

Strathblane area Local Place Plan 2025

PROPOSED LOCAL PLACE PLAN AS APPROVED BY STRATHBLANE CC AND
STRATHBLANE CDT 8 SEPTEMBER 2025



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2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Local Place Plan is presented by Strathblane Community Council (SCC) and Strathblane Community Development Trust (SC336337) (SCDT) on behalf of the people in Strathblane and Blanefield and the surrounding area covered by SCC for the purpose of informing the Local Development Plan (LDP). It sets out our agreed principles and priorities and will be the document we turn to when assessing potential new development proposals. It also serves as our Community Action Plan.

Our community consultation has suggested some **guiding principles** that our community cares about and underpins our plan:

1. *We treasure the location of our villages and the Campsie Fells and have an underlying resistance to large scale development*
2. *We wish to preserve our rural location and are against development between Strathblane and Milngavie*
3. *Our local economy needs to be resilient for a productive, liveable and sustainable community*
4. *Our community works together to be supportive and caring and to offer more to young people.*
5. *Our community must take decisions about our future over the next ten years and beyond.*

Our priorities are set out under 4 related **themes**:

Theme 1 - Traffic: The villages straddle the A81, which is the main route to the Trossachs and the commute to Glasgow for communities in SW Stirling. Pedestrian safety and speeding traffic are serious concerns for our community. Our plan highlights our proposals to put pedestrians first.

Theme 2 - The right kind of homes, in the right places: our community supports sustainable development of housing that meets the needs of our communities even if it means releasing green belt to achieve modest development. We need affordable homes to rent and buy and homes for downsizing to release larger homes for families.

Theme 3 - Delivering for and strengthening our community sustainability and address climate change: key activities have been identified by our community and are shown in our new Community Action Plan.

Theme 4 - Supporting our local infrastructure: infrastructure improvements are needed to ensure that developments and community projects are sustainable, such as future proofing the sewage works, building the cemetery extension, delivering parking and EV charging, paths and improving broadband.

Consultation

Community Consultation specific to this LPP took place through 2024 via a community survey and drop-in consultation sessions in early 2025. These were publicised through our newsletter, Facebook page and website. The results were published on the Community Council website.

Actions

• **TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT**

- Effective methods are required to tackle the problem of speeding within the village even if these are expensive to provide including safe crossing points. New housing developments and the new cemetery must contribute to traffic management/ calming. More parking space must be provided to sustain local businesses and improve road safety.
- Public transport needs to be improved and made more affordable to encourage use and Stirling concession cards should integrate with train travel to Glasgow.

• **THE RIGHT HOMES IN THE RIGHT PLACES**

- Subject to satisfactory enhancements in traffic management, and subject to guarantees that any development would be geared to community need, we could support the release of green belt land on the North and South sides of the A81 to the west of the village. To secure the right kind development, planning rules must be designed to ensure local needs are met.
- The right kind of development from our perspective is social and affordable housing, low-cost home ownership and properties to downsize to release larger properties for families. Our community is against building any more high value properties.
- Planning rules must also prevent abuse of “brownfield” exceptions within the Green Belt.
- Developments must not increase flood risk in areas of the settlement downstream.

• **SUSTAINABILITY**

- The Community Council will support the newly formed local energy development group, looking at providing renewable energy for the village.
- We will support the protection of nature throughout our area and strengthen the protection of biodiversity.
- We will continue to encourage our community to take action to address climate change.
- We will develop local recycling opportunities

• **INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Some growth in small businesses and tourism to support the local hotel and cafe, shops and other services should be encouraged.
- A workable cemetery site must be confirmed (currently planned next to Braidgate on Campsie Road).
- Public toilets open every day required to encourage visitors to stay locally. The community will use our best endeavours to achieve this.
- The community will continue with ambitious plans to improve the path and cycle network for active travel.
- Build on potential of John Muir Way and West Highland Way and promote small growth in businesses and tourism to secure local facilities and local employment
- Efforts to drain the King George V playing fields will continue along with play and sports facilities

- We expect Scottish Water, the power networks and British Telecom to continue to bring their infrastructure up to date.
- We will continue to work towards the provision of Superfast Broadband for the whole settlement area.
- Local health services must be protected and we will continue to monitor any proposed changes to our provision.

3 ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY TODAY

This local place plan (LPP) covers the Strathblane Community Council area. It is made up of the conjoined villages of Strathblane and Blanefield that lie in the valley of the Blane Water to the south-west of the Stirling area, around 4 miles from the Glasgow conurbation and about 26 miles from Stirling. It straddles the A81 and A809 tourist routes to The Trossachs and the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park. The Campsie Fells and Strathblane Hills, part of the Southern Hills Local Landscape Area that provides an attractive backdrop to the north, whilst to the south lies the rising land of the Muirhouse and Dumbrook Muirs and Mugdock Country Park.

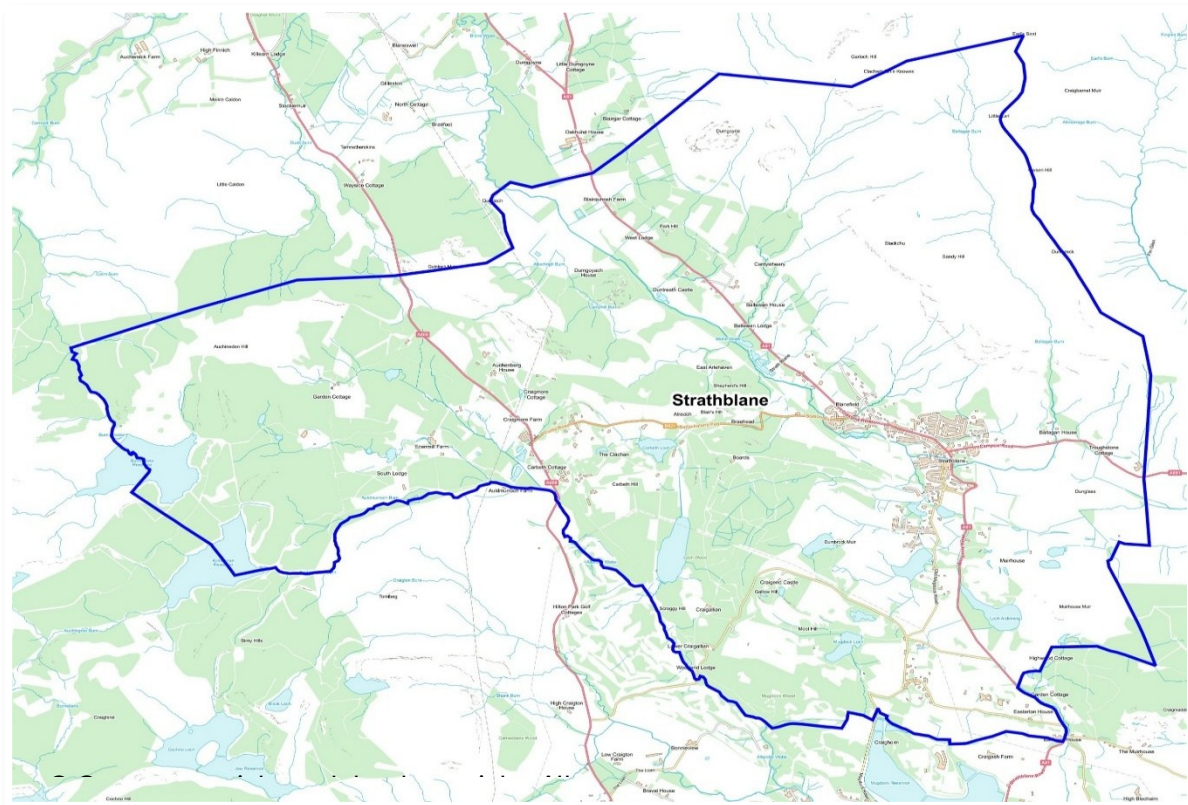


Figure 1 - Map showing Strathblane Community Council Area

We are indebted to Stirling Council's Place Profile¹ for providing much of the information presented here.

Historically comprising the three villages of Edenkill, Netherton and Blanefield, the form of the individual settlements has become lost since the expansion and development of the villages since 1950 and the area is now a dormitory area for Glasgow. Dispersed larger properties in Mugdock and Mugdock Country Park are located 1.5 miles to the south.

The estate of Carbeth lies approximately 2 miles west of Strathblane, comprising farmland, lochs, woodlands, gardens, estate houses and offices. A number of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest including two listed buildings - Carbeth Guthrie house and Clachan Cottage. Two designated conservation areas, Carbeth North and Carbeth South cover

¹ See [Strathblane and Blanefield](#) and Stirling Council's Open Data site <https://data-stirling-council.hub.arcgis.com/>

the Carbeth Huts, reflecting the important social history of the hutting tradition and the unique nature of Carbeth as the largest remaining hutting community in Scotland. The estate also lies in the Green Belt. The area around Auchengillan in the south western outlying area includes the Auchengillan scout camp.

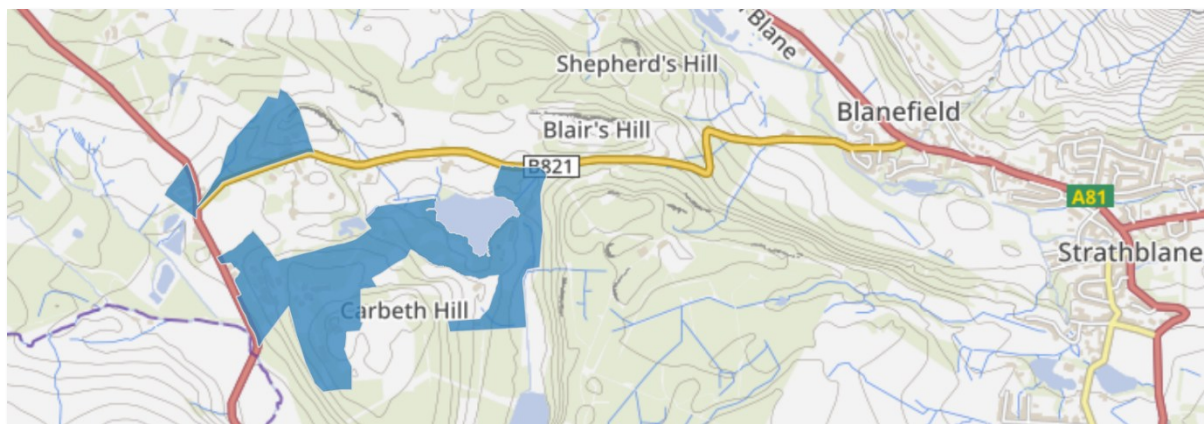


Figure 2 - Carbeth North & South Conservation Areas (updated schema 2024)

Strathblane & Blane Valley is classified as an '**accessible rural area**' by the Scottish Government and, according to National Records of Scotland's mid-2022 population estimates, Strathblane Community Council area has an estimated total population of 2,301.

Figure 3 displays the percentages of each age group based on the mid-2022 population estimates for the settlement area². It suggests that 51.6% of Strathblane and Blane Valley's population are aged between 26 to 66 years old whilst 17.4% are aged between 0 to 16 years old and just under 1/4 (24.1%) of the population are aged 67+.

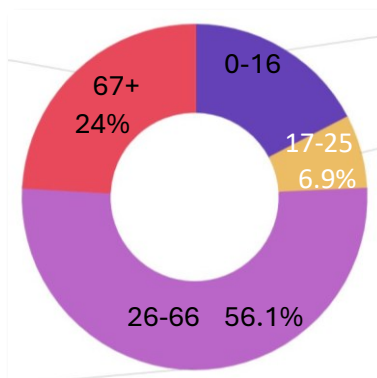


Figure 3 - Population in Strathblane & Blane Valley by Age Groups 2022 (NRS)

3.1 DEPRIVATION

According to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)³, the Blane Valley settlement datazone (S01013007) is within the 20% least deprived areas in Scotland whilst the Strathblane settlement datazone (S01013008) is within the 30% least deprived areas in Scotland.

Within the SIMD criteria, however, there is one category where our community does score as deprived: Access. The settlement zones are in the 20% most deprived areas for access. The Blane Valley datazone outwith the settlements (S01013006) is within the 6% most deprived areas for Access.

3.2 HEALTH STATISTICS

Health statistics available are for the wider area of Blane Valley.

² (The census data does not map well onto the community council area as a whole.)

³ <https://stirling-council.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/basic/index.html?appid=f9d119c2e6f345aeb1eeabd53741456c>

Life Expectancy - In Blane Valley, life expectancy in 2019 was higher for females (85.39) than males (81.52); this was significantly higher than the averages for Stirling (females 81.9, males 77.6) and Scotland (females 81, males 76.8).

Crime Rate - Public Health Scotland's 2017 data on crime states that the crime rate per 1000 people for Blane Valley is 14.93. This is lower than Stirling (25) and Scotland (28.8).

Environment – 19.15% of Blane Valley population live within 500 metres of a derelict site (2022). This is lower than the Scottish average of 27.2% but higher than the Stirling average of 11.39%. In Strathblane there is the derelict site of the closed public toilets and the site of demolished fire damaged house in Kirkhouse Road. Over half of Blane Valley's residents, 55.92%, are considered to be living in one of the 15% most 'access deprived' areas in Scotland (2017).

3.3 STRATHBLANE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2011

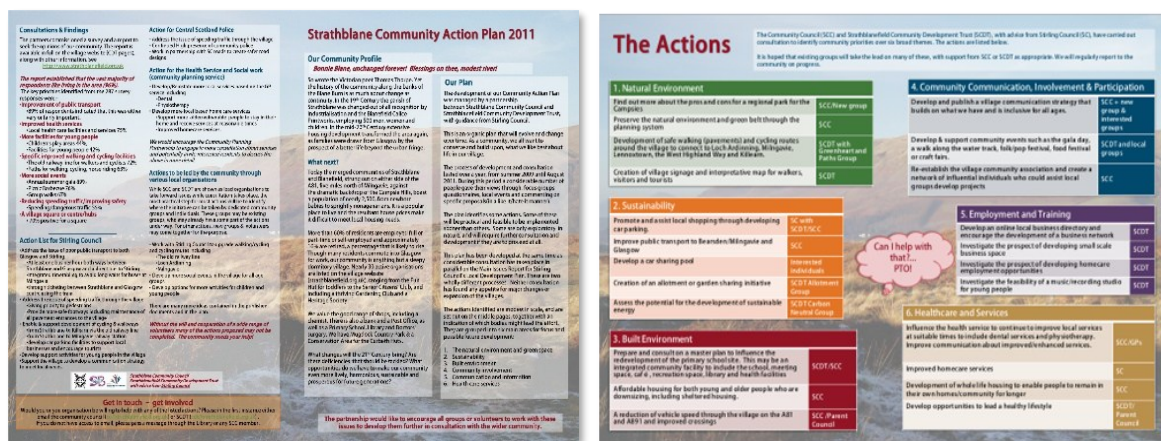


Figure 4 - Community Action Plan 2011

Strathblane Community Action Plan 2011 was managed by a partnership between Strathblane Community Council and Strathblane Community Development Trust, with guidance from Stirling Council. The process of development and consultation lasted over a year, from summer 2009 until late 2010. Consultation was carried out through focus groups, questionnaires, local events and comments from the community on specific proposals, with six main areas for focus and possible future development identified.

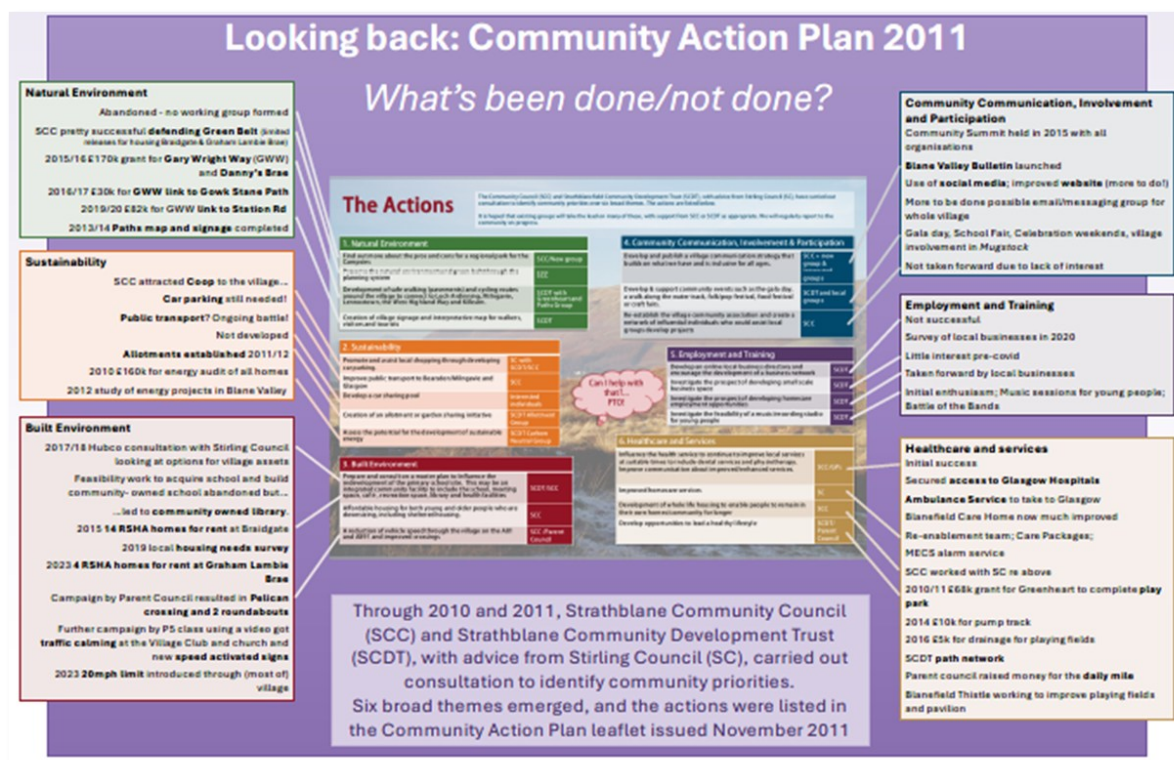


Figure 5- Strathblane Community Action Plan 2011 - Actions status 2024

In the intervening years, many of the actions identified have been followed through, as illustrated in Figure (reproduced larger in Appendix A - Community Action Plan 2011 – What's been done/not done).

3.4 COMMUNITY ASSETS AND AMENITIES

Figure 6 shows a selection of the community assets and amenities that are valued by residents and visitors. In the 2024 LPP survey, **public transport**, the **post office**, **local shops** and **healthcare** facilities had the most support as being very important for people. **Facilities for young people** also scored highly, as did **children's play areas** and **sports and leisure facilities**.

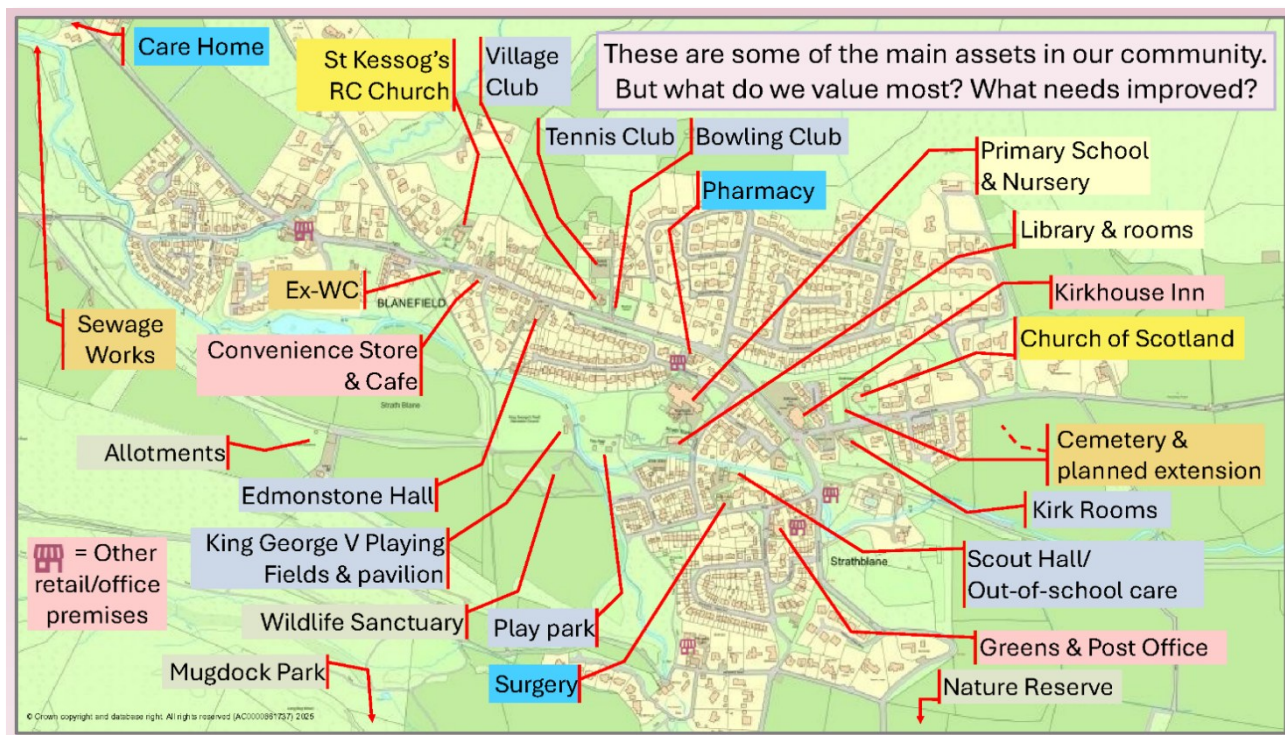


Figure 6 - Community assets and amenities

3.4.1.1 Open Space and the natural environment

Within the villages, the King George V park offers play facilities and areas of open greenspace and footpaths with links to the wider countryside. Further open green spaces are mainly located to the west of the main road through the settlement. The allotments to the southwest of Strathblane offers opportunities for residents to cultivate their own produce. The Strathblane Wildlife Sanctuary is run by volunteers through the SCDT, offers residents an opportunity to be actively involved with ‘rewilding’ and organises nature education and community activities for all ages. Several initiatives at the Strathblane Primary School support biodiversity, including a wildlife pond, herbicide free maintenance and several “On-The-Verge” pollinator patches full of wildflowers, which are part of the school’s biodiversity curriculum. The local “Wee Spuds” group for children and young persons plays an active role in educating the community about its natural environment and contributing to the development of nature areas.



Figure 7 - Depiction of the Strathblane Wildlife Sanctuary

3.4.1.2 Biodiversity and ecosystem services

We value our natural environment for the services they provide, including leisure, sports, (mental) health, flood mitigation, carbon storage, agriculture, and their intrinsic values pertaining to biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The Strathblane Community Council Area (SCCA) covers several statutory protected sites, 'irreplaceable habitats' (according to the current National Planning Framework (NPF4)), areas with carbon-rich soils and soils and habitats important for flood mitigation. A number of nature networks can be enhanced to support and invite biodiversity, allowing our diverse wildlife



Figure 8 - Species-rich meadow at SSSI Dumbrook Loch Meadows

populations to thrive. More information about protected sites, ecosystems and green corridors can be found in Appendix E - Our biodiversity: strengths, challenges and opportunities .

The historic stewardship of the landscape around the village has resulted in areas of high biodiversity value, including Scotland's most important waxcap grasslands, species-rich grasslands, ancient woodlands, wetlands and ancient wood pastures. We acknowledge the cultural history, rarity and sensitivity of these ecosystems and actively support protecting and enhancing them.

The following community activities and initiatives bring people closer to nature. These are especially important considering the increasing disconnection of society with nature. Several footpaths and cycle routes, including the John Muir Way, Gary Wright Way and the West Highland Way, provide access for our residents and visitors to enjoy the tranquillity of the rural landscape. However, the direct access from the village to the surrounding hills and slopes is limited, the main routes being the tracks from the Campsie Dene Road, Ballagan Farm and Ballagan Glen. The local streams, burns and lochs are biodiversity hotspots and are also used for leisure as well as the cooling system of Glengoyne Distillery.

The main **open space features within the Strathblane and Blanefield settlement** are:

- **Strathblane Old Railway** – Large area of attractive greenspace with cycling and walking routes through areas of mature woodland and important connections with the wider network
- **King George 5th Park** – The large, attractive area of parkland is divided by the river, offering play facilities and mature trees to the east and poorly drained playing fields to the west.

Local Landscape Areas (LLAs) are designated throughout Scotland in areas where the scenery is highly valued locally. There are two LLAs within the Strathblane and Blanefield Community Council boundary - Southern Hills LLA (LLA5) and Kilpatrick Hills (LLA8).

Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCSs) LNCSs identify locally important natural heritage and protect these designated sites from being affected by development proposals, conserving the biodiversity.

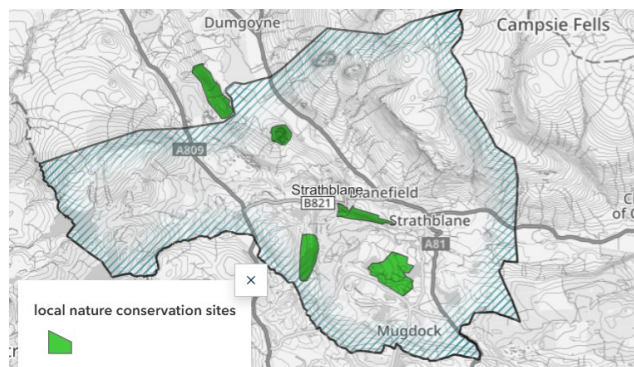


Figure 9 - Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCSs)

Green Belts are areas of land within the countryside, located beyond settlement boundaries, which are designated for specific planning purposes. The purpose of designating Green Belts is to guide development towards appropriate locations, allowing for more effective management of growth, rather than preventing development altogether.

The primary purpose of the Green Belt in Strathblane is its role in connection to the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Belt. It lessens development in the countryside between Strathblane and Milngavie to the south, preserving the distinct identities of these settlements. A secondary function of the Green Belt is to safeguard the immediate surroundings of Strathblane itself.

Further discussion of the Green Belt is in section Strathblane Green Belt – What is it and what is it for?

Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSIs): There are five SSSIs within the boundary of Strathblane and Blanefield Community Council area:

- **Mugdock Wood SSSI** has an area of 169.92 hectares and is located across the boundary of Stirling Council and East Dunbartonshire Council. This area includes Mugdock Country Park, Mugdock Wood, Mugdock Loch and Drumclog Moor.
- **Carbeth loch SSSI** is 9.94 hectares and consists of both the man-made, mesotrophic loch and the surrounding land.
- **Craigallion Marshes SSSI** is located along the Stirling Council boundary with East Dunbartonshire Council. The SSSI is 8.17 hectares and supports a large number of plant species including several which are notably rare in the region and is also one of the most extensive areas of flood-plain fen habitat in the Stirling area.
- **Dumbrock Loch Meadows SSSI** is located a mile from Strathblane and covers an area of 27.58 hectares. The SSSI comprises of one of the largest areas of unimproved, herb-rich, lowland grassland in the Stirling Council area; Habitats of this type are nationally rare and declining.
- **Ballagan Glen SSSI** is a steep-sided glen on the south face of the Campsie Fells and less than a mile east of Strathblane. The upper limit of the glen is a waterfall above a feature known as the Spout of Ballagan. The SSSI has a total area of 6.81 hectares.

Tree Preservation Orders: There are three tree preservation orders (TPOs) within the Strathblane Community Council area – ‘Blane Valley Hotel’ now Netherblane within the settlement boundary, ‘Ballagan House’ along the A891 to the east of the settlement, and an extensive TPO at Mugdock in the south named ‘Highland Gateway’, which covers an area of 236.7 hectares.

3.4.2 Flood risk

The Blane Water flows through the settlement, with tributaries the Ballagan Burn and Punch Bowl .

For Planning purposes, 'at risk of flooding' or in a 'flood risk area' means land or built form with an annual probability of being flooded of greater than 0.5% which must include an appropriate allowance for future climate change.

The map below indicates the medium likelihood of river and surface water flooding in Strathblane and Blanefield as sourced from SEPA’s Flood Maps and including SEPA’s Future Flood Maps⁴. These maps have been generated taking into account the potential effects of climate change for a single future climate scenario based on available predictions of river flows and sea levels for the 2080s.

⁴ <https://map.sepa.org.uk/floodmaps/FloodRisk/FutureFloodMaps>

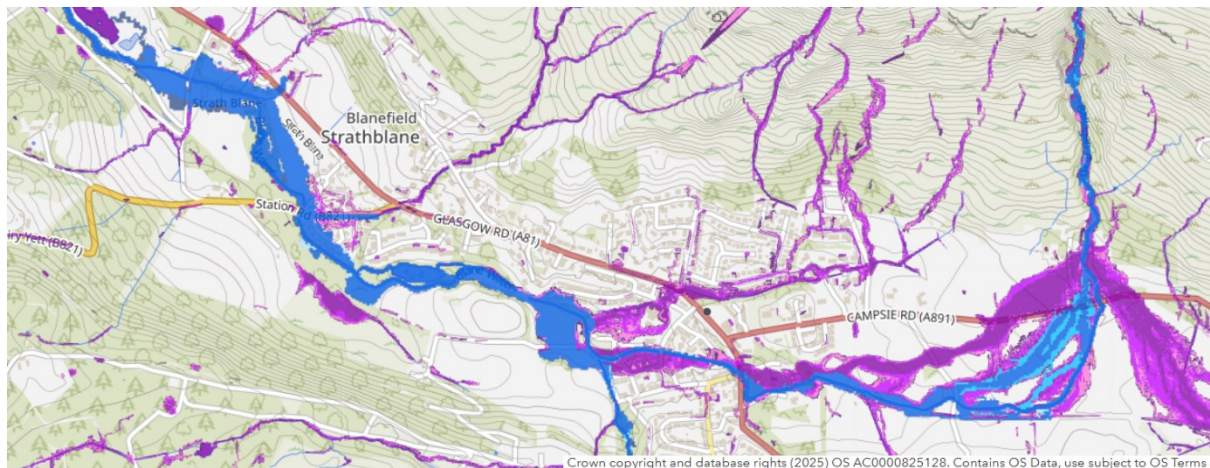


Figure 10 - SEPA flood risk map - present and future (Blue = river flooding; mauve = Surface water)

3.4.3 Derelict Sites

There are no derelict sites in Strathblane on the derelict land survey. However, the vacant public toilets and associated land are an eyesore.

Within the Strathblane Community Council area, there are two buildings included on the building at risk register: Clachan cottage at Carbeth and Craigend Castle at Mugdock Country Park

3.5 HISTORIC ASSETS & PLACES

3.5.1 Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas

The Carbeth North and Carbeth South Conservation Areas are located within the boundary of the Strathblane Community Council Area.

There are five B-Listed Buildings/Structures within the settlement boundary for Strathblane, four of which are associated within the Blane Valley Valve Houses. Within the wider Community Council area, there are fifteen B-Listed Buildings/Structures and three C-Listed Buildings.

3.5.2 Scheduled monuments

There are four Scheduled Monuments within the Strathblane Community Council area: Dumgoyach standing Stones, Broadgate Mound, Queen's View and Mugdock Castle.

3.6 ACTIVE TRAVEL

The map below (Figure 12) highlights core paths in Strathblane and Blanefield including:

- Along Campsie Dene Road, north west, eventually connecting to Killearn
- From outwith the Community Council area to Dumgoyne
- From A81 at West Lodge past Dumgoyach to Ballachalair Yett (B821), alongside Carbeth Loch and Craigallian Loch before reaching Mugdock Wood

- The West Highland Way long distance route passes north-south through the western part of our area.
- The John Muir Way long distance route passes east-west through the village.
- Various core paths leading from Strathblane and Blanefield to the woods and lochs in the south of the area including the Strathkelvin Railway Path, and west into the

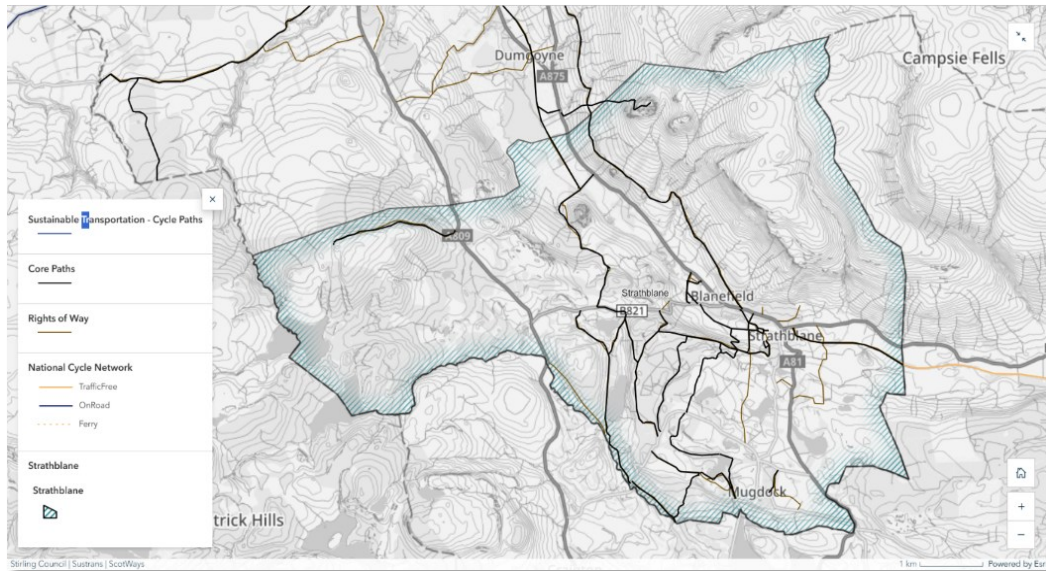


Figure 12 - Core Paths and rights of way (from Strathblane Place Profile)



Figure 11 - Shared pathway

3.7 BUS ROUTES & STOPS

There are two bus services travelling through the area on Glasgow Road (A81) - Midland Bluebird X10A and X10. Bus stops are well spaced from end to end of the settlement.

There is no bus route serving the A809 (also affecting Croftamie and Drymen), nor the A891 linking to Lennoxton and beyond.

3.8 HOUSING STOCK

Based on the 2022 Census, it is estimated that the area has 844 occupied homes within the Settlement boundary. We also have a lot of houses outwith the settlement boundary making approximately 1100 overall.

3.8.1 Housing Tenure

Figure 13 shows housing tenure percentage in Strathblane compared to the Stirling Council area. The majority of homes in Strathblane are owner occupied - 725 homes (86%). The number of social rented and private rented homes is broadly similar, with 60 (7%) being social rented and 49 (6%) private rented. Compared to the Stirling Council area, Strathblane has a significantly higher proportion of owner-occupied homes and fewer rental properties, both social and private.

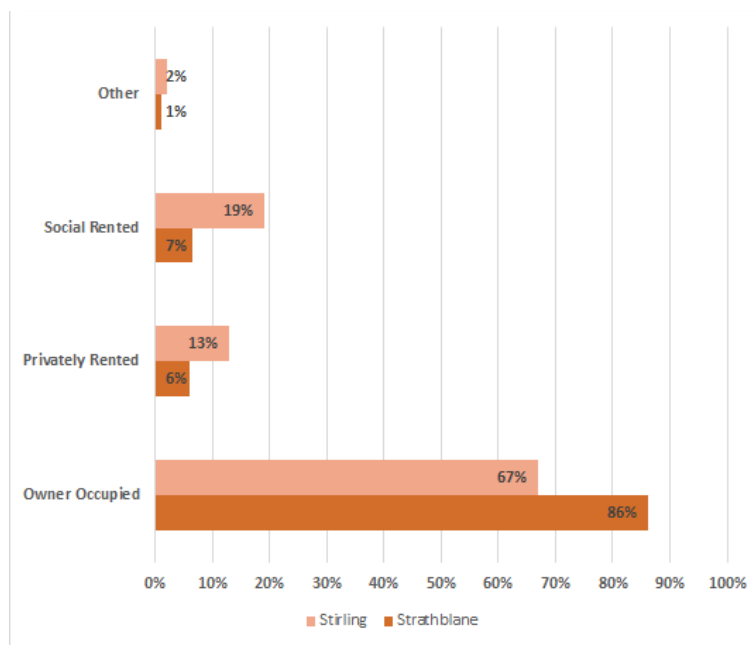


Figure 13 - Household tenure comparison - Strathblane vs all Stirling

3.8.2 Housing Type

In Strathblane, houses⁵ make up 80% of the housing stock, with flats accounting for the remaining 20%. The majority are detached houses (397, 47%), followed by semi-detached (158, 19%) and terraced (125, 15%). Compared to the Stirling Council area, Strathblane has a significantly higher proportion of houses and correspondingly fewer flats.

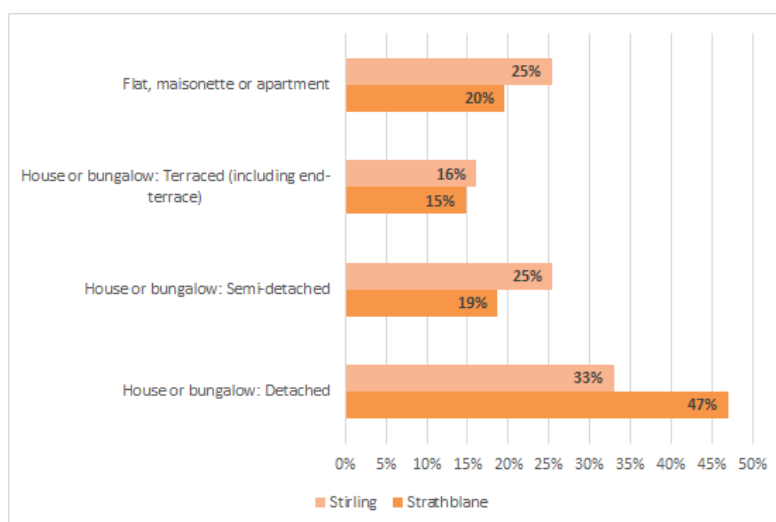


Figure 14 - Housing types in Strathblane compared to all Stirling

⁵ We do not count the 170 huts at Carbeth

3.8.3 Past Housing Growth

According to Stirling's Place Profile, 39 new homes were delivered in the period between 2010/11 to 2021/22. These were from the developments at Campsie Road (28 homes) and a site to the South of the A81 (11 homes). These statistics do not include 'windfall' sites such as building houses in gardens, subdividing large houses and so forth.



Figure 15 - Comparison between housing growth in the Strathblane/Blanefield and the Stirling LDP

The number of new homes completed since 2010/11 accounts for approximately **1%** of the total number of new homes delivered within the Stirling Local Development Plan Area over the same

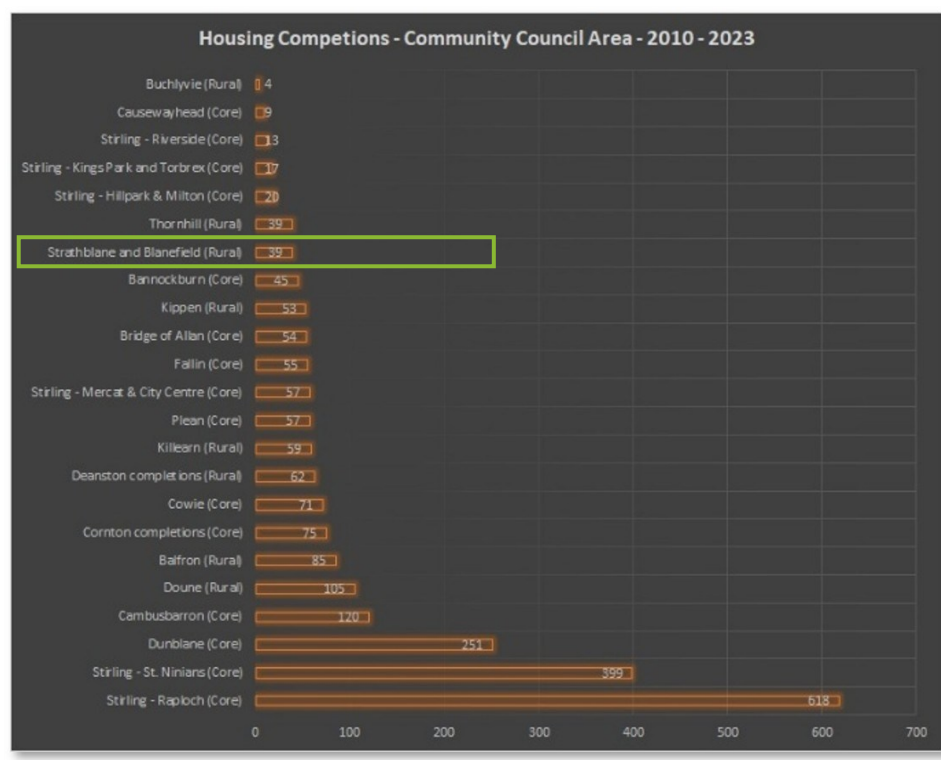


Figure 16 - Housing completions 2010-2023 by CC area

period (3,085 new homes). A comparison between housing growth in the Strathblane/Blanefield and the Stirling Local Development Plan is shown in Figure 15.

The graph in Figure 16 compares housing completions in the area to those in all settlements with the Stirling Local Development Plan area.

It shows that the area has relatively low growth compared to other rural settlements of similar size, such as Killearn (59 completions) and Balfron (85 completions). To these figures we should add the 89 houses being delivered currently at the Killearn Hospital site and 11 RSHA units being delivered at Lampson Road.

3.9 EDUCATION

3.9.1.1 Primary Schooling

Strathblane Primary School is located within the settlement on Southview Road and has nursery provision.

3.9.1.2 Secondary Schooling

Strathblane falls within the catchment of Balfron High School, which is located along Roman Road in Balfron, approximately 8.4 miles away.

There is also an out of school care club provided by a social enterprise company, SOSOC, and a volunteer parent and toddler group, the Fun Hut.

3.10 HEALTHCARE PROVISION

Strathblane have one NHS GP practice – Edenkiln Surgery on Dumbrock Road. There is also one pharmacy located at 10 Southview Road.

No capacity pressures have been identified by NHS Forth Valley (NHS FV) in Strathblane, although some residents use Killearn or Milngavie for GP services.

3.11 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Stirling Council's 2012 Open Space Strategy (OSS) sets out the amount of accessible open space in the Stirling Council area. The document concluded that 100% of residents in the Stirling Council area live within 300 metres of a publicly accessible open space.

The OSS identified 7 sites comprising a total of 165.84 hectares of open space, as listed in the table below.

Table 1 - Sites in Strathblane identified in the Open Space Strategy

Site Name	Settlement	Typology	Audit Score
Park Place	Strathblane And Blanefield	Amenity Greenspace	51
Strathblane Old Railway	Strathblane And Blanefield	Green Corridor	71
Strathblane Primary School	Strathblane And Blanefield	Institutional Grounds	59
King George 5th Park Play Area	Strathblane And Blanefield	Playspace	71
King George 5th Park	Strathblane And Blanefield	Public Parks	63
Dumbrock Glen	Strathblane And Blanefield	Woodland And Semi-natural	52
Campsie Road Woodland Area	Strathblane And Blanefield	Woodland And Semi-natural	49

3.12 EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

From the 2022 Census, of the 1,901 people in Strathblane aged 16 and over, 32.5% are in full time employment, 10.9% are in part time employment and 12.4% are self-employed

41.2% of people aged 16 and over were within the “economically inactive” category. An economically inactive person is someone who is not actively seeking employment due to reasons such as retirement, looking after home or family, long-term sick or disabled, or they are a student.

0.1% of people aged 16 and over who are economically active (excluding full-time students), were unemployed.

3.13 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Strathblane Heritage is a very active group in the community and the full history of the area can be found at <https://www.strathblaneheritage.org>

As with many other rural villages our origins are based on industry (notably textile Printworks) and latterly the former railway.

3.14 LOCAL LIVING

Pre-pandemic working patterns were very much commuting, to the Greater Glasgow area or to Edinburgh. Since the pandemic, our survey in 2024 has shown that those working full time, some 40% work from home some of the time, while 18% work from home most or all of the time. For those working part-time, 39% work from home some of the time and 32% work from home all or most of the time.

This could well have implications for local services and amenities.

In the 2024 LPP survey, respondents were asked about where they usually went for various activities in the last few months.

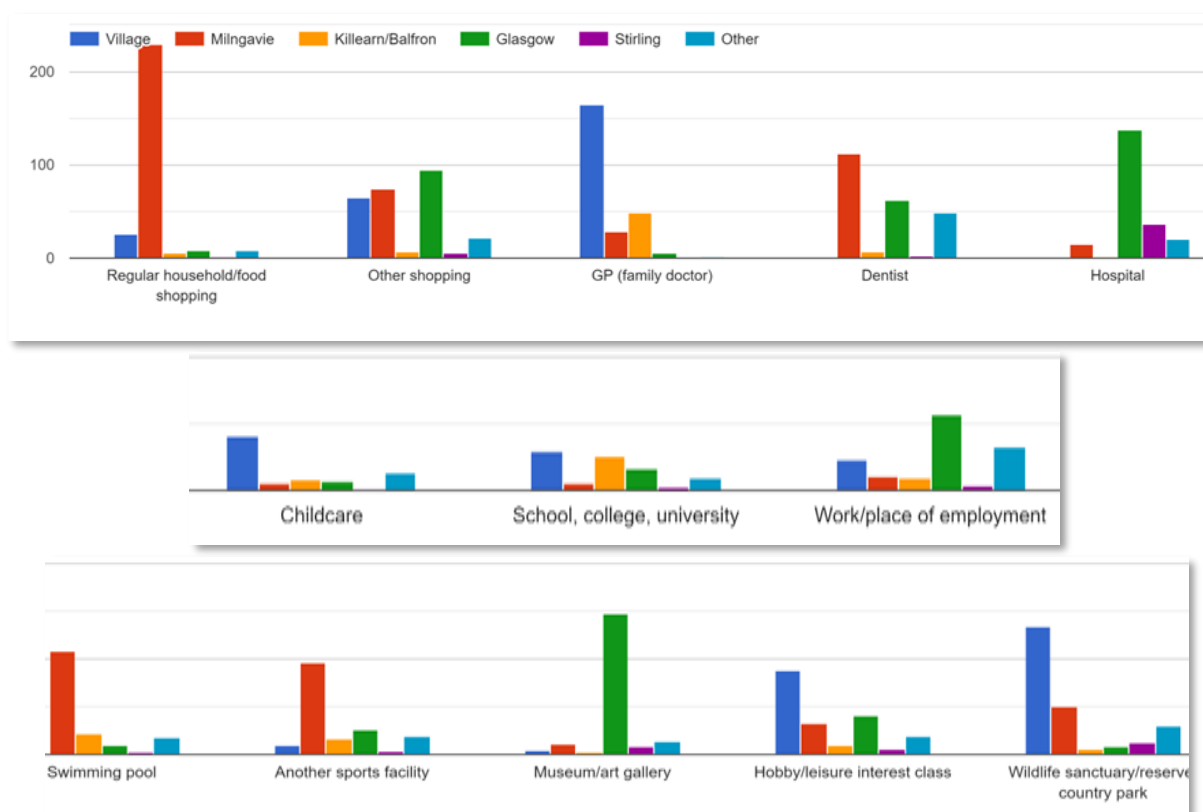


Figure 17 - Where do residents go for activities (Survey Q2)

The pandemic taught us to appreciate our local amenities, particularly our extensive paths network and our local shops. However, we know that our local services and shops struggle in the period of the current LDP. We have lost the Blane Valley Inn, our Coop store (replaced by Greens), our public toilets and our bank.

We have 2 hairdressers, a barber, 2 convenience stores, one with a post office, a pharmacy, a café, a takeaway and the Kirkhouse Inn. It is vital that these services survive to sustain our community along with our local trade businesses. Small growth to our community will assist this supporting renewal of the population and provide more affordable homes for local employees. There is also a cafe on the A809, a large tourist and horticultural enterprise at Edenmill with another cafe. The scout camp at Auchengillan regularly hosts large gatherings of young people that can number up to 1,000 visitors. The fishing centre at Carbeth is also popular and has its own cafe. There is a camping & caravan park on the B821 Cuilt Brae.

We also have a growing local maker network within the community.

We are fortunate to have 4 community halls, the Edmonstone Hall, the Village Club, the Scout Hall and the Kirkrooms, all run by volunteers. They are well used for exercise classes, parent and toddler groups, fundraising, community choir, Strathblane heritage, art groups, uniform organisations, community care support groups, parties and weddings. In addition, there is a tennis club, a bowling club, 2 equestrian centres and our local football team, who have a pavilion on the King George V playing fields.

Our new community owned, but council run, Thomas Graham Community Library is clearly becoming the hub of our villages and a centre for learning, help and socialising.

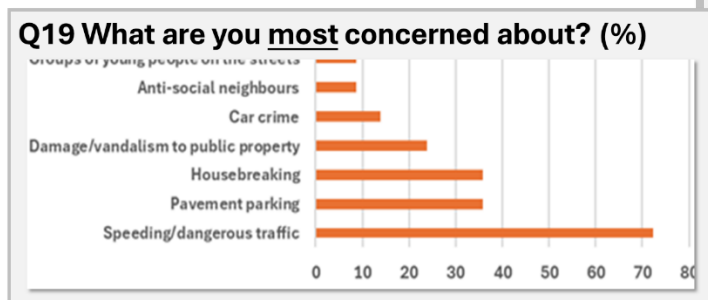
All the above combine to contribute to the vibrancy and wellbeing of our community and we wish to protect and build on that through our local place plan.

We have had a relatively low level of development in recent years with 2 small housing developments at Braidgate and Graham Lambie Brae, the nursery extension to the school and the library. We successfully campaigned against a large-scale development of at least 70 houses to the east of Braidgate because they were the wrong houses to sustain the community and they were in the wrong place. The campaign brought the community together, but also helped the community to be clear about the homes that **are** needed to sustain the community.

4 MANAGING TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT

4.1 MANAGING TRAFFIC

Our community's Number One priority in the 2024 LPP survey was managing traffic and speeding and putting pedestrians first (Q19). This is the case for every survey we have carried out over the last 15 years. We have had some improvements after long battles, including 2 roundabouts and pedestrian traffic lights, but the more recent improvements have been demolished by speeding traffic. The recent introduction of the 20mph speed limit has



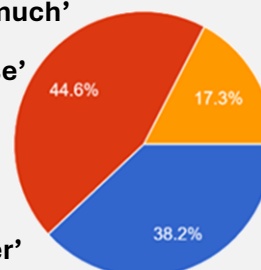
had limited success (Q7).

Q7 Has 20mph speed limit made a difference?

'Not much'

'Worse'

'Better'



WE DEMAND ACTION TO PUT PEDESTRIANS FIRST

Our villages straddle the A81 and the A809 runs through the southern section of the area. These

“very few drivers adhere to the 20mph and many drivers are frustrated and overtake more. The speed limit is inconsistent eg 20mph on A81 moving to 30mph on Campsie Road then returning to 20mph when entering Dunglass

two roads form the main tourist routes to the Trossachs, Loch Lomond and the commute to Glasgow for communities in SW Stirling. All new developments in SW Stirling result in increased traffic through our community with no additional community benefit to manage traffic. Our community is deeply worried about what

will happen when the **89** new homes in Killearn are occupied. It is clear that Stirling Council has given little consideration to the consequences on other communities of these numbers of new homes that are likely to have at least 2 cars for each home. The B821 Cuilt Brae connects the villages with our outlying areas and links A81 to the A809, the Stockiemuir Road. This is a narrow unrestricted road where traffic travels at fast speeds when approaching the village at Station Road. The West Highland Way crosses this road and, although some improvements have been made to create walking space, it is still very dangerous.

“traffic calming in the village – what we have doesn't work and actually encourages speeding to beat the oncoming traffic. Speedbumps work! Speed bumps are a less costly administrative burden. I walk the village every day and believe the 20mph is ineffective and largely

The A891 Campsie Road links the villages to our outlying area of Ballagan and beyond to Lennoxton and is the commuting route to the East and Edinburgh in particular. The speed limit is 30 mph and the 40 mph limit doesn't currently reach the dwellings at Ballagan⁶. There is no pavement beyond Braidgate. Traffic travels significantly above the speed limits and further traffic calming and speed reductions are needed here along with a pedestrian path to Ballagan.

Our community has a right to feel safe to walk on pavements and cycle on our roads. Indeed, it must feel safe to walk to school.

"A81 is incredibly dangerous, I walk small children to school this way every day and I am always fearful. Current traffic calming does NOTHING."

It is much easier to assess whether traffic is moving at 20 mph rather than 30mph so, although our speed concerns have not been measured recently, we know that traffic is speeding in many cases excessively. We cannot understand why

speed limits are not adhered to in our area when we have seen that they are observed better in neighbouring communities. It is especially noticeable where there are new 20mph limits on the A811 at Buchlyvie and Arnprior where traffic, in the main, observe the speed limits.

"Commercial traffic ignores it. Locals generally comply. Rush hour traffic ignores it. Queues build up at village club at calming area. This will get worse with new scheme at Oakwood. It's difficult to assess speeds when entering the main road."

We have been demanding action for 20 years and studies have been carried out, but everything is deemed "too expensive". We have had to fight and campaign for every improvement, and we have had enough.

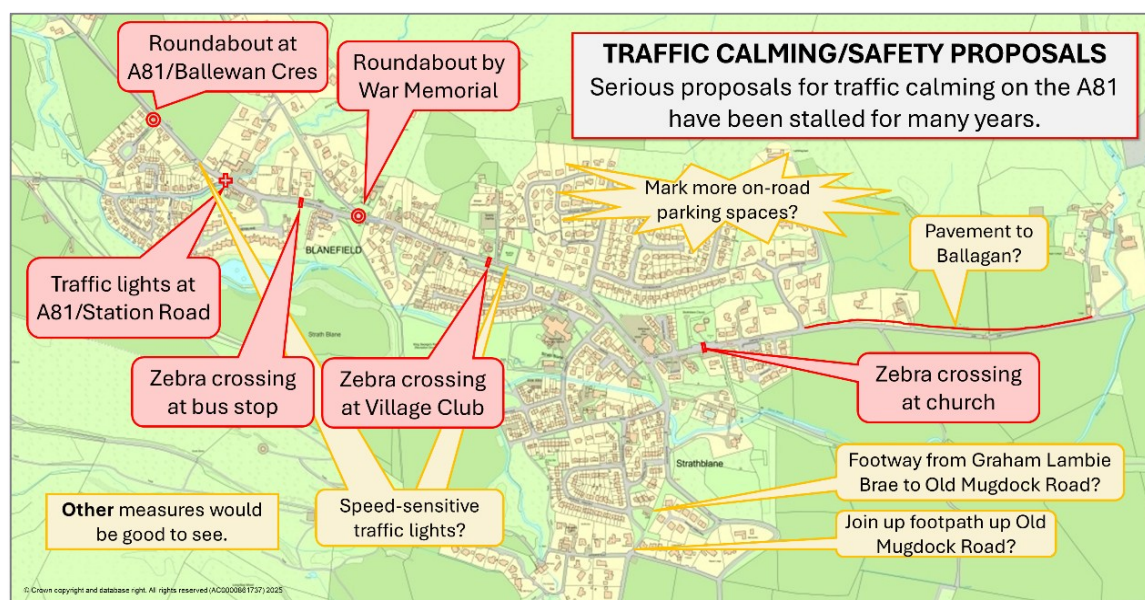


Figure 18 - Traffic calming & safety proposals

⁶ An SC officer has promised the creation of a 40 mph buffer zone running from the end of the current 30 mph zone on the A891 Campsie road for approximately 600 m eastwards. This has not yet been implemented.

The A81 is quite narrow in places and does not have pavements on both sides of the road which limits traffic management options. Homes are set back from the road and there are a lot of hedges which possibly create the feeling of not being in a village, so the solution must be to create a more urban environment on the road itself. This could involve new physical restrictions at the western end of the villages along with new pedestrian crossings, or pilot average speed cameras, or speed sensitive traffic lights such as those trialled in Dumfries & Galloway⁷.

4.2 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Public Transport – An Important Move to Sustainability

The 2024 LPP survey showed an overwhelming desire to **protect and improve public transport**.

The preferred destinations were well defined, mostly in line with the current bus service. A large majority indicated that they would use the service if it were improved.

“Improvement of public transport would be paramount to making living in the village future proof, alignment of bus and train timetables, affordable fares, very frequent and reliable

We have the X10 and X10A buses serving our village, but it is not a reliable service and hence not used as much as it could be. **The buses are old and uncomfortable.**

“Public transport – our young adults are inhibited in taking hospitality work or socialising. Last bus on a Sunday is 6pm!”

Key to getting public transport right for our community is linking to Milngavie and the train station and to train times. So many get off the train and see the bus disappearing as they reach the bus stop. A local bus linking Balfron, Killearn and Strathblane to Milngavie could be the best option to make the service reliable and used.

“The lack of frequency combined with the cost of even the most basic journeys, means leaving the village without a car/bus card is increasingly difficult. This is counterproductive to

Public transport needs to be affordable to encourage use. Ticket zones begin and end at the county boundary, meaning that bus travel from here to Glasgow or even Milngavie is extortionate, for young workers and others without travel passes. Stirling concession cards do not integrate with train travel to Glasgow, which is our nearest.

We should not forget that for us, getting to and from Forth Valley Royal Hospital in Larbert by public transport is practically impossible.

⁷ A75, Springholm <https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-202200330286/>

5 DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

5.1 THE RIGHT KIND OF HOMES – COMMUNITY NEED VS COMMERCIAL VIABILITY

There is a need for more housing in our community, but only of the right kind.

A 2019 Housing Needs Study⁸ found that the local area needs **more housing in the 'affordable' category** (low-cost ownership and social rented housing) and **more homes for downsizing** to release large family homes for purchase. The **2024 LPP Survey confirms this consensus** on the type and need for small and medium houses of reasonable cost (Q11). But history proves that this is *not* the type of housing delivered by developers responding to market forces alone.

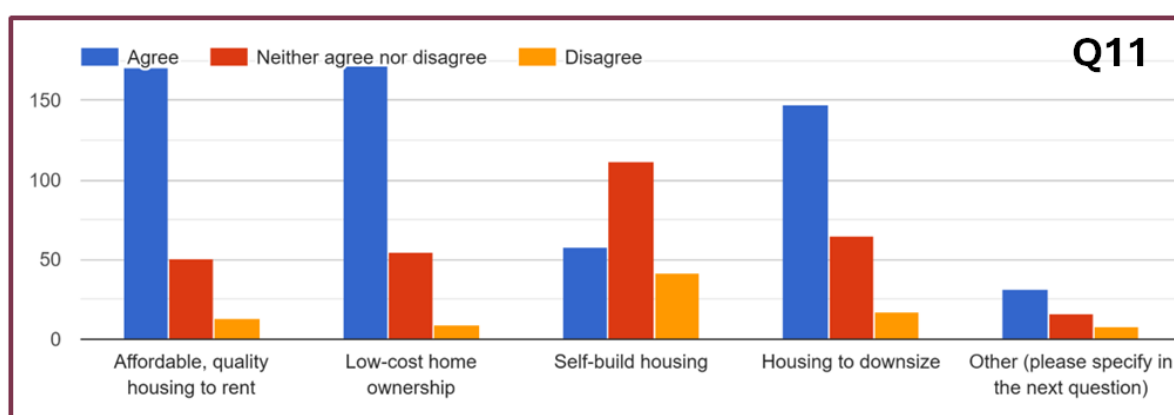


Figure 19 - Survey responses on types of housing needed

“Strathblane badly needs elderly housing to release family housing stock. I can count 12 houses in Milndavie Crescent that could be released by council/owner occupation”

These findings are consistent with the findings of Stirling’s own research towards LDP3 (Housing Analysis Report ‘Have a Say in the Future of Your Place’, Public Feedback on Existing and New Housing, April 2024).

Topic papers supporting the Stirling’s

“Any housing considered should be highly sustainable and best in class, ideally passivehaus standard”

LDP3 Evidence Report include “Topic 10: Quality Homes and Land Requirements”. Policy background is summarised as follows:

5.8. NPF4’s Policy 16 (Quality Homes) sets out the requirement for affordable housing. The policy intent is stated to be:

‘To encourage, promote and facilitate the delivery of more high quality, affordable and sustainable homes, in the right locations, providing choice

⁸ Draft report at <https://strathblanecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Strathblane-HNS-Results-Draft.pdf>

across tenures that meet the diverse housing needs of people and communities across Scotland.'

5.9. With regard to affordable housing provision, Policy 16 sets a minimum contribution to the provision of affordable homes of 25% but provides for higher or lower contributions through local development plans, where justified by evidence of need. It states that the contribution is to be provided by local policy and guidance. Provision is also provided to support the delivery of affordable housing on sites not allocated for housing development where the proposal is less than 50 homes.

5.10. Policy 2.2 (Planning for Mixed Communities and Affordable Housing) of the adopted LDP2 requires that all new residential developments exceeding a certain site size within 'pressured' areas must include a minimum of 25% affordable housing, rising to a minimum of 33% in 'highly pressured' areas. These requirements were initially established through LDP1, adopted in 2014.

"We should determine that ALL new housing is dedicated to meeting local needs"

5.11. Policy 3.3 (Developer Contributions) of LDP2 supports the provision of affordable housing set out in Policy 2.2 by establishing the policy framework for planning obligations secured through market housing-led development proposals. The specific contribution requirements are set out in the Council's planning guidance document on 'Developer Contributions' (CD012).

Strathblane CC provided extensive comments on the consultation prior to the production of the Evidence Report. We are grateful to Stirling for providing responses⁹ specific to our points. What is clear is that **present policies provide no mechanism or incentive for meeting the identified needs in our area.** The only mechanism ever identified for providing more affordable housing is to allow *even more* market housing. To allow commercial housebuilders free rein will only exacerbate and perpetuate the existing imbalances. This is starkly illustrated by the preponderance of 5+-bedroom houses being delivered on the Killearn Hospital site, seen in Figure 20¹⁰.

Former Killearn Hospital, Killearn	H157	Rural	89	1 bed = 0 – 0%
				2 bed = 14 – 16%
				3 bed = 20 – 22%
				3 bed = 4 – 4%
				5+ bed = 52 – 58%
			Five or more bedrooms: 58%	
			Affordable units: ZERO	

Figure 20 - Housing mix, Killearn Hospital site (and with ZERO affordable units)

Added to that, the Topic Paper ignores 'small' completions (fewer than 4 'units', regardless of size).

⁹ 20250314 CD284 - Planning response to Strathblane CC submission (CD283)

¹⁰ LDP3 Evidence Report Appendix 11 - Topic Paper 10, Table 5

The current policy on Developer Contributions actively *incentivises* developers to build/convert fewer than 4 units on the sites typical in our area. We have seen multiple times proposals being cut back during the planning process purely to avoid making any developer contribution. Yet this type of development, out in the countryside, represents the majority of units delivered in the rural area. Only 46% units in the Rural area have been built within the settlement boundaries.

Rural Area	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total	% of total
Countryside	14	20	20	16	42	112	54%
Settlements	30	18	32	0	15	95	46%
Total	44	38	52	16	57	207	100%

Figure 21 - Housing completions in Countryside vs Settlements under current plan

Figure 21 is a table from the DRAFT topic paper which has been dropped in the version provided in the Evidence Report.

- What sense can we make of an Evidence Report that seems blind to more than half of development that *actually occurs* in the rural area?
- What is the point of promoting a 33% percent affordable contribution in ‘highly pressured’ areas, if more than half of all units actually delivered are on schemes exempt from contributions at all? Effectively, 33% means less than 15% for the community, in other words, and it means precisely ZERO affordable contribution in our area, UNLESS building on larger sites in the Green Belt is allowed.
- Even if 33% were defined across the area, the HNDA indicated a need of 46% affordable to 54% market housing, across the plan area. **Some other way to deliver the needed housing must be found.**
- If one of the key needs for our community is housing for older residents to downsize, why is there no ambition in the Evidence Report to deliver wheelchair accessible housing in our area, whether by new building or by adaptation?

In section 9 Conclusion and Recommendations below, we provide suggestions/requests to be taken into consideration for the new LDP3. We do not necessarily have solutions, but if the LDP is to be ‘focused on deliverability’, then some new models for delivery are going to be required.

5.2 IN THE RIGHT LOCATIONS - HOUSING NEED VS ENVIRONMENT

5.2.1 Strathblane Green Belt – What is it and what is it for?

This topic is based on our guiding principles 1 and 2 of treasuring the location of our villages and the Campsie Fells and an underlying resistance to large scale development, along with a wish to preserve our rural location and reject development between Strathblane and Milngavie.

It also covers all 4 of our themes – traffic; the right kind of homes; delivering for and strengthening our community resilience and addressing climate change; supporting our local infrastructure.

For detailed discussion of policy issues around the Green Belt, see Appendix D - **Strathblane Green Belt – What is it and what is it for?** We present only a summary here.

In the Strathblane area, Stirling’s current planning policy (LDP2) defines “**Settlement**”, “**Countryside**” and “**Green belt**”, shaded in the map of Figure 22. The policy on Green Belt exists within the context of the broader Policy 2.10 on housing in the countryside.

*“The **primary purpose** of the Green Belt in Strathblane is its role in connection to the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Belt. It **lessens development in the countryside between Strathblane and Milngavie to the south**, preserving the distinct identities of these settlements. A **secondary function** of the Green Belt is **to safeguard the immediate surroundings of Strathblane itself**.”*

According to Stirling’s 2024 review of the green belts, the areas of Green Belt around Strathblane additionally contribute to “nature networks and climate mitigation and adaptation”.

So what is supposed to be the effect of Green Belt designation on development? Development in a Green Belt area is to be permitted only in certain circumstances, where it cannot be avoided. But **pressure to release (or just build on) the Green Belt is constant**. Only vigilance and hard work by the Community Council and others has prevented a free-for-all.

“Strathblane is a special village that retains its rural charm despite its proximity to Glasgow; its boundaries should be protected with more tree

“Strathblane and Blanefield is in a rural area and should be protected from urban sprawl, any developments that contribute to traffic through the villages should be

5.2.2 Community opinion on the Green Belt

Almost 90% in the 2024 LPP Survey said that **preserving the Green Belt is important**, while *also* recognising the need for certain new housing. This is consistent with the consultation responses cited in Stirling’s Evidence Report, 4.3. But Green Belt boundaries can be redrawn every few years, if the need arises.

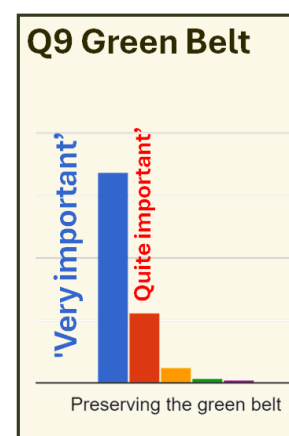
Is it time to release part of the Green Belt, to meet the need for specific housing? In the consultation drop-in sessions we asked:

- Which *parts* of the Green Belt are critical to preserve?
- Has the settlement got ‘out of shape’?
- Is the Green Belt/countryside policy *too strict* in some ways?
- Are there *loopholes* that need closing?

The responses to the questions are discussed below.

5.2.2.1 Which parts of the Strathblane Green Belt are most critical?

To facilitate consultation and discussion of the major sites that were proposed in the LPP survey 2024, we have considered the Strathblane Green Belt as falling into three broad chunks, as shown in Figure 22:



- Green belt NORTH includes the fields either side of the A81 *en route* to Killearn and the Trossachs. It includes sites labelled 1 and 2 in the consultation drop-in sessions.
- Green belt EAST includes the fields either side of the A891 Campsie Road, *en route* to Lennoxton and Kilsyth. It includes sites labelled 3 and 4 in the consultation drop-in sessions, and an additional site 7.
- Green belt SOUTH includes the largest part of the Green Belt, extending along the A81 heading south towards Milngavie, along Old Mugdock Road south towards Milngavie, and along the A809 Stockiemuir Road towards Bearsden. It includes the whole area of Mugdock (including all garden grounds), and extends to the boundary with East Dunbartonshire, where a corresponding green belt policy continues to Milngavie, Bearsden and Glasgow beyond. It also includes the sites labelled 5 and 6 in the consultation drop-in sessions.

It can be seen that the area we have identified as “South” functions to fulfil the ‘Primary purpose’ of the Green Belt: preventing coalescence. The North and East parts logically relate to the secondary purpose (protecting the setting). A clear majority of residents who attended the drop-in sessions, agreed that this South part of the Strathblane Green Belt is particularly critical to preserve:

Q: Do you agree that the South part of the Green Belt is particularly critical to preserve?
A: YES

YES	NO
108	23

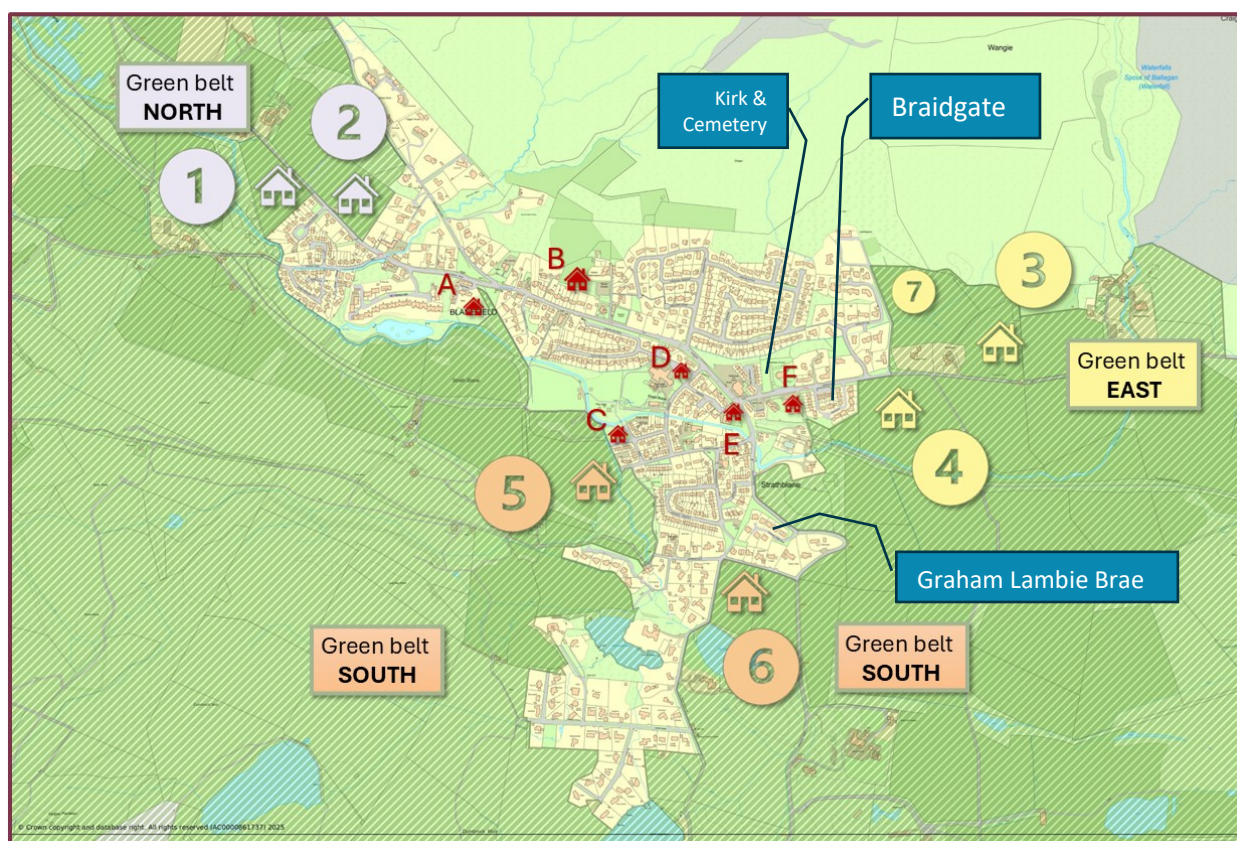


Figure 22 - Green Belt areas and labelled sites

In the revision of the Green Belt boundary for LDP1, when the housing development at Braidgate was allowed, this was built on land that had been earmarked as an extension of the cemetery. The housing was allowed on the basis that the cemetery could be put in the next field, and this would form a new, permanent boundary to the settlement. Residents attending the 2025 drop-in sessions were asked:

Q: Do you wish to see the proposed cemetery extension beside Braidgate completed and confirmed as a permanent boundary to the settlement? A: YES

YES	NO
97	26

A clear majority said Yes. NPF4 Policy mentions cemetery provision as a suitable use of land within the Green Belt, so no boundary change would be required.

This has implications for consideration of Site 4, as any housing development would conflict with that past commitment, and could undermine trust in the LDP process as a whole.

5.2.2.2 *Is the Green Belt/countryside policy too strict in some ways?*

One of the exceptions that allows building in the Green Belt is to allow use of 'brownfield' land that has been seriously degraded by buildings or some other past use. The current policy (at least as it is interpreted by the council) allows only one house to be built on the brownfield site, regardless how large that site may be. There are not many large brownfield sites in the Green Belt, but this rule (or this interpretation of the rule) works directly against the identified need for housing: instead of more, smaller dwellings it allows only fewer, larger dwellings. In the 2025 drop-in sessions, residents were asked:

Q: Would you like to see Green Belt policy changed so that two or more smaller dwellings can be built on a 'brownfield' site of suitable size, rather than only one (large) house? A: YES

YES	NO
116	19

A clear majority said Yes. If there is to be a brownfield exception to allow delivery of housing in the Green Belt, the housing delivered should make best use of the land to meet the community's established housing need.

5.2.2.3 *Are there loopholes that need closing?*

When the Housing in the Countryside policy was first introduced in 2010, then adopted into LDP1, it was recognised that a 'brownfield exception' might incentivise landowners to degrade their land, in the hope of a long-term planning gain. Therefore activity after the end of 2009 would not be recognised as creating 'brownfield' status for building houses in the countryside. When this policy was reviewed for LDP2, the cut-off date was moved from 2009 to 2013. We consider this to have been a mistake, which underestimates how far landowners in the most highly pressured locations are prepared to 'take the long view'. In the 2025 drop-in sessions, residents were asked:

Q: Would you like to see 2013 maintained as the cut-off date for 'new' brownfield status? A: YES

YES	NO
115	8

A clear majority said Yes. We remind that NPF4 Policy has no ‘brownfield’ exception at all.

5.2.3 Flood Risk

As illustrated in Figure 10, many parts of the existing settlement are at risk of flooding from river and/or surface flow. The perception of this risk has increased in recent years, following a number of deluge incidents. Properties in Station Road/Blane Crescent have been flooded. The paths and play areas have been flooded. The Ballagan Burn in particular can rise very quickly with flow from the tops of the Strathblane/Campsie Hills, so that water laps almost at road level.



Figure 23 - Flooding in Blane Crescent BBC news 2019

While planners and applicants may focus attention on flood risk within a development site, the community is concerned to ensure that development upstream should not increase the risk of flooding downstream, through the villages. Against this background, we have taken an especially close interest in the downstream consequences of proposals for sites upstream of the settlement. Among the sites discussed below, Sites 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 fall into this category.

Of course, proposal sites which are themselves at risk of flooding must also be considered less suitable for development. Among the sites discussed below, substantial parts of Sites 1 and 4 fall into this category.

In considering all proposals, we strongly support Stirling’s attention to flood considerations, SUDS etc.. However, there will always be a discrepancy between the SUDS theory and SUDS in practice. Even if calculations and modelling were an exact science, the climate is known to be unpredictable. The diligence of occupiers in maintaining SUDS for the long term is also questionable.

Of course, outside of development planning, addressing the ecosystem and adopting Nature Based Solutions to flooding and surface water management can bring significant benefit and reduce flood risk across the area. The health of the surrounding ecosystems, such as the blanket peat bogs uphill, determines the buffer capacity in extreme weather events (see Appendix E). Degradation of these ecosystems result in limited water retention capacity, causing increased quantities of water runoff during extreme weather events and thereby increasing flood risk of properties. Peat restoration and wetland, grassland and woodland conservation help mitigate these flood risks.

5.3 POTENTIAL HOUSING SITES - IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION

Residents suggested a number of potential sites for new housing, in the 2024 LPP Survey.

5.3.1 Smaller sites within the settlement boundary

Several smaller sites within the Settlement were suggested in the survey responses, as potential sites for housing. These smaller sites are labelled **A** to **F** on the map of Figure 22.

It is considered that such smaller sites may help deliver some part of local housing needs, for example particular needs housing for the elderly. **For the private and church-owned sites, the**

suggestions came from the public rather than from the landowners. No discussions have been entered with the landowners to determine whether they would be interested in releasing these sites for housing, let alone how such housing might be delivered.

Table 2 - Identifying smaller sites within the Settlement Boundary

Smaller sites within the settlement boundary			
Label	Location	Owner	Status; Comments
A	Wood Place	Private	Open/Wooded; Historic housing pre-WW2 South facing; difficult access/slope
B	Farmland North of tennis courts	Private	Grazing; South facing; very difficult access
C	Park Place	Council	Open space; Close to amenities; flood risk?
D	Grass area Kirkburn/Southview Rd	Council	Open space; prominent; school needs parking
E	Between Tel. Exchange & A81	Council	Wooded; small/difficult access?
F	Manse & grounds	Church	Housing

In the drop-in sessions, residents were able to rank these smaller sites in order of preference for development, on a scale 'Yes please'/'Yes if necessary'/'Definitely not'. The responses collated from the drop-in sessions were as follows:

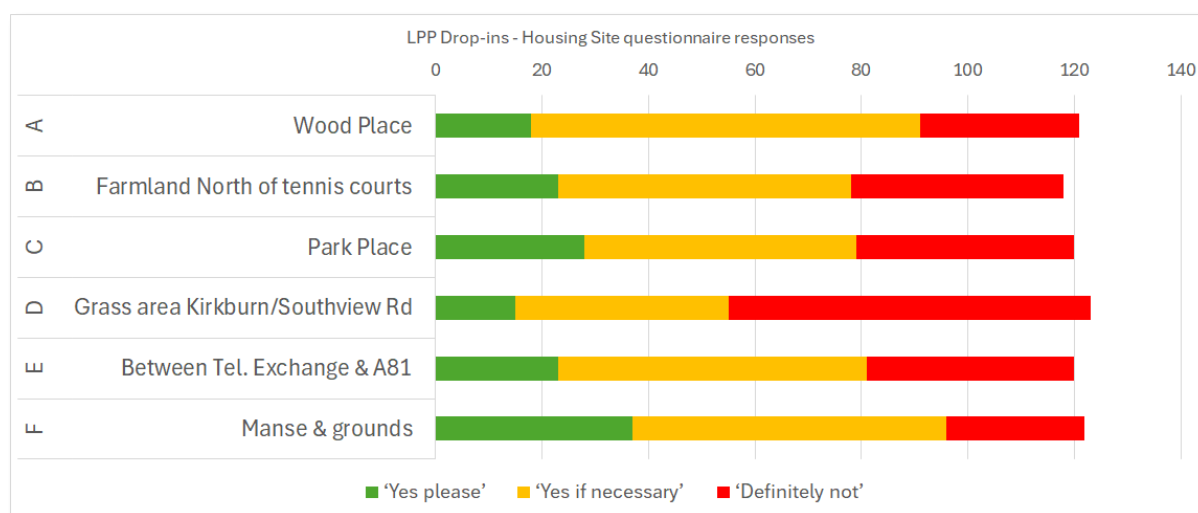


Figure 24 - Drop-in response to smaller site options

The following conclusions can be drawn:

- A clear majority of respondents would be against any development of the grass area Site D.

- For any of the remaining sites (A, B, C, E, F) less than 1/3 of respondents would say “definitely not”, while a majority would accept development on the sites “if necessary”.
- The sites **A (Wood Place)** and **F (Manse and grounds)** would be preferred over any of the other sites, with the **Manse and grounds** most popular.
- The sites **C (Park Place)** and **F (Manse and grounds)** received the highest numbers of “yes please” responses, with the **Manse and grounds** most popular by this measure also.

Of the favourite sites, only Park Place is in council ownership. It should be noted that probably only a small portion of the ground is suitable for development, while the Orchard area is at risk of flooding (Figure 25)¹¹.

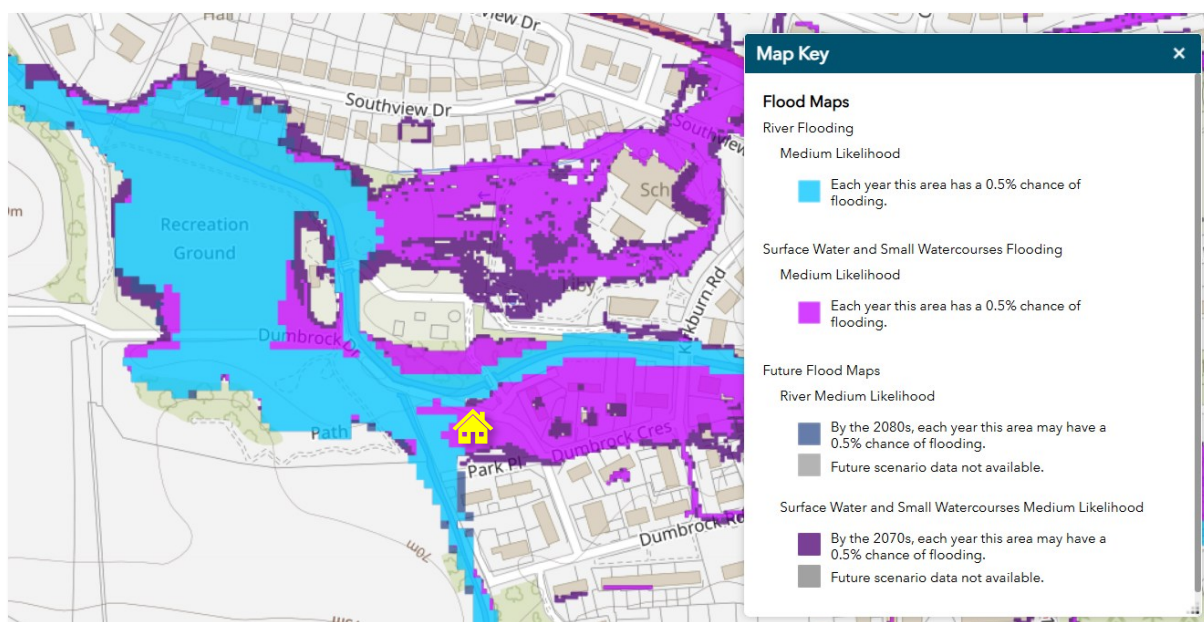


Figure 25 - Flood risk for park Place area (Site C)

5.3.2 Larger sites within Green Belt

The evidence report and survey broadly confirm that there is a need to add certain types of housing to meet the needs of the community, but any sites within the settlement boundary are small and may not even be available or practical. What if, say 15, or 25 new units are needed, to meet the particular housing needs of our community? There are clearly no sites large enough for such a development within the current settlement boundary.

From the suggestions made by residents in the LPP Survey of 2024, the LPP working group identified a number of sites outwith the settlement boundary which could be considered for release from the Green Belt, if such release is necessary to meet the needs of the community. A major focus of the drop-in sessions was to obtain the views of the residents on which of these sites would be a ‘least worst’ choice. To inform the consultation, each site was presented with a number of ‘pros and cons’, based on local knowledge and the planning history. The sites can conveniently be grouped also into the sub-areas of the Green Belt, identified above.

¹¹ <https://data.stirling.gov.uk/maps/stirling-council::flood-risk-management-river-surface-coastal-future-layers-sepa-open-data/about?path=> - Quick link <https://arcg.is/1jqSKj1>

All of these sites are currently in private ownership, and the suggestion of these sites came initially from the public rather than from the landowners. However, for several of these sites (1, 2, 4, 6), the Community Council and/or the LPP working group have had presentations from the landowners or their agents, confirming that they are interested in development. For the remaining sites (3, 5, 7) we have had no contact with the landowners.

5.3.2.1 Green Belt NORTH sites

The larger sites labelled 1 and 2 have been considered in this part of the Green Belt. For the drop-in sessions, some known ‘pros’ and cons were briefly listed.

1	A81 - South side (before Care Home)		
Owned:	Private (& interested)	Status:	Grazing
Pros:	Bus route; South facing; ‘Rebalance’ settlement?		
Cons:	Remote from amenities?; visual impact from N; Lower part floods		
2	A81 - North side (opposite Ballewan Crescent)		
Owned:	Private (& interested)	Status:	Grazing
Pros:	Bus route; South facing; ‘Rebalance’ settlement?		
Cons:	Remote from amenities? Visual impact from N		

Flood risk has been identified for a substantial part of Site 1. A flood risk map for the area is reproduced in Figure 26, with the site labels added.

As mentioned, the landowner has presented these sites for consideration to a community council meeting in 2024 and to the LPP Working Group more recently. Housing to meet the needs of the community is part of the proposal for sites 1 and/or 2, should they be released from the Green Belt.

References to ‘**rebalancing**’ the settlement refer to the fact that the bulk of development in recent decades has gravitated to the southern, Strathblane end of the village. This has left the Blanefield end, including retail business, feeling rather isolated. Over that timescale, this end of the village has lost shops, a pub and a post office. It is considered that development on sites 1 and/or 2 could halt further decline, bringing new energy and economic life to the western end of the settlement.

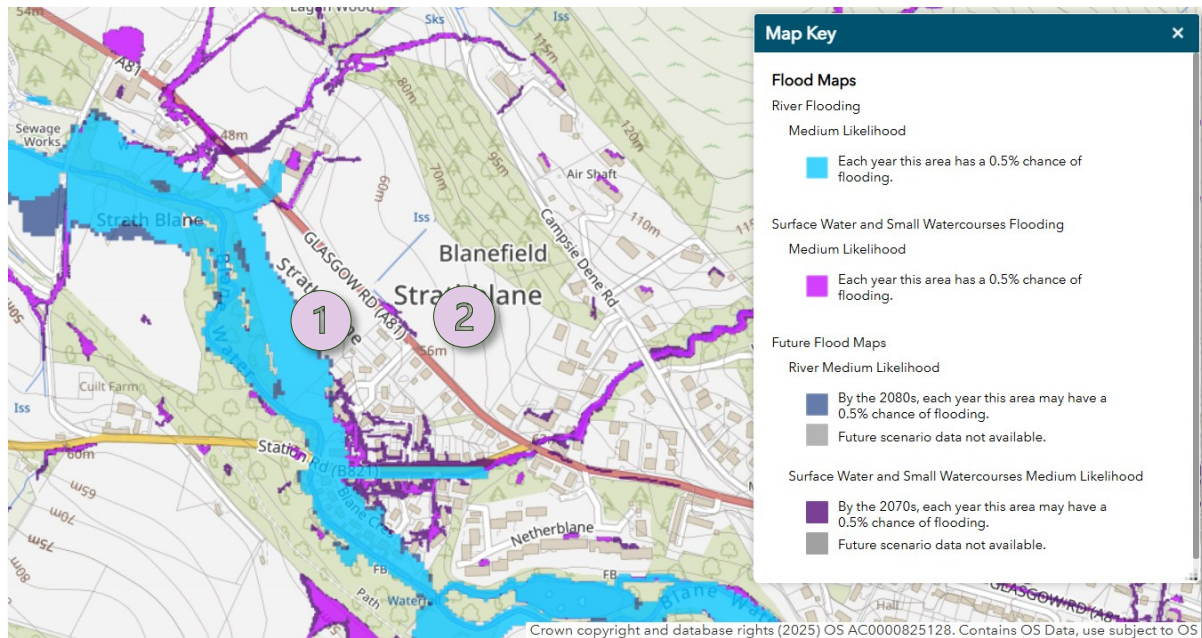


Figure 26 - Flood risk map for Green Belt NORTH area (Sites 1, 2)

Development at these locations would also create an opportunity to address the Number One concern of residents at this end of the village: **speeding traffic and danger to pedestrians**. This problem is already going to get much worse with the Killearn Hospital development. Development on these sites is adjacent the bus route. New pedestrian/active travel routes must of course be integrated into the development.

As will be seen from the drop-in session responses below (Figure 28), **both sites 1 and 2 were most favoured as a location for new housing**, with less than a quarter of respondents rejecting them outright. Less than a fifth of those with an opinion, would object to housing on Site 2.

It must be stressed that any development proposals can only be supported if they are delivering (exclusively or predominantly) the “right type” of housing, according to the needs of our community as identified above.

Subject to satisfactory enhancements in traffic management, and subject to guarantees that any development would be geared to community need, we could support the release of Sites 1 and/or 2 for the right kind development.

5.3.2.2 Green Belt EAST sites

The larger sites labelled 3 and 4 have been considered in this part of the Green Belt. For the drop-in sessions, some known ‘pros’ and cons were briefly listed. After the drop-in sessions, a Site 7 was added, for reasons explained below. This site is labelled 7.

3	Campsie Rd - North side (Standing Stone field)		
Owned:	Private	Status:	Grazing
Pros:	South facing; level		
Cons:	Downstream flood risk; visual impact from E & S; >400m from bus route		
4	Campsie Rd - South side (beyond Braidgate)		
Owned:	Private (& interested)	Status:	Grazing/ Cemetery allocation
Pros:	South facing		
Cons:	Cemetery needed; <u>Refused already</u> by Court of Session; prehistoric monument; downstream flood risk; visual impact; mostly >400m from bus		
*7	Campsie Rd – North side (behind Broadgate Farm)		
Owned:	Private	Status:	Grazing
Pros:	Identified by Stirling Green Belt Review as weakly related to Green Belt aims.		
Cons:	Not canvassed during drop-in sessions; >400m from bus; unbalancing settlement?		

* Some visitors to the drop-in sessions commented that the field behind Broadgate Farm would be an alternative to site 3; less obtrusive and without the historic monument. Additionally, this site was highlighted in Stirling's 2024 Green Belt review as an unobtrusive site which could be considered for release without unduly impacting the setting of the settlement. For these reasons, we have added it to the list as **Site 7** on the map of Figure 22 and in the table below, along with some 'pros' and 'cons' derived from the context. If any proposals should come forward relating to this site 7, it should be remembered that Site 7 has not been subject to the same consultation as sites 1-6.

Flood risk, particularly for the settlement downstream, was a particular concern when Site 4 was previously applied and fought for through appeal. A flood risk map for the area is reproduced in Figure 27, with the site labels added.

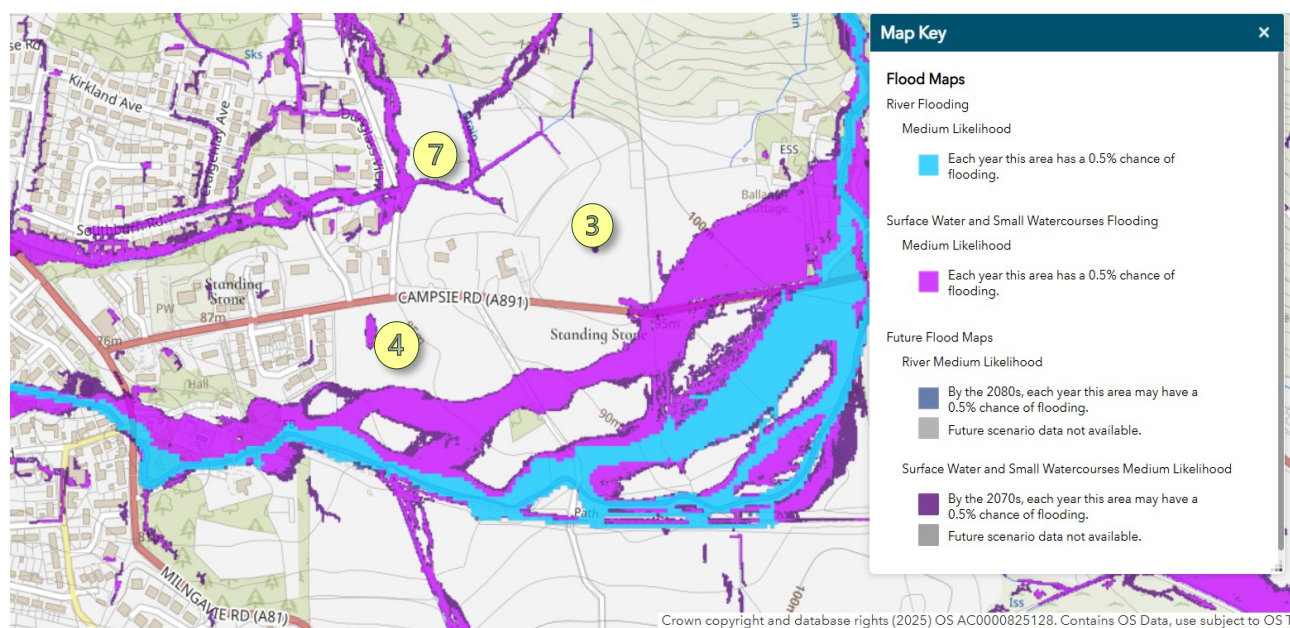


Figure 27 - Flood risk map for Green Belt EAST area (sites 3, 4, 7)

As mentioned, an agent for Site 4 has presented the site again to the LPP Working Group more recently. An indicative layout suggested fewer houses than the proposals rejected in the past, which would be located away from the wetter parts of the site. We have had no contact with owners or agents for Sites 3 and 7.

As will be seen from the drop-in session responses below, neither site 3 nor 4 was popular as a location for new housing. Roughly one third of respondents would consider these sites, if necessary, but roughly half expressed “definitely not”.

Any proposed release of this land would be counter to previous undertakings, would further ‘unbalance’ the settlement to the detriment of residents and businesses at the western end of the settlement. Any development on Site 3 would leave the cemetery extension without a convenient location and would undermine the plans to create a new hard boundary. Problems of traffic and flooding downstream would not be addressed, nor sustainable public transport.

Given the above, we do not support development on any of the sites 3, 4 or 7.

5.3.2.3 Green Belt SOUTH sites

The larger sites labelled 5 and 6 have been considered in this part of the Green Belt. For the drop-in sessions, some known ‘pros’ and cons were briefly listed.

5	Horses’ field (beyond end of Dumbrock Road)		
Owned:	Private	Status:	Grazing (horses)
Pros:			
Cons:	Rejected in public enquiry; High slope; North facing; >400m from bus; Dumbrock Road congested; visual impact from village & Wildlife Sanctuary		

6	Milndavie Road – South side (Opposite new flats on Bluerisk site)		
Owned:	Private (& interested)	Status:	Grazing
Pros:	Near bus route (but no footpath)		
Cons:	No pedestrian route to village?; visual impact on approach; precedent for sprawl south?		

Site 5 was rejected in a full public enquiry some decades ago. At the drop-in sessions, as seen in Figure 28, this site produced the strongest negative opinion of all sites, with only 10% in favour and 62% in the “definitely not” category.

Site 6 has been presented to us on behalf of the landowner. However, reaction against this site was also strongly negative in the drop-in sessions (58% “definitely not”). Sites in this South part of the Green Belt are seen to be clearly in conflict with the primary purpose of the Strathblane Green Belt, and also the setting of the village, as well as the climate resilience and adaptability. The elevated position and lack of feasible pedestrian access to the village also mean that it is not well connected with the settlement, despite its proximity.

We do not support release of either site 5 and 6 for development.

5.3.3 Resident opinions on Larger Sites

In the drop-in sessions, residents were able to rank these sites in order of preference for development, on a scale ‘Yes please’/‘Yes if necessary’/‘Definitely not’. The responses collated from the drop-in sessions were as follows:

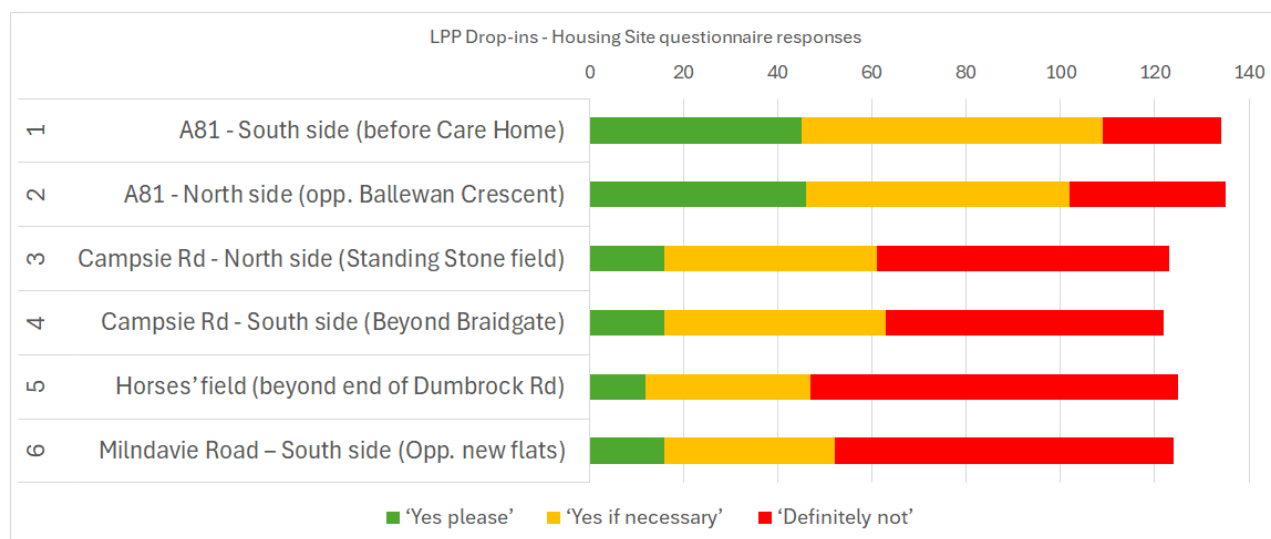


Figure 28 - Drop-in response to larger site options

The conclusions drawn above are included in the section Conclusion and Recommendations below.

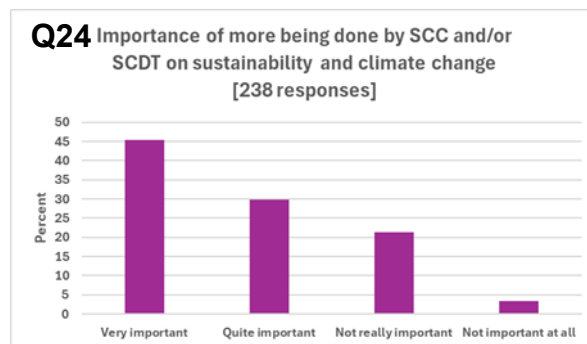
6 DELIVERING FOR AND STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY

6.1 RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Guiding principle 3. Our local economy needs to be resilient for a productive, liveable and sustainable community

Respondents were asked how important they felt it was for SCC and SCDT to be doing more on the issues relating to sustainability and climate change (Q24). A clear majority (over 75%) were of the opinion that it was important, with nearly half according it high importance, particularly females, although less importance was given by the 45-54 age-group. Of those who thought it was important, 130 respondents gave examples of what SCC or SCDT could be doing.

The most common themes that emerged from all these ideas can be summarised as:



1. Improvement of Public Transport: Many respondents emphasised the need for better public transport to reduce car usage. Suggestions included more frequent bus services, integration with wider transport networks, and lobbying for country-wide bus passes.

2. Recycling and Waste Management: There were numerous calls for enhanced recycling facilities, including specific mentions of recycling for items like blister packs, tetra packs, and soft plastics. Respondents also highlighted the need for better waste disposal to discourage littering and fly-tipping.

“super interesting, hope there will be further consultation on developments going forward. I still don’t fully understand the process. The community helps its sustainability as a community not a commuter town.”

3. Electric Vehicle Charging: 15% of respondents mentioned the need for electric vehicle charging points throughout the village.

4. Renewable Energy Initiatives: Several respondents suggested the installation of renewable energy sources such as solar panels, wind turbines, and community energy projects. There were also mentions of exploring hydroelectric power and community heating systems.

5. Flood Prevention and Green Spaces: The importance of flood prevention measures was frequently mentioned, with suggestions for better drainage systems and safeguarding green spaces. Respondents also called for more tree planting and the maintenance of green areas.

6. Energy Efficiency: the need to improve the energy efficiency of buildings. Suggestions include better insulation, reducing energy bills for village-owned buildings, and community education on energy-saving measures. The range of suggestions indicates a strong interest in multiple aspects of energy efficiency.

7. Active Travel: better cycling and walking routes to encourage non-car travel. This included safer cycle paths and footpaths connecting outlying areas with the village.

8. Community Engagement and Education: organising community events to promote sustainability, such as upcycling workshops, repair cafes, and educational sessions on reducing carbon footprints.

9. Local Food and Zero Waste: Promoting local food production and zero waste initiatives, such as refill shops and community gardens, was also mentioned.

6.2 LOCAL INITIATIVES FACILITATED BY SCDT

An active Allotments working group has also been incorporated into SCDT, with land leased locally. The Allotment group organises a well-attended yearly open day.

The Paths group has linked up all parts of Strathblane and Blane field, with plans to extend further.

SCDT was instrumental in setting up a working group, Strathblane Wildlife Sanctuary (SWS), to promote active involvement and practical projects to further climate action and sustainability. An area of land in the centre of the community was leased on a long-term basis and local volunteers were engaged to plant over 2000 trees and a wildflower meadow, make accessible paths, a pond and information boards. Many younger people, including children, in the community have enthusiastically joined in many of these activities as part of a broad voluntary commitment to the area.

“Developing paths around the village great! - extend to the Beech Tree? Allotments have added to community mental health support

SCDT hosted five Climate Action film evenings in 2025, funded by a Community Pride grant by Stirling Council. Invited speakers led discussions afterwards and the evenings were very well attended.

A SCDT-sponsored feasibility study funded by the CARES scheme has been agreed for a renewable energy project, in line with the Just Transition principles, involving solar, hydro and wind technologies. Several sites will be investigated, and the results will help navigate renewable energy initiatives for the community.

SCDT and SCC have become members of a new charity, Southwest Stirling Climate Action Network (SWScan) [SCIO: SC053948], aimed at supporting community-based initiatives across the region seeking to mitigate or adapt to climate change and raise awareness of environmental sustainability. Its themes include energy (retrofit, power generation), resources (reduce, reuse, repair and recycle), food production and consumption, ecology (local nature conservation sites, nature corridors), travel (bus services, linking walking/cycling paths between communities) and education (schools). It aims to help connect knowledge bases and supports connectivity between the rural villages.

6.3 NATURAL ASSETS, CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION ACTIONS

Action is needed to halt local biodiversity and soil carbon loss and to support (natural) flood mitigation. Promoting nature education and outdoor activities promotes connectivity with our surrounding world and is known to increase (mental) health.

The following actions work to achieve these results:

- Support connections with nature

Better connectivity from the village to the surrounding countryside by foot and bicycle. Well-designed routes contribute to concentrating human activity and thereby can reduce disruption to wildlife.

- Nature education and sustainable practices

Local initiatives are promoting nature education and more can be done, including theme specific activities and workshops. Examples are:

- Climate resistant gardening, including drought-resistant planting and on-site water retention measurements.
- Further reduction of herbicides and pesticides in green space and garden maintenance
- Educating and reducing unnecessary artificial light pollution, especially along waterways and near bat roosts
- Habitat- and distribution data

Up to date species distribution data of (protected) local species from national databases is not readily available to planning departments nor the public. The Wildlife Information Centre, which is responsible for supplying local environmental records, struggles with a significant backlog and issues with acquisition of available data from the national databases of different species groups. This has resulted in outdated data being available in planning processes and Local Nature Conservation Sites based on historic site lists instead of current distribution data of priority species. Pro-active consultation with the local vice-county recorders can illuminate sites of specific nature values which can be designated instead of in addition to the current list of LNCS, with less need of public investment of site surveys as data is already available. A better understanding of the locations and biodiversity value of local ecosystems can help navigate better to limit conflict between development and nature values.

- Restoration and conservation of for flood mitigation, carbon sequestration and biodiversity

Especially the uphill ecosystems have high biodiversity value, a significant capacity for carbon sequestration and their health is of linked to flood risk downhill. Opportunities for action per ecosystem for restoration and/or conservation are provided in Addendum x.

- Green corridors

Habitat fragmentation is an important factor contributing to biodiversity loss. (Re)-connecting and strengthening green corridors that pass through the area supports biodiversity and (genetically) healthy wildlife populations. Green corridors are presented ‘through the eyes’ of a number of species in Addendum x and presented as models for specific habitat needs which benefits a larger group of species. Opportunities for improvement per green corridor model are presented. Physical barriers or a lack of suitable habitat can significantly impact the effectiveness of green corridors. For example, the BugLife’s green corridor ‘B-line’ entering at the council’s border on the old railway line track at Ballagan Farm goes from high biodiversity quality on the East-Dunbartonshire side, where an appropriate mowing regime is implemented and it is recognized as LNCS, to low quality on the Stirling council side due to inappropriate

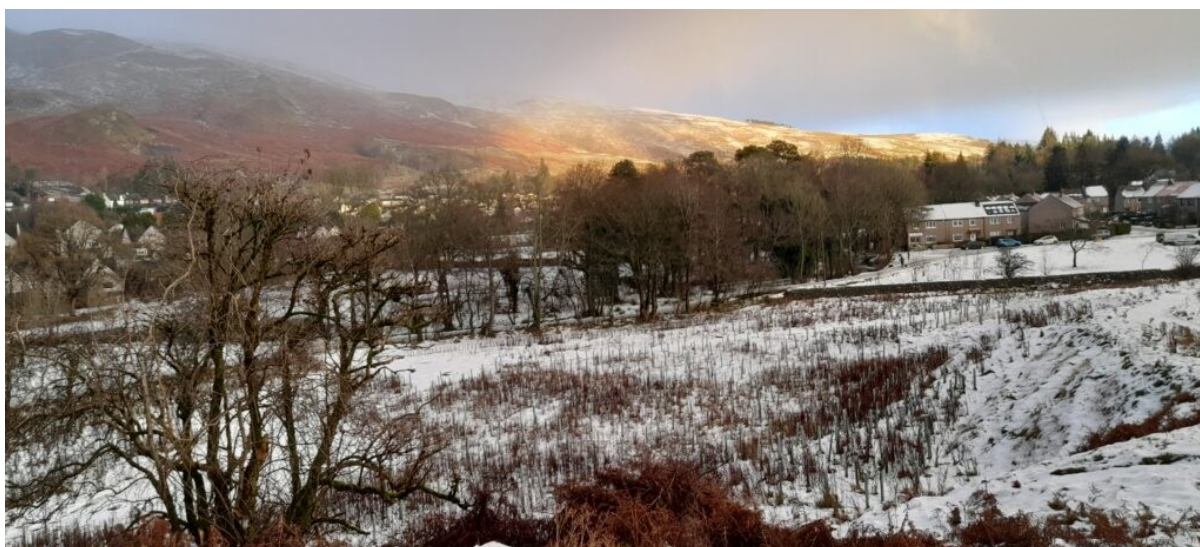
management to sustain a meaningful green corridor for insects. Implementation of appropriate management can restore this gap in the green corridor.



Figure 29 - BugLife B-line green corridor on the East Dunbartonshire side of the boundary (L) and Stirling side (R).

- Urban species-specific action

A number of urban species are locally struggling, including House sparrow, Swift and House martin. Placing nest boxes on appropriate locations support these local populations and brings nature closer to people (see addendum x). With the help of the 'On the Verge' team and a number of local volunteers, some of the smaller council lawns and verges can be (partially) transformed into and maintained as 'pollinator patches'.



6.4 SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Guiding principle 3 says our local economy needs to be resilient for a productive, liveable and sustainable community

A vibrant community needs vital infrastructure to be sustainable in the long term. Not only do we need well maintained roads for good communication, but we also need sewage works that are capable of expansion and an electricity network capable of taking locally generated renewable energy. The broadband service, while much improved, still doesn't deliver full fibre to every home and business. **We expect Scottish Water, the Power Network providers and British Telecom to continue to bring their infrastructure up to date.**

Our cemetery is nearly at capacity and land must be earmarked for a cemetery extension within easy reach of our parish church.

Balfron High School has plenty of capacity, but Strathblane Primary School is running some composite classes as pupil numbers are increasing. The new nursery school is very well used.

While NHS Forth Valley say they have sufficient resources to serve our residents, we have fought hard to retain access to Glasgow Hospitals given the public transport problems to reach Larbert. Our well used surgery has already lost some district nurse services with staffing resources cut and patients having to travel to Killearn and wait for at least 50 minutes after a 10 minute appointment to catch a bus back. Some residents use the Killearn Health Centre or Milngavie for GP services. **We must ensure local health services continue to be provided within our settlement boundary.**

We need shops and services within the settlement to prevent us becoming a dormitory settlement to Glasgow. We know our shops are struggling and we have lost our Coop store in Strathblane which has been replaced by Greens and is not as well used. Our Post Office is currently located in Greens. We have a well-used convenience store in Blanefield. In addition, we have hairdressers, a chemist, a cafe, a takeaway and an accountant plus several well used local trade services.

We have lost one pub and so rely on the Kirkhouse Inn for pub and restaurant facilities within the village. It struggles from time to time.

Local jobs are important to our community, and we are open to the creation of office or business units in or near the villages. **Indeed, a tourist facility attracting visitors that then use our services would help our services to survive.**

Many visitors pass through our villages on route to the Trossachs and Loch Lomond. We need them to stop and use our facilities. **Stirling Council closed our Public Toilets some time ago, although those in Killearn and Balfron are still open.** There is no comfort partnership with a

local business to provide toilets. Our new library has public toilets, but the opening hours are limited and there is no signage. **The community is using its best endeavours to re-open the public toilets.**

"The infrastructure of the village needs improvement to support small growth; this includes proper traffic management. Growth is important to support our services in the village, so they survive. We need shops and a pub."

Apart from the Kirkhouse and St Kessogs church, there are no public car parks to encourage people to stop and use our services. We also have no electric charging points for vehicles or bikes to encourage folk to stop. There is such potential for our villages, as the John Muir Way passes through our community and the West Highland Way is also within our community, but **our lack of appropriate infrastructure hinders capitalising on this potential and securing our local services, local employment and businesses for the future.**

Sports and play facilities have been provided by the community through grants, fund raising and development contributions. **Provision still needs to be improved, as does drainage.**

Our community spaces, the Edmonstone Hall, the Village Club, the Kirk Rooms, the Scout Hall and the library community rooms are all run and managed by volunteers, and all have potential to have their use increased.

We need some growth in small businesses and tourism to support the local hotel and cafe, shops and other services.

We should not forget that there is substantial economic activity outwith the village area. For example, we have Mugdock Country Park, Edenmill Farm soft play, St Mocha coffee and takeaway, Carbeth Fishery and tourist facilities, and Auchineden Scout Centre, all of which attract many visitors from outside the community.

6.4.1 Active Travel

There are at least four areas where we are looking to create new paths, and are in discussion with landowners.

We want to develop a walking connection to the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Loch Arding nature reserve. We have secured landowner's agreement to a connecting path from Old Mugdock Road (OMR) to the A81 entrance to the reserve and are now seeking safe walking access from the village to OMR and thence the connection path and the reserve.

We are starting to look at a proposal to establish a path parallel to the A891 from the Ballagan House area to the paved stretch of the A891 in the village, or a connection south to the Strathkelvin Cycle way to the South of Ballagan.

We are in discussions with Scottish Water about establishing a proper path and eventually a cycleway along the former railway line between Station Road in Blanefield and the West Highland Way at Dumgoyach. This is a key priority flagged in the survey for the place plan, to give an easy, flat connection with Killearn, and to Stirling Council's King's Highway proposals. Such a track would also link the King's Highway, West Highland Way, Rob Roy Way and points north into the central belt's network of cycle-tracks and paths, the John Muir Way and more.

We are surveying and discussing with landholders the possibility of developing an access path to the Campsie Fells and especially the wide area of mid-height land (between about 100m and 250 elevation) north of the village. This is a key priority flagged in the survey for this local place plan. This area is at present difficult to access, but would be a popular area for local recreation.

The community will continue to take action on its path and cycling ambitions.

7 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Guiding principles 4 and 5 are reflected in the work we have done on engaging the community.

4. Our community works together to be supportive and caring and to offer more to young people.
5. Our community must take decisions about our future over the next ten years and beyond.

Strathblane Community Council (SCC), jointly with Strathblane Community Development Trust (SCDT), as approved constituted bodies under section 19 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, have taken a variety of approaches during 2024 and 2025 to discover and articulate local residents' views about future developments in the area.

Previous consultations, which form the background to this work, were carried out in 2009 through to 2011, leading to the Strathblane Community Action Plan (2011). Six broad themes emerged with associated actions, many of which were implemented. More recently there have been community surveys on housing needs in the area (2020), interest in the building of a new village library (Thomas Graham Community Library, 2020), business services facilities (2020), lifelong learning opportunities in the new library (2023) and sports facilities (2023). Opinion boards and focus groups have also been used where appropriate; e.g. with library users and community organisations to ensure a wide range of opinions were captured in support of the new library (2020).

Community consultations about the current LPP, including a survey and physical drop-in sessions in the library, began in 2024. The survey was live for 2 months (23 March 2024 until 20 May 2024). In total, there were 255 responses to the questionnaire, of which 232 were submitted electronically and 23 by written completion of the paper version. The respondents to the survey cannot be assumed to be representative of the whole community, as they were not sampled randomly, but, rather, all residents were invited to take part via the local newsletter (Blane Valley Bulletin), distributed to all households. A copy of the Questionnaire is in Appendix B - LPP Survey 2024 – Questionnaire. A fuller analysis of the survey results is presented in Appendix C - LPP Survey 2024 – Analysis of responses.

Of the 255 respondents, 154 people (61%) answered only for themselves, while 99 (39%) answered on behalf of their household (on average two people per household). Based on the Census data for 2022, we can estimate the number of residents covered by the respondents is approximately 21% of the local population in the Strathblane Community Council area. Very few people missed any questions out of their responses. In addition to the pre-defined answers,

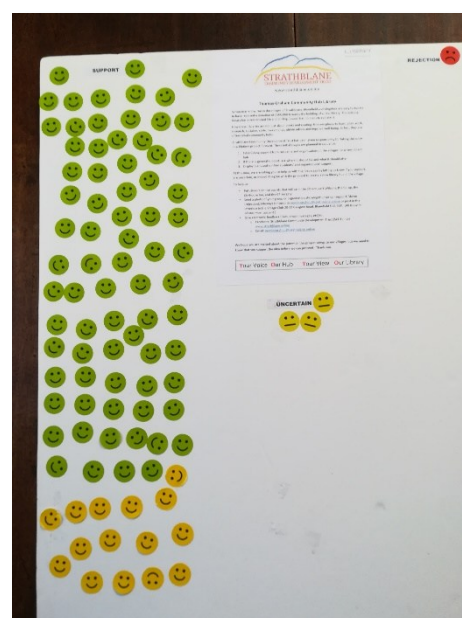
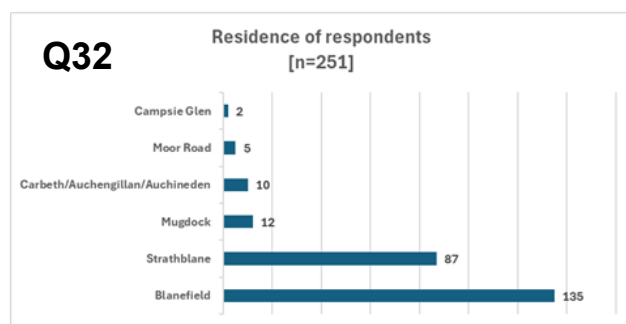
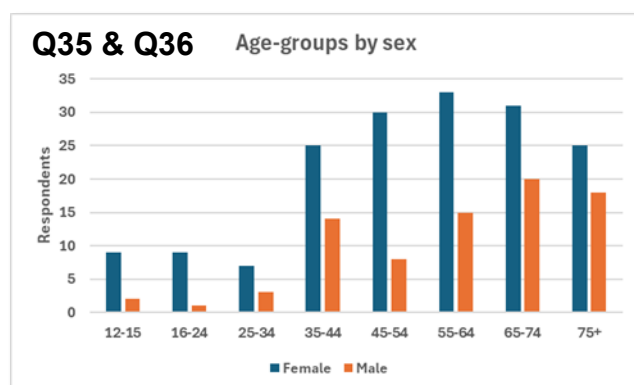
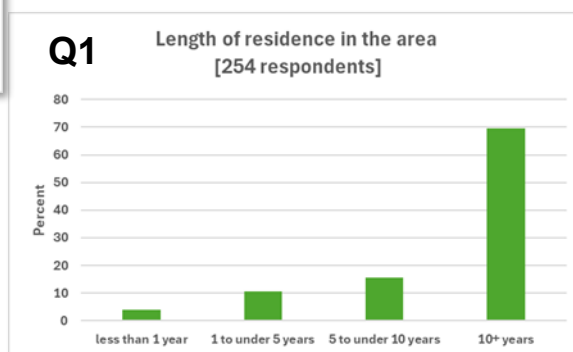


Figure 30 - Opinion board from consultation towards community library



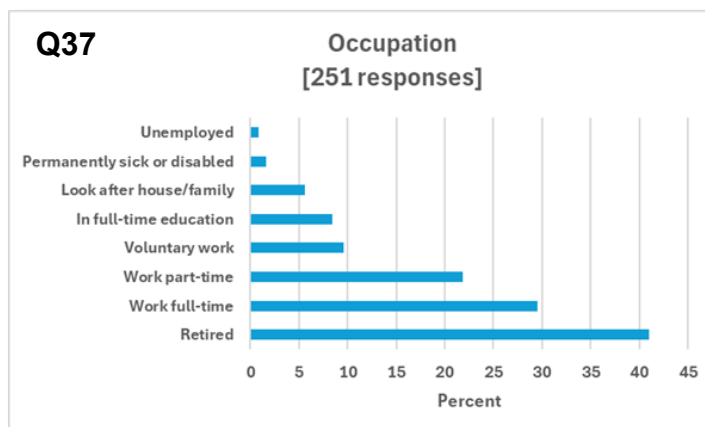
free text comments were invited, which were extensive. All respondents live in the Strathblane Community Council area, apart from two who live close by.

The vast majority of people (over 85%) have lived in this area for more than 5 years, with 70% over 10 years (Q1). Compared to the Census of 2022, respondents were more likely to be older (65+), while similar to the other age-group proportions, apart from relatively fewer in the 35-49 age range (Q36). Two-thirds of respondents were female, compared to 53% in the Census, with middle-aged males showing a relatively lower response than females (Q35, Q36). 96% identified as being of white ethnicity.



While the largest group of respondents are retired (41%), some 30% work fulltime, 22% work part-time, nearly 10% are involved in voluntary work (many of whom are retired), over 8% are in full-time education and nearly 6% look after their home and family. (Q37) A couple of young people were unemployed, one due to permanent sickness or disability.

In summary, within the limits of a 20% response rate we can be reasonably confident that our survey gives a good reflection of community opinion. We can make some allowance for deviations between the profile of the respondent group and the demography of the population from the census, but for present purposes it is reasonable to accept the results as representing the perspectives and opinions of the residents.



The survey results were summarised and published on the local Facebook page and in the local newsletter in February/March 2025, which is sent to all households, with an invitation to all residents to review the results in more detail at three drop-in sessions, designed to align with people's availability during the day and evening. Information boards were provided, including electronically, with feedback forms for completion. SCC/SCDT members were available to assist in this process, where needed. In total there were 139 response forms completed, giving, inter alia, clear levels of support for any future housing development, as well as views on traffic, public transport, facilities, sustainability/climate change, etc.



8 STRATHBLANE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2025

Guiding principles:

4. Our community works together to be supportive and caring and to offer more to young people.
5. Our community must take decisions about our future over the next ten years and beyond.

This plan is the joint responsibility of Strathblane Community Council, as elected representatives of the local community, and Strathblane Community Development Trust, whose constitution aims to further sustainable development in the community. These organisations organise and deliver various ways to engage the community to further their aims, including surveys and drop-in sessions, supported by feedback through a local newsletter, websites and social media. Local residents, businesses, clubs and societies are the target audiences.

The two principal themes of this engagement are **supporting/developing infrastructure** and **sustainability and climate change**. The former includes issues relating to homes, services and traffic, while the latter includes active travel, renewable energy and the environment. Table 3 provides details of the key objectives, along with the organisations responsible for each.

Table 3 - Community Action Plan

Supporting/developing infrastructure		Sustainability and Climate Change	
Action	Who?	Action	Who?
Homes		Active Travel	
Social housing for rent	SC	Create parking places and enforce pavement parking ban	SC
Affordable houses for families/single people	SC	Development of walking and cycling paths, including to Ballagan, Loch Ardinning, Campsies, West Highland Way and connect with surrounding villages (Killearn, Milngavie)	SCDT; SWScan
Community ownership for young and old	SCDT	Renewable energy	
Housing for downsizing	SC	Feasibility studies for hydro, solar and wind power Deliver project if viable Explore local energy club	SCDT; local landowner
Opportunities for self-build	SC,	Collaborative action through SWScan	SCC; SCDT; SWScan
Sheltered/supported housing	Housing provider	Provision of electric charging points for cars and bicycles	SC,SCDT

Preventing large, expensive housing	SC; SCC	Environment	
Services		Preserve the green belt (unless agreed for housing)	SC; SCC
Reliable and frequent bus service to Glasgow and Stirling	SC; Bus company	Development of nature corridors between villages	SWScan
Improve local nursing services	NHS	Development of playing fields for multi-sports	SCDT
Preserve Post Office services	P.O. SCC	Improvement/development of play areas for children	SCDT
Space for local business development	SCC, SCDT	Construction of sports pavillion	SCDT
Support and develop local shops	ALL	Improved signage for cyclists and walkers	SCDT
Provision of local toilet facilities	SCDT	Development of routes to support connection with nature	SCDT
Cemetery extension	SC	Nature education and sustainable practices	SWS and SC
Provision of car parking to promote local economy	SC; SCC	Biodiversity distribution data issues	SCDT, SC, TWIC and local vice-county recorders
Provision of super-fast broadband	SC, SCC	Ecosystem restoration and conservation for Flood Prevention and Green Spaces	Facilitation of funding opportunities through SCDT
Traffic		Urban species actions	SWS, SC
Control of speeding	Police, SC, SCC	Evaluating proposed LNCS sites and new suggestions	SC, TWIC, SWT, local citizen science groups and SCDT
Education of drivers / behavioural change	Police; SC, SCC	Enhanced recycling and waste management	SCDT
		Energy Efficiency: the need to improve the energy efficiency of buildings.	SCDT
		Climate action: Community Engagement and Education	SCDT
		Local Food and Zero Waste	SCDT

9 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Strathblane Community Council and the Strathblane Community Development Trust ask Stirling Council to take this Local Place Plan into account in the next stages of development planning.

For your assistance, Table 4 presents some specific conclusions and recommendations in preparing proposals for the third Local Development Plan.

Strathblane Community Council and the Strathblane Community Development Trust will form a continuing monitoring group to maintain involvement in the LPP and LDP3 process.

Strathblane Community Council and the Strathblane Community Development Trust will take forward the Community Action Plan 2025-2035.

Table 4 - Conclusions and recommendations for the Development Plan Scheme (LDP3)				
No.	Section (see above)–	Community Proposal/ Priority	Suggested amendments or Inclusions to LDP lots of refs to be added	NPF4/ other support
THEME 1 – TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT				
1.	4.1	We need to find effective methods to tackle the problem of speeding within the village even if these are expensive to provide.	Ensure any new development improves traffic situation.	?
2.	4.1 6.4	More parking space must be provided to sustain local businesses and improve road safety.	Location? Other policy? Provide more marked spaces on the carriageway.	?
3.	4.1	Pavement parking is endemic despite new rules.	Provide more marked spaces on the carriageway.	
4.	3.7 4.2 6.4.1	Public transport needs to be improved in terms of routes and timetables. Bus and train timetables should integrate instead of conflicting.	?	?
5.	4.2	Public transport needs to be more affordable to encourage use. Concession cards should integrate with train travel to Glasgow.	?	?
6.	4.2	Public transport to outlying portions of the area is non-existent. What happened to DRT?	What happened to DRT?	?
THEME 2 - THE RIGHT KIND OF HOMES, IN THE RIGHT PLACES				
7.	3.8 3.8.2 5.1	We need more affordable 2-4 bed houses for first time buyers and families wishing to upsize.	Limit development of larger market housing	
8.	3.8 3.8.2 5.1	We need more bungalow style housing and flats for those wishing to downsize.	Limit development of larger market housing.	
9.	3.8 3.8.2 5.1	We need more affordable housing: social rent and low-cost home ownership.	Devise policies that work for our area.	

10.	5.3.2 5.3.3	If required for community-need housing, release modest amount of Green Belt in the North portion.	Consider releasing Site 1 and/or Site 2 from the Green Belt for appropriate housing	Policy 8
11.	5.2.2 5.3.3 App'x D	Preserve the Green Belt, especially in the South (primary purpose)	Maintain Green Belt SOUTH → No development at sites 5, 6.	Policy 8
12.	5.2.2 5.3.2.2 5.3.3 App'x D	Preserve the Green Belt in the East portion (secondary purpose); respect past decisions.	Maintain Green Belt EAST → no development at sites 3, 4.	Policy 8
13.	5.3 5.3.1	Strictly for the above housing types, Smaller sites as per our map of suggested areas.	Support suitable development on Sites F (Manse & grounds) C (Park Place) A (Wood Place)	
14.	5.2.2.3 App'x D	Close the loophole whereby numerous 1-3 unit developments in the countryside are exempt from Developer Contributions.	Developer Contributions; rural housing	
15.	5.2.2 5.3.2.2 App'x D	Confirm site for cemetery extension.	LDP2 has cemetery on Site 4	Policy 8
16.	5.2.2.3 App'x D	Prevent abuse of 'brownfield' exception to Green Belt policy.	Review 'brownfield' exception against NPF4. If maintained, do not shift cut-off date.	Policy 8
17.	5.2.2.2 App'x D	Maximise potential of larger 'brownfield' sites to deliver multiple, smaller housing units.	Review 'brownfield' exception. Abolish single-house limit, where size of brownfield site would support multiple smaller dwellings. (LDP ref)	
18.	5.2.3 5.3 App'x E	Developments must not increase flood risk in downstream parts of the settlement.	Avoid over-reliance on SUDS engineering – site selection is key.	
19.	4.1	All developments must actively enhance road safety and put pedestrians first. All of the above must promote active travel.	Maintain sustainability policies (400m radius; safe footpaths)	

THEME 3 - DELIVERING FOR AND STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY AND ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

20.		We will support the newly formed local energy development group, looking at providing renewable energy for the village.	LDP should support delivery of small-scale sustainable energy.	
21.		Strengthen protection of biodiversity.	current	?
22.		We will continue to encourage our community to take action to address climate change		
23.	5.2.3 5.3 App'x E	Any development must not increase flood risk in downstream areas of the settlement	LDP should Address issues of potential flooding	

THEME 4 - SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

24.	6.4	Build on potential of John Muir Way and West Highland Way	The LDP should actively foster. The potential of these paths to support our area.	
25.	6.4	Keep LOCAL health services and be vigilant to further services being moved to Killearn or Balfron.		
26.	6.4	Some growth should be encouraged in small businesses and tourism to support the local hotel and cafe, shops and other services.		

27.	6.4	A workable cemetery site must be confirmed		
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Section No	Community Proposal/ Priority	Suggested amendments or Inclusions to LDP in relation to Strathblane and surrounding area	NPF4/ other Policy support
6.4	Provide public toilets to encourage tourists to stop and use our shops and businesses	LDP should address issue of lack of public toilet facilities in our area which attracts walkers from the West Highland Way	
6.4	Play and sports facilities need improvement and drainage, specially the playing fields in King George V Park		
6.4 8	Superfast broadband is essential for the whole settlement area		
6.4	Power networks need to be resilient and capable of expansion to encourage the development of local renewable energy projects		
6.4	Scottish water must ensure sewage capacity is robust to accommodate small growth		

6.1(7)	The community will continue with ambitious plans to improve the path and cycle network for active travel.		

10 LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A - Community Action Plan 2011 – What’s been done/not done

Appendix B - LPP Survey 2024 – Questionnaire

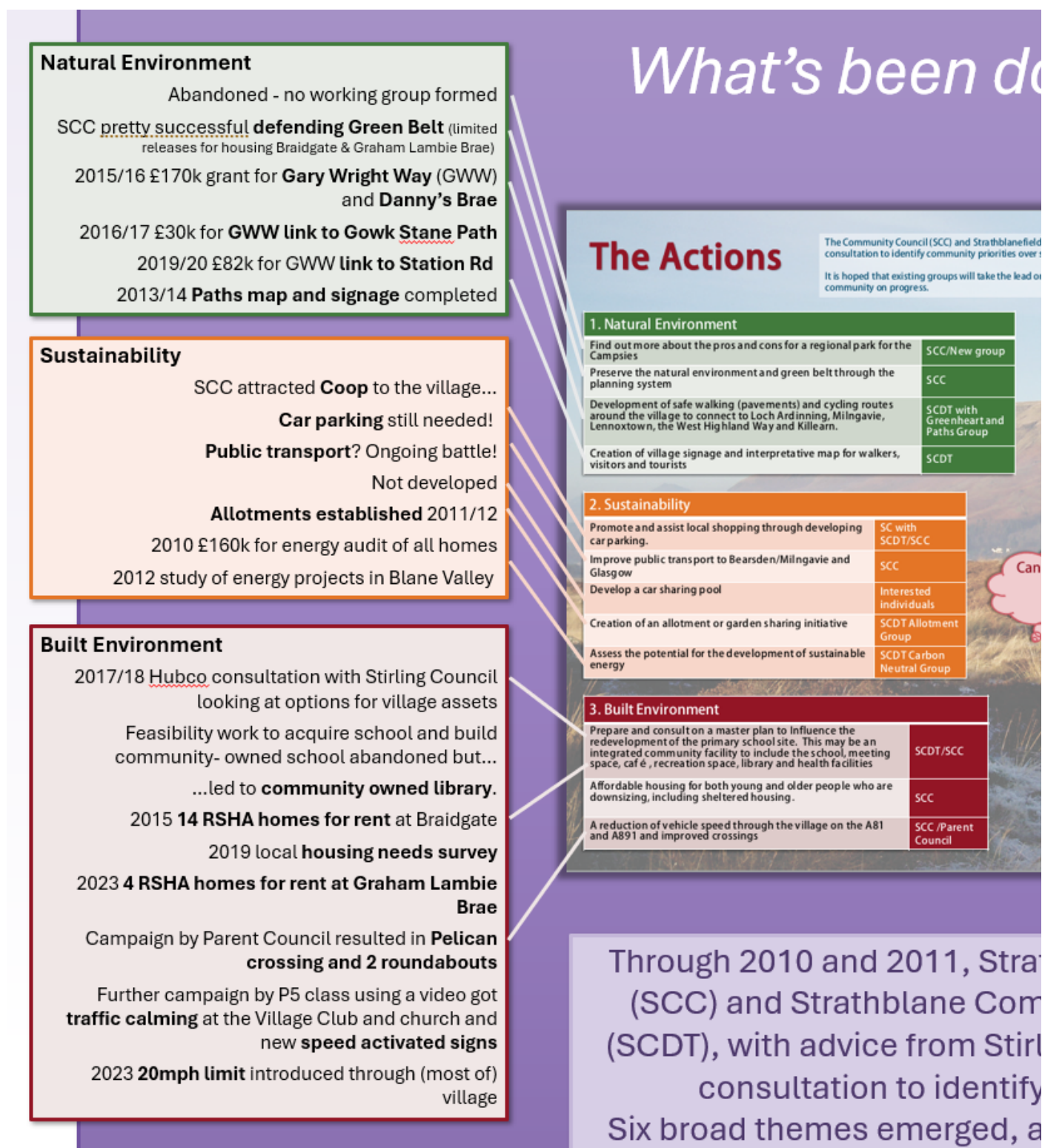
Appendix C - LPP Survey 2024 – Analysis of responses

Appendix D - Strathblane Green Belt – What is it and what is it for?

Appendix E - Our biodiversity: strengths, challenges and opportunities

Appendix F - Local Place Plan Validation Check List

A. APPENDIX A - COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2011 – WHAT'S BEEN DONE/NOT DONE



[Probably this needs pasting in a text format but images give the idea for now.]

Done/not done?

Community Development Trust (SCDT), with advice from Stirling Council (SC), have carried out broad themes. The actions are listed below.

Many of these, with support from SCC or SCDT as appropriate. We will regularly report to the

4. Community Communication, Involvement & Participation

Develop and publish a village communication strategy that builds on what we have and is inclusive for all ages.	SCC + new group & interested groups
Develop & support community events such as the gala day, a walk along the water track, folk/pop festival, food festival or craft fairs.	SCDT and local groups
Re-establish the village community association and create a network of influential individuals who could assist local groups develop projects	SCC

5. Employment and Training

Develop an online local business directory and encourage the development of a business network	SCDT
Investigate the prospect of developing small scale business space	SCDT
Investigate the prospect of developing homecare employment opportunities	SCDT
Investigate the feasibility of a music/recording studio for young people	SCDT

6. Healthcare and Services

Influence the health service to continue to improve local services at suitable times to include dental services and physiotherapy. Improve communication about improved/enhanced services.	SCC/GPs
Improved homecare services	SC
Development of whole life housing to enable people to remain in their own homes/community for longer	SCC
Develop opportunities to lead a healthy lifestyle	SCDT/Parent Council

Community Communication, Involvement and Participation

Community Summit held in 2015 with all organisations

Blane Valley Bulletin launched

Use of **social media**; improved **website** (more to do!)

More to be done possible email/messaging group for whole village

Gala day, School Fair, Celebration weekends, village involvement in *Mugstock*

Not taken forward due to lack of interest

Employment and Training

Not successful

Survey of local businesses in 2020

Little interest pre-covid

Taken forward by local businesses

Initial enthusiasm; Music sessions for young people; Battle of the Bands

Healthcare and services

Initial success

Secured **access to Glasgow Hospitals**

Ambulance Service to take to Glasgow

Blanefield Care Home now much improved

Re-enablement team; Care Packages;

MECS alarm service

SCC worked with SC re above

2010/11 £68k grant for Greenheart to complete **play park**

2014 £10k for pump track

2016 £5k for drainage for playing fields

SCDT **path network**

Parent council raised money for the **daily mile**

Blanefield Thistle working to improve playing fields and pavilion

Strathblane Community Council
Community Development Trust
Stirling Council (SC), carried out
community priorities.
and the actions were listed in
a leaflet issued November 2011

[Probably this needs pasting in a text format but images give the idea for now.]

B. APPENDIX B - LPP SURVEY 2024 – QUESTIONNAIRE

To be inserted for submission – see separate file for now.

View online <https://strathblanecc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Appendix-B-LOCAL-PLACE-PLAN-SURVEY-2024-Questionnaire.pdf>

C. APPENDIX C - LPP SURVEY 2024 – ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

To be inserted for submission – see separate file for now.

View online <https://strathblanecc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Local-Place-Plan-2024-results-v3-incl-Appendix-1-8.pdf>

D. APPENDIX D - STRATHBLANE GREEN BELT – WHAT IS IT AND WHAT IS IT FOR?

This topic is based on our guiding principles 1 and 2 of treasuring the location of our villages and the Campsie Fells and an underlying resistance to large scale development, along with a wish to preserve our rural location and reject development between Strathblane and Milngavie.

It also covers all 4 of our themes – traffic; the right kind of homes; delivering for and strengthening our community resilience and addressing climate change; supporting our local infrastructure.

THIS APPENDIX EXPANDS UPON THE INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS PRESENTED IN THE SECTION 5.2 ABOVE.

Topic papers supporting the Stirling's LDP3 Evidence Report include "Topic 04: Green Belt Review" assessing the relevance of current designations and boundaries while identifying potential new boundaries.

National Planning Framework 4¹² says that green belts "may be zoned around settlements where there is a significant danger of unsustainable growth in car-based commuting or suburbanisation of the countryside". This has long been recognised as the situation around Strathblane and Blanefield. NPF4 further states that green belts should be identified or reviewed as part of the preparation of LDPs. Boundary changes "may be made to accommodate planned growth, or to extend, or alter them to accommodate planned growth, or to extend, or alter the area covered as Green Belt". "Detailed Green Belt boundaries should be based on evidence and should be clearly identified in plans".

"Strathblane is a special village that retains its rural charm despite its proximity to Glasgow; its boundaries should be protected with more tree

WHAT IS THE GREEN BELT FOR?

In the Strathblane area, Stirling's current planning policy (LDP2) defines "**Settlement**", "**Countryside**" and "**Green belt**" with inner boundaries shown in Figure 32 and Figure 33. The policy on Green Belt exists within the context of the broader Policy 2.10 on housing in the countryside.

*"The **primary purpose** of the Green Belt in Strathblane is its role in connection to the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Belt. It **lessens development in the countryside between Strathblane and Milngavie to the south**, preserving the distinct identities of these settlements. A **secondary function** of the Green Belt is **to safeguard the immediate surroundings of Strathblane itself**."*

¹² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/pages/3/>

According to the 2024 review, the areas of Green Belt around Strathblane additionally score medium-high and high for “nature networks and climate mitigation and adaptation”. This supports the role of these areas in contributing to Green Belt objectives under NPF4. The 2024 review also scores different parts of the Green Belt for their contribution in different assessment criteria. (See further discussion below).

“Strathblane and Blanefield is in a rural area and should be protected from urban sprawl, any developments that contribute to traffic through the villages should be

WHAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE THE EFFECT OF GREEN BELT DESIGNATION ON DEVELOPMENT?

NPF4 Policy 8 states:

Policy 8 (Green Belts)

a) Development proposals within a green belt designated within the LDP will only be supported if:

i) they are for:

development associated with agriculture, woodland creation, forestry and existing woodland (including community woodlands);

residential accommodation required and designed for a key worker in a primary industry within the immediate vicinity of their place of employment where the presence of a worker is essential to the operation of the enterprise, or retired workers where there is no suitable alternative accommodation available;

horticulture, including market gardening and directly connected retailing, as well as community growing;

outdoor recreation, play and sport or leisure and tourism uses; and developments that provide opportunities for access to the open countryside (including routes for active travel and core paths);

flood risk management (such as development of blue and green infrastructure within a “drainage catchment” to manage/mitigate flood risk and/or drainage issues);

essential infrastructure or new cemetery provision;

minerals operations and renewable energy developments;

intensification of established uses, including extensions to an existing building where that is ancillary to the main use;

the reuse, rehabilitation and conversion of historic environment assets; or

one-for-one replacements of existing permanent homes.

and

ii) the following requirements are met:

reasons are provided as to why a green belt location is essential and why it cannot be located on an alternative site outwith the green belt;

the purpose of the green belt at that location is not undermined;

the proposal is compatible with the surrounding established countryside and landscape character;

the proposal has been designed to ensure it is of an appropriate scale, massing and external appearance, and uses materials that minimise visual impact on the green belt as far as possible; and

there will be no significant long-term impacts on the environmental quality of the green belt.

In the 2024 Review, the **strength of the Green Belt boundary** was assessed around the settlement, as shown in Figure 31. It is recommended that boundaries in general should meet at least the “moderate” strength level. We mention two locations here, labelled on the figure:

- (Note 1) the assessment of moderate-weak strength here may be out of date, considering that the Strathblane Wildlife Sanctuary on the Green Belt at this location is now well-established.
- (Note 2) the assessment of moderate-weak strength is supposed to be addressed by the zoning of Green Belt at this location for a future cemetery extension.

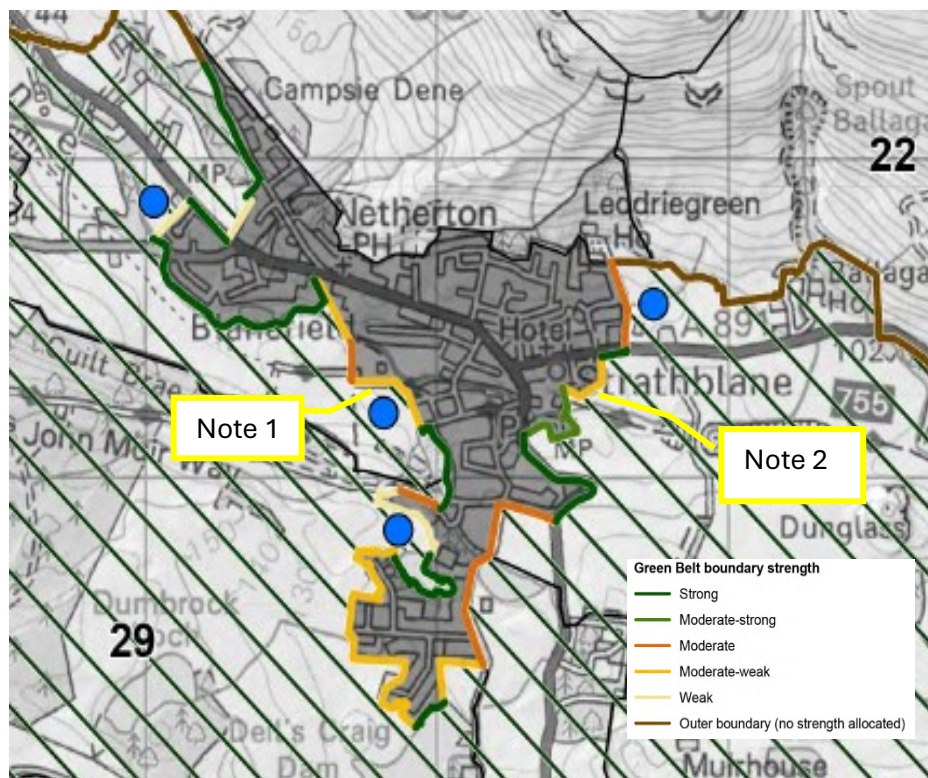


Figure 31 - Stirling 2024 review of Green Belt boundaries – boundary strength

Blue indicator points in Figure 31 are identified in the review as sites whose contribution to Green Belt objectives is less clear. Three of these sites are identified below and considered for development potential.

PRESSURE ON THE GREEN BELT IS CONSTANT

Pressure to release (or just build on) the Green Belt is constant. Only vigilance and hard work by the Community Council and others has prevented a free-for-all.

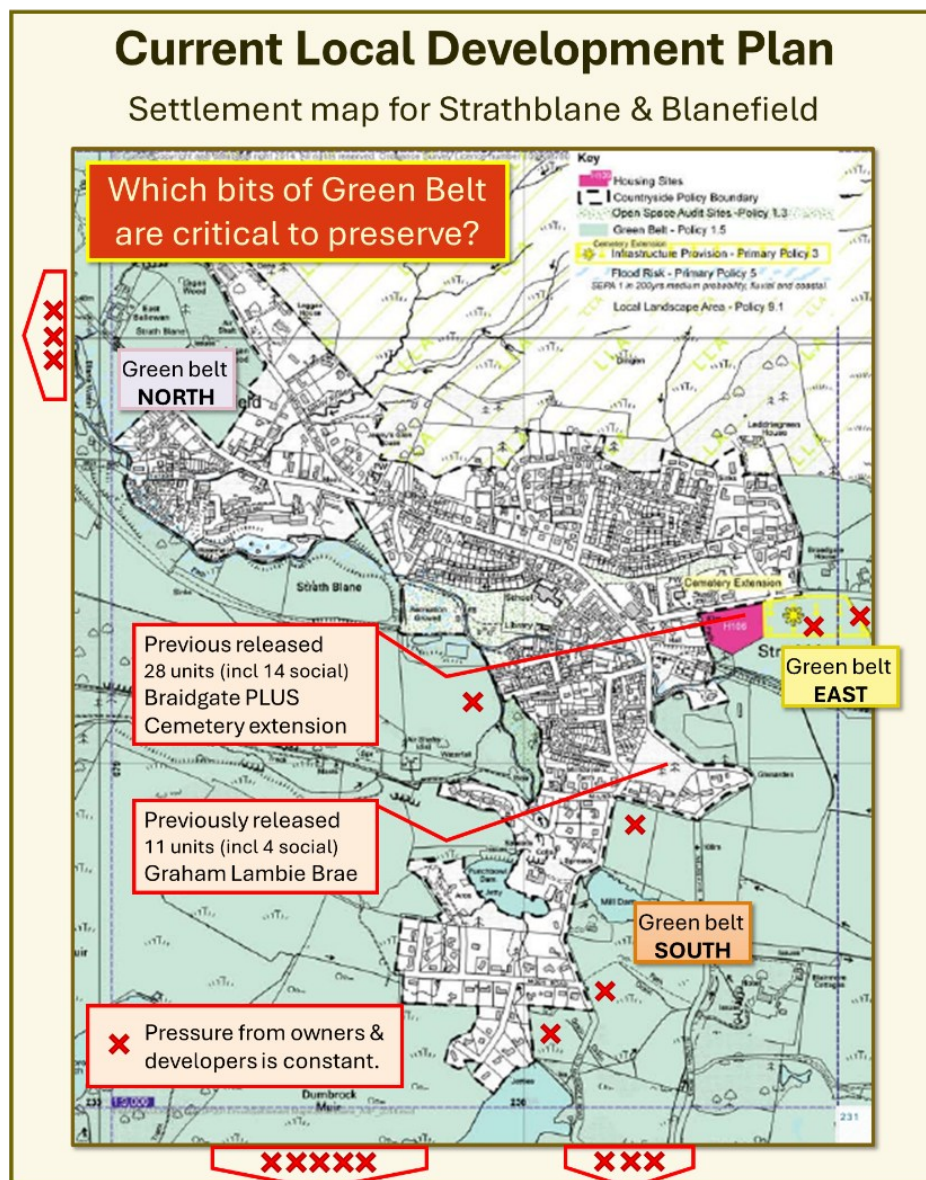


Figure 32 - Green belt - past releases and past refusals

Around the turn of the century, a proposal for a major development on Site 5 (Horses' Field) was rejected after a huge campaign and a public enquiry. In 2009-2012, planning applications¹³ for 5 houses in Mugdock were rejected and appealed, with site visits and hearings with the relevant Reporters. The principle of the Green Belt was upheld, and dubious 'brownfield' basis was

¹³ Application 09/00394/FUL & appeal PPA-390-2001; Applications 11/00509/PPP, 11/00547/PPP, 11/00548/PPP & appeals PPA-390-2017, PPA-390-2018, PPA-390-2019.

rejected. Some applicants (or their agents) simply argue that green belt designation is no reason not to build new houses on their sites¹⁴. Others try to create ‘brownfield’ conditions¹⁵ in the hope of permission. The community has not been opposed to proposals that genuinely meet the exception criteria (brownfield, agricultural business need, etc.) and development is permitted. However, there has occasionally been abuse of this, and there is constant temptation to exploit these exceptions.

The community was active in securing a cut-off date in the original Housing in the Countryside policy, so that newly-created brownfield conditions would never lead to an entitlement to develop in the future. This was, unfortunately, weakened when the authority shifted the cut-off date in the last review of the policy. Additionally, we notice that the criteria set out in NPF Policy 8 do not include any general ‘brownfield site’ exception of the type we have in our current policy.

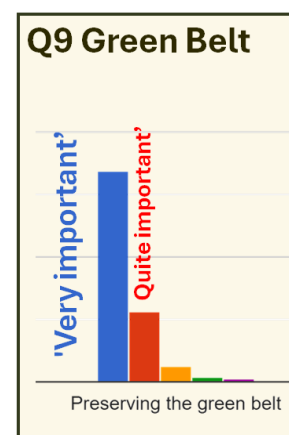
To retain such an exception therefore needs to be justified in this LDP3 process, and the exception should be very narrowly drawn. A further shift in the cut-off date must be avoided. More comment on this is below.

COMMUNITY OPINION ON THE GREEN BELT

Almost 90% in the 2024 LPP Survey said that **preserving the Green Belt is important**, while *also* recognising the need for certain new housing. This is consistent with the consultation responses cited in Stirling’s Evidence Report, 4.3. But Green Belt boundaries can be redrawn every few years, if the need arises.

Is it time to release part of the Green Belt, to meet the need for specific housing? In the consultation drop-in sessions we asked:

- Which *parts* of the Green Belt are critical to preserve?
- Has the settlement got ‘out of shape’?
- Is the Green Belt/countryside policy *too strict* in some ways?
- Are there *loopholes* that need closing?



The responses to the questions are discussed below.

WHICH PARTS OF THE STRATHBLANE GREEN BELT ARE MOST CRITICAL?

To facilitate consultation and discussion of the major sites that were proposed in the LPP survey 2024, we have considered the Strathblane Green Belt as falling into three broad chunks, as shown in Figure 32 and Figure 33:

- Green belt NORTH includes the fields either side of the A81 *en route* to Killearn and the Trossachs. It includes sites labelled 1 and 2 in the consultation drop-in sessions.

¹⁴ See recent examples 23_00450_FUL 8 Houses Land 625M East Of Auchencraig Strathblane; 23_00692_FUL dwellinghouse 35M East Of Craig Barton Old Mugdock Road

¹⁵ See 22_00295_PPP Demolition livery buildings and erection of 5No. dwellinghouses Bankend House Stable

- Green belt EAST includes the fields either side of the A891 Campsie Road, *en route* to Lennoxton and Kilsyth. It includes sites labelled 3 and 4 in the consultation drop-in sessions, and an additional site 7.
- Green belt SOUTH includes the largest part of the Green Belt, extending along the A81 heading south towards Milngavie, along Old Mugdock Road south towards Milngavie, and along the A809 Stockiemuir Road towards Bearsden. It includes the whole area of Mugdock (including all garden grounds), and extends to the boundary with East Dunbartonshire, where a corresponding green belt policy continues to Milngavie, Bearsden and Glasgow beyond. It also includes the sites labelled 5 and 6 in the consultation drop-in sessions.

It can be seen that the area we have identified as “South” functions to fulfil the ‘Primary purpose’ of the Green Belt: preventing coalescence. The North and East parts logically relate to the secondary purpose (protecting the setting). A clear majority of residents who attended the drop-in sessions, agreed that this South part of the Strathblane Green Belt is particularly critical to preserve:

Q: Do you agree that the South part of the Green Belt is particularly critical to preserve? A: YES

YES	NO
108	23

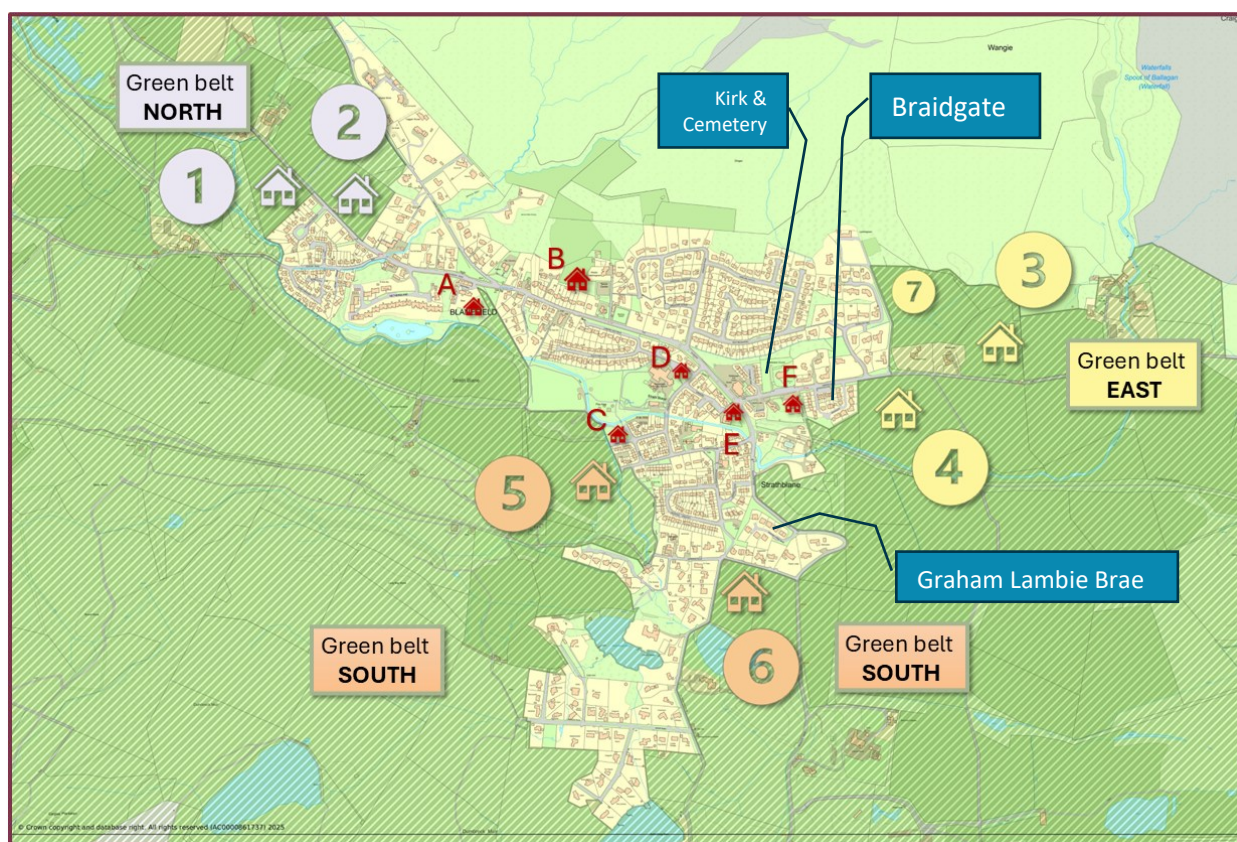


Figure 33 - Green Belt areas and labelled sites

In the revision of the Green Belt boundary for LDP1, when the housing development at Braidgate was allowed, this was built on land that had been earmarked as an extension of the cemetery. The housing was allowed on the basis that the cemetery could be put in the next field, and this would form a new, permanent boundary to the settlement. Residents attending the 2025 drop-in sessions were asked:

Q: Do you wish to see the proposed cemetery extension beside Braidgate completed and confirmed as a permanent boundary to the settlement? A: YES

YES	NO
97	26

A clear majority said Yes. NPF4 Policy mentions cemetery provision as a suitable use of land within the Green Belt, so no boundary change would be required. The 2024 Green Belt Review suggests that the Green Belt boundary should be strengthened in this area (see Note 2 on Figure 31 **Error! Reference source not found.** above).

This has implications for consideration of Site 4, as any housing development would conflict with that past commitment, and could undermine trust in the LDP process as a whole.

IS THE GREEN BELT/COUNTRYSIDE POLICY TOO STRICT IN SOME WAYS?

One of the exceptions that allows building in the Green Belt is to allow use of ‘brownfield’ land that has been seriously degraded by buildings or some other past use. The current policy (at least as it is interpreted by the council) allows only one house to be built on the brownfield site, regardless how large that site may be. For a large site, we have seen¹⁶ that this means only one large house can be allowed, even if the site would suit 2, 3, 4 smaller units being built. There are not many large brownfield sites in the Green Belt, but this rule (or this interpretation of the rule) works directly against the identified need for housing: instead of more, smaller dwellings it allows only fewer, larger dwellings. In the 2025 drop-in sessions, residents were asked:

Q: Would you like to see Green Belt policy changed so that two or more smaller dwellings can be built on a ‘brownfield’ site of suitable size, rather than only one (large) house? A: YES

YES	NO
116	19

A clear majority said Yes. We remind that NPF4 Policy has no ‘brownfield’ exception at all. If there is to be a brownfield exception under LDP3, the housing delivered should make best use of the land to meet the community’s established housing need. The housing must also meet all of the conditions in part (ii) of NPF4 Policy 8.

ARE THERE LOOPHOLES THAT NEED CLOSING?

When the Housing in the Countryside policy was first introduced in 2010, then adopted into LDP1, it was recognised that a ‘brownfield exception’ might incentivise landowners to degrade their land, in the hope of a long-term planning gain. We have seen this tried in at least one planning application, and the area has several other locations where a suspicion could arise

¹⁶ See, for example 21/00629/FUL relating to a derelict sawmill complex. One very large dwellinghouse has allowed, where the owner’s preferred proposal with two houses was rejected (20/00410/FUL, withdrawn). Back in history, six houses were delivered on the site of the old Children’s Hospital along Milndavie Road.

that someone is trying to create a pretext for a future planning permission. The policy therefore stated that structures erected after the end of 2009 will not be recognised as creating 'brownfield' status for building houses in the countryside.

When this policy was reviewed for LDP2, the cut-off date was moved from 2009 to 2013. We consider this to have been a mistake, which underestimates how far landowners in the most highly pressured locations are prepared to 'take the long view' and create brownfield conditions now, in the expectation that, even in 15 or 20 years, the cut-off date will have slid far enough into the future that they can develop the land with no impediment. In the 2025 drop-in sessions, residents were asked:

Q: Would you like to see 2013 maintained as the cut-off date for 'new' brownfield status? A: YES

YES	NO
115	8

A clear majority said Yes. If the authority is minded to shift the cut-off date again for the wider Countryside, consideration should be given to keeping the present cut-off date at least in the Green Belt, where the greatest pressure applies. We remind that NPF4 Policy has no 'brownfield' exception at all.

E. APPENDIX E - OUR BIODIVERSITY: STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

INVASIVE SPECIES

Invasive species pose a significant issue for local biodiversity as they can outcompete native plants and animals and alter habitats. Whilst most invasive species are non-native, native species can become an issue for vulnerable ecosystems.

Invasive species relevant to the area and ecosystems are:

- Himalayan balsam
- Giant hogweed
- Japanese hogweed
- Monkeyflower
- Rhododendron
- Grey squirrel
- New-Zealand flatworm
- Bracken

Himalayan balsam is locally found along the Ballagan/Blane Burn starting around the football pitches and westwards, and along a number of the small burns leading to the Blane (e.g. Kirk Burn). Significant patches can also be found on the site of the old Blanefield station railway yards. It is also numerous along the A81 between Blanefield and Glengoyne Distillery.

Giant hogweed can cause severe skin burns and small numbers are found for example along the A81.

Japanese hogweed can be found along the A81 as well and can spread very fast, may damage buildings and is hard to eradicate.

Monkeyflower is found in small waterways, for example near Easterton Farm and along the John Muir Way but is also already popping up in the burn through the village.

Rhododendron can spread aggressively, outcompeting native plants by forming dense shading thickets and amending soil condition. Furthermore, it can accumulate the spread of the tree disease *Phytophthora ramorum*, causing sudden death of larch trees.

Grey squirrels pose a threat to red squirrel by carrying and passing on the squirrel pox disease and outcompeting them from resources and habitat. Furthermore, they can cause damage to trees by stripping their bark.

New-Zealand flatworm was accidentally introduced to the UK and is now widespread in and around Strathblane and Blanefield. It can significantly harm ecosystems by preying on and thereby reducing earthworm numbers. Earthworms are important for soil health and are a main food source for many species including Hedgehog and Badger.

Whilst Bracken is a native species, it can become invasive in grassland ecosystems when the combination of soil moisture and grazing pressure is not sufficient to keep it under control. It will quickly overshadow grasses and wildflowers and chemically alters the soil to suppress other species from growing, creating a monoculture which has limited biodiversity value and is

prone to accelerate wildfires. The Scottish Wildlife Trust applies manual bracken management at Loch Ardinning and Ballagan Glen. Local volunteers, including the Strathblane Scout group (36th Forth Valley), help to control bracken at the Strathblane Wildlife Sanctuary.

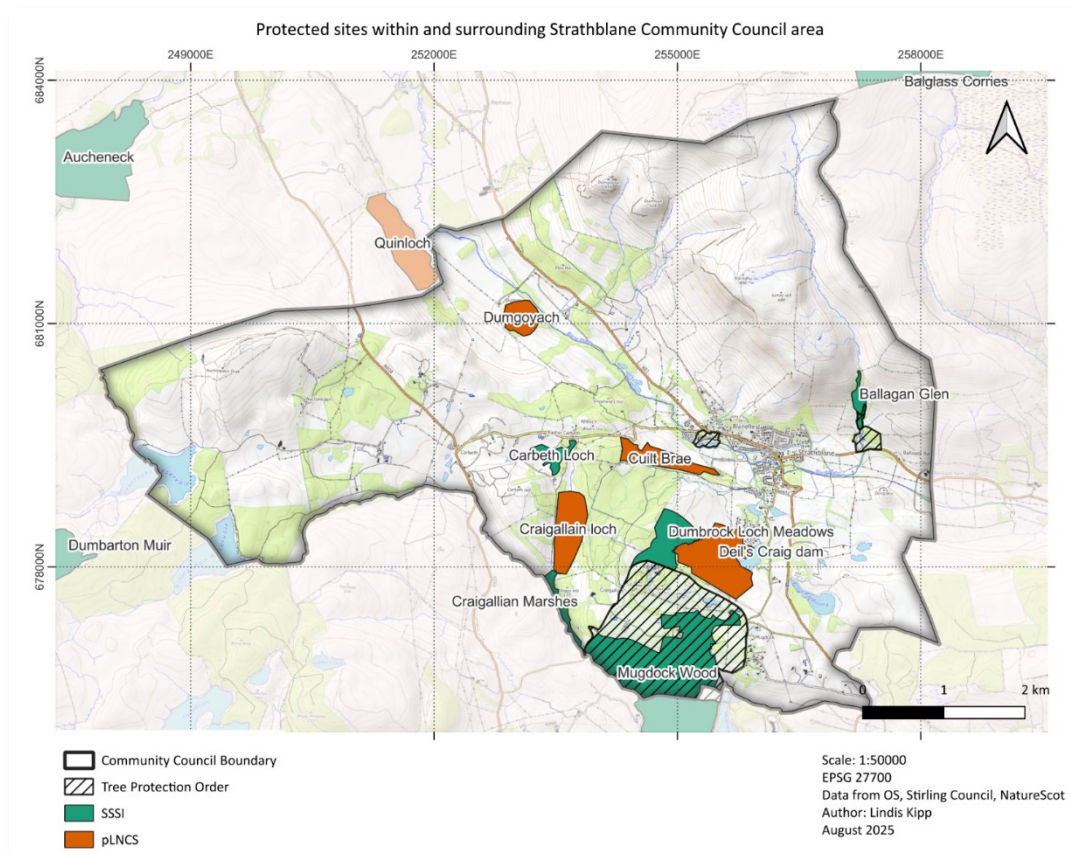
Without taking measures to counter the spread of these invasive species, they will continue to spread and become more costly and difficult to eradicate. Several governmental grants are available to fund measures for active control. Offering support with invasive species management grant applications, including mapping out known locations of these species, will help landowners to be more effective in taking measures to limit their spread or ideally eradicate them.

PROTECTED SITES AND LANDSCAPES

The statutory protected sites within the Strathblane Community Council boundaries include 5 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) sites, namely Carbeth Loch, Dumbrook Loch Meadows, Craiggallian Marshes, Ballagan Glen and a part of Mugdock Wood (map 1).

SSSI sites in the wider area include Cadder Wilderness, South Braes, Bargeny Hill, Sculliongour Limestone Quarry, Manse Burn in East Dunbartonshire Council, Dumbarton Muir in West Dunbartonshire Council and Aucheneck and Balglass Corries in Stirling Council. The descriptions of the biodiversity values of these sites are presented in their citations (see <https://sssi.ros.gov.uk>).

There are three proposed Local Nature Conservation Sites (pLNCS) (map 1). These sites were listed in the former Local Wildlife Site list by the Scottish Wildlife Trust as having 'biodiversity



Map 1. Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), proposed Local Nature Conservation Sites (pLNCS) and blanket Tree Protection Order areas within and around the Strathblane Community Council area

values' in the 1980/1990's. Since then, land use on some of these sites has (dramatically) changed and there are no records available from The Wildlife Information Centre (TWIC) that support specific biodiversity value of these sites. Monitoring these sites and comparing the results with known biodiversity data of other sites within the Strathblane Community Council area might result in specific management advice and/or an alternative or additional designation of LNCS sites.

There are three blanket Tree Protection Order (TPO)-areas (see Map 1) which protect the area against deliberate damage and destruction of woodland habitat, namely 'Netherblane' around the Netherblane development, 'Ballagan' which encompasses the Ballagan Estate and woodland and Mugdock Wood at Mugdock Country Park.

Local Landscape Areas (LLAs) are nationally designated areas where the scenery is highly valued on a local scale. The LLA 'Southern Hills' (LLA5) and 'Kilpatrick Hills' (LLA8) are partly within the Strathblane Community Council boundaries.

The Scottish Wildlife Trust manages the non-statutory protected biodiversity site 'Loch Ardingning'.

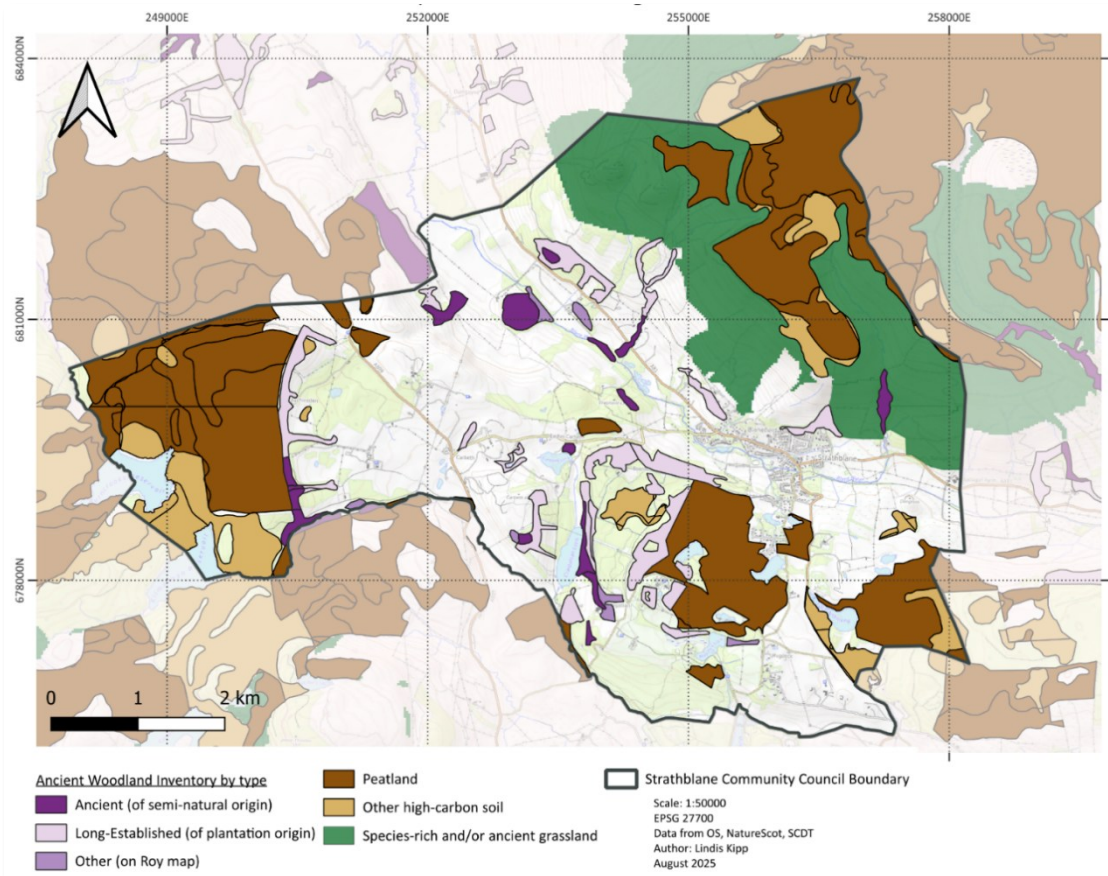
IRREPLACEABLE HABITATS, CARBON-RICH SOILS AND FLOOD MITIGATION

'Irreplaceable habitats' have a special status in the biodiversity metric system in the current National Planning Framework (NPF4). Here, 'Irreplaceable habitats' are defined as those which are 'technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity'. Examples of irreplaceable habitats are peatlands, ancient woodland and, following the advice of PlantLife UK, species-rich grasslands.

Policy 5 of the NPF4 specifically focuses on protecting and restoring carbon-rich soils, aiming to minimize soil disturbance from development and to protect the valuable carbon storage and ecosystem services that healthy soils provide, including flood risk mitigation.

Identified sites of considered irreplaceable habitat and high-carbon soils are presented in map 2. Further site investigations would further quantify the habitat- and soil value within and beyond these sites.

The blanket bogs, species-rich grasslands, heathlands, improved grasslands, woodlands, wetlands and urban greenspaces function as rainwater buffers to our village. Considering the expected increase of incidence of extreme weather conditions, the health of the local (uphill) ecosystems is important to mitigate flood risks now and in the future. Below we outline the specific ecological functions and nature services they provide to our community, their locations, and further opportunities for improvements of these areas falling within the SCCA.



Map 2. Irreplaceable habitats and high-carbon soils within and surrounding the Strathblane Community Council area.

Blanket bogs

The blanket bogs within and outside of SCCA play a crucial role in regulating water flow and quality, acting as a natural buffer against flooding and pollution. Their ability to store and filter large volumes of water helps to moderate stream flows, reducing the risk of downstream flooding and pollution. According to NatureScot, peatlands store 25 times more carbon than all the vegetation in the UK and carbon locked in the Scottish peatland soils is equivalent to 140 years' worth of Scotland's total annual greenhouse gas emissions.

Locations

- Campsie Fells towards Earl's Seat
- North of Burncrooks Reservoir
- Muirhouse Muir and Craigend Muir (patches)
- patches of blanket bog on Auchineden Hill, north of Queen's View car park (both around the Carbeth area) and west of Moor Road (Strathblane).

Opportunities

Due to ditches that were dug relatively recently to partially drain these areas, the upland blanket bog ecosystem is in the process of degradation, making it increasingly vulnerable to wildfires, carbon emission and losing water buffering capacity. Peatland restoration through national schemes such as PeatACTION can stop and reverse the damage done by the long-term drainage, reversing the aforementioned negative impacts. It allows the sphagnum peat mosses to regrow, resulting in an increased ability to retain water within these blanket bogs, resulting in a lower risk of flooding events in and around the village.

Species-rich grasslands and (ancient) waxcap grasslands

Within the last century, 97 percent of UK's species-rich grassland has been lost due to land use changes. Many of the species listed by the Scottish Government as being Priority Species for conservation (Scottish Biodiversity Action Plan) are dependent on these species-rich grasslands. A fraction of the remaining species-rich grasslands represents a rare soil ecosystem called 'waxcap grassland'. Waxcaps are a group of grassland fungi which are indicators of an extensive soil-food-network, and the health of their ecosystem is reflected in the number of specific grassland fungi species that grow in the soil. The fruiting bodies (mushrooms) of waxcaps and associated species that grow out of the soil are just a small part of these huge living organisms as their underground mycorrhizal networks can span miles. These networks grow extremely slowly and are thought to be up to 600 years old. Once damaged, they struggle to recover, and such recovery can take decades or longer. They are indicators of a longstanding undisturbed and agriculturally unimproved grassland. As such they not only represent important and increasingly rare grassland ecosystems, but they also represent a unique Scottish cultural heritage rooted in the farming of these rough hillside landscapes. Apart from these fungi, ancient grasslands benefit a significant number of 'Priority Species'. The current records show that the Campsie slopes around Ballagan Glen have 29 waxcap species which makes them qualify as of 'international importance'. It is the most species-rich 'natural' waxcap grassland in Scotland, and the recorded species assemblage is far beyond the thresholds for the site to be considered for Site of Special Scientific Interest which is set at 19 waxcap species by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Locations

- South slopes of Campsie Fells (species-rich grasslands with waxcap grassland)
- Unimproved grasslands between Mugdock Country park and Gawk Stane road, excluding the horse meadows
- Unimproved grasslands on both sides of the A81.
- Unimproved grassland patches on both sides of the A809

Opportunities

Recent studies illuminate the value of ‘unimproved’ species-rich and semi-natural grasslands as natural stable carbon sinks with essential ecosystem services. Considering common tree health risks (pests, disease, flooding, drought and wildfires), they offer more resilient carbon storage compared to for example broadleaved woodland. Beyond carbon storage, species-rich grasslands provide important ecosystem services that are unique to those habitats, including water supply and flow regulation, soil erosion control, support for pollinators, invertebrates and ground nesting birds and support for cultural traditions, including local traditional agricultural systems. Recognizing their ecological importance and biodiversity services supports the conservation of these mostly unprotected sites. As these grasslands are a ‘sub-climax’ ecosystem, they need management to not proceed to the next stages of succession, ending as woodland. Their management can consist of hay cutting but in this area, it is mostly done by (low intensity) grazing of cattle and sheep. Conservation grazing allows flora and fauna to flourish whilst keeping the grasslands from becoming encroached by bracken and other invading plants and has been successfully implemented at the (SSSI) meadows surrounding Dumbreck Loch. However, uphill farming is becoming increasingly financially unviable, risking grazing, an important cultural heritage, to cease and important grassland sites to degrade. Finding opportunities to support the local farmers and landowners to be able to implement conservation grazing regimes which maintain this irreplaceable habitat can significantly help protect local priority species populations and the critical services their associated ecosystems provide.

Heathlands

Heathland vegetation occurs on mineral soils and thin peats (<0.5m deep) throughout the uplands and moorlands of the UK. It is characterised by the presence of dwarf shrubs such as heathers, Blaeberry, Gorse and Juniper with typically an understory of grasses, Bog asphodel, sedges and mosses. Locally, the zones between the upland blanket bog and the species-rich grasslands hold extensive areas of heathland. In lower areas, geomorphological factors have created often inundated areas on which thinner peaty soils have developed. Water flows through the local sedimentary rock layers buffer these predominantly acidic peaty soils which has resulted in botanically interesting gradient heathland areas with orchids and species such as grass-of-Parnassus, devil’s-bit-scabious, distant sedge and harebell.

Locations

- Zones south of and around the blanket bog areas uphill towards Earl’s seat
- Zones at Queen’s view, Dumgoyach Brae, Craigmore and around Craigallian Loch
- Muirhouse Muir, around Loch Ardrinning
- Patches between Dunglass hill and Craigend Muir
- Lower Campsie Fells slopes behind Campsie Dene road (Blanefield).

Opportunities

Heathlands store a significant amount of carbon in both their vegetation and soil. Due to overgrazing, wildfires, (self-seeded) afforestation and changes in hydrology, the majority of heathlands are in the process of degradation. Limiting winter grazing supports healthy moorland flora. The reversal of drainage can limit bracken and tree invasion, support sphagnum moss growth and thereby carbon sequestration and water retention capacity and reduces wildfire risk.

Improved agricultural land

Improved grasslands are considered modified by humans, typically to enhance their productivity and yield. The Community Council area has areas of high value agricultural land which has been carefully managed and fertilized for many years. Hedgerows, rows of trees and dry-stone walls typically form the boundaries between fields; livestock is rotated, hay and silage are cut and manure is spread. Whilst their botanic value is limited, these grasslands offer important downland grazing for livestock as part of conservation grazing rotations and associated wildlife including dung beetles. The pastures provide a buffer during extreme weather events. The hedgerows, rows of trees and dry-stone walls can function as part of green corridors between habitats.

Locations

- most downland grasslands with vehicular access

Opportunities

Considerate cutting and extending the planting of hedgerows can enhance their functionality for local wildlife. Tree planting can bridge gaps in existing tree rows and enhance riparian values along streams, strengthening their functions as wildlife corridor as well as regulating river temperatures and stabilising riverbanks. Rotational grazing and herbal leys can help limit the need for chemical parasite control.

Woodlands

The woodlands within the Strathblane Community Council area consist of areas of Ancient woodland with native species, long-established woodlands of plantation origin, ancient woodland sites which have been altered by planting non-native tree species, and new woodland plantations on sites with different previous land use/ecosystems. The sites with production timber consists mostly of sitka spruce, Douglas fir and larch. They are predominantly in rotation of felling and replanting and produces much needed timber. They are typically planted as monocultures. There are several areas that can be considered as woodland pasture. These are areas of grazed pasture with veteran or ancient trees with an open canopy and they diverse habitats for wildlife. This ancient part of the cultural landscape pre-dates the Highland Clearances.

Locations

(Ancient) native woodlands include :

- Dumgoyach hill,
- north of WHW Hotel and Campsite

- north-east of Carbeth Loch
- part of Carbeth wood
- part of Loch Wood (east of Craigallian Loch)
- Mugdock Wood
- Ballagan Glen

Production woodland locations, felling licences and management plans can be found on Forestry Scotland website.

Examples of woodland pasture locations include:

- pastures east and west of Ballagan Estate
- pastures with veteran trees on the Duntreath Estate
- pastures with veteran trees on the Ballewan Estate

Opportunities

Tree planting and woodland regeneration schemes are key parts of carbon sequestration and conservation efforts of Stirling Council, supporting woodland habitats to thrive and be (re)connected. However, inappropriate tree planting on existing species-rich grassland and heathland habitats can compromise their biodiversity potential and provision of ecosystem services including flood mitigation, and release soil carbon stocks during the land conversion process. Whilst this lost carbon is recovered over time, it can take decades if not centuries to recover to the original level of soil carbon stocks after disturbance due to the change of land use.

The amount of carbon sequestered and stored by tree planting will depend on whether the trees are felled, how the timber is used, level and method of land drainage, and the predicted increase in forest fires and vulnerability to pests and diseases due to climate change. Reaching the flood mitigation potential of planted woodland takes time and, until such capacity is reached, can negatively affect flood risk to the environment and nearby communities. Furthermore, soil preparation and woodland management, including soil disturbance, drainage, herbicide and fertilizer use, can negatively impact surrounding ecosystem health, including soil life and freshwater fauna.

Carefully analysing whether there is a net biodiversity gain, carbon storage and flood mitigation on the short- and long-term when afforestation is considered on a site without recent woodland history is paramount and offers opportunities to reconsider locations offering more favourable long-term positive biodiversity and community outcomes. Considering this on a holistic basis for the interest of the local community and biodiversity will look beyond the 'right tree, right place' and 'standard' impact assessment considerations.

The flood mitigation capacity of woodlands depends on the forest structure and management. Due to overgrazing by livestock and roedeer, the majority of the local woodlands lack natural regeneration and undergrowth. This limits nesting opportunities for birds and creates monocultures and bare soils. As bare soils dry up more quickly, it makes woodlands more vulnerable to erosion. Taking measures to decrease grazing pressure and restore the layered undergrowth vegetation will boost biodiversity and water retention capacity. Significant ecological improvement can be gained by creating or restoring the natural gradients of woodland edges and broadening riparian woodland zones.

Waterways and wetlands

The watercourses in the Strathblane area consist of a number of small burns joining the Ballagan and Blanewater as it flows west through the valley. The streams are generally small, and fast flowing as they drain the upland muirs to the south and Campsie Fells hillslopes north of the villages. Responses to rainfall are generally short lived and flashy, with the occasional significant flood bringing rich sediments and debris down to the valley floor and main water course of the Blane. Each are home to many native species of flora and fauna relying on the watercourses for sustenance and while far from healthy, the river supports Atlantic salmon and lamprey.

The Blane flows east to west, starting as the Ballagan Burn before forming the Blane Water around the King George V park. After the village the Blane Water flows northwest to meet the Endrick Water near Killearn. The Blane is slower flowing and more sizeable than the tributaries with a series of deep pools and riffles, each creating their own habitats for fauna and birdlife.

In addition to providing natural drainage, the watercourses around the area have sustained agricultural and industrial activities in the valley for centuries. In addition to natural waterbodies, a number of engineered impoundments and channel sections fed watermills and provided water supply to bleaching and print works. The legacy of these activities has left a number of lochs on the muirs, interconnected with shallow channels and drains. These in turn provide habitat for a wide and varied ecosystem.

Locations

- The Ballagan Burn, Blane Water and tributaries
- Mugdock (Mugdock, Craigallan, and Carbeth Lochs)
- Dumbrook Muir (including Lock Ardingning, Dumbrook Loch, Deil's Craig and Punchbowl dams)
- Wetlands and ponds along the Blane, west of the villages

Opportunities

Developing the waterbodies and courses to develop Nature Networks promotes more suitable environments for otters and amphibians, wild and waterfowl. Local populations are present but relatively few in number. Improved management of land and pollution events (including historical and legacy activity), removal of invasive species (e.g. Himalayan Balsam found extensively along the Blane) and developing better and more varied sediment beds would improve biodiversity, water quality and habitat. Restructuring and repairing river banks, dam embankments and reducing straightened channels will serve to reduce flood risk and impacts downstream.

Urban landscape

Urban landscapes play a vital role in providing benefits for both our community and biodiversity. The park, school grounds, play areas, football pitch and garden spaces are places to relax and play. Whilst they are created for recreation and aesthetics, they create vital habitats for wildlife, contributing to the overall health and resilience of the surrounding ecosystems.

Opportunities

Species such as swift, house martin, barn owl, barn swallow, house sparrow and several bat species use roof spaces for their nests and roosts. The local populations of especially swift, House martin and House sparrow are decreasing to the point where viable local populations might disappear altogether. Urgent intervention by creating nest spaces can help support and restore these populations. Artificial light at night can cause major disruption to urban biodiversity, altering the behaviour, physiology, and reproductive success of urban animals including birds and insects. Limiting the use of garden lighting by using motion-activated devices or considerate placement and timers can limit disruption, as well as controlling the direction of these light sources to the ground instead of spreading omnidirectionally.

NATURE NETWORKS

Nature networks can be divided into the categories core area (and buffer zones), landscape corridors, and stepping stone corridors. By modelling our nature networks using 'key species', landscape elements can be identified that meet the needs of a wider group of species. These landscape elements can be enhanced, increasing their functionality, whilst keeping in mind to minimize negative effects on other species models. For example, planting a line-forming element through an extensive grassland area might be beneficial for bats, but can have a negative effect on ground nesting birds. Maps 3 and 4 visualise opportunities for green networks of habitats, considering their core areas, corridors and stepping stones within the SCCA boundary and beyond. Further investigation can illuminate if and where interventions are needed to strengthen the ecological functionality of these corridors.

Core areas

The core areas for our nature networks are the SSSI-sites, ancient woodland, (ancient) waxcap- & species rich grassland, lochs, streams, peatlands and heathlands within and surrounding the Strathblane Community Council area.

Corridors

Nature corridors bridge the gap between habitats that would otherwise be too small for a species to use and supports geneflow critical for minimizing inbreeding, re-establishment of species, and resilience of populations. These corridors can only function well if they meet the target species-specific life-history requirements. For example, bats will roost in cavities in trees and buildings and, depending on the species, will use line forming elements like tree rows to move between their roosts and foraging grounds. Large gaps in these line-forming elements will affect the bat's ability to reach their foraging grounds.

Stepping stones

Stepping stones allow species to move between larger patches of habitat and are important to connect fragmented landscapes. The functionality of stepping stones depends on their quality, and the ability for specific species to reach them within the wider nature network.

Model 'Pine marten'

The landscape type for this example requires broad connections between small scale landscapes, including hedgerows, wet pastures, ancient woodland, mature woodland, young woodland, gradual and species rich woodland edges.

Local species that benefit from this green corridor are pine marten, hedgehog, green woodpecker, redpoll, bullfinch, weasel, stoat, brown long-eared bat, noctule bat, red squirrel, fork-tailed flower bee, purple hairstreak, grey dagger (moth), badger, bluebell and beetles.

The minimal width of the corridors is 500 m, with an allowance of some parts to be less than 100 m (but not more than 100 m long for Pine marten).

Important barriers are roads and artificial light on bat flight routes.

Model 'Otter'

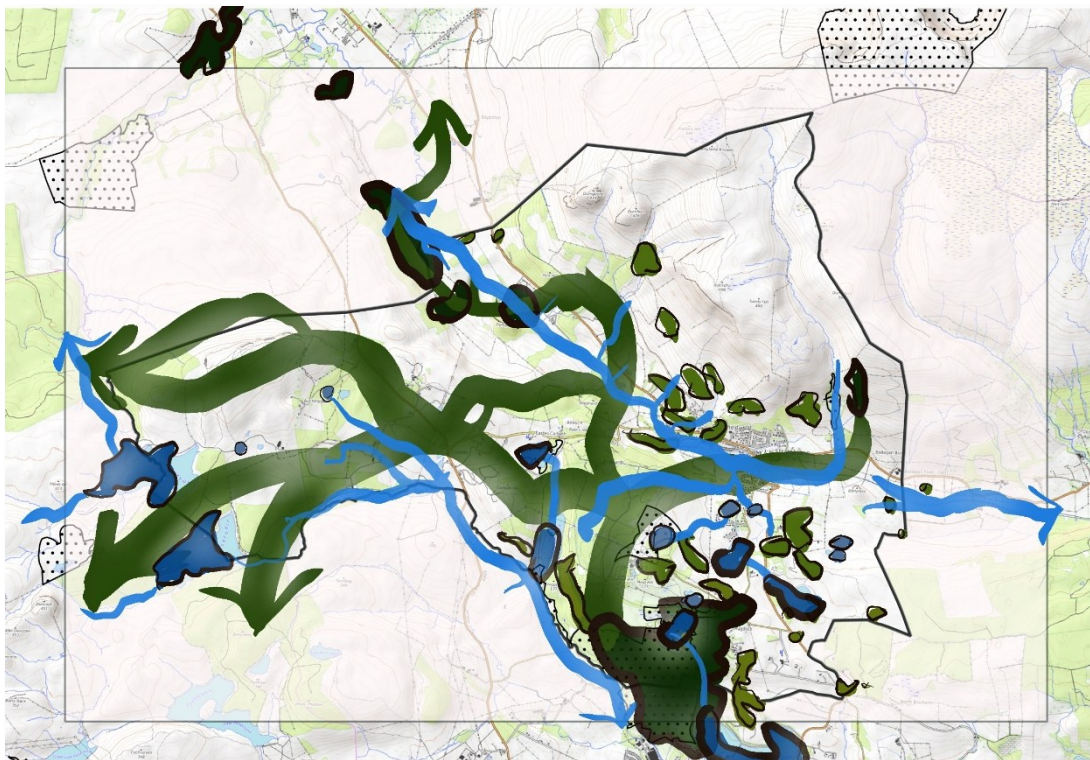
This model focusses on a combination of waterways with riparian elements and marshy areas, ponds and lochs.

This model supports local species like otter, kingfisher, brown trout, salmon, European eel, dipper, grey wagtail, damselfly and dragonflies, woodcock, Daubenton's bat, amphibians (common frog, common toad, palmate newt, common newt), sedge warbler, bog pimpernel and least yellow water lily.

Stepping stones for this model consist of a variety of small-scale landscape elements, including lochs, ponds, gardens, small (wet) woodlands and rush pastures.

Important factors for the functionality of this green corridor are the water quality and availability of broad water edge zones.

Species including Otter and amphibians spend a considerable amount of time on land and a major issue for their conservation is mortality due to traffic collision.



Map3 - Green corridors model 'Pine marten' (green) and 'Otter' (blue).

Model 'Small pearl-bordered fritillary'

The landscape model encompasses a mosaic of wet moor, marsh and rush areas to dry acid/neutral/calcareous species-rich grasslands and verges. Notable plant species found in this habitat are heather, harebell, frog orchid, early marsh orchid, northern marsh orchid, Lesser butterfly-orchid, grass-of-Parnassus, wild pansy and a range of sedges, grasses and mosses.

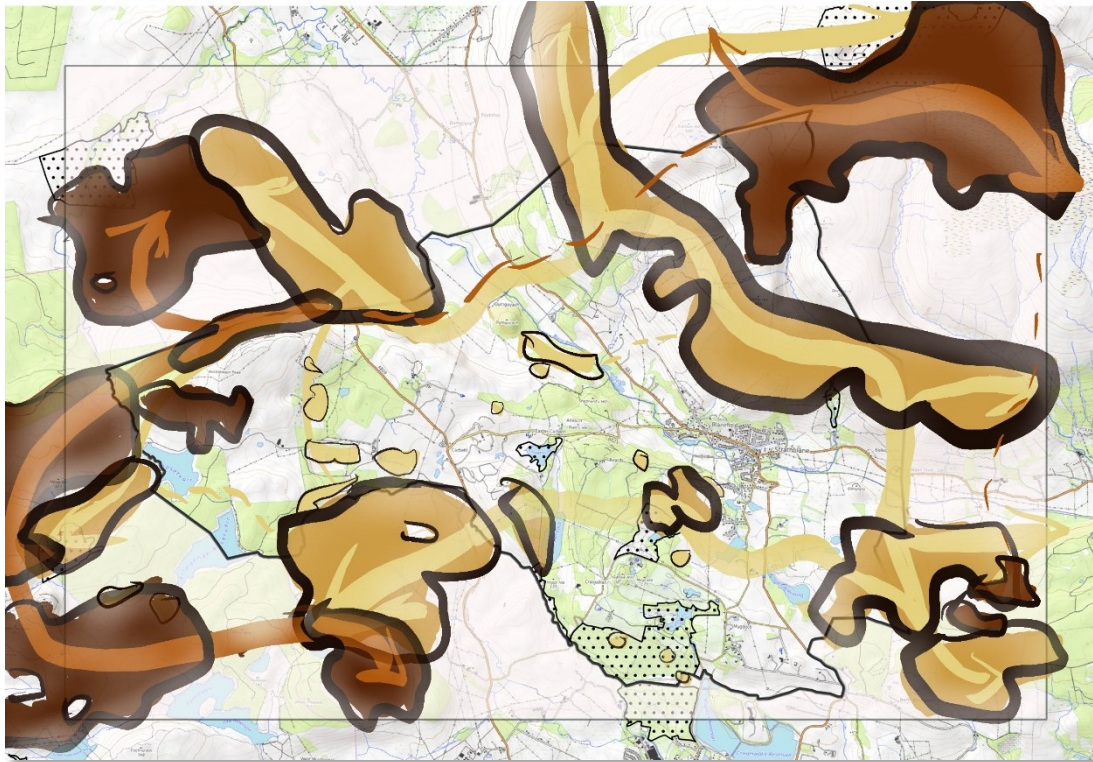
Local species that benefit from this green corridor include small-bordered fritillary, small heath, small copper, latticed heath (moth), narrow-bordered five-spotted burnet (moth), bellflower blunthorn bee, gypsy cuckoo bee, common lizard, adder and badger (foraging). The local geology and historic land use are the main contributors to the species richness and natural variety of a mosaic of habitats. Corridors should align with the needs of the species. For example, the Common lizard will not cross an area over 100 m of improved grassland, arable land or built-up area.

The planned Buglife's 'B-Line' green corridor along the John Muir Way for insects falls within this category. This green corridor is mapped out along 134 miles of walking and cycling route From Helensburgh to Dunbar and crosses the Strathblane Community Council area. Neighbouring East-Dunbartonshire Council has embraced the potential and value of this corridor by including it in their list of Local Nature Conservation Sites and implements a wildflower-friendly grass cutting regime. In its current condition, the part of this green corridor within the Strathblane Community Council area has limited ecological and aesthetic value. Appropriate management in combination with reseeding and several years of cut-and-remove can help support the effectivity of this corridor.

Model 'Large heath'

The landscape model 'Large heath' is formed by the network of blanket bog areas which represent a range of gradations of peat depth and 'health' condition. Typical species of sphagnum mosses, bog asphodel, cotton grasses, heathers, grasses, rushes and sedges can be found, as well as aquatic species in the number of lochans spread out throughout the areas. Large areas of peat bog are found uphill whilst smaller 'remnants' of blanket bog are found downhill and act as stepping stones, connecting the larger peatlands.

Local species that benefit from this green corridor include bilberry (blaeberry) bumblebee, red grouse, black grouse, skylark, snipe and several peatland-associated beetles, flies and spider species.



Map 4 - Green corridors model 'Small pearl-bordered fritillary' (yellow) and 'Large heath' (brown).

Important factors for the functionality of this model of green corridor are the health of the blanket bog and the availability of stepping stones. Threats to the health of the peatlands and the stepping stones include drainage, invasion of self-seeding trees from nearby woodlands and forestry, agricultural improvement, overgrazing (especially during winter), burning (illegal muirburn and wildfires), erosion, eutrophication of the water-supply and atmospheric pollutions including nitrogen deposition.

F. APPENDIX F - LOCAL PLACE PLAN VALIDATION CHECK LIST

Statutory Requirement for Local Place Plan	Requirement compliance check (Yes/No)	Identify the page or paragraph where each requirement is met within the Local Place Plan
1. Identify the community body who prepared the LPP, and a statement showing compliance with the definition of a Community Body. (This definition can be seen in Text Box 1 of the Planning Circular LPP, Page 3).		SCC SCDT
2. Contain a map that shows the land to which the Local Place Plan relates		y
3. Contain a statement of the Community Body's proposals as to the development and use of land or identifies land or buildings that the community body considers to be of particular significance to the local area within the Local Place Plan area.		y
4. Check that where a proposal relates to a specific area of land or building that the Local Place Plan contains a map or maps to identify the location of the land or building.		y
5. Contact details (including email address) to contact the community body		
6. A copy of the written constitution of the Community Controlled body		Cc scheme Scdt articles
7. A list of the councillors and community councils consulted, and when, that border the area to which the Local Place Plan relates		
8. A copy of the Proposed Local Place Plan		
9. A copy of the pre-submission information notice evidencing compliance with the required contents		tbd
10. A statement explaining how the proposals in the Local Place Plan		

align with or differ from the relevant policies and development proposals and why it considers that the Local Development Plan should be amended considering this.		
11. A statement explaining how the LPP has regard to the Local Development Plan, National Planning Framework, and any applicable Locality Plans.		
12. A brief description of the engagement and consultation activity or activities		y
13. An estimation of the number of people/organisations involved in Local Place Plan preparation (that would be in a survey or workshop)		
14. Evidence of the level of community support for the Local Place Plan and how the community body reached that view		
15. Clear reasons for any amendment to a policy or site allocation – if applicable.		