

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration

Planning Committee: 25 June 2014

Subject: Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Main Issues Report

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To advise the Committee of the publication of the Main Issues Report for Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park and to agree the Council's response.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that Appendix 1 is submitted to the National Park Authority as this Council's response to the Main Issues Report.

3. Background

- 3.1** The National Park Authority is preparing a new Local Development Plan for the National Park area including that part within West Dunbartonshire, for which it acts as Planning Authority. The Main Issues Report is the first statutory consultation stage in the preparation of the new Plan. On adoption the new Local Development Plan would supersede the National Park Local Plan which was adopted in December 2011. The new Plan will cover the period 2016 to 2021, but will also look further ahead.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** The Main Issues Report focuses on what may change between the existing Local Plan and the new Local Development Plan. The areas of change identified are:

- Rural Economy
- Visitor Experience
- Infrastructure & Services
- Housing

Settlement maps and development opportunities are also set out, including for Balloch and Gartocharn.

Rural Economy

- 4.2** The change proposed relates to existing Local Plan policy ED3 which refers to Economic Development in the Countryside. The suggested change would lift the restriction for economic development to be associated with supporting or securing the retention of a rural based economic activity and would allow any economic activity, subject to physical, visual or other environmental impacts. The policy would also be changed to allow for development in accordance

with agreed Estate Management Plans that the National Park Authority had been a partner in preparing.

- 4.3** Alternative options presented include allowing the aforementioned change to policy ED3 to apply only within existing building groups or to keep policy ED3 as it is.
- 4.4** It is also proposed that pilot Rural Development Frameworks are prepared for Luss and its wider area and for the area between Balmaha and Drymen. These would provide more clarity for landowners and communities on what is acceptable in planning terms.
- 4.5** The proposed Council response in Appendix 1 supports the preferred option in respect of changes to policy ED3 and queries the implications of West Dunbartonshire areas not being covered by Rural Development Frameworks.

Visitor Experience

- 4.6** The Main Issues Report proposes adding Aberfoyle and Blairmore/ Kilmun/ Strone to the key locations where strategic tourism development will be supported. Balloch is already such a location. It also identifies other areas where small scale tourism in the countryside should be directed. There are none of these within West Dunbartonshire.
- 4.7** The proposed Council response supports Balloch continuing as a location for strategic tourism development, agrees with the identification of areas for small scale tourism development in the countryside, and supports camping and motorhome provision within appropriate locations in West Dunbartonshire parts of the National Park.

Infrastructure and Services

- 4.8** The preferred option with regard to infrastructure and services includes focussing new development in or adjacent to existing settlements, identifying infrastructure and service requirements for each settlement, securing greater planning contributions towards infrastructure and services, and greater focus on improving town and village centres
- 4.9** West Dunbartonshire Greenspace has identified a requirement for a cemetery extension in Gartocharn and a preferred site at Kilmaronock Church. It is proposed to the National Park Authority that this site (identified in Appendix 1) should be included in the new Local Development Plan.

Housing

- 4.10** The Main Issues Report identifies a preferred option of continuing to plan for 75 new houses a year across the Park area, requiring land for 750 units for the period 2016-2026. There is land identified in the existing local plan for 380 houses in this period. Additional opportunities are proposed in Arrochar and Callander for 160 units, with the remaining balance coming from windfall

opportunities. Two alternative options are proposed. One reduces the requirement to 50-60 units per annum and does not require any additional land to be identified. The other suggests reducing the requirement to match recent completions of 23 houses per annum.

- 4.11** On this matter, the proposed Council response supports that the National Park Authority continues to plan on the basis of 75 completions per year. This does not significantly affect the amount of land identified for housing in Balloch or Gartocharn, and ensures a generous supply of land for housing.
- 4.12** The Main Issues Report sets out options for contributions towards affordable housing based upon the location of proposed development. These locations are:
- On sites within settlements.
 - From sites adjacent to settlements.
 - From sites within small rural communities and building groups in the countryside.
- 4.13** On affordable housing contributions from sites within settlements, the preferred option is to seek a minimum of 25% affordable housing contribution on housing sites of 4 or more units in all settlements with the exception of Loch Lomondside (Tarbet, Luss, Gartocharn, Drymen & Croftamie) where a 50% requirement would apply. On housing sites of up to 3 units, an affordable or smaller size house will be required or a contribution towards funding affordable housing elsewhere, with a higher contribution sought from Loch Lomondside houses. Alternative options include all small sites (i.e. 3 units or less) on Loch Lomondside being for affordable or local needs housing only or not requiring any affordable housing contribution from small sites outwith the Loch Lomondside settlements.
- 4.14** On affordable housing contributions from sites adjacent to settlement boundaries which are not identified in the Local Plan, the preferred option is to allow open market housing where this cross-subsidises affordable housing. The alternative options are to only allow affordable housing on sites proposed adjacent to existing settlements or to not allow development adjacent to existing settlements.
- 4.15** Within small rural communities and building groups in the countryside, the preferred option is to allow small to medium sized houses, which must meet affordable needs for its first 10 years. Alternative options are for such houses to be retained as affordable in perpetuity, or to allow open market houses in such locations but seek financial contribution towards affordable housing.
- 4.16** The preferred option for affordable housing contributions from sites within settlements continues the requirement currently in place for Balloch and Gartocharn (i.e. 25% and 50%). The proposed Council response supports this. On the issue of development adjacent to settlement boundaries, it is proposed that the alternative option of focussing on identifying sites within settlements or amending settlement boundaries is taken. This would be a plan-led approach, and on the basis of planning for a generous supply of 75

units per year, there should be no need for additional sites to come through the planning application process.

Balloch

- 4.17** The Main Issues Report strategy for Balloch includes:
- Support for development of Balloch Castle that safeguards the building and enhances Balloch park as a visitor attraction.
 - Improved water transport links.
 - Retention of current tourism/recreation sites.
 - Rezoning of a housing site between Ben Lomond Way and Old Luss Road to tourism/commercial use.
 - Support opportunities to add to Loch Lomond Shores.
 - Retention of 3 housing sites with capacity for 53 units.
 - Support for improvement to public realm around old station.
- 4.18** The preferred strategy for Balloch does not raise any concerns .

Gartocharn

- 4.19** The Main Issues Report preferred strategy for Gartocharn retains the existing housing site identified at French Farm for 6 units and identifies an additional opportunity for approximately 10 units at Burnbrae Farm at the western edge of the village.
- 4.20** The preferred strategy for Gartocharn does not raise any concerns.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no personnel issues associated with this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1** The requirement for a 25% affordable housing contribution will affect the receipt the Council will receive for the Carrochan Road site in Balloch. However, this requirement is already in the existing Local Plan.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** There are no known risks associated with this report.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** There are no equalities issues associated with this report.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** The views of the Council's Housing, Roads, Greenspace, Asset Management, and Economic Development services were sought for the preparation of this report. Greenspace requested that the Council response include a cemetery

extension at Kilmaronock Church. The Main issues Report did not raise any concerns for the other Council services.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 The Main Issues Report is the first stage in the preparation of a new Local Development Plan for the National Park. The Local Development Plan is a wide ranging document which has an impact on all of the Council's strategic priorities. This response has been prepared with specific regard to the Council's strategic priorities of:

- Improving economic growth and employability
- Improving local housing and environmentally sustainable infrastructure

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Date: 6 June 2014

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Appendices:	Appendix 1 - West Dunbartonshire Council Response to Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Local Development Plan Main Issues Report
Background Papers:	Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Main Issues Report
Wards Affected:	1