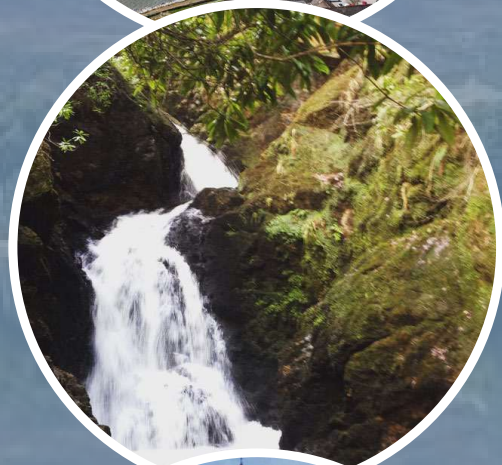


GOLSPIE 2034/44 PLACE PLAN



A partnership project, led by the people of Golspie.





Cover and logo by Golspie Place Plan community steering group.

All map credits: Unless otherwise indicated, all map have been authored by Lisa Mackenzie and Anaïs Chanon using base maps from OS MasterMap, Ordnance Survey, Digimap Ordnance Survey Collection, <https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/>.

The University of Edinburgh team who worked on this place plan include Lisa Mackenzie and Anaïs Chanon (leads) as well as John Darbyshire, Anna Reid and Norman Villeroux.

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Acknowledgements

The preparation of the Golspie 2034/2044 Local Place Plan was facilitated by the Golspie Community Council, through a locally formed place plan team, and with support from the University of Edinburgh.

Disclaimer

All information in this proposed place plan has been included to the best of the Golspie Place Plan team’s knowledge, and in line with information accessible to the team and collected during community engagement sessions.

Adjacent page Golspie’s mosaic of landscapes. From hills to shoreline. Photos Lisa Mackenzie and Anaïs Chanon, 2022.

INTRODUCTION

VISION STATEMENT

2034/2044 Vision for Golspie: A resilient village embracing the future

Our aim is to build a thriving, resilient, self-reliant and supportive community where all ages can live, work, learn and play: a welcoming place for residents and visitors alike.

We want to **preserve and enhance** what is **unique and best** in the Golspie area:

- Over a millenium of history and heritage.
- A unique location situated on land bounded by the sea and the hill.
- Supportive and cohesive community spirit.
- An internationally recognised and designated natural environment.
- World class sporting opportunities and outdoor activities (mountain biking, golfing & karting).

We also want to **grow and develop** the full potential of our community by:

- Agreeing an area-wide, multi-agency strategic flood management plan with all stakeholders by June 2025, to be implemented over 10 years (see **p.25, 33, 48-49**).
- Prioritising projects to address the needs identified in this and previous community engagement and village plans (flood protection, child care, affordable housing, transport, good quality jobs, etc.) and to reduce our community carbon footprint.
- ‘Greening the grey’ hard flood defence and other structures to increase biodiversity and combat climate change.
- Creating a community hub to form a focus for residents, draw together the many clubs & societies already in the village, and increase the attraction for visitors to stay rather than pass through (see **p.28, 42-47**).
- Enhancing our natural environment in all 3 of our key landscapes - coast, hill and village - with blue-green nature based solutions to both mitigate flood risk and improve footpath networks and 20 minute neighbourhoods.



Above Looking towards the village from the Glebe.
Photo Anna Reid.

Context

The village of Golspie (Goillspidh) is a historic fishing village on the east coast of the County of Sutherland.

It lies halfway between Inverness and Thurso on the main A9 trunk road and is the first village that you have to drive through when using this route which starts in Falkirk. In fact, Golspie is the first village not bypassed when driving on trunk roads after Dover. **It is the gateway to the Highlands.**

It is a rural and coastal location which can be found on the official North Coast 500 route. Golspie can be described as a ‘mini Vancouver’, sandwiched as it is between the sea to the east and the hill to the west.

The village boasts numerous scenic walks which include a 3-mile sandy beach, the Big Burn waterfall, the Ben Bhraggie Hill, and the National Nature reserve at Loch Fleet.

The Highland Wildcat trails offer an exhilarating mountain biking experience for riders of all levels over looking the East Sutherland Coast.

With a population of 1,337 residents (2022 census), the village has its own primary and high schools. It has managed to retain a number of key services along with having its own golf course and other key sporting amenities which continue to draw both local people and tourists to the area.

Golspie’s 2024 Local Place Plan

An **integrated approach** has been adopted to realise a spatial strategy for Golspie that takes account of relevant plans in:

- the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP)¹
- the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (CaSPlan)²
- the Golspie Community Plan³

It also sets out locally specific proposals that acknowledge the distinct particularities of Golspie as a place, from the perspective of its own community.

The Golspie place plan seeks to make helpful integrations with National Planning Priorities in National Planning Framework 4 (2023)⁴, and feed constructively into the evidence gathering stage of preparations for the publishing of the Highland Local Development Plan (HLDP) in 2027.

The plan takes a place-based approach consolidating Golspie’s existing assets with new proposals that respect the unique environment in which the village lies.

The purpose of this Local Place Plan is:

- To help the Community Council and Highland Council consider the impact of planning applications on our local communities.
- To inform Highland Council’s review of the Local Development Plan.
- To influence investment by Highland Council, other public bodies, funders, landowners and businesses in ways that support our local community.

¹ https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/development_plans/199/highland-wide_local_development_plan
² https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/19712/casplan_adopted
³ <https://highlandcpp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Golspie-Community-Plan.pdf>
⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/>

BACKGROUND PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT & FINDINGS

In 2016 and 2018 the Golspie community residents were widely surveyed by local action group Go Golspie and the Sutherland Community Partnership respectively.

Residents were invited to complete online and paper questionnaires, workshops were held for businesses, groups and individuals, and interactive sessions were hosted for Secondary School pupils to add their input. The results were collated and published as the Golspie Community Development Plan and the **Golspie Locality Plan**.

Across both plans residents mentioned how they valued living in a safe, secure community which was felt by most, to have a strong community spirit. The community's heritage was cherished by its residents, alongside the natural environment and the access to a varied landscape. It was felt that the local economy, at the time, was perhaps stronger than similar settlements in the area and that Golspie benefitted from its position on the A9 and its ability to retain some services that had been lost by other communities.

Concerns were raised about the ageing population and the struggle within the community to retain young people and families. A lack of childcare and insecurity in employment were highlighted as barriers to retaining young people, as well as lower than average earnings. Unreliable public transport and poor digital connectivity was felt to negatively impact the community. Tourism was also highlighted as a likely economic opportunity from which residents were not getting the full benefit.

During the surveys, potential resources and underutilised assets were highlighted. Many of the actions and suggestions from the surveys have already been taken forward by local groups, including GoGolspie and the community council. Several have continued to be discussed and will be found mentioned in the 2024 Place Plan.

Of note, in 2016 the need for greater flood defences was highlighted and it was suggested that this could lead to a wider regeneration of the harbour area. Work in this area has continued to be undertaken by the community and is now understood to be a pressing need.

Many of the ideas and themes that came out of previous surveys, continue to be discussion points within the community.

The 2024 Place Plan highlights many from the earlier discussions alongside the ideas that came out of the recent place plan inputs.

The 2024 Place Plan allows the community to create a visual map of Golspie's ideal future as decided by its residents.

2024 LOCAL PLACE PLAN ENGAGEMENT

In accordance with the Scottish Governments 'Place Principle' (2019)¹ consultative events leading up to the making of the plan invited in voices from all sectors of the community to foster a shared understanding of place and take a collaborative approach.

Engagement workshops lasting 2 days ran at the beginning and end of June 2024 and involved communication of the Place Planning Process, a description of the National Planning Framework and coverage of land allocations and designations for Golspie in the current Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan, CaSLDP (2018)².

During the engagement workshops large format base plans of Golspie and of the Community Council area were used to understand the extent of issues brought forward by community members in attendance. Specific to the approach taken was the need to understand **landscape scaled inter-relationships** within but also beyond the village boundary. Collaboratively mapping issues brought local people together to give shared accounts of Golspie's assets and of the challenges facing the village currently and in the future.

The collaboratively generated maps that came out of these two engagement workshops led to the generation of 2 draft plans, one at the scale of the Community Council Area and one at the scale of the village. The draft plans were made available online with descriptive details of project sites along with a supporting video that detailed the approach taken. This information allowed for any new comments or ideas from the community to be collected during a period from the 17th to the 26th of July 2024.



Above Engagement events in Golspie. Photos by Anna Reid, 2024.

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/place-principle-introduction/>

² https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/19712/cas-plan_adopted

Golspie residents were asked for their views on what they think Golspie needs and where they want it to go using the following formats:

- In person
- Online
- E-mail
- Paper copy

An online survey with a paper copy option was carried out by Go Golspie from Dec 2023 until Mar 2024. This survey was:

- Sent out by email to Go Golspie's membership database.
- Posted online for everyone to complete.
- Hard copies available to complete were also made available.

A total of 80 survey responses were received. The information received from the survey data was used to prepare a list of everything people think we need in Golspie.

During the next stage of consultation, a series of in-person engagement sessions were held. These were led and supported by the Community Council and facilitated by Landscape Architects from Edinburgh University.

Sessions were held in the Golspie community lounge with open access to all Golspie residents to drop in and give their views. Workshops were run in conjunction with information presentations by Edinburgh University. Younger people were involved throughout, with Golspie Youth Action Project offering inputs at several sessions and a bespoke consultation was held for high school pupils.

It is recognised that the views of our younger generations are vital for the success of Golspie's Place Plan as it is their future. Over 30 youths from Golspie High School from different year groups attended to give their views with another 10 youths and the Golspie Youth Action project team.

During the workshop sessions the previous collated data which identified what we need was used to move to the next stage of where we want it / where it could go.

The sessions were well attended and lots of input received. All the information received was collated by Edinburgh University to create maps indicating what assets/facilities are wanted/needed by the community and potential location options for each. This information was added to the existing mapping to create new mapping with an accompanying list of project suggestions. This was put online to allow people a further opportunity to comment. Four responses were received to this online feedback form.

During the next stage of consultation a meeting was held with key stakeholders – namely Highland Council's various departments (Roads, Flood, Education, Property) along with Sutherland Estates and Highland's & Islands Enterprise. As the major landowners within the Golspie Community Council area, it was important to gain an understanding of their concerns, and potential opportunities to add to the plan.

Finally we engaged with the local farmers who hold significant land interests in & around Golspie. They have fed into the plan with their views. The contributions of both these groups have been enlightening and extremely useful to Golspie's Place Plan.

The Place Plan team has endeavoured to ensure that the consultation has been wide, deep and meaningful to give all in the community every opportunity to give their views. The aim is for the final plan to be as representative and as inclusive as possible, including the broadest cross section of opinions from the community. We are grateful to the Landscape Architecture team at ESALA/ECA/University of Edinburgh for their support in drafting the plan. We hope that you find the plan encouraging, helpful and interesting.



Above Photo Anna Reid. June 2024.

COMMUNITY VISION

The vision of the Golspie 2034/2044 Local Place Plan is to create an aspirational, ambitious but also realistic record of what the community have identified as a need and where residents would like it to go. This Local Place Plan will then be used to update the Golspie Community Development Plan prioritising the needs and building them into community action projects to make them a reality.

Central to the place plan and underpinning everything else is an area wide, multi-agency strategic flood management plan to be agreed with all stakeholders by June 2025 and then implemented in stages over 10 years. Golspie is in the top 10 coastal areas in Scotland at risk of flooding (this will only get worse with the current climate change trajectory of the world. Sea levels are rising and extreme weather events are predicted to become more frequent). This will include both hard and soft flood defence measures, peatland restoration and nature-based solutions, or adaptation in the 3 key landscapes of the coastline, the hill and the village itself.

It is hoped that the measures above can serve two or more purposes of managing flood water, biodiversity gain or nature conservation and creating public amenity such as combining drainage channels with cycle or footpaths or SUDS with communal garden or growing spaces.

Golspie is on the one hand a prisoner of its geography lying as it does between the sea and the hill behind with very little flat land on which to expand or relocate.

On the other hand its residents and visitors have a wonderful and an incredibly varied natural location to enjoy - hills, rivers, sea, beach, woodland, nature reserve, golf, karting and any number of sports, activities and interest groups to join - not to mention a cultural heritage going back over three thousand years.

These natural and historical assets need nurturing so that our history can be passed on to our children and visitors to the area. Tourism and outdoor pursuits will play an important part in promoting and growing the village.

Golspie is fortunate to have retained many key facilities and amenities which similar sized communities have lost (post office, primary school, high school, doctor, dentist, hospital, optician, swimming pool, gym, library, locality office, fire station, etc.). The aim is not just to safeguard these assets but to enhance and improve them for future generations; to create a place with good quality jobs, accessible homes and a safe environment for all age groups.

Finally, there is key national infrastructure here that is vital to protect (A9 trunk road, railway) for the economy and wellbeing, not just of Golspie, but of all those living and working to the north and south who use this road and rail corridor.



Above Golspie's Coastal Frontage with Mound Rock on the skyline.
Photo: Lisa Mackenzie

PROPOSED PLACE PLAN FOR GOLSPIE

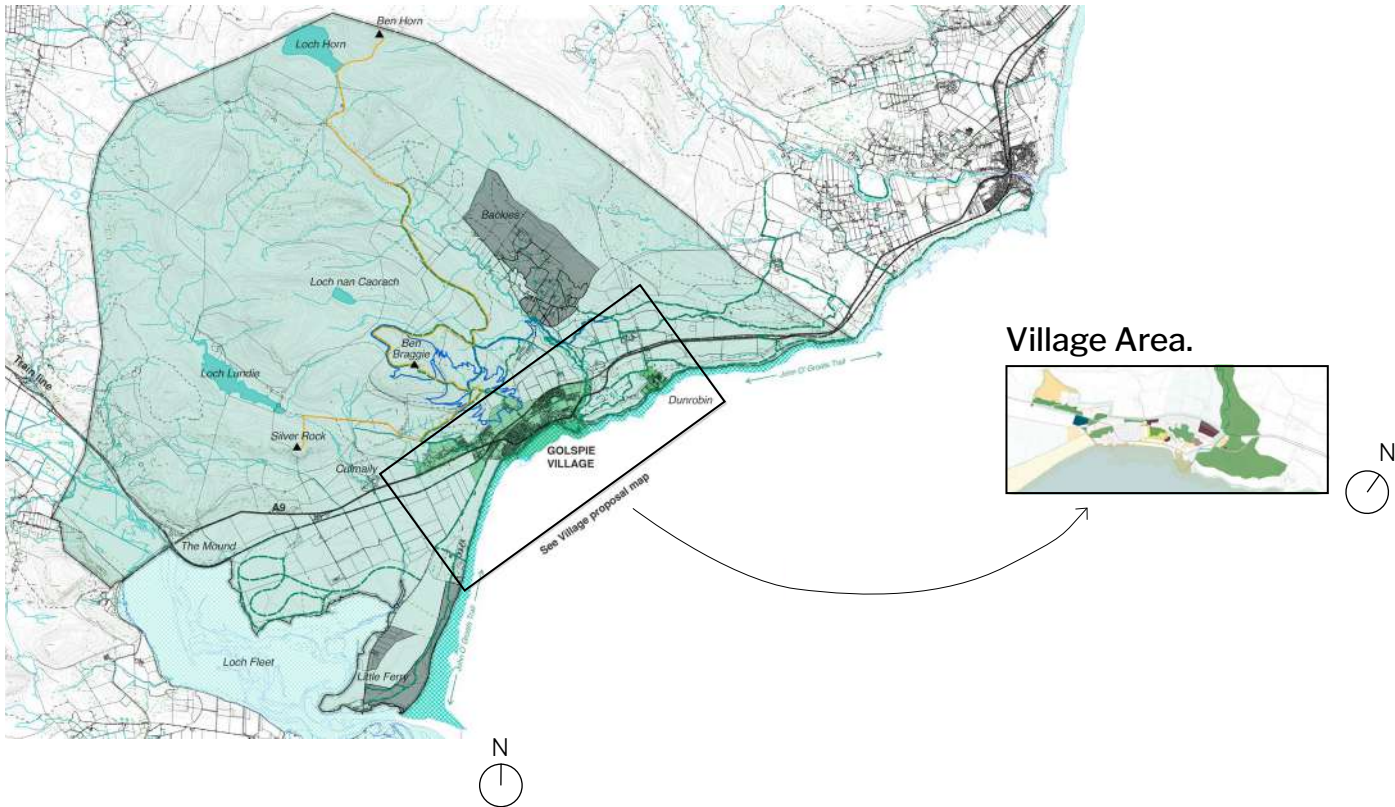
HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

Scales

The plan was developed at two key scales:

- The whole Golspie Community Council Area scale.
- The Village Area Scale, focusing on the village core and its shoreline, from Drummie to Dunrobin Castle.

Whole Golspie Community Council Area.



Themes

Five themes were defined to organise conversation groups during the community engagement sessions in June 2024.

Most proposals are relevant to more than one theme.

For each proposal included in this Place Plan, we have indicated relevant theme colours.



1. Community Life

2. Community Resilience: Environmental, Emergency, Economic

3. Nature Culture and Heritage

4. Connectivity (Physical and Digital)

5. Homes and Infrastructure

Themes definitions

1. Community Life

What do we need in place to enable us to be a happy, healthy, resilient and self-sufficient community?

We have community cohesion and support which is created by close-knit families and friends, the many clubs & societies run by volunteers, outdoor activities, sport and the selfless commitment of the many who work to improve the Golspie area for those who live and visit here. We need to retain this and identify what else we need to survive, thrive and be resilient.

(Themes definitions continue pages 22-23)

2. Community Resilience: Environmental, Emergency, Economic

What do we need to enable our community to remain safe and protected from environment changes?

The most important environmental challenge Golspie needs to address is the immediate flood risk from the coast, the hill, surface water and the water table. A robust, deliverable strategic flood risk management plan will address this holistically, incorporate nature-based solutions for net biodiversity gain and conservation of our important natural assets. It will be implemented in stages.

What do we need to enable the community to remain resilient in times of emergency?

A community resilience plan is currently being drafted for use in emergencies (Extreme Weather, Flooding, Electric Power Failure, Pandemics, Etc).

What do we need to enable economic prosperity in our community, where businesses thrive and we have somewhere to work?

We need to reverse the current ageing demographic and depopulation trend. We need to encourage businesses to grow and new light industries to be established here.

Close collaboration with possible funding organisations is needed to nurture an environment conducive to the creation of good quality, secure jobs in a fragile economy that relies heavily on seasonal tourist trade.

3. Nature Culture and Heritage

What do we need to sustain and nurture our natural & cultural heritage for locals and visitors?

The natural landscape of Golspie and the surrounding area, which incorporates the sea, the coastal margin, the village itself and the hill country behind. Every community has a distinct culture born of its particular history and heritage from which our traditions and customs have evolved. In the case of Golspie from the Iron Age broch at Carn Liath to our Gala week, crofting community in Backies, the herring fishing and golf our culture is built on more than 1000yrs of history.

We need to enhance and promote what we currently have within our community and encourage more people to explore our natural assets.

4. Connectivity (Physical and Digital)

The state of being connected to one another.

What do we need in place to enable us to have a physical connection to get from place to place within our community?

We need affordable and reliable transport (rail, bus, car, bike, walking (active travel)) and all the associated infrastructure required (roads, safe pathways, cycle tracks and availability of fuel).

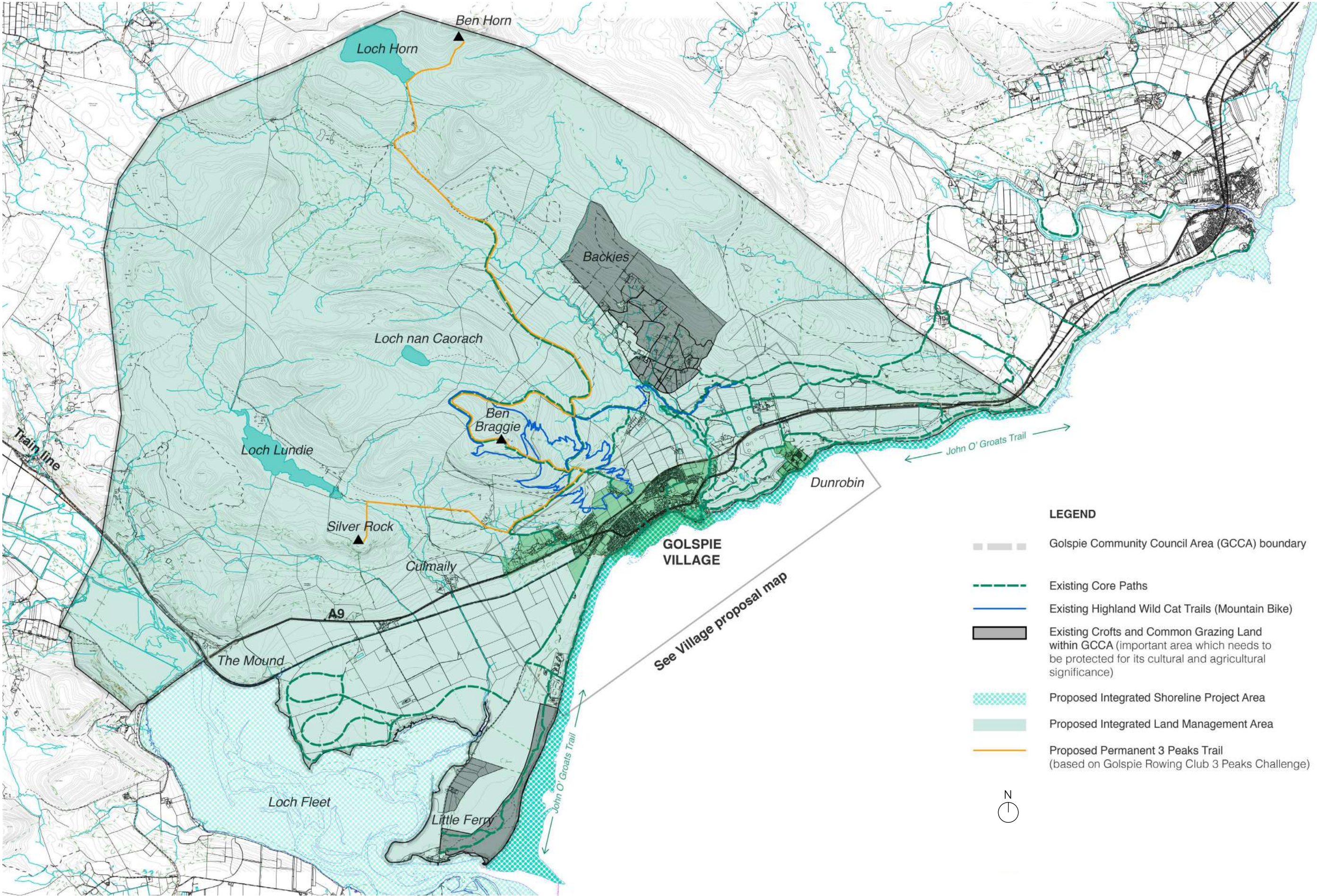
What do we need to enable us to have a digital connection with others in our communities and further afield? We need affordable and reliable communications (landline, mobile, cable, internet (web, social media, AI), etc) to enable people to go about their daily business, seek the support of friends, family, community and services and learn, work and play.

5. Homes and Infrastructure

What do we need in place to enable everyone who wants to be part of our community the ability to do so?

We need ‘Homes, not houses’. Vacant properties and second homes do not contribute to a community. Good quality, energy efficient and affordable homes for young families, workers and residents are a key aspiration to reverse depopulation and safeguard the future of our community. Infrastructure such as excellent school and childcare provision, robust welfare services and reliable transport are all required to support Golspie. We need the right infrastructure so people can live, work, shop, and socialise in Golspie.

WHOLE COMMUNITY COUNCIL AREA PROPOSED PLAN



VILLAGE PROPOSED PLAN

Buildings of particular significance:

- 1 Drummie
- 2 Train Station
- 3 Golspie Pier
- 4 High School
- 5 Primary School
- 6 Seaforth Care Home
- 7 YMCA
- 8 Fountain Rd Hall
- 9 Free Church and Church Hall (Church St)
- 10 Old Sutherland Estate offices (Duke St)
- 11 Bank of Scotland building
- 12 St Andrew's Church
- 13 Old Dunrobin Mill

LEGEND

- Proposed new Town Centre Area (including new Village Hub)
- Existing paths
- Proposed paths
- Proposed Green-blue networks
- Existing Greenspaces
- Proposed Climate Adaptation Nature Areas (CANA)
- New Housing
- Community development
- Business



JUSTIFICATIONS FOR PROPOSED CHANGES:

INTEGRATED STRATEGIES & CATALYST AREAS

Ideas beyond the village boundary

In creating the place plan for Golspie, the village's unique rural location between the land and the sea has been brought to the fore by the community.

As a consequence, the spatial proposals outline an interconnected landscape where green and blue networks unite through different scales and extend beyond the village. To support this vision the community emphasised the need to **represent the whole Golspie Community Council Area in Highland Council Planning documentation.**

The plan has been articulated across two integrated strategies:

- **A green-blue strategy** (p. 30-33)
- **A path strategy** (p. 34-40)

The plan also features **three catalyst areas.**

Catalyst Areas

'Catalyst Areas' have been envisioned as holding potential for regenerative projects that could deliver economic, environmental and social benefits for the people of Golspie. The spatial plans are ambitious in addressing the place plan themes (p.21-23) but also embedded in reality with a care for their future deliverability. Catalyst areas address important relationships in key sites where the community feel that solutions rely on organisations, land owners and individuals working together rather than alone.

The demarcation of three distinct catalyst areas make the best of Golspie's existing assets by developing what is already there, building positively and collaboratively towards a resilient future. The catalyst areas show a clear ambition for future change by prioritising sites that take a whole systems approach to the future of the village.

Catalyst areas include:

C1 The Village Hub (see p. 42-47)

Re-defining existing assets of public realm, community infrastructure and buildings to strengthen community interaction, reduce inequalities, promote wellbeing and enhance Golspie's village centre as a place for business and enterprise. The village hub proposal is a space for intergenerational activities that optimises underused open space and weaves public realm and nature based solutions into lanes and vennels to build a stronger relation to the coast.

Child care is a crucial need for Golspie that is currently not being met. A Child care centre in this location is a key consideration.

Notably, the spatial proposal for C1 makes a departure from the limited delineation of Golspie's Main Street in the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (CaSLDP) to draw in other related streets and spaces to the north of the Main Street that already operate as places of gathering. The justification for the departure from the CaSLDP is detailed in the Village Project Proposals section of this report (see p.42).

C2 The Shoreline (see p. 48-53)

The village of Golspie benefits from a proactive contingent of community members engaged in dialogue with Highland Council about the risks to the village of sea level change and storm surge flooding. The community shares a will to confront and deal with the reality of coastal flooding through appropriate initiatives that maximise opportunities and minimise risks from the impacts of climate change.

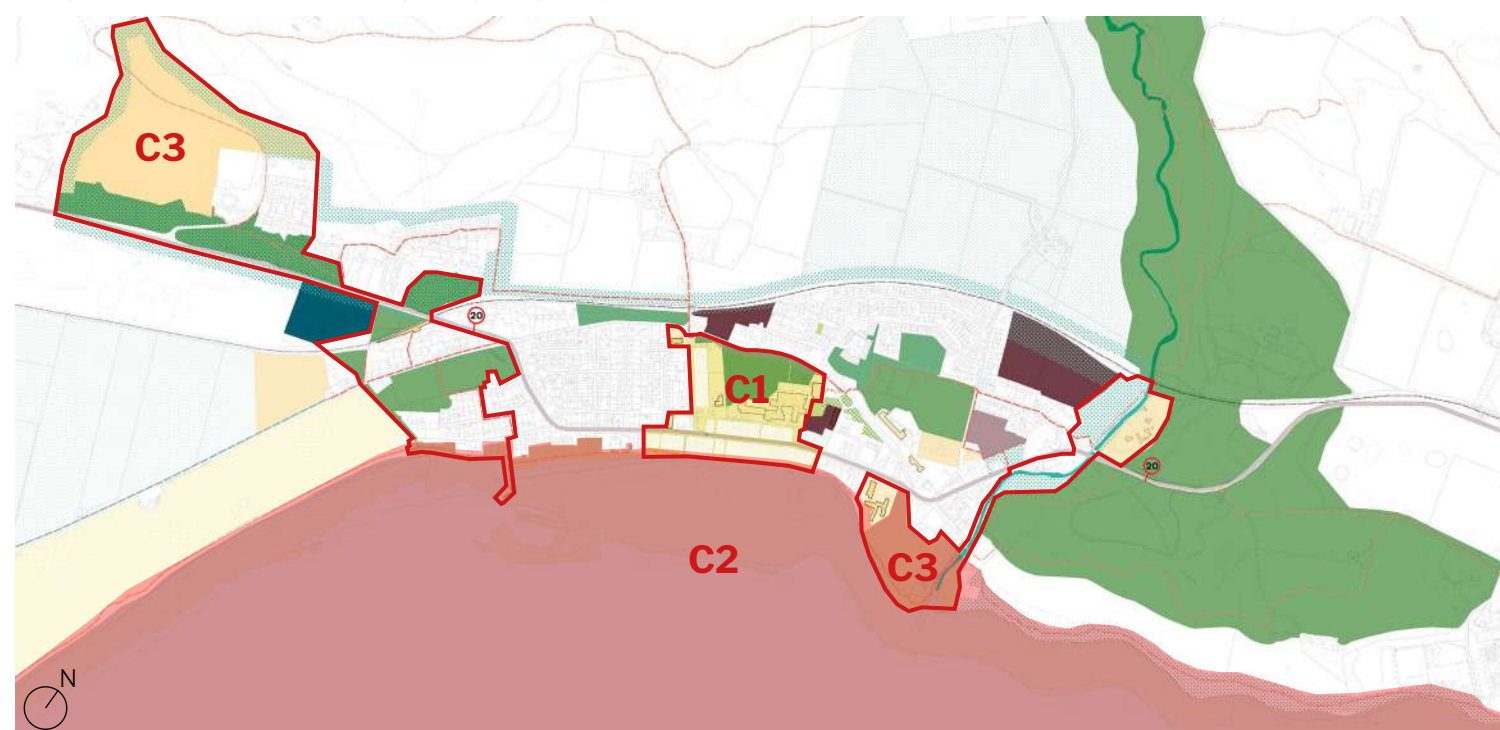
The Scottish Governments Coastal Change Adaptation Plan Guidance (2023) states the need to plan for long term adaptation and resilience and engage in a joined up approach to finding viable solutions for communities most at risk from coastal change. The Golspie Community have set out proposals in this plan that seek an integrated and co-ordinated, diverse and sustainable approach to safeguarding the resilience of the shoreline in the decades ahead. **The need for a Coastal Adaptation Plan for Golspie is a pressing issue that the community would like to see as a priority issue for Highland Council.**

C3 The Gateways (see p. 54-59)

In 2010, The Sutherland Local Plan¹ set out the idea of a 'Green Firth' that viewed *"the Dornoch Firth as a unique landscape and ecosystem, supporting organic farm produce, sensitive sporting practices, land and water-borne recreation, abundant wildlife habitats, inshore fisheries and specialist pursuits"*.

Under the heading of Accessibility and Connectivity Highland Council's draft Sustainable Tourism Strategy (May 2024)² sets out the need to "improve issues surrounding the physical, sensory and technological accessibility and connectivity at and between visitor destinations and settlements to create an environment that is usable by all and which reduces inequalities".

In Golspie's Community Action Plan (2017)³ and in the engagement events in June 2024 the community spoke of its desire to encourage people to stop and enjoy Golspie as a place rather than just passing through. In the proposed Gateway sites Golspie's environment and beautiful landscape setting is intended to be showcased but also enhanced to allow its community to live well locally through **incentivising job creation, decarbonising recreation and promoting active travel connections.** The need to operate a balance between nature conservation, job creation, recreational pursuits and tourism has been given due consideration and care, and the proposals that follow seek to add to existing ecosystems by protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The Gateway sites lock in and propose extensions to core paths to ensure connectivity on foot and by bicycle to regional assets.



¹ https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/515/sutherland_local_plan_-_adopted_plan_2010

² https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1457/tourism_and_visitor_attractions/148/tourism/3

³ <https://highlandcpp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Golspie-Community-Plan.pdf>

GREEN-BLUE STRATEGY

Improving non-coastal drainage issues in Golspie.

13A Back of Village Hub

Add drainage buffer/Green-blue edge (to address current drainage issues)

13B Memorial fountain

Add better drainage, better signage, better crossing.

Proposals should be cognisant of the interrelationship with the new planned attenuation pond as part of the caravan site to ease drainage issues around the fountain.

21 Stafford Park

Add Ecological/drainage buffer.

24 Back of Business Park

Improve road edge and business park edge as SUDS/green-blue edge Improve road and crossing for safety.

Community council has already had exploratory discussions with HC about a planting scheme here to improve waterlogging at this site, and hope to move forward with this soon.

25 Edge of Train line

Add green-blue buffer edge to deal with run off from hills.

Add new path connection between Drummie and Village Hub/centre that takes a more direct route and is more user friendly. >

> 25 Edge of Train line (cont.)

The Drummie Development Brief (2001)¹ principles of «developing a sound landscape, open space and planting framework with the early implementation of structural planting, integration of built forms with green space landscaping and pedestrian links as part of an overall concept» should be adhered to in new initiatives.

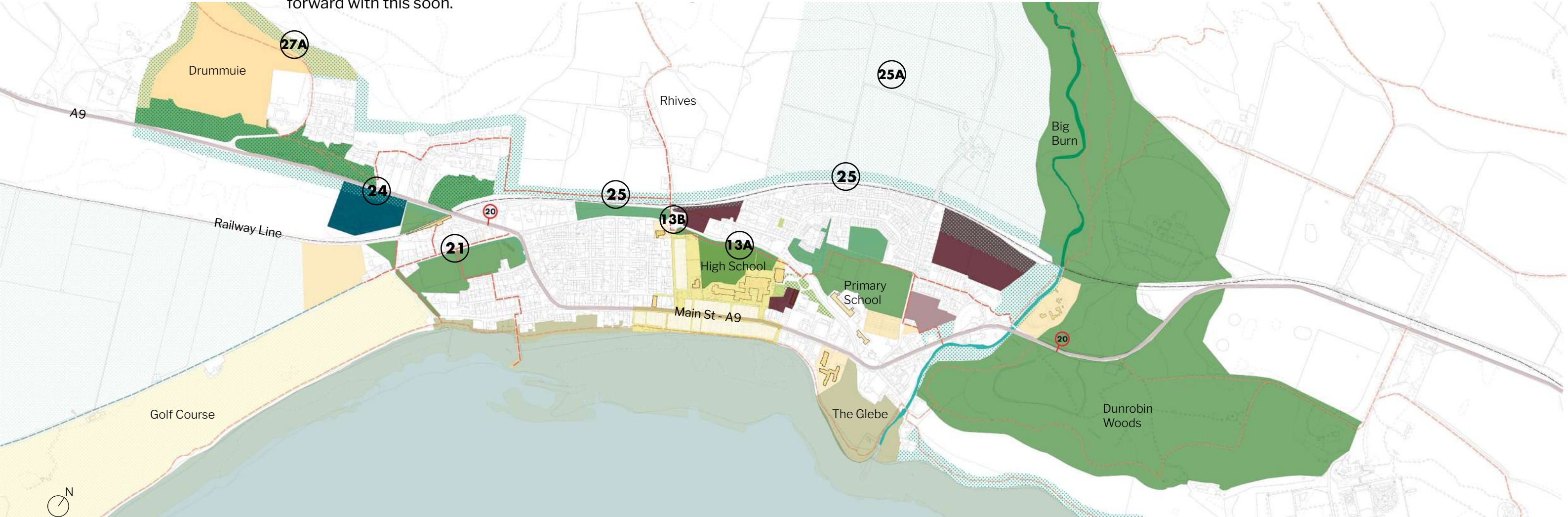
¹ https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/1738/drummie_golspie_development_brief_january_2001

25A Back of Train line

Issue with flooding (run off water and debris): add better drainage system involving multiple agency collaborations.

27A Back of Drummie

Add sustainable drainage/ green-blue edge that deals with surface water coming down off the hills and fields to the North of the site.



GREEN-BLUE STRATEGY

Improving non-coastal drainage issues in Golspie.



B1



B2



B3

B1 Argo Terrace
(Fields between Golspie Tower - The Stackyard)

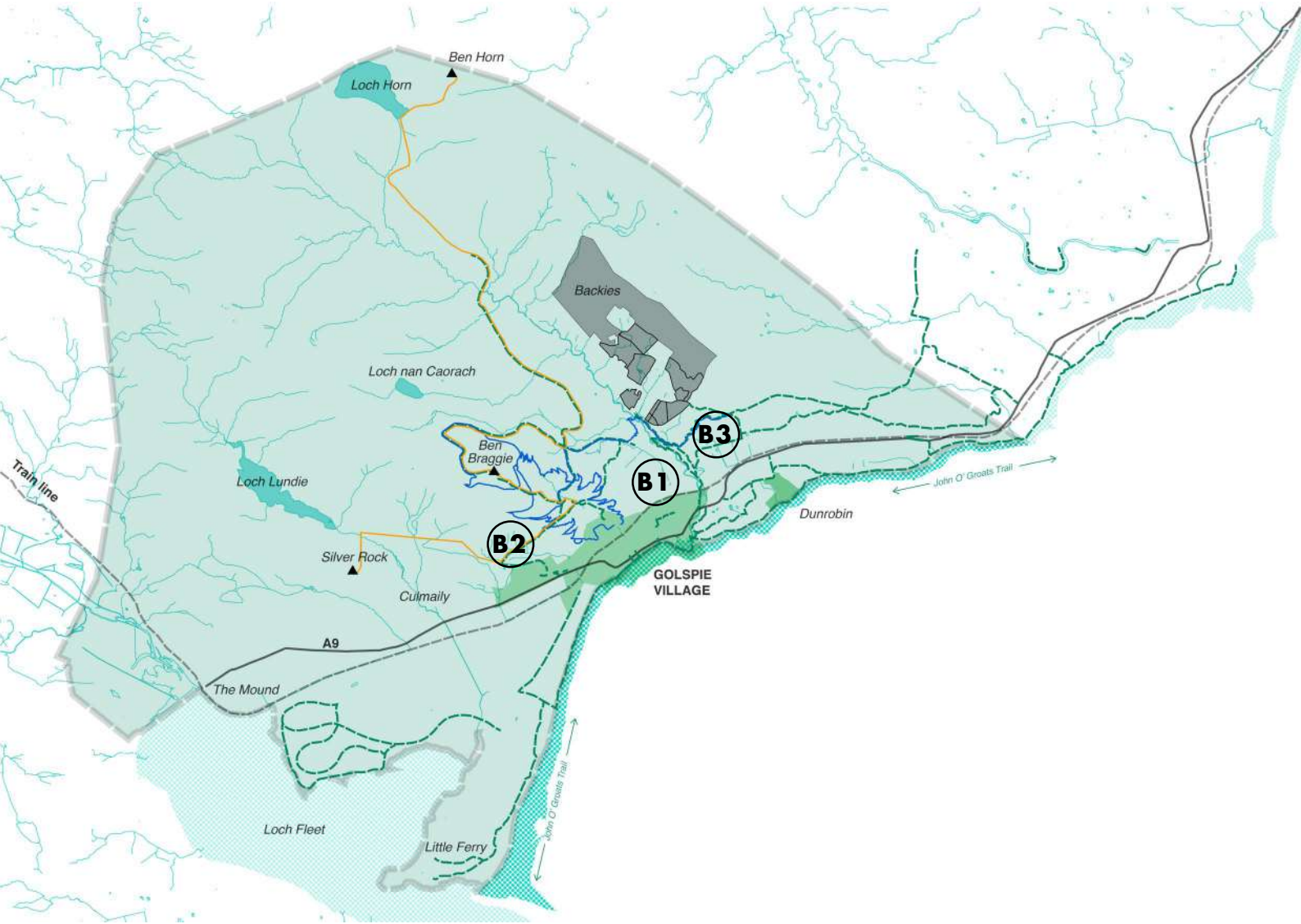
Flood Risk Management
Management of surface drainage (flooding from agricultural fields running down Argo Terrace). Explore the improvement of the attenuation pond above the stackyard at Golspie tower to deal with surface water drainage problems.

B2 Allt Domhain Burn
Drummuie

Flood Risk Management
Management of surface drainage (flooding from agricultural fields running down Queens Drive) Review of Drain and Balancing Ponds for capacity.

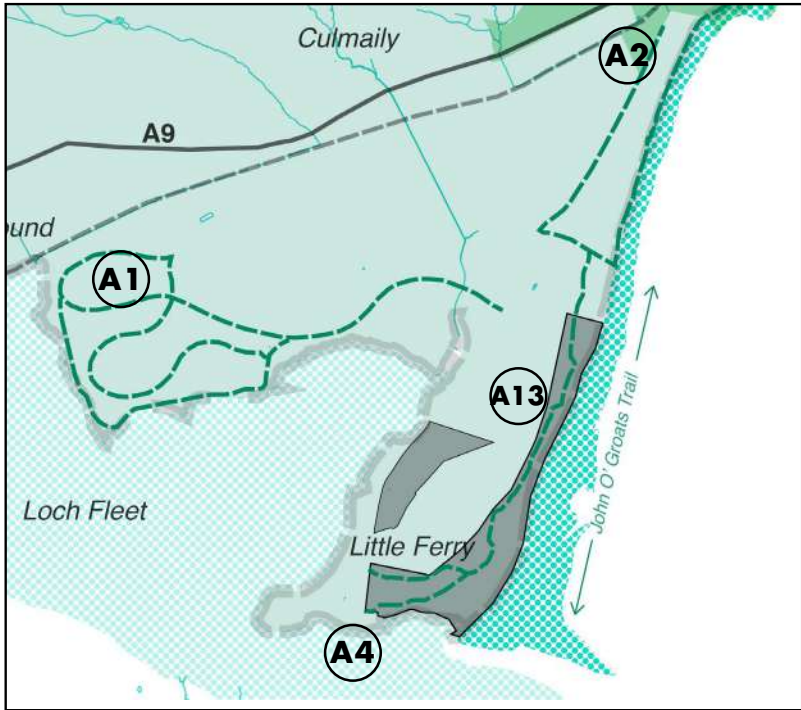
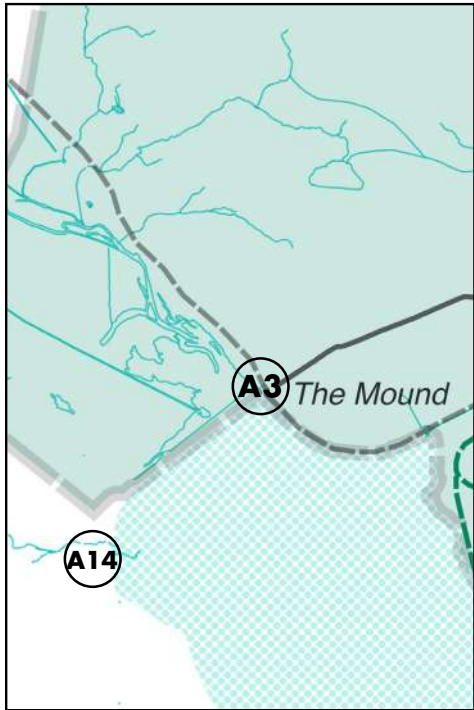
B3 Sawmill Backies
(Dunrobin Sawmill)

Flood Risk Management
Major flooding issue at the bridge. Drainage needs to be resolved through urgent multi-agency collaboration.



Beyond the specific projects listed in this «Green-blue strategy»chapter, the whole Golspie Community Council Area, as well as relevant river catchments, need to form part of an **integrated land management area which prioritises biodiversity and flood prevention.**

PATH STRATEGY (1/2)



All Path Strategy proposals to be considered in relationship with existing paths and trails, including, but not limited to, the existing long distance trails which pass through Golspie (for example, the John O'Groats trail (largely walking route), and the the Pictish Trail (off-road cycling route)).

A2 Golspie Village West
Core Path Improvement
Improve connectivity of the Core Path between Station Road (A9) Ferry Road and Church street, giving coastal access from the Core paths that exist to the North of the village.

New signage and trail markers to support and encourage access for all.

A13 Littleferry
Add new path, interpretation signage and toilet facilities.

Add Battle of Littleferry trail, as well as composting toilets and donation box at Little Ferry.

A1 Balblair Wood (Loch Fleet)

Constructed Path 8.8kms (Sutherland Core Paths Plan SU12.02)

Core Path Improvement:
Flat trails provide the perfect place for people to learn to ride. This location of the Core Path network is suitable for inclusive cycling allowing a range of riders access to cycle paths in the Golspie vicinity.

The path is currently wide enough for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Paths must remain clear with vegetation maintained to prevent lack of access to the paths.

New signage and trail markers to support and encourage access for all.

A3 A9 truck road section of Core Path at The Mound.

Add new path:
Explore options to build a new safer route to avoid cyclists and pedestrians using the dangerous stretch of path that runs along the A9.

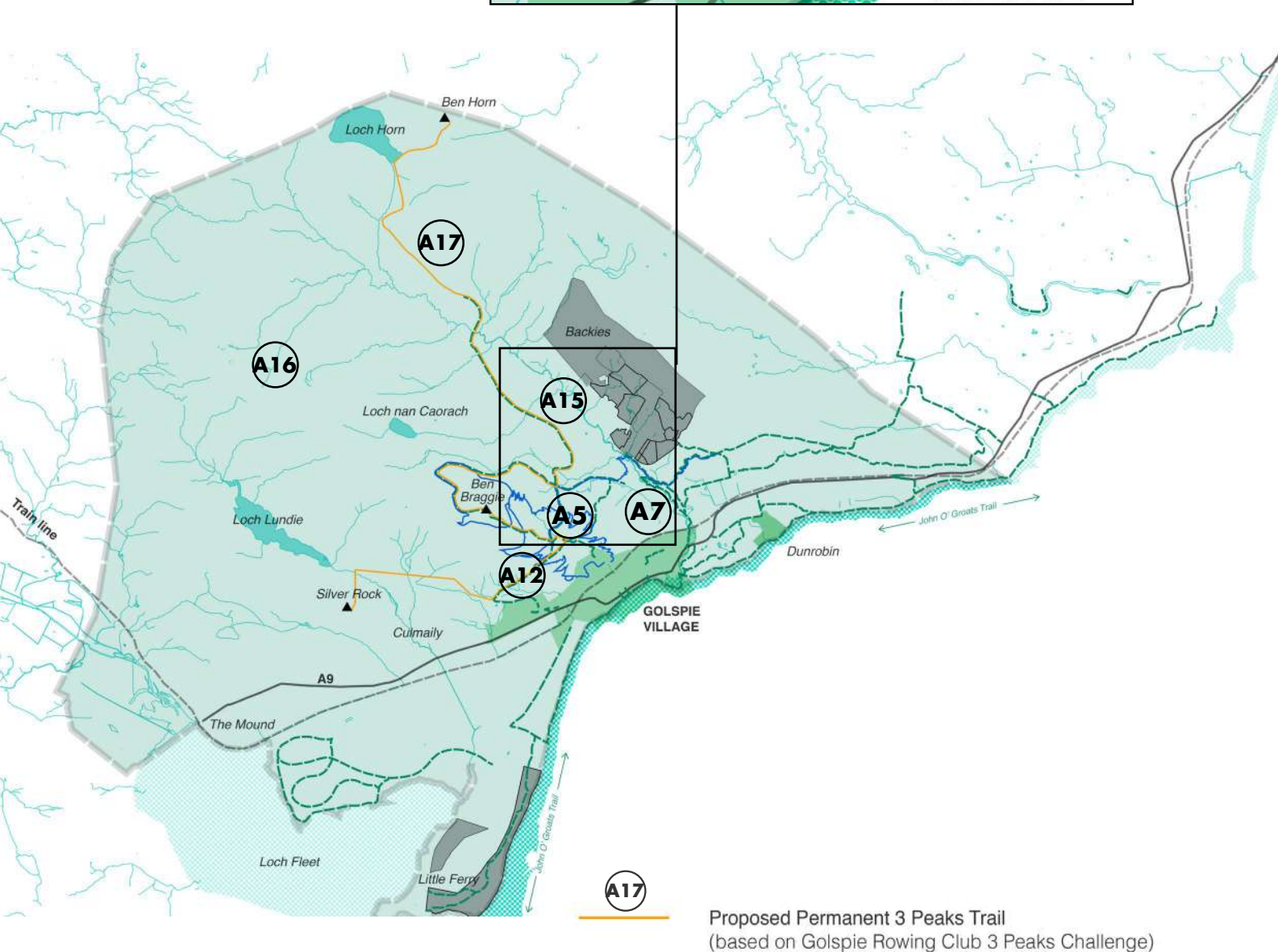
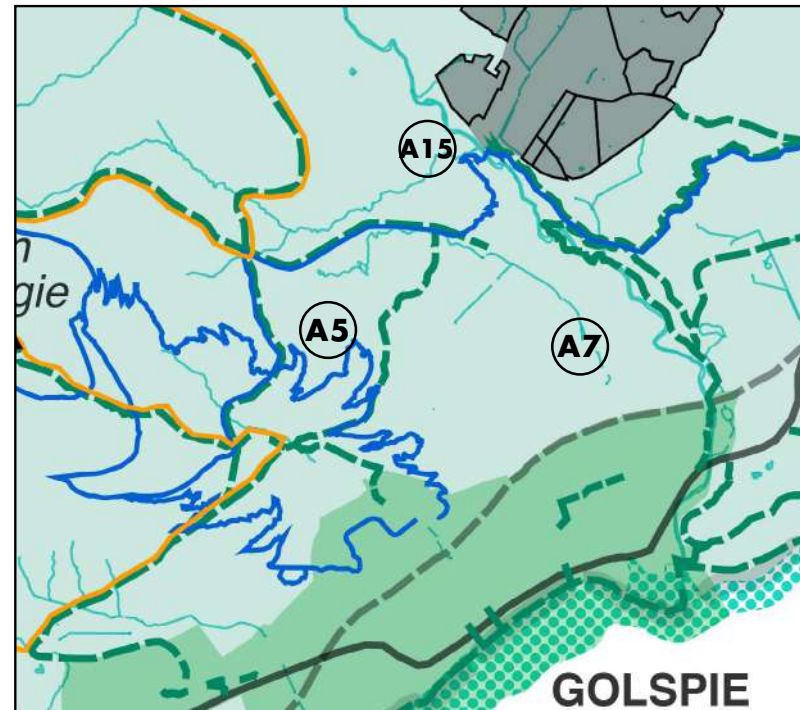
A4 Little Ferry to Skelbo connection

Add new paths:
Explore options to build a connective bridge for cyclists, pedestrians and horse riding between Little Ferry and Skelbo to Connect Golspie, Embo and Dornoch. This proposal would negate the need for item A3 above.

Explore the re-purposing of the old and existing railway line as a cycle path to avoid the A9 and connect with Balblair wood trails.

A14 Near back of Loch Fleet

Add new path:
Add cycle path on old railway line to Dornoch.



A5 Wildcat Trails

Improve Ben Bhraggie Wildcat Trails are currently only served by local volunteers. Access and facilities including uplifts to top, cafe, showers, bike wash, parking, hire, accessibility should all be considered as of strategic importance to Golspie. It would be advisable to speak to Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland (DMBinS) <https://dmbins.com/> prior to developing this project. Also need to liaise with Highland Wildcat Trails for this project <https://www.highlandwildcat.com/>

A7 Bridal Path to North of Golspie Tower

Existing path improvement:

Provide signage and trail improvements to this important link for all abilities riders (less steep route) Improve connectivity and signage to point A8 below.

Signage should set out expectations for shared path etiquette.

A volunteer rescue team with a base at Rhives and the use of maps delineating explicit search areas could be implemented to assist pedestrians or cyclists requiring first aid support.

Need to liaise with Highland Wildcat Trails for this project <https://www.highlandwildcat.com/>

A12 Drummie to Rhives connection

Add new path

The existing Core Path running through the village is fragmented.

There needs to be a connection from The Drummie site housing estate round the back of the hospital, through the field all the way to Rhives.

A15 Backies

Improve car park:

There are a few car parking areas at Backies which could be improved (better surfacing and layout) to enable better access to Wild Cat Mountain Biking Trail and Big Burn.

A16 Whole Golspie Community Council Area

Add new interpretation signage and heritage path network.

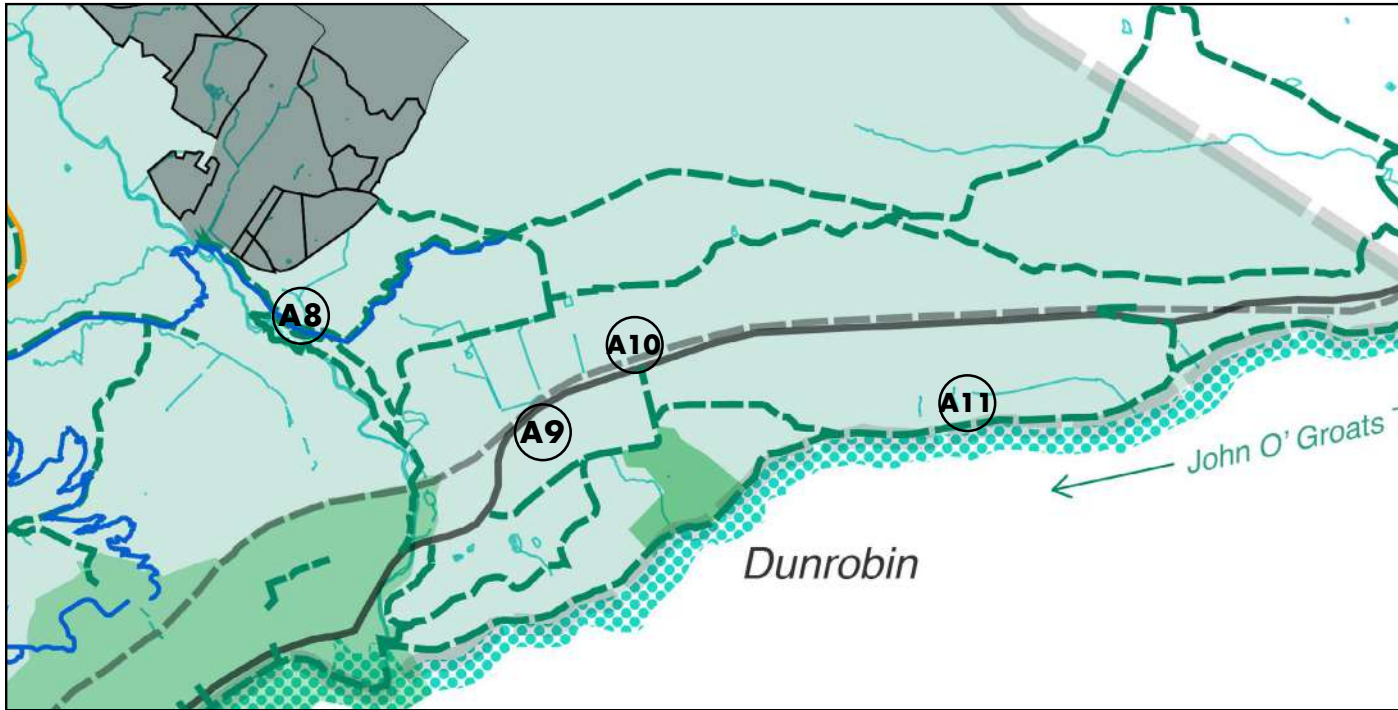
Add Heritage interpretation along paths (Hut Circles, Brochs...etc) + new paths to connect all heritage sites together.

For the Golspie Community Council area this adds to the connectivity of Golspie and its surroundings (including Dunrobin Castle) to the nearby UNESCO world heritage site of the Flow Country and to the Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet Special Area of Protection.

A17 Three Peaks Trail

Formalise the Three Peaks Trail Route.

Based on Golspie Rowing Club 3 Peaks Challenge.



A8 Big Burn

Improve existing path + Add new path
Improve link between Picts Path (bridal link) and Big Burn core path + connectivity to Point A7 above.

A9 Sibell Road – Flagstaff Lodge

Add new path
Improve Core Path link and connectivity to avoid dangerous junctions on to A9 allowing better connectivity to Brora.

A10 Fire Station House Junction

(Sutherland Core Paths Plan SU06.13 Sputie Burn)

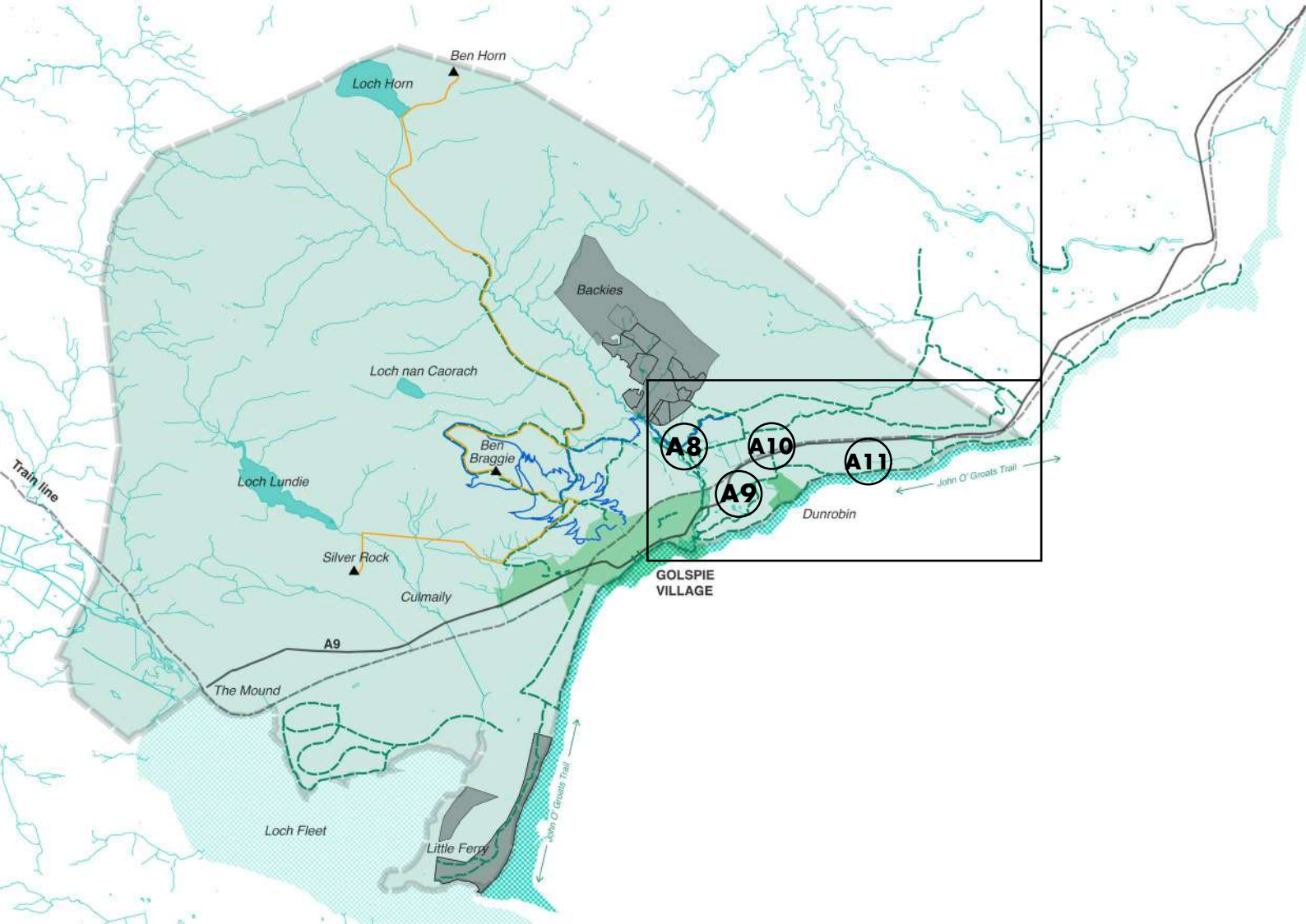
Improve existing path

Improvements to dangerous Core Path junction to A9 Road to encourage safe cycling and pedestrian access to the Core Path network and John O' Groats Trail. This improvement requires urgent multi-agency collaboration.

This is particularly important to allow access for all abilities to access the Big Burn track which runs to the North of Dunrobin farm and provides a flatter/easier route and access for all abilities to Uppat Wood.

A11 Lady's Walk/Memorial

Improve existing path
Improvements to the Lady's Walk track surface and improvements to prevent damage from hill flooding/run off.





A5 Rhives
Golspie to Wildcat Trails
connectivity

(Sutherland Core Paths
Plan SU12.05 – SU12.16,
SU12.13 to SU12.08 and
SU12.22)

Existing path upgrade
Improve connectivity and
signage between Golspie
Village, Golspie Promenade,
and Core Path areas to the
North of Golspie including
The Wildcat Trails. See
project 15 above.

**A6 Golspie Town Cycle
Centre/Facility.**

Add new facility
Provide Village Centre
changing and bike servicing
facilities to encourage the
Wildcat Trail users to stay
in the town. Bike washing
and maintenance facilities
will also be provided at the
Caravan site.

Also see proposal C1/13 on
Village scale proposal map.



Above Golspie's coastline from Ferry Road. Photo: Anaïs Chanon

C1. THE VILLAGE HUB (1/3)
An attractive and welcoming space to gather including a village square for events.

The village hub prioritises accessible and sustainably designed public realm with low maintenance planting to support ecology and biodiversity and showcase the work of Golspie in bloom.

The village hub could include provision and space for sustainable transportation (cycle hire for example) a tourism centre and an outdoor laundrette to service camping and tourist visitors. The public toilets and Health Centre to be retained.

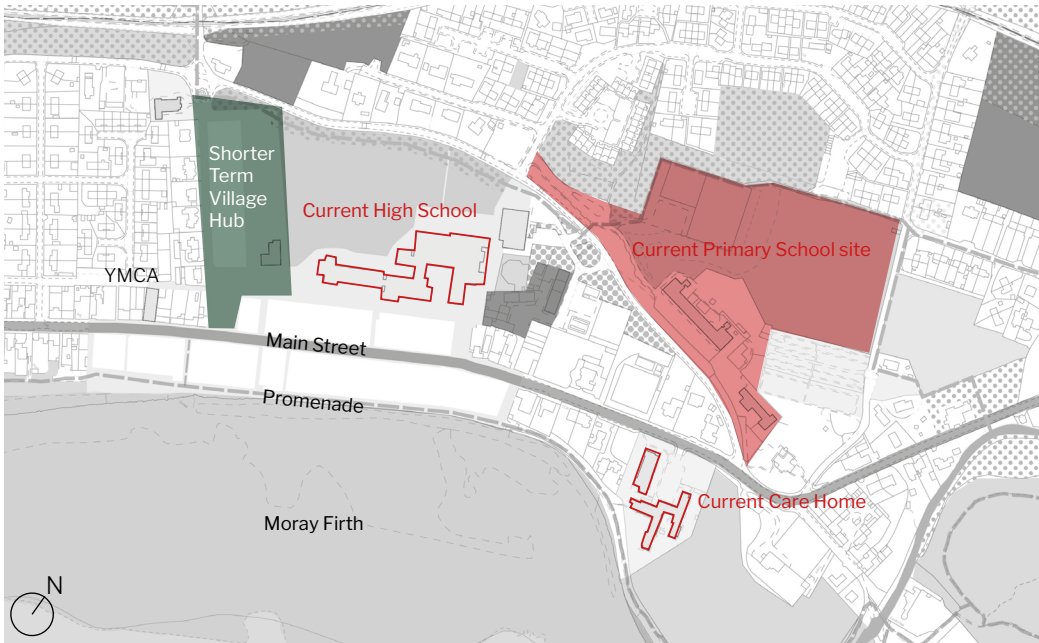
The new Village hub proposal draws in Fountain Road, Fountain Road Hall (Go Golspie Development Trust), the popular coffee bothy, school access and the Golspie Medical Practice into meaningful alignment to support the community’s desire to develop an attractive area of public realm accessible to all in this location. The proposal seeks to capture the economic and social benefits of attracting visitors to Golspie in ways that are harmonious with community life. (see Sustainable Tourism Draft Strategy, May 2024, Priorities for ‘our place’ and ‘our economy’.)

The Village Hub is connected as a space with project S4 below where living marine streets connecting the hub spaces with the shoreline to the south would help deal with surface water drainage sustainably but also contribute to the quality of public realm in Golspie.

See project 13 and 19 pages 44-45.

Adjacent Page Long term plans for the Village Hub depend on the potential relocation of key facilities (High School, Primary School and Care Home).

The diagram below outline a potential phasing.



Short Term.



Medium Term.



Long Term.

C1. THE VILLAGE HUB (2/3)

A space to gather

13 Village Hub

Strengthen Golspie’s village core as a space for social interaction, participative design and new economic initiatives that work in harmony with public realm as a critical asset of place. A space of high quality and biodiverse landscape that tunes into local distinctiveness. A space to gather, including a village square for events. The space will utilise the latest approaches in delivering sustainable urban drainage to deal with surface run off and the high water table/tidal influence impacting sub-ground and surface conditions of the site.

The village hub will reuse & add to public realm assets maximising connectivity between community facilities to strengthen community interaction, reduce inequalities, promote wellbeing and enhance Golspie’s village centre as a place for business and enterprise.

Nature based solutions woven in to the lanes and vennels to the south of the hub would build a stronger connection to the coast and and deal with surface water flooding from storm surge conditions.

(13 Village Hub, cont.)

The proposal seeks to capture the economic and social benefits towards community wealth of attracting visitors to Golspie in ways that are harmonious with community life. (see Sustainable Tourism Draft Strategy, May 2024, Priorities for ‘our place’ and ‘our economy’.)

The Public toilets and Health Centre to be retained.

Clause 163, CaSLDP: This proposal is cognisant of the potential designation of the historic core of Golspie with Conservation area status.

Clause 163: CaSLDP: This proposal requires a deviation from the currently shown red boundary of Golspie’s town centre in the CaSLDP.

Argumentation: The limited delineation of Golspie’s high street as the ‘town centre’ disregards other related streets and public spaces to the North of the High Street that already operate as significant places of community gathering.

19 Connection between YMCA and Village Hub

Improve connection between YMCA + Village Hub green/ public space to provide access to space for YMCA. Explore possibilities for new tree planting to add to the quality and micro-climate of the public realm.

20 Main Street

Add new crossings. Explore best crossing option allowing access and timing for all.

Improve streetscape material in line with conservation area status that could be obtained for Main St (foregrounding heritage). Also potential for tree planting along Main Street.

12A Allotment Gardens

Retain gardens (important for the village)

Add collective composting area (reinstate what G.R.E.A.N - Golspie Recycling Environmental Action Network had put in place before)

29 Small plot

Add community garden

- Existing paths
- Proposed paths
- Proposed Green-blue networks
- Existing Greenspaces
- Proposed Climate Adaptation Nature Areas (CANA)
- New Housing
- Community development
- Business



C1. THE VILLAGE HUB (3/3)

A space to gather

6 Primary School

Option A If **relocated** to “Village Hub” site, Primary School site could be reused to **add** housing or cemetery extension (this is one of the options for cemetery extension, see 8, 26 and 31 for other options)

Option B The primary school site (as well as the green/ pitches behind it) could be used to build a new 3-18 yo school campus.

The rationale for relocating all the schools (and potentially the Care Home as well) to the Primary School site are as follows:

- With coastal flood and erosion risks, it seems sensible to relocate critical facilities to higher ground.
- If a new High School was constructed at the primary school site, the current High School could continue to operate during the works.



7 Playing fields

Add/improve changing facilities. Access to playing fields should also be made free if possible.



9 Playing fields

Retain Playing field.



10 Edges of playing fields

Add ecological improvements at the edge (part of the green-blue network in the village)



11 From Housing to Big Burn

Add ecological and active travel connection to Big Burn.



12 Industrial Estate

If the Industrial Estate is **relocated** to Business Park along A9, could add housing? Or could become car park to replace removed car park at Village hub? **OPTIONS** to be discussed.



15 Connection Village Hub to Wild Cat Trails

Add/improve paths to rationalise connections between Rhives and the caravan site and connectivity to the Highland Wild Cat Mountain Biking Trails.

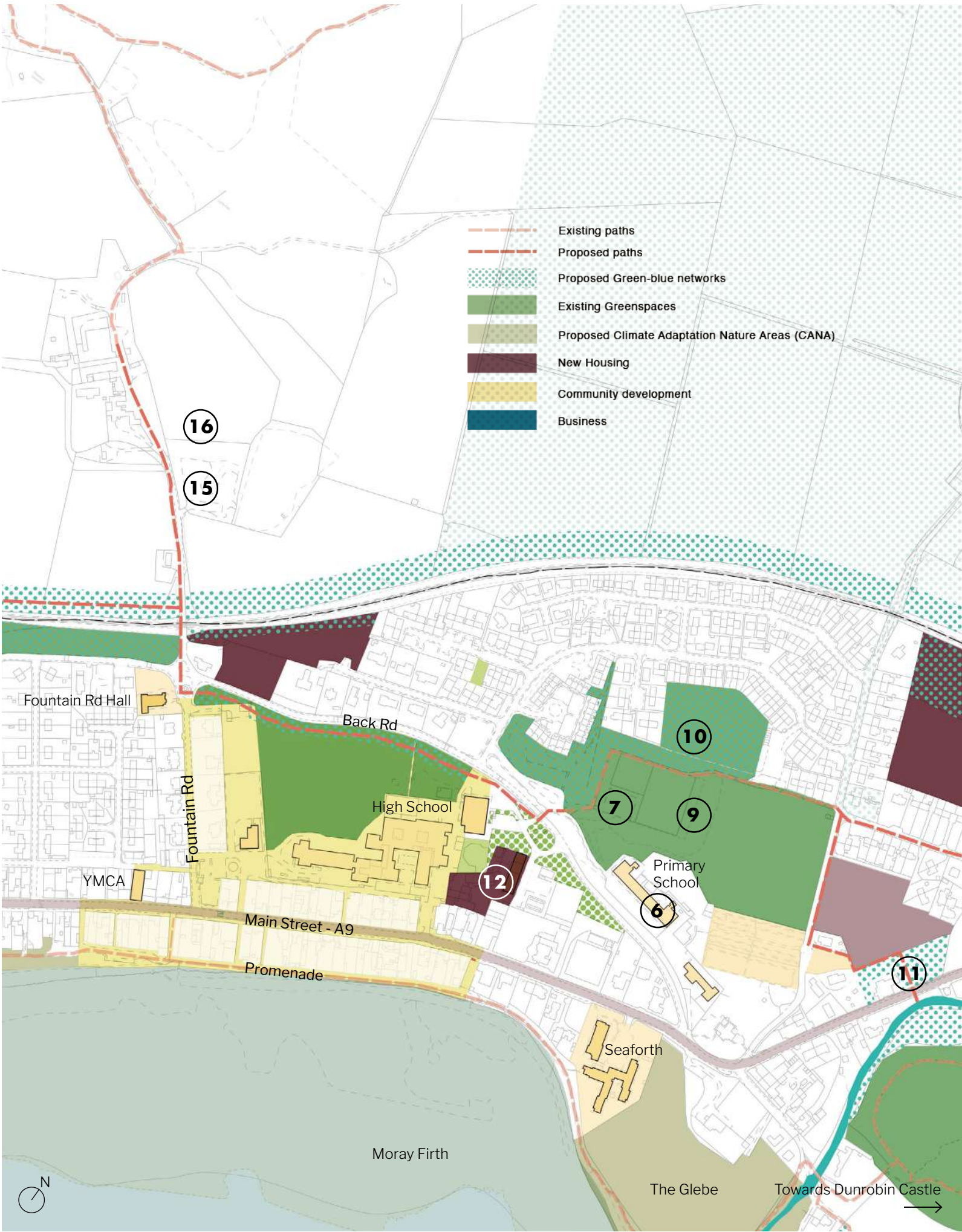
The CaSLDP (2018) p99 States “Tourism continues to be important to the local economy and provides employment. Appropriate tourist facilities that would support the Wildcat bike trails should be encouraged. Land adjacent to this at GP05 Rhives has planning permission for a camping/ caravan site with space for up to 30 touring caravans”.

There is an opportunity to ease congestion to the bike track carpark through rationalising the entrance to the caravan site and providing a new alternative footpath to avoid the existing working yard.



16 Rhives

Retain/improve: Caravan Site is underway and should be continued to be supported in new planning documents.



C2. THE SHORELINE (1/2)

An integrated, diverse and multi-functional shoreline.

Coastal flooding and erosion were central discussion points during all engagement events in the making of this Place Plan, informed by the Dynamic Coast Report findings¹.

The lack of connection between the village and the coast was also discussed, with a shared feeling that “the village has turned its back to the sea”.

The remit of the Local Place Plan is not to propose a detailed design for this area, but to suggest overall **place-based** principles (in line with community aspirations) for how coastal land could be used. The headings below prioritise the disconnect between coastal ecosystems and local planning frameworks that do not currently include provision for marine nature protection and enhancement.

• AN INTEGRATED/COORDINATED SHORELINE

Dynamics associated with coastal landscapes (including sediment movement, longshore drift, wave impact...etc) mean that any intervention at the coast, even small scale, will have an impact on the rest of the shoreline. Therefore, any flood protection projects along Golspie’s shoreline will need to be fully **integrated at the appropriate scale** (Coastal Sediment Cell 3 and relevant terrestrial river catchments, see **Fig. A + B** on adjacent page) and the impact on the whole shoreline considered, within Golspie Community Council area, and beyond. At larger scales the proximity of Golspie to the Dornoch and Loch Fleet SPA requires careful thought while at a village scale the impact of coastal protection measures should take into account impacts on Golspie Golf Club, North of Scotland Karting Club, and Golspie Static Caravan Park.

• A DIVERSE SHORELINE

The portion of the shoreline included within Golspie’s Community Council Area varies from “pinch point” areas (at the promenade for example) where there is not a lot of existing space to intervene, and areas with more open space. Proposed strategies for Golspie’s shoreline will therefore need to be diverse and differentiated depending on the type of space available.

• A MULTI-FUNCTIONAL/SUSTAINABLE SHORELINE

An important priority for flood protection measures is that they improve the quality of public and recreational spaces along the shoreline (including better accessibility), as well as contributing its ecological health. The shoreline needs to be considered for its climate resilience in the long term, its carbon footprint and the ability of the shoreline to deliver a combined approach to championing the proximity of Golspie to the sea for health, wellbeing and tourism.

In Scotland, Pilot projects and examples of community led coastal adaptation where socio-cultural values are aligned with adaptation science are lacking. The Golspie Coul area is specifically identified as an area at strong risk in the Dynamic Coast Report (2021).

The Shorelines designation as a catalyst area in this plan offers an opportunity in Golspie to directly address systematic barriers to climate change adaptation as identified by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC report 2023); namely, lack of community engagement, low climate literacy and a low sense of urgency.

The Shoreline of Golspie has huge potential as a pilot project to attract funding to develop evidence based models for scenario planning for coastal spaces, jurisdictions and economies in both the short and long term. Furthermore the Golspie Flood Action Group have demonstrated a high level of engagement in implementing protective measures for Golspie’s Coast working collaboratively with Highland Council and the Scottish Flood Forum.

Highland Council’s Climate Action Coastlines initiative was selected as one of The Scottish Government’s pathfinder organisations in the Scottish Governments Green Growth Accelerator programme in 2021 denoting strong alignments and opportunities to deliver against National Planning Priorities for Scotland in terms of climate adaptation and resilience in coastal communities.

See projects S1 to S9 for ideas which have been discussed during engagement sessions.

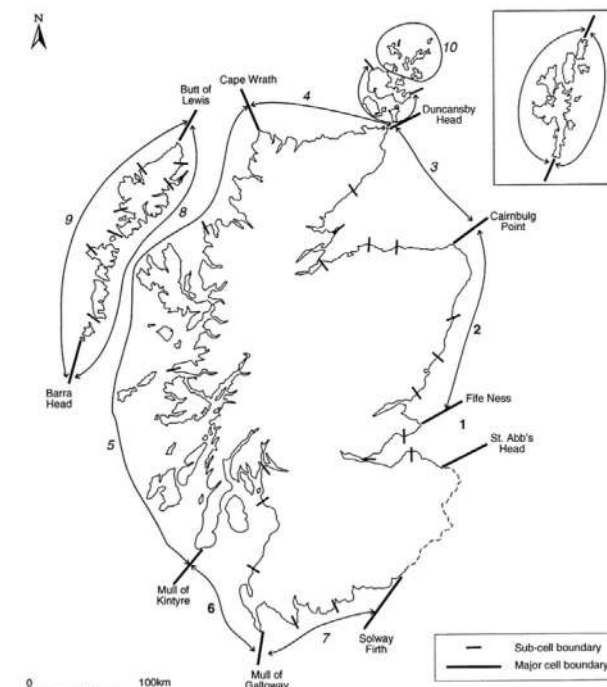


Fig. A. Coastal Cells and sub-cells in Scotland as identified by Brampton et al (1999). Illustration extracted from J.D Hansom, Coastal sensitivity to environmental change: a view from the beach, CATENA, Volume 42, Issues 2–4, 2001 (Pages 291–305).

The Scottish coastline is divided into eleven coastal sediment cell boundaries (see **Fig. A**). The Golspie-Coul area is situated within Cell 3 (which corresponds to the Moray Firth area) and more specifically within Sub-cell 3F, extending from Helmsdale to Morrich More. Sub-cell 3F is a relevant unit to create an **integrated shoreline management area** as most of the sediment-related processes (movement, accretion, and erosion), which play a fundamental role in coastal change affecting the Golspie-Coul area, happen within this sub-cell. Extending the management area to the relevant terrestrial river catchments (see **Fig. B**) is also fundamental to ensure that both flooding and sediment movement are managed coherently and holistically.



Fig. B. Map of the terrestrial river catchments (in orange) which are (at least partly) included within the Golspie Community Council area, and which feed into Sediment Cell 3F (see Fig A map and caption above). Map credit: Eloise Mercer.

¹ https://www.dynamiccoast.com/files/dc2/ DC2_WS4_Golspie_FINAL.pdf

C2. THE SHORELINE (2/3)

An integrated, diverse and multi-functional shoreline.

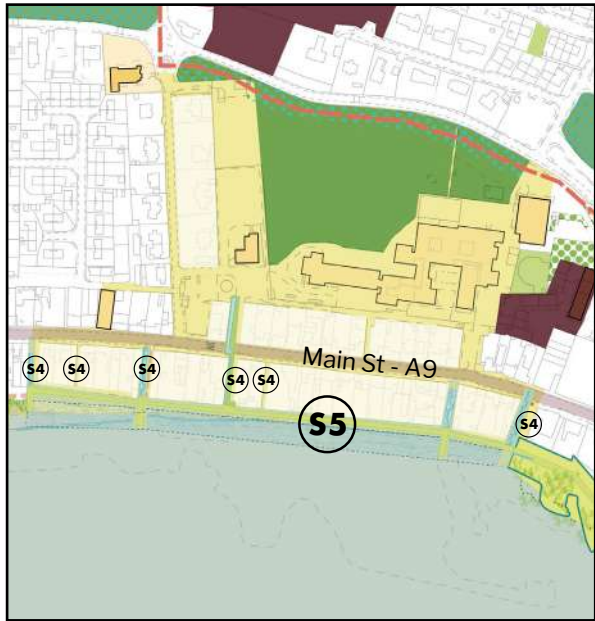
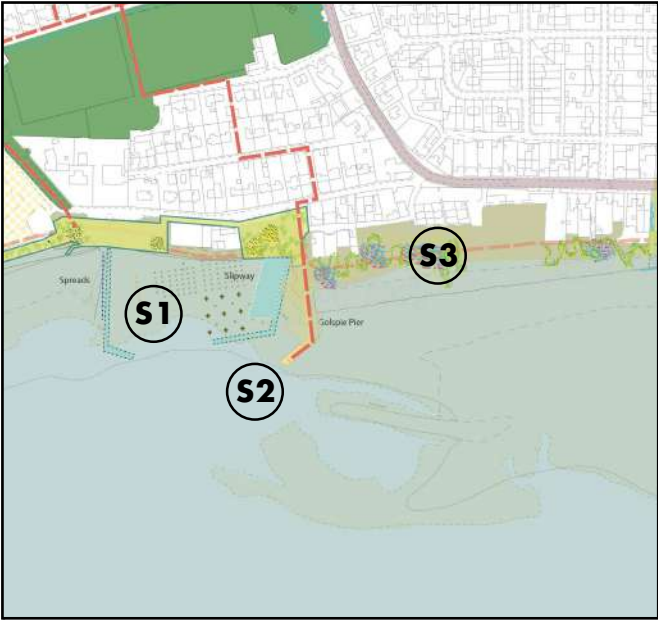
S1 - S2 Golspie Pier

Improve/refurbish :

The current Pier is in need of repair and viable options should be sought for refurbishment that consider the optimal shape of the pier and its alignment to the coast to prevent negative impacts downdrift and optimal enhancements to Golspie's shoreline.

Add improved blue access:
Opportunity for this project to allow Blue access, safe shelter and recreational use of the sea.

Pier jumping has been cited as a popular activity within the youth of the village.



S3 Greenspace to the Sea edge South of Shore Street

Improve green-blue edge:
Development of Beach Parkland Scheme incorporating parking. This proposal integrates with S2 above to support blue access and the recreational use of the sea. Streets designed to work sustainably with marine drainage.

Feature Nature Based Parkland strip integrating dune features and promoting biodiversity and marine flora and fauna at this end of the village. Proposals should be cognisant of the existing demarcated floor patterns that site the location of the old fishing cottages which is an important element of local heritage.

Improve opportunities to integrate play facilities and existing and new public art where possible. This proposal aligns with the need for a Golspie Specific Shoreline Adaptation Plan.



S4 Lanes between Main St and Promenade

Add SUDS/drainage retrofit.

Explore 'living marine streets' retrofitting streets with sustainable urban drainage infrastructure to handle marine floodwater.

Murdo's Lane and Campbell's Lane hard and soft landscaping interventions to improve surface water management and contribute to the 'green blue firth' identity of the town.

Nature-based Stormwater Strategies are an effective and economical way to deal with stormwater surge – disconnect impervious surfaces – design for infiltration on site

This proposal aligns with the need for a Golspie Specific Shoreline Adaptation Plan.

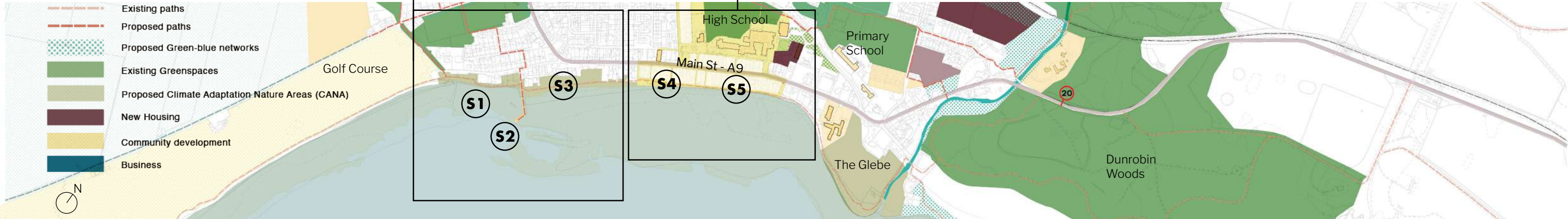


S5 Existing Sea Wall frontage

Add Bank and Berm Scheme.

Aesthetic improvements could be made by integrating features of marine parkland to 'soften' the functional components of the scheme and encourage biodiversity net gain through detailed design. Access for all abilities to be designed into any new proposals.

This proposal aligns with the need for a Golspie Specific Shoreline Adaptation Plan.



C2. THE SHORELINE (3/3)

An integrated, diverse and multi-functional shoreline.

S8 Golf Course Edge

Explore linkages and sediment response to other bank and berm and Nature Based Strip (S3) to develop suitable nature based solution for the golf course edge. Considerations of the resilience of the golf course edge should be included in a coastal change adaptation plan specific to Golspie.



S9 Kart Track Edge & Caravan Park

Explore linkages and sediment response to other bank and berm and Nature Based Strip (S3 and S8) to develop suitable nature based solution for the kart track edge and for the Golpie Links Caravan Park. Considerations of the resilience of the Kart Track and the Static Caravan Site should be included in a coastal change adaption plan specific to Golspie.



S10 Intertidal Area

A tidal energy scheme should be explored in the coastal change adaptation plan specific to Golspie:

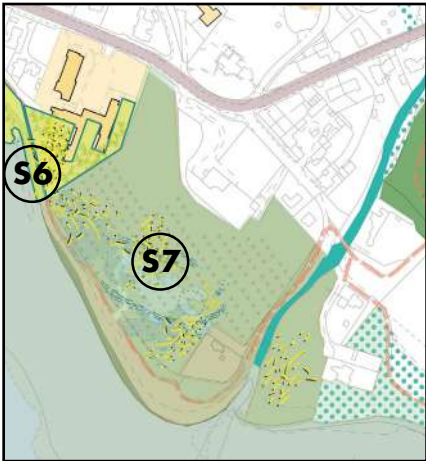
Potential for off shore breakwaters as per Dynamic Coast report¹ suggestion +/- nature-based solutions such as seagrass forest or kelp beds to attenuate wave power. Also, possibility of underwater turbines at Littleferry pier. This could potentially generate a great deal of power for Golspie.



¹ https://www.dynamiccoast.com/files/dc2/DC2_WS4_Golspie_FINAL.pdf

S6 Seaforth House Gardens

Improve sea frontage of Seaforth house gardens by encouraging ecology, biodiversity and marine flora and fauna.



S7 The Glebe

Add a new key seaside parkland to contribute to the Northern Green Gateway of Golspie. (See C3 Above)

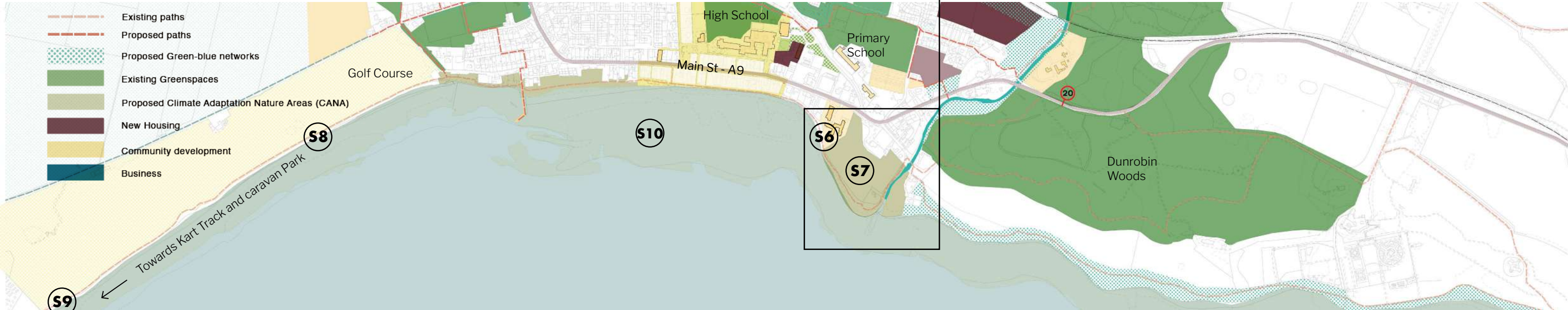
Strong potential for this site to function as a Climate Adapted Nature Area/Managed Retreat exemplar. The landscape will contribute to shoreline management and should be a part of a Coastal Change Adaptation Plan specifically for Golspie.

The proposal focuses on unlocking both Natural and Cultural Heritage, with a potential heritage centre (see 1, 1A and 1B), better connections to the Big Burn, and better pedestrian and cycle paths to Dunrobin Castle to encourage people to come into the village and along the shoreline.

(S7 The Glebe, cont.)

This project aligns with a number of actions in the Highland Nature Biodiversity Action Plan (see below). Sensitively integrated Parking to the rear of space for town visitors and tourists.

This proposal aligns with the need for a Golspie Specific Shoreline Adaptation Plan.



C3. THE GATEWAYS

Add Gateway Parkland sites integrating green-blue nature led design at the north and south entry points to the village. See projects 1 to 5 and 27.

The importance of making sure that people stop in Golspie was one of the main points discussed during engagement events. The gateway sites will be thought of as a large-scale green spaces within which different facilities and services are included. The sites proposed are intended to take an ecosystem led approach in delivering both social, economic and environmental benefits to the Golspie area. This proposal aligns with the concept of promoting the Dornoch Firth as a 'Green Firth' as set out in the Sutherland Local Plan 2010.

The Gateway sites “improve issues surrounding the physical, sensory and technological accessibility and connectivity at and between visitor destinations and settlements to create an environment that is usable by all and which reduces inequalities”. (Highland Council Draft Sustainable Tourism Strategy, May 2024).

For the Golspie Community Council area this adds to the connectivity of Golspie and its surroundings (including Dunrobin Castle) to the nearby UNESCO world heritage site of the Flow Country and to the Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet Special Area of Protection.

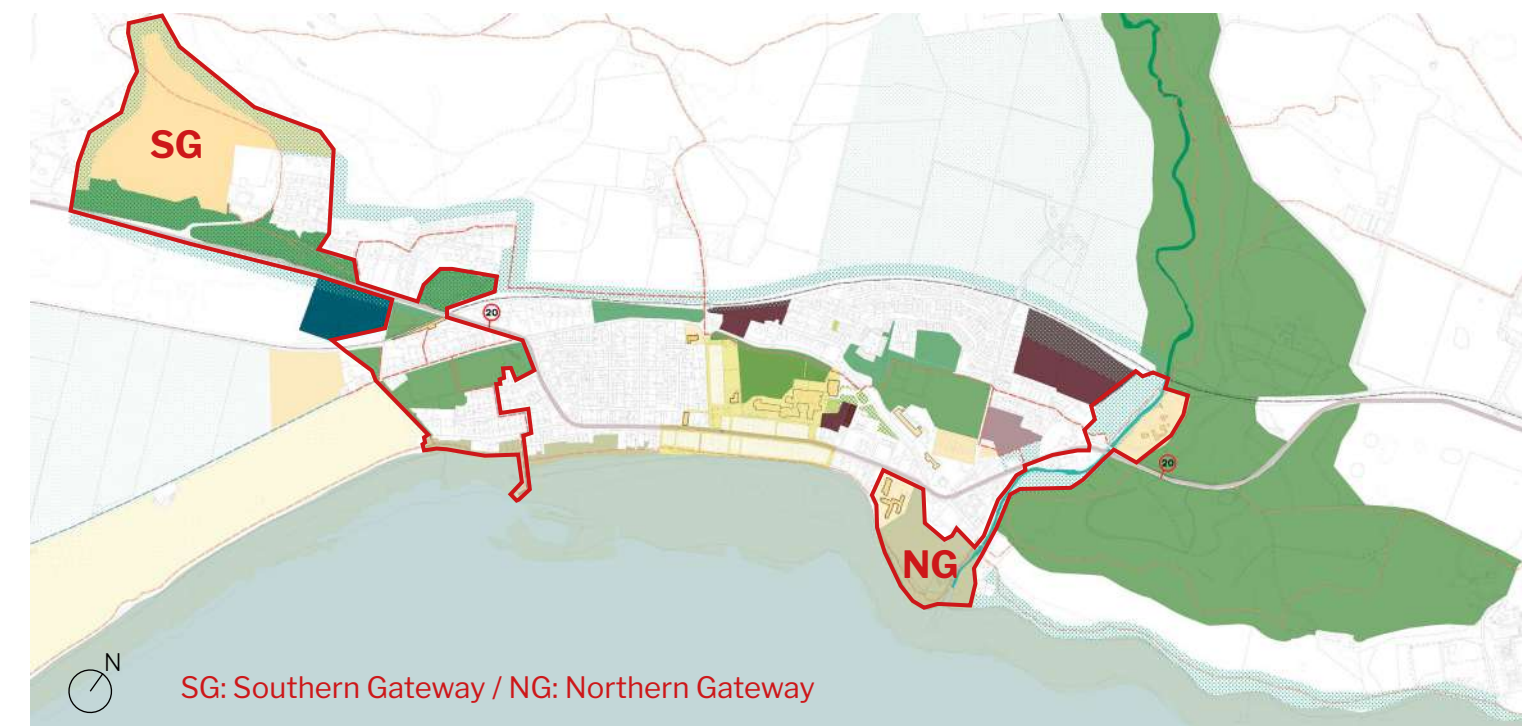
Two gateways are delineated: The Southern Gateway site is outlined in projects 27 and 27A below and the Northern Gateway is outlined in projects S6 and S7 below.

The Gateway sites encourage 'living well locally' through incentivising job creation (green skills), decarbonising recreation and promoting active travel connections. The spatial proposals are set down in outline with the intention of making a balance between new development and adding to and protecting existing ecosystems. There is a strong will to enhance opportunities for biodiversity in the interfaces between the town and the surrounding marine and terrestrial landscapes.

The Gateway sites and their designation in this plan as potential CANA's (Climate Adapted Nature Areas) provide opportunities to deploy nature based solutions in addressing the risk of coastal and terrestrial flooding in Golspie and align with key actions of the Highland Nature Biodiversity Action Plan (2021-2026). Specifically Key Action 2: Landscape Scale Nature Conservation and Restoration Work and Action, Action 3: Identify and Conserve Priority Species, Action 6: Increased participation in green and blue activities to benefit health and Action 9: Long term research into Environmental change.

The Gateway sites propose some new extensions to core paths. Justification: to ensure better connectivity on foot and by

bicycle to regional assets for both local people and visitors alike. The extensions to core paths contribute to Golspie's potential as a major destination for mountain biking whilst giving more general cycling access to all abilities of cyclist. This change would address three of the placemaking priorities set out in the CaSLDP, namely: Assist and promote economic development, assist and promote tourism and tourist facilities, maintain access to Core Paths. The Gateway sites contribute to the principles of the Highland Charter for Climate, Nature & Health (highlandcnh-charter.com) which puts climate, nature, and the benefits of green and blue health at the centre of decision-making and action, so that the natural environment and people have improved health, wellbeing, and resilience.



THE NORTHERN GATEWAY (1/1)

Golspie's Natural & Cultural Heritage Gateway

1/1A/1B Heritage centre

1 Opportunity for the mill to be **refurbished** as a Heritage Centre, with better links with the Big Burn.

Other potential locations for a Heritage Centre include the Sutherland Estates Office (1A) or St Andrews parish church (1B).

5 The Glebe

Land currently in private ownership, but potential to **add** Green Gateway car park. Needs to be discreet, integrated green car park with a small footprint to keep the Glebe as a park.

The positioning of the car park is intended to give people good access to recreational opportunities of walking and cycling in and around Golspie by locking into active travel connections and reducing congestion around the village hub.

2B Mouth of Big Burn / Duck Pond

Add/Improve path to make it accessible.

3B Path through Dunrobin Woods

Improve: More accessible paths to Dunrobin woods.

4 Seaforth Care Home

Potentially **relocate** care home to Village Hub (see C1 and 13) or School Campus (see 6) and Add Green Gateway (sustainable drainage to contribute to Community Council area wide flood strategy). At present sea level change forecasts vary between high and low emission scenarios; and therefore planning for uncertain futures requires flexible and dynamic >

2A Big Burn

Strengthen ecological corridor along this section of the Big Burn + add path. Consideration needs to be given to rescue access during extreme flood events.

Opportunity to explore temporary events such as a winter light display to the attract visitors to Golspie out of season.

3C Pumped Hydro Scheme

Explore opportunity for pumped hydro: loch to the north big burn/ big burn. Develop opportunity for community owned power generation, reduce Golspie's carbon footprint and improve energy security.

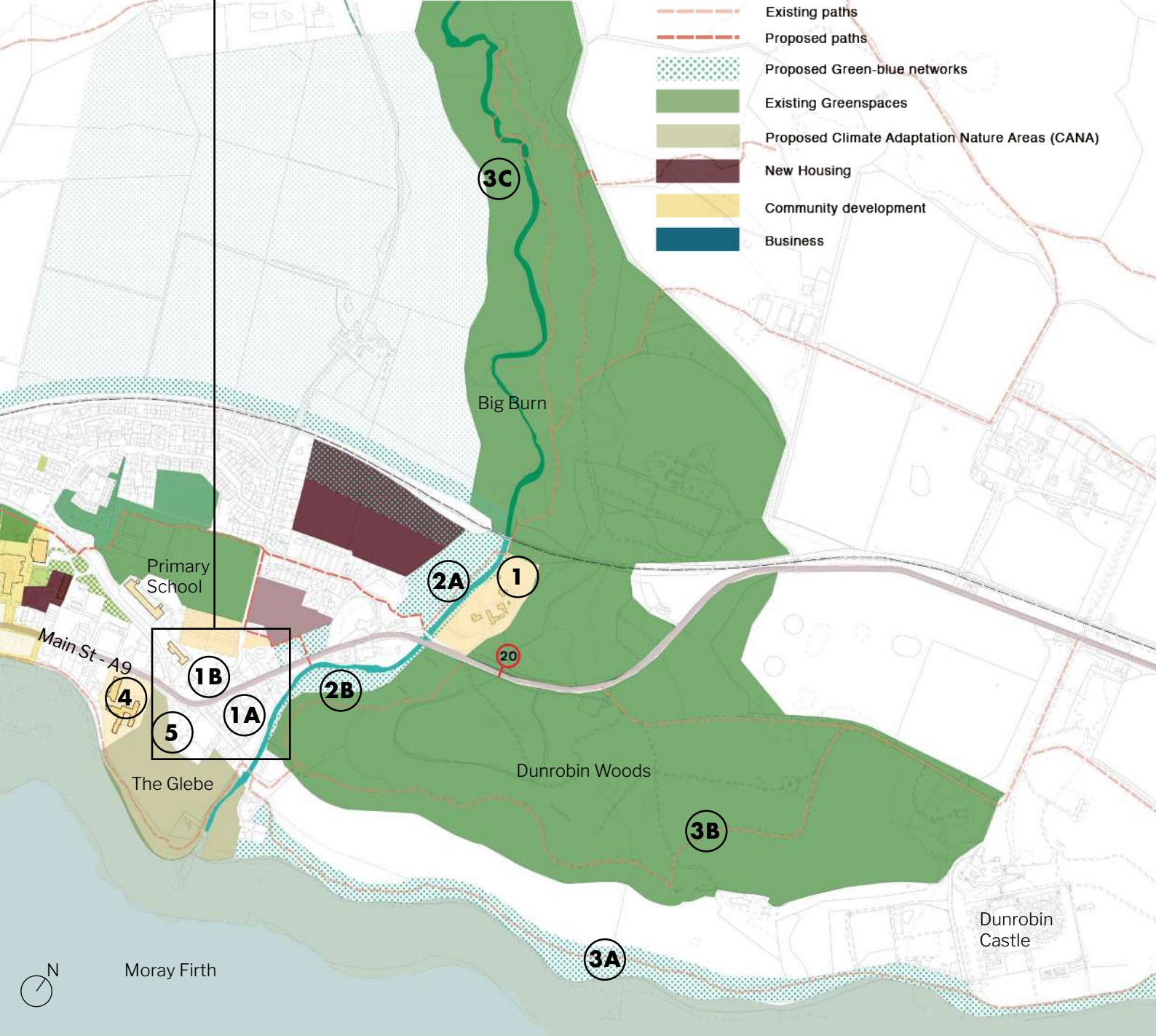
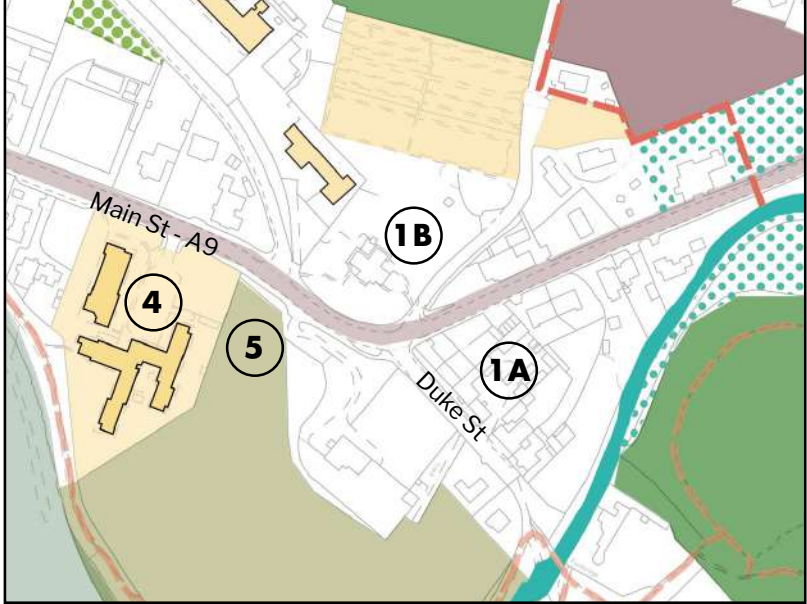
> approaches for key community facilities. The relocation of the care home can be a long-term plan if the Seaforth site becomes at risk of flooding

The priority for the care home is to allow people to 'live well locally' for as long as possible and the proposals and proximities reflect the intention to foster a culture of strong intergenerational relationships in the village.

3A Path to Dunrobin Castle

Improve path, add cycle path + signage.

Address access for all. Implementing better, safer paths between Golspie and Brora. Attention given to the replacement of the Kissing Gate that fell into the sea at the entrance to the East Shore and the long term viability of the main gate.



THE SOUTHERN GATEWAY

Golspie's Training and Business Gateway



- Existing paths
- Proposed paths
- Proposed Green-blue networks
- Existing Greenspaces
- Proposed Climate Adaptation Nature Areas (CANA)
- New Housing
- Community development
- Business

27 Drummuie

Add outdoor training centre (similar to Glenmore lodge)

Add training/apprenticeship facilities (Potential UHI partnership on coastal green skills training, with connection to crofts at Backies too. Links with High School “Rural Skills” course and other practical subjects).

The Southern Gateway will link spatially to both the Village Hub and the the Shoreline and take cognisance of the Drummie Development Brief (2001) principles where open space, planting frameworks and the integration of built form, green space and pedestrian links are prioritised in any new detailed proposals in future.

Add new housing for staff/trainees at the back of the site.

Options for hotels and luxury accommodation options have also been discussed.

(27 Drummuie, cont.)

Drummuie could also include bike wash down, maintenance & repair facility, shower/toilet block. When the mountain bike track was originally started there were plans for a bike skills area near Drummuie.



23 Business Park

Add supermarket/food shop (although this could “drain” activity away from Main St, perhaps add more affordable food shop units on the Main St?)

Add business incubator

Add self-service petrol station with parking and electric charging points.



22 Connection from train station to Ferry Rd and the Pier

Add new path from train station to Ferry Rd and Pier with appropriate signage and lighting.



OTHER PROPOSALS : HOUSING

Options for new housing sites
& Proposals to improve existing residential areas

8 Field

Add housing (21 units). All new housing in the village to include affordable and social housing.

All new housing to adhere to sustainable construction principles, biodiversity net gain principles, avoid soil sealing, incorporate sustainable sewage and drainage systems.

> Also, option for adding cemetery extension on this site (see pages 62-63).

17 Plot at junction Rhives Road and Back Road

Add new Housing. Check owner’s approval. All new housing in the village to include affordable and social housing. All new housing to adhere to sustainable construction principles, biodiversity net gain principles, avoid soil sealing, incorporate sustainable sewage and drainage systems.

18 Existing housing area between Main St and Back Road

Small improvements:
Survey of vacant plots to find potential self-build/ renovation opportunities.
Home energy improvements
Micro SUDS/drainage (Ecological patches)
“Sponge” neighbourhood.

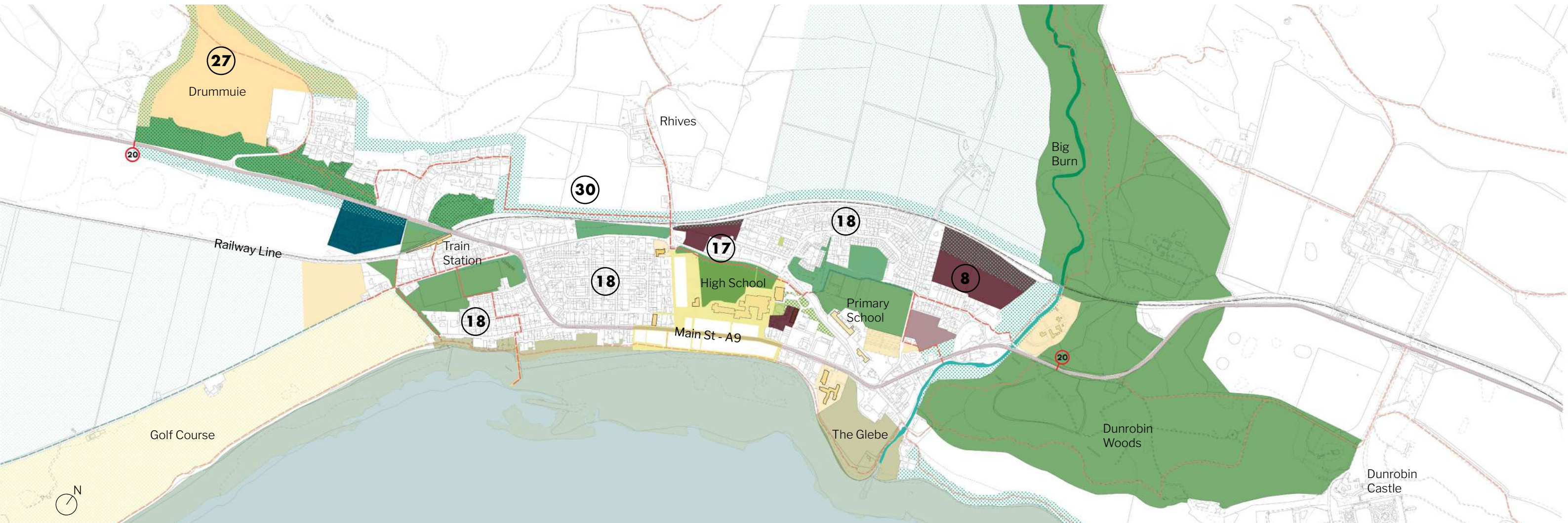
27 Drummue

Add new housing for staff/ trainees at the back of the site.

30 Fields adjacent to Rhives

Add housing and/or Caravan park/camp site.

All new housing in the village to include affordable and social housing. All new housing to adhere to sustainable construction principles, biodiversity net gain principles, avoid soil sealing, incorporate sustainable sewage and drainage systems.



OTHER PROPOSALS : CEMETERY EXTENSION

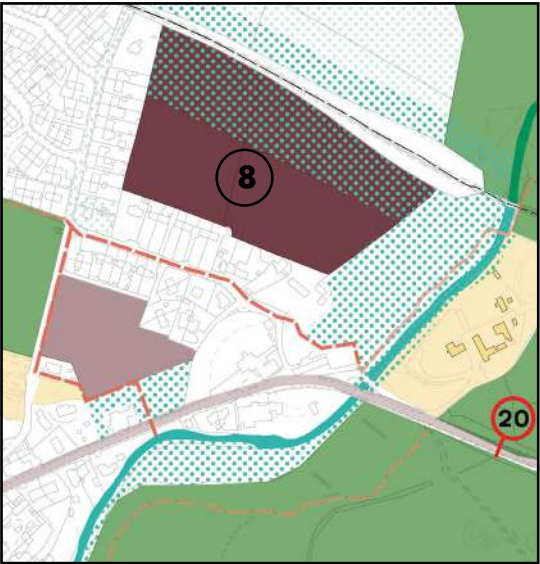
Options



26 Field

Potentially **add** cemetery extension (this is one of the options, see **8** for other options). We note the current drainage issues on this site which might be improved by the green-blue edge (see 30-31). Other options for this site include a Caravan Park/ camp site or potentially housing.

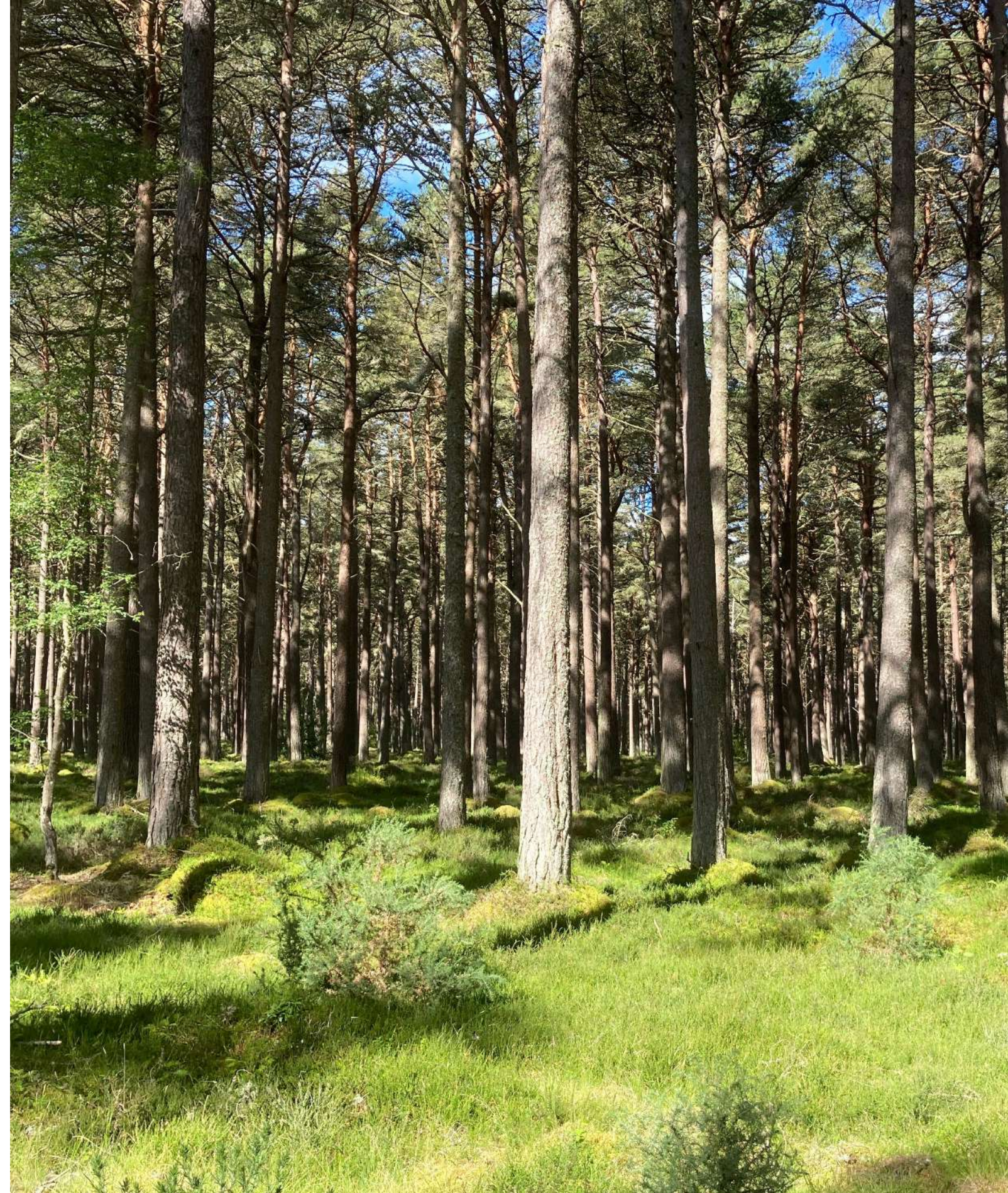
Collaborative initiative needs Highland Council support to ensure that a permanent solution to poor surface water drainage is addressed. Some of the fields next to the business park are completely water logged and require best practice in surface water drainage to be taken forward.



NEXT STEPS / THE WAY FORWARD

The next step is for the whole community, the community council and stakeholders to draw up a community action plan to realize the aims identified in this plan. The projects must be prioritized, and then allocated to appropriate organizations to take forward with broad time-lines decided. Funding will clearly be a fundamental issue, but can be sought in stages. Collaboration with all invested agencies will be key to the success of this plan.

In sum, this plan belongs to the community - it is for the community to seize its destiny, decide on its priorities and be proactive in determining its future for our children and grandchildren.



Above Golspie's Balblair Woods. Photo: Anaïs Chanon

PROPOSALS SUMMARY TABLE

Whole Community Council Area			
Proposal		Reasons	More Detail
1	Create an integrated shoreline management area covering the whole Golspie community council area covering, inc. relevant coastal cells.	To support Climate Change Adaptation and flood mitigation whilst protecting critical infrastructure for Golspie. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P25, P49
2	Create an integrated land management area covering the whole Golspie community council area and relevant river catchments.	To support Climate Change Adaptation and flood mitigation whilst protecting critical infrastructure for Golspie. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P25, P33 Green Blue Strategy, Proposals B1, B2 and B3.
3	Formally establish a permanent 3 Peaks Trail.	To support and develop local tourism by incentivising recreational opportunities for both locals and visitors. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19 & 43).</i>	P25: Whole community council area proposed plan. P37: Proposal A17.

Path Strategy			
Proposal		Reasons	More Detail
A1	Improve Balblair Wood/Loch Fleet path. Constructed path 8.8kms (Sutherland Core Paths Plan SU12.02).	To promote active travel. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P34-35
A2	Improve Golspie Village west path.	To promote active travel. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P34-35
A3	Improve A9 truck road section of core path at The Mound.	To promote active travel. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P34-35
A4	Improve Little Ferry to Skelbo connection (this proposal would supersede item A3 above).	To promote active travel. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P34-35.
A5	Improve trail and facilities associated with Wildcat Trails and improve Rhives/Golspie to Wildcat Trails connectivity. (Sutherland Core Paths Plan SU12.05 – SU12.16, SU12.13 to SU12.08 and SU12.22).	To promote active travel, increase and support and develop tourism. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19 & 43).</i>	P36-37 & P40-41
A6	Add new Golspie Town Cycle Centre/Facility.	To promote active travel, increase and support and develop tourism. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19 & 43).</i>	P40-41 Also see project proposals C1/13 on Village scale proposal map.
A7	Improve signage and Bridal Path to North of Golspie Tower trail.	To promote active travel. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P36-37
A8	Improve paths links at Big Burn.	To promote active travel. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P38-39
A9	Improve connectivity at Sibell Road – Flagstaff Lodge.	To promote active travel. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P38-39
A10	Improve Fire Station House path junction. (Sutherland Core Paths Plan SU06.13 Sputie Burn).	To promote active travel, increase and support and develop tourism. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19 & 43).</i>	P38-39
A11	Improve Lady's Walk/Memorial path.	To support flood mitigation. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P38-39

Path Strategy (cont.)			
Proposal		Reasons	More Detail
A12	Improve Drummie to Rhives connection.	To promote active travel/access for all. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P36-37
A13	Improve path at Littleferry.	To promote active travel, increase and support and develop tourism. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19 & 43).</i>	P34-35
A14	Improve paths near back of Loch Fleet.	To promote active travel/access for all. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P34-35
A15	Improve car parking provision at Backies.	To promote active travel/access for all. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P36-37.
A16	Add signage and develop heritage path network for Whole Golspie Community Council area.	To support and develop tourism/heritage by making more of local assets. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 43).</i>	P36-37
Green Blue Strategy			
Proposal		Reasons	More Detail
B1	Improve drainage at Argo Terrace (fields between Golspie Tower - The Stackyard).	To support flood mitigation. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P33
B2	Improve drainage at Allt Domhain Burn Drummie.	To support flood mitigation. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P33
B3	Improve drainage at Sawmill Backies (Dunrobin Sawmill).	To support flood mitigation. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P33
Village Proposed Plan Scale			
Proposed Catalyst Areas		Reasons	More Detail
C1	The Village Hub.	To improve the town/neighbourhood centre, support & develop tourism and support local development. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19 & 43).</i>	P28 & P42-47 See projects, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, 20, 12A, 29.
C2	The Shoreline.	To support climate adaptation, flood mitigation and national plans (Scottish Governments Coastal Change Adaptation Plan Guidance (2023)). <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P28, P48-49, P50-51 See projects, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10.
C3	The Gateways.	To promote active travel & retain/improve/expand on quality open space. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i> To support principles set out in Golspie's Community Action Plan (2017) and Highland Council's draft Sustainable Tourism Strategy (May 2024).	P54-59

Individual Projects/Proposals		Reasons	More Detail
1/1A/1B	Create a Heritage Centre.	To support and develop tourism/heritage by making more of local assets. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 43).</i>	P56-57
2A	Strengthen ecological corridor and path at Big Burn.	To promote active travel & improve access existing quality open space and create more outdoor opportunities for health and wellbeing, for locals and visitors. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P56-57
2B	Improve accessibility to Mouth of Big Burn / Duck Pond.	To promote active travel & improve access existing quality open space and create more outdoor opportunities for health and wellbeing, for locals and visitors. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P56-57
3A	Improve path to Dunrobin Castle.	To promote active travel & improve access existing quality open space and create more outdoor opportunities for health and wellbeing, for locals and visitors. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P56-57
3B	Improve path through Dunrobin Woods.	To promote active travel & improve access existing quality open space and create more outdoor opportunities for health and wellbeing, for locals and visitors. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P56-57
3C	Explore Pumped Hydro Scheme.	To support Climate Change adaptation with renewable energy. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P56-57
4	Potentially relocate Seaforth Care Home.	To support Climate Change Adaptation and flood mitigation whilst protecting critical infrastructure for Golspie. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P56-57
5	Add park and green gateway car park at The Glebe.	To expand provision of quality open space in Golspie & to support climate change adaptation and flood mitigation. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P56-57
6	Potentially relocate Primary School.	To support Climate Change Adaptation and flood mitigation whilst protecting critical infrastructure for Golspie. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P46-47
7	Improve changing facilities at Playing Fields.	To improve the provision of quality of open space and green-blue infrastructure and play facilities in Golspie. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P46-47
8	Potentially create new housing at field along rail tracks.	Add housing (21 units) to improve the provision of affordable and social housing. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P60-61
9	Retain playing fields.	To retain quality open space and green/blue infrastructure and play facilities. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P46-47

Individual Projects/Proposals		Reasons	More Detail
10	Add ecological improvements at the edge of playing fields.	To support Climate Change Adaptation and flood mitigation. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P46-47
11	Add ecological and active corridor from new housing to Big Burn.	To promote active travel and support climate adaptation. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P46-47
12	Potential create new housing at Industrial Estate.	To improve the provision of affordable and social housing in the centre of Golspie. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P46-47
12A	Retain allotment gardens.	To support local initiatives for the promotion of community food growing. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P44-45
13	Village Hub.	To improve the town centre and promote active travel <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i> To support principles set out in <i>Highland Council Sustainable Tourism Draft Strategy, May 2024, Priorities for 'our place' and 'our economy'.</i> To respond to <i>CaSLDP Clause 163: This proposal is cognisant of the potential designation of the historic core of Golspie with Conservation area status. This proposal requires a deviation from the currently shown red boundary of Golspie's town centre in the CaSLDP.</i>	See P42-43, P44-45 , for more detail.
13A	Add better drainage to Back of Village Hub. (Green Blue Strategy Area).	To support Climate Change Adaptation and flood mitigation whilst protecting critical infrastructure for Golspie. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P30-31.
13B	Add better drainage to Memorial Fountain area (Green Blue Strategy Area).	To support Climate Change Adaptation and flood mitigation whilst protecting critical infrastructure for Golspie. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P30-31.
15	Add/improve path to rationalise connection from Village Hub to Wild Cat Trails.	To promote active travel and local tourism & support local development. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i> To support principles set out in <i>CaSLDP (2018) p99.</i>	P46-47.
16	Retain/improve caravan park at Rhives.	To promote local tourism: <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19 & 43).</i>	P46-47
17	Add potential new housing on plot at junction Rhives Road and Back Road.	To support more affordable and social housing provision. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P60-61
18	Make small improvements to existing housing area between Main St and Back Road.	To improve housing provision. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P60-61
19	Improve connection between YMCA and Village Hub.	Retain, improve and expand quality open space whilst conserving important assets of the built environment. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P44-45

Individual Projects/Proposals		Reasons	More Detail
20	Add new crossings and improve streetscape on Main Street.	To promote active travel and retain an active main street promoting local employment. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P44-45.
21	Add drainage buffer along Stafford Park (Green Blue Strategy Area).	To support Climate Change Adaptation and flood mitigation whilst protecting critical infrastructure for Golspie. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P30-31.
22	Connection from train station to Ferry Rd and the Pier.	To promote active travel. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P59
23	Potentially add supermarket/food shop/ business incubator/ self-service petrol station at Business Park.	To provide essential services for Golspie/neighbouring communities and provide new employment opportunities. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P59
24	Improve road edge, crossing and drainage at Back of Business Park (Green Blue Strategy Area).	To improve safety and support Climate Change Adaptation and flood mitigation whilst protecting critical infrastructure for Golspie. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P30-31.
25	Add new path connection and better drainage along edge of train line (Green Blue Strategy Area).	To support Climate Change Adaptation and flood mitigation whilst protecting critical infrastructure for Golspie. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i> To support principles set out in <i>The Drummie Development Brief (2001).</i>	P30-31. Projects 25, 25A, 27A.
26	Potential cemetery extension (this is one of the options, see 8 for other options).	To future-proof important local facilities.	P62-63.
27	Add outdoor centre and housing at Drummie.	To provide more housing, new local employment opportunities and new tourism/community facilities. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P58-59 & P60-61
27A	Improve drainage at Back of Drummie.	Support Climate Change Adaptation and flood mitigation whilst protecting critical infrastructure for Golspie. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P30-31.
29	Create new community garden.	Promote community food growing, community health & wellbeing and climate adaptation: Garden to improve health and wellbeing opportunities for local growing, green prescription and biodiversity. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P44-45
30	Add housing and/or caravan park on field adjacent to Rhives.	Provide better housing and tourism provisions: Add housing and/or caravan park/camp site. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P60-61

Shoreline projects		Reasons	More Detail
S1-S2	Improve and refurbish Golspie Pier and add better blue access.	To support and develop tourism/heritage by making more of local assets. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 43).</i>	P50-51
S3	Create nature-based parkland at greenspace to the Sea edge South of Shore Street.	To support and develop tourism/heritage by making more of local assets. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 43).</i>	P50-51.
S4	Improve streetscape and drainage at lanes between Main St and Promenade.	To support Climate Change Adaptation and flood mitigation whilst protecting critical infrastructure for Golspie. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P50-51.
S5	Soften existing Sea Wall frontage.	To support Climate Change Adaptation and flood mitigation whilst protecting critical infrastructure for Golspie. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P50-51.
S6	Improve marine edge at Seaforth House Gardens.	To support Climate Change Adaptation and flood mitigation whilst protecting critical infrastructure for Golspie. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P52-53
S7	Create new parkland at The Glebe.	To support climate change adaptation and expand the provision of quality open space. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i> To support principles set out in <i>Highland Nature Biodiversity Action Plan.</i>	P52-53
S8	Develop nature-based solutions along Golf Course Edge.	To promote active travel and support climate adaptation. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P52-53
S9	Develop nature-based solutions along Kart Track Edge & Caravan Park.	To promote active travel, support climate adaptation, improve provision of quality open space and retain local employment. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P52-53
S10	Explore coastal adaptation solutions and tidal energy scheme at intertidal area.	To support Climate Change adaptation with renewable energy and generate new employment opportunities. <i>Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans (para 19).</i>	P52-53

References:

Planning circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans:
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/circular-1-2022-local-place-plans/>

Golspie's Community Action Plan (2017):
<https://highlandcpp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Golspie-Community-Plan.pdf>

The Highland Council. Draft Sustainable Tourism Strategy (May 2024):
https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/83169/item_5_draft_sustainable_tourism_strategy

Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan CaSLDP (2018):
https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/19712/casplan_adopted

Drummie, Golspie Development Brief (2001): https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/1738/drummie_golspie_development_brief_january_2001

Highland Nature Biodiversity Action Plan (2021-2026):
https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/2260/highland_nature_biodiversity_action_plan_2021_to_2026

