

# Drumnadrochit futures futures DRUIM NA DROCHAID

a vision & actions

Lèirsinn & gnìomhan

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

MAY 2008

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

An Cèitean 2008

Seirbheis Dealbhachaidh agus Leasachaidh

Please give  
your views

## a vision : 2030 Lèirsinn : 2030

This *newspaper* has been prepared to stimulate discussion with “the community” about the future of Drumnadrochit. The intention is to inform choices and the local development plan, to be prepared and reviewed every 5 years.

In particular, it:

- ❖ presents a **vision** of the village 25 years from now as a basis for dialogue on important planning issues; and
- ❖ sets out the **actions** needed to prepare for related services, infrastructure and amenities.

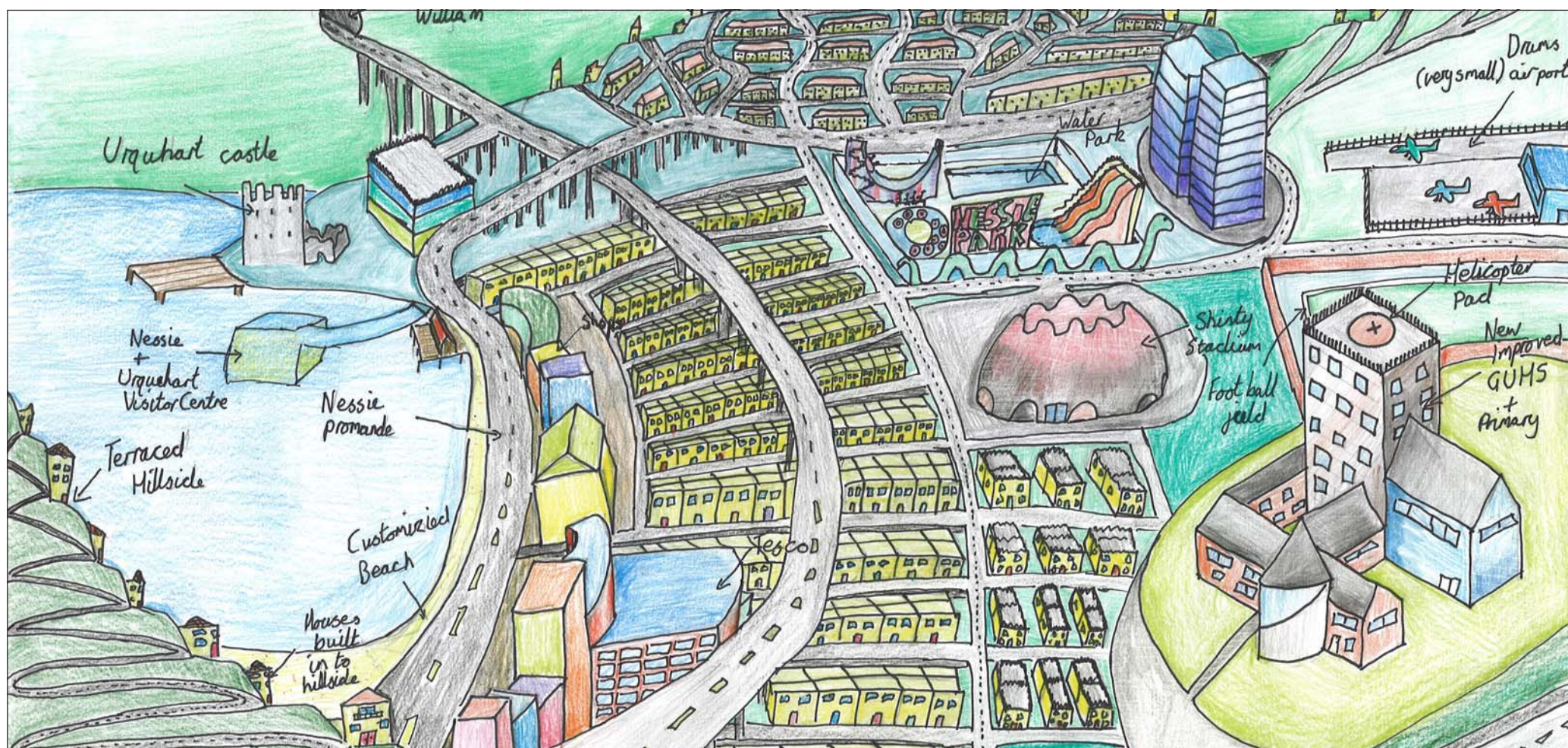
The *vision* draws upon ideas and advice generated at workshops held locally on 8<sup>th</sup> June and 11<sup>th</sup> Sept 2006 (see [www.highland.gov.uk/drum-workshops.htm](http://www.highland.gov.uk/drum-workshops.htm)). These brought together community and agency “interests” to examine options, consider shared objectives and work collaboratively.

**Imagine Drumnadrochit in 2030** ...a lively, competitive rural centre in the hinterland of one of Scotland’s most dynamic City-regions, thriving on its associations with Loch Ness and continuing to draw visitors from across the globe. This is a community where the foresight and resolve of local people some 25 years ago began to lay the foundations for a sustainable future: a place with real prospects, able to regenerate and where the pace and quality of change has kept the local character and appeal.

The main village **thoroughfare** is a busy, colourful mix of **commercial and community** facilities, centrally located and easily accessible. An array of local **shops and services, small businesses, health centre/surgery, recycling facilities, housing and tourist** attractions have located at new focal and crossing points. New roundabouts at key locations calm traffic and connect with an adjusted network of local “loop” roads serving the distinct village communities Kilmore, Lewiston, Allanmore-Pitkerrald and Balmaccaan. The A82 is altogether a more attractive **tree-lined** boulevard, safer with **segregated pedestrian and cyclist routes**.

Shifting the **trunk road** with a new bridge over the River Enrick will transform the village centre and bring an air of tranquility to the “green”: a more attractive meeting place for people. This would complement the new **commercial “gateway”** with its **village “format” supermarket, small enterprise park, housing accommodation and transport terminus**, which is developing around a new square. This is a key connection for community bus services to Inverness, Urquhart Castle and the *National Park* entry point at Cannich.

First Prize “Drumnadrochit Futures” Illustrations Competition: Christine Graham, age 14





There are genuine choices for **development land**, allowing the village to grow in several directions simultaneously and above the vulnerable river flood plains. Particular emphasis has been placed on the *grain* of the community, restoring the **street character** and connecting **open “buffers”**. Pressure to “fill” these open lands with urban style “blocks” and concentrating building in one location at a time, have been firmly resisted: the preference, to carefully distribute and phase development. The *market* has responded positively to local needs, helping to strike a balance of housing and green space. The individual identities of Lewiston, Kilmore, Balmaccaan, Kilmichael and Milton have strengthened as they have adjusted to changing demands. The community is now better integrated and expansion towards Allanmore-Pitkerrald has blended in successfully.

Peoples’ concerns about over-development have subsided as the predominantly linear communities have tended towards a mix of traditional and innovative building styles. A choice of accommodation in various sizes, forms and tenures is available. Important associations are being established, notably **housing for the elderly** in close proximity to **community care facilities**; and young single households in easy reach of social and transport services. **Affordable homes** are a significant feature across the community, fostering a healthy social mix of residents in all age-groups and helping to retain younger adults. The village remains a walkable place, housing directly linked and close, to daily needs.

The **community schools** built and refurbished 25 years ago are the centre of gravity for social activities. It has proved wise to have retained space for expanding facilities. Long term planning also enabled timeous upgrading of the **waste water** drainage system as part of the 2010-2014 programme; and for the layout of housing to integrate with **community transport** and kerbside **recycling** services. The emergency services now operate from locations free from flood risk.

Careful landscape adjustments have created links across several raised beaches, leaving the entire village better connected, including by a network of lit paths and informal walks - **safer routes** - to the main focal and activity points.

Discrete groups of trees, once regarded as immutable but modified in return for wider local benefits - such as additional **cemetery** space and better connections - have recovered in the **village setting**, compensated in part by an active programme of community-led **enhancements**. The community audit records increased levels of **bio-diversity** year-on-year.

Underpinned by strong design principles, careful controls and local expectations about the **rate of house-building**, the community is regarded as a model in **sustainability**. Development blends seamlessly with the structure and shape of the village, protecting its setting and within the capacity of local service networks. Areas not suitable for development are locally managed for agriculture, forestry, recreation and conservation. Fully utilised **green corridors** provide for wildlife habitats, amalgamated farms, allotments, a community garden, new woodlands and outdoor leisure.

Courtesy of anti-**flood measures** these also support a **golf course** straddling the river and flood plain, its clubhouse and visitor facilities assembled with new village **parking** and a reception point for walks. A valuable **“community” woodland** is evolving downstream of the village centre and a further recreation ground is doubling-up as a new venue for the **Highland Games**. Again, particular emphasis is laid on restoring continuous access and treed corridors. An orbital system of **core paths** stretches along and over the Enrick, wrapping around the village and extending into the higher ground and recreational forests beyond. The oaks have been replanted to restore a key feature on the A82 approaches. As the village has grown, land is increasingly vested for all time with the community. Much of the heritage is held locally in **Trust**, enabling the village to “tap” into the *Social Enterprise* Lottery Fund to replenish amenities.

The entire scene is of a vibrant community occupying the lower reaches of the glen, its traditional “visitor gateways” at Borlum and by the *Monster Exhibitions*, wonderfully framed in views from the main vantage points on the Great Glen Way, by the bounding hills and Craigmonie. That it is able to absorb a **wind-energy** scheme is a mark of the standards of design expected and the sustainable principles on which the community has developed. **Drumnadrochit 2030 ... a confident place, its future safe in the hands of local people.**

## Building the vision

This vision presents a view as to how local assets might be harnessed to influence the direction in which the village might evolve. It brings together planning principles and shared community aspirations founded on the following themes (*see diagrams back page*):

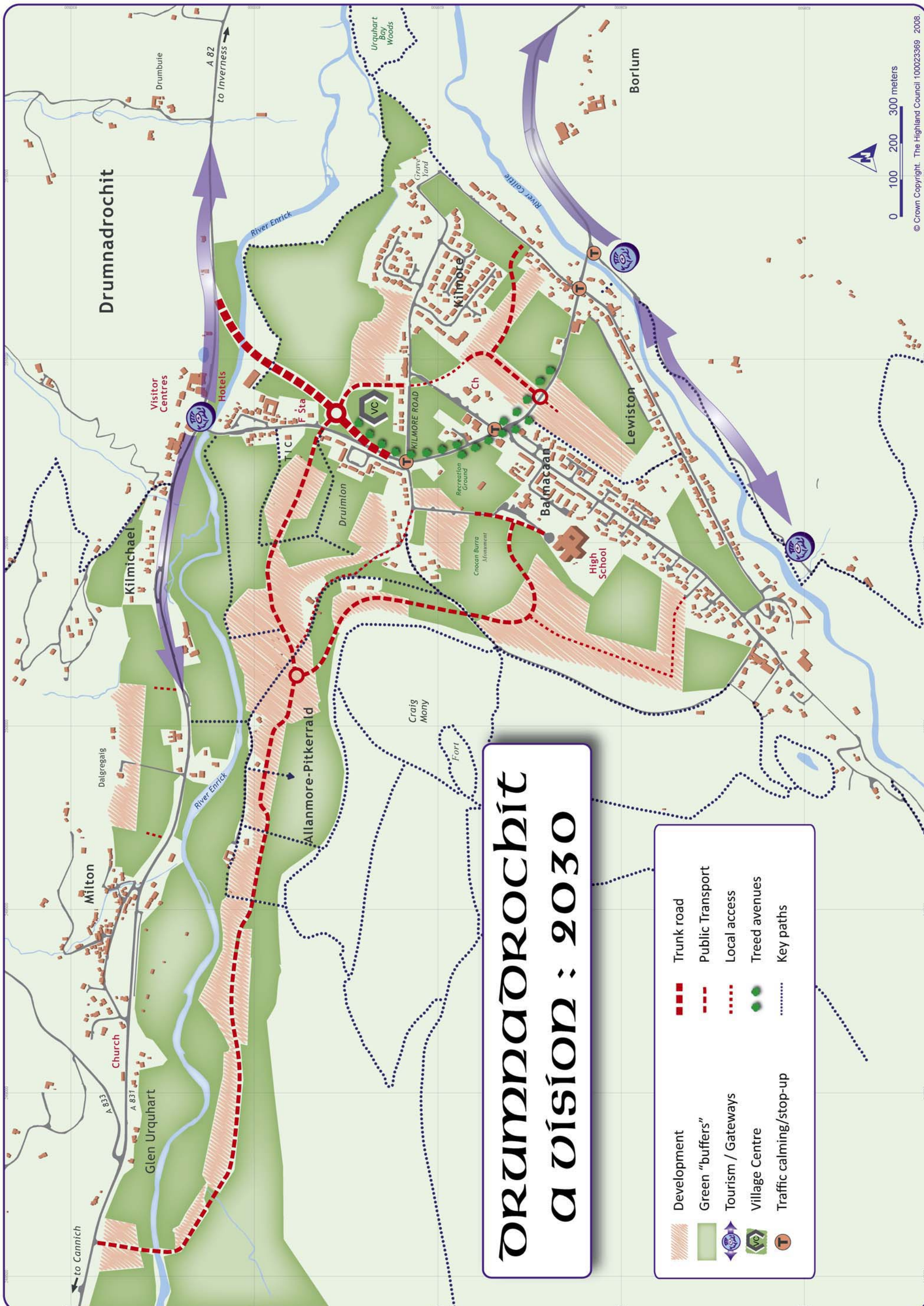
### principles

- ❖ **setting** - strengthening the landscape structure and protecting sites designated for their heritage importance. Reinforcing a lattice of woodland and trees, afforested backdrop, fields and hedges to give shelter and containment, a context for local routes, and views in and out
- ❖ **connections** - a legible, cohesive community, safe and easy to move around, with direct pedestrian/cycle routes and other key linkages protected. Schools, medical facilities, post office, hall, shops and other amenities preferably within 10-15 minutes walk
- ❖ **fit** - developing the glen floor and reinforcing the linear settlement form, balancing building land and intervening green “buffers”, and maximizing exposure to daylight. The 30-60m contours represent the limits for most “community” development
- ❖ **viability** - promoting sites capable of being developed economically. These will be outwith the flood plain, close to infrastructure networks, at nodal or vantage points or where feasible, “brownfield” opportunities arise;

### community priorities

- ❖ by-passing the village centre to reduce the divisive effects of the A82, extend shops, businesses and services and protect development from flooding
- ❖ a network of paths, cycle and safer routes around the village through and into new community woodlands and alongside more attractive thoroughfares
- ❖ homes located at a choice of sites, connected to facilities, keeping pace with the local character. Developing linear streets on the “higher” ground with adjoining open fields
- ❖ new services and amenities, particularly a health centre, golf course and open space.







# actions grìomhan

Action on a number of fronts is required to begin to bring this *vision* about and to ensure that infrastructure, services, transport and environmental management priorities are integrated and able to allow any part of the *vision* to proceed at any time - **subject to the local development plan**. The following **actions** are expressed as recommendations to partners and to stimulate or build upon community initiatives.

## action 1: water

The water supply to Drumnadrochit is presently sourced from Loch Nam Bat and the River Coiltie, and delivered through separate treatment and storage plants at Upper Drumbuie and Boglashin. Scottish Water proposes to amalgamate these systems and to supply Drumnadrochit - as a whole - from its source and treatment facilities at Glenconvinth/Loch Buich, enabled by strategic improvements to the Loch Assynt supply (Easter Ross) to Beauly. The recently installed village trunk mains and retained/improved storage facilities at Coiltie and Loch Nam Bat have enabled the temporary moratorium on development to be “lifted”. A revised Water Order to secure the supply for the longer-term will not be accomplished until after 2010. It is recommended that Scottish Water give priority to any related procedures.

## action 2: waste water

Further to a major upgrade to accommodate development at Kilmore, the Waste Water Treatment Works is understood to offer capacity for the *equivalent* of 200+ additional houses. Whilst it may need also to serve development outwith the village, the works are expected to satisfy anticipated house-building over the next 5 years and beyond. A flow/capacity study by Scottish Water will enable these assumptions to be reviewed at an early date. With Scottish Water’s capital programme set out in a four-yearly cycle, further investment at Drumnadrochit should be planned for the period 2010-2014. Provision should be made to double the capacity of the works in the longer term and to adjust the 90m. “buffer” to neighbouring property accordingly. The capability of the village mains network to connect future development to the WwTW will be subject to a *Network Capacity Study*. It is recommended that this should be tackled comprehensively and jointly by affected landowners/developers and the housing agencies.

## action 3: trunk road

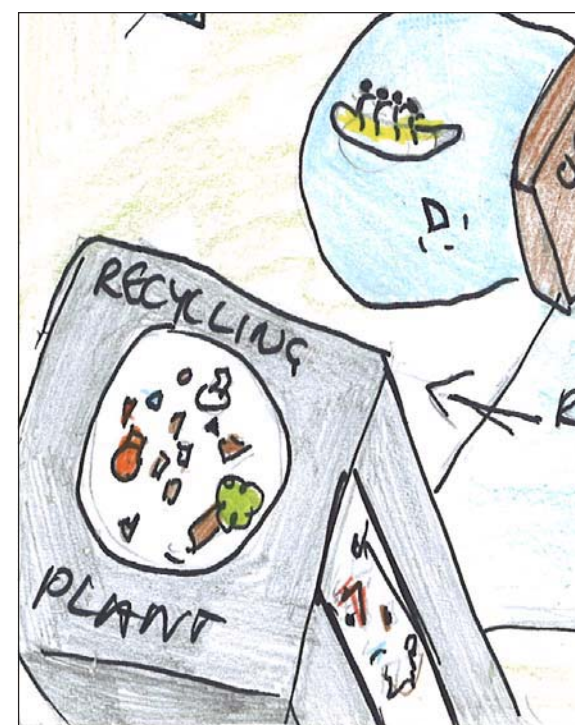
Realignment of the A82 *around* the village centre will require to be taken forward as a capital trunk road improvement by the Scottish Government. It is to undertake a Route Action Plan for the A82 between Inverness and Fort William, likely to proceed in 2008-09 as part of a *Strategic Road Review* programme. Any opportunity for improvement of the A82 at Drumnadrochit which might emerge, will be subject to STAG (Scottish Transport Assessment Guidelines) appraisal and consideration of any potential economic and social benefits. This *vision* enables a recommendation to be made to the Scottish Government/Transport Scotland that consideration be given to realignment of the A82 at Drumnadrochit as part of the A82 Route Action Plan.

## action 4: flood protection

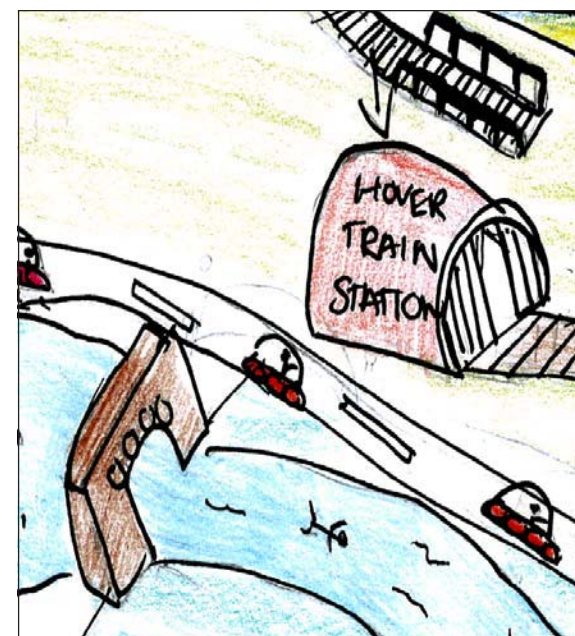
In 2005-06 the Consultants Jacobs Baptie were commissioned - by the “SAFER” project, with the Forestry Commission as lead agency - to prepare a hydrological model and flood risk assessment of the River Enrick. The Council wishes to work with the community and agency partners to explore the scope for cost effective flood mitigation in order to assist in reducing the vulnerability of land and property to flooding. It is anticipated that possible options may include land management and engineering measures, and that the regulatory authorities SEPA and Scottish Natural Heritage will be involved in consideration of their effects on the environment. Adherence with statutory procedures and Environmental Assessment may be necessary depending on the nature of any works, and it may be necessary to phase these over a number of years. Glen Urquhart Community Council is to facilitate a “community workshop” as a first step.



Highly Commended:  
Sarah-Louise Pocock, age 12



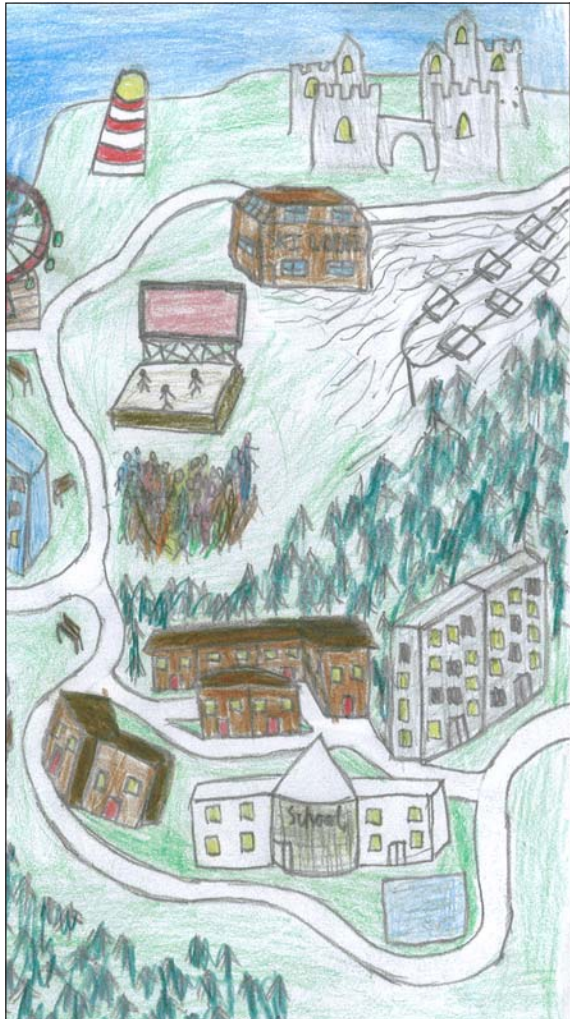
Third Prize “Drumnadrochit Futures”  
Illustrations Competition: Sarah Wilson, age 12



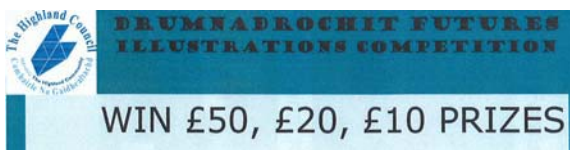




Highly Commended: Samuel Gill, age 14



Highly Commended: Vinnie Holmes, age 12



WIN £50, £20, £10 PRIZES

A big "thank you" to the pupils of Glen Urquhart High School for taking part. Some real visioning, innovative ideas and great artwork! Thanks also to the sponsors - Glen Urquhart Community Council and visitlochness.

Congratulations to the Prize Winners:

**First Prize Christine Graham Age 14**

**Second Prize John Stirling Age 14**

**Third Prize Sarah Wilson Age 12**

and those Highly Commended:

Leanne Greatrex & Kirsty Lloyd, 14

Samuel Gill, 14

Sarah-Louise Pocock, 12

Vinnie Holmes, 12

Clarrie Murdoch & Cameron Jones, 12

Natasha & Becky, 12

## action 5: health centre

The surgery is too small to meet local needs and the Highland Health Board has considered different finance options for the provision of extra accommodation. Whilst the most likely scenario appears to involve expansion/redevelopment of the existing facilities, it is conceivable - as part of a growing community - that a new health centre may be required at some point in the future. It is appropriate to consider where this might be located. The options include a facility as part of an expanding "village centre" or at an alternative "nodal" position, for example adjoining the bowling green (Pitkerrald Road); adjacent to the existing surgery, or beside the Glenurquhart Centre. It is recommended that the Highland Health Board (Community Health Partnership) encourage NHS Highland to prioritise funding for expansion of the surgery; and consider whether land should be identified and reserved for new facilities in the longer term, and at which location.

## action 6: community

The Highland Housing Alliance is a development organisation established by the local Housing Associations and the Council, with the support of Communities Scotland and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Its role is to co-ordinate action by the private sector, housing associations and the public agencies to open-up land for housing, and includes "banking" land for the future. The Alliance has commissioned a feasibility study of the *allocated* Allanmore-Pitkerrald lands, including related servicing/infrastructure costs and phasing. Agreement has been reached with Albyn Housing Society to transfer the former High School as part of a conversion/new build scheme to create 13 affordable homes during 2008-09.

## action 7: green framework

Community support is emerging for a range of public access, recreational projects and environmental improvements. These could embrace public access, community woodland/tree planting, golf course and other enhancement. Land and routes might be secured in connection with the Core Path Network Plan - which the Council has a statutory responsibility to prepare and which will be accompanied by an Action Plan in its own right - and by landowner agreements relating to the use of *reserved* green "buffers". There could be substantial local benefit in co-ordinating related initiatives particularly in terms of community consultation, deciding priorities, woodland/path design, land plans/legal agreements, funding procurement and contract management.

This *vision* enables a recommendation to the Council's partners - Inverness and Nairn Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Forestry Commission with EC support - that consideration be given to the appointment of a Project Officer to implement a programme of community access and enhancement works.

Some 25-30 ha. is required for a 9-hole golf course. This needs to be configured to locate a clubhouse in an accessible position, enable continuity of play, a minimum fairway width of approximately 50m. and safeguard neighbouring development and public access. The option to extend to 18-holes would be desirable. A golf course could be formed on green/"buffer" lands otherwise unsuitable for development. Several permutations might arise for discussion (see *Diag. Golf Course Options* below).





## village centre development guidelines

Only proposals which comprise:

- ❖ extension or expansion of existing uses; or
- ❖ redevelopment/refurbishment of existing buildings;

will be supported. Development may involve the assembly of land but should not extend beyond the limits of existing curtilages. Building will be designed with a minimum floor level of 4.5m OD and constructed with water resistant materials.

Emphasis will be placed on:

- ❖ design complementary with the setting of buildings around the green, in particular compatibility of building lines and height, access and servicing, and traditional appearance and finishes; and
- ❖ replacing redundant agricultural buildings, "brownfield" redevelopment and restoring vacated sites. Buildings and amenities should be positioned to present an enhanced frontage to any future trunk road re-alignment.

Proposals will be subject to Flood Risk Assessment and considered for their impact on existing development and remedial works, if necessary.



## action 8: village centre constraints

The village centre is a vibrant mix of shops, visitor facilities, community services and housing arranged around the "green". This creates an extremely attractive focal point. **The scope for expansion to the west and/or east has been examined** against a Flood Risk Assessment and advice contained within *SPP7 Planning and Flooding*, since adjoining land lies within the flood plain. Generally, these are factors which restrict development except where protection could accrue to existing property, from *land-raising*. Notwithstanding, a feasible development opportunity would need to emerge.

In principle, development to the west may be permissible as a free-standing scheme; whereas development could not proceed to the east on its own. Expansion in both directions may be acceptable, provided a proposal is part of wider anti-flood measures. Substantial "townscape" and safety enhancements could arise from diverting through traffic, rear servicing and more parking to hold visitors. Benefits for established enterprises would need to be assured, including promotion of businesses, signing and "treatment" of the existing thoroughfare and public spaces.

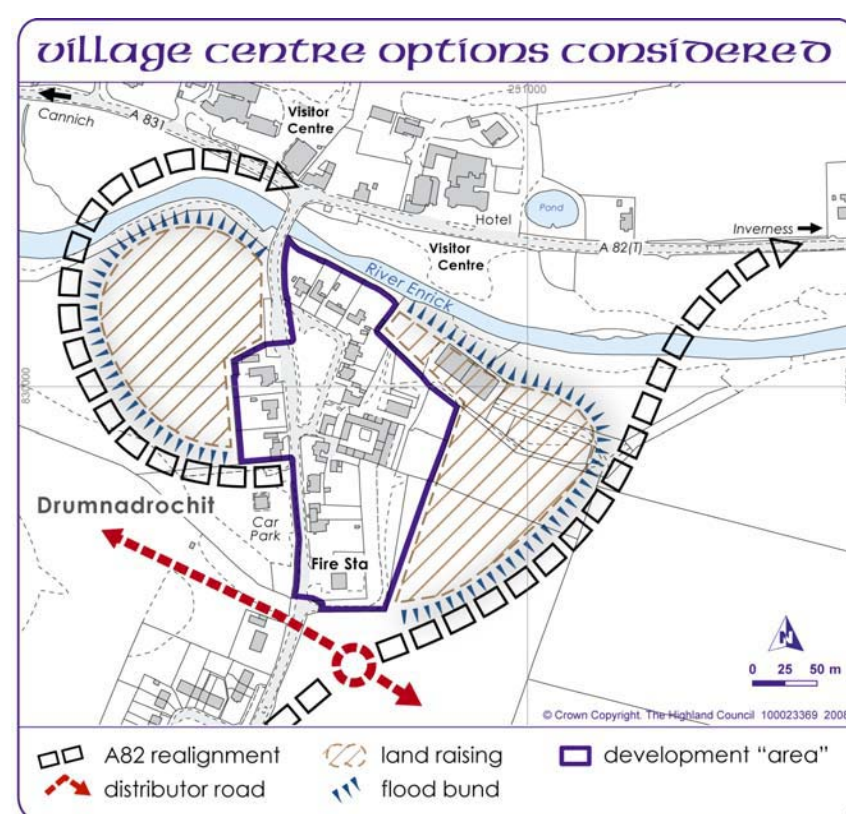
below: Second Prize "Drumnadrochit Futures" Illustrations Competition: John Stirling, age 14



A "footprint" of 0.8-1.0 ha. would be needed for a supermarket, small shops, business units and health centre, for example. Development would also require to fit with any long-term aspirations to reconfigure the A82. Options for this might have included:

- ❖ a route to the west of the village centre which could enable flood protection. This presents engineering and design constraints arising from gradient and alignment, as well as amenity impacts close to the A863 junction;
- ❖ a route to the east which could not offer flood protection. However, this could be more feasible in engineering terms and would shorten journeys for trunk road users.

However, with *land-raising* estimated at £250-450,000, expansion of the village centre to the west/east may not present a viable proposition whilst alternatives free from this level of additional cost exist. Accordingly, it is recommended that principles are applied to guide "infill" development within the existing village centre (see panel left), and that **the potential for expanding commercial/business/community facilities be investigated elsewhere** (see Action 9 below).



## action 9: new village centre

Land east of Drumlun lies close to the village centre. This is a high profile location with "upfront" visibility for commercial, business and tourist activities, potential for mixed uses on 3-dimensions and scope to develop as a new landmark/village "gateway". This area lies above the flood plain, adjacent to the trunk road, offers good accessibility and sits well with the established hub of visitor-community

activity. Development at this location could involve a strong, integrated design theme, a "domestic" scale of building and shared parking and servicing. This could become a key focal point, built around a new "green" or "square" and public transport terminus, with additional parking capacity to serve the village centre and related amenities, such as riverside walks. A site would need to be able to function ahead of any

realignment of the A82, but protect that possibility as well as a future roundabout; and safety improvements for the wider Kilmore/East Lewiston network. It is recommended that some 1.5 ha. of land at this location is identified for development of a future village centre.

far left : Highly Commended:  
Leanne Greatrex & Kirsty Lloyd, ages 14



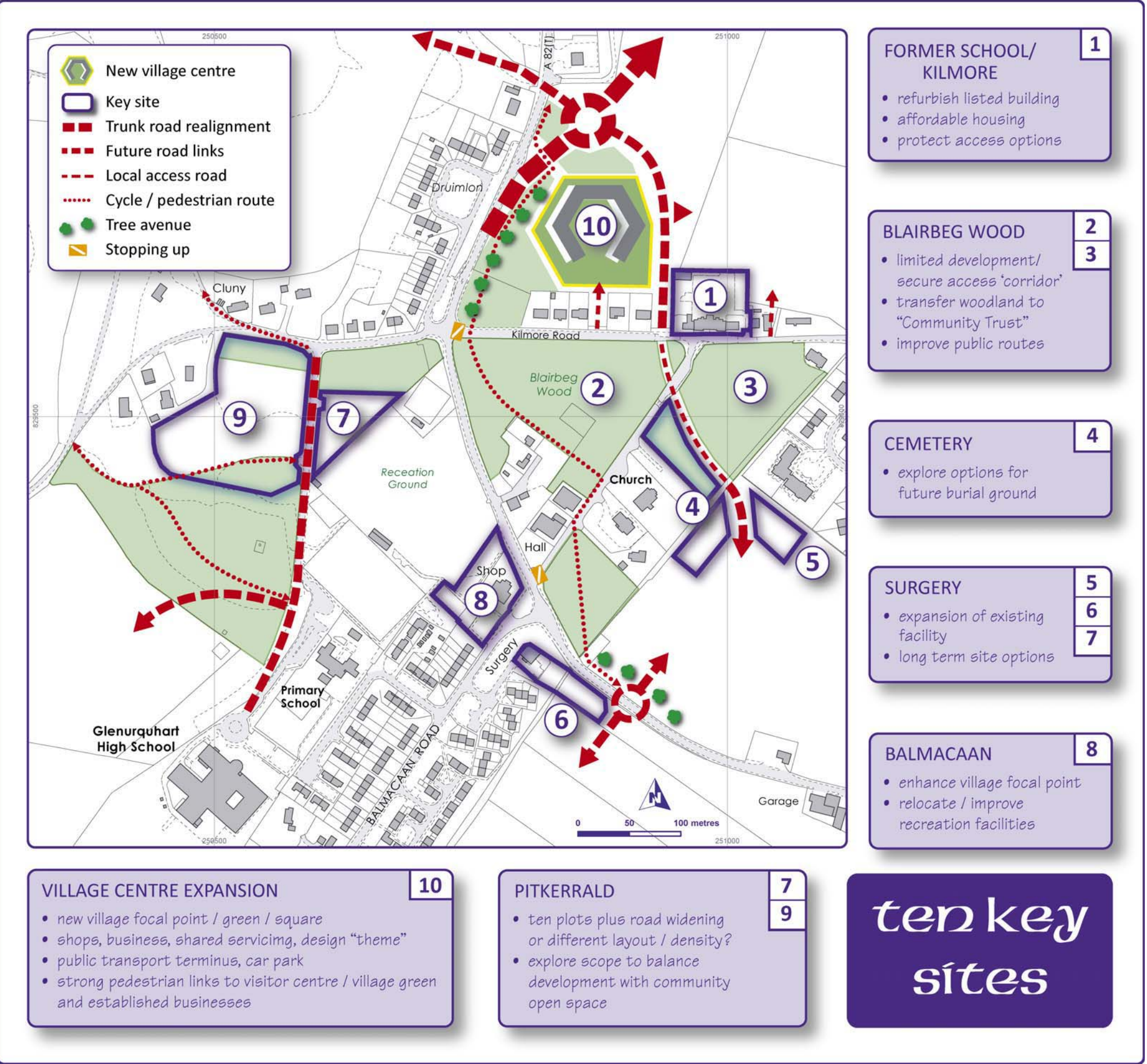
action 10: ten key sites

The vision raises implications for “commitments” in the adopted Local Plan not yet taken-up, and which could contribute differently to long-term objectives. In particular, this is an opportunity to “revisit” some ten key parcels of land or property identified for development or redevelopment, or protected as open space or amenity features.

These include sites located in the A82/ Pitkerrald/Kilmore “corridors” at the heart of the village, including Blairbeg Wood. The diagram below identifies key issues in each case and the scope for adjustments. It is recommended - subject to agreement with landowners and wider community discussion - that further consideration is given to these ten key sites and their potential to help deliver the vision.



Highly Commended: Clarrie Murdoch & Cameron Jones, 12



Highly Commended: Natasha & Becky, ages 12





## public meeting & exhibition/ “drop-in” day

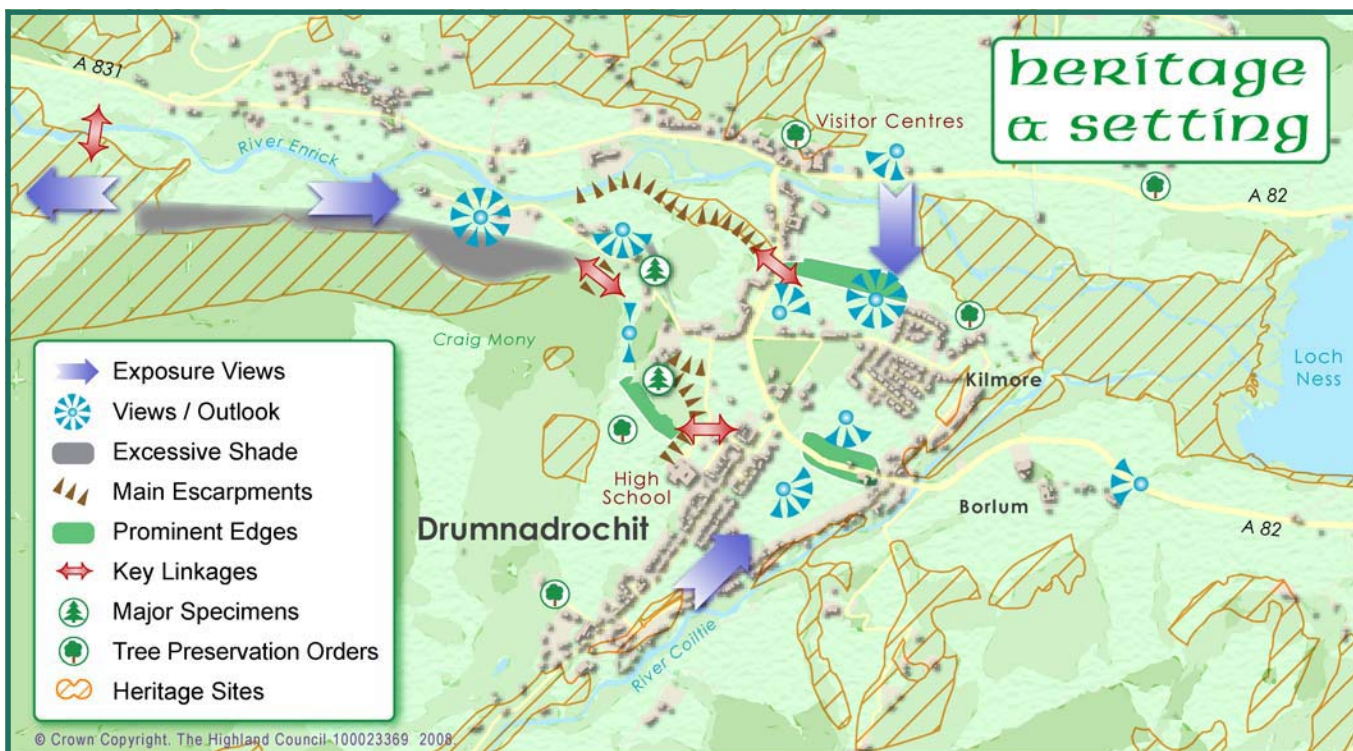
A Public Meeting and an Exhibition/ “Drop-in Day” will be held to hear views about *Drumnadrochit Futures* and a Draft Development Brief which has been prepared to guide development at Allanmore-Pitkerrald.

### Exhibition/Drop-in Day

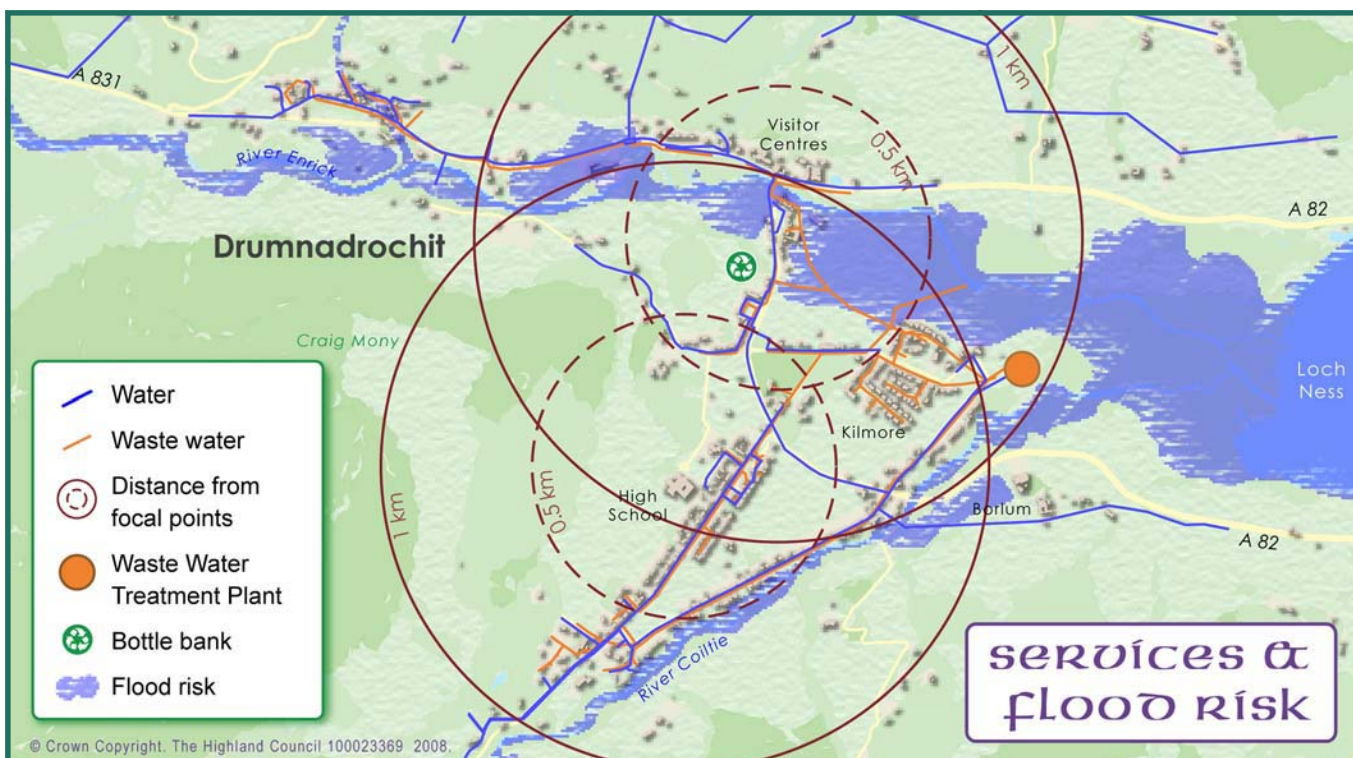
**Monday 9th June, 2008** at the Community Room, Glen Urquhart High School from **11:00am - 8:00pm**

### Public Meeting

**Wednesday 11th June, 2008** at Glen Urquhart High School at **7:45pm**



Building the Vision: these diagrams indicate important local development factors



## DRUMNADROCHIT futures please give your views

Which aspects of *a vision: 2030* do you most support?

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

Which aspects of *a vision: 2030* do you least like?

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

Please complete and return this form by Friday 15th August, 2008 in the Freepost envelope provided to: The Highland Council, FREEPOST SC05568, Director of Planning & Development, Inverness IV3 5BR. Please make additional comments if you wish

Name .....  
Address .....  
Tel.....  
e-mail.....

Which *actions* do you agree or disagree with?

		Agree ✓	Disagree ✗
1	Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Waste Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Trunk Road	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Flood Protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Health Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Green Framework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Village Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	New Village Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Ten Key Sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1) Former School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2) Blairbeg Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3) Blairbeg Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4) Cemetery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5) Surgery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6) Surgery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7) Surgery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8) Balmacaan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9) Pitkerrald	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10) Village Centre Expansion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>