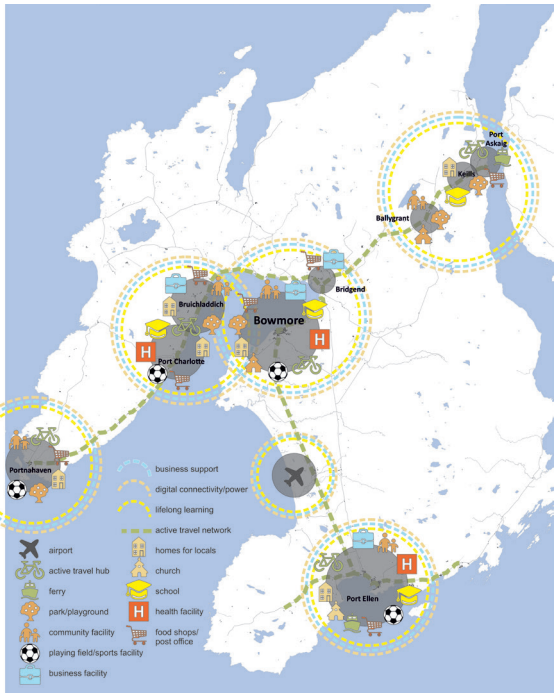
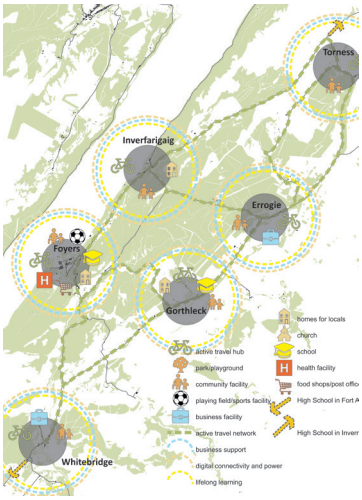
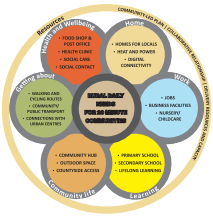
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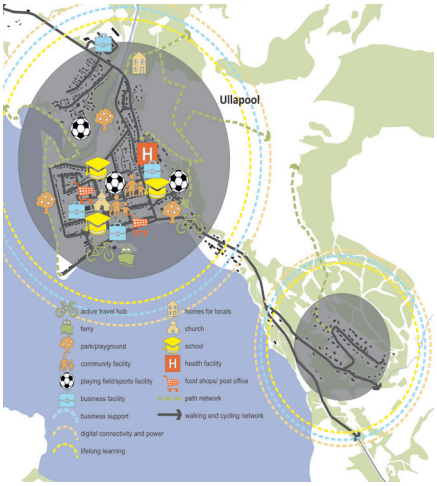
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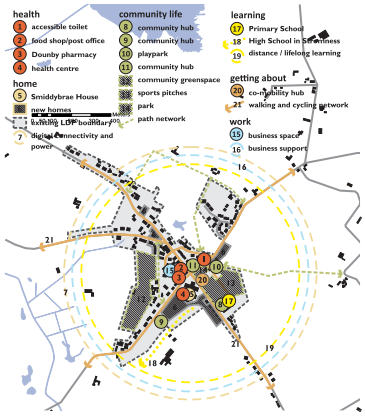
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LIVING WELL LOCALLY

20 Minute Communities in the Highlands and Islands

HITRANS | SUSTRANS

JUNE 2022



Nick Wright Planning
Willie Miller Urban Design

Acknowledgments

This report was commissioned by HITRANS and Sustrans. It was prepared by Nick Wright (Nick Wright Planning) and Ines Triebel (WMUD).

We are grateful to the many practitioners across Scotland who contributed to the research and supported development of the case studies.



LIVING WELL LOCALLY

20 Minute Communities in the Highlands and Islands

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1. INTRODUCTION

Across the world, societies are seeking solutions to interconnected problems: to urgently reduce carbon emissions, to improve health and wellbeing by helping people to become more active, and to make local communities and economies more resilient in the face of change. In many disparate places, from Paris to Melbourne, the solutions emerging are very similar: to create places which contain most of the things that most people need for their everyday lives, within a short, safe and pleasant walk or cycle ride.

The 20 Minute Neighbourhood is an ambitious new policy concept which seeks to apply this thinking nationally across Scotland. The Scottish Government committed to the concept in its 2020-21 Programme for Government, with more detail in draft National Planning Framework 4 (draft NPF4). This is explained in more detail in section 2 of this report.

This report was commissioned by HITRANS (the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership) and Sustrans to help implement the national policy commitment to 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in the Highlands and Islands. Building on existing research and analysis, the report seeks to answer two questions:

- What could a 20 Minute Neighbourhood look like in a rural and island context?
- What would need to happen for a rural settlement to become a 20 minute community?

This report's answers to those questions were informed through analysis of existing research and practice related to 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, discussions with practitioners across many disciplines and organisations throughout Scotland but particularly in the Highlands and Islands, and analysis of four case study areas. The report also draws on the authors' own experience of planning and community development in the Highlands and Islands.

The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 defines what is meant by 20 Minute Neighbourhoods and how they have been promoted elsewhere in the UK and abroad. It also summarises previous research and national policy.
- Section 3 highlights opportunities and issues for implementation of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in the Highlands and Islands context.
- Section 4 develops a framework for daily rural needs in the Highlands and Islands, illustrated with examples of how they are already being implemented.
- To illustrate what 20 Minute Communities could look like in different parts of the Highlands and Islands, section 5 develops four case studies from Islay to Orkney.
- Section 6 summarises key points and next steps.
- Further sources of information and an extract from draft NPF4 can be found in the appendices.



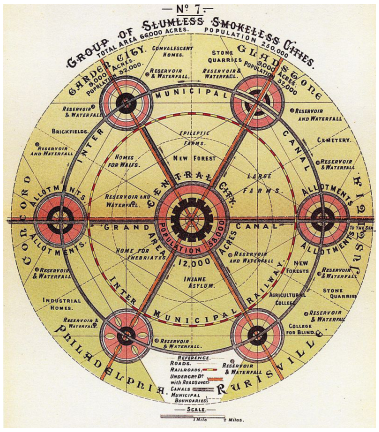
2. POLICY AND RESEARCH CONTEXTS

2.1 What are 20 Minute Neighbourhoods?

The basic ethos of the "20 Minute Neighbourhood" can be summarised as people having all of their daily needs - work, school, shopping, keeping active and so on - available within 20 minutes of their home, by using sustainable forms of transport: walking, cycling or public transport.

In principle, the concept aims to support efforts to tackle climate change, inequalities and health and wellbeing - all of which align with UN Sustainable Development Goals as well as Scottish Government policy. It also links to the Place Principle, which increasingly underpins the Scottish Government's policy framework and place-based investment.

20 Minute Neighbourhoods are new, but the roots of the concept go back over a hundred years. The pioneering town planner Ebenezer Howard, in his seminal 1898 book Garden Cities of To-Morrow, laid out a spatial framework for planning based around people's daily needs. His ideas were brought to life in Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities, which remain popular places to live today. Howard was a founding member of the Town and Country Planning Association, which continues to update and promote his concepts. It has recently published a guide to 20 Minute Neighbourhoods (see overleaf).



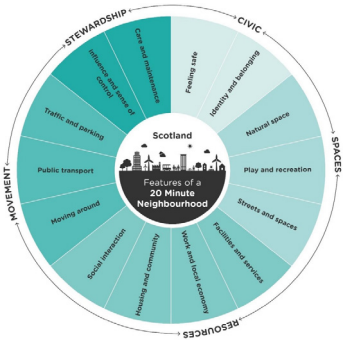
from Ebenezer Howard, Garden Cities of To-Morrow, 1898

The principle of people being able to easily access facilities and amenities has been a constant theme in planning since Howard's work, as reflected by initiatives like walkable neighbourhoods, urban villages, 15 minute cities and many others.

Once you start to consider 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in more detail, the apparent simplicity of the concept becomes more complicated. What is meant by "daily needs"? What are "sustainable forms of transport"? What mode of transport do you use to measure 20 minutes' travel time?

These and other questions have been the subject of much recent discussion, in Scotland and further afield. Some of the main discussion papers are summarised below. Their content has informed the later sections of this report, alongside discussions with practitioners around Scotland (particularly in the Highlands and Islands) who are considering how to implement the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept. This includes ongoing work such as an ongoing pilot project in Drymen being undertaken by Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority and Forth Environment Link which was nearing completion at the time of writing this report; and work by Aberdeenshire Council to use the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept as a basis for service delivery across the local authority area.

ClimateXChange - 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in a Scottish Context (Stefanie O'Gorman and Rebecca Dillon-Robinson, Ramboll for the ClimateXChange, 2021)



Scotland-wide mapping of neighbourhoods against 20 Minute Neighbourhood criteria and recommendations on actions are needed to implement the concept nationally, including further research on diverse demonstration areas (see section 5 of this report).

from ClimateXChange / Ramboll 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in a Scottish Context, 2021 (page 11)

Improvement Service - Argyll and Bute Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy: a 20 Minute Neighbourhood Rapid Scoping Assessment (Margaret Douglas and Irene Beautyman, 2021)
A discussion paper highlighting high-level issues in applying 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in a Highlands and Islands context.



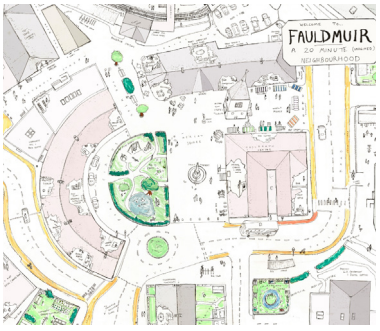
Midlands Connect - The Future of Rural Mobility (2022)
Contains a toolkit (pages 9-12) to improve rural access to services and facilities in rural England.

from Midlands Connect: The future of rural mobility, 2022 (pages 9-10)

RTPI Scotland - Implementing 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in Planning Policy and Practice (Robbie Calvert, 2021)
Explores how the Scottish planning system can support delivery of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods.

Scottish Rural Action, Scottish Rural and Islands Transport Community and SURF - 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in Rural and Island Scotland: report from practitioner roundtable (2022)
Analysis of challenges in applying the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept to rural and island Scotland, and comparison with community-led planning initiatives.

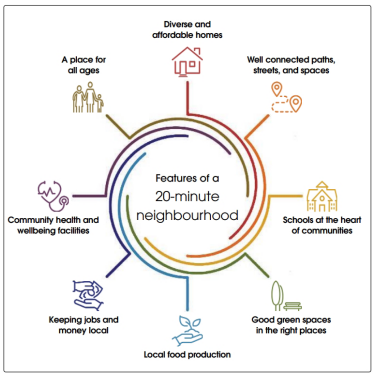
Scottish Rural Parliament - Summary of March 2021 session on 20 Minute Neighbourhoods.
Discussion points and recommendations for 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in rural Scotland.



SURF - 20 Minute Neighbourhood Practitioners Network webpage
Meeting 3 (January 2022) contains interesting perspectives on 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in the Highlands and Islands and related information.

from SURF / Mitch Miller: Fauldmuir - an imagined 20 Minute Neighbourhood

Sustrans - What is a 20 Minute Neighbourhood?
Short summary of what they are, what they should contain, and why they are important.



TCPA - Guide to 20 Minute Neighbourhoods (2021)
A comprehensive guide for the introduction of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in England, written for local authority planners.

from TCPA Guide to 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, 2021 (page 3)

Velocity - Growing Villages Differently (2020)
A planning and design led approach to growing villages and enhancing rural life in England.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for other online resources on 20 Minute Neighbourhoods.



2.2 Experience around the world

The contemporary concept of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods is not just a theoretical construct: there is experience on the ground too.

In Australia, the Melbourne city plan is built on the principle of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods:

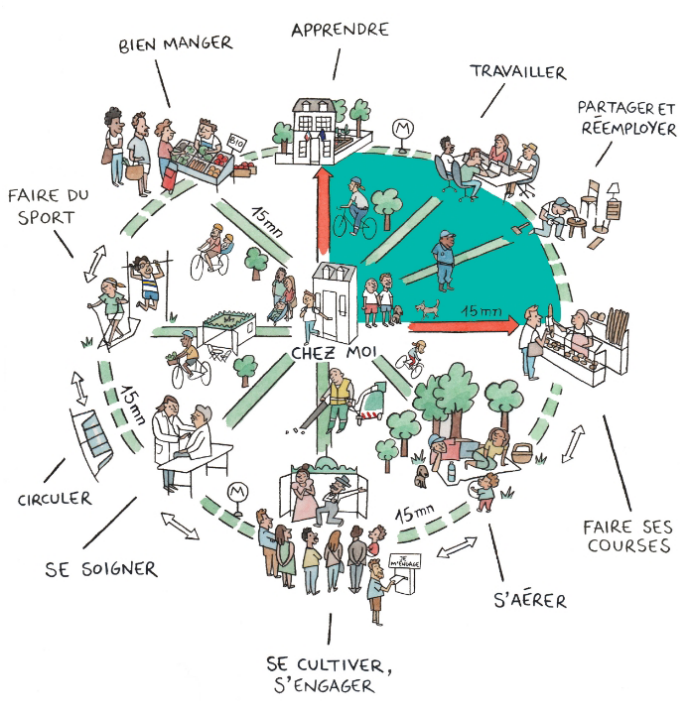
> *"Plan Melbourne aims to make the 20-minute neighbourhood concept a reality for every person… These connected and walkable places are where people can live, work and play; buy their bread and milk, work from home or local business, access services and meet their neighbours at the central gathering places." (source: Victoria State Government)*



Features of Melbourne's 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

Other cities around the world are adopting similar approaches, including Paris, Barcelona, Portland and Detroit. Closer to home, the Edinburgh 20 Minute Neighbourhood Strategy was launched in 2021 as a new approach to planning and delivering public services in the city.

But no country has yet implemented the 20 Minutes Neighbourhood concept nationally, across the range of different urban and rural communities that make up an entire country. Scotland is the first to announce its intention.



Paris' 15 minute neighbourhood initiative (courtesy of Micael Dessin)

2.3 Scotland's policy aspirations

In the 2020-21 Programme for Government, the Scottish Government committed to working with local government to take forward the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept, which it described as "[places] where people can meet their needs within a 20 minute walk from their house" (on page 5 of the document).

Following this commitment, draft NPF4 was published in November 2021. The section of draft NPF4 about 20 Minute Neighbourhoods is subtitled "We want our places to support local living" (page 73, emphasis added), and is reproduced in full in Appendix 2.

Key elements of draft NPF4's approach to 20 Minute Neighbourhoods include:

> ***"20 Minute Neighbourhoods are a method of achieving connected and compact neighbourhoods designed in such a way that all people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable walk, wheel or cycle (within approx. 800m) of their home. The principle can be adjusted to include varying geographical scales from cities and urban environments, to rural and island communities.*** *Housing would be planned together with local infrastructure including schools, community centres, local shops, greenspaces and health and social care to significantly reduce the need to use unsustainable modes of travel, to prioritise quality of life, reduce inequalities, increase levels of health and wellbeing and respond to the climate emergency. This can also include providing digital services where appropriate..."*
>
> ***"This concept will apply differently in urban and rural areas…"***
>
> ***"The application of the 20 Minute Neighbourhood will vary across the country and will need to be adjusted to suit local circumstances particularly in rural areas where the delivery of services and extent of local infrastructure may not necessarily be supported by the surrounding density of population.*** *20 Minute Neighbourhoods are however an opportunity to rethink how housing, service provision, city, town or village centres could be re-configured to support new ways of working, homeworking and community hubs in line with localism objectives and reducing demand for motorised travel."*
> *(draft NPF4, page 73; emphasis added)*

In addition, draft NPF4 also makes clear the critical role that the delivery of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods can have in increasing the population of the Highlands and Islands:

> *"We will do all we can to help reverse depopulation across rural Scotland. Here, as with other more rural areas of Scotland, 20 minute neighbourhoods can be tailored to work with both larger towns and more dispersed settlement patterns." (draft NPF4, page 21)*

That aspiration to increase the population of the Highlands and Islands is emphasised elsewhere in draft NPF4:

> *"…we need to do more to reverse past patterns of population decline and sustain local facilities and services that support rural and dispersed communities" (page 12)*
>
> *"Some communities have experienced outmigration, particularly the loss of younger people, especially outwith Inverness. Further population decline is a*



future risk, particularly for the west and north. Many communities depend on the car and more limited access to services creates disadvantage, despite the quality of life and good health that many people living here enjoy." (page 19)

At the time of writing this report (April 2022), parliamentary and public consultation responses to draft NPF4 are being considered prior to the plan being finalised and then approved by the Scottish Parliament later in 2022.

2.4 Key Points

The national policy context outlined in this section suggests that:

- 20 Minute Neighbourhoods are here to stay.
- There is a clear ambition to roll the concept out nationally.
- Application of the concept should be adjusted to suit local circumstances, particularly in rural areas. More work is needed to inform what those adjustments should be.

20 Minute Neighbourhoods are here to stay, but work is required to tailor the concept to work across different parts of Scotland. What are the challenges and opportunities for 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in the Highlands and Islands?

3. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

3.1 Challenges

A good starting point is to consider some of the recent responses to draft NPF4.

Following its publication in November 2021, draft NPF4 was subject to scrutiny by the Scottish Parliament. A primary element of that scrutiny process was an inquiry by the Scottish Parliament's Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee that included taking evidence from stakeholders and the public.

The report of the Committee's inquiry into draft NPF4 was published in March 2022. In relation to 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, it notes that the challenges of creating 20 Minute Neighbourhoods appear to be most pronounced in the Highlands and Islands:

> *"The Committee welcomes 20 minute neighbourhoods and notes that stakeholders recognise this as a good planning concept. There are undoubtedly, however, very significant challenges associated with delivering on 20 minute neighbourhoods. Whether it's a new development, an existing urban setting or rural or island context, careful consideration will need to be given to how it can be applied in each context. Communities will need to be involved in shaping the places in which they are to live and amongst other things, there will need to be a focus on infrastructure and sustainable transport to deliver on these ambitions. The Committee welcomes the Minister's recognition of the importance of STPR2 in delivering on 20 minute neighbourhoods, but would welcome further information from the Scottish Government on how it intends to deliver on 20 minute neighbourhoods across Scotland and in particular in rural and island areas where the challenges of creating 20 minute neighbourhoods would appear to be most pronounced." (paragraph 169, page 31, paragraph 169; emphasis added)*

The Committee's report is, however, silent on what those challenges might be in rural and island areas. Like the rest of rural Scotland, much of the population of the Highlands and Islands lives in towns, where the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept outlined in draft NPF4 (see section 2.3 above) may not need much refinement, as indicated by the Argyll and Bute 20 Minute Neighbourhood Rapid Scoping Assessment by the Improvement Service referred to in section 2.1 above. Indeed, many towns and larger villages in the Highlands and Islands are close to functioning as 20 Minute Neighbourhoods already, as the Ullapool example in this report illustrates (see section 5.3 below).

It is in the smaller settlements and sparsely populated rural areas of the Highlands and Islands where the challenges of implementing and delivering 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, as currently conceived in draft NPF4, will be most strongly felt.

What might those challenges be? A number have already been identified, as summarised in Figure 3.1.



Table 3.1: Challenges to delivering 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in the Highlands and Islands

CHALLENGE	SOURCE
The strength of the draft NPF4 definition of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods is that it is easy to understand and visualise. But in vast areas of the Highlands and Islands it is simply pie-in-the-sky to imagine that daily services, facilities and amenities can be provided within 20 minutes walk or cycle.	20 Minute Neighbourhoods in Rural and Island Scotland, SRA, SRITC and SURF, January 2022
This requirement to travel, frequently with no other option than by car, needs to be understood and taken account of in National Planning Policy.	Argyll and Bute Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy: a 20 Minute Neighbourhood Rapid Scoping Assessment, Improvement Service, 2021
What facilities, services and so on will be included in the definition of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods?	The Highland Council consultation response to draft NPF4, March 2022
Residents have to travel considerable distances to access shops, works and services in the Highlands and Islands.	The Highland Council consultation response to draft NPF4, March 2022
Small rural villages cannot sustain services to allow walking access within 20 minutes, but towns and other urban areas with services could do so.	Argyll and Bute Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy: a 20 Minute Neighbourhood Rapid Scoping Assessment, Improvement Service, 2021
What population size is needed to sustain relevant services in a 20 minute neighbourhood? What core services and amenities should be provided in a hub?	Argyll and Bute Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy: a 20 Minute Neighbourhood Rapid Scoping Assessment, Improvement Service, 2021
Since the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept is based on a critical mass of population, there is a risk of further centralisation of services to rural and island population hubs, while satellite villages or crofting settlements are cut off from each other and from opportunities. This would reinforce poverty, inequality and outmigration, running counter to the draft NPF4 ambition of reversing rural depopulation.	20 Minute Neighbourhoods in Rural and Island Scotland, SRA, SRITC and SURF, January 2022
What travel distances are anticipated for different modes of travel? Will electric vehicles be part of the transport mix for 20 Minute Neighbourhoods?	The Highland Council consultation response to draft NPF4, March 2022
Sustaining public transport and demand-responsive in remote sparsely populated rural areas is a known challenge. It may lead to forced car ownership and transport poverty in low income groups, again exacerbating rural problems and depopulation.	Argyll and Bute Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy: a 20 Minute Neighbourhood Rapid Scoping Assessment, Improvement Service, 2021

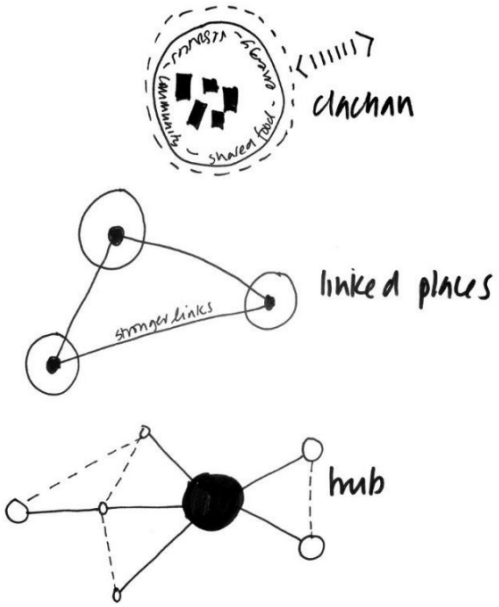
CHALLENGE	SOURCE
The challenge of applying and retrofitting 'local living' and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods to existing communities (see next page).	The Highland Council consultation response to draft NPF4, March 2022
The 'local living' benefits of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, emphasised in draft NPF4, may need more emphasis in rural areas.	Argyll and Bute Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy: a 20 Minute Neighbourhood Rapid Scoping Assessment, Improvement Service, 2021
The word 'neighbourhood' has implicit urban connotations: 20 Minute Communities may better reflect Scotland's urban and rural make-up.	The Highland Council consultation response to draft NPF4, March 2022
The practicalities of planning policy implementation, such as data collection to define 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, clarity on Local Development Plan 'gatecheck' requirements, co-ordinating different departmental and Community Planning Partner agendas, and resources to plan and deliver 20 Minute Neighbourhoods	Discussions with rural local authority policy planners in connection with this research

The last point in Table 3.1, in relation to planning policy, also draws attention to one of the challenges for future local planning policy in the Highlands and Islands. Future local planning policy will need to ensure that new developments reflect the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept by resisting inappropriate new developments, whilst at the same time enabling development in isolated communities in order to sustain their population. For example, crofting communities have developed over time into dispersed settlements without coherent centres; although new development is essential to sustain these communities, their dispersed spatial pattern tends to encourage car use. Navigating these apparent tensions will be important to avoid depriving isolated communities of new homes for local families, work opportunities and facilities.

Finally, a few words about 'retrofitting' existing communities, which was mentioned in Table 3.1. Draft NPF4 (page 73) makes a brief reference to retrofitting existing communities, which serves as a reminder that the document does of course focus on what the planning system can do to support the implementation of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods. Successful delivery of the concept across Scotland will also need co-ordinated action in other policy areas. That is because the planning system focuses only on land use and new development, whilst a successful 20 Minute Neighbourhood embraces public services, community facilities, transport, economic development, education and community development. (Sections 4 and 5 of this report unpack those in more detail.)



Retrofitting existing neighbourhoods will therefore be an essential element of implementing 20 Minute Neighbourhoods across Scotland, because they are where most people live. The implications of this for rural Scottish communities have been explored in recent research by Lucy Styles, focussing on Aberdeenshire, which also outlines typologies for different kinds of rural 20 Minute Neighbourhoods settlement (also the case studies section 5.1 of this report).



Spatial typologies of rural 20 Minute Neighbourhoods: from research by Lucy Styles (FIgure 31, page 68)

3.2 Opportunities

Despite widespread support for the principle of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods amongst rural practitioners, it is not surprising that the challenges described above and the urban focus of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods elsewhere (see section 2.1) has given rise to a common concern that the concept feels inherently urban.

Acknowledging this, the Scottish Government has made clear in draft NPF4 that it expects to vary the application of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods between rural and urban parts of Scotland (see section 2.2 above).

This section therefore explores how to address practitioners' concerns about applying the concept in rural areas, by identifying opportunities to apply the concept in the Highlands and Islands in ways that will support government aspirations to tackle climate change, inequalities, health and wellbeing, and rural depopulation.

The following statement in draft NPF4 lies at the heart of many of the challenges in applying the 20 Minute Neighbourhoods concept in the Highlands and Islands:

> *"20 Minute Neighbourhoods are a method of achieving connected and compact neighbourhoods designed in such a way that all people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable walk, wheel or cycle (within approx. 800m) of their home". (draft NPF4, page 73; emphasis added)*

This 800 metre distance might be workable in main settlements in the Highlands and Islands. But in most villages and rural areas, it will simply be impossible to implement.

Three simple adjustments to the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept, as contained in draft NPF4, would enable it to encompass virtually the entire population of the Highlands and Islands. These are described in Figure 3.2.

Table 3.2: Suggested adjustments to the draft NPF4 policy framework for 20 Minute Communities in the Highlands and Islands

1	**Broaden from exclusively walking and cycling to sustainable travel**	Expand the walking and cycling requirement to include journeys by any sustainable means of transport, in line with the Scottish Government's sustainable travel hierarchy. This would bring in public transport, community transport and electric vehicles, all of which offer low-carbon responses to the reality of moving people and goods over longer distances in the sparsely populated HIghlands and Islands. Also, the car needs to be part of the mix in rural Scotland, but in ways which are lower-carbon than they are at the moment. (See section 4.7 for more information.)
2	**Treat 20 minutes as a target rather than a requirement**	The objective should be enabling people to live well locally, with access to all their daily needs. A defined target is helpful when applying policy, but as a requirement it risks excluding communities from access to services or investment. The acceptable distance or time may vary between communities due to geography and context: 15, 20 or 30 minutes will each be appropriate in different places.
3	**Brand as 20 Minute Communities rather than 20 Minute Neighbourhoods**	'Neighbourhood' carries urban connotations: it is rarely used in villages or the countryside, where neighbours may be some distance away. 'Communities' would be more inclusive of urban and rural Scotland, and would reflect Scottish policy aspirations for community empowerment and the Place Principle.

The focus of these suggestions is of course the Highlands and Islands. Although some may also be appropriate for other parts of the country, care will be needed with the final NPF4 policy wording and associated delivery mechanisms to avoid the concept being diluted or mis-represented in more densely populated urban areas.

Complementary to those adjustments is the recognition in draft NPF4 that 20 Minute Neighbourhoods "can also include providing digital services where appropriate" (see Appendix 2 of this report). This hints at the importance for sparsely populated communities not only of broadband (for example



clinical appointments by video, online shopping and social contact by video call), but also mobile and peripatetic services (mobile banks, visiting health clinicians and so on, which have a long heritage in the Highlands and Islands) and use of drones for deliveries of post and prescriptions. These solutions are explored further in section 4 of this report.

The adjustments suggested in Table 3.2 would enable the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept to be applied across almost the entire Highlands and Islands, positively tackling the challenges identified in Table 3.1.

Work has already started on how to do that, led by Scottish Rural Action, Scottish Rural and Islands Transport Community and SURF in their paper 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in Rural and Island Scotland published in January 2022. This identified a number of existing 'living locally' projects and initiatives in the Highlands and Islands which align with 20 Minute Neighbourhood thinking, under three headings (see pages 4-5 of their report for more detail):

1. **Bringing facilities and services into neighbourhoods - for example:**
   - Rural Housing Scotland's SMART Clachans as a focus for small-scale housing development with shared facilities and services.
   - Shared mobile services which also create shared community space, such as mobile libraries, shops, takeaway vans and the Screen Machine.
2. **Connecting neighbourhoods through public and active transport - for example:**
   - Improving connectivity between satellite villages and larger settlements (such as safe active travel routes or community transport schemes).
   - Acknowledging the ongoing need for cars and also for carbon reduction, by supporting transition to electric vehicles.
3. **Encouraging public participation and behaviour change - for example:**
   - Recognising the importance of volunteers and community anchor organisations for delivery.
   - Supporting small but critical infrastructure to help people switch to walking or cycling: benches, lights, toilets, signage etc.

Section 4 builds on that good work by sharing a range of existing projects and initiatives which support delivery of the 20 Minute Neighbourhoods concept in the Highlands and Islands.

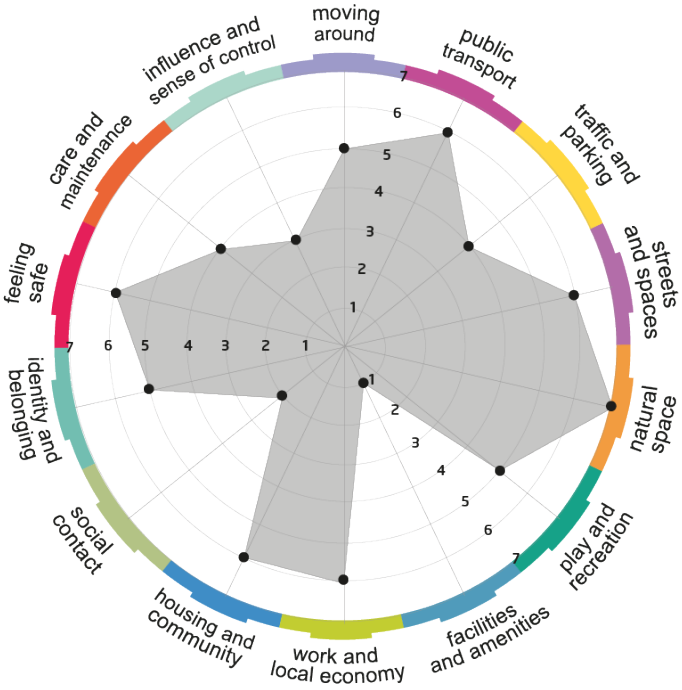
4. KEY FEATURES OF HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS - 20 MINUTE COMMUNITIES

The Highlands and Islands are unique. Sparse populations, economic and cultural circumstances, and often long distances and journey times mean that ways of life can be very different from other parts of Scotland and the UK. For example, nowhere else in the UK are halls of residence an accepted element of normal local authority secondary schooling. Low population density makes public transport much less viable than in cities, meaning that there is often no alternative to the private car for journeys which are simply too long to walk or cycle.

What might a functioning Highlands and Islands 20 Minute Neighbourhood look like?

A number of models have already been developed to identify people's daily needs in their local area, as the basis for what 20 Minute Neighbourhoods need to offer their local residents. Those models include text-based models by Sustrans and ClimateXChange / Ramboll (page 12) and the graphic models shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: selected graphic models of place-based frameworks for daily needs (continued overleaf)



Scottish Government Place Standard



Improvement Service Place and Wellbeing Outcomes



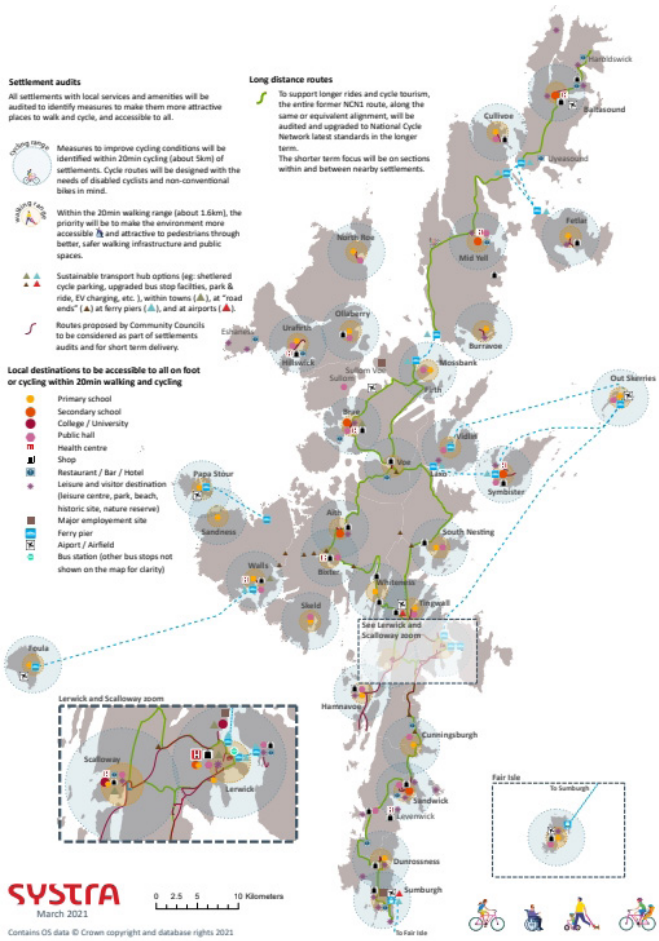
Figure 4.1: selected graphic models of place-based frameworks for daily needs (continued from previous page)



Plan Melbourne, Australia 20-minute neighbourhoods



TCPA Guide to 20 Minute Neighbourhoods 2021

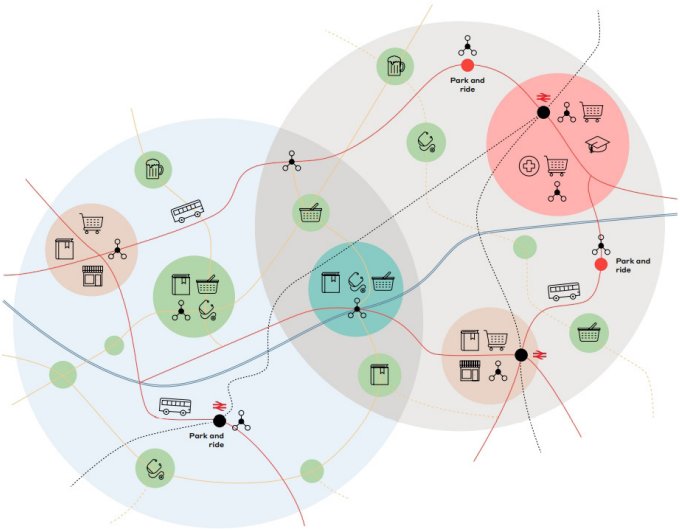


Shetland Islands Council / Systra Shetland Active Travel Strategy 2021-2026

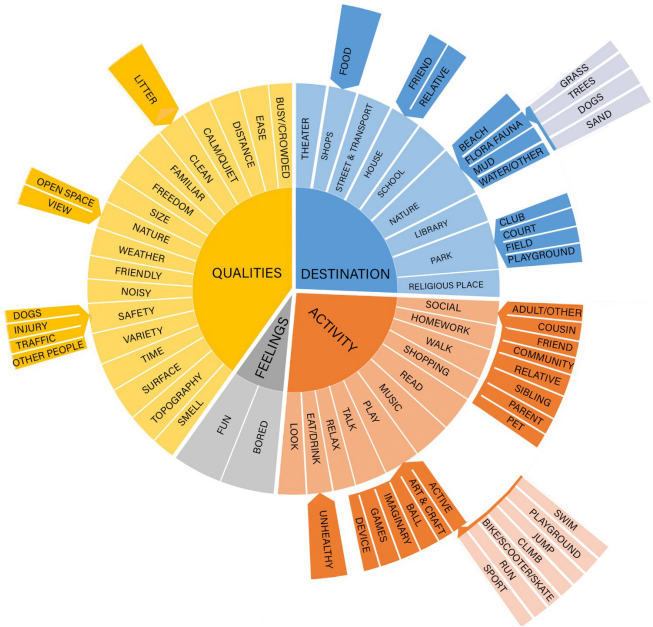
Figure 4.1: selected graphic models of place-based frameworks for daily needs (continued from previous page)



City of Edinburgh Council 20-Minute Neighbourhood Strategy: Living Well Locally 2021



WSP The 30 Minute Rural Community 2021



Sustrans: Children's 20 Minute Neighbourhoods - diagram of children's daily needs from research in Auckland, New Zealand.



Northern Ireland Regional Development Strategy 2035



The models shown in Figure 4.1 are all useful starting points. They illustrate the need for 20 Minute Neighbourhoods to encompass all aspects of daily life – work, learning, recreation, homes, getting about, services, facilities and community life.

However, none of them are tailored to the specific needs of rural Scotland (as highlighted in Scottish Rural Action's Manifesto for Rural Scotland, 2016); and most do not drill down to the level of detail needed to visualise how 20 Minute Neighbourhoods would work in that unique context. Residents of rural and island communities have different lifestyles and expectations from people in urban communities, and often a different sense of community and relationship with the natural environment.

So, rather than simply assume that urban-based models of people's daily needs will also work in rural and island contexts, this section of the report explores contemporary daily needs in Highlands and Islands communities in order to establish the building blocks of rural 20 Minute Neighbourhoods.

4.1 Key features

Figure 4.1 (overleaf) contains a framework of the daily needs for rural residents in the Highlands and Islands – physically, digitally, by mobile provision or even by drone. Essentially, the the framework contains the building blocks of a sustainable framework for living well locally in rural Scotland.

Sections 4.2 to 4.8 describe each element of the framework in more detail, using examples of real projects from around the country to illustrate that all of these things are already happening. To deliver 20 Minute Communities, these piecemeal initiatives need to be mainstreamed, coordinated and resourced so that they become commonplace across the Highlands and islands. The range of options will continue to grow as new technology helps us move towards net zero carbon emissions, particularly for buildings, transport and communications.

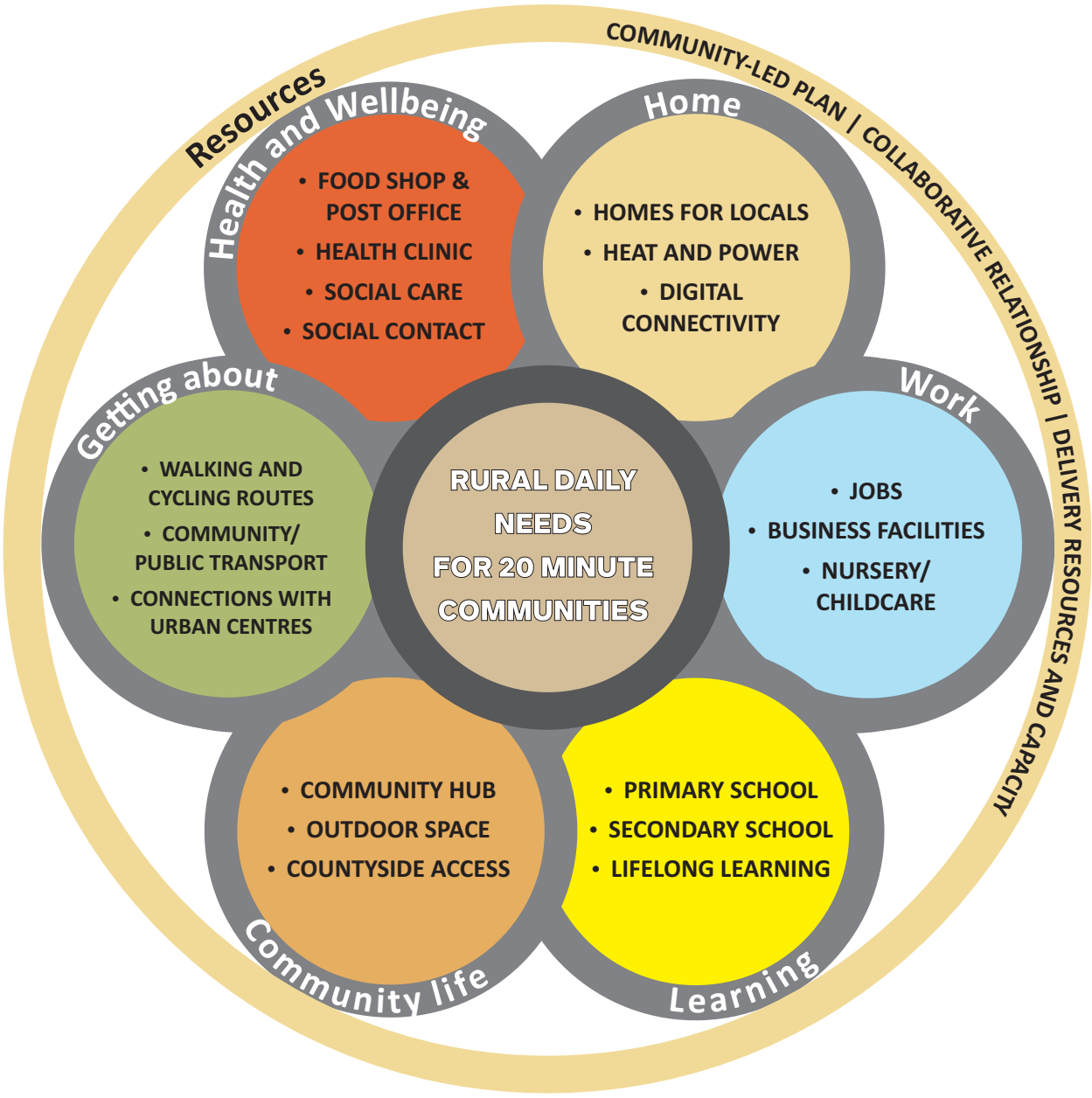


Figure 4.1: rural daily needs in the Highlands and Islands



4.2 Health

Food shop and post office: access to healthy food, everyday groceries and Post Office facilities is essential without having to travel long distances to bigger towns. A local shop is ideal because it contributes to the local economy and offers social contact, but viability is an issue in many small communities. Fortunately, there are other alternatives to the conventional privately-run shop: for example, community enterprise, mobile vans and delivery services.



Jura Community Shop: the island's only shop and Post Office, community owned since 2014



An Crubh, Sleat, Skye: part of the community centre, this shop and Post Office sells local goods to support the local economy

Social contact: creating opportunities for social contact is vital for people's health and wellbeing. Meeting people is of course a benefit from many of the key features on these pages: shops, community hubs and public transport to name just three examples.



Julie's Roots and Fruits, Islay: locally run service delivering fresh food to homes across rural Islay

Health and social care: access to everyday health and social care such as public toilets, a pharmacist, GP, dentist, and other basic health and social care services.

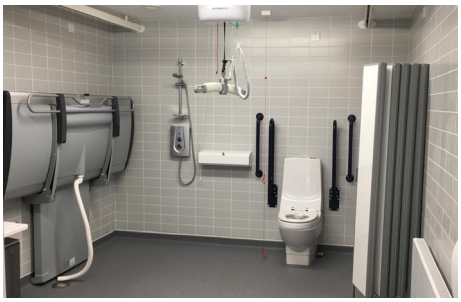
Dedicated local healthcare professionals can be supplemented by peripatetic clinicians and video/telephone consultations with specialists - provided that there is an appropriate space for visiting clinics (see section 4.3) and good broadband (see 4.6).

Drone deliveries to Mull: the UK's first medical drone delivery service began in 2021 between Oban Airport and Mull, flying pathology samples between NHS facilities and saving over 12,000 hours of sample waiting and transport time (more information in this video). Funded by Argyll and Bute Council and the Rural Growth Deal, it is being expanded to include prescriptions and Royal Mail



Boleskine Community Care: community-led organisation covering the rural area south of Loch Ness. It provides Care at Home to local residents in their own homes using professionally qualified home care workers, plus a range of other health and wellbeing services from its small hub building in Foyers: health clinics, befriending and wellbeing activities. Its services complement local GP and NHS services.

Social care can be provided through home care visitors and community-based health and wellbeing activities. Provision of specialist housing to enable elderly and vulnerable people in their local community, and respite care for voluntary carers, are challenges throughout the Highlands and Islands because of the cost and viability.



Changing Places public toilet, Barra: a fully specified accessible toilet with a hoist, as part of the local An Garadh community garden and cafe project.



Just Ask enquiry line, Highland: telephone enquiry line giving direct public access to specialist healthcare professionals.



4.3 Community life

Community hubs: a good, well used community building is the heart of any rural community and a focus for social contact. Indoors, it can host a youth club, a cafe, homework class, faith services, childcare, business space, gigs, ceilidhs, a gym, indoor sports, weddings…. the list is almost infinite. Outside, there can be a play area, barbeques, gala days, sensory garden, space for a mobile cinema, sport, and much more besides. Rural Scotland has many excellent community hubs which are enlivened by busy programmes of activity, as illustrated by the selected examples in this section and section 4.4.



GALE Centre, Gareloch: as well as being the local community centre, cafe, shop and visitor hub, the GALE Centre is a place for local producers to display and sell goods- giving it an important role in the local economy too.



Broadford and Strath Mens Shed, Skye: the first men's shed on Skye. It meets formally twice a week, but in reality is very rarely empty.



St Brides Centre, Douglas: as well as a hall and meeting rooms, this community-run centre offers a small gym and fitness classes run by a local fitness instructor- supporting local health and wellbeing, attracting younger people, and creating employment.



Balmaclellan Smiddy, Galloway: bringing a derelict building in the centre of the village back into use as a vibrant multi-use community centre, with electric vehicle charging (see section 4.7 below). More information in this video.



Falkland Community Library, Fife: local library taken over by the community to prevent it from closure, now with events and a community cafe. More information about its story here.



The Screen Machine: Scotland's mobile cinema, which brings the joy of cinema to communities throughout the Highlands and Islands throughout the year. What better place to park up than at the local community hub?



In a twist on the conventional 'community hub', Shetland Islands Council is proposing locality hubs around the islands to support rural communities (see page 51 of Shetland's 2022 Main Issues Report). Brae, for example, has a Co-op, swimming pool, schools, health centre, care home, hairdresser, takeaway, garage, hotels, agricultural contractors store. These facilities serve not only the village but also the wider rural hinterland of North Mavine, so folk can come into Brae by bus or car and access all those facilities within a 5 minute walk. The idea is to counteract centralisation of facilities and reduce the need to drive into Lerwick, half an hour away. As part of the approach, the Council's next generation of planning policy aims to designate Brae as a 'Preferred Area of Growth' to increase the choice and supply of homes locally.

Outdoor space: people need everyday access to public outdoor space - for children's play, sport, events, community growing, or somewhere to meet and enjoy nature. This need not be in the form of a park or allotments, as might be found in a city neighbourhood: at its simplest, a play area, open grass, and access to a beach, moorland or woodland might be sufficient.



Wyvis Natural Play Park, Garve: a community-led play park in the village of Garve, near Dingwall- not only a great facility for local children, but a place for families from the wider area to meet too.



Port Mor Centre, Port Charlotte, Islay: community-owned playpark and sports pitches, together with a community cafe, hall and visitor campsite.



Stromness Town House, Orkney: a small pleasant stone-paved community space in the heart of the town- nice to sit and chat or watch the world go by, but with an easy-to-erect removable canopy allowing it to be used as a performance space.



Port Ellen, Islay: the shore is a simple, important and easily accessed public space, as in many coastal villages (image from Google Maps)



Abriachan community woodland, Loch Ness: paths and bike trails network as part of a 540 hectare community woodland developed since 1998- creating jobs, outdoor learning and health & wellbeing activities.



Crianlarich path network: network of surfaced paths enabling the local community to enjoy walks from their homes without having to walk on trunk road verges.

Renfrewshire Leisure Lanes: Gateway features, signage and leaflets to support more walking, cycling and horse-riding on West Renfrewshire's network of lightly trafficked rural roads. More information on page 15 of Renfrewshire Outdoor Access Strategy 2016.



4.4 Work

Opportunities to work and earn money are critical for rural communities to survive and prosper. Creating those opportunities rarely involves a single physical project like building a play area or a community hub: it involves tackling a range of barriers which make it difficult for employees to access jobs, for self-employed people to earn money, and for employers to create jobs. More home-working and decentralising public sector jobs to local community hubs can also create opportunities to work locally, such as the Warehouse Building in Stromness, also strengthening local economies and reducing the need to travel.

Jobs: throughout rural Scotland, many initiatives already help to unlock rural entrepreneurship and tackle business isolation, provided by national agencies and community organisations alike. For example:

- LEADER funded projects across rural Scotland (such as this range of projects in Orkney to support local business and MBTAG local tourism business support in the Borders and Midlothian)
- Perthshire Artisans: online display and sales portal for self-employed producers in the region.
- Rural Enterprise Directory Scotland: online map and directory promoting businesses in rural and island Scotland
- iwork4me: self-employment support for autistic people in Scotland
- FindBusinessSupport.gov.scot: national online portal for public sector support for businesses

The availability of childcare (especially early years and childminding) is a particular barrier for parents seeking work in rural Scotland. This 2021 Scottish Government report explains the challenges and solutions for rural areas.

Business facilities: a lack of workshop or office space, facilities like teleconferencing, meeting rooms, high speed broadband or 3D printing, and places to meet other workers or network - each of these can all be a barrier to employment, whether for self-employed people or small organisations looking to sustain and grow.

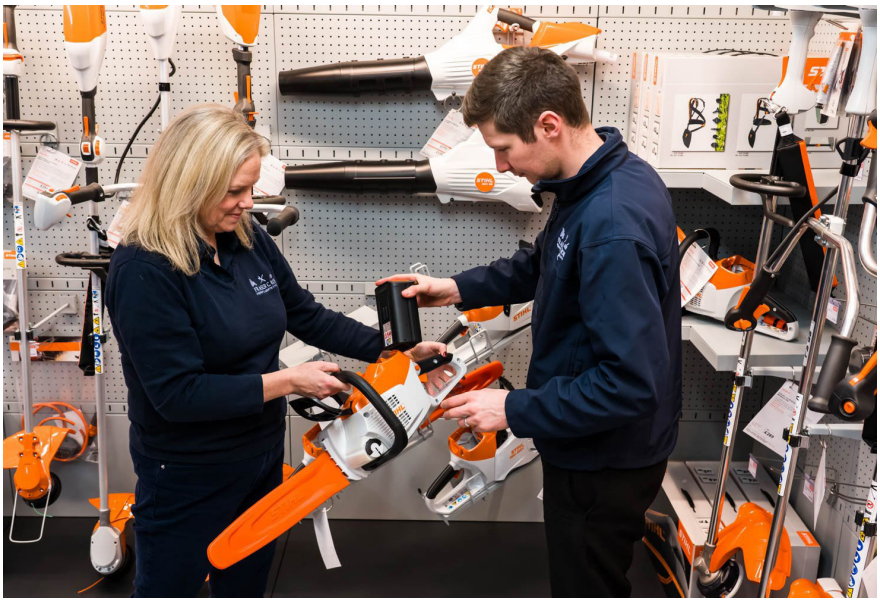
Many rural communities have tackled this by creating business hubs, each slightly different according to local context, as the accompanying examples show. Community-led initiatives like these are conscious efforts to generate local employment. They are often accompanied by creating paid staff posts to complement volunteer activity, which both creates employment and increases community delivery capacity (see section 4.8).



Talla Na Mara, West Harris: community enterprise centre offering offices and business space for affordable lease, and a hub for creative industries with gallery, artists studios and craft workshops- plus also space for hire and events, a restaurant and campervan hook-ups. Developed by West Harris Community Trust.

The Strathdearn, Tomatin: community centre containing business facilities for local residents as well as meeting rooms, EV charging, restaurant, cafe, shop and sports facilities.





Drymen Business Hub and Strathard Hub: these locally run hubs in the Trossachs offer affordable co-working space, business facilities, fast internet, events, training and links to the local college. Weblinks for more information: Drymen and Strathard.



4.5 Learning

Schools are essential community facilities throughout the Highlands and Islands. Primary schools can be found even in the smallest villages, where they often act as hubs of community life providing more than simply teaching facilities. High schools generally have larger catchment areas and are not found in every community; many students travel to high school or stay in purpose-built hostels or halls of residence, and this is unlikely to change. Online learning is an important part of the mix, enabling pupils to access a greater range of learning opportunities wherever they live.



Evie Community School, Orkney: in common with many other rural schools in the Highlands and Islands, this small school offers a programme of community events, fitness activities and the local playpark- as well as lessons, of course.

e-Sgoil digital learning, Western Isles: an online learning programme established by the local authority in 2016 to fill a specific gap in language teaching, e-Sgoil has since expanded across the curriculum to ensure that the 100 children in Castlebay can have the same opportunities as the 1,100 in Stornoway. Boosted by the COVID pandemic restrictions, it now exchanges teaching further afield.

Lifelong learning: communities throughout the Highlands and Islands have for centuries shared their knowledge with each other. Every night of the year, dozens of learning events take place in community halls large and small, such as those described in sections 4.3 and 4.4. Some communities are fortunate enough to have dedicated premises for learning activities, such as Brora Learning Zone and its busy programme of arts, cookery and youth activities.

Online learning enables people to access learning opportunities such as libraries and learning materials direct from their homes using broadband (see section 4.6). UHI (University of the Highlands and Islands) delivers online, distance learning and face-to-face courses throughout the region, and other providers operate more locally (such as Orkney's community learning programme delivered online and through local community centres).

Mobile libraries provide valuable access to learning materials throughout the Highlands and Islands, providing not only books but also valuable human contact for isolated residents. This short video shows a day in the life of Lewis mobile library, including interviews with local residents.



High Life Highland's Moray Firth and Dingwall mobile library: one of a number in Highland (and elsewhere in the region), this mobile library complementing an online reference library, apps and traditional library premises.

4.6 Home

Without affordable quality homes for local residents, rural communities in the Highlands and Islands will struggle to have a sustainable future - as is recognised by the Scottish Government in draft NPF4 (see section 2.3 above), the Scottish Land Commission, Rural Housing Scotland, local authorities and others.

Affordable low-carbon homes for local people: tackling this requires local communities to have sufficient affordable homes across a range of sizes and tenures to ensure that people on lower incomes can afford to live and work locally. Existing homes also need to be fuel-efficient and up to modern standards: the increasing costs of housing and fuel have long been difficult for residents on lower incomes, both economically and in terms of the health risks of cold damp homes.



Fort Augustus: community-led development of 12 homes (houses and flats) for affordable rent by the local development trust, Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Community Company.



Ulva Ferry, Mull: affordable homes for locals, developed by the local community, where 10 years ago the local primary school was threatened with closure. More information in the SURF award citation from 2017 (see page 12 of the award brochure).



Ardgeal, Kincraig: ten new sustainable timber homes, built through a collaboration of the local community, Forestry and Land Scotland and the Communities Housing Trust, providing local job opportunities and with title restrictions to ensure affordability into the future.



Digital connectivity: good broadband and mobile services are essential utilities for every home, as explained elsewhere in section 4. Many aspects of day-to-day life rely on them: working from home, online learning, staying in touch with friends and family, and accessing information and services such as online health consultations for example. The 20 Minute Neighbourhood Rapid Scoping Assessment for Argyll and Bute published in 2021 highlighted that improvements to digital infrastructure are particularly important and could bring benefits such as enabling more people to work from home, enabling rural re-population and providing more access to services online.





Scottish Government R100 broadband scheme: commits to providing superfast broadband access (at least 30 mbps) throughout the country.

Community-led broadband south of Loch Ness: community-led initiative giving residents access to broadband speeds of at least 30mbps in partnership with a Highlands-based internet service provider.

Heat and power: with an eye to creating energy resilience and zero-carbon energy production, more communities are installing their own renewable heat and power supplies - producing their own electricity within their 20 Minute Community!





Community renewables in Cairndow, Argyll: community-led heat and power through locally grown and chipped biomass and hydro, supplying local needs with surplus power to spare.

Outer Hebrides Local Energy Hub: This major project takes waste from the local salmon hatchery, combines it with household and garden waste, and turns it into energy using an anaerobic digester. The result? Electricity for local residents and businesses, hydrogen and oxygen for the salmon hatchery, and fuel for the local hydrogen-powered bin lorry. A truly circular project, as well as being innovative and worthy of its awards.



Smart Clachan: combining the built form of a traditional rural settlement and community-led housing models, the Smart Clachan initiative creates modern affordable homes with shared services such as district heating, electric vehicles and workshops. Pioneered by Rural Housing Scotland in response to depopulation and climate change, initial projects are being delivered across Uist.



4.7 Getting about

The ability to move easily and sustainably around our local communities is an essential element of the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept, as explained in section 2.1 above.

But for the 20 Minute concept to work across the Highlands and Islands, 'getting about' needs to be broadened from exclusively walking and cycling to other forms of sustainable travel too, in line with the Scottish Government's sustainable travel hierarchy (see Table 3.2 in section 3.2, above). This brings public transport, community transport and electric and even autonomous vehicles into the mix, all of which offer low-carbon responses to the reality of moving people and goods in the sparsely populated Highlands and Islands.

So, what might that 'transport mix' look like in the Highlands and Islands?

Walking and cycling routes: whilst many rural communities have footways, they are often narrow, in poor condition and feel unsafe because they are alongside a road with a 40-60mph speed limit and no buffer between pedestrians and traffic. Safe walking and cycling between rural communities is often impossible, with people of all ages having to share the vehicle carriageway with fast moving vehicles.

Such vehicle dominance does not encourage walking and cycling in line with the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept. But there are good examples around the Highlands and Islands of how it can be different, as the examples here show.

Particular challenges for the Highlands and Islands include:

- Developing walking and cycling networks across sparsely populated areas to current standards is expensive, and would be prohibitive for widespread implementation. How can specifications be tailored to be safe, cheap and effective in the Highlands and Islands?
- Recognising the importance of 'micro-solutions': small but critical features that make walking and cycling journeys an accessible and attractive alternative for all users, such as signs, benches and shelter.



Loch Indaal Way, Islay: new 1.5 mile walking and cycling path linking Port Charlotte and Bruichladdich (see Islay case study in section 5.2 below), separated from the adjacent road. Construction required the co-operation of local landowners. The cost of this 'gold standard' route was approximately £1.5m.



Ardura, Mull: part of the longer Fionnphort-Craignure walking and cycling route, this 2 mile reinstatement of an old road (by-passed in the 1960s) was to a more affordable tailored specification involving a bound surface rather than tarmac. For more information see the project report by Mull and Iona Community Trust.



Drymen, Stirlingshire: places to sit and rest, and signage- the small but critical infrastructure that makes walking and cycling attractive. Courtesy of Scottish Rural Action presentation to SURF 20 Minute Neighbourhoods Practitioners' Network (slide 5).

Public transport and community transport: public transport in the Highlands and Islands is largely provided through bus operators, complemented by rail services in some places. Sparse populations mean that viability is an issue across the Highlands and Islands, with subsidies required to maintain most services. Away from routes that link main towns or ferry terminals, timetables are often irregular; more flexible demand-responsive 'dial-a-bus' services operate in some areas.

Community transport has grown in scope in recent years to complement public transport. It can take many different forms, such as access to ebikes, volunteer-run car sharing, electric vehicle charging points, car clubs and demand-responsive minibuses - or a mix of those and other initiatives, as the accompanying examples illustrate.

Mobility hubs are a way of bringing together different modes of transport - places where public transport, community transport, walking, cycling and shared transport can interconnect. The aim is to make it easier to get around without a car, although providing for sustainable car use can be part of the offer (such as electric charging points for cars used by disabled people or in shared use). CoMoUK is a useful source of information and resources about mobility hubs. The Scottish Government's recent review of transport investment for the next 20 years (draft STPR2, recommendation 22) highlights the potential strategic importance of mobility hubs nationally.

Also worthy of note is the importance of 'micro-solutions': small but critical infrastructure that mean public and community transport can be attractive alternatives in the Highlands and Islands, such as information, shelters in bus stops, and help with fixing and maintaining bikes.

A particular challenge for the Highlands and Islands is funding, resources and viability - of running public transport services, of establishing and sustaining community transport, and of decarbonisation. The question of resources includes not only funding, but also the capacity of local communities to set up community transport schemes.

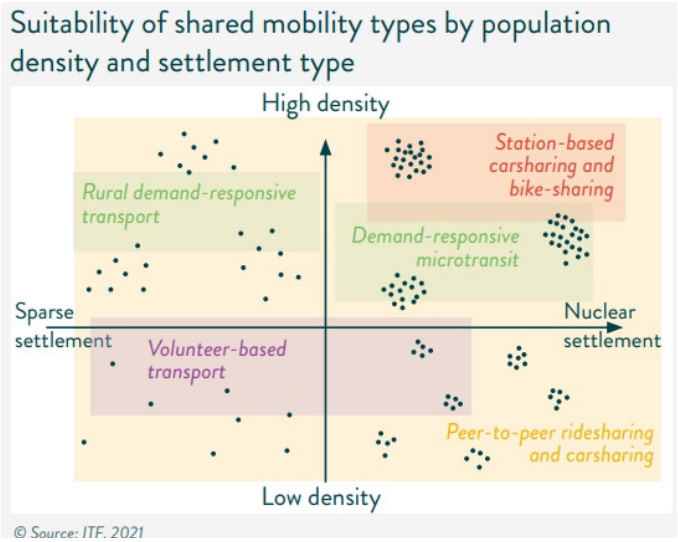
In response to these challenges, there is much innovation happening in the rural transport sector, creating new ways for rural communities to experience 'shared mobility' in ways that also reduce carbon emissions. This section gives only a brief introduction to some of the thinking. For more information, see the following resources:

- HITRANS completed and current projects
- Midlands Connect The Future of Rural Mobility 2022 (includes a Rural Mobility Toolkit)
- SEStran Mobility Hubs: a strategic study for the South East of Scotland / SEStran region 2020
- Systra / Local Government Association The future of public transport and the role of Local Government 2021
- UITP Knowledge Brief: the rural mobility challenge for public transport 2022 (link to full report here)
- UK Government Transport in rural areas toolkit 2022
- WSP The 30 Minute Rural Community 2021



Loch Ness Hub, Drumnadrochit: social enterprise offering ebikes, electric vehicle charing, toilets and tourist information





Knowledge Brief: the rural mobility challenge for public transport 2022, page 5



Badenoch and Strathspey Community Transport: offers a range of services including community car scheme, vehicle hire, registered bus routes and mobility scooter loan. The organisation has two minibuses and a wheelchair-adapted car, all fully accessible, and 125 volunteers using their own cars.

West Wheels Car Club, Mallaig: community transport initiative with two vehicles available to members in Mallaig, Arisaig, Morar, Knoydart, south Skye and the Small Isles. Your car when you need it, and not when you don't!



Transport for Tongue: even the most sparsely populated areas can create a viable community transport operation. Tongue, Melness and Skerray on the north coast of Sutherland, with a population of less than 600, runs a lift share scheme and weekly timetabled minibus services to Lairg and Inverness.

Bike Bute: Fyne Futures run an e-bike hire scheme for residents and locals in Rothesay, as well as the Car Bute car club which has been offering vehicles to the residents of Bute for over 10 years- now including electric cars, of course.



Connections with urban centres: the nature of the sparsely populated Highlands and Islands means that not every need can be provided within a nominal 20 minutes travel time: such as access to bigger shops, hospitals, entertainment or higher education.

Some of these needs can be satisfied through technology. That is why broadband and drone technology are so important for access to online services and deliveries respectively (see section 4.2 above).

For other needs, travel will still be required to larger towns like Kirkwall, Stornoway, Inverness and Oban, or cities afield in Aberdeen, Edinburgh or Glasgow. Good sustainable travel infrastructure and services to reach those places are an essential element in making 20 Minute Communities work in the Highlands and Islands: roads, ferries, buses, air and rail. The Islay and Ullapool case studies in sections 5.2 and 5.3 illustrate this point, with reference to the importance of good sustainable links to Glasgow and Inverness respectively.



On-demand electric buses in Moray: following introduction of a new zero-carbon electric bus services between Forres and Aberlour, Moray Growth Deal is investing £4 million in Bus Revolution- a low-carbon, on-demand bus service to offer a rural alternative to private cars, including innovative app-based technology to allow 'Uber' style bookings.



4.8 Resources

Last but not least, 20 Minute Communities won't be delivered across the Highlands and Islands without resources. These can be broken down into three ingredients.

1. **A community-led plan:** a good plan generates common purpose, prioritises actions, and secures funding and support. Communities across the Highlands and Islands have led the way on community-led action planning in recent decades. Now they have a similar but more influential new tool: Local Place Plans. 20 Minute Communities and Local Plans are like two sides of a coin: the former describes what we're aiming for and gives it national priority, whilst Local Place Plans enable it to be tailored and delivered at the local level.

2. **Delivery resources and capacity:** without resources, 20 Minute Communities will only be warm words. Turning them into reality by replicating the examples on these pages across the Highlands and Islands, will need resources. That means money and capacity for community organisations like Development Trusts (which may need to be established if they do not already exist), local authorities and other Community Planning Partners. The examples in section 5 indicate notionally where most resources will be required. The risk of not allocating sufficient resources is that inequalities will be exacerbated: communities which already have capacity and resources will attract even more, whilst other places will languish and fall behind.

3. **Collaborative relationships:** every example on the previous pages has been implemented through collaboration between local communities and the public sector. This is essential both to create a plan of what to do, and then to implement projects to deliver that plan. This necessitates good collaborative relationships between local communities (normally through a Community Council and/or Community Development Trust) or the local authority and its Community Planning Partners.

5. IMAGINING 20 MINUTE COMMUNITIES IN THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

The case studies in this section show how the rural 20 Minute Communities described in section 4 could look in different parts of the Highlands and Islands. The four different areas each illustrate a different perspective:

The 4 case studies to show how those rural 20MN components would land on the ground:

- **Dounby, Orkney:** a small village on West Mainland with the local school, shops and other basic facilities that also serves a small hinterland of smaller villages and farms.
- **Ullapool**: a busy village and ferry terminal that acts as focus for a very large and sparsely populated region of the North-West Highlands, but few other villages nearby.
- **Islay**: an island network of villages, often some distance apart with sparsely populated farmland and moorland between. Higher-order services like the secondary school and hospital focussed in one settlement (Bowmore).
- **Stratherrick and Foyers, south of Loch Ness:** a cluster of small settlements effectively functioning as a single community, with people travelling between settlements for different things.

Each case study contains a sequence of layered plans showing 20 minute catchments from hubs by walking, cycling and motor vehicle (data from app.traveltime.com), an overall plan and matrix mapping the key features of rural 20 Minute Communities (see section 4 above) at a notional date of 2030. If you find the plans in these case studies interesting, a similar exercise has also been conducted at a larger scale by Systra and Shetland Islands Council for the Shetland Active Travel Strategy 2021-2026 (page 23).





5.1 DOUNBY 2030

Dounby is a small village on West Mainland in Orkney, approximately 10-15 miles from the nearest towns of Stromness (which has the local high school) and Kirkwall (Orkney's main commercial hub and home to the hospital and college).

The population of Dounby itself is around 200 people. The surrounding rural area of farms and smaller villages has a population of approximately 2,000. Facilities in Dounby include a primary school and nursery, Co-op, GP surgery, care home, pharmacy, butcher, hotel, churches and public toilets. Buses link the village with Stromness and Kirkwall.

The local community enjoys a good range of local facilities. In many ways, it is a good basis for a model rural 20 minute neighbourhood as described in section 3. But to achieve this, a number of gaps to be filled, including:

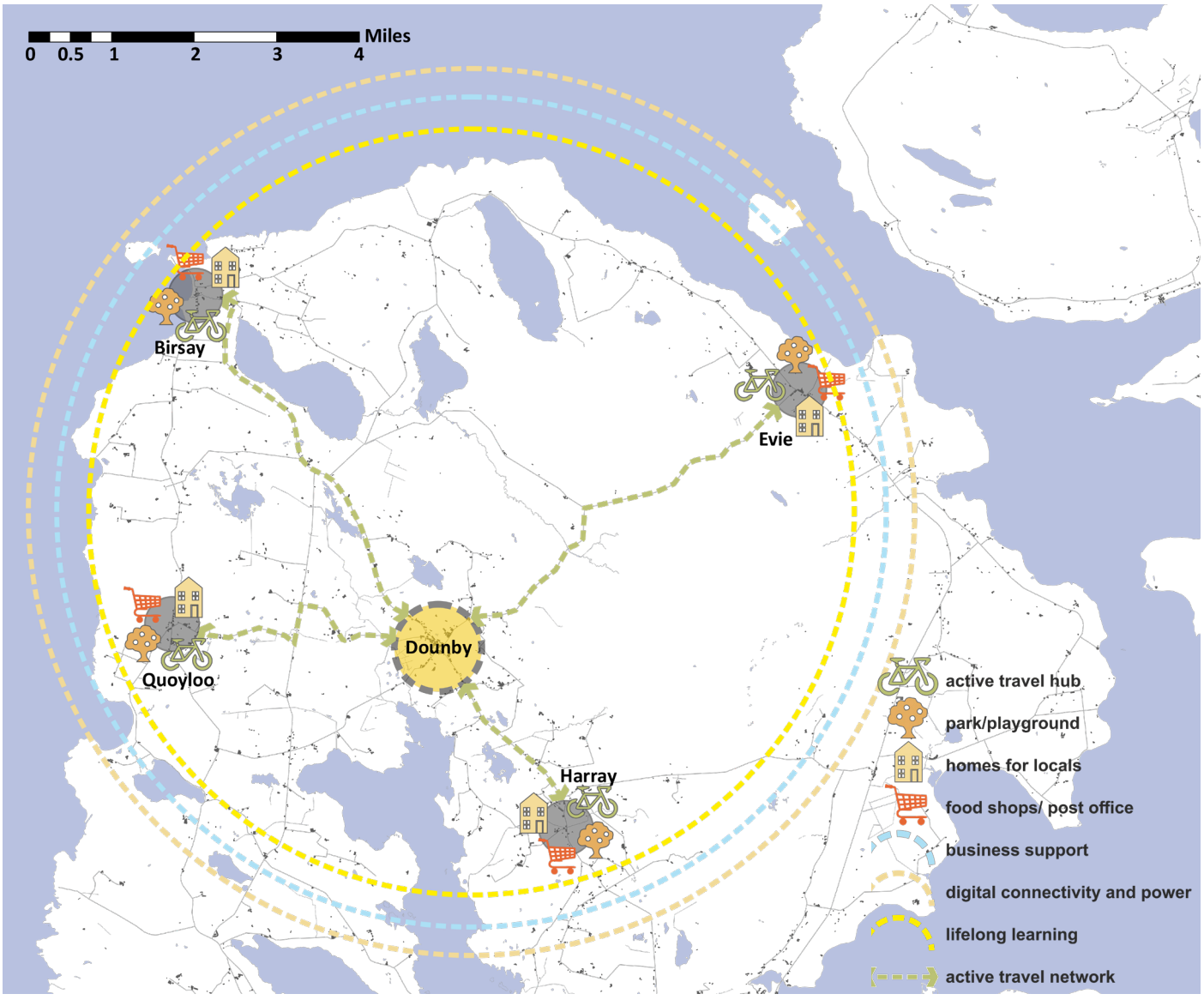
- a safe walking and cycling network within the village and to the wider area.
- improved public / community transport linking the surrounding area with the village - including more regular services (which could be provided through a community transport scheme rather than conventional bus services), a mobility hub, bus shelters and local ebike scheme.
- better quality of public green space and play provision.
- a more compact and 'walkable' village with future housing sites located closer to the village centre.

The matrix describes those interventions in a little more detail, with an approximate indication of the scale of capital spend required. The plans show how the interventions would land on the ground in the village and surrounding area.

Dounby is now preparing a Local Place Plan - an opportunity for the local community and public bodies to plan and deliver a 20 Minute Community, including establishing a local Development Trust to spearhead community-led projects. With 1,500-2,000 new homes needed in Orkney as a whole over the next decade, there is a huge opportunity to explore how new investment in homes, jobs and services could combine to create a true 20 Minute Community.

HEALTH		
Food shop & Post Office	Retain existing Co-op and post office	
Health clinic	Retain surgery and pharmacy	
Social care	Retain care home	
COMMUNITY LIFE		
Community hub	Upgrade community school, retain church hall and hotel	£££
Outdoor space	Improve market green & play provision	£
Countryside access	Complete gaps in local path network	£
WORK		
Jobs	Retain economic development support	
Business facilities	New business facilities in hotel, church hall, community school and/or dedicated building	£(£)
Nursery/childcare	Retain nursery	
LEARNING		
Primary school	Retain primary school	
High school	Retain link to Stromness Academy	
Lifelong learning	Upgrade broadband to homes and community facilities	£

HOME		
Homes for locals	New affordable homes	££
Heat and power	Energy efficiency retrofit improvements	£
Digital connectivity	Upgrade broadband to homes and community facilities	£
GETTING ABOUT		
Walking and cycling routes	Local network of safe cycle/ walking routes	££
Community / public transport	Community transport initiative for local area with co-mobility hub, bus shelters and local ebike scheme	££
Connections with urban centres	Enhanced public/community transport to Kirkwall and Stromness	£
RESOURCES		
Community-led plan	Prepare Local Place Plan	£
Delivery resources and capacity	Resources for these actions, and a community development trust to lead local actions	£££
Collaborative relationship	Continue 'Orkney Matters' collaborative relationship between local authority, Community Planning Partners and Community Council	


Miles
0 0.5 1 2 3 4
Birsay
Evie
Dounby
Quoyloo
Harray
active travel hub
park/playground
homes for locals
food shops/ post office
business support
digital connectivity and power
lifelong learning
active travel network

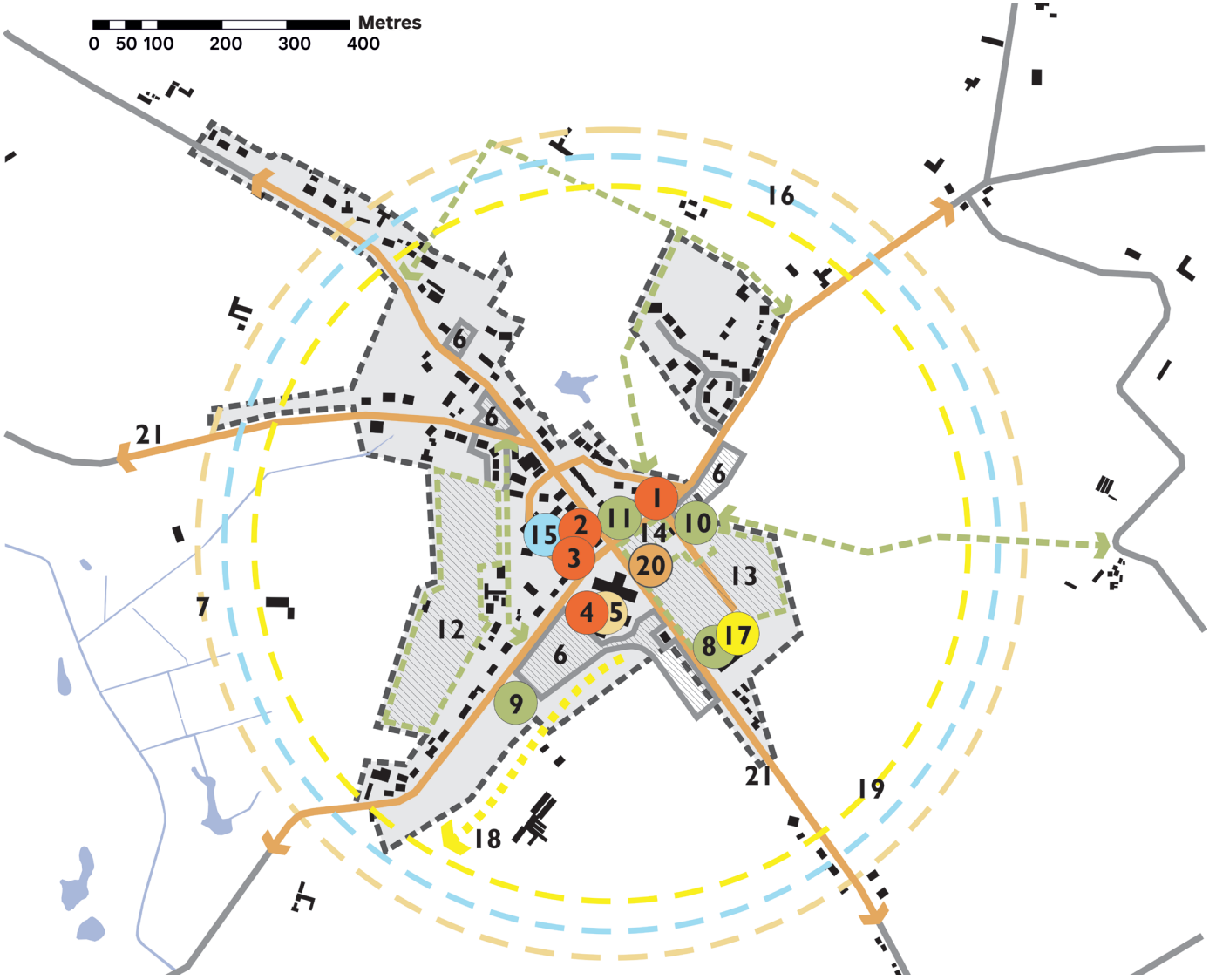

20min walking


20min cycling


20min driving



DOUNBY VILLAGE



health

1. accessible toilet
2. food shop/post office
3. Dounby pharmacy
4. health centre

home

5. Smiddybrae House
6. new homes
   existing LDP boundary
7. digital connectivity and power

community life

8. community hub
9. community hub
10. playpark
11. community hub
12. community greenspace
13. sports pitches
14. park
    path network

learning

17. Primary School
18. High School in Stromness
19. distance / lifelong learning

getting about

20. co-mobility hub
21. walking and cycling network

work

15. business space
16. business support

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5.2 ISLAY 2030

Islay is the fifth largest Scottish island with a population of 3,200 at the 2011 census. It is about 5 hours from Glasgow to road and ferry, and 40 minutes by air from Glasgow Airport.

Islay's half a dozen or so small villages form a network. Most of the island's population lies within 20 minutes of at least one of these settlements.

Bowmore and Port Ellen are the two largest villages with around 800 residents each. Of the two, Bowmore is the most central and has the high school, hospital and other main services; most of the island's residents live within approximately half an hour's drive.

Outwith Bowmore, local facilities and services are distributed amongst the other villages in the network. Port Ellen has more than most, as befits its relatively large size. Other villages have a more limited range of services. For example, Portnahaven has a hall, Keills has a school, Port Askaig has a hotel; and Port Charlotte has all of those.

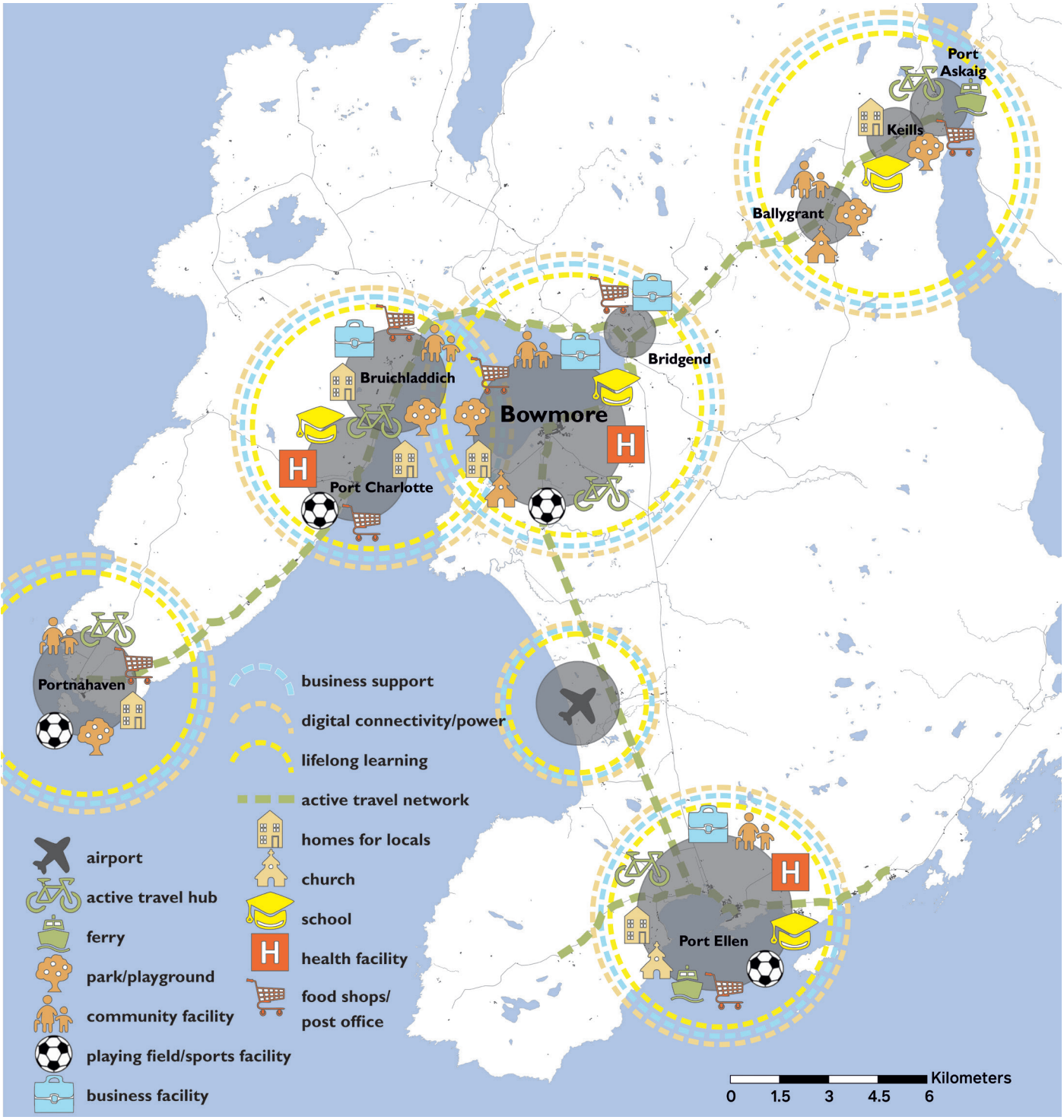
To enable the local community to function as a network of rural 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, a number of investments are required. For example:

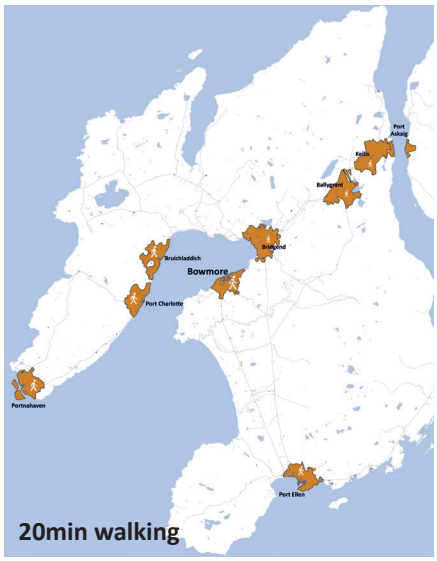
- Essential facilities in each settlement, such as a community centre, play park and greenspace. Where a shop or health centre is not viable, mobile and/or online provision may be appropriate.
- Safer walking and cycling infrastructure within villages (footways are often poor or even non-existent within Islay's villages) and between villages (such as the new walking/cycling routes between Port Charlotte / Bruichladdich and Port Ellen / Ardbeg).
- A network of community/public transport that serves the whole island, not just the villages.
- Strengthened support for local jobs and enterprise across the island, such as improved digital connectivity and the rural skills accelerator programme currently being developed through the Rural Growth Deal.
- Energy production from local renewable sources such as wind and tidal, to provide more local resilience.
- Continued investment in building affordable homes in villages.
- Additional support and capacity-building for community-led development.
- Continued improvements to mainland connections, such as drones for mail and medical supplies, enhanced broadband for online services, and improved low-carbon links to the mainland.

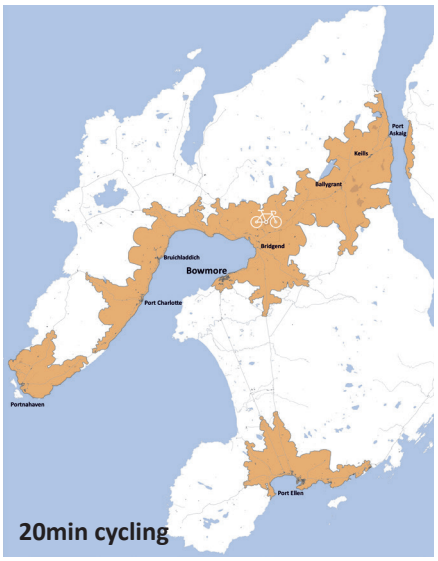
HEALTH		
Food shop & Post Office	Expand van-based mobile shop service	££
Health clinic	Expand online and peripatetic healthcare	££
Social care	Expand home-based care and respite	££
COMMUNITY LIFE		
Community hub	More activities in community centres	£
Outdoor space	Enhance open space and play provision in villages	£
Countryside access	Local path networks for each village	£
WORK		
Jobs	Continued economic development support	££
Business facilities	Improved digital connectivity, business/workshop space in each village	££
Nursery/childcare	Retain island-wide nurseries and childcare	
LEARNING		
Primary school	Retain primary schools	
High school	Retain high school	
Lifelong learning	Improve broadband to homes and community facilities island-wide	££

Many of these proposals either already exist in some form on the island or are being developed. They are summarised in the accompanying matrix and 2030 plan.

HOME		
Homes for locals	New affordable homes	££
Heat and power	Energy efficiency retrofit improvements	£
Digital connectivity	Upgrade broadband to homes and community facilities	£
GETTING ABOUT		
Walking and cycling routes	Network of safe cycle/walking routes linking villages	£££
Community / public transport	Island-wide community transport initiative (e.g. minibus, co-mobility hubs, bus shelters, ebikes)	££
Connections with urban centres	Low-carbon ferry, plane and drone connections	£££
RESOURCES		
Community-led plan	Prepare Local Place Plans / Community Action Plans for all communities	£
Delivery resources and capacity	Build capacity in each community, make delivery resources accessible	£££
Collaborative relationship	Continue collaborative relationships between local authority, Community Planning Partners and local communities	


Port Askaig
Keills
Ballygrant
Bridgend
Bruichladdich
Bowmore
Port Charlotte
Portnahaven
Port Ellen
business support
digital connectivity/power
lifelong learning
active travel network
homes for locals
church
school
health facility
food shops/ post office
airport
active travel hub
ferry
park/playground
community facility
playing field/sports facility
business facility
Kilometers
0 1.5 3 4.5 6


20min walking


20min cycling


20min driving



5.3 ULLAPOOL 2030

Ullapool has a population of around 1,500 people. Despite its small size, it is the largest settlement on the west coast north of Fort William and an important ferry terminal.

The village provides services and amenities for a large sparsely populated area of the North-West Highlands, including high school, healthcare, supermarket, commercial services and tourism amenities. The next larger settlements are Dingwall (1 hour's drive, 2 hours by public transport) and Inverness (1¼ hours' drive, 1½ hours by coach). There are few other villages in the immediate vicinity.

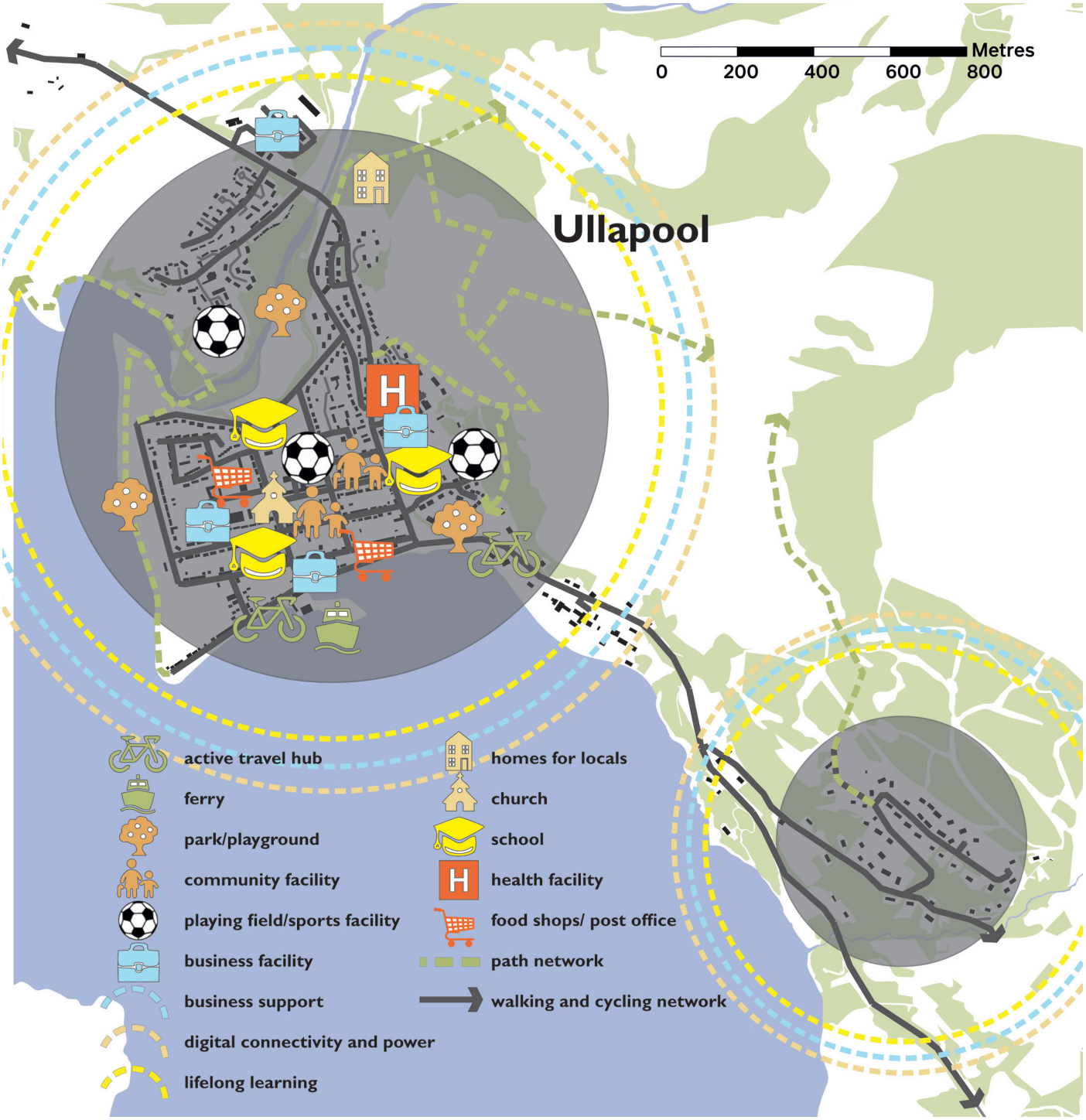
The main area of the village, north of the harbour, is in many ways already a model 20 Minute Neighbourhood in terms of urban form, land use, facilities, services and access to open space and nature. Many of the elements of a rural 20 Minute Neighbourhood already exist in this main part of the village - within 20 minutes walk.

So, what else would be needed to make Ullapool a fully functioning rural 20 Minute Neighbourhood?

- More prominent walking/cycling networks and a community transport service (e.g. including an ebike scheme, demand responsive minibus, and mobility hub) would help to reduce reliance on cars within the village.
- This is particularly the case for residents of the Braes, which is 20-30 minutes walk south along the A835 trunk road from the village centre. A safe walking and cycling link, coupled with community transport, would better connect this 'suburb' to the main village and could be continued south to more isolated homes alongside Loch Broom.
- Improved bus or community transport to Dingwall and Inverness would enable local residents to more easily access job opportunities, public services, further/higher education and so on.
- Ullapool should continue to be developed as a hub for services to its extensive rural hinterland, using a greater range of mobile services, improved community/public transport and technology like broadband and drone deliveries.
- Affordable homes, fuel poverty, employment training and health/social care are priorities for the local community and should be planned through a future Local Place Plan, with delivery resources and capacity made available for the local community and public services.

HEALTH		
Food shop & Post Office	Retain retail choice	
Health clinic	Retain and enhance health services	£
Social care	Retain and enhance care provision	£
COMMUNITY LIFE		
Community hub	Retain Village Hall and increase activities	£
Outdoor space	Enhance open space and play provision	£
Countryside access	Maintain & promote local path network	£
WORK		
Jobs	Retain economic development support, including training/apprenticeships	££
Business facilities	Ensure sufficient land and facilities for business	££
Nursery/childcare	Retain nursery and childcare provision	
LEARNING		
Primary school	Retain primary school	
High school	Retain high school	
Lifelong learning	Improve broadband to homes and community facilities	£

HOME		
Homes for locals	More affordable homes	£££
Heat and power	Energy efficiency retrofit improvements	££
Digital connectivity	Upgrade broadband to homes and community facilities	£
GETTING ABOUT		
Walking and cycling routes	Safe walking/cycling routes within the village and to the Braes	££
Community / public transport	Local community transport (e.g. local minibus, co-mobility hub, bus shelters, ebikes)	££
Connections with urban centres	Enhanced public/community transport to Dingwall and Inverness	£
RESOURCES		
Community-led plan	Prepare Local Place Plan	£
Delivery resources and capacity	Build capacity of community development trust and make delivery resources accessible	£££
Collaborative relationship	Continue collaborative relationships between local authority, Community Planning Partners and local communities	


Metres
0
200
400
600
800
Ullapool
active travel hub
ferry
park/playground
community facility
playing field/sports facility
business facility
business support
digital connectivity and power
lifelong learning
homes for locals
church
school
health facility
food shops/ post office
path network
walking and cycling network


Ullapool
20min walking


Ardmair
Ullapool
Leckmeln
20min cycling


Ardmair
Ullapool
Leckmeln
20min driving



5.4 FOYERS AND STRATHERRICK 2030

Foyers and Stratherrick are to the east of Loch Ness, 30-45 minutes' drive from Inverness. The area functions as a single community of around 800 people, distributed across a few small villages plus scattered farms and houses.

People expect to travel between villages for their day-today needs. For example, Lower Foyers has a GP surgery and the biggest concentration of jobs; Upper Foyers has the only shop and post office; Gorthleck has the larger of two primary schools. Accessibility between the villages is critical. People without access to a car have limited access to facilities and activities.

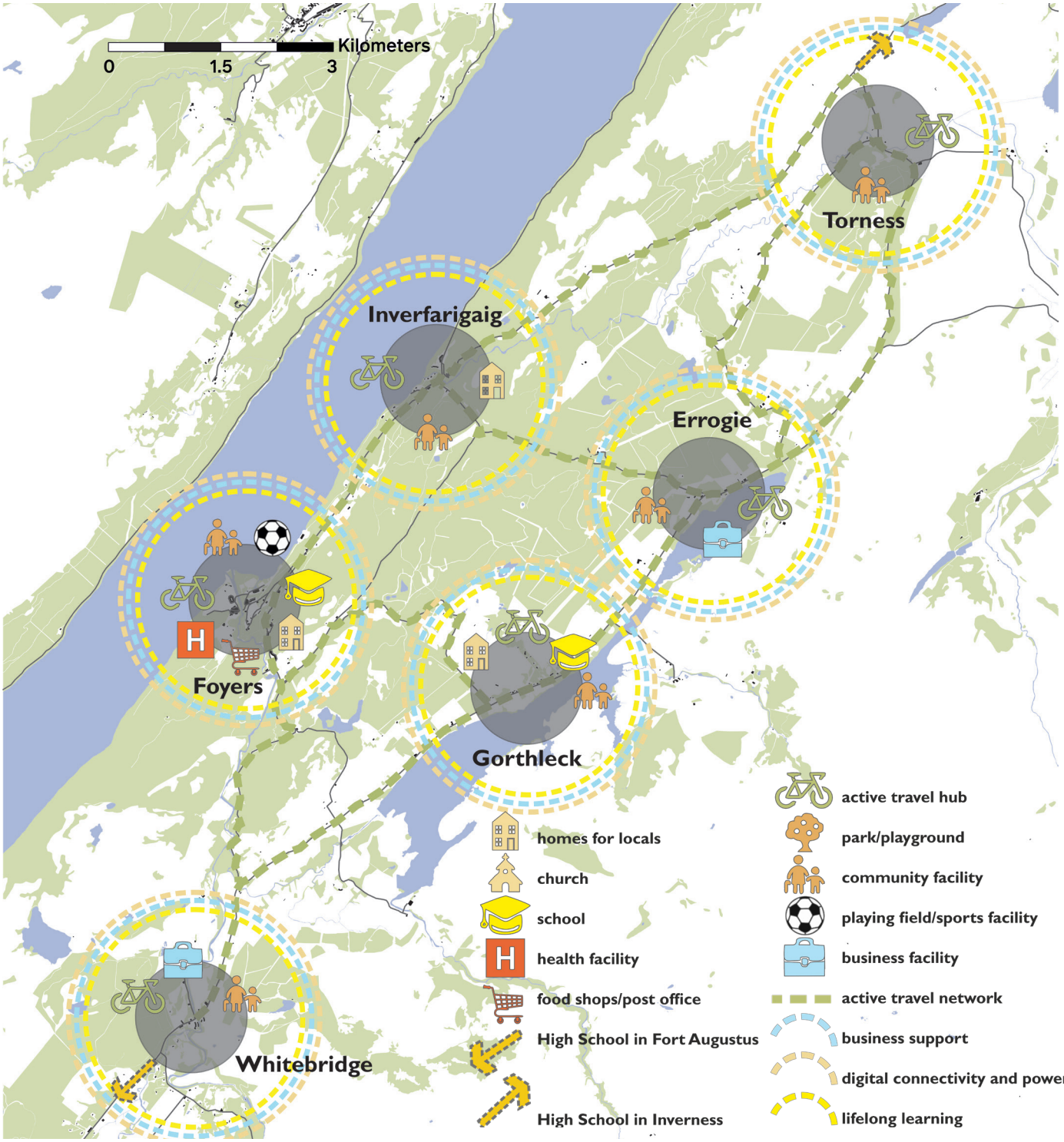
The local community is rectifying this situation by taking a range of actions, funded primarily through local windfarm funds:

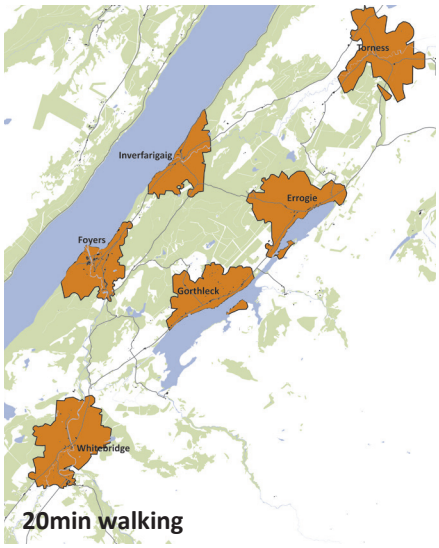
- A community hub in each village with a minimum of playpark, greenspace, meeting and learning space, accessible toilets and mobility hub. Each hub would also have a complementary role in the community-wide network like business and volunteer support in Whitebridge, sports facilities in Foyers and crafters' studio in Errogie.
- Enhanced community transport, including options for a minibus, car share, electric vehicle charging, ebikes and mopeds.
- Improving pedestrian and cycle safety within and between villages, particularly to schools and community/mobility hubs.
- Further develop local home-based care (Boleskine Community Care) and retain GP surgery.
- Community purchase of the local shop and post office and a mobile van to reach the community as a whole.
- Low-cost rented accommodation for local people and home-based care enabling people to stay in their community.

The community's low population density means that the car will inevitably remain part of community life, as in many other parts of the Highlands and Islands. But with the steps it is taking, the community has the potential to become a more sustainable and connected rural 20 Minute Neighbourhood.

HEALTH		
Food shop & Post Office	Retain retail choice	
Health clinic	Retain and enhance health services	£
Social care	Retain and enhance care provision	£
COMMUNITY LIFE		
Community hub	Develop network of local community hubs and activities in each village	£££
Outdoor space	Enhance open space and play provision in villages	£££
Countryside access	Upgrade local path networks, community woodland	£(£)
WORK		
Jobs	Retain economic development support, including training/apprenticeships	££
Business facilities	Ensure sufficient land and facilities for business	££
Nursery/childcare	Retain nursery and childcare provision	
LEARNING		
Primary school	Revitalise local apprenticeship scheme, create employment on community projects	£(£)
High school	Continue to improve digital connectivity, business/workshop space in at least one community hub	£(£)
Lifelong learning	Develop local childcare	£(£)

HOME		
Homes for locals	Retain primary schools	
Heat and power	Community/public transport link to Fort Augustus	£(£)
Digital connectivity	Continue to roll out broadband upgrades to homes and community facilities	£
GETTING ABOUT		
Walking and cycling routes	Network of safe cycle/walking routes linking villages	£££
Community / public transport	Community transport initiative for local area (e.g. minibus, mobility hubs, bus shelters, ebikes, electric vehicle charging, scooters)	££
Connections with urban centres	Enhanced public/community transport to Inverness and Fort Augustus	£
RESOURCES		
Community-led plan	Prepare Local Place Plan based on community action plan	£
Delivery resources and capacity	Resources and capacity to take forward these actions	£££
Collaborative relationship	Continue collaborative relationships between local authority, Community Planning Partners and local communities	

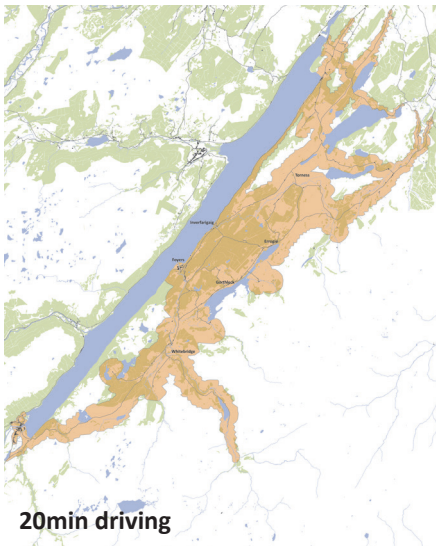




20min walking



20min cycling



20min driving



6. WHAT NEXT?

This report was commissioned by HITRANS and Sustrans to help implement the national policy commitment to 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in the Highlands and Islands. Building on existing research and analysis, the report has aimed to answer two questions. What could a 20 Minute Neighbourhood look like in a rural and island context? And what would need to happen for a rural settlement to become a 20 minute community?

In answering those questions, this report has:

- Summarised the **history and thinking behind the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept** - essentially a new name for a long-established idea, which has taken root in some major cities around the world. Scotland is now pioneering the way for implementing it at the national scale, as laid out in draft NPF4 (see section 2).

- Explained some of the **challenges of implementation** in the sparsely populated Highlands and Islands (see section 3.1).

- Recommended **three simple adjustments to draft NPF4** to make the draft 20 Minutes Neighbourhoods policy deliverable across the Highlands and Islands, whilst remaining true to the draft NPF4 principles of tackling climate change and sustaining / repopulating rural communities (see section 3.2).

- Suggested the **key features of 20 Minute Communities in the Highlands and Islands**, which focus not only on buildings, facilities and transport, but also on services, resources and community collaboration (section 4). The concept needs to encompass all aspects of daily rural life – education, work, housing, public services, community life, access to the outdoors, moving sustainably around local communities and to urban centres, and collaborative delivery and resources.

- Highlighted **examples of real projects** to illustrate that those building blocks of rural 20 Minute Communities already exist in many places from around the country (section 4).

- Developed **plans for four communities**, to show how 20 Minute Communities could play out on the ground in different Highlands and Islands contexts (section 5).

Our key conclusion is that 20 Minute Neighbourhoods could be as good a fit for rural Scotland as for urban Scotland. The concept can work for the vast majority of the Highlands and Islands population - with minor adjustments to the draft NPF4 policy framework, as explained in section 6.1. Indeed, many towns and larger villages in the Highlands and Islands already exemplify many of the principles of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods.

Section 6.1 reiterates the suggested adjustments to the draft NPF4 policy framework, whilst section 6.2 considers wider issues to inform the future delivery of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in the Highlands and Islands.

6.1 Adjustments to draft NPF4

For the draft NPF4 20 Minute Neighbourhood policy framework to be able to work across the bulk of the Highlands and Islands, three simple adjustments are suggested, as shown in Table 6.1 (overleaf). More information is contained in section 3.2 (above).

Table 6.1: Suggested adjustments to the draft NPF4 policy framework for 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in the Highlands and Islands

1	**Broaden from exclusively walking and cycling to sustainable travel**	Expand the walking and cycling requirement to include journeys by any sustainable means of transport, in line with the Scottish Government's sustainable travel hierarchy. This would bring in public transport, community transport and electric vehicles, all of which offer low-carbon responses to the reality of moving people and goods over longer distances in the sparsely populated HIghlands and Islands. Also, the car needs to be part of the mix in rural Scotland, but in ways which are lower-carbon than they are at the moment. (See section 4.7 for more information.)
2	**Treat 20 minutes as a target rather than a requirement**	The objective should be enabling people to live well locally, with access to all their daily needs. A defined target is helpful when applying policy, but as a requirement it risks excluding communities from access to services or investment. The acceptable distance or time may vary between communities due to geography and context: 15, 20 or 30 minutes will each be appropriate in different places.
3	**Brand as 20 Minute Communities rather than 20 Minute Neighbourhoods**	'Neighbourhood' carries urban connotations: it is rarely used in villages or the countryside, where neighbours may be some distance away. 'Communities' would be more inclusive of urban and rural Scotland, and would reflect Scottish policy aspirations for community empowerment and the Place Principle.

6.2 Delivery challenges

To accompany the suggested adjustments to the draft NPF4 policy suggested above, a number of issues relating to delivery of 20 Minute Communities have emerged during this research. None of these are insurmountable, but they are each important to consider if the 20 Minute Community concept is to work on a national basis and achieve its desired outcomes. These challenges are posed as discussion questions below.

1. **How should the key features of rural 20 Minute Communities be defined?** A six point framework has been suggested in section 4.1. That would merit further testing and discussion, and the details are yet to be resolved: for example, at what size of population different facilities or services should be available locally? How will the features of individual 20 Minute Communities be responsive to local context? Should that be done nationally through NPF4, at local authority level through Local Development Plans and Community Planning Partnerships, or by local communities through Local Place Plans?

2. **How should solutions be tailored to the Highlands and Islands?** The unique context of the region and its communities will require tailored solutions across all of the key features of 20 Minute Communities. Many local communities are already used to different ways of life from elsewhere in Scotland, from greater self-reliance to high school halls of residence. Solutions that are applicable in more densely populated urban Scotland may not be appropriate or practical, such as design standards for cycle paths. New technology can offer different solutions: for example, broadband and drone technology can enable services to be delivered over large distances in the Highlands and Islands (although the implications of moving services online for essential human contact needs to be considered, particularly for people living in isolated locations).

3. **How do we avoid further centralisation of services, with more remote areas being left isolated and worse off?** Practitioners across the Highlands and Islands have expressed concerns that the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept could lead to further centralisation of services to rural and island population hubs, while satellite villages or crofting settlements are cut off from each other and from opportunities. The impact would be to



reinforce poverty, inequality and outmigration, running counter to the draft NPF4 ambition of reversing rural depopulation. The risk of those impacts will increase if there are not enough resources to go around (see below).

4. **How do we ensure 20 Minute Communities don't just become a tickbox exercise?** There is a risk that the concept generates a tickbox mentality - providing specific facilities within a specific distance - with no thought to the specific needs of different communities, the quality of what is being created, and what is needed to achieve behaviour change and deliver outcomes. For example, walking and cycling paths need to be accessible to all users, with small but vital features like smooth surfaces and resting points; community hubs need to offer affordable facilities and activities for all residents, young and old, whatever their income or ability.

5. **How can 20 Minute Communities become a tool to tackle economic, social and health & wellbeing inequalities, and promote community empowerment?** Following on from the previous point, 20 Minute Communities need to provide opportunities for everybody in the local community, regardless of ethnicity, sex, disability, income and so on. And at the wider regional or national level, planning and delivery of 20 Minute Communities will require investment: they will not happen by relying on policy alone. If resources are scarce, the risk is that they go to the empowered community who already have the capacity to bid for them; but that would do nothing for communities in need who lack capacity. A similar question has previously been raised in connection with Local Place Plans.

6. **How will sufficient resources be made available to plan and deliver 20 Minute Communities?** The aspiration to deliver 20 Minute Communities nationally is worthy and exciting. But realising that policy aspiration will take significant resources to plan and to deliver. National government and agencies will need to make funding available for delivery; local government and Community Planning Partners will need resources to co-ordinate, plan and deliver local policy and action; and local communities will need capacity and resources to plan and deliver. All players will need resources to collaborate.

7. **How will the necessary collaboration be achieved?** Because the 20 Minute Community concept has such a range of features (as described in section 4.1), it cannot be the preserve of any one discipline alone. Infrastructure, planning, transport, landscape, employability, regeneration and many others will need to work together. Delivery of 20 Minute Communities needs to be similarly collaborative, as local communities, local government and Community Planning Partners, and national government and agencies will all need to work together as described in section 4.8. How will that collaboration be achieved? What resources, working arrangements, skills and behaviours will be required?

8. **Will data be available to enable planning and delivery**? Rolling out the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept across the country will need data on the availability of 'key features' of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods (see section 4) in every community - without that, it will be impossible to make informed decisions on what improvements are needed and where. Some data is relatively accessible, such as on primary schools or healthcare facilities. But data on many other key features is much more difficult to assimilate: for example, on childcare, job opportunities or business space. It is also important to understand not only whether key features exist locally or not, but also the quality of those features: for example, are active travel routes of good quality, and do community hubs offer the range of services and facilities needed? Nationally available data across the key features - ideally mapped spatially through publicly accessible GIS data - would support decision-making on the actions and resources required to implement 20 Minute Neighbourhoods.

6.3 Next steps

This report hopes to inform the final version of NPF4 and its delivery plan, and future arrangements for resourcing the delivery of 20 Minute Communities. Although the report concludes by identifying challenges for delivery, that is in the spirit of taking a step forward towards tackling those challenges.

Delivering 20 Minute Communities across rural Scotland will need to be a collaborative effort, as explained in sections 4.8 and 6.2. To achieve success, it will involve rethinking the delivery of public services from education and healthcare to economic development, realigning public sector investment, empowering communities and local authorities to plan and deliver, and rethinking planning policy and development delivery. The capital and maintenance investments needed will be substantial, but so is the promise offered by draft NPF4.

We suggest the immediate next steps are to:

1. Review the detailed wording of draft NPF4 as recommended in section 6.1 above.
2. Convene discussion amongst key stakeholders at national and local levels (from both public and third sectors) to consider the delivery of 20 Minute Communities in rural Scotland.

Those discussions should involve:

- Local authorities, national park authorities, regional transport partnerships and Community Planning Partners from across the Highlands and Islands and other parts of rural Scotland.
- National government and agencies such as the Improvement Service, Scottish Futures Trust, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and South of Scotland Enterprise.
- Third sector organisations who are active in the field, such as SURF, Scottish Rural Action, the Scottish Rural and Islands Transport Community, and Sustrans.
- Locally based organisations who are already working to deliver 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, for example Forth Environment Link in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

The scope of the discussions should include:

- The delivery challenges identified in section 6.2 (above) and questions posed elsewhere such as in the practitioner roundtable report by Scottish Rural Action, Scottish Rural and Islands Transport Community and SURF about 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in rural and island Scotland (2022) and ClimateXChange / Ramboll research report on 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in a Scottish content (2021).
- Sharing knowledge of what is already happening on the ground across rural Scotland to test and deliver 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, such as in Aberdeenshire, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, Orkney and Shetland.
- Sharing and understanding the challenges and opportunities of delivering 20 Minute Communities in rural Scotland, from the point of view of all concerned, to enhance the understanding presented in this report.

The ultimate aim should be to co-produce a route map for collaborative delivery of rural 20 Minute Communities, as part of informing the Scottish Government's NPF4 delivery programme and Place Based Investment Programme.



APPENDIX 1: SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

ONLINE VIDEO

Carlos Moreno The 15 Minute City 2020 (TED talk, 8 minutes)

COP26, Glasgow Presentations on 20 Minute Neighbourhoods including by Stefanie O'Gorman (about 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in a Scottish Context research) and Stephen Willacy (Danish village clusters), 2021 (1 hour)

Landor Links Creating Viable 20 Minute Neighbourhoods 2021 (recording of presentations and discussions, 1 hour 30 minutes)

Scotland's Towns Partnership 20 Minute Neighbourhoods 2021 (recording of presentations and discussions, 1 hour 30 minutes)

SURF 20 Minute Neighbourhood Practitioners Network 2021 onwards (recordings of presentations and discussions)

Velocity Growing Villages Differently 2018 (animated presentation, 4 minutes)

THE WRITTEN WORD

City of Edinburgh Council 20 Minute Neighbourhoods Strategy 2021
Strategy for applying the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept to the delivery of public services in Edinburgh.

City of Portland, Oregon 20 Minute Neighbourhoods planning policy webpage
Portland's planning policy for 20 Minute Neighbourhoods.

ClimateXChange 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in a Scottish Context Stefanie O'Gorman and, Rebecca Dillon-Robinson, Ramboll for the ClimateXChange, 2021
Scotland-wide mapping of neighbourhoods against 20 Minute Neighbourhood criteria and recommendations on actions are needed to implement the concept nationally, including further research on diverse demonstration areas (see section 5 of this report).

Improvement Service 20 Minute Neighbourhood Elected Member Briefing Paper 2021
A summary of the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept.

Improvement Service Argyll and Bute Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy: a 20 Minute Neighbourhood Rapid Scoping Assessment Margaret Douglas and Irene Beautyman, 2021
Considers the high level opportunities and challenges around implementing 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in parts of the Highlands and Islands.

Lucy Styles Aberdeenshire's rural and suburban towns: an investigation into the retrofitability of the 20 minute neighbourhoods into existing places MSc dissertation, University of Dundee, 2021
Analysis of how to apply the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept in Aberdeenshire, including retrofitting to existing communities and the role of the local authority.

Midlands Connect The Future of Rural Mobility 2022
Contains a toolkit (pages 9-12) to improve rural access to services and facilities in rural England.

Plan Melbourne: 20 Minute Neighbourhoods Victoria State Government Melbourne
Melbourne's planning webpages explaining their 20 Minute Neighbourhood initiative.

RTPI Cymru Living Locally in Rural Wales 2022

Explores the role of the planning system in supporting rural living in Wales and whether the 15 minute neighbourhood model can be applied in more remote rural areas

RTPI Scotland 20 minute neighbourhoods & Local Place Plans - new tools for a healthier, greener Scotland 2021
Explores the relationship between 20 Minute Neighbourhoods as a concept and Local Place Plans as a delivery tool.

RTPI Scotland Implementing 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in Planning Policy and Practice (Robbie Calvert, 2021)
Explores how the Scottish planning system can support delivery of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods.

Scottish Rural Action, Scottish Rural and Islands Transport Community and SURF 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in Rural and Island Scotland: report from practitioner roundtable 2022
Analysis of challenges in applying the 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept to rural and island Scotland, and comparison with community-led planning initiatives.

Scottish Rural Parliament 20 Minute Neighbourhood Session 2021
Summary of a discussion at the Virtual Scottish Rural Parliament about 20 Minute Neighbourhoods on 18 March 2021.

Shetland Islands Council Local Development Plan: Main Issues Report 2022
Includes a 'Locality Hub' concept on pages 58-59 as an approach to delivering 20 Minute Neighbourhoods.

SURF 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in draft NPF4 2021
Includes a summary of what draft NPF4 says about the concept

SURF 20 Minute Neighbourhood Practitioners Network
Various resources, including Meeting 3 (January 2022) which contains interesting perspectives on 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in the Highlands and Islands.

Sustrans What is a 20 Minute Neighbourhood?
Short summary of what they are, what they should contain, and why they are important.

TCPA Guide to 20 Minute Neighbourhoods 2021
A comprehensive guide for the introduction of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in England, written for local authority planners.

UITP Knowledge Brief: the rural mobility challenge for public transport 2022 (link to full report by the International Transport Forum here)
Information on the challenges facing public transport in rural areas.

Velocity Growing Villages Differently 2020
A planning and design led approach to growing villages and enhancing rural life in England, including networks of villages linked by sustainable travel.



APPENDIX 2: EXTRACT FROM DRAFT NPF4



Liveable Places

20 minute neighbourhoods

We want our places to support local living.

20 Minute Neighbourhoods are a method of achieving connected and compact neighbourhoods designed in such a way that all people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable walk, wheel or cycle (within approx. 800m) of their home. The principle can be adjusted to include varying geographical scales from cities and urban environments, to rural and island communities. Housing would be planned together with local infrastructure including schools, community centres, local shops, greenspaces and health and social care to significantly reduce the need to use unsustainable modes of travel, to prioritise quality of life, reduce inequalities, increase levels of health and wellbeing and respond to the climate emergency. This can also include providing digital services where appropriate.

We urgently need to reduce the need to travel unsustainably and to encourage people to live more locally. This can be achieved by building on the Place Principle in the creation of 20 minute neighbourhoods where the accessibility credentials and the quality of our places support our health and wellbeing, reduce inequalities and respond to the requirements for the creation of resilient places to cope with and tackle climate change. The planning system should support development that will contribute to the creation of walkable, liveable and thriving places that provide and encourage sustainable travel options, provide communities with local access to the wide range of facilities, services, work and opportunities for socialising, leisure and play activities that they need to support a healthier and flourishing community.

This concept will apply differently in urban and rural areas and should be guided by the Place Principle and place-based working that informs the local development plan. Communities will be well-placed to inform the approach to their own areas. Dense urban areas will more easily be able to benefit from a network of 20 minute neighbourhoods and the focus should be on maintaining mixed uses and improving the quality and diversity of local areas, particularly for communities who face more disadvantage. Retrofitting facilities in areas which are predominantly residential should also help to reduce the need to travel.

The application of the 20 Minute Neighbourhood will vary across the country and will need to be adjusted to suit local circumstances particularly in rural areas where the delivery of services and extent of local infrastructure may not necessarily be supported by the surrounding density of population. 20 Minute Neighbourhoods are however an opportunity to rethink how housing, service provision, city, town or village centres could be re-configured to support new ways of working, homeworking and community hubs in line with localism objectives and reducing demand for motorised travel.

Policy 7: Local living

Decision makers can determine what facilities can reasonably be expected to be accessible from homes, taking into account local circumstances, as well as the role of digital connectivity in providing some services remotely.

a) Local development plans should **support the principle of 20 minute neighbourhoods,** including through the spatial strategy, development proposals, associated site briefs and masterplans. The approach should take into account the local context for the plan and reflect the particular characteristics of the area. It should set out proposals to support the development and network of 20 minute neighbourhood by bringing together relevant policies in this NPF to promote development

that will contribute to the creation of safe, walkable, liveable and thriving places that provide and encourage sustainable travel options, provide communities with local access to the wide range of facilities, services, work, natural spaces and opportunities for socialising, leisure and play activities that they need to support a healthier and flourishing and climate resilient community.

b) Development proposals that are **consistent with the principles of 20 minute neighbourhoods should be supported.** To inform this, relevant development proposals, including those for homes, should be safe, take into account the infrastructure of a place and be accessed easily by walking, wheeling and cycling from homes. Consideration should be given to:

- local public transport and safe walking, wheeling and cycling networks;
- local employment opportunities, good connections to public transport, jobs and services within the region;
- local shopping areas;
- local health and social care facilities and services;
- local childcare, schools and lifelong learning opportunities;
- local playgrounds and informal play opportunities, parks, green streets and spaces, community gardens, sport and recreation facilities;
- safe streets and spaces;
- affordable housing options, ability to age in place, housing diversity;
- the level of interconnectivity with the surrounding neighbourhood. Proposals should demonstrate how the development will relate to, and enhance, the local area.

Policy 7: Local living

Q29: Do you agree that this policy sufficiently addresses the need to support local living?

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