

# Inchmarlo, Brathens and Glassel Community Council

## Local Place Plan



January 2025

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## Summary and LDP Statements

This report provides statutory input to Aberdeenshire Council's (AC) 2028 Local Development Plan (LDP). The LDP in turn determines where major development can and cannot take place, and the conditions placed upon it.

The report takes the form of a "Local Place Plan" (LPP), and is based on direct input from individual local residents. In addition to requirements for the LDP, resident's input also provides a set of priorities and actions for the Inchmarlo, Brathens and Glassel Community Council (IBGCC) to address. Resident's input is described in detail in the main report. Social interaction, identity and belonging, and natural spaces are identified as strengths, and in particular the facilities provided by the Inchmarlo Community Workshop & Hall. Improvements are also called for in a number of areas:

- Traffic speeds, and dangerous conditions turning onto the A93
- A lack of off-road walking and cycling routes for active travel, and associated dangerous and unsafe road conditions, including a lack of pavements and crossings
- Flooding of roads and in particular housing
- Improved community facilities in the Inchmarlo Retirement Village (IRV)
- Poor Stagecoach bus services; reliability, frequency and cost

IBGCC has very limited resources (6 volunteer members, less than 1 full-time equivalent), and its effectiveness in addressing the above topics will rely to a large extent on forming, or working with existing residents groups. IBGCC is working closely with neighbouring Community Councils to address shared issues. IBGCC has an important role in influencing councillors and AC in their decision-making, and brings a knowledge of government and other agencies, sources of funding, and others skills to help solve issues, and protect and support our strengths. IBGCC also allocates significant funding from Mid-Hill windfarm to suitable qualifying projects.

Based on the above, IBGCC has specific requests of Aberdeenshire Council's Local Development Plan;

1. It's very important to us that we work constructively with all stakeholders; residents, landowners, developers, the local council and others.
2. The Inchmarlo Workshop and Hall should be supported and protected in its activities, and also through addressing issues with the A93 which separates the two facilities at Bridge of Canny. Further speed reduction, provision of pavements, crossings and additional car-parking should all be considered in the LDP.
3. More generally, ongoing and future developments should be required to enhance traffic safety conditions, including any new entrances onto the A93 where speed limits, sight lines, pavements, crossing and pedestrian access to and egress from public transport, and any other safety issues should be addressed at the planning stage, with suitable planning conditions put in place. This will help to alleviate the ongoing struggle to retrospectively improve road safety.
4. Flooding is a major issue not least for those householders directly affected. IBGCC wishes to explore what flood relief measures can be put in place as part of the LDP in particular at Bridge of Canny and Beltie Cottages, and to address root causes such as drains, increased surface run-off, ponding by made ground, or banks bursting.

5. A network of paths is described and mapped here that IBGCC wishes to advance at every opportunity when plans are developed in the LDP, including at Inchmarlo Retirement Village and by Kirkwood Homes (referenced as OP1, OP2 and OP3 in the 2023 LDP).
6. IBGCC wishes to work with Aberdeenshire Council to further rationalise and extend its Core Paths network. In particular IBGCC would like to see the connection between IRV and Banchory improved, taking into account IRV residents' specific mobility needs.
7. Where developments have been included in the LDP, or have subsequently gained planning permission, IBGCC wishes to maximise and protect community benefits. These community benefits may be used to enhance applications, and then subsequently come under commercial pressure, or fail to be delivered. IBGCC wishes to work with AC to guard against this and ensure benefits such as paths and other benefits are delivered.
8. IBGCC welcomes the protection of land in the current LDP, and wishes to protect natural spaces where they can or do provide benefit to the community. This includes the potential for land at the former golf course in Inchmarlo which lies outside of P1 and P2, and more generally any land that can provide safe off-road walking and cycling routes.
9. It is noted here that IBGCC is working with Forestry and Land Scotland to understand the potential of its land-holding to host path networks. IBGCC would like the support of AC in developing these paths, and any extensions or connections that may require crossing land zoned for development, or for protection.

## Introduction and Background

During 2024, Inchmarlo, Brathens and Glassel Community Council (IBGCC) undertook to produce a Local Place Plan (LPP) in support of Aberdeenshire council's (AC) ongoing Local Development Planning (LDP) process. LPPs are designed to set out what people want for their community and where they want it, with reporting to be in part map-based. It is an official document which Aberdeenshire Council must take into consideration as part of the Local Development Planning process.

The Aberdeenshire LDP is published every five years and contains details of how the council will manage further development of Aberdeenshire. AC describe the LDP as being used;

- in the determination of planning applications, and to zone land for development (known as allocations) or protect it for specific uses
- to inform and advise developers and communities on the principles that built development should follow and where it should be located

The current Local Development Plan dates from 2023, and AC is now preparing the 2028 plan. See References 1 and 2 below for further details. The 2023 LDP includes details of individual Settlements, in this case for Inchmarlo, and for neighbouring Banchory.

The Scottish Government now recognises that LDPs would benefit from additional input from host communities, as they have until now consisted largely of commercial housing and other development proposals. As a consequence, IBGCC has engaged with local residents via integrated newsletters, public meetings and questionnaires. Questionnaire results form much of the basis for this LPP.

The LPP will be submitted to AC as part of the data collection or "Evidence Report" stage of LDP planning. In 2025 AC will come back and engage with the community, including IBGCC, as part of the "Call for Ideas" stage. This will provide further dialogue around exactly how the LPP will be integrated into the LDP.

## 2019 Community Action Plan

IBGCC was formed in 2020 by the splitting of Feughdee West (FWCC) to produce a separate community council north of the River Dee. Prior to its formation, the greater FWCC produced a Community Action Plan (CAP) by consulting with residents. The CAP identified four projects, which based on our latest questionnaire are still highly relevant, and as will be discussed have been delivered to greater or lesser degrees;

1. "Connecting our Communities; to connect our communities, we will focus on projects that will create a better path network both for walkers and cyclists, improving the links into Banchory as well as in more rural areas such as over Scolty Hill.
2. Developing our Community; we want links within the community to be improved, bringing more people together socially and making people more aware of what's going on, providing activities for a range of age groups and interests and encouraging everyone to participate.
3. Improving access to services; we will work with partners to ensure our infrastructure is improved, which will focus mainly on making our road networks safer, increasing provision of car parking and improving telecoms and broadband reliability, particularly in our more rural and remote communities.

4. Building on our assets; We want to see Inchmarlo Hall continue to increase the social and learning activities and opportunities it holds and build up what's offered in the community workshop. With improved pathways and better use of our Halls, we will be able to develop Feughdee West as a "destination" for visiting cyclists and walkers. This could provide our community with opportunities to generate income which will support funding secured from windfarm developments and other funding sources."

This Local Place Plan should be considered as an extension of the 2019 Community Action Plan,

### Maturity of the LPP and levels of definition

With the limited resources available to IBGCC (estimated less than 1 full-time equivalent), it was important to keep the LPP scope realistic, and deliverable in the time available i.e. at AC's request by early 2025, to be considered in 2028 LDP. This document therefore describes projects and actions at a relatively high level, which can then be progressed in 2025, with provision for updated LPPs to be submitted if required.

### Mapping and description of the area

A GIS system has been used to create maps used in this LPP. GIS allows maps from disparate sources to be overlain with basemaps such as google satellite images, or openstreetmaps. Boundaries, routes and other features can be created by digitising, or by importing for example .gpx files. Note that the location all features should be considered as **approximate** only.

An example map is shown below, with the IBGCC boundary in white, overlain on googlemaps satellite imagery. The area is bound to the north by the A980 and the flanks of the Hill of Fare, to the south by the River Dee and to the east by the town of Banchory. The boundary to the west is less well defined, with its origins in the historical Kincardineshire / Aberdeenshire county boundary subject to some recent amendments, and adjoins the neighbouring community councils of mid-Deeside and Torphins. The IBGCC area is roughly 6km east to west, and 3km north to south, with an area of 17sqkm.

The number of people on the electoral roll for IBGCC is 554 which includes those aged over 14 years. There is no specific health, social and demographic data available for the IBGCC area, however the following statistical data has been taken from the Crathes and Torphins Intermediate Zone Statistical Summary of 2023 which is considered to be of closest relevance for our area.

Based on the 2011 Census, 93.6% were born in the UK and 98.6% are of white ethnicity. Approximately 58% of the population is of working age (16-64) which is among the lowest proportions in Aberdeenshire. Approximately 19% are in the 0-15 years age range and 23% are in the 65+ age category. In terms of health related indicators this area has one of the best health profiles in Scotland with only 21 % of other Intermediate zones ranking higher. In terms of household income this area is on the more affluent end of the scale in the context of Aberdeenshire. The whole area has 0.14 dwellings per hectare which is towards the more rural end of the Aberdeenshire spectrum. A large proportion of dwellings (c. 60%) fall within Council Tax Bands F-G, which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in Aberdeenshire. The median house price is £316k which is £105k higher than the Aberdeenshire average. 8% of households do not have access to a car or van. 35% of premises do not have access to superfast broadband (>30 Mb/s download speed) which is at the poorer end of the Aberdeenshire scale.

The map below shows Forestry and Land Scotland (F&LS) woods in green and LDP areas in variously coloured polygons; OP numbers relate to developments, and P numbers to areas that are protected. The open area in the north is a mix of privately-owned farmland and forestry, some of which is contained in the Glassel estate. Brathens Eco-business Park and Greenpark Leisure holiday park are highlighted, as is Glassel Hall. In the southwest, a large area of hilly forestry is contained between the A93 and River Dee, with Scottish Water's Invercarnie water treatment works on its eastern edge. Immediately to the northeast across the A93 is the Inchmarlo Retirement Village (IRV), and immediately to the east again is the Inchmarlo Golf Centre, containing a driving range and clubhouse that provides meals and exercise facilities. To the west of the water treatment plant, along the A93 there are a collection of houses including Smiddy Park, Beltie Cottages, Bridge of Canny and other individual houses. Close to the Bridge itself are the Inchmarlo Community Workshop, and Inchmarlo Community Hall. A second housing cluster near Glassel Hall grew up around the former railway station.

IBGCC residents are dependent on Banchory, Torphins and Aboyne for key services such as health, education and shopping. A map showing the IBGCC boundary in the wider context of Aberdeenshire is shown below.

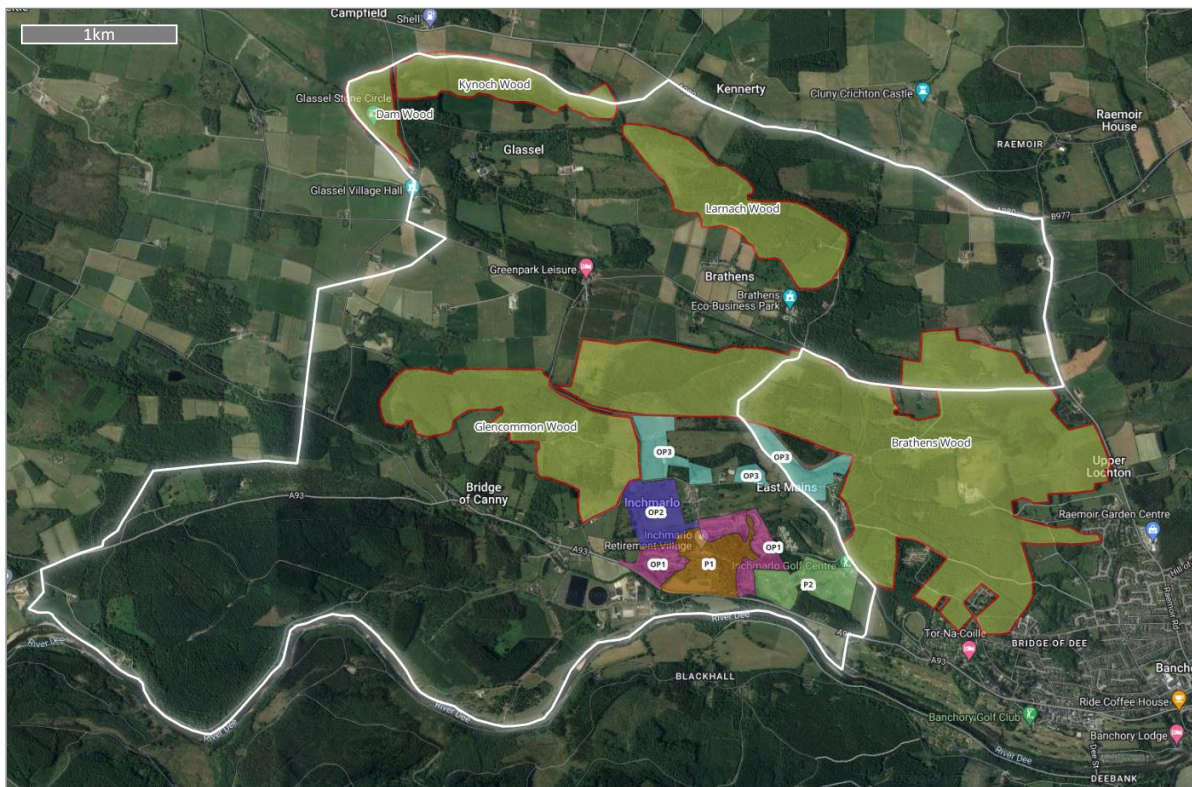


Figure 1. IBGCC summary map



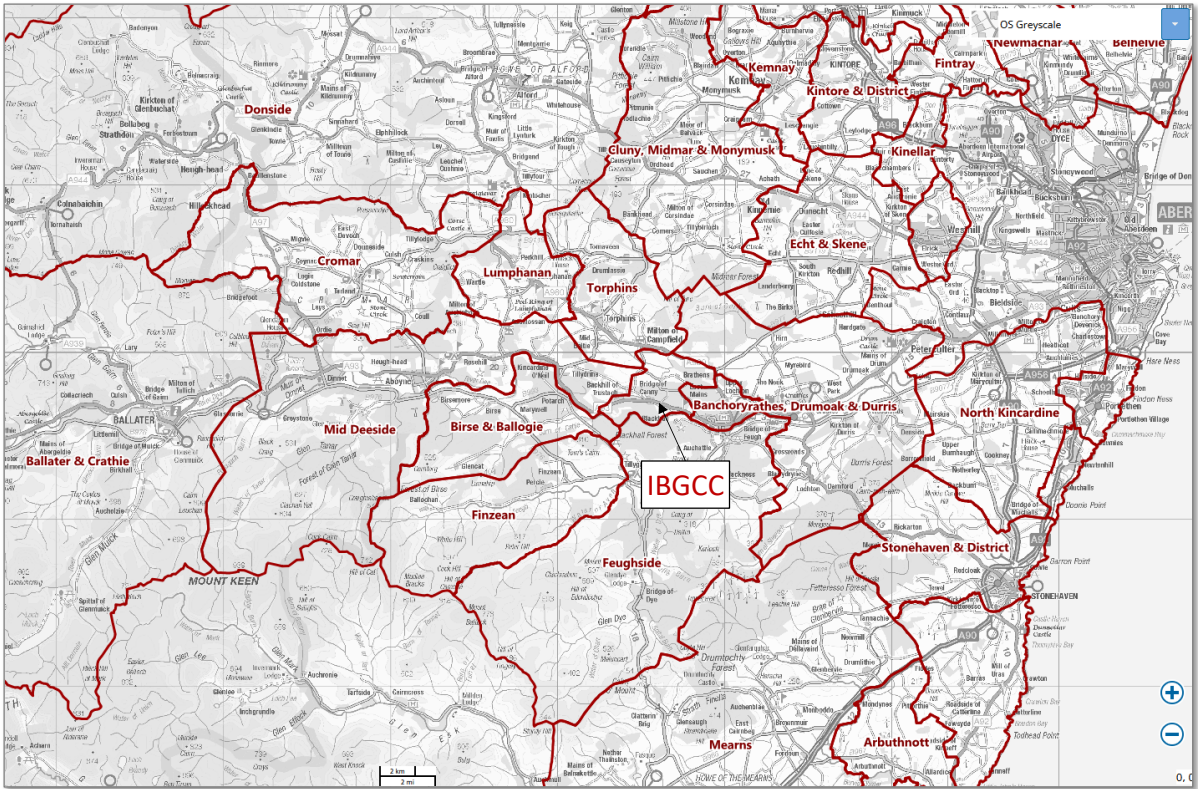


Figure 2. IBGCC location map

## 2023 Local Development Plan

The Inchmarlo area is subject to two major developments in the 2023 LDP, which due to their combined scale of ca. 265 houses plus hotel, warrant their own section in the report. IRV is planning to significantly extend its housing (OP1 and 2 in the map below), and to the north Kirkwood Homes are planning housing, the first phase of which is under construction, and a hotel (OP3). The relevant section in the LDP is repeated below, for ease of reference and due to the significance to this LPP. Sections that refer directly to the Community Action Plan / Local Place Plan, or are particularly relevant, are highlighted in green. Note that ongoing planning and development activity by the developers has now superseded the 2023 LDP in places;

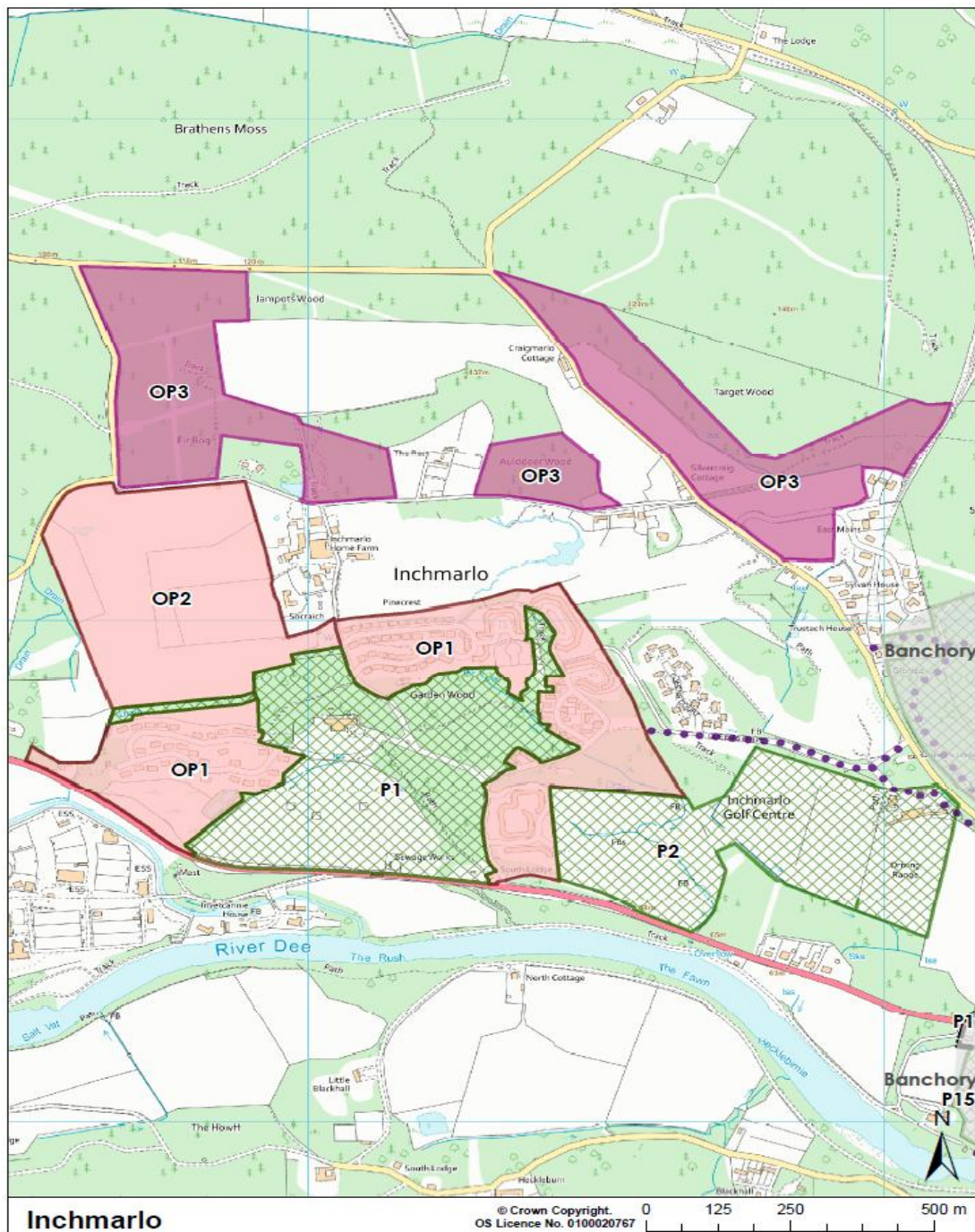


Figure 3. 2023 LDP Inchmarlo map

# INCHMARLO

## Vision

Inchmarlo is a largely self-contained continuing care retirement village situated to the west of Banchory. It is set within the context of the listed Inchmarlo House and its extensive Historic Gardens which provide a very high-quality scenic backdrop to the retirement village making it a unique and attractive place to live. Inchmarlo House acts as the main service point and offers specialist facilities for the community, including respite and medical care. Allocations have been made which will increase the provision of retirement accommodation in the village, to secure its long-term future and viability.

Additionally, planning permission has been granted for a separate mixed use development immediately to the north of the retirement village that does not form part of the retirement community.

## Natural and Historic Environment

The River Dee Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) is found along the southern edge of the settlement. The River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which includes all tributaries leading to the River Dee, is situated in close proximity to the settlement.

The Category B Listed Inchmarlo House is situated within a protected area of land P1.

## Settlement Features

Protected Land	
P1	To protect the setting of Inchmarlo House as a contribution to the character of the place including specimen trees that form a characteristic element of local design.
P2	To protect the golf course as part of the green-blue network and provide a setting for the community.

## Flood Risk

- Parts of Inchmarlo are in an area potentially vulnerable to flood risk as identified by the National Flood Risk Assessment. Flood Risk Assessments may be required.
- A number of watercourses run through or in close proximity to site OP1, OP2 and OP3. A Flood Risk Assessment may be required.

## Services and Infrastructure

- **Local transport infrastructure:** Development may be required to contribute to footway extensions, upgrades and crossing facilities, cycle infrastructure and public transport provision.

- **Strategic drainage and water supply:** The Inchmarlo retirement community is connected via private network to the Inchmarlo Waste Water Treatment Works, which currently has insufficient capacity. Development outwith the retirement community is required to connect directly to the Waste Water Treatment Works. A growth project will be initiated once development meets Scottish Water's five growth criteria. Early engagement with Scottish Water is recommended.
- **Secondary education:** Residential developments may be required to contribute towards the provision of additional capacity at Banchory Academy.
- **Community facilities:** All residential development may be required to contribute towards facilities that serve the community in Inchmarlo or towards facilities in the wider catchment area at Banchory. These may be identified in the Community Plan or relevant Community Action Plan.
- **Sports and recreation facilities:** All residential development may be required to contribute to indoor and outdoor sports and learning facilities in Inchmarlo or towards facilities in the wider catchment area at Banchory. These may be identified in the Community Plan or relevant Community Action Plan.
- **Recycling and waste:** All developments will be required to comply with the standards for recycling and waste facilities, and development may be required to contribute towards strategic recycling and waste infrastructure that benefit residents within its catchment, as set out in Appendix 15.
- **Health and care facilities:** All residential development may be required to contribute towards a new health centre in Banchory. Contribution towards an additional pharmacy facility may be required.

#### Allocated Sites

##### OP1: Inchmarlo Continuing Care Community

**Allocation:** 60 homes

This site was previously allocated as site OP1 in the LDP 2017. Development of the site is intended to meet the retirement housing needs in the area. A Masterplan for the site was approved by the Marr Area Committee in March 2015 and future development proposals for the remaining phases are expected to reflect this.

Housing proposed should be designed in a way that meets the needs of the user but considers the style of the existing housing stock. Siting and landscaping should be undertaken to ensure that the P1 site of Inchmarlo House, including its setting, is not compromised. Development must not have an adverse effect upon the use and amenity of the adjacent golf course. There is a core path which ends at the eastern boundary of the site. Efforts should be made to include access to this route through the layout of the site.

Any proposal will be subject to a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) in order to consider potential effects on the qualifying interests of the River Dee SAC. A Construction Method Statement may be required. A Flood Risk Assessment may also be required.

## OP2: Land Southeast of Glencommon Wood

**Allocation:** 120 homes

This is a newly allocated site. Development of the site is intended to meet the retirement housing needs in the area. A Masterplan will be required for the site.

Housing proposed should be designed in a way that meets the needs of the user but considers the style of the existing housing stock. Efforts should be made to connect to path networks associated with Inchmarlo House through the layout of the site. Suitable landscaping and soft planting should be undertaken to protect and enhance the character of the area. Existing woodland/trees on and adjacent to the site should be retained and enhanced particularly the specimen trees adjacent to Inchmarlo House. Equivalent compensatory planting must be provided should there be tree loss. The development should not impact on the Category B Listed Inchmarlo House and its setting.

A Transport Assessment is required detailing two points of access from the A93 as well as footway/cycleway connectivity to local amenities and the provision of public transport into the site.

Any proposal will be subject to a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) in order to consider potential effects on the qualifying interests of the River Dee SAC. A Construction Method Statement may be required. A Flood Risk Assessment may be required due to a small watercourse adjacent to the site. Buffer strips will be required adjacent to the watercourses and should be integrated as positive features of the development. Enhancement of any straightened watercourse and removal of any redundant features should be investigated.

It is expected this development will connect to the Inchmarlo Septic Tank otherwise connection to the public network is required.

## OP3: Land at East Mains and Auldeer Wood

**Allocation:** Mix of uses including 85 homes, tourism, leisure and business (Hotel and Hotel Lodges)

This is a newly allocated site. Planning permission for a mix of uses has been implemented on this site. Permission for housing has been granted as an enabling development proposal to fund the construction of a hotel. The development shall be delivered as approved in relation to the fulfilment of the obligation for the site as an enabling development, unless otherwise agreed.

Efforts should be made to connect to path networks through the layout of the site. Suitable open space, landscaping and soft planting should be provided to protect and enhance the character of the area. Existing woodland/trees on and adjacent to the site should be retained and enhanced. Equivalent compensatory planting must be provided should there be tree loss. The existing site has an overriding wooded character and the woodland/trees should be retained to act as a framework for the hotel and hotel lodges. The scale of any development should be carefully designed to reflect the largely rural and wooded character, with siting and design of the development of a scale that is contained by, rather than dominating this woodland setting. Open space should be biodiverse and native species should be used in landscaping as far as possible.

There are a number of technical assessments that may be required including a Transport Assessment and an active travel plan; a Flood Risk Assessment; a programme of archaeological works and scheme of investigation; a Contaminated Land Assessment; and a Habitats Assessment. The active travel plan should consider provision for links to Banchory.

Any proposal will be subject to a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) in order to consider potential effects on the qualifying interests of the River Dee SAC. A Construction Method Statement may be required. Buffer strips will be required adjacent to the watercourses and should be integrated as positive features of the development.

In the case of IRV, the Masterplan referred to above is in progress, and was consulted on in early 2024 by developer Skene Enterprises with discussion of increased housing numbers and a new access road onto the A93 near the West Lodge.

In addition to specific land allocations, the 2023 LDP introduces a new boundary between “Remote and Accessible Rural Areas”, defined by the Scottish Government, to help determine planning applications. This boundary cuts across the IBGCC area as shown below, and is designed to protect Accessible Rural Areas from over-development. Under the Policies described in the 2023 LDP, this will restrict further development of the housing cluster at Glassel, and as policies develop may have further impact on the area. The boundary is defined by a 30-minute drive-time from Aberdeen, and its convoluted shaped is driven by the GIS algorithms used to derive it.

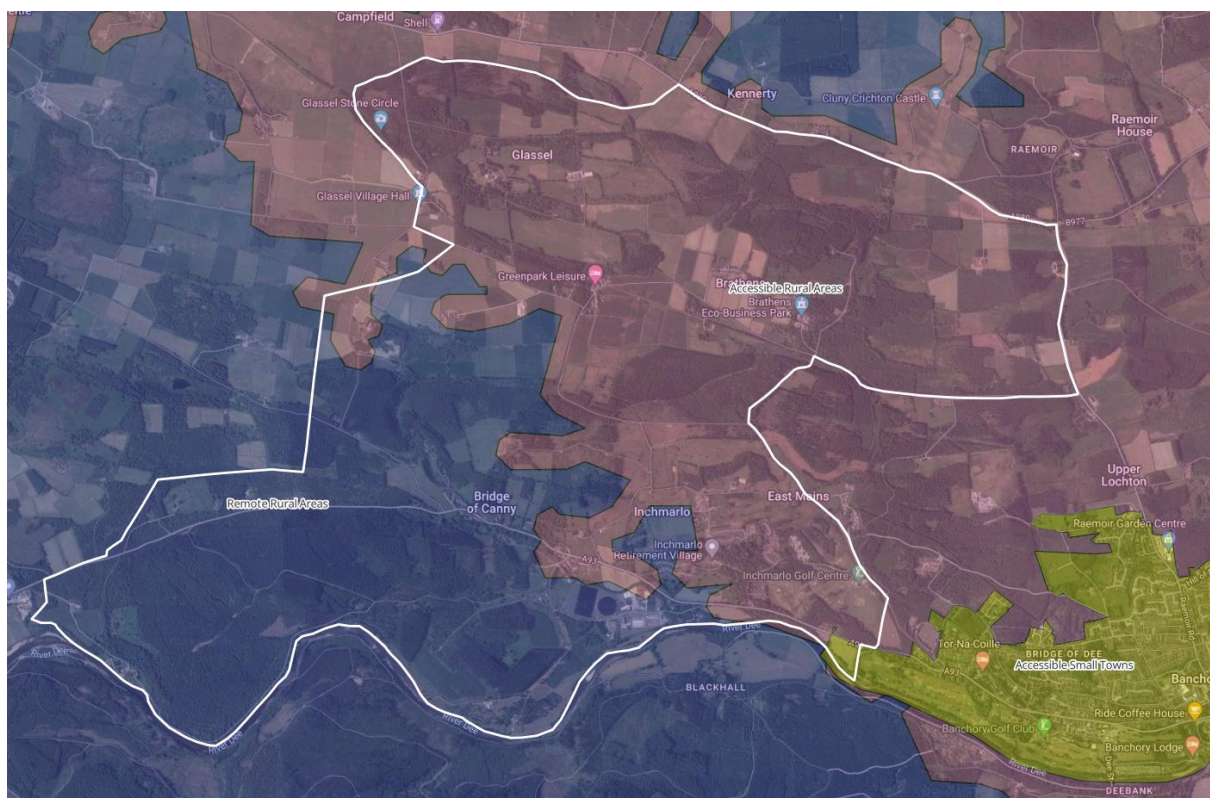


Figure 4. Accessible / Remote Rural boundary

### Forestry and Land Scotland (F&LS) Banchory Woods Land Management Plan

F&LS own and manage extensive forestry in the Banchory area, including the IBGCC area as shown in the map above. F&LS’s 2018 management plan provides technical details of these assets, of particular interest is the designation of Glencommon Wood as Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS), with a plan to fully restore it to a mixture of upland oak wood, upland birch wood and native pine wood with biodiversity being the main objective.

F&LS are receptive to working with the community (see the 2023 Community Strategy), a recent example being the new path from Easter Beltie to Glassel, constructed and managed by the Torphins Path Group on F&LS land.

## Inchmarlo Retirement Village

The IBGCC area has a significant percentage of its residents living in the Inchmarlo Retirement Village (IRV). Approximately 235 out of a total of c. 600 people. Residents have to be over the age of 55, and many are much older. The 100 acre site is privately run, and is centred around Inchmarlo House, which is now a care home with space for 42 residents. There are 181 flats and houses, with plans to build a similar number of houses in future phases. Consequently, there are particular aspects to IRV which are highlighted in this plan. IRV has its own website at <https://inchmarlo-retirement.co.uk/homes-for-sale/faqs/>.

As noted above, plans for further development of IRV are contained in the 2023 LDP, and are currently the subject of a Masterplan exercise aimed at refining the proposal towards full planning permission.

## LPP Objectives

With the above introductory statements made, the objectives of the LPP can be listed as;

1. Engage effectively with the local community such that their views can be represented.
2. Subsequently engage with key stakeholders, ensuring no “surprises” in the final LPP.
3. Reflect all existing initiatives and plans when creating the LPP, including community benefits and commitments that have been made in planning approvals.
4. Propose a realistic and achievable set of projects for further development, that could be supported by individuals or groups willing to take them forward.
5. Ensure that the 2028 LDP takes into account the key conclusions of the LPP.

## Community Engagement

Community engagement lies at the root of this LPP, and the key themes and future activities described later are based on the feedback received from residents, principally through a series of public exhibitions and an associated questionnaire. The public exhibitions were advertised as part of a Newsletter hand-delivered to houses in the IBGCC area, through the IBGCC email distribution list, and on the IBGCC website. Exhibitions were held on the evening of 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2024 in Glassel Hall, the evening of 22<sup>nd</sup> August in Inchmarlo Village Hall, and on the afternoon of 28<sup>th</sup> August at Inchmarlo Retirement Village Marquee. Our thanks to all those who attended and otherwise provided their comments in our questionnaire, we learnt that completing questionnaires at the event itself was vital.

An example of the questionnaire is provided below. This was a distillation of the Scottish Government’s Place Standard Tool, which at 24 pages long was felt to be more appropriate for a dedicated workshop environment. The full tool was however made available via the IBGCC website, but did not receive much interest, in part due to the low traffic on the site.

Respondents were asked to score 14 questions from 1 (poor) to 7 (great), each relating to a different aspect of life in the local area. When answering each question, the questionnaire provided a list of “considerations” to help prompt thinking. Respondents were also encouraged to provide commentary to accompany their scores. The format is consistent with the questionnaires being adopted by

adjacent community councils, allowing results to be compared. Scores and comments were then compiled and are discussed further in the results section of this report.

<b>Inchmarlo, Brathens and Glassel Community Council - Local Place Plan Questionnaire</b>
<p>Aberdeenshire Council compiles a Local Development Plan every 10 years, and in the past this has consisted largely of proposals for housing development. There is a recognition at Scottish Government level that more input from host communities is a requirement, and to this end IBGCC are consulting with local residents in order to submit their views in the form of a "Local Place Plan". Further details are available on our website <a href="http://ibgcc.org">ibgcc.org</a>.</p> <p>The purpose of the questionnaire is to allow the community council to accurately represent the views of the community, which can then directly impact both the Local Place Plan and Aberdeenshire's Development Plan.</p> <p>When completing the questionnaire, please consider your own position, and also others in the community. For each question, use the "considerations" to give an overall score, and to prompt comments that can be recorded in the text box at the bottom. <b>Note that comments are often the most valuable information.</b> Please return at the event, or to <a href="mailto:secretary@ibgcc.org">secretary@ibgcc.org</a></p>

Postcode:	AB31 4DU	Name*:	Paul Herrington	Email*:	<a href="mailto:paul.herrington@hotmail.com">paul.herrington@hotmail.com</a>
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	Score	<- Please score between 1 = Poor and 7 = Great	Considerations:
Walking & cycling	4	Provision of off-road paths, pavements, safe speed limits. Availability of routes leading to where you need/want to go. Accessibility to all users.	
Public transport	3	Cost, reliability, provision of real-time information. Easy to reach destinations you need/want to get to. Accessible to all, safe and sheltered bus stops.	
Traffic	2	Priority of people over vehicles; via traffic calming, safe pedestrian routes & crossings. How does traffic affect people; speed, noise, fear.	
Streets & buildings	6	Are there any problems? Flooding, derelict buildings, vacant land, pollution, litter, lighting levels, pavement clutter, busy roads, illegal parking.	
Natural spaces	6	Are there accessible natural spaces, are they looked after, how could they be improved eg. rewilding, tree planting, wildlife protection, path creation.	
Play & recreation	5	Are there indoor & outdoor spaces for play & recreation. Are they open/ accessible to all. What could be better used? Are there issues eg. booking?	
Facilities & services	6	Access to, and quality of; schools, health & social services; shops, libraries, halls, recycling centres; electricity, water, telecomms & other services.	
Work & local economy	4	Are there local jobs available, of the right kind, or training & volunteering opportunities. Are there challenges & is the economy thriving or declining.	
Housing	4	Is the mix of housing good; size, price, rental, retirement, supported living. Is heating/ insulation a problem. Are there challenges eg. noise, flooding.	
Social interaction	5	Are there opportunities to meet others. In halls, churches, community groups. Is there a mix for kids, pensioners etc. What about during crises eg. storms.	
Identity & belonging	5	Is there a sense of identity eg. neighbourliness, traditions, local groups. Are people involved eg. volunteering, support networks.	
Feeling safe	7	Are there physical issues eg. lighting, pavements, traffic speed/volume. Are there social/behavioural issues eg anti-social behaviour, littering.	
Care & maintenance	5	Is the area well maintained and are issues quickly reported and resolved; by council, community, others eg. fly-tipping, flooding, road surfaces.	
Influence & control	5	Are there opportunities to influence issues affecting the area. Does the community have effective groups, and are they listened to.	

<p>What are the strengths and key changes could we make to improve the area? Where possible please provide specifics that can be acted upon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better off-road links to settlements for walking, cycling etc would encourage less use of cars, and allow people to benefit from exercise more easily.</li> <li>- Perhaps more on-demand public transport services. Real time data on bus arrivals.</li> <li>- Improved traffic calming, sight-lines and speed controls and enforcement on busy A93 and other problem areas eg. Glassel.</li> <li>- Try to address uncertainty in the local economy given the dominance of the oil industry, which is now in rapid decline. Focus on tourism, outdoor pursuits, food and drink, quality of life and remote working.</li> <li>- With respect to housing, new housing is still being built and prices are flat/falling so should be opportunities for most.</li> </ul>
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Questionnaire based on Scot. Govt. "Place Standard Tool"

\* if you would like to be kept informed of progress on the LPP

Figure 5. Example questionnaire



## Further Engagement

In addition to engaging with residents, IBGCC had contacted businesses, community groups, local councillors and others in a second phase of engagement once we had the initial residents' views. A list of those engaged is given below.

Consultee
Aberdeenshire Council
Aberdeenshire Council Outdoor Access
Banchory Community Council
Banchory Paths
Crathes, Durris and Drumoak CC
Forestry and Land Scotland
Frank Burnett / Inchmarlo Home Farm
Glassel Hall
Inchmarlo Community Hall
Inchmarlo Community Workshop
Inchmarlo Golf Centre
Kirkwood Homes
Local Councillors
Mid-Deeside Community Council
Nestrans / Jacobs
Skene Enterprises
Torphins Community Council
Torphins Paths Group
Individual Residents

## Nestrans

North East of Scotland Transport Partnership (Nestrans) is a government-led Regional Transport Partnership for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, made up of 4 Councillors from Aberdeen City Council, 4 Councillors from Aberdeenshire Council, and 4 non-Councillor members appointed in a personal capacity by the Minister for Transport. Nestrans' 2040 priorities are;

- Improved journey efficiencies to enhance connectivity
- Zero fatalities on the road network
- Air quality that is cleaner than the World Health Organisation standards for emissions from transport
- Significantly reduced carbon emissions from transport to support net-zero by 2045
- Accessibility for all
- A step change in public transport and active travel enabling a 50:50 mode split between car driver and sustainable modes.

Further details of Nestrans can be found at <https://www.nestrans.org.uk/about-nestrans/>

## Questionnaire results and key themes

A total of 55 completed questionnaires were received, corresponding to around 10% of the residents in IBGCC. This is considered to be a good return-rate for engagements of this type.

Question scores are summarised in the table below, with each question represented by a row, and the 55 respondents by columns. Scores are colour-coded from 1 (poor) = red to 7 (great) = green. The last column is the average score for each question. The table has been ordered from the lowest average score at the top (traffic, 3.1), to the highest score at the bottom (identity and belonging, 5.6). Where questions were not scored, the cell is blank.

The same data was used to produce the graph below, which shows the average score with high (P10) and low (P90) ranges. The low range associated with “streets and buildings” relates to issues with flooding, whilst the low range associated with “feeling safe” relates to a lack of pavements and crossings. Further analysis of scores is combined with associated questionnaire comments in the following discussion.

Individual ->	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	Av
Traffic	4	2	4	6	4	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	4	1	2	6	1	1	6	5	6	3	1	3	3	1	1	4	4	2	1	2	2	3	3	5	3	2	5	5	6	1	2	4	4	3	2	4	1	3	4	4	3.1			
Walking & cycling	4	4	5	4	4	2	5	1	1	2	3	3	1	4	6	2	6	2	1	2	4	4	3	1	4	4	1	1	2	5	2	3	5	5	2	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	4	7	7	1	1	5	1	6	5	5	4	3.3
Work & local economy	6	4	6	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	6	6	4	4	2	5	2	3	5	3	6	5	5	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	5	3	5	4	5	5	4	6	4	4	4	6	7	6	2	4	4	5	4	4.1				
Public transport	2	3	6	4	4	6	4	4	4	6	4	4	5	6	4	3	5	2	2	4	6	5	1	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	6	6	6	4	3	5	4	5	5	4	6	4	4	4	6	7	6	2	4	4	5	4	4.3		
Play & recreation	6	5	3	6	2	4	6	6	5	3	6	6	6	7	5	7	6	4	3	5	5	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	5	3	3	3	4	5	4	6	6	5	5	4	6	6	5	5	3	3	3	7	4	4	5	4	4.5			
Streets & buildings	6	6	5	6	2	3	6	7	7	6	5	4	3	4	5	6	6	2	6	6	5	3	5	1	5	5	1	3	6	1	5	5	3	1	6	3	6	6	5	4	5	5	6	4	5	6	4	5	5	4	4	4.5				
Care & maintenance	5	5	5	4	2	3	5	3	5	4	3	5	5	6	7	2	6	7	5	4	5	6	4	4	4	4	1	4	3	6	6	6	3	6	6	6	5	5	4	6	6	5	3	2	4	7	5	4	6	4	4.6					
Feeling safe	6	7	7	4	3	5	7	7	3	6	5	4	5	7	6	7	3	6	6	5	6	7	3	5	5	1	1	3	5	2	1	3	3	2	6	2	6	6	7	6	7	5	3	3	3	3	4	7	5	3	3	4.7				
Housing	4	4	6	5	3	6	6	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	1	4	7	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	3	5	5	3	5	5	6	3	6	6	6	6	6	4	4	6	6	5	3	7	2	4	7	4.7				
Influence & control	4	5	6	5	5	6	5	5	5	6	6	2	3	7	6	7	4	5	5	5	5	7	6	6	6	3	4	4	5	4	4	1	3	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	7	2	4	7	4.7			
Facilities & services	6	6	6	4	6	5	5	6	4	5	5	6	5	7	6	4	4	6	5	6	5	6	5	5	4	4	6	4	4	5	4	4	4	2	5	2	6	6	6	6	6	6	3	4	4	6	7	3	3	5	5	2	4.8			
Natural spaces	6	6	7	7	5	2	6	3	3	5	5	5	6	6	7	5	7	2	5	7	6	5	3	6	4	4	5	3	4	6	4	5	5	3	5	5	7	3	6	6	4	5	7	7	7	4	5	7	5	7	4	5	1	5.1		
Social interaction	4	5	6	6	6	5	5	7	6	6	6	6	5	3	7	6	3	5	5	3	5	6	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	4	6	6	3	3	3	4	4	6	4	6	6	7	7	6	4	6	6	3	6	3	5	3	5.3			
Identity & belonging	5	5	7	7	6	5	6	7	7	6	5	6	5	6	7	6	6	6	7	5	6	7	7	6	6	7	7	5	6	6	4	4	2	6	6	4	5	6	7	7	7	4	4	6	4	5	3	5	3	5	6	5.6				

Figure 6. Colour-coded questionnaire scores

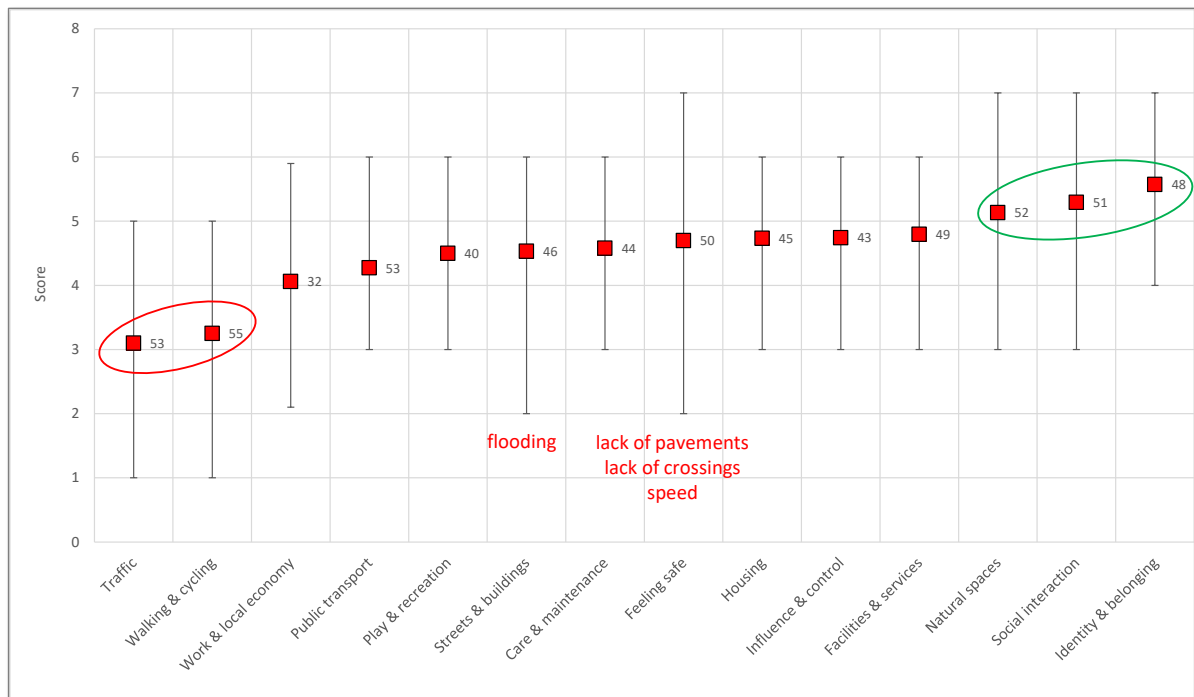


Figure 7. Graph of questionnaire scores

## Traffic

Traffic is the lowest scoring question in the survey. Traffic travelling too fast is a recurring theme, either because the speed limit is felt to be too high, or because speed limits are regularly exceeded. Locations described below are numbered on the following maps.

The entrance to IRV is raised as particular issue (location 1), where there are several hundred residents plus staff and services all coming and going via a single entrance onto the A93. Residents also access bus services at the entrance, requiring the crossing of the A93.

A petition was raised in 2023 by IRV residents to reduce the A93 limit to 40mph from Banchory to BoC, including the IRV entrance. This was taken forward by IBGCC to Aberdeenshire Council, supported by Marr Area local councillors. Unfortunately, this was unsuccessful due to AC's road policy, although additional signage indicating "elderly people crossing" has been installed.

Key sections from AC's Road Teams report to AC's decision-making "Infrastructure and Services Committee" on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2023 are appended to this document. There are several points of note from the discussion in Section 3 of the report which would merit further exploration by IBGCC, including the speed of HGVs, accident history and causes, Kirkwood Home's failure to deliver the referenced safe path route (in breach of planning conditions), and arguments around signage clutter and drivers criminalising themselves.

One area of specific concern is visibility looking west when exiting IRV. It may be possible to improve this by regularly cutting back and clearing vegetation.

Issues relating to the bus stops at the IRV entrance were raised, where elderly residents, perhaps with mobility restrictions, are faced with crossing a busy road with no speed restriction, whilst the bus stops themselves lack adequate pavements, dropped kerbs and access for those with disabilities.

There are further concerns within IRV over traffic speeds and volumes. Traffic speed bumps have been installed in places, but their design causes problems for residents with health issues such as back pain. Concern over traffic volumes relate to the new housing developments, and this may be mitigated to some extent by the new entrance under discussion onto the A93 (location 2); the internal road that might provide access is felt to be too narrow.



Figure 8. Map showing IRV existing and possible entrances

Residents in the BoC area also raised significant concerns regarding speed, with conditions described as unsafe and dangerous, including for bikes and pedestrians. Although the recent 40mph restriction was felt to be an improvement, it is often disregarded, and “grossly excessive speeds are not uncommon”. A flashing sign was suggested, indicating SLOW or the vehicle speed. Speed cameras issuing automatic fines were also suggested, and an example from the Scottish Borders cited. A need for additional 40mph signs was identified on stretches where drivers can fail to realise they are still in a 40mph zone.

The location of speed reduction signs approaching BoC from the west was raised (location 3), and it was noted there have been multiple accidents at the associated bend due to cars speeding and road conditions. When approaching from the west, drivers are coming off a fast stretch of open road and are required to slow quickly and significantly at the first bend at BoC. Moving the signage farther west would give drivers more time to slow down, give additional protection to those houses on the north side of the road who are currently not within the speed restriction, and also to the increasingly busy Craighash Quarry road entrance.

Sight-lines exiting the Craighash Quarry road (location 4) looking west were specifically raised, with vehicles speeding around the corner causing an accident risk and inadequate clearance of vegetation by the council. One tractor driver described just having to “go for it” when turning right with a trailer, and “hoping for the best”. This is a dangerous situation. In another quote, “The junction of the Craighash Quarry road onto the A93 is very dangerous. It is impossible to see vehicles approaching from the west, the 40mph zone is too close to the junction and is ignored by many people.”

A further speed reduction (e.g. To 30mph) was called for from entering Inchmarlo on the Aboyne side to past the Inchmarlo Community Hall, where there are high numbers of pedestrians, and no pavements or crossings (location 5). Visibility is poor due to bends in the road. “Walkers crossing the bridge to the quarry road, people crossing between the community hall and the bothy workshop, and buses stopping make this area very busy and the speed limit should be reduced.” A “Pedestrians in road ahead” sign was also called for, as was a Pedestrian crossing.

The road section at the bridge itself has been the site of accidents with large vehicles (e.g. lorries, SUVs) unable to pass each other without hitting the bridge parapet.

For residents living east of the bridge, at Beltie Cottages and Smiddy Park, it was noted that whilst the 40mph restriction was welcomed “the majority of vehicles still race down the road well above the speed limit. This is very dangerous for the children who live there and need to cross the road to the school bus stop (location 6), and for residents trying to exit junctions.” More speed limit enforcement measures were called for.

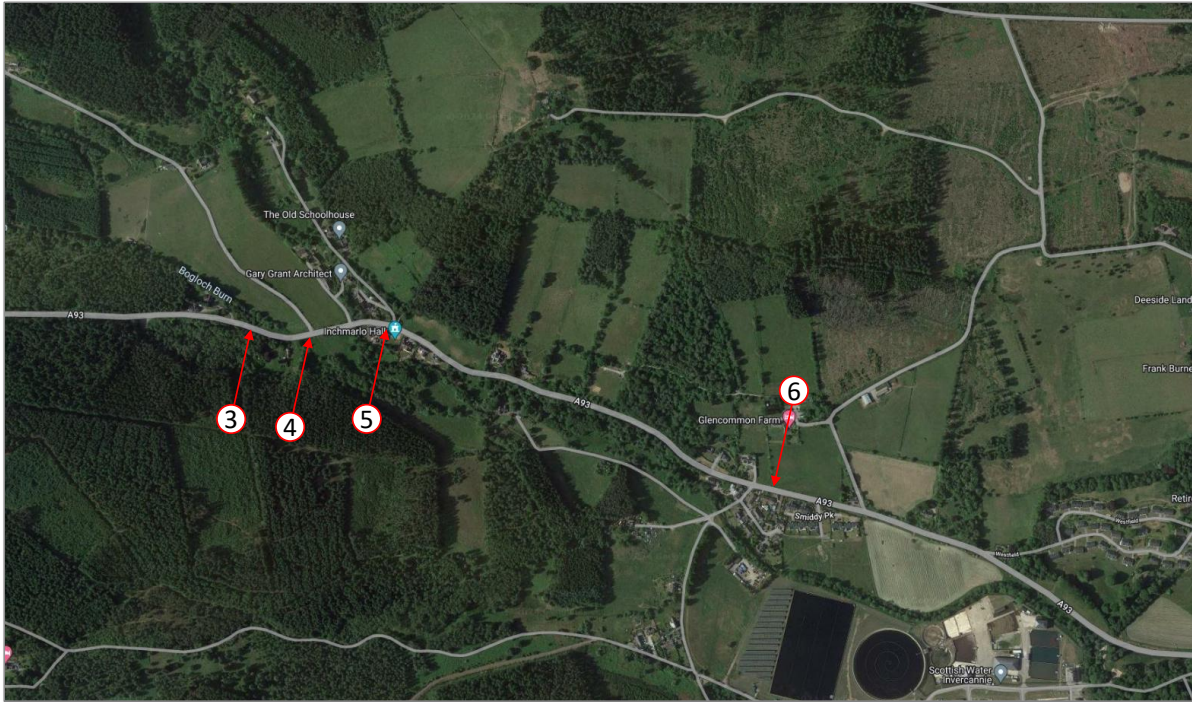


Figure 9. Map showing traffic issues at Bridge of Canny

Occasional speeding was also noted at Glassel Hall, where there may be a case to extend the existing 40mph restriction south to include the new multi-user path, and cluster of housing at the former mill and railway station.

Given the low score and significant commentary in the questionnaire, combined with the above narrative and list of actions, it is recommended that a residents group be formed, given willing participants can be found, to address the issues and actions.

## Walking and Cycling

Walking and cycling is a low-scoring question in the survey, only slightly above Traffic. There has been a long-standing desire to see improved active travel linkages between IBGCC and Banchory, particularly given the dependence on the latter for services and employment (see the 2019 Community Action Plan). The map below shows the existing routes of significance;

1. The new multi-user path from Easter Beltie to Glassel via Dam Wood. This route was opened in 2024 by the Torphins Paths Group (TPG). Dam Wood is part of the local F&LS land-holding.
2. Route of the former railway. This was part of the Aberdeen to Ballater railway line that closed in the 1960s and linked Banchory to Glassel, Torphins and Lumphanan. The new Easter Beltie path uses part of the route, and there is potential to re-use more sections if a coherent plan can be established.
3. Brathens Moss Walks. These have potential to provide additional linkages to the former railway, or into new paths associated with the Inchmarlo LDP housing.
4. Aberdeenshire Council Core Paths. These paths have been identified by AC and are protected from further development. The Core Path leading from IRV into Banchory has potential to serve the retirement village if it can be better connected into Banchory across the Glassel Road. The core path running along the north bank of the River Dee is in a sensitive site close to the water's edge, and terminates at a residential house and fishing lodge.

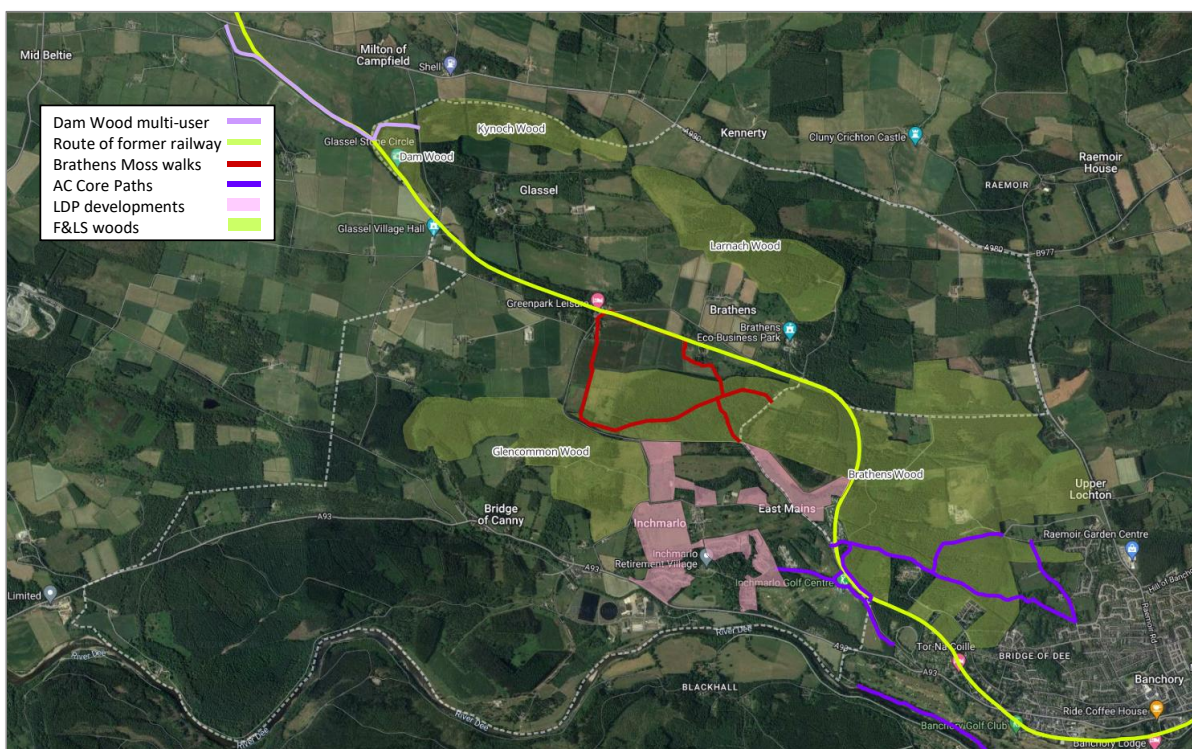


Figure 10. Map showing formal paths around IBGCC

In the context of the above notes, commentary received as part of the questionnaire is consolidated in the following sections. A more detailed map below shows some of the routes described.

Torphins Path Group would like to establish a path from Torphins to Banchory using F&LS and other land where possible. The Dam Wood path is the first section to be implemented. The possibility of

taking the route north through Kynoch, Larnach and into Brathens Woods is being explored, avoiding the housing and estate activity along the former railway route, which has thus far proven to be a blocker.

Furthermore, TPG would like to create a circular route around Dam Wood which could - if including an out-and-back along the new Easter Beltie Wetlands Path - make a lovely 5km route accessible for all including wheelchair users. A schematic route is shown in the map below.

New developments at Inchmarlo will increase traffic along already busy roads that are too dangerous for pedestrians, and increasingly so for cyclists. An off-road path alongside the Glassel Road has been proposed, joining paths such as at Brathens Moss with Banchory Core Paths. As noted above, path construction of this type is part of Kirkwood Homes planning obligation, although it has not been implemented to date. Again, a schematic route is shown below.

Connection of IRV to walking and cycling routes outside the complex was raised. There is at the same time a reluctance to have outsiders pass through the village on through-routes. It may be that, as noted above, the existing core path can provide a suitable access route that does not create a through-route.

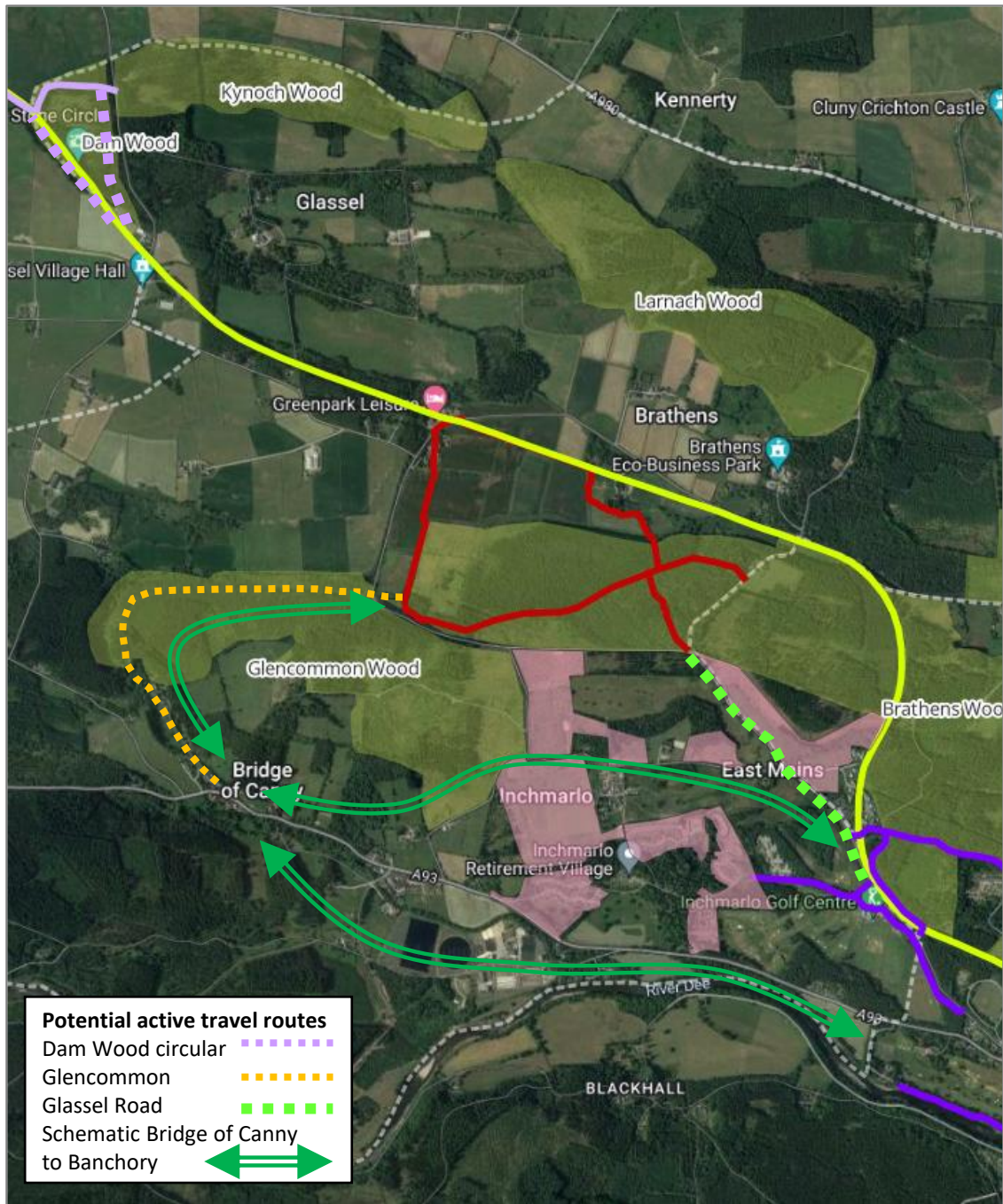


Figure 11. Map showing potential paths routes in IBGCC

IRV is a private development (owned and operated by Skene Enterprises) and roads are not adopted by the council. However, it was noted that roadside pavements are generally absent, and this is a particular issue for those wheelchair dependent residents.

The road section at BoC is described as really unsafe at the speed drivers come through, with significant pedestrian activity, limited sight lines due to corners, and no pavements. The bridge itself is too narrow for large vehicles to pass each other, and pedestrians must share the bridge to cross to and from housing, the quarry road, Trustach Woods, the community hall, workshop and bus stops. Combined with issues raised in the Traffic section of this report, this location justifies a further review of traffic control including consideration of paths, pavements and a pedestrian crossing.



The lack of a safe cycling route into Banchory from BoC is also noted, with impatient drivers on the A93 leading to unsafe conditions. Again, this should be linked to the A93 review proposed under the traffic section. Off-road routes avoiding traffic have been considered, and are shown in a very high-level form on the map above. These all have multiple issues to address, from steep hills, to complex permissions, however they should be borne in mind if opportunities arise to secure or develop sections. The northern route could coincide with the Glencommon path mentioned below. The central route would be part of the greater Inchmarlo development. The southern route would have the added advantage of connecting housing along the A93 at BoC, Beltie Cottages and Smiddy Park, but has multiple issues to overcome not least entering Banchory. Alternatively, a pavement alongside the A93 would also serve to connect these housing clusters with facilities at the BoC.

There have been instances in recent years of popular walking paths being lost as a result of timber felling operations. The rights of landowners and their commercial considerations are recognised; however, preservation or re-instatement of routes should be a consideration. Felling at Sluie provides an example where a walking route has been created, albeit around a deer fence. However, felling at Glencommon Wood destroyed a well-established and popular route linking BoC to Brathens. There may be scope to work with F&LS to re-instate this route in line with the PAWS designation, and commitments to working with local communities. A schematic route is shown above.

Nestrans (see above), through its contractor Jacobs, is developing proposals for a “Regional Active Travel Network”. The routes that run through the IBGCC area are shown in the map below, comprising predominantly “Quiet Roads” and “Share Use Paths”. IBGCC is working with Jacobs to progress these proposals.

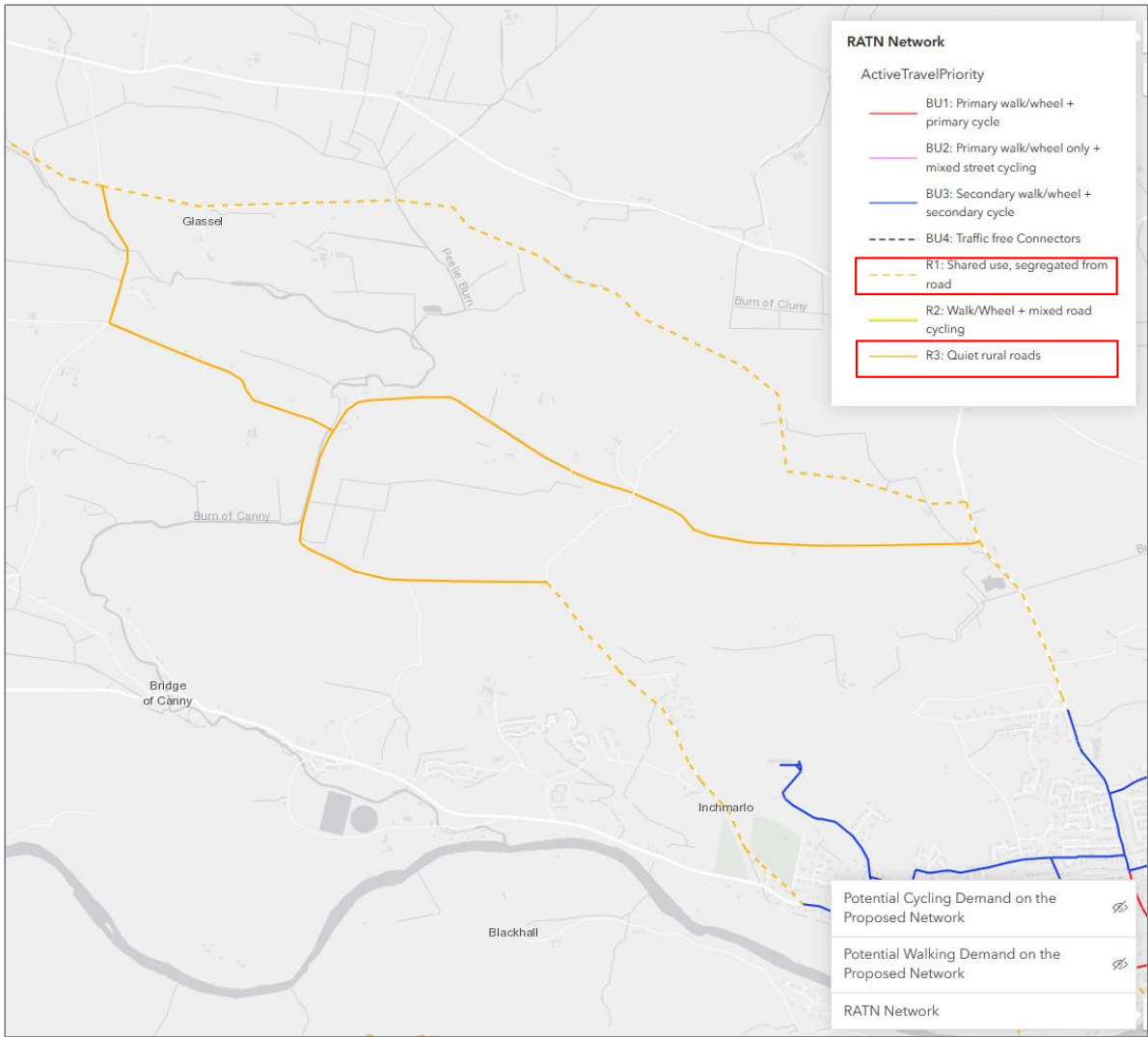


Figure 12. Map showing NESTRANS potential quiet and off-road shared routes

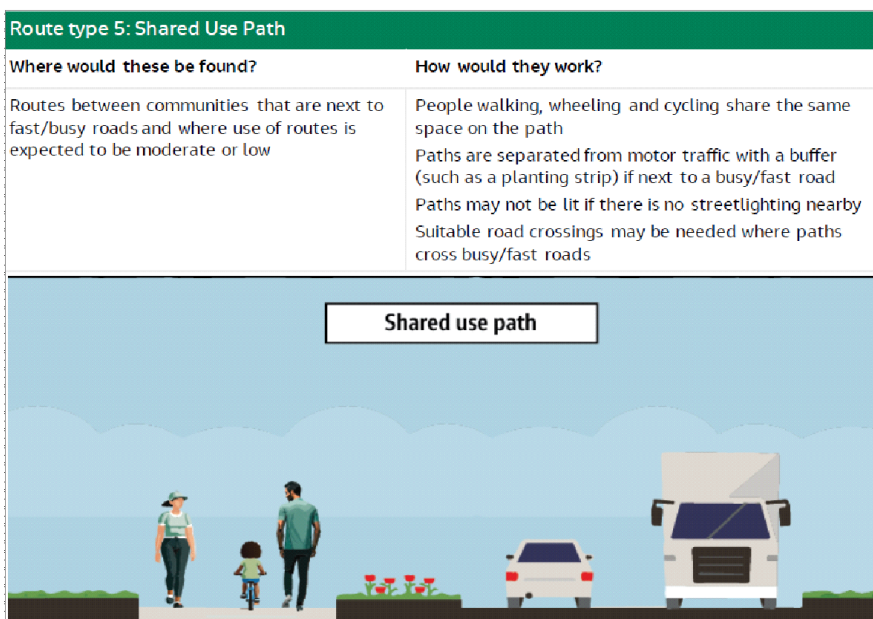


Figure 13. NESTRANS shared route explainer

Route type 7: Quiet Road	
Where would these be found?	How would they work?
Minor rural roads where traffic levels are low	<p>Pedestrians and cyclists share space with motor traffic</p> <p>Use of the routes is likely to be low, so the cost of separating pedestrians and cyclists from motor traffic does not offer good value</p> <p>Signs warn motorists of the likely presence of people walking, wheeling and cycling</p> <p>Speed limits are reduced to 30mph or lower</p> <p>Roads are unlikely to be lit</p> <p>Suitable road crossings may be needed where routes cross busy/fast roads</p>

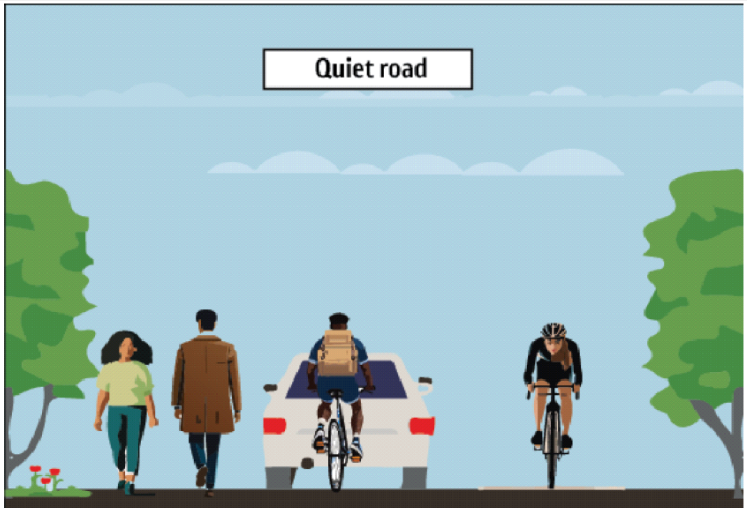
  


Figure 14. NESTRANS quiet road explainer

### Work and Local Economy

This question scored towards the lower end in our survey. There is a recognition that the oil and gas sector is now in decline, rapidly so in recent years due to government tax and policy changes. Oil and gas workers are retiring, moving away, with limited replacement. Major solutions lie out-with the scope of this report, however it is worth noting that the 2019 Community Action Plan looked to develop the area as a destination for walkers and cyclists. Mountain-bike tracks and cycle shops have opened in the area in the intervening years. Cycling is an increasingly popular activity, spurred on by COVID and with early retirees amongst others. There is a wider context of tourism, outdoor pursuits, food and drink, quality of life and remote working. Working with other CCs and groups, IBGCC can play its part in understanding this potential, and promoting related initiatives.

### Public transport

Again, this question scored towards the lower end in our survey. Public transport links in the IBGCC area comprise bus routes along the A93 and the Glassel Road (201, 202) operated by Stagecoach, and a council-operated mini-bus service (A2B).

It was noted that Stagecoach services are expensive, infrequent and very unreliable, sometimes resulting in an additional wait of an hour. Cross-country journeys are an issue, meaning it is much quicker and easier to drive, and there is no direct service to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.

Marked bus-stops at Inchmarlo Hall and opposite at the Workshop were requested, as was a bus-stop and shelter at Glassel Hall. Accessing bus-stops is also an issue requiring passengers to walk on busy main roads, which discourages users. As described above, the bus-stops at IRV entrance are not easily accessible for those with mobility issues, and crossing the road is particularly hazardous for the same reasons. Improvements to the access to and layout of bus-stops needs to be addressed.

There is a lack of real-time information on bus services, which has been available elsewhere for many years, both at bus-stops and in smart-phone apps. The knowledge of when a bus is going to arrive is important in avoiding some of the issues described above.

Taken together, the above create significant disincentives to using buses rather than cars.

Banchory town A2B is a council operated minibus service providing travel for shopping or other local services or facilities. The service is free to use and is available for people that have difficulty walking, people with other disabilities or residents who don't live near a regular bus route. The service offers low floor and wheel-chair accessible transport. Wheel-chair users at IRV "thank the lord" for this service, otherwise they would be "stuck".

A2B buses can be booked up to 7 days before travel or 14 days for health-related trips, but no later than the day before travel. Perhaps a similar service for the general public, i.e. an on-demand bus service, could be of wider application.

## Play and recreation

This topic scored towards the middle of the survey, and attracted limited commentary, perhaps reflecting the demographic of IBGCC.

It is notable that there are no formal playgrounds for children in the area, although there are extensive woodlands and wild ground. There is a golf centre at Inchmarlo, and other sports facilities and grounds are located in Banchory. Although there are excellent Rugby facilities in Banchory, it was noted that better football pitches were required. More bike trails were requested, and this links with the Walking and Cycling topic above.

There were appeals for improved facilities at IRV, including a swimming pool and facilities to play sports such as pickle ball.

## Streets and Buildings, Care and Maintenance

The responses to these two questions have been combined as they cover similar issues. Sites referenced in the text are shown in the map below.

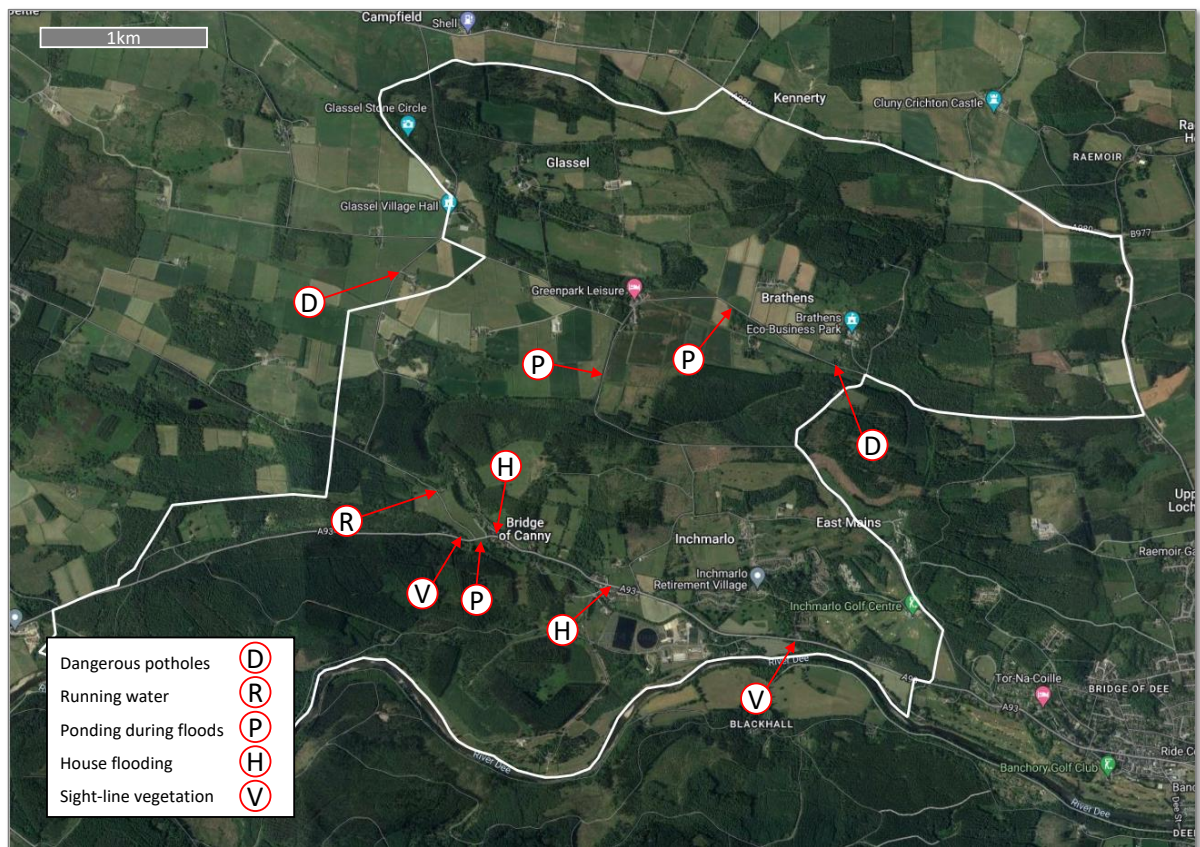


Figure 15. Map showing road and flooding issues

The most significant issue raised here is flooding of houses, at Bridge of Canny and Beltie Cottages in particular (“H” on the map). Flooding of roads also occurs in these areas and in low-lying areas at Brathens (“P” on the map). Note that flooding on the section of road south of Greenpark Leisure is an accepted part of the road network.

Flooding of houses at Bridge of Canny occurred due to the Canny Burn breaking its banks, together with surface water run-off ponding on low-lying fields at the Craighash Quarry road as it approaches the A93. There is a resident’s group in place, however support to address this issue is required. Drainage or other engineering solutions have been suggested and need to be more widely understood.

At Beltie Cottages, drainage issues are reported, with residents having to clear them themselves, including the elderly. There are additional drainage issues on the Craighash Quarry road, at Delavaird, where a permanent flow of running water has recently occurred and will become dangerous when frozen (“R” on the map).

The response to Storm Arwen was praised in the commentary, and it raises an important issue if (or when) the area is affected by another weather event that amongst other things cuts off the electricity supply. “Resilience” is now a topic that is given priority by government, and a local group exists at Bridge of Canny who are putting plans in place at Inchmarlo Village Hall to provide emergency support with future events.

Additional comments were received regarding potholes, which are left open too long and became dangerous at Brathens and Bridgend Cottages (“D” on the map), where the underlying issues of road structure and drainage need to be addressed.

Fly-tipping has become a problem in laybys and track entrances, and is addressed directly by AC. It may be there are preventative measures that could be taken to deter or catch offenders. Casual littering of verges is also a general and frustrating issue.

Cutting back of vegetation at road verges and junctions becomes particularly important where it affects sight lines. This is particularly acute along the A93, and issues at the IRV entrance, and at the Craighash Quarry road junction have been raised under the Traffic section.

## Feeling safe

IBGCC was generally seen as a safe area, with the exception of issues captured above relating to traffic, walking/cycling, accessing public transport, and specific issues within IRV regarding road/pavement/path safety.

Crossing the road to access IRV bus stops on the A93 was described as “Scary” due to the amount and speed of traffic. Issues of traffic speed within IRV were also reported.

Concerns were raised at IRV over the lack of a suitably sized community facility that, amongst other things, would provide a resilience service during power cuts, storms etc.

There was further concern over what would happen if internet services are lost, traditional phone lines no longer operate, and (potentially life-saving) help was required.

IRV speed bump design was raised, as the geometry causes issues for those with back problems.

The above points highlight the need to recognise the particular characteristics of the IRV community, for example in decisions over A93 speed restrictions at the entrance.

Again, BoC residents described safety as poor on the A93, with speeding being a significant problem, and a reduction in speed limit required. A “children/pedestrians walking” sign was also requested. The occurrence of multiple accidents / car crashes at the bend coming in from the west side at the 40mph speed-limit were described, often due to cars speeding and road conditions.

## Housing

Concerns were raised over the amount of new housing, and the need to ensure that facilities and services were available to cope with the increasing population. There was also concern that with the downturn in the oil and gas industry, additional housing may not be required.

There was recognition that IRV provided the facilities that residents need in terms of housing, however this was not necessarily suitable for families.

## Influence and Control

It was recognised that there is an active Community Council, and two active Village Halls, however there is no residents’ group with IRV.

## Facilities and Services

It was commented that Banchory provides most services which are accessible if you have a car. It was noted that Banchory High Street has declined, Banchory Academy is over-crowded, and health services are unable to cope.

Concerns were raised over further expansion of IRV, as it is already large, losing its community aspects, requires a community facility large enough for its residents, and would need an expansion to the Care Facility. The most important improvement for one resident was safe, easy access (cycle, walk, mobility) to a permanent meeting place(s) with light meals, drinks, even take-away. Warm, bright, with space outside.

The often poor telecommunications services, in particular broadband, were noted, depending on the exact location. Full fibre broadband is due to be provided by Openreach, as a contractor to the Scottish Government, however this contract has not been delivered yet, and excludes certain properties.

## Natural Spaces

Natural spaces score highly in the questionnaire, with re-wilding, path construction, and availability of forest and riverside walks cited as strengths. However, loss of walks in commercial forestry was noted by several respondents, including blockage by wind-blown trees. There was also a suggestion to convert the disused golf course into a nature reserve.

Concern was raised over the plans for a windfarm on Hill of Fare, and for pylons. IBGCC is working with adjacent Community Councils, and Aberdeenshire Council, to object to the proposals.

## Social Interaction

Again, this scored highly in the questionnaire, across both IRV and other areas. IRV was seen as a quiet and pleasant place to retire to, with a nursing home for people who require help and can no longer look after themselves or their homes, whilst dogs are kept on the lead when walked, which is essential. The great efforts made to entertain residents was appreciated.

It was noted that social interaction was within the estate, and only occurred outside on an individual basis, although the University of the 3rd Age was highlighted as having improved social interaction. There was a request for more information (in paper format) and access to local activity groups for example crafts & tai chi during daytime.

Again, the need was raised for a gathering place in IRV for social interaction all year, rather than the marquee which is well used in the summer.

At BoC, the good, local mutually-supporting community was recognised, with the Inchmarlo Hall being a highlight, as well as the Workshop. Both Glassel and Inchmarlo halls were seen as a strength of the area as social hubs. An important improvement would be to include ways to get to these facilities safely on foot/bike. At Inchmarlo Hall and Workshop the ability to turn into and out of the carpark off the A93 was seen as a blocker for those that needed to drive, for example from IRV. It was noted that people help each other out in a crisis e.g. flooding or fallen trees, and there is a good group of people with practical skills.

However, it was also noted from experience working in health and social services that there are those in our community who are socially isolated, particularly elderly residents, and so may not interact or

respond to questionnaires. A befriending service or similar was suggested to help with this issue.

### Identity and Belonging

As per Social Interaction, this element scored very highly in the questionnaire, with the Halls and Workshop cited, along with the overall community and people, and a good community spirit and sense of belonging.

There was however, once again, seen to be a lack of connection between IRV and the wider community.



## Summary of Projects and Actions

A list of projects and actions have been extracted from each of the sections above, and form the basis for progressing issues raised by the community. The listing below is in order of greatest concern to least concern, as measured by the average questionnaire score, however action items should be considered on their own merits.

Progress will be dependent on residents or group coming forward to provide support, as the Community Council has limited resources to progress only a limited number unaided. As developments in the 2023 LDP progress, and the 2028 plan matures, IBGCC looks forward to working with Aberdeenshire Council, landowners and developers to enhance projects, and deliver community benefits described in this report.

IBGCC's role in projects can vary, providing a hands-off connection to Aberdeenshire Council where residents or other groups want to take the lead. Depending on circumstances IBGCC is able to provide some financial support via the Mid-Hill windfarm funding it administers.

### 1. Traffic and Feeling Safe

- 1.1. If residents are forthcoming, form a group focussed on road safety.
- 1.2. Carry out a strategic review of road safety - issues, possible solutions, ways to securing change.
- 1.3. Maintain a watching brief on the Scottish Government and subsequent AC roads policies.
- 1.4. Work with AC to review 40mph limit at IRV entrance, including Road Teams ISC report of 24th Aug 2023, and associated bus-stop issues.
- 1.5. Within its remit, work with IRV to address concerns over traffic speed and volumes, resilience and other concerns raised by residents.
- 1.6. Work with AC to address concerns over visibility at junctions, including clearing vegetation at IRV entrance, and at the Craighash Quarry road, where they join the A93, to improve visibility to the west when exiting.
- 1.7. Work with residents at BoC to address the multiple concerns over traffic speeds, accidents and related dangers.
- 1.8. Consider the case for extending the 40mph speed restriction at Glassel.

### 2. Walking and Cycling

- 2.1. Review AC's LDP and Planning Advice, and understand planning policy on outdoor access and development.
- 2.2. Work with Torphins Paths Group, Banchory Paths Association, F&LS and other landowners to progress the route along the former railway line, and circular route in Dam Wood.
- 2.3. Work with AC to improve the connectivity of the core path leading from IRV with core paths in Banchory.
- 2.4. Investigate the scope for a segregated path along the Glassel road, with Aberdeenshire Council, Kirkwood Homes and Skene Enterprises.
- 2.5. Within its remit, work with IRV to address concerns over pavements and wheel-chair accessibility.

- 2.6. Alongside the related Traffic action, work with BoC, Beltie Cottages and Smiddy Park residents to improve safety for walkers, cyclists and other users who suffer from traffic issues on the A93, and in particular to improve access to Inchmarlo Hall and the Workshop
  - 2.7. Alongside the A93 review under the Traffic section, consider options to improve safety for cyclists.
  - 2.8. Investigate segregated routes from BoC via Glencommon Wood, via Inchmarlo Home Farm, and via Invercarnie water treatment plant.
  - 2.9. Work with F&LS to re-develop the BoC to Brathens route that ran through Glencommon wood.
  - 2.10. Continue working with Nestrans to progress the Regional Active Travel Network through the IBGCC area.
- 3. Work and Local Economy**
- 3.1. Work with neighbouring Community Councils and other bodies to develop post-oil and gas activity, including walking and cycling destinations, and a wider focus on tourism, outdoor pursuits, food and drink, quality of life and remote working.
- 4. Public Transport**
- 4.1. Work with bus user groups and AC to address the issues described with Stagecoach services and bus-stops.
  - 4.2. Support and protect the A2B bus service, and consider how a similar service might be more widely developed.
- 5. Play and recreation**
- 5.1. Make the connection with the walking and cycling topic around recreation
  - 5.2. Work with IRV as appropriate regarding recreational facilities
  - 5.3. Work with Banchory CC regarding football and play facilities
- 6. Streets and Buildings, Care and Maintenance**
- 6.1. Work with the resident's group at Bridge of Canny to address flooding of houses by the Canny Burn.
  - 6.2. Investigate the drainage issues causing flooding risk at Beltie Cottages, with AC.
  - 6.3. Address surface water at the bottom of the Craighlash Quarry road.
- 7. Feeling safe**
- 7.1. Issues are closely related to Traffic and Walking / Cycling, and these should be addressed jointly where appropriate.
  - 7.2. Discuss the need for a community facility at IRV, including for resilience, as part of the ongoing Masterplan exercise.
- 8. Influence and Control**
- 8.1. Explore whether there is scope for a resident's group in IRV
- 9. Facilities and Services**
- 9.1. Work with Banchory CC to understand issues related to facilities and services described above.

**9.2.** As above, discuss the scope for a community facility at IRV.

**9.3.** Work with residents to address telecommunication issues

#### **10. Natural spaces**

**10.1.** Work with and support local paths groups and initiatives.

**10.2.** Work with F&LS and other landowners to protect or re-instate paths in forestry areas.

**10.3.** Investigate plans for the disused part of the Inchmarlo Golf Course and possible protection and re-use as a nature reserve.

**10.4.** Continue to object to the Hill of Fare windfarm proposal.

#### **11. Social Interaction, Identity and Belonging**

**11.1.** Again, explore whether there is scope for a resident's group within IRV, perhaps working with IBGCC, who can address issues raised.

**11.2.** As above, discuss the scope for a community facility at IRV.

**11.3.** Continue to support the community Halls, Workshop and other facilities, including Mid-Hill windfarm funding as appropriate.

**11.4.** Understand the level of social isolation and practical steps that could be taken to help, for example a befriending service.

## Glossary

AC – Aberdeenshire Council

BoC – Bridge of Canny

CAP - Community Action Plan

F&LS – Forestry and Land Scotland

GIS – Geographic Information System

IBGCC – Inchmarlo, Glassel and Brathens Community Council

IRV – Inchmarlo Retirement Village

ISC – Aberdeenshire Council’s Infrastructure and Services Committee

LDP – Local Development Plan

LPP – Local Place Plan

PAWS - Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site

TPG – Torphins Paths Group

## References

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## Appendix: Extract from Report to ISC, 24/8/23, A93 Inchmarlo Banchory – Request for extension of Speed Limit.

- 3.1 Both general speed limits for restricted roads and the national speed limit are set by the Scottish Government and these apply by default across the country. As these defaults may not be appropriate for all sections of a route, local traffic authorities are permitted to set local speed limits suited to local conditions and circumstances.
- 3.2 To ensure a strategic approach adopted in the use of this power, the Infrastructure Services Committee agreed the current Speed Limit Policy, and associated Manual, at its meeting of 26 November 2020.
- 3.3 The policy aims to promote a reasonable balance between the competing demands of drivers and pedestrians, and residents and businesses. Compliance with the policy should ensure a level of consistency across Aberdeenshire, with speed limits being set fairly and systematically following a quantitatively based assessment approach.
- 3.4 The A93 from Bridge of Canny eastwards to Banchory is a single carriageway A class road in a countryside environment, with grass verges and no street lighting. The section of road is currently subject to the national speed limit. While this is 60mph for cars, motorcycles, and car derived vans it should be noted that buses and coaches are limited to 50mph as are goods vehicles not exceeding 7.5 tonnes. Goods vehicles in excess of 7.5 tonnes are restricted to 40mph on this class of road.
- 3.5 The initial report to Marr Area Committee focused on the section of road surrounding the entrance to Inchmarlo Retirement Estate. However, the oral evidence presented at Marr Area Committee confirmed that the petition referred to a larger section of road. It was confirmed that the petitioners were seeking a 40mph limit to be created from the western boundary of the current 30mph limit to the eastern boundary of the existing 40mph limit at Bridge of Canny, as set out in **Appendix 3**.
- 3.6 Following the Marr Area Committee meeting, the local Roads team have reviewed the request for the extension, including liaison with the Council's Road Safety Unit ("RSU").

- 3.7 As part of those discussions a review of accident history for the previous 5 years was undertaken. There have been 4 recorded collisions as follows:
- Loss of control on frost/ice.
  - Driver did not pay attention to temporary traffic lights and collided with a stationary vehicle.
  - Young driver collided with verge.
  - Young driver travelling too fast for conditions on a wet/damp road, drifted into opposing lane and collided with verge.
- 3.8 The results from the database search indicate that the section of road from Bridge of Canny to Banchory is not a location with a significant history of accidents. The small number of listed accidents also do not indicate that speed is a main contributory factor.
- 3.9 The review also concluded that a 40mph speed limit would not be perceived as appropriate by most road users. A key factor when setting a speed limit is how the road and adjacent land use looks to road users. In this instance, setting a 40mph limit on a rural stretch of road with low housing density and no footpaths is likely to lead to high levels of non-compliance. If a speed limit is set too low and is ignored, this could result in the majority of drivers criminalising themselves and could bring the system of speed limits into disrepute.
- 3.10 One of the reasons given for the proposed change to 40mph for this section of road was the suggestion that it would make it a safer and more comfortable cycle and walking route between Inchmarlo and Banchory, in the absence of any paths or pavements. Due to the nature of the road and the lack of footpaths, the local Roads team and RSU would not support the introduction of a 40mph limit as a means of making the route more suitable for walkers and would instead encourage the use of internal or off road footpaths. There are existing paths within the Retirement Estate linking to Banchory. A safe route to school was required as part of the planning permission for the Kirkwood Inchmarlo Development, this will run through the Retirement Estate providing a safe route to and from Banchory, fully segregated from the A93.
- 3.11 While enforcement of speed limits is entirely the responsibility for Police Scotland, Police enforcement is expensive, and resources are limited. It is therefore important that speed limits are designed to be effective without the need for extensive enforcement effort. There should be no expectation that the Police would be able to provide regular enforcement if a speed limit has been set too low as this could result in an unreasonable additional demand on Police resources. It is also important to set reasonable speed limits to ensure consistency across the country.
- 3.12 Retaining the national speed limit as the standard speed limit on countryside roads in Aberdeenshire helps preserve the rural character of the area by minimising the sign clutter of repeater speed limit signs.
- 3.13 The conclusion of the review is that the section of road considered does not meet the criteria for a reduced speed limit as set out in the current policy.