



Dulnain Bridge Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

Compiled December 2024

Supported by

Dulnain Bridge Community Council

Dulnain Bridge Community Development Trust

Dulnain Bridge Village Hall

Friends of Dulnain Bridge

Facilitated by Voluntary Action in Badenoch and Strathspey



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1. Summary

In October 2024, Dulnain Bridge Community Council together with Dulnain Bridge Community Development Trust, Dulnain Bridge Village Hall and Friends of Dulnain Bridge, decided that they wished to carry out a review of the community action plan for the village, which had been previously undertaken in 2016. The purpose of revisiting and updating the plan was primarily aimed at giving these key community organisations, along with a range of other groups in the community, plus public and private sector stakeholders, a strong mandate to move forward with tackling current and emerging issues, as well as leading on new community projects, identified as priorities by the residents of the Dulnain Bridge Community Council area during the process in late 2024.

With support from Voluntary Action in Badenoch & Strathspey, the community-led steering group, comprising representation from the organisations listed above, agreed that they would seek the views of residents on a number of key questions. This was achieved via a survey which was personally delivered to every household by volunteers - as a paper copy, which was also accessible online. In addition, the questions contained in the survey were also raised with some targeted groups that were identified as being harder to get accurate/quality information from. This was undertaken by members of the steering group going out with the survey questions to places and events where it was considered that individuals or groups falling into this category might be approached.

The process was entitled **Dulnain Bridge Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030**. In previous action planning carried out by the communities within this area, the focus was on activity mostly with a 2 to 3-year timespan. Given the increased need now to also focus on longer-term goals, particularly in relation to the environment and the economy, residents and businesses were asked to consider where they and the community wanted to be by 2030, so generating a more extended set of plans and aspirations.

Examples of **recent successes** across the communities with community-led projects and action planning include:

- Setting up the community development trust
- Refreshing of village planters
- Friends of DB set up and all the events
- New housing for the community
- Upgrades to Hall & social events
- Cycle path to Grantown
- Community newsletters and FB pages
- Footpath joining Speyside Centre with existing paths in Curr Woods
- 20mph bin stickers
- Litter picks
- Swift boxes x 25.

To help add to these achievements, residents were encouraged to take part in the community action plan review in 2024. However, this time round people were invited to think not only about what might be achieved together, but that the projects the villages were being asked to consider, would be ones that would help the area develop a more sustainable future. This is set against a backdrop of life post-lockdowns, the challenge of finding new volunteers, plus the changing economic as well as the climate and biodiversity situation we find ourselves in.

The Dulnain Bridge community action planning process adhered to the National Standards for Community Engagement to ensure all of the following elements were fully taken into account during the community-led initiative:

Impact, Communication, Methods, Working together, Planning, Support and Inclusion.

See [Section 4. Community Engagement](#) for further details on the 7 Standards.

2. The Community

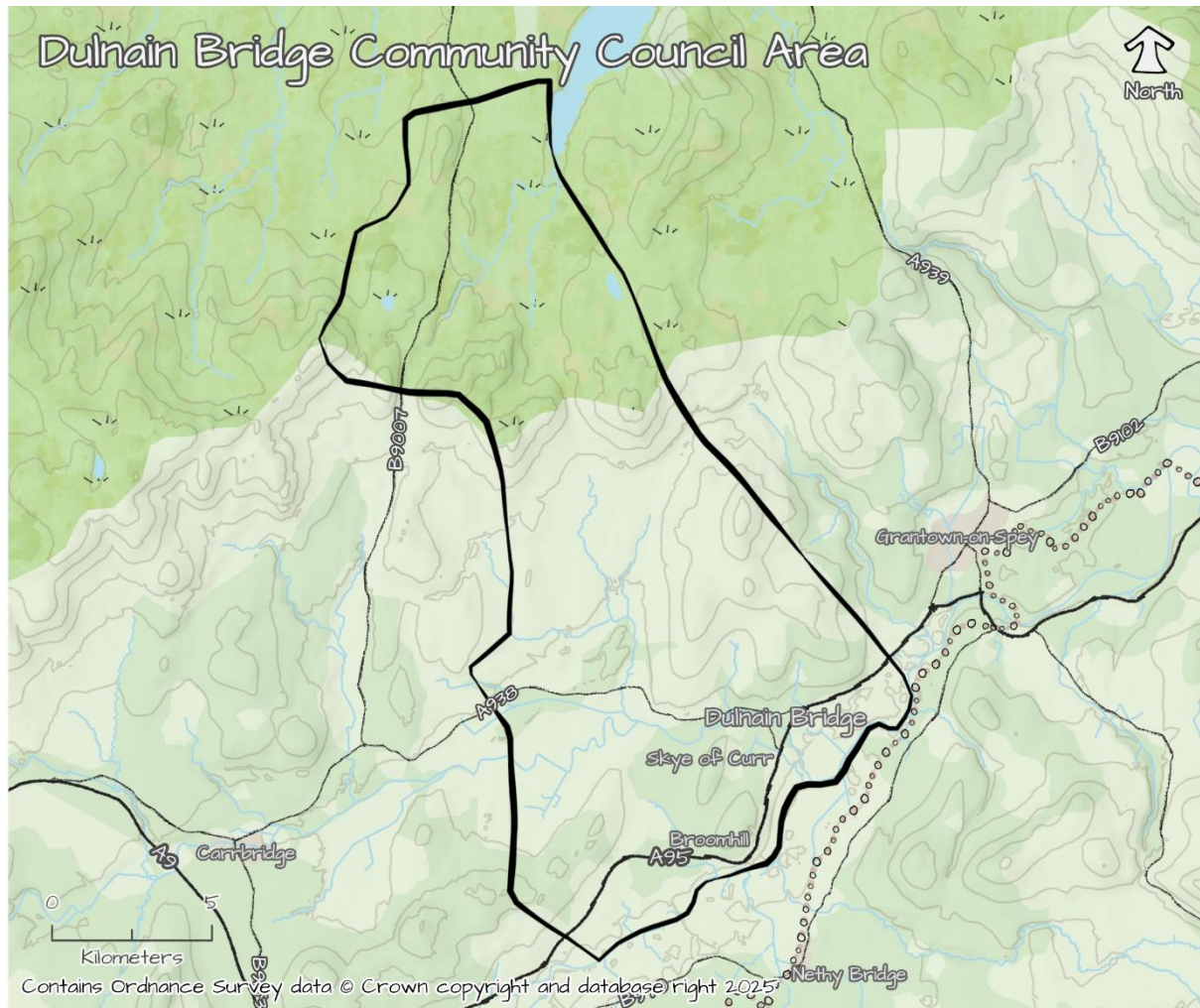
Dulnain Bridge (Scottish Gaelic: Drochaid Thulnain) is a village in Strathspey, sited on the river Dulnain, close to where it meets the River Spey. It is three miles south-west of Grantown-on-Spey in the Scottish Highlands and sits within the Highland Council local authority area. The current population is estimated at just over 470 people. The Dulnain Bridge Community Council area stretches far beyond the village of Dulnain Bridge, up to Lochindorb in the north, and down to Broomhill in the south (see Dulnain Bridge Community Council Area map on page 5).

The village lies near to the A95 in the Cairngorms National Park. One of its notable features is the bridge over the Dulnain, which still today lies at the heart of the village. The traditional counties of Inverness-shire and Morayshire are separated by the bridge, which has existed for centuries. It was swept away in a flood in 1829, but was re-built to reconnect the two communities the village is made up of. Dulnain Bridge itself is centred to the north of the bridge, and this particular part of the village lies in Morayshire. The crofting community of Skye of Curr – lying in Inverness-shire - stretches for a mile to the south terminating at the well-known Speyside Centre. Curr Wood to the south and east of the village has the country's largest population of Twinflower known by the botanical name of *Linnea Borealis* which shares the forest floor with a tiny orchid called Creeping Ladies Tresses.

At the north end of the village, next to the impressive Roches Moutonnée (set of unique glaciated rocks), is a display of antiquated farm machinery, designed to enhance the road into the village from the east. It features crofting machinery that has been used for decades in the fields around the Dulnain Bridge area.

There is one hotel in the village -Tigh-na-Sgiath. The village hall is located on the main road in Dulnain Bridge, next to the village post office and garage. On the other side of the bridge is a park and children's playground. Notably within Dulnain Bridge there remains one of a decreasing number of areas where crofting continues as a traditional way of life for a number of people within the community.

Dulnain Bridge Community Council Area map



Community Organisations

There are a small number of community organisations/groups which work for the benefit of the Dulnain Bridge community and are almost entirely run by volunteers. These include: Dulnain Bridge Community Council, Dulnain Bridge Community Development Trust, Dulnain Bridge Village Hall and Friends of Dulnain Bridge.

Community Assets

Dulnain Bridge Village Hall

Antiquated Crofting / Farm Machinery (display) at north-east entrance to village

Local Businesses

There are several local businesses operating in the village including Dulnain Bridge Garage, Dulnain Bridge PO, the Speyside Centre, Seafield and Muckrach Estates, farms and crofts, the Cairn Distillery, as well as a number of holiday rental opportunities. There is currently no local business/tourism association to represent the voice of commercial activity in Dulnain Bridge.

3. The Process

The Dulnain Bridge community consultation period ran from October to December 2024 and during this time, the way in which the community action planning process was carried out, broadly fell into four stages. These were:

- 1) Gathering Information
- 2) Data Sorting and Collation
- 3) Involving People & Refining Ideas
- 4) Community Action Plan (CAP) document production

Within the four stages of the process, the steering group asked the following questions:

Gathering Information

- What do we want to know?
- What questions will we ask?
- What methods will we use?
- How will we do it?

Data Sorting

- What does it involve?
- How will we do it?
- Who will do / assist with this?
- In what form will we present it back to the community?

Involving People & Refining Ideas

- What stakeholder groups do we need to involve?
- How (& where) will we present the information gathered so far?
- How will people in the community help refine the information?
- Who will assist with this?

CAP document production

- What will it include?
- Who will put it together?
- How will it be presented to the community?
- What happens to it next?

In addition, the steering group also considered what timescales and key dates they wanted to aim for and how they would deal with communications & publicity - ensuring that these elements were robust, so the process was as inclusive as it could be.

The fifth and most crucial stage of the whole action planning initiative, involves delivery of the plan by the Dulnain Bridge community and other stakeholders. Essentially this deals with questions such as:

- Who will take responsibility for the CAP?
- How will it be driven forward?
- How will it be monitored and evaluated?

There is more detail on how this can be achieved in [Section 8. Next Steps](#).

Gathering Information

There was a lot of discussion about the nature and precise wording of questions in the survey, as the steering group wanted to revisit questions asked in previous community-led action planning, to re-establish what specific things people liked about Dulnain Bridge and wanted to keep in their community. They also wished to encourage the communities to look to at least a 5-year horizon, and consider how they might tackle some of the trickier issues such as care for the environment, supporting younger and older residents, employability and transport. So questions were asked which were broadly framed, to allow responders to bring up a wide range of issues and ideas without being led.

The paper version covered just two sides of A4 and the survey asked 3 questions:

- 1) *What do you like about living in Dulnain Bridge?*
- 2) *What changes would you like to see for Dulnain Bridge by 2030?*
(You might want to think about how you as an individual or we as a community can improve our environment, address climate change and biodiversity loss, develop our local economy, increase social and leisure opportunities and local cultural experiences.)
If you could improve just ONE of these things, what would it be?
- 3) *Are there any new projects (large or small) that you would like to see happening in the community? Or any existing projects that need to be sustained?*

The survey also asked:

Would you be willing to get involved in any projects you are interested in? YES / NO
If Yes, please provide contact details.

This last additional question was included to try to encourage more people to come forward to help with projects that were of particular interest to them, in order to counteract the reduction in volunteer numbers, that had come about in recent years and especially following the 2020/21 pandemic lockdowns.

It was decided that all households in Dulnain Bridge (approx. 300) would receive a paper copy of the survey through their letterbox and this was carried out by a team of community volunteers, who over a period of a few days, delivered copies out into all areas of the community. This method helped to deliver an inclusive process of community engagement, where everyone had the opportunity to respond to the survey if they wished and they were able to do this via hard copy, which could be deposited back into one of the centrally located survey boxes, or online via QR code which enabled the community to access the survey on a range of devices.

Data Sorting

All of the responses came in either online via Survey Monkey, by hard copy into CAP-branded boxes left at various locations in the area, or from information collated at events put on for specific groups in the village. Surveys were returned from the community's primary and high school pupils and these responses highlighted the ideas and opinions of young people living in the area.

Every comment was recorded and categorised, so that everyone would be able to 'see' their voice in the displayed results. The information was sorted into 3 main themes: Social, Environmental and Our Young People and the number of times a particular issue or idea was mentioned was noted, so priorities could rise to the top of the lists in each themed category.

These lists were then prepared for display (see [Section 6. Action Plan – what the community wants](#) and [Section 10. Appendices](#)), so every member of the community could see what had been said and get involved in the next stage, when ideas were refined and solutions to issues sought.

Involving People & Refining Ideas

The process culminated in the ***Dulnain Bridge Big Conversation***, which took place on a Friday and Saturday in December 2024 at Dulnain Bridge Village Hall. At this drop in event, the results were offered back to the community and time given for reflection and discussion around the topics.

During the event, all of the residents who attended were asked to consider the top priorities that had been identified from the process under the headings of Dulnain Bridge:

- A Socially Connected Community
- A Climate Conscious Community
- A Community for Our Young People

They were asked to look at those areas of particular interest to them and write on action plan templates aimed at refining ideas by looking at questions such as: *What specific action needs to be taken to achieve this priority* and *Who needs to be involved?*

CAP document production

All of the comments and pieces of information given by the public during the **Dulnain Bridge Big Conversation** event were collected and incorporated into this report, which now belongs to the Dulnain Bridge community and will be used as the basis for ongoing community development over the next 5-8 years, with support from the community's organisations and all other relevant stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sector.

Also, a list of all those who came forward offering to volunteer their help with certain projects was compiled and will be held by the team taking the action plan forward (referred to as **Team Dulnain Bridge** for the purposes of this report).

4. Community Engagement

The National Standards for Community Engagement are good-practice principles designed to improve and guide the process of community engagement.

They are clear principles that describe the main elements of effective community engagement. They provide detailed performance statements that everyone involved can use to achieve the highest quality results and the greatest impact.

The standards are particularly helpful for communities - their organisations and groups - to help them involve their members or the wider community in shaping the services and changes they need, and to make sure they accurately represent members' or the community's views in the decision-making processes.



5. Survey Responses

Thanks go to the 81 residents who contributed so meaningfully and thoughtfully to the community survey – this number represents 17% of the community’s population and includes responses from school age residents. Also, thanks go to the people who attended the Big Conversation drop-in event at the village hall over the two days.

For a full list of what came out of the survey responses, see [Section 10. Appendices](#) (list of appendices below). These show all comments made by the community in answer to the survey questions, prioritised in order of the number of people who mentioned them.

[Appendix i](#) [What do you like about living in Dulnain Bridge?](#)

[Appendix ii](#) [What changes would you like to see for Dulnain Bridge by 2030?](#)

6. Action Plan – what the community wants

Project Themes and Priorities

The CAP sets out the community’s vision for the longer term (up to 10 years) with more detailed activity across the 3 specified themes:

- A Socially Connected Community
- A Climate Conscious Community
- A Community for Our Young People

itemising priority outcomes and actions which are shown in the relevant tables below.

It is important to note that some of the project outcomes will be a “quick win” whereas others will sometimes take significantly more time to plan and execute. To achieve results and outcomes in the short, medium/longer term each high priority project/outcome will have its own activity plan which will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely (SMART) and determined and agreed in the first part of the CAP implementation.

The 3 themes were taken and put into separate groupings, showing what the priorities are for each theme. Within each priority, projects have been listed that have been drawn from the high priorities that came out of the survey data. Further views and information for each priority were sought from those who attended the drop-in events and suggested actions, together with any additional information are outlined below each section.

DULNAIN BRIDGE: A SOCIALLY CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Priority: Shop at the post office would be great

- Feasibility to explore community options

Priority: Café in the village for locals and to encourage people to visit the village

- Maybe a community-run café in hall

Priority: Traffic slowing measures on road entering village from Carrbridge

- Look into putting a crossing

Priority: Upgrade entry signs to the village

- Replace signs and replant to make each entry to village more welcoming and attractive

Priority: Improve the picnic bench area

- Put a fence between the benches and bottle bank area

PRIORITY: IMPROVE COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Shop & Post Office

- Explore possibility of delivery/return methods eg Evri
- Support PO as much as possible

Cafe

- Community run in the hall
- Combine a pop-up shop with a café

Picnic Bench area

- Fence between benches and bottle bank
- Reposition recycling to rear of village hall
- Consider positioning of dog poo bins, so not near to picnic benches
- Move picnic area to opposite garage if recycling can't be moved
- Add a BBQ stand if possible

Install winter lights

- Plan layout requirements and look into funding
- + Larger noticeboard on front of Hall

PRIORITY: TRAFFIC SLOWING MEASURES

- Discuss options available with Highland Council eg crossings, speed bumps, chicanes etc

PRIORITY: UPGRADE ENTRY SIGNS

- Potentially 4 signs (at A938 x 2, 1 x B9178, 1 x past Speyside Centre)
- Talk to Grantown Initiative re signs recently installed there
- Engage with local artist/graphic designer and explore costs
- Replant (at base of / nearby signs) also to make more attractive

DULNAIN BRIDGE: A CLIMATE CONSCIOUS COMMUNITY

Priority: Complete path to Grantown

Priority: Fix the bridge so the barriers can be removed

Priority: Develop / connect more local pathways and cycleways to other villages

- Nethy Bridge
- Carrbridge

Priority: Promote biodiversity in the village and woodlands

- Plant different types of native trees in underused open land – without obscuring the views
- Plant more wildflowers to attract insects
- Allow some grass to grow long in summer months to allow variety of flowers to bloom eg at eastern end of park
- More bird boxes in the village

PRIORITY: COMPLETE PATH TO GRANTOWN

- Urge CNPA / experts to get this finally constructed in 2025

PRIORITY: FIX THE BRIDGE

- Use this mandate to push for Highland Council action to repair bridge and remove eyesore barriers

DEVELOP/CONNECT LOCAL PATHWAYS & CYCLEWAYS TO OTHER VILLAGES

- Explore options for crossing A95 to encourage Active Travel to Nethy and Boat
- Encourage CNPA to pick this up **after** completing Grantown route eg link to old Carr road via the laundry path
- Consider siting some benches in the woods eg at viewpoints
- Investigate getting better path maps – maybe done by village itself
- Continue to improve and maintain current path networks

PRIORITY: PROMOTE BIODIVERSITY

- Info boards at key places on existing species (or part of upgraded path maps)
- Develop a wildflower space
- Identify a spot for a community herb/veg plot
- Campaign to get swift boxes around village (ask Spey Shed to make them)

DULNAIN BRIDGE: A COMMUNITY FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

Priorities:

- Bigger slide at the playpark
- More things at the playpark
- More bike-friendly paths
- Pump track

PRIORITY: YOUNG PEOPLE

Improve the playpark

- Pull together a volunteer group to take forward an upgrade project
- Ensure dogs are kept out of the play area eg fenced with automatic closing gate (at wood side of park?)
- Replace nets on football goals

More bike-friendly paths

- Bring together a project group to identify requirements and costs

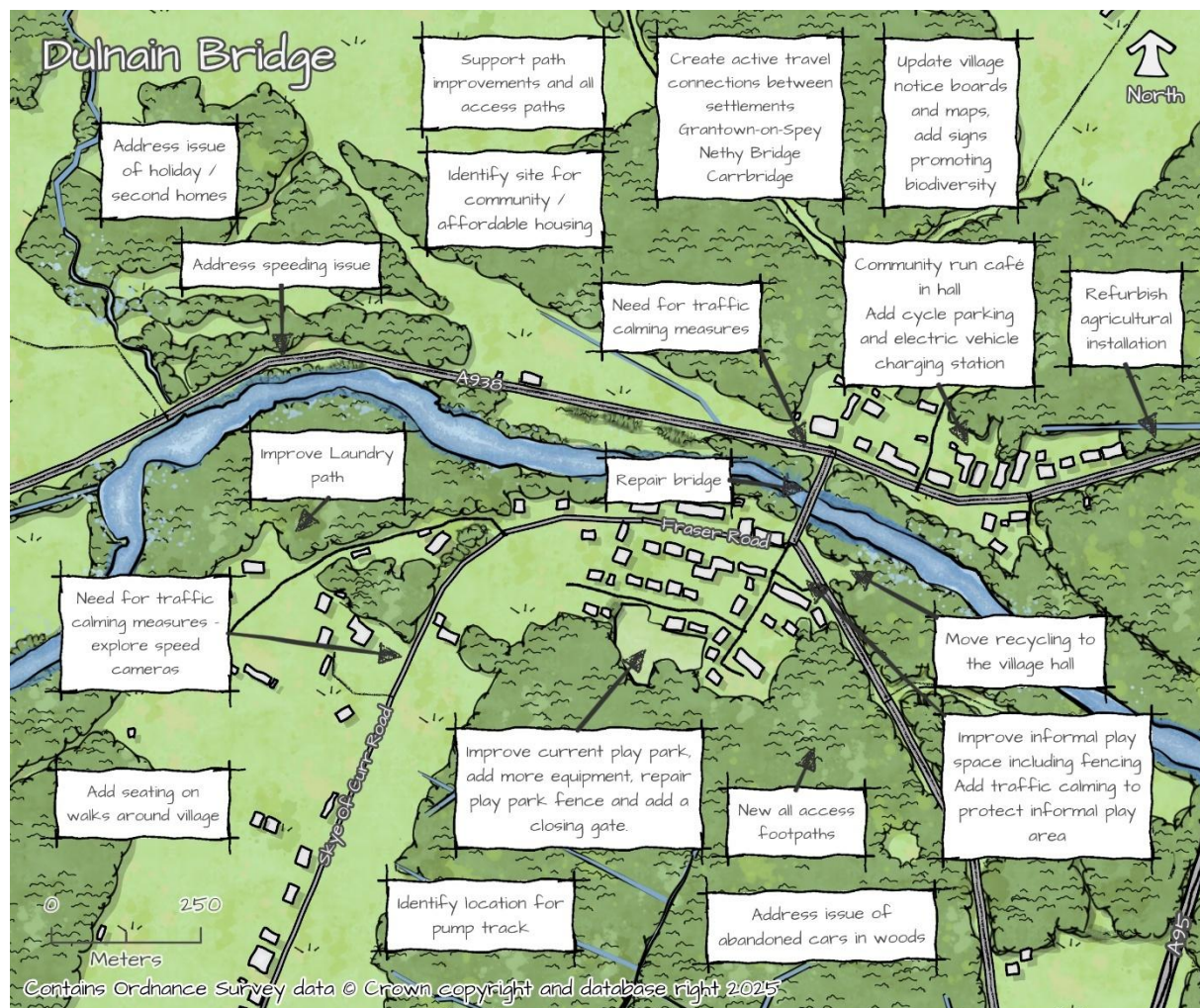
Pump track

- Explore site options and feasibility, funding etc

7. Suggested Spatial Priorities

The sketch map below illustrates some suggested spatial proposals to help realise the community vision and Community Action Plan. It displays comments which were provided by local residents and businesses during the two-day Big Conversation drop-in event. The map refers to the priorities that have come out of the Community Action Plan (CAP) responses and help express the community's aspirations and solutions for development and use of land within the Local Development Plan. This reflects the local planning policy which aims to create sustainable, liveable and productive places as expressed in National Planning Framework 4 (2023).

Dulnain Bridge locality Community Action Plan map



The map shows some of the community's ideas and priorities for the future development of Dulnain Bridge, as well as helping the community to develop and deliver its own projects.

The purpose of the maps is to:

- Complement the CAP by showing how the Dulnain Bridge community could look in future once the vision and CAP have been implemented.
- Help Dulnain Bridge Community Council, Highland Council and CNPA consider the impact of planning applications on the community.
- Inform CNPA's review of the Local Development Plan.
- Influence investment from public bodies, funders, landowners and businesses, in ways that support the community.

8. Next Steps: Delivery

Steps to deliver the Dulnain Bridge Community Action Plan

The next steps to start working with the action plan and looking at how parts can start to be delivered will be subject to some discussion within the community organisations, but broadly involves **collectively**:

- Setting up a *Team Dulnain Bridge* (see below) to take the plan forward. Agreeing a chair for a specified period at a time, so will rotate after X months or after X meetings
- Agreeing to adopt the Values and Principles laid out below
- Agreeing what priorities will be taken forward initially
- Managing the project volunteer list that has come out of the process
- Involving all key stakeholders (organisations & individuals) in co-design of project delivery
- Drawing up a more detailed delivery action plan for each prioritised project, identifying aims, actions, milestones, who needs to be involved, key deliverables. (VABS has a template for this.)
- Communicating progress with the communities
- Reviewing progress on a regular basis
- Revisiting the action plan as required

Values and Principles

The following values and principles will underpin the way in which this action plan is rolled out and implemented:

- 1) A plan for all - it is the responsibility of the whole community (individuals and groups) to unite and work together for project ambitions to be realised
- 2) Transparency - all ideas should be planned and researched openly with a commitment to co-production where groups contribute to the ideas as they develop
- 3) Partnership - working together with a shared agenda will be at the heart of any activity arising from this plan
- 4) Inclusion - everyone is invited to participate and everyone benefits, regardless of age and ability

- 5) Impact - the success of this plan will be judged on activities which have a positive influence on people and communities
- 6) Involvement - ensuring the communities are meaningfully involved in decisions that affect their lives.

Team Dulnain Bridge

It is very important to ensure the effective delivery of this action plan, for all of the community to work together to implement it, ie a full community approach not just one or two organisations. This approach has been called *Team Dulnain Bridge* in this report, but of course the community will decide on its own name for these purposes.

Team Dulnain Bridge will be the forum for agreeing on how the Steps at the start of this section are taken forward, as well as where responsibility will sit in terms of delivering on the Values and Principles outlined above. It will not have a separate legal identity, but simply be a forum called maybe two or three times a year, perhaps by a rotating chair. It should comprise as a minimum, representatives from the organisations who initially steered the action planning process, together with any other community groups who wish to be involved.

Ongoing community engagement

A process for securing community mandates for projects at key milestones is advisable, so that projects can enjoy broad community support, follow best practice in terms of co-design and allow for those who will be most impacted by a project's deliverables to be involved in the activity.

Volunteer lists

A list of people who have come forward to volunteer in general or for specific projects, has been compiled from a question in the survey and also information given by residents at the Big Conversation event. The Dulnain Bridge CAP Volunteer list is a vital part of delivering on the action planning process and those on the list need to be kept informed of how things are being progressed and what part they might be able to play in that.

Levels of Support

The surveys have given the key community organisations in Dulnain Bridge a lot of detailed information coming from a wide sector of the community, regarding their thoughts on issues and ideas for projects that they would like to see taken forward on their behalf.

The priorities fall into two main groups and will require to be tackled in a different way:

- projects which, although some are mid to longer term, are possible for the community to take forward themselves, with some minimal support from the relevant key agencies or support organisations.

- large, complex issues around employment, housing, transport, business support and infrastructure, where the community will require a great deal of long-term assistance from various public, third and sometimes private sector organisations in order to take these forward and make a notable difference.

Monitoring, Auditing and Evaluation of the Community Action Plan

Monitoring, auditing and evaluation are essential requirements of any Community Action Plan to ensure it is being implemented. **Team Dulnain Bridge** will meet regularly to review progress on the plan. Keeping records against each theme and project will be a useful tool to ensure progress is being maintained. These meetings will be open and accessible to all groups and individuals. Evaluation provides an opportunity to reflect and learn from activities, assess the outcomes and effectiveness of a project and think about new ways of doing things.

9. Thanks & Acknowledgements

Thanks for all their involvement and hard work in helping to make the process a success must go to:

- * Dulnain Bridge Community Council
- * Dulnain Bridge Community Development Trust
- * Dulnain Bridge Village Hall
- * Friends of Dulnain Bridge
- * All the delivery volunteers who put surveys through every household's door

Voluntary Action in Badenoch and Strathspey (VABS), as an independent community and volunteering development charity, supported Dulnain Bridge community through this community action planning process and facilitated the steering group meetings, but always led by the community in how they wished to proceed.

Community Action Planning (CAP) is carried out in partnership by all of the Cairngorms National Park communities on a regular basis at the community's request. Funding to VABS to facilitate the communities' CAP process is provided by the Cairngorms National Park Authority.

10. Appendices

Appendix i: What do you like about living in Dulnain Bridge?

- Our amazing surroundings – great views, close to nature, peaceful, quiet and pretty
- Small village community - welcoming and friendly people, good community spirit, feels safe
- Quick and easy access to nature and woodland walks, quiet walks to take the dog
- Real neighbours and not just holiday homes
- The community hall
- Size of the village is nice and the fact it's less touristy and busy than other similarly sized villages in the area. I also like that there are very few holiday homes or Airbnbs, most of the houses are lived in full time!
- The river and forests: surrounded by woodland and lovely walks along the river
- Several active village organisations
- Speyside Centre nearby
- Post Office and Garage
- The playpark
- Singing carols on the grass
- Community holding more fun/positive events in the hall
- Football goals
- Clean air
- Rural setting but close enough to Inverness for bigger shops and the airport
- Grew up in the village, have been a resident for 47 years and love my village: it's quiet, safe with scenic surroundings
- Bus service
- Still has a rural feeling, not been spoilt with over planting of trees
- Close to Grantown on Spey for a wide range of services
- Sense of history eg the crofting community in Skye of Curr Road
- Able to go fishing
- In a national park

Appendix ii

What changes would you like to see for Dulnain Bridge by 2030?

SOCIAL

- Shop and post office would be great
- Café in the village - for locals and to encourage people to visit the village
- Traffic slowing measures on the road especially entering village from Carrbridge (a crossing?)
- Upgrade entry signs to the village – more welcoming
- Improve the picnic bench area – add a fence between the benches and bottle bank?

- More social housing
- Noticeboard outside village hall detailing local events
- More events in Hall for socialising and fundraising (bake sales, board game nights etc)
- More people getting involved in the community and helping to make ideas a reality
- Provide public toilets
- Replace fence around the park – looking rather tatty
- More regular use of village email system
- Interpretation about the farm equipment – what and how it was used

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Complete path to Grantown
- Fix the bridge so the barriers can be removed (and the community is not at risk of being divided by the river)
- Develop and connect more local pathways and cycleways to other villages eg Nethy Bridge and Carrbridge.
- Promote biodiversity in the village and woodlands
 - Plant different types of native trees in underused open land – without obscuring the views
 - Plant more wildflowers to attract insects
 - Allow some grass to grow long in summer months to allow variety of flowers to bloom eg at eastern end of park
 - More bird boxes in the village
- More frequent public transport to Grantown to save driving
- Improve Laundry Path off Skye of Curr road – lots of lying water
- Make more of the Roche Moutonnée
- Provide EV chargers that work
- More paths accessible for a wheelchair or buggy
- Footbridge over river Dulnain in the woods
- Community ownership of local woodland
- Is the local infrastructure in place to support the village expansion eg is the road through Skye of Curr going to be wide enough to cater for all the new house builds and multi car owners ?

YOUNG PEOPLE

- Bigger slide at the playpark
- More things at the playpark, especially suitable for younger children
- More bike-friendly paths
- Pump track

- The shop is closed and they would like it to reopen as a grocery store that sells necessities, a bit like the one in Carrbridge
- More clubs for young people
- A crossing near the bus stop would make it safer and that there should be no parking along the road by the garage
- A chicane in the main road would slow traffic down and make people stick to the speed limit
- The buses need a proper turning circle to make turning safer
- Better access to the woods with a clear entrance because people hop over the fence.