

Final report of the Strathdearn Community Survey

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Executive summary

1. This is a summary of the main findings from a community survey, focus groups and interviews carried out among people who live and work in Strathdearn. This work was undertaken as part of a project to develop an updated community plan for Strathdearn. The survey was carried out during September and October 2021, and it closed on 31 October. Alongside the survey, focus groups were held with children and young people, and interviews were carried out with local business owners.
2. Survey respondents, focus group participants and interviewees were asked for their views about the needs of the community. Questions in the survey focused specifically on needs in eight main areas: (i) children and young people, (ii) community transport, (iii) housing, (iv) village pub / restaurant, (v) visitor management, (vi) tackling climate change and the impacts of climate change, (vii) other ideas for using windfarm funding, and (viii) community communication. In addition, a short section at the end of the survey invited responses from people living in Moy, on the needs of that community.

About the respondents, participants and interviewees

3. The survey analysis was based on 213 responses.
4. Survey respondents were 56% female / 43% male (1% of respondents answered 'prefer not to say'). Around quarter of the sample were aged 50-59. The smallest two categories of respondents were aged 12-16 and 17-19. Twenty-six respondents (about 12% of the sample) said they had a disability and half of those with a disability were aged 60 and over. Around a third of respondents said they had lived or worked in Strathdearn for more than 25 years. A further third said they had lived or worked in the area for 6-15 years. The remaining one-third of respondents were split among those who had lived or worked in the area for less than 5 years or for 16-25 years.
5. Two focus groups were undertaken among children and young people. These included (i) 19 primary school children aged 7 to 11, in Years P4-7 at the local primary school and (ii) four boys aged 12-13.
6. Seven interviews were carried out with business owners representing a range of large and small businesses in the area, including those involved in estate management, property development, B&B / self-catering accommodation provision, food production / catering, and electronic engineering.

What do people like about living or working in Strathdearn?

7. Most survey respondents said that the thing they liked **most** about living or working in Strathdearn was the 'beauty of the countryside'. In addition, between 50% and 75% of respondents also liked (i) the 'peace and quiet' of the area, (ii) the 'accessibility to Inverness and Aviemore', (iii) the 'good local walks' and (iv) the feeling that Strathdearn was a 'good place to raise a family'.
8. Children and young people said that the things they liked most about the area were (i) the people, (ii) the new community facilities in Tomatin (Hub, café, multi-use games area (MUGA)), and (iii) the rural nature of the community.

The needs of children and young people

9. There were nine questions in the survey about the needs of children and young people in Strathdearn. The findings indicated that the greatest needs were perceived in relation to (i) activities / clubs for primary-aged children, (ii) activities / clubs for secondary-aged children, (iii) an outdoor space for playing football, and (iv) completion of the planned BMX/skate park. Two-thirds of respondents, or more, agreed that there were needs in these areas.

10. The only question in this section which did not receive support from at least half of respondents was in relation to the need for a before-school or breakfast club.

11. There was ambivalence among survey respondents about whether there was a need for a paid individual to co-ordinate / manage young people's activities and services. Almost two-thirds of respondents (63%) agreed that there was a need for this post; however, within this group, only 37% agreed strongly. Moreover, in their comments, respondents often stated that there was a need for parents to be more directly involved in co-ordinating and managing activities for young people in the area. These views were expressed both by those who saw a need for a paid co-ordinator in the area and those who did not.

The views of children and young people

12. Children and young people identified the main problems in their community as (i) too much litter / dog poo lying about, (ii) a lack of activities / things to do, (iii) the need for improvements to the play parks and MUGA, and (iv) road traffic. Both younger and older children expressed a desire for a local youth group and more activities for children and young people, including football, dancing, mountain biking, gymnastics, skate boarding, swimming, etc.

Community transport

13. There were four questions in the survey about community transport. Survey respondents indicated the highest level of support for the idea of re-opening the train station in Tomatin – 83% of respondents agreed that this was a need in the area. A similar level of support was expressed specifically for the idea of improving transport between Strathdearn and Inverness. Overall, respondents were less likely to say that there was a need for better / more frequent transport (i) between Strathdearn and Aviemore, or (ii) within Strathdearn.

Housing

14. A series of questions were included in the survey about local housing needs. Just over half of respondents thought there was a need for additional affordable housing in Strathdearn. Among those who thought there was a need for additional affordable housing – and those who were not sure – the type of housing people thought was **most** needed in the next 5-7 years was **community-owned rented accommodation**. Respondents saw the least need for good quality private rented housing or owner-occupied retirement housing.

15. Respondents identified the following groups in most need of affordable housing: (i) first time buyers, (ii) young people who want to stay in the area, (iii) single people living alone, (iv) young couples, and (v) growing families with low or average incomes looking for a larger home.

16. Respondents highlighted several challenges which would need to be overcome in addressing the housing shortage in the area. These were (i) the need to persuade local landowners to sell plots of land for housing development; (ii) the lack of access to services / utilities; and (iii) the objections of some people in the community who do not want housing developments near their own homes.

Village pub / restaurant

17. The survey included one question asking whether there was a need for a pub or restaurant in Strathdearn. There was strong support for this idea, with 84% of survey respondents agreeing there was a need in this area. However, in their comments, respondents expressed many caveats.

18. Respondents saw a pub / restaurant as having an important social function in terms of providing a place for people to meet in the evening and 'bringing the community together'. However, respondents often gave reasons why a 'traditional pub' was probably no longer viable in Tomatin, and among those who thought there was a need for a pub / restaurant, not everyone was in favour of a new building being constructed. Instead, respondents suggested that current facilities (including the local café or hall) could be developed to serve this purpose on a part-time basis (i.e. two or three evenings per week).

Visitor management

19. The survey included 10 questions regarding services / facilities for visitors. Space for parking – at Loch Moy and at The Strathdearn in Tomatin – was seen to be the greatest need, and there was widespread agreement (in the comments) that the parking problems in these two areas needed to be addressed. A few respondents offered suggestions about how this could be done, including by (i) relocating the MUGA, (ii) providing alternative parking for Hub staff elsewhere, and (iii) identifying land near Loch Moy which could be developed for car parking.

20. In terms of visitor accommodation, the responses to the survey indicated that there may be a need for certain types of tourist accommodation, but the general view (from the comments) was that it should be left to the private sector to provide this.

21. The comments in this section highlighted ongoing tensions and ambivalence in the community about encouraging tourism.

Tackling climate change and the impacts of climate change

22. The survey included a range of questions about possible ways of addressing climate change at a local level. Respondents were most likely to identify a need for improved local recycling facilities – 86% of respondents agreed (strongly or slightly) that this was a need in the area. There was also relatively strong support for the development of local allotments or a community orchard – 72% agreed (strongly or slightly) that there was a need for this.

23. Respondents also made a wide range of suggestions for other ways that community windfarm funding could be used to tackle climate change and the impacts of climate change in Strathdearn. The three main suggestions involved (i) providing support (through a loan or grant scheme) to local residents and businesses to make their homes / premises more energy efficient, (ii) investigating

the opportunities for the community as a whole to generate its own energy, and (iii) planting more trees, shrubs and flowers and supporting local wildlife conservation efforts.

24. Respondents were asked about the extent to which they supported possible future renewable energy developments in Strathdearn. Two-thirds of respondents (67%) indicated that they supported such developments (strongly or slightly). Inadvertently, the survey did not include space for comments following this question. However, some respondents did comment. These individuals expressed general support for renewable energy developments but were concerned about the visual impact of an increasing number of wind turbines on the hills in Strathdearn.

Other ideas for using local windfarm funding

25. There were six questions in the survey inviting views and comments on other ideas for using local windfarm funding. Of the options offered, the strongest support was indicated for (i) making improvements to the physical environment of the community – 91% of respondents agreed (strongly or slightly) that this was needed, and (ii) improving or extending the local path network – 84% agreed (strongly or slightly) that this was needed.

26. Respondents also made other suggestions for how local windfarm funding could be used for the benefit of Strathdearn. Those mentioned most often included: (i) development of additional leisure / recreational facilities, (ii) establishing a community wealth fund, (iii) purchasing land for a community woodland, and (iv) offering support for local economic development. Some people made more general statements about how windfarm funding should be used. Whilst there was no clear consensus in these comments, the issue of ‘sustainability’ was a recurring theme – as was the view the community benefit funding should not be given to individuals who do not really need it.

Community communication

27. The survey included a series of questions about community communication. Respondents were most likely to say that they had enough information about what the Strathdearn Community Council and Strathdearn Community Developments were doing, and they were least likely to say they had enough information about what the Strathdearn Community Charitable Trust was doing.

28. Respondents were also more likely to say that they felt able to make their views known in relation to Community Council discussions, as compared with the other two groups.

29. Respondents offered a range of suggestions for how communication between the three groups and other members of the community could be improved. These suggestions included: (i) making available better / clearer information about the purposes of, and differences between the groups, (ii) changing the timing and format of meetings, (iii) ensuring greater transparency through better reporting; and (iv) holding democratic elections (and providing information about how members of the community can stand for election).

30. The Strathdearn newsletter is an important vehicle for community communication and 75% of respondents to the survey said they **always** read the newsletter; a further 22% said they **sometimes** read it. In addition, respondents were most likely to say that they preferred to receive information about what is happening in their local community **through print or by email** – rather than through Facebook, by visiting a website, or through local notice boards.

The needs of Moy

31. The last five questions in the survey sought views about the needs of the community at Moy. There was unanimous agreement that support was needed for winter preparedness in that community. There was also relatively strong support among Moy residents for the idea of a part-time ranger, based at Loch Moy, and for the creation of a Moy community hub. However, in relation to both of these ideas, there were caveats and concerns voiced.

32. In their comments, respondents from Moy often highlighted concerns about parking problems at Loch Moy and suggested that these needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The needs of businesses in Strathdearn

33. Interviews with business owners identified a number of challenges facing businesses in Strathdearn, including difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff (which was attributed to the lack of affordable accommodation in the area) and a lack of local storage and office space.

34. Business owners made a range of suggestions for ways that windfarm funding could be used to support social and economic development in Strathdearn – which would lead to a growth in local jobs and help young people from the area to establish their own businesses. Suggestions included providing storage containers or office space to rent; creating an online business portal; providing micro-loans to local small business; and offering basic recruitment services for local businesses. There was also a suggestion that community leaders should consider ways of telling the story of the local area – both to visitors and to local people. This would lead to a sense of shared community and generate pride in the area.

Conclusions

35. The findings of the survey, focus groups and interviews have identified where there are needs in the local community. In that sense, this report provides useful information for local community groups in their future planning. However, in many respects, the findings may be seen as presenting a ‘wish list’ – a list of needs without any prioritisation attached to them. It is possible, on the basis of these findings, to say (for example) that there was a broad consensus among the residents of Strathdearn that there are needs in relation to (i) activities for young people, (ii) affordable housing, (iii) a railway service, (iv) a pub / restaurant (for evening meals), (v) the physical environment (particularly in and around Tomatin), (vi) parking (at The Strathdearn and Loch Moy), (vii) the local path network, (viii) recycling facilities, etc. However, what the findings **do not indicate** is where the community’s priorities lie. The community event, held on 4 December 2022, provided the necessary prioritisation of the wish list, and identified where action should be taken first.

36. However, it is also important to bear in mind that, even if certain needs are **not** prioritised highly by the community in this current exercise, this does not mean that no action will necessarily be taken to address those needs. Community priorities will be kept under review during the lifetime of the new community plan, and there is the option to bring forward less highly prioritised needs if there is sufficient community support and the resources (including funding) to do so.

1. Introduction

1.1 This is a report of a community survey carried out among people who live and work in Strathdearn. The survey was open for responses in September and October 2021 and it closed on 31 October. This report also includes findings from interviews / focus groups with local business owners and local children and young people, which took place during the survey.

About the survey

1.2 This work was part of a larger project to develop an updated community plan for Strathdearn. The project involved five stages:

- **Stage 1:** interviews with key stakeholders
- **Stage 2:** the community survey
- **Stage 3:** interviews / focus groups with local business owners and children and young people
- **Stage 4:** a community event – the purpose of which was to present the results of stages 1-3 to the community and to ask the community to prioritise future actions
- **Stage 5:** drafting of the community plan and presentation to the community.

1.3 The development of the survey questions was informed by the findings from the Stage 1 interviews with key stakeholders. This report includes the findings from Stages 2 and 3. Findings from Stages 1 and 4 have been reported separately.

1.4 The survey contained a mix of closed (tick-box / multiple-choice) and open (free text) questions which invited views from local residents about the needs of the community in specific areas. Altogether, there were 36 numbered questions; however, most of the closed questions contained multiple sub-questions. In general, the closed questions asked respondents if they **agreed** (strongly or slightly) or **disagreed** (strongly or slightly) that certain needs existed in Strathdearn. Respondents were also given the option to say if they were not sure or had no strong view on a particular issue. The survey covered the following themes:

- What people like about living and working in Strathdearn
- Children and young people
- Community transport
- Housing
- Village pub / restaurant
- Visitor management
- Tackling climate change and the impacts of climate change
- Other ideas for using windfarm funding
- Community communication.

1.5 A short section at the end of the survey invited responses from people living in Moy, on the needs of that particular community. (A copy of the survey is attached as a separate document.)

1.6 The survey was administered online (using SurveyMonkey) and on paper (for those who could not easily access the online version).

About the survey analysis

1.7 Frequency analysis was carried out on all the closed questions in the survey, and the results are presented in tables or graphs throughout this report.

1.8 Thematic analysis was carried out on the responses to the open questions.

1.9 Note that not all respondents answered every question – and in some cases, respondents made a comment in response to an open question, but the comment did not address that question. If the comment addressed a different question in the survey, it was analysed together with the comments received on that question.

1.10 All the tables / charts in this report provide information about the total number of people who answered the question. This is referred to as the ‘base’ number of respondents. Most of the charts in this report present the **percentage** of respondents who answered in a certain way. However, where there were very small number of respondents (for example, in relation to the questions about the needs of Moy), the results are reported as **numbers**, rather than percentages.

About the focus groups / interviews

1.11 In addition to the community survey, focus groups were carried out with children and young people and interviews were carried out with business owners in Strathearn. The children and young people’s focus groups included one group with five boys aged 12-14, and one group of 19 children aged 7 to 11 in Years P4-7 at the Strathearn Primary School.

1.12 Seven telephone and online interviews were undertaken with eight business owners in Strathearn.¹ These individuals represented a range of large and small businesses including those involved in estate management, property development, B&B / self-catering accommodation provision, food production / catering, and electronic engineering.

About the report

1.13 The following chapter of this report (Chapter 2) provides information about the respondents to the survey. Chapters 3 – 12 present the findings from the survey, with each chapter focusing on one of the main themes in the survey. Findings from the focus groups with children and young people have been included at the end of Chapter 3 (which discusses what local people like about living in Strathearn) and Chapter 4 (which focuses on the needs of children and young people). Finally, Chapter 13 presents the findings from the interviews with local business owners. A brief summary of the key finding from each chapter is presented at the end of that chapter.

¹ These were in addition to any business owners who took part in the Stage 1 interviews.

2. Description of the survey responses and respondents

2.1 This section provides information about the responses and respondents to the survey.

Responses to the survey

Number of responses received

2.2 The survey received 254 responses through the online response form by the closing date of 31 October 2021. An additional 10 responses were received on paper.

Number of responses included in the analysis

2.3 This survey was intended for people who live and / or work in Strathearn. Therefore, the first question in the survey asked respondents if they lived or worked in the area. Those who answered 'no' were redirected out of the survey. There were 6 individuals who answered 'no' to this question, and these responses were removed from the survey database before analysis.

2.4 In addition, upon examination of the survey responses, it was found that a further 31 responses were entirely blank – apart from the initial demographic questions. These responses were also removed from the analysis.

2.5 Finally, 14 respondents answered the initial screening question, the initial demographic questions and the first main question of the survey ('What do you like about living or working in Strathearn?'), but then answered no additional questions. These 14 responses were also removed from the analysis.

2.6 Thus, **the analysis was based on 213 responses**. See Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Responses received and responses removed from the analysis

Responses received	
• Responses received online	254
• Responses received on paper	+ 10
Responses removed	
• Respondent did not live or work in Strathearn	- 6
• Respondent answered initial demographic questions only	- 31
• Respondent answered initial demographic questions and Question 1 only	- 14
Total responses included in the analysis	213

Description of the respondents

2.7 The survey contained an initial set of demographic questions. These asked respondents about their geographic location, gender, age, disability, and length of time living / working in Strathearn.

Geographic location (residents of Moy)

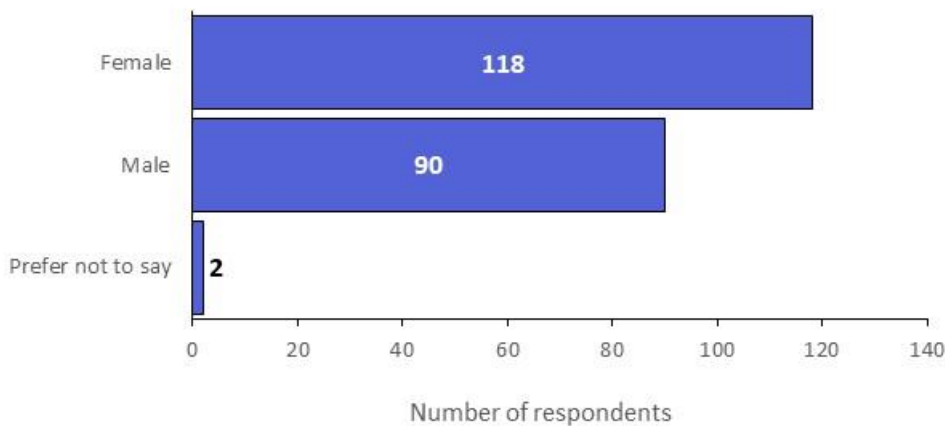
2.8 The survey included a short set of questions which were intended specifically to gather views from people living in Moy. Thus, respondents were asked at the start of the survey if they lived in

Moy. A total of 36 respondents answered ‘yes’ to this question. Further details and information about the characteristics of this group are presented in Chapter 12.

Gender

2.9 Respondents were asked if they identified as male, female, other, or if they preferred not to say. Figure 2.1 shows that 118 (56%) identified as female and 90 (43%) identified as male. Two respondents (1% of the sample) answered ‘prefer not to say’. None of the respondents self-identified as ‘Other’.

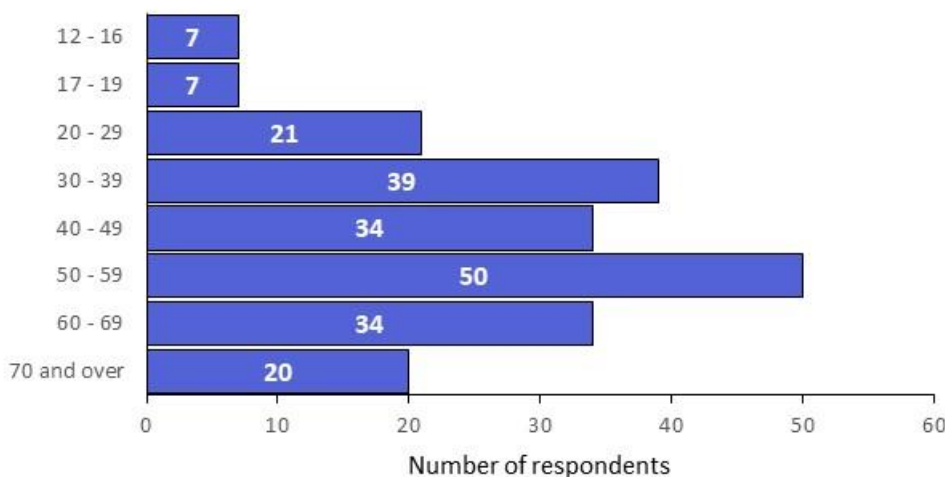
Figure 2.1: Respondent gender (base: 210)



Age

2.10 Respondents were asked to indicate their age by selecting one of eight age group categories. Figure 2.2 shows that the smallest two categories of respondents were aged 12–16 and 17–19.² The largest category of respondents (around a quarter of the sample) were aged 50–59.

Figure 2.2: Respondent age group (base: 212)



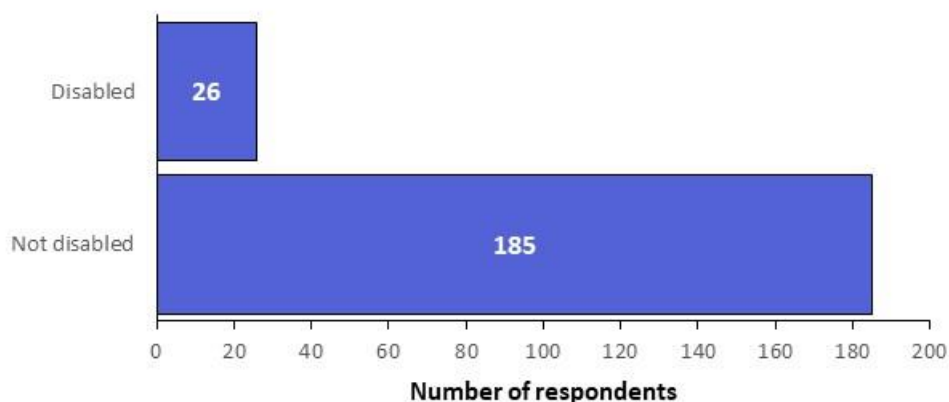
Disability

2.11 Respondents were asked if they had a disability, which was defined as ‘a physical or mental health condition that lasts or is expected to last 12 months or more, and which limits your ability to

² In the remainder of this report these two categories have been combined in a single category: ‘under 20’.

carry out day-to-day activities'. Figure 2.3 shows that 26 respondents (12% of the sample) said they had a disability. Half of those who said they had a disability (13 out of 26) were aged 60 and over.

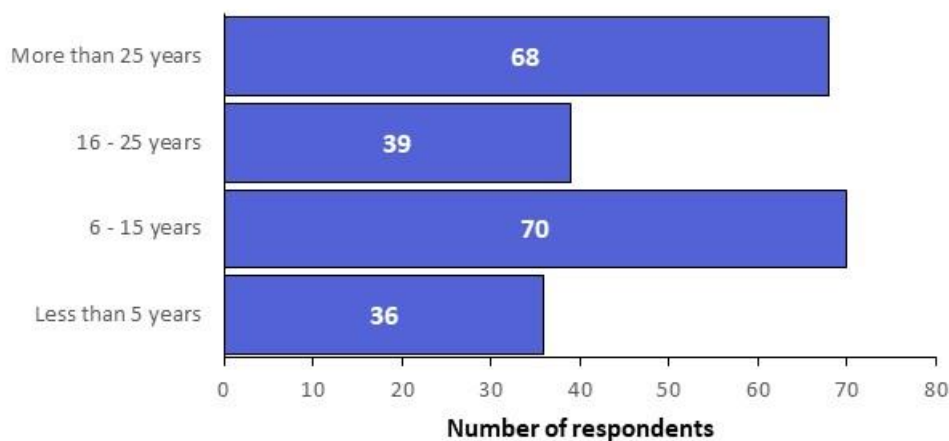
Figure 2.3: Whether respondents had a disability (base: 211)



Number of years resident in Strathearn

2.12 Finally, respondents were asked how long they have lived (or worked) in the Strathearn area. Around a third of respondents (68 out of 213 or 32%) said they had lived or worked in the area for more than 25 years. A similar proportion (70 out of 213, or 33%) said they had lived or worked in the area for 6–15 years. The remaining one-third of respondents were split among those who had lived or worked in the area for less than 5 years, or for 16–25 years.

Figure 2.4: Number of years respondents have lived or worked in the Strathearn area (base: 213)



3. What do people like about living or working in Strathdearn

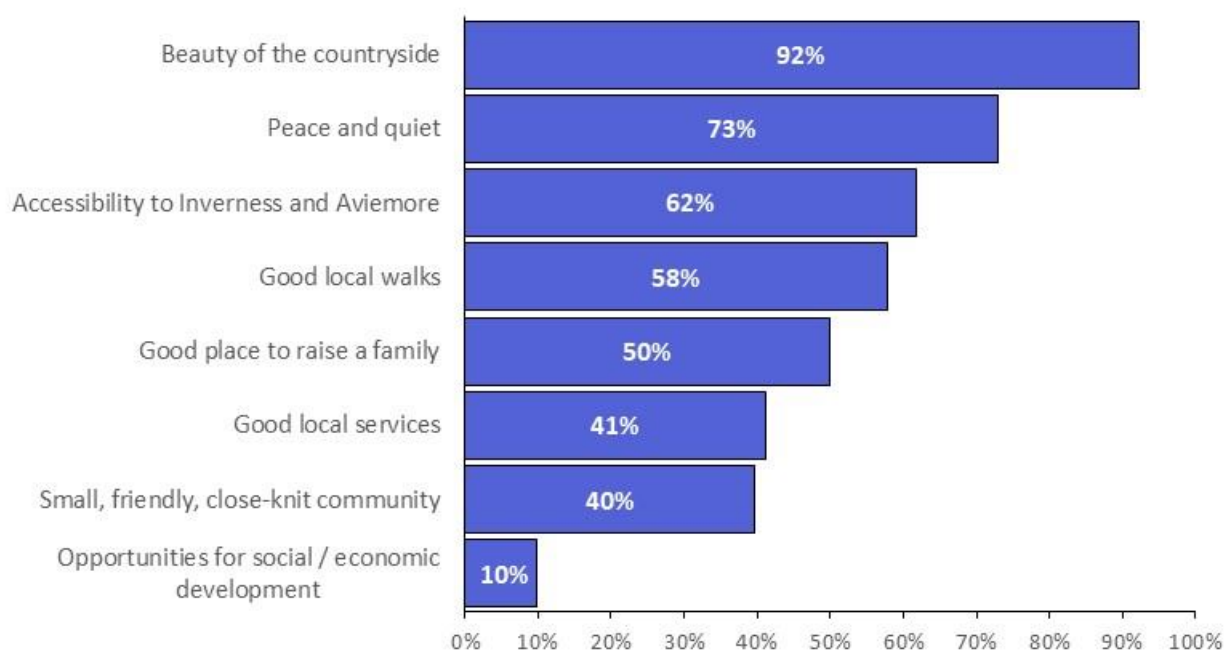
3.1 This chapter presents respondents' answers to the question: 'What do you like about living or working in Strathdearn?' Respondents were given a list of eight options and asked to tick all that applied for them. People were also invited to add further comments.

Main findings

3.2 Figure 3.1 shows that the vast majority of respondents (92%) said that one of the things they liked **most** about living or working in Strathdearn was the 'beauty of the countryside'. In addition, between 50% and 75% also liked (i) the 'peace and quiet' of the area, (ii) the 'accessibility to Inverness and Aviemore', (iii) the 'good local walks' and (iv) the feeling that Strathdearn was a 'good place to raise a family'.

3.3 'Good local services' and a 'small, friendly, close-knit community' were identified by smaller proportions of respondents – 41% and 40% respectively. Just 10% identified 'opportunities for social / economic development' as one of the things they liked most about the area.

Figure 3.1: What people liked most about living or working in Strathdearn (base: 204)



Note: Respondents could tick more than one box. Therefore, percentages do not total 100%.

Comments on what people like about living / working in Strathdearn

3.4 Seventy (70) respondents provided further comments. Around two-thirds of these either elaborated on their response to the closed question (explaining in more detail why they selected certain items from the list above), or they identified additional things about living or working in Strathdearn that they liked. These included:

- Rural community that is not overdeveloped
- The availability of community resources
- The feeling of being 'at home'

- Family / good friends nearby
- The local primary school
- Excellent facilities in a small community (e.g. well-stocked shop, café)
- Local church community
- Swimming in the river / walking in the woods
- Local history
- Local wildlife
- Dark nights
- The diversity of the community
- House prices are lower than in the Cairngorms
- Plenty of places to walk the dogs
- Easy access to trails for walking, running, and cycling, and the ability to explore the countryside on the doorstep
- A forward-looking rural community (e.g. broadband)
- An involved community

3.5 Around a quarter of the respondents provided only negative comments, and around half of this group were aged between 50 and 59 years old. This group perceived that Strathdearn was no longer a ‘small, friendly, close-knit community’, but rather a divisive community full of disagreements and factions. In some cases, this group attributed the loss of a sense of closeness in the community to changes which had taken place – mainly in Tomatin – such as the closure and demolition of the local pub and the construction of the new community hall. However, others in this group expressed a more general anxiety about ‘over-development’ and ‘tourism’ and felt the community was being taken in a direction that they did not want to go. A few pointed to specific concerns including: (i) the general ‘untidy’ appearance of the area, (ii) the lack of affordable housing, (iii) a lack of childcare provision, (iv) poor public transport services, and (v) difficulties maintaining local health and social care services due to a shortage of local qualified staff. There was also a concern about bullying on the school bus which takes young secondary-aged school pupils from Strathdearn to Inverness.

Views of children and young people (focus groups)

3.6 Nineteen (19) children in years P4-7 at the local primary school were asked by their classroom teacher, ‘What do you like about your community?’ The children’s responses could be grouped into three main themes: (i) the people, (ii) the community facilities, and (iii) the rural nature of the area. Each of these is discussed briefly here, with any other points raised by children summarised afterwards.

The people

3.7 Children said that the people in their community were ‘friendly’, ‘good’, ‘kind and caring’, and ‘nice to everyone’. Children had the feeling that people in their community knew each other and cared for each other.

‘I like the people in the community because everyone knows each other, and everyone is so kind and caring.’

‘I like how everyone is nice to everyone.’

The new community facilities in Tomatin

3.8 Children often identified the Hub, café, and multi-use games area (MUGA) as things they liked about their community. Some also said they liked the park – although there were also suggestions from children that improvements in the park were needed. (These comments are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.)

'I like the astroturf because you can play sports on it.' [Some specifically stated that they liked being able to play football, basketball, tennis and shinty on the astroturf.]

'3 Bridges, Hub / hall, MUGA...'

The rural nature of the area

3.9 Children expressed an appreciation for the rural nature of their community. Some said they liked the local woods; one said they liked having lots of wildlife and animals around the village.

Other things that children liked about their community

3.10 One child said she liked the drama class in the Hub *'because it is lots of fun and I can do drama with all my friends.'* Another said he liked the school, and a third said he liked *'the hoall [whole] village'*.

3.11 A focus group with four boys aged 12 and 13 in Strathearn also explored their views about what they liked about living in the area. This group identified many of the same things as the younger children, discussed above. In particular, they liked:

- That the area is safe (including for cycling)
- That Strathearn is a beautiful place to live (with lovely views and lots of space)
- The café (although this was seen to be a bit expensive)
- Swimming in the river
- The park (although this group, like the younger children, also highlighted improvements which they thought were needed)
- Woods / mountain biking trails
- Astroturf (MUGA) (for playing football).

4. The needs of children and young people

4.1 This chapter presents the findings from the survey relating to nine questions about the potential needs of children and young people in Strathdearn for services, activities, or recreational / leisure facilities. Respondents were asked if they agreed, disagreed, or were not sure that these needs existed.

4.2 In addition, the main findings of two focus groups with (i) 19 children aged 7 to 11, from years P4-7 at the primary school and (ii) four boys, aged 12 and 13, are presented at the end of this chapter.

Main findings (survey)

Activities / clubs for primary-aged children and young people

4.3 Figure 4.1 (opposite) shows that 83% of respondents agreed (strongly or slightly) that there is a need for activities / clubs for primary-aged children in Strathdearn. Very few people (2%) disagreed, although 14% said they were unsure or did not have a strong view on this matter.

Activities / clubs for secondary-aged young people / teenagers

4.4 Similarly, Figure 4.2 shows that 84% of respondents agreed (strongly or slightly) that there is a need for activities / clubs for secondary-aged young people. Again, 2% of respondents disagreed, and 13% said they were unsure or did not have a strong view.

Before-school or breakfast club

4.5 Figure 4.3 shows that 44% of respondents agreed (strongly or slightly) that there is a need for a before-school or breakfast club for children attending school in the area. However, 20% disagreed (strongly or slightly) and 36% said they were unsure or did not have a strong view. This particular question received the lowest level of support of all the questions in this section of the survey.

Figure 4.1: Is there a need for activities / clubs for primary-aged children? (base: 208)

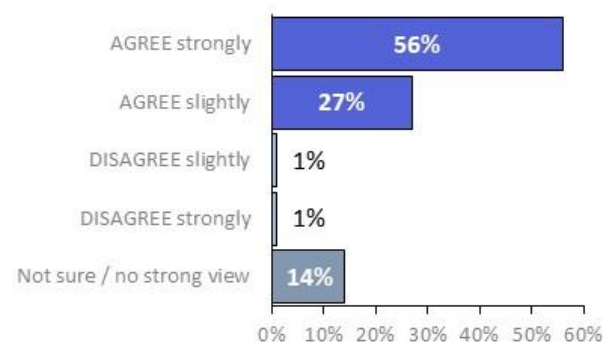


Figure 4.2: Is there a need for activities / clubs for secondary-aged children / teenagers? (base: 209)

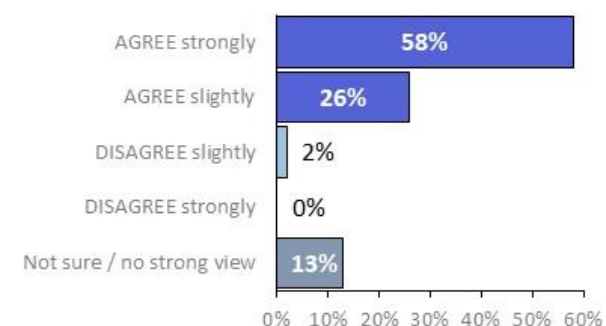
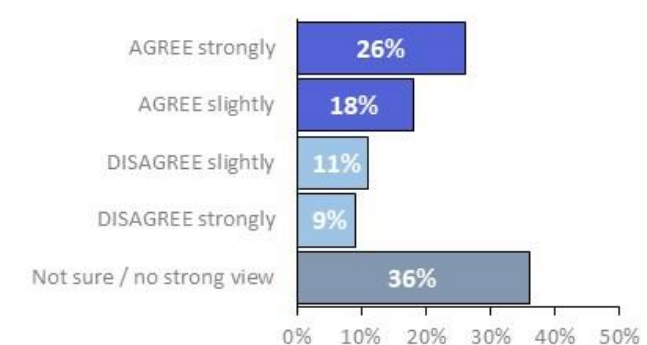


Figure 4.3: Is there a need for a before-school or breakfast club? (base: 197)



Childcare services for pre-school children

4.6 Figure 4.4 shows that 61% of respondents agreed (strongly or slightly) that there is need for childcare services for pre-school children in the area. Seven percent (7%) disagreed (strongly or slightly), and a third (31%) said they were unsure or did not have a strong view.

Completion of the planned BMX / skate park

4.7 Figure 4.5 shows that almost two-thirds of respondents (65%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that the (planned) BMX / skate park should be completed. Twelve percent (12%) disagreed and 22% were unsure or did not have a strong view.

An indoor space for young people to meet and spend time (unsupervised)

4.8 Figure 4.6 shows that around six in ten respondents (59%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that there is a need for an indoor space for young people to meet and just spend time (unsupervised). However, around a fifth of respondents (21%) disagreed and the same proportion (20%) said they were not sure or had no strong view.

Better, more affordable access to the covered games area in Tomatin

4.9 Figure 4.7 shows that 57% of respondents agreed (strongly or slightly) that there is a need for better, more affordable access for children and young people to the covered games area in Tomatin. Twelve percent (12%) disagreed and nearly a third (30%) said they were unsure or had no strong view.

Figure 4.4: Is there a need for childcare services for pre-school children (base: 201)

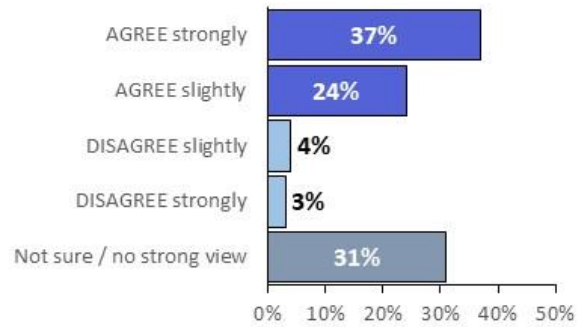


Figure 4.5: Is there a need to complete the (planned) BMX / skate park? (base: 205)

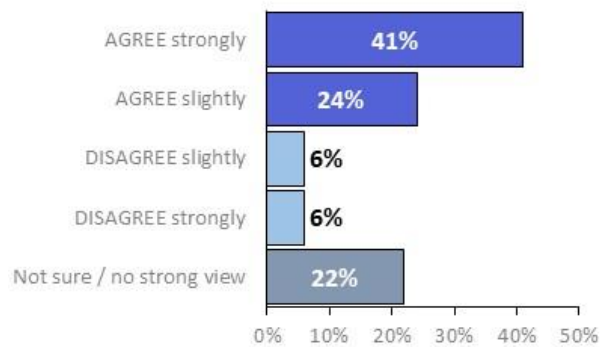


Figure 4.6: Is there a need for an indoor space for young people to meet and spend time? (base: 208)

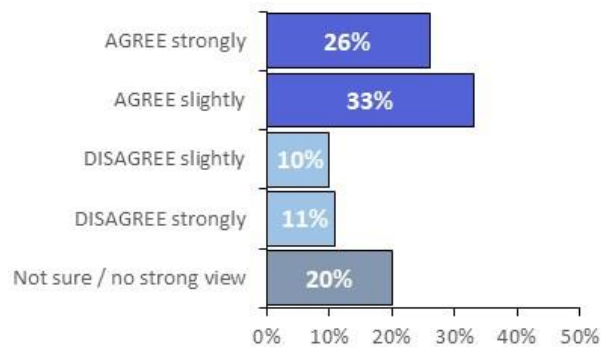
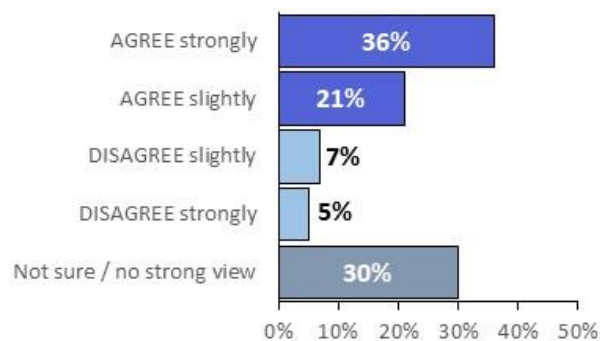


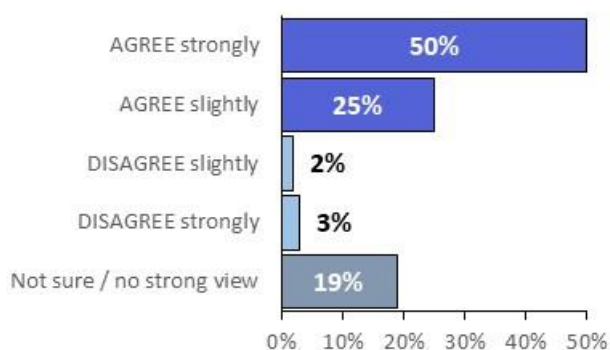
Figure 4.7: Is there a need for better and more affordable access to the covered games area in Tomatin? (base: 204)



An outdoor games pitch

4.10 Finally, Figure 4.8 shows that three-quarters of respondents (75%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that there was a need for an outdoor games pitch for children and young people to play football or other team sports. Just 5% disagreed on this question, and 19% were unsure or had no strong view.

Figure 4.8: Is there a need for an outdoor games pitch (for football, etc.)? (base: 206)

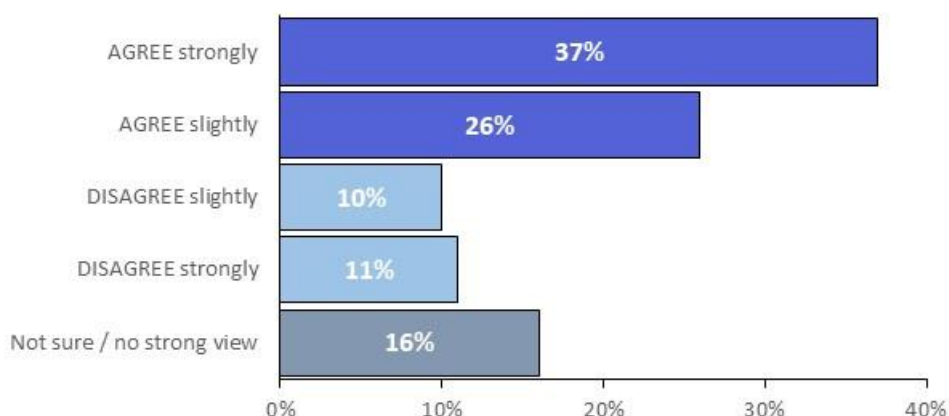


Co-ordinator / manager for children and young people's activities and services

4.11 In addition to the eight questions above, the survey included a separate question which asked respondents whether they thought there was a need for a paid person to co-ordinate and manage activities and services for children and young people in the area.

4.12 Figure 4.9 shows that 63% of respondents agreed (strongly or slightly) in answer to this question, 21% disagreed (strongly or slightly), and 16% said they had no strong view.

Figure 4.9: Is there a need for a paid person to co-ordinate and manage activities and services for children and young people in the area? (base: 208)



Comments from the survey on the needs of children and young people in Strathdearn

4.13 Survey respondents were invited to provide further comments in relation to any of these questions, and 81 respondents did so. Some expanded on their responses to the closed questions; some identified additional needs in the area for children and young people; and some made more general comments. There were five main themes, relating to (i) the need for activities / clubs for children and young people, (ii) the need for facilities for children and young people, (iii) the need for a paid co-ordinator, (iv) issues relating to childcare and educational services in the area; and more generally, (v) attitudes to children and young people. Each of these is discussed below.

Activities / clubs for children and young people

4.14 The subject raised most frequently in respondents' comments in this section related to activities / clubs for children and young people. Some respondents identified specific types of

activities / clubs that – in their view – were needed for young people in the area. However, more often, respondents made general comments about the lack of structured activities or organised clubs for young people; and / or they expressed a view about what the community's role should be in addressing any perceived needs in this area.

4.15 Among those who made general comments, there were three distinct views:

- The first main group suggested that there is a *'lack of activities on offer at present'* and that *'there needs to be more for young people to do.'* Some respondents in this group commented that, when they were growing up, there was a range of community sports teams (i.e. football, shinty, badminton) and other activities (i.e. karate classes) in the area that young people were able to get involved in. One respondent commented that the lack of community focus on young people's needs / activities in the area is *'not good enough'*. Another expressed *'disappointment'* that, in a community with such a large disposable income, no one (including the young people of the community) is benefiting from this in a recreational capacity.
- The second main group were less supportive of the community having a role (or, at least, a very significant financial role) in providing activities for children and young people in the area. In general, this group thought parents needed to take greater responsibility by getting involved in running and supporting clubs and activities – rather than expecting the community to do this for them. One respondent in this group commented that *'children and young people have free access to hills, river, and lochs, with good off-road cycle opportunities'*; another suggested that young people *'should be free to make their own activities'* (in a responsible manner).
- A third group – smaller than the first two – acknowledged that there may be a need for activities for children and young people in the area, but this group sounded a note of caution, saying that *'quite often activities are welcomed to begin with, then people stop utilising them'*. Among this group, there was a view that *'not everything can be provided in a small village'*, and a community the size of Strathdearn simply cannot sustain a lot of activities for children and young people.

4.16 In addition to these three views, there were concerns voiced that the high cost of hiring the hall and MUGA may be a barrier to greater use of these facilities for children and young people's activities / groups. One respondent suggested that *'more competitive rates'* should be offered to enable sports clubs to make greater use of the local facilities. Another wanted to see more effort put into fully using the *'second-to-none'* facilities available in the hall by hosting classes and activities. This respondent suggested that the community could have a role in approaching teachers / activity leaders with an offer of space for classes, and partly subsidising the rental of the hall for those activities.

4.17 As noted above, some respondents identified specific types of activities that they felt were needed in the area for children and young people. These included (roughly in order of frequency of mention):

- A football club

- Music tuition – and the opportunity for everyone in the community (not just children) to sample different instruments
- Weekly table tennis in the hall
- Dance classes (for all ages)
- A fitness club
- A rugby club
- A play group for mums and toddlers (one respondent said such a group previously existed, but no longer did so)
- Outdoor activities clubs (skiing, biking, etc.).

4.18 Note that, in relation to the activities listed above, young people under 20 who took part in the survey specifically asked for a football club and table tennis in the hall; and young people aged 20-29 specifically asked for a football club and dance classes.

Facilities for children and young people

4.19 A second major theme in the comments in this section of the survey related to the need for facilities (not just activities) for children and young people. One respondent said that *‘whilst facilities for young people have started to improve, there is still a requirement for improvement’*. Comments on this subject often focused on three specific facilities which were seen to be needed: (i) a BMX / skate park, (ii) space for a football pitch, and (iii) a gym. There were also comments in relation to two existing facilities: (iv) the MUGA and (v) the play parks. The views expressed about each of these are summarised here.

- **BMX / skate park:** In general, respondents who raised the subject of a BMX / skate park expressed the view that the completion of this facility should be prioritised. Some queried why this question was included in the survey, given that its construction had already been agreed, and they expressed frustration about the ongoing delay in completing it. One respondent asked, *‘Do we just think kids are not worth it?’* Another highlighted the important social value of a skate park for local children and young people:

‘I think the skate park should be top priority so kids have a place to socialise together and spend time....’ (Female, aged 20-29, ID 252)

However, one older respondent expressed concern about the location of the skate park. This individual considered the intended location to be *‘unsuitable’* given the level of noise associated with this activity and the proximity of the planned skate park to sheltered housing, and they called for *‘the concrete to be taken up, bark put down, and more play equipment installed’*.

- **Football pitch:** For the most part, respondents who raised the topic of a *‘a green area for football’* thought that such a space was needed. One individual (aged in their 20s) commented that *‘when I was growing up there was lots more green space in the area’*. This respondent suggested that, as the village has expanded over the years, green space for activities such as football had been lost. Some respondents pointed out that there was *‘no land available’* for a games pitch; however others suggested that, if the land could be acquired, it could also function as a space for community events, festivals, fairs, and firework

evenings – as well as providing space for outdoor sports. In contrast to these types of comments, another respondent (also aged in their 20s) noted that there was, in fact, already space available for football at the school and at Raigbeg. This same individual also suggested that the MUGA provided a suitable space for football, too.

- **Gym:** Some respondents expressed the need for a gym and / or other type of fitness facility. This group suggested that a gym could be used by both local teenagers and adults, and that the creation of this facility should be prioritised.

4.20 With regard to existing facilities – the MUGA and the children’s play parks – the following issues were raised by respondents to the survey:

- **MUGA:** There should be no extension of the hours of access to the MUGA. As agreed with local residents when the MUGA was initially proposed, the hours should remain 9am – 9pm. One respondent (aged in their 20s) also suggested that *‘more access to the MUGA is not needed’*. However, a contrasting view was that *‘the covered games area is a great facility but the booking systems and management of it are awkward and substandard!’*
- **Children’s play parks:** Respondents made a number of observations about the children’s play parks in Tomatin, including that (i) they *‘cost a fortune and are hardly ever used’*, and (ii) they could have been better set out with more choice of equipment. One respondent also suggested that the school playground needs to have more activities to encourage positive play during playtime.

4.21 Note that children and young people who were consulted in focus groups also spontaneously raised issues with the MUGA and children’s play parks, and these views are discussed at paragraph 4.48 below.

4.22 Finally, in terms of other facilities for children, respondents to the survey suggested there were needs for:

- A hall / play centre for young children and children with disabilities
- A soft play area (for little kids)
- A sand pit
- An outdoor swimming pool
- Marked and maintained routes for mountain biking
- A footpath / cycle track along the old A9 to connect Tomatin and Moy to Daviot
- A community bus to make it easier for young people to take part in after school activities in Inverness

4.23 However, each of these suggestions were made by just one person.

4.24 In general, respondents who raised issues about the facilities available for children and young people in the area wanted **additional** or improved facilities. However, there was (less often) a contrasting view that *‘it is unrealistic for parents to expect to have all the facilities of a city in a small village’*.

Co-ordination and management of activities services for children and young people

4.25 Another very common theme in the comments at this section related to the question of whether there is a need for a paid person to co-ordinate and manage activities and services for children and young people in the area. Around a quarter of everyone who commented made a comment about this issue. Moreover, there was a great deal of overlap in the views expressed, regardless of whether respondents agreed, disagreed or had no strong view about whether a children's activities co-ordinator / manager was needed.

4.26 Everyone made the point that parents needed to be more involved in (i.e. to *'take greater responsibility for'*) the running and supporting of clubs and activities for children and young people in the local area. In addition, there should not be the expectation that local children's activities are simply provided for free; parents (and children) should have to contribute *'in terms of time, money and care'*. Those who **agreed** that there was a need for a local children's activities co-ordinator thought that this individual would not be able to do it all, and that parents would have to be involved in working with this individual (who, some said, should only be employed on a part-time basis). Those who **disagreed** that there was a need for this type of co-ordinator thought that parents should ultimately be responsible for providing and co-ordinating (with other parents) the activities for their own children.

'It would be nice if parents took a more proactive role in organising activities for the children in the village. A paid person to coordinate and organise activities is a good idea, but parents have to also take some responsibility.' (Male, aged 50-59, ID 191, strongly agreed that there was a need for a paid co-ordinator)

'Parents need to accept responsibility for activities for their children. A single paid helper won't solve any problems without effort, commitment and energy from most parents in the community.' (Male, aged 70 and over, ID 104, slightly disagreed that there was a need for a paid co-ordinator)

'There has never been a lot for children / young people in the area, but as parents we put the miles in to take them to activities in other areas because as parents it was our responsibility to do this. The community is not there to entertain the children / young people of the area! On saying this, it is great to have the all-weather facility & play parks and I would [hope] they continue to be used respectfully.' (Female, aged 50-59, ID 159, not sure if there was a need for a paid co-ordinator)

4.27 One respondent commented that the skate / BMX park was a case in point: a call went out to parents to help with the design of this, but *'there has been a deafening silence'*.

4.28 Among those who **agreed strongly** that there was a need for a paid children's activities co-ordinator, the following specific suggestions were made:

- The co-ordinator *'should have clear goals, accountability and control of hours and time management as it will not be a role that is capable of generating income to cover its costs'*.
- The co-ordinator should be someone who can relate to and engage with young people.

- It would be worth linking up with head teachers (at Millburn, Daviot and Strathdearn) to ensure a joined-up approach.
- The co-ordinator could be involved in supporting local children to take part in after-school activities outwith the immediate local area (i.e. if a community bus could be made available).

4.29 Those who disagreed (strongly or slightly) that there was a need for a paid co-ordinator suggested that other currently employed individuals could potentially take on this role, including:

- The local Active Schools Coordinator
- The Strathdearn Hall events booking manager.

4.30 Some who disagreed strongly that there was a need for a paid co-ordinator suggested that *'very few other communities would have the luxury'* to consider paying an individual to co-ordinate activities for their children and young people. One individual considered it to be a 'misuse' of the community's funding to pay for this.

Childcare and education

4.31 A less prominent theme in the comments at this section related to the needs for better childcare and educational services in the area. Respondents who raised concerns about the school and / or lack of local childcare services made a number of points, which they suggested could be addressed through community funding:

- Flexible, wrap-around childcare for all ages is really important for any community.
- The lack of accessible childcare services is forcing young families to move out of the area.
- The school is struggling to retain (good) teachers; it was suggested that the community could help by providing funding for additional classes or private tutoring during holidays or at the weekends in (for example) English or maths.

4.32 However, there were contrasting views expressed by two respondents. One suggested that *'as an affluent area with low levels of poverty, there is no need for [community] money to be spent on childcare'*. The second suggested it should not be the responsibility of the community to provide **all** services for children and young people in the area. This individual argued that Highland Council should also have a responsibility for doing so.

Perceptions of and attitudes to children and young people

4.33 Finally, some respondents did not specifically comment on any of the questions included in this section of the survey. Instead, they commented in a more general way about their perceptions of children and young people in the community, and / or their perceptions of the **attitudes** towards children and young people in the community.

4.34 On the one hand, some argued that *'there needs to be less judging of them for being as kids can be'*. On the other, there was a call for there to be *'consequences for the children that think vandalism is okay'*.

4.35 The first group had the impression that the needs of children in the community are, at present, overlooked, and that attitudes towards children within the community can often be quite negative:

'Children are completely missed out from this community. They are the future. Always negatives said, never praise!' (Respondent aged 30-39, ID 213)

'I feel it's a waste of time giving the youth somewhere to go because as soon as anything happens there will be complaints and it'd be taken away in no time.'
(Male, aged 20-29, ID 203)

4.36 However, there was also an acknowledgement among respondents that damage (to property) sometimes occurs because young people in the community are not occupied with more positive activities. For some respondents, the answer to this problem was to get more CCTV and insist that there be 'consequences'. However, there was a recurring view among others that the community should make the effort to consult more often with its children and young people directly to find out what **they** feel they need.

The views of children and young people (focus groups)

4.37 As discussed above, as part of the wider community consultation, focus groups were held with 19 pupils in years P4-7 at the Strathdearn Primary School, and with four older boys, aged 12 and 13. The children and young people were all asked three questions:

- What do you like about your community?³
- What do you **not** like about your community?
- If you could change one thing to improve your community, what would it be and why?

4.38 The primary school children were also asked a fourth question, 'What could make your community better?' The responses to this latter question overlapped to a large extent with answers to the second and third questions and so they have been included in the discussion here.

4.39 It should be noted that children and young people's views of what they did not like about their community, and the improvements they thought were needed, arose spontaneously; they were not prompted with suggestions from the focus group facilitators. It should also be noted that not **all** the suggestions for improvements from children and young people necessarily involved the development of activities, services or facilities for children. Indeed, when pupils in P4-7 at the primary school were asked 'What do you not like about your community?' the most common response was that there was too much litter and dog poo everywhere.

4.40 The main themes in the discussions with children and young people focused on: (i) litter / dog poo, (ii) the lack of activities / things to do in the area, (iii) the play parks and MUGA and (iv) road safety in the community.

³ The responses to this question have already been presented at the end of Chapter 3 of this report.

Litter

4.41 Litter and dog poo were significant issues for children in P4-7 at the local primary school. More than half of the children in this group identified this as something they did not like about their community – as the following responses show:

What do you not like about your community?

'That there is dog poo everywhere'

'I don't like all the litter around our community because it's bad for our environment.'

'I don't like how lost [lots] of people leave dog poo everywhere as it's disgusting when we're out walking.'

'I don't like how people litter when there is litter bins provided at the park and shop, because a dog or any other animal could eat it.'

4.42 This group suggested that, to improve the community, 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 primary school 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!'*).

4.43 The issue of litter was not spontaneously raised by the 12- and 13-year-old boys as something they were concerned about.

Lack of activities / things to do.

4.44 When children in years P4-7 were asked *'What do you not like about your community?'* it was not common for them to comment on the lack of things to do – although one child did: *'I don't like how there is not enough things to do in the village.'*

4.45 However, when children in this group were asked *'What could make your community better?'* and *'If you could change one thing to improve your community, what would it be?'*, the most common suggestion – after the need for more bins – was a request for *'more clubs and things going on at the hub'* and *'some youth groups or sporting activities'*. Some children suggested specific activities which they thought would make their community better for them, including football, dancing, gymnastics, and swimming. There were also requests for *'summer camps'*, *'riding stables'*, *'more art shops'*, *'a library'*, *'a bigger shop'*, *'a golf course'*, and *'a Tomatin football team'*.

4.46 The issue of not having enough to do was a significant theme in the focus group with older boys. When asked what they did not like about living in the area, there was a unanimous view that there were *'not enough activities in the evening / weekends'*. When asked *'what would you change if you could'*, this group spontaneously suggested that having a local youth group would help. They suggested that this could potentially meet one or two times per week, with the activities of the group decided by those who attend. At the same time, they also suggested that the activities might include: music / art (could a piano be made available in the hall?), movie nights, going out for a walk with a game keeper, or other outdoor activities like mountain biking.

4.47 The teenagers were also more likely than the younger children to identify a need for certain facilities, including:

- Land for a proper BMX track and mountain biking (like Carrbridge / Boat of Garten or a smaller version of Newtonmore's Wolftrax)
- A gym – possibly in the games hall in the Hub? – but it would need to be able to be moved out of the way when the hall was being used for something else, and this may not be practical.
- A BMX / skate park – there was unanimous agreement that *'the bit of level concrete in the park'* was not suitable for a skate park. It was suggested that the concrete might instead provide the foundation for a *'cosy young people's hut'*, and that whoever was responsible for locking the MUGA gates at night could possibly also lock the hut at night.
- A community cinema.

The play parks and the MUGA

4.48 Primary school children and the older children both spontaneously identified *'the astroturf'* (or MUGA) as something they liked about their community. However, when children from the primary school were asked, 'what do you **not** like about your community?', several pointed to the play parks as things they did not like. Some specifically stated that *'the park is not very big'* and *'the park is boring'* and needs more equipment. Children at the primary school suggested that the local parks would be *'more fun'* if they had more equipment. Suggestions from this group included adding a climbing wall, a bike track, and a trampoline.

4.49 The 'park rules' were also highlighted as something that both younger and older children in the area did not like. When children at the primary school were asked what they would change if they could, one child at the primary school wrote:

'Take the rules sine [sign] at the park down. The whole point of going to the park is to be able to run around and be able to eat and drink. Because the sine [sign] says 'no food or drink' and 'no running', it is not making the park fun.'

4.50 The 12- and 13-year-olds also raised the issue of the 'park rules', expressing incredulity that, in a children's play park, there were rules like 'don't run', 'don't eat', 'don't drink', and that all the park rules were about what children were **not** allowed to do. These young people suggested that the park rules seemed to be intended to discourage kids from enjoying themselves and having fun, and this, they explained, was why no one used the play parks.

4.51 The older children suggested that the park rules should be worded more positively, and their suggestions included:

'Use the equipment as you like, but with respect.'

'Feel free to run around and have fun.'

'Feel free to eat or drink, but please tidy up after yourself.'

4.52 This group also thought that young people and their families ought to have been better consulted about the rules for using the MUGA.

4.53 In addition to the play parks in Tomatin, there was also a comment from one child at the primary school who, when asked what one thing about their community they would like to change to improve it, said *'I would add a play park in the school'*.

Road safety

4.54 Finally, one other issue which was raised by both the younger and older children was the issue of road safety. One child at the primary school said that *'cars driving too fast'* was one of the things she did not like about her community. This same child also suggested that having pavements would improve the community. The view was echoed the older children, who identified a need for a track or pavement (for walking / cycling) between the Hub and the Distillery.

Other concerns and suggestions

4.55 Occasionally, the children and young people highlighted other issues about their community that they felt dissatisfied with and / or wanted to change.

4.56 One child at the primary school said that one of the things he did not like about his community was that the *'houses are all squished together'*.

4.57 When asked what would make their community better, a small number of additional suggestions were made (each by one child), including: a half-day on a Friday *'just in case we need to go somewhere'*, and *'more shops in the village'*. One child (humorously) expressed the desire that *'it will be Christmas every day'*.

4.58 Finally, one child in P4-7, when asked 'what would make our community better?', highlighted their own educational aspirations:

'Better education, because I don't feel like I am getting taught enough compared to my cousin'.

Quick overview of main findings



- Activities / clubs for primary-aged children
 - Activities / clubs for secondary-aged children
 - Outdoor games pitch (for football, etc.)
 - Completion of the BMX / skate park
-



- Childcare services for pre-school children
 - Better, more affordable access to the covered games area in Tomatin
-



- An indoor space for young people to meet and spend time (unsupervised)
 - A paid person to co-ordinate and manage activities / services for children and young people in the area
-



- Before-school or breakfast club
-

5. Community transport

5.1 The survey included four questions which asked about the need for (improvements to) local transport services and respondents were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed in relation to each. They also had the option to say if they were not sure or had no strong view. The findings are presented below.

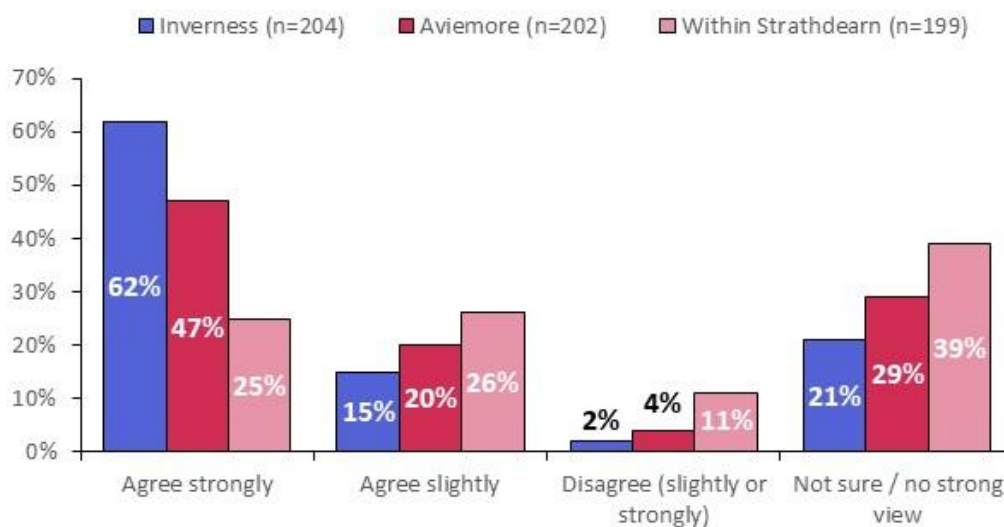
Main findings

Improved transport between Strathdearn and Aviemore / Inverness and within Strathdearn

5.2 Figure 5.1 below compares people's views about the need for better / more frequent transport (i) between Strathdearn and Aviemore, (ii) between Strathdearn and Inverness and (iii) within Strathdearn. The figure shows that respondents were more likely to agree (strongly or slightly) that better / more frequent transport was needed between Strathdearn and Inverness (77% agreed strongly or slightly) than between Strathdearn and Aviemore (67% agreed strongly or slightly) or within Strathdearn (51% agreed strongly or slightly).

5.3 Respondents were also more likely to say that they were not sure or had no strong view about whether improved transport was needed between Strathdearn and Aviemore, and within Strathdearn.

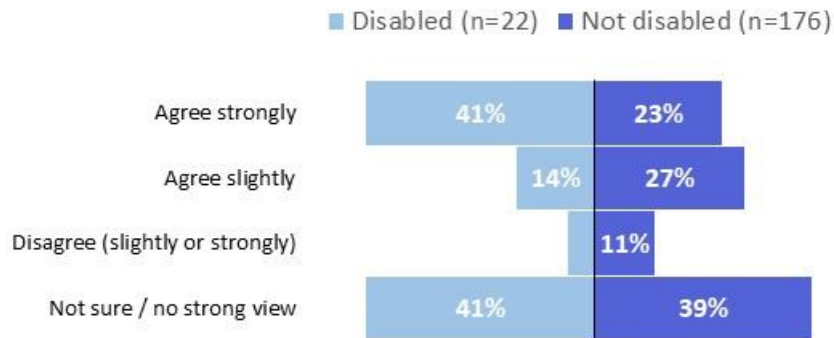
Figure 5.1: Do you agree or disagree that there is a need for better / more frequent transport between Strathdearn and Inverness (base: 204), between Strathdearn and Aviemore (base: 202) and within Strathdearn (base: 199)?



Note: Very few respondents disagreed (either slightly or strongly) in response to any of these questions and therefore the 'disagree slightly' and 'disagree strongly' responses have been combined in the figure above.

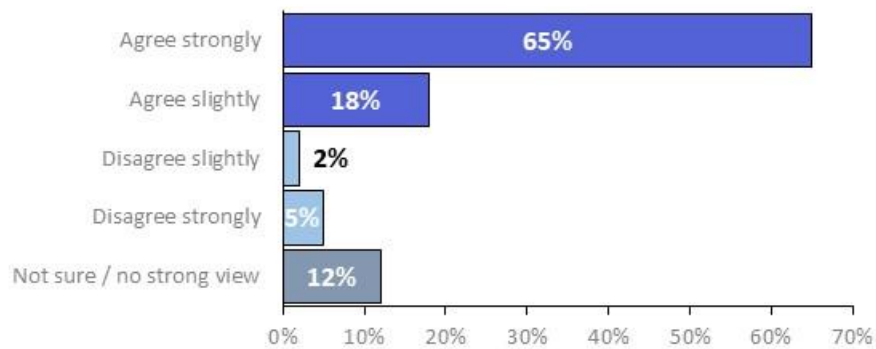
5.4 It is worth noting that disabled people who took part in the survey were more likely than non-disabled people to **strongly agree** that better transport was needed **within** Strathdearn (41% vs 23%, respectively). (See Figure 5.2.) Disabled people were also less likely than non-disabled people to disagree with this statement, although the level of uncertainty within the two groups was similar (41% vs 39%, respectively). (Note, however, that the number of disabled people who answered this question was small, n=22, and therefore these figures should be treated with caution.)

Figure 5.2: Do you agree or disagree that there is a need for better transport WITHIN Strathdearn? (By disability status) (n=198)



5.5 Finally, Figure 5.3 below shows that a large majority of respondents (83%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that there is a need to reopen the train station in Tomatin. Just 5% of respondents disagreed, although 12% expressed uncertainty about this issue.

Figure 5.3: Do you agree or disagree that there is a need to reopen the train station in Tomatin? (base 202)



5.6 It is worth noting that there were similar levels of strong support for reopening the train station and for improving transport between Tomatin and Inverness (65% and 62%, respectively, agreed strongly).

Comments on the need for improved community transport

5.7 Respondents were asked if they would like to say anything else about local transport needs, and 69 individuals made further comments. In general, these expanded on respondents’ answers to the closed questions, and respondents often reiterated that the local bus service was very poor, and therefore no one used it. Some respondents noted that the poor public transport links had wider social and economic impacts on Strathdearn, resulting in people who could not drive (for whatever reason) having to move out of the area and older, disabled people becoming increasingly isolated. Some also highlighted the need for better local transport to enable older people living in the area to have more reliable access to the medical services in Inverness and Aviemore.

5.8 There were three main themes in the comments at this question and these related to (i) the idea of reopening the train station, (ii) the possibility of a community bus service, and (iii) the need to promote / encourage active travel.

Reopening the train station

5.9 Most comments focused on the idea of reopening the train station. As the findings above showed, a large proportion of respondents expressed strong support for reopening the station. In their comments, this group identified a range of possible benefits, including that a train service would (i) be more environmentally friendly, (ii) decrease reliance on cars, (iii) bring tourism to the area, (iv) enable people to commute / travel more easily to Inverness and Aviemore, and (v) provide greater social and economic opportunities – especially for young people. One individual simply said:

'Reopening the train station would be a massive improvement'. (Female, aged 50-59, ID 20)

5.10 Respondents suggested that local people were likely to fully support the train (more so than local buses which are very infrequent); one respondent said he would use the train over his car almost every time if the opportunity were available, and there was one request that if a train service were re-established in the area, it should stop in Moy too.

5.11 However, a few individuals suggested that the argument for reinstating a train service to the area would be won or lost on economic grounds. One commented that:

'Of course, everyone wants "better" transport services, but it is a matter of economics as to what can be provided. In reality, though, the buses are usually pretty empty, and it is highly unlikely that it could be financially justified to open the railway station.' (Male, aged 70 and over, ID 1)

5.12 Another claimed that previous efforts to get the rail service reinstated had foundered because of the expense (to the railway company) of maintaining the station.

5.13 However, an alternative point was made that getting the train station reopened would require, in the first instance, applying political pressure to local elected representatives.

Views on a new community transport service

5.14 The second main theme in the comments related to community transport. Respondents often suggested that the community should purchase its own 'bus' (described variously as a 'mini-bus', a '16-seater' or other type of 'small vehicle') and operate a local service. It was suggested that such a service would be useful to local residents of all ages. Respondents understood that this would involve paying a qualified driver as well as covering the ongoing costs of insurance, security, maintenance, and cleaning.

5.15 It was suggested that such a service could / would be used by members of the community for:

- Hospital, doctor, dentist and other appointments and shopping trips (in Inverness or Aviemore)
- School runs (which should attract funding from Highland Council)
- Trips to cultural venues (Eden Court, cinema, etc.) or dinner in Inverness (it was suggested that this could be offered once a month)
- Days out for (i) the mother and toddler group and (ii) older members of the community

- Going to the café or attending events / activities at The Strathdearn (for people living in the outlying areas of Tomatin)
- Taking residents to church at Dalarossie.

5.16 Some respondents referred to the minibus service currently operating in Strathnairn as a possible model for a future Strathdearn service. There were also a range of other suggestions about how the service could operate. In some cases, these suggestions were mutually exclusive. For example, it was suggested that the service should be operated (i) ‘on-demand’ (similar to a taxi service), (ii) according to a timetable (like an ordinary bus service, but covering the local area only), or (iii) that certain aspects of the service should be ‘bookable’ in advance so that the service would not run if there were no bookings (i.e. evening service into Inverness). Other respondents focused on the type of vehicle that would be required, suggesting that it should be an electric vehicle and should include a wheelchair ramp.

Active travel

5.17 The third main theme in the comments at this question related to issues of ‘active travel’. Specifically, respondents wanted to see active travel better promoted at a local level. A key aspect of that would be to create a safe and well-maintained cycle route between Moy and Tomatin. Respondents suggested that such a route would be beneficial to both communities and would allow Moy residents to access the facilities in Tomatin in an environmentally friendly way.

Other views

5.18 Finally, there were two further comments regarding community transport issues, namely that (i) community funds should be used to subsidise a taxi service for the area (rather than establishing a community bus service) – as there is currently only one person operating a taxi service and they were reported to be very busy; and (ii) the school bus service should be extended beyond Corrybrough (where it currently stops) to drop off children who live further along the round.

Quick overview of main findings



- Reopen the train station in Tomatin
 - Better / more frequent transport between Strathdearn and Inverness
-



- Better / more frequent transport between Strathdearn and Aviemore
-



- Better transport WITHIN Strathdearn
-

6. Housing

6.1 The survey included four questions about the potential need for local housing. Two of these questions were closed and two were open. These questions were intended to take into account that Strathtearn Community Developments are in the process of building (in partnership with Highland Council) 12 new affordable homes in the community. This work is expected to start in 2022. However, discussions with stakeholders in Stage 1 of this project suggested that **additional** housing was likely to be needed in the area even after these new homes were built.

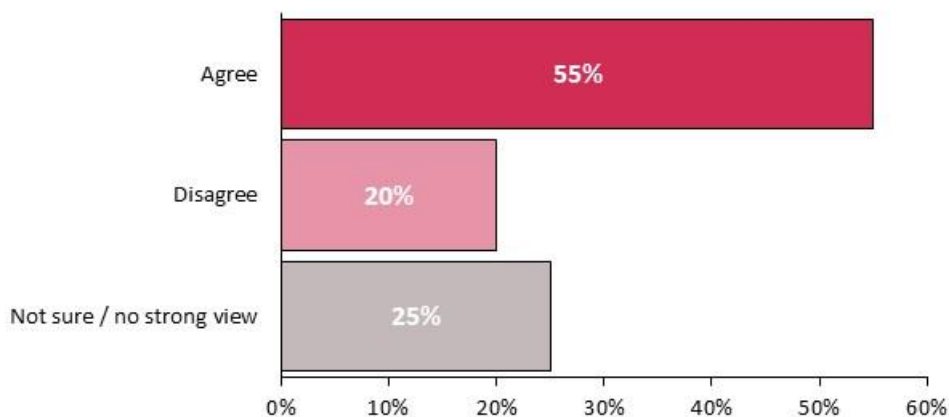
6.2 An initial question asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed there was a need for additional affordable housing in the area. Those who answered 'agree' or 'not sure' to this question were directed to two follow-up questions, asking about the type(s) of affordable housing needed. Those who answered 'disagree' to the initial question were simply asked for their further comments. The findings of each of these questions is presented below.

Main findings

Is there a need for additional affordable housing?

6.3 Figure 6.1 shows that 55% of respondents agreed that there was a need for additional affordable housing in Strathtearn. A fifth of respondents (20%) disagreed, and a quarter (25%) said they were not sure or had no strong view.

Figure 6.1: Do you agree or disagree that there is a need for additional affordable housing in Strathtearn? (base: 206)



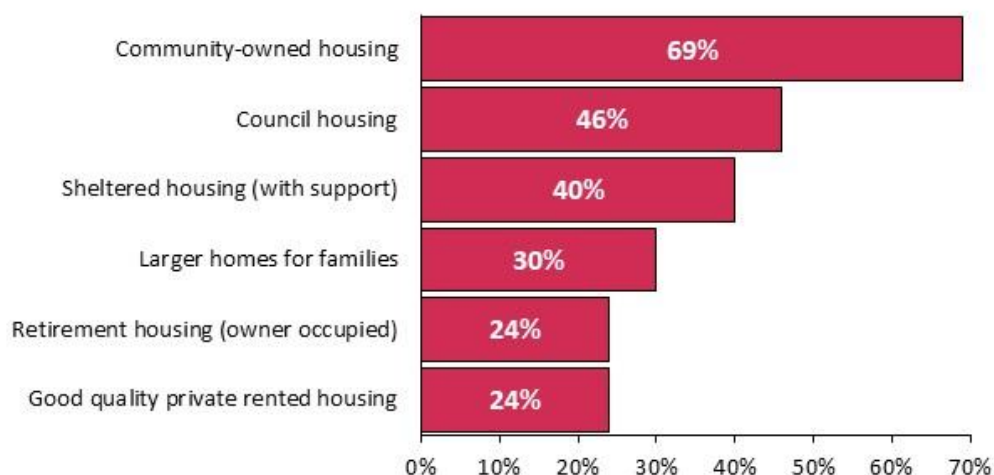
6.4 Respondents answering 'agree' or 'not sure / no strong view' were directed to a follow-up question, which asked for their views about what kinds of affordable housing were **most** needed in Strathtearn – that is, within the next 5-7 years. This group of respondents were given six options (identified on the basis of discussions with stakeholders in Stage 1) and were asked to tick all that apply.

6.5 Figure 6.2 shows that 'community-owned housing' was the option selected by the largest proportion of respondents (69%).⁴ All other options were selected by less than half of respondents,

⁴ The questionnaire explained that 'community-owned housing' was housing owned and maintained by the community and rented out to people on low incomes from the community.

although ‘council housing’ was chosen by just under half (46%).⁵ Respondents saw the **least** need for larger homes for families, owner-occupied retirement housing, and good quality private rented housing – all of which were selected by less than a third of respondents.

Figure 6.2: What kinds of affordable housing do you think are MOST needed in Strathdearn – within the next 5-7 years? (base: 145)



Comments on the types of affordable housing needed – or not needed

6.6 Among those who saw a need for more affordable housing in Strathdearn (and those who were unsure), 52 respondents provided further comments about the types of affordable housing they thought was needed.⁶

6.7 There were several recurring themes in these comments. These focused on (i) concerns about the lack of housing in the area in general, and the lack of affordable housing specifically, (ii) challenges in addressing the shortage of housing, (iii) views about the priority groups for affordable housing, and (iv) arguments against certain types of housing. Each of these is covered briefly here.

Concerns about the lack of housing in the area and the lack of affordable housing, specifically

6.8 Respondents repeatedly voiced concern about the lack of suitable affordable housing in Strathdearn, and the impact that this was having – and would continue to have in the future – on the community, in terms of population decline and loss of services. It was noted that there were seldom any properties for sale in the area, and when houses **did** come on the market, they were generally large, multi-bedroom houses which people on modest incomes could not afford.

6.9 Respondents suggested that young single people, young families and, in some cases, older people were being forced to move out of the area because of the lack of suitable housing. This, in their view, was leading to a breakdown of the community.

⁵ ‘Council housing’ was defined as housing that is owned and maintained by the local authority.

⁶ It should be noted that one respondent referred to a local housing needs survey which was carried out in 2019. It will be important to consider whether and how the findings of the current survey indicate a need to update the findings of that previous study.

6.10 Some respondents pointed to the growth of holiday homes / AirBnb in the area, and the negative impact this was having on local housing. Some wanted to see restrictions on the number of properties used in this way.

Challenges in addressing the shortage of housing

6.11 The respondents in this group pointed to several challenges which would need to be overcome to address the housing shortage in the area. These were (i) the need to persuade local landowners to sell plots of land for housing development; (ii) the lack of access to services / utilities; and (iii) the objections of some people from the community who do not want housing developments near their homes. There was also a suggestion that the new Local Plan for the area would (potentially) make it harder to identify land for housing development.

The priority needs for housing

6.12 Respondents who saw a need for additional affordable housing in the area often identified specific groups who they believed were most in need of this housing. These included:

- 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 looking for a larger home.

6.13 Some respondents who discussed this issue were in favour of community-owned housing with a local allocations policy – to ensure that those most in need were given a house. It was suggested that community-owned housing would have the advantage of retaining the community's investment within the community. However, others thought that council housing (owned and managed by the local authority) would be preferable. The latter group were concerned about the possibility of any community-owned housing being sold off for profit.

6.14 Some (including some older respondents) also made the point that older people wanting to downsize found it difficult to do so in Strathdearn. These respondents suggested that if smaller, more flexible homes for older people were available, this would free up larger houses for families. There was a suggestion that community-owned retirement housing could be developed in the area.

6.15 Other suggestions included:

- Inviting a housing association to develop smaller homes in the area, with shared ownership arrangements
- Planning now for more housing as the current development for 12 affordable homes is under progress – this would involve new discussions with the local landowner(s)
- Offering small plots to local people for self-build at an affordable price
- Developing accessible sheltered housing for local older people to enable them to continue to be looked after in their own community
- Having a good mix of all types of housing.

6.16 A few respondents suggested that any affordable housing developed in the area should only be allocated to 'local' people.

Arguments against certain types of housing

6.17 Some respondents explained why they did **not** identify certain types of housing as priorities for Strathdearn. For example:

- **In relation to council housing**, there was a view that Strathdearn is not currently a council housing priority area. In addition, it was suggested that if council housing was made available in the area, it should be allocated to local families first (or those who originally come from the area), rather than to families not from the area.
- **In relation to private rented housing**, respondents were concerned that this type of housing would simply be sold off by the landlord for profit or turned into holiday lets. There was a view that private rented housing would do nothing to help people in the community.
- **In relation to owner-occupied retirement housing**, the point was made that much of the housing in Strathdearn is **already** owner-occupied retirement housing. Although it is not entirely clear how this comment should be interpreted, presumably the respondent who made it was suggesting that housing for retired people should not be prioritised.
- **In relation to sheltered housing with a staff member onsite**, this was seen to be an outdated and unviable model of housing.

Other comments

6.18 Finally, respondents who thought additional housing was needed in the area made a small number of addition points, including that:

- Whatever housing is built should be of good quality and individualised / distinctive (i.e. '*not all the same boxes*').
- Any housing development should be sympathetic – that is, proportionate to the size and nature of the community – rather than seeking to significantly change the community.

Other comments on the need for housing

6.19 As Figure 6.1 above showed, 20% of respondents (or 41 people) answered 'no' to the first question in this section – that is, they disagreed that there was a need for affordable housing in the area. Of these, 20 provided further comments at Question 17. The comments of these individuals focused on a small number of issues.

6.20 In general, these respondents were concerned about over-development and so did not want more housing in the area. A few suggested that, if it could be shown that affordable housing was needed in the area, then Highland Council should be responsible for providing it – as council housing. There was also a view in this group that good-quality homes or self-build opportunities should be made available **rather** than affordable housing. Finally, there was a suggestion that better infrastructure (in terms of services) was needed before any further housing development could be considered.

Quick overview of main findings



- More affordable housing needed – specifically, community-owned housing.



- Private rented housing
- Owner-occupied retirement housing
- Larger homes for families



- Council housing
 - Sheltered housing (with support)
-

7. Village pub / restaurant

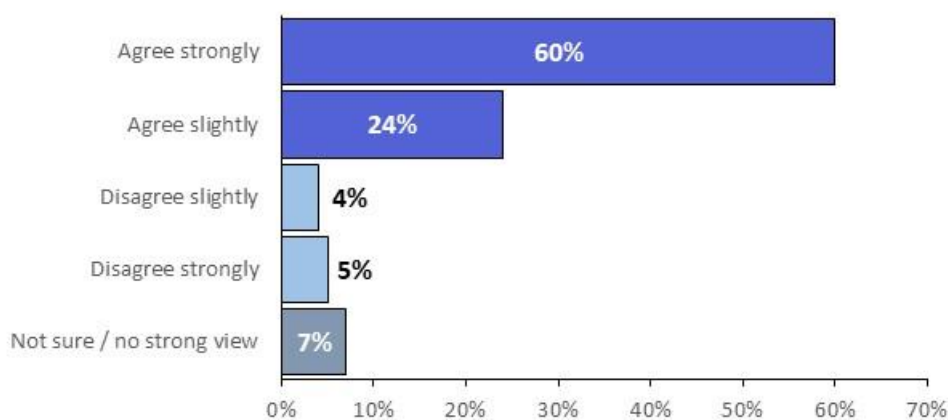
7.1 During the interviews carried out in Stage 1 of the project, several stakeholders suggested that there was a need in Strathdearn for a village pub, or a restaurant. Those who raised this issue acknowledged – and appreciated – the new community café, but felt there was a need for a different kind of establishment – in addition to the café. However, there was not always agreement about what type of establishment this should be. Some suggested that a family restaurant was needed, whereas others thought that a replacement for the old village pub was needed – i.e. somewhere where people could meet up with friends over a drink after work. There were some suggestions that the community café could possibly be developed to provide this service; however, others believed that the café did not offer the required ‘atmosphere’.

7.2 Thus, the community survey included a question about whether there was a need for a pub or restaurant in Strathdearn.

Main finding

7.3 Figure 7.1 shows that there was strong support for this idea. Overall, 84% of respondents agreed (strongly or slightly) that there was a need for a pub or restaurant, whilst 9% disagreed (strongly or slightly), and 7% expressed uncertainty.

Figure 7.1: Do you agree or disagree that there is a need for pub or restaurant in Strathdearn? (base: 199)



Comments on the need for a pub or restaurant

7.4 Respondents were invited to provide comments and 104 did so. Among those who agreed that a pub / restaurant was needed, comments focused on (i) the benefits for the community of a local pub or restaurant, (ii) the challenges or difficulties of developing such an establishment, and (iii) the type of pub and / or restaurant which is needed and / or likely to be successful. Among those who disagreed, or were unsure, about whether a pub / restaurant was needed, comments focused on why such an establishment was unlikely to succeed. Each of these different views are discussed briefly below.

7.5 It should be noted that many of the individuals who answered ‘agree slightly’ in response to this question, and indeed, some who answered ‘agree strongly’ often gave reasons why a ‘traditional pub’ was probably no longer viable in Tomatin. This group of respondents often

suggested that current facilities (including the local café or hall) could be developed to provide meals / drinks and a space for the local community and visitors to gather in the evening.

Benefits of a local pub / restaurant

7.6 Respondents who agreed (i.e. mostly those who agreed **strongly**) in response to the above question often talked of the need for a pub, specifically, rather than a restaurant. This group saw a pub as having an important social function in terms of providing a place for people to meet in the evenings and ‘bringing the community together’.

‘A pub / restaurant is the social centre of any community as it enables people to meet and get to know each other.’ (Male, aged 60-69, ID 148)

‘I think it would be good for a place to gather with friends (both locals and visitors) in the evening.’ (Female, aged 30-39, ID 50)

‘Without somewhere for people to meet in the evenings there is no community!’ (Male, aged 40-49, ID 84)

7.7 Some respondents commented that because they did not work in Tomatin during the day, they had found it very difficult to meet people, and felt that a local pub (or restaurant), open for evening and weekend meals and social activities, would enable this to happen. Several suggested that a pub / restaurant would specifically meet the needs of ‘working adults’. Many in this group mourned the loss of the village’s previous pub.

‘When we had the pub, it was a great place for people to socialise. Regardless of drinking it was a social hub. I don’t see this ever returning in any capacity as those days are long gone. The pub was knocked down and community spirit went with it.’ (Female, aged 20-29, ID 180)

7.8 However, other respondents in this group talked less about the social function of a pub / restaurant, and more about the benefits of having a place in Tomatin (‘somewhere on your doorstep’) to have a meal and a drink in the evening. Some thought that a ‘traditional pub’ was unlikely to succeed in the area, but that a restaurant would be more likely to do so. This group thought such an establishment would attract not only locals but also visitors and would complement the café. Some also suggested that a pub / restaurant would provide jobs for local young people.

Type of establishment which is needed and / or likely to be successful

7.9 Those who saw the need for a local pub / restaurant often made suggestions about the type of establishment that was likely to be successful. In particular, it would need to have:

- Nice music
- A ‘cosy’ atmosphere
- Good (‘decent’, ‘healthy’) food / local produce
- Good service
- An alcohol licence

- A micro-brewery style tap room
- Indoor seating and a take-away service
- Pub quiz nights.

7.10 There were also suggestions that it should be ‘family friendly’, ‘dog friendly’ and ‘affordable’; that it should be targeted at visitors as well as locals (to make it succeed financially), and that it should have a ‘different atmosphere’ to the restaurant planned for the development proposed at Freeburn (to avoid competing with that restaurant).

7.11 However, among those who thought a pub / restaurant was needed in Strathdearn, not everyone was in favour of a new building being constructed. Among this group, it was relatively common (especially among those who answered ‘agree slightly’) to suggest that a part-time pub / restaurant could be established in the existing community café.

‘Turn the cafe into a bar Thursday through to Sunday. Get a late license, pizza oven, cocktails, local beers, and call it the Strath Bar!’ (Male, aged 40-49, ID 10)

7.12 One respondent referred to a similar arrangement (‘a bar in the hall’) in Boat of Garten, which they believed had been very successful in that community.

7.13 Finally, among the respondents who ‘agreed’ there was a need for a pub / restaurant, there were a small number who were not in favour of it being built using community funds.

Challenges / disadvantages

7.14 Respondents who agreed that there was a need for a pub / restaurant in Strathdearn – and especially those who agreed only ‘slightly’ – frequently identified challenges in delivering such an establishment. The one mentioned most often was that it was unlikely that a pub / restaurant in a village the size of Tomatin would be able to make a profit. Some respondents also expressed the view that, if the development at Freeburn went ahead, a separate pub / restaurant in the village of Tomatin would simply not be viable. (Indeed, it was suggested that if the development on the A9 went ahead, there would be no need for a separate pub / restaurant in Tomatin.) It was common for respondents to point out that the reason the original pub had closed was that the community did not support it.

7.15 Some respondents wanted to see the community subsidise the cost of running a pub / restaurant; this group argued that the benefit would be to ‘bring back community spirit’. More often, however, respondents suggested that the pub / restaurant should be combined with the existing café. Those who made this point praised the existing café and argued that the community needed to support it.

7.16 Other challenges of establishing a pub / restaurant in the village were seen to be:

- A possible rise in anti-social behaviour
- Difficulties in getting reliable, long-term staff
- Lack of public transport (which would make it impossible for enough people to use a pub)

- ‘Times have moved on’; ‘people no longer spend time or money drinking in pubs’ the habit of visiting a pub was likely to have waned in the years since the old pub had closed.

Views disagreeing with, or unsure about, the need for a pub / restaurant

7.17 Among the respondents who disagreed (slightly or strongly) or who were unsure about the need for a pub / restaurant in Strathdearn, there were a small number of recurring views. These echoed the challenges highlighted above. This group repeatedly made the following points:

- A pub in a village the size of Tomatin would not be commercially viable; current licensing and drink-driving laws would make it impossible for a pub to make a profit. Again, some pointed out that the former pub in Tomatin had closed because of lack of community support.
- The planned development at Freeburn will (eventually) satisfy the desire among the local community for a restaurant.
- The centre of Tomatin was the wrong place for a pub, as this would result in an increase in noise and anti-social behaviour in the evening.

7.18 Some respondents in this group simply disagreed that a pub / restaurant was ‘needed’ in Strathdearn at all. This group made the point that there are a large variety of restaurants in Inverness just a 15-minute drive away, and they argued that the existing daytime café provides space for meeting up and it should be supported. Some also suggested that, in time, the café might be expanded to offer evening meals.

7.19 Some in this group argued that, if, in any case, a pub was rebuilt, this should be done on a purely commercial basis and should not receive any community windfarm funding.

Quick overview of main finding



- Village pub or restaurant – but with a lot of caveats
-

8. Visitor management

8.1 Interviews conducted with stakeholders in Stage 1 identified a range of growing problems which were attributed to an increasing number of visitors. These problems were seen to be related to inappropriate parking and access to land, and litter. However, at the same time, there were also concerns that Strathtearn was missing out on the potential economic opportunities that visitors could bring to the area. In general, those in the latter group were keen to see visitor numbers expand – but in a sensitive and managed way.

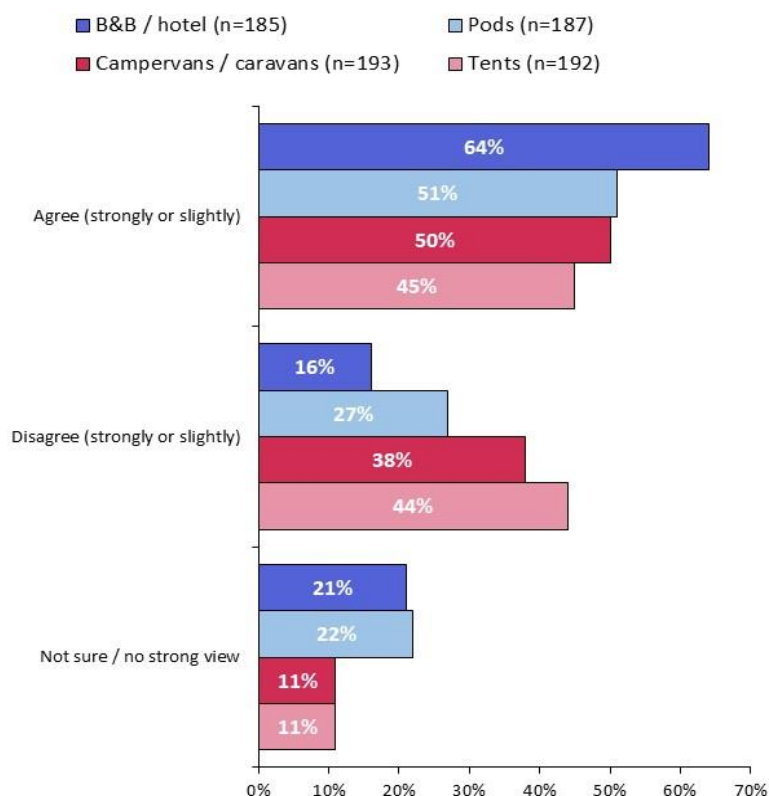
8.2 Thus, the survey included a series of questions on the topic of visitor management. The first set of four questions asked whether there was a need for certain types of visitor accommodation. A second set of six questions focused on the needs for specific facilities or services for visitors.

Main findings in relation to the need for visitor accommodation

8.3 The survey included four questions, asking respondents if they agreed or disagreed that certain types of visitor accommodation were needed in Strathtearn.

8.4 Figure 8.1 presents the combined results of these four questions. The figure shows that **half or more** of respondents agreed (strongly or slightly) that there was a need for (i) B&B or hotel accommodation (64%), (ii) glamping or pod-type accommodation (51%), and (iii) space for overnight camping for campervans and caravans (50%). Slightly less than half (45%) also agreed there was a need for space for overnight camping for tents; however, a similar proportion (44%) disagreed that there was a need for overnight tent camping – and most of those disagreed strongly.

Figure 8.1: Do you agree or disagree that there is a need for the following types of visitor accommodation? (The base figures for each question are shown in the legend.)



Main findings in relation to the need for other visitor services / facilities

8.5 The survey asked respondents if they thought there was a need in the area for other types of services / facilities for visitors. Figures 8.2 – 8.7 below present the results.

Space for parking

8.6 Figure 8.2 shows that a large majority of respondents (85%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that there is a need for space (or additional space) for parking at The Strathtearn and / or Loch Moy. Eleven percent (11%) disagreed, and 4% expressed uncertainty or no strong view on the matter.

Information and signage

8.7 Figure 8.3 shows that a substantial majority of respondents (72%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that there is a need for better information (e.g. signage, online and printed information) about local sites of interest. Fourteen percent (14%) of respondents disagreed (strongly or slightly) and the same proportion were not sure or had no strong view on this issue.

Access to public toilets outside the main population areas

8.8 Figure 8.4 shows that a substantial majority of respondents (72%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that there is a need for public toilets outside the main population areas. The interviews with stakeholders in Stage 1 suggested there may be a need, specifically, near Loch Moy – although respondents to the survey were not asked to comment regarding a particular location. Twelve percent (12%) of respondents disagreed (strongly or slightly) that there was a need for additional public toilets, and 17% expressed uncertainty / no strong view.

Figure 8.2: Do you agree or disagree that there is a need for space for parking? (base: 192)

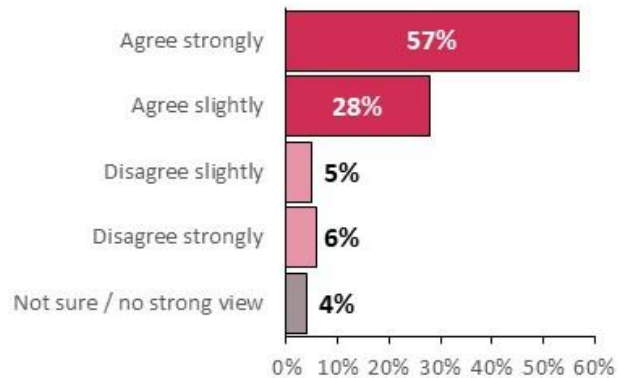


Figure 8.3: Do you agree or disagree that there is a need for better information / signage about local sites of interest? (base: 190)

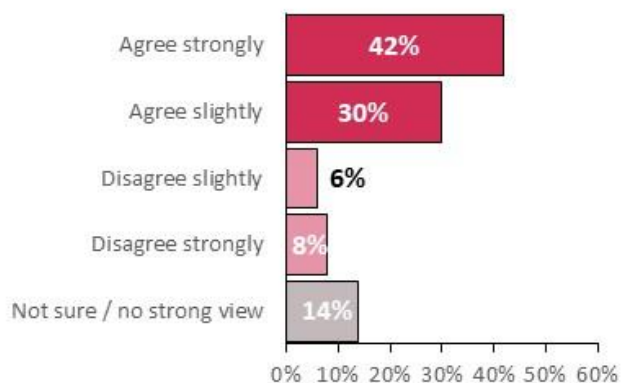
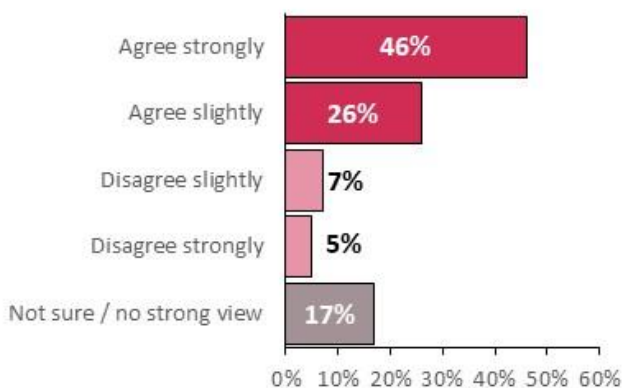


Figure 8.4: Do you agree or disagree that there is a need for access to public toilets (outside the main population areas)? (base: 194)



Bicycle or e-bike hire

8.9 Figure 8.5 shows that just over half (52%) of respondents agreed (strongly or slightly) that there is a need for bicycle or e-bike hire services for visitors to the area. However, around a quarter (26%) disagreed, and a similar proportion (23%) said they were not sure or had no strong view.

Electric vehicle charging points

8.10 Figure 8.6 shows that around two-thirds of respondents (67%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that there is a need for electric vehicle charging points in Strathdearn. Twelve percent (12%) disagreed, and (20%) said they were not sure or had no strong view on this question.

Locally managed wildlife tourism opportunities

8.11 Finally, Figure 8.7 shows that nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that there is a need in Strathdearn for locally managed wildlife tourism opportunities. Fourteen percent (14%) disagreed and 22% said they were not sure or had no strong view.

Figure 8.5: Do you agree or disagree that there is a need for bicycle or e-bike hire? (base: 187)

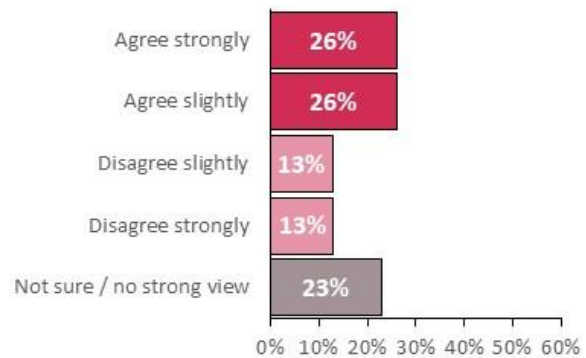


Figure 8.6: Do you agree or disagree that there is a need for electric vehicle charging points? (base: 185)

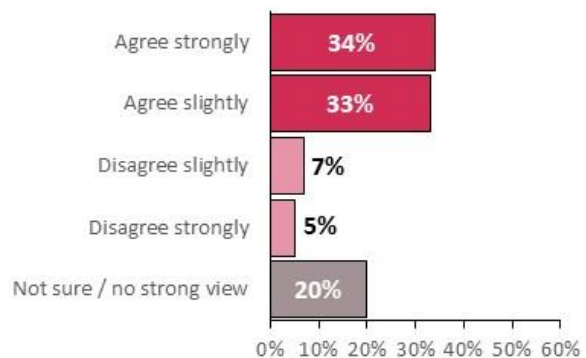
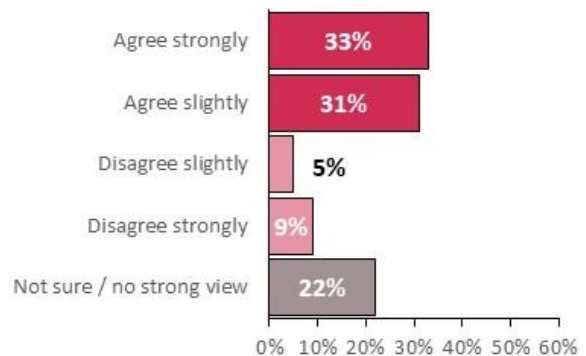


Figure 8.7: Do you agree or disagree that there is a need for locally managed wildlife tourism opportunities? (base: 189)



Comments on the need for visitor accommodation and services / facilities

8.12 At the end of this series of questions, space was provided for comments and respondents were invited to explain their choices relating to visitor accommodation or other visitor services / facilities. Altogether 73 respondents commented, and the views expressed reflected the ongoing tension that exists in the community about whether tourism should be encouraged or discouraged.

Visitor accommodation

8.13 Figure 8.1 above showed that half (or more) of respondents agreed there was a need in Strathdearn for (i) B&B, guest house or hotel accommodation; (ii) pods; and (iii) space for overnight campervan / caravan parking. There was less agreement about the need for space for overnight tent camping. However, regardless of whether they agreed or disagreed, respondents often stated

in their comments that **any** visitor accommodation in the area should be left to the private sector and should not be developed using community windfarm funding. Several respondents explicitly stated that they did not see how the provision of accommodation for visitors would benefit the wider community.

8.14 Respondents who were in favour of developing additional local visitor accommodation pointed to the additional income and jobs that this could bring to the community. They also highlighted that:

- Visitors are already using the area; providing them with better facilities would reduce the incidence of 'wild' camping and the problems that can be associated with that.
- There is a lack of suitable campervan / caravan facilities across the Highlands. Campervans currently use the Freeburn site and once this is developed, some alternative provision should be made for them. However, campervans should not be encouraged to park at The Strathearn.
- Aires (which provide space for campervan parking, together with water, toilet and grey waste facilities) have been established successfully in other areas.
- Any campsite (for campervans or tents) should be located on the edge of the village(s) so that it does not have an adverse impact on local residents.

8.15 In contrast to these views, respondents who were **not** in favour of developing additional local visitor accommodation pointed to (i) the planned development of a hotel at Freeburn, and (ii) existing provision of pods and B&Bs (both in Tomatin), and a campsite (at Daviot). This group argued that there was no need for any more tourist accommodation in Strathearn. They also pointed out that there is no community-owned land available to enable the development of campsite facilities.

Other visitor services or facilities

8.16 In terms of other visitor services or facilities, again there was a prevalent view that certain services or facilities (for example, in relation to wildlife tourism, or bicycle hire) should, in general, be provided by the private sector. There was disagreement among respondents about whether better information (paper, online and signage) about local sites of interest should be made available, and this disagreement related to an ambivalence in the community about encouraging tourism.

8.17 Respondents frequently highlighted that steps were already being taken to provide access to e-bikes and electric vehicle charging points. In general, they did not think that any additional facilities in this respect were needed.

8.18 There was, however, a more general consensus that the **parking problems** at The Strathearn and Loch Moy needed to be addressed. Some respondents suggested there was a growing safety hazard in relation to people parking on the main road in Tomatin, and in passing places and on road verges near Loch Moy. A few respondents offered suggestions about how these problems could (or **should not**) be addressed:

- At The Strathdearn:
 - Provide separate parking (elsewhere) for staff of the shop, hall and café.
 - Relocate the MUGA to where the old football pitch was – this would not only reduce the noise in the middle of the village but also provide additional parking space for around 40 cars.
 - The existing lack of car parking space should not be addressed by adding extra spaces along the side of the MUGA. *‘This would only result in further urbanising a once quiet and beautiful country village.’*
 - The Strathdearn site needs better management, e.g. signs put out to indicate overflow parking by the recycling bins, when necessary. Staff could also be encouraged to park there.
 - It should be made clear that parking is legal on a public road so long as accesses are not blocked and a clear thoroughfare is kept.
- At Loch Moy:
 - There is space in Moy that could be used for parking in between the schoolhouse and the old manse. Local walks in the area should not be promoted until appropriate parking is in place.
 - There is potentially space for parking in the forestry road at Tullochclury by the little bridge; however, efforts will need to be made to engage with local residents first before pursuing this option.

8.19 In relation to both locations, there was a view that any new parking facilities should not be near people’s homes.

8.20 **Regarding public toilets**, the general view expressed in the comments was that there was a need to provide access to public toilets in the area – at Loch Moy, in particular, but also in Tomatin where there is no access to toilets when the Hub is closed. One respondent noted that there is a sign on the A9 which advertises the availability of toilets in Tomatin; however, when the Hub is closed, visitors simply use the trees / shrubs around the car park / outside people’s homes. It was suggested that once the Freeburn site had been developed, this would provide the necessary facilities. However, in the meantime, toilets were needed to prevent people from using the outdoors. There was also a specific call for better disabled toilet provision in the area. The two main challenges to addressing this need were highlighted as (i) the lack of land, and (ii) the need for the community to service these facilities.

Other comments

8.21 Finally, a small number of respondents suggested additional facilities / services that they felt were needed in Strathdearn. It was not clear, in every case, whether these facilities would be targeted or intended primarily for visitors, locals, or a combination of the two. Suggestions included:

- A dog park – with access for disabled and older people
- An improved / extended path network
- A community woodland.

8.22 The last two of these suggestions will be discussed further in Chapter 10.

Quick overview of main findings



- New or additional parking at sites of local interest, but with caveats
 - Better tourist information (signs, online, printed), but with caveats
 - Access to public toilets outside main population areas, but with caveats
-



- Electric vehicle charging points
 - Locally managed wildlife tourism opportunities, but with caveats
-



There may be a need for some / all of the following types of tourist accommodation, but the general view (from the comments) was that this should be left to the private sector to provide.

- B&B, guest house or hotel accommodation
 - Glamping or pods
 - Space for overnight campervan / caravan camping
 - Space for overnight tent camping
-



- Bicycle / e-bike hire
-

9. Tackling climate change and its impacts

9.1 The survey included five questions about possible ways of using windfarm funding to tackle climate change and the impacts of climate change in Strathdearn. A sixth question asked respondents what their views were about possible future renewable energy developments in the Strathdearn area. Respondents could answer ‘support strongly’, ‘support slightly’, ‘oppose slightly’, ‘oppose strongly’, or ‘not sure / don’t have a strong view’.

9.2 The analysis of responses to each of these six questions is presented below.

Main findings

Grants to local residents for part-purchase of an e-bike

9.3 Figure 9.1 shows that over half of respondents (58%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that windfarm funding should be used to give grants to local residents to cover part of the cost of purchasing an e-bike. However, 32% disagreed, and most of this group disagreed strongly. Eleven percent (11%) said they were not sure or had no strong view on this question.

Make a small number of e-bikes available for hire / loan

9.4 Figure 9.2 shows that nearly two-thirds of respondents (65%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that windfarm funding should be used to make a small number of e-bikes available to local people for hire or loan. However, 21% disagreed (of those, 14% disagreed strongly), and 13% said they were not sure or had no strong view on the matter.

Figure 9.1: Do you agree or disagree that windfarm funding should be used to give grants to local residents to cover part of the cost of purchasing an e-bike? (base: 190)

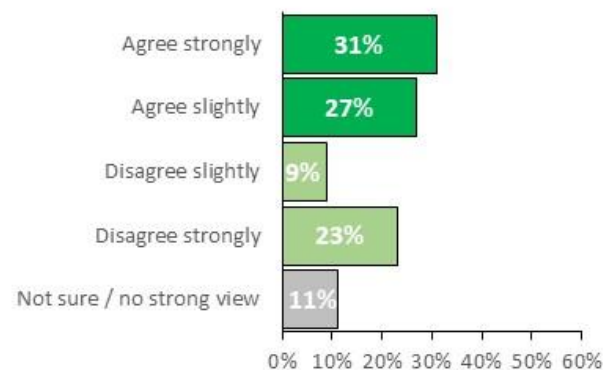
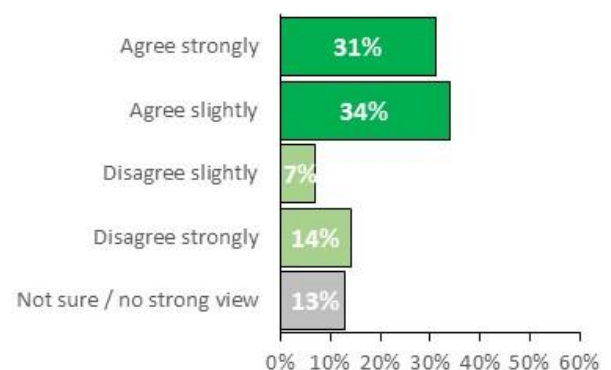


Figure 9.2: Do you agree or disagree that windfarm funding should be used to make a small number of e-bikes available to local people for hire / loan? (base: 191)



Provide better recycling facilities

9.5 Figure 9.3 shows that a large majority of respondents (86%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that windfarm funding should be used to improve local recycling facilities – i.e. through better provision of recycling bins and recycling points. More than half of respondents (57%) agreed strongly on this issue. Just 3% disagreed (strongly or slightly), and 11% said they were not sure or had no strong view.

Carry out energy efficiency checks on local properties

9.6 Figure 9.4 shows that nearly six out of ten respondents (59%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that windfarm funding should be used to carry out energy efficiency checks on local properties (with written reports provided). A fifth of respondents (20%) disagreed (strongly or slightly), and a similar proportion (22%) said they were not sure or had no strong view on the issue.

Provide space / land for local food growing initiatives

9.7 Figure 9.5 shows that nearly three-quarters of respondents (72%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that windfarm funding should be used to support local food growing initiatives (for example, the development of allotments or a community orchard). Fourteen percent (14%) disagreed, and most of these (11%) disagreed strongly. The same proportion (14%) said they were not sure or had no strong view.

Figure 9.3: Do you agree or disagree that windfarm funding should be used to improve local recycling facilities (i.e. bins and recycling points)? (base: 192)

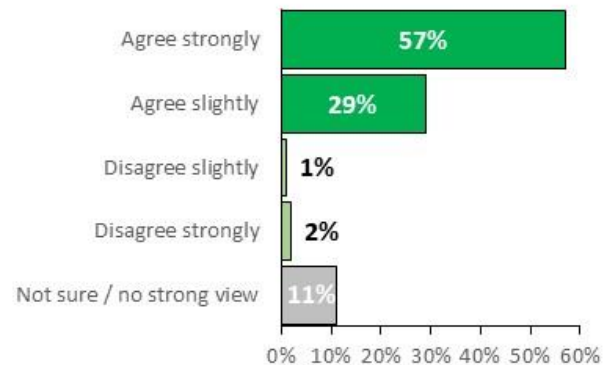


Figure 9.4: Do you agree or disagree that windfarm funding should be used to carry out energy efficiency checks on local properties? (base: 188)

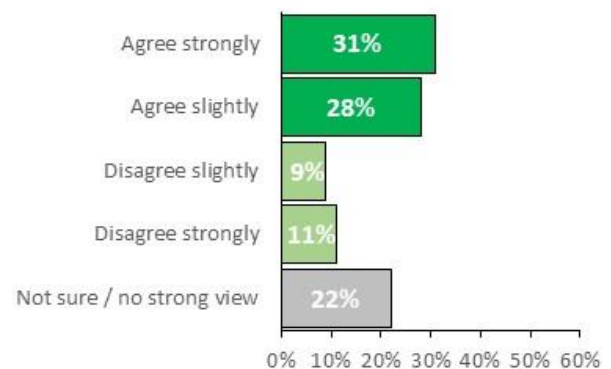
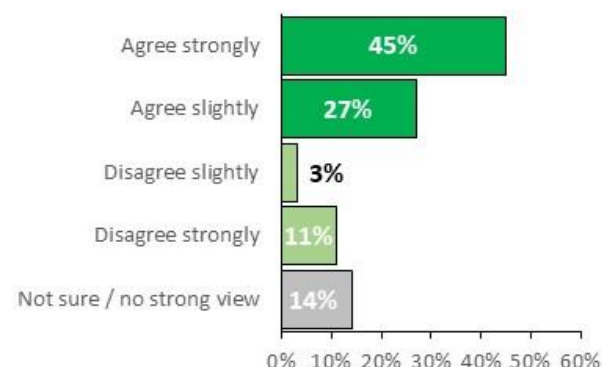


Figure 9.5: Do you agree or disagree that windfarm funding should be used to support local food growing initiatives? (base: 190)



Comments on ways of using windfarm funding to tackle climate change

9.8 Respondents were asked if they would like to provide further comments to explain their choices or to suggest other ways that windfarm funding could be used locally to tackle climate change or the impacts of climate change. Fifty-eight (58) respondents made comments, and most of these offered additional suggestions.

9.9 The analysis below will first discuss views on the five ideas included in the consultation questionnaire. Then, a brief summary is given of the additional suggestions made by respondents.

E-bikes

9.10 Those who commented on this suggestion were, for the most part, **not** supportive of using windfarm funding to give grants to local residents for part-purchase of an e-bike, or to establish an e-bike hire / borrow scheme. These respondents pointed out that (i) there is already work ongoing to supply four e-bikes for hire / loan, (ii) e-bike batteries cannot be recycled, (iii) traditional bicycles have a smaller carbon footprint than e-bikes, and (iv) an e-bike hire scheme for members of the community would require ongoing maintenance. Some respondents thought this idea was 'ridiculous' and wanted community funds to be spent in other ways.

Improved recycling facilities

9.11 In general, respondents supported using windfarm funding to improve local recycling facilities. Some highlighted a specific need for a recycling point at the north end of Tomatin, and more glass recycling bins in Moy. (There was also a suggestion that, if a new car park were built at Loch Moy, then recycling facilities should be provided there, too.) Respondents made the following additional suggestions:

- Either a local in-village garden waste facility, or provision of garden waste collection, would assist with local compost-making and food growing.
- Surplus materials from, for example, construction projects (timber, roofing, etc.) could be repurposed locally.
- Small scale local plastic recycling units (which turns plastic into useful long-use items) could be set up with a little capital (*'machines in a garage, basically'*); however, they would require community commitment.

9.12 However, a few respondents argued that it should be the responsibility of Highland Council to provide (and pay for) improved recycling facilities, not the local community.

Energy efficiency checks

9.13 Very few respondents commented on the idea of providing energy efficiency checks on local properties (with written recommendations made). Among those who did, there was a view that, if such checks were undertaken, then the community should also offer financial assistance to implement any recommendations. However, the issue of using windfarm funding to improve the energy efficiency of people's homes was a major theme in the additional suggestions made by respondents – and this is discussed below. (See paragraph 9.15.)

Allotments / food growing and sharing

9.14 Among those who commented on the idea of establishing allotments, a community orchard, or other local food growing initiative(s), there were largely supportive views. There was a specific comment that the residents of Moy would be interested in having a local allotment (and a suggestion that it should be sited near the (proposed) community hub, together with parking). Those in favour of allotments identified a wide range of benefits, including (i) providing fresh air and exercise, (ii) bringing together people of all generations, and (iii) providing a source of local produce for the shop and café. However, a few also pointed out that an allotment or community orchard could not be created without access to land. There was a contrasting view among a few respondents that there is no need for allotments in Strathdearn because *'everyone has a garden'*.

Other ideas

9.15 As mentioned above, it was common for respondents to suggest other ways that local windfarm money could be used to tackle climate change and the impacts of climate change within Strathdearn. There were a large number of suggestions; however, the ideas could be grouped into a relatively small number of themes, as follows:

- **Energy efficiency of local homes and businesses:** Provide loans or grants to residents and businesses to make their homes / premises more energy efficient and / or to install greener heating systems. Install solar panels on the Hub / café and on all houses in Strathdearn.
- **Local green energy generation:** Explore the opportunities for the community as a whole to generate its own energy and / or become more carbon neutral (e.g. through purchase of a windmill, or by *'repurposing features such as old gravel quarries into solar farms'*).

'Buy land for carbon sequestration, solar park which provides subsidised electricity to residents / community owned buildings.' (Female, aged 50-59, ID 183)

'Explore if the windfarm funding could be used to develop provision of other green energy, e.g. local community hydro schemes or thermal heat recovery including battery storage for high generating / low demand times.' (Local resident, aged 60-69, ID 134)

- **Ecology and bio-diversity:** Plant more trees, shrubs and flowers and reinstate hedges (especially around the Hub). Do more to conserve local moorlands. Establish a community woodland (with land purchased from a local landowner / woodland trust) which could be used for leisure, ecology education and the production of biomass. Provide funding to support local wildlife conservation (e.g. red squirrels, pine martens and birds of prey).
- **Litter / waste reduction:** Address the problem of increased plastic waste / litter in the area. Help local businesses to explore how to use less plastic.
- **Local flooding:** Undertake research and planning for flood defence and mitigation, and consider the security of local infrastructure such as roads and bridges. (*'Take a look at SEPA flood maps for 2050 and you'll see a lot of existing properties are going to have problems.'*)
- **Raise awareness of climate change among local residents:** Invite experts to give talks (at the school, in the Hub, etc.) to improve local knowledge of climate change-related issues.
- **Direct payments to residents:** Provide grant / loans to local residents for winter heating bills.

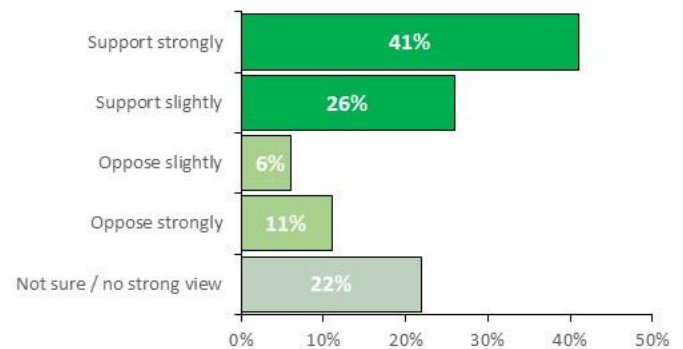
9.16 Several respondents suggested that Tomatin and / or Moy could aspire to the aim of becoming the first ‘Green Highland Village’ or the first ‘carbon-neutral village’ in Scotland.

Views on possible future renewable energy developments in Strathdearn

9.17 The final question in this section of the survey asked respondents for their views about possible future renewable energy developments in the area – and to indicate if they supported or opposed such developments, or if they were not sure or had no strong view.

9.18 Figure 9.6 shows that around two-thirds of respondents (67%) supported (strongly or slightly) possible future renewable energy developments in the area. Seventeen percent (17%) were opposed (strongly or slightly), and 22% were not sure or had no strong view on the issue.

Figure 9.6: What is your view about possible future renewable energy developments in the Strathdearn area? (base: 189)



9.19 Inadvertently, the survey did not include space for comments following this question. However, six (6) respondents made comments on this question elsewhere in the survey (usually in the previous or following comments boxes). A summary of the views expressed are presented here.

9.20 Among this small group of respondents, there was general support for renewable energy developments – but at the same time, a desire not to have additional wind turbines in Strathdearn. These respondents described the visual impact of the existing turbines as ‘blots’ on the skyline. One respondent expressed the view that having turbines on all the local hills was ‘*destroying the natural beauty of the Highlands*’ and constituted ‘*visual pollution*’.

9.21 There were suggestions that ‘small hydro schemes’ in the area would be more acceptable – as would turbines at sea, and wave or tidal energy schemes located off the coast.

Quick overview of main findings



- Improve local recycling facilities (more bins and recycling points)



- Local food growing initiatives



- Grants to residents for part-purchase of an e-bike
- Make a small number of e-bikes available for hire / loan



- Carry out energy efficiency checks (with report) on local properties
- Respondents made a wide range of other suggestions for ways that windfarm money could be used to tackle climate change and the impacts of climate change, including through improving energy efficiency of local homes; exploring the possibilities of local energy generation; and flood mitigation.

10. Other ideas for using local windfarm funding

10.1 The survey included a set of five questions which invited views about a range of suggestions that stakeholders had made (in Stage 1 of the consultation) regarding other ideas for using windfarm funding for community benefit. The analysis of responses to each of these five questions is presented here.

Main findings

Improving / extending the local path network

10.2 Figure 10.1 shows that a large majority of respondents (84%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that windfarm funding should be used to improve / extend the local path network. Of these, 58% agreed strongly. Just 10% disagreed (strongly or slightly), and 5% said they were not sure or had no strong view.

Holding more community events

10.3 Figure 10.2 shows that just over three-quarters of respondents (76%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that windfarm funding should be used to hold more community events. Fourteen percent (14%) disagreed (strongly or slightly), and 9% said they were not sure or had no strong view.

Delivering adult education / skills development programmes

10.4 Figure 10.3 shows that more than three-quarters of respondents (79%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that windfarm funding should be used to deliver adult education or skills development programmes (in areas like IT, crafts, etc.). Very few respondents (8%) disagreed (strongly or slightly) with this idea. Thirteen percent (13%) were not sure or had no strong view.

Figure 10.1: Do you think windfarm funding should be used to improve / extend the local path network? (base: 191)

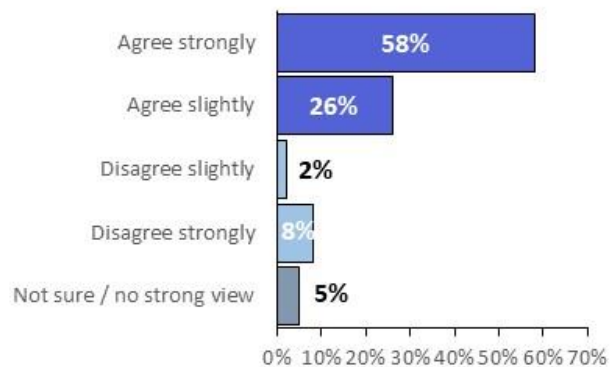


Figure 10.2: Do you think windfarm funding should be used to hold more community events (e.g. barbecues, community suppers, etc.) (base: 190)

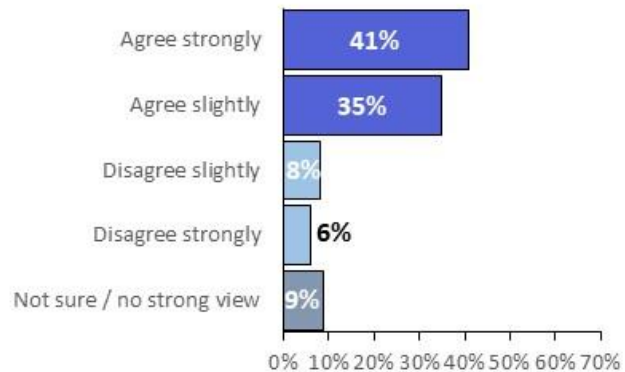
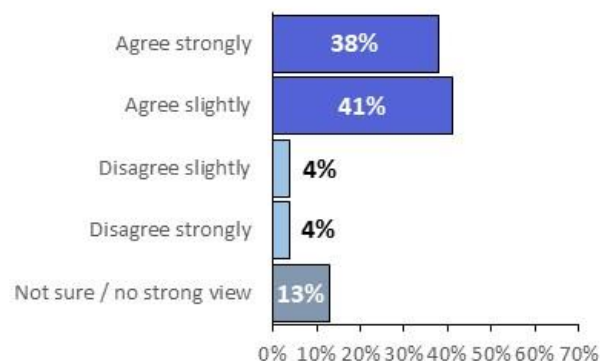


Figure 10.3: Do you think windfarm funding should be used to deliver adult education / skills development programmes (e.g. IT, crafts, etc.) (base: 191)



Making improvements to the physical environment of the community

10.5 Figure 10.4 shows that a large majority of respondents (91%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that windfarm funding should be used to make improvements to the physical environment of the community – for example, through better maintenance of paths and plants, and through installation of benches and solar lights in bus shelters. Nearly two-thirds (63%) agreed strongly with this proposal. Just 5% disagreed (strongly or slightly), and a further 5% said they were not sure or had no strong view.

Supporting local voluntary groups

10.6 Finally, Figure 10.5 shows that a large majority of respondents (83%) agreed (strongly or slightly) that windfarm funding should be used to support local voluntary groups. Very few (5%) disagreed (strongly or slightly), and 12% said they were not sure or had no strong view.

Figure 10.4: Do you think windfarm funding should be used to make improvements to the physical environment of the community (e.g. maintain paths, plants, instal benches, solar lights in bus shelters, etc.) (base: 191)

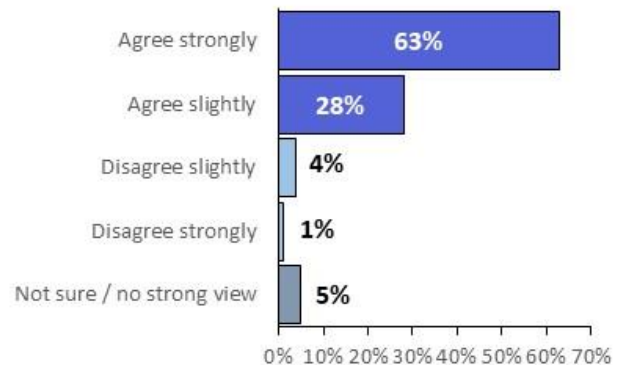
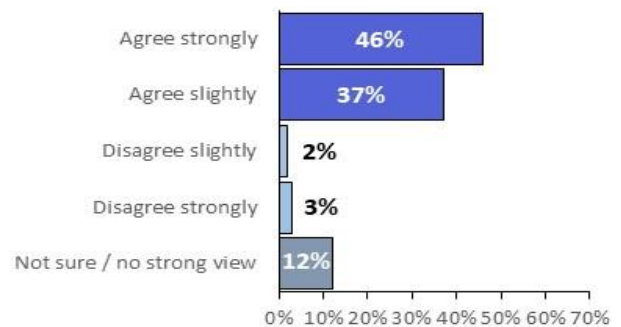


Figure 10.5: Do you think windfarm funding should be used to support local voluntary groups? (base: 191)



Comments on other ideas for using local windfarm funding

10.7 Respondents were given space to explain their choices and / or to suggest other ways that windfarm funding could be used locally for the benefit of the community. Altogether, 70 respondents made comments.

10.8 Most comments focused on (i) improvements to the local path network and (ii) improvements to the physical environment (mainly in and around Tomatin and Moy). These two main themes are discussed first below. Fewer respondents commented in relation to using windfarm funding for (iii) holding more community events, (iv) delivering adult education / skills development programmes, or (v) supporting local voluntary groups. The views in relation to these latter three topics are covered briefly in a single section below. Respondents also suggested a range of other ways that windfarm money could be used for the benefit of the community, and a small number made comments of a more general nature. These views are summarised at the end of this section.

Improve local path network

10.9 There was a recurring view among respondents that improvements were needed to the local path network – although some suggested that work to improve local paths was already underway.

10.10 Three main issues were raised: (i) the need for cycle tracks and mountain bike trails, (ii) the need to improve existing footpaths, and (iii) the need for a pedestrian pavement along the road in Tomatin.

- **Cycle tracks and mountain bike trails:** With regard to cycle tracks and mountain bike trails, there were suggestions that these were needed specifically at Moy, but also elsewhere around Strathdearn. There was also a suggestion that the offroad right-of-way from Inverness to Moy and on to Tomatin should be reinstated. (Comments at an earlier question called for a cycle track between Tomatin and Moy and onward to Daviot.) Note that older children in Strathdearn also highlighted a desire for more cycle tracks and mountain bike trails in the area – as discussed in Chapter 4.
- **Footpaths:** With regard to existing footpaths, there were concerns that there were so few off-road walking routes in the local area. Respondents attributed this to hostility among local estate owners to public access of their land. (There was a recurring view that efforts to improve the local path network seem to be continually hampered by local landowners.)
- **Pedestrian pavement in Tomatin:** With regard to the need for a pedestrian pavement along the road in Tomatin, it was suggested that the primary need was for a footpath between the Hub and the school. Concerns were voiced about the safety of children / families walking in the road (unlit after dark) alongside cars, tractors, and other motorised vehicles. Apart from the perceived need for a pavement, there were also suggestions that the main road through Tomatin should be designated a 20mph zone, and there were requests for speed bumps or other forms of traffic calming to slow down passing traffic. Reference was made to comparable work done in Farr to improve public safety. (Note that children and young people from the area also identified a need for a pavement between the Hub and distillery – as discussed in Chapter 4.)

10.11 A few respondents made specific suggestions about where the path network around Tomatin could be extended. Suggestions included (i) developing walks and bike trails for kids in the Distillery Wood, and (ii) developing a footpath around Tomatin House. One respondent suggested that:

‘Windfarm funding should be put towards improving path networks around the community, with wildlife hides at suitable points. There are stunning walks around the village, with a network of paths, many in boggy areas. Two new bridges have been installed recently, however [they] lead to paths that are generally waterlogged for half the year.’ (Female, aged 40-49, ID 48)

10.12 There was, however, also a suggestion that existing footpaths through local woods should not be ‘paved’ as rougher paths were seen to help support the maintenance of balance and muscle tone among older walkers.

10.13 Finally, the point was made that pavements in other areas of the Highlands are constructed and maintained by Highland Council – particularly in towns where there is an issue of public safety and the need to separate pedestrians from road traffic. There was a view that community windfarm funding should not be used for projects that should rightly be funded by the local authority.

Improve the physical environment of the community

10.14 The second major theme in the comments at this question related to the appearance of Tomatin. The village was described by some respondents as '*scruffy*', a '*mess*', and '*looking like an industrial area*'. Respondents wanted it to be '*neater*', '*tidier*', and '*bonnier*'. Moy was **not** generally singled out by respondents as being unattractive, and indeed, some suggested that aspects of the physical environment in Moy should be adopted in Tomatin (i.e. street furniture, signage, planters). However, there were concerns that the grass verges in both Moy and Tomatin needed more regular mowing. (Note that children in Years P4-7 at the primary school said that discarded litter and dog poo were the main things in their community that they did not like – see Chapter 4 for details.)

10.15 Respondents made a wide range of suggestions about how the appearance of the local area could be improved, including through installing planters and planting flowers and trees (especially around the Hub), erecting better signage for walks, providing litter bins, installing better lighting (there was a specific request for '*Narnia-style streetlamps*'), tending the milestones, and developing a local '*nature trail*'. There were also a few suggestions that windfarm funding should be used to employ (from within the local population) a small maintenance team all year round to regularly cut the grass verges in summer, trim trees and hedges, remove weeds and non-native invasive plants (e.g. rhododendron), and deal with snow and ice gritting in areas of Strathdearn not gritted by Highland Council.

10.16 There was also a very specific suggestion that a tree currently growing on top of the Loch Moy monument should be removed as a matter of urgency. In addition, there was an offer of help from a local landscape designer.

Community events, adult education / skills development, and support for local voluntary groups

10.17 As noted above, there were a relatively small number of comments made in relation to each of these three topics.

- **Community events:** Those who commented on this made two points. The first was that events are always held in Tomatin; some respondents wanted to see events occasionally held in Moy. The second point was made by two respondents who did not agree that windfarm funding should be used to organise community events. These individuals thought that events should be organised on a voluntary basis and the costs covered through fundraising or a small charge to participants. A third individual commented that community events only need to be held once or twice a year; if they are held too often, they will not be supported.
- **Adult education / skill development programmes:** Those who commented on this issue generally wanted to see a wider range of groups / courses for adults (and including local mums). However, it was noted that several existing groups only met during the day and were therefore not accessible to working people. Respondents also pointed out that there were

adult education classes in Inverness, but the lack of transport was a barrier for some in attending these.

- **Support for local voluntary groups:** Those who commented on this issue made a number of points. First, there was some ambivalence expressed about windfarm funding being used for groups that exist solely *'for the pleasure of the participants, with no wider benefit'* to the community. Respondents thought that community funding needed to be made more widely available beyond certain clubs, and that existing voluntary groups needed to eventually become self-sustaining, rather than relying on windfarm monies. There was a suggestion that any support for groups should be provided on more of a *'mentoring'* basis (i.e. offering advice on how to run a group, and deal with the administrative / management functions), rather than providing direct financial support. Along similar lines, one respondent commented that local clubs often find it difficult to fill office holder positions (i.e. president, secretary, treasurer), and that the support given to local groups could be given by employing a paid administrator, who would also have responsibility for organising events like an annual garden show or art show.

Other ideas

10.18 Finally, respondents suggested a wide range of other things which they thought community windfarm funding should be used for. Those mentioned most often included:

- **Development of additional leisure / recreational facilities:** Several respondents thought a gym facility should be created. Some of these noted that gym equipment was available, and there was just the requirement to find a location for it. Two suggestions were (i) to locate the gym equipment in the MUGA (*'it's never fully used anyway'*), or (ii) to move to home-working arrangements for staff currently working at the hall and use the current office for a gym. There was also a (single) request for a swimming pool. At the same time, there was a concern voiced about the high costs of keeping the hall open – which (it was suggested) needed to be addressed).
- **Establishment of a community wealth fund:** One respondent suggested that *'as other communities are already doing – notably in Ayrshire – Strathdearn should be actively considering a 'community wealth fund' and a clear reserves policy to 'future proof' the community.'* The respondent pointed out that the community bodies in Strathdearn already have sustainable development as a core purpose; this means that a focus on *'intergenerational equity'* would be appropriate.
- **Purchase land for a community woodland:** The point was made that Strathdearn has no community woodland (unlike many other villages in Highland). There were suggestions that such a woodland could be used for both recreational (i.e. walking and cycling) and educational purposes (i.e. nature study).
- **Support with local economic development:** There was a suggestion that windfarm funding could be used to support the development of community-owned workshops / studios to support the development of local trades, crafts and businesses. This would help strengthen the community and also provide work for young people. There was also a suggestion that a small business grant scheme could be provided to help establish new businesses and / or help existing businesses to expand.

- **Support for older people:** Respondents made various suggestions of how community funding could be used to better support older people in the community, including through help with transport, mobility scooters and wheelchairs.
- **Support for younger people:** There was a general view expressed that a greater share of community funding should be targeted for young people. (Refer to Chapter 4 for details.) In the comments at this section, there was also a specific suggestion that a school bus attendant should be employed to address bullying issues on the school bus.

10.19 Other suggestions, each made by one person, were to use community windfarm funding for:

- Better clearing of roads in the winter
- Ensuring that high-quality broadband (described by one respondent as *'first-class'* and an *'example for others'*) is fully available across the area
- Generating more pride in the community by telling the Strathdearn story (*'Not suggesting an active campaign to get more visitors here; rather a story that generates more pride in the place and gains respect from visitors in return.'*)

General

10.20 Finally, some respondents, in their comments at this question, made more general statements about how windfarm funding should be used. There was no obvious consensus in these views, although the issue of 'sustainability' was a recurring theme – as was the view that community benefit funding should not be given to individuals who do not really need it. The quotes below provide an illustration of the range of views expressed:

'We are very fortunate to have the windfarm money which opens up many opportunities for people living locally. As long as projects are sustainable for the area then the money should be used. Perhaps a reminder of the 'sustainable' objectives might be useful as well as being as open and transparent as possible about what the money is being spent on. This is important to gain the trust of the community and ensure that funds are being spent in the best way possible. I think the new hall has been great and we enjoy visiting the café a great deal; it has also provided local work for quite a few young people.' (Female, aged 40-49, ID 88)

'Any scheme needs to aim towards being self-funding in the longer term so that it can survive when the windfarm monies cease.' (Male, aged 60-69, ID 14)

'Anything that will make a real difference to the community and can be provided by this money should be done so. It is for the community after all. Spend it, don't hoard it.' (Male, aged 40-49, ID 82)

'The money was meant to be used for groups & clubs in the area to benefit the community, not being given out to individuals. Nor was it meant to be used to subsidise the hub / shop, they should be running as businesses not as charities, no way either is making enough money to pay the wages.' (Female, aged 50-59, ID 159)

'Money needs to become available to help support more than just certain clubs.'
(Male, aged 20-29, ID 203)

'The money must be used to the benefit of the community living here now.'
(Female, aged 30-39, ID 81)

'Spend should be 75% capital and 25% revenue leaving long lasting benefit.' (Male, aged 30-39, ID 184)

'Windfarm money should absolutely be spent ON THE COMMUNITY, the whole community, and nothing but the community.' (Female, aged 30-39, ID 4)

Quick overview of main findings



- Improve / extend the local path network
- Make improvements to the physical environment of the community (maintain paths / plants, instal benches and solar lights in bus shelters, etc.)
- Provide support for local voluntary groups, but with caveats
- Hold more community events (e.g. barbecues, community suppers, etc.), but with caveats



- Deliver adult education / skills development programmes (e.g. IT, crafts, etc.)
-

11. Community communication

11.1 During discussion with stakeholders in Stage 1 of this project, some highlighted what they saw as the challenges of keeping the community informed and consulted about local initiatives being taken by the three main community groups: Strathdearn Community Council (hereafter referred to as the Community Council), Strathdearn Community Developments Ltd (SCD), and the Strathdearn Community Charitable Trust (SCCT).

11.2 There was a view among some stakeholders that these groups needed to work harder to provide information about what they are doing and the decisions they are taking – and to better involve the wider community in those decisions.

11.3 The survey included five questions about community communication. The first two questions in this section asked respondents (i) if they felt they had enough information from the three community groups about their activities and decisions, and (ii) if they felt able to make their views known to the three community groups. The third question was an open question, inviting suggestions about what would help members of the community to make their views known to the three groups. The fourth and fifth questions were closed questions asking about (i) frequency of reading the Strathdearn newsletter and (ii) how people prefer to receive information.

Main findings

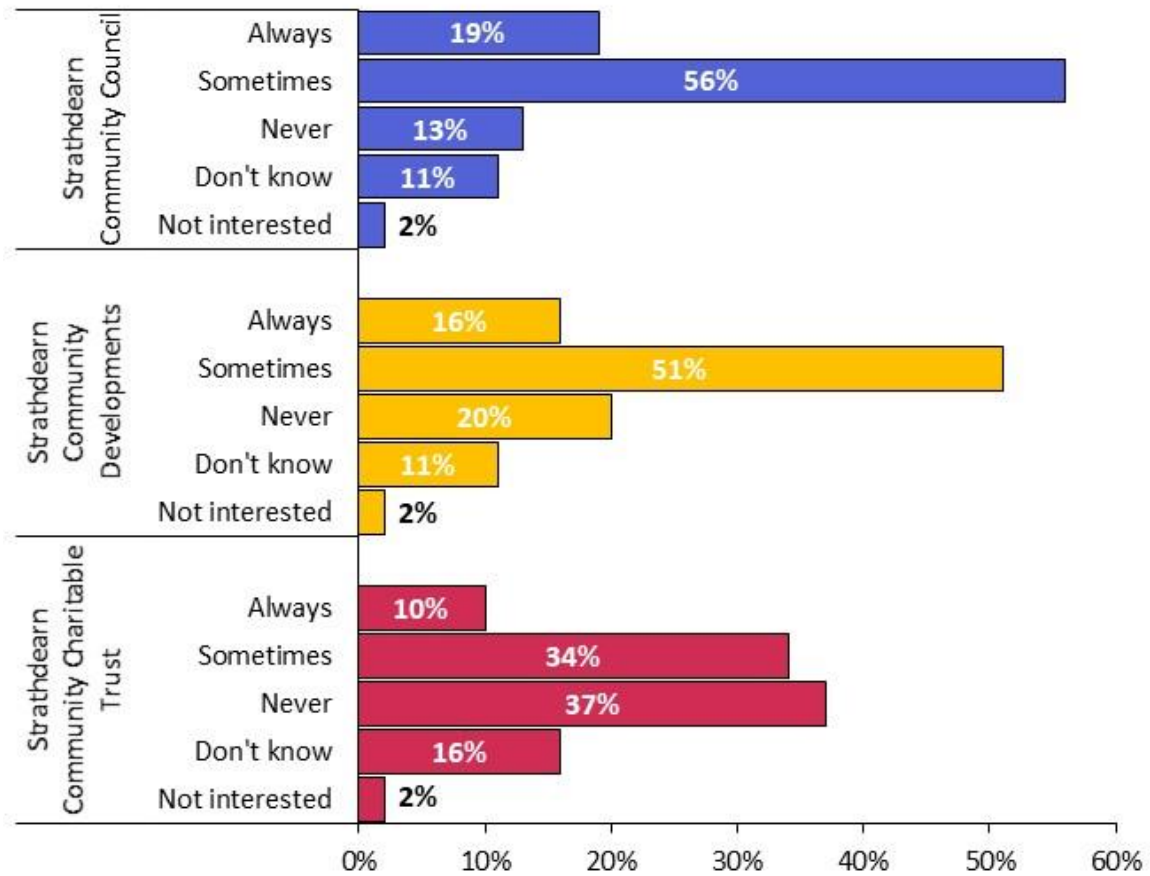
Perceived availability of information from community groups

11.4 The first question in this section asked ‘Do you feel you have enough information about what the following community groups are doing (i.e. meetings, discussions, decisions taken)?’

11.5 Figure 11.1 shows that respondents were more likely to say that they had enough information about what the Community Council and SCD were doing, as compared with SCCT. Three-quarters of respondents (75%) said they ‘always’ or ‘sometimes’ had enough information about what the Community Council was doing, and two-thirds (67%) said they ‘always’ or ‘sometimes’ had enough information about what SCD was doing. This compared with 44% of respondents who said they ‘always’ or ‘sometimes’ knew what was happening with the SCCT.

11.6 It is worth noting that only 2% of survey respondents to the survey indicated that they were ‘not interested’ in having information from any of the three community groups.

Figure 11.1: Do you feel you have enough information about what the following community groups are doing (i.e. meetings, discussions, decisions taken)? (base: 195)

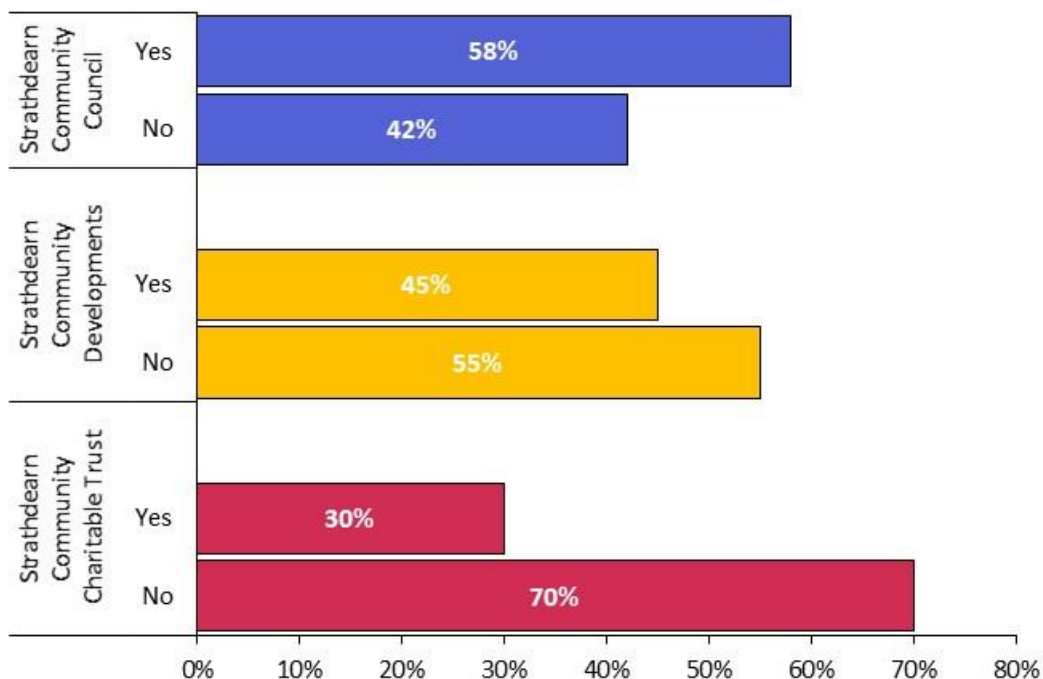


Perceived accessibility of community groups

11.7 The second question in this section asked respondents if they felt able to make their views known in relation to discussions / decisions taken by the three groups.

11.8 Figure 11.2 below shows that respondents were more likely to say they felt able to make their views known to the Community Council as compared with the other two groups. Specifically, 58% said this regarding the Community Council, whereas a slightly lower proportion (45%) said they felt able to make their views known to SCD, and just 30% said they felt able to make their views known to SCCT.

Figure 11.2: Do you feel you are able to make your views known in relation to discussions / decisions taken by these three groups? (base: 175)



What would help people to make their views known to local community groups?

11.9 The third question in this section asked respondents what would help them to make their views known to the three community groups. This was an open question and 71 respondents provided comments.

11.10 It should be noted that not everyone who made comments at this question offered a suggestion about how to improve communication between the community groups and local residents. Some had the view that the situation was *'hopeless'* or that it was *'pointless'* for local residents to attempt to engage with the main community groups because (in their opinion) *'they don't listen'*.⁷ However, such views were in the minority.

11.11 Among those who offered constructive suggestions, there were four main themes and these concerned (i) the need for better / clearer information about the purposes of, and differences between, the three groups, (ii) the format, timing and length of meetings, (iii) the need for greater transparency through better reporting, and (iv) the importance of democratic elections – and of encouraging a wider range of community members to stand for election in local groups.

Better / clearer information about the purposes of, and differences between, the three groups

11.12 The first main theme in the comments was about providing better / clearer information about the roles and relationships of the three main community groups.

11.13 Some respondents said they knew little about who the members of the different groups were, and what the difference between the groups was. Others were familiar with the Community

⁷ Some respondents made comments about specific individuals in their comments. These comments are acknowledged, but are not reported here, as they are irrelevant to the question.

Council and SCD, but nevertheless said that they knew little about SCCT (*'who is on it, how it operates, etc.'*)

11.14 People wanted information about who the members of the groups were, how often they change, how new members are selected (or elected), how often they meet, and what the processes are for decision-making.

The format, timing, and length of meetings

11.15 The second main theme in respondents' comments related to the format, timing and length of meetings. There were suggestions that people in the community would be more able to engage with the different community groups if better information about the times and locations of meetings, and meeting agendas, were made available in advance.

11.16 There were suggestions that more meetings (some said *'all meetings'*) should be open to the public. (Presumably, this suggestion does not relate to Community Council meetings which are, in any case, all open to the public.) Several respondents specifically remarked that SCCT meetings were closed to the public, which they considered to be *'secretive'*, *'unaccountable'* and *'undemocratic'*.

11.17 A few respondents focused on the start-time of Community Council and SCD meetings (at 7.00 or 7.30pm on a weekday evening), which makes it impossible for people who work in Inverness and don't get home until late, to be able to eat dinner and then go out to the meeting. There were also concerns about the length of meetings (said specifically in relation to SCD meetings). It was suggested that the current meeting times are convenient only for people who live and work in the area, and / or who are retired. It was also suggested that meetings should be shorter and could be held (for example) on a Sunday afternoon to make them more accessible to other local residents.

11.18 Finally, there was a suggestion that all three groups should provide a way for members of the community to join meetings virtually / remotely. This would make it easier for busy parents and people who work during the day to attend.

Greater transparency through better reporting

11.19 The third main theme regarding improving community communication was in relation to reporting. Respondents suggested that better reporting of meetings would help to improve the visibility, accessibility, transparency, and accountability of all three groups.

11.20 There were suggestions that minutes of all meetings of all three groups should be available publicly online, and that fuller minutes of meetings were needed for SCD and SCCT, particularly – although it was noted that SCD (but not SCCT) makes regular reports at Community Council meetings.

11.21 Some respondents noted that each of the three groups provides an update on their activities in the Strathdearn newsletter, but there were also suggestions that updates should be provided **between** newsletters – perhaps on Facebook, or by email, or on community notice boards. Alternatively, some thought the Strathdearn newsletter should be published monthly (rather than

every 3 months) and suggested that each of the three groups could report monthly through the newsletter.

The importance of democratic elections

11.22 The fourth theme (less common than the first three) was that all three of the groups should have open public elections – or at the very least, they should do more to inform the community about when elections are being held and how a member of the community can stand for election. One respondent suggested that public elections for all three groups should happen every three years, and there were several concerns voiced that SCCT members are unelected (*‘directors may be continually reappointed by other directors’*).

Other suggestions

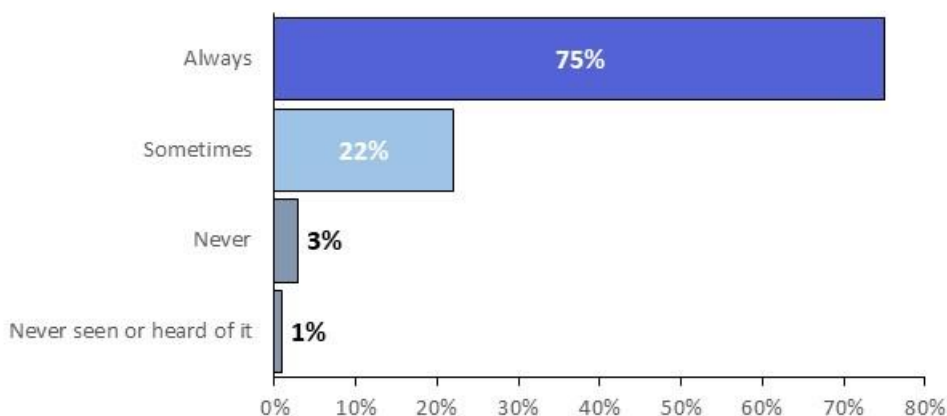
11.23 Finally, a small number of respondents made a range of other suggestions for improving community communication, including:

- Being more welcoming when members of the community attend meetings
- Speaking to local residents directly (*‘It would be good if two members went round the community talking to people individually.’*)
- Carrying out more frequent, quick surveys
- Publishing more information about how local people can contribute and get involved.

The role of the Strathdearn newsletter in community communication

11.24 Respondents were asked to indicate how often they read the Strathdearn newsletter. Figure 11.3 shows that a large proportion of the respondents to this survey (75%) always read the newsletter, and a further 22% sometimes read it. Very few respondents indicated that they never read the newsletter or had never seen or heard of it.

Figure 11.3: Do you read the Strathdearn newsletter? (base: 193)

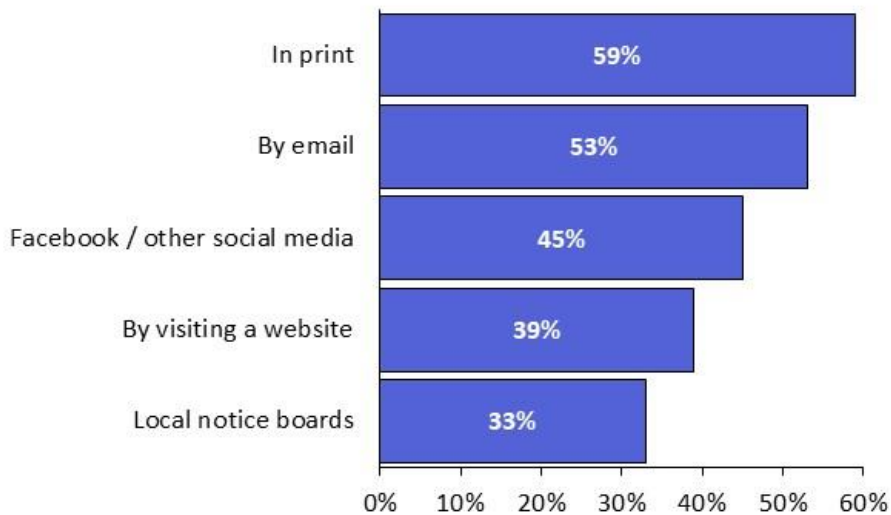


Preferences for receiving information

11.25 Finally, the survey asked people to indicate the ways in which they would prefer to receive information about what is happening in their local community. Five choices were offered, and respondents could tick as many as applied for them.

11.26 Table 11.4 shows that 59% of respondents said they preferred to receive information in print. However, just over half (53%) said they would prefer to receive information by email, and 45% wanted information through Facebook or other social media sites. Fewer respondents wanted to have their information by visiting a website or reading local notice boards.

Figure 11.4: How would you prefer to receive information about what is happening in your local community? (base: 193)



Note that percentages do not total 100% because respondents could choose more than one option.

12. The needs of Moy

12.1 The final section of the community survey focused specifically on the needs of people in Moy.

12.2 At the time the Windfarm Community Benefit Fund was established in Strathearn, Eneco (the company then in charge of the windfarm), wanted the area most affected by the Moy Windfarm to receive priority in relation to the disbursement of the funds. Thus, a Moy Sub-Committee was established to identify the specific needs of people living in Moy, and the community in Moy was the first in the area to benefit from improved broadband services.

12.3 The Moy Sub-Committee has continued to work together to identify the specific needs of the community in that part of Strathearn. In February 2018, the committee carried out a consultation among local residents in Moy, and a number of needs in that community were identified. Questions were included in this current community survey as a way of confirming the findings of the February 2018 consultation exercise.

12.4 Thus, the survey included three questions regarding the needs of Moy. These asked about the need for (i) a community meeting space, (ii) electric vehicle charging points, and (iii) support for winter preparedness (e.g. emergency snow removal, grit bins, etc.). These questions were intended specifically for people living in Moy; however, respondents living outside Moy could also reply

12.5 To enable the views of Moy residents to be ascertained in relation to these questions, the survey included a question (at the start of the survey) asking respondents to indicate if they lived in Moy. Thirty-six (36) individuals answered ‘yes’ to this question. A majority of this group (21 out of 36) were female, and two-thirds (24 out of 36) were aged 50 and over.

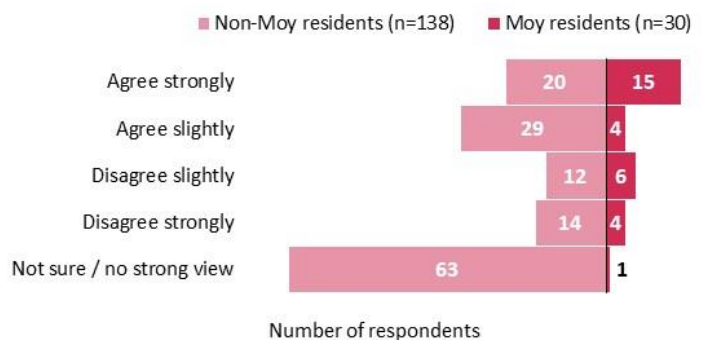
12.6 Of the 36 Moy respondents who started the survey, 31 answered the questions in this final section. The figures below (12.1 – 12.3) compare the responses of this group of 31 Moy residents with those of non-Moy residents. (A large proportion of the latter group said they were ‘not sure / no strong view’ in relation to all these questions.)

Main findings

A community meeting space / hub

12.7 Figure 12.1 shows that nearly two-thirds of the Moy residents (19 out of 30) agreed (strongly or slightly) that a community meeting space / hub was needed in Moy. One-third of Moy residents (10 out of 30) disagreed (strongly or slightly). Just one respondent was unsure or had no strong view on this issue. Most non-Moy residents said they were ‘not sure’ or had ‘no strong view’ in relation to this question.

Figure 12.1: Do you agree or disagree that Moy needs a community meeting space / hub?



Electric vehicle charging points

12.8 Figure 12.2 shows that a majority of Moy residents (18 out of 31) agreed (strongly or slightly) that electric vehicle charging points were needed. Once again, however, around a third (9 out of 31) disagreed, and 4 Moy respondents said they were unsure or had no strong view. Most non-Moy residents said they were 'not sure' or had 'no strong view' in relation to this question.

Support for winter preparedness

12.9 Finally, Table 12.3 shows that **all** the Moy residents who answered this question (31 out of 31) agreed that the area needed support for winter preparedness; most agreed strongly. It is worth noting that a large proportion of non-Moy residents (87 out of 139, or 63%) also agreed in response to this question.

Figure 12.2: Do you agree or disagree that Moy needs electric vehicle charging points?

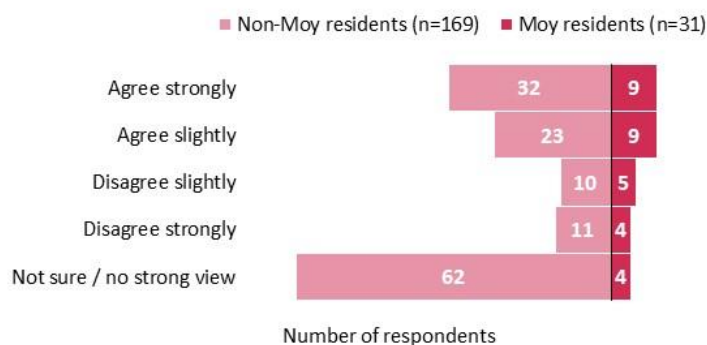
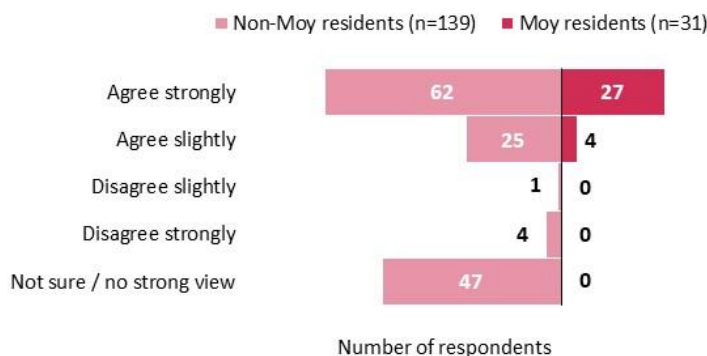


Figure 12.3: Do you agree or disagree that Moy needs support for winter preparedness (e.g. emergency snow clearance, grit bins, etc.)

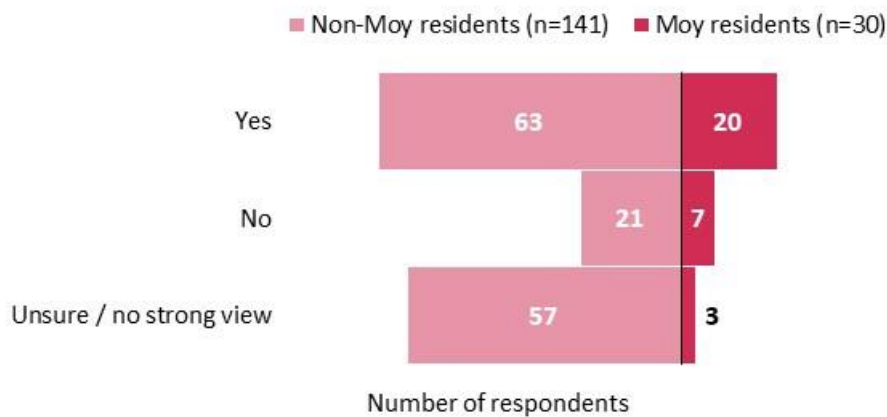


Need for a part-time ranger

12.10 During Stage 1 of this project, several stakeholders highlighted growing concerns about the behaviour of visitors at Loch Moy. A part-time ranger was employed for a short period of time in the summer of 2021 to try to address the issues of inappropriate parking and litter. Some suggested that there may be a need to employ a part-time ranger on a longer-term basis, and so a question about this was included in the survey. Respondents were asked: 'Do you think that the area around Loch Moy would benefit from having a part-time ranger?' Respondents could answer 'yes', 'no' or 'unsure / don't have a strong view'.

12.11 Table 12.4 below shows that two-thirds of Moy residents (20 out of 30) thought the area would benefit from having a part-time ranger. Seven (7) out of 30 disagreed, and 3 were unsure or had no strong view on this matter. There was also relatively strong support among non-Moy residents for a part-time ranger. Forty-four percent (63 out of 141) answered 'yes' to this question, and non-Moy residents were more likely to answer 'yes' to this question than to say that they were unsure or had no strong view – indicating the importance of Loch Moy as an amenity to the wider community.

Figure 12.4: Do you think that the area would benefit from having a part-time ranger?



Comments regarding the needs of Moy

12.12 Seventeen (17) Moy residents and 20 non-Moy residents provided further comments. Most of the topics raised in the comments related to the questions of (i) a part-time ranger, and (ii) a local community hub for people in Moy. Two further subjects also frequently appeared in the comments, and these concerned (iii) parking problems at Loch Moy and (iv) the need for attention to the physical appearance of the area. Each of these is discussed briefly below. A wide range of other issues were also raised, and these are presented at the end of this section.

12.13 Occasionally, respondents also made more general statements. One expressed the view that *'It seems everything happens in Tomatin and Moy is the forgotten.'* A second respondent called for better project management support from Strathdearn Community Developments for the Moy Subcommittee. Some also expressed frustration with what they perceived as *'an unhelpful approach from the Highland Council Planning Department'* in supporting the local community to achieve their aspirations (for example, in relation to the proposed Moy hub, or improving parking arrangements at Loch Moy).

Part-time ranger

Views of Moy residents

12.14 By and large, respondents from Moy who commented on the topic of a part-time ranger were very supportive of the idea. Some noted that a trial of the arrangement which had taken place during the summer of 2021 had been successful. Most respondents saw the ranger as having a role in addressing inappropriate parking, campfires and litter – as well as educating visitors about local wildlife.

12.15 However, whilst most saw the engagement with visitors / tourists as an important aspect of the role, there were also (occasionally) some suggestions that a ranger should not give out *'tourist information'* or *'encourage tourists'*. Instead, their role should be about giving *'guidance'* to people. One respondent voiced concern that the creation of a ranger post could result in many more visitors to the area, with no real benefit to Moy. This individual suggested that the entire community in Moy should be consulted about this issue, and that a focus group would be a better way of doing this, rather than through a questionnaire.

Views of non-Moy residents

12.16 Some survey respondents who did not live in Moy also provided comments on this subject. Several of these asked whether the Moy Estate would need to be involved in any decision about employing a ranger to manage visitors on their land. Aside from this, there were two main views among non-Moy residents about the proposal to employ a part-time ranger.

12.17 On the one hand, there was general support for the proposal: *'Moy is often forgotten, the loch is often busy, and people park wherever they desire. It would be good to get a ranger to help with this.'* One respondent in this group expressed an interest in applying for the job. Another suggested that there was a need for such a post to cover the whole of Strathdearn, and one other respondent suggested that a single permanent ranger for the area would be better than two part-time posts.

12.18 In contrast to these views, the second main view expressed about the idea of employing a part-time ranger was more sceptical. One respondent in this group thought that a part-time ranger may not be able to solve the problems that have developed at Loch Moy over the past few years. A second individual suggested that employing staff costs money which does not offer a significant benefit to community members.

A Moy community hub

Views of Moy residents

12.19 There were two contrasting views among the Moy residents who discussed the topic of a community hub in their comments. On the one hand, some expressed strong support for this idea and frustration that there seemed to be so many barriers in making this happen.

'A meeting place in Moy is of paramount importance, as there is currently no facility where Moy residents can meet up to organise social and educational events, meaning it is difficult to establish a proper sense of community.... The Moy Sub-Committee of SCD has identified some potential sites for a small community hub but has been frustrated by a lack of available land, which seems odd given the land mass within the Moy Estate, and also by the unhelpful approach of the planning department, which seems to place a disproportionate importance on the preservation of birch trees which are abundant in the area. I feel that some serious political pressure needs to be applied in order to secure a site through local elected politicians.' (Male, aged 50-59, ID 78)

12.20 Respondents who supported the creation of a local hub in Moy suggested that this facility could serve numerous purposes, including providing a space for the local community to meet (for organised talks and community events), a safe place to store community equipment (such as e-bikes and snow clearing machinery), a recycling point, a base for the local ranger, and an information point for visitors.

12.21 The alternative view was that there was no need for a local hub in Moy – one Moy resident referred to this idea as *'a complete waste of money'* – that the Strathdearn Hub in Tomatin could (and should) be used by the residents of Moy, and that it would be more cost-effective to simply provide transport to The Strathdearn for Moy residents.

12.22 Finally, one Moy resident suggested that a ‘small marquee’ could be given to the residents of Moy for community gatherings, until they have their own meeting place.

Views of non-Moy residents

12.23 Survey respondents who were not Moy residents generally expressed scepticism about this idea. Some wondered why the Strathdearn Hub was not seen to be a satisfactory meeting place for people living in Moy. Another suggested that, given the very small and dispersed population in Moy, it was *‘difficult to see how anything more than a very modest community meeting space would be viable’*. One further respondent echoed this view suggesting that the creation of a meeting place in Moy should only be progressed if there is a *‘robust and popular case for it’* from the local residents.

Parking problems around Loch Moy

12.24 The third main theme in the comments about the needs of Moy related to the issue of parking – and in fact, most of these comments came from non-Moy residents. Just one Moy respondent raised the subject of parking in the area and this individual stated that *‘for us, creating parking away from our home is the most pressing issue’*. This view was echoed by one non-Moy resident who suggested that *‘the primary requirement in Moy is parking; then the rest can proceed’*. Non-Moy residents suggested that Moy needs a parking area so that those who live elsewhere in Strathdearn can come and walk in the area. It was also noted that, as Loch Moy is now firmly on the *‘recreational map’* for walking and cycling, the parking problems in the area are likely to only get worse if they are not addressed. One (non-Moy) respondent argued that *‘installing effective visitor management like paths and car parks is a good investment against future impacts and disruption’*.

12.25 Finally, one Moy respondent suggested that electric car charging points could be included in the development of a new car park for Loch Moy. However, these *‘should not be near anyone’s house (unless requested).’*

Physical appearance of the area

12.26 The fourth main theme in the comments about the needs of Moy related to the physical appearance of the area. Some Moy residents expressed concern about the increase in litter in the area and called for better access to waste bins and dog bins. There was also a view that some areas (both land and buildings) around the Moy Estate look *‘very untidy’* and would benefit from some landscaping and maintenance. However, the respondent expressing this view suggested that the local estate should be persuaded to spend its own funds on this – to be encouraged to take pride in the appearance of Moy.

12.27 There was also a call for repairs to be made to the B9154 under the railway bridge (immediately before the windfarm entrance when coming from the north). One respondent pointed out that the windfarm was meant to bring benefits to local residents, but the condition of this road is a direct negative impact of the windfarm. It was suggested that the windfarm management needs to be made aware of this issue and asked to repair the road.

12.28 Finally, one respondent highlighted a positive change in the appearance of the local area: *‘It’s been great to see that the birch walk was improved and the new signs and planters’*.

Other issues raised by Moy residents

12.29A range of additional comments / suggestions were made regarding the needs of Moy.

- In relation to the question (above) regarding **winter preparedness**, there was endorsement for the proposal to assist Moy with snow clearing and grit bins. One respondent specifically commented that *'Ruthven and Lynebeg are completely forgotten about when it comes to winter'*.
- There were suggestions about **expanding the path network in and around Moy**, including (as discussed earlier in this report) developing a cycle track between Moy and Tomatin. Another suggested project would involve reinstating the offroad right-of-way from Inverness to Moy and on to Tomatin. This would have the positive effects of encouraging more people and families to walk, cycle and ride horses, whilst also reducing car use.
- There were requests for grants for electric bikes for Moy residents, a gym, an outdoor space for football and community events, space for an allotment, and the development of housing for young people currently living with parents, and suitable housing for over-55s (to enable them to downsize and free up larger houses for families in the area).
- On the negative side, Moy was described as having *'an unenviable reputation as a hot spot for wildlife crime – mainly raptor persecution'* and flood maps show it is the most vulnerable part of Strathdearn for future flooding

Quick overview of main findings



- Support for winter preparedness
- Address the problems of parking at Loch Moy (based on respondents' comments)



- Part-time ranger, but there was a view that this role should not be used to attract visitors to the area
- Community meeting space / hub, but not all Moy residents are convinced of the need for this



- Electric vehicle charging points
-

13. The needs of businesses in Strathtearn

13.1 One-to-one interviews were undertaken with eight business owners of seven businesses in Strathtearn.⁸ These represented a range of large and small businesses including those involved in estate management, property development, the provision of B&B / self-catering accommodation, food production / catering, and electronic engineering.

Problems identified

13.2 Interviewees highlighted a range of challenges facing businesses in the Strathtearn area. These included:

- **Difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff:** business owners attributed this mainly to the lack of housing in the area – forcing employees to have to commute from Inverness or other larger communities. It was noted that this issue does not just apply to local business, but also to local public services.
- **Lack of storage and office space:** some businesses were struggling to keep up with demand and grow their business because they were having to work out of their homes.
- **Lack of local hospitality services:** for businesses providing visitor accommodation, the lack of somewhere for people to eat in the evening meant that the area was less attractive to some visitors.
- **The split in the community about whether to encourage (and better manage) or discourage tourism:** there was a suggestion that some residents of the local community were opposed to all and any new developments, which made it very challenging for local small businesses.

13.3 One of the key messages from local business owners was that Strathtearn is an aging community, and it needs to grow to be able to sustain itself. If it doesn't grow, existing services will continue to disappear. *Economic development brings services to communities.*

Ideas for encouraging social and economic development

13.4 Business respondents were all very keenly aware that community benefit funding should not be used to support individual private businesses. However, they made a range of suggestions for ways that windfarm funding could be used to be used to support wider social and economic development in the area – which would lead to a growth in local employment and enable young people from the area to establish their own businesses.

- **Rent storage containers / office space** to local small businesses – one interviewee suggested that might be an option to local this at or near the old railway station, and the rental income received for this space might provide an incentive to the railway to reinstate rail services to Tomatin. Alternatively, the community could seek to acquire land to develop office space and storage in other ways. Possible opportunities include the quarry / old sawmill / Forestry Commission land / Council-owned land. It was suggested that community leaders need to

⁸ These were in addition to any business owners who took part in the Stage 1 interviews.

engage with the local estates in a more proactive way – although the challenges of doing so were also recognised.

- **Create an online business portal** – listing all the local businesses in the area and explaining what they do
- **Offer basic recruitment services for local businesses** – maintain a list of local young people looking for work, and local businesses looking for staff – and then link the two together. The point was made that this arrangement could lead to formal apprenticeships in some businesses.
- **Provide loans / targeted funding** – this could include (i) community-funded mortgages or micro-loans to local small businesses and (ii) funding for good business advice.
- **Find ways of generating pride in our community** – one interviewee suggested that there was a need for the people of Strathdearn to be able to tell the story of the local area – not only to visitors, but to local people. This would lead to a sense of shared community and generate pride in the area.
- **Affordable housing** – more affordable housing is needed in the area to enable local businesses to attract and retain staff; in addition, careful consideration is needed in relation to how to allocate the existing / planned affordable housing to people who may want to live and work in the area
- **Invest in young people** – this could be done by subsidising private tutoring, offering educational grants to local young people with financial needs, or helping local young people to start up their own businesses.