

## SEA Screening Report – Cover Note

### Cover Note Section 1

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### Cover Note Section 2

<b>An SEA screening report is attached for the plan entitled:</b>	North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Strategy
<b>The Responsible Authority is:</b>	North Ayrshire Council

### Cover Note Section 3

Screening is required because the plan/programme falls under Section 5(3)(c) or Section 8(1) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. Our view is that: -

**An SEA is not required** because the plan is not likely to have significant environmental effects

### Cover Note Section 6

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### Cover Note Section 7

**Signature:**

Louise Kirk

**Date:**

December 2010

## SEA Screening Report

### SEA Screening Report Section 1: Key Facts

<b>Responsible Authority:</b>	North Ayrshire Council (NAC)
<b>Title of Plan:</b>	North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Strategy
<b>Plan purpose:</b>	The purpose of Strategy is to review the existing Outdoor Access Strategy adopted in 2004 and the vision and priorities identified therein. It will review the existing situation in terms of provision, use, policies and resources to produce an action plan for the planning and development of outdoor access. The purpose of which is to provide a means for agreeing and co-ordinating priorities for future outdoor access development between the Council and partners. The Action Plan will take account of constraints e.g. availability of resources and maintenance requirements faced by the Council and partners.
<b>What prompted the plan:</b>	The Strategy is a revision of the original North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Strategy which was prompted by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. The production of a Strategy is not a requirement under the Act however it is widely accepted that it translates the legislation into a local perspective.
<b>Plan subject:</b>	Public access to land
<b>Period covered by plan:</b>	5 years
<b>Frequency of plan updates:</b>	As circumstances dictate
<b>Plan area:</b>	North Ayrshire's administrative boundary 886.70sq km
<b>Summary of nature/content of the Plan:</b>	<p><b>NATURE:</b> The Strategy will identify –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A vision for outdoor access</li> <li>• The key themes, issues, outcomes and priorities</li> <li>• Actions for the implementation of the Strategy</li> <li>• Potential delivery mechanisms</li> </ul> <p><b>CONTENT:</b> The Strategy will contain –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Audit of the existing supply, demand, policies and resources</li> <li>• A summary of the key themes, issues and aims</li> <li>• An Action Plan including potential delivery mechanisms</li> <li>• A framework for monitoring and evaluation</li> </ul>
<b>Proposed plan objectives:</b>	The objectives of the Strategy are expressed as outcomes rather than objectives. Please see Appendix One for details. Appendix Two provides a summary of the Strategy review as developed to date.
<b>Date:</b>	December 2010

## SEA Screening Report Section 2: Considering the Likely Significance of Effects on the Environment

Table 1 below summarises the findings of the screening exercise undertaken by North Ayrshire Council in determining the likelihood of significant environment effects from the Outdoor Access Strategy.

**Table 1 – Likely Significance of Effects on the Environment**

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment	Likely to have significant environmental effect?	Summary of significant environmental effects
1(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	No	The Strategy will include a framework for projects by way of an Action Plan. This will focus on the existing path network and undertaking improvements to make the network more effective. The implementation of the Action Plan will be dependant on the availability of or securing resources and as such actions will be prioritised. Improvements will therefore be made on an incremental basis as resources are secured. Other projects identified could include path creation or educational projects which may have an positive effect on the environment however these would be subject to a separate assessment process e.g. through the production of a feasibility study.
1(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	No	The Strategy will be informed by the Core Paths Plan, which was separately subject to SEA, and the Single Outcome Agreement. It may have some influence on some other local plans such as the Local Transport Strategy, Open Space Strategy and Local Development Plan.
1(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	Potentially yes	The Strategy will promote sustainable development by providing increased opportunities for sustainable non-motorised transport. The effect of this is likely to be positive through encouraging walking and cycling in preference to car journeys. This will contribute to public policy objectives such as health, sustainable transport and tourism. The Strategy will be subject to a separate Health Impact Assessment process.
1(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	No	The Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC) is the document responsible for the promotion of responsible access and separate legislation exists to address the majority of the environmental problems relevant to the plan e.g. anti-social behaviour and litter. The Strategy may however identify actions which could contribute to tackling the problems generally perceived to be associated with outdoor access for example through improved education and awareness raising. The Strategy may identify proposals which could impact on the cultural or natural heritage however it is likely that these would be subject to a separate assessment process e.g. through a feasibility study and that the effects would be minimal and reversible.
1(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment	No	The positive impacts of the Strategy may be taken into consideration in the development and implementation of community legislation on the environment.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment	Likely to have significant environmental effect?	Summary of significant environmental effects
2(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Minimal and reversible	<p>The environmental effects of the Strategy are considered to be low in magnitude. The Strategy will focus on the existing path network and undertaking improvements to make it more effective.</p> <p>Where new routes are proposed, the effects will be limited to small linear areas and will potentially be reversible. These would be assessed at a project level e.g. through a Feasibility Study and STAG assessment.</p> <p>In relation to increased usage resulting in a cumulative negative environmental impact through increased disturbance, the Strategy will provide an opportunity to focus development and usage in environmentally robust areas thereby relieving pressure from sensitive areas.</p>
2(b) the cumulative nature of the effects	No	<p>The negative impacts of the Strategy are likely to be localised and with minimal disturbance therefore the magnitude of the cumulative negative effects is considered to be low. There may be a positive cumulative impact on other environmental factors through the increased promotion and use of routes, the significance of which is unknown.</p>
2(c) transboundary nature of the effects	No	<p>The Strategy covers the administrative area for which North Ayrshire Council is the responsible Access Authority but has the potential to link into similar plans being prepared by neighbouring Authorities. This may widen some of the positive benefits of the Strategy however negative impacts are likely to remain localised and minimal.</p>
2(d) the risks to human health or the environment	Negligible	<p>There will be positive effects achieved by providing opportunities for increased physical activity and consequently improving lifestyles and health.</p> <p>The Strategy will be subject to a separate Health Impact Assessment (HIA) process to assess the impact on health and well being. The likelihood of accidents occurring will potentially be reduced as the core path network will provide maintained, fit for purpose routes and improved access points.</p>
2(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects	No	<p>The implementation of the Strategy will have significant positive effects within North Ayrshire and will provide for all sectors of the population. The Strategy will also connect to neighbouring Authorities' Strategies.</p>
2(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage, (ii) exceeds environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use	Negligible	<p>The Strategy will attempt to ensure that the demand for access is balanced with the need to protect the environment and will provide opportunities to manage responsible access to minimise any negative effects in specially designated or vulnerable sites. Proposals for new routes will be assessed through Feasibility Studies and include STAG assessment.</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment	Likely to have significant environmental effect?	Summary of significant environmental effects
2(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status	Minimal and Reversible	<p>There is potential for environmental effects on designated sites brought about by increased path use however this is likely to be minimal and reversible. It is unlikely to have any significant adverse environmental effects in line with the findings of the Core Paths Plan as it will predominantly relate to Core Paths.</p> <p>The Strategy will also provide opportunities to plan to avoid specially designated sites or manage access in such a way as to have minimal negative impacts. Proposals for new routes will be assessed at a project level and through Feasibility Studies and include STAG assessment.</p>

A summary of the screening process is presented in **Table 2** below

**Table 2 – Summary of Screening Assessment**

**SUMMARY:** The Outdoor Access Strategy will review the existing Strategy adopted in 2004 and the vision, aims and priorities identified therein. The revised Strategy will be developed in partnership with the North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum (Forum). The review will be informed by the Core Paths Plan (CPP) which was separately subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA).

The SEA for the Core Paths Plan identified that the Plan as a whole did not have a significant environmental effect. It identified that there would be no significant impact from the designation of any of the routes as Core Paths. The increased responsible usage associated with the Plan as a whole was also identified as being unlikely to have any significant adverse environmental effects.

The Strategy will concentrate on the existing path network and in particular the Core Path network. It will focus undertaking improvements to make the network more effective, which it is envisaged will be made on an incremental basis depending on the availability of resources. This is due to constraints placed on the Strategy and implementing organisations in terms of the availability of financial resources and long term maintenance/management requirements. The potential effects of any improvements are likely to be assessed on a project level when the extent of available resources is fully known.

The Strategy will include a framework for projects by way of an Action Plan. The implementation of the Action Plan will be dependant on the availability of or securing resources and as such actions will be prioritised. The tasks identified within the action plan could include projects which may have an effect on the environment however it is likely that these would be subject to a separate assessment process e.g. a project level assessment or through a feasibility study for path creation projects including a Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) assessment. The Strategy will therefore not identify the alignment or specifications of paths or routes unless a feasibility study exists for the route.

The environmental effects of the Strategy are considered to be low in magnitude. Where new routes are proposed, these will be subject to separate assessment and the effects will be limited to small linear areas and will potentially be reversible. In relation to increased usage resulting in a cumulative negative environmental impact through increased disturbance, the Strategy will provide an opportunity to focus development and usage in environmentally robust areas thereby relieving pressure from sensitive areas.

The negative impacts of the Strategy are likely to be localised and with minimal disturbance therefore the magnitude of the cumulative negative effects is considered to be low. There may be a positive cumulative impact on other environmental factors through the increased promotion and use of routes.

It is for these reasons that the North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum and North Ayrshire Council believe that SEA is not required.

## SEA Screening Report Section 3: Summary of Record of Comments from the Consultation Authorities

**Table 3: Summary Record of Comments from the Consultation Authorities**

<b>Title of Plan:</b>	North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Strategy
<b>Responsible Authority:</b>	North Ayrshire Council
<b>Date comments received:</b>	

<b>Consultation Authority</b>	<b>Views</b>
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency	Significant environmental effects: Yes/No
	If yes, please note SEA topic/issues here
Scottish Natural Heritage	Significant environmental effects: Yes/No
	If yes, please note SEA topic/issues here
Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland)	Significant environmental effects: Yes/No
	If yes, please note SEA topic/issues here

## SEA Screening Report Section 4: Record of post screening action

**Table 4: Record of Comments from the Consultation Authorities**

<b>Title of Plan:</b>	North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Strategy
<b>Responsible Authority:</b>	North Ayrshire Council

1. Responsible Authority and Consultation Authorities in agreement – SEA <u>is</u> required	
Date of determination	
2. Responsible Authority and Consultation Authorities in agreement – SEA <u>is not</u> required	
Date of determination	
3. Responsible Authority and Consultation Authorities cannot reach agreement	
Date referred to Scottish Ministers	
4. Scottish Ministers' determination	
Date of determination	
5. Publicity requirements met (Regulation 15)	
6. Signature	
Date	



## APPENDIX ONE

The draft outcomes for the Strategy are as follows:

- Outcome One: Outdoor access opportunities are integrated into the wider environmental, economic regeneration, land management and development programmes.
- Outcome Two: Outdoor Access is improved and promoted for everyday journeys, health improvement and recreation through equitable provision, local initiatives, improved infrastructure, increased awareness and community participation.
- Outcome Three: North Ayrshire is an attractive, accessible and quality destination for outdoor access activities for both residents and visitors.
- Outcome Four: The condition and maintenance of North Ayrshire's path networks, infrastructure and signage has improved.
- Outcome Five: North Ayrshire has a co-ordinated, high quality outdoor access information, education and interpretation programme.
- Outcome Six: North Ayrshire's access users, agencies, communities and land managers are actively engaged in the management, planning and development of responsible and sustainable outdoor access.
- Outcome Seven: North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum is a well known, independent, trusted and expert local institution.

## **APPENDIX TWO**

### **Strategy Structure**

The Strategy will be structured to enable sections to be updated on a regular basis and in light of changes.

### **Foreword**

This will be in the main body of the Strategy and will be available on the OAS CD or on-line. This will be unlikely to change until the next review of the Strategy. This will come from the Chair of the Forum and the Elected Member with the Portfolio for the Environment.

### **Introduction**

This will be in the main body of the Strategy and will be available on the OAS CD or on-line. This will be unlikely to change until the next review of the Strategy. This will provide a summary of the purpose of the Strategy and the access rights and responsibilities provided by the Act in a similar manner to the Core Paths Plan.

### **Audit Section**

Supply Audit: This will be map based and available on the OAS CD or on-line. This will allow it to be readily updated in light of the creation of new paths or changes to the existing network

Demand Audit: This will be in a similar format to the original study and available on the OAS CD or on-line. This will allow it to be readily updated in light of new research or information

Policies Audit: This will be comprised of tables in a similar format to that of the Core Paths Plan and available on the OAS CD or on-line. This will allow it to be readily updated in light of new policies

Resources Audit: This will be comprised of tables, provide links to funders' websites or other relevant information and available on the OAS CD or on-line. This will allow it to be readily updated in light of changes to funding schemes

### **Key Themes, Issues and Aims**

This will form the main body of the Strategy and will be available on the OAS CD or on-line. This will be unlikely to change substantially until the next review of the Strategy. This will also be summarised in an Executive Summary style document similar to that of the SOA. A small quantity of the Executive Summary will be printed for distribution to Stakeholders and for promotional activities.

### **Action Plan**

This will be comprised of tables in a similar format to the SOA Action Plan and available on the OAS CD or on-line. This will allow it to be readily updated in light of any changes or the identification of new projects or opportunities.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**

This will compliment the Action Plan and a review date will be set for each action.

## The Strategy

The first North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Strategy was adopted in September 2004. It has informed and directed outdoor access development in North Ayrshire in the intervening period and acted as a valuable funding tool for the Council, Outdoor Access Forum and partners. The Strategy has been reviewed to examine the progress made to date and identify and agree priorities for the future. It takes account of the wealth of changes that have occurred in the intervening period including changes to policies and plans, the enactment of the Land Reform legislation and the adoption of the North Ayrshire Core Paths Plan.

### Why do we need an Access Strategy?

The Access Strategy provides a framework for reviewing the existing situation in terms of provision, use, policy and resources and a means for agreeing and co-ordinating priorities for future access. It is very much a partnership document that brings together a wide range of organisations with an involvement in access planning and implementation.

It will provide the strategic vision for outdoor access and demonstrate how real benefits can be delivered for local people through the agreed priorities and targets. They highlight that well planned, managed and promoted access can contribute to a wide range of agendas such as social inclusion, health improvement and sustainable transport as well as improving people's overall quality of life. They also act as a valuable funding tool for Local Authorities and partner organisations.

### What did the original Strategy achieve?

The original Strategy achieved a number of successes including:

- The formation of a successful and productive Outdoor Access Forum
- The upgrade of substantial sections of the National Cycle Network to an all abilities standard
- Improving the signage and infrastructure on our path networks
- The development of the Community Outdoor Access Grant Scheme
- The development of the Go On Get Out There Scheme in partnership with the Council's Infrastructure and Design and Educational Services
- The development of the Paws for Thought and From the Horse's Mouth initiatives to promote responsible dog walking and horse riding thereby tackling key issues for local communities and users
- Achieving two national awards for Ayrshire Outdoor Access Toolkit in partnership with East Ayrshire Council and Outdoor Access Forum
- The development and adoption of the North Ayrshire Core Paths Plan
- The development of the Outdoor Access North Ayrshire Project in partnership with and funded by a wide range of organisations
- Working in partnership with other organisations on initiatives such as the Green Gym with NHS Ayrshire and Arran and the development of the Brodick Seafront Path with Brodick Improvements Committee and the Council's Infrastructure and Design Services
- Securing the funding for and developing Feasibility Studies to look at the potential to take some of our key routes off road for example the National Cycle Network Route 7 between Kilwinning and Kilbirnie
- The provision of conferences, training and networking events for stakeholders in partnership with neighbouring Authorities
- Having our work identified as good practice in a number of national publications

Whilst we celebrate the successes that have made, we also realise that there is a need for further activity and improvement.

## What are the key issues for North Ayrshire?

The key issues for North Ayrshire are identified within the vision for Community Planning as:

Working and Training  
Healthy and Active  
Caring and Supporting  
Safe and Secure  
Learning and Taking Part  
Clean and Green  
For You and Everyone  
Working Together

The Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) outlines the ways in which the vision will be delivered. Outdoor Access has a significant role to play in achieving a number of the outcomes including:

Outcome Number	Outcome
1	We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe
1a	Transport links and services to and from North Ayrshire have improved
1b	North Ayrshire is a more attractive tourist destination
6	We live longer, healthier lives
6e	People are more active more often
10	We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need
10c	The condition of roads, footways, path networks and lighting has improved
11	We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others
11a	Levels of voluntary action and community involvement have increased
11b	Partnership working between the public, community and voluntary sector has improved
12	We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations
12a	Our environment is protected and enhanced

## How will the Strategy benefit the communities of and visitors to North Ayrshire

Our Strategy will focus on the key issues for North Ayrshire and identify the ways in which outdoor access can assist in achieving the vision for Community Planning of North Ayrshire – A Better Life.

### Working and Training

Unemployment is recognised as the most significant and persistent challenge for North Ayrshire and has been further exacerbated by the economic downturn. Outdoor access development and improvements provide valuable opportunities to make sure North Ayrshire is an attractive and accessible place for new and existing businesses to grow and to attract tourists and boost tourism development. By ensuring that our business environments are well connected to path networks and local housing developments, local people will be able to access employment opportunities as levels of car ownership in North Ayrshire are lower than the national average.

The transport infrastructure is vital to the economy of the area, especially in our more rural locations. Walking and cycling are integral components of transport policy and systems and have an invaluable role to play in providing a sustainable and integrated approach to transport opportunities.

Tourism continues to be a very important part of North Ayrshire's economy with our Islands, coastline and hills providing popular destinations for day trips, longer stays and outdoor activities. Local path networks that meet local needs and aspirations can also be attractive to visitors and integrating paths networks with tourist attractions will provide a higher quality and more accessible visitor experience. With more people holidaying at home in the UK having a good quality integrated transport and path network will ensure that North Ayrshire is equipped to attract a larger share of tourists and visitors.

## **Healthy and Active**

Many of our residents experience chronic poor health and are disadvantaged compared to other areas in Scotland. There are also significant differences in health between our most disadvantaged and most advantaged communities. Consequently the health of our communities is persistently poorer than that experienced in Scotland as a whole.

Health and wellbeing is affected by a wide range of influences such as our environment, social and economic factors, personal and family circumstances and lifestyle. Walking and cycling offer two low cost options to become more active with walking in particular being recognised as the most effective form of exercise for sedentary people to become more active.

Outdoor access improvement and development offers an opportunity to improve our local environments and provide inclusive low cost opportunities for our communities to adopt a more active and healthy lifestyle.

Path networks and open spaces provide easy opportunities for physical activity close to people's homes, without cost or the need for specialist equipment or training. Access to open space is also recognised as having beneficial effects on mental health and well-being as well as physical health. However many individuals are unable, unwilling or uncertain about how to become more active and further promotion of the benefits and opportunities available is essential to tackling this problem.

## **Caring and Supporting**

Whilst North Ayrshire's population is likely to decrease slightly, the age structure is projected to change significantly resulting in an increasingly ageing population. Accessible path networks can provide a vital lifeline for our older residents enabling them to access community facilities, opportunities for health improvement and meet with others. Ensuring that our paths are constructed to all abilities standard wherever practicable and that they are safe and welcoming will make our path networks available and attractive to older people and other vulnerable users.

Housing and homelessness are key issues for North Ayrshire and ensuring that new housing and social housing is integrated into the path and transport networks will assist in meeting our communities' needs. North Ayrshire also has a large rural community with a number of satellite villages not fully integrated into the public transport network. These communities can often experience isolation and path networks between communities can provide a vital link for everyday journeys, recreation and social interaction.

Initiatives such as the Green Gym have proved beneficial by providing opportunities for some of our most vulnerable groups to participate in outdoor activities and have provided demonstrable

benefits in terms of mental and physical health and well-being. Initiatives such as this also provide valuable opportunities for shared benefit between communities and the Local Authority in the current financial climate.

## **Safe and Secure**

Properly managed outdoor access increases the perception of personal safety. By improving our local path networks and providing better information and education we can encourage people to use local path networks, countryside and open space responsibly. Increased use has been recognised as a valuable method of tackling anti-social behaviour and vandalism. This in turn can improve people's perception of their local area and improve their confidence to walk or cycle in preference to journeys by car.

The development and promotion of outdoor access opportunities in partnership with local communities also offers a valuable opportunity for people to work together to improve their local environment. This can also tackle anti-social behaviour and vandalism by bringing communities together and creating an increased sense of pride and ownership for the local environment.

## **Learning and Taking Part**

It is important that everyone in North Ayrshire has the opportunity to be involved in the planning, development and management of access to ensure that it meets our communities' needs and aspirations. Being actively involved in outdoor access offers opportunities for communities to learn new skills, build capacity and confidence and strengthen links between communities. The outdoor access agenda provides a range of opportunities for communities and visitors to North Ayrshire to learn and taking part.

Path networks and the outdoors provide a rich and diverse environment for learning not only for schools and other educational establishments but for individuals and communities. The learning opportunities can be informal such as through interpretation and signage or formal through taught lessons in the outdoors. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code provides a valuable educational resource in terms of promoting responsible and active citizenship.

North Ayrshire has an active community and voluntary sector with large numbers of group being actively involved in the outdoor access agenda. It provides opportunities for people to take part on a variety of levels from taking part in the development of path networks and learning new skills such as path construction techniques to taking part in walks, cycles or other activities and learning about the local environment and history and to being actively involved in the promotion of their local area and the opportunities it offers through the production of promotional materials.

## **Clean and Green**

North Ayrshire has a varied and attractive landscape with rolling open hills, extensive coastline, woodlands, river valleys and glens. Our environment is recognised as our biggest asset and is highly valued by our local communities. Outdoor access development provides a valuable opportunity to work with landowners and managers to improve our local environment and promote responsible access to our communities and visitors.

By creating and improving local path networks and the promoting outdoor access for everyday journeys to work, shops and local facilities we can help our communities to reduce their dependence on cars for short journeys and their carbon footprint. This will in turn benefit their health and well being as well.

In our more fragile environments, careful management of outdoor access can also ensure that public use does not have negative impacts. In our working countryside environment such as farmland and estates, careful management and promotion of responsible access can also ensure that public use does not negatively impact on the working lives and interests of those who depend on it.

Whilst a number of successful initiatives were developed from the original strategy to address some of the issues that have and in some case continue to blight our local environment such as dog fouling and there is scope to expand on these. By promoting responsibility from an early age we can ensure that our environment is cared for and treated with respect to the benefit of local communities and visitors.

## **For You and Everyone**

Paths are available to everyone irrespective of their age, disability, gender, race, religious belief or sexual orientation. They provide easy opportunities for recreation and everyday journeys close to people's homes, free of charge and without the need for specialist equipment or training.

We want to make sure that our area is welcoming and open to everyone. Our path networks are being improved wherever possible to ensure that they are fully accessible to all users and the information produced to promote the networks is produced in accessible and alternative formats.

## **Working Together**

The key to successes made to date in relation to outdoor access has clearly been partnership working. Continuing to actively engage communities and local organisations in the planning, development and management is essential to future success. Working together can build capacity within communities and increase voluntary action on the ground and our Outdoor Access Forum itself is a key example of partnership working in practice.

Securing funding and partnership support for projects was a key challenge for the original Strategy and in the current economic climate this will be a more difficult task to achieve. As all organisations are focussing on core activities and tightening their belts we will have to work together and be more innovative in the way that we deliver our services and to identify areas we can work together to mutual benefit.

## **A Vision for Outdoor Access**

The original vision was

“To ensure that an integrated and co-ordinated network of access opportunities whether by tracks, on open land or by in land water, is either created or facilitated to promote economic prosperity, improve the quality of life and regenerate the environment”

An example of a potential new vision is as follows:

“Our communities and visitors will have access to and be actively engaged in the development and delivery of an integrated and co-ordinated network of high quality and accessible outdoor access opportunities for everyday journeys, recreation and health improvement”

## Draft Key Aims for the Strategy

### Original Aims

To improve access to local employment opportunities

To ensure that access is considered as an integral part of any programmes of wider environmental improvement, economic regeneration and development projects in relation to new development within the framework of the local plan

To encourage initiatives that incorporate access provision within existing or planned land management proposals and schemes

### Combined Draft Aim - One

To integrate outdoor access opportunities into wider environmental, economic regeneration, land management or development programmes or as an Outcome -

Outdoor access opportunities are integrated into the wider environmental, economic regeneration, land management and development programmes

### SOA Outcomes

1a, 1b,10c and12a

### This will be achieved through the following tasks

Prepare and implement Supplementary Guidance on outdoor access for the Local Development Plan

Develop the Main Issue of Coastal Access for the Local Development Plan

Work with landowners/managers to ensure that access is considered as an integral part of any agri-environment or regeneration schemes

Work with Irvine Bay Regeneration Company on the projects related to outdoor access

Respond to consultations on planning applications or other initiatives



<b>Original Aims</b>
To promote initiatives that encourage local people to walk or cycle for journeys to school, work, community facilities and between settlements
To encourage increased use of public transport by promoting safe links to bus and railway stations
To investigate the need for ancillary infrastructure such as cycle racks and lockers
To ensure that new and existing networks are linked to local communities
To promote initiatives which develop increased sense of pride and stewardship of local access networks amongst communities
To take into consideration the requirements of people of all ages and abilities and ensure safety issues are reflected in the location and design of access provision
To encourage groups and initiatives that develop community participation in outdoor access related activities and that promote public access as a means of encouraging healthier lifestyles
To identify and cater equitably for the recreational requirements of different user groups
<b>Combined Draft Aim - Two</b>
To improve and promote outdoor access opportunities for recreation and everyday journeys through equitable provision, local initiatives, improved infrastructure, increased awareness and community participation
or as an Outcome -
Outdoor Access is improved and promoted for everyday journeys, health improvement and recreation through equitable provision, local initiatives, improved infrastructure, increased awareness and community participation
<b>SOA Outcomes</b>
1a, 1b, 6e, 10c, 11a, 11b and 12a
<b>This will be achieved through the following tasks</b>
Prepare and implement a promotional scheme for the Core Paths Plan and wider path network
Review the Core Paths Plan on a 5 year basis or at the request of Scottish Ministers
Amend the Core Paths Plan to reflect localised changes or as a result of the review process

Promote outdoor access for everyday journeys, health improvement and recreation through the Outdoor Access North Ayrshire Project

Develop Active Travel maps for key local facilities to encourage sustainable transport

Develop a standard policy for outdoor access infrastructure

Promote outdoor access opportunities and path networks for health and well being benefits

Implement and administer the Community Outdoor Access Grant Scheme

Implement and administer the Go On Get Out There Grant Scheme

Other tasks which will contribute to this aim/outcome:

Prepare and implement Supplementary Guidance on outdoor access for the Local Development Plan

**Original Aims**

To develop North Ayrshire as a quality destination for outdoor access activities including walking, cycling, horse riding

To raise awareness of path networks, access areas and opportunities for outdoor access with local residents and visitors

To investigate the need for visitor facilities and associated infrastructure in relation to new or existing access

To maximise the potential for access opportunities to the coast and open hills

To improve and encourage responsible recreational access around the principal settlements as well as in the wider countryside

To safeguard and enhance the natural, built and cultural heritage in the development, management and use of paths

To promote long distance routes and the linkage of existing networks

**Combined Draft Aim - Three**

To ensure that North Ayrshire is an attractive, quality and accessible destination for outdoor access activities for both residents and visitors  
or as an Outcome -

North Ayrshire is an attractive, accessible and quality destination for outdoor access activities for both residents and visitors

**SOA Outcomes**

1a, 1b, 6e, 10c and 12a

**This will be achieved through the following tasks**

Review and implement the Outdoor Access Strategy

Develop and implement the Outdoor Access North Ayrshire Project

Prepare Feasibility Studies for Strategic Routes

Promote long distance routes

Promote North Ayrshire as a quality destination for outdoor access activities

Monitor funding opportunities and submit applications for outdoor access projects

Meet the Statutory duties, obligations and powers in relation to outdoor access under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003

**Original Aims**

To link path projects with training opportunities

To investigate the opportunity for the development of a standard signage policy

To improve maintenance regimes and develop innovative approaches to long term route management

**Combined Draft Aim - Four**

To improve the condition and maintenance regimes of North Ayrshire's path networks and signage  
or as an outcome –

The condition and maintenance of North Ayrshire's path networks, infrastructure and signage has improved

**SOA Outcomes**

1a, 1b, 10c and 12a

**This will be achieved through the following tasks**

Prepare and implement an improvements and signage scheme for the Core Paths Plan and wider path network

Review and prepare an improvements scheme for the existing provision for outdoor access within Council ownership including path networks, parks and open space

Develop and implement path improvement projects

Develop and implement a standard signage and interpretation policy

Investigate opportunities to link path projects and path management with training and other voluntary initiatives

**Original Aims**

To raise awareness and improve information, education and interpretation in relation to outdoor access as outlined in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code

To develop a co-ordinated approach with other services and agencies in the delivery of outdoor access education

**Combined Draft Aim - Five**

To develop and deliver a co-ordinated, high quality outdoor access information, education and interpretation programme for North Ayrshire or as an outcome –

North Ayrshire has a co-ordinated, high quality outdoor access information, education and interpretation programme

**SOA Outcomes**

1a, 1b, 6e, 11a, 11b and 12a

**This will be achieved through the following tasks**

Promote and raise awareness and understanding of the SOAC with landowners/managers, access users and the public

Develop and promote a co-ordinated suite of outdoor access educational materials in partnership with NAOAF and NAC Educational Services

Develop and promote the Paws for Thought responsible dog walking and From the Horse's Mouth responsible horse riding initiatives

Develop and promote responsible access materials for the Outdoor Access North Ayrshire Project

Incorporate SOAC information into outdoor access promotional materials

**Original Aims**

To establish initiatives that encourage involvement in the planning and implementation of access whilst promoting dialogue and understanding between access users, agencies, communities, and land managers

**Combined Draft Aim – Six**

To actively engage North Ayrshire's access users, agencies, communities and land managers in the management, planning and development of outdoor access

or as an outcome –

North Ayrshire's access users, agencies, communities and land managers are actively engaged in the management, planning and development of responsible and sustainable outdoor access

**SOA Outcomes**

1a, 1b, 6e, 10c, 11a, 11b and 12a

**This will be achieved through the following tasks**

Manage, develop and administer the North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum (NAOAF)

Maintain a balanced and representative structure for the NAOAF

Promote and publicise the role of the NAOAF

Develop and maintain links between the NAOAF and stakeholder/partner organisations

Investigate opportunities for the future development of the NAOAF

Develop partnership activities with the NAOAF

Organise a two yearly networking event for all stakeholders

## **North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum**

It is proposed that an additional aim be incorporated into the Strategy regarding the Outdoor Access Forum

### **Aim**

To ensure that North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum is an independent, trusted and expert local institution  
or expressed as an outcome –

North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum is a well known, independent, trusted and expert local institution

### **SOA Outcomes**

1a, 1b, 6e, 10c, 11a, 11b and 12a

### **This will be achieved through the following tasks**

Provide advice and guidance to the Council and any other body who consults it on outdoor access related issues.

Offer advice to parties in dispute regarding outdoor access related issues

Assist the Council to perform its functions in relation to outdoor access

Act as a statutory consultee on outdoor access related matters

Offer local leadership in relation to outdoor access

Liaise with, support and assist local communities and interest groups

Assist with the assessment of the Community Outdoor Access Grant Scheme (COAGS)

Assist with the development and implementation of the Outdoor Access North Ayrshire Project



## Draft Action Plan Template

The following table could be utilised in a similar manner to the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) Action Plan to create an Action Plan for the Strategy.

<b>Strategy Aim/Outcome</b>	
<b>SOA Actions</b>	
<b>Community Plan Priority</b>	

Action/Task	Description	Funding Required	Priority Level	Lead(s)	Partner(s)	Target Date	Review Date
		See 1	See 2				

Note 1: This could be identified as from existing budget, implementation dependent on external funding or external funding secured.

Note 2: As per the previous strategy this could be identified as high, medium and low

**Directorate for the Built Environment**

SEA Unit, 2-H Bridge Car Park Mail point 13, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

T: 0131-244 7650 F: 0131-244 7555  
E: Johnathan.whittlestone@scotland.gsi.gov.uk



Date : 20 December 2010

Louise Kirk  
Access Officer  
Corporate Services - Planning  
North Ayrshire Council  
Cunninghame House  
Irvine  
KA12 8EE

**00556 Screening - North ayrshire council - Outdoor access strategy**

Dear Louise

With reference to the Screening document you submitted on 7 December 2010.

The Consultation Authorities have now considered your screening request as per **Section 9(3)** of the **Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005**. For convenience I have set out, in the table below, their individual views on whether there is a likelihood of significant environmental effects.

Please note, these are the views and opinions of the Consultation Authorities on the likelihood of significant environmental effects arising from the plan or programme and not a judgement on whether an SEA is required. It is therefore for the Responsible Authority to determine whether an SEA is required in the circumstances. I have attached the individual letters from the Consultation Authorities, outlining their views and opinions. Where possible the Consultation Authorities may have offered supplementary information and/or advice for you to consider, which you should find helpful.

CONSULTATION AUTHORITY	LIKELIHOOD OF SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS
Historic Scotland	No
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	No
Scottish Natural Heritage	No
<b>OVERALL VIEW ON LIKELIHOOD OF SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS</b>	No

As the Consultation Authorities have now notified you of their views, you should now refer to the Act to consider your next step. You should of course take into account the advice offered by the Consultation Authorities.

You should note, as per Section 10 of the Act, within 28 days of your determination about whether an SEA is required or not, a copy of the determination and any related statement of reasons must be passed to the Consultation Authorities. This may be done via the SEA Gateway.

If you have any queries or would like me to clarify any points, please call me on 0131 244 7650.

Yours sincerely

Johnathan Whittlestone  
SEA Gateway Officer



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



HISTORIC  
SCOTLAND



ALBA  
AOSMHOR

Louise Kirk  
Access Officer  
Corporate Services – Planning  
North Ayrshire Council  
Cunninghame House  
Irvine  
KA12 8EE

Longmore House  
Salisbury Place  
Edinburgh  
EH9 1SH

Direct Line: 0131 668 8960  
Direct Fax: 0131 668 8899  
Switchboard: 0131 668 8600

Our ref: AMN/23/528 AS  
Case ref: 201005598

Date: 13 December 2010

Dear Ms Kirk

**Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005  
North Ayrshire Council – Outdoor Access Strategy  
Screening Report**

Thank you for consulting Historic Scotland on the screening report for North Ayrshire Council's Outdoor Access Strategy received by the Scottish Government's SEA Gateway on 7 December 2010. I have reviewed the screening report on behalf of Historic Scotland in its role as a Consultation Authority under the above Act, in accordance with the requirements of Section 9(3). In doing so I have used the criteria set out in Schedule 2 for determining the likely significance of the effects on the environment. Please note that our view is based on our main area of interest for the historic environment.

My understanding from the report is that the Outdoor Access Strategy will update the existing strategy and will be informed by the North Ayrshire Core Paths Plan, focusing on the existing path network. I note that the report considers that any effects of the strategy are considered to be low and that any new routes would be subject to a separate assessment. Therefore, in light of the information contained in the report I agree that the strategy is unlikely to have significant effects on the historic environment.

As you will be aware, it is the responsibility of North Ayrshire Council as the Responsible Authority to determine whether the strategy requires an environmental assessment and to inform the Consultation Authorities accordingly.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this response.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Stevenson  
Senior Development Assessment Officer (SEA)



Our Ref: PCS111305/scr/JD  
SG Ref: SEA00556

Louise Kirk  
Access Officer  
Corporate Services  
Planning North Ayrshire Council  
Cunninghame House  
Irvine  
KA12 8EE

20<sup>th</sup> December 2010

By email: [sea.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sea.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

Dear Louise,

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005  
NORTH AYRSHIRE OUTDOOR ACCESS STRATEGY - SCREENING REPORT**

I refer to your screening consultation submitted on 7 December 2010 via the Scottish Government SEA Gateway in respect of the above programme

In accordance with Section 9(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act, 2005, SEPA has considered your screening report using the criteria set out in Schedule 2 for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment.

Having reviewed the Screening Report, SEPA considers that in respect of its main areas of interest (air, water, soil, human health and climatic factors) the plan is not likely to have significant strategic environmental effects. Although SEPA is of the view that significant environmental effects are unlikely, it is for the North Ayrshire Council as Responsible Authority to make a formal determination taking into account the consultation responses received.

If it is formally determined that SEA *is* required, you will be aware that the next stage requires the Responsible Authority to consult the Consultation Authorities on the proposed scope and level of detail to be included within the Environmental Report. The Consultation Authorities typically expect to receive a concise Scoping Report at this stage. Further information about this stage and what should be included in a Scoping Report can be found in Chapter 5 of the Scottish SEA Tool Kit available from [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/09/13104943/45](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/09/13104943/45).

Should you wish to discuss this screening consultation, please do not hesitate to contact me on 01355 574268 or via SEPA's SEA Gateway at [sea.gateway@sepa.org.uk](mailto:sea.gateway@sepa.org.uk)

Yours sincerely,

June Dawson  
Senior Planning Officer

**Chairman**  
David Sigsworth

**Chief Executive**  
Dr Campbell Gemmell

**SEPA Corporate Office**

Erskine Court, Castle Business Park, Stirling FK9 4TR  
tel 01786 457700 fax 01786 446885  
[www.sepa.org.uk](http://www.sepa.org.uk)



**Scottish Natural Heritage**

All of nature for all of Scotland

Ms Louise Kirk  
Access Officer  
Corporate Services Planning  
North Ayrshire Council  
Cunninghame House  
Irvine  
KA12 8EE

17 December 2010  
Our Ref: 00556

Dear Louise

**Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005: North Ayrshire Council –  
Outdoor Access Strategy – Screening Determination**

I refer to your screening consultation submitted on 7 December 2010 via the Scottish Government SEA Gateway in respect of the above strategy.

In accordance with Section 9(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, SNH has considered your screening report using the criteria set out in Schedule 2 for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment.

We agree that the above strategy is not likely to have significant environmental effects.

This view is based on the information you have provided in the report. We have taken note of the following key points – i) the strategy comprises a review of an existing document, ii) the conclusions from the recent SEA for the North Ayrshire Core Paths Plan, iii) the close relationship between the core paths plan and the strategy, and iv) the focus on the existing path network.

Please note that this consultation response provides a view solely on the potential for the plan, strategy or programme to have significant environmental effects. We cannot comment on whether or not the strategy meets other criteria determining the need for SEA as set out in the Act.

.../2

E-mailed to :

Scottish Executive SEA Gateway: [sea.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sea.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

Copy e-mailed to:

SNH SEA Gateway: [sea.gateway@snh.gov.uk](mailto:sea.gateway@snh.gov.uk)

SEPA SEA Gateway: [sea.gateway@sepa.org.uk](mailto:sea.gateway@sepa.org.uk)

HS SEA Gateway: [hssea.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:hssea.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

C172968

Scottish Natural Heritage, 19 Wellington Square, Ayr, KA7 1EZ

Tel: 01292 261392 Fax 01292 269493 [www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk)



Should you wish to discuss this screening determination, please do not hesitate to contact Geoff Atkins at our Clydebank office or via SNH's SEA Gateway at [sea.gateway@snh.gov.uk](mailto:sea.gateway@snh.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely

DOROTHY SIMPSON  
Operations Manager  
Strathclyde & Ayrshire