



New Local Development Plan

Appendix 1: Evidence Report Part A

National Park Authority Board Meeting
Monday 10th November 2025

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report and legislative requirements

The purpose of this Evidence Report is to set out the evidence that has been gathered and collated to inform the preparation of the new Local Development Plan (LDP). A LDP is a statutory plan that shows how to manage the development and use of land in the long-term public interest. The LDP forms part of the development plan for the National Park which comprises the National Planning Framework (prepared by the Scottish Ministers and which covers all of Scotland) and the LDP for the National Park. The National Park is described in Section Two of this report and the roles and responsibilities of the National Park Authority, also acting as a Planning Authority, are described in Section Three.

This Evidence Report precedes the preparation of the new LDP for the National Park. It is a new requirement under the implementation of the 2019 Planning (Scotland) Act and marks the end of the evidence gathering stage of the new plan making process involving information gathering and stakeholder engagement.

It provides a summary of the relevant baseline data and information needed to establish what it is that we need to plan for to inform a deliverable, place-based, and people focussed LDP. It also shows our interpretation of the evidence, alongside stakeholders views and comments, and explains what we believe this evidence means for preparing the new plan by way of key issues and implications.

There is no prescribed statutory format for Evidence Reports however the Scottish Government provides a suggested template and style which we have followed. The way in which we have structure the evidence into a set of Topic Papers and Place Profiles is explained in Section Four. In collating and presenting the evidence, we have strived to be proportionate and to highlight the key implications for the new LDP, alongside any evidence gaps or areas of stakeholder agreement or dispute. This is summarised in a Position Statement in Section Five. There are not considered to be any areas of dispute on the evidence base. Links and document referencing are provided in the Topic Papers.

In preparing the Evidence Report we have engaged and consulted widely, building on extensive engagement either already underway or recently undertaken to inform the preparation of the new National Park Partnership Plan and Local Place Plans. Significant outreach has been undertaken over recent years to better understand the needs and aspirations of different user groups and communities of interest that either have a strong connection to the National Park or seek to build one. The National Park Partnership Plan and Local Place Plans are explained further in Section Three below and information on how we engaged is summarised in Section Six.

By statute, we were required to seek and have regard to the views of the following stakeholders:

- The public at large
- Children and young people, and;
- Key Agencies (Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Water, Scottish Enterprise (within its jurisdiction), Highlands and Islands Enterprise (within its jurisdiction), Regional Transport Partnerships (within relevant areas), Crofting Commission (in crofting counties and designated areas) and Health Boards)

We also show how we have sought the views of the following specific stakeholders, and how these have been taken into account in this Evidence Report:

- The public at large
- Children and young people
- Disabled people
- Gypsies and Travellers
- Community Councils

Finally, Section Seven reflects on the success of the current LDP and includes consideration of the achievement of its outcomes, allocated development sites, the spatial strategy used to guide and determine new development applications, alongside listing our lessons learned and emerging ideas and aspirations for preparing the new LDP.

1.2 Next steps

Once the Evidence Report has been submitted to the Scottish Government for the Gate Check Assessment, we will launch a Call for Sites and Ideas process. The purpose of this stage is to invite individuals, community groups, landowners, developers, and other stakeholders to propose specific sites or ideas within the National Park that they believe should be considered for future development, protection, or other land use designations.

Site assessments will then be undertaken, alongside all remaining sites already identified for development in the current LDP and in Local Place Plans. The site assessment process is a core element in shaping the new LDP. A detailed methodology has been developed and is included as part of this Evidence Report and being submitted to the Scottish Government as part of the Gate Check.

The next phase is to begin preparing the new LDP – called the Proposed Plan. It is expected that the new LDP will look very different to the current one, with less policies and more spatial and place specific content. It will focus on telling a clear and compelling story about the future of the National Park that meets the needs and aspirations of everyone with an interest in it (acting in the long-term public interest), through place-based and delivery focussed lens.

Details on these stages and revised timescales (updated September 2025) can be found in our Development Plan Scheme.

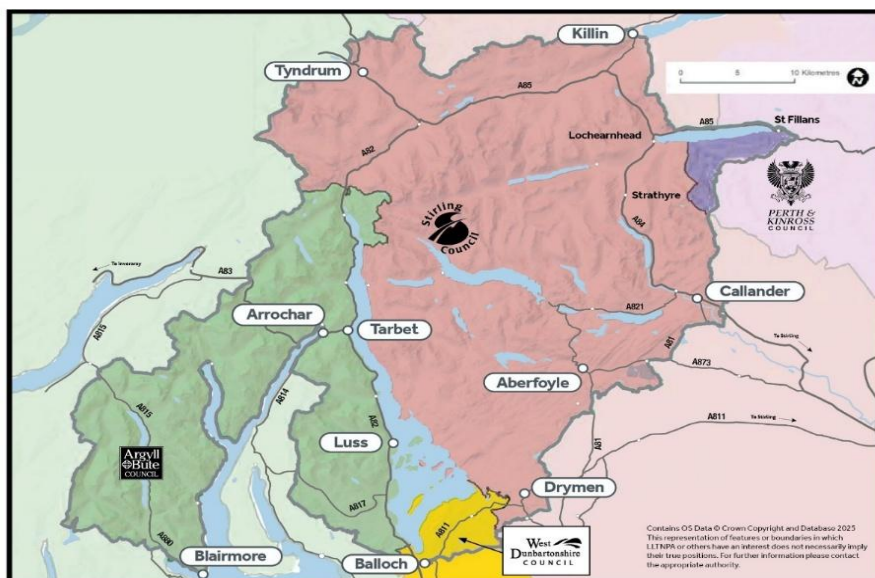
2. Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park

2.1 The place we are preparing a new plan for

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is one of Scotland's most iconic landscapes. Renowned and valued for its special landscape qualities and vast recreational resource, it contrasts from rolling lowland landscapes in the south to high mountains in the north, and has many lochs, rivers, forests and woodlands. It features many sites and designations of both national and international significance with 67 sites designated for their special nature conservation value.

However, nature in the National Park is facing serious challenges, including peatland degradation, overgrazing, declining ecological condition of designated sites and the spread of invasive non-native species - all compounded by the growing impacts of climate change such as increased rainfall, flooding and temperature extremes.

With an estimated population of 14,718 (in 2018) living across 22 settlements, alongside several smaller and more dispersed rural communities and in the countryside, the National Park covers 1,865 square kilometres (720 square miles) as shown in Map One below. Callander is the biggest town with a population of approximately 3,700 and range of services and facilities including the only Secondary School within the National Park boundary. The rest of the villages are smaller in size with a more limited range of services and facilities. These have a dependency either on Callander or on towns and villages surrounding the National Park.



Map One Location of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park

The National Park's population is both declining and aging with projections showing a continued loss of children and population of working age and a swelling of population over pensionable age, especially aged 75+. The SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) shows communities at both ends of the deprivation scale in the National Park, with some neighbouring areas being among some of the most deprived in Scotland showing income, employment and health as key contributing factors.

50% of Scotland's population live within one hour's travel time of the National Park, and it is within easy reach of many people. The most up to date visitor information reveals that there were 4.5M visitor days in 2024 and evidence suggests that visitor numbers are increasing. Tourism, farming and forestry are the backbone of the rural economy with growing trends in hybrid and home workers. A number of important walking routes pass through the National Park, including the West Highland Way (a route completed by 40,000+ walkers every year) and a further six of Scotland's 'Great Trails'.

2.2 Key challenges facing the National Park

Despite the area being a National Park, there are some 'uncomfortable truths' that require to be tackled. The National Park Partnership Plan (2024) (explained in Section 3) identifies the following as just some of the key challenges facing the area:

- a. Nearly a fifth of designated sites for nature are in decline,
- b. Invasive non-native species remain widespread,
- c. Approximately 50% of water bodies are not in good ecological condition,
- d. Over 50,000 hectares of peatlands may currently be degraded, releasing greenhouse gases, and contributing towards climate warming,
- e. Winter rainfall in Scotland will increase by 8-18% over the coming decades and rainfall events will become more intense all year round, with an increase in flooding,
- f. 79% of visitors arrive by car and 73% explore the area by car (according to a 2019/20 visitor survey). If there is no intervention, car-based travel is predicted to increase nationally by 40% by 2037,
- g. The National Parks population has a lower proportion of young and working age people compared to the national average,
- h. The National Park is one of the most expensive places in Scotland to buy a house and
- i. 75% of National Park households cannot afford average house prices and 43% cannot afford lower quartile value house prices. (Housing research 2022).

2.3 A National asset

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) provides a set of regional spatial planning priorities for five broad regions of Scotland which are to inform the preparation of regional spatial strategies (RSS, explained in Section 3) and LDPs by planning authorities. The National Park is identified as straddling both the Central and North areas. It is included in the spatial

strategy for the Central area in the priorities listed in the ‘sustainable places’ section on page 132 of NPF4, which identifies that it 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. The National Park will continue to support the quality of life and health of the urban population and its future priorities include new infrastructure provision to provide a quality visitor experience and support people to connect with nature, as well as a greener tourism sector supported by innovative low carbon transport solutions. Long distance active travel and rail routes have untapped potential to provide sustainable tourism solutions. The area’s communities can adapt to support more localised living and working opportunities, with improved digital connectivity and affordable housing. More integrated planning and land management offers opportunities to support land use change and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The approach also links with and relates to the action area to the north.”

National Parks are a part of the nation’s identity and play an important role in delivering benefits for Scotland as a whole. They have the potential to significantly contribute towards Scotland achieving key policy outcomes, particularly in relation to nature, climate and health and to act as exemplars of thriving places. The National Park Partnership Plan sets out how Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park can help Scotland deliver on national outcomes around nature and climate as well as supporting people and the economy.

3. Planning Authority and a National Park Authority: Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Planning in the National Park and other statutory functions

Planning in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is different to all other areas of Scotland (including the Cairngorms National Park). The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 sets out our responsibilities including full statutory planning and access functions. We are responsible for preparing, consulting and adopting a LDP as well as determining planning applications and undertaking development monitoring and enforcement action. Our [Planning and Access Committee](#) normally meets regularly to consider certain planning applications, enforcement actions, policy papers, legal agreements and access matters.

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park forms part of four local authorities. These are Stirling (the largest area of the National Park), followed by Argyll and Bute, West Dunbartonshire and Perth and Kinross. These authorities provide all other statutory functions such as housing, education, building control roads, parks and open space and the National Park Authority (NPA) works very closely with them.

The NPA is an executive Scottish Government [non-departmental public body](#) (also known as an NDPB) and it has a Board made up of 17 Board Members. In terms of composition, five

Board Members are elected from the communities in the National Park and twelve appointed by the Scottish Ministers, with six of these being nominated by the four Local Authorities that cover the National Park.

The NPA Board agree the overall direction of the NPA which is to ensure that the National Park statutory aims are collectively achieved in relation to the National Park in a co-ordinated way.

3.2 National Park Aims

The aims of the National Park are set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 and are:

- j. To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area
- k. To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area
- l. To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public and
- m. To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

These aims are to be pursued collectively. However, if there is conflict between the first aim, the conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage, and any others, greater weight must be given to the first aim (under Section 9(6) of the National Park (Scotland) Act 2000). This is often referred to as the Sandford Principle.

These aims underpin all planning and development activity within the National Park, ensuring that growth and change are balanced with the need to protect and enhance the area's unique environment and heritage.

The Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill is currently progressing through the Parliamentary process and includes new statutory provisions for National Parks which include adjustments to the four statutory aims and strengthening the responsibility of public bodies to have regard to the aims and to deliver National Park Plans. The current timeline, as of October, is that it will be an Act of Parliament during 2026. This is not anticipated to result in any significant changes to the process to prepare the new LDP and close attention is being given to carefully watching the progression of this Bill through Parliament.

3.3 National Park Partnership Plan

The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 requires the National Park Authority to prepare a 'National Park Plan' to set out how the National Park is to be managed with all public partner agencies to ensure the statutory aims of the National Park are achieved in a coordinated way. We call the National Park Plan our National Park *Partnership* Plan (NPPP), since it is focussed on coordinating action, collaboration and partnership working.

The NPPP for 2024-2029 was approved by Scottish Ministers and published in 2024. It establishes a long-term vision for the National Park to 2045 to be a '**thriving place** that is **nature positive** and **carbon negative**'. To achieve this vision, a set of nine outcomes are identified for 2045, by which time the National Park should be:

- n. A natural carbon sink
- o. A restored landscape for nature
- p. An exemplar of regenerative land use
- q. A place for all to enjoy safely and responsibly
- r. A place with high quality visitor infrastructure
- s. A place with an inclusive low carbon travel network
- t. A greener, more diverse rural economy
- u. A place with more resilient rural communities and
- v. A place with a more responsive approach to new development

These nine long term outcomes for the National Park up to 2045 provide the strategic direction and framework for the new LDP, as explained further below alongside the role and relationships of the various plans needed in the National Park.

3.4 Relationship between the Local Development Plan and the National Park Partnership Plan

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended by the 2019 Planning (Scotland) Act 2019) requires planning authorities to prepare two types of plans - LDPs and Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS). RSS's are different to LDPs and are intended to provide strategic guidance for regional areas (which could be one local authority area or more that are combined to form a bigger region). Guidance on what constitutes a region and on how to prepare a RSS is yet to be published, and at the moment the Scottish Government requires that all planning authorities are to focus on preparing new LDPs.

An indicative RSS was prepared in 2020 and submitted to the Scottish Government. Whilst this is just for the National Park area it includes consideration of cross boundary issues for the wider region within which the National Park is set. This links particularly with the Forth Valley area (including Stirling, Clackmannan and Falkirk Local Authority areas) where stakeholders considered that wider catchment-scale working could help support climate resilience, enhance natural capital and decarbonisation of the region and support the rural economy through tourism. Discussions with the Glasgow and Clyde Valley region also highlighted the strategic role of the National Park in relation to central Scotland (50% of Scotland's population is within one hour of the National Park) and the opportunities this presents for health, wellbeing and inclusion. The indicative RSS helped inform preparation of the NPPP.

The National Park Partnership plan (NPPP) is not a statutory planning document however it is considered that the NPPP is potentially very similar in content to what a future Regional

Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the National Park might look like, in that it already identifies the areas strategic development and infrastructure needs and priorities, as well as the general locations for these. This level of strategic information forms part of the evidence base for the new LDP and will inform its more detailed spatial strategy. There was extensive engagement undertaken to help prepare the NPPP (and stakeholder engagement undertaken to prepare the indicative RSS) and this also has informed the evidence base and our understanding of key issues that the new LDP must help address and plan for.

Although a standalone statutory document, the new LDP will therefore be a key delivery tool to help deliver the NPPP long-term outcomes for the National Park. To help to do this, the NPPP identifies a set of objectives and policies to guide decision making as well as a series of actions needed over 2024-2029. A summary of these can be found [here](#) on page 49 of the NPPP. A separate section has been added to the templates used for each topic paper in this Evidence Report at Section Eight to identify specific NPPP implications.

The new LDP will help deliver for the NPPP vision elements of a *thriving place* that is *carbon negative* and *nature positive*. These are considered to closely reflect the three themes of NPF4 of sustainable places, liveable places and productive places, however there are some differences between where topics have been grouped under each core theme in each document. However, overall, it is considered that the NPPP aligns to NPF4's long term spatial strategy and set of national planning policies. Some of the Topic Papers identify the potential requirement for bespoke local policies to either add local variation or further details to the application of certain NPF4 policies to reflect National Park circumstances. The need for policy variation will be considered and justified at Proposed Plan stage.

3.5 Land use and Regional Land Use Framework

A central and cross cutting theme underpinning the whole of the NPPP is land use. The NPPP seeks to support more regenerative land use and create more sustainable land use management within the National Park, as it is recognised that changes to land use and increased investment in natural capital can help secure a range of private, public and community benefits. Regenerative land use means managing land in ways that restore nature, such as improving soil health, planting native species, increasing biodiversity and supporting sustainable livelihoods for communities.

The NPPP identifies that one of the ways this could be done is through facilitating a new Regional Land Use Partnership (RLUP) to work with the NPA to prepare a Regional Land Use Framework (RLUF). The intention is to establish more partnership working through the RLUP to ensure collaborative identification of land use change objectives, priorities and opportunities across the National Park.

A RLUF is a framework tool to guide how land is used and managed across a specific region in a coordinated, sustainable, and integrated way. The framework's aim is to balance economic, environmental, and social objectives to make best use of Scotland's land in the

face of challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and competing land use demands. It is a place-based, locally led approach considering the specific natural, cultural and socio-economic characteristics of a region.

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is currently a Scottish Government pilot 'region' to test how RLUPs and RLUFs could work in terms of roles, outcomes, processes, governance and funding. This is of relevance to the new LDP and how we prepare the (growing) suite of plans, strategies and frameworks for the National Park area.

3.6 Relationship between the Local Development Plan, National Park Partnership Plan and Regional Land Use Framework

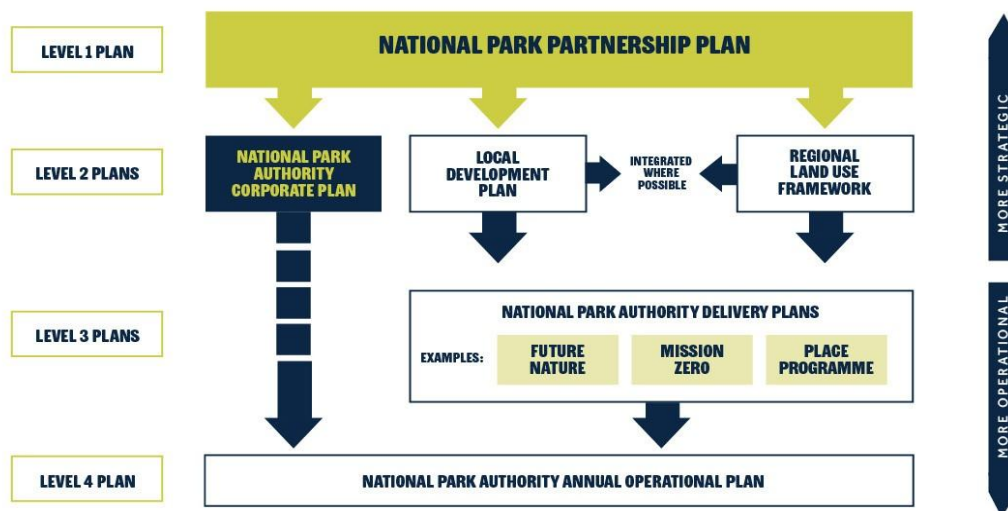
As stated above, there are now potentially several plans and strategies that will be required for the National Park that support delivery of the NPPP and provide spatial land use information. It is likely that some of the content of these plans and strategies will overlap and the approach established when preparing the NPPP was to try to streamline and simplify our plan making processes as far as possible. This is to help avoid the potential for over consultation with stakeholders and to also ensure we manage resources efficiently.

Therefore, where possible the approach will be to try to combine plans, for example the NPPP also potentially acting as the RSS and exploring if the new LDP can incorporate the RLUF (or aspects of it). This will be subject to being able to comply with any existing and forthcoming statutory regulations regarding the status of these plans and strategies, and the process, governance and implementation of these plans and strategies.

The aspiration is to include as much information on land use in the new LDP as possible given its significance for climate and nature. Ideally, we will be able to continue to engage on this, to enable consideration of land use changes with development and infrastructure needs along with any associated social and economic needs and opportunities stemming from this. This includes supporting new job creation, nature tourism, low-carbon development, access to nature and supporting land management practices that contribute to climate and biodiversity goals.

Support for progressing towards this integrated approach has been shaped through early engagement with communities, land managers, key agencies, and stakeholders and it has generally received positive feedback. The potential relationship between the LDP, NPPP and RLUF is shown in Figure One below.

Figure One: Relationship between the National Park Partnership Plan and the Local Development Plan



3.7 Local Place Plans

As referred to above, Local Place Plans form an important element in the process to prepare the new LDP. The National Park has proactively supported communities to prepare Local Place Plans (LPPs) through our [Local Place Plan programme of work](#) recognising their potential to support thriving communities and NPPP outcomes.

A formal invitation to prepare LPPs was issued in 2022 and support has been provided to communities in various ways including in-kind technical assistance with mapping, engagement processes and planning support and guidance. This support has been led by our Sustainable Community Advisers and supported by planners from our Communities and Place Planning team. A small amount of funding was also offered to allow communities to commission their own specialist support in recognition of differing levels of volunteer capacity to undertake a LPP process between communities. Training events, workshops and advisory groups were established to help build capacity and ensure communities felt empowered to think broadly about climate, nature, land use and local enterprise as these are all key areas identified in the NPPP where communities can lead local led action and create local wealth building. This approach has helped foster stronger relationships between the National Park Authority and local community organisations, particularly local Community Development Trusts and Community Councils.

LPPs have informed the LDP evidence base and provided rich local community level information. Where available, LPPs also informed the development of the NPPP, highlighting important and shared common issues for communities including climate, transport and housing as key priorities. There are now 13 LPPs registered and information from LPPs has

been summarised in the place topic papers, whilst insights from them has also helped to shape the Topic Papers.

LPP's will be used to inform preparation of the new LDP. The NPPP also identifies opportunities for communities through community wealth building, asset transfers and green finance initiatives and LPPs offer a transparent and inclusive way to help influence, stimulate and guide these activities. While some challenges remain, such as varying degrees of community capacity, it is hoped that there will soon be a full suite of LPPs for the National Park. Within the National Park context, and given the nature of its smaller rural communities, LPPs have been both an empowering process for communities and a chance for NPA community advisers and planners to work with community representatives, helping to build a greater understanding of community views, issues and aspirations for the new LDP.

4. Evidence gathering - Key topics for consideration and meeting legislative planning requirements

4.1 How we have gathered and presented the evidence in 10 Topic Papers

To break the gathered evidence up into manageable blocks, we have created 10 Topic Papers by grouping the most closely related national planning policies of NPF4 (see Table One below). Each of these 10 Topic Papers aims to proportionately summarise relevant national, regional and local evidence and information for the given topic area. NPF4 Policy 8: Green belts has been excluded as there are no green belts within or located close to the National Park and as green belts have never arisen as an issue requiring consideration.

Table One: Topic papers and NPF4 Policy groupings as relevant to the National Park context

Topic paper 1: Climate and Land Use	Topic paper 2: Biodiversity, Natural Places, and Forestry, Woodland and Trees	Topic paper 3: Infrastructure First	Topic paper 4: Flooding, Water Management and Blue and Green infrastructure	Topic paper 5: Energy, and Heat and Cooling
1. Tackling the Climate and Nature Crisis 2. Climate Mitigation and Adaptation 5. Soils 10. Coastal Development Land Use	3. Biodiversity 4. Natural Places 6. Forestry, Woodland and Trees	18. Infrastructure First 24. Digital Infrastructure	22. Flood Risk and Water Management 20. Blue and Green Infrastructure	11. Energy 19. Heat and Cooling

Topic paper 6: Sustainable Transport	Topic paper 7: Housing	Topic paper 8: Living Well Locally	Topic paper 9: Cultural Heritage and Place	Topic paper 10: Rural Economy
13. Sustainable Transport	16. Quality Homes 17. Rural Homes	15. Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods 23. Health and Safety 9. Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings 21. Play, recreation and sport 12. Zero Waste	14. Design, Quality and Place 7. Historic Assets and Places 31. Culture and Creativity	29. Rural Development 30. Tourism 28. Retail 27. City, town, local and commercial centres 26. Business and Industry 32. Aquaculture 33. Minerals 25. Community Wealth Building

Each of the Topic Papers has the same format:

- A list of the relevant sections of the Planning Act (and any other relevant legislation and statutory requirements),
- Links to the evidence that informs that Topic Paper,
- Context of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and the National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP)
- Summary of the selected evidence for that Topic Paper;
- Implications that the evidence presents for the preparation of the new LDP
- Summary of stakeholder engagement and
- Statement of agreement/dispute.

The Topic Papers have been prepared with advice and comments incorporated from public bodies such as SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot, Transport Scotland and the Local Authorities that cover the National Park. Where data or information has not been available, is incomplete or currently in the process of being finalised, this has been highlighted in the Topic Paper and where relevant this will be actioned for the Proposed Plan stage.

A summary of the key implications arising from the ten topic papers and six area summaries is provided in Section 5.

4.2 Place Topic Papers for six proposed sub-areas

As part of the evidence-gathering stage for the new LDP, six Place Profiles were prepared for sub-areas of the National Park to provide a locally nuanced understanding of place. These are included in Section 5 and reflect distinct geographic areas, settlements and the functional relationships between these, particularly in respect of shared services, facilities and transport

links. Each Place Profile draws on a mix of data, policy context and community insights gleaned from registered Local Place Plans so far.

The profiles were designed to support engagement by presenting spatial information alongside known key issues and opportunities specific to each sub-area. This was intended to help stakeholders to consider and share feedback on any information gaps or errors. They were also intended to test if these six sub-areas represent easily identifiable and relatable geographic levels upon which a 'place based' approach can be developed when preparing the spatial strategy for the new LDP (and one where stakeholders will collaborate effectively to drive and support delivery).

It is important to note that the Place Profiles are a high-level point to evidence, not a detailed map or 'plan' that includes everything in the same level of detail. These papers supplement the other Evidence Report Topic Papers, and direct readers to those papers, rather than repeat them.

In the engagement we stated that we would not update these Area Summaries for the Evidence Report, and that feedback we received on them, either in-person or via the online survey, would be incorporated as relevant into the Evidence Report and updates to the Topic Papers. We have however made minor changes, relating largely to correcting and/or updating minor or factual points, and these are detailed in the table below. Feedback on wider matters is covered in the updates to Topic Papers and the full Evidence Report.

4.3 Evidence Base Spatial Map based data

Two interactive maps have been developed and form part of the Evidence base for the new LDP. These are for the [LDP Evidence base spatial data](#) and the [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#).

The maps should be used in conjunction with the written Evidence Report. They are live interactive maps and the information displayed may change over time as we obtain additional or new data.

The maps contain a wide range of spatial datasets from both the National Park Authority and a number of partner organisations including Scottish Government, NatureScot and Scottish Forestry and SEPA.

4.4 Section 15(5) Matters: Key characteristics and needs of the National Park

The Evidence Report must address, as identified in Section 15(5) of The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 our views on the following:

- The principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage, and environmental characteristics of the district.
- The principal purposes for which land is used.
- The size, composition, health, and distribution of the population.
- The housing needs of the population, including the needs of students, older people, and disabled people.
- The availability of land for housing, including for older and disabled people.
- The desirability of allocating land for resettlement.
- The health and education needs of the population and the likely effects of development on these needs.
- The extent of rural depopulation.
- The capacity of education services.
- The desirability of maintaining cultural venues and facilities.
- The infrastructure of the district (communications, transport, drainage, water, energy, health care, education facilities), and how it is used.
- Any anticipated changes in the above matters

Table Two below shows the relevant Topic Papers that these matters are addressed in.

Table Two: Section 15(5) Matters: Key characteristics and needs of the National Park

Section 15(5) Matter	Topic paper(s) - where the evidence sits
The principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Paper 1: Climate Change & Land Use • Topic Paper 2: Biodiversity, Natural Places, Forestry, Woodlands & Trees • Topic Paper 4: Flooding, Water Management & Blue-Green Infrastructure • Topic Paper 5: Energy, Heat & Cooling • Topic Paper 6: Sustainable Transport • Topic Paper 8: Living Well Locally • Topic Paper 9: Cultural Heritage & Place
The principal purposes for which the land is used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Paper 1: Climate Change & Land Use • Topic Paper 4: Flooding, Water Management & BGI • Topic Paper 5: Energy, Heat & Cooling • Topic Paper 8: Living Well Locally
The size, composition, health and distribution of the population of the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Paper 3: Infrastructure First • Topic Paper 5: Energy, Heat & Cooling • Topic Paper 6: Sustainable Transport • Topic Paper 7: Housing • Topic Paper 8: Living Well Locally • Topic Paper 10: Rural Economy
The housing needs of the population of the area (including students, older people and disabled people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Paper 5: Energy, Heat & Cooling • Topic Paper 7: Housing • Topic Paper 10: Rural Economy

The availability of land in the district for housing (including for older people and disabled people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Paper 7: Housing • Topic Paper 8: Living Well Locally
The desirability of allocating land for the purposes of resettlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Paper 7: Housing
The health needs of the population and the likely effects of development/use of land on those needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Paper 3: Infrastructure First • Topic Paper 4: Flooding, Water Management & BGI • Topic Paper 5: Energy, Heat & Cooling • Topic Paper 7: Housing • Topic Paper 8: Living Well Locally
The education needs of the population and likely effects of development/use of land on those needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Paper 3: Infrastructure First • Topic Paper 8: Living Well Locally
The extent of rural areas with substantial population decline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Paper 7: Housing • Topic Paper 8: Living Well Locally • Topic Paper 10: Rural Economy
The capacity of education services in the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Paper 3: Infrastructure First • Topic Paper 8: Living Well Locally
The desirability of maintaining an appropriate number and range of cultural venues/facilities (incl. live music)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Paper 9: Cultural Heritage & Place
The infrastructure of the district (comms, transport, drainage, water/energy, health care, education)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Paper 3: Infrastructure First • Topic Paper 1: Climate Change & Land Use • Topic Paper 4: Flooding, Water Management & BGI • Topic Paper 5: Energy, Heat & Cooling • Topic Paper 6: Sustainable Transport • Topic Paper 8: Living Well Locally • Topic Paper 10: Rural Economy
How that infrastructure is used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Paper 3: Infrastructure First • Topic Paper 1: Climate Change & Land Use • Topic Paper 4: Flooding, Water Management & BGI • Topic Paper 5: Energy, Heat & Cooling • Topic Paper 6: Sustainable Transport

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Paper 8: Living Well Locally • Topic Paper 10: Rural Economy
Any change which the planning authority thinks may occur in relation to any of the matters above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Paper 3: Infrastructure First • Topic Paper 2: Biodiversity, Natural Places, Forestry, Woodlands & Trees • Topic Paper 1: Climate Change & Land Use • Topic Paper 5: Energy, Heat & Cooling • Topic Paper 6: Sustainable Transport • Topic Paper 7: Housing • Topic Paper 8: Living Well Locally • Topic Paper 9: Cultural Heritage & Place • Topic Paper 10: Rural Economy

5. **Position Statement: Summary of implications for the Proposed Plan, Stakeholder agreements and our view on the sufficiency of the evidence**

This section summarises the key implications arising from the evidence that will inform preparation of the Proposed Plan (the new LDP). Please note that throughout consultation, and in this report, we refer to the Proposed Plan as the ‘new LDP’, this is to help our audiences understand the various plans that we prepare for the National Park.

Each of the ten topic papers in Section Eight are summarised below to provide a high-level overview of the key implications specific to the National Park. Information on data sources and links are included in the Topic Papers to allow brevity and ease of reading in this section. At the end of each topic summary there is also a summary of stakeholder views on the sufficiency of the evidence, a summary of how stakeholder engagement has strengthened the evidence base and a summary of the NPA view on what the evidence and key implications arising from this mean for preparing the new LDP.

The topic papers in Section Eight provide more detailed consideration of NPF4 policies and their application within the National Park, as well as any implications or specific issues/tensions/crossover that is apparent between NPF4 policy areas (for example between applying the housing and tourism policies in the rural area or for accommodating new development in flood-prone communities). The topic papers also identify where local policies might be required to address National Park specific issues and opportunities.

A summary of key place-based implications arising for the six identified sub-areas identified in the Place Profiles in Section Eight is also included. These will help inform the creation of a place-based spatial strategy for the Proposed Plan.

5.1 Topic Paper 1: Climate and Land Use

This Topic Paper considers NPF4 policies on:

1. Tackling the climate and nature crises
2. Climate mitigation and adaptation
5. Soils
10. Coastal Development

Land Use is also considered.

KEY IMPLICATIONS for the new LDP include:

Climate risks and adaptation – predictions show that temperature increases are expected across the National Park, with warmer, drier summers and milder, wetter winters. Summer rainfall could decrease by 15-24%, increasing risk of water stress and drought, whilst in winter rainfall could increase by 10-11% causing flood risk and pressure on drainage and water infrastructure as well as roads, bridges and paths.

The new LDP will need to plan for significantly warmer conditions, increased heat stress, water scarcity and increased flood risk.

A Strategic Climate Change Adaptation Risk and Opportunities Assessment was undertaken in 2024 and identified the primary climate hazards more likely to cause damage or impact an identified set of receptors in the National Park. Key hazards identified were:

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

The main receptors identified includes:

- Infrastructure
- Habitats
- Settlements
- Visitor and recreational destinations
- Historic Assets
- Agriculture and
- Forestry

This report assesses and rates the likely severity of each risk against each receptor and information is mapped spatially. This will help inform the new LDP spatial strategy where land use or new development can potentially have a role or a response.

Greenhouse gas emissions – A Carbon Footprint Assessment and Proposed Pathway to Net Zero for the National Park was published in May 2023. It provides a consumption-based assessment of greenhouse gas emissions from the baseline year of 2019, during which National Park residents emitted a total of 217,000 tCO₂e, 17.6% higher than national averages. Key contributors included driving, which produced emissions 36% above the UK average, and flying and other transport, which were approximately 30% higher. Household fuel emissions (excluding driving) were about 12% higher than the national average, while household electricity emissions were significantly higher, at 61% above the UK average.

Visitors to the National Park generated 387,000 tCO₂e in emissions, with 290,978 tCO₂e attributed to travel to and from the National Park and 95,712 tCO₂e produced during their stay. Emissions from visitor travel were primarily driven by personal flights (51%) and vehicle fuel (35%), with other public transport accounting for just 5%. While in the National Park, most visitor emissions come from food and drink (42%), followed by accommodation (18%) excluding food.

Industry-related GHG emissions totalled 52,938 tCO₂e. The largest source of emissions came from accommodation and food services, which account for 41% of the total emissions (21,735 tCO₂e). This is followed by agriculture, forestry, and fishing, contributing 19% (9,819 tCO₂e), and Production (manufacturing) at 11% (5,981 tCO₂e).

Mitigation strategy - The Carbon Footprint Assessment and Proposed Pathway to Net Zero Report sets out the pathway for the National Park to reach a consumption-based net zero by 2035 and to become a carbon sink for the whole of Scotland. It establishes a 2019 baseline for the National Park for the purposes of achieving net zero of 301,367 tCO₂e per year, and provides tailored, Paris agreement aligned emission reduction targets across six categories.

These are:

- Energy
- Food and drink
- Non-food shopping
- Travel to and from the area
- Land based CO₂ and
- Land based non-CO₂.

The proposed emissions reduction and carbon sequestration targets require 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. These require changes like never before and the new LDP has a critical role to play in terms of guiding investment and land

use change, as well as increasingly more sustainable patterns of living, working and visiting the National Park.

Land use change measures, particularly peatland restoration and new woodland creation, will contribute the largest proportion of the annual net reduction in GHG emissions of the footprint categories. The Report 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.

Land use - is predominantly agriculture (65%), being primarily 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. Work is underway to prepare a report on the Value of Farming and Land Use which will seek to establish a baseline for current land use and farming activity in terms of its social, economic and environmental value. This work will provide opportunity for further stakeholder engagement which will help inform and guide land use change.

Soils - types and characteristics in the National Park reflect its diverse geology and topography. The Highland Boundary Fault divides it into two distinct regions as characterised by Nature Scotland's Landscape Character Assessment. Blanket peats and gleys (wet clay soils deprived of oxygen) dominate soils above 200m and soils become thin on more upland slopes. South of the Highland Boundary Fault soils are primarily brown earths, well drained and have high natural fertility supporting grassland and cultivation for fodder crops.

Grazing pressures - Unsustainable levels of wild and domesticated grazing in some upland and woodland areas are reducing tree cover and erosion of soils. The new LDP will need to reflect and align spatial development strategies with changes to land use management that seek to protect soils that hold local, cultural, regional, national and international significance, as well as restore damaged peat and increase tree cover. This will be informed by the Value of Farming and Land Use report that has recently been commissioned by the National Park Authority.

Coastal erosion - is an issue that the new LDP will require to consider. The National Park coastal area is vulnerable to both flooding and coastal erosion with high risks of flooding along the Cowal Peninsula and part of Loch Long. Some settlements already have artificial coastal defences in place and [Dynamic Coast future erosion](#) data shows that parts of Ardentinn, Lochgoilhead, Carrick Castle, Kilmun, Strone and Blairmore are most at risk by 2050 under a high emissions scenario. Coastal Change Adaptation Plans (CCAPs) will help inform understanding of both current and future coastal erosion and flooding risks. Argyll and Bute Council's CCAP status is still to be confirmed however 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 and development strategy within the new LDP.

The impacts of intense rainfall and flooding are considered separately in the Topic Paper on Flooding however there are vulnerabilities for Cowal communities, particularly when the A83 is closed at the Rest and Be Thankful due to landslips as this is the main access road linking Cowal with west Loch Lomond and southbound towards Glasgow.

Integration of land use and spatial planning – It is the aspiration to integrate land use change as much as possible within the new LDP to potentially allow it to also function as a Regional Land Use Framework (RLUF) for the National Park. The National Park is one of the Scottish Government appointed pilot regions to test and consider the potential role of Regional Land Use Partnerships and Frameworks. The new LDP can also identify opportunities for land use change to provide an integrated land use and development delivery framework.

Sustainable Development Strategy - The new LDP should prioritise sustainable locations for the majority of development and support more local living and working and reduce car travel distances through increased opportunities for modal shift, including for visitors when in the National Park. 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) for some communities where flooding is a significant constraint. Alternative locations may be required in some instances. 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 addressing current and future development needs.

Stakeholder comments in relation to sufficiency of the evidence and NPA view on the key implications of this for preparing the new LDP

- **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.
- **Stakeholder engagement** has resulted in the Topic Paper being strengthened by creating clearer links between climate and biodiversity evidence, particularly in relation to peatland restoration and nature networks. Relevant national guidance, including SNAP3 and SEPA's Water Scarcity PAN, has been summarised to reinforce the policy context. The paper also now reflects a wider range of climate-related land management pressures, such as bracken control, to better illustrate how changing environmental conditions are influencing land use within the National Park.
- **The key implications arising from the evidence and stakeholder engagement** for this topic area are mainly focussed around responding to the significant climate and environmental challenges facing the National Park, including rising temperatures, increased flood and drought risks and coastal erosion.

A 2024 climate risk assessment identifies key hazards and vulnerable areas in the National Park, and a 2023 carbon footprint study identifies sources of emissions from residents, visitors and industry. This shows that travel is a large contributor to carbon emissions and is a key area for intervention. To achieve net zero by 2035, land use change focussing on peatland restoration and woodland creation is also required, alongside promoting more sustainable living and travel. As land use change is a significant issue (and opportunity) for the National Park, the preparation of the new LDP will explore whether the new spatial development strategy can also function also as a Regional Land Use Framework in order to achieve a more integrated approach towards guiding future land use change alongside supporting nature restoration and sustainable community and rural development.

5.2 Topic Paper 2: Biodiversity, Natural Places, Forestry, Woodland and Trees

This Topic Paper considers NPF4 policies on:

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

KEY IMPLICATIONS for the Proposed Plan

NPF4 Spatial Strategy identifies that the 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. More integrated planning and land management offers opportunities to support land use change and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The new LDP will need to identify and reflect the landscape-scale opportunities for nature and climate at more localised levels to show land use, infrastructure and development implications.

Enhancing biodiversity through new development – including national and major development in the National Park, offers significant potential for biodiversity enhancement and measures that in turn will help towards climate mitigation.

State of Nature in the National Park – Whilst the evidence shows that nature fairs better in the National Park than other areas of Scotland it is still in trouble and bold action is urgently required for nature recovery within the National Park. Major challenges to nature include Invasive Non-Native Species, peatland erosion and drainage and over grazing, particularly in wooded areas. This is important context for preparing the new LDP.

National Park targets for nature restoration - Through the work set out in the Future Nature Route Map, the National Park Authority and partners have 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 Future Nature Route Map includes 'Nature positive development' as a key workstream with the aim of this being to *"Explore enhanced opportunities for ... nature-based solutions, natural infrastructure, nature networks and 'nature positive development' ...* The Proposed Plan will help achieve this through the identification of nature networks, guiding land use change, identifying opportunities for investment in natural capital, enhancing biodiversity in new development and through the spatial development strategy.

Nature Networks: key habitats to support - The NPPP and Future Nature Route Map identify the three key habitat networks within the National Park, peatland, woodland and water/wetland. The priority areas in [Map 3 of the NPPP](#), on page 59, will form the starting point for identifying a Nature Network for the National Park but other high value habitats, such as grassland and upland habitats, will also be considered. 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 as barriers to movement identified on the Wildlife Connectivity Map element of the Nature Network Tool (NatureScot/ AECOM).

Three key landscape scale nature restoration 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. Wild Strathfillan is an ambitious nature restoration project across 50,000 hectares in the north of the National Park that will establish a nature recovery network and seeks to ensure that nature will thrive alongside the rural industries that underpin the local community. The Loch Lomond Rainforest project aims to re-establish a resilient and well-connected temperate rainforest habitat around Loch Lomond, tackling rhododendron encroachment and grazing pressures and to devise a plan for the rainforest habitat.

The new LDP will need to consider how the new spatial strategy can support delivery of the identified outcomes of these projects, as well as the necessary development and local infrastructure that may be required to support people working to deliver these projects and associated rural economic opportunities and requirements, such as community wealth building.

The Strathard Framework is a collaborative pilot project that trialled integrating land use and planning in the Strathard area of the National Park and was adopted as Planning Guidance in 2022. It identifies the development and infrastructure needs for the area alongside opportunities for investment in natural capital such as woodland management and creation, and peatland restoration. This approach has helped test and consider how the new LDP can 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 LDP.

Peatland restoration - Around 36.5% (68,000ha) of land within the National Park is covered by peatland that is estimated to hold up to 20 million tonnes of carbon. A significant proportion of this (45,600ha) is classed as degraded and requiring restoration via changes to land management rather than physical works to peat (such as reductions in grazing

pressure). The peatland restoration opportunities are identified in the Future Nature Route Map and in Maps 1 and 3 of the NPPP. This will inform preparation of the new LDP and nature networks.

New woodland creation The National Park Authority's Trees and Woodland Strategy guides the local implementation of Scotland's Forestry Strategy and the NPPP includes a target to double the average annual rate of woodland expansion from 200ha year to 400ha, focusing on priority areas. The Trees and Woodland Strategy 2019 – 2039 guides woodland enhancement and creation within the National Park to help a range of benefits and contains a spatial analysis that shows preferred and potential areas for native woodland creation. Preferred Areas are where native woodland creation would have the greatest impact in improving woodland connectivity. Potential Areas are 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 are also identified.

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). It will form the starting point for identifying the native woodland creation component of the Nature Network within the new LDP.

Tree Disease and Forest Restructuring - The threat to our trees from pests and diseases is growing. In the National Park, there have been outbreaks of various *Phytophthora* and ash dieback is now established. The Cowal area of the National Park is located within the Risk Reduction Zone for *Phytophthora* where felling of infected trees and trees around them is required but capacity of the sector to undertake this is limited. The remainder of the National Park is within the Priority Action Zone where survey and control efforts seek to manage further spread and outbreaks.

As a result, several FLS-owned forests are going through significant short-term restructuring which had not been foreseen when Land Management Plans were produced, resulting in a range of impacts and implications for landscape, sense of place, ecology, drainage and operational implications for forestry works. Some are short term, and others are longer term and the new LDP will need to give cognisance to the degree of change envisaged in certain areas of the National Park and any associated development, recreational and infrastructure requirements and/or opportunities that could arise through forest restructuring.

Landscape Qualities - In 2010 the '*Special Landscape Qualities of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park*' report identified the qualities that underpin the National Park landscape designation and make the landscape so special and create a distinctive sense of place. This report will be a consideration in the preparation of the new LDP and spatial development strategy. 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 development and landscape change.

Stakeholder comments in relation to sufficiency of the evidence and NPA view on the key implications of this for preparing the new LDP

- **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.
- **Stakeholder engagement** has led to the inclusion of additional information on matters such as Nature Networks, designated sites, Local Nature Conservation Sites, tree health and invasive non-native species. A number of additional evidence sources were also identified through this process, and these have been incorporated in the final version of the paper.
- **The key implications arising from the evidence and stakeholder engagement** for this topic area are mainly focussed around identifying and enabling opportunities to restore nature and tackle climate change. The new LDP will require to identify where this can happen, support biodiversity enhancement in new developments and guiding land use change to reduce emissions. Key priorities include restoring peatland and new woodland creation, tackling invasive species, managing over-grazing and supporting large-scale nature recovery projects such as The Great Trossachs Forest, Wild Strathfillan and the Loch Lomond Rainforest.

5.3 Topic Paper 3: Infrastructure

This Topic Paper considers NPF4 Policies on:

- 18. Infrastructure First
- 24. Digital Infrastructure

KEY IMPLICATIONS for the new LDP include:

Spatial Strategy and scale of development envisaged - The most significant scaled development in the National Park is expected to be to trunk roads improvements, electricity generation at Sloy Hydro Electric Power station 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.

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 Inverarnan 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 off-shore nationally.

Infrastructure constraints in rural villages – Of the 17 water treatment works serving the National Park, four have capacity available and 13 potentially require future investment. Of the 34 wastewater treatment works serving the National Park, six have capacity available and 28 potentially require future investment. An implication for the new LDP will be addressing constraints on capacity and provision of infrastructure to support new development including water, waste water, energy and other key services. This includes consideration of known areas of constraint for private wastewater drainage and where additional investment in water treatment and wastewater treatment infrastructure may be required.

Education Capacity - Based on the available future school roll projections for all four relevant local authorities, there are no concerns regarding school capacity up to 2034/35 apart from Callander Primary School which is currently operating over its optimum capacity, and is currently being rebuilt to accommodate larger capacity. Drymen Primary School is expected to exceed its working capacity from the 2027/28 school year onward. This reflects planned housing growth in the area. The rest of the data indicates that most primary schools within the National Park actually operate below capacity, with some significantly below capacity. The only secondary school within the National Park (McLaren High School) is currently operating below capacity at 79%. This is indicative of population changes in the National Park and decline in the younger age groups.

Digital connectivity – In terms of broadband access and capacity there are large areas of the Cowal part of the National Park, as well as parts of the north and northeast of the National Park – such as Killin, The Trossachs and Ben Lomond where between 50% and 100% of premises receive broadband speeds that are below the Universal Service Obligation. 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. In terms of mobile network coverage and capacity there are areas that experience significant connectivity challenges. 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.

Infrastructure Priorities identified in the NPPP - The new LDP will reflect the strategic infrastructure and development priorities identified in the NPPP on Map 4: Infrastructure Investment Priority areas for visitor experience investment, at primary gateways on the edges of the National Park, at villages within the National Park with good facilities and infrastructure and on 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 local and Park-wide priorities, indicative timelines, and investment needs to help support coordinated delivery. This will inform the new LDP 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 and on improvements to travel infrastructure to create more sustainable and active travel options and infrastructure. Investment is needed at key visitor hubs including Balloch, Callander and Arrochar/Tarbet to support more people travelling 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.

Stakeholder comments in relation to sufficiency of the evidence and NPA view on the key implications of this for preparing the new LDP

- **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.
- **In response to stakeholder feedback**, Topic Paper 3 has been updated to include clearer baseline information on existing water and wastewater treatment capacity, including an update on Callander WWTW. Energy infrastructure evidence has been strengthened through the inclusion of recent SSEN and SHEPD network reports, ensuring a more up-to-date picture of grid capacity and future demand. The paper also now incorporates additional information on education infrastructure, including provision for Additional Support Needs, to give a fuller view of service capacity across the National Park.
- **The key implications arising from the evidence and stakeholder engagement** for this topic area are mainly focussed delivery of nationally significant infrastructure, including trunk road upgrades, improvements to the Sloy Hydro Electric Power Station, and enhancements to the electricity transmission network. Strategic growth will continue to be directed to Callander, Balloch, and Arrochar & Tarbet as identified in the National Park Partnership Plan. Key infrastructure challenges include limited electricity grid and wastewater capacity, variable digital connectivity, and some future localised pressures on school capacity at Drymen. The new LDP will align with the NPPP and be also guided by the National Park-wide Place

Investment Delivery Route Map and Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies to coordinate delivery of improved visitor and community infrastructure.

5.4 Topic Paper 4: Flooding, Water Management and Blue and Green Infrastructure

This Topic Paper considers NPF4 policies on:

- 22. Flood Risk and Water Management
- 20. Blue and Green Infrastructure

KEY IMPLICATIONS for the new LDP include:

Areas of identified flood risk - The National Park is exposed to a combination of coastal, fluvial, and surface water flood risks. It has four Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVA's) at Aberfoyle, Balloch, Callander and Strathyre which are identified as being at significant risk of flooding and requiring targeted management to reduce that risk. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), including flood risk constraints, will inform the spatial strategy and site allocation process for the new 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 support communities experiencing flooding to adapt as well as the future approach for new development needed in these areas to support sustainable rural communities.

Coastal flooding and erosion - In line with SEPA's update and the increased focus on coastal flooding in the SFRA, the new LDP should consider identifying areas at risk of coastal erosion and subsequent flooding, particularly along the Cowal Peninsula, to inform effective planning and mitigation strategies.

Flood Protection Schemes – Stirling Council has undertaken extensive exploratory work in the National Park's most at-risk communities: Aberfoyle and Callander. This involved flood modelling which aims to measure flood risk and possible solutions for flood risk reduction. Hydraulic model updates are being undertaken and the SFRA will be updated once information is available.

Callander has a long history of flooding which impacts homes, businesses and roads. Stirling Council is working on identifying a preferred flood protection scheme which seeks to reduce flood risk from river flooding. Surface water flooding also impacts on Callander and a Surface Water Management Plan is expected to be complete early in 2026 which will inform the new LDP.

Aberfoyle experiences flooding from the River Forth, impacting on homes, businesses and roads. The area beyond Aberfoyle, in the wider Strathard landward area is particularly

sensitive to flood impacts when the only road access route in and out, the B829, is cut off. A flood protection scheme was submitted to the Scottish Government for funding however it was deemed low priority due to its low cost/benefit ratio and was unsuccessful. Stirling Council awaits news on future funding cycles and will determine if the scheme can be re-submitted later. This information will inform the new LDP and the new LDP spatial strategy will consider opportunities for natural flood management options within the wider Strathard area, as already established in the Strathard Framework Planning Guidance.

Balloch can experience flooding from the River Leven, Carrochan and Ballagan Burns. Information in a 2019 feasibility study for Loch Lomond and Vale of Leven Flood Management assesses options to alleviate future flooding.

Natural Flood Management - The new 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 and Green Infrastructure –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 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. Effective water resource management is becoming even more critical and the new LDP can help improve 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.

Water Quality - there are 97 identified water bodies within the National Park and 47 remain in moderate, poor, or bad condition, highlighting ongoing environmental challenges associated with water quality. Efforts to improve and restore water bodies will require targeted action, delivered through collaborative stakeholder partnerships, focusing on mitigating hydroelectric impacts, enhancing ecological conditions, and addressing physical modifications to surface waters.

Stakeholder comments in relation to sufficiency of the evidence and NPA view on the key implications of this for preparing the new LDP

- **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.

- **Topic Paper 4 has been strengthened following stakeholder engagement** with additional baseline evidence on water environment condition and flood risk, including SEPA's Water Environment dataset and River Basin Management Plan 3 information. The relationship between the NPA and neighbouring local authorities on flooding matters has been clarified within both the topic paper and SFRA. The Topic Paper also better reflects the role of natural flood management and blue-green infrastructure in supporting wider ecological networks, with key SEPA evidence sources signposted to show how these will inform future policy and delivery.
- **The key implications arising from the evidence and stakeholder engagement** for this topic area are mainly focussed on the range of flood risks, including coastal, fluvial, and surface water flooding, with Potentially Vulnerable Areas such as Aberfoyle, Callander, Strathyre and Balloch requiring careful consideration. The new LDP will need to identify how to enable development necessary for local communities' needs in flood-prone areas, particularly where access routes are vulnerable against flooding. This will require further consideration and engagement on the application of NPF4 Policy 22 as the spatial strategy is being prepared. The LDP should integrate blue-green infrastructure to manage surface water and enhance water retention, support sustainable water management in response to increasing water scarcity, and protect key ecosystems. Water quality is also a concern, with nearly half of the Park's 97 water bodies in moderate or poorer condition, highlighting the need for collaborative action to improve ecological status and mitigate impacts from development and hydropower operations.

5.5 Topic Paper 5: Energy, Heat and Cooling

This Topic Paper considers NPF4 policies on:

- 11. Energy
- 19. Heat and Cooling

KEY IMPLICATIONS for the new LDP include:

NPF4 requires development potential for renewable, low carbon and zero emission sources to be maximised but does not support windfarms in National Parks. The new LDP should consider how best to provide guidance to direct appropriate renewable energy development within the National Park.

Net Zero National Park by 2035 - Whilst the carbon footprint assessment for the National Park identifies that the largest opportunities to reduce emissions are in land use change, particularly through peatland restoration and woodland expansion, decarbonising energy consumption such as heating, electricity and transport by communities, businesses and visitors is a critical component of the net zero route map. The new LDP will require to acknowledge and facilitate this.

Operational and consented energy output from the National Park is 122,176 MWh per year. 76% of this is from hydro development and 24% is from biomass. A further 142MWh is permitted and due to be operational from solar photovoltaics. No hydrogen projects are identified for the National Park.

Heat Network potential - Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) are published for Stirling and Perth and Kinross local authorities. Stirling Council identifies fuel poverty risks in some National Park communities and Callander High School as having potential as a district heat network site. Land east of Callander also has potential for sequestration through re-wetting and peatland restoration. Argyll and Bute Council is developing their LHEES and it currently identifies the value of introducing micro heat networks, solar energy storage technologies and battery storage. The new LDP spatial strategy will be informed by the four local authority LHEES's and will consider appropriate solutions for rural areas.

Increased community scale energy and heat generation as well as an increase in retrofitting renewables technologies to community buildings, is a short term (five year) objective in the National Park Partnership Plan.

Opportunities for Solar energy- If full technical capacity for rooftop solar and thermal photovoltaics (19.07MW & 24.22MW respectively) could be achieved there is a potential for approximately 2,750 tonnes of carbon emissions to be saved each year from roof-mounted solar. Whilst this represents a small percentage of overall emissions there may be some opportunities for ground mounted solar, however assessing technical capacity and potential environmental implications at strategic levels has not been possible at the Evidence Report stage and will require further consideration as the spatial strategy for the new LDP is prepared.

Opportunities for Heat Pumps - Across all domestic and non-domestic building stock, there is potential for approximately 32,500 tonnes of carbon emissions to be saved per year from the integration of heat pumps, which could be delivered privately, publicly, or through community-owned projects.

Opportunities for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) – There is a rise in demand for BESS nationally to support renewable energy transmission. Establishing technical potential for the National Park has not been possible for Evidence Report stage as demand is dependent on the sources of renewable energy potential and grid capacity. There could be scope for the co-location and deployment of batteries, proportionate to the scale of renewable energy development in the National Park.

Opportunities for Hydro energy – There is an established hydro-electric presence within the National Park. In April 2025, Scottish and Southern Energy submitted a planning application with the Energy Consents Unit for the new Sloy Pumped Hydro Storage scheme, which is currently under consideration. Aside from this, it is expected that schemes coming

forward in the National Park are likely to be relatively small-scale run of river schemes to add to an already well-established presence.

Opportunities for Wind energy- There is some evidenced demand for small scale wind turbines within the National Park, including instances where co-located with other technologies. Current planning policy guidance supports appropriately sited single turbines with a blade tip height of 30m, and this will be re-considered as part the new LDP preparation.

Biomass energy - 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.

Grid capacity - The new LDP 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.

Stakeholder comments in relation to sufficiency of the evidence and NPA view on the key implications of this for preparing the new LDP

- **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.
- **Topic Paper 5 has been updated** to reflect the approved status of Argyll and Bute's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) and to ensure correct referencing. Additional evidence on grid capacity has been incorporated through updated GSP data, and the paper now more clearly acknowledges potential local impacts from renewable energy technologies, including noise, smoke nuisance and air quality considerations.
- **The key implications arising from the evidence and stakeholder engagement** for this topic area are mainly focussed on the new LDP promoting an increase in renewable and low-carbon energy to meet the needs of local communities and businesses. Existing generation includes hydroelectric and biomass, with some permitted solar capacity. Opportunities include rooftop and ground-mounted solar, heat pumps, community-scale heat networks, battery storage, and small-scale run-of-river hydro. Small-scale wind turbines may be considered where appropriate. The LDP will be guided by the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies prepared by the Local Authorities.

5.6 Topic Paper 6: Sustainable Transport

This Topic Paper considers NPF4 Policy 13: Sustainable Transport.

KEY IMPLICATIONS for the Proposed Plan

Reducing the dependency on private cars and supporting modal shift are the key transport implications for the new LDP. Public transport is not very well aligned with the needs of visitors or the needs of some communities and businesses. Car based journeys dominate travel to and within the National Park with significant pressures during peak visitor periods on infrastructure, environment and communities.

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 new LDP.

Transport Gateways and Hubs - Primary Gateways are identified in the above Transport 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 new LDP. 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 travellers. 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. Whilst improving key national transport routes, the A83 upgrade will help build in climate resilience for communities in the west of the National Park and for the west of Scotland with the central belt. Development of this scale offers significant opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and restoration and the new LDP will help inform this approach.

EV Charging – Currently there are 17 EV charging points distributed across the National Park. Tarbet, Balloch and Callander are identified in the NPPP 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 new LDP 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.

Stakeholder comments in relation to sufficiency of the evidence and NPA view on the key implications of this for preparing the new LDP

- **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.
- **As a result of engagement, Topic Paper 6 has been strengthened** with clearer clarification of statutory roles, improved and updated references to national, regional and local transport strategies. New and updated data has been incorporated to provide a fuller evidence base on travel demand, public transport capacity, and network pressures, including 2022 Census data, rail patronage, bus capacity and road safety evidence. In addition, commitments around ongoing transport appraisal work and engagement with Transport Scotland have been made more explicit.
- **The key implications arising from the evidence and stakeholder engagement** for this topic area are mainly focussed on how the new LDP can support the NPPP identified outcomes of reducing dependency on private cars and supporting modal shift towards sustainable travel, given that car-based journeys currently dominate travel to and within the National Park. The new LDP will need to acknowledge that there are gaps in public transport and the requirement to enhance active travel routes and infrastructure, including upgrading off-road paths and connections between settlements. The new LDP should also consider the role of primary and secondary transport gateways and hubs, opportunities for park and ride facilities, water-based transport options, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and improvements to the A83 and A82 trunk roads.

5.7 Topic Paper 7: Housing

This Topic Paper considers NPF4 Policies on:

- 16. Quality Homes
- 17. Rural Homes

KEY IMPLICATIONS for the Proposed Plan

Population trends and projections show continued decline and changes in age structure. The National Park's population is projected to decline by 7% from 14,718 in 2018 to 13,667 by 2043, equating to a loss of 1,051 residents over 25 years. For the four local authorities that the National Park falls within, Stirling is projected to see an increase of 10.5%, while West Dunbartonshire (-7.4%), Perth and Kinross (-1%), and Argyll and Bute (-14.8%) are expected to experience declines.

The age profile of the population is projected to shift significantly. The number of children under 16 is projected to fall by 25% and the working-age population is expected to decline by 14%, while the pensionable-age population is anticipated to increase by 17%, with a significant rise in the 75+ age group.

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 well as for working age single person, couples and young family homes.

The Local Housing Land Requirement is identified for 750 more homes over 10 years (75 a year) – this is higher than the Scottish Government minimum requirement of 300 homes over 10 years (the MATHLUR – Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement) however we are expected to go beyond this minimum requirement. 75 per year is very ambitious however it is a continuation of the current LDP annual target and is considered necessary in light of identified housing pressures, needs, population change, decline and the declared national housing emergency. The NPPP identifies the challenges surrounding rural housing delivery and states that finding new ways to help tackle these is a priority area for action, working in partnership with the statutory housing authorities and other stakeholders.

Meeting the housing needs of communities and the local workforce is identified as a key objective in the NPPP to support more resilient rural communities. There are significant levels of housing need stemming from high house prices (commuting and retirement pressures), limited alternative options to open market housing, shrinking private rented sector and the ongoing loss of homes from the housing supply (to use as second and holiday homes). An increase in affordable housing provision (of various tenures), making better use of existing stock and ensuring that deliverable land is available for housing are all key implications for the new LDP. New housing should also be linked more closely to community identified needs in Local Place Plans and to rural economic needs.

Identification of deliverable land is very challenging in a rural context and made more difficult considering the changing climatic conditions facing the National Park. Flooding is a key constraint for several communities, making site identification more difficult and suggesting a need to look for opportunities outside of settlements for affordable housing and/or affordable self-build opportunities to support rural businesses and green jobs. Development costs associated with delivery and infrastructure can present challenges for delivery, evidenced by a lag between approval of planning permission and completions over the current LDP plan period. This raises implications for delivery and is identified as a priority area for action between the NPA and partners in the NPPP.

Local Policies on Housing - The National Park is a mix of accessible rural and remote rural areas as classified by the Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification. Roughly speaking the northern and Cowal areas are remote rural, and the south and eastern areas accessible rural. It has a few 'small towns', such as Callander and Balloch, as per the classification. The new LDP will consider how NPF4 Policy 17 on rural homes will apply in the National Park context and whether there is a need for any bespoke local policies in each of the proposed sub-areas to meet area specific challenges and opportunities. This will also be informed by Local Place Plans.

Short Term Lets - Evidence indicates that certain areas in the National Park are experiencing high levels of short-term letting, adversely affecting the housing availability for local people with some communities feeling that a tipping point has been reached. The preparation of the Proposed Plan will consider the options for policy and other planning controls to help protect and retain existing homes and prevent further loss of homes that would otherwise be available to people wishing to live and work in the National Park.

Second Homes - In light of the challenges that second and holiday homes have on the available housing stock, the new LDP could consider whether a local policy is required to protect new homes from being removed from the available housing supply via the use of a permanent residency condition.

Amount of affordable housing required on mixed tenure sites - The current LDP housing policy requires differing percentages of affordable housing contribution on sites above four units and the evidence suggests that this warrants 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 and the new LDP will consider and identify the required approach.

Housing needs of older people – and accessible housing for specialist housing needs and key workers and working age population requires to be considered as part of the new LDP. The evidence reveals that there is a mismatch with housing supply not necessarily meeting the needs of households in the National Park, for example in the Stirling Council area of the National Park 77% of homes have more bedrooms than needed.

Self-build affordable housing – Monitoring of the current LDP reveals that there has been little uptake of the affordable self-build opportunities established through the current LDP Housing Policy 2 parts (b) and (c). This could be due to lack of promotion and awareness however evidence suggests that there is strong interest for open market housing on these sites/plots suggesting landowner aspiration for full market value. Any continuation of this approach will need to be carefully considered against NPF4 Policy 17 alongside the potential need for a local policy to consider how best to meet identified local housing needs.

Stakeholder comments in relation to sufficiency of the evidence and NPA view on the key implications of this for preparing the new LDP

- **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.
- **Stakeholder engagement on Topic Paper 7 and the supporting Population and Housing Background Paper led to significant improvements.** Updated local authority data from Stirling Council and the Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care

Partnership was incorporated, alongside new policy references recommended by Homes for Scotland. Additional evidence on housing need and land supply was also included, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of local housing challenges and opportunities.

- The key implications arising from the evidence and stakeholder engagement for this topic area are mainly focussed on how the new LDP can assist in addressing the projected population decline and ageing demographic in the National Park, with a reduction in children and working-age residents and an increase in households headed by people aged 65 or over. The new LDP will need to ensure that housing provision meets the needs of its local communities, including meeting the housing needs of smaller and older households, working-age families, key workers, and rural businesses. Planning for approximately 750 new homes over 10 years is ambitious however considered necessary. The new LDP will need to consider levels of affordable need and requirements alongside site availability, infrastructure and flood constraints and self-build opportunities, informed by Local Place Plans and rural economic needs.

5.8 Topic Paper 8: Local Living

This Topic Paper considers NPF4 Policies on:

- 15. Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods
- 23. Health and Safety
- 9. Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings
- 21. Play, recreation and sport
- 12. Zero Waste

KEY IMPLICATIONS for the Proposed Plan

Health of residents— in 2022 more than 80% of the NP population (approx. 14,566 people) described their health positively. 76% reported that their health does not limit their daily activities and 24% reported to have some degree of limitation in their daily lives. Just under 2000 people provide unpaid care to others – nearly one in seven residents. This indicates overall a generally healthy population but one that is aging and where care is involved. The Proposed Plan will need to consider the needs of this aging population in terms of housing, health and services. Access to health care (A&E and hospital) is identified as a key health inequality for people living in some of the Park's remoter communities due to the distance to access healthcare.

Health outcomes for adjoining areas – The National Park is a resource for everyone in Scotland. Of the four local authorities that are part of the National Park, West Dunbartonshire Council has the poorest health outcomes and there is opportunity to consider how access to outdoor space, nature and recreation can help address this. Access to the National Park is considered in the transport and infrastructure topic papers as there are implications for the new LDP to consider how to support more sustainable and active travel transport to and

around the Park, as well as the provision of accessible, high quality infrastructure to support visitors to have a safe, responsible and enjoyable experience and opportunity to connect with nature.

Local Living - Achieving 20-minute neighbourhoods is challenging in the National Park with many dispersed rural communities. Limited public transport and increasingly centralised service provision are key implications for rural communities and businesses when trying to reduce their carbon footprint and reliance on cars. Digital connectivity, alternative solutions to provision of local services and transport, and community led initiatives help with a move towards lower carbon living and working. This has implications for the new LDP in terms of consideration of how places/communities are used into the future, how they evolve and adapt to both the impacts of climate change and increased efforts around mitigation.

Closer links to each other (communities that are linked in terms of shared services and facilities) as well as with nature, land use, landscape, heritage and culture will help deepen connections and changes to ways of living and working. Local communities have been supported to consider and identify their needs in relation to being able to live and work more locally to help support climate action through recently established Community Climate Action Hubs and any actions and projects arising from these will be considered alongside developing the new LDP Spatial Strategy. Local Place Plans are also valuable sources of detailed local level information and will inform the development of sub-area spatial strategies.

Vacant and derelict land – There are 8 sites listed on the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey covering 7.26 hectares. These are all allocated sites in or close to settlements in the Local Development Plan, some of which have planning permission but have seen little, if any, progress. located in or close to settlements. The new LDP will consider the delivery aspects for these alongside an assessment of all other LDP allocated sites.

Open Space and Play Sufficiency – are key themes arising from NPF4 and the 2019 Planning Act. Both require formal survey and assessments as a statutory requirement. An Open Space Audit was undertaken in 2007 to inform previous local planning work and continues to act as a baseline to assess open space. The majority of open space formally included in this audit is identified as amenity greenspace. The Audit identified a lack of play provision for older children and a lack of sporting provision within smaller settlements. A play sufficiency assessment was undertaken in 2025 to assess the adequacy of play opportunities for children under 18. Key findings include the existence of 32 equipped play areas and numerous natural play opportunities, though several communities lack adequate facilities. Settlement-level summaries identify priorities such as adding adventure play, improving maintenance, and developing masterplans for strategic open spaces. The report concludes with the importance of integrating play provision into development plans and highlights the social, environmental, and health benefits of accessible, high-quality play environments.

Noise pollution – the National Park is predominantly a tranquil area with low ambient noise levels however certain localised sources contribute to noise in Lochgoilhead (low-frequency

noise) and at Loch Lomond, particularly along the northern stretches of the A82 (traffic and motorised water sports).

Stakeholder comments in relation to sufficiency of the evidence and NPA view on the key implications of this for preparing the new LDP

- **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.
- **Stakeholder Engagement on Topic Paper 8** contributed to a more robust and balanced paper. Argyll and Bute Council's Housing Department prompted the inclusion of the Strategic Empty Homes Policy and local officer details, while NatureScot's feedback informed updates to mapping, spatial data, and links across related topic areas. The British Geological Survey's recommendations improved the treatment of environmental risks, and Homes for Scotland's input strengthened references to vacant and derelict land. Feedback from ScotWays and the Stirling Area Access Panel also enhanced discussion on the core path networks and rural accessibility.
- The key implications arising from the evidence and stakeholder engagement for this topic area are mainly focussed on how the new LDP can support communities to live and work more sustainably. Place-based planning using six proposed sub-areas, informed by Local Place Plans and stakeholder engagement, will guide future land use, development, and infrastructure to strengthen community resilience, connections, promote sustainable lifestyles and respond to climate change. The new LDP will also consider how to facilitate development of vacant and derelict land and identify where open space and play improvements are required.

5.9 Topic Paper 9: Cultural Heritage and Place

This Topic Paper considers NPF4 policies on:

- 14. Design, Quality and Place
- 7. Historic Assets and Places
- 31. Culture and Creativity

KEY IMPLICATIONS for the Proposed Plan

Requirement to protect and enhance our historic environment - The new LDP will accord with NPF4 policies to protect and enhance the historic environment and recognise and integrate this in strategy and decision making.

Design Quality and Place - The new LDP will be a place based, visually engaging document based on nature restoration, climate adaptation and mitigation, local living and Community Wealth Building principles. It will take account of Local Place Plans and the identified needs and aspirations of local communities.

Culture, traditions and associations - The new LDP will recognise and support the role of cultural events, traditions and attractions and plan for associated development and infrastructure support requirements. Closer consideration of, and integration with, land use as part of developing the new LDP spatial strategy will assist with deepening social and cultural connections and associations with land use, nature and historic landscapes that will be changing as they adapt to climate change and as nature is restored.

Impacts of climate change on our historic environment is an issue affecting all areas. Key risks identified nationally include structural damage from flooding, increased biological growth on historic structures, ground instability leading to foundation movement, and accelerated coastal erosion. The new LDP will need to anticipate these issues and consider ways in which the new LDP spatial development strategy can seek to help support the care and retention of historic buildings, sites, monuments and landscapes.

50 buildings are identified as being at risk in the National Park on the national Buildings at Risk Register. These buildings are in various categories of condition. Almost half are assessed as being at high and critical risk of survival. As well as offering potentially sustainable re-development options, these buildings form important elements of the National Parks cultural heritage and landscape.

The Stirling Heritage Strategy 2025–2028 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.

Demolition of listed buildings (and unlisted buildings of local character and quality) is identified as a concern, particularly with the focus within NPF 4 on repair and reuse being the preferred option and demolition seen as the least preferred option.

Stakeholder comments in relation to sufficiency of the evidence and NPA view on the key implications of this for preparing the new LDP

- **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.

- **Stakeholder comments on Topic Paper 9** enhanced the integration of heritage and environmental considerations. Data and recommendations from Historic Environment Scotland informed the final paper and implications section, and additional material from the West of Scotland Archaeology Service expanded discussion on public benefit and social value. In response to Scottish Water's feedback, greater emphasis was placed on the water environment, supported by the inclusion of the Water Resilient Places Policy Framework.
- **The key implications arising from the evidence and stakeholder engagement** for this topic area are mainly focussed on the role of the new LDP in protecting and enhancing the historic environment, conserving buildings at risk and integrating cultural heritage, traditions, and community aspirations into planning decisions as much as possible. The new LDP will be place-based, supporting high-quality development that supports nature restoration, climate adaptation and mitigation, and local living principles. Climate change presents risks to historic assets and landscapes, including flooding, coastal erosion, structural damage, and biological growth, which the new LDP can seek to address by supporting repair, reuse and retention of important historic buildings and assets.

5.10 Topic Paper 10 Rural Economy

This Topic Paper considers NPF4 policies on:

- 29. Rural Development
- 30. Tourism
- 28. Retail
- 27. City, town, local and commercial centres
- 26. Business and Industry
- 32. Aquaculture
- 33. Minerals
- 25. Community Wealth Building

KEY IMPLICATIONS for the Proposed Plan.

Supporting a green recovery - An initial assessment of nature-based jobs and skills (NatureScot) highlights the importance of natural capital as a driver for sustainable economic recovery. Key findings emphasise the potential for significant job growth, skills development needs, and opportunities in nature-based sectors. These jobs span sectors such as agriculture, forestry, tourism, and food and drink, which are dependent on natural capital. Future growth is anticipated nationally, driven by expanded activities like peatland restoration, forestation, and urban green infrastructure projects. The new LDP should recognise these socio-economic opportunities for the National Park's population as well as the necessity to support uptake of more people working in green jobs to ensure NPPP aims for climate and nature are achieved.

Economic Development in the National Park: There has been very poor take up of sites identified for economic development in the current LDP. The majority of economic development activity has been located on land that was not identified for development in the current LDP and instead by a policy that supports appropriate economic development in the countryside (a criteria-based policy). Development activity includes growth and diversification of rural businesses and establishment of new small scale tourism businesses in defined geographic areas. An average of eight applications a year have been approved for small scale economic development projects. Implications arising from this will require the new LDP to re-consider the spatial development strategy and approach for where land is identified for future economic activity aligned to consideration of community wealth building opportunities.

Employment in the National Park: The 2022 census indicates that around 55% (6,972) of the population aged over 16 are economically active (excluding full time students). The workforce is highly skilled and well-educated and is concentrated on tourism, professional services, public sectors and trades. Of the economically inactive population, 76% are retired. 37% of employed people work from home and tend to be among the 50-64 and over 65 age groups. Younger age groups (aged 16-24) are the most likely to commute. Commuting patterns vary from short distance (20% of all commutes) to longer commutes from 10km to more than 60 km. Around 1,000 people (15%) had no fixed place of work or worked outside the UK. There is a strong trend towards home working and the new LDP will require to consider any opportunities and issues arising from this (increased demand for housing to support remote and hybrid working for example).

Businesses in the National Park: In 2022 there were around 1,160 businesses in the National Park and 74% were micro-businesses employing between 0-4 people. 20% of micro businesses are in the primary sector – agriculture, forestry and fishing. 1% (11) businesses employ more than 50 people and 10 of these are in the accommodation and food services sector. Through engagement, this sector has reported challenges with staff retention and recruitment linked to poor transport and housing options which are key implications for the new LDP.

Village centre retail provision in the National Park is mostly concentrated in Balloch, Callander, Aberfoyle, Drymen and Killin. Flooding in Callander and Aberfoyle is acting as a barrier to ongoing retail provision and investment. Safeguarding of retail spaces is a current LDP priority and supplementary planning guidance has been prepared to support this. Pre-application planning inquiries suggest increasing pressure to continue to convert retail spaces to housing 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. The new LDP will need to consider the role of retail provision in town and village centres.

Visitor Trends in the National Park are reported mainly in two separate reports in 2024 and 2025. The 2024 STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) report estimated that there were 4.53M visitor days* in 2023. The National Park Annual Visitor Study (2025) estimated a similar figure at 4.54M visitors in 2024 with day visitors comprising the majority of

visitors. *('Visitor days' refers to the total number of days people spend at a place. It helps show how busy a location really is, because it counts not just how many people visit, but also how long they stay.)

In 2023, the STEAM report identified that approximately £385M was generated in expenditure with the economic impact of indirect effects being approximately £540M. Peak months for visitors are from June-August and off-season months (October-March) are also seeing growing visitors looking mainly for outdoor activities. Evidence suggests visitor numbers and economic contributions are on an upward trajectory although feedback from businesses is that trading conditions are increasingly challenging. The National Park Annual Visitor Study 2025 identified that approximately 70% of visitors arrived by car and there are concentrated pressures at certain hotspots and during peak season. It highlights the needs for targeted visitor management and infrastructure planning.

This has implications for the Proposed Plan in terms of how this can be supported through new visitor related development and infrastructure and what the appropriate nature, scale, type and locations for this could be, alongside consideration of environmental capacity and opportunities for community wealth building.

Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies (STIDS) have been undertaken for four areas of the National Park as part of a more recently established NPA led multi-year delivery programme of place-based visitor infrastructure improvements. This seeks to better manage visitor pressures and improve the overall visitor experience. The four priority areas are:

- 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. A Place Programme Delivery Route Map has been prepared and provides a timeline for implementation following a collaborative, place-based approach. The new LDP spatial strategy and place-based guidance will be informed by these studies and the delivery route map for improvements to visitor infrastructure.

Tourism Development in the National Park: The current LDP identifies 13 sites for tourism/visitor experience and eight mixed use sites. Progress on these allocated sites has been limited. The new LDP will reconsider and assess their role and contribution to the revised spatial strategy as well as potential new approaches needed to unlock development where existing sites are continued into the new LDP.

The current LDP also seeks to support tourism investment and opportunities for smaller scale development in identified countryside areas with good access to visitor infrastructure and environmental capacity. Over the plan period approval has been granted in these areas for:

- a. 257 self-catering units
- b. 164 caravans
- c. 420 bedspaces in serviced accommodation (extensions to/ or new hotels), and
- d. 90 pitches for motorhomes/camping.

The majority of these are located in the eastern and southern areas of the National Park and at Lochgoilhead. Outside the areas identified in the current LDP for small scale tourism opportunities in the countryside most approvals have been linked to existing rural businesses, farm diversification or within/adjacent to villages. Camping provision varies between areas with some areas having limited or no formal options for camping.

The new LDP will re-evaluate the current environmental capacity for future tourism growth in each of the proposed six sub-areas that will form the basis from which the new LDP is prepared. This will include re-consideration of the countryside areas currently defined under Visitor Experience Policy 1(b), alongside NPF4 policies such as sustainable travel and the appropriate scale of development that can be accommodated in each area. Given the pipeline of development that is already approved (but not yet implemented) it is considered unlikely at this stage that there will be significant land release required for new tourism and visitor related development. It is more likely to be limited and focussed on smaller scale developments.

Consideration will also need to be given to the implications arising from the interplay of current LDP intended policy outcomes to support affordable housing in the countryside and small-scale tourism, particularly where small-scale tourism developments are used as second homes and little or no affordable housing has been delivered in some rural areas. Some communities have also raised concerns in their Local Place Plans.

Short Term Lets for holiday accommodation have all been registered and mapped with clusters apparent. In total there are 799 licences registered providing the equivalent of 4,644 bed spaces. These make a significant contribution to visitor accommodation but also can result in the removal of otherwise homes for local people. Some communities feel that a 'tipping point' has been reached. Consideration of the solutions towards supporting both local housing and visitor accommodation in the National Park will be a key implication for the new LDP.

Community Wealth Building – The Community Empowerment Act 2015 provides powers to communities for participation, asset transfer (to own or manage public assets) and right to buy amongst other provisions. Currently the Community Wealth Bill (2025) is progressing through Parliament and key measures include fair employment, supporting local businesses and social enterprises, using public procurement to benefit communities and encouraging community land ownership and reuse of vacant land. The Scottish Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement 2002 on land ownership, management and use seeks sustainable economic development and a more diverse pattern of land ownership and tenure with more communities owning, leasing or using land and buildings.

The local authorities approach to Community Wealth Building includes a variety of actions including plural ownership (growing small enterprises, community organisations, cooperatives, etc), use of land and property for local financial and social gain, addressing vacant and derelict land, alternative financial models to support local economic development.

75 assets are currently in community ownership in the National Park: 21 of these are village halls. The new LDP will consider whether there is a need for bespoke policies to support community wealth building within the National Park, as well as the role of new development and opportunities through land use change.

Aquaculture: There are 22 lochs (and one lake) in the National Park, as well as 39 miles of coastline around three sea lochs and many miles of rivers. Loch Goil has ecological significance as a Nature Conservation Marine Protected Area (MPA) and a stretch of Loch Long is designated as Shellfish Protected Waters. Loch Goil and Loch Long are Category 3 areas for possible fish farms according to marine fish farm location guidelines, meaning that there appear to be better prospects of satisfying nutrient loading and benthic impact requirements [than Category 1 or 2 areas]. There are currently three active finfish sites (farmed) in the National Park and the Scottish Ministers granted planning permission for a fourth at Loch Long in August 2025. The new LDP will require to carefully consider the application of NPF4 policy for sustainable aquaculture with the National Park statutory aims.

Minerals (Construction Aggregates): There are two active quarries/mines in the National Park – Cononish Gold and Silver Mine near Tyndrum and Cambusmore sand and gravel quarry at Callander. There is no identified requirement for further works in the National Park suggested by the evidence.

Stakeholder comments in relation to sufficiency of the evidence and NPA view on the key implications of this for preparing the new LDP

- **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.
- **Stakeholder engagement on Topic Paper 10** ensured a more comprehensive and up-to-date evidence base. Input from Scottish Enterprise led to expanded analysis of employment and business land use, while NatureScot's comments strengthened mapping and the treatment of long-distance walking routes. Contributions from Argyll and Bute Council, Marine Planning Scotland, and the British Geological Survey ensured the inclusion of the latest strategies and datasets. The paper also incorporates new material on accessible tourism and sustainable water management, reflecting feedback from the Rural Stirling Access Panel and Scottish Water.

- **The key implications arising from the evidence and stakeholder engagement** for this topic area are mainly focussed on the role of the new LDP in supporting a green recovery and sustainable economic development in the National Park, recognising opportunities in nature-based sectors such as agriculture, forestry, tourism and food and drink. It will need to consider and address the limited take-up of previously identified economic development sites, support local businesses and micro-enterprises, and consider the implications of visitor pressures, short-term lets and access to affordable housing for local communities and businesses. The new LDP will also need to support opportunities for communities to own and manage assets, ensuring economic, social, and environmental benefits are considered and integrated into the spatial strategy.

5.11 Place Profile Paper Area 1: Callander and Strathearn Sub Area

Summary of key Place Implications

1. Safeguard distinctive landscapes and restoring the natural environment
2. Manage tourism pressures, including traffic congestion and visitor management
3. Address housing affordability and limited supply
4. Tackle flooding and water management challenges
5. Address transport service connectivity gaps and investment in sustainable transport
6. Build community resilience
7. Identify opportunities for blue-green infrastructure

Relevance of Implications to delivering National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) and NPF4 outcomes:

NPPP Theme: A Nature Positive Place

- The area holds high concentrations of designated natural assets, the Great Trossachs Forest National Nature Reserve, The River Teith Special Area of Conservation and the Ben More – Stob Binnein Site of Special Scientific Interest and the River Earn National Scenic Area.
- Habitat restoration will focus on peatlands, native woodlands and wetlands.
- Natural flood management will support climate resilience and water management.
- Biodiversity work includes species conservation, control of invasive species and herbivore grazing pressures.
- Landscape-scale initiatives promote habitat connectivity and nature recovery, for example the Great Trossachs and Forth Climate Forests.

NPPP Theme: A Carbon Negative Place

- Callander acts as the main transport hub in the network of towns and villages.
- Sustainable and active travel are priorities, building on key routes such as National Cycle Route 7, Rob Roy Way and the Great Trossachs Path.
- Traffic congestion is an issue along key routes and visitor hotspots.
- Low-carbon transport initiatives are expanding, including new bus services, e-bike infrastructure, and improved off-road connections.

NPPP Theme: A Thriving Place

- Callander serves as the main service and employment hub, supporting surrounding rural villages.
- Smaller settlements face challenges with limited services, transport and affordable housing.
- Community facilities and assets play a key role in wellbeing and local enterprise.
- Development pressures stem from mostly from housing demand and tourism growth. Planned infrastructure projects include the new Callander Primary School and design options are being explored for the Callander Meadows area.
- Digital connectivity is improving, extending fibre and coverage across rural areas.
- Community-led regeneration focuses on local hubs, reuse of derelict sites, and heritage enhancement.

5.12 Place Profile Paper Area 2: Strathard and The Trossachs

Summary of key Place Implications

1. Address flood risk and infrastructure limitations
2. Manage seasonal visitor pressure
3. Protect landscape and biodiversity sensitivity
4. Support opportunities for peatland, native woodland and wetland restoration
5. Address housing affordability
6. Address limited transport and active travel connections
7. Support community assets and enterprise initiatives

Relevance of Implications to delivering National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) and NPF4 Outcomes:

NPPP Theme: A Nature Positive Place

- There is a high concentration of designated natural sites including Great Trossachs Forest National Nature Reserve, River Teith Special Area of Conservation, Trossachs Woods Special Area of Conservation and Lake of Menteith Site of Special Scientific Interest and the Trossachs National Scenic Area.
- Peatland and woodland restoration are key priorities, particularly around Loch Ard, Loch Katrine, and linking Loch Ard, Gartmore and Loch Venachar.
- Nature-based flood mitigation is focused on Aberfoyle and the Forth catchment.
- Invasive species management and species conservation programmes (beavers, red squirrels) are ongoing to enhance biodiversity.
- Management of herbivore grazing pressures.
- Community-led actions are focussed on protecting lochshore habitats, open spaces and supporting biodiversity improvements in local settlements.
- Large-scale nature recovery initiatives (National Park Authority led Future Nature Strategy, Forth Climate Forest) promote habitat connectivity and ecological resilience.

NPPP Theme: A Carbon Negative Place

- Aberfoyle serves as the primary hub for sustainable transport and low-carbon infrastructure, linked to Callander.
- Visitor congestion hotspots along the A821, B829 and loch access points highlight the need for low-carbon infrastructure redesign.
- Active travel and connectivity improvements are identified as required between Aberfoyle, Gartmore, Port of Menteith, and Kinlochard, using National Cycle Route 7.
- Mobility hubs in Aberfoyle and Port of Menteith could help integrate EV charging, cycling, and public transport.
- Forestry and peatland projects at the Great Trossachs Forest, Achray Forest and Loch Ard forest and around Lochs Ard and Katrine provide opportunities for carbon sequestration and habitat enhancement.

NPPP Theme: A Thriving Place

- Aberfoyle is the main service and employment hub, supporting surrounding villages.
- Housing affordability and delivery are severely constrained by flood risk and infrastructure pressures for a large part of this area (single road access only).
- Community wealth and facilities are supported through village halls, business hubs, and local community owned businesses.
- Tourism is a significant part of the local economy but also pressures roads, housing and environmental capacity, highlighting the need for sustainable tourism management.
- Play and recreation upgrades are needed to support families and wellbeing.
- Collaboration through the Strathard Framework integrates land use, resilience, and tourism strategy.

5.13 Place Profile Paper Area 3: Strathfillan and Glen Dochart

Summary of key Place Implications:

1. Strengthen Killin, Crianlarich, and Tyndrum as key service hubs
2. Address housing affordability and supply issues
3. Address limited transport and digital connectivity
4. Support peatland and native woodland restoration
5. Strengthen the rural economy, currently dependent on a few key industries
6. Support community enterprise and local ownership
7. Delivery infrastructure projects (mining and renewable energy developments)

Relevance of Implications to delivering National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) and NPF4 Outcomes:

NPPP Theme: A Nature Positive Place

- High concentration of designated natural sites including Ben Lui, Meall na Samhna, River Tay Special Areas of Conservation, and Glen Etive & Glen Fyne Special Protection Areas.

- Restoration priorities focus on peatlands, woodlands, and wetlands across Ben Lui, Strathfillan, and the Rivers Dochart and Fillan.
- Landscape-scale projects such as Wild Strathfillan, Forth Climate Forest, and Greater Cononish Glen enhance ecological function, habitat and woodland connectivity.
- Management of herbivore grazing pressures and tree diseases is needed to protect natural capital and support nature restoration
- Opportunities exist for ecological remediation of historic mining pollution and floodplain restoration.

NPPP Theme: A Carbon Negative Place

- Peatlands and wooded Straths provide major carbon storage and sequestration opportunities through restoration and native woodland expansion.
- Active travel and sustainable transport are underdeveloped, with opportunities for cycle path and National Cycle Route 7 improvements including Killin to Crianlarich.
- Visitor hubs in Killin, Crianlarich, and Tyndrum are identified as key areas for improving visitor facilities, encouraging low-carbon travel, and better managing visitor pressures.
- Public transport gaps exist, especially east to west, with community schemes partially addressing needs.
- Congestion and emissions hotspots are focused at the Falls of Falloch and along the A82.
- Renewable energy potential includes hydro, battery storage and small-scale renewables.

NPPP Theme: A Thriving Place

- Population decline and service access challenges affect rural areas outside Killin.
- Killin serves as the main service hub for the area's healthcare, retail and education services.
- Crianlarich and Tyndrum have close service links with Killin and Callander, which can present some challenges in terms of accessibility and connectivity.
- Affordable housing stock is relatively high, but limited development land and second-home pressures restrict availability.
- Community assets and ownership (village halls, woodland, hubs) support social cohesion and local wealth building.
- Local economy relies on tourism and land management, with a need for diversification.
- Worker accommodation shortages constrain employment opportunities.
- Digital connectivity gaps limit business, education, and wider community access.

5.14 Place Profile Paper Area 4: Cowal

Summary of key Place Implications:

1. Support remote coastal and loch rural communities
2. Improve infrastructure resilience and encourage investment
3. Manage flood and coastal erosion risks
4. Support native woodland and peatland restoration opportunities

5. Support tourism and nature-based economy opportunities
6. Address housing affordability pressures

Relevance of Implications to delivering National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) and NPF4 Outcomes:

NPPP Theme: A Nature Positive Place

- High concentration of designated natural sites including Loch Goil Marine Protected Area, Sites of Special Scientific Interest at Loch Eck, Craighoyle Woodland, Hell's Glen, Beinn an Lochain. Key Atlantic oak and hazel woodlands.
- Habitat restoration priorities focus on peatlands, woodlands, and wetlands across uplands, loch fringes, and loch catchments.
- Forest restructuring through Forestry and Land Scotland's plans to replace larch with native broadleaves and expand Scotland's Rainforest.
- Herbivore management, invasive species control, and tree disease mitigation to reduce grazing pressures, support habitat recovery and biodiversity.
- Marine and coastal conservation addresses litter, aquaculture pressures, grey seal protection, and seagrass restoration.

NPPP Theme: A Carbon Negative Place

- Peatlands and forests around Loch Goil, Loch Eck, and Glen Finart provide key carbon storage and sequestration.
- Transport challenges include limited bus and active-travel links, car dependency, and congestion on A83/A815.
- Sustainable connectivity opportunities include off-road cycle routes, improved bus/ferry links, and water transport upgrades.
- Visitor management and NPA led Place Programme investments aim to reduce emissions and manage seasonal demand.
- Renewable energy and infrastructure developments include hydro, powerline rerouting and potential wind/battery storage.

NPPP Theme: A Thriving Place

- Dunoon is the main service hub for education, health, and retail. Lochgoilhead support local services and employment.
- Housing pressures arise from limited land, infrastructure constraints, high costs, and a high proportion of second homes/short-term lets.
- Community control of assets is strong through hydro schemes, community woodlands, gardens, halls, and heritage assets.
- Digital connectivity is adequate in core villages but limited in upland and coastal fringes.
- Tourism and nature-based economy is supported by Benmore Botanic Gardens, Puck's Glen, and Cormonachan Woods, requiring careful visitor management.
- Built heritage at risk includes Carrick Castle Church, Glenfinart House, and listed coastal buildings needing investment.

5.15 Place Profile Paper Area 5: East Loch Lomond

Summary of key Place Implications:

1. Manage Visitor pressures and seasonal congestion
2. Address limited public transport and active travel options
3. Address limited affordable housing supply
4. Address flooding and climate risks
5. Support opportunities for woodland, peatland, and habitat restoration.
6. Manage invasive species and tree disease

Relevance of Implications to delivering National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) and NPF4 Outcomes:

NPPP Theme: A Nature Positive Place

- High concentration of designated natural sites including Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve & RAMSAR, Endrick Water & Loch Lomond Woods Special Areas of Conservation, Ben Lomond & Conic Hill Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Loch Lomond National Scenic Area.
- Priority habitats for restoration are Atlantic oak woodland, peatlands, and wetlands.
- Ecological pressures include invasive species, tree disease, and herbivore grazing.
- Key restoration initiatives involve peatland and woodland restoration, rainforest recovery, and nature corridors along Endrick Water and Loch Lomond.
- Beaver reintroduction at RSPB Loch Lomond enhances water management and biodiversity.

NPPP Theme: A Carbon Negative Place

- Visitor travel is largely car-dependent, causing congestion and emissions.
- Active travel links between Drymen, Balmaha, and Rowardennan are key opportunities.
- Primary and secondary visitor hubs (Drymen/Balmaha and Rowardennan) are priorities for low-carbon infrastructure investment.
- Sustainable transport opportunities include park & ride, improved water transport, cycle paths, safe walking networks, and blue/green infrastructure upgrades.
- Mobility Partnership and Place Programme support integrated low-carbon travel and visitor management.

NPPP Theme: A Thriving Place

- Drymen serves as the main service and living hub for east Loch Lomond communities
- Housing pressures include limited affordable/social housing and high levels of short-term lets and second homes.
- Tourism infrastructure is under strain from visitor volumes.
- Key development projects include future housing in Drymen and Balmaha, mixed-use redevelopment at Pirniehall (Croftamie), and Rowardennan car park upgrades.
- Employment centres on tourism, hospitality, land-based work, and public services, with Drymen and Balmaha as local hubs.
- Historic assets at risk include Buchanan Castle and Pirniehall

5.16 Place Profile Paper Area 6: West Loch Lomond

Summary of key Place Implications:

1. Manage visitor pressure and congestion
2. Address infrastructure and housing pressures
3. Address flooding and climate risks
4. Address ageing population challenges
5. Support peatland, woodland, and rainforest restoration
6. Manage Invasive Species and Herbivore Impact
7. Support upgrades to strategic energy and transport corridors

Relevance of Implications to delivering National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) and NPF4 Outcomes:

NPPP Theme: A Nature Positive Place

- High concentration of designated natural sites including Loch Lomond Woods Special Area of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Glen Etive & Glen Fyne Species Protection Areas and Balloch Castle Country Park and Loch Lomond National Scenic Area.
- Priority habitats are Atlantic oak woodland, peatlands west of Luss, and wetland corridors along Loch Lomond and Loch Long.
- Key species include red squirrels, golden eagles, and beavers.
- Pressures include climate change, invasive species, tree disease (*Phytophthora ramorum*) and herbivore overgrazing.
- Restoration and partnership opportunities involve peatland and woodland restoration, rainforest habitat expansion, native woodland recovery associated with strategic larch removal, nature networks, natural flood management, and local actions on invasive species, marine litter, and greenspace improvement.

NPPP Theme: A Carbon Negative Place

- Opportunities for strategic travel low-carbon hubs: Balloch and Arrochar/Tarbet (Primary), Luss (Secondary).
- Major transport routes (A82, A83) are identified for upgrading.
- Visitor transport is heavily car-dependent (79%), causing congestion, emissions, and safety issues.
- Hotspots for congestion include A82 (Balloch–Luss–Tarbet) and A83 (Arrochar).
- Opportunities include active travel upgrades, integrated sustainable transport strategies, improved bus/rail/water links, blue/green infrastructure

NPPP Theme: A Thriving Place

- Settlements: Balloch is the main visitor gateway and service hub; Arrochar & Tarbet host a range of local services and facilities and to a lesser extent Luss, which also experiences visitor pressures.
- Community challenges: Affordable housing shortages, ageing population, youth outmigration and car dependence.
- Built environment pressures: Long-term vacant and derelict sites, plus Buildings at Risk (for example Balloch Castle, parts of Tarbet Hotel).
- Economy and infrastructure: Tourism and hospitality dominate; targeted regeneration at Balloch, Arrochar & Tarbet; digital coverage generally strong.

5.17 Conclusions on the overall sufficiency of the evidence

Engagement with stakeholders has been vital in shaping and strengthening the Topic Papers, ensuring that each reflects current data, relevant policy context, and a broad range of local and professional insights. Feedback received through engagement has enhanced the accuracy and relevance of the evidence base supporting the new LDP. The NPA is satisfied with the sufficiency of the evidence to inform the next stage of preparing the new LDP and to be able to proceed towards Gatecheck and then Proposed Plan stage. There are several gaps in evidence identified in the Topic Papers however information is provided to explain how and when these gaps are being addressed.

6. How did we engage - Engagement Statement

6.1 Our approach to engagement

a. *Overarching principles*

People care deeply about the National Park and the places they live and work. By embracing engagement as an opportunity to bring local people into our strategic development planning, a stronger, shared vision can be built for the future of this special landscape through the new LDP.

Our approach to engagement is built upon years of experience in supporting the development of Local Place Plans, and guided by the Scottish Government's [Effective Community Engagement in Local Development Plans](#) planning guidance, as well as the principles shared in the National Standards for Community Engagement. We have strived to be inclusive, offer meaningful opportunities to participate, and tailor the engagement approach to the needs of different stakeholders. In doing so, we can build upon our long-term collaborative relationships throughout the plan-making process.

There has been a programme of community capacity building and support in place since the National Park was established in 2022, particularly through our approach to Local Place Plans in recent years. This multiyear engagement has allowed the NPA to involve, collaborate with and ultimately empower many National Park communities to actively shape the future of their communities and places. This foundation was critical in the NPA's approach to engagement for the new LDP. Both in acknowledging the richness of the evidence already held from local communities and their Local Place Plans, but also in understanding how best to engage people through the whole lifecycle of preparing the new LDP and beyond into delivery.

Recognising the Evidence Gathering stage as a technical stage, the engagement was consciously designed to meet different audiences' needs by tailoring how evidence was presented and how feedback was sought. The NPA invited wide-ranging opinion on the evidence, but have been proportionate to reduce potential consultation fatigue, knowing this is the early stages of Local Development Plan preparation and there will be many future opportunities to engage with the process. As such, the NPA also aimed to build this awareness and momentum toward later stages too.

b. Previous engagement

The approach to engaging on the new LDP was grounded in extensive and recent engagement, ranging from the formal NPPP consultation to the more recent years of Local Place Plan preparation support. It is through this experience that the NPA have developed excellent working relationships with partners, key stakeholders, local businesses and communities, and have a detailed knowledge of local priorities and wider key issues to address.

The NPA recognise that we have received considerable input from individuals and communities who have shared their insights on issues affecting the National Park, and their priorities for improving these. This has provided a robust evidence base and working knowledge of how best to engage with stakeholders.

i. National Park Partnership Plan

The National Park Partnership Plan for 2024-2029 is the management plan for the Loch Lomond The Trossachs National Park as a place, required under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. It provides the context on which the LDP is built.

As highlighted above in Section Three, given the Plan's remit to cover the full National Park area, and role in coordinating action by multiple partners, it is designed to be a *partnership* Plan. This means it needs to represent the consensus views of all National Park stakeholders, whilst meeting the aims for National Parks set out by Scottish Government. Engagement and consultation were therefore critical to its successful development and adoption.

An extensive plan of engagement was delivered in the development phase. This covered discussions with key agencies, focus groups with underrepresented voices such as younger people and those from ethnic minority backgrounds, meetings with community groups, and an overarching campaign to promote engagement.

This culminated in a 12-week formal consultation in 2023, delivered on the Commonplace digital platform. We received a total of 233 responses to the formal consultation, with a further 75 contributions made via the interactive map on the Commonplace platform.

These responses were critical in helping the Authority to finalise the National Park Partnership Plan. Comments received on the third chapter of the National Park Partnership Plan, 'Enabling a Greener Economy and Sustainable Living' are particularly relevant to the new LDP. Responses received were generally supportive of the objectives within the draft Plan. Topics raised included the need for more affordable housing, policies on housing and tourism accommodation, and renewable energy development. The views LDP preparation.

ii. Local Place Plans

The NPA has a long and well-established history of supporting community-led planning, beginning with Community Action Plans (CAPs) over a decade ago. This sustained engagement has laid the groundwork for the successful rollout of Local Place Plans (LPPs), introduced formally in 2022 under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. The transition from CAPs to LPPs reflects a deepening of the Authority's commitment to empowering communities to shape their places. This long-term relationship has fostered trust, built

capacity, and enabled communities to articulate their priorities with increasing confidence and clarity.

To date, 13 LPPs have been registered across the National Park, with a further five in development. With 21 community council areas in total, this represents approximately 85% coverage, an exceptionally high figure but we are keen to achieve 100% coverage for the National Park. This level of uptake provides strong assurance that the LPPs are representative of community views across the National Park. The breadth of coverage also demonstrates the effectiveness of the NPA support programme and the enthusiasm of local communities to engage meaningfully in shaping their future.

The NPA's approach to supporting LPP development was designed to be both innovative and empowering. Communities are encouraged to lead the process through locally formed steering groups, often composed of volunteers and local stakeholders. Grants have been made available to enable communities to commission specialist support for consultation, mapping, and facilitation. In-kind technical support—such as GIS mapping, planning advice, and workshop facilitation—has been provided to at least eight communities, ensuring equitable access to resources regardless of local capacity. This model has helped communities think more broadly about climate, nature, land use, and enterprise, aligning local priorities with national policy goals.

Communities have also adopted best-practice tools in developing their LPPs, including the Place Standard Tool, which supports structured engagement and helps assess the quality of a place across social, environmental, and economic dimensions. This has enabled communities to identify strengths and areas for improvement, and to prioritise actions in a transparent and inclusive way. The use of mapping tools—often supported by the Park Authority's GIS team—has further enhanced the quality and clarity of the plans. Together, these approaches ensure that LPPs are not only compliant with statutory requirements but also rooted in genuine community insight and ambition.

The Lochgoil Local Place Plan (2024–2029) is a good pilot example of community-led spatial planning within the National Park. Developed through extensive consultation and supported by a locally formed steering group, the plan integrates a strategic vision for land use with broader social and economic objectives. Lochgoil's approach is particularly innovative due to its alignment with the Scottish Government's Regional Land Use Framework (RLUF) pilot programme. As one of six communities invited to participate, Lochgoil used its LPP process to explore how land use decisions could be made collaboratively between residents, landowners, and public bodies. This led to the creation of a Land Use Forum - an open platform for dialogue and decision-making -designed to tackle climate change, restore habitats, and promote sustainable development. The plan's use of best-practice tools, including the Place Standard Tool and participatory mapping, further demonstrates how community insight can shape land use in a way that is inclusive, locally relevant, and nationally significant. Learnings from Lochgoil are informing approaches and ideas for future Local Place Plans and alignment with other plans and strategies.

Table 3 summarises the registered Local Place Plans to date, showing the date of publication, level of support provided by the NPA to preparing the plan, the approach taken by the community in preparing their plan and the number of people that engaged from the community.

Table 3 Summary of Local Place Plans

Community / Local Place Plan	Date Published	Support provided from the NPA	Community approach and delivery	Number of People Responding
Ardentinny	Not yet published	Funding, GIS support, Planning team support, biodiversity and climate change consultation, monitoring, governance, submission support	Community engagement events (place standard workshop, walkabouts, asset mapping), Steering Group, Residents' survey, Focus Group.	92 people engaged, including local businesses
Arrochar, Tarbet & Ardlui	April 2023	Funding, GIS support, Planning team support, support for project delivery, submission support	Residents survey, Focus Group, Community Event	293 people engaged, including 38 local businesses
Balloch & Haldane	Not yet published	Funding, priorities setting, GIS support, proposals, Planning team support, submission support	Steering Group, stakeholder mapping, survey, community engagement events	In process of engagement
Balquhidder, Lochearnhead & Strathyre	March 2024	Planning support, GIS support, submission support	Steering Group, community engagement events	94 people engaged, including businesses
Callander	2022	Funding, GIS support, delivery-plan guidance, Planning team support, monitoring	Focus groups, information-rich website (due to Covid restrictions), High School survey, Place Standard survey, Community Survey and ballot on analyses of previous surveys	357 engaged including 175 High school pupils
Croftamie	Not yet published	Funding, GIS support, Planning team support, biodiversity and climate change support, monitoring	Community survey, mapping, 2 community engagement events, worked with a PhD student on heritage information.	Not yet published
Drymen	2023	Funding, GIS support, Planning team support, monitoring and reporting requirements, submission support	Community engagement, survey, workshop, steering group	350 engaged including local businesses
East Loch Lomond	Not yet published	Funding, GIS support, planning team support, monitoring, biodiversity and	Steering group, stakeholder mapping, survey, community survey, workshops,	230 engaged, including local businesses and landowners

		climate change consultation		
Gartmore	March 2024	Funding, GIS support, Planning team support, monitoring	Maps, steering group, survey, community events, Place Standard Tool	172 people engaged
Killin & Ardeonaig	Not yet published	Storyboard/draft plan, templates & guidance for validation, support from Development Planning Team, monitoring	Steering group, community event, Place Standard Tool, walkabout	Not yet published
Kilmaronock	March 2024	Funding, GIS support, pre-submission meeting, monitoring	Place Standard Tool, survey, community event	111 engaged, including local businesses and landowners
Lochgoil	March 2024	Funding, GIS support, advice on land-use topics and climate and nature, submission support, monitoring	Steering group, community engagement events, maps	100 engaged, including landowners and businesses
Luss & Arden	March 2023	Funding, project delivery support, monitoring,	Community survey, community drop-in event, business survey, primary school session	120 engaged, including local businesses
Port of Menteith	2025	Funding, GIS support, monitoring, Planning team support	Steering group, survey, online hub, community engagement, focus group, Place standard scoping session.	135 engaged
Strathard	March 2024	Funding, GIS support, documentation for consultation, Planning support, submission support	Workshops, youth sessions, survey	500 engaged
Strathfillan	2021	Monitoring, GIS support, planning team support.	Survey, Place Standard Tool, open days, structured workshops, mapped discussions, school/YP sessions, business & resident focus groups	70 engaged, including local businesses
St Fillans	March 2024	Funding, IS support, Planning support, submission support, monitoring	Steering group, focus groups, surveys, place standard workshops, workshops, community event	150 engaged, including local businesses
Trossachs	2024	Funding, monitoring, GIS support, advice on biodiversity and climate change,	Steering group, Consultant, based on previous Community Action Plan, Community Open Day using Place	30 engaged

		planning team support.	Standard Tool, Young People's Open Day.	
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c. *Ongoing relevant engagement*

Whilst noting the specific consultation and engagement opportunities above, it is emphasised that by nature of being a NPA, partnership working is fundamental to the delivery of our objectives. This means that constantly engaging partners and stakeholders, to build understanding of shared issues and working together on solutions. Some of the wider ongoing engagement mechanisms that have helped shape and inform the evidence base for the new LDP are:

- The Strathard Framework Delivery Group: The Strathard Framework is a rural development and land use strategy designed to create a healthier, more climate-resilient future for the Strathard area within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. Developed through a collaborative, multi-year process, it brings together community representatives, businesses, landowners, and public agencies in a co-design approach. The Framework builds on existing plans and strategies, including Community Life Plans (the community's version of Local Place Plans), and was shaped through a series of workshops that identified shared priorities and aspirations. It is unique in integrating both development planning and land use guidance, offering a holistic view of opportunities and challenges across Kinlochard, Aberfoyle, Stronachlachar, and Inversnaid. Delivery is now underway, overseen by a smaller partnership group representing community and public sector agencies, and Rural Stirling Housing Association, through a dedicated Delivery Plan comprising ten partnership projects, which focus on nature-based flood management, biodiversity enhancement, active travel infrastructure, affordable housing, and eco-tourism development. The Framework also serves as supplementary planning guidance alongside the National Park's Local Development Plan, influencing future land use and development decisions and is acting as a pilot approach to test how place-based approaches can be developed in the National Park.
- [Local Visitor Management Groups](#): there are four active place-based groups bringing together representatives from local Community Councils and Community Development Trusts, businesses, landowners, Local Authorities and key agencies such as Police Scotland, Transport Scotland and Forestry and Land Scotland. These groups ensure that visitor management decisions at a local level are made in an inclusive way.
- [Place Programme](#) consultations and engagement around the Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies were undertaken through the Local Visitor Management groups, noted above. Projects developed from these studies have widened engagement to include the local communities and those led by the NPA include Tarbet Pier Masterplan, Rowardennan Masterplan, Balmaha Masterplan [Balloch Pierhead Improvement Action Plan](#) (jointly with West Dunbartonshire Council). The latter of these alone received over 200 consultation responses. Those led by others include the community led work in Callander at Callander Meadows and Station Road.

- Business Destination Group: this is an established business led group comprising representation from tourism business owners and leaders Park-wide and is a key communication, engagement and development network between businesses and the National Park Authority.
- The Future Nature Operational Group: comprised of 29 organisations who were involved in the development of our Future Nature Route Map, this group collaborate on delivering projects that tackle the effects of the global nature crisis happening in the National Park.
- Callander Partnership: a forum comprised of Callander Community Development Trust, Callander Community Council, Stirling Council, the NPA and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Countryside Trust, with a wider supporting membership including a range of Callander based Third Sector groups and Forestry and Land Scotland.
- Scottish Land and Estates Land Management Forum: a collaborative forum bringing together members of Scottish Land and Estates who manage holdings within the National Park boundary and the NPA.
- Deer Management Groups: collaborative associations of landowners, land managers, stalkers and other stakeholders who coordinate the sustainable management of deer across the landscape. Deer Management Groups play a key role in implementing local deer management plans, monitoring populations, and aligning their practices with national policy and local priorities set by the Deer Management Group.
- The Authority's ongoing relationships with stakeholders from these forums and wider have been an important foundation for the Evidence Gathering stage and will continue to be built upon as we move through later stages of preparation.

6.2 Summary of engagement delivered for the Local Development Plan Evidence Gathering Stage

A broad range of engagement was undertaken to support the preparation of the Evidence Report. This ranged from detailed technical correspondence with the key agencies, to local in-person workshops and bespoke opportunities for select audiences, to an introductory online presence to build awareness of the new LDP, suitable for all audiences.

d. Who we engaged with

The NPA are required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 to engage and consult with specific stakeholder groups, such as the planning key agencies, children and young people, Gypsy/Travellers and disabled people. However, as part of the engagement approach, this was broadened to enable those with an interest in development and land use, community development, and the relevant topics within our Evidence Report to participate too. Engagement covered:

- [Planning key agencies](#), comprised of public bodies recognised by Scottish Government as supporting the delivery of land use planning.
- Four partner Local Authorities: West Dunbartonshire, Argyll & Bute, Perth & Kinross and Stirling Councils.

- National Park Partnership Plan [partner agencies](#)
- Internal Park Authority specialist colleagues.
- All Community Councils, Community Development Trusts and key local stakeholders who have previously engaged through Local Place Plan preparation.
- Local businesses, landowners and land managers, including representative bodies, such as Scottish Land and Estates and National Farmers Union of Scotland.
- The general public and those who have signed up to be updated from the current Local Development Plan.
- Children and young people, disabled people and Gypsy/Travellers, identified as specific groups to include in engagement by the legislation.

e. *How the Authority engaged*

The Authority delivered a range of engagement opportunities throughout the preparation of this Evidence Report. Early engagement commenced with the key agencies, Local Authorities and National Park Partnership Plan partners in February 2025, with a focused engagement period with all other stakeholders delivered over May - September 2025. Engagement consisted of 5 main strands:

- By correspondence and discussion with Key Agencies and NPPP partners on the topic papers and supplementary papers
- Online and digital
- In-person, place-based workshops
- Feedback surveys
- Further bespoke engagement

Each of these engagement strands is explained in further detail in the sections below.

f. *What the Authority engaged on*

The Authority carried out engagement focusing on the following documents:

- All 10 technical Topic Papers
- Supplementary and background papers to the topic papers, including:
 - draft Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and interactive map,
 - Population and Housing Background paper
 - Play Sufficiency Assessment
- All 6 Place Profile sub-area summaries

All can be found on our website: [Help Shape our Local Development Plan - Here. Now. All of us. - Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park](#)

6.3 Correspondence with key agencies and National Park Partnership Plan partners

g. *Planning key agencies and partner Local Authorities*

The first stage of engagement was with key agencies and National Park Partnership Plan partners to ensure that the topic papers and supporting documents were as complete as possible.

Prior to wider circulation, planning key agencies were asked to provide feedback on topic papers on the completeness and accuracy of the information presented in each of the topic papers, asking for evidence to be shared with the Authority where required for inclusion. This was carried out via correspondence and also in focused discussions as relevant.

Throughout the early development of the topic papers, the Authority continued to work with partner Local Authorities. This was mainly at officer level but also through various groups and forums, for example as members of Stirling, and Argyll and Bute Strategic Housing Forums. This allows understanding of potential commonality in some of the Authorities' approaches for areas within and outside the National Park and agreeing data sharing where required to inform the topic papers and wider approach to preparing the Evidence Report. This continued partnership approach also allowed the Authority to take a proportionate and best value approach. For example, utilising the relevant engagement responses gathered by Stirling Council's Education Department's engagement was more pragmatic than repeating the same engagement for our Play Sufficiency Assessment.

Where possible, feedback from key agencies and local authorities was integrated into the topic papers and it was these updated, second versions that were available for wider and public engagement.

Following the closure of the public feedback stage, where required, the Authority then re-engaged with the relevant key agencies to notify them of the changes that had been made following theirs and wider feedback, and at that stage asked for statements of agreement to move forward to the Evidence Report submitting stage.

Statutory Key Agencies	Topic Paper 1: Climate Change and Land Use	Topic Paper 2: Biodiversity, Natural Places, and Forestry, Woodland and Trees	Topic Paper 3: Infrastructure First	Topic Paper 4: Flooding, Water Management and Blue and Green Infrastructure	Topic Paper 5: Energy and Heat and Cooling	Topic Paper 6: Sustainable Transport	Topic Paper 7: Housing	Topic Paper 8: Living Well Locally	Topic Paper 9: Cultural Heritage and Place	Topic Paper 10: Rural Economy
Historic Environment Scotland	✓✓	✓✓			✓✓			✓✓	✓✓	
NatureScot	✓✓	✓✓		✓✓		✓✓		✓✓		✓✓
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓				✓		✓
Scottish Water	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Scottish Enterprise								✓✓		✓✓
Health Boards			✓					✓		
Regional Transport Partnerships						✓✓ (TACTRAN)				
Crofting Commission	✓									✓

Other Key Agencies	Topic Paper 1: Climate Change and Land Use	Topic Paper 2: Biodiversity, Natural Places, and Forestry, Woodland and Trees	Topic Paper 3: Infrastructure First	Topic Paper 4: Flooding, Water Management and Blue and Green Infrastructure	Topic Paper 5: Energy and Heat and Cooling	Topic Paper 6: Sustainable Transport	Topic Paper 7: Housing	Topic Paper 8: Living Well Locally	Topic Paper 9: Cultural Heritage and Place	Topic Paper 10: Rural Economy
Sport Scotland								✓✓		
Architecture and Design Scotland									✓✓	
British Geological Society		✓✓		✓✓	✓✓			✓✓		✓✓
Scottish Government Departments	Topic Paper 1: Climate Change and Land Use	Topic Paper 2: Biodiversity, Natural Places, and Forestry, Woodland and Trees	Topic Paper 3: Infrastructure First	Topic Paper 4: Flooding, Water Management and Blue and Green Infrastructure	Topic Paper 5: Energy and Heat and Cooling	Topic Paper 6: Sustainable Transport	Topic Paper 7: Housing	Topic Paper 8: Living Well Locally	Topic Paper 9: Cultural Heritage and Place	Topic Paper 10: Rural Economy
Transport Scotland			✓✓			✓✓				
Scottish Forestry	✓	✓✓								
Marine Scotland	✓	✓		✓						✓✓

Local Authorities	Topic Paper 1: Climate Change and Land Use	Topic Paper 2: Biodiversity, Natural Places, and Forestry, Woodland and Trees	Topic Paper 3: Infrastructure First	Topic Paper 4: Flooding, Water Management and Blue and Green Infrastructure	Topic Paper 5: Energy and Heat and Cooling	Topic Paper 6: Sustainable Transport	Topic Paper 7: Housing	Topic Paper 8: Living Well Locally	Topic Paper 9: Cultural Heritage and Place	Topic Paper 10: Rural Economy
West Dunbartonshire	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Argyll and Bute	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Stirling	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Perth and Kinross	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Additional	Topic Paper 1: Climate Change and Land Use	Topic Paper 2: Biodiversity, Natural Places, and Forestry, Woodland and Trees	Topic Paper 3: Infrastructure First	Topic Paper 4: Flooding, Water Management and Blue and Green Infrastructure	Topic Paper 5: Energy and Heat and Cooling	Topic Paper 6: Sustainable Transport	Topic Paper 7: Housing	Topic Paper 8: Living Well Locally	Topic Paper 9: Cultural Heritage and Place	Topic Paper 10: Rural Economy
HSCP			✓✓				✓✓			
Scottish and Southern Electricity			✓✓		✓✓					

Networks Transmission										
Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Distribution			✓✓		✓✓					
SP Energy Networks			✓		✓					
West Of Scotland Archaeology Service									✓✓	
RPID	✓	✓								
Scottish Government Regional Land Use Partnerships Team	✓									
Stirling Area Access Panel	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Homes for Scotland	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓✓	✓		✓
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust						✓		✓✓		✓

Key	
Consulted	✓
Response Received	✓

Strathfillan & Glen Dochart				
Stakeholder group	Invitee	Workshop attendance	Topic Paper survey response submitted	Area summary survey response submitted
Community Organisations	Strathfillan CDT	✓		
	Killin & Ardeonaig CC	✓		
	Killin & Ardeonaig CDT	✓		
Other relevant local stakeholders	Inveraray & Tyndrum DMG			
	Tyndrum Infrastructure Group			
	Rural Stirling Housing Association			
	Hosteling Scotland			
	NPA Board Members			
	Forestry and Land Scotland			
	Local Business Owners			
	Landowners	✓		

Callander & Strathearn				
Stakeholder group	Invitee	Workshop attendance	Topic Paper survey response submitted	Area summary survey response submitted
Community Organisations	Callander CDT	✓		
	Callander CC	✓		

	Balquhidder, Lochearnhead & Strathyre CT		✓	
	Balquhidder, Lochearnhead & Strathyre CC	✓	✓	
	St Fillans CC			
	St Fillans CDT			
Other relevant local stakeholders	Callander Enterprise			
	Balquhidder DMG	✓		
	Glenartney DMG			
	Stirling DMG			
	Forestry and Land Scotland		✓	
	Landowners	✓		
	NPA Board members	✓		
	Callander Partnership members			
	Scottish Land and Estates			
	National Farmers Union of Scotland			
	Rural Stirling Housing			
	Water Safety Partnership			
	Callander Flood Group	✓		

Strathard & Trossachs				
Stakeholder group	Invitee	Workshop attendance	Topic Paper survey response submitted	Area summary survey response submitted
Community Organisations	Gartmore CT			
	Gartmore CC			
	Strathard CDT			
	Strathard CT	✓		

	Strathard CC	✓		
	Trossachs CC			
	Trossachs CT			
	Port of Menteith CC	✓	✓	✓
Other relevant local stakeholders	Kinlochard Residents Association			
	Balquhidder DMG			
	Scottish Water			
	Landowners	✓		
	NPA Board Members	✓		
	National Farmers Union of Scotland			
	FLS			
	Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust	✓	✓	✓
	Local Business Owners	✓		
	Forth Rivers Trust	✓		
	Strathard Flood Group	✓		

East Loch Lomond

Stakeholder group	Invitee	Workshop attendance	Topic Paper survey response submitted	Area summary survey response submitted
Community Organisations	Croftamie CT	✓		
	Croftamie CC			
	Drymen CDT	✓		
	East Loch Lomond CT	✓		
	Kilmaronock CDT	✓	✓	✓
	Drymen CC	✓		

	Kilmaronock CC	✓	✓	✓
Other relevant local stakeholders	East Loch Lomond Land Management Forum	✓		
	RSPB Loch Lomond	✓		✓
	Buchanan Castle Roads and Infrastructure Group	✓		
	FLS			
	Local Business Owners	✓	✓	
	Landowners	✓		✓
	NPA Board Members	✓		
	NTS Ben Lomond			

West Loch Lomond				
Stakeholder group	Invitee	Workshop attendance	Topic Paper survey response submitted	Area summary survey response submitted
Community Organisations	Arrochar, Tarbet & Ardlui CC	✓		
	Arrochar & Tarbet CDT	✓		
	Luss & Arden CC	✓		
	Luss & Arden CDT			
	Balloch & Haldane CC	✓		
	Kilmaronock CC	✓	✓	✓
Other relevant local stakeholders	West Loch Lomond DMG			
	Inveraray & Tyndrum DMG			
	Local Businesses	✓		
	Scottish Enterprise		✓	
	Landowners	✓		✓
	FLS			
	NPA Board Members	✓		

	Scottish Land and Estates			
	National Farmers Union of Scotland			
	Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group	✓		

Cowal				
Stakeholder group	Invitee	Workshop attendance	Topic Paper survey response submitted	Area summary survey response submitted
Community Organisations	Ardentinny CC			✓
	Kilmun (Benmore & Kilmun CT)			
	Kilmun CC			
	Lochgoil CT	✓		
	Lochgoil CC			
	Carrick Castle CT	✓		
	Sandbank CT			
	Strachur CC			
Other relevant local stakeholders	FLS			
	Local Businesses			
	Landowners			
	NPA Board Members	✓		
	Benmore Botanic Gardens			
	Argyll Countryside Trust			
	Historic Kilmun	✓		

Tabled summary of our key agency engagement, broken down by topic paper, is presented in the previous section.

h. National Park Partnership Plan partners and internal stakeholders

Alongside the focused asks for key agencies on the topic papers, wider engagement on the new Local Development Plan was carried out with NPPP partners. Information was highlighted at a meeting with the Local Access Forum for the National Park. A focused discussion was held with the Future Nature Operational Group, which is made up of partners across public and third sector working on tackling the nature crisis. The aim of both meetings was to discuss any relevant issues from the topic papers and highlighting the opportunity to provide formal feedback via the surveys.

In addition to external partner engagement, internal National Park Authority staff received a briefing on the new Local Development Plan at an all-staff meeting, to support promotion of the new Local Development Plan and the opportunity to engage with the feedback surveys, as part of wider partner discussions.

National Park Authority Board members were provided with focused briefings, enabling them to support their local communities in engaging with the Evidence Gathering stage. This is explored further in the in-person, place-based workshop section below.

6.4 Online and digital

To ensure that the preparation of the new LDP was transparent and made available to the public at large, the Authority [created specific pages](#) on the Evidence Gathering stage that were kept updated throughout. The aim of these pages was to provide explanatory context to all audiences, and importantly as an accessible place to host all topic papers and area summaries alongside feedback surveys. These pages have received over 1,700 views since they were launched in May. Alternative formats of the area summaries were offered by request to increase accessibility for online users.

Alongside the targeted communications to key agencies and key local stakeholders invited to workshops, we also used the mailing list generated through previous engagement on the current Local Development Plan to notify the 343 subscribers that the Evidence Gathering stage was commencing and then that feedback surveys were open for people to comment. These mailers had a higher rate of engagement with a maximum of 14.8% people following links to our website for further information.

A short online briefing was also offered via Microsoft Teams and was advertised for wider public to sign up to via the website. This was also advertised through the communications about the in-person workshops as an alternative to those unable to make their local workshop, as well as to key stakeholders from partner agencies. A summary of the discussions from this online briefing is available in Appendix 4: Associated Evidence Report Appendices a) Report of pre-Evidence Report Engagement Consultation Workshops.

6.5 In-person, place-based workshops

The Authority's most significant engagement activity within the Evidence Gathering stage was the delivery of six in-person, place-based workshops delivered across the National Park area.

As the Local Development Plan is a spatial plan, in early scoping we identified six different draft sub-areas for consideration. The approach was to group local living services around the Community Council boundaries they support, alongside the surrounding landscape that shares common qualities and management practices. This resulted in six areas, and six workshops being hosted:

- West Loch Lomond
- East Loch Lomond
- Cowal
- Strathard and The Trossachs
- Strathfillan and Glen Dochart
- Callander and Strathearn

It was important to introduce these six areas early on in our engagement as this spatial format will be used throughout the preparation of the new LDP, subject to required modifications following engagement. This allows various local stakeholders to understand and communicate their immediate needs, whilst also considering how their settlement, village or town needs to connect with other local places for wider local living services. Reflecting the unique challenges and opportunities of living within a National Park, including the surrounding landscape and land use also allows rural and natural capital aspects that are integral to the sustainable future of the National Park to be integrated within the new LDP.

An in-person workshop was held in a community hub in each of these six areas. Rather than just inviting representatives from the relevant Community Councils and Community Development Trusts (all of whom within the National Park area were invited to the relevant workshop) and other community organisations, wider key stakeholders from the area were also invited. This included local land managers and owners, both private and public, local key businesses, and representatives from various local stakeholder groups such as Deer Management Groups. Locally elected Board members, and Board members elected to represent the four Local Authorities on the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority were also present at each of the workshops. Taking this broader approach was intended to promote a rich, holistic and varied conversation of different viewpoints of the needs of the area within the workshops. It also aimed to continue promoting relationships between local stakeholders, which are of real importance when seeking transformative change of an area.

Practically, mailing lists were created by officers within the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority to enable targeted invites and promotion to these workshops to these wide stakeholder audiences.

A total of 68 stakeholders, representing 44 different organisations attended the in-person workshops.

To support these local workshops, detailed Place Profiles for each of the six areas were created. These area summaries present the place based evidence from across all 10 topic papers. They were designed to be visual and map-based to break up the detailed content in a more digestible and accessible format.

Bringing forward the three main themes of the National Park Partnership Plan, which stakeholders would have familiarity of from the earlier consultation, the information for each place was grouped into the following format:

- Place profile introductory page, providing an overview of the area, the local communities covered and key planning and development considerations including all the registered Local Place Plans to be taken into consideration.
- 'A nature positive place' section, communicating the key themes, issues and opportunities from topic papers 1. Climate Change and Land Use, 2. Biodiversity, Natural Places, and Forestry, Woodland and Trees, and 4. Flooding, Water Management, and Blue and Green Infrastructure.
- 'A carbon negative place' section, communicating the key themes, issues and opportunities from topic papers 3. Infrastructure First, 4. Flooding, Water Management, and Blue and Green Infrastructure, 6. Sustainable Transport, 8. Living Well Locally, 9. Cultural Heritage and Place, and 10. Rural Economy.
- 'A thriving place' section, communicating the key themes, issues and opportunities from topic papers 2. Biodiversity, Natural Places, and Forestry, Woodland and Trees, 3. Infrastructure First, 4. Flooding, Water Management, and Blue and Green Infrastructure, 5. Energy and Heat and Cooling, 6. Sustainable Transport, 7. Housing, 8. Living Well Locally, 9. Cultural Heritage and Place, and 10. Rural Economy.

Within the introduction the relevant Local Place Plans were highlighted. For each of the theme sections, a summary of actions from those registered plans was drawn out, clearly contextualising the existing priorities and commitments of local communities.

This was important in continuing to build trust with local stakeholders in showing how the NPA is already taking their needs into consideration in the development of new LDP.

These area summaries were printed at large scale to be displayed during the workshops, as well as being shared digitally on our new LDP webpages.

The workshops were held in the evening, in central community hubs within the area. After a drop in window and time to review the area summary boards, a presentation introducing the new LDP and key concepts was delivered. Further time to read the boards and chat informally between stakeholders and with Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority staff was followed by a facilitated discussion by an external consultant. The external consultant ensured impartiality to allow everyone's voices to be heard, and in capturing the key topics from the workshops. Comments received within the workshops and those summarised within the workshop report have been directly integrated into the topic papers and areas summaries submitted as part of the Evidence Report. However, all attendees to the workshops were also encouraged to complete the formal feedback surveys as well, if required.

A summary of the key themes drawn from the workshops, main discussion points and represented organisations from each of these workshops is presented in full in Appendix 4: Associated Evidence Report Appendices a) Report of pre-Evidence Report Engagement Consultation Workshops.

6.6 Feedback surveys

Three surveys were available online for people to provide feedback. These were made with the widely used Microsoft Forms function, aiming to increase ease of use, and were also designed to be short and simple in format, again intending to promote accessibility. They were hosted on our website and promoted via all engagement channels listed above.

a. Topic Paper Survey summary

A total of 11 organisations and 2 individual stakeholders provided comments on 45 total topic papers, as summarised in the table below.

Organisation name	Topic Papers commented upon (list numbers / names)
ScotWays	3, 6, 7, 8
Port of Menteith Community Council	6
Historic Environment Scotland	9
Individual 1	All Topic Papers
Stirling Area Local Access Panel	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 2
Balquhiddar, Lochearnhead and Strathyre Community Council & Balquhiddar, Lochearnhead and Strathyre Community Trust	All Topic Papers
Balmaha Bunkhouse	6
Scottish Enterprise	10
Clackmannanshire & Stirling HSCP	7, 10
Network Rail	6
Individual 2	10
Persimmon Homes	6, 7, 9
Stirling Council	7

All the comments from these surveys have been directly integrated into the Topic Papers and can be seen in the 'Summary of Engagement' section of each relevant paper.

b. Area Summaries Survey summary

A total of 6 organisations and 2 individual stakeholders provided comments on the area summaries.

Organisation name	Area Summary commented upon	Which Topic Papers comments are relevant to
Port of Menteith Community Council	Strathard & the Trossachs	2, 3, 6
Kilmaronock Community Trust	East Loch Lomond, West Loch Lomond	2, 6, 7, 8

Individual 1	West Loch Lomond	2, 6
Individual 2	Lomond area	7, 8, 0
Luss Estates Company	West Loch Lomond	7, 10
Ardentinny Community Council	Cowal	8
RSPB Scotland	Strathard & the Trossachs, East Loch Lomond	2, 8
Montrose Estates	East Loch Lomond	2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10

All the comments from these surveys have been directly integrated into the Topic Papers and can be seen in the ‘Summary of Engagement’ section of each relevant paper.

c. *Play sufficiency survey*

To ensure that a wide range of stakeholders had an opportunity to reflect on the draft Play Sufficiency Assessment an online survey was designed specifically for the Play Sufficiency Assessment, with the survey branching off after the first question to provide a targeted questionnaire to three groups: Primary School children, Secondary School children, and Parents/carers/community workers. One response was received.

To note, further engagement was completed by Stirling Council over the full Local Authority area, through their Play Park Survey in June 2024. Engagement responses relevant to settlements within the National Park were included within the full Play Sufficiency Assessment.

6.7 Further bespoke engagement

Whilst the above engagement opportunities were comprehensive in being offered to a wide range of participants, further, bespoke engagement was conducted with four stakeholder groups whom benefitted from a more tailored approach.

a. *Land manager’s workshop*

This workshop provided key land use stakeholders a dedicated opportunity to engage in shaping the new LDP at this early state, with a particular focus on the potential to integrate land use planning more effectively. Attendees included members of the Scottish Land & Estates Land Management Forum and representatives from the National Farmers Union of Scotland. The session aimed to explore how land use priorities could inform spatial planning through the next Local Development Plan. Through a series of structured and facilitated discussions, participants shared their views on priorities and opportunities for land use businesses, how spatial planning could work and the tools and incentives required to support the approach, and the challenges, and opportunities for collaboration going forward. While there were understandable uncertainties about the new approach being proposed, participants expressed interest in the potential benefits it could bring to land managers. Importantly, they also provided comment on potential negative impacts that should be

mitigated. There was strong support for the ongoing work of the Authority's land management team and their approach in building productive relationships with land managers. The workshop was viewed as a valuable stepping stone—laying the groundwork for broadening the conversation to include other key voices and for deepening the dialogue around specific initiatives and locations. Looking ahead, there was a shared sense that this work could run in parallel with involving community representatives across the six Local Development Plan areas, with a view to co-designing the early outline of the plan over the next six months.

b. Disability groups

To ensure the Authority had engaged with people with disabilities, the Authority reached out to the main Local Access Panels covering the National Park: Stirling, Argyll and Bute, and West Dunbartonshire areas. Local Access Panels are groups of disabled volunteers who work together to improve physical access and wider social inclusion within their communities, and as such, presented an excellent forum to discuss the evidence for the new Local Development Plan.

This outreach work resulted in detailed written feedback and then a follow-on one-to-one conversation with a representative from the Stirling area Local Access Panel, discussing the needs of people with disabilities in relation to the new LDP. Detailed feedback was then gathered and the insights were collated using the feedback surveys, above.

As the Authority continues to progress through the further stages of preparing the new LDP we will continue to engage with Local Access Forums and seek to make opportunities as accessible as possible.

c. Gypsy/Travellers

As the NPA is not the Housing Authority for the National Park area, and there are no Local Authority managed sites within the National Park, we do not have established forums to engage with Gypsy/Traveller communities. However, the evidence and expertise of Local Authority partners was drawn upon, most extensively West Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute Councils. Both have excellent relationships with their Gypsy/Traveller communities having carried out previous engagement for their respective Housing Need Demand Assessments (HNDA) and in West Dunbartonshire's case for their new LDP, and both have Gypsy/Traveller community and resident forums.

Following advice from the Local Authorities, a bespoke survey was created for this community. It visually showed the closest Local Authority managed sites and summarised that from the current HNDA there was no known requirement for provision within the National Park. A short set of questions asked respondents to confirm whether this was the case or if not, highlight where there might be interest in provision of a site or stopping off point / facilities.

This survey was circulated by the relevant Local Authorities and a Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority officer attended West Dunbartonshire's Dennystoun Forge (the geographically closest site to the National Park's boundary) resident's meeting to discuss this. The aim of the survey was to assess the adequacy of sites and stopping-off points within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park.

A total of 20 responses were received. Of these, 19 respondents identified a need for additional provision within the National Park. Balloch and Luss were the most frequently mentioned locations and Gartocharn was also mentioned by 3 respondents.

The majority of respondents stated that there are not enough safe places to camp when travelling in the National Park. Only two respondents indicated that there were sufficient safe camping areas. When asked to identify historic or preferred stopping places, Balloch and Luss again featured most prominently, with several respondents also referencing Gartocharn and other areas of West Dunbartonshire. A small number mentioned locations such as Balmaha, Callander, Aberfoyle, and Kilmarnock.

Overall, the findings indicate some demand for additional Gypsy/Traveller provision within and around the National Park. Respondents highlighted Balloch, Luss, Gartocharn, and wider West Dunbartonshire as priority areas where managed sites are currently considered to be limited. The feedback also pointed to insufficient formal and informal stopping places to meet both seasonal and longer-term needs. The NPA will continue to work closely with the four housing authorities throughout the preparation of the new LDP to further our understanding of accommodation needs across the National Park and to ensure the requirements of the Gypsy/Traveller community are fully considered.

d. Young People

The Authority have a longstanding programme of opportunities for young people, that the focused new LDP engagement was build upon. The National Park Youth Committee, a group aged 14-26 dedicated to representing the voice of young people in policy and decision making have been integral to the work for the new LDP.

An introductory planning workshop was delivered for the Youth Committee, utilising the Lomond Banks development proposal as a live case study for understanding the importance of the current LDP and NPF4 in making planning decisions generally. This was later followed by a short introduction to the Evidence Gathering stage of preparation, and through discussion with two local members who attended McLaren High, the only high school in the National Park, we developed a focused workshop for other local pupils, to assist with gathering further insight from this audience.

Staff from Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority attended McLaren High School to deliver an introductory workshop and to seek the views of young people regarding the future of the National Park. A total of 16 pupils participated in the session, with approximately half residing within the National Park and the remainder living close to its boundary and regularly engaging with the area through school and as visitors.

The workshop opened with a presentation providing an overview of the planning process, supported by live examples of planning cases within the National Park to provide some context. Officers also introduced the LDP process and outlined opportunities for young people to contribute. In the second part of the session, pupils were invited to identify what they considered important under the three themes of the National Park Partnership Plan: *A Nature Positive Place*, *A Carbon Negative Place*, and *A Thriving Place*. Students were divided into three groups for this exercise, with open discussion actively encouraged.

Under the theme of *A Nature Positive Place*, several consistent priorities were identified. The protection of the natural environment, including water habitats and rare species, emerged as a key concern across all groups:

“We’re really worried about animal conservation. We want animals and their habitats to be protected.”

“We’re concerned about deforesting in Killin. We think it should be farmed responsibly.”

For the theme of *A Carbon Negative Place*, discussion centred on the importance of strengthening both the public transport network and opportunities for active travel. Pupils highlighted the need for accessible and sustainable options, particularly for young people:

“Better cycles paths are important to better connect villages.”

“For transport it’s important for young people to have accessible busses. The busses should also have frequent stops.”

Finally, under the theme of *A Thriving Place*, pupils reflected on the quality of local facilities and the resilience of their communities. Two groups emphasised the need for more formal open spaces, including gardens, while concerns were also raised about the closure of local businesses and the importance of supporting a diverse retail offer:

“Prevent smaller businesses closing down due to inactivity.”

“Start to think about making community gardens for smaller villages.”

The workshop highlighted that young people have a strong vision for the future of the National Park, with particular emphasis on the protection of nature, the reduction of carbon emissions, and the development of thriving, resilient communities. Their contributions reflected a clear understanding of the challenges facing the National Park, alongside practical and constructive suggestions for addressing them. Priorities identified included safeguarding habitats and species, enhancing sustainable transport and active travel networks, and strengthening community facilities while supporting local businesses. These perspectives provide valuable evidence to inform the preparation of the next LDP and will help to ensure that the voices of young people are meaningfully represented in shaping the long-term future of the National Park.

7. Evaluating the success of the current Local Development Plan

As part of this Evidence Report we are required to evaluate the success of the current LDP. This is to help to inform the evidence base for preparing the new LDP.

The Scottish Government Local Development Planning Guidance requires that we evaluate the success of LDP outcomes, allocations and lessons learned from the current plan. We are also to consider the appropriateness of the current spatial strategy for the new LDP.

These are considered below in order of:

- a) Success of Local Development Plan Outcomes
- b) Success of Local Development Plan Allocations
- c) Appropriateness of the Local Development Plan Spatial Development Strategy and
- d) Lessons learned for preparing the new Local Development plan

The evidence gleaned from preparing the Topic Papers has informed our review, as well as a host of other documents, particularly our annual LDP monitoring reports, Action Programme/Delivery Programme, Housing Land Audits, annual Planning Performance Framework and Improvement plans.

As explained in the previous section on our engagement, this was extensive in the lead up to preparing our National Park Partnership Plan (2023) and has helped frame our understanding of key issues and identify the key priorities for action up to 2045, looking 20 years ahead. As a NPA, we also organise and host various partnership forums, such as our Visitor Management Forum, Youth Committee, Visitor Management Groups and a Park wide Destination Group which comprises representatives from local tourism businesses. Our Board also host a Board led 'Futures Group' where a group of Board members work with Park Authority staff and external stakeholders to undertake in-depth exploration into complex issues to identify options and actions to address these. Subjects for this group have been diverse and included examples such as Transport, Housing and Visitor Infrastructure. All of this has helped our understanding and consideration of the role and success of the current LDP in helping to address some of the key issues facing the National Park over the duration of the plan period and when thinking ahead to the future.

Local Place Plans have also provided local insight to the views of our communities on a range of matters including some issues specific to the LDP and showing preferred locations for new development. These have also helped our thinking when reviewing the current LDP.

An internal session was organised and run to bring together staff from policy planning and development management alongside specialist advisers to discuss and share opinions on each of the four questions. Development management staff hold a significant amount of knowledge and expertise derived from working with applicants on development proposals and the use and application of planning policy. Insights were available from this on where

there are pressures or tensions, development trends or challenges to policy application. Knowledge and insights from pre-application inquiries, phone calls and enforcement matters all helps to paint a picture of how the current LDP is performing.

7.1 Success of Local Development Plan Outcomes

The Local Development Plan vision articulates a set of 13 outcomes which are represented visually on pages 10 to 15 of the current LDP. These outcomes seek to achieve:

1. Safeguarding our precious natural and cultural assets
2. Opportunities for low carbon energy generation
3. The National Park is a place for all to enjoy
4. Supporting the needs of everyone
5. High Quality visitor accommodation in a range of locations
6. More places to camp and experience the outdoors
7. More active travel options and off-road connections
8. Thriving economically active rural economy
9. Young people have a future living and working in the Park
10. High quality development enhances our towns and villages for our communities and visitors to enjoy
11. Thriving towns and village centres
12. Safeguarding our historic buildings to retain a strong sense of place
13. More opportunities to travel on the Park's lochs and experience being by the water

The Monitoring Framework prepared in 2017 (and published in 2018) to support annual monitoring of the Local Development Plan summarised these 13 outcomes into a more condensed set of eight development themes to monitor:

- a) Climate Change and Renewables
- b) Housing
- c) Tourism Accommodation
- d) Visitor Facilities, Recreation and Transport
- e) Natural Environment
- f) Historic Environment
- g) Economic Development
- h) Sustainable Communities (including Retail, Communities Facilities and Open Space)

Between 2017 and 2021, annual monitoring reports for the LDP followed the eight development themes set out in the 2017 Monitoring Framework, based on the vision outcomes on the Plan. Using a range of indicators to assess how effectively the Plan's policies and proposals were being achieved, the monitoring framework also sought to monitor changes in the principal physical, economic, social, and environmental characteristics of the National Park.

For the years 2022, 2023 and 2024, in response to the need to prioritise other work pressures post Covid, monitoring focused solely on housing and visitor accommodation. Time was also spent over this period to adjust to NPF4 being published and familiarisation and application of this to policy assessments and planning decisions. Housing and visitor accommodation represent the largest development types within the National Park and are the areas for which the LDP provides the most detailed spatial bespoke policy guidance. Views were sought from colleagues in Development Management and Place Planning teams on trends over recent years for all development themes to help inform understanding of development trends and delivery, what's working well and not so well.

To inform our new LDP some additional work will be undertaken to review the missing six themes for the years 2022, 2023 and 2024 and provide a complete set of monitoring reports over the lifespan of the current LDP. This will be undertaken early in 2026, alongside work to prepare monitoring reports for 2025.

Some focussed work was undertaken to look at the data from monitoring reports across the years (2017 up to either 2021 or 2024 for housing and visitor accommodation) to provide an overview of the extent of success of the eight themed outcomes. These are summarised below per development theme which has been RAG rated as either red (poor performance), amber (satisfactory performance- some issues/room for improvement) and green (strong performance) and in the table at the end of this section. These outcomes were also discussed at the internal meeting introduced above and a summary of our view as a Planning Authority is also provided for each Monitoring Framework outcome. For the avoidance of doubt this rating does not take into account the external economic and operating environment which is outwith the control of the planning system.

Monitoring Framework Outcome Theme (a) Climate change and renewables **(Monitoring period 2017-2021, RAG rated GREEN)**

Since 2019 there was an improvement in the uptake of Low and Zero Carbon Technology in new buildings (housing and tourism) and a decline in applications for (what was previously a significant number of applications for) small run-of river hydro schemes due to changes in feed in tariffs. There has been a mix of technologies since 2019 with Solar PV and air source heat pumps, and some biomass, being the most common. Standalone renewable energy developments have been limited. Our view as a Planning Authority is that progress towards this outcome has worked very well. Planners felt it has improved since NPF4 was published and have been placing more focus on conditions for Low and Zero Carbon Technology in development over the last 12 months but highlighted the difficulty in assessing the technical aspects of these.

Monitoring Framework Outcome Theme (b) Housing **(Monitoring period - 2017-2024, RAG rated AMBER)**

There has been inconsistent annual rates of housing delivery, only meeting the housing target of 75 new homes per year once in 2021 (81 completions). On average, over the plan period 50 homes have been approved per year. Between 2017-2023 rates of open market and affordable completions were similar. Windfall development made up an average of 50% of housing completions between 2017-2023.

Our view as a Planning Authority is that delivery against this outcome has been very mixed. The delivery of housing is challenging nationally, with a range of factors outwith planning having an impact. There has been strong success on some of the LDP allocated sites however the LDP policy desire to create and nurture more opportunities to support affordable self-build housing on the edges of settlements and within building groups in the countryside has seen limited delivery.

The exception to this is at West Loch Lomondside, where a Rural Development Framework has supported housing delivery in the countryside around Luss. This was necessary due to there being significant constraints to locating new development within Luss village. Multiple sites and a mix of open market and affordable housing have been secured. Notably all the land and sites are in the one land ownership allowing cross financing and aiding viability. The other two notable examples were at Stronachlachar and Coldrach building groups in the countryside, however these were largely supported under brownfield/historic building policies rather than housing policies.

Overall, it was felt that whilst there has been interest in building new housing in Building Groups in the Countryside, this has mainly been for open market housing rather than affordable self-build. Planners spend significant time on lengthy negotiations for single houses, trying to secure affordable housing instead of open market. Applicants cite multiple reasons on why they can't provide affordable houses (including difficulties in securing mortgage due to title restrictions, limitations on investment return, restrictions on primary housing use and extensions of floorspace.)

Monitoring Framework Outcome Theme (c) Visitor Accommodation
(Monitoring period 2017-2024, RAG rated AMBER)

Visitor Accommodation developments have largely been chalet, lodge and pod-style catering with limited camping and motorhome pitch approvals overall. Development has been mainly located within the current LDP defined 'Areas of Opportunity for small scale tourism' with additional growth in towns and villages and some countryside sites, while limited activity occurred on Visitor Experience sites allocated in the LDP.

Our view as a Planning Authority is that delivery against this outcome has had mixed success. The intended policy outcome is to facilitate and secure more opportunities to camp and enjoy the outdoors as well as for small scale tourism in identified zones in the countryside (the green shaded areas in the spatial development strategy). Delivery has been

heavily focussed on lodges and glamping (mainly high-end market). There has been an increase in provision for motorhomes with quite a few pre-applications for these and planning permission approved for motorhome facilities at Tarbet, Ben More Gardens, Lagganbeg near Gartocharn, Slanj Restaurant at Tarbet, Lochgoil Cruisers, Rashfield and at Carrick Farm.

The current Local Development Plan outcomes for housing and tourism are identified to help address population change and decline, meet identified housing needs and support the rural economy by offering flexibility in defined areas of the countryside for some small-scale tourism developments where previous plans have been more restrictive. Monitoring of development trends and practitioner experience reveals that most of the development activity secured in countryside has been for tourism rather than affordable housing, with some tensions now apparent with the interplay of the housing and tourism policies for affordable housing and small-scale tourism in the countryside. The absence of delivery support for small scale affordable housing is important to recognise.

Monitoring Framework Outcome Theme (d) Visitor Facilities, Recreation and Transport
(Monitoring period 2017-2021, RAG rated GREEN)

There was significant works to expand the path network between 2017-2019. From 2020, development activity focused on smaller path projects, sustainable transport infrastructure and visitor infrastructure such as car parking. Our view as a Planning Authority is that there has been strong delivery against this outcome. Over the plan period there has been a significant increase and improvement in recreational paths, long distance routes and links to these and strong programme delivery, including National Heritage Lottery funded projects in partnership with the Cairngorms National Park Authority. The current LDP largely played a supportive role in such development through its Overarching Policies and Transport Policy 2.

Monitoring Framework Outcome Theme (e) Natural Environment
(Monitoring period 2018- 2021, RAG rated GREEN)

From 2018 onwards policies were applied to safeguard heritage and secure biodiversity gains or mitigate negative impacts through development. Most planning applications involving flood risk were resolved through early dialogue, design changes, and mitigation measures, avoiding refusal. Where necessary, proposals were withdrawn if flooding concerns could not be addressed. Our view as a Planning Authority is that there has been strong delivery against this outcome in terms of assessment, mitigation and compensation for biodiversity loss on development sites but there is scope to deliver more by way of enhancement.

Apart from large scale applications, biodiversity enhancements are generally sought through planning conditions and there is a need to consider what instances more details are required for enhancement at application submission (rather than a matter to be addressed by a post decision condition). The NPA Guidance for Enhancement for Local Development (due to be published towards the end of 2025) and Scottish Biodiversity Metric (anticipated to be

published mid 2026) will help achieve this. Sharing information on UK BAP Priority Habitats externally would also help ensure better consideration of biodiversity from application initiation and concept stage.

Monitoring Framework Outcome Theme (f) Historic Environment
(Monitoring period 2017-2021, RAG rated GREEN)

The sensitive reuse of redundant and vernacular buildings has brought vacant or at-risk structures back into use and planning decisions have prevented inappropriate demolition, unsympathetic alterations or proposals that would impact protected areas. Our view as a Planning Authority is that there has been very strong delivery towards safeguarding the historic environment, with careful consideration being given in terms of impact and contribution of new development to the historic environment, especially listed buildings, conservation areas and designed landscapes. A re-survey of Buildings at Risk took place during the current LDP period and this resulted in a number of new building's being identified. This is an area that calls for further scrutiny in the new LDP given the number of Buildings at Risk within the National Park.

Monitoring Framework Outcome Theme (g) Economic Development
(Monitoring period 2017-2021, RAG rated AMBER)

There was an average of eight economic development applications approved per year, typically small-scale office, retail and community hubs. The number of sites on the vacant and derelict land register reduced as some sites were repurposed or redeveloped. Our view as a Planning Authority is that delivery against this outcome has had mixed success. The majority of approvals for economic development are not on LDP allocated sites in the settlements or the LDP identified rural activity areas. This is discussed in the Spatial Development Strategy section below. Development activity has centred more on expansion of existing businesses or diversification of rural businesses. There has also been interest for several allocated economic development sites within settlements for housing. This includes Lochearnhead (former garage site, mixed use site at Claish Farm, Callander and the mixed-use site at Tyndrum).

Monitoring Framework Outcome Theme (h) Sustainable Communities (including Retail, Communities Facilities and Open Space)
(Monitoring period 2017-2021, RAG rated AMBER)

Monitoring data shows that there has been strong delivery of community projects such as new parks, gardens, leisure facilities, and upgraded education provision, while safeguarding open space and applying retail policy to balance vitality with appropriate new development. Connectivity was enhanced through active travel routes and improved rural telecommunications, including 4G and emergency service coverage. Our view as a Planning

Authority however is that delivery against this outcome has been mixed. There is a growing trend towards loss of retail units in villages and a safeguarding planning policy was introduced as planning guidance in 2022 to try to restrict any further loss of retail units. In operation, this policy has been met with resistance over the requirement to market the property for its current use for a minimum 12-month period. Post Covid, the roles and dynamics of rural village centres is changing. More people are working hybrid style and online shopping has grown significantly. The new LDP must consider how best to support vibrant village centres and the need to enhance and/or safeguard retail provision alongside other activities and uses for buildings and spaces that are important parts of village and town centres. NPF4 policy guidance and Local Place Plans will be important sources of information for this.

	LDP Outcomes			
	Development Theme 1: Climate Change and Renewables (2017-2021)	Development Theme 2: Housing (2017-2024)	Development Theme 3: Tourism Accommodation	Development Theme 4: Visitor Facilities, Recreation and Transport (2017-2021)
Status				
Key Points	<p>There has been an improvement in the uptake of low and zero carbon technology (LZCT) in new buildings from 2019 onwards. Over the five-year period, approvals were consistently granted for a mix of renewable technologies, with hydro schemes featuring prominently between 2017 and 2019 before declining due to changes in feed-in tariffs. Solar PV and air source heat pumps have emerged as the most commonly adopted technologies, supplemented by some use of biomass boilers. The effective use of planning conditions has helped to secure compliance while allowing applicants flexibility in their choice of technology. Although there has been a general decline in standalone renewable energy proposals, this has been offset by the integration of LZCT within new developments, particularly in the housing and tourism sectors. It is also important to note that there are extensive householder permitted development rights that mean many domestic schemes are not recorded.</p> <p><i>136 approvals for new development inc. LZCT.</i> <i>9 hydro schemes approved</i> <i>8 standalone solar panel developments approved</i> <i>3 biomass approvals</i></p>	<p>Between 2017 and 2024, housing delivery against the LDP target of 75 homes per year has been inconsistent, with the target met only once in 2021 (81 completions) and other years ranging from 20 to 66 units. Approvals fluctuated largely, peaking at 182 units in 2019 and falling to 24 in 2020 (COVID-19), with the median over the 7 year period at around 50 units per year. Open market housing has made up the majority of delivery, supported by affordable housing, with at least 162 affordable homes completed over the period. However, this figure has been fluctuating annually. Affordable home delivery has been concentrated in certain years - most notably 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2024, perhaps driven by large developments at Succoth, Callander, Balloch and Croftamie. Most housing has been located in towns and villages (66-89% each year) and windfall development has been a steady contributor to supply across the period, particularly outweighing approvals and completions on LDP allocated sites between the period 2022-2024. The overall delivery pattern is largely driven by a small number of larger sites throughout the period, as well as external factors such as COVID-19.</p> <p><i>512 housing approvals (units)</i> <i>218 housing completions (units)</i> <i>150 housing completions (affordable units)</i></p>	<p>Most tourism accommodation approvals in the National Park were for small scale self-catering units, commonly, chalet/lodge and pod style units between 2017 and 2024. Serviced accommodation approvals varied, with some years showing higher numbers due to single large applications such as hotel extensions or redevelopments. Caravan stances, camping pods and static lodges were regularly approved with the largest number recorded in 2022 before lower levels in subsequent years. Approvals for camping and motorhome pitches were limited overall, with increases in 2017, 2021 and 2023 compared to 2018, 2019, 2022 and 2024 where there were no pitch approvals. In terms of location of development, it has largely been in Areas of Opportunity for Small Scale Tourism, but there has still been substantial development in Towns and Villages and some in the countryside. For the years 2017-2021 when development on LDP allocated sites was monitored, there was limited activity on Visitor Experience sites with 1 DET, 1 PPP, 1 application renewal and 1 completion.</p>	<p>Over the 5 years, the National Park saw considerable expansion of its path network, with around 20.4km completed and a further 35.1km approved between 2017 and 2019 through major projects such as Mountains and the People, the Cross Pilgrim Way and the Rob Roy Way. From 2020 onwards, delivery focused on smaller-scale path projects alongside the integration of active travel infrastructure. For example, Dalrigh community bike skills park and improved active travel links between Drymen and Balmaha. Sustainable travel was increasingly embedded into planning approvals through transport assessments, active travel plans and design measures, supported by consultation with the Access and Recreation team, who contributed to over 85 consultations in 2021.</p> <p><i>41.6km of path approved</i> <i>25.1km of path complete</i></p>

LDP Outcomes

Development Theme 5: Natural Environment (2018-2021)	Development Theme 6: Historic Environment (2017-2021)	Development Theme 7: Economic Development (2017-2021)	Development Theme 8: Sustainable Communities (2017-2021)
<p>No conclusions could be drawn for 2017 due to limited data and the monitoring system not yet being established, but from 2018 onwards policies were applied to safeguard heritage and secure biodiversity gains or mitigate negative impacts through development. Common measures included removal of non-native species, native tree and hedge planting, installation of bird and bat boxes and wetland habitat management, with some planting delivered as mitigation rather than net gain. Awareness of enhancement opportunities was supported through staff training led by internal conservation experts and RSPB. From 2018–2021, most planning applications involving flood risk were resolved through early dialogue, design changes, and mitigation measures, avoiding refusal. Where necessary, proposals were withdrawn if flooding concerns could not be addressed. Flood risk assessments, flood-resilient materials, and raised floor levels were common solutions, with SEPA and council flood authorities regularly consulted to guide decisions. By 2021, flood risk policy (NEP13) had become more embedded in decision-making, with proactive engagement ensuring that most proposals were adapted to address flood risk concerns before determination.</p> <p><i>In 2021 NEP13 was cited in 33 decided applications and active engagement with council flood authorities (65 consultations) and SEPA (46 consultations).</i></p>	<p>Across the 5 year period, Historic Environment policies have consistently safeguarded and enhanced the Park's built and cultural heritage. Sensitive reuse of redundant and vernacular buildings has brought vacant or at-risk structures back into use, maintaining their historic character while supporting sustainable development. Planning assessments have prevented inappropriate demolition, unsympathetic alterations, and proposals that would harm the setting or significance of listed buildings, conservation areas, designed landscapes, or scheduled monuments. Where change has been approved, it has typically been subject to detailed conditions on design, materials, and layout to ensure alignment with heritage values.</p> <p><i>A yearly average of around 25-30 listed building consents and 19-20 conservation area approvals, alongside cases where Historic Environment policies influenced refusals, withdrawals and design amendments.</i></p>	<p>Generally, there are very few economic development applications when tourism accommodation is excluded. Between 2017 and 2021, on average around 8 applications a year under the economic development policy. These approvals were typically small scale and ranged from community hubs, offices, retail, visitor attractions, workshops and agricultural uses. Most economic development approvals were not on allocated economic development sites. Notably, larger projects included the Cononish Gold Mine. The vacant and derelict land register saw slight reductions throughout the years as some sites were redeveloped or formally repurposed.</p>	<p>Between 2017 and 2021, community projects were supported and delivered, including the creation of new community parks, gardens, leisure facilities and upgraded school and nursery provision, a number of which fulfilled priorities highlighted in the Community Action Plans. The safeguarding of open space and community facilities was a recurring theme throughout the period with changes permitted only where impacts were minimal and/or offset by public benefits. The retail policy was applied and balanced maintaining vitality where units were vacant, unviable or had historic permissions, while also encouraging new retail development in appropriate locations. Connectivity improvements also featured consistently, from new and upgraded active travel routes to telecommunication masts improving 4G and emergency service coverage in more rural areas.</p> <p><i>37 telecommunication masts approved across the 5 year period.</i></p> <p><i>1 telecommunication mast refusal due to adverse visual impact.</i></p> <p><i>3 telecommunications masts withdrawn by agent due to visual impact and need to explore alternative siting.</i></p> <p><i>12 applications for change of use (loss of retail) were approved.</i></p> <p><i>No new retail application approvals between 2017 and 2019.</i></p> <p><i>15 new retail application approvals across 2020 and 2021/</i></p>

7.2 Success of current LDP Allocations

LDP site allocations focus mainly on housing, economic development and mixed used sites. The most up to date information sources on progress on current LDP allocated sites is within the 2023 Delivery Programme and the 2024 Delivery Programme update that focussed solely on housing.

Table 4 presents the evidence for allocated sites rated red, amber and green. Red rated sites are where no progress has been made or where planning permission has lapsed or where no updated information has been provided by the landowner or their agent. Amber categorised sites are sites where development has progressed in some way – for example a pre-application enquiry has been received, a planning application is currently under consideration, or the allocated site has planning permission. Finally, sites categorised as green are sites where a material start has been made on site, or where the site is under construction or is complete.

Table 4: Current LDP Allocated sites status

Area/Delivery Classification	Red	Amber	Green
Strategic Growth Areas	11	10	4
Other Villages	18	17	1
Totals (of 61 sites)	29	27	5
Totals %	48%	44%	8%

The evidence presents very mixed results, with progress being made on 52% of all sites (nine of which are complete). The most common reasons for delays in development delivery include landowner intentions, landownership changes, marketing (lack of), changes in market demand for some locations and uses, land banking, waste-water capacity and for some where a proportion of affordable housing is required, conclusion of a legal agreement.

Since the last full delivery programme update in 2023 and following our internal review session of the current LDP and allocated sites, there has been notable progress across several locations. One of the previously red-rated sites has advanced to amber status with the submission of a planning application in recent months. In addition, three amber-rated allocated sites have now reached green status, reflecting their completion. It is also important to highlight that five amber-rated sites have been partially developed, with further phases still to be implemented to bring them to full completion.

These figures also do not present information on development that has been delivered on non-allocated sites. It is considered that windfall development and development that is permitted through either spatial or criteria-based planning policies (rather than specific allocations) is a key characteristic for rural areas such as the National Park.

The current LDP sought to be as plan led as possible via a range of approaches in its spatial strategy, designed to offer flexibility to respond to opportunities and demand whilst at the same time setting some parameters for growth and assurances to local communities on the types and locations where change could be supported.

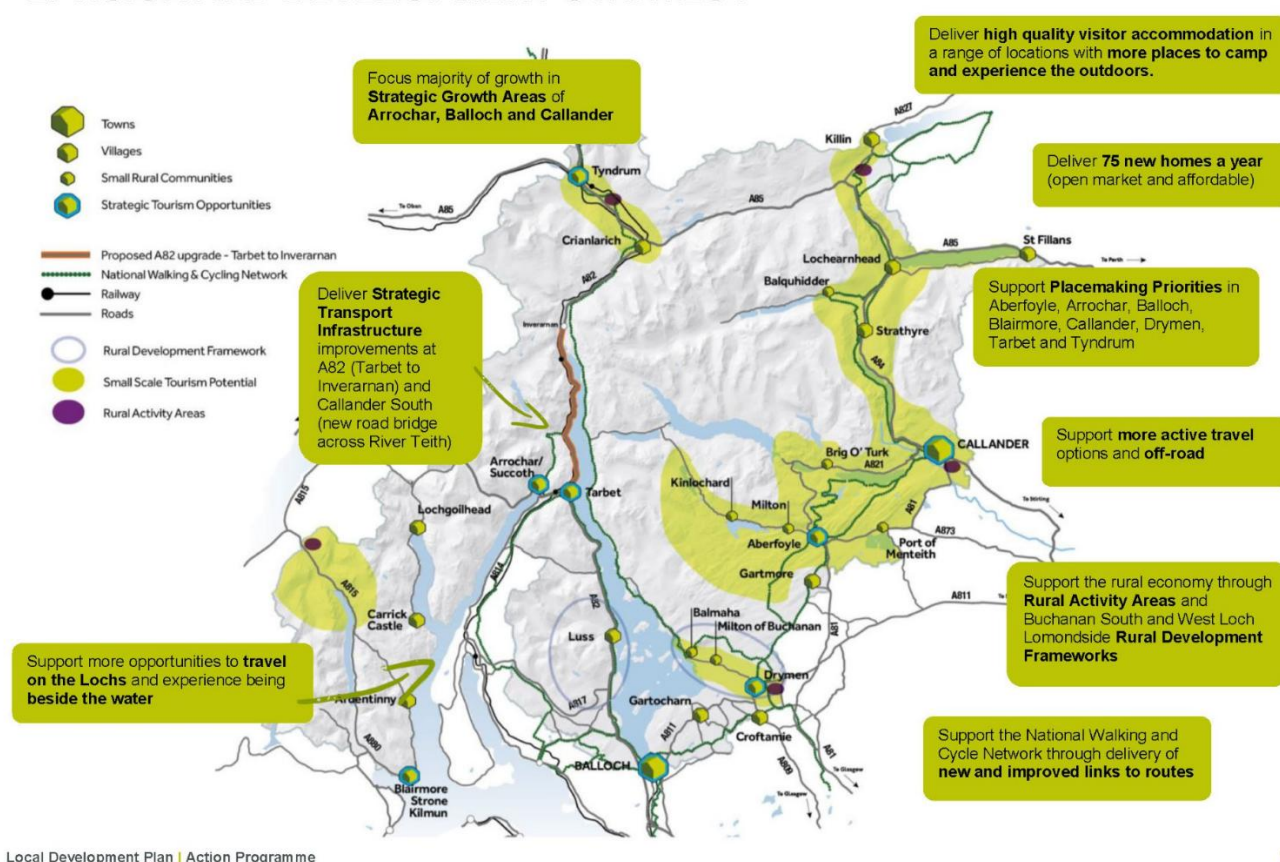
7.3 Appropriateness of the current LDP Spatial Development Strategy

This section explains and considers the appropriateness of the current LDP Spatial Development Strategy.

Figure 2 below articulates the spatial strategy and highlights the key outcomes for the current LDP. The key components of the Spatial Development Strategy are: Strategic Growth Areas, Rural Development Frameworks, the Strathard Framework, Place Making Priorities, Rural Activity Areas, Opportunities for small scale tourism development in the countryside, Housing, Affordable housing in Accessible Rural and Remote Rural areas and Housing Policy for sites outside towns and village.

Figure 2: Current LDP Development Strategy

2. VISION AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



A summary reflection on the extent of success of each element of the spatial strategy is also provided below, this is derived from a review of development trends, interest and applications over the current LDP period.

- a. Three Strategic Growth Areas (Callander, Balloch, Arrochar & Tarbet) – Callander and Balloch are the biggest ‘towns’ in the National Park with the largest range of shops, services, facilities and visitor infrastructure. Balloch has a railway and bus station. Callander has a bus station. Arrochar and Tarbet play strategically significant roles in terms of visitor infrastructure and untapped opportunities to consolidate and address vacant and derelict land to make these communities more attractive, sustainable and vibrant into the future.

Consideration - It is still considered that these locations are where most development and larger scale development should be directed. This is established in the NPPP and in previous LDPs. It is felt important to continue to steer higher levels of investment to these areas. There has been development delivery in Callander and Balloch and development interest in Arrochar and Tarbet. There has been significant partner effort (led by the NPA) for Callander South expansion at Claish Farm with some initial development delivered (affordable housing, new primary school under construction. The other uses, including tourism, have not yet come forward but their remains active interest and a City Region Deal infrastructure project to deliver better connectivity is being actively pursued by Stirling Council). There has been market/developer interest for Balloch at identified sites for mixed uses with the most notable being West Riverside (Lomond Banks planning application currently being considered by the Scottish Ministers) along with other improvements or expansion of existing tourism businesses. A forum established for Arrochar and Tarbet ran for several years to bring partners together and coordinate action, particularly for vacant sites and there has been developer interest in the former Torpedo site and the Succoth site at the head of Loch Long.

Two Rural Development Frameworks (RDFs) (West and East Loch Lomond) – These framework documents accompany the current LDP as supplementary planning guidance. They were created as pilots to test how different approaches might be applied in different rural areas to guide rural development and investment where the past policy approach would have been more restrictive towards development in the countryside.

Consideration - *It is considered that the RDFs are working well and have been successful in supporting development needs and rural economic opportunities. These allow for more area/place-based consideration of the issues and opportunities which otherwise may have been constrained by a blanket LDP policy approach for development in the countryside. It is considered that the West Loch Lomond RDF worked very well as the majority of the land was all in the same ownership. This enabled a package of rural development that was aligned to identified and agreed rural economic and social outcomes for the area and assisted delivery, programming, viability and flexibility,*

especially for provision of housing across the area rather than consideration on a site-by-site basis. RDFs are felt to have worked well to create local strategy frameworks that are bespoke to that area. Learnings from these have implications for preparing the new LDP and offer opportunity to frame these more closely within the broader environmental, social and economic outcomes established in the NPPP.

- b. Strathard Framework and integration of planning and land use – This was a pilot approach between the NPA, Stirling Council, Strathard Community Council and Strathard Community Development Trust looking at how to bring together planning guidance, land use and local place plans into one overall strategic framework to be used by a range of stakeholders and to guide future planning decisions, influence land use change and support community empowerment.

Consideration – It is considered that the Strathard Framework is working well. The process built on momentum already established in the community through their LPP process and is felt to have been successful in drawing in and fostering collaboration between stakeholders and providing spatial information across the whole area, not just the settlements. It has supported ongoing stakeholder engagement for the current delivery phase and empowered local community organisations to drive this more. It sets out the key land use issues and opportunities and is a tool to help influence land use change and highlight where there are land use or land management conflicts. It has allowed more integrated planning and land use guidance and it was considered helpful to incorporate elements of the trees and woodlands strategy and the peatland strategy into a planning framework.

- c. Eight Place Making Priorities identified in towns and villages – These are long lasting, legacy actions and initiatives arising from in depth stakeholder engagement through a previous Scottish Government pilot programme on place making approaches called ‘Charrettes’.

Consideration – It is considered that this element of the spatial strategy has not performed as expected. It is still considered that the locations identified are correct as priorities for investment in civic space and public realm, however investment and delivery for these is reliant on multiple public sector partners and, in some instances joint partnership with the private sector which requires dedicated time and resource to coordinate and deliver.

A key achievement has been public realm enhancement to streetscape, traffic flow management and central civic space in the centre of Balloch led by West Dunbartonshire Council and Sustrans and supported by the National Park Authority. This was informed and initiated by the previous Balloch Charette engagement and report setting out key placemaking priorities.

To help drive more place making improvements, the NPA has established a new Place Projects team focussing on capital projects and visitor infrastructure delivery working alongside public sector partners. A National Park Place Programme is now in place and investment has been focussed firstly in the Trossachs and more recently at Tarbet, Balloch and Rowardennan which has included utilising VisitScotland administered RTIF (Rural Tourism Infrastructure Funds) to improve hot-spot visitor areas and issues. The programme also includes other place making priority areas of the current LDP of Arrochar, Tarbet, Drymen, Balloch, Callander and Aberfoyle which are considered in new Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Destination Studies (STIDS) and intended to be part of the partnership approach as indicated in the NPPP map. The Place Programme Route Map brings together the highest priority actions within the study areas and is our most up-to-date direction of travel [Agenda Item 12 - Appendix 3 Place Programme Delivery Route Map](#). These studies will provide place-based details for improvements to these communities and potentially others over time in the new LDP and will also form the rationale and justification for funding applications and assembling funding packages for delivery.

- d. Five Rural Activity Area's – These are areas outside the towns and villages that are identified to provide space for economic development activities. These were identified partly to respond to economic development needs but also in recognition of some constraints and challenges to identifying sites in the towns and villages or where expansion of an existing site (for example saw-mill or biomass plant) might support opportunity to accommodate other uses or shared heat.

Consideration - There has been no take up or development on these sites. The new LDP will consider the ongoing requirement for Rural Activity Areas as part of the new spatial strategy. Monitoring reveals that economic development has tended to occur as rural diversification or expansion of either rural businesses or new businesses choosing to co-locate with existing rural businesses. This will also need to be considered in terms of new NPF4 policies on climate, travel patterns and local living.

- e. Opportunities for small scale tourism development in the countryside – There are some broad geographic zones that have been identified in the current LDP (through Policy VE1 part (b) and referred to as the 'green shaded areas' in which small scale tourism uses will generally be supported subject to criteria on locations, scale, design and control of occupancy).

Consideration – This element of the spatial strategy has worked well in terms of delivery of high-quality, small scale visitor accommodation within this defined area. However, it is considered that the defined areas for small scale tourism development may be too large and widely defined along transport corridors and that in some remoter locations, for example Balquhiddar, there are tensions showing. These tensions are stemming from

new tourism accommodation effectively being used as second homes, which is not the policy intent.

The planning guidance to accompany current LDP Policy VE1 (b) defines 'small scale' however it is challenging to ensure consistency in approach when considering proposals in terms of overall footprint, landscape impact and number of car based journeys generated on remote and often single track rural roads. If continuing with this policy approach as a local policy, a review will be required

- f. Housing: The current LDP identifies a housing target, as distinct from requirement, of 75 new homes a year. There was no formal housing requirement identified for the current LDP and instead a judgement was taken on what an aspirational target should be. Given the socio-economic challenges facing the National Park it was agreed (and supported at an examination of the current LDP) that an ambitious housing target was required to allow for flexibility and opportunities to come forward through allocations and also a bespoke spatial strategy to encourage a more diverse range of housing options.

Consideration – there has been mixed success in terms of housing delivery as previously highlighted. The rationale and strategy are thought to remain robust but delivery of this raises implications for the new LDP to carefully consider.

- g. Affordable Housing in the Accessible Rural and Remote Rural Areas – In the current LDP housing policy differentiation is provided for accessible Loch Lomondside area, Accessible Stirling area and Remote Rural areas to specify different affordable housing requirements are identified in response to different housing pressures and housing system dynamics.

Consideration – Given the housing pressures facing the majority of National Park communities (albeit the nature of these varies from commuting in the south to holiday lets in the north) it might be that a Parkwide approach (to affordable housing %) may be more appropriate and that this is an implication for the new LDP to consider.

- h. Housing Policy for sites outside towns and villages– The current LDP provides spatial differentiation and different policy approaches between new housing in the settlements, on edges of settlements, in existing building groups in the countryside and in the countryside. For sites identified on the edges of settlements or building groups in the countryside this operates as a rural housing exceptions policy and only affordable housing is permitted. This is designed to stimulate opportunity for affordable self-build and small to medium scale affordable housing development.

Consideration – There has been very limited success in securing more affordable housing on the edge of settlements or building groups in the countryside. The policy has not been successful in attracting households interested in affordable self-build in the

countryside as was the original intent (smaller households, young people, or lower/modest incomes households). Most interest and demand has been for open market housing, which the policy is designed to prevent to ensure more opportunities are created for affordable housing provision within the National Park. When working with applicants for houses within building groups in the countryside it is significantly time consuming for Development Management planners at the National Park Authority. There is generally resistance from applicants on compliance with the affordability requirements and often lengthy negotiation required. This necessitates a lot of work on consolidation, ultimately hindering delivery.

This has implications for the new LDP and consideration of the application of NPF4 Policy 17 and the need for any local policy variations.

7.4 Lessons learned for preparing the new plan

In terms of lessons learned it is clear from the evidence that there is a lag between approvals and development being completed on the ground. Whilst this is characteristic for a rural area, the new style LDP and accompanying Delivery Programme will necessitate re-evaluation of delivery options for all sites.

The continued role of windfall development supported via area and generic criteria based planning policies should not be underestimated in the National Park as a large rural area. Our tourism policies have been very successful in supporting a step change in our accommodation product as well as food and drink.

However there is a balance to be struck between achieving a plan-led document that provides transparent and clear guidance through allocations alongside the need for flexibility and responsiveness to opportunities over the 10-year duration of the new plan. It is therefore likely that area based frameworks will be the preferred approach - providing a fusion between the two options of local spatial guidance delineating areas where certain types of development may be appropriate in response to local issues and meeting NPF4 spatial strategy requirements as well as specific site allocations.

Other views shared at the internal review session of the current LDP when looking forward to the new LDP included the following thoughts that will be part of our consideration when preparing the new LDP:

- The need to provide more spatial information and detail for development and land use changes in the land around and between settlements.
- More consideration of communities and what Community Wealth Building means for the National Park within the context of supporting rural communities and rural economic development.

- Firmer policy/strategy for housing approach to better meet the needs for National Park communities, businesses, younger people and smaller households.
- Establish a new monitoring framework looking more closely at tracking allocations and windfall development.
- Rural Development Framework's worked/are working well and we should consider how to replicate and develop sub-area strategies that allow a more responsive approach to be taken to harnessing development opportunities in each of these areas that meet the 9 NPPP outcomes.
- The need to focus on making communities more flood resilient.
- More focus on all types of development within and adjacent to communities to support more local living.
- Significantly improve delivery of biodiversity enhancement particularly for larger scale proposals.
- Achieve much more delivery of affordable, smaller homes in our rural communities.
- A more robust housing and tourism strategy to balance towards need and avoid conflict/pressure, based on the evidence and Local Place Plan's.
- The need to include site allocations that can be delivered and reflect need.
- Increased requirements (but requires clear guidance) for projects to deliver a high standard of sustainable buildings and consider this at the outset – to accord with the expected national policy direction and building standards requirements over the next 10 years.
- Landscape protection strategy/policy that includes measures to protect areas of lochshore from incremental privatisation.
- Annotation to provide more context for site allocations and proposed uses.
- How to ensure delivery on our stalled sites that are a blight on communities.
- Develop a more simplified monitoring strategy that reflects rural development context.
- Better identification of existing biodiversity interests and opportunities (nature networks) should inform better site allocations and enhancement requirements and make it easier to assess windfall applications.

