

Where is Flamingo Land in the LLTNPA's evidence report for their new Local Development Plan?

Description

Board

2025 meetings

- [10th March – National Park HQ: 10am](#)
- [9th June – National Park HQ: 10.30am](#)
- [15th September – National Park HQ: 10am](#)
- [8th December – National Park HQ: 10am](#)

Screenshot 28th October

On Monday 10th November the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) are holding a special board meeting to approve the evidence report for their new Local Development Plan (LDP) for approval by Scottish Ministers. Sid Perrie, the locally elected member for Balloch who is now off sick due to the actions of the Standards Commission ([see here](#)), alerted me to this meeting but when I checked on the 28th October, there was no indication on the LLTNPA's website such a meeting was to take place in two weeks time. It seems that the LLTNPA doesn't want anyone to know and although the papers for the meeting on Monday 10th November have now been published ([see here](#)), the meeting is online so no-one can go and protest.

While there are dozens and dozens of pages of glossy 'evidence', which would take a couple of days to scrutinise, the meeting is only two hours long. The reason for that is that board members have been discussing the LDP for some time in private briefing sessions and everything has already been decided. The only purpose of the meeting is to tick a governance box, one of which is that the LLTNPA has assembled sufficient evidence to proceed to the next stage of the LDP.

Given how staff at the LLTNPA had manipulated the last LDP dated 2017-21, which I described in the Flamingo Land Story ([see here](#)) and ([see here](#)), I have focussed my attention on what the evidence report says about Balloch. This is mainly contained in the West Loch Lomond evidence report ([see here](#)).

The section on what consultation has taken place is interesting, not least because it fails to say what has been learned from that:

West Loch Lomond

Stakeholder group	Invitee	Workshop attendance
Community Organisations	Arrochar, Tarbet & Ardlui CC	✓
	Arrochar & Tarbet CDT	✓
	Luss & Arden CC	✓
	Luss & Arden CDT	
	Balloch & Haldane CC	✓
	Kilmarnock CC	✓
Other relevant local stakeholders	West Loch Lomond DMG	
	Inveraray & Tyndrum DMG	
	Local Businesses	✓
	Scottish Enterprise	
	Landowners	✓
	FLS	
	NPA Board Members	✓

Given the levels of concern about the Flamingo Land development, attendance by the Balloch and Haldane Community Council hardly looks impressive. One wonders why other community organisations like Save Loch Lomond weren't on the list too. The lack of organisations responding to the topic paper and area summary surveys further suggest there were major failings in the process.

To me that failure is proven by the lack of any reference to the 150,000 plus people who objected to the Flamingo Land Development in Balloch, the most in Scottish history. What ordinary people think or want to happen simply doesn't count as evidence.

The LLTNPA attempts to gloss over this by reference to the Balloch and Haldane Local Place Plan. Misleadingly this is described as being "not yet published" and "in process of engagement" when actually consultation is only now about to start:

Balloch & Haldane	Not yet published	Funding, priorities setting, GIS support, proposals, Planning team support, submission support	Steering Group, stakeholder mapping, survey, community engagement events	In process of engagement
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Although Balloch is the most important gateway to the National Park and the only settlement in the National Park which features in the list of the 20% most deprived communities in Scotland (according to data in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) it has been about the last to get a Local Place Plan.

That appears to have been quite deliberate decision on the part of staff. Had they allowed the local community to develop their own Local Place Plan, that would have made it much harder for Flamingo Land. The public should not be allowed to forget that senior staff had kept it secret that they were involved with Flamingo Land while conducting the Balloch charrette ([see here](#)).

This glossy extract on the BHCC Place Plan is a good illustration of planning chaos which will allow any wish:

BALLOCH AND HALDANE PLACE PLAN

Preparations are underway to begin this Local Place Plan. It will inform the new Local Development Plan and will be considered alongside the Balloch Charette and Balloch Pierhead Action Plans. The fundamental aim of this Place Plan will be to provide consensus on the community's future direction and priorities, serving the following purposes:

- > Influence planning policy as contained in the new National Park Local Development Plan, in line with Local Place Plan legislation and guidance.
- > Bring together the many different strands of community activity as well as filling in any gaps which are needed to deliver the community's priorities.
- > Evidence community aspirations to help secure funding and support for community-led action, and to influence future public services and public and private sector investment.



The Local Place Plan is to sit alongside the

charrette, when it should supercede it. It is also to sit alongside the Pierhead Plan which, as I have previously explained, should have been developed AFTER the Local Place Plan and informed by it ([see here](#)). The Pierhead Plan appeared designed to assist the Flamingo Land development and this was later confirmed by the conditions attached to Scottish Enterprise's sale of the land there to the LLTNPA ([see here](#)).

The section on Community Facilities helps highlight the lack of such facilities in the most deprived area: on West Loch Lomond:

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING - COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community wealth building is a specific policy within NPF4 (Policy 25) which aims to ensure that local economic development focuses on community and place benefits as a central and primary consideration with reference to supporting community ownership and management of buildings and land. Its policy intent is to encourage and promote a new strategic approach to economic development that provides a practical model for building a wellbeing economy at local, regional and national level. Community-run services are not covered in this profile.

Community assets here include the Three Villages Hall in Arrochar, the Arrochar Hydroelectric Project operated jointly by Arrochar & Tarbet and Luss & Arden Development Trusts, Luss Village Hall, Gartocham Millennium Hall and Kilmarnock Old Kirk.

There is no mention in the Evidence Report of the South Loch Lomond Local Development Trust's attempt to take over the Tourist Information Centre building centre in Balloch, the aspirations of other to take over Drumkinnon or what the impact of losing the Riverside Site, a local park, to Flamingo Land's chalets would be. In short there is no evidence of what people actually need or want.

NPPP Theme: A Thriving Place

- **Settlements:** Balloch is the main visitor gateway and service hub; Arrochar a range of local services and facilities and to a lesser extent Luss, which also experiences visitor pressures.
- **Community challenges:** Affordable housing shortages, ageing population, outmigration and car dependence.
- **Built environment pressures:** Long-term vacant and derelict sites, plus Buildings at Risk (for example Balloch Castle, parts of Tarbet Hotel).
- **Economy and infrastructure:** Tourism and hospitality dominate; targeted regeneration Balloch, Arrochar & Tarbet; digital coverage generally strong.

It is interesting that Woodbank House in Balloch, which has continued to deteriorate in Flamingo Land is not given as an example of Buildings at Risk and no reference is given as to where in the morass might a complete list of buildings at risk and derelict sites.

There is no attempt, either, to explain what sort of "visitor gateway" would make Balloch a thriving place or in what way it is a service hub currently, although this may just be a reference to transport links. The section on Thriving Places also claims Balloch "has sufficient services for living well locally" who decided that? and goes on to refer to "a lack of opportunities for young people and families" whatever that means. If when reading this you think of the lack of a football pitch, you might take this as an argument against developing the Riverside Site, but if as a lack of jobs as a reason for the Flamingo Land development going ahead. This sort of language is deliberate: you can take out of the evidence plan whatever you want.

The vague statement on the National Park Partnership Plan illustrates what is going on:

NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN DELIVERY TO BE CONSIDERED

Balloch and Arrochar & Tarbet are highlighted in the National Park Partnership Plan as areas for strategic investment and development:

- Balloch: Investment that enhances Balloch as the main visitor and transport interchange hub for the National Park.
- Arrochar & Tarbet: Focus on addressing vacant and derelict sites to support rural regeneration.

Throughout the NPPP development and approval process the LLTNPA Board "with the exception of Sid Perrie" endorsed progressing the major development "already in the pipeline for development" ([see here](#)). That was an indirect reference to Flamingo Land and is why Sid Perrie quite rightly argued the LLTNPA Board had a conflict of interest when it came to deciding the Flamingo Land Planning Application. It appears now to be what is meant by "Investment that enhances

Balloch as the main visitor and transport interchange hub for the National Park?•.

VISITOR PRESSURE AND CONGESTION HOTSPOTS

Owing to visitor pressures affecting communities, businesses and visitors here, the A82 route north of Balloch to Arrochar and Tarbet was identified as an area for a national intervention and Strategic Study (STID). Visitor pressures in terms of vehicles and behaviours are experienced in communities and visitor sites including the A82 road and its laybys, Balloch, Luss and Duck Bay, Tarbet and access points to the Arrochar Alps on the A83. There is peak time congestion on A82 between Arden and Balloch due to Faslane base traffic. By contrast, the Forestry and Land Scotland Ardgartan site is underused.

While there generally appears to be very little actual evidence in the evidence report, it is noteworthy the LLTNPA is now acknowledging the serious congestion issues on the A82 and Balloch. A year ago they failed to object to the Flamingo Land planning application on the grounds of the traffic it would attract and consequent congestion and parking problems. That allowed the Reporter, Mr Buylla, to set aside concerns by local people on the impact on their lives.

AREAS VULNERABLE TO FLOODING AND COASTAL EROSION

The Local Plan District is Clyde and Loch Lomond; this is the geographical area where flood risk management plans are used to manage flood risk.

Based on SEPA Future Flood Maps V3.0 the settlements here are vulnerable to both river and surface water flooding, with Arrochar and Succoth also vulnerable to coastal flooding. Balloch is in a community based Potentially Vulnerable Area (2024), these are specifically defined areas where the risks to property from flooding, and the estimated average annual damages occurring as a result of flooding, are greatest.

Future coastal erosion is not identified here; however coastal defences are located around the Head of Loch Long.

I did not recall "Potentially Vulnerable Area" being mentioned in the Board Report about the Flamingo Land Planning Application so did a word search which came up blank! While the LLTNPA's main objection to the Flamingo Land site was on grounds of flood risk, it appears it might have been stronger!

In summary, the Evidence report for Balloch lacks evidence. That is important because it might have helped inform Ivan McKee's decision about whether or not the Flamingo Land should go ahead. Mr McKee and anyone else can take from it what they want. That is not an accident, it is how LLTNPA senior management ensure they can justify whatever they do.

I have not had time to consider any other parts of the plan and see if the evidence cited is any better but local communities and visitors BEWARE!

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. flamingo land
2. LLTNPA
3. planning
4. Scottish Government

Date Created

November 7, 2025

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