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# Stranraer Waterfront Development Area

## SEA Environmental Report

October 2011



**SEA Environment Report**

Dumfries & Galloway Council

**Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan  
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): Environment Report**

**October 2011**

*natural* CAPITAL

13 Coates Crescent  
Edinburgh  
EH3 7AF  
Telephone 0131 220 6121  
Facsimile 0131 220 6131  
Email [info@naturalcapital.co.uk](mailto:info@naturalcapital.co.uk)



## SEA Environment Report

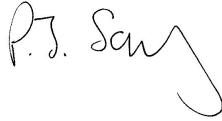
Dumfries & Galloway Council

### **Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): Environmental Report**

For and on behalf of  
Natural Capital Ltd.

Approved by: Dr Phil Say

Signed:



Position: Director

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> October 2011

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# **STRANRAER WATERFRONT URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY AND MASTERPLAN SEA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 CONTEXT OF THE STRANRAER WATERFRONT URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY AND MASTERPLAN**

The Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan (that will throughout the rest of this non-technical summary be referred to as 'the Masterplan') has set out a strategic aim to reposition Stranraer and Loch Ryan as a distinctive and successful marine leisure destination. It is underpinned by the following strategic objectives, to:

- reconnect the town centre with the waterfront;
- encourage high quality architectural design;
- create a more pedestrian friendly environment;
- create opportunities and infrastructure for access to the water;
- change perceptions of Stranraer from a ferry port to a leisure destination; and
- increase substantially the number of people who visit Stranraer and the surrounding area.

### **1.2 STATUTORY CONTEXT FOR UNDERTAKING THE SEA OF THE MASTERPLAN**

The SEA Directive aims to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans with a view to promoting sustainable development.

Dumfries and Galloway Council recognises that the development of a Masterplan of this kind for the Waterfront area of Stranraer has the potential to generate significant environmental effects on the immediate area and the wider Loch Ryan depending on the nature, scale and location of development. It is therefore appropriate that a Masterplan of this kind should be appraised so that any possible negative effects can be mitigated and the positive effects strengthened as far as is possible.

### **1.3 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT**

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to set out the findings of an environmental assessment of the Masterplan. In accordance with Part 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Environmental Report identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the Masterplan and identifies where appropriate any necessary mitigation.

### **1.4 OVERALL APPROACH TO SEA**

The approach to the SEA has followed a series of defined stages:

- undertaking an initial screening exercise to determine the likelihood of significant environmental effects being generated by the Masterplan and the need for a full SEA;
- having established that full SEA was necessary, to undertake a scoping exercise that would focus the assessment on the key environmental issues;

- reviewing relevant plans and programmes that will influence the Masterplan in the context of the key environmental issues;
- identification and review of relevant aspects of the current state of the environment associated with the environmental issues that could be influenced by the implementation of the Masterplan;
- clarification of the existing and potential future environmental issues which may influence or be influenced by the Masterplan;
- environmental assessment of the key objectives within the Masterplan;
- establishing any appropriate mitigation and proposals for monitoring the implementation of the Masterplan.

### **1.5 SCREENING**

In accordance with the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Council considered whether the environmental effects (positive and negative) of the Masterplan were likely to be significant. The screening exercise concluded that there would be no significant effects on the key topic areas of biodiversity (flora and fauna), population, human health, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape. Conclusions with regard to impacts on biodiversity were subject to verification by the results of an ecological survey. Ecological work was carried<sup>1</sup> out that did support the conclusion that there would be no significant residual effects arising from the implementation of the Masterplan. The three statutory consultees - Historic Scotland, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) - were in broad agreement with the screening conclusions. SNH however was concerned about possible disturbance effects on important winter migratory birds visiting the wider Loch Ryan area that could be caused by increased light boat activity and jet skiing as a result of creating a larger marina area at the Waterfront. SNH considered that if the Masterplan was to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance then it should be assessed through the full SEA process with a focus on this key issue.

### **1.6 SCOPING**

The scoping stage was informed by the screening exercise and the feedback from the consultation authorities. It was able to draw from information about the scope of the objectives and nature of the Masterplan, the known environmental baseline likely to be affected by the Masterplan, and the likely remaining environmental issues to consider. The outcome of the initial scoping exercise indicated that all of the topic areas could be screened out apart from biodiversity, flora and fauna. The rationale for this was supported by the assessment summarised in the screening report and also in the responses of the statutory agencies.

### **1.7 ASSESSMENT METHODS**

An SEA framework based on biodiversity protection objectives and supporting question sets was used to assess the key objectives of the Masterplan and to test whether the adoption of the plan would trigger the risk of a significant environmental effect on flora and fauna in and around the Waterfront area.

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<sup>1</sup> Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan Ecological Assessment Report, for Dumfries & Galloway Council, Natural Capital, 2011

## 2 ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE

This section of the Environmental Report describes the current state of the environment in the study area with an emphasis on biodiversity. The immediate Masterplan area does not contain any habitats that are designated under international or national legislation or by Dumfries and Galloway Council. Loch Ryan is designated by SNH as a Marine Consultation Area<sup>2</sup>. This section sets out the closest designated areas and highlights their respective level of protection. It also provides further detail regarding species that are protected under European or national legislation, together with appropriate information on priority species and habitats.

Loch Ryan is a site of national importance for six species of wetland bird including scaup, and Canadian pale-bellied brent geese. Wintering scaup rely on the feeding sites in the oyster beds in the deep water of the Southern basin of Loch Ryan. Numbers of Canadian pale-bellied brent geese are increasing, and can be found in significant numbers on the exposed mud flats and eelgrass beds in the Southern basin of Loch Ryan to the East of Stranraer.

## 3 CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes a description of existing environmental problems, especially those relating to any areas of particular environmental importance. Environmental problems identified to date that relate to biodiversity at a strategic level across Dumfries and Galloway are:

- a decline in biodiversity in the general region;
- the lack of information on European protected species;
- the impacts of climate change on biodiversity.

Should the Masterplan lead to any reduction in biodiversity, particularly a significant impact on flora and fauna, as suggested in the SNH response to screening, then this would constitute a 'significant effect'.

### 3.1 ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

Although no strategic options have been considered as alternatives, the development of the Masterplan has been an iterative process, during which a number of possible options within the harbour footprint have been considered. The eventual design has come about through extensive stakeholder and community consultation and is considered to represent the most sustainable approach to regeneration of the waterfront area.

### 3.2 ASSESSMENT OF MASTERPLAN OBJECTIVES

The six Masterplan Objectives broadly intend to promote increased visitor activity in and around Loch Ryan. With the increase in footfall and human pressures to the area, this could generate increased disturbance to birds and other wildlife. Human disturbance can originate from a variety of sources, including increased boating activity (e.g. motorboats, canoe, kayak, dory and viewing boats), increased use of personal water craft (i.e. jet ski activity), and increased human traffic (e.g. angling, hiking, and foot traffic, increasing disturbance particularly to banks and shorelines). The impacts can be

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<sup>2</sup> Marine Consultation Area – a non-statutory designation by SNH to highlight nature conservation priorities in the near shore marine environment

a direct result of harassment of birds or other wildlife, or can occur indirectly through the loss of habitat or feeding grounds. Increased small boat and jet-ski activity around and within eel grass beds to the east of Stranraer and the oyster beds within the southern basin could therefore have significant implications for nationally important populations of geese and diving duck (i.e. scaup) as well as the habitats themselves.

### **3.3 PROPOSED MITIGATION**

The effects of increased visitor pressure can be mitigated against with sensible habitat and visitor management. The development of a robust management plan that includes:

- restricting jet ski and small boat activity in shallow waters, particularly the eelgrass beds to the east of Stranraer, to May to August, with no activity permitted during September to April;
- designating restricted landing and launching areas for motorboats and jet skis;
- mapped and zoned “no go areas” for jet skiing, and zoned areas where jet ski activity will be permitted alongside clear indications of the above permitted seasonal periods; and
- ensuring visitors are educated on the management goals of the plan, by providing educational information at designated boat landing and visitor arrival areas, such as interpretation boards that highlight exclusion zoning and promote the protection of species and habitats of importance.

If the above measures within the context of an effective management plan are established, this will provide the mitigation necessary to achieve tourism and recreational objectives without significant environmental impacts on the sensitive features of Loch Ryan.

### **3.4 MONITORING**

Loch Ryan is designated by SNH as a Marine Consultation Area and the purpose of this designation is to encourage coastal communities and management bodies to be aware of marine conservation issues in the area. As such indicator performance of the wider Loch Ryan relies on actions of local governing bodies, and continued site management. Ongoing activities and knowledge of the Council’s biodiversity officer, and survey work carried out by the local Environmental Resources Centre should inform performance indicators during the implementation of the Stranraer Waterfront Masterplan. Some potential indicators are set out in the main report and the refinement of these or the selection of further appropriate indicators on which the effects of the Masterplan on biodiversity can be measured, will be undertaken through consultation with SNH.

## **4 NEXT STEPS**

The key milestones in the SEA process are as follows:

- the Environmental Report, which reports the findings of the SEA of the Masterplan, will be published for consultation alongside the draft Masterplan, such that the two documents (the Masterplan and its accompanying SEA) will be available for consultation together for a period of no less than six weeks (November to December 2011);
- following consultation on the Masterplan and the Environmental Report, the Masterplan will be revised and updated where necessary and appropriate, taking account of the comments received; and

- following any revision of the Masterplan, an SEA Statement will be prepared and made available to the Consultation Authorities and public setting out how the findings of consultation and environmental assessment have been incorporated into the further development of the Masterplan.

## **5 COMMENTS**

Any comments on the SEA of the Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan should be addressed to :

Jon Mengham  
Dumfries & Galloway Council  
Kirkbank House  
English Street  
Dumfries  
DG1 2HS  
Jon.mengham@dumgal.gov.uk



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 CONTEXT OF THE STRANRAER WATERFRONT URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY AND MASTERPLAN

Dumfries & Galloway Council and Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway approved Stranraer Waterfront's Development Framework in July 2005. This sets out a vision for a future Masterplan:

*"To reposition Stranraer and Loch Ryan as a distinctive and successful marine leisure destination."*

The Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan<sup>1</sup> (that will throughout the rest of the document be referred to as 'the Masterplan') has been produced as the first stage in delivering this vision. The Masterplan is underpinned by the following strategic objectives:

- Reconnect the town centre with the waterfront
- Encourage high quality architectural design
- Create a more pedestrian friendly environment
- Create opportunities and infrastructure for access to the water
- Change perceptions of Stranraer from a ferry port to a leisure destination
- Increase substantially the number of people who visit Stranraer and the surrounding area

The overall concept design proposals within the Masterplan cover an area of some 10.5 hectares of previously developed land and buildings divided into four 'character areas' – the marina, the town extension, the East Pier Gateway and the East Pier (see Figure 1 for the existing situation and Figure 2 for the future plans). The Masterplan is planning a modest increase in housing, a hotel, a supermarket, and some light commercial/office development together with a marina of around 250 berths (see Figure 2). Stakeholder workshops and extensive community consultations were held as part of the Masterplan process. The key facts relating to the Masterplan are summarised in Box 1.

### 1.2 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) AND THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 is the statutory mechanism by which the requirements of the European Directive 2001/42/EC – *"On the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment"* (known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment or SEA Directive) are now delivered in Scotland. The Act delivers on the Partnership Agreement commitment to apply SEA to all public plans, programmes and strategies (PPS). The SEA Directive aims to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans with a view to promoting sustainable development.

It has been recognised by Dumfries & Galloway Council that the proposed development of Stranraer waterfront has the potential to impact on flora and fauna within Loch Ryan and could therefore impact on the SEA objective "to protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats". It is therefore appropriate that the Masterplan be appraised in terms of this SEA objective so that any possible negative effects can be mitigated against and the positive effects strengthened as far as possible. The need to appraise against all other SEA topics and the corresponding SEA objectives has been screened out during the scoping stage of the SEA (see Section 2.5: Scoping the Appraisal).

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<sup>1</sup> The Stranraer Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan, Smith, Scott, Mullan Associates, December 2009





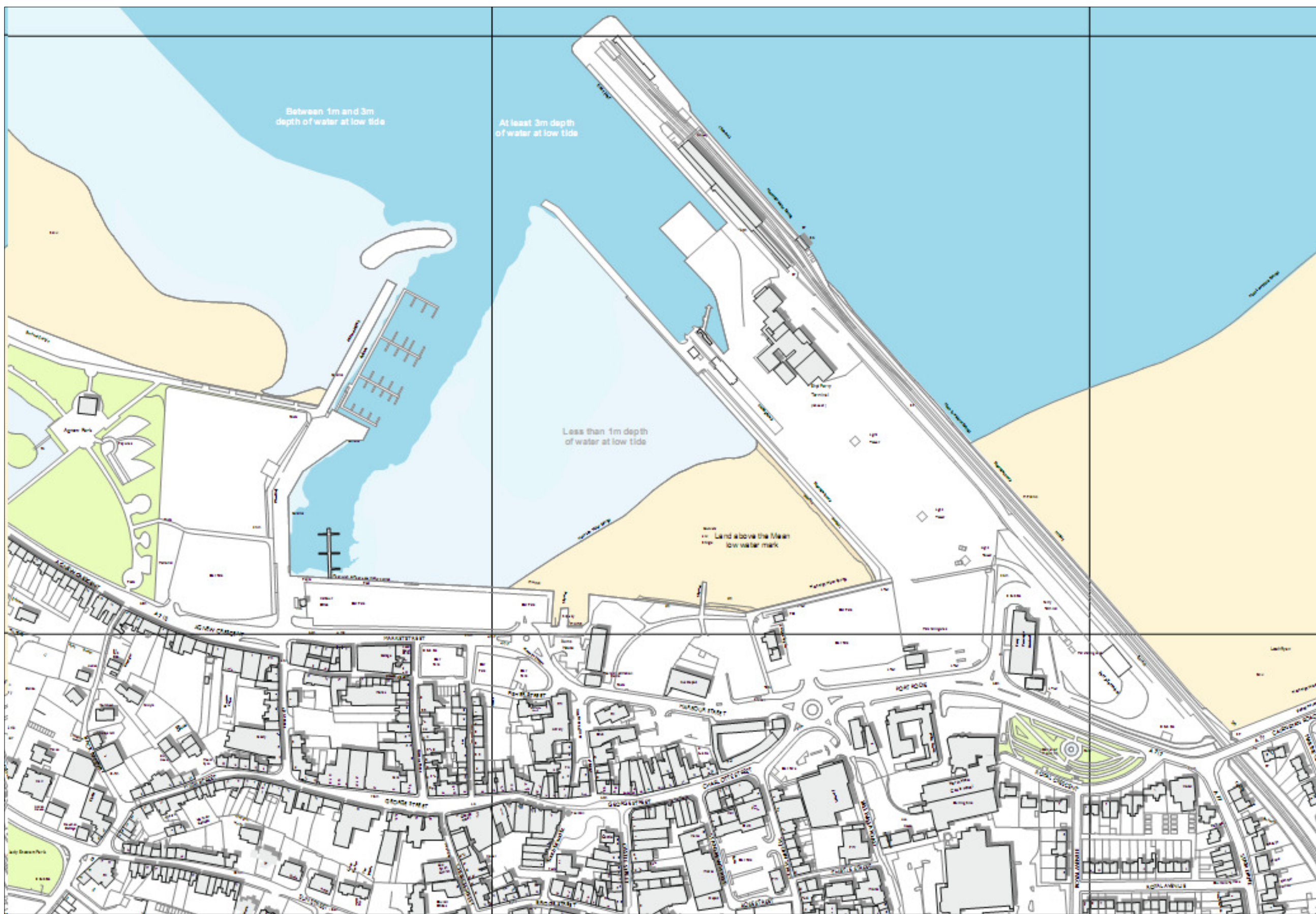


Figure 1: Existing Waterfront Layout

Stranraer Waterfront  
SEA Scoping Report

Figure reproduced from original report: *The Stranraer Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan*; Smith, Scott, Mullan Associates December 2009.





Figure 2: Proposed Waterfront Layout

Stranraer Waterfront  
SEA Scoping Report

Figure reproduced from original report: *The Stranraer Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan*; Smith, Scott, Mullan Associates December 2009.



### **1.3 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT**

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to set out the findings of an environmental assessment of the Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan. In accordance with Part 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Environmental Report identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the Masterplan.

### **1.4 SEA ACTIVITIES TO DATE**

The following SEA process has been applied to the Masterplan:

- preparation and submission of a Screening Report (Annex A);
- preparation of the Scoping Report (Annex B); and
- submission of the Scoping Report to the Consultation Authorities.

Statutory consultation with the SEA Consultation Authorities - Historic Scotland (HS), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) was undertaken in August and September 2011 via the SEA Gateway through submission of the SEA Scoping Report.

Comments received from the Authorities have been reviewed by the Natural Capital team and incorporated into the SEA process (see Section 2.7 for a summary and also Annex C).

The Environmental Report brings the results of all of these activities together and then goes on to describe:

- an appraisal of the Masterplan Objectives against the SEA objective “to protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats”;
- an appraisal of the alternatives to the Masterplan and cumulative effects (see Section 4.2); and
- the proposals for any mitigation measures and monitoring of the implementation of the Masterplan (see Sections 4.4 and 4.5).

The next steps for the SEA, including those for public consultation and finalisation and adoption of the Masterplan are set out in Section 5 of this report. Box 1 summarises the key facts relating to the Masterplan.

### **1.5 LAYOUT OF THE REPORT**

The remainder of the document is structured as follows:

- Section 2: sets out the appraisal methodology including SEA guidance and the response to the statutory consultation;
- Section 3: describes the Masterplan and its context together with the links with other relevant plans and programmes together with the relevant environmental baseline and key environmental issues;
- Section 4: presents the results of the environmental assessment including any proposed mitigation and proposals for monitoring; and
- Section 5: describes the next steps in the process.

The main text is supported by the following annexes:

- Annex A: Screening Report
- Annex B: Scoping Report

- Annex C: Summary of Statutory Consultee Responses to the Scoping Report
- Annex D: Bibliography and Sources of Information

**Box 1: Summary of Key Facts relating to the Strategy and Masterplan**

**Name of Responsible Authority:** Dumfries & Galloway Council

**Title of Plan/Programme:** Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan

**What prompted the Plan:** Council decision to develop a masterplan for the regeneration of the Waterfront area because of:

- the opportunities and challenges created now that the ferry operators (P & O and Stena Line) have relocated;
- the desire to make sure the Waterfront does not become a derelict area with the decline in the ferry business;
- the struggle that Stranraer could face in the future defining its character although this presents the opportunity to explore new tourism related opportunities.

**Plan Subject:** A regeneration plan

**Period covered by Plan:** The plan will be formally reviewed every five years

**Frequency of Updates:** It is likely to cover a 10 to 20 year period

**Plan Area:** See Figures 1 and 2

**Plan Purpose/Objectives:** The Masterplan is aimed at increasing inward investment, improving the environment and on promoting Stranraer as a destination for seaside activities and marine leisure through a mix of business, retail and housing development

Any comments on the Masterplan and Environmental Report should be addressed to:

**Contact Point:** Jon Mengham  
Dumfries & Galloway Council  
Kirkbank House  
English Street  
Dumfries  
DG1 2HS  
Jon.mengham@dumgal.gov.uk

## **2 APPRAISAL METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This section presents a summary of the methods used to carry out the environmental assessment of the Masterplan. The approach to SEA is introduced, followed by the guidance that has been used to shape the development of the Environmental Report. This is then followed by a summary of the screening and scoping processes. The assessment methods are set out in Section 2.6 and the chapter is concluded with a description of the response to the statutory consultation on the scoping report.

### **2.2 OVERALL APPROACH TO SEA**

The approach to the SEA has followed a series of defined stages:

- undertaking an initial screening exercise to determine the likelihood of significant environmental effects being generated by the Masterplan and the need for a full SEA (Section 2.4 and Annex A);
- having established that full SEA was necessary, to undertake a scoping exercise that would focus the assessment on the key environmental issues (Section 2.5 and Annex B);
- reviewing relevant plans and programmes that will influence the Masterplan in the context of the key environmental issues (Section 3.2, Table 3.1);
- identification and review of relevant aspects of the current state of the environment associated with the environmental issues that could be influenced by the implementation of the Masterplan (Section 3.3);
- clarification of the existing and potential future environmental issues which may influence or be influenced by the Masterplan (Section 3.4);
- environmental assessment of the key objectives within the Masterplan (Section 4.3);
- establishing any appropriate mitigation and proposals for monitoring the implementation of the Masterplan (Sections 4.4 and 4.5).

### **2.3 SEA GUIDANCE**

This Environmental Report has been prepared with reference to the following SEA legislation and guidance:

- Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005;
- European Commission DG Environment (2004) Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment;
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005) A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive;
- Scottish Executive (2006) SEA Toolkit;
- Scottish Government (2010) Planning Advice Note 1/2010 Strategic Environmental Assessment of Development Plans

The main requirements set out in the Directive are summarised in Table 2.1 along with a comment as to their status in the SEA of the Masterplan.

**Table 2.1: SEA Directive Guidance**

<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Response within SEA of the Masterplan</b>
a) Outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans	Addressed within Sections 1.1 and 3.2, and Table 3.1
b) Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment	Addressed within Section 3.3
c) Environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	Addressed within Section 3.3
d) Existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan	Addressed within Section 3.4
e) Environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation	Addressed within Table 3.1
f) Likely significant effects on the environment	Addressed within Section 4.3 and Table 4.1
g) Measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan	Addressed within Section 4.4 and Table 4.1
h) Outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties	Addressed within Section 4.2
i) Description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10	Addressed within Section 4.5
j) Non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	A non-technical summary occurs at the front of this report

## 2.4 SCREENING THE MASTERPLAN

In accordance with the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Council considered whether the environmental effects (positive and negative) of the Masterplan were likely to be significant. The screening exercise concluded that there would be no significant effects on the key topic areas of biodiversity (flora and fauna), population, human health, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape. Conclusions with regard to impacts on biodiversity were subject to verification by the results of an ecological survey. Ecological work was carried<sup>2</sup> out that did support the conclusion that there would be no significant residual effects arising from the implementation of the Masterplan.

The three statutory consultees were in broad agreement with the screening conclusions. SNH however was concerned about possible disturbance effects on important winter migratory birds visiting the wider Loch Ryan area that could be caused by increased light

<sup>2</sup> Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan Ecological Assessment Report, for Dumfries & Galloway Council, Natural Capital, 2011



boat activity and jet skiing as a result of creating a larger marina area at the Waterfront. SNH considered that if the Masterplan was to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance then it should be assessed through the full SEA process with a focus on this key issue.

## 2.5 SCOPING THE APPRAISAL

The scoping stage was informed by the screening exercise and the feedback from the consultation authorities. It was able to draw from information about the scope of the objectives and nature of the Masterplan, the known environmental baseline likely to be affected by the Masterplan, and the likely remaining environmental issues to consider.

A summary of the scoping appraisal is presented in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2 Scoping of Significant Effects**

SEA Issues	Scoped In	Scoped Out	Reasons
Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Yes		Due to comments and feedback on the screening report from SNH
Population		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees
Human health		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees
Soil		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees
Water		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees
Air		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees
Climatic factors		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees
Material assets		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees
Cultural heritage		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees
Landscape		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees

As can be seen in Table 2.2, the outcome of the initial scoping exercise indicates that all of the topic areas can be screened out apart from biodiversity, flora and fauna. The rationale for this is supported by the assessment summarised in the screening report and also in the responses of the statutory agencies (see Annex B of the scoping report).

## 2.6 ASSESSMENT METHODS

A framework approach was developed to evaluate the effects of the Masterplan.

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 (the Scottish Act) does not require the generation of SEA objectives to appraise the potential effects of this Masterplan. However, environmental protection objectives from other policies, plans and programmes

should be taken into consideration where they are appropriate. The development of specific SEA objectives and indicators is a recognised way in which environmental effects can be described, analysed and compared. SEA objectives will describe the intent and desired direction of environmental change, whilst indicators will measure the performance of the Masterplan against these objectives.

Schedule 2 of the Scottish Act requires that the Environmental Report should include a description of existing environmental problems, especially those relating to any areas of particular environmental importance. The purpose of this section is to explore the key environmental issues flagged up that are relevant to the general area and whether the Masterplan is likely to have an effect either positively or negatively on these issues. As a result of feedback on the screening and scoping reports this Environmental Report concentrates on assessing the issues raised by SNH with a focus on effects on biodiversity (flora and fauna).

Table 2.3 summarises the SEA Appraisal Framework used to evaluate the effects of the Masterplan on biodiversity. The Framework has been developed as a result of integrating a number of strands of relevant information and has been designed to reflect:

- environmental issues and problems identified through consultation and as part of the baseline analysis (see *Section 3.3* above);
- the results of the SEA screening exercise and responses from the statutory consultees.

**Table 2.3: SEA Appraisal Framework with Supporting Question Set Used in Assessing the Masterplan and its Effects on Biodiversity**

SEA Topic	Objective	Question Set
Biodiversity (Flora and Fauna)	1. To protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats	<p>Will the objectives of the Masterplan and its main proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the protection and/or enhancement of sites designated for their nature conservation interests?</li> <li>• Promote and enhance local biodiversity?</li> </ul> <p>Will the change in use of Loch Ryan be significant in terms of its impacts on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• important habitats in and around Loch Ryan?</li> <li>• feeding and roosting sites for important bird species in and around Loch Ryan?</li> <li>• important plant and animal species such as eel grass (<i>Zostera marina</i>) and native oyster (<i>Ostrea edulis</i>) beds?</li> <li>• any protected species within Loch Ryan?</li> </ul>

During the assessment using this appraisal framework the effects were considered in terms of their scale, the sensitivity of the resource, whether the effects were likely to be temporary or permanent, positive or negative, direct or indirect and whether there would be any likelihood that effects could build up. Wherever the potential for significant environmental effects was identified the potential for mitigation was also considered. A simple scoring system was used to assess the Masterplan against the SEA framework (see Table 2.4).

**Table 2.4 SEA Framework Scoring System**

Clear contribution to the objective, very positive	✓✓
Broadly supportive	✓
Neutral, no discernible effect	<b>0</b>
Negative effect, incompatible	*
Very negative effect	**
Uncertain effect	?

The findings of the assessment were set out in a matrix table based on the one in Table 2.5 (see Section 4). Each assessment (see Table 4.1) was supported by text as appropriate to ensure that the summaries in the tables are clear and the methods of assessment transparent. In undertaking the final appraisals of residual effects, the scale and nature of the effects was taken into account together with the potential for cumulative environmental effects.



**Table 2.5 Example Matrix for Documenting the Assessment of the Masterplan**

SEA Objective	Likely Environmental Impact			Mitigation or Further Improvement
	Short	Medium	Long	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats</li> </ul> <p>Will the objectives of the Masterplan and its main proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the protection and/or enhancement of sites designated for their nature conservation interests?</li> <li>• Promote and enhance local biodiversity?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the change in use of Loch Ryan be significant in terms of its impacts on:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ important habitats in and around Loch Ryan?</li> <li>○ feeding and roosting sites for important bird species in and around Loch Ryan?</li> <li>○ important plant and animal species such as eel grass (<i>Zostera marina</i>) and native oyster beds?</li> <li>○ any protected species within Loch Ryan?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				<p>(to cover for example):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Likelihood/certainty of effect occurring</li> <li>- Geographical scale of effect</li> <li>- Whether temporary or permanent</li> <li>- Frequency of effects and potential for reversibility</li> <li>- Assumptions made in assessment</li> <li>- Future opportunities for mitigation</li> <li>- Potential for indirect effects</li> <li>- Potential for secondary effects</li> <li>- Potential for synergistic effects</li> <li>- Potential for cumulative effects</li> <li>- Identification of any partners to deliver mitigation etc.</li> <li>- Recommendations for data collation etc.</li> </ul>

## **2.7 RESPONSE TO STATUTORY CONSULTATION**

The responses of the three statutory consultees – Historic Scotland, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage – to the consultation process on the screening and scoping reports is summarised in Annex C. A brief summary of the responses is given below.

### **2.7.1 Historic Scotland**

Historic Scotland agreed with the consideration that the Masterplan was unlikely to have significant effects on the historic environment, and therefore was content that the historic environment was scoped out of the assessment. Historic Scotland made no further recommendations or comments.

### **2.7.2 Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)**

SEPA overall considered the scoping report to sufficiently reflect the scale and influence of the proposed Masterplan. Key points included:

- an acknowledgement that biodiversity (flora and fauna) would be the only SEA issue to be scoped into the Environmental Report;
- an observation that since water is the main environmental medium influencing biodiversity it would be useful to include water related indicators in the environmental baseline and monitoring programme;
- it would be advisable to take into account the River Basin Management Planning process during the preparation of the environmental report. The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland describes the environmental objectives for each waterbody, as well as management measures.

### **2.7.3 Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)**

At the screening stage SNH had identified one area where the implications of delivering the Masterplan could lead to a significant environmental effect and this was with regard to possible effects of increases in light boat craft activity on feeding and roosting migratory birds and on eel grass beds.

During scoping SNH was generally content with the scope proposed for the environmental report and included a recommendation that the implications of the Masterplan should also include effects (if any) on native oyster beds.

### 3 PLAN CONTEXT

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section details the Masterplan's links with other relevant plans, programmes and strategies (PPS), provides a brief environmental background which details the current state of the environment of the study area, and provides a description of existing environmental problems. These are all focused on the topic of biodiversity since this is the only topic area that was scoped into the assessment during the screening and scoping stages.

#### 3.2 LINKS WITH OTHER RELEVANT PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES

An understanding of the relevance of other legislation, policy and plans to the Masterplan is an essential step in understanding its context, and in deriving the necessary baseline for the assessment. For the reasons already stated the baseline (Section 3.3) focuses on information relevant to biodiversity (flora and fauna) and the interpretation of the effects of the Masterplan (see Section 1.1). A summary list of the policies, plans and programmes together with their environmental objectives relevant to biodiversity and to the context of the Masterplan are presented in Table 3.1 below. These were used to help formulate the SEA objective in Table 2.3 together with its supporting question set (see Section 2.6).

**Table 3.1: Summary of Representative Plans, Programmes and Strategies (PPS) relevant to the Masterplan in the context of its potential effects on biodiversity (flora and fauna)**

Policy, Plan or Programme	Summary of Relevant Environmental Objectives and corresponding implications for the Masterplan in terms of Biodiversity
<b>International</b>	
European Union (2009) Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (codified version)	Framework for the conservation and management of, and human interactions with, wild birds in Europe
European Union (2000) Directive 2000/60/EC Water Framework Directive	Requirement to achieve good ecological status by 2015; Links to Solway Tweed River Basin Management Plan
European Union (1992) Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora	Preservation, protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, including the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora promote the maintenance of biodiversity, taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements
Council of Europe (1979) Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats	Ensures conservation and protection of wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats
<b>UK Wide</b>	
The UK Strategy for Sustainable Development "Securing the Future" (2005)	Recognises the importance of biological organisms in maintaining life-sustaining systems of the earth and the importance of the variability (biodiversity). Sets out a policy framework for an ecosystems approach to protecting the environment
Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan (1994)	To conserve and enhance the UK's biodiversity
<b>National</b>	
Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011	Sets out a comprehensive regime for water environment protection in Scotland
Scottish Government, SPP Scottish Planning Policy 2010 (supersedes NPPG 14 Natural Heritage and NPPG 13 Coastal Planning)	Improving the natural environment and the sustainable use and enjoyment of it is one of the Government's national outcomes. Planning authorities should therefore support opportunities for enjoyment and understanding of the natural heritage  Planning authorities should seek to prevent further fragmentation or isolation of habitats and identify

Policy, Plan or Programme	Summary of Relevant Environmental Objectives and corresponding implications for the Masterplan in terms of Biodiversity
	<p>opportunities to restore links which have been broken. Where possible, planning authorities should seek benefits for species and habitats from new development including the restoration of degraded habitats</p> <p>Planning authorities should also seek to protect the coastal environment, indicate priority locations for enhancement and regeneration, identify areas at risk from coastal erosion and flooding, and promote public access to and along the coast wherever possible</p>
Marine (Scotland) Act (2010)	To make provisions in relation to the Scottish marine area, including marine plans, licensing of marine activities and the protection of the area and its wildlife
"Choosing Our Future": Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)	Emphasises the need to protect Scotland's natural resources for the long term and to strengthen their role as part of people's lives and culture. Safeguarding the quality of Scotland's natural heritage is a priority
Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act (2004)	To conserve and enhance Scotland's biodiversity, wildlife and natural features. The Act places a "Biodiversity Duty" on Dumfries & Galloway Council
Scottish Biodiversity Strategy: Scotland's Biodiversity, It's in Your Hands, Scottish Executive (2004)	To halt the loss and conserve Scotland's biodiversity for future generations, to restore and enhance biodiversity through better planning design and practice, to increase awareness, understanding and enjoyment of biodiversity and to develop an effective management framework that ensures that biodiversity is taken into account in all decision making
Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003	Requires Dumfries & Galloway Council to have regard to the desirability of protecting the water environment
Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003	Introduces a right of responsible access to land and inland water in Scotland. The <i>Scottish Outdoor Access Code</i> gives guidance on the responsible exercising of this right
Scottish Government (2000) PAN60 Planning for Natural Heritage	PAN60 demonstrates how development and planning can contribute to conservation, enhancement, enjoyment and understanding of the natural environment; encourages planning authorities to be positive and creative in addressing natural heritage issues
<b>Local</b>	
Dumfries & Galloway Council (2011) Local Development Plan Main Issues Report	The environment currently makes a significant contribution to the region's economy and to the quality of life of its residents. To ensure that development respects and enhances the natural and built environment and is not detrimental, the spatial strategy will seek to guide appropriate development to less sensitive areas.
Scott Wilson for Scottish Water Port Rodie Pumping Station Design Statement, August 2010	Statement for the development of new pumping station required within Loch Ryan, specifically a new waste water pumping facility in the Port Rodie area of Stranraer.
SEPA and Environment Agency (2009) The river basin management plan for the Solway Tweed river basin district 2009–2015	Seeks to protect waters requiring special protection because of sensitivity to pollution or particular economic, social or environmental importance. Loch Ryan falls into this category because it supports economically significant shellfish stocks and habitats or species of international biodiversity conservation importance
Dumfries & Galloway Council (2009) Together is better, Dumfries & Galloway Community Plan 2009 - 2012	Seeks to achieve an environment that is protected and enhanced with everyone having a sense of ownership and individual and joint responsibility for the environment and in maintaining biodiversity



Policy, Plan or Programme	Summary of Relevant Environmental Objectives and corresponding implications for the Masterplan in terms of Biodiversity
DGC (2008) Dumfries & Galloway Local Biodiversity Action Plan	Promotes and contains measures to help protect and enhance the biodiversity of Dumfries and Galloway. The Biodiversity Action Plan contains a local habitat action plan for seagrass beds ( <i>Zostera spp.</i> ) and a species statement for birds.
Stena Line. Loch Ryan Port Environmental Statement (2008)	Environmental statement for the development and operation of a new port facility to accommodate Stena Line's ferry service between Stranraer and Belfast. The development intended to replace the current facilities in Stranraer with new port facilities at "Loch Ryan Port", ten kilometres north of Stranraer. The data held within this environmental statement was used to reinforce the environmental baseline.
H R Wallingford for Dumfries & Galloway Council (2005) Dumfries and Galloway Shoreline Management Plan	The Shoreline Management Plan begins to develop a coastal defence strategy for Dumfries and Galloway coastline and adjacent land. It provides priorities for coastal defence, including preservation of property and infrastructure, the environment and public safety.
Solway Firth European Marine Site Scheme of Management 2000	Conservation objectives for the prevention of the deterioration of natural habitats or the habitats of species, or disturbance of species for which the Solway European Marine Site is designated.
Dumfries & Galloway Structure Plan (1999)	The Structure Plan is due to be replaced by the Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan. The Structure Plan formed a strategy to guide development of Dumfries and Galloway from 1999 until the LDP is complete and adopted. Section 4 of the report details the nature conservation objectives for Dumfries and Galloway. It provided a baseline of environmental conditions of Loch Ryan.
Loch Ryan Strategy (1998)	Loch Ryan Strategy 1998 is a coastal management plan for the Loch Ryan and Stranraer area. The "Natural Heritage" section, which provided an environmental baseline of the area was used to inform this report.

### 3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE

This section of the Environmental Report describes the current state of the environment in the study area with an emphasis on biodiversity, as this is the key topic scoped into the assessment (see Section 2.5 and Annexes A and B).

#### 3.3.1 Biodiversity – Flora and Fauna

The following data sources were used in the production of an environmental baseline with a focus on biodiversity (flora and fauna and in particular birds) in the context of Loch Ryan and the surrounding area:

- Dumfries & Galloway Council (internal documents and reports);
- anecdotal evidence from Dumfries & Galloway Council Biodiversity Officer;
- SEPA (e.g. State of the Environment Report)<sup>3</sup>;
- SNH (e.g. Interactive Facts and Figures)<sup>4</sup> ;
- other relevant environmental reports produced for the area (e.g. commissioned EIA reports)<sup>5</sup>;
- RSPB and British Trust for Ornithology data on birds<sup>6</sup>;
- Dumfries and Galloway Environmental Resources Centre; and

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.sepa.org.uk/science\\_and\\_research/data\\_and\\_reports/state\\_of\\_the\\_environment.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/science_and_research/data_and_reports/state_of_the_environment.aspx)

<sup>4</sup> [http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/portal/page?\\_pageid=93,866334,93\\_884286&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/portal/page?_pageid=93,866334,93_884286&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

<sup>5</sup> Stena Line, Loch Ryan Port, Environmental Statement, ERM 2008

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/webs/data>

- data from local bird watching groups.

The sources of reference for the environmental baseline are included in Annex D.

The immediate Masterplan area does not contain any habitats that are designated under international or national legislation or by Dumfries & Galloway Council. Loch Ryan is however designated by SNH as a Marine Consultation Area<sup>7</sup>. This section sets out the closest designated areas and highlights their respective level of protection. It also provides further detail regarding species that are protected under European or national legislation, together with appropriate information on priority species and habitats.

## Designated Areas

### *Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)*

SACs are designated under the EC Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, known as the Habitats Directive. In the UK, sites are protected under The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, due to the presence of one or more habitats or species listed in the Directive. Management plans are written to ensure 'favourable conservation status.' SPAs are strictly protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC and 2009/147/EC 'Codified') also known as the Birds Directive, which came into force in April 1979. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds, listed in Annex I to the Birds Directive, and for regularly occurring migratory species.

There are no SACs or SPAs in the proposed Masterplan development area. The closest is Glen App - Galloway Moors an upland site designated for its breeding population of hen harrier. Loch of Inch and Torrs Warren SPA, Ramsar Site and SSSI is some 8km away and is a coastal SPA and Ramsar Site on the south coast of Galloway designated because it supports internationally important populations of wintering white fronted goose and hen harrier.

### *Ramsar Sites*

Wetland areas of high ecological value can be designated as Ramsar sites under the convention on wetlands of international importance. The nearest RAMSAR site is some 2.5km away (Loch of Inch and Torrs Warren – see above under SPA).

### *Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)*

These areas are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended by the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. Sites are designated due to the presence of important flora, fauna or geographical features. There are no SSSIs in the proposed development area or within 2km.

### *National Nature Reserves (NNR) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR)*

NNRs are sites of special natural interest, and provide opportunities for environmental education and the informal enjoyment of nature by the public. There are no national nature reserves in the vicinity of Stranraer and the nearest local nature reserve is at Wigtown Bay. This LNR includes the estuaries of the Rivers Cree and Bladnoch and is the biggest LNR in the British Isles. The site is protected for its mudflats and salt marsh habitats that are home to several thousand geese in winter months.

## Protected Species

In view of the concerns expressed by SNH it is important to consider the effects on European and nationally protected species in the area including birds. European species

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<sup>7</sup> Marine Consultation Area – a non-statutory designation by SNH to highlight nature conservation priorities in the near shore marine environment

are given a high level of protection under Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, transposed into UK law by The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994. Those species that might be relevant to Loch Ryan include otter, some cetaceans and some bat species. Bird species are protected by the European Council Directive (2009/147/EC).

There are a number of nationally important wintering bird species in and around Loch Ryan, with feeding activity taking place September to March/April. Loch Ryan is a site of national importance for six species of wetland bird including scaup, and Canadian pale-bellied brent geese. Wintering scaup (*Aythya marila*) rely on the feeding sites in the oyster beds in the deep water of the Southern basin of Loch Ryan. Numbers of Canadian pale-bellied brent geese (*Brenta bernicla*) are increasing, and can be found in significant numbers on the exposed mud flats and eelgrass beds in the Southern basin of Loch Ryan to the East of Stranraer. Geese are also often found in the area known as “the wig”, midway up the eastern coast of Loch Ryan.

In terms of protected mammal species, there have been two recent records of the pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), including a known roost site within the Masterplan area. There are no records for cetaceans in the Loch Ryan area, however, there is anecdotal evidence that the harbour porpoise may have been observed within the loch on occasion. There are very few written records of otter in and around Loch Ryan, but there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that they do use both the coastal habitat and inland areas.

### Priority Habitats and Species

The Dumfries & Galloway Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), contains 23 local habitat action plans and a total of 50 local species action plans. The combination of oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) beds and eelgrass beds (*Zostera marina*), predominantly in the southern basin of the loch, makes Loch Ryan significant in Scottish terms as it bears more resemblance to certain rias (narrow sea inlets) in southern Britain. These habitats are important feeding grounds for nationally important populations of wetland bird species that overwinter in and around Loch Ryan.

Dumfries & Galloway Local Biodiversity Action Plan and Shoreline Management Plan commit to maintaining and enhancing *Zostera marina* habitat in all areas in which it has previously been recorded.

### 3.3.2 Water

Although no particular concerns were raised with regard to water quality of Loch Ryan (either by SEPA or SNH), since it is the main environmental ‘medium’ that plays a crucial part in influencing the biodiversity of the loch it was felt useful to include it within the background environmental baseline and monitoring programme (see Section 4.5).

#### Surface Water Quality

SEPA monitors surface water quality in watercourses, estuaries and other water bodies. In addition, under the Water Framework Directive, enacted in Scotland in the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003, SEPA has responsibilities relating the management and protection of river catchments (river basin districts), which includes the groundwater resource within those catchments.

SEPA classifies rivers in terms of water quality from A1 (excellent), A2 (good) to D (seriously polluted) this classification is based on a combination of chemical, biological and aesthetic criteria. Similarly estuarine waters are also classified from A to D. The

water quality status of Loch Ryan and Stranraer is Class C (poor)<sup>8</sup>, although SEPA recorded improvements in 2006 to stretches in Loch Ryan due to the statutory phasing out of Tributyl Tin (TBT) as an anti-foulant on ships<sup>9</sup>.

The Loch Ryan coastal waterbody is classified as having an overall status of “moderate”, and an ecological status of “moderate” within the River Basin Management Plan for North Solway (produced by SEPA)<sup>10</sup>. SEPA sets out an environmental objective for the Loch Ryan waterbody to reach “good” status by 2021, through mitigation of sewage disposal and pollution from livestock farming. There are two shellfish growing waters protected under the Shellfish Growing Waters Directive in the North Solway river basin area (as part of the Solway Tweed area), and Loch Ryan is one of them with important native oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) beds in the southern basin.

Scottish Water has a statutory duty, as set out in the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC), to upgrade wastewater treatment facilities in Stranraer in order to address environmental and health issues associated with current non-compliant discharges to Loch Ryan. Planning permission has been granted for a new Wastewater Treatment Works at Leswalt which will provide secondary treatment of the wastewater and remove the discharge from Loch Ryan. To facilitate this, a number of new pumping stations are required within the catchment including a new waste water pumping facility in the Port Rodie area of Stranraer. This new pumping facility is currently under construction and is due to be commissioned in spring of 2012.

### 3.4 CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes a description of existing environmental problems, especially those relating to any areas of particular environmental importance. The purpose of this section is to explore the key environmental issues that are relevant to biodiversity (flora and fauna) as highlighted by Dumfries & Galloway Council at a strategic level for Dumfries and Galloway, and whether the Masterplan is likely to have a significant effect either positively or negatively on these issues.

Environmental problems identified to date that relate to biodiversity at a strategic level across Dumfries and Galloway are:

- **Biodiversity, flora and fauna:** Decline in biodiversity in the general region; lack of information on European protected species; impacts of climate change on biodiversity.  
**Implications to the Masterplan:** Should the Masterplan lead to any reduction in biodiversity, particularly a significant impact on flora and fauna (as suggested in the SNH response to screening – see below) then this would constitute a ‘significant effect’.
- **Water:** Issues around the current water quality of Loch Ryan (see 3.6 above).  
**Implications to the Masterplan:** Water quality in Loch Ryan is expected to improve with the upgrades of sewage treatment to be undertaken by Scottish Water. No significant issues were raised by screening or in the statutory responses.

The environmental problems flagged up by SNH during the screening stage related specifically to biodiversity, flora and fauna, and are summarised in Table 3.2.

<sup>8</sup> SEPA Coastal Waters Classification 1996-2006: South West Scotland. [Online]. Accessed September 2011

<sup>9</sup> SEPA, 2006. National Water Quality Classification 2006. [Online] Accessed September 2011

<sup>10</sup> SEPA, 2007. Solway Tweed River Basin Management Plan, 2009-2015. [Online] Accessed September 2011

**Table 3.2 Environmental Issues Raise by SNH Relevant to the Masterplan**

SEA Topic Area	Potential Problems	Comments	Implications of the Masterplan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biodiversity - fauna</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disturbance to feeding, roosting and overwintering wildfowl, seabirds and waders within Loch Ryan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groups of feeding and roosting birds (seabirds and waders) can be disturbed by boating activities if shallow craft stray too close to these sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The potential increase in small boat use of Loch Ryan that will be able to access shallow areas of the loch currently relatively free of boat traffic</li> <li>Accordingly there may be an increase in disturbance to feeding, roosting and overwintering wildfowl, seabirds and waders</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biodiversity – flora and fauna</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disturbance to or destruction of eel grass beds, impacts on native oyster beds and other habitats in and around Loch Ryan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Propeller turbulence from small craft may directly affect eel grass beds and other habitats in the shallow areas of Loch Ryan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The potential increase in small boat use of Loch Ryan that will be able to access shallow areas of the loch currently relatively free of boat traffic</li> <li>Accordingly the propellers of such craft could impact negatively on eel grass (<i>Zostera marina</i>) and native oyster (<i>Ostrea edulis</i>) beds</li> </ul>



## 4 ASSESSMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The procedure for assessing the likely significant environmental effects of the Masterplan has been described in Section 2.6. The key objectives of the Masterplan have been assessed against the SEA framework (see Table 4.1).

### 4.2 PLAN ALTERNATIVES

The SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 require the Environmental Report to consider the impacts of alternatives to the proposed plan. There is no alternative *per se* to the Waterfront Masterplan other than simply 'a do nothing' alternative, since there is only one Stranraer Waterfront that will need some form of regeneration plan put into place once Stena Line has moved out. Although no strategic options have been considered as alternatives, the development of the Masterplan has been an iterative process, during which a number of possible options within the harbour footprint have been considered. The eventual design has come about through extensive stakeholder and community consultation and is considered to represent the most sustainable approach to regeneration of the waterfront area.

### 4.3 ASSESSMENT OF THE MASTERPLAN OBJECTIVES/PROPOSALS

The six Masterplan Objectives (stated in Table 4.1 below) broadly intend to promote increased visitor activity in and around Loch Ryan. With the increase in footfall and human pressures to the area, this could generate increased disturbance to birds and other wildlife. Human disturbance can originate from a variety of sources, including increased boating activity (e.g. motorboats, canoe, kayak, dory and viewing boats), increased use of personal water craft (i.e. jet ski activity), and increased human traffic (e.g. angling, hiking, and foot traffic, increasing disturbance particularly to banks and shorelines). The impacts can be a direct result of harassment of birds or other wildlife, or can occur indirectly through the loss of habitat or feeding grounds.

A recent study of disturbance distances in selected bird species<sup>11</sup>, investigated behavioural response of a number of coastal bird species (including divers and sea duck) to human disturbance. The study highlighted that coastal species are more likely to swim away than flush, when exposed to both pedestrian and aquatic vehicle disturbance, however, the study does indicate that bird populations that are stressed by other factors, such as low food availability, are less likely to withstand the effects of disturbance than otherwise unstressed populations. This suggests that disturbance, if persistent and located close to or within feeding grounds, is likely to cause cumulative negative impacts on bird populations. Increased small boat and jet-ski activity around and within eel grass beds to the east of Stranraer and the oyster beds within the southern basin could therefore have significant implications for nationally important populations of geese and diving duck (i.e. scaup).

Although there is potential for negative impacts on nationally important wintering bird populations in Loch Ryan, the effects of increased visitor pressure can be mitigated against with sensible habitat and visitor management (Section 4.4). The development of a robust management plan that includes limited seasonal visits and exclusion zones will play a role in mitigating against the possible increases in human disturbance.

Table 4.1 below consolidates and summarises the environmental effects that are predicted to arise as a result of the adoption of the Masterplan and outlines any necessary mitigation.

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<sup>11</sup> M. Ruddock and D.P. Whitfield (2007). A Review of the Disturbance Distances in Selected Bird Species.





**Table 4.1 SEA Appraisal Summary of the Masterplan**

SEA Objective	Potential Effect	Mitigation	Nature of Residual Effect	Assessment of Residual Effect			Comments
				Short	Med	Long	
<b>Masterplan Objective 1 Reconnect the town centre with the waterfront</b>							
To protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The delivery of Objective 1 could increase visitor pressure on the waterfront and with the possible increased footfall could generate effects such as disturbance to birds and other wildlife</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The planned increase in green spaces and production of a more sensitive landscape design that provides opportunities for enhancing biodiversity in what was once a very urban and developed environment, should help to mitigate against increased visitor activity</li> <li>The creation of a more pedestrian friendly environment (see Objective 3 below) should also be able to steer movement onto designated paths and away from any potentially sensitive areas</li> <li>Further interpretive signs and information about the plants and wildlife of the waterfront area (as part of a wider Loch Ryan Management Plan – see Objective 4 below) can also serve to raise awareness and minimise impacts on biodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With the implementation of the recommended mitigation the residual effect should be neutral or even slightly positive in the longer term</li> </ul>	0	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is an opportunity for the landscape design to help enhance local biodiversity through a natural approach to planting in the green spaces and corridors (see Natural Capital's Ecology Report<sup>2</sup>)</li> <li>The production of a Loch Ryan Management plan with associated interpretation should help to better manage any increases in visitor numbers. As awareness is raised about wildlife conservation in the more sensitive areas this should help protect the biodiversity of the wider Loch Ryan catchment</li> </ul>

<b>Masterplan Objective 2 Encourage high quality architectural design</b>							
To protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The delivery of Objective 2 should not generate any significant impacts on biodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The incorporation of measures to encourage wildlife in new build – such as swift nest boxes – could help to generate a more positive effect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likely to be neutral or slightly positive in the longer term</li> </ul>	0	0	✓	
<b>Masterplan Objective 3 Create a more pedestrian friendly environment</b>							
To protect and enhance biodiversity and natural Habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The delivery of Objective 3 should not generate any significant impacts on biodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The creation of a more pedestrian friendly environment should be able to steer movement onto designated paths and away from any potentially sensitive areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likely to be neutral</li> </ul>	0	0	0	
<b>Masterplan Objective 4 Create opportunities and infrastructure for access to the water</b>							
To protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development of a new 250 berth marina as part of the Waterfront Masterplan could lead to an increase in small boat activity including jet skiing in the wider Loch Ryan area</li> <li>There is potential for increased activity close to the shoreline thus affecting bird species that feed in these areas</li> <li>The oyster beds in the deeper water of the southern basin support a large population of scaup, and the eel grass beds to the east of Stranraer and the Stena Line pier are an important feeding site in winter for Canadian pale-bellied brent geese. If jet skiers and those</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mitigation should include restrictions on small boat activity in key areas of Loch Ryan during specific times of year to avoid disturbance to the feeding grounds of overwintering migratory birds. For example, restricting small boat activity in shallow waters (particularly around the eel grass beds) to May to August with no activity permitted during September to April.</li> <li>Mitigation would also be provided if Loch Ryan were to be mapped and zoned to clearly identify 'no go areas' for jet skiing.</li> <li>Clearly identified designated landing and launching areas for jet skis should manage increased activity.</li> <li>Such mitigation could also be reinforced with clear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likely to be neutral with rigorous application of exclusion zones and seasonal permitted activity</li> </ul>	0	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ecological Report<sup>2</sup> states that there are specific areas in Loch Ryan that are important feeding grounds for nationally important bird species. But with the rigorous application of exclusion zones and increased awareness of restrictions in terms of seasonal activity, there should be no residual effects on this SEA objective</li> <li>These exclusion zones and restricted activity should be incorporated into a tourism and leisure management plan for the wider Loch Ryan</li> <li>Increased awareness of overwintering migratory birds of national</li> </ul>

	operating smaller craft stray into these areas there is a risk of disturbance or injury to feeding and roosting birds	<p>indications of permitted seasonal periods included in a tourism and leisure management plan for the wider Loch Ryan area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures should be in place to ensure visitors are educated on the management goals of the plan, by providing educational information at designated boat landing and visitor arrival areas, such as interpretation boards.</li> </ul>					importance and the avoidance of disturbance, should enhance the protection of the feeding grounds in which they rely on, promoting an overall positive impact, particularly in the longer term as the Masterplan is delivered
<b>Masterplan Objective 5      Change perceptions of Stranraer from a ferry port to a leisure destination</b>							
To protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The delivery of Objective 5 could contribute towards increasing visitor pressure on the waterfront and lead to possible increased footfall that could generate effects such as disturbance to birds and other wildlife both along the waterfront and within the wider Loch Ryan area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The planned increase in green spaces and production of a more sensitive landscape design that provides opportunities for enhancing biodiversity in what was once a very urban and developed environment, should help to mitigate against increased visitor activity</li> <li>The creation of a more pedestrian friendly environment (see Objective 3 above) should also be able to steer movement onto designated paths and away from any potentially sensitive areas</li> <li>Further interpretive signs and information about the plants and wildlife of the waterfront area (as part of a wider Loch Ryan Management Plan – see Objective 4 above) can also serve to raise awareness and minimise impacts on biodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With the implementation of the recommended mitigation the residual effect should be neutral or even slightly positive in the longer term</li> </ul>	0	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The production of a Loch Ryan Management plan with associated interpretation should help to better manage any increases in visitor numbers. As awareness is raised about wildlife conservation in the more sensitive areas this should help protect the biodiversity of the wider Loch Ryan catchment</li> <li>With the rigorous application of exclusion zones and increased awareness of restrictions in terms of seasonal activity for jet skiing and light boat activity, there should be no residual effects on this SEA objective</li> </ul>

Masterplan Objective 6 Increase substantially the number of people who visit Stranraer and the surrounding area							
To protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The delivery of Objective 6 is likely to increase visitor pressure on the waterfront and in the wider Loch Ryan area</li> <li>With the potentially large increases in footfall this could generate effects such as disturbance to birds and other wildlife across the wider Loch Ryan catchment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The planned increase in green spaces and production of a more sensitive landscape design that provides opportunities for enhancing biodiversity in what was once a very urban and developed environment, should help to mitigate against increased visitor activity</li> <li>The creation of a more pedestrian friendly environment (see Objective 3 above) should also be able to steer movement onto designated paths and away from any potentially sensitive areas</li> <li>Further interpretive signs and information about the plants and wildlife of the waterfront area (as part of a wider Loch Ryan Management Plan – see Objective 4 above) can also serve to raise awareness and minimise impacts on biodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With the implementation of the recommended mitigation the residual effect should be neutral or even slightly positive in the longer term</li> </ul>	0	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is an opportunity for the landscape design to help enhance local biodiversity through a natural approach to planting in the green spaces and corridors (see Natural Capital's Ecology Report<sup>12</sup>)</li> <li>The production of a Loch Ryan Management plan with associated interpretation should help to better manage any increases in visitor numbers. As awareness is raised about wildlife conservation in the more sensitive areas this should help protect the biodiversity of the wider Loch Ryan catchment</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan Ecological Assessment Report, for Dumfries & Galloway Council, Natural Capital, 2011

#### 4.4 MITIGATION

Table 4.1 above and Table 4.1 of the Ecological Assessment Report<sup>13</sup>, provide detail on recommended measures that will mitigate against any potential negative environmental impacts and also contribute to the enhancement of site ecology. With these mitigation measures in place, there is expected to be no significant environmental effects generated by the Stranraer Waterfront Masterplan. A summary of mitigation measures is provided below.

##### *Enhancing Site Ecology*

During the design of landscape setting and open spaces, as part of the proposed development at Stranraer waterfront, there is potential for actions to be taken to enhance local biodiversity and contribute towards the delivery of the Dumfries & Galloway Local Biodiversity Action Plan. Table 4.1 in the Ecological Assessment Report<sup>12</sup> outlines detailed recommendations, and a summary of actions are provided below:

- Encourage the development of coastal grassland, characterised by coastal plant species (i.e. sea plantain, thrift, fescues and bents together with herbs such as ladies bedstraw, birds foot trefoil and thyme).
- Mowing some areas of grassland less and allowing a greater variety of wild flowers to come through, to attract insects and seed eating birds.
- Establishment of native tree and shrub habitat more typical of coastal habitat, and ensuring any ornamental shrub planting consists of species which attracts insects (i.e. buddleias, cotoneasters, lavenders, rosemary and fuchsias).
- Installation of nest boxes to attract breeding black guillemot to the East Pier and the installation of nest boxes for swifts in some of the new builds.
- The use of effective Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) that play both an ecological role as well as an engineering, water balancing role. The development of a coastal SUDS pond or wetland area that mimics a coastal wetland and supports one or two saltmarsh species as well as other more freshwater marshy species.
- The promotion of wild space in urban areas as an educational resource to inform communities about local coastal wildlife (i.e. interpretation boards placed in strategic locations).

##### *Protection of Priority Habitats and Species*

Due to the Masterplan strategic objectives that seek to encourage an increase in recreational use of Loch Ryan, there is potential for increased use of small boats and jet skis in the wider Loch Ryan area. If there are no controls exerted on the use of jet skis and small boats in the wider Loch Ryan area this could lead to potential negative effects on sensitive feeding grounds of nationally important populations of wintering birds (e.g. the feeding grounds at the eelgrass beds (*Zostera marina*) to the east of the Stena Line pier, and the oyster beds (*Ostrea edulis*) in the deeper water within the Southern basin of Loch Ryan).

In order to mitigate against the possibility of these cumulative negative effects being generated from the objectives of the Stranraer Waterfront Masterplan, it is recommended that a management plan for the wider Loch Ryan be created that includes strategies for zoning Loch Ryan and restrictions on seasonal and site specific activity. For example:

- restricting jet ski and small boat activity in shallow waters, particularly the eelgrass beds to the east of Stranraer, to May to August, with no activity permitted during September to April;

<sup>13</sup> Stranraer Waterfront Development Area Ecological Assessment Report, August 2011

- designating restricted landing and launching areas for motorboats and jet skis;
- mapped and zoned “no go areas” for jet skiing, and zoned areas where jet ski activity will be permitted alongside clear indications of the above permitted seasonal periods; and
- ensuring visitors are educated on the management goals of the plan, by providing educational information at designated boat landing and visitor arrival areas, such as interpretation boards that highlight exclusion zoning and promote the protection of species and habitats of importance.

If the above measures are established this will provide the mitigation necessary to achieve tourism and recreational objectives without significant environmental impacts on the sensitive features of Loch Ryan.

An example of how the management of visitor pressures can be carried out successfully is illustrated by Crouch Harbour Authority’s guidelines on the “Use of Personal Water Craft on the Rivers Crouch and Roach”<sup>14</sup>. The Crouch and Roach estuaries are located in the English County of Essex and attract internationally important numbers of wild fowl and waders during the winter months (including populations of brent geese). Permanent exclusion zones for personal water craft (PWC) are in place along the entire River Roach and its creeks, and their use is restricted to three zones within the River Crouch. PWCs are permitted to navigate directly from a launching place to these permitted areas, provided they stay within the eight knot speed limit, but must not be used within any other part of the river.

It is clear from the available literature that as long as a ‘Tourism and Visitor Management Plan’ for the wider Loch Ryan is produced that provides guidance on activities that could impact on visiting migratory bird populations and the wider Loch Ryan biodiversity, then increased tourism and recreational activities can be accommodated with no residual significant environmental effect.

In terms of protected species, two recent records of pipistrelle bats means that any planned work that could involve disturbance to properties within the Masterplan area that contain bat roosts, would mean that such properties would need to be surveyed and the necessary precautions taken to protect the bats.

#### **4.5 MONITORING AND ESTABLISHING APPROPRIATE INDICATORS**

Monitoring of the effects of implementing the Masterplan on biodiversity is likely to be undertaken by the activities of several interested parties, and would be likely to include (but not necessarily be restricted to):

- Dumfries & Galloway Council Biodiversity Section and Officer
- Dumfries and Galloway Environmental Resources Centre
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- RSPB
- Scottish Wildlife Trust

Environmental regulators (e.g. SEPA) will play a role through ongoing monitoring regimes in ensuring that no additional environmental impacts arise on any parts of the environment (such as the water quality of Loch Ryan), at risk from activities involved in implementing the Masterplan (e.g. construction).

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<sup>14</sup> Crouch Harbour Authority. [Online] <http://crouchharbour.org.uk/byelaws/personal-watercraft/>. Accessed September 2011.

Water quality monitoring will continue to be undertaken by SEPA. Loch Ryan is designated by SNH as a Marine Consultation Area and the purpose of this designation is to encourage coastal communities and management bodies to be aware of marine conservation issues in the area. As such indicator performance of the wider Loch Ryan relies on actions of local governing bodies, and continued site management. Ongoing activities and knowledge of the Council's biodiversity officer, and survey work carried out by the local Environmental Resources Centre should inform performance indicators during the implementation of the Stranraer Waterfront Masterplan.

Some possible indicators that could be used to monitor the effects of the Masterplan on local biodiversity are summarised in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 Possible Indicators for Monitoring the Effects of the Waterfront Masterplan**

<b>SEA Topic</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Example Indicators</b>	<b>Monitored by:</b>
<b>Biodiversity (Flora and Fauna)</b>	1. To protect and encourage further use of feeding and roosting sites by winter migrants (scaup, Canadian pale bellied brent geese)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Status and use of important feeding and roosting sites (numbers of birds)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Lead:</b> SNH,</li> <li><b>Partners:</b> RSPB, Local bird watching group</li> </ul>
	2. To protect (and where appropriate enhance) eel grass and oyster beds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Status of eel grass and oyster beds in Loch Ryan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Lead:</b> SNH,</li> <li><b>Partners:</b> D&amp;G Council</li> </ul>
	3. To protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats while improving access to natural spaces and the wider Loch Ryan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Status of key natural and semi-natural habitats and biodiversity around Loch Ryan (how this relates to D&amp;G LBAP)</li> <li>Evidence of awareness raising and education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Lead:</b> D&amp;G Council</li> <li><b>Partners:</b> SNH</li> </ul>

The refinement of these indicators or the selection of further appropriate indicators on which the effects of the Masterplan on biodiversity can be measured, will be undertaken through consultation with SNH.





## **5 NEXT STEPS**

### **5.1 ANTICIPATED MILESTONES**

The key milestones in the SEA process are as follows:

- the Environmental Report, which reports the findings of the SEA of the Masterplan, will be published for consultation alongside the draft Masterplan, such that the two documents (the Masterplan and its accompanying SEA) will be available for consultation together for a period of no less than six weeks (November to December 2011);
- following consultation on the Masterplan and the Environmental Report, the Masterplan will be revised and updated where necessary and appropriate, taking account of the comments received; and
- following any revision of the Masterplan, an SEA Statement will be prepared and made available to the Consultation Authorities and public setting out how the findings of consultation and environmental assessment have been incorporated into the further development of the Masterplan.

### **5.2 KEY TIMESCALES**

Key timescales in the development of the Masterplan and SEA are as follows:

- submission of the Environmental Report to the Consultation Authorities in November 2011;
- consultation on the Masterplan and Environmental Report from November 2011 to December 2011; and
- finalise in December 2011.



ANNEX A  
(TO MAIN ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT)

SCREENING REPORT



## SEA SCREENING REPORT (COVER NOTE )

### PART 1

To: [SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

### PART 2

An SEA Screening Report is attached for the plan, programme or strategy (PPS) entitled:

**Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan**

The Responsible Authority is:

**Dumfries & Galloway Council**

### COMPLETE PART 3 or 4 or 5

### PART 3

Screening is required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. Our view is that:

- an SEA is required** because the PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(3) of the Act and is likely to have significant environmental effects *or*
- an SEA is required** because the PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(4) of the Act and is likely to have significant environmental effects *or*
- an SEA is not required** because the PPS is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and also see Part 5 below)

### PART 4

- The PPS does not require an SEA under the Act. However, we wish to carry out an SEA on a voluntary basis. We accept that, because this SEA is voluntary, the statutory 28 day timescale for views from the Consultation Authorities cannot be guaranteed.

### PART 5

- 
- We believe that this masterplan does not need a full SEA because:
    - The masterplan is at the lowest level in the plan hierarchy and will eventually sit within the new Local Development Plan for Dumfries & Galloway which is itself undergoing SEA.
    - The masterplan presents no alternatives for consideration, these have been considered at the LDP level and SEA has inputted at this level in the decision making process.
    - All the strategic decisions have already been taken and this masterplan simply influences the projects on the ground so SEA will have little effect and is likely to duplicate processes that are already underway.
    - Although there will be environmental effects these have already been identified and appropriate studies initiated and EIA following recognised best practice will determine any mitigation needed at the appropriate time.
    - Full SEA carried out on this masterplan would not add any strategic value and would risk duplicating work already done (see above) and incurring unnecessary cost.

**SEA SCREENING REPORT (COVER NOTE)**

**PART 6**

<b>Contact name</b>	Jon Mengham
<b>Job Title</b>	Dumfries Regeneration Officer
<b>Contact address</b>	Dumfries & Galloway Council Kirkbank House English Street Dumfries DG1 2HS
<b>Contact tel no</b>	01387 260157
<b>Contact email</b>	Jon.mengham@dumgal.gov.uk

**PART 7**

<b>Signature</b> (electronic signature is acceptable)	
<b>Date</b>	14 April 2011

## SEA SCREENING REPORT - KEY FACTS

<b>Responsible Authority</b>	Dumfries & Galloway Council		
<b>Title of PPS</b>	Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan		
<b>Purpose of PPS</b>	To set out a regeneration plan for the Stranraer Waterfront Area		
<b>What prompted the PPS</b> (e.g. a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)	<p>Council decision to develop a masterplan for the regeneration of the waterfront area because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the opportunities and challenges created now that the ferries (P &amp; O and Stena Line) have pulled out;</li> <li>• the desire to make sure the Waterfront does not become a derelict area with the decline in the ferry business;</li> <li>• the struggle that Stranraer could face in the future finding its character and this presents the opportunity to explore new tourism related opportunities.</li> </ul>		
<b>Subject</b> (e.g. transport)	A regeneration plan		
<b>Period covered by PPS</b>	It is likely to cover a 10 to 20 year period		
<b>Frequency of updates</b>	It is likely to be subsumed into the LDP framework so whilst the original masterplan will not necessarily be updated the LDP will, together with associated area action plans following statutory requirements		
<b>Area covered by PPS</b> (e.g. geographical area – it is good practice to attach a map)	See attached map		
<b>Summary of nature/ content of PPS</b>	The Masterplan is aimed at increasing inward investment, improving the environment and on promoting Stranraer as a destination for seaside activities and marine leisure through a mix of business, retail and housing development (See Annex A for more details)		
<b>Are there any proposed PPS objectives?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<b>Copy of objectives attached</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	YES (see Annex A)	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
<b>Date</b>	14 April 2011		

## SEA SCREENING REPORT

Our determinations regarding the likely significance of effects on the environment of Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan is set out in Table 1.

**TABLE 1 – LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

TITLE OF PPS		
Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan		
RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY		
Dumfries & Galloway Council		
Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (1(a), 1(b) etc. refer to paragraphs in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)	Likely to have significant environmental effects?  YES/NO	Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
1(a) the degree to which the PPS sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	<b>NO</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Masterplan covers a relatively small portion (10.5 hectares) of a small town (population ca 12,000)</li> <li>It proposes 380 new houses, modest retail and office accommodation, a hotel and supermarket (See Annex A for more details)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whilst there are likely to be potential environmental effects caused by construction activities these would not be expected to be of such significance that they could not be either prevented or mitigated using good practice</li> <li>The various environmental topic areas are reviewed in Annex B and the anticipated effects are discussed under each heading</li> <li>The potential environmental effects can be avoided and/or mitigated through the EIA process</li> </ul>
1(b) the degree to which the PPS influences other PPS including those in a hierarchy	<b>NO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This PPS is at the bottom end of the hierarchy, 'nesting' within the LDP</li> <li>Alternatives and choices will have been already dealt with in the SEA for the LDP</li> </ul>



<p>1(c) the relevance of the PPS for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development</p>	<p><b>NO</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Masterplan recognises the role it can play in promoting sustainable development and so within Chapter 4 that focuses on the Urban Design Strategy there is a section devoted to presenting a suite of sustainable design proposals (see Section 4.5 of the Masterplan)</li> <li>• Sustainability principles have been factored into the Masterplan during its development and this has resulted in the integration of environmental considerations in an iterative way</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment</b></p> <p>(1(d) etc. refer to paras in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)</p>	<p><b>Likely to have significant environmental effects?</b></p> <p><b>YES/NO</b></p>	<p><b>Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)</b></p>
<p>1(d) environmental problems relevant to the PPS</p>	<p><b>NO</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The key SEA environmental topic areas are reviewed in Annex B, Table B1 and the potential environmental effects/problems are reviewed</li> <li>• Whilst some potential environmental impacts are identified it is considered that these can be mitigated and that the residual effects would not be significant</li> <li>• Some environmental problems have been identified that are relevant to the Masterplan but these have or will be addressed by further studies (such as the Stranraer Waterfront Masterplan Transport Evaluation, a contaminated land study of the old gasworks area, the Conservation Area Character Study and an ecological survey – See Annex A Table A1 for details) and an SEA would add no further insight and would merely recommend the same studies</li> </ul>
<p>1(e) the relevance of the PPS for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, PPS linked to waste management or water protection)</p>	<p><b>NO</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PPS has no such links and so is not identified as relevant to the implementation of Community legislation on the environment</li> </ul>

<p><b>Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment</b></p> <p>(1(d) etc. refer to paras in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)</p>	<p><b>Likely to have significant environmental effects?</b></p> <p><b>YES/NO</b></p>	<p><b>Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)</b></p>
<p>2 (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects</p>	<p><b>NO</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None of the potential environmental effects are considered to pose threats of significant adverse damage or irreversible damage to the environment</li> <li>• The predicted effects are reviewed in Annex B and the probability, frequency and reversibility considered in the table presented</li> </ul>
<p>2 (b) the cumulative nature of the effects</p>	<p><b>NO</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The only effects that might create some degree of cumulative effect would be the relatively small (in scale) emissions of CO<sub>2</sub></li> <li>• Whilst cumulative in nature the level of emissions are anticipated to be small (on a regional/global scale) because of the relatively small scale of the Masterplan (in terms of size and numbers of buildings) and because sustainable design principles that include improved energy efficiency, use of renewable energy and sustainable transport solutions are being promoted</li> <li>• During construction noise, dust visual intrusion and disruption to communities could be significant but would be mitigated by adopting best practice</li> </ul>
<p>2 (c) transboundary nature of the effects (i.e. environmental effects on other EU Member States)</p>	<p><b>NO</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by their very nature are transboundary , in this case because of the scale of the plan and the use of sustainable design and construction principles they are not considered to be sufficiently significant (on a regional or global scale) as to pose a threat to for example other EU Member States</li> </ul>
<p>2 (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)</p>	<p><b>NO</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any environmental effects generated by the Masterplan are not considered sufficiently significant as to pose a risk to human health and can be mitigated using good practice (see Annex B)</li> </ul>

<b>Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment</b> (2(e), 2(f) etc refer to paras in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)	<b>Likely to have significant environmental effects?</b>  <b>YES/NO</b>	<b>Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)</b>
2 (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	<b>NO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable</li> <li>• No effects have been identified of sufficient significance or magnitude as to pose a threat to a nearby population of any size</li> <li>• Similarly no effects are of sufficient magnitude or spatial extent as to pose a significant threat to the environment</li> </ul>
2 (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to- (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use.	<b>NO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loch Ryan is designated as a Marine Consultation Area. The water quality of Loch Ryan is expected to improve now that the ferries have pulled out and because Scottish Water is delivering a project that will provide a long term waste water solution to discharges that are currently made to Loch Ryan. The Masterplan does not propose anything that will compromise this</li> <li>• The area likely to be affected by the developments proposed within the Masterplan is valued for its local heritage e.g. harbour features and the Conservation Area</li> <li>• There are already further studies underway that include a Conservation Area Character Appraisal as well as a Townscape Heritage Initiative</li> <li>• An SEA would be unable to identify anything additional that has not already been picked up and that is being addressed through further commissioned studies (See Table A1 Annex A)</li> </ul>
2 (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	<b>NO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no landscape impacts identified that would affect any designated landscape areas at a recognised national, Community or international protection status</li> </ul>

## SEA SCREENING REPORT

A summary of our considerations of the significant environmental effects of Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan is given below.

TABLE 2 – SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

- **Biodiversity (Flora and Fauna)** No significant adverse effects are anticipated and with careful design local biodiversity should be enhanced.
- **Population** No significant adverse effects anticipated and if the conceptual design that embraces sustainable design principles is delivered the effects on the population are likely to be positive.
- **Human Health** No significant adverse effects anticipated and if the conceptual design that embraces sustainable design principles is delivered the effects on human health are likely to be neutral or even possibly positive.
- **Air** No significant adverse effects anticipated. The anticipated design features to improve public transport, encourage cycling, pedestrian access and to provide 40% additional open space and public realm (areas for walking) should serve to encourage alternative travel modes.
- **Water** No significant adverse effects anticipated and with good design and best construction practice this should serve to adequately protect Loch Ryan from the potential impacts of construction activities. Improvements to the Scottish Water Port Rodie pumping station should contribute to improved water quality in Loch Ryan.
- **Soil** Once the contaminated land work has been completed and any remediation needed delivered, then no significant adverse effects are anticipated and existing mitigation and good practice should serve to adequately protect the environment and public health.
- **Climatic Factors** No significant adverse effects anticipated and good practice in flood protection and adaptation should serve to adequately protect against any adverse risks posed by climate change and flooding. Sustainable design with energy efficiency and use of renewables where appropriate should serve to address CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from new build.
- **Landscape** No significant adverse effects anticipated and good practice in Urban Design should serve to protect the local landscape and townscape and ensure that designs serve to enhance existing character.
- **Cultural Heritage** No significant adverse effects anticipated and good practice in design should serve to protect the historic environment and cultural heritage together with following any conclusions and recommendations from the Conservation Area Character Appraisal.
- **Material Assets** No significant adverse effects anticipated (if anything, could be positive) since commitments made in the Masterplan to re-use of buildings and construction materials and to follow sustainable design and construction techniques should serve to protect material assets.

# SCREENING REPORT ANNEX A

## Project Outline



## A1 PROJECT OUTLINE

Stranraer situated at the head of Loch Ryan and lying at the south-western tip of Scotland is recognised as a district capital and commercial trading centre with Ireland. The waterfront is now considered to be under utilised and 'tired' and with the proposed relocation of Stena ferry operations to Cairnryan there is an opportunity for Stranraer to redevelop its waterfront. This is regarded as an opportunity to enhance the physical setting of the town centre and reconnect it with Loch Ryan. Dumfries and Galloway Council and Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway approved Stranraer Waterfronts Development Framework in July 2005. This clearly sets out a vision for a future Masterplan:

*"To reposition Stranraer and Loch Ryan as a distinctive and successful marine leisure destination"*

The Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan<sup>1</sup> has been produced as the first stage in delivering this vision and is underpinned by the following strategic objectives:

### Masterplan Strategic Objectives

- reconnect the town centre with the waterfront;
- encourage high quality architectural design;
- create a more pedestrian friendly environment;
- create opportunities and infrastructure for access to the water;
- change perceptions of Stranraer from a ferry port to a leisure destination;
- substantially increase the number of people who visit Stranraer and the surrounding area.

The overall concept design proposals within the Masterplan cover an area of some 10.5 hectares of previously developed land and buildings divided into four 'character areas' – the marina, the town extension, the East Pier Gateway and the East Pier (see attached Maps 1 (for existing situation) and 2 (for future plans)). The Masterplan is planning a modest increase in housing, a hotel, a supermarket, some light commercial/office development together with a marina of around 250 berths (see Map 2). Stakeholder workshops and extensive community consultations were held as part of the masterplan process.

The Masterplan includes a section on Sustainable Design Proposals – Section 4.5. This describes how as part of the design development of the Masterplan proposals that Sustainability Analysis was carried out by the Building Research Establishment (BRE). BRE analysed the masterplan proposals under the 8 BRE 'Greenprint' categories and provided a commentary including identifying any physical constraints to delivering a sustainable masterplan. BRE also presented key principles to embed sustainability into the masterplan and future sustainability steps in the procurement process.

The Sustainability Analysis covers a number of the topic areas that would be covered within a Strategic Environmental Assessment and sets out details on climatic factors (e.g. climate change and flood risk), water, population (community, health, safety etc), ecology, soil (e.g. contaminated land), air quality (transport, noise pollution) material assets (resources and maximising the reuse of land and buildings and recycling of materials), cultural heritage. From the analysis a number of additional studies have been flagged and their status is summarised in Table A1.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Stranraer Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan*, Smith, Scott, Mullan Associates, December 2009

**Table A1 Additional Studies Commissioned**

Reference Number	Topic	Title or Study Reference	Current Status
1	Traffic and Transport	<i>Stranraer Waterfront Masterplan Transport Evaluation</i> , MVA Consultancy for Dumfries and Galloway Council, 2011	Draft completed November 2010 final report expected Summer 2011
2	Contaminated Land	Contaminated land study of former gasworks site, Stranraer	Study commissioned and in progress
3	Climatic Factors	<i>Stranraer Waterfront Development, Coastal Flood Risk Assessment</i> , Terrenus, October 2010	Completed and issued October 2010
4	Biodiversity – flora and fauna	Ecological and Protected Species Survey	To be commissioned
5	Cultural Heritage	Conservation Area Character Appraisal	Commissioned and In progress



## SCREENING REPORT ANNEX B

### Review of Potential Environmental Effects



**Table B1 Review of Potential Environmental Effects of the Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan**

SEA Topic	Issues and Likely Effects	Scale	Mitigation	Residual Effect	Value of SEA?
Biodiversity (Flora and Fauna)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no areas of statutory designation for nature conservation interest (such as SAC, SPA or SSSI) in the proposed development area or within 2km (Loch Ryan is designated as a Marine Consultation Area – see later under ‘Water’ for further discussion)</li> <li>Most of the development area is previously developed land and brownfield site (including the infrastructure of an active port) with little anticipated ecological value (this will be confirmed by the proposed ecological survey work)</li> <li>There are one or two small areas of rough ground or green open space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The green space and rough ground likely to be affected by any new development is relatively small (less than a hectare)</li> <li>Most of the development area comprises hard standing, roads, existing housing and other industrial, port and harbour infrastructure or ferry terminal buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current Masterplan recommends that ecological survey work is undertaken (see Section 4.5 Ecology) to better understand the ecological value of the small parcels of derelict ground and public open space and to tie in with the Local Biodiversity Action Plan</li> <li>It also builds into the concept design increased green infrastructure and green spaces to help enhance biodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No significant adverse effects anticipated (subject to results of ecological survey work)</li> <li>With careful design local biodiversity should be enhanced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEA would not add anything new and would be likely to repeat the requirement for background ecological survey work that has already been identified in the sustainability assessment within the Masterplan (see Section 4.5 of the Masterplan and Annex A Table A1 Reference 4 accompanying this submission)</li> </ul>

SEA Topic	Issues and Likely Effects	Scale	Mitigation	Residual Effect	Value of SEA?
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If anything the population are likely to benefit from the delivery of the Masterplan since it aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regenerate areas soon to be vacated by the ferry operations that could become derelict;</li> <li>improve amenity and areas for exercise (walking and cycling)</li> <li>create more green spaces</li> <li>provide more quality housing</li> <li>contribute to an improvement in quality of life</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The scale of the plan is relatively small (10.5 hectares) and confined to the waterfront area of Stranraer which itself is a small town (12,000)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific environmental protection measures where needed will be determined through the EIA and planning consent process</li> <li>Effects on population are thought likely to be either neutral or positive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No significant adverse effects anticipated</li> <li>If the conceptual design that embraces sustainable design principles is delivered the effects on the population are likely to be positive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEA would not add anything new to what has already been established through the sustainability assessment work within the Masterplan (see Section 4.5 Community and Place)</li> </ul>
Human health	<p>The main issues that could be raised in connection with this Masterplan and human health would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the possible risks of increased traffic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From an SEA viewpoint the scale of the proposed development is relatively small (see Annex A for more details on the concept</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A traffic study (see Annex A, Table A1, Reference 1) has already determined that delivery of the Masterplan will not generate significant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No significant adverse effects anticipated</li> <li>If the conceptual design that embraces sustainable design principles is delivered the effects on human</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEA would not add anything new and would be likely to repeat the requirement for further studies and design principles for which commitments</li> </ul>

SEA Topic	Issues and Likely Effects	Scale	Mitigation	Residual Effect	Value of SEA?
	<p>contributing to harmful vehicle emissions or impacting on road safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• impacts on water quality in Loch Ryan that affect fisheries (in particular the mussel beds)</li> <li>• contaminated land issues related to the former small gasworks site</li> </ul>	<p>design of the development)</p>	<p>adverse transport related effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Masterplan promotes measures to reduce traffic and encourage more public transport, walking and cycling</li> <li>• Since water quality in Loch Ryan is currently moderate and with the removal of the ferries is expected if anything to improve, then it is unlikely that delivery of the Masterplan will cause any water quality problems. Where needed mitigation can be identified through EIA and planning consent conditions</li> <li>• A contaminated land study (see Annex A, Table A1, Reference 2) has also been commissioned and this will determine any risks posed by the former gasworks site and the necessary</li> </ul>	<p>health are likely to be neutral or even possibly positive</p>	<p>have already been made (see Section 4.5 in the Masterplan) and in some cases implemented (e.g. the need for more survey work and studies – see Annex A, Table A1, Reference 2)</p>

SEA Topic	Issues and Likely Effects	Scale	Mitigation	Residual Effect	Value of SEA?
			remediation		
Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in Stranraer and no known current problems associated with vehicle emissions or congestion problems</li> <li>• The Masterplan is planning a modest increase in housing and commercial developments (see Annex A)</li> <li>• Historically Stranraer has been a relatively busy ferry port and the Masterplan anticipates a shift away from this towards becoming a popular marina and tourism destination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scale of change is likely to be relatively small and localised to Stranraer</li> <li>• Car use is not anticipated to change significantly with the trade off being between the loss of ferry traffic verses any build up of marina and tourism related traffic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A traffic and transport study has already been commissioned (see Annex A, Table A1, Reference 1) to provide more accurate and up to date traffic figures</li> <li>• Initial results indicate that there are no anticipated issues with regard to traffic that would significantly impact on local air quality</li> <li>• Since the ferry is moving out of Stranraer it is anticipated that if anything air quality might improve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant adverse effects anticipated</li> <li>• The anticipated design features to improve public transport, encourage cycling, pedestrian access and 40% open space and public realm should serve to encourage alternative travel modes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEA would not add anything new and would be likely to repeat the requirement for a traffic study and list similar mitigation for which commitments have already been made</li> </ul>
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loch Ryan is designated as a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masterplan activities likely to affect Loch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The construction industry has</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant adverse effects anticipated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEA would not add anything new to what</li> </ul>

SEA Topic	Issues and Likely Effects	Scale	Mitigation	Residual Effect	Value of SEA?
	<p>Marine Consultation Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historically the water quality of Loch Ryan has been moderate</li> <li>The ferries together with dredging activities have created and maintained channels and have tended to disturb sediment material</li> <li>The activities of a busy port and ferry terminal have tended to result in maintaining water of moderate quality</li> <li>There is a mussel bed further out in the estuary used for shellfish gathering</li> <li>Construction activity in the vicinity of Loch Ryan could pose a threat to its water quality</li> <li>Scottish Water operate a sewage pumping station in the Masterplan area</li> </ul>	<p>Ryan would be the creation of the marina and the activities of light boats and yachts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These would be localised to the waterfront and not on the scale of the previous ferry activity</li> </ul>	<p>developed good practice (CIRIA 2001a<sup>1</sup> etc) that would serve to offer mitigate measures that could be used against any possible threats to Loch Ryan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Masterplan has already incorporated Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDS) into the concept design that will help both with flood control as well as water quality. These will be developed further in consultation with SEPA as and when the designs are firmed up</li> <li>If anything with the ferry operation relocated the water quality would be expected to show some improvement</li> <li>The sewage pumping station is expected to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing good practice should serve to adequately protect Loch Ryan from the potential effects of construction activities</li> <li>Improvements to the Scottish Water Port Rodie pumping station in Stranraer should contribute to improved water quality in Loch Ryan</li> </ul>	<p>is known and already being acted on (see Section 4.5 in the Masterplan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EIA and planning consent conditions, where appropriate would be expected to cover all necessary requirements</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites, CIRIA C532, London 2001

SEA Topic	Issues and Likely Effects	Scale	Mitigation	Residual Effect	Value of SEA?
			be upgraded as part of the development which will again contribute to water quality improvements		
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since most if not all of the land is previously developed there are no expected land use impacts on soil as a resource</li> <li>• There is a former small gasworks site within the plan area that could pose a contaminated land risk during construction activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Masterplan is confined to the waterfront area in Stranraer and the gasworks site is a very small part of this overall site</li> <li>• The overall scale of potential contaminated land is considered to be relatively small</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Masterplanning process has already identified the need for a contaminated land survey to best deal with this issue (see Annex A, Table A1, Reference 2) and this is currently ongoing</li> <li>• Appropriate mitigation for any contaminated land issues following standard best practice will be identified through this study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant adverse effects anticipated</li> <li>• Existing good practice in contaminated land remediation (see for example CIRIA 2001b<sup>2</sup>) should serve to adequately protect the environment and public health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEA would not add anything new and would be likely to repeat the requirement for a contaminated land study (see Annex A, Table A1, Reference 2) and a commitment to any recommended mitigation</li> </ul>
Climatic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risks of coastal flooding and surface water flooding have already been identified as risks for development in this area within the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scale of the Stranraer Waterfront Area and of the proposed new build is of a relatively small scale and not likely to contribute significantly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Masterplanning process has already identified the need for a Flood Risk Assessment which has already been commissioned and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant adverse effects anticipated</li> <li>• Existing good practice in flood protection and adaptation should serve to adequately protect against any</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEA would not add anything new and would be likely to repeat the requirement for a Flood Risk Assessment (see Section 4.5 with sub-</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Remedial processes for contaminated land – principles and practice, CIRIA C549, London 2001



SEA Topic	Issues and Likely Effects	Scale	Mitigation	Residual Effect	Value of SEA?
	<p>masterplanning process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Energy efficiency and use of renewables together with sustainable design and construction for new buildings have all been considered within the Sustainable Design Proposals that feature in the Masterplan</li> </ul>	<p>towards global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The scale of the proposed development is sufficiently significant as to trigger a Flood Risk Assessment</li> </ul>	<p>which has reported (see Annex A, Table A1, Reference 3)</p>	<p>adverse risks posed by climate change and flooding</p>	<p>sections on Climate Change in the Masterplan)</p>
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small marina unlikely to pose a significant threat to landscape quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No developments are proposed within the Masterplan of any size and scale that pose any significant threats to the landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Sustainable Design Principles to be adopted for the scheme are aiming to make sure that developments are designed to safeguard the quality of the local landscape and townscape and that sustainable urban design is factored into the design criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No significant effects anticipated</li> <li>Existing good practice in landscape design should serve to protect the local landscape and townscape and ensure that designs serve to enhance existing character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEA would not add anything new and would be likely to repeat the requirement for the masterplan to follow Sustainable Design Principles</li> </ul>
Cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Stranraer Waterfront Development includes a Conservation Area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effects likely to be restricted to a relatively small area within the overall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was established early on in the masterplan work that for the project to be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No significant adverse effects anticipated</li> <li>Existing best practice in design should serve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEA would not add anything new and would be likely to repeat the requirement</li> </ul>

SEA Topic	Issues and Likely Effects	Scale	Mitigation	Residual Effect	Value of SEA?
	<p>as well as a number of listed buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There could be localised effects on the historic environment and settings of important buildings and monuments</li> </ul>	Masterplan site	<p>successful it needed to take cognisance of the historic heart of the town</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a result of this commitment the following interlinked studies have already got underway (see Annex A, Table A1, Reference 5): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conservation Area Character Appraisal</li> <li>- Townscape Heritage Initiative</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Once the studies have been completed they should serve to provide a clear baseline for future sustainable design proposals</li> </ul>	to protect the historic environment and cultural heritage and where possible enhance it	<p>to follow good practice and recommendations coming out of any appraisal studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EIA and planning consent conditions, where appropriate would be expected to deal with any localised effects</li> </ul>
Material assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the existing harbour is not used then there will be a risk that it goes into decline and becomes derelict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the relatively small scale of the Stranraer Waterfront Area, and the reuse of as much infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Sustainable Design Principles to be adopted for the scheme (see Section 4.5 of the Masterplan)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant adverse effects anticipated (if anything could be positive)</li> <li>• Existing good practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEA would not add anything new and would be likely to repeat the requirement to follow good practice</li> </ul>

SEA Topic	Issues and Likely Effects	Scale	Mitigation	Residual Effect	Value of SEA?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fundamental principles within the Masterplan are for sustainable design and to reuse existing developed land and buildings – this will serve to conserve material assets and ensure that reuse and recycling take place</li> <li>The sustainable design principles should ensure that if anything there should be positive effects on material assets</li> </ul>	and buildings as possible then the residual effects on any assets will be small, localised and more likely to be positive	are aiming to make sure that developments are designed to safeguard material assets and to reuse or recycle as much building material as possible (see Annex A)	in design (see for example CIRIA 2004 <sup>3</sup> ) should serve to protect material assets	and the Sustainable Design Principles adopted by the Masterplan

<sup>3</sup> Design for deconstruction: Principles of design to facilitate reuse and recycling (C607), CIRIA 2004



ANNEX B  
(TO MAIN ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT)

SCOPING REPORT



**SEA Scoping Report**

Dumfries & Galloway Council

**Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan  
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): Scoping Report**

**August 2011**

*natural* CAPITAL

13 Coates Crescent  
Edinburgh  
EH3 7AF  
Telephone 0131 220 6121  
Facsimile 0131 220 6131  
Email [info@naturalcapital.co.uk](mailto:info@naturalcapital.co.uk)





## SEA Scoping Report

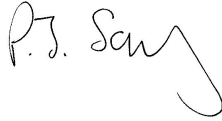
Dumfries & Galloway Council

### **Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): Scoping Report**

For and on behalf of  
Natural Capital Ltd.

Approved by: Dr Phil Say

Signed:



Position: Director

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> August 2011

This report has been prepared by Natural Capital Ltd. with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client, incorporating our General Terms and Conditions of Business and taking account of the resources devoted to it by agreement with the client.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 STRANRAER WATERFRONT URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY AND MASTERPLAN

Dumfries & Galloway Council and Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway approved Stranraer Waterfront's Development Framework in July 2005. This sets out a vision for a future Masterplan:

*"To reposition Stranraer and Loch Ryan as a distinctive and successful marine leisure destination."*

The Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan<sup>1</sup> (that will throughout the rest of the document be referred to as 'the Masterplan') has been produced as the first stage in delivering this vision and is underpinned by the following strategic objectives:

#### Masterplan Strategic Objectives

- Reconnect the town centre with the waterfront;
- encourage high quality architectural design;
- create a more pedestrian friendly environment;
- create opportunities and infrastructure for access to the water;
- change perceptions of Stranraer from a ferry port to a leisure destination;
- increase substantially the number of people who visit Stranraer and the surrounding area.

The overall concept design proposals within the Masterplan cover an area of some 10.5 ha of previously developed land and buildings divided into four 'character areas' – the marina, the town extension, the East Pier Gateway and the East Pier (see attached Figure 1 in Main Environmental Report (for existing situation) and Figure 2 (for future plans). The Masterplan is planning a modest increase in housing, a hotel, a supermarket, some light commercial/office development together with a marina of around 250 berths (see Figure 2). Stakeholder workshops and extensive community consultations were held as part of the masterplan process. The key facts relating to the Masterplan are summarised in Box 1.

### 1.2 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) AND THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 is the statutory mechanism by which the requirements of the European Directive 2001/42/EC – *"On the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment"* (known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment or SEA Directive) are now delivered in Scotland. The Act delivers on the Partnership Agreement commitment to apply SEA to all public plans, programmes and strategies (PPS). The SEA Directive aims to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans with a view to promoting sustainable development.

### 1.3 STARTING THE SEA PROCESS

There are a number of distinct stages in the SEA process and depending on the nature of the PPS it can start with Screening, where a Responsible Authority establishes whether the PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects. Having formed an opinion the Responsible Authority must formally consult with the Consultation Authorities (Historic Scotland (HS), Scottish Environment Protection

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<sup>1</sup> *The Stranraer Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan*, Smith, Scott, Mullan Associates, December 2009

Agency (SEPA) and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)) to seek their views prior to making a determination about undertaking SEA.

Given the nature, size and scale of the Masterplan Dumfries & Galloway Council decided to undertake a screening exercise to assist them in determining whether there was a need to undertake the full SEA process.

### **Box 1: Summary of Key Facts relating to the Strategy and Masterplan**

**Name of Responsible Authority:** Dumfries & Galloway Council

**Title of Plan/Programme:** Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan

**What prompted the Plan:** Council decision to develop a masterplan for the regeneration of the waterfront area because of:

- the opportunities and challenges created now that the ferry operators (P & O and Stena Line) have relocated;
- the desire to make sure the Waterfront does not become a derelict area with the decline in the ferry business;
- the struggle that Stranraer could face in the future defining its character although this presents the opportunity to explore new tourism related opportunities.

**Plan Subject:** A regeneration plan

**Period covered by Plan:** The plan will be formally reviewed every five years

**Frequency of Updates:** It is likely to cover a 10 to 20 year period

**Plan Area:** See Figures 1 and 2 (See figures 1 and 2 of main Environmental Report)

**Plan Purpose/Objectives:** The Masterplan is aimed at increasing inward investment, improving the environment and on promoting Stranraer as a destination for seaside activities and marine leisure through a mix of business, retail and housing development

**Contact Point:** Jon Mengham  
Dumfries & Galloway Council  
Kirkbank House  
English Street  
Dumfries  
DG1 2HS  
Jon.mengham@dumgal.gov.uk

## **1.4 SCREENING**

A screening report was produced and submitted to the Consultation Authorities for comment and feedback. The conclusions of this assessment were that:

- whilst there were likely to be potential environmental effects caused by, for example, future construction activities these would not be expected to be of such significance that they could not be either prevented or mitigated using good practice through the EIA process. None of the potential environmental effects were considered to pose threats of significant adverse damage or irreversible damage to the environment;

- sustainability principles had been factored into the Masterplan during its development and this had resulted in the integration of environmental considerations in an iterative way;
- some environmental problems had been identified that were relevant to the Masterplan but these had or would be addressed by further studies (such as the Stranraer Waterfront Masterplan Transport Evaluation, a contaminated land study of the old gasworks area, the Conservation Area Character Study and an ecological survey) and an SEA would add no further insight and would merely recommend the same studies.

It was concluded, therefore, that the Masterplan would not be likely to have significant strategic environmental effects.

In the responses to the Screening Report from the statutory authorities there was a broad consensus that the Masterplan would not be likely to have significant strategic environmental effects (see responses to the screening in Annex B). This would therefore have led to the conclusion that it would not need go through further detailed strategic environmental assessment.

However Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) did observe that:

*‘Having reviewed the Screening Report, we consider that there will be an increase in small boat use of Loch Ryan which is indicated by the increase in provision of marina berths. These shallow draft craft will be able to access shallow areas of the loch which are currently relatively free of boat traffic. Accordingly there may be an increase in disturbance to feeding, roosting and overwintering wildfowl, seabirds and waders. Propeller turbulence may directly affect eel grass beds and other habitats.’*

The conclusion of SNH was that:

*‘Given the relatively local (albeit potentially important) nature of possible effects SNH is happy to agree that a SEA of the masterplan is not required.’*

There was however a caveat to this statement in that SNH did wish to see SEA carried out if the Masterplan or an equivalent plan was to become Supplementary Planning Guidance because of the concerns over the possible impacts of increased boat (small craft) activities on local biodiversity.

Given that Dumfries & Galloway Council is intending to adopt the Masterplan in full as Supplementary Planning Guidance it has therefore been decided that the Masterplan should undergo further SEA because of SNH’s feedback on the screening report.

However, in keeping with the guidance provided by the Scottish Government on undertaking SEA (as published in the Strategic Environmental Assessment Toolkit<sup>2</sup> and PAN 1/2010<sup>3</sup>) the council considered that the SEA should:

- focus on the environmental effects identified as potentially significant – in this case on biodiversity;
- be proportional to the scale of the plan and its position in the hierarchy of plans; and

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/09/13104943/0>

<sup>3</sup> PAN 1/2010 Strategic Environmental Assessment of Development Plans, Scottish Government, March 2010

- not be repetitive, unfocused and stray into areas that have already been screened out and acknowledged by the statutory agencies as not strategically significant.

Dumfries & Galloway Council proposes to take the rest of the SEA process forward as follows:

- **Step 1:** Scoping which is the focus of this document;
- **Step 2:** Appraisal of relevant elements of the Masterplan focusing on possible significant effects;
- **Step 3:** Production of an Environmental Report;
- **Step 4:** Consultation of the Masterplan with the Environmental Report.

Steps 2 and 3 will be undertaken following consultation on this scoping report (see Section 3).

## 1.5 SCOPING THE APPRAISAL

### 1.5.1 Initial Scoping

In accordance with the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Council considered whether the environmental effects (positive and negative) of the Masterplan were likely to be significant. This was carried out in a formal screening exercise (see Section 1.4 above).

The findings of the screening exercise (see Annex A) together with the responses from the statutory consultees (see Annex B) has informed the scoping stage. A summary of the initial scoping appraisal is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1 Scoping of Significant Effects**

SEA Issues	Scoped In	Scoped Out	Reasons
Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Yes		Due to comments and feedback on the screening report from SNH
Population		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees
Human health		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees
Soil		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees
Water		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees
Air		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees
Climatic factors		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees
Material assets		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees



SEA Issues	Scoped In	Scoped Out	Reasons
Cultural heritage		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees
Landscape		Yes	No likely significant effects as determined in the screening report and supported by responses of all three statutory consultees

As can be seen in Table 1 the outcome of the initial scoping exercise indicates that all of the topic areas can be screened out apart from biodiversity, flora and fauna. The rationale for this is supported by the assessment summarised in Annex B of the screening report (see Annex A of this report) and also in the responses of the statutory agencies (see Annex B of this report).

### 1.5.2 The Scoping Report

The purpose of this SEA scoping report is to set out sufficient information on the Masterplan to enable the Consultation Authorities (HS, SEPA and SNH) to form a view on the consultation periods and scope/level of detail that will be appropriate for the accompanying environmental report.

The document summarises the baseline information and related plans and programmes (PPS) to be discussed, presents the draft proposed framework for the appraisal and outlines the overall methodology. It should be emphasised that it is intended that the Environmental Report that will accompany the Masterplan will focus entirely on the potential significant effect on biodiversity identified by SNH. This means that the baseline information, the relevant PPS and the methodology will all focus on the topic of biodiversity (flora and fauna).

All comments received from the Consultation Authorities will be taken into account and the methodology including the SEA appraisal framework will be amended as required.

### 1.6 LAYOUT OF THE REPORT

The remainder of the document is structured as follows:

- **Section 2:** describes the plan context, the links with other relevant plans and programmes, the scope of the environmental baseline for the Environmental Report and the likely environmental issues and sets out the SEA objectives;
- **Section 3:** sets out how the environmental assessment will be carried out and includes the assessment methodology; the appraisal framework; the establishment of the SEA indicators and the proposed structure of the Environmental Report.

The main text is supported by the following annex:

- **Annex A:** Screening report
- **Annex B:** Screening responses from statutory agencies
- **Annex C:** Bibliography



## 2 PLAN CONTEXT

### 2.1 LINKS WITH OTHER RELEVANT PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES

An understanding of the relevance of other legislation, policy and plans to the Masterplan is an essential step in understanding its context, and in deriving the necessary baseline for the assessment. The baseline will focus on information relevant to biodiversity (flora and fauna) and the interpretation of the effects of the Masterplan (see Section 1.1). A summary list of the policies, plans and programmes together with their environmental objectives relevant to biodiversity and to the context of the Masterplan are presented in Table 2.1 below. These were used to help formulate the SEA objective in Table 2.3 together with its supporting question set (see Section 2.4).

Other plans and programmes, together with more details on the key environmental messages will be included in the Environmental Report and, while the list of documents reviewed will be duly thorough it is the intention to limit the review of plans, programmes and strategies to those that will be of direct relevance to the context of the plan and its potential significant environmental effects on biodiversity.

**Table 2.1: Summary of Representative Plans, Programmes and Strategies (PPS) relevant to the Masterplan in the context of its potential effects on biodiversity (flora and fauna)**

Policy, Plan or Programme	Summary of Relevant Environmental Objectives and corresponding implications for the Masterplan in terms of Biodiversity
<b>International</b>	
Council of Europe (1979) <i>Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats</i>	Ensures conservation and protection of wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats
European Union (1992) <i>Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora</i>	Preservation, protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, including the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora promote the maintenance of biodiversity, taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements
European Union (2009) <i>Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (codified version)</i>	Framework for the conservation and management of, and human interactions with, wild birds in Europe
European Union (2000) <i>Directive 2000/60/EC Water Framework Directive</i>	Requirement to achieve good ecological status by 2015; Links to Solway Tweed River Basin Management Plan
<b>UK Wide</b>	
The UK Strategy for Sustainable Development "Securing the Future" (2005)	To ensure the effective protection of the environment, maintenance of economic growth, employment and prudent use of natural resources
Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan (1994)	To conserve and enhance the UK's biodiversity
<b>National</b>	
Scottish Government (2000) <i>PAN60 Planning for Natural Heritage</i>	PAN60 demonstrates how development and planning can contribute to conservation, enhancement, enjoyment and understanding of the natural environment; encourages planning authorities to be positive and creative in addressing natural heritage issues
"Choosing Our Future": Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)	To decrease Scotland's energy consumption and waste production to ensure the health and well being of Scotland's future generations
Scottish Biodiversity Strategy: Scotland's Biodiversity, Its in Your Hands (2004)	To conserve Scotland's biodiversity for future generations
Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act (2004)	To conserve and enhance Scotland's biodiversity, wildlife and natural features. The Act places a "Biodiversity Duty" on Dumfries & Galloway Council

Policy, Plan or Programme	Summary of Relevant Environmental Objectives and corresponding implications for the Masterplan in terms of Biodiversity
Scottish Government, SPP Scottish Planning Policy 2010 (supersedes NPPG 14 Natural Heritage and NPPG 13 Coastal Planning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving the natural environment and the sustainable use and enjoyment of it is one of the Government's national outcomes. Planning authorities should therefore support opportunities for enjoyment and understanding of the natural heritage</li> <li>Planning authorities should seek to prevent further fragmentation or isolation of habitats and identify opportunities to restore links which have been broken. Where possible, planning authorities should seek benefits for species and habitats from new development including the restoration of degraded habitats</li> </ul>
Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2005	A comprehensive regime for water environment protection in Scotland
Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003	Requires Dumfries & Galloway Council to have regard to the desirability of protecting the water environment
National Planning Framework 2 (NPF2) (2009)	To ensure that future planning contributes towards sustainable development
Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003	Introduces a right of responsible access to land and inland water in Scotland. The <i>Scottish Outdoor Access Code</i> gives guidance on the responsible exercising of this right
Marine (Scotland) Bill (2009)	To make provisions in relation to the Scottish marine area, including marine plans, licensing of marine activities and the protection of the area and its wildlife
Scottish Government (2009) Scottish Planning Policy <i>Coastal Planning</i> p18	Statement of Scottish Government planning policy that expects to provide a policy context for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>protecting designated nature conservation sites from inappropriate development; and</li> <li>making provisions to identify areas of risk of coastal flooding</li> </ul>
Scottish Government (2009) Scottish Planning Policy <i>Landscape and Natural Heritage</i> pp21 - 25	Statement of Scottish Government planning policy that expects to provide a policy context in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encourage opportunities for enjoyment and understanding of natural heritage; and</li> <li>encourage positive change whilst maintaining and enhancing landscape's distinctive character</li> </ul>
<b>Local</b>	
Dumfries & Galloway Council Local Development Plan	These Plans will be reviewed in detail in the environmental report, along with other relevant documents presented by the statutory consultees.
Dumfries & Galloway Community Plan 2004 - 2009	
Dumfries & Galloway Structure Plan (1999)	
Adopted Local Plan for Wigtown (2006)	
DGC (2008) <i>Dumfries &amp; Galloway Local Biodiversity Action Plan</i>	
Dumfries and Galloway Shoreline Management Plan 2005	
Natural Heritage Futures: Wigtown Machars and Outer Solway, Western Southern Uplands and inner Solway, Border Hills	
Solway Firth European Marine Site Scheme of Management 2000	
Scott Wilson for Scottish Water <i>Port Rodie Pumping Station Design Statement</i> , August 2010	

## 2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE AND KEY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

### 2.2.1 Baseline

This section describes the proposed structure and level of detail that will be used to form the environmental baseline in the Environmental Report, with its intended focus on biodiversity (flora and fauna). The key environmental issues and problems associated with biodiversity in a more general sense across Dumfries and Galloway are summarised in Section 2.3. These have been identified from the review of plans and programmes, discussions with Dumfries & Galloway Council and a review of baseline information held by the Council.

To establish an environmental baseline of the current state of play with regard to biodiversity (flora and fauna and in particular birds) in the context of Loch Ryan and the surrounding area the following data sources will be used:

- Dumfries & Galloway Council (internal documents and reports);
- SEPA (e.g. State of the Environment Report)<sup>4</sup> at ;
- SNH (e.g. Interactive Facts and Figures)<sup>5</sup> ;
- Other relevant environmental reports produced for the area (e.g. commissioned EIA reports)<sup>6</sup>;
- RSPB and British Trust for Ornithology data on birds<sup>7</sup>;
- Data from local bird watching groups.

### 2.2.2 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

The immediate Masterplan area does not contain any habitats that are designated under international or national legislation or by Dumfries & Galloway Council. Loch Ryan is however designated by SNH as a Marine Consultation Area<sup>8</sup>. This section within the Environmental Report will set out the nearest designated areas and highlight their respective level of protection. It will provide further detail regarding species that are protected under European or national legislation, together with appropriate information on priority species and habitats.

#### Designated Areas

##### *Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)*

SACs are designated under the EC Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, known as the Habitats Directive. In the UK, sites are protected under The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, due to the presence of one or more habitats or species listed in the Directive. Management plans are written to ensure 'favourable conservation status.' SPAs are strictly protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC and 2009/147/EC 'Codified') also known as the Birds Directive, which came into force in April 1979. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds, listed in Annex I to the Birds Directive, and for regularly occurring migratory species.

There are no SACs or SPAs in the proposed development. The nearest is Glen App - Galloway Moors an upland site designated for its breeding population of hen harrier.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.sepa.org.uk/science\\_and\\_research/data\\_and\\_reports/state\\_of\\_the\\_environment.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/science_and_research/data_and_reports/state_of_the_environment.aspx)

<sup>5</sup> [http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/portal/page?\\_pageid=93,866334,93\\_884286&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/portal/page?_pageid=93,866334,93_884286&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

<sup>6</sup> Stena Line, Loch Ryan Port, Environmental Statement, ERM 2008

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/webs/data>

<sup>8</sup> Marine Consultation Area – a non-statutory designation by SNH to highlight nature conservation priorities in the near shore marine environment

Loch of Inch and Torrs Warren SPA, Ramsar Site and SSSI is some 8 km away and is a coastal SPA and Ramsar Site on the south coast of Galloway designated because it supports internationally important populations of wintering white fronted goose and hen harrier.

We would expect to identify those sites that have any possible connection with Loch Ryan (e.g. through possibly the movement of feeding and roosting migratory birds) and assess the risks posed by small boat movements within the loch.

#### *Ramsar Sites*

Wetland areas of high ecological value can be designated as Ramsar sites under the convention on wetlands of international importance. The nearest RAMSAR site is some 2.5 km away (Loch of Inch and Torrs Warren – see above under SPA) however we would expect to screen such sites for possible relevance to the boating activities that might be generated by the Masterplan.

#### *Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)*

These areas are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended by the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. Sites are designated due to the presence of important flora, fauna or geographical features. There are no SSSIs in the proposed development area or within 2km. We would expect to review those sites in the general area for possible links to Loch Ryan and assess what if any effects the potential increased small boat activity might generate.

#### *National Nature Reserves (NNR) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR)*

NNRs are sites of special natural interest, and provide opportunities for environmental education and the informal enjoyment of nature by the public. There are no national nature reserves in the vicinity of Stranraer and the nearest local nature reserve is at Wigtown Bay. This LNR includes the estuaries of the Rivers Cree and Bladnoch and is the biggest LNR in the British Isles. The site is protected for its mudflats and salt marsh habitats that are home to several thousand geese in winter months.

#### **Protected Species**

In view of the concerns expressed by SNH it will be important to consider the effects of any proposals on European and nationally protected species in the area including birds. European species are given a high level of protection under Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, transposed into UK law by The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994. Those species that might be relevant to Loch Ryan include otter, some cetaceans and some bat species. Bird species are protected by the European Council Directive (2009/147/EC).

We would expect to identify what if any risks are posed by the Masterplan and its proposals (including the potential increase in small boat activity) to the important populations of birds and any protected species within Loch Ryan.

#### **Priority Habitats and Species**

The Dumfries & Galloway Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), contains 23 local habitat action plans and a total of 50 local species action plans. Relevant details of any relevant to the Masterplan site will be included in the Environmental Report. In particular reference will be made to relevant sea and seashore habitat management plans including the seagrass bed (*Zostera spp*) management plan.

### 2.2.3 Water

Although no particular concerns were raised with regard to water quality of Loch Ryan (either by SEPA or SNH), since it is the main environmental 'medium' that plays a crucial part in influencing the biodiversity of the loch it was felt useful to include it within the background environmental baseline.

#### Surface Water Quality

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) monitors surface water quality in watercourses, estuaries and other water bodies. In addition, under the Water Framework Directive, enacted in Scotland in the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003, SEPA has responsibilities relating the management and protection of river catchments (river basin districts), which includes the groundwater resource within those catchments.

SEPA classifies rivers in terms of water quality from A1 (excellent), A2 (good) to D (seriously polluted) this classification is based on a combination of chemical, biological and aesthetic criteria. Similarly estuarine waters are also classified from A to D. Reference will be made to the current water quality status of Loch Ryan and key factors that will influence this.

### 2.3 CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Schedule 2 of the Scottish Act requires that the Environmental Report includes a description of existing environmental problems, especially those relating to any areas of particular environmental importance. The purpose of this section is to explore the key environmental issues that are relevant to biodiversity (flora and fauna) as highlighted by Dumfries & Galloway Council at a strategic level for Dumfries and Galloway, and whether the Masterplan is likely to have a significant effect either positively or negatively on these issues.

Environmental problems identified to date that relate to biodiversity at a strategic level are:

- **Biodiversity, flora and fauna:** Decline in biodiversity in region; lack of information on European protected species; impacts of climate change on biodiversity.  
**Implications to the Masterplan:** Should the Masterplan lead to any reduction in biodiversity, particularly a significant impact on flora and fauna (as suggested in the SNH response to screening) then this would of course constitute a 'significant effect'.
- **Water:** Issues around the current water quality of Loch Ryan.  
**Implications to the Masterplan:** Water quality in Loch Ryan is expected to improve with the upgrades of sewage treatment to be undertaken by Scottish Water. No significant issues were raised by screening or in the statutory responses.

More specific environmental issues that relate to biodiversity (flora and fauna) as raised by SNH in its screening response are summarised in Table 2.2.

### 2.4 SEA OBJECTIVES

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 (the Scottish Act) does not require the generation of SEA objectives by Dumfries & Galloway Council to appraise the potential effects of this Masterplan. However, environmental protection objectives from other policies, plans and programmes should be taken into consideration where they are appropriate. The development of specific SEA

objectives and indicators is a recognised way in which environmental effects can be described, analysed and compared. SEA objectives will describe the intent and desired direction of environmental change, whilst indicators will measure the performance of the Masterplan against these objectives.

**Table 2.2 Environmental Issues Raise by SNH Relevant to the Masterplan**

SEA Topic Area	Potential Problems	Comments	Implications of the Masterplan
• Biodiversity - fauna	• Disturbance to feeding, roosting and overwintering wildfowl, seabirds and waders within Loch Ryan	• Groups of feeding and roosting birds (seabirds and waders) can be disturbed by boating activities if shallow craft stray too close to these sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The potential increase in small boat use of Loch Ryan that will be able to access shallow areas of the loch currently relatively free of boat traffic</li> <li>• Accordingly there may be an increase in disturbance to feeding, roosting and overwintering wildfowl, seabirds and waders</li> </ul>
• Biodiversity – flora and fauna	• Disturbance to or destruction of eel grass beds and other habitats in and around Loch Ryan	• Propeller turbulence from small craft may directly affect eel grass beds and other habitats in the shallow areas of Loch Ryan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The potential increase in small boat use of Loch Ryan that will be able to access shallow areas of the loch currently relatively free of boat traffic</li> <li>• Accordingly the propellers of such craft could impact negatively on eel grass beds</li> </ul>

Table 2.3 summarises a draft SEA objective for the Masterplan. The objective has been developed as a result of integrating a number of strands of relevant information and has been designed to reflect:

- environmental issues and problems identified as part of the baseline analysis (see *Section 2.3* above);
- the results of the SEA screening exercise and responses from the statutory consultees.

**Table 2.3: Draft SEA Objective with Supporting Question Set to be Used in Assessing the Masterplan**

SEA Topic	Objective	Question Set
Biodiversity (Flora and Fauna)	1. To protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats	<p>Will the objectives of the Masterplan and its main proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the protection and/or enhancement of sites designated for their nature conservation interests?</li> <li>• Will the change in use of Loch Ryan be significant in terms of its impacts on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ important habitats in and around Loch Ryan?</li> <li>○ feeding and roosting sites for important bird species in and around Loch Ryan?</li> <li>○ important plant species such as eel grass?</li> <li>○ any protected species within Loch Ryan?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Promote and enhance local biodiversity?</li> </ul>



### 3 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section sets out the scope, approach and level of detail proposed for the environmental assessment of the Masterplan. The proposed framework to be used for the appraisal is outlined. The findings of the assessment will be presented in the Environmental Report.

#### 3.2 PLAN ALTERNATIVES

The SEA Directive and the *Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act* require the Environmental Report to consider the impacts of alternatives to the proposed plan. There is no alternative *per se* to the Waterfront Masterplan other than simply 'a do nothing' alternative, since there is only one Stranraer Waterfront that will need some form of regeneration plan put into place once Stena Line has moved out. Although no significant strategic options have been considered as alternatives the development of the Masterplan has been an iterative process, during which a number of possible options within the harbour footprint have been considered. The eventual design has come about through extensive stakeholder and community consultation.

#### 3.3 SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

This has already been covered in Sections 1.4 and 1.5.

#### 3.4 ASSESSMENT METHODS

A framework approach is suggested to evaluate the effects of the Masterplan. The SEA framework is set out in Table 2.3.

It is suggested that the SEA framework will be used to predict the potential effects of the Masterplan and its key objectives/proposals. The effects will be considered in terms of their scale, the sensitivity of the resource, whether the effects are likely to be temporary or permanent, positive or negative, direct or indirect and whether there is any likelihood that effects could build up. Wherever the potential for significant environmental effects is identified the potential for mitigation will be considered.

A simple scoring system will be used to assess the Masterplan against the SEA framework using the scoring system, as set out in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 SEA Framework Scoring System**

Clear contribution to the objective, very positive	
Broadly supportive	
Neutral, no discernible effect	
Negative effect, incompatible	
Very negative effect	
Uncertain effect	

The findings the assessment will be set out in a matrix table (based on the one in Table 3.2). The assessment will be supported by text as appropriate to ensure that the summaries in the tables are clear and the methods of assessment transparent. The text will indicate where qualitative appraisal only has been possible and what information has been used to inform the findings and recommendations.

In undertaking the final appraisals of residual effects, the scale and nature of the effects will be taken into account. The potential for cumulative environmental effects of the Masterplan will be evaluated.

### 3.4.1 Monitoring and Establishing Appropriate Indicators

Monitoring of the effects of implementing the Masterplan on biodiversity is likely to be undertaken by the activities of several interested parties, and would be likely to include (but not necessarily be restricted to):

- Dumfries & Galloway Council Biodiversity Section and Officer
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- RSPB
- Scottish Wildlife Group

Environmental regulators (e.g. SEPA) will play a role through ongoing monitoring regimes in ensuring that no additional environmental impacts arise on any parts of the environment (such as the water quality of Loch Ryan), at risk from activities involved in implementing the Masterplan (e.g. construction).

If found necessary, the selection of appropriate indicators on which the effects of the Masterplan on biodiversity can be measured, will be undertaken through consultation with the SNH.

### 3.4.2 Proposed Structure of the Environmental Report

In broad terms it is suggested that the Environmental Report will be set out as illustrated in Box 3.1.

#### **Box 3.1: Draft Structure of the Report**

The report will broadly follow Scottish Government guidance\* to ensure that the contents cover the required contents of an SEA Environmental Report and would include:

- An introduction to the report which sets out what it is trying to achieve and signposts in a table where the information required by the SEA Regulations is located;
  - The key objectives/proposals of the Masterplan;
  - A description of the assessment methodology;
  - A review of the consultation process and the input it has made;
  - A review of relevant plans and programmes and how they have influenced the SEA in particular in developing objectives and indicators;
  - A description of the relevant environmental baseline highlighting any shortfalls in data;
  - The SEA framework including objectives and indicators;
  - Description of the key environmental issues identified;
  - A description of proposed mitigation measures where these are necessary;
  - Proposals for monitoring future effects of the Masterplan if relevant; and
  - A Non-Technical Summary of the above.
- SEA Guidance Templates, SEA Gateway, Scottish Executive (now Government)

**Table 3.2 Example Matrix for Documenting the Assessment of the Masterplan**

SEA Objective	Likely Environmental Impact			Mitigation or Further Improvement
	Short	Medium	Long	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats</li> </ul> <p>Will the objectives of the Masterplan and its main proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the protection and/or enhancement of sites designated for their nature conservation interests?</li> <li>• Promote and enhance local biodiversity?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the change in use of Loch Ryan be significant in terms of its impacts on:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ important habitats in and around Loch Ryan?</li> <li>○ feeding and roosting sites for important bird species in and around Loch Ryan?</li> <li>○ important plant species such as eel grass?</li> <li>○ any protected species within Loch Ryan?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				(to cover for example): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Likelihood/certainty of effect occurring</li> <li>- Geographical scale of effect</li> <li>- Whether temporary or permanent</li> <li>- Frequency of effects and potential for reversibility</li> <li>- Assumptions made in assessment</li> <li>- Future opportunities for mitigation</li> <li>- Potential for indirect effects</li> <li>- Potential for secondary effects</li> <li>- Potential for synergistic effects</li> <li>- Potential for cumulative effects</li> <li>- Identification of any partners to deliver mitigation etc</li> <li>- Recommendations for data collation</li> <li>- etc</li> </ul>



## **4 NEXT STEPS**

### **4.1 ANTICIPATED MILESTONES**

The key milestones in the SEA process are as follows:

- Submission of SEA Scoping Report to SEA Gateway - August 2011.
- Preparation of the Environmental Report - August/September 2011.
- Consultation on the draft Environmental Report and Masterplan - September to December 2011.

### **4.2 PROPOSED CONSULTATION TIMESCALES**

In terms of section 15(3) of the Act, it is proposed that the Environmental Report together with the Masterplan will be presented for public consultation. A period of at least six weeks will be allowed for representations to be made in respect of the Masterplan and Environmental Report.



SCOPING REPORT ANNEX A

SCREENING REPORT

(SEE ANNEX A OF MAIN ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT)





SCOPING REPORT ANNEX B

STATUTORY AUTHORITY  
RESPONSES



HISTORIC  
SCOTLAND



ALBA  
AOSMHOR

Jon Mengham  
Dumfries Regeneration Officer  
Dumfries and Galloway Council  
Kirkbank House  
English Street  
Dumfries  
DG1 2HS

Longmore House  
Salisbury Place  
Edinburgh  
EH9 1SH

Direct Line: 0131 668 8960  
[Andrew.stevenson2@Scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.stevenson2@Scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

Our ref: AMN/23/543 AS  
Case ref: 201100300

Date: 9 May 2011

Dear Mr Mengham

**Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005**  
**Dumfries and Galloway Council – Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan**  
**Screening Report**

Thank you for consulting Historic Scotland on the screening report for Dumfries and Galloway Council's Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan received by the Scottish Government's SEA Gateway on 14 April 2011. 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 screening report is that the masterplan aims to deliver a number of strategic objectives for the waterfront of Stranraer following the withdrawal of ferry operations. I also note that much of the strategic decision making and consideration of alternatives have been taken through the LDP process and its associated SEA. Therefore, in light of the information contained in the report I agree that the masterplan is unlikely to have significant effects on the historic environment.

As you will be aware, it is the responsibility of Dumfries and Galloway Council as the Responsible Authority to determine whether the masterplan 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)







**Scottish Natural Heritage**

All of nature for all of Scotland

Jon Mengham  
Dumfries and Galloway Council  
English Street  
Dumfries  
DG21 2HS

10 May 2011  
Your ref: CNS SEA LDP D&G 68580

Dear Mr Mengham

**Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005  
Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan- Screening Report**

Thank you for your Screening Report consultation submitted under the above Act in respect of the Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan. This was received by SNH via the Scottish Government SEA Gateway on 14 April 2011.

In accordance with Section 9(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act, 2005, we have 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, we consider that there will be an increase in small boat use of Loch Ryan which is indicated by the increase in provision of marina berths. These shallow draft craft will be able to access shallow areas of the loch which are currently relatively free of boat traffic. Accordingly there may be an increase in disturbance to feeding, roosting and overwintering wildfowl, seabirds and waders. Propeller turbulence may directly affect eel grass beds and other habitats.

**Therefore we disagree that the above Masterplan is not likely to have significant environmental effects.** We note that Table 1 – LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT row 1b under summary of significant environmental effects notes that “Alternatives and choices will have already been dealt with in the SEA for the LDP.” This is incorrect: the LDP Main Issues Report Interim Environmental Report paragraph 5.2.9 (referring to Stranraer) notes that “Development of the Waterfront will be guided by Supplementary Planning Guidance that will be subject to its own Environmental Assessment. “ There appears therefore to be agreement within Dumfries and Galloway Council that there are environmental issues to be considered but confusion as to how this will be considered.

Given the relatively local (albeit potentially important) nature of possible effects **SNH is happy to agree that a SEA of the masterplan is not required but only providing that the above mentioned SPG is produced and subject to SEA.**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Scottish Natural Heritage, Carmont House, The Crichton, Bankend Road, Dumfries, DG1 4ZF  
Email [Southern\\_scotland@snh.gov.uk](mailto:Southern_scotland@snh.gov.uk) Tel 01387 247010 Fax 01387 259247 [www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk)

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

Should you wish to discuss this screening determination, please do not hesitate to contact Alastair Clark on 01671 401075 or via SNH's SEA Gateway at [sea.gateway@snh.gov.uk](mailto:sea.gateway@snh.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely

**Chris Miles**  
Area Manager  
Southern Scotland  
[Chris.miles@snh.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.miles@snh.gov.uk)

Our ref: PCS113359/scr/JD  
SG ref: SEA00589

If telephoning ask for:  
June Dawson

27<sup>th</sup> April 2011

Jon Mengham  
Dumfries Regeneration Officer  
Dumfries and Galloway Council  
Kirkbank House  
English Street  
Dumfries  
DG1 2HS

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

Dear Sir

## **Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan- Screening Report**

Thank you for your Screening Report consultation submitted under the above Act in respect of the Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan. This was received by SEPA via the Scottish Government SEA Gateway on 14 April 2011.

In accordance with Section 9(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act, 2005, we have 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, we consider that in respect of our main areas of interest (air, water, soil, human health and climatic factors) the Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan is not likely to have significant strategic environmental effects. Although we are of the view that significant environmental effects are not likely, it is for the Dumfries and Galloway Council as Responsible Authority to make a formal determination taking into account the consultation responses received.

Please note that although we do not consider that the PPS will have significant strategic effects on the environment we do consider that it may have some effects. We would therefore welcome consultation on the draft proposals which should be directed to our local Planning Service team at [planning.ek@sepa.org.uk](mailto:planning.ek@sepa.org.uk).

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). We would encourage you to use the Scoping Report to focus the assessment on those SEA topics upon which there are likely to be significant environmental effects.



Chairman  
David Sigsworth

Chief Executive  
Dr Campbell Gemmell

### 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)

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

Yours sincerely,

June Dawson  
Senior Planning Officer



SCOPING REPORT ANNEX C

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(SEE ANNEX D OF MAIN ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT)



ANNEX C  
(TO MAIN ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT)

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY AUTHORITY RESPONSES TO THE  
SCOPING REPORT



**Table C1: Responses to Statutory Consultation**

Consultee	Contact	Date	Information/Comments	Response/Comments
<b>Statutory Consultees</b>				
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	June Dawson Senior Planning Officer	7 <sup>th</sup> September 2011	As SNH's concerns related to the potential impacts on local biodiversity it is accepted that biodiversity (flora and fauna) will be the only SEA issue to be scoped into the Environmental Report (ER)	Noted, biodiversity (flora and fauna) is the only SEA issue to be scoped into the assessment
			SEPA agreed that as water will be the main environmental medium influencing biodiversity it will be useful to include relevant data in the environmental baseline information. Given this influence consideration could be given to including some water related indicators in the monitoring programme	Noted, current water quality classification of Loch Ryan recorded in Section 3.6 of Environmental Report. Water quality is also included within the monitoring programme in Section 4.5 of Environmental Report
			SEPA suggested taking into account the River Basin Management Planning process in the preparation of the plan. The River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for the Scotland River Basin District and the draft Area Management Plans describe environmental objectives for each waterbody to protect and improve the water environment and a Programme of Measures to progress towards achieving these environmental objectives	Noted. The river basin management plan for the Solway Tweed river basin district does not specifically set environmental objectives for Loch Ryan but there is a reference to its shellfish status. Some detail included in Table 3.1 and Section 3.6 of Environmental Report
			We note the proposed approach in relation to the assessment of the potential reasonable alternatives and are content with this	Noted
			We are satisfied with the proposal for a 6 week consultation period for the ER	Noted
Historic Scotland	Andrew Stevenson Senior Heritage Management Officer	6 <sup>th</sup> September 2011	In our response to the screening report we were content to agree with your consideration that the strategy/masterplan was unlikely to have significant effects on the historic environment. I therefore note that you intend to scope the historic environment out of the assessment and I remain content to agree with this approach	Noted, the historic environment has been scoped out of the Environmental Report
			I am content with the consultation period of at least 6 weeks proposed for consultation on the strategy/masterplan and the Environmental Report.	Noted
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)	Chris Miles Area Manager, Southern Scotland	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2011	SNH is content with the scope and level of detail proposed for the environmental report but would note that Table 2.2 'Implications of the Masterplan' should not necessarily be restricted to eel grass beds: for example an assessment of the effects (if any) on native oyster beds must also be included	Noted, detail has included in the ecological baseline report and in Section 3.5 of Environmental Report. It was identified that important populations of Scaup feed in the oyster beds located in the Southern basin of Loch Ryan
			SNH notes that a period of at least six weeks is proposed for consultation on the Environmental Report and is content with this proposed period	Noted



ANNEX D  
(TO MAIN ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT)

BIBLIOGRAPHY





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Natural Capital Ltd  
13 Coates Crescent  
Edinburgh  
EH3 7AF  
Tel: 0131 220 6121  
Fax: 0131 220 6131  
Email: [info@naturalcapital.co.uk](mailto:info@naturalcapital.co.uk)