

Delivery Plan for the Strathard Framework

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Supported by the Strathard Steering Group



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Introduction

The delivery plan sets out indicative timescales and first steps for initiating the delivery of the priorities and opportunities identified in the Strathard Framework. It will be reviewed and updated regularly and monitored annually either separately or as part of the [Local Development Plan Action Programme](#).

The steering group to date has been on communication and coordination of the work of public sector bodies and community bodies of Strathard. Members of the Steering Group currently include:

- National Park Authority,
- Stirling Council,
- Strathard Community Development Trust,
- Strathard Community Council.

The membership may grow and change over time and this list will be updated as required.

This framework provides a focus for the Steering Group going forward and will be used as a tool to prioritise and support delivery on the ground. This delivery plan is the working document for the Steering Group. There are also various other sub-groups operating in the area that may be involved in steering groups set up for the following projects. The projects directly lead on from the priorities from the Framework in relation to development and land.

THERE ARE 10 KEY PROJECTS:

- Visitor Management & Infrastructure
- Sustainable & Active Travel
 - Sub-Area Priority - Aberfoyle Public Realm/Mobility Hub
- Community Self-Sufficiency/Economy/Affordable Housing
- Woodland Management & Creation
- Landscape Tranquillity and Dark Skies
- Community resilience, flood adaptation, mitigation and management
- Improve water quality and utility infrastructure
- Peatland Restoration
- Renewable Energy
- Land Diversification

There are other priorities that are not listed which either do not relate to land and development or are small-scale projects being led by the community or Stirling council such as events, community/visitor website management and development and community projects such as improving the village hall, local play parks. Further details on these projects can be found in the Strathard Tourism Strategy or the [Community Life Plans](#).

QUICK WINS / FOCUS in 2022:

The details of each project is listed below but it is important to highlight some of the things that will be the priority and focus for 2022:

- Visitor Management Strategy.
- Launch of Gravelfoyle gravel bike routes.
- Research into modal shift to sustainable and active travel.
- Focus in scoping work/lead and funding on Aberfoyle Public Realm and Mobility Hub.
- Creation of a new FLS Land Management Plan for Loch Katrine.
- Progress on the natural flood management schemes.
- Progress on rhododendron removal.
- Scoping out audit of use of existing building stock – self-catering/second homes/open market housing and affordable and identifying opportunities for affordable home development and a local housing need survey.

KEY PROJECT 1 - Visitor Management and Infrastructure

Aim

To tackle the pressures from day visitors and finding solutions including visitor infrastructure and management so that enforcement is a last resort.

Timescales

Start 2021/22

Funding

Funding may come from the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund – RTIF.

Lead

National Park Authority lead for steering group that includes Community Councils and Trusts for Strathard, Gartmore, Port of Menteith and Trossachs, Forest & Land Scotland, Stirling Council, Steamship Sir Walter Scott Trust, Woodland Trust, Kinlochard Village Hall Committee. Various others will be involved including Loch Ard Local History Group in relation to any heritage trails.

Update/Status @ March 2022

- Trossachs Visitor Management Project was successful in gaining funding for a range of works including car parking spaces at Stronachlachar, Trossachs Pier and Ben A'an. Stronachlachar site, within Strathard, gained planning permission in March 2021.
- Strathard and Trossachs area stakeholder meeting held in January 2021 to discuss 2021 season.
- Meetings in May 2021 with Kinlochard working group to examine possibility of a temporary car park. Community survey undertaken looking at options for temporary toilets, car park and traffic measures.
- New 30mph and 20mph speed limits put into force in Kinlochard prior to the start of the season in 2021.
- Steering group has met a number of times in 2021/22 and topics that the group cover include (but not exclusive to):
 - Motorhome Service Points and parking
 - Signage, seating and shelter
 - Car parking and traffic management measures
 - Fixed Variable Messaging Signage
 - Toilet and changing provision
 - Litter bins and recycling hubs
 - Tent based camping provision
 - Sustainable Transport enabling infrastructure
 - Path links for safety, congestion and erosion
 - Cycle path development for safety and congestion
 - Visitor Centres and food, drink and recreational equipment hire concessions

- Scottish Water leading on visitor management at Loch Katrine and have brought together sub-groups to discuss signage and litter management around the Loch.

Actions

- 1.1 NPA to prepare a Strathard & Trossachs Visitor Management Strategy in 2022.
- 1.2 Scope out work for the development of the aqueduct path and heritage routes for visitors (longer term).
- 1.3 [Gravellyfoyle](#), promoted bike routes with new signage, to be completed in the forest to provide enhanced cycling opportunities in the Forest – official launch expected to be 2022.
- 1.4 Introduce traffic management measures to reduce pressures of visitor traffic.
- 1.5 Continue supporting work being led by Scottish Water on the Loch Katrine visitor management to address litter and signage.

KEY PROJECT 2 - Sustainable & Active Travel

Aim

Provide active and sustainable transport options across Strathard such as a shuttle bus that supports both visitor and community needs (in particular older and younger people).

Timescales

2021-2025

Funding

National Park Authority will resource meetings.

Funding for infrastructure projects will be determined at a later date and further information will be added as available.

Lead

Stirling Council transport team and National Park Sustainable

Update/Status @ March 2022

- Scoping exercise completed by Stirling Council on an active travel route between Aberfoyle and Stirling. Challenges identified included flooding, engineering challenges, 3rd party agreement, lack of verge on roadside.
- Active travel plan prepared for Aberfoyle by Countryside Trust with the community.
- Stirling Council have funded new e-bike lockers at Kinlochard and Aberfoyle for community use.

Actions

- 2.1 NPA to consider pilot a shuttle bus from Callander, Drymen via Aberfoyle over 2022 season.
- 2.2 Steering group members to discuss delivery of infrastructure improvements as identified by the Strategy and also sustainable transport pilots e.g. shuttle bus. Further detail will be added when available.
- 2.3 Development of a new active travel (cycle/pedestrian) link between Kinlochard and Aberfoyle via the Forest. Funding to be sought to improve the surface and install signage along the route. Timing to follow on from restructuring of the forest on the south side of Loch Ard.
- 2.4 Revisit route options for Aberfoyle to Stirling active travel route which is likely to be via Buchlyvie path and constructing an entirely new path along the line of the old railway to Stirling.

SUB AREA KEY PROJECT - Aberfoyle Public Realm/Mobility Hub

Aim

To improve the public realm on car park and Main Street (surfacing/street furniture etc.) and create an exemplar village mobility hub.

Timescales

Start 2021/22

Funding

Unknown – some funding may be available from National Park Authority and Stirling Council but this will need to be matched with an external funding source.

CoMoUK have published new guidance – Mobility Hub Delivery Models – Funding, Procurement and management guidance.

Lead

Strathard Community (Trust or Community Council), Stirling Council Transport Team and National Park Authority to scope out the project and the lead is still to be identified. It may be steering group lead.

Update/Status @ March 2022

- Initial work undertaken in 2014 to draw up some sketch ideas as part of the [Charrette](#) undertaken by the National Park Authority to inform the Local Development Plan.
- Identification of the area as a Placemaking Priority in the Local Development Plan in 2017.
- Small incremental improvements have been made such as new fingerposts, bike parking along Main Street, new picnic benches on riverside and plans to improve the toilets but no masterplan has been prepared and various issues remain.

Actions

2A.1 Set up a steering group to find funding, then commission a consultant to build on previous Charrette work to prepare detailed design options for the Main Street and car park, undertaking consultation.

2A.2 Once plans are prepared and agreed with the community, then seeking funding to implement.

2A.3 Implementation of scheme.

KEY PROJECT 3 - Community self-sufficiency, economy and affordable housing

Aim

- To develop or find re-development opportunities for affordable housing in or near to Aberfoyle that can address the acute affordable housing shortage in relation to small and family homes.
- To create opportunities for business/storage units to be used by local entrepreneurs
- To support projects that create community self-sufficiency and community ownership.

Timescales

2022-2025

Funding

Scottish Government Strategic Housing Fund administered by Stirling Council. The latest Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2021/22 to 2025/25 has ring fenced funds in the area but no sites identified.

Lead

National Park Authority working with Rural Stirling Housing Association, Stirling Council and the community

Update/Status @ November 2021

- National Park Authority and Rural Stirling Housing Association have been investigating site options for affordable housing with Forest and Land Scotland.
- The three wards – Kinlochard, Stronachlachar/Inversnaid and Aberfoyle have developed their own detailed Life Plans (Local Place Plans) in 2019 then Aberfoyle in 2021 which identify projects to help improve community self-sufficiency.
- The Community Council considered purchasing the old co-op premises and undertook a feasibility and a community consultation but this did not lead to the purchase given the constraints with the building, in particular flooding. The exercise did generate lots of information which can be used to further other initiatives.
- Community Trust have gained funding towards a development officer post.
- NPA have commissioned National Park wide research on housing market, including a snapshot of self-catering business and private rental market. This work is to be completed by April 2022.

Actions

- 3.1 Undertake an audit of vacant sites, buildings, housing stock, tourism accommodation to understand the need and demand for both housing, business/office space and tourism. – Utilise results from NPA housing market research.
- 3.2 Set up a project group to involve the community on exploring affordable housing and community ownership on sites investigated and any other options for reusing existing buildings. Group also to decide if a local housing need survey is required and if it needs to target specific areas of need e.g. for young people, for local workers and also location.
- 3.3 Investigate options for workshop units at the allocated economic development site in Aberfoyle owned by Forest and Land Scotland.
- 3.4 Work with the community life plan working groups operating in this area to positively identify opportunities for community ownership and/or asset transfer of land/premises.

KEY PROJECT 4 - Woodland Management & Creation

Aim

To improve the condition of the existing woodland for multi-benefits including increasing biodiversity by removal of invasive non-native species and herbivore management. This includes improving the condition of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs Woodland Special Areas of Conservation.

To increase the total amount of woodland cover in Strathard, in particular at Loch Arklet to enhance the Great Trossachs Forest NNR and Comer.

Timescales

Long-term – already started.

Funding

Various funding sources available for rhododendron removal, other invasive removal and native tree planting along riparian edges and on new areas of ground such as FGS funding from Scottish Forestry.

Lead

East Loch Lomond Land Management Forum on deer and goat culling – incs FLS, other land owners such as RSPB.

National Park Authority on rhododendron removal on certain sites.

Update/Status @ March 2022

- FLS have various Land Management Plans in place for parts of the forest (see Framework for details).
- FLS have undertaken extensive clearance from the National Forest Estate of rhododendron and have a programme for follow-up control.
- Queen Elizabeth Forest Park was the first site in the [Climate Ready Forest network](#) and hosted the [launch event](#) workshop in October 2013, [presentations from the workshop](#) are available online. In October 2015 the site hosted a climate ready forestry learning exchange.
- Internal Feral Goat Management Plan and East Loch Lomond Deer Management Plan (2019-2024) have been completed.
- Goat and Deer culling continue as per plan.
- NatureScot continue work to remove rhododendron within Trossachs Special Areas of Conservation woodland.
- NPA currently leading on rhododendron removal to eradicate complete colonies. Work at Invernsaid gorge recently started in summer 2021. Next area to be targeted is around protected sites and their buffer zones and adjacent to areas tackled by FLS.

- Forest Research were successful in bidding into a [project](#) called “SUPERB” - “Systemic solutions for up scaling of urgent ecosystem restoration for forest-related biodiversity and ecosystem services (SUPERB)” and the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park has been selected a demonstration site.
- FLS have are preparing a Land Management Plan for Loch Katrine with the consultation event with the community undertaken in September 2021 and drafting of the plan is underway.

Actions

- 4.1 FLS/Glen Falloch to cull goats in accordance with Feral Goat Management Plan.
- 4.2 Increase membership, across the area, of the East Loch Lomond Management Forum.
- 4.3 FLS to finalise the Land Management Plan for Loch Katrine area in April 2022 and this will identify suitable areas for new woodland creation and woodland management opportunities.
- 4.4 Rhododendron eradication to continue across the area.

KEY PROJECT 5 - Landscape Tranquillity and Dark Skies

Aim

To develop the area's potential as a dark sky sanctuary or discovery site in order to reduce light pollution and highlight the importance of the area for dark skies and promote year-round tourism opportunities.

Timescales

2022-2050

Funding

TBC

Lead

TBC

Update/Status @ March 2022

- Small working group established in Kinlochard and an initial event was run on dark skies to raise community awareness.
- Working group undertook a dark skies survey across the community with a good response rate and links have been made with Callander Landscape Partnership.

Actions

- 5.1 Support / work with existing Kinlochard Dark Skies working group.
- 5.2 Investigate options for expanding the project across the whole of Strathard and continue links with Callander Landscape Partnership Dark Sky Project.
- 5.3 Potential projects could include working with businesses to reduce light pollution, investigated Dark Sky Sanctuary status or Discovery Sites, updating sky quality/darkness survey, creating a lighting management plan and light replacement projects, developing events for the community and visitors.

KEY PROJECT 6 - Community resilience, flood adaptation, mitigation and management

Aim

To reduce the impact of flooding on the existing population and visitors through:

- Adaptation – this could including finding new access and egress routes for existing homes and business
- Mitigation – actions to reduce the severity of the flooding – flood alert systems etc.
- Management – both natural flood management schemes and engineered schemes.

To ensure that the area remains a viable place to live, work and visit and does not result in communities being relocated.

Timescales

Long-term – already started – end point unknown.

Funding

Aberfoyle Engineered flood scheme – funding being sought by Stirling Council.

Community resilience – community.

Natural Flood Management – funding being sought by Forest and Land Scotland for works on the Duchray catchment.

Lead

Aberfoyle Engineered flood scheme and surface water management – Stirling Council

Natural Flood Management – Forest and Land Scotland (FLS), with help of Strathard Initiative steering group – SEPA, NPA, SC, NatureScot.

Update/Status @ March 2022

To date:

- Stirling Council completed Flood Report on Duchray Catchment in 2014.
- Stirling Council set up two live river level monitors at the car park and Loch Ard Road (up to the primary school).
- Further Leaky Wood Debris Dam Trials completed on Duchray Water by FLS (dams installed April 2018)
- [Engineered Flood Scheme](#) for Aberfoyle – Stirling Council have prepared the scheme.
- Aberfoyle is highlighted in SEPA's draft Forth Local Plan – Flood Risk Management Plan 2022-2028 (July 2021) with various objectives to avoid inappropriate development that increases flood risk in Aberfoyle, preparing for flooding as a result

of climate change, reducing flood risk from surface water and the River Forth and Duchray Water.

- Meetings ongoing between Stirling Council, Forest and Land Scotland and the Strathard Community Council to agree alternate access and egress routes for residents living within the Forest environs in the event of B829 closures.

Actions

- 6.1 Stirling Council to continue to bid for funding for the engineered flood scheme for Aberfoyle.
- 6.2 Stirling Council to develop and implement a surface water management plan for Aberfoyle in order to better understand surface water flood risk and mechanisms.
- 6.3 Community resilience group working with stakeholders to identify adaptation and mitigation measures to address flooding on B829 and the subsequent road closures.
- 6.4 SEPA to continue to maintain the Aberfoyle flood warning scheme.
- 6.5 Natural Flood Management – opportunities to continue partnership work of Strathard Initiative to gain funding for a range of measures to control run off through leaky dams, wetland creation and other wider measures which are within separate priorities including woodland creation and peatland restoration.
- 6.6 FLS to expand natural flood management on the Duchray Water catchment following the trials.

KEY PROJECT 7 - Water ecosystems and supporting utility infrastructure

Aim

To improve the water ecosystem across Strathard to restore salmon spawning grounds, tackle invasive non-native species, improve riparian edge habitat.

Timescales

2022-2027

Funding

Unknown - volunteers

Lead

Forth Rivers Trust in partnership with Forth District Salmon Fishery Board, Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority, Scottish Water, SEPA and individual home owners and land managers inc Forest and Land Scotland and RSPB.

Update/Status @ March 2022

- Water vole reintroduction has been successful across Strathard with a healthy population across all water courses.
- Forth Rivers Trust lead on Forth Invasive non-native species project and removal has been undertaken along various watercourses tackling plants such as giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and American skunk cabbage.
- [Forth and Teith catchment management plan](#) 2021-2027 launched in October 2021
- Forth Rivers Trust carry out fish surveys in the area.

Actions

- 7.1 Explore options for foul drainage provision (to minimise increase in phosphorous) around Loch Ard as new development proposals arise (in consultation with Scottish Water and SEPA).
- 7.2 Loch Ard Forest Wetland Restoration and Enhancement – project highlighted in Forth & Teith Management Plan – undertaken in water vole area with a series of volunteer days and improvements to existing wetland and riparian habitats whilst undertaking additional wetland creation works, where appropriate. Includes removal of scrub and tree encroachment onto existing wetland and riparian habitat, planting locally sources native wetland plants, use water colonisation data as an indicator of success of wetland connectivity.
- 7.3 Trossachs Water Vole Project – continue to look after re-introduced water vole population in Loch Ard and Queen Elizabeth Forest by monitoring and controlling American mink.

- 7.4 Monitor forestry applications to highlight any conflicts and to promote protection of rivers and wildlife.
- 7.5 Influence forestry practice to reduce effects of acidification by letting more light into rivers, adding lime to water courses to decrease acidification and planting broad leaved trees along rivers opened up.

KEY PROJECT 8 - Peatland Restoration

Aim

- To restore peatlands so they store carbon to reduce impacts of climate change nationally and internationally.
- To improve the biodiversity benefits of peatlands and the benefits to reducing flooding by retaining more water.

Timescales

Long-term – already started – end point unknown.

Funding

[Peatland ACTION Fund](#)

Lead

National Park Authority with landowner support.

Update/Status @ March 2022

- Strathard Initiative have undertaken research into the peatland resource in Strathard. In the Duchray catchment there is a lack of suitable degraded peatland on the open hillsides in the upper catchment that could be restored.
- Currently there are no sites within Strathard that have been identified as a priority. There is some small-scale restoration projects that could get funding as identified on the map within the Framework.
- FLS Land Management Plan have identified peatland restoration opportunities including the new Loch Katrine plan.

Actions

- 8.1 Work with landowners to investigate opportunities and funding.

KEY PROJECT 9 - Renewable Energy

Aim

To investigate options to ensure all properties within Strathard area have access to renewable energy and there is a move away from oil/gas fuel.

Timescales

2022-2025

Funding

Scottish Government renewable incentive scheme – soon to be replaced with Heat

Lead

Various –individuals, community groups, Stirling Council Sustainability Team

Update/Status @ March 2022

- A number of hydro schemes are in operation across Strathard feeding into the National Grid and there are solar panels, heat pump on various properties.
- Stirling Council Sustainability Team working on heat mapping and this project can build on Stirling Council Renewable Heat Project/Energy Centre at the WWTW in Stirling.

Actions

- 9.1 Investigate options in Aberfoyle for an Energy Hub that provides district heating across all existing buildings – using either heat pump technology, biomass, waste heat from the waste water treatment works and solar.
- 9.2 Investigate options to work collaboratively with other neighbouring communities in relation to renewables and heat networks.
- 9.3 Investigate options for small run- of-river schemes and small wind turbines within Strathard that are community run and owned.
- 9.4 Raise awareness to individual residents of heat pump technology and the benefits of switching to this from off-grid gas/oil systems.
- 9.5 Public bodies to support the Community Life Plan working groups to identify land suitable for community ownership which could facilitate provision of community heat hubs.

KEY PROJECT 10 – Land Use Diversification

Aim

To diversify farms and estates to provide a role in local food production and national carbon capture and reducing biodiversity loss.

Timescales

2022-2050

Funding

Possibly carbon credits, Agri-Environmental Climate Scheme, Forestry Grant Schemes, Small Farms Agricultural Grant Scheme, New Entrants/Young Farmers Start Up Grant Scheme etc.

Lead

Individual estates and farms and community

Update/Status @ March 2022

- Various land management plans are in place setting out priorities for various land holdings.

Actions

- 10.1 Farms and estates to investigate funding opportunities for woodland creation, natural flood management and peatland restoration.
- 10.2 National Park planning team to offer support in relation to development opportunities that may help finance nature projects such as renewables and camping/glamping developments.
- 10.3 Investigate opportunities for community land ownership and asset transfer.