

Dores and Essich Community Action Plan
A vision of our future 2024 – 2034

Summary Document

Commissioned by Dores and Essich Community Council
Funded by Statkraft
Prepared by: Impact Hub Inverness



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Our vision for the Dores and Essich areas is to cultivate a vibrant, resilient, and sustainable community that cherishes its natural resources, supports its people, enhances infrastructure and amenities and fosters strong community spirit through collaborative effort.

Background

- Dores and Essich Community Council (DECC) commissioned Impact Hub Inverness to support them with the development of a community action plan.
- The purpose of the plan is to gather the views, aspirations and priorities of the community of Dores and Essich Community Council area (hereafter referred to as Dores and Essich area) and set out the main and most viable priorities for the community to take forward over the coming 10 years.
- While the community action plan (CAP) was commissioned by DECC, the contents reflect what has been – and still is – a collaborative community journey and it is outwith the scope of DECC to take these initiatives forward on its own.
- The Dores and Essich area lies southwest of Inverness, starting at Torbreck and running along the shore of Loch Ness, encompassing the settlements of Scaniport, Essich and Dores. Dores is the main settlement in the area, located approximately in the mid-point, and 10km from Inverness.
- It is a rural community with a total population of approximately 360, and an adult population of 285, according to the 2011 Census¹. There has been an estimated 12.9% increase in population in the wider south Loch Ness area from 2011 to 2021.
- The area has a number of important local assets - both natural and built - including a community-owned village hall in Dores and a primary school.
- The school roll in the local primary school, Aldourie, has seen some degree of variation, ranging from 31 to 22 in the last 10 years but it is currently declining.
- The area is a popular destination for visitors due to its scenery and location on the shores of Loch Ness with easy access to, and stunning views of, the Loch itself.

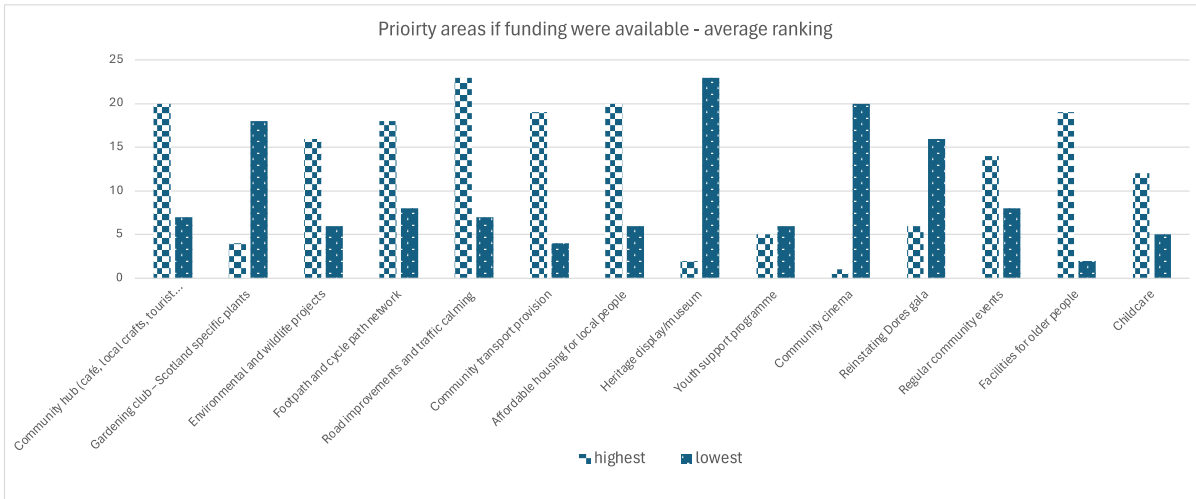
Community Consultation

- A Community Action Plan needs to be informed by the views and aspirations of the local residents, and the preparation of this CAP involved four key forms of public consultation and engagement during April and May 2024:
 - Community survey made available online and in paper form, which received 47 responses, representing 16.5% of the population.
 - Two open drop-in sessions held in Dores Parish Hall
 - Survey of primary school children
 - Interviews with local stakeholders
- There was consistency throughout the consultation from what people liked about living in the Dores and Essich community area. This included its rural nature, scenery and community spirit.
- The main challenges identified by respondents, now and in the next 5-10 years were also consistent and included:
 - High levels of tourism and the impact this has on the area and its infrastructure
 - Challenges around being an aging population and the need to support younger people and families to be able to remain in and move to the area.

¹ Taken from the current available [Scottish Government census data](#). 2022 census data is not yet publicly available at community council level but should be available through Highland Council by the end of 2024.

- Road conditions and high levels of traffic
- Public toilet provision
- Housing, in particular housing for young families
- Car parking provision
- Elderly care
- Dores beach area
- Play park area

- Respondents were also asked to provide suggestions on solutions and / or potential locations for the issues highlighted above. Tables listing all suggestions and locations can be found in full in the community action plan.
- The community survey asked people to give their top 5 highest and lowest priority areas for community projects if funding was available. As can be seen in the graph below, the highest ranked were road and traffic calming measures, community hub, affordable housing, community transport and facilities for older people.



Community Priority Actions – The Next 10 Years

- The priorities set out in the community action plan below encompass the things people who live in the area said matter to them the most, and because these are the things that would make the greatest impact on life in the area.
- This plan should be seen as the start of the journey with its success dependent on the continued enthusiasm and support of the members of the Dores and Essich community.
- The plan is very much a collective vision of the community, and it is not realistic to expect DECC to undertake all the actions in the plan alone. To be a success, it will require a holistic and community approach involving local residents, businesses and stakeholders.
- The actions below have been colour coded by timescale. There are a number of actions that can be taken immediately, the ‘quick wins’. To maintain traction and enthusiasm, it is recommended that these immediate actions are moved forward.
- Many of these actions are major projects in their own right and are outwith the control of the local community alone to bring to fruition and will require joint working or lobbying of others if they are to succeed.
- DECC has already commissioned the preparation of a Local Place Plan which will build on the work carried out during the preparation of the CAP, and add further depth to some of the findings.

Community Action Plan for Dores and Essich over the next 10 years:

Colour coding of table:

Immediate action
Short to medium term action
Longer term action

Project	Changes the community wants to see	Feasibility	Possible locations	Economic, social & environmental impact	Potential sources of funding	Timescale and Next steps
Public toilet provision	New toilet block	Feasible with access to land and funding	At the bus stop or a new car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for environmental impact due to reduced soiling of local area • Potential for positive impact on Dores Inn as would relieve them of managing the toilets as at present 	Comfort Scheme for running costs. Dores Community Development Trust Fund/ Awards for All/Statkraft community benefit Changing Places funding	Identify suitable sites and establish land ownership. Discuss with Dores Inn who currently run the Comfort Scheme.
Car parking for visitors	Double yellow lines	Feasible	Along the road to Foyers on exit from Dores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on community safety 	n/a	Council responsibility – make

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access for residents living along the route 		representation to the Council
	Additional car parking provision	Possible areas already scoped out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church Area adjacent to football field Area next to Hall (temporary) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on community safety Relieve pressure on roads Economic impact as would free up parking at Dores Inn for Inn customers 	Council	Council responsibility – make representation to the Council
	Mobile home parking provision	Possible areas already scoped out and planning in place	On the edge of Dores village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If community run, would generate an income Reduces parking in inappropriate places 	Self-financing: private operator	Outwith control of community: engage in discussion with owner/ operator
	'No parking' signs through the village	Feasible	Throughout the village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved community safety Increased access for residents along the main roads 	Council	Council responsibility
Care services for the elderly	Extend Boleskine community services.	Feasible if Boleskine has capacity – model already being developed	Village Hall	Improved care for elderly	NHS	Discussions with Boleskine and NHS

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	GP visiting 2hrs/week in Dores Hall		Village Hall	Improved access to health care for whole community, especially those with mobility restrictions	NHS	Discussions with NHS and/or nearest GP practice
	Provide a local house for local carers, with shared facilities for health visits etc.		As part of proposed housing at The Glebe	Improved access to care services for those with care needs	NHS	Discussions with Council and housing developer
Community and public transport	Dial a bus service or community bus		Extension of Foyers bus in partnership with Foyers?	Positive social impact due to increased access for those with mobility restrictions	Dores Community Development Trust Fund/Statkraft	Short to medium term - discuss with Stratherrick and Foyers Medium to long term – investigate potential for own bus/dial a bus scheme
	Park and ride scheme	Possible but would require identification of a site and coordination with a bus service	Site to be identified	Would reduce negative environmental impact	Council	Discussions needed with Council and bus operator

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	Weekend buses from and to Inverness, especially during the summer season	Feasible		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased social impact • Reduced environmental impact as fewer cars and less parking needed • Increased economic impact as would enable more people to visit 	Could be self-financing	Potential for community bus to operate if one was introduced? Discussions with current operators
	Bike parking spaces near the beach	Feasible		Positive environmental impact as fewer cars and less parking demand	Council, Active Travel monies, Sustrans	Discussions with landowner and council
	Water taxis across the loch	Feasible	Various points along the loch – Dores, Drumnadrochit, Loch End	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce traffic on the roads and reduced pollution • Potential economic benefit for taxi operator, and also local businesses who would be more accessible 	Self-financing – private operator	Discussions would be needed with Council and SEPA
Beach area	Benches and furniture/art at the beach	Feasible with support from local community, businesses and funders	Dores beach	Positive social impact, as the beach would be more pleasant for locals and visitors alike	Dores Community Development Trust Fund/Statkraft Could also be sponsored by	Discussions with local community and businesses to identify anyone who would be willing to support project and

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					local businesses	funders to find financial support.
	Establish a Friends of Dores Beach	Feasible with volunteers	n/a	Potential for significant positive economic, social and environmental impact	n/a although could benefit from some resources. Awards for All	Establish support for the idea amongst possible volunteers and identify a co-ordinator to lead the group and agree purpose
	Greater fire prevention signage	Feasible with support from landowners and funders.	Throughout the village but Dores beach in particular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased environmental impact as reducing the risk of fires in the area Increased social impact as potentially reducing the risk of anti-social behaviour, making the area safer for everyone. 	Dores Community Development Trust Fund/Statkraft /Highland Council	<p>Speak with Council to find out if there is any support available.</p> <p>Speak with landowners about potential locations for signs. They may also be willing to contribute to some of the costs.</p>
	Increased shrub clearing to prevent fires	Feasible but need to identify who would do this	Dores beach and surrounding area	Positive environmental impact by reducing the risk of fires spreading.	Landowners owning the land	Discussions with local community and/or businesses to identify who would be willing to

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		i.e. volunteers, local business.				<p>help and decide on dates / timings throughout the year to clear and maintain areas.</p> <p>Discussions with any landowners about areas privately owned to seek permission to carry out work.</p>
	Reintroduction of a ranger service	Possible but would require a source of funding in place to hire and retain a ranger. No longer funded by Council so need to source alternative funding and suitable person.		Positive social and environmental impact as there would be reduced risk of fires, littering, anti-social behaviour etc.	Local estates/ businesses, particularly those that are impacted by the issues set to be addressed by the ranger post. Could part fund with Dores Community Development	<p>Discussions with potential funders i.e. estates, local businesses, Council.</p> <p>Identifying if any other neighbouring communities are looking for a similar service that could be shared and jointly funded.</p>

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					Trust Fund/Statkraft Potentially worth speaking with the Council again to find out if this is something they will fund again, or even part fund.	
	BBQ pits to contain fires	Feasible but would need to source funding required to purchase pits, someone to maintain and empty pits and permission from landowners to install pits.	Beach area	Positive social and environmental impact as there would be reduced risk of fires.	Dores Community Development Trust Fund/Statkraft	Identify potential site(s) for BBQ pits and speak with landowner. Discussions would be needed with Fire Service and SEPA, potentially. Source funding to purchase pits.

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						Identify person(s) who will maintain and empty pits. Potentially could be part of ranger service if service is reintroduced but if it is not, most likely looking at volunteers to do this.
	Litter bins	Highly feasible, but issue could be regular emptying	Car parks, beach area	Lower levels of littering would have a positive environmental impact	Dores Community Development Trust Fund/Statkraft /Council/ Awards for All	Identify potential locations and preferred style. Hold discussions with landowners.
Traffic safety and calming measures	Road crossing to Dores beach	More challenging as this would require support from the Council to install new crossing.	At road crossing to Dores beach	Installing a road crossing to Dores beach would make the area safer for pedestrians to cross and greatly reduce the risk of road accidents in a busy area, thus having a positive social impact.	N/a – needs to be done by Council	Council responsibility – make representation to the Council

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	Speed bumps/chicanes at the three road entrances/exits to Dores village	More challenging as Council would be responsible for installing any speed bumps or chicanes on public roads.	Entrances and exits to Dores village	Speed bumps and chicanes used to reduce speeding and improve safety of pedestrians in the area.	N/a – needs to be done by Council	Council responsibility – make representation to the Council
	Path to school moved back from the road		Road to school	Increased community safety	N/a – needs to be done by Council	Council responsibility
	30 mph speed limit from school to village.	Challenging as Council's responsibility	Stretch of road between Dores village and Aldourie primary school	Reduced speed of road users to reduce the risk of accidents on the road and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly school kids using that path / road to get to and from school	N/a – needs to be done by Council	Council responsibility – make representation to the Council
	Make sure paths are suitable for wheelchairs, elderly, buggies etc	Challenging as Council's responsibility and potentially a big project to undertake.	Various throughout Dores	More accessible paths would have both a positive social and environmental impact as it would allow more people to easily		Council responsibility – make representation to the Council

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	More cycle paths	Feasibility will depend on where the cycle paths will be. If running them through areas with multiple landowners, it would potentially be more challenging as would require permission from all.	Various – would need greater discussion within the community and land owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to nature and cycling would have positive social impact and physical and mental health • Some environmental impact, but would focus this on maintained tracks rather than be in an uncontrolled way if people make their own routes • Could attract more people so potential economic impact, but could also be negative impact if too busy 	Cycling UK Sustrans	Need further community consultation to establish possible routes
Housing provision	Make plots available for private housing development	Possible but would likely need a multi-stakeholder approach i.e. Council, local landowners, housing developer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two areas already zoned in Dores – by the Hall and the Church/cemetery 	Both positive social and economic impact as it would allow more people, in particular young families, to remain in the area.	Council Highland Housing Partnership Rural Housing Fund Cairn or Albyn Housing associations	Requires discussions with Council and landowners Need to establish up to date housing needs, once the projects identified are completed.

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		ideally specialising in or with good understanding of community housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somewhere between Dores and Scaniport • Torbreck • Behind Torr Gardens. • The Glebe • Between school and village 			Contact Communities Housing Trust
	Key worker housing (link to elderly care)	Possible but depends on availability of suitable housing and lease management	Glebe development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic impact as would create employment • Social impact as would improve level of care 	Speak with community led housing developers, such as Communities Housing Trust , about key worker housing schemes and potential funding.	Discussions with developer working on The Glebe site

Project	Changes the community wants to see	Feasibility	Possible locations	Economic, social & environmental impact	Potential sources of funding	Timescale and Next steps
Cemetery extension		Project already underway	Already identified	Social impact	n/a	n/a
Football pitch maintenance	More regular maintenance to ensure pitch is usable	Feasible with discussion	Football pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social impact from additional location for community gathering, and increased physical activity • Environmental improvement 	Possible volunteers Dores Community Development Trust Fund/Statkraft	Discussions with land owner, possible partnership agreement with maintenance done by volunteers
Community Hub development	Community warm hub	Costly and would need to identify land	Possibly in the Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive social impact as would give venue for community support and services to be delivered • Would likely have negative impact on the existing Hall as community too small to sustain two such facilities, unless it was based in the Hall, in which case the impact would be positive for the Hall through increased use, and greater sustainability 	Creation of new hub challenging in current funding landscape Various sources of funding could be available depending on activities to be included if based on existing Hall facility	Further community consultation required to establish facilities and services desired in a community hub, and then discussion with Hall as to how these could be offered in existing facilities.

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Village Hall	Childminding facilities/after school care	Possible but should note that previous parent and toddler group folded	Dores Parish Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive social impact 		Contact CALA to establish if they would be interested in operating in the area
More community activities	General statement of more things to do	Feasible but could be challenging to establish specifics.	Village Hall	Positive social impact	Depends on the activities Would need to be community-led by volunteers and reflect people's interests	Further community consultation required to establish facilities and services desired in a community hub, and then discussion with Hall as to how these could be offered in existing facilities.