

INTRODUCTION

This is the 2023 Community Action Plan for the Upper Deeside area of Ballater and Crathie. It has been developed under the lead of the Ballater and Crathie Community Council working with Marr Area Partnership and Aberdeenshire Council. A Steering Committee, known as the Community Action Plan Team, representing various community groups was established and this group has undertaken the task of engaging extensively with the community and stakeholders to produce this Action Plan.

Deeside continues to be a very successful tourist destination and its economy boosted by the hospitality and retail sectors. The sad death of Her Majesty, The Queen at Balmoral in 2022 focussed the world's attention on our community and we continue to benefit economically and culturally from that focus.

The area has now recovered well from the flooding caused by Storm Frank in 2015 and its resilience has served it to good effect during power outages and other subsequent climate related events. However, ever more vigilance and preparation is needed.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN (CAP)?

The CAP is the Plan which local community groups use to deliver what our local community wants and needs to deliver our Vision. The BCCC is the single point of Leadership and Accountability for the implementation of this Plan. Most of the 2018 CAP was very successfully delivered and this 2023 CAP is aimed to build on that success.

WHICH COMMUNITY GROUPS?

The CAP is led by Ballater & Crathie Community Council, and supported by:

- Ballater Royal Deeside (officially Ballater (RD) Limited) - a local charity that is also owner of the subsidiary company Ballater Community Enterprise Limited which runs Ballater Caravan Park;
- Visit Ballater Business Association - which runs the Visit Ballater Website on behalf of businesses and for community groups;
- The Victoria & Albert Halls (Ballater) Trust – a charity that is responsible for the maintenance and development of these landmark Halls; and
- The Community and Heritage Hub - the objectives for which are currently evolving.

The intention is that other Community Groups will engage with this Plan.

PLAN TIMEFRAME

The CAP will be at least a 5-year plan with some Strategic Projects requiring a longer-term investment. Our Vision sets out our aspiration for the long term – this is not a finite goal rather an infinite goal to benefit the current community and future generations.

VISION

Ballater & Crathie is universally recognised as a
sustainable, vibrant community,
which works together,
to create a positive and inclusive environment
in which to live, work and visit.

VALUES

- We work together.
- We make a positive difference.
- We strive to be inclusive.

STRATEGIC, OPERATIONAL, TACTICAL

Our plan aims to be a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound) and identified under the headings of Strategic, Operational and Tactical based on impact, scale, investment, complexity and practicalities. Whilst we have designed the plan to be aspirational and ambitious we have also sought to balance what is realistic and achievable.

FOCUS AREA 1

RECREATION & SOCIAL LIFE

Our Recreation & Social Life aims to ensure that we offer a range of activities which:-

Are diverse to cater for a variety of interests,
Offer Inclusivity and Accessibility to all People,
Provide environmentally friendly and sustainable solutions,
and
Remain relevant, utilised, and well maintained.

STRATEGIC GOALS – MONALTRIE PARK

We will define and implement a development and maintenance plan for improved use of Monaltrie Park through a Management Group which engages relevant user and interest groups and will determine how to:-

1. Better cater for young people and young adults,
2. Improve overall inclusivity and access for all individuals and groups,
3. Maximise the benefit for the whole community, and
4. Ensure it is valued as an attractive, engaging, and viable place to be and to use.

Survey Suggestions

Consideration of pump track, zip wire, child facilities, toilets, Coffee Shop. All suggestions will be considered by the Management Group.

STRATEGIC GOAL – PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

We will maximise our inherent attractions of art & culture, history & heritage, food & drink, action & adventure, and wildlife & nature to develop a rolling programme of events which is co-ordinated and utilises our venues in a considered and empathetic way which is:-

1. Inclusive and diverse,
2. Sympathetic to our environment and community,
3. Financially and commercially viable, and
4. Supports and funds the maintenance and improvement of all our venues.

The Management Group will consist of key private, publicly funded and non-profit enterprises to ensure an integrated approach.

Survey Suggestions

Consideration of use of The Halls as a centre for Commercial Events Programme / Community Creative Play / Safe Space and Resilience Centre / Business and Community Group Admin Centre.

OPERATIONAL GOAL – OUTDOOR SPACE ASSETS

We will define a plan to consistently maintain and ensure relevance for our outdoor recreational space (e.g. The Greens), Foot Paths & Cycle Paths Networks, and Signage, including provision of sufficient toilet facilities always in consideration for the sustainability of our environment and sympathy for our community, and

Survey Suggestions

Improve toilet facilities in The Square, Crathie and other suitable locations.

TACTICAL GOAL – BENCHES.

We will ensure that there is sufficient provision of Benches to ensure inclusivity and access for a diverse population our outdoor space through providing access to rest areas, with clear ownership of assets within an assigned community group / authority for maintenance and upkeep.

TACTICAL GOALS - LITTER & DOG POO

Provide Litter and Dog Poo Bins within our village space and recreational facilities cognisant of the potential negative impact on our community and environment, with clear ownership of assets within an assigned community group / authority for maintenance and upkeep.

SOT	Goal	Description	Owner Group	Partners
Strategic	Monaltrie Park	Development and Improvement Plan	BRD	
Strategic	Events Programme	Development of Event Programme engaging for broad range of interest areas	The Halls	
Operational	Outdoor Space, Paths and Cycle Tracks & Signage	Develop maintenance and improvement plan	BRD	
Tactical	Improve inclusivity and access to our outdoor spaces through provision of adequate benches in our outdoor space	Define need, consult with appropriate agencies including CNPA and secure funding to provide and maintain.	BRD	
Tactical	Provide adequate litter and dog poo bins in our outdoor space	Define need, consult with appropriate agencies including CNPA and secure funding to provide and maintain.	BCCC	

FOCUS AREA 2

THE COMMUNITY & HERITAGE HUB

We received great feedback as to how best now to use The Hub.

The Community Groups are in discussion as to how best to manage and sustainably run the Hub for the benefit of the Community. We will strive to make The Hub an energetic catalyst for services and events in the community as well as providing a focus for local heritage. Ballater (RD) Limited and the Victoria & Albert Halls (Ballater) Trust are working to create an ownership and management structure and formalise its relationship with both so that The Hub will be financially viable and any cost shared fairly.

It is proposed that The Hub will provide services such as design, printing and ticket sales, both remotely and directly promote the creation and delivery of attractive events in the community, as well as being a place for information to be centralised and given out. Our aim is that the Hub will be an attractive place to visit and will use space available to display local heritage items.

As Ballater (RD) Limited and the Victoria & Albert Halls (Ballater) Trust make progress with this exciting project, we will do our best to keep you informed and seek further feedback.

FOCUS AREA 3

OUR LOCAL ECONOMY

Our local economy drives and underpins Ballater & Crathie as a great place to live, work and visit.

A vibrant economy is essential to ensure the health and wellbeing of ALL the community.

We will strive to ensure that our economy thrives so that our people have access to opportunities for education, skills, employment, social connection, quality of life.

We will focus on community owned enterprise –
whereby money circulates locally, and wealth is distributed more equally.

STRATEGIC GOAL – AFFORDABLE BUSINESS UNITS

We will attract and sustain new business enterprises (building on such as the establishment of example Moxon Architects) through provision and marketing of community owned business units. We will ensure that these new enterprises are:-

1. In keeping with our community environment;
2. Sustainable and relevant;
3. Viable; and
4. Avoid exacerbating the already lack of affordable housing.

Survey Suggestions

Green Industries, Geothermal technology, Alternative Therapies, Pop Ups, Dentists, Chiropracist, Outdoor Experiences, Learning Outside, Crafts and Artisans.

STRATEGIC GOAL – SUSTAINING HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

We will work with local enterprise to develop our unique offer for world class sustainable hospitality and tourism, supporting smaller enterprises by developing and delivering:-

1. Solutions to resource shortfall of skills by working with schools, colleges, universities, businesses and enterprises;
2. Programmes for training young people, adults and retirees to deliver a world class standard;
3. Collaborating with together to identify creative solutions in support of all contributors to a healthy economy.

Survey Suggestions

Hospitality Training for young people and adults, Consortium of Businesses to provide training, transport and accommodation.

OPERATIONAL GOAL

We will promote Ballater & Crathie as inclusive destinations through encouraging the provision of more diverse accessibility facilities with the aim of securing national accreditations. We will facilitate:-

1. Education programme for businesses and organisations;
2. Specific guidance for residents and visitors; and
3. Partnership with relevant groups and organisations to fast-track improvements.

Survey Suggestions

Strategic Partnerships; Education; Advice on Grants and Funding.

BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2023

SOT	Goal	Description	Owner Group	Partners
Strategic	Affordable Business Units	Develop a Plan to attract new industries aligned to our area and provide affordable business units	Business Association	
Strategic	Sustain Hospitality & Tourism	Strategic Plan to improve the resource pipeline	Business Association	
Operational	Diversity & Accessibility	Increase provision of accessible venues and attractions	Business Association	

**FOCUS AREA 4
THE ENVIRONMENT**

The CAP TEAM will focus on improving the Resilience of our Community to cope, withstand and protect us from environmental threats of flood, drought, fire and storms, at the same time as promoting sustainable use of energy.

FLOODING, DROUGHT, FIRE AND RESILIENCE

We will strive to make Ballater and Crathie as safe and resilient a place in which to live, work and visit, as we can

GOALS – Flooding and Drought

Storm Frank was a traumatic event for much of the community, and the results of the survey reflect this. So that we are all protected so far as possible from extreme weather events, and in the event of damage, that the community is able to bounce back quickly, we will continue to develop and implement the existing BCCC workstreams on Flooding and Drought to:-

- A. Better ensure preservation of life – The First Priority - Operational,
- B. Improve take up and installation of property level protection - Tactical,
- C. Ensure that support for Option 3A by Aberdeenshire Council is withdrawn - Tactical,
- D. Put in place short term local protection for Ballater against lower level more frequent flooding - Strategic,
- E. Develop realistic alternatives for medium term local protection - Strategic, and
- F. Explore upstream storage options – very long term Strategic.

STRATEGIC GOALS – Medium and long term medium and higher level protection

We will support medium term actions to ensure that the impact on the village of higher frequency high water events remains low. We will consult and engage with all stakeholders on all possible options including dredging and reprofiling the river; and on moving, improving and maintenance of existing and new river banks and bunds, particularly in conjunction with proposals for a sustainable riverside path. These actions could also mitigate the impact of lower frequency high water events.

We will also promote upstream initiatives for water management in the Dee catchment area.

We will continue to co-ordinate with other Community Councils and land owners a multi-community position for the Dee Catchment Area regarding flooding and drought and establish a list of the areas of concern and request support from the Scottish Government for a water management feasibility study to address the challenges of climate change.

Survey Suggestions

Draining and dredging, building bunds, river bank maintenance, land management and tree planting, upstream flood plain, balance lakes, consider the impact of the Ballater Bridge.

Working with the whole of Dee Valley on long term options. Work on Loch Muick, Loch Callater, the Gairn, Dee plain around the Linn. Crathie asks not to be forgotten.

TACTICAL GOAL – Property Level Protection.

In order to aid property owners having the best prospects of self-help, we will continue to promote the installation of Property Level Protection (PLP) including flood gates and non-return valves, throughout the whole community, with the ongoing assistance of the Scottish Flood Forum. With the Resilience Groups we will enhance actions and processes relating to SEPA flood warnings, including the use of a watch list to assist occupiers with specific needs.

Survey Suggestions

Property level protection is important but not always affordable.

TACTICAL GOAL – Option 3A.

In the light of overwhelming community opposition, as well as the considerable economic impact, BCCC will oppose AbCo Option 3A, and press AbCo Marr Area Committee to actively withdraw Option 3A and develop a dialogue with AbCo as to alternatives.

Survey Suggestions

Overwhelming opposition to Option 3A.

TACTICAL GOAL – Short term low level protection

We will support short term actions to ensure that the impact on the village of higher frequency high water events remains low. We will use the final RPS additional report to engage with all stakeholders to deliver practical actions on the ground as soon as possible. These actions could also mitigate the impact of lower frequency high water events.

Survey Suggestions

Numbers of suggestions for improvements to the existing village bund.

OPERATIONAL GOAL – Preservation of Life

We will continue to improve the existing initial response plan setting out lines of command and emergency response and further develop links with SEPA and understanding of flood risks.

Survey Suggestions

Quick response to remove caravans from the Caravan Park.

OPERATIONAL GOAL – Fire

In conjunction with the emergency services, we will define a plan to reduce the use of barbecues and fires on the hills during dry seasons and improve the availability of prudent fire-fighting equipment.

Survey Suggestions

Suggestions regarding signage, information and facilities.

STRATEGIC GOAL – Resilience

We will assist the existing Resilience Groups to ensure that during emergencies so far as possible everyone in the community is safe, that those who need assistance to activate Property Level Protection receive it and that everyone in the community is sufficiently warm, fed and watered.

Survey Suggestions

Emergency Relief Fund. Concerns about loss of telephones and communications in emergencies, checking on outlying properties.

Consideration of a community environmental plan.

BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2023

SOT	Goal	Description	Owner Group	Partners
Strategic	Medium term higher level flood prevention works	Consult with stakeholders on all practical alternatives and develop a plan for funding and implementation	BCCC	AbCo, CNPA, Scottish Government
Strategic	Long term higher level flood prevention works	Promote upstream initiatives for water management in the Dee catchment area.	BCCC	AbCo, CNPA, Scottish Government, Scottish Water, Estates, River Dee Trust
Tactical	Improve Property Level Protection	Promote PLP enhance actions and processes relating to SEPA flood warnings, including the use of a watch list.	BCCC	SEPA, SFF, AbCo
Tactical	Oppose Option 3A	Press AbCo Marr Area Committee to actively withdraw Option 3A.	BCCC	AbCo
Tactical	Short term low level flood prevention works	Use the final RPS additional report to deliver practical actions.	BCCC	AbCo, CNPA, SEPA, Ballater Golf Club, BCE and BRD
Operational	Preservation of Life	Develop existing response plan and develop links with SEPA	BCCC	SEPA, Emergency Services

THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

We will strive to make Ballater and Crathie as resilient, self-sufficient and carbon negative a place in which to live, work and visit as we can.

STRATEGIC GOALS – The Environment and Energy

We will investigate the provision of local energy supply whether ground source, solar, hydro-electric or geo-thermal and how best to improve the provision of transport with less carbon dioxide generation.

TACTICAL GOALS – The Environment and Energy

We will investigate the feasibility of providing local facilities for gardening, allotments and communal composting.

We will promote the insulation of properties and ways to assist reduction in the need for energy.

We will investigate the feasibility of providing the sharing and repairing of tools and other facilities.

Survey Suggestions

Consideration of wood / log club, how best to insulate granite houses. Dealing with garden waste particularly Autumn leaf fall. Car sharing scheme and encouraging more cycling. Encourage development of old buildings rather than demolition.

SOT	Goal	Description	Owner Group	Partners
Strategic	Local Energy Supply	Feasibility Plan	BRD	Estates, CNPA, CAN
Strategic	Low carbon transport	Define need, consult with appropriate agencies including CNPA and secure funding to provide and maintain.	BCCC	AbCo, CNPA, CAN
Tactical	Improve local facilities for gardening, allotments and communal composting	Define need, consult with appropriate agencies including CNPA and secure funding to provide and maintain.	BRD	CAN
Tactical	Promote property insulation	Define need, consult with appropriate agencies and secure funding to provide and maintain.	BCCC	AbCo, CNPA
Tactical	Sharing and repairing of tools and other facilities	Define need, consult with appropriate agencies including CNPA and secure funding to provide and maintain.	BRD	CAN

FOCUS AREA 5

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

We will consistently promote the health and wellbeing of all residents, striving to ensure an inclusive environment for social connection, to support and sustain the diversity of our population.

We will deliver sustainable, relevant and cohesive options in service of all.

STRATEGIC GOAL – CHILDCARE PROVISION

We will work with local community groups & businesses and the relevant agencies to create a framework for Childcare Provision based on current need but aspirational requirements to attract the younger / family demographic to the community. We will deliver the identified requirements from parent & toddler / playgroup/ childminder/ creche /nursery /breakfast and after school clubs. We will ensure that the framework:

1. Identifies creative solutions to meet community needs (think out of the box);
2. Remains relevant and sustainable;
3. Accessible for all; and
4. Provides practical and tangible support for parents and guardians.

Survey Suggestions

Business and Community Consortium to provide nursery; recruitment of childminders; funding for pre and after school clubs.

OPERATIONAL GOAL – FOOD PANTRY AND COOKERY CLASSES

The Food Pantry is open to all the community with the aim of encouraging reduction of food waste, and offers classes to create creative dishes on limited budgets.

We will work together with local food and drink businesses including both retail and hospitality to ensure:-

1. Market Food Pantry, Warm Space and Cookery Lessons,
2. The quality of provision in the food pantry promotes health and wellbeing in our diet;
3. The usage of the food pantry is known to all community to support reduction in food waste; and
4. The food pantry becomes a hub for regular / guest cookery demonstrations showcasing how to create nutritious and economic meals.

Survey Suggestions

Promote as open to all community.

OPERATIONAL GOAL – TELEPHONE AND BROADBAND CONNECTION & USAGE

We will work with the relevant agencies to ensure we have the optimal telephone and broadband connections to ensure:

1. the community infrastructure is the best in the country for all digital activities.
2. we have alternative analogue solutions to provide resilience in times of hardship or crisis,
3. we provide facilities to educate all the community to keep abreast of digital developments, and
4. we provide cybersecurity education and regular updates.

Survey Suggestions

Best in class provision for homeworkers, more education.

SOT	Goal	Description	Owner Group	Partners
Strategic	Childcare Provision	Develop solution to lack of childcare to enable parents and guardians to work locally		
Operational	Food & Pantry Classes	Promote and increase use of Food Pantry and Cookery Classes		
Operational	Telephone and Broadband	Optimise Telephone and Broadband		

**FOCUS AREA 6
AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The Housing Sub Group of the BCCC will focus on AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

They will consider how to lobby and/or work in partnership with local landowners, the local authority, CNPA and businesses to ensure the provision of adequate affordable housing, to attract and retain the younger demographic, essential to the sustainability, health and wellbeing of our community.

The solutions must be creative, environmentally friendly, sustainable, and relevant.

The Cairngorm National Park Authority is committed to reducing the proportion of second homes in new developments by ensuring that new housing development is targeted at meeting local needs as far as possible.

STRATEGIC GOAL – AFFORDABLE HOMES

We will engage the appropriate skills and talent onto the BCCC Housing Sub-Group to identify creative solutions to addressing the housing need, and work with Housing Associations, Local Authorities, Cairngorm Business Partnership, Landowners, and other appropriate bodies to deliver a programme of provision for affordable housing over 5 to 10 years. Consideration will be given to the following non-exclusive list:-

1. Learning from Braemar Community Enterprise in establishing affordable housing;
2. The CBP scheme for provision of housing to employees;
3. Scotia Homes development provision for 45% affordable housing;
4. Re-classification of holiday homes due to changes in Short Lease legislation;
5. Previous projects shelved; and
6. New opportunities.

Survey Suggestions

Reduce second homes; increase affordable rental properties.

SOT	Goal	Description	Owner Group	Partners
Strategic	Significantly increase Provision of Affordable Homes	Work in partnership with all stakeholders to define a multi strand strategic plan	BCCC	CNPA

**FOCUS AREA 7
INDEPENDENT & ASSISTED LIVING**

A New Assisted Living Sub-Group will focus on INDEPENDENT & ASSISTED LIVING

They will consider how to lobby and/or work in partnership with local landowners, the local authority, CNPA and businesses to ensure the provision of Assisted Living Provision to cater for the ageing and disabled demographic for both independent and assisted living, essential to the sustainability, health and wellbeing of our community. The solutions must be creative, environmentally friendly, sustainable, and relevant.

STRATEGIC GOAL – CARE HOME

We will engage the appropriate skills and talent onto the BCCC Independent & Assisted Living Sub Group to identify creative solutions, and work with Housing Associations, Local Authorities, Cairngorm Business Partnership, Landowners, and other appropriate bodies to deliver a programme of provision for a local care home over 5 to 10 years. Consideration will be given to the following no-exclusive list:-

1. Assisted Living Enterprises
2. Private Care Home Enterprises
3. Community Led Facilities

Survey Suggestions

Approach national providers.

OPERATIONAL GOAL –INDEPENDENT LIVING AND SUPPORTED LIVING

We will work with local businesses & community groups and relevant agencies to create a framework for sustaining independent living for our ageing demographic and those with disabilities, and identify options for provision of supported living infrastructure. We will aspire to provide:-

1. Friendship and social activity;
2. Prescription collection / delivery service;
3. Shopping and banking support;
4. Transport provision for medical appointments and times of need;
5. Warm and friendly space during winter; and
6. Training for residents in needs of individuals.

Survey Suggestions

Approach national providers.

SOT	Goal	Description	Owner Group	Partners
Strategic	Provision of Care Home to replace lost resource	Work with Partners and Stakeholders to develop Strategy	BCCC	
Strategic	Greater provision of independent and supported living	Work with Partners and Stakeholders to develop Strategy	BCCC	