Indian British, Chinese, Chinese British, Arab, Arab British etc. None had specific dissatisfaction with housing needs.

Argyll and Bute Council has assessed the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) tool, which is prepared by the Scottish Government and found its baseline projection for additional housing – 850 units over five years – to be overly conservative. In response, the council developed more robust, aspirational growth scenarios aimed at reversing population decline. These scenarios account for factors such as the investment and expansion of the naval base in Helensburgh and Lomond. The Council's growth model projects the need for 1,450 units over five years and 1,651 units over ten years (2022/23 to 2031/32). While these figures fall outside the standard robust and credible framework, the Council considers them both realistic and strategically valid.

Of these projected units:

- 22% (319 units) are allocated for Helensburgh and Lomond.
- 16.8% (238 units) are allocated for Cowal.

Within these allocations, the towns of Dunoon and Helensburgh are expected to accommodate the largest proportion of development. For the National Park area of Argyll and Bute, the LHS identifies a minimum target of 20 units over five years and 40 units over ten years across Cowal and Helensburgh & Lomond HMAs. While this target is not broken down by tenure, there is significant demand for alternative housing tenures such as mid-market rental properties and shared ownership options.

Within the National Park specifically, the LHS identifies development potential for 17 housing units in Cowal and 22 housing units in Helensburgh and Lomond, with existing housing allocated sites capable of accommodating 39 units. However, this falls one unit short of the minimum 40 units required over ten years.

### **Argyll and Bute Housing and Need and Demand Assessment 2021**

The Argyll and Bute Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) 2021 provides a comprehensive analysis of the region's current and projected housing needs, supporting the development of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) and Local Development Plans (LDPs) for both Argyll and Bute and the National Park. Argyll and Bute encompass the second-largest area within the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, with approximately 20% of the National Park's population residing within its boundary. For housing planning purposes, Argyll and Bute is divided into nine Housing Market Areas (HMAs), with the National Park partially covering the Cowal and Helensburgh & Lomond HMAs.

The Population and Housing Background Paper provides a detailed analysis of the information within the HNDA and a summarised version is included within this topic paper.

The population of Argyll and Bute was estimated at 85,320 in 2020, with around 1,350 residents living within the National Park. Since 2000, both the Cowal and Helensburgh & Lomond HMAs have experienced population decline, driven by natural change (more deaths than births) rather than net migration, which is projected to continue until 2031. Despite an overall population decline, both HMAs are expected to see an increase in the elderly population, reflecting broader trends in Scotland.

The HNDA projects a total housing need of 2,235 dwellings across Argyll and Bute from 2021 to 2041, averaging 111 new units annually. This includes 390 owner-occupied homes, 280 private rentals, 185 below-market rent units, and 1,380 social rent properties. Between 2021 and 2030, the Cowal HMA is projected to need 32 new dwellings, and the Helensburgh & Lomond HMA will require 48. While most of this demand will be met outside the National Park, there remains a clear housing need within its boundaries, which will be considered in the new Local Development Plan to ensure adequate housing land supply targets are met. The Housing Supply Targets specific to the National Park are included within the Local Housing Strategy and are set out in the section above.

### **Specialist Housing Provision**

The report highlights significant demand for accessible and adapted housing, with around four applicants per available unit. While new affordable housing generally meets accessibility standards, ongoing monitoring at each site is recommended, with a target of 5% of new builds being accessible or adapted. Demand for home adaptations remains high across sectors, with funding delays, particularly in the private sector. A local database of adapted homes is proposed to improve the matching of housing to individuals' needs.

For wheelchair-accessible housing, despite improvements in data collection, up to 80 households still face unmet needs. The report recommends a target of 5% of public sector housing being

wheelchair-accessible, alongside encouraging private sector compliance with accessibility standards.

The demand for temporary and non-permanent housing for homeless individuals has decreased, with reduced reliance on unsuitable B&B accommodations. Continued focus is needed on ensuring adequate supply, particularly of smaller units in key towns. Housing for domestic violence survivors is maintained through partnerships with organisations like Women's Aid, and successful refugee resettlement programs are noted, with future needs for both refugees and students requiring close monitoring.

In terms of supported housing, the aging population's needs persist, with a shift away from traditional sheltered housing towards alternative support models. A target of 10% of new builds being suitable for people with particular needs is proposed, focusing on areas such as Lorn, Cowal, and Helensburgh & Lomond. As reliance on care homes declines, collaboration between housing and health services remains crucial.

Care and support services are shifting toward in-home care for older residents, with growing demand for telecare and stronger social support networks. Rural areas face challenges due to staffing shortages, particularly for supporting individuals with learning disabilities and autism, which are identified as priority areas.

For Gypsy/Traveller communities, current site provision is adequate but may require additional pitches to meet historical levels. Maintaining quality standards on existing sites and establishing a formal working group to oversee these needs are recommended.

Regarding development planning for specialist housing, most older adults are expected to remain in their current homes or move within the private market, but a lack of downsizing options highlights the need for planning policies that promote accessible and age-appropriate homes. Private developers are encouraged to adopt Lifetime Homes standards, particularly in larger developments, to meet specialist housing targets.

### **Argyll and Bute Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2025 – 2030**

The *Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2025/26 to 2029/30* for Argyll and Bute Council sets out a comprehensive five-year strategy to increase the supply of affordable housing across the region. It aligns with national and local strategic goals, particularly those outlined in the Local Housing Strategy (LHS), the Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan, and the Scottish Government's Housing to 2040 vision. The SHIP provides a pipeline of proposed developments across Argyll and Bute, identifying where new affordable homes can be built, how they will be funded, and what actions are required to support delivery.

The SHIP identifies key pressures such as high construction costs, limited land availability, and a shortage of local skilled labour. In response, it proposes mitigation strategies including early planning, modular construction techniques, and collaborative stakeholder engagement. Investment is directed by robust criteria encompassing need, deliverability, affordability, and alignment with wider policy aims such as reducing child and fuel poverty, supporting independent living, and addressing homelessness.

The SHIP outlines priorities for affordable housing delivery over the next five years, building on the 516 homes completed under the previous SHIPs (2019 – 2024). Despite pandemic-related challenges, progress remained strong, with most new homes for social rent and several designed for specialist or wheelchair use.

Looking ahead, the SHIP aims to deliver over 1,243 affordable homes by 2030, focusing on key settlements such as Oban, Dunbeg, Helensburgh, Dunoon, Campbeltown, and Lochgilphead, alongside significant island developments. Around 10% of new homes will be adaptable for higher dependency needs, ensuring flexibility for an ageing population.

The programme involves major partners including Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and also Dunbritton, Fyne Homes and LINK Group. Additional community-led and small-scale rural projects are also planned to support fragile and remote communities.

The SHIP also highlights key thematic priorities, including tackling fuel poverty and improving energy efficiency. Many planned developments are designed to meet or exceed zero-emission standards, supporting both the Council's and the Scottish Government's climate objectives. The plan continues to promote repurposing empty homes, supporting self-build and community-led housing, and addressing specialist housing needs through partnership with the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP). Particular emphasis is placed on providing adaptable housing for older people and those with disabilities to enable independent living and reduce pressure on care services.

Overall, the SHIP reflects a coordinated and ambitious approach to tackling housing issues in Argyll and Bute, emphasising sustainability, community engagement, and strategic investment to meet diverse needs across a geographically complex area.

### **Arrochar, Tarbet and Ardlui Community Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2025**

The Arrochar, Tarbet and Ardlui Community Housing Assessment (February 2025) identifies a clear shortage of affordable homes, particularly for young people, families, and local workers. Surveys revealed high housing costs, limited availability, and a dominance of owner-occupied and second homes, leaving few options for permanent residents.

Social housing is very limited, with only 65 properties and few new lets each year, while 9% of homes are used as holiday or short-term lets. Most households cannot afford local private rents or house prices, highlighting serious affordability pressures.

The report estimates a need for around 12 new affordable homes over the next five years, potentially supported by the proposed Dunbritton Housing Association development at Succoth. It calls for small-scale, energy-efficient housing to help retain the local population and support the long-term sustainability of these rural communities.

A more detailed summary of this report can be found in the Population and Housing Background Paper.

### ***Stirling Council Local Context***

### **Stirling Local Housing Strategy 2012**

Stirling's Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2012 outlines a strategic framework for addressing housing issues across Stirling Council, including the National Park part of Stirling Council, from 2012 to 2017. The document is now quite dated and therefore has not been summarised to the same level of detail as the Argyll and Bute LHS. More detail has instead been taken from the HNDA and additional data that has been provided by Stirling Council and Clackmannanshire and Stirling HSCP – all of which are summarised within the Population and Housing Background Paper. A new Stirling LHS is currently being prepared and will form part of the evidence for the LDP when it is published.

The document identifies Stirling as a distinct Housing Market Area, further segmented into Stirling Urban, Stirling Rural, and National Park sub-areas. Created in partnership with Stirling's Strategic Housing Forum and various stakeholders, the LHS seeks to guide plans such as the National Park Authority's Local Development Plan, drawing on the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) as a key reference point.

The strategy covers five core sections:

- the Need and Demand for Housing,
- House Condition, Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty,
- Viable and Sustainable Communities,
- Homelessness, and
- Particular Housing Needs.

Key objectives include increasing the supply of affordable housing, improving housing conditions, enhancing energy efficiency to combat fuel poverty and climate change, supporting sustainable community development, and addressing homelessness with dignity and comprehensive support systems. The LHS emphasises inclusivity, having undergone extensive consultations with diverse community groups.

Strategic environmental considerations are woven into the plan to support sustainability goals. Additionally, the strategy acknowledges the impacts of welfare reforms on housing, outlining measures to mitigate adverse effects through awareness, policy adjustments, and support programs. Monitoring and review mechanisms are embedded in the strategy to track progress against defined outcomes, with a performance framework established for continuous assessment. Through coordinated efforts with local partners and community engagement, the LHS aims to create a more equitable, sustainable, and resilient housing environment across Stirling.

### **Stirling Council Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2019-2038**

The Stirling Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) provides an in-depth analysis of population and housing trends within the Stirling Council area, many of which reflect patterns seen in the National Park. A more detailed breakdown and analysis of the HNDA is provided in the Population and Housing Background Paper, supported by additional data from Stirling Council to better reflect current circumstances. While the existing HNDA is now considered out of date and no longer fully robust or credible, supplementary information from Stirling Council and the Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership has been used to strengthen the evidence base. Stirling Council is currently preparing an updated HNDA, which will inform the next Local Development Plan and guide the finalisation of the Housing Supply Target and Housing Land Requirement.

While Stirling's population is projected to grow to 102,787 by 2041, largely due to in-migration influenced by its student population, the more rural areas, including the National Park, are expected to experience an ageing population, with increasing numbers of retirees leading to associated housing pressures.

The Stirling Council area of the National Park's housing market consists of approximately 4,400 dwellings, with 91% occupied, 7% used as second homes, and 2% vacant, indicating a higher proportion of ineffective housing stock compared to Stirling and Scotland overall, largely due to holiday home ownership. Housing tenure data shows that 68% of homes are owner-occupied, 18% are socially rented, 11% are privately rented, and 3% are rent-free. Housing stock is predominantly larger properties, with 44.7% having six or more rooms, and 84% of homes being

houses or bungalows - significantly higher than the Scottish average of 63%. Detached properties account for 46% of homes, compared to just 22% nationally.

Social housing in the National Park is primarily houses (86% of council stock), with a notable 30% being bungalows. Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) manage properties predominantly consisting of houses (50%) and four-in-a-block flats (30%). Under-occupancy is a significant issue, with 77% of homes having more bedrooms than needed, exceeding the national average of 66%, likely due to second-home ownership, empty-nest households, and higher-income residents purchasing larger homes.

Analysis of Stirling Council's waiting list (as of June 2017) revealed 2,575 mainstream applicants across Stirling Council, with 19% experiencing overcrowding. This information has been supplemented with more up to date figures provided by Stirling Council – as of July 2025 there were 2,225 applicants on the waiting list and 525 homeless households across the Stirling Council area.

The HNDA states that the National Park exhibits the highest housing pressure, with a 13:1 ratio of applicants per available property, up from 9:1 in earlier years, driven by the lack of effective housing stock. More recent data from the Clackmannanshire and Stirling HSCP provides a clearer picture of growing pressure on social housing within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. As of November 2024, there were 169 applicants on Stirling Council's housing list for homes within The Park, with the highest demand in Callander, followed by Drymen and Killin. In contrast, turnover in 2023/24 was extremely limited, with only 18 properties becoming available – 13 in Callander, 4 in Aberfoyle, and 1 in Drymen. Compared to the earlier HNDA findings, which already showed the Park as having the highest demand-to-supply ratio in Stirling (13 applicants per let), the situation has worsened. The data confirms a continuing shortage of affordable and appropriately sized homes, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions to expand supply and improve access for local residents.

Future housing needs were projected using three socio-economic scenarios, with the baseline scenario – assuming moderate growth in income, house prices, and rents – deemed the most likely. Under this scenario, the National Park will require 251 new homes over the new Local Development Plan period (2027–2037), averaging 25 homes per year, including 100 affordable homes and 151 private market homes. This assessment guides land use planning to ensure sufficient housing supply amidst fluctuating demands.

### Specialist Housing Provision

There is a clear need to improve data on accessible and adapted housing, although existing evidence indicates a strong demand for properties with adaptations. Similarly, data on wheelchair-accessible housing requires enhancement, but current waiting list snapshots reveal significant demand, with approximately three applicants for every available property.

In terms of supported accommodation, the Care Home Census reports a 17% reduction in care homes over the past decade, while occupancy rates highlight a consistent demand, particularly for individuals with mental health needs. Although the desire for independent living has limited demand for traditional sheltered housing, the rising number of care clients – a 32% increase in home help recipients – signals growing demand for purpose-built housing tailored to an ageing population. Older owner-occupiers are increasingly opting to downsize to smaller, more manageable homes within the private market, emphasising the importance of developments designed to facilitate this transition.

Developers are encouraged to incorporate Lifetime Homes Standards in new builds, as retrofitting and adaptations tend to be less cost-effective. Regarding Gypsy/Traveller communities, there is limited evidence of unmet demand for new sites. The existing Council-managed site adequately meets current needs, with no requirement for additional land allocation for new sites or pitches

### **Stirling Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2025/26 – 2029/30**

The Stirling Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2025/26 – 2029/30 outlines Stirling Council's priorities for the development and delivery of affordable housing over the next five years. The plan aligns with national and local housing strategies, including Scotland's commitment to deliver 110,000 affordable homes by 2032.

The SHIP sets out investment priorities for affordable housing in Stirling and demonstrates how these will be delivered. The plan identifies necessary resources, integrates local and national housing policies, and supports community-focused development. Notably, the SHIP aligns with NPF4 and the Local Development Plans of both Stirling and the National Park. Housing priorities within the National Park focus on addressing housing challenges unique to this region.

The Stirling housing market is divided into three sub-areas: the Stirling Core, Rural Stirling Villages, and the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park.

The SHIP highlights challenges such as reduced Scottish Government funding, rising construction costs, and land acquisition difficulties, particularly in rural and National Park areas. The scarcity of suitable sites and economic pressures pose risks to the delivery of affordable housing. Nonetheless, strong collaboration between local authorities, housing associations, and developers aims to overcome these obstacles.

The SHIP emphasises the provision of accessible housing, with a target of 15% of all affordable units being designed for specialist needs, including wheelchair accessibility. Within the National Park and surrounding areas, there is a focus on meeting the needs of key workers, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

The SHIP includes projects delivering 549 affordable homes across Stirling over five years, with a strong focus on social rent. Within the National Park, approximately 16% of completions will occur, reflecting its share of the identified housing need. Developments in the National Park aim to address local challenges such as second homes and the demand for sustainable rural housing.

### **West Dunbartonshire Local Context**

#### **West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy 2022 - 2027**

The most recent Local Housing Strategy for West Dunbartonshire was published in 2022 and runs until 2027. It is based on the Glasgow and Clyde Valley HNDA published in 2015. It was prepared by the eight local authorities in the Housing Market Partnership (HMP) area – of which West Dunbartonshire is one. An updated HNDA has since been published, again for the Glasgow and Clyde Valley area, and therefore both documents need to be considered as evidence.

The LHS applies to a very small part of the National Park – namely the southern part of Loch Lomond at Gartocharn and Balloch. There is very little detail regarding the rural area of Gartocharn, however there are some conclusions that may be relevant to Balloch.

As explained in the section below in relation to our own Housing Market Analysis, Balloch operates as a separate housing market area and is fairly contained. The issues here are different from other parts of the National Park.



The HNDA for 2015 produced housing estimates, split by tenure and each of the eight local authorities. The Local Housing Strategy then adjusted these estimates to set the Housing Supply Targets taking into a number of factors. The targets are as follows:

	2012-2024	2024-2029	Annual average
<b>Private</b>	1,800	750	150
<b>Social Rent</b>	960	400	80
<b>Total</b>	2,760	1,150	230

The West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan aims to meet the Housing Supply Target by identifying sufficient land for housing development, supplemented by a 15% generosity allowance to ensure flexibility.

Local demand analysis reveals that average house prices in the area increased to £131,922 in July 2021, a 5% rise from the previous year. The Housing Land Supply report concludes that there is strong demand for both homes for sale and private rent. This demand has been influenced by a post-pandemic trend of people seeking larger homes and properties with outdoor space.

The social rent sector plays a significant role in West Dunbartonshire, with 39% of households living in social rented accommodation, much higher than the Scottish average of 23%. Furthermore, 54% of households are single-person households. The size of the social rent sector has expanded due to the council's empty homes and buy-back strategies, which have successfully increased the availability of social housing.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain. Young people, older people, and single-adult households face significant difficulties accessing housing that is both affordable and suited to their needs. The waiting list for social housing has increased to 5,000 applicants, highlighting the urgent need for new housing in West Dunbartonshire. The HLS survey found that 76.8% of respondents strongly support the development of affordable housing that is well-located and meets the specific needs of occupants.

To address these challenges, the council is exploring alternative tenure options to help younger households access their first homes and provide suitable housing for older residents. Further research is planned to identify effective solutions to meet these needs.

Additionally, self-build housing is recognised as a potential way to address specific housing ambitions and requirements. To support this, West Dunbartonshire will create a self-build register of plots, developed in partnership with planning teams from both West Dunbartonshire and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. This initiative aims to provide opportunities for individuals and families to design and build homes that suit their specific needs.

These combined efforts reflect West Dunbartonshire's commitment to addressing housing demand, expanding affordable housing options, and supporting a diverse range of housing solutions tailored to the community's needs.

**Homelessness** – The rate of youth homelessness continues to be high and a key concern and focus – 26.7 per 1,000 population against a Scottish figure of 12.7. The Council are exploring options for bespoke Youth Housing Options Service for people age 16-24yrs. They are piloting a new Shared Living pilot.

**Gypsy/Travellers** – There is one long established site for gypsy/travellers providing 20 pitches in a large, settled community at Dennystoun Forge. There has been increased engagement with residents and this has resulted in improvements to the site. A transit site was explored in 2016/17 and the WDC LDP identified an opportunity for the Dennystoun Forge site to expand.

**Specialist accommodation** – Against an ageing population and rising complexity of need, the Council prioritises prevention, person-centred support, and enabling people to live at home – backed by Care at Home services (10,000+ hours weekly), community alarms, adaptations, and Care & Repair assistance. Provision spans specialist and supported options (amenity, retirement, sheltered and supported living), a design standard requiring 10% wheelchair-standard affordable homes, and dementia-friendly housing to support independence. The strategy also addresses needs of disabled people, autistic people, those with mental health conditions, prison leavers, young care leavers, and Armed Forces communities, while recognising most older residents will “age in place” in mainstream homes through right-sizing, adaptations and better allocation of accessible stock.

### **Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2024**

The Glasgow and Clyde Valley Housing Need and Demand Assessment (June 2024) evaluates housing requirements across the region, including West Dunbartonshire Council. It informs local housing strategies, development plans, and Housing Supply Targets (HSTs).

#### **Housing Demand & Social Housing**

West Dunbartonshire requires 350 additional homes by 2040 (about 18 per year), reflecting moderate growth while ensuring supply meets affordability and tenure diversity. Social housing demand is high, with 16,000 social units (10,454 Council-owned) and 5,714 applicants on the waiting list. Rising homelessness pressures have led to emergency bed and breakfast accommodations for the first time in five years.

#### **Private Market & Development Trends**

From 2018 to 2023, 439 private homes were built, with more planned. Economic drivers such as the Faslane expansion and Golden Jubilee Hospital growth will increase housing demand, particularly in Helensburgh and Clydebank.

#### **Affordability & Demographic Trends**

While private rents remain lower than in neighbouring areas, affordability remains a challenge. The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) for a one-bedroom is £373.97, while average rent is £445. For two-bedroom homes, LHA is £448.76, but rent averages £582. West Dunbartonshire has a growing 65+ population, necessitating investment in specialist housing such as wheelchair-accessible and age-friendly homes.

#### **Housing Supply Targets (HSTs)**

The Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027 aligns with Scottish Government goals, prioritising affordable housing expansion, homelessness reduction, and housing quality improvements. Adjusted HST projections estimate:

- 2012-2029: 3,910 homes (2,550 private, 1,360 social rented/below-market rent).
- Annual Targets: 150 private homes, 80 social rented units.

To meet future housing needs, West Dunbartonshire must expand social housing, enhance affordability initiatives, and integrate economic growth into housing planning.

While the National Park forms only a small part of the Council's area, its housing needs reflect broader regional trends.

### **West Dunbartonshire Council Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2026 – 2030**

The West Dunbartonshire Council Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2025/26 – 2029/30 outlines the Council's priorities and strategies for delivering affordable housing over the next five years. The plan responds to significant budgetary challenges, following a 27% reduction in the Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP), resulting in the Council's annual Resource Planning Assumption (RPA) being cut from £10.795 million to £8.477 million, a reduction of 21.5%

Despite these financial constraints, the SHIP aims to deliver approximately 762 new affordable homes. The delivery strategy focuses on maximising high-quality housing supply to address the growing housing crisis, including homelessness, rising housing demand, and child poverty.

The SHIP highlights several constraints, including increased construction costs, labour shortages, and planning delays. The average grant support required per unit is projected at £110,000, with specific projects exceeding this due to additional quality benchmarks.

To mitigate funding challenges, the Council plans to explore alternative financing models, including front-funding agreements with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), institutional investment, and the use of financial reserves. The SHIP also incorporates sustainability goals, with new housing developments required to meet Net Zero standards, ensuring energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty.

In May 2025, West Dunbartonshire declared a housing emergency, becoming the fifth local authority in Scotland to do so, underlining the urgency of the SHIP's objectives. The plan reflects flexibility to adapt to funding changes, with reserve projects identified to address potential program slippage.

### **Perth and Kinross Local Context**

#### **Perth and Kinross Local Housing Strategy 2022 – 2027**

The Perth and Kinross Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2022-2027 outlines the Council's strategic vision, priorities, and actions to address housing needs and support sustainable communities across the region. The strategy builds upon the achievements of the previous LHS (2016-2021), which delivered significant outcomes, including the creation of 963 new affordable homes, regeneration projects, and improved homelessness services through initiatives like the Home First model, which reduced homelessness presentations and temporary accommodation use.

The LHS aims to deliver more affordable, energy-efficient homes, support independent living, and promote sustainable, connected communities. The strategy is shaped by extensive consultation with residents, stakeholders, and partners to ensure it reflects local priorities. Its development was influenced by key national policies such as Housing to 2040, the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), and Scotland's Fuel Poverty Strategy.

The strategy identifies four key priorities:

- **Providing More Affordable Homes:** Addressing housing shortages and ensuring equitable access to affordable housing across urban and rural areas.

- Offering a Range of Housing Options: Ensuring diverse, accessible, and sustainable housing choices that meet different needs and income levels.
- Delivering Housing for People with Varying Needs: Supporting vulnerable populations, including older people, individuals with disabilities, and those experiencing homelessness.
- Ensuring Quality Homes with Affordable Warmth and Zero Emissions: Focusing on energy efficiency, reducing carbon emissions, and tackling fuel poverty.

The LHS addresses demographic changes, particularly the ageing population, and economic challenges like high housing costs and employment shifts. The strategy promotes cross-sector collaboration, aligns with broader regional initiatives like the Tay Cities Deal, and integrates health and social care planning to support holistic community well-being.

Perth & Kinross has set a provisional Housing Supply Target (HST) of 654 homes per year, derived from the Tayside HNDA and used to inform the Housing Land Requirement in the next Local Development Plan: 32% affordable (210 homes) and 68% market (444 homes)

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are in place to track progress, with a strong emphasis on tackling inequality, supporting inclusive growth, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents in Perth and Kinross.

### **Perth and Kinross Housing Need and Demand Assessment (2022)**

The Perth and Kinross Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), published in 2022, provides a comprehensive analysis of housing needs across the Perth and Kinross Council area, which is part of the broader Tayside region, encompassing four local authorities: Angus, Dundee, Fife, and Perth and Kinross. The HNDA confirms that Perth and Kinross is a relatively self-contained Housing Market Area (HMA), with 63% of property purchases originating from within the council boundary. Within this area, the Strathearn sub-HMA encompasses the part of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, although the report does not provide specific population data or housing targets for the National Park, making it challenging to determine precise housing needs within this area.

**Population and Housing Market Trends** – The small section of Perth and Kinross within the National Park is primarily centred around St. Fillans, which, according to the 2011 Census, had a population of 259 residents across 113 households. By 2021, the population had likely grown overall, despite a 10% decline in younger residents and a 24% increase in the older population. Of the households in St. Fillans, 73% are owner-occupied, with 10% used as second homes. These trends align with the broader Perth and Kinross area, where population growth is primarily driven by inward migration, especially from other parts of the UK, and an aging demographic is becoming increasingly dominant.

Perth and Kinross boasts the highest median income among the Tayside councils, with a median income of £33,280 in 2018, up 10% from 2014. However, housing affordability remains a significant challenge. Average house prices have risen 13% from 2009 to 2019, reaching £199,463, and nearly 49% of residents cannot afford homes at lower quartile prices, requiring 4.82 times the average income to purchase. The private rental market fares no better, with an average rent of £720 exceeding the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) of £544, leaving 54% of households unable to afford private rentals.

**Housing Supply and Affordability** – Social rents in Perth and Kinross, while generally affordable, show disparities. Registered Social Landlord (RSL) rents average £412 monthly, 38% higher than local authority rents at £298, though only 16% of households cannot afford RSL rents under a

30% income-to-rent ratio. Affordability pressures have grown, with 16% of households spending over 30% of their income on housing costs and moderate financial strain post-COVID rising by 66% across the region.

**Estimated Housing Need and Supply Targets** – The HNDA outlines three housing need scenarios for the next 20 years, projecting the following cumulative housing requirements across all tenures in Perth and Kinross:

<b>Cumulative Housing Need: All Tenures</b>	<b>2026 - 2030</b>	<b>2031 - 2035</b>	<b>2036 - 2040</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Principal scenario</b>	3,786	4,522	5,388	<b>13,696 homes.</b>
<b>High migration scenario</b>	4,237	5,271	6,459	<b>15,967 homes.</b>
<b>Growth scenario</b>	7,451	9,729	10,595	<b>27,775 homes</b>

Based on these projections, the Perth and Kinross Local Housing Strategy (LHS) has set an annual Housing Supply Target of 654 homes, split between affordable and market housing. The HNDA states that the housing estimates for the Strathearn sub-HMA for between 2021 and 2040 range from 714 – 862. Neither the LHS and HNDA set specific targets for the National Park area and therefore addressing housing need will be done in consultation with Perth and Kinross Housing Authority.

The HNDA and LHS highlight the need for a balanced approach to meet housing demand in Perth and Kinross, addressing affordability, demographic changes, and inward migration. For the small portion of the National Park within the council area, the housing requirements are minimal, reflecting the localised nature of the housing market within the Strathearn sub-HMA. The primary focus remains on delivering sufficient housing in the broader Perth and Kinross area to meet the needs of its growing and aging population.

### **Perth and Kinross Council Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2025 – 2030**

The Perth and Kinross Council Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2025/26 – 2029/30 outlines the Council's key priorities and investment strategies for affordable housing over the next five years. The plan aims to deliver 1,152 affordable homes between 2025 and 2030, exceeding the Local Housing Strategy target of 654 homes per year, 210 of which are to be affordable. This ambitious target reflects the Council's commitment to supporting the Scottish Government's Housing to 2040 strategy, focusing on sustainable communities, affordable homes, and energy efficiency.

The plan identifies a mix of new builds, buybacks, regeneration, and restoration projects to meet housing needs, with strong partnerships between the Council, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), Health and Social Care Partnerships, and community stakeholders.

The plan recognises key challenges including limited funding, rising construction and retrofit costs, skills shortages, and the need to balance new build programmes with the retrofit and decarbonisation of existing stock. It prioritises projects that deliver a mix of social rent, mid-market rent, and shared equity housing, while also supporting rural and island communities through targeted interventions.

The SHIP emphasises addressing specific housing needs, aiming to ensure that 10% of all new affordable homes are suitable for people with particular needs, such as wheelchair accessibility. Additionally, the plan supports the 'Home First' model to reduce homelessness and reliance on temporary accommodations, promoting rapid rehousing strategies.

Perth and Kinross Council faces distinct demographic challenges, balancing a large rural population with an urban centre. The Local Housing Strategy 2022–2027 aims to reflect the area's 53% urban / 47% rural population split in affordable housing delivery. However, in 2023/24, 64% of new affordable homes were in rural areas and 36% in urban areas. The current SHIP plans to deliver 398 rural and 625 urban homes, excluding buybacks and projects supported by the Rural Housing Fund.

Beyond the SHIP, PKC supports affordable housing through community-led approaches funded by the Rural Housing Fund and Scottish Land Fund. PKC is also developing a Key Worker Policy to address shortages of suitable housing for essential workers in rural areas, enabling access to the Affordable Rural Homes for Key Workers Fund and guiding RSL partners on future opportunities.

### National Park Authority

#### **Population Data**

A detailed breakdown of the population data for the National Park can be found within the supplementary Population and Housing Background Paper which has been prepared to complement this evidence report. A summary of the key population figures for the National Park is included below.

The National Records of Scotland (NRS) population and household projections provide insights into how the population and household structure of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park (LLTNP) is expected to evolve over the coming decades. These projections are critical in determining housing needs and informing the Local Development Plan (LDP), which will be adopted in 2027 and will remain in place until 2037.

Population projections from the National Records of Scotland show that the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is expected to experience a 7% population decline from 14,718 in 2018 to around 13,600 by 2043, contrasting with a national increase of 5.8%. This decline is driven by low birth rates, an ageing population, and continued out-migration of younger adults, with positive net migration unable to offset natural losses. The proportion of residents aged 75 and over is projected to nearly double (11% to 21%), while the working-age population will fall from 60% to 56%, increasing the dependency ratio and pressure on services.

These demographic trends highlight significant implications for housing, employment, and service provision. Demand will increasingly shift towards affordable, adaptable housing and enhanced health and social care to support an older population, while retaining and attracting younger people through affordable homes, jobs, and infrastructure investment will be essential to sustain the Park's rural communities and economy.

#### **Household Projections**

Similarly with the section above, further detail regarding the household projections for the National Park can be found within the Population and Housing Background report.

The number of households in Scotland is projected to grow by 120,000 (5%) over the next decade, increasing from 2.48 million in 2018 to 2.60 million in 2028. Over the longer term, household numbers are expected to rise by 10%, reaching 2.71 million by 2043.

In Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, the number of households is also projected to increase by 2039, although at a slower rate than the Scottish average. This growth is largely attributed to a rise in the number of people living alone or in smaller households. The average household size in the National Park was 2.18 people in 2014, and this figure is projected to decrease by 11% to 1.94 people by 2039. The decline in household size is driven by the aging population, as older individuals are more likely to live alone or in smaller households. By 2039, it is estimated that 51% of households in the National Park will be headed by individuals aged 65 or over, reflecting the significant demographic shift towards an older population. This trend highlights the need for housing that meets the specific requirements of smaller and older households.

As of 2023, the National Park Authority estimates there are approximately 7,772 household spaces within The Park. Of these, 90.3% are occupied by residents, while 4.6% are vacant. Additionally, there are an estimated 389 second homes, accounting for 5% of the total housing stock in the National Park. These figures underscore the importance of addressing housing availability and ensuring a balance between primary residences and second homes to meet the needs of the local population.

#### **LLTNPA Housing Market Research including Short-term lets pressure (November 2022)**

The National Park commissioned Arneil Johnston to prepare a report detailing the key housing market trends within the National Park in order to supplement the work of the housing authorities and provide a finer grained level of data and analysis for the National Park. The 2022 report provides a comprehensive analysis of the housing system within The National Park focusing on affordability, market dynamics, and the impact of second homes and short-term lets. This report serves as a vital evidence base for understanding housing pressures and informing future policies. More detailed analysis of the report can be found within the Population and Housing Background Paper.

Housing Market Sub-Areas – The study validated and redefined housing market sub-areas (HMSAs) to reflect current dynamics. Five functional HMSAs were established: Balloch, Breadalbane, Callander & Aberfoyle, Cowal, and Loch Lomondside. These sub-areas illustrated in the map in figure 2 in the appendix below exhibited varying degrees of self-containment, with high inward migration in some regions like Cowal and high local retention in others like Balloch.

Housing Stock and Dwelling Distribution – There are approximately 7,571 dwellings in The Park, with 93% occupied, 5% second homes, and 2% empty. Areas like Cowal have a higher proportion of second homes (17%), while Balloch has virtually none. Ownership dominates the housing market, creating affordability challenges for lower-income households. The private rented sector is limited and often unaffordable, while social housing availability is low, with high demand and long waiting lists.

Household Projections – The National Records of Scotland project minimal household growth in The Park, with a 1% increase expected between 2022 and 2037. This stable trend underscores the need to address current housing shortages, particularly in affordable and social housing.

Affordability Challenges – Affordability is a major issue, with average house prices in 2019/20 at £215,889, significantly higher than the Scottish average of £182,357. Around 43% of households

cannot afford homes even at lower quartile prices, and 75% are priced out of average market prices. Rental costs are also high, averaging £681.82 per month, making social housing crucial for low-income households.

**Short-term Lets and Second Homes** – The growing presence of second homes and short-term rentals, particularly in areas like Cowal and Loch Lomondside, exacerbates affordability issues and reduces the availability of long-term housing. These trends contribute to house price inflation and strain the housing system.

**Social Housing Pressures** – Social housing constitutes only 13% of the total stock, well below the Scottish average of 24%. Regions like Breadalbane have higher social housing availability (35%), while Loch Lomondside has just 7%. Demand far outstrips supply, with waiting lists significantly exceeding available units.

The report made several recommendations which aim to improve the housing system within the National Park. These recommendations include:

- Increase Affordable Housing Supply - Strategic interventions are needed to expand affordable housing availability. This includes tighter regulations on second homes and short-term lets to curb price inflation and retain housing stock for permanent residents.
- Expand Social Housing Investment - Collaboration with housing providers is critical to increasing social housing stock, reducing waiting list pressures, and addressing the acute need for affordable rental options.
- Tackle Ineffective Housing Stock - Policies should focus on repurposing empty homes and buildings to increase housing availability for local residents.
- Support Sustainable Development - The report emphasises the importance of addressing land and infrastructure constraints, streamlining planning processes, and supporting community-led housing projects.

The report provides valuable insights into the housing challenges in National Park, highlighting the acute affordability issues, the impact of second homes, and the inadequacy of social housing. Its findings emphasise the need for bold policy interventions and collaborative efforts to create affordable, sustainable housing solutions for local residents. This evidence forms a cornerstone for addressing the National Park's housing crisis and guiding future planning decisions.

### **Self-Build Register**

The National Park Authority prepared a self-build register in 2024, inviting people interested in self-build to register their interest to help gauge demand for such provision across the National Park. To date, there are four registered entries spread across The Park.

### **Local Development Plan Monitoring**

Monitoring housing approvals and completions since 2017 provides key insight into how well the current Local Development Plan has delivered on its housing objectives and where future policy adjustments may be needed. The data highlights performance against targets, spatial strategy effectiveness, affordable housing delivery, and shifting patterns such as the rising importance of windfall developments. The Population and Housing Background paper provides a more detailed analysis of the housing monitoring data.

The current LDP set a target of 75 homes per year over a 12 year period (900 in total). Monitoring between 2017 - 2024 shows that a total of 477 homes have been approved since 2017 (an average of 63 per year) and 281 completed – around 59% of all approvals.



Trends show a strong and balanced contribution from both open market and affordable housing, with each playing an important role in meeting the diverse housing needs across the National Park. While approvals have been dominated by open market homes (318 units), completions have been driven by affordable housing, which accounted for 162 of the 281 completions. Windfall sites make a significant contribution to housing supply, including for small sites and single houses. Spatially, the majority of housing approvals remain focused in towns and villages (77%), consistent with the Park's strategy of concentrating development in sustainable, well-served settlements. Smaller proportions occurred in building groups (8%), small rural communities (6%), and the open countryside (6%), typically tied to rural businesses, tourism accommodation, or building conversions. This distribution shows that the LDP's spatial strategy remains broadly effective in managing growth, protecting rural landscapes, and supporting settlement vitality, while still allowing limited policy-compliant rural housing.

### **Short Term Lets**

Short-term lets (STLs) in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park have become a major feature of the local housing and tourism landscape. Since October 2023, all STLs require registration, providing accurate data showing around 799 licensed lets across the Park, offering over 4,600 bed spaces – more detail of this can be found in Topic Paper 10 Rural Development and the locations can be found on the interactive map under Topic Paper 10. The highest concentrations are found around Loch Lomond's southern shores (Balloch, Luss, Arrochar), Loch Goil and Loch Long, and the gateway towns of Callander and Lochearnhead, reflecting strong visitor demand and accessibility from the Central Belt.

Research by Arneil Johnstone (2022) found that STLs account for up to 38% of potential rental stock in some areas, particularly Breadalbane, Loch Lomondside, Callander & Aberfoyle, and Cowal, significantly reducing housing available for permanent residents. Although there are more private rented sector (PRS) homes (around 700) than STLs, the income gap between STL and PRS rents – with STLs earning up to £6,600 per month compared to £680 on average for long-term lets – has encouraged landlords to shift properties into short-term use. Combined with second and empty homes, this has effectively removed around 11% of dwellings from the permanent housing market, intensifying affordability pressures and limiting supply in key communities.

Overall, while short-term lets support tourism and local economies, their growth poses challenges for housing affordability, community sustainability, and the availability of long-term homes. Future planning and housing strategies will need to balance the economic benefits of tourism with the need to maintain viable year-round communities.

### **Second Homes**

The Housing Market Pressures Report prepared by Arneil Johnstone details the levels of ineffective housing stock within the National Park. The report states that analysis of housing data from the National Records of Scotland (2021) and Ordnance Survey Address Base shows that second homes make up around 5% of all dwellings within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, but their distribution is highly uneven across the area. The Cowal sub-area records by far the highest concentration, with 17% of homes used as second residences, followed by Breadalbane (7%) and Callander & Aberfoyle (4%). In contrast, Loch Lomondside has only 3% and Balloch shows none.

This uneven pattern highlights the growing impact of second homes in specific rural and lochside communities, particularly in Cowal, where nearly one in five dwellings is unavailable for permanent occupation. Combined with a small proportion of vacant properties (typically 1–2%),

this creates significant “ineffective stock” – homes not contributing to local housing needs – ranging from 19% in Cowal to just 1% in Balloch.

Overall, while most dwellings across the Park remain occupied, the high proportion of second homes in certain areas – often aligned with scenic, high-demand locations – reduces the availability of housing for local residents and contributes to affordability pressures, particularly where affordable housing options are already limited.

### **Combined Effect of Ineffective Stock**

The combined impact of short-term lets and second homes presents a major challenge for housing within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. While both contribute significantly to the tourism economy and local business activity, their growing presence has reduced the supply of permanent, affordable housing – particularly in high-demand areas such as Cowal, Loch Lomondside, and Callander & Aberfoyle. With around 16% of dwellings effectively removed from the year-round housing market, local residents face increasing barriers to securing suitable accommodation, which in turn affects community sustainability, workforce retention, and local services. Addressing these pressures will require targeted policy interventions that balance the economic benefits of tourism with the need to protect the Park’s social and economic fabric.

### **Land for the Purposes of Resettlement**

The National Park does not contain significant areas of previously inhabited land, making it unlikely that land will need to be specifically allocated for resettlement purposes. However, this position will be fully reviewed during the preparation of the next Local Development Plan to ensure that all potential land requirements are appropriately considered and aligned with future development and community needs.

### **Establishing an indicative Housing Land Requirement**

The next Local Development Plan for Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park must allocate enough land for at least the first 10 years (to 2037) and set a housing requirement that is evidence-led and deliverable within environmental and infrastructure limits. The Housing Need and Demand Assessments provide the factual baseline and the Local Housing Land Requirement translates this into land allocations.

NPF4 sets a Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) of 300 homes over 10 years (30 per year), but national policy requires this to be exceeded. The Population and Housing Background Paper provides a thorough analysis of HNDA data, Local Housing Strategies, Local Place Plans, Housing Land Audit, the Housing Market Pressures Report 2022, and socio-economic trends, including national and local housing emergencies, an ageing population, high second-home ownership, affordability pressures, and delivery challenges.

As part of the preparation of the Population and Housing Background Paper four target options were tested:

1. 30 homes/year (MATHLR baseline) – meets minimum but lacks resilience or growth.
2. 45 homes/year – aligns with recent completions but cautious and growth-limiting.
3. 75 homes/year (current LDP target) – ambitious but supports population retention, affordability, and sustainable communities.

4. 100 homes/year – would require major new sites, risk infrastructure strain, and may not be deliverable.

Based on the analysis within the Population and Housing Background Paper the preferred option is to retain the 75 homes per year target. The Population and Housing Background Paper provides a detailed analysis of each housing target option and explains the rationale for recommending a target of 75 homes per year. It also outlines the corresponding land requirement needed to support each option.

The proposed housing target was included within the consultation materials, providing partners and external stakeholders with the opportunity to comment. No objections were raised to the proposed target. Furthermore, Argyll and Bute Council, Perth and Kinross Council, Homes for Scotland, and Persimmon Homes explicitly expressed their support for the target proposed.

The 2024 Annual Housing Land Audit demonstrates that the existing available land supply is strong: there remains capacity for 316 new units on allocated sites plus 102 on permitted windfall units. A windfall assumption has been estimated of 150 over 10 years. This is based on a lower windfall assumption than presently used and is informed by past completions trends instead of approvals. The evidence reveals that there is a significant lag between approvals and completions so it is considered prudent to lower the windfall assumption.

The evidence suggests that there is adequate land to meet short-term needs but that there will be a requirement to identify land for approximately 182 additional units over ten years (or 302 additional units if using 2025 as the baseline year and projecting forward 12 years to 2027). Several Local Place Plans identify housing as a key issue with some identifying preferred locations for new housing, and these will inform preparation of the new LDP spatial strategy and allocation of new housing sites.

Improving housing outcomes will also depend on unlocking ineffective stock, tackling short-term lets and empty homes, and meeting the needs of an ageing population and working population, alongside new build delivery.

## Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

As part of the Evidence Gathering process for the new Local Development Plan (LDP), the National Park Authority developed a suite of Topic Papers and Area Summaries to explore key planning themes and local issues across The Park. These documents form the technical and spatial foundation for the new LDP and were central to the targeted community engagement process between May and July.

Ten Topic Papers were drafted, aligning with the relevant policies in NPF4. These papers summarise national, regional, and local data, providing a detailed evidence base on subjects such as climate change, biodiversity, housing, infrastructure, and the rural economy. They were developed by National Park officers, incorporating input from key public bodies including SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot, Transport Scotland, and local authorities.

A draft of this topic paper was sent to:

- Stirling Council Housing Authority
- Argyll and Bute Housing Authority
- Perth and Kinross Housing Authority
- West Dunbartonshire Housing Authority
- Homes for Scotland

- Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership
- Highlands Health and Social Care Partnership
- Hillcrest Housing Association
- Fyne Homes
- Dunbritton Homes
- Rural Stirling Housing Association
- Scottish Water

Six Area Summaries were also produced to provide a more accessible, place-based and spatial view of the evidence. These summaries incorporate mapped information alongside key content from registered Local Place Plans highlighting key opportunities, challenges, and priorities for specific areas within The National Park. The spatial presentation was intended to support more informed and locally relevant discussion during in-person workshops.

As part of the engagement activities, a series of in-person workshops were held in May and June 2025 across the National Park to present the Area Summaries and gather feedback directly from local community groups and stakeholders. To ensure wider participation, complementary online surveys were also made available, allowing people to review and comment on both the Topic Papers and Area Summaries over a six-week period (May – July 2025). In addition to public engagement, input was actively sought from key statutory agencies and partner organisations throughout the preparation process to help shape and strengthen the evidence base.

Summary of Responses	
Respondent	Summary of Comments and Response
Argyll and Bute Housing Authority	<p>The Housing Authority generally agreed with the evidence set out within the paper and provided comments to state that there were more up to date documents – specifically the SHIP – than what had been referenced.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> All comments were noted and updated within the final version of the paper and any documents were updated to ensure they were the most up to date version.</p>
Stirling Council Housing Authority	<p>Stirling Council disagreed with the evidence presented and stated that the evidence can be supplemented by more up to date information that they hold, which can strengthen the evidence referenced.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Additional evidence was obtained from Stirling Council and added to the paper. The Housing Authority reviewed the up to date version of the paper and were content with the additional evidence and how it had been summarised. The have stated that they now agree with the evidence set out within the Paper.</p>
Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership	<p>The HSCP disagreed with the evidence set out initially as it was deemed to be out of date. The comments recommend adding references to local strategic documents, including the Clackmannanshire and Stirling HSCP Strategic Commissioning Plan, and updating outdated data such as Stirling's LHS, SHIP, HNDA. It was suggested to obtain additional information from census data, homelessness trends and social housing waiting lists. The HSCP also provided additional information and data for</p>

	<p>inclusion and to help update the Stirling Council section of the report.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Additional evidence was obtained from the HSCP and added to the paper and other suggested data sources were also added to the Paper – specifically the health census data. The HSCP reviewed the up to date version of the paper and were content with the additional evidence and how it had been summarised. They have stated that they now agree with the evidence set out within the Paper.</p>
Perth and Kinross Housing Authority	<p>PKC Council had no specific comments on the paper and noted the suggested housing target and the potential requirement for land allocation.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Noted</p>
West Dunbartonshire Council	<p>WDC had no comments to housing except noted that the Council had declared a Housing Emergency in 2025.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Noted and added to the topic paper.</p>
Homes for Scotland	<p>The response stresses the need for an accurate, up-to-date evidence base and close engagement with the homebuilding industry when preparing the new Local Development Plan, Homes for Scotland recommends gathering additional data from Stirling Council to ensure evidence base is more robust. It supports a higher housing land requirement (around 750 homes) to address affordability, population growth, and workforce needs, warning against reducing targets below past completion rates. Additional evidence such as updated HNDAs, Local Housing Strategies, and research on housing supply, land availability, and SME builders should inform planning. Deliverability, viability, and developer control of sites are highlighted as critical to site selection. The response also notes Housing Emergencies in nearby areas, the importance of integrating local housing priorities, and the need for justified targets for accessible or adaptable homes.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> The recommended pieces of evidence have been included where they were considered to be appropriate. Additional data has been sought from Stirling Council specifically to improve the evidence base.</p>
Stirling Access Panel	<p>The suggestions recommend updating terminology to “accessible housing,” referencing Lifetime Homes Standards and modular solutions, increasing the target for accessible homes to 15%, and expanding workforce housing considerations – especially affordability and proximity to jobs – to better meet diverse and future housing needs.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Noted and all addressed within Housing and Population Paper.</p>
Kilmaronock Community Council	<p>The community believes current housing policy has failed for two decades, with an urgent need for sustainable, affordable homes but little suitable land available. Past large-scale development proposals were opposed due to limited infrastructure capacity (water, sewerage, roads) and a preference to reserve capacity for future local residents. Residents also felt major tourist or</p>

	<p>business projects would harm the area's environmental and economic character.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Comments have been noted. However, as the comments received do not identify gaps in evidence, data, or information, but instead reflect views on requirements, it is considered that these are best addressed at the next stage during preparation of the Proposed Plan.</p>
Scottish Water	<p>Scottish Water confirms support for the Housing Topic Paper and highlights its duty under SR2021-27 to provide strategic potable water and wastewater capacity for all new housing and related developments. It plans resources up to 25 years ahead, considering climate change and sustainable management to balance supply, demand, and environmental protection. In rural areas, infrastructure upgrades may be needed, so early engagement with developers is encouraged. Scottish Water will continue collaborating with planners and developers to ensure capacity and delivery certainty.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Noted</p>
Persimmon Homes	<p>Persimmon Homes supports the Topic Paper praising its comprehensive evidence base, alignment with NPF4, and recognition of key delivery challenges like infrastructure, land availability, costs, and the impact of second homes. They suggest strengthening the paper with clearer analysis of site deliverability, infrastructure readiness, viability, and developer insights, as well as improved monitoring and mechanisms to address under-delivery. Overall, they view the paper as a strong foundation for the Local Development Plan and welcome ongoing engagement.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Updated data from 2024 Housing Land Audit added to the Population and Housing paper and Topic Paper to provide analysis of housing land supply.</p>

As part of the preparation of the Evidence Report, a detailed Population and Housing Background Paper was developed to provide an in-depth analysis of the four Housing Need and Demand Assessments (HNDAs) and other relevant data. This analysis enables the National Park to gain a clearer understanding of housing requirements across the area and to identify an indicative Housing Supply Target and Housing Land Requirement. The paper was published for consultation and shared with all listed consultees, whose feedback has been carefully reviewed and incorporated into the final version.

Summary of Responses	
Respondent	Summary of Comments and Response
Argyll and Bute Housing Department	<p>The Housing Target presented in the paper was supported and there were some minor amends suggested – particularly ensuring any information sourced from the HNDA is labelled.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> All comments have been addressed in the updated version.</p>
Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership	<p>The HSCP disagreed with the evidence set out initially as it was deemed to be out of date. The comments recommend adding references to local strategic documents, including the Clackmannanshire and Stirling HSCP Strategic Commissioning</p>

	<p>Plan, and updating outdated data such as Stirling's LHS, SHIP, HNDA. It was suggested to obtain additional information from census data, homelessness trends and social housing waiting lists. The HSCP also provided additional information and data for inclusion and to help update the Stirling Council section of the report.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Additional evidence was obtained from the HSCP and added to the paper and other suggested data sources were also added to the Paper – specifically the health census data. The HSCP reviewed the up to date version of the paper and were content with the additional evidence and how it had been summarised. They stated that they now agree with the evidence set out within the Paper.</p>
Stirling Council Housing Department	<p>Stirling Council disagreed with the evidence presented and stated that the evidence can be supplemented by more up to date information that they hold, which can strengthen the evidence referenced.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Additional evidence was obtained from Stirling Council and added to the paper. The Housing Authority reviewed the up to date version of the paper and were content with the additional evidence and how it had been summarised. They stated that they now agree with the evidence set out within the Paper.</p>
Persimmon Homes	<p>Persimmon Homes supports the Topic Paper praising its comprehensive evidence base, alignment with NPF4, and recognition of key delivery challenges like infrastructure, land availability, costs, and the impact of second homes. They suggest strengthening the paper with clearer analysis of site deliverability, infrastructure readiness, viability, and developer insights, as well as improved monitoring and mechanisms to address under-delivery. Overall, they view the paper as a strong foundation for the Local Development Plan and welcome ongoing engagement.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Updated data from 2024 Housing Land Audit added to the Population and Housing paper and Topic Paper to provide analysis of housing land supply.</p>

## Summary of Implication for the Proposed Plan

The implications of the evidence for the new Local Development Plan (LDP) may be summarised as follows:

- Affordable Housing Needs – Despite substantial completion rates for affordable housing in the last five years in the National Park, a significant shortfall persists. This underscores the need for continued prioritisation of affordable housing to address unmet demand and long-term housing challenges and associated population decline. The LDP will consider where changes to policy and allocations may be required to address this issue.
- Workers Accommodation – Staff shortages, particularly in the tourism accommodation and retail sectors. Housing is recognised as a critical factor in addressing this challenge by providing suitable accommodation for workers. Ensuring the availability of affordable and accessible housing for employees is essential to support the local economy and community sustainability.
- Spatial Strategy – Land for housing will be identified in the new LDP and will strive to align with local living and 20 minute neighbourhood principles. However constraints in some

settlements may require the spatial strategy to consider the role of land around settlements for affordable housing and /or affordable self-build opportunities to support rural businesses and green jobs.

- Bespoke Local Housing Policies – Given that a substantial portion of The Park's land area is classified as remote rural, it's crucial to evaluate the applicability of National Planning Framework 4 Policy 17. This policy addresses rural homes, and its criteria may need adjustment based on local knowledge to reflect the unique characteristics of areas straddling the boundary between accessible and remote rural classifications.
- Local Place Plans – Insights from some LPPs have identified specific housing sites that will be considered for incorporation into the Proposed Plan to address local housing needs effectively. These sites will be evaluated during the preparation the LDP using the Site Assessment Methodology.
- Housing Land Requirement - The Population and Background Paper sets out the Scottish Government MATHLR figure for the National Park of a minimum of 30 homes per year , equating to 300 over 10 years. This is significantly lower than the evidenced need within the HNDA's from the four Local Authorities and also lower than the current average approval and completion rate. For the new LDP, it is considered that a continuation with the current ambitious housing target of 75 new homes per year is appropriate and necessary. This equates to a Local Housing Land Requirement for 750 new homes over a ten-year period, significantly in excess of the MATHLUR figure. There has not been any substantive changes to local circumstances to warrant departure from the current LDP housing target, in fact the evidence suggests that the continued loss of housing stock to second and holiday homes is now impacting on some of our local communities and businesses.
- Land Supply - The 2024 Housing Land Audit confirms a strong existing land supply, comprising 316 units on allocated sites, 102 permitted windfall units, and a 10-year windfall allowance of 150 units. While this is sufficient to meet short-term needs, the evidence at present suggests around 182 additional units will need to be identified. A full review of existing allocations and the indicative Housing Land Requirement will be completed during preparation of the next Local Development Plan.
- Short Term Lets – Evidence indicates that certain areas within the National Park are experiencing increasing levels of short-term lets, reducing the amount of private rented homes and adversely affecting housing availability for local people. Further investigation and engagement would be required to inform any potential decision on whether to designate Short Term Let Control Areas to certain areas of the National Park. Careful consideration is required of the merits of this designation towards maintaining housing options for local people alongside any potential impacts it may have on the availability of tourism accommodation, potentially impacting tourism dependent communities and the rural economy.
- Second Homes – In light of the rise in second homes and the challenges this presents for housing stock, particularly in pressured towns and villages, it may be prudent to consider any policy, controls (e.g. 'permanent residence condition') or guidance to address this for new homes.
- Affordable Housing Requirements on mixed tenure sites – The current LDP has a policy which specifies the affordable housing requirements across remote rural and accessible



rural areas of the National Park. The evidence suggests that the current affordable housing contribution levels (25%, 33%, and 50%) warrant re-evaluation. Housing challenges are prevalent not only in accessible rural areas but also in remote rural regions, exacerbated by pressures from second and holiday homes. A uniform contribution rate across the entire Park might be more equitable, or alternatively, maintaining differentiated rates could be justified based on specific local circumstances. It may also be appropriate to review the current commuted sum policy, as adjusting the required contribution could help facilitate the delivery of a greater number of affordable housing options across the National Park.

- **Adaptable Housing** - The LDP should address the need for housing tailored to older adults and set a target for 10% of new builds to be adaptable, including being wheelchair-accessible, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility and future adaptation in housing options. While Stirling currently applies a 15% target, the other three HNDA's set a target of 10%. It was therefore considered that a 10% target is a more realistic and balanced reflection of housing needs and delivery capacity across the National Park.

### **Statements of Agreement / Dispute**

There are no substantive areas of disagreement on the evidence in the paper. Feedback from respondents to the Topic Paper consultation have largely been addressed in the Evidence Report. Stirling Council, Argyll and Bute Council, Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership, Homes for Scotland and Persimmon Homes have confirmed they are content with the paper and the housing targets set.

## Appendix

Figure 1 – Urban – Rural Classification

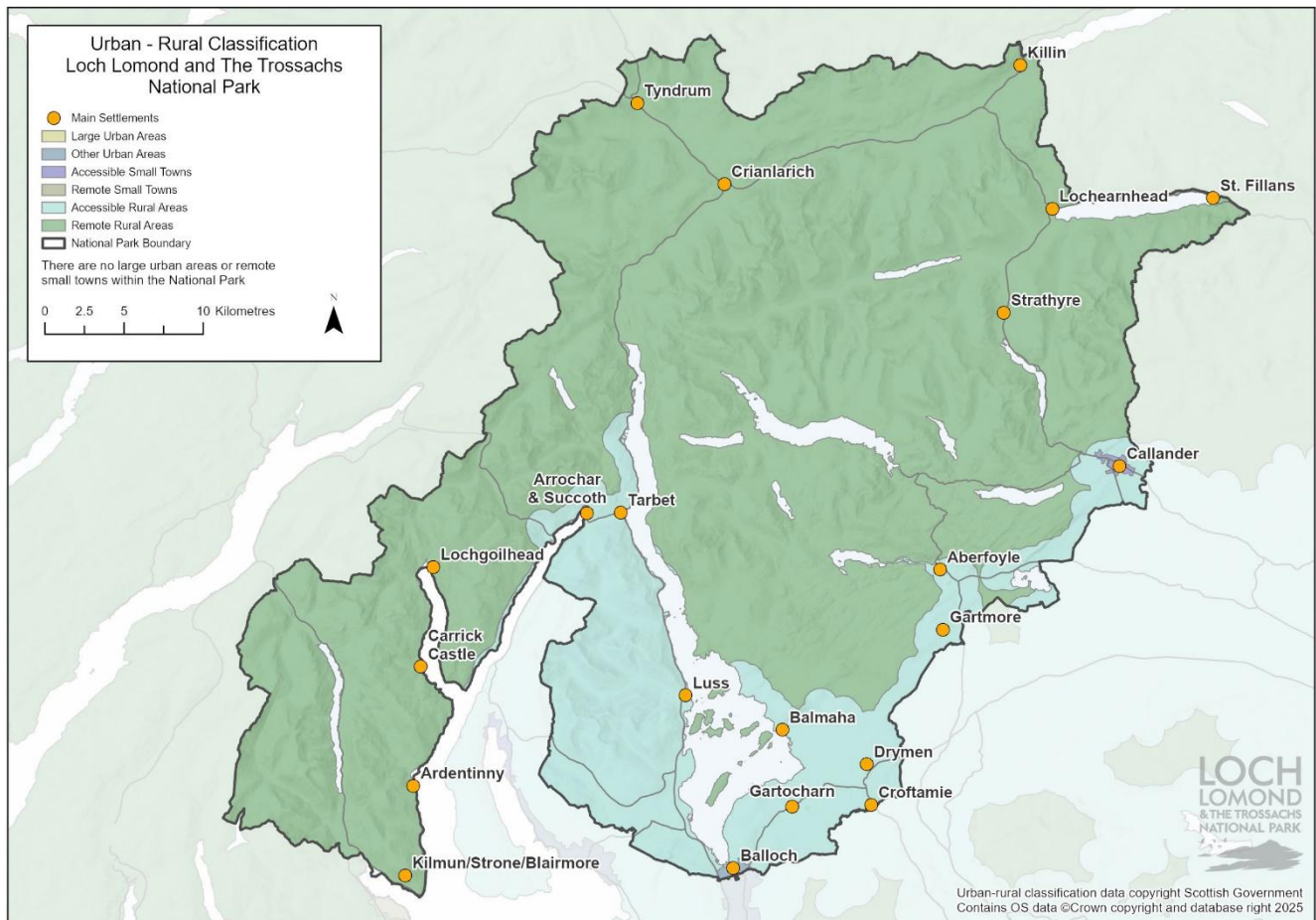


Figure 2 - Local Housing Market Areas

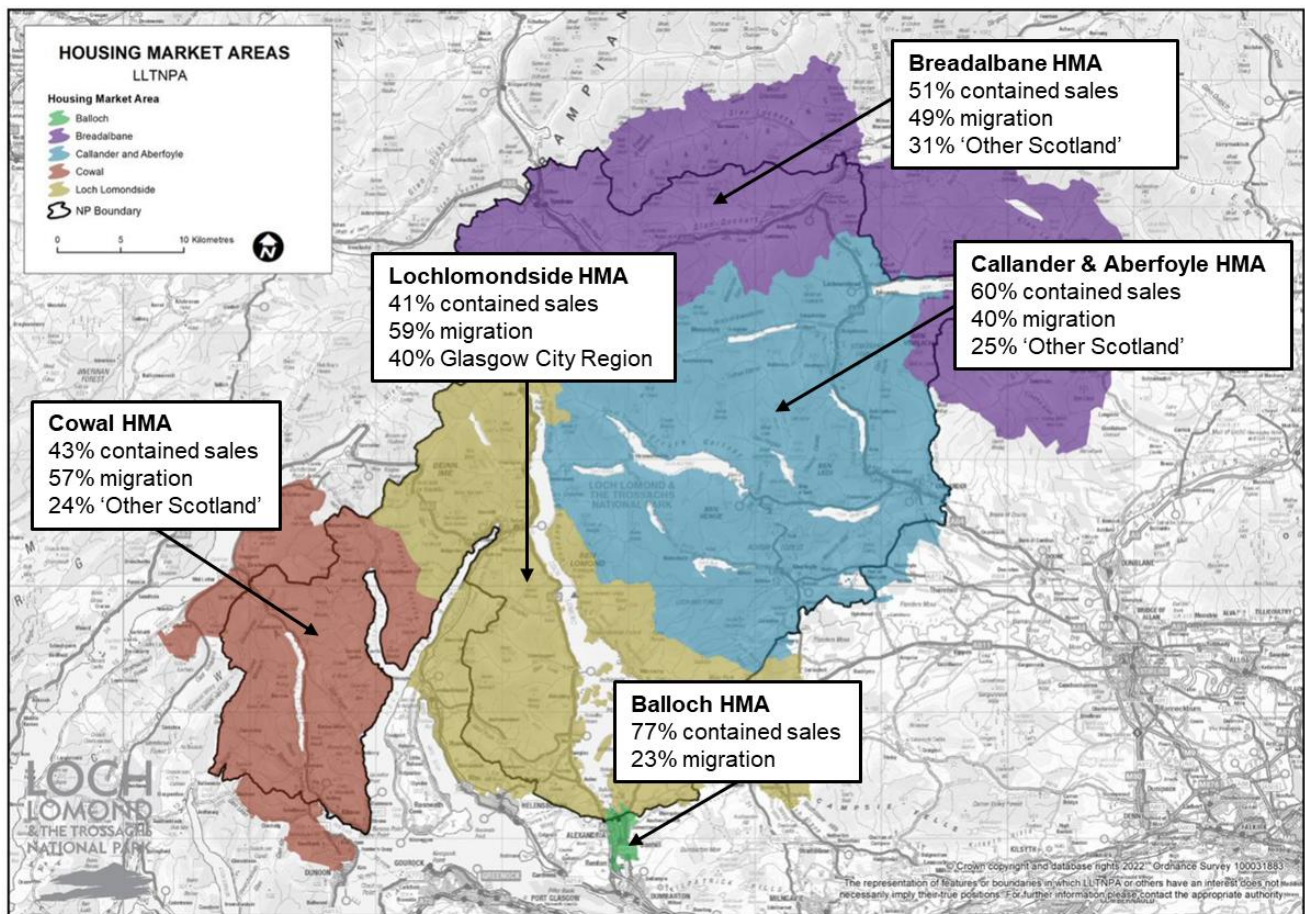


Figure 3 – Detailed Housing Data per Datazone

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
<b>Datazone – name and town/village area</b>	<b>% of residential units datazone within the National Park</b>	<b>No. of Residential Units in The Park (as estimate of total)<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>Of no. of residential units – no. social rent</b>	<b>Vacant (inc long-term empty) as % of housing stock – Column B</b>	<b>Second homes as a % of housing stock – Column B</b>	<b>Approx<sup>8</sup>.no of short-term holiday lets (suitable as homes i.e. not restricted as holiday use) – of Column F</b>	<b>Total short-term lets (commercial properties not included in residential numbers)</b>
<b>Lochgoilhead Carrick Castle and Ardentinny (S01007355)</b>	88.3%	604	37 (6%)	22 (4%)	145 (24%)	46 (8%)	163
<b>Kilmun, Blairmore and Strone (S01007356)</b>	100%	403	53 (13%)	13 (3%)	27 (7%)	25 (6%)	32
<b>Arrochar, Tarbet, Ardgartan, Ardlui (S01007358)</b>	100%	437	65 (15%)	21 (5%)	24 (6%)	18 (4%)	63
<b>Luss, Arden and Glen Fruin (S01007404)</b>	97.88%	220	29 (13%)	15 (6%)	17 (7%)	32 (14%)	269

<sup>7</sup> Data in column B, D and E is extracted from Small Area Statistics on Household Estimates 2021 Council Tax Records <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/households/household-estimates/small-area-statistics-on-households-and-dwellings>

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that this figure is an approximate as short-term letting market fluctuates and this is using data from a web trawl in July 2022 and numbers change depending on the year and the time of year that the search is undertaken – websites trawled inc booking.com, cottages.com, coopercottages, Airbnb, Skyes., tripadvisor and a few local sites.

<b>St Fillans and Comrie (S01011861)</b>	31.49%	138	2 (1%)	8 (6%)	14 (12%)	4 (3%)	49
<b>Balmaha, Milton of Buchanan (S01013001)</b>	100%	178	12 (7%)	5 (3%)	3 (1.7%)	4 (2%)	49
<b>Croftamie (S01013002)</b>	59.7%	154	11 (9%)	8 (5%)	3 (2%)	8 (5%)	43
<b>Drymen North (S01013009)</b>	100%	278	49 (17%) Total of whole of Drymen (10%)	8 (2.9%)	2 (0.7%)	2 (0.7%)	17
<b>Drymen South (S01013010)</b>	69.32%	191	0 (0%)	10 (6%)	1 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	0
<b>Port of Menteith (S01013110)</b>	47.74%	137	6 (5%)	6 (5.2%)	1 (0.8%)	5 (4%)	11
<b>Gartmore (S01013111)</b>	91.10%	193	17 (9%)	5 (2.7%)	5 (2.7%)	0 (0%)	24
<b>Callander (combined S01013112, 113, 115, 116)</b>	100%	1398	353 (27%)	45 (3.5%)	19 (1.5%)	26 (2%)	32
<b>Callander E and Brig o Turk (S01013114)</b>	86.13%	360	0 (0%)	15 (4.6%)	11 (3.4%)	18 (6%)	30
<b>Aberfoyle (S01013117)</b>	100%	274	87 (32%)	5 (1.8%)	5 (1.8%)	6 (2%)	10
<b>Strathard (S01013118)</b>	100%	247	6 (2.5%)	16 (6.6%)	20 (8%)	28 (11%)	77
<b>BLS (S01013119)</b>	99.06%	426	48 (11%)	20 (4.7%)	58 (14%)	71 (17%)	113

<b>Killin (S01013120)</b>	83.20%	453	94 (23%)	32 (7.8%)	32 (7.8%)	26 (6%)	43
<b>Crianlarich and Tyndrum (S01013121)</b>	100%	182	57 (35%)	6 (4%)	9 (5.4%)	11 (7%)	75
<b>Balloch (S01013233, 34, 35, 36, 39)</b>	Unknown	744	0 *Social rent within Balloch is outside NP boundary	9 (1.2%)	2 (0.3%)	6 (0.8%)	7
<b>Balloch (Mollanbowie/Ballagan)</b>	100%	370	0	9 (2.6%)	1 (0.3%)	4 (1 %)	5
<b>Gartocharn and Kilmaronock (S01013242)</b>	100%	268	8 (3%)	11 (4%)	2 (0.7%)	9 (3%)	17



<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>Topic Paper 8 - Living Well Locally</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p><b><u>Policy 9 - Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land and Empty Buildings</u></b> - The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15 (5) the physical and environmental characteristics of the district</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Policy 12 - Zero Waste</u></b> - The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the infrastructure of the district; and</li> <li>• How that infrastructure is used</li> <li>• Regulation 9 – have regard to the national waste management plan</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Policy 15 - Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods</u></b> - The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15(5) the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.</li> <li>• Section 15(2A) a statement of the planning authority's policies and proposals as to the provision of public conveniences.</li> <li>• Section 15(2B) a statement of the planning authority's policies and proposals as to the provision of water refill locations.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Policy 21 - Play, Recreation and Sport</u></b> - The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended, Section 16D(1):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a planning authority must assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area for children in preparing an Evidence Report.</li> <li>• The Town and Country Planning (Play Sufficiency Assessment)(Scotland) Regulations 2023 set out the form and content of the Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA); the persons who must be consulted in preparing the PSA; and the publication of the PSA.</li> <li>• Regulation 9 – have regard to any open space strategy</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Policy 23 - Health and Safety</u></b> - The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended, Section 15(5):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the size, composition, health and distribution of the population of the district;</li> <li>• the health needs of the population of the district;</li> <li>• the infrastructure of the district (including health care facilities); and</li> <li>• how that infrastructure is used.</li> <li>• Regulation 9 – have regard to location of control of major accident hazard establishments/pipelines</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Other relevant legislation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Aims of National Parks in Scotland (as set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000)</li> </ul>

## Links to Evidence

### **Interactive Map**

For any data that is not linked in this topic paper, these can be viewed on the National Park Authority's [interactive GIS map viewer](#) under 'A Thriving Place' layer.

- [Interactive GIS Map Viewer](#)

### **National Park Partnership Plan**

- [Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029](#)

### **Policy 9 – Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land and Empty Buildings**

#### **National Policy Context**

- [Vacant and Derelict Land in Scotland 2019](#)
- [Open Mosaic Habitats High Value Guidance: When is Brownfield Land of High Environmental Value? 2015](#)
- [Vacant and Derelict Land Reuse: Progress Report 2024](#)
- [Transforming Vacant and Derelict Land in Scotland](#)

#### **Local Context**

- [Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance](#)

#### **National Park Context**

- [Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority Vacant and Derelict Land audit 2019](#)
- [Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Register 2024](#)
- [Buildings at Risk Register](#)
- [Contaminated Land, Scotland](#)
- [UK Radon Map](#)

### **Policy 12 – Zero Waste**

#### **National Context**

- [Scotland's Zero Waste Plan 2010](#)
- [Making Things Last: A Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland 2016](#)
- [Stop, Sort, Burn, Bury: Incineration in The Waste Hierarchy: Independent Review 2022](#)

#### **Local Context**

- [Stirling Council 10-year strategy 2023](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Waste Strategy 2024](#)
- [Perth and Kinross Waste Management Plan - Perth & Kinross Council 2021](#)
- [West Dunbartonshire Council Waste Strategy 2023 - 2028](#)
- [Scottish Environment Protection Agency Household Waste Data 2024](#)
- [Scottish Environment Protection Agency Waste Site Capacity](#)

#### **National Park Context**

- [Scottish Environment Protection Agency Waste Management Facilities](#)
- [Loch Lomond and The Trossachs - Explore Outdoor Interactive Map](#)



## **Policy 15 – Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods**

### **National Context**

- [Scottish Government Planning Guidance: Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods 2024](#)
- [Briefing: Place and Wellbeing Outcomes 2024](#)
- [Living Well Locally - 20 Minute Communities in the Highlands and Islands 2022](#)
- [20 Minute Neighbourhoods in a Scottish Context 2021](#)
- [HITRANS 20 Minute Neighbourhoods Study 2022](#)

### **National Park Context**

- [Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority 20 Minute neighbourhood Vision 2021](#)
- [Aberfoyle – as a community mobility hub 2024](#)
- [Arrochar and Tarbet – as a community mobility hub 2024](#)
- [Callander – as a community mobility hub 2024](#)
- [Drymen Village Active Travel 2021](#)
- [LLTNP Core Paths Plan 2023](#)
- [The Scottish Living Locally Data Portal \(SLLDP\)](#)
- [Priority Places for Food Index 2024](#)
- [Scottish Water Map 2025](#)

## **Policy 21 – Play, Recreation and Sport**

### **National Context**

- [Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Vision 2025](#)
- [Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Action Plan 2025](#)
- [A More Active Scotland: Scotland's Physical Activity Delivery Plan 2018](#)

### **National Park Context**

- [Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Open Space Audit 2007](#)
- [Scottish Household Survey on Physical Activity Participation 2022](#)
- Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Annual Visitor Study 2025 (document not yet available online, will be submitted to Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals Division at Gate check stage)
- [Play Sufficiency Assessment](#)

## **Policy 23 – Health and Safety**

### **National Context**

- [Public Health Priorities for Scotland 2018](#)
- [Place And Wellbeing: Integrating Land Use Planning 2024](#)
- [A Healthier Future – Scotland's Diet & Healthy Weight Delivery Plan 2018](#)
- [Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027](#)
- [Briefing: Place and Wellbeing Outcomes 2024](#)
- [Creating-hope-together-scotlands-suicide-prevention-action-plan-2022-2025](#)
- [National Guidance on Action to Address Suicides at Locations of Concern 2022](#)
- [Cleaner Air For Scotland 2: Towards a Better Place for Everyone 2021](#)

- [Long-term Monitoring of Health Inequalities 2021](#)

#### National Park Context

- [Travelling Distance to Hospital A+E Department](#)
- [The Scottish Public Health Profiles 2024](#)
- [Census 2022 - Health Data](#)
- [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020](#)
- [Mental Health Awareness](#)
- [Scottish Public Health Observatory Profiles](#)
- [West Dunbartonshire Adult Mental Health](#)
- [Stirling Adult Mental Health](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Adult Mental Health](#)
- [Perth and Kinross Adult Mental Health](#)
- [Scottish Air Quality Map 2025](#)
- [Overview of Scotland's noise Data 2024](#)
- [Locations of Control or Major Accident Hazard Establishments and/or Pipelines 2015](#)
- [Locations of Landslides](#)

### **National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context**

Five NPF4 policy areas have been grouped into this Evidence Paper as they are closely connected in the context of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. This paper focuses on the health and wellbeing of residents, recognising the important role that access to quality greenspace, play provision, and safe environments play in supporting positive outcomes. Policies on brownfield, vacant and derelict land and zero waste have been included as the reuse of land and resources can improve local places while reducing environmental impacts. Local Living and the 20-minute neighbourhood concept are also considered, acknowledging the opportunities and challenges of applying this approach within a predominantly rural setting.

**Policy 9 Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land and Empty Buildings** places a significant emphasis and priority to the redevelopment of brownfield sites. NPF4 defines “brownfield” as land which has previously been developed. This covers vacant or derelict land, and land occupied by redundant or unused buildings. The redevelopment or reuse of brownfield sites and buildings for housing or businesses can bring unused or underutilised sites back into productive use and reduce the need for expansion onto greenfield land.

**Policy 12 Zero Waste** seeks to encourage, promote and facilitate development that is consistent with the waste hierarchy to reduce, reuse and recycle materials. Local Development Plans have a key role in identifying the necessary waste infrastructure in the right locations to achieve ambitious targets for reducing waste and increasing recycling.

**Policy 15 Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods** aims to apply the Place Principle and support the creation of connected, compact neighbourhoods where people can meet most daily needs close to home, ideally by walking, wheeling, cycling, or using sustainable transport. Local Development Plans should promote local living, including 20-minute neighbourhoods, through their spatial strategy, site briefs, and masterplans. Approaches should reflect local context, settlement patterns, and the specific characteristics and challenges of each place.

Policy 15 sets out key criteria to consider when assessing planning proposals, including local access to:

- sustainable transport (public transport, safe and high-quality walking, wheeling, and cycling networks)
- employment opportunities
- shopping and other local services
- health and social care facilities
- childcare, schools, and lifelong learning
- play spaces, parks, green streets, community gardens, food growing opportunities, sports and recreation facilities
- publicly accessible toilets
- affordable and diverse housing options, including the ability to age in place

These criteria provide a framework for exploring Local Living within the Evidence Report. Mapping should be used to develop a methodology for delivering Local Living across the National Park.

**Policy 21 Play, Recreation and Sport** aims to encourage and support play, recreation, and sport by improving natural and built environments with equitable access to facilities, enhancing physical and mental health. Local Development Plans should identify sites for sports and outdoor recreation based on community needs, Play Sufficiency Assessments, and Open Space Strategies. These spaces should integrate with blue and green infrastructure while considering relevant plans such as flood risk management. All new provisions must be well-designed, high-quality, accessible, and inclusive.

**Policy 23 Health and Safety** aims to protect people and places from environmental harm, mitigate safety risks, and promote development that enhances health and wellbeing. It seeks to improve health, reduce inequalities, and ensure safe environments while supporting planned health infrastructure. Local Development Plans should address health inequalities, particularly in disadvantaged areas, by identifying necessary health and social care services in collaboration with relevant authorities. LDPs should promote healthier lifestyles through exercise opportunities, community food growing, and suicide prevention awareness. Additionally, spatial strategies should ensure safe distances between hazardous sites and public or environmentally sensitive areas.

## **National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2024 – 2029 Context**

The Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2024 – 2029 is the overarching management framework that sets out a shared vision and priorities for the future of the National Park. It provides the strategic direction for decision-making, ensuring that conservation, visitor management, climate action and community wellbeing are addressed in an integrated way to deliver long-term benefits for people, place and nature.

### **Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land and Empty Buildings**

The National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) highlights the importance of addressing brownfield, vacant, derelict land, and empty buildings within Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park as part of its sustainable development and nature restoration strategies. A key focus is on prioritising the repurposing and redevelopment of brownfield and derelict sites to reduce environmental impacts, restore degraded landscapes, and support local economies. Strategies for vacant and derelict land emphasise assessing and incorporating these sites into development plans to bring them back into productive use, contributing to regeneration efforts while reducing visual and environmental blight. The Plan also stresses the importance of

evaluating the biodiversity value of long term vacant and derelict sites, as some may have naturalised and become ecosystems hosting diverse species and may merit alternatives to redevelopment.

### **Zero Waste**

Local authorities retain statutory responsibility for waste collection and disposal, but the National Park Partnership Plan highlights green jobs as central to achieving net zero, spanning sectors like renewable energy, nature-based industries, zero waste and the circular economy.

### **Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods**

The NPPP explains that Local Living in the National Park is about enabling people to meet more of their daily needs close to where they live or work, supported by good rural services, affordable housing, local food growing, renewable energy, and better transport options. It highlights how reducing dependence on cars through home or hybrid working, local business hubs, active travel, and community-led initiatives can cut emissions while creating more vibrant and resilient communities. Local Place Plans and Community Climate Action Hubs are identified as important tools to help communities shape this transition, while addressing housing pressures from second homes and short-term lets is also a priority. Overall, the Plan links Local Living to climate action, community wellbeing, and building a thriving rural economy.

### **Play, Recreation and Sport**

The NPPP emphasises the importance of play, recreation, and sport in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park as integral to promoting health, well-being, and enjoyment of the natural environment. It highlights efforts to enhance opportunities for outdoor recreation and ensure accessibility for people of all ages and abilities. This involves the development and maintenance of high-quality recreational infrastructure, including paths, trails, and facilities that support active lifestyles. The plan also focuses on increasing participation in recreational activities, reducing barriers to access, and fostering a stronger connection between people and nature. Encouraging responsible outdoor activities is a priority, aligning with sustainability goals and protecting The Park's natural beauty and biodiversity.

### **Health and Safety**

The NPPP emphasises health and safety in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park as a critical component of ensuring the well-being of both residents and visitors. It highlights the importance of promoting safe and responsible access to The Park's natural and recreational assets, supported by well-maintained infrastructure such as paths, trails, and visitor facilities. The plan addresses health by encouraging outdoor activities that contribute to physical and mental well-being while ensuring the natural environment is preserved and accessible to all. This includes targeted efforts to reduce hazards associated with natural events like flooding, landslides, and wildfires, as these can have significant impacts on communities, infrastructure, and visitor safety.

## **Summary of Evidence**

This Topic Paper is divided into five sections, reflecting National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Policies, each pulling together the relevant policies and data for the National Park area.

The policy areas are:

- Policy 9 – Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land and Empty Buildings
- Policy 12 – Zero Waste
- Policy 15 – Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods
- Policy 21 – Play, Recreation and Sport

- Policy 23 – Health and Safety

It is also important to acknowledge that there is overlap between the Living Well Locally paper and policy areas explored within other Topic Papers. The relevant Topic Papers that should be read in conjunction with this paper are:

- Topic Paper 3 – Infrastructure First and Digital Infrastructure
- Topic Paper 4 – Blue and Green Infrastructure
- Topic Paper 9 – Historic Assets and Design, Quality and Place

## **Policy 9 – Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land and Empty Buildings**

### National Policy Context

This section details some of the National policy and research which will influence the policy direction of the new Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Local Development Plan.

### Vacant and Derelict Land in Scotland

In February 2019, the Scottish Land Commission published research which considered the harms caused by vacant and derelict land (VDL) on communities and to develop a framework which could be used for assessing the impact of VDL.

The report states that in 2018, VDL in Scotland covered over 11,000 hectares, with 80% located within settlements. It also draws on figures which demonstrate that a significant proportion of the population, especially in deprived areas, lives within 500 meters of VDL. The report goes into detail about the effects of VDL on communities, the health of the population, the economy etc:

- Health: VDL is linked to poorer physical and mental health outcomes, including stress and anxiety, often exacerbated in deprived communities.
- Environment: Contaminants in VDL pose risks to soil, air, and water quality. Neglected sites can also diminish local perceptions of the area.
- Economy: VDL affects property values and discourages investment, with remediation costs often deterring development.
- Community: VDL impacts perceptions of safety and wellbeing. Long-term vacancy contributes to a decline in community morale and resilience.

The report emphasises the need for coordinated action across government, private developers, and communities to transform VDL into assets that benefit local areas. By addressing the harms and leveraging the potential of these sites, Scotland aims to foster sustainable community development.

### Open mosaic habitats high value guidance: when is brownfield land of ‘high environmental value’?

A report written by Wildlife and Countryside Link – *Open Mosaic Habitats High Value Guidance: When is Brownfield Land of ‘High Environmental Value’?* – provides guidance on assessing whether brownfield land is of high environmental value, particularly regarding biodiversity. It addresses the balance between redeveloping brownfield sites for economic purposes and preserving those that serve as vital habitats for wildlife.

Brownfield land is previously developed land, often considered for regeneration. However, some brownfield sites have significant ecological value, supporting rare and threatened species. These sites often provide important habitats in urban areas, acting as refuges for wildlife and as accessible green spaces for local communities.

NPF4 encourages the reuse of brownfield land for development, provided it does not hold high environmental value. However, the lack of a clear definition of "high environmental value" has led to confusion and loss of wildlife-rich brownfield sites.

The document sets out some criteria for High Environmental Value. A brownfield site is considered of high environmental value if:

- It contains priority habitats, as listed under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- It holds nature conservation designations like Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Local Wildlife Sites.
- It supports biodiversity, particularly the open mosaic habitats on previously developed land (OMHPDL), which are crucial for various species including rare invertebrates, plants, and reptiles.

While only a small percentage of brownfield sites are of high environmental value, protecting these sites is crucial for biodiversity. The document argues that safeguarding such areas would not significantly hinder brownfield development overall but would prevent inappropriate development on ecologically important sites.

Apart from biodiversity, brownfield sites can offer recreational spaces for communities and contribute to ecosystem services like carbon sequestration, water cycle regulation, and microclimate moderation.

### **Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Reuse Report 2024**

The 2024 Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land (VDL) Reuse Progress Report, prepared by Ryden for the Scottish Land Commission, highlights encouraging progress in tackling long-term derelict land and embedding reuse within national policy.

Scotland's total VDL has reduced from 11,037 hectares in 2018 to 9,236 hectares in 2022, but many long-term sites remain difficult to unlock due to contamination, ownership and viability challenges. Housing is the leading reuse outcome, accounting for more than half of redeveloped sites, while other uses include industry, agriculture, and green space. Smaller sites (under one hectare) continue to be reused most frequently, but even persistent long-term derelict sites are increasingly being brought forward, often for residential development.

Barriers to reuse include high remediation costs, complex ownership, contamination, and weak market demand in some areas. Nonetheless, case studies demonstrate that with the right combination of public, private, and community leadership, stalled sites can be successfully transformed.

Overall, Scotland's stock of vacant and derelict land is declining, reuse is becoming more mainstream, and even the most challenging sites are beginning to see progress. Sustained policy support, targeted investment, and innovative delivery models will be critical to maintain momentum and deliver wider social, economic, and environmental benefits.

### **Transforming Vacant and Derelict Land in Scotland**

The report highlights how Scotland's legacy of vacant and derelict land (VDL) continues to affect communities, with almost a third of the population living within 500 metres of a derelict site, rising to over half in deprived areas.

These spaces negatively impact wellbeing, yet the case studies show their potential to be transformed into assets that address housing needs, tackle climate change, improve health, and support resilient local economies. Examples include new affordable housing in Inverness,

renewable energy generation at Edinburgh's Saughton Park, urban food growing projects in Glasgow, and play and learning spaces such as the Wishawhill Wood Pump Track and Baltic Street Adventure Playground.

Other projects illustrate how VDL can support jobs and enterprise, as in the redevelopment of the Shawfield chemical works site, or provide innovative responses to social issues, such as the Social Bite Village for people experiencing homelessness. Forward-looking projects like vertical farming in Invergowrie also demonstrate the role of reimagined land in delivering sustainable food systems.

Together, these examples demonstrate how coordinated action, community engagement, and innovative approaches can bring derelict sites back into productive use, creating places to live, work, play, and connect while contributing to Scotland's wider environmental and social goals.

### Local Context

#### **Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance**

The Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance developed by the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership (SEHP) aims to support local authorities in Scotland to bring empty homes back into use through a more strategic and integrated approach. Created in collaboration with housing consultancy Arneil Johnston, the document offers advisory guidance and a flexible framework that each local authority can adapt to suit their local needs and context. It aligns closely with national housing policies, including the Scottish Government's "Housing to 2040" strategy, and supports objectives such as increasing affordable housing supply, regenerating communities, and contributing to climate goals through sustainable housing reuse.

It is noted that each of the four local authorities that cover the National Park has an Empty Homes officer who is responsible for encouraging property owners to sell or let their empty properties.

### National Park Context

#### **The Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey**

The Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (SVDLS) is updated annually with data returns from all local and planning authorities to the Scottish Government. It involves reporting the annual change in the take-up of brownfield land and recording new sites which have become vacant or derelict. These are mapped and various details are recorded for them, including the former use of the land, the likelihood of it coming back into use and how soon this may take place. Sites are categorised according to whether they are:

- *Vacant land* – brownfield sites which are ready for new development, and which must be within settlements; or
- *Derelict land* – brownfield sites which can either be inside or outside settlements, but are not ready for new development, for example due to the presence of unusable buildings.

SVDLS sites include those that are allocated for employment use or housing or are windfall sites where developers have pursued planning applications for housing but work on site has not yet started or has stalled. The SVDLS requires Local Authorities to identify sites that have been removed from the survey since the last return, for example due to development on them commencing or due to them becoming naturalised.

The National Park contributes annually to the SVDLS process and submitted the most recent return October 2024. The most recent submission shows no real change from the previous vacant and derelict land survey and lists 8 sites that cover a cumulative area of 7.26ha. A map of these sites has been linked in the interactive map above. All the vacant and derelict land within the National Park has been allocated in the previous Local Development Plan to encourage development on site

Several vacant and derelict sites across different locations have been identified for potential development. The following information is from The Park Authority's 2024 return. In Lochearnhead, the Station Cottages site (0.92 ha), previously used for transport, remains derelict under private ownership with no planning updates, while the Holiday Centre site (0.56 ha) has planning permission for 12 homes but remains undeveloped. In Carrick Castle, a former hotel site (0.53 ha) has been vacant since 2001 - 2004, with approved plans for eight homes. Drymen's Salmon Leap (0.25 ha), previously a tourism site, is derelict with no planning updates. In Arrochar, the Former Torpedo Range (3.61 ha), previously used for defence, has remained derelict since 2001 - 2004 though a planning application submitted in 2023 for a tourism led development is pending a decision. In Tarbet, both the Tourist Information Centre site (0.16 ha) and the Former Harvey's Garage site (0.42 ha) have been derelict since the early 2000s, with no updates. Lastly, In Balloch, *Woodbank* (0.81 ha), a former residential and latterly a tourism site vacant since 1981 - 1985, is part of a major development proposal that was refused planning permission by the National Park Authority with that decision currently subject of an appeal that Scottish Ministers will determine.

There does not appear to be a pattern to the distribution of vacant and derelict sites across the National Park as they are spread across the National Park within settlements or close to their boundary and across all four local authority areas.

The SVDLS requires respondents to rate the 'development potential' of sites, which captures the likelihood of them coming back into productive use and how soon this may be. Of the 8 undeveloped sites 4 are deemed to be developable short term, 3 are deemed to be developable medium term and 1 is deemed to have an undetermined time scale for development

The National Park undertook a Vacant and Derelict Land Audit in 2019 and the most recent 2024 return to the Vacant and Derelict Land Survey shows very little change in these sites with all remaining undeveloped. This highlights a key area of focus for the National Park and the next iteration of the Local Development Plan and work should be completed which develops mechanisms for unlocking these development sites.

### **Buildings at Risk Register**

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) maintains a list of important buildings that are at risk in Scotland – The Buildings at Risk Register (BARR). The buildings included on this list are usually listed buildings or buildings within Conservation Areas and may be at risk due to them being structurally unsound, long-term vacant or damaged by fire. The current BARR has 50 buildings registered as 'at risk' within the National Park.

The buildings at risk within the National Park are located across the authority with the majority being located in rural setting (52%) and rural settlements (36%). The locations of the buildings at risk across the National Park have been mapped (figure 1 in the appendix and under Topic Paper 9 in the interactive map) and analysis has identified three hotspots:

- Drymen (particularly surrounding Buchanan Castle)
- Callander



- Kilmun /Blairmore.

The BARR includes details of each of the buildings at risk and these have been totalled to provide an overview of the threat to the historic environment across the area. The compiled numbers are shown in the tables below:

Location Type		
Category	Number	Percentage
Rural	26	52%
Rural Settlement	18	36%
Small Town	5	10%
Remote	1	2%

Category of Risk		
Category	Number	Percentage
Low	10	20%
Moderate	16	32%
High	20	40%
Critical	4	8%

Condition		
Category	Number	Percentage
Ruinous	7	14%
Very Poor	11	22%
Poor	19	38%
Fair	12	24%
Good	1	2%

### **Contaminated Land and other hazards**

The National Park has no 'special sites' of statutory registered contaminated land (under Part 11A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990). Individual sites of former use or development may contain contaminants and this is assessed and regulated through the planning application process in consultation with the relevant Council's Environmental Health Department.

### **Radon Gas**

Radon is a naturally occurring, radioactive, colourless and odourless gas that is formed where uranium and radium are present in our underlying geology. Where this gas occurs under a dwelling, the external walls contain it and the containment of radon can build up inside the dwelling over the long-term posing a risk to health.

Radon produces a radioactive dust in the air we breathe. The dust is trapped in our airways and emits radiation that damages the inside of our lungs. This damage, like the damage caused by smoking, increases our risk of lung cancer.

Within the National Park there are small areas where the underlying geology may result in higher concentrations of naturally occurring radon gas, these areas primarily on the boundary of The Park, particularly the North and South. The UK Health and Security Agency produce a [UK radon map](#) which shows pockets of land where there is the potential for homes to have levels at or above the UK action level. Within these areas appropriate buildings regulations must be followed. Guidance also suggests that the same measures are established within a 50m buffer of these areas to account for uncertain geological boundaries.

### **Major Accident Hazard establishments and / or pipelines**

Evidence Reports are required to consider any additional, recently granted Hazardous Substances Consents and any expansion plans for new or existing sites, of businesses/operators using hazardous substances. There are no premises within the National Park which meet the HSE threshold for the Major Control of Accident Hazard Regulations.

The Finner High Pressure Pipeline crosses through the southern part of the National Park from east to west and requires to be accounted for in any development proposals sited within the identified INEOS consultation buffer zones. The future of this pipeline remains uncertain, and as such, it may not need to be considered in future planning decisions.

## **Policy 12 – Zero Waste**

### National Context

This section details the National policy which will inform the policy position of the National Park in the new Local Development Plan.

### Scotland's Zero Waste Plan

Scotland's Zero Waste Plan, published by the Scottish Government in June 2010 outlines a strategic approach to waste management, aiming to reduce waste, increase recycling, and promote resource efficiency. The overarching aim is for Scotland to become a zero-waste society by 2025, with targets of recycling 70% of all waste and sending only 5% of waste to landfill.

The plan emphasises waste prevention, reuse, recycling, and recovery of materials. The goal is not to eliminate waste completely but to minimise it and manage resources effectively. The plan aligns with Scotland's Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, which sets targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 42% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. The shift to zero waste will reduce Scotland's reliance on new primary resources and help combat climate change by reducing emissions from waste. Additionally, Scotland is targeting a reduction in food waste in landfills. These targets align with the country's broader climate action goals, aiming to transition towards a circular economy and contribute to Scotland's net-zero emissions ambitions.

### Making Things Last: A Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland (2016)

Making Things Last: A Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland outlines Scotland's commitment to transitioning towards a more sustainable, resource-efficient economy. The strategy highlights the environmental, economic, and social benefits of adopting a circular economy, emphasising the need to reduce waste, extend product lifespans, and improve recycling. It aligns with Scotland's Zero Waste Plan and Safeguarding Scotland's Resources policies, setting ambitious targets to cut carbon emissions, reduce food waste by 33% by 2025, and promote the reuse and remanufacturing industries.

The strategy prioritises four key sectors: food and drink, manufacturing, construction and the built environment, and energy infrastructure. It proposes measures such as designing products for longer lifespans, supporting second-hand markets, enhancing repair services, and expanding recycling infrastructure. The plan also calls for greater producer responsibility, ensuring manufacturers account for the environmental impact of their products throughout their lifecycle.

Scotland aims to position itself as a global leader in circular economy practices, integrating sustainability into economic development, job creation, and environmental protection. By embedding circular economy principles into business models, public services, and everyday life, the strategy aspires to create a more resilient, low-carbon, and resource-efficient future.

### Stop, Sort, Burn, Bury? – Independent Review of the Role of Incineration in the Waste Hierarchy in Scotland

The report titled – Stop, Sort, Burn, Bury? Independent Review of the Role of Incineration in the Waste Hierarchy in Scotland – was published in April 2022.

The report evaluates the role of incineration in Scotland's waste management system and its alignment with national carbon reduction targets. The review, focuses on residual waste management, examining how Scotland can transition toward a circular economy while balancing environmental, economic, and social impacts.

The review found that there will likely be a capacity gap in managing residual waste by 2025, primarily due to the upcoming ban on biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) in landfills. However, if Scotland meets its recycling and waste reduction targets, this gap could be minimised or eliminated. To avoid overcapacity in the future, the report recommends that Scotland limits new incineration infrastructure by halting further planning permissions for incinerators, unless balanced by the closure of older facilities (Recommendation 4). This is critical as too much incineration capacity could discourage recycling and waste reduction efforts.

The report highlights concerns that a reliance on incineration could act as a constraint on greater waste prevention and recycling, particularly as incineration produces carbon dioxide, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. The review confirms that while modern incinerators are less harmful than landfills, they still have environmental impacts, particularly on climate change, and should only be part of a transitional strategy towards reducing waste and increasing recycling.

The report emphasises the need for separate reporting of greenhouse gas emissions from incineration (Recommendation 12). Furthermore, the Scottish Government is urged to explore technologies such as Combined Heat and Power and carbon capture to reduce emissions from existing incinerators (Recommendation 14).

The review underlines the importance of careful planning and decision-making to avoid effects that could hinder recycling and circular economy goals. It specifically recommends that no new planning permissions for incinerators be granted unless there is a corresponding closure of existing capacity. Additionally, the report calls for incorporating these strategies into Scotland's fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) to ensure future developments align with the country's broader environmental and waste management goals. Community engagement is another critical aspect highlighted in the planning process. Effective and authentic engagement with local communities is vital to the successful planning and operation of waste treatment facilities (Recommendation 8).

### **Local Authority Waste Management Plans**

The National Park Authority is not directly responsible for waste management within its boundary and instead this responsibility lies with the four Local Authorities which make up the National Park. In this section each of the Local Authorities waste management strategies has been summarised as the National Park will need to take these into account when considering waste management in the new Local Development Plan. Some data has also been provided within this section on each of the four local authorities waste statistics.

### **Stirling Council Household Waste and Recycling Policy**

The 10-Year Strategy for Thriving Stirling (2020-2030) includes zero waste and waste management as part of its broader commitment to achieving Carbon Net Zero and tackling the climate emergency. Stirling Council has declared a Climate & Ecological Emergency and is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, addressing waste regulation, and improving recycling and waste prevention.

The strategy recognises that achieving zero waste requires a shift in how Stirling handles waste disposal and resource management. The strategy underscores the importance of collaboration

between government, businesses, and communities to implement effective waste management and emission reduction policies.

#### Argyll and Bute Waste Strategy

The Argyll and Bute Waste Strategy 2024 outlines the local authority's plans and approaches to waste management, aiming to align with Scottish Government policies and promote sustainable waste reduction, reuse, and recycling practices. It emphasises compliance with upcoming legislative changes, such as the ban on Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) in landfills and other national waste reduction goals.

The Local Authority's overarching aim is to promote waste reduction, reuse, and recycling through public education, clear guidelines, and support for local reuse initiatives.

The strategy is tailored to different regions within Argyll and Bute, including the islands and mainland areas. Waste from islands like Tiree, Islay, and Mull is managed locally through Council-operated landfill sites, while other areas have private contracts for waste disposal. There are several changes to waste policy outlined in the document:

- By 2021, the council must stop sending biodegradable waste (food, garden waste, paper) to landfills. This will require a transition to alternative waste disposal methods, potentially involving increased costs.
- In 2026, the council's contract with Renewi will end, prompting a need to explore new waste disposal models, either in-house or outsourced.
- The Scottish Government's upcoming Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drink containers will affect recycling streams by diverting certain materials away from kerbside collections.

The document outlines two key challenges in relation to waste management. The first is geographic isolation and limited infrastructure, which pose unique challenges to waste management in Argyll and Bute. Finance is also an issue for waste management as landfill tax is a significant cost, amounting to around 75% of total disposal costs. Reducing landfill use is key to saving money and reducing environmental impact.

The Argyll and Bute Waste Strategy mentions that the waste from the Helensburgh and Lomond area, which is within the boundaries of the National Park, is collected and disposed of at third-party private sites outside Argyll and Bute.

#### Perth and Kinross Waste Management Plan 2010-2025

The Perth & Kinross Council Waste Management Plan (2010-2025) provides strategic direction for managing waste in alignment with Scotland's Zero Waste Plan. Its key goals are to reduce landfill use, increase recycling, and promote sustainable waste practices while addressing local challenges.

The plan follows the waste hierarchy: prevention, reuse, recycling, and disposal and it aligns with Scotland's Zero Waste Plan, aiming for 70% recycling by 2025 and less than 5% waste going to landfill by 2025. The plan includes initiatives to prevent waste at the source through local campaigns, community projects, and business support for waste minimisation.

The Council acknowledges the need for flexibility in waste management to adapt to changes in waste composition and national regulations. The plan emphasises public engagement through national and local waste awareness campaigns. Community involvement and partnerships with local charities are also key components.

Although primarily focused on municipal waste, the plan also touches on managing commercial and industrial waste in line with Scotland's broader targets for commercial and industrial waste recycling.

The waste management plan supports integrating waste facilities into local development plans to ensure adequate infrastructure for recycling and waste treatment. The council will collaborate with planning authorities to identify land suitable for waste facilities as part of broader strategic development efforts.

#### West Dunbartonshire Council Waste Strategy 2023 - 2028

The West Dunbartonshire Council Waste Strategy (2023-2028) outlines the Council's short and long-term plans to manage waste, aligning with Scotland's climate and zero-waste goals.

The waste service is responsible for 47% of the council's carbon footprint. The strategy details ways to reduce this by improving waste prevention, encouraging reuse, and increasing recycling efforts. The council aims to achieve zero waste to landfill by 2025, which aligns with Scottish Government targets. It outlines plans to increase recycling services and reduce the amount of residual waste through better resource recovery.

The document outlines the council's strategic objectives which are included below:

- Transition towards a circular economy by maximising the reuse of materials and reducing landfill use.
- Provide a cost-effective and compliant waste service that meets national regulations, including the 2025 ban on biodegradable waste in landfills.
- Ensure that the service is customer-focused, with responsive services that meet household needs.

The document focuses on two key enablers which will help the local authority meet its recycling targets. The first is investing in infrastructure improvements, such as the development of a Recycling Resource and Reuse Centre (RRRC) to manage and process waste locally. The second is to ensure there is a strong emphasis on community engagement, aiming to drive behavioural change toward waste reduction and recycling.

#### SEPA Waste Data

Across the four authorities that make up Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park – West Dunbartonshire, Stirling, Argyll and Bute, and Perth and Kinross – the total waste generated in 2023 varied significantly.

Across the entire local authority area, West Dunbartonshire, Stirling, and Argyll and Bute each recorded the lowest levels of waste generation, producing between 0 and 50,000 tonnes. In contrast, Perth and Kinross generated a significantly higher amount, falling within the 50,000 to 100,000 tonnes range.

Recycling rates across these areas also differed. West Dunbartonshire had the lowest household recycling rate at 30-40%. Argyll and Bute achieved a rate of 40-50%, while Perth and Kinross and Stirling had the highest rate at 50-60%.

In terms of waste composition, Argyll and Bute's waste was primarily made up of household waste and vegetal waste. Similarly, in Perth and Kinross, the largest contributors were household waste, wood waste and vegetal waste. Stirling's waste was also dominated by

household waste, amounting to 18, 674 tonnes. West Dunbartonshire followed a similar pattern, with household waste comprising the largest share at 23, 712 tonnes.

The total business waste generated by these areas was 61,826 tonnes in Argyll and Bute, 121,551 tonnes in Perth and Kinross, 45,723 tonnes in Stirling, and 40,580 tonnes in West Dunbartonshire. These figures highlight the variation in waste generation and recycling practices across the National Park's council areas.

### **Landfill Sites**

There are no landfill sites within the National Park boundary but each of the Local Authorities has a number of landfill sites. As of the latest 2023 data, Argyll and Bute has 19 landfill sites, with a total of 26,908 tonnes of waste landfilled and a remaining capacity of 205,836 tonnes.

Perth and Kinross and Stirling have 12 and 4 landfill sites, respectively, but no details on waste landfilled or remaining capacity are available. West Dunbartonshire operates 6 landfill sites, with 128,810 tonnes of waste landfilled and a significantly larger remaining capacity of 2,063,976 tonnes.

### **National Park Context**

#### **Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Waste Management Facilities**

There are 7 local authority household recycling locations which vary in terms of what materials can be recycled. All are located within car parks and the distribution of them is focused on the larger settlements – Arrochar, Callander, Luss etc.

There are also three more general waste disposal areas in the east of The Park and the locations of these corresponds to the locations of the recycling facilities.

There is one larger scale recycling centre which is managed by Stirling Council and it is located in Callander. The other areas of The Park are served by recycling centres which are not within The Park boundary but are in relatively close proximity.

As part of the process to map the Local Living facilities, waste management facilities have also been mapped. The locations of these can be viewed in the interactive map in the Local Living Facilities layer.

## **Policy 15 – Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods**

### **National Context**

The concept of local living was identified as one of the overarching spatial principles in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) . Policy 15 'Local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods' of NPF4 and the supporting draft Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods – planning guidance (April 2024) sets out the policy context for considering the Local Living concept and how this links with the Scottish Governments Place Standard Tool. Below is a summary of the policy context which will inform the National Park's position on Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods in a rural context.

#### **Scottish Government Planning Guidance: Local Living and 20 minute Neighbourhoods**

Scottish Government Planning Guidance: Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods (April 2024) provides detailed guidance on implementing the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods in Scotland. This concept is central to NPF4 and aims to create communities where people can meet most of their daily needs within a 20-minute walk or cycle from their homes. The guidance

supports local authorities, communities, and developers in planning and designing these neighbourhoods.

The guidance is rooted in NPF4's emphasis on climate action, reducing inequalities, and enhancing health and well-being. It promotes local living as a key spatial principle and provides detailed advice for planning authorities and communities.

### **Place and Wellbeing Outcomes – Improvement Service**

The National Place and Wellbeing Outcomes provide a focus for where place impacts on the wellbeing of people and planet. The Outcomes provide a common set of evidenced features that make every place – the characteristics of a place that allow those who live, learn, work, and relax there to thrive. They promote equitable outcomes for different population groups and contribute to both greater climate resilience and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. They are also key features for delivering 20-minute neighbourhood ambitions. The Outcomes are detailed in the source material noted above. The Outcome themes are interlinked – interventions in one Outcome have a knock-on impact on achieving the other Outcomes. Thus, a place-based approach is the basis for their delivery. A place-based approach should consider the physical, economic, and social elements that make up a place collaboratively.

### **Living Well Locally – 20 Minute Communities in the Highlands and Islands**

The "*20 Minute Communities in the Highlands and Islands*" report was published in June 2022 by HITRANS and Sustrans and explores how the 20-Minute Neighbourhood concept could be adapted to the rural and island contexts of Scotland's Highlands and Islands. The goal is to create communities where essential services and facilities are accessible within a 20-minute walk, cycle, or public transport journey, thereby reducing reliance on cars, promoting sustainability, and improving wellbeing.

This model promotes living well locally by ensuring that residents can access their daily needs, such as work, education, healthcare, and social activities, within a short distance of their homes. Originally applied in urban settings, the challenge is to adapt it for rural areas. There are different challenges within rural areas compared to urban localities. These challenges include:

- **Geographic Dispersal:** Many rural and island communities are too spread out for walking or cycling to be practical for all daily needs.
- **Infrastructure:** Limited public transport and poor road and path conditions make sustainable transport options challenging.
- **Service Accessibility:** Lower population density makes it difficult to sustain services like shops, schools, and healthcare within close proximity.

The report suggests broadening the definition of sustainable travel to include public transport and electric vehicles and treating the 20-minute time frame as a flexible target rather than a strict rule. It also suggests re-branding the concept as "20-Minute Communities" to better reflect rural realities.

The report outlines key features that rural 20-Minute Communities should include, such as access to healthcare, schools, jobs, digital connectivity, public transport, and social hubs. It highlights examples of community-led initiatives that are already addressing some of these needs. In summary, this report examines how to tailor the 20-Minute Neighbourhood concept for the unique conditions of Scotland's Highlands and Islands, aiming to improve sustainability, reduce carbon emissions, and enhance the quality of life for residents in rural areas.

It is considered this report is relevant for the National Park Authorities approach to the 20-minute neighbourhood concept.

### **ClimateXChange – 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in a Scottish Context**

*20 Minute Neighbourhoods in a Scottish Context* explores the applicability of the 20-Minute Neighbourhood concept in Scotland, with a focus on how this urban planning model can be adapted for different settlement types, including urban, rural, and remote areas. 20-Minute Neighbourhoods aim to create places where people can access most of their daily needs within a 20-minute walk or cycle from their homes. This includes essential services like shops, schools, healthcare, and green spaces.

The report found that many areas in Scotland, both urban and rural, have the necessary infrastructure to support the 20-Minute Neighbourhood model. However, they may not yet meet the quality standards or function effectively as 20-minute neighbourhoods due to barriers such as poor infrastructure and transport. The report detailed the challenges of implementing the 20-minute neighbourhood approach, for example the geographic spread of rural communities, existing inequalities, and varying levels of infrastructure quality across different regions.

The report presents eight recommendations for making 20-Minute Neighbourhoods a reality in Scotland. These recommendations are designed to support the development of sustainable, accessible communities that prioritise walking, cycling, and public transport. The recommendations are as follows:

- Use the development of NPF4 to streamline and align policies that support 20-minute neighbourhoods.
- Emphasise active travel and improve public transport options, particularly in rural and urban areas, to minimise the need for private vehicles.
- Provide clear definitions, frameworks, and funding mechanisms at the national level to ensure consistent implementation.
- Encourage local authorities to work with communities to tailor the 20-minute neighbourhood model to their specific needs and promote active participation in decision-making.
- Further evaluate demonstration areas with a variety of neighbourhood types, including diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, to refine the model and assess its impacts.
- Undertake research to better understand how far people are willing to walk and cycle to access essential services, and how visual factors influence their willingness to do so.
- Establish a detailed national and local baseline to track the progress of 20-minute neighbourhoods and support planning efforts.
- Investigate how well the Place Principle is being applied by local authorities, identify challenges, and propose solutions to overcome barriers

Overall, the report emphasises the importance of community participation, flexible approaches, and aligning the concept with broader policy goals like sustainability, health, and wellbeing.

### **HITRANS 20 Minute Neighbourhoods Study ([arcgis.com](https://arcgis.com))**

HITRANS developed a mapping tool for the Highlands and Islands area of Scotland to determine how 20 minute neighbourhoods concept could be applied in a rural setting. The study provides mapping for Argyll and Bute Local Authority and goes into detail about the level of service provision based on the census output areas.



## National Park Context

### **Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Settlements**

There are **28** settlements within the National Park. A map of these is included as figure 2 in the appendix. The spatial strategy in the current Local Development Plan identifies three classifications that are used to represent differing geographies and communities whilst also taking account of the locale of services and facilities across the area.

The three existing classifications are:

- **Towns** – These are the locations, that have the greatest range of existing public services, employment, facilities and transport or path networks.
- **Villages** – These locations provide a broad range of public services, employment opportunities, facilities, and transport or path networks.
- **Small Rural Communities** – Small Rural Communities are the Park's smallest settlements, characterised by their remote rural setting, limited services and facilities, and often dispersed development patterns.

Reviewing this strategy, the next Local Development Plan will develop a tailored approach to sustainable development that reflects the unique characteristics and challenges of our rural communities, ensuring that all residents can benefit from the opportunities Local Living provides. Significant work has already been undertaken to shape The Park's approach to Local Living. This includes detailed service mapping, a community-based pilot project and exploration of how The Park could be divided into sub-areas aligned with Local Living principles. The following sections provide more detail on these areas of work.

Additional information relevant to Local Living can also be found in other topic papers:

- **TopiPaper 6** – transport networks, including public transport and active travel
- **TopiPaper 10** – business, employment, and rural population distribution
- **TopiPaper 3** – infrastructure, including health, social care, education and digital infrastructure
- **TopiPaper 7** – affordable housing
- Other sections of this paper – play, sport, and recreation.

### **Local Living Mapping**

As part of the preparation of the Evidence Report, the National Park Authority has mapped the distribution of Local Living facilities across The Park. An audit was carried out across 14 categories of facilities, covering community services, retail, education, healthcare and transport, in order to build a clear picture of provision in different settlements. The resulting mapping, provided in the interactive map link above, illustrates the facilities available within or close to each settlement, highlighting both areas of strength and those with more limited access.

The mapping was initially developed using OS AddressBase data and then verified through on-the-ground fieldwork, ensuring an accurate and up-to-date understanding of local provision. This approach not only captures the presence of facilities but also reflects the rural context of the National Park, where larger settlements often act as hubs serving surrounding communities. The data provides a valuable evidence base to inform the Local Development Plan, and more detailed analysis of the findings will be undertaken during the next stages of plan preparation.

This analysis will help identify where improved connections, infrastructure, or targeted service enhancements could best support local living across The Park.

### **Sub-Area Mapping**

As part of the preparation for integrating the Local Living principle into the forthcoming Local Development Plan, the National Park Authority has reviewed how different sub-areas within The Park could work together to support local living. As previously mentioned, the National Park Authority will likely adopt a rural approach to the Local Living principle, meaning that services may be shared across several settlements within the same sub-area. A map of the suggested sub areas is illustrated in figure 4 of the appendix and is also included within the interactive mapping.

The first stage of this work was a desk-based mapping exercise undertaken by National Park Authority officers. This assessed the availability of services – healthcare, retail, education, and community facilities – against the 20-minute neighbourhood concept, leading to the identification of six potential sub-areas.

The findings highlighted that larger settlements such as Callander, Balloch, Drymen, and Aberfoyle tend to provide a wider range of services, while smaller and more remote villages have more limited provision. The following section summarises the characteristics, challenges, and opportunities initially identified for each of the potential sub-areas.

#### **Cowal – Lochgoilhead, Ardentinny, Blairmore, Strone, Kilmun**

This sub-area lacks a clear hub but has strong traditions of collaboration. Challenges include population decline, housing pressure from second homes, and high vulnerability to climate change (land slips, flooding, rising seas). Services are spread across villages, with primary schools in Lochgoil and Strone, medical centres in Kilmun and Lochgoilhead, and grocery shops in most settlements. The economy is tourism-based (notably caravan parks), though concerns exist over sustainability.

#### **West Loch Lomond – Luss, Arrochar, Tarbet, Succoth**

Arrochar and Tarbet have potential as service hubs due to transport links but lack facilities. Luss faces intense visitor pressure and an ageing population, while Arrochar and Tarbet contend with derelict sites and limited community spaces. Services include two primary schools, local halls, grocery shops, and healthcare in Arrochar (Luss relies on Balloch/Helensburgh). Flooding risk affects Arrochar, and active travel improvements are needed. Housing shortages and heavy tourism demand are key pressures, with Luss seeking diversification and Arrochar/Tarbet aiming to capture more passing trade.

#### **East and South Loch Lomond – Drymen, Croftamie, Balmaha, Gartocharn**

Drymen is best placed to serve as a hub. Services are limited locally, with residents depending on Balloch, Balfron, and Glasgow for many needs. The area has two primary schools, village halls, shops, and play parks, GP and dentist. Housing costs are very high, fuelled by commuter demand and tourism, leaving businesses short of worker accommodation. Tourism dominates, with Drymen hosting West Highland Way visitors and other settlements focusing on high-end hospitality and wedding venues.

#### **Strathfillan and Killin**

Communities here collaborate closely, though there is no dominant hub. Population decline and weak transport links limit access to services. Killin provides a GP practice, shops, cafés, and a school, while Crianlarich and Tyndrum face worker housing shortages despite strong community

ownership initiatives. Residents rely on Callander for secondary education and wider services. Tourism underpins the economy, but housing pressures from second homes and short-term lets threaten community sustainability.

### **Callander, Balquhidder, Lochearnhead, St Fillans, Strathyre, Trossachs**

Callander acts as the main hub, offering strong service links to Stirling. St Fillans, however, looks to Comrie. Housing affordability is a major issue, particularly in St Fillans and Balquhidder. Vacant sites exist in Lochearnhead, and deer management tensions affect collaboration. Tourism is central to the economy, though ageing populations and workforce shortages have led to business closures. Active travel routes are improving.

### **Strathard, Gartmore, Port of Menteith**

These communities cooperate on visitor management but lack a central hub. Connectivity is poor, with limited public transport links to Stirling and Balfour. Services include three primary schools, village halls, and play parks, but medical care is accessed in Buchlyvie and Kippen. Affordable housing is in high demand, particularly in Aberfoyle, which also faces flooding issues. Tourism and small businesses sustain the local economy, with community-led projects supporting services and infrastructure.

The outputs from this initial mapping exercise provided the foundation for the Place-Based Papers /Area Summaries, which explore the Local Living concept in greater detail as part of the Evidence Report. Six papers have been prepared, covering:

- Cowal
- West Loch Lomond
- East Loch Lomond
- Strathard and the Trossachs
- Callander and Strathearn
- Strathfillan and Glen Dochart

To ensure local perspectives were captured, the Authority also supported the preparation of Local Place Plans for most settlements. These Plans have been invaluable in deepening understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with Local Living, and their findings are reflected throughout the Place-Based Papers.

The boundaries of the proposed sub-areas were subject to consultation during the preparation of the Evidence Report, and community feedback will be carefully considered in finalising this approach for the next Local Development Plan.

### **Drymen and the Villages of East Loch Lomond – Living Well Locally, Vision and Routemap**

The National Park Authority commissioned a pilot project to explore how the 20-minute neighbourhood concept might translate within a rural setting. This pilot, which focused on East Loch Lomond (ELL), provided valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges of applying the approach beyond urban contexts. The findings will help to inform the development of the Proposed Plan and will offer a practical reference point for considering how the principles of accessibility and local living can be adapted to rural communities.

The project involved surveys, events, and conversations with over 120 residents, identifying key community priorities such as improved public transport, better walking and cycling routes, and enhanced community spaces. Residents prioritised maintaining the strong sense of identity and

belonging in their villages, improving access to local amenities, and enhancing safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Routemap outlines objectives across five themes: Movement, Spaces, Resources, Civic, and Stewardship. These include creating shared-use paths, improving public transport connections, developing community hubs, and ensuring sustainable housing and local amenities.

Key challenges include the dispersed nature of rural services, limited public transport, and the need for better infrastructure to support walking and cycling. Opportunities include reusing disused buildings, improving green spaces, and enhancing local economic opportunities.

The Routemap recommends forming working groups, seeking funding, and engaging with stakeholders to implement the vision. Technical assessments and detailed planning are needed to address the specific needs of each village and ensure that the 20-minute neighbourhood concept is adapted effectively for rural settings.

The vision emphasises the potential for Drymen and East Loch Lomond to become more connected, sustainable communities. By improving local transport, housing, and amenities, the area can better meet residents' needs and contribute to Scotland's broader goals of reducing carbon emissions and enhancing quality of life.

#### **Aberfoyle – as a community mobility hub 2024**

The Aberfoyle Mobility Hub Report (2024), produced by Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Countryside Trust, explores the potential of Aberfoyle to function as a rural community mobility hub. It builds a case for more integrated, sustainable, and low-carbon transport options to better serve both residents and visitors. The report highlights Aberfoyle's strategic location as a gateway to the National Park, yet identifies significant shortcomings in transport connectivity, signage, and infrastructure.

The report applies CoMoUK's mobility hub criteria to assess Aberfoyle across six key areas: sustainable mode options, visibility and accessibility, ease of switching between transport modes, safety, practical facilities, and visual/community appeal. While Aberfoyle shows promise in areas such as cycle parking, basic amenities, and strategic location, it falls short in integration, signage, inclusive access, and the co-location of transport options.

The report calls for a system-wide, place-based approach aligned with national climate and transport policies. Recommendations include improving shared transport (e.g., shuttle buses, bike share), enhancing signage and digital information, improving disabled and active travel access, and promoting existing facilities. Community collaboration, particularly through the local Development Trust and National Park Authority, is emphasised as essential for success. Ultimately, with relatively modest investments and coordination, Aberfoyle could become an exemplar for rural sustainable mobility, supporting climate goals, reducing car dependency, and enhancing both local life and tourism experience.

#### **Arrochar and Tarbet – as a community mobility hub 2024**

The Arrochar Mobility Hub Report (2024), prepared by the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Countryside Trust, explores the potential for Arrochar, Tarbet, and Ardlui to operate collectively as a community mobility hub. Situated in a key gateway area within the National Park, these rural villages are uniquely placed to support sustainable and active travel, connecting visitors and residents to wider destinations. The report identifies the existing infrastructure – including a

train station on the West Highland Line, bus services, cycle and walking routes, and waterbus links – but also highlights shortcomings in connectivity, signage, accessibility, and service integration.

The assessment used CoMo UK's community mobility hub criteria and found that although the area has many components of a mobility hub, improvements are required to meet accreditation standards. Key deficiencies include a lack of shared transport options, inconsistent signage and information, inadequate accessible infrastructure (e.g. poor disabled access to the station), limited cycle parking, and a disjointed presentation of practical services. The report advocates for a whole-systems approach to modal shift and behaviour change, aligned with national climate and active travel goals. It provides a series of practical, place-based recommendations including improving shared transport access (like bike and car hire), enhancing signage and digital connectivity, integrating wayfinding systems, upgrading accessibility and infrastructure, and better promotion of existing community services.

Overall, the report positions Arrochar and Tarbet as a strong candidate for a rural mobility hub pilot, with the potential to become a model for integrated, sustainable transport in remote gateway communities. Its successful implementation depends on collaborative planning among stakeholders, alignment with the National Park's goals, and a shared vision for reducing carbon emissions and improving local quality of life.

#### **Callander – as a community mobility hub 2024**

The Callander Mobility Hub Report explores how Callander, as a key gateway to the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, could function as a rural mobility hub, improving transport integration, accessibility, and community experience. Produced by the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust, the report evaluates existing infrastructure using CoMoUK's mobility hub accreditation criteria, alongside community consultation and walkability audits. While Callander has some sustainable transport elements – such as bus services, cycling routes, and shared bike hire – the town falls short in key areas like signage, wayfinding, accessibility, and the ease of switching between transport modes.

Station Road Car Park and Ancaster Square are key transport nodes, but the connections between them and to the wider active travel network are fragmented or unclear. Infrastructure such as cycle parking is often poorly located, signage is inconsistent, and access for disabled users is limited. Despite being well-positioned geographically and historically, Callander currently lacks the facilities and cohesive design to function as a full mobility hub.

The report outlines several recommendations, including improving shared transport awareness, enhancing signage and real-time travel information, addressing gaps in inclusive access, and increasing coordination between stakeholders. It advocates for a systems-based approach to tackle transport poverty and promote a just transition to low-carbon mobility. With targeted investment, community involvement, and a strategic focus, Callander could become an exemplary model for rural mobility, enhancing connectivity for both residents and visitors.

#### **Drymen Community Active Travel Plan (2021)**

This Drymen Active Travel Plan (2021) was produced by the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Countryside Trust as part of the organisation's Active Travel Project. The Action Plan sets out a community-driven approach to improving walking, cycling and wheeling in and around Drymen. It recognises the village's strategic location on national routes such as NCN7, the West Highland Way and the Rob Roy Way, but highlights significant gaps in safe and connected infrastructure, particularly links to Balmaha and Croftamie. Through consultation and surveys, the community

identified road safety, traffic speed, poor signage, limited segregated routes, and accessibility challenges as key barriers. The plan aligns with local and national policies and proposes practical actions including better signage and mapping, improved school travel planning, safer crossings, secure cycle parking, and the development of segregated paths. It also stresses behaviour change measures such as bike training, repair workshops, e-bike schemes, and led walks and rides. By fostering collaboration between the community, local authorities and partners, the plan aims to create a healthier, safer and more sustainable place to live, work and visit, while supporting tourism, reducing carbon emissions, and strengthening local wellbeing and the economy.

### **Health Service Facilities in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park**

Details of the health care facilities within the National Park are included as part of the evidence in Policy 23 – Health and Safety within this paper – and are also mapped on the interactive map.

### **Education Facilities in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park**

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park spans four local authorities, with education facilities both within and on the outskirts of The Park area playing a crucial role in serving local communities. Further details on the education facilities can be found in Topic Paper 3 – Infrastructure First – and on the interactive map.

The Park has seven nurseries, with four additional facilities outside its boundary serving residents. Croftamie nursery has relocated to Drymen, and Crianlarich nursery is merging with Killin nursery. St. Fillan's residents rely on Comrie Primary School's nursery, 7.6km away.

Of the 18 primary schools serving The Park, 14 are within its boundary. Callander Primary is at capacity and will be relocated near McLaren High School. Six secondary schools serve The Park, with McLaren High School the only one within the boundary.

Within the National Park, ASN provision is available at Katrine House in McLaren High School and Trossachs House at Callander Primary School. Outside The Park, ASN is provided at Etive House (St Modan's High School), Parklands Primary School (Helensburgh), and Choices School (Jamestown). McLaren High and Parklands Primary are in good condition, Choices School is satisfactory, and Callander Primary is in poor condition, although a replacement school is under construction.

Three Roman Catholic schools near The Park serve residents: St. Kessog's Primary (Alexandria), St. Modan's High (Stirling), and Our Lady & St. Patrick's High (Dumbarton).

Within The Park, Scottish Agricultural College (Crianlarich) offers higher education. Nearby institutions include University of the Highlands & Islands (Helensburgh, Dunoon, Oban), University of Stirling, and Forth Valley College. Southern residents have access to University of the West of Scotland, Glasgow's universities, and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Education planning must consider both facilities within and outside The Park to meet local needs effectively.

### **Transport Links in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park**

Transport is vital to supporting local living in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, enabling residents to access jobs, services, and facilities while also accommodating visitors. Larger towns such as Balloch and Callander are relatively well connected, but many smaller villages face gaps in transport provision, making daily life more challenging. Improving active

travel, public transport, and low-carbon options is key to reducing car dependency, supporting sustainable tourism, and strengthening the ability of communities to live well locally. The Transport Infrastructure within The Park is explored in detail in Topic Paper 6 and a summary is included below:

**Active Travel:** Within the National Park, walking and cycling are primarily supported by pavements in larger towns such as Balloch and Callander, with more limited provision in rural areas. The Core Paths network extends to approximately 732km, incorporating pavements, historic paths, forest tracks, cycle routes, and quiet minor roads. Long-distance cycling routes, including National Cycle Network Route 7, run through the Park and are used for both recreational and functional journeys. Existing facilities also include the West Loch Lomond Cycle Route between Balloch and Tarbet, and partially completed projects linking Lochearnhead to St Fillans and Drymen to Balmaha. In addition, over 15 e-bike charging points are available at key locations across the Park.

**Public Transport:** Public transport within the National Park is provided through a mix of waterbus, bus, coach, and rail services. Waterbus routes operate across Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine, with the option to transport bikes. A range of local bus services, run by operators such as McColl's, Garelochhead Coaches, and Stirling Council, connect villages, while regional links are provided by Citylink, Stagecoach, and West Coast Motors. Overall capacity is sufficient, though some routes are busier than others, and there are opportunities to extend services, improve integration, and develop park-and-ride facilities. Rail access is provided by two lines: ScotRail services between Glasgow and Balloch, which primarily support commuting but operate at limited frequency, and the West Highland Line, which serves Arrochar/Tarbet, Ardlui, Crianlarich, and Tyndrum. While this line offers scenic access, facilities are limited and connections to nearby villages are poor. Recent improvements, such as the introduction of Highland Explorer carriages, have enhanced cycle access, but integration with local travel remains weak.

**Community Transport:** Volunteer-run buses and car schemes (e.g., in Killin and Strathard) provide vital services for residents with limited access to public transport.

**Private Transport:** Most visitors (79%) travel by car, placing pressure on parking. Around 9,500 formal spaces exist, with additional private and unauthorised parking hotspots, particularly at busy visitor sites. Verge parking is a recurring problem in areas such as Balmaha, Inveruglas, and Loch Lubnaig.

**EV Infrastructure:** There are currently 17 EV charging points, concentrated in larger settlements (Balloch, Callander, Aberfoyle, Killin). Provision is limited in rural areas such as Cowal and the Trossachs, though upgrades (e.g., Tarbet Pier) are underway. Expansion is needed to meet future demand.

More details about the Transport system within the National Park can be found in Topic Paper 6 and locations of public transport facilities can be viewed on the interactive map.

### **Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Core Paths Plan 2023**

The Core Paths Plan 2023 provides a strong foundation for supporting local living, with around 732km of routes including cycle tracks, pavements, historic paths, forest tracks, and quiet minor roads connecting towns, villages, and the wider countryside. Many key walking and cycling routes are part of this network, showing the overlap between recreation and everyday travel. With targeted upgrades, maintenance, and clearer wayfinding, the Core Paths could play a vital

role in enabling people to access services, jobs, and facilities locally while also supporting sustainable travel.

### **The Scottish Living Locally Data Portal**

The Scottish Government have produced the Living Locally Data Portal which is an interactive online map that shows for all residential locations in Scotland whether they have access to 12 living locally facilities, these are set out below. The data is not available for the whole of the National Park area but a summary of the detail has been provided below. The data was extracted from the portal in early 2024 for the following 12 identified facilities.

1. Healthy food retail
2. Public transport
3. High frequency public transport
4. Primary healthcare
5. Recreational resources
6. Primary school
7. Financial
8. Pharmacy
9. Accessible public open space
10. Social and Cultural
11. Eating establishments
12. Super-Fast Broadband

It is important to recognise that this data is framed around the 20-minute neighbourhood principles. While it provides useful context, the rural nature of the National Park must be considered when interpreting the findings. Some areas appear to have limited access to facilities within the 20-minute framework; however, it is understood that larger settlements function as service hubs for surrounding communities with lower local provision. The data therefore highlights that, while maintaining appropriate levels of service provision is important, the priority should be on improving transport and connections to these larger settlements, rather than expecting every settlement across the Park to accommodate the full range of services. As the portal reports at datazone level, some settlements are divided into separate areas. For the purposes of this report, the outputs from each datazone have been combined and summarised to provide a fuller understanding of each place. The following sections present these combined summaries for each settlement.

**Callander and the Trossachs:** Callander acts as a well-equipped service hub, with good access to healthcare, education, broadband, and community facilities in the town centre. However, services and transport provision diminish in the surrounding rural areas. While public transport is widely available, the lack of high-frequency connections limits accessibility to larger settlements. Addressing these gaps – particularly in transport and rural provision – would strengthen Callander’s role as a resilient hub for residents and visitors.

**Balquhiddy, Lochearnhead and Strathgryre:** Balquhiddy, Lochearnhead, and Strathgryre offer a high-quality rural living environment, supported by outdoor recreation opportunities, open space, and moderate broadband. While key services such as healthcare, retail, and education are limited locally, reasonable transport links connect residents to nearby hubs. Improving transport and digital infrastructure would enhance access while maintaining the benefits of rural living.



**St Fillans and surrounding area:** This area benefits from moderate to good access to services, with strong public transport coverage, good digital connectivity, and a wide range of recreational, cultural, and community facilities. However, access to healthy food retail and primary healthcare is limited, requiring travel to larger towns. Strengthening high-frequency transport and improving local provision of food and medical services would support greater self-sufficiency and resilience.

**Drymen and surrounding area:** The Drymen area shows a mixed picture of local living. Drymen Village benefits from excellent access to most essential services, including healthcare, education, financial services, community facilities, and universal public transport, supported by 100% broadband coverage. However, food retail and dining options are absent, and high-frequency transport is lacking, limiting convenience and self-sufficiency. In contrast, the wider rural area east of Drymen faces much greater challenges, with low access to healthcare, education, transport, and recreational resources, alongside no food retail and very limited dining provision. Broadband coverage is stronger here than many rural areas but does not fully offset service gaps. Overall, while Drymen Village functions as a strong local hub, expanding food provision, transport connections, and key services across the wider rural area would be essential to strengthen self-sufficiency and ensure more balanced access to local living opportunities.

**Gartochard and surrounding area:** Gartocharn and the surrounding area face significant challenges for local living, with no access to primary healthcare, pharmacies, or food retail, requiring residents to travel elsewhere for these essential needs. Public transport coverage is moderate but lacks high-frequency services, limiting convenient connections to larger hubs. Some amenities are available, including financial services, eating establishments, social and cultural facilities, and recreational resources, though access remains limited. Primary school provision reaches part of the community, but education options overall are restricted. Broadband coverage is relatively low, which can hinder digital connectivity. Overall, the area relies heavily on nearby settlements for key services, and improvements to transport, broadband, and local facilities would be vital to support residents and strengthen self-sufficiency.

**Balmaha and Buchanan Castle:** Balmaha and Buchanan Castle have limited access to essential services, with no local provision of healthcare, pharmacies, financial services, schools, or food retail, leaving residents reliant on nearby towns. Public transport coverage is low and high-frequency services are almost absent, restricting convenient travel. Recreational resources and open space are minimal, though social and cultural facilities provide some opportunities for community engagement. Broadband coverage is moderate, supporting a degree of digital connectivity. Overall, this area faces major barriers to local living, and improvements to transport, food access, and basic services would be vital to enhance self-sufficiency and quality of life.

**Arrochar and Tarbet:** Arrochar, Tarbet, and the surrounding rural areas offer some important local services, with healthcare available in Arrochar and primary education in both Arrochar and Tarbet. Public transport coverage is relatively strong, though the absence of high-frequency services limits convenient onward travel. Residents benefit from access to recreational resources and open space, reflecting the area's natural environment, alongside some financial services, dining options, and community facilities. Broadband coverage is moderate, supporting digital connectivity for many households. However, the lack of food retail and pharmacies means residents often rely on larger towns for everyday needs. Strengthening transport links, expanding local amenities, and improving digital infrastructure would help build on existing assets and enhance local living across the area.

**Conclusions:** Callander and Drymen act as the strongest hubs in the area, with access to most essential services and good public transport coverage, though both lack high-frequency

connections and local food retail options. Callander provides a wide range of amenities but weaker links to Stirling, Glasgow, and nearby rural communities limit its reach. Surrounding areas, including the BLS communities (Balquhiddel, Lochearnhead, Strathyre), have significant service gaps, with little or no access to healthcare, education, or food retail, and poor transport connectivity. St Fillans performs comparatively better, with over half of residents able to access key services, though healthcare remains limited. Overall, strengthening transport, expanding healthcare provision, and improving access to food retail would enhance local living and support greater self-sufficiency across the region.

### **Priority Places for Food Index Version 2**

The Priority Places for Food Index is a composite index formed of data compiled across seven different dimensions relating to food insecurity risk in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Its goal is to identify neighbourhoods that are most vulnerable to increases in the cost of living and which have a lack of accessibility to cheap, healthy, and sustainable sources of food. The tool provides data on food priorities for the datazones within the National Park. A summary of the information obtained from this dataset showed that access and proximity to supermarket and retail facilities is a consistent challenge for communities across the National Park. While physical access to supermarket facilities is limited, there are very few social barriers to food access and there is a limited need for external support for families. This highlights the need to prioritise transport and travel to larger supermarkets, while also supporting food retail opportunities within settlements across the National Park.

### **Locations of water re-fill taps**

Scottish Water has details of the water re-fill locations within The Park. A link to the map of these is included as figure 3 in the appendix and linked above. There are ten locations across The Park and most are concentrated around Loch Lomond.

## **Policy 21 – Play, Recreation and Sport**

This section provides an overview of the provision of sites for outdoor recreation. The assessment considers a range of facilities from sports pitches, parks and play spaces which are important centres for informal activities like walking and cycling. The Topic Paper summarises the findings of the Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA).

It should be noted that the National Park is a rural authority where the majority of residents have good access to the natural environment.

### **National Context**

### **Play Strategy For Scotland – Our Vision**

The Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Vision outlines the Scotland Government's approach to ensuring that play is a key element of childhood development. It emphasises the importance of play in the lives of children and young people, both for their personal growth and the wellbeing of society. The strategy advocates for play to be embedded across all environments - homes, schools, and communities.

*Play is defined as a freely chosen, self-directed, and intrinsically motivated activity.*

Scotland aims to be the best place for children to grow up, valuing play as a fundamental daily experience that enhances life. The goal is to provide opportunities for children to engage in play everywhere. The strategy aligns with Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which recognises play as a right for all children. It advocates for action to ensure play is accessible across various settings, including for disadvantaged or disabled children.

The strategy promotes a supportive environment with trained professionals across sectors, including education and health, to encourage play. It also advocates for embracing risks in play, as managing challenges is crucial for children's growth and confidence.

The document concludes with a commitment to create an action plan (see following summary) that will detail the steps needed to achieve these play-related goals across Scotland.

### **Play Strategy for Scotland – Our Action Plan**

The Play Strategy for Scotland: Action Plan sets out practical steps to achieve the vision of making Scotland the best place to grow up, where play is a valued part of daily life for all children and young people. It builds on the vision laid out in the Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Vision, and focuses on the importance of play for children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development.

The strategy emphasises children's right to play as outlined in Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It seeks to integrate play into Scotland's policies on education, health, and community planning. It is designed to support broader frameworks such as the Early Years Framework, Equally Well, and Achieving Our Potential.

The Action Plan outlines four key areas for action. These are detailed below:

- In the Home: Actions include providing parents and carers with resources and guidance to support play at home, promoting the importance of play-friendly environments, and offering training for staff working with families.
- At Nursery and School: The plan calls for embedding play into the education system through training for school staff, designing inclusive and stimulating play spaces, and increasing community access to school grounds outside school hours.
- In the Community: The focus is on creating more outdoor play spaces, incorporating play into community planning, and making public spaces accessible and welcoming for play. It also emphasises reducing barriers such as traffic and safety concerns.
- Positive Support for Play: The plan advocates for professional development for the play workforce, promoting a risk-benefit approach to play, and increasing media engagement to foster positive attitudes toward play.

A Play Strategy Implementation Group will oversee the progress, with input from statutory bodies, local authorities, and third-sector organisations. The plan also emphasises partnership working and engagement with children and young people to ensure that their voices are heard. The Play Strategy Action Plan outlines short, medium, and long-term goals to ensure that all children, regardless of background or ability, can benefit from diverse, adventurous, and inclusive play opportunities.

### **A More Active Scotland: Scotland's Physical Activity Delivery Plan**

A More Active Scotland: Scotland's Physical Activity Delivery Plan outlines the Scottish Government's strategic framework to increase physical activity across all age groups, emphasising its benefits for health, well-being, and social inclusion. The plan aligns with the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030, aiming for a 15% reduction in physical inactivity by 2030. It emphasises the role of physical activity in preventing diseases, improving mental health, and fostering community engagement.

The plan is structured around six key outcomes: encouraging inactive individuals to become active, supporting lifelong physical activity, fostering physical competence from an early age,

enhancing active infrastructure, promoting community well-being through sport, and expanding opportunities for participation and achievement in sport.

The Scottish Government commits to cross-sector collaboration, integrating physical activity into health, education, transport, and planning policies. Investment in infrastructure, such as walking and cycling networks and community sports hubs, is a priority. Additionally, the plan promotes equity and inclusion, ensuring that all demographics, including children, older adults, and underrepresented groups, have opportunities to engage in physical activity.

The plan positions Scotland as a leader in promoting active lifestyles, setting a global example in integrating physical activity into public health and policy.

### National Park Context

#### **Open Spaces Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park**

The Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Open Space Audit was published in 2007 with support from Land Use Consultants (LUC). This work was commissioned to support the preparation of the National Park Local Development Plan and to examine the role of open spaces within rural settlements. Rural settlements present different challenges to urban environments in terms of access to open space as there is generally an abundance of 'open space' resources beyond settlement boundaries but potentially fewer options within built up areas. This key factor was taken into account when preparing the open space audit and is still relevant to the National Park and communities today.

It is important to recognise some of the attributes which make the open space resource within the National Park settlements valuable. Many of the settlements have an important historic character and this may include planned estate villages for which a central green may form an intrinsic role in the settlement character.

The open space audit focused on 28 settlements across the National Park and across each of the four local authority areas. The first step in preparing the audit was to define the term open space. The definition used was from Scottish Planning Policy 11: Open Space and Physical Activity - Consultation Draft (2006) and defined the term open space as including:

*'green space consisting of any vegetated land or structure, water or geological feature in an urban area, including trees, woodland and paths, and civic space consisting of squares, market places and other paved or hard landscaped areas with a civic function.'*

The audit provides a summary of the open spaces provision within each of the settlements included and highlights important features and key issues within each settlement. This information is then used to provide an overview of key issues for open space policy within the National Park.

The majority of open spaces surveyed fall within the amenity greenspace category. The distribution of other types of space shows a fairly even distribution, indicating a good spread of open space types across the National Park settlements as a whole.

The report goes into more detail about the lack of play provision for older children and the lack of sporting provision within smaller settlements. The audit also found that while there was some evidence of poor quality open spaces there were also examples of good quality open spaces within most settlements.

It is recognised that the current audit and approach is now quite dated and while it is not a legislative requirement for National Park Authority's to produce an Open Space Strategy, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park authority will consider preparing an updated strategy which also recognises the importance of connectivity between spaces. While communities within the National Park have good access to natural spaces, it is recognised that open spaces provide a different function.

Details of the National Park's open spaces can be found on the interactive map.

### **Scottish Household Survey – Participation Rates by Physical Activity**

NPF4 Policy 21 requires that the LDP should identify sites for outdoor recreation and that this should be based on an understanding of the needs and demand in the community. To assess needs and demands the Scottish Household Survey 2022 (SHS) was used to identify participation rates in physical activities.

Walking is the most frequent activity across all the local authority areas with a minimum of 60% of the population taking part. Walking is the most gender-neutral activity suggesting there are few barriers to participation. It should be noted that these results do not indicate the frequency of participation which is an important factor in ensuring that taking part in an activity translates into actual health benefits.

The bullet points below detail the participation rates of people across the four Local Authority areas:

- In 2022, walking was the most popular recreational activity across all regions. It had the highest participation rates in Perth and Kinross (82%), followed by Argyll and Bute (75%), Stirling (73%), and West Dunbartonshire (60%).
- Swimming participation varied between areas. It was most popular in Perth and Kinross, where 20% of people took part. In contrast, only 12% participated in Stirling and West Dunbartonshire.
- Football was generally less popular. The highest participation was in Stirling (9%), while other areas had between 4% and 5% taking part.
- Cycling was most common in Perth and Kinross (17%), but less so in Argyll and Bute and West Dunbartonshire, where only 12% of people cycled.
- Keep fit and aerobics classes were especially popular in Perth and Kinross, with a 20% participation rate. Argyll and Bute had the lowest at just 7%.
- When it came to multigym use and weight training, West Dunbartonshire had the highest rate (19%), while Argyll and Bute had the lowest (11%).
- Golf was most popular in Perth and Kinross (7%), and least popular in West Dunbartonshire (3%).
- Running and jogging followed a similar pattern. They were most popular in Perth and Kinross (15%), but only 7% participated in West Dunbartonshire.
- Other activities, such as snooker, dancing, and bowls, had more modest levels of participation. Snooker and billiards reached 4% in Argyll and Bute, while dancing was most popular in Perth and Kinross (9%).

In summary, Perth and Kinross had the highest levels of participation across most activities. On the other hand, West Dunbartonshire consistently recorded the lowest levels of engagement in many categories.

## **Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Annual Visitor Study 2025**

The National Park attracts large numbers of visitors each year, making it essential to consider their recreational activities and needs alongside those of residents. The Annual Visitor Study 2025 surveyed visitor profiles, behaviours, and activities to inform a new visitor volume model, providing valuable insight into who visits the Park, how they travel, and what they do during their stay.

This section focuses on visitor activities, highlighting the range of recreational, leisure, and cultural pursuits across The Park and how these vary seasonally. The findings build a clearer picture of visitor behaviour and the role that different activities play in shaping the Park's overall visitor experience.

The survey shows that low-level walking (65%) is by far the most popular activity, often combined with eating out and local food and drink (46%) and general sightseeing or relaxing (36%). Together, these activities reflect the appeal of the Park's landscapes alongside opportunities for social and leisure experiences. Many of the most common activities are outdoors and low-cost, meaning visits often do not require significant expenditure, though food, drink, and retail are frequently part of the mix.

Other regularly reported activities include shopping (25%), visiting towns (21%), visiting attractions (20%), and high-level walking (21%). More specialist pursuits – such as multi-day walking, wildlife watching, photography, climbing, and organised tours – attract smaller groups of visitors but remain important to the Park's recreational offer.

It is important to note that seasonal variations are evident:

- Sightseeing is much more popular during the high season, while driving increases in the low season.
- Camping is strongly associated with summer but declines in winter.
- Walking and eating out remain consistently popular throughout the year.

Overall, the results confirm that walking, food and drink, and sightseeing dominate the visitor experience, while a wide range of other recreational activities – from wildlife watching to water sports – adds richness and diversity to what The Park offers across the seasons.

Sports Facilities Within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, sports facilities are relatively sparse and unevenly distributed. The interactive map shows that the majority of facilities are concentrated around settlements in the south and east of the park, particularly near Balloch and Drymen and Callander. In these areas a range of sports facilities can be found with the most common being golf courses, sports pitches and sports halls. The dataset presents a range of publicly and privately owned facilities, with some facilities being council owned while others are associated with hotels or are under other private ownership. This distinction will need to be considered when assessing the specific needs of each community.

Sports facilities become increasingly limited in the northern and western parts of The Park. Remote rural communities such as Crianlarich and those located in the Cowal Peninsula show a marked absence of provision, with only a small number of mapped facilities available. This highlights a significant shortfall in accessible sports infrastructure for both residents and visitors in these areas. Although the Lochgoil community does benefit from some provision, most

facilities are concentrated within the privately owned Drimsynie Holiday Village. As a result, the extent to which local residents can access and use these facilities requires careful consideration.

Despite the limited distribution within the park itself, there are significant opportunities for residents and visitors to access sports facilities just beyond its boundaries. Stirling serves as a major hub, offering a wide range of provision including swimming pools, fitness centres, sports halls, athletics tracks, and even specialist facilities such as ice rinks. To the south of The Park the urban centres of Helensburgh, Dumbarton, Clydebank, and the wider Glasgow conurbation provide a dense cluster of diverse facilities, making them an important resource for communities in the southern part of the park. Together, these nearby towns and cities help to offset the lack of facilities within the park itself, although access still requires travel.

The mapped data indicated that formal sports facility provision within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs is limited, with most opportunities concentrated at the southern edge near larger settlements. Central and northern communities face significant gaps, relying on either informal outdoor recreation or travel to neighbouring towns and cities outside the park such as Stirling, Dumbarton, and Glasgow.

### **Play Sufficiency Assessment**

The Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Play Sufficiency Assessment (April 2025) is a report prepared for the National Park Authority. It responds to the requirements of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and the 2023 Play Sufficiency Assessment Regulations, which mandate that planning authorities assess the adequacy of play opportunities for children under 18. This assessment aims to support inclusive placemaking, promote health and wellbeing, and contribute to the creation of 20-minute neighbourhoods.

The report highlights the vital role of play in children's development, mental and physical health, and social engagement. It recognises both formal and informal play spaces, including equipped play areas, natural environments, and open spaces, across 21 key settlements in the National Park. Using GIS mapping, site visits, community consultation, and collaboration with local councils, the study assesses the quality, quantity, and accessibility of play provision.

Key findings include the existence of 32 equipped play areas and numerous natural play opportunities, though several communities lack adequate facilities. The assessment introduces a tailored set of play space standards adapted to the National Park's rural and dispersed geography, focusing on quality design, accessibility, and age-appropriate features.

Recommendations are made for short-, medium-, and long-term improvements, such as equipment upgrades, improved connectivity, and enhanced inclusivity, especially for disabled children.

The audit includes settlement-level summaries, identifying priorities like adding adventure play, improving maintenance, and developing masterplans for strategic open spaces. The report concludes with the importance of integrating play provision into future Local Development Plans and underscores the social, environmental, and health benefits of accessible, high-quality play environments.

## **Policy 23 – Health and Safety**

The purpose of this section is to provide background information on the subject of health and wellbeing. This Topic Paper looks at the issues which influence the health and wellbeing of local residents and looks at the key drivers for change that the LDP can help improve the health and wellbeing of the area. Considerable work has already been undertaken to better understand the

social care infrastructure requirements across the National Park area and further detail can be found in Topic Paper 3 – Infrastructure First. Further analysis will be required once the spatial distribution of development is agreed through the Proposed Plan stage of LDP. The topic paper also discusses current policies and guidance regarding health and planning. There are a multitude of factors that can impact on both health and wellbeing however this Topic Paper focuses on those areas where the LDP can have an influence.

### National Context

#### **Public Health Priorities for Scotland**

Public Health Priorities for Scotland outlines six key priorities to improve public health outcomes across Scotland. It provides a comprehensive framework for addressing health inequalities and promoting wellbeing over the next decade, with a strong focus on prevention, early intervention, and collaboration among various sectors. The six priorities are detailed below:

- **Vibrant, Healthy, and Safe Places and Communities:** Emphasises the importance of creating well-designed, sustainable communities with safe housing, accessible services, and green spaces. Local decision-making and community involvement are highlighted as key to improving the physical and social environments that influence health.
- **Flourishing in Early Years:** Focuses on supporting children's health and wellbeing, starting from pregnancy. It highlights the impact of early childhood poverty, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and the need for quality early learning and childcare to ensure a strong start in life.
- **Good Mental Wellbeing:** Aims to promote mental health across all ages, reduce stigma, and prevent mental health issues through early intervention. Social and economic factors such as inequality are recognised as major contributors to mental health problems.
- **Reducing Harm from Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs:** Seeks to reduce substance use and the related harm. The strategy focuses not just on addiction but also on the harmful effects of everyday substance use, especially in deprived communities.
- **Sustainable and Inclusive Economy with Equality of Outcomes for All:** Addresses the impact of poverty and inequality on health, promoting inclusive economic growth. Tackling socio-economic disparities is key to improving public health and achieving fairness in outcomes for all.
- **Eating Well, Healthy Weight, and Physical Activity:** Focuses on improving diet and increasing physical activity as essential for reducing obesity and related health conditions. It also targets environmental and societal factors that influence lifestyle choices.

The strategy calls for a whole-system approach, involving public services, communities, the private sector, and individuals. The creation of a new national public health body, Public Health Scotland, is emphasised as a crucial step in supporting local and national efforts. Additionally, the plan commits to reducing health inequalities, promoting fairness, and using data-driven approaches to support change.

#### **Place and Wellbeing: Integrating Land Use Planning and Public Health in Scotland**

The *Place and Wellbeing: Integrating Land Use Planning and Public Health in Scotland* report highlights the critical intersection between land use planning and public health to promote wellbeing and reduce inequalities across Scotland. Developed in response to the Planning



(Scotland) Act 2019, the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), and Scotland's six public health priorities, the report emphasises a whole-systems approach where planning decisions are aligned with public health objectives.

The document outlines the role of land use planning in shaping healthier communities by ensuring access to green spaces, active travel networks, quality housing, and sustainable infrastructure. It presents key challenges such as health inequalities, ageing populations, environmental factors, and the impact of COVID-19, which have reinforced the need for integrated planning. The Place Principle, adopted by the Scottish Government and COSLA, underpins the strategy, encouraging multi-agency collaboration to improve health outcomes and economic growth.

Key recommendations include stronger collaboration between planners and public health professionals, better data-sharing, improved community engagement, and embedding health considerations into planning policies. Ultimately, the report calls for a more systematic, evidence-based approach to planning, ensuring that Scotland's future developments contribute to healthier, more resilient, and equitable communities.

### **A Healthier Future: Scotland's Diet and Health Weight Delivery Plan**

A Healthier Future: Scotland's Diet & Healthy Weight Delivery Plan, 2018, outlines the Scottish Government's strategy to address obesity and promote healthier eating habits across the country. Recognising the significant public health challenge posed by poor diet and unhealthy weight, the plan sets a bold vision for Scotland where everyone eats well and maintains a healthy weight. It includes an ambitious target to halve childhood obesity by 2030 and reduce diet-related health inequalities.

The strategy focuses on five key outcomes: ensuring children have a healthy start in life, creating a food environment that supports healthier choices, improving access to effective weight management services, promoting leadership in diet and health initiatives, and addressing socio-economic inequalities related to diet and obesity. Measures include restricting unhealthy food promotions, increasing support for weight management programs, enhancing public education on nutrition, and reforming food labelling and advertising. The Scottish Government also aims to work with businesses and public institutions to encourage healthier food options and improve Scotland's food culture.

A critical part of the plan is targeted interventions for high-risk groups, especially children, low-income communities, and those with obesity-related health conditions like type 2 diabetes.

### **Mental Health Strategy 2017 – 2027**

The Mental Health Strategy: 2017-2027 outlines Scotland's long-term commitment to improving mental health services, reducing stigma, and ensuring equality between mental and physical health. The strategy acknowledges that mental health challenges affect people across all aspects of life and emphasises prevention, early intervention, access to services, physical well-being, rights, and data-driven planning. It aims to provide person-centred, recovery-focused care, ensuring that individuals receive timely and appropriate support.

The plan sets out 40 key actions, including increasing the mental health workforce by 800 professionals, enhancing support for children and young people in schools, improving early interventions for at-risk groups, and ensuring better integration of mental health services across primary care, emergency services, and justice settings. Special emphasis is placed on

addressing mental health disparities among vulnerable populations, such as young offenders, people with substance use issues, and those experiencing rural isolation.

Overall, the strategy envisions a Scotland where mental health is treated with the same urgency as physical health, ensuring that people can access help quickly, receive high-quality care, and live healthier, fulfilling lives.

### **Place and Wellbeing Outcomes – Improvement Service**

The National Place and Wellbeing Outcomes provide a focus for where place impacts on the wellbeing of people and planet. The Place and Wellbeing Outcomes emphasises the importance of designing and maintaining places that positively impact both people and the environment while addressing inequalities. The documentation included on the Improvement Service website highlight that Scotland faces challenges such as declining healthy life expectancy, climate change, and socio-economic inequalities, necessitating a collaborative, place-based approach to public services. The PWO framework is built on principles of equitable outcomes, sustainability, and systemic support, ensuring places foster health, wellbeing, and social inclusion. It aligns with NPF4, ensuring consistency across planning policies. Key themes include active travel, accessible public transport, quality natural spaces, community engagement, and economic opportunities.

The approach encourages local decision-making, integrating community voices to shape safe, inclusive, and sustainable places that support long-term public health, social equity, and environmental resilience.

### **Creating Hope Together: Scotland's Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2022 – 2025**

The Creating Hope Together strategy outlines Scotland's suicide prevention action plan for 2022-2025, aiming to reduce suicide rates while addressing inequalities that contribute to suicide risk. It emphasises a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, ensuring that suicide prevention is embedded across public policies, healthcare, education, and communities. The plan is structured around four key outcomes:

1. Creating environments that protect against suicide risk, including psychological, social, cultural, economic, and physical factors.
2. Strengthening public awareness and response to suicide through education, community engagement, and reducing stigma.
3. Ensuring compassionate, high-quality, and timely support for individuals at risk, those affected by suicide, and their caregivers.
4. Building a well-coordinated, evidence-based approach, integrating lived experiences, research, and collaboration among national, local, and sectoral partners.

Key actions include developing suicide-safe public spaces, improving crisis response services, embedding suicide prevention in schools and workplaces, and providing better support for vulnerable groups such as young people, neurodivergent individuals, and those affected by trauma, poverty, or addiction.

The action relating to safe public spaces is a key area that Planning can have an influence and help to work towards meeting this objective.

### **National Guidance on Action to Address Suicides at Locations of Concern**

This resource provides guidance on preventing suicides at identified locations of concern by supporting community planning partnerships (CPPs) and multi-agency groups in implementing effective strategies. Locations of concern are public sites where suicides have occurred, such as bridges, cliffs, railways, remote areas, and bodies of water. Preventative measures aim to restrict access to means of suicide, enable intervention by third parties, and signpost support services. A five-step approach is recommended: multi-agency collaboration, data collection and analysis, reviewing intervention options, planning, and ongoing monitoring. Effective physical interventions include physical barriers, restricted access, surveillance and signage with helpline information. Integrating suicide prevention into infrastructure planning is key to long-term safety.

### **Cleaner Air for Scotland 2: Towards a Better Plan for Everyone**

The Cleaner Air for Scotland 2, 2021, strategy outlines Scotland's plan to improve air quality and protect public health while addressing climate change and environmental sustainability. It builds on the 2015 Cleaner Air for Scotland strategy and aligns with other national policies on transport, planning, health, and energy.

The strategy follows 10 key themes:

1. Health, A Precautionary Approach – Recognising the severe impacts of air pollution on respiratory and cardiovascular health, particularly among vulnerable populations. It supports proactive air quality improvements beyond legal compliance.
2. Integrated Policy – Aligning air quality policies with climate change, noise reduction, and land use strategies to ensure co-benefits across sectors.
3. Placemaking – Embedding air quality considerations into urban planning, using nature-based solutions and the National Planning Framework 4 to create healthier, more sustainable communities.
4. Data Improvements – Enhancing air quality, transport, and health data collection to guide policy and increase public awareness.
5. Public Engagement and Behaviour Change – Promoting awareness and encouraging sustainable choices, such as reducing car use and adopting cleaner transport options.
6. Industrial Emissions Regulation – Strengthening policies to maintain or exceed EU environmental standards post-Brexit, ensuring industries comply with strict emission controls.
7. Tackling Non-Transport Emissions – Addressing pollution from domestic heating and agriculture, particularly ammonia emissions from farming.
8. Transport Emission Reductions – Encouraging active travel (walking, cycling), public transport, low-emission zones, and cleaner vehicle technologies to cut air pollution from road transport.
9. Governance and Accountability – Strengthening responsibilities at national and local levels to ensure effective policy implementation.
10. Monitoring and Progress Review – Tracking progress over five years, with a mid-term review in 2024 to assess policy effectiveness.

The strategy highlights transport and urban air pollution as key challenges while recognising progress made in reducing emissions from industry, energy, and vehicle exhausts. Scotland aims to become a leader in air quality improvement, ensuring that cleaner air contributes to public health, economic resilience, and environmental sustainability.

### **Long Term Monitoring of Health Inequalities 2021**

The Long-Term Monitoring of Health Inequalities report (January 2021) provides a detailed analysis of health disparities in Scotland, focusing on differences between the most and least deprived areas using a range of indicators over time. While some progress has been made – such as a reduction in absolute gaps for indicators like coronary heart disease deaths, alcohol-related admissions, and healthy life expectancy for females – many health inequalities persist or have worsened. For instance, healthy life expectancy for males has declined, and gaps in premature mortality and drug-related hospital admissions have increased significantly.

Key findings include a rising Relative Index of Inequality in premature mortality, mental wellbeing, and alcohol-specific deaths. Mental wellbeing has remained static overall, but inequalities remain stark, with those in deprived areas significantly more likely to report poor mental health.

The document covers a wide range of indicators, including low birthweight, self-assessed health, limiting long-term conditions, hospital admissions, and cause-specific mortality. It highlights that while overall mortality rates have declined over time, improvements are unevenly distributed, with deprived areas seeing slower progress or worsening outcomes. The report underscores the importance of sustained, targeted interventions and continuous monitoring to reduce long-standing health inequalities across Scotland.

### **National Park Context**

#### **Health Boards**

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is covered by four Health Boards:

1. NHS Highland – Covers the northern areas of The Park, including parts of Stirlingshire and Argyll & Bute.
2. NHS Forth Valley – Covers areas including Callander and other parts of Stirlingshire.
3. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde – Covers the southern and western areas, including Balloch and parts of West Dunbartonshire.
4. NHS Tayside – Covers the Perth and Kinross area to the north, east of The Park.

These health boards provide primary, secondary, and emergency healthcare services to communities within the National Park, ensuring access to hospitals, GP services, and mental health support.

#### **Health and Social Care Partnerships**

The four NHS health boards covering Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park are supported by four Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs), which integrate services across local authorities, health boards, and third-sector organisations. Their goal is to coordinate efficient, responsive care for local communities.

The HSCPs covering the National Park are:

- Clackmannanshire & Stirling HSCP

- West Dunbartonshire HSCP
- Perth & Kinross HSCP
- Argyll & Bute HSCP

Each HSCP focuses on improving healthcare integration and service delivery, ensuring they meet the specific needs of The Park's population.

### **Health Service Mapping**

A key element of health and safety of the population is the availability of health and social care facilities. As a rural area, the health facilities are often located out with the National Park and not necessarily within easy access of all settlements. Below are summaries of each of the key types of health care facilities and how many are located within each local authority area:

- *A&E and Minor Injuries Units* - Access to Accident & Emergency (A+E) and Minor Injuries Units is limited within the region, with Argyll and Bute having the only facility within the National Park. Perth and Kinross, Stirling, and West Dunbartonshire each have one unit, but all are located outside The Park, meaning residents may need to travel for emergency medical care. This highlights potential challenges in accessing urgent healthcare services, particularly for those in more remote or rural locations.
- *Pharmacies* - Access to pharmacies varies across the National Park, with Stirling having the highest availability at six, followed by West Dunbartonshire with three and Perth and Kinross with one. Argyll and Bute have no pharmacies within The Park boundary, potentially creating challenges for residents in accessing essential medications and healthcare advice. This distribution indicates disparities in pharmaceutical services, with rural areas likely facing greater difficulties in obtaining prescriptions and over-the-counter healthcare support.
- *Opticians* - Access to opticians is limited across much of the National Park, with the closest facilities for Argyll and Bute in Dunoon, for Perth and Kinross in Crieff, and for Stirling in Balfron or Dunblane. In contrast, West Dunbartonshire has two opticians, offering better local access to eye care services. This highlights potential challenges for residents in more rural areas who may need to travel significant distances for routine eye examinations and vision care.
- *Dentists* - Access to dental services varies across the National Park, with West Dunbartonshire having the highest availability at five dentists, followed by Stirling with three and Argyll and Bute with one. Perth and Kinross has no dental services within the area, potentially requiring residents to travel for routine and emergency dental care.
- *GPs* - There are 14 GP practices serving communities within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, with seven located inside The Park and seven outside, supporting areas like Strachur, St Fillan's, and Croftamie. Across Scotland, GP list sizes have generally increased, and in The Park, 10 of the 14 practices have grown since 2015, with an average list size of 3,378 patients. Lochgoilhead, Kilmun, and Alexandria practices have seen a decline, while others face rising demand. Arrochar and Strachur practices (Argyll & Bute) have grown, while Lochgoilhead and Kilmun have declined.

Comrie Medical Practice (Perth & Kinross), serving St Fillan's, has expanded. Stirling practices, including Aberfoyle and Callander, have grown significantly, while Drymen and Killin saw moderate increases. In West Dunbartonshire, no practices are inside The Park, but four in Balloch serve local residents. Loch Lomond Surgery has declined by 681 patients, while Oakview and Lennox practices have grown. These trends highlight the need for targeted healthcare planning and infrastructure investment.

Further details of the health care facilities within and close to The National Park are included within Topic Paper 3 – Infrastructure First – and also within the interactive mapping that has been prepared as part of the Local Living review.

### **Travelling distance to a Hospital A+E Department**

Within The Park, many communities are located more than a 30-minute drive from a Hospital A&E department, creating challenges in accessing emergency medical care. However, Balloch, Croftamie, and parts of the East and South of Callander are exceptions, as they fall within a 30-minute drive to an A&E facility.

When considering both A&E and Minor Injuries Units (MIUs), a significant portion of the Northwest, North, and East of The Park still lacks access within 30 minutes by car. However, the following communities do fall within a 30-minute travel time to either A&E or an MIU: Balloch, Luss, Arrochar, Tarbet, Succoth, Gartocharn, Drymen, Croftamie, Balmaha, Gartmore, Aberfoyle, Callander, Ardentiny, Blairmore, Strone, and Kilmun.

This highlights a major gap in emergency healthcare coverage, particularly for remote communities in The Park's northern and eastern regions, where residents may face significant travel times for urgent medical attention.

### **Census 2022 – Health Data**

In 2022, the total population of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park was approx. 14,566 people. The majority of residents reported being in good or very good health, with 48.5% (7,062 people) stating their health was very good and 31.9% (4,642 people) reporting good health. A smaller portion, 14.0% (2,045 people), described their health as fair. Meanwhile, 4.2% (612 people) indicated they were in bad health, and 1.4% (205 people) reported very bad health. Overall, more than 80% of the population described their health positively, while only around 5.6% reported being in poor health.

Within this population, 1,283 individuals reported being deaf or partially hearing impaired, while 333 people were blind or partially vision impaired. A smaller number – 40 people – reported experiencing full or partial loss of voice or difficulty speaking. In terms of cognitive and developmental health, 592 individuals had one or more learning disabilities, learning difficulties, or developmental disorders. Physical disabilities affected 1,339 residents, while 1,156 people reported living with a mental health condition. The most commonly reported long-term health issue was a long-term illness, disease, or condition, affecting 3,317 individuals. These figures indicate that while the majority of residents do not report major impairments, a significant portion of the population lives with a range of long-term health conditions and disabilities.

The census also asked residents if their day to day activities were limited as a result of their health. 1,369 individuals (9.4%) reported that their day-to-day activities were limited a lot due to disability, while 2,052 people (14.1%) said their activities were limited a little. The majority of residents – 11,146 people (76.5%) – reported no limitations to their day-to-day activities.

This indicates that while a significant majority of the population experiences no disability-related limitations, approximately 23.5% of residents reported some degree of limitation in their daily lives.

According to the Census, there were 14,330 people aged 3 and over living in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. Of this population, 1,933 individuals (13.5%) provided unpaid care to others. The majority of unpaid carers – 1,183 people – offered between 1 to 19 hours of care per week. A further 188 individuals provided care for 20 to 34 hours weekly, while 125 people provided care for 35 to 49 hours. Notably, 441 residents were engaged in intensive unpaid care, giving 50 or more hours per week. Meanwhile, 12,397 people (86.5%) reported that they did not provide any unpaid care. These figures highlight the significant role unpaid carers play in the local community, with nearly one in seven residents offering some form of unpaid support to others.

The data highlights that the majority of residents within The National Park report good overall health, with over 80% describing their health as good or very good. However, there remains a notable portion of the population affected by health challenges, including long-term illnesses, physical and mental health conditions, and disabilities. Approximately one in four residents experiences some level of limitation in their daily activities due to health issues. Additionally, the presence of nearly 2,000 unpaid carers – 13.5% of the population aged 3 and over – reflects a strong culture of informal care within the community, with a significant number providing intensive weekly support. Together, these figures paint a picture of a generally healthy but aging or care-involved population, underscoring the importance of accessible healthcare services and support systems for both individuals with health conditions and the carers who assist them.

### **SIMD Analysis – Health Domain Rank**

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) measures deprivation across small areas (data zones) in Scotland based on factors such as income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime, and housing. For the National Park, the SIMD data is relevant as it can highlight disparities within different parts of The Park area. The interactive map contains details of the SIMD data relevant to the National Park.

Although the National Park itself is not categorised as one of the most deprived areas in Scotland, certain data zones within or near The Park may show varying levels of deprivation, particularly in terms of access to services due to the rural nature of the area. Geographic access to healthcare, education, and other essential services can be challenging in such remote areas, which is a key domain in the SIMD assessment.

The data below shows the specific health ranking for the major settlements across the National Park. The ranking is scored between 1 and 10 with 1 being the most deprived and 10 being the least deprived. The data illustrates that the National Park communities are all ranked in the least deprived areas.

Health rankings vary marginally across towns and villages in the National Park. The strongest results are seen in St Fillans, Strathyre, and parts of Callander, all scoring 9, while Crianlarich, Tyndrum, Killin, Arrochar, and Croftamie also perform well with scores of 8. Balloch, Luss, and Aberfoyle sit in the mid-range with scores of 6-7, and Lochgoilhead, Ardentinn, and Blairmore/Kilmun/Strone score slightly lower at 5-6.

Within settlements, there are some contrasts: in Callander, the west and McLaren High School area score 9, but the High Street drops to 6; in Drymen, the north scores 6 while the south reaches 10, showing the biggest difference within a small area. Overall, most communities show good health outcomes, though some localised disparities remain.

### **Mental Health Awareness**

In 2023, Scotland's suicide mortality rate was 14.6 per 100,000 people, with males being 3.2 times more likely to die by suicide than females. Suicide rates were also significantly affected by socioeconomic inequalities, with the mortality rate in the most deprived areas being 2.4 times higher than in the least deprived areas. This disparity is greater than the 1.8 times gap observed for all causes of death. Suicide rates were highest among individuals aged 25-44 and 45-64, while rates among those aged 65-74 have increased consecutively over the past five years.

The Scottish Public Health Observatory profiles provide a breakdown of adult mental health data for each of the Local Authority areas. While it is difficult to draw specific conclusions for The National Park from this data it is useful to understand that the different areas of the National Park experience different challenges which impact mental health outcomes. An overarching summary of each of the Local Authority areas is detailed below. It is worth noting that the data below is for the whole Local Authority area.

#### **West Dunbartonshire**

West Dunbartonshire faces significant mental health challenges compared to Scotland overall. Wellbeing is lower, more adults experience common mental health problems, and suicide and alcohol-related hospital stays are higher. General health is also weaker, with fewer adults rating their health positively, lower levels of healthy eating, and slightly higher long-term illness, though physical activity is similar to the national average.

Community resilience is limited, with low levels of influence, trust, belonging, and volunteering, despite loneliness being less common than elsewhere in Scotland. Structural issues also persist, including higher homelessness, more neighbourhood problems, and fewer people rating their area highly. However, financial wellbeing is comparatively stronger, and housing disrepair is less common.

#### **Stirling**

Stirling generally performs better than Scotland overall on adult mental health and wellbeing. Rates of common mental health problems are similar to the national average, but suicide rates and alcohol-related hospital stays are lower. Overall wellbeing is broadly comparable.

General health is relatively strong, with more adults reporting good health and meeting physical activity guidelines, though fewer eat healthily and long-term illness is more common.

Community resilience is a strength, with higher levels of influence, belonging, trust, and volunteering, and fewer people reporting loneliness.

Structural outcomes are mixed: homelessness and harassment rates are lower, but discrimination is slightly higher. Neighbourhood satisfaction and use of open space are strong, while housing quality, financial wellbeing, and employment outcomes are broadly in line with national figures.

#### **Argyll and Bute**

In Argyll & Bute, overall mental wellbeing is slightly stronger than the national average, with fewer adults reporting common mental health problems. However, suicide rates are slightly higher, and alcohol-related hospital stays remain a concern.



General health is mixed: more adults report good health and higher physical activity, but healthy eating is less common and long-term illness more prevalent.

Community resilience is comparatively strong, with higher levels of belonging, trust, and volunteering, though loneliness is more frequently reported.

Structural indicators are generally positive, with lower levels of homelessness, discrimination, and neighbourhood issues, alongside stronger financial wellbeing and higher neighbourhood satisfaction. Housing and employment outcomes are broadly similar to national trends.

### Perth and Kinross

In Perth & Kinross, overall wellbeing is stronger than the national average, with fewer adults reporting common mental health problems. However, suicide rates are higher, though alcohol-related hospital stays are lower.

General health is positive, with more adults reporting good health, healthier lifestyles, and fewer long-term illnesses.

Community resilience is strong, with higher influence, trust, volunteering, and lower loneliness, while neighbourhood belonging is similar to the national picture.

Structural outcomes are mixed: homelessness is lower and neighbourhood satisfaction higher, but discrimination is more common. Residents use local open space more, financial wellbeing is stronger, underemployment is lower, though housing disrepair is slightly more frequent.

### Air Quality

Air quality is an important factor in considering the health and well-being of an area. Poor air quality causes increased incidences of respiratory disease and other illnesses. Air pollution also has negative impacts upon the surrounding natural environment including designated habitats. There is a statutory requirement for the LDP to accord with any Air Quality Action Plans for Air Quality Management Areas.

Air quality in the National Park is good, noting the predominately rural area. This is on the basis that there are no major industrial or commercial sources of air pollutants within the area and road traffic is therefore the main source of local air pollution. Other sources of air pollution in the National Park are energy and agriculture, as well as some household activities, such as heating.

### Noise Pollution

Noise can adversely affect quality of life, amenity, public health and environmental quality. By guiding development to the right locations and where necessary, specifying design and layout issues, the LDP can help to prevent and minimise the consequences of noise.

The Environmental Noise Directive requires the Scottish Government to produce strategic noise maps. The Directive was transposed into Scottish legislation under the Environmental Noise (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and amended by the Environmental Noise (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2018 following the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union.

The three main objectives are:

- to determine the noise exposure of the population through noise mapping;
- to make information available on environmental noise to the public; and

- to establish action plans based on the mapping results, to reduce levels where necessary, and to preserve environmental noise quality where it is good.

In order to meet the regulations for managing noise, Scotland has prepared noise maps. Scotland's noise maps provide a geographical representation of noise levels across the country, highlighting areas where people are exposed to high levels of environmental noise. These maps are produced every five years in accordance with the Environmental Noise Directive. The key objectives of noise mapping are to assess population exposure to environmental noise, ensure public access to noise-related information, and develop action plans to mitigate high noise levels while preserving areas with good environmental noise quality.

A review of the mapping prepared for Scotland indicated that Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is predominantly a tranquil area with low ambient noise levels, characterised by its natural landscapes and limited urban development. However, certain localised sources contribute to noise within The Park:

1. In Lochgoilhead, residents have reported a persistent low-frequency noise, often referred to as the "Lochgoilhead Hum." Investigations suggest potential sources, including operations from the Ministry of Defence (MOD) noise range, which conducts trials involving submarines and frigates on Loch Goil.
2. Additional contributors to low-frequency noise in Lochgoilhead include operations from the Scottish Water Waste Water Treatment Works, where operational pumps and turbines have been noted as noise sources.
3. The A82 road, especially along the northern stretch of Loch Lomond, has a notable effect on The Park's noise levels. Due to the surrounding topography, traffic noise can carry and be heard from elevated locations, including the summit of Ben Lomond. If not carefully planned and managed, upcoming upgrades to the A82 could further intensify this noise impact.
4. Water sports, such as speed boating and jet skiing, contribute to noise pollution on Loch Lomond. To address this, byelaws have been implemented to regulate these activities, aiming to preserve The Park's natural tranquillity.

Overall, while The Park maintains its reputation for quietness, localised activities can influence the ambient noise level.

#### **Locations of Control or Major Accident Hazard establishments and/or pipelines**

A search was completed of the Control of Major Accident Hazards public database and there were no establishments in the National Park boundary included.

#### **Locations of Landslides**

British Geological Survey hold a database which pinpoints locations of Landslides. The data highlights that there are historic locations of landslides across the National Park but the highest concentration is on the A83 – Rest and Be Thankful. This is a widely known risk in this area and work is currently ongoing to mitigate the risk.

### **Summary of Stakeholder Engagement**

As part of the Evidence Gathering process for the new Local Development Plan (LDP), the National Park Authority developed a suite of Topic Papers and Area Summaries to explore key planning themes and local issues across The Park. These documents form the technical and

spatial foundation for the new LDP and were central to the targeted community engagement process between May and July.

Ten Topic Papers were drafted, aligning with the relevant policies in NPF4. These papers summarise national, regional, and local data, providing a detailed evidence base on subjects such as climate change, biodiversity, housing, infrastructure, and the rural economy. They were developed by National Park officers, incorporating input from key public bodies including SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot, Transport Scotland, and local authorities.

A draft of this topic paper was sent to:

- Historic Environment Scotland
- NatureScot
- SEPA
- Scottish Water
- Scottish Enterprise
- NHS Forth Valley
- NHS Tayside
- NHS Highland
- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
- West Dunbartonshire Council
- Argyll and Bute Council
- Stirling Council
- Perth and Kinross Council

Six Area Summaries were also produced to provide a more accessible, place-based and spatial view of the evidence. These summaries incorporate mapped information alongside key content from registered Local Place Plans highlighting key opportunities, challenges, and priorities for specific areas within The National Park. The spatial presentation was intended to support more informed and locally relevant discussion during in-person workshops.

As part of the engagement activities, a series of in-person workshops were held in May and June 2025 across the National Park to present the Area Summaries and gather feedback directly from local community groups and stakeholders. To ensure wider participation, complementary online surveys were also made available, allowing people to review and comment on both the Topic Papers and Area Summaries over a six-week period (May – July 2025). In addition to public engagement, input was actively sought from key statutory agencies and partner organisations throughout the preparation process to help shape and strengthen the evidence base.

Summary of Responses	
Respondent	Summary of Comments and Response
Argyll and Bute Housing Department	<p>The Housing Authority generally agreed with the evidence set out within the paper but suggested including a reference to the work that the Empty Homes officer is undertaking.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> The Strategic Empty Homes policy from the Scottish Government was included and the details of the Empty Homes Officers within the Local Authorities has also been incorporated.</p>

Historic Environment Scotland	HES did not have any additional comments to make to this paper.
Scottish Water	Scottish Water commented on each of the policy areas within this paper but did not provide any additional data or note any gaps in evidence. Their comments focused on promoting sustainable approaches such as blue-green infrastructure, circular economy principles, and support for 20-minute neighbourhoods, while also highlighting ongoing investment in local wastewater infrastructure. <b>Response:</b> All comments are noted and will be considered throughout the preparation of the Local Development Plan.
SEPA	SEPA did not have any additional comments to make to this paper.
Stirling Council Environmental Health	Comments from Stirling Council highlighted the need to clarify that Local Authorities, not SEPA, hold databases of potentially contaminated sites. It was also suggested that the document should reference requirements for Site Investigations on contaminated land relevant developments. <b>Response:</b> All comments noted and the paper has been updated to reflect the need to engage with the four Local Authorities on site specific contaminated land issues during the planning application process.
NatureScot	<p>NatureScot recommends strengthening the evidence base to better inform the Local Development Plan. This includes an audit of the types and quality of greenspaces, with maps to show how provision links to use and local attitudes, and identification of areas requiring enhancement. Stronger connections to other themes such as transport, health, and biodiversity are advised to reflect the cross-cutting nature of local living.</p> <p>They suggest including spatial data on vacant and derelict land, contaminated sites from historic mining, and radon risk areas, to guide safe and sustainable development. Evidence on air and water quality, pollution, and invasive non-native species should also be added.</p> <p>NatureScot supports the 20-minute neighbourhood approach but stresses the need to account for cross-boundary services, education provision (including green skills training), and links to supporting schools outside The Park. They highlight evidence gaps in areas without local-level planning frameworks and in local food growing initiatives. Finally, they call for stronger recognition of the health and social value of greenspace and biodiversity, alongside data on allotments, air quality, and water quality monitoring.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> The paper includes a summary of the Open Space Strategy and Play Sufficiency Assessment which highlights the quality of greenspaces. The interactive map also includes locations of greenspaces across The Park. The Local Living section has been re-drafted to include cross-cutting links to other relevant papers. The Local Living mapping contains evidence on</p>

	location of food growing opportunities. Vacant and Derelict spatial data is also included within the interactive map and the link to the Radon map is also included within the summary of evidence. NatureScot has highlighted an evidence gap of local level strategies for some settlements. The National Park do not consider this to be an evidence gap as the strategies that have been prepared are based on evidenced need and/or were pilot projects to test the Local Living Principle in a rural setting.
NHS Health Boards	Each of the four NHS Health Boards covering the National Park boundary were consulted as part of the process, and follow-up emails were issued. No responses were received from the Health Boards.
Scottish Enterprise	Scottish Enterprise were supportive of the evidence presented and stated that there was sufficient information to inform the development of the LDP. <b>Response:</b> Noted
British Geological Survey	BGS advises that for radon, the more detailed 1:50,000 UK Radon dataset should be used instead of the free 1 km grid version, with access available through the Improvement Service, For landslides and debris flows, which pose significant risks in the National Park and may have implications beyond the transport network, BGS highlights two key resources: the National Landslide Database (records of past events) and the GeoSure Landslide Hazard Map (areas of susceptibility).  <b>Response:</b> Improvement Service Radon map has been considered as part of the Evidence Base. An additional section on Landslides has been added to the paper.
Homes for Scotland	Homes for Scotland suggested several additional policy documents for inclusion.  In relation to the V&DL section Homes for Scotland noted that allocating housing sites is not enough; viability and marketability must be fully assessed. HFS supports brownfield reuse but only where viable. Sites not delivered should be reviewed, and wider constraints (e.g. flooding, ecology) considered to ensure appropriate use.  The response also included some commentary on the evidence presented for Local Living. It stated that flexibility in applying the 20-minute neighbourhood model in rural areas is welcomed. Larger housing sites in main settlements could help deliver new neighbourhoods, while smaller sites can support existing services. HFS highlights that housing affordability pressures are driven by restricted land supply, second homes, and holiday lets, and warns against unintended consequences of limiting allocations.  The final policy area included in the response was Play and Recreation. The response states that that new development can enhance play and sport through on-site provision, off-site

	<p>contributions, and improved active travel links benefiting both new and existing residents.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> A review of the suggested additional evidence resulted in two policy documents being included – The Scottish Land Commission’s report on V&amp;DL reuse and Transforming V&amp;DL in Scotland.</p> <p>The comments on each of the policy areas are noted and will be taken into account when preparing the new Local Development Plan and specifically when assessing allocated sites.</p>
Kilmarnock Community Council	<p>The response highlighted the value of local walking routes and long-distance trails for wellbeing and connectivity, but noted limited local amenities, poor public transport, and reliance on the Balloch station car park for accessibility. It recommended greater support for community transport and local business hubs to reduce commuting, strengthen the rural economy, and attract a younger demographic.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Comments have been noted. However, as the comments received do not identify gaps in evidence, data, or information, but instead reflect views on requirements, it is considered that these are best addressed at the next stage during preparation of the Proposed Plan.</p>
Scotways (Scottish Rights of way and access society)	<p>ScotWays disagreed with the draft version of the paper published during the consultation period, recommending that Core Paths Plan and the national Catalogue of Rights of Way be included in the evidence base, as these routes are vital for supporting local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> The Core Paths Plan 2023 has been added to the summary of evidence.</p>
Stirling Area Access Panel	<p>The Panel welcomed discussion of 20-minute neighbourhoods but stressed the need to reflect rural challenges, particularly for people with support needs and the absence of key services. They suggested acknowledging the limited applicability of the concept in rural areas and highlighting the importance of local employment in forestry, farming, and food production for sustainability and resilience.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> The Local Living Section has been re-drafted taking these comments into consideration. More detail has been added to reflect the transport, education and health services available across The Park and the challenges of rural living have also been included.</p>

## Summary of Implication for the Proposed Plan

The implications of the evidence for the Proposed Plan may be summarised as follows:

### **Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land and Empty Buildings**

- Prioritising Brownfield Sites - The new Local Development Plan (LDP) should prioritise the redevelopment of brownfield, vacant and derelict land across the National Park, particularly in and around existing settlements, to support regeneration, reduce land wastage, and make efficient use of infrastructure.
- Protecting ecological value of brownfield sites - The new LDP should aim to safeguard ecologically valuable brownfield sites, balancing regeneration with nature conservation. The LDP could assess these sites for biodiversity before promoting redevelopment and designate them for conservation or green infrastructure where appropriate. Where development occurs, require biodiversity assessments and measures to protect, enhance, or offset biodiversity loss.
- Buildings at Risk - The new LDP should encourage the adaptive reuse of historic or traditional buildings at risk, including for the 50 properties included on the Buildings at Risk Register.

### **Zero Waste**

- Waste Reduction in developments - The new LDP should aim to promote a circular economy and integrate waste reduction in all developments.
- New waste infrastructure - The new LDP should promote sustainable waste infrastructure within or close to settlements by supporting the development of local recycling points and food waste facilities.
- Construction waste - The new LDP should require new developments – particularly housing, tourism, and commercial uses – to demonstrate how they will minimise waste during construction and operation. This includes encouraging the use of recycled materials in construction.

### **Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods**

- Rural approach to local living - It will be key for the new LDP to develop a rural-appropriate interpretation of 20-minute neighbourhoods, recognising that in dispersed and low-density rural communities, access to key services and facilities solely by walking or cycling may not always be practical. The LDP should instead focus on supporting local service provision, supporting improvements to public and community transport links, supporting digital infrastructure for remote access to services, and promoting multi-use community hubs. This flexible approach can help deliver the core principles of 20-minute neighbourhoods while respecting the unique rural character of the National Park.
- Local Needs and Opportunities - In developing the new LDP place-based engagement should be used to identify local needs and opportunities. By working with residents, businesses, and community groups, the LDP can target policies on issues like services, travel, digital access, housing, and jobs. This approach will ensure that development reflects local priorities and supports community empowerment and local living.

### **Play, Recreation and Sport**

- Outdoor recreation and sport - The new LDP should protect and enhance land for outdoor recreation and sport. It should safeguard existing spaces and identify gaps, ensuring facilities are accessible, inclusive, and well-maintained to support wellbeing, community cohesion, and active lifestyles across the National Park.

- Connections with green and blue networks - The new LDP should ensure high-quality, inclusive design of recreational spaces that connect with wider green and blue networks. Designs should support safety, biodiversity, seasonal use, and promote active travel, nature-based recreation, and climate resilience, while enhancing the National Park's landscape character.
- Inclusive access to nature - The new LDP should prioritise projects that improve access to nature and reduce barriers for all age groups and abilities. The Local Development Plan should support initiatives that make it easier for everyone - regardless of age, mobility, or personal circumstance - to enjoy and benefit from natural spaces. This aligns with the National Park's goals of enhancing wellbeing, supporting inclusivity, and encouraging connection with the natural environment.
- Safeguarding spaces for play and sport - The new LDP should safeguard existing play spaces, sports pitches, and recreational facilities from redevelopment unless alternative provision of equal or greater community value is secured within the local area.
- Rural approaches to recreation facilities - The new LDP should support innovative rural solutions for recreation, such as nature-based play areas, community-run sports hubs, or shared-use facilities in villages where traditional infrastructure may not be viable.

### **Health and Safety**

- LDP Spatial Strategy - The new LDP spatial strategy will contribute to safer, healthier environments, particularly in areas with proximity to derelict sites or environmental hazards (e.g., radon or major pipelines).
- Locating active travel routes away from busy roads - The new LDP should encourage active travel infrastructure that considers road safety and separation from heavy vehicle routes, especially in areas where walking and cycling routes may intersect with fast or busy roads.

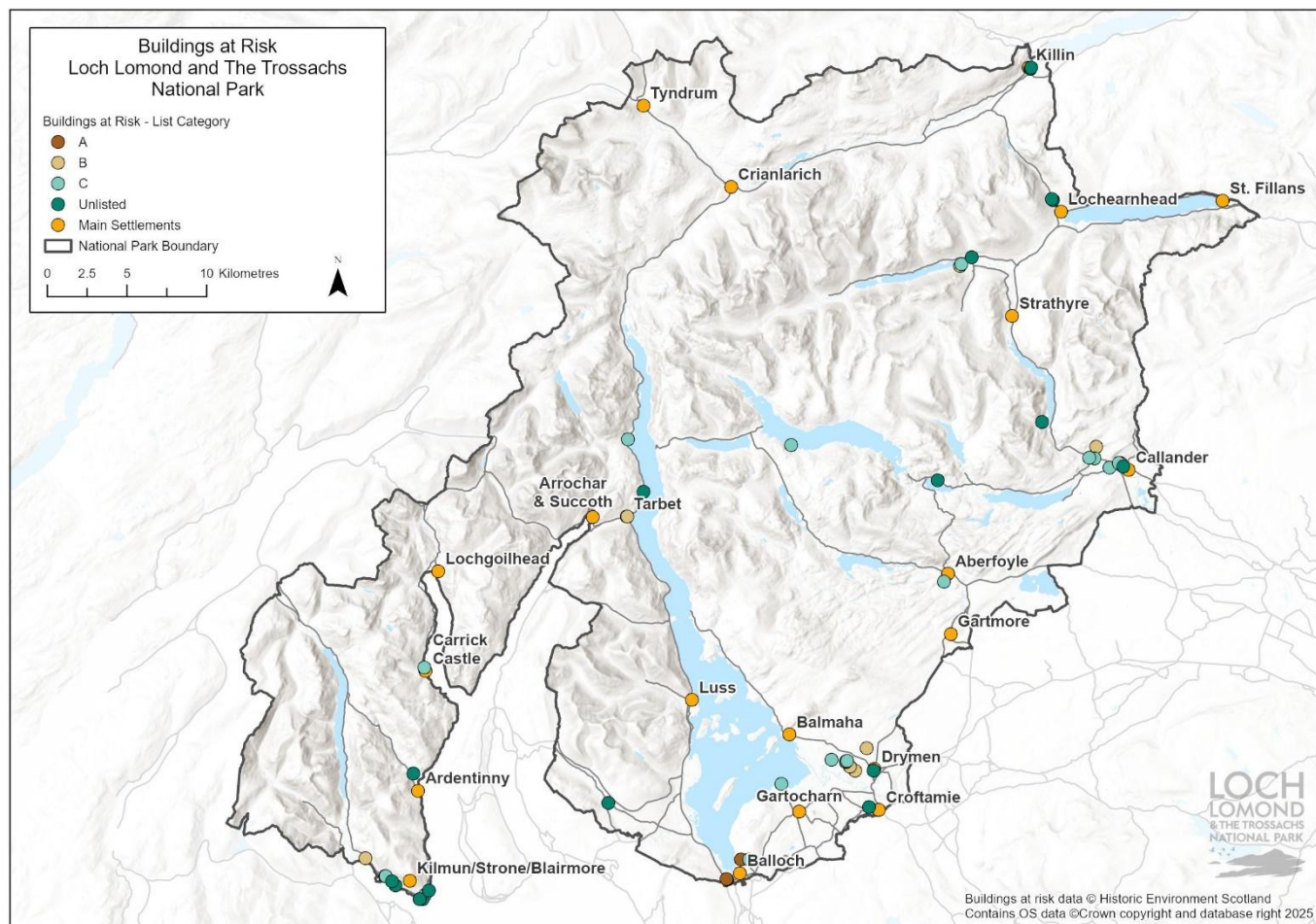
### **Statements of Agreement / Dispute**

There are no substantive areas of disagreement on the evidence in the paper. Feedback from respondents to the Topic Paper consultation have largely been addressed in the Evidence Report. NatureScot, Scottish Water and Scottish Enterprise have confirmed they are content with the paper.

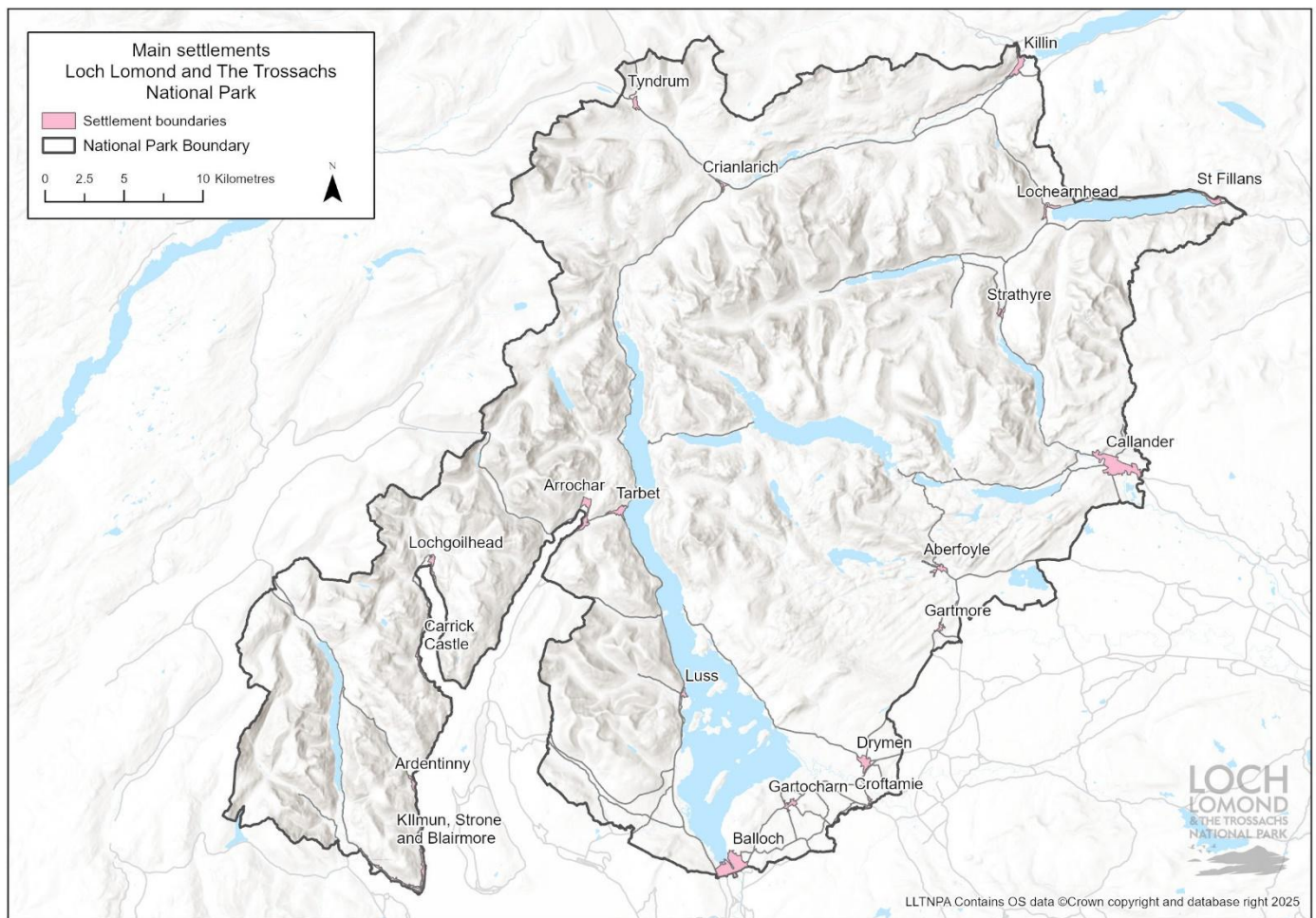


## Appendix

Figure 1 – Buildings at Risk across Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park



**Figure 2 - Main settlements within The National Park**



*Figure 3 – Locations of Scottish Water Water Re-fill Stations*

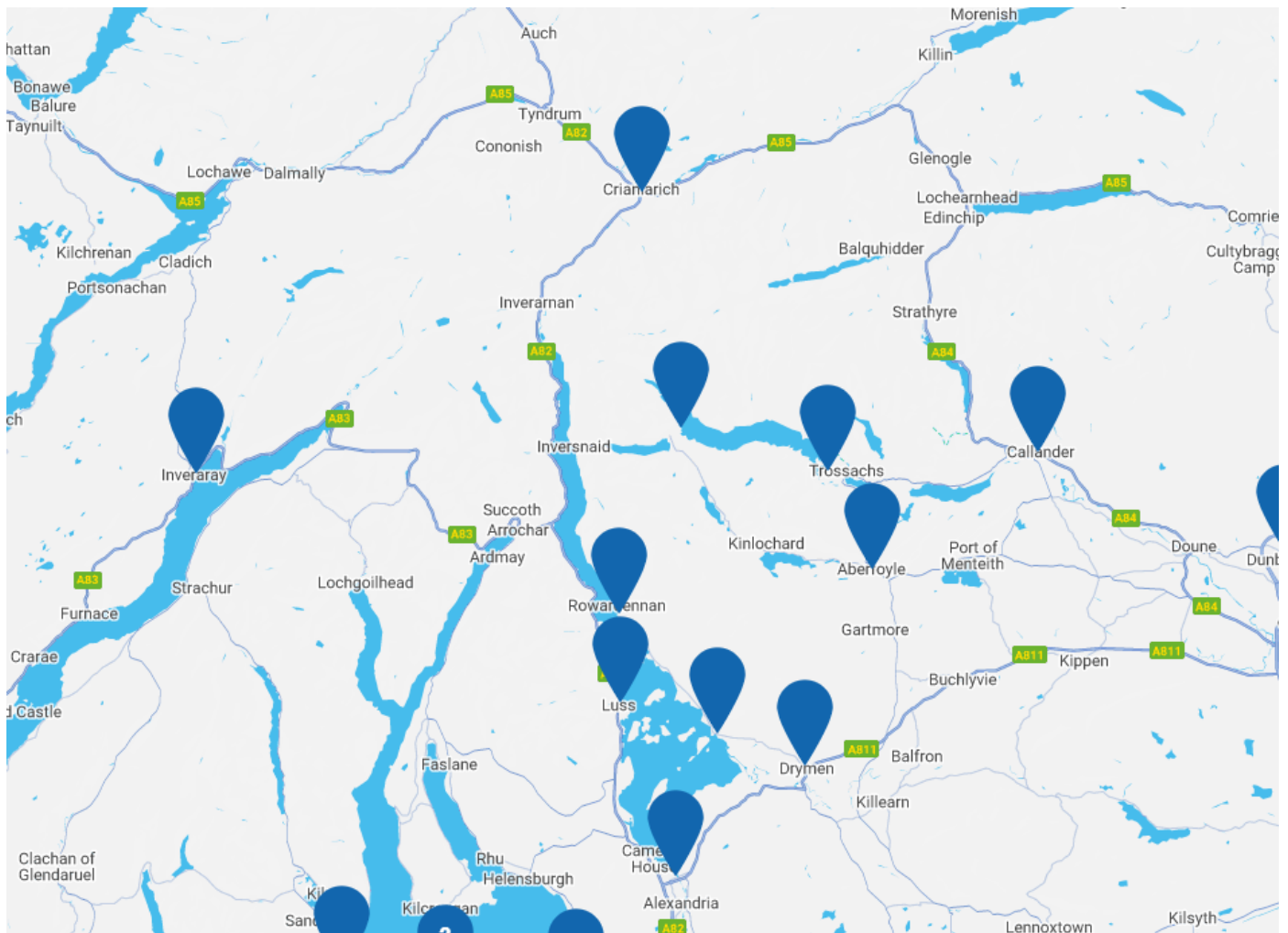
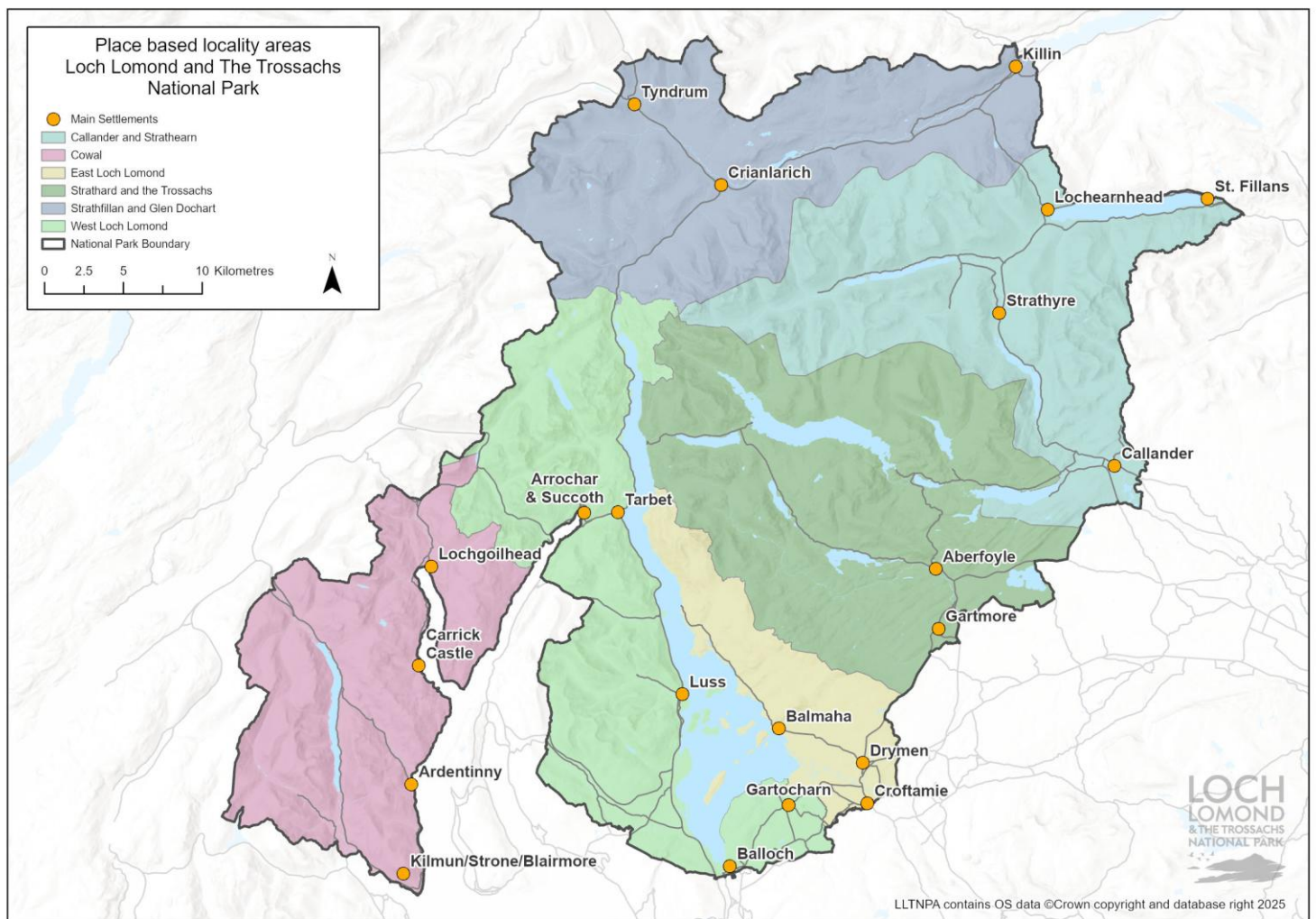




Figure 4 – Place Based Locality Areas



<b>Issue: Topic/Place</b>	<b>Topic Paper 9 - Cultural Heritage and Place</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p><b><u>Policy 7 - Historic Assets and Places</u></b> - Town &amp; Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 Section 15(5), as amended</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The principal physical - cultural, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Policy 14 - Design Quality and Place</u></b> - Town &amp; Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 Section 15(5), as amended</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Policy 31 - Culture and Creativity</u></b> - Town &amp; Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 Section 15(5), as amended</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The principal cultural, economic, social and built heritage characteristics of the district; The desirability of maintaining an appropriate number and range of cultural venues and facilities (including in particular, but not limited to, live music venues) in the district.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Other relevant legislation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The aims of the National Parks in Scotland as set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000.</li> <li>Planning (Listed Buildings &amp; Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.</li> <li>Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p><b><u>Interactive Map</u></b> For any data that is not linked in this topic paper, these can be viewed on the National Park Authority's <a href="#">interactive GIS map viewer</a> under 'A Thriving Place' layer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Interactive GIS Map Viewer</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>National Park Partnership Plan</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Policy 7 – Historic Assets and Places</u></b> <b><u>National Context</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Historic Environment Scotland: Our Past, Our Future 2023</a></li> <li><a href="#">Historic Environment Policy for Scotland 2019</a></li> <li><a href="#">Historic Environment Scotland Circular 2019</a></li> <li><a href="#">Managing Change in the Historic Environment</a></li> <li><a href="#">Guidance for Peatland Restoration and the Historic Environment in Scotland 2022</a></li> <li><a href="#">Historic Environment Scotland: Pointing the Way to the Future 2023</a></li> <li><a href="#">Green Recovery Statement for The Historic Environment 2022</a></li> <li><a href="#">A Guide to Climate Change Impacts 2019</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Local Context</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Stirling Heritage Strategy 2025-2028</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>National Park Context</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Designations Map Search</a></li> </ul>

- [Welcome! | PastMap](#)
- [Interactive map of West of Scotland Archaeology Service](#)

#### **Conservation Area Appraisal:**

- [Callander CAA](#)
- [Killin CAA](#)
- [St Fillans CAA](#)
- [Drymen CAA](#)
- [Gartmore CAA](#)
- [Luss CAA](#)

#### **Boundary Maps of Conservation Areas:**

- [Callander](#)
  - [Drymen](#)
  - [Gartmore](#)
  - [Killin](#)
  - [Luss](#)
  - [Milton](#)
  - [Tyndrum](#)
  - [St Fillans](#)
- [Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Historic Designed Landscapes Project](#)
  - [Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland – Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Summary Report 2022](#)
  - [Buildings at Risk Register](#)
  - [Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority Vacant and Derelict Land audit 2019](#)
  - [Inventory Gardens Review 2014-2018](#)

#### **Policy 14 – Design Quality and Place** **National Context**

- [National Planning Framework 4](#)
- [A Policy Statement on Architecture and Place for Scotland 2013](#)
- [The Public Health Scotland Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025](#)
- [Designing Streets: A Policy Statement for Scotland 2010](#)
- [A New Future for Scotland's Town Centres: easy read 2021](#)
- [Water-Resilient Places: A Policy Framework for Surface Water Management and Blue-Green Infrastructure](#)

#### **National Park Context**

- [National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029](#)
- [Open Space Settlement maps \(jpegs\)](#)
- [Open Space Strategy](#)

#### **Policy 31 - Culture and Creativity** **National Context**

- [Scotland's Creative Learning Plan 2024](#)
- [A Cultural Strategy for Scotland 2020](#)

- [The National Gaelic Language Plan 2023-2028](#)

#### National Park Context

- [Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority Gaelic Language Plan 2024 – 2029](#)
- [The Scottish Household Survey 2022](#)
- [Employment Statistics for jobs in the creative industry 2025](#)

### **National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context**

This evidence report combines three NPF4 policy areas which all focus on enhancing the cultural offer of a place. The National Park is known for its unique and dramatic landscapes but the history and sense of place within the towns and villages is also a valuable component of The Park's overall worth.

**Policy 7 Historic Assets and Places** requires Local Development Plan's (LDP's) to support the sustainable management of the historic environment. They should identify, protect, and enhance valued historic assets.

**Policy 14 Design Quality and Place** requires LDP's to be place based and in line with the Place Principle. LDP's should provide clear expectations for design, quality, and place taking account of local context, characteristics, and connectivity of the area. Development proposals that are poorly designed, detrimental to the amenity of the surrounding area or inconsistent with the six qualities of successful places, will not be supported.

**Policy 31 Culture and Creativity** seeks to ensure that local distinctive places reflect the diversity of communities and support regeneration and town centre vibrancy, that cultural and creative industries are expanded, provide jobs and investment, and that communities have access to cultural and creative industries.

**Annex D: Six Qualities of Successful Places** alongside the Place Standard, the six qualities of successful places provides a framework for assessing and delivering successful places.

### **National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2024 – 2029 Context**

#### **Historic Assets and Places**

The National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) highlights the importance of preserving the historic environment within The National Park. It acknowledges that the natural and cultural heritage, including historic buildings, monuments, and landscapes, are integral to The Park's identity. The plan emphasises the need for careful management and conservation efforts to ensure that these historic assets are protected while accommodating sustainable development. Climate change poses additional risks, such as extreme weather conditions that could damage historic structures and landscapes. Thus, adaptive measures are necessary to protect the historic environment from deterioration.

The plan promotes balancing the preservation of cultural heritage with modern development, ensuring that new construction respects the historic environment and the broader landscape. This aligns with the National Park's overall vision of maintaining its natural beauty and cultural significance for future generations while responding to climate challenges.

#### **Design Quality and Place**

The NPPP includes a strong focus on design quality and place-making. The document emphasises the need to balance development with the natural landscape while ensuring high

standards in design that contribute to both community well-being and environmental sustainability. A coordinated, place-based approach is essential for investing in high-quality visitor facilities across public sites. This approach ensures that developments address local needs, preserve environmental sensitivities, and cater to visitor demand, with a focus on sustainable travel, accessibility, and responsible tourism. The plan highlights the importance of integrating nature-based design principles, such as using sustainable materials and protecting biodiversity. This is part of The Park's commitment to the Future Nature and Mission Zero initiatives, ensuring that infrastructure development contributes to climate resilience.

Infrastructure improvements are targeted at key visitor hubs, such as Balloch, Callander, and Arrochar. This includes the development of sustainable travel networks and the enhancement of non-motorised access to reduce car dependency, manage visitor numbers, and encourage responsible behaviour.

### **Culture and Creativity**

The NPPP emphasises the role of culture in enhancing community wellbeing, supporting sustainable tourism, and fostering local identity. The plan highlights the importance of conserving The Park's cultural heritage.

## **Summary of Evidence**

The evidence report is divided into three sections, each pulling together the relevant policies and data sets which will shape policy in this area for the new Local Development Plan (LDP).

The three policy areas are:

- Policy 7 - Historic Assets and Places
- Policy 14 - Design Quality and Place
- Policy 31 - Culture and Creativity

It is also important to acknowledge that there is overlap between the Cultural Heritage and Place paper and NPF4 Policy 1 (Tackling the Climate and Nature Crisis), Policy 2 (Climate Mitigation and Adaptation), Policy 9 (Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings) and Policy 15 (Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods). These policy areas are explored in more detail in Topic Paper 1 (Climate Change & Land Use) and Topic Paper 8 (Living Well Locally).

## **Policy 7 – Historic Assets and Places**

### **National and Local Authority Context**

This section sets out the National Policy which will be used to inform the new Local Development Plan (LDP) for the National Park.

### **Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment 2023**

"Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment" outlines Scotland's five-year strategy for preserving and enhancing its historic environment. Historic Environment Scotland published the strategy in 2023.

The strategy aims to sustain and enhance the benefits of Scotland's historic environment for people and communities, aligning with broader national goals such as building a wellbeing economy, creating resilient and inclusive places, and delivering a net-zero future in response to climate change.



#### Strategic Priorities:

- **Net Zero Transition**: The strategy emphasises the historic environment's role in achieving climate targets through sustainable practices and adapting to climate impacts.
- **Empowering Communities**: It focuses on using the historic environment to build resilient and inclusive communities, ensuring that heritage contributes to local identity and social cohesion.
- **Wellbeing Economy**: The strategy aims to integrate the historic environment into Scotland's wellbeing economy, emphasising heritage's role in job creation, tourism, and enhancing quality of life.

The strategy calls for collaboration across various sectors. Historic Environment Scotland will focus on enabling and facilitating partnerships and monitoring progress.

The strategy acknowledges significant challenges. However, it also highlights opportunities to leverage the historic environment for sustainable development, community empowerment, and economic growth.

The document provides important data, and the economic impact of heritage. It also highlights public attitudes toward heritage and the importance of maintaining Scotland's historic assets.

#### **Historic Environment Policy for Scotland**

The Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS) provides a comprehensive framework for managing, protecting, and promoting Scotland's historic environment. It emphasises that the historic environment includes both tangible and intangible elements and plays a vital role in shaping national identity, well-being, and sustainability.

HEPS is a non-statutory policy that aligns with broader Scottish and UK government policies, as well as international heritage conventions.

The core policies focus on recognising cultural significance, protecting heritage sites, mitigating negative impacts, promoting sustainable development, and ensuring decision-making processes are inclusive and well-informed. The policy encourages proactive management, balancing conservation with the evolving needs of communities and the economy.

In summary, the document serves as a strategic guide for the responsible management of Scotland's historic environment, ensuring that heritage is preserved, valued, and adapted in a way that benefits both present and future generations.

#### **The Historic Environment Scotland Circular**

The Historic Environment Scotland Circular outlines the regulations and procedures governing the management, designation, and protection of Scotland's historic environment. It provides guidance on the legal frameworks, including the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, and the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010.

The document details the designation process for scheduled monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, historic battlefields, and historic marine protected areas. It explains how sites are designated, the appeal process, and the legal exclusions applicable to listed buildings.

A major section is dedicated to Historic Environment Scotland's role in the planning system, highlighting its involvement in development planning, planning permission, environmental impact

assessments, and strategic environmental assessments. The document sets out when and how Historic Environment Scotland should be consulted, ensuring that changes to heritage assets are appropriately managed.

### **Managing Change in the Historic Environment – Guidance Notes**

Managing Change guidance notes support informed decision-making in the historic environment by outlining key considerations for proposed changes. They provide guidance on assessing impacts on cultural significance, relevant national policies, and sources for more detailed technical information. These notes apply to various types of changes, including alterations to historic buildings - such as window replacements, extensions, or adaptive reuse - works affecting heritage assets like scheduled monuments and historic battlefields, and large-scale developments that impact the wider historic landscape, such as housing projects or wind farms.

### **ALGAO Peatland Restoration and the Historic Environment Guidance**

The Guidance for Peatland Restoration and the Historic Environment in Scotland outlines the significance of peatlands as both ecological and historical archives, offering a unique preservation environment for organic remains and archaeological evidence. It highlights that while peatland restoration supports climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation, it must also consider the historic environment to prevent damage to buried archaeological resources. The document provides a framework for integrating heritage protection into peatland restoration projects.

The guidance also stresses that peatland restoration contributes to long-term historic environment preservation by preventing further erosion and degradation of buried sites.

The National Park has an active Peatland Restoration Programme underway and therefore this document will be vital in ensuring that there will be minimal negative impacts to the historic environment through this process.

### **ALGAO Delivery of Public Benefit and Social Value Guidance**

The Delivery of Public Benefit and Social Value Guidance (Feb 2023) outlines how archaeology in the planning process can better support public benefit and social value, aligning with National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). The guidance responds to new NPF4 requirements that, when impacts on the historic environment cannot be avoided, archaeological mitigation must deliver meaningful public outcomes - not just through excavation and recording, but also through broader engagement and educational activities.

The document defines the historic environment as a shared, irreplaceable resource that connects people to place, identity, and cultural heritage. It emphasises a proportionate approach where the scale of public engagement reflects the significance of archaeological findings. It outlines how developers, archaeological contractors, and local authorities should embed public benefit throughout the planning and mitigation process.

Overall, this document serves as a practical framework to ensure archaeological work contributes positively to communities and aligns with broader goals of climate resilience, local identity, and sustainable development.

### **Pointing the Way to the Future 2023**

Pointing the Way to the Future (2023) outlines Historic Environment Scotland's (HES) approach to integrating climate action and sustainability into its regulatory and advisory roles. Recognising the climate and nature crises, it emphasises that decisions about the historic environment must support Scotland's net zero target by 2045. The document highlights the role of conservation,

reuse, and sustainable development in climate adaptation, aligning with the National Planning Framework (NPF4). It advocates for adapting historic buildings rather than demolition to reduce carbon waste and promotes the circular economy through material reuse. Additionally, it underscores heritage conservation's social impact, ensuring a just transition to net zero while preserving cultural identity and addressing past injustices.

### **The Green Recovery Statement**

The Green Recovery Statement for Scotland's Historic Environment, published by Historic Environment Scotland (HES), outlines how Scotland's historic assets can contribute to a green economic recovery while supporting the transition to a net-zero, climate-resilient society. It identifies key areas where the preservation, reuse, and adaptation of heritage sites can drive sustainability, including resource efficiency, supporting net-zero emissions, green job creation, localism, responsible tourism, land management, and digital connectivity.

The document emphasises that repurposing existing buildings can significantly reduce carbon emissions compared to new construction, aligning with Scotland's climate targets. When well-maintained and retrofitted, offer energy-efficient solutions while preserving cultural heritage. Furthermore, the repair and conservation of historic assets create skilled, green jobs, boosting local economies and reducing regional inequalities. Additionally, effective land management and digital technologies help protect Scotland's historic sites and landscapes from climate change.

### **Guide to Climate Change Impacts on Scotland's Historic Environment**

The Guide to Climate Change Impacts on Scotland's Historic Environment, developed by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) in collaboration with the Our Place in Time Climate Change Working Group, provides an overview of how climate change is affecting Scotland's historic assets and offers strategies for mitigation and adaptation.

The guide highlights that climate change is already impacting Scotland's historic environment through increased rainfall, rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and sea-level rise. Many historic sites, including buildings, archaeological remains, and coastal heritage, are vulnerable to these environmental changes. Key risks identified include structural damage from flooding, increased biological growth on historic structures, ground instability leading to foundation movement, and accelerated coastal erosion.

To address these challenges, the guide provides a framework for assessing climate-related risks, understanding potential hazards, and implementing adaptation strategies.

### **Stirling Heritage Strategy 2025 – 2028**

The Stirling Heritage Strategy 2025–2028 sets out a vision to protect, celebrate, and sustainably manage Stirling's historic environment. Developed by Stirling City Heritage Trust with input from a multi-agency steering group - including Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority. The strategy applies to the entire Stirling Council area, including areas within the National Park, and emphasises the need for close collaboration between Stirling Council and The Park Authority. The strategy also references the National Park Partnership Plan 2024–2029 and highlights The Park Authority's role in managing heritage sites and recognises heritage as a key contributor to community pride, economic growth, tourism, and community wellbeing.

The strategy identifies major challenges such as climate change, building disrepair, skills shortages, funding constraints, and community disengagement, particularly in rural areas. In response, it sets seven strategic aims: conserving heritage assets, strengthening partnerships,

promoting sustainable tourism, engaging communities, tackling climate change, supporting traditional skills, and enhancing heritage education and research.

The strategy calls for strong heritage maintenance, strong community involvement, and alignment with national frameworks such as NPF4 and “Our Past, Our Future.” An action plan and regular monitoring would guide implementation, ensuring Stirling’s heritage remains protected and relevant for future generations.

### National Park Context

#### **Historical Sites within the National Park**

The interactive map linked above contains locations of all the historic assets within the National Park. A summary of the number of sites within the National Park is detailed below. This section goes into detail about each of the categories listed below:

Heritage Designation	Number within the National Park
Listed Buildings	Category A - 27
	Category B - 203
	Category C - 334
	<b>Total - 564</b>
Conservation areas	8
Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes	7
Non-inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes	31
Scheduled Monuments	61

#### Conservation Areas

Local Planning Authorities have a statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to designate areas which are of special historic or architectural interest as conservation areas. Local Authorities are also expected to review the conservation areas to ensure that the historic environment is protected, valued, and managed sustainably. To support National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Policy 7 (Historic Assets and Places), the new Local Development Plan will continue to protect and enhance its historic environment assets and places.

The table below lists the 8 designated conservation areas within the National Park and the date of their designation.

Name of Conservation Area	Date Designated
Callander	1981, extensions August 2011 and October 2011
Drymen	1973, extension 2001 and October 2011
Gartmore	1976
Killin	1973, boundary amended 1978, extension 2001, further amendment 2011
Luss	1971, extension 1984
Milton, to west of Aberfoyle	1984
Tyndrum	1978
St Fillans	October 2011

### Gardens and Designed Landscapes

The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes was first published in 1987. Balloch Castle, Benmore (Younger Botanic Garden), Rednock House, and Ross Priory were first included on the Inventory at this time. Inchmahome Priory, Rossdhu and The Roman Camp were added later in 2006-2007 as part of a project to extend the Inventory.

Buchanan Castle was removed from the Inventory in 2016 as part of an Inventory Gardens Review carried out by Historic Environment Scotland.

In 2012 the National Park Authority commissioned a Historic Designed Landscape project 2012 is (available on our publications section of our website). This addressed 39 site descriptions for non-inventory sites to assist in guiding sensitive design in and around these landscapes and continue to provide relevant management guidance.

### **Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, Historic Designed Landscape Project: Summary Report 2012**

The *Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park: Historic Designed Landscapes Project* was initiated by the National Park Authority to identify, assess, and recommend conservation measures for designed landscapes across the park. The project culminated in a register of 39 significant sites (including inventory and non-inventory sites). Designed landscapes – ranging from estate grounds, woodlands, and parklands to gardens and built features – were assessed for their historical value, condition, and conservation needs. The majority of the landscapes are 19th-century in origin, with some incorporating older elements like 16th-century tower houses. A substantial number of sites are concentrated around Loch Lomond's south-western shore, creating a significant collective visual and cultural impact.

Key findings from the survey include the diversity in size, condition, and usage of these landscapes. While some remain intact under private ownership or institutional use, others have been fragmented, neglected, or repurposed for tourism, housing, or leisure developments. Recommendations include targeted restoration of gardens and parkland, woodland management, improved public access, and the integration of suitable new developments guided by Conservation Management Plans.

Despite challenges, these landscapes remain vital to the park's visual character and cultural heritage, and their protection and enhancement are key to sustaining the park's special qualities.

### **Buildings at Risk Register – Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Summary Report**

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) prepared a summary report on the 2022 Buildings at Risk Register (BARR) survey conducted in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park (LLTNP). The Buildings at Risk Register (BARR) was established in 1990 to promote the repair and reuse of heritage buildings. It serves as a tool for raising awareness and understanding the pressures on Scotland's built heritage. The register includes information about the condition and risk status of heritage buildings and helps prioritise investment for their preservation. The Register is compiled through a fieldwork programme assessing building condition and risk, during which HES is supported by Local Planning Authorities.

The survey included site visits, desk-based research, and discussions with local stakeholders. It assessed the condition and risk of various heritage buildings within The Park. The survey was completed between winter 2021 and spring 2022 and some of the outputs are detailed below:

- The Register features a total of 50 at-risk buildings.
- A total of 28 new buildings were identified as at-risk during the survey, with most being in fair condition and classified as low or moderate risk.
- Over 40% of the at-risk buildings have been in this condition for at least 10 years. 7 pre-date the creation of The Park.
- 65% are classified as dwellings ranging in size from cottages to mansions. The residential category includes estate buildings such as stables or doocots collectively representing country house heritage.
- The survey identified concentrations of at-risk buildings in specific settlements within The Park, with no buildings found to be under restoration during the survey period.

The report notes that no buildings were under active restoration during the survey, with only one (a croft in Glen Ogle) removed from the at-risk register. Since the inception of the BARR, the ratio of saved to lost buildings is 3:1, rising to 5:1 for listed buildings. Most at-risk buildings are in Stirling and Argyll and Bute, primarily outside conservation areas. Buchanan Castle and its estate account for seven at-risk buildings. Public Health Scotland links derelict sites to negative health impacts, particularly in deprived areas.

Nationally, 17% of at-risk buildings are in high-deprivation zones (deciles 1-3), but in Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, this figure is under 4%, with only Woodbank House and Stables meeting the criterion.

Overall, the report provides a detailed analysis of the condition and risk of heritage buildings within Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and emphasises the importance of continued efforts to preserve Scotland's built heritage.

It is worth noting that in September 2024 Historic Environment Scotland (HES) completed a review of the Buildings at Risk Register, which focused on evaluating its effectiveness in helping bring buildings back into use. The aim was to gather evidence to inform recommendations for the long-term future of the Register.

Following careful consideration of the review's key findings, conclusions, and options, HES decided to pause the BARR while the long-term future of the Register is explored. As a result, the BARR will not be updated until further notice.

### **Development Management Trends within the Historic Environment**

A report prepared by Historic Environment Scotland in April 2024 detailed the trends of applications received by the National Park with regards to the historic environment. These trends are detailed below:

- Generally, in the local authority areas within the National Park, we have seen a significant number of cases for the conversion of buildings to holiday lets and to significantly extend listed buildings, particularly in rural locations.
- There have also been a number of applications for upgrades and retrofits to listed buildings, especially improvements related to energy efficiency and climate resilience.
- HES have also been consulted on a number of proposals for demolition of both listed and unlisted buildings in conservation areas which are of interest or contribute positively to the character of the conservation area. Demolition continues to be a concern, particularly with the focus within National Planning Framework 4 on repair and reuse being the preferred option and demolition seen as the least preferred option.

- As the disposal of churches in ecclesiastical use gathers momentum, it is expected that more domestic/community use conversion schemes for churches in the area will be noted.

### **WOSAS Interactive Mapping**

The role of archaeological advisor to the National Park Authority area is covered by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WOSAS) and they primarily provide the National Park with advice on planning applications, policy and guidance. WOSAS have also prepared interactive mapping services with links to [HES PastMap](#) to allow for Local Authorities to better understand the archaeological assets within their boundaries and therefore to make development and land use decisions which do not negatively impact on the historic environment. The mapping demonstrates that there are sites and monuments of archaeological importance across the National Park and it is recognised that these would need to be taken into consideration when preparing the final plan and spatial strategy.

### **Vacant and Derelict Land**

The Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (SVDLS) is updated annually each autumn with data returns from Scottish local authorities to the Scottish Government and published the following spring. It involves reporting the annual change in the take-up of brownfield land and recording new sites which have become vacant or derelict. These are mapped and various details are recorded for them, including the former use of the land, the likelihood of it coming back into use and how soon this may take place. Sites are categorised according to whether they are:

- Vacant land – brownfield sites which are ready for new development, and which must be within settlements; or
- Derelict – brownfield sites which can either be inside or outside settlements, but are not ready for new development, for example due to the presence of unusable buildings.

SVDLS sites include those that are allocated for employment use or housing or are windfall sites where developers have pursued planning applications for housing but work on site has not yet started or has stalled. The SVDLS requires Councils to identify sites that have been removed from the survey since the last return, for example due to development on them commencing or due to them becoming naturalised. The SVDLS does not include vacant brownfield sites that are out with settlement boundaries.

The National Park has contributed annually to the SVDLS process, including visiting and mapping sites to verify their suitability for inclusion in the return. The latest SVDLS submitted to the Scottish Government was that of October 2024.

The National Park's October 2024 SVDLS submission reports no significant changes from previous surveys, listing eight vacant and derelict sites covering 7.26 ha. These sites, previously allocated for development, remain undeveloped. The interactive map demonstrates the location of the sites.

The identified sites are spread across the National Park with no clear pattern. In Lochearnhead, *Station Cottages* (0.92 ha) remains under private ownership with no planning updates, while the *Holiday Centre* (0.56 ha) has planning permission for 12 homes but remains undeveloped. In Carrick Castle, a *former hotel site* (0.53 ha) has been vacant since 2001-2004, with plans for eight homes. Drymen's *Salmon Leap* (0.25 ha), an ex-hospitality site, remains derelict with no planning updates. In Arrochar, the *Former Torpedo Range* (3.61 ha) has been derelict since 2001-2004. In Tarbet, both the *Tourist Information Centre* (0.16 ha) and *Former Harvey's Garage* (0.42 ha) have been vacant since the early 2000s under mixed ownership. In Balloch, *Woodbank* (0.81 ha), a former residential site vacant since 1981-1985. An application for a major tourism development

on this site was submitted to the National Park but was refused. The applicant has since appealed the decision, and the outcome is currently pending.

The development potential of these sites varies, with four deemed suitable for short-term development, three for medium-term, and one with an undetermined timeline.

## **Policy 14 – Design Quality and Place**

This section focuses on NPF 4 policy 14 – design quality and place and is broken down into national policy which will inform the policy direction of the new LDP and then the existing policy perspective and data for the National Park area.

### National Context

#### **Annex D – NPF 4 Six Qualities of Successful Places**

Annex D of NPF 4 sets out the six qualities required for designing successful places. These are:

- Healthy – supporting the prioritisation of women’s safety and improving physical and mental health
- Pleasant – Supporting attractive natural and built spaces
- Connected – Supporting well connected networks that make moving around easy and reduce car dependency
- Distinctive – Supporting attention to detail of local architectural styles and natural landscapes to be interpreted into designs to reinforce identity
- Sustainable – Supporting the efficient use of resources that will allow people to live, play, work and stay in their area, ensuring climate resilience and integrating nature positive biodiversity solutions
- Adaptable – Supporting commitment to investing in the long-term value of buildings, streets and spaces by allowing for flexibility so that they can meet the changing needs and accommodate different uses over time.

#### **Creating Places – a Policy Statement on Architecture and Place for Scotland**

The document outlines a national policy on architecture and place, emphasising the importance of good design in creating vibrant communities and a thriving economy. The strategy focuses on embedding design in various policy areas, promoting low-carbon design, and ensuring high-quality outcomes in public projects. It advocates for meaningful community involvement and interdisciplinary collaboration to achieve these goals. The policy aims to create sustainable, walkable neighbourhoods and recognises the importance of architecture in shaping national identity.

The six qualities of successful places are identified as:

1. Distinctive
2. safe and pleasant
3. easy to move around
4. welcoming
5. adaptable
6. resource efficient.

The Scottish Government commits to embedding these principles across public sector decisions and actions, with Architecture and Design Scotland playing a key role in championing high standards in architecture and place-making.



Overall, the document sets out a comprehensive approach to creating places that are sustainable, inclusive, and reflective of Scotland's identity, with a strong focus on quality design as a driver for positive social, economic, and environmental outcomes.

### **The Public Health Scotland Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025**

The Public Health Scotland Strategic Plan 2022–2025 outlines the goals and strategies for improving public health in Scotland over three years. The plan aims to create a Scotland where everyone thrives, focusing on improving life expectancy and reducing health inequalities, particularly between wealthier and poorer communities. It is recognised within the document that placemaking is an important factor to improving health outcomes.

### **A Policy Statement for Scotland – Designing Streets**

Designing Streets: A Policy Statement for Scotland outlines Scotland's national policy on street design. The primary principle is that street design must prioritise the sense of place over vehicle movement. This means designing streets that enhance local identity, social interaction, and pedestrian safety rather than merely facilitating the flow of motor traffic. The policy encourages a shift from rigid, standards-based approaches to street design towards more flexible, context-sensitive, and design-led processes. The emphasis is on creating streets that are well-integrated with their surroundings and serve multiple functions beyond just transportation.

The policy suggests that street design should be considered early in the planning process and run concurrently with the Road Construction Consent (RCC) process. This integration ensures that street design is not an afterthought but a core part of the development process. The document provides detailed guidance on various aspects of street design, including pedestrian and cyclist considerations, street structure, junction design, and public transport integration. It also addresses technical issues such as visibility, street width, and materials.

Overall, Designing Streets represents a significant shift in Scotland's approach to street design, focusing on creating spaces that are people-friendly, adaptable, and reflective of local character.

### **A New Future For Scotland's Town Centres**

A New Future for Scotland's Town Centres is a report by the Town Centre Action Plan Review Group, published in February 2021. The report provides an in-depth analysis and recommendations for revitalising Scotland's town centres in the context of contemporary challenges.

The report identifies several key issues affecting town centres, including:

- Decentralisation and Disaggregation: Over the past 60 years, activities have moved away from town centres, leading to a decline in their economic and social vitality.
- Environmental Impact: Current patterns of development and transportation are unsustainable and contribute to environmental degradation.
- Economic Disadvantages: Town centres face higher operating costs compared to out-of-town developments, making them less attractive for businesses.
- Social Exclusion: Some town centres are perceived as unwelcoming or inaccessible, particularly for marginalised groups.

The report makes three main types of recommendations:

1. Strengthening the Role of Town Centres in Planning: This includes integrating town centres into the National Planning Framework and ensuring that local community needs are at the forefront of planning decisions.
2. Reforming Tax and Development Systems: The report calls for a review of taxation and funding mechanisms to level the playing field between town centres and out-of-town

developments. This includes considering digital taxes and introducing levies on out-of-town car parking.

3. Supporting Demonstration Projects: The report advocates for expanded funding for projects that demonstrate innovative approaches to town centre revitalisation, focusing on themes like town centre living, digital development, and climate change response.

The concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods, where residents can access most of their daily needs within a 20-minute walk or cycle, is highlighted as a key strategy for making town centres more sustainable and vibrant. The report suggests that this approach can be adapted to fit the unique circumstances of different towns.

The report concludes that town centres have a critical role to play in achieving Scotland's broader social, economic, and environmental goals. It emphasises the need for collaboration across sectors and levels of government to ensure that town centres can thrive and meet the needs of their communities.

### **Water-Resilient Places – A Policy Framework for Surface Water Management and Blue-Green Infrastructure**

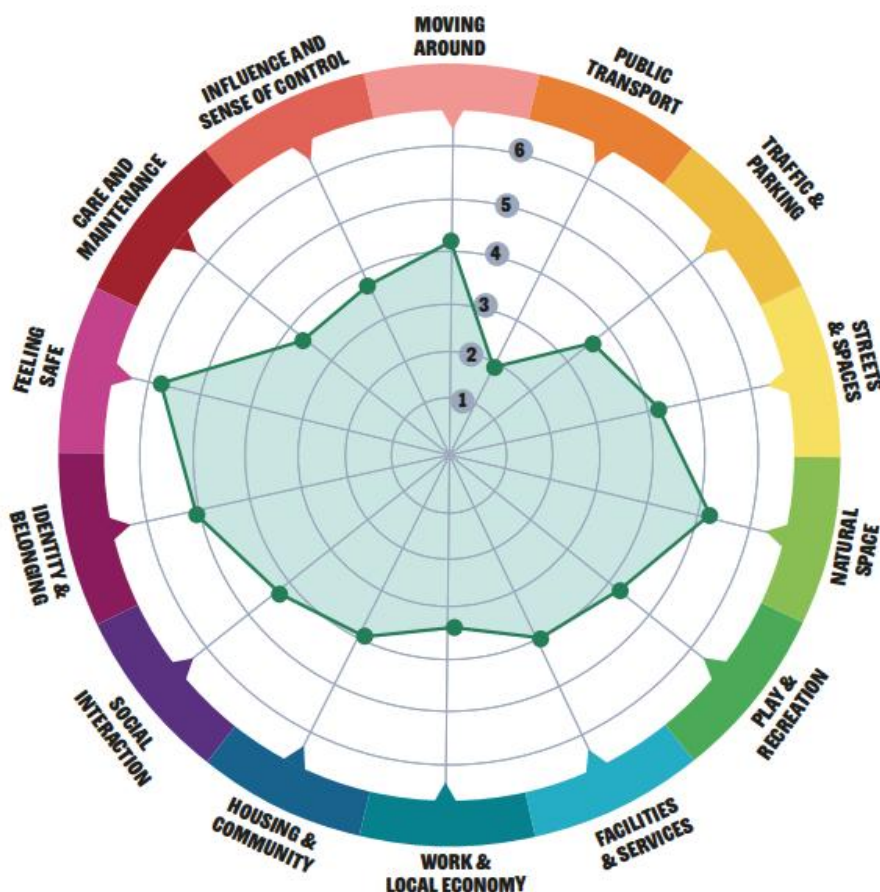
The Water-Resilient Places: A Policy Framework for Surface Water Management and Blue-Green Infrastructure (Scottish Government, 2021) sets out a strategic approach to managing surface water in Scotland, recognising the increasing risks from climate change, urban development, and ageing infrastructure. The framework promotes the creation of attractive, sustainable, and climate-resilient towns and cities through the integration of blue-green infrastructure and improved drainage systems. It identifies six key elements for delivery, including embedding water management in decision-making, better alignment of flood risk and drainage planning, prioritising sustainable drainage in all developments, improving policy coordination, establishing local drainage partnerships, and securing sustainable finance. Through 21 targeted recommendations and a shared vision, the framework aims to embed water resilience into placemaking, ensuring that all sectors contribute to tackling flood risk and creating thriving, adaptable communities.

### **National Park Context**

### **National Park Partnership Plan – Park Wide Place Standard**

Many of the National Park's communities have assessed the quality of their places through their Local Place Plans and using the Place Standard tool. Figure 1, below, shows the combined results of assessments undertaken at the time of writing the National Park Partnership Plan, taken from seven recently completed Local Place Plans from communities across different parts of the National Park. The Park Authority works with 20 communities in total and will update this when new assessments are undertaken.

Despite geographic differences, the results so far are very similar across communities and common concerns identified are issues around lack of public transport, available housing, jobs and rural services. These are essential ingredients to support thriving places and rural communities. The Place Standard tool assesses 14 themes about a place, the higher scores located closer to the outside of the circle are considered to be strengths for a place, whilst lower scores, closer to the middle of the circle, are themes needing improvement.



*Figure 1 – Indicative Place Standard Results (compiled for National Park Level)  
Results are compiled from Place Standard assessments undertaken by the following communities:  
Balquhidder, Lochearnhead and Strathyre, Callander, Drymen, Lochgoil, Killin and Ardeonaig,  
Strathfillan and St Fillans.*

### **Open Spaces Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park**

The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Open Space Audit (2007) was carried out in partnership with Land Use Consultants (LUC) to evaluate the function and contribution of open spaces within rural settlements. Unlike urban areas, rural communities have abundant open space beyond settlements but limited options within built-up areas. The audit examined 28 settlements across the four local authority areas, defining open space based on the SPP 11 Consultation Draft (2006) to include green spaces, water features, and civic areas.

Findings highlighted that most open spaces fell under amenity greenspace, with a fairly even distribution of other types. However, gaps were identified, particularly in play and sports provision for older children in smaller settlements. While some areas had poor-quality open spaces, others demonstrated high-quality environments. The audit also recognised the historic character of some villages, where central greens play a vital role in settlement identity.

Given the audit's age, the new LDP will carefully consider open space, in particular connectivity and addressing community needs. While natural spaces are widely accessible, dedicated open spaces serve distinct functions, and community input will guide future planning.

## **Policy 31 - Culture and Creativity**

This section focuses on culture and creativity matters specific to Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. As with the above chapters this section will also include any relevant national policy positions but will also pull together specific data for the National Park.

### **National Context**

#### **Scotland's Creativity Learning Plan**

Scotland's Creative Learning Plan, first published in 2013, established a shared vision for the role of creativity in education, developing a common understanding of creativity skills. Its aims include integrating creativity into policies, encouraging innovative teaching practices, and increasing parental support for experiential learning. In response to the evolving educational landscape, particularly the impact of COVID-19, the plan has been refreshed to ensure learners can develop and apply creativity in a rapidly changing world.

The updated three-year outcomes focus on embedding creativity in curriculum design, enhancing mental well-being, empowering learners to influence their own creative learning, ensuring they apply creativity across contexts, and making quality cultural experiences accessible to all.

#### **A Cultural Strategy for Scotland (2020)**

A Culture Strategy for Scotland (2020) outlines the Scottish Government's strategic vision and approach to culture. Culture is considered central to Scotland's identity, social cohesion, and prosperity. The strategy envisions Scotland as a place where culture is valued, protected, and nurtured, impacting every community and being celebrated globally.

The document outlines three areas for strategic action:

- **National Partnerships and Collaborations:** Establishing a National Partnership for Culture to advise the government and build on this strategy, ensuring the ongoing development of Scotland's cultural sector.
- **Supporting Cultural Organisations:** Continuation of support for Scotland's National Performing Companies and international cultural exchanges, showcasing Scotland's creativity on the global stage.
- **Addressing Challenges:** Working to address issues related to immigration, trade, and mobility that affect the cultural sector, ensuring Scotland can maintain its cultural leadership globally.

The document serves as a comprehensive guide for the future development of Scotland's cultural landscape, aiming to integrate culture into all aspects of life and governance, thereby enriching society and enhancing Scotland's global cultural standing.

#### **National Gaelic Language Plan 2023 – 2028**

The "National Gaelic Language Plan 2023-2028" outlines the Scottish Government's strategic approach to promoting and revitalising the Gaelic language in Scotland over a five-year period.

The primary aim is to increase the number of people speaking, learning, using, and supporting Gaelic across Scotland. This plan is part of the legal framework established by the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and builds on the successes and lessons learned from previous plans.

Despite progress in Gaelic education and media, challenges remain, particularly in maintaining Gaelic use in traditional communities and ensuring the language's survival in modern contexts. Declines in Gaelic-speaking populations in key areas like the islands and rural northwest require holistic solutions, including economic support and infrastructure development.

The plan identifies several priority areas, including:

- Community Support: Enhancing Gaelic use in communities through networks, community plans, and supporting Gaelic officers and events.
- Home Use: Promoting Gaelic in the home by developing digital resources, supporting Gaelic-medium education (GME), and encouraging family use of Gaelic.
- Creative Industries: Supporting Gaelic in broadcasting, arts, and publishing to maintain its cultural impact and increase its appeal, especially among young people.
- Education: Expanding and strengthening Gaelic-medium education at all levels, from early childhood through adult learning.
- Targets: Specific targets are set for each priority area, such as developing community Gaelic plans, increasing Gaelic-medium childcare services, and enhancing support for Gaelic in creative industries.
- Implementation: The plan emphasises that success depends on collaboration across various sectors, including public authorities, Gaelic organisations, communities, and individuals.

Overall, the plan seeks to not only preserve but also grow the Gaelic language, ensuring it remains a vibrant part of Scotland's cultural and social fabric.

### National Park Context

#### **Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Gaelic Language Plan 2024 – 2029**

The *2024-2029 Draft Gaelic Language Plan* for The National Park Authority has been prepared under Section 3 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. The plan aims to promote and support Gaelic within the National Park, recognising its historical and cultural significance. It aligns with the objectives of the National Gaelic Language Plan and commits to increasing the use, learning, and promotion of Gaelic over the next five years.

It outlines strategic commitments to encourage Gaelic use among staff, visitors, and local communities. These include expanding bilingual signage, offering training for employees, promoting Gaelic heritage in interpretation materials, and ensuring public communication is accessible in both Gaelic and English. Specific high-level goals include integrating Gaelic into public services, increasing opportunities for learning, and actively promoting the language's visibility and relevance.

The Plan was approved by Ministers in March 2025, with the final version due to be published shortly.

#### **Cultural Sector Mapping**

The National Park is a predominately rural area and therefore the majority of cultural venues are located within the larger urban centres within close proximity to The Park. LDP guidance provides examples of cultural venues as museums, galleries, theatres, cinemas, music venues, studios, recording spaces and space for art/craft activities.

While the majority of larger scale cultural venues will be located out with The Park (Helensburgh, Dumbarton, Glasgow, Stirling, Edinburgh), there are some opportunities for residents and visitors to the National Park to access cultural venues within the boundary too.

The National Park offers a range of cultural and community facilities across its settlements. There are three libraries located in Balloch, Callander and Killin. Community and village halls are more widespread, with approximately twenty-one venues available throughout The Park. A single occasional cinema operates at Cameron House, while two museums can be found in Balloch and Callander. Additionally, art galleries are located in Luss and Callander, contributing to The Park's cultural and artistic offering. In preparing the Evidence Report, mapping has been undertaken to capture the facilities that help deliver the local living principle. This includes categories such as cultural venues and community facilities, with the interactive map above illustrating their location and spread across the National Park.

While traditional cultural venues, as described above, may be limited within the National Park, the area offers a diverse range of attractions that are well-suited to its rural setting. These experiences – accessible to both residents and visitors – enrich the cultural fabric of The Park and provide meaningful opportunities to engage with its unique heritage, landscape, and local traditions.

Examples of these types of venues are listed below and please note this list is not exhaustive:

- Sea Life Loch Lomond Aquarium
- RSPB Nature Reserve
- Golf Courses
- Benmore Botanical Gardens
- Pucks Glen
- Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine Cruises
- Balloch Castle Country Park

### **Events in The National Park**

While the National Park may have comparatively limited numbers of cultural venues, there are a number of events which happen annually which contribute to the rural cultural heritage across The Park. The list below is not exhaustive but indicative of the range of events that communities and visitors can take part in each year:

- Go Swim is an annual event held on the shore of Loch Lomond in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support. There are a number of long and short-distance swim events which are suitable for people of all abilities.
- Piping on the Square is organised by Drymen Community Development Trust each year and provides residents and visitors with an hour of music in Drymen Square. The event supports local pipe bands to participate.
- Agricultural shows and country fairs are part of the rural cultural heritage and continue to this day across the National Park. The Drymen show is the longest running agricultural show in Scotland with approx. eight thousand visitors every year.
- Highland Games remain an event on the social calendar for residents and visitors to The Park with several happening throughout the year. There are notable Highland Games at Luss, Killin, Balquhider and in Cowal.

## Data Context

### **The Scottish Household Survey 2022**

The Scottish Household Survey 2022 published statistics on the numbers of people who access or are involved in the cultural sector. There is not a specific set of data for The National Park area but there is information for the four local authority areas which cover the National Park. It should be noted the Stirling Council area has a large urban area within its boundary and therefore the data for this area is significantly different. The data set breaks down these figures further and interrogates them by providing details on the difference in accessing cultural activities between different protected characteristics. The data indicates that while the majority of the area covered by the National Park is above the Scottish average for cultural engagement, West Dunbartonshire is below the average percentage.

Between 2018 and 2022, cultural engagement among adults in Scotland remained high, with 88% participating in cultural activities. Engagement was above the national average in Argyll and Bute (93%), Perth and Kinross (97%), and Stirling (91%), indicating strong cultural involvement in these areas. In West Dunbartonshire, engagement was lower at 82%, though still reflecting significant participation in cultural activities.

### **Employment Statistics for jobs in the creative industry**

Scotland's Creative Industries sector spans advertising, architecture, design, performing arts, film, music, publishing, software, and cultural education. Creative industries are those based on individual creativity, skill and talent, or which have the potential to create wealth and jobs through the development or production of intellectual property.

Employment in the Creative Industries sector stood at 90,000 in 2023, accounting for 3.4% of employment in Scotland and 5.4% of employment in Creative Industries across Great Britain. Employment in this sector increased by 2.3% over the latest year in Scotland.

In 2023, employment in the Creative Industries sector was highest in Glasgow City (25,065) and City of Edinburgh (23,065), which comprised 27.9% and 25.6% of employment in this sector respectively.

## **Summary of Stakeholder Engagement**

As part of the Evidence Gathering process for the new Local Development Plan (LDP), the National Park Authority developed a suite of Topic Papers and Area Summaries to explore key planning themes and local issues across The Park. These documents form the technical and spatial foundation for the new LDP and were central to the targeted community engagement process between May and July.

Ten Topic Papers were drafted, aligning with the relevant policies in NPF4. These papers summarise national, regional, and local data, providing a detailed evidence base on subjects such as climate change, biodiversity, housing, infrastructure, and the rural economy. They were developed by National Park officers, incorporating input from key public bodies including SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot, Transport Scotland, and local authorities.

A draft of this topic paper was sent to:

- Historic Environment Scotland
- West of Scotland Archaeology Service
- Architecture and Design Scotland
- Scottish Water
- Argyll and Bute Historic Environment Advisor

Six Area Summaries were also produced to provide a more accessible, place-based and spatial view of the evidence. These summaries incorporate mapped information alongside key content from registered Local Place Plans highlighting key opportunities, challenges, and priorities for specific areas within The National Park. The spatial presentation was intended to support more informed and locally relevant discussion during in-person workshops.

As part of the engagement activities, a series of in-person workshops were held in May and June 2025 across the National Park to present the Area Summaries and gather feedback directly from local community groups and stakeholders. To ensure wider participation, complementary online surveys were also made available, allowing people to review and comment on both the Topic Papers and Area Summaries over a six-week period (May – July 2025). In addition to public engagement, input was actively sought from key statutory agencies and partner organisations throughout the preparation process to help shape and strengthen the evidence base.

Summary of Responses	
Respondent	Summary of Comments and Response
Historic Environment Scotland	<p>Historic Environment Scotland expressed their support for the evidence presented and provided suggestions regarding its potential implications.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> These suggestions have been taken into account and reflected in the final implications outlined below.</p>
Architecture and Design Scotland	<p>Architecture and Design Scotland did not have any comments to make to this paper.</p>
West of Scotland Archaeology Service	<p>West of Scotland Archeology Service provided an additional piece of evidence to include within the paper which is titled <i>Delivery of Public Benefit and Social Value Guidance for Archaeology in the Planning Process</i>.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> This evidence has been incorporated into the final version.</p>
Scottish Water	<p>Scottish Water has expressed support for the overarching principles within the paper and requested that the six qualities of place section was expanded to include the water environment.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> In response to initial feedback, the paper was revised to incorporate the Water Resilient Places Policy Framework and to place greater emphasis on water within the six qualities of successful places.</p>
Persimmon Homes	<p>Persimmon Homes responded via the online survey and were generally supportive of the paper and stated that the evidence was robust. They highlight their proposed site near Balloch Castle and express a commitment to collaborating on restoration efforts if the site is allocated in the Local Development Plan.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Noted and follow up meeting organised to discuss proposal.</p>



Kilmarnock Community Council (KCC)	<p>KCC seeks to preserve the area's agricultural and environmental character, highlighting its alignment with East Loch Lomond. It supports maintaining paths to Aber and Dumpling Hill, protecting natural assets like SSSIs, parks, and nature reserves. The community values Gartocharn Primary School for its educational and cultural role and supports broad catchment to ensure its sustainability. Traditional recreational access to Loch Lomond for local residents, especially youth, is essential, and concerns are raised about threats from commercial developments that could limit this access or increase costs.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Comments have been noted. However, as the comments received do not identify gaps in evidence, data, or information, but instead reflect views on requirements, it is considered that these are best addressed at the next stage during preparation of the Proposed Plan.</p>
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## Summary of Implication for the Proposed Plan

The implications of the evidence for the Proposed Plan may be summarised as follows:

### Policy 7 – Historic Assets and Places

- The National Park Authority has clear obligations to protect and enhance built, archaeological, and cultural heritage. The new LDP should consider options to take a proactive approach, preserving their significance while supporting climate resilience measures that respect their character.
- The new LDP should ensure that site assessments for site allocations fully consider The Park's built and cultural heritage assets, integrating their value into analysis and decision-making.
- The new LDP should support and recognise the historic environment as a vital contributor to key policy areas, including tourism, regeneration of brownfield and vacant sites, health and wellbeing, cultural identity, and the transition to net zero – ensuring its value is fully integrated into strategic planning policy.
- The new Local Development Plan should identify, protect, and support the reuse of buildings at risk. This could include maintaining an up-to-date register, assessing heritage value, and promoting adaptive reuse through sensitive restoration that preserves character and supports sustainability, local identity, and regeneration.

### Policy 14 – Design Quality and Place

- The new LDP should be a place-based, visually engaging document guided by the six qualities of successful places outlined in NPF4 Policy 14 and Annex D.

- The new LDP should take account of LPPs that set out long-term needs and aspirations, ensuring that future development aligns with the priorities of both residents and businesses.
- The new LDP should integrate the Local Living principle into development planning by promoting walkable neighbourhoods, positive health outcomes, local services, and sustainable transport, while also encouraging resilient, climate-adaptive design that enhances biodiversity and delivers high-quality public spaces.
- The new LDP should aim to promote the adaptive reuse of vacant buildings to preserve cultural and architectural heritage while supporting economic and community development.
- The new LDP will prioritise development on vacant and derelict land (V&DL) to improve environmental quality and stimulate investment on underutilised sites.
- The new LDP should identify and map priority brownfield sites and develop clear guidance for their redevelopment, ensuring alignment with sustainable design and development goals and contribution to biodiversity.

### **Policy 31 - Culture and Creativity**

- The new LDP should recognise and support the role of cultural events, traditions, and attractions as key components of the National Park's community wealth, contributing to a vibrant tourism industry, local economic growth, and distinctive placemaking.
- The new LDP should support the ongoing use, maintenance, and improvement of cultural sites and facilities, to assist in them remaining accessible, sustainable, and valued by both residents and visitors.

### **Statements of Agreement / Dispute**

There are no known substantive areas of disagreement on the evidence in the paper. Feedback from respondents to the Topic Paper consultation have largely been addressed in the Evidence Report. Historic Environment Scotland and Scottish Water have confirmed they are content with the paper.

<b>Issue:</b> <b>Topic/Place</b>	<b>Topic Paper 10 - Rural Economy</b>
<b>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p><b><u>Community Wealth Building</u></b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15(5) - the principle physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Business and Industry</u></b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5) - the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district</li> <li>• Section 15 (5) - the principal purposes for which land is used.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>City, Town, Local and Commercial Centres</u></b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5) - the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district;</li> <li>• section 15(5) - the principal purposes for which the land is used</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Retail</u></b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5) - the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district;</li> <li>• section 15(5) - the principal purposes for which the land is used</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Rural Development</u></b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15(5) – the extent to which there are rural areas within the district in relation to where there has been a substantial decline in population.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Tourism</u></b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• section 15(5) - the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.</li> <li>• Section 15 (5) the principal purposes for which land is used.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Aquaculture</u></b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15(5) - the principle economic and environmental characteristics of the district</li> <li>• Regulation 9 – have regard to the national marine plan and any regional marine plan</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Minerals</u></b> - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 15(5)(a) - the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district</li> </ul>

	<p><b><u>Other relevant legislation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Aims of National Parks in Scotland (as set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Links to Evidence</b></p>	<p><b><u>Interactive Map</u></b></p> <p>For any data that is not linked in this topic paper, these can be viewed on the National Park Authority's <a href="#">interactive GIS map viewer</a> under 'A Thriving Place' layer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Interactive GIS Map Viewer</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>National Park Partnership Plan</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Overarching</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Register</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority Vacant and Derelict Land audit 2019</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Policy 25 - Community Wealth Building</u></b></p> <p><b><u>National Context</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill 2025</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015: A Summary 2017</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Scottish Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement 2022</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Wealth Building and Land</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Local Context</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Community Ownership in Scotland 2022 2023</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Stirling's New Economic Strategy 2022</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Wealth Building in Argyll and Bute 2023</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">West Dunbartonshire Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>National Park Context</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority Asset Register 2025</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Asset Transfer Register 2025</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Policy 26 – Business and Industry</u></b></p> <p><b><u>National Context</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation 2022</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Scottish Government Labour Market Trends 2025</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Supporting a green recovery: an initial assessment of nature-based jobs and skills2020</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Local Context</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Stirling's New Economic Strategy 2022</a></li> </ul>

- [Argyll & Bute Economic Strategy 2019-20203](#)

#### National Park Context

- [Delivery-Programme-2025.pdf](#)
- [Businesses in Scotland: 2024](#)
- [Employment Census Data 2022](#)

### **Policy 27 – City, Town, Local and Commercial Centres**

#### National Context

- [A New Future for Scotland's Town Centres 2021](#)
- [Town Centre Action Plan Review: Joint Scottish Government And COSLA Response 2022](#)
- [A Toolkit for Successful Town Centres](#)

#### National Park Context

- [Understanding Scottish Places 2015](#)

### **Policy 28 – Retail**

#### National Context

- [Getting the Right Change – A Retail Strategy for Scotland 2022](#)
- [SGF Scottish Local Shop Report 2023](#)
- [Out of Home Scotland 2021](#)

#### National Park Context

- [Local development Plan 2017-2021](#)

### **Policy 29 – Rural Development**

#### National Context

- [Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2020](#)

#### National Park Context

- [Local development Plan 2017-2021](#)
- [population-projections-2018-data.xlsx](#)
- [Search | Scotland's Census - Search by topic - Topic selection](#)

### **Policy 30 – Tourism**

#### National Context

- [Scotland Outlook 2030; Scotland's tourism strategy](#)
- [Food Tourism Action Plan](#)
- [Scotland Marine Tourism Strategy 2020-2025](#)
- [Scottish Agritourism, a strategy for sustainable growth 2024](#)
- [Scotland's Resident's Views on Tourism 2025](#)
- [Scotland Visitor Survey 2023](#)
- [Scotland Visitor Survey 2023 - Accessible Tourism](#)

### Local Context

- [Glasgow City Region Strategy 2018-2023](#)
- [Argyll & The Isles Strategic Tourism Partnership Visitor Economy Recovery And Growth Strategy 2022-2025](#)
- [Tourism-Strategy-and-Action-Plan-2025-2030.pdf](#)

### National Park Context

- [Monitoring report 2024](#)
- [Scotland Visitor Survey 2023](#)
- Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Annual Visitor Study 2025 (document not yet available online, will be submitted to Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals Division at Gate check stage)
- Loch Lomond and The Trossachs STEAM Report 2024 (document not yet available online, will be submitted to Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals Division at Gate check stage)
- [Housing Market Pressure Report 2022](#)
- [Forestry and Land Scotland: Stay the Night](#)
- [Camping Management Zones](#)
- [Camping permit areas in the National Park 2022](#)
- [Planning \(Scotland\) Act update: Changing Places Toilets Regulations 2020](#)
- [Loch Lomond and the Trossachs - An Accessible Destination](#)
- [Place Programme Delivery Route Map 2024](#)
- [West Loch Lomond Strategic Development Framework 2022](#)
- [East Loch Lomond Strategic Development Framework 2022](#)
- [Strathard & The Trossachs Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Framework 2024](#)
- [Callander Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Framework 2024](#)

## **Policy 32 – Aquaculture**

### National Context

- [Scotland's National Marine Plan: A Single Framework for Managing Our Seas 2015](#)
- [Vision for sustainable aquaculture 2023](#)
- [Climate change: Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029](#)
- [Scotland's Fisheries Management Strategy 2020-2030](#)
- [Finfish Aquaculture Sector Plan Single Pages.pdf](#)
- [Scottish wild salmon strategy 2022](#)
- [Sea Lice Regulatory Framework Implementation | Scottish Environment Protection Agency \(SEPA\)](#)
- [Scotland's Marine Economic Statistics 2022](#)
- [Blue Economy Vision for Scotland 2022](#)

### National Park Context

- [Marine Scotland: National Marine Plan Interactive](#)
- [Marine Fish Farm Map](#)
- [Wild Salmonid Protection Zones](#)

- [Scotland's Aquaculture - Sea Lice Data](#)
- [Water Classification Hub](#)
- [Aquaculture Map | Scotland's Aquaculture](#)
- [Scotland's Environment Web Map](#)

### **Policy 33 – Minerals**

#### **National Context**

- [British Geological Survey: UK Minerals Yearbook 2021](#)
- [Collation of The Results of The Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland 2019](#)
- [Collation of the results of the 2023 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Great Britain](#)

#### **National Park Context**

- [Local development Plan 2017-2021](#)
- [GeoIndex - British Geological Survey](#)

## **National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context**

Eight NPF4 policy areas have been grouped into this one Evidence Paper as the policy areas are considered to align with one another in the context of Loch Lomond the Trossachs National Park area. This topic paper is primarily focused on the rural economy within the National Park and the various factors which contribute to its growth or decline. The primary driver of the economy in the National Park is tourism and this facilitates much of the economic activity within The Park, hence why these two key policy areas have been combined. Another key part of our rural economy is the retail sector. Community Wealth building has also been added to this Topic Paper as this is to become a key area of focus. Finally, aquaculture and minerals have also been included within this paper as they form a small part of the rural economy for the National Park. The land use sector is an important component of the rural economy and implications arising from land use change are considered in Topic Paper One Climate and Land Use.

**Policy 25 Community Wealth Building** aims to support and facilitate a new strategic approach to economic development that also provides a practical model for building a wellbeing economy at local, regional and national levels. The policy requires Local Development Plans to be aligned with any strategy for community wealth building for the area. Spatial strategies should address community wealth building priorities, identify community assets, set out opportunities to tackle economic disadvantage and inequality and seek to provide benefits for local communities.

**Policy 26 Business and Industry** states that Local Development Plans should allocate sufficient land for business and industry, taking into account business and industry land audits, in particular ensuring that there is a suitable range of sites that meet current market demand, location, size and quality in terms of accessibility and services. The allocation should take account of local economic strategies and support broader objectives of delivering a low carbon and net zero economic recovery and a fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy. The policy also supports proposals out with areas identified for development if that are of a nature and scale that is compatible with the surrounding area.

**Policy 27 City, Town, Local and Commercial Centres** aims to promote, encourage and facilitate development within town centres. The policy stipulates that LDPs should support



sustainable development within towns and commercial centres. NPF4 guidance suggests that LDPs should identify a network of centres within the local district that reflect the principle of the 20-minute neighbourhood concept. It is also necessary that the LDP provide a portion of their Local Housing Land Requirements in city and town centres and aim to identify opportunities that will support residential development.

**Policy 28 Retail** is closely linked to Policy 27. NPF4 states that the intent of this policy is to ensure that retail investment is located in sustainable locations which can be accessed by a range of transport modes. The policy states that LDPs should outline where there is a need for further retail provision and should identify locations for healthy food and drink outlets.

**Policy 29 Rural Development** seeks to support vibrant and sustainable rural areas by encouraging economic activity, innovation and diversification, while protecting the distinctive rural character, the service role of small towns, and the area's natural assets and cultural heritage. Its key outcomes are to create thriving rural communities and businesses and maintain a balanced, sustainable rural population. Local Development Plans should analyse the characteristics and needs of rural areas, including existing development patterns, environmental assets, community priorities, and economic opportunities. Using this evidence, LDPs should set out a spatial strategy that supports rural sustainability and prosperity, apply the Scottish Government's 6-Fold Urban Rural Classification (2020) to identify remote rural areas, and highlight previously inhabited areas suitable for resettlement.

**Policy 30 Tourism** seeks to encourage and support sustainable tourism development that benefits local people, is consistent with net zero and nature commitments, and inspires people to visit Scotland. LDPs should support the recovery, growth and long-term resilience of the tourism sector. The spatial strategy in a LDP should identify suitable locations which reflect opportunities for tourism development by taking full account of the needs of communities, visitors, the industry and the environment. The spatial strategy should also identify areas of tourism pressure where further development would not be appropriate.

**Policy 32 Aquaculture** aims to ensure that new aquaculture development is in line with the National and Regional Marine Plan and that adverse environmental impacts are minimised. NPF4 seeks to support an aquaculture industry that is sustainable and economically viable whilst contributing to food security.

**Policy 33 Minerals** seeks to support the sustainable management of resources and minimise the impacts of the extraction of minerals on communities and the environment. Local Development Plans are required to provide at least a 10-year landbank of construction aggregates in relevant market areas.

## National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2024 – 2029 Context

The National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) is divided into three chapters which cover the key themes and issues for the National Park. The final chapter – Chapter 3: *Designing a Greener Way of Living* – focuses on how people live, work and experience the National Park and how this needs to change to respond and adapt to the climate and nature crises as well as to support thriving communities into the future. The eight topics within this topic paper are all covered in this final chapter of the NPPP.

Spending on nature-based and wellness tourism is a growing trend and the National Park's rural economy must adapt to support this whilst also becoming greener, more diverse and more equitable than it is currently. It is also necessary for the National Park to focus on generating and retaining wealth more locally in order to support communities to become more sustainable and resilient. This topic paper aims to bring these key themes together as they all play a



crucial role in achieving the above aims of a more sustainable economy which also improves the lives of those who live and work within the National Park.

There is considerable development interest in The National Park, primarily for housing and tourism-related developments, however there are some areas of The Park which are experiencing development pressure and there is limited scope for development in these areas due to capacity and environmental constraints. The NPPP has concluded that it is unlikely that any new significant sites will be identified for the duration of the new Plan beyond what is already identified in the LDP and in the pipeline for delivery. The NPPP instead, is encouraging a more responsive approach to development in the National Park that will support community wealth building and the rural economy, support adaptation and build resilience to climate change, support green jobs and skills, local living and land use and management. It identifies that there is a legacy of vacant and derelict land and brownfield sites that will need to be brought back into use. This will also be a key focus of the forthcoming LDP.

The NPPP has identified areas within the National Park for strategic development and investment and these are illustrated in figure 1 of the appendix. This map (figure 1) will become a key consideration for the new LDP and forms part of our evidence base. The NPPP is the overarching vision document for the National Park so it is crucial that the new LDP is in line within these strategic policies.

The NPPP includes an overarching policy for developing and investing within the National Park. The policy states that development and infrastructure within the National Park will be guided by principles that support climate action, nature restoration, and local community needs, while fostering a greener, low-carbon economy and a wellbeing-focused economy. These are considered to align closely with NPF4 policy outcomes intent. Key priorities include addressing the climate emergency through sustainable development, maximising opportunities for nature restoration, supporting local living and working, ensuring a just transition for businesses, and promoting community-led development. Nationally significant infrastructure improvements, such as trunk road upgrades, electricity transmission, and hydro-electric projects, will be supported where they safeguard the environment and landscape while enhancing visitor experiences.

Strategic-scale development will focus on Callander, expanding sustainably to support mixed-use development and regional service provision; Balloch, attracting tourism investment, transport improvements, and economic regeneration; and Arrochar & Tarbet, prioritising the redevelopment of vacant and derelict sites to meet community needs and improve infrastructure for visitors.

Large-scale wind farms will not be permitted within the National Park, in line with National Planning Framework 4, and proposals near The Park boundary must be designed to avoid negative impacts on its special landscape qualities. This policy framework ensures sustainable growth, environmental protection, and community resilience, while supporting economic and tourism development in ways that preserve the National Park's unique character.

This chapter also contains several objectives which correspond to the NPF4 policies within this Topic Paper. A summary of the objectives already set within the NPPP have been included below under each policy:

**Community Wealth Building** – Objective 3 within section 3.2 outlines the Partnership Plan's vision for building community wealth. The Partnership Plan sets an approach which seeks to build community wealth where local businesses and communities benefit from economic transition, retaining and reinvesting wealth locally. Key actions include capacity building, training, and skills development for community anchor organisations, fostering collaboration

between the public sector, land managers, businesses, and communities to expand the green economy through new business models and social enterprises. Additionally, communities should be supported in engaging with land use decisions to enhance local influence over land and assets. A new Community Wealth Building approach will be developed to maximise local benefits from new developments and investments.

**Business and Industry** - The National Park Authority is committed to supporting low-carbon businesses by helping them reduce emissions and transition toward a net-zero economy, this aim is explored in objective 2 within section 3.1 of the Plan. Key actions include enhancing access to specialist technical advice and collaborative opportunities, as well as improving digital and telecommunications infrastructure to optimise business operations

Objective 3 of section 3.1 is also relevant to NPF4 policy 26. The National Park is focused on growing green and nature-based jobs and skills to support a more sustainable and diverse local economy. Key actions include establishing an evidence base to identify skills gaps and labour shortages in key sectors such as nature, land management, and transport, and developing a Green and Nature-Based Skills Action Plan to outline training needs and employment opportunities.

**Rural Development** - The National Park is committed to delivering strategic development needs by ensuring that nationally significant infrastructure projects, as outlined in National Planning Framework 4, are designed to protect The Park's environmental and landscape qualities while maximising benefits for local communities, businesses, and visitors. Key priorities include sustainable expansion in Callander to support local living, enhancing Balloch as a major visitor and transport hub, and regenerating Arrochar and Tarbet by addressing vacant and derelict sites. The aims and actions for this policy area are detailed in section 3.3, objective 1. The NPPP also seeks to support rural development that is required to support a healthy land use sector within the National Park and that supports land use change needed to achieve long term climate and nature outcomes. The LDP will be prepared to also consider and reflect land use information to act as a framework to better guide, and integrate as far as possible development, infrastructure and land use guidance at localised sub-area level (six sub areas are proposed).

**Tourism** - Objective 1 in section 3.1 of the Partnership Plan details The National Park's aims to increase sustainable tourism by fostering a thriving visitor economy that transitions towards low-emission, nature-connected experiences while celebrating local culture and heritage.

Key actions include collaborating to develop new tourism opportunities, establishing a baseline for green tourism accreditation to assess business participation, and providing toolkits and guidance to help businesses capitalise on low-carbon tourism.

## Summary of Evidence

This Topic Paper is divided into eight sections, reflecting NPF4 policies, each pulling together the relevant policies and data for the National Park area.

The policy areas are:

- Policy 25 – Community Wealth Building
- Policy 26 – Business and Industry
- Policy 27 – City, Town, Local and Commercial Centres
- Policy 28 – Retail
- Policy 29 – Rural Development

- Policy 30 – Tourism
- Policy 32 – Aquaculture
- Policy 33 – Minerals

It is also important to acknowledge that there is overlap between the Rural Economy paper and policy areas explored within other Topic Papers. The relevant Topic Papers and policies that should be read in conjunction with this paper are:

- Topic Paper 7 (Housing) – Policy 17 Rural Homes
- Topic Paper 8 (Living Well Locally) – Policy 15 Local Living & 20 Minute Neighbourhoods
- Topic Paper 9 (Cultural Heritage & Place) – Policy 31 Culture and Creativity

### **Overarching Data**

Many of these policies areas are informed by overlapping datasets that will inform the new Local Development Plan (LDP). To avoid repetition, rather than integrating them into each NPF4 policy area individually, this section presents a comprehensive overview of the key data and insights that underpin the rural economy of the National Park as a whole.

### **Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020**

SIMD is a “relative measure of deprivation across 6,976 small areas (called data zones)”. It is the Scottish Government’s standard approach to identify areas of multiple deprivation and is an established source of information to inform the delivery of public services and decision making. If an area is identified as deprived this can relate to people having low incomes but can also mean fewer resources and opportunities, SIMD looks at the extent to which an area is considered deprived relating to 7 factors, namely income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. SIMD ranks data zones from the most deprived (ranked 1) to least deprived (ranked 10). It is acknowledged that data zones in rural areas cover a large geographic extent and reflect a more mixed picture of deprivation.

In a Scottish context, the National Park is generally a wealthy area within Scotland and therefore there are few areas of economic disadvantage within The Park. The two areas which indicate deprivation in this index within the National Park are Balloch to the south of The Park and Cowal to the west of The Park. Balloch has one area within the community which falls within the 5% most deprived areas in Scotland and also has an area which falls within the 10% least deprived areas in Scotland. The SIMD data within the interactive map illustrates that Balloch is a complicated town with a mixture of issues to address.

The other area of interest within the National Park is Lochgoilhead which currently sits within the 4<sup>th</sup> decile of the deprivation index. While this is shown as an area of deprivation on the overall ranking on the SIMD index the primary factor contributing to this lower overall ranking is the geographic access rank which is currently ranked as a 1 out of 10. This area can only be accessed by single track road and there are limited public transport options. There are other small pockets of deprivation within the National Park e.g. Crianlarich, Tyndrum, Balquidder and all of these areas have also received a 1 for geographic access and as a result are classified as deprived.

Whilst it is acknowledged this information is dated 2020, it is the most recent Index, but it also requires to be considered with other sources of information and data on the socio-economic circumstances in the National Park’s communities.

## **Vacant and Derelict Land**

The Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (SVDLS) is updated annually each autumn with data returns from local authorities to the Scottish Government and published the following spring. It involves reporting the annual change in the take-up of brownfield land and recording new sites which have become vacant or derelict. These are mapped and various details are recorded for them, including the former use of the land, the likelihood of it coming back into use and how soon this may take place. Sites are categorised according to whether they are:

- Vacant land – brownfield sites which are ready for new development, and which must be within settlements; or
- Derelict – brownfield sites which can either be inside or outside settlements, but are not ready for new development, for example due to the presence of unusable buildings.

SVDLS sites include those that are allocated for employment use or housing or are windfall sites where developers have pursued planning applications for housing but work on site has not yet started or has stalled. The SVDLS requires Councils to identify sites that have been removed from the survey since the last return, for example due to development on them commencing or due to them becoming naturalised. The SVDLS does not include vacant brownfield sites that are out with settlement boundaries.

The National Park has contributed annually to the SVDLS process, including visiting and mapping sites to verify their suitability for inclusion in the return. The latest SVDLS submitted to the Scottish Government was that of October 2024.

The National Park's October 2024 SVDLS submission reports no significant changes from previous surveys, listing eight vacant and derelict sites covering 7.26 ha. These sites, previously allocated for development, remain undeveloped.

The identified sites are spread across the National Park with no clear pattern. In Lochearnhead, *Station Cottages* (0.92 ha) remains under private ownership with no planning updates, while the *Holiday Centre* (0.56 ha) has planning permission for 12 homes but remains undeveloped. In Carrick Castle, a *former hotel site* (0.53 ha) has been vacant since 2001, with plans for eight homes. Drymen's *Salmon Leap* (0.25 ha), an ex-hospitality site, remains derelict with no planning updates. In Arrochar, the *Former Torpedo Range* (3.61 ha) has been derelict since 2001. In Tarbet, both the *Tourist Information Centre* (0.16 ha) and *Former Harvey's Garage* (0.42 ha) have been vacant since the early 2000s under mixed ownership. In Balloch, *Woodbank* (0.81 ha), a former residential and latterly a tourism site vacant since 1981–1985, is part of a major development proposal that was refused planning permission by the National Park Authority with that decision currently subject of an appeal that Scottish Ministers will determine.

The development potential of these sites varies, with four deemed suitable for short-term development, three for medium-term, and one with an undetermined timeline.

## **Policy 25 – Community Wealth Building**

### **National Context**

The Scottish Government defines community wealth building as “*an approach designed to tackle long-standing economic challenges and transform Scotland's local and regional*

*economies by considering the ways in which the public sector, in partnership with the private, third and community sectors, can ensure more wealth is generated, circulated and retained in communities and localities.”*

Community Wealth Building acts as a framework for activity across five interlinked pillars:

- Spending - Maximising community benefits through procurement and commissioning, developing good enterprises, fair work and shorter supply chains.
- Fair Workforce - Increasing fair work and developing local labour markets that support the wellbeing of communities.
- Land and property - Growing social, ecological, financial and economic value that local communities gain from land and property assets.
- Inclusive ownership - Developing more local and social enterprises which generate community wealth, including social enterprises, employee-owned firms and cooperatives.
- Finance - Ensuring that flows of investment and financial institutions work for local people, communities and businesses.

### **The Community Wealth Building Bill 2025**

The Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill aims to establish a legislative framework to promote inclusive local economic development and reduce inequality across Scotland. It requires the Scottish Ministers to produce a national Community Wealth Building Statement, outlining their strategies to reduce economic disparities and grow local and regional economies by keeping wealth circulating within communities. Key measures include promoting fair employment, supporting local businesses and social enterprises, using public procurement to benefit communities, and encouraging community land ownership and the reuse of vacant land.

Local authorities, alongside relevant public bodies such as Health Boards and Skills Development Scotland, must jointly develop and publish a Community Wealth Building Action Plan within three years of the Act's commencement. These plans must detail concrete steps to retain wealth locally, such as supporting local procurement, employee ownership, and entrepreneurship.

The Bill also mandates the Scottish Ministers to issue guidance on community wealth building, which specified public bodies must consider when developing corporate strategies. A wide range of public bodies are listed in the Schedule, including National Park Authorities, VisitScotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, and Police Scotland.

Overall, the Bill marks a shift toward a more community-centred economy, empowering local stakeholders and embedding equity and sustainability in economic planning.

### **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015**

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 is a landmark piece of legislation designed to enhance the role of communities in decision-making processes across Scotland. It aims to empower local communities by giving them more influence over public services, assets, and decisions that affect their lives. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 enhances community involvement in decision-making and access to resources. Key provisions include:

1. Community Participation: Empowers communities to influence public services and outcomes through participation requests.
2. Asset Transfer: Allows communities to request ownership or management of public assets, with clear reasons required for rejections.
3. Right to Buy Land: Extends the right to buy land to urban and rural areas, even if not for sale, under specific conditions.
4. Allotments: Increases access to land for community growing, requiring councils to address high demand.
5. Community Planning: Strengthens partnerships to improve local outcomes and reduce inequalities.
6. National Outcomes: Mandates public consultation to ensure national priorities reflect community aspirations.
7. Local Democracy: Promotes greater involvement in budgeting and planning decisions.

The Act aims to empower communities, reduce inequalities, and foster collaboration between citizens and public authorities. The Act emphasises transparency, accountability, and a bottom-up approach to governance. It seeks to empower communities to have greater control over their resources, decision-making, and future development, thereby fostering stronger, more resilient communities. This legislation is part of Scotland's broader agenda to promote social justice and reduce inequality through active community participation.

### **Scottish Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement 2022**

The Scottish Land Rights and Responsibilities statement was published in 2022. It articulates the national vision for the ownership, use and management of land and sets out how competing priorities from landowners, managers, local communities and society at large should be balanced in order to achieve a more equitable society.

The statement sets out the vision as being:

*“A Scotland with a strong and dynamic relationship between its land and people, where all land contributes to a modern, sustainable and successful country, supports a just transition to net zero, and where rights and responsibilities in relation to land and its natural capital are fully recognised and fulfilled.”*

The statement also details the seven principles which underpin the overarching vision:

1. The overall framework of land rights, responsibilities and public policies should promote, fulfil and respect relevant human rights in relation to land, contribute to public interest and wellbeing, and balance public and private interests. The framework should support sustainable economic development, protect and enhance the environment, support a just transition to net zero, help achieve social justice and build a fairer society for the common good.
2. There should be a more diverse pattern of land ownership and tenure, with more opportunities for citizens to own, lease and have access to land.

3. More local communities should have the opportunity to own, lease or use buildings and land which can contribute to their community's wellbeing and future development.
4. The holders of land rights should exercise these rights in ways that take account of their responsibilities to meet high standards of land ownership, management and use. Acting as the stewards of Scotland's land resource for future generations they should contribute to wider public benefit, sustainable growth and a modern, successful country.
5. Land ownership, management and use should deliver a wide range of social, environmental, economic and cultural benefits.
6. There should be transparency about the ownership, use and management of land, and this information should be publicly available, clear and contain relevant detail.
7. There should be meaningful collaboration and community engagement in decisions about land.

### **Scottish Land Commission – Community Wealth Building and Land**

The Scottish Land Commission published guidance which sets out practical actions that public bodies can take to use and manage land productively and in the public interest.

The actions set out below are guidelines for good practice. They set out the measures and activities that can be taken to support a community wealth building approach to managing land and buildings. There are six headline areas for action:

- Supporting net zero ambitions and sustainable development – Taking and implementing decisions, use and management in ways that promote good stewardship
- Positive management of land and assets – Proactively managing your estate
- Productive re-use of land and buildings – Addressing vacant and derelict land
- Collaboration and partnership – Engaging with your community and involving others in decisions about land and buildings
- Supporting economic growth and community aspirations – Promoting and enabling diversified ownership and management of land and buildings, including community ownership
- Sharing information – Being open and transparent about land and buildings and about decision-making processes and plans.

The guidance goes into detail on each of the headline actions and provides further detail on how to deliver against the actions.

#### **Local Context**

### **Community Ownership in Scotland 2022**

This document was published in 2023 and sets out the official statistics for community ownership in Scotland in 2021. The main finding of the report states that there are approximately 754 assets in community ownership as of December 2022. The Highlands and Argyll and Bute local authorities together contain 274 assets which corresponds to

36% of all the assets in community ownership. The majority of assets in community ownership are land and buildings.

The data illustrates that in 2000 there were a total of 75 community groups who owned assets compared to 505 community groups in 2022. This increase has been due to a number of factors including better funding and policy which supports communities to take on these assets.

The document provides figures on a range of different factors associated with community ownership e.g. assets by type, size purchase price etc. All provide relevant information but a particularly useful set of statistics to review is the Assets by Urban Rural Classification 2020 and 2022. Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park is classified as either accessible rural or remote rural by the Scottish Government's Urban Rural Classification 2020, and the data demonstrates that the majority of community owned assets are within similar classifications to the National Park. The data shows that remote rural areas contain 60% of the community owned assets within Scotland and a further 19% are within accessible rural areas. The trend is valuable evidence for the National Park confirming that rural communities are motivated and interested in taking on community ownership projects.

The National Park is covered by four local authorities – Stirling, Argyll and Bute, Perth and Kinross and West Dunbartonshire. In 2022 the Local Authority with the highest number of community owned assets – across the whole Council areas – was Argyll and Bute who fall within the 51 – 100 range. Stirling and Perth and Kinross both fall within the 16 – 50 community owned assets range and therefore are below Argyll and Bute. West Dunbartonshire is shown to have the least number of community owned assets as it falls within the 1 – 5 range on the Scottish Government map.

### **Stirling Council Economic Strategy 2022**

Stirling Council published their most recent Economic Strategy in 2022. The strategy covers several key themes and details the Council's aims in relation to each theme. One of the key actions specified in the strategy is to 'Maximise the Impact of Local Organisations' and to do this the Council aims to develop and deliver a Community Wealth Building approach.

Stirling have set out 5 key principles of their Community Wealth Building Approach:

- Plural Ownership: developing and growing small enterprises, community organisations, cooperatives, etc
- Financial Power: keep the flows of investment within our local economy
- Fair Employment: investments which create jobs and opportunities for local citizens
- Procurement: 'Keeping It Local', buying local goods and services
- Use of land and property: using our local assets for local financial and social gain

### **Community Wealth Building in Argyll and Bute – A Framework for Action**

Community Wealth Building in Argyll and Bute provides a comprehensive framework for implementing a Community Wealth Building (CWB) approach in the area. The report identifies significant challenges faced by Argyll and Bute, including a housing crisis, depopulation, and the adverse effects of market-driven economic practices. It highlights the urgent need for a shift toward a more equitable economic model rooted in CWB



principles to ensure that benefits flow directly to local communities. This aligns with Scotland's broader commitment to fostering a wellbeing economy.

The strategy is built around five key pillars. First, Spending focuses on utilising public procurement to benefit local suppliers and promote fair work practices. Second, Workforce emphasises supporting fair employment, ensuring living wages, and creating job progression opportunities for local residents. Third, Inclusive Ownership seeks to encourage cooperative, community, and employee ownership of assets and businesses to help retain wealth locally. Fourth, Land and Property aims to maximise the value of land and property for local communities by promoting community-led ownership and addressing vacant or derelict land. Finally, Finance seeks to develop alternative financial mechanisms such as community bonds, credit unions, and local investment strategies to support local economic development.

The report acknowledges progress made in areas such as renewable energy projects, support for social enterprises, and local procurement initiatives. However, challenges persist, including a lack of coordination, capacity issues, and limited access to financing, which hinder the full realisation of CWB principles.

To address these challenges, the report offers key recommendations. These include embedding CWB into economic strategies and aligning them with national policies, such as Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation. The report also proposes establishing time-limited groups and working committees to drive specific CWB initiatives. It emphasises the need to support employee ownership and community-led renewable energy projects, develop a local Affordable Workspace Strategy, and address barriers to community asset transfers. Strengthening partnerships with anchor institutions is also highlighted as a critical step to enhance their role in fostering local economic development.

The role of the National Park Authority is highlighted within the document, and it is suggested that the National Park Authority could play a key role in addressing challenges such as the housing and climate emergencies. The report suggests that collaboration with landowners to align land use with community wealth building principles and to maximise the benefits for local people.

### **West Dunbartonshire Economic Development strategy 2022 - 2027**

The West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) Economic Development Strategy 2022-27 builds on the Council's unique approach to the Foundational Economy, which focuses on supporting citizenship and welfare through the provision of essential goods and services such as health, food, education, housing, and more. The strategy covers key areas such as procurement, skills development, business support, employability, placemaking, 20-minute neighbourhoods, housing, community empowerment, climate action, and the green economy. Additionally, the strategy emphasises Community Wealth Building (CWB) as a cornerstone of its approach, highlighting participatory budgeting as a key policy.

CWB is a people-focused approach to local economic development, designed to redirect wealth into the local economy and place control and benefits into the hands of local communities. The strategy acknowledges the importance of CWB principles and outlines the Council's response through practical actions:

- Plural Ownership of the Economy: WDC provides support for social enterprises to start and grow, fostering diverse forms of ownership in the local economy.

- **Financial Power for Local Places:** Initiatives like the Scotland Loves Local scheme encourage residents to prioritise local businesses, strengthening high streets and supporting community businesses.
- **Fair Employment and Just Labour Markets:** The Working4U employability service focuses on engaging harder-to-reach groups, helping them transition into meaningful employment opportunities.
- **Progressive Procurement of Goods and Services:** WDC's procurement practices align with CWB principles by prioritising local suppliers and ethical sourcing, as detailed in the broader strategy.
- **Socially Productive Use of Land and Property:** Underutilised assets have been successfully transferred to community groups through the community asset transfer process, empowering local organisations to make productive use of land and facilities.

WDC has committed to participatory budgeting as a core policy, in line with COSLA's 1% Framework Agreement from October 2017. This agreement mandates that at least 1% of local authority budgets (excluding council tax) be allocated through participatory processes. Since then, WDC's Communities Team has facilitated significant PB initiatives, ranging from small grants to tests of mainstreaming PB in specific service areas and budgets.

By prioritising participatory processes, WDC aims to foster stronger community engagement, ensure responsive governance, and enhance the wellbeing of its residents while aligning with the broader principles of CWB.

### National Park context

#### **Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Asset Register**

The National Park Authority's Asset Register is maintained in accordance with Section 94 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. This legislation requires public authorities to publish a register of land and buildings they own or lease, to the best of their knowledge and belief. The aim is to increase transparency and support community asset transfer, where communities can request to take over ownership or management of public assets. The asset register was last updated in April 2025 and contains 41 assets either owned or tenanted by the National Park. Of the 41 assets 8 are either let out in full or let out in part.

The assets held by the National Park Authority serve a wide range of purposes, supporting recreation, conservation, tourism, and park operations. These are grouped into several key categories:

Visitor and Recreational Facilities include car parks, campsites, cycle paths, picnic areas, walking trails, piers, and slipways, all designed to enhance public enjoyment and tourism. Notable examples include Bracklinn Falls Car Park, Falls of Falloch, Milarrochy Bay, and the Luss Visitor Centre and Picnic Site.

Heritage and Conservation Sites contribute to environmental protection and biodiversity, encompassing wildlife habitats, loch shorelines, and woodland areas. Key sites include Aberfoyle Wildlife Site, Critreoch Wildlife Site, and Kenmore Woods.

Essential Public Services and Amenities such as public toilets, visitor centres, and ranger stations provide vital facilities for visitors. Important locations include the Balmaha Visitor Centre, Luss Public Toilets, and Rowardennan Toilets.

Administrative and Operational Buildings support the day-to-day functioning of The Park Authority. These include office spaces and maintenance units, such as the Callander Office, Alexandria Maintenance Unit, and the National Park Headquarters at Carrochan.

Infrastructure and Transport Facilities include pontoons, bridges, and cycle routes that facilitate both access and sustainable tourism. Noteworthy examples are the Loch Lomond Shores Pontoon, Tarbet Slipway and Pier, and parts of the National Cycle Network.

Assets vary in tenure and usage, with some fully owned and occupied by The Park Authority, while others are leased or partially used. They are categorised as owner-occupied, tenant-occupied, or let-out, depending on their function and management arrangements.

### **Community Owned Assets and Enterprise Database**

The National Park holds an internal database of all (known to The Park Authority): Community Owned Assets, Assets Leased by the Community, Assets Managed by the community and Community led Enterprises/Projects. The data base was last updated in 2024 with the support of the local communities within in The Park. An overview of these assets provided the following information:

- There are approx. 75 assets in community ownership in the National Park area.
- The most commonly owned asset by communities is a community hub which is usually a village hall. There are approx. 21 village halls currently in community ownership across the National Park.
- The majority of community owned assets are located in Stirling and Argyll and Bute council areas

Stirling has the highest number, with 44 community-owned assets, followed by Argyll and Bute with 25. Perth and Kinross and West Dunbartonshire each have 3 community-owned assets within The Park area.

## **Policy 26 – Business and Industry**

### **National context**

#### **Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation**

Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation was published in March 2022 and sets out a vision for Scotland to have a wellbeing economy which thrives across economic, social and environmental dimensions.

By 2032, Scotland aims to create a wellbeing economy that delivers prosperity, reduces poverty, especially child poverty, and respects environmental limits. The strategy seeks inclusive growth across all regions through five priorities: fostering an entrepreneurial culture, expanding into new markets and net-zero industries, boosting productivity and innovation, developing lifelong skills with employer investment, and reorienting the economy toward fair work and wellbeing. A sixth programme will streamline delivery and accountability through a

collaborative “Team Scotland” approach, focusing on high-impact actions to transform the economy over the next decade.

### **Scottish Government Labour Market Trends 2025**

The February 2025 Labour Market Trends Report provides an overview of Scotland’s employment, unemployment, and economic activity, utilising data from HMRC’s Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real-Time Information (RTI), the ONS Labour Force Survey (LFS), and Claimant Count estimates.

#### **Key Labour Market Statistics:**

- In January 2025, Scotland had 2.46 million payrolled employees, a 0.1% decrease from the previous year, compared to a 0.2% increase in the UK.
- The median monthly pay for payrolled employees in Scotland was £2,486, reflecting a 5.2% increase from January 2024, though lower than the UK’s 5.7% rise.
- Scotland's claimant count was 110,600, increasing by 1.4% over the month and 4.3% over the year, with an unemployment rate of 3.8%, lower than the UK’s 4.6%.

#### **Employment and Economic Activity:**

- The employment rate for people aged 16 to 64 was 74.2%, increasing by 0.9 percentage points over the quarter, but remaining below the UK’s 74.9%.
- The unemployment rate for those 16 and over was 3.8%, 0.5 percentage points higher than the previous quarter but 0.7 percentage points lower than the previous year.
- The economic inactivity rate (people not working or seeking employment) was 22.8%, 1.2 percentage points lower than the previous quarter but above the UK rate of 21.5%.

This report highlights Scotland’s labour market resilience, with employment and pay levels rising despite economic uncertainties. However, challenges remain, particularly in addressing higher economic inactivity rates and lower pay growth compared to the UK average.

### **Supporting a green recovery: an initial assessment of nature-based jobs and skills | NatureScot**

Nature Scot published “Supporting a Green Recovery: An Initial Assessment of Nature-Based Jobs and Skills” which explores the role of nature-based sectors in Scotland's transition to a net-zero economy. It highlights the importance of natural capital as a driver for sustainable economic recovery.

Nature-based jobs accounted for approximately 195,000 roles in 2019, representing 7.5% of Scotland's workforce. These jobs span sectors such as agriculture, forestry, tourism, and food and drink, which are dependent on natural capital. Nature-based roles grew five times faster than overall employment between 2015 and 2019, underlining their growing importance. Future growth is anticipated, driven by expanded activities like peatland restoration, forestation, and urban green infrastructure projects.

The report identifies challenges such as gender imbalances, an aging workforce, and skills shortages in operational and technical roles. It stresses the need for strategic workforce planning, targeted training programs, and promoting Modern Apprenticeships to address these gaps. Additionally, fostering partnerships between public, private, and academic

institutions is vital to support research and innovation in nature-based solutions, green finance, and sustainable land management.

The report concludes that building a diverse and skilled workforce is essential for realising Scotland's green recovery and achieving long-term sustainability goals. It calls for coordinated action to address regional variations in job distribution and support equitable access to nature-based employment opportunities.

### Local context

#### **Stirling Council Economic Strategy 2022**

The Stirling Economic Strategy 2022 - 2030 sets out a vision for a thriving, sustainable and inclusive economy. It aims to grow businesses, attract investment, create high-quality jobs, tackle inequality and support the transition to net zero. The plan responds to major changes such as Brexit, the climate emergency, Covid-19 and the £214 million City Region Deal.

The strategy focuses on business growth, skills development, fair work, revitalising town and rural economies, community wealth building and promoting Stirling as a place to invest. It includes a clear action plan, governance and performance measures to track progress, ensuring long-term economic resilience and inclusive growth.

#### **Argyll and Bute Council Economic Strategy 2024 -2034**

The Argyll and Bute Council's Economic Strategy Refresh 2024 - 2034 outlines forward-looking plan to build a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable local economy over the next decade. Rooted in a place-based and people-centred approach, the strategy focuses on four key pillars: *People*, *Place*, *Planet*, and *Prosperity*. It seeks to address demographic challenges, economic disparities, and climate change, while capitalising on the region's natural assets and community strengths. The strategy promotes a wellbeing economy through community wealth building, fair work, and inclusive growth. It emphasises collaboration across public, private, and third sectors to tackle local issues such as housing shortages, skills gaps, transport infrastructure, and digital connectivity. The refreshed strategy also highlights the importance of net-zero goals, sustainable tourism, renewable energy, and green industries, all supported by strong governance, data-driven decision-making, and strategic investment planning.

### National Park context

#### **Local Development Plan 2017 - 2021 Delivery Programme 2024**

The current Local Development Plan allocates five dedicated economic development sites and eight mixed-use sites that include opportunities for economic activity. Key mixed-use locations include areas adjacent to the Three Villages Hall in Arrochar, Callander Station Road lower car park, Claish Farm in South Callander, the former Salmon Leap in Drymen, the Old Station site in Balloch, a former garage in Lochearnhead, the Clifton site in Tyndrum, and land north of the primary school in Luss.

However, progress on these allocated sites has been limited over the past five years. None of the five economic development sites have been developed or are currently subject to planning applications. Of the mixed-use and visitor experience sites, only Claish Farm has seen partial development, with 50 new homes delivered but no associated economic uses implemented. Some movement has occurred on other sites, with planning applications either approved or pending for the Three Villages Hall site and the site in Luss.

Despite this slow uptake, economic activity has continued on non-allocated sites. The latest monitoring report highlights strong investment in tourism, growth in small businesses, and the expansion of existing enterprises. On average, eight applications per year have been approved under the Economic Development Policy, demonstrating that while allocated sites remain largely undeveloped, wider economic activity within The Park continues to be supported.

Within the National Park there is only one industrial site – Lagrannoch – which is located within Callander.

### **Business in Scotland 2024**

The 'Business in Scotland' data, collected annually, provides the numbers and types of businesses across Scotland by local authority area. As of March 2024, there were an estimated 358,235 private sector businesses operating in Scotland, including 174,085 registered businesses. This represents an increase of 715 registered businesses (0.4%) over the past year – the first annual rise since 2020. The number of small, medium, and large businesses all increased, along with a growth in abroad-owned businesses. SMEs made up 355,805 of the total, providing around 1.2 million jobs and accounting for 55.9% of private sector employment.

The Business in Scotland data is provided by Local Authority area and a breakdown of the numbers of businesses by employee size for each of the Local Authority areas is shown in the table below. Perth and Kinross has not been included in this breakdown as the area of the Local Authority which falls within the National Park is very small and therefore the figures would not be reflective of the National Park context:

	<b>No. of small businesses (0-49 employees)</b>	<b>No. of medium sized businesses (50-249 employees)</b>	<b>No. of large businesses (250+)</b>
<b>Argyll and Bute</b>	3,840 (2010) <b>3,845 (2024)</b>	95 (2010) <b>95 (2024)</b>	150 (2010) <b>160 (2024)</b>
<b>Stirling</b>	3,840 (2010) <b>3,725 (2024)</b>	135 (2010) <b>155 (2024)</b>	320 (2010) <b>315 (2024)</b>
<b>West Dunbartonshire</b>	1,525 (2010) <b>1,765 (2024)</b>	75 (2010) <b>55 (2024)</b>	195 (2010) <b>180 (2024)</b>

In Argyll and Bute, the number of small and medium-sized businesses has remained virtually unchanged between 2010 and 2024, indicating a stable business environment over time. However, there has been a modest increase in the number of large businesses, rising from 150 to 160, which may suggest some growth among higher-scale enterprises in the area.

In Stirling, there has been a slight decline in the number of small businesses, dropping by 115, which could reflect business closures or consolidations. On the other hand, the number of medium-sized businesses has increased notably, from 135 to 155, pointing to expansion of existing businesses or a greater presence of mid-sized firms. The number of large businesses has seen a minor decline, from 320 to 315.

West Dunbartonshire has experienced strong growth in the number of small businesses, increasing from 1,525 to 1,765, which may indicate a rise in entrepreneurial activity or effective local support for small enterprises. However, the number of medium-sized businesses has decreased from 75 to 55. Similarly, large businesses have declined slightly from 195 to 180, possibly reflecting broader economic shifts in the area.

Overall, small business trends vary across the three areas, with stability in Argyll and Bute, a slight decline in Stirling, and strong growth in West Dunbartonshire. Medium-sized businesses show mixed results, with growth in Stirling, stability in Argyll and Bute, and decline in West Dunbartonshire. Large businesses have remained relatively stable, with only minor fluctuations in each area. These patterns may reflect differing regional economic strategies, sectoral strengths, or local challenges affecting business growth and retention.

The Business in Scotland 2024 data also provides information on the different employment sectors across Scotland.

Nationally the three largest industry sectors are Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities, Wholesale and Retail Trade and Construction. These account for approx. 29% of all registered private sector businesses.

The Business in Scotland 2024 data includes a breakdown of business numbers by Local Authority area and by urban/rural classification. The table below highlights data specifically for Local Authorities that fall within the Accessible Rural and Remote Rural categories, as these are the predominant classifications for the National Park area.

Local Authority	Accessible Rural	Remote Rural
Argyll and Bute	170	2610
Stirling	1360	345
West Dunbartonshire	80	0

The data shows a clear variation in the distribution of rural businesses across the selected local authorities. Argyll and Bute has a strong Remote Rural business presence, with 2,610 businesses compared to just 170 in Accessible Rural areas, reflecting its largely remote rural geography.

In contrast, Stirling has a significantly higher number of businesses in Accessible Rural areas (1,360) than in Remote Rural areas (345), suggesting a more connected rural economy with better access to urban centres. West Dunbartonshire has a minimal rural business presence overall, with only 80 businesses in Accessible Rural areas and none in Remote Rural areas, indicating the predominantly urban character of the area.

The 2024 data for Stirling Council Local Authority area shows that the top three business types are: Professional and Scientific and technical services (15%), Wholesale and Retail Trade (16%), and Construction (12%). Accommodation and Food Services is joint forth with Agriculture and Forestry.

The 2024 data for Argyll and Bute Council shows that the top three business types are: Agriculture and Forestry (20%), Wholesale and Retail Trade (15%), Accommodation and Food Services (13%). Construction is forth, around 10%.

The 2024 data for West Dunbartonshire Council area shows that the top three business types area: Wholesale and Retail Trade (21%), Construction (14%) and Professional and Scientific services (10%).

### **Businesses in the National Park 2022**

A more in-depth desk-based study was carried out in 2022 into the number and types of business within the National Park.

As of 2022, there were approx. 1,160 businesses operating within the National Park. Although the number of businesses peaked in 2017, the downward trend observed in the following years appears to be reversing in recent data. Several sectors have experienced notable decline, particularly Financial and Insurance Services (-11%), Real Estate (-4%), Transportation and Storage (-3%), and Retail (-1%). For instance, the number of retail businesses fell from 170 to 155, while financial services declined from 10 to just 5 businesses. This trend may reflect broader national challenges facing high streets, with the impact potentially more acute in certain villages within The Park.

Despite these declines, several sectors have shown modest growth. Manufacturing increased by 4%, rising from 30 to 40 businesses; Accommodation and Food Services grew by 1%, from 200 to 220 businesses; Construction also saw a 1% increase, from 95 to 105 businesses; and Education and Social Work Activities increased by 3%. These shifts suggest a growing emphasis on services related to tourism, hospitality, and local infrastructure.

The business landscape of the National Park is dominated by micro-businesses. In 2022, 74% of businesses had between 0-4 employees, and just 1% had more than 50 employees. Notably, all 10 of the large businesses with 50+ employees are in the Accommodation and Food Services sector – a figure that has remained stable since 2015.

Micro-businesses in the primary industries – particularly agriculture, forestry, and fishing – account for 20% of all such enterprises, yet only 2% of total employment. This discrepancy highlights a sector composed largely of sole traders or very small operations, such as individual farms, estates, and forestry-related contractors.

Analysis of the business demographics across relevant Council areas – Argyll and Bute, Stirling, and West Dunbartonshire – reinforces the pattern of small-scale enterprise dominance within the National Park. These areas, particularly Argyll and Bute and Stirling, host a high proportion of small rural businesses, supporting the assumption that the economy is characterised by numerous small employers and very few large-scale operations.

### **Employment Census data 2022**

According to the 2022 Census, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park had a population of 12,567 people aged 16 and over, with 7,067 individuals in employment during the week prior to the census. The employment landscape is characterised by a skilled and diverse workforce, with the most common occupations falling within Professional Occupations (1,455), Skilled Trades (951), and Associate Professional and Technical roles (948). These reflect The Park's strong economic base in specialised trades, technical services, and professional fields. Within the professional category, jobs are concentrated in science and technology (374), healthcare (356), education (259), and public/business services (466). Management roles are also significant, with 903 individuals



employed as managers or senior officials, split between corporate and other managerial roles.

Other key sectors include Caring, Leisure, and Other Services (541), where personal care (333) and tourism-related services (206) are prevalent; Sales and Customer Service (417) in retail and other customer-facing roles; Process, Plant, and Machine Operatives (406), including 190 in transport-related roles; and Elementary Occupations (839), primarily in trades (186) and support services (654).

Employment is distributed across 22 industry sectors, with the largest being Accommodation and Food Services (998) – a clear indicator of The Park's reliance on tourism – followed by Human Health and Social Work (787) and Education (656). Other notable sectors include Transport and Storage (615), Wholesale and Retail Trade (511), and Public Administration and Defence (337). Smaller sectors such as mining, utilities, and waste management account for fewer than 70 people each, and the least represented were household employment (9) and extra-territorial bodies (3).

The Park's economy is also defined by a high level of economic activity, with 6,972 people economically active, excluding full-time students. Of these, 5,228 were employees – 3,851 full-time and 1,377 part-time – while 1,594 were self-employed. Among the self-employed, 394 operated with employees (mostly full-time), and 1,200 were sole traders, with about a third working part-time. Unemployment was low, with just 150 people actively seeking work. There were also 274 economically active full-time students, mostly employed part-time.

The economically inactive population totalled 5,321, driven mainly by retirees (4,025, or 76%), reflecting the area's older demographic. Other inactive groups included individuals caring for family (357), long-term sick or disabled (411), non-working students (311), and 217 citing other reasons. These figures indicate both an aging population and a local economy that supports sole traders, micro-businesses, and flexible working arrangements.

Commuting and work patterns further reflect The Park's rural character and changing workforce trends. Of the 6,873 employed individuals, 2,571 (37%) worked mainly from home, particularly among older age groups - 40% of those aged 50-64 and 51% of those 65 and over. In contrast, younger workers (16-24) were more likely to commute, with only 23% working remotely and most travelling less than 5km.

Short-distance commutes were common: 679 people (10%) travelled under 2km, 335 (5%) between 2-5km, and 365 (5%) between 5-10km. Longer commutes included 631 people (9%) travelling 10-20km and 577 (8%) travelling 20-30km. A smaller proportion travelled over 30km, with 220 commuting 40-60km and 212 commuting more than 60km. Additionally, 1,019 people (15%) had no fixed place of work or worked outside the UK.

Travel to work methods reflected strong reliance on private transport and remote working. Driving a car or van was the most common method, used by 3,177 people (46%). Active and public transport use was low: 527 walked, 199 were car passengers, and only 64 cycled. Public transport was used by 73 bus and 123 train commuters. Very few used taxis (16), motorcycles (9), or the underground (4), and 108 used other or unspecified means.

In terms of educational attainment, the population is relatively well-qualified. Of those aged 16 and over, 4,854 people (39%) held degree-level qualifications or higher, the largest education group. A further 1,590 held sub-degree or further education qualifications (e.g., HNCs or HNDs), 966 had completed apprenticeships, and 3,472 held school-level qualifications (1,446 upper and 2,026 lower). Only 1,681 people (13%) had no formal qualifications.

The data indicates that The National Park has a highly skilled, well-educated, and economically active population, with employment concentrated in tourism, professional services, public sectors, and trades. A strong trend towards home-working and low unemployment reflects a stable, flexible rural economy. The area is also marked by a high proportion of retirees, a relatively low uptake of public transport, and a growing role for self-employment and part-time work – especially among students and small business owners.

## **Policy 27 – City, Town, Local and Commercial Centres**

### National context

#### **A New Future for Scotland's Town Centres**

*A New Future for Scotland's Town Centres* emphasises the critical role of town centres in fostering social, economic, and environmental wellbeing while addressing challenges such as climate change, inequality, and post-COVID recovery. It builds on the 2013 Town Centre Action Plan, updating its vision and recommendations to reflect current realities and ambitions.

The review of Scotland's 2013 Town Centre Action Plan highlights progress in supporting town centres but stresses the need for faster, more consistent action, especially after Covid-19 exposed inequalities. Town centres are seen as vital for community wellbeing, local economies, and climate goals but face challenges such as decentralisation, high operating costs, and accessibility issues. The Review Group recommends three key actions: strengthening the role of towns in planning and involving communities more inclusively; reforming taxation and funding to create a fairer, climate-focused economic environment; and expanding funding for projects on town centre living, digital skills, community enterprise, and climate resilience. These steps aim to create greener, healthier, and fairer town centres that meet local needs and enhance wellbeing.

#### **Town Centre Action Plan Review – Joint Response from the Scottish Government and COSLA 2022**

The Town Centre Action Plan Review – Joint Response from the Scottish Government and COSLA (April 2022) outlines a collaborative national strategy for revitalising Scotland's town centres, recognising their vital role in promoting wellbeing, sustainability, economic vitality, and local identity. This response builds on the findings of the independent report *"A New Future for Scotland's Town Centres"*, aiming to transition from policy intentions to practical, community-driven outcomes.

The plan is framed as a national Call to Action, promoting a vision where towns serve the wellbeing of people, the planet, and the economy. It stresses that government alone cannot effect change; instead, success depends on collective effort across local communities, councils, businesses, and third sector organisations. The plan identifies four key action areas: (A) establishing the right policy framework, (B) ensuring appropriate support, (C) creating an investment framework, and (D) working closely with partners.

Actions include updating planning frameworks to prioritise sustainable, town-centre-first development, reforming tax and fiscal policies to support local businesses, encouraging town centre living and 20-minute neighbourhoods, and promoting digital inclusion and climate resilience. Specific investments are proposed for affordable housing, green

infrastructure, digital connectivity, and community ownership. The plan also emphasises measuring progress through improved data and evaluation methods.

Ultimately, the plan calls for a holistic, place-based approach that empowers local communities to shape their town centres in ways that reflect their unique needs, histories, and assets.

### **Town Centre Toolkit**

The Town Centre Toolkit is an online resource provided by the Scottish Government to support the regeneration and improvement of town centres across Scotland. It offers guidance, practical tools, and case studies to help communities, businesses, local authorities, and developers create vibrant, sustainable, and resilient town centres.

Principles for Town Centre Renewal:

- Encourages collaboration between local authorities, businesses, and communities.
- Promotes a people-first approach to town centre design and management.
- Focuses on sustainability and adaptability to future challenges.

The toolkit aligns with Scotland's Town Centre Action Plan, which prioritises community engagement, economic growth, and sustainability. It serves as a practical resource for anyone involved in town centre development, helping them make informed decisions to create thriving town centres.

### **National Park context**

#### **Scotland's Towns Partnership, Understand Scottish Places**

The *Understanding Scottish Places (USP)* platform, commissioned by the Scottish Government, was launched in April 2015 to provide insights into the characteristics and relationships of towns across Scotland. Instead of ranking towns as better or worse, USP highlights their shared attributes.

The platform has been updated since it was first launched in 2018 and now includes a Connectivity and Environment Assets section. This added new descriptive indicators, including average download speed, greenspace per 1,000 residents, and buildings at risk. A new Change Section was also introduced, featuring population trends, migration rates, and job changes.

The platform does not produce data for all Towns across Scotland but it does have detailed information for Callander within the National Park. A summary of the output from this source is detailed below:

Callander, located in Stirling Council, is an 18th-century planned town known as the gateway to the Trossachs and has been a significant tourist destination since the time of Sir Walter Scott. With a population of 3,077, Callander is characterised by a diverse demographic mix, including a high proportion of older couples without children. The local economy is composed of both professional and non-professional jobs, with self-employment and part-time work playing a vital role.

The town is classified as interdependent to independent, meaning it has a degree of economic self-sufficiency but also relies on nearby areas. Compared to similar towns, Callander has a higher number of charities, jobs, shops, GP services, and a diverse retail sector. However, it has fewer public sector jobs and children in primary and secondary schools, with a notable difference in commuting distances.

Between 2001 and 2011, Callander's population grew by 6%, a faster rate than similar towns. However, job numbers declined by 7% from 2009 to 2014, indicating economic shifts. Employment is distributed across various sectors, with significant representation in public administration, health, retail, and accommodation services. A mix of professional and skilled manual workers is evident, with education levels ranging from no formal qualifications to university degrees.

The town has strong connectivity and environmental assets, with above-average download speeds (23 Mbps) and extensive green spaces per capita. Callander's charity sector is less prominent than in comparable towns, with fewer residents per charity and receiving lower grant funding. In terms of travel, most residents commute relatively short distances, though a higher proportion travel longer distances for work compared to similar towns.

Overall, Callander is a vibrant, economically diverse town with a strong tourism base and a mix of independent and interdependent characteristics. Its historic appeal, natural beauty, and service sector make it a key destination within Scotland, but economic and employment challenges remain.

### **Network of Centres**

A network of centres refers to the interconnected hierarchy of towns, villages, and neighbourhood hubs that provide access to goods, services, and community facilities. Central to National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), this concept supports sustainable, place-based development, 20-minute neighbourhoods, balanced urban-rural growth, and reduced car dependency. Networks typically include city, town, local, and commercial centres, though the latter are less prioritised. The new Local Development Plans will use this framework to identify service gaps, guide investment, and ensure development supports both community needs and environmental goals.

The map in figure 2 of the appendix shows the main settlements within the National Park, and the map in figure 1 details the current development strategy from the National Park Partnership Plan 2024 – 2029. The categorisation of settlements for the new Local Development Plan is yet to be determined. The interactive map also contains details of the main settlements within the National Park.

### **Clustering of Non-retail Facilities**

NPF4 requires LDPs to be informed by evidence on where clustering of non-retail uses may be adversely impacting on the wellbeing of communities.

As part of preparing this Evidence Report, Local Living services have been mapped, covering both retail and non-retail facilities. This mapping will help identify gaps in service provision as well as clusters of facilities that may be having a negative impact on communities. The findings will be used to shape and inform policy within the next Local Development Plan. The Local Living interactive mapping is linked above.

## **Policy 28 – Retail**

### **National context**

### **Getting the Right Change – A Retail Strategy for Scotland**

The Scottish Government published a document in 2022 titled "Getting the Right Change: A Retail Strategy for Scotland". It outlines Scotland's vision for a successful, resilient, sustainable, and inclusive retail sector. It aims to strengthen retail's role in the economy

while addressing challenges such as the COVID-19 recovery, climate change, and economic inequality. The strategy is structured around four key themes: Sector, People, Place, and Just Transition.

**Sector** – The strategy emphasises increasing productivity, innovation, and entrepreneurship in the retail sector. It identifies opportunities for growth through technological advancements, digitalisation, and sustainable practices. Initiatives include support for local supply chains, the promotion of Scotland's produce, and improved digital capabilities for retailers.

**People** – Fair work and skills development are at the centre of the strategy's vision for the workforce. It seeks to reduce in-work poverty, close gender and ethnicity pay gaps and promote secure employment. Measures include skills audits, training programs, and commitments to fair wages and working conditions.

**Place** – The document underscores the importance of retail in creating vibrant communities. It advocates for a place-based approach to planning, integrating retail into "20-minute neighbourhoods" and encouraging localism. Efforts include revitalising town centres, repurposing vacant retail spaces, and fostering local economic benefits through community wealth building.

**Just Transition** – Scotland aims to achieve a net-zero retail sector by 2045. The strategy highlights the role of circular economy practices, sustainable transport options, and reducing carbon footprints in retail operations. Specific measures include deposit return schemes, restrictions on single-use plastics, and incentives for adopting environmentally friendly business models.

This comprehensive approach positions retail as a cornerstone of Scotland's broader goals for economic transformation, sustainability, and social equity.

### **Scottish Local Shop Report 2023**

The *Scottish Local Shop Report 2023*, produced by the Scottish Grocers' Federation (SGF) and the Association of Convenience Stores (ACS), provides a comprehensive overview of the convenience store sector in Scotland. It highlights the sector's economic contributions, employment, services, and role in supporting local communities.

There are over 5,170 convenience stores in Scotland, employing more than 49,000 people. The sector contributes £10.6 billion in gross value added (GVA) annually and over £9 billion in taxes. Scottish convenience stores invested £62 million in 2023, focusing on refrigeration, signage, technology, and sustainability measures like LED lighting and smart meters.

Convenience stores are essential in rural, urban, and suburban settings, offering vital services such as bill payment (76%), free cash machines (47%), and local grocery delivery (26%). They play a significant role in community engagement, with 81% of independent retailers participating in activities like charity fundraising, food bank donations, and local event sponsorship.

The sector also addresses inclusivity, with many stores providing wheelchair access (70%) and wide aisles (62%). Sustainability is a growing focus, with stores adopting renewable energy measures like solar panels and chiller doors.

Overall, the report underscores the sector's critical role in supporting Scotland's local economies, providing essential services, and fostering vibrant, sustainable communities.

## **Out of Home – Scotland 2021**

Food Standards Scotland's 2021 market analysis of out-of-home (OOH) food and drink shows partial recovery from 2020 but activity remained below pre-pandemic levels. Quick service restaurants (QSRs) were the only channel to grow versus 2019, driven by strong takeaway and delivery services. Consumer behaviour shifted: ages 35-54 reduced trips the most, while those 55+ reduced the least; lower-income groups visited more, especially QSRs and convenience stores, but spent less per trip. Eating out was increasingly motivated by practicality. Main meals declined least, while snacks and cold drinks saw the biggest drop. Takeaway and delivery boomed, with delivery trips more than doubling since 2019, aided by apps and aggregators. Rural residents, though fewer, averaged 185 trips versus 135 for urban consumers, spending less per visit (£4.82 vs £6.13) and favouring bakeries, sandwich shops, and cafes.

### **National Park context**

## **Local Development Plan 2017 – 2021**

The Local Development Plan currently includes only one retail allocation: Callander RET1 Stirling Road, previously designated for a supermarket. This allocation remained undeveloped for over seven years despite active marketing, leading to its repurposing for a 50-bed care home following a retail impact assessment. The assessment highlighted a lack of viability for retail use at the site and potential harm to the vitality of Callander town centre. The care home was approved in response to a demonstrated local shortfall in care spaces and the needs of an aging population.

Several mixed-use allocations incorporate retail elements, including Callander MU1, Arrochar MU1, Drymen MU1, Blairmore VE1, and Tarbet VE1, among others. These projects aim to blend retail with other uses, such as housing, tourism, and community spaces, to support local economies and improve community amenities.

Between 2017 and 2021, retail development activity was limited. Notable developments included the relocation and expansion of cooperative supermarkets in Killin and Callander. Proposed retail units at Luss and Balmaha remain undeveloped, potentially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Planning data suggests businesses often prefer using properties they already own rather than renting vacant units, though exceptions have been made for small-scale local craft sales where vacant units were financially unviable.

Safeguarding retail spaces remains a priority. Over five years, 12 instances of change of use from retail to non-retail were approved, primarily converting to cafes, professional services, or housing. These changes occurred mostly in Callander and Killin, with pre-application data indicating increasing pressure to convert retail spaces into residential or tourism uses. Callander has shown resilience, with new businesses opening in previously vacant units, often transitioning to cafes or food shops. In contrast, Killin faces higher risks, with persistent vacancies and fewer proposals for alternative uses.

## **Retail Provision**

Retail development plays an important role in supporting the vitality and viability of settlements within the National Park, contributing to the sustainability of the wider rural economy. As outlined in The Park's development strategy, both large and small settlements serve a crucial function in meeting the day-to-day shopping needs of residents while also offering a variety of retail opportunities for visitors and tourists. Due to the scale and character of these settlements

and the predominantly rural setting, retail provision is expected to remain small in scale, focused on supporting local communities and enhancing tourism-related economic activity.

The five towns and villages within the National Park which act as a hub and provide a main street retail offering are: Balloch, Callander, Aberfoyle, Drymen and Killin.

Sustaining retail provision is an important issue across the National Park, with several barriers affecting the ability of shops and local services to remain viable.

One of the notable barriers to retail development and provision within the National Park is flooding, which is particularly significant in Callander and Aberfoyle. It is considered that flooding is having a major impact on the growth and even the long-term sustainability of the rural economy in these settlements. In Aberfoyle, for example, many retail units have been on the market for years, often due to business owners retiring but being unable to find buyers as the flood risk makes it more difficult to secure insurance. This creates a risk that these units will fall into dereliction, with knock-on effects for tourism as well as the availability of essential services for local residents.

As part of the preparation of the Evidence Report, a map of service provision, including retail provision has been developed and is linked in the interactive map above as part of the Local Living Layer within Topic Paper 8. The mapping illustrates the limited retail provision within the National Park, particularly in areas classified as Remote Rural. While all larger settlements have at least one shop, supermarkets are located outside The Park in surrounding urban areas. This distribution of retail services broadly reflects the patterns typically found in rural regions. However, careful consideration is needed to ensure smaller settlements remain adequately served, especially in relation to public transport access.

## Policy 29 – Rural Development

### National context

#### **Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2020**

The Scottish Government's Urban Rural Classification provides a consistent way of defining urban and rural areas across Scotland. The classification is based upon two main criteria – population and accessibility. The classification is available in multiple forms, including a 6-fold classification which distinguishes between urban, rural and remote areas through six categories and an 8-fold classification which further distinguishes between remote and very remote regions. The detail of the 6-fold classification is included in the table below:

Class	Class Name	Description
1	Large Urban Areas	Settlements of 125,000 people and over
2	Other Urban Areas	Settlements of 10,000 to 124,999 people.
3	Accessible Small Towns	Settlements of 3,000 to 9,999 people, and within a 30 minute drive time of a Settlement of 10,000 or more
4	Remote Small Towns	Settlements of 3,000 to 9,999 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes but less than or equal to 60 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more
5	Accessible Rural Areas	Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and within a drive time of 30 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.

6	Remote Rural Areas	Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes but less than or equal to 60 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
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The map in figure 3 of the appendix has been prepared to correspond to the 6-fold Urban Rural category and shows that Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority is covered primarily by accessible rural and remote rural.

The map shows that the northern part of the Park is classified as Remote Rural, with around ten settlements falling within this category, including Tyndrum, Lochgoilhead, Killin, and St Fillans. The southern part of the Park is classified as Accessible Rural, containing approximately nine settlements within the Park boundary, for example Luss, Arrochar and Drymen. In addition, Callander is identified as an Accessible Small Town, while Balloch is categorised as an Other Urban Area.

This distribution highlights the contrast within the National Park between remote rural communities in the north and more accessible settlements in the south. It demonstrates the diversity of settlement patterns across the Park and reflects the different challenges and opportunities faced by communities – from sustaining services and economic activity in remote areas to managing growth and accessibility pressures in more connected locations.

#### National Park context

#### **Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Local Development Plan 2017 - 2021**

The current Local Development Plan identifies five Rural Activity Areas designated to support rural business development. These include Callander East, Drymen South, Acharn Biomass Plant in Killin, Strathfillan (focusing on economic activities linked to Scotland's Rural Research Centre at Auchtertyre and Kirkton Farms), and Strachur South, which is intended for new and expanded rural businesses at the Balliemeanoch sawmill.

The plan also allocates five economic development sites and eight mixed-use sites (all allocations can be viewed on interactive map above) that incorporate economic development opportunities. Notable mixed-use sites include the area adjacent to the Three Villages Hall in Arrochar, Callander Station Road lower car park, Claish Farm in South Callander, the former Salmon Leap in Drymen, the Old Station site in Balloch, the former garage in Lochearnhead, the Tyndrum site at Clifton, and the site north of the primary school in Luss.

Over the past five years, there has been limited progress in developing these allocated sites. None of the five designated economic development sites have been developed or are currently subject to planning applications. Among the visitor experience and mixed-use sites, only Claish Farm has been partly developed, with 50 new homes constructed but no economic uses implemented. There has been movement on a few sites, including pending or approved applications for the Three Villages Hall, the site north of the primary school in Luss.

Despite slow progress on allocated sites, there has been economic development activity on non-allocated sites. The monitoring report indicates strong investment in tourism and some growth in smaller businesses, as well as the expansion of existing enterprises. On average, the Economic Development Policy has facilitated eight approvals annually, reflecting continued economic activity beyond the allocated sites.



## **Rural Population Data**

The 2022 Census estimates the population of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park at 14,566, with projections indicating a 7% decline by 2043, reducing the total to 13,667. This projected decrease is largely driven by an ageing population, with the number of children expected to fall by 25% and working-age residents by 14%, while those of pensionable age are projected to increase by 17%. Over the same period, deaths are expected to exceed births, and net migration is anticipated to have a neutral effect on overall population numbers.

Between 2011 and 2021, population projection trends across the National Park varied significantly by area. Many settlements experienced declines, particularly among younger and working-age groups. For example, Lochgoilhead, Carrick Castle, and Ardentinnny saw a combined 7.95% population decline, while Arrochar, Tarbet, and Ardlui declined by a total of 8.78%, both driven by losses in working-age and youth populations. Callander saw a 4.06% decline overall, Kilmun, Blairmore, and Strone declined by 5.56%, and Crianlarich and Tyndrum by 8.11%, with the latter experiencing a 54.05% drop in young people. Balloch also saw a 5.46% overall decline, mainly due to a significant drop in working-age residents.

In contrast, some areas recorded modest population growth, primarily due to increases in older residents. Croftamie saw the largest growth at 16.1%, driven by a 50% rise in the over-65 population. Kilmahog and Brig o' Turk grew by 15.62%, also reflecting a strong increase in older residents. Other areas such as Luss and Arden (+5.12%), Balmaha and Milton of Buchanan (+5.32%), Killin (+3.99%), and Comrie and St Fillans (+2.83%) also experienced growth, typically associated with a rising pension-age population.

These trends point to a growing demographic imbalance within the National Park, with a shrinking younger population and increasing numbers of older residents. This shift presents significant challenges for long-term community sustainability, particularly around housing needs, staff recruitment and retention, and the provision of (and access to) services for an ageing population.

## **Policy 30 – Tourism**

### **National context**

### **Scottish Tourism Strategy (Scotland Outlook 2030)**

*Scotland Outlook 2030* outlines a comprehensive vision for Scotland to become a global leader in 21st-century tourism. Developed through extensive collaboration with industry stakeholders, government bodies, and local communities, the strategy emphasises sustainable growth, inclusivity, and innovation in the tourism sector. It positions tourism as a powerful force to enhance Scotland's economy, environment, and social wellbeing.

The strategy envisions Scotland as a world leader in responsible and sustainable tourism, prioritising people, places, businesses, and experiences. It emphasises enriching visitors' experiences while delivering economic and cultural benefits to communities.

The document outlines four Strategic Priorities:

1. **Passionate People:** Building a skilled, diverse, and valued tourism workforce while promoting fair work practices and career development.
2. **Thriving Places:** Managing tourism sustainably to benefit communities, protect natural and cultural assets, and enhance connectivity and infrastructure.

3. **Memorable Experiences:** Offering authentic, high-quality visitor experiences that encourage longer stays, seasonal dispersal, and exploration beyond traditional destinations.
4. **Diverse Businesses:** Supporting resilient and innovative businesses that adopt sustainable practices and leverage emerging technologies.

The strategy aligns with Scotland's net-zero emissions target by 2045, focusing on reducing tourism's environmental impact through green practices, resource efficiency, and community-driven development.

Achieving the strategy's vision requires progress in six key areas: digital innovation, policy alignment, investment, transport and digital connectivity, business networking, and effective global positioning.

The strategy highlights the importance of collaborative governance and stakeholder engagement, ensuring alignment between local, regional, and national priorities. It proposes regular monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation to respond to evolving challenges and opportunities.

### **Food Tourism Action Plan for Scotland**

The *Food Tourism Action Plan for Scotland* outlines an ambitious strategy to position Scotland as a globally recognised food tourism destination by 2030. This initiative is a collaboration between Scotland Food & Drink, the Scottish Tourism Alliance, and the Scottish Government. It aims to unlock a £1 billion growth opportunity by integrating Scotland's food and drink sectors with tourism to deliver sustainable economic benefits, support rural communities, and celebrate the nation's cultural and culinary heritage.

The plan focuses on five key pillars:

1. **Sustainable Local Food Supply Chain:** Strengthening connections between food producers and tourism businesses while enhancing the availability of local food and drink to meet increasing demand.
2. **Quality Products and Experiences:** Delivering high-quality, memorable food tourism experiences rooted in Scottish ingredients, culture, and heritage.
3. **Rich Storytelling:** Using compelling narratives about Scotland's food, drink, and traditions to attract and engage visitors.
4. **Skilled and Vibrant Workforce:** Developing training and career pathways to create a passionate and skilled workforce dedicated to food tourism.
5. **Innovative Collaboration:** Encouraging partnerships across sectors and regions to create unique and marketable food tourism experiences.

The plan includes 17 targeted actions, such as evolving quality assurance programs, establishing food tourism apprenticeship schemes, and creating a national marketing framework. It emphasises agritourism, local sourcing, and leveraging Scotland's natural and cultural assets to provide authentic experiences.

Implementation requires collaboration across public, private, and non-profit sectors, with leadership from a National Food Tourism Board and regional clusters. The plan underscores the importance of sustainability, inclusivity, and community engagement in building a resilient and globally competitive food tourism sector. Through these

efforts, Scotland aims to cement its reputation as a “Land of Food and Drink,” offering world-class experiences that benefit visitors and local communities alike.

### **Marine Tourism Strategy**

*"Giant Strides: A Strategy for Scotland's Marine Tourism 2020-2025"* outlines a vision to position Scotland as a global leader in sustainable marine tourism by 2025. This strategy builds on the previous framework, *Awakening the Giant*, emphasising sustainability, community benefits, and economic growth. It aims to increase the sector's economic contribution to over £500 million annually while addressing modern challenges like climate change and evolving consumer expectations.

The strategy is structured around four key themes:

1. **Our Waters:** Promoting stewardship of Scotland's natural marine environment through investment in natural capital, wildlife protection, waste reduction, and achieving net-zero emissions. Infrastructure like piers, pontoons, and harbours will be developed sensitively to balance environmental and community needs.
2. **Our Experiences:** Focusing on providing seamless, authentic marine tourism experiences that meet changing consumer demands while leveraging opportunities in low-carbon and circular economies.
3. **Our Businesses:** Supporting profitability and sustainability in marine tourism businesses by enhancing collaboration, innovation, and marketing, and optimising the ecosystem of business support.
4. **Our People and Communities:** Highlighting the importance of skilled leadership and community engagement to make marine tourism a career of choice and a force for good in supporting local communities and wellbeing.

The strategy emphasises collaboration among stakeholders through a Partnership Plan that aligns activities with national and international sustainability goals, such as Scotland's National Performance Framework and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. By fostering partnerships, encouraging innovation, and focusing on place-based approaches, *Giant Strides* seeks to drive long-term economic growth, environmental conservation, and community benefits, making marine tourism a cornerstone of Scotland's sustainable future.

### **Scottish Agritourism Strategy for Sustainable Growth**

The Scottish Agritourism Strategy for Sustainable Growth outlines a long-term vision for developing agritourism as a key sector within Scotland's rural economy. The strategy aims to create 1,000 agritourism enterprises by 2030, with at least half offering a food and drink element. It emphasises a high-quality, authentic visitor experience centred around agriculture, local food, and rural heritage while ensuring economic sustainability for family farms and crofts.

Agritourism is defined as a tourism or leisure activity on a working farm, croft, or estate that produces food, setting it apart from general rural tourism. The strategy identifies agritourism as a significant growth opportunity, helping farms diversify income streams while boosting rural economies, combating depopulation, and preserving Scottish landscapes. It also highlights its role in promoting food heritage, addressing gender imbalances in farm ownership, and enhancing community well-being.

The strategy outlines five key priorities:

1. Attracting and retaining a skilled workforce, reversing rural depopulation.
2. Developing a thriving, responsible sector, including potential policy support for agritourism classification.
3. Providing high-quality, market-driven experiences, ensuring alignment with consumer demand.
4. Building financially sustainable businesses that support Scottish agriculture.
5. Expanding food and drink offerings, strengthening the link between tourism and Scotland's food sector.

Overall, the strategy presents a coordinated approach to making Scotland a global leader in agritourism, ensuring its economic, social, and environmental sustainability while enriching visitors' experiences with Scotland's rich agricultural traditions.

### **Scotland Resident's Views on Tourism 2025**

The Scotland Residents' View on Tourism 2025 report finds that Scottish residents broadly view tourism as vital to the economy, providing jobs, supporting local businesses, and boosting investment and Scotland's international reputation. Tourism is also seen as helping to conserve heritage, enhance communities, and protect the natural environment. Most respondents whose area is a tourist destination feel visitor numbers are acceptable, and 40% believe decisions balance residents' and businesses' needs, though fewer than half think businesses always consider local communities. Concerns include traffic congestion, parking shortages, litter, lack of toilet facilities, irresponsible driving or camping (especially in the Highlands and Islands) and over half of respondents had concerns about the reduction in affordable housing due to second homes or short term lets. Overall, residents value tourism's economic and cultural benefits but want better management of visitor impacts and more inclusive decision-making.

### **The Scotland Visitor Survey 2023 – Accessible Tourism**

The Scotland Visitor Survey 2023 – Accessible Tourism report highlights the experiences of visitors to Scotland with health conditions or access needs. Around 9% of visitors reported having a long-term health condition, most commonly mobility impairments or conditions limiting daily activities. Similarly, 9% of visitors (and their groups) had specific access requirements, with families and older visitors more likely to report such needs. While most visitors with access needs found it reasonably easy to get around Scotland, only 35% rated it "very easy", and overseas visitors generally reported more difficulties than those from the UK. About one in five (19%) of these visitors encountered barriers, mainly issues with stairs, parking, uneven paths, inaccessible accommodation, or limited toilet facilities. Overall, the findings underline both Scotland's progress and the ongoing challenges in making tourism more inclusive, with infrastructure and accessibility improvements needed to enhance the visitor experience.

### **Local Context**

### **Glasgow City Region Strategy**

The [strategy](#) 2018-2023 is relevant as it covers the area adjacent to the National Park and also West Dunbartonshire Council area which is the southern edge of The Park – Balloch and Gartocharn and also discusses the West Highland Way which starts in East Dunbartonshire before travelling through Stirling Council and into The Park. Its focus is on

developing and growing the city region's food and drink sector, attracting an additional 1 million visitors to the region, and developing a shared tourism offer throughout the region, and finally the establishment of regional events. Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park is promoted as a key attraction in the area.

### **Argyll and the Isles Strategic Tourism Partnership Visitor Economy Recovery and Growth Strategy 2022-2025**

The strategy sets out a framework to support the recovery and sustainable growth of the visitor economy in Argyll & the Isles following recent global challenges, including COVID-19, Brexit, and rising energy costs. It builds on the region's strengths – outstanding natural assets, cultural heritage, and food and drink – while aligning with national priorities such as Scotland Outlook 2030 and the National Strategy for Economic Transformation.

The strategy identifies four key priorities: (1) extending the visitor season and dispersing visitors across the destination, (2) reaching new audiences, (3) improving the tourism offer, and (4) progressing towards net zero. These priorities are supported by targeted marketing, investment in infrastructure, community engagement, and business support. The strategy emphasises responsible and sustainable tourism, encouraging innovation, digital capability, and fair work practices to ensure the sector's resilience.

Recent achievements include investment in visitor infrastructure, successful marketing campaigns (such as *Wild About Argyll*), and strong recovery trends in visitor numbers and economic impact. Looking forward, the partnership will focus on enhancing adventure tourism, food and drink experiences, marine and coastal assets, and cultural events, while embedding sustainable practices to meet consumer demand for responsible travel.

Overall, the strategy aims to position Argyll & the Isles as “Scotland's Adventure Coast” – a destination that delivers memorable, high-quality experiences for visitors while supporting local communities, protecting the environment, and contributing to Scotland's wider economic and sustainability goals.

### **Perth and Kinross Tourism Action Plan 2025 – 2030**

The Perth and Kinross Tourism Strategy & Action Plan 2025 – 2030 outlines a five-year vision for an inclusive, sustainable, and globally connected visitor economy. Developed with local and national partners – including Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park – it aligns with Scotland's wider economic strategies and builds on post-pandemic recovery. The plan focuses on four pillars:

- promotion and marketing to grow visitors, stays, and spending;
- investment and infrastructure to improve access, facilities, and manage community impacts;
- market development and internationalisation to create new tourism products and expand global reach;
- industry growth and resilience to support businesses, workforce needs, sustainability, and community engagement.

Leveraging Perth and Kinross's cultural heritage, outdoor assets, food and drink reputation, and UNESCO City of Craft status, it highlights trends like transformational tourism, wellness, and conscious travel, and a potential Visitor Levy to ensure responsible growth.

## National Park context

### **Local Development Plan Monitoring 2024 – Visitor Experience and Tourism Accommodation Trends**

The current Local Development Plan (LDP) designates 13 visitor experience sites and 8 mixed-use sites that include opportunities for tourism development, such as Claish Farm in Callander, the Old Station site in Balloch, and Tarbet Village Green. These allocated sites are intended for a variety of developments, ranging from visitor accommodation and activity-based attractions to infrastructure such as visitor centres, adventure parks, and public amenities.

Over the past five years, however, progress on allocated visitor experience sites has been limited. Several sites remain vacant or derelict with no development activity, including the former Tourist Information Centre and Harvey's Garage in Tarbet, and Auchenlaich in Callander. Some sites have seen pending or approved applications, such as Tarbet Central Green and Ben Arthur in Arrochar. Meanwhile, the site north of Luss Primary School has been approved for retail and light industrial use rather than for visitor experience development.

**Trends in Tourism Approvals:** Across the LDP period from 2017 to 2024, tourism accommodation approvals have been relatively steady in overall numbers, though with variation between accommodation types. In total, approvals over this eight-year period include:

- 257 self-catering buildings
- 164 self-catering caravans
- 420 bedspaces in serviced accommodation
- 90 pitches for camping/motorhomes

This broad stability contrasts with a more recent downward trend. Since 2021–2022, when self-catering approvals were higher as the sector recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic, approvals have declined. In 2023, only 27 self-catering units were approved, followed by 32 units in 2024 – the lowest annual figures since 2017.

**Serviced Accommodation:** Serviced accommodation approvals, including hotels, guest houses, and bunkhouses, fluctuated during the plan period. The peak was in 2019 with 188 new bedspaces, while 2021 saw just 6 bedspaces approved. Many of these approvals related to extensions of existing hotels, such as the Courie Inn in Killin, The Lodge in Lochgoilhead, Glenview in Luss, Rowardennan Hotel on Loch Lomond, Cameron House in Balloch, and Monachyle Mhor in Balquhitter. New hotel and hostel developments approved during this period included Bellavista in Balloch, Blair Cottage in Balmaha (now operating as Birchwood Guest Lodge), Lochwood in Lochgoilhead, Lochiel House in Callander, and Bonnie Banks in Balloch. Although approvals dipped during the pandemic, the sector has since shown signs of recovery.

**Non-Serviced Accommodation:** Non-serviced accommodation approvals, such as self-catering units and caravans, have been broadly stable across the plan period, with notable peaks in 2017 (89 units) and 2022 (87 units). Approvals for camping and motorhome pitches have been more varied, with some years recording no new approvals. The peak occurred in 2021, with 46 pitches approved, but no approvals were recorded in either 2023 or 2024.

**Holiday Parks and Small-Scale Developments:** In terms of larger-scale projects, only one major holiday park application has been approved in the past five years – the redevelopment of the Former Highland Way Hotel for 23 units. A medium-sized project of 8 units was approved at Ballagan Farm. Several existing sites expanded during the plan period, including Portnellan, Ardlui Retreat, and Tigh Mor Trossachs. Small-scale holiday developments accounted for 8 applications, totalling 24 units, with examples including Carrick House, Buchanan Smithy, and Claddoch Farm.

**Spatial Distribution of Tourism Development:** Tourism approvals have not been evenly spread across the National Park. The majority of applications are concentrated in the eastern and southern parts of the Park, as well as around Lochgoilhead, one of the most pressured visitor areas. Outside designated tourism opportunity zones, most approvals have been linked to existing business expansions, farm diversifications, or developments located within or adjacent to villages.

- **West Highland Way:** There has been steady growth in glamping sites catering to walkers and short-stay visitors from Glasgow.
- **Countryside Applications:** Most approvals have come from business expansions or farm diversification. Examples include Lennox of Loch Lomond Glamping, which highlights challenges around sustainable transport, and Balvalachlan in Callander, which evolved from a steading conversion to a wider business expansion.
- **Towns and Villages:** Despite policy support for larger-scale projects in and around villages, interest has been limited. Only Ballagan (Balloch) and Gart Lodge (Callander) have brought forward projects of around 8 holiday units.

Tourism accommodation within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park has experienced modest overall growth since 2017, supported largely by expansions of existing businesses rather than new enterprises. The hotel sector has seen recovery since the pandemic in terms of new development activity, but self-catering approvals have declined in the most recent years. Camping and holiday park approvals remain limited, with little new large-scale development. Looking ahead, one of the key challenges is to improve uptake of allocated visitor experience sites, many of which have seen little or no progress despite their designation.

### **Scottish Visitor Survey 2023 – Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Fact Sheet**

The Scotland Visitor Survey 2023, prepared by Visit Scotland, highlights the strong interest for Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park as a destination. The average travel party visiting the Park consisted of 2.7 people, with 10% of groups including children under 16 and 12% travelling with pets, indicating a demand for pet-friendly facilities and experiences.

While the majority of visitors came from the UK, there was also notable international interest, reflecting Scotland's growing appeal to global travellers. Feedback shows a high level of satisfaction, particularly with the Park's natural beauty and outdoor recreational opportunities, though opportunities remain to improve infrastructure, visitor facilities, and accessibility. The findings also underline the Park's economic importance, with visitor spending providing significant support to local businesses and services. Overall, the survey offers valuable insights to enhance visitor experiences and maximise the tourism potential of The National Park.

## **Loch Lomond and the Trossachs STEAM Report 2024**

The Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Final STEAM Report (2024) provides an in-depth analysis of tourism trends, visitor numbers, economic contributions, and employment impacts related to tourism in the National Park. The STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) methodology quantifies tourism's local economic impact using visitor data, accommodation statistics, and sectoral multipliers.

### **Visitor Numbers and Trends**

The report highlights that in 2023, 4.53 million visitor days were recorded in The Park, representing a 7.8% increase from the previous year. Visitor numbers also increased, reaching 2.76 million, a 12.9% rise from 2022. This growth was primarily driven by a rise in both day visitors and overnight stays, with particular increases in non-serviced accommodations such as self-catering lodges and holiday rentals.

A key trend noted in the report is the seasonal distribution of visitors. The Park experiences peak visitation during the summer months (June-August), with notable spikes during school holidays and weekends. However, off-season tourism (October-March) is also growing, particularly among international tourists and outdoor recreation enthusiasts. This shift aligns with national trends indicating greater year-round engagement in outdoor activities.

### **Economic Impact of Tourism**

Tourism remains a major economic driver for the National Park. In 2023, direct visitor expenditure reached £384.88 million, marking a 19.6% increase from 2022. The total economic impact, including indirect effects, amounted to £540 million, a 20.2% increase year-over-year. These figures underscore the significant role of tourism in supporting local businesses, services, and infrastructure.

### **Sectoral Contributions and Employment**

The tourism industry in the National Park provides substantial employment opportunities, with 6,711 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs in 2023, reflecting an 8.1% increase from the previous year. The accommodation sector remains the largest employer, accounting for 29.4% of total employment. Other key sectors include food and drink (15.2%), transport (13.8%), shopping (9.5%), and recreation (5.3%).

Indirect employment, which includes supply chain effects, represents 26.7% of total tourism-related jobs, highlighting tourism's broader economic benefits beyond direct service roles.

### **Visitor Spending and Regional Impact**

The spending distribution indicates that accommodation is the largest expenditure category, followed by food and drink, shopping, and recreation activities. The growth in non-serviced accommodations, such as holiday cottages and short-term rentals, suggests a diversification of visitor preferences. Meanwhile, the increasing use of local dining and recreational services contributes to a more evenly distributed economic impact across the region.



## Future Considerations

The report suggests that visitor numbers and economic contributions are on an upward trajectory, with further potential for expanding sustainable tourism initiatives.

Recommendations include:

- Enhancing infrastructure to support peak-season visitors while maintaining environmental protections.
- Developing off-season tourism offerings, particularly in outdoor and nature-based experiences.
- Addressing workforce challenges in hospitality and tourism sectors through training and employment incentives.
- Improving transportation and accessibility, including sustainable travel options for visitors.

In conclusion, the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Final STEAM Report (2024) provides a comprehensive overview of tourism growth, economic benefits, and employment trends. The findings emphasise the importance of tourism to the region's economy and the need for strategic planning to ensure sustainable development while preserving The Park's natural beauty and visitor experience.

## **Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Annual Visitor Study 2025**

The Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park (LLTNP) Annual Visitor Study 2025 provides a comprehensive assessment of visitor numbers, profiles, and behaviours to inform tourism planning and economic development. Estimating visitor volumes is complex because the Park has open boundaries, resident populations, and through traffic. To address this, the Park Authority commissioned the Moffat Centre for Travel and Tourism to build a robust, repeatable Annual Visitor Volume Model. The study, conducted from June 2023 to November 2024, combined a large-scale visitor survey with secondary data sources such as Transport Scotland traffic counters, public transport data, and tourism performance indicators. A total of 849 face-to-face interviews were carried out year-round, providing a statistically reliable sample.

The Annual Visitor Volume Model estimated 4.54 million visitors in 2024, aligning with long-term trends and previous studies (e.g., 4.51 million in 2019 and around 4 million in 2011). Seasonal visitor flows peak at Easter, summer (especially August), and autumn, reflecting Scotland's extended holiday season and the Park's proximity to major population centres.

The research revealed that transport is the key determinant of visitor numbers, with cars accounting for about 70% of all arrivals, supported by smaller shares using coaches, public transport, or active travel. Party size averaged 2.7 people, with the largest volume of visitors being adults (88%).

Most visitors came for a day trip (over half of respondents), while 30% stayed overnight and about 11% were passing through, contributing additional spending. Overnight stays peak in summer (35% vs. 25% in winter), while day trips dominate in the low season and a fewer number of visitors opt to stay overnight within The Park. Summer also sees more first-time and international visitors, while the off-season reflects a strong base of repeat local visitors, particularly from Greater Glasgow, the Central Belt, and nearby regions such as Stirling and West Dunbartonshire.

Visitors reported high satisfaction, particularly with the Park's natural beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities. The most popular activities were low-level walking (21%), eating out and enjoying local food (14%), sightseeing (13%), and visiting towns or attractions. Many activities require little or no spending, which explains why expenditure-based tourism models can underestimate actual visitation.

The study concluded that while visitor numbers remain strong and repeat visitation is high, pressures are concentrated in certain hotspots and during peak seasons. This highlights the continued need for targeted visitor management and infrastructure planning, particularly around parking, toilets, and public transport provision to balance visitor growth with sustainability.

### **Short Term Lets within Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park**

A short-term let is paid temporary accommodation provided by a host to a guest who does not use it as their main home (for example, holiday cottages, B&Bs, Airbnb-style flats, or glamping pods).

From October 2023, all short-term lets required registration under the short-term licence process, providing a more accurate dataset. These datasets have been obtained from the four Local Authorities within the boundary of the National Park and mapped accordingly. The mapping is included within the interactive map.

The distribution of short-term lets across The National Park shows clear areas of clustering as well as more sparsely represented parts of The Park. The most significant concentrations are found around Loch Lomond's southern shores, particularly in and around Balloch, Luss, and Arrochar. This reflects the strong tourism demand and accessibility of the area from the Central Belt, making it a popular base for visitors. There are also notable clusters around Loch Goil and Loch Long, especially in Lochgoilhead, Ardentinny and Kilmun, highlighting the attraction of these lochside locations for short-term accommodation.

Further north, clustering is visible in Callander and Lochearnhead, with density tapering eastwards along the A85 corridor towards Killin and westwards towards Crianlarich. These areas act as gateways into the Park, serving both domestic and international visitors who are travelling into the Highlands.

Overall, the pattern illustrates how short-term lets are concentrated around accessible lochside settlements and key gateway towns, while more remote areas see fewer units.

This distribution highlights both the tourism strengths of high-demand destinations and the challenge of ensuring visitor accommodation is spread more evenly to relieve pressure on hotspots while supporting a wider range of communities.

The Local Authorities have provided data for their area and this has been extrapolated for the National Park boundary specifically. The table below shows the approximate number of licences recorded and the total number of bed spaces available within each Local Authority area of The National Park.

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Total Licences</b>	<b>Bed Spaces Available</b>
Argyll and Bute	314	1,913
West Dunbartonshire	66	482
Perth and Kinross	24	107
Stirling	395	2,142
<b>Total</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>4,644</b>

## **Operation of Housing System within Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park 2022**

The short-term letting sector in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park was reviewed in July 2022 by Arneil Johnstone as part of housing market research.

The report examines the impact of short-term lets (STLs) on the housing market within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. Using a four-week snapshot of advertised vacancies across platforms such as Airbnb and local letting websites, 393 vacancies were analysed, of which 310 (79%) were STLs that could otherwise have been suitable residential properties. Concentrations were particularly high in Breadalbane (100%), Loch Lomondside (91%), Callander & Aberfoyle (83%) and Cowal (90%), with Balloch showing the lowest proportion (13%). Although there are more private rented sector (PRS) properties overall (around 700) than STLs, in areas like Callander & Aberfoyle the number of STLs is significant, representing over a third of potential rental stock.

STLs were found to account for between 29-38% of rental properties in most housing market areas, apart from Balloch (6%). Where rental markets are already small, even modest growth in STLs can have a disproportionate impact on local housing availability. Alongside limited social housing, second homes and empty homes, this further reduces options for permanent residents. Ineffective stock (second and empty homes) was also found to exceed the scale of STLs, particularly in Cowal (22%) and Breadalbane (17%).

Financial comparisons underline the scale of the challenge. Average STL rents ranged from £1,576 to £6,682 per month depending on season and location, compared with average PRS rents of £682 across the park. The disparity was most acute in Loch Lomondside, where the difference between PRS and high-season STL rents exceeded £5,000 per month. This income gap provides a strong incentive for landlords to switch properties from long-term to short-term use. Analysis also suggests that PRS rents tend to be higher in areas with greater concentrations of STLs, reflecting reduced supply.

Overall, while the Park still has more PRS homes than STLs, the growth of STLs is reducing the availability of affordable rental housing and exacerbating pressures in areas already struggling with supply. Combined with second and empty homes, it is estimated that around 11% of dwellings have been effectively removed from the permanent housing market, with the impact most acute in Cowal and Breadalbane. This indicates that short-term letting is contributing significantly to affordability and availability pressures, with knock-on effects for the sustainability of local communities. It is important to also look at STL's alongside other housing data for communities such as levels of affordable housing, waiting lists for affordable housing and turnover, the roles of the private rented sector and levels of second homes to fully understand local housing system dynamics.

### **Camping Provision**

The National Park has designated four Camping Management Zones in high-pressure areas to manage the volume and behavioural impacts of wild camping. Camping Management Zones contain designated "permit areas" where a set number of camping permits are issued. These areas offer a more informal, 'wild camping' experience in high-demand locations within the National Park and typically have no formal facilities. The map in figure 5 of the appendix details the camping permit areas across the National Park. The permit areas accommodate different types of camping experience. There are 32 areas which are to be used for tents only, there are 9 areas which are only to be used

by motorhomes/campervans and a further 4 sites which are for mixed use – tents, motorhomes or campervans.

The National Park Authority maintains a database of all camping and caravan sites across the National Park, totalling 37 sites. Of these, 7 are tent-only sites, with four operated by the National Park Authority, one run by the Rowardennan Youth Hostel, and a privately-owned site at Drymen Camping. There are 12 sites which have pitches for tents, motorhomes and campervans. Of these sites none are owned or operated by the National Park Authority. There are also 11 sites across the National Park which are for motorhome/campervans only and do not accommodate tents, all of these are privately owned.

The campsites which are operated by the National Park Authority are Loch Chon which offers 26 pitches for tents, Loch Achray which offers 17 tent pitches and Inchcailloch which has space to accommodate 12 people per night. Sallochy campsite on the eastern side of Loch Lomond has 21 pitches – 11 located within a central camping area and 10 along the west highland way. In total the National Park offers 76 tent pitches across its camping locations.

Within the National Park there are also 7 'Stay the Night' locations operated by Forestry and Land Scotland, allowing overnight motorhome parking in designated car parks – these are detailed in the map in figure 5 of the appendix.

Overall camping distribution varies significantly by area. West Loch Lomond, including Arrochar and Tarbet, has limited provision with only two formal campsites (Luss and Glen Loin), no tent-only sites, and few permit areas. East Loch Lomond has a better balance, including three mixed-use campsites, one motorhome-only site, four tent-only sites, and one permit area. Trossachs West and North are better served overall but still lack tent-only sites in the north. Cowal Peninsula and Strathfillan/Glen Dochart have minimal provision, with only one mixed-use site in Cowal and three in Strathfillan, and no tent-only or permit areas - though wild camping remains an option due to the absence of camping management zones. Notably, Crianlarich has no formal campsite provision, highlighting a clear gap in this part of The Park. Overall, while provision is strong in some areas, others - particularly West Loch Lomond, Cowal, and Strathfillan - have limited or no formal options for tent-based camping.

### **Long Distance Walking Routes**

Within Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, there are several nationally and regionally significant long-distance walking routes, examples include:

- The West Highland Way – Scotland's most popular long-distance trail, stretching 96 miles from Milngavie to Fort William and passing through Drymen, Balmaha, Rowardennan, Inversnaid, Crianlarich and Tyndrum.
- The Rob Roy Way – a 79-mile route from Drymen to Pitlochry, crossing the Park through Aberfoyle, Callander, Strathyre and Killin.
- The Three Lochs Way – a 34-mile route from Balloch to Inveruglas, linking Loch Lomond, The Gareloch and Loch Long.
- The Cowal Way (also marketed as the Loch Lomond & Cowal Way) – a 57-mile route from Portavadie to Inveruglas, connecting the west coast of Cowal to Loch Lomond.

- The John Muir Way – a coast-to-coast route from Helensburgh to Dunbar, with its western section passing through Balloch and along Loch Lomond.

These routes have a major impact on the Park's economy, environment, and communities. The West Highland Way alone attracts tens of thousands of walkers annually, supporting local businesses such as B&Bs, pubs, cafés, and transport services. This steady flow of visitors helps sustain rural economies, particularly in villages that might otherwise struggle with declining populations or limited employment opportunities. Similarly, routes like the Rob Roy Way and Cowal Way distribute visitors more widely, spreading economic benefits beyond Loch Lomond's busiest hotspots.

From an environmental perspective, these trails concentrate recreational use along defined corridors, helping to manage visitor pressures. However, they also create challenges, such as path erosion, litter, and demand for public facilities (e.g., toilets, parking, and waste management). In high-use sections – particularly Balmaha, Rowardennan, and Inversnaid – the strain on infrastructure can be acute during peak season.

Socially and culturally, the routes enhance opportunities for health, wellbeing, and connection with heritage. They provide accessible ways for both residents and visitors to engage with the Park's landscapes, history, and wildlife. At the same time, reliance on tourism linked to these trails can make some communities vulnerable to seasonal fluctuations in visitor numbers.

Overall, long-distance walking routes are one of the defining features of the National Park, offering both opportunities for sustainable tourism and challenges for visitor management.

### **Waste Disposal Facilities**

Motorhome waste disposal options are extremely limited across the National Park. There is just one public waste disposal facility, located at the Tarbet site, while all other chemical toilet disposal points are privately managed at the camping and caravan sites. Only three private sites currently allow public access to their waste facilities for a small fee, creating a significant gap in public waste disposal provision across the National Park. Addressing this shortfall is a key challenge for improving motorhome infrastructure and sustainable tourism in the region.

### **Public Toilet Provision**

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduced a requirement for Local Development Plans (LDPs) to include policies on the provision of public toilets, ensuring that planning authorities account for public convenience needs. Additionally, the Town and Country Planning (Changing Places Toilet Facilities) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 mandate that large-scale developments over 5,000 sqm or those expected to serve more than 1,000 people must include Changing Places toilets. While few developments within the National Park meet this threshold, it is considered good practice to include Changing Places toilets in visitor hotspots.

At present, the National Park has two Changing Places toilets, located in Aberfoyle and Tyndrum. Public satisfaction with toilet availability has improved, rising from 53% in 2015/16 to 66% in 2019/20, though only a minority rated public toilets as "very good". Site upgrade works at Tarbet include a new Changing Places toilet which is due to be complete in 2026.

There are 25 public toilets across the National Park, supplemented by six comfort schemes – private businesses that allow public access to their toilets. These facilities are managed by various organisations, including local councils, private businesses, and the National Park Authority. Public toilets are available in Balloch, Arrochar, Tarbet, Luss, Inveruglas, Balmaha, Aberfoyle, Callander, Crianlarich, Tyndrum, Killin, and St Fillans, among other locations.

Gaps in public toilet provision remain across the National Park, with several communities particularly affected. Strathyre currently has no facilities, while in Kinlochard, Stronachlachar and Inversnaid, access relies on the goodwill of local businesses rather than an official comfort scheme. Blairmore faces a similar situation, with café facilities available but not formally part of the scheme. Arrochar depends on two comfort schemes but lacks permanent public toilets, and both Gartmore and Gartocharn have no provision at all. This highlights the uneven distribution of facilities and the reliance on informal arrangements in certain areas.

While public toilet provision has improved, key gaps remain, especially in rural and high-traffic areas. Efforts to expand Changing Places toilets, increase comfort scheme partnerships, and secure funding for new public toilets will be crucial in enhancing the visitor experience and supporting sustainable tourism growth within the National Park.

### **Loch Lomond and The Trossachs – An Accessible Destination Toolkit**

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority works closely with VisitScotland and is committed to making the Park an accessible destination where tourism businesses and infrastructure meet the needs of all visitors.

With nearly one in five people in the UK having a disability and a collective spending power of £249 billion, improving accessibility presents a major opportunity for local businesses to attract and retain customers. Despite this, 63% of businesses nationally do not promote their accessible provisions. Enhancing accessible services not only benefits disabled visitors but also families, older people, and those with temporary impairments, improving overall customer experience. By making simple operational changes, businesses can increase repeat visits, positive reviews, and recommendations. A toolkit has been developed to help businesses maximise these opportunities, providing practical guidance and links to expert support, ultimately strengthening the Park's visitor economy and inclusivity.

### **Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies (STIDS)**

In recent years the National Park Authority have made infrastructure upgrades and improvements a priority in order to better manage areas of visitor pressure. As part of this process, The National Park have developed a Place Programme Delivery Route map and also commissioned Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies (STIDS) to be completed for four areas of The Park which experience the highest levels of visitor pressure. The STIDS were developed to identify areas of opportunity and to identify actions to strengthen tourism infrastructure and place quality. A summary of the overarching Delivery Route map and each of the four STID areas has been included below:

#### **Place Programme Delivery Route Map**

The Place Programme Delivery Route Map outlines a strategic plan for visitor infrastructure investment across Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. This plan aims to enhance visitor experiences while ensuring sustainability, accessibility, and environmental protection.

It aligns with the National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029, with an indicative extension to 2034, providing a long-term framework for coordinated, multi-year investment.

The Route Map identifies key priority areas for infrastructure development, focusing on West Loch Lomond, Balloch, East Loch Lomond, Strathard & The Trossachs, Callander & Surrounding Areas, and other secondary hubs. These areas experience high visitor pressure and require improvements in facilities, transport connectivity, and environmental management. The investment strategy follows a structured approach that includes feasibility studies, community engagement, and phased funding applications.

For West Loch Lomond, major projects include transforming Tarbet into a sustainable transport hub, upgrading Arrochar Glen Loin for safer visitor access, and enhancing Luss Village to manage tourism impact. Balloch, as a major gateway, will see developments such as the Pierhead Masterplan, a renewed transport hub, and enhancements to Balloch Castle Country Park. East Loch Lomond projects focus on upgrading Conic Hill paths, improving visitor infrastructure in Balmaha and Rowardennan, and introducing seasonal park-and-ride facilities.

In Strathard and The Trossachs, the plan prioritises the Aberfoyle Sustainable Travel Hub, expanded active travel networks, and improved connectivity between key destinations. Similarly, in Callander and Surrounding Areas, the focus is on Station Road Hub for sustainable transport, developing Callander Meadows, and strengthening active travel links to nearby trails and sites.

Investment will be sought for secondary hubs such as Tyndrum, Benmore, Crianlarich, Killin, Lochgoilhead, and St Fillans, with smaller-scale projects aimed at accessibility, public amenities, and nature-based enhancements. The total estimated investment is £16.85 million from 2024-2029, rising to £29.84 million by 2034. Funding will come from a mix of public sector allocations, strategic tourism funds, and partnerships with local authorities, businesses, and third-sector organisations.

The Place Programme Delivery Route Map provides a structured timeline for implementation, balancing short-term improvements with long-term sustainability goals. By following a collaborative, place-based approach, the programme seeks to enhance visitor experiences, reduce environmental impact, and support local communities, making the National Park a more resilient and inclusive destination.

### West Loch Lomond STID

This STID focuses on the West Loch Lomond area and specifically interventions at Arrochar and Tarbet which are both Placemaking priority areas. The proposal for Tarbet is to develop a visitor hub with improved accessibility by sustainable forms of transport. This is in line with the Placemaking priority guidance within the LDP and is currently in the process of being implemented. The proposal for Arrochar is similar and it is suggested that Arrochar could benefit from improved visitor facilities and transport access. This work has not yet been started, however the outline brief included within the STID would accord with the Placemaking priorities set out in the LDP.

### East Loch Lomond STID

This STID focuses on the area to the east of Loch Lomond and includes suggested interventions for Drymen which has been identified as a Placemaking priority area within the current LDP. The suggested improvements for Drymen are in line with those set out within the LDP and focus on improving a sense of place through enhancements to the Village green. The STID has also noted issues with traffic congestion and active travel access which

are suggested areas for infrastructure upgrades. There are no timescales set for this piece of work currently but once it is underway it will fulfil the brief set within the LDP.

### Strathard and The Trossachs STID

This STID focuses on the Strathard and Trossachs area of the National Park which includes Aberfoyle, Strathard, The Trossachs and Port of Menteith. Aberfoyle is also an area designated as a placemaking priority area and the proposal within the STID is in line with the suggested focus areas from the LDP.

### Callander STID

This STID focuses specifically on the settlement of Callander and the surrounding area. The study provides an in-depth review of the area and proposes interventions which could improve the area for the local and visitor community. Callander has also been designated as a placemaking priority area within the current LDP and the suggested areas for improvement have been captured within the STID. The STID goes beyond the current LDP and includes suggested proposals.

## **Policy 32 – Aquaculture**

There are 22 lochs (and one lake) including Britain's biggest body of freshwater in the National Park, as well as 39 miles of coastline around three sea lochs and many miles of rivers.

### National context

#### **Scotland's National Marine Plan**

Scotland's National Marine Plan provides a comprehensive framework for the sustainable management of the country's marine environment, covering both inshore and offshore waters. It is developed in accordance with the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, ensuring a structured approach to balancing economic, social, and environmental interests within Scotland's seas. The Plan aligns with the UK Marine Policy Statement and integrates land-sea interactions while incorporating input from various stakeholders.

A key element of the Plan is its commitment to sustainability. The marine environment is managed to ensure the long-term protection of biodiversity, habitats, and ecosystems while supporting economic activities such as fishing, aquaculture, renewable energy, and tourism. The Plan adopts an ecosystem-based approach, promoting resilience against human-induced impacts and climate change. Climate change mitigation and adaptation are crucial considerations, and the Plan incorporates Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Framework to address environmental challenges.

The Plan also highlights economic opportunities while ensuring responsible marine development. The document identifies strategic objectives, including supporting marine industries, ensuring equitable access to resources, promoting marine conservation, and integrating marine and land planning policies. It sets out specific policies for various sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, offshore renewable energy, oil and gas, carbon capture and storage, shipping, ports and harbours, tourism, and defence.

Overall, the National Marine Plan serves as a strategic tool to guide sustainable development in Scotland's seas, balancing economic growth with environmental conservation. It seeks to provide a clear, regulated, and integrated approach to marine



planning, ensuring Scotland's marine resources are managed effectively for current and future generations.

### **Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture**

The Scottish Government's Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture, published in July 2023, sets out the Scottish Government's long-term aspirations for the finfish, shellfish and seaweed farming sectors, and the wider aquaculture supply chain. The Scottish Government has developed a series of outcomes that will help drive progress towards the Vision by 2045; in key areas such as the environment and biodiversity, consenting, community benefit, business and health and welfare.

The Scottish Government expects science, research and development to play a leading role in aquaculture's sustainable development.

Delivery of the Vision will see communities share in the success of aquaculture. The Scottish Government wants communities to meaningfully contribute to aquaculture planning and to improve and streamline consenting. This will include working with and supporting local authorities to maximise the opportunities and benefits that are available to communities.

### **Scottish National Adaptation Plan**

Scotland's National Adaptation Programme 3, published in September 2024, sets out specific commitments to support the Fisheries and Aquaculture sectors to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The Scottish Government's Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture includes outcomes related to climate change with an ambition to see the aquaculture sector play its part in Scotland achieving Net Zero emissions. The Scottish Government will continue to support the sector to put in place climate resilience plans to manage the risks of climate change by 2029.

### **Scotland's Fisheries Management Strategy 2020-2030**

Scotland's Fisheries Management Strategy 2020-2030 sets out a long-term vision for managing the country's sea fisheries as part of its Blue Economy approach. The strategy aims to balance environmental sustainability, economic growth, and social well-being while ensuring Scotland remains a world-class fishing nation. It emphasises responsible and sustainable fisheries management, ensuring that marine resources are protected for future generations, while also securing jobs, supporting coastal communities, and promoting innovation in the fishing industry.

The strategy is built on a sustainability-first approach, ensuring that fisheries are managed to maintain biological diversity and ecosystem health while optimising long-term economic benefits. It supports the transition to a net-zero emissions economy, reducing the environmental impact of fishing while fostering economic resilience. The strategy also prioritises safe and fair working conditions, aiming to improve fishing as an attractive and secure career option.

The strategy aligns with Scotland's National Marine Plan and broader international commitments, working towards Good Environmental Status in Scottish waters. It focuses on co-management, ensuring that decision-making is inclusive, transparent, and informed by scientific evidence. This involves active collaboration between the government, fishing industry, and environmental stakeholders to ensure policies meet the needs of all parties.

Scotland's Fisheries Management Strategy 2020-2030 aims to position the country as a global leader in sustainable fisheries management. By integrating science, innovation, and stakeholder collaboration, it seeks to balance the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of fisheries.

### **FINFISH Aquaculture Sector Plan**

The Finfish Aquaculture Sector Plan outlines Scotland's strategy for regulating and managing the finfish aquaculture industry, with a focus on sustainability, environmental protection, and economic growth. Developed by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), the plan aims to ensure the sector complies with environmental regulations while promoting innovation and sustainable practices.

The plan envisions the Scottish finfish aquaculture sector as a global leader in environmentally responsible fish farming. It seeks to balance economic success with environmental sustainability, emphasising efficient resource use, waste reduction, and habitat protection. The key objectives are:

1. Full Compliance – Ensuring all businesses adhere to environmental protection laws.
2. Beyond Compliance – Encouraging businesses to adopt sustainable innovations beyond the legal minimum.

The plan is part of SEPA's "One Planet Prosperity" strategy, aiming to regulate industries in a way that helps Scotland prosper within environmental limits.

The Scottish finfish aquaculture industry has ambitious growth targets, aiming to produce 300,000-400,000 tonnes of fish annually by 2030. However, this expansion must align with sustainability principles, ensuring:

- Lower carbon emissions from energy use and transportation.
- Sustainable fish feed sources, reducing reliance on wild-caught fish.
- Circular economy solutions, including repurposing waste materials.

SEPA will support businesses that adopt greener technologies, such as recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS), renewable energy, and low-impact packaging.

Scotland's Finfish Aquaculture Sector Plan seeks to create a sustainable, well-regulated, and globally competitive aquaculture industry. By enforcing compliance, fostering innovation, and reducing environmental impacts, the plan aims to ensure long-term industry growth while protecting marine ecosystems.

### **Scottish Wild Salmon Strategy**

The Scottish Government's Wild Salmon Strategy provides an overarching framework to tackle the wide range of pressures on wild salmon. It brings together the range of organisations with responsibilities to protect salmon, including District Salmon Fishery Boards, River Trusts, NatureScot and Scottish Forestry.

A Strategy Implementation Plan 2023-2028 identifies collective action for wild salmon across government, business and charitable sectors.

The knowledge, expertise and contribution of partners including Scottish Environment Protection Agency, NatureScot and District Salmon Fishery Boards and Trusts is essential for the delivery of the actions in the Implementation Plan.

In March 2024 the Scottish Government published a report on the progress made in the first year since publication of the Wild salmon strategy implementation plan, showing work has progressed on over fifty of the actions.

### **Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) Sea lice risk assessment framework**

SEPA commenced the implementation of a new sea lice risk assessment framework to protect wild salmon populations from 1 February 2024. The framework for protecting sea trout populations commenced in March 2025.

SEPA's sea lice risk assessment framework uses a screening model to be implemented under the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011. To prevent salmonids from experiencing a harmful level of lice SEPA applies an exposure threshold in wild salmon protection zones (narrow or constrained areas of sea, such as sea lochs).

Work is underway to plan the managed transition away from control of sea lice and the risk to wild salmonids through local authority Environmental Management Plans which will be phased out by the end of 2025, and replaced by SEPA's national monitoring strategy.

### **Scotland's Marine Economic Statistics 2022**

In Scotland's Marine Economic Statistics 2022, Argyll and Clyde reported fish landings valued at £28 million, with a corresponding fishing employment headcount of 396 individuals based on vessel registration.

In the distribution of Atlantic salmon production value across Scotland, Argyll and Clyde accounted for 18%, making it the joint-third-largest contributor. The North Coast and West Highlands region, as well as the Shetland Isles, held larger shares in comparison.

For Argyll and Bute, Marine GVA (Gross Value Added) totaled £118 million.

### **Blue Economy Vision for Scotland**

The Blue Economy Vision for Scotland outlines the Scottish Government's long-term strategy to enhance the sustainable use of marine resources while balancing economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and social well-being. Recognising the increasing importance of the marine environment in addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and economic challenges, the vision emphasises a shared stewardship approach to managing Scotland's marine assets responsibly. By 2045, the plan aims to establish a thriving blue economy that supports ecosystem health, improved livelihoods, economic growth, and social inclusion.

The document defines the blue economy as the interconnected marine, coastal, and freshwater environments that support various industries, including fishing, aquaculture, tourism, marine biotechnology, energy, and conservation. It highlights the critical role these sectors play in Scotland's economy, particularly for coastal and island communities, and stresses the need for sustainable management to mitigate the negative impacts of human activity on marine ecosystems.

To achieve its vision, the strategy identifies six key outcomes:

1. Healthy Marine Ecosystems – Protecting and restoring marine biodiversity and ensuring sustainable management.
2. Climate Resilience and Net Zero Goals – Decarbonising marine sectors, increasing renewable energy use, and addressing climate change impacts.
3. Innovative and Competitive Marine Industries – Promoting sustainable economic growth in marine sectors while maintaining environmental balance.
4. Sustainable Blue Food Production – Supporting responsible seafood and aquaculture industries to enhance food security and global trade.
5. Thriving Coastal and Island Communities – Ensuring equitable access to marine-based jobs, fair wages, and social inclusion.
6. Ocean Literacy and Public Engagement – Educating the public on the importance of marine resources and encouraging participation in marine governance.

Overall, the Blue Economy Vision for Scotland presents a comprehensive roadmap for leveraging the marine sector's potential while addressing climate challenges, economic resilience, and social equity. It underscores the importance of sustainable stewardship in maintaining Scotland's marine environment for future generations.

#### National Park context

#### **Marine Scotland – Interactive Map**

Loch Goil holds special ecological significance as a Nature Conservation Marine Protected Area (MPA), safeguarding its marine biodiversity and habitats. Similarly, a stretch of Loch Long, from the Torpedo Range to Glenmallan, is designated as Shellfish Protected Waters, ensuring water quality standards that support shellfish farming and maintain ecological balance.

Both Loch Long and Loch Goil are categorised as Category 3 areas according to marine fish farm location guidelines. This classification indicates that these lochs have favourable conditions for managing nutrient loading and benthic impacts - critical factors in maintaining healthy aquatic ecosystems. However, despite this designation, each site must still undergo careful assessment to ensure that localised conditions align with regulatory and environmental sustainability goals.

#### **Guidance on Locations of Marine Fish Farms**

The interactive map prepared by the Scottish Government includes guidance on possible locations of future fish farm developments. The guidance is separated into three categories:

- *Category 1 - where the development of new or expansion of existing marine fish farms will only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances*
- *Category 2 - where new development or expansion of existing sites would not result in the area being re-categorised as category 1*
- *Category 3 - where there appear to be better prospects of satisfying nutrient loading and benthic impact requirements*

Within the National Park there are two category three areas – Loch Goil and Loch Long

### **Shellfish Waters Protected Area**

There is one Shellfish protected area within the National Park. It is located at the north of Loch Long.

### **Active Finfish Sites**

Finfish sites in Scotland are farms where fish are raised in the sea or in freshwater. The sites include sea lochs, voes, inlets, and freshwater lochs. While Fish Farms can include any farmed aquatic organism including shellfish, finfish sites only cultivate fish with fins. According to the SEPA data, there are three active finfish sites within the National Park and they are all freshwater sites:

Active Finfish Sites:

- SC for the Ecology and Natural Environment
- Trossachs Trout Ltd.
- Loch Earn

The Scottish Ministers granted permission for a new fish farm at Loch Long in August 2025.

### **Wild Salmon Protection Zones**

There are two Wild Salmon protection areas within the National Park. The first is Loch Goil and the second is Loch Long.

### **Active Fishery Sites**

An active fishery site is a pond or other installation where farmed fish are stocked for recreational fishing (either private or commercial). Within the National Park boundary there are sixteen sites across the National Park:

- Loch Lomond Golf Club Lochan
- Blairmore Fishery
- Muir Park Reservoir
- Lake of Menteith
- Gartchonzie Pond
- Allt a Chip Dhuibh
- Loch Vennachar
- Cul na Greine
- Tigh Mor Fishing Pond
- Loch Ard
- Loch Earn
- Glenample Top Pond

- Lochan Eala
- Lochan na Bi
- Lochan Creag nan Caorann
- Lochan a Mhadaidh

### **Active Shellfish Sites**

There is one active shellfish site within the National Park and it is located south of Callander.

### **Obstacles to Fish Migration**

The interactive map provided by SEPA Web displays natural and artificial obstacles to fish migration, particularly affecting salmonid species, across Scotland. Within the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, various barriers such as dams, weirs, and culverts are identified, potentially hindering fish movement and impacting aquatic ecosystems. The map also indicates the severity of these obstacles and highlights any mitigation measures in place.

## **Policy 33 – Minerals**

### **National context**

#### **United Kingdom Minerals Yearbook 2021**

Between 2014 and 2020, Scotland's mineral production experienced significant fluctuations, particularly in coal extraction. Opencast coal production declined sharply from 2.5 million tonnes in 2014 to just 167,000 tonnes in 2020, while deep-mined coal saw no recorded production. There was no reported production of natural gas, crude oil, or condensates from onshore sources, while offshore figures remain undisclosed. In non-ferrous metals, gold production peaked at 6 kg in 2016, with no output recorded thereafter, while silver production reached 14 kg in the same year before ceasing.

Among industrial minerals, sand and gravel (land-won) production fluctuated, peaking at 6.2 thousand tonnes in 2016 before declining to 4.8 thousand tonnes in 2020. Igneous rock (16.9 thousand tonnes) and limestone and dolomite (1.3 thousand tonnes) were key extracted materials, along with sandstone (2.8 thousand tonnes). The production of talc remained low, falling from 5,000 tonnes in 2014 to just 1,000 tonnes in 2020, while silica sand production was recorded at 655,000 tonnes in 2018. Peat extraction was noted at 501,000 m<sup>3</sup> in 2014, with no further figures available. The report highlights Scotland's ongoing shift away from coal mining and the continued importance of aggregates and industrial minerals in construction and industry.

#### **Collation of the results of the 2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland**

The Collation Results 2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey Scotland report provides insights into the role of National Parks in the context of aggregate minerals in Scotland. It highlights that National Parks and National Scenic Areas together cover 21% of Scotland's land area, serving as important protected landscapes that balance conservation with limited development activities.

In terms of aggregate mineral sales, only 1.7% (0.36 million tonnes) of the total sales in Scotland came from National Parks and National Scenic Areas in 2019. Additionally, no

new planning permissions were granted for the extraction of sand, gravel, or crushed rock within National Parks during this period. This reflects the restrictive approach to mineral extraction in these protected areas, ensuring that landscape preservation and environmental protection remain a priority.

Despite this restriction, reserves of aggregates in both active and inactive sites within National Parks and National Scenic Areas accounted for 4% (5.2 million tonnes) of total reserves across Scotland. This indicates that while some extraction activities do occur within these areas, they are carefully managed and controlled to align with environmental regulations and conservation goals.

The report also highlights that National Parks and National Scenic Areas are not mutually exclusive from other designated conservation areas, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). This means that some sites within National Parks may also carry additional conservation protections, further limiting the scope of aggregate extraction activities.

### **Collation of the Results of the 2023 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Great Britain**

The Aggregate Minerals Survey 2023 provides a detailed overview of aggregate production, sales, reserves, and environmental impacts across Great Britain. For Scotland, total sales of primary aggregates in 2023 were reported at 21.7 Mt with Scotland accounting for around 13% of all UK aggregate sales. Scotland also held 26% of Great Britain's permitted reserves, with the Highlands (54%) and West Central Scotland (12%) containing the largest shares.

In environmentally designated areas, 1.7% of Scotland's aggregate sales (0.37 Mt) came from National Parks and National Scenic Areas (NSAs). While the report makes no site-specific mention of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, the Park is part of Scotland's National Parks and NSAs category, meaning its quarries contribute a small share of this total. Overall, extraction in these areas is limited due to their conservation importance, with most production concentrated outside the Park.

In summary, Scotland plays a significant role in UK aggregates supply, but within protected areas like Loch Lomond & The Trossachs, production is minimal, reflecting a balance between resource extraction and environmental protection.

#### **National Park context**

#### **Minerals - Construction Aggregates**

The National Park has 2 quarries and mines with planning permission:

##### *Cononish Gold and Silver Mine at Glen Cononish, Tyndrum:*

Opened in Nov 2020 and has its first full year of production in 2021. This mine is not currently operational, although the current care and maintenance period is understood to end during the summer months with production recommencing.

##### *Cambusmore quarry producing sand and gravel, at Callander:*

In Feb 2022 recent approval for the retention of existing quarry processing plant at expansion.

There are a number of historic quarries that previously quarried slate and stone (e.g. sandstone, puddingstone). There is a sand and gravel resource identified in Glen Loin and

various applications have been refused due to adverse impacts – particularly on the community and in relation to traffic generation.

Local Development Plans are required to support a 10-year landbank for construction aggregates. The key evidence informing this requirement is the 2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland, which provides data on the production, distribution, and reserves of crushed rock, sand, and gravel across Scotland as of that year. The survey indicates that, at the time, aggregate reserves were generally sufficient to meet local demand. However, the data is only available at the level of strategic plan areas and for Argyll and Bute, with no specific information provided for the National Park itself.

### **British Geological Survey Interactive Map**

The British Geological Survey mapping provides detailed mapping on mineral deposits across the National Park. This mapping will be used to inform development policy going forward.

## **Summary of Stakeholder Engagement**

As part of the Evidence Gathering process for the new Local Development Plan (LDP), the National Park Authority developed a suite of Topic Papers and Area Summaries to explore key planning themes and local issues across The Park. These documents form the technical and spatial foundation for the new LDP and were central to the targeted community engagement process between May and July.

Ten Topic Papers were drafted, aligning with the relevant policies in NPF4. These papers summarise national, regional, and local data, providing a detailed evidence base on subjects such as climate change, biodiversity, housing, infrastructure, and the rural economy. They were developed by National Park officers, incorporating input from key public bodies including SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot, Transport Scotland, and local authorities.

A draft of this topic paper was sent to:

- NatureScot
- SEPA
- Scottish Water
- Scottish Enterprise
- Crofting Commission
- Marine Scotland
- West Dunbartonshire Council
- Argyll and Bute Council
- Stirling Council
- Perth and Kinross Council

Six Area Summaries were also produced to provide a more accessible, place-based and spatial view of the evidence. These summaries incorporate mapped information alongside key content from registered Local Place Plans highlighting key opportunities, challenges, and priorities for specific areas within The National Park. The spatial presentation was intended to support more informed and locally relevant discussion during in-person workshops.



As part of the engagement activities, a series of in-person workshops were held in May and June 2025 across the National Park to present the Area Summaries and gather feedback directly from local community groups and stakeholders. To ensure wider participation, complementary online surveys were also made available, allowing people to review and comment on both the Topic Papers and Area Summaries over a six-week period (May – July 2025). In addition to public engagement, input was actively sought from key statutory agencies and partner organisations throughout the preparation process to help shape and strengthen the evidence base.

Summary of Responses	
Respondent	Summary of Comments and LLTNPA Response
Local Resident	<p>Flooding poses a major barrier to the rural economy in settlements such as Aberfoyle and Callander, leaving retail units unsold and at risk of dereliction, with knock-on impacts for tourism and local services.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> This issue has been noted and added to the narrative within the Evidence Report.</p>
Scottish Enterprise	<p>Scottish Enterprise initially responded via email and noted that Topic Paper 10 adequately addresses the economic policy context under Policy 26 but advises it should also include data on employment land use, take-up, and demand as required by Scottish Government guidance. On other related policies, SE had no further comments and considered the evidence sufficient to proceed to Local Development Plan production.</p> <p>Additionally, Scottish Enterprise responded to the updated paper via the online survey and were supportive of the topic paper. Their response stated that guidance recommends that the Local Development Plan Evidence Reports should include Business Land Audits. While this is not referenced in the Draft Topic Paper, it is recognised that, given the limited scale and nature of industrial land within the National Park, such an audit would not be practical. Instead, references to relevant policy documents are considered to provide sufficient context for progressing the LDP.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> The topic paper was updated based on the initial feedback and more detail was included on employment and business land use. Annual monitoring of LDP allocations is carried out alongside the review of planning applications for business, tourism, and other commercial developments, allowing progress to be measured against the LDP Outcomes. In addition, consultation with local authority economic development teams has provided up-to-date insights to further inform the assessment.</p>
SEPA	SEPA did not provide any additional comments to this paper.
Homes for Scotland	Homes for Scotland responded by stating that, amid the national Housing Emergency, future 10-year Local Development Plans must be based on robust evidence and

	<p>ongoing engagement with the homebuilding sector. They emphasised that while rural developments may be modest in scale, they are vital in sustaining local services and communities. With NPF4 aiming to encourage rural housing, Homes for Scotland highlighted the need for sufficient site allocations to support local populations and services, particularly given the decline in delivery from SME builders who have traditionally been central to rural housing provision.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> All comments from Homes for Scotland have been noted and will be considered as part of the preparation of the new Local Development Plan. The comments will also inform the final Housing papers within the Evidence Report.</p>
Rural Stirling Access Panel	<p>Rural Stirling Access Panel responded via the online survey and stated that the paper could be strengthened by giving greater attention to rural industries like agriculture, forestry, and fishing, and by addressing environmental concerns such as invasive species in freshwater aquaculture. It should also include data on accessible tourist accommodation and consider enhanced facilities, such as a Changing Places toilet at Balmaha. Concerns were raised about the transfer of community assets without accounting for future maintenance costs, and about community councils lacking the expertise to assess complex proposals, with village consultations not always being carried out equitably.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> The comments from Rural Stirling Access Panel have been noted and the paper has been edited to reflect these where possible. Specifically, the paper has been updated to include additional national policy documents which provide data on accessible tourism at a national level and the paper has also included The National Park's accessibility toolkit. Details on agriculture, forestry etc. are considered within Topic Papers 1 and 2.</p>
Crofting Commission	Crofting Commission did not respond to this paper
NatureScot	<p>The paper would benefit from clearer mapping and evidence, including brownfield site distribution, community-owned assets, community councils and land use for biodiversity, and green job data. More detail is needed on housing impacts from second homes, key visitor attractions, and pressures from the West Highland Way. Improved mapping of campgrounds, camping zones, and toilet provision is also recommended to better manage visitor pressures and infrastructure needs.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> The comments from NatureScot have been addressed where possible where appropriate, particularly a section added on long distance walking routes throughout the Park, including. It was decided to expand on NatureScot's request for a section on the West Highland Way to discuss the tourism impact of the number of the long-distance walking</p>

	<p>routes. The mapping has been improved where possible, however, a specific layer for brownfield mapping has not been included as this is covered by the mapping of the existing LDP allocations.</p>
Argyll and Bute Council Housing Department	<p>Overall the Housing Authority agreed with the evidence set out and provided detail on an updated Economic Strategy.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> The Argyll and Bute Economic Strategy was updated to the most recent 2023 version.</p>
Marine Planning Scotland	<p>Marine Planning Scotland provided additional policy and data sets to include. These include the Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture, Scottish National Adaptation Plan, Scottish Wild Salmon Strategy and SEPA Sea Lice Risk Assessment Framework.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> All policy documents and other suggested edits have been incorporated into the final version of the topic paper.</p>
British Geological Survey	<p>BGS requested that additional data and policy documents were added to the Minerals section of the paper – namely the 2023 Aggregate Mineral Survey for Great Britain.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> The additional data has been noted and where possible added to the paper as evidence.</p>
Scottish Water	<p>Scottish Water's response highlights its commitment to providing water and wastewater capacity for new developments, with mechanisms in place to increase capacity where needed. It stresses the importance of sustainable surface water management in both urban and rural developments and encourages early engagement with developers, especially in rural and tourism-related projects where infrastructure pressures are higher. Specific guidance is requested on when short-term lets or holiday homes require planning permission, as this may trigger reclassification to non-domestic accounts. Scottish Water also emphasises the need for partnership working to deliver blue-green infrastructure, manage seasonal tourism pressures, and support balanced economic growth within the National Park.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> All comments from Scottish Water have been noted and will be considered as part of the preparation of the new Local Development Plan.</p>
Kilmarnock Community Council	<p>Kilmarnock Community Council highlighted the rural economy's reliance on farming, smallholdings, tourism, and local businesses, noting existing facilities such as nurseries, riding stables, holiday cottages, and hospitality venues. They raised concerns about limited rail capacity, traffic pressures. KCC also urged the Plan to support farm diversification into business hubs, which could create local jobs, reduce</p>

commuting, and help retain working families to sustain schools and the local economy.

**Response:** Comments have been noted. However, as the comments received do not identify gaps in evidence, data, or information, but instead reflect views on requirements, it is considered that these are best addressed at the next stage during preparation of the Proposed Plan.

## Summary of Implication for the Proposed Plan

The implications of the evidence for the new Local Development Plan may be summarised as follows:

### Community Wealth Building

- Community Control of land and assets - The new Local Development Plan (LDP) should consider local policies that actively support community wealth building by supporting development that enables more community led management or ownership of land and assets.
- Identifying and protecting community assets - The new LDP should identify and map important community assets – this could be anything from community facilities, community owned assets and buildings and locally important areas of greenspace or buildings - that need to be protected. These should be identified through the Local Place Plans and further engagement with local communities.

### Business and Industry

- Support to business development - The LDP should support small-scale, low-carbon, and nature-based enterprises that align with net zero and climate resilience goals. This includes businesses in sustainable land use, biodiversity, local food, renewables, eco-tourism, and the circular economy. Policies should enable their growth in suitable locations, supporting local jobs, supply chains, and a just transition.
- Support to growing green jobs and skills - Addressing skills shortages should be a key consideration for the new Local Development Plan, particularly in supporting the transition to a low-carbon, nature-based economy. Planning policy can play an enabling role by identifying and allocating land or premises suitable for green businesses and social enterprises that focus on skills development in sectors such as renewable energy, land management, conservation, and tourism.
- Review of current LDP economic development sites - The evidence indicates that existing economic development sites within the National Park have largely remained undeveloped, with limited market demand. Where demand does exist, it is typically driven by local businesses and is modest in scale, often related to the growth or expansion of existing enterprises rather than large-scale new development. In light of this, the new Local Development Plan should consider deallocating or reallocating sites that have proven ineffective or are unlikely to be developed.

### City, Town, Local and Commercial Centres

- Settlement hierarchy - The new LDP should consider developing mapping to show the network of local centres across the National Park, illustrating settlement roles, connections, and activity hubs. This will inform the new LDP spatial strategy by looking at available infrastructure, transport, and services.

- Supporting town and village centres - The LDP should continue to prioritise town and village centres as community hubs for retail and service provision. It should protect their vitality and support flexible, mixed-use projects that help centres adapt and thrive.

## **Retail**

- Retail in towns and villages - The LDP should explore opportunities to facilitate small-scale, community-oriented retail development within town and village centres and ensure that infrastructure and spatial planning support the integration of these facilities into existing settlements.
- Mapping retail provision – The new LDP should use the mapping prepared for the Local Living dataset to identify retail gaps within settlements and key visitor areas. It should also map which adjoining settlements rely on specific facilities and assess transport connections to these locations, ensuring retail provision supports 20-minute neighbourhoods and sustainable local economies.

## **Rural Development**

- Development in the countryside - The LDP must align with NPF4 guidance to identify rural character, development pressures, community priorities, and economic needs per area. It should clarify areas where development (including farms, crofts and economic activity) is supported or restricted based on environmental sensitivity and local context.
- Mapping constraints to new development in defined countryside locations - The LDP could designate specific areas where economic development, particularly tourism-related, may be inappropriate due to high visitor pressure or environmental sensitivity.
- Supporting Community Wealth Building opportunities in the countryside - The LDP should tailor rural development policies to reflect local needs and opportunities, supporting community-led and social enterprise projects like small-scale retail and business units. It should also identify suitable areas for such development while applying stricter controls in environmentally sensitive locations.

## **Tourism**

- New tourism development locations - The LDP should promote sustainable tourism development that supports local communities and protects The Park's natural and cultural assets. This includes identifying appropriate locations for new visitor accommodation, attractions, and infrastructure, while managing tourism pressure in sensitive areas and some communities. The LDP may need to set criteria for assessing tourism proposals, particularly in high-demand or ecologically fragile areas, and ensure they contribute positively to local economic development, placemaking, and community wellbeing.
- Managing visitor accommodation for tourism uses only - The LDP should explore whether occupancy conditions (e.g. preventing year-round sole party occupancy for holiday lets) should be introduced to help manage the impact of tourism on permanent housing availability - particularly since NPF4 does not explicitly address this.
- Managing new self-catering in some villages - The New LDP should consider whether local policies are required that restrict new self-catering accommodation being built instead of new housing provision. Exceptions may be made for conversions, such as garages or garden developments, that do not displace existing homes where appropriate and not detrimental to residential amenity.
- Short Term Let Control Areas- To manage pressure from holiday lets, the National Park Authority could also consider establishing Short Term Let Control Areas in affected

locations. This requires careful consideration as it is a relatively new policy mechanism in Scotland and the impacts of introducing Short Term Let Areas in other parts of Scotland are still to be identified. Engagement with a range of stakeholders including communities and representatives from the local tourism sector will be required to inform this.

- Preventing loss of tourism accommodation - The LDP should support and protect tourism accommodation (for example hotels, guest houses, B&Bs) in towns and villages, as they are well-located near transport and amenities, provide community benefits such as cafés or restaurants, and support local jobs and social vitality.
- Expansion of rural businesses - The new Local Development Plan should establish clearer upper thresholds for business expansion, moving beyond reliance on the existing scale as the only benchmark. This approach would help prevent disproportionately large developments in countryside areas dependent on car-based travel and from altering the character of rural communities and landscapes. It should also include safeguards to manage cumulative or incremental expansion over time, ensuring growth remains proportionate and in keeping with the local context.
- New tourism visitor accommodation opportunities - The LDP should identify suitable locations for new tourism opportunities within the National Park and for a range of types of visitor accommodation.

### **Aquaculture**

- National Park environmental context - Consideration needs to be given as to whether the new LDP will align with the NPF4 policy for sustainable aquaculture. There is limited scope for aquaculture development within the National Park and therefore a bespoke policy should be considered.
- Alignment with the National Marine Plan - Support for aquaculture in the new LDP should align with the National Marine Plan, ensuring sustainability, minimal environmental impact, and compatibility with other land and marine uses. Proposals must also show community benefit and support climate and nature recovery goals.

### **Minerals**

- Safeguarding mineral resources – The new LDP should safeguard important mineral resources while ensuring extraction is sustainable and community sensitive. The LDP should identify key resources, set clear assessment criteria, and take a more restrictive approach - supporting extraction only where there's a clear national need, no alternative outside The Park, and alignment with conservation and community goals.
- Ecological considerations - In line with NPF4's policy, the new Local Development Plan should avoid mineral extraction or related development in sensitive ecological zones, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), ancient woodlands, peatlands, or other designated or high-value natural areas.

## **Statements of Agreement / Dispute**

There are no substantive areas of disagreement on the evidence in the paper. Feedback from respondents to the Topic Paper consultation have largely been addressed in the Evidence Report. NatureScot, Scottish Water and Scottish Enterprise have confirmed they are content with the paper.

## Appendix

Figure 1 – National Park Partnership Plan Development Strategy

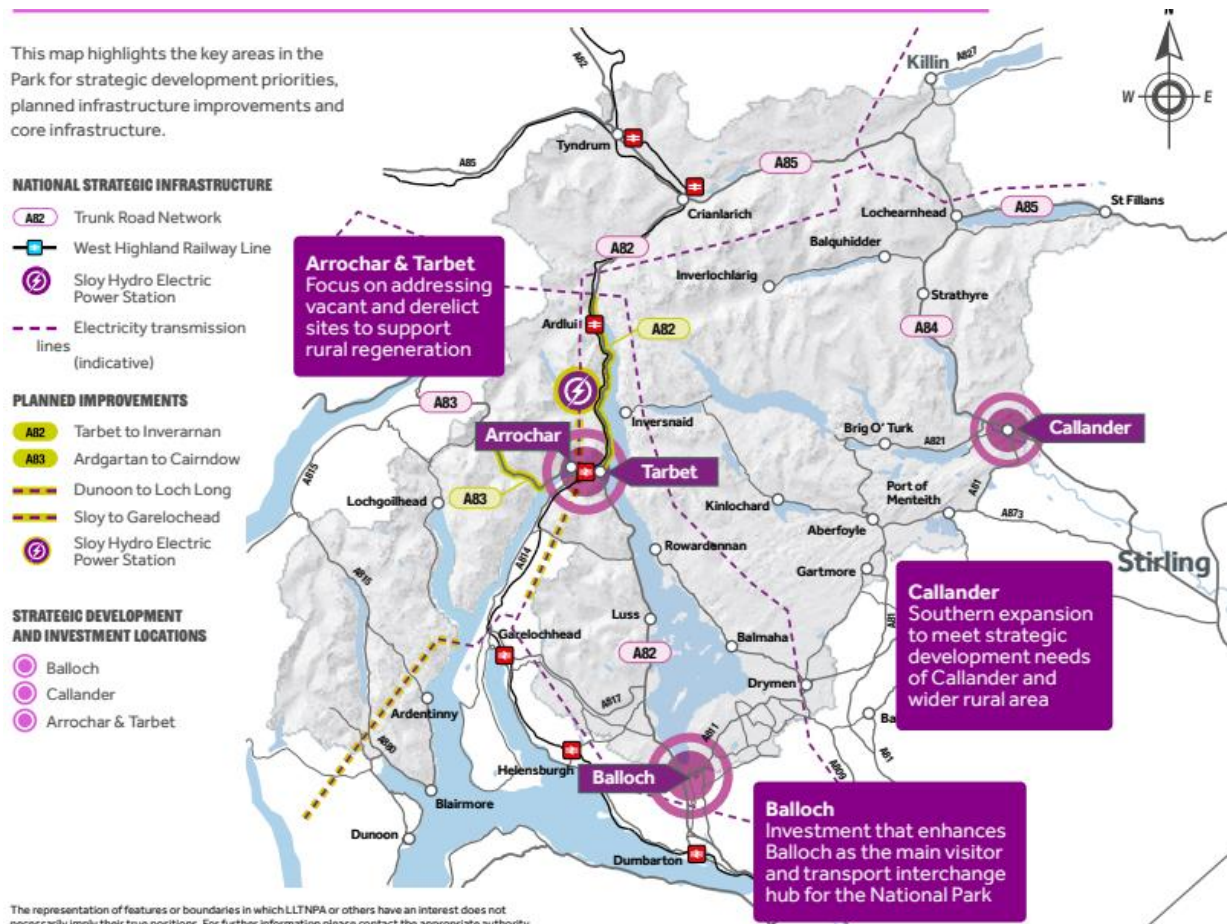




Figure 2 – Main Settlements in The National Park

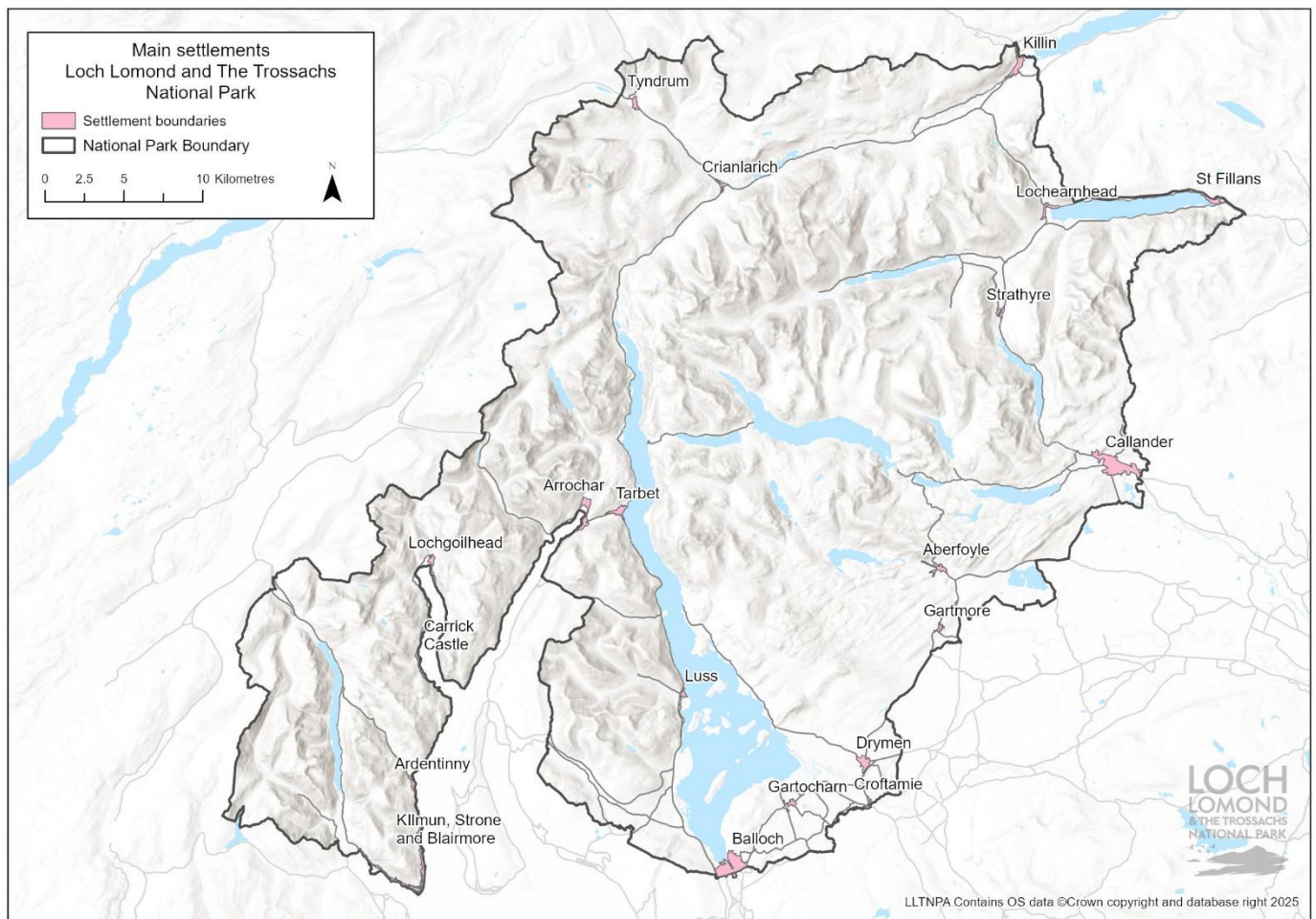




Figure 3 – Urban – Rural Classification

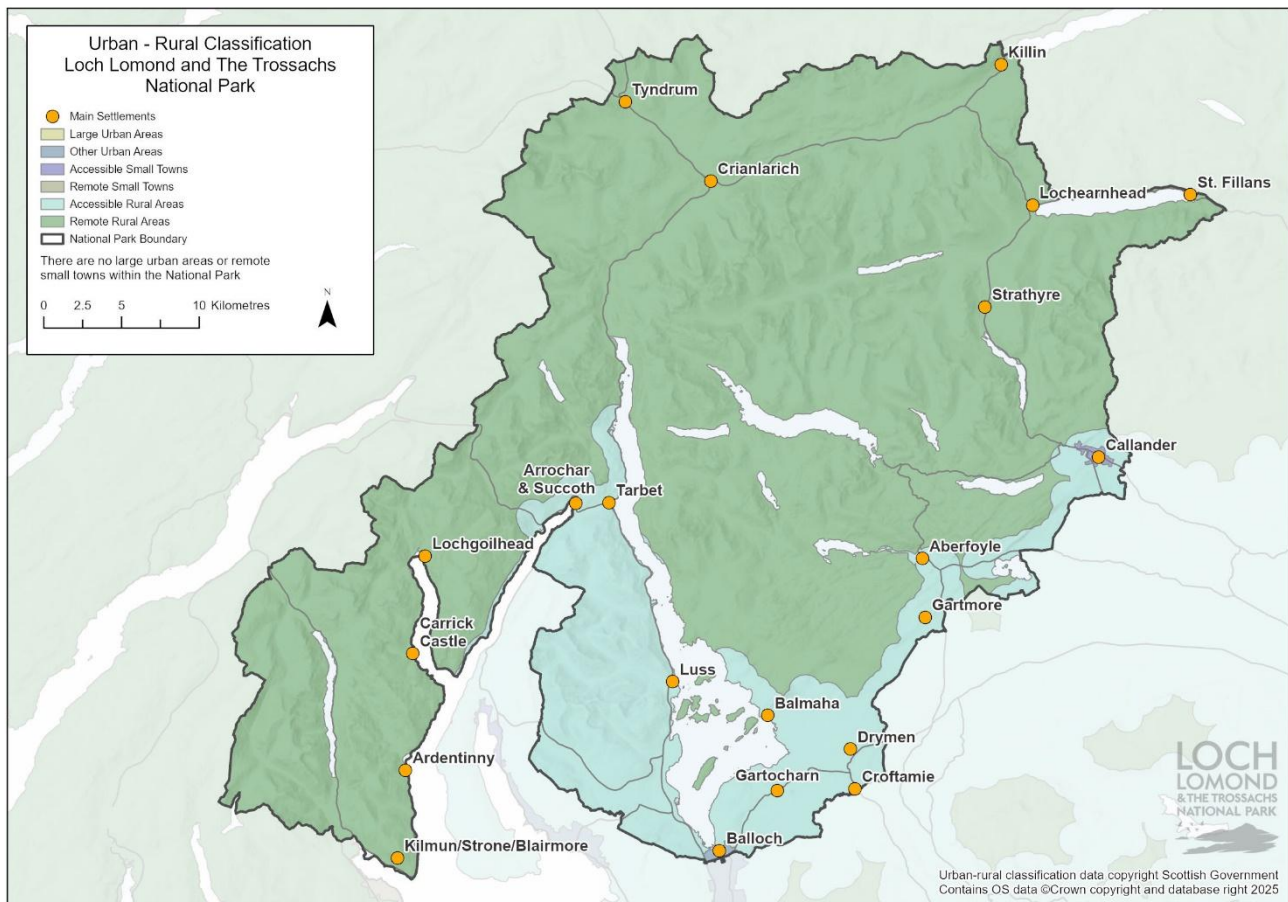


Figure 4 – Tourism Approvals and Completions between 2017 - 2021

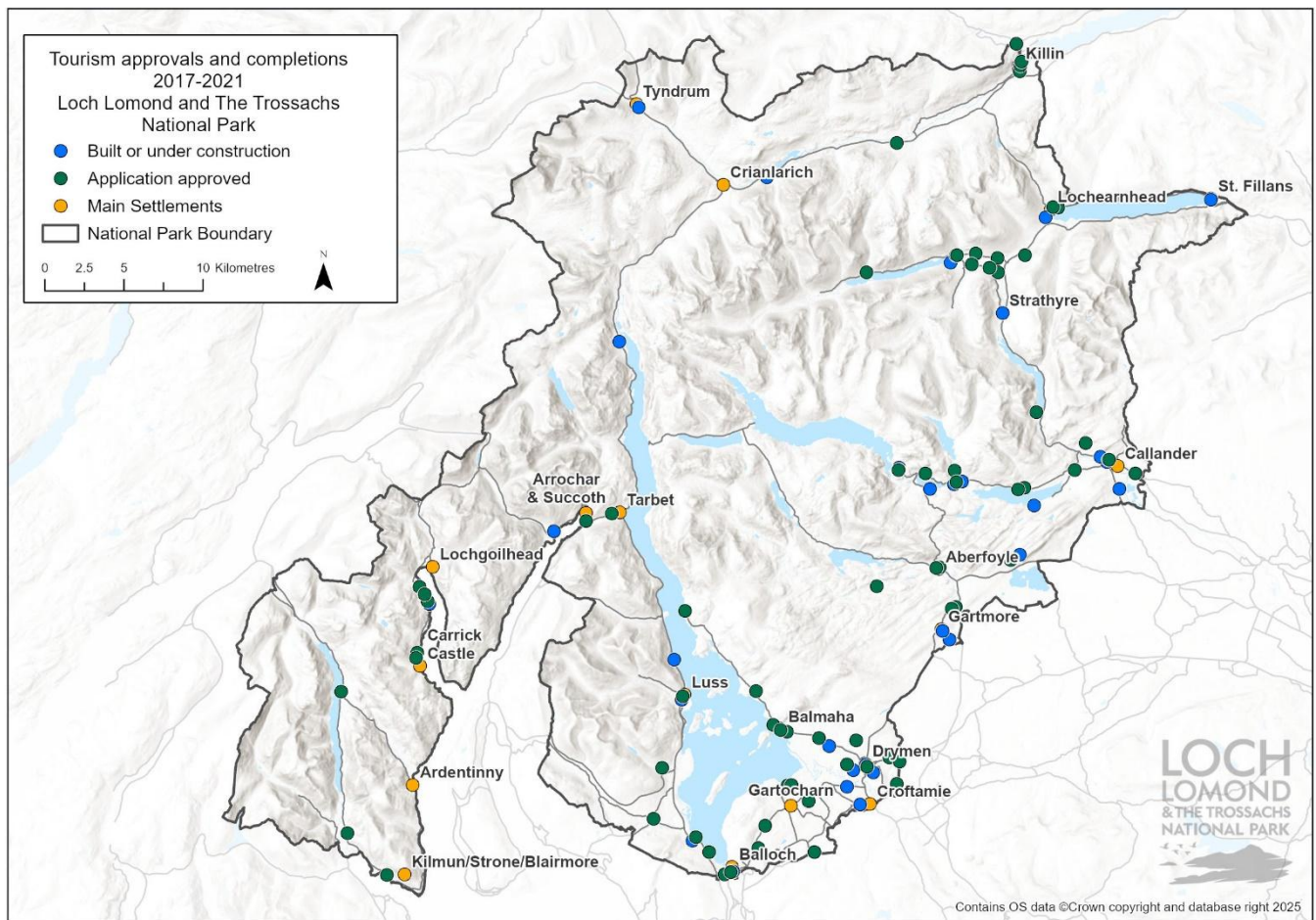


Figure 5 – Camping and Motorhome Sites across Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park

