

## **North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum**

### **Note of Statutory Forum Meeting**

Monday 29 September 2008 – Ardrossan Civic Centre, Glasgow Street, Ardrossan

**Present:** Luke Borwick (Chair), Bruce Davidson, Louise Dickson, Jean Highgate, Sandy Miller and Dick Sim

**Attending:** Janice Gray (PfAP), Margaret Ferrier and Louise Kirk (both NAC)

**Apologises:** Annique Armstrong, Kerry Burns, David Clegg, PC Donna Harrison, Cllr Jean Highgate (Vice Chair), Rob Loney, Kate Samson and Gerard Tattersfield

#### **Welcome & Introduction**

Luke Borwick welcomed the Group to the meeting. No issues were raised in relation to the Note of the June meeting.

#### **Progress Update**

##### **• Access & Code Issues**

The AO advised the Group of the following issues:

- Silverburn Farm, Whiting Bay, Isle of Arran: A complaint has been received regarding the proposed closure of a claimed Right of Way (RoW) between the main A787 and Whiting Bay Golf Course. The AO advised that Evidence of Use Questionnaires had been issued to all interested parties and that a considerable level of response had been received. The Forum agreed that based on the information available, the route appeared to meet the criteria necessary for RoW status. The group indicated that they were supportive of the route being kept open. It was agreed that the AO would continue investigating the issue, undertake negotiations where necessary and advise the Forum accordingly at the next appropriate meeting.
- Marine Drive, Irvine: The AO advised that an enquiry had been received from the Irvine Bay Urban Bay Regeneration Company (URC) regarding access rights across a section of the Beach Park at Marine Drive, Irvine. This is in relation to a proposal to create a golf course on the site as part of the Masterplan for the Irvine Bay area.  
The AO indicated that the URC were advised of the existence of the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 7 (also two proposed Core Paths IK10 and IK62), a further proposed Core Paths (IK11A), a variety of wider path network route and the access rights under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. The AO had advised the URC that it was envisaged that these routes could be retained or incorporated into the proposals for the site. The AO also advised the URC of the parking use in the area by access users, which should be addressed by the Parking Study, being undertaken as part of their overall investigations.
- Harbourside, Irvine: The AO advised that an enquiry had been received from the Irvine Bay URC regarding access rights through a site comprised of the three car parks adjacent to the bridge to the former Big Idea. This is in relation to a proposal to create a housing development on the site as part of the Masterplan for the Irvine Bay area. The AO indicated that the URC were advised of the existence of a proposed Core Path (IK8) and the use of the area for parking to access the Beach Park. The AO had advised the URC that it was envisaged that this route could be retained or incorporated into the proposals for the site. The issues in relation to parking use were also reiterated in relation to this enquiry.

The Forum indicated concern that outdoor access should be provided for and the core path network retained within both of the Irvine sites. MF advised the group that the proposals for these sites were being developed independently to the Council by consultants working on behalf of the URC. The AO advised that further information on the URC's proposals for the Irvine Bay area could be obtained from their website: [www.irvinebayurc.co.uk](http://www.irvinebayurc.co.uk). It was agreed that the progress of these projects would be monitored and considered further by the group where necessary.

Discussion arose in relation to the Masterplan being promoted by NPL Estates in the press for the Ardeer Peninsula. MF advised the group that the Masterplan has not been agreed with the Council and Planning Permission has not been secured for the proposals. The Group agreed that a bridge onto the Ardeer peninsula would provide for increased access but recognised the issues in relation to the industrial uses and the impact of

these on access rights. It was agreed that the progress of the Ardeer Masterplan would be monitored and considered further by the group where necessary.

- **Projects 2008/09**

The AO advised that a Consultants Brief has been prepared and issued to consultants for the NCN 7 Kilwinning to Kilbirnie Off-road route feasibility study. The Brief has identified the need for extensive consultation including landowners, local communities and the Outdoor Access Forum. Copies of the Consultants Brief are available from the AO on request. The AO advised that the consultants' Expressions of Interest were due by 3 October, Fee Submission were due by 13 October, Interviews would be held on 20 October and the successful consultant would be appointed shortly thereafter. It was agreed that the AO would advise the group of the appointment and agreed timescales at the next meeting.

The AO also advised that the funding application submitted by Brodick Improvements Committee (BIC) to the Argyll and Islands Leader Programme has been successful for the Brodick Seafront Project. The group congratulated BIC on their success and welcomed the development of the route, which is identified as a potential core path in the Draft Core Paths Plan.

The AO indicated that an allocation of £3.38 million has been announced for the Ayrshire Leader Programme. South Ayrshire Council as lead Authority are in the process of appointing a small team to implement the Programme. It was agreed that an application would be submitted to this programme in due course for the upgrade of the NCN 73 at Ardeer Quarry, Ardeer. It was agreed that the AO would progress this and keep the group informed of any progress as appropriate.

It was agreed that further discussion would be undertaken in relation to projects at the next Forum meeting, as more information would be available at that stage on the likely timescale for adoption of the Core Paths Plan. It was agreed that all potential projects should be raised with the AO prior to the next meeting.

### **Forum development**

- **Forum leaflet**

The AO circulated the amended text for the leaflet for general distribution to the group. LD was thanked for her and her husband's efforts in producing the leaflet text. It was agreed that the AO would arrange for a mock up of the final leaflet to be produced for the next Forum meeting. Discussion arose on the most appropriate colours and fonts for the leaflet. It was agreed that a buff background and blue text using a true type font would be the most appropriate option. The group agreed to comment on the overall presentation of the leaflet and the printing requirements at the next meeting.

- **NAF/LAF Joint Meeting**

The AO provided the group with a summary of the NAF/LAF Joint meeting. Councillor Winifred Sloan, Provost of South Ayrshire Council opened the meeting and Richard Wakeford, Director-General Environment of the Scottish Government, provided the Key Note speech. David McDonald provided a personal view of access rights in Sweden and Roddy Fairley, Director of Operations South at Scottish Natural Heritage provided a presentation on the work of SNH.

Mark Wrightman, Secretary of the National Access Forum provided an update on the work of the National Access Forum and Ian Bunch, the Secretary of Prestwick Golf Club provided a presentation on access management on golf courses. South Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway and North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forums provided presentation on key issues in their areas and progress made to date. East Renfrewshire Outdoor Access Forum provided a presentation on improving the communication channels between Forums using a web based discussion forum.

The representatives who had been in attendance at the Joint Meeting agreed that it had been a worthwhile and informative event and that there had been more two-way communication than in previous years. The AO advised that the North Ayrshire presentation had been very well received. The group thanked KS for preparing and providing the presentation on behalf of the Forum.

The group expressed concerns regarding the web-based discussion Forum due to the resource implications. JG highlighted that the PfAP Web Forum had been closed as it was not being used effectively and required a considerable level of input and management. It was agreed that the AO and PfAP would monitor any developments in relation to this and advise the group accordingly.

The AO advised that the agendas and minutes of the National Access Forum are sent to the Council by e-mail. Forum representatives wishing to receive copies of these mailings were requested to contact the AO directly.

- **North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership**

The AO advised the group that the Community Planning Partnership has invited a member of the Forum to join the Environment Partnership. This is a sub-group of the Community Planning Partnership and will replace the current Environment Thematic Group. It was agreed that this invitation would be examined in full after the presentation from the Community Planning Co-ordinator.

The AO advised that the Community Planning Partnership would be consulting on the draft Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) in the near future. The group discussed the importance of ensuring the outdoor access agenda is recognised within the SOA and agreed to examine this and prepare a response to the consultation at the next meeting. JG advised that the PfAP has produced guidance on incorporating the outdoor access agenda into the new SOAs. It was agreed that this would be examined alongside the Draft SOA at the next meeting. Forum representatives wishing to receive a copy of the document prior to the meeting were requested to contact the AO directly.

- **Training and events**

The AO advised the group of the following training opportunities:

- Common Ground seminar to explore the synergy available to Local Outdoor Access Forums and Local Disability Access Panels across Scotland – Paths for All Partnership (PfAP) – 7 October 2008
- Path Construction Basics course – PfAP – 21 October 2008
- Managing Shared Use course – PfAP – 28 October 2008
- Accessibility and Survey Audit course – SNH – 28 October 2008
- Your Day In Court seminar – PfAP – 12 November 2008
- Scottish Outdoor Access Fair – Scottish Countryside Access Network (SCAN) – 21 November 2008
- Workshop for Recreational User Representatives of Local Access Forums – Ramblers Association – 22 November 2008

Forum representatives interested in attending the events were requested to contact the organisation arranging the event directly or to request further information from the AO.

The AO advised the group that the Ramblers Association had enquired as to whether or not Forum meetings were held in public. JG advised that the majority of Forums held their meetings in public. The group discussed the need for confidentiality in relation to certain issues and the issue of data protection. The group examined the mechanisms to allow public contribution that were all ready in place for example through raising issues with the Access Officer or representatives. It was agreed that these mechanisms provided sufficient opportunities for the vast majority of situations and requests to attend Forum meetings would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The AO agreed to advise the Ramblers Association accordingly.

## **Core Path Planning**

- **Formal Consultation**

The AO advised that three of the four formal objections had been resolved and that negotiations were on going in relation to the remaining objection. The group welcomed the resolution of the objections and it was agreed that the AO would advise the group of any progress in relation to the remaining objection at the next Forum meeting. RL agreed to assist the AO with the negotiations where necessary.

- **Next stages**

The AO advised the group that the North Ayrshire and Clyde Muirshiel Countryside Ranger Services have agreed to survey a number of proposed core paths in preparation for the adoption of the Core Paths Plan. Volunteers were sought from the group to assist with this process. It was agreed that the AO would supply maps and forms to all willing volunteers in the near future.

The AO advised that subject to the resolution of the remaining objection, the Core Paths Plan would be considered for adoption by the Executive on 9 December 2008. It is envisaged that the North Ayrshire Council Committee will consider the Executive's decision for ratification in early January 2009. The group agreed to bring forward the next

Forum meeting to 19 November 2008 to provide sufficient time to consider the final format and content of the Plan prior to the Committee deadline. It was agreed that the AO would reschedule the meeting and advise all representatives accordingly.

#### • **Production of the Core Path Plan**

The group discussed the format of the final Core Paths Plan. It was agreed that the Plan would be made available free of charge on CD Rom, electronically on the Council's website and as loan and reference copies in all North Ayrshire Libraries. It was agreed that a mock up of the final Plan would be prepared and that this would be discussed in full at the November meeting. It was agreed that the AO would source quotations prior to the meeting for the group's consideration.

The AO advised that approaches had been made to Strathclyde Police, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Historic Scotland (HS) for assistance with the production of the Access and the Natural Heritage and Access and the Cultural Heritage leaflets. These were required as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process. It was agreed that the AO would advise the group of any progress at the November meeting.

#### **Single Outcome Agreement**

Justina Murray (JM), Community Planning Coordinator, provided the group with a presentation on the Community Planning Partnership and the purpose of and development of the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) for North Ayrshire. A copy of the presentation is provided as Appendix A to this Note.

JM reiterated the invitation for a Forum representative to join the Environment Partnership of the Community Planning Partnership and advised that the consultation on the Draft SOA would be between 31 October and 24 November 2008. The group welcomed the opportunity to join the Environment Partnership and agreed to identify a suitable volunteer at their next meeting. MF highlighted that the group is very experienced and therefore has valuable contributions to make and knowledge to impart to the Environment Partnership. The group agreed that this provided a valuable opportunity for partnership working.

It was agreed that the AO would circulate the information on the SOA consultation as soon as it becomes available from the Community Planning Partnership. The group highlighted that outdoor access is cross cutting across all the agendas covered by the SOA for example health, social inclusion and the environment. The group stressed that funding is necessary to implement works and promote access therefore it is essential that the role of outdoor access is fully recognised within the SOA.

#### **AOCB**

- Wardlaw Wood, Dalry – SM advised the group that there had been an "informal rave" at Wardlaw Wood, Dalry. This was organised without the landowner's permission. The route to the Wood is a proposed core path (NC49) and a large removal van was used to take equipment up to the Wood using the path. The Police were called on a number of occasions as the event had run on into the late evening. The Police had arrived some time later and advised SM that the organisers had been told to turn the music down. SM indicated that he was disappointed with the response obtained and would require to ensure that the vehicular gates were locked to prevent further incidences of this nature.

#### **Close of meeting**

LB thanked the group for participating in the meeting and JM for providing an informative presentation on the Community Planning Partnership and SOA. The group were reminded that the next meeting would be on 19 November 2008 and that the December meeting was now formally cancelled.