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# Carrick Way Development and Management Plan

## **Final Report**

January 2006

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## **PART ONE – PROJECT BRIEF**

### **I. Introduction**

This plan was commissioned by Girvan Horizons to prepare a Development and Management Plan (DMP) for the proposed Carrick Way long distance route.

The development of a circular route around the hills of North and South Carrick has stemmed from the interest in walking shown during three recent walking festivals organised in the area.

There has already been path development activity in the area, with Ayrshire Paths developing and promoting local networks around the settlements of Girvan, Kirkoswald, Maybole, Straiton, Dailly and Barr.

The proposal has the support of South Ayrshire Council and local Community Councils and is co-ordinated by Ayrshire Walking Festivals group (AWFG).

The group has carried out an initial survey of the proposed route, and this study is designed to build on that initial work by carrying out the following tasks:

- ✓ Produce a Development and Management Plan that will be used as a management tool for directing the development and management of the route.
- ✓ Identify the potential for future development along with potential sources of funding.
- ✓ Identify long term goals.
- ✓ Identify costs for management and maintenance.

### **II. Approach to the study**

#### **Carrick Way Development and Management Plan**

The Client Group are keen to have a Development and Management Plan that will cover the following topics:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ The development process</li><li>✓ The management process</li><li>✓ Funding issues</li><li>✓ Economic and tourism potential</li><li>✓ Associated service provision</li><li>✓ Likely visitor market</li></ul> | <p>Key members of the Council and other local agencies were contacted to discuss their views on these topics. See Appendix 6.7 for contact record</p> |
|---|---|



## Network Survey

This survey covered the proposed route identified for the Carrick Way, along with some alternative links. The survey assessed the route condition and identified barriers and maintenance requirements. Each of the 12 route sections will have a survey report covering the following areas:

- Route description: - *noting the routes popularity and any existing structures and utilities.*
- Landscape and linkages: - *noting the terrain the section passes through and highlights potential linkages or alternative routes.*
- Accessibility evaluation: - *noting any barriers to access for different user groups.*
- Risk management: - *noting any significant hazards in the section.*
- Rationale: - *this section draws together the upgrade and maintenance proposals for the section.*

***Detailed costs can be seen in the survey report for each section in Part 5 of the DMP (under separate cover)***

## Survey Approach

The parameters of the survey were agreed at the start-up meeting. The introduction of the Land Reform Legislation requires that surveys now need to consider all users, identifying barriers and constraints the route will present to different users.

A low key approach is required for the development of the Way with proposals for minimal waymarking, minimal upgrade and maintenance. Options have been provided for complete new build path in some areas.

The prescriptions for upgrade and the approach to safety management will be influenced by the particular Visitor Management Zone the section is in. (see 2.2 below)

## **PART TWO – DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN - BACKGROUND**

### **1. Vision**

The vision for the Carrick Way could be:

*“To create a sustainable access resource, developed and managed by local people, that will appeal to a wide range of users, ages and abilities”*

**The Vision will need to be ratified by the Management Group for the Way.**

### **2. Network Policy statements**

These statements guide the ideal management of the network and ensure that there is a consistent approach applied to the management and maintenance of the network.

**Policy statements 2.1 to 2.3 have been worked up, as they impact on the development of the DMP.**

Others will have to be worked up by the Way's Management Group.

#### **2.1 Route inspections**

Route inspections will take place at *a minimum* – once per year. Ideally two inspections will be undertaken, in early spring and late summer. Inspections will be logged on a proforma and filed in a central location. Risk assessments will be reviewed at the time of route inspections, and any changes noted.

#### **2.2 Route zoning and visitor risk management**

The surveyed route was zoned to guide two aspects of the DMP:

- Ø Approach to Health and Safety. The different zones will have a different management input with regard to risk.
- Ø Approach to visitor information. Each zone is distinct in terms of terrain, remoteness and level of user skill required.

The zones are used as a guide to risk management, however, there will be areas within each zone that are unique and will require special treatment.

We have identified 2 zones for the Way:

Ø **Rugged Zone.** The following sections fall into this zone:

- Section 5 Dailly to Straiton
- Section 6 Straiton to Barr
- Section 7 Barr to Barrhill
- Section 12 – Lendalfoot to Girvan

In the Rugged zone a reasonable level of fitness is required. Access facilities for the less able are unlikely. There will be few warning signs and limited use of physical safety measures in this zone. In winter or inclement weather a greater level of skill and self reliance will be important in this zone

Ø **Rural Zone.** The following sections fall into this zone:

- Section 1 Girvan to Kirkoswald
- Section 2 Kirkoswald to Dunure
- Section 3 Dunure to Maybole
- Section 4 Maybole to Dailly
- Section 8 Barr to Girvan
- Section 9 Barrhill to Ballantrae
- Section 10 Colmonell to Ballantrae
- Section 11 Colmonell to Lendalfoot

In the Rural zone a moderate level of fitness is required. There will be limited access for the less able. There will be some warning signs and physical safety measures are likely.

### **Risk Assessments**

The initial survey will have identified the significant hazards apparent at the time of survey. (see Section Plans in section 4) Full risk assessments will be undertaken by those who know the route and will be able to consider factors such as volume of traffic on country roads.

**A suggested matrix for carrying out risk assessments can be seen in Appendix 6.6**

Risk Assessments will be revisited annually during route inspection.

## 2.3 Maintenance standards

The Route plans contained in section 4 of this document provide an assessment of the current condition of the Way derived from the survey.

The type of surface and location will influence what upgrade and management is required. We have allocated a surface category to each link of the Way

The **surface categories** used are as follows:

A – Hard and firm – Road links

B – Firm but uneven/loose – Track links

C – Loose, soft or unstable – Fields or greenways

Taking the route as a whole the current condition is as follows:

A – 62km

**This means that 68% of the Way is firm (on roads and tracks) with some areas uneven or loose, and 32% can be regarded as loose, soft or unstable**

B – 65km

C – 60km

We see from the route zoning that the location of a path will influence the expectations, awareness and preparedness of users to accept a lower surface standard. For example those using a path in a ‘Rugged’ area (Dailly through to Barrhill and Lendalfoot to Girvan) will be more prepared to have a ‘C’ category route.

The key principle here is to provide the user with information on what they can expect – they can then decide on whether to use the route. It follows that parts of the route near where people live or popular tourist destinations will have to have a higher standard to cater for a wider range of users.

The standard to which a path is maintained will also depend on what other use it is put to. In areas where agricultural or forestry operations are still taking place, it may not be practicable to maintain a path to ‘A’ condition, sometimes paths may deteriorate to C after use, and reinstatement may be dependent on the resources of the landowner or of the management group.

For this reason we have not listed a maintenance standard for aggregate tracks, as the wear will depend on what use it is being put to. It is much more sensible to repair to a standard after use.



The following maintenance tasks should be applied to this route:

- Route inspection
- Clear drains
- Clear culverts
- Verge maintenance/grass cutting
- Tree and scrub pruning
- Infrastructure repair

The maintenance of the route will depend on the standard of path that is installed. Management should focus on the management and future upgrade of class C links.

A suggested specification for maintenance is outlined below:

<b>Inspection by walking</b>	
Maintenance task	Inspection of trail by walking
Frequency	2 x per year – Spring and Autumn
Standard	1 hr per 1.5 kilometre
Materials	Clipboard/pen/measuring tape and dictaphone
Method	Walk the trail inspecting trail surface, verges, trees, culverts, bridges, signage and amenities. Inspect network immediately after flood or storm events
Capital equipment	

<b>Clear side drains</b>	
Maintenance task	Clear side drains by machine
Frequency	One pass per 5 years
Standard	£0.65 per linear m
Materials	
Method	Start rolling programme of clearing 1/5 drains per year
Capital equipment	Digger

<b>Clear culverts</b>	
Maintenance task	Clear culverts and open cross drains by hand
Frequency	1 x per year
Standard	Clear vegetation and silt from 300mm pipe - £6.00 each Clear vegetation and silt from 500mm pipe - £15.00 each
Materials	Shovel
Method	Remove debris built up along the bottom of pipe/haul debris away
Capital equipment	

<b>Verge maintenance</b>	
Maintenance task	Flail or strim path verge
Frequency	Two passes per annum
Standard	Flail: 0.20 per linear m Strim: 0.85 per linear m
Materials	
Method	Flail: one pass to maintain 1.5m verge Strim: 2 passes per annum to maintain 0.5m verge
Capital equipment	Mini Tractor mounted Flail Hand strimmer

<b>Tree and shrub pruning</b>	
Maintenance task	Control of tree and shrub encroachment along trail
Frequency	Once every 2-3 years
Standard	0.30 per linear m
Materials	
Method	Cut back trees and shrubs to clear a 2.5m height clear walking tunnel and 1m back from path edge. Inspect woodland areas immediately after storm events
Capital equipment	Chain saw/brush cutter

<b>Infrastructure repair</b>	
Maintenance task	Repair of signs and gates
Frequency	Once every 5 years
Standard	Grease hinges and catches of pedestrian gate annually @ £1.30 each Retreat standard pedestrian gate - £15.00 each Retreat fingerpost - £15.00 Retreat waymarkers - £2 each Replace interpretive panels - £1000 each
Materials	
Method	Grease hinges and catches Replace or tighten loose bolts Stain gates and fingerposts Replace damaged posts Replace unreadable or damaged signs

## 2.4 Bridges inspections

Bridges along the Way vary from a 2m 'footstick' to stone bridges and 20m wooden bridges. The large wooden bridges are in Glen App estate, and will be part of the Councils responsibility.

There are 2 forms of inspection that should be carried out on bridges:

- Annual visual inspection
- 5 yearly technical inspection

The **annual inspection** should take place in the summer when water levels are low. This will enable bridge abutments to be visually checked for undercutting. In wooden bridges the connection between the bridge and the abutments should be checked for rot. Decking timbers should be checked for rot, missing sections and slip hazards. Rails should be checked for firmness.

It is also useful to check bridges after periods of heavy rain.

Bridges checked should be noted on a signed and dated proforma.

The 5 yearly inspection should be carried out by a qualified Bridge inspector. This inspection could cost in the region of £500.00/bridge.

**Other Policy statements should be developed for the following:**

No	Policy	Priority	Date completed
2.5	Timber management		
2.6	Wildlife management		
2.7	Agricultural use		
2.8	Open areas and vistas		
2.9	Cultural resources		
2.10	Water management		
2.11	Car parks and main access points		
2.12	Emergency planning and co-ordination		
2.13	Public information and education		
2.14	Route signage		
2.15	Motorised use and traffic management		
2.17	Mountain bike use		
2.18	Horse use		

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### **3. Carrick Way description**

#### **3.1 General**

The Carrick Way is a proposed circular route around the hills of South and North Carrick in South Ayrshire. The route of the Way follows a 'corridor' from Girvan – Kirkoswald – Dunure – Maybole – Dailly – Straiton – Barr – Barrhill – Ballantrae – Colmonell – Lendalfoot and finally back to Girvan.

The route will be accessible from 3 railway stations – Girvan, Maybole and Barrhill. The route provides access to a diverse range of landscapes, from forest and upland landscapes to intensive agriculture and coast.

The southern section of the Way could potentially link to the Southern Upland Way and the northern section of the Way could potentially link to Ayr and beyond. There is also potential to link east to Loch Doon and routes in East Ayrshire.

#### **3.2 Public use and interest**

The tourism industry in the UK has prospered over the past 20 years. Spending on out-of-home leisure in the UK has nearly doubled over the last decade and now comprises nearly 25% of the total household expenditure. Tourism in Scotland now accounts for £4.5bn – 5% of Scotland GDP<sup>1</sup>.

The following trends are forecast<sup>2</sup>:

- Ø By 2020 over 50's will out-number younger generations
- Ø The current generation of over 60's is the healthiest and most active on record
- Ø Over 50's control 50% of all discretionary income
- Ø One in five over 60's go on 3 holidays a year
- Ø The 50+ market aspire to participate in active leisure for longer
- Ø Grandparents seek leisure opportunities to occupy grandchildren
- Ø Markets are opening up to China, India and Eastern Europe
- Ø More and more people are seeking activities that will help them lose weight
- Ø More and more people are seeking relaxation away from stressful work
- Ø The cost of travel is coming down in real terms
- Ø But - environmental impact from air travel is of growing concern.

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<sup>1</sup> Yeoman, I 2004, Economic Perspectives, What do you want Scottish Tourism to look like in 2015

<sup>2</sup> Muirden, M and Martin, B. 2004. Future trends in lifestyles and leisure, Economic Research Associates

More locally a proposal for a coastal walk is being developed by members of the Ayr Rotary club. Sections of the coast such as the Byne Hill and Croy Shore are already popular destinations.

South Ayrshire Council has developed walks networks around the settlements of Girvan, Kirkoswald, Maybole, Dailly, Straiton and Barr. There is no usage data available for these networks.

The Ayrshire Walking Festivals Group has led walks over parts of the Way over the past 3 years. These led walks have become increasingly popular with participants travelling considerable distances to take part.

### **3.3 Strategy and Policy context**

#### **3.3.1 JOINT AYRSHIRE STRUCTURE PLAN**

The 3 Council joint Structure Plan is currently out to consultation. Ayrshire like other parts of Scotland is suffering from a reducing population, high unemployment and lack of investment in towns and villages.

The Plan proposes a hierarchy of towns and villages in relation to future investment. The main business and infrastructure investment will centre on Ayr, Kilmarnock and Irvine with Maybole and Girvan becoming Service centres. A Carrick Investment Corridor will be set up with these two towns at its core. The main 'gateways into the area are seen as Prestwick and Glasgow airports and the towns of Ayr, Stranraer and Troon.

The Plan recognises that 90% of South Ayrshire is rural with a landscape in a state of decline. One of the aims of the Plan is to 'Promote appropriate development in rural areas'. There is a growing recognition that the environment of South Ayrshire is an economic driver as well as fostering health and social benefits.

As a third of households in the area do not have access to a car, particular encouragement will be given to linking walking, cycling and public transport.

Renewable energy is seen as an economic driver of local economies. Two main areas have been identified for development; east of Kilmarnock and the south east of the area.

The areas tourist assets are seen as golf, coastal fringe, communities, hills, natural habitats and cultural heritage. The Plan states that new tourism development should be encouraged where it supports and strengthens urban centres, coastal and resort towns and rural diversification.

The plan recognises that footpath and cycle links have been developed and suggests that there is a need to develop a less controlled and more open form of access over broader areas.

The Plan recognises that South Ayrshire has some of the best and most accessible coastline and islands in Scotland and proposes a coast based maritime recreation area, linked to Arran.

### **3.3.2 SOUTH AYRSHIRE LOCAL PLAN**

#### **Key points:**

The Council will seek to encourage an increase in the amount of high quality self catering accommodation and upper range hotel accommodation.

In terms of attractions the Council sees scope in diversifying activities and attractions that will assist in lengthening the tourist season or capitalising on specific market themes.

The Council is sympathetic to the process of agricultural diversification and other business opportunities. The south part of South Ayrshire is seen as a rural diversification area, with policies aimed at maintaining the viability of existing settlements and combating rural economic decline.

In terms of footpaths and cycleways, the Council will seek the provision, improvement and protection from loss of pedestrian routes, footpaths, cycleways and cycle parking facilities. The Council will protect disused railway lines, riverside walkways and recognised rights of way. As an integral element of the Council's aims to reduce the dependence on the car and to increase the attractiveness of other modes of transport a number of safe and convenient footpaths and cycleways are being established.

### **3.3.3 SOUTH AYRSHIRE ACCESS STRATEGY**

A number of Community Paths Projects have been developed in South Ayrshire.

These are:

- Ø Dailly
- Ø Straiton
- Ø Barr
- Ø Girvan
- Ø Maybole

In 2004 the Ayr Rotary club prepared a proposal for the development of a coastal route between Glen App and Troon.

Important access resources are the coast and large tracts of forest in the south. The most important forests for walking, cycling, horse riding, education and fishing are Carrick and Glen Trool forests. Quiet roads are important for cycling and NCR 7 passes through South Ayrshire. Provision of adequate cycle parking is seen to be important.



The strategy has identified 4 Key Themes:

- Ø **Sustainable transport** – developing functional access routes to transport services jobs and schools. Stakeholders felt that making links between access networks and the public transport network was important. Target areas of low car ownership.
- Ø **Access and sustainable land management** – provision of high quality access resources for visitors. Work with land managers to provide education and awareness raising. Link access with nature conservation and environmental management.
- Ø **Access based tourism and business development** - outdoor activities are a key strength. Need to stimulate local business development. Explore how access could contribute to training and opportunities for learning.
- Ø **Health Benefits** – community involvement in the development of local access opportunities. Target communities where social exclusion is greatest. Provide better walking and cycling links for patients and employees of NHS Ayrshire and Arran. Increase levels of physical activity and encourage active community participation in the planning process.

The Strategy proposes 3 **Core Path Network Zones**

- Ø Coast – Girvan/ Troon Ayr and Prestwick
- Ø Inland farming area
- Ø Remote upland rural area

The supply audit shows that there is a concentration of routes around settlements, but low concentration of routes in the Carrick area.

The demand audit shows that a low proportion of visitors walk when they visit the area. Cycling is regarded as an important transport issue.

There are 3 areas of Policy relating to access:

1. **Healthy lifestyles** – a key element of local and national policy. One of the key issues is to raise awareness of access opportunities in the local area.
2. **Sustainability and environment** – the rural nature of the area means that there is a high dependency on cars. The settlements that should be targeted include Girvan and Dailly. The Structure and Local Plans support initiatives that will encourage walking and cycling.
3. **Economic development.** The proposed Carrick Way and Coastal Path could support economic development. An access network is seen as a mechanism to enhance access to local facilities and encourage leisure and recreation in the rural areas. The Council's current Business Plan priorities include access to services, leisure opportunities and health.

Stakeholders see the following as being important:

- Ø Making the links between access provision and the transport network
- Ø Provision of cycle parking
- Ø Encourage access based tourism and business development
- Ø Provision of routes suitable for disabled use

There are 12 objectives that are applicable across the 3 Action Areas of South Ayrshire, the following are of relevance to the development of the Carrick Way:

- Ø Tie into the Transport Strategy
- Ø Reduce the impacts on land management
- Ø Raise awareness/provide education opportunities
- Ø Develop links to nature conservation and environmental management
- Ø Develop access to provide benefits for visitors
- Ø Link access with local business development
- Ø Target areas of social inclusion
- Ø Encourage levels of physical activity and community participation

There are 3 Action Zones specified for South Ayrshire -

### **Coast Network Zone**

The following points are of relevance:

- It is important that any long distance route links with other local paths to form a more complete path
- There are sensitive conservation sites on the coast
- There are concentration of poor health, low car ownership and social exclusion in this area
- Develop community networks and links between settlements and links from the coast inland
- Need to work with East and North Ayrshire Councils and Dumfries and Galloway to ensure better strategic routes and linkages
- Need to develop functional links between Girvan and remote settlements inland and connections with bus and rail transport

### **Inland Network Zone**

The following points are of relevance:

- Need to balance access with land management
- Develop more local level community networks
- Develop strategic eastern link along the River Ayr walk way

## Remote/upland rural Network Zone

The following points are of relevance:

- Balance access development with land management considerations
- Forest extraction could impact on access routes – opportunities to develop alternative routes in the future
- Potential for mountain bike business in the area
- Create better off-road access between settlements
- There are archaeological features of interest
- Potential to Link to Glen Trool cycle routes
- There are Path Networks in Straiton, Barr and Dailly

Access forum sub groups are suggested as a mechanism for developing projects or themes.

### 3.3.4 WALKING TOURISM – Scotexchange.com

This document provides some background to the market. It reveals that 41% of all adults regularly take a stroll and walking is the most popular leisure activity.

Walking accounts for 18% of all tourism expenditure in Scotland. Walking is by far the most common active pursuit undertaken by visitors to Scotland (25% of outdoor activity trips and expenditure).

Membership of the Ramblers Association has more than trebled since 1980.

Research reveals that 55% of the Scottish population had walked in the countryside or coast.

#### Growth Potential

Health walking

ABC1

83% of domestic visitors come by car

56% are 44 and younger

39% are 45 and older

#### Target markets:

UK young socialisers

UK young leisure adventurers

UK leisure explores

UK older organised

UK family actives

UK young single women

German outdoor enthusiasts

Dutch outdoor enthusiasts

Casual walkers

#### When do they visit?

Walking market is seasonal – with most visits between April and September.

The average stay is 7 days and they are more likely to use camping and caravanning (34%) and self catering (31%). 17% use hotel guest house and B&B. Overseas visitors are more likely to use the later type of accommodation.

Scotland strengths are:

- Ø the variety of walk types and locations
- Ø quality of the scenery
- Ø perception that the country is clean, green and uncrowded
- Ø cultural and natural heritage are strong motivators

**How can they be attracted?**

- Tie into Visit Scotland promotion of walking: brochure/production of a walking map/accommodation guide and internet promotion
- Tie into walkingwild.com and other walking web sites
- Encourage participation in the walkers Welcome Scheme
- Submit articles in the walking press

**How should the product be developed in the future?**

1. Accommodation providers and walking operators should work together to create packages
2. Need to invest in appropriate services
3. Develop links with other activities and areas
4. Couple walking-experience with a city break in Edinburgh or Glasgow
5. Need to develop paths to improve the experience of visitors
6. Need to ensure that the paths and infrastructure are maintained to a high standard
7. Need to ensure that there is clear accessible information on locations and type of walk, as well as easily understood signposting
8. Need to provide good parking at key locations and some form of shelter from inclement weather
9. Create links to other long distance routes

Tourism Statistics – [www.scotexchange.com](http://www.scotexchange.com)

- Ø 79% of UK visitors to Ayrshire and Arran had visited before
- Ø 37% were visiting castles, monuments and churches
- Ø 33% were walking (more than 2miles)
- Ø Main form of accommodation used were hotels/guest houses(15%) caravan and camping (13%) and self catering (12%)
- Ø 72% of people travelled to the area by car
- Ø Average length of stay was 4 nights
- Ø 25% of visits take place between July and September
- Ø 49% will come from Scotland
- Ø 44% will come from England

### 3.3.5 GIRVAN AND SOUTH CARRICK SIP – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Girvan is a town on the Ayrshire coast with around 7000 inhabitants. It services the surrounding South Carrick with a further 4000 people. Girvan was traditionally a service centre and seaside resort. This role has declined in recent years with the town and surrounding area having a high unemployment rate. Lack of opportunity is compounded by geographical isolation, low levels of car ownership and poor public transport provision.

#### SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Hills, farms and sea</li> <li>§ Harbour infrastructure</li> <li>§ Accommodation</li> <li>§ Events</li> <li>§ Scenic location – Including Ailsa Craig</li> <li>§ On rail and road route</li> <li>§ Local Craft base</li> <li>§ SIP Status</li> </ul>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Run down look</li> <li>§ Limited leisure facilities</li> <li>§ Many tourists have limited disposable income</li> <li>§ Low aspirations</li> <li>§ No champions</li> <li>§ Over reliant on manufacturing</li> <li>§ Lack of premises for new businesses</li> </ul>
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Prestwick airport</li> <li>§ Sailing is growing</li> <li>§ Internet booking</li> <li>§ Green Tourism</li> <li>§ Proposed new railheads</li> <li>§ ERDF money available</li> <li>§ Townscape Heritage Initiative</li> </ul>	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Cheap foreign holidays</li> <li>§ City Tourism</li> <li>§ Scottish Rural Tourism numbers falling</li> <li>§ General lagging of the Ayrshire economy</li> <li>§ Young people leaving the towns</li> <li>§ Reduced access to EU funds after 2006</li> </ul>

### **3.3.6 SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL – Vision for 2020 – framework for the Community Plan**

- § Recognises that SA has one of the most attractive and safe environments in Scotland
- § Create a strong and diverse local economy – offering secure and quality employment
- § Create opportunities for Life Long Learning

### **3.3.7 Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy 2001 – 2004**

- § Recognises the significance of the activities market, particularly cycling, walking and sailing
- § Supporting complimentary events and festivals
- § Facilitating the development of skills and qualifications in the tourism workforce
- § Enhancing tourism infrastructure

### **3.3.8 Girvan and South Carrick – Tourism/Image Work Plan 2004-05**

The Plan outlines a stratagem to develop tourism activity within the Girvan and South Carrick area for the period 2004-05. In relation to the development of the Carrick Way the following issues are relevant.

The Plan highlights a lack of information on visitor characteristics, although information from neighbouring Dumfries and Galloway studies are used to guide planning. There is a need to develop a 'brand' that is distinct from the overall 'Ayrshire/Burns' brand. The brand that has been put forward is that of '**South West Scotland Activity Centre**'.

Using Dumfries and Galloway visitor data, the potential market for South Ayrshire could be from markets ranging from 30 to 60+ age range, generally from middle to upper class backgrounds. The key characteristic of this market is a higher tendency to have frequent short break holidays within the UK, and they have higher than average disposable income.

The above visitor characteristics accords with the visitor profile for Scotland in general.

The proximity to Ireland highlights the potential market in Northern Ireland.

The increase in traffic through Prestwick Airport is another potential market. The current DART Project (Development of Active Regions and Sustainable Tourism) highlights potential links to the partner states – Ireland and Germany

The plan identifies the need to work with local tourism businesses to influence product development to meet new customer markets.

The key advantage of the area is strong transport linkages which enable the area to capitalise on short break holidays.

Niche markets of relevance are:

- Ø Walking Breaks
- Ø Cycling Holidays
- Ø Wildlife holidays
- Ø Culture and Heritage breaks
- Ø Events and festivals
- Ø Green tourism

South Carrick is therefore an ideal destination for holiday makers of all ages, offering a variety of places to visit, following either active or passive pursuits.

### **3.3.9 Policy and strategy ‘hooks’**

It is important that any new access development ties into existing strategies and policies. The foregoing brief review of relevant documents provides important ‘hooks’ that the development should connect with.

The following ‘hooks’ will influence the development of the Carrick Way:

- *Maybole and Girvan will become key service centres*
- *Gateways into the area are regarded as, Prestwick and Glasgow Airports, Ayr, Stranraer and Troon*
- *The Council will support appropriate development and farm diversification in rural areas. The southern part of the Council area is seen as a rural diversification area*
- *The Council will encourage the linking of walking and cycling to public transport*
- *Renewable energy development will be permitted in the south of the area*
- *Tourism development will be encouraged where it supports urban centres, coastal and resort towns and rural diversification*
- *Future access development should be ‘less controlled and more open form of access over broader areas’*
- *The main access resource are the coast and southern forest areas*
- *The Carrick Way is regarded as a project that can support economic development. The other 2 strands of the Access Strategy are ‘healthy lifestyles’ and ‘sustainability and the environment’*
- *The Access strategy aims to develop links from the coast and remote settlements inland*
- *The Access strategy sees potential to develop mountain bike business in the remote/upland zone*
- *The Access Strategy aims to create better off road access between settlements and links to Glen Trool*



- *Scottish strengths are regarded as the variety of walk types, the quality of the scenery, a country that is clean and green and the cultural and natural heritage*
- *The brand for the area is 'South West Scotland Activity Centre'*
- *The Tourist Group and accommodation providers should work together to create packages*
- *Shelter and informal camp sites should be provided in the more remote eastern sections*

### **3.4 Features of Interest**

*The features of interest along the Way have been plotted on Map 1 and listed in Appendix 6.1. No assessment of the local or regional significance of these features have been made.*

The main feature of interest that people come to Scotland for is the scenery. Each section of the route provides access to views over a variety of habitats and terrain. We also know that visitors to Ayrshire come for the cultural heritage attractions. The Features of interest list in Appendix 6.1, shows that the majority of features are of an historical interest.

South Ayrshire has a number of international, national and local nature conservation designations. These are in the main on or near the coast (too numerous to plot on the overview map). Discussion with conservation agencies/groups will need to take place before these could be promoted. *Perhaps the mechanism for doing this is through the proposed Lighthouse Centre in Girvan*

The coast and the more remote inland areas provide access to good bird watching (see map 1 for locations).

A number of the settlements connected by the way have local walks networks, that not only provide access to the local features of interest, but provide short walks alternatives.

The majority of features are in the coastal strip, with only a handful in the more remote inland area.

### **3.5 Facilities and support services**

*Facilities and services have been marked alongside each settlement on map 1. Appendix 6.2 also provides detail of support services against each settlement.*

An assessment of the types of facility available to users will depend on the target market the Way will attract. The scotexchange article noted in 3.3.4 above, states that walkers prefer to stay in low cost accommodation (caravan and camping/self catering). This market is fairly well catered for with 8 caravan sites (with camping pitches) and 36 self catering units.

Accommodation is not consistent through the area of the Carrick Way, with some reasonable provision offset by poor/no facilities in other areas. Transport provision is good at the main 'gateways' - Maybole, Girvan, Ballantrae and Barrhill. Elsewhere, public transport is not good.

Although on paper, most of the settlements have facilities such as shops, eating places and toilets etc, it should be noted that 'off season' a lot of these facilities are closed.

## **PART THREE – AUDIT REPORT**

### **4. Section Plans**

#### **4.7 Section 7 – Barr to Barrhill**

##### **4.7.1 Description**

This section follows the B 734, south from **Barr** to **Albany Farm**, then follows the tar/aggregate track to **White Knowes**. The route enters the forest here and follows the forest track south for ~1km before turning right into a fire break. The route then follows forest rides for ~3.5km to **Little Shalloch**. The route continues on track down to **Mark Cottage** then follows the single track road to **Muck Bridge**. From the Bridge the route follows a green road to **Blaneyscaw**, then track through to a junction just past **Balhamage farm**. Another green road is followed to **Knockmalloch Farm**, then track and road down to **Barrhill**.

##### **4.7.2 Landscape and links**

River valleys and forest dominate this section. The link to White Knowes affords views down to the Stinchar Valley, and from Mark to Muck Bridge the route follows the Muck Water. From the bridge to Barrhill the route is elevated above the Duisk River.

Long term it might be possible to continue the route south from Little Shalloch through the forest that is currently earmarked for Wind farm development.

##### **4.7.3 Accessibility**

This section is over 20km long, with 75% on roads and track. The section has potential to be multi-use, with optional new build costs provided for the wet links through the forest. This leaves a few links over greenway/old road that until demand is assessed, spend on upgrade could not be justified. There are a few links that have gradients in excess of 1:10. It is not practicable to engineer these gradients out.

##### **4.7.4 Visitor risk management**

Risk assessments should address the following significant hazards:

- Ø Cattle and bulls throughout the area

- Ø Farm vehicles on narrow tracks
- Ø Traffic on the roads

#### **4.7.5 Rationale**

The route surveyed takes the user due south from Barr, through forest plantation to Little Shalloch. The only direct route through the forest is via forest rides that are extremely damp underfoot. Because people are channelled through this area, we suggest that a new build causeway is installed. From Little Shalloch it would be possible to continue through the forest all the way to Barrhill.

This option was rejected because of potential 'forest overkill', and the route surveyed followed the open ground beside the Muck and River valleys. It should be noted that the forest route would be a better multi-use alternative, with only 1km of new build required.

Costs for signage is noted below.

**Signage = £1,560.00**

**Costs for upgrade = £13,841.00.** *Note: much of this cost would be absorbed into the new build option*

**New build path = £32,685.00**

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Maintenance of the route is based on the signage and minor upgrade option

Item	Description	Unit	Qty	Rate	Amount
1	Route inspection	hours	5	10.00	50.00
2	Sign maintenance	no	8	15.00	120.00
3	Gate maintenance	no	14	1.30	18.20
4	Culvert clean	no	29	20.00	580.00
5	Grass cut	Sq m	1400	0.20	280.00
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL MAINTENANCE COST</b>					<b>£1048.20</b>

**Notes:**

1. Specification based on standards outlined in section 2.6.
2. Sign maintenance. There are 24 signs along the route. Specification based on maintenance of 1/3(8) per year.
3. Gates. There are 14 gates across or alongside the route.

## 4.9 Section 9 – Barrhill to Ballantrae

### 4.9.1. Description

There are two possible routes connecting Barrhill to Ballantrae:

1. A forest route that uses the tracks through Arecleoch Forest, to connect with Leffin Donald Farm. This has potential to be multi-use if the quiet road is taken at Auchenflower to Ballantrae via Lagan farms.

This route was not surveyed as discussions with Forestry Commission revealed plans to extract timber from the forest over the foreseeable future. Measures would have to be taken to ensure user safety over 2-3km of the haul route, and the route relies on using tracks that will be installed during the proposed wind farm development.

2. An open country route that will have to be promoted as a ‘preferred walking route’ due to sections across remote and extremely wet terrain.

This route uses road and estate track to **Knockmalloch farm**, north of Barrhill then uses old vegetated road and track to cross the Duisk River at **Ballochmorrie farm**. Crossing the A714 at **Ligburn** the route then crosses the railway before connecting with the road to **Drumskeoch farm**. The route then uses the old road running west from Drumskeoch to connect with the Wheeb track at **Reuchal**. From **Wheeb** the route crosses the bridge at **Glenour** before skirting the forest on rough terrain to **Liglea** ruin. From Liglea the route crosses to **Dunnack Burn** then follows the track to **Leffin Donald farm**. The route connects with the forest route at this point. The route then uses quiet roads as far as **Crailoch**, where it then follows an old vegetated road to **Smyrton**. From Smyrton the route follows the paths in **Glenapp Estate** and a quiet road into **Ballantrae**.

### 4.9.2 Landscape and links

The route effectively follows the line of 4 river valleys; starting with views over the Duisk Valley, then skirting the edge of the Burn of Lig valley before entering Glen Tig. The route then affords good views over the Stichar valley towards the coast before following the Smyrton and Kilphin Burns towards Ballantrae.

### 4.9.3 Accessibility

62% of the route in this section is on quiet road with a tar surface, or on estate track, with varying surface condition. 38% of the route is on ‘greenway’ or vegetated track/road. A lot of this greenway is grazed by sheep and cattle, with significant sections with poor drainage and poached by cattle. The approach taken is to exclude the stock where possible and install drainage. These sections will cut up if used by cycles or horses. More robust alternatives are available.

There are 36 gates in this section. Adopting 'the least restrictive option' we suggest that self closing gates are installed at these points.

There are a number of links that display gradients in excess of 1:10. It is not practical to engineer these gradients out.

The links through Glenapp Estate have a number of narrow bridges and steps that will present a barrier to some users.

There are a number of sections that have gorse or tree encroachment. These sections will need cleared and a mowing and pruning regime implemented in the future.

#### **4.9.4 Visitor Risk management**

Risk assessments should address the following significant hazards:

- Ø Cattle and bulls throughout the area
- Ø Farm vehicles on narrow tracks
- Ø Remote sections – people getting lost

#### **4.9.5 Rationale**

A significant proportion of this route is on track and road (62%). The balance (38%) is in open country. Signage and upgrade amounts to around half the proposed capital costs (£22,542.00).

This work would allow people to orientate and will significantly improve accessibility. (The bulk of these costs related to the installation of self closing gates).

The new build proposed relates mainly to sections that are badly poached by cattle. We have suggested fencing to exclude the cattle and the installation of a small section of path at Knockmallock Farm. In Glenapp Estate we have suggested path scraping and top dressing to improve access for a wider range of users.

**Signage - £4,859.00**

**Upgrade - £17,683.00**

**New build - £21,750.00**

The maintenance prescriptions relevant to this route are:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Qty</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1	Route inspection	hours	6	10.00	60.00
2	Alongside drain clear	lm	750	0.75	562.50
3	Culvert clear	no	20	20.00	400.00
4	Sign maintenance	no	23	15.00	345.00
5	Gate maintenance	no	36	1.30	46.80
6	Grass cut	Sq m	3570	0.20	714.00
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL MAINTENANCE COST</b>					<b>£2128.30</b>

**Notes:**

1. Specification based on standards outlined in section
5. Gates. There are 36 gates across or alongside the route.
4. Sign maintenance. There are 69 signs along the route. Specification based on maintenance of 1/3(~23) per year.