

Dumfries and Galloway Council

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2

Nith Estuary National Scenic Area Management Strategy

Planning Guidance - November 2019



This management strategy was first adopted as supplementary planning guidance to the Nithsdale Local Plan. That plan was replaced by the Council's first Local Development Plan (LDP) in 2014. The LDP has been reviewed and has been replaced by LDP2 in 2019. As the strategy is considered, by the Council, to remain relevant to the implementation of LDP2 it has been readopted as planning guidance to LDP2.

Policy NE1: National Scenic Areas ties the management strategy to LDP2. 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. The Council will work with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to review and update the content of the strategy during the lifetime of LDP2.

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 Nith Estuary NSA, that we commend this document to you.

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Nith Estuary

SUMMARY

The Nith Estuary is recognised nationally and internationally for its outstanding scenery. This management strategy is being 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 in this Strategy and a vision for the future of the Nith Estuary 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, 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



Nith Estuary

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT

National Scenic Areas

1.1.2 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.

1.2.2 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 areas 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 SNH (Scottish Natural Heritage), 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.

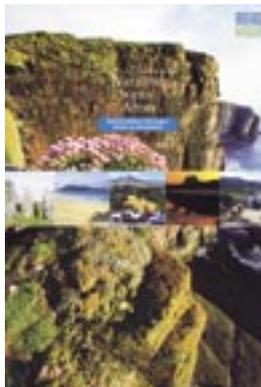




1.2.2 Some of the changes that can occur within the seascape, agriculture and forestry, which may significantly affect the scenic qualities of the NSA, are outwith statutory planning control. Some changes, however, are subject to consultation, such as applications for woodland and forestry grant schemes.

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 has 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 Nith Estuary National Scenic Area. The East Stewartry Coast 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 NSA taking full account of existing strategies and plans;
- examined the forces that may cause change within each NSA;
- established clear objectives on how this change should be managed;
- identified opportunities for the management and enhancement of the landscape qualities of each NSA;
- proposed a series of actions, potentially delivered by a wide variety of partners;
- provided a framework from which the potential affect of future change on the scenic qualities of the Nith Estuary 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?

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, focussing specifically on broad land management issues across the three National Scenic Areas, was held in September 2001. Land managers from all three NSAs

attended the meeting and raised issues, concerns and opportunities for the designation.



- A second land managers meeting was held in May 2002 to discuss the working papers, discussing in detail the developing agricultural issues and actions.
- Meetings have been held with various organisations and agencies throughout the development of the Strategy

Public Workshops

- The first round of public workshops were held in September 2001 at Colvend Public Hall, Gatehouse Community Centre, Hutton Hall (Bankend), and New Abbey Village Hall, and attended by over 100 people.
- At the workshops a series of short discussions were held to identify what people valued most about the NSAs, and what changes they had noticed in the landscape over the last 20 years or so. Places of local importance and places where problems exist were identified, and ideas and opportunities for the areas were raised.



- Workshops have also been held with staff from SNH, members of the local chapter of the Royal Town Planning Institute, and the Countryside Rangers and Wardens of the region.
- The second round of public workshops were held in March 2002 and 98 people attended the four meetings.
- During the workshops agreement was sought on the scenic values that had been identified for each National Scenic Area, and the proposed vision for the areas. The potential actions in the working papers were prioritised, their timing considered, and possible implementers noted. Participants also indicated specific actions that they may wish to help implement.

Questionnaires

- A questionnaire was devised and distributed at public events, sent to Community Councils and a variety of organisations. Over 90 completed questionnaires were returned.
- Over Easter 2002, questionnaires targeted at visitors to the area were distributed at locations within and around the National Scenic Areas. Interviews were also undertaken at five locations over the Easter weekend. 110 completed questionnaires were returned, and 56 interviews undertaken.

Working Papers

- A working paper for each of the Areas was produced in February 2002, 430 copies were distributed and comments sought during a six week consultation period.
- Comments on the working paper were received from all those attending the second round of workshops, and a further 34 written responses received.

Consultative Draft Management Strategies

- In July 2002 a Draft Management Strategy for each of the Areas was produced and over 550 copies were distributed. Written comments were invited during a 10-week consultation period.
- 48 written responses were received from a variety of individuals, organisations and agencies. All comments were considered and discussed by the project partners and the strategies were 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 Nith Estuary** in which the physical and cultural influences that have shaped this landscape are described.
- 3 **What's special about the Nith Estuary** 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 Nith Estuary 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



Nith Estuary



THE LANDSCAPE OF THE NITH ESTUARY

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Nith Estuary 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" (Countryside Commission for Scotland, 1978). 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 Nith Estuary and the following section examines its scenic qualities.

the landscape





2.2 Landscape Character

2.2.1 The Dumfries and Galloway Landscape Assessment (Land Use Consultants, 1998) identifies the distinct patterns and combination of elements that create the different landscape character types within the National Scenic Area. Landscape types include Inner Solway coastal flats (including merse, coastal moss and plain, estuarine flats and coastal parkland), coastal granite uplands and the lower valley of the Nith (see Fig. 2, page 18). This Landscape Assessment has provided the basis for policies within the Structure Plan, 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 Nith Estuary, 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 Nith Estuary

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 through which rocks later intruded and were overlaid. Greywackes and shales are exposed across the region, orientated in a band lying from north east to south west.

2.3.2 Large scale earth movements followed this period of deposition and the rock was folded, fractured, uplifted and eroded. Later dramatic intrusions of molten rock produced the granite mass of Criffel, which extends westwards. The rounded granite boulders used in the dykes around Criffel express the local geology.

2.3.3 Changes in the climate and movement of the earth's crust lead to further sedimentary deposits being laid in a desert environment. A large area of Permian (red) sandstone remains



around the Nith, and some carboniferous limestone beds underlie the southern slopes of Criffel, stretching from Kirkbean to Mainsriddle. Excellent for building, these sandstones became the predominant building material in the local area, their colour and texture a distinct feature in the landscape.

2.3.4 Rock exposures at Kirkbean and Southernness have been designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest as the limestone exposures contain coral bands, trace fossils and algal limestones representing the later carboniferous period.

2.3.5 Over time the rocks have been shaped by natural processes, the younger softer sandstones being eroded far more easily than the granite. The Permian sandstone has eroded to form the Dumfries basin, the River Nith cutting its course more easily through the softer stone.

Drift geology

2.3.6 Successive ice ages have shaped the landscape. During the last main glaciation the area was covered by ice, originating from the

north, that was moving southwards eroding the surface of the land. Once these glaciers started to retreat glacial debris was deposited across the landscape. The Devil's Stone, on the coast at Arbigland, is an example of an erratic block of Criffel granite that was eroded and transported to the shore during the last ice age. Boulder clay was laid down over the Permian sandstone on the east bank of the Nith, forming the prominent ridge that delineates the eastern limit of the NSA, and on the higher land on the western shore.

2.3.7 The melting of the ice sheets caused a rapid rise in sea level and the rebound of the earth's crust. These major fluctuations between the land and sea resulted in the overall rising of the land and the subsequent formation of raised terraces. The west shore of the Nith Estuary from Dumfries to Southwick Water contains wide expanses of raised beach deposits. Natural depressions in these glacial deposits were later infilled in part by either alluvium or peat (Kirkconnell Flow). A mudstone bed forms the flat bank from Dumfries to Airds Point, with glacial sands, gravel and marine deposits lying further south.





2.3.8 These three major geomorphological elements (granite peak, raised beach and prominent ridge) are reflected in the main landscape types – coastal granite uplands, coastal flats and lower dale.

Soils

2.3.9 The upper slopes of Criffel have thin drifts of shallow peaty gley soils derived from the underlying granite and greywackes. These thin acidic soils support heather moorland, however they are difficult to improve agriculturally and are therefore mainly used for rough grazing and forestry.

2.3.10 Brown forest soils, derived from the thin stony loam tills, occur on the lower slopes of Criffel. The raised beach terraces of glacial sands and gravels, located on both banks of the Nith, are formed from thick deposits of grey silty clays. Cultivation of soils from clay and loam till is difficult due to persistent wetness, while stony soils derived from raised beaches have a low capacity for holding water. This land is therefore suitable primarily for grassland but capable of producing some cereal crops

2.3.11 Peat occurs on the raised bog at Kirkconnell Flow National Nature Reserve and saline alluvial soils on the areas of merse (salt marsh), the fertile alluvial soil is valuable as rough grazing land.

2.3.12 The Permian sandstone on the eastern shore and carboniferous beds on the southern slopes of Criffel have developed clay loam tills, and are the most fertile land in the Nith NSA, capable of producing a moderate range of crops.

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. This is borne out within the Nith Estuary NSA - the wettest areas occur on the elevated slopes and summit, and the lowlands at their foot are wetter than the eastern bank.

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 higher ground on the western shore is slightly cooler than the rest of the NSA and is also more exposed. The summit of Criffel is very exposed, however the elevated slopes provide some shelter to the western shore, including a particularly sheltered pocket around New Abbey.

Marine environment

2.3.16 The Solway Firth has a large tidal range - around 8.4 m in the inner Solway - and has two tidal cycles per day. The intertidal area is a complex of largely mobile sand banks separated by winding channels. The ebb tide takes a longer time to drain from the shallow flats than the flood tide does to rise over them.

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. The sediment on which merse (salt marsh) occurs is considered to be of marine rather than river origin, and its transport within the NSA has seen the merse eroding at Caerlaverock and accreting at Kirkconnell. 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 NSA contains some of the earliest known archaeology of the region, with spreads of flints and stone tools dating back over 8,000 years found along the top of the raised beach from Powillimount to Carsethorn. Early man was well prepared to exploit the abundance of resources available along this coast - fish and shellfish from the estuary, nuts, berries and edible herbs from the wooded hinterland, and game hunting up the less wooded river valley.

2.3.21 Agricultural activity of the last two centuries has removed the line of Neolithic burial cairns, prominently situated along the ridgeline from Drumburn to Lochhill. The prehistoric ritual aspects of the western bank are further emphasised by henge monuments at Woodside and Picts' Knowe. Aerial photography reveals a number of prehistoric settlement sites skirting the foot of Criffel, and on the higher ground overlooking New Abbey Pow.

2.3.22 The eastern side of the estuary also has its prehistoric monuments with a complex of cropmarks around Caerlaverock. These indicate that during the Bronze Age (around 4,000 years ago), a ritual centre was developing at the interface between the sea and the land. Later prehistoric settlement is also revealed by cropmarks, showing farmsteads and field systems on the eastern and southern slopes





of Ward Law and the ridge running north. In troubled times the population of these farmsteads, along with their livestock, would retreat to the forts, the earthworks still visible at Ward Law, Craig Wood or Camp Hill.

2.3.23 The importance of the Ward Law site, with its commanding view of the Solway and Lower Nithsdale, was recognised by the Romans, who built a camp on the ridge, and used the native fort as a lookout post. A more permanent fort was built just below at Lantonside, to control river traffic and receive incoming goods from across the empire.

2.3.24 This maritime outlook intensifies in the medieval period, when the Nith was the border between the realm of Galloway and that of Scotland, as well as an access point for trade from England and Ireland. Ingleston motte guards the Galloway side, whilst the earlier castle at Caerlaverock, and an earthwork castle at Cockpool, controlling Lochar Water, guard the Scottish shore. The later castle at Caerlaverock was famously besieged by the English in 1300, and continued to guard the Nith estuary up to its demise after a siege in the 1640's. On the western bank are the later tower houses of Kirkconnell and Abbot's Tower.

2.3.25 Also on the western side, in more peaceful periods, the foundation of the Cistercian Sweetheart Abbey at New Abbey brought trade and agricultural improvement to the area, with woodland cleared, marshes drained, and sheep farming introduced.

2.3.26 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 Arbigland, Shambellie and Kirkconnell. Gardens and woodlands were created, the remnants of which still survive as important features in the landscape.

2.3.27 Agricultural improvements were undertaken to enclose the land with dykes enabling the raising of cattle, and the marsh was gradually reclaimed through the

introduction of ditches and flood banks, which allowed the cattle to be grazed all year. Following the Reformation the estates took over the church lands and at New Abbey a corn mill was established for the production of flour.

2.3.28 To the south-west of New Abbey there is an area of small regular fields which are probably small-holdings for tenants in the village, established at the time of enclosure. Elsewhere around the village much of the land is regimented with 'planned' fields, except for a block of enclosures of less regular form on the north-east in the direction of Shambellie Grange and the Abbot's Tower. This may have been enclosed separately from the rest because of a difference in landholding. The planned fields suggest the work of a single landowner unencumbered by the interests of anyone else.



2.3.29 The River Nith, as well as being a source of food, also provided the major transport route. Glencaple was a bustling port with quays from which ships sailed to America and the West Indies. Carsethorn also had a pier, and took transatlantic trade. The channel of the Nith was deepened and embanked in the early 19th century to keep the port open to larger ships, however the development of the railways signalled the end of the rivers' importance for shipping.

2.3.30 Haaf netting, which was introduced by the Vikings, is still practised on the Nith, and boat access is still taken to the river at

Glencaple. The evidence of fishing may be seen in at least one location on the west of the Nith estuary where there is a fish-trap several kilometres to the north of Carsethorn.

Habitats and wildlife

2.3.31 The north banks of the Solway Firth contain around 30% of Scotland's saltmarsh (locally known as merse). The marshes and flats of the Upper Solway form one of the largest continuous areas of intertidal habitat in Britain. The Nith Estuary is part of this estuarine complex, which is of importance nationally and internationally for wintering wildfowl and wading birds, in addition to forming a vital link for migrating birds. The inner Solway Firth has been designated a European Marine Site and a management scheme has recently been devised. Nationally important breeding populations of birds, natterjack toads and invertebrates are present. Also of national importance are the merse and marine habitats, the rare maritime plant species, the geology and the geomorphology.



2.3.32 A National Nature Reserve was created at Caerlaverock in 1957, to manage the interests of conservation, wildfowling and farming. It now extends to nearly 8000ha, more than half of which is tidal mud flats. The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust have developed a visitor centre at Eastpark Farm, managed specifically for wild geese, with a series of hides for bird watching.

2.3.33 Kirkconnell Flow is a good example of a raised bog of estuarine origin and has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a National Nature Reserve and a candidate Special Area of Conservation. The plantation and self seeded Scots Pine which cover the reserve are being removed as part of essential restoration management to save the raised bog.

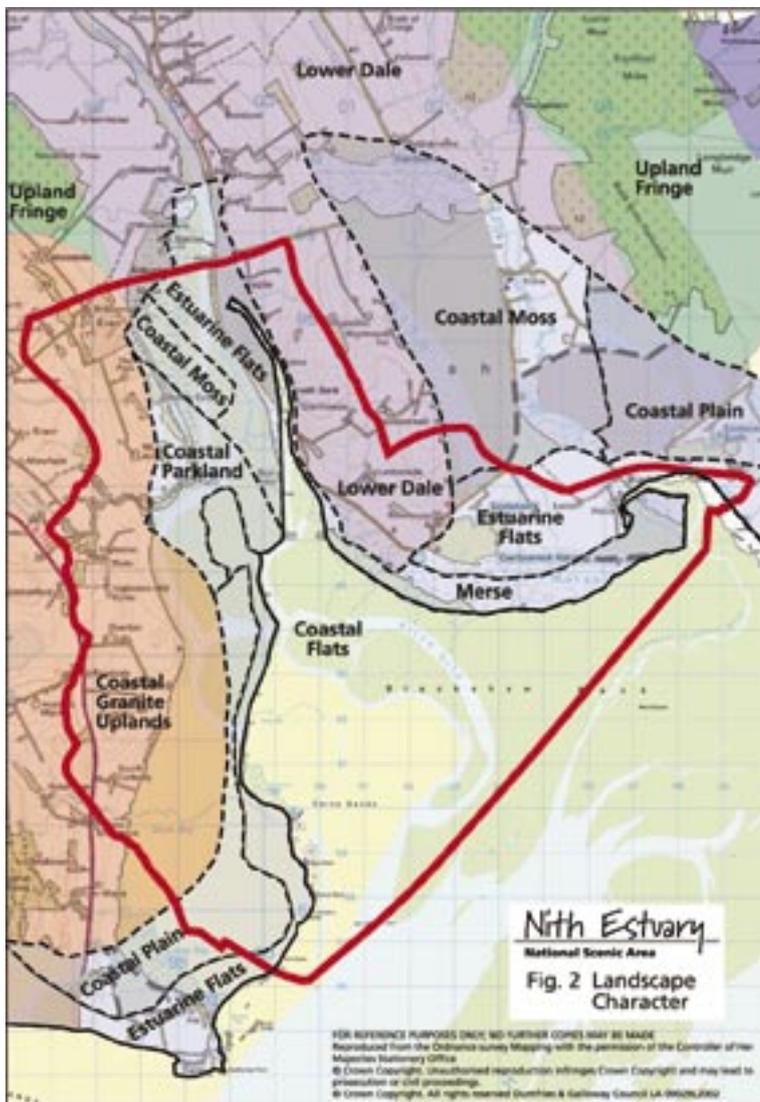
Current land use and landscape

2.3.34 Along the west bank of the estuary, as the land falls from the granite mass of Criffel to the coastal flats, there is a distinctive change in the land use influenced by the overlay of glacial till. Heather moorland occurs on the upper slopes of Criffel, and forestry plantations extend from the northern slopes along the ridge to Marthrow Hill culminating in Mabie Forest where the dark green forests merge into oak woodland.

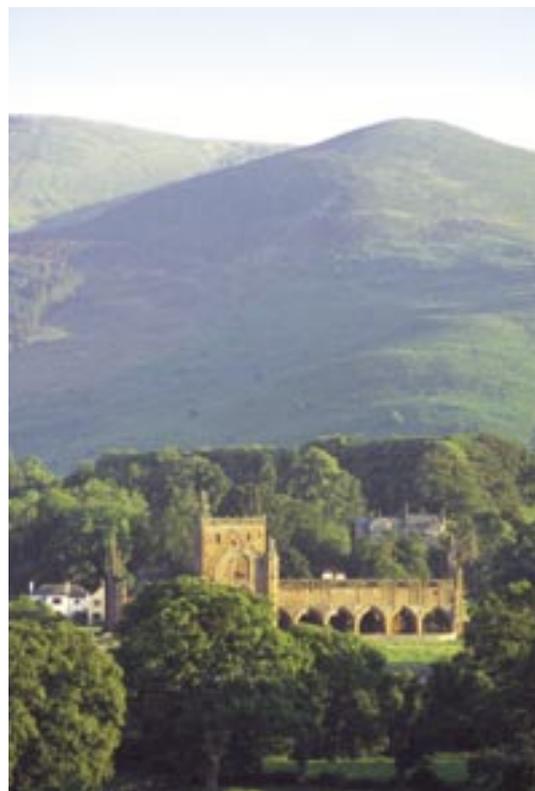
2.3.35 At the base of Criffel are medium sized fields of improved pasture, generally delineated by hedgerows. These fields gradually change from improved to semi-improved grassland as the land rises, with the field boundaries also changing from hedges to dykes that form a strong regular pattern. The few remaining areas that have not been improved for agriculture are generally moss that could not be drained. Around New Abbey the more varied topography and the influence of the large estates has created a lush grazed valley of undulating hills with policy plantations and many trees creating a parkland feel. In the past, vegetables were grown on the arable lands around Kirkbean but the land is now mainly put down to grass for dairy cattle, with some cereal crops.



Nith Estuary



2.3.36 New Abbey has been designated an outstanding Conservation Area due to its special architectural and historic interest. The boundary is widely drawn to protect the setting of the village and Abbey, the surrounding land, the corn mill, the central glebe land and the woodland close by. The settlement, dominated by the Abbey, nestles in a rich pastoral valley not visible from the estuary. This intimate valley contrasts with the open slopes of Criffel and the exposed coastal flats.



2.3.37 The remaining landscape within the NSA is composed of coastal flats which can be subdivided into areas of slightly differing characteristics. Estuarine flats follow the shore line on the west bank, the upper reaches of the River Nith and the eastern bank adjoining the merse. This land is very low lying and includes the areas of sand and mud that are exposed at low tide. Despite its flatness this is a very dynamic landscape with movement from the ever changing water and the many birds feeding at low tide. The land is generally fenced in large fields, with some remnants of hedges remaining. Individual trees are dotted across the flats, often adjacent to isolated farm buildings.

2.3.38 Drainage to the flats is naturally poor, and the raised bog at Kirkconnell Flow, formerly colonised by Scots Pine, is delineated by stands of birch. The plain between the coastal flats and the base of Criffel forms gently undulating farmland. Fields of improved pasture are enclosed by hedges, which contain many trees.

2.3.39 The eastern flank of the Nith is contained by a ridge which culminates at Ward Law. Fields of improved pasture cover the gently sloping ridge, with many scattered farms connected by minor roads. The enclosing hedgerows in many cases have been replaced with post and wire fencing. The field boundaries follow the trends in the topography, as do the local roads which are often straight for long stretches. When viewed from the B725 at the eastern boundary of the NSA, the hedges form a key feature, climbing up the ridge in parallel lines. Trees surround many of the farmsteads, with small shelterbelts, hedgerow and roadside trees creating a soft landscape.

2.3.40 The eastern shore line of the Nith around Caerlaverock, between the coastal flats and the shore is a large expanse of merse (grazed saltmarsh). A network of small channels dissect this unenclosed land which has a distinctive appearance, the dark green colour often turning pink in the summer. In the summer the merse is grazed by cows and sheep, and in the winter by thousands of geese.



Nith Estuary

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE NITH ESTUARY

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The previous section describes the character of the Nith Estuary 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 contribute to 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 Nith Estuary is special (88% response from questionnaire statistics). But what is it about the scenery that makes it so attractive? The answer to this question forms the foundation from which the Management Strategy must be developed. The unique qualities that combine to form the outstanding beauty of the area needed to be identified and agreed, to enable policies to be devised to safeguard their future.

3.1.4 How and why we appreciate particular types of scenery is a very complex issue, and there is currently no agreed or accepted method as to how scenic qualities should be defined. 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 Nith Estuary – what made it a unique, special place. The responses ranged from comments such as 'God's own country', to qualities such as peacefulness and constant change, and to landscape features (natural and cultural) that are particular to the area such as Criffel, Sweetheart Abbey and Ward Law. 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, used these identified qualities to structure and inform an analysis of the scenic qualities of the landscape, based on desk study and field analysis. The scenic qualities of the Nith Estuary National Scenic Area are detailed below, with the words taken directly from consultations in italics.

3.2 Scenic Qualities of the Nith Estuary

3.2.1 The core qualities of the Nith Estuary are its bold *elemental* landscape valued for its *tranquillity*, sense of *remoteness* and *harmony*, with Criffel rising steeply from the estuary to dominate the surrounding land. Land, sky and sea dramatically combine to provide a *constantly changing* land and seascape of *contrast* and *diversity*. This is a living, *working landscape* imprinted with the *evidence of man* through its farmland to its numerous landmarks.

Composition

3.2.2 Identified below are a range of qualities that contribute to the scenic value of the Nith Estuary. It is the fundamental relationship between all these qualities however that together forms the outstanding scenery.

- This is a landscape of bold *contrasts* on a *large scale*. The main elements of the large *mass of Criffel*, the *water* and *mudflats*, the lower *Ward Law* ridge and the surrounding *coastal flats* form a distinctive whole that appears well balanced and pleasing to the eye.
- The shoreline acts as a dynamic transitional edge between the land and the water – the process of erosion and accretion of the coast linked to the moving channel of the river Nith.

Scale and drama

3.2.3 This is a *vast expansive* landscape with *panoramic views* across the Solway Firth to the Cumbrian coast. The *openness* of the Firth and the *huge skies* contribute to the sense of scale, drama and remoteness.





- *Criffel* itself is a major contributor to the dramatic impact – its granite mass contrasting with the strong horizontal scale of the merse, mud flats and seascape.
- With the low hills at its base this dramatic contrast leads to an *ambiguity of scale* that makes *Criffel* seem much higher.



- When viewed from the north *Criffel* is often in shadow, the darker hues contrasting with the adjoining landscape making it difficult to judge *distance*. By creating an impression that it is further away *Criffel* appears even larger and more impressive.
- Reference points confirming the scale of the scenery are provided in the main by parkland trees, isolated buildings and transitory elements such as birds or cloud formations over the water.
- The *Cumbrian Fells*, when visible across the Solway Firth, contribute to the sense of scale.

Contrast

3.2.4 A key quality of the Nith Estuary is the contrast between landscape elements. The immediate and lasting impression of the area is the striking contrast of *Criffel* against the *Solway*, however there are many other elements within the estuary that add to this quality:

- *rugged* upper slopes of *Criffel* contrast with the tranquil *smooth* green fields of the lower slopes;
- *intimate* rich *pastoral valley* around New Abbey contrasts with the *open slopes* of *Criffel* and *exposed coastal flats*;

- *containment* of the River Nith at Airds Point contrasts with the *openness* of the Solway, marking the change in focus from river valley to estuary;
- the '*naturalness*' of the water and Criffel contrasts with the *managed* landscape – emphasised in views such as Carsethorn against the Solway and the Cumbrian coast, and experienced along the Glencaple road right by the coast;
- horizontal line of merse/water with the *wriggling channels* of the merse and 'sculpted' mud;
- the *constantly changing intertidal* areas contrast with the *solidity* of Criffel and the *uniformity* of the sea; and
- the contrast between the west and east sides of the Nith, with differences in topography, geology and soils reflected in *landform* and *past and present landuse*.

Diversity

3.2.5 A range of landscape types (from estuarine flats to granite uplands) and habitats (merse to upland heath) occur within the Nith Estuary NSA, a wide number of which can be seen or experienced in most views (see Fig 2, page 18). The varied character of these landscape types are reinforced by the smaller scale differences within them that combine to provide a wide range of *colours* and *textures* within the landscape.

- Coarse woodland and grassland textures set against smooth *reflective mudflats*.
- *Rough moorland* of upper slopes against *rolling parkland* around New Abbey.
- *Different shades of green* – from the lush green of improved pasture, through the differing greens of semi improved and unimproved grasslands, to the dark green of merse and the mix of woodland greens, including the dark green of conifers.
- *Seasonal colour* and *pattern* in woodlands, heathland and farmland, including elements such as flocks of birds and the transient waterfalls on Criffel.



Change/movement

3.2.6 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 tranquillity of the NSA, however it can also create a dynamic effect within the landscape. Change and movement contribute to the scenic qualities through the following.

- The *tidal cycle* with the emergence and submergence of *vast areas of mud and sand* on a twelve hourly cycle.
- *Changing weather patterns* that are very apparent in the *vast sky*. Approaching storms blowing into the estuary from the west and patterns of cloud cover on Criffel that can provide a local weather forecast.
- The *Nith bore*.
- The movement of large flocks of *geese across the estuary*.
- The changing *intervisibility* across the Solway border to the Cumbrian coast.





Light

3.2.7 In an unfamiliar landscape the sea can often be sensed before it is actually seen, mainly due to the *quality* of reflected *light* over water. The south facing orientation of the Nith Estuary intensifies this effect and allows the full movement of the sun to be observed, with the light and colours of the rising and setting sun intensified by the reflection on the water and wet mud.



The quality of the skyscape over the Nith Estuary is central to its special character due to the following.

- Periodic *clarity of views* due to the *unpolluted* atmosphere
- *Changing distant views* in response to weather conditions – the *Cumbrian coast* appearing and disappearing.
- Varying opacity as rain showers travel across the sky



- Mist/low cloud flooding the estuary and coastal flats, with Criffel rising above.
- *Colours* and cloud patterns multiplied and *reflected* in the *water* and *wet mud*.
- Clear night skies due to the lack of light pollution.

Sensory qualities

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

These include:

- flocks of *geese* taking off and landing on the *merse*;
- presence of *wildlife* from *birds* calling to *toads* croaking;
- the winds and breezes;
- *agricultural* (rather than industrial) noise and smells; and
- sounds and smell of water.

Harmony

3.2.8 One of the qualities valued about the Nith Estuary is that it is a *living, working landscape*, which appears to be generally well managed and retains an *unspoilt* feel. There is a sense of harmony between the land and the people, with the *evidence of man* embedded in the landscape and evident in many of its landmarks. The *traditional small settlements* fit well into the landscape, they are well contained and in general have been sensitively developed. The building materials of red sandstone (in the east) and granite (in the west) reflect the geology of the landscape.



Landmarks

3.2.9 Landmarks, both natural and man made, act as orientation features in the landscape and are important contributors to the distinctiveness of the Nith Estuary. Among the most significant identified at the workshops, some of which are identified on Figure 2, are:

- Criffel;
- River Nith and Solway Firth;
- intertidal mudflats;
- merse;
- skeins of geese;
- Ward Law;
- Caerlaverock Castle;
- Cumbrian Fells;
- Sweetheart Abbey;
- New Abbey;
- tanks at Airds Point;
- Southernness lighthouse;
- Waterloo monument; and
- Mabie forest.

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 the NSAs will need to be established as presently there is no statutory mechanism for altering the current boundaries.

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

3.3.3 Transitions between areas of higher and lower scenic quality may sometimes be quite distinct and abrupt but more often they are of a 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 to a lesser concentration. 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. Many people felt that the special qualities of the Nith Estuary 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, as can funding tied to the designation, however 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.



Nith Estuary

THE CHALLENGE

the challenge

4.1 How we are looking after the NSA

4.1.1 Those living and working within the Nith Estuary 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 Nith Estuary National Scenic Area is a special landscape that has occurred through a gradual process of natural and man-made change. Why should we now be concerned about the future of the area?

4.2.2 The landscape is always changing due to natural processes such as the moving channel of the Nith, coastal erosion and accretion, and its 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 Nith Estuary 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 scenic qualities, as identified in the previous section, are briefly outlined in the table below. Opportunities for enhancement are discussed in Section 5.



National Scenic Area

Table 1		
Scenic quality		Factors affecting quality
Core qualities	Elemental Tranquillity Remoteness	Noise disturbance through active sports and increased traffic Increased access onto shoreline/merse
Scale and drama	Long views Openness of Firth Huge skies Ambiguity of scale and distance	Interruption of views by intrusive elements Screening at key viewpoints Introduction of scale references into Firth and open slopes of Criffel
Contrast	Criffel/Solway Rugged slopes/smooth fields Intimate valley/open Firth & coastal flats Containment of Nith/open Firth Naturalness/managed land Horizontal/vertical elements Transitory intertidal area/solidity of Criffel and uniformity of water Differing topography/geology/land use on east /west bank of Nith	Loss of open slopes and visible rock outcrops on Criffel Erosion or loss of key characteristics – loss of parkland trees/ woodland, planting of trees on coastal flats Changes or decline in agriculture Introduction of vertical elements to Firth and coastal flats Standardisation of building materials and farming practices
Diversity	Landscape character Habitat Colour Texture	Erosion or loss of key characteristics – dykes, hedges, trees, etc. Degradation or loss of visually significant habitats – heathland, merse, grazing marsh Reduction in key species
Change/ movement	Tidal Weather Wildlife	Climate change and sea-level rise Coastal defences
Light	Clarity of atmosphere Distant views Clear night skies Varying opacity Colours and cloud patterns	Air pollution Light pollution
Sensory qualities	Geese & wildlife Agricultural sounds and smells	Reduction in key species Change in land use – loss of farm land, loss of stock Increase in industrial noise Noise and disturbance from active water sports Water pollution
Composition	Asymmetrical balance of mass of Criffel and open estuary	Loss of views, and access to views, to appreciate composition
Harmony	Living, working landscape Well managed Unspoilt Contained settlements Sensitive development Traditional materials	Changing population and age patterns – out migration and incomers Decline in agriculture employment Litter pollution Increased suburbanisation Increased standardisation of building 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 Grant 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 Nith's 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.

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 Nith Estuary National Scenic Area, with particular reference to its natural and cultural heritage, and with regard to its economic well being.

Under this vision the following detailed aims have been identified:

Raise awareness, understanding, appreciation, support and responsibility for the Nith Estuary 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 Nith Estuary 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.



Nith Estuary

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

5.1 Introduction

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

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

5.1.3 The effect these issues have on the landscape is initially 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 Nith Estuary NSA is an agricultural landscape, the majority of the land 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, and the production of silage and some hay. Dairying is concentrated on the western shore of the Nith, with some cereal production around Kirkbean and on the Ward Law ridge on the east.

5.2.2 The area was not covered by the Environmentally Sensitive Area agri-environment scheme, so therefore there has been little assistance available for the conservation and repair of field boundaries. 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 Changing subsidies are a key driver in determining land use and farming practices. In the past, farming subsidies were largely production related and were available, for example, for the improvement of marginal land and drainage of wetlands. This led to the loss of habitats such as herb rich meadows, 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 Criffel and Ward Law currently given over to forestry.



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



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 arable 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 a 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



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 subsidy regimes, and more recently in response to Foot and Mouth Disease. These changes in turn affect the farmed landscape.

may also be a push for changes in land use to forestry, housing development, or renewable energy, as well as recreation development (see relevant sections below). It will be important to ensure that new ventures reinforce the landscape character and scenic quality of the landscape. Examples exist elsewhere in Britain of integrated farm diversification support schemes that aim to encourage both business development and environmental enhancement (eg the Bowland Initiative in Lancashire).

AGRICULTURE: Farm diversification, changes in the type of farming		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
Farm diversification Loss of diversity in the farmed landscape Loss of traditional breeds Prominent silage bales	Support farm diversification projects which reinforce landscape character and scenic quality, for example through the provision of integrated support for both business development and environmental enhancement	A/Fd1
	Investigate ways in which three NSAs designations within the region can 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 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 amalgamation of small fields and loss of field boundaries can erode the distinctive character of the landscape. 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 layering, 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. Those east and west of the Nith are quite distinct from each other. 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. Foot and Mouth Disease may have compounded these problems.





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 Loss of local jobs and services	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
	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 parkland trees are a characteristic feature of the farming landscape in parts of the Nith Estuary. There are several large estates on both banks of Nith where trees are a significant feature in the landscape, such as the mature staghorn oaks around



Kirkconnell. There has been a general decline in the management and the replacement of dead and dying trees, including the woodland pasture, shelter belts and small farm woodlands that are particularly characteristic west of the Nith (often located in enclosures and on knolls). 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 the Woodland and forestry section.

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



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 Forestry and woodland are distinct features within the Nith Estuary NSA and make a significant contribution to the landscape. Cover ranges from individual parkland and hedgerow trees (around New Abbey, Kirkconnell and Caerlaverock), policy woodland and shelterbelts (south of New Abbey where small woodland pockets and shelterbelts occur on prominent knolls and enclosures), larger woodlands (Shambellie), and productive forests (Mabie and Criffel). Woodlands and forests are concentrated around New Abbey and the lower slopes of Criffel, the coastal flats being much more open with occasional shelterbelts and individual trees.



5.3.2 Ownership is mainly private apart from the large productive forests which are owned by the Forestry Commission and managed by Forest Enterprise, and for which Forest Design Plans have been developed detailing their



restructuring. Recreational facilities have been developed at Mabie Forest. Individual trees and small woodlands are generally unproductive and therefore many are unmanaged.

5.3.3 A formal 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 Grant 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 Nith – providing a variety of colour and texture throughout the year. Ancient and long



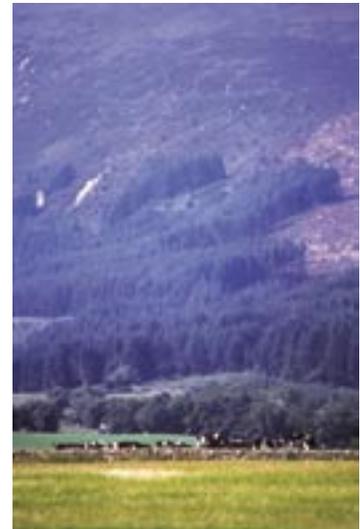


established woods of semi-natural origin are important as visually distinct elements in the landscape as well as being very important for nature conservation eg. prominent woodlands such as the ancient woodlands at Airds Hill.

5.3.6 A major increase or decrease of tree cover can alter the character of the area. For example, the introduction of woodland blocks to the estuarine flats and merse would affect their open character, and the loss/degradation of parkland around New Abbey would erode its character. The design and management of forests and woodlands also has a major effect on scenic quality and landscape character. Large productive forests require careful design to fit into the landscape, in terms of their scale and shapes, edges and felling coups, and forestry extraction tracks. Small woods can obscure views, or appear incongruous if unrelated to the surrounding landscape character. Forests can affect longer views into and from NSA. For example the forests on Criffel and the smaller field blocks on the Ward Law ridge can be seen from Silloth. Meanwhile unmanaged woodland can erode the scenic quality (eg gradual loss of Scots Pine shelterbelts on distinct knolls and enclosures south of New Abbey). Appropriate

woodland management is therefore vital to conserve the scenic qualities of this NSA (eg. the clump of trees at Ward Law) .

5.3.7 Forests and woodlands also provide significant opportunities for recreation. The facilities at Mabie Forest are very well developed and attract a very high numbers 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 4.9 Recreation and tourism section).



WOODLAND & FORESTRY: Forests and woodlands		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
Need for sensitive forest design	Seek to develop a vision statement for forestry within the NSA	W/Fw1
	Seek the inclusion of NSA objectives in all forest design plans	W/Fw2
Lack of woodland management	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
Loss of small woodlands	Increase awareness about the cultural heritage of woodlands and forests (eg. interpretation of charcoal platforms)	W/Fw5
Conservation and expansion of native woodlands	Support and encourage the regeneration and replanting of small woods, shelterbelts and riparian trees,, including the renewal of boundaries where necessary	W/Fw6
Conservation and expansion of riparian woods	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
Recreational opportunities	Encourage identification of opportunities for the expansion of native woodlands	W/Fw9
	Support the partial restoration of the open character of the coastal moss (Kirkconnell Flow)	W/Fw10

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 and the Rural Stewardship Scheme within recognised



designed landscapes. Parkland trees around New Abbey and Kirkconnell House are significant features in the landscape. Evidence of designed estate landscapes contributes to the quality of the Nith Estuary NSA.

WOODLAND & FORESTRY: Hedgerow, roadside and parkland trees		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
Tree loss	Seek to encourage the retention or replacement of avenues and tree lines as they are distinct features, reflecting estate and designed landscapes	W/Hr1
Loss of hedgerows	Support the protection of important, threatened trees and avenues by Tree Preservation Orders	W/Hr2
	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 tidal shore of the Nith Estuary is predominantly soft, with a small section of rock occurring from Carsethorn southwards. Large areas of merse line the eastern shore of the estuary, a significant proportion of which is designated and managed for its nature conservation value. In other areas the farmed estuarine flats lie adjacent to the coast.



5.4.2 Southernness (outwith NSA) is the only area on the Nith Estuary designated as 'Developed Coastline' in the Dumfries and Galloway Structure Plan. The coastal villages of Glencaple and Carsethorn were once bustling ports, and many other small harbours and quays that existed along the coast are now disused. Remnants of former jetties, quays and stake nets are still evident along the coast.

5.4.3 The beaches at Carsethorn and Powillimount are used for recreation. 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 a cross-border partnership, coordinated by the Solway Firth Partnership.



Predicted sea level rise

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

SHORELINE: Predicted Sea level rise		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
Coastal protection versus managed realignment	Link with existing strategies including the Solway Firth Strategy, the Management Strategy for the Inner Solway European Marine Site and the study on the potential for managed realignment along the Inner Solway	S/SI1
	Support development of a Shoreline Management Plan for the Solway	S/SI2
	Seek improvements to the appearance of existing coastal protection when undertaking replacement or repair	S/SI3
	Seek to support an approach of coastal realignment wherever appropriate (retreat the line of coastal defence)	S/SI4
	Ensure consideration is given to the effects of proposed development and protection works on natural coastal processes	S/SI5

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 (Carsethorn and 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 (see also 5.9 Recreation and tourism section). 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
Litter	Support initiatives to reduce coastal and marine litter	S/P1
Dog fouling	Support initiatives to reduce dog fouling	S/P2
Light pollution	Foster a sense of ownership and responsibility for beaches/shore amongst local communities	S/P3
Noise pollution		
Water quality	Support endeavours to meet the highest water quality standards	S/P4
	Support endeavours to maintain clear night skies	S/P5

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). Traditional forms of intertidal fishing (haaf netting, stake netting) are 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. See Infrastructure Issues and Opportunities for a discussion of offshore infrastructure developments.

SHORELINE: Shoreline activities including cockling		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
Recreation (see also 5.9)	Support ongoing moves to achieve sustainable fisheries and promote acceptable working methods	S/Sh1
Cockling		



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 quayside at Glencaple is now seldom used by river traffic. These are discussed in 5.6 Cultural Heritage Issues and Opportunities.

5.4.11 The tanks at Airds point are visually intrusive when viewed from the East bank. They appear to the viewer as the only industrial element within a 'natural' landscape. They have been painted a colour that blends them into their surroundings in certain lights.

SHORELINE: Coastal and maritime features		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
Loss of jetties, quays (see 5.6)	Seek to encourage the use of maritime features that remain in working order	S/Cm1
Loss of stake nets (see 5.6)	Seek to minimise the visual impact of the Airds Point tanks, and support endeavours for their removal once they cease to be operational	S/Cm2
Impact of Airds Point Tanks		

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 removal of trees at Kirkconnell Flow). The coastline of the Nith Estuary NSA has several such sites, 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: Caerlaverock National Nature Reserve (NNR); Kirkconnell Flow NNR and Kirkconnell Merse. There is a Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserve at Drummain's Reed Beds and Local Wildlife Sites occur at Loch Kindar and The Loshes.

5.5.3 The variety of different habitats and species within the NSA are an intrinsic part of the appeal of this landscape. The continuing management of the heather moorland,

woodland, mosses, 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 Nith.

5.5.5 Many people wish road 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 road 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	Support delivery of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan within the NSA	NC/P2
Management of road verges		





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 heather moorland on Criffel. The diversity and contrast between these habitats are core qualities of the Nith Estuary 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 hill ground).

5.5.8 Changing farming practice has also led to loss or neglect of small pockets of habitats 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 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 section). In certain places large areas of invasive weeds, such as Japanese Knotweed are affecting scenic quality and biodiversity. This is a region-wide problem, and eradication is very difficult and expensive.

NATURE CONSERVATION: Decline of habitats and species		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
Land use change	Seek to raise awareness of habitat and species diversity in area	NC/Dh1
Decline in semi-natural habitats	Support sustainable management of important habitats (eg wetlands and floodplains, merse heathland (Criffel) native woodlands) and species (eg geese) through enhanced agri-environment scheme and other sources	NC/Dh2
Loss of diversity		
Decline in certain species	Support provision of advice on habitat management (eg wetlands) and management for certain species	NC/Dh3
Invasion of alien species		
	Ensure habitat/visual diversity is incorporated in the design of new planting and restructuring proposals	NC/Dh5
	Seek to provide practical demonstrations of habitat management	NC/Dh6

5.6 Cultural Heritage Issues and Opportunities

Relevant Aim

Raise awareness, understanding, appreciation, support and responsibility for the Nith Estuary 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 Nith Estuary 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: Ward Law Hill, Roman fort and enclosure; Caerlaverock Castle, old castle, castle courtyard and harbour; Ingleston Mote; Sweetheart Abbey; New Abbey Corn Mill, lade, mill, curling and fish pond; McCulloch Castle Fort, Arbigland. Numerous further sites have been recorded that are of national and regional importance.

5.6.2 The Nith Estuary NSA includes many planned estates which make an important contribution to the landscape's character, and which contain features of historic interest (see



also 5.3 Agriculture and 5.3 Woodland and forestry sections). The designed landscape of Arbigland House is included in the national 'Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland', and a further eight policy landscapes have been identified within the NSA. The Inventory lists what were then considered the most important sites in Scotland (it is currently under 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 as important as the individual sites themselves 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 Nith 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 Natural Heritage section 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
	Consider important examples of historic land-use patterns in undertaking land use change	CH/HI2
Historic character of settlement pattern	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
Contribution of estate policy landscapes		

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 netting technique of haaf netting is still undertaken on the Nith and contributes to local distinctiveness. Stake nets, a distinctive feature of this coastal landscape, have slowly been lost.

5.6.9 The former importance of the Solway and the Nith as transport routes is reflected in the remains of piers, harbours, and ship wrecks along the coast that add to the scenic quality and cultural heritage of the area. There are also some wartime remains evident. Many of these features are falling into disrepair, and some will be lost to the sea.



There are also numerous local tales and fables which contribute to local distinctiveness. Such material can be used to highlight the special qualities of the area and can strengthen a sense of ownership and care for the National Scenic Area.

CULTURAL HERITAGE: Maritime heritage		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
Local distinctiveness of traditional fisheries	Seek to raise awareness of the area's maritime heritage	CH/Mh1
	Seek to recognise and encourage sustainable traditional activities which contribute to local distinctiveness, including traditional fisheries such as haaf netting on the Nith	CH/Mh2
Disrepair and lack of uses of jetties and harbours	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
Wartime heritage		

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, tourists and those living /interest in area	CH/La3
	Increase public awareness of all aspects of heritage through interpretation	CH/La4



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 Turner painted scenes at Caerlaverock, and a more recent example is the light labyrinth at Sweetheart Abbey. Robert Burns made his home in the region and Glencaple, and Brow Well feature on the 'Burns Heritage Trail'.





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 Nith Estuary 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 Nith NSA are New Abbey, Glencaple, Carsethorn and Kirkbean. New Abbey is an Outstanding Conservation Area, and Carsethorn has been proposed as a Conservation Area in the Finalised Nithsdale Local Plan. Traditional building materials vary either side of the Nith, with red sandstone used on the eastern side of the Nith and granite more frequent on the west.

5.7.2 There have been very few houses built within the NSA over recent years. However a site in New Abbey has recently had approval for a Housing Association development of 18 houses.

5.7.3 Policies, proposals and design guidance concerning development within the NSA are included in the Structure Plan and finalised Nithsdale Local Plan and 'Caring for the Built Environment'. Within the finalised Local Plan there is an allocation for 30 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 a sub-urban 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 a key quality of Nith Estuary NSA.



DEVELOPMENT: New developments within settlements		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
Distinctive character of settlements	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
Need for new housing	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
Need for affordable housing	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 avoiding the poor copying 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 in 5.9 Recreation and tourism Issues and Opportunities.





DEVELOPMENT: New Development in the Countryside		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
Aspirations for housing in the countryside	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
New agricultural buildings		
Recreational development (see 5.9)	Develop additional guidance on the siting and design of buildings in the countryside	D/Nc2

Use and care of existing buildings

5.7.13 Traditional buildings provide a direct and important link to the past, reflecting how the area has developed, and contributing to its scenic quality and landscape character. 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	Seek to encourage the re-use of redundant traditional buildings, for example for tourism business opportunities or affordable housing	D/Uc1
Alterations and extensions to traditional properties	Seek to reinforce the character of the NSA through the sympathetic restoration of redundant and dilapidated buildings	D/Uc2
Care of listed buildings	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 Nith NSA. Mineral workings, 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 Regional distributor roads serve both shores of the Nith Estuary NSA. The B725 along the eastern bank is a narrow road, with a few sharp bends, that runs adjacent to the shore from Kelton to Caerlaverock. The A710 on the western bank also has very sharp bends (at New Abbey and Islesteps just north of the NSA), and has open views across the estuary from Corbelly Hill southwards.

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 on the flat open coastal land. 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.



5.8.5 The speed of travel can significantly affect the experience of the landscape. At faster speeds only glancing sweeping views can be safely experienced, whilst slower travel speed allows views to be more safely enjoyed. Improvements such as the straightening of bends may cause an increase of traffic speed.

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

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

5.8.8 Stunning views across the Solway are revealed driving along the A710, but there are few viewing points, causing slowing of traffic and informal parking. Road signs and car parking are discussed in 5.9 Recreation and Tourism Issues and Opportunities





INFRASTRUCTURE: Roads		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
Character and quality of roads	Seek to promote sustainable transport solutions within the NSA (community transport/taxis/roving tourist mini-bus)	I/R1
Views from roads	Seek to encourage high quality and innovative engineering solutions to road schemes within the NSA	I/R2
	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
Increases in traffic numbers and speed	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
Signs (see 5.9)	Seek to reduce conflict between those using roads for key journeys and those travelling to enjoy scenery, for example by providing safe parking at key viewpoints	I/R6

Power and telecommunications

5.8.9 Overhead power lines, telecommunication masts, wind turbines and ancillary buildings can be intrusive elements in landscape. Capacity for such development varies according to landscape type eg. a mast within the coastal flats/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.

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

5.8.11 Environmental Assessment is required for major infrastructure developments. The Structure Plan provides a presumption against applications for wind farms of three 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.

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

INFRASTRUCTURE: Power and telecommunications		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
Demand for telecommunication masts	Seek to raise awareness of utilities company to the aims of the NSA.	I/Pt1
	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
Demand for wind farms	Seek to ensure environmental impacts including affects on key views are fully assessed when considering development proposals	I/Pt3
	Seek consideration of undergrounding of cables in sensitive locations	I/Pt4
Power lines	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 Nith Estuary NSA provides outstanding scenery and wildlife, opportunities for quiet enjoyment, numerous historic attractions and some sporting opportunities.

5.9.2 Visitor attractions include: the John Paul Jones Museum; National Costume Museum at Shambellie; Mabie Forest; Mabie Farm Park; Waterloo monument; Sweetheart Abbey; New Abbey Corn Mill; Brow Well; and the Wildfowl

and Wetlands Trust at Caerlaverock. (Just outwith the eastern boundary at Ruthwell: Savings Bank Museum and the Ruthwell Cross).

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 A number of hotels, guest houses and bed and breakfast accommodation are located within the NSA. Southernness, just outwith the NSA, has a large caravan and chalet development. It is anticipated that there will be a continuing demand for further such development.

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





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

5.9.7 Increasing visitor numbers leads to greater volume of people and cars and can affect the tranquillity and amenity value of the area. There is a potential conflict of use on narrow roads with growing numbers of pedestrians, cyclists and cars (see also 5.8 Infrastructure Issues and Opportunities)

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.



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
	Seek to encourage a wide provision of accommodation types within and close to the NSA	RT/Rd6
	Support initiatives to improve the standard of accommodation	RT/Rd7
Landscape impacts of caravan parks	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
Capacity of landscape to absorb recreational pressure	Encourage conversion of existing redundant farm buildings and other traditional buildings into visitor facilities/tourist accommodation	RT/Rd10

5.9.9 The Council are developing access opportunities across the region in consultation with local communities through the access forum, and in accordance with the Access Strategy. Proposed changes to access legislation will place a duty on the Council to develop and maintain a Core Path Network. Route 7 of the National Cycle Route and the National Byway Cycle Route skirt the east bank of the Nith. A specialist mountain bike centre is being developed at Mabie Forest, part of the 'Seven Stanes' project being undertaken across the South of Scotland.

5.9.10 Access taken over farmland in an irresponsible manner 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

surfacing in a rural location, can appear 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 takes in both banks of the Nith, and links all three NSAs in the region. Stunning views across the Solway are revealed driving along A710, but there are few viewing points, causing slowing traffic and informal parking. Informal parking on verges and roadsides can be dangerous and is inconvenient to other road users. However, provision of further parking in inappropriate locations may increase visitor numbers to more inaccessible locations, potentially causing disturbance to wildlife and affecting the sense of remoteness. Car parking provision needs to be carefully thought out as the location and size of car parks, signage to them and application of a charge can affect the distribution of cars and visitors throughout the NSA.

RECREATION AND TOURISM: Countryside access		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
Accessibility of countryside within NSA	Seek to increase opportunities for all residents and visitors to participate in quiet recreational activity	RT/Ca1
Support of landowners	Seek to encourage the use of existing tracks that avoids damage and disturbance to wildlife or 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		
Management of car parking	Seek to encourage provision of sensitively sited and designed car parks, supported by a possible 'park and walk' initiative	RT/Ca5
	Seek to develop local links/spurs from the Solway Coast Heritage Trail to the coast	RT/Ca6
	Seek to encourage the use of public transport to reach and explore the NSA	RT/Ca7





Other recreational activities

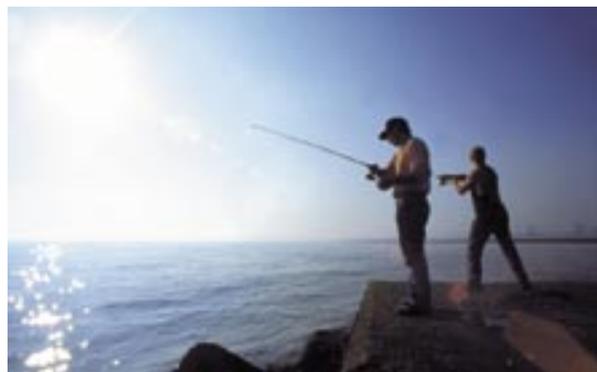
5.9.13 The attractive beaches within the NSA form an important recreational resource. Many residents and visitors enjoy the beaches at Carsethorn, Arbigland, and Powillimount. Visitor pressure can disturb and damage the sensitive habitats on the shore. Litter pollution and dog fouling affects the enjoyment of beaches, sea borne litter being the main problem. These issues are discussed further in the 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.

5.9.15 Traditional activities such as haaf netting, wildfowling and rough shooting are distinctive to the area and are in decline as the younger generation appear less interested in countryside pursuits. The decline in fish stocks on the Nith, 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.



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 encourage involvement in sustainable traditional countryside sports	RT/Oa4
Demand for golf courses	Encourage potential of viewing the NSA from the coastal waters	RT/Oa5
Increase in water sports	Seek to ensure golf courses fit well into landscape and reinforce the character of the surrounding landscape	RT/Oa6

Marketing, promotion and interpretation

5.9.18 The NSA has a very low profile at present and is not actively promoted. There is an opportunity to raise awareness of the NSA and link with the wider promotion of Dumfries and Galloway 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 Nith NSA have a valuable role to play in the development of any interpretative material, particularly their involvement in guided walks and talks.

RECREATION AND TOURISM: Marketing, promotion and interpretation		
Key issues	Opportunities	Code
Low profile of NSA	Link into the developing Dumfries and Galloway Tourism Strategy	RT/Mp1
	Support and seek to develop the role of tourist information centre/advice	RT/Mp2
Lack of signs	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
Availability of NSA specific interpretation	Raise awareness of NSA by introducing signs from major routes through Dumfries and Galloway, and consider the need for additional signs to highlight key facilities such as beaches	RT/Mp5
	Support the provision of interpretation at key sites eg. existing car parks	RT/Mp6



Nith Estuary

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 Nith Estuary. 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 be 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.

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 Nith Estuary. 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 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, SEDG, FC, SEERAD, DGC, NSA Officer, RSPB, SAC	M	Ongoing	A/Fd1
2	Support initiatives to develop a 'one stop shop' for advice and guidance on agri-environment issues	SH, SEDG, RSPB, SEERAD, FWAG, SAC	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 agri-environment scheme for NSAs 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, Land Managers, NDSFB, SNH, SAC	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, SEERAD, HS, SAC, 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 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, FWAG, FC, SAC	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, 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, SE, SNH, NSA Officer, SAC	M	M	W/Fw8
4	Continue to develop recreational potential of forests	FC, FE, PWO, Communities	H	Ongoing	W/Fw4
Projects – research, development and implementation					
5	Develop a Roadside Tree Initiative to pilot the replacement of hedgerow trees and old individual trees/avenues without compromising road safety	SNH, DGC, NSA Officer	H	S	W/Hr1
6	Explore opportunities to encourage replacement of parkland trees and management of habitat	NSA Officer, SH, SNH, Land Managers	H	M	W/Hr3
7	Investigate scope for managing/reopening key views within forestry – link to footpath and road views	FC, FE, PWO, SNH, DGC, NSA Officer, Communities	M	M	W/Fw3
Raising awareness and understanding					
8	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
9	Encourage take up of Amenity Planting Grant in appropriate landscape character areas	DCG, SNH	H	Ongoing	W/Hr4
10	Establish ways of disseminating Historic Land-use Assessment to raise awareness of historic features within woodlands and their cultural value, and assist in forest design to minimise impact on the cultural heritage	HS, RCHAMS, SH, NSA Officer, DGC	M	M	W/Fw5
11	Encourage the use of woodland planting to help integrate new development into the landscape	NSA Officer, DGC, Developers	M	M	W/Fw7
12	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					
13	Encourage use of Landscape Design Guidance for forests and woodland in Dumfries and Galloway	FC, FE, PWO, SNH, DGC	H	Ongoing	W/Fw3 W/Fw10
14	Promote findings and improve awareness of Local Forestry Framework guidance	FC, SNH, DGC, PWO	H	Ongoing	W/Fw2
15	Encourage retention of saplings during hedge cutting in appropriate locations	NSA Officer, FWAG, Land Managers	H	ongoing	W/Hr1



16	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
17	Develop a vision statement for future of woodlands and forests in the NSA	FC, SNH, DGC, NSA Officer, Communities	M	L	W/Fw1
18	Include tracks in Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme applications 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
19	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					
20	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
21	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
22	Continue Council policy to seek public access agreements on FC land being sold where appropriate	FE, DGC	M	Ongoing	W/Fw4
23	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
24	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, SEERAD, SNH, NSA Officer	M	L	W/Hr3
25	Support delivery of the Scottish Forestry Strategy to further the aims of the NSA including diversification of farmland, development of new markets for timber and other woodland products, extending and enhancing woodlands where appropriate	FC, FE, SEDG	H	Ongoing	W/Fw9

6.1.9 SHORELINE ACTION PLAN

Objectives

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

Encourage enjoyment of the 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/SI1
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/Sh1
4	Support the study identifying potential areas of coastal realignment in the Inner Solway	SNH, DGC, RSPB, NSA Officer	L	Ongoing	S/SI4
	Projects – research, development and implementation				
5	Explore most effective way of cleaning up popular beaches through projects such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Adopt a Beach Initiative' - 'Clean Coasts Scotland' Initiative - Regular litter clean up by dedicated team working in NSA (eg. local community volunteers, etc.) 	SFP, NSA Officer, 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	H	S	S/SI1
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 Glencaple quay by river traffic	Community	M	L	S/Cm1
9	Explore methods for reducing the visual impact of the tanks at Airds Point such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - screen planting - careful choice of colour when repainting 	NSA Officer, DuPont, Communities	M	L	S/Cm2
	Raising awareness and understanding				
10	Support and promote ongoing litter education programme	SFP, SWEAP, Schools, Communities	H	Ongoing	S/P1,P2,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, DGC, SFP, HS, Land Managers	H	Ongoing	S/SI3
	Guidance				
13	Consider implementation of innovative 'soft' engineering techniques which are visually acceptable	SFP, SNH, DGC, SEPA	L	L	S/SI3
14	Develop Shoreline Management Plan for the northern shores of the Solway	SFP, RSPB, SNH, DGC	M	L	S/SI2



	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 Nith District Salmon Fisheries Board in the sustainable management of fish stocks in the river	NDSFB, SNH, SH	M	L	NC/Dh2
2	Support implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans for Species and Habitats	LBAP Partnership (inc. FC, FE, SNH, DGC, SAC, 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, WWT, 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 explore 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, SFP, RSPB, 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, WWT, RSPB, SWT	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. DGC, SNH, FC, RSPB, WWT, SWT)	H	Ongoing	NC/Dh1
9	Support ongoing programmes of environmental awareness and understanding of wildlife value relevant to NSA	LBAP Partnership (inc. SNH, WWT, RSPB, SWT)	H	Ongoing	NC/Dh1 NC/Dh4
10	Encourage uptake of Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme (under review) to improve biodiversity and recreational value of existing woods	FC, PWO	H	Ongoing	NC/Dh2 NC/Dh5
11	Encourage uptake of SNH funded Amenity Planting Grant	SNH, DGC			NC/Dh2 NC/Dh5
Guidance					
12	Provide advice on management of habitats that are intrinsic to scenic quality of NSA eg. merse, moorland, woodland, etc	FC, SNH, SH, SAC, FWAG, 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, RSPB, SAC, Communities	H	Ongoing	NC/Dh3
15	Support demonstration of wetland management – RSPB Mersehead farm	SNH, RSPB	M	Ongoing	NC/Dh6
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
Projects – research, development and implementation					
2	Investigate the most effective way of conserving some stake nets along the coast	SFP, NSA Officer, Land Managers	H	S	CH/Mh3
3	Encourage the consideration of protecting traditional netting when selling fishing rights	NDSFB, Haaf Netters Assoc., Land Managers, SFP	H	M	CH/Mh2
4	Develop interpretative material for leaflets/interpretation boards/guided walks/trails of maritime history	NSA Officer, SFP, Communities, DGC, DGTB, SCAPE	M	M	CH/Mh4
5	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
6	Assess need for further Historic Land-use Assessment research or survey work	DGC, HS, RCAHMS	S	L	CH/A2
7	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					
8	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 - river lines –music and song of the Nith - ‘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
9	Give consideration to the promotion of landscape heritage and interpretation of the NSA through - pamphlets - guided walks (using local guides) - exhibition material - dedicated interpretation centre (for all 3 NSAs in D&G)	SNH, DGC, SH, SFP, Local Groups, Communities, NSA Officer, DGTB	H	S-L	CH/La2 CH/La3
10	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
11	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
12	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

13	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, Communities	M	Ongoing	CH/La3
	Guidance				
14	Continue to provide advice on management of archaeological features through Historic Scotland and Council Archaeologist	DGC, HS	H	Ongoing	CH/A1
15	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				
16	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
17	Continue safeguarding large areas of archaeological interest through implementation of Structure Plan policy on Archaeologically Sensitive Areas (eg. New Abbey)	DGC	H	Ongoing	CH/A1
18	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/H13





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, HS, DGC, NSA Officer	L	Ongoing	D/Uc2
Raising awareness and understanding					
11	Continue promotion of Landscape Assessment and application of guidance through staff training, and establish ways of disseminating Landscape Character information more widely	SNH, DGC	M	S/O	D/Ns1 D/Ns2
12	Promotion of NSA special qualities and character, informed by the Historic Land-use Assessment, through ongoing training, communication and publicity	SNH, DGC, NSA Officer, 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, DGTB, SH, NSA Officer, DGC	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) and consider solutions	NSA Officer, DGC, Access Forum, Communities	M	M	I/R6
See Recreation and Tourism Plan for Signage					
Raising awareness and understanding					
8	Incorporate environmental appraisal in all road work schemes within the NSA	DGC	H	S/O	I/R2 I/R3
9	Ensure affects to NSA key views and scenic quality are carefully considered when considering potential developments outwith the NSA	SNH, DGC, SE	H	S/O	I/Pt6
10	Give particular regard to landscape considerations in assessing and designing potential road improvement schemes within the NSA	DGC	H	S/O	I/R4
11	Take particular account of NSA qualities in assessing notifications of minor works to public utilities	DGC	H	S/O	I/Pt3
12	Establish discussion with Statutory Undertakers working group on conservation of landscape character	NSA Officer, DGC	H	S/O	I/Pt4
13	Establish ways of disseminating Landscape Character Assessment to statutory undertakers and telecommunication providers	SNH, DGC	H	S/O	I/Pt1
Guidance					
14	Continue to implement current Council policy and SNH guidance on wind farms (Guidelines on the environmental impact of wind farms and small scale hydro electric schemes)	SNH, DGC	H	S	I/Pt2 I/Pt3 I/Pt6
15	Assess need to formulate specific policy for small scale wind generators within or affecting the NSA	SNH, DGC	M	M	I/Pt3
Policy and legislation					
16	Support implementation of Wind energy strategy within the Structure Plan	DGC	H	O	I/Pt7
17	Continue the programme of listing unique roadside features	DGC, HS	M	O	I/R3
18	Continue implementation of planning policy on telecommunication and major infrastructure development	DGC	H	O	I/Pt5 I/Pt3
19	Ensure mitigation and reinstatement works are undertaken following pipeline installation	DGC, Developers	M		I/Pt2 I/Pt5
20	Consider placing a duty on Statutory Undertakers to have regard to the scenic value of the NSA	SE	M	O	I/Pt1 I/Pt2

6.1.14 RECREATION AND TOURISM ACTION PLAN

Objective

Develop the potential of the National Scenic Area 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	NSA Officer, DGTB	H	Ongoing	RT/Rd1
7	Continue management of wildfowling through permit scheme at Caerlaverock NNR	SNH	H	Ongoing	RT/Oa3 RT/Oa4
(See Nature Conservation Action Plan re fish stocks in Nith)					
Projects – research, development and implementation					
8	Develop ways of providing information about traditional sports undertaken in Nith – 'living history' talks with local residents, storytelling	NSA Officer, Community, DGC	M	M	RT/Oa3
9	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
10	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
11	Assess need for visitor management within the NSA to prevent pressure on sensitive locations and explore management solutions	NSA Officer, FE, HS, RSPB, SNH, DGC, DGTB, Access Forum, HS	H	M	RT/Ca2
12	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





13	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, DGTB, Access Forum, RSPB	H	S/M/L	RT/Rd1 RT/Ca4 RT/Ca6 RT/Ca7 I/R1
14	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
15	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
16	Explore the potential of developing further horse riding routes within the NSA	FE, Access Forum, Business Operators, DGC	M	M	RT/Ca1
17	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
18	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 - NSA 'brand' - 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
19	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
20	Seek to ensure adequate parking is provided at access points to popular walks	SNH, DGC, Access Forum, Land Managers, Communities	H	Ongoing	Rt/Oa2
Raising awareness and understanding					
21	Encourage development of specialist/theme holidays/activities that build on the qualities and distinctiveness of the area (tie in with niche markets identified by DGTB, and 'Making Tracks' Nature based tourism scheme)	SFP, SEDG, SNH, RSPB, DGTB, Business Operators	H	S/M	RT/Oa2 RT/Oa3 RT/Oa4 RT/Oa5
22	Encourage involvement of school parties and youth groups in outdoor activities within the NSA	FC, DGC Youth Strategy, SFP, Land Managers, Fishing assoc.	M	M/L	RT/Oa3
23	Continue development of annual programme of guided walks and events, to include heritage/archaeology/maritime themes within the NSA, involving local community, landowners and farmers	DGC, NSA Officer, FE, RSPB, SNH, SFP, Land Managers, HS, Communities	M	S	RT/Oa2

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24	Promote the NSAs special qualities and landscape character through: - NSA guide/leaflet - Historic Land-use Assessment data - exhibition material - 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, HS	H	S/M	RT/Mp3 RT/Mp5
25	Raise awareness of Tourist Board advisory staff on the special landscape and nature conservation value of the NSA	SNH, RSPB, DGTB, NSA Officer	H	S	RT/Mp2
26	Encourage uptake of Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme to enhance recreational value of existing woods	FC, PWO	M	Ongoing	RT/Ca1 W/Fw5
Guidance					
27	Ensure design of new paths and tracks are in keeping with local character	FC, FE, PWO, SNH, DGC	H	S	RT/Mp4
28	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
29	Encourage the conversion of traditional buildings for use as visitor facilities/tourist accommodation (such as at Caerlaverock WWT)	HS	M	Ongoing	RT/Mp4 RT/Rd10
30	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, RSPB, SNH, DGTB, Access Forum, Community Safety	M	Ongoing	RT/Oa1 S/P1 S/P2
31	Seek to ensure the design of golf courses is sympathetic to surrounding landscape, habitats and the cultural heritage	SNH, DGC, NSA Officer, Business Operators	L	L	RT/O6 Rt/Mp4
Policy and legislation					
32	Continue to implement Structure and Local Plan policies concerning caravan and chalet development	DGC	H	Ongoing	RT/Rd2 RT/Rd4
33	Continue support for tourist development which accords with the Structure and Local Plan policy	DGC	H	Ongoing	RT/Mp4
34	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 involved in its development continue to be involved and informed during its implementation. An ongoing process of consultation, 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 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 in 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-ordinate – 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 need for the continuation 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 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 Nith Estuary 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	Forestry Enterprise
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
HS	Historic Scotland
LBAP partners	Local Biodiversity Action Plan partners
NDSFB	Nith District Salmon Fisheries Board
NFUS	National Farmers Union of Scotland
PWO	Private Woodland Owners
RCAHMS	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SAC	Scottish Agricultural College
SCAPE	Scottish Coastal Archaeology and Palaeo-Environment
SE	Scottish Executive
SEERAD	Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department
SEPA	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
SEDG	Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway
SFP	Solway Firth Partnership
SH	Solway Heritage
SLF	Scottish Landowners Federation
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
SW	Scottish Water
SWEAP	South West Environmental Action Project
SWT	Scottish Wildlife Trust

Glossary of terms	
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CPS	Countryside Premium Scheme
D&G	Dumfries and Galloway
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
HLA	Historic Land-use Assessment
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
NPPG	National Planning Policy 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 Nith Estuary Region
9,300 HECTARES**

Extent of Area

The area includes Criffell and Kirkconnel Flow, the mouth of the River Nith south of Islesteps, Carse Sands and Caerlaverock. The western limits are defined south of Arbigland by the public road to Powillimount from the main road at Newmains south of the main road (A710), the ridge of Millour, leading to Boreland Hill, the Glen Burn behind Criffell (569m), and the western march of Shambellie Wood continue the western limits northwards to the Mabie Forester, where Marthrown Hill (249m), the mouth of the Cargen Pow at Islesteps, and, across the Nith, the track from Netherwood Mains to Netherwood Bank define the northern extent of the area. From Netherwood Bank southwards the ridge to Chapelhill, and the public road B725 from Bankend eastwards to the Thwaite Burn define the extent of the remainder of the area.

Description

The River Nith and the Lochar Water flow into the Solway Firth to form a wide tidal estuary comprising the Carse Sands, Blackshaw Bank and Priestside Bank. These extensive sands, mudflats and saltings, of an openness and horizontal scale are unusual in Scotland, are complemented and enhanced by the presence of the gentle granite cone of Criffell and the long well-wooded ridge extending back to Marthrown Hill. The eastern flank of the hill, best seen from Caerlaverock, has steep convex slopes with a mixture of woodland and moorland descending into the richer sylvan and pastoral landscape around New Abbey. By contrast Marthrown Hill is heavily wooded, but below it the riverside flats are a mixture of pasture and peat moss with associated birch trees. To the east of the tidal channel of the Nith relief is low, but the long valley is given emphasis by a long low ridge parallel with the river. The river at this point is broad and bordered by open fields, marshes and riverside trees in some places. The variety of elements constitutes a whole that is of great beauty, and constantly changes with the coming and going of the tide, which in this vicinity affects and intertidal zone of enormous width.

Other National Interests

There are National Nature Reserves at Caerlaverock and Kirkconnel Flow and Sites of Special Scientific Interest at the Flooders, Kirkconnel Merse and Carse Bay.

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 the boundary north to include Kingholm Quay and Crichton grounds on the eastern bank of the Nith and on the west to extend the boundary to the edge of Dumfries at Troqueer, then following the Dalbeattie Road, skirting Cargenbridge, down to Dalskairth, rejoining the existing boundary at Marthrow Hill.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Crichton Hospital Grounds already recognised as an important area and designated a Conservation Area. The settlement boundary of the town follows in part the boundary of the conservation area. • The Crichton estate forms a distinct edge to the town . • Aware of estuary/coastal scenery from the B725/Stanehouse Loaning junction. • The scenic qualities of the Nith NSA gradually become more apparent from Islesteps southwards where the scenery becomes estuarine.
Joining with the East Stewartry NSA as the quality of the landscape currently between these two areas was considered to be of an equal value to the landscape within the NSAs. There were differing opinions as to whether the development at Southerness should be included/ excluded if the boundary were realigned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landscape between the two NSAs does not have a significantly lower scenic value. Development at Southerness is largely hidden from immediate views.
Extensions of the north eastern boundary to include the eastern flank of the Ward Law ridge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward Law forms a distinct landscape unit enclosing the estuary, however the boundary is currently drawn on the ridgeline which encloses the view from the Nith. The eastern flank of Ward Law however is very important when viewing Nith Estuary from the east (A75) and provides scale and contrast with the upper slopes of Criffel. • The road down the eastern flank of the Nith and back up the eastern flank of Ward Law ridge form a popular driving and cycling circular route.
Extensions of the eastern boundary to include Ruthwell.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no obvious or distinct change in the landscape at this boundary, just a gradual dissolution of the valued qualities of the NSA.
Extensions of the eastern boundary to include Locharmoss/ Longbridge Muir.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area does not exhibit the contrast and variety of the estuary and coast.
Extend the boundary north-west to include all of Mabie Forest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mabie forest is very important in terms of the recreational facilities it provides and is greatly valued.





<p>Extend west to include Troston Hill, Auchengray Craigs, Meikle Hard and Redbank Hill.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing boundary extends beyond the enclosing ridge line of the estuary to include the western slopes of Criffel, that do not exhibit the direct land/water relationship of the estuary. • Existing boundary drawn where the Tannoch Burn joins the New Abbey Pow, upstream of which it becomes the Glensone Burn.
<p>The whole of the coastline should be included as it is of equal scenic quality.</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. • 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 influence aspects of the Nith Estuary NSA – some statutory – including:

Dumfries and Galloway Landscape Assessment

Solway Firth Strategy

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

D&G Countryside Access Strategy

Landscape design guidance for woodlands and forestry in D&G

Ae 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

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
Kirkconnell Flow
- **National Nature Reserve**
Caerlaverock
Kirkconnell Flow
- **Nature reserves**
Drummain's Reedbed (Scottish Wildlife Trust)
Kirkconnell Merse (RSPB)
- **Local wildlife sites**
Loch Kindar
The Loshes, Auchenfad

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Ward Law Hill, Roman fort and enclosure

*Caerlaverock Castle, old castle castle courtyard and harbour

*Sweetheart Abbey

*New Abbey Corn Mill, lade, mill, curling and fish pond

Ingleston Mote

McCulloch Castle Fort, Arbigland

**sites managed by Historic Scotland*

Gardens & Designed Landscapes

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

Arbigland

Gardens and Designed Landscapes

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

Mabie House

Shambellie

Ardwall

Cavens

Kirkconnell

Conheath

Kelton House

Caerlaverock





APPENDIX 5

Consultees

Communities

- Caerlaverock Community Council
- Kirkbean Community Council
- Lower Nithsdale Federation of Community Councils
- New Abbey Community Council
- Ruthwell and Clarencefield Community Council
- Troqueer Landward Community Council

Elected representatives

- Council Elected Members

Land Management

- Forestry Commission SW Scotland Conservancy
- Forestry Enterprise
- FWAG
- Nith District Salmon Fisheries Board
- Nith Estuary Haafnet Fisheries Association
- National Farmers Union of Scotland
- Scottish Executive Environmental and Rural Affairs Department
- Scottish Landowners Federation

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 Environment Protection Agency
- Solway Firth Partnership
- Solway Heritage
- The National Trust for Scotland

Recreation

- Dumfries and Galloway Tourist Board
- Galloway Cycling Group
- Loch Kindar Angling Club
- Locharbriggs Social Club (sea angling section)
- Mountaineering Council Scotland
- ScotWays (Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society)

Others

- All individuals who attended the workshops and land managers meetings
- Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway
- Scottish Executive

Photography

R & B Mearns

Mike Bolam Photography

Solway Firth Partnership

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Keith Kirk

Peter Norman

Dumfries and Galloway Tourist Board

Forest Enterprise

Hugh Bryden