Fleet Valley

National Scenic Area

Management Strategy

This management strategy was first adopted as supplementary planning guidance to the Stewartry Local Plan. That plan has been replaced by the Local Development Plan (LDP). As the strategy is considered, by the Council, to remain relevant to the implementation of the LDP it has been readopted as non-statutory guidance to the LDP.

Policy NE1: National Scenic Areas ties the management strategy to the LDP. The management strategy has been produced to ensure the area continues to justify its designation as a nationally important landscape. It provides an agreed approach to the future of the area, offering better guidance and advice on how to invest resources in a more focused way.

FOREWORD

We are justifiable proud of Scotland's landscapes, and in Dumfries and Galloway we have some of the highest scenic quality, recognised by their designation as National Scenic Areas (NSAs). NSAs represent the very best of Scotland's landscapes, deserving of the special effort and resources that are required to ensure that their fine qualities endure, to be enjoyed by both present and future generations.

Each one of the three NSAs on the Solway Firth has its own distinct and recognisable character, valued by residents and visitors alike. They are a very important resource for Dumfries and Galloway, attracting tourists and providing an attractive setting for business. They contribute hugely to the quality of life in the region.

These are very much dynamic landscapes: the features that we cherish today are to a high degree the product of people's efforts to make a living from the land and sea, both today and for centuries past. But recent years have seen a marked increase in the tempo of change and perhaps not surprisingly in the circumstances, some mistakes have been made.

If we are to ensure that what we value today in these outstanding landscapes is retained for tomorrow, we need a shared vision of their future and a clear idea of the actions required to realise it. This is what this national pilot project set out to do – and we believe this Management Strategy is an important step towards achieving it.

Both of our organisations are committed to pursuing the aspirations set out here. This will take time and resources, but most importantly effort by all who care for the landscapes of Dumfries and Galloway - the communities which live and work in these areas, the individuals and organisations who own and manage the land that we enjoy, the visitors who return to the area seeking quiet enjoyment, and the public bodies whose actions have such an important influence on the landscape we see around us. It is in recognition of the need to work together towards the vision set out for the Fleet Valley NSA, that we commend this document to you.

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Dumfries and Galloway Council

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SUMMARY

The Fleet Valley is recognised nationally and internationally for its outstanding scenery. This Management Strategy has been developed through a consultative process to ensure the area retains its special qualities for many years to come.

The scenic qualities and landscape character are described and a vision for the future of the Fleet Valley National Scenic Area is set out. Issues and actions that are bringing about change within this landscape are identified and opportunities to enable this change to conserve, or enhance, its scenic value are offered. A plan of action has been devised that will safeguard the landscape and develop opportunities for its enhancement, and sets out how the strategy can begin to be implemented.

summary

Fleet Valley

1 WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

1.1 **National Scenic Areas**

1.1.1 Scotland is renowned for the high quality of its landscapes, a national asset. Some of the very best are in Dumfries and Galloway, attracting visitors to the region and providing the setting for where people live, work and play. These special landscapes are of substantial economic value and of great importance for our quality of life.

1.1.2 Dumfries and Galloway contains a wide range of different landscapes. The coastline stretches from the tidal flats of the Solway Firth in the east, flats on a scale not found elsewhere in Scotland, to the sea cliffs of the Mull of Galloway, Scotland's most southerly point, from where you can look across to Ireland and the Isle of Man. The highest mountains in southern Scotland and Britain's largest Forest Park lie to the north, the landscape divided by river valleys that reach the coast in a series of estuaries, bays, inlets and beaches. The rich pattern of farmland between the hills and coast contains many picturesque small towns and villages, and the remains of stone circles, ruined abbeys and castles provide evidence of the area's rich cultural heritage.

1.1.3   The Nith Estuary, Fleet Valley and the East Stewartry Coast are designated as National Scenic Areas (NSAs) due to their outstanding beauty and in order to safeguard them as part of Scotland's national heritage. They are recognised as some of the most scenic places in Britain and are a major asset for Dumfries and Galloway.

1.1.4   The Countryside Commission for Scotland, the predecessor of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), identified National Scenic Areas as landscapes that were highly valued and needed special care, and in 1980 the Secretary of State established the designation. (see Appendix 1. Extract from 'Scotland's Scenic Heritage).

1.1.5   There are currently 40 of these outstanding landscapes, the majority located in the mountainous north and west of the country, but with five found in the more managed landscapes of the south and east.

1.1.6   The areas are subject to special landscape conservation measures, including enhanced protection through statutory plans and policies. Town and Country Planning controls are extended, with planning consent required for more minor forms of development than elsewhere, and involving consultation with SNH on certain proposals.

1.1.7   The National Scenic Area designation is the only Scottish designation that is based solely on the scenic quality of the landscape rather than its nature conservation or cultural value. The quality of the landscape in NSAs is considered equivalent to that recognised by the new National Park designation, and likewise deserving of special care.

1.2   The policy and development plan context

1.2.1   At present NSAs largely seek to influence change through the planning system. Development proposals in the NSAs are currently subject to the following statutory policies and procedures.

- **National Planning Policy Guideline 14: Natural Heritage (1999)** states that NSAs are nationally important for their scenic quality and requires Planning Authorities to take particular care to ensure that new development in or adjacent to a NSA does not detract from the quality or character of the landscape. Within NSAs permitted development rights are more limited than elsewhere, and the Planning Authority is required to consult SNH on certain categories of development (details are contained in SDD circulars 20/1980 and 9/1987).

- **The Dumfries and Galloway Structure Plan,** approved by Scottish Ministers in December 1999, indicates the location of the three NSAs in Dumfries and Galloway in the key diagram. Policy E1 – 'National Scenic Areas' requires the siting and design of development to respect the special nature of the area and that development within, or which would have a significant impact on the NSA, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that either "the proposed development will not compromise the area's scenic landscape and character and overall integrity; or that any significant adverse effects on the scenic interest and integrity of the area are clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance".

- The boundaries of the National Scenic Areas are shown on the **Local Plan** proposals maps. The Local Plans apply General Policy 41 to the NSAs, which states that "the Planning Authority will assess development proposals, within or adjacent to NSAs, using the criteria set out in Structure Plan Policy E1".

- A series of National Planning Policy Guidelines dealing with Land For Housing, Coastal Planning, Natural Heritage and Rural Development and Planning Advice Notes in relation to - Siting and Design of New Housing in the Countryside, Farm and Forestry Buildings, Fitting new Development into the Countryside, Planning For Natural Heritage and Radio Telecommunications.

1.2.2 Some of the changes that can occur within the seascape, agriculture and forestry, which may significantly affect the scenic qualities of the NSA, are outwith statutory planning control. Some changes, however, are subject to consultation, such as applications for woodland and forestry grant schemes.

1.3 Pilot Management Strategies

1.3.1 Following a review of all natural heritage designations in 1997, the Scottish Executive endorsed the need for a national landscape designation. It was generally perceived, however, that the existing NSA designation was ineffective, and this led to a detailed re-assessment of the designation. SNH produced their National Scenic Area Advice to Government in 1999 following extensive consultation.
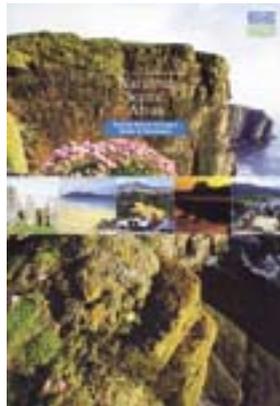
The proposals for making the designation more effective include:

- a new legislative basis for NSAs;
- a new duty on local authorities to produce, implement and review NSA Management Strategies;
- a new duty on public bodies to safeguard the interests of the NSA;
- a review of provisions under the Town and Country Planning system;
- broader provisions to influence land management within NSAs; and
- actions to increase awareness and 'ownership' of NSAs.

1.3.2 Whilst a formal response from Government was awaited to their advice SNH, in partnership with the relevant Councils, piloted the development of Management Strategies in two regions of Scotland – Dumfries and Galloway and Highland.

1.3.3 The purpose of a Management Strategy is not to fossilise or preserve the area, but to ensure that the area continues to justify its designation as a nationally important landscape. This can be achieved by the identification and management of change in a way that conserves the unique and distinct qualities of the area, whilst maintaining and enhancing it as a place in which to live, work and visit.

1.3.4 The Management Strategy does not seek to impose onerous additional restrictions on land managers, the principal custodians of this landscape. Economics have played a fundamental role in creating this managed landscape and is the basis for its continuing management. The economic viability of the NSA is essential to its future, however this must be achieved through an approach that conserves the special qualities of the area. An accolade designation such as this provides opportunities, and the NSA can be developed to bring local economic benefit. The strategy identifies how we can target effort and resources, influence existing mechanisms, and seek incentives to enable the unique qualities and character of the landscape to be conserved.

1.3.5 All three National Scenic Areas in Dumfries and Galloway – the Nith Estuary, the East Stewartry Coast and the Fleet Valley - lie on the north shore of the Solway Firth and are focused on the river estuaries and bays contained by surrounding hills. This strategy concerns the Fleet Valley National Scenic Area. The East Stewartry Coast and Nith Estuary National Scenic Areas are discussed in separate documents.

1.4 Purpose of the project

1.4.1 The purpose of the pilot project in Dumfries and Galloway was to initiate and take forward the preparation of a Management Strategy for each of the NSAs in the region. This was achieved through a participatory

process that encouraged the involvement of those with an interest in the areas and led to the production of three strategies with accompanying plans of action. A temporary project officer was appointed to take forward the process. It is the intention that the strategies and their action plans will be reviewed regularly to monitor progress and adapt to changing circumstances. To date the project has:

- raised awareness of the designation and begun to develop a sense of ownership of the area amongst the local community;

- liaised with local communities, landowners, representative groups and agencies that have an interest in the areas;

- enabled those with an interest in the NSA's to contribute to the preparation of the strategies;

- defined the scenic qualities of each NSA through a new method of landscape analysis;

- commented on the validity of the existing NSA boundaries;

- developed a vision for the NSA taking full account of existing strategies and plans;

- examined the forces that may cause change within each NSA;

- established clear objectives on how this change should be managed;

- identified opportunities for the management and enhancement of the landscape qualities of each NSA;

- proposed a series of actions, potentially delivered by a wide variety of partners;

- provided a framework from which the potential affect of future change on the scenic qualities of the Fleet Valley NSA can be easily recognised;

- contributed to a wider debate on the definition of scenic qualities; and

- prompted a Historic Land-use Assessment to be undertaken with the subsequent publication of a summary report.

1.5 What has happened

1.5.1 A Project Officer was appointed to develop the Management Strategies in December 2000.

Events

- Introductory seminar held in February 2001 at Castle Douglas, with fifty representatives from a wide variety of interest groups and organisations attending (including an MSP, local councillors, National Farmers Union, Scottish Landowners Federation, Forestry Commission and Forest Enterprise, Fisheries Board, Solway Firth Partnership, SEPA, Southern Upland Partnership and six Community Councils).

- Exhibition displays and participatory events were held at the Dumfries and Lockerbie Agricultural Show and the Dumfries Environment Fair.

- Presentations to the Council's Stewartry Area Committee and Lower Nithsdale Area Committee in February 2001 and February 2002.

- Presentation to the West Areas Board of Scottish Natural Heritage in May 2002.

- Presentations to ten of the Community Councils located within the three NSAs, and to the Lower Nithsdale Federation of Community Councils.

- Presentations to The Murray Usher Foundation, Dalbeattie Forest Community Partnership, and Stewartry Coalition for the Disabled.

- A seminar presentation at the Crichton University.

- Sharing of information and views with those involved in the preparation of the Management Strategy for Wester Ross National Scenic Area during a visit to Dumfries and Galloway in June 2002.

Meetings

- An initial meeting for land managers, focusing specifically on broad land management issues across the three National Scenic Areas, was held in September 2001. Land managers from all three NSAs attended the meeting and raised issues, concerns and opportunities for the designation.

- A second land managers meeting was held in May 2002 to discuss the working papers, discussing in detail the developing agricultural issues and actions.

- Meetings have been held with various organisations and agencies throughout the development of the Strategy.

Public Workshops

- The first round of public workshops were held in September 2001 at Colvend Public Hall, Gatehouse Community Centre, Hutton Hall (Bankend) and New Abbey Village Hall, and attended by over 100 people.

- At the workshops a series of short discussions were held to identify what people valued most about the NSAs, and what changes they had noticed in the landscape over the last 20 years or so. Places of local importance and places where problems exist were identified, and ideas and opportunities for the areas were raised.

- Workshops have also been held with staff from SNH, members of the local chapter of the Royal Town Planning Institute, and the Countryside Rangers and Wardens of the region.

- The second round of public workshops were held in March 2002 and 98 people attended the four meetings.

- During the workshops agreement was sought on the scenic values that had been identified for each National Scenic Area, and the proposed vision for the areas. The potential actions in the working papers were prioritised, their timing considered, and possible implementers noted. Participants also indicated specific actions that they may wish to help implement.

Questionnaires

- A questionnaire was devised and distributed at public events, sent to Community Councils and a variety of organisations. Over 90 completed questionnaires were returned.

- Over Easter 2002, questionnaires targeted at visitors to the area were distributed at locations within and around the National Scenic Areas. Interviews were also undertaken at five locations over the Easter weekend. 110 completed questionnaires were returned, and 56 interviews undertaken.

Working Papers

- A working paper for each of the Areas was produced in February 2002, 430 copies were distributed and comments sought during a six week consultation period.

- Comments on the working paper were received from all those attending the second round of workshops, and a further 34 written responses received.

Consultative Draft Management Strategies

- In July 2002 a Draft Management Strategy for each of the Areas was produced and over 550 copies were distributed. Written comments were invited during a 10-week consultation period.

- 48 written responses were received from a variety of individuals, organisations and agencies. All comments were considered and discussed by the project partners and the strategies revised accordingly.

Research

- Site survey and analysis of the landscape of the three NSAs

- Development of a new approach to landscape analysis to define the scenic qualities of each NSA.

- Historic Land-use Assessment undertaken by The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and Historic Scotland.

Consultation

- A report containing key information gathered during the consultation, including a summary of responses to the Consultative Draft has been compiled.

1.6 Structure of this document

This Management Strategy is divided into five further sections:-

2 **The landscape of the Fleet Valley** in which the physical and cultural influences that have shaped this landscape are described.

3 **What is special about the Fleet Valley** identifies the scenic qualities of the area and comments on the existing boundary.

4 **The challenge** outlines the need for a strategy and sets out the vision for the future.

5 **What can be done** sets out the issues that are causing change in the Fleet Valley and identifies opportunities for future management and enhancement.

6 **Making it happen** provides a series of Action Plans and outlines the potential implementation process.

Winner of 'Draw a Special Landscape' competition - Jenny Smith from Crocketford

Fleet Valley
National Scenic Area

2 THE LANDSCAPE THE FLEET VALLEY

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1   The Fleet Valley National Scenic Area (see Figure 1), was identified by the Countryside Commission for Scotland through a systematic comparative process that aimed to identify "…. areas of unsurpassed attractiveness which must be conserved as part of our national heritage" (See Appendix 1 for the original citation from Scotland's Scenic Heritage). The purpose of the NSA designation is to highlight the national importance of the landscape character and scenic qualities of the designated landscape with the intention that special care should be taken to conserve and enhance it.

2.1.2   Landscape character can be identified through an accepted and established technique of analysis and classification, and provides an objective approach to what we can see in the landscape in terms of the landform and land cover. Scenic qualities are more difficult to define as they are based on our reaction to, or feeling about, a particular landscape and our value judgement about how beautiful it is. This section considers the landscape character of the Fleet Valley and the following section examines its scenic qualities.

the landscape

2.2 Landscape character

2.2.1   The Dumfries and Galloway Landscape Assessment (Land Use Consultants, 1998) identifies the distinct patterns and combination of elements that create the different landscape character types within the National Scenic Area (see Figure 2, page 18). Landscape types include Wigtown coastal flats (including estuarine flats and coastal plain), Borgue peninsula with gorsey knolls, Cairnharrow Upland Fringe, Cairnharrow and Fleet foothills, and Cullendoch foothills with forest. This landscape assessment has provided the basis for policies within the Structure Plan and the finalised Stewartry Local Plan, and informs responses to planning applications.

2.2.2   The forces that have shaped the landscape character of the Fleet Valley, both physical and cultural, are described in detail below. Physical forces such as geology, soils and climate are outlined, and then the way man has shaped and used the landscape is detailed.

2.3 The Landscape Character of the Fleet Valley

Physical influences:

Geology

2.3.1   The earliest rocks of the area are sedimentary deposits laid down in deep seas during the Silurian period around 440 million years ago. These form the layer into which rocks later intruded and on to which recent sediments have been overlain. Greywackes and shales outcrop across the region and are orientated in a band running from north-east to south-west.

2.3.2   Large scale earth movements followed this period of deposition and the Silurian sediments were folded and thrust into a mountainous terrain which then experienced significant erosion. At Barlocco on the Borgue coast, at the eastern boundary of the NSA, a good example of this episode of folding can be seen. The greywackes, siltstones and mudstones on the shore have been contorted

by a sequence of folds formed under intense compression. These outcrops have been designated an SSSI (part of Borgue Coast SSSI) in recognition of their importance and have figured prominently in the continuing debate about the geological formation of the Southern Uplands.

2.3.3   These upheavals were followed by dramatic intrusions of molten rock that produced the granite mass of Cairnsmore of Fleet to the north of the NSA. Evidence of this granite can be seen in the rounded granite boulders in the Galloway dykes around the Fleet

Drift geology

2.3.4   Successive ice ages have shaped the landscape. During the last main period of glaciation the area was covered by ice, originating from the north that was moving southwards eroding the surface. Once these glaciers started to retreat glacial debris was deposited carpeting the landscape in many

places. At the head of the Fleet Valley the scouring ice plucked out granite boulders leaving behind a wall of rock, the Clints of Dromore, that forms a prominent feature in the landscape. On the land lying east of Fleet Bay the process of glacial erosion and deposition has created a terrain of boulder clay and solid rock outcrops, with layers of alluvium deposited in these glacially eroded hollows. The direction of ice movement is clearly evident across this landscape in the orientation of ridges and hollows.

2.3.5   The melting of the ice sheets caused a rapid rise in sea level and the rebound of the earths crust, creating major fluctuations between the land and sea. Beaches and estuarine deposits – sands, gravels and clays - formed during this time around Gatehouse, whilst river alluvium was deposited creating the floodplain of the Water of Fleet.

Soils

2.3.6   The hills enclosing the Fleet valley have soils derived from the thin stony drifts of greywackes and shales, and frost shattered rock debris. On the upper slopes peaty gley soils occur, the thin acidic soil and climate support heather moorland used for rough grazing and forestry. The valley sides have brown forest soils developed over stony loamy drifts, providing good quality rough grazing, some of which has been improved.

2.3.7   More fertile sandy loam soils occur in the river valley, developed from the gravels and sands of the estuarine terraces, and containing much stone (used in dykes). The lower valleys of the Fleet and Boreland Burn contain some of the most fertile soil in the NSA, which is capable of producing a moderate range of crops. Other equally fertile soils derived from stony loam drifts occur on the coast and around Cally.

2.3.8   On the eastern shore of the Bay the soils are similar to those on the valley sides, however the strongly glaciated terrain contains knolls and areas of outcropping rock. This peninsula provides good pasture and is used for stock rearing.

2.3.9   A small pocket of soil developed on windblown sand occurs at Sandgreen, and an area of saline alluvial soil occurs on the area of raised beach at the head of the Bay. The latter fertile soil is capable of supporting a narrow range of crops.

Climate

2.3.10   The Solway Coast has a generally mild climate and is naturally sheltered from north westerly winds and the full force of Atlantic gales. Winds are predominantly westerly and south westerly, with colder easterly winds experienced particularly in Spring.

2.3.11   The warm moist air from the south west influences the rainfall (around 1140mm year) making the region fairly wet, with coastal areas generally being slightly drier than the higher inland areas. This is borne out within the Fleet Valley NSA - the coastal strip being drier than the valley and surrounding hills.

2.3.12   Temperatures are characterised as warm, with mild winters and cool summers. A long growing season and low incidence of frost is experienced along the coast. Slightly cooler temperatures occur in the high surrounding hills which are also more exposed than the rest of the NSA. The coastal strip and valley sides are moderately exposed, with the coast experiencing milder winters than the valley. Gatehouse and the valley floor are sheltered by the surrounding landform. The low Fleet Isles provide localised shelter along the shore.

Marine Environment

2.3.13   The Solway Firth has a large tidal range - around 6.7m in the Fleet Bay- and has two tidal cycles per day. The whole bay is intertidal, and the meandering narrow channels of the Water of Fleet and the Skyre Burn cross the expanse of sand flats and into the south-east of Wigtown Bay.

2.3.14   The estuary is shallow enough for the islands of Ardwall and Barlocco, at the mouth of the Bay, to be reached on foot at low tide. Temperatures vary over the seasons, being warmest in the summer, and waves are generated primarily from within the North Irish Sea. Their height and direction are dependent

on the wind, with wave heights being generally low compared with those on more exposed coasts.

2.3.15   The pattern of water movement within

the Solway Firth transports sediment (and sea borne litter/pollutants) eastwards, filling the estuaries with mud and sand. The lower parts of the bay are largely intertidal sandflats which become more muddy in the upper parts of the estuary. A small area of merse (saltmarsh) lines the head of the bay and the sediment on which it occurs is considered to be of marine rather than river origin. Sediment transport within the bay is influenced by wave exposure, the position of the river channel and the sediment supply.

Cultural influences:

Cultural heritage

2.3.16   The Fleet Valley has a long history of settlement, exploitation and development. The upland areas to the north and west of the Fleet still bear traces of prehistoric field systems, clearance cairns, round-houses, cup-and-ring marked rocks and burnt mounds, most of which are thought to date to the 2nd millennium BC. Examination of cropmarks showing on aerial photographs indicates that settlement continued into the valley bottom. A major group of early prehistoric ritual sites – stone circles, burial cairns and standing stones, lies between Cairnharrow and Cambret Moor.

2.3.17   The Romans built a small fort to guard the Fleet crossing, just to the north of the current town near the cemetery. Rare traces of the Roman road heading west from the

crossing survive on the flanks of Ardwall Hill. Native settlements of the period also survive, from Carstramon down to Boreland of Girthon, most visibly in the important fortified site of Trusty's Hill.

2.3.18   Trusty's Hill continued to be occupied into the early medieval period, and the carvings there are thought to commemorate a Pictish raiding party. Out in the bay, early monks founded an isolated community on Ardwall Isle, and occupied small drystone cells around a chapel.

2.3.19   The importance of guarding the river continued into the Middle Ages. The 12th century motte-and-bailey at Boreland of Anwoth was the first in a sequence of fortifications, followed by the 13th century earthwork castle at Cally, which in turn was superseded by the late 15th century tower house at Cardoness. Likewise, further upstream, Rusko Castle replaced an earlier earthwork near Pulcree. Even before the canalisation of the Fleet, an English spy reported that at Cardoness "at the full sea, boats of eight tons may come under the wall".

2.3.20   In less troubled conditions the benign climactic shift in the medieval period, like that of the Bronze Age three millennium earlier, led to agricultural exploitation at higher altitudes

than was previously, or is currently, possible. In what is now rough grazing on the fells around the valley are the remains of many medieval farmsteads, corn-drying kilns, rig-and-furrow ploughed fields and animal pens, in some places overlying their prehistoric counterparts. Such remains may have been as much a feature in the lowland areas as the upland but are no longer evident due to centuries of cultivation and improvements.

2.3.21 In the period of stability that followed the civil wars of the mid-seventeenth century, agriculture flourished, with large estates established around country houses such as Cally, Ardwall and Rusco. Gardens and woodlands were created, the remnants of which still survive, and agricultural improvements were undertaken.

2.3.22 Through the 18th and well into the 19th Century many dykes were built to enclose the land to enable the raising of sheep and cattle. The enclosed land was gradually improved through the introduction of fertilisers, fodder crops and drainage. The style of stone wall developed in the area is known as the Galloway dyke (also the Galloway dyke and hedge), the upper large stones allowing light to show through, thus deterring stock, particularly the agile black faced sheep that were suited to the uplands, from trying to jump them. Local skills and knowledge about dyking survives

in the area, and has been formative in the re-establishment of dyking skills in Britain over the last 30 years.

2.3.23 In the mid 18th century army engineers constructed a new road across the valley, which is still traceable going west from Anwoth into the hills. This also led to increased prospecting for minerals in the hills, and there are traces of early lead mines to the north-west.
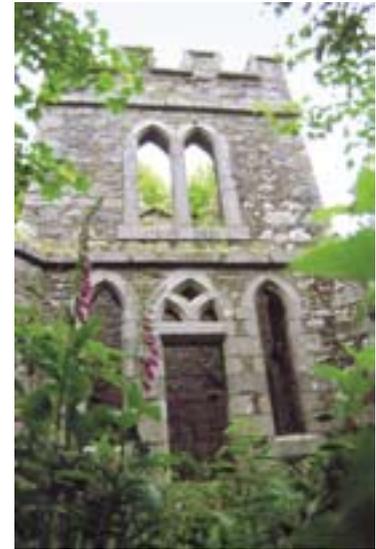
2.3.24 James Murray of Broughton and Cally enclosed and improved his vast estates, which extended over Galloway, creating modern and productive farms. He also planned and developed the town of Gatehouse of Fleet, laid out in a grid pattern in the 1760's, which become a prosperous mill town. By the late 18th Century the town had four cotton factories, a brass foundry, a wine company, a brewery, tanneries, brickworks, a soap factory, and a ship building and repairing yard. Power for the mills was provided principally by water from Loch Whinyeon, reaching the town through an elaborate system of tunnels, dams and lades.

2.3.25 The towns position at the centre of the cotton textile industry in Galloway had passed by the mid 19th Century as it became unable to compete with the more efficient, and better located, steam powered mills elsewhere. As the production of cotton ceased the mill buildings were used for series of other industrial ventures including a sawmill and bobbin mill, the latter producing pirns and bobbins until the early 1930's.

2.3.26   Although the Water of Fleet was not able to provide enough water to power the mills it was a vital means of transport, linking the thriving industrial town with Wigtown Bay and the Solway. The winding course of the lower river to the harbour at Boatgreen proved difficult for the passage of larger boats, and to improve access a new canalised course was cut in 1824. An embankment was built at the head of the Bay, land between the canal and Cally reclaimed, and a swing bridge constructed across the canal near Cardoness Castle. The harbour became too shallow and was replaced with a new quay, Port Macadam, at the head of the canal in 1836. The development of the railways generally signalled the end of the rivers' importance for transport. Gatehouse station was located in the foothills at the top of the valley, to the north of the NSA, and the impressive viaduct across the Big Water of Fleet (now disused) remains an outstanding feature in the landscape.

2.3.27   Elizabeth Murray Usher, like her predecessor, believed in creating and guiding the changes necessary to increase prosperity and employment in the area, whilst she endeavoured to conserve the quality of the landscape. This vision is being taken forward today by the Murray Usher Foundation (see Appendix 2). Land on the estate was sold to the Forestry Commission and other estate farmland that was sold was (and is still) held under Conservation Agreements with the National Trust for Scotland, through which various restrictions were placed on individual parcels of land. Prior to the introduction of planning regulations new building in Gatehouse was carefully controlled through conditions in the feu charter to ensure the distinctiveness of the area was retained.

Habitats and wildlife

2.3.28   Cairnsmore of Fleet National Nature Reserve lies just outwith the northern boundary of the NSA. It covers an extensive area of open moorland and is one of the few hills remaining in Galloway that has unforested ground stretching from the valley to its summit. It was

designated a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in recognition of the importance of its ecosystem, and is managed traditionally by Scottish Natural Heritage - the only working farm they own and farm.

2.3.29   Two of the ancient and semi natural woodlands in the Fleet Valley have habitats of international importance and are proposed as Special Areas of Conservation. Killiegowan and Carstramon Woods are oak woodlands, much of which was formerly coppiced, and contain a rich mix of other deciduous tree and shrubs. The ground flora is equally varied - the sites are known for their stunning bluebell displays - and the woods support many birds and invertebrate species. Carstramon Wood is a wildlife reserve managed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

2.3.30   Killiegowan wood lies at the foot of Ardwall Hill, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to its nationally important heathland and grass habitat. The site covers a complex of low moorland, rough pasture, and rich meadow. The upper parts of the hill are covered in heather, with a variety of wet grassland and water meadow species on the lower slopes. Another important grassland site, Lagganmullan, is partly within the NSA and contains large areas of rush pasture and wet heath habitat.

Fleet Valley
National Scenic Area
Fig.2 Landscape Character
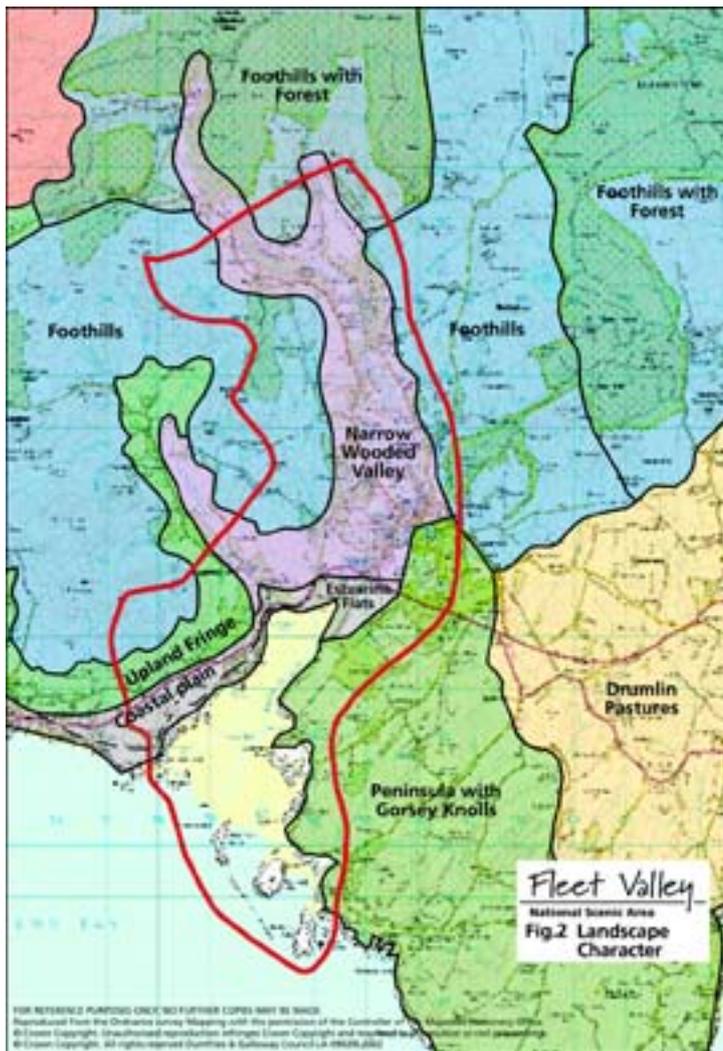
2.3.31   The coast from Airds Bay stretching eastwards beyond the Fleet Bay is nationally recognised for its biological and geological interest (see geology above). It contains examples of maritime heath vegetation and some of the islands support large seabird colonies.

2.3.32   At Carrick Ponds a series of pools and mires provide a range of habitats, containing a nationally significant variety of plants and grasses thriving on and adapted to water, and supporting a diverse community of invertebrates.

Current land use and landscape

2.3.33   The hills enclosing the valley are undulating and craggy, with extensive areas of heather moorland on the upper slopes. These slopes are traversed by a few dykes, dividing the land into large areas for the grazing of sheep, and are dissected by streams, often with associated riparian woodland. The lower slopes are divided into medium sized fields most of which have been improved, and are predominantly pasture. Cardoness Wood, a native broadleaf woodland visible from the east bank of the bay, spreads over the lower slopes of Mill Knock. The large dark green swathe of the Galloway Forest Park covers the higher hills to the north and east of the valley, and on the valley sides a large field block plantation is located at Scar Hill, with smaller angular blocks on Doon of Culreoch. A few farmsteads are scattered throughout the lower slopes, often with trees in close proximity to afford some shelter. On clear days views across the southern uplands to Merrick, the highest mountain in the region, and out across the Solway Firth to the Isle of Man can be taken from the hills.

2.3.34   The narrow valley rises quickly from the shore to the hills. It is well wooded with broadleaves clothing the valley sides and covering the prominent Doon of Castramont. Small pockets of broadleaf and coniferous woodland occur on the valley floor and the riparian woodland delineates the meandering course of the Water of Fleet. Many individual trees are scattered throughout the valley and line the roads, including hedgerow trees and mature individual specimens. On the lush floor of the lower valley the medium sized fields are enclosed by hedgerows, many now replaced with post and wire fencing, and with dykes (and the combined Galloway hedge and dyke) on more elevated ground and further upstream. The valley profile changes from the open flat floor at the head of the Bay to the narrow V-shaped upper valley, the river not easily visible along its course until it reaches Gatehouse. Views are fairly contained, however the viewing point at Venniehill, a hilltop field on the western end of the town (owned by the National Trust for Scotland), provides excellent views across the town and valley.

2.3.35   The Boreland Hills, a series of low uneven hills with irregular clumps of gorse, woodland, and trees, lie between the valley and the head of the Bay. The Rutherford

Monument, commemorating a famous Presbyterian minister from the old Anwoth Church in the adjacent valley, sits on top of the hills and is a prominent landmark in the valley.

2.3.36   Gatehouse of Fleet has been designated an Outstanding Conservation Area, due to its planned gridiron layout, historical importance and visual appearance; including the two storied dwellings, the use of brick as a building material, and the mill lades which pass through the town. Housing expansion has occurred in discreet pockets outwith the town, more recently at Bracken and Ramsay Wood. The town sits at the head of the Fleet Bay and marks the change from valley to estuarine landscape.

2.3.37   The coastal flats that generally lie to the south of the A75 contain large fields enclosed in a regular pattern of dykes. The improved grassland is used mainly for the grazing of sheep and cattle, and some cereal crops are grown. Skyreburn Bay is lined with unenclosed merse , and the reclaimed flats west of Cally House are divided by fencing into large fields. This flat land provides the route for the main arterial road across the region, the Gatehouse bypass which cuts through the designed landscape of Cally.

2.3.38   The eastern shore of the Fleet Bay is an uneven, hummocky landscape, with rocky outcrops and associated gorse, creating prominent knolls within fields of improved pasture. Dykes, often white from lichen cover, generally bound the fields. The land is predominantly used as grazing for cattle and sheep. There is no tree cover on the exposed headland, however inland the landscape contains small mixed woodlands and the extensive policy woodlands and plantations of Cally Woods. Many individual trees are also scattered through the landscape, giving a sheltered parkland feel to parts of the landscape. Panoramic views of the NSA, across Wigtown Bay to the Machars, and beyond to the Solway can be taken from the coast.

2.3.39   This stretch of coast is very popular destination for holiday makers, and consequently tourism and recreation facilities are well developed. Caravan and chalet developments along the coast provide accommodation, and launch facilities, within the area. Cally House is now a hotel, with associated golf course set in the designed landscape. A footpath and horse riding network has been developed within Cally Woods.

Fleet Valley

3 WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE FLEET VALLEY

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The previous section describes the character of the Fleet Valley landscape and begins to suggest how it influences the quality of the scenery through the local mix of individual landscape elements, the landscape character types, and the way these elements and character types fit together.

3.1.2 Other less tangible qualities such as tranquillity, the emotional response of the viewer, cultural and historical associations and individual preferences for particular types of landscape and places, also affect the quality of the scenery. Although we all experience landscape in different ways there are certain types of scenery that contain qualities recognised and valued by very many people. This scenery is therefore generally perceived to be of outstanding natural beauty.

3.1.3 The results of a questionnaire survey (see 1.5.1) confirmed that the landscape of the Fleet Valley is special (100% response from questionnaire statistics). But what is it about the scenery that makes it so attractive? The answer to this question forms the foundation from which the Management Strategy must be developed. The unique qualities that combine to form the outstanding beauty of the area need to be identified and agreed, following which policies can be devised to ensure they are not eroded or lost.

3.1.4 How and why we appreciate particular types of scenery is a very complex issue, and there is currently no agreed or accepted method as to how scenic qualities should be analysed. An approach to identifying the scenic qualities was therefore devised that combined the subjective evaluation of the landscape from broad consultation, with more objective research and analysis.

what is special

3.1.5   Workshop participants and those completing questionnaires were asked to identify what they valued most about the Fleet Valley – what made it a unique, special place. The responses ranged from comments such as 'absolutely perfect' and 'microcosm of Scotland', to qualities such as timelessness and the quality of life, and to landscape features (natural and cultural) that are particular to the area such as Doon of Castramont, Cardoness Castle and the Mill Lades. There was general agreement on certain qualities and features between groups at all workshops and in questionnaire responses.

3.1.6   The project officer, a professional landscape architect, has used these identified qualities to structure and inform an analysis of the scenic qualities of the landscape, based on desk study and field analysis. The scenic qualities of the Fleet Valley NSA are detailed below, with the words taken directly from consultations in italics.

3.2   Scenic Qualities of the Fleet Valley

3.2.1   The core qualities of the Fleet Valley are the *diverse* landscape, rising gently from *coast*, through *valley* to *hills* within a very *small area*, and valued for its *harmony* and sense of *timelessness*. The *farmed* landscape and *broadleaf woodland* provides a distinctive

setting for the *historic settlement of Gatehouse of Fleet*, which lies between the narrow valley and the coastal bay.

Scale

3.2.2   Fleet Valley provides a variety of scales from the small *intimate valley at Anwoth* to the large *open hills* dominated by Cairnsmore of Fleet.

- The character of the river valley changes from the *open estuary* with its *distant views*, to the sheltered *pastoral landscape* marked out with hedges, and finally to the enclosed steeply sided upper parts of the valley, its slopes covered in woodland.

- The wide variety of elements concentrated within a very compact area conveys the sense of a miniaturised larger scale landscape.

- The *tides* in the Bay lead to a changing perception of distance – the opposite shores seeming to be closer when the intertidal sands are exposed.

Diversity

3.2.3   Differences in geology, topography and soils influence the diversity of the landscape. A wide variety of habitats and landscape types are present within the Fleet Valley NSA, from estuarine flats to foothills with forest, a range of which can be seen or experienced in most views.

- The variety of habitats: coastal and marine (open sea, sea grass beds, estuary, merse, maritime cliff and shore), farmland, grassland (unimproved neutral grassland including purple moor grass and rush pasture), upland heathland, wetland (fen, rivers and streams), and woodland (native and planted coniferous woodland). The NSA contains very good examples of such habitats that are reflected in the variety of SSSIs within the area.

- *The variety of landscape types*/characters: open sea and mud flats, with estuarine flats and coastal plain to the west of the bay and Borgue peninsula with gorsey knolls to the east. Cairnharrow upland fringe and foothills enclose the narrow wooded valley to the west, and the Fleet foothills and Cullendoch foothills with forest the east side of the valley (see Figure 2).

This mix of habitats /landscape types combine to provide a wide variety of colours and textures within the landscape.

- Indented *rocky coast* and *islands* compared to the *canalised river* and *mill lades*

- Differing textures of the *broadleaf woodland*, unimproved grassland, *moorland* and *pastoral* fields.

- Seasonal colour and patterns – in particular the *large areas of native woodland*, the *moorland* and *farmland*, and also including elements such as the gorse on the peninsula, the heather, the bluebells at *Carstramon* and the lichen covered *dykes* along the coast.

- The many shades of green present in the native woodlands and unimproved grasslands, the lush green of the valley pasture, and the dark greens of the conifers on the surrounding hills.

Harmony

3.2.4   One of the qualities valued about the Fleet Valley is that it is a *working landscape*, with *well managed* agricultural *land* that appears *unspoiled* but is *productive*. There is a sense of harmony between the land and the people evident in the *rich archaeological and industrial history*, the *historic planned town* and *it's setting in the landscape.* This quality is reinforced by the following.

- Traditional *farm buildings nestling in the scenery.*

- *Sympathetic development and care in planning* with new development *not affecting the character of the area*.

- *Balance* of land uses such as *agriculture, deciduous woodland* and *tourism*.

- Perceived *lack of landscape change* creating a sense of *timelessness*.

- History of land tenure - land being held by a few families over many generations giving unity to the town and the surrounding landscape.

Composition

3.2.5   The way in which the diverse elements within this landscape combine is a key quality of the NSA. The *mix of sea, coast, river and hills in a small area* concentrates the scenery and can give the impression of it being a *microcosm of Scotland*.

- The Fleet Valley is an ordered landscape that undergoes a *gentle transformation from coastal scenery to hills and mountains*. The natural progression of one landscape type to another – estuarine flats, coastal fringe, upland fringe, foothills, etc. – creates a landscape of harmony with few stark contrasts.

- Fleet Bay and valley appear well *balanced*. The Islands of Fleet mark the limit of the intertidal area and contain the bay, and Gatehouse sits at the high tide line at the head of the estuary, marking the change from an estuarine to a valley landscape. The town is located at the mid point between the Isles and the head of the valley - the upper basin of the Water of Fleet with its viaduct and the Clints of Dromore.

- The *Water of Fleet* links the hills to the coast, cutting through the steep wooded upper valley, then meandering through pasture land, and eventually reaching the shore by the canal.

- The *historic town* of Gatehouse is the nucleus of the area – not only centrally located but fundamental to the development of the surrounding landscape.

- The bay acts as a dynamic transitional zone that is balanced by the solidity of the hills to the west.

Coastal change/movement

3.2.6   *Constant change* and movement are vital qualities of this *dynamic* landscape. Wigtown Bay and the Solway appear to be relatively 'gentle' bodies of water that contribute to the tranquillity of the area, but also create a dramatic effect on the landscape. Change and movement contribute to the scenic qualities through the following.

- The tidal cycle causes the emergence and submergence of *large intertidal areas* of sand and mud.

- As the tide recedes the Isles of Fleet become connected to the shore.

- The bay constantly changing due not only to the large intertidal area but also to the *differing light and wind conditions*.

- Movement of flocks of birds across the water.

- A constant change of scenery when travelling through this landscape due to the wide variety of landscape elements within a confined area.

- Changing *weather* patterns apparent in the large sky as approaching storms blow into the bay from the west. Cloud cover on the surrounding hills providing a local weather forecast.

Light

3.2.7   In an unfamiliar landscape the coast can often be sensed before it is seen, mainly due to the quality of reflected light apparent in the sky. The *light quality* experienced in the lower valley and along the coast is *like that of an island*, where the light is intensified from reflection in the surrounding water surface.

The quality of light and the skyscape over Fleet Bay is greatly valued due to the following.

• Colours of the *sunset* and skies which are multiplied and reflected on the water and mud flats.

• Clear night skies due to the lack of light pollution.

• Varying opacity as rain comes in across the coast and settles on the hills.

• Periodic clarity of *views* due to *lack of pollution* in the atmosphere.

• *Distant views* of the *Isle of Man and Merrick* appear and disappear according to the changing weather conditions.

These include:

• the *variety of wildlife* from *birds of prey* to *otters* and deer;

• sound and smell of the water;

• agricultural (rather than industrial) noise and smells;

• the wind and breezes;

• sound of water travelling along the *mill lades* and waterwheel in Gatehouse of Fleet; and

• the *quietness* which *adds to the enjoyment of the area*.

Landmarks

3.2.9   Landmarks, both natural and man made, act as orientation features in the landscape and are important contributors to the distinctiveness of the Fleet Valley. The most significant man made feature is the town of Gatehouse of Fleet itself, lying literally at the heart of the NSA, and fundamental to the development of the valley and surrounding landscape. Among the most significant are:

Sensory qualities

3.2.8   Some of the qualities unique to the Fleet Valley are not visual – the sounds and smells experienced when in the NSA can reinforce other qualities, such as *tranquillity* and a sense of *naturalness*.

- Gatehouse of Fleet;
- Cairnharrow;
- Fleet Bay;
- Skyreburn Bay;
- Fleet Islands;
- Wigtown Bay;
- Cardoness Castle;
- Doon of Carstramont;
- Rutherford's monument;
- Big Water of Fleet viaduct;
- Clints of Dromore;
- Cairnsmore of Fleet; and
- Cambret Hill masts.

3.3 Defining the boundary

3.3.1   Scottish Natural Heritage recognises the need to review the validity of the existing National Scenic Area boundaries. A new legislative basis for the NSAs will need to be established as presently there is no statutory mechanism for altering the current boundaries.

3.3.2   The validity of the existing boundary was explored during the development of the Management Strategy. From the work undertaken to date, it is apparent that a reconsideration of the boundary is warranted.

3.3.3   Transitions between areas of higher and lower scenic quality may sometimes be quite distinct and abrupt but more often are of transitional nature with a gradual change as the special qualities become diluted. Many of the recognised scenic qualities of the NSA are present in the surrounding areas but are experienced to a lesser intensity. The landscape

immediately surrounding the NSA is recognised as being of great importance within Dumfries and Galloway and has been designated a Regional Scenic Are. These locally designated scenic areas are protected through policy within the Structure Plan.

3.3.4   During consultations much discussion was held and many comments received regarding the boundary line. Generally it was felt that the special qualities of the Fleet Valley extended beyond the existing boundary. These comments will inform future work into the validity of the boundary (see Appendix 3 for a summary of the changes suggested), however any proposed changes will require more detailed and comparative analysis, discussion and debate than has been undertaken during the preparation of this Management Strategy.

3.3.5   Consideration should be given to the application of the Management Strategy outwith the current NSA boundaries. The extended planning controls regulating development can only be applied within the designated area. Dedicated funding would need to be focused on the NSA and its immediate environs. Guidance and advice on managing landscape change could be applied to those areas immediately beyond the boundary that are considered to display the recognised scenic qualities of the NSA. In land management terms this would go some way towards allowing a more practical application of the strategy covering whole farms, woods and forests, and not just the land within the NSA boundary.

Fleet Valley

4 THE CHALLENGE

4.1 How we are looking after the NSA

4.1.1 Those living and working within the Fleet Valley have an important role in the management of the NSA. Some of the very qualities that are so highly valued today are a result of the careful stewardship undertaken by land owners and managers in the past and now. Control of development, ensuring high standards of siting and design, has also sought to conserve these qualities.

4.1.2 In addition to statutory planning control there are also a range of policies and associated initiatives and plans (outlined in Appendix 4) that are currently in place that support, or influence, the management of the landscape in the National Scenic Area.

4.2 What's changing in the NSA?

4.2.1 The Fleet Valley National Scenic Area is a special landscape that has occurred through a gradual process of natural and man-made change. Why should we now be concerned about the future of the area?

4.2.2 The landscape is always changing due to natural processes such as the moving channel of the Water of Fleet, and the management by man (eg. creation of flood banks, planting of woodland, changing farm practice). Man-made change is now much more rapid than in the past – standardisation has increased the speed and extent of change (eg. Common Agricultural Policy, standard house design). Lots of small changes that may seem individually insignificant, such as not replanting fallen hedgerow trees or the dereliction of dykes, can together change the character and special qualities of the area.

4.2.3 Change is a natural part of progress and is therefore essential for the maintenance and development of the social and economic health of the NSA. The Fleet Valley is a managed landscape that has evolved principally in response to the economic decisions of land managers and landowners. Sympathetic management is essential to ensure the special qualities of the landscape are conserved.

4.2.4 What changes could threaten or enhance the scenic quality of the NSA and the quality of life of those living within it? Some factors that may threaten the scenic qualities, as identified in the previous section are briefly outlined in Table 1 opposite. Opportunities for enhancement are discussed in Section 5.

Table 1		
Scenic quality		**Factors affecting quality**
Core qualities	Diversity Broadleaf woodland Farmed landscape Historic settlement Small area Valley Coast	Loss of land use variety Loss of woodland Decline in agriculture Inappropriate development
Scale	Varying scales – intimate to large Views Ambiguity of distance Concentration of elements	Land use balance - retain woodland for intimacy and open hills Interruption of views by intrusive elements Screening at key viewpoints
Diversity	Habitat Landscape character Colour Texture	Degradation or loss of visually significant habitats –native woodland, moorland Erosion or loss of key landscape characteristics – dykes, hedges, trees, etc. Reduction in key species
Harmony	Working landscape Well managed Traditional buildings Unspoilt Archaeology and industrial history Contained settlement Sensitive development	Changing population and age patterns – out migration and incomers Decline in agriculture employment Litter pollution Loss of visible remains of past use of land. Increased suburbanisation Increased standardisation of buildings and roads Public utilities – phone masts, power lines etc
Coastal change/ movement	Tidal Weather Wildlife	Climate change and sea-level rise Coastal defences Reduction in species
Light	Clarity of atmosphere Distant views Clear night skies Varying opacity Colours and cloud patterns	Air pollution Light pollution
Sensory qualities	Wildlife Agricultural sounds and smells Water sounds and smells	Reduction in key species Change in land use – loss of farm land, loss of stock Increase in industrial noise Noise and disturbance from active water sports Water pollution
Landmarks	Orientation features Evidence of past use of the land	Maintenance and repair of structures and monuments Loss of views to landmarks Loss of access Loss of their prominence in the landscape through inappropriate scale and location of new development

4.2.5   There are also many changes occurring that could positively benefit the National Scenic Area. The review of the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme, currently being revised to the Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme, will allow greater targeting of grants geographically and in terms of woodland type. The introduction and development of agri-environment schemes has also demonstrated a move towards more environmentally based support, which could support the objectives of the NSA (certain schemes have already provided assistance in the care of features in the landscape).

4.3   A Vision for the future

4.3.1   With the growing range of pressures on the Fleet Valley landscape outlined above, and in order to develop a strategy to manage change in the area, we must consider what we are aspiring to. What do we want this landscape to be like in the future and what do we want it to provide, recognising that the NSA is an important but not a controlling influence on many future changes? We want to enable the area to continue to evolve to meet out our future needs, rather than be fossilised. We want to conserve rather than preserve the current landscape.

4.3.2   The proposed vision for each of the three National Scenic Areas in Dumfries and Galloway is of a living, working landscape which provides a range of economically and environmentally sustainable land uses, supports thriving local communities with a high quality of life, and that can be enjoyed by the present and future generations.

4.3.3   Following from this vision the overarching aim of this Management Strategy is:

To recognise, protect, conserve and enhance the landscape character, scenic qualities and local distinctiveness of the Fleet Valley National Scenic Area, with particular reference to its natural and cultural heritage, and with regard to its economic well being.

4.3.4   Under this vision the following detailed aims have been identified:

Raise awareness, understanding, appreciation, support and responsibility for the Fleet Valley NSA amongst local communities.

Guide change arising from all forms of development (housing, servicing, business, retailing and tourism) to maintain the scenic quality of the National Scenic Area.

Assist land managers in safeguarding and enhancing scenic qualities through guidance and by influencing the formulation of land management policy and its implementation.

Identify, conserve and where appropriate strengthen locally distinctive landscape features to reinforce the character of the landscape.

Reinforce and maintain the individual character of settlements within the Fleet Valley NSA.

Encourage enjoyment of the area where it is consistent with conserving and enhancing the environment, particularly where it plays a role in assisting economic and social opportunity.

Recognise, protect, conserve and enhance the landscape character, scenic qualities and local distinctiveness of the Fleet Valley National Scenic Area, with particular reference to its natural and cultural heritage, and with regard to its economic well being.

Fleet Valley

5 WHAT CAN BE DONE

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A list of issues currently causing change within the Fleet Valley NSA has been prepared from information gained during consultation and research. The issues have been organised into a series of eight topics covering the range of major activities and features that occur in the landscape: agriculture; woodland and forestry; shoreline; nature conservation; cultural heritage; development; infrastructure; and recreation and tourism.

5.1.2 There is a degree of overlap between these topics as an issue can affect more than one of them. To avoid repetition however the issues have been allocated to the most appropriate topic and therefore a certain amount of cross referencing is required.

5.1.3 The effect these issues have on the landscape is considered and opportunities for positively influencing change are identified. A proposed Plan for Action to deliver these opportunities is then set out in the next section. The code allocated to each opportunity provides a link to the individual actions given in the plan.

5.1.4 The three National Scenic Areas within Dumfries and Galloway lie in close proximity and are focused on river estuaries and bays. All three areas share many scenic qualities and landscape characteristics, and consequently the majority of issues affecting the landscape are common to all.

what can be done

5.2 Agriculture Issues and Opportunities

Relevant Aim

Assist land managers in safeguarding and enhancing scenic qualities through guidance and by influencing the formulation of land management policy and its implementation.

Objective

Support the role of agriculture as a principal land use, seeking a viable agricultural economy and guiding change to conserve and enhance the scenic qualities of the National Scenic Area.

Description

5.2.1   The Fleet Valley NSA is an agricultural landscape, the majority of the land being owner occupied, and its continuing management is vitally important to the character and quality of the NSA landscape. The farms are predominantly mixed livestock dominated by grass principally for permanent grazing and for the production of silage and some hay. Sheep rearing is concentrated in the valley and the rough grazing on the hills, with mixed livestock rearing and dairying on the coastal areas.

5.2.2   The majority of the NSA, apart from the eastern shore of the Fleet Bay, has been included in the Environmentally Sensitive Area agri-environment scheme. Uptake of the scheme has been high in the Stewartry, and grant aid has supported the maintenance of dykes to good effect (the scheme is now closed to new applications).

5.2.3   Interest in the recent (post Foot and Mouth Disease) Environment and Tourism Recovery Grant across the region indicates farmers are amenable to well–designed schemes that include measures to conserve and promote the enjoyment of the landscape.

Changing support regimes

5.2.4   Changes in support are a key driver in determining land use and farming practices. In the past, farming subsidies were largely production related and were available, for example, for the improvement of marginal land and drainage of wetlands. This led to the loss of habitats such as herb rich meadows, gorse pasture, rough grassland, and heathland, and subsequent loss in visual diversity and supported species.

5.2.5   Introduction of agri-environment schemes, (sequentially the Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Countryside Premium Scheme and then Rural Stewardship Scheme), indicates a move towards supporting environmentally friendly farming, for example by supporting the creation and management of hedges, dry stone dykes and wetlands. However much agricultural support remains production driven.

5.2.6   The balance of support for forestry versus farming also influences land use choices within the NSA, with less productive upland areas, such as Scar Hill, currently given over to forestry.

AGRICULTURE: Changing support regimes		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
CAP reform Agri-environment schemes Integration of agricultural and forestry support mechanisms	Support the prioritisation of landscape enhancement works within NSA within existing agri-environment schemes, for example in providing support for management and creation of a variety of habitats	A/Cs1
	Support the development of new schemes of whole farm support within the NSA as proposed in the Forward Strategy for Agriculture	A/Cs2
	Support the increasing integration of agricultural and forestry support systems and their prioritisation to support environmental, economic and social objectives within the NSA	A/Cs3

Farm diversification, changes in the type of farming

5.2.7   Farmers are also changing what and how they chose to farm, and are diversifying into other activities in response to changing economic conditions and support regimes, and more recently in response to Foot and Mouth Disease. These changes in turn affect the farmed landscape.

5.2.8   In terms of traditional farming activities, there appears to have been a reduction in the variety of crops grown, and a trend away from mixed farming towards pasture, causing a loss of visual and habitat diversity and a more uniform landscape. There has also been a significant decline in hay-making and an increase in silage production, leading to stocks of silage bales, sometimes sited in prominent locations

5.2.9   There has also been a trend away from traditional hardy breeds, more cattle now overwinter in sheds, dependent on silage production and resulting in slurry spreading, and fewer animals are visible in the landscape in the winter months.

5.2.10   Changing economics are also leading farmers to look at diversifying into other activities to bring in additional income. The highly scenic landscapes of the NSA present particular business opportunities for tourism and recreation based activities. In future there may also be a push for changes in land use to forestry, housing development or renewable energy, as well as recreation development (see relevant sections below). It will be important to ensure that new ventures reinforce the landscape character and scenic quality of the landscape. Examples exist elsewhere in Britain of integrated farm diversification support schemes that aim to encourage both business development and environmental enhancement (eg the Bowland Initiative in Lancashire).

AGRICULTURE: Farm diversification, changes in the type of farming		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Farm diversification Loss of diversity in the farmed landscape Loss of traditional breeds Prominent silage bales	Support farm diversification projects which reinforce landscape character and scenic quality, for example through the provision of integrated support for both business development and environmental enhancement	A/Fd1
	Investigate ways in which three NSAs designations within the region can used to provide added value to local produce	A/Fd2
	Encourage consideration of sensitive siting and colour of silage bales	A/Fd3

Increasing mechanisation and amalgamation of farms

5.2.11　As farming modernises along with other industries it has become more mechanised, with the use of increasingly large and specialised machinery, and less labour. These changes are reflected in the farming landscape and the communities of the NSA.

5.2.12　Some farms have amalgamated due to the economies of scale, leaving redundant farm buildings, and yet new larger buildings are required. Traditionally farm steadings are well sited and adopt characteristic designs, and often have trees nearby. New larger farm buildings may have greater landscape impacts, and siting and design require careful consideration (see also Development Issues and Opportunties)

5.2.13　Large machinery requires large fields and wide gates and tracks. The loss of gateposts at narrow field openings and estate entrances can lead to a loss of decline distinctiveness if not reinstated. Machinery is unsuited to undertaking many traditional land management techniques such as dyking, hedge laying, and coppicing. Less time and labour (and money) is available for non-essential landscape management leading to a decline in such skills.

5.2.14　Dykes are a key characteristic of this landscape (with some hedges in the lower Fleet Valley), reinforcing local character and distinctiveness, and providing evidence of historic land use patterns. Dry stone dykes reflect the local geology, crafts and traditions. Galloway dykes and Galloway dykes and hedges are quite distinct. Inappropriate repairs of dykes (for example the use of mortar to secure coping stones), and the replacement of hedges and dykes with wire fences can erode local distinctiveness and detract from the appearance of the NSA. Management, maintenance and repair of traditional field boundaries (and buildings) is costly and dependent on a healthy agricultural economy.

5.2.15　Meanwhile the decline in rural jobs, compounded by lack of affordable housing, contributes to a drift of young people away from the area, and the general decline in local services, affecting the quality of life of the NSA.

AGRICULTURE: Increasing mechanisation and amalgamation of farms			
Key issues	**Opportunities**		**Code**
Redundant farm buildings	Seek to raise awareness of the landscape and cultural value of farm features such as field boundaries, gateposts etc and provide information and management advice		A/Im1
Demand for new large farm buildings (see 5.7)	Seek enhanced support for landscape management operations which support the objectives of the NSA, including for example the maintenance and repair of existing field boundaries, reinstatement of traditional gateways, the creation of new hedges, and the sensitive management of water courses within the NSA		A/Im2
Conservation of hedges, dykes and gateposts			
Loss of labour intensive land management skills and practice	Support training in traditional techniques such as dyking, hedge laying etc		A/Im3
Loss of local jobs and services	Support local employment initiatives linked to environmental enhancement and land management to conserve the landscape of the NSA		A/Im4
	Support the continued and enhanced protection of locally distinctive features listed for historical interest such as gateposts		A/Im5

Farm woodlands and trees

5.2.16   There were large estates on both banks of the Fleet Bay creating a significant feature in the landscape, such as the avenue of trees from Cally Mains to Sandgreen, and Cardoness Wood. There has been a general decline in the management and the replacement of dead and dying trees, including roadside trees and individual specimen trees that are particularly characteristic to the area. A variety of reasons are involved, including, shading of the grass crop, road safety concerns, Dutch elm disease, changing cutting methods and financial constraints. These issues are discussed further in 5.3 Woodland and forestry Section.

AGRICULTURE: Farm woodlands and trees		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Decline in management	See 5.3 Woodland and forestry section	
Lack of replacement		

5.3 Woodland and Forestry Issues and Opportunities

Relevant Aim

Assist land managers in safeguarding and enhancing scenic qualities through guidance, and by influencing the formulation of land management policy and its implementation.

Objective

Support the management of existing woodland, forestry, parkland and individual trees, and promote and encourage new planting design that will conserve and enhance the qualities of the landscape.

Description

5.3.1   Broadleaf woodland and trees make a significant contribution to the landscape of the Fleet Valley NSA. Tree cover ranges from individual mature and hedgerow trees (eg.on the valley floor and roadsides), riparian trees, policy parkland and woodland (Ardwall and Cardoness), large broadleaf woodlands (Carstramon and Killiegowan) and productive forests (Scar Hill, Cally and Disdow Woods).

5.3.2   Ownership is mainly private apart from the larger productive forests of Cally and Disdow (part of Laurieston Forest) which are state owned and managed, and for which Forest Design Plans have been developed detailing their restructuring. Recreational facilities have been developed at Cally Woods. Many of the broadleaf woodlands are very valuable for their nature conservation as well as scenic value, and management is undertaken to maintain and enhance their biodiversity.

Individual trees and the smaller woodland pockets are generally unproductive and therefore replacement and management is not undertaken.

5.3.3   A consultation process is established between the Forestry Commission, the Council and SNH, and other statutory bodies over felling, restructuring and new planting schemes, with sites identified on the Commission's Public Register of New Planting and Felling Proposals. Current guidance on forestry includes the 'Landscape Design Guidance for Forests and Woodlands in Dumfries and Galloway', and the Galloway Local Forestry Framework that has identified the NSA as being highly sensitive to new forestry planting.

5.3.4   Forestry is supported through the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme, currently being revised as the Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme. On a much smaller scale there is also an Amenity Planting Grant Scheme (for proposals under 0.25 hectare) funded by SNH and administered by the Council, which has enhanced payment rates within the NSA.

Forests and woodlands

5.2.5   Forests and woodland contribute significantly to landscape character. For example broadleaf and mixed woodland are important to the scenic quality of the Fleet Valley – providing a variety of colour and texture throughout the year. Large ancient and long established woods of natural origin clothe the valley sides. Carstramon, Killiegowan and

Cardoness woods are very important as visually distinct elements in this landscape as well as their importance for nature conservation.

5.3.6   A major increase or decrease of tree cover can alter the character of the area. For example, the introduction of woodland blocks to the coastal flats and foothills would affect the open character, and reduce the diversity of the landscape. The design and management of forests and woodlands also has a major effect on scenic quality and landscape character. Large productive forests require careful design to fit into the landscape, in terms of their scale and shapes, edges and felling coups, and forestry extraction tracks. Small woods can obscure views, or appear incongruous if unrelated to the surrounding landscape character. Forests can affect longer views into and from NSA. For example Scar Hill and field blocks on the south west slopes of Doon of Culreoch, and panoramic views of the Fleet valley from surrounding hills should be maintained. Meanwhile unmanaged woodland can detract from scenic quality. Appropriate woodland management is therefore vital to conserve the core scenic qualities of this NSA .

The riparian woodland along the banks of the Water of Fleet is highly visible from the valley sides and delineates the meandering lower reaches of the river. Water of Fleet can only be glimpsed through the trees. Native Riparian woods can provide benefits to aquatic species.
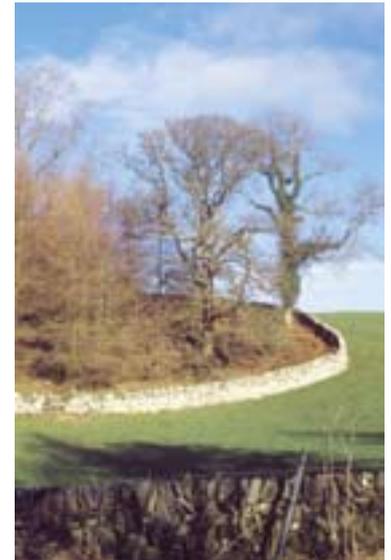
5.3.7   Forests and woodlands also provide significant opportunities for recreation. Cally Woods has car parking facilities, a small information centre and a network of paths and bridle-route that attracts regular visitors. Forests can visually absorb a high number of visitors (and cars) without affecting the sense of remoteness and tranquillity of the rest of the area (see also 5.9 under Recreation and tourism Section).

WOODLAND & FORESTRY: Forests and woodlands		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Need for sensitive forest design	Seek to develop a vision statement for forestry within the NSA	W/Fw1
Lack of woodland management	Seek the inclusion of NSA objectives in all forest design plans	W/Fw2
Loss of small woodlands	Encourage a high standard of design for forests and woodland in the NSA, including regard for key long views	W/Fw3
Conservation and expansion of native woodlands	Support and encourage the development and maintenance of recreational opportunities in existing forest	W/Fw4
Conservation and expansion of riparian woods	Increase awareness about the cultural heritage of woodlands and forests (eg. interpretation of charcoal platforms)	W/Fw5
Recreational opportunities	Support and encourage the regeneration and replanting of small woods, shelterbelts, and riparian trees including the renewal of boundaries where necessary	W/Fw6
	Encourage the introduction of shelterbelts for framing and shelter for new development where appropriate (through WGS and planning conditions), and in accordance with relevant design guidance	W/Fw7
	Support the provision of advice on conservation and sustainable broadleaved woodland management	W/Fw8
	Encourage identification of opportunities for the expansion of native woodlands	W/Fw9

Hedgerow, roadside and parkland trees

5.3.8   Some avenues and individual trees within the Fleet NSA are covered by Tree Preservation Orders, and prior notice must be given before any work is undertaken to trees within Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area. Trees are being lost through old age, disease and felling, and are often not being replaced. Planting to replace individual mature trees and avenues must be undertaken well in advance to ensure visual continuity. Assistance is available through the Amenity Planting Grant Scheme and also through the Rural Stewardship Scheme within recognised designed landscapes. Parkland trees are a feature of the designed estate landscape within the Fleet Valley – Cally, Ardwall and Cardoness - and contribute to the scenic quality of the area. Many roadside trees, and mature individual specimens occur throughout the valley and coastal landscape.
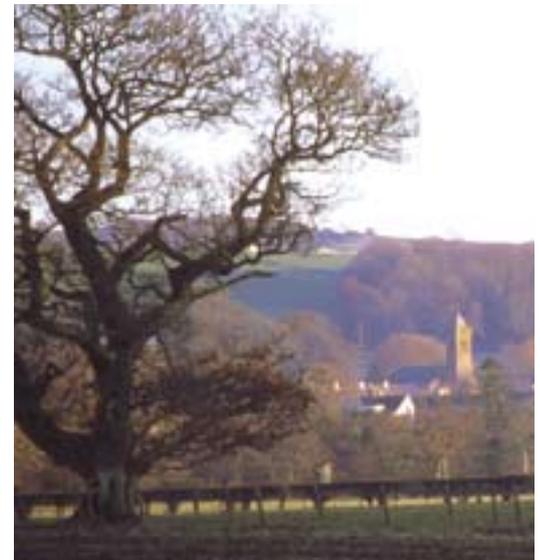
WOODLAND & FORESTRY: Hedgerow, roadside and parkland trees		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Tree loss	Seek to encourage the retention or replacement of avenues and tree lines as they are distinct features, reflecting estate and designed landscapes	W/Hr1
Loss of hedgerows	Support the protection of important, threatened trees and avenues by Tree Preservation Orders	W/Hr2
Replacement of avenues	Seek to encourage the conservation and enhancement of parkland character particularly within designed landscapes	W/Hr3
	Seek to encourage the maintenance and replanting of hedgerows	W/Hr4

5.4 Shoreline Issues and Opportunities

Relevant aim

Identify, conserve and where appropriate strengthen locally distinctive landscape features to reinforce the character of the landscape.

Objectives

Conserve and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the shoreline, whilst working with the natural coastal processes, and seek to minimise levels of water, air, noise and light pollution.

Encourage enjoyment of the area where it is consistent with conserving and enhancing the environment, particularly where it plays a role in assisting economic and social opportunity.

Description

5.4.1   Much of the western and northern shore is a raised beach, and the most seaward shores of the estuary are predominantly rocky. At low tide a large area of sandflats and some mudflats are exposed with only a very small sub tidal channel. An area of merse lines the head of Bay.

5.4.2   The small sandy bays along the coast are well developed for recreation, the beaches provide safe bathing and access for water sports, with caravan parks and chalets located at Mossyard, Cardoness, Sandgreen and Carrick. Some coastal litter, principally sea borne, is evident along the shoreline.

5.4.3   An integrated and sustainable management plan for the coast and estuary, the Solway Firth Strategy, was published in 1998, and its implementation is being successfully achieved through the cross border Solway Firth Partnership.

Predicted sea level rise

5.4.4   The areas of intertidal sand and mudflats are an intrinsic part of the scenic value of the Fleet Valley NSA. As sea levels rise and are contained by barriers (sea walls, earth embankments) the intertidal area is squeezed, leading to the loss of visually distinct habitats and supported species. Traditional protection methods can interfere with the natural processes of erosion and accretion, and the existing hard engineering solutions are often visually intrusive. Managed realignment provides a more sustainable option, using intertidal habitats such as mudflats and merse to provide naturally efficient coast protection.

SHORELINE: Predicted sea level rise		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Coastal protection versus managed realignment	Link with existing strategies including the Solway Firth Strategy and the study on the potential for managed realignment along the Inner Solway	S/Sl1
	Support development of a Shoreline Management Plan for the Solway	S/Sl2
	Seek improvements to the appearance of existing coastal protection when undertaking replacement or repair	S/Sl3
	Seek to support an approach of coastal realignment wherever appropriate (retreat the line of coastal defence)	S/Sl4

Pollution

5.4.5   Litter detracts from the scenic value and amenity of the shoreline, particularly on beaches. Coastal and sea borne litter is present along the shoreline. Dog fouling is also a problem on some beaches. However, strandlines form an important and sensitive habitat for rare plants and invertebrates.

5.4.6   Clear night skies can be affected by light pollution. The tranquillity of the NSA can be affected by noise pollution from active water sports (see also 5.9 Recreation and tourism). Sewage pollution and poor water quality can also detract from the scenic quality and amenity value of the area (see also 5.5 Nature conservation).

SHORELINE: Pollution		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Litter Dog fouling Light pollution Noise pollution Water quality	Support initiatives to reduce coastal and marine litter	S/P1
	Support initiatives to reduce dog fouling	S/P2
	Foster a sense of ownership and responsibility for beaches/shore amongst local communities	S/P3
	Support endeavours to meet the highest water quality standards	S/P4

Shoreline activities

5.4.7   The shoreline is a key focus for a range of recreational activity, including walking, beach activities, water sports, and wildfowling (see Recreation and Tourism Issues and Opportunities). A traditional form of intertidal fishing (stake netting) is discussed in 5.6 Cultural Heritage Issues and Opportunities.

(See 5.8 Infrastructure Issues and Opportunities for a discussion of offshore infrastructure developments).

SHORELINE: Shoreline activities		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Recreation	See 5.9 Recreation and Tourism section	

Coastal and maritime features

5.4.8   The evidence of former jetties, stake nets and harbours reflects the importance of the maritime history of the Solway. They provide a link with the past and contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the coast. The harbour at Port Macadam is occasionally used by small pleasure craft and following the construction of the bypass is no longer suitable for sailing vessels. These are discussed in 5.6 Cultural Heritage Issues and Opportunities.

SHORELINE: Coastal and maritime features		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Loss of jetties, quays (see Cultural Heritage section) Loss of stake nets (see Cultural Heritage section)	Seek to encourage the use of maritime features that remain in working order	S/Cm1

5.5 Nature Conservation Issues and Opportunities

Relevant Aim

Identify, conserve and where appropriate strengthen locally distinctive landscape features to reinforce the character of the landscape.

Objective

Conserve and enhance the diverse habitats and species of the National Scenic Area which contribute to its scenic value.

Description

5.5.1   Important sites for nature conservation are generally those that have remained least cultivated or disturbed by humans, although in some cases active management is needed to maintain or enhance their wildlife value. The Fleet Valley NSA has several such sites, many of which have been designated for their international, national and local importance for nature conservation (see Appendix 5), and to ensure their appropriate management and conservation.

5.5.2   Sites managed by conservation organisations include: the Scottish Wildlife Trust reserve at Carstramon Wood; Killiegowan Wood; Ardwall Hill; Lagganmullan; and Carrick ponds. Numerous further sites are situated just outwith the NSA boundary: Cairnsmore of Fleet National Nature Reserve; Skyreburn grasslands; and Laughenghie and Airie Hills. Other important sites include the designated Local Wildlife Site at Cardoness Wood, and the National Trust for Scotland's hill top viewpoint at Venniehill.

5.5.3   The variety of different habitats and species within the NSA are an intrinsic part of

the appeal of this landscape. The continuing management of the heather moorland, native and broadleaf woodland, unimproved grasslands and intertidal habitats are therefore necessary to safeguard the character and scenic quality of the NSA.

Perception of wildlife value

5.5.4   Some landscapes can be of low biodiversity interest but have a high scenic value. For example, many people see improved pasture as a lush green ordered landscape that is visually pleasing, though agricultural improvement may have led to less diverse grassland. However, there are many examples of habitat and landscape value working together to create scenic landscapes which are valued for their 'naturalness', such as heather moorland, merse or broadleaved woodland. Wildlife itself contributes to our experience of the NSA, for example the sound and movement of birds, and the fish stocks in the Water of Fleet.

5.5.5   Many people wish road side verges were frequently mown and looked 'tidier'. However verges provide an important habitat of mixed grasses and wild flowers, supporting a variety of species (formerly found along field margins). Others are aware of the loss of wild flowers from field edges, and appreciate diverse swards on verges.

NATURE CONSERVATION: Perception of wildlife value		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Sense of naturalness Experience of wildlife Management of road verges	Raise awareness of the links between landscape and biodiversity	NC/P1
	Support delivery of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan within the NSA	NC/P2

Decline of habitats and species

5.5.6   The visual characteristics of different semi-natural habitats often contribute to the landscape character and scenic quality, such as the native oakwoods at Carstramon and heather moorland on Ardwall Hill The diversity and contrast between these habitats are core qualities of the Fleet Valley NSA. Sites and habitats important for nature conservation are often areas of poorer quality land that have remained free of recent land management change (such as agricultural improvement, or the introduction of non-native forestry). Decline in such habitats has also led to a decline in certain species.

5.5.7   It is important to conserve habitats on more marginal land where they contribute to scenic value and biodiversity. Many of these habitats depend on less intensive management to remain in good health (for example grazing at low stocking densities on gorse pasture and heathland).

5.5.8   Changing farming practice has also led to the loss or neglect of small pockets of habitat which used to be found in the agricultural landscape, including field margins, wetland areas, hedgerows and veteran trees (see also 5.2 Agriculture and 5.3 Woodland and forestry). There has consequently been a declinein the species that were supported by these habitats. For example, the number of farmland birds has decreased due to fewer spring cereal crops, wetland drainage and a general intensification of farming practice.

5.5.9   Declining water quality can also lead to the loss of certain species such as sea trout. The decline in fish stocks are discussed further in 5.9 Recreation and tourism section. In certain places, large areas of invasive weeds, such as Japanese Knotweed are affecting scenic quality and biodiversity. This is a region wide problem and eradication is very difficult and expensive.

NATURE CONSERVATION: Decline of habitats and species		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Land use change Decline in semi-natural habitats Loss of diversity Decline in certain species Invasion of alien species	Seek to raise awareness of habitat and species diversity in area	NC/Dh1
	Support sustainable management of important habitats (eg heathland native woodlands) and species (eg sea trout), through enhanced agri-environment scheme and other sources	NC/Dh2
	Support provision of advice on habitat management (eg wetlands) and management for certain species	NC/Dh3
	Support conservation management at Carstramon Wood SWT Reserve	NC/Dh4
	Ensure habitat/visual diversity is incorporated in the design of new planting and restructuring proposals	NC/Dh5

5.6   Cultural Heritage Issues and Opportunities

Relevant Aim

Raise awareness, understanding, appreciation, support and responsibility for the Fleet Valley NSA amongst local communities.

Objectives

Support and encourage the conservation and management of the historic environment of the National Scenic Area, and promote the recognition and understanding of this unique heritage as an important contribution to local distinctiveness.

Encourage enjoyment of the area where it is consistent with conserving and enhancing the environment, particularly where it plays a role in assisting economic and social opportunity.

Description

5.6.1   The Fleet Valley NSA has a long and rich history of occupation and use, the evidence of which is still present in the landscape today. The designated Scheduled Ancient Monuments

sites are: Cardoness Castle which is in the care of Historic Scotland; Trusty's Hill; a Roman fortlet; Pulcree mote; Anwoth Old Church; Moat park; Boreland/Green Tower Moat; Ardwall Island; and the standing stones of Newton. Over one hundred further sites have been recorded in the NSA, a substantial proportion of which are of national and regional importance.

5.6.2   Planned estates evident in the Fleet Valley make an important contribution to the landscape's character, and contain features of historic interest. A proportion of the land within the NSA is held in Conservation Agreements with the National Trust for Scotland. The designed landscape of Cally is included in the national 'Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland' and a further two policy landscapes have been identified within the NSA. The Inventory lists what were then considered the most important sites in Scotland (it is currently the subject of revision) and comprise a national resource in cultural heritage terms, and therefore merit safeguarding and appropriate management.

5.6.3   This is a landscape that has inspired many writers and artists over the centuries, and influenced local tales, customs and traditions.

Historic landscapes

5.6.4   The landscape between identified sites of archaeological interest is important and can tell us as much about the past. The pattern of the landscape and its boundaries and divisions reflect many thousands of years of human activity. This pattern provides evidence of how the land was managed in the past, and contributes to the present landscape character.

5.6.5   Historic Scotland and the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments in Scotland have undertaken a Historic Land-use Assessment (HLA) of the NSA and surrounding landscape. The assessment identifies the various different historic and relict land-uses evident in the present day

landscape, information that will further our understanding of the distinctiveness of the Fleet Valley NSA. Knowledge of how the landscape has been formed and used in the past can help develop a new understanding and appreciation of its special qualities and foster an interest in its future management. A report summarising the findings has recently been published (See also 5.2 Agriculture and 5.5 Nature Conservation section for further discussion on field boundaries).

CULTURAL HERITAGE: Historic landscapes		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
Historic character of enclosure patterns Historic character of settlement pattern Contribution of estate policy landscapes	Raise awareness of the cultural dimension of the landscape eg land held in NTS Conservation Agreements	CH/Hl1
	Consider important examples of historic landuse patterns in undertaking land use change	CH/Hl2
	Conserve the designed landscapes within the NSA (those listed on Inventory and those non Inventory sites that contribute significantly to the landscape of the NSA	CH/Hl3

Archaeological sites

5.6.6   Prominent historic features in the landscape act as landmarks contributing to the distinctiveness of the landscape and are greatly valued by residents and visitors. The visible evidence of previous occupation of the land in the form of archaeological sites contributes to the scenic quality and enjoyment of the landscape. Inappropriate land use or management can erode archaeological or cultural heritage sites and features.

5.6.7   The most important archaeological sites within NSA are scheduled as Ancient Monuments, however many other archaeological sites of national and regional importance exist within the area that could potentially provide understanding

and interpretation of the NSA's landscape. Important historic buildings are listed by Historic Scotland. These are discussed in 5.7 Development Issues and Opportunities.

CULTURAL HERITAGE: Archaeological sites		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
High concentration of archaeological and historic features	Seek to safeguard important archaeological sites within the NSA from damage and disturbance	Ch/A1
	Seek to collate information on and raise awareness of significant archaeological sites within the NSA	Ch/A2

Maritime heritage

5.6.8   Traditional fisheries are a distinctive feature of the Solway coast. Stake nets, a distinctive feature of this coastal landscape, are slowly being lost.

5.6.9   The former importance of the Fleet, Wigtown Bay and the Solway as transport routes is reflected in the remains of jetties, harbours, stake nets and ship wrecks along the coast that add to the scenic quality and cultural heritage of the area. Many of these features are falling into disrepair, and some will be lost to the sea.

CULTURAL HERITAGE: Maritime heritage		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Local distinctiveness of traditional fisheries Disrepair and lack of uses of jetties and harbours Wartime heritage	Seek to raise awareness of the area's maritime heritage	CH/Mh1
	Seek to recognise and encourage sustainable traditional activities which contribute to local distinctiveness	CH/Mh2
	Seek to conserve and interpret visible evidence of the former fishing and maritme history of the Solway, including jetties, quays, wrecks and examples of stake nets	CH/Mh3
	Develop educational and tourism opportunities	CH/Mh4
	Encourage the consideration of protecting traditional netting when selling fishing rights	CH/Mh5

Literature, art and folklore

5.6.10   The Solway coast has long been popular with artists and crafts people, and has features in literature. For example the Faed family, the Kirkcudbright artists who painted at Carrick, John Buchan, Dorothy L Sayers, and Robert Burns is reputed to have written 'Scots Wha Hae' during a stay in the town. There are also numerous local tales and fables which contribute to local distinctiveness. Such material can be used to highlight the special qualities of the area and can strengthen a sense of ownership and care for the National Scenic Area.

CULTURAL HERITAGE: Literature, art and folklore		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Contribution of art, literature and folklore to local identity	Seek to encourage and support creative arts that increase awareness of the landscape and cultural heritage of the NSA	CH/La1
	Seek to develop educational and tourism opportunities	CH/La2
	Encourage interpretation of landscape and cultural heritage interest to schools, residents, tourists and others interested in the area	CH/La3
	Increase public awareness of all aspects of heritage through interpretation	CH/La4

Fleet Valley

5.7 Development Issues and Opportunties

Relevant Aims

Guide change arising from all forms of development (housing, servicing, business, retailing and tourism) to maintain the scenic quality of the National Scenic Area.

Reinforce and maintain the individual character of settlements within the Fleet Valley NSA.

Objective

Reinforce and maintain the individual character of settlements within the National Scenic Area, and ensure new developments reinforce the character of this landscape.

Description

5.7.1 The special historical and architectural importance of Gatehouse of Fleet is recognised in its designation as an Outstanding Conservation Area. Many of the buildings within the town have also been listed for their special historical and architectural interest. It has been proposed in the finalised Stewartry Local Plan that additional controls are applied to restrict the range of minor alterations that can be carried out on buildings within the Conservation Area. An extension to the Conservation Area has also been proposed to include features that contribute to the setting of the town. Traditional building materials include granite and greywacke, and the distinctive brick built cottages of Birtwhistle Street. The renovation and conversion of former industrial buildings has provided new accommodation within the town. Recent

housing development has occurred at Bracken and Ramsay Woods, to the north west of Gatehouse.

5.7.2 Some of the land within the NSA is held in Conservation Agreements with the National Trust for Scotland, which apply certain conditions on the development and use of the land.

5.7.3 Policies, proposals and design guidance concerning development within the NSA are included in the Structure Plan and finalised Stewartry Local Plan and 'Caring for the Built Environment'. Within the finalised Local Plan there is an allocation for around 25 houses in the area.

5.7.4 Some of the newer developments and conversions have been very successful in respecting and reinforcing local character, however certain alterations and developments have eroded local distinctiveness.

New developments within settlement

5.7.5 Settlements reflect and reinforce landscape character and distinctiveness, and contribute to the scenic quality of the area. Character is influenced by factors such as the style and detailing of the buildings, layout of the settlement, geology, historic development and its setting within the surrounding landscape.

5.7.6 The boundaries to settlements are as important as the historic core in terms of landscape impact. New peripheral developments can alter the distinct town/country edge, leading to a more a sub-urban character. Views from the surrounding landscape and approaches into the settlement are important in how we experience the landscape.

DEVELOPMENT: New developments within settlement		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
Distinctive character of settlements Need for new housing Need for affordable housing	Seek to recognise and raise awareness of the distinct character of settlements within the NSA, and the need to conserve that character	D/Ns1
	Seek to identify key design requirements of new development within the NSA	D/Ns2
	Seek to reinforce the distinct character of settlements through the sympathetic siting, layout and design of new developments that respects the existing structure and layout of settlements	D/Ns3
	Seek to ensure existing policies and design guidance concerning development within settlements are rigorously enforced, ensuring new developments are located within settlement boundaries, and appropriate planning conditions are applied	D/Ns4
	Encourage assessment of the impact of any developments on key views around settlements	D/Ns5
	Seek to promote the NSA as an area of design excellence, encouraging appropriately designed modern buildings that reflect local character and sense of place, avoiding poor imitation of past building styles, and encouraging housing of architectural merit in prominent locations. Encourage the involvement of professionals with relevant experience in the design of innovative and sympathetic proposals	D/Ns6
	Seek to encourage sustainable housing design within the NSA	D/Ns7
	Support the provision of appropriately designed affordable housing within the NSA	D/Ns8
	Support schemes for assisted/joint purchasing for rural families in rural locations	D/Ns9

5.7.7   There is a need for well designed and sited new housing in settlements. Standardisation of house design and layout throughout the country leads to an erosion of the distinct character of settlements. New developments, which respect local distinctiveness, can contribute to scenic quality.

5.7.8   Lack of affordable housing (and employment opportunities) has compounded the out migration of younger people, creating a trend towards villages becoming commuter settlements and retirement locations, and leading to a closure of local facilities. This could affect the valued quality of harmony within the NSA - and dilute the current connection between those living in settlements and their long connection to the surrounding landscape. Harmony between town and country is a key quality of the Fleet Valley NSA.

New Development in the Countryside

5.7.9   National Planning Policy Guidelines presume against new housing in the countryside. Incremental development in the countryside that is unsympathetic to the character of the area can affect its scenic quality. Capacity for such development varies according to landscape type, for example a building within a flat open landscape will be more visually intrusive than within a wooded landscape.

5.7.10   Many of the design issues discussed in relation to settlements are equally applicable in the countryside. Outbuildings and inappropriate boundary treatment can create intrusive elements, for example suburban style boundary walls and fences or Leylandii hedges, poorly sited oil storage tanks, and the conversion of former agricultural land into gardens. Care should be taken in the design of such features.

5.7.11   Large agricultural buildings can become dominant features in the landscape and overwhelm traditional farm buildings. New materials can be more obtrusive in the landscape than traditional ones. However, careful siting and design can help to mitigate impacts, for example respecting the natural landform, planting trees to help tie new

buildings into the landscape, and using appropriate muted and non-reflective finishes such as the traditional dark red colours of agricultural buildings which provide contrast with the landscape and reinforce landscape character.

5.7.12　Tourism developments are discussed in 5.9 Recreation and Tourism Issues and Opportunities.

DEVELOPMENT: New Development in the Countryside		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Aspirations for housing in the countryside New agricultural buildings	Seek to ensure National Planning Policy Guidance, Structure and Local Plan policies on development in the countryside and within small building groups is rigorously adhered to	D/Nc1
Recreational development (see 5.9)	Develop additional guidance on the siting and design of buildings in the countryside	D/Nc2

Use and care of existing buildings

5.7.13　Traditional buildings provide a direct and important link to the past, reflecting how the area has developed, and contributing to its scenic quality and landscape character. A high number of properties within the Fleet Valley NSA are listed. As the costs of renovating traditional and listed buildings are high, unused buildings may fall into disrepair and will eventually be lost, eroding the quality of the NSA.

5.7.14　Restoration of buildings needs to be sympathetic to local character. The cumulative effect of unsympathetic minor works, such as window and door replacement, can affect the integrity of traditional buildings. Extensions, usually sited to the rear of a property, can have little visual impact from within settlements. However their effect may be significant from surrounding vantage points.

DEVELOPMENT: Use and care of existing buildings		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Renovation and reuse of derelict and vacant buildings Alterations and extensions to traditional properties Care of listed buildings	Seek to encourage the re-use of redundant traditional buildings, for example for tourism business opportunities or affordable housing	D/Uc1
	Seek to reinforce the character of the NSA through the sympathetic restoration of redundant and dilapidated buildings	D/Uc2
	Seek to ensure existing policies and design guidance concerning extensions and alterations are rigorously applied within the NSA	D/Uc3
	Seek to provide additional guidance on the use of appropriate materials, techniques and design solutions	D/Uc4
	Support appropriate funding of the maintenance and repair of traditional buildings through Historic Buildings Grants Scheme and Town Schemes Grants and other sources	D/Uc5
	Support the introduction of facelift schemes within NSA settlements	D/Uc6
	Assess the impact of alterations and extensions on key views	D/Uc7

Minerals

5.7.15　Potentially workable reserves of sand and gravel occur within the Fleet Valley NSA. Mineral working, despite being a temporary use of land, can cause significant disruption to the physical environment during extraction, and can have a permanent impact on the landscape.

DEVELOPMENT: Minerals		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Sand and gravel reserves	Seek to ensure appropriate assessment of environmental impacts and generation of appropriate mitigation measures for any proposed sand and gravel extraction.	D/M1
	Seek to safeguard key views	D/M2

5.8 Infrastructure Issues and Opportunties

Relevant Aim

Guide change arising from all forms of development (housing, servicing, business, retailing and tourism) to maintain the scenic quality of the National Scenic Area.

Objective

Reinforce and maintain the individual character of roads within the National Scenic Area, and ensure new infrastructure developments reinforce the character of this landscape.

Description

5.8.1   The A75 (Euro route E18), the main trunk road across the region linking Gretna to Stranraer, passes through the Fleet Valley NSA. The road provides excellent views across the valley and the surrounding landscape, particularly when travelling westwards, when the first views of the Galloway Hills are revealed just east of the NSA boundary, and the trunk road runs directly adjacent to the shore at Skyreburn Bay.

5.8.2   Minor roads serve the remainder of the NSA, the road to Laurieston (to the north east of the valley) providing a view down the valley to the coast. Cyclists and pedestrians also use these roads, causing some concern for road safety.

5.8.3   The bypass around Gatehouse, built in 1986, cuts through Cally Woods and across the estuarine flats, thereafter rejoining the original route as it runs parallel to the coast. The bypass has greatly reduced through traffic but there has also been a decline in passing trade.

5.8.4   Overhead cables are especially evident on the flat open coastal land and the telecommunication masts at Cambret Hill are prominent features in the landscape.

Roads

5.8.5   The character of the road corridor is very important to the NSA, as it is the most common method of experiencing the landscape, and also reinforces landscape character, reflecting topography and historic land use and settlement patterns. The speed of travel can significantly affect the experience of the landscape. At faster speeds only glancing sweeping views can be safely experienced, whilst slower travel speed allows views to be more safely enjoyed. Improvements such as the straightening of bends may cause an increase of traffic speed.

5.8.6   Road improvements may result in loss of landscape features such as hedges and dykes, gateposts, tree lines, bridges and milestones. Improvements may also introduce a more urban character, for example by introducing concrete kerbing or inappropriate lighting columns.

5.8.7   An increase in the volume and size of vehicles using roads affects their amenity value and landscape character by discouraging use by pedestrians and cyclists, causing damage to road verges by vehicle overrun, and increasing noise. A growing awareness and promotion of the NSA may put the network under further pressure, necessitating yet more improvements that may alter existing character.

5.8.8   Panoramic views across the Fleet Valley can be had from the A75 east of Gatehouse and from the Laurieston Road on the east of the valley (both outwith the NSA boundary), but there are few viewing points, causing slowing of traffic and informal parking. Road signs and car parking are discussed in 5.9 Recreation and Tourism Issues and Opportunities.

INFRASTRUCTURE: Roads		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Character and quality of roads	Seek to promote sustainable transport solutions within the NSA (community transport/taxis/roving tourist mini-bus)	I/R1
Views from roads	Seek to encourage high quality and innovative engineering solutions to road schemes within NSA	I/R2
Increases in traffic numbers and speed	Seek to ensure road improvement schemes respect local landscape character and features, conserving features such as gateposts and bridges that reinforce the character of the area, and providing appropriate mitigation to reinstate and reinforce such features where necessary	I/R3
Signs (see Recreation and Tourism section)	Seek to maintain important views of the scenery from roads	I/R4
	Encourage use of the NSA as a showcase for management and maintenance of roads, for example improving the conservation value of road verges	I/R5
	Seek to reduce conflict between those using roads for key journeys and those travelling to enjoy scenery, for example by providing safe parking at key viewpoints.	I/R6

Power and telecommunications

5.8.9   Overhead power lines, telecommunication masts, wind turbines and ancillary buildings can be intrusive elements in landscape. Capacity for such development varies according to landscape type eg. a mast within the coastal flats will be more visually intrusive than within a wooded landscape. Developments outwith the NSA boundary can also affect scenic quality, intruding into key views and panoramas.

5.8.10   The area has recently seen interest in telecommunications masts. There may also be a move towards provision of small-scale wind generators, such as small turbines to provide energy for farm holdings. At the time of writing a submission for an offshore wind farm (60 turbine) in the Inner Solway is being considered by the Scottish Executive.

5.8.11   Environmental Assessment is required for major infrastructure developments. The Structure Plan provides a presumption against applications for wind farms of three of more turbines within the NSA. Current planning controls do not regulate development within the marine environment. Foreshore and seabed developments are currently controlled by a variety of legislation, none of which are aimed specifically at off shore wind farms.

5.8.12   Pipelines tend to have less long term visual impact provided they are carefully routed through less sensitive areas of improved agriculture, and provided careful reinstatement and enhancement of affected landscape features is carried out.

INFRASTRUCTURE: Power and telecommunications		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Demand for telecommunication masts	Seek to raise awareness of utility companies to the aims of the NSA	I/Pt1
Demand for wind farms	Encourage the Scottish Executive to place a duty on statutory undertakers and agencies to have due regard to the special qualities of the NSA when undertaking their functions and duties, and seek to influence development by statutory undertakers that is currently outwith planning control to minimise impact on this scenic landscape	I/Pt2
Power lines	Seek to ensure environmental impacts including effects on key views are fully assessed when considering development proposals	I/Pt3
Controls in the marine environment	Seek consideration of undergrounding of cables in sensitive locations	I/Pt4
	Support provision of facilities to enable home working from rural areas, subject to conservation of scenic qualities of area	I/Pt5
	Support extension of planning controls in the marine environment	I/Pt6
	Support delivery of wind farm policy framework	I/Pt7

5.9 Recreation and Tourism Issues And Opportunties

Relevant Aim

Encourage enjoyment of the area where it is consistent with conserving and enhancing the environment, particularly where it plays a role in assisting economic and social opportunity.

Objective

Develop the potential for sustainable tourism and recreation activities within the National Scenic Area for the enjoyment and health of all residents and visitors, and to maximise benefits to the local economy.

Description

5.9.1   The Fleet Estuary NSA provides outstanding scenery and wildlife, opportunities for quiet enjoyment, and some historic attractions and sporting opportunities. The coast is a well established destination for holidaymakers its sandy bays providing safe bathing, opportunities for water sports and offering a variety of accommodation.

5.9.2   Visitor attractions include: Cardoness Castle; Mill on the Fleet; Venniehill; Rutherfords Monument; and the 'Cream O'Galloway' just outwith NSA boundary.

5.9.3   Tourism is important to the economy of Dumfries and Galloway, and is largely dependent upon the quality and character of the landscape. Tourism can benefit local communities and the local economy through generation of income and support for local services and facilities.

Recreation and tourism development

5.9.4   The popularity of the coast for holiday makers is reflected in the number of hotels, guest houses and bed and breakfast accommodations located throughout the NSA.

Caravan parks, providing facilities for touring and static vans, are located at Sandgreen, Gatehouse, Cardoness and Mossyard. At Carrick there is a long established chalet development. It is anticipated that there will be a continuing demand for caravan and chalet development.

5.9.5   Unsympathetic tourist development can have a detrimental impact on the landscape, eroding landscape character and affecting key views. Any tourism developments must safeguard scenic value.

5.9.6   Visitors who stay in the NSA will have more opportunity to enjoy the area and may bring greater financial benefits to the local economy. The quality of their accommodation will reflect on their experience of the NSA. Caravan and chalet parks can be visible and intrusive features in the landscape - especially those located within the flat open coastal areas.

5.9.7   Increasing visitor numbers leads to a greater volume of people and cars and can affect the tranquillity and amenity value of the area. There is a potential conflict of use on narrow roads with growing numbers of pedestrians, cyclists and cars (see also Infrastructure Issues and Opportunities)

RECREATION AND TOURISM: Recreation and tourism development		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Economic and social benefits	Seek to realise the potential for sustainable tourism within the NSA	RT/Rd1
Availability and quality of accommodation	Seek to increase the quality of the visitor experience of the NSA	RT/Rd2
Capacity of landscape to absorb new development	Support sensitively sited and designed developments which accord with the Local Plan	RT/Rd3
	Promote the sensitive siting and design of caravan and chalet parks	RT/Rd4
Landscape impacts of caravan parks	Seek to encourage landscape improvements to established caravan and chalet sites to minimise impact on the wider landscape	RT/Rd5
Capacity of landscape to absorb recreational pressure	Seek to encourage a wide provision of accommodation types within and close to the NSA	RT/Rd6
	Support initiatives to improve the standard of accommodation	RT/Rd7
	Seek to encourage the use of local produce, services and staff in all tourism operations	RT/Rd8
	Seek to identify and manage areas that are vulnerable to damage from visitor pressure	RT/Rd9
	Encourage conversion of existing redundant farm buildings and other traditional buildings into visitor facilities/tourist accommodation	RT/Rd10

Countryside access

5.9.8   Walking, cycling and horse riding are enjoyed by residents and visitors to the area, and are ideal methods of enjoying the scenery of the NSA. The main providers of opportunities for informal access are farmers, land-owners, local estates and Forest Enterprise. Many routes used by local residents are not signposted or formalised and are therefore seldom used by visitors.

5.9.9   The Council are developing access opportunities across the region in consultation with local communities through the Access Forum and in accordance with the Access Strategy. Proposed changes to access legislation will place a duty on the Council to develop and maintain a Core Path Network. Route 7 of the National Cycle Network travels through the Fleet Valley NSA from the Borgue Coast, through Cally Woods and along the western side of the valley to Gatehouse station. A network of paths and a bridle route have been established in Cally Woods. Gatehouse Development Initiative has recently undertaken a footpath audit.

5.9.10   Access taken over farmland in an irresponsible fashion can lead to disturbance of stock and damage to crops. Informal access

may cause (unintentional) disturbance or damage to landscape character, habitats and species. Disturbance will vary according to user numbers, habitat or character types, and time of year.

5.9.11   Formalised paths and tracks, and accompanying signage can also have a significant impact on the landscape. The use of

inappropriate surfacing, such as tarmac surface in a rural location, can appear incongruous. Particular care is required where paths and tracks pass through designed landscapes such as Cally. A careful balance between appropriate design, location and number of signs is required to prevent cluttering the landscape and eroding local distinctiveness.

5.9.12   Many visitors arrive at and travel through the area by car. The signposted Solway Coast Heritage Trail follows the A75 through the NSA, and links all three NSAs in the region. Stunning views across Wigtown Bay, and out to the Solway can be taken from the A75, but there are few viewing points, causing slowing traffic and informal parking. Informal parking on verges and roadsides can be dangerous and is inconvenient to other road users. However, provision of further parking in inappropriate locations may increase visitor numbers to more inaccessible locations, potentially causing disturbance to wildlife and affecting the sense of remoteness. Car parking provision needs to be carefully thought out as the location and size of car parks, signage to them and application of a charge can affect the distribution of cars and visitors throughout the NSA.

RECREATION AND TOURISM: Countryside access		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Accessibility of countryside within NSA	Seek to increase opportunities for all residents and visitors to participate in quiet recreational activity	RT/Ca1
Support of landowners Appropriate design and signposting of routes	Seek to encourage the use of existing tracks, which avoids damage and disturbance to wildlife, farm livestock, agricultural land, or features of cultural interest	RT/Ca2
Disturbance to farming Disturbance to wildlife Management of car parking	Support the provision of planned and managed access through the development and implementation of the Core Path Network and Access Strategy	RT/Ca3
	Support initiatives aimed at packaging and promoting cycling breaks that link with local cycle and repair shops and accommodation	RT/Ca4
	Seek to encourage provision of sensitively sited and designed car parks, supported by a possible 'park and walk' initiative	RT/Ca5
	Seek to develop local links/spurs from the Solway Coast Heritage Trail to the coast	RT/Ca6
	Seek to encourage the use of public transport to reach and explore the NSA	RT/Ca7

Other recreational activities

5.9.13   The attractive beaches within the NSA form an important recreational resource. Large numbers of residents and visitors enjoy the beaches and safe swimming at Mossyard, Sandgreen and Carrick. Visitor pressure can disturb and damage the sensitive habitats on the shore. Litter pollution and dog fouling affects the enjoyment of beaches sea borne litter being the main problem. Shoreline issues are discussed further in section 5.4.

5.9.14   The distinctive wildlife and history of the NSA is a major asset for tourism and is the reason why many people visit the area. There are a number of more formal recreation attractions such as visitor centres, historic buildings and monuments, and nature reserves.

5.9.15   The Water of Fleet has sea trout and salmon. The decline in fish stocks for a variety of reasons, including acidification, reduces fishing opportunities and affects amenity value. West Galloway Fisheries Trust has recently developed a five year management plan for the Water of Fleet.

5.9.16   There are two courses within the NSA, one affording spectacular views across the valley and the other set in the designed landscape of Cally. The number of golf courses and driving ranges is increasing across Dumfries and Galloway. Golf courses need to be sensitively designed and located or they can undermine landscape character by introducing a highly managed element into the landscape.

5.9.17   The scenic qualities of the NSA can also be experienced from Wigtown Bay. Powered water sports such as jet-skis cause noise and habitat disturbance and these activities may increase due to restrictions coming into force in the Lake District.

RECREATION AND TOURISM: Other recreational activities		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Quality of beaches	Seek to promote responsible behaviour by beach visitors	RT/Oa1
Contribution of museums, reserves and other formal recreational facilities	Support development of appropriate facilities and interpretation at established visitor attractions and nature reserves	RT/Oa2
Traditional countryside activities	Seek to raise awareness of opportunities for traditional countryside pursuits	RT/Oa3
Demand for golf courses	Seek to support involvement in sustainable traditional countryside sports	RT/Oa4
Increase in water sports	Encourage potential of viewing the NSA from the coastal waters	RT/Oa5
	Seek to ensure golf courses fit well into landscape and reinforce the character of the surrounding landscape	RT/Oa6

Marketing, promotion and interpretation,

5.9.18   The NSA has a very low profile at present and is not actively promoted. There is an opportunity to raise awareness of the NSA, and link with the wider promotion of Dumfries and Galloway though the developing Tourism Strategy. A degree of caution is required however as inappropriate promotion may indirectly increase pressure on the core qualities of the NSA.

5.9.19   Signs can be used to raise awareness of the NSA and the facilities within it, but too many signs can clutter the landscape and introduce an 'urban' element into rural landscapes. Excessive standardisation of signage can erode local distinctiveness.

5.9.20   The quality of the visitor experience of the NSA can be improved through good quality information and interpretation. This material can play a vital part in raising awareness of the special qualities of the area and influence the distribution of visitors throughout the NSA.

5.9.21   Local people contribute to the distinctiveness of the NSA and give a strong identity to the area. Many have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the landscape and have been involved in its stewardship. The communities of the Fleet Valley NSA have a valuable role to play in the development of any interpretative material, particularly their involvement in guided walks and talks.

RECREATION AND TOURISM: Marketing, promotion and interpretation,		
Key issues	**Opportunities**	**Code**
Low profile of NSA	Link into the developing Dumfries and Galloway Tourism Strategy	RT/Mp1
Lack of signs Availability of NSA specific interpretation Local knowledge	Support and seek to develop the role of tourist information centre/ advice	RT/Mp2
	Support initiatives for co-ordinated marketing and promotion of all tourist providers in the NSA	Rt/Mp3
	Seek a balance between maximising economic benefits from tourism whilst ensuring minimum impact on scenic qualities of the landscape	Rt/Mp4
	Raise awareness of NSA by introducing signs from major routes through Dumfries and Galloway, and consider the need for additional signs to highlight key facilities such as beaches	Rt/Mp5
	Support the provision of interpretation at key sites	Rt/Mp6

6 MAKING IT HAPPEN

6.1 Action Plans

6.1.1   The previous section has set out the issues and opportunities to conserve and enhance the qualities of the Fleet Valley. A vision for the future of the NSA has also been set out, and the key to fulfilling this aspiration is the development of a clear programme of actions that will deliver the identified opportunities, and consequently meet the aims of the Management Strategy.

6.1.2   The landscape we value today is the product of the actions of many individuals, groups and organisations over many years, and it is therefore unrealistic to expect the Management Strategy to be delivered by one organisation. It must involve the many individuals, businesses, local communities, interest groups and public sector organisations with an interest in the area.

6.1.3   A broad range of groups and organisations based locally and nationally, as well as individual land managers and the local community will be involved in the delivery of these Action Plans. The type of role each partner undertakes will vary (for example advisory, consultative, implementation, etc), the levels at which they work will be different – local, regional, national - and will happen over varying timescales. It must be recognised however that the level of involvement of these potential partners in the delivery of actions is, in many cases, wholly dependent on the availability of resources.

6.1.4   All the actions have been allocated a priority- high (H), medium (M) or low (L) - according to their importance in safeguarding the scenic qualities of the Fleet Valley. Timescales have also been indicated for each action (but are dependent on available resources) in the following terms:

Ongoing action (O)

Short term (S) – 1-2 years

Medium term (M) – 2-5 years

Long term (L) – over 5 years

The code numbers can be used to reference actions with the opportunities identified under each topic heading in Section 5.

6.1.5   The suggested actions have been grouped according to their function;

• Collaboration
• Project development
• Raising awareness and understanding
• Guidance
• Policy and legislation

6.1.6   To measure the progress in implementing the Management Strategy the Action Plans will be subject to monitoring and review. This regular monitoring and review process will highlight the need to refocus effort towards specific issues or particular areas of concern affecting the NSA and ensure the scenic qualities and landscape character of the Fleet Valley is safeguarded. It will also allow the Action Plan to retain the flexibility to adapt to the availability of resources. A review of the Management Strategy itself will be undertaken in due course.

making it happen

6.1.7 AGRICULTURE ACTION PLAN

Objective:

Support the role of agriculture as a principal land use, seeking a viable agricultural economy and guiding change to conserve and enhance the scenic qualities of the National Scenic Area.

Action No.	Proposed Action	Potential Partners	Priority H/M/L	Timing	Code
	Collaboration				
1	Continue and further support and encourage farm diversification within NSA where it is consistent with planning policy and landscape character (for example through integrated business development and environmental enhancement projects)	SNH, FC, SEDG, SEERAD, SAC, DGC, NSA Officer	M	Ongoing	A/Fd1
2	Support initiatives to develop a 'one stop shop' for advice and guidance on agri-environment issues	SH, SEDG, SEERAD, FWAG, SAC	M	L	A/Cs1 A/Fd1
	Projects – research, development and implementation				
3	Explore the feasibility of a specific NSA agri-environment scheme to encourage appropriate management of landscape features/qualities	NSA Officer, NFUS, SLF, SAC, SEERAD	H	S	A/Im2 A/Fd5
4	Explore the feasibility of developing a supported land management apprenticeship scheme to ensure traditional skills are not lost	SNH, SEDG, NSA Officer	M	M	A/Im3 A/Im4
5	Explore mechanisms to enable additional environmental improvement and land management activities to be undertaken within the NSA, in agreement with landowners	NSA Officer, Land managers, SEERAD, FWAG	M	M	A/Im2 A/Im4
6	Give consideration to enhancing existing drainage management schemes to conserve/restore the natural characteristics and biodiversity of water courses	SEPA, SAC, Land Managers, FDSFB, SNH	M	M	A/Im2
7	Undertake redundant traditional buildings survey (building on the Listed Farm Steadings Project undertaken by Solway Heritage) and investigate support available for conversion works	SNH, SH, SEDG, NSA Officer, SEERAD, SAC, HS, Land Managers	H	M	A/Im1
8	Support and encourage the development of 'specialist' local product markets which support the image of the NSA and the use of the NSA designation as a marketing tool ('Eat the View' initiative by Countryside Agency) to provide added value to local products, where it contributes positively to the image of the NSA	NSA Officer, SNH, SEDG, Mill, FC	M	L	A/Fd2
	(See also Forestry & Woodland Action Plan re management of woodlands and Cultural Heritage Action Plan re maintenance of dykes)				
	Raising awareness and understanding				
9	Encourage take up of existing grant/advice from SNH, FWAG, SAC, FC and SEERAD to conserve and reinforce landscape character (eg take up of RSS assistance for creation and renovation of dykes and hedges)	FC, SNH, FWAG, SAC, SEERAD	H	S	A/Im2
	(See also Cultural Heritage Actions with regard to the farmed landscape)				
	Guidance				
10	Develop advice/guidance sheets on key landscapes features and their conservation to be made available to all those undertaking land management within NSA (eg. siting of bale stacks, conservation of dykes, woodland management)	NSA Officer, SNH, DGC, SH, FWAG, FC, SAC	H	M	A/Fd3 A/Im1 A/Im6

	Policy and legislation				
11	Explore the possibility of adjusting current agri-environment support schemes to ensure recognition of NSA, and support for land management activities which contribute to scenic quality	NSA Officer, SLF, DGC, SEERAD, SNH	H	M	A/Cs1
12	Explore the potential benefits of Land Management Contracts or similar within the NSA	SNH, SEERAD, SLF, HS, DGC	H	L	A/Cs2
13	Encourage increased integration of forestry and agriculture grant schemes	FC, SEERAD	H	M	A/Cs3
14	Continue to apply Structure and Local Plan policies and guidance on rural development	DGC	H	O	A/Im5

6.1.8 WOODLAND AND FORESTRY ACTION PLAN

Objective
Support the management of existing woodland, forestry, parkland and individual trees, and promote and encourage new planting design that will conserve and enhance the qualities of the landscape.

Action No.	Proposed Action	Potential partners	Priority H/M/L	Timing	Code
	Collaboration				
1	Continue established consultation process between FE, FC, DGC, SNH and local communities on forestry proposals	SNH, DGC, FC, FE, PWO, Community	H	Ongoing	W/Fw2
2	Continue partnership approach to agreeing and operating haulage routes	FC, FE, PWO, SEDG, DGC	H	Ongoing	W/Fw1
3	Continue on-going research of economic value of small woodlands and potential funding streams through Small Woods in South Scotland Working Group	FC, SE, SNH, SAC, NSA Officer	M	M	W/Fw8
4	Continue to develop recreational potential of forests	FC, FE, PWO, Community	H	Ongoing	W/Fw4
	Projects – research, development and implementation				
5	Develop a Roadside Tree Initiative to pilot the replacement of hedgerow trees and old individual trees/avenues without compromising road safety	SNH, DGC, NSA Officer	H	S	W/Hr1
6	Explore opportunities to encourage replacement of parkland trees and management of habitat	SH, SNH, NSA Officer, Land Managers	H	M	W/Hr3
7	Investigate scope for managing/reopening key views within forestry – link to footpath and road views	FC, FE, PWO, SNH, DGC, NSA Officer , Community	M	M	W/Fw3
8	Investigate opportunities for maintaining or reopening views of the Water of Fleet from key viewpoints	NSA Officer , Community, GFT	M	S	W/Fw3
9	Investigate opportunities for maintaining or reopening views of the valley and surrounding hills from within the town	NSA Officer , Community	M	M	W/Fw3
	Raising awareness and understanding				
10	Encourage take up of Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme to support the regeneration and management of native woodlands, shelterbelts and riparian woodland which support landscape character in the NSA	FC, SAC, SEERAD, SLF, NFUS	H	Ongoing	W/Fw6
11	Encourage take up of Amenity Planting Grant in appropriate landscape character areas	DCG, SNH	H	Ongoing	W/Hr4
12	Establish ways of disseminating Historic Land-use Assessment to raise awareness of historic features within woodlands and their cultural value, and assist in forest design to minimise impact on the cultural heritage	HS, RCHAMS, SH, NSA Officer, DGC	M	M	W/Fw5
13	Encourage the use of woodland planting to help integrate new development into the landscape	NSA Officer, DGC, Developers	M	M	W/Fw7
14	Support the provision of advice on the conservation and management of woodlands in the NSA	SNH, FC, SAC	H	Ongoing	W/Fw8
	Raise awareness of the cultural value of woodlands – see Cultural Heritage Action Plan				
	Guidance				
15	Encourage use of Landscape Design Guidance for forests and woodland in Dumfries and Galloway.	FC, FE, PWO, SNH, DGC	H	Ongoing	W/Fw3
16	Promote findings and improve awareness of Local Forestry Framework guidance	FC, PWO, SNH, DGC	H	Ongoing	W/Fw2
17	Encourage retention of saplings during hedge cutting in appropriate locations	FWAG, NSA Officer, Land Managers	H	ongoing	W/Hr1

18	Continue implementation of Forestry Guidelines (eg. Forest and Water Guidelines which take into account water quality in design and restructuring of woodlands)	FC, FE, PWO, Contractors	H	Ongoing	W/Fw3 W/Fw4
19	Develop a vision statement for future of woodlands and forests in the NSA	FC, SNH, DGC, NSA Officer, Community	M	L	W/Fw1
20	Include tracks in Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme applications and other Forest Design Plans but continue to delay construction, where possible, until trees grown (and improving extraction techniques may reduce need for tracks)	FC, FE, PWO,	S	S	W/Fw3
21	Develop national guidance through Small Farm Woods Design Project (ongoing), combining functional needs of the wood (shelterbelt, shooting, etc) with design requirements	FC, Land Managers	M	L	W/Fw8
	Policy and legislation				
22	Seek to ensure target funding is available for appropriate new planting and management that contributes to the scenic value of the NSA eg. through the Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme and through the Amenity Tree Planting Grant	FC, SNH, DGC, NSA Officer	H	Ongoing	W/Fw6 W/Fw7 W/Hr4
23	Continue to improve forest design and restructuring to support the aims of the NSA through Forest Plans and individual forestry grant proposals	FC, FE, PWO, SNH, DGC	H	Ongoing	W/Fw2
24	Continue Council policy to seek public access agreements on FC land being sold where appropriate	FE, DGC	M	Ongoing	W/Fw4
25	Review the Regional Indicative Forestry Strategy to meet current Government guidance, continuing to take the NSA designation into account	FC, DGC	M	M	W/Fw9
26	Explore the potential for extending capital payments under current RSS for the planting and protection of parkland trees to include non-Inventory designed landscapes in the NSA	FC, NSA Officer, SEERAD, SNH	M	L	W/Hr3
27	Support delivery of the Scottish Forestry Strategy to further the aims of the NSA including diversification of farmland, development of new markets for timber and other woodland products, extending and enhancing woodlands where appropriate	FC, FE, SEDG	H	Ongoing	W/Fw9

6.1.9 SHORELINE ACTION PLAN

Objectives

Conserve and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the shoreline, whilst working with natural coastal processes, and seek to minimise levels of water, air, noise and light pollution.

Encourage enjoyment of the areas where it is consistent with conserving and enhancing the environment, particularly where it plays a role in assisting economic and social opportunity.

Action No.	Proposed Action	Potential partners	Priority H/M/L	Timing	Code
	Collaboration				
1	Co-ordinate with the Solway Firth strategy as it applies to the NSA	SFP, SNH, DGC, NSA Officer	H	Ongoing	S/Sl1
2	Support the programme of improvements to sewage treatment plants	SEPA, SW, DGC	H	Ongoing	S/P4
3	Support the study identifying potential areas of coastal realignment in the Inner Solway	SNH, DGC, NSA Officer	L	Ongoing	S/Sl4
	Projects – research, development and implementation				
4	Explore most effective way of cleaning up popular beaches through projects such as: - 'Adopt a Beach Initiative' - 'Clean Coasts Scotland' Initiative - Regular litter clean up by dedicated team working in NSA (eg. local community volunteers, etc.)	SFP, NSA Officer, Community, SEPA, SW	H	S	S/P1 S/P2 S/P3
5	Undertake/develop projects with Solway Firth Partnership to achieve mutual aims and objectives – such as Marine Litter Project	SFP, SNH, NSA Officer	H	S	S/Sl1
6	Identify and record evidence and condition of maritime features and examine mechanisms and funding streams for their conservation	SFP, SNH, NSA Officer, Local History groups, Community, HS, SCAPE	H	S	S/Cm1
7	Support investigation into the restoration of Port Macadam	GDI, NSA officer, Mill	M	L	S/Cm1
	Raising awareness and understanding				
8	Support and promote ongoing litter education programme	SFP, SWEAP, Schools, Mill, Community	H	Ongoing	S/ P1,P2,P3
9	Raise awareness about sources of marine litter	SFP, Mill	H	M	S/P1
10	Encourage the seeking of advice from SNH and SEPA prior to undertaking coastal defence work, to ensure no detrimental impact on coastal processes	SNH, SEPA, HS, DGC, SFP, Land owners	H	Ongoing	S/Sl3
	Guidance				
11	Consider implementation of innovative 'soft' engineering techniques which are visually acceptable	SFP, SEPA, SNH, DGC	L	L	S/Sl3
12	Develop Shoreline Management Plan for the northern shores of the Solway	SFP, SNH, DGC, RSPB	M	L	S/Sl2
	Policy and legislation				
13	Continue implementation of current Structure Plan policy on applications for protection against coastal erosion	DGC	H	Ongoing	S/Sl5
14	Consider potential for light pollution when assessing coastal development proposals	DGC	H	Ongoing	S/P5
15	Continue implementation of current Structure Plan policy on coastal development	DGC	H	Ongoing	S/Sl5 RT/Rd3

6.1.10 NATURE CONSERVATION ACTION PLAN

Objective
Conserve and enhance the diverse habitats and species of the National Scenic Area which contribute to its scenic value.

Action No.	Proposed Action	Potential partners	Priority H/M/L	Timing	Code
	Collaboration				
1	Support Fleet District Salmon Fisheries Board and Galloway Fisheries Trust in the sustainable management of fish stocks in the river.	SNH, SH, GFT, FDSB	M	L	NC/Dh2
2	Support implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans for Species and Habitats	LBAP Partnership (including FC, FE, SNH, DGC, SFP, SAC, RSPB), Community, Community	H	Ongoing	NC/P2
3	Support implementation of the Road-side Biodiversity Action Plan to maintain important roadside habitats	SNH, DGC, Community	H	Ongoing	NC/P2
	Projects – research, development and implementation				
4	Support the management and interpretation of sites designated for their wildlife value	SNH, SH, SFP, NTS, SWT, Community	H	M	NC/Dh1 NC/Dh3
5	Record problem areas of invasive weeds, and investigate the most appropriate methods for preventing spread and possible means of eradication	NSA Officer, Community	M	L	NC/Dh3
6	Establish scale of noise pollution, identify its effective disturbance to wildlife within the NSA and assess the need for management	SNH, SFP, NSA Officer	H	M	NC/Dh2
	Raising awareness and understanding				
7	Raise awareness of and interpret nature conservation interest of NSA through annual programme of ranger led walks	DGC, SNH, FE, SFP, SWT, NTS, Mill	H	Ongoing	NC/P1
8	Raise awareness of and interpret nature conservation interest of NSA through ongoing communication and publicity of LBAP	LBAP Partnership (including DGC, SNH, FC, RSPB, SWT, NTS), Mill	H	Ongoing	NC/Dh1
9	Support ongoing programmes of environmental awareness and understanding of wildlife value relevant to NSA	LBAP Partnership (including SNH, SWT, NTS), Mill	H	Ongoing	NC/Dh1 NC/Dh4
10	Encourage uptake of Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme (under review) to improve biodiversity and recreational value of existing woods.	FC, PWO	H	Ongoing	NC/Dh2 NC/Dh5
11	Encourage uptake of SNH funded Amenity Planting Grant	SNH, DGC			NC/Dh2 NC/Dh5
	Guidance				
12	Provide advice on management of habitats that are intrinsic to scenic quality of NSA eg. merse, moorland, woodland, etc	FC, SNH, SH, SAC, FWAG	H	Ongoing	NC/Dh3
13	Support measures to encourage good agricultural practice to prevent diffuse run off	SEERAD, SEPA, SAC, SH	H	Ongoing	NC/Dh3
14	Promote best practice to prevent the spread of invasive weeds eg. knotweed, ragwort, etc.	SEERAD, SAC, Community	H	Ongoing	NC/Dh3
	Policy and legislation				
15	Ensure water quality standards are being maintained and all consented discharges meet national/international standards	SW, SEPA	H	Ongoing	NC/Dh2
16	Support implementation of Water Framework Directive	SNH, SEPA	H	Ongoing	NC/Dh2

6.1.11 CULTURAL HERITAGE ACTION PLAN

Objectives

Support and encourage the conservation and management of the historic environment of the National Scenic Area, and promote the recognition and understanding of this unique heritage as an important contribution to local distinctiveness.

Encourage enjoyment of the areas where it is consistent with conserving and enhancing the environment, particularly where it plays a role in assisting economic and social opportunity.

Action No.	Proposed Action	Potential partners	Priority H/M/L	Timing	Code
	Collaboration				
1	Continue to develop the Sites and Monuments Record as it applies to the NSA	DGC, HS, Community	M	Ongoing	CH/A2
2	Co-ordinate with Gatehouse Development Initiative in the development of projects to achieve the objectives of the NSA	GDI, NSA Officer	H	Ongoing	CH/La2 CH/La4
3	Co-ordinate with the board of the Mill on the Fleet and the Friends of the Mill in the development of projects to achieve the objectives of the NSA	Mill, NSA Officer	H	Ongoing	
4	Co-ordinate with the National Trust for Scotland in the development of projects to achieve the objectives of the NSA	NTS, NSA Officer	H	S	CH/Hl1 CH/La4
	Projects – research, development and implementation				
5	Investigate the most effective way of conserving some stake nets along the coast	SFP, NSA Officer, Land Managers	H	S	CH/Mh3
6	Encourage the consideration of protecting traditional netting when selling fishing rights	FDSFB, Land Managers, SFP	H	M	CH/Mh2
7	Develop interpretative material for leaflets/interpretation boards/guided walks/trails of maritime history	NSA Officer, SFP, DGC, Community, DGTB, SCAPE, Mill	M	M	CH/Mh4
8	Assess need for production of landscape management plans for designed landscapes including their potential for interpretation and access	SNH, HS, Garden History Soc.	L	L	CH/Hl3 W/Hr1 W/Fw6
9	Support production of landscape management plan for designed landscape at Cally	FE, FC, SNH NSA Officer	M	M	CH/Hl3
10	Assess need for further Historic Land-use Assessment research or survey work	DGC, HS, RCAHMS	S	L	CH/A2
11	Encourage links with former trade ports across Solway eg.Whitehaven	SFP (Marine Leisure Forum), Community, NSA Officer, Mill	L	L	CH/MH1
	Raising awareness and understanding				
12	Development of a ongoing range of arts and culture projects for a variety of ages and interests eg.: - oral history of NSA - place names that reflect the landscape - 'postcards from the edge'- new views/poems about the shore to promote area	SFP, NSA Officer, Schools, Local Groups, Community, Mill	H	M	CH/Mh1 CH/La1
13	Give consideration to the promotion of landscape heritage and interpretation of the NSA through - pamphlets - guided walks (using local guides) - exhibition material - dedicated interpretation centre (for all 3 NSAs in Dumfries and Galloway)	SNH, DGC, SH, SFP, NSA Officer, DGTB, Local Groups, Community, Mill	H	S-L	CH/La2 CH/La3

14	Explore the application of the Historic Land-use Assessment to inform land use and landscape management decisions and to highlight areas of conservation concern (eg. identify historically important field patterns)	SH, DGC, HS, RCAHMS Local History Groups, Land Managers	H	M-L	CH/Hl1 CH/Hl2
15	Develop ways of disseminating Historic Land-use Assessment information in an easily accessible way	SH, HS, RCAHMS DGC, NSA Officer	H	M-L	CH/La4
16	Develop landscape interpretation for schools/community groups – 'Behind The Scene' Box (using historic paintings and comparing them with current views, literature inspired by the area)	Local Schools, NSA Officer, DGC, Local Groups, Community, Mill	M	M	CH/La2
17	Support development of local interpretation projects and events focusing on local history and traditions (eg. interpretation of charcoal platforms in old woodlands)	FC, SH, DGC, NSA Officer, Local History Groups, Community, Mill	M	Ongoing	CH/La3
18	Raise awareness of the National Trust for Scotland Conservation Agreements, their significance to the landscape of the NSA, and their implications on development	NTS, NSA Officer	H	M	CH/Hl1 D/Ns1
	Guidance				
19	Continue to provide advice on management of archaeological features through Historic Scotland and Council Archaeologist	DGC, HS	H	Ongoing	CH/A1
20	Encourage uptake of existing schemes that support conservation and appropriate management of archaeological or historic sites and historic landscape features	SH, DGC, HS, SEERAD	H	Ongoing	CH/A1
	Policy and legislation				
21	Continue the protection and conservation of important historic and archaeological sites within the NSA by Historic Scotland and through the application of existing Council policies, and the implementation of appropriate planning conditions	DGC, HS	H	Ongoing	CH/A1
22	Explore the potential for extending existing Rural Stewardship Scheme to include non/Inventory designed landscapes in the NSA (capital payments under current RSS include restoration of gate piers, restoration of dykes, etc.)	NSA Officer, SEERAD, SLF, DGC	M	L	CH/Hl3

6.1.12 DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

Objective

Reinforce and maintain the individual character of settlements within the National Scenic Area, and ensure new developments reinforce the character of this landscape.

Action No.	Proposed Action	Potential Partners	Priority H/M/L	Timing	Code
	Collaboration				
1	Support initiatives enabling the development of affordable housing, and assisted purchasing schemes	DGC, Community Scotland	H	O	D/Ns8 D/Ns9
2	Support the use of sustainable housing design within the NSA	DGC, Developers	M	L	D/Ns7
	Projects – research, development and implementation				
3	Undertake audit to highlight extent of dereliction and vacancy within the NSA	SH, DGC, NSA Officer	H	M	D/Uc1
4	Explore the need of undertaking an audit of distinct character of settlements and producing a statement of characteristics of built form/design brief for each settlement in NSA to guide new development	SH, DGC, Community, NSA Officer	H	S/M	D/Ns6 D/Ns2
5	Investigate possibility of undertaking Village Design Statements – approach which involves the local community	SH, DGC, Community, NSA Officer	M	M/L	D/Ns3 D/Ns2
6	Develop a map of key view points within and from NSAs to establish sensitive locations for development	SH, DGC, NSA Officer, Community	H	S	D/Ns5
7	Identify any particularly sensitive locations for development within settlements that require landscape guidance.	SH, DGC, NSA Officer	M	S/O	D/Ns1
8	Investigate feasibility of supporting/developing/promoting a traditional tradesman team to undertake specialist work such as sash windows	DGC, NSA Officer, SEDG	M	M	D/Uc5
9	Explore the need for targeting existing funding schemes to the NSA- to encourage the appropriate restoration of vacant and derelict traditional buildings (listed and non listed)	DGC, NSA Officer, HS	M	M/L	D/Uc5
10	Support the introduction of facelift schemes for buildings within the NSA	SH, NSA Officer, HS, DGC	L	Ongoing	D/Uc2
	Raising awareness and understanding				
11	Continue promotion of Landscape Assessment and application of guidance through staff training, and establish ways of disseminating Landscape Character information more widely	SNH, DGC	M	S/O	D/Ns1 D/Ns2
12	Promotion of NSA special qualities and character, informed by the Historic Land-use Assessment, through ongoing training, communication and publicity	SNH, DGC, NSA Officer, Mill, HS, RCAHMS	H	S/O	D/Ns1
13	Raise awareness of the need for the higher quality of design within the NSA, and encourage contemporary designs that reflect the distinctiveness of traditional buildings	DGC, NSA Officer,	H	S/O	D/Ns6
	Guidance				
14	Support the implementation of design guidance in Structure and finalised Local Plan, and 'Caring for the Built Environment'	DGC	H	O	D/Ns6
15	Encourage a co-ordinated consistent approach to planning advice and issues is given within the NSA	DGC	H	S/O	D/Ns4
16	Continue support for the developing protocol between Council and SNH with regard to development and natural heritage	SNH, DGC	M	S/O	D/Nc1

17	Assess the need for Policy and Guidance Note re siting and design of new housing in the countryside	DGC, NSA Officer	M	M/L	D/Nc2
18	Implement specific guidance on the siting and design of agricultural buildings (PAN 39 Farm and Forestry Buildings)	DGC, Land Managers	M	S/O	D/Nc2
19	Continue production of Townscape Appraisals in respect of Conservation areas within the NSA	SH, HS, DGC	H	S/M	D/Uc2 D/Ns2
20	Develop further advice on the conservation of historic buildings	DGC, SH, HS	M	L	D/Uc4 D/Ns2
	Policy and legislation				
21	Continue implementation of existing policy and design guidance on development contained in Structure and finalised Local Plan, and 'Caring for the Built Environment'	DGC,	H	Ongoing	D/Ns1
22	Continue the programme of continuous assessment of listing buildings	SH, DGC, HS	H	O	D/Uc2
23	Continue assessment of any proposals within Conservation Areas against Historic Scotland and DGC advice	DGC, HS	H	O	D/Uc2
24	Continue implementation of existing policy and design guidance on listed buildings	DGC, HS	H	O	D/Uc2
25	Continue to consider favourably appropriate small scale infill development which meet Council policy	DGC	H	O	D/Nc1
26	Apply existing National Planning Policy Guidance and Council policy on housing in the countryside	DGC	H	O	D/Nc1
27	Continue implementation of existing policy and design guidance on alterations and extensions	DGC	H	O	D/Uc3
28	Continue to implement the current policy and advice on development within National Scenic Areas	SNH, DGC	H	O	D/Ns3
29	Continue to implement the current policy and advice on development within Regional Scenic Areas	DGC	H	O	D/Ns3
30	Continue to implement current planning policy on minerals	DGC	M	O	D/M1

6.1.13 INFRASTRUCTURE ACTION PLAN

Objective

Reinforce and maintain the individual character of roads within the National Scenic Area, and ensure new infrastructure developments reinforce the character of this landscape.

Action No.	Proposed Action	Potential partners	Priority H/M/L	Timing	Code
	Collaboration				
1	Continue development of conservation lead management on rural roads within the NSA	DGC	H	O	I/R5
2	Continue to encourage strategic approach from telecom providers and mast sharing	SEDG, DGC	H	O	I/Pt3
	Projects – research, development and implementation				
3	Discuss viability of developing viewing points at key locations, and introducing a 'clear view' management programme	SH, DGC, NSA Officer, Community, Land Managers	H	S/M	I/R4 I/R6
4	Explore potential for developing scenic routes for visitors within (and linking) the NSA, connected to the existing Solway Coast Trail	SNH, DGC, SH, NSA Officer, DGTB	M	M/L	I/R6
5	Ensure that the advance notification of any works to be undertaken by public utilities is considered prior to commencement of works in NSA	NSA Officer, DGC, Public Utilities	M	M	I/Pt2
6	Assess need for removal of redundant radio antennae/masts prior to end of 10 year temporary permission period	DGC, Operators	M	M/L	I/Pt2
7	Assess extent of problem with conflicting road users (cars/bikes/walkers/horses) and consider solutions	NSA Officer, DGC , Access Forum, Community	M	M	I/R6
	See Recreation and Tourism Plan for Signage				
	Raising awareness and understanding				
8	Incorporate environmental appraisal in all road work schemes within the NSA	DGC	H	S/O	I/R2 I/R3
9	Ensure affects to NSA key views and scenic quality are carefully considered when considering potential developments outwith the NSA	SNH, DGC, SE	H	S/O	I/Pt6
10	Give particular regard to landscape considerations in assessing and designing potential road improvement schemes within the NSA.	DGC,	H	S/O	I/R4
11	Take particular account of NSA qualities in assessing notifications of minor works to public utilities	DGC	H	S/O	I/Pt3
12	Establish discussion with Statutory Undertakers working group on conservation of landscape character	NSA Officer, DGC	H	S/O	I/Pt4
13	Establish ways of disseminating Landscape Character Assessment to statutory undertakers and telecommunication providers	SNH, DGC	H	S/O	I/Pt1
	Guidance				
14	Continue to implement current Council policy and SNH guidance on windfarms (Guidelines on the environmental impact of windfarms and small scale hydro electric schemes)	SNH, DGC	H	S	I/Pt2 I/Pt3 I/Pt6
15	Assess need to formulate specific policy for small scale wind generators within or affecting NSA	SNH, DGC,	M	M	I/Pt3
	Policy and legislation				
16	Support implementation of Wind energy strategy within the Structure Plan	DGC	H	O	I/Pt7
17	Continue the programme of listing unique roadside features	DGC, HS	M	O	I/R3

18	Continue implementation of planning policy on telecommunication and major infrastructure development	DGC	H	O	I/Pt5 I/Pt3
19	Ensure mitigation and reinstatement works are undertaken following pipeline installation	DGC, Developers	M		I/Pt2 I/Pt5
20	Consider placing a duty on Statutory Undertakers to have regard to the scenic value of the NSA	SE	M	O	I/Pt1 I/Pt2

6.1.14 RECREATION AND TOURISM ACTION PLAN

Objective

Develop the potential for sustainable tourism and recreation activities within the National Scenic Area for the enjoyment and health of all residents and visitors, and to maximise benefits to the local economy.

Action No.	Proposed Action	Potential partners	Priority H/M/L	Timing	Code
	Collaboration				
1	Support implementation and review of D&G Access Strategy and the development of Core Path Networks within the NSA	SNH, DGC, DGTB, Access Forum, SH	H	Ongoing	RT/Ca3
2	Support the ongoing development of recreational opportunities in existing forests	FC, FE, PWO, SEDG	H	Ongoing	W/Fw5
3	Support promotion of locally produced food, crafts, etc in tourist outlets	SEDG, Business Operators, Mill	H	S	RT/Rd8
4	Support the 'Access for Recreation Survey' (currently being undertaken for Solway Firth Partnership) that is assessing the impact of coastal access points on habitat	SNH, NSA Officer	H	S	RT/Ca2 Rt/Ca3
5	Support established quality assurance schemes for accommodation, visitor facilities, and green tourism	DGTB, VisitScotland, Business Operators	H	Ongoing	RT/Rd7 RT/Rd2
6	Co-ordinate with DGTB in the development of projects to achieve the objectives of the NSA	NSA Officer, DGTB	H	Ongoing	RT/Rd1
	(See Nature Conservation Action Plan re fish stocks in Fleet)				
	Projects – research, development and implementation				
7	Support development of local footpath networks and walks leaflets within the NSA, working in association with Access Officers	SEDG, SNH, DGC, DGTB, Access Forum, Mill	H	Ongoing	RT/Ca1 RT/Ca2 RT/Ca3
8	Consider the need for all abilities access within the NSA. Engage with local user groups to consider how the enjoyment of the NSA can be achieved at key viewpoints within and around the area	SNH, DGC, Capability Scotland, Access Forum, SH, NSA Officer, Community	H	S	RT/Ca1
9	Assess need for visitor management within the NSA to prevent pressure on sensitive locations and explore management solutions	NSA Officer, FE, SNH, DGC, DGTB, Access Forum, HS	H	M	RT/Ca2
10	Consider the need to review existing car parking to assess where improvements, such as resurfacing and interpretation etc., or other management changes are needed	Access Forum, NSA Officer, DGC	M	L	Rt/Ca5 Rt/Mp6

11	Promote the use of alternative forms of transport within the NSA: - Continue promotion of public transport links on tourist information - Investigate opportunity to develop links from existing cycle routes to the coast. - Consider development of a 'park and walk' initiative at key locations - Explore desire for developing local touring mini bus providing scenic tour of area, and to allow access to coastal walks (drop off/pick up service) - Support development of tourism and recreational opportunities that link with public transport network.	DGC, Business Operators, FE, DGTB, Access Forum	H	S/M/L	RT/Rd1 RT/Ca4 RT/Ca6 RT/Ca7 I/R1
12	Seek to minimise the impact of existing caravan and chalet development on long views (including light pollution), and investigate funding for such mitigation measures	NSA Officer, Business Operators	H	S/M	RT/Rd4 RT/Rd5
13	Assess provision for camping within the NSA (particularly in relation to walking and cycling routes) along with other forms of visitor accommodation	NSA Officer	M	L	Rt/Rd6
14	Explore the potential of developing further horse riding routes within the NSA	FE, DGC, Access Forum, Business Operators	M	M	RT/Ca1
15	Monitor use of powered recreational craft and assess need for zoning or attracting active water sports elsewhere in region	NSA Officer, SFP	H	S	RT/Mp4
16	Assess the need for developing a marketing plan for the NSA which could consider development of: - entrance features at key locations into the NSA - twinning with old trade ports such as Whitehaven (link with John Paul Jones), between resorts, and with Solway AONB - Joint action marketing within and between three NSAs	NSA Officer, SNH, DGC, DGTB, SEDG, Mill	H	L	RT/Mp3
17	Develop a strategy for signage within the NSA: - to ensure appropriate signs are provided to recreational facilities - to consider the design and development of gateway/entrance features at key locations in the NSA - to implement signage to NSA from main routes - to consider NSA within current review of signage strategy	NSA Officer, SNH, DGTB, DGC, Access Forum	H	S/M	RT/Mp5
18	Seek to ensure adequate parking is provided at access points to popular walks	SNH, DGC, Access Forum, Land Managers, Community	H	Ongoing	Rt/Oa2
	Raising awareness and understanding				
19	Encourage development of specialist/theme holidays/activities that build on the qualities and distinctiveness of the area (tie in with niche markets identified by DGTB, and 'Making Tracks' Nature based tourism scheme)	SFP, SEDG, SNH, DGTB, Mill, Business Operators	H	S/M	RT/Oa2 RT/Oa3 RT/Oa4 RT/Oa5
20	Encourage involvement of school parties and youth groups in outdoor activities within the NSA	FC, SFP, DGC (Youth Strategy), Land Managers, Fishing assoc., Mill	M	M/L	RT/Oa3

21	Continue development of annual programme of guided walks and events, to include heritage/archaeology/maritime themes within the NSA, involving local community, landowners and farmers	SNH, DGC, FE, NSA Officer, SFP, NTS, Land Managers, HS, Community, Mill	M	S	RT/Oa2
22	Promote the NSAs special qualities and landscape character through: - NSA guide/leaflet - Historic Land-use Assessment data - exhibition material displayed in the Mill on the Fleet - dedicated interpretation centre (for all 3 NSAs in region) - West of Scotland Screen Commission - Development of a NSA web site	SNH, DGC, NSA Officer, DGTB, Mill, HS	H	S/M	RT/ Mp3 RT/ Mp5
23	Raise awareness of Tourist Board advisory staff on the special landscape and nature conservation value of the NSA	SNH, DGTB, NSA Officer	H	S	RT/ Mp2
24	Encourage uptake of Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme to enhance recreational value of existing woods.	FC, PWO	M	Ongoing	RT/Ca1 W/Fw5
	Guidance				
25	Ensure design of new paths and tracks are in keeping with local character.	FC, FE, PWO, SNH, DGC	H	S	RT/ Mp4
26	Ensure future car parks are located sympathetically within the landscape, and that the design and signage reflects local distinctiveness	FC, FE, PWO,	H	Ongoing	RT/ Mp4
27	Encourage the conversion of traditional buildings for use as visitor facilities/tourist accommodation	HS	M	Ongoing	RT/ Mp4 RT/ Rd10
28	Develop a visitor's code of conduct (Keep it Special?) to raise awareness of sensitive habitats, agricultural operations, responsible dog control and behaviour, removal of litter etc.	FC, FE, SNH, DGTB, Community Safety, Mill displays, Access Forum	M	Ongoing	RT/Oa1 S/P1 S/P2
29	Seek to ensure the design of golf courses is sympathetic to surrounding landscape, habitats and the cultural heritage	SNH, DGC, NSA Officer, Business Operators	L	L	RT/O6 Rt/Mp4
	Policy and legislation				
31	Continue to implement Structure and Local Plan policies concerning caravan and chalet development	DGC	H	Ongoing	RT/Rd2 RT/Rd4
32	Continue support for tourist development which accords with the Structure and Local Plan policy	DGC	H	Ongoing	RT/ Mp4
33	Develop any NSA projects within the framework of the Tourism Strategy for D&G	SNH, DGC, DGTB, SEDG	H	Ongoing	RT/ Mp1

6.2   Implementation

6.2.1   The publication of this Management Strategy marks a new beginning in caring for the outstanding landscape of the National Scenic Area. Dumfries and Galloway Council and Scottish Natural Heritage have endorsed the Management Strategy, and it has been adopted as supplementary guidance to the Structure Plan and Finalised Local Plans. A wide range of organisations and individuals have expressed support for the Strategy and are committed to assisting in its implementation (see Appendix 5 for list of organisations involved in its preparation).

6.2.2   The implementation of the strategy requires the delivery of a wide range of actions relating to the many activities and features that occur in this landscape, and the opportunities they offer. Consequently numerous organisations and individuals are needed, each with particular knowledge, interests and concerns, to be involved in the implementation process.

6.2.3   It is vital to the success of the Management Strategy that those who live and work in the NSA continue to be involved and informed during its implementation. An ongoing process of participation, with local communities and land managers in particular, must be set in place to ensure the successful delivery of the Action Plans.

6.2.4   The Management Strategy aims to influence and guide existing funding mechanisms and potential partners, as well as to implement new actions. Some partners are already delivering actions, and other actions can be delivered through a modification of the way the partners work.

6.2.5   Where additional resources are required to deliver actions this can, in some cases, be met through a re-prioritisation of existing resources, where a refocusing of funds can support the objectives of the NSA.

6.2.6   New sources of funding will also need to be sought and SNH has highlighted to Government the strong case for additional funding from national sources, in recognition of the national interest in the management and safeguarding of the NSAs. Additional sources of funding, such as the Lottery, will need to be actively pursued to secure the implementation of the Strategy.

6.2.7   SNH has proposed through their 'Advice to Government' that the local authority role for the NSA should be strengthened and enhanced, with local authorities fulfilling the following functions for the NSA at the local level:

• leader – to champion the NSA and drive forward actions to ensure NSAs achieve their broad purpose;

• co-ordinator – to provide a focus for actions and effort and ensure they are co-ordinated, in particular through the Management Strategy; and

• advocate - to support and communicate locally the designation's purpose.

6.2.8   The development of the strategies has raised awareness and expectations for the NSA amongst local communities and it is important that this momentum is sustained. The pilot project partners, SNH and Dumfries and Galloway Council, have therefore recognised the benefit of a project officer post in some capacity in the years ahead. Such a post would enable the ongoing consultation and involvement process, the development and delivery of specific actions, the investigation and securing of funding, and to co-ordinate the implementation of Action Plans.

6.2.9   Working at the national level SNH will continue to ensure that adequate safeguards for all NSAs are provided through policy and practice, and by monitoring how individual NSAs are faring.

6.2.10   The development of the Management Strategy has been influenced by existing plans and initiatives (see Appendix 4). These links are vital, allowing action in the NSA to build on work already being undertaken. The aims and objectives set out for the Fleet Valley NSA will in turn inform the preparation and implementation of other plans and programmes of work.

Acronyms used for potential partners involved in implementing actions	
DGC	Dumfries and Galloway Council
DGTB	Dumfries and Galloway Tourist Board
DSFB	District Salmon Fisheries Board
FC	Forestry Commission
FE	Forest Enterprise
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
FDSFB	Fleet District Salmon Fisheries Board
GFT	Galloway Fisheries Trust
HS	Historic Scotland
LBAP partners	Local Biodiversity Action Plan partners
Mill	Board of the Mill on the Fleet
NFUS	National Farmers Union of Scotland
PWO	Private Woodland Owners
RCAHMS	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SAC	Scottish Agricultural College
SCAPE	Scottish Coastal Archaeology and Palaeo-Environment
SE	Scottish Executive
SEERAD	Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department
SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
SEDG	Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway
SFP	Solway Firth Partnership
SH	Solway Heritage
SLF	Scottish Landowners Federation
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
SW	Scottish Water
SWEAP	South West Environmental Action Project
SWT	Scottish Wildlife Trust

Glossary of terms	
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CPS	Countryside Premium Scheme
D&G	Dumfries and Galloway
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
HLA	Historic Land-use Assessment
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
NPPG	National Planning Policy Guidline
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NSA	National Scenic Area
RBAP	Roadside Biodiversity Action Plan
RSA	Regional Scenic Area
RSS	Rural Stewardship Scheme
SFGS	Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
WGS	Woodland Grant Scheme

APPENDIX 1

Extract from Scotland's Scenic Heritage

Countryside Commission For Scotland 1978

Dumfries & Galloway Fleet Valley Region

5,300 HECTARES

Extent of Area

The area includes Fleet Bay and the enclosing landforms on either side together with the valley of the Fleet inland as far as the southern end of Rig of Drumruck. The western limits run from Mossyard to Ben John, Mill Knock, Ardwall Hill, Kenlum Hill and Scar Hill to Meikle Bennan. The northern limits run from Meikle Bennan through Rig of Drumruck to Doon of Culreoch, and the eastern limits from Doon of Culreoch, via Castramont, Doon Hill and Bar of Barlay, to skirt Gatehouse of Fleet on the eastern side along the ridge joining Disdow Wood and Bar Hill. From Bar Hill the first inland ridge from Fleet Bay is followed to Barlocco Isle.

Description

Fleet Bay is dominated by the hill mass of Cairnharrow (456m) on its western side, of which Ben John and Mill Knock are outliers. On the east relief is not so pronounced but enclosure is given by the ridge which culminates in the well wooded Bar Hill just south of Gatehouse. Woodland contributes significantly to the Fleet Bay landscape, with policy planting and hedgerow trees being dominant. The village of Gatehouse of Fleet plays a prominent part in the scene, acting as a pleasing focal point for the valley which changes character at the village from estuarial to upland. While there is a greater amplitude of relief in the inner valley the landscape is also softer, more enclosed and intimate. There is a variety of woodlands from young plantations to mature broadleaved woods clothing the valley sides, while above them extends the open moorland of the hills, and below the riverside pasture. The pattern is one of rich, well-managed, mixed land use farming in which the woods are particularly striking, and where there is evidence of long established prosperity in the number of castles, churches, monuments and ancient remains.

Other National Interests

The Forestry Commission owns woodlands at Boreland Burn, Disdow Wood and in the Fleet Forest. There are Sites of Scientific Interest at Castramont Wood, Killiegowan Wood, and the Borgue Coast which extends as far as Fleet Bay.

APPENDIX 2

The Murray Usher Foundation

Extract from Trust Deed

I To maintain and conserve for the public benefit of the people and former Burgh of Gatehouse-of-Fleet and the inhabitants of the Parishes of Girthon and Anworth and of visitors to all these areas the traditional architectural features and general aesthetic amenities of the said Burgh and Parishes including the promotion and encouragement therein of:

a) Attractive, healthy and stimulating conditions of life, work and recreation.

b) High Standards of architecture, building and Town and Country Planning, and the preservation of buildings and features of artistic merit or historic interest.

c) The preservation of wildlife.

d) The protection of the beauties and amenities of the countryside.

e) The elimination and prevention of ugliness arising from bad design, neglect or any other cause.

f) Knowledge of and interest in the matters aforesaid amongst persons concerned with such matters and of the general public – particularly of the younger generation.

g) A sense of local pride amongst the people living therein.

h) The stimulation of public consciousness and appreciation of beauty and character of public and private meetings, excursions, exhibitions and other forms of instruction and publicity.

II To do such other things as are for the cultural, aesthetic, religious, educational or public benefit of said persons and areas including the relief of poverty; or

III To assist any charitable organisations, funds or schemes concerned with or providing for the cultural aesthetic educational benefit of the said people and former Burgh of Gatehouse-of-Fleet and of the said parishes of Girthon and Anworth including the preservation of wildlife bearing specifically in mind the need to help charitable and public organisations overcome their difficulties of either maintaining their existing buildings or providing new buildings in the said Burgh in a manner which is in keeping with the character of Gatehouse-of-Fleet and relative to this the Trustees are asked to keep in mind the said points and principles made by the Royal Fine Art Commission regarding new buildings in and around small towns and villages.

APPENDIX 3

Boundary comments

During consultations much discussion was held and many comments received regarding the boundary line of the NSA. Generally it was felt that the special qualities of the Fleet Valley extended beyond the existing lines. A summary of the suggested changes are detailed on the table below, with a commentary provided, and show the wide range of views held.

Changes suggested during consultation	Initial commentary
Extend the boundary to the south west to include Ringdoo Point and headland.	• The rocky shore at Ringdoo Point is linked to the Garvellan Rocks at low tide. Only half of the 'double' beach between the rocks is within the NSA. • When viewed from the opposite shore Ringdoo Point and the headland form the south western 'corner' of Bay. The headland and coast appear to display the same scenic qualities as the adjoining coastal flats within the NSA. • Views of the Bay when approaching from the west (A75) first glimpsed from the Mossyard access (where the current boundary lies).
Suggestions for the westward boundary included: • Taking the boundary directly from Ben John to Kenlum Hill thereby including the lower slopes of the Syreburn Valley. • Taking the boundary from Ben John to Cairnharrow rejoining at Meikle Bennan. • From Ringdoo Point to Barholm Hill, then to Cairnharrow and Cambret Hill, north to Pibble Hill incorporating the upper basin of the Fleet and the Clints of Dromore, rejoining existing boundary at the Doon of Culreoch.	• The Skyreburn Valley displays different landscape characteristics to the Fleet Valley having a more open upland feel with very little woodland. Diversity is provided through the colours and textures of the unimproved grasslands (some of which are designated SSSIs). • Cairnharrow dominates the western shore and contributes significantly to the scenic quality of the NSA, providing scale, contrast and diversity. • Current boundary is taken along the first ridge line enclosing the Bay and Valley. The complete visual landscape units of the Skyreburn valley and the western setting of the Fleet Valley and Bay would be included in the NSA if the boundary were taken from this more dominant ridge of hills.
Extend boundary to the North to include: • Gatehouse station, the Big Water of Fleet Viaduct, and the Clints of Dromore. • Further North to include Loch Skerrow and Loch Grannoch.	• The Clints of Dromore and the Viaduct are dramatic features that contribute to the distinctiveness of the area. • The upper basin of the Water of Fleet is an integral part of the valley landscape. • The scale and openness of the scenery contrast to the enclosed lower reaches of the valley and would provide further diversity within the NSA. • Large amount of afforestation to the North and east of the Clints (Galloway Forest Park). Consideration will be given as to whether the area exhibits the valued qualities of the NSA.

Comments on the North Eastern boundary included: • Extend from the existing boundary at Doon of Culreoch to White Top of Culreoch, to Fell of Laghead, then to Benfadyeon, and rejoining at Disdow Wood. • As above but continuing south to Kirkandrews Bay. • Extend further east from Fell of Laghead to include Loch Whinyeon.	• Current NE boundary is not easily discernable in the landscape. Extending boundary to more prominent ridge line would provide containment. • The road to Laurieston provides a key viewing point - the only road from which a panoramic view of the NSA can be seen. • Loch Whinyeon is the source of water fron which the mills were fed and is therefore integral to the development of the town. • Extending the eastern boundary would allow the inclusion of further land held in NTS Conservation Agreements.
Extend south east to include: • Kirkandrews Bay rejoining existing boundary at Knockbrex. • From Kirkandrews the boundary follows minor road north to Plunton Mains, then follow B727 to Gatehouse.	• Castle Haven and Kirkandrews Bay have a spectacular rocky coastline similar to that exhibited within the NSA. Consideration will be given as to whether the bays exhibit other core scenic qualities apparent in the NSA. • Only a very small part of the Borgue peninsula with its undulating, irregular topography and gorsey knolls is included in the NSA. The peninsula provides a dramatic contrast to the western hills with its intimate scale and enclosed views. The agricultural landscape is quite distinct from the pasture of the Fleet Valley. • The current boundary only includes part of the designed landscape of Cally.
• Other valleys and estuaries along the coast eg. Cree and Kirkcudbright Bay are of equal scenic quality to the Fleet NSA.	• Consideration needs to be given as to whether the whole coastline exhibits the complexity and diversity exhibited within the NSA. • The size of the NSA should be such that the targeting of existing funding or the creation of new grants can be applied to practical management units. • Many of the issues raised are also applicable to the adjacent section of coastline. • The Annex Report to the Dumfries and Galloway Landscape Assessment suggests the case for a Solway Coast NSA from west of Annan to Wigtown Bay.
Seaward boundary appears arbitrary.	• The existing boundary is drawn between identifiable points on the coast. • There is no obvious or distinct change in the seascape at this boundary. • Intertidal flats and seaward views contribute to the scenic quality of the NSA.

APPENDIX 4

How we are currently looking after the National Scenic Areas

- **International policy**

  NSA are recognised internationally - they are listed as Category V on the IUCN World List of Protected Areas.

- **European policy**

  EC Habitats Directive- Natura 2000: Solway Firth European Marine Site Management Scheme Dec.2000

  Environmental Impact Assessment Directive 1985 (as implemented through the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1999)

  Water Framework Directive 2000

- **National Policy**

  Currently the main means of providing care to the NSA is through the Town and Country Planning system. Normal planning controls are extended within the NSA through the removal of certain permitted development rights. SNH are required to be consulted on the following categories of development:

  - Schemes of 5 or more houses/chalets unless identified in an adopted Local Plan

  - Sites for 5 or more mobile dwellings/ caravans

  - All non residential development of more than 0.5 hectares

  - All buildings or structures over 12 metres high (including agricultural and forestry developments)

  - Vehicle tracks except where they are part of an approved forestry scheme

  - All local highway authority roadworks outside present road boundaries costing more than £100,000.

  Scottish ministers must be consulted where the council wish to permit development against the advice of SNH

  National Planning Policy Guidance, in particular

  NPPG 3 - Land for Housing

  NPPG 5 – Archaeology and Planning

  NPPG 11 - Sport, physical recreation and open space

  NPPG 13 - Coastal Planning

  NPPG 14 - Natural Heritage

  NPPG 15 - Rural Development

  NPPG 18 – Planning and the Historic Environment

  NPPG 19 – Radio Communications

  Planning Advice Notes, in particular:

  PAN 36 - Siting and Design of New Housing in the Countryside

  PAN 39 - Farm and Forestry Buildings

  PAN 42 – Archaeology : The Planning Process and Scheduled Monument procedure

  PAN 44 - Fitting new Development into the Countryside

  PAN 60 - Planning for Natural Heritage

  PAN 62 - Radio Telecommunications

  Forestry Act 1967 (as amended)

- **Local policy**

  Dumfries and Galloway Local Structure Plan 1999

  Contains specific policy (Policy E1)

  'The siting and design of development should respect the special nature of the area. Development within, or which would have a significant impact on NSAs will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that either:-

  1.	the proposed development will not compromise the areas scenic and landscape character; or

  2.	any significant adverse effects on the scenic interest and integrity of the area are clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance.'

  The structure plan also contains policies on Landscape Character, Regional Scenic Areas, nature conservation, SSSIs, coastal development, conservation areas, listed buildings, historic gardens and designed landscapes and archaeology.

Finalised Nithsdale and Stewartry Local Plan contains a policy (General Policy 41) relating to development within NSAs

'National Scenic areas have been so designated to reflect the outstanding importance of their natural beauty and scenery. It is essential that these qualities are not compromised by inappropriate or insensitive development, to protect the appearance of these areas and in recognition of the role they play in contributing to the quality of life and to the local economy such as tourism.'

- **Local initiatives**

Many documents, plans and strategies influence aspects of the Fleet Valley NSA – some statutory – including:

D&G Landscape Assessment

Solway Firth Strategy

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

D&G Countryside Access Strategy

Landscape design guidance for woodlands and forestry in D&G

Galloway Forest district Strategic Plan

Forest Design Plans

Private sector Forest Plans

Consultation Agreement between Forestry Commission and D&GC

Dumfries and Galloway Tourism Strategy

Natural Heritage Futures Prospectus :The Wigtown Machars and outer Solway

SSSI Site Management statements

APPENDIX 5

Sites, areas and monuments identified for their particular interest.

Nature Conservation designations

- **Proposed Special Area of Conservation**
  SSSI
  Killiegowan Wood
  Carstramon Wood

- **SSSI**
  Lagganmullan
  Ardwall Hill
  Carrick Ponds
  Borgue Coast

- **Reserves**
  Carstarmon Wood (Scottish Wildlife Trust)

- **Local Wildlife Sites**
  Cardoness Wood

Scheduled Ancient Monuments
Cardoness Castle (managed by Historic Scotland)
Pulcree Mote
Roman Fortlet
Anwoth Old Church, cross slab and Gordon Tomb
Trusty's Hill
Moat Park, mote
Boreland/Green Tower Mote
Ardwall Island, chapels and cemetery
Standing Stones of Newton, Chambered Cairn

Gardens & Designed Landscapes
(Listed in Inventory of Gardens and Designed
Landscapes in Scotland)
Cally

Gardens and Designed Landscapes
Non –Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes
Sites identified by Garden History Society include:
Cardoness
Ardwall

APPENDIX 6

Consultees

Communities

- Carrick Residents Association
- Gatehouse Community Council
- Gatehouse Development Initiative
- Friends of the Mill
- The Board of the Mill on the Fleet

Elected representatives

- Council Elected Members

Land Management

- Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
- Forestry Commission SW Scotland Conservancy
- Forestry Enterprise
- Fleet District Salmon Fisheries Board
- Galloway Fisheries Trust
- National Farmers Uniion of scotland
- Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department
- Scottish Landowners Association

Natural and Cultural Heritage

- Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland
- Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland
- Dumfries and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarians
- Galloway Preservation Society
- Historic Scotland
- LINK
- Murray Usher Foundation
- Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland
- Royal Fine Art Commission
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Scottish Civic Trust
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Solway Firth Partnership
- Solway Heritage
- The National Trust for Scotland

Recreation

- Dumfries and Galloway Tourist Board
- Galloway Cycling Group
- Mountaineering Council Scotland
- ScotWays (Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society)

Others

- All individuals that attended workshops and land managers meetings.
- Stewartry Coalition for the Disabled
- Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway
- Scottish Executive

Photography

R & B Mearns

Mike Bolam Photography

Solway Firth Partnership

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Keith Kirk

Peter Norman

Dumfries and Galloway Tourist Board

Hugh Bryden