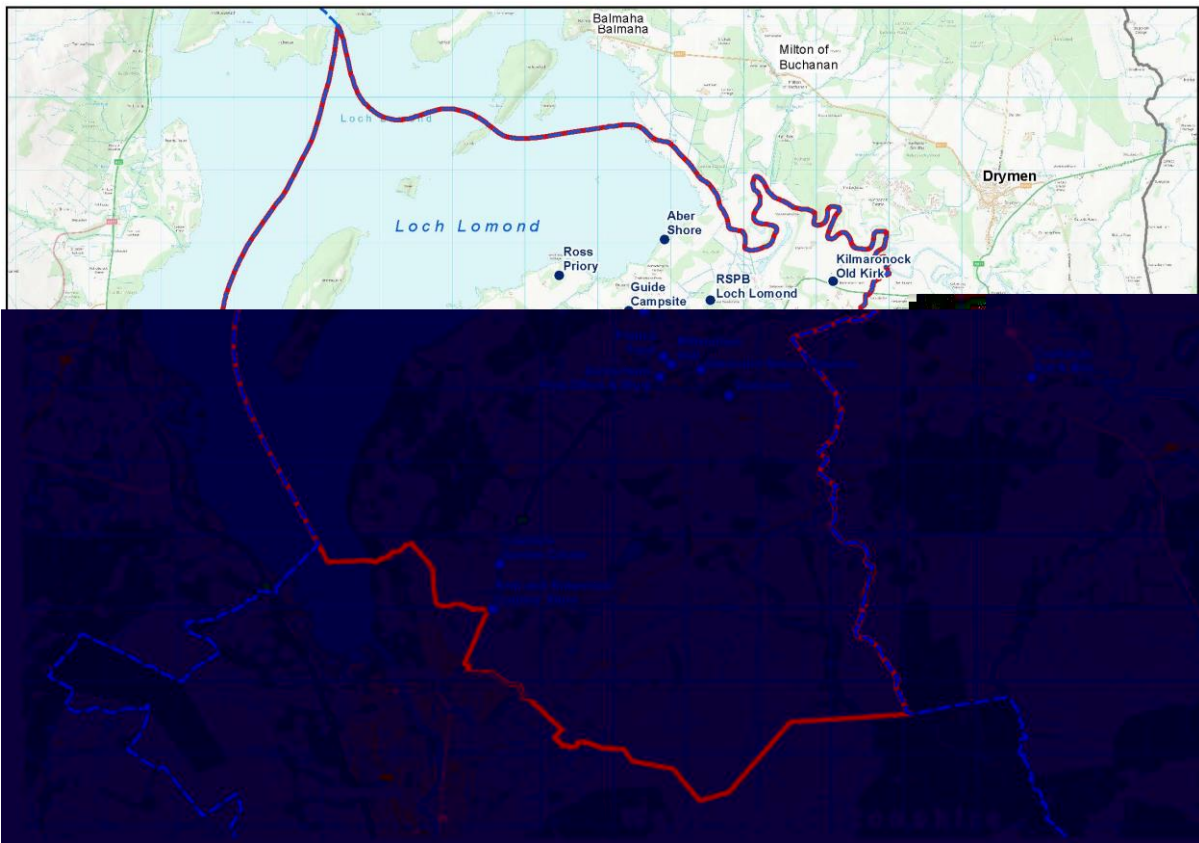


# Kilmarnock Local Place Plan

Draft - for further consultation v3

V6 September 2023



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# 1. What is a Local Place Plan

The “Place Principle” was adopted by the Scottish Government and COSLA in 2018. It was initially embedded in legislation in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and finally set out when the National Planning Framework 4 was enacted in February 2023. This gives communities the right to feed into the planning system with ideas and to influence policy.

Our plan set out here is intended to be the submission to the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (the NP), to influence the development of its next Development Plan about what should happen in each community and where it should happen.

Its focus is not restricted to the National Park’s planning concerns. Many of the themes and project aspirations set out here are the responsibility of West Dunbartonshire Council or of the community itself.

The plan is being led by the Kilmarnock Community Council with support from the Kilmarnock Community Trust and has been delivered by a steering group of local people, drawing on individuals representing a wide range of local interests and perspectives including the Community Council and Trust, the Millennium Hall management committee, the Old Kirk Trust, School & Parents Association, Farmers, Young Farmers & the local Heritage Society.

Validation of the final draft will be done by the National Park and a copy submitted to West Dunbartonshire Council and all elected members and associated Community Councils.

# 2. What We Did

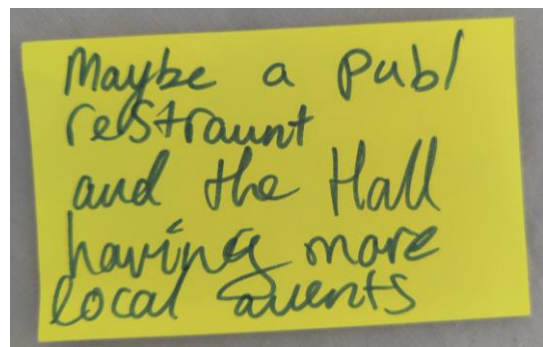


The results of this Place Plan are rooted in a long history of listening to the community. The existing Community Action Plan had some unresolved actions which needed to be retested in a new way. The Steering Group pulled these issues together to form the basis of the first round of consultations, a community wide survey distributed widely on and offline.

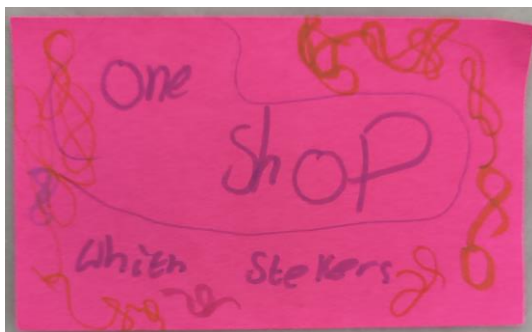
Questionnaires were sent to each household identified on a list provided by West Dunbartonshire Council and an online version was posted on the village website. Awareness of the questionnaire was raised using the Gartocharn Community Facebook page, local WhatsApp groups, and posters.

76 questionnaires were completed which represented about 25% of households.

The analysis of responses formed the basis of a public consultation event which was held in the Millennium Hall, in March. Approximately 35 people attended throughout the day to enter into a conversation about the nature of the community and priorities for change. The feedback during this event was much more conversational and ideas and suggestions were captured on post-it notes. Participants also allocated stars to indicate which issues



were of highest importance to them.



A separate questionnaire was sent to known local businesses and about 50% responded. We spent time with the local school children to ensure that children’s views were fed into the ideas.

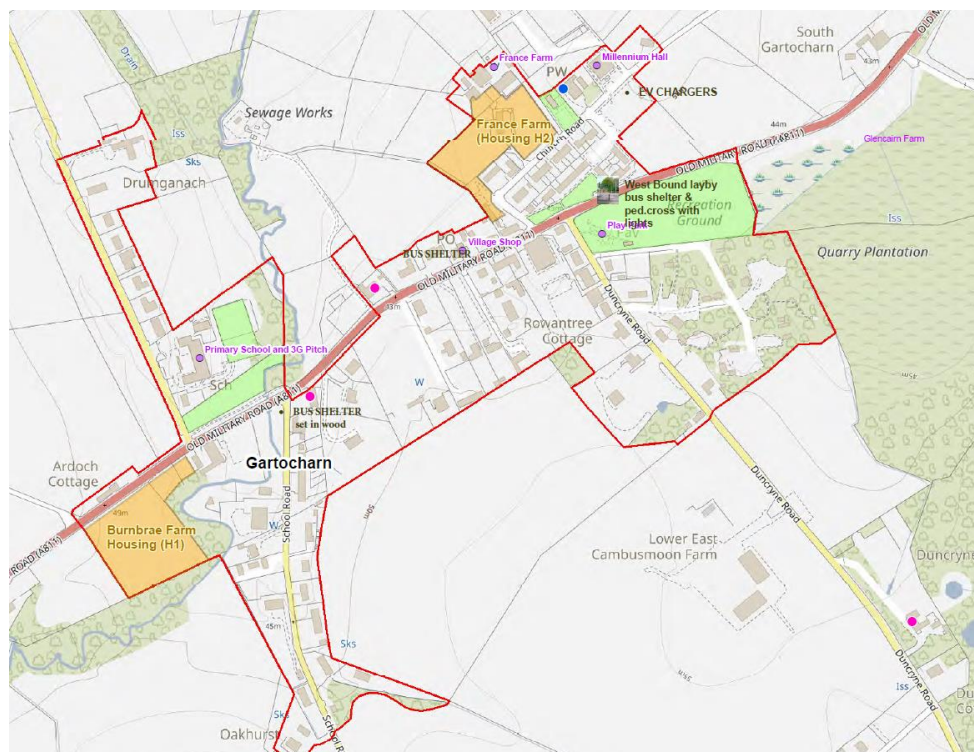
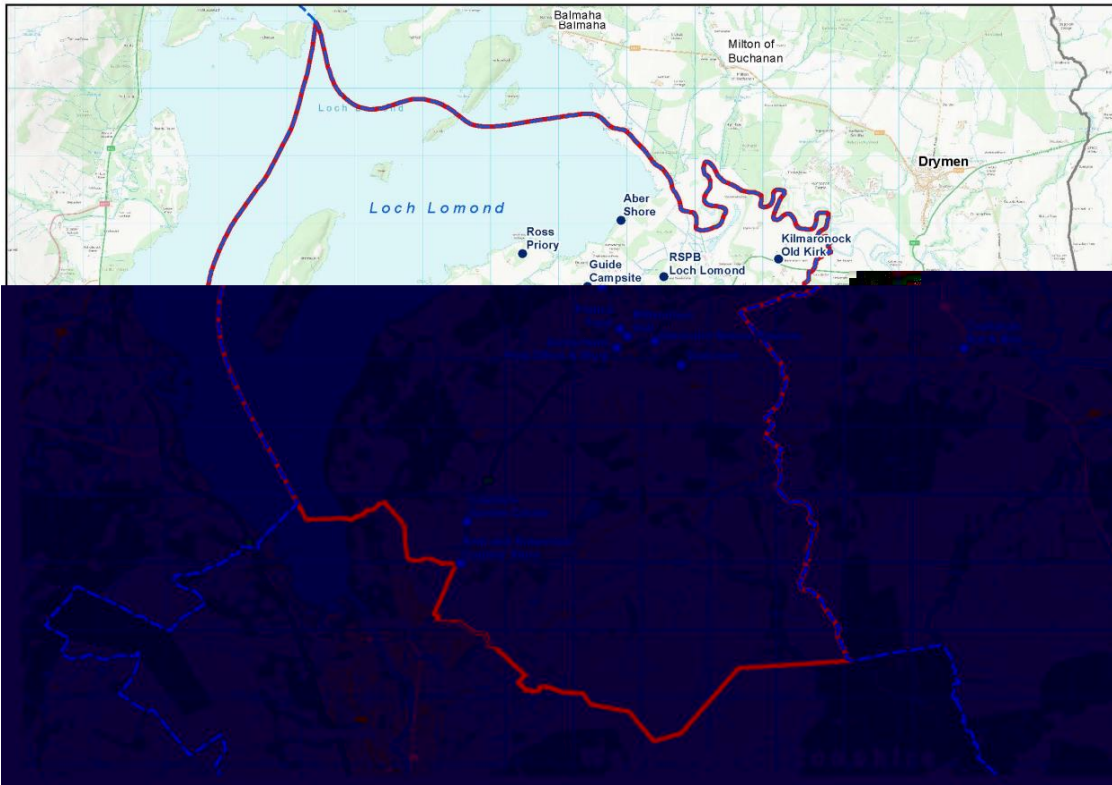
A special meeting was arranged by the community council to present and discuss the findings.



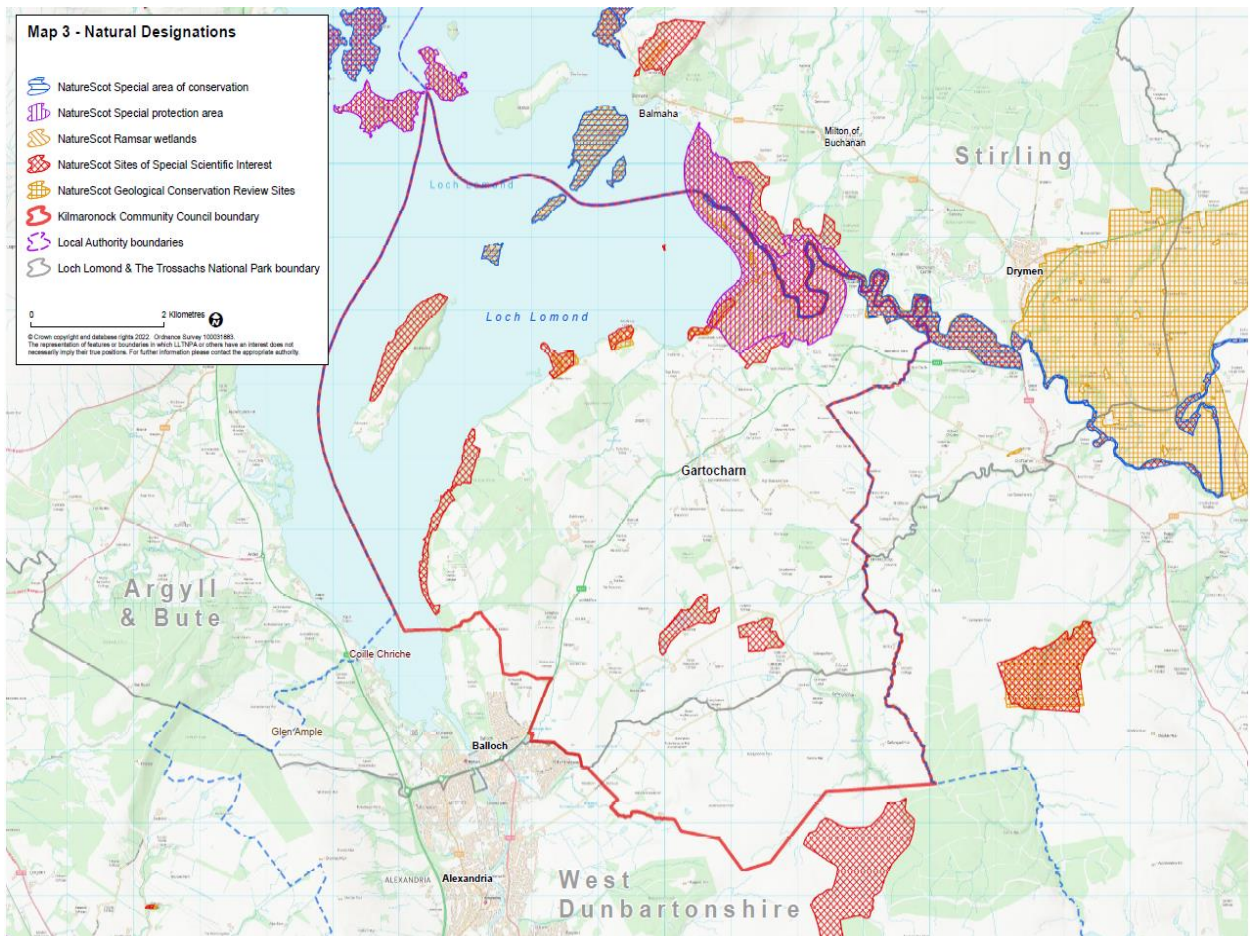
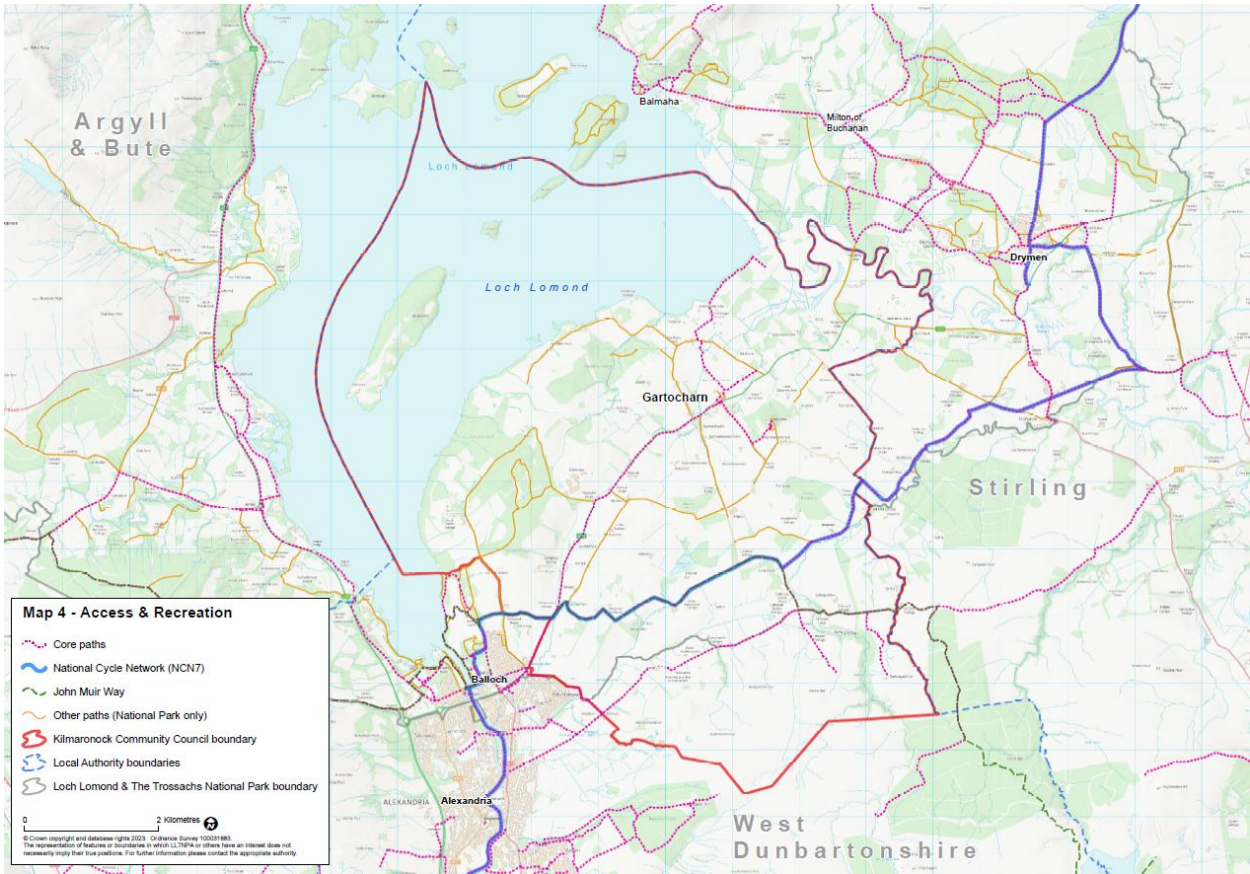
### 3. The Nature of our Place

#### Where We are

The map below indicates the boundary line of this Local Place Plan followed by different maps of the community.



Kilmarnock is the only rural community in West Dunbartonshire. It is a rural area on the fringes of urban Scotland and predominantly an agricultural area. It has close links with Drymen and Croftamie in Stirlingshire as well as with the Vale of Leven and Balloch and it has a lot in common with other rural areas in the National Park, although it is on the fringes of the park boundary too.



The population at 2011 census was 1399 people. The small area population projection data shows that there has been a 1% decline in total population, alongside a marked reduction in working age population with related increase in older people of 33.9%. This creates both opportunities with experienced retirees along with imminent challenges in relation to care for isolated older people.

KCC data zones	Total	Young	Work age	Older
2011	1423	192	930	301
2021	1396	190	803	403
% change	-1.9%	-1.0%	-15.8%	33.9%

Source - Population Estimates 2011-2021

At the 2011 census 45% of residents lived in detached houses, 51% live in semi-detached/terraced, with only 4% living in flats/apartments, which is very different to the Scottish averages. There are 8 properties for social rent in the Kilmarnock community council area, all in the village with the likely need for more to be built as there are challenges with young people and young families finding accommodation. Only 0.6% of properties are recorded as 2<sup>nd</sup> homes, and 1.5% of the housing stock is designated as long-term empty. It is estimated that there are 26 holiday lets in the area.

The main settlement in the area is Gartocharn, which sits either side of the busy A811 road that runs from Balloch, at the south end of Loch Lomond, to Stirling. The village has a thriving primary school and nursery, a children's playground and football pitch, a local shop, post office and garage, France Farm - a well-used farm shop operating one day a week, and a fine community hall. But it is affected by the traffic on the main road through its centre and has recently lost what had been a pub, and then a restaurant, at its centre.

To the north of the main road the old community of Aber spreads down to the shores of the loch and Boturich sits close to the border with Balloch. To the south are more homes and farms along the backroads to Croftamie and up towards the Kilpatrick hills. The largest group on this side is around the old Caldarvan Station.

Although many of the working age residents work at home or commute, there are several enterprises in the community: farms, tourist accommodation, a haulier and an earth working machine contractor, a garden centre, equestrian and agricultural supplier and a building materials provider. The University of Strathclyde owns Ross Priory, a substantial house and gardens on the shore of the loch. Much of the land is also owned by Forest and Land Scotland.

Overall, the landscape is a mixture of farmland, rough grazing, open moor, and mixed woodland. The loch side location provides a fine landscape and significant areas of scientific interest. The RSPB operates a reserve just north of the village which is managed by Nature Scot and the National Park Authority. There are a range of national environmental and biodiversity designations and important landscapes such as the Woodland Trust at Whinny Hill.

There is a church next to the Millennium Hall. In addition, Kilmarnock Old Kirk sits some two miles from the village, on the side of the main road to Drymen. It is being restored by a community trust as a heritage and community centre and is being used for some services and music events until the refurbishment is completed.

This is not an area of significant deprivation. 2% of pensioners live in poverty compared with a 12% average across Scotland. Only 0.8% claim unemployment benefit compared with 3.2% across Scotland and there are no universal credit claimants.

Although 33% are in full time employment compared with a national average of 40%, that will be due to the higher than average number of older people. 24% of the population are over 65 compared to a Scottish average of 19% and there are fewer people of working age and fewer children. Only 9% of households are families with dependent children compared to 28% across Scotland.

This is not a very mixed community with only 6 non-white people at the last census.

Although the community is in the higher deciles for multiple deprivation, 100% of the population lives in an area recognised as having a very low geographical access to services.

There are good levels of health and wellbeing and fewer than average numbers of people on benefits such as Personal Independence Payments. 15.8% say they have a limiting long-term illness compared with a national average of 19.6%.

Pupil attainment and educational levels are strong.

However, more people than average (12% vs 9%) provide unpaid care.

The energy efficiency rating for buildings is relatively low requiring some input in relation to net zero.



## 4. What People Told us and Our Plan

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### 4.1 Our Vision For The Future

From the consultation responses a strong vision of the future for the Kilmarnock community emerges. This is not a vision which just addresses challenges but one that values and builds on the community's strengths. This is the kind of place that the people who live there want it to be:

Our community will be a place that is:

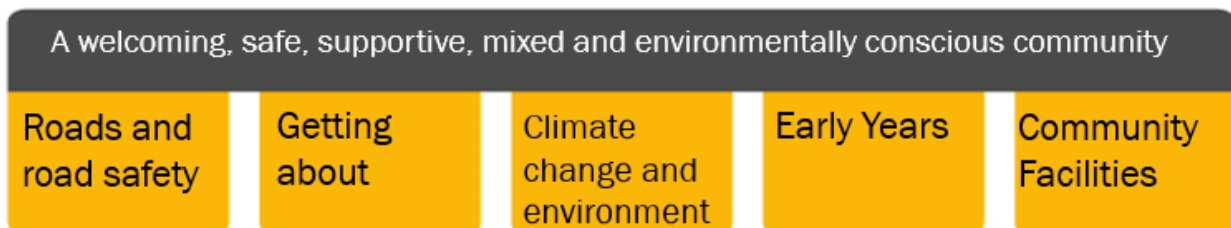
1. welcoming and inclusive.
2. a safe place, for residents of all ages and one that will be mutually supportive.
3. demographically balanced, with young families encouraged to live here. It recognises that its life is based on a mix of farming, tourism, local employment and commuting and on the engagement of retired residents. It values the mix, wishes to sustain it and is keen to address the challenges it implies.
4. committed to its environment, and keen to take the actions that will contribute to net-zero targets. It will also maintain and enhance its environment - its landscapes and its wildlife.

### 4.2 Priority Themes For Action

The responses and engagement of residents have helped us identify the challenges that we have in achieving this vision, and the actions we should undertake to work towards achieving that vision.

They require combinations of actions by the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, West Dunbartonshire Council, other agencies, and by the community itself. These are set out in the five Priority Themes for Action.

The following five themes for action are drawn from the consultation responses, reflections of the history and nature of community issues and a consideration of appropriate next steps.



## 1. Roads – condition, traffic and safety

### The Local Situation

There is a range of road types within Kilmarnock and each have their own challenges. The A811 (the Old Military Road) is the main road through the village with a speed limit transitioning from 60 mph to 30 mph within the village and back to 60 mph on leaving. In Gartocharn, the houses are very close to the road leaving narrow footways for pedestrians. There is one light controlled pedestrian crossing at the western edge near the school. Footways outwith the village envelope are either non-existent, overgrown, narrow or otherwise inadequate for pedestrian use.

Ross Loan, School Rd, Church Road, Duncryne Terrace and Duncryne Road are the main residential streets particularly as they join the A811 main road. These are single-track narrow roads in the main.

Ross Loan and Aber Loan form a single-track horseshoe around the north of the village with occasional passing places and farm gate entrances. Ross Loan has speed bumps outside the Primary School and narrow pedestrian footways where houses prevail. There are various sub-communities based around the horseshoe particularly near the loch. A caravan and campervan park is situated to the northeast of the horseshoe apex.

Finally, what are known as the back roads are also single-track C-roads with occasional passing places and farm gate entrances. Though this is predominantly farmland there is also some infill housing interspersed with the farms. Part of the C-roads are designated as a National Cycle Route (NCN 7) and a long-distance path (The John Muir Way). The core paths network also runs through the area.

### What People Told Us

There is an overall feeling of safety expressed by residents. Neighbourhood use of WhatsApp groups keeps people informed and able to express issues. There is an appreciation of Glencairn Nature Reserve (when open) and RSPB for parking provision.

The main identified issue was **speeding traffic** both on A811 in the village and on the outer C-roads. This affects pedestrians of all ages and parents with small children or pushchairs, whether walking on the pavement or trying to cross the road at desire-points such as the Village Shop, bus stops and the play park. The narrowness of the pavement, often further narrowed by overgrown hedges, serves to heighten the fear of the passing traffic, particularly large vehicles and lorries. There are no safe crossing points at locations such as village shop, bus stops and play field. On the C-roads, the traffic levels are enough to cause conflict between vehicles and cyclists or equestrians. When there are problems on the A811, the back roads are used as a diversion but are not suitable for heavy traffic or large vehicles. Not only are there vehicles exceeding the speed limits, but there is also a common view that the speed limits themselves are too high.

The second priority concern raised was **road surface condition**. Despite past work bringing most of the roads up to a good standard, some areas have not been repaired and some roads (Auchincarroch Rd) and some verges have been left in a poor state by utility companies.

The third priority concern is **parking**. Pavement parking on residential roads hinders the safe passage of pedestrians particularly those with push chairs. This hindrance forces pedestrians to walk in the road. Parking in passing places and in the lay-by at Duncryne Terrace was also raised often blocking the area needed for Ambulance services and for disabled residents. At school pick up time, parking at the school end of Ross Loan causes congestion issues. Similarly, at the Play Park end of Duncryne Road, cars park anywhere they can to be close to the Play Park. There is good parking near the Millennium Hall.

The fourth priority concern is **flooding**. This tends to happen at the same spots on A811 but also on Church Rd. Along Duncryne Terrace the floods can get so bad as to ingress into property. The underlying cause of flooding needs to be addressed.

The fifth priority concern relates to the **remoteness of rural roads**. Late night activity includes Anti-Social Behaviour such as drug use and motorbike racing. Rural crime is prevalent such as poaching and theft from farms. Fly tipping is a common crime.

### Long List of Projects to Address these Issues

1. Increase police presence/patrols on the main and back roads to discourage speeding, anti-Social Behaviour and rural crime.
2. Reduce the speed limits to 20 mph zone from play park to school, and also 20 mph on Ross/Aber horseshoe and C-roads and 40 mph between Gartocharn and Balloch.
3. Traffic cameras installed for road safety particularly in relation to speeding.
4. Install a light controlled crossing over A811 between Duncryne Terrace and the Play Park to allow safe crossing. This would have a bonus of slowing traffic through the core village centre.
5. Create more passing places and extend/elongate the existing ones (e.g., to allow a lorry length or more to pull in) on 'C' roads to alleviate congestion when used for diversion from A811.
6. Add "No Parking" signs on all passing places.
7. Create more authorised parking spaces – with EV chargers – to alleviate pavement parking.
8. Improve Public Transport services to aid the transition from cars to public transport to reduce traffic levels all over.
9. Investigate the organisation of conglomerated delivery days e.g., could non-urgent deliveries be coordinated to the same day of the week to reduce traffic. Could collection points be created.

### Implementation Plan

- KCC to discuss details of proposed crossing with WDC and residents of Duncryne Terrace.
- KCC to discuss speed solutions with WDC & Police Scotland.
- KCC to liaise with Police Scotland regarding Anti-Social Behaviour and rural crime prevention.
- KCC to discuss pavement parking with residents before talking to WDC.
- Residents to identify hot spots of Passing Place abuse, KCC to liaise with residents on which Passing Places to extend or location of additional ones. KCC to lobby WDC for delivery.
- KCC to discuss with WDC the diligence on checking utility repairs is completed to good standard and verges made good and maintained.
- KCT/KMHA to explore the idea of a home delivery collection point e.g., in Hall car park. Residents could collect their own or a "Community Delivery Group" set up for those that can't collect.

## 2 Getting about

### The Local Situation

There is an issue with public transport service frequency and how it suits different people, particularly commuters.

Many people recognise that Public Transport is a solution to CO2 reductions versus car use and something that must be invested in. Improved services would benefit the mobility of visitors, clearly breaking dependency on cars, congestion and car parking.

Connectivity within the locality is an issue. Because the back roads are not suitable for larger buses thought needs to be given to how to connect the outlying areas to the core village.

Connectivity outwith the locality is also a problem. Connections to the rail service at Balloch for example are poorly co-ordinated. Connections to Stirling are very challenging. The most common issue raised was the lack of connections to the east in general with Drymen, Croftamie & Balfron.

Bus stops need to be carefully considered. Sheltered waiting areas would be welcomed but this may create issues with maintenance, litter and anti-social behaviour.

The school bus is a regular bus (twice a day) that takes school kids to school, but people can jump on, pay their fare and go to Balfron or any of the villages it goes through on its way to Balfron.

### What People Told Us

Although there was an understanding that rural communities do normally lack public transport, there is actually a need to enhance the service to create opportunities for tourists, and to reduce our carbon footprint. There is a demand for new electric vehicles.

There were suggestions that the current 309 bus service should be enhanced and the buses should link with the train in Balloch.

Some people asked for shelters and bus-stops, and a smaller number felt there should be more stops. Some think there should be buses stopping on demand and an enhanced stop at the playpark.

Respondents were looking for more routes, especially to Stirling, and Balfron so that teenagers could meet friends.

Other suggestions were for a funded car share scheme and a local taxi service.

As a topic, Footpaths and Cycleways attracted a high proportion of respondents. 62% of those replies felt action or their presence was a high priority, 35% said they were good to have and only 3% regarded them as unnecessary.

There were 92 comments made regarding footpaths and cycleways half of which concerned the existing pavements. Specific and regular mention was made of the state of the pavement along the A811 to Balloch being poorly maintained and dangerous. Similarly, the pavement along Church Road which is in a poor state of repair. Many feel the South pavement through the village is too narrow with hedges overgrown. Flooding is an issue by the pedestrian crossing and in the lay-by to the front of Duncryne Terrace.

Parking on the pavement is an area of concern particularly in front of the shop.

There was very clear and robust support for the rebuilding of Aber Bridge with disappointment expressed that the National Park has not managed to resolve this issue.

The pavement at Balagan has been recently resurfaced and is now fit for purpose. However, there is no continuous, useable, pavement beyond this point linking to Gartocharn.

Lengthy attempts have been made to repair Aber Bridge; however, the substructure was found to be in need of replacement and the bridge itself straddles land owned by two landowners which has caused an issue with progressing the project.

### **Long List of Projects to Address these Issues**

1. A new community owned electric minibus service or car sharing scheme, particularly linking the outlying areas to the village centre.
2. Improve the timetable to better match departing and arriving trains at Balloch.
3. Improve connections to the East – Drymen, Croftamie, Balfron and Stirling.
4. Provide a well-designed and fitting bus shelter at the east end of the village – one at the play park with a safe crossing point was highlighted.
5. Better footpaths from the village to Drymen. It was suggested that this be routed via the War Memorial to RSBP and then on to the metal bridge at Wood End Lodge (Wards Hill Estate). A footpath is also needed to the Old Kirk and a safe walking route from the school and nursery to the Millennium Hall.
6. Reinstatement/creation of pavements along A811 between Balagan and Gartocharn. This could be a dual use path for use by pedestrians and cyclists as an alternative to the, less direct, NCN7.
7. Pathway from Balloch to Gartocharn.
8. Regular maintenance of pavements and hedges that run adjacent to paths.
9. Footpath to run from Junction of Church Road and Ross Loan to War Memorial and then on to Old Kirk. Footpath to run from Gartocharn to Drymen via Woodend Lodge.
10. Safe walking route from the school/nursery to the Millennium Hall. Reinstatement of Aber Bridge.
11. Improved frequency of public transport including better connectivity with trains and coverage of the back roads to get people out of their cars. Creation of safe and appealing walking and cycling routes to connect people and services would also help.

### **Implementation Plan**

- Establish a dialogue with SFT on adding a bus stop at the play park in conjunction with further consultation on specific project of a crossing and bus stop opposite Duncryne Terrace.
- Initiate a detailed survey into transport including with neighbouring villages. Further work should be done with residents about the level of community interest in car share, community transport etc.
- Establish a diverse community transport scheme.
- Open up dialogue with Sustrans and WDC about active travel.
- Consider setting up local work parties to address hedge and other environmental maintenance.

### 3 Climate change, Biodiversity and net-zero

#### The Local Situation

The Scottish Government Emission targets (Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019) has articulated the concept of the climate emergency and a need for “transformative change”. With an increasing focus on this as a cross cutting theme in Government this is resulting in new policy areas and funding streams from Government and other bodies such as the Lottery distributors.

This commits to a just transition to net zero where everyone, regardless of circumstances can be part of that journey. This is new to all communities such as Kilmarnock but a key priority.

Several village litter picks were organised prior to the ‘Covid years’, many residents are active litter pickers. The Council is responsible for litter removal along the A811.

The bottle banks at the Co-op store in Balloch and at the garden centre, both well used by local residents, have recently been removed. Other bottle banks remain in Balloch and in Alexandria, and a comprehensive recycling centre is provided at Dalmoak.

#### What People Told Us

79% of respondents said that addressing the climate, environment and nature crises is a priority. Help is needed for individuals to better understand the issues and options and enable good decisions to be made locally.

The main areas of concern that people have are:

*Homes, Heating & Power:* Many recognise the urgent need to move from fossil-based fuel (in Kilmarnock that’s mainly oil-fired boilers) to a greener alternative but don’t have a clear view of the alternative options and for many the costs are a concern. Planning and building control can mandate eco-friendly solutions for new builds but retrofitting new solutions to older homes isn’t usually easy or cheap and in some cases conflicts with Listed Building guidance. A small number of respondents continue to resist a move from oil-fired solutions for ideological or practical reasons.

Improving poor insulation is a significant issue for many properties.

*Transport :* At present most residents see little alternative to the continuing use of (mostly) petrol & diesel fuelled cars for most journeys. As a rural area with poor public transport and lack of safe wheeling routes, this is unsurprising.

*Recycling:* We’d all like to do more by way of re-purposing / re-using / re-cycling (and reducing waste in the first place). There is a lack of recycling facilities and uncertainty about what materials can be recycled (and how) and a level of suspicion that “it all ends up in landfill anyway.” Better information is needed and local options made available.

*Flooding:* People have concerns about local flooding e.g., from fields and burns as well as Loch Lomond and Sea level impacts.

Kilmarnock would like to aspire to become a Net Zero community. We already have a Net Zero farm and there are some passive homes. There is potential for a community solar farm. The proposed Wind Farm on the Kilpatrick Hills faces some resistance but that may be reduced if there’s a clear community benefit such as cheaper electricity.

There was a total of 57 responses on the subject of recycling in the questionnaire that all households received. 79% of those responses said that care and maintenance was of High Priority.

During the open consultation in the Millennium Hall, there were five stars set against ‘better recycling and battery and bottle banks’. There were a further four stars set against ‘litter picks and bins’.

There were comments on the litter on verges on all roads surrounding Gartocharn and on the hedges in the village being kept cut back more.

## Long List of Projects to Address these Issues

### Net Zero

1. Share information about renewable energy and help people to think through options.
2. Public or community-run EV charge points in the village. This could be part of a community energy solution.
3. Car sharing and electric bike hire schemes.
4. Better Community facilities for glass, clothing, batteries and toys were suggested with better information about what and how to recycle.

### Biodiversity and the environment

5. Consideration of the causes of flooding and an understanding of mitigation schemes.
6. Improved drainage by existing pedestrian crossing and in front of Duncryne Terrace to reduce flooding.

### Implementation Plan

- Create a community net-zero group, to share understanding and practical experience of steps to reduce household and business carbon footprints.
- Explore options for community promotion of EV chargers in the village.
- Explore car-sharing opportunities.
- Open up a dialogue with farmers about flooding from fields.
- Discuss flood mitigation with WDC.
- Feasibility study into a village wide renewable energy scheme.
- Research and a costed plan for sustainable community led transport as well as funding for a demonstration project.
- Request WDC Greenspace to provide more frequent litter picking on A811.
- Request WDC to provide facilities for glass recycling in the village if the Community can agree on a site.
- Discuss the possibility of a battery recycling facility with the village shop owner.
- Ask KCC, WDC, and Community Police, to co-ordinate an annual litter-pick.
- Install CCTV for property protection against rural crime.

## 4 The Importance of Early Years

### The Local Situation

The area has one primary school, Gartocharn Primary & Nursery but limited additional childcare facilities. Gartocharn Primary & Nursery is currently a healthy and thriving non-denominational school and ELC. It caters for up to 100 children in the school, and up to 30 children at one time in the nursery. It currently has 89 children in the school, and 38 in the nursery. 38 pupils (43%) at the school currently reside in the catchment area, with 51 pupils (57%) living outside it.

There are excellent outdoor facilities at the Gartocharn campus, including a superb Astro-turf pitch (also available for community use) and a forest school area, complete with a cabin for outdoor learning. It is a School of Excellence in Outdoor Learning with Green Flag Eco-School status, and works closely with local partners such as the RSPB, National Park, WDC Balloch Park Rangers and RHET.

There is currently no provision of after-school care. Pre-Covid, there was an after-school club run by volunteer parents which met Mon-Thurs 3-5pm in the Kilmarnock Millennium Hall. It was popular, but proved difficult to run, with only two families volunteering, meaning two days per week running it per family. Those families decided against running it again due to lack of other parent volunteers and it being too onerous a task. There was a meeting last year via the school to assess want /need / feasibility of setting up another after-school club, but unfortunately a lack of parent volunteers meant it could not get off the ground.

The nursery looks after children aged 6 weeks to 5 years. Hours for children up to 3 years old are 8:30am – 4:30pm, 52 weeks a year excluding Christmas. Hours for 3-5 year-olds are 8:30am – 2:30pm, termtime only.

West Dunbartonshire Council does not accommodate any after-school care at Gartocharn and there is no statutory duty on local authorities in Scotland to do so, although they do have the power to provide such care. Lack of funding, together with insurance and liability responsibilities all mean that WDC feels it cannot provide after-school care at Gartocharn. It was investigated by the school in recent times, and the conclusion was that it needs to be a private care organisation that provides such a service. Areas of high deprivation might be the only places to get after-school care provided by the Council.

At school pick-up time, there is limited parking at the school grounds, and cars queue along Ross Loan to turn into the drop-off/pick-up zone. There is a danger of cars wanting to turn off the A811 onto Ross Loan being stuck on the main road due to the queue. The school is doing as much as it can and has been trying to improve the situation by changing the pick-up time to be from 3 - 3:10pm for traffic easing. The school has also been getting information out to parents and carers not to queue on the A811 via leaflets, Seesaw messages, posters, and even a video.

For children walking to school, the current situation is that they must navigate much of the journey along the main road, with only one safe crossing point available, that happens to be in a place that floods whenever there is rain.

There is a school bus available for school-age children living within the catchment area and over 2 miles from the school (or 1 mile if there are no safe walking routes). 17 school pupils currently use this service - but many pupils commute from Balloch, so the bus service does not include them.

The school has an Astro-turf pitch that is available for the whole community to use. The community can also book the school gym after school hours if they wish. There is a good relationship between the village community and the school.

Regarding secondary schools, most school leavers go on to either Balfron High or Vale of Leven Academy (VOLA). There seems to have been a higher percentage that go to Balfron over the last few years. The figures for school leavers in 2023 are that 9 are going to Balfron, and 3 to VOLA.

The future of Gartocharn Primary and Nursery looks secure for now. Two new Heads have just been appointed to both the School and Nursery, and WDC has just invested £40,000 in 2023 towards getting part of the Nursery garden updated - which seems to suggest there are no current plans for



closure. The Care Inspectorate always gives very good reports on the campus, and it seems to be a sought-after place to send children to, with a large number of pupils coming from the Balloch area. With a planned increase in governmental childcare funding, there will be a need to keep as many places open as possible.

### **What People Told Us**

Gartocharn Primary & Nursery is highly valued by residents including those who use it and those who do not. Both acknowledge its importance in attracting people to the village, and appreciate the facilities available to all residents, such as the John Young community pitch. One mentioned the school as being “important to the vitality of the village.” Several respondents highlighted the school as one of the things they most liked about living in the area, whilst more respondents (12%) highlighted it as something they would most want to keep in the area. A response from the nearby RSPB Loch Lomond reserve noted the “great relationship with the local Primary School who support us with our work and hopefully also gain great benefit from being near to an RSPB site.”

However, there were many comments regarding the lack of after-school care and limited nursery hours. Many people feel that better childcare provision would help parents work and contribute to the local economy. One response under the “Access” header mentioned that not having access to after-school childcare “is a reason people will leave the area or not move to the area” and mentioned their family will “probably have to move” because of this, as they cannot afford to have one parent not working. There were also comments on the shorter nursery hours particularly once a child turns 3, being incompatible with full-time working hours.

All comments on the school & nursery and need for better after-school care were intertwined through various sections of the survey, including the economy, play areas, transport, social interaction, feeling of influence, usage, access, traffic, and pathways –seeming to highlight the reach of the school & nursery within the village.

Some respondents noted the positive social impact the school & nursery have in opening up community connections. Whilst some respondents were aware of the community pitch at the school being available to the village community, there were a couple of comments that suggested others were not aware of this.

Many responses mentioned the busy traffic on the A811 and the lack of safe pathways to school being a worry for them regarding children. This also extended to high school children, and the mention of bus shelters and safe off-road cycle paths to the Endrick villages, as well as to our primary school & nursery were suggested.

There were 21 comments regarding the traffic situation at school pick-up time, with potentially dangerous congestion on the A811, and the lack of sufficient parking at the school.

### **Long List of Projects to Address these Issues**

1. A feasibility study into innovative community led after-school care provisions should be implemented with a view to establishing a sustainable pre and after school provision beyond the statutory minimum.
2. A safe route to school should be developed with a safe pathway away from the road. This would tie up with other pathway plans in the “Getting About” theme.
3. Increase parking spaces and drop-off at the school

### **Implementation Plan**

- Better signage should be delivered by WDC
- Meetings should take place with WDC to discuss options.

## 5 Meeting Places and Community Facilities

### The Local Situation

The Kilmarnock Millenium Hall is a venue for Friday coffee mornings, parties, weddings, ceilidhs, concerts, meetings as well as hosting the following group activities: Yoga, Tai Chi, Frayed Edges Sewing, B Flats choir, Ukulele, Gardening, SWI and Young Farmers. It also has an “honesty” library. There were requests for more fitness classes, adult education, art club, community garden, walking group, bridle paths, cycle paths, walking routes, tennis courts and community cinema. The primary school has a badminton club for adults. WhatsApp groups for Aber and Backroads communities help keep residents in touch. Gartocharn Community has a Facebook page used to advertise forthcoming events and send messages but we have nothing for young people.

The football pitch has been upgraded and levelled but parking is a big issue. This may be resolved with new parking at Glencairn nature reserve.

The play park flooding needs to be resolved and equipment needs to be upgraded. It is suggested that the slide be replaced, and a zip wire, willow tunnels, sandpit, picnic benches and public toilet are introduced.

Regarding a public toilet there have been proposals to offer the use of KMH foyer toilets for a fee, or, building a new self-cleaning w.c., or, installing toilets at the changing rooms by the playground.

Access to the play park needs to be made safer.

The Old Kirk is a valued venue and it is a priority to complete the fundraising process and finish off the restoration.

### What People Told Us

Access to Facilitated Amenities in Kilmarnock was considered a high priority by 54% and good to have by 41% of the 56 respondents. It got 12 stars.

50% of the 94 comments related to the lack of a pub / cafe in the village. The House of Darroch (formerly The Hungry Monk / The Gartocharn Hotel) is missed by 10% of the residents and those working from home as a community hub.

Access to healthcare was a concern for the elderly and infirm without a car. It was suggested we have a health care facility in KMH on a Friday morning and as a community we should support the services of nearby VOLH.

It was suggested that young people might like to engage through social networking.

A Public Toilet was requested for the village and play park by a third of respondents. The closure of the House of Darroch and previous public toilet, in about 2009, has led to the loss of this facility. More than once KMH car park has been used as a toilet and the caretaker (Fiona) kindly cleaned it up. Perhaps KMH could arrange access for a fee. In the report back from the previous action plan there was one star allocated for a public toilet.

Opportunities for Social Contact and Belonging was considered a high priority by 46% and good to have by 48% of the 52 respondents.

The lack of informal meeting venues was raised by many (12 stars). KMH was acknowledged as a great asset, especially the Friday coffee morning run by volunteers. It was suggested it could be a commercial venture to provide a daytime coffee shop. Over a quarter of respondents are actively involved in the variety of group activities in KMH but more classes were requested. There is general feeling that there is a good community spirit but some working parents and people on their own find it difficult to find the time or the inclination to join in village activities. Some also find such gatherings badly advertised and intimidating.

Backroads and Aber WhatsApp groups are helpful in getting to know neighbours and share information.

Play and Recreation Opportunities was considered a high priority by 25% and good to have by 75% of the 56 respondents.

The village has a play park, football pitch and nearby golf course at Ross Priory.

Some felt the play park equipment required upgrading, a public toilet and safer access.

There is a serious problem with flooding. Recent work done on levelling the football pitch was appreciated but there is still a problem parking. Both safer road crossing and parking got 10 stars.

KMH offers a variety of group activities but 10% of respondents would like additional evening fitness and adult education classes and after school gym for teenagers. Also requested were more bridle paths, walking routes, cycle paths, tennis courts, ceilidhs and a community cinema.

#### **Long List of Projects to Address these Issues**

1. Initiate a feasibility study to reinstate a pub/cafe in House of Darroch or a facility at the KMH.
2. Install a public toilet or open up access to existing toilets.
3. Consult the community about more group activities e.g., fitness, art, adult education, community cinema, walking.
4. Improve advertising of events and activities including creating a social network for young people.
5. Consider the installation of a community led healthcare facility.
6. Upgrade equipment in play park and address flooding issues.
7. Make access to play area safer by having safer road crossing and gate.

#### **Implementation Plan**

- Consider the reinstatement of the cafe.
- Approach WDC about safety and flood prevention.
- Approach KMH about access to public toilets and how this could be sustained by donations or sponsorship.
- Consult with the KMH as the key local facility about diversifying their offering.

## 5. Next Steps

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Following the consultation meeting where the residents will consider this draft plan the following steps will be taken:

1. Update of plan with prioritised project list
2. Fit themes and projects to the national and regional policy framework
3. Comments from steering group and key stakeholders
4. Near final plan proof-read for distribution
5. Plan discussed and approved by Community Council and Development Trust
6. 28-day consultation period to elected members and adjacent Community Councils
7. Comments received and final changes made
8. Statement of amendment to Local Development Plan
9. Final plan graphically designed
10. Submission to National Park Authority for verification
11. Plan signed off



# Appendix 1 : Key matters that should be considered by the National Park Authority

Some of the specific concerns raised, and suggestions made by the community, require explicit consideration by the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park as it develops its next Development Plan. This section summarises the issues for consideration that have emerged from the consultations and from discussion at the Kilmarnock Community Council.

## 1 Housing / planning

To improve housing availability in the area we would support changes to the LDP to cover:

- Small-scale housing of 2-3 bedrooms being prioritised over more substantial properties. These would be more affordable and suitable for new families or older people releasing their larger homes to general stock.
- Promotion of single-storey housing to benefit elderly or less able-bodied persons. Also helps with housing market mobility.
- Promotion of Carbon neutral housing within LDP Housing Policies for obvious benefit to counter Climate Change. This applies to alterations as much as new builds.
- The addition of a disability category to the LDP Housing Policies.
- Promotion of development for rental rather than sale.
- Any multiple unit developments to provide infrastructure impact assessment e.g., travel plan to major hubs, population equivalent values for public Water & Sewage use, traffic effects (access & egress to road network), off road parking, EV charging facilities.
- Sympathetic infill housing outwith the village envelope – the opposite of clumping (massing). This makes use of some unproductive land to provide economic benefit to landowners and contribute to the housing supply. It also disperses development from a crowded central location with its traffic and parking issues.
- Review LDP policies on compulsory use of occupancy conditions in all cases (e.g., HF2(d)). Scot Gov is encouraging a move away from the use of such clauses.
- Place more weight on statutory consultees SEPA & Scottish Water to deliver stronger assessments of impacts of sewage treatment whenever an application proposes a discharge to any watercourse. Discourage soak away systems. Require applicants to provide a life cycle maintenance plan for sewage treatment plants.

## 2 Living Well Locally: Amenities and Facilities

To support “Living Well Locally”, we would like to see:

- LLTNFA review the LDP & associated policies to promote provision and retention of local amenities and facilities that will help communities reduce their travel footprint e.g., proper scrutiny of change of use classes that impact on community facilities including pubs, cafés, shops, toilets etc.
- LLTNFA to liaise across council borders with Transport providers to coordinate public transport services that connect villages across council boundaries with each other and the major transport hubs.

## 3 Living Well Locally: Residents alongside tourists

To improve the balance of effects on residents from Tourist tolls or other restrictions we would like to see:

- Resident Parking permits or designated spaces, either free or at a significant discount.
- Resident Camping permits, either free or at a significant discount.
- Resident Launch permits, either free or at a significant discount.

#### 4 Natural Open Spaces

To improve management and enjoyment of Natural Open Spaces in the area we would support changes to the LDP or other policies to cover:

- Promote provision for habitat restoration in development applications either as part of the development or developer contribution to a community accessible fund.
- Promote enjoyment of managed Natural Space by improving accessibility by sustainable means e.g., safe routes for walking, cycling, wheelchair use.
- Improve connectivity between popular sites via said safe routes.

#### 5 Paths and Cycleways

To encourage Active Travel, we would like to see:

- LLTNPA take more responsibility in maintenance and improvement of the existing path network by having good Landowner Agreements in place for Rights of Way and Core Paths at the very least.
- LLTNPA to reduce bureaucratic burden on Community Bodies who are engaged in projects to maintain and improve paths on behalf of the NP.
- LLTNPA to assist Community Bodies in accessing funding for Active Travel projects large and small.

#### 6 Enjoyment of Outdoor Spaces by all

To further the enjoyment of our outdoor spaces by all, we would like to see:

- more investment in outdoor education. This could be in schools at all age levels, online resources through social media, public facing online presences not just LLTNPA website and make leaflets available to all tourist accommodation providers. Encourage Community Councils and Development Trusts to promote the educational material.
- a rolling review of the byelaws after each tourist season with a view to relaxation or removal of as many as possible.

#### 7 Pollution / protection of natural resources

To reduce pollution and increase protection of our natural resources, we would like to see:

- LLTNPA take more responsibility in tackling litter throughout the NP not just on LLTNPA owned land. Liaise with Local Authorities, Community Councils and Development Trusts. Volunteers will be more likely to help if there is accountability from on high.
- Require SEPA responses to all Planning Applications involving ANY discharge to a water course.
- Hold regular talks with WDC, SW & SEPA to raise awareness and monitor water quality for continual improvement.
- Continue the Seasonal reviews with all Stakeholders to maintain a priority list of infrastructure improvement needs and encourage existing and future tourism providers to participate in the provision of parking, bins and toilet facilities.

### Spatial implications

A number of the issues set out above need to be developed further as map-based propositions. We will use the further community consultation process, planned for October, to explore how best to express their spatial implications.