



OUR COMMUNITY

FOYERS - TORNESS - WHITEBRIDGE - GORTHLECK - ERROGIE - INVERFARIGAIG

OUR FUTURE

Stratherrick & Foyers Community Action Plan 2021

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the many local residents, community groups, businesses and organisations who committed so much energy and enthusiasm to produce this plan. Particular thanks to the volunteers on the steering group, drawn from across the local community, who helped to ensure that the process of producing the plan reached as many people as it did despite the constraints associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Commissioned by:
Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust

Facilitated by:
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Icecream Architecture
Scottish Community Development Centre

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FOREWORD

Thank you to everyone who has taken part in developing this Community Action Plan. The Trust commissioned the Plan to develop a shared vision of the improvements you want to see to your community over the next decade.

I hope as you read through the plan you will agree that it captures the ideas and recommendations that have emerged from the extensive consultation process. Your input, from more than thirty percent of the people that live here, has ensured it should be an accurate reflection of your aspirations.

The ideas range from the straightforward, for example a playpark, through to thoughts on how we might tackle some of the most complex problems we face today such as ensuring our homes are carbon neutral.

The plan is very solution focused. You will see that the main element is project plans, providing guidance on not only what should be done but how it will be done.

It is important to stress that this is not the Trust's plan. Of course, it provides us with a mandate going forward. But fundamentally the plan has been developed by the community for the community. Any organisation (large or small) and any individual can pick up a project and run with it.

This plan's publication provides the Trust with the opportunity to change its relationship with the community. Of course, the Trust remains responsible for good governance of the benefit funds. However, our role in the future will be to support you, the community, to implement the projects described in the plan.

Finally, many thanks to Nick Wright and his team for doing such a magnificent job. They have helped us as a community to lay out the roadmap through which we, working together, can create a healthy, happy and prosperous community for generations. Now I'm looking forward to working with you all to turn it into a reality!

Kirsty Balfour
Chair, Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust

Despite a quarter-century of working on community-led plans across Scotland, I had never visited the south side of Loch Ness between Fort Augustus and Inverness. So, when the chance to facilitate this plan landed in my inbox in October 2020, I sensed an opportunity. Not simply to get to know somewhere new, but to do something that hadn't been done before in Scotland – to support the emergence of a healthy, vibrant, growing rural community, leading change itself from the inside, and working with the public sector as an equal partner.

That rare opportunity exists because Stratherrick and Foyers have unrivalled access to resources. Significant community benefit funds, coupled with the community capacity, commitment and energy I've seen first hand, gives ability to invest in a way that the public sector might have done 50 years ago. That enables sustainable, contemporary solutions to the challenges that you and rest of rural Scotland face today: good jobs, affordable homes, rural poverty, climate change, an ageing population, cuts to public services and – perhaps hardest to define, but very real for this community – encroaching urbanism.

The beauty of the community-led response in a plan like this is that it is positive. You aren't simply focussing on problems. You are focussing on aspirations and how you as a community can meet them, through your own substantial resources and energy. Building homes for people who need them most, creating local childcare so parents can get back to work, improving countryside access so you and visitors can enjoy the hills and lochs, and much more besides: this is a community which has the ability to take control of its own destiny. You have the resources, you have the commitment, and you have supportive public authorities.

Lots of communities prepare community action plans like this. Too often, the process is energising for those involved, but little changes on the ground. Stratherrick and Foyers will be different, because you have the resources to make things happen. Inevitably small parts of the plan will fall by the wayside, but that won't matter: the sum is bigger than the parts. This plan demonstrates you have the power to transform your community – and to inspire the rest of Scotland. Good luck!

Nick Wright
Plan facilitator

INTRODUCTION

This part of the Plan explains:

- How we prepared the Plan (section 1).
- Our aspirations and challenges, and facts and figures about our local community (section 2).
- How this Plan fits with public policy and other organisations (section 3).

1 ABOUT THIS PLAN

This plan is in four parts:

- **Introduction** (sections 1 to 4) explains how the plan was prepared, describes our community, explains how the plan links to bigger strategic agendas, and introduces some typical local characters to illustrate how the plan will improve people's lives.
- **Objectives** (section 5) contains our vision for the future of our local community in 2030: what's important to us and what we want to achieve. The vision emerged through the community engagement process described in section 1.
- **Actions Areas** (sections 6 to 10) contains 20 action areas to deliver our vision, divided into five themes. The themes and actions were also developed through the community engagement process described in section 1.
- **Making it happen** (section 11) explains how we as a community will work together and collaborate with others to turn the action areas into reality.

A summary of the plan can be found on the Community Action Plan website [here](#).

Supporting information, such as more detailed community engagement results, is available online by following weblinks included in the document.

Why plan?

This Community Action Plan is intended to:

- Provide common purpose for the local community to work together.
- Help local community initiatives to tap into funding and support by showing how they contribute to community aspirations.
- Demonstrate to funders (such as community benefit funds from renewable energy schemes) and other stakeholders that we as a community have a clear sense of direction that reflects both our aspirations and wider government priorities.
- Help other stakeholders to understand how they can support our aspirations, including The Highland Council, Forestry and Land Scotland, NHS Scotland and other public sector bodies, landowners, utilities and infrastructure organisations.

The plan will be our guide for what we as a community will make happen over the next 10 years. The actions in the plan are ambitious. Some may happen quickly, others will take many years of hard work and collaboration.

By bringing together the community's energy and the resources available to us, we are confident that we can continue to make a real difference to improving lives in our local community, and set an example of community empowerment for others to follow.

How the plan was prepared

This plan was prepared with six months of community engagement between February and August 2021, in three basic stages as shown in the diagram overleaf.



February - March 2021

April - June 2021

July - August 2021

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

Ask everyone for their ideas about the future of the community

Simple online and postcard survey

Reach out across the whole community using website, social media, postcards delivered house-to-house, schools, word-of-mouth

COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY

Explore challenges & opportunities identified by the community

Agree priorities.

Develop realistic & workable solutions

Online "Citizens assembly" open to all

Involve organisations who can make things happen

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

Bring solutions together into a draft strategic action plan

Publish summary of draft plan online for people to review

AGREEING OUR AMBITION

1st Zoom event open to all

Stream live online

Share survey results

Agree working group topics based on survey analysis

Explore issues and solutions by topic

Agree aspirations/brief for each topic

Start online ideas bank

15 April, 7:30pm

WORKING GROUPS

5 themed online working groups

Open to anyone

Facilitated by consultant team

Prepare realistic solutions and actions for their objective

Informed by Community Survey, Community Assembly and Ideas Bank

April - May

ARE WE GETTING THERE?

2nd live Zoom event open to all

Share draft actions from working groups

Check that emerging solutions match ambitions of Community Survey and Zoom event

Explore priorities

27 May, 7:30pm

WORKING GROUPS

Finalise strategy and action areas for comment in draft Community Action Plan

June

From the outset, the focus was on producing a plan which not only reflected community aspirations, but was also practicable and deliverable. Although the local community is committed to lead delivery of the plan, individual projects will need support particularly in terms of:

- Financial resources, not least from the windfarm funders who supported preparation of this plan.
- Collaborative decision-making on public services for action areas like transport, health, planning and land management, where organisations such as The Highland Council and Forest and Land Scotland have statutory powers, organise public services and manage land.

The plan therefore takes account of public sector policies and plans (see section 3: Setting the scene), as well as informs their future review by acting as a statement of community aspirations and intentions. Liaison with public sector organisations took place throughout the process to give confidence that the process and outputs are robust, to understand and support their aspirations, and to ensure that the plan is realistic.

Community engagement was facilitated by a team of independent facilitators with experience of community engagement, development and action planning, commissioned on behalf of the local community by Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust. Before work started on the plan, a steering group was established to help check that the consultation process would reach the whole community. Around 20 local people joined the group from a cross-section of ages, locations, community organisations and individual interests.

The COVID-19 pandemic meant that most of that contact took place online rather than face to face. A dedicated website www.communityfuture.net was created as the focus for online engagement, evolving as the successive stages of engagement unfolded. The website was used to:

- Host online engagement, including the initial community survey, Ideas Bank and draft action plan content.
- Promote events such as the online Community Assemblies and community workshops.
- Provide regular news updates.
- Act as an interactive 24/7 resource about the action plan.

A number of measures were taken to ensure that nobody was prevented from participating due to lack of online access or knowledge:

- Hard copy mailouts were sent to all households in the area about key stages in the process including the community survey, Community Assembly dates and draft Action Plan.
- All publicity materials contained a named contact, phone number and postal address, and encouraged people to contact that person if they had any questions or comments.
- All residents were encouraged to help their friends, families and neighbours to engage in the process.
- Community organisations kindly helped spread the word, for example Boleskine Community Care home visitors and the organisers of the weekly Soup To Go event.
- As lockdown restrictions eased from July 2021, the facilitation team took the opportunity to participate in face-to-face events including a youth barbecue and the summer fair.

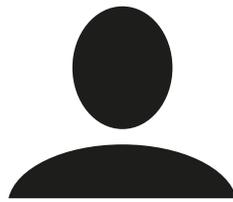
To give confidence in the outputs and process, the community engagement was designed and delivered in line with the Scottish Government's [National Standards for Community Engagement](#) and draft "[How To Guide](#)" on Local Place Planning. Although finalised guidance on Local Place Plans was awaited from the Scottish Government when this plan was prepared, the Community Action Plan was deliberately prepared in a way expected to be consistent with that forthcoming guidance, so that the process and outputs have credibility with The Highland Council as planning authority.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The high level of engagement from the local community was great to see, despite the constraints of the COVID lockdown. The figures on this page relate to local engagement in producing the Community Action Plan. They show just how much energy there is among the local community to get involved and make things happen.



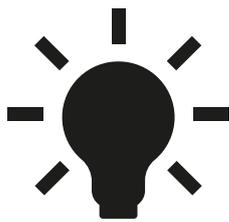
380
households
in total



820
residents in
total



264
Community survey
responses
(Over 30% of
residents)



110
suggestions in
the Ideas Bank



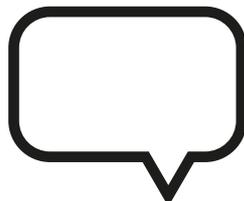
40
Likes
highest number of Likes
for any idea in the Ideas
Bank: retain Post Office
and shop



2
Community Assemblies



240
people checked out
the draft plan online



120
comments
on the draft plan



200
people joined the
email update list



Community Survey results

Summaries of community engagement outputs (follow weblinks for more information on www.communityfuture.net):



The community engagement process has been evaluated against the [National Standards for Community Engagement](#) using the associated [VOICE](#) evaluation. Follow [this weblink](#) to see the evaluation report.

2 SETTING THE SCENE

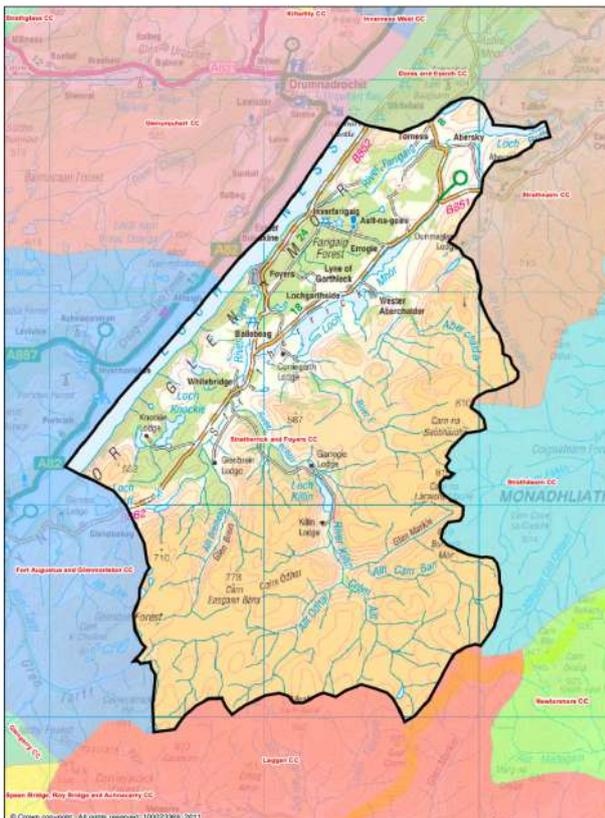
This section contains:

- Essential facts and figures about our community – our location, population, housing and economic activity.
- Community activity – a summary of the many community groups and activities already happening.
- What we think about our community – what’s good about the community, our challenges and our aspirations, garnered through the community survey undertaken at the start of the community action planning process.
- Public policy context – important national and local public policy drivers that the plan contributes to.

Facts and figures about our community

LOCATION

This plan relates to the area covered by [Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council](#) and [Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust](#), as shown on the accompanying plan. The Community Council area is the same as the area that is eligible for community benefit funding through the Community Trust.

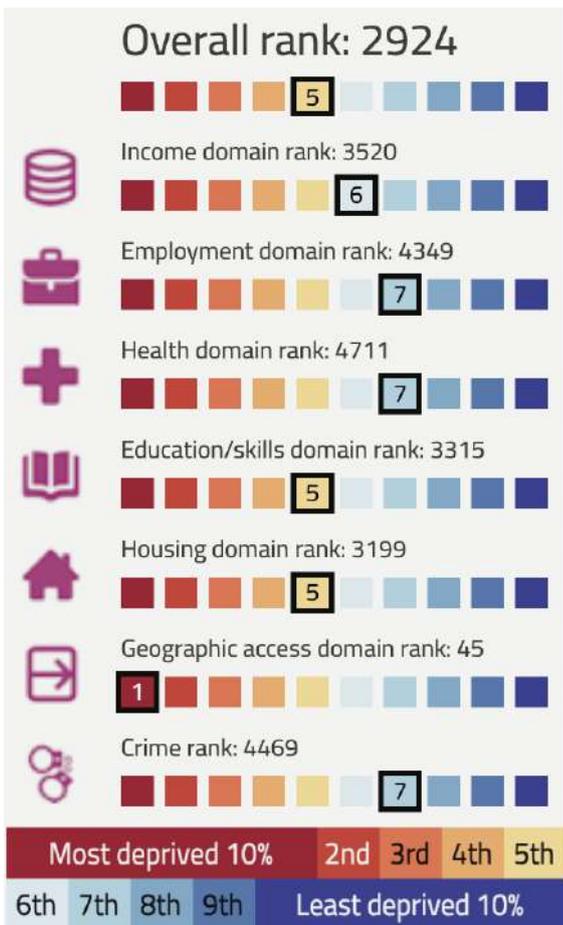


Plan area

This plan covers a large rural area the south of Loch Ness, 20 miles north-south and 10 miles east-west.

The main settlements are the villages of Erroglie, Foyers, Gorthleck, Inverfarigaig, Whitebridge and Torness. Outwith the villages are scattered houses, farms and estate buildings, set in a landscape of lochs, farmland, forestry and moorland extending up into the Monadhliath mountains.

Facilities and amenities include a shop in Foyers, primary schools in Gorthleck and Foyers, a medical centre in Foyers, hotels and cafes in Foyers and Whitebridge, community buildings in Whitebridge, Gorthleck and Foyers, and a playpark and campsite in Foyers.



Data from SIMD 2020

[The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation \(SIMD\)](#) is a Scottish Government tool for identifying areas with relatively high levels of deprivation. SIMD looks at the extent to which an area is deprived across seven domains: income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. In other words, SIMD does not simply measure deprivation in terms of financial income, but other resources and opportunities too.

SIMD divides the whole of Scotland into almost 7,000 small areas (called 'data zones'). The Community Action Plan area of Stratherrick and Foyers forms part of a slightly larger area including Dores, with a population of almost 1,000 people (datazone ref: S01010665).

The accompanying image shows how our community is in the most deprived 10% of Scottish datazones for the geographic access indicator (travel times to schools, shops, surgeries etc, and access to broadband), and just below average in terms of education/skills and housing indicators. Compared to Scotland as a whole, our community is also just below average.

CONNECTIONS

The nearest towns are Inverness (20 miles north of Foyers/Gorthleck), which has the main catchment secondary school, supermarkets and other facilities. There are two bus services from Foyers and Whitebridge/Gorthleck.

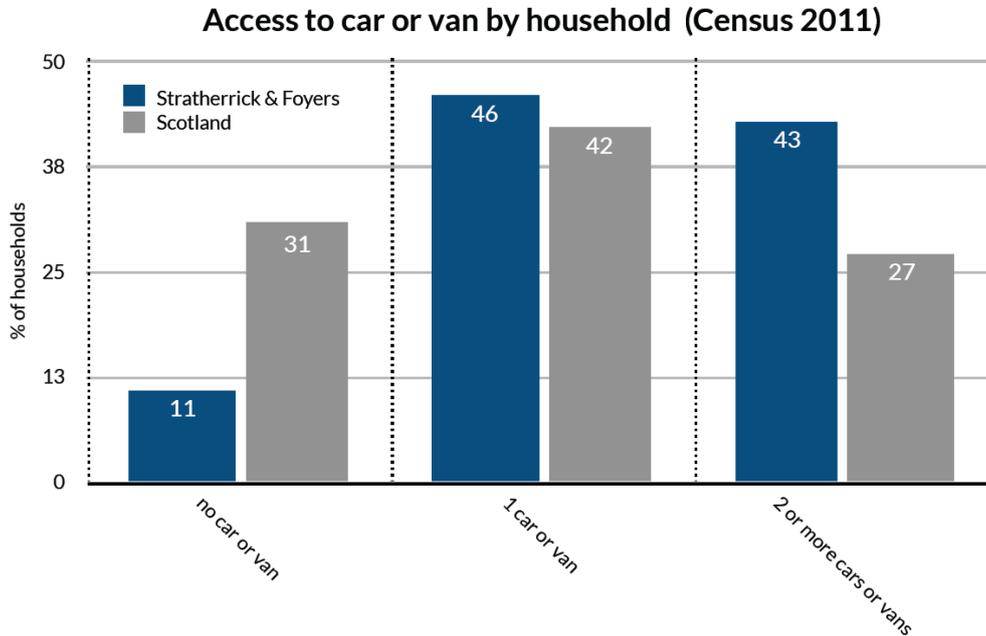
Fort Augustus is 15 miles south of Foyers/Gorthleck and has a smaller secondary school and some other local facilities. There are no direct bus services from Foyers or Stratherrick.



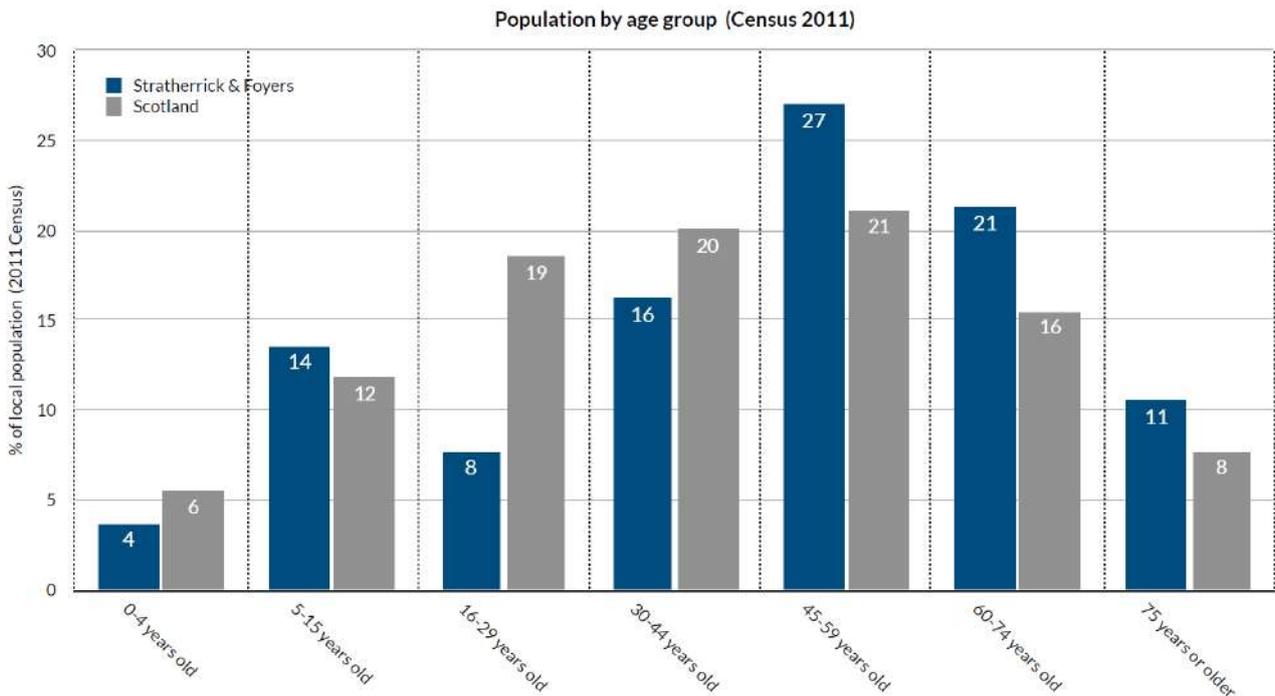
20 minute walking distances (yellow areas) and public transport (yellow routes)

POPULATION

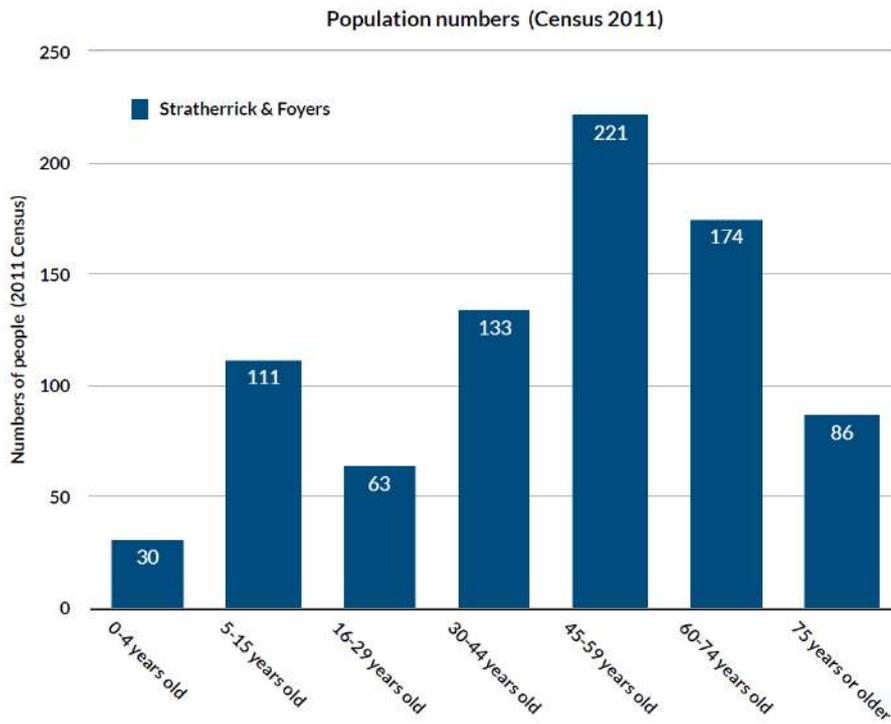
At the 2011 [census](#), around 10% of households in Stratherrick and Foyers did not have access to a car or a van.



The local population was approximately 815 people at the time of the last Census in 2011. The accompanying table contains the age breakdown. It shows that there were substantially fewer young adults compared to the Scottish average, but more middle-aged and older people.



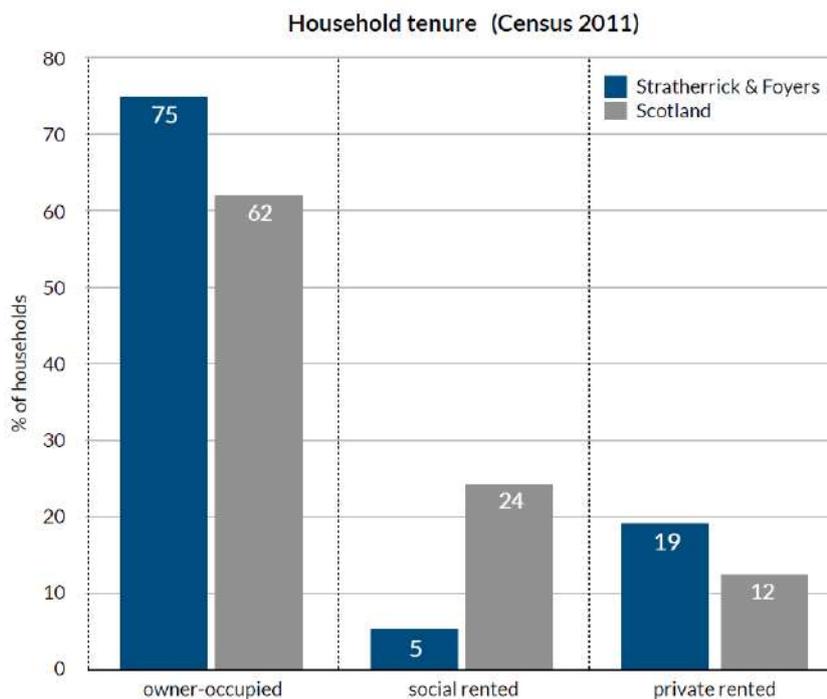
The numbers of people in each age group can be small. The lowest numbers in particular age groups are 30 people aged between 0 and 4 years old, and 63 people aged between 16 and 29 years old.



The latest population projections from the [National Records of Scotland](#) (2018) for Highland forecast a decline in the number of children and younger adults over the next 25 years, and a growth in adults of pensionable age. Although these projections refer to Highland, they suggest that the existing age profile of Stratherrick and Foyers – with higher proportions of older adults compared to the Scottish average – is likely to become even more marked.

HOUSING

In common with many part of rural Scotland, Stratherrick and Foyers has a higher proportion of owner-occupied housing than Scotland as a whole (Census 2011). Within the 25% of the local housing stock that is rented, the majority is privately rented (including housing tied to estate workers); only 5% of households are social-rented.



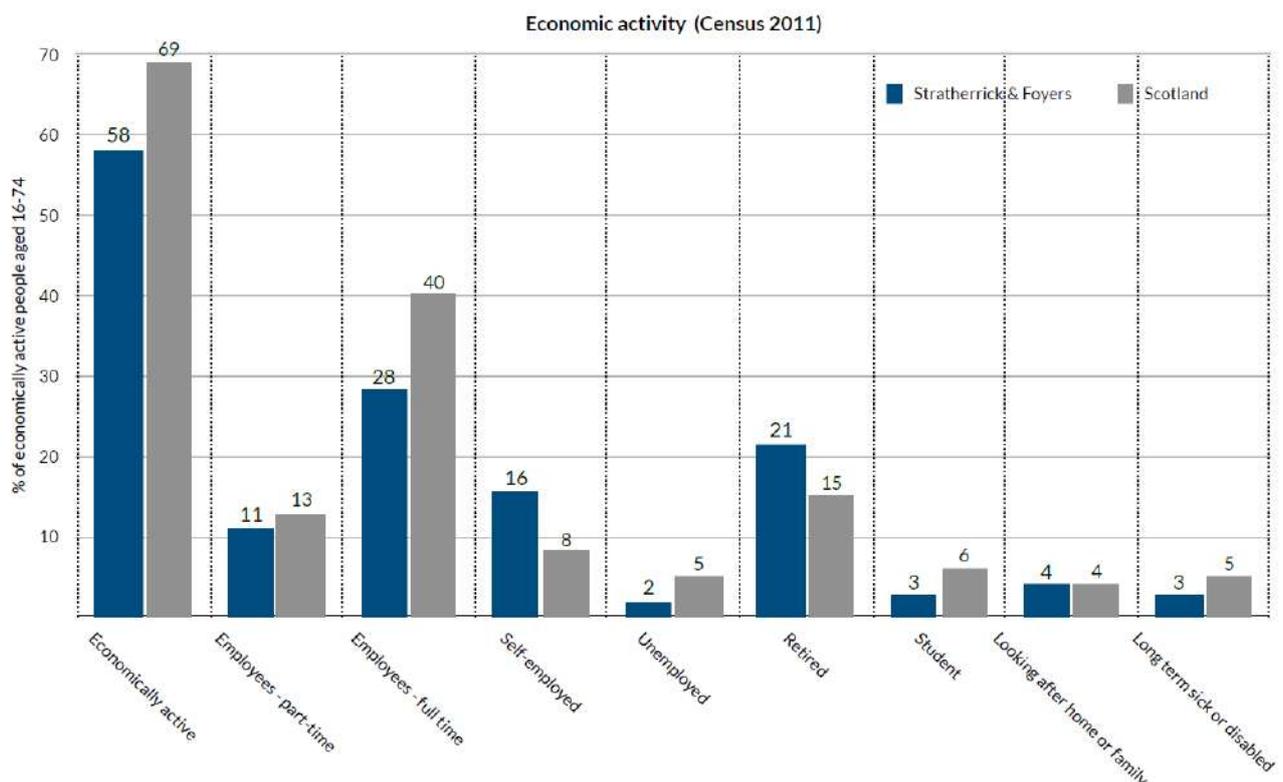
At the last Census, Stratherrick and Foyers had 382 occupied households. Compared to Scotland as a whole, there was a higher proportion of over-65 one person households and a lower proportion of family households with children. This is consistent with the age profile described above.

	Stratherrick and Foyers	Scotland
One person household	34%	35%
Aged 65 or over	18%	13%
Aged under 65	16%	22%
One family households	52%	53%
Lone parent with dependent children	6%	7%
Lone parent without dependent children	2%	4%
Couple with dependent children	12%	18%
Couple without dependent children	24%	24%
Other households	12%	13%
All full-time students	<1%	1%
All aged 65 and over	8%	8%
Other	3%	4%

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

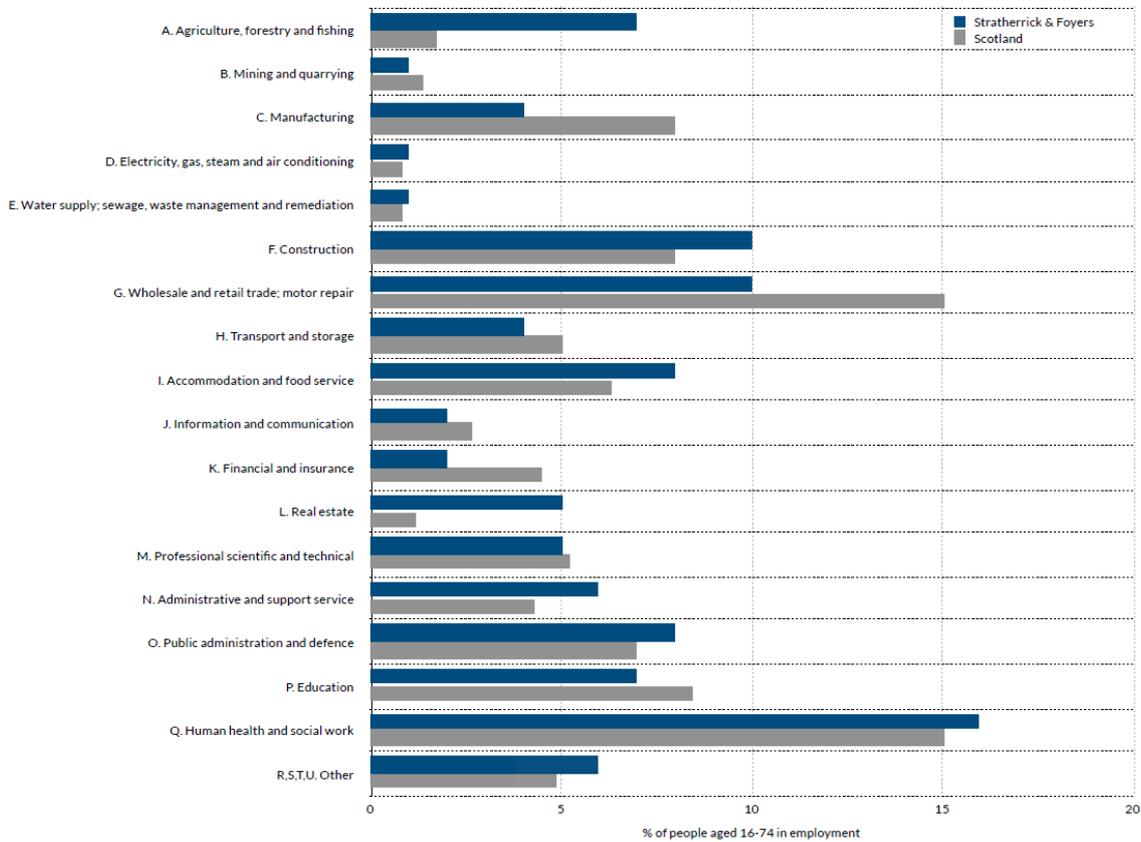
The total number of people aged 16-74 was 591 at the last Census. 185 of those were employed full-time and 68 employed part-time. 105 were self-employed (double the national average). 15 were unemployed and 15 were students.

A lower proportion (58%) was economically active than in Scotland as a whole (69%). A higher proportion of those people were self-employed than the Scottish average, and fewer are employees. The proportion of retired people in Stratherrick and Foyers (21%) is higher than the Scottish average (15%).

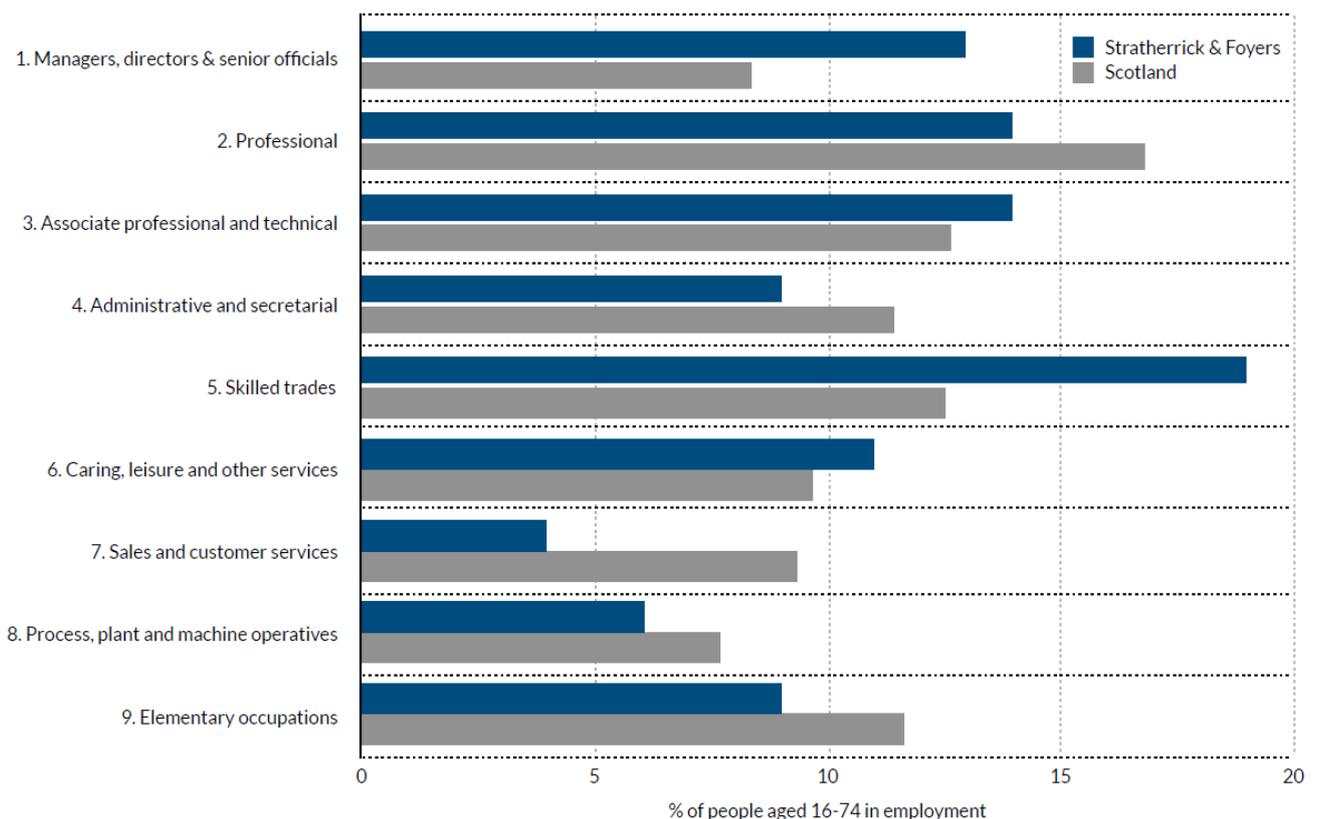


Compared to the Scottish average, significantly more people in Stratherrick and Foyers worked in agriculture / forestry / fishing and (perhaps surprisingly) real estate at the last census. Significantly fewer worked in manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade and motor repair than the Scottish average. Higher proportions of the local community worked in management and skilled trades, and lower proportions in sales and customer services.

Employment sector (Census 2011)



Occupation (Census 2011)



COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

Our local community is very active. We have over 30 active volunteer-run organisations in the local community (more information online about many of them [here](#)), together with businesses, estates, schools and public bodies.



In addition to the usual public services run by the local authority and other public bodies, the 30-plus local volunteer-led groups run a huge variety of activities and services which are of great value to the local community. These include:

Health, wellbeing and community support: for a number of years, we have benefited from ground-breaking 'Care at Home' for local residents provided by [Boleskine Community Care](#). They also offer community transport, befriending and other community-based health and social care initiatives, and have plans to expand their operations in line with this Community Action Plan.

In addition, a range of grants and support for individuals (including for those experiencing hardship, COVID-19 support, students, sporting events and home adaptations for medical reasons), community groups and major projects and groups are provided by the Knockie Foundation and [Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust](#).

A number of local groups came together to provide support for individuals in need during the COVID-19 pandemic under the umbrella of the [Broly Group](#), with activities such as food banks, financial support, hardship grants, vegetable boxes etc

The local [Community Apprenticeship Scheme](#) is jointly operated with Glengarry, Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston for local unemployed people aged 16 or over.

The local [Community Broadband Scheme](#) provides broadband to local properties which are poorly served by the hard-wired BT Openreach network, working with Cromarty Firth Wireless Networks Ltd to provide an average connection speed of at least 30Mbps.

Community facilities: the Wildside Centre and Stratherrick Public Hall are owned and managed by the local community, with the [Wildside Centre](#) in particular providing modern indoor and outdoor facilities for community use. New public toilets are expected to be completed in Foyers in 2022.

Other community-owned assets which will be developed to support implementation of this plan include refurbishment of the former [Errogie Church](#) as an indoor community space, and a slipway and community facilities at [Foyers Bay](#) on Loch Ness (see section 6).

Children and young people: activities, events and support for young people are organised locally by FIRA, the Youth Club and Wildside Baby and Toddler Group – the latter being as much for parents as the kids!

Environment, history and heritage: activities organised by a number of local organisations include courses in bee-keeping, composting and other skills, regular community markets and e-bike hire schemes. Ongoing community-led conservation of historical assets includes the Wade Bridge at Whitebridge, war memorial and Boleskine House.

Leisure and recreation: Popular annual community events include the Summer Gala, firework display, Winter Wonderland event at Christmas, Loch Ness Marathon and [Loch Ness 360 Challenge](#). Local groups like SOSA 2019 and many others organise a range of activities from canoeing, walking and climbing through to weaving and pottery.

To help people enjoy the great outdoors, new paths have been created including the [Trail of the 7 Lochs](#) and a section of the [Loch Ness 360 Trail](#), together with path signage and maintenance in collaboration with landowners and public authorities. New outdoor and indoor recreational facilities at the community-owned '[Riverside Field](#)' in Lower Foyers are at an advanced stage of planning (see section 6).

All of these activities are valuable for the community and should continue to receive support, in addition to the new action areas proposed later in this community action plan. They are evidence of the community's ability to make things happen.

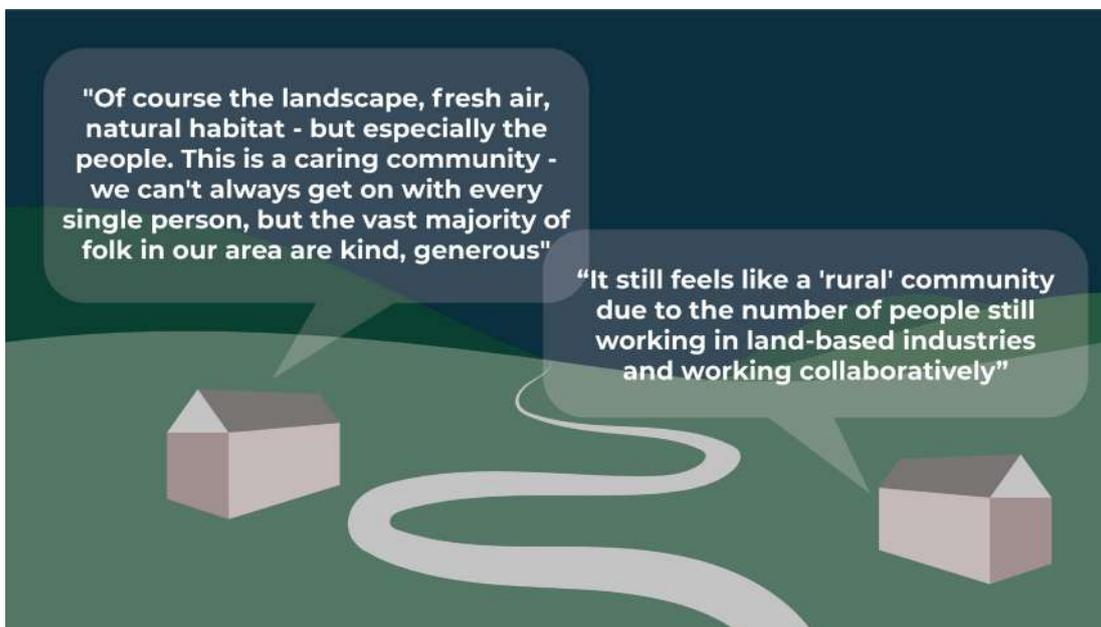
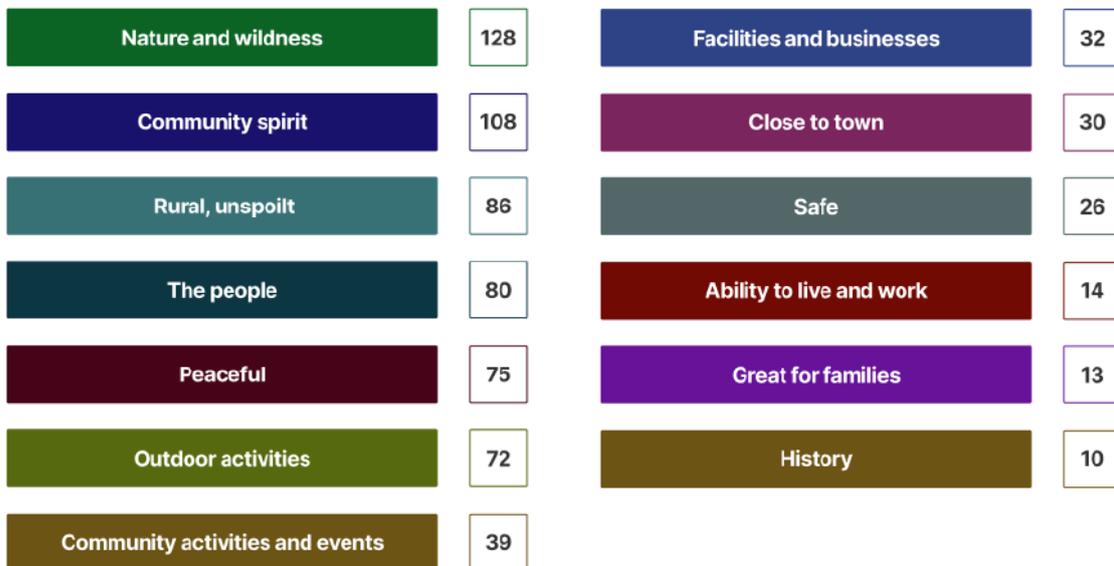
WHAT WE THINK ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

The community survey undertaken at the start of the Community Action Plan revealed a huge amount of valuable information about the community. Over 260 of our approximately 800 residents answered three questions. You can see a summary below, with more information online at: www.communityfutures.net/surveyresults

GOOD POINTS

People were asked: What do you like about our community? For example, what's good about living or working here? What do you love about the area? What needs to be protected for the future?

The most popular answers are shown in the graphic below, with the number of times they were mentioned. The things people most liked about the community all relate to nature, community spirit, people, and quiet unspoiled countryside. Each was mentioned by over 70 people, and is summed up by the two quotes below.

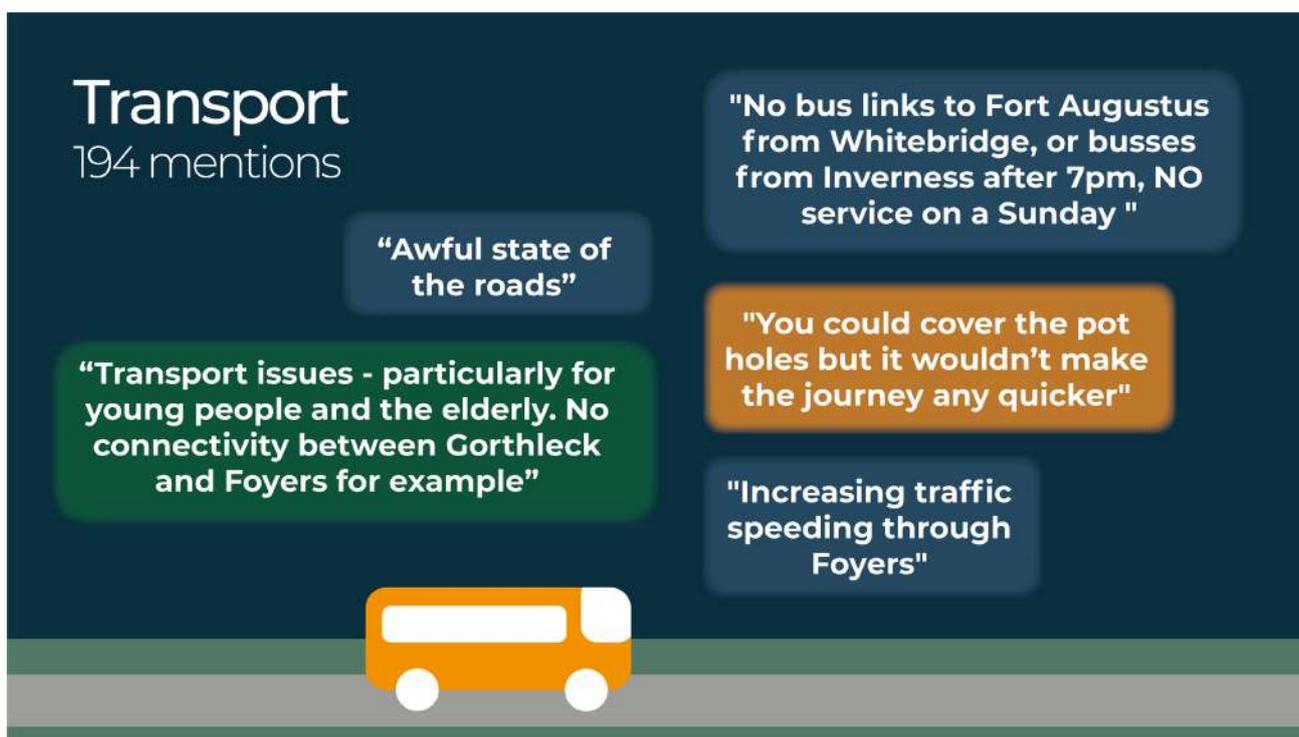


OUR BIG CHALLENGES

The survey asked: Other than COVID-19, what are the big challenges facing our community? What's difficult about living or working here? These could be issues you face personally, or problems that apply to others or indeed the whole community. The graphic summarises everyone's answers, including number of mentions.



By far the biggest challenge was transport, mentioned by 194 people (75% of respondents). The main specific concerns were potholes and winter gritting, followed by public transport and the amount and speed of traffic. The quotes show that people were concerned about getting around the local area, and also getting to Inverness and Fort Augustus.



Facilities and services was the second biggest challenge, mentioned by 99 people (approximately 40% of respondents). This included broadband and phone access, maintenance (including paths, bins and woodlands), playparks, sports facilities and so on. The quotes on the next page give a flavour.

Facilities & services

99 mentions

"Infrastructure is falling apart. The woodlands, country paths and footpaths are overgrown & in disrepair"

"no open outdoor space for play, a new playground for Gorthleck would be fantastic"



"A bigger and better place for BCC"

"In general the broadband service is poor"

The remaining quotes below illustrate some of the other challenges. 'Community' includes information and decision-making about how community benefit money is spent (mentioned by 40 people, approximately 15% of respondents), and general community spirit and strain on volunteers (mentioned by 30 people, approximately 10% of respondents). 'Housing' focussed mainly on the lack of affordable housing (mentioned by 53 people, approximately 20% of respondents).

Community

82 mentions

"Lack of communication, and misunderstandings causing bad feeling. (Often exacerbated by social media)"

Housing

74 mentions

"heating bill is through the roof due to storage heating"

Cost of living

64 mentions

"The vast sums coming in are having a negative effect on our community and causing frictions"

Nature

58 mentions

"Keeping our young people here by offering local employment and local houses that are affordable"

Tourism

52 mentions

"appreciate needing tourism but do like the quietness too"

OUR FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

The survey asked: What are your aspirations for our community in the future? If you had a magic wand, how would you like the community to be in say 2040?

The responses to this question revealed a number of common themes. The two most popular, each mentioned by 55 people, were protecting the natural environment and more things for kids (like bike paths, activities, playparks and transport).

More detailed analysis of the survey responses, particularly future aspirations, is available online [here](#).

As well as being a fascinating snapshot of our local community, the survey responses helped to identify themes on which to focus the community engagement to develop the Community Action Plan. With a little refinement as the plan was prepared, those themes have proved robust and form the action area headings in sections 6 to 10 of this plan:

- Community life
- Getting about
- Outdoors and nature
- Our homes
- Organising ourselves

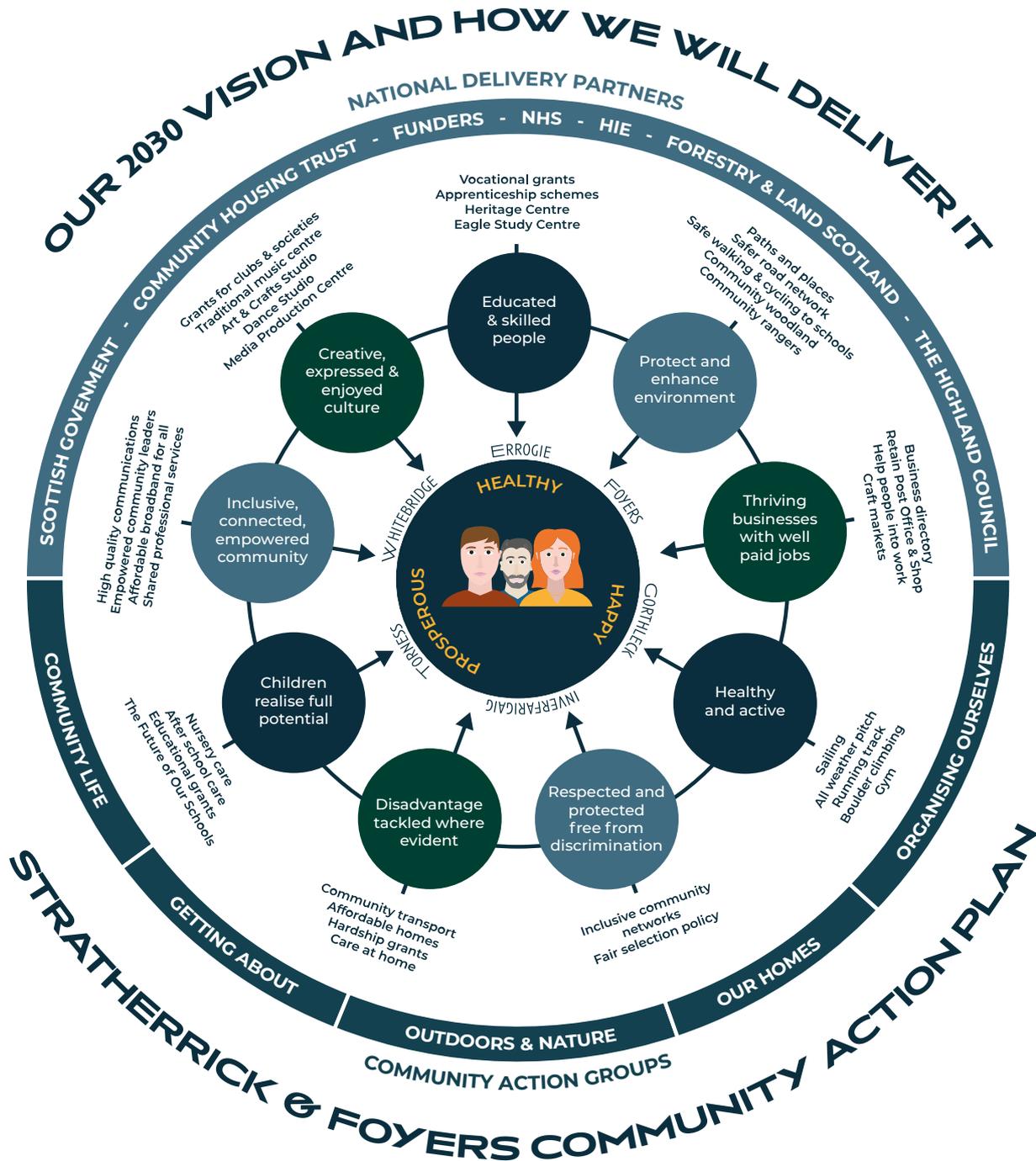
Protect the Natural Environment	55
More Things for Kids	55
Keep Rural Identity	45
Strengthen Community Spirit	41
More Jobs	37
More Young People & Young Families	37
Sustainable Communities	33
Eco Friendly & Zero Carbon	28
Support Local Enterprise	27
Support Our Elderly Folk	23
Make More of History & Culture	15
Fairness, Equality, Poverty Reduction	12

OBJECTIVES

This part of the Plan contains our vision for the future and explains how the Plan will support wider public policy agendas.

3 THE STRATEGIC PICTURE

The accompanying diagram shows how community action, supported by other organisations, contributes to national agendas like education, culture, environment, business and tackling disadvantage. Some of the activities described in the diagram are already happening, others are proposed in this Plan. Ultimately, our central focus is to create a healthy, happy and prosperous community.



COMMUNITY ASSETS:

- FORMER ERROGIE CHURCH
- FOYERS BAY SLPWAY & YARD
- INVERFARIGAIG FOREST SCHOOL
- LOWER FOYERS BUSINESS UNITS

- RIVERSIDE FIELD, FOYERS
- STRATHERRICK PUBLIC HALL, GORTHLECK
- TORNESSE FIELDS SPORTS CLUB
- WILDSIDE CENTRE, WHITEBRIDGE

Developed from the [National Performance Framework](#) (Scottish Government), [Achieving Better Community Development](#) (SCDC) and the [determinants of health](#) (Dahlgren-Whitehead).

DELIVERING PUBLIC POLICY

Scotland's strategic priorities are the cornerstones of our Plan - climate change, health and wellbeing, sustainable economic growth, fairness and equality.

Those strategic priorities are enshrined in the Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework](#) and its twelve National Outcomes. At the more local level, a number of existing public sector plans relate to our local community, including:

- The adopted [Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan](#) (2015)
- [Visit Inverness Loch Ness](#) BID (Business Improvement District) Business Plan 2019
- [South Loch Ness Land Management Plan](#) 2015 (Forestry and Land Scotland)
- South Loch Ness Road Improvement Strategy 2014
- [Highland Core Path Plan](#)

This Community Action Plan gives local action a central role in delivering a range of local, regional and national policy agendas. This is entirely consistent with the Scottish Government's [community empowerment](#) agenda and a range of other policy drivers from health and wellbeing to sustainable economic growth; this is shown on the accompanying diagram. As a community, we see ourselves as a fundamental delivery partner of local and national government. In response, we hope that local and national government will work collaboratively with us to support delivery of this Community Action Plan.

WORKING WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

As explained above, this Plan will deliver national agendas and local aspirations. Working collaboratively is vital because some of our community aspirations in this Plan cannot be achieved by the community alone, irrespective of resources, but will involve shaping other organisations' plans and services. The Highland Council, Forestry & Land Scotland and others each have established plans and priorities that can help deliver this Plan's aspirations in many ways. These plans are regularly reviewed. We want to work as a partner with these organisations, helping them to deliver what's in their plans where we can, and working with them to review the plans as opportunities arise.

This Plan's action areas (sections 6 to 10) reflect existing public sector plans where appropriate. For example, countryside rangers, development plan policy for new housing, and roads and footway improvements in the Road Improvement Strategy.

In relation to future reviews of public sector plans and activity, specific input relating to planning, transport, forestry, access, tourism, economic development and education can be found in section 10 (Organising ourselves > Planning and public services).

Some of the actions in this Plan relate to statutory responsibilities held by public bodies, for example education provision and maintenance of adopted roads and footways. It would be inappropriate for the local community to take over these responsibilities, but we would like to work collaboratively with the relevant authorities to influence how they are discharged and support where we can. Please see section 11 (What's next) for more information.

4 OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Our 2030 vision (see diagram) is rooted in the aspirations and challenges from the community survey and wider public policy agendas (see section 3) and has been developed through community engagement.

The vision is expressed as three equal objectives or guiding principles. Every proposal in the Plan, and future proposals, should maximise its contribution to these objectives.

As a community, we want to be ambitious, sustainable, creative and collaborative in the way that we implement the Plan.



ACTION AREAS

This part of the Plan is our toolkit for action. Anyone should feel able to pick up a project and use the relevant page as a foundation to get started.

It is divided into five themes, each containing up to five action areas.

You can see all the action areas at a glance on the next page. On the following page, we introduce you to Jim, Claire, Ryan, Amy and Paul: typical local characters who will illustrate how the Plan will transform their lives.

5 BRINGING THE PLAN TO LIFE

To illustrate the impact that this Plan will have on people's lives, we'd like to introduce five typical local folk. They aren't real people, but they represent our community.

What will this plan mean for them? To answer that question, we'll return to Claire, Jim, Amy, Ryan and Paul in each of the action areas (sections 6 to 10) to demonstrate the positive impacts that this Plan will have on their lives.



Jim 68

Occupation:
retired estate worker

Backstory:
Jim spent all his life working on local estates. He loved the outdoor life and the folk. When he retired, he got a wee house in Foyers, living on his own. It's hard to keep warm in the winter and the heating costs a small fortune. But he's lucky with his health, enjoys getting out for walks, and likes meeting neighbours when there's something on locally.

Hobbies:
walking, catching up with friends

Dreams:
a warmer house, continued good health to get out and about

Challenges:
cost of living, keeping in touch with people



Claire 34

Occupation:
part-time jobs in local hotel and cleaning holiday lets

Backstory:
Claire was born and brought up in Gorthleck. She went to uni in Dundee to study environmental science, then came home and got married. She's now divorced, her two children are at primary school, and she has a couple of part-time jobs to make ends meet. She is tired after work and is very busy then doing the housework and minding the children.

Hobbies:
Claire doesn't have much time for hobbies. Pressure on time means she struggles to join community groups.

Dreams:
Claire would like to be independent one day. At the moment she feels like she depends financially on her ex, as she would not be able to bring up the children on her part time wages. She also depends on her parents for childcare. She'd like to give her two children opportunities to go to uni like she did. And she'd love to get a local job that uses her environmental science...

Challenges:
money, confidence, self-esteem, using her environmental knowledge



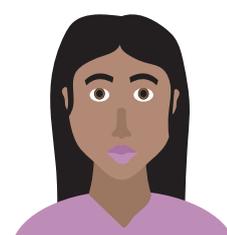
Ryan 16

Occupation:
secondary school

Backstory:
Ryan's parents moved to Foyers when he was 8. Primary school was a bit strange because it was so small, but secondary school in Fort Augustus is better. It's a bit of a pain being driven there and back every day by his mum. He's not sure what he'll do when he leaves school – maybe go to college in Inverness, or maybe get a job to get some money?

Hobbies:
gaming, meeting his pals

Challenges:
not much to do for teenagers locally, not much in the way of jobs or work experience, difficult getting to Inverness, dreadful broadband



Amy 22

Occupation:
recent arts graduate

Backstory:
Amy has just come back to living with her parents after studying textile design at Glasgow School of Art. She liked art school, but prefers being back in a small community she knows. Amy is working in Inverness at the moment, but spending too much on petrol as the buses don't fit in with her work times – not that the bus is much cheaper. She loves being back in the Strath... the changing seasons, the landscape. But the winter nights are going to be quiet with most of her friends now in Inverness.

Dream:
earning money from doing what she loves, designing and producing textiles – there's so much inspiration in local landscape and nature, if only she had a studio and a way of selling!



Paul 52

Occupation:
financial consultant

Backstory:
Paul moved to Errogie a few years ago from the Central Belt, leaving his big Edinburgh firm and the daily commute to become self-employed. He loves having the great outdoors on his doorstep, getting out every day if he can. He has a home office (although he wishes the broadband was more reliable), and only occasionally needs to travel to see clients in the Central Belt. Paul's wife Susan works part-time at UHI in Inverness and plays a lot of tennis; most of her friends are in town.

Hobbies:
Anything outdoors – skiing, running, walking, canoeing.

Challenges:
a decent broadband connection for work, keeping active whilst getting older, having other like-minded folk locally to enjoy the outdoors with!

6 COMMUNITY LIFE

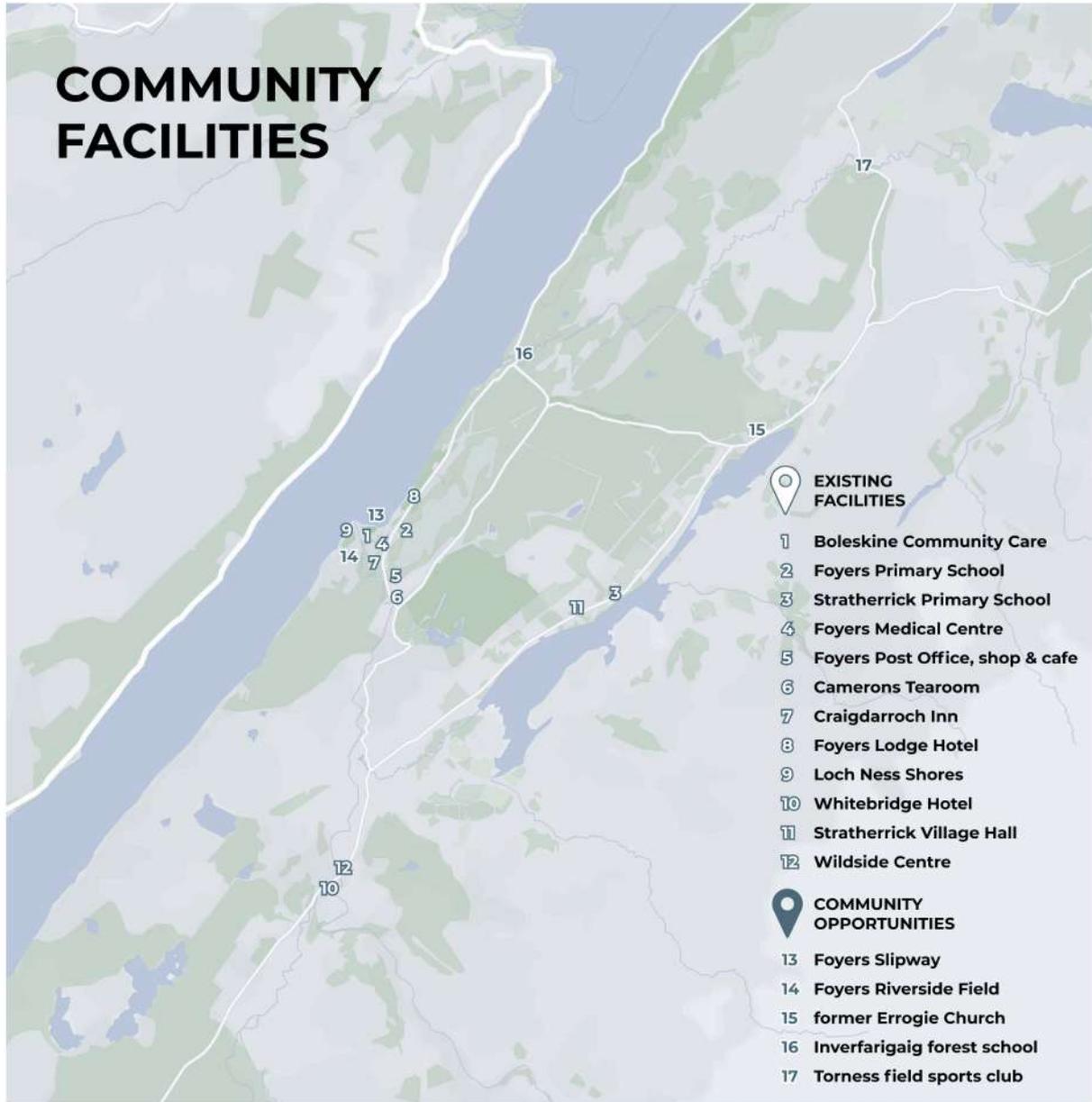
The five action areas in this theme are about the community being able to meet and be active.

The action areas are derived from people's suggestions put forward in the Ideas Bank, synthesised through the Community Assemblies and community workshops (see section 2). Relevant ideas are listed under each action area, to inform future design and delivery.

You can see all the suggestions in the Ideas Bank for this theme, with more information in the words of the local person who originally suggested them, by going to this [theme's Ideas Bank webpage](#) and scrolling down.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES



RETAIN POST OFFICE & SHOP

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

#CommunityLife

The shop in Foyers is our only shop and Post Office. It provides excellent service and fulfils a vital role. If there is any risk of closure, we will consider community purchase to ensure that it remains open. Particularly if the shop is run as community-owned social enterprise, it offers scope to recycle profits and expand its services in a number of ways, for example:

Increasing the range of products and services available, such as local produce and electric vehicle charging.

Create opportunities for local work experience and employment.

Use of upstairs accommodation for affordable rented accommodation or holiday let.

Subsidiary outlets elsewhere in the community such as a mobile van, vending machines or food larders.



Example:
Dingwall mobile Post Office



Example:
Jura Community Shop



Example:
Armadale Stores, Skye

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

“Foyers Stores and post office is at the heart of our community, with no other shop for miles in any direction. It has a paypoint for electricity, post office for banking and sending items and a shop well stocked with the basics for our community. To lose this would affect everyone in the area.”

“Purchase it!”

“The shop is up for sale - it's a wonderful asset, but running it as a community/social enterprise would allow the shop to do so much more for the community”

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

I'm in the shop most days for my messages or a cup of tea and a natter in the café, so I'm glad it will stay open.



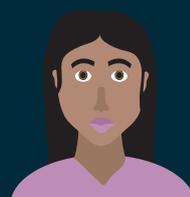
Claire 34

The shop is brilliant between trips to the supermarket – losing it would mean more trips into Inverness, which I can't really afford.



Ryan 16

Friends in Gorthleck say they'd at least like a vending machine there as they can't get to the shop in Foyers.



Amy 22

I'd be able to sell my textiles locally – and maybe even get a part-time job to save travelling into Inverness.



Paul 52

I like to buy local when I can – the more services the shop offers, the more reasons I have not to go online or into Inverness.

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Good fit
Develop our community	Excellent fit
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Excellent fit
Health & Wellbeing	Very good fit
Community	Excellent fit
Zero Carbon	Very good fit
Inclusive Growth	Excellent fit
Education & Culture	Good fit

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the Community Life action group (see section 11).

Aims

- Retain shop and Post Office in the community

Outputs

- Shop and Post Office in Foyers
- Mobile presence elsewhere

Outcomes

- Local access to goods and services
- Support for local producers

Key actions

- Identify local lead and contact potential partners (see Organising Ourselves > Improve communications)
- Speak to other community shops
- Feasibility study and business plan
- Funding
- Acquisition

Who should be involved

- Existing shop/Post Office
- Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust

- Visit Inverness Loch Ness BID

- HIE
- The Highland Council officers/elected members
- [The Plunkett Foundation](#)

Timescale

- Feasibility study and business plan – immediate
- Funding application - be ready to progress when appropriate

Outline cost

- Dependent on valuation of shop and scope of services in business plan

Risks

- Securing sufficient funding (including match funding)
- Long term viability

Key related action areas

- Getting About > Community transport
- Organising Ourselves > Help people into work

AFTER-SCHOOL/NURSERY CARE

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

#CommunityLife

The lack of significant childcare in the local area is a barrier to working families, reducing the hours that parents with young children are available to work because they must childmind themselves, travel to Inverness for childcare (which often does not fit with the working or school day) or rely on any local family they might have to provide childcare for pre-school children.

Locally available 'wrap-around' care and activities for babies to teens at the start and end of the school day, for pre-school children and at weekends would enable parents to rejoin the labour market. This would be good for the local economy and community, and good for individual health and well-being.

A new childcare enterprise could complement existing early years and nursery provision in the local schools by tapping into local expertise, also providing a new source of local employment. It should ideally link with the community transport initiative (see section 7) to increase its reach across our dispersed population and free parents up as much as possible. The operation could work as a social and/or private enterprise, possibly linked to the local primary schools.

At the 2011 Census, our community had approximately 30 pre-school children and 110 children aged 5 to 15. These figures give an indication of the likely scale of opportunity for business planning purposes, and also for the number of parents who could make an increased contribution to the labour market through this initiative.

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

"We have 1 pre nursery ... and 1 primary - I work from home on a permanent basis, husband's hours/days are varied; family live too far away to offer any support. For us to have local childcare and after school care would be amazing, with the childcare being on ad hoc basis"

"Nursery after school club for all ages but it will need fully employed and qualified individuals somewhere like Wildside or Stratherrick hall would be ideal, could this be linked in with the school in anyway or involve their staff?"

"Absolute lynchpin - without this, we'll struggle to change the demographic (families etc) and help people stay in the community"

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

Maybe I'd get asked to do less babysitting!



Claire 34

I'd be free to get other jobs rather than juggling being back for 3pm and asking family to look after them.



Ryan 16

My mum says childcare would have let her get back to work, and we'd have more money.



Amy 22

Doesn't really affect me yet.



Paul 52

My kids are away now, but local childcare a few years ago would have meant we could both have gone back to work and be earning

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Good fit
Develop our community	Excellent fit
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Excellent fit
Health & Wellbeing	Excellent fit
Community	Excellent fit
Zero Carbon	Very good fit
Inclusive Growth	Very good fit
Education & Culture	Excellent fit

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the Community Life action group (see section 11).

Aims

- Local nursery and wrap-around out-of-school care

Outputs

- Care available for local families in local area
- Reasonably priced
- Weekdays and weekends
- Outcomes
- Support working families
- Parents can access work opportunities more easily

Key actions

- Identify local lead and contact potential partners (see Organising Ourselves > Improve communications)
- Draw on knowledge in [2021 Scottish Government research on rural childcare provision](#) and [Highland Directory of Services for Children, Young People and Families](#) (including this [information pack](#))
- Set up a working group, tapping into expertise from Highland Council [ELC Commissioner](#) (see below) and potential local providers as appropriate
- Develop business plan and delivery model based on demand, viability and premises requirements

Who should be involved

- Baby and Toddlers Group
- Boleskine Community Care
- Highland Council's local Early Learning and Childcare Commissioner
- Local schools and head teachers
- Parent Councils
- Parents and carers (through different life stages)
- Existing childcare providers
- Highland TSI
- [Highland Care and Learning Alliance](#)

Timescale

- Preparation can be started at any time
- Setup period c. 12 months

Outline cost

- Dependent on business plan and delivery model

Risks

- Securing sufficient funding (including match funding)
- Over-provision with low utilisation
- Long term viability

Key related action areas

- Community Life > Local community hubs
- Community Life > The future of our schools
- Organising ourselves > Help people into work

LOCAL COMMUNITY HUBS

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

#CommunityLife

Places for all generations to meet and be active are essential – for indoor activities like group activities, clubs, indoor markets, music, arts and crafts, meetings and storage space, and outdoor activities like fairs, fun days, barbeques and community gardening. The range of ideas suggested in the Ideas Bank shows the level of activity and interest in the community to be accommodated.

We are a dispersed community. Although we are used to travelling around between villages, not everyone has access to a car, so it's important to make sure that community hubs are accessible.

Our current situation is that:

- Ongoing refurbishment of the Wildside Centre is creating a new hub in Whitebridge.
- Stratherrick Public Hall is re-opening following repairs to the roof.
- Errogie Church has recently been acquired by the community; the nature of the building lends itself well to arts and crafts, including studio, performance and display space.
- Boleskine Community Care is keen to expand from their current premises in Lower Foyers to be able to provide more inter-generational services and facilities, possibly also in Stratherrick.
- The former forest school at Inverfarigaig is being acquired by the local community.
- Torness field sports club offers an opportunity for community activity.
- In addition, there are ongoing projects to create sports facilities in Foyers at the Riverside Field and slipway (see Community Life > Foyers sports facilities).

We need a practical network of community hubs which makes optimal use of the buildings that we have, whilst being realistic about viability and resources. What's important is that the hubs need to accommodate what we need, and they need to be accessible. Community transport (a separate action area in this plan) will help to make the hubs accessible.

We want to invest in each of our villages (see plan at the start of this section), with each hub responding to the character of the existing building or location (such as Errogie Church or Inverfarigaig forest school) and local aspirations (taking the Ideas Bank as a starting point).



Example:

Refurbished Gartmore Village Hall,
near Aberfoyle

COMMUNITY SUGGESTIONS:

Teen hub
 Place to sell local crafts
 Cafe and crafts area in Errogie church
 Childcare, after school club
 Community cafe
 Music events
 Cinema
 Playpark at Gorthleck Hall
 Make more of spaces we have already
 Modernise Gorthleck hall

Informal education and activities
 Shop or vending machine at Gorthleck Hall
 Storage/activity space for community groups
 Bigger hub for BCC
 Community tree house
 Community art
 Library
 Community Radio
 Volunteer base
 Community vehicle workshop

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

"Don't forget Gorthleck Hall, it is right in the middle of our community and should be a community hub. Too much development in Foyers and White-bridge could strip our community of its identity. It also means unnecessary long journeys and is less green travelling longer distances."

"A purpose built space as a hub to provide services, activities and shared areas for all generations... Outside green space with play area, sensory garden"

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

I don't go out much on winter evenings. More clubs would tempt me out – but I'd need transport if they weren't in Foyers.



Claire 34

Stratherrick Public Hall was the place to go - the only place with a sprung dance floor! Childcare and a playpark there would be just the thing.



Ryan 16

I'd like somewhere to meet my pals. My cousins near Glasgow say they have their space in a community centre with computers and music kit. Could we get that?



Amy 22

Yep, more places for us all to meet and do things would be good. I could run a textile course!



Paul 52

As I get older I'd like to join the heritage group or help with some of the community action plan.

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Good fit
Develop our community	Very good fit
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Excellent fit
Health & Wellbeing	Excellent fit
Community	Excellent fit
Zero Carbon	Very good fit
Inclusive Growth	Good fit
Education & Culture	Excellent fit

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the Community Life action group (see section 11).

Aims

- Community hubs in each main settlement
- Home to a wide range of activities
- Complementary activities in different hubs

Outputs

- Network of 6 community hubs for people to meet and activities
- Programme of activities in each hub

Outcomes

- Less social isolation
- Community cohesion

Key actions

- Strategy for use of each individual building in the network and long term maintenance/renewal
- Continue existing projects (eg repurposing and refurbishing former Errogie Church, and extending and upgrading Wildside Centre) taking account of this Plan
- Feasibility study for potential new Boleskine Community Care accommodation
- Options appraisal and outline business planning for replacement of Stratherrick Public Hall
- Contact potential partners (see Organising Ourselves > Improve communications)

Who should be involved?

- Stratherrick Public Hall trustees
- Boleskine Community Care
- Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust
- local community
- The Highland Council officers/elected members
- Communities Housing Trust
- Highland TSI

Timescale

- Completion within 5 years

Outline cost

- Options appraisal should estimate costs and potential sources of funding

Risks

- Securing sufficient funding (including match funding)
- Over-provision of community spaces with low utilisation
- Long term viability of network

Key related action areas

- Community life > After-school/nursery care
- Community life > Foyers sport facilities
- Getting about > Community transport
- Getting about > Safe walking and cycling to schools and community hubs
- Outdoors & nature > Playparks
- Our homes > Affordable community-owned homes
- Organising ourselves > Help people into work
- Organising ourselves > Support volunteering and groups

FOYERS SPORTS FACILITIES

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

#CommunityLife

Our local community has very few sports facilities, as was made clear in responses to the [community survey](#). Popular activities like going to the gym, for example, require an hour and a half's round trip to Inverness. Despite having Loch Ness, Scotland's second largest loch, on our doorstep, we have limited ability to access the loch for watersports.

In other words, despite the opportunities we have available to us, our land and water sports facilities are lacking for a variety of ages and interests. Improved facilities would:

- Enable more local people to enjoy exercise and sport, both individually and in groups, with associated health and wellbeing benefits.
- Reduce the need to travel to Inverness or elsewhere to participate in sport, which is a barrier in terms of cost and time.
- Support the visitor economy by providing more things to do (particularly watersports).

The community survey and Ideas Bank generated a range of suggestions for new facilities, including sensory garden, maze, paths, kids play, pump track, gym, dry ski slope, slipway, watersports and arts/music venue in the old aluminium factory. Two community-led projects are already underway to address community aspirations: sports and leisure facilities on the [Riverside Field](#) in Lower Foyers and a slipway and watersports storage at [Foyers Bay](#) on Loch Ness (follow the links for more information on Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust project webpages). Together these will make a significant positive impact.

There are mixed views amongst the community on the content and design of the Riverside Field proposals. A local steering group has been established to resolve these issues and enable the project to move forward, in a way that is sensitive to the concerns of local residents whilst also ensuring that the community is able to enjoy improved sports facilities.

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

"Something fun! there is next to nothing to do in the community...would be nice to see some sort of leisure centre/gym. It's near impossible to fit in after work activities when there isn't any, especially when you rely on a non frequent bus service."

"Would be great to have course for kids/adults to learn to sail, cycle, ski, fish etc and have holiday camps etc for this in the holidays"

"I think a sensitive approach is vital."

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

Kids really need pitches and clubs like we had. It's a shame the shinty pitch is covered in weeds.



Claire 34

It would be great for the kids to be able to take part in activities locally – they'd love to try kayaking.



Ryan 16

Gym and basketball would be good.



Amy 22

The gym's a good idea – I'd join. It was really popular when I was at uni.



Paul 52

We're all told health and wellbeing are important, but it's difficult when you need to travel nearly an hour to Inverness. Watersports on the loch are long overdue.

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Good fit
Develop our community	Very good fit
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Excellent fit
Health & Wellbeing	Excellent fit
Community	Excellent fit
Zero Carbon	Very good fit
Inclusive Growth	Good fit
Education & Culture	Excellent fit

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the Community Life action group (see section 11).

Aims

- Local sports facilities for residents and visitors

Outputs

- More active population
- Community cohesion
- More attractive for young people and families

Key actions

- Refine and deliver Riverside Field proposals through local steering group and planning application process, taking account of this plan.
- Move forward with Foyers Bay project using similar process with local steering group, taking account of this plan.

Who should be involved?

- Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust
- Local residents, businesses and wider community
- Schools
- SportScotland
- SOSA2019 and sports/activity clubs
- SportScotland
- The Highland Council officers/elected members
- High Life Highland

Outline cost

- See Community Trust webpages for [Riverside Field](#) and [Foyers Bay](#) for updates

Risks

- Ensuring facilities are appropriate for neighbours and wider local community.
- Securing sufficient funding (including match funding and future maintenance costs).

Key related action areas

- Getting about > Community transport
- Getting about > Safe walking and cycling to schools and community hubs
- Outdoors and Nature > Playparks
- Organising ourselves > Help people into work
- Organising ourselves > Support volunteering and groups

THE FUTURE OF OUR SCHOOLS

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

#CommunityLife

Our two primary schools are vital and provide great education. But the long term trend for our school rolls is one of steady decline: 134 pupils in 1938/39, 98 in 1958/59, 56 in 1980/81, 34 in 2020/21. The forecast for Foyers Primary is particularly worrying: it is forecast to drop to just one pupil in 2027 from the current role of nine. Stratherrick Primary is forecast to remain fairly stable for the next 10-15 years, at around 20 pupils. Whatever the implications for the future of the schools, we will continue to have very small class sizes.

We would like to start a discussion with the Council about how best to plan for long term local education provision and maximise its contribution to the local community. What we mean by that is:

- How can the primary education experience be made as good as it can be for our children's development, particularly thinking of small school rolls and the transition to larger class sizes and rolls in secondary schools?
- What might local primary school provision and school transport arrangements look like in the future? Are changes needed? Should we think about how education provision might combine with other community activities?

We don't have fixed ideas on any of these things; there are no easy answers. We recognise that the Council, as education authority, has statutory and resources constraints and considerable expertise in these areas. We would simply like to open a discussion, which might possibly lead to future collaborative action.

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

"Merkinch in Inverness have just completed a fantastic new primary school that incorporates; early years, child development, before and after school clubs. Something that could incorporate all the needs of young children would be a great asset to our area and encourage young families to stay. It could also provide training opportunities for those interested in child-care/education."

"Could Foyers school be used as the nursery setting and Stratherrick as the Primary, thereby not losing either facility within the community? For those with pupils in both then maybe a community bus could link the two if required."

"Linking wrap around child-care with school would be great"

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

I didn't realise Foyers Primary was forecast to have no pupils in 5 years' time. I wouldn't want to see it close.



Claire 34

I like our small class sizes, but I'm worried that the kids are missing out on social contact. What will it be like when they go to secondary?



Ryan 16

My mum and dad wanted me to go Kilchuimen as it was smaller. It's fine but transport is a hassle.



Amy 22

I went to Inverness Royal Academy and the transition to big school was tough.



Paul 52

I like the idea of community input to the future of schools, and linking that with other things in the plan like community transport and community hubs.

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Good fit
Develop our community	Very good fit
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Excellent fit
Health & Wellbeing	Very good fit
Community	Excellent fit
Zero Carbon	Good fit
Inclusive Growth	Very good fit
Education & Culture	Excellent fit

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the Community Life action group (see section 11).

Aims

- Retain and enhance local educational provision

Outputs

- Retain local primary schooling

Outcomes

- Improved school/education experience

Key actions

- Approach Highland Council to initiate a discussion
- Contact potential partners (see Organising Ourselves > Improve communications)

Who should be involved

- The Highland Council officers/elected members
- Local schools
- Parent Councils
- Local community

Timescale

- Initiate discussions within 1 year

Outline cost

- Zero at present

Risks

- Outwith community control – depends on partnership working

Key related action areas

- Community life > Community hubs
- Community life > After-school/nursery care
- Getting about > Community transport
- Getting about > Safe walking and cycling to schools and community hubs
- Outdoors & nature > Playparks
- Organising ourselves > Help people into work
- Organising ourselves > Planning and public services

7 GETTING ABOUT

The three action areas in this theme are about people being able to get around safely and sustainably, with or without a car. It was previously called Better Connections, but through the community engagement process was renamed Getting About and the action area relating to broadband moved to Our Homes.

As explained in section 3 of this Plan, our community is in the most deprived 10% in Scotland for geographic access (travel time to schools, shops, surgeries etc, and access to broadband). This underlines the importance of travel and transport for us.

The action areas are derived from people's suggestions put forward in the Ideas Bank, synthesised through the Community Assemblies and community workshops (see section 2). Relevant ideas are listed under each action area, to inform future design and delivery.

You can see all the suggestions in the Ideas Bank for this theme, with more information in the words of the local person who originally suggested them, by going to this [theme's Ideas Bank webpage](#) and scrolling down.



COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

#GettingAbout

Being such a dispersed rural community, transport is a particular issue in Stratherrick and Foyers – to get around the local area (e.g. to the shop and surgery in Foyers, schools in Gorthleck and Foyers, and community centre in Whitebridge) and to facilities and amenities in Fort Augustus and Inverness.

Building on the existing car pooling service organised by Boleskine Community Care, an expanded community transport initiative should have a number of specific aims:

1. Offer practical alternatives to driving, especially for younger & older people and those without access to a car.
2. Provide services at daytime, evenings and weekends.
3. Support the zero-carbon/green agenda.
4. Complement other action areas such as local childcare services, community hubs, and safer and walking and cycling to schools.

There are a number of options for running service, for example:

- Varying extent of scale and scope, for example getting to school, work, shops and entertainment
- Focus could be extended beyond local population to visitors
- Timetabled and/or dial-on-demand minibus
- Minibus hire
- Car share/hire (see [this link](#) for example)
- Hire of electric cars, scooters and/or e-bikes
- Water transport on Loch Ness
- Run as community-owned social enterprise and/or in partnership with existing transport operators

The business model, scope of operation and degree of economic benefit will depend on feasibility. Based on most the recent Census data, our local population is around 140 young people aged below 16, 500 adults aged 16-64, and around 200 residents aged 65 or older. That potential market would increase if Fort Augustus (population approximately 650) and other smaller villages like Dores and Farr were included in the catchment area.



Example:
[Annandale Community Transport](#)



Example:
[Bo'ness Community Bus](#)



Example:
[West Wheels community car club, Mallaig](#)

COMMUNITY SUGGESTIONS:

Community minibus
 Better Public Transport
 E-Bike/Scooter hire / convertor kits
 Electric vehicle charging stations
 Electric car hubs
 Subsidise young people to learn to drive
 - not just cars, could be moped etc as can
 learn younger/ more cheaply

Could use existing operators,
 e.g. bus operators
 Community bus
 Transport - buses
 Public transport
 Bike hire facilities (mountain & electric)

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

"A small mini bus would also be able to go off route to people's homes (within reason) where there are particular disabilities/ difficulties. A flexible service bringing all the current micro communities together as one and also available to the schools to enable all to take part in such things as swimming lessons rather than numbers being restricted by the number of parents' cars available."

"E-bikes are a great idea"

"Transport issues – particularly for young people and the elderly. No connectivity between Gorthleck and Foyers for example."

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

Getting down to the medical centre or into Raigmore for appointments isn't the easiest by bus.



Claire 34

I'll be able to get to the pub or into Inverness for a drink in the evening for the first time for year, yay!



Ryan 16

Getting into Inverness on Sundays would be cool.



Amy 22

Hiring a scooter would be a cool way of getting to work in Inverness in the summer.



Paul 52

I missed the recent electric bike trial and fancy a shot on one!

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Excellent fit
Develop our community	Excellent fit
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Excellent fit
Health & Wellbeing	Excellent fit
Community	Excellent fit
Zero Carbon	Excellent fit
Inclusive Growth	Excellent fit
Education & Culture	Excellent fit

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the **Getting About action group (see section 11)**.

Aims

- Attractive low-carbon affordable alternative to the car, especially for those without car access
- Easier access to community facilities, work and leisure opportunities

Outputs

- Affordable weekday/weekend transport around the local area and to towns

Outcomes

- Less social isolation
- Less reliance on the car
- Easier access to work and education opportunities

Key actions

- Identify local lead and contact potential partners (see Organising Ourselves > Improve communications)
- Speak to other similar projects elsewhere
- Feasibility study to agree scope, funding and phased delivery plan – including quick wins

Who should be involved

- Potential external partners such as The Highland Council, [HiTrans](#), [Paths for All](#), [Smarter Choices Smarter Places](#), [Living Streets](#), [CoMoUK](#) and [Sustrans](#)
- Local groups with experience/interest in transport, e.g. Boleskine Community Care, Green Team, SOSA2019
- Local bus companies

Timescale

- 1-2 years

Outline cost

- Depends on feasibility study (note scope for initial 'quick win' phase)

Risks

- Securing sufficient funding (including match funding)
- Long term viability

Key related action areas

- Community life > Community hubs
- Community life > After-school/nursery care
- Community life > Foyers sport facilities
- Getting about > Safe walking and cycling to schools and community hubs
- Organising ourselves > Help people into work

SAFER ROAD NETWORK

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

#GettingAbout

Our road network is vital to move around our dispersed community, and to connect with other places. But it does not work effectively for everyone:

- With no pavements outwith Foyers and Errogie, walking or cycling can be hazardous – particularly for children or others without access to a car. In these days of encouraging walking and cycling as a means of transport, the general lack of dedicated infrastructure is a deterrent to walking or cycling even short distances.
- Some parts of the road network, which is predominantly single track, struggle to accommodate both the volume and nature of traffic, for example increases in construction and tourism traffic in recent years. This has led to damage to verges and high vehicle speeds through Stratherrick in particular.

Road improvements can be controversial, as local opinion on recent road narrowing and pavement installation in Errogie shows. But schemes like this, provided they are sensitively designed, demonstrate that it is possible to make our road network safer for pedestrians and cyclists, reduce speeds through villages, retain our rural character and accommodate current traffic demands, without significant impact on journey times.

We would like to work proactively with The Highland Council as roads authority on improvements and investment in the road network, so the community moves from being a reactive consultee to a strategic proactive partner. This could include:

- Planning and design: working collaboratively on the forthcoming review and implementation of the South Loch Ness Roads Improvement Strategy, taking the content of this plan as our starting point.
- Delivery: exploring the scope for community involvement in roads maintenance, such as using local farmers and estates' equipment and staff for keeping roads clear in the winter; securing support from windfarm operators; and developing timber haulage / windfarm construction protocols.

COMMUNITY SUGGESTIONS:

Restrict traffic to 30mph through built up areas such as villages
Dynamic speed limit signs
Reduced speed limits
Pavement/ cycle routes through villages
Slow road design in villages
Designated heavy vehicles routes

Please use the laybys to let traffic past (signage for tourists and other road users)
Off-road network linking villages using forest roads
Create nice entrance ways to each village e.g. Flower beds or stone wall like Dores

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

"New roads would be amazing since they never really get fixed and it's always really bumpy and full of giant potholes. So fixing the potholes and even making the roads two way rather than single track would be great"

"You could cover the potholes but it wouldn't make the journey any quicker"

"Roads are now inadequate for the amount of traffic"

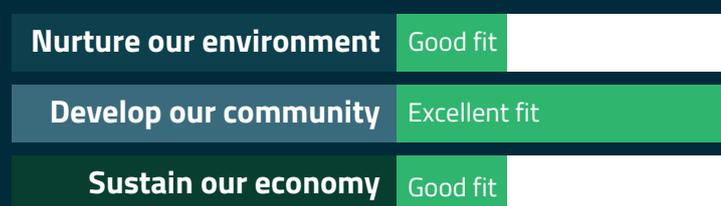
WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Contribution to vision and objectives:

Contribution to national priorities:



HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the Getting About action group (see section 11).

Aims

- Improve road safety, especially for pedestrians and cyclists

Outputs

- Reduced vehicle speeds through settlements
- Safe pedestrian/cycle facilities

Outcomes

- More people walking and cycling for local journeys

Key actions

- Identify local lead and contact potential partners (see Organising Ourselves > Improve communications)
- Review South Loch Ness Roads Improvement strategy with The Highland Council
- Explore innovative delivery approaches with the council as roads authority

Who should be involved

- Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council
- The Highland Council officers/elected members
- Potential external supporters such as [HiTrans](#), [Paths for All](#), [Smarter Choices Smarter Places](#), [Living Streets](#) and [Sustrans](#)

- Adjacent Community Councils

- Windfarm developers

- [Spokes for Folks](#)

Timescale

- 3-4 years to initiate, design and implement

Outline cost

- £250k to £1m depending on scope of work, but can be phased into smaller projects

Risks

- Outwith community control – depends on partnership working
- Securing sufficient funding (including match funding)
- Long term viability

Key related action areas

- Community life > Community hubs
- Community life > Foyers sport facilities
- Community life > After-school/nursery care
- Community life > The future of schools
- Getting about > Community transport
- Getting about > Safer road network
- Organising ourselves > Planning and public services

SAFE WALKING & CYCLING TO SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY HUBS

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

#GettingAbout

Closely linked with the 'Safer road network' action area, we want to particularly focus on making it safer and easier for:

- Children to walk and cycle to our two primary schools – which will also make it easier for everyone else to walk and cycle around Foyers and Gorthleck because if it's safer for children, it's safer for everyone.
- Everyone to walk and cycle to existing and future community hubs like the Wildside Centre, Riverside Field and Foyers Bay.

The reasons for focussing on these two types of destinations are that do not currently enjoy pavement connections, they generate relatively large numbers of trips, and they offer the most scope for encouraging more people to walk and cycle (which is a national policy objective as well as a local aspiration, and therefore likely to be more attractive to potential funders).

The 'brief' for these projects should include:

- Proposals should be sensitively designed to blend in with our rural environment, without appearing urban or suburban. For example, materials should be natural wherever possible (wood, stone, vegetation) and design features should be rural in character.
- Existing features such as the old bridge in Lower Foyers should be repaired and incorporated into proposals wherever possible.
- Within villages, speed limits should be no more than 30mph and roads should be designed to encourage drivers to adhere to the speed limit.

COMMUNITY SUGGESTIONS:

*Dynamic speed limit signs
Reduced speed limits
Pavements/cycle routes through villages
Fix old bridge in Lower Foyers
Better signage on the existing path network*

*Restrict traffic to 30mph through built up areas such as villages
Off-road network linking villages using forest roads
Autonomous vehicles*

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

"We don't have a car and getting around is hard, the bus costs too much for all the family. I can't always get to school activities after school because I can't get back home. We need more foot-path so we can walk safely."

"See if can get a cycle/ footpath so it makes it safe for those in Gorthleck to get to school safely and if possible something from Errogie to Gorthleck"

"Make the road network safe for cyclists and pedestrians"

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

Sounds like a good idea to me. We always used to walk to school.



Claire 34

With a decent pavement and slower traffic through Gorthleck, the kids would be able to walk to school – it's only a few hundred yards, but it's just not safe.



Ryan 16

A decent crossing to get to the primary school would make it a bit safer for the young kids.



Amy 22

I wasn't allowed to cycle to school.



Paul 52

If we're serious about being healthier, let's encourage more kids to walk and cycle to school!

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Excellent fit
Develop our community	Good fit
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Very good fit
Health & Wellbeing	Excellent fit
Community	Excellent fit
Zero Carbon	Excellent fit
Inclusive Growth	Good fit
Education & Culture	Very good fit

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the Getting About action group (see section 11).

Aims

- Make it safe for people to walk and cycle to schools and community hubs

Outputs

- Safe pedestrian/cycle routes to schools and community hubs

Outcomes

- More people walking and cycling for local journeys

Key actions

- Identify local lead and contact potential partners (see Organising Ourselves > Improve communications)
- Initiate discussions with schools and the Council on scope of work
- Contact potential partners using SFCT Communications Strategy
- Secure funding to appoint specialist team to design and cost proposals

Who should be involved

- Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council
- The Highland Council officers/elected members
- Schools
- Parent Councils
- Cycling and walking groups and businesses
- Potential external funders such as [Paths for All](#), [Smarter Choices Smarter Places](#), [Living Streets](#) and [Sustrans](#)

Timescale

- 3-4 years to initiate, design and implement

Outline cost

- £250k to £1m depending on scope of work, but can be phased into smaller projects

Risks

- Outwith community control – depends on partnership working
- Securing sufficient funding (including match funding)
- Long term viability

Key related action areas

- Community life > Community hubs
- Community life > Foyers sport facilities
- Community life > After-school/nursery care
- Community life > The future of schools
- Getting about > Community transport
- Getting about > Safer road network
- Organising ourselves > Planning and public services

8 OUTDOORS AND NATURE

The four action areas in this theme are about sustaining and nurturing the great outdoors for locals, visitors and nature itself, working collaboratively with landowners.

The action areas are derived from people's suggestions put forward in the Ideas Bank, synthesised through the Community Assemblies and community workshops (see section 2). Relevant ideas are listed under each action area, to inform future design and delivery.

You can see all the suggestions in the Ideas Bank for this theme, with more information in the words of the local person who originally suggested them, by going to [this theme's Ideas Bank webpage](#) and scrolling down.



PATHS AND PLACES

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? #Outdoors&Nature

Our greatest assets are our people and our countryside, according to the [community survey](#). Enjoying the great outdoors depends on being able to access it (via paths and access to lochs) and having facilities, interpretation and things to do. These things are important for our community's enjoyment of the countryside and for visitors. We need to sensitively balance the vital economic contribution of tourism whilst avoiding problems related to excessive visitor numbers experienced by some parts of the Highlands. The key is in balancing the objectives described in section 5 of this plan: sustainable tourism.

Paths and access to lochs are an essential part of our outdoor 'infrastructure'. We have an extensive path network, having benefitted from investments such as the Loch Ness 360 Trail and the Trail of the Seven Lochs. But there are some gaps such as access to our smaller lochs, and more could be made of forest and hill access tracks. The path network generally needs maintenance: drainage, surfacing, signage and so on. Facilities like benches, viewpoints, bins and interpretation need investment.

Our aspiration is a network of multi-use routes (walking, cycling, mountain biking and cross-country skiing as appropriate) linking villages, viewpoints and points of natural and historic interest. Our landscape is a working one, including forestry, farming and estates. Access and land management need to work in partnership; for example, a planned approach to felling and planting to enhance views from key routes and viewpoints.

Developing and maintaining our path network is a long term ambition involving a number of activities:

- Establish a dedicated group to prioritise, seek funding and do work on the ground – in partnership with landowners and Community Rangers (see separate action area).
- Audit path network to identify what needs to be done.
- Determine priorities for investment (for example, a manageable selection of initial key routes which fit available funding and could demonstrate early progress).

Places to visit and enjoy are equally important. We have a number of important local features such as:

- The Falls of Foyers, the Suidhe and other viewpoints.
- Built heritage interest including 18th century General Wade Bridges at Whitebridge and Inverfarigaig, Boleskine House, the former aluminium factory in Foyers, churches and Boleskine graveyard.
- Eagles in the Monadhliath mountains and other recognised flora and fauna habitats.

Each of these presents an opportunity to enhance the visitor experience, nurture our environment and create employment through construction and maintenance, as the many Ideas Bank suggestions demonstrate. Some of these ideas are ongoing and may need further support, such as repairs to the Wade Bridge in Whitebridge, access to Loch Ness at Foyers Bay (see section 6), facilities and renovation of Boleskine House; others are ideas awaiting further work, like a rope bridge to enjoy the Falls of Foyers, an eagle study centre for high value ecotourism, or repurposing the former aluminium factory for arts and music.

EXAMPLES:



Example:
Cycling at Whitelee Wind Farm, East Renfrewshire



Example:
Trails at Abriachan, Loch Ness



Example:
Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership



Example:
Helgeland scenic route, Norway

COMMUNITY SUGGESTIONS:

Fix old bridge in Lower Foyers
Fix Wade Bridge in Whitebridge
Sculpture trail with local artists
Maze
Rope bridge at Falls of Foyers
Upgrade Boleskine House
Composting toilets
Community "airighs"
Maintenance programme
Let's get rid of the rhododendron ponticum
Better signage on the existing path network
More outdoor seating and covered benches for all weather
Bench near old phonebox at Lower Foyers
'Scenic routes' contemporary facilities at tourist hotspots
Dark sky starwatching shelters

Local walks guide book
Repairs to the Boleskine graveyard
Kayak/Canoe access to Loch Mhor
Mountain bike trails
Skiing and mountainbiking on windfarm access tracks
Develop the Strath into European centre for the preservation and study of eagles
Outdoor activities run by knowledgeable locals
A dedicated pathways and access group
A community tree house with connected walkways through the trees and accommodation for the locals
Park at Wildside or in the Whitebridge area

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

"The woodlands, country paths and footpaths are overgrown & in disrepair. Picnic benches are broken"

"Get some good signage in place and agreement from landowners to allow good easy access."

"Improve access to lochs for kayaking etc - but not for noisy jetskis!"

"This all needs to be done very sensitively to fit in with nurture nature objective, conserving environment and not losing rural identity of area. Would prefer to see any improvements to paths/facilities done in small scale way that doesn't encourage hordes of visitors..."

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

Fixing paths is a good idea, lots have got overgrown over the years – and I need more benches at my age!



Claire 34

I'd like to work at the eagle study centre – a local job, using my degree, what a dream!



Ryan 16

Music stuff down at aluminium factory – cool!



Amy 22

Help people immerse themselves in nature. More for visitors to do means more of them will come, which will help me make a living.



Paul 52

I'd like to be able to get easier access onto the lochs, especially in Stratherrick. They're great for kayaking but it's hard to lug boats over the fields.

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Excellent fit
Develop our community	Excellent fit
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Excellent fit
Health & Wellbeing	Excellent fit
Community	Excellent fit
Zero Carbon	Very good fit
Inclusive Growth	Very good fit
Education & Culture	Excellent fit

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the **Outdoors & Nature action group (see section 11)**.

Aims

- Help locals and visitors to explore and enjoy our local environment

Outputs

- Network of signposted walking routes with good surfaces and facilities

Outcomes

- More active population
- Facilities and activities for visitors

Key actions

- Establish local access group (see Organising Ourselves > Improve communications)
- Approach Forestry & Land Scotland and estates to work in partnership, including collaborative review of South Loch Ness Land Management Plan
- Audit path network and identify priorities including quick wins and longer term goals
- Support existing local heritage projects

Who should be involved

- Local heritage and access groups and businesses
- Landowners including estates and Forestry and Land Scotland
- Community Rangers
- The Highland Council officers/elected members
- Visit Inverness Loch Ness BID
- Public agencies including Visit Scotland, NatureScot, Paths for All

- SSE and Scottish Power
- South Loch Ness Action Group
- Scotways

Timescale

- Quick wins by supporting existing projects within a year, longer term projects and path network improvements will take 5-10 years to implement

Outline cost

- To be determined through audit of path network: anything from £5-10k initial budget for path maintenance to >£1m for comprehensive 5 year investment in path network

Risks

- Landowner agreements
- Spreading investment too thinly
- Long term maintenance network

Key related action areas

- Getting about > Safe walking and cycling to schools and community hubs
- Outdoors & nature > Playpark
- Outdoors & nature > Community Rangers
- Organising ourselves > Support volunteering and groups

PLAYPARKS

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? #Outdoors&Nature

Families and young people are our future, and playparks are a vital element of our community being family-friendly alongside jobs, housing, transport, education etc.

We want to:

- Fill gaps in villages without provision, like Gorthleck.
- Maintain and future-proof our playparks to a high standard with a rolling programme of investment across the community.
- Focus on natural, sustainable, adventure play for all ages such as woodland play and bike pump track.
- Ensure that residents and visitors aren't encouraged to travel elsewhere for play by poor standards of facilities locally.

This should be co-ordinated with investment in community hubs, childcare and community rangers (see other action areas). It offers economic potential in terms of construction and maintenance.



Example:
[Wyvis Natural Play Park, Garve](#)



Example:
[Catherine Street playpark, Dumfries](#)

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

"since the old park equipment got removed I think it would be nice if there was a new public park for everyone to use with swings, a climbing frame, new football goals, a seesaw, new benches and some balance obstacles or something like that"

"A simple forest fairy trail that's manned by someone responsible to make tiny changes from time to time in order to keep interest, and repair those little oops moments which are inevitable."

"Wyvis Adventure Play Park at Garve should certainly be studied and copied - I recently visited it with great-grandchildren, who were absolutely enthralled with the options available."

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

You won't catch me on a slide any more!



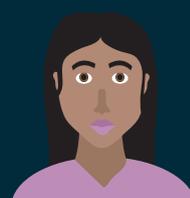
Claire 34

Great for the kids, especially here in Gorthleck – we don't have a playpark any more.



Ryan 16

Yep, it would be good if there was stuff for teenagers too, somewhere to hang out in the evenings.



Amy 22

There isn't much going on round here when you're young, decent playparks is something.



Paul 52

Natural materials and adventure play would be good. It's all part of making the area more family friendly to keep the community alive.

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Good fit
Develop our community	Excellent fit
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Excellent fit
Health & Wellbeing	Excellent fit
Community	Excellent fit
Zero Carbon	Very good fit
Inclusive Growth	Good fit
Education & Culture	Excellent fit

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the **Outdoors & Nature action group** (see section 11).

Aims

- Good opportunities for outdoor play throughout the community

Outputs

- Modern play areas in each village

Outcomes

- More active children
- More attractive for families

Key actions

- Identify local lead and contact potential partners (see Organising Ourselves > Improve communications)
- Develop costed designs for playparks at Gorthleck and Wildside Centre as initial projects
- Develop 10 year programme of capital and maintenance playpark investment across the whole community

Who should be involved

- Baby and Toddlers Group
- The Highland Council officers/elected members
- Communities Housing Trust

Timescale

- 1-2 years

Outline cost

- Depends on initial designs and assessment of capital/maintenance for network over a 10 year period

Risks

- Securing sufficient funding (including match funding)
- Agreeing partnership arrangements where other landowners are involved

Key related action areas

- Community life > Foyers sport facilities
- Getting about > Safe walking and cycling to schools and community hubs
- Our homes > Affordable community-owned homes
- Organising ourselves > Planning and public services

COMMUNITY WOODLAND

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? #Outdoors&Nature

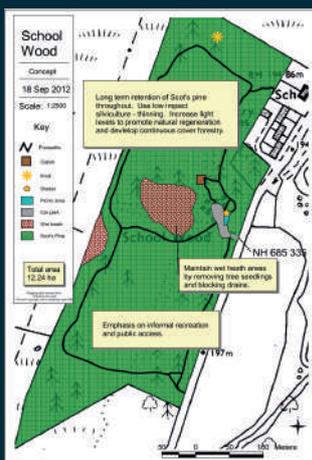
Forestry is part of our DNA: it has long been part of our landscape and economy. Many of us work in forestry and woodland management, and many more of us have a deep interest in it.

With so much local knowledge and interest, it's no surprise that we have a strong aspiration to manage our own community woodland. Managing our own community woodland, either through acquisition or lease, would open up a range of opportunities for locals and visitors including:

- Nature conservation.
- Woodland access.
- Outdoor learning and education.
- Woodlots for small-scale economic activity.
- Fuel / timber harvesting for community use and income generation.

There are various accessible areas of forestry that this could happen, for example near Inverfarigaig, Foyers or Glenlia. Establishing and managing a community woodland is a major commitment. Our first step will therefore be to prepare a brief and commission a feasibility study, which should consider:

- Scope of activities
- Site options appraisal
- Community capacity
- Partnership delivery models (e.g. acquisition, leasing)
- Business plan for preferred option
- Economic/employment potential



Example:
[School Wood, Farr](#)



Example:
[Abriachan Forest Trust](#)



Example:
[David Marshall Lodge, Aberfoyle](#)

COMMUNITY SUGGESTIONS:

Protect local fauna and flora
 Outdoor activities run by knowledgeable locals
 Wildflower meadows
 A dedicated pathways access group
 A community tree house with connected walkways through the trees

Community firewood
 Woodland crofting
 Woodlots
 Outdoor activities run by knowledgeable locals
 Lets get rid of the rhododendron ponticum
 Mountain trails

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

“local land based employment. Working woodlands by restoring native species, timber harvesting for income and associated employment, forest/woodland occupations – saw mill, tree nursery, tree planting. Orchards, vegetable growing, educational and recreational assets. Forest schools etc.”

“Many of our natural woodlands are simply a collection of old trees without saplings, undergrowth or flowers on the forest floor. This is not a wood that is sustainable. There must be a better way.”

“purchase woodland large enough (500 ha or more) for native woodland conservation, natural regeneration, informal recreation and some productive woodland. This could be zoned for biodiversity and the local supply of wood fuel and other timber products. A larger area should also generate enough income from low impact forestry to enable local employment.”

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

I worked my life in the forestry. There's a few of us round here the same, so there's a bit of local expertise.



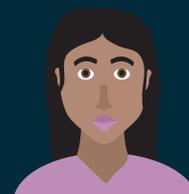
Claire 34

Would help families get more involved with nature. I've always been interested in our woods and nature, it's why I studied environmental science at uni.



Ryan 16

Yep, whatever.



Amy 22

Our woodlands are our landscape and culture. I like the idea of more nature conservation rather than just felling trees



Paul 52

There's always talk of doing this and there's lots of expertise locally.

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Good fit	
Develop our community	Excellent fit	
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit	

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Very good fit	
Health & Wellbeing	Excellent fit	
Community	Excellent fit	
Zero Carbon	Excellent fit	
Inclusive Growth	Excellent fit	
Education & Culture	Excellent fit	

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the **Outdoors & Nature action group** (see section 11).

Aims

- Make more of our forestry for nature conservation, learning and community activity.

Outputs

- At least one area of community woodland.

Outcomes

- Nature conservation
- Less social isolation
- Community cohesion

Key actions

- Identify local lead and establish group of potential partners (see Organising Ourselves > Improve communications)
- Feasibility study

Who should be involved

- Forestry and Land Scotland
- Local estates as appropriate
- Interested community groups
- Schools
- Parent Councils
- Community Woodland Association
- Community Land Scotland
- Scottish Land Fund
- Community payback orders

Timescale

- Feasibility study and business plan: 1 year

Outline cost

- Fees for feasibility study: £20-25k
- Cost of establishing and managing community woodland: to be derived from feasibility study

Risks

- Securing sufficient funding (including match funding)
- Community capacity
- Long term management and viability

Key related action areas

- Outdoors & nature > Community Rangers
- Organising ourselves > Helping people into work
- Organising ourselves > Support volunteering and groups
- Organising ourselves > Planning and public services

COMMUNITY RANGERS

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? #Outdoors&Nature

With increasing visitor numbers locally as well as across the Highlands, we are delighted that 2021 has seen the start of dedicated seasonal rangers for South Loch Ness. They are a much needed resource to address problems related to 'wild' camping and antisocial behaviour, particularly along Loch Ness.

We believe an expanded Community Ranger Squad would have a vital role in keeping our local environment and path networks in good condition, sharing outdoor learning and co-ordinating activity. This would benefit the visitor economy, nurture our environment (a fundamentally important asset) and create local employment.

Our brief for the squad is:

- Expanded role to include path network management, maintenance of outdoor public spaces, outdoor learning and nature conservation, volunteer support and partner liaison, as well as the existing enforcement role.
- Year-round.
- Apprenticeship/work experience as part of the squad.
- Suggested staffing: 2-3 full time equivalents over a 5 year period.
- Dedicated to South Loch Ness.



Example:
[Fort Augustus Community Caretakers](#)



Example:
[Loch Lomond visitor rangers](#)

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

"local environment/access ranger to enable the co-ordination of local environmental projects to help get people out and connected with nature and associated health benefits of this, as well as co-ordinating access issues with the estates to ensure open responsible access"

"include proactive conservation work - educational and practical sessions to enhance local/ visitors awareness/ appreciation of environment and enhance local species and habitats."

"would like to see a Ranger employed to educate tourists about our area and to protect it. A ranger would be on hand for work with the children and teens in our community, help maintain, paths, fences, etc..."

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

Paths and benches need to be kept in good order. We have a lot to look after!



Claire 34

Maybe a job for me, or the kids when they're older!



Ryan 16

There aren't many jobs locally so that would help.



Amy 22

It all helps people appreciate nature. And it would create jobs too.



Paul 52

We have too many paths for volunteers to manage. So it's good to create jobs and maintain an important asset at the same time.

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Excellent fit
Develop our community	Excellent fit
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Very good fit
Health & Wellbeing	Excellent fit
Community	Excellent fit
Zero Carbon	Very good fit
Inclusive Growth	Excellent fit
Education & Culture	Excellent fit

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the **Outdoors & Nature action group** (see section 11).

Aims

Year-round outdoor maintenance and education

Outputs

Dedicated year-round ranger service
Path / facilities maintenance
Outdoor learning activities

Outcomes

Better outdoor environment
Outdoor education for locals and visitors

Key actions

Identify local lead and contact potential partners (see Organising Ourselves > Improve communications)
Prepare funding bid for implementation from 2022/23

Who should be involved

Visit Inverness Loch Ness BID
Forestry and Land Scotland
Local estates
The Highland Council officers/elected members
Community Trusts Apprenticeship Scheme
Visit Scotland

Timescale

Have in place from 2022/23

Outline cost

£150,000 p.a. assuming a squad of 3 full time equivalents and budget for learning, path repairs etc

Risks

Securing sufficient funding (including match funding)
Lack of integration with VILN / F&LS / local estates

Key related action areas

Outdoors & nature > Paths and places
Outdoors & nature > Playpark
Outdoors & nature > Community woodland
Organising ourselves > Helping people into work
Organising ourselves > Support volunteering and groups
Organising ourselves > Planning and public services

9 OUR HOMES

The five action areas in this theme are about giving everyone in the community access to a good quality affordable home, because homes = people = community.

The action areas are derived from people's suggestions put forward in the Ideas Bank, synthesised through the Community Assemblies and community workshops (see section 2). Relevant ideas are listed under each action area, to inform future design and delivery.

You can see all the suggestions in the Ideas Bank for this theme, with more information in the words of the local person who originally suggested them, by going to [this theme's Ideas Bank webpage](#) and scrolling down.



AFFORDABLE COMMUNITY-OWNED HOMES

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

#OurHomes

We need to keep and attract young people and working families, as highlighted by the declining school roll in Foyers, forecast to drop to one pupil by 2027. Families will keep our community alive. With the high cost of housing locally, often they cannot afford to live in our community even if they work here. The same applies to people who might have worked their whole lives here, living in tied property owned by their employees, but need to find new accommodation when they retire.

We need to find ways of providing housing that is affordable for these valued members of our community. We want to make sure that it is well designed, high quality and low carbon. And we want to make sure that it is 'recycled' and becomes available to others who need it when occupants move on.

To do that, we will:

- Develop low-cost rented homes for local people who need them.
- Ensure that they remain in community ownership, to ensure that they remain available for those who need them most.
- Make sure that design and construction are low carbon, high quality and sympathetic to the rural environment, with appropriate space standards and amenities.
- Maximise opportunities for local people and businesses to be involved in supply and construction, whether new build or conversion, including local apprenticeships and work opportunities.

New development in particular is a complex process and is often controversial, but it is important that we succeed because increasing the supply of affordable housing is so important for the future of the community.

We will need to:

- Properly assess the scale and nature of local need, including the number of people in need and the number/type of homes required.
- Identify an appropriate model for tenancy and management.
- Work through local sensitivities around location and design.
- Work with partners who are experienced in developing rural affordable housing, such as the Communities Housing Trust.
- Create opportunities for local employment.



Example:

Fort Augustus community-led housing
(image courtesy of Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Community Company)



Example:

Ardgeal community housing, Kincaig

COMMUNITY SUGGESTIONS:

- Purchase shop and convert space above into rented accommodation for young staff
- Build new community-owned homes
- Buy existing homes and rent affordably
- Affordable housing for rent
- We need more working families
- Identify sites
- Financial support packages, e.g. help to buy

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

“Providing affordable housing and housing that is in keeping with the rural environment... Otherwise we run the risk of the area becoming over reliant on tourism with a housing stock of 2nd homes and self-catering, lying empty for several months of the year.”

“Many purchasers are older, more financially secure and may have income from activities outside the area. There has been a creeping rise in the number of properties kept for second homes or for self-catering. Under-occupation of larger homes is common.”

“I would like more affordable housing, ie maybe private rent options or part buy option. Maybe this would encourage younger folk to stay in area.”

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

When I retired I had to leave my tied property and didn't have much choice of where to live. Where I stay now is expensive to heat and maintain.



Claire 34

Definitely much needed – renting or buying is so expensive here.



Ryan 16

I'm not planning on moving out yet.



Amy 22

Something like this would be the only chance for people my age to get our own place, unless we go to Inverness or further away



Paul 52

If those who do need a new home can't get one, they'll be forced out. Who will run the shop, staff the hotels and work the land?

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Good fit
Develop our community	Excellent fit
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Excellent fit
Health & Wellbeing	Excellent fit
Community	Excellent fit
Zero Carbon	Very good fit
Inclusive Growth	Excellent fit
Education & Culture	Good fit

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the Our Homes action group (see section 11).

Aims

- Affordable homes available for local people who need them
- Local people aren't forced to leave the area because of property prices/availability

Outputs

- Low-cost rented homes available for local people in perpetuity

Outcomes

- Balanced demographic

Key actions

- Identify local lead and contact potential partners (see Organising Ourselves > Improve communications)
- Contact potential partners using SFCT Communications Strategy
- Commission Housing Needs Survey to establish need/demand and options for development, tenancy and management, including consideration of specialist care/respite accommodation (see separate action area)
- Consider potential sites for new build and/or conversion, including previously identified sites in Gorthleck and Inverfarigaig

Who should be involved

- Communities Housing Trust
- Rural Housing Scotland
- Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council
- Boleskine Community Care
- The Highland Council planning and housing officers / elected members
- Landowners

Timescale

- 5 years to completion

Outline cost

- Housing Needs Survey up to £20k
- Development cost to be determined through Housing Needs Survey (depends on number and type of homes, scope of proposals and extent of any land acquisition)

Risks

- Securing sufficient funding (including match funding)
- Site finding and development process
- Long term property management

Key related action areas

- Community life > Local community hubs
- Our homes > Specialist accommodation
- Our homes > Zero-carbon homes for all
- Organising ourselves > Helping people into work

SPECIALIST ACCOMMODATION: ELDERLY | CARE | RESPITE

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

#OurHomes

Our community has led the way with community-led care through the award-winning work of Boleskine Community Care, offering a variety of health, care and well-being services including Care at Home, community transport, befriending and a range of community activities. We want to continue these immensely popular and valuable services, and expand their scope and effectiveness. That should include ensuring that Boleskine Community Care and its carers have appropriate accommodation and resources.

One proposed new area is the provision of specialist care and respite accommodation in the local area, which would enable members of our local community in need of more specialist care to continue living here. At the moment, they have to leave the local community to go to Inverness or further afield. The first steps are to assess the amount and type of accommodation required, establish viability, and identify how sheltered housing could be procured (e.g. with a specialist partner). These steps could usefully take place in parallel with the housing needs analysis for affordable homes (see separate action area).

As with construction of affordable homes, community-led construction and management offers scope for local job creation, apprenticeships and work experience.



Example:
[Jura Progressive Care Centre](#)

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

"This would enable older people to stay in the community in purpose built housing. It would also free up homes for younger families."

"The community care scheme is achieving great success and desperately needed for the ageing population"

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

The services BCC provide are second to none. I don't need the care at home yet, but it might not be long!



Claire 34

My parents might need this at some point – it would be sad for them to have to move away for lack of care or more appropriate housing.



Ryan 16

Granny finds the stairs in her house difficult, and says she'd like a nice warm bungalow.



Amy 22

This would be a nice way of older people being able to stay near their friends and family rather than far away.



Paul 52

My mother-in-law will be moving in with us soon. We all get on, but maybe respite accommodation might come in handy for all of us!

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Good fit
Develop our community	Very good fit
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Excellent fit
Health & Wellbeing	Excellent fit
Community	Excellent fit
Zero Carbon	Good fit
Inclusive Growth	Very good fit
Education & Culture	Very good fit

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the Our Homes action group (see section 11).

Aims

- Local care and respite services

Outputs

- Specialist care and respite accommodation/services in the local area

Outcomes

- People who need care able to stay in the community
- Respite for home-based carers

Key actions

- Identify local lead and contact potential partners (see Organising Ourselves > Improve communications)
- Assess need, feasibility and potential delivery partner(s), prepare business plan (commission as part of Housing Needs Survey for affordable housing)

Who should be involved

- Boleskine Community Care
- Communities Housing Trust
- Barnardos
- Shelter Scotland
- The Highland Council planning, housing and social work officers / elected members
- GP surgery

Timescale

- 5 years

Outline cost

- Survey should be incorporated in into housing needs survey (see Affordable Community-owned Homes)
- Delivery dependent on needs assessment and business planning

Risks

- Viability of services and accommodation for a small community
- Securing sufficient funding (including match funding)

Key related action areas

- Community life > Local community hubs
- Getting about > Community transport
- Our homes > Affordable community-owned homes
- Organising ourselves > Helping people into work
- Organising ourselves > Support volunteering and groups

ZERO-CARBON HOMES FOR ALL

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

#OurHomes

Chilly winters, expensive fuel bills and old properties mean that it can be difficult and expensive to heat homes, especially older homes not built to modern eco-standards. With the drive to go carbon-neutral stepping up, we can help individuals and the planet by bringing existing homes up to modern eco, quality and space standards. This would improve living conditions for those in poorer quality accommodation and reduce their heating and power costs.

There is no clear way of delivering this yet, but ever increasing importance of tackling climate change suggests that practical solutions will emerge - particularly given the importance of renewable energy power generation in our local community.

We would like to work with electricity providers, the public sector and others to create a grant/loan system for eco-friendly home improvements and eco-retrofit of vacant and derelict property, including considering the potential for help-to-buy support or similar (such as for young people or those moving out of tied housing); and to signpost residents to information on repairs and housing issues (e.g. Albyn Tenant Information Pack and Shelter Scotland). This could potentially extend into community-led housing management, creating a model for other rural communities to tackle climate change and fuel poverty.

Our community has approximately 375 households. Based on 2011 Census data, around 75% are owner-occupied, 20% private rented and 5% social rented, We are unaware of the number of homes which require upgrading, but would seek to establish this as part of our initial feasibility work.



Example:

[Sustainable Renovation: Improving homes for energy, health and environment](#)

COMMUNITY SUGGESTIONS:

- *Bring in specialist consultation to discuss options for energy for the community*
- *Solar panels - pull power to central battery*
- *Design housing with local weather in mind*
- *Home improvement grants*
- *Dedicated community wind turbine*
- *Free power from windfarm/hydro schemes*
- *Directory of local tradesmen*
- *Local 'Citizens Advice Bureau' style information*

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

"People who live in the council houses in Foyers have damp running down their walls and can't afford heating as they pay an exorbitant rate by meter.... A grant scheme could help people change to greener energy."

"I rent my tiny flat ... the rent continually rises every year including services! I have no garden and heating bill is through the roof due to storage heating."

"Grants to improve insulation and move from oil heating to air or ground source heat pumps."

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



My flat is chilly despite the heating bills... a bit of modernisation wouldn't go amiss, but I'd need some advice.



Any support to make our home comfier and cheaper to run would be welcome!



A friend's house has heat pumps, solar panels and all the tech – cool.



I don't have my own place yet, but it's sad seeing empty houses without anybody living in them.



I'd like to invest in improvements myself, and would appreciate some incentive.

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Excellent fit
Develop our community	Good fit
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Excellent fit
Health & Wellbeing	Excellent fit
Community	Very good fit
Zero Carbon	Excellent fit
Inclusive Growth	Excellent fit
Education & Culture	Good fit

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the Our Homes action group (see section 11).

Aims

- Ensure people do not experience fuel poverty and housing is up to modern standards

Outputs

- Local homes are warm, well-maintained, cost-efficient, low-carbon and not lying empty

Outcomes

- Less fuel poverty
- Lower carbon emissions
- More comfortable homes

Key actions

- Identify local lead and potential partners (see 'Who should be involved').
- Undertake specialist analysis of the scale and nature of the challenge through an audit of housing stock and potential solutions, including advice on options for zero-carbon solutions, funding options, community-led housing management (such as communal factoring, services and maintenance), and signposting to information and any other supporting actions required to maximise uptake and effectiveness.
- Work with the public sector, funders and energy companies to develop a realistic, fundable approach to housing stock upgrades.

Who should be involved

- The Highland Council officers/elected members
- Boleskine Community Care
- Shelter Scotland
- Communities Housing Trust
- Local Energy Scotland
- Energy Saving Trust
- Community Energy Scotland
- Utilities and power generation companies

Timescale

- 2-3 years

Outline cost

- Depends on business planning
- Rural Housing Fund a potential source

Risks

- Securing sufficient funding (including match funding)
- Scale of task
- Agreement of private owners

Key related action areas

- Organising ourselves > Helping people into work
- Organising ourselves > Planning and public services

AFFORDABLE BROADBAND FOR ALL

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

#OurHomes

Broadband has become an essential household utility for work and play, just like electricity, water and a phone. In our dispersed rural community, broadband is also essential for businesses from hotels and estates to self-employed people working from home. Poor broadband was regularly mentioned in the community survey.

In recent years, our broadband connections have improved dramatically thanks not least to investment in the Cromarty Firth Wireless Network led by Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust, including free outdoor wifi at community hubs like the Wildside Centre. But significant parts of our community are still waiting for better broadband, including Lower Foyers, Inverfarigaig, Errogie and Torness.

We want reliable, affordable, super-fast broadband to be available throughout the local community. **The Community Trust will continue working towards that objective, in conjunction with the Scotland-wide R100 programme and broadband providers. Follow [this link](#) for updates.**



QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

"Poor broadband connections and patchy mobile phone reception - handicap for local businesses and modern life in general."

"All households should have free broadband which would lead more to working from home, to encourage young families to stay in area."

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

My flat had broadband when I moved in. I use it all the time with my tablet – more than the TV these days.



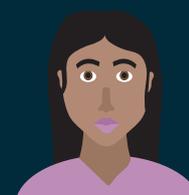
Claire 34

Broadband in the Strath is good even if it's not cheap, but that's the same everywhere.



Ryan 16

We don't have any broadband, which is rubbish. It's totally essential.



Amy 22

I've got a website to sell my textiles online. I couldn't do it without broadband, but I'd like a less flakey connection.



Paul 52

I rely on broadband for work. Without it, I'd have to get an office in Inverness (which I don't think I could afford) or move.

Nurture our environment	Good fit	
Develop our community	Excellent fit	
Sustain our economy	Very good fit	

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Excellent fit	
Health & Wellbeing	Very good fit	
Community	Very good fit	
Zero Carbon	Good fit	
Inclusive Growth	Excellent fit	
Education & Culture	Excellent fit	

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the Our Homes action group (see section 11).

Aims

- Every household has access to affordable high speed broadband

Outputs

- An affordable high speed broadband available to every household

Outcomes

- Community and individuals do not lose out on work and leisure opportunities
- Attract working people

Key actions

- Develop plan of action depending on rollout of R100 programme

Who should be involved

- Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust
- Cromarty Firth Wireless Network and other operators
- Community users

Timescale

- Depends on R100 rollout and subsequent decisions

Outline cost

- Depends on R100 rollout and subsequent decisions

Risks

- Dependency on R100 rollout by others
- Securing appropriate operators at reasonable cost

Key related action areas

- Organising ourselves > Planning and public services

10 ORGANISING OURSELVES

The three action areas in this theme are about how we work together to create opportunities for people and make things happen.

The action areas are derived from people's suggestions put forward in the Ideas Bank, synthesised through the Community Assemblies and community workshops (see section 2). Relevant ideas are listed under each action area, to inform future design and delivery.

You can see all the suggestions in the Ideas Bank for this theme, with more information in the words of the local person who originally suggested them, by going to [this theme's Ideas Bank webpage](#) and scrolling down.



HELP PEOPLE INTO WORK

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? #OrganisingOurselves

Sustaining our economy is one of the three objectives of this plan (see section 5). That means have local employment and work opportunities, which are fundamental to sustaining our community in the long term. This should involve not only creating employment, but also building individual skills and confidence to enable people to access opportunities.

Employment and economic activity statistics for our local population are described in section 2. Although the 2011 Census figures are now rather dated, they show 15 people unemployed locally from a total of almost 600 people aged 16-64. 68 were employed part-time, 185 full-time, and 105 were self employed.

As a community we want to:

- Encourage more take-up of our existing Community Apprenticeships Scheme.
- Avoid relying on volunteers if we can create paid employment – for example, attracting resources to translate existing volunteer roles into paid jobs (as Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust has increasingly been doing recently).
- Maximise employment, apprenticeships and work experience opportunities when delivering this plan (e.g. Community Rangers and new homes).
- With other economic development agencies (like HIE and The Highland Council) and funders, work out what else needs to happen to expand work experience, employment and local businesses in line with the plan's three objectives; such as workshop space, training, recruitment, access to finance and so on.

COMMUNITY SUGGESTIONS:

- *More paid staff to do community projects*
- *Legacy projects that support long term business*
- *Let's employ people rather than always rely on volunteers*
- *Organise seminars for teenagers*
- *Expand apprenticeships Programme*
- *Wind farm should offer apprenticeships*
- *Create learning opportunities and apprenticeships for youngsters in caring professions*
- *Reverse mentoring: staff support volunteers and help young people develop skills and get into work*

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

"Employ people rather than always rely on volunteers"

"Local jobs and apprenticeship schemes in environment, sustainability etc as well as tourism and hospitality."

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

There aren't as many jobs on the land as there used to be, and we need to have work locally for people to be able to stay here and live a decent life.



Claire 34

More choice of jobs is definitely what the community needs – not just for me personally, but for my friends and my kids.



Ryan 16

I don't really know where I'd get a job here. A bit of local work experience might help.



Amy 22

I work in Inverness and travel costs a lot. I can't keep it up. I want to get my textile business off the ground so I can work from home. Better broadband and a community shop will help me get set up.



Paul 52

Without more local jobs, our community will just get older and older. That's not a sustainable future.

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Good fit
Develop our community	Excellent fit
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Excellent fit
Health & Wellbeing	Excellent fit
Community	Excellent fit
Zero Carbon	Very good fit
Inclusive Growth	Excellent fit
Education & Culture	Good fit

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the Organising Ourselves action group (see section 11).

Aims

- Maximise local job opportunities

Outputs

- More jobs, apprenticeships and work experience

Outcomes

- Retain and grow working age population

Key actions

- Identify local lead
- Create paid support to deliver community-led projects (see next action area: supporting volunteers)
- Discuss with economic development agencies and local businesses how to expand take-up of Community Apprenticeships Scheme and complementary action to increase apprenticeships and work experience

Who should be involved

- Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Community Company
- Local businesses
- Businesses and organisations operating in the area
- Community organisations
- HIE
- The Highland Council economic development officers / elected members
- Visit Inverness Loch Ness BID

Timescale

- Already started; ongoing

Outline cost

- Will be built into individual project budgets for each action area
- Expansion of Community Apprenticeship Scheme and other new projects to be established

Risks

- Viability of jobs and initiatives in a small community
- Securing support from economic development agencies and businesses

Key related action areas

- Community life > Retain shop and Post Office
- Community life > After-school/nursery care
- Community life > Local community hubs
- Community life > Foyers sports facilities
- Community life > The future of our schools
- Getting about > Community transport
- Outdoors and nature > Community woodland
- Outdoors and nature > Community rangers
- Our homes > Affordable community-owned homes
- Our homes > Specialist accommodation
- Our homes > Zero-carbon homes for all
- Organising ourselves > Support volunteering and groups
- Organising ourselves > Planning and public services

SUPPORT VOLUNTEERING & GROUPS

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? #OrganisingOurselves

Volunteers contribute a huge amount to our local community, as the breadth of community activity described in section 2 demonstrates. Volunteers will continue to be vital even if some tasks are done by paid employees in the future (see previous action area).

We are a small community of around 800 people yet have over 30 volunteer-led groups. We must not take our volunteers for granted. To ensure existing volunteers stay fresh, that new people join and that the local community continues to reap the benefits, we therefore need to build capacity and reduce volunteer fatigue by:

- Providing professional administrative, developmental and delivery support for groups delivering existing and new projects, including making grants and resources easier to access.
- Supporting individual volunteers to develop skills and confidence, so that they personally can get the most of their volunteering experience.
- Creating opportunities for volunteers and groups to share, develop and learn from each other.
- Ensuring that groups have access to the facilities and storage that they need (links with the Community Hubs action area).
- Organising study visits to see how other communities are responding to similar challenges.



Example:
Three Towns Chit Chat, North Ayrshire

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

I like to go along to a few groups and do what I can to help, but it's always hard to find folk willing to fill in forms and do the bureaucracy. Getting help with those things would be a great help.



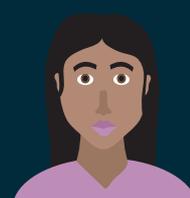
Claire 34

Although I don't have much time to get involved in running community groups, they provide so many useful things for the community – like the Babies and Toddlers for mums, and sports clubs for the kids. None of these things run themselves, so I'm grateful to the folk who have the time to organise them so well.



Ryan 16

The guys who run the football said the other day that they can get me involved in the kids training, so I can put it on my CV. I won't get paid anything, but it might help me get a job.



Amy 22

I like meeting folk at Spin and Chat... I hadn't thought that it might be a good way of learning new skills for my CV too, like basic finance or running a group.



Paul 52

I enjoy helping kids with the canoeing and climbing, but we really struggle for time to fill in all the risk assessment forms and grant application, and for storage space for kit. Help on those two things would free us up to run more regular activities.

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Good fit	
Develop our community	Excellent fit	
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit	

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Very good fit	
Health & Wellbeing	Excellent fit	
Community	Excellent fit	
Zero Carbon	Good fit	
Inclusive Growth	Very good fit	
Education & Culture	Excellent fit	

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the Organising Ourselves action group (see section 11).

Aims

- Enable volunteers to enhance their skills and satisfaction
- Retain and increase volunteer capacity

Outputs

- Sufficient volunteers for community activity

Outcomes

- Continued strong voluntary sector

Key actions

- Identify lead organisation
- Create administrative/developmental support and capacity building for local groups and volunteers
- Establish regular informal sharing events for local groups
- Ensure that community hubs (see separate action area) offer the space that groups need

Who else could be involved

- Highland Third Sector Interface
- National third sector agencies including SCVO, DTAS
- Non-profit organisations operating in the community
- The Highland Council officers/elected members

Timescale

- 1 year

Outline cost

- To be determined by action group

Risks

- Securing sufficient funding (including match funding)
- Insufficient volunteers

Key related action areas

- Community life > Retain shop and Post Office
- Community life > After-school / nursery care
- Community life > Local community hubs
- Community life > Foyers sports facilities
- Community life > The future of our schools
- Getting about > Community transport
- Getting about > Safer road network
- Getting about > Safe walking & cycling to schools & community hubs
- Outdoors and nature > Paths and places
- Outdoors and nature > Playparks
- Outdoors and nature > Community woodland
- Outdoors and nature > Community rangers
- Our homes > Affordable community-owned homes
- Our homes > Specialist accommodation
- Our homes > Zero-carbon homes for all
- Our homes > Affordable broadband for all
- Organising ourselves > Help people into work
- Organising ourselves > Improve communications
- Organising ourselves > Planning and public services

IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? #OrganisingOurselves

Good communications within the community are critical at two levels:

- Between community groups – to share information, support each other and co-ordinate activities (which links with the volunteer support action area, such as regular informal meet-up events). This Community Action Plan has lots of action areas, and we need to make sure that our activities are co-ordinated. This is covered in more detail in section 11 (Making It Happen).
- Amongst the wider community – a two-way flow of information so that individual residents know what's happening, and so that they can shape and be involved in community activities.

Our communications need to reach out across the community and they need to be co-ordinated. Individual groups rightly need to maintain direct communications with their members and the wider community, whether those communications are about community-based health and care services or family fun days.

At the same time, we know that a plethora of information can be confusing to people and important messages or events can get lost. So it's important that, at the same time as individual groups running their own communications, there is a single joint source of information that our local population of around 800 can turn to find out about local events or activities.

The Community Trust has been significantly redeveloping its website, printed magazine and social media during the pandemic as resources for all local groups and individuals to use and share information; this work will continue and we should all support it to make it as effective as possible. This is linked with the increasing support for our 30-plus voluntary groups that is being made available locally (see previous action area).

In the past, the Community Trust has been criticised by some people for not being open enough in its decision-making. Such criticisms are not uncommon across the country when a local organisation has responsibility for disbursing funds, but continued increase in openness and understanding from everyone involved will help (including funders). Since preparation of this action plan began, the Trust has already initiated major improvements in its operations and communications, as outlined on the communications webpage of the Trust's website. This work will continue by all groups and individual members of the community taking responsibility to improve communications, and when combined with improved support for community groups and volunteering (see previous action area), we will consolidate the "we're in this together" approach that has emerged strongly through the Community Action Planning process.



Example:
Our community magazine

COMMUNITY SUGGESTIONS:

Multiple methods of communication
Simplify community websites
Hard copy of calendar events
More engagement between groups

Regular public meetings of the Community Trust
Community council should run more projects
Folk shouldn't dominate!

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

"Community has a responsibility in the communications jigsaw too. A lot of responsibility is falling on the Trust and volunteers to co-ordinate and structure communications."

"Lack of communication and misunderstandings causing bad feeling (often exacerbated by social media)"

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:



Jim 68

Before COVID there was always lots on, but I don't do Facebook so don't always hear about it.



Claire 34

There's always lots going on – but sometimes we miss out on things. Having one 'what's on' webpage would be great.



Ryan 16

Granny says she doesn't always know what's on. Maybe I should let her know when I see things on my phone that she might be interested in.



Amy 22

Sometimes I miss what's going on as I'm not looking in the right place – BCC organised some footcare recently, but I missed it.



Paul 52

Some folk give the Trust a hard time, but it's run by volunteers who commit lots of time and effort – let's be a bit more understanding and help them to help us.

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Good fit	
Develop our community	Good fit	
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit	

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Excellent fit	
Health & Wellbeing	Excellent fit	
Community	Excellent fit	
Zero Carbon	Good fit	
Inclusive Growth	Good fit	
Education & Culture	Very good fit	

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the Organising Ourselves action group (see section 11).

Aims

- Everyone should know what's happening locally
- Community groups work together to share information publicly

Outputs

- Printed and online community information accessible to all

Outcomes

- More community cohesion
- Less social isolation
- More collaboration amongst community groups

Key actions

- Community Trust continues to develop communications
- Maintain advisory group to support improved community communications by the Community Trust and other stakeholders
- Initiate annual community survey to assess quality and impact of community communications

Who should be involved

- All community groups
- Residents
- Businesses
- External stakeholders e.g. Highland Third Sector Interface, national third sector agencies including SCVO, DTAS

Timescale

- Ongoing

Outline cost

- Already budgeted

Risks

- Lack of collaboration amongst community organisations and residents

Key related action areas

- Community life > Retain shop and Post Office
- Community life > After-school / nursery care
- Community life > Local community hubs
- Community life > Foyers sports facilities
- Community life > The future of our schools
- Getting about > Community transport
- Getting about > Safer road network
- Getting about > Safe walking & cycling to schools & community hubs
- Outdoors and nature > Paths and places
- Outdoors and nature > Playparks
- Outdoors and nature > Community woodland
- Outdoors and nature > Community rangers
- Our homes > Affordable community-owned homes
- Our homes > Specialist accommodation
- Our homes > Zero-carbon homes for all
- Our homes > Affordable broadband for all
- Organising ourselves > Help people into work
- Organising ourselves > Support volunteering and groups
- Organising ourselves > Planning and public services

PLANNING

PUBLIC SERVICES

Some community aspirations cannot be achieved with money or community effort, but will involve shaping other organisations' plans and services.

We would like to work proactively with The Highland Council, Forestry and Land Scotland and other relevant partners to make sure that their future plans and decision making meet our needs, potentially also bringing resources to support collaborative delivery. The main areas for collaboration are listed in the table.

Some of these actions relate to statutory responsibilities held by public bodies, for example education provision and maintenance of adopted roads, footways and public open spaces. It would be inappropriate for the local community to take over these responsibilities, but we would like to work collaboratively with the relevant authorities to influence how they are discharged and support where we can.

Area	Aims	Action themes with more information	Tools
Planning and developing	Enhancing rural character and zero-carbon development – including design and layout of new development, including eco-friendly design, indoor and outdoor space standards, affordable homes, tenure mix, public greenspaces, community facilities, local materials and design	 Our Homes	Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (ongoing review) and guidance, future Local Place Plan
Walking, cycling and traffic	Enhance walking and cycling, safety, maintenance – all whilst retaining rural character	 Getting Around	South Loch Ness Road Improvement Strategy (forthcoming review)
Forestry access & land management	Path network improvements, sensitive forestry and land management at key viewpoints, public access and use of forest roads and hill tracks, community woodland, permanent community ranger service, create local employment/work experience opportunities	 Outdoors & Nature	F&LS South Loch Ness Land Management Plan (forthcoming review), other estate management plans
Visitors and economic development	Sensitive visitor management (including Ranger squad), support for the visitor economy whilst retaining rural character, create local employment/work experience opportunities		Loch Ness Tourism Strategy (forthcoming new plan)
Education	Open a discussion about future schooling	 Community Life	Future decisions on local school estate in response to changing school rolls



Example:
[Your Kirkwall Local Place Plan](#)



Example:
[Isle of Tiree Sustainable Design Guidance](#)

COMMUNITY SUGGESTIONS:

- Development should be eco, green, innovative, local materials
- Design housing with local weather in mind
- Prevent loch-side development
- New builds must be for permanent residency
- Restrict windfarms to locations that can't be seen
- Engage with FLS about the potential of their routes/tracks to fulfil more purposes
- Move from a reactive position on others plans and polices to a proactive strategic position

QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

"a community should be more than a collection of houses"

"avoid the so called 'urbanisation of the rural environment' where new house builds replicate in style housing estates in cities"

WHAT IMPACT WILL IT HAVE?

Contribution to individual aspirations:

Jim 68	Claire 34	Ryan 16	Amy 22	Paul 52
Above my pay grade.	Sounds very long term – but if we don't ask, we don't get!	I don't know much about it.	If this helps make things happen, why not?	The public sector has to work with communities these days – by doing this we'll be helping them and helping ourselves too.

Contribution to vision and objectives:

Nurture our environment	Excellent fit
Develop our community	Excellent fit
Sustain our economy	Excellent fit

Contribution to national priorities:

Fair, Equal, Diverse	Excellent fit
Health & Wellbeing	Excellent fit
Community	Excellent fit
Zero Carbon	Excellent fit
Inclusive Growth	Excellent fit
Education & Culture	Excellent fit

HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

These suggestions will be developed in more detail by the Organising Ourselves action group (see section 11).

Aims

- Ensure that public services and plans reflect community aspirations

Outputs

- Reviews of public sector plans and investments that reflect this Community Action Plan

Outcomes

- Collaborative delivery of this Community Action Plan

Key actions

- Identify local leads
- Work proactively with other stakeholders to discuss how to build community aspirations into their plans and decision making

Who should be involved

- The Highland Council
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- HIE
- Other Community Planning partners

Timescale

- Ongoing

Outline cost

- n/a

Risks

- Lack of resources from public sector partners
- Unrealistic expectations from local community

Key related action areas

- Community life > After-school / nursery care
- Community life > Local community hubs
- Community life > Foyers sports facilities
- Community life > The future of our schools
- Getting about > Safer road network
- Getting about > Safe walking & cycling to schools & community hubs
- Outdoors and nature > Paths and places
- Outdoors and nature > Playparks
- Outdoors and nature > Community woodland
- Outdoors and nature > Community rangers
- Our homes > Affordable community-owned homes
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- Our homes > Zero-carbon homes for all
- Our homes > Affordable broadband for all
- Organising ourselves > Help people into work
- Organising ourselves > Support volunteering and groups

MAKING IT HAPPEN

This part of the Plan explains how it will be implemented. It covers:

- Resources
- Collaborative working
- The role of the Community Trust
- Initial actions
- Monitoring, review and evaluation

11 IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The plan's vision and objectives in sections 3 and 4, and the twenty action areas in sections 6 to 10, have all been developed through community engagement.

Every proposal in the plan, and any future proposals which emerge, should balance the three objectives and maximise its contribution to each of them. That means that in fleshing out the actions in this plan, the three objectives should be treated as guiding principles. Each is equally important. At the same time, we want to be ambitious, sustainable, creative and collaborative in the way that we implement the plan.

RESOURCES

Although we are fortunate to have access to significant long term community benefit funding from local renewable energy projects, that does not mean that we will have sufficient resources to deliver everything in this plan. There are a number of reasons for this:

- For any given project, community benefit funding needs to be complemented by other resources. That means that if we cannot secure resources from other sources, that project may not be able to proceed.
- Most projects in this Plan need support from others. This might not be financial: for example, it might be to tap into specialist expertise to develop community-based housing, work with landowners on footpath improvements, or with the Council on planning future road improvements. In other words, delivery of much of this Plan will rely on the goodwill and support of other partners (see 'Collaborative Delivery' below).
- Money is not the only resource that is needed to deliver projects: volunteer and/or staff time is also needed to spend that money. We are a small community. Although we are very active, with over 30 community groups, there is a limit to our capacity to deliver projects.

We will take a practical, action-focussed approach to delivering projects, focussing resources on initiatives which demonstrate:

- Motivation: is there interest amongst the local community to deliver the project?
- Capacity: does the community have the knowledge, skills, experience, confidence and volunteers to deliver the project?
- Opportunity: is there an opportunity like a favourable new policy or strategic context, interest from an external partner, or a new funding stream?

COLLABORATIVE DELIVERY

This plan reflects our community's aspirations as a whole: the content does not belong to any one organisation or group of people. The same applies to delivery of the plan: everyone's involvement will be essential.

Collaboration with others will also be essential, particularly The Highland Council and relevant Community Planning partners, and landowners such as Forestry and Land Scotland and local estates. Relevant action areas are described in the external stakeholders matrix at the end of this section, with pointers for key organisations in section 10 (Organising Ourselves > Planning and public policy).

The Highland Council and its Community Planning partners are particularly important because they have a role in a number of this plan's action areas, such as roads, paths, planning, housing, health and wellbeing, visitor management and economic development. With such a range of interests, it may help the Council and the community to establish a dedicated line of communication to co-ordinate collaboration (for example, between the Community Council and local Councillors, between the Community Trust's chief executive and the Council's relevant Ward Manager, or a steering group of community and Council representatives).

An initial focus for discussion with the Council would be to request it endorses this plan as a Local Place Plan.

ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY TRUST

Our local community is in the fortunate position of being able to access community benefit funding from renewable energy projects. That funding has supported preparation of this plan and should also support its delivery.

Community benefit funding is channelled through our local Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust, run by local volunteers. Whilst this plan has been prepared, the Trust has been building its capacity to facilitate and support the local community to deliver the plan, including increasing its staff complement and reviewing its operations and structures. The Trust does not wish to control delivery of the plan: it wishes to encourage and enable delivery by the community as a whole, with the Trust taking responsibility for specific actions where appropriate.

The Trust's role in delivering the plan will include:

- 1. Action groups:** establishing and facilitating action groups for each of the plan's five themes, drawing membership from appropriate local groups and people from across the community. The groups' purpose should be to deliver their particular set of action areas, co-ordinating, championing and monitoring as appropriate. Each action group should have a budget and staff support from the Trust to support delivery: for example, for feasibility work required to take forward actions and establish simple annual targets or progress indicators. The focus of the groups should be on delivering rather than reworking the action areas.
- 2. Delivery support:** providing staff support for volunteer community groups on administration, development and delivery.
- 3. Input to the Trust:** creating more opportunities for the community to be informed about, steer and guide the Trust's activities, particularly in relation to communications (see Organising Ourselves, page 78).

INITIAL ACTIONS

Initial actions for the first year of the plan are summarised in the accompanying table.

THEME	ACTION AREA	FIRST STEPS
 <p>COMMUNITY LIFE</p>	<i>Retain Post Office and Shop</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility study and business plan for acquisition of shop to support potential funding bid
	<i>After-school/nursery care</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business plan and delivery model for after-school/nursery care
	<i>Community hubs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced outside space at Wildside Centre Refurbishment of Errogie Church as community hub Options appraisal and outline business planning for community hub in Gorthleck
	<i>Foyers sports facilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Riverside Field and Foyers Bay projects
 <p>GETTING ABOUT</p>	<i>Community transport</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility study and delivery plan for community transport
	<i>Safer road network + Safe walking and cycling to schools and community hubs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review South Loch Ness Roads Improvement Strategy with The Highland Council Work with The Highland Council on road improvements in Gorthleck The Highland Council
 <p>OUTDOORS & NATURE</p>	<i>Paths and places</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up local access group focussed on Stratherrick and Foyers Review South Loch Ness Land Management Plan with Forestry & Land Scotland
	<i>Playparks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement costed designs for playparks at Gorthleck and Wildside Centre Develop rolling 10 year programme for playpark investment generally
	<i>Community woodland</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish group and commission feasibility study for community woodland
	<i>Community Rangers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Rangers: prepare funding bid for implementation from 2022
 <p>OUR HOMES</p>	<i>Affordable community-owned homes + Specialist accommodation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission housing needs survey
	<i>Zero-carbon homes for all</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission specialist advice on grants/loans for zero-carbon retrofits to existing homes
	<i>Affordable broadband for all</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop plan of action for broadband rollout in response
 <p>ORGANISING OURSELVES</p>	<i>Help people into work</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore how to expand and complement Community Apprenticeships Scheme
	<i>Supporting volunteering and groups</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide administrative/developmental support and capacity building for local voluntary groups Start regular informal sharing events for local groups
	<i>Improve communications</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued investment in communications by Community Trust, with community input

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Potential external delivery partners are summarised in the accompanying table.

 <p>COMMUNITY LIFE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities Housing Trust • Forestry and Land Scotland • Highlands and Islands Enterprise • Highland Third Sector Interface • The Highland Council • Sport Scotland • Visit Inverness Loch Ness BID
 <p>GETTING ABOUT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HiTrans • Living Streets • Paths for All • Sustrans • The Highland Council • Transport operators
 <p>OUTDOORS & NATURE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities Housing Trust • Community Woodland Association • Forestry and Land Scotland • Highlands and Islands Enterprise • Highland Third Sector Interface • NatureScot • Paths for All • The Highland Council • Visit Inverness Loch Ness BID • Visit Scotland
 <p>OUR HOMES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities Housing Trust • Highlands and Islands Enterprise • Rural Housing Scotland • Shelter Scotland • The Highland Council
 <p>ORGANISING OURSELVES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DTAS • Forestry and Land Scotland • Highland Third Sector Interface • SCVO • The Highland Council • Visit Inverness Loch Ness BID

MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION

We will monitor our progress on implementing this plan, and the impacts that it has, at a number of levels:

- For each of the five action areas, the proposed action groups will monitor inputs, outputs and outcomes, supported by the Community Trust. This information is important as it will form the basis of monitoring and review for the local community, external stakeholders and funders.
- The community as a whole will be kept up-to-date with progress on implementing the action plan via the Community Trust's communication channels (website, social media and magazine/ newsletter), using information from the five action groups. We will produce a simple annual review of progress to understand what is working well and what is not (for example using a red-yellow-green 'traffic light' system to indicate progress).
- The action plan itself should be reviewed after 5 years, with community engagement to review and updates the objectives and action areas. Assuming good progress is made, new objectives and actions will need to be set.

"THE BEST WAY TO PREDICT THE FUTURE IS TO INVENT IT."

Alan Kay, educator and computing pioneer



OUR COMMUNITY OUR FUTURE

ERROGIE - FOYERS - GORTHLECK - INVERFARIGAIG - TORNESS - WHITEBRIDGE