

Mini case study

LIVEPark – Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park



This case study shows how a planning authority can influence place quality through local plans and spatial strategies. Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park (LL&TNP) uses Rural Development Frameworks (RDF) to provide place-led Supplementary Guidance in key areas. RDFs show how policies are applied or varied to shape development for that area. In line with the place principle, this approach encouraged proactive community engagement from landowners and developers to get certainty over what could be accommodated in their area.

Project and Approach

The LL&TNP Performance Framework of 2015-16 advised two areas where Rural Development Frameworks (RDFs) should be used to pilot approaches for guiding and facilitating appropriate development. RDFs highlight development opportunities and constraints and identify where it might be appropriate to vary from National Park wide criteria-based policies on housing, tourism or economic development in the countryside – either to be more restrictive or more flexible. The approach helped the coordination and delivery of sustainable development in local circumstances.

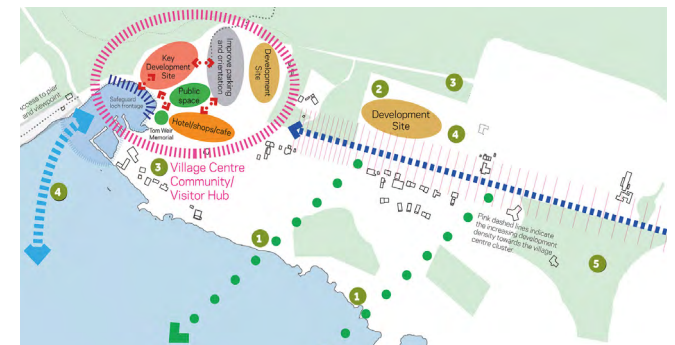
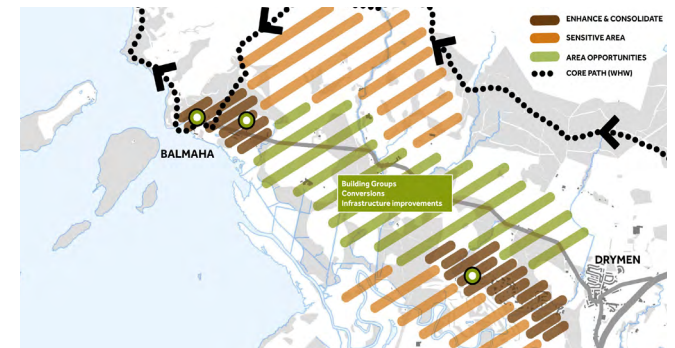
LL&TNP held consultations with communities, landowners and businesses. Here, they found a shared desire to broaden a spatial dimension to the area planning and to coordinate development in the area more cohesively. Others requested detailed guidance on what appropriate development might be, and areas where development may be acceptable.

Process

“The process for the two areas (West Loch Lomondside and Buchanan South) was different as local circumstances differed. In West Loch Lomondside (between Inverbeg and Balloch including Luss) the main landowner, Luss Estates, had already started a process of looking at all their land holdings and held their own community and stakeholder workshops led by their appointed architect, Page | Park Architects.

Luss Estates were seeking to address the issues in the area: the ageing demographic, the car parking, limited and poor quality retail offering and threatened closure of the village school so that the village could become a sustainable thriving place.’

“Two charrettes / workshops were held. The first workshop was an initial consultation to give an opportunity for people to express views, hopes and concerns. Those present included the community council, community development trust, local businesses, primary school parent council, councillors, the Park Authority, the council and Luss Estates.



Top: Map of the Buchanan South RDF boundary, **Middle:** Balmaha Strategic Principles Map, **Bottom:** A sketch of a smaller group of housing units from Buchanan South RDF. (Credit: Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park).

“It is clear to see the impact on development that the Frameworks are making.”

Derek Manson, Development Planner, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park

In the second workshop, proposals were presented to gain views and there was the same attendance... we could then develop a Rural Development Framework to provide guidance that had statutory status and could be taken into consideration during decision making.”

An appointed planner and architect held two workshops in the Buchanan area: “The two-hour workshops, organised and led by the Park Authority, included members of the community but also representatives from Montrose estates as a main landowner, Rural Stirling Housing Association and the community council. The current development proposals and other aspirations were discussed in the first half of the workshop followed by discussions of how the area could change/develop in the next five to ten years... Following the workshops, a headline paper was produced by the consultant, finalising their guidance before formal consultation.”



Top: Front cover of the West Loch Lomondside RDF showing a Loch Lomond sightline (Credit: Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park).

Rural Development Frameworks

The RDFs (both published in June 2017) are now part of the Local Development Plan and adopted as Statutory Supplementary Guidance. The frameworks create certainty for landowners, investors and communities on the types of development that could be accommodated.

The RDFs feature a map that illustrates the area covered by the guidance, highlighting the special characteristics to be protected and/or enhanced as part of the design of any development proposal. The Frameworks show proposals for partnerships to work together on developments. With this, the framework shows where small windfall development and conversion opportunities would fall below the size threshold for an identified development opportunity in the Local Development Plan.

West Loch Lomond

A better relationship has been created with the estate and has aligned many of their aspirations with those of the community, the Park and other stakeholders such as the council.

In Luss, many applications have been submitted and have been or are being processed for affordable housing in a mixture of locations, as well as for a village green, retail units, and a new car park. So far, five affordable homes have been developed on the ground as part of this package of proposals.

Buchanan South

The community council has referred to and has used the document when commenting on planning applications as they feel that they are in a strong position to accurately represent the views of local residents.

Affordable housing has been approved at allocated sites and work on the cycle/pedestrian connection between Drymen and Balmaha is partially completed. It has also helped deal with infill development pressures in Buchanan estate where the framework has clear guidance as to what is appropriate.

Transferability of approach using RDF's

Rural Development Frameworks could be applied in other rural areas to help communities, businesses and landowners develop a shared vision for an area. The RDF model suggests an approach to develop Place Plans.

RDF's were well received by their communities who now feel less vulnerable to ad-hoc development proposals which do not acknowledge the area context.

Conclusion

Since the adoption of the RDFs there has been a greater co-ordinated approach between all stakeholders taken in the delivery of sustainable rural development proposals within each of the two Rural Development Frameworks.

“Having detailed frameworks for an area helps achieve an agreed overall development strategy for the area whilst key assets are protected...We consider this approach could be widely used in other rural authorities which face similar pressures and encouraging their use will help deliver development that is place based and will deliver multiple benefits to the local economy, community and natural heritage.”



Derek Manson,

Development Planner, Loch
Lomond and the Trossachs
National Park