



nick wright planning

people, place + planning

Steven Tolson



Jura CONSULTANTS



Aberfeldy Charrette Report

September 20

Aberfeldy Today



Executive summary

This report sets out the outcomes of the Aberfeldy Town Centre design charrette, undertaken in spring 2015 with members of the local community and representatives from Perth and Kinross Council.

Initiated by Perth and Kinross Council with support from Aberfeldy Community Council and Aberfeldy Small Business Association, the charrette was part of the Scottish Government's Town Centre Charrette Mainstreaming Programme. It was organised by a team led by 7N Architects with Nick Wright Planning (urban planner), Jura Consultants (culture and heritage) and Steven Tolson (property surveyor).

A charrette is essentially a collaborative way of preparing proposals for future change in a particular place. The local community and professionals work together to identify issues and aspirations, and then design proposals in response to those issues and aspirations. In this case, a restricted budget and timeframe meant that the engagement elements of the charrette were necessarily short and sharp, although well publicised. It focused on two public workshops a few weeks apart plus other complementary engagement activities.

The focus of the work was the future of Aberfeldy town centre. The charrette process enabled those involved to agree a vision for what they want the town centre to be like in the future, and create a set of ideas and actions to make that happen. Those ideas and actions, and indeed the whole charrette process, are framed in terms of the Scottish Government's newly published Town Centre Toolkit.

The local community has a track record in investing time and resources in excellent projects in the town centre such as the Birks Cinema and Aberfeldy Festival. A Community Survey was undertaken in 2014 to identify future priorities, which was quickly followed by the development of initial proposals for redesign of The Square. The purpose of the charrette was to progress these and other town centre initiatives and identity.

This report focuses on physical and placemaking interventions in response to the issues raised during the charrette. The proposals reflect the aspirations of the community at this point in time. They are not intended to an overall regeneration strategy for the town as a whole; rather, the report describes a menu of short, medium and long term placemaking actions that could be taken forward by the Council and the local community.

The sketches and plans in the report are intended to illustrate how the town centre could be transformed. More detailed design work will be needed for each of the projects to be taken forward. The specifics of each proposal may change as they progress through more detailed design and consultation.

Similar charrettes were undertaken simultaneously in Auchterarder and Crieff town centres by the same consultant team. A number of key principles emerged from all three charrettes:

- Support collaborative working.
- Create more people-friendly streets and spaces.
- Improve access to the town centres.
- Improve the physical fabric of town centres.
- Connect with other initiatives to coordinate marketing and business support.

This report is intended to provide a flexible framework and vision for town centre regeneration in Aberfeldy, and to be a resource to help community, business and public sector partners develop and progress individual projects.

Charrette Workshop



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The Charrette

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Introduction and Context

The report, the Charrette approach, local issues, aspirations and context

01

Aberfeldy's Picturesque Location



The Charrette

Introduction

Key information Sources

- Aberfeldy Community Facilities Audit 2011 (ACC)
- Aberfeldy Community Survey 2014 (ACC)
- Aberfeldy Square Public Realm Improvements Consultation Report 2014 (PKC)
- Highland Perthshire Community Profile (PKC)
- Perth and Kinross Employment Land Audit 2013 (PKC)
- Perth and Kinross Housing Land Audit 2014 (PKC)
- Perth and Kinross Local Development Plan 2014 (PKC)
- Perth and Kinross Retail Study and Town Centre Review 2014 (PKC)
- Rural Perth and Kinross LEADER Business Plan 2014-20

ACC: Aberfeldy Community Council
PKC: Perth and Kinross Council



Steven Tolson

Aberfeldy and the Town Centre

Aberfeldy lies in beautiful Strathhtay, surrounded by history, mountains, glens and lochs in the heart of Highland Perthshire. Although 10 miles from the main north-south artery of the A9 and 15 miles from the bigger tourist destination of Pitlochry, Aberfeldy is located on the Perthshire Tourist Route – one of Scotland’s 12 official National Tourist Routes.

The town itself has a population of around 2,000 and serves as a centre for the surrounding area. A supermarket and facilities campus (schools, library and sports centre) have recently been built near the town centre. There are a range of other shops, businesses and other facilities in the town centre. The cultural offer includes the community-run Birks Cinema, the annual Aberfeldy Festival and a number of cafes, restaurants and bars. There are a number of active ‘civic’ groups including the Locus Centre, Community Council and Small Business Association. Popular attractions such as the Birks of Aberfeldy and the River Tay are within easy reach of the town centre.

Yet, despite these excellent assets, there is concern that the town centre does not reach its full potential. The former Co-op occupying one side of The Square, which is ‘the town centre’ for many residents, has been vacant since the opening of the new edge-of-centre supermarket in 2014. Other buildings are vacant and there is concern locally that the town centre does not promote itself well enough, or indeed offer enough, for tourists and residents alike.





image courtesy of Grace Heggarty

Aberfeldy town centre: what next?

Do you want to make your town centre better? Come along and help us work out how.

We'll be building on the results of the community survey last May and the options for the Square from October.

Young and old, residents and businesses, Council and community groups: **everyone** is welcome!

bring
an
idea!

AMBITION + IDEAS Wednesday 18th March 7:30pm sharp - 9pm Town Hall

PRIORITIES + ACTION Wednesday 15th April 7:30pm sharp - 9pm Town Hall

The Charrette

Introduction

The Five Stage Charrette Process
February to September 2015

1. A range of discussions with key community groups, school pupils, businesses and Council departments, accompanied by site visits and desk-based research (see 'Key information sources').
2. First public charrette workshop focussing on visioning and priority projects (Wednesday evening 18 March).
3. Four week design studio period to produce draft proposals.
4. Second public charrette workshop to agree and refine draft proposals (Wednesday evening 15 April).
5. Finalise proposals.

The Charrette

A charrette is essentially a collaborative way of preparing proposals for future change in a particular place. The local community and professionals work together to identify issues and aspirations, and then design proposals in response to those issues and aspirations. In this case, a limited timeframe and budget meant that the engagement elements of the charrette were necessarily short and sharp, although well publicised, focussing on two public workshops a few weeks apart plus other complementary engagement activities, as summarized adjacent and explained in more detail later in this section.

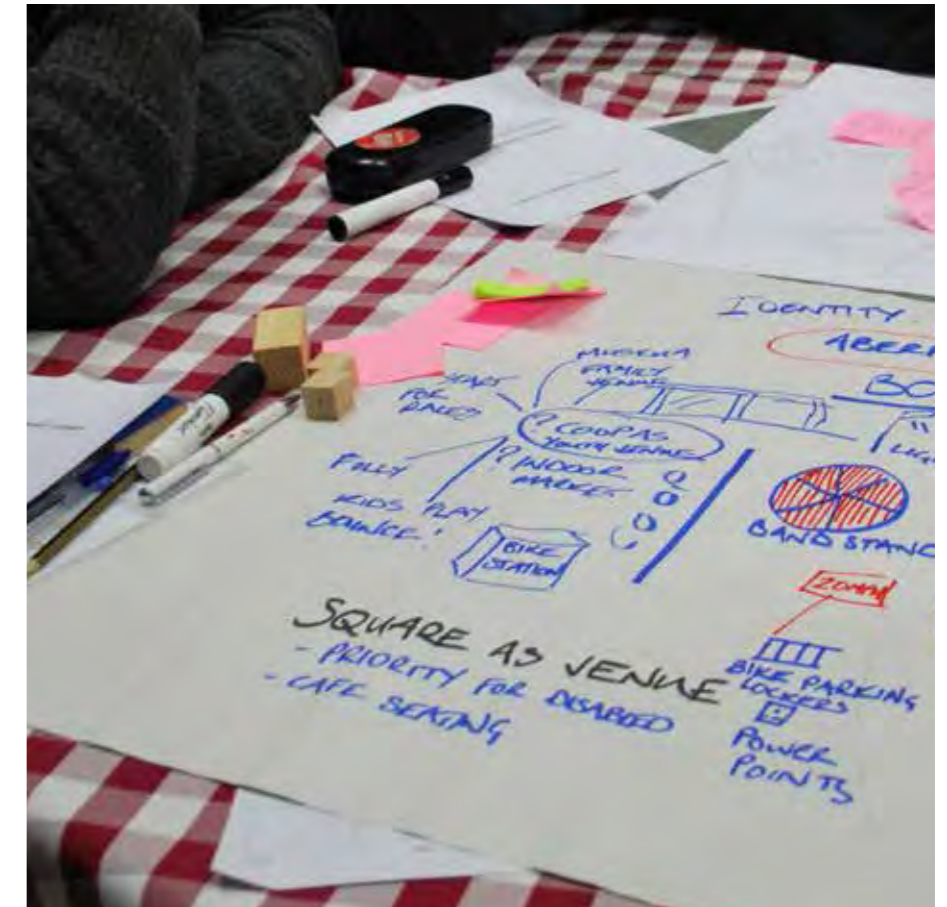
The focus of this charrette was the future of Aberfeldy town centre. The charrette process enabled those involved to agree a vision for what they want the town centre to be like in the future, and create a set of ideas and actions to make that happen. The intention was to support the priorities identified in the Community Survey undertaken by the Community Council in 2014. The ideas and actions that emerged through the charrette process, and indeed the process itself, are framed in terms of the Scottish Government's newly published Town Centre Toolkit.

Section 1 of the report describes the issues and aspirations that emerged from the initial charrette sessions, desktop research and site analysis. Sections 2 and 3 focus on the physical, urban design placemaking interventions that were developed in response to the issues raised during the charrette.

The proposals reflect the aspirations of the community at this point in time. They are not intended to an overall regeneration strategy for the town as a whole; rather, the report describes a menu of short, medium and long term placemaking actions that could be taken forward by the Council and the local community.

The sketches and plans in the report are intended to illustrate how the town centre could be transformed. More detailed design work will be needed for each of the projects to be taken forward. The specifics of each proposal may change as they progress through more detailed design and consultation.

The report is intended to evidence the shared sense of purpose that emerged through the charrette process, provide a flexible framework and vision for town centre regeneration in Aberfeldy, and to be a resource to help community, business and public sector partners develop and progress individual projects.



Charrette Overview

Process

Charrette Process

The charrette team's approach to placemaking is based on the premise that the physical aspects of places are intertwined with their economic and social wellbeing, and strategies for change must take a holistic view of how places work well. This is the approach embodied in the Scottish Government's newly published Town Centre Toolkit. It aims to balance aspirational long term thinking for the town centre with pragmatism, and to help make the most of existing budgets and potential future funding.

Fundamental to this is creating an agreed vision and set of principles, so that every effort made by the community, local authorities and agencies is a step in the right direction towards delivering something on the ground that will make a difference.

Analysis of existing information, discussions with selected local stakeholders and the first public charrette workshop provided a rich basis of ideas and information on which to build proposals. Equally importantly, each of the two public charrette workshops generated a genuine buzz and enthusiasm amongst those involved (40-50 people at each workshop) to make the town centre a better place.

Workshop One - 18th March 2015

This session focused on identifying local assets, aspirations, areas for improvement, and - looking ahead to 2030 - a vision for the future of the town centre. A summary of the outputs can be seen on subsequent pages: what people liked about the town centre, what they disliked, and the main focuses for future change.

Workshop Two - 15th April 2015

The charrette team presented draft proposals developed in response to the discussions at the first workshop. Facilitated discussion then sought community feedback, which assisted shaped the final proposals and recommendations in Sections 2 and 3 of this report.



- > [Community Workshop Discussion](#)
- > [Community Aspiration Exercise](#)



During Workshop One, people identified this image of a dynamic civic square in Jedburgh as best representing their vision for the future of Aberfeldy.

Charrette Workshops

Community Likes



Independent Businesses



Creative Community



Public Parks



Connection to the Countryside



The Square

1. Independent Businesses

Aberfeldy benefits from a vibrant and varied range of independent shops, galleries and cafés. During the charrette, this was highlighted as one of the town's greatest assets and should be encouraged and developed.

2. Creative Community

It was made evident throughout the charrette that Aberfeldy has an engaged, creative and active community, supporting a range of activities, such as markets and festivals within the town. The charrette provided an opportunity for these groups to discuss future community engagement potential.

3. Public Parks

The community benefits from a diverse range of public parks, most notably The Birks of Aberfeldy and Victoria Park. Suggestion came forward during the charrette that these assets should be enhanced through public realm improvements and better management for the benefit of locals and visitors alike.

4. Connection to the Countryside

The quality of the surrounding natural environment was one of the key reasons identified for living in and visiting Aberfeldy. An enhancement of connections and activities should be encouraged, with particular attention to the development of core paths and national cycle connectivity.

5. The Square

The Square provides a civic heart to the town, hosting occasional events and activities whilst providing a key orientation point for visitors to the town. A range of opinions were raised during the charrette that outlined approaches to improving the urban realm and developing The Square into a more flexible community space.



The Square was the civic, commercial and cultural heart of Aberfeldy, yet today it's dominated by vehicles, poor quality urban realm and the vacant buildings.

A flexible, attractive and people friendly Civic Square is imperative to the success of the Town Centre.

Charrette Workshops

Community Dislikes



Car Parking



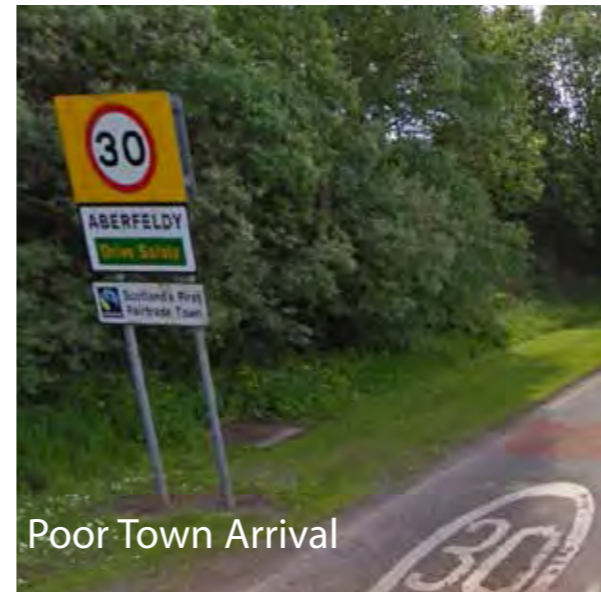
Empty Co-op Building



Scruffy Urban Realm



Car Dominated Centre



Poor Town Arrival

1. Car Parking

It was made clear that Aberfeldy's community suffers from inefficient and inadequate parking facilities within the town centre. Maximising the use of existing car parks, park and ride schemes and controlled parking zones were all discussed as options during the charrette workshops.

2. Empty Co-op Building

With a prominent site in the heart of the town, the empty former co-op building on The Square was a source of much concern for the community. Whilst various community uses for the building were discussed during the charrette, it became clear that commercial investment in the property would be the preferred option.

3. Scruffy Urban Realm

The community expressed concern over the quality of the urban realm within the town. An upgrade of shabby pavements, repainting of buildings, introducing greenery and street furniture were considered to be achievable, short term gains for improving the town centre environment.

4. Car Dominated Centre

The impact of the A827 on Aberfeldy is significant and vehicles dominate the town centre. One-way systems, temporary road closures, a town by-pass and peripheral car parks for visitors were all discussed during the charrette, along with short term rebalancing of the streetscape through shared surfaces and a variation of street materials.

5. Poor Town Arrival

A key feature of the charrette discussion was how to bring people from the A9 into Aberfeldy and how to improve the thresholds into the town. Suggestions for improving this included the installation of public art at the entrance to the town and the purchasing of a brown tourist sign for the A9.

Charrette Workshops

Key Principles for the Future

1. Culture

Aberfeldy will:

Be a creative community, continuing to support and nurture the strong creative talent within the community to provide a cultural focus to the Town Centre.

2. Community

Aberfeldy will:

Be an inclusive community for all ages;
Continue to support and nurture the strong existing community and support further initiatives.

Aberfeldy will have:

Appropriate community facilities;
A community activity Hub;
Superfast broadband.

3. Town Environment

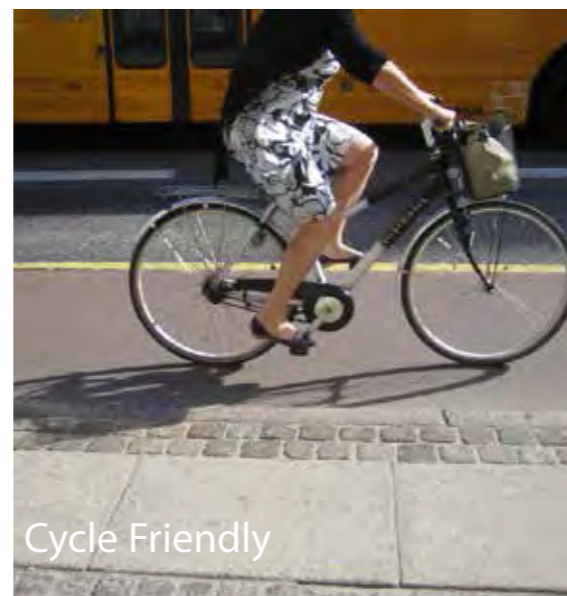
Aberfeldy will be:

A destination at the gateway to the Highlands;
A safe, clean and friendly pedestrian environment;
An attractive well maintained town.

Aberfeldy will have:

A consistent identity and character for the town;
Accessible local amenities.

People will know where Aberfeldy is and where things are.



Charrette Workshops

Key Principles for the Future



Diverse Activity



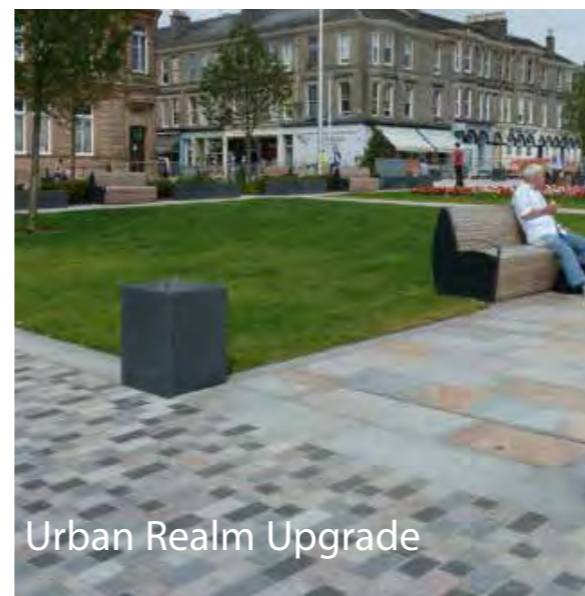
Engaging Streetscape



Creative Wayfinding



Seasonal Streetscape



Urban Realm Upgrade

4. Natural Environment

Aberfeldy will:
Encourage the enjoyment of the natural environment for all;
Look after its natural surroundings and take a lead on promoting responsible use of natural places.

5. Tourism and Leisure

Aberfeldy will be:
An attractive visitor destination;

Aberfeldy will have:
Leisure facilities for all ages;
A wide range of accommodation.

6. Retail

Aberfeldy will be:
A retail hub for the local people, surrounding area and tourists.

Aberfeldy will:
Offer a variety of choice in a quality retail environment;
Encourage local products.

7. Transport

Aberfeldy will have:
Excellent connections, both within, and to and from the town, including walking, cycling and affordable public transport;
A parking strategy for all users.

Charrette Workshops

Key Initiatives



Key Issues and Discussions

During 2014, comprehensive surveys of the local community's concerns and aspirations were undertaken of the local community's concerns and aspirations for the town as a whole (the Community Survey, led by the Community Council) and options for change to The Square (led by Perth and Kinross Council). These formed a valuable starting point for the charrette.

Considering these issues in the round at the first public charrette workshop, four clear priorities emerged:

1

Improve The Square: develop new uses, reduce parking and prioritise pedestrians.

2

Find a new use for the empty Co-op building, for example a new community facility or venue.

3

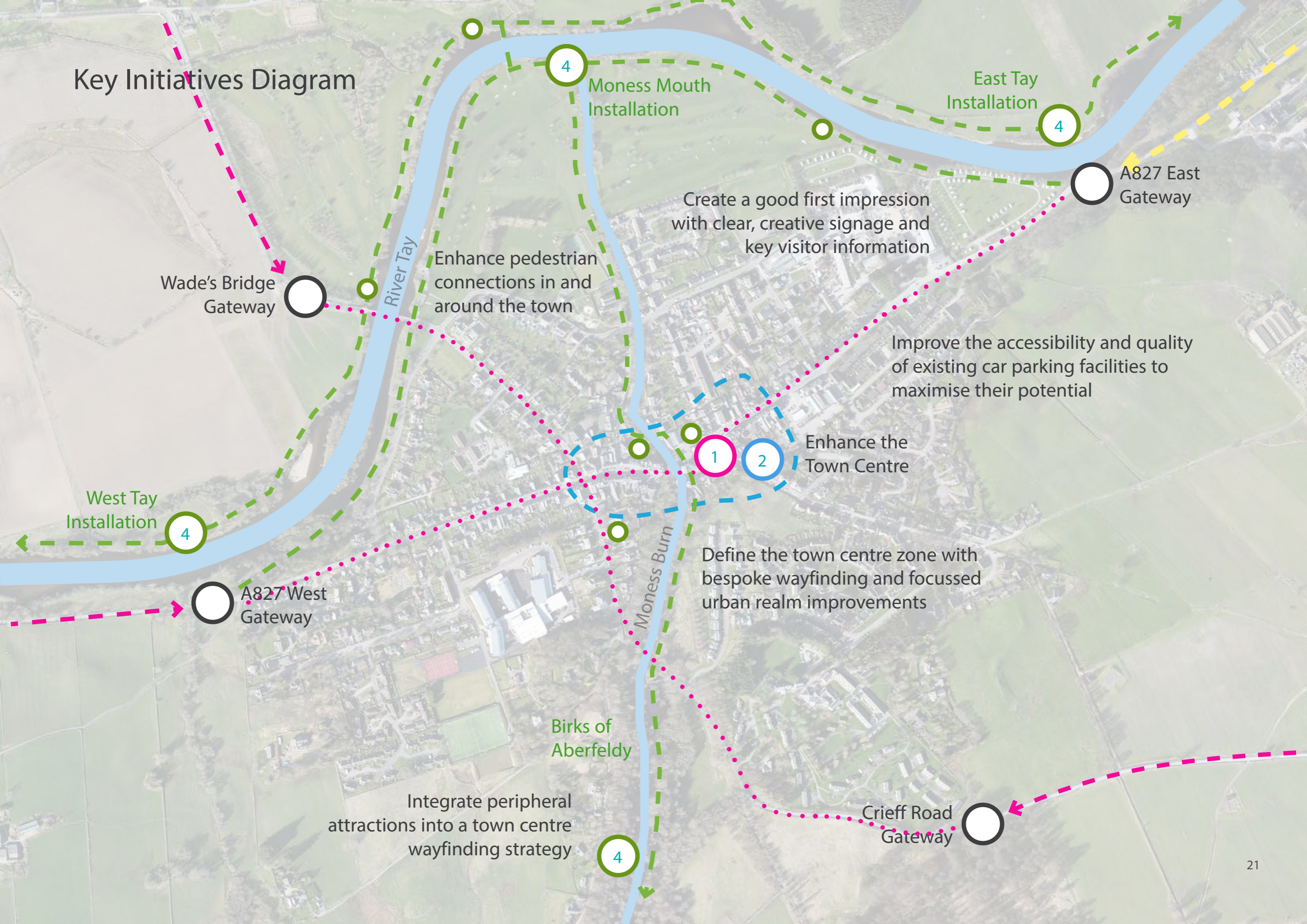
Encourage visitors to turn off the A9: make Aberfeldy more attractive to tourists exploring Strathtay.

4

Make more of Aberfeldy's existing assets: enhance the riverside and make the most of the town's historic and cultural assets, including the Lower Birks.



Key Initiatives Diagram



Charrette Proposals

The overall vision, strategy and design proposals developed in response to community issues and aspirations

02



Prioritising the Town Centre

Strategic Approach



The Tay Bridge
© RCAHMS



Activity in The Square
© Explore Scotland



Aberfeldy market day
© Aberfeldy Farmers' Market



Aberfeldy's picturesque location
© Donald Ford

Strategic Initiatives

Proposal Developments

The feedback from the initial workshop clearly identified priorities that needed to be addressed in the Charrette design response which is outlined on the following pages. The diagram opposite summarises the strategy for the town.



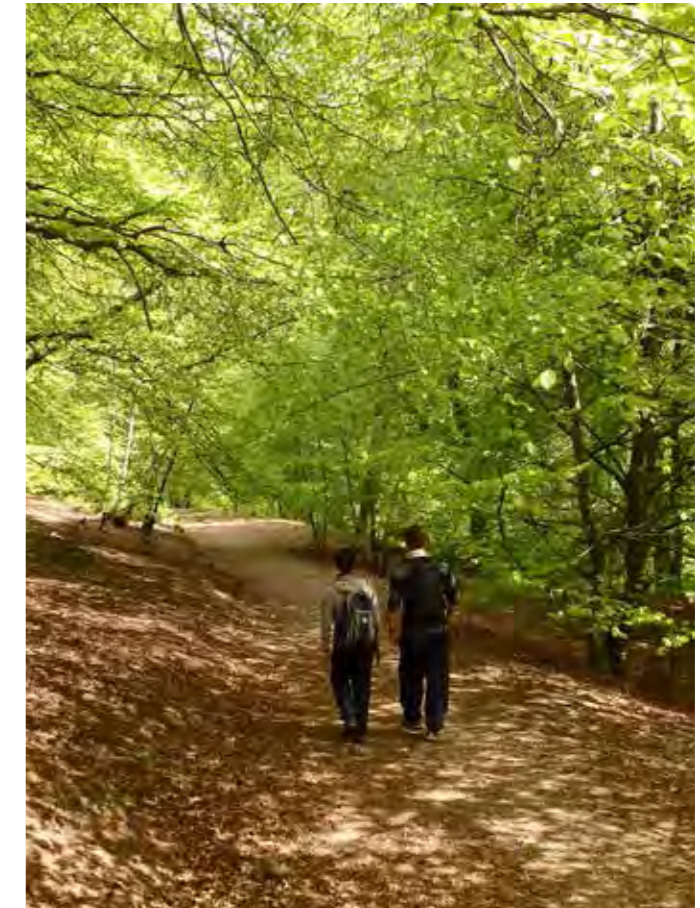
1 Improve the public realm within The Square



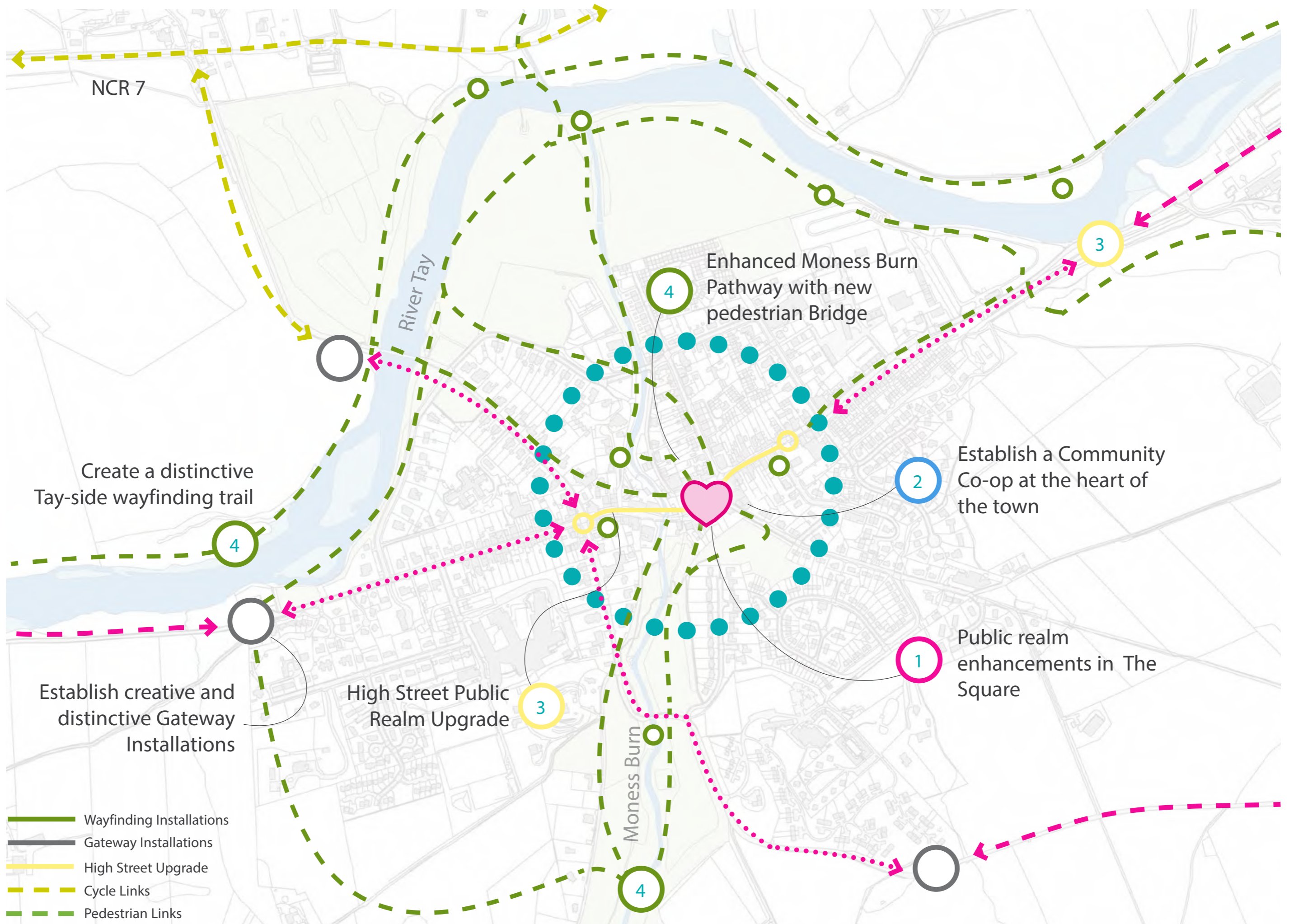
2 Find new uses for the former Co-op



3 Make Aberfeldy more attractive to tourists



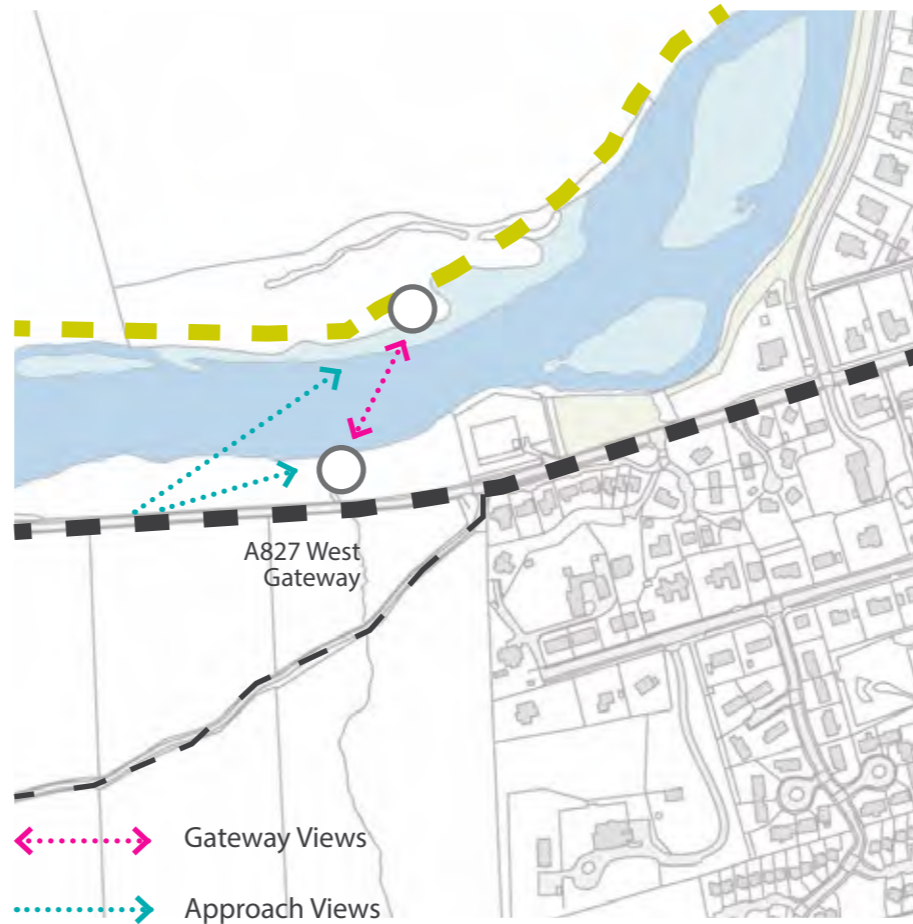
4 Enhance Aberfeldy's existing assets



Wider Connections

Gateways

Aberfeldy Approach



Gateways

Establishing physical gateways to the town in the form of artworks, pavilions or distinctive landscaping will help to define Aberfeldy's identity and will give passing visitors plenty of notice that they are about to enter a special place. It is proposed that designs are developed for gateway features at the four, principal, entry points to the town as part of the town's wayfinding strategy, with potential to develop further on the northern banks of the Tay.

Indication to the Aberfeldy from the A9 was also considered to be a priority for the community, either in the form of a brown tourist sign or as an extension of the town's wayfinding strategy.



© recyclart.org



© artificial landscapes

Wider Connections

Gateways



Aberfeldy Town Centre Strategy

High Street Thresholds

- Thresholds break up the A827 into defined sections within the town with crossing points to emphasise the desired shift towards a pedestrian centred town.
- Definition through paving and coloured tarmac road surface, emphasised through strategic street furniture, lighting and planting.

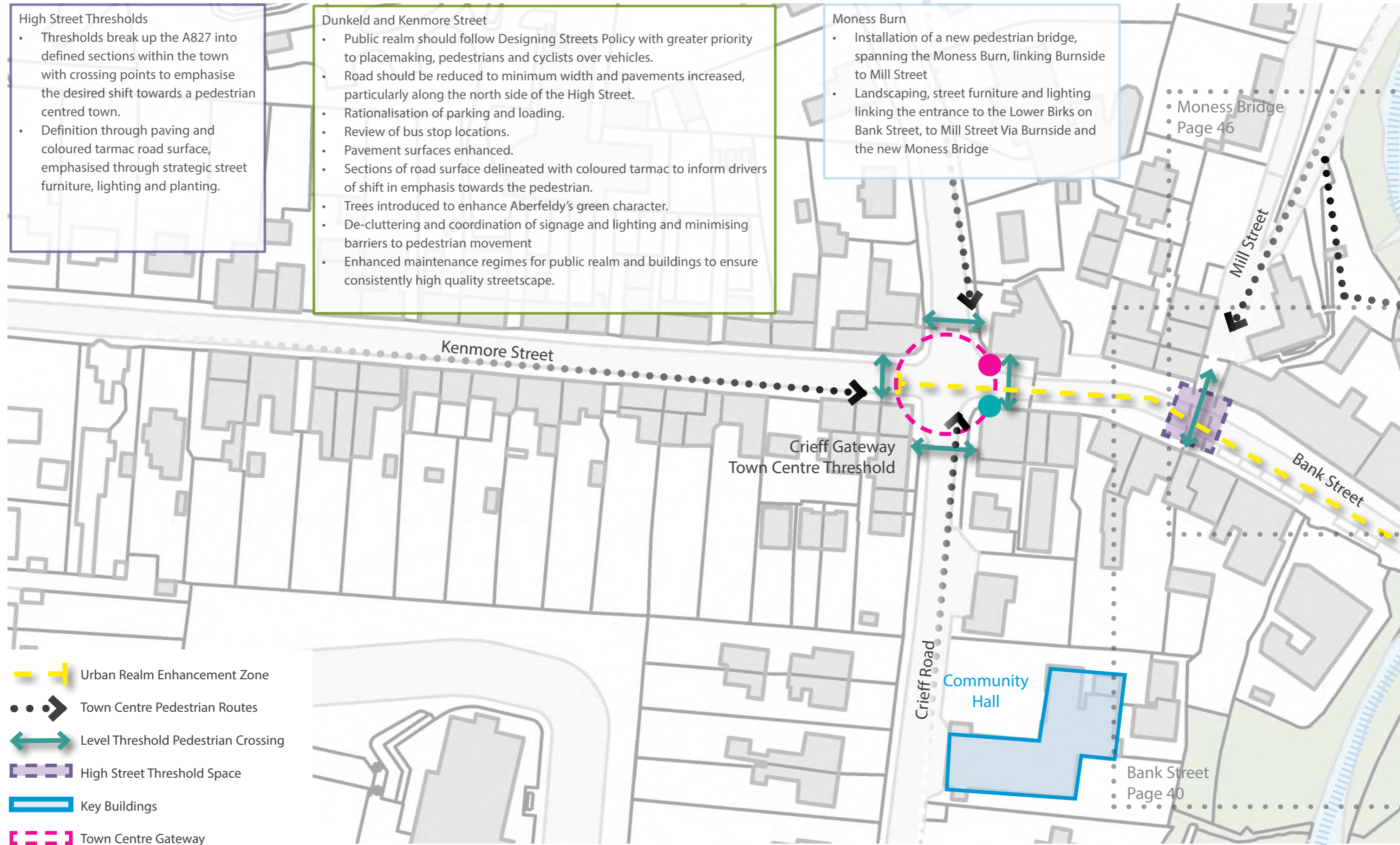
Dunkeld and Kenmore Street

- Public realm should follow Designing Streets Policy with greater priority to placemaking, pedestrians and cyclists over vehicles.
- Road should be reduced to minimum width and pavements increased, particularly along the north side of the High Street.
- Rationalisation of parking and loading.
- Review of bus stop locations.
- Pavement surfaces enhanced.
- Sections of road surface delineated with coloured tarmac to inform drivers of shift in emphasis towards the pedestrian.
- Trees introduced to enhance Aberfeldy's green character.
- De-cluttering and coordination of signage and lighting and minimising barriers to pedestrian movement
- Enhanced maintenance regimes for public realm and buildings to ensure consistently high quality streetscape.

Moness Burn

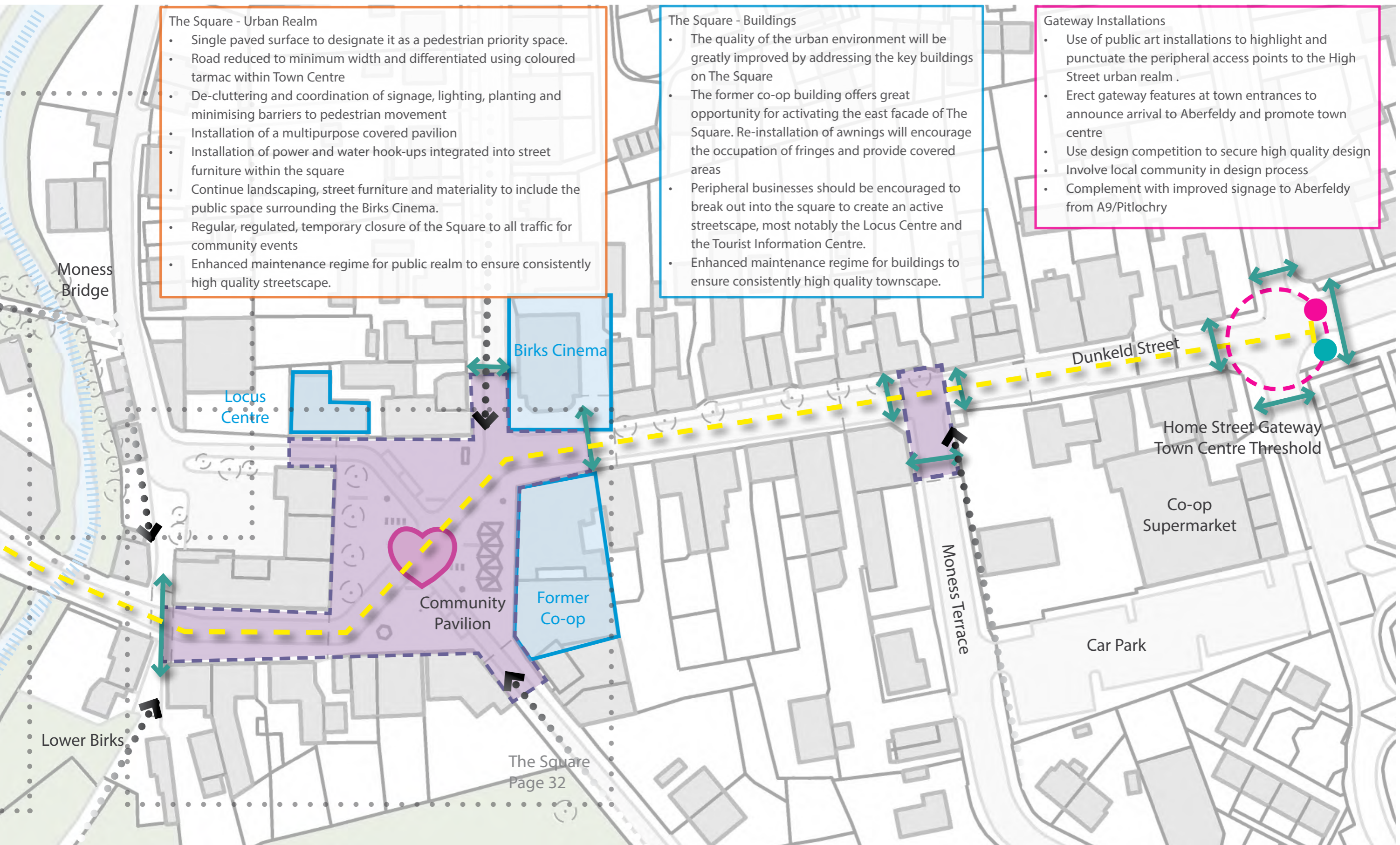
- Installation of a new pedestrian bridge, spanning the Moness Burn, linking Burnside to Mill Street
- Landscaping, street furniture and lighting linking the entrance to the Lower Birks on Bank Street, to Mill Street Via Burnside and the new Moness Bridge

• Moness Bridge
• Page 46



- Urban Realm Enhancement Zone
- Town Centre Pedestrian Routes
- Level Threshold Pedestrian Crossing
- High Street Threshold Space
- Key Buildings
- Town Centre Gateway

The strategy for the core area of the town centre focuses Bank Street to Dunkeld Street, with The Square at the civic heart.



The Square



The Square

Aberfeldy's Historic Heart



The Fountain in The Square
© Kenneth Allen



The Birks Cinema
© picturehousetheatres.eu



Independent Business
© tripadvisor



Market in the Square
© highlandperthshire.com

The Square

The Square has always been the civic heart of the town and is one of the best public spaces in rural Perthshire. But the space needs to be less dominated by cars to become a people place again. A space that will be the focus for the community and a vibrant, attractive, space that will encourage visitors to stop and explore the town.

Key Principles and Initiatives

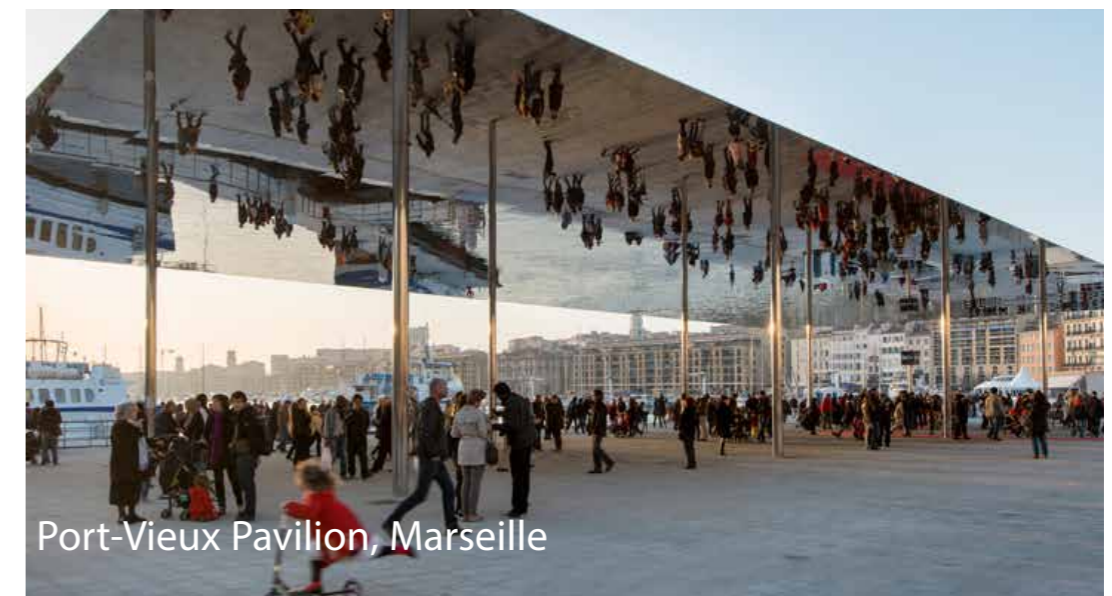
- Introduce a level threshold, shared surface on footway and carriageway
- Introduce community and tourist information signs
- Coordinate street furniture, bollards and lighting with integrated power hook-up facilities for events
- Install a multipurpose, covered Pavilion
- Extend urban realm to include The Birks Cinema
- Plant new trees along the west of the Square
- Establish programme for regular, temporary closure of Old Crieff Road and Burnside Lane to traffic
- Ensure businesses and event organisers are involved in detailed design work.

Activity Heart

The Square is Aberfeldy's primary public space, physically connecting Bank Street and Dunkeld Street. It holds temporary events such as markets, festivals and craft fairs, however today, it principally functions as a transitional space, dominated by traffic and with a lack of public realm amenities.

Bristol's Make Sunday Special initiative has stimulated creative thinking to reposition public space, liberated by creating car free city centre streets once a month an Parking Day Festivals are an internationally successful initiative to temporarily use car parking spaces for community development and activity.

It might be that a regular removal of parking from The Square and temporary closure of both Burnside Lane and Old Crieff Road will free up public space and facilitate a more varied range of temporary events. The permanent effect may be that peripheral properties look to open up to the square, stimulating a backdrop of more permanent and diverse activity.



A/ The Lower Birks

- Emphasise the entrance to the Lower Birks by extending the street materials, furniture, planting and lighting of The Square through the Memorial Arch entrance and into the Birks
- Installation of public art wayfinding and information on Bank Street
- Installation of accessible public WC

B/ The Square Urban Realm

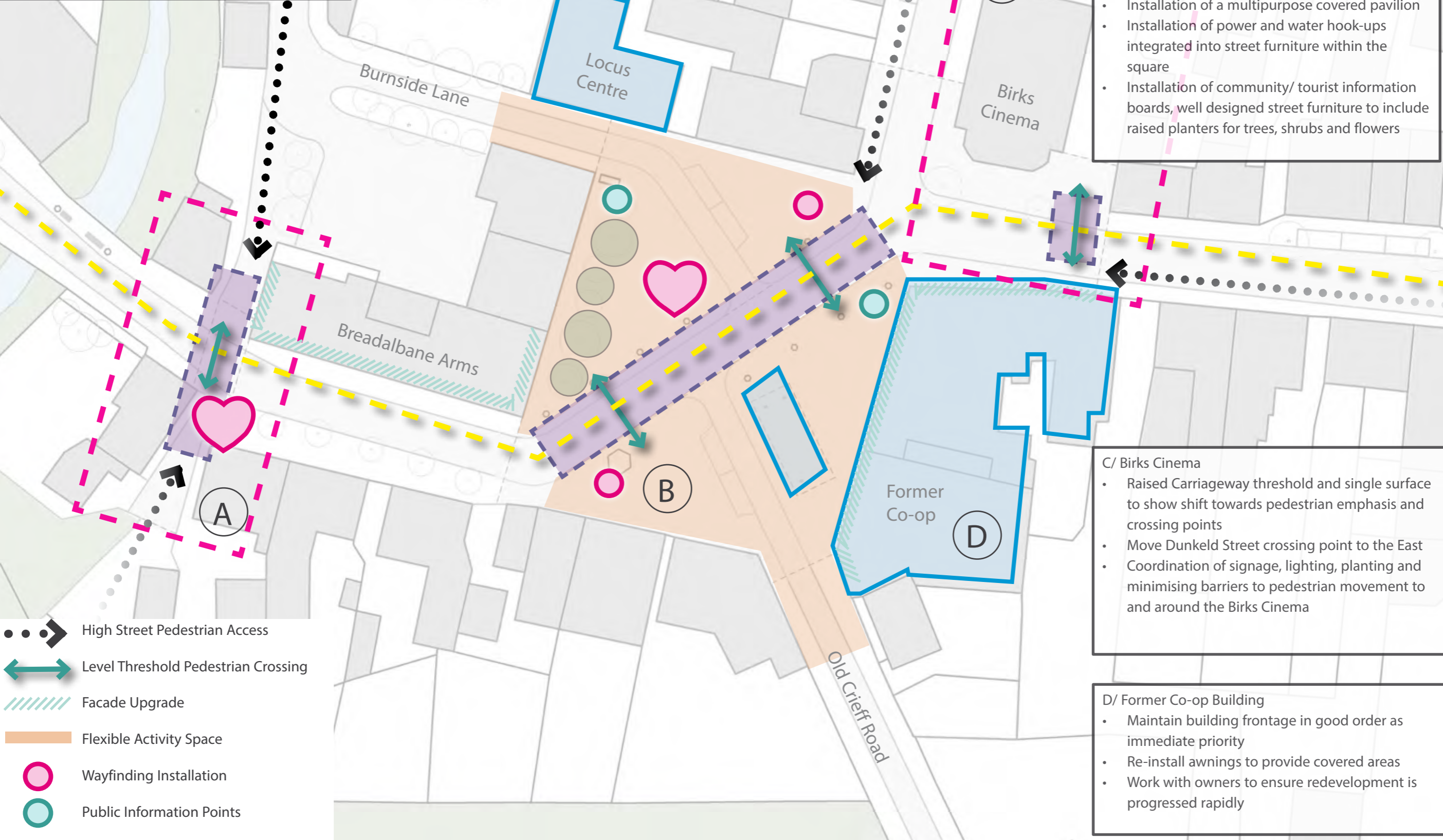
- Raised threshold and single surface to differentiate from approach roads
- Reduce carriageway to its minimum width
- Parking removed and bus stops integrated within re-design of The Square
- De-cluttering and coordination of signage, lighting, planting and minimising barriers to pedestrian movement
- Installation of a multipurpose covered pavilion
- Installation of power and water hook-ups integrated into street furniture within the square
- Installation of community/ tourist information boards, well designed street furniture to include raised planters for trees, shrubs and flowers

C/ Birks Cinema

- Raised Carriageway threshold and single surface to show shift towards pedestrian emphasis and crossing points
- Move Dunkeld Street crossing point to the East
- Coordination of signage, lighting, planting and minimising barriers to pedestrian movement to and around the Birks Cinema

D/ Former Co-op Building

- Maintain building frontage in good order as immediate priority
- Re-install awnings to provide covered areas
- Work with owners to ensure redevelopment is progressed rapidly

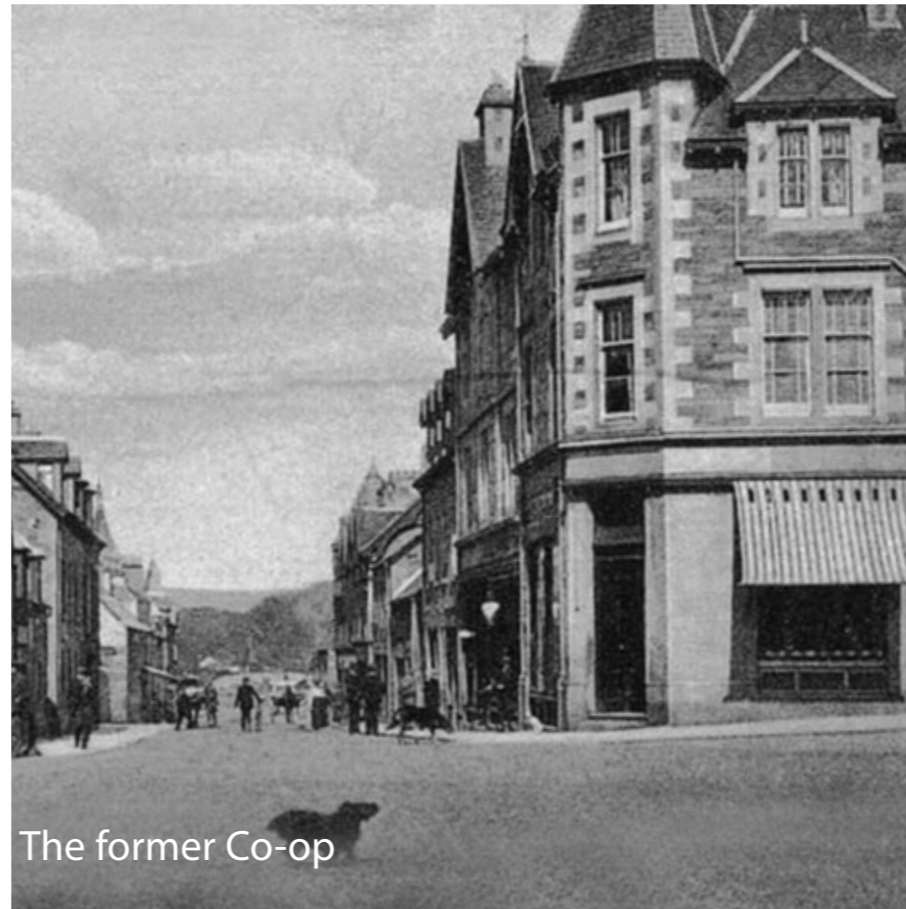


- High Street Pedestrian Access
- Level Threshold Pedestrian Crossing
- Facade Upgrade
- Flexible Activity Space
- Wayfinding Installation
- Public Information Points

The Square



The people-centred square



The former Co-op

Before the car, The Square was entirely a place for people, but with the closure of the co-op, the square has lost its significance for the community. Reducing the impact of vehicles on Aberfeldy's main civic space and reactivating the dormant co-op building are crucial to re-invigorating the town centre.

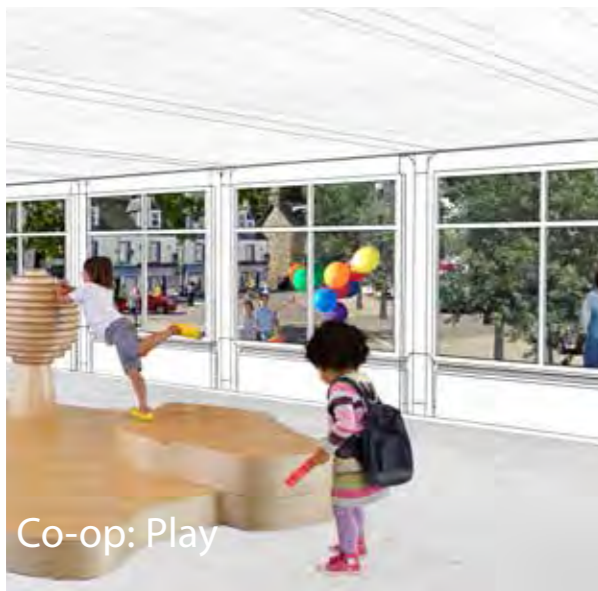
The Former Co-op

The vacant, former Co-op, building to the east of The Square blights the principal public space in the town centre, and whilst it had been mentioned that certain parties were interested in purchasing the building, at the time of writing no purchaser has yet been identified.

The Charrette identified a range of potential uses that would benefit the Aberfeldy and the surrounding area, as a cultural or civic centre or as a small business hub in the heart of the town. However, with community resources currently focused on other projects within the town, there seems to be limited scope for the community to pursue it for public use at this time. However, should circumstances change and an opportunity arise then a form of community or public use in this location would add much to the heart of the town.

Activities in The Square

The public realm design for The Square should incorporate the space and the appropriate service infrastructure to accommodate a range of events and activities. The active use of this space can be a significant draw to visitors.



Co-op: Play

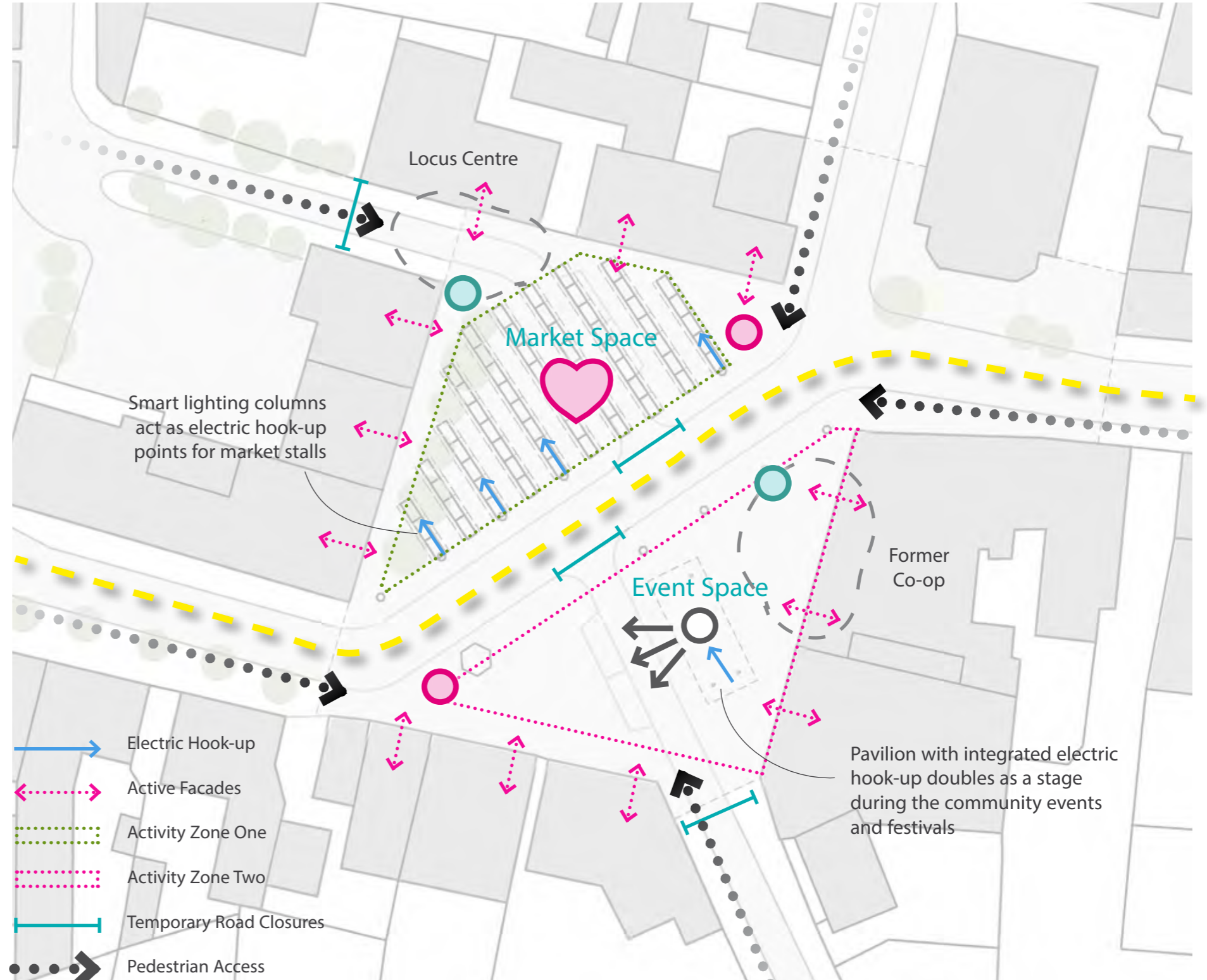


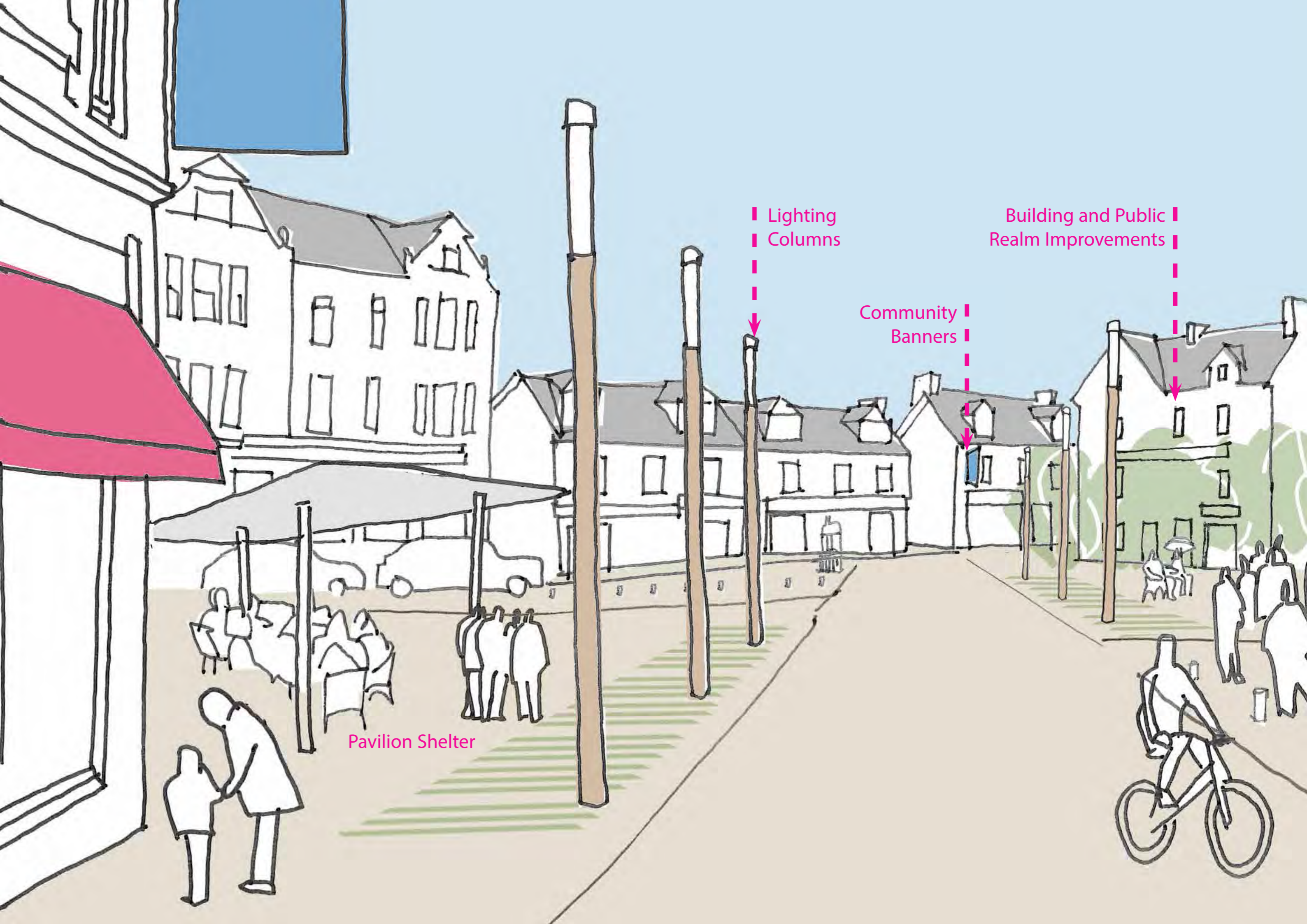
Co-op: Workshop



Co-op: Fitness

The Square





Lighting
Columns

Building and Public
Realm Improvements

Community
Banners

Pavilion Shelter

Event Space
(inc. services)

Community
Information





La Birks cafe
&
Italian Restaurant
01887 820 220

La Birks
ITALIAN RESTAURANT
Cafe
01887 820 220

Bank Street

Aberfeldy's Multipurpose High Street



Bank Street 1943
© alejandro63 flickr



Bank Street 1983
© alejandro63 flickr



Bank Street Today
© undiscoveredscotland

Bank Street

Bank Street currently suffers from too much of the street space being devoted to cars. Giving more of the space back to pedestrians, without compromising access, will help to encourage more visitors to explore the town.

Key Principles and Initiatives

- Establish carriageway thresholds to create traffic calming zones within the town centre
- Upgrade carriageway and footways between Crieff Road/ Bank Street and Moness Terrace/ Dunkeld Street Junctions
- Introduce coordinated lighting and street furniture
- Extend materiality and street furniture to lead visitors towards peripheral attractions
- Reduce carriageway as much as possible to emphasise the pedestrian centred urban realm
- Integrate marked parking bays into the footway
- Introduce Public Art to the streetscape to establish identity and mark the key points within the town centre

Accessibility and Navigation

High Streets are in a state of transition throughout the country. In order to reposition them at the heart of communities, they must adapt in line with contemporary cultural shifts. Accessibility and Navigability are key factors for drawing in visitors and serving locals. Thresholds help define zonal character and intensify identity. Wayfinders and good signage create an easy to use, interactive and user friendly High Street.

Temporary Testing

A good way to approach changes in Urban Design is to test things first. In Kansas, the Better Blocks initiative temporarily colonised part of the carriageway with chairs and trees. During the Glasgow International Festival, a series of Vacant City Centre shops became creative installations, bringing diverse activity to the street.



A/ Crieff Road Junction

- Expand corners at junctions to create improved pedestrian crossing points, to keep parked cars away from the junction and to provide a space for street furniture, planting, public art and lighting
- Clear demarcation of pedestrian crossing points
- Improved link to Town Hall and Breadalbane Campus, continuing urban realm materiality, street furniture and lighting down Crieff Road

B/ Watermill Reach

- Raised Carriageway threshold and single surface to show shift towards pedestrian emphasis and crossing points
- Reduce carriageway to the minimum width
- De-cluttering and coordination of signage, lighting, planting and minimising barriers to pedestrian movement
- Installation of community/ tourist information boards, high quality street furniture to include raised planters for trees, shrubs and flowers

C/ Bank Street Urban Realm

- Public realm should follow Designing Streets Policy with greater priority to placemaking, pedestrians and cyclists over vehicles.
- Carriageway should be reduced to minimum width and pavements increased, particularly along the north side of the High Street.
- Rationalisation of parking and loading.
- Pavement surfaces enhanced.
- Sections of carriageway surface delineated with coloured tarmac to inform drivers of shift in emphasis towards the pedestrian.
- De-cluttering and coordination of signage and lighting and minimising barriers to pedestrian movement.

●●●➔ High Street Pedestrian Access

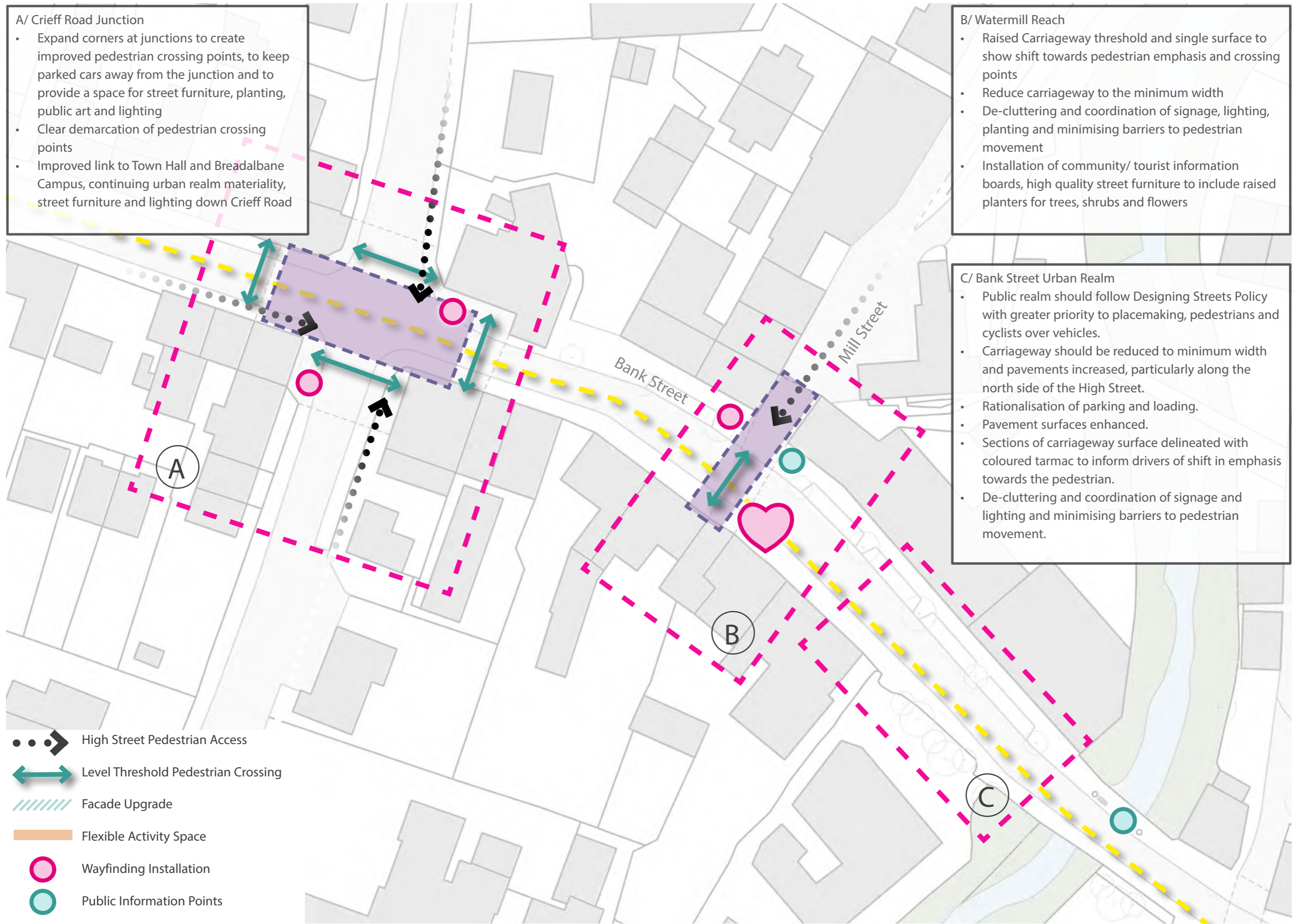
↔ Level Threshold Pedestrian Crossing

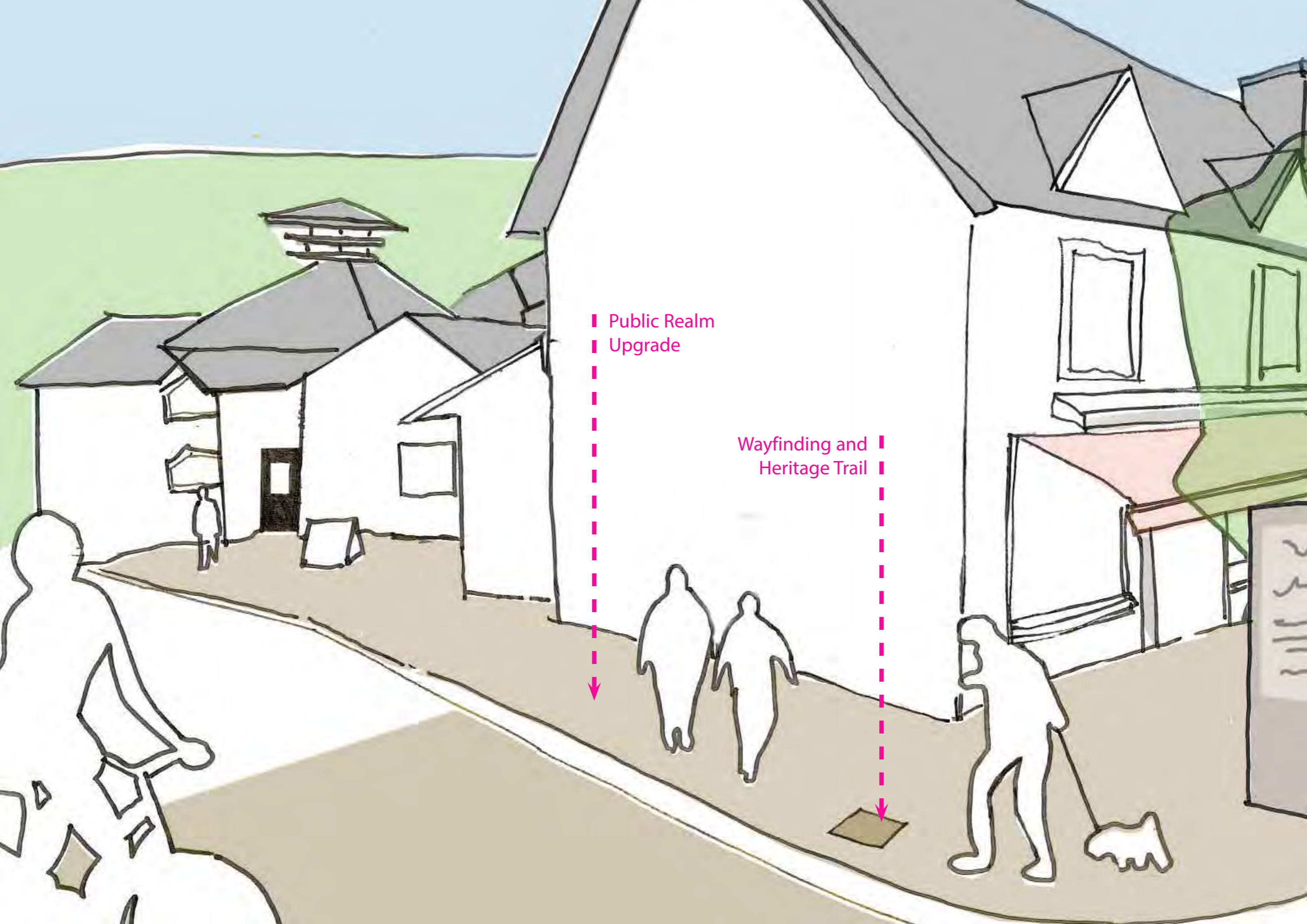
//// Facade Upgrade

▬ Flexible Activity Space

○ Wayfinding Installation

○ Public Information Points





Public Realm Upgrade

Wayfinding and Heritage Trail

Community Information

Integrated Planting
(where possible)

Marked Parking Bays
(where possible)

Lighting Columns





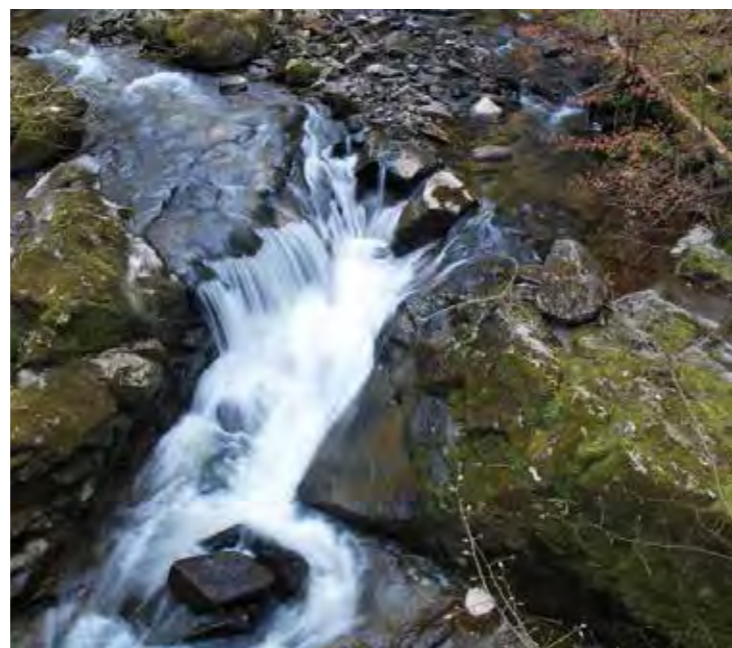
The Moness Burn from Bank Street Bridge

Moneess Burn

Aberfeldy's Nature Corridor



The Fountain in The Square
© WS Menzies



The Moneess Burn
© walkthehighlands.com



Bank Street entrance to The Birks
© google



Aberfeldy Watermill Bookshop
© tripadvisor.com

Moness Burn

The Moness Burn is an attractive green swathe which could be utilised to improve links for visitors, around the town and down to the river, with the construction of a new footbridge.

Key Principles and Initiatives

- Connect the town centre with the Moness Burn and its associated attractions
- Introduce new, active pedestrian bridge linking Burnside to the Watermill
- Install interactive wayfinding, viewing opportunities and street furniture along the Moness Burn

Local Connections

The Moness Burn spans Aberfeldy, bringing local, natural assets into the heart of the town. However, while the Watermill and The Birks take advantage of this within the urban realm, the experience is disjointed and detached from the Square at the heart of the town.

The introduction of a Burnside walkway and people-centric zones can enhance local connections throughout the town, providing a key pedestrian link from the Birks to the Tay, providing great viewing opportunities of the surrounding countryside and distant hills whilst linking existing river orientated attractions.

Moness Bridge

Part of this strategy could include the creation of a new, active, pedestrian bridge, could be a key development within the town centre, linking Burnside to the Watermill. This would create a new place to dwell and experience the beauty of the Moness Burn away from the noise of the A827.

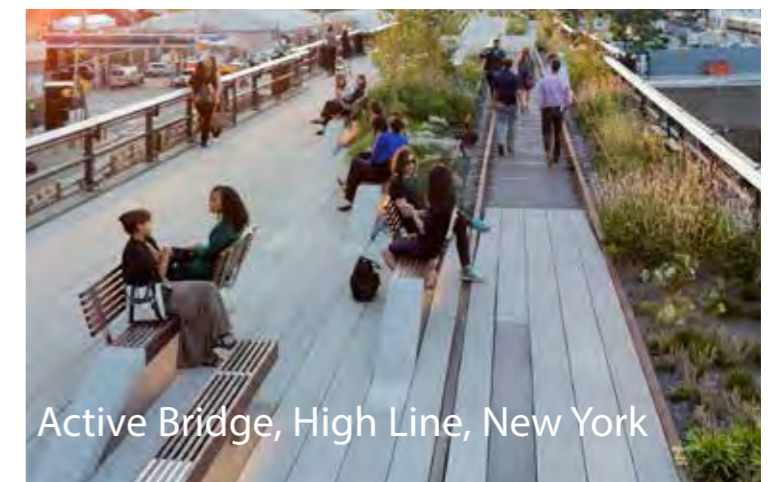
Concerns were raised during the Charrette process about the financial viability of this, however, examples such as the ZUS bridge in Rotterdam show how crowd-funded, community sponsored projects can have significant results.



An t-Eilean Bridge, Inverness Campus



Bank Street Bridge, Viewing Opportunity



Active Bridge, High Line, New York

A/ The Moness Bridge

- Installation of a new Pedestrian Bridge linking Burnside to the Watermill
- Integrated lighting, seating and planting to encourage an active urban realm
- Fringe developments to include the installation of public information, cycling storage and lockers.

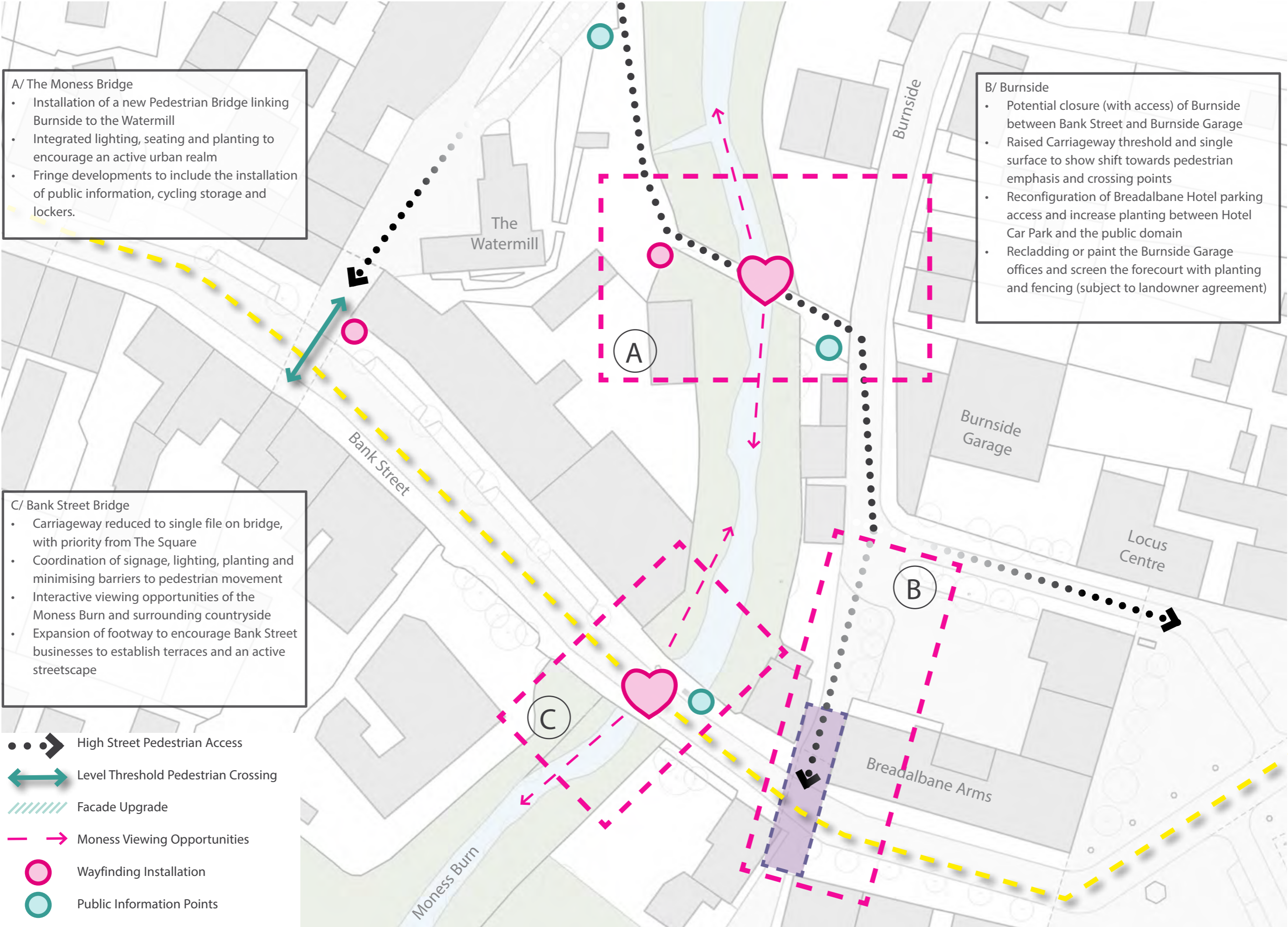
B/ Burnside

- Potential closure (with access) of Burnside between Bank Street and Burnside Garage
- Raised Carriageway threshold and single surface to show shift towards pedestrian emphasis and crossing points
- Reconfiguration of Breadalbane Hotel parking access and increase planting between Hotel Car Park and the public domain
- Recladding or paint the Burnside Garage offices and screen the forecourt with planting and fencing (subject to landowner agreement)

C/ Bank Street Bridge

- Carriageway reduced to single file on bridge, with priority from The Square
- Coordination of signage, lighting, planting and minimising barriers to pedestrian movement
- Interactive viewing opportunities of the Moness Burn and surrounding countryside
- Expansion of footway to encourage Bank Street businesses to establish terraces and an active streetscape

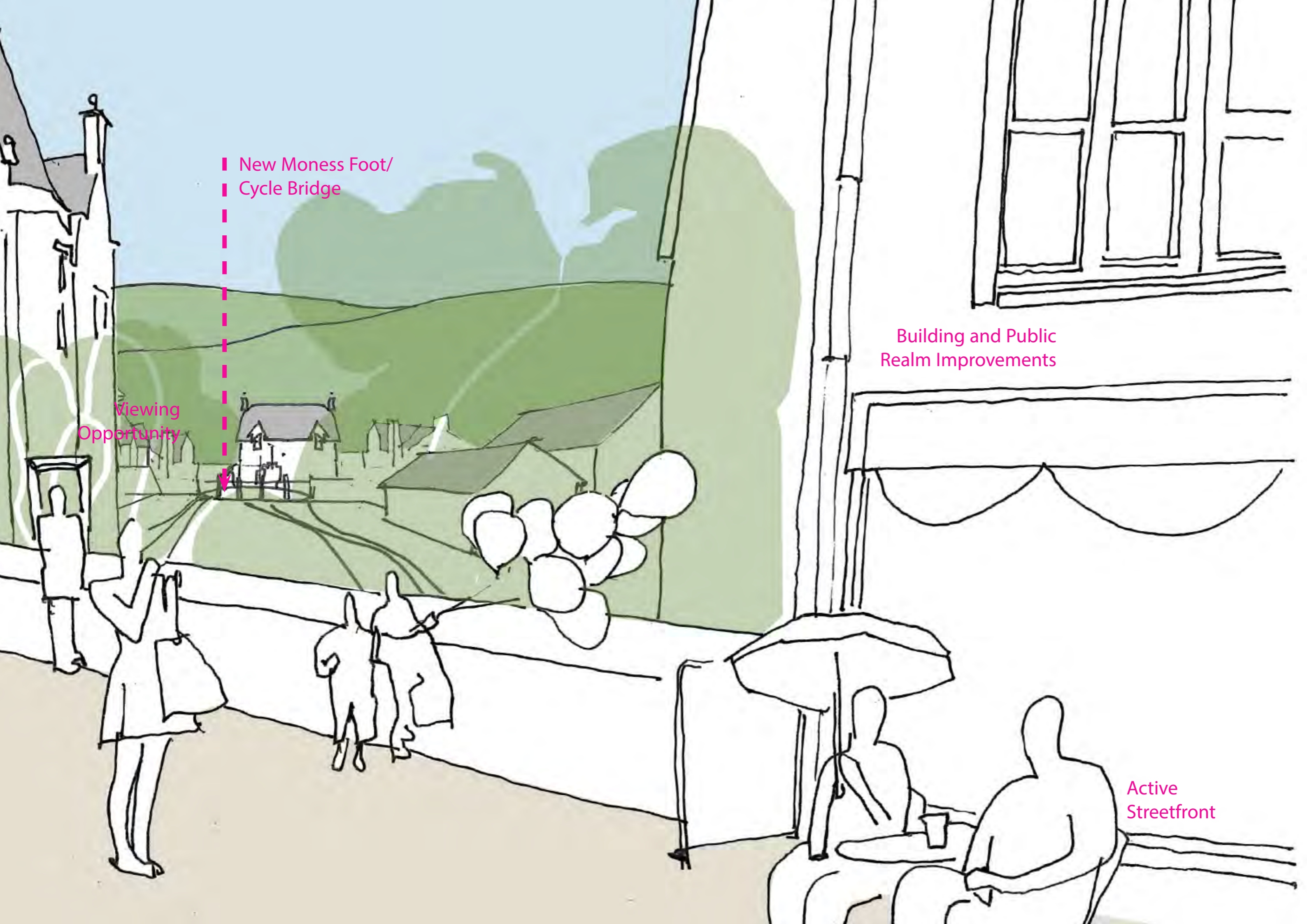
- • • → High Street Pedestrian Access
- ↔ Level Threshold Pedestrian Crossing
- //// Facade Upgrade
- → Moness Viewing Opportunities
- Wayfinding Installation
- Public Information Points





Community
Banners

Carriageway reduced
to minimum possible
width



■ New Moness Foot/
■ Cycle Bridge

Viewing
Opportunity

Building and Public
Realm Improvements

Active
Streetfront

Making it happen

How to deliver the proposals through collaborative working, sourcing funding and project development

03

Making it happen

Charrette Outcomes

In the words of an old Japanese proverb: "Vision without action is a dream. Action without vision is a nightmare." The charrette's visionary thinking for the next 20 years of Aberfeldy town centre's future will only bear fruit if it is accompanied by action. This section provides information on collaborative working, funding and project development to implement the proposals described in Section 2.

The 20 year vision created in this report reflects Aberfeldy town centre and the community's aspirations as they were in early 2015. Times change, tastes change and people move on.

Flexibility and Adaptability

The key principles and design approach contained in this report should be seen as a guiding strategy: the details and indeed individual projects that make up the strategy can, and should, flex over time. Any number of new opportunities and ideas are likely to emerge over the coming months and years as a result of, for example, new people emerging or new funding becoming available.

It is important not to deter activity and investment simply because something is not contained in this document. That is why flexibility and adaptability is so important.

The partners should use this document, alongside other documents such as the Community Action Plan, as tools to secure funding to apply for grants and loans for individual projects and seek investment from developers interested in the area.

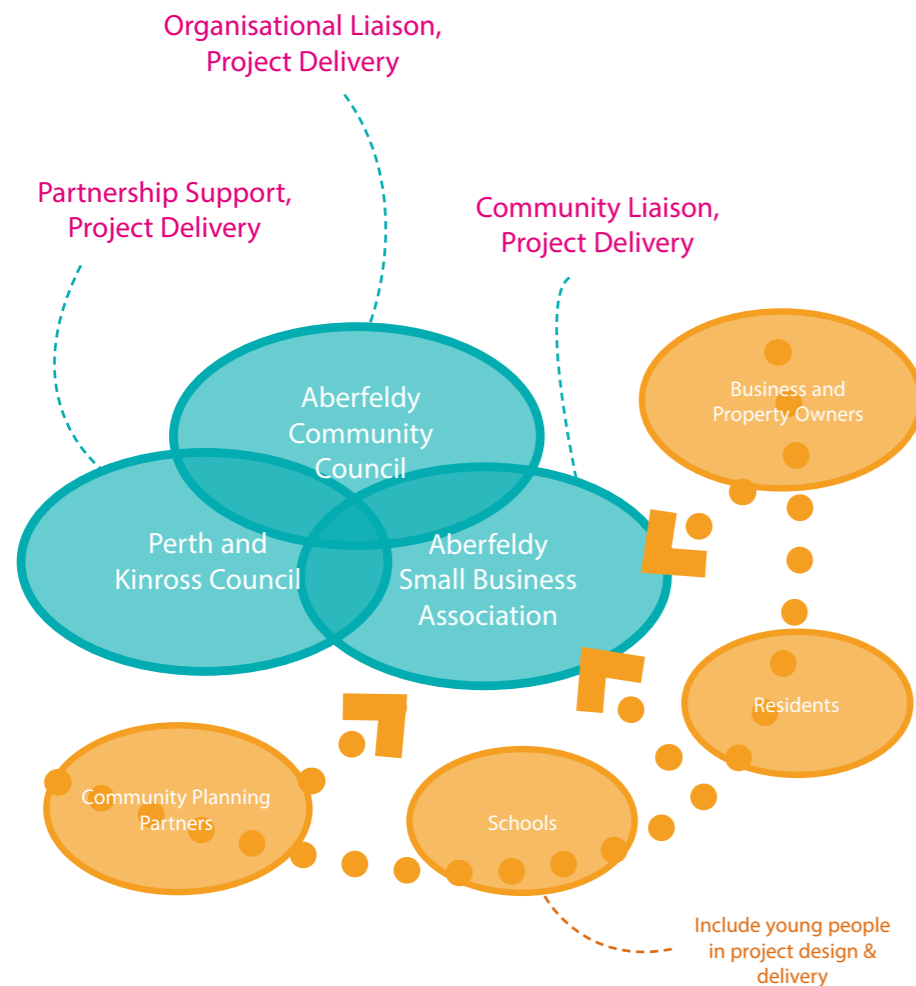
It should also be used to influence Council land use planning policy and service delivery/infrastructure and facilities investment by the Council and its Community Planning partners (capital and revenue budgets).



Making it happen

Collaborative Working

In times of limited funding, the energies and resources of all parties will be most effective through collaborative working between Perth and Kinross Council and the local community.



It was clear from the Charrette meetings that the Aberfeldy and wider Tay Valley community recognised that community action either through individual or collective action was a necessity.

From the inputs at these meetings there was clear evidence of a creative community both in terms of thinking and application. Much of this creativity has grown as a response to changing economic circumstances with a recognition that the people of Tay Valley were the best people to fix problems with the support of others. The Birks Cinema is just one example of a creative response arising from binding community action together not just to save a building but recognising such a facility has value in binding Aberfeldy's place identity by physical transformation, social interaction and economic generation.

Much of the economic activity in the Tay Valley relies on small creative entrepreneurial action. This action essentially projects the place's values and lifestyle. Such characteristics were evident at the meetings with a sharing of desires and preferences of what is required and how the community might achieve their goals.

The challenge is how to transfer such sharing at a charrette into delivering community action. Making a living in a rural economy requires commitment and hard effort and people understandably have to put their energies into their own individual interests, priorities and productions. Equally, there is already significant collective voluntary action from those who have invested substantial time into projects such as the Birks Cinema, Highland Perthshire Community Land Trust, Aberfeldy Festival and so on. All of these actions demonstrate a considerable commitment by the people in their place.

The key question is whether one can find the time and capacity for all that creativity and commitment to somehow be bound together for even closer co-operative action to further enhance and project Aberfeldy as a great place to live and visit?

All successful projects need champions and leaders who can call upon their enthusiastic energy and commitment to enthuse people to come together in the form of a project coalition of support. Successful projects can only be realized with good levels of co-operation from all of the participating partners.

From our discussions and investigations there are three key partners who need to work together and collectively take the lead for the vision to become reality. Each has a complementary role and should take the lead on certain aspects of delivery, as shown in the diagram.

The key partners should continue to work alongside each other in mutually supportive relationships, with Perth and Kinross Council continuing as an equal partner as well as offering a facilitating role. The Council, with its range of paid staff and systems, should support but not direct the volunteer-led organisations.

Beyond the key partners, the wider circle of stakeholders will vary over time. They need to be kept updated of progress so they can support as appropriate. Progress updates could take various forms, for example from newsletters and social media to a 5 yearly conference to celebrate and re-energise.

Funding Sources

Funding Opportunities

Perth and Kinross Council Community Funding Sources

- PKC Corporate Financial Assistance Grant
- Common Good Fund
- PKC Community Environment Challenge Fund

Perth and Kinross Council operate a grant service which provides support to people looking to secure funding for projects and activities. (T: 0845 605 2000, or by visiting www.pkgrantsdirect.com)

PKC Corporate Financial Assistance Grant

Investment in growth and development

- Three year funding for voluntary organisations
- Support for Enterprising Communities
- Support to optimise other funding streams

Investment in grass-roots activities

- Support for small group activities
- Support for small community events

Common Good Funding Opportunities

Local Education Activities

- Activity or purpose that can demonstrate a benefit to the community within the common good area

Acquisition of equipment (max 50% of total costs)

Community Event Support (max 50% of total costs)

- Christmas lighting & firework displays
- Events/games/festivals
- Prize giving at events/games/festivals

Capital grants for provision / improvement of facilities for general public (max 50% of total costs)

Only limited funding has been identified for delivery of capital proposals from existing public sector budgets. It is important to make good use of this existing funding to deliver some quick wins on the ground, as described in the Delivery Timetable on page 57. Partners will need to work together to access capital funding for public sector led projects.

PKC Corporate Financial Assistance Grant

The Council aims to target its own funding via their Corporate Financial Assistance budget in an “investment focussed” manner. Their aim is to provide support to obtaining investment funding that contributes and sustains organisations and projects. The Council is seeking to take a longer term view on investment in community capacity building that will enable stronger local communities through partnership arrangements. The Council believes such support will enable them to achieve positive social and environmental outcomes.

Common Good Fund

Perth and Kinross Council owns land and property that forms part of the common good of the former burghs in Perth & Kinross. There is a statutory requirement for the Council to manage common good assets “having regard to the interests of the inhabitants” of those former burghs. In addition, the Council administers 10 associated common good funds one of which is Aberfeldy Common Good Fund

The Common Good Fund is intended to provide grant support to citizens or qualifying organisations to undertake a range of community activities.

Common Good Fund awards need to comply with the “Code of Guidance on Funding External Bodies and Following the Public Pound approved by Perth and Kinross Council on 30 June 1999”. Awards must also comply with the Council’s statutory obligations relating to the common good assets. Awards are subject to a funding, monitoring and reporting agreements and procedures.

Other Council Managed Funds

In addition to the PKC Corporate Financial Assistance and Common Good Funds, the Council also administers a range of smaller Trusts that have been bequeathed to the Council. Trust funds are subject to particular criteria on how they can be awarded and are required to meet the intentions of the original benefactors. Trusts may be “Charitable Trusts” and “Public Trusts” under the Charity and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 definition. The Charitable Trusts are regulated by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

Funding Sources

Funding Opportunities

PKC Community Environment Challenge Fund

Support available for projects that;

- Reduce waste or recycling materials
- Save on management/ materials through plant alterations
- Benefit the local economy (tourism/ craft/ production)
- Benefit and integrate the wider, diverse community
- Work with existing/ proposed regeneration services
- Can be exercised within 12 months
- Demonstrate sustainable environmental action

Various Other Available Community Funding Sources

- Robertson Trust
- Gannochy Trust
- Forteviot Trust
- SSE Griffin and Calliachar Wind Farm Fund
- Lottery Funds "Big Lottery", "Awards for All" and "Heritage Lottery Fund"
- Creative Scotland
- A range of Scottish Government Regeneration Funds
- Sport Scotland
- The Impact of Scottish Government's Community Empowerment Legislation
- Townscape Heritage Scheme
- Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme

The PKC Community Environment Challenge Fund

Challenge funds may be awarded where projects are being led and delivered by community groups that are supported by the wider local community and can demonstrate a significant difference to the local environment. Such projects also need to demonstrate that they have a viable long-term sustainable management plan. As a general comment, grant awards are subject to a maximum of 50% of the total project costs. The balance of costs could be covered by "match funding" and/or in kind activity.

Townscape Heritage Fund

Townscape Heritage schemes, the replacement programme for the preceding Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), are intended to reverse the decline of the country's historic towns. Applicants work with a range of partners to repair buildings in conservation areas, creating attractive, vibrant places that people want to live, visit and invest in. Situated in a designated conservation area, Aberfeldy is eligible to apply for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and others for the purposes of this scheme. This can include repairing and reinstating architectural detail, including shop-fronts, work to bring vacant buildings back into use, and improvements to the public realm. All of these would help address issues identified by the residents of Aberfeldy as points which should be incorporated into the overall vision for the town.

The Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill

The Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill is due to be enacted later this year. Related to Community Empowerment, Scottish Government is also promoting a Land Reform Bill. Its provisions within the proposed Empowerment and Land Reform legislation includes greater opportunities for communities to achieve their goals and aspirations through taking independent action. In order to provide the necessary power to local communities it is likely that defined, resourced and funded "community bodies" will have the ability to acquire local assets and undertake local services. Future sources of public funding are likely to be linked to this agenda.

To exercise community action under this forthcoming legislation there will need to be appropriate community structures, organisations and processes. Community bodies will require support for capacity building and while local volunteers will remain the life blood of local initiatives there nevertheless will need to be appropriate resources to deliver and operate projects. From our discussions during the Charrette process, it was clear that the existing community groups were highly dedicated but believed that they were at full capacity through their existing commitments.

If the community wishes to acquire property for any purpose (such as the former Co-op building on The Square), the key partners may wish to consider whether there is a need to establish a 'formal Community Body' in terms of the current Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill, such as a Development Trust. This may be necessary to allow the local community to lead future projects, such as the successful refurbishment of the Birks Cinema. The Development Trusts Association (DTA) and their Community Ownership Support Service would be able to provide further advice on this.

Delivery Recommendations



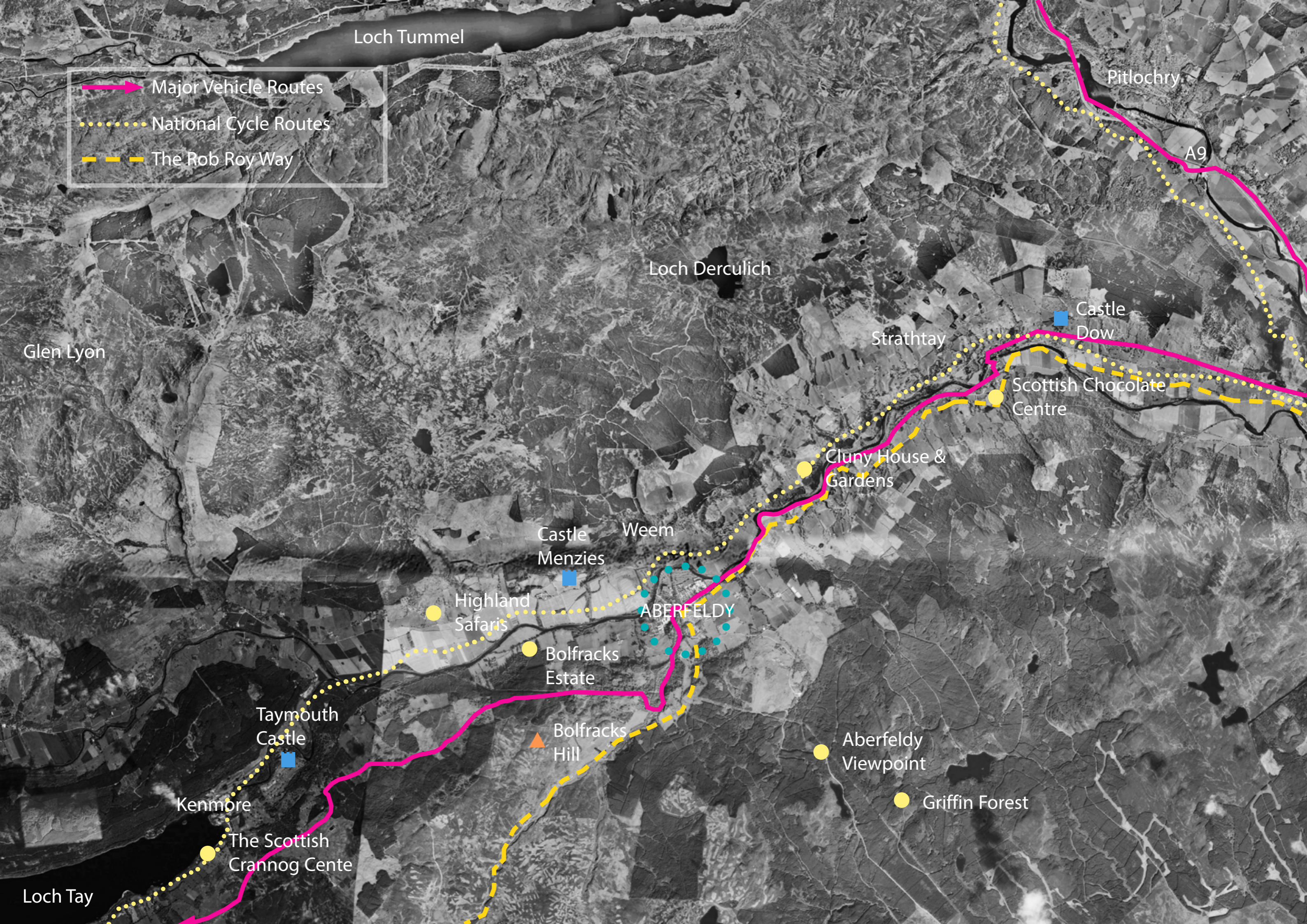
- A Establish whether there are community project champions who are willing, with others, to lead the propositions.
- B Ascertain whether there is sufficient coalition of support from people who are willing to engage and help drive the projects forward.
- C Assuming (A) + (B) can be achieved consider the establishment of an “Aberfeldy Town Team” that becomes the “Community Body” entity that is properly constituted to be able to access a variety of funds and act as the vehicle for community co-operative action and provide funding and management capacity
- D Such an “Aberfeldy Town Team” entity would engage in a co-operative agreement with all partners and build up critical working relationships with the relevant Council representatives.
- E Engage and seek co-operation and potential funding guidance from Development Trust Association Scotland and their Community Ownership Support Service.
- F Monitor and engage with Scottish Government and PKC on the enactment of the Community Empowerment Bill and subsequent secondary legislation along with any resulting funding initiatives and pilot programmes.
- G Engage with good practice Community Trusts to gain knowledge on the best way to undertake community acquisitions and generally operate a community initiative. DTAS will assist in such engagement along with good practice organizations such as Neilston Development Trust who have acquired assets under the Land Reform legislation.

Delivery Timetable



with council support





- Major Vehicle Routes
- National Cycle Routes
- The Rob Roy Way

Loch Tummel

Pitlochry

A9

Loch Derculich

Glen Lyon

Strathtay

Castle Dow

Scottish Chocolate Centre

Cluny House & Gardens

Castle Menzies

Weem

ABERFELDY

Highland Safaris

Bolfracks Estate

Bolfracks Hill

Aberfeldy Viewpoint

Griffin Forest

Taymouth Castle

Kenmore

The Scottish Crannog Centre

Loch Tay

Visitor Context

Surrounding Assets

Regional Visitor Attraction Offer
Perthshire Attractions Performance
Ranking VisitScotland 2014

- Tay Forest Park, Dunkeld (251,700 Visitors)
- Killcrankie Visitor Centre (109,000 Visitors)
- The Birnham Institute (106,000 Visitors)
- Dunkeld Cathedral (85,900 Visitors)
- Blair Atholl Distillery, Pitlochry (75,000 Visitors)
- Ben Lawers Visitor Centre (31,600 Visitors)
- [Dewar's World of Whiskey](#) (28,900 Visitors)
- Loch of the Lowes, Dunkeld (19,900 Visitors)
- Ell House, Dunkeld (18,200 Visitors)
- Scottish Crannog Centre, Kenmore (19,700 Visitors)
- [Bolfrack's Garden](#) (1,500 Visitors)

The Birks of Aberfeldy were not included in the VisitScotland ranking but other surveys indicate that they are single biggest attraction in the town, attracting approximately 50,000 visitors per year.

Visitors are important to Aberfeldy's local economy. As part of their initial analysis, the charrette team undertook specialist research on this particular topic.

Current Visitor Numbers¹

Aberfeldy, situated in the Highland Perthshire region of Scotland, has a population of 1,986² with a regional 60 minute visitor market of 195,000.

The region of Highland Perthshire has a population of almost 12,000 with a day trip market that includes a further 45,000 approximately. Within Perthshire, the majority of trips to region are made by people living in Scotland. Despite a decline in visits by domestic tourists between 2012 and 2013, spending by the group nevertheless increased during this period of time while visits by overseas tourist to the area have also increased.

In 2013, UK tourists to Perthshire spent approximately £183 million and made 643,000 trips to the region, 65% of these coming from within Scotland. Overseas visitors made 152,000 trips spending £57 million.

Current Visitor Offer³

Perthshire's rural areas report significantly higher visitor numbers than the regions Urban areas. A number of attractions, particularly those based outdoors, have seen their visitor numbers increase significantly between 2013 and 2014 where ten attractions in the region gained over 50,000 visitors in 2014.

Visitor Infrastructure

The appeal of a town as a destination is equally reliant on the local retail and catering infrastructure, allowing it to both attract and serve visitors, as well as underpinning the local community. Aberfeldy performs strongly in these categories, with local retail offers including boutique shops and independent catering opportunities.

1 VisitScotland 2013
2 Census 2011
3 The Moffat Centre Visitor Attraction Monitor

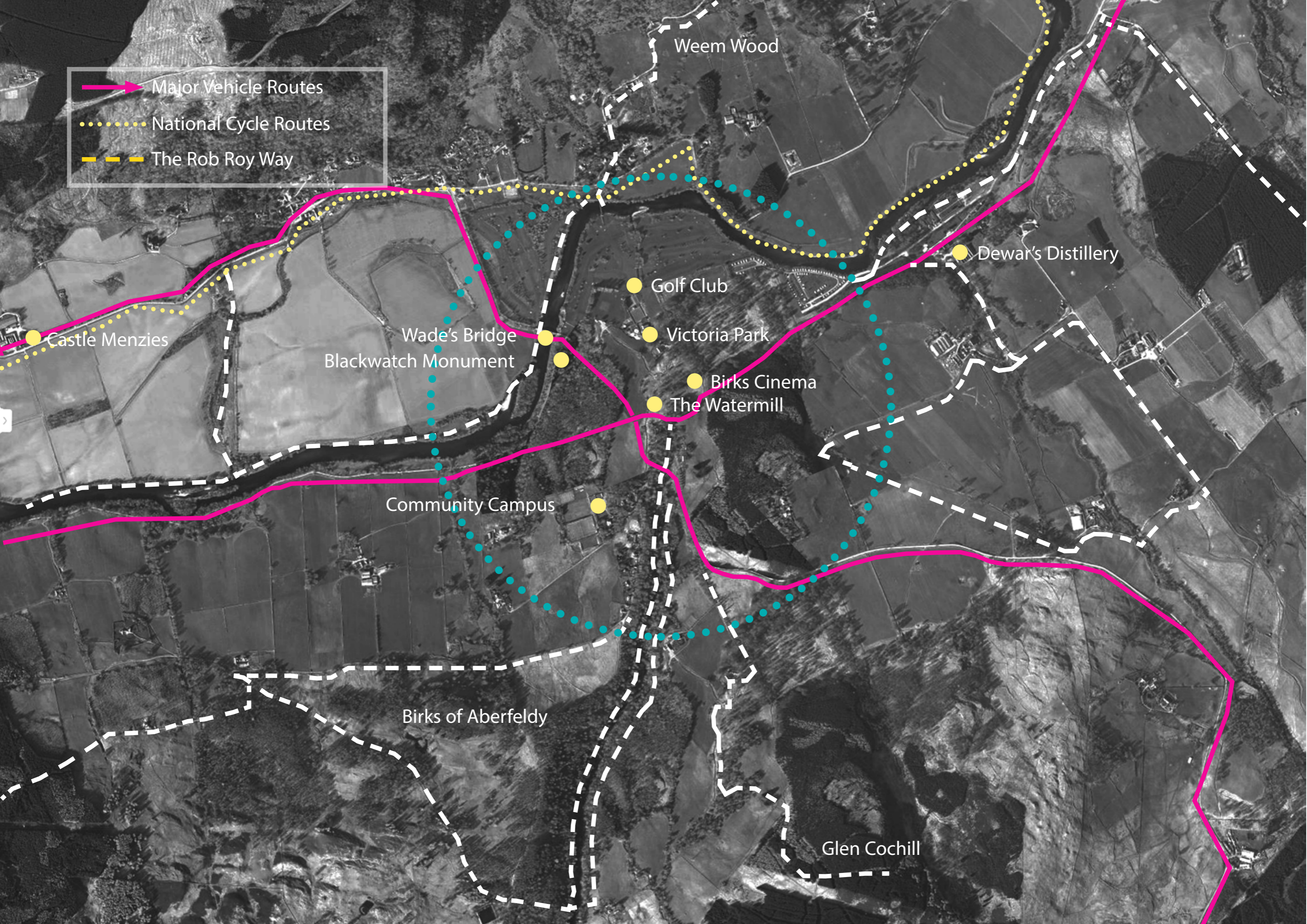


Loch Tummel



Local Independent Businesses

Major Vehicle Routes
National Cycle Routes
The Rob Roy Way



Weem Wood

Dewar's Distillery

Golf Club

Victoria Park

Birks Cinema

The Watermill

Wade's Bridge
Blackwatch Monument

Community Campus

Birks of Aberfeldy

Glen Cochill

Castle Menzies

Visitor Context

Local Assets

'Soft' Visitor Attraction Offer

Local attractions that do not provide a structured visitor experience

Walks

- The Rob Roy Way
- The Birks of Aberfeldy
- Ben Lawers
- Castle Dow, Grandtully
- Acharn to Aberfeldy path
- Aberfeldy Viewpoint

Leisure Sports

- Aberfeldy Golf Course
- Victoria Park, Aberfeldy
- Breadalbane Community Campus
- Aberfeldy Angling Club
- Bolfracks Estate Fishery
- Dunolly Adventure Outdoors
- Highland Safari Adventures
- Splash White Water rafting

Road Cycling

- Etape Caledonia Route
- Dunkeld- Aberfeldy Circular
- Loch Tay to Glen Lyon (48 miles)

Mountain Biking

- Griffin Forest (9.3 miles)
- Drummond Hill (6.2 miles)

Activities

There are already a number of relatively small events either being implemented or in the planning stages such as the proposed Tummel and Tay Festival. An enhanced programme could serve to both attract visitors and cater to those in the area for other reasons.

Key Aims

While the day-trip market for the area is significant, the number of domestic visitors to Perthshire has declined in recent years. The length of stay and levels of expenditure for both overseas tourists and domestic tourists have either increased or declined to a lesser degree.

Aberfeldy has a considerable local visitor offer which combines these popular visitor attractions with a strong offer of 'soft' visitor options, as well as opportunities for adventure and outdoors experiences. The top 10 attractions within 30 minutes of Aberfeldy attracted over 100,000 visitors in 2014, with Dewar's World of Whisky attracting over 28,000 visitors. With judicious marketing, this could allow it to carve a niche within the region.

Based on the visitor assessment, it is recommended that, while certainly not dismissing the day-trip market, the primary focus should be on visitors staying in Highland Perthshire.

To enhance the visitor economy of Aberfeldy, the focus should be on the following aims:

- Ensuring that all visitors are welcome in Aberfeldy
- Ensuring that all visitors are aware of all that the town has to offer
- Maximising the impact of all local attractions and visitor offer
- Encouraging visitors to spend time and money in Aberfeldy
- Ensuring ease of access to car and cycle parking
- Examining the potential to introduce new family attractions



The Birks of Aberfeldy



Aberfeldy Watermill Bookshop



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