

Strathdearn COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

2022 – 2027

THE
STRATHDEARN
MEET. EAT. EXPLORE.



Strathdearn Community Council
Strathdearn Community Developments
Strathdearn Community Charitable Trust

Who's who and what do they do?

This action plan sets out what people in Strathdearn, collectively, have decided should happen in our community over the next few years. However, to achieve these things, we will need individuals in the community – people like YOU – to get involved.

If there is a priority described here that you feel passionately about, we would encourage you to get involved in making it happen. No one is too old or too young to make a difference in our community.

To express your interest, contact:

STRATHDEARN COMMUNITY COUNCIL: strathdearncc@gmail.com or

STRATHDEARN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTS: elainemacleod@strathdearn.org

STRATHDEARN COMMUNITY COUNCIL (SCC) is a statutory body. Like other community councils, it was set up by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. SCC acts as a voice for the local area, articulating the views and concerns of local people on a wide range of issues of public concern; and making representations to The Highland Council, other public sector bodies and private agencies on matters within their sphere of interest, including planning and licensing applications, and road safety.

STRATHDEARN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTS LTD (SCD) is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. SCD is also a membership organisation, and its Board of Trustees are elected by the members. The organisation's legal status allows it to own land and other assets, to employ staff, and apply for grants and loans. However, its charitable status places certain restrictions on the company's activities. For example, it may only engage in activities which are set out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association. In addition, SCD is not allowed to make a profit from commercial enterprises.

THE MOY SUB-COMMITTEE (MSC) was set up by SCD to identify projects for funding by Strathdearn's share of the Moy Windfarm Community Benefit Fund. The Sub-Committee is comprised mainly (but not solely) of residents of Moy and the surrounding area who are also members of SCD.

WHITE RIVER TRADING (WRT) is a wholly owned trading subsidiary of SCD. It was set up in July 2016 to operate SCD's commercial operations. Unlike SCD, WRT is allowed to run businesses for profit. However, as a trading subsidiary of SCD, all the profits made by WRT are returned to SCD to be invested back into the community.

STRATHDEARN COMMUNITY CHARITABLE TRUST (SCCT) was set up to disburse the funds received by the community from the Farr Windfarm. Requests for funding must satisfy the charitable purposes of the Trust and applications are usually discussed in public at Community Council meetings before being forwarded with a recommendation to SCCT.

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The third Strathdearn community plan

OVERVIEW

This is the third Strathdearn community plan.

The first Strathdearn community appraisal was carried out in 2006. This identified community aspirations and priorities to be brought forward for action, which led to the creation of a multi-use games area (MUGA), as well as adding extra weight to the community's aspirations for affordable housing. Activities for children also featured in this first plan.

The second Strathdearn community plan was published in March 2011, following an in-depth community study commissioned by Strathdearn Community Council in response to the substantial sums of money becoming available to the community from local windfarms. This study, carried out by the CADISPA Trust (Conservation and Development in Sparsely Populated Areas), resulted in the establishment of a company limited by guarantee with charitable status – Strathdearn Community Developments Ltd. – to take forward the community's priorities.

The second plan was initially intended to cover the period 2011 to 2016, but was subsequently extended as many of the actions included in that plan were still ongoing at the end of the five-year period. The following projects have been taken forward over the past 10 years:

- ▶ The development and construction of a new community Hub
- ▶ The purchase of the former village shop (now re-established within the Hub)
- ▶ Installation of super-fast fibre broadband to most households in Strathdearn (with plans for coverage of the entire area in future)
- ▶ Expansion of the local path networks in Tomatin and Moy (still ongoing)
- ▶ Establishment of the Strathdearn Carers (a community care team serving older and infirm residents)
- ▶ Construction of a new children's play area
- ▶ Development of a community website to complement the previously existing Strathdearn Facebook page
- ▶ Purchase of e-bikes for local hire, installation of e-bike chargers, and construction of a maintenance shed with tools
- ▶ A small works programme to make improvements to the physical appearance of the community including provision of benches along local paths

Work is still ongoing to build 12 affordable housing units (six of which will be owned by Highland Council), provide two building plots for self-build homes, develop after-school childcare services, and carry out further improvements to local walking and cycling routes.

The process of updating the Strathdearn community plan

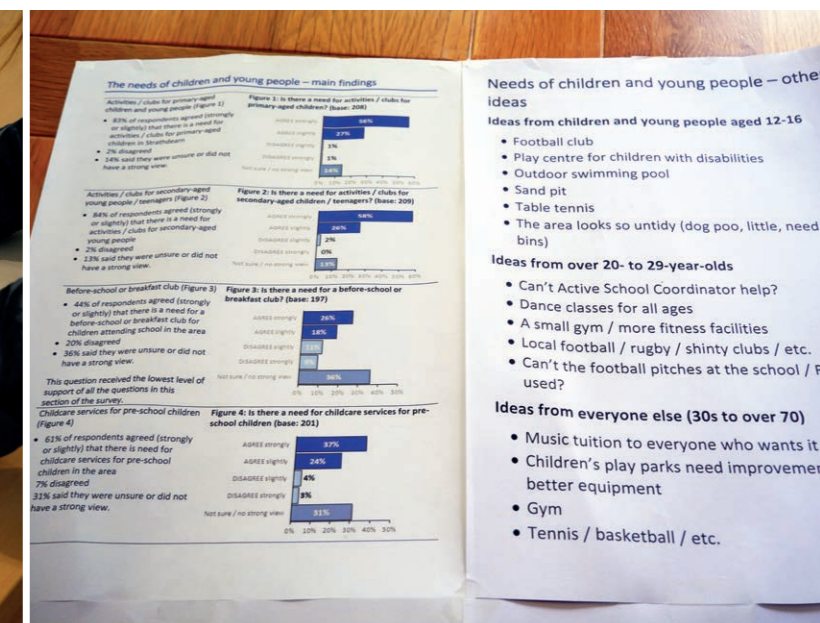
The process of updating the Strathdearn community plan was co-ordinated by a steering group comprising representatives of Strathdearn Community Council (SCC), Strathdearn Community Developments Ltd (SCD), the Moy Sub-Committee, the Strathdearn Community Charitable Trust, and other members of the local community.

The community consultation to inform the 2022 – 2027 Strathdearn community plan involved five stages:

- 1 Interviews with key community leaders and other stakeholders
- 2 A community survey
- 3 Focus groups with children and young people
- 4 Interviews with local business owners
- 5 A community event, held on 4 December 2021, to prioritise future actions

Who took part in the consultation?

- ▶ 25 stakeholders were interviewed
- ▶ 213 people, aged 12 and over, participated in the community survey
- ▶ 19 children in Primary 4-7 (aged 7–11) and 5 boys (aged 12-14) took part in focus groups
- ▶ 8 business owners were interviewed
- ▶ 40 local residents attended the community event in December



Our community today

A BRIEF PROFILE OF STRATHDEARN

LOCATION

Strathdearn is a small rural community in the Highland Council area. The area is named after a river valley in the Highlands of Scotland which extends about 22 miles from Coignafearn in the south to Moy in the north, following the River Findhorn's course through the Parish of Moy, Dalarossie and Tomatin.

Strathdearn is located halfway between Inverness and Aviemore, with Slochd summit forming its southern boundary on the A9. Located on the northwest boundary of The Cairngorms National Park, Strathdearn has a mountain / moorland scenery and climate.

POPULATION

The population of Strathdearn is currently estimated to be around 640 people (including children and young people).

Tomatin and Moy are Strathdearn's two main centres of population. The main centre of population is Tomatin, with a second population centre at Moy. The number of households in Strathdearn is around 300.

Strathdearn is very sparsely populated with just 1.3 people per square kilometre.

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

Strathdearn has a single primary school covering Primary 1 to Primary 7. P1–3 is taught in one class, and P4–7 is taught in a second class. As of September 2021, there were 39 children on the primary school roll. The school also has a nursery with 8 children attending.

There are no secondary schools in Strathdearn. Millburn Academy in Inverness is the school attended by most secondary-school pupils in Strathdearn.

There is currently no after-school care scheme in Strathdearn, but talks are ongoing with Youth Highland to try to establish after-school activities for local children.

A small number of primary and secondary-aged children in Strathdearn are home-schooled.

There are currently no registered childminders in Strathdearn.

HOUSING

Findings from the 2001 census indicate that the majority of houses in Strathdearn are detached or semi-detached, and just over half of houses in the area (52%) are owned outright or owned with a mortgage. Just over 20% of houses in the area are rented from a private landlord. Council housing or other social rented housing comprises less than 10% of the housing available in Strathdearn.

According to the 2001 census, 29% of houses in Strathdearn are occupied by just one person, and 36% are occupied by just two people. Thus, only around a third of houses in Strathdearn are occupied by families.

As of Spring 2022, work is underway to construct 12 new affordable homes in Strathdearn. This project, taken forward as a partnership between SCD and Highland Council will result in 6 community-owned houses and 6 houses owned by the Council. In addition, two self-build plots will be made available as part of this project.



HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

There are no primary care services in Strathdearn. Members of the community attend GPs, dentists and pharmacies in Inverness or Aviemore. In addition, the Milton of Leys pharmacy provides a prescription delivery service from Aviemore and Inverness GPs to all residents, if required.

SCD successfully established the Strathdearn Carers Scheme in mid-2015. This vital community care service for older and infirm members of the community was originally operated by Highland Home Carers (HHC). However due to the economic situation within the social care sector and difficulties in recruiting and retaining local staff, the contract for this scheme has been handed back to the NHS who are managing the service until a new provider can be found to take over.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES, INCLUDING SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES

After several years of community consultation and planning, a new community Hub (The Strathdearn) opened in Tomatin in October 2019. The Strathdearn complex comprises several buildings and incorporates the former Strathdearn village hall. The site includes the village shop, a new village café, space for meetings and events, a small play park for young children, a multi-use games area (MUGA), and parking.

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

There are several bus services between Inverness and Moy / Tomatin. Stagecoach operates the number 15, number 37, number X37 and the M39 services. However, these are infrequent.

Tomatin is on the main rail line between Inverness and Aviemore. Tomatin Station opened on 8 July 1897 but closed to passengers and goods traffic on 3 May 1965.

Most people living in Strathdearn are reliant on their cars for transport – which creates difficulties for younger people, people with disabilities or long-term health conditions, and older people.

LOCAL ECONOMY AND TOURISM

People in Strathdearn earn their living in six main sectors: health and social care, manufacturing, retail, hospitality, construction and education. Together, around 60% of the adult population are employed in these six sectors. A further 6% of the local population are employed in agriculture (including forestry and fishing). Around 15% of the working-age population in Strathdearn are self-employed.

The Tomatin Distillery, established in 1897, is the largest employer in Strathdearn, with 62 employees, although not all of these necessarily live in Strathdearn. The Distillery has a visitor centre which is open daily (7 days a week), and there are plans to further develop the site and experience for visitors.

SCD and its subsidiary trading company, White River Trading, employ seven staff on full- or part-time contracts, as well as a Financial Controller, an HR Consultant and the Company Secretary on a part-time consultancy basis. Most of these individuals live within Strathdearn.

Planning consent was granted in December 2018 for a large development at the site previously occupied by the Little Chef restaurant, a small hotel and fuel station. The developer, Braemore Estates, purchased the site in 2005, and current plans are for a 99-bed hotel (under a franchise with Holiday Inn Express), a farm shop and 200-seat restaurant, drive through bakery and food outlet, four retail units and a filling station (including electric car charge points). When this development goes ahead, it is expected that it will create a large number of new jobs in the community.

What do people in Strathdearn

THINK ABOUT THEIR COMMUNITY?

What people liked most about living or working in Strathdearn



What people said:

- 'Being in a rural community that is not over-developed.'
- 'Close community ties to the people and the area are the most important things. Everyone looks out for each other.'
- 'Community resources.'
- 'Family close by.'
- 'Love the friendly community.'
- 'The most important thing to me is that I have a lot of friends in the Strathdearn community, and we meet up during school, and sometimes at the Strathdearn Cafe. They mean a lot to me.'
- 'Freedom to roam and the peace and quiet on your doorstep.'
- 'Having a well-stocked local shop is very important to me. It is great having the cafe and new hall.'
- 'Excellent facilities for a small community.'
- 'A school of good repute – led and managed so the children have the opportunity to excel through opportunity.'
- 'I enjoy being part of the local church. We have a very special congregation and have a weekly Sunday service, a weekly prayer meeting and monthly afternoon teas.'

- 'I like being able to come home from being in a city for university to the countryside for the holidays.'
- 'I like swimming in the river in the summer and going into the woods.'
- 'I am interested in Strathdearn's local history.'
- 'Plenty of places to walk the dogs.'
- 'Local wildlife.'
- 'Moy is a friendly place to live.'
- 'The great work the community leaders have done to develop the community the way they have.'
- 'Peace and quiet and dark at nights.'
- 'The diverse nature of the community that draws in people from all backgrounds and professions.'
- 'The house prices are lower than [in] the Cairngorms.'
- 'I particularly enjoy the access routes for walking and cycling, which allows a healthy lifestyle for my family and our dogs.'
- 'A forward-looking rural community (e.g. broadband).'
- 'An involved community.'
- 'It has always been my home.'

Note: Respondents could tick more than one box. Therefore, percentages do not total 100%. Figures are based on 204 participants.

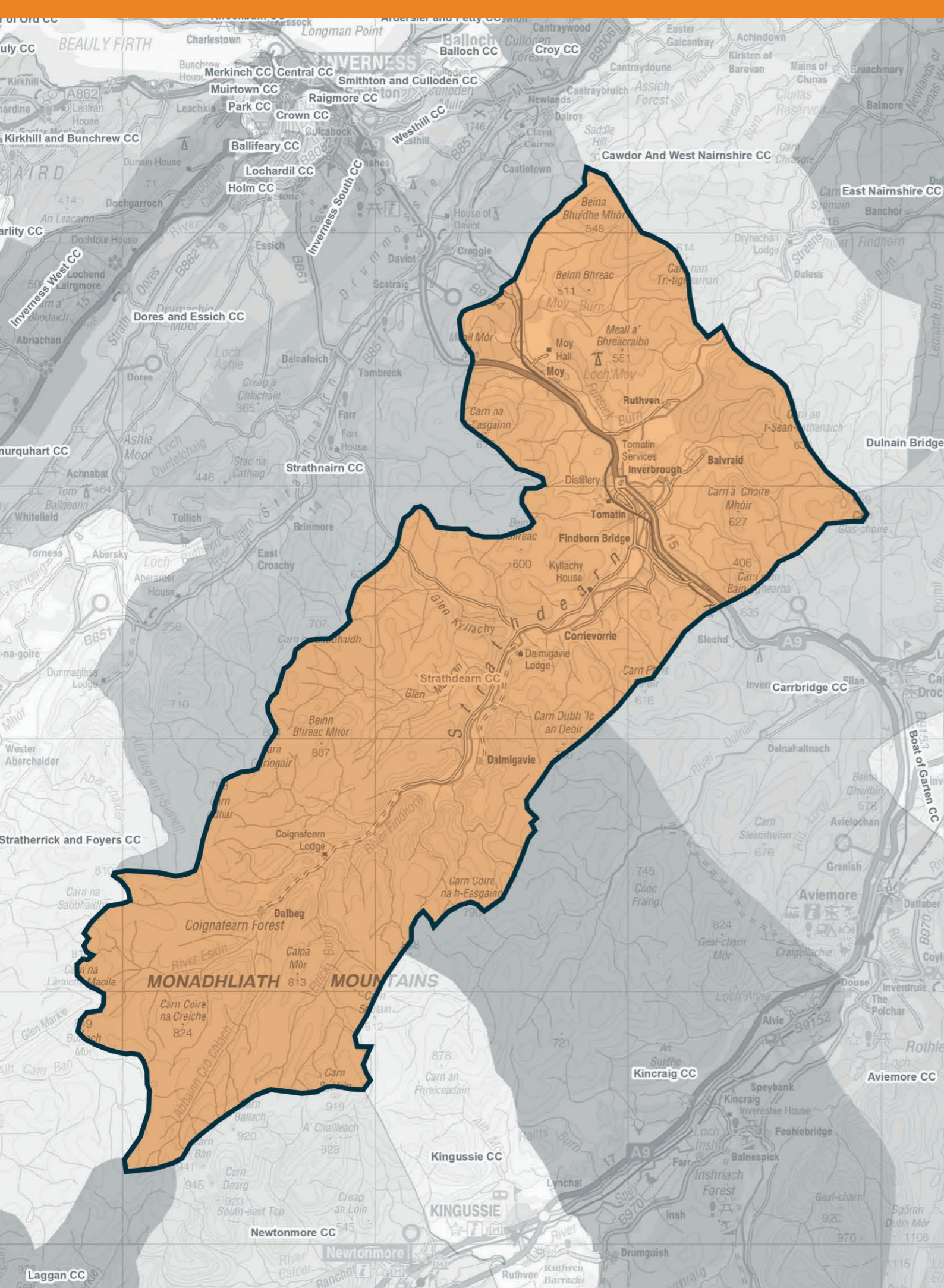
Things people don't like or are concerned about

In their comments, respondents to the community survey and children and young people in focus groups highlighted some things that they didn't like, or were concerned about, in relation to their community. These often related to (in no particular order):

- The appearance of the local area
- A lack of parking at certain key locations in the community
- A lack of suitable housing
- A perceived loss of community coherence
- Fears of overdevelopment and loss of environmental amenity

What people said:

- 'Tomatin has become a very scruffy untidy village so not a great first image or welcome to Tomatin.'
- 'Need to be able to retain families in Strathdearn and also enable older people to continue living in Strathdearn rather than be uprooted when their care needs increase.'
- 'I work in construction, and it feels like the Highlands are filling up with affordable housing. I'd rather see other infrastructure coming in as well.'
- 'Don't overgrow the area, it's perfect at the moment.'
- 'Private rented housing in Tomatin has become really expensive over the years.'
- 'Affordable housing also needs to be backed up with good community facilities and employment opportunities.'
- 'The pandemic has led to people exploring their local areas which has seen a large rise in people visiting local attractions with many of them having to park along road verges or on roads. There are also no litter facilities, so there had definitely been an increase in rubbish on local walks. There is sustainable money to be made here, but this needs to be tempered with environmental impact.'
- 'Parking needs to be addressed in Moy and Tomatin.'
- 'Car parking is crucial as residents, tourists and the wider public are unable to access walks and cycle routes without a place to park safely and appropriately.'
- 'It is a nice size, would be very sad to see it overdeveloped. Growth is healthy, but greed could ruin this place.'
- 'There are a number of tensions under the surface in the community, so all is not as friendly as it appears at times.'
- 'It used to have a close-knit community and used to look welcoming but now there is an awful mess where the Tomatin Inn used to be situated. Walks are limited with fences being erected and dangerous water holes in place. Certainly not the place it used to be.'
- 'Sporting estates were always a big part of Strathdearn and work for the kids during summer and October holidays at beating, etc. This seems to be lost now a bit, which is a loss for kids development I think.'
- 'The beauty of the countryside and the freedom to walk in it is so important. It is therefore a matter of public concern to preserve that beauty from a proliferation of more wind farms.'
- 'Do not want to see Strathdearn over-developed.'



Vision for the future of Strathdearn

Participants in the community event on 4 December 2021 were asked:

What legacy would you like to see from the windfarms for this community?

The responses indicated that people in Strathdearn have a vision for:

-  Attractive villages with excellent community facilities
-  A more socially cohesive community
-  A greener community, less dependent on fossil fuels
-  An economically thriving community, which is not spoiled by over-development
-  A community which invests in its future – including the future of its young people



What people said:

'Improvement in local facilities to help us become more self-sufficient and environmentally friendly. Help with solar power, perhaps, or less need for oil for central heating, etc. Help to move from oil financially.'

'To help households afford solar panels, anything to help us (stop) using fossil fuels. Our surrounding area (some) are not pretty to look at, do anything to remedy the effect. More simple benches around the walk please.'

'Purchasing enough land to create a decent sports pitch for the area (i.e. football pitch).'

'Simple improvements in and around village – benches. Assist local households with purchasing solar panels. Make Tomatin an attractive village to live in or visit. So need more of a local building, i.e. pub / restaurant, through to evenings to bring community together.'

'I fear that the windfarm money is detrimental to the community. Development in my opinion is going too fast. I would prefer some of the money to be given to the Highland Council so that many other areas of the Highlands can benefit. I feel this community is spending just for the sake of it – for example, keeping a hall open at huge expense / losses to the village.'

'Qualified professional staff needed.'

'A main hall with proper stage, stage lighting, sound system and better acoustics.'

'A community with more people participating and volunteering – less grousing on Facebook!'

'Buying land for a mixture of housing.'

'I just hope the legacy is positive for residents. I fear over-development of the area and I like living in a rural unspoilt area. I hope the legacy is to improve the area for locals rather than just to encourage tourists.'

'1. Making sure they (the wind turbines) come down once they have completed their lifespan. 2. Hopefully won't damage the community with tourism due to walks and other things. 3. Ace skate park. Pump track and dirt jumps.'

'Helping young (or not so young) to access apprenticeships, training, etc. to help them in their careers.'

'A business park to encourage people to live and work in Tomatin, rather than it becoming a 'commuter' place for Inverness.'

'Investment to ensure community assets are supported when windfarm money dries up.'

Main priorities

AND PROPOSED ACTIONS

This section sets out the main priorities identified by the community – based on the results of the community survey and the community event held in December 2021. These priorities are grouped under seven themes. The community's priorities will provide the basis for planning for the next five years or more in partnership with public agencies and other supporters.

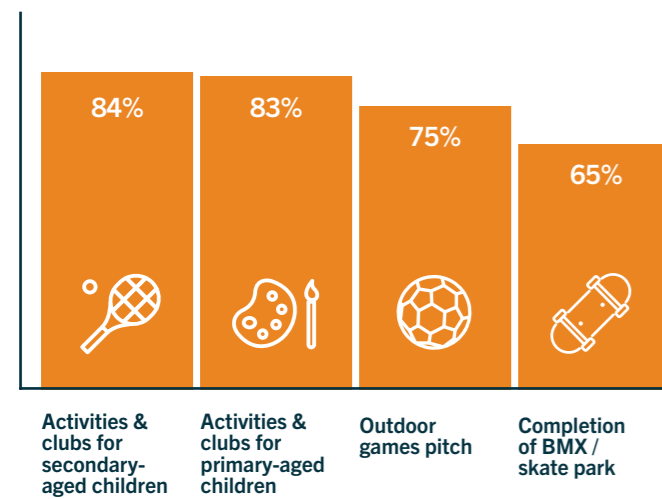
Alongside each of the main priorities are a set of proposed actions. Some of the community's priorities will be more complex than others to achieve and it may not be possible to achieve all of them within five years. However, the listed actions are the first steps in taking those priorities forward. Actions will remain under review and may change during the lifetime of the community plan.

Some of the community's priorities cannot be achieved by the main community groups working alone; some priorities will require the active involvement of members of the wider community to be brought to fruition.

THEME 1: Children and young people

The community survey included a series of questions asking about the need for services, activities or facilities for children and young people in Strathdearn. Survey respondents identified needs in relation to most of these questions. However, the three needs that were prioritised at the community event in December 2021 were in relation to (i) completion of the (planned) BMX / skate park – which was prioritised very highly, (ii) the need for activities / clubs for primary- and secondary-aged children and young people, and (iii) the need for an outdoor games pitch (for football, etc.).

Percentage of people who agreed (strongly or slightly) that there is a need for:



Children and young people from the focus groups said that there are *'not enough activities in the evening / weekends'* for people their age, and when asked what would make their community better, they said things like *'more clubs and things going on at the Hub'* or *'some youth groups or sporting activities'*.

Young people and their families will need to be consulted about how to take forward these priorities, particularly as younger and older children are likely to have very different ideas about what they want. A previous attempt to consult young people and their families about the development of the BMX / skate park was unsuccessful but, in any case, it is clear that the space initially identified for a BMX / skate park on Old Mill Road is not adequate.

Strathdearn Community Developments is currently putting together an application for funding which – if successful – will enable a youth worker to be appointed to take forward some of these priorities. There was a recurring view among people who took part in the survey that parents also need to play a role in the running and supporting of clubs and activities for children and young people in the area.



Main priorities:

- ▶ Explore options for establishing a young people's club – or clubs
- ▶ Develop proposals BMX / skate park
- ▶ Identify space / land for an outdoor games pitch (this priority has been incorporated into Theme 4 below)

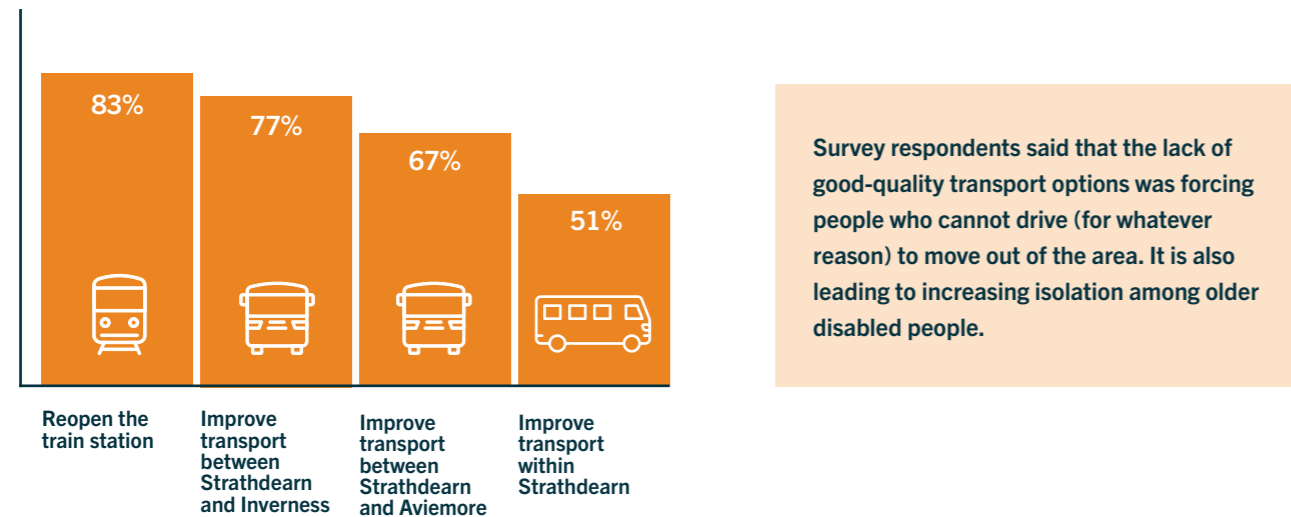
THEME 1: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	
Priorities	Proposed actions
Explore options for establishing a young people's club – or clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Engage with Highland Council, Youth Highland, and the Active Schools Coordinator to explore options for delivering a greater range of local activities for children and young people in Strathdearn ▶ Appoint a youth worker to engage with young people and their families, to help them decide (and prioritise) what they want, and what support and facilities are needed to make it happen
<i>Action by</i>	SCD
Develop proposals for a BMX / skate park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Youth worker to establish a youth action group, comprising young people and parents, to bring forward proposals about the kind of BMX / skate park they want ▶ Consult expert skate park designers about design options, space requirements, and costs ▶ Identify an appropriate location for a BMX / skate park
<i>Action by</i>	SCD, Community Council
Identify space / land for an outdoor games pitch	▶ (This action has been incorporated into Theme 4 below.)
<i>Action by</i>	SCD



THEME 2: Community transport

Improving local transport was a very high priority among respondents to the community survey. Needs were highlighted in relation to improving transport between Strathdearn and Inverness, between Strathdearn and Aviemore, and within Strathdearn. Disabled people who took part in the survey were more likely than non-disabled people to strongly agree that better transport was needed within Strathdearn.

Percentage of people who agreed (slightly or strongly) that there is a need to:



Poor public transport was reported to be having significant negative social and economic impacts on Strathdearn. The people most affected are the younger and older members of the community. Some survey respondents also noted the environmental impact of a reliance on cars for travel.

Survey respondents thought that improvements in local transport services would give people living in the community better access to medical services in Inverness and Aviemore and would make it easier for people who provide key local services to travel out from Inverness to work in Tomatin.

In terms of the priorities for improving local transport, re-establishing a train service to Tomatin was the top priority. Re-opening the train station was ranked as the second highest priority among all the priorities identified by those attending the community event in December. Furthermore, this is not a new priority for Strathdearn. The CADISPA study (published in 2011) also found that 're-opening the rail station at Tomatin' was a high priority for the local community.

There has probably never been a better time for the local community to campaign for the re-establishment of a train service to Tomatin. The climate crisis is driving significant changes in Scottish Government policies, which are aimed at improving public transport and reducing personal car use. Moreover, the rail service in Scotland has just come into public ownership, and there are now several communities in Scotland where rail services have been re-introduced after decades of closure – resulting in well-documented social and economic benefits to those communities.

If the rail service in Tomatin is to be reinstated, the local community will need to work together to make it happen. At the same time, people recognise that re-opening the train station will not happen overnight. In the meantime, it was suggested that the establishment of a community bus service (or other form of locally-run transport) could provide a more flexible option than the existing bus services for travel between Strathdearn and Inverness and / or between Strathdearn and Aviemore.

Main priorities:

- ▶ Re-establish a train service to Tomatin
- ▶ Undertake a feasibility study and options appraisal to establish a form of community transport

THEME 2: COMMUNITY TRANSPORT	
Priorities	Proposed actions
Re-establish a train service to Tomatin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Establish a rail service campaign group in Strathdearn to galvanise community support ▶ Gather evidence of the positive outcomes for other communities in Scotland from the reopening of rail stations or lines (e.g. Alloa, the Scottish Borders Line, etc.) ▶ Engage with other communities surrounding Strathdearn to strengthen the campaign ▶ Organise a vocal and persistent community campaign targeted at local councillors, MSPs, Transport Scotland, and the new nationally-owned Scotrail ▶ Pursue options for mixed business / community use of part of the former railway station site
Action by	SCD, Community Council
Undertake a feasibility study and options appraisal to establish a form of community transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consult other communities that have established successful community-led transport services, including the Badenoch and Strathspey Community Transport Company and the SCATA community minibus operating in Strathnairn ▶ Seek advice from DTAS's Local Transport Solutions Officer ▶ Commission a feasibility study and identify costed options ▶ Engage with the Transport and Streets Department at Highland Council to explore options for possible shared funding
Action by	SCD



THEME 3: Affordable housing

Housing was a key concern among survey respondents. People repeatedly voiced concerns about the impact that the lack of affordable local housing was having – and would continue to have – on the community in terms of population decline and loss of services. They noted that young single people, young families and, in some cases, older people were being forced to move out of the area because of a lack of suitable, affordable housing. This, in their view, was contributing to a breakdown of the community. Some respondents expressed concerns about the growth of holiday homes and AirBnBs in the area, and the negative impact this was having on the availability of local homes. Some wanted to see restrictions on the number of houses used in this way.

Strathdearn Community Developments has been working together with Highland Council for several years to bring new affordable housing to the area, and this work is now coming to fruition with the construction of 12 new houses expected to start in 2022. This is clearly a positive result. However, it was suggested – both by survey respondents and those who attended the community event – that there may continue to be a need for **additional** community-owned housing and council housing in Strathdearn once the current group of new houses are built.

Survey respondents identified several key priority groups for local housing including first-time buyers, young people who want to stay in the area, single people living alone, young couples, growing families with low or average incomes, and older people currently living in the community who wish to downsize.

Main priorities:

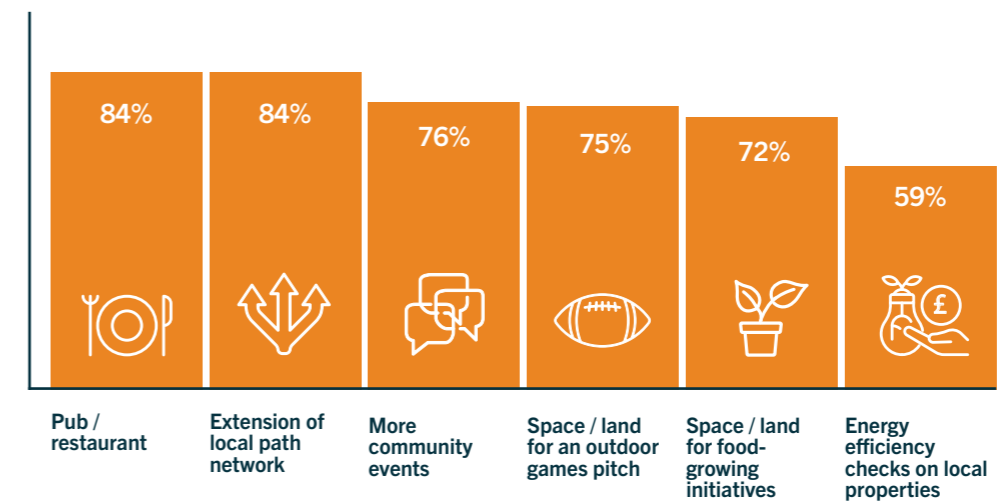
- ▶ Proceed with construction of planned affordable homes
- ▶ Identify needs and options for developing additional affordable housing

THEME 3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING	
Priorities	Proposed actions
Proceed with construction of planned affordable homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue to work with Highland Council to oversee the building of the new homes ▶ Agree and finalise (together with the Communities Housing Trust) an allocations policy for the new community-owned houses
Action by	SCD
Identify needs and options for developing additional affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review the need for future affordable housing ▶ Identify opportunities to purchase land for this purpose ▶ Engage with Highland Council and other social landlords regarding the development of possible future affordable housing in the area
Action by	SCD

THEME 4: Health and well-being

Findings from the community survey highlighted a range of needs in the community broadly related to health and well-being. These included needs relating to the social aspects of the community, the need for additional leisure and recreational opportunities and facilities, and the need to address fuel poverty in the community.

Percentage of respondents who agreed (strongly or slightly) there was a need for:



Social aspects of the community

84% of the respondents to the community survey thought there was a need for a village pub or restaurant in Strathdearn. The need for a village pub / restaurant was also ranked first among all priorities by those who attended the community event in December.

Survey respondents saw a village pub or restaurant as having an important social function in the community – in bringing people together and enabling people to meet and get to know each other. One respondent said: *‘Without somewhere for people to meet in the evenings, there is no community!’*

Respondents made a range of suggestions about what they wanted in a village pub / restaurant, including *‘nice music’, ‘a cosy atmosphere’, ‘good food / local produce’, ‘good service’, ‘an alcohol licence’, ‘pub quiz nights’, ‘family friendly’, ‘dog friendly’, etc.*

However, survey respondents and attendees at the community event were clear that it was not a *‘traditional pub’* – like the one that used to be in Strathdearn – that was needed. Nor did they think a traditional pub would be commercially viable. In addition, most people were not in favour of a new building being constructed – given the development planned for the former Little Chef site on the A9. Instead, there was a recurring view that a part-time pub / restaurant could be established as part of the existing café, or in the Hub.

Evening openings at the café have been trialled. However, not everyone in the community knows – in advance – when these are planned. Better / more publicity for evening café openings may be needed – especially for those residents who are not on Facebook.

Although the need for an evening eating place was the top priority for people in Strathdearn, respondents to the survey and attendees at the community event in December 2021 also thought there was a need for regular community events *‘to bring the community together more’*. Three-quarters of survey respondents thought that community windfarm funding should be used to hold more community events such as barbecues, community suppers, fêtes, etc.

Leisure, recreation and sport

Respondents to the community survey suggested that community windfarm funding could be used to support a wide range of leisure, recreation, or sporting activities. However, one of the highest priorities was seen to be extending the local path network: 84% of survey respondents agreed that this was a need in the area. Improving and extending the local path network was also among the highest priorities identified by those who attended the community event in December 2021.

Survey respondents – and children and young people in focus groups – suggested that extending the path network could involve (i) creating / extending existing cycle tracks and mountain bike trails, (ii) continuing the ongoing work to improve footpaths around Tomatin and Loch Moy, and specifically (iii) completing construction of a path along the road between the Hub and the primary school.

A recurring view within the survey was that the community needs more land to achieve its aspirations. Some of these aspirations included:

- ▶ **Space for a full-size outdoor games pitch and for community social gatherings**
- ▶ **A community woodland which could be used for both recreational and educational purposes**
- ▶ **Space for a community orchard or allotments (this idea received strong support by survey respondents, but was not prioritised at the community event)**
- ▶ **Space to develop community-owned workshops, studios, office space or storage for local businesses**

Development of a gym

The development of a gym in Strathdearn was the subject of a separate community survey carried out in March 2021, when free gym equipment became available to the community. This survey found strong support for developing of gym. However, as a more extensive community survey (undertaken as part of the current community planning process) was due to be carried out later in 2021, a decision was taken to put the gym equipment into storage to await the outcome of the second survey.

Fifty-nine (59) members of the local community took part in the gym survey. Of these, 95% (56 individuals) were in favour of establishing a gym in the Hub (in Tomatin), and 50% (29 individuals) thought it might be possible for a gym to be established in Moy. Most of those who wanted a gym said they would use it at least once a week.

Twelve people (out of the 213 respondents to the second survey) made comments to request a gym. Given the relatively small number of comments made on this issue, the development of a gym was not added to the list of things that people voted on at the December 2021 event, and thus it was not prioritised during the community planning process. However, given the support already expressed in the March 2021 survey for a gym – and the fact that the equipment is available to the community free of charge – further work will be undertaken to explore the options for developing a gym in Strathdearn.

Tackling fuel poverty in Strathdearn

One aspect of the local people’s vision for their community is that it should be ‘a greener community, less dependent on fossil fuels’. The issue of reducing dependence on fossil fuels is closely linked to reducing fuel poverty in rural communities, and these issues were a major theme in people’s comments in the community survey.

59% of respondents to the community survey agreed (strongly or slightly) that windfarm funding should be used to carry out energy efficiency checks on local properties. However, there was a recurring view that if community funds were used to provide such a service, then financial assistance should also be available to implement any recommendations. Respondents suggested that grants / loans should be made available to local people to install greener heating systems, solar panels, insulation, cladding, electric car chargers, etc. There were also suggestions that opportunities should be explored for the community to generate its own energy – for example, through the purchase of a wind turbine or through the development of a local solar farm or hydro scheme.

Grants / loans for such initiatives are widely available at a national level, and rural communities throughout Scotland are playing an important role in tackling fuel poverty among their residents. Although the topic of ‘energy efficiency’ per se was not prioritised highly at the community event in December 2021, the level of comment made in the community survey indicates that the issue of fuel poverty is of great concern to local people.



Main priorities:

- ▶ Consider options for further developing evening openings of the village café in Tomatin
- ▶ Increase interaction – and reduce social isolation – among local residents (see Theme 2)
- ▶ Improve and extend the local path network
- ▶ Acquire land for community purposes (e.g. community woodland, outdoor games pitch, community gatherings, fêtes, educational purposes, skate park, allotments, etc.)
- ▶ Explore the feasibility of (and options for) developing a gym
- ▶ Bring forward proposals for tackling fuel poverty in Strathdearn
- ▶ Explore opportunities for the community to generate its own (green) energy

THEME 4: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	
Priorities	Proposed actions
Consider options for further developing evening openings of the village café in Tomatin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Engage in discussions with proprietor of the café about ways of developing – and better publicising – evening openings ▶ Evaluate the success of evening café openings – seek views from the café provider, diners, staff, etc. – and assess what needs to be done to encourage attendance and ensure financial sustainability
<i>Action by</i>	SCD
Increase interaction – and reduce social isolation – among local residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Organise regular community events – consider ‘pop-up pubs’ in the Hall, family quiz nights, barbecues, and other community events ▶ Make available a small budget to local community groups for social, health and / or educational events to enable hire of equipment, marquees, visiting speakers, catering, etc. with a proportion of costs recovered through ticket sales ▶ Explore options for establishing a form of community transport to support attendance at community events and group meetings (see Theme 2)
<i>Action by</i>	SCD, White River Trading
Improve and extend the local path network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Engage in discussions with Forestry and Land Scotland or other commercial forestry managers in the Strathdearn area about the possibility of developing or extending local mountain bike trails and forest walks in a sustainable way ▶ Investigate options for extending the path between the centre of Tomatin and the north end of the village
<i>Action by</i>	SCD, Community Council
Acquire land for community purposes (e.g. community woodland, outdoor games pitch, community gatherings, fêtes, educational purposes, skate park, allotments, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identify potential sites of interest for community benefit (e.g. community woodland, games pitch, community gatherings, fêtes, educational purposes, skate park, allotments, etc.) ▶ Seek advice / support from appropriate agencies regarding possible community land purchase(s) or long-term loan / rental arrangement
<i>Action by</i>	SCD, Community Council

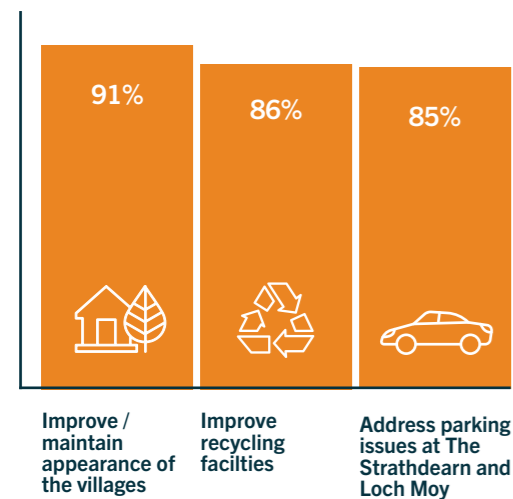
THEME 4: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	
Priorities	Proposed actions
Explore the feasibility of (and options for) developing a gym	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identify possible locations for a gym ▶ Carry out a feasibility study to assess the pros and cons of potential locations and to ensure that the facility will be sustainable in the long term
<i>Action by</i>	SCD
Bring forward proposals for tackling fuel poverty in Strathdearn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Obtain grant funding to appoint an ‘energy champion’ with the task of investigating the best ways of supporting local residents to access advice, grants and loans to reduce their energy consumption and make their homes more energy efficient
<i>Action by</i>	SCD
Explore opportunities for the community to generate its own (green) energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Contact Development Trusts Association Scotland to obtain a list of other rural communities with experience of generating their own renewable energy ▶ Contact other rural communities in Scotland to find out what is involved and how to make it happen
<i>Action by</i>	SCD



THEME 5: Safety and the environment

Community safety and the environment were important issues for those who took part in the community consultation. Survey respondents identified a number of needs in relation to these topics, and several of these needs were prioritised highly at the community event in December 2021. These included those relating to (i) parking and pedestrian safety, (ii) the appearance of the community, and (iii) recycling facilities.

Percentage of people who agreed (slightly or strongly) that there is a need to:



One child at the primary school said that 'cars driving too fast' was something she didn't like about her community. This same child said that 'having pavements' would be an improvement.

Parking and pedestrian safety

Respondents to the community survey largely agreed that there is a need for space (or additional space) for parking near local sites of interest – in particular, at The Strathdearn / Hub and Loch Moy. Participants in the community event in December 2021 also saw the need to develop new / additional parking in both these locations as high priorities.

Survey respondents thought that there was a growing safety hazard in relation to people parking on the main road in Tomatin when the Hub car park is full, and parking in passing places and on road verges near Loch Moy. Some survey respondents made suggestions about how to address these problems. However, the feasibility of these suggestions, and their potential impacts on local residents, would need to be assessed.

Concerns were also voiced by survey respondents – and young people in focus groups – about the safety of children and families having to walk in the road in Tomatin on the way to and from school, especially in winter. Local people are especially keen to see a footpath between the Hub and the primary school. There were also suggestions that the main road through Tomatin should be designated a 20mph zone, and there were requests for traffic calming measures to slow down passing traffic. One respondent to the survey referred to comparable work carried out in Farr to improve public safety.

The construction of a 'spinal route' through Tomatin has been a priority in Strathdearn for a number of years. The intention is that this path will connect the centre of Tomatin with the north end of the village. Work began on this path in 2015, but a number of issues have delayed its completion. However, in Spring 2022, work began on the section of path between the Hub and the primary school. Efforts to complete the remaining sections are ongoing.

Improve and maintain the appearance of Tomatin and Moy

There was a general consensus among respondents to the community survey that improvements were needed to the physical environment in and around Tomatin and Moy. Survey respondents suggested that the appearance of the local area could be improved by installing planters and planting flowers and trees (especially around the Hub), erecting better signage for walks, providing litter bins, installing better lighting, tending the milestones, and developing a local nature trail.

The appearance of the community was also an important issue for children in the local primary school. More than half of children in P4-7 said that discarded litter and dog poo were the main things they did not like about their community. The children suggested there was a need for (i) 'more bins around the village', and (ii) for people 'to stop littering' and to 'stop shattering glass in certain spots'. Other suggestions made by the children for improving the appearance of their community included (i) creating a wildlife garden, and (ii) planting more trees (as well as 'no more people cutting down trees!').

Some survey respondents suggested that windfarm funding should be used to employ (from within the local community) a small maintenance team all year round to help keep the villages tidy. However, this is also one area where members of the community could become more involved through volunteer litter picks and planting flowers. Recently a caretaker has been appointed to maintain the areas around The Strathdearn and the play parks in Tomatin. This is in addition to the existing Community Council scheme which arranges for grass verges in Tomatin and Moy to be cut once a year in summer.

Improve recycling facilities

Survey respondents highlighted a need to improve local recycling facilities – for example, through better provision of recycling bins and recycling points. This issue was also seen as a secondary priority by those who attended the community event in December 2021.

Some survey respondents made specific suggestions about where recycling points were needed. Others offered ideas of how to reduce waste in the community more generally, including by establishing a local garden waste recycling facility, exploring options for repurposing materials left over from construction projects (i.e. timber, roofing, etc.), and developing small-scale local plastic recycling units. At the same time, there was also a contrasting view that it should be the responsibility of Highland Council, not the local community, to deliver improved recycling facilities.



Main priorities:

- ▶ Address key community safety issues (e.g. traffic, parking, pedestrian safety)
- ▶ Improve and maintain the appearance of Tomatin and Moy
- ▶ Identify options for improving recycling in Strathdearn

THEME 5: SAFETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT	
Priorities	Proposed actions
Address key community safety issues (e.g. traffic, parking, pedestrian safety)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue to work with Highland Council to introduce traffic calming in Tomatin; and a new path between the centre of the village and the primary school ▶ Identify feasible (neighbour-friendly) options for expanding available parking at The Strathdearn and Loch Moy ▶ Moy sub-committee to take forward proposed solutions to the parking problems around Loch Moy ▶ If necessary, consult with local landowners and appropriate agencies about acquiring land to achieve these aims
<i>Action by</i>	<i>Community Council, SCD, Moy Sub-committee</i>
Improve and maintain the appearance of Tomatin and Moy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identify what needs to be done, and develop a maintenance plan ▶ Communicate the plan to the community and seek involvement from local people where appropriate
<i>Action by</i>	<i>Community Council, SCD, Moy Sub-committee</i>
Identify options for improving recycling in Strathdearn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Establish a recycling working group to develop proposals
<i>Action by</i>	<i>SCD</i>

THEME 6: Support for local business development

There was no specific question asked in the community survey about what could be done to help support local businesses and / or to develop a thriving local economy. However, the interviews with local business owners highlighted a number of needs among local businesses, one of which was a need for space – office space, workshop space, storage space, etc. It was suggested that community windfarm funding could be used to develop a small industrial estate with the rental income returning to the community.

Therefore, this idea was included (among other ideas suggested by local businesses) at the community event in December 2021 as a potential action, and it was ranked as a secondary priority by those who attended.

Main priority:

- ▶ Explore the feasibility of developing a small industrial unit with storage, workshop and office space

THEME 6: SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	
Priorities	Proposed actions
Explore the feasibility of developing a small industrial unit with storage, workshop and office space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consult with local small businesses to identify exactly what type of space is needed ▶ Identify potential sites and funding support (e.g. HIE, Highland Council, etc.)
<i>Action by</i>	<i>SCD</i>



THEME 7: Moy priorities

The final section of the community survey focused specifically on the needs of the community in Moy. Those prioritised most highly by people in Moy were (i) the creation of a community meeting space, (ii) the need for support for winter snow-clearing, and (iii) the need for a part-time ranger to manage the effects of an increased number of visitors at Loch Moy in Spring and Summer months.

In relation to the creation of a community meeting space, around two-thirds of Moy residents who took part in the community survey agreed that such a facility was needed in Moy. The Moy Sub-Committee are aware that there may be differences of opinion among people in Moy about whether a local meeting place is needed and how such a facility might be used. There are plans to carry out a further consultation with people in Moy in Spring / Summer 2022. In the meantime, the Moy Sub-Committee are engaging with Highland Council to identify a possible location for a meeting place.

Regarding the issue of winter snow-clearing, a community-funded snow-clearance and ice-gritting scheme has been established in Tomatin. However, there is currently no such scheme operating in Moy. The community survey included a question asking whether there was a need for a similar scheme in the Moy area, and the Moy residents who took part in the survey were unanimous that there was a need for this. (It is worth noting that non-Moy residents who took part in the survey also generally agreed there was a need for support with winter preparedness in Moy.)

Regarding the need for a part-time ranger, the Moy Sub-Committee employed a seasonal part-time ranger through Forestry and Land Scotland in June 2021. This was seen to have a positive impact on the issues of inappropriate parking, litter, and campfires around Loch Moy. The findings from the community survey indicate that there is support from people in Moy for extending this role. However, a commitment from Forestry and Land Scotland will be needed to recruit a seasonal ranger again in 2022. Discussions with Forestry and Land Scotland and other agencies are ongoing.

Main priorities:

- ▶ Continue to assess the desirability and feasibility of establishing a community meeting place in Moy
- ▶ Improve winter preparedness arrangements in Moy
- ▶ Investigate options for employing a part-time ranger at Loch Moy in spring / summer months

THEME 7: MOY PRIORITIES	
Priorities	Proposed actions
Continue to assess the desirability and feasibility of establishing a community meeting place in Moy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identify a potential site for a local hub in Moy in discussion with Highland Council ▶ Carry out further consultation with Moy residents to determine the level of demand for a local hub and the full range of potential uses for such a facility ▶ Undertake a costed options appraisal to investigate how this facility could be established in a sustainable way
<i>Action by</i>	<i>Moy Sub-committee, SCD</i>
Improve winter preparedness arrangements in Moy, Lynebeg and Ruthven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue to engage with Highland Council to clear snow and grit roads in and around Moy ▶ (At the same time) continue to explore ways of extending the Strathdearn Community Council winter snow-clearance scheme to areas around Moy
<i>Action by</i>	<i>Moy Sub-committee, Community Council</i>
Investigate options for employing a part-time ranger at Loch Moy in spring / summer months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Engage with relevant agencies and the Moy Estate regarding the possibility of employing a part-time ranger at Loch Moy to manage the effects of an increased number of visitors in Spring / Summer months
<i>Action by</i>	<i>Moy Sub-committee, SCD</i>



Summary of strategic themes

AND MAIN PRIORITIES



THEME 1: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- ▶ Explore options for establishing a young people's club – or clubs
- ▶ Develop proposals for a BMX / skate park
- ▶ Identify space / land for an outdoor games pitch (see Theme 4)



THEME 2: COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

- ▶ Re-establish a train service to Tomatin
- ▶ Undertake a feasibility study and options appraisal to establish a form of community transport



THEME 3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- ▶ Proceed with construction of planned affordable homes
- ▶ Identify needs and options for developing additional affordable housing



THEME 4: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- ▶ Consider options for further developing evening openings of the village café in Tomatin
- ▶ Increase interaction – and reduce social isolation – among local residents (see also Theme 2)
- ▶ Improve and extend the local path network
- ▶ Acquire land for community purposes (e.g. community woodland, outdoor games pitch, community gatherings, fêtes, educational purposes, skate park, allotments, etc.)
- ▶ Explore the feasibility of (and options for) developing a gym

- ▶ Bring forward proposals for tackling fuel poverty in Strathdearn
- ▶ Explore opportunities for the community to generate its own (green) energy



THEME 5: SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ Address key community safety issues (e.g. traffic, parking, pedestrian safety)
- ▶ Improve and maintain the appearance of Tomatin and Moy
- ▶ Identify options for improving recycling in Strathdearn



THEME 6: SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Explore the feasibility of developing a small industrial unit with storage, workshop and office space



THEME 7: MOY PRIORITIES

- ▶ Continue to assess the desirability and feasibility of establishing a community meeting place in Moy
- ▶ Improve winter preparedness arrangements in Moy, Lynebeg and Ruthven
- ▶ Investigate options for employing a part-time ranger at Loch Moy in spring / summer months

How to get involved

Would you like to get involved in taking forward the community's priorities and making them a reality? Why not get involved in one of our working groups – or join the Community Council or SCD Board.

To express your interest, contact:

STRATHDEARN COMMUNITY COUNCIL: strathdearncc@gmail.com or

STRATHDEARN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTS: elainemacleod@strathdearn.org

Many hands make light work!

Acknowledgements

The Third Strathdearn Community Plan was commissioned by a steering group comprising members of Strathdearn Community Council, Strathdearn Community Developments, the Moy Sub-committee, and the Strathdearn Community Charitable Trust – together with members of the community not involved in any of these groups. Members of the Steering Group were:

- ▶ Davie Cameron
- ▶ James Duncan
- ▶ Carol James
- ▶ Vivian Roden
- ▶ Edward Osborne
- ▶ Aimee Williamson

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Strathdearn
COMMUNITY
ACTION PLAN
2022 – 2027

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