

A Brief Guide to Preparing an Outdoor Access Plan



Introduction - Outdoor Access Plans

This guidance is intended to provide developers, local authorities and others in Scotland with practical advice on understanding the requirements, scope and benefits in producing an Outdoor Access Plan – relevant to various types and levels of development proposals.

A range of general guidance on outdoor access rights exists, but there is currently a lack of detailed information on how to consider and mitigate the impacts of any development on these statutory public access rights.

The guidance has been designed to cover all types of development - e.g. residential, commercial, leisure, recreation, transport, energy - and all levels of development - the National, Major and Local levels introduced by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006.

It illustrates the key issues to be addressed when considering outdoor access, and signposts how to assess, manage and monitor potential impacts on statutory outdoor access rights. The guidance also includes direction to useful reference sources which provide additional, and more detailed, background information for developers in preparing Outdoor Access Plans.

It is intended to be a user-friendly document providing clear and concise advice and good practice guidance to all those involved in the production and assessment of Outdoor Access Plans. Such plans are not intended to impose an onerous requirement on developers, but to assist all parties in considering and carrying out developments.

The research behind this guidance was carried out by Scott Wilson consultants, as a commissioned research study for SNH.

When is Outdoor Access relevant ?

The recent 'Scottish Planning Policy' (SPP, 2010) is the current statement of the Scottish Government policies on nationally important land use planning matters. The SPP sets out various subject planning policies, including policies on Open Space and Physical Activity about public access and development. Paragraph 150 states –

“Statutory access rights under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 apply to most land and inland water in Scotland, underpinning opportunities for outdoor recreation. Planning authorities should consider access issues and should protect core and other important routes and access rights when preparing development plans and making decisions on planning applications. ..Where relevant, access rights and core paths plans should be considered when determining planning applications. New development should incorporate new and enhanced access opportunities, linked to wider access networks.”

The SPP also states that **‘Wherever possible, planning authorities and developers should identify opportunities to create and enhance networks between open spaces and avoid fragmentation. ..The planning system should support a pattern of development which reduces the need to travel, facilitates travel by public transport, ..and provides safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling.’**

This means that there is broad relevance for considering access issues within development planning. Potentially, any type of development proposal, and many policies and plans, are likely to have some level of impact or opportunities for statutory access rights, and for paths and networks. It might arise from direct land-take, or effects on path networks, or through affecting nearby access links to local community facilities or amenities.

There is consequently a common interest across planners and developers in being able to give clear and integrated consideration to public access issues, related to new development and planning applications.

To meet these SPP policies, an Outdoor Access Plan can be a very appropriate document, helping to ensure that issues of public access rights and important routes are openly considered and protected, and that opportunities for new or enhanced access can be incorporated wherever possible.

In some cases an Outdoor Access Plan will have an additional purpose of considering environmental protection (safeguarding habitats, species and landscapes) alongside considering access issues, particularly where a development has the potential to impact on designated sites. In such situations the issues will need to be assessed and designed for, to ensure access rights are maintained - and enhanced if possible - without detriment to the key environmental assets.

What is an Outdoor Access Plan?

An Outdoor Access Plan (OAP) brings together in a single concise document the various issues, impacts and opportunities relating to public outdoor access. This allows them to be recognised, considered and adjusted in an integrated and open way.

The OAP should assess the existing baseline outdoor access provision, predict the impact of the proposed development or policy on that baseline, and consider how any impacts will be managed and monitored, and how opportunities can be realised.

The production of OAPs is still a relatively new phenomenon, and the scale of an OAP will vary depending on the scope, scale, location and content of the development proposal. There is “no one size fits all” solution.

For example, a ‘local level’ development of 10 houses where outdoor access is a material issue (e.g. through loss of an access route to an existing public open space) may only require a few pages to cover the necessary elements to demonstrate that access issues have been considered, and show how these will be addressed (perhaps by an alternative route), so that public access rights are protected and integrated. A national or major development (e.g. a windfarm, business park, new trunk road) will probably require a more detailed approach to addressing outdoor access issues, and therefore could result in the production of a more detailed OAP document. In all such cases, where public outdoor access is a development issue the OAP will provide important supporting information for the planning application.

At what stage should an Outdoor Access Plan be prepared?

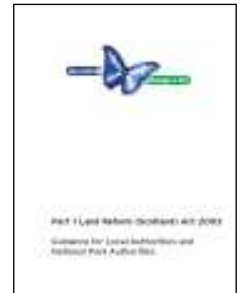
An OAP is not a statutory requirement in planning, but it can prove useful as part of the early stages of design, preparation and assessment for many types of development.

Some developers and organisations are starting to prepare an OAP on their own initiative. This can prove especially useful in preparing for discussions with nearby communities or other interests, as it helps to explain and plan how public access issues will be handled. For housing or workplace developments, or community facilities like schools, this may also provide information on a major selling point behind proposals.

The need for an OAP may also arise through pre-application discussions with the Planning Authority, enabling the identification of any outdoor access issues that the Authority deems to be relevant considerations in the development proposal at an early stage of the planning application process.

It may be that an OAP arises as a more formal requirement, where outdoor access is deemed to be a relevant consideration for the proposed development. In such cases, the imposition of a planning consent condition may require a developer to produce and submit an OAP, for approval by the planning authority prior to the commencement of development,

This option of a planning condition is noted in the Scottish Executive publication “Guidance for Local Authorities and National Park Authorities on Part 1 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003” (2005), which suggests that in order for Scottish local authorities to ensure continuing public access rights, they may consider attaching a suitable planning condition where this is appropriate. Suggested wording for such a planning condition is included in this guidance.



For larger projects likely to be subject to preparation of an Environmental Statement, much of the information which this Guidance recommends for inclusion in an OAP will also be relevant to the ES requirements, for instance the “Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Community Effects” assessment.

The preparation of an OAP would lie with the developer, but appropriate support and information should be available from the planning authority. It is therefore recommended that at the pre-application stage, and prior to commencing the OAP production process, developers initially discuss and agree with the relevant planning authority the level of detail required and the format of the OAP.

What are the benefits in producing an Outdoor Access Plan?

There are several key benefits in producing an OAP :-

- It provides clear and focussed consideration where outdoor access is a particular issue, to help the consideration of the planning application;
- Some high profile developments have now demonstrated the advantages in specifically addressing outdoor access rights through an OAP, and are beginning to set standards in outdoor access management planning (*some OAP case study references are provided at the end of this guidance document*);
- An OAP contributes to increased openness and transparency for all parties involved, in recognising, understanding and managing the impacts of a proposal on public access rights;
- It provides a valuable discussion tool in contributing to community engagement, and for working within the emerging frameworks created by the Core Path Plans, the Open Space Strategy etc.
- It can identify reasonable outdoor access enhancement opportunities, that may be considered as planning gain from the development proposal, for instance potentially as part of a s75 Agreement;
- It can bring public relations and business benefits for many developments, providing clear information on provisions for public access, paths, greenspace, active travel opportunities and local accessibility.

How should an Outdoor Access Plan be structured?

The structure of an Outdoor Access Plan should comprise a series of logical and sequential steps :

STEP 1	Identify the Purpose, Aims & Objectives of the Outdoor Access Plan
STEP 2	Establish the Outdoor Access Baseline affected by the development proposal
STEP 3	Identify predicted development impacts and potential enhancements on the Outdoor Access Baseline
STEP 4	Mitigate the predicted development impacts, and design potential enhancements
STEP 5	Manage & Monitor the implementation of the O A P.

For each of the five Steps, “Minimum Requirements” are first identified, which are potentially applicable to all project types (National/Major/Local levels); followed by “Additional Considerations” which are likely to be more relevant to National & Major level development projects.

“Key Advice” sections then provide specific guidance in identifying and addressing outdoor access issues .

STEP 1 – IDENTIFY THE PURPOSE, AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE OUTDOOR ACCESS PLAN

Minimum Requirements

Define in clear and concise overall terms why the OAP is being produced.

For example :

- ‘To plan site tracks and paths to maintain public access routes during construction, and to enhance public outdoor access in the long-term’
- ‘To manage outdoor access by the public during the site construction phase e.g. clarify existing public access on the site and minimise potential conflicts with site traffic’

Additional Considerations

- Aim to provide safe public access alternatives at all stages of the development, avoiding main site works areas and haul routes during construction, as work phases progress;
- Consider achieving enhanced outdoor access networks and viewpoints, illustrated by an ‘on completion’ plan. Such a plan provides a useful discussion document for community engagement, demonstrating the end design proposals.

STEP 2 – ESTABLISH THE OUTDOOR ACCESS BASELINE AFFECTED BY THE DEVELOPMENT

Minimum Requirements

- Identify existing access points, paths or cycle routes and any Rights of Way or Core Paths;
- Identify existing activities e.g. walking, cycling, horse-riding, canoeing, and sailing, as relevant;
- Identify existing settlements that may use the site for recreational or other purposes, now or in future;
- Identify any natural heritage features e.g. conserved landscapes, protected species and habitats, where the development proposal creates access considerations.

Additional Considerations

- Identify any informal routes, “desire lines”, equestrian trails, or other access infrastructure including seating, picnic tables, “kissing-gates”, signage and viewpoints;
- Include access provision on both land and inland water;
- Identify (*if available*) participation levels and profiles;
- Identify key community facilities adjacent to the development site e.g. schools, churches, health centres, libraries, post offices, and shops which are connected by an existing access network, or which would benefit from such provision;
- Identify access links to public transport infrastructure e.g. bus stops, bus and rail stations;
- Identify if any natural heritage features that have conservation designations e.g. SSSI, SAC, SPA or protected species designations (e.g. bats, otters, badger).
- Issues of public safety raised by the inter-relationship between the development proposal and the outdoor access baseline.

Key Advice

- Provide a Map or a graphic illustration highlighting the outdoor access Baseline, showing all relevant features on and adjacent to the development site.

STEP 3 – IDENTIFY PREDICTED DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS AND POTENTIAL ENHANCEMENTS ON THE OUTDOOR ACCESS BASELINE

Minimum Requirements

- Identify the extent, period and nature of impacts where baseline outdoor access will be temporarily / permanently affected;
- Assess the potential significance of impacts on the baselines identified during Step 2 above;
- Consider the nature and location of people (e.g. residents, visitors) and existing land use receptors (e.g. domestic gardens, open space play areas) who could potentially experience increase in disturbance, invasion of privacy, disruption to activity, etc, as a consequence of the proposal;
- Consider scope to enhance outdoor access, either as development gain or to compensate for expected impacts
- Identify predicted changes in levels and patterns of outdoor access activity, and whether mitigation is required to protect statutory rights of outdoor access.

Additional Considerations

- Consider the relevant outdoor access responsibilities with regards to temporary or permanent exclusion as set out in legislation;
- Consider the likely significance of the temporary / permanent impacts upon the affected baseline receptors;
- Review the likely significance of temporary / permanent access impacts upon the affected existing natural heritage conditions;
- Check the potential consequences of any such temporary/permanent impacts in line with statutory obligations (e.g. the Conservation Regulations 1991 as amended; the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended; and the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. These implications might for example include disturbance from diverted access routes affecting Schedule 1 Birds (e.g. *hen harrier, peregrine*) during breeding seasons, or European Protected Species..

Key Advice

- **Potential development impacts on the outdoor access baseline could be wide-ranging in their nature. The following examples provide an illustration of what to consider:-**
 - Severance of baseline path networks on, over, or adjacent to, development land;
 - Temporary/permanent loss of open space due to land-take;
 - Severance of baseline public access to, over, or adjacent to, inland water areas;
 - Restricted access/permanent loss of related infrastructure provision (e.g. car parks, gates, non-vehicular bridges, access furniture such as way-marked signage, seats, shelters, and viewing points);
 - Health & Safety implications during the development construction phase arising from the potential “inter-face” between outdoor access rights and construction activity (e.g. unavoidable shared use of access roads/paths/tracks involving vehicular movements, machinery operations, and equipment/materials storage);
 - Adverse effects on interest groups affected by the development construction and post-construction activity (e.g. walker, cyclist, equestrian, local community clubs and groups);
 - Adverse effects on individual public and visitor users affected by the development construction and post-construction activity;

- **In addition, the following points provide helpful advice in undertaking STEP 3:-**
 - Adopt an early pro-active and sympathetic position in considering mutually acceptable mitigation to identified development impacts on the outdoor access baseline;
 - Consider the P.R. and community engagement benefits of addressing adverse human outdoor access impacts (e.g. residential development sales; attitudes to renewables developments);
 - Provide a graphic illustration e.g. a Map delineating the impacted outdoor access baseline features on, and adjacent to, the development site.

STEP 4 – MITIGATE PREDICTED DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS AND DESIGN POTENTIAL ENHANCEMENTS TO THE OUTDOOR ACCESS BASELINE

Minimum Requirements

- Propose targeted and tailored mitigation measures, to address identified impacts
- Identify where new or enhanced access opportunities may be incorporated.

Additional Considerations

- Ensure that proposed mitigation measures are relevant, realistic, acceptable and deliverable in order to prevent, reduce or off-set the predicted development impacts;
- Ensure any access mitigation which is a statutory requirement is specified e.g. site specific management, access routing or exclusion zones during breeding season(s) of Schedule 1 Birds.

Key Advice

Predicted Impact

Severance of baseline path networks on, over, or adjacent to, the development site.

Restricted access/permanent loss of related infrastructure provision (e.g. car parks, gates, non-vehicular bridges, way-marked signage).

Health & Safety implications during the development construction phase, arising from overlap between outdoor access and construction activity (e.g. unavoidable shared use of access roads/paths/tracks involving vehicular movements, machinery operations, and equipment/materials storage).

Adverse effects on particular interest groups (e.g. walker, cyclist, equestrian, local community clubs) and individuals affected by the development construction and post-construction activity.

Provide a graphic illustration e.g. a Map illustrating Mitigation proposals (e.g. locations proposed for exclusion of statutory access rights; proposed diversionary/alternative access routes; examples of on, and off-site, public information provision).

Suggested Mitigation / Enhancement

Provision of alternative signed diversionary route to maintain outdoor access without significant additional length/time. Consider suitable path surfaces for all users, to maintain/promote inclusive user access. Should “tie-in” to wider access networks.

Provision of temporary (or permanent) new infrastructure - e.g. alternative vehicle parking, gate accesses, access furniture, directional signage.

Consider the provision of temporary route crossing points; or separation mechanisms (eg. a temporary bridge over a busy haul route). Prepare information signage, leaflets etc advising on the development construction activity (plant, vehicles, and machinery) and the temporary changes to baseline access provision.

Consider appropriate communication strategy to be implemented - e.g. site liaison group, community groups, etc; on-site and off-site public information/interpretation provision.

STEP 5 – MANAGING & MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTDOOR ACCESS PLAN

Minimum Requirements

- Identify the most appropriate implementation structure (the developer, contractor, or a partnership (e.g. developer and local authority) to oversee implementation of the OAP proposals – with identified “lead” management responsibilities;
- Objectively review the Plan to establish if it has fully considered all the development impacts on the outdoor access baseline.

Additional Considerations

- Consider the contractor management role during construction e.g. temporary diversionary access routes, shared route management; the Health & Safety “inter-face” between the contractor and those exercising responsible outdoor access rights;
- Consider whether it is appropriate to have an on-site access management mechanism e.g. a Ranger service or a voluntary structure such as an established site user group;
- Consider establishing a Steering Group (*involving those represented on the implementation management structure and others e.g. key user and local community groups, local Access Forum*);
- Establish proposed maintenance programmes for paths, open spaces, and access infrastructure;
- Consider the preparation of an Action Plan – setting out the mitigation and enhancement measures, lead actions, target time-scales, etc, so that implementation progress can be assessed;
- Establish a time-scale for reviewing the Outdoor Access Plan. The review process itself should:-
 - Consider if the development has successfully integrated into the baseline environment in respect of outdoor access provision – or whether provision has led to other access issues
 - Establish whether all the proposed mitigation objectives have been achieved, and if not, determine what remedial actions should be implemented.
 - Assess whether new or enhanced provisions have established fully, and for instance of any further promotion or information may be required.

Existing Outdoor Access Plans which have been prepared in support of development planning applications provide useful reference sources to draw upon in preparing a project specific OAP. The following Case Studies include four ‘Major-level’ cases illustrating specific themes, and a ‘Local-level’ case study.

CASE STUDIES :

1. Tornagrain - A Planned Town for the Highlands

Challenge to tie-in a new community as part of the wider strategy for balanced development between Inverness and Nairn.

The prime purpose of the Tornagrain 'Access Management Plan' was to describe the context for access provision and ensure that the demand for access provision across the site was appropriately anticipated and assessed, so that it could be incorporated into the design of the development.

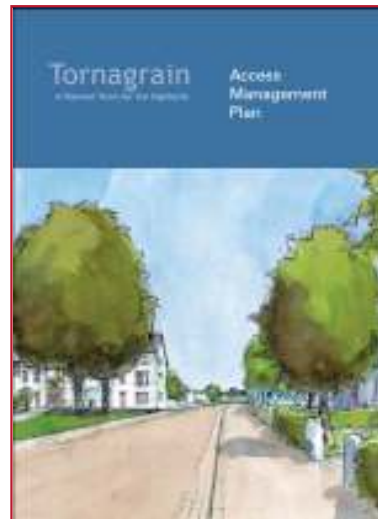
The development proposals include some 4,960 homes, retail and employment space, schools, leisure facilities and open space.

The access baseline at the site is mainly low-key and informal, mostly involving local residents and dog walkers. The existing access provision consists of an extensive network of forest tracks, rides and desire lines in Tornagrain Wood, and a formal forest track.

The Access Management Plan addressed issues of access during construction - identifying public safety as a key element - and of continuing public access, including disability access.

The proposed development will comprise urban-type developments largely replacing rural land uses. Allowance was made for various areas of open space, and recognition given to the importance of tie-ins at the edges of the site.

To facilitate and manage access and recreation at Tornagrain, the Access Management Plan set out practical objectives including improvements to existing access points, new access points, route creation, installation of access furniture, signage, and information and interpretation points.



Document Details:-

- A4 portrait (26 pages) with 3 maps;
- For more details follow this web link:-

http://www.tornagrain-newtown.co.uk/UserFiles/File/Jan09/Tornagrain_Access_Management_Plan_WEB.pdf

2. Whitelee Windfarm

Proposal for Europe's largest on-shore windfarm with a development footprint across three Local Authority Areas.

The Whitelee Access Action Plan covers a large area across East Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire, and East Ayrshire. The plan showed early recognition that the development could improve access provision and cater for a range of recreational users in all three local planning authorities, and an opportunistic approach was taken. Preparation of Core Path Plans by each of the authorities aided the production of the access plan for Whitelee. Existing infrastructure included a network of informal routes, rights of way and forest roads.

Early preparation of a "Path Planning Study" in 2002 revealed that the development of a windfarm in the area could bring major advantages to develop recreational access provision, while economic and community advantages were also noted as being important. A thorough consultation process of public meetings and one-to-one interviews were undertaken with landowners, residents, and interested parties. Many of the issues and opportunities that were identified at this early stage were vital in the production of the access plan for the area seven years later.

A Section 75 agreement was used to ensure that the access plan for the development was produced by Scottish Power. The agreement also ensured that an Access Planning Group was established to oversee the development and implementation of the plan, with the three planning authorities taking a lead role on the "Whitelee Access Planning Group" that also includes stakeholders and community councils. The authorities agreed that a full-time project officer would achieve this, and a post was created within East Renfrewshire Council which agreed to take the lead role on behalf of South Lanarkshire and East Ayrshire.

Public and stakeholder consultation orchestrated by the Whitelee Access Planning Group formed an integral part of the process for producing the access plan. The Local Access Forum was utilised as part of the consultative phase as well.

It is clearly stated within the document that *"development of the Whitelee Access Action Plan has benefited greatly from co-operation and joint*

working between the local authorities". The involvement of stakeholders and partner organisations was also important. Joint working has the potential to improve communication between councils and create links between various departments, particularly those involved in producing and updating core path plans.

As part of the monitoring and mitigation strategy a ranger service has been established as part of the access plan and there is a requirement to update the plan every 5 years. Regular site inspections are included.

Management priorities have included the construction of a visitor centre, enhancement of site entrances, construction of recreational path networks, interpretation panels, shelters and viewpoints, and cycle hire provision. Monitoring is to include regular visitor monitoring, site inspections, maintenance and publicity.



Document Details:-

- A4 portrait (23 pages) with 2 maps;
- For more details please contact:-
Nick Prower (Whitelee Access Project Officer) -
nick.prower@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

3. Castle Stuart Golf Links - Providing New Access Infrastructure

Proposal for a new golf resort development at Castle Stuart, east of Inverness, involving the re-development of largely agricultural land. An opportunity to provide, and improve, public access for an area of countryside with considerable ecological, archaeological and visual interest. The initial phase of development - the Castle Stuart Links Course & Clubhouse - opened in the summer of 2009.

The project site covers some 157 hectares, with proposed development phases to include a 57 bedroom small luxury hotel & spa, 148 'resort-ownership' lodges and apartments, and a second 18-hole seaside golf course (Source: www.castlestuartgolf.com).

The "Castle Stuart Golf Links Access Management Plan" has been prepared and the key objective "is to provide for well-managed public access in conjunction with the everyday use and maintenance of the golf links, without either adversely impeding these activities, or otherwise disrupting the existing environment". The access plan seeks to ensure that the demand for access across the development site is appropriately anticipated through continued consultations with the Highland Council and the local community, so that it can be incorporated into the design for the development.

The plan identifies the key access points to and within the development site, as well as the baseline recreational activities associated with the site (e.g. walking, dog walking) and other current activities involving access (e.g. wildfowling, bird-ringing). The plan states that "there is high potential for the development of public access for casual use, by e.g. recreational walkers, or more formal use by e.g. birdwatchers".

During the project construction phase, the access plan identifies specific access infrastructure provision that will be provided by the appointed contractor.

This provision includes:-

- access path network, including for those using wheelchairs or pushchairs;
- uniform, non-slip surfacing of any footways and carriageways, avoiding use of steps and any gradients greater than those they replace;
- provision of pavement ramps at all junctions of footways with carriageways – to be constructed with tactile edges for the visually impaired, the base of the ramp flush with the carriageway and of a gradient no greater than 1 in 12.

During the project operational phase, the outdoor access plan also identifies specific access infrastructure provision to be provided. This includes:-

- the use of signage around the development - e.g. signs to encourage responsible behaviour by the public exercising their access rights on the golf courses, way-marking signs advising the public of where access routes lead, with information and interpretation panels/maps devised by the developer in conjunction with the Highland Council, the local community, RSPB, SNH;
- new access points and casual visitor parking;
- new access route creation, devised by the developer in conjunction with the Highland Council Access Officer;
- new access furniture e.g. public benches at viewpoints over Castle Stuart and the Moray Firth, and a bird hide.

Document Details:-

- A4 portrait (30 pages) with 2 maps;
- For more details please contact:-
The Highland Council Planning & Development Service.
(Tel No. 01463 702816)

4. Whiteness Development Proposal

Major residential and marina proposal on the Moray Firth coast. Need to address potential adverse affects arising from people taking access on the qualifying features of the Moray Firth designated sites on and adjacent to the proposed development.

The Whiteness site is a disused oil platform construction site, a brown-field area with existing harbour infrastructure. The long term Whiteness proposal includes almost 2000 houses, hotel, school, and a 500 berth marina, achieved through staged development.

The site is adjacent to the Inner Moray Firth Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation, Ramsar site and Site of Special Scientific Interest, particularly important for birds and for bottle-nose dolphins, and as such is sensitive to change and is considered to have extremely high natural heritage value.

Given the sensitive nature of the site, SNH and the Highland Council asked the Whiteness Property Company Limited to produce an Access Management Plan detailing how qualifying features of the designated sites will be preserved and protected while also addressing how access rights are to be managed.

The access plan provides extensive data on the existing situation at Whiteness both in terms of ecological interests and current recreational activities. Projected levels and patterns of use were clearly defined for prospective residents and visitors.

Specific mitigation measures include encouraging local residents to act as stewards and environmental advocates by providing information and interpretation points. A welcome and orientation facility will be designed to steer visitors to less sensitive parts of the site, in addition to directional signage.

Site management will initially be the responsibility of the developer but in due course it is intended to hand over responsibility to a community trust.

A monitoring framework is proposed to identify issues and set objectives to be assessed at regular intervals, including various survey works to determine any impacts on the qualifying features of the SPA. The effectiveness of access management measures will be monitored by tracking people and vehicular movements over time across the area.

The access plan recognises that responsible access provision brings huge social and health benefits to many people. Access can raise greater public awareness of the natural environment and the value of marine ecosystems, thereby assisting enhanced long term protection.



Document Details:-

- A4 portrait (116 pages) with 9 maps;
- For more information please contact:-
The Whiteness Property Development
Company Ltd, Whiteness Road,
Ardersier, IV2 7QX

5. Rum Habitat Restoration Project –

Outdoor Access Plan at a local level

This brief outdoor access plan sets out how SNH intends to manage impacts on outdoor access created by the construction of a temporary deer fence, proposed to enable native woodland planting on the east coast of the Isle of Rum as part of the Rum Habitat Restoration Project.

Following agreement with the Rum Woodland Working Group and members of the public on this woodland planting project, SNH proposed the installation of a temporary deer fence of approximately 3.5km in length, to protect the new trees for up to 5 years following planting.

An existing recent visitor survey had found that around 2,000 visitors came to Rum for hill walking, with around 50% of these walkers traversing the Rum Cuillins and between 100 - 150 of them walking the Dibidil path. The survey also found that a high proportion of visitors to Rum, including those participating in walking, were attracted to the island by its wildlife.

To minimise the impact on this visitor access, the proposed deer fence line was located below the Dibidil path. Even so, the plan recognises that the fence would temporarily restrict access to open land, archaeological features and an otter viewing site.

In order to mitigate the impacts of the temporary deer fence, a number of measures were included:-

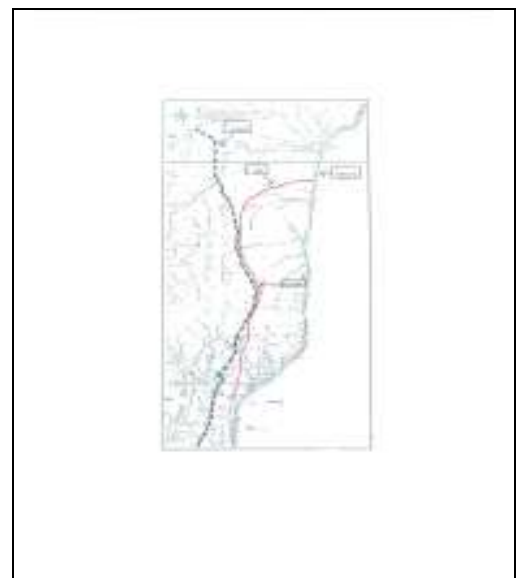
- location of a gate at the north end of the deer fence to provide access to the most accessible section of the island's east coastline and to a former farmstead;
- location of a stile over the deer fence at its southern end;
- provision of directional arrow markers to indicate the direction and distance of the gate and stile;
- provision of visitor information about the location and purpose of the deer fence at the start of the Dibidil path.

- erection of the deer fence during March/April – outwith the main island visitor season;

These mitigation measures ensured that the main access routes would not be directly affected by the construction of the temporary deer fence, and public access to all the baseline features of interest within the enclosure would be facilitated by the gate and stile.

A simple map is used to illustrate the access plan proposals.

By considering and addressing the access issues through a basic outdoor access plan, SNH deemed the overall impacts to be acceptably low and short-term in nature, and could explain how and why the approach was being taken.



Document Details:-

- A4 portrait (1 page) with 1 map;
- For more information please contact:-
SNH - West Highland Area Office, Fort William
(Tel No. 01397 704716)

Supporting Information and advice available in preparing an Outdoor Access Plan

For further information and advice relevant to outdoor access planning, there are a number of useful reference sources. Key sources of additional information are highlighted below.

Useful Reference Information	
Documentation Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Reform (Scotland) Act (2003); http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2003/PDF/asp_20030002_en.pdf • Scottish Outdoor Access Code; http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/access/ApprovedCode050604.pdf • Scottish Executive “Guidance on Part 1 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act (2005); http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/02/20645/51837 • Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2006/asp_20060017_en_1 • National Planning Framework (2) for Scotland (Executive Summary) http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/277181/0083229.pdf • Access Authority Core Path Plans; (contact the Access Officer(s) in the relevant local authority/national park authority where the planning application will be submitted) • Disability Discrimination Act (1995 & 2005); http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2005/ukpga_20050013_en_1.htm • SNH – EIA Handbook, Appendix 5 “Outdoor Access Impact Assessment” (2009); http://www.snh.org.uk/publications/online/heritagemanagement/eia/appendix5.shtml • SNH – “Outdoor Access & the Planning System”; http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/commissioned_reports/307%20-%20Outdoor%20Access%20and%20the%20Planning%20System.pdf • Scottish Planning Policy (“Open Space & Physical Activity” is a specific Subject Policy); http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/300760/0093908.pdf • Local Authority produced guidance e.g.:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aberdeenshire Council – Draft Local Development Plan : Draft Delivering Development Policy “SG LSD6 Public Access” ▪ Aberdeenshire Council Guidance leaflet: “Outdoor Access & Development” (Aberdeenshire Council Planning & Environment Services Tel No. 01224 664221)

Advice

Planning Authorities

Local Authority

Contact the Planning Department of the local authority (or local authorities) to whom you intend submitting your planning application. The Planning Department should be able to provide contact details for the authority's Access Officer.

National Park Authorities

For proposed developments in the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park area, contact the National Park Authority which has planning powers to decide all planning and related applications within the National Park boundary:-

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority
Carrochan
Carrochan Road
Balloch
G83 8EG Tel: 01389 722600

For proposed developments in the Cairngorms National Park area, the National Park Authority deals only with planning applications that are of significance to the aims of the Park. Planning applications therefore are made to the relevant local authority. Once an application is lodged, the Park Authority has 21 days to decide if the application raises issues of significance to the Park. If an application does raise such issues, then the Park Authority will take responsibility for deciding the application.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)

Policy & Advice (Recreation & Access)
SNH
Silvan House
231, Corstorphine Road
Edinburgh,
EH12 7AT

Tel: 0131 316 2682
Email: rob.garner@snh.gov.uk

