

Agenda Item	4
Report No	LA/2/25

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Lochaber Area Committee

**Date:** 27 January 2025

**Report Title:** Lochaber Area Place Plan

**Report By:** Chief Officer, Housing and Communities

### 1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report invites Members to adopt the Lochaber Area Place Plan

The Lochaber Area Place Plan has been developed using a Place Based approach and does not set out to replace existing plans and policies for the area. Instead, it aims to capture and present what the common themes and priorities are and aims to serve as a comprehensive document that not only reflects the aspirations of the local community but also aligns with existing strategic and localised plans, ensuring that Lochaber thrives as a sustainable, liveable, and prosperous community.

This report also provides an update on next steps for progressing the plan.

### 2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Consider and adopt the Lochaber Area Place Plan, using it as a tool to inform and support decision making about Lochaber.
- ii. Support and promote the plan where possible in terms of its consideration within other Plans, Strategies, Development, and Funding opportunities across or impacting the Lochaber area.
- iii. Note the next steps for progressing the work set out in the plan.

### **3 Implications**

#### **3.1 Resource**

No additional resource is requested. Highland Council support for initiatives outlined in the Plan may have resource implications in the future which would be subject to appropriate Committee or Service decision making.

Ongoing involvement in Place Planning activity requires input and commitment from services across the Council to ensure Place Plans provide the framework to support targeting resources, service delivery and provide a clear vision for attracting external investment. The Plan will help the Highland Council, partners, and communities secure funding by evidencing the impact of every pound spent and the actions associated will provide clarity and manage expectation around how and where resources are prioritised.

#### **3.2 Legal**

There are no legal implications rising from the adoption of the Lochaber Area Place Plan.

#### **3.3 Risk**

The Lochaber Area Place Plan will help to coordinate future activity and investment in the area. Developing a place-based approach is encouraged through the Scottish Government's Place Principle, the Christie Commission recommendations and is required by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 for community planning.

#### **3.4 Gaelic**

A focus on place, and considering the priorities for a local area, has potential to support a focus on Gaelic language and culture if identified by communities and partners.

### **4 Impacts**

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 An Integrated Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval. The Screening process has concluded that the Plan has a positive impact on promoting equality, addressing inequality (including socio-economic) and targeting the priorities of the people of Lochaber and therefore a full impact assessment is not required. Members are asked to consider the summary below and detailed in Appendix 1 to support the decision-making process.

<b>Impact Assessment Area</b>	<b>Conclusion of Screening / Full Assessment</b>
Equality	Positive impact
Socio-economic	Positive impact
Human Rights	No impact
Children's Rights and Wellbeing	Positive impact
Island and Mainland Rural	Positive impact
Climate Change	Positive impact
Data Rights	No impact

## **5. Background**

5.1 In 2021, Highland Council made a commitment to develop Area Place Plans mainly based on Area Committee boundaries. The Plans have been developed and facilitated in various ways across Highland, as each area is different. This Area Place Plan (APP) for Lochaber has been developed using a Place Based approach and does not set out to replace existing plans and policies for the area. Instead, it aims to capture and present what the common themes and priorities are and aims to serve as a comprehensive document that not only reflects the aspirations of the local community but also aligns with existing strategic and localised plans, ensuring that Lochaber thrives as a sustainable, liveable, and prosperous community. Clarification on the difference between Area and Local Place Plans is noted below.

### **5.2 Area Place Plan**

The Place Principle is a Scottish Government and CoSLA initiative to encourage better collaboration and community involvement. It is about understanding the issues, opportunities and relationships in a place, to allow effective partnership working to improve the quality of life for communities. Knowing how a community is structured and how it works helps make good decisions on investment, service delivery and how to coordinate change.

In Highland, APPs are being developed to provide an overview of existing strategies and projects. Community engagement builds a shared understanding of how Place underpins development, service delivery and how communities and organisations work together. These plans will be a future guide to maximise the impact for people living in an area, based on shared understanding of local need.

At its simplest, APPs will create a shared vision for an area, outlining priority outcomes and how they will be achieved. The Plans will make publicly clear what activity is happening in each area, the outcomes being sought, when they are intended to be delivered and who is responsible for doing so.

### **5.3 Local Place Plan**

Following recent changes to the national planning system, communities have been invited to consider preparation of their own Local Place Plans – a community's proposals for development of use of land and buildings in their local area. Currently across Highland, several groups are engaging their local community to reflect how to make their place better, agree priorities for the future and how to act on them – often working with others. While local place plans have a particular role in the planning

system, they may also highlight other priorities for service delivery and community action.

## **6 How the Plan was prepared**

6.1 The Lochaber Area Place Plan (Appendix 2) was developed in conjunction with a wider group of stakeholders, including representation from: Highland Council (Elected Members and services); Highlife Highland; NHS Highland; Community Partnerships; Police Scotland; Scottish Fire and Rescue Service; Highland Third Sector Interface; Highlands and Islands Enterprise; Community Councils and Community Development Companies. All are thanked for their input to the Area Place Plan. The Area Profile set out at Appendix 3 provides an overview of the key information relating to Lochaber.

### **6.2 Existing Plans**

To remove duplication and identify gaps, existing plans relevant to the Lochaber area have been collated within one document (Appendix 4) and the common themes from these have been included within the Area Place Plan.

### **6.3 Engagement**

Various engagement opportunities took place between June and November 2024:

- Stakeholder Meetings
- Survey – online and hard copies in various locations
- Public Drop-in Sessions across Lochaber
- Online Workshops
- Networking Events
- Draft Plan Drop-in Sessions

The responses received are detailed in an Engagement Report (Appendix 5). These responses have informed the Lochaber Area Place Plan and have been shared with relevant partners to help inform their own work.

## **7 Priorities for Lochaber**

To ease linkage between the Lochaber Area Place Plan and wider statutory and strategic documents, the emerging Priorities for Lochaber have been aligned to the three pillars of People, Place and Prosperity.

### **7.1 People**

- Improving access to services
- Empowering young people
- Expanding access to diverse and inclusive activities

### **7.2 Place**

- Develop community resilience
- Improving infrastructure
- Address climate challenges
- Modernising essential services
- Enhancing the area's natural and built environments
- Well-connected and efficient transport system
- Addressing housing challenges

### 7.3 Prosperity

- Tourism management
- Fostering economic growth
- Strong, skilled workforce
- Collaboration and working together

### 7.4 How the plan will be used

This Plan will provide all those with an interest in or those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in Lochaber with a helpful tool to:

- Establish a shared understanding of local needs and opportunities.
- Inform decisions on service design and delivery.
- Provide evidence to support funding bids for projects.
- Encourage public, private, and community collaboration for long-term sustainable growth.
- Make best use of available resources and forward plan for when funding and investment becomes available.
- Link with local and national decision-making processes, influencing public services, budgeting, and planning policies to reflect the needs and aspirations of the Lochaber community.

### 7.5 Development and Delivery of the Lochaber Area Place Plan

A bespoke action plan will be created to set out the route for delivery of the priorities within the Lochaber Area Place Plan. The action plan will seek to:

- further understand and develop each priority, in discussion across all sectors;
- set out to identify the best mechanism for delivery and the range of partners to be involved
- assess potential barriers
- assess potential funding opportunities
- provide estimates of timescales

Not all priorities will be achievable in the short to medium term, however, priorities within this plan have the widest community support and this plan, along with appendices, can be used to evidence and inform developments and funding decisions.

Designation: Chief Officer, Housing and Communities

Date: 18 December 2024

Author: Jane Young, Community Support Officer

Background Papers:

Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Integrated Impact Assessment
- Appendix 2: Lochaber Area Place Plan

- Appendix 3: Lochaber Area Profile
- Appendix 4: Plan Relevant to Lochaber Area
- Appendix 5: Engagement Report

## INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Impact Assessment Area	Conclusion of Screening / Full Assessment
Equality	The Lochaber Area Place Plan identifies aspirations and potential improvements to services and options available within the Area. It mentions specific needs of young people and the elderly in its development. The plan also covers accessibility issues. No negative effects have been identified towards any protected characteristics.
Socio-economic	Positive impacts – the plan covers employability and access to opportunities and services, including the particular difficulties encountered from a remote and rural perspective as well as the additional costs of living in such environments. It mentions the issues around housing availability and affordability as well as the difficulties related to lack of public transport options.
Human Rights	No rights will be negatively affected by the activity within the plan.
Children's Rights and Wellbeing	The plan can positively affect children and young people specifically mentioning childcare provision, access to education and employability prospects for young people. It notes the desire for youth spaces and appropriate, safe public transport routes to both these and other activities. Children and young people were consulted as part of the engagement process. The plan promotes development of proposals which would benefit these groups as well as others.
Island and Mainland Rural	Transport issues, connectivity, potential isolation, mental health and access to services are all key within rural communities, particularly in Lochaber given the vast geography and distances involved, as well as little public transport provision. These are all highlighted within the plan and improvement would lead to positive impact.
Climate Change	Resilience issues particularly with respect to flooding and adverse weather are included within the plan, as are sustainable tourism (and the associated protection of the landscape / environment), reducing the impacts of tourism, renewable energy and sustainable land use practices. Any potential climate impacts which have been identified are anticipated to be

	positive and potentially reduce current negative impacts.
Data Rights	No impact



# *Lochaber Area Place Plan*

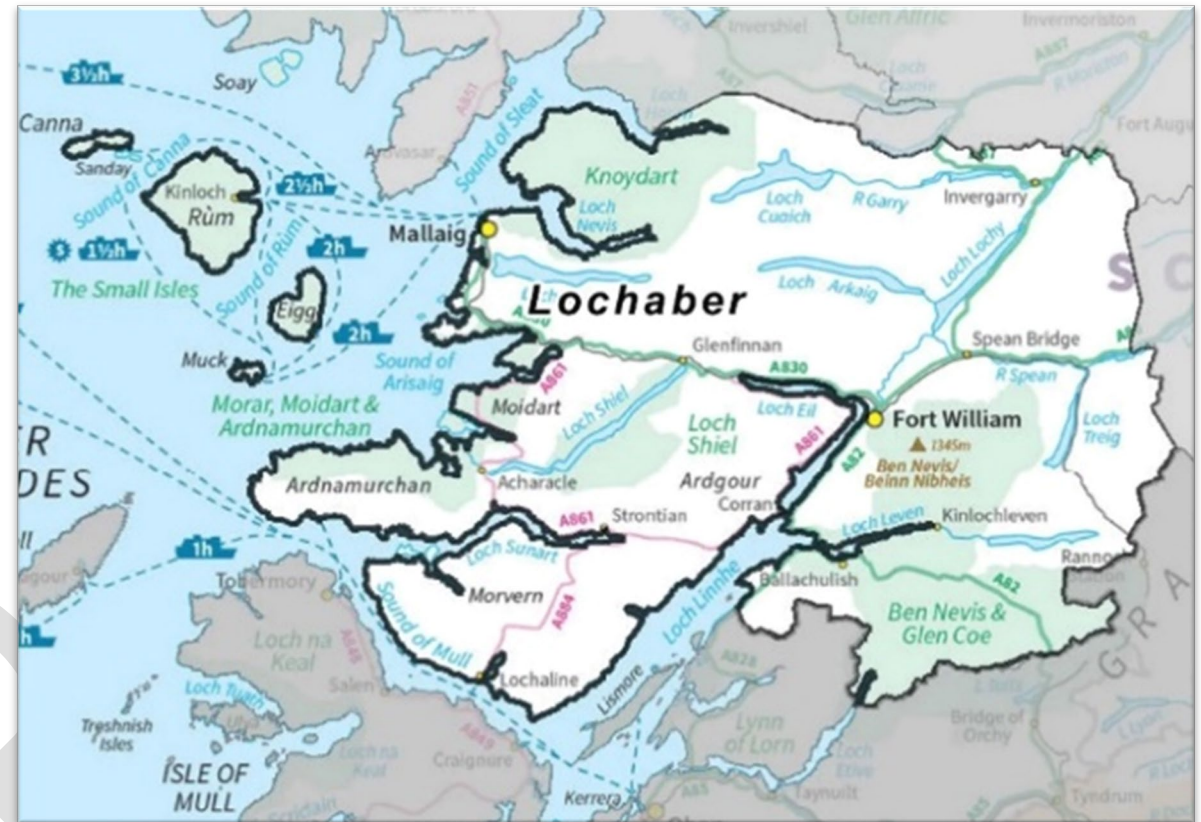
## *Gaelic title*



<https://engagehighland.co.uk/lochaber-place-plan>

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## *Introduction*

In 2021, Highland Council made a commitment to develop Area Place Plans mainly based on Area Committee boundaries. The Plans have been developed and facilitated in various ways across Highland, as each area is different.

This Area Place Plan for Lochaber has been developed using a Place Based approach and does not set out to replace existing plans and policies for the area. Instead, it aims to capture and present what the common themes and priorities are and aims to serve as a comprehensive document that not only reflects the aspirations of the local community but also aligns with existing strategic and localised plans, ensuring that Lochaber thrives as a sustainable, liveable, and prosperous community.

This Plan will provide all those with an interest in or responsible for providing services and looking after assets in Lochaber with a helpful tool to:

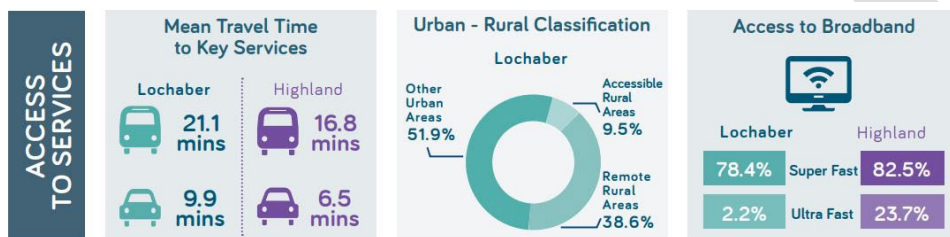
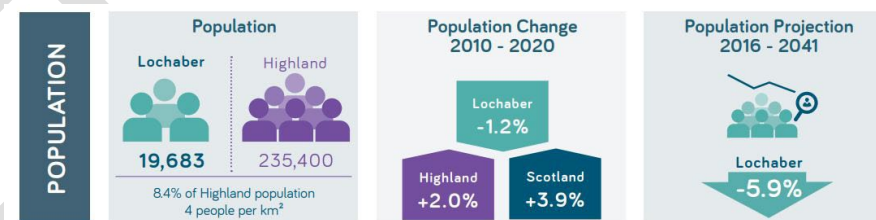
- Establish a shared understanding of local needs and opportunities.
- Inform decisions on service design and delivery.
- Provide evidence to support funding bids for projects.
- Encourage public, private, and community collaboration for long-term sustainable growth.
- Make best use of available resources and forward plan for when funding and investment becomes available.
- Link with local and national decision-making processes, influencing public services, budgeting, and planning policies to reflect the needs and aspirations of the Lochaber community.

A bespoke action plan will be created to set out the route for delivery of the priorities within the Lochaber Place Plan. This action plan will highlight lead partners and possible funding streams. Not all priorities will be achievable in the short to medium term, however, priorities within this plan have the widest community support and this plan, along with appendices, can be used to evidence and inform developments and funding decisions.

## About Lochaber

Lochaber is located within Ward 11 and 21 of the Highland Council, the extensive area covers 4,656 km<sup>2</sup> encompassing a diverse landscape of coastal, inland and island areas. Lochaber has the highest mountain, deepest loch and the most westerly point in mainland Britain making it known internationally as the Outdoor Capital of the UK. Lochaber hosts several annual events such as the UCI Mountain Bike World Cup and the Scottish Six Days Trial.

- Just over half the population (52%) live within the urban areas.
- Almost two in five people (39%) live in remote and very remote rural areas.
- Lochaber has a population of 19,683 people. 16.3% are children aged 0-15 years, 61.9% aged 16-64 years and 21.8% people aged 65+.



- Lochaber comprises 51.9% Other Urban, 38.6% Remote Rural and 9.5% Accessible Rural Areas. Remote Rural Areas classification is often coupled with higher cost of living including transport, food, fuel, with fewer employment opportunities, lower wages and social isolation.
- Lochaber has 78.4% super-fast broadband coverage, lower than the Highland average of 82.5%, and 2.2% ultra-fast coverage, significantly less than Highland average of 23.7%.

- 93% of the Area is covered by significant development constraint in terms of altitude, future flooding, national environmental, or international environmental designation (NSA, SAC, SPA, NNR, SSSI, Peatland [Class 1 & 2], TPO, Ancient Woodland Inventory, land over 370m, being over 500m from the adopted road network, future 1 in 200 year fluvial and coastal flood risk areas and current 1 in 200 year pluvial areas).



See Appendix 1: Lochaber Profile

## *How we got here*

The Area Place Plan sits alongside Local Place Plans, Community Planning processes, Development and Delivery Plans, as well as Community Plans. To remove duplication and identify gaps, existing plans have been collated within one document and the common themes from these have been included within the Area Place Plan.

*See Appendix 2: Plans Relevant to Lochaber Area*

Various engagement opportunities took place between June and November 2024:

- Stakeholder Meetings
- Survey – online and hard copies in various locations
- Public Drop-in Sessions across Lochaber
- Online Workshops
- Networking Events
- Draft Plan Drop-in Sessions

The responses received are detailed in appendix 3: Engagement Report. These responses have informed the Lochaber Area Place Plan and have been shared with relevant partners to help inform their own work, particularly noting the Highland Investment Plan and the Highland Local Development Plan.

To ease linkage between the Lochaber Area Place Plan and wider statutory and strategic documents, we have aligned the emerging Priorities for Lochaber to the three pillars of People, Place and Prosperity.

We would like to thank everyone who took part in either the direct engagement work for this Area Place Plan, or for the previous consultations which have also informed it.

*See Appendix 3: Engagement Report*

## *People*

Improving access to services across Lochaber is essential to fostering resilient, healthy and inclusive communities. This plan prioritises the well-being of all residents, with comprehensive actions to address needs and plan for sustainable support systems for the future. By addressing these priorities, we aim to create a community where health, support and care are accessible to all, ensuring Lochaber remains a vibrant and supportive place to live.

Empowering young people in Lochaber is fundamental to ensuring a thriving, inclusive and lively community. This Plan addresses the challenges they face and creates opportunities for growth, connection, and well-being. The plan aspires to create a supportive, dynamic environment where young people can reach their full potential, contribute to their communities, and envision a bright future in Lochaber.

Expanding access to diverse and inclusive activities is essential in building a vibrant, connected and healthy community in Lochaber. This plan prioritises providing opportunities for recreation, culture, and social engagement that meet the needs and interests of all residents. By delivering on these priorities, the plan aims to create a Lochaber where opportunities for connection, creativity and engagement enrich lives and strengthen the bonds within our community.

## *Place*

Building community resilience and improving infrastructure are vital steps toward creating a sustainable, welcoming, and accessible Lochaber. This plan is committed to addressing climate challenges, modernising essential services, and enhancing the area's natural and built environments for the benefit of all. The actions within this plan will ensure Lochaber becomes a more resilient, accessible and attractive place to live, work and visit, with infrastructure that reflects the area's vibrant and sustainable future.

A well-connected and efficient transport system is critical to supporting the social and economic vitality of Lochaber. This plan highlights the need to improving transport infrastructure, expand connectivity and ensure accessible, sustainable and future-proof solutions for all residents and visitors. By delivering the priorities within this plan, Lochaber will benefit from a modern, inclusive and integrated transport system that supports community connectivity, reduces environmental impact and enhances quality of life.

Lochaber's natural beauty and ecological richness are fundamental to our community's identity and future prosperity. This plan aims to foster sustainable practices, protect our environment and empower communities and businesses to lead the transition to a greener future. Through the action within this plan, Lochaber will lead by example in environmental stewardship, ensuring a sustainable and thriving future that respects and preserves our natural heritage for generations to come.

Addressing housing challenges is critical to ensuring that all residents of Lochaber have access to safe, affordable, and suitable homes. This plan is committed to creating a balanced housing market that supports the needs of key workers, young people, families and older residents while fostering community resilience and sustainable development. By advancing the action within this plan, we aim to create a Lochaber where everyone has access to quality housing that meets their needs, supports community cohesion and ensures sustainable growth.

## *Prosperity*

Tourism is a vital part of Lochaber's economy and cultural identity, but it is essential to manage it in a way that benefits both visitors and local communities. This plan seeks to strike a balance, ensuring tourism supports local businesses while reducing pressures on infrastructure and residents. By implementing the actions within this plan Lochaber will continue to thrive as a welcoming destination while ensuring its communities and environment are protected and enhanced for future generations.

Fostering economic growth in Lochaber is vital to creating a thriving, sustainable community. The plan focuses on supporting local businesses, diversifying retail options, and enhancing the visitor experience, all while promoting environmentally responsible practices. By fostering a supportive environment for local businesses and creating opportunities that appeal to both residents and visitors, Lochaber can build a resilient and diverse economy that benefits everyone in the community.

A strong, skilled workforce is the backbone of a thriving Lochaber. This plan prioritises that all residents, regardless of where they live, have access to the opportunities and support needed for personal and professional growth. This plan focuses on improving access to education, training and employment while addressing the unique challenges faced by rural communities. By addressing these key areas, the plan aims to create a workforce that is skilled, resilient and connected to opportunities, ensuring Lochaber remains a place where people can build their careers and contribute to the future success of their communities.

Collaboration and working together are essential to the success of any community-driven initiatives in Lochaber. This plan prioritises fostering strong, transparent relationships between communities, statutory agencies and private-sector partners to ensure that resources, knowledge and support are shared effectively. By working together, we can create sustainable, locally driven solutions that meet the unique needs of each community. Through strengthened partnerships and collaboration, Lochaber can build a more resilient, resourceful and empowered community where all voices are heard equally and all communities can thrive.



## Priorities

People	
<b>Access to Services</b>	
1.	Increase the number of care beds within Lochaber
2.	Expand day care options for older people and support independent living for longer
3.	Invest in a new hospital
4.	Retain and enhance health services in rural areas
5.	Enhance patient transport options to improve access to health services
6.	Strengthen support for local third sector organisations, community groups and clubs providing services within the communities
7.	Increase dedicated programs to support physical and mental health
8.	Enhance emergency services in rural communities
9.	Attract, retain and train specialists to ensure services can be provided
<b>Young People</b>	
9.	Expand engagement programs including mental and sexual health support
10.	Increase the number of youth clubs and safe recreational areas across Lochaber to enhance social spaces and activities
11.	Encourage engagement to retain young people in Lochaber
12.	Explore transport options to support young people in rural areas getting work in school holidays, socialising etc
<b>Activities</b>	
13.	Increase green and arts-based activities that promote health, wellbeing and strengthen the connection to nature
14.	Increase the range of inclusive and affordable activities to accommodate varied interests and age groups across Lochaber
15.	Provide accessible and affordable cultural activities
16.	Provide community spaces for social engagement and drop-in's for all ages
17.	Ensure activities, events, and spaces are provided in suitable locations with appropriate transport options and have support to be sustainable
18.	Improve events and activities communication to enhance engagement both on and offline

<b>Place</b>	
1.	Increase community resilience and support to help them adapt to climate changes
2.	Improve internet and mobile phone connectivity, especially in remote areas
3.	Improve the appearance and accessibility of public spaces including carparks and waterfront areas
4.	Expand waste management services to address littering and provide more public recycling facilities
5.	Enhance paths and trails with accessible signage, seating, and regular maintenance
6.	Visual enhancements to address neglected buildings
7.	Increase the number of public toilets and ensure regular cleaning and maintenance to improve appearance
8.	Develop a regular maintenance schedule for roads, pavements, and verges
9.	Connect appropriate areas across Lochaber to our waterfront
<b>Transport</b>	
10.	Improve transport infrastructure
11.	Secure future-proof ferry services
12.	Develop an effective traffic plan to ease congestion
13.	Develop an integrated public transport schedule linking buses, trains, and ferries to improve connectivity, considering shift work and school times
14.	Expand public transport options, especially for evenings and weekends to improve connectivity between rural areas and main town centres
15.	Support community-led transport initiatives
16.	Review bus stop locations
17.	Enhance active travel infrastructure, including connecting links
18.	Review parking charges and permits for local residents
19.	Explore park-and-ride services
<b>Housing</b>	
20.	Increase the stock of affordable housing, particularly for key workers, young people, and locals
21.	Support local self-builds, woodland crofts, and community housing to increase local housing options
22.	Implement housing that is easily adaptable for accessibility
23.	Introduce incentives for the use of vacant buildings to address housing shortages
24.	Limit short-term lets suitable for permanent housing options
25.	Encourage incentives and support available for residents to downsize, potentially increasing availability of family size homes
<b>Environmental</b>	
26.	Develop community allotments and food-growing spaces
27.	Increase renewable energy projects and environmental education programs
28.	Protect and promote local green spaces, rewilding, and biodiversity, designate wildflower zones in parks and summer maintenance-free areas
29.	Support businesses and communities to continue transition to Net Zero
30.	Promote renewable heating options

## Prosperity

<b>Tourism Management</b>	
1.	Encourage a balanced approach to tourism, with measures to reduce pressures on communities and to support local businesses
2.	Improve signage, transport links, and amenities for tourists, including more welcome centres and bus-route guides highlighting attractions
3.	Implement effective traffic management in busy tourist areas, explore park-and-ride link options
<b>Economic</b>	
4.	Promote business development in Lochaber, encouraging improvements to attract local and tourist spending
5.	Attract diverse retail options: Encourage clothing and general retail stores to balance outdoor-focused shops
6.	Host more events and festivals
7.	Support seasonal pop-up cafes and stalls
8.	Encourage local organic or free-range food opportunities
<b>Employment and Skills Development</b>	
9.	Explore options for further education, training, skills development, and job opportunities to rural areas limited by transport options
10.	Encourage long term employment contracts to maintain expertise and community continuity
11.	Develop affordable childcare solutions across Lochaber's communities
12.	Remove barriers to support residents to participate, contribute to community life, access support, training, and employment
<b>Collaboration Working</b>	
13.	Strengthen collaboration with Communities
14.	Communicate and share resource effectively among Statutory Agencies and Third Sector Partners
15.	Enhance support for third sector organisations as key drivers of local projects
16.	Create a platform for sharing successful projects and knowledge between communities
17.	Develop clear funding guidelines that prioritise community input and consultations
18.	Provide resources and funding to communities with limited capacity or resilience
19.	Increase long-term funding to ensure the sustainability of community projects
20.	Create local solutions for Community Groups to access affordable facilities, particularly in areas with no community space

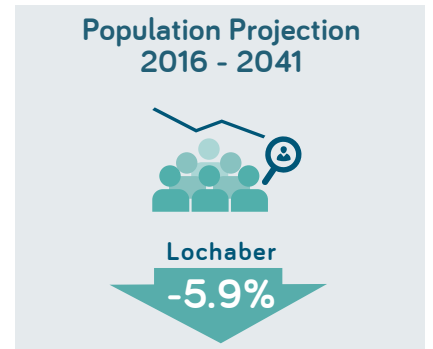
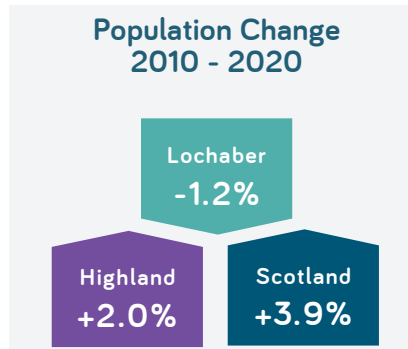
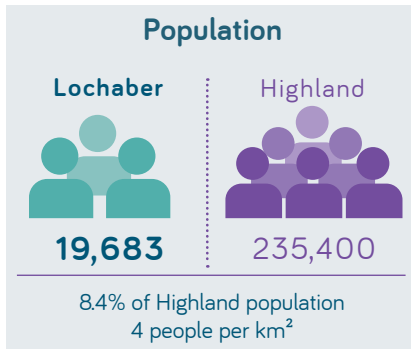
## Appendices

2	Lochaber Area Profile
3	Plans Relevant to Lochaber Area live document - links for inclusion should be sent to <a href="mailto:jane.young@highland.gov.uk">jane.young@highland.gov.uk</a>
4	Engagement Report

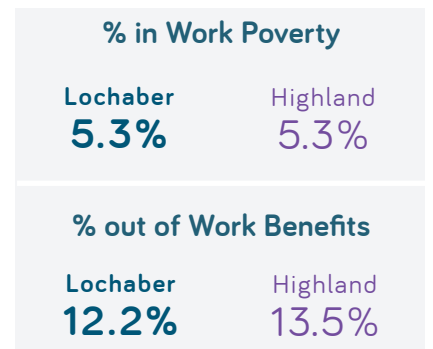
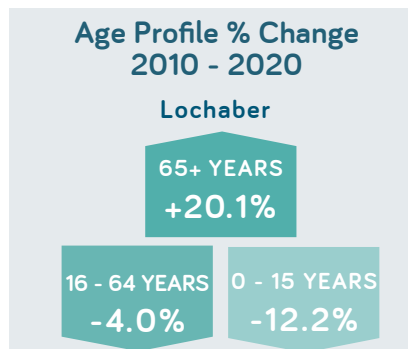
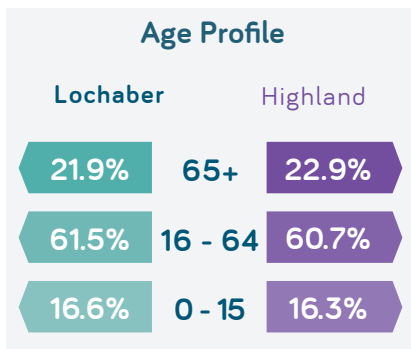
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# LOCHABER AREA PROFILE

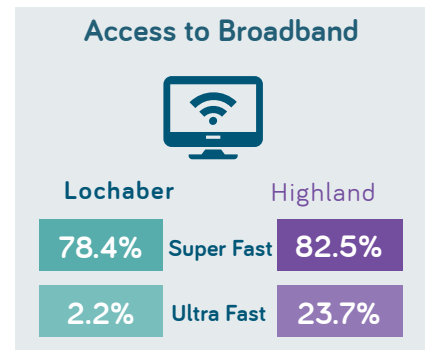
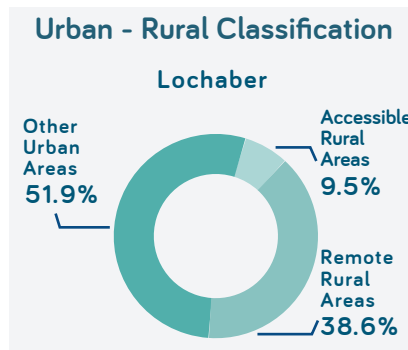
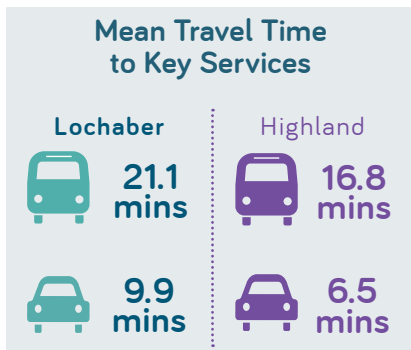
POPULATION



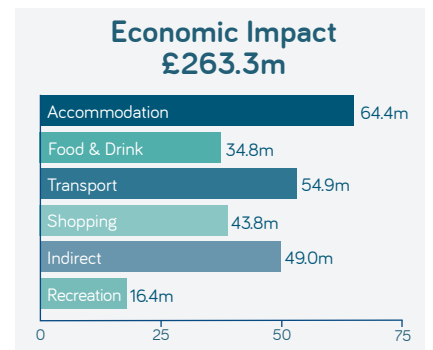
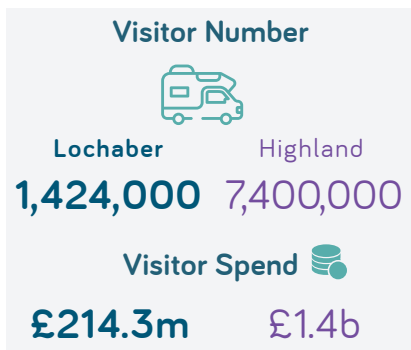
EMPLOYMENT



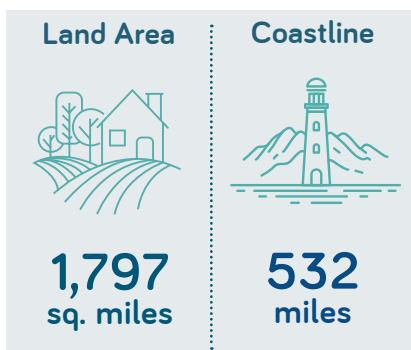
ACCESS TO SERVICES



TOURISM



ENVIRONMENT



# KEY FACTS

## POPULATION

- During 2010-2020 Lochaber population **decreased** by 1.2%, this is against an overall Highland population increase of 2%
- Lochaber 2016-2041 population projection is towards a **decrease** of 5.9%, this is against predicted growth in some other areas of Highland

## EMPLOYMENT

- During 2010-2020, the percentage of population over 65 **rose** by 20.1% (with this age group representing 21.9% of the total population in the area). During the same period the percentage of population between 0-15 years old **decreased** by 12.2% (with this age group representing 16.6% of the total population in the area)
- Lochaber working age profile is **similar** to the Highland average
- Percentage of people experiencing in-work poverty or receiving out of work benefits is **similar** to the Highland average

## ACCESS TO SERVICES

- Average travel time to key services by both personal transport and public transport is **higher** than the Highland average
- Lochaber comprises of 51.9% **Other Urban Areas**, 38.6% **Remote Rural Areas** and 9.5% **Accessible Rural Areas**. Remote Rural Areas classification is often coupled with higher living costs including transport, food, fuel, fewer employment opportunities, lower wages and social isolation
- Lochaber has 78.4% super-fast broadband coverage, slightly **lower** than the Highland average of 82.5%, and 2.2% ultra-fast coverage, significantly **less** than Highland average of 23.7%

## TOURISM

- Lochaber contributes approximately **19%** of estimated visitor numbers to Highland and **19%** of estimated visitor spend in Highland
- Tourism is an important economic contributor to Lochaber with an estimated economic impact of **£263.3m**
- This represents a significant contribution to the overall Highland tourism economic impact figures compared to other areas in Highland

## ENVIRONMENT

- **30%** of Lochaber land area has environmental designation coverage. For further information on the environmental designations please visit <https://sitelink.nature.scot/home>
- The natural environment in Lochaber is a significant asset, contributing to the quality of life of local residents and attracting tourism to the area.

## Statistics reference list

**Population/Population Change/Age Profile/Population Density** - Small Area Population Estimates (SAPE) by National Records of Scotland - nrscotland.gov.uk Updated 2020

**Population Projection** - Highland Council Corporate Plan 2019-2022

**Urban Rural Classification** - Scottish Government 6-fold Urban-Rural Classification [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot) Updated 2020

**Access to Services** - 2020 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) [www.statistics.gov.scot](http://www.statistics.gov.scot) Uses data from 2018

These indicators average SIMD population weighted average time taken to reach key services by driving or by public transport.

Car indicator averages mean drive time to a GP surgery, Post Office, Retail Centre, Primary School, Secondary School and Petrol Station

Public transport indicator averages mean travel time to a GP surgery, Post Office and Retail Centre

**Broadband** - Ofcom Connection Nations Report Updated 2021

**Out of Work Benefits** - Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) Updated May 2021

**In Work Poverty** - Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) Updated November 2021

**Tourism** - Report by Global Tourism Solutions UK Ltd Updated 2019. Shows pre-pandemic figures. Job estimates are FTE's

**Environmental** - NatureScot Sitelink <https://sitelink.nature.scot/home>

## Plans Relevant to Lochaber

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## Development Plans

[www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/development\\_plans](http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/development_plans)

<i>Area</i>	<i>Plan</i>	<i>Lead Organisation</i>	<i>Social media / Weblink</i>
Highland	Highland Wide Local Development Plan	Highland Council	<a href="http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/199/highland-wide_local_development_plan">www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/199/highland-wide_local_development_plan</a>
West Highland	West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan	Highland Council	<a href="http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/582/west_highlands_and_islands_local_development_plan">www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/582/west_highlands_and_islands_local_development_plan</a>

## Area Place Plans

<https://engagehighland.co.uk/>

<i>Area</i>	<i>Plan</i>	<i>Lead Organisation</i>	<i>Social media / Weblink</i>
Lochaber	Area Place Plan	Highland Council	<a href="https://engagehighland.co.uk/lochaber-place-plan">https://engagehighland.co.uk/lochaber-place-plan</a>
Fort William	Fort William 2040	Highland Council	<a href="http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/1038/fort_william_2040_fw2040">www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/1038/fort_william_2040_fw2040</a>
Fort William	Town Centre Action Plan - Fort William	Highland Council	<a href="http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/28440/fw2040_town_centre_draft_masterplan_and_delivery_framework">www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/28440/fw2040_town_centre_draft_masterplan_and_delivery_framework</a>



## Local Place Plans

[https://highland.gov.uk/info/178/development\\_plans/1043/local\\_place\\_plans](https://highland.gov.uk/info/178/development_plans/1043/local_place_plans)

<https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1>

<i>Area</i>	<i>Plan</i>	<i>Lead Organisation</i>	<i>Social media / Weblink</i>
Ardgour	Local Place Plan	Ardgour Community Council Ardgour Glensanda Development Trust	<a href="http://www.ardgourcommunitiestogether.net/home-1-1">www.ardgourcommunitiestogether.net/home-1-1</a>
Caol	Local Place Plan	Caol Community Council	<a href="https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1">https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1</a>
Duror & Kentallen	Local Place Plan	Duror & Kentallen Community Council	<a href="http://www.durorandkentallen.co.uk/">www.durorandkentallen.co.uk/</a>
Glengarry	Local Place Plan	Glengarry Community Council	<a href="http://www.glengarrycommunitycouncil.co.uk/">www.glengarrycommunitycouncil.co.uk/</a>
Fort Augustus & Glenmoriston	Local Place Plan		<a href="https://communitycompany.co.uk/">https://communitycompany.co.uk/</a> (overlaps part of Lochaber)
Kinlochleven	Local Place Plan	Kinlochleven Community Action Group	<a href="https://www.kinlochlevenfutures.net/">https://www.kinlochlevenfutures.net/</a>
Morvern	Live Life Morvern Local Place Plan	Morvern Community Council, Morvern Community Trust, Morvern Community Development Company	<a href="https://morvern.org/community">https://morvern.org/community</a>
Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry	Local Place Plan	Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council	<a href="https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1">https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1</a>
South Knoydart	Local Place Plan	South Knoydart Community Council	<a href="https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1">https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1</a>

## Community Partnership Plans

<https://highlandcpp.org.uk/>

<i>Area</i>	<i>Plan</i>	<i>Lead Organisation</i>	<i>Social media / Weblink</i>
Highland	Highlands Outcome Improvement Plan	Highland Community Planning Partnership	<a href="https://highlandcpp.org.uk/about-hcpp/highland-outcome-improvement-plan/">https://highlandcpp.org.uk/about-hcpp/highland-outcome-improvement-plan/</a>
Lochaber	Community Partnership Plan	Lochaber Community Partnership	<a href="https://highlandcpp.org.uk/community-partnerships/lochaber-community-partnership/">https://highlandcpp.org.uk/community-partnerships/lochaber-community-partnership/</a>
Caol	Community Action Group Plan	Lochaber Community Partnership	
Fort William	Community Action Group Plan	Lochaber Community Partnership	
Kinlochleven	Community Action Group Plan	Lochaber Community Partnership	

## Community Plans

<i>Area</i>	<i>Plan</i>	<i>Lead Organisation</i>	<i>Social media / Weblink</i>
Acharacle	Acharacle Community Plan	Acharacle Community Company	<a href="http://www.acharaclecommunitycompany.co.uk/activities--projects.html">www.acharaclecommunitycompany.co.uk/activities--projects.html</a>
Ballachulish	Ballachulish Community Action Plan	Ballachulish Community Forum	<a href="http://www.ballachulish.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/balla-cap-FINAL.pdf">http://www.ballachulish.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/balla-cap-FINAL.pdf</a>
Kinlochleven	Community	Kinlochleven Community Trust	<a href="http://www.kinlochleven.co.uk/current-projects">www.kinlochleven.co.uk/current-projects</a>
Knoydart	Community	Knoydart Community	<a href="https://knoydart.org/about-the-knoydart-foundation/">https://knoydart.org/about-the-knoydart-foundation/</a>
Isle of Canna	Community	Isle of Canna Community Development Trust	<a href="http://www.theisleofcanna.com/">www.theisleofcanna.com/</a>
Isle of Eigg	Community	The Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust	<a href="http://isleofeigg.org/ieht/">http://isleofeigg.org/ieht/</a>
Isle of Muck	Community	Isle of Muck Community	<a href="http://www.isleofmuck.com/">www.isleofmuck.com/</a>
Isle of Rum	Community	Various	<a href="http://www.isleofrum.com/">www.isleofrum.com/</a>
Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry	Community Action Plan	Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry SCIO	<a href="https://srascio.scot/57-2/">https://srascio.scot/57-2/</a>

## Other

<i>Area</i>	<i>Plan</i>	<i>Lead Organisation</i>	<i>Social media / Weblink</i>
Road to the Isles	Road to the Isles Location Action Plan	Highland Council	<a href="http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/25064/road-to-the-isles-location-action-plan-2022">www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/25064/road-to-the-isles-location-action-plan-2022</a>
Fort William - Waterfront	Fort William Pontoons	Fort William Marina & Shoreline Community Interest Company	<a href="http://www.fwmsc.co.uk/future-plans/">www.fwmsc.co.uk/future-plans/</a>
Fort William	Bus Partnership Fund STAG appraisal report		<a href="https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1523/transport-and-streets/1013/bus-partnership-fund-projects/8">https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1523/transport-and-streets/1013/bus-partnership-fund-projects/8</a>
Glengarry	Glengarry Community Woodlands	Glengarry Community Woodlands	<a href="http://www.glengarry.org.uk/">www.glengarry.org.uk/</a>
Mallaig	Mallaig Harbour Master Plan	Mallaig Harbour Authority	<a href="https://mallaig-harbour.com/draft-masterplan-2/">https://mallaig-harbour.com/draft-masterplan-2/</a>
Strontian	URRAM	URRAM	<a href="https://urram.scot/">https://urram.scot/</a>
Lochaber Wide	Lochaber health and social care redesign	NHS Highland	<a href="https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/about/service-redesign/lochaber-health-and-social-care-redesign/">https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/about/service-redesign/lochaber-health-and-social-care-redesign/</a>
Lochaber	NHSH District Plan	NHS Highland	
Ben Nevis	Management Plan for Ben Nevis	John Muir Trust	<a href="http://www.johnmuirtrust.org/about-us/where-we-work/ben-nevis">www.johnmuirtrust.org/about-us/where-we-work/ben-nevis</a>
Lochaber	Various	Forestry and Land Scotland	<a href="https://forestryandland.gov.scot/search-results?keyword=lochaber">https://forestryandland.gov.scot/search-results?keyword=lochaber</a>
West Lochaber	Deer Management Plan		<a href="https://wlochaberdmg.deer-management.co.uk/deer-management-plan/">https://wlochaberdmg.deer-management.co.uk/deer-management-plan/</a>
Crianlarich to Mallaig	West Highland Community Rail Partnership	West Highland Community Rail Partnership	<a href="http://www.westhighlandcrp.com/">www.westhighlandcrp.com/</a>
Fort William	Fort William Active Travel Masterplan	Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS)	<a href="https://hitrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Fort_William_Active_Travel_Masterplan_Final_Report_2019.pdf">https://hitrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Fort_William_Active_Travel_Masterplan_Final_Report_2019.pdf</a>
Lochaber	Operating Plan	Highlands & Islands Enterprise	<a href="http://www.hie.co.uk/about-us/policies-and-publications/strategy-and-operating-plan/">www.hie.co.uk/about-us/policies-and-publications/strategy-and-operating-plan/</a>

Glen Nevis	Nevis Strategy	Nevis Landscape Partnership	<a href="https://www.nevislandscape.co.uk/about-us/library#library_document_118">https://www.nevislandscape.co.uk/about-us/library#library_document_118</a>
Highland	Children & Young People's Participation Strategy	Multi-Agency	<a href="http://www.childrensrighthighland.co.uk/children-young-peoples-participation-strategy">www.childrensrighthighland.co.uk/children-young-peoples-participation-strategy</a>
Lochaber	Shaping Our Future Service - Consultation	Scottish Fire & Rescue Service	<a href="http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/get-involved/consultations/shaping-our-future-service-your-say/">www.firescotland.gov.uk/get-involved/consultations/shaping-our-future-service-your-say/</a>
Highland	Local Policing Plan / Local Priorities	Police Scotland	<a href="http://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/ehak3cc1/highland-local-policing-plan-2023-2026.docx">www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/ehak3cc1/highland-local-policing-plan-2023-2026.docx</a>
Lochaber	Business Plan	Lochaber Chamber of Commerce	<a href="https://www.lochaberchamber.co.uk/about-us/our-business-plan/">https://www.lochaberchamber.co.uk/about-us/our-business-plan/</a>
Scotland	Corporate Plan	Scottish Canals	<a href="https://d1hxd0sho1wxko.cloudfront.net/production/general/Scottish-Canals-Corporate-Plan-2023-28-Final-C.pdf">https://d1hxd0sho1wxko.cloudfront.net/production/general/Scottish-Canals-Corporate-Plan-2023-28-Final-C.pdf</a>
Highland	Active Travel Strategy	Highland Council	<a href="https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/28781/active_travel_strategy">https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/28781/active_travel_strategy</a>

# *Engagement Report - Lochaber Area Place Plan*



<https://engagehighland.co.uk/lochaber-place-plan>

*Introduction*

This report details the engagement workstream that has informed the Lochaber Area Place Plan. As outlined within the Area Place Plan, the engagement workstream was influenced and informed by existing consultation documents and data along with other linked plans relevant to the Lochaber area in an attempt to minimise repeated consultations.

The responses received are detailed in this report. These have informed the Lochaber Area Place Plan and have been shared with partners to help inform their own work, particularly noting the Highland Investment Plan and the Highland Local Development Plan.

### *Engagement Schedule*

The engagement to inform this plan took place between June - November 2024. To remove duplication and identify gaps, existing plans were collated within one document and the common themes from these included within the Lochaber Area Place Plan.

An online platform was created <https://engagehighland.co.uk/lochaber-place-plan>.

Stakeholder meetings were held to inform the engagement schedule, taking previous consultations into consideration and identifying gaps.

An online survey and ideas boards were published, and hardcopies made available in various libraries across Lochaber, including the mobile library, between 27 September – 31 October 2024.

A number of public drop-in sessions were held at various locations across Lochaber during October 2024.

Several online and in person workshops were held during October 2024.

### *Feedback*

#### *Strengths ("What's Good?")*

There's a deep sense of belonging, with residents describing a friendly and supportive community that looks out for each other. People come together for various social and outdoor activities, often volunteering in local initiatives. Locals are helpful and caring especially in times of crisis, making the community feel close-knit and supportive. Many community groups showcase resident's commitment to keeping the area welcoming and clean citing examples of annual litter clean-ups and managing dog bins.

The area is celebrated for its breathtaking scenery, landscapes, and public spaces. Glen Nevis, the forests, lochs, and waterways add to its appeal, with some areas even designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The environment offers a peaceful, isolated charm that allows residents and visitors to enjoy nature.

Overall, the area feels safe, with low crime rates and a sense of security among residents. Clean streets and a welcoming atmosphere further enhance the quality of life. Community facilities, such as libraries and village halls provide an essential public space offering a welcoming place to go supporting the needs of residents and contributing to a well-rounded living experience. There is strong social cohesion, with people generally helpful and supportive, particularly during crisis.

Schools are noted for their small class sizes, fostering quality and personalised education. There are also good examples of extracurricular activities and career pathways, such as apprenticeships and specialised courses for young people.

Visitors comment on the area's natural beauty, friendly people, reliable transport, and general safety. Many express that the area is a memorable and attractive destination.



## Comments:

- *It's very pretty (visitor)*
- *Almost everything is good*
- *hall is good for events*
- *Friendly people*
- *good shops*
- *feels safe*
- *low crime*
- *nice place to live*
- *good shops*
- *nice walks*
- *Community spirit very good*
- *beautiful scenery*
- *great outdoors*
- *lots of community groups*
- *good places to get outdoors*
- *We live in one of the most attractive natural environments*
- *people so friendly*
- *services beyond expectation (visitor)*
- *good public transport (visitor)*
- *breathtaking scenery (visitor)*
- *community spirit and willingness of people to help in the community*
- *great outdoor walks*
- *many walks/trails for those who wish to get out*
- *I feel completely safe living here.*
- *People are kind and helpful*
- *Most people look out for each other in the area*
- *Many groups for social and outdoor activities.*
- *We are surrounded by the most wonderful scenery - we can get out and walk for free (with waterproofs mostly).*
- *great community working*
- *supportive community in times of crisis*
- *freedom, isolation, can enjoy not being around people*
- *tranquillity*
- *cool community*
- *clean air, clean streets*
- *community facilities - high school/library*
- *plenty of alternative paths career wise for young people e.g. apprenticeships/courses*
- *great library*
- *Volunteers perform annual litter pick and manage dog poo bins*
- *natural beauty*
- *good schools*
- *great community*
- *teachers very 1-1 since not many pupils so get a good education*
- *the amount of extracurricular activities are good*
- *Corran ferry is a great connection*
- *great schools*
- *the community is lovely*
- *it is a beautiful part of the country the landscape is gorgeous*
- *The library offers me somewhere to go*
- *A lot of building and areas do look lovely and well-kept though*
- *Glen Nevis is lovely*
- *new flood defence works and pathway in Caol*
- *various lochs and waterways of glengarry are exemplary and often designated SSSIs. The wilderness areas, particularly the western end of Glengarry, are often described as the last great wilderness of the UK.*
- *local efforts to provide a community transport service*
- *Strong sense of community*

## Challenges ("What's Not so Good?")

Residents in new build developments and remote areas feel isolated and disconnected due to limited transportation options. Limited public transport options with poor connections (buses, trains and ferries), inconvenient scheduling and lack of stops/shelters. Issues with Corran Ferry queues and reliability. High cost of public transport was also highlighted.

Limited services and support for independent living for elderly or disabled residents. Limited healthcare access difficulty finding local carers and inconsistent delivery across Lochaber was noted. Limited affordable activities for all ages, as well as limited extracurriculars, youth clubs, and summer programs, lack of affordable or accessible activities for young people and concerns that the older generation is overlooked in terms of services and community support.

Lack of police presence and slow response times, certain areas and (e.g., underpass) are seen as unsafe especially at night. Potholes, lack of winter gritting, poor maintenance of pathways and narrow/overgrown roads causing safety concerns.

Traffic congestion, crowding and seasonal strain on local services, management of wild camping could be improved. Limited or poorly maintained public toilets, parking issues, and a lack of community amenities (post offices, banks, and shops) were highlighted. Businesses seen to focus on tourism rather than locals for example closing out of season. High street has empty shops and lacks variety, especially in clothing and household goods.

Complaints about the rundown look of the high street and neglected buildings (e.g. Middle Street) detract from the town's image. Litter, overflowing bins, and lack of them. Overgrown public areas (parks, paths, pier) and invasive species are untreated. Concerns overfishing restrictions and inadequate protection of scenic areas from infrastructure projects and impacts of unmanaged tourism on natural sites were noted.

Insufficient housing options, especially for essential workers and new developments adding pressure on outdated infrastructure. Limited childcare options, and inadequate resources for arts and music education. Limited access to employment opportunities and further education due to transport issues and the lack of local training and apprenticeship programs. Lack of accessible recreational opportunities at convenient times were also highlighted.

Communities struggle to attract volunteers and there is a feeling that communities can be divided with a lack of active engagement.

## Comments:

- *no budget for schools*
- *older generation can be forgotten about*
- *no art centre in Lochaber with performance arts space*
- *Corran Ferry queuing system Ardgour side*
- *not a lot of train lines, too many changes to get anywhere*
- *Transport, pupils can't attend college course from start to finish*
- *Lack of public electric charging points for cars*
- *Public transport doesn't connect - busses with ferries and such - especially on the border between Lochaber and Argyll*
- *It takes an hour to get close to where you are going*
- *closure of Dhail Mhor*
- *lack of childcare*
- *it can be difficult to find professional/tradespeople*
- *money goes to Inverness*
- *no access to organic food*
- *busses and transport in general is limited*
- *takes a long time to get to other places*
- *can't get to see a doctor without interview*
- *lack of opportunity, e.g. things in town are hard to get to*
- *poor Public transport - trains to other places, more bus routes*
- *lack of support from Highland Council for community initiatives*
- *local recycling without having to take plastics to Fort William*
- *lack of carers*
- *expensive*
- *lack of instrumental service Highlife Highland - Ardnamurchan*
- *traffic congestion*
- *lack of public toilets*
- *empty shops in high street giving impression town is run down*
- *unable to commute from outside of Fort William*
- *traffic congestion*
- *lack of public transport services*
- *short term funding*
- *medical cover is sketchy since amalgamation of Medical Centre – Acharacle/Morvern*
- *Corran ferry - cost, queues, reliability*
- *potholes in road*
- *transport to sports activities for teenagers - relies on parents*
- *public transport – Langal*
- *no community spirit*
- *post office - Mallaig*
- *bank is closing - Mallaig*
- *community is divided*
- *resident groups and Community Councils struggle for numbers to keep going. There is an apathy and feeling that someone else should "do it"*
- *general feeling is too much is invested in Inverness and the greater Highlands are ignored. There are many run-down areas that need minor investment to repair*
- *young people in new build houses feel cut off from travel links. Awful weather to which active travel isn't always an appropriate option and parents are being heavily relied upon*
- *too many tourists, we need them but needs to be managed*
- *no clubs in summer for young people*
- *businesses focused on tourism not locals, close out of season*
- *1 hours' drive to nearest town*
- *management of tourists*
- *Police slow to respond (3.5hrs)*
- *too many visitors*
- *fishing restrictions have had a negative impact on area*
- *look of the town from the bypass very poor, even the new buildings*
- *tourism causing traffic congestion*
- *lack of shops - clothing*
- *Highstreet looks like no one is taking any pride in it - very unsightly*
- *lack of interest from Highland Council*
- *issues with planning constraints*
- *volunteer organization: 10-12 active members only*

- *lack of housing for everyone including for those wishing to work in the NHS, Care sector*
- *high street needs improved, visually unattractive, absent landlords, empty shops*
- *traffic infrastructure lacking leading to poor traffic flow/ congestion*
- *locals cannot get into restaurants/cafes in "season" and when its quiet they often close*
- *infrastructure*
- *tourism management*
- *not enough for residents and visitors to do*
- *lack of respect for area, rubbish everywhere and speeding vehicles especially in built up areas – Caol/Corpach*
- *a disconnect between residents and tourists that could be bridged by work to get residents to understand the positives that tourism brings to the area - to understand that without the tourist industry, Fort William and Lochaber would be a backwater with very little infrastructure.*
- *increased engagement and activity with young people is needed to reduce antisocial behaviour*
- *no water sports*
- *not many useful shops - clothing, household*
- *Highlife Highland exercise classes take place early evening or during the day, not suitable for someone who works in Fort William. The Leven Centre is not even open on the weekends - Kinlochleven*
- *youth Clubs in South Lochaber*
- *litter and overflowing bins are a problem. Bottle recycling bins have smashed glass around them*
- *wild campers on the West Highland Way camp within the village area, breaking branches off trees, eroding the areas and defecate in the woods without burying it. They are often within 100yds of people's homes - Kinlochleven*
- *no adequate trash pickup from bins or streets*
- *resident car parking problematic in Fort William and surrounding villages due to age of construction*
- *walk around the old pier has become overgrown and the fences are broken. There is also Japanese Knot Weed on Scottish Water land next to*
- *it isn't easy to identify what is going on when*
- *mental health is a huge concern but if we can't get the staff, we need to look at other options. Basic exercise is one the best things you can do for your mental health*
- *too many activities need paid for which doesn't make it accessible for all, we can walk so many routes for free but need appropriate clothing/shoes for this*
- *not enough on offer for visitors when weather poor but then I wouldn't think they come here for the weather*
- *local hotels cater for tourism but a hostelry/inn for locals is missing in rural villages generally – Glengarry*
- *whilst long distance walks/cycling is catered for (great glen way) local circular routes would be better for locals*
- *a lot of the grass areas are overgrown, same applies to many of our foot paths, flights of steps. Just a general lack of attention from the local authority*
- *often activities end up stopping because of lack of volunteers*
- *without adequate facilities i.e. toilets, none can comfortably participate in community activities organised by local groups in rural areas*
- *Inverlochy Castle has not been looked after - this brings a lot of visitors and is closed off, needs upgraded*
- *Fort William High Street – buildings look like they are falling down*
- *scrap yard across the road from Town Centre*
- *very little provided centrally by larger charities or council*
- *cost of busses is disproportionate to the distances travelled*
- *housing estates are being built and not included in the bus routes*
- *community transport does not operate during the times I would use them - evenings and weekends*
- *community transport does not have enough volunteers, and I feel bad using the service daily*
- *underpass in fort William does not feel safe*
- *Stem facilities stalled – what's happening?*
- *lack of adult/community leaning within the area*
- *distance from my home to nearest stop is too far for me to walk*

*the old pier walk which is not being treated and is at risk of spreading further - Kinlochleven*

- *The Ice Factor being closed is a big detractor in the village. The Aluminium Story centre is also closed. It would be nice to see Jahama and KCT get their act together and ensure the village continues to thrive*
- *Middle Street buildings are a mess in the centre of our town and canopy along High Street is in terrible condition*
- *library and underpass are still in poor condition. Proper lighting needs installed*
- *train station is very dated*
- *Belford needs replaced*
- *main issue is lack of volunteers and transport. A lot of activities that happen in Fort William for school aged children and young people do not fit in with buses into Fort William*
- *lack of services in some areas*
- *there is an increasing pressure to allow various energy infrastructure development with apparently little consideration on the visual/ecological impact. It is the future we worry about*
- *Craigs cemetery looks awful, as does the roundabout near Morrisons*
- *Middle St, Viewforth Car and West End Car Parks are shocking, overgrown weeds and bushes and dreadful surfacing, not a good way to greet arriving visitors*
- *people are very selfish when parking when they have no disability or children in those spaces*
- *no safe walking between areas due to roads and signage*
- *waterfront is hard for folk to get to - particularly the Old Fort, no-one can get easy and safe access to the shore or beach areas*
- *condition of roads and lack of them in the local area. Total gridlock in summer with one road*
- *tourist traffic is insane – Glenfinnan*
- *New houses were built on Blar Mhor without considering the additional pressure this may place on the already busy junction at Lochy Bridge A830 onto A82. This was not ameliorated by reducing the bus service between Corpach and Upper Achintore because more people started getting in their cars!*
- *Glengarry residents live very remotely and will be aware they are on their own when it comes to transport. The C1144 road to Kinloch Hourn is 22 miles long, single track and 'fragile' - people living along it will not have access to public transport unless and until they can get to the main road. This should not be the case for the majority of residents living in Invergarry itself. But sadly, it often is, and we rely on the local efforts to provide a Fort William bus from time to time*
- *public transport is not convenient, timings not coordinated, very limited options*
- *community have mentioned the lack of bus stops (and shelters) in the right places and the usefulness of the timings linked to other transport options*
- *buses from outer areas, like South Lochaber, do not always tie in well with buses to/from Glasgow (from Glencoe). Buses from South*
- *need better arrival hub at Fort William Station*
- *communities do not cater for workers coming into the area – restricted due to shift work - open hours – hotels catering for tourism trade only*
- *Lochaber does not always tie in well with getting across town to the Health Centre*
- *local buses linking in with long haul buses, walking from town bus stops to the bus stances (bus station.... lol) is not that easy for some people*
- *winter resilience needs to be improved - lack of pavement gritting*
- *roads that are not well maintained or gritted in winter make me feel unsafe because I drive frequently for work*
- *lack of police presence*
- *ungritted roads*
- *feel unsafe in High street area, mainly in the evenings*
- *street lighting could be better*
- *lack of shops*
- *not enough affordable activities - indoor & outdoor*
- *lack of Post Offices in some rural communities*
- *not enough support for independent living*
- *too far a walk to the nearest bus stop*
- *experience of falling on a bus means I won't use public transport now - the drivers do not wait until you are seated before driving*

- *condition of roads on our side round Loch Linnhe - needs upgraded*
- *limited public transport and no bus shelters*
- *not frequent enough public transport services to match requirements or lifestyle. The last train leaves fort William at 22:10 which means its missing end of shows or movies*
- *timings of busses and the spread of bus routes is insufficient for my needs*
- *I have to have my car for work and public transportation does not fit in with my child's after-school activities*

## *What needs to Improve*

Feedback highlighted the following:

Upgrading transport infrastructure to ease congestion, with particular attention to areas experiencing high tourist activity. Enhancing links between rural communities and main town centres to ensure equitable access to essential services and opportunities. Expand parking options and ensure reliable ferry operations to meet the needs of residents and visitors alike, introduce well-designed pedestrian and cycling paths to encourage local travel and promote sustainability.

Efforts in housing and community development focus on addressing critical needs, expand the availability of appropriate housing with emphasis on supporting key workers, locals, older people and young people. Encourage the use of vacant buildings to mitigate housing shortages, community housing initiatives and promote inclusive and accessible housing solutions.

Address slow broadband rollout, particularly in remote areas by expanding internet access and providing technical support for older residents.

Expand youth and social services focusing on enhancing well-being, engagement and inclusivity within the community. Provide dedicated mental health services for both youth and adults and offer a diverse range of affordable activities and social spaces.

Efforts to enhance environmental and recreational spaces with a focus on sustainability, accessibility and community enjoyment. Protect and promote rewilding initiatives to support local ecosystems and improve the appearance and accessibility of high streets, parks and waterfronts. Enhance the area by providing clearer signage and increasing parking availability near trails and points of interest. Improve public restrooms and seating to improve the usability of shared spaces. Expand services to tackle littering and increase public recycling options.

Balanced tourism, improve signage, public information and parking facilities to aid both residents and visitors. Support initiatives like pop-up cafes and accessible public transport to attractions and revitalised points of interest. Focus on enhancing our spaces through greenery, building maintenance and visual upgrades.

Efforts to strengthen community cohesion and engagement, emphasise collaboration, communication and access to essential services. Strengthen working relationships between the council, NHS and third-sector organisations to support community programs. Ensure long-term funding for the continuation of valuable community initiatives.

*People*

- *need for more care services*
- *new hospital*
- *maintaining current care homes*
- *the lack of care beds must be resolved, especially with the announced closure of Moss Park*
- *Dhail Mhor open and support from NHS to help it grow*
- *opening of care facilities for young and old*
- *ageing population*
- *more Day Care provision is needed for the elderly*
- *more care home places for people in their local community*
- *care Provision that one of the things that we can do that we should be planning for is to support*
- *support to sustain Lochaber and District Lunch Club*
- *health span, support people being independent at home and having a healthy and active life for as long as possible,*
- *have groups, areas for people to go especially in winter to just chat or just listen over a coffee or something*
- *spaces for older people to socialise*
- *intergenerational engagement is key to improving community wellbeing, and a focus on activity that is not purely 'outdoor activity' based, although this is a key aspect of the area*
- *support for mental health – youth*
- *support for sexual health - youth*
- *place to for senior pupils that is not a club*
- *nurture/encourage/support our young people to stay in Lochaber*
- *wheeling and cycling provision, including people who use a wheelchair or a motor scooter, or any sort of like walking frame or any kind. Mobility aids, support people with mobility impairments and people don't drive*
- *centralised "what's on" might help? It can be hard to find out what is actually running*
- *support needed for communities where capacity/resilience/funding is limited*
- *accessibility – ferries (Knoydart)*
- *emergency services – no fire engine in Knoydart*
- *more youth-focused activities are needed*
- *a central location where folk can find out about events/activities would be great*
- *more free or affordable green and art-based activities which connect people to nature and creative outlets would be lovely and this would also have a positive impact on health and well being*
- *youth programmes for teenagers*



## Place

- *more bins at laybys and car parks*
- *improved infrastructure*
- *piers and boat yards need investment*
- *youth café on in the summer*
- *why not have graffiti art on buildings facing the by-pass e.g. local scenes*
- *a grass cutting calendar, to ensure communities know when the council will attempt grass cutting, and if play spaces can be cut for summer*
- *directory of clubs and activities*
- *Fort William needs considerable work to address decades of under investment in the town. Villages outside are in much better condition.*
- *High street needs improved - middle street especially*
- *weeding, painting, resurfacing pavements, and roads*
- *Old Inverlochy Castle needs to be made safe, and scaffolding removed*
- *appropriate places for wildflower growth be left for no cuts*
- *multipurpose sports facility indoor or covered - we need to beat the rain*
- *space to socialise without having to attend a group/club/activity*
- *better maintenance of roads, pavements, verges, public spaces*
- *need more public toilets*
- *improve facilities - clean public toilets*
- *High Street needs improved, more green spaces, matching street furniture and bins, support for local shop keepers to keep their shops clean and tidy outside*
- *only allow sensitive, appropriate development and infrastructure. Whilst being currently satisfied the imminent future is littered with infrastructure projects that will potentially have major impact on how Glengarry looks and feels*
- *make use of the waterfront and connect it to appropriate communities*
- *more signposts – peninsular*
- *green and art-based activities, which connect people to nature there*
- *bus stops could be a lot nicer*
- *canal bridges – school times*
- *improve infrastructure*
- *cultural activities related to the visual arts*
- *weeding, painting, resurfacing pavements, and roads. More bins at laybys and car parks*
- *sort the roundabouts out. The one at Lochybridge, the mound of earth is way too big - take that off and add a feature to do with FW, maybe whiskey barrels or even just some rocks with bedding plants like heather.*
- *so much of the area needs a fresh coat of paint*
- *more bins, if your surroundings are tidy and well kempt this will, hopefully, make the community take pride in their area*
- *back of Fort William High Street - facing the Loch - requires attention to improve its appearance from the bypass*
- *some attention to the waterfront - improving the benches and floral displays - perhaps with more robust visual enhancements rather than fragile planters - stimulating use of the waterfront - coffee cabins etc, perhaps*
- *improve pavements so they are easy for older people or people with mobility issues to walk on without risk of tripping*
- *roundabouts as mentioned as they are the first thing visitors see*
- *buildings along the bypass need painted*
- *increase trains to meet local and tourist demand*
- *maintain/upgrade points of interest/heritage sites*
- *keep the road markings maintained. junction at Farmfoods especially*
- *Glen Nevis shouldn't be charging to park there*
- *improve public transport (evening/weekend/rural locations)*
- *improve information about public transport*
- *improve parking - Glenfinnan*
- *safe active travel routes connecting communities and access to public transport*
- *support for community transport initiatives*
- *West – East bus route*
- *traffic management to stop parking on verges - Glenfinnan*
- *resurface roads*
- *sort Fort William traffic*

- *need community and businesses to come together and agree a plan to sort out traffic congestion*
- *public transport needs to be improved to all areas*
- *western relief road*
- *better roads infrastructure*
- *build a bridge at Corran*
- *fairer charges on carparks for locals (as in Oban)*
- *public parking should not be charged*
- *make one of the Viewforth carparks long term parking permits for people working on High Street*
- *sustainable Transport and Safe Walking and Cycling Routes*
- *Fort William has good routes to walk and cycle away from the busy roads but lots of communities in Lochaber don't - we should all be able to choose to walk or cycle for local journeys without feeling unsafe*
- *active travel – Spean bridge*
- *too many cars parked along verges - unsightly and unsafe*
- *grass verges are messy, plant wildflowers/low maintenance native plants*
- *could the Kinlochleven to Fort William Bus not continue on to the health centre to allow patients and staff to get to early appointments*
- *local affordable housing*
- *lack of housing - particularly for young people & single persons*
- *build all kinds of housing to ensure accommodation for everyone*
- *more houses and shops being built but not the infrastructure*
- *more affordable housing - too much Airbnb, no long-term lets for locals*
- *need more houses for locals and professionals*
- *encourage self builds/woodland Crofts/community housing/landowners to develop affordable homes*
- *can we make a provision that a % of housing should be 'easily' convertible to meet accessible needs of a disabled person*
- *enforcements on empty homes – Being discusses at Scottish Gov??*
- *mapping of empty high street buildings/spaces as potential for housing*
- *more diverse transport solutions*
- *better transport links*
- *secure and future proof ferry*
- *park and ride connecting ferry to fort William*
- *need better ferries*
- *encourage locals to use bus/bike to reduce congestion*
- *build active travel road Caol to Inverlochty*
- *road improvements*
- *key worker housing*
- *small housing units*
- *attract more in private housing*
- *explore processes/solutions for privately owned empty homes*
- *mid-market section of society needs somewhere to move onto and into also, so building houses in the 200 - 300 thousand bracket should also be considered to free up owned ex council houses.*
- *climate action*
- *need more rewilding and biodiversity*
- *more green spaces*
- *community food growing*
- *community allotments*
- *environmental initiatives and outdoor spaces*
- *protect the last vestiges of our original wilderness landscape*
- *adaptation to extreme weather*
- *a comprehensive plan for how Lochaber is going to reduce its carbon emissions including supporting communities to tackle climate change*
- *heating & energy efficiency*
- *energy renewables*
- *support for businesses and communities to adapt to Net Zero transition*
- *use workers camp for housing – Spean Bridge*

## Prosperity

- *more use should be made of our Community Schools - Hire charges are too great for many community groups. Availability of school community facilities is often poor. This needs to be reassessed to make it work for our communities*
- *transport opportunities allowing and enabling people to take up apprenticeship's opportunities*
- *transport available so pupils aren't disadvantaged in college access*
- *better communication between Council and communities*
- *we need action*
- *cost and lack of grants*
- *action needs to happen not all the consultations; people are tired of it all*
- *sharing good practice and learning from past experiences*
- *council & NHS to work with community partners not against*
- *money needed for the area*
- *some commitment on finance for these things and plans*
- *where will all the money come from for this*
- *more investment in public resources*
- *community cohesion*
- *the short-term funding leads to loss of expertise and momentum*
- *longer term employment contracts to retain expertise and momentum*
- *share examples of good practice & lessons learned*
- *HC need to offer more support to Community groups*
- *business community needs to smarten up Ft Wm*
- *remove commercial forestry*
- *childcare for young children*
- *encouragement and support to provide childcare provision for those who want to work with kids under 2 - reputation makes this an unattractive occupation*
- *childcare provision for 1-2yr olds - nothing in rural communities*
- *more information/welcome for our walking visitors*
- *West Highland Way Café*
- *pop up stalls/cafes*
- *events and activities away from the urban centre of Inverness would be welcomed. Lochaber Live and the Camanachd Cup being held locally was a positive. Similar events would be welcome*
- *share experience/knowledge across our communities*
- *community schools are too expensive for them to use, this makes it difficult for them to have public meetings to attract more members. It is the same for other voluntary groups that offer help and advice, they cannot afford the school hire fees. There is no public hall in the*
- *community resilience*
- *partnership working*
- *communities who have capacity get the goodies and those that don't. Don't. Even though they may need it more.*
- *effective funding processes – ensuring Consultations/Plans are used as a guide for funders*
- *clothing shops which aren't outdoor based*
- *better shops - clothes shops - not outdoor/walking shops*
- *food festival would be welcomed*
- *action is needed in Lochaber given all the consultations/plans*
- *connecting communities – share resources/partnership working*
- *partnership working - communication needs to flows both ways! no matter the topic or agenda, as well as an acknowledgement of the efforts*
- *identify how the 3rd sector can support/complement partnership working*
- *support for third sector partners to drive forward projects and actions*
- *third sector involvement, information exchange, and effective partnership*
- *tourism and economic development*
- *increase motorhome facilities*
- *improved information about public transport – highlight points of interest on bus routes*
- *advertise our tourism better*
- *Countryside Rangers*
- *park and ride linking with public transport to points of interest*

## *Draft Lochaber Area Place Plan – Feedback*

This section of the report details responses received regarding the draft Lochaber Area Place Plan. Responses received have been reviewed and incorporated into the plan as appropriate.

Opportunities to view and comment on the Draft Plan included:

- plan uploaded to <https://engagehighland.co.uk/lochaber-place-plan> with online comments board
- plan emailed to all Stakeholders and Partners asking for feedback to be submitted online or via email
- hard copy of plan available to view and comment on at libraries across Lochaber
- plan available to view and comment on at several events, with Officers in attendance to answer any questions

## *Engage HQ*

- *Many thanks for all the fine and detailed work - most necessary!*
- *Generally, this plan looks good and many of the points raised in our local place plan and survey seem to be being addressed through this Lochaber Area Place Plan.*
- *P8 Economic: Encouraging local organic and free-range food opportunities. This needs real support for local abattoirs/butchers/growers if local food is to reach local customers.*
- *P10 Transport 12: We understand the park-and-ride service would be for Fort William?*
- *P7 Housing: Housing for older people is needed too; this could free up family homes while allowing older people to remain in their local areas. – additional action - incentives for downsizing*
- *P8 Tourism: We need to increase the available stops for campervans/motorhomes alongside provision of chemical disposal points. these can be relatively simple low-cost things to supply and can generate income for communities/landowners. Any facilities need to be more widely publicised. With the imminent closure of all our VisitScotland Tourist Information Centres effective ways have to be found to get relevant information out to visitors to alleviate current hot-spot problems.*
- *P10 Under 'Place', no 5: find a way to enable local community groups to take part in the care of their paths, signage etc. Presently it seems there is limited ability for this to occur even if there is a will for things to happen on the ground.*
- *17: More connecting links for communities to multi-user paths.*
- *Housing: as above older people need housing too.*
- *P9 Actions Young People: Although it is mentioned separately, lack of available transport is a major hindrance to young people in rural areas getting work in school holidays, socialising etc.*

## *Emails received*

- *I wanted to send a quick email to say how much I think has been achieved with the Lochaber Place plan in such a condensed period of time. To see the information that was presented at the drop-in and the summary of this and knowing that the survey had only closed on the 31<sup>st</sup>, makes it even more amazing that this was collated and summarised into such comprehensive but concise version. Many thanks and I hope that you start to get good feedback on the draft plan.*
- *It's great you have managed to get this draft done in such a short time; it seems to cover everything previously discussed!*
- *Overall, it's a great draft plan. The section on transport is particularly welcome.*
- *Thank you for your work on the plan and for the opportunity to feedback.*
- *We welcome the principle of the plan and broadly support the listed priorities which are largely based on previously identified needs.*
- *Place – "Develop Community Resilience to increase a sense of preparedness." The word "sense" doesn't seem appropriate here. Perhaps this could include "...to increase preparedness for climatic changes" or have a specific reference to climate adaptation?*
- *"Connect Lochaber to our waterfront". I think you mean connect Fort William Town Centre or Kinlochleven to its waterfront? I don't think, for example, Eigg or Mallaig has an issue with this. This also needs to be done in a climate resilient way, i.e. one that takes into consideration projections around increases in coastal flooding.*
- *Environmental – "For promoting heating and energy efficiency" This should say "renewable heating options".*
- *"Support for businesses and communities to adapt to Net Zero transition." This could be more ambitious and recognise that many communities and businesses in Lochaber (particularly those in remote and island communities) are pioneers in this area and so already at the forefront of this transition. Perhaps "support businesses and communities to continue to lead the transition to net zero" would be more appropriate.*
- *People: we have been doing some work with New Scots – which has been enlightening. It would be helpful if the plan was able to emphasize the demographic diversity in Lochaber communities, and 1) seek to support removing barriers for this cohort to participate and contribute to community life 2) improve access to requalifying support, training, employment, and services for this cohort.*
- *Young People: the plan talks about 'safe recreational spaces. Could this possibly be widened to include 'and activities?'*
- *Housing: there has been some talk on the NHSH side at both the Hospital and Community Services Redesign Stakeholder Group, and at the District Planning Group, of increasing the supply of housing suitable for older people. Could this be added to reflect these conversations?*
- *Limit Short-Term lets: could this more precisely state 'limit short-term lets suitable as permanent housing options' as this seems to be in keeping with positioning this priority as a housing theme.*
- *Access to Services: Enhance patient transport options to improve access to health services.*
- *Everyone agreed with the priorities around care home places, day care and the hospital etc - but they also mentioned the need to retain GP practices and visiting services (Physiotherapy, Podiatry etc.) - in rural areas.*
- *I'm not quite sure where this fits -: Provide housing/housing support for key public services personnel (police, teachers, health, and care staff) to enhance chances of recruitment to the area.*
- *There were also a few comments about encouraging use of existing public venues so that we don't lose them e.g. Nevis Centre, libraries, Caol Community Centre etc.*

- *A couple of folks mentioned the need to balance the needs of visitors to the area with the needs of local people - especially around ferry crossings, parking and bus travel.*
- *There was also a comment on "Increase the range of inclusive and affordable activities to accommodate varied interests and age groups within the community." It wasn't so much about increasing the range of activities/experiences as trying to make cultural activities in particular affordable and more accessible to all.*
- *Our main concern is that there is nothing in the current draft that sets out how the Plan will help achieve these previously identified objectives. Many of these objectives have been the subjects of discussion for many years without any action being taken. The Plan needs to set out how it will deliver where previous initiatives have failed.*
- *In addition, there has been a serious deterioration in recent years on several issues. These include, traffic congestion, public transport provisions, social care and public services. While we welcome the general aspiration in the plan for 'improvements', 'increases' and 'enhancements', these have to be assessed in the context of shifting baselines. Improvements on these issues should not be measured against the current situation but relative to previous periods with more acceptable levels of service. To use the buses as an example, we went from a service every fifteen minutes to a service every half an hour, which this year was cut to only once an hour. The aim should be to restore the bus service to something that meets the needs of the community rather than just improve on the current minimal levels. Similarly, traffic congestion has got progressively worse over recent years to the extent now that it affects everyone living and working in Lochaber. The aim should be to reduce congestion to levels at which traffic always flows freely rather than just to improve on what we have experienced in the last few years.*
- *One way in which the Lochaber Area Place Plan may be able to have a positive influence is in relation to planning decisions, including those of Highland Council developments. At the moment there appears to be little consideration in the planning process for the aspirations expressed in the Place Plan, despite almost all of these having been well-known for a long time. To give a specific example, the housing development by Highland Council on the Blar did not take into account access to buses or active travel. We have ended up in a situation where residents in the new housing could have had much better access to bus stops, properly designed routes to link to cycle paths, adequate covered storage for bicycles, proper public and community spaces, if some consideration had been given to the needs of the community at the planning stages. All of these failings were highlighted early on in consultations and are also aspirations of the Place Plan but were still not taken into account. The first action for the Place Plan could be to ensure that Highland Council developments are aligned with the Plan.*

## *Drop-in sessions/events*

- *Very clear and simple to understand*
- *Seems to incorporate all the current priorities*
- *Good to see People sections – care homes, access to services, day care provision*
- *Partnership working with communities being an integral part is the way forward, so it is good to see this included.*
- *Condense the bullet points into statements as these are duplicated within the Priorities.*
- *Partnership Working heading should be Collaboration/Relationships/Joined up Working*
- *Action 4 – can we expand to include wording for Local community groups/clubs as not all see themselves as TSI Organisations*
- *Action 13 – please be mindful about people who cannot access online/maybe include something to reflect this*
- *Add in something about patient transport being available*
- *Action 12. Drop ins for socialising???*
- *Ensure people can access activities – transport/busses/locations*
- *Access to services – attract/retain/train specialist to ensure continuity of services can be provided – example given 12 months waiting for Occupational Therapist to carry out a home assessment for adaptations.*

Thank you to everyone who took part in the direct engagement for this Area Place Plan,  
and for the previous consultations which have also informed it.