


Aviemore Active Travel Audit

Summary Report

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HITRANS

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HITRANS

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Document history

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Appendix A - Aviemore Active Travel Network – Potential Improvements

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Halcrow Group Ltd was commissioned by HITRANS, the Highlands and Islands Regional Transportation Partnership to:

- Develop a methodology to audit existing active travel infrastructure;
- Provide baseline information on existing infrastructure provision for active travel, and
- Recommend priority areas for future investment

1.1.2 The overall aim is to assess where best to apply available funding in order to increase the potential for active travel and ideally to see an increase in the number of people choosing to walk or cycle.

1.1.3 In particular, the key purpose of the audits is to identify:

This document summarises the main findings of the methodology as applied to Aviemore and the surrounding Strathspey and Badenoch towns.

2 Active Travel Methodology

2.1 What is the methodology?

- 2.1.1 Halcrow has developed a methodology to assess existing and proposed active travel infrastructure. This methodology is based on the following key parameters:
- A desktop study including demographics, travel to work patterns, public transport information and traffic accident data;
 - Analysis of main trip generators/attractors;
 - Consultation with the Local Authority and other interested parties; and
 - On site audits, and
 - Application of a 'prioritisation filter'.
- 2.1.2 The prioritisation filter is an analysis tool to identify those corridors where there is the greatest potential for modal shift. The filter encompasses information from the desktop study such as demographic data, trip generators and attractors, planning proposals and the results of stakeholder consultation. The filter also assesses the 'implementability' of a route compared to its potential usage.
- 2.1.3 On site audits for walking are carried out utilising the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) Pedestrian Environment Review System (PERS). For cycling, an Institution of Highways and Transportation (IHT) cycle audit is undertaken. Both systems audit the condition of existing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists to identify where proposed measures can be effectively targeted.
- 2.1.4 The outputs from the application of the methodology are an Active Travel Prioritised Action Plan and an Active Travel Master Plan.
- 2.1.5 The prioritised action plan identifies areas and potential interventions where there is the greatest potential to achieve modal shift or where there is the greatest need for infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. The master plan is a potential core network for pedestrians and cyclists that provide direct, convenient, safe, attractive and coherent links between journey origins and journey attractors. The proposals contained within the prioritised action plan and master plan will require further investigation and feasibility work.
- 2.1.6 Consultation also plays an integral role in the identification of routes for walking and cycling and also helps to pinpoint, at a very local level, the barriers to active travel. For the Aviemore audit, the following individuals and organisations were consulted:
- Cairngorm National Park Authority: Head Planner, Strategic Policy Officer, Outdoor Access Officer;
 - The Highland Council: Principal Engineer, Transport Development Support Officer, Road Safety, Public Transport;
 - Sustrans;
 - Local bike shop, and
 - Community Council

3 Walking and Cycling in Aviemore

3.1 Overview of current conditions for active travel

- 3.1.1 The Cairngorm National Park Authority states that there over 17,000 residents in the National Park area, whilst the 2001 census states that over 11,000 of these residents are located in the Strathspey and Badenoch area alone. The largest settlement is Aviemore, closely followed by Grantown-on-Spey. Although census data from 2011 is not yet available, it is useful to note that in 2001, the populations of Aviemore and Grantown-on-Spey were 2,397 and 2,166 respectively. There has been significant development in Aviemore since then, with large housing schemes delivered on the northern edge of the town which has had an impact on population statistics. Although both populations are very similar, this masks the true disparate nature of the settlements.
- 3.1.2 Aviemore has been expanding since its strategic importance as a railway junction in the 19th century resulted in the development of railway employee homes. It's proximity to the A9 has ensured that it has remained the major tourist hub within the Cairngorm National Park with easy access from Inverness to the north and Perth to the south. As a result, standard census statistics do not truly represent the demands placed on services and infrastructure within the town. Local congestion is not uncommon and can create perceived barriers to active travel.
- 3.1.3 The age structure of Aviemore indicates a slightly higher percentage of the population made of working age (69%) and a slightly lower number of pensionable ages (11%) in comparison the rest of the Highland region (65% and 16% respectively). In comparison to Grantown-on-Spey, Aviemore again demonstrates a younger population. There is a similar percentage of under 16 year olds, a lower percentage of working age (59%) in Grantown-on-Spey and a significantly higher percentage of pensionable age (22%) may influence both the likely journey motivators and the appropriate interventions that may prove effective in increasing active travel.



Figure 3-1: Aviemore in Cairngorm National Park Context, south east of Inverness

3.1.4 Table 3-1 below provides a comparison of how people travel to work in Aviemore, Grantown-on-Spey, the Highlands and Scotland.

Table 3-1: Comparison of mode of transport for journeys to work and study – regional and national comparison

Mode of transport	Aviemore	Grantown-on-Spey	Highland	Scotland
% taking bus	15	3	13	16.5
% car and passenger	47	47	55	53
% cycle	3	4	3	1.3
% walk	32	44	24	23

(Data supplied by SCROL 2001 Census)

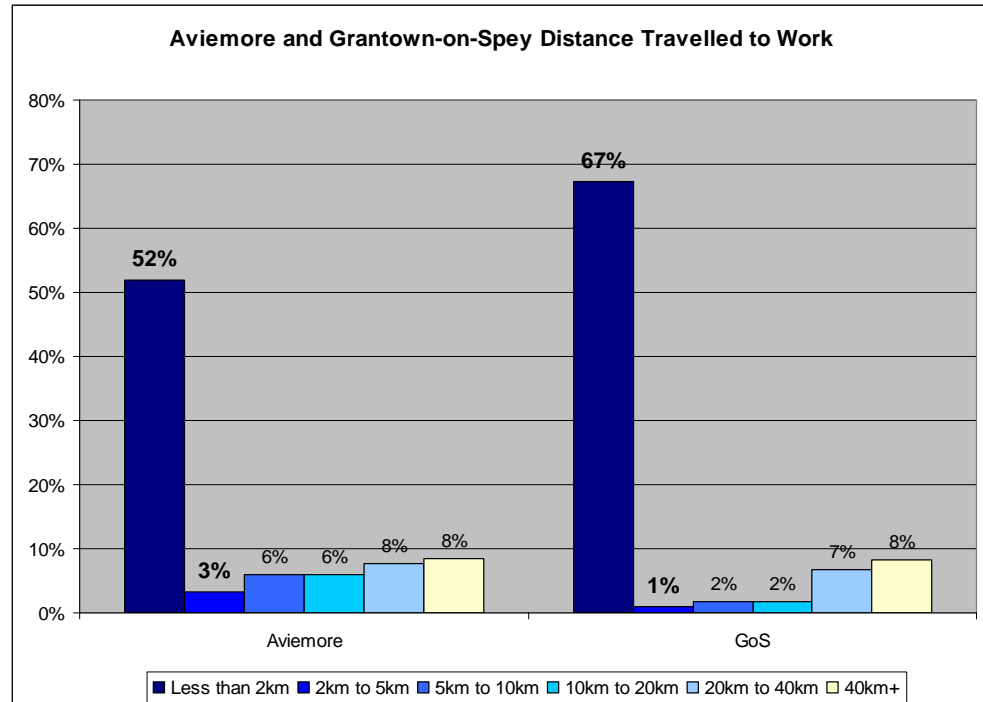
3.1.5 Although there has been significant expansion in Aviemore since 2001, the census data remains the most complete source available at this time. These figures should be taken as an indication of likely travel patterns and this data shows that:

- Walking is an accepted and popular method of travel to work or place of study in both settlements;
- Cycling is on a par with the regional figures although higher than the national levels;
- Active travel is responsible for almost half of all journeys to work or place of study in Grantown-on-Spey;

- Buses are not widely used in Granttown-on-Spey, with significantly lower levels in comparison to local, regional and national statistics, and
- Car use is lower than the regional and national statistics

3.1.6 Census data has also been used to provide a snapshot of the distances travelled to work and study in Aviemore and Granttown-on-Spey and are shown below in Figure 3-2.

Figure 3-2: Aviemore and Granttown-on-Spey Travel to Work Data



3.1.7 Over two thirds of journeys to work or place of study in Granttown-on-Spey are less than 2km and over half of journeys in Aviemore are less than 2km. This is reflected in the high levels of cycling and specifically walking demonstrated in the settlement census statistics. It is clear that walking and cycling are accepted methods of travel and that the prioritised action plan should focus on improving the network and filling key gaps rather than wholesale change. The high number of journeys to work or study under 2km suggest the key to a practical walking and cycling network in this area would focus on short trips and overcoming barriers.

3.1.8 Whilst Census data is now ten years old, it does serve to provide comparable data with other areas and it remains the best data available, prior to the publication of results from the census undertaken in 2011. It is expected that the timetable for releasing census 2011 results held by the National Records of Scotland will be published in May or June 2012.

3.2 Study Area

3.2.1 Aviemore is the most populous town within the Cairngorm National Park Authority, an area that covers 4528km². The Cairngorm National Park is an area of outstanding natural beauty where people and nature co-exist in an entirely unique habitat. According to Cairngorm National Park data, 39% of the Park is designated as important for nature heritage; 25% is of European importance. This ecosystem is home to 25% of the UK's threatened bird, animal and plant species. The co-existence

of people and nature is a key feature of the National Park, with a resident population of 17,000. The population is significantly swelled by visitors to the Park; recent figures suggest that around 1.4m people visited in 2007, 1.1m to Badenoch and Strathspey alone¹.

- 3.2.2 Tourism plays a major role in the National Park, accounting for 30% of the local economy and a wide variety of activities available. Aviemore is an all year round resort with both peak winter and summer seasons. The high demand on facilities and infrastructure in Aviemore can create congestion, car parking issues and increased conflict between motor vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.
- 3.2.3 Wedged between the A9 on the west and the River Spey on the east, Aviemore is a linear settlement, with the majority of residences in the north and the retail, leisure and recreation concentrated in the south. As a result, the majority of journeys carried out in Aviemore will involve a north-south movement and with very few route options, therefore the Grampian Road corridor is the most important link for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. Serving the new Aviemore Community Primary School, main shopping areas, Aviemore Railway Station and the Macdonald Highland Resort, good active travel provision on Grampian Road is important for maximising walking and cycling levels.
- 3.2.4 Aviemore is very compact, only measuring 3km from its most northerly point to its most southerly. The town is generally flat with the exception of the new High Burnside residential development on the North West edge of town. The combination of a flat town with short journeys is the ideal situation for encouraging more active forms of travel. It is important that areas on the edge of town are fully included in walking and cycling plans as geography and topography may act as disincentives when trying to encourage active travel.
- 3.2.5 High Burnside is severed by the A9 with one traffic free underpass, one access road and woodland paths through Craigellachie National Nature Reserve linking to the town centre. It is vital that these links are promoted and improved to enable utility trips between High Burnside and the economic hub of Aviemore.
- 3.2.6 One of the most notable exceptions within Aviemore is the lack of dedicated pedestrian crossing facilities. The town centre benefits from a zebra crossing although its proximity to the Tesco site access can cause issues and on site observations included cars exiting Tesco car park and passing through the zebra crossing while in use by pedestrians and short periods of congestion caused by vehicles queuing out of Tesco and over the zebra crossing. Although site visits were undertaken out with the main winter peak period, during the site visits it was apparent that access issues in

¹ Figures relating to Cairngorm National Park obtained from <http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/the-park/facts-figures/>

the vicinity of the existing Tesco store appear to create relatively notable congestion on Grampian Road. There is a signal controlled crossing on Grampian Road near the new Primary School site and during on site observations, this was well used. Throughout the remainder of Aviemore, crossings are informal and may benefit from further signalised options especially on Grampian Road. It would be desirable for further informal crossings with refuge islands and cycle safety measures to be considered where traffic flows would permit.

- 3.2.7 As shown in the census statistics, walking is a very popular travel mode in Aviemore, a fact that should attract high priority when it comes to investments and maintenance. Currently, many areas of footway within the town centre are in a state of disrepair and are disjointed as they are broken up by site access points and narrow at important pinch points. One issue noted during on site observations and supported by information from the Community Council was that cycling on footways was an issue for residents. Where footways are already narrow, the addition of cyclists can create further conflict issues. Another issue raised by the Community Council was that car parking on footways remained an issue as this created obstructions and damage.



Figure 3-3: Street furniture outside shopping area, wide footways, partially covered



Figure 3-4: Myrtlefield shopping centre provides local facilities such as pharmacy and post office, footway sheltered



Figure 3-5: On street parking, poor surface condition and Zebra crossing next to Tesco



Figure 3-6: Narrow section of footway in town centre blocked by street furniture



Figure 3-7: Cars parked on narrow footway next to local shopping centre



Figure 3-8: National Cycle Network signing near Coylumbridge could be improved



Figure 3-9: Taxi rank at Aviemore Rail Station frequently causes obstruction to pedestrians



Figure 3-10: Example of tactile paving in Aviemore town centre, generally not provided throughout settlement



Figure 3-11: Footways at some locations are narrowed by the provision of on street car parking



Figure 3-12: A new Aviemore Community Primary School is due to open shortly



Figure 3-13: There has been significant development to the northern end of Aviemore



Figure 3-14: A larger superstore will be developed next to the roundabout on Grampian Road

3.3 Existing provision for cycling

- 3.3.1 National Cycle Network Route 7, Pitlochry to Inverness, passes through Aviemore, connecting Kingussie to the south and Boat of Garten and Carrbridge to the north. This route is marketed not only as NCN Route 7 but part of the Lochs & Glens Route from Glasgow to Inverness via Pitlochry. The routes are popular for shorter local trips as well as catering for long distance tours including Land's End to John O'Groats (LEJOG) cyclists.
- 3.3.2 A large section of the route through Aviemore uses quiet roads east of and running parallel to the railway line. As the route continues past the town centre, it continues parallel to the Strathspey Railway on a short section of well surfaced but unlit off road path. The route is well signed at this point showing the different routes to Boat of Garten, the shorter off-road Speyside Way path (6 miles) or the longer on road route (9 miles).
- 3.3.3 There are no dedicated on road cycle facilities in Aviemore, notably Grampian Road. Whilst the National Cycle Network provides a quiet route in to the town centre from the residential area in the north, key trip generators are not served and the only option is the main road. This may be another factor for the high level of walking rather than cycling in Aviemore. The lack of facilities and constant traffic flow may be a barrier to cycling, the off-road facilities being remote from Aviemore Primary School, Tesco and the majority of residences. High levels of traffic on Grampian Road through the town centre may be responsible for some cyclists choosing to cycle on the footway rather than the carriageway. This was noted at several locations but became an issue where widths of footways prevented cyclists and pedestrians passing safely.
- 3.3.4 The level of signage for local attractions is notably high, catering for the significant levels of tourism in the area but also useful for residents who may wish to walk or cycle. The National Cycle Network is generally well signed through Aviemore and beyond. Positive steps have been taken to include the off road section of the National Cycle Network in the local signage strategy and links to the town centre and specific trip generators are appropriately signed.
- 3.3.5 Whilst on site in Aviemore, it was noted that there were high levels of recreational cycling, utilising the magnificent Old Logging Way between Coylumbridge and Aviemore, a very attractive off road route recently significantly upgraded. Groups of

tourists on hire bikes were a common site with lots of opportunities to get out on two wheels and plentiful information available from local bike shops and local tourist information centres. A series of off road cycle route maps have been compiled by local enthusiasts and cover large areas of the Cairngorm National Park.



Figure 3-15: Extensive pedestrian/cycle signage in similar style to street lighting and Rail Station



Figure 3-16: Traffic free NCN route running parallel with Grampian Road showing poor surface drainage



Figure 3-17: Quiet road linking Aviemore to Rothiemurchus Estate



Figure 3-18: NCN7 pedestrian/cycle bridge across the River Spey at the south of Aviemore



Figure 3-19: Significantly upgraded Old Logging Way route provided off road paths from Aviemore to Coylumbridge



Figure 3-20: NCN7 signing in Rothiemurchus for Old Logging Way, Kingussie to the south and Boat of Garten to the north



Figure 3-21: Cycling on footways was noted frequently in the town centre



Figure 3-22: Narrow footways on some areas of Grampian Road are still used by some cyclists



Figure 3-23: High quality traffic free link from Dalfaber to Aviemore town centre



Figure 3-24: High quality traffic free link under A9 from High Burnside

3.4 Existing cycle parking

- 3.4.1 There are a large number of important trip generators within Aviemore that provide a high standard of cycle parking. Cycle parking seems to have been an afterthought, or received little thought at other key sites however, as in some instances the location or design are far from ideal.
- 3.4.2 Aviemore Railway Station is an important trip generator and it provides a high standard of cycle parking (Figure 3-25, Figure 3-26). There are covered cycle racks which should be of benefit to longer stay cycle parking. This is important as public transport links to the “commuter” rail services are inadequate and providing high quality cycle parking may encourage people to cycle to the station rather than take the car. There are also uncovered Sheffield racks at the station which are in a more prominent position, perhaps detracting from the higher quality covered parking nearer the platform.
- 3.4.3 The major retail area within the town centre is served by cycle parking at Tesco (Figure 3-27) in the form of six Sheffield racks although due to the installation, they may only accommodate nine bikes rather than a potential twelve. They are close to the store entrance next to the cash machines although are not immediately visible as you access the site from Grampian Road. As well as these racks, there are racks next

to the Bank of Scotland (Figure 3-28) just off Grampian Road, wheel racks outside the library (Figure 3-29), (which can damage bike wheels if a secured bike is knocked over), wheel racks at the rear of the Myrtlefield Shopping Centre and an installation of cycle racks near the subway to the Dell of Spey (Figure 3-30).

- 3.4.4 Cycle parking is provided at the entrance to the Macdonald Highland Resort leisure facilities (Figure 3-31), a popular community facility which provides the only swimming pool in town. This is a major trip generator for families and the provision of cycle parking is encouraging as generally, trips will be of a short nature from residential areas.
- 3.4.5 New housing developments on the north of Aviemore included high quality covered Sheffield racks for the residents (Figure 3-32). This is an excellent example of what can be provided in future developments and should be replicated where appropriate.
- 3.4.6 There were two areas that would benefit from the provision of cycle parking, these included the area around the new shops adjacent to Dalfaber Drive (Figure 3-34) where the on site audit noted bikes leant against shop frontages. Anecdotal evidence reported that bikes have been stolen from this area whilst people have been in the shops. If formal cycle parking opportunities are provided in this area, then cyclists have the option to lock their bikes while shopping rather than leaving them unsecured. The main shopping stretch on Grampian Road from the chip shop south to the railway station does not provide any formal cycle parking opportunities, although consistent levels of demand were noted during the on site audit (Figure 3-33).

Figure 3-25: Cycle parking at Aviemore Rail Station



Figure 3-26: Cycle parking at Aviemore Rail Station



Figure 3-27: Cycle parking at Tesco poorly laid out reducing potential capacity



Figure 3-28: Cycle parking at Bank of Scotland on Grampian Road



Figure 3-29: Cycle parking outside the library of a low standard



Figure 3-30: Unconventional cycle parking at entrance to Dell of Spey



Figure 3-31: Cycle parking at Macdonald Highland Resort leisure facilities



Figure 3-32: Cycle parking provided at new residential developments of high standard



Figure 3-33: Casual cycle parking at shops near rail station



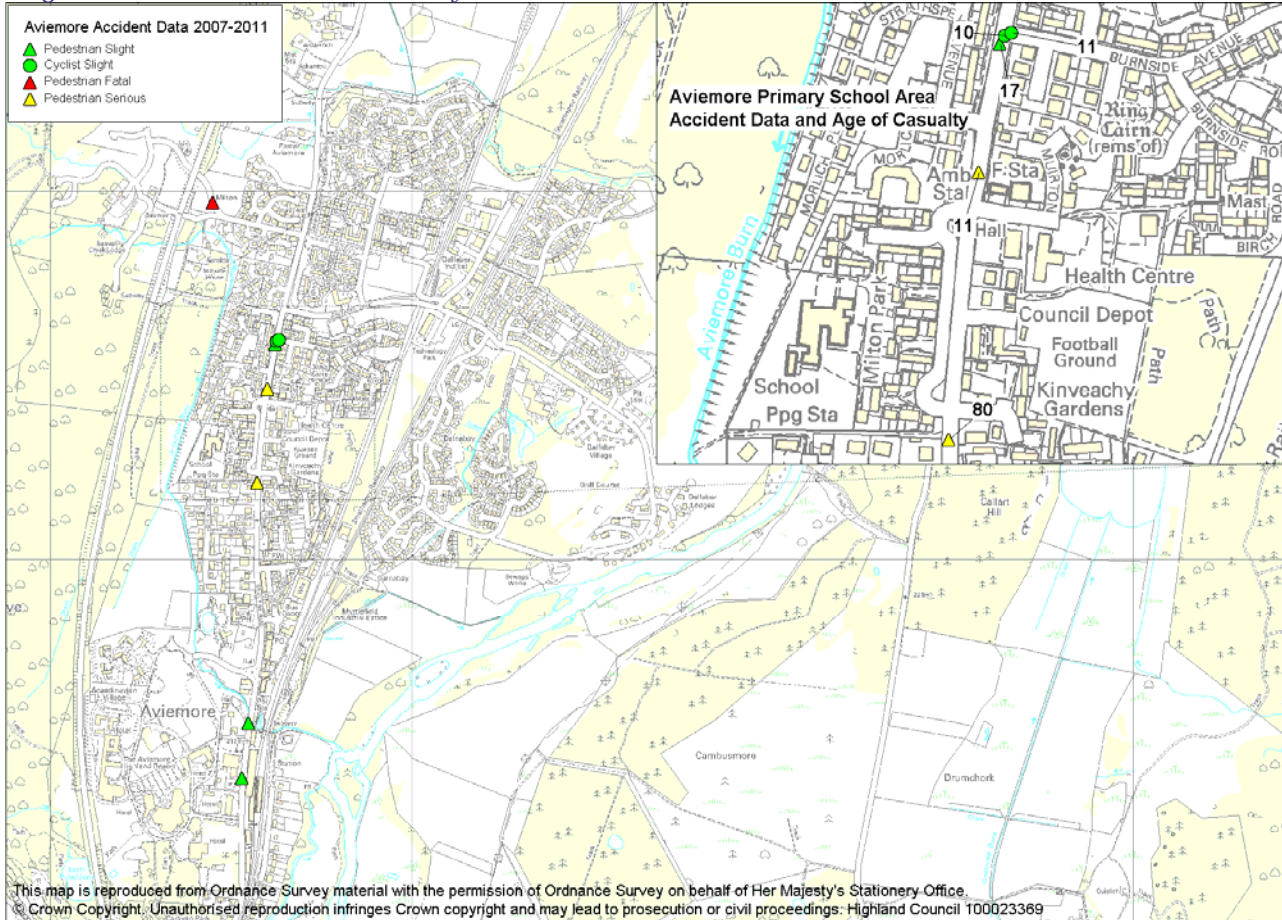
Figure 3-34: Bikes left unlocked outside new shops adjacent to Dalfaber Drive



3.5 Traffic flow and accident data

- 3.5.1 The available pedestrian and cyclist accident data for Aviemore highlighted a recurring pattern and one problem hotspot which may benefit from mitigation measures. As can be seen in Figure 3-37 below, seven out of the eight pedestrian or cyclist accidents that occurred between 2007 and 2011 occurred on Grampian Road. This is not to be unexpected as Grampian Road is the only direct traffic route from north to south through Aviemore and as a result, is the most used route by all modes of travel.
- 3.5.2 The area with the greatest concentration of accidents has occurred on the stretch of Grampian Road near the old Primary School and adjacent to the site of the new Aviemore Community Primary. This is of concern, even more so when analysing the ages of those involved, one ten year old and two eleven year olds. The two cyclist injuries occurred when children who had been cycling on the footway entered the carriageway in front of vehicles without any attempt to brake. According to the Cycling Scotland website, Bikeability Scotland Level 2 teaches children how to ride a bike safely on the road and navigate basic junctions. It is usually delivered to children in Primary 6 and takes place on quiet roads.

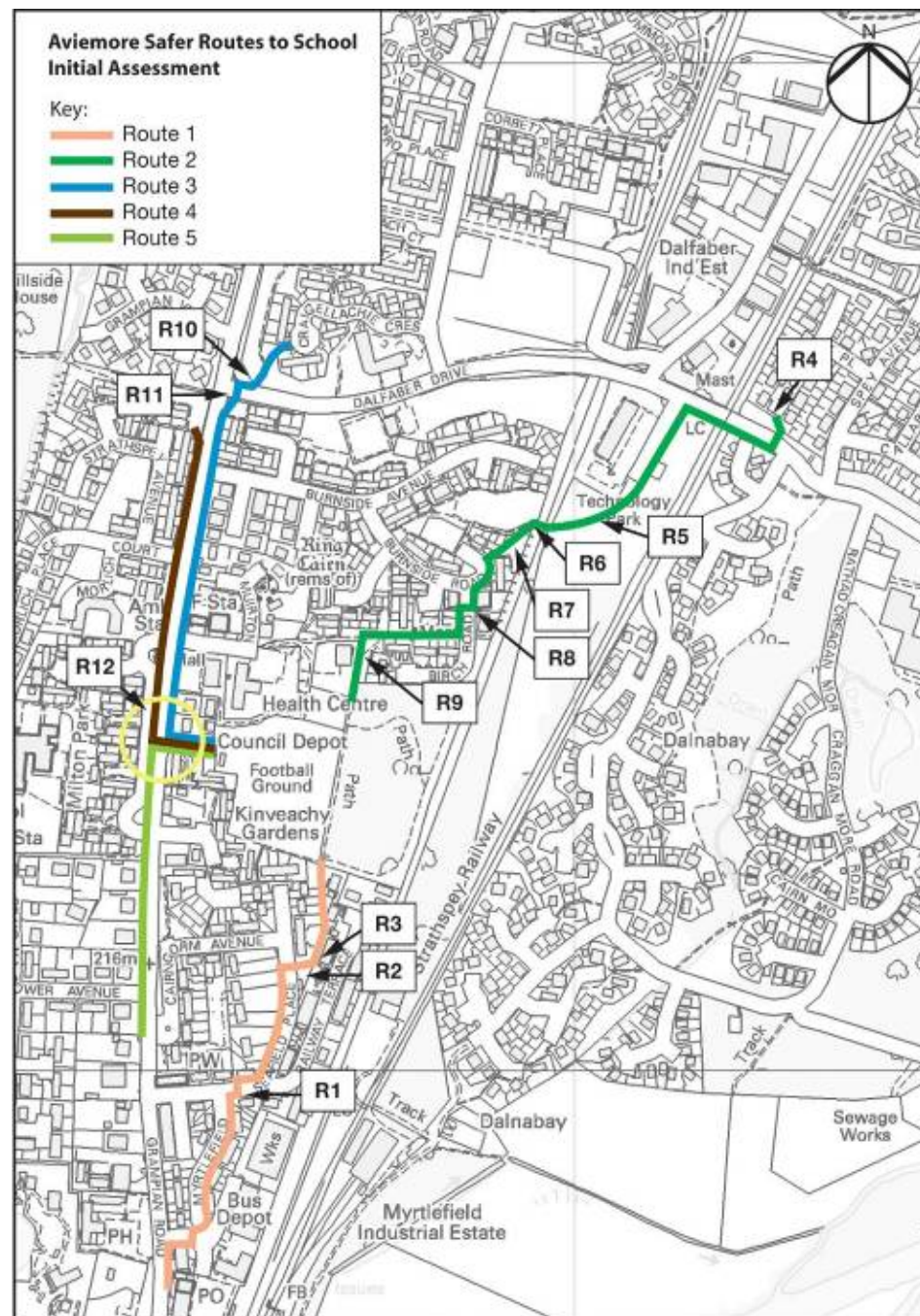
Figure 3-35: Aviemore Pedestrian and Cycle Accident Data 2007-2011



3.6 School Travel Data

- 3.6.1 Aviemore Primary School is relocating to the east side of Grampian Road to a new larger site including assorted community facilities. This has presented many opportunities for improved access to the new site. In 2010, the Highland Council Road Safety Team completed an initial route assessment of the new site and the main routes are shown below (Figure 3-36) with detailed interventions presented in section 5 of this report. A full Green Travel Plan is to be undertaken and will be adopted and promoted by the new school.

Figure 3-36: Safer Routes to School Initial Assessment



3.7 Local Transport Strategy

3.7.1 Of the nine objectives within the draft Local Transport Strategy for the Highlands 2009-2012 (LTS), five have a direct impact on both the encouragement and increase of walking and cycling:

- Social Inclusion: Facilitate travel to enable economic/social involvement and improve access/travel choices to essential services for those without access to a private car
- Environment: Manage/reduce the impacts of transport on the natural and built environment

- Health: Increase levels of cycling and walking to promote health improvement and modal shift
- Personal Safety: Address issues of perceived safety and personal security particularly where they are a barrier to walking, cycling and public transport
- Traffic Reduction: Where appropriate consider targets for reducing traffic, although noting the variation in conditions and requirements between rural and urban areas

3.7.2 The LTS sets out what the Active Travel Masterplans will help identify and what the Highland Council will improve. This includes

- Design requirements/standards for new development to include good design for cyclists. Design guides to include standards and recommended approach
- Improvement schemes in town/city centres to include good design for cyclists such as cycle friendly traffic calming, contraflow provision for one way streets where space permits, advanced stop lines at traffic signals, toucan crossings
- Sustrans Cycle Routes
- Improved short stay cycle parking at key sites
- Continue to develop a cycle parking installation programme for schools and further education establishments through Travel Plans and the Safer Routes to School Programme
- With developers promote the installation of short and long stay cycle parking at key trip attractors in each settlement, through Travel Plans and the development management

3.7.3 In addition, the LTS also incorporates local outcome 10.1 of The Highland Council's Single Outcome Agreement to increase the number of children walking and cycling to school.

3.8 Local Plan

3.8.1 Planning in the Cairngorms National Park is unique. It involves the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) working alongside the five local authorities which operate in the Park – Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland, Moray and Perth & Kinross. The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan, together with any Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), covers the Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland and Moray parts of the National Park only. The Local Plan sets out detailed policies against which all planning applications submitted in the Cairngorms National Park will be judged. It is recommended that it is read in conjunction with the SPG relevant to the type of development. The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan was adopted on October 29th 2010 and raises several major developments in the area.

3.8.2 Most significantly, the Local Plan continues the proposal for a new sustainable community at Cambusmore (An Camas Mor) on the east side of the River Spey opposite Aviemore that was identified in the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan 1997 and in the Highland Structure Plan 2001. There are plans to develop 1500 homes and associated community facilities. Development of the site will require a detailed transport assessment that must evaluate the impact upon the trunk road, local road network, rail network and the need for non-motorised access across the River Spey to link with Aviemore.

- 3.8.3 The intention is to create an attractive environment for walking and where there is contact with other forms of transport, to give pedestrians priority. Cycling will be encouraged, particularly when accessing neighbouring communities for accessing employment, services, and other facilities.
- 3.8.4 Another of the most significant developments approved in Aviemore is the relocation and expansion of Tesco² from its site adjacent to Laurel Bank Lane further north on Grampian Road to the land adjacent to the northern Macdonald Highland Resort access. The plans approved indicate the new Myrtlefield store would be three times the size of the existing town centre premises. Supporting evidence in the application suggests that the larger store will reduce car journeys to shop in Inverness although it is expected to generate a higher number of local trips in Aviemore.
- 3.8.5 From the Transport Assessment (TA), a number of measures are proposed to accommodate the pedestrian trips likely to be generated by development and encourage further walking trips. These include: good standard pedestrian footways provided within the site to link with the existing footways on Grampian Road and the Highland Resort access road, and provision of a controlled pedestrian crossing located close to the principal pedestrian access to the site. To promote cycling to the site, secured sheltered cycle parking facilities will be provided within the development and positioned close to the store entrance. The application has been unanimously approved subject to conditions by members of the CNPA planning committee. Work on the store will not begin until a rare insect is moved to another suitable location which will be spring 2013 at the earliest.

3.9 Other plans/strategies

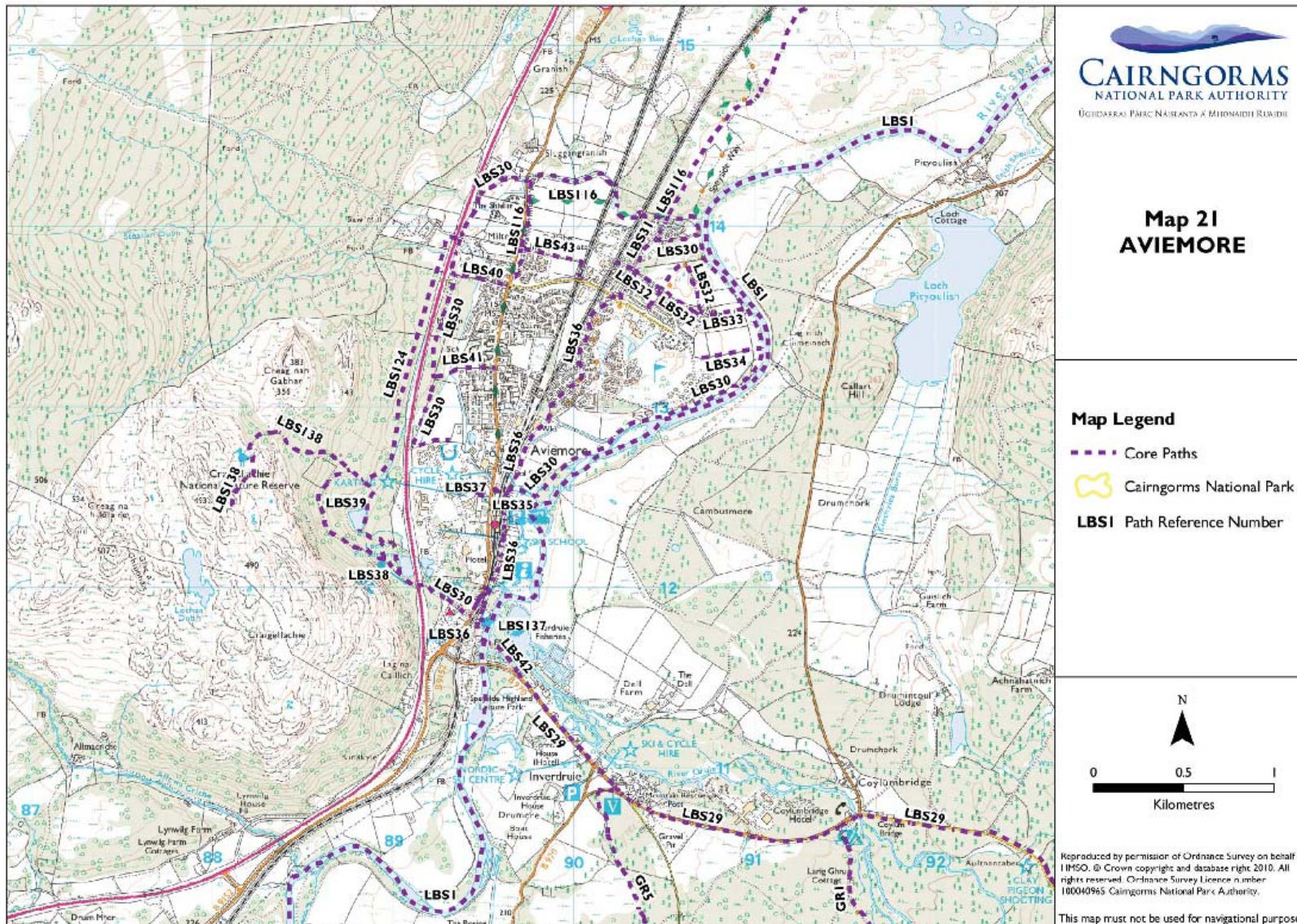
- 3.9.1 Our Community...A Way Forward Action Plan – Aviemore, Rothiemurchus & Glenmore was a consultation exercise carried out by the Cairngorms National Park Authority that prioritised actions the community would like to see. Issues ranged from more NHS Dentists to building a pub in Dalfaber. Of the twenty six high priorities that came out of consultation, four of them were directly related to transport including three of the top five. The highest priority was to “Improve main street crossings and congestion” followed by “upgrade level crossing at Dalfaber” and “cheaper/better integrated bus and train links for work/leisure to Inverness/Central Belt”.
- 3.9.2 Other priorities listed that relate to transport include “better car parking in centre of town”, “a riverside footpath”, “more buses”, “cycle racks on buses and larger bus

² New Tesco Planning Application: Planning app 11/02017/FUL | Erection of Class 1 retail store with associated parking, servicing and landscaping. Please visit <http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/park-authority/planning/planning-applications> | Land Adjacent to The Winking Owl, Grampian Road, Aviemore.

timetables”, “more walking and cycling routes including new developments”, “part pedestrianised town centre”, “traffic wardens”, “stop speeding at north end of Aviemore”, “dealing with dog fouling” and “provision of a shuttle bus around Aviemore including new developments”. All these points highlight the desire to provide better active travel and public transport facilities.

3.10 Core Paths Planning

- 3.10.1 Production of Core Paths plans are a mandatory requirement for every Local Authority. The CNPA aimed to identify and designate, in consultation with local residents, a network of paths that would make it “easier for everyone to enjoy the outdoors responsibly”. The following plan shows the network of core paths which are “sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area”.
- 3.10.2 As well as the identified Core Paths, the Cairngorms Local Action Group LEADR Programmes have identified the Cairngorms Communities Path Network. The following core paths were identified for the project- LBS124 and LBS30- but it has been difficult to deliver these due to protracted land owner negotiations. LBS124 is still a priority as it provides access from the north end of Aviemore to Craigellachie National Nature Reserve. Other paths that would benefit from improvements include LBS30, 40 and 41.



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3.11 Current Issues

3.11.1 To summarise, the audit process identified a number of key issues that act as a disincentive for active travel as noted below.

1. High volumes of traffic

- Busy through routes may be a deterrent to active travel
- Peak tourist seasons will generate large numbers of visiting vehicles

2. Cycling on pavements observed and highlighted as concern by Community Council

- Local residents feel that cycling on the pavement creates conflict between cyclists and pedestrians
- The issue at heart is why do cyclists not feel safe on the road?

3. Land ownership

- Conflicts surrounding land ownership has led to issues when trying to adopt proposed Core Paths in the area

4. Dog fouling

- On site observations included high levels of dog fouling on footways in the northern sections of Aviemore

5. Weather

- A harsh winter climate not only impacts upon the levels of active travel it also has consequences for maintenance and appropriateness of certain path surfaces

Large scale regeneration and development plans

- Piecemeal development in the town centre has led to a disjointed structure although new developments provide the opportunity to provide high quality active travel infrastructure

6. Public transport

- The provision of school buses from Aviemore in the AM peak and returning in the PM peak result in no vehicles being available to provide a relevant commuter service
- Opportunity to encourage these trips to use active travel modes rather than private car journeys
- Significantly less connectivity for settlements outwith Aviemore, fewer and less frequent services connecting to Inverness and central belt

7. Car parking on footways

- The community council have raised the issue of car parking on footways which causes obstruction and damage

3.11.2 SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis of Active Travel in Aviemore

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Compact settlement resulting in high percentage of short journeys to work or place of study</p> <p>Demonstrably high levels of active travel, specifically walking</p> <p>Outdoor culture is integral to Aviemore</p> <p>High quality off road leisure routes in area</p> <p>Thriving local bike shops</p> <p>Expanding community highlighting Aviemore as a desirable place to live</p> <p>Large housing development to the north of Aviemore has been designed with traffic calmed streets and attractive active travel infrastructure</p> <p>Development of “local centre” within new residential area provides option for short trips to shops more easily made by walking or cycling than going in to town centre</p>	<p>Grampian Road is the only direct north south link in a linear settlement</p> <p>Piecemeal development has resulted in disjointed settlement</p> <p>Poor standard of footways in retail area of town centre with low DDA compliance</p> <p>Large proportion of homes in Aviemore are holiday homes or second homes</p> <p>High numbers of visitors arriving by car</p> <p>School buses during AM and PM peaks result in few available commuter services and potentially more cars</p> <p>Harsh winter climate</p> <p>Physical barriers running north to south through Aviemore include two railway lines, River Spey and Grampian Road</p>

Opportunities	Threats
<p>New Aviemore Community Primary School</p> <p>New Tesco development</p> <p>An Camas Mor development on East of River Spey</p> <p>Translate acceptance of leisure cycling into more utility trips</p> <p>Cairngorm National Park planning legislation promotes sustainability and could be used to build walking and cycling into the heart of new communities</p> <p>High number of small scale interventions which would improve short but crucial links around town centre</p>	<p>Disputes concerning land ownership obstructing Core Paths development</p> <p>Uncertainty over pedestrian/cycle bridge across River Spey from An Camas Mor</p> <p>“Lost Generation” as Aviemore Primary pupils who may walk or cycle to school are subsequently bussed to Kingussie High School</p> <p>Macdonald Highland Resort’s proposed withdrawal from the Highland Council swimming scheme may mean that the closest accessible pool for residents is Grantown-on-Spey</p>

4 Potential Aviemore Active Travel Network

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The active travel audit identified potential walking and cycling routes that could link residential areas to the main trip generators and attractors to form a strategic network for the area. The main trip generators are:

- Macdonald Highland Resort
- Tesco
- Aviemore Rail Station
- Strathspey Railway
- Grampian Road Shops
- Myrtlefield Centre
- Aviemore Community Primary School
- Rothiemurchus Estate
- Craigellachie National Nature Reserve
- Dalfaber Industrial Estate
- The Speyside Way
- Aviemore Technology Park
- Dalfaber Village Holiday Homes
- Glenmore

4.1.2 The study has developed a set of long term objectives for encouraging walking and cycling as follows:

The priority for Aviemore is to ensure a direct link across the River Spey with the proposed development at An Camas Mor. Without this link for pedestrians and cyclists, the route in to Aviemore town centre will require residents to go south to Coylumbridge, then west along the B970 to the south of Aviemore then north up Grampian Road. This is a significant detour and the distance will certainly be a disincentive to active travel for those less confident of cycling or unable to walk longer distances.

4.1.3 This may have far reaching consequences for the two settlements. Without a short, direct, attractive non-motorised link, residents of An Camas Mor may tend to visit Aviemore by car, bringing significantly more traffic to an already congested road network. The increased pressure on the local road network could become critical during peak season. It is recommended that a pedestrian and cycle bridge is investigated and if feasible, developed as a top priority.

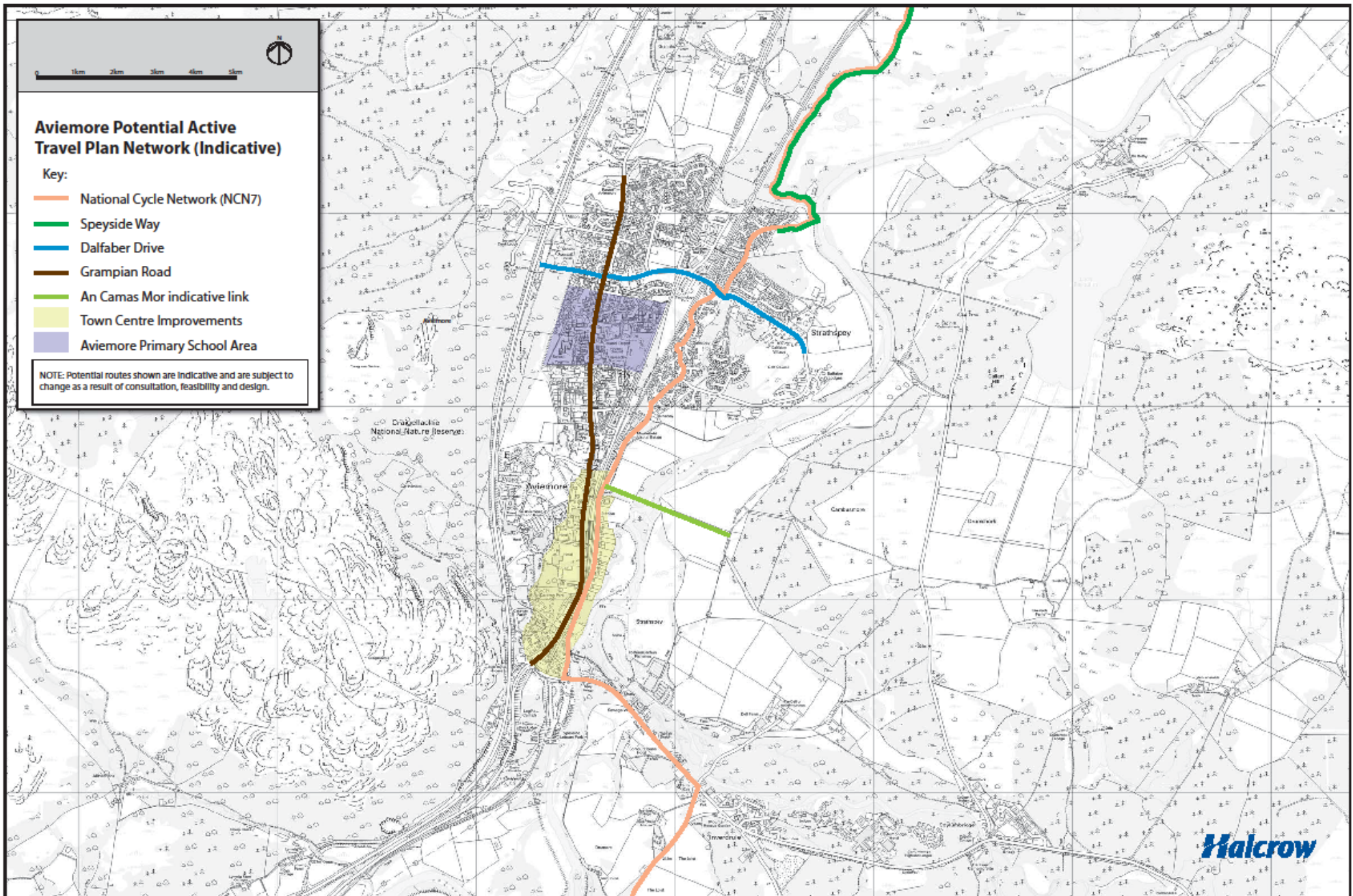
4.1.4 There is a demonstrable acceptance of active travel from 2001 census data but it is important that facilities for walking and cycling in Aviemore are maintained for year round use. New infrastructure must take into account the potentially harsh winters in the area and choose surface materials and appropriate lighting accordingly. It may not be possible for all paths in the area to be serviced during periods of bad weather, as such, choosing materials that will remain usable without gritting is recommended.

4.2 Active Travel Network

4.2.1 The following corridors have been identified as having the potential to provide the most direct and coherent network of routes to the destinations listed in 4.1.1. The routes are:

- An Camas Mor Link
- Grampian Road
- National Cycle Network Route 7
- Dalfaber Drive
- Town Centre Links

4.2.2 A full description of the routes with potential improvements subject to consultation, feasibility and design are included in Appendix 1 of this report. The action plan in the following sections suggests the key priorities in the development of the aforementioned routes along with the 'softer' initiatives to encourage active travel in the area. Figure 4-1 at the end of this chapter shows the extent of the potential Active Travel Network in relation to the Local Plan for Aviemore.



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5 Prioritised Action Plan

5.1 The Priorities

5.1.1 This prioritised Active Travel Plan sets out the key potential measures needed to encourage walking and cycling in Aviemore. As well as incorporating parts of the strategic walking and cycling network, it also includes promotion and 'soft' measures which form part of a package of works which have been used successfully in those towns and cities where there has been an increase in sustainable modes.

5.1.2 The following are the key priorities for encouraging active travel in Aviemore:

- Priority 1: An Camas Mor Connectivity
- Priority 2: Grampian Road Corridor
- Priority 3: Aviemore Community Primary School Links
- Priority 4: Town Centre Improvements
- Priority 5: National Cycle Network 7
- Priority 6: Delivery of Core Paths
- Priority 7: Badenoch & Strathspey Towns Package

5.1.3 Each of these individual priorities are summarised below and form part of the wider Aviemore Active Travel Network outlined in chapter 4.

5.2 Priority 1 Recommendation: An Camas Mor Connectivity

5.2.1 There is an ongoing planning application for Cambusmore (now An Camas Mor) that is detailed in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan. The development was identified in the 1997 Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan and in the Highland Structure Plan in 2001. The Local Plan identified an indicative site, with plans to develop up to 1500 homes and various community facilities over time.

5.2.2 Of vital importance to achieving the sustainability goals set out by the National Park Authority, is provision for non motorised transport across the River Spey, linking the two communities of An Camas Mor and Aviemore. The river is a major physical barrier to active travel and without the provision of direct links; longer journeys via Coylumbridge and the B970 or Old Logging Way may prove to be equally harmful in achieving high levels of active travel in the new town.

5.2.3 It is expected that the development within An Camas Mor may take decades to complete but it is essential that the potential for a bridge across the River Spey is investigated at the very outset. Links need to be established and active travel promoted as the quickest and most convenient way in to Aviemore. Until and even when An Camas Mor is established, its residents will rely on Aviemore services including the rail station, healthcare, shops and schools. The Highland Council TEC Services have assessed the planning application and have identified the "requirement for the provision of a pedestrian/cycle bridge over the River Spey".

5.2.4 Alongside the development is a community initiative application to develop a community park between An Camas Mor and the River Spey. This application has taken forward the desire for a non-motorised link across the river. The An Camas Mor application does not include proposals for a community park or a bridge across

the River Spey, but the Environmental Statement acknowledges the community initiative and its relationship with An Camas Mòr. The Proposed Masterplan Report also makes reference to it and indicates the potential for a connection from the 'High Street' across the river and into Aviemore.

- 5.2.5 Planning Gain has been considered and assessed by the Planning Gain section of Aberdeenshire Council acting on behalf of the CNPA, their recommendation of planning gain that would be required to be secured as part of the development includes "The funding for a bridge and contribution to paths for foot/cycle link to central Aviemore via River Spey". The Local Plan requires that the new community would be laid out and designed in accordance with an agreed master plan, and would include allocation for "An extensive network of segregated footpaths and cycle ways including a bridge over the River Spey".
- 5.2.6 At its meeting of 12th December 2008 the CNPA Planning Committee formally agreed a set of principles which Members wished to see reflected in proposals for the new community at An Camas Mòr. Included within this it was stated that "Fundamental to its delivery is a new foot/cycle bridge across the River Spey with a path directly linking central Aviemore and An Camas Mòr to ensure that the communities are true partners. The masterplan for An Camas Mòr will be expected to acknowledge this objective and demonstrate how An Camas Mòr, with other parties, will directly contribute to its delivery".

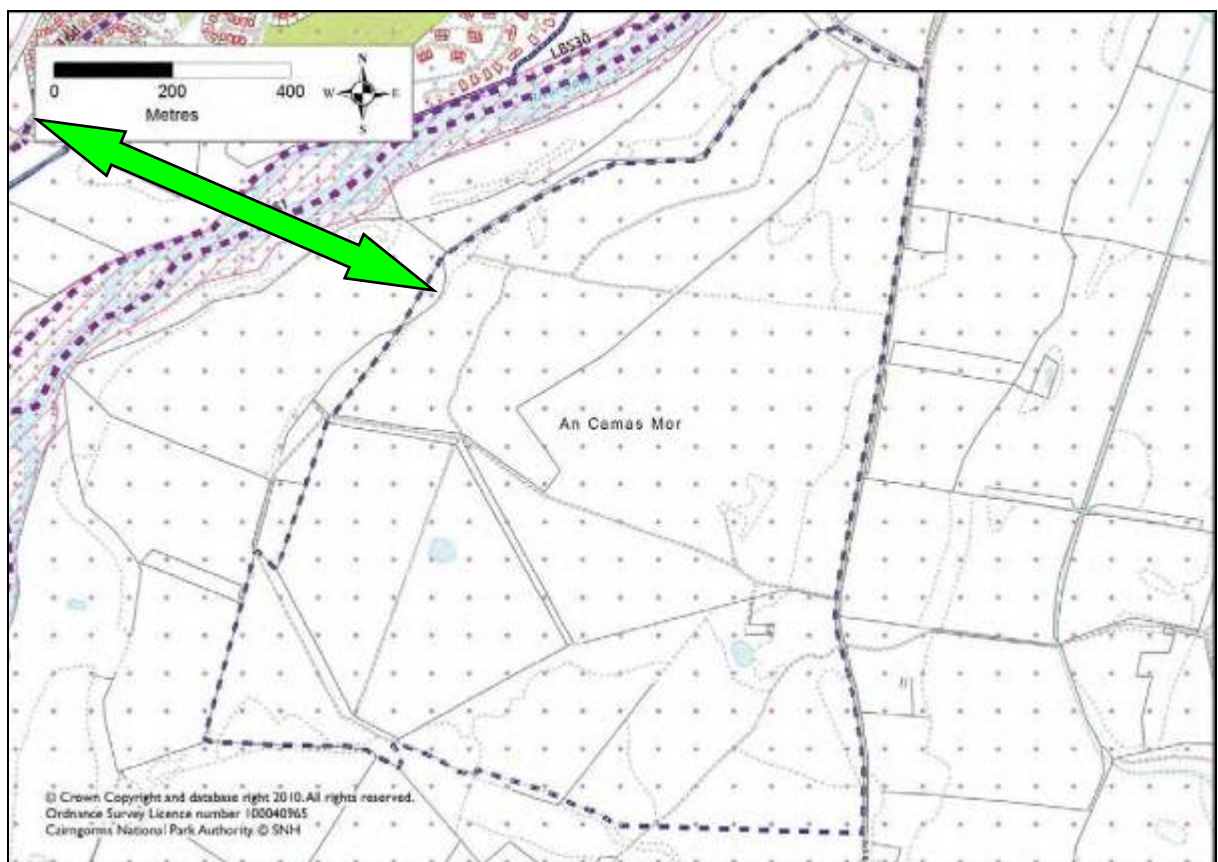


Figure 5-1: An Camas Mor development site, Cairngorms National Park Local Plan 2010 and indicative link across the River Spey

5.2.7 The recommendations are summarised below in Table 5-1:

Table 5-1: Priority 1 Recommendations Summary Table – An Camas Mor Connectivity
Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the potential for a direct pedestrian/cycle bridge across the River Spey connecting Aviemore and An Camas Mor
Issues for consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding needs to be secured to install the link Land ownership may be a stumbling block as encountered when adopting Core Paths Consider the impacts upon the local road network if a non-motorised alternative is not provided and the implications of greater congestion
Recommended Intervention (subject to feasibility and design)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highland Council’s Senior Transport Officer has provided comment in determining the distances from Aviemore primary school, the provision of a footway / cycleway from the site is a critical factor, as depending on the timeframe <p>for the provision of a bridge and its location, a need may arise in the intervening period for the provision of home to school transport. Where this is the case the Local Authority would seek a development contribution towards the cost of the provision of this service, until the proposed school within the development is built.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through consultation with developers, residents and other key stakeholders, approve design and alignment for a pedestrian/cyclist bridge over the River Spey connecting Aviemore to An Camas Mor. A non-motorised link across the River Spey must be well connected on either bank to the settlements of Aviemore and An Camas Mor. Suitably surfaced and well lit shared use paths would ensure that the bridge remains a viable journey option at all times of the year, accounting for the short daylight hours in winter and the often extreme climate of the Cairngorm region. Ensure a link is created as soon as development begins. It would be unsatisfactory to wait until significant development had been completed, as travel patterns and behaviour may quickly engrain the car as the most desirable mode. Encouraging a modal shift from cars to walking and cycling after the car has been established as the norm will be more challenging than encouraging active travel modes from the outset.

5.3 Priority 2 Recommendation: Grampian Road Corridor Improvements

5.3.1 As Grampian Road is the only north south route through Aviemore that serves the all key trip generators, nearly all journeys will require using it at some point. Whether the journey is a north-south movement along roadside footways or whether it is cross from east to west, ensuring active travel infrastructure facilitates safe, direct and coherent walking and cycling trips is crucial in maximising the undoubted potential of the town.

5.3.2 Traffic flows are fairly consistent throughout the day although peak seasonal traffic during school summer holidays or a busy winter weekend significantly adds to the motor vehicles on Grampian Road. This traffic can create perceived or psychological

barriers to walking and cycling if people aren't confident cycling with traffic where no dedicated on or off road facilities are provided.

5.3.3 Analysis of pedestrian and cyclist accident data for the past five years indicates that seven out of the eight recorded accidents occurred on Grampian Road. This suggests that, although the fault with many of them was not with the motorist but rather the pedestrian or cyclist, this is an area of immediate concern. To mitigate and reduce the likelihood of further incidents, pedestrians and cyclists should be given greater consideration. Further formal pedestrian crossings on the corridor could reduce the need for pedestrians to cross the road when unsafe to do so. The need to provide extra pedestrian and cycle facilities must consider the needs and impacts upon all travel modes.

5.3.4 In addition to the north/south Grampian Road corridor, the National Cycle Network Route 7 runs parallel through Aviemore. Although this provides a pleasant, quiet route, unlike Grampian Road, it does not link directly to the main trip generators in the town. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that to support a cycling community, the most direct route through Aviemore does not create in itself a physical barrier to active travel.



Figure 5-1: Obstructed footway on Grampian Road



Figure 5-2: No tactile paving, dropped kerbs to be flush



Figure 5-3: Link from Newlands Road to Grampian Road



Figure 5-4: Poor footway maintenance symptomatic of Grampian Road



Figure 5-5: Improved crossing points of Grampian Road are crucial and of high concern to residents



Figure 5-6: Improved crossing points of Grampian Road are crucial and of high concern to residents

5.3.5 The recommendations are summarised below in Table 5-2:

Table 5-2: Priority 2 Recommendations Summary Table – Grampian Road Corridor Improvements

Description

- Seek to improve pedestrian infrastructure and cycling environment throughout the Grampian Road corridor and aim to improve road safety issues for both pedestrians and cyclists

Issues for consideration

- This is the only continuous north south link through Aviemore and is therefore of strategic importance
- The importance of this link within the local road network must be considered and any interventions must consider impacts on all modes of transport
- Space constraints may limit options to provide dedicated cycle facilities in design

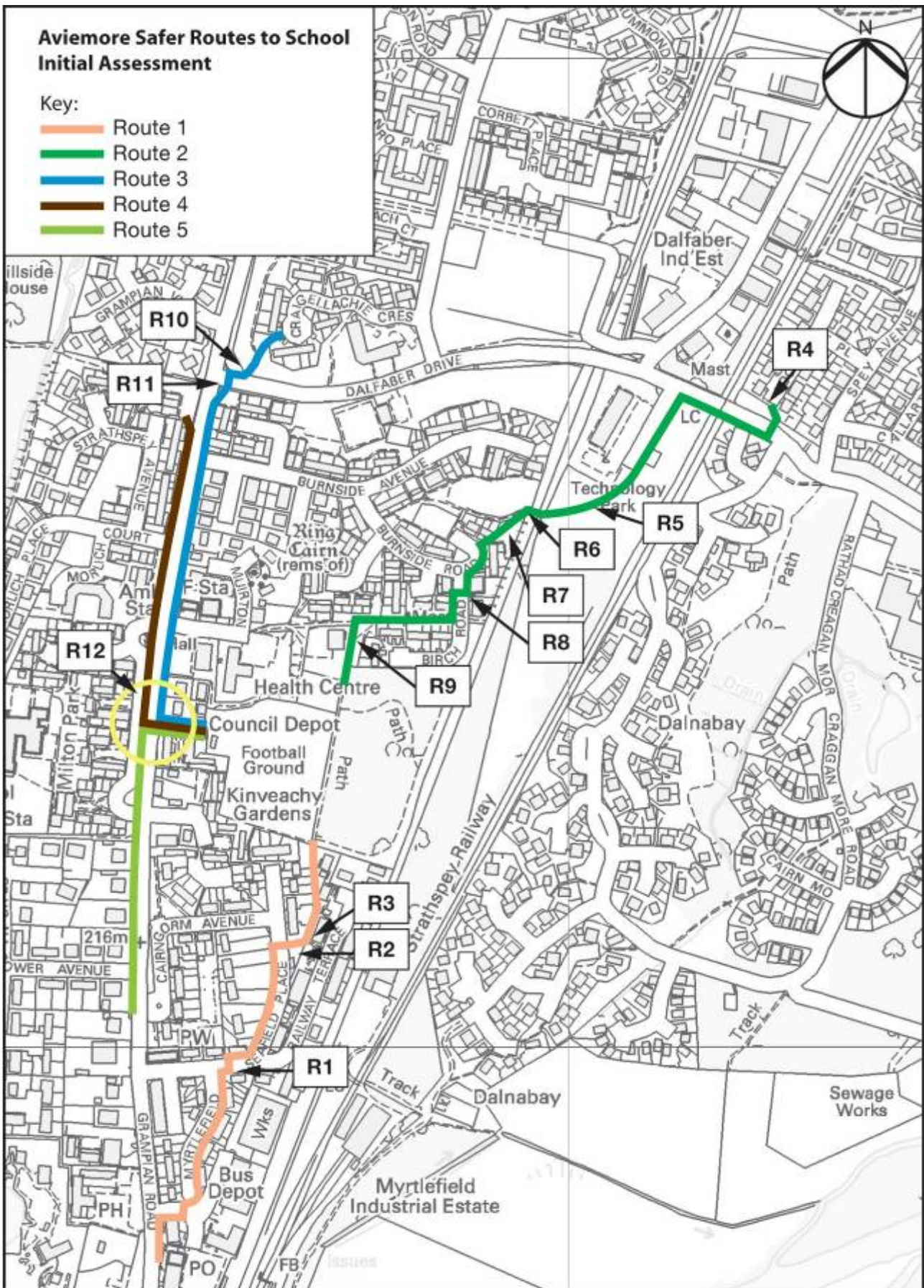
Recommended Intervention (subject to feasibility and design)

- Strive to create more coherent footways in town centre around shopping areas, uniform surfacing, DDA compliant tactile paving and flush dropped kerbs. Currently, footways are piecemeal and have been installed alongside development which has created a patchwork effect where uniform surfaces, widths and general design standards have not been applied. It would be advantageous to provide improved surfacing in many areas where damage has resulted in uneven and unattractive footways. Not only can these cause trip hazards and force people to step onto the carriageway to avoid pedestrian conflict without fully considering the traffic, through consultation with the Badenoch and Strathspey Access Panel, the issue was frequently highlighted as a concern to disabled users.
- The long term aim for Aviemore town centre should be to improve a sense of place, reducing the movement function of Grampian Road and making it an area in which people choose to spend time. Pedestrianising the link would be unfeasible although the implementation of shared space may be more realistic. This is a long term aim that could have significant impacts upon the town, all of which must be considered in a full expert study.
- To provide a safe pedestrian environment along the Grampian Road corridor, every crossing should have flush dropped kerbs with appropriate tactile paving. The issue was raised through consultation with the Access Panel and Highland Council officers as well as anecdotal evidence from parents during the on site audit.
- As part of the new Tesco development, the removal of the roundabout on Grampian Road at the northern access to the Macdonald Highland Resort and the signalisation of the junction should be investigated further. This would provide much needed pedestrian crossing facilities at the junction as well as reducing the likelihood of road traffic accidents involving cyclists. Roundabouts are the least safe junction type for cyclists. Turning counts and speed surveys would assist any new design and a viable alternative that does not heavily impact on vehicle behaviour would be possible.
- In an attempt to reduce through traffic in Aviemore, Automatic Number Plate Recognition surveys could establish the level of traffic passing directly through the town from the south A9 exit rather than bypassing and using the north A9 exit. As a “do-minimum” intervention, new signage could be placed on the A9 for Aviemore South/Aviemore North.

- Concerns as to the limited formal crossing opportunities of Grampian Road were raised in consultations. With key trip generators on both sides, it is important that both sides are safely accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. Highlighted as an issue of concern in the accident data and raised by visually impaired members of the Access Panel, increased formal crossing opportunities should be considered. Alongside capitalising on formal crossing opportunities around the new Tesco/Macdonald Highland Resort access and at the new Aviemore Community Primary School, consideration should be taken to provide safer crossing opportunities at Dalfaber Drive/Burnside Avenue, the area of greatest concern within the accident data.
- The Community Council raised the issue of cyclists using the pavement being of great concern to them. This is an issue that can create conflict between cyclists and pedestrians, causing either to unexpectedly have to enter the carriageway to avoid incident. The conflict between a cyclist or pedestrian and a moving motor vehicle is likely to have greater consequences than a conflict between the non motorised travellers. During the on site audit, cyclists were observed using the footways, supporting the statement that it is an issue within the town. The provision of dedicated cycle facilities on Grampian Road could reduce the prevalence of cycling on footways. Whilst there is little useable space around Aviemore Rail Station, the relatively low levels of on street car parking provided should enable the provision of advisory cycle lanes which could raise driver awareness of cyclists and provide dedicated road space to get bikes off the footways and on to the carriageway. This may not appeal to all cyclists however and it is important that the alternative parallel NCN 7 route is promoted as a quiet route to the town centre and is linked to Grampian Road at every opportunity.
- Path improvements and short links to Grampian Road, including path from Newlands Road within the new housing area would be beneficial. This link could be used by those in High Burnside who wish to walk or cycle to the local centre near Dalfaber Drive.

5.4 Priority 3 Recommendation: Aviemore Community Primary School Links

- 5.4.1 The development of a new Community Primary School with facilities open throughout the day and evening not only to pupils but other local users too, provides many opportunities to promote active travel choices within Aviemore. The Highland Council Road Safety Team undertook a safer routes assessment for the proposed new school. The findings are provisional as safer routes cannot be recommended without consultation with pupils, parents and staff.
- 5.4.2 Following the opening of the school, it is recommended that a full consultation with the required parties is undertaken and alongside the Safer Routes to School, a School Travel Plan should be developed and circulated around pupils, parents and staff. Ownership and responsibility of the document should be transferred to the school and pupil involvement is a great way to encourage walking and cycling.
- 5.4.3 The next stage is to get children comfortable with cycling on road. Bikeability Scotland Level 3 teaches children how to navigate more complex junctions and plan journeys effectively. It is aimed at Primary 7 pupils and supports them to make independent journeys and plan the quietest and safest route available. Level 3 training is delivered on road, on a route that has been risk assessed by a qualified cycle trainer. It is generally accepted as important that children learn to cycle on the road safely and with consideration for their own and others safety and wellbeing.



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Figure 5-7: Provisional Aviemore Safer Routes to School (The Highland Council)



Figure 5-8: Short section of footway leading up to potential Toucan crossing



Figure 5-9: Path leading to new school to be formalised from Technology Park under railway line



Figure 5-10: Extensive paths network to be formalised linking new school to housing areas



Figure 5-11: Renew footway markings for Safer Routes to School

5.4.4 The recommendations are summarised below in Table 5-3:

Table 5-3: Priority 3 Recommendations Summary Table – Aviemore Community Primary School Links

Description

There are numerous Safer Routes to School links that should be addressed shortly after the new Aviemore Community Primary School is opened and a full consultation exercise can be undertaken

-

Issues for consideration

- The school is close to opening and “retro-fitting” cycling and walking facilities may be more challenging than if they were considered during design and planning processes.
- Grampian Road lies in close proximity to the new Aviemore Community Primary School and could create a significant barrier to active travel if not given full consideration.

Recommended Intervention (subject to feasibility and design)

- **Route 1:** The route along Mayfield and Seafeld Place is well provisioned with footpath on one side of the road. This route would service pupils approaching the school from Dalfaber Road.
- **Route 2:** Is the route from the estates on the east side of the Strathspey Railway. This route currently uses informal foot paths that would need to be made up to a suitable standard before they could be used as a route to school.
- **Route 3:** This route leads from Craigellachie Crescent to the new school along Grampian Road.
- **Route 4 and 5:** Routes 4 and 5 are both along Grampian Road to allow the estates to the west of Grampian Road access to a safer route.
- There is an opportunity to redetermine a short section of footway on either side of existing pedestrian crossing and convert to a Toucan crossing to allow bicycles to be ridden across. This would provide a safe cycle crossing point for those having to negotiate Grampian Road and reduce the length of footway to be shared with pedestrians.

5.5 Priority 4 Recommendation: Town Centre Active Travel Improvements

5.5.1 The town centre in Aviemore is a hub of economic activity, made more important still by the lack of local centres in the outlying residential areas. Therefore, every trip within Aviemore that involves visiting retail, dining or leisure facilities will use the town centre. Making this area accessible by walking or cycling and ensuring the town centre itself is easy to walk around and provides appropriate trip end facilities for cyclists may encourage a larger share of trips to choose active travel modes.

5.5.2 There are notable traffic related issues within the town centre area; perhaps most significantly is the reported congestion around the Tesco access junction and the zebra crossing. During on the site audits which were undertaken out with peak seasonal periods, little significant congestion was noted although anecdotal evidence

suggests that this area is of real concern to local residents. The CNPA Community Action Plan highlighted this as the highest priority intervention within Aviemore. As Tesco moves to a new site further north, the issue may deal with itself. However, if the site is re-used for an alternative use, the issue of traffic using the car park will create obstruction.

- 5.5.3 The streetscape within Aviemore town centre is a disjointed affair with a mismatch of footway styles, numerous site access crossing pedestrian desire lines and other obstructions. Retail areas have been developed as the town has grown resulting in varying styles of architecture but also, varying standards of footways and consideration of pedestrians. In an attempt to smarten up the town centre, footways, pedestrian desire lines and other issues which may encourage people to stay in town longer or feel more comfortable walking around should be given consideration. This issue was raised by various members of the Badenoch and Strathspey Access Panel as one of the biggest barriers to mobility and visually impaired people getting around town on their own.



Figure 5-12: Cluttered footways reduce effective widths



Figure 5-13: Footway around entrance to Aviemore Rail Station obstructed by taxi rank and bus shelter

- 5.5.4 The recommendations are summarised below in Table 5-4:

Table 5-4: Priority 4 Recommendations Summary Table – Town Centre Improvements

Description

- Enhancing the pedestrian environment of the town centre and ensuring it accessible by both walking and cycling may encourage more short trips to be undertaken by active travel modes

Issues for consideration

- Traffic levels may be perceived as a physical barrier to active travel journeys in the town centre
- Consultations have indicated that existing footway standards and pedestrian crossing provision is a disincentive for disabled users

Recommended Intervention (subject to feasibility and design)

As outlined in section 5.3 Priority 2 Recommendation: Grampian Road Corridor Improvements, consider integrating all footways in the town centre around shopping areas. Currently, footways are piecemeal and have been installed alongside development which has created a patchwork effect where uniform surfaces and widths etc have not been applied. It would be advantageous to provide improved surfacing in many areas where damage has resulted in uneven and unattractive footways. Not only can these cause trip hazards and force people to step onto the carriageway to avoid pedestrian conflict without fully considering the traffic, through consultation with the Badenoch and Strathspey Access Panel, the issue was frequently highlighted as a concern to disabled users.

- Reduce street clutter in town centre including shop advertising boards. This not only creates unattractive clutter on footways, it has been raised as an issue by visually impaired members of the Badenoch and Strathspey Access Panel. Reducing street clutter will create the effect of widening usable footway space, reducing obstructions and reducing pedestrian conflict.
- Provide more cycle parking opportunities closer to the main shopping stretches of the town centre. During the audit, it was noted that cycle parking provision was consistently under utilised although bikes were often leant against shop frontages without any means of securing them to prevent theft. Anecdotal evidence suggested bike theft had become an issue in Aviemore, more frequent low impact, low capacity cycle parking would provide opportunities to safely lock bikes while visiting shops.
- The taxi rank and bus stop arrangement outside Aviemore Rail Station creates obstruction for pedestrians and cyclists alike. Waiting taxis added to waiting bus patrons, combined with a disjointed footway layout is a barrier to walking. Options should be considered to reduce the congestion at this point and introduce a more coherent footway from the rail station on to Grampian Road.

5.6 Priority 5 Recommendation: National Cycle Network Route 7

- 5.6.1 National Route 7 of the National Cycle Network is a long distance cycle route between Sunderland and Inverness via Penrith, Carlisle, Dumfries, Ayr, Glasgow, Pitlochry and Aviemore. The route is fully open and signed through Aviemore and serves many of the nearby towns such as Kingussie, Boat of Garten and Carrbridge. As well as local trips, the route is often used as part of an “End to End” journey from Land’s End to John O’ Groats (LEJOG).
- 5.6.2 With the varying cycle trips and users of NCN 7 comes varying requirements or demands for the route to be attractive. Both on and off road routes are provided if making the journey north from Aviemore, both well signed from the town centre. The off road route shares paths with the Speyside Way.

- 5.6.3 As well as serving Aviemore, the NCN provides a strategic link between other towns in the Badenoch & Strathspey area including Grantown-on-Spey, Carrbridge, Nethy Bridge, Boat of Garten, Kincaig, Kingussie and Newtonmore. This provides an excellent opportunity to provide realistic alternative travel options an increase cycling between the settlements. Improvements need to be considered along the route that would enhance the cycling environment and could increase the modal share of sustainable transport.



Figure 5-14: Fantastic off-road link from Dalfaber to Aviemore town centre to be promoted and lit to provide alternative route to Grampian Road



Figure 5-15: Only existing NCN signage to rear of station is unclear



Figure 5-16: Improvements to railway level crossing for pedestrians should be considered



Figure 5-17: Links north to the NCN off road section should be promoted as alternative route to town



Figure 5-18: Desire line on the north of Dalfaber Drive approaching the level crossing



Figure 5-19: Surface drainage improvements to be considered

5.6.4 The recommendations are summarised below in Table 5-5:

Table 5-5: Priority 5 Recommendations Summary Table – National Cycle Network Route 7

Description

- Seek to improve the facilities on the National Cycle Network through Aviemore and raise the profile of the route within the town with information more readily available for residents

Issues for consideration

- Although the National Cycle Network provides a coherent route through Aviemore, it is remote from many of the key trip generators
- The National Cycle Network is severed from Grampian Road by two railway lines with limited crossings
- Improve the connectivity between towns in Badenoch & Strathspey for cyclists

Recommended Intervention (subject to feasibility and design)

- The off road section of the NCN in Aviemore provides an excellent link to the north of the town from the centre. The path was seen to be used during on site audits throughout daylight hours although was notably quiet later in the day and as dusk fell. There is no street lighting provided on this section and users may benefit from the installation of columns from the town centre north to Dalfaber.

The lighting of paths was raised as an issue during consultation with local stakeholders and some people remarked that they would not use the paths when it was dark.

- Grantown, Carrbridge, Nethy Bridge, Boat of Garten, Aviemore, Kincaing, Kingussie, Newtonmore are all within realistic cycling distance of at least their nearest neighbour and this should be encouraged wherever possible. Considering options to increase the provision of off road sections between the towns, segregating cyclists from national speed limit roads.
- The section of road from the front of Aviemore Rail Station to the NCN at Dalfaber Road requires cyclists to join the carriageway at a busy location with no specific provision for them. Two options that should be considered would be the introduction of a short stretch of advisory cycle lane which will provide a link from the front of the station to the quiet road section. There is good access to the NCN from the rear of Aviemore Rail Station, a fact that is not promoted enough. Installation of better signing and/or information boards at this location may guide cyclists who wish to avoid the busy Grampian Road Corridor and lead them on to the network at Dalfaber Road.
- Improve links from the new residential area to the north of Aviemore with the NCN. Links should be provided from the north of the residential area on to the off-road section shared with the Speyside Way and signed for the town centre. This will promote an alternative route to Aviemore for those less willing to use Grampian Road. Dalfaber Drive is the most important link to achieve a coherent route between the NCN and the housing. The main barrier on this link is the level crossing. There are currently no barriers on the level crossing and through consultation and co-operation with Network Rail, improvements to this should be developed. It is understood that a condition of the planning permission for the Dalfaber development is to provide a half barrier crossing which should be installed at the earliest possible point. Surfacing is required on the north side of road as desire lines suggests more people walk on this side as it passes railway crossing.
- The section from Dalfaber Road that runs parallel to the railway lines displayed frequent poor drainage. This not only will reduce the routes attractiveness to local users, it has an impact on maintenance and the general life of the surfacing. Improvements should be sought to reduce incidents of poor drainage, in turn reducing long term maintenance costs and making the path more usable during all weather conditions.

5.7 Priority 6 Recommendation: Core Paths Delivery

- 5.7.1 The Cairngorms National Park Authority has a duty under the Land Reform Act to prepare a Core Paths Plan and to keep it under review. Within section 17 of the Act, it states that the core paths network should be, 'sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area'.
- 5.7.2 This is further defined in guidance which was produced by the Scottish Government for Local Authorities and National Park Authorities. The guidance states that, the 'sufficiency' of the proposed core paths network to give reasonable access throughout the area may be assessed by the extent to which it demonstrates reasonable responsiveness to local consultations, key public policy objectives and the Outdoor Access Strategy in relation to and at the scale of the authority's area.
- 5.7.3 Some public roads and pavements have been designated as core paths where the CNPA decided they provide important links in the network. Roads were only included in the network if they are already well used by people for accessing the

wider network and where no suitable off-road alternative could be identified. Guidance from national agencies is that designation of roads as part the network should be accompanied by relevant safety measures. It has been agreed that the CNPA will work with Highland Council Roads Departments and the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust to identify and implement appropriate measures such as reduced speed limits, traffic calming, cycle lanes and signage etc, as is the case with the existing National Cycle Network.

- 5.7.4 Whilst the adopted plan met the guidance outlined above, the delivery of some key paths has been halted by protracted land ownership negotiations. In particular, LBS124 and LBS130 were identified and are currently undelivered. These are still considered a priority as the LBS124 provides access from the north end of the Aviemore to Craigellachie Nature Reserve.
- 5.7.5 Of the implemented paths, there are still opportunities for improvements; these include LBS30, 37, 40 and 41. Work has been carried out on the Orbital Route LBS30 in the High Burnside area but this is piecemeal and a more co-ordinated approach should be developed. The route has the potential to link up areas of population to the economic centre of Aviemore. LBS37 was well used during on site observations although the fence at the west end to stop pedestrians entering the Macdonald Highland Resort was often climbed over by users. This is a well used route and landowner permissions should be sought to develop a coherent route from the town centre into the resort. LBS40 and 41 provide links to leisure routes in Milton Wood although these routes also provide a viable route to the town centre from the Dalfaber and High Burnside areas of housing that would be an alternative to Grampian Road.



Figure 5-200: Laurel Bank Lane LBS37



Figure 5-21: Laurel Bank Lane LBS37



Figure 5-21: Aviemore Orbital Path requires upgrading



Figure 5-22: Aviemore Orbital Path to be upgraded



Figure 5-23: Aviemore Orbital Path to be upgraded



Figure 5-24: New section of Core Paths linked to High Burnside development



Figure 5-25: LBS41 in need of upgrading



Figure 5-26: LBS41 could be enhanced

5.7.6 The recommendations are summarised below in Table 5-6:

Table 5-6: Priority 6 Recommendations Summary Table – Core Paths Delivery

Description

- Continue work towards implementation of all Core Paths in Aviemore.

Issues for consideration

- Ongoing protracted landowner negotiations are stalling the adoption of these paths.
- Funding for improvements may not be prioritised unless future developer contributions are secured.

Recommended Intervention (subject to feasibility and design)

Working together with local access groups and the Community Council, develop strategies for securing funding to upgrade paths network throughout Aviemore. Recent application to National Lottery funds for improving paths network along River Spey pending although illustrates a willingness to explore alternative funding and take forward a comprehensive active travel network in the town.

- Work toward a complete Aviemore Orbital Route, a path highlighted in the Core Paths plan. There has been some high quality sections installed alongside High Burnside development although many links remain sub standard, mud tracks. Appropriate surfacing should be considered as extreme climate in the area can result in maintenance issues that are not easily addressed as paths may be less accessible than roadside footways.
- Ensure that current planning application work on Laurel Bank Lane is completed (ref 11/03573/FUL). Work with landowners in town centre to improve pedestrian link from Grampian Road to the Macdonald Highland Resort, including access improvements at Laurel Bank Lane. This route was frequently used during on site audit observations, providing a direct link between two very important commercial areas.
- LBS40 and 41 provide links from the north end of town to Milton Wood. These links not only serve as leisure routes but provide a viable alternative for residents in the Dalfaber/High Burnside areas to walk or cycle to the Macdonald Highland Resort and into town whilst avoiding Grampian Road.

5.8 Priority 7 Recommendation: Badenoch and Strathspey Towns Package

- 5.8.1 Taking forward some of the ideas from the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places project, the towns of Badenoch and Strathspey could deliver a general package of measures which may support walking and cycling.
- 5.8.2 Although not all of these will be applicable to all towns in the area, simple steps taken can include improved walking and cycling routes, better public transport links, more pedestrian-only areas, travel advisors visiting homes, and car sharing schemes.



Figure 5-27: Take opportunity to seek to formalise short links in town centres



Figure 5-28: Safer Routes to School measures should be rolled out across the area



Figure 5-29: High quality information boards in town centres



Figure 5-30: High quality pedestrian crossing in Grantown-on-Spey

5.8.3 The recommendations are summarised below in Table 5-7:

Table 5-7: Priority 7 Recommendations Summary Table – Badenoch and Strathspey Towns Package

Description

- Supporting walking and cycling in the towns surrounding Aviemore through a package of hard and soft interventions will have the ability to increase levels of active travel

Issues for consideration

- Available funding may restrict large scale intervention.
- A lack of development in the towns may reduce ability to secure developer contributions which could aid active travel.

Recommended Intervention (subject to feasibility and design)

- Aim to ensure that all town centres are DDA compliant with flush dropped kerbs and appropriate tactile paving. This will have the effect of reducing barriers to mobility and visually impaired users. Formal crossing points are important in town centres, many settlements being located on busy A-Roads with significant volumes of through traffic. Ensuring all town centres have appropriate pedestrian crossing facilities should reduce road safety issues and could have the effect of reducing traffic speeds in the area.
- Consider appropriateness of adopting a 20mph speed limit in all towns and villages. The improvement in road safety for all users has been proven in extensive trials across the UK where 20mph speed limits have been set out. Promote the intervention and ensure residents are aware of the impacts, especially the benefits gained by active travel. The road networks of these towns can be classed as a community network for active travel following the introduction of a 20mph speed limit considering the safety benefits associated.
- Formalise short links and desire lines around town centres which may provide an advantage for pedestrians over other forms of transport.

- **Ensure that any schools adopt a School Travel Plan and promote it in association with the local authority road safety officers. Ownership of these documents and pupil involvement will help assert active travel as normality with the younger generation.**
- **Aim to provide walking and cycling information in the forms of maps and information boards posted in the town centres. Measures such as Personal Travel Planning may help to provide bespoke information to residents of the area, giving them tailored information to suit their journey needs.**

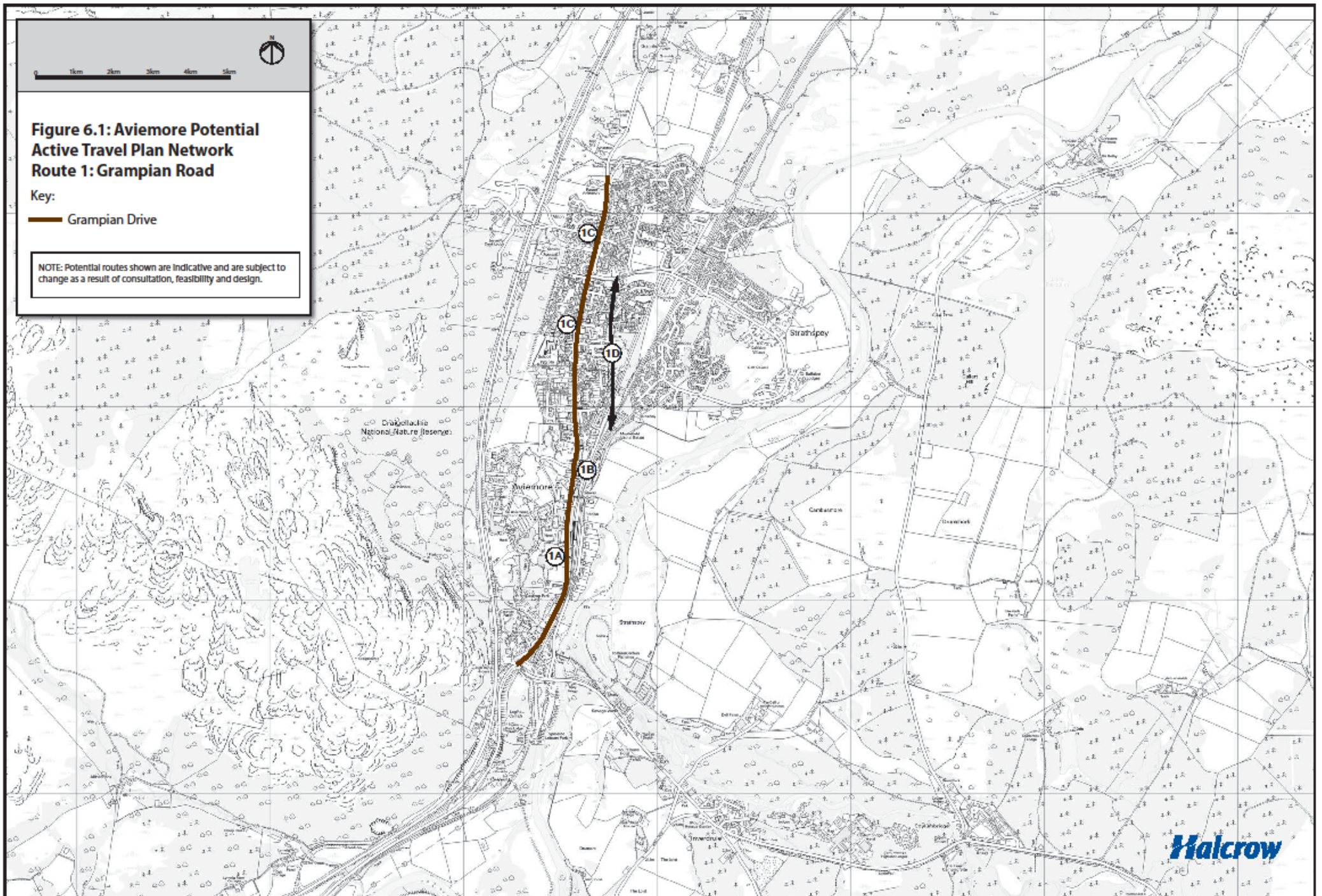
6 Conclusions

- 6.1.1 Aviemore is a town that is expanding and current plans show no sign of the growth slowing. Major developments in the area, including An Camas Mor, will see the population potentially double over the coming decades. In addition to the larger population, tourism adds further strain to existing infrastructure with an all year round market catering for visitors drawn in by the location, nature and outstanding outdoor recreational facilities in the area.
- 6.1.2 It is vital that in an attempt to instil a culture of walking and cycling, action is taken immediately, not as the town expands, rather before it does so, establishing active travel as the norm and as a user friendly travel choice. Data from the 2001 census suggests that walking is already popular within Aviemore for the purpose of utility trips, as the town expands, pedestrian infrastructure must not be compromised or neglected but opportunities to enhance it should be grasped by both the Cairngorm National Park Authority and The Highland Council.
- 6.1.3 Although available data suggests that cycling is no more popular than the regional level, it is higher than that of the national average. Existing trips are generally short and walking may be a more attractive choice as it is perceived to be more viable than cycling. As Aviemore grows, so trip distances from residential areas to employment, retail and leisure will increase. This is a crucial stage in the establishing of travel choice behaviour of a settlement and the development and promotion of coherent and attractive cycle routes from the outset will ensure that there are fewer barriers to getting onto a bike.
- 6.1.4 The surrounding Badenoch and Strathspey towns, the largest of which is Grantown-on-Spey, may benefit from a package of measures that can be universally applied to encourage walking and cycling and reduce existing barriers to active travel. The reality of an ageing population in these towns will influence the likely measures that may increase active travel. Activities such as promotion of existing routes, improved maintenance, compliance with DDA guidance, encouragement of walking and cycling for health through various agencies and personal travel planning may be all that it takes to increase the levels of active travel.
- 6.1.5 Aviemore is well placed to establish itself as a sustainable community, a theme resonant throughout National Park policy. A close working relationship between the Cairngorm National Park Authority and The Highland Council is vital to the success of this vision. Transport will become one of the most important facets in achieving these goals, as increased pressure on the local and strategic road network is felt, alleviating these issues can be supported by a comprehensive active travel strategy, putting walking and cycling first in any planning decision will be key to this.



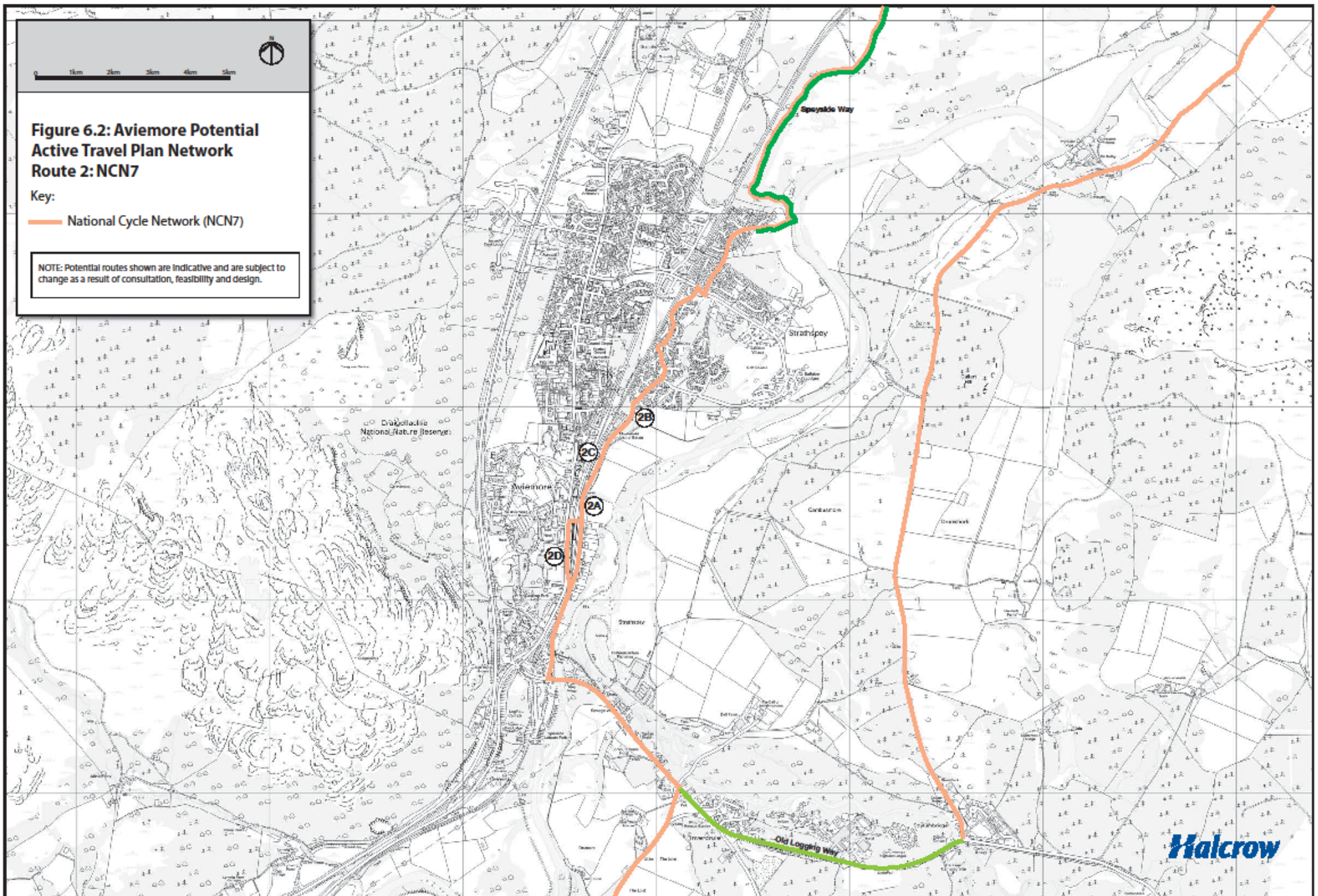
Appendix A

Aviemore Active Travel Network – Potential Improvements



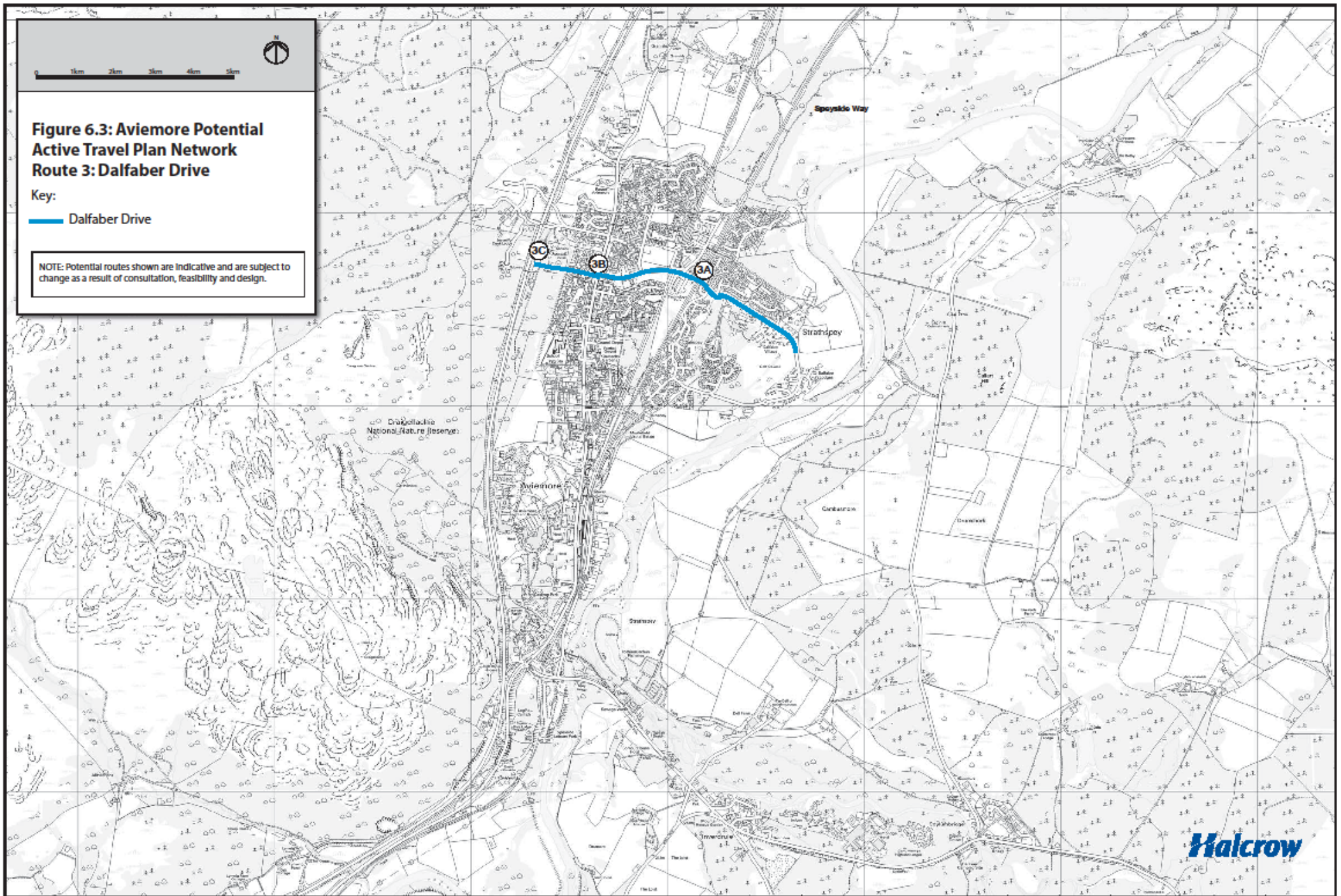
Route 1 – Grampian Road

Ref	Street	Start	End	Potential intervention (All subject to feasibility and design)
1a	Grampian Road	B970	Macdonald Highland Resort North Entrance	Create a coherent footway with similar surfacing, a direct route, flush dropped kerbs through the town centre
1b	Grampian Road	Macdonald Highland Resort North Entrance		Remove roundabout and signalise junction as part of plans to develop new Tesco site.
1c	Grampian Road	Dalfaber Drive	Burnside Avenue	Carry out pedestrian crossing study to determine most appropriate placement of a formal crossing point to increase road safety in the area
1d	Grampian Road	B970	Dougal Drive	Improve safety for cyclists by considering specific facilities such as segregation or on road cycle lanes.
1e	Grampian Road	Newlands Road	Grampian Road	Improve informal links between residential areas and Grampian Road including surfacing, lighting and signing short links which would give make walking or cycling more direct than driving



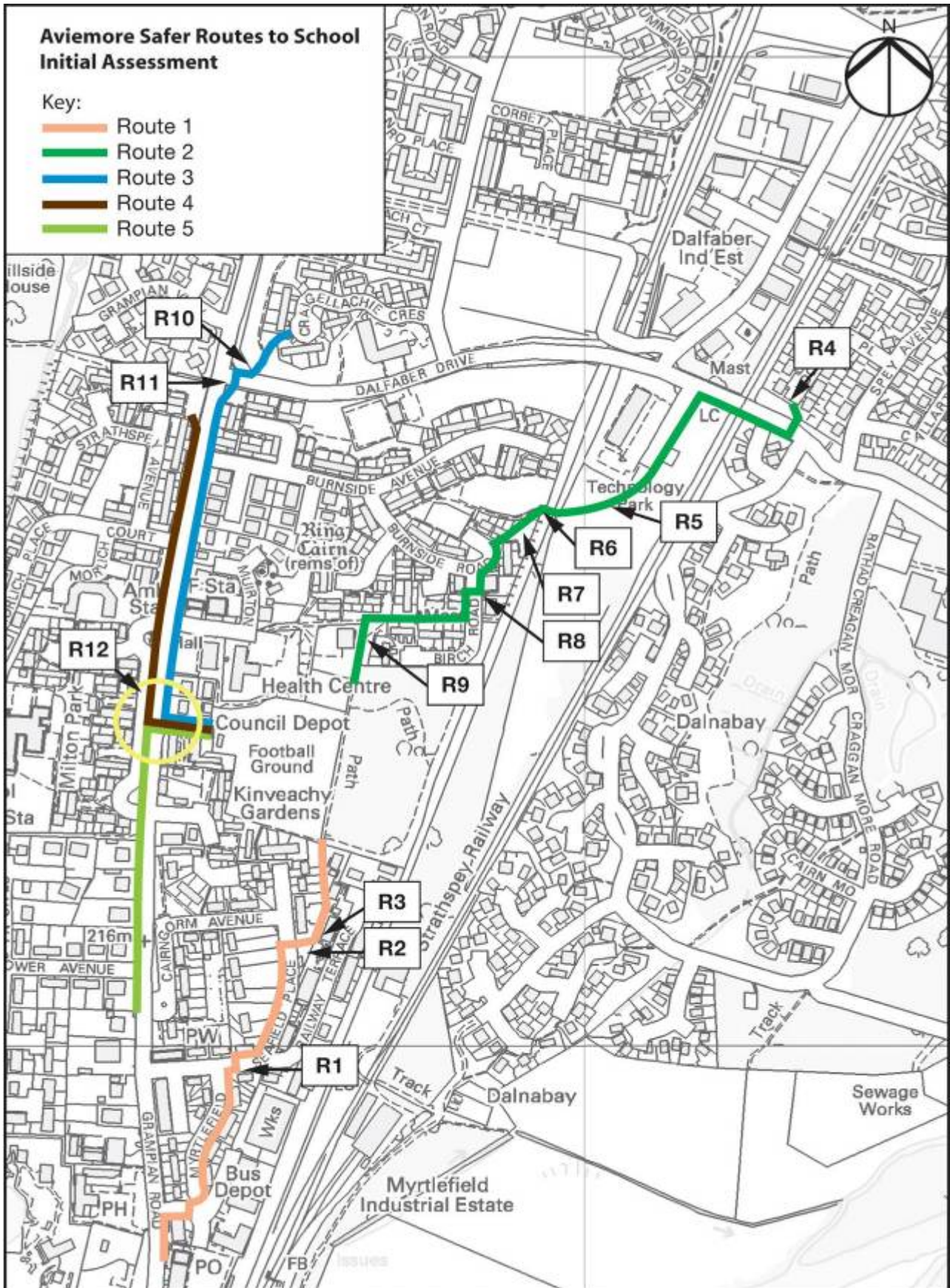
Route 2 – National Cycle Network Route 7

Ref	Street	Start	End	Potential intervention (All subject to feasibility and design)
2a	Aviemore Rail Station	Aviemore Rail Station	Dalfaber Road	Improved promotion of rear entrance to NCN from Aviemore Rail Station avoiding need to negotiate Grampian Road. Signage and information boards should raise the profile of this link from the main station concourse.
2b	NCN7 off road path	Aviemore Rail Station	Dalnabay	Install lighting columns on off road section of NCN7 from Aviemore town centre northward encouraging use after dark for commuters
2c	NCN7 off road path	Aviemore Rail Station	Dalnabay	Improved surface drainage will reduce incidence of ponding, resulting in a more usable path and reduced maintenance costs from weathering.
2d	Grampian Road	Aviemore Rail Station	Dalfaber Road	Provide a short section of advisory cycle lane to link Aviemore Rail Station with the NCN at Dalfaber Road for those that choose to access the route from this direction



Route 3 – Dalfaber Drive

Ref	Street	Start	End	Potential intervention (All subject to feasibility and design)
3a	Dalfaber Drive	Dalfaber Drive Level Crossing		Improve road safety of level crossing through consultation with Network Rail and other stakeholders to decide on most appropriate intervention. This may include the introduction of barriers or a grade separated pedestrian crossing
3b	Grampian Road	Dalfaber Drive		Carry out pedestrian crossing study to determine most appropriate placement of a formal crossing point to increase road safety in the area
3c	Milton Wood	Grampian Road	Milton Wood	Improve paths from Grampian Road to Milton Wood including Core Path LBS40 and 41. Improved surfacing, lighting, signage and promotion will highlight the route as viable alternative to Grampian Road link to Macdonald Highland Resort



Safer Routes to Aviemore Community Primary School

Ref	Street	Start	End	Potential intervention (All subject to feasibility and design)
R1	Mayfield Place			Stop Look Listen markings (SLL) and dropped kerbs (DK)
R2	Seafield Place			Stop Look Listen markings (SLL) and dropped kerbs (DK)
R3	Seafield Place pathway			Path between Seafield Place and new school to be tidied up including resurfacing and lighting where appropriate
R4	Dalfaber Drive			SLL and DK to facilitate crossing of Dalfaber Drive
R5	Off road path	Technology Park	Burnside Road	Formalise the footpath from the end of the technology park under the rail line. Provide lighting columns on new path
R6	Off road path	Technology Park	Burnside Road	Underpass to be cleaned up and lit
R7	Burnside Road pathways			Formalise footpaths from underpass through houses to new school
R8	Birch Road			SLL and DK to facilitate crossing Birch Road
R9	Birch Road			Formalisation of the footpath into the school
R10	Dalfaber Drive			Section of pedestrian guard rail to encourage crossing closer to Grampian road to improve visibility of traffic turning onto Dalfaber Drive
R11	Dalfaber Drive			SLL and DK at crossing on Dalfaber Drive
R12	Grampian Road			Carry out pedestrian crossing study to determine most appropriate placement of a formal crossing point to increase road safety in the area

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