



Lochaber Community
Partnership

Lochaber Area Plan



Report to Lochaber Area Scrutiny Committee

Introduction

The way in which we plan for our communities and people in the Lochaber and Ardnamurchan area has changed. The Lochaber Community Planning Partnership consisting of core public bodies was established following the introduction of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/community-empowerment-scotland-act-summary/>) to work together with communities to develop locality plans for places that are experiencing consistent levels of inequality relative to other areas of Highland. The legislation broadened the number of statutory partners, agencies, third sector (voluntary) organisations and community groups, who in partnership would work better together to plan and provide services at a local level. We aim to work with the people of Lochaber to plan and secure resources where needed for the provision of services which improve outcomes reducing inequalities.

The Highland Outcome Improvement Plan ([What is the HCCP | Highland Community Planning Partnership \(highlandcpp.org.uk\)](http://highlandcpp.org.uk)) (HOIP) sets the foundation for community planning across the Highland region, the aspirations and the specific actions that will be undertaken to deliver them. The HOIP was developed following extensive engagement with the communities of the Highland region and seeks to work together to tackle the issues that lead to inequalities in Highland. In doing so we will make the Highlands a fairer place to live so that everyone can enjoy the benefits of the region.

Highland Council following guidance from Scottish Government have sought to update the approach to community planning and have recently installed a Partnership Development Manager aligned directly to supporting and developing the Community Planning Partnerships. This manager has also been provided with several area specific Development Officers, one of which is located to cover Easter Ross and Lochaber. The development officer posts commenced in June 2023 and are for a period of 2 years funded where they will be reviewed and amended accordingly.

The Chair and the Local SFRS Officer who will be assuming the Chair have met with the development officer to provide oversight of the current stage of the locality plan and processes taking place within the defined Community Action Groups (CAG). The officer is also providing guidance on a standardised formatting of locality plan which will ensure that all Community Planning Partnerships within Highland are working to the same continuity and approach. It has also been agreed that administrative support and a vice chair will be established to support the Chair. It should be noted that in the

majority of instances all partners that support the partnership are devolved from a primary employer and balance the needs of the partnership against business demands. This can create significant challenges particularly during this period where the financial pressures on public sector bodies are ever demanding and resourcing has been impacted increasing workloads with reduced staffing.

The officer will not be involved in the implementation of CAG or the delivery of work within the CAGs but will support the development of the Lochaber Locality Plan. This plan will provide an overarching view of the expectations of the group and address key thematic themes which are relevant to the communities of Lochaber and Ardnamurchan.

Fort William 'Locality' (Local Action) area

Locality (sometimes referred as Local Action) Plans set out how community groups, organisations and local services can work together to make a difference to local areas and the lives of people who live and work there. These are living plans and will change as more local people get involved, and services in the local area change to meet local needs.

Lochaber is a geographical district in the West of the Scottish Highlands, and formally today it is a District of Highland Region of Scotland, covering 4,648 km². It has a population of about 19,000 of whom 9,000 live in the Fort William and Caol area. Outside Fort William the population density is only 1.7 per km², making Lochaber one of least densely populated parts of Europe.

The Lochaber Community Planning Partnership has been tasked with working with three 'localities' within the Lochaber area that are experiencing the poorest outcomes:

Fort William (Plantation, Upper Achintore and Town Centre)

Caol North

Kinlochleven

These are the defined Community Action Groups (CAG)

Fort William Town Centre requires investment for improvements and the Fort William Town Centre Plan 2015 from Highland Council supports that activity.

<https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/15655/fort-william-town-centre-action-plan> The action plan highlights a range of proposals and opportunities identified by the community and stakeholders that can deliver regeneration in the town centre. The Lochaber Community Planning Partnership takes cognisance of this action plan and the ongoing activities / projects aligning objectives to meet stakeholder and community desires.

Aligning closely to the Lochaber CPP is the FW2040 Plan and the CPP group has representation on this working group to provide updates and engage.

Fort William 2040

FW2040 is a collaborative process to co-ordinate and deliver a shared vision for the future of Fort William and Lochaber. The plan has been established through feedback from community members within the area and aims to assist in working together on an ongoing basis to deliver the best possible outcomes for people and places in and around Fort William.

<https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local-and-statutory-development-plans/582/west-highland-and-islands-local-development-plan/5>

A number of stakeholders (local and national) including the Lochaber Community Planning Partnership are involved in the progress and implementation of the FW2040 plan. The vision is all stakeholders working together for the following four themes:

A Great Place to Live

A Connected Place

A Place Facing Water

A Place with Collective Ambition

Lochaber Community Development Plan

Lochaber community partnership set out to consult and develop a plan which encompassed the purpose and strategic aims of Scottish Government, Highland Council Single Outcome Agreement which would shape the future and work of the partnership.

https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/6448/lochaber_community_development_plan

This plan has shaped the activities of the group and each of the CAGs work towards achieving positive outcomes within the areas.

Each of the CAGs meet regularly and are chaired by a representative of the CPP group, they also provide funding where required and implement projects to support identified needs within the locality. The CAGs also provide an action tracker for scrutiny and report back to the Chair and the CPP group on a quarterly basis. These meetings allow for regular scrutiny, governance and direction setting aligning to the HOIP.

The current core members of the Lochaber CPP are:

Police Scotland
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
NHS Highland
Highland and Islands Enterprise
Highlife Highland
Voluntary Action Lochaber
Highland Council

Following regular reviews at the scheduled meetings University of Highland and Islands now attend to support the Education sector and provide updates which may benefit the youth in our communities. There are also regular guest speakers and presentations on socio economic matters which may impact / support the growth / development of the Lochaber Community and these help shape planning and implementation.

What have we done to listen to people living and working in the Fort William locality.

A group comprising of community representatives, organisation's, agencies and services – known as the Fort William Community Action Group (FWCAG) was set up by the Lochaber Community Planning Partnership to work together to identify the issues that are contributing to poorer outcomes and put in place an action plan to tackle these. The group recognise that this work is not short term and will require regular dialogue between the public, private and voluntary sector with the community at its heart. FWCAG asked those living and working in the locality about what it was like for them to live and work in the area. They also listened to organisations and businesses providing services in the locality.



The 'place standard' tool was used which asked a series of comprehensive questions. The survey was widely distributed through social media, printed media and via partners. It was important to hear the voices of those who may not normally or be able to voice their views so partners deliberately sought to support the engagement of these people.

The FWCAG have also looked at the ambitions contained in the FW2040 Place Planning document and how the achievement of these ambitions may contribute to achieving better outcomes for the Fort William locality area.

FWCAG have looked at the feedback from young people through the Highland youth forum and local youth networks and the issues young people have raised in relation to transport, health and opportunities.

With the activities of the FWCAG and the focus on key localities within the Lochaber area 5 key themes were identified ensuring that the “Greener “opportunities were included which would form the basis for Community Partnership Planning:

A Healthier Place to Live

A Safer Place to Live

A Community which is Stronger and Empowered

A Wealthier and Fairer Place

A Smarter Place to Live

Going forward there will be an action tracker developed that will allow Chairs / Partners to update activity and outcomes ensuring that scrutiny of the CPPs is established and an improved reporting mechanism established for reporting back through Highland Council.

The thematic approach will be adopted and a robust working model attained which will continue to support and improve the outcomes for those living and working within the Lochaber Communities. The next scheduled meeting for the group is 31st October 2023 and discussions will be held on the new and improved way of working going forward.

Lochaber CPP link:

[Lochaber CP - Highland Community Planning Partnership \(highlandcpp.org.uk\)](https://highlandcpp.org.uk)