

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE - 29 MAY 2002

EAST AYRSHIRE OUTDOOR ACCESS STRATEGY

Report by Director of Community Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To request the Committee to consider and, if acceptable, adopt the East Ayrshire Outdoor Access Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Committee has previously approved reports regarding the Council's response to the draft Land Reform bill, the production of an Outdoor Access Strategy is a key requirement of the forthcoming legislation.
- 2.2 East Ayrshire Council appointed Land Use Consultants in September 2001 to produce the Strategy and a Pilot Study. The Strategy was joint funded by: Scottish Natural Heritage, Paths for All Partnership, Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire and East Ayrshire Council.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 In October 2001 the first draft of the Outdoor Access Strategy was produced by Land Use Consultants. The draft was circulated to the newly established Steering Group and Access Forum for comment.
- 3.2 Land Use Consultants gave a presentation of the final draft Outdoor Access Strategy at the Access Forum in December 2001. The Strategy was put on the East Ayrshire Council Intranet for wider consultation and comment.
- 3.3 The final and completed Strategy and Pilot Study was delivered in March 2002. A copy of the final Outdoor Access Strategy is available in the Members' Lounge.
- 3.4 A comprehensive leaflet summarising the Strategy is being developed to raise awareness of the Strategy and its implications for East Ayrshire.
- 3.5 The main points of the Strategy are:
- Taking Access a stage further.
 - Rationale: assess what already exists and the demand for access.
 - Key challenges and opportunities for Access in East Ayrshire.
- 3.6 The vision for developing outdoor access in East Ayrshire is very broad, incorporating a range of different themes. It is critical that a greater emphasis

is placed on the role that access can play in delivering a much wider range of issues than its traditional focus on countryside recreation. These themes are:

- developing healthy and sustainable communities;
- realising the tourism potential of East Ayrshire;
- supporting economic and environmental regeneration;
- sustainable transport.

3.7 The Strategy aims to realise the following Vision for East Ayrshire:

A series of well planned, co-ordinated and used path networks which will provide connections between communities, meet the social needs and health needs of communities, realise the area's tourism potential, promote more sustainable transport choices and support economic and environmental regeneration.

The strategy has divided East Ayrshire into the following zones:

Core Path Network Action Zones.

A : Plateau Moorland

B: Kilmarnock

C: Farmland and landward towns and villages.

D: Irvine River Valley

E: Ayr River Valley

F: Cumnock and New Cumnock

G: Doon Valley

H: Southern Upland Area

3.8 East Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum.

The Inaugural Meeting of the East Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum was held at an early stage in the process of preparing the Strategy. To date four forums have been held at different locations within the authority. A proposed structure has been put to the Forum with a Core Group and six Local Action Groups. The Core Group will be made up of representatives from Public Agencies, Non Governmental Agencies, Land Managers, User Groups and a representative from the Local Action Groups.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications related to the approval of the Outdoor Access Strategy.

5. LEGAL AUTHORITY/IMPLICATIONS.

5.1 The completion of an East Ayrshire Outdoor Access Strategy will fulfill part of the Council's obligations and responsibilities outlined in the draft Land Reform (Scotland) Bill.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Nil.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The Outdoor Access Strategy fulfills some of the Council's obligations as indicated in the draft Land Reform (Scotland) Bill. The Strategy will underpin the development of outdoor access in East ayrshire.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (i) adopt the East Ayrshire Outdoor Access Strategy; and
- (ii) otherwise note the content of this report.

William Stafford
Director of Community Services

WS/ASM/CM
29 April 2002

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. East Ayrshire Outdoor Access Strategy
2. Reports to Community Services Committee – Countryside/Outdoor Access Unit on 6th February 2002, 19th September 2001, and 7th February 2001

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone 01563 576076 and ask for John Griffiths, Head of Leisure Services.

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AGENDA