



East Stewartry Coast

National Scenic Area

M a n a g e m e n t S t r a t e g y



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 That plan has been replaced by the Local Development Plan (LDP).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 justifiably 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 East Stewartry Coast NSA, that we commend this document to you.

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SUMMARY

The East Stewartry Coast 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 East Stewartry Coast 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



East Stewartry Coast

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.

what's it all about



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.

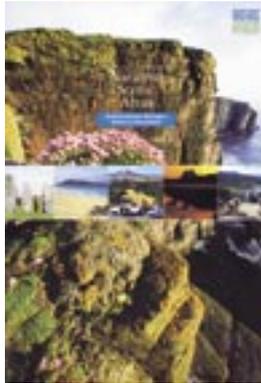




1.2.2 Some of the changes that can occur within the seascape, agriculture and forestry, which may significantly affect the scenic qualities of the NSA, are outwith statutory planning control. Some changes, however, are subject to consultation, such as applications for woodland and forestry grant schemes.

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 Government response to the NSA advice was awaited 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 East Stewartry Coast National Scenic Area. The Nith Estuary and Fleet Valley 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 NSAs 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 NSAs 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 each 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.
- 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 East Stowartry Coast** in which the physical and cultural influences that have shaped this landscape are described.
- 3 **What is special about the East Stowartry Coast** 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 East Stowartry Coast 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



East Stewartry Coast



2 THE LANDSCAPE OF THE EAST STEWARTRY COAST

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The East Stewartry 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 East Stewartry Coast and the following section examines its scenic qualities.





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 estuarine flats (bays and Preston Merse), coastal granite uplands, the narrow wooded Urr Valley, the peninsula and peninsula with gorse knolls (that lie to the west and east of the bays). This landscape assessment has provided the basis for policies within the Structure Plan and the finalised Nithsdale and Stewartry Local Plans, and informs responses to planning applications.

2.2.2 The forces that have shaped the landscape character of the East Stewartry Coast, 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 East Stewartry Coast

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 rocks were 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 and the Silurian sediments were folded and thrust into a mountainous terrain which then experienced significant erosion. Shortly afterwards dramatic intrusions of molten rock cooled to produce the granite mass that extends from Criffel to the Dalbeattie area, and reaches the shore at Auchencairn Bay and partly surrounds Rough Firth. This local grey granite has traditionally been used as building material, as can be seen in the cottages at Rockcliffe.



2.3.3 Changes in the climate and the earth crust led to further sedimentary deposits being laid. A band of Carboniferous sediments including limestone beds overlie the southern slopes of the Dalbeattie/Criffel granite, stretching from Mersehead to Kirkbean. The spectacular cliffs east of Castlehill Point form the scarp of the North Solway Fault, marking the junction of the Silurian beds from the later Carboniferous sediments.

2.3.4 The evident geology is fundamental to the landscape character and scenic qualities of the NSA, and at Rockcliffe rocks from the three formative geological periods can be seen. To the north of the bay at Port Donnel granite is exposed at the foreshore, while greywacke continues along the shore between the village and Castlehill Point to form the cliffs that stretch to Sandyhills Bay. Areas of limestone occur between Castlehill Point and Gutchers Isle, and Port O'Warren and Portling Bay.

Drift geology

2.3.5 Over time natural processes have shaped and changed the rocks. The Silurian sediments are more resistant to erosion than the younger softer sandstones, and along the fault line this has led to the formation of distinctive rock features known locally as Lot's Wife and the Cows Snout.

2.3.6 The Needles Eye at Southwick, part of the Criffel granite mass, has been included within the Upper Solway Flats SSSI due to the veins containing minerals such as uranium, lead, copper, arsenic, and other metals.

2.3.7 Successive ice ages have shaped the landscape. During the last main glaciation the area was scoured by ice, originating from the north, that was moving southwards eroding the surface. Once these glaciers started to retreat glacial debris was deposited across the landscape. Boulder clay was laid down over the granite whilst elsewhere the effects of erosion have exposed extensive solid rock outcrops. The coastal fringes were predominantly areas of deposition and glacial deposits remain at the head of Auchencairn and Orchardton Bays.





2.3.8 The melting of the ice sheets caused a rapid rise in water levels and the rebound of the earth's crust, creating major fluctuations between the land and sea levels. This resulted in the formation of raised beaches at Mersehead, around Torr Point and the lower reaches of the River Urr, with areas of alluvium being deposited along the flood plain of the river.

Soils

2.3.9 The upper slopes of Screel and the hills to the east have soils derived from greywackes and shales, which are associated with the granite intrusions and subsequent glacial action. Drifts soils have developed on thin, stony frost shattered rock debris producing a rugged terrain with many rocky outcrops. Shallow peaty gley soils occur on the higher summits, the thin acidic soil supporting heather moorland, which combined with other factors makes the land difficult to improve agriculturally, and is used for rough grazing and forestry. On the lower slopes free draining brown forest soils have developed over the stony loamy drifts that provide good quality rough grazing, some of which has been improved.

2.3.10 Much of the lower lying land, apart from the flat raised beaches around the rivers and heads of the bays, have soils derived from the underlying granite. Drifts are generally thin, stony, sandy loam, with the outcropping rock forming a major component of the soil pattern. The terrain and outcropping rock make cultivation difficult, and much of the land is used for rough grazing and forestry. Areas of more fertile soils with less rock have been improved and can support stock rearing and dairy farming.

2.3.11 Silty loam soils have developed on the estuarine raised beaches formed from deposited silt and clay. Cultivation of soils from clay till is difficult due to persistent wetness, and is therefore suitable primarily for grassland but capable of producing some cereal crops. On the periphery of these beach terraces small pockets of sandy loam occur, the most fertile soil in the NSA, that is capable of producing a moderate range of crops.



2.3.12 At Mersehead gley soils have developed from the fine sandy loams and coarse sands of the former dunes. Despite the low organic matter and high water table these support a narrow range of crops. The fertile alluvial soils on the areas of merse are very valuable as rough grazing land.

Climate

2.3.13 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.

2.3.14 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.

2.3.15 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. The high surrounding hills are slightly cooler than the rest of the NSA and are also more exposed, as is the coastal strip. The summits of Screel and Bengairn are very exposed, however they provide shelter to the inland areas that experience milder winters. Rough Island and Hestan Island provide localised shelter within the Bays.

Marine environment

2.3.16 The Solway Firth has a large tidal range - around 6.7m in the Rough Firth and Auchencairn Bay- and has two tidal cycles per day. The intertidal area is a complex of largely mobile sand banks separated by winding channels, the outermost flats of Auchencairn and Orchardton Bays are sandy, while the more sheltered inner flats of the Rough Firth are muddy. Within the estuaries the flood and ebb tide are of approximately equal duration, but at Sandyhills the flood tide rises more quickly.



2.3.17 Waters are shallow with temperatures varying over the seasons, being warmest (particularly in the estuaries) in the summer. Waves are generated primarily from within the North Irish Sea, their height and direction dependent on the wind, with wave heights being generally low compared with those on more exposed coasts.

2.3.18 The pattern of water movement within the Solway Firth transports sediment (and sea borne litter/pollutants) eastwards, filling the estuaries with mud and sand. Merse (saltmarsh) lines the intertidal areas within the upper parts of the estuary and the sediment on which it occurs is considered to be of marine rather than river origin. Sediment transport within the NSA

has seen the merse eroding at Auchencairn and accreting at Mersehead. The process of erosion and accretion is also influenced by wave exposure, the position of the river channel and the sediment supply.

2.3.19 The frequent changes to the banks and channels within the Solway means it remains largely uncharted, and the difficulty of navigating in these shallow waters restricts passage to smaller vessels.

Cultural influences:

Cultural heritage

2.3.20 The earliest known archaeology of this area are finds of Bronze Age axes, dated to the 2nd millennium BC, and probably derived from burial cairns like those on the ridge to the south-west of Auchencairn, or on Laggan Hill towards Caulkerbush. There is evidence of a variety of prehistoric settlements in the area. On lower-lying fertile soils are farmsteads surrounded by a single earthen bank, such as those towards Auchenfad. On the hill-tops ringing Auchencairn Bay are a number of fortified camps, such as Airds, Almorness, Ramshaw Wood and Moyle Hill, refuges for the farming population and their livestock in times of trouble. On the coast itself promontory settlements, defended by earthen banks on the landward side and by sea cliffs on the others, include those at Castlehill Point and Port o' Warren.





2.3.21 The fort at the top of the rocky outcrop at Mote of Mark continued in use into the early medieval period, and excavations have revealed trading contacts with France and the Mediterranean over 1500 years ago. In the medieval period control of the Urr passed upstream to the motte-and-bailey castle at Richorn, with another motte further round the coast at Boreland of Colvend. At Orchardton are the remains of a later 15th century tower house and barmkin, unique in Scotland for its circular tower which may reflect Irish influence in its construction.

2.3.22 The benign climatic shift in the medieval period led to agricultural expansion into higher land, in areas which are now used for rough grazing. Extensive remains of these medieval farmsteads, with their attendant corn-drying kilns, clearance cairns and field systems, can be seen on the southern and eastern flanks of Laggan Hill, and on Millbank Hill to the east, as well as around Kirkland Hill to the north-east of Rockcliffe. Another good example, with remnants of a ruined laird's house, is located on the northern half of Hestan Island. Medieval churches in the area are represented by the fine ruined church and graveyard at Southwick, dedicated to 'Our Lady of Southwick' in the 13th century, and by a site at Kirkennan on the Urr, which only survives as a cropmark, visible on aerial photographs.

2.3.23 More recent remains, showing how the landscape resources have been utilised, include sites such as the lead mines along the Hass Burn, the charcoal-burning platforms in Tornat Plantation (by South Glen, Palnackie), the jetties and tramway which serviced the Kipp Quarries, or Glenstocken quarry, at Gutcher's Isle on the coast where the granite was worked for mill stones. Although not rich in minerals a variety of workings were scattered across the landscape. Copper was mined at Colvend and Hestan Island between 1770 and 1850, and the ore shipped to Swansea. Iron ore was extracted from Auchenleck, on the edge of the NSA, producing 50-70 tons per week to be sent by sailing ship from Balcarry to Birmingham.

2.3.24 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 Orchardton, Munches and Southwick. Gardens and woodlands were created, the remnants of which still survive, and agricultural improvements were undertaken.

2.3.25 The land was enclosed by dykes, to enable the raising of cattle, and was gradually improved through the introduction of fertilisers, fodder crops and drainage. The pattern of field boundaries that preceded the Improvements were partly reflected in the later 18th and early 19th Century enclosures as the irregular topography made it very difficult to straighten existing boundaries. This makes for a unique landscape, containing occasional fields with curvilinear boundaries, that the Improvers viewed as inefficient to agricultural production.



2.3.26 Relicts of the pre-Improvement farms are still evident in the landscape. Small areas of hill ground were often sub-divided between surrounding farms and delineated by stone dykes that still leave their mark on the landscape (eg. Kirkland Hill to the north east of Rockcliffe). In the rough pastures there are numerous abandoned farms with dilapidated dykes surrounding their sub-rectangular fields. Some examples of abandoned farms also survive within forestry plantations, their boundaries still marked on modern maps.

2.3.27 The Solway Firth, as well as being a source of food, also provided the major transport route. Palnackie was the main port in the Urr estuary, serving Castle Douglas and Gelston, with ships from all over the world bringing cargo such as slates, coal, Baltic timber and rags for the paper mill in Dalbeattie. Brick ballast from the sailing ships was used in the construction of some buildings in the village. Produce exported from Palnackie, and the smaller port of Kippford, included granite from the local quarries and agricultural produce.

2.3.28 The complex coastline of small bays was ideal for the smuggling trade, which at times during the 18th Century was second to farming as a money earner in the region. The Isle of Man was a major source of contraband goods, being independent of the Crown and its taxes. Items such as salt, tobacco, and spirits were brought to Scotland and then on to England on horseback. A notorious smuggling community was located at the head of the Torr peninsula, and caves in the sea cliffs provided hiding places for such goods.

2.3.29 The evidence of fishing may be seen in the last vestiges of fishtraps, such as at Rockcliffe, and the stake nets (for salmon and flounder) along the coast. Flounders were also traditionally caught by paddling in tidal creeks and spearing the fish trapped underfoot with a 'leister' or spear. Local fisherman also worked mussel beds near Castlehill Point and Hestan Island. Up until the early 18th Century the sea also provided salt, extracted in rock cut depressions, such as at Saltpan Rocks at Douglas Hall, Sandyhills Bay.

2.3.30 The development of the railway slowly reduced shipping and brought the first tourists to the area. The Colvend Coast became a popular destination for Victorians, enthusiastic about the benefits of sea bathing and able to enjoy the mild climate. The area became known as the 'Scottish Riviera', and holiday villas developed along the coast between Sandyhills and Kippford, .

Habitats and wildlife

2.3.31 The maritime cliffs of the East Stewartry Coast are nationally important for their seabird colonies. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) have been designated at Port o'Warren, which has a large, long established cormorant rookery, and at Balcary Point where the breeding colony includes cormorants, guillemots and razorbills. Both sites are also rich in invertebrate species, some of which are at their northern limit in Britain.



2.3.32 The marshes and flats of the Upper Solway form one of the largest continuous areas of intertidal habitat in Britain, important internationally for its habitats and species, and nationally for its geomorphology (see Drift geology). The western reach of this European Marine Site is within the National Scenic Area, and habitats of note include Mersehead Sands, one of the main goose roosting sites in the Solway, the sand dunes and saltmarsh of Preston Merse, and the ancient oak woodland on the cliffs at Southwick.

2.3.33 The woodland at Southwick is owned and managed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has developed Mersehead Farm, situated at the base of the wooded cliffs, as a wildlife reserve. The farm is managed specifically for





numerous trees are scattered throughout the landscape. Merse lines the head of the bays, its dark green appearance quite distinct from the adjoining land. On the promontories at Torr, Almorness and Glen Isle, policy woodland and small conifer plantations are interspersed with areas of rough grassland and gorse scrub on the more irregular, rocky ground.

breeding waders and wintering waterfowl and a visitor centre, bird watching hides and trails are provided. Rough Island, which is in the care of the National Trust for Scotland, is a bird sanctuary to which access is restricted at certain times of the year.

2.3.34 Areas of merse at the head of Auchencairn and Orchardton Bay, have also been designated as an SSSI due to the wide range of saltmarsh plant communities present, and the large numbers of wildfowl and waders visiting the site.

Current land use and landscape

2.3.35 This glaciated lowland coast has an open and irregular coastline with granite hills rising abruptly to enclose the bays. The hills are steep sided and rugged with large outcrops of rock at the summit and upper slopes. Sheep graze on the unimproved rough grassland and heather moorland on the upper slopes, the fields enclosed by dykes. Extensive coniferous plantations extend from the upper slopes to the flatter areas of till plain at the base of the hills. This lush flat land, stretching from Auchencairn to Palnackie, is predominately improved pasture with dairy cattle, sheep and some crops. The fields are larger than on the higher slopes, bounded by hedges, and

2.3.36 On the western shore of Auchencairn Bay the gently undulating landscape of small hills is divided by a mix of hedges, dykes and fences into medium sized fields. The improved pasture is grazed principally by dairy cattle with some stock and sheep. Hedgerow trees, small shelterbelts and plantations are prominent within this low undulating landscape. Restructuring of the large plantation block established on Rascarrel Moss is currently underway. As the land rises in the west,



panoramic views across the NSA and the Solway Firth can be taken from the viewing area on the A711. Due to the irregular topography within the NSA this is one of the few easily accessible viewing points.

2.3.37 The River Urr meanders through the flat narrow valley floor, contained by the lower forested slopes of the granite hills, its course delineated by riparian trees. During low tide the deep cut channel reveal large areas of mud and silt. Large fields of improved grassland, enclosed by hedges, lie in the flatter areas with dykes and outcropping rock occurring on the more elevated ground. Views from the valley are generally enclosed; however the large house and associated woodland at Munches, which holds a commanding position on the river, can be clearly seen from the surrounding area.

2.3.38 The headland at the eastern shore of Rough Firth, stretching from Kippford to Sandyhills is an uneven, hummocky landscape with rocky outcrops and associated gorse, creating prominent knolls within fields of improved pasture. Stone dykes generally bound the fields. The upper slopes of the coastal hills (Barcloy, White and Torrs Hill) remain largely unimproved with gorse scrub, and are used predominantly as rough grazing for cattle and sheep. There is no tree cover on the headland hills, however the remaining landscape has mature roadside trees, shelterbelts, small clumps of broadleaves, and a forestry plantation at Mark Hill. The topography and vegetation limit the inland views, but panoramic views across the Solway can be taken from the coast.

2.3.39 This stretch of coast is very popular with holiday makers and consequently tourism and recreation facilities are well developed. Numerous hotels, caravan and chalet developments provide accommodation within the area. Riding, golfing and marina facilities are available; and the numerous coastal and forest paths that have been established are well used.

2.3.40 The eastern end of the NSA is comprised of low lying estuarine flats, broken by an edge of sand dunes that stretch into the vast areas of sand exposed at low tide. Hedges mainly bound the large fields and a shelterbelt, dominant in the flat landscape, provides some shelter. Some cereal crops are grown, and sheep and cattle graze the improved pasture. The landscape is dominated by water; the meandering lower tidal reaches of the Southwick Water, the network of small channels dissecting the merse, and the flooding of the low lying fields in the wetter months. Although farmed the land is managed principally as a wildlife reserve (see Habitats and Wildlife).



East Stewartry Coast

3 WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE EAST STEWARTRY COAST

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The previous section describes the character of the East Stewartry Coast 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) confirmed that the landscape of the East Stewartry Coast is special (85% 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 special 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 derive these qualities from particular types of scenery is a very complex issue, and there is currently no agreed or accepted method as to how these 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 East Stewartry Coast – what made it a unique, special place. The responses ranged from comments such as ‘it’s undiscovered’ – ‘don’t tell anyone about it’, to qualities such as quietness and the pace of life, and to landscape features (natural and cultural) that are particular to the area such as Rough Island, Orchardton Tower and Mote of Mark. 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 NSA, based on desk study and field analysis. The scenic qualities of the East Stewartry Coast NSA are detailed below, with the words taken directly from consultations in italics.

3.2 Scenic Qualities of the East Stewartry Coast

3.2.1 The core qualities of the East Stewartry Coast are the *sheltered, enclosed* coastal landscape, valued for its *peacefulness*, intimacy and *sea views across the Solway*. The *irregular topography, indented coastline* and *variety of land cover* form a *managed* landscape of great *complexity* and *diversity*.

Complexity

3.2.2 A key quality in the East Stewartry Coast is the *mixture* of diverse landscape types and the intricate way in which they are interconnected. The variety of landscape types present within the NSA range from estuarine flats to granite uplands, a number of which can be seen or experienced in most views.

Types of landscape include: coastal granite uplands (Bengairn and Dalbeattie), open sea, mud flats, coastal flats, Dundrennan peninsula to the west of the bays and Rockcliffe Peninsula with gorse knolls to the east. The granite uplands are divided by the narrow valley of the Urr (see Figure 2).

The *complexity* of the *coastline* and the *varied topography* is reinforced further by the following.

- The mixture of *farming, forestry, tourism, settlements* and natural habitat all found within a fairly narrow coastal strip.
- Shallow *bays* and promontories with a variety of *sandy beaches* and *dunes*, areas of *merse* and *mudflats* and *woodland* coming right down to the shoreline.





- The contrast between the *wildness* of some parts of the landscape and the managed *agricultural* land that are often in very close proximity.
- The *diversity of views* that can be seen, from panoramas across the landward hills and the Solway, to short views enclosed by the surrounding landform. Views are often concealed by the topography and woodland, allowing only glimpses of the scenery beyond, creating an *adventure of views* when travelling through the area – *turn a corner on the road and a different view* is revealed.

Intimacy of scale

3.2.3 This is a landscape focused around a series of *bays* and *enclosed* by the *surrounding hills* and *islands*. The topography, indented *rocky coast* and wooded promontories combine to create an intimate *small scale* landscape.

- The relationship of elements within this landscape affects their perceived scale - the *low enclosing hills* seen *against the backdrop of the estuary* appear *higher* due to their contrast *with the bays and Firth*. The *vast intertidal areas* also emphasise the height of the *dramatic cliffs*.
- Distance across the bays appears to change – opposing shores seem to be closer at low tide, with high tide making the bays appear larger.
- Much of the coastline is *inaccessible by road* reinforcing the sense of *privacy* and seclusion of the small bays and headlands.

Diversity

3.2.4 Differences in geology, topography and soils create the distinct and diverse elements of each landscape type and habitat within the East Stewartry Coast NSA. The variety of habitats include: coastal and marine (open sea, sea grass beds, estuary, merse, maritime cliff and slope, sand dune); farmland; upland heath; wetland (rivers and streams, floodplains at Mersehead, Colvend Lochs); and woodland (planted coniferous woodland, wild and scrub pasture, native woodland).



This range of *habitats* and the individual *landscape types* provide diversity within the landscape, displaying a wide *variety* of patterns, colours and textures.

- *Patterns of small irregular fields* that reflect the landform and are marked by a system of *dykes* and *hedges*.
- Pockets of *native* and *broadleaf woodland* scattered throughout the landscape, their coarse texture, and that of the scrub and grasslands, set against the smooth sand and mud.
- *Meandering* channel of the lower reaches of the River *Urr* and Southwick Water, and the *wriggling pattern of channels* on the merse.
- *Rugged hills* against the improved pasture and merse along coast.
- The hills and the surrounding *fields interrupted by geology* - with *gorsey knolls* and outcrops of *granite poking through*.
- The *geology continues onto the coast* forming the indented *rocky shore, dramatic cliffs, islands*, and a series of distinct large rock formations many of which have been named.
- Seasonal colour and *pattern* in the *mixed woodlands*, heathland and farmland including the flowering colours of gorse, heather, rhododendron (on the lower slopes of Bengairn), and the rich colours of *wild flowers* and grasses on Rough Island.
- The many shades of green - from the dark green of the merse through to the lush green of improved grassland, and the mixture of greens in the broadleaf woodlands and conifer plantations.

Change/movement

3.2.5 Constant *change* and movement are vital ingredients in this *dynamic* landscape. The Solway appears to be a relatively 'gentle' body of water that contributes to the *peaceful* quality of the NSA, but the movement of the tide creates a dramatic effect on the landscape. Change and movement contribute to the scenic qualities through the following.



- The tidal cycle causes the emergence/ submergence of a *vast intertidal* area of *mud and sand*.
- As the causeways to Hestan and Rough Island are revealed the islands become attached or connected to the shore.
- The bays perceived as land that *become flooded with water* as the tide comes in.
- Wetlands, such as Mersehead, that become flooded with water over the winter months.
- The gradual silting of channels and rivers, and the accretion and erosion of the merse.
- Changing weather patterns apparent in the large sky as approaching storms blow into the estuary from the west. Cloud cover on Screel and Bengairn providing a local weather forecast.
- The changing *intervisibility* across the Solway border to the Cumbrian coast.

Light

3.2.6 The coast can often be sensed before it is seen, mainly due to the appearance of the sky over the water. The quality of the skyscape over the East Stewartry Coast is greatly valued due to the following.





- Sunrise, sunset and cloud patterns reflected in the large areas of sand and mud.
- Clarity of views provided by the *good clean air*.
- *Sea views across the Solway* constantly changing in response to weather conditions.
- Clear night skies due to the lack of light pollution.
- Varying opacity as rain showers travel across the Solway and mist settles in across the bays.
- Winter mists and sea haars.



Sensory qualities

3.2.7 Some of the special qualities of the East Stewartry Coast are not visual – the sounds and smells experienced when in the NSA can reinforce other qualities, such as *peacefulness* and a sense of *naturalness*. These include:

- the *abundant wildlife*, especially *birds* – *waders, skylarks and lapwings in Spring* and *colonies of sea birds* on the rocky cliffs;
- *flocks of birds* taking off and landing on the *merse, coastal flats, and intertidal areas*;
- sounds and smell of the water;
- the *mild and variable climate* experienced in this sheltered landscape; and
- the wind and breezes across the bays.

Composition

3.2.8 The East Stewartry Coast is a landscape of complexity and variety with very few dominant features or orientation points between the surrounding hills and the coast. The *mixture of landscape types, habitat and landuse*, and the relationship between them is an important quality in this landscape.

- It is *difficult to pinpoint one feature or element*– it is the *combination of them all* that is outstanding.
- The bays act as a *dynamic* transitional zone – part landscape and part seascape – that adds to the complexity of the landscape.

Harmony

3.2.9 One of the qualities valued about the East Stewartry Coast is that it is a *living, working landscape* that retains a sense of *naturalness* and an *unspoilt and uncommercialised* feel. There is a *balance* of land uses, such as *agriculture, forestry and tourism*, and *houses generally blend with the natural environment*. There is a sense of harmony between the land and the people, and a rich history evident in the *archaeological and maritime history*. The landscape affords numerous opportunities for quiet appreciation and enjoyment, with beaches, yachting, golfing and fishing available, and numerous walks including *long coastal paths and forest walks*.





Landmarks

3.2.10 Landmarks, both natural and man made, act as orientation features in the landscape and are important contributors to the distinctiveness of the East Stewartry Coast. Among the most significant are:

- Scrael;
- Bengairn;
- intertidal mudflats;
- Cumbrian Fells;
- Rough Firth;
- Balcary point;
- Hestan Island;
- Torr Point;
- Almorness Point;
- Rough Island;
- Castlehill Point, known locally as Castle Point;
- Mote of Mark;
- Sandyhills Bay; and
- Orchardton Tower.

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 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 they 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 Area. 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. Some people felt that the special qualities of the East Stewartry Coast extended beyond the existing boundary. These comments will inform future work into the validity of the boundary (see Appendix 2 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.



East Stewartry Coast

4 THE CHALLENGE

the challenge

4.1 How we are looking after the NSA

4.1.1 Those living and working within the East Stewartry Coast National Scenic Area have an important role in its management. 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 3) 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 East Stewartry Coast 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 erosion of sand dunes, erosion and accretion of the merse, 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 East Stewarty Coast 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 below. Opportunities for enhancement are discussed in Section 5.



| Table 1 | | |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Scenic quality | | Factors affecting quality |
| Core qualities | Shelter Enclosure Peacefulness | Loss of woodland Noise disturbance |
| Complexity | Irregular topography Field patterns Native/broadleaf woodland Mixed land-use Wildness/agricultural landscape Geology Merse, mudflats and sandy beaches River and merse channels Views and glimpses | Loss of open slopes and visible rock outcrops Erosion or loss of key characteristics of landscape eg. dykes and hedges Loss of woodland Changes to land use balance Changes or decline in agriculture Removal of gorse through improvement |
| Scale | Intimacy Ambiguity of scale and distance Privacy Views | Land use balance - need woodland for intimacy Interruption of views by intrusive elements Screening at key viewpoints Introduction of scale references into the bays Increasing numbers of visitors to secluded bays |
| Diversity | Landscape character Habitat Colour Texture | Erosion or loss of key characteristics – dykes, hedges, trees, etc. Degradation or loss of visually significant habitats – gorse and woodland pasture, native woodland heathland, merse Reduction in key species |
| 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 | Reduction in key species Change in land use – loss of farm land, loss of stock Noise and disturbance from active water sports Water pollution |
| Harmony | Living, working landscape Unspoilt/uncommercialised Sensitive development Archaeology and maritime history Balance of land use Recreational value | Changing population and age patterns – out migration and incomers Decline in agriculture employment Litter pollution Increased suburbanisation Increased standardisation of buildings and roads Public utilities – phone masts, power lines etc |
| 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 East Stewartry Coast 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 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 East Stewartry Coast 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 East Stewartry Coast 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 East Stewartry Coast 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 Nith Estuary National Scenic Area, with particular reference to its natural and cultural heritage, and with regard to its economic well being.



East Stewartry Coast

5 WHAT CAN BE DONE

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A list of issues currently causing change within the East Stewartry Coast 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 farming; 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 East Stewartry Coast is an agricultural landscape, primarily owned and managed by private individuals, 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 for grazing, the production of silage and some hay. Some cereal production occurs around the head of Auchencairn Bay.

5.2.2 The NSA has been covered by the Environmentally Sensitive Area agri-environment scheme, uptake of which 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). A number of holdings have agreements under the Merse Management Scheme, funded and administered by SNH.

5.2.3 Interest in the recent (post Foot and Mouth Disease) Environment and Tourism Recovery Grant 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 gorse pasture, rough grassland, heathland and merse, 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 on the enclosing hills (Screel, Potterland, Blackbellie, Mark Hill etc.), currently given over to forestry.





| AGRICULTURE: Changing support regimes | | |
|---|--|-------|
| Key issues | Opportunities | Code |
| CAP reform | 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 |
| Agri-environment schemes | | |
| Integration of agricultural and forestry support mechanisms | 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 been a trend away from traditional hardy breeds leading to decline in grazing on unimproved grassland such as merse, affecting the appearance, and suitable habitat for geese, and causing a loss of local

character. 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 | 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 |
| Loss of traditional breeds Prominent silage bales | Investigate ways in which three NSAs designations within the region can be used to provide added value to local produce | A/Fd2 |
| | Encourage consideration of sensitive siting and colour of silage bales | A/Fd3 |
| | Support maintenance of grazing patterns on merse and coastal marshes | A/Fd4 |
| | Support stocking of traditional breeds on merse | A/Fd5 |

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

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 decline of local 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 Hedges and dykes are key characteristics of this landscape, reinforcing local character and distinctiveness, and providing evidence of historic land use patterns. Dry stone dykes reflect the local geology, crafts and traditions. 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 Demand for new large farm buildings (see 5.7) | 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 |
| Conservation of hedges, dykes and gateposts Loss of labour intensive land management skills and practice | 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 |
| Loss of local jobs and services | Support training in traditional techniques such as dyking, hedge laying etc | A/Im3 |
| | 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 Small woodlands, roadside avenues, hedgerow and mature individual trees are a characteristic feature of the farming landscape in parts of the East Stewartry Coast. There are several large estates where trees are a significant feature in the landscape, such as the avenue to Orchardton House. There has been a general decline in the management and the replacement of dead and dying trees, including the decline of policy woodland, shelter belts and small farm woodlands that are particularly characteristic to the area. A variety of reasons are involved, including less need for shelterbelts to protect stock in winter, 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 Woodland and forestry make a significant contribution to the landscape of the East Stewartry Coast NSA. Cover ranges from individual mature and hedgerow trees (for instance the roadside oaks around Sandyhills), policy woodland (Munches, Orchardton and Southwick estates), shelterbelts (mature Scots Pine on the Rockcliffe and Dundrennan peninsulas), native woodlands (Gibbs Hole Wood) and productive forests (Screel and Mark Hill).

5.3.2 Ownership is mainly private apart from the large productive forests which are state owned and managed, and for which Forest Design Plans have been developed detailing their restructuring. South West Community Woodland Trust is developing woodland at Potterland using traditional woodland management methods. Individual trees and small woodlands are generally unproductive and therefore many are unmanaged.



5.3.3 A consultation process is established between the Forestry Commission, the Council, 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 Local Forestry Frameworks (produced for Galloway and Langholm/Lockerbie) whose guidance can be generally applied.

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

5.3.5 Forests and woodland contribute significantly to landscape character. For example broadleaf and mixed woodland are important to the visual diversity of the East Stewartry Coast – providing a variety of colour and texture throughout the year. Ancient and





long established woods of natural origin are important as visually distinct elements in the landscape as well as being very important for nature conservation eg. the oak woodland on the maritime cliffs at Southwick.

5.3.6 A major increase or decrease of tree cover can alter the character of the area. For example, the introduction of woodland would affect the open coastal character of the merse, Urr floodplain and Dundrennan and Rockcliffe peninsulas. The rugged, irregular topography of the coastal granite uplands may be obscured by woodland. 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 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 Bengairn and Screele are prominent hills highly visible from the surrounding areas, and the panoramic views from these hills should be maintained. Meanwhile unmanaged woodland can detract from scenic

quality. Appropriate woodland management is therefore vital to conserve the scenic qualities of this NSA (eg. prominent woodlands such as the woodlands at Torr and Almorness peninsulas, and Southwick Coast Reserve are distinct features in the landscape). The riparian woodland along the banks of the River Urr is visible from the surrounding hills and delineate the meandering lower reaches of the river.



5.3.7 Forests and woodlands also provide significant opportunities for recreation. Screele and Dalbeattie Forest have car parking facilities and walks and attract a high number of 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 Recreation and tourism section).

| WOODLAND & FORESTRY: Forests and woodlands | | |
|--|---|-------|
| Key issues | Opportunities | Code |
| Need for sensitive forest design Lack of woodland management Loss of small woodlands Conservation and expansion of native woodlands Conservation and expansion of riparian woods Recreational opportunities | Seek to develop a vision statement for forestry within the NSA | W/Fw1 |
| | Seek the inclusion of NSA objectives in all forest design plans | W/Fw2 |
| | Encourage a high standard of design for forests and woodland in the NSA, including regard for key long views | W/Fw3 |
| | Support and encourage the development and maintenance of recreational opportunities in existing forests. | W/Fw4 |
| | Increase awareness about the cultural heritage of woodlands and forests (eg. interpretation of charcoal platforms) | W/Fw5 |
| | 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 Hedgerows and hedgerow trees are characteristic of the more sheltered lowland parts of the NSA. A few avenues and individual trees are covered by Tree Preservation Orders, but most are not. 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. Assistance is also available through the Rural Stewardship Scheme within recognised designed landscapes. Parkland trees are a feature of the designed estate landscapes, and many roadside trees are present around Sandyhills, contributing to the scenic quality of the East Stowarty Coast.



| WOODLAND & FORESTRY: Hedgerow, roadside and parkland trees | | |
|--|---|-------|
| Key issues | Opportunities | Code |
| Tree loss Loss of hedgerows Replacement of avenues | Seek to encourage the retention or replacement of avenues and tree lines as they are distinct features, reflecting estate and designed landscapes | W/Hr1 |
| | Support the protection of important, threatened trees and avenues by Tree Preservation Orders | W/Hr2 |
| | 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 The shoreline of the East Stewartry Coast is predominantly rocky, with the shallow bays at Auchencairn and Orchardton cut into the granite bedrock. Sea cliffs extend from Castlehill Point to Sandyhills, and westwards from Balcary Point. Sand stretches from Mersehead to Southernness, and dunes occur at Sandyhills Bay where efforts have been undertaken to stabilise the remaining dunes. Areas of merse occur at Southwick Water, and line the heads of the Bays and Rough Firth. At low tide large areas of sandflats and mudflats are exposed.



5.4.2 Southernness (immediately outwith the NSA) is one of the few areas designated as Developed Coastline in the Dumfries and Galloway Structure Plan. Rockcliffe and Kippford, former shipbuilding and fishing villages, are popular with holidaymakers, the marina at Kippford attracting recreational



sailors. Remnants of former jetties, stake nets and some wartime remains are still evident along the coast.

5.4.3 The beaches at Rockcliffe and Sandyhills are currently designated as Bathing Waters, and other smaller, more secluded beaches are located on the promontories. Coastal litter, principally sea borne, is evident along the shoreline.

5.4.4 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

5.4.5 Extensive areas of intertidal sand and mudflats are an intrinsic part of the scenic value of the East Stewartry Coast. 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 often 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 Management Strategy for the Inner Solway European Marine Site and the study on the potential for managed realignment along the Inner Solway | S/S11 |
| | Support development of a Shoreline Management Plan for the Solway | S/S12 |
| | Seek improvements to the appearance of existing coastal protection when undertaking replacement or repair | S/S13 |
| | Seek to support an approach of coastal realignment wherever appropriate (retreat the line of coastal defence) | S/S14 |

Pollution

5.4.6 Litter detracts from the scenic value and amenity of the shoreline, particularly on beaches. Coastal and sea borne litter is present all along the shoreline, with incidents of dumped and abandoned vehicles (Southernness). Dog fouling is also a problem on some beaches. However, strandlines form an important and sensitive habitat for rare plants and invertebrates.

5.4.7 Clear night skies can be affected by light pollution. The tranquillity of the NSA can be affected by noise pollution from active water sports and shoreline activities (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 section).





| SHORELINE: Pollution | | |
|--|---|------|
| Key issues | Opportunities | Code |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 including cockling

5.4.8 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 Cultural Heritage Issues and Opportunities.

5.4.9 Uncontrolled hand gathering of cockles has affected the amenity and tourism value of the foreshore and beaches, causing physical disturbance and damage, noise and visual disturbance from tractors and lorries. The fishery has now been closed by the Scottish Executive and may reopen only when stocks regenerate, and subject to sustainable management. Similar disturbance is also caused by increasing numbers of motor bikes and cars taking access across the foreshore between Mersehead and Southerness.

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

| SHORELINE: Shoreline activities including cockling | | |
|---|---|-------|
| Key issues | Opportunities | Code |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation (see also 5.9) • Cockling | Seek to reduce inappropriate vehicular access to foreshore. | S/Sh1 |
| | Support ongoing moves to achieve sustainable fisheries and promote acceptable working methods | S/Sh2 |

Coastal and maritime features

5.4.10 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 Palnackie is under used by river traffic. These are discussed in 5.6 Cultural Heritage Issues and Opportunities.

| SHORELINE: Coastal and maritime features | | |
|--|---|-------|
| Key issues | Opportunities | Code |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of jetties, quays (see 5.6) • Loss of stake nets (see 5.6) | 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 (such as the control of water levels at Mersehead Farm). The coastline of this NSA has several such sites, some of which have been designated for their international, national and local importance for nature conservation (see Appendix 4), and to ensure their appropriate management and conservation.

5.5.2 Sites managed by conservation organisations include: the Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserve at Southwick Coast; the Mersehead RSPB Reserve; and the National Trust for Scotland own and manage land at Rockcliffe and Rough Island. Designated Local Wildlife Sites within the NSA are located at: Clifton Farm; Castlehill Point; and Almorness. Two further Local Wildlife Sites occur just outwith the NSA at Rascarrel Moss and Southernness golf course.

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 woodland, heather moorland, gorse scrub, merse 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 river Urr.

5.5.5 Many people wish roadside 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 | Raise awareness of the links between landscape and biodiversity | NC/P1 |
| Experience of wildlife | | |
| Management of road verges | 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 gorse pasture around Sandyhills. The combination of these habitats is a core quality of the East Stewart Coast 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 the merse and gorse pasture).

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 Forestry and woodland). There has been a decline in 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 salmon. (Water quality issues are discussed further in 5.4 Shoreline). 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 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 wetlands and floodplains, merse, heathland), native woodlands and species (eg geese), 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 and visitor facilities at Mersehead RSPB Reserve | NC/Dh4 |
| | Support conservation management at Southwick Coast SWT Reserve | NC/Dh5 |
| | Ensure habitat/visual diversity is incorporated in the design of new planting and restructuring proposals | NC/Dh6 |
| | Seek to provide practical demonstrations of habitat management | NC/Dh7 |

5.6 Cultural Heritage Issues and Opportunities

Relevant Aim

Raise awareness, understanding, appreciation, support and responsibility for the East Stewartry Coast 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 East Stewartry Coast 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: Orchardton Tower; Mote of Mark; Castlehill Point; Southwick Church; Manor House, Hestan Island; Nethertown Cottages Fort; and the forts at Seaside. Numerous further sites have been recorded that are of national and regional importance.



5.6.2 Many planned estates are evident in the East Stewartry Coast NSA, making an important contribution to the landscape's character, and which contain features of historic interest (see also 5.2 Agriculture and 5.3 Forestry and woodland).

The designed landscape of Barnhourie Mill is included in the national 'Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland', and a further seven 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 East Stewartry Coast 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 for further discussion on field boundaries).

| CULTURAL HERITAGE: Historic landscapes | | |
|--|---|--------|
| Key issues | Opportunities | Code |
| Historic character of enclosure patterns | Raise awareness of the cultural dimension of the landscape | CH/HI1 |
| Historic character of settlement pattern | Consider important examples of historic land-use patterns in undertaking land use change | CH/HI2 |
| Contribution of estate policy landscapes | 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/HI3 |

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 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. The traditional stake netting technique is still undertaken along the coast and contributes to local distinctiveness, but is slowly being lost.

5.6.9 The former importance of the Solway and the Urr as transport routes is reflected in the remains of jetties, harbours, and ship wrecks along the coast that add to the scenic quality and cultural heritage of the area. The indented rocky coast was well used by smugglers. There are also some wartime remains evident. Many of these features 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 that contribute to local distinctiveness | CH/Mh2 |
| | Seek to conserve and interpret visible evidence of the former fishing and maritime 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 featured in literature. For example SR Crockett's 'The Raiders' was inspired by Hestan Island, and when an excise officer, Robert Burns was stationed at Balcarry Bay. There are also numerous local tales and fables which contribute to local distinctiveness. Such material can be used to highlight the special qualities of area and 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 |





5.7 Development Issues and Opportunities

Relevant Aims

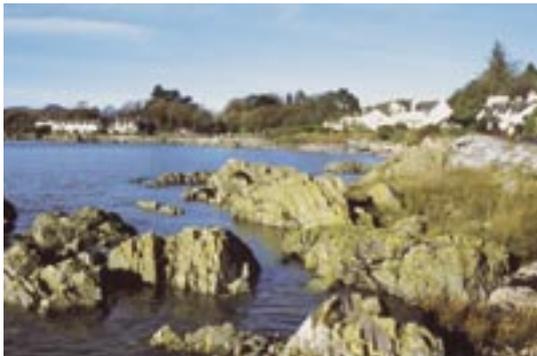
Guide change arising from all forms of development (housing, servicing, business, retailing and tourism) to maintain the scenic quality of the National Scenic Area.

Reinforce and maintain the individual character of settlements within the East Stewartry Coast 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 main villages in the East Stewartry Coast NSA are Palnackie, Kippford, Rockcliffe and Colvend. Granite and greywacke are the traditional building materials in the settlements, rural buildings are mainly whitewashed rubble walls and the large country houses are usually unpainted dressed stone.

5.7.2 There have been a small number of houses built within the NSA over recent years, and there are presently a number of sites with planning permission, principally in Kippford.

5.7.3 Policies, proposals and design guidance concerning development within the NSA are included in the Structure Plan and finalised Nithsdale and Stewartry Local Plans and 'Caring for the Built Environment'. Within the finalised

Local Plan there is an allocation for 19 houses in the area as well as infill opportunities identified in some villages.

5.7.4 Some newer developments have been very successful in respecting and reinforcing local character. However, because there was no advice identifying the special qualities of the NSA, certain new 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 suburban character. Views from the surrounding landscape and approaches into the settlements are important in how we experience the landscape.

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 each settlement. 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 an important quality of the East Stewartry Coast NSA.

| DEVELOPMENT: New development within settlements | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 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 |

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 under 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 Recreational development (see 5.9) | 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 |
| | 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. 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 |
| | Assess the impact of alterations and extensions on key views | D/Uc6 |

Minerals

5.7.15 Potentially workable reserves of sand and gravel occur within the East Stewartry Coast 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 Opportunities

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 A710 and A711 regional distributor roads are the main routes within the East Stewartry Coast NSA, and generally run parallel to the coast along the base of the enclosing hills. A series of minor roads, some single track, provide access to the coast. The road from Auchencairn to Balcary Point is the only road that runs adjacent to the shore.

5.8.2 The growing dependence on cars has led to an increase in traffic, and speeds, on the roads and a decline in local public transport service. Cyclists and pedestrians also use these roads, causing some concern for road safety.

5.8.3 Overhead cables are especially evident along road corridors and where they traverse the contours of the irregular topography, particularly at the coast. Some telecommunication masts are visible in the landscape.



Roads

5.8.4 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.

5.8.5 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.

5.8.6 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.

5.8.7 Stunning views across Mersehead and the Solway are glimpsed when driving along the A710, but there are few viewing points, causing slowing of traffic and informal parking. Road signs and car parking are discussed under 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 the 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 section 4.9) | 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

5.8.8 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/merse 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.

5.8.9 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.

5.8.10 Environmental Assessment is required for major infrastructure developments.

The Structure Plan provides a presumption against applications for wind farms of three or 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.

5.8.11 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, and the settlements within it | 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 Opportunities

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 East Stewartry Coast NSA provides outstanding scenery and wildlife, opportunities for quiet enjoyment, historic attractions and some sporting opportunities. The Colvend Coast is a well established destination for holidaymakers and offers a variety of accommodation.

5.9.2 Visitor attractions include: Orchardton Tower; Mote of Mark; Rough Island; Mersehead RSPB Reserve; Southwick Reserve; numerous beaches; marina facilities, a riding centre, coastal paths and golf courses.

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 accommodation located throughout the NSA.

Caravan parks, providing facilities for touring and static vans, are located at Palnackie, Kippford, Rockcliffe and Sandyhills. A large chalet park has been developed at Barend, Sandyhills. 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 open coastal areas.

5.9.7 Increasing visitor numbers leads to greater volumes 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 5.8 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 |
| | Seek to increase the quality of the visitor experience of the NSA | RT/Rd2 |
| Availability and quality of accommodation | 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 |
| Capacity of landscape to absorb new development | Seek to encourage landscape improvements to established caravan and chalet sites to minimise impact on the wider landscape | RT/Rd5 |
| Landscape impacts of caravan parks | Seek to encourage a wide provision of accommodation types within and close to the NSA | RT/Rd6 |
| Capacity of landscape to absorb recreational pressure | 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 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. A walking leaflet has recently been produced promoting paths in and around Dalbeattie and Colvend. At Dalbeattie Forest, just outwith the NSA, Dalbeattie Forest Community Partnership are developing a network of paths for the less able and a specialist mountain bike centre is being developed, part of the 'Seven Stanes' project being undertaken across the South of Scotland.



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, appears incongruous. 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 sign-posted Solway Coast Heritage Trail follows the A710 through the NSA, and links all three NSAs in the region. Stunning views across the Solway are revealed driving along this road, 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.

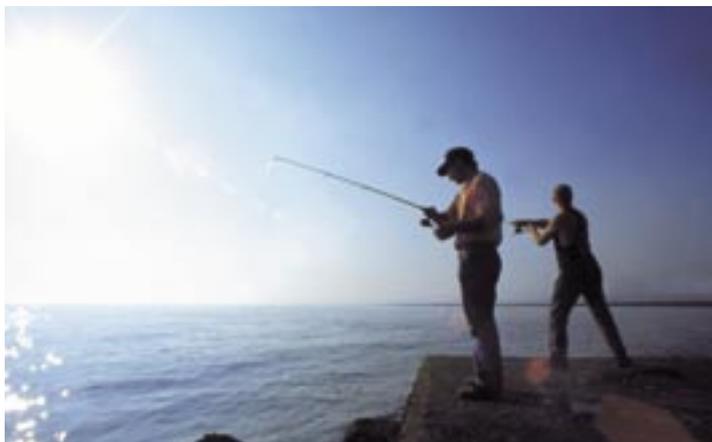
Other recreational activities

5.9.13 The attractive beaches within the NSA form an important recreational resource. Many residents and visitors enjoy the beaches at Sandyhills and Rockcliffe. 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. (These issues are discussed further in 5.4 Shoreline Issues and Opportunities)

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 museums, historic buildings and monuments, and nature reserves.

| 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 | 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 |
| Appropriate design and signposting of routes | Support the provision of planned and managed access through the development and implementation of the Core Path Network and Access Strategy | RT/Ca3 |
| Disturbance to farming | Support initiatives aimed at packaging and promoting cycling breaks that link with local cycle and repair shops and accommodation | RT/Ca4 |
| Disturbance to wildlife | Seek to encourage provision of sensitively sited and designed car parks, supported by a possible 'park and walk' initiative | RT/Ca5 |
| Management of car parking | 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 |





5.9.15 Traditional activities such the flounder trampling at Palnackie are distinctive to the area. The Urr has salmon, sea trout, and brown trout. The decline in fish stocks, due to a variety of reasons, reduces fishing opportunities and affects amenity value.

5.9.16 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, particularly when adjacent to unimproved land, such as on coastal headlands.

5.9.17 The scenic qualities of the NSA can also be experienced from the Solway. 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.

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 through 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 East Stewartry Coast 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: Other recreational activities | | |
|--|---|--------|
| Key issues | Opportunities | Code |
| Quality of beaches | Seek to promote responsible behaviour by beach visitors | RT/Oa1 |
| | Support development of appropriate facilities and interpretation at established visitor attractions and nature reserves | RT/Oa2 |
| Contribution of museums, reserves and other formal recreational facilities | Seek to raise awareness of opportunities for traditional countryside pursuits | RT/Oa3 |
| | Seek to support involvement in sustainable traditional countryside sports | RT/Oa4 |
| Traditional countryside activities | 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 |
| Demand for golf courses | | |
| Increase in water sports | | |

5.9.22 The current name of the NSA is unsatisfactory as it is not distinct enough geographically and is not locally acknowledged. The eastern section of the NSA has long been known, and promoted as the Colvend Coast (indeed the NSA is signposted as such from the A75), however this does not include Auchencairn and Orchardton Bay.



| RECREATION AND TOURISM: Marketing, promotion and interpretation | | |
|---|---|--------|
| Key issues | Opportunities | Code |
| Low profile of NSA Lack of signs Availability of NSA specific interpretation Local knowledge | Link into the developing Dumfries and Galloway Tourism Strategy | RT/Mp1 |
| | 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 the 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 |
| | Consideration of a new name for the NSA | RT/Mp7 |



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 East Stewartry Coast. 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 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. (List of acronyms provided at rear of document).

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 East Stewartry Coast. 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 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 are safeguarded. It will also allow the Action Plans 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, RSPB | 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, RSPB | M | L | A/Cs1 A/Fd1 |
| 3 | Seek to ensure the continuation of the Merse Management Scheme | SNH, Land managers | H | S | A/Fd4 A/Fd5 NC/ Dh2 |
| Projects – research, development and implementation | | | | | |
| 4 | Explore the feasibility of a specific NSA agri-environment scheme to encourage appropriate management of landscape features/qualities | NSA Officer, NFUS, SLF, SAC, SEERAD, RSPB | H | S | A/Im2 A/Fd5 |
| 5 | 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 |
| 6 | 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 |
| 7 | Give consideration to enhancing existing drainage management schemes to conserve/restore the natural characteristics and biodiversity of water courses | SEPA, SAC, Land Managers, UDSFB, SNH | M | M | A/Im2 |
| 8 | Undertake redundant traditional buildings survey (building on the Listed Farm Steadings Project undertaken by Solway Heritage) and investigate support available for conversion works | NSA Officer, SNH, SH, SEDG, HS, SAC, SEERAD, Land Managers | H | M | A/Im1 |
| 9 | 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, FC | M | L | A/Fd2 A/Fd2 |
| | (See also Forestry & Woodland Action Plan re management of woodlands and See Cultural Heritage Action Plan re maintenance of dykes) | | | | |
| Raising awareness and understanding | | | | | |
| 10 | 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 | | | | | |
| 11 | 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, RSPB, SAC, FWAG, FC, | H | M | A/Fd3 A/Im1 |



| | Policy and legislation | | | | |
|----|---|--|---|---|-------|
| 12 | 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, DGC, SLF, RSPB, SEERAD, SNH | H | M | A/Cs1 |
| 13 | Explore the potential benefits of Land Management Contracts or similar within the NSA | SNH, SEERAD, NFUS, SLF, RSPB, HS, DGC | H | L | A/Cs2 |
| 14 | Encourage increased integration of forestry and agriculture grant schemes | FC, SEERAD | H | M | A/Cs3 |
| 15 | 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, Communities | 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 ongoing research of economic value of small woodlands and potential funding streams through Small Woods in South Scotland Working Group | FC, SNH, SE, SAC, NSA Officer | M | M | W/Fw8 |
| 4 | Continue to develop recreational potential of forests | FC, FE, PWO, Communities | H | Ongoing | W/Fw4 |
| 5 | Support Dalbeattie Forest Community Woodland Partnership in the development of projects where applicable to achieve the aims of the NSA | | H | Ongoing | W/Fw5 W/Fw4 |
| Projects – research, development and implementation | | | | | |
| 6 | 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 |
| 7 | Explore opportunities to encourage replacement of parkland trees and management of habitat | NSA Officer, SH, SNH, Land Managers | H | M | W/Hr3 |
| 8 | Investigate scope for managing/reopening key views within forestry – link to footpath and road views | FC, FE, PWO, SNH, DGC, NSA Officer, Communities | M | M | W/Fw3 |
| Raising awareness and understanding | | | | | |
| 9 | 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 |
| 10 | Encourage take up of Amenity Planting Grant in appropriate landscape character areas | DCG, SNH | H | Ongoing | W/Hr4 |
| 11 | 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, DGC, NSA Officer | M | M | W/Fw5 |
| 12 | Encourage the use of woodland planting to help integrate new development into the landscape | NSA Officer, DGC, Developers | M | M | W/Fw7 |
| 13 | 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 | | | | | |
| 14 | Encourage use of Landscape Design Guidance for forests and woodland in Dumfries and Galloway | FC, FE, PWO, SNH, DGC | H | Ongoing | W/Fw3 |
| 15 | Promote findings and improve awareness of Local Forestry Framework guidance | FC, PWO, SNH, DGC | H | Ongoing | W/Fw2 |
| 16 | Encourage retention of saplings during hedge cutting in appropriate locations | NSA Officer, FWAG, Land Managers | H | Ongoing | W/Hr1 |



| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---|---------|-------------------------|
| 17 | 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 |
| 18 | Develop a vision statement for future of woodlands and forests in the NSA | FC, SNH, DGC, NSA Officer, Communities | M | L | W/Fw1 |
| 19 | 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 |
| 20 | 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 | | | | | |
| 21 | 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 |
| 22 | 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 |
| 23 | Continue Council policy to seek public access agreements on FC land being sold where appropriate | FE, DGC | M | Ongoing | W/Fw4 |
| 24 | 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 |
| 25 | 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 |
| 26 | 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 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.

| 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/S11 |
| 2 | Support the programme of improvements to sewage treatment plants | SEPA, SW, DGC | H | Ongoing | S/P4 |
| 3 | Support introduction of Regulating Order and management plan for the cockle and mussel shellfisheries within the Solway Firth | SNH, DGC, SSMA, SE, RSPB | H | S | S/Sh2 |
| 4 | Support the study identifying potential areas of coastal realignment in the Inner Solway | SNH, DGC, NSA Officer, RSPB | L | Ongoing | S/S14 |
| Projects – research, development and implementation | | | | | |
| 5 | 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, RSPB, NSA Officer, Communities, SEPA, SW | H | S | S/P1 S/P2 S/P3 |
| 6 | Undertake/develop projects with Solway Firth Partnership to achieve mutual aims and objectives – such as Marine Litter Project | SFP, SNH, NSA Officer, RSPB | H | S | S/S11 |
| 7 | Identify and record evidence and condition of maritime features and examine mechanisms and funding streams for their conservation | SFP, SNH, HS, SCAPE, NSA Officer, Local History groups, Communities | H | S | S/Cm1 |
| 8 | Encourage appropriate use of Palnackie harbour by river traffic | Communities | M | L | S/Cm1 |
| 9 | Explore methods of reducing inappropriate vehicular access to foreshore | NSA Officer, RSPB, SNH | M | M | S/Sh1 |
| Raising awareness and understanding | | | | | |
| 10 | Support and promote ongoing litter education programme | SFP, RSPB, Schools, SWEAP, Communities | H | Ongoing | S/P1 S/P2 S/P3 |
| 11 | Raise awareness about sources of marine litter | SFP | H | M | S/P1 |
| 12 | 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, SFP, DGC, HS | H | Ongoing | S/S13 |
| Guidance | | | | | |
| 13 | Consider implementation of innovative 'soft' engineering techniques which are visually acceptable | SFP, SNH, DGC, SEPA | L | L | S/S13 |
| 14 | Develop Shoreline Management Plan for the northern shores of the Solway | SFP, RSPB, SNH, DGC | M | L | S/S12 |
| Policy and legislation | | | | | |
| 15 | Continue implementation of current Structure Plan policy on applications for protection against coastal erosion | DGC | H | Ongoing | S/S15 |
| 16 | Consider potential for light pollution when assessing coastal development proposals | DGC | H | Ongoing | S/P5 |
| 17 | Continue implementation of current Structure Plan policy on coastal development | DGC | H | Ongoing | S/S15 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 Urr District Salmon Fisheries Board in the sustainable management of fish stocks in the river | UDSFB, SNH, SH, GFT | M | L | NC/Dh2 |
| 2 | Support implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans for Species and Habitats | LBAP Partnership (inc. FC, FE, SAC, SNH, DGC, SFP, RSPB), Communities | H | Ongoing | NC/P2 |
| 3 | Support implementation of the Road-side Biodiversity Action Plan to maintain important roadside habitats | SNH, DGC, Communities | 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, RSPB, SWT, Communities | 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, Communities | 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, RSPB, 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, FE, SNH, SFP, RSPB, SWT, NTS | H | Ongoing | NC/P1 |
| 8 | Raise awareness of and interpret nature conservation interest of NSA through ongoing communication and publicity of LBAP | LBAP, Partnership (inc. RSPB, SWT, DGC, FC, SNH, NTS) | H | Ongoing | NC/Dh1 |
| 9 | Support ongoing programmes of environmental awareness and understanding of wildlife value relevant to NSA | LBAP, Partnership (inc. SWT, NTS, SNH) | H | Ongoing | NC/Dh1 NC/Dh4 NC/Dh5 |
| 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/Dh6 |
| 11 | Encourage uptake of SNH funded Amenity Planting Grant | SNH, DGC | | | NC/Dh2 NC/Dh6 |
| 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, RSPB | H | Ongoing | NC/Dh3 |
| 13 | Support measures to encourage good agricultural practice to prevent diffuse run off | SEERAD, SEPA, SH, RSPB, SAC | H | Ongoing | NC/Dh3 |
| 14 | Promote best practice to prevent the spread of invasive weeds eg. knotweed, ragwort, etc. | SEERAD, SAC, RSPB | H | Ongoing | NC/Dh3 |
| 15 | Support demonstration of wetland management –Mersehead RSPB Reserve | SNH, RSPB | M | Ongoing | NC/Dh7 |
| Policy and legislation | | | | | |
| 16 | Ensure water quality standards are being maintained and all consented discharges meet national/international standards | SW, SEPA | H | Ongoing | NC/Dh2 |
| 17 | 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 area 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, Communities | M | Ongoing | CH/A2 |
| 2 | Co-ordinate with Dalbeattie Community Initiative in the development of cultural heritage projects to achieve the objectives of the NSA | Dalbeattie Community Initiative, NSA Officer | H | Ongoing | Ch/La2 Ch/La4 |
| 3 | Co-ordinate with Auchencairn Initiative in the development of cultural heritage projects to achieve the objectives of the NSA | Auchencairn Initiative, NSA Officer | H | Ongoing | Ch/La2 Ch/La4 |
| Projects – research, development and implementation | | | | | |
| 4 | Investigate the most effective way of conserving some stake nets along the coast | SFP, NSA Officer, Land Managers, SCAPE | H | S | CH/Mh3 |
| 5 | Encourage the consideration of protecting traditional netting when selling fishing rights | UDSFB, Land Managers, SFP | H | M | CH/Mh2 |
| 6 | Develop interpretative material for leaflets/interpretation boards/guided walks/trails of maritime history | NSA Officer, SFP, DGC, DGTB, SCAPE, Communities | M | M | CH/Mh4 |
| 7 | 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/HI3 W/Hr1 W/Fw6 |
| 8 | Assess need for further Historic Land-use Assessment research or survey work | DGC, HS, RCAHMS | S | L | CH/A2 |
| 9 | Encourage links with former trade ports across Solway eg. Whitehaven | SFP Marine Leisure Forum, Communities, NSA Officer | L | L | CH/MH1 |
| Raising awareness and understanding | | | | | |
| 10 | 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, Communities | H | M | CH/Mh1 CH/La1 |
| 11 | 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 NSA's in D&G) | SNH, DGC, SH, SFP, NSA Officer, Local Groups, Communities | H | S-L | CH/La2 CH/La3 |



| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---|---------|------------------|
| 12 | 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, HS, RCAHMS, DGC, Local History Groups, Land Managers | H | M-L | CH/HI1 CH/HI2 |
| 13 | 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 |
| 14 | 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, Local Groups, Communities, DGC | M | M | CH/La2 |
| 15 | 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 | M | Ongoing | CH/La3 |
| Guidance | | | | | |
| 16 | Continue to provide advice on management of archaeological features through Historic Scotland and Council Archaeologist | DGC, HS | H | Ongoing | CH/A1 |
| 17 | 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 | | | | | |
| 18 | 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 |
| 19 | 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/HI3 |

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, Communities 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, Communities, 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, Communities, 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, Communities | 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, DGC, NSA Officer, HS | 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 HLA, through ongoing training, communication and publicity | SNH, DGC, NSA Officer, 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, NSA Officer, DGC, Communities, 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, SH, DGTB, NSA Officer | 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, Communities | M | M | I/R6 |
| 8 | Assess need for additional parking facilities within the NSA | NSA Officer, DGC | M | M | I/R6 |
| See Recreation and Tourism Plan for Signage | | | | | |
| Raising awareness and understanding | | | | | |
| 9 | Incorporate environmental appraisal in all road work schemes within the NSA | DGC | H | S/O | I/R2 I/R3 |
| 10 | 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 |
| 11 | Give particular regard to landscape considerations in assessing and designing potential road improvement schemes within the NSA | DGC | H | S/O | I/R4 |
| 12 | Take particular account of NSA qualities in assessing notifications of minor works to public utilities | DGC | H | S/O | I/Pt3 |
| 13 | Establish discussion with Statutory Undertakers working group on conservation of landscape character | NSA Officer, DGC | H | S/O | I/Pt4 |
| 14 | Establish ways of disseminating Landscape Character Assessment to statutory undertakers and telecommunication providers | SNH, DGC | H | S/O | I/Pt1 |
| Guidance | | | | | |
| 15 | 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 |
| 16 | Assess need to formulate specific policy for small scale wind generators within or affecting the NSA | SNH, DGC | M | M | I/Pt3 |



| Policy and legislation | | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--------------------|---|---|----------------|
| 17 | Support implementation of Wind energy strategy within the Structure Plan | DGC | H | O | I/Pt7 |
| 18 | Continue the programme of listing unique roadside features | DGC, HS | M | O | I/R3 |
| 19 | Continue implementation of planning policy on telecommunication and major infrastructure development | DGC | H | O | I/Pt5 I/Pt3 |
| 20 | Ensure mitigation and reinstatement works are undertaken following pipeline installation | DGC, Developers | M | | I/Pt2 I/Pt5 |
| 21 | 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 | 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 (See Nature Conservation Action Plan re fish stocks in Urr) | NSA Officer, DGTB | H | Ongoing | RT/Rd1 |
| 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 | 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, Communities | 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, RSPB, SNH, DGC, DGTB, HS, Access Forum | 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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, RSPB, 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, 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 | H | L | RT/ Mp3 |
| 17 | Develop a strategy for signage within the NSA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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, RSPB, 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, Communities | H | Ongoing | RT/Oa2 |
| 19 | Seek to identify an appropriate and distinct name for the NSA | Communities, NSA Officer, Business operators | H | S | Rt/ Mp7 |
| Raising awareness and understanding | | | | | |
| 20 | 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, RSPB, SEDG, SNH, DGTB, Business Operators | H | S/M | RT/Oa2 RT/Oa3 RT/Oa4 RT/Oa5 |
| 21 | Encourage involvement of school parties and youth groups in outdoor activities within the NSA | FC, DGC (Youth Strategy), SFP, RSPB, Land Managers, Fishing assoc. | M | M/L | RT/Oa3 |
| 22 | Continue development of annual programme of guided walks and events, to include heritage/archaeology/maritime themes within the NSA, involving local communities, landowners and farmers | DGC, SNH, NSA Officer, FE, SFP, HS NTS, RSPB, Land Managers, Communities | M | S | RT/Oa2 |



| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---------|------------------------|
| 23 | Promote the NSAs special qualities and landscape character through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NSA guide/leaflet - exhibition material - Historic Land-use Assessment data - dedicated interpretation centre (for all 3 NSAs in D&G) - West of Scotland Screen Commission - Development of a NSA web site | SNH, DGC, DGTB, NSA Officer, RSPB | H | S/M | RT/Mp3 RT/Mp5 |
| 24 | Raise awareness of Tourist Board advisory staff on the special landscape and nature conservation value of the NSA | SNH, RSPB, DGTB, HS, NSA Officer | H | S | RT/Mp2 |
| 25 | Encourage uptake of Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme to enhance recreational value of existing woods | FC, PWO | M | Ongoing | RT/Ca1 W/Fw5 |
| Guidance | | | | | |
| 26 | Ensure design of new paths and tracks are in keeping with local character | FC, FE, PWO, SNH, DGC | H | S | RT/Mp4 |
| 27 | Ensure future car parks are located sympathetically within the landscape, and that the design and signage reflects local distinctiveness | FC, FE, PWO, DGC | H | Ongoing | RT/Mp4 |
| 28 | Encourage the conversion of traditional buildings for use as visitor facilities/tourist accommodation | HS | M | Ongoing | RT/Mp4 RT/Rd10 |
| 29 | 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, RSPB, DGTB, Community Safety, Access Forum | M | Ongoing | RT/Oa1 S/P1 S/P2 |
| 30 | 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/Oa6 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 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 3). These links are vital, allowing action in the NSA to build on work already being undertaken. The aims and objectives set out for the East Stewartry Coast 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 |
| GFT | Galloway Fisheries Trust |
| HS | Historic Scotland |
| LBAP Partners | Local Biodiversity Action Plan partners |
| NFUS | National Farmers Union of Scotland |
| NTS | The National Trust for 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 |
| SSMA | Solway Shellfish Management Association |
| 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 Guideline |
| 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 East Stewartry Coast Region

4,500 Hectares

Extent of Area

The area comprises Auchencairn Bay, Orchardton Bay, Rough Firth, Sandyhills Bay, the Mersehead Sands and their immediate hinterlands. The western margin is defined by the ridge running from Balcarry Point to the summit of Bengairn Hill (391m). From there the inland limits run through the summits of Scree Hill, Croach Hill, Blackbellie Hills, Barlochan Hill and Ramshaw Wood to cross the floodplain of the Urr north of Munches to the main road A710. The main road defines the limit southwards as far as Woodside, and then the summit of the ridge of Mark Hill and Shiel Hill behind the villages of Kippford and Rockcliffe. From Shiel Hill the inland limits follow a line connecting with the summits of Barclay Hill, Bainloch Hill and Redbank Hill where they take up the line of the District boundary to Mersehead Plantation and the shore.

Description

The wide tidal flats of Mersehead Sands occur at a point where the saltings of Preston Merse meet the fossil cliffs and raised beaches of the rocky Sandyhills coast. Sandyhills Bay with its dunes and enclosing woodland is separated from Mersehead Sands by the meandering intertidal stretch of the Southwick Water which adds visual interest to the wide expanse of sand. Inland the containing hills are part wooded and part moorland, and at Caulkerbush there is a diverse pattern of hedgerow trees, parkland and wooded hillside.

Westwards the hills become progressively more wooded in a way which strengthens the feeling of enclosure that they contribute to the inshore waters of Rough Firth, Orchardton Bay and Auchencairn Bay. Within the bays, divided by the wooded promontories of Almorness Point and Torr Point, lie Heston Island and Rough Island which strengthen the character of enclosed intimacy and shelter that these inlets exhibit. Around their shores the land use pattern of mixed farming and forestry and undulating relief underline this small scale intimacy of landscape, which contrasts well with the open character of the sand flats. The villages of Rockcliffe and Kippford add to the diversity of the scene, and elsewhere buildings tend to be of a traditional character which harmonises well with the nature of the landscape.

Other National Interests

The National Trust for Scotland owns Rough Island and land at Rockcliffe. The Forestry Commission owns scattered tracts of woodland at Kippford, South Glen, Auchencairn Moss, Dalbeattie Forest and Caulkerbush. There are sites of Special Scientific Interest at Auchencairn Bay and the Southernness Coast.





APPENDIX 2

Boundary comments

During consultations much discussion was held and many comments received regarding the existing boundary line of the NSA. 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 boundary to the south west along the coast to include Rascarrel Bay, Rascarrel Moss and Auchencairn, rejoining existing boundary north of the village. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rascarrel Bay different from coast within NSA as shingle beach – inclusion would add to the visual and aural diversity of NSA. Dramatic sea cliffs display very similar qualities to those within the NSA at Port O'Warren in NSA. Does not have large intertidal range but tidal movement reveals/conceals striking rock arches/tunnels of Brock's Holes. Importance of coast recognised for its range of habitats and seabird colonies. Very popular circular walk from Balcary to Rascarrel Bay – enjoyed for scenery and views. Auchencairn has been proposed as a Conservation Area. Village built into the hillside and has retained its integrity, adding to the quality of the landscape. |
| Extend to Rascarrel Bay as above, rejoining the existing boundary at Bengairn. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boundary currently runs along the first ridge line viewed from the coast. This low ridge does not provide the distinct containment of the higher hills to the north west. Peninsula is a gently undulating landscape of regular fields, providing contrast to the rugged hills and irregular coast, and provides important setting to Auchencairn Bay. As travel west the valued qualities of NSA gradually dissipate. Hill forts and ancient hill top settlements to west could provide containment eg. Bengairn, Suie Hill, Settlement at Nether Hazelfield. |
| Extend the boundary north west from Bengairn to include Ingleston Moor, Barlae Hill and Doach Woods, rejoining existing boundary just north of Ramshaw Wood. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beyond the ridge line that forms the current boundary the scenic qualities change and do not exhibit the variety and complexity of the estuarine/coastal landscape. |
| <p>Many comments about the north east boundary were received, summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> extend boundary to east edge of Dalbeattie Forest. extend east into Dalbeattie Forest to include Cloak Hill, Smithland Hill and Barclay Hill. Extend further east to the B793 and then B794 farm boundary rejoining at Sandyhills – some also suggested extending boundary width to include the northern entrance to Dalbeattie Forest. Extend east to B793 and then follow road to Caulkerbush. Extend north to include Clawberry Hill. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boundary follows first inland ridge – low ridge does not provide visual containment that other parts of the boundary provides. The visually complex peninsula with gorse knolls extends to the edge of Dalbeattie Forest. The irregular topography and scrub/wood pasture north of the A710 reinforce the sense of intimacy and enclosure valued within the NSA. Inclusion of Colvend Lochs would increase diversity. Extending boundary to Moyle Hill, Ironhash Hill and rejoining at Barclay Hill would provide more discernable containment to bays. Dalbeattie Forest provides recreational and viewing opportunities for all abilities, and can visually absorb large numbers of people and cars without affecting the sense of peacefulness in surrounding landscape. Landscape to east of above ridge also very scenic but does not appear to display complexity and diversity of coastal landscape. |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Link this NSA to the Nith Estuary NSA as the landscape perceived as being of equal quality and the small non designated strip of land is seen as 'puzzling'. Differing opinions as to whether Southernness should be included/excluded if the boundary realigned.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landscape between the two NSAs does not have a significantly lower scenic value. Development at Southernness is largely hidden from immediate views. |
| <p>Boundary seems arbitrary – there being no difference between this area and the whole of the Stewartry coastline.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Consideration needs to be given as to whether the whole coastline exhibits the complexity and diversity exhibited within the NSA. • 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. |
| <p>Seaward boundary appears arbitrary.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 3

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 Plans contain 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 influencing aspects of the East StewartryCoast 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 Western Southern Uplands and Inner Solway

Natural Heritage Futures Prospectus :The Wigtown Machars and Outer Solway

Mersehead RSPB Reserve Management Plan

SSSI Site Management statements





Appendix 4

Sites, areas and monuments identified for their particular interest

Nature Conservation designations

- **Proposed Special Area of Conservation**
 - Candidate Special Protection Area
 - Ramsar Site
 - SSSI
 - Upper Solway Flats and Marshes
- **Candidate Special Area of Conservation**
 - SSSI
 - Port O'Warren
 - Abbey Burn Foot to Balcary Point
 - Auchencairn and Orchardton Bays
- **Nature reserves**
 - Southwick Coast (Scottish Wildlife Trust)
 - Mersehead RSPB Reserve
- **Local wildlife sites**
 - Clifton Farm
 - Castlehill Point
 - Almorness

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

- Orchardton Tower (managed by Historic Scotland)
- Nethertown Cottages Fort
- Mote of Mark, fort
- Castlehill Point
- Hestan Island, Manor House
- Southwick Church
- Seaside, fort (on boundary)

Gardens & Designed Landscapes

(Listed in national Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland)

Barnhourie Mill

Gardens and Designed Landscapes

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

Munches

Orchardton House

Baron's Craig

Nutwood

Auchencairn House

Roughills

Southwick House

Appendix 5

Consultees

Communities

- Auchencairn Community Council
- Auchencairn Initiative
- Colvend and Southwick Community Council
- Dalbeattie Community Council
- Dalbeattie Community Initiative
- Kippford Association

Elected representatives

- Council Elected Members

Land Management

- Dalbeattie Forest Community Partnership
- Forestry Commission SW Scotland Conservancy
- Forest Enterprise
- Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
- Galloway Fisheries Trust
- National Farmers Union of Scotland
- Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department
- Scottish Landowners Federation
- Solway Shellfish Hand Gatherers Association
- Urr District Salmon Fisheries Board
- Urr Navigation Trust

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
- 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
- Locharbriggs Social Club (sea angling section)
- Mountaineering Council Scotland
- ScotWays (Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society)

Others

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





Photography

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