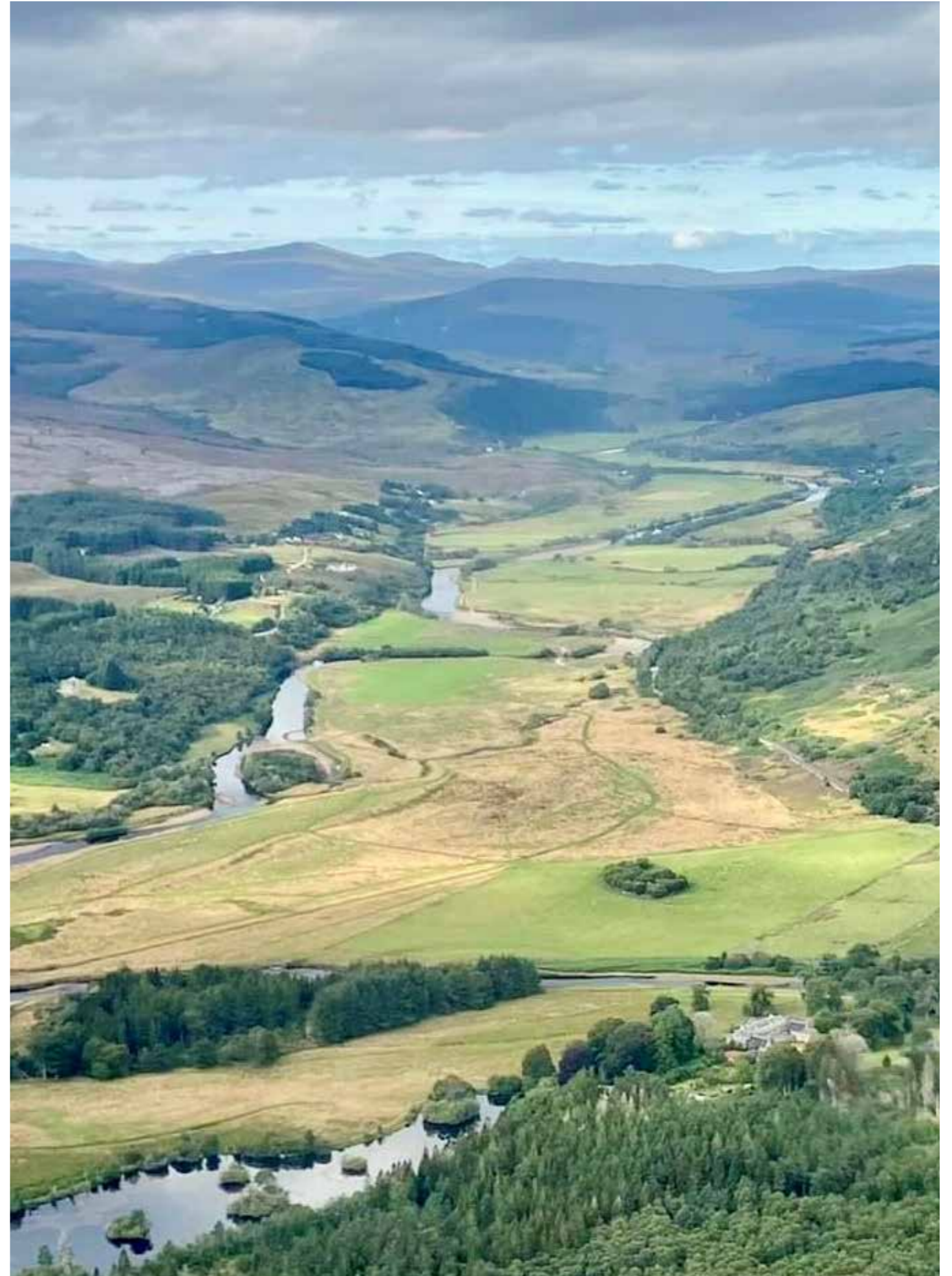


# Kyle of Sutherland Local Place Plan



# Kyle of Sutherland

## Acknowledgements

Preparation of this Local Place Plan was facilitated by Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust.

The work has been supported by local community groups, drawn from the wider local community, who gave valuable advice and support to engage as widely across the local community as possible.

Thanks go to the many other local people who contributed to the development of this Local Place Plan.

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- Ardgay & District Community Council
- Creich Community Council
- Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust

The report has been collated by Oberlanders Architects.

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Version 4	31.10.24	Community comments incorporated
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Version 6	22.04.26	Clarifications requested by THC

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# Introduction

**The Kyle of Sutherland Local Place Plan has been prepared on behalf of the community and is a plan for the future development of the area.**

The plan contains the community's vision, and calls for action, for the Kyle of Sutherland area. It reflects community aspirations which were captured in the Community Action Plan of 2022 and which have been subsequently developed.

The area of the Kyle of Sutherland, which is located in Sutherland, includes the parishes of Ardgay & District and Creich Community Council which includes the primary settlements of;

- Ardgay & Gledfield
- Bonar Bridge
- Culrain & Invershin
- Inveran & Achany
- Oykel Bridge
- Rosehall
- Altass
- Linside
- Spinningdale

We recognise that there are some smaller settlements which have not been featured in the mapping exercise and, in the fullness of time, would hope that the study could extend to include these.

The Local Place Plan reflects planning policy aims of creating sustainable, liveable and productive places as outlined in National Planning Framework 4 (2023). The LPP also takes account of the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan and the Highland-wide Local Development Plan 2012.

The CaSPlan was approved by Highland Council on 28th June 2018 and supports growth and of small settlements and community lead development in order to help strengthen rural communities. The Highland-wide Local Development Plan 2012 was adopted in 2012 and highlights development options in the Highland area with a 20 year view. Both documents seek to optimise sustainable development with consideration to climate change, community well-being and community engagement.

This Local Place Plan acknowledges that whilst the HwLDP currently remains part of the adopted development plan for the area, NPF4 provides more recent general policies to guide development.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/>



# Extent of this Place Plan

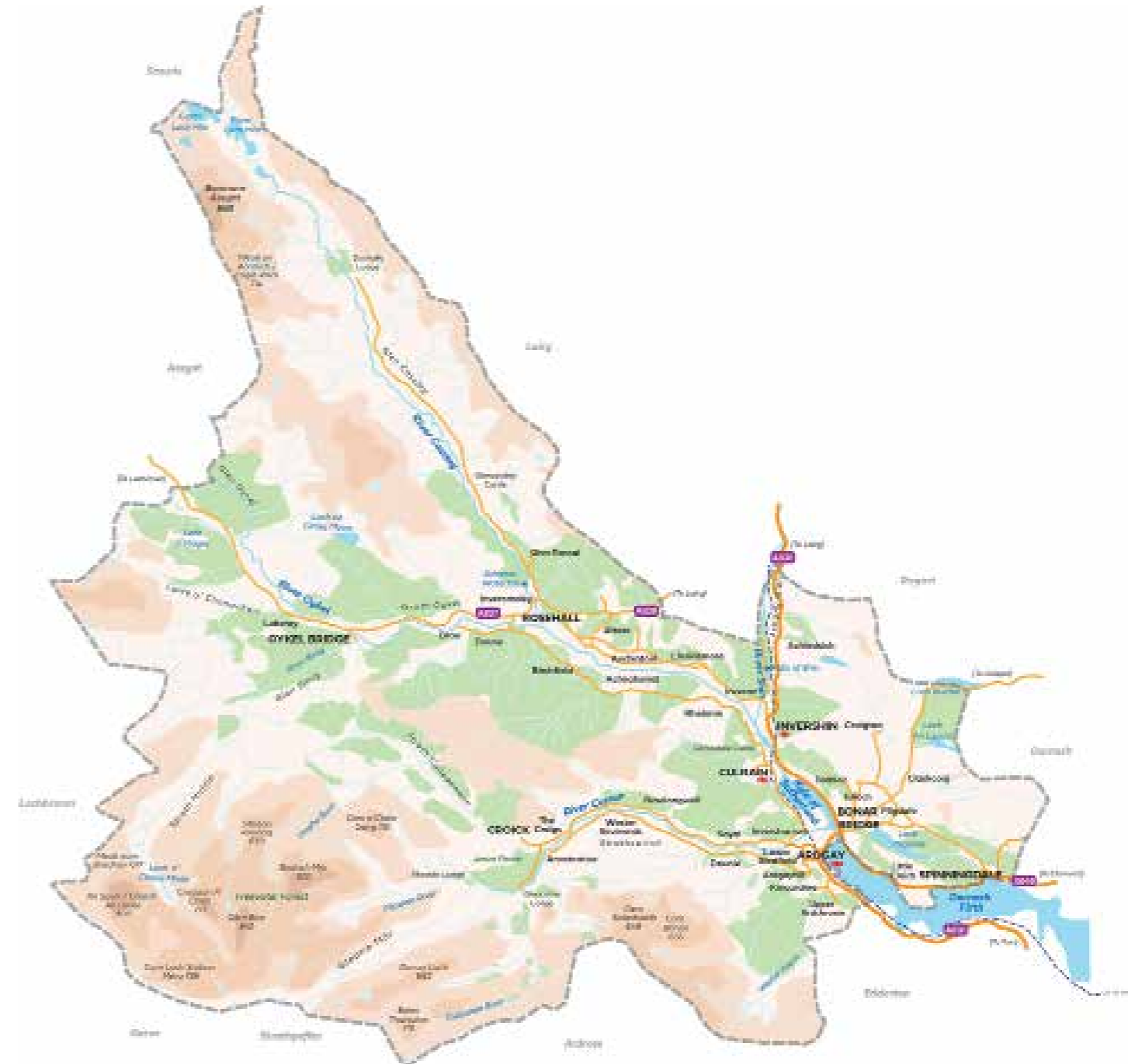
The extent of this place plan includes the parishes of Ardgay and District and Creich Community Council. Neighbouring community councils, which are adjoining, have been included in the review process. These include Ardrross, Scourie, Assynt, Edderton, Strathpeffer, Garve and District, Lochbroom, Lairg, Rogart and Dornoch

The initial section of this Local Place Plan covers the area, as a whole, highlighting the important general principles and proposals that relate across the Kyle of Sutherland. The following section addresses each of the settlement areas and picks up specific issues.

The concerns, opportunities and actions have been developed from the findings of the 2022 Community Action Plan (CAP) and further developed through the community consultation events specific to the Local Place Plan (LPP) development.

## Regard to existing Locality Plans

In 2018/19 Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust was commissioned by the Sutherland Community Planning Partnership (SCP) to carry out the engagement and production of the Creich Community Plan. This was done through the employment of the KoSDT Community Engagement Team who were responsible for the creation of the Creich Community Plan. All research and engagement findings are held on file by KoSDT, and the plan has been essential to the production of all subsequent Kyle of Sutherland community plans, including the Kyle of Sutherland Local Place Plan.





# Relationship with Community Action Plan 2022

## Ardgay, Criech & Lairg Community Action Plan

Ardgay, Criech & Lairg Community Action Plan was compiled in 2022 and published in spring 2023. The review was funded by SSE Renewables supported by Voluntary Action in Badenoch & Strathspey, along with Voluntary Group Sutherland, and a community led steering group.

The study was titled Ardgay, Creich and Lairg Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030. Given the increased need now to focus on longer-term, as well as short to mid-term goals, residents were asked to consider where they and their community wanted to be by 2030, so generating an 8 to 10-year set of plans and aspirations.

### Identified Priorities

The Community Action Plan identified a range of actions which were grouped within four key themes;

#### Environmental - Climate Conscious Communities

Actions to sustain and nurture our landscape, heritage and climate contributions for locals, visitors and nature itself

#### Cultural - Culturally Vibrant Communities

Actions which celebrate and enrich the culture of the community and which sustain and develop community spaces and services for locals and visitors

#### Economic - Economically Thriving Communities

Actions which maintain and support the economy and economic growth and which sustain and develop business, tourism and financial investment

#### Social - Socially Connected Communities

Actions to sustain and develop the community to grow, meet and be active with access to good quality affordable housing and social care

#### Our Homes - Safe and protected Communities

Actions to give everyone access to affordable homes within the community

The Community Action Plan had four areas of identified priorities which are incorporated throughout this plan. For the LLP we have added a fifth heading “Our Homes”. This has been a significant issue, raised in all community consultations, and thus warrants its own section. The **Identified Priorities** have developed through the consultation process and are summarised in the following pages.



## Relationship with NPF4

In the development of the local place plan the community body reviewed the key policies of NPF4 to see how these align with the aims of the local place plan.

**Compact Growth:** Limiting urban expansion to optimize the use of brownfield, vacant, and derelict land.

**Local Living:** Creating networks of 20-minute neighborhoods to enhance community living.

**Balanced Development:** Ensuring development is spread across all regions of Scotland, including rural and island areas.

**Conserving and Recycling:** Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and recycling resources.

**Urban and Rural Synergy:** Collaborating between urban and rural areas to achieve shared objectives.

**Just Transition:** Facilitating a fair transition away from fossil fuels to a sustainable future.

The development of the LPP has considered the policies of NPF4 through the exploration of the themes highlighted as being identified priorities.

# Demographics

The demographics of the area has been included to provide contextual information regarding the population. Data from Scotland's Census 2022 clearly shows the community is ageing;

- 62% of the population is over 50 yrs of age
- 47% of the population is economically inactive, a number that will grow over the next decade as the over 50s move into retirement age

## Kyle of Sutherland

An analysis of the census figures for Kyle of Sutherland in 2011 and 2022 reveals the following;

- The population of the Kyle of Sutherland has decreased from 1760 in 2011 to 1680 in 2022
- The number of people under the age of 19 has decreased from 340 in 2011 to 224 in 2022
- The number of people over the age of 60 has increased from 611 in 2011 to 771 in 2022
- The number of one person households has increased from 290 in 2011 to 316 in 2022

In summary, the population is reducing and aging and the area is losing economically active residents. This is largely in keeping with the rest of Sutherland. The data identified in the section below is not available specifically for Kyle of Sutherland but outlines the demographics for the wider county.

## Sutherland

- In 2021, Sutherland had a population of 13,142. This equates to 6 people per square mile
- In 2023, Highland Council projected a 15% decline in Sutherland's population by 2040
- The ratio of 1.9 people of working age (16-64) to older people, is lower than Highland and Scotland and is forecast to decrease further
- Since 2001 there has been a 38% increase in the 65+ population
- The population aged 16-64 has decreased by 3%
- The population under 16 decreased by 27%

## Birth rate

- The annual number of deaths in the area, exceeds the number of births
- Improvement in the mortality rate in Sutherland has stalled
- Over the last decade the birth rate has decreased - only 60 live births in Sutherland in 2020

## Poverty

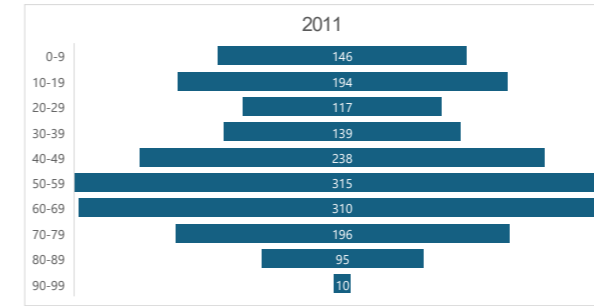
- Recent evidence from Loughborough University suggests that to attain the same material standard of living in rural areas of Scotland requires 15-35% higher income than urban areas
- In 2019, 25% of homes in Scotland were in Fuel Poverty. In Sutherland it was 40%, with 33% in extreme fuel poverty (where 20% of income is used on energy. In 2023, figures indicated 60- 70% of homes in Sutherland were in fuel poverty
- 1 in 4 children in Sutherland were deemed to be living in poverty in 2019 - prior to the pandemic and cost of living crisis

## Income & Employment

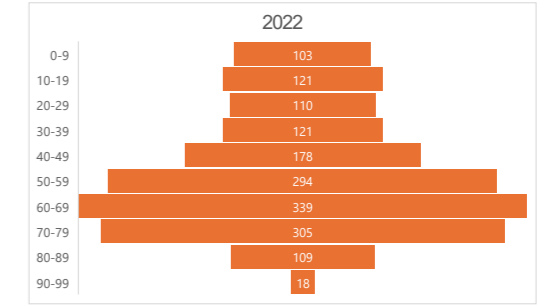
- The average income (after housing costs deducted), in the Highlands & islands is £18,600 compared to a Scottish average of £25,012 (less housing costs)
- The gender pay gap in the Highlands & islands is 4.5% in 2023 vs 3.6% across Scotland
- The Highlands & Islands have a lower rate of unemployment 2.3% in 2023 vs 3.6% across Sutherland
- There are much higher rates of self-employment 14% vs 10% nationally

## Kyle of Sutherland

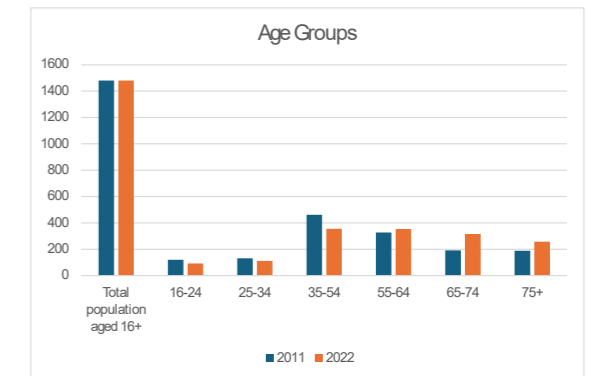
2011



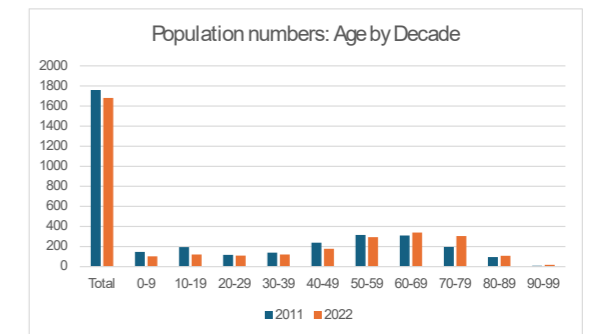
2022



	2011			2022		
	Creich	Kincardine	KoS	Creich	Kincardine	KoS
Aged 16+	910	571	1481	959	521	1480
16-24	78	42	120	72	20	92
25-34	90	41	131	72	40	112
35-54	275	187	462	238	117	355
55-64	207	121	328	220	134	354
65-74	146	45	191	205	111	316
75+	114	75	189	158	99	257

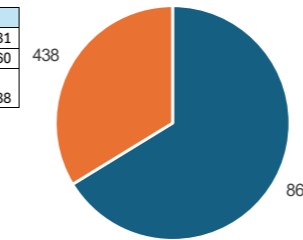


	2011			2022		
	Creich	Kincardine	KoS	Creich	Kincardine	KoS
Total	1111	649	1760	1117	563	1680
0-9	107	39	146	73	30	103
10-19	132	62	194	93	28	121
20-29	80	37	117	85	25	110
30-39	94	45	139	86	35	121
40-49	130	108	238	109	69	178
50-59	194	121	315	195	99	294
60-69	192	118	310	212	127	339
70-79	113	83	196	179	126	305
80-89	63	32	95	70	39	109
90-99	6	4	10	15	3	18

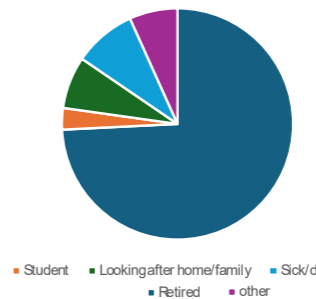


Economic Activity 2011

Economic Activity 2011	
All people aged 16+	1331
Economically Active	860
Economically Inactive	438

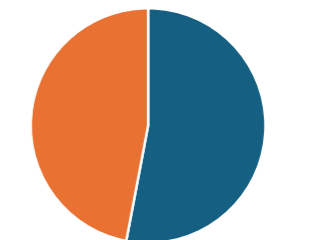


Economic Inactivity 2022



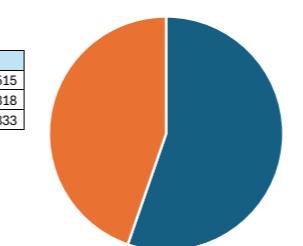
Economic Activity 2022

Economic Activity 2022	
All people aged 16+	1480
Economically Active	781
Economically Inactive	693



Single Person Households 2011 (total 290)

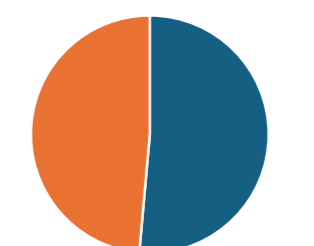
All households 2011	
Creich	515
Kincardine	318
C&K	833



	2011	2022
Total Households	515	542
Single Households	290	316

Single Person Households 2022 (total 316)

All households 2022	
Creich	542
Kincardine	307
C&K	849





# Identified Priority - Environmental

The natural environment is one of our area’s greatest assets. It is treasured by our community and plays a major part in local employment opportunities, which come through the salmon fishing industry on the rivers and from tourism, with many people being attracted to the area each year due to its beauty. There is a very strong sense of place, and love of the natural environment. This must be protected, and all developments should be considered in the context of the landscape, wildlife, and the people who live in and rely on it for their existence.

## Windfarms and infrastructure

There are currently 38 active turbines operating above Rosehall and a further 26 already approved. The Kyle of Sutherland therefore plays its part in delivering UK and Scottish government climate change targets. During the past two years it is understood that 93 more turbines, in separate developments, have been proposed and are currently at some stage of scoping and planning in the Rosehall, Strath Oykel and Invershin areas. If approved these would have a significant impact on the landscape of the Kyle, its environment, its economy and its communities. It is widely felt in the local area that there is an unacceptable impact on the natural environment. Many believe that the opportunities and economic benefit of the windfarms have not outweighed the impact that the developments have had on the community, its natural

environment and infrastructure. The Highland Region currently accounts for the majority of Scotland’s current, installed, renewable energy capacity and if all proposed developments gain planning consent this could increase considerably. The planning process, and evaluation of proposed windfarms, and associated infrastructure, must take cognizance of Government policy on green energy, their installations, and the potential impact on rural communities. Many in the community feel that;

- There are concerns about turbine spacing and distance from settlements. The common theme, from the community consultation, is that the continuous spread of these schemes, along the Kyle, and the creep being experienced towards settlements, is undermining any benefits that are being produced, for the area. Their potential impact on communities and the environment should be openly presented and holistically considered
- An up to date and maintained online mapping system of all applications within the knowledge of The Highland Council should be created and be made available for members of the public to view. This should include all renewables developments in order to present a holistic overview of the applications that are currently in the pipeline, including but not limited to, all proposed electricity generation,



storage and transmission developments, grid connection, energy generation stations, solar farms, BESSs, and wind farms.

- A review of the consultation and planning process is required to enable communities to have a recognizable say in energy generation, storage, and transmission planning applications.
- Consultations on such developments to address community concerns about safety and environmental issues

## Community Benefit Funds

The distribution of funds should continue to be from cross party community groups / residents and administration of these should always be democratic and transparent. Community benefit funds should remain for the benefit of the communities affected by installations

and should generally not be redirected to a Highland or Scotland wide fund without involving a full consultation with all affected communities of renewable installations.

The community have questioned whether the suggested amount payable of £5,000 per megawatt per annum (index linked for the operational lifetime of the project) for Community Benefit Funds, put forward by the Scottish Government in its Good Practice Principles in 2014, remains valid 10 years after this was published. A review is needed of the contribution to Community Benefit Funds.

## Forests and Woodland

As with many areas in the Highlands our forests are a large part of our community, contributing, for centuries, to our economy, and infrastructure.

Protection of wildlife habitats and access to outdoor spaces for people

# Environmental (continued)



should be maintained. The area has several forests and woodlands, including ancient woodlands, which must be maintained and sympathetically further developed for the benefit of the environment, community and economy through supported community involvement and support from Forestry Land Scotland

- Retain, maintain, and develop the Gearchoille woods with exploration of an extension.
- Retain, maintain, and develop The Balblair forest with exploration of further bike trails.
- Retain, maintain, and develop Carbisdale Wood with exploration of reinstating bike trails.
- Retain, maintain, and develop the Rosehall Forest with exploration of further bike trails.
- Retain, maintain, and develop Migdale woods with exploration of a full path around the loch.
- Retain, maintain, and develop all core paths and public access.
- Protect and retain all remaining areas of ancient woodland.
- Retain and maintain the Ravens Rock Gorge recreational area with the reinstatement of the paths where possible.

## Rivers and Lochs

Our rivers and lochs support the environment, the economy and the community and should be protected. Fishing has traditionally been important to the local economy. The

area benefits from four rivers which merge into the Dornoch Firth. In recent years the numbers of fish have diminished, for a variety of reasons, which has impacted on the economy.

Work is being facilitated by the Kyle of Sutherland Rivers Trust (formerly known as Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust) to mitigate this. As an example of the work necessary to protect our waters, The Kyle of Sutherland Rivers Trust Native Tree Nursery is supporting riverside riparian planting to provide river shading to combat rising water temperatures.

Further consideration needs to be given to erosion and flooding.

Open water offers the opportunity for outdoor activity, and investigations into how better to access the river are needed.

## Community Green Space

Alongside our natural environment are community green spaces, including parks, playing fields, community gardens and growing spaces. These should be protected and enhanced to deliver health, wellbeing, and physical benefits.

## Active Travel

As with a lot of communities in the north of Scotland, our towns and villages are dispersed and not everyone in the area has access to a car or reliable public transport. Active travel pathways are therefore a valuable resource and provide a safe means for pedestrians and wheelers to

move within and between settlements. Outwith the key settlement areas active travel paths are few and far between and investment in more key routes would be welcome.

## Climate Change Awareness

The communities are conscious that climate change is affecting the locality through coastal and fluvial flooding. This is particularly noticeable in the areas between Bonar Bridge and Ardgay and around Invershin and Rosehall.

Areas affected by potential flooding risk becoming undevelopable which brings economic challenges.

An example of the impact of flooding risk can be seen at the car park at South Bonar which had been considered a good place for the development of facilities for motorhomes. Unfortunately the development has been considered to be unviable, by SEPA, due to the perceived flood risk in relation to overnight parking.

## Biodiversity

There is an ambition not only to 'retain, maintain and develop' local woodlands but to expand and link them up to provide wildlife corridors which would help provide additional and improved habitats for the wildlife already present in the area such as red squirrels, pine martens, etc, and would open up opportunities to help protect rare and endangered species.



Not only would this be good for the wildlife but could provide employment through the deer management activities required to control deer numbers to support woodland expansion and through things like wildlife tourism and foraging in the future. Furthermore, extended riparian woodland would be good for the local fishing and a healthier ecosystem is good for local quality of life.



# Identified Priority - Cultural

## Cultural Vibrancy

The cultural vibrancy of a community embodies the living, evolving spirit of a community where traditions are honoured and creativity flourishes. It is important for our sense of place, identity and belonging that these cultural activities are supported. The majority of cultural events take place in community buildings, therefore there is a direct link between maintaining those and being culturally vibrant. The community would like to;

- Retain, maintain, and develop cultural dances such as ceilidhs.
- Retain, maintain, and develop cultural music such as concerts.
- Retain, maintain, and develop cultural events such as seasonal celebrations.
- Retain, maintain, and develop cultural gatherings such as crofting shows.

## Activities

It is worth noting that whilst some activities in the area have declined, considerable effort has been invested by the community in providing and maintaining a range of recreational activities which are accessible by both locals and visitors.

In the Kyle of Sutherland we are lucky to have a number of strong community organisations, providing significant wellbeing support and recreational activities for residents of all ages. There are also a number of local voluntary groups supporting the community

through provision of activities such as exercise classes, bowls, football, badminton, jogging, dancing, a cinema club, an annual book fair, and other ad hoc events. The volunteer-run Kyle of Sutherland Gala Week is an annual highlight for residents and visitors of all ages.

It is evident that there is a strong sense of pride in maintaining traditional local activities. The cultural vibrancy of a community embodies the living, evolving spirit of a community, where traditions are honored and creativity flourishes. It is important for our sense of tradition, identity and belonging that these cultural activities are supported.

## Village Halls and Community Buildings

Community buildings provide an anchor and centre for activity and are essential to the communities and their cultural activities. The majority of cultural events take place in community buildings, therefore there is a direct link between maintaining these buildings and being culturally vibrant. We note the importance of these assets and need to ensure they are retained and maintained.

## Local History

The area is rich in local history and opportunity to capitalise on this, through accessible interpretation, is important for both locals and visitors. Elizabeth Beaton's publication 'Sutherland An Illustrated Architectural Guide' Rutland Press 1995 identifies the extent of local architecture and archaeology of note and references



Kincardine Free Church, Gledfield House, Gruinards, Braelangwell, Amat, Glencalvie Lodge, Croick Church, Carbisdale Castle, Migdale Hospital, Achany House, Aultnagar, Glencassley Castle and Rosehall House. Several of these buildings are widely known and provide an opportunity for interpretation and interest for visitors to the area. Efforts should be made to retain, maintain and develop this opportunity.

## Crofting

It is also important that we support, celebrate and develop traditional ways of life. Supporting the creation of new crofts to allow young people to live in traditional ways is one way to

achieve this. There has been growing support, backed by FLS, to introduce new schemes of woodland crofting in rural areas, allowing agricultural professionals the opportunity to purchase land through FLS's Community Asset Transfer Scheme, develop their own crofts, and build their own homes, again supporting the requirements set out in NPF4's Policy 29 highlighting the local rural economy

## Farming

Farming and agriculture is also an important part of our landscape, economy and way of life and although not discussed in detail during the period of consultation is being noted for its importance to the area.

# Identified Priority - Economic



## Local Businesses

Businesses work hard to survive in this economically fragile area and are the backbone of local employment. It is crucial to the survival of them, and our communities, that they are supported to remain and develop.

## Encouraging entrepreneurship

The community are keen to encourage social and private entrepreneurship with a spatial map identifying where mixed development would be appropriate.

There are opportunities for small businesses to thrive in the settlement areas. Specifically this process has raised awareness of opportunities for the development of woodland small holdings, game processing & distilling businesses amongst a range of other possibilities.

## Public Transport

Access to reliable public transport hasn't been realised for decades despite best efforts. 'North of Ardgay the train line is serviced by infrequent northbound and southbound services and a reduced service on Sundays, meaning travel by rail is unsuitable and inconvenient for most. This, mixed with the lack of a consistent transport service has limited young people accessing educational facilities including the University of the Highlands and Islands, potential job opportunities and basic amenities outwith the area.

Exploration on how to deliver more community transport schemes, like the

one operated by the Bradbury in Bonar Bridge, are required to give our rural communities the same opportunities that larger settlements enjoy.

## Active Travel

While our area is fortunate enough to have a number of cycle and walking routes and trails they are generally maintained on a volunteer basis and this needs to be addressed to avoid the risk of losing them. Upgrading the trails across the area and notably in Balblair, Culrain and Rosehall are seen as a priority.

Active travel between communities is of particular concern, and despite being located on the Far North Way (formerly known as National Cycle Route 1) the poor connection between communities currently does not allow safe and enjoyable active travel as per Policy 13 of NPF4. This is particularly evident between Bonar Bridge, Ardgay, Culrain and Invershin which present the opportunity for a loop path.

## Signage/Interpretation

An area of opportunity, highlighted by all of the local areas, was the better use of signage, on our roads, in our villages and on our footpaths, to highlight local amenities, routes and active travel networks to our visitors. It was also noted that things like interpretation boards highlighting our natural and cultural asset, and other facts about the area, would help to highlight the rich culture of the place and provide another amenity for visitors.



## Digital Connectivity & Mobile Coverage

Reliable and fast broadband is the backbone to remote working and without this, rural communities will struggle to survive. It is essential that digital connection is improved across the area. It is also essential that the black spots in mobile phone coverage are resolved.

## Fuel Poverty

Figures from the Scottish Government indicate 40% of households in the Highlands are facing fuel poverty, with 33% facing extreme fuel poverty. This compares to the 20% national average. Despite our area's contribution to the national energy demand, our fuel tariffs are higher than elsewhere in the country. This exacerbates fuel poverty and is a problem which must be addressed.

# Identified Priority - Social



## Young People

For the future success of any rural community there must be support and development for young people. This includes attracting new families to move to the area and retaining those already resident. Growing the population of working age, and younger residents, is key to the sustainability of communities. The community aims can be summarised as follows;

- Retain all local primary schools and nurseries.
- Retain and develop existing youth club services
- Retain and develop childcare services and facilities.
- Retain, maintain, and develop local youth sports facilities, including cycling, football, badminton, & golf.
- Retain and develop community led events and initiatives for children & families.
- Retain, maintain, and develop all play parks incorporating equipment that is accessible and inclusive of all.

## Community Facilities & Services

The area has a number of community assets/facilities and services which contribute to the successful cohesion, resilience, health, and social inclusion of our communities and assists in achieving NPF4's Policy 15 which highlights the importance of local living and, where feasible, the 20-minute neighbourhood scheme. These should be retained. The community aims can be summarised as follows;

- Retain the GP service and facility.
- Retain and maintain the Post Office services.
- Retain and support the further development of services at Migdale Hospital
- Retain local shops
- Retain, maintain, and develop Bonar Bridge Football Club facilities and services.
- Retain, maintain, and develop the Bonar Bridge Golf Club facilities and services.
- Retain, maintain, and develop the Bradbury Centre facilities and services.
- Retain, maintain, and develop the Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust
- Retain, maintain, and develop the Kyle of Sutherland Hub facilities and services.
- Retain, maintain, and develop the Kyle of Sutherland Heritage Society
- Retain, maintain, and develop Village Halls facilities and services.
- Retain, maintain and develop projects which support people to have access to opportunities irrespective of circumstance such as free activities, food larders, community growing gardens
- Retain and develop small community organisations providing ad hoc events such as, but not exclusively, The Kyle of Sutherland Gala Week, Parent councils, playgroups, dance and fitness classes, running club, bowls, and whist.



- Provide places for worship for the community.
- Develop more electric vehicle (EV) charging points in each village.

## Traffic speed & safety of our roads

An area of concern highlighted across all of the local areas was related to speeding and the need for speed restrictions to be updated to reflect the areas they cover. With the growth of our communities many families and elderly people live along roads outwith the settlement which lack access to footpaths.

A thorough review by The Highland Council's Roads Department, based on the findings for each local area, detailed later in this report, is required to keep our local population safe on the roads.

This should be considered a priority action and the community would appreciate a comprehensive review.

# Identified Priority - Our Homes



## New Housing

In order to allow our communities to be viable, sustainable, and progressive it is pivotal to keep and attract young people and families to the area and support our elderly to live independently through the delivery of a mix of social and private housing developments. This was previously noted in the 2022 Community Action Plan and also identified by the Communities Housing Trust. Both highlighted the need for access to community owned affordable and attainable housing. These homes should be designed in a way that they can suit a range of different families and young people, not just the typical nuclear family, so that upon the end of their tenure these homes can be re-let. While the importance of affordable rented homes can't be understated it has also been noted within the Community Action Plan that home ownership is a key milestone in many younger people's lives these days but is becoming a lot harder to attain. So as well as rented homes it should also be highlighted that a variety of approaches should be taken to allow for home ownership in the area to become more attainable. We anticipate that this could be through shared equity schemes, discounted sale prices, and self build plots through collaboration with community led organisations.

The community would like to look at partnership working with local companies for trade training, the CITB,

and affordable housing providers.

This collaborative approach would safeguard the young people in our area giving them access to affordable, quality homes, support career development and small business growth. This circular development/ economic approach is considered key to the future of our area and its community.

To ensure that second home ownership and short term lets don't continue to take over large portions of the area's housing stock, consideration could be given to introducing a rural housing burden for all new affordable housing stock.

In alignment with NPF 4 Policy 29 the community supports the following:

- Developing low-cost rented and purchasable homes to attract and keep young people in the local area.
- Keeping community control over some new homes through rural housing burdens and alike to ensure they remain available throughout their life cycle.
- Encouraging housing to be designed and constructed to a high standard with an emphasis on low carbon and ecologically sound buildings.
- Ensuring the construction process, where possible, makes use of local trades, materials and can provide learning/apprenticeship opportunities for young locals.



- Supporting the creation of new crofts to allow young people to live in more traditional ways
- Increasing provision of housing for the elderly including links to be made with available housing to help older generations who may want to downsize (eg FIT type homes)
- Community Support scheme to help homeowner residents and businesses to insulate their properties and other upgrades to bring them up to a modern build

and environmental standard and assist in reducing fuel poverty.

## Existing Housing

Existing housing stock in the area varies. Of note, is the high percentage of solid masonry buildings which are poorly insulated and are expensive to heat. This is a contributing factor in the disproportionately high percentage of people in fuel poverty. One way to address the issue would be to explore retrofitting. Empty, older homes could also be restored.

# Community engagement and consultation

## Community Action Plan

In order for the Local Place Plan to represent the vision of the community, wide and extensive consultation has been undertaken.

In the first instance, the Community Action Plan (CAP) which was commissioned in 2022, was thoroughly interrogated and used to form the bedrock of the LPP.

The CAP was titled Ardgay, Creich and Lairg Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030. Given the increased need to focus on longer-term as well as short to mid-term goals, residents were asked to consider where they and their community wanted to be by 2030, so generating an 8 to 10-year set of plans and aspirations. The priorities identified in the CAP provided the basis for the LPP workshops.

## Workshops

Workshops were organised to gather local input. The first was attended by the original stakeholders who contributed to the CAP.

The information gathered at the first workshop enabled a draft spatial plan to be collated. This was presented at a second workshop, held a month later, which was open to the general public. The second workshop was attended by 35 individuals who contributed actively to the discussion and debate.

Further focused consultation and stakeholder engagement was undertaken to explore issues raised in the initial process.

The LPP has been collated for review by the Local Community Councils and has been further shared with the Highland Council Councillors for final review.



## Level and Nature of Support for the LPP

To produce any community plan wide participation is fundamental, and that it is vitally important that the voice of the community is heard and incorporated. If this is not the case then the plan produced will not gain the support of those it is produced to benefit, those who live and work in the community.

Work commenced on the Local Place Plan at the beginning of July 2024. The Highland Council (THC) encouraged local communities to submit their Local Place Plans by 27th September 2024. This deadline was subsequently extended during the development period. This allowed further review and consultation, especially with Ardgay & District CC (which had been in abeyance at the start of the planning process) and Creich CC, who both endorsed the Kyle of Sutherland

Local Place Plan prior to submission. The LPP was submitted to THC on the 28th of November 2024.

## The engagement process

Prior to commencement of the LPP, the Ardgay, Creich, and Lairg Community Action Plan 2023 (CAP) was published. This gathered the aspirations and vision for the area. It is a thorough and detailed study and provided an ideal basis for the development of the LPP. Given the submission deadline, and the breadth of the recent consultation undertaken to produce the CAP, KoSDT did not feel that it would be appropriate, necessary, or feasible, to hold a further extensive public consultation. It was therefore agreed with Creich CC (Ardgay & District CC were in abeyance at the time) that the information gathered from the extensive consultation exercise undertaken

.....

in 2022/23 to inform the CAP was appropriately recent and relevant to properly inform the LPP. As a result, the CAP was thoroughly interrogated, and the priorities identified in the CAP provided the basis for the LPP workshops which were organised to gather local input.

The first workshop was held in Invershin Village Hall on the 18th of July 2024. It was attended by the original stakeholders who contributed to the CAP. The invited groups were as follows:

- Ardgay & District Community Council – although the CC was in abeyance, we consulted with the previous CC members who contributed to the CAP
- Bradbury Centre
- Creich Community Council
- Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust
- Kyle of Sutherland Hub
- Rosehall & District Action Group
- Ardgay Village Hall
- Bonar Bridge Village Hall
- Culrain Village Hall
- Invershin Village Hall
- Rosehall Village Hall
- Voluntary Groups Sutherland

The workshop reflected on the priorities identified during the CAP consultation and reviewed the existing settlement areas and development sites to consider, where opportunities exist, and where problems may lie. The information gathered at the workshop enabled a draft spatial plan to be collated. Comments received by email after the event were also incorporated.

The spatial plan was then presented at a second public workshop, held on the 22nd of August 2024 in Ardgay Village Hall, to look at the opportunities and issues and allow feedback following further development and research of the ideas identified in the initial workshop.

This workshop was open to the general public and was attended by 38 individuals who contributed actively to the discussion and debate. Comments were gathered in writing, verbally and by follow-up emails. Additional focused consultation and stakeholder engagement was also undertaken to explore issues raised in the initial process.

The information gathered from the workshops, and subsequent correspondence, formed the basis of the initial draft LPP which was then circulated and made available to the public.

Although there was almost universal support for the spatial aspects of the plan there was considerable debate surrounding the content of the Environmental Statement. Due to significant existing and planned Energy and Infrastructure developments in the Kyle of Sutherland area many contributors felt that the LPP should make a strong statement on restriction of future development.

The wording being suggested was not felt to be appropriate for inclusion in the LPP so wording that reflected the feeling was agreed and the two local CC's submitted statements as appendices to ensure that the strong feelings held by some residents was respected.

The final draft was then sent to the statutory consultees: each sitting Elected Member in the Wards covered by the Local Place Plan, and all Community Councils within and adjoining the Local Place Plan area were sent the draft for their consideration. This was undertaken on 20th September 2024, with a 28-day period for comment which concluded on the 18th of October.

All sitting elected members in the following Wards were consulted:

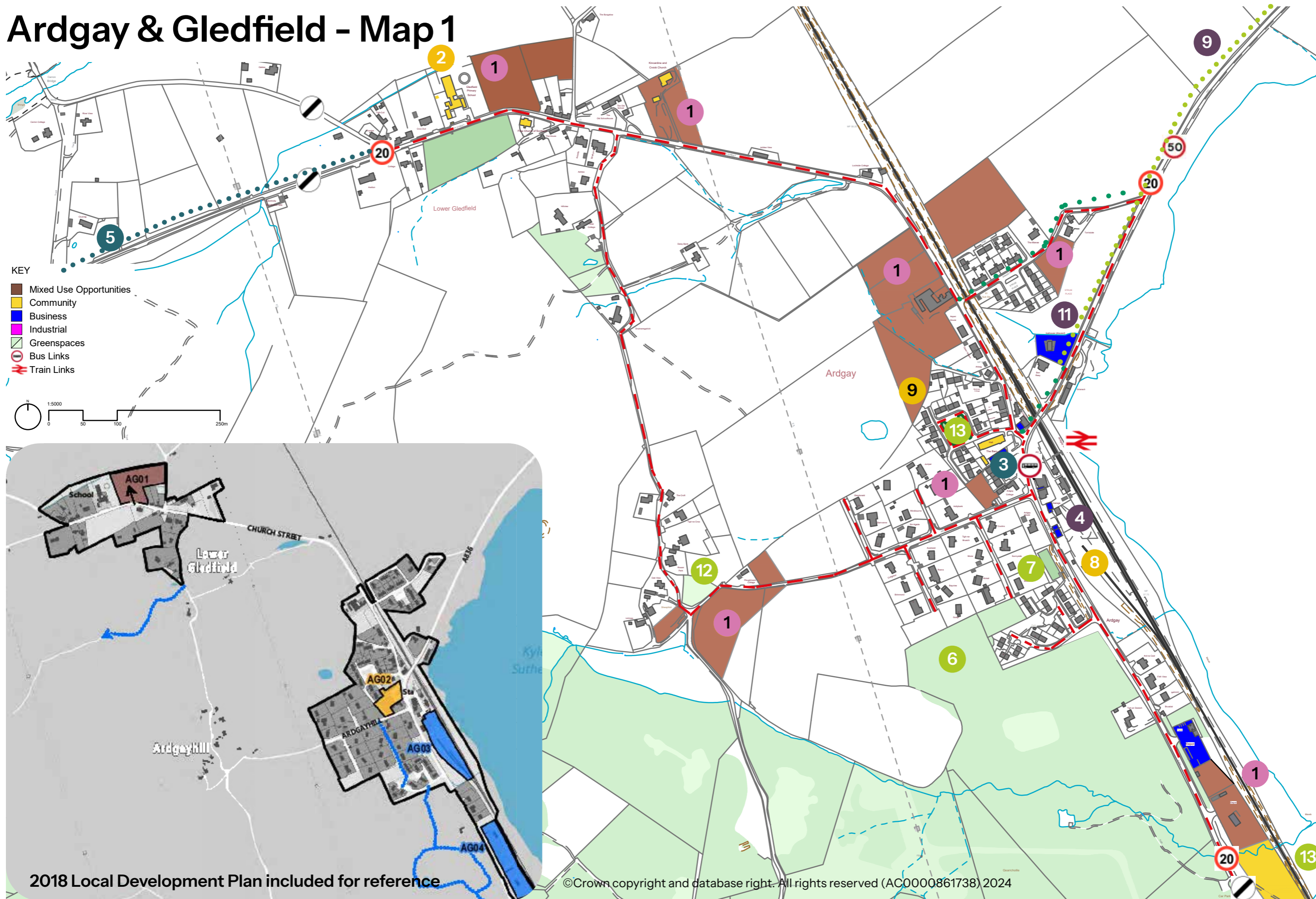
- North, West and Central Sutherland
- East Sutherland and Edderton
- Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh
- Cromarty Firth

The following Community Councils were consulted:

- Ardgay and District
- Ardross
- Assynt
- Creich
- Dornoch
- Edderton
- Garve and District
- Lairg
- Lochbroom
- Rogart
- Scourie
- Strathpeffer

Therefore, the LPP was as widely consulted upon as possible, and the final draft was agreed by both Ardgay & District CC and Creich CC prior to submission to THC on the 28th of November 2024.

# Ardgay & Gledfield - Map 1



# Ardgay & Gledfield Actions

This part of the Local Place Plan focuses on Ardgay and Gledfield. The action areas (e.g. Social) and actions (e.g. housing needs) relate directly to the Community Action Plan, which contains more information.

## 1. Affordable & Attainable Homes

Encouragement of new small-scale development of new homes and mixed use development on identified sites within Ardgay and Gledfield including:

- Previously identified site on the grounds east of the primary school.
- Lands surrounding Kincardine Church and Hall.
- Lands identified around Manse Street and the old farm house.
- Lands previously identified in Local Development Plan as Business use should be amended to mixed use.
- Land behind recent housing at Drovers Sq owned by Community Housing Trust.
- Land on Ardgay Hill

The above areas have been identified as areas of potential housing/mixed use development, but their feasibility and viability is unknown. Other appropriate sites may also come forward in the future.

It was noted within the community consultation sessions that an emphasis needs to be put on creating a range of different housing including family friendly homes.

New developments should be designed to include some housing with ample garden space for children to play in which will also help retain the identity of the housing in the area.

External partners: Communities Housing Trust, Housing Associations, Highland Council, Appropriate Community Groups, Landowners.

## 2. Protect & Enhance Gledfield

### Primary's Future

The school and nursery is an essential community facility which needs to be protected. The nursery has recently been mothballed due to lack of pupils and the worry in the community is that this will have a knock on affect to the primary school.

Protecting and enhancing facilities that are already in place is essential to community growth so options including childcare, play equipment and other community activities outside of school hours should be explored to make better use of the facility.

Key Partner: Highland Council, Local Parent Council

## 3. Maintain and Improve Facilities

To ensure the community continues to thrive in Ardgay and Gledfield it is of great importance that community facilities and commercial premises are maintained and improved. Community facilities like the village hall, school, larder, tree nursery and poly tunnel are some of the main factors that keeps the community together and provide safe spaces for people.

Key Partners: Highland Council, Local Community Groups

## 4. Existing Businesses

The local shop and garage as well as the businesses located in the business centre and adjacent offices provide important local services to both residents and visitors. Recognising the important role they provide in supporting tourism, the village and local employment is important to maintaining them within the community. Actions should be taken to help support existing businesses to grow and to attract new business to the area.

Key Partners: Local Businesses, Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Business Gateway

## 5. Commercial Growth

Current plans for the area include the addition of 47 new lodges on the Gledfield Estate which will increase tourism in the area. Infrastructure to help meet the demand for a large number of new visitors to the area should be considered so that there are places for people to eat and drink, undertake activities and enjoy the village.

The proposal includes an active travel path to Gledfield village. Ideally this should link with an offroad route to Bonar Bridge.

Key Partners: Local Businesses, Highland Council, Landowners, HIE.

## 6. Community Woodland

During community consultations it was noted that the Gearchoille Community Woodland is a well used and maintained community asset and the identified area to the north of the woodland could be incorporated into the community woodland area over time. It was felt that better sign posting and improvement of the access point would benefit the village and encourage greater use

External Partners: Gearchoille Woodland Group,

## 7. Playparks/Greenspace

Ensuring a plan is in place to help maintain and improve the local playpark and playing field. Any improvements should involve local young people. A preference is generally for natural equipment & play for all ages

External Partners: Highland Council, Local Community Groups.

# Ardgay & Gledfield Actions

## 8. Speed Limits



A concern for some time of the community is the excessive speeds around Ardgay and Gledfield outwith the new 20mph limit areas introduced in the last year. Areas to be assessed to bring speed limits down are the following:

- The Ardgay to Gledfield road is a 30mph Traffic calming measures could be considered to reduce potential speeding.
- The road between Gledfield and Culrain is currently a 60mph zone but the lack of footpaths and the numerous blind corners make this stretch dangerous.
- The single track road around Ardgay Hill is currently a 60mph zone. This is a road that a number of families live on the the lack of a footpath has been raised.

A mix of speed limits being reduced and physical speed reduction measures to be discussed within community.

Key Partners: Highland Council, Police Scotland

## 9. Caron Place Path



Re-establishing the path at the rear of Carron Place to allow for safer walking for pedestrians.

Key Partners: Highland Council, Landowners

## 12. Community wood



Potential location identified for a destination woodland with views over kyle

External Partners: Highland Council, Local Community Groups, Landowner

## 10. Ardgay-Bonar Path



As a byproduct of the speeding along the Ardgay-Bonar Bridge straight as well as the footpath that passes over the railway bridge not being fit for purpose the provision of an upgraded foot/cycle path between the two areas is desperately required. To make this safe for children it was proposed that this could be set further back from the road, starting at the Bonar Bridge Industrial Estate. The path could then be terminated in one of two locations.

- Path could link up with Manse Road so the smaller railway bridge where traffic is a lot slower could be utilised.
- Path could link up at bottom of the hill on A836 where it currently narrows and the road/footpath in this area could be re-configured to make it safer for pedestrian use.
- A new road junction could also be considered

Key Partners: Highland Council, Landowners, Sustrans

## 11. Ice House



Reusing existing structure for potential business use within village.

Key Partners: Potential business owners, Landowners, Highland Council.

## 13. Tree Nursery



Kyle of Sutherland Rivers Trust have developed a tree nursery. Opportunity for volunteer involvement.

External Partners: Kyle of Sutherland Rivers Trust, Local Groups

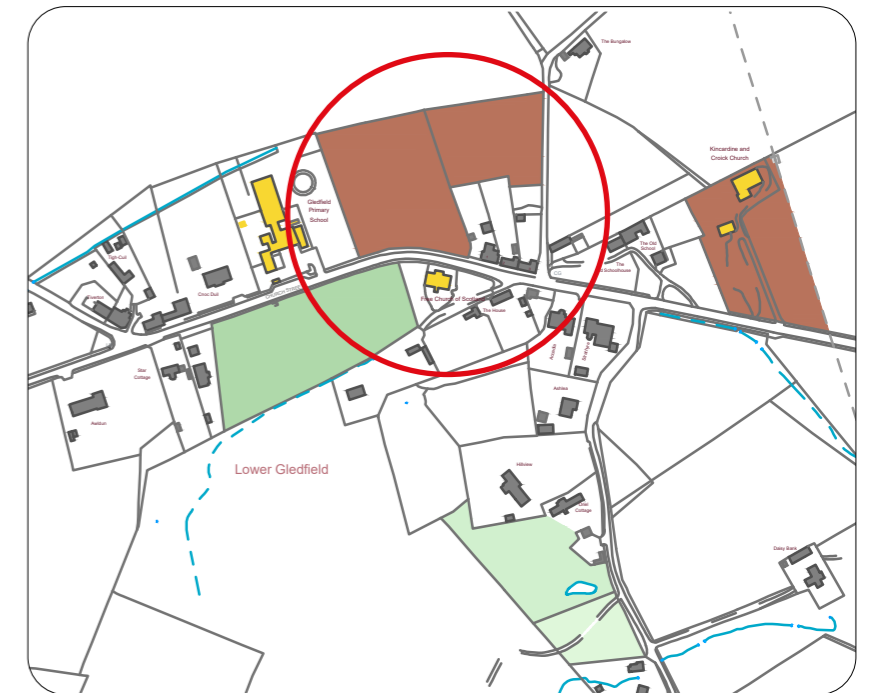
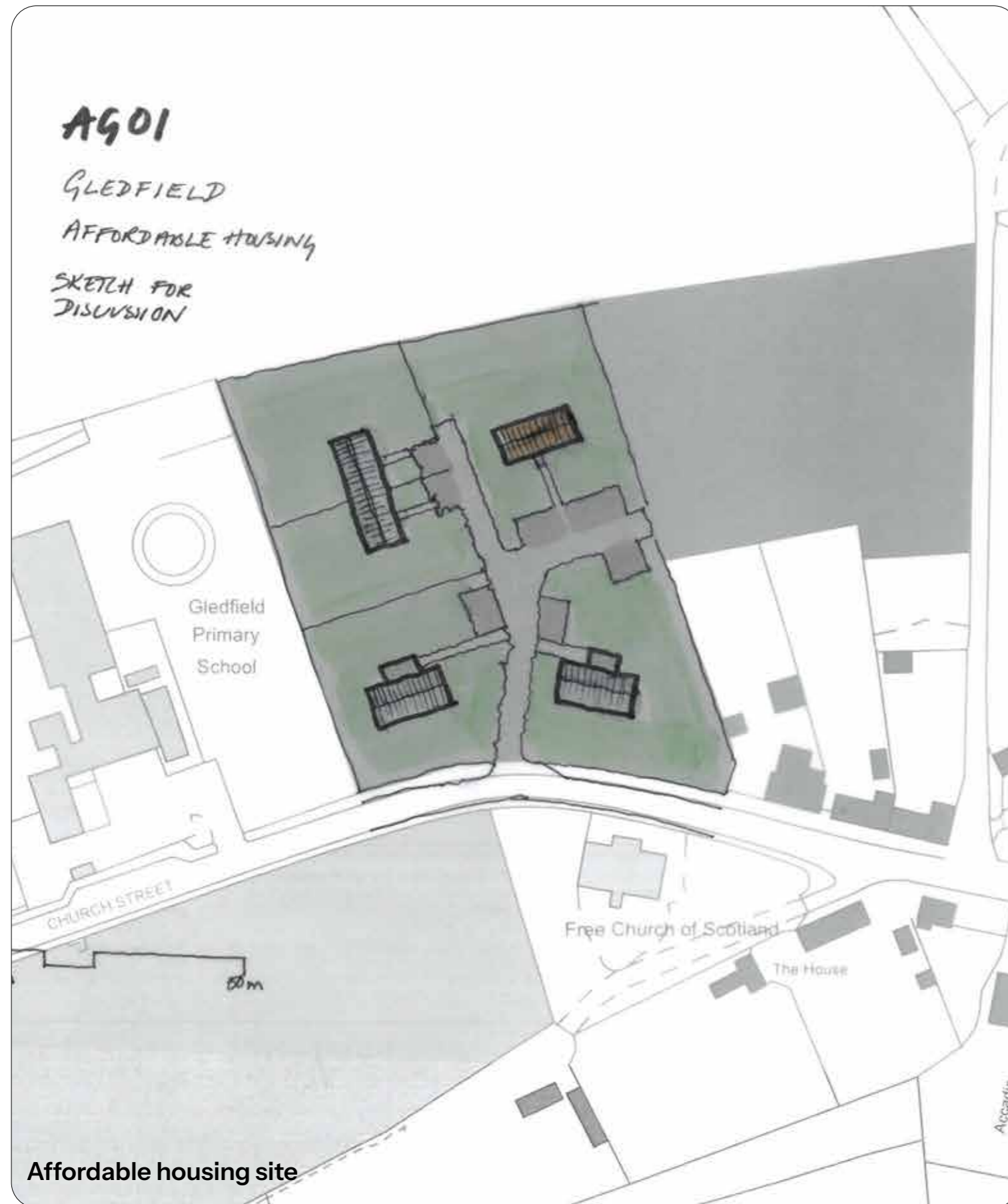
## 14. Community orchard



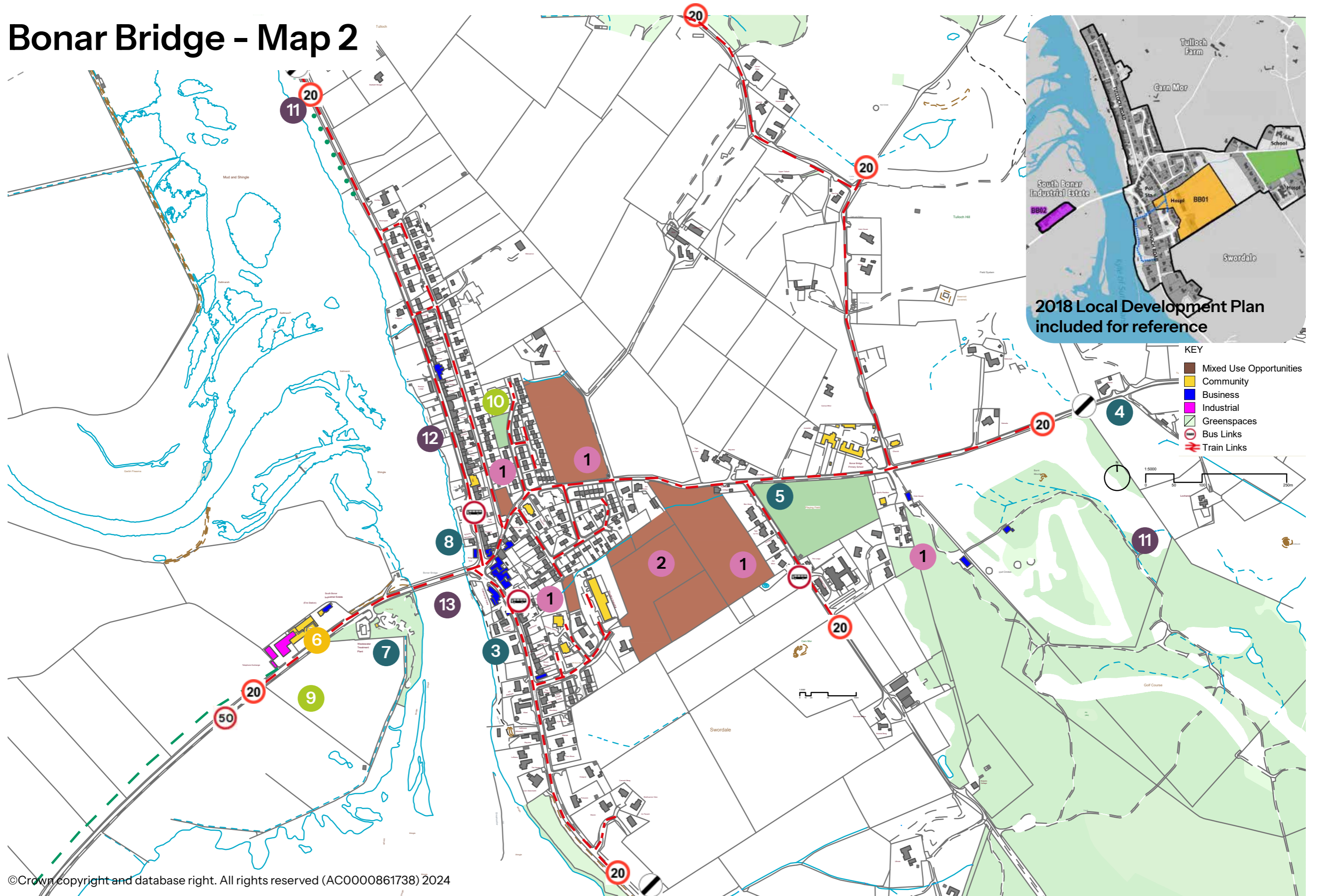
Potential location identified for a community orchard

External Partners: Highland Council, Local Community Groups, Residents

# Ardgay - Sketches from Workshop



# Bonar Bridge - Map 2



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# Bonar Bridge Actions

This part of the Local Place Plan focuses on Bonar Bridge. The action areas (e.g. Social) and actions (e.g. housing needs) relate directly to the Community Action Plan, which contains more information.

## 1. Affordable & Attainable Homes

Encouragement of new small-scale development of new homes and mixed use development on identified sites within Bonar Bridge including:

- Previously identified site Local Development Plan east of Migdale Hospital should be retained and extended all the way back to Matheson Road housing. Slope of site to be identified to recognise viability of any proposals.
- Brownfield land on Tulloch Road was highlighted for mixed use development.
- Land identified behind Gilmour Crescent. Slope of site to be identified to recognise viability of any proposals.

The above areas have been identified by the community as areas of potential housing/mixed use development, but their feasibility and viability is unknown. Other appropriate sites may also come forward in the future.

External partners: Communities Housing Trust, Housing Associations, Highland Council, Appropriate Community Groups, Landowners.

## 2. Family Friendly Homes

It was noted within the community consultation sessions that an emphasis needs to be put on creating a range of different housing including family friendly homes.

New developments should be designed to include some housing with ample garden space for children to play in which will also help retain the identity of the housing in the area.

External partners: Communities Housing Trust, Albyn Housing, Highland Council.

## 3. Retaining Visitors

A big issue identified with community consultation and in the Community Action Plan was the need to support facilities which retain visitors in the area and subsequently spend money which contributes to the local economy.

The village needs to address the lack of accommodation and places to eat and drink in order to help retain visitor numbers. It also needs to keep the public toilets open.

Key Partners: Local Businesses, Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Venture North

## 4. Holiday Homes

An issue widely discussed is the abundance of short term let and holiday homes in the area. While it is accepted that these properties exist it may not be beneficial to the village to see these numbers expand without consideration to developing more permanent homes.

Key Partners: Local Businesses, Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

## 5. Football Pitch

As per the Community Action plan the area is in need of an all weather football pitch to allow locals of all ages to partake in active sports. The football club in the village has recently upgraded their club house and parking area so creating an artificial pitch with appropriate lighting and access to the community to match the improvements made would be sensible.

Key Partners: Local Businesses, Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Potential Funders

## 6. Additional Community Facility

Health and wellbeing has become increasingly recognised as important for all generations. An activity den has Planning Approval as part of the Hub facility and funding to secure its delivery is sought. Realisation of the activity den will allow activity classes to be increased.

Key Partners: Kyle of Sutherland Hub, Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Potential Funders

## 7. Motorhome Development

Facilities for the disposal of campervan waste remains an issue in the area. Potential services by the Standing Stones in the South Bonar area have previously been considered but faced significant concerns about flooding issues from SEPA. Consultation with SEPA could be reopened to create a service facility to reduce mis-use of the public toilets without encouraging overnight stays.

Key Partners: Local Businesses, Highland Council, SEPA

## 8. Existing Buildings

While it is important to designate new sites for development it is also key to retain and develop what already exists. The Lairg Road in Bonar Bridge has an abundance of business premises that are not currently occupied which would be beneficial to reoccupy or repurpose.

Key Partners: Local Businesses, Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Building Owners

# Bonar Bridge Actions

## 9. Flood Planting

The area in and around the industrial estate is a known coastal flood area. Planting trees and other shrubs in the identified flood area will help to improve soil quality which in turn will help to intercept and soak up water at a higher capacity than is currently seen.

External Partners: Highland Council, Forestry and Land Scotland, Nature Scotland, SEPA

## 10. Playparks/Greenspace

Ensuring a plan is in place to help maintain and improve the local playpark and playing field. Any improvements should involve local Young people and an emphasis should be put on using natural equipment and play for all ages

Please see 'The Area as a Whole' section for more information about playparks and greenspaces.

External Partners: Highland Council, Local Community Groups.

## 11. Improve Path Network

Continued ongoing maintenance, signage/ interpretation and opening up views through woodland thinning, for short accessible local loops for dog walking and active travel.

External partners: Landowners, Highland Council, NatureScot, Forestry and Land Scotland

## 11. Balblair Trails Footpath

The pavement between Bonar Bridge and the Balblair trails, a stretch of under a mile, would benefit from being upgraded and made safer for the bikers and pedestrians that plan on using the trails as currently the pavement is at road level with no raised kerb on a section of road with an unrestricted speed limit.

Creating a more conventional raised pavement and widening in areas are required to keep users safe.

## 12. Speed Limits

Excessive speeds around Bonar Bridge have been a concern for some time, particularly on the branch roads outwith the new 20mph limit areas introduced in the last year. Areas to be assessed to bring speed limits down are the following:

- The 20mph limit on the Dornoch road going South East should be extended to include the pavement area leading to the cluster of houses at the start of the village.
- Matheson Road should be the same as the in village 20mph speed limits with the further housing and infrastructure changes proposed.
- The roads from the primary school that loop around Tulloch and back to Lairg Road should be reduced due to number of houses on the road and no footpaths for pedestrians.
- The 20mph limit on Lairg Road going north west should be extended past the new housing along the banks of the Allt Ruladh a' Choire.

A mix of speed limits being reduced and physical speed reduction measures to be discussed within community. Please see 'The Area as a Whole' section for more information about housing requirements, siting, delivery and investment.

## 13. Community Events

As per the Community Action Plan there is a desire in the village to support community events that have been affected by factors like Covid. These include but are not limited to:

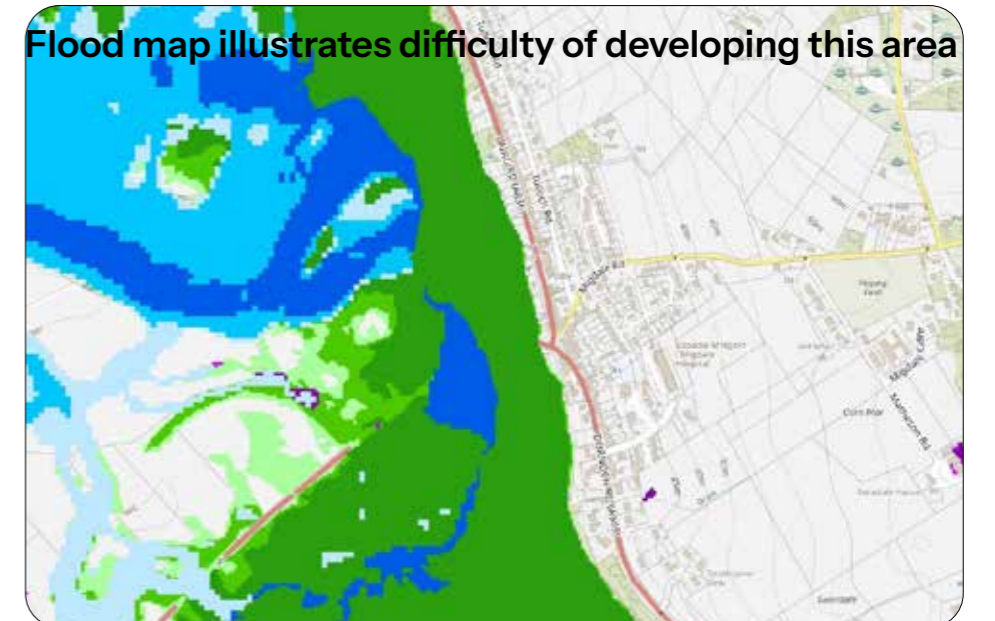
- Operating a local market on a monthly basis to allow small local businesses to expand and create another attraction for both locals and visitors.
- Kickstarting the re-formation of the Highland Gathering/ Invercarron Games.
- Continued support and development of the Gala Week celebrations.

External partners: Landowners, Highland Council, Scottish Highland Games Association Local Businesses.

## 14. Bus Service

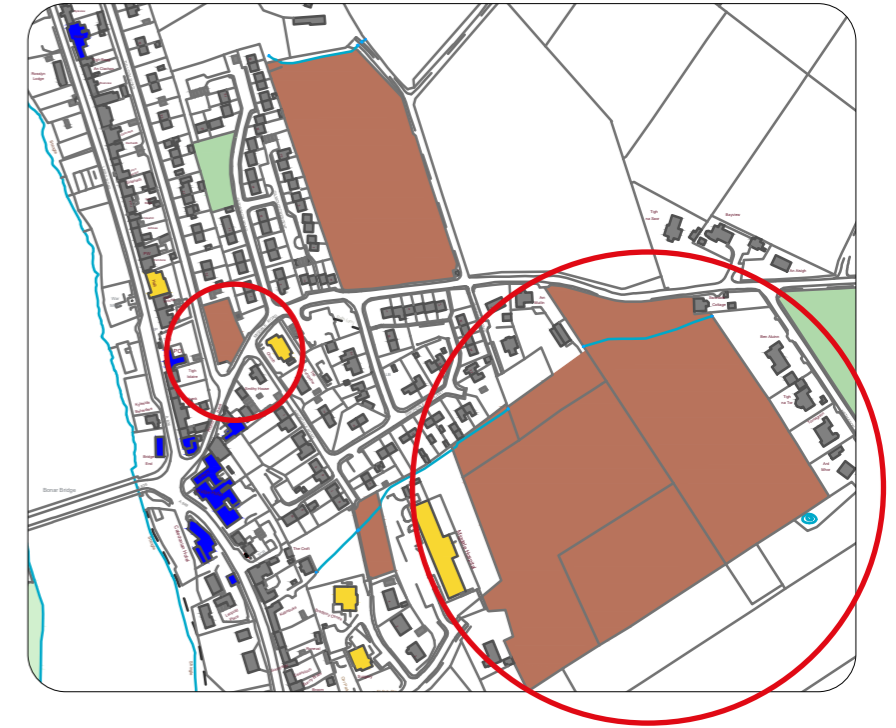
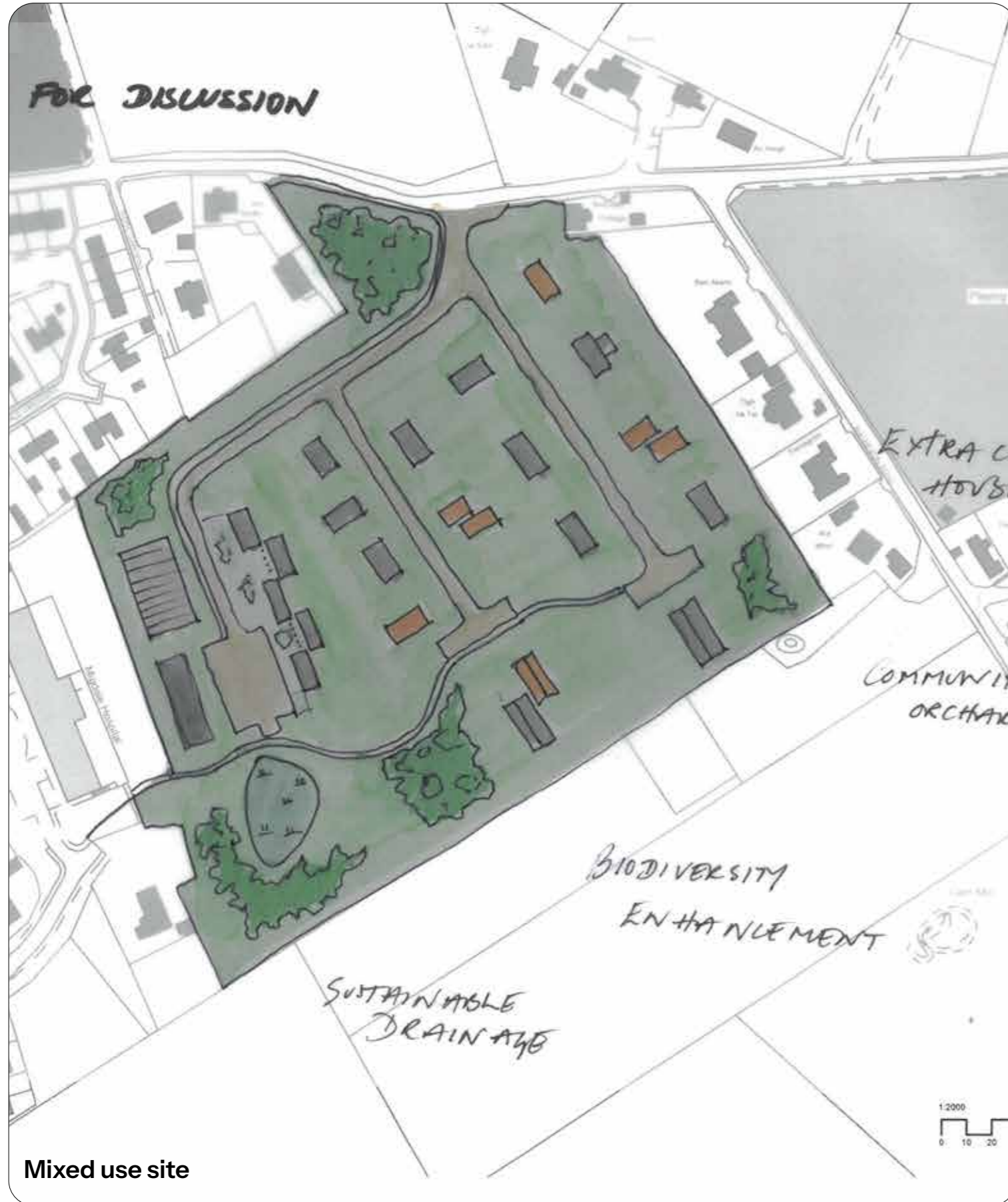
Additional support to assist community transport services to maintain and improve bus service which has proved vital to elderly people in the local area.

External partners: Bradbury Centre, Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

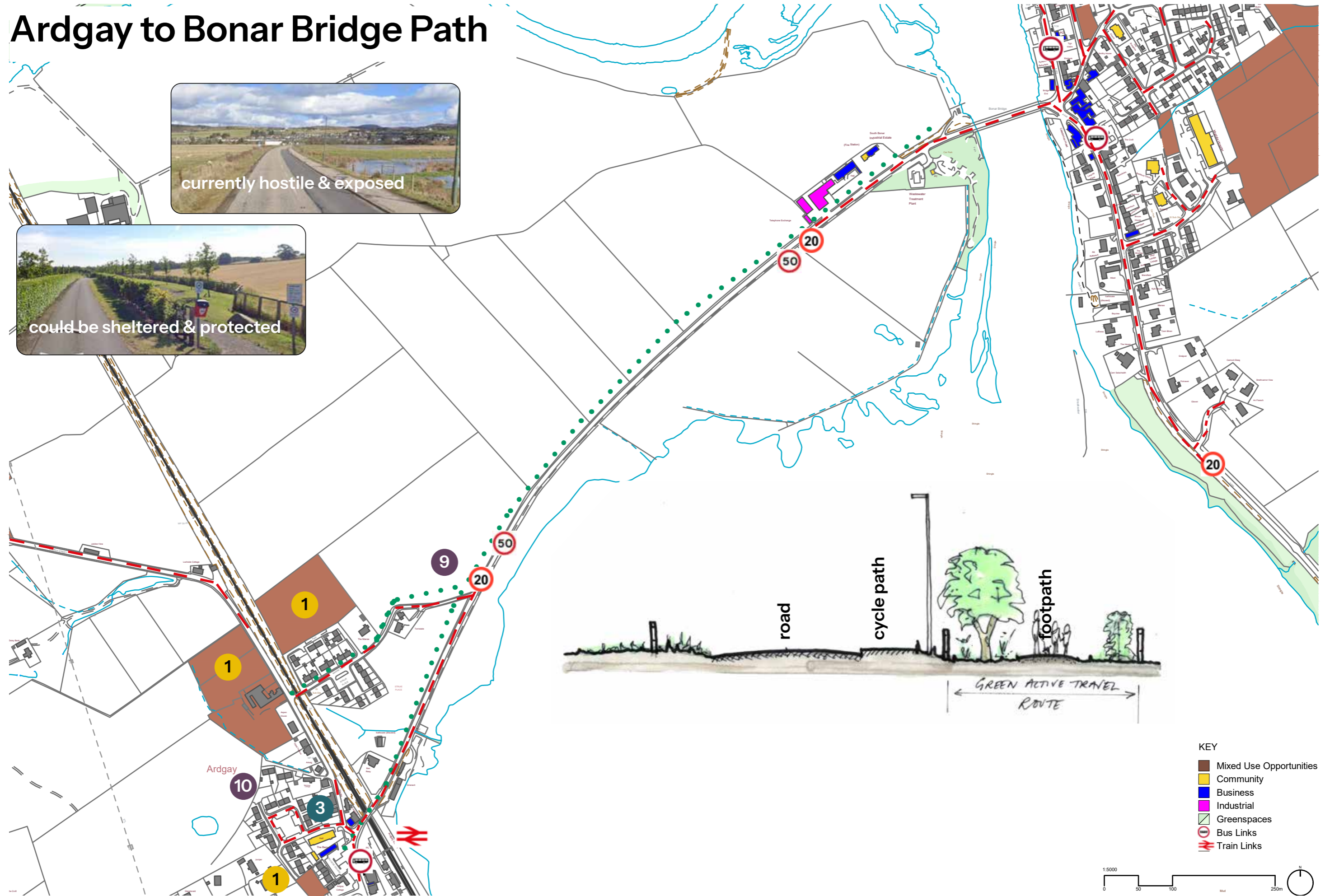
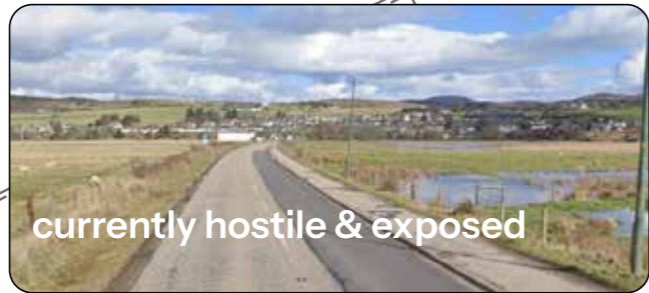


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# Bonar Bridge - Sketches from Workshop



# Ardgay to Bonar Bridge Path



- KEY
- Mixed Use Opportunities
  - Community
  - Business
  - Industrial
  - Greenspaces
  - Bus Links
  - Train Links



# Culrain & Invershin - Map 3



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# Culrain Actions

This part of the Local Place Plan focuses on Culrain. The action areas (e.g. Social) and actions (e.g. housing needs) relate directly to the Community Action Plan, which contains more information.

## 1. Affordable & Attainable Homes



Encouragement of new small-scale development of new homes and mixed use development on identified sites within Culrain including:

- Site that lies within the grounds of the village hall to the north of the building could potentially have two houses built on it

The above areas have been identified by the community as areas of potential housing/mixed use development, but their feasibility and viability is unknown. Other appropriate sites may also come forward in the future.

External partners: Communities Housing Trust, Housing Associations, Highland Council, Appropriate Community Groups, Landowners.

## 2. Digital Connectivity



A key issue raised by the community was the lack of quality digital connectivity and mobile phone coverage. Whilst there is wifi broadband, the lack of fibre broadband has left the village behind some of the other areas that have been upgraded in the fibre roll out in recent years. To help make the village attractive to new businesses or people working from home it is essential that this is rectified as a matter of urgency.

Key Partner: Highland Council, Highland Broadband

## 3. Maintain and Improve Hall



As with many other places the village hall is in need of some fabric and cosmetic upgrades. This is of paramount importance to the area as it is currently the only community facility in the village and is used frequently by the locals.

Key Partners: Highland Council, Local Community Groups

## 4. Sharing Our History



At the community consultation events it was noted that more should be done to highlight and promote the history of the Culrain area including the Battle of Carbisdale, 1650, history of local clearances, and later construction of Carbisdale Castle as part of the settlement of the Duke of Sutherland's Estate.

It was suggested that this could be done by utilising permanent interpretation boards around the village and the surrounding paths in the same way that other local areas have done to help make an experience of the attraction.

It was also suggested that the once planned visitor centre in the area should be re-visited with the if it could possibly drive more visitors to the area.

External partners: Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Local History Groups

## 5. Community Bus



An investigation is required into whether a community run bus service would be beneficial to locals in the same way that the Community Transport Service in Bonar Bridge is.

External partners: Local Community Groups

## 6. Train Service



Although the village has an active train station it is typically only served by four trains a day, going north and south. In order for the service to provide meaningful transport to the community more trains need to make the journey north, past Tain, to allow residents and visitors the option to make day trips to different locations. It would also be helpful if the first south bound train was rescheduled to connect with the mainline train which departs Inverness for London at 07.55 (15 minutes after the northerly train arrives in Inverness) This small adjustment would transform connectivity and would ensure the service continues to be used.

External partners: Scotrail, Highland Council, Friends of Far North Line, Hightrans, Far North Line Community Rail Partnership

## 7. Active Travel



As mentioned in other areas active travel in and around our communities is essential for both local people and visitors. The community has therefore indicated that it is pivotal to keep all of the surrounding trails around Culrain open and in some areas upgraded to allow for active travel and connections between all of the areas noted in this Local Place Plan. An investigation is required into funding avenues as currently these are maintained by a group of volunteers. It would also be beneficial for the community to see some road side pavements provided, particularly on some of the blind bends on the main road.

External Partners: Highland Council, FLS, Nature Scot, SEPA

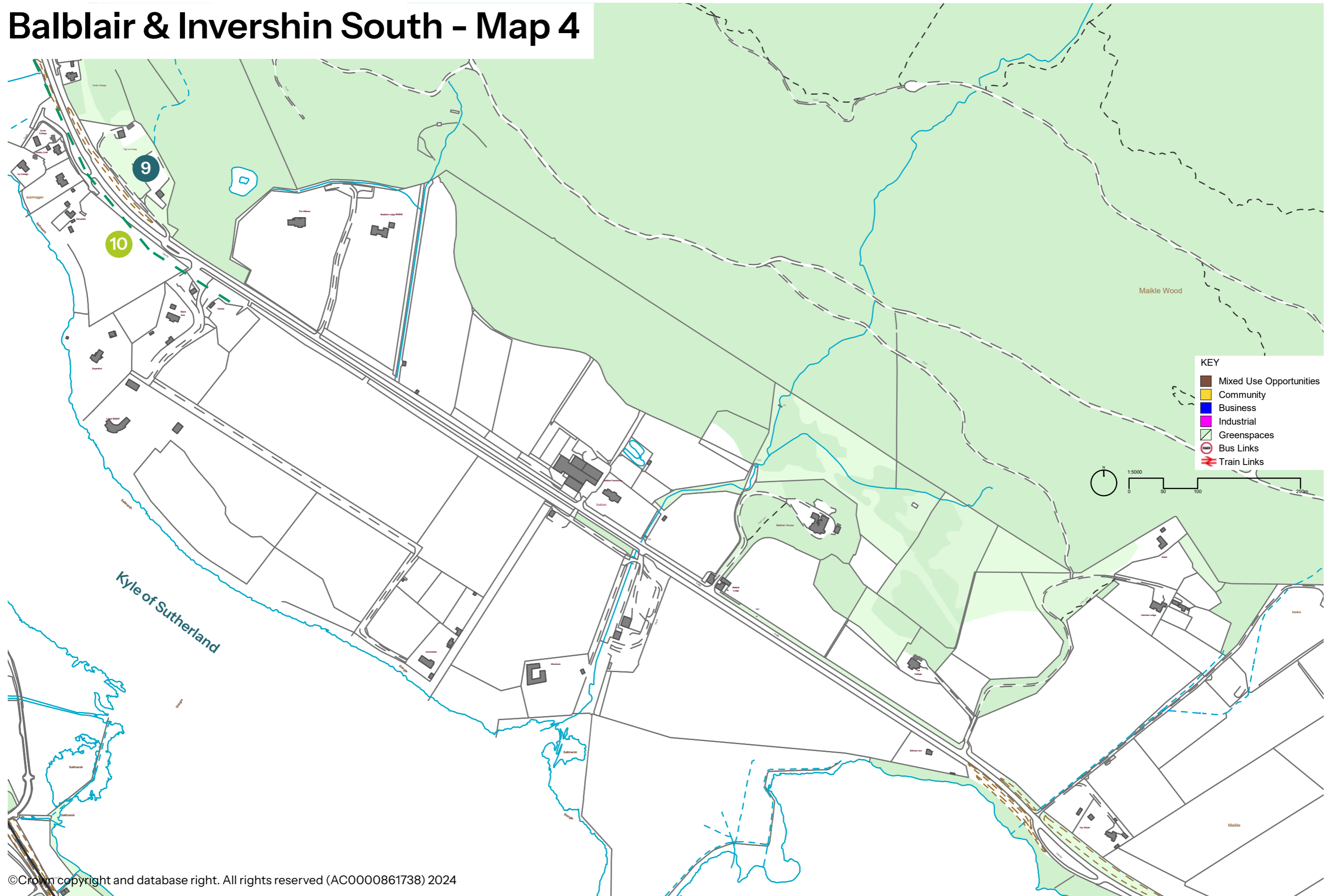
## 8. Speed Limits



A concern for some time of the Community has been the failure to implement a 20mph speed limit through the village, despite this being requested. A reduction of speed limit from 60/30mph to 20mph, applied to the section of road, identified on the accompanying diagram, would greatly improve the safety of this section of road which is frequently used by, not only residents, but walkers, cyclists and horse riders accessing the adjacent Carbisdale Forest Trails.

Key Partners: Highland Council & Police Scotland

# Balblair & Invershin South - Map 4



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# Balblair & Invershin South Actions

This part of the Local Place Plan focuses on Invershin and Balblair. The action areas (e.g. Social) and actions (e.g. housing needs) relate directly to the Community Action Plan, which contains more information.

## 8. Housing Development

It was felt within the community group that development locations in and around the Invershin area wasn't required to be identified in the local place plan. While applications for new single houses can still be expected the need for community development wasn't identified.

## 9. Digital Connectivity

A key issue raised by the community was the lack of quality digital connectivity and mobile phone coverage. Whilst there is wifi broadband, the lack of fibre broadband has left the village behind some of the other areas that have been upgraded in the fibre roll out over the last year. To help make the village attractive to new businesses or people working from home it is essential that this is rectified as a matter of urgency.

Key Partner: Highland Council, Highland Broadband

## 10. Active Travel

The community support a footpath from Invershin to Bonar Bridge. The road is wide enough to create a footpath and to do so and reduce the speed limit of the road; would help to address current community concerns which have been repeatedly raised.

A safe circular active travel route from Ardgay, out to Culrain over the viaduct and back through Bonar bridge would be a huge benefit to our area for both locals and visitors

As well as supporting wider active travel, a footpath would also enable residents to easily access the Invershin Hotel or the train station.

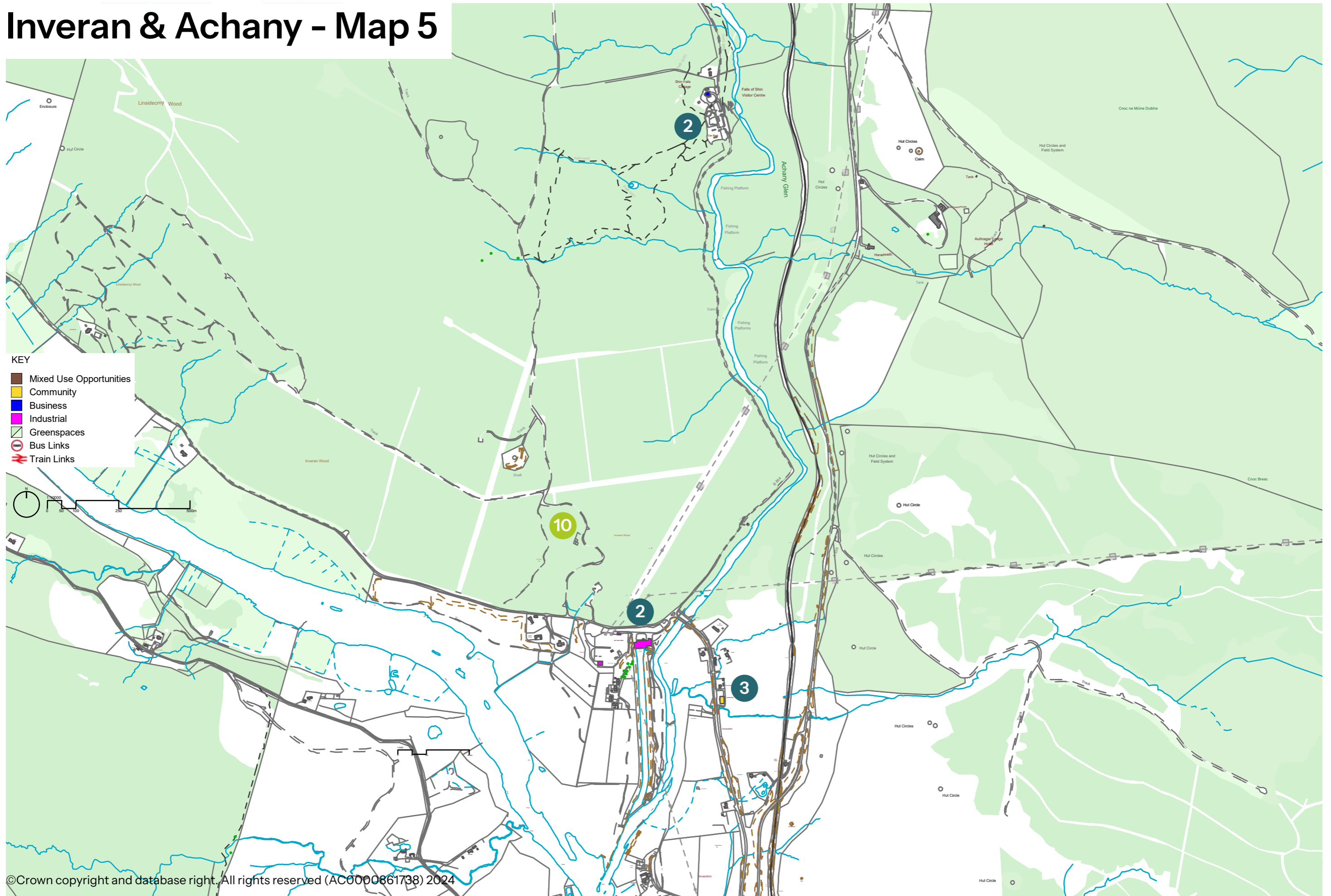
External Partners: Highland Council, Forestry and Land Scotland, Nature Scotland, Land owner

## 11. Train Service

As with Culrain, although the village has an active train station it is typically only served by four trains a day, going north and south. In order for the service to provide meaningful transport to the community more trains need to make the journey north, past Tain, to allow residents and visitors the option to make day trips to different locations. It would also be helpful if the first south bound train was rescheduled to connect with the mainline train which departs Inverness for London at 07.55 (15 minutes after the northerly train arrives in Inverness) This small adjustment would transform connectivity and would ensure the service continues to be used.

External partners: Scotrail, Highland Council, Friends of Far North Line, Hightrans, Far North Line Community Rail Partnership

# Inveran & Achany - Map 5



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# Inveran & Achany Actions

This part of the Local Place Plan focuses on Inveran and Achany. The action areas (e.g. Social) and actions (e.g. housing needs) relate directly to the Community Action Plan, which contains more information.

## 1. Housing Development

It was felt within the community group that development locations in and around the Invershin area wasn't required to be identified in the local place plan. While applications for new single houses can still be expected the need for community development wasn't identified.

## 2. Digital Connectivity

As with other smaller villages a key issue within the community that was noted in the sessions was the obvious lack of quality digital connectivity. The lack of fibre broadband has left the village behind some of the other areas that have been upgraded in the fibre roll out over the last year. To help make the village attractive to new businesses or people working from home it is essential that this is rectified as a matter of urgency.

Key Partner: Highland Council, Highland Broadband

## 3. Maintain & Improve Hall

As with many other places the Invershin village hall is in need of some fabric and cosmetic upgrades. This is of paramount importance to the area as it is currently the only community facility in the village and is used frequently by local groups.

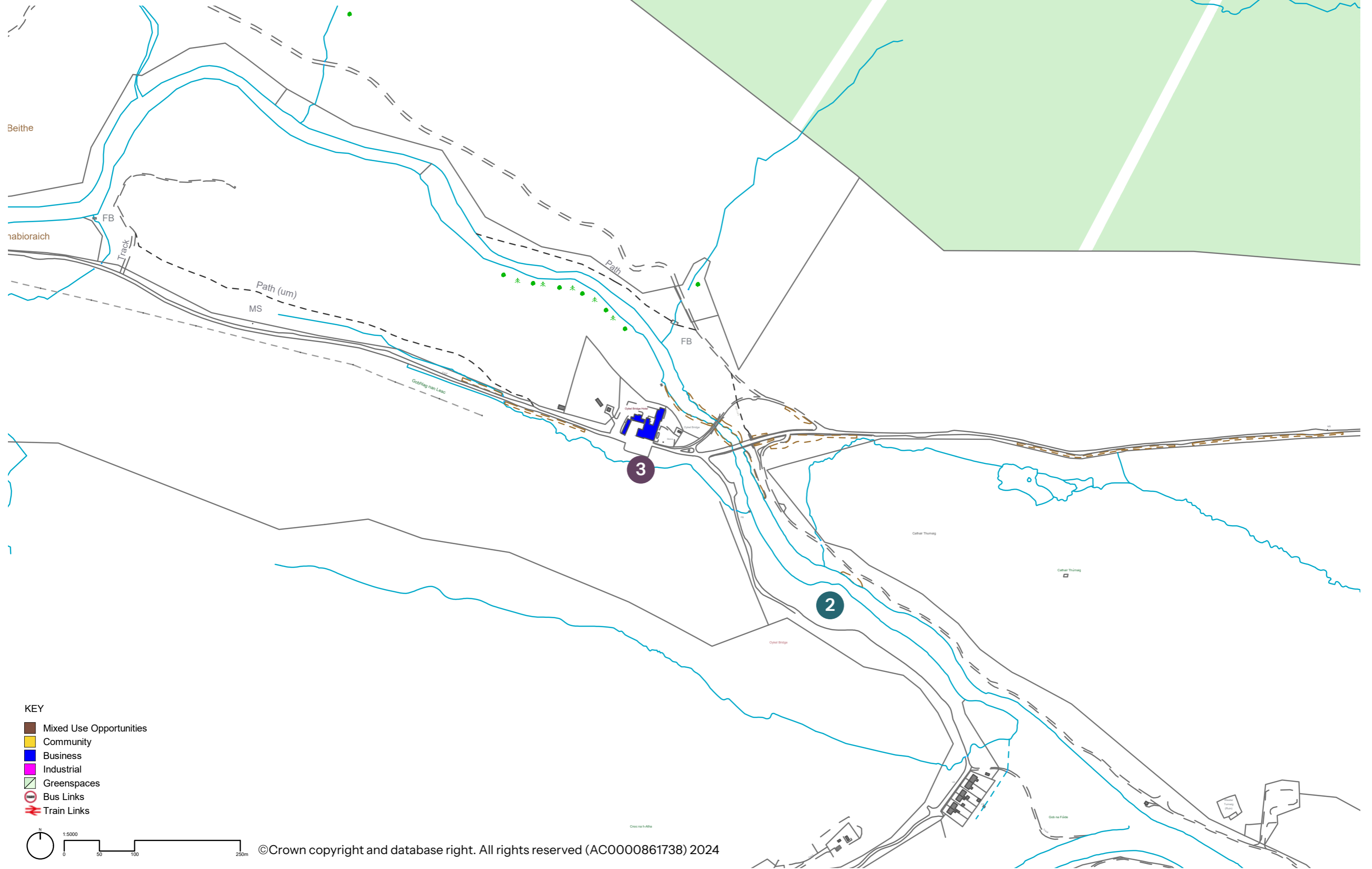
Key Partners: Invershin Hall Committee, Highland Council, Local Community Groups

## 4. Active Travel

As mentioned in other areas active travel in and around our communities is essential for both local people and visitors. The path network between the two settlements is strong and maintained but improving the paths to connect the two places would allow for further walks being established for locals and visitors.

External Partners: Highland Council, Forestry and Land Scotland, Nature Scotland

# Oykel Bridge - Map 6



- KEY**
- Mixed Use Opportunities
  - Community
  - Business
  - Industrial
  - Greenspaces
  - Bus Links
  - Train Links



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# Oykel Bridge Actions

This part of the Local Place Plan focuses on Oykel Bridge. The action areas (e.g. Social) and actions (e.g. housing needs) relate directly to the Community Action Plan, which contains more information.

## 1. Housing Development



It was felt within the community group that development locations in and around the two areas likely wasn't required to be identified in the local place plan. While applications for new single houses can still be expected the need for an actual development wasn't identified.

## 2. Digital Connectivity



As with other smaller villages a key issue within the community that was noted in the sessions was the obvious lack of fast, quality, digital connectivity. The lack of fibre broadband has left the village behind some of the other areas that have been upgraded in the fibre roll out over the last year. To help make the village attractive to new businesses or people working from home it is essential that this is rectified as a matter of urgency.

Key Partner: Highland Council, Highland Broadband

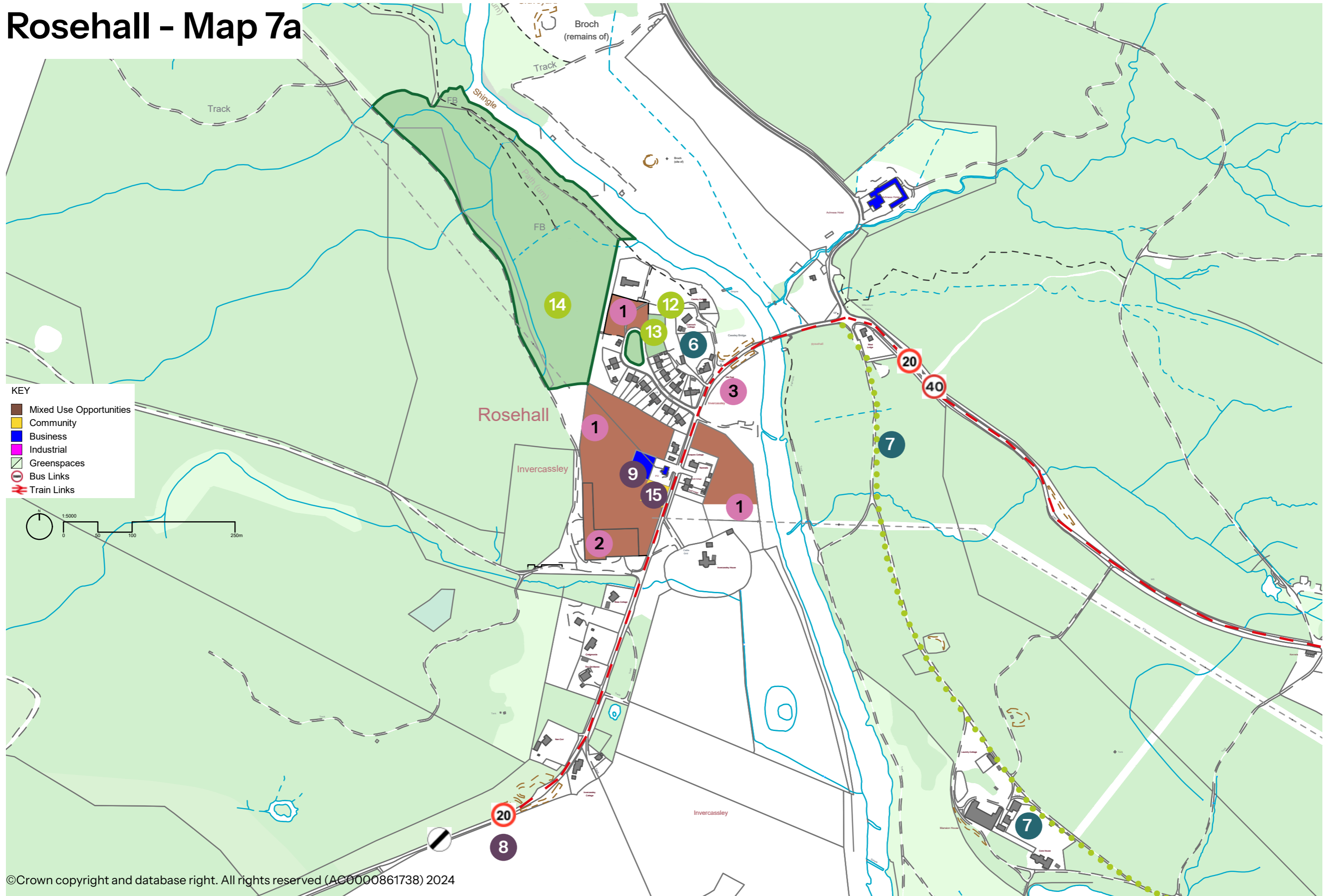
## 3. Promote Hotel



One of the main attractions in the area is the hotel which over the years has been a staple for visitors coming to the area to undertake field sports like shooting and fishing. Helping the hotel through promotion and advertisement was discussed as a way to increase visitor numbers. There are national walking & cycle passes close by which could be capitalised on.

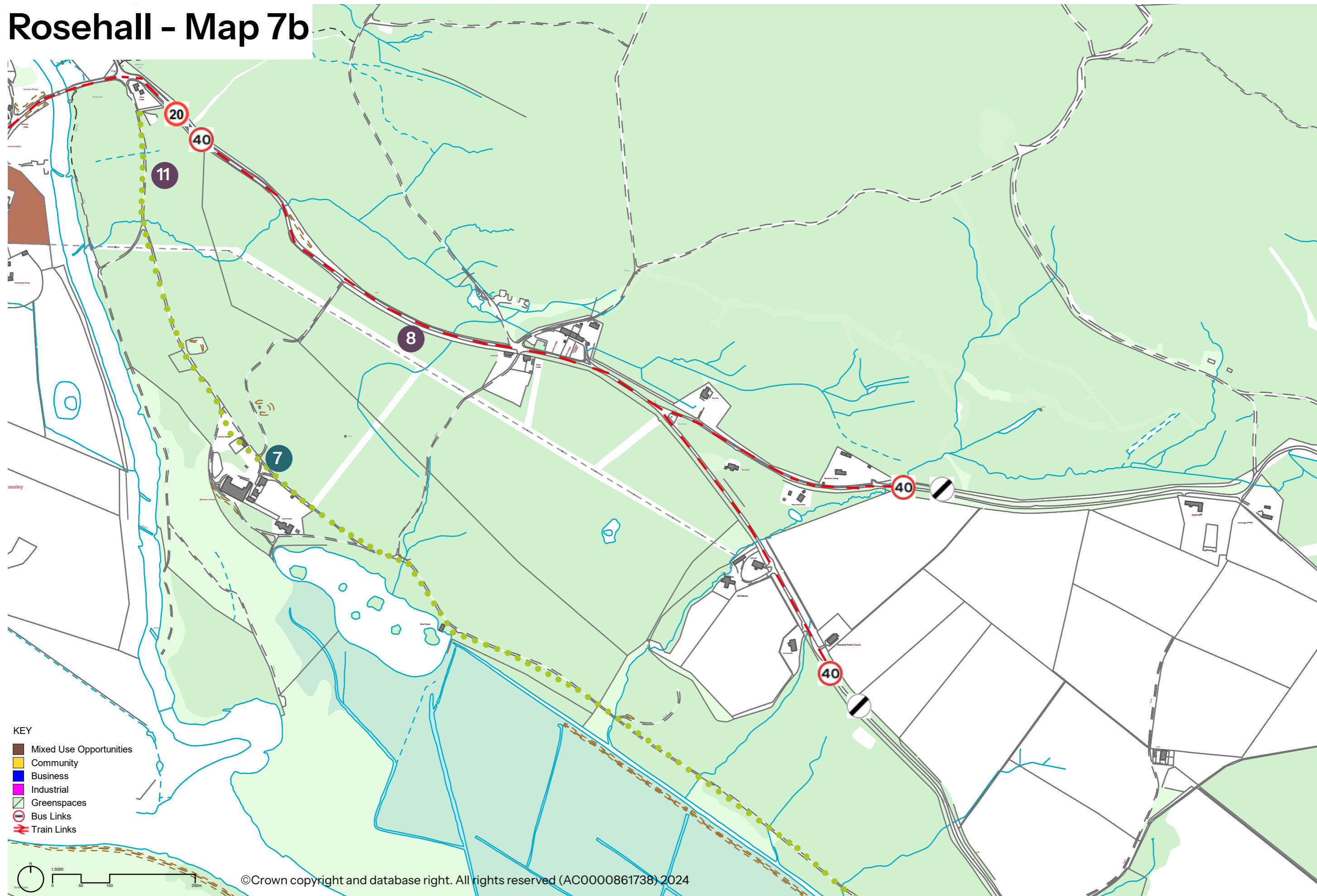
Key Partners: Local Businesses

# Rosehall - Map 7a



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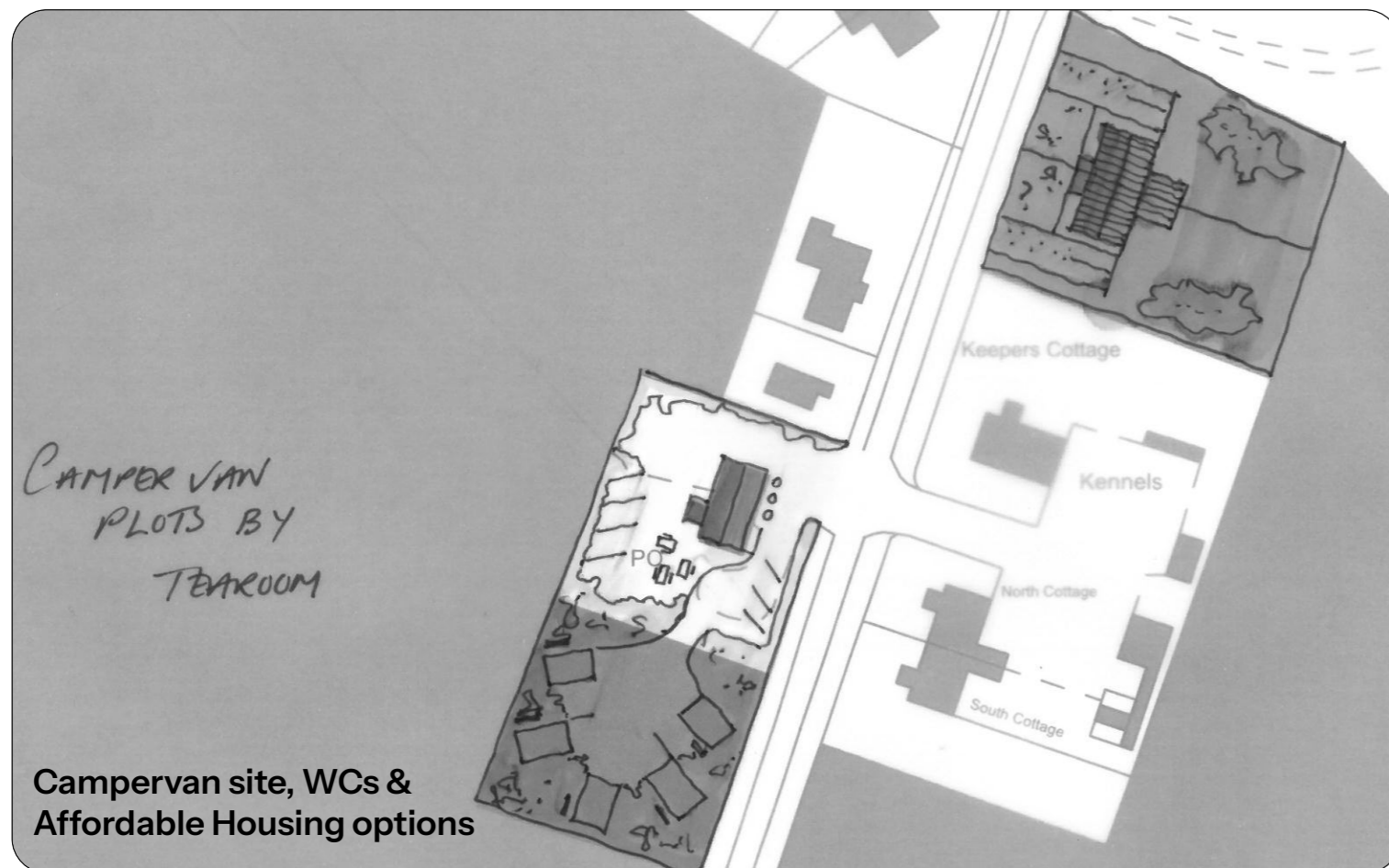
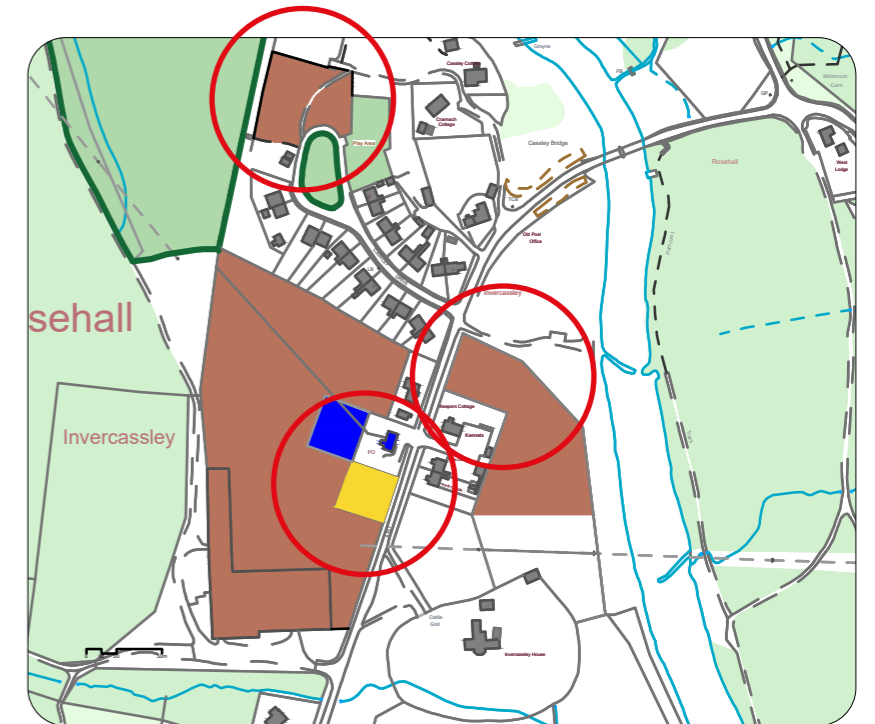
# Rosehall - Map 7b



# Rosehall - Sketches from Workshop



Cassley Drive Housing



Campervan site, WCs & Affordable Housing options

# Rosehall Actions

This part of the Local Place Plan focuses on Rosehall, which has historically been tied in with Altass; hence Rosehall school and Rosehall village hall are located in Altass. The action areas and actions relate directly to the Community Action Plan, which contains more information.

## 1. Affordable & Attainable Homes

Encouragement of new small-scale development of new homes and mixed use development on identified sites within Rosehall including:

- The unused plots at the north end of Cassley Drive provide opportunities for infill development.
- The area to the south of Cassley Drive could be used for houses, though this is currently privately owned agricultural land. The area of land immediately behind the Tea Rooms, also privately owned, could be used for hard standing for camper vans and a camping site
- Land north of Invercassley House could lend itself to future development.

The above areas have been identified by the community as areas suitable for housing/mixed use development, but their feasibility and viability is unknown. Other appropriate sites may also come forward in the future. Low water pressure was raised as a potential issue

External partners: Communities Housing Trust, Housing Associations, Highland Council, Appropriate Community Groups, Landowners.

## 16. Promote Hotel

One of the main attractions in the area is the Achness Hotel which over the years has been a staple for visitors coming to the area to undertake field sports like shooting and fishing. Helping the hotel through promotion and advertisement was discussed as a way to increase visitor numbers.

Key Partners: Local Businesses

## 2. Family Friendly Homes

It was noted within the community consultation sessions that an emphasis needs to be put on creating a range of different housing including family friendly homes.

New developments should be designed to include some housing with ample garden space for children to play in which will also help retain the identity of the housing in the area.

External partners: Communities Housing Trust, Albyn Housing, Highland Council.

## 3. Infrastructure Upgrades

In order to progress with new developments mentioned in this section of the report it is important that the area needs to have some infrastructure upgrades over the coming years to make this viable.

There is a known lack of water pressure in the area causing an initial challenge.

External partners: Scottish Water Highland Council.

## 4. Protect & Enhance the Future of Rosehall Primary

The school is an essential community facility which needs to be protected. There is concern in the community about dwindling numbers of pupils which needs to be addressed. (refer to Altass Map)

Protecting facilities that are already in place is essential to community growth so options including childcare, play equipment and other community activities outside of school hours should be explored to make better use of the facility.

Key Partner: Highland Council

## 5. Holiday Homes

An issue widely discussed is the abundance of short term let and holiday homes in the area. While it is accepted that these properties exist it may not be beneficial to the village to see these numbers expand without consideration to developing more permanent homes.

Key Partners: Local Businesses, Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

## 6. Digital Connectivity

As with other smaller villages a key issue within the community that was noted in the sessions was the obvious lack of quality digital connectivity. The lack of fibre broadband has left the village behind some of the other areas that have been upgraded in the fibre roll out over the last year. To help make the village attractive to new businesses or people working from home it is essential that this is rectified as a matter of urgency.

Key Partner: Highland Council, Highland Broadband

## 7. Mansion House Development

Rosehall Mansion House has been unoccupied for many years, the roof and structure is in decay and it requires action to prevent it from becoming unsafe. Privately owned and a listed building, it is a currently a redundant asset in the community. The community have noted that the core path from East lodge to West lodge could be improved to enable it to be used by wheelers and walkers and provide a safe route from Invercassley to the Primary School

Key Partners: Building Owner, Highland Council, Historic Environment Scotland (HES)

# Rosehall Actions

## 8. Speed Limits



There is some concern related to traffic speed in Rosehall, Altass and Linside. Areas to be considered include:

- All three main areas could have limits applied to reduce traffic speeds in the most built up areas.
- A 20mph limit has already been introduced around the village hall, primary school and cluster of houses around them
- Lower speed limits could be introduced through Altass, Auchintoul and Linside road. These are small narrow roads with blind corners and speeding is unsafe for both vehicles and pedestrians

A mix of speed restrictions including physical measures could be considered however a blanket reduction to 20mph is considered undesirable.

Key Partners: Highland Council & Police Scotland

## 9. Motorhome facilities



As site has been identified beside the Invercassley Tea rooms for a campervan facility complete with appropriate waste disposal and overnight parking bays.

Key Partners: Highland Council, Business owner, Landowner, Local community

## 10. Woodland Crofts



The forested area north of Raven's Rock and extending to the A839 could be considered for new woodland croft development

Woodland Crofts are a management approach which is relatively rare in Scotland but is picking up traction with FLS looking to sell off or asset transfer areas of woodland to communities. The woodland croft approach is one that is being pushed by FLS but also housing organisations like Communities Housing Trust to help encourage young people to find a way into crofting but also benefit from building homes.

External Partners: Highland Council, FLS, Nature Scot, Communities Housing Trust and Appropriate Community Groups

## 11. Active Travel



Active travel, in and around our communities, is essential for both local people and visitors. The path network between the settlement areas needs to be addressed as connections are currently poor. Existing paths around Ravens Rock and through some of the other FLS areas such as the Rosehall Forest could be further improved. A proposal to improve the track between Rosehall Mansions House East Lodge and Rosehall has been suggested. (see item 7)

External Partners: RADAG, Highland Council, Forestry and Land Scotland, Nature Scotland

## 12. Playparks/Greenspace



Ensuring a plan is in place to help maintain and improve the local playpark and playing field. Any improvements should involve local young people and an emphasis should be put on using natural equipment and play for all ages

External Partners: Highland Council, Local Community Groups.

## 13. Community orchard



There is an opportunity to develop the green area in the centre of Cassley Drive as a community orchard

External Partners: Highland Council, Local Community Groups, Residents

## 14. Community woodland



There is an opportunity to develop community woodland to the west of Cassley Drive.

External Partners: Highland Council, Local Community Groups, Residents, Land owner

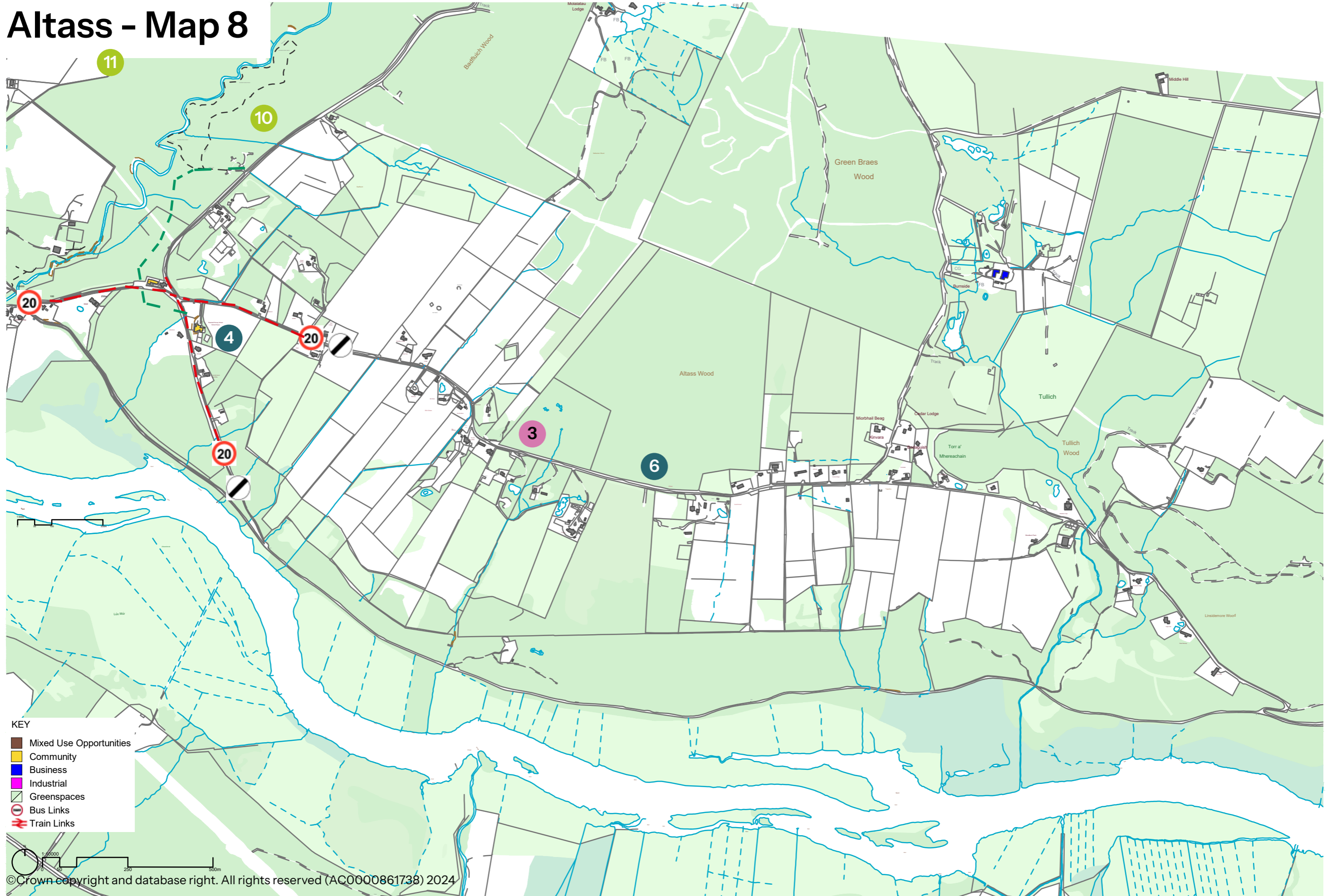
## 15. Public Toilets



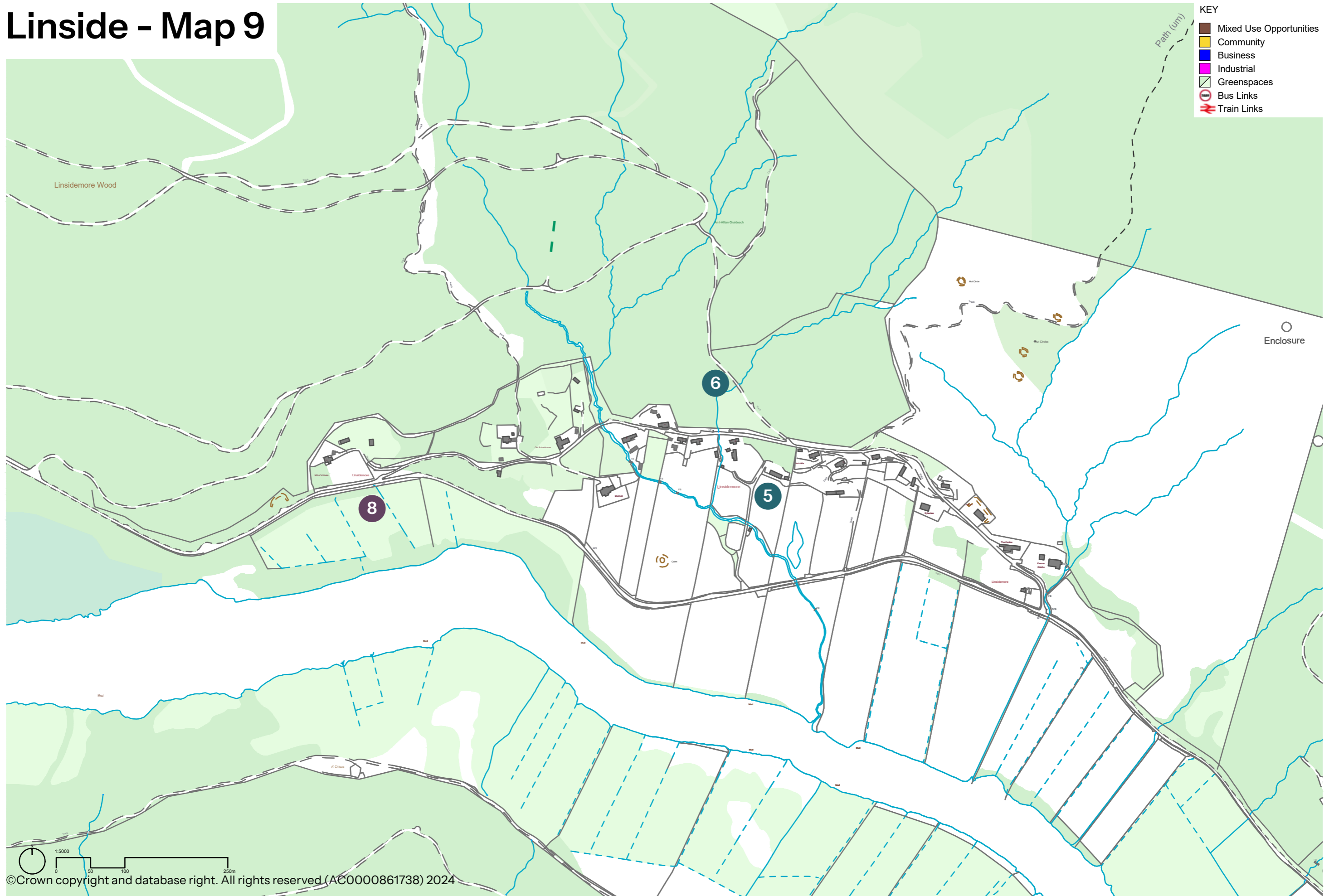
There are no public toilets between Bonar Bridge / Lairg and the west coast. New facilities could be linked to the Invercassley Tea rooms and potential campervan site.

External Partners: Highland Council, Business Owner, Land Owner, Local Community Groups, Residents

# Altass - Map 8



# Linside - Map 9



# Altass & Linside Actions

This part of the Local Place Plan focuses on Rosehall, Altass and Linside. The action areas (e.g. Social) and actions (e.g. housing needs) relate directly to the Community Action Plan, which contains more information.

## 3. Infrastructure Upgrades

In order to progress with new developments mentioned in this section of the report it is important that the area needs to have some infrastructure upgrades over the coming years to make this viable. Note that there may be a lack of water pressure in the area.

External partners: Scottish Water Highland Council.



## 9. Mountain Bike Trails

There is a walking & mountain bike trail through the local area that would benefit from further upgrade. Putting a strategy in place to see these upgraded in a similar way to the Balblair trails would bring more visitors to the area who would contribute to the local economy by using the hotel, restaurant and tea rooms as well as creating a healthy outdoor activity area for locals.

Key Partners: RADAG, Highland Council, SportScotland



## 5. Short term lets

An issue of contention in the village is the abundance of short term let and holiday homes in the area. While it is accepted that these properties are now in place and a small amount does allow for economic mix in the area it may not be beneficial to the village to see these numbers expand further. In the consultation it was stated that 50% of homes in Linside alone are designated as second homes.

The designated sites identified for the Local Place Plan should be allocated with the requirement of no holiday home/short term let applications being permitted.

Key Partners: Local Businesses, Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, CHT, Affordable Housing Associations



## 10. Woodland Crofts

The forested area north of the village hall and school could be considered for new woodland croft developments

Woodland Crofts are a management approach which is relatively rare in Scotland but is picking up traction with FLS looking to sell off or asset transfer areas of woodland to communities. The woodland croft approach is one that is being pushed by FLS but also housing organisations like Communities Housing Trust to help encourage young people to find a way into crofting but also benefit from building homes.

External Partners: Highland Council, FLS, Nature Scot Communities Housing Trust



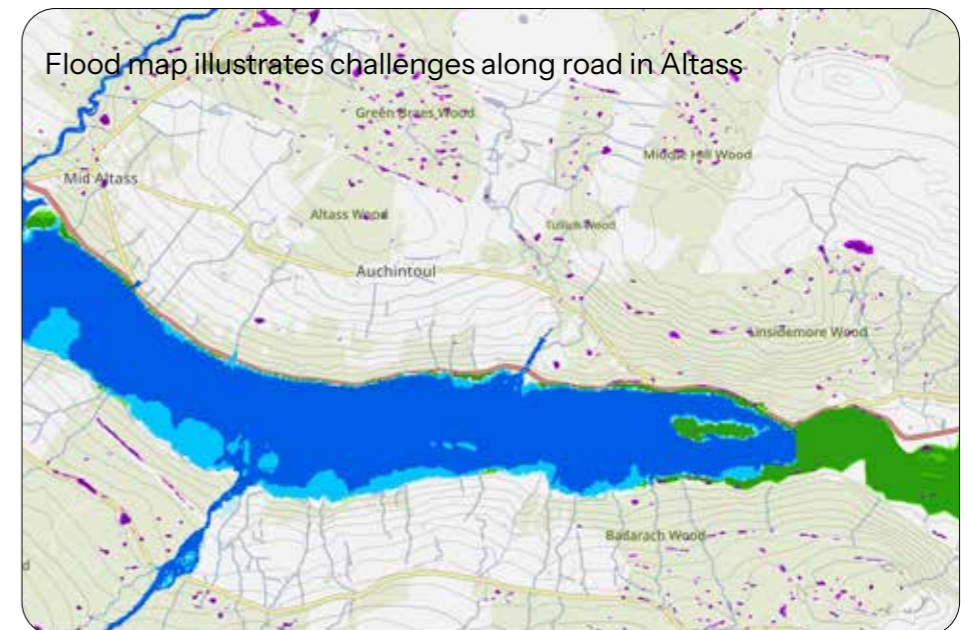
## 6. Digital Connectivity

As with other smaller settlements a key issue within the community that was noted in the sessions was the obvious lack of quality digital connectivity. The lack of fibre broadband has left the village behind some of the other areas that have been upgraded in the fibre roll out over the last year. To help make the village attractive to new businesses or people working from home it is essential that this is rectified as a matter of urgency.

Key Partner: Highland Council, Highland Broadband

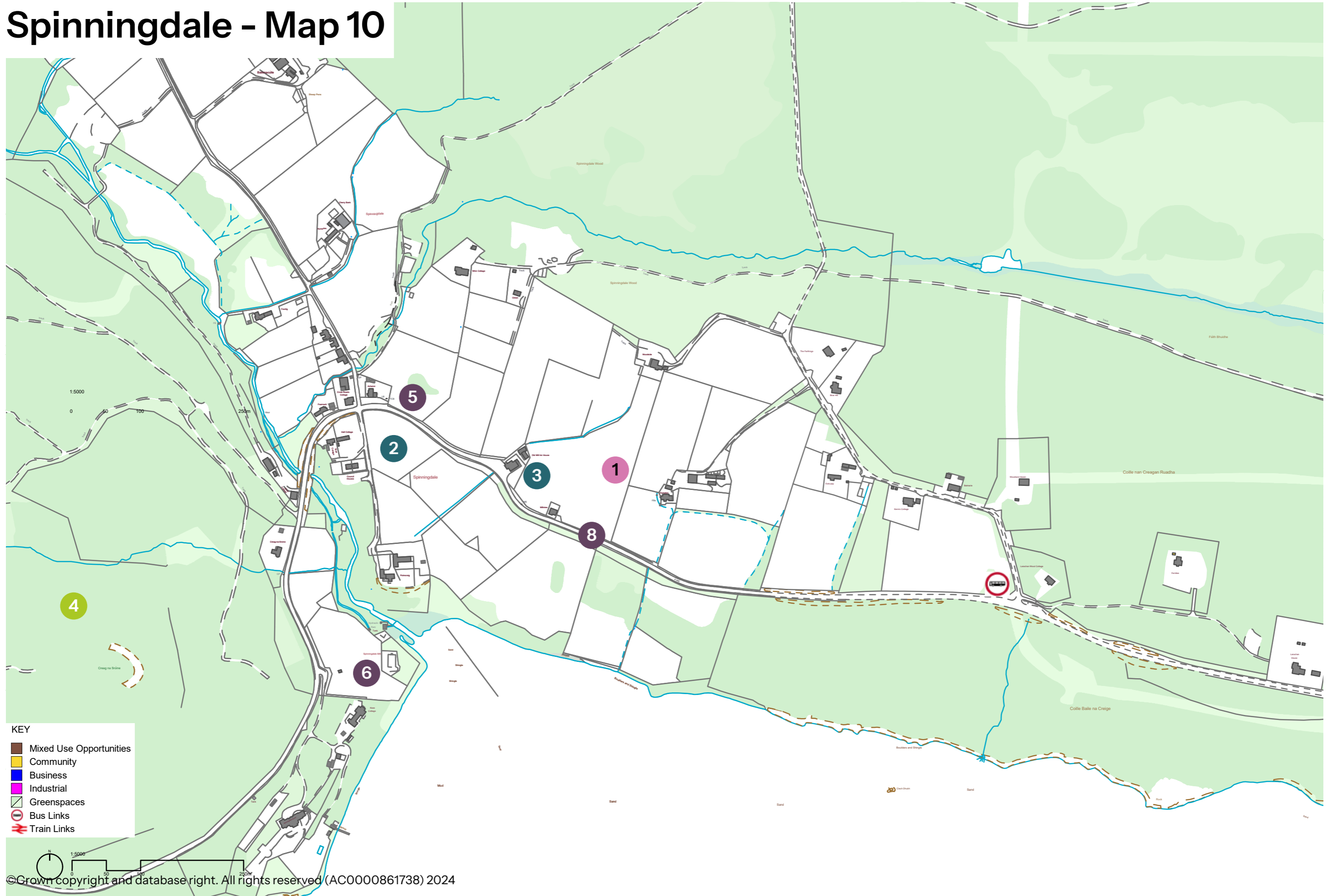


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# Spinningdale - Map 10



# Spinningdale Actions

This part of the Local Place Plan focuses on Spinningdale. The action areas (e.g. Social) and actions (e.g. housing needs) relate directly to the Community Action Plan, which contains more information.

## 1. Housing Development



It was felt within the community group that development locations in and around the the two areas likely wasn't required to be identified in the local place plan. While applications for new single houses can still be expected the need for community development wasn't identified.

## 2. Digital Connectivity



As with other smaller settlements a key issue within the community that was noted in the sessions was the obvious lack of quality digital connectivity. The lack of fibre broadband has left the village behind some of the other areas that have been upgraded in the fibre roll out over the last year. To help make the village attractive to new businesses or people working from home it is essential that this is rectified as a matter of urgency.

Key Partner: Highland Council, Highland Broadband

## 3. Building Upgrades



A number of the buildings in the area have become dilapidated over time and are now a point of contention for many residents. An investigation into how these buildings can move forward needs to be undertaken by the local community to understand how to get best use out of them

Key Partners: Local Businesses, Community Groups

## 4. Ledmore & Migdale



Continuing to support the amazing work undertaken by the Woodland Trust to improve and enhance the 700 hectares site of woodland, wildlife and paths.

External Partners: Woodland Trust, Forestry and Land Scotland, Nature Scotland

## 5. Bus Stop



The current bus stop sits at one end of the village and up a fairly steep hill with no footpath leading to it. A new bus stop in the village closer to the majority of houses needs to be investigated to provide a safe and accessible solution for public transport needs.

## 6. Utilising Our History



At the community consultation events it was noted by the group that more should be done to highlight and promote the history of the Old Cotton Mill which was built in the 1700's and burned down in 1806 into the condition that it is today.

It was suggested that this could be done by utilising permanent interpretation boards around the village and the surrounding paths in the same way that other local areas have done to help make an experience of the attraction.

External partners: Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Highland Council

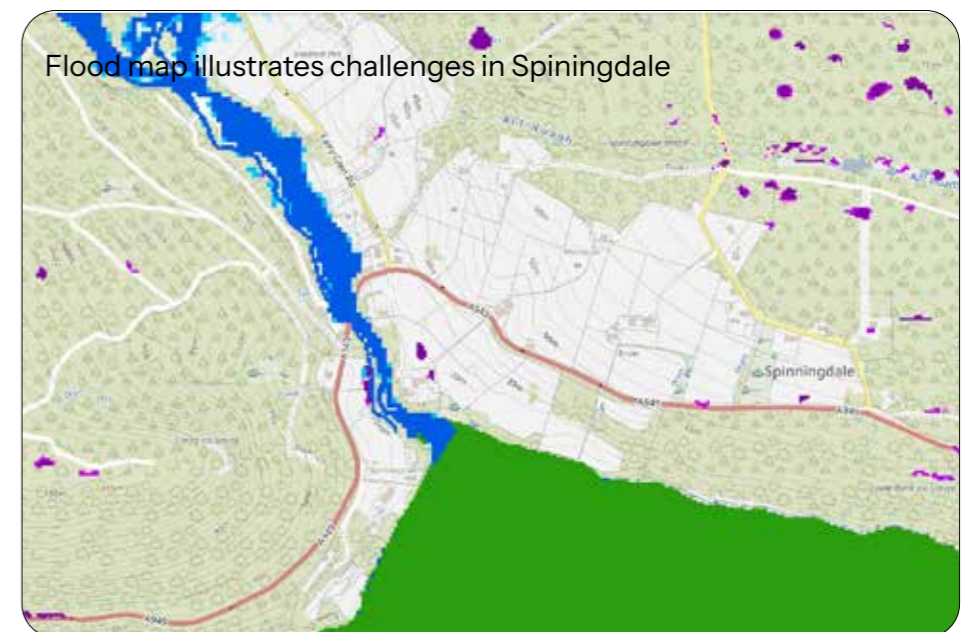
## 7. Speed Limits



A concern for some time of the community is the excessive speeds through the village which despite the Highland wide speed limit updates last year is still designated as a 60mph zone.:

A mix of speed limits being reduced and physical speed reduction measures to be discussed within community. Please see 'The Area as a Whole' section for more information about requirements and delivery.

Key Partners: Highland Council, Police Scotland



Flood map illustrates challenges in Spinningdale

# Stakeholders Glossary

Key stakeholders have been identified in relation to each action. For further reference, a glossary of stakeholder acronyms has been included.

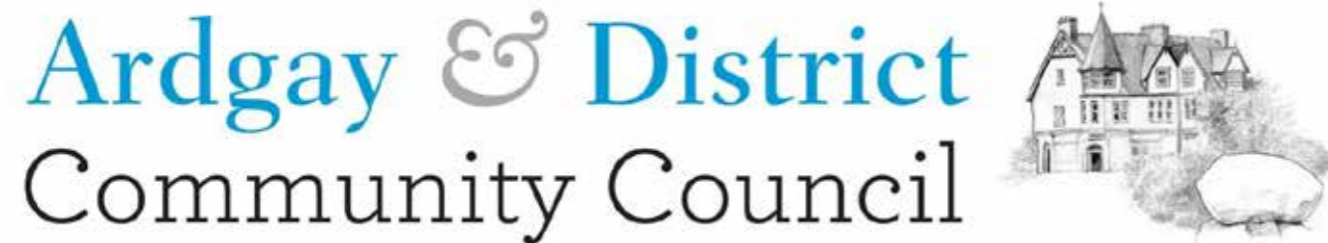
ADCC	Ardgay & District Community Council	
BC	Bradbury Centre	
CHT	Communities Housing Trust	
CCC	Creich Community Council	
FLS	Forestry Land Scotland	
HH	Highlife Highland	
HIE	Highlands and Islands Enterprise	
Hitrans	Hitrans	
HES	Historic Environment Scotland	
KoSDT	Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust	
KoSH	Kyle of Sutherland Hub	
KoSRT	Kyle of Sutherland Rivers Trust	
NS	Nature Scot	
THC	The Highland Council	
RADAG	Rosehall & District Action Group	
RSL	Registered Social Landlords	
Sustrans	Sustrans	
VGS	Voluntary Groups Sutherland	

# Next Steps

This Local Place Plan has been based on the Community Action Plan and developed through further consultation. It maps out how our communities would like to see the area improve over the next 5-10 years.

A number of the actions identified in the plan are already underway but many of the actions are still just ideas which need further development and consideration and, most importantly, funding.

# Appedix - Community Council Statements



Renewable energy developments are having a cumulative impact which is undermining and severely detrimental to the natural, landscape and cultural elements which form the very essence of the Kyle of Sutherland.

The wide panoramic views of landscape and seascape from Dornoch Firth/Kyle of Sutherland combined, along with the wide uninterrupted skyscapes which allow star gazing and northern light viewing, are key characteristics of the Kyle of Sutherland which are crucial to the special sense of place for both locals and visitors alike.

The current cumulation of operational and proposed renewable energy developments in the area is having a critically adverse impact on this irreplaceable and increasingly fragile natural landscape and its associated ecology, historic environment assets and communities.

The adverse impacts on the well being of our communities is significant and cannot be underestimated. The enhanced risk of wild fires, contamination of water supplies, alien noise, vibration, interference with radio signals and impact on livestock and wild animals are all negative impacts of these developments which our small fragile community does not have the resources and capacity to address. As a remote rural location we have a constant battle to retain population and the damaging impact of these developments threatens the very existence of our community.

We will seek to resist any further renewable energy developments which impact the special intrinsic character of our area and threaten the stability and sustainability of our community.

The communities of Creich and Ardgay are the custodians of the Kyle of Sutherland, a duty undertaken for centuries. The natural world along the Kyle of Sutherland is rare, endangered, and fragile. From the summit of Ben More Assynt on the West Coast to the Dornoch Firth on the East Coast, with its major tributaries the River Oykel, the River Carron, and the River Shin, this land is one of Scotland's most precious, and yet most forgotten wonders.

To serve and protect the Kyle of Sutherland, on behalf of Sutherland, Scotland, and the World, the Community Councils of Ardgay and Creich unanimously oppose the industrialisation of the Kyle. The area has a longstanding hydro scheme and already a number of wind farms, so is serving Scotland and the UK well with natural energy production. It should not be allowed to be irreparably damaged by further large-scale windfarm and battery storage developments.

Due to the imminent harm from numerous wind farm developments proposed on and around the Kyle of Sutherland, we wish to send a direct message to the Highland Council and the Scottish Government:

Refuse, as we do, all applications for further windfarms and battery storage within the Kyle of Sutherland and its tributary glens. and ensure that a full, cumulative nature impact survey of the entire region forms part of every new development application, including those already in planning and scoping.

Our Plan is to re-engage with the International Union for Conservation of Nature, who determine protected landscapes, within which part of our land is already included.

We call for an independent survey of the entire area including its rivers, ecology, natural fauna and flora, endangered species and the health and wellbeing of the local residents. There needs to be engagement with estate owners, including the Government's own Forestry Land Scotland, to commit to protecting the land and rivers from further damaging wind farm developments and a committed drive to return the land to the communities.

All that is already great about this wonderful natural environment, its unbelievable biodiversity, and its welcoming communities needs protected, enhanced and supported now, if these rural communities are to be able to survive and thrive. The Scottish Government talks a good game about protecting its rural communities and delivering equality, so it's time that they listened to us and our not overly ambitious Local Place Plan.

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# The End.

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For any questions  
please contact:

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