

North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum

Draft Meeting Note

Monday 7 December 2009 - Ardrossan Civic Centre, Glasgow Street, Ardrossan

Present: Luke Borwick (Chair), Bruce Davidson, Louise Dickson, Rob Loney and Sandy Millar

In Attendance: Geoff Atkins (SNH), Margaret Ferrier (NAC), Ruth Kelloe, Louise Kirk, Cameron Sharp (both NAC) and Charles Woodward (CMRP)

Apologies: Annique Armstrong, Kenny Burns, Councillor Jean Highgate, Jean Highet, Kate Sampson, Dick Sim and Gerard Tattersfield.

Welcome and introduction

Luke Borwick (LB) welcomed the Forum to the meeting. No issues were raised in relation to the note of the September meeting. LB welcomed David Hammond (DH), Planning Officer, from North Ayrshire Council to the meeting.

Presentation – North Ayrshire Local Development Plan

DH provided the Forum with an interesting presentation on the North Ayrshire Local Development Plan. The presentation explained what a Local Development Plan (LDP) is and examined the links between outdoor access and planning. A copy of the presentation is provided as Appendix 1. The Forum were advised that the Main Issues Report (MIR) would be published electronically from mid December 2009 and out for public consultation between January and March 2010. The Forum agreed that it would be beneficial to contribute to the consultation process. It was agreed that a workshop would be organised to enable them to do so at the next meeting.

Within the questions and answers session discussion arose on the need for business space, rural housing, consideration in relation to Greenfield sites, the plan length and review period and mixed development. DH stressed the importance of a balance approach to delivering the Plan. CW reminded the Forum of the Scottish Rural Property and Business Association's (SRPBA) campaign to improve the availability of sustainable rural housing. Discussion arose of the potential for a rural crofting designation on Arran. Margaret Ferrier (MF) highlighted that the LDP process encourages debate on all of this. National Planning Framework 2 (NPF2) and the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) were also discussed and DH advised that there would be policies in relation to this within the Providing Infrastructure section of the LDP. LB thanked DH for the presentation and DH left the meeting.

Progress update

• Access and Code issues

The AO advised the Forum of the following issues and requested their input:

- Easter Highfield – The Forum were advised that the AO and Rob Loney (RL) met with the landowner and complainant to agree a solution. The landowner subsequently requested a minor modification which effectively reduced the overall length of the diversion by accessing

the field closer to the garden area. The Forum considered the proposal and agreed that it was reasonable. It was agreed that the AO would advise the landowner of the Forum's agreement, monitor the implementation and advise the Forum as appropriate.

- Dogs – The AO advised the Forum that presentations on responsible dog walking have been provided to the St Peters Primary as part of the pilot project. These were well received and it was envisaged that they would be rolled out to other local Schools. Discussions are to be held with Educational Services to see if the Paws for Thought initiative could be incorporated into the Countryside Ranger Service's education programme. The Forum agreed that it was important to incorporate this and to link into the Curriculum for Excellence where possible. It was agreed that the AO would investigate this and advise the Forum accordingly.
- Kelburn Avenue, Fairlie – The AO advised that further enquiries had been received in relation to the locked gate at Kelburn Avenue. The Council's Legal Services have advised that legal action would most likely be unsuccessful in light of the recent court cases therefore they are not recommending that a Section 14 Notice be issued. The Forum agreed that this appeared to be a logical course of action based on the outcome of recent cases and advice.
- Planning Applications – The AO advised that number of planning consultations have been received which related to core paths, paths and access rights. These have responded to directly by the AO including the restoration of Fairlie Castle and redevelopment of the housing at Old Caley Road. The AO advised that the transport assessment for the redevelopment of Recreation Park in East Road, Irvine had also recently been received. The Forum agreed that it was useful to be kept informed of such applications.

- **NCN Route 7 Feasibility Study**

The Forum were provided with a copy of the draft Health Impact Assessment Report and agreed to feed comments back to the AO by 5 January 2010. The AO advised that as a result of the consultation undertaken with the landowners between Dalry and Kilbirnie further work is required to survey and prepare specifications for the new alignment proposed by the Landowners. It was agreed that the AO would meet with the consultants in mid December to agree the scope of this work. The AO advised that a claim will be submitted to Sustrans by March 2010 for the Health Impact Assessment element of the project. The AO highlighted to the Forum that this element of the Study had been delayed by a change in personnel at greenspace scotland.

- **Projects 2009/10**

The AO reminded the Forum of the need to identify small scale projects for the utilisation of any remaining revenue budget. It was agreed that the AO should be advised of any proposals prior to the next meeting. The AO advised that the Capital Budget is still £50,000 and applications are being submitted to Sustrans and the Rural Development Contracts option of the Scottish Rural Development Programme for the upgrade of NCN 73 through Ardeer Quarry. The Forum agreed identify alternative works in case the bids are unsuccessful and to advise the AO of ideas before the next meeting. LB advised the Forum that it was advantageous to have a number of projects "on the shelf" in case funding opportunities arise.

- **Projects 2010/11**

The AO advised that no additional projects had been identified by the Forum for 2010/11. The AO reminded the Forum that the agreed focus was on the implementation of the Core Paths Plan. The Forum was requested to advise the AO of any potential projects prior to the next meeting.

The AO advised that Arran Access Trust, Arran Bike Club and partners are currently considering a bid to Argyll and the Islands LEADER programme for a feasibility study for the proposed route between Brodick and Corrie. It is estimated that the total cost would be in the region of £30,000 and that potentially 50% could be applied for from LEADER. They are looking for support from NAC and Infrastructure and Design (Roads) are currently looking into their own budgets. The Forum agreed that it would be reasonable to contribute to this project subject to a funding package being secured involving the different organisations. It was agreed that the AO would progress this with the groups and advise the Forum as appropriate.

- **Consultations**

The AO reminded the Forum of the need to feedback on the Outdoor Access Strategy Review questionnaire and advised that only one completed review form has been received. The Forum discussed the review of the Strategy and agreed that it merited a separate session. It was agreed that the next Forum meeting would concentrate on the review. The AO highlighted that it would be useful if the formal consultation on the Access Strategy could mirror the Local Development Plan process. The AO also reminded the Forum that this it is envisaged that supplementary guidance will be produced on outdoor access for the Local Development Plan. The Forum agreed that this should be covered as part of the review session and highlighted the need to cover issues such as secure lockers, off road routes, shower facilities and maintenance of routes.

The AO reminded the Forum that the closing date for the Inquiry into Active Travel was 11 December 2009. The Forum was also advised that an Officer level response was being submitted on behalf of Planning Services and Infrastructure and Design Services.

Forum development

- Membership issues

The AO advised that an e-mail has been circulated to all substitute representatives enquiring as to whether any of them would be interested in becoming representatives. RL highlighted that it would be beneficial to secure involvement from the health or health promotion sector for example through NHS Ayrshire and Arran. It was agreed that the AO should seek potential representatives/substitutes at the next Community Engagement Network meeting on 8 December 2009. LB highlighted that the NFUS and SRPBA should be approached to identify substitutes for landowners/managers. It was agreed that the AO would follow this up.

Charlie Woodward (CW) advised the Forum that Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park (CMRP) have been appointed to Inverclyde and Renfrewshire Outdoor Access Forums but currently attend North Ayrshire's as they were previously part of the Outdoor Access Steering Group. The Forum agreed that CMRP should be appointed to the Forum as an Agency representative. It was agreed that this appointment would be confirmed through a Committee Report when the full range of proposed appointments and/or changes are being reported to Committee for approval.

- Future Forum activities

The AO advised the Forum that the Renfrewshire OAF would like to meet with representatives from North Ayrshire OAF in 2010 to discuss a number of issues including partnership working and Forum development post Core Paths planning. The AO advised that the proposed date was

Thursday 25 February and RL volunteered to participate. The Forum discussed potential Forum activities for 2010 including site visits and one meeting with both the substitutes and representatives. It was agreed that the AO would investigate this further to inform discussion at the next appropriate meeting.

- Future presentations

The AO advised that a presentation will be made by Infrastructure and Design Services (Roads) to the next appropriate Forum meeting. This was not possible for the December meeting due to staff changes within the Service. The Forum was asked to identify any presentations they wish to receive in 2010 to enable the AO to make the necessary arrangements. It was agreed that suggestions should be passed to the AO before the next meeting.

Core Path Planning

- Implementation of the Core Paths Plan

The Forum discussed and approved the SOA Action Plan Activities relating to the Core Paths Plan circulated at the last meeting.

The AO advised that at a recent meeting of the AOs in the West of Scotland proposals had been developed for a standardised approach to signage of Core Paths in these areas. Copies of the proposed signage were circulated and it was agreed that these were reasonable and in line with the new signage guidance produced by Paths for All and Scottish Natural Heritage. The AO advised that the West Kilbride Civic Society has approached the Council regarding a partnership project to signpost the routes within the village. The Forum agreed that this project should be progressed and that a community based approach to signage was beneficial. It was agreed that this should be investigated for other communities.

- Promotion of the Core Paths Plan

The Forum discussed and approved SOA Action Plan Activities relating to the promotion of the Core Paths Plan circulated at the last meeting. The AO advised that the tender process for the Outdoor Access North Ayrshire (OANA) booklets is on-going. Bruce Davidson (BD) agreed to assist with the Tender evaluation on 11 December 2009. It was agreed that the Forum would assist with the meetings and consultations on the booklets when dates have been confirmed.

The AO advised the Forum of the proposals for the landowner engagement element of the project which have developed with SRPBA's AO. This includes the development of improved web based information on the Ayrshire Paths website and key information on leaflets to remind access users of their responsibilities and increases awareness of land management activities. Meetings are to be held with SRPBA, NFUS members and other landowners/managers to identify the main issues and produce seasonal/monthly information for the website. The AO also highlighted that the SRPBA is preparing a Case Study on the OANA project and hoped to include an article on it in the next Land Business magazine for members. LB advised the Forum that the SRPBA are the only land management organisation with an AO and that grant support had been secured for 3 years from SNH for the post.

North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership

- Environment Partnership Update

RL and the AO provided the Forum with an update on activities of the Environment Partnership. It was agreed that copies of the Reports to the EP will be circulated with the Notes of future meetings.

- Single Outcome Agreement and Action Plan

The Forum discussed the Actions for 2009/10 and recommended that these be proposed for incorporation into the 2010/11 Action Plan. LB reminded the Forum of the importance of the outdoor access agenda being recognised within the SOA. It was agreed that the AO and RL would report these recommendations back to the Community Planning Partnership and appraise the Forum of any progress in relation to this.

AOCB

The following issues were raised under Any Other Competent Business:

- Scottish Coastal Ways – The AO advised that NAC have been invited to sit on the Steering Group for the Scottish Coastal Ways (SCW). The AO advised that no budget has been allocated to the initiative at present. The Forum discussed the issues in relation to the current routes including a lack of funding, varying standards, managing expectations and maintenance. The AO advised that these issues have already been raised at the SCW conference and through the Steering Group. It was agreed that the AO would keep the Forum appraised of any progress.
- Outdoor Education Strategy – Cameron Sharp (CS) advised the Forum that Educational Services are producing an Outdoor Education Strategy. The Forum agreed that it would be beneficial to link this to the Outdoor Access Strategy and related initiatives.
- Road Verges – RL raised the issue of the maintenance of road verges and ditches and the progress made to date with Infrastructure and Design Services. Sandy Miller (SM) reiterated concerns regarding safety of non-motorised users on rural roads.

Close of meeting

Luke closed the meeting and thanked the Forum for participating. They were reminded that the next meeting would be held on and would be on 15 February 2010 and comprised of workshops on the Main Issues Report and Review of the Outdoor Access Strategy.

New Uses for "Old" Sites

- Lack of new business/industry (Employment Land Review)
- Pressure for alternative uses
- Blots on the landscape



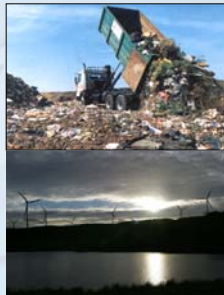
The Future of Our Town Centres

- Urban Regeneration Company Projects
- People spending money elsewhere
- Decline of town centres
- Supermarkets vs. the High Street



Providing Infrastructure

- Traffic
- Water/Drainage
- Energy
- Hunterston
- Waste
- Education/Medical facilities



Rural, Coastal & Island Development

- New housing in the countryside
- Protection of coastal and rural assets, but encouraging visitors
- Access to the coast-coastal park, new development



What have we done so far?

- Consultation with key agencies
- Consultation with Community Councils, Youth Council
- Other stakeholders (IBRC, Council Services)
- Each Main Issue explored with elected Members at workshop/Committee
- Main Issues Report drafted, approved by Council



Next Steps

- Main Issues Report (MIR) published December 2009
- Sets out general proposals for where development should and should not occur, no confirmed allocations
- MIR will be consulted on throughout January, February and into March
- Press releases, libraries, public exhibitions, Planning Forums, information on the web
- Comments and submissions will be considered and inform the preparation of the next stage- Proposed Plan (December 2010)
- Proposed Plan will be North Ayrshire Council's more settled view, and will contain site specific allocations
- Proposed Plan will also be the subject of consultation



Next Steps

- Your comments will help shape the debate



Remember...

- The new LDP has to make land use decisions where there is no clear consensus...
- The new LDP is a tool to bring about change, but won't solve every problem...
- Need to work together, not apart!

