

**SEA SCOPING REPORT
COVER NOTE**

Dumfries and Galloway Council
Open Space Strategy

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An SEA Scoping Report is attached for the strategy entitled:
Dumfries and Galloway Open Space Strategy

The Responsible Authority is: Dumfries and Galloway Council

The Open Space Strategy falls under the scope of Section 5(3) of the Act and requires an SEA under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

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BACKGROUND

The purpose of this Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report is to set out sufficient information on the Dumfries and Galloway Open Space Strategy (OSS) to enable the Consultation Authorities to form a view on the consultation period and scope/level of detail that will be appropriate for the Environment Report.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Key Facts

Responsible Authority

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Title of Strategy

Dumfries and Galloway Open Space Strategy (OSS)

What prompted the plan?

The OSS fulfils a requirement set out in the Scottish Government's Planning Advice Note - Planning and Open Space (PAN 65) and the current Scottish Planning Policy (2010). SPP states that "Planning authorities should take a strategic and long term approach to managing the open space in their area, assessing both current and future needs and protecting all spaces which can help to meet them. Authorities should undertake an audit of the open space resource in their area...and using the information from this, should prepare an open space strategy which sets out the vision for new and improved open space and addresses any deficiencies identified". An open space audit has been carried out which provides the baseline data for the OSS.

The Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan (LDP) is currently at Examination stage and it is proposed that the Strategy will support open space and green network policies in the LDP as well as the wider strategic and policy objectives of the Plan. The Strategy will not only be used to inform planning decisions but is an important document for other Council services such as those responsible for commissioning and maintaining open space and also those involved in communities, housing, education, sports, recreation, health and physical activity, outdoor access, biodiversity, flood management and climate change.

Plan Subject

The OSS reflects the Council's approach to managing the open space resource in settlements within the Dumfries and Galloway region.

Period Covered by Plan

The period covered by the plan is 2014-2019.

Frequency of Plan Updates

The Strategy, along with the associated Audit, will be reviewed every 5 years.

Area covered by Strategy

The OSS will cover the whole of the Dumfries and Galloway region.

Purpose and Objectives of the Strategy

The OSS will inform decision making on open space and sets out: how Dumfries and Galloway Council will invest in and manage the open space in its area, the vision for new and improved open space and how existing valuable and valued areas are to be protected. Specifically, one of its main aims is to ensure that the majority of residents in the region have access to good quality open space.

It is intended that the Strategy provides the evidence, sets the direction and helps secure funds for investment in open space. The overall outcome of the Strategy is to maintain (or increase where possible) reasonable quantity, accessibility and quality of publicly usable open spaces - especially in relation to wider connectivity and multi-functionality. This will ensure that there is sufficient open space provision of appropriate quality, within easy walking distance from people's homes which is linked by paths and green corridors.

The specific objectives which come under the overall outcome are as follows:

- Objective 1: maintain or increase (where necessary and possible) the amount of open space with the aim of meeting the publicly usable open space quantity and accessibility standard;
- Objective 2: avoid fragmentation of existing open space networks;
- Objective 3: increase / enhance connectivity between open spaces and between these and residential areas;
- Objective 4: maintain or increase (where necessary and possible) the quality of existing spaces and ensure that new spaces are of good quality;
- Objective 5: ensure new open space is made as multi-functional as possible, serving a number of different uses and aim to improve multi-functionality of existing spaces.

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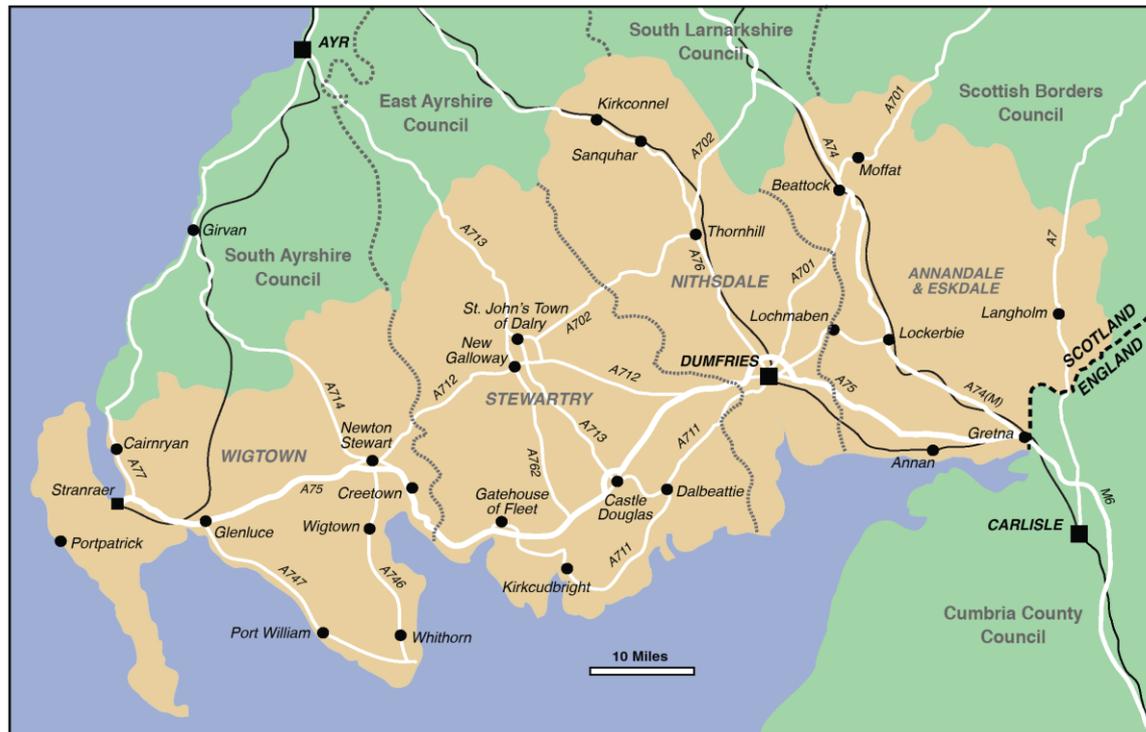
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Dumfries and Galloway Council (DGC) is undertaking the preparation of an Open Space Strategy for towns and villages in the region (see map below).

Map of Dumfries and Galloway Area



Introduction to Dumfries and Galloway

- 1.2 Dumfries and Galloway is the third largest region in Scotland with its land area covering approximately 6,400 square kilometres. In 2011, the area had a population of approximately 151,324. The settlement pattern is one of small settlements spread across a large area. Over a quarter of the population live more than 30 minutes' drive from a large town and most people live in small communities of 4,000 or less or in the countryside. The biggest town is Dumfries with a population of over 38,000 followed by Stranraer with around 10,500 and Annan with over 8,000.
- 1.3 Dumfries and Galloway is a rural area with farming and forestry being the dominant land uses. There is a large amount of accessible open space in the region, including coastal areas, hills and forest parks which are particularly significant in attracting tourism to the area. The OSS, however, focuses on open space that is within or immediately adjacent to settlements which serves as both a draw for visitors and as an important community resource. The open space audit covered open space within 500 metres of the settlement boundaries of the 48 Regional, District and Local Centres as identified in the LDP and the Strategy has a focus on these settlements.

- 1.4 The region is particularly characterised as having an ageing population with an average age of 43.7 years, compared with the Scottish average of 40.3. It has one of the highest numbers of people aged 65 and over in Scotland (21.8% of the total population fall into this category, with nearly half of these being older than 74), compared to the national average of 16.8% aged 65 and over.

Introduction to SEA

- 1.5 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 (referred to in this report as “the 2005 Act”) requires local authorities to assess the environmental impact of certain plans, programmes and strategies (PPS) which they prepare. The mechanism through which this is achieved is Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 1.6 Under the 2005 Act, SEA is a requirement for PPS relating to a number of sectors including Town and Country Planning. The Council considers that an environmental assessment and Environment Report and other actions in accordance with Part 2 of the 2005 Act are required for the OSS. This SEA Scoping Report has been prepared in accordance with Section 15 of the 2005 Act and made use of the guidance provided in the Scottish Executive SEA Toolkit and Templates. The overall aim of undertaking SEA for the OSS will be to ensure that all significant environmental effects are considered as an integral part of the process towards adoption of the OSS. It is anticipated that the Strategy will be adopted in 2014.
- 1.7 The 2005 Act sets out the requirements for environmental assessment which involves:
- the preparation of an environmental report;
 - the carrying out of consultations; and
 - the taking into account of the environmental report and the result of the consultations in decision-making.
- 1.8 An essential element of the SEA process involves consulting with the public and the designated Consultation Authorities, namely Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and Historic Scotland (HS), at various stages throughout the process. A key stage of the SEA process is the preparation of this Scoping report. The Council is required to consult the 3 Consultation Authorities on this document.
- 1.9 The purpose of this Scoping Report is to set out sufficient information on the OSS to enable the Consultation Authorities to form a view on the proposed consultation periods and scope/level of detail that will be appropriate for the Environmental Report (ER).
- 1.10 By issuing this Scoping Report the responsible authority is seeking comments on the proposed methodology and scope of the SEA from the Consultation Authorities. Existing information that may be of relevance to the study is also being sought. This includes data on:
- other relevant plans and programmes
 - environmental protection objectives
 - environmental or sustainability problems
 - the existing and future state of the environment
 - information on relevant additional cumulative or synergistic effects

Comments received from the Consulting Authorities on the Scoping Report will be taken into account in the SEA. The Environmental Report will also detail how the comments have been addressed in the OSS.

- 1.11 The 2005 Act identifies nine environmental issues to be used during the SEA process which are:
- biodiversity, fauna and flora
 - population and human health
 - soil
 - water
 - air
 - climatic factors
 - material assets
 - cultural heritage, and
 - landscape

The interactions between these should also be considered.

2. PLAN CONTEXT

Relationship with other plans, programmes and environmental objectives

- 2.1 A review of other relevant plans programmes and strategies (PPS) is an essential component of SEA. The aim of the review is to:
- identify matters that are significant and could influence the development of the OSS;
 - establish links between other PPSs and the emerging OSS;
 - identify key national and regional priorities that need to be taken into consideration; and
 - identify any objectives and indicators relevant to the OSS in other PPS that could be used to inform the SEA process.
- 2.2 Table 1 lists the PPS and environmental objectives we propose to analyse for their relationship with the OSS. Any PPS above the Scottish level have generally been excluded from the list, primarily because it is assumed that all relevant international, European and UK environmental legislation has been implemented into national, regional and local strategy and guidance.
- 2.3 The OSS could be affected by, and itself affect, a wide range of other relevant PPS both within and outside the Council's jurisdiction and it is therefore important to determine whether the OSS will give rise to conflicts with these. Inconsistencies are bound to arise at times between other PPS or environmental objectives. In deciding how to resolve any conflicts, the relative timing of the plans, programmes or objectives concerned will be considered, as well as the degree to which they accord with current policy or legal requirements and the objectives of the Act and SEA Directive. The table below summarises the main, directly relevant strategies and plans, which have an influence on the OSS.

Table 1: Relationship of OSS with other PPS

Name of PPS	Key Considerations	How it affects or is affected by the OSS
Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)	This SPP is a statement of Scottish Government policy on land use planning and includes its view of the purpose of planning, the core principles and objectives of the system, statutory guidance on sustainable development, concise subject planning policies, including the implications for development planning and development management, and its expectations of the intended outcomes of the planning system.	SPP encourages planning authorities to prepare Open Space strategies and carry out audits of the existing resource.
Planning Advice Note 65	Planning Advice Notes (PANs) provide advice on good practice and other relevant information. PAN65 gives advice on the role of the planning system in protecting and enhancing existing open spaces and providing high quality new spaces.	PAN 65 sets out a typology of open spaces to be used as a basis for audits and provides guidance on preparing open space strategies.
Dumfries and Galloway Local Plan 2006	Sets out detailed policies and specific proposals for the development and guide of land that guide day to day planning applications. Due to be replaced by Local Development Plan by end of 2014.	Contains policies requiring the provision of open space in new developments and also for the protection of existing open space. Key open spaces are identified in the inset maps.
Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan (due to be adopted 2014)	Provides the planning framework for the region, guiding the future use and development of towns, villages and the rural area. Contains detailed policies and specific proposals, including allocated housing and business and industry sites.	Contains policies requiring the provision of or contribution towards open space as part of new developments, as well as protecting existing spaces and avoiding fragmentation of green networks. It will be accompanied by Supplementary Guidance on Open Space.
Dumfries and Galloway Council Priorities and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016	This is the region's fourth SOA and presents the aspirations and commitments of all the partners in Dumfries and Galloway to improve the quality of life for the people who live here. SOAs provide the foundation for effective partnership working within which wider reform initiatives can take place.	OSS objectives support the following Council priorities: Priority 1: We will provide a good start in life for all our children; Priority 3: We will care for our older and vulnerable people; Priority 6: We will protect and sustain our environment.
Access Strategy (Open	The Dumfries & Galloway Outdoor Access Strategy provides a	The OSS supports the vision and objectives

Outdoors, Dumfries and Galloway Outdoor Access Strategy, 2012-2017)	vision for outdoor access and the strategic framework for planning, managing and developing access in Dumfries & Galloway.	(e.g. increasing physical activity) set out in the Access Strategy.
Child Healthy Weight Sustainability Framework (2011)	The purpose of the Framework is to provide a framework that will build the momentum to tackle the increasing problem of overweight and obesity in Dumfries & Galloway.	The Framework recognises that improving the built environment in order to facilitate and enable outdoor activities and active travel and increasing opportunities to be physically active (both objectives of the OSS) are key elements in tackling overweight and obesity.
Core Paths Plan	Maps the paths considered to be key to the area, termed 'Core Paths', and give residents and visitors reasonable non-vehicular access throughout Dumfries and Galloway. Dumfries	The Core Paths Plan identified a network of core paths throughout the region – the paths can be part of wider open space and green corridors or form important connections between open spaces.
Cultural Strategy (2009)	The purpose of this strategy is to guide the future development and delivery of cultural assets and services within Dumfries and Galloway.	Open spaces can provide venues for cultural events and festivals and are important cultural spaces in their own right.
Forestry and Woodland Strategy (2013)	Providing a framework for the management, protection and enhancement of trees and urban woods with specific actions relating to promoting the use of forests for recreation, physical activity and to enhance health and wellbeing.	Woodlands within and adjacent to settlements make an important contribution to the open space resource.
Leisure and Sport Strategy (2006-2010)	The strategy contains a framework in which leisure and sport and active lifestyles are valued as ways of improving the quality of life in communities throughout the region.	Influences the open space typology of outdoor sports areas.
Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2008)	Aims to conserve and enhance biodiversity and deliver action for national priorities identified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP), and for local areas of species and habitats which are particularly valued.	Identifies at risk local species and habitats to be protected and enhanced within Dumfries and Galloway.
Local Housing Strategy (2012)	Sets out a shared understanding of the housing and related priorities of Dumfries and Galloway and addresses how the Council and its key partners will meet these and contribute	Contributes towards delivering good quality and well-designed housing areas which support people's physical and mental wellbeing

	toward the delivery of the Council's Single Outcome Agreement.	– which would include open space.
Local Transport Strategy (2011)	Sets out Dumfries and Galloway Council's Action Plan for transport in the area, seeking to address identified local problems and explore localised transport issues.	The strategy has implications for open spaces in relation to promoting the benefits of walking and cycling and improving walking and cycling facilities.
Physical Activity Strategy (2008-2011)	Sets out a co-ordinated approach to increasing opportunities for people to take part in physical activity with the main aim being to improve the health and wellbeing of the local community through the promotion, provision and support of various initiatives.	Recognises the need for the provision of good quality, accessible open space in encouraging and sustaining physical activity.
Play Equipment (Playspace) Strategy (2010 – 2015)	This document reviews the Council's play park provision (playspace) and develops a strategic approach.	Strategy for future service delivery and the policy for inspection, maintenance and provision of play equipment found within the open space typology of children's and teenage play areas.
Regional Transport Strategy (2008)	The purpose of this Strategy is to determine and deliver better transport solutions, both regionally and nationally, and to act as a catalyst for regeneration of the region's economy.	Supports the promotion of walking and cycling, including support for Core Paths and walking networks.

Relevant Environmental Baseline and Data Sources

- 2.4 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 Schedule 3 requires that the Environmental Report includes a description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without the implementation of the PPS, and the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.
- 2.5 Data is required to establish the current baseline condition of the environment in the absence of the OSS which will provide a basis for evaluating and monitoring the environmental effects of the Strategy.
- 2.6 Table 2 lists the data sources of the baseline information that will be used to help the environmental assessment. The list will be refined and further baseline information may also be used in the assessment. A list of data used will be included within the Environmental Report.
- 2.7 Considerable information about the environment is already held as part of the DGC Geographic Information System (GIS). It is anticipated that this will be used to assist in the development of the environmental assessment of the OSS.

Table 2: Data sources for providing baseline environmental assessment

SEA Issue	Relevant Data	Examples of Implications for OSS
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	SACs SPAs Ramsar Sites SSSIs National Nature Reserves Local Nature Reserves Local Wildlife Sites UK BAP & LBAP priority habitats and species Ancient and long established woodlands	Potential for adverse effects (noise, pollution, human activity) upon protected habitats and species from new developments and management of new open spaces; Green corridors (wildlife movement) could be fragmented; Potential to create new corridors, new habitats and reduce any existing adverse effects.
Population and Human Health	Population figures Health and Wellbeing Profiles (life expectancy and mortality by cause) Access to outdoors / open space Sport and recreation participation Physical activity levels Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Core paths D&G LDP	New developments create a demand/ requirement for new open spaces as a venue for relaxation, sport, interaction etc.; Strategy aims to identify surplus/ deficit of open space and standards for provision of new open spaces; Potential to improve health through increased physical activity, reduce pollution by encouraging walking and cycling as an alternative to the car; Positive effects on mental health and wellbeing.
Soil	Land Capability for Agriculture classifications Information from “Scotland’s Soils” website Contaminated land	Potential for new development and new open space to lead to loss of prime quality agricultural land; Conversely designation of open space (e.g. that which is protected for visual amenity) could safeguard this type of soil.
Water	Water quality monitoring data	Open spaces can act as natural filters for storm water, and help reduce runoff.
Air	Air quality monitoring data	Increasing / improving areas of open space could improve local air quality.
Climatic Factors	Carbon dioxide emissions by sector/per capita Levels of greenhouse gas emissions Local precipitation levels Local temperature levels Indicative river and coastal flood	Role in climate change adaptation and mitigation e.g. act as a carbon sink / flood mitigation / water management / cooling effect.

	maps	
Material Assets	Open Space Audit data (amount / type of space) Core Paths	Surplus/ deficits of open spaces will be identified in the Strategy and proposals to address these issues will be set out. Proposals to improve quality will also be set out.
Cultural Heritage	Scheduled Ancient Monuments Listed Buildings Conservation Areas Archaeological Sensitive Areas Gardens and Designed Landscapes	Open space can form important part of settings for e.g. listed buildings and Conservation Areas and historic landscapes.
Landscape	D&G Landscape Character Assessment Designated landscape areas Inventory and non-inventory Gardens and Designed landscapes	Poorly designed developments could fail to integrate into the landscape or fragment green corridors or could adversely affect designated landscapes; Potential projects could be identified which significantly improve / protect the landscape.

3. SCOPING OF SEA ISSUES

3.1 Based on the objectives of the OSS and the extensive and varied environment of Dumfries and Galloway, the Council considers that it could not exclude any environmental issue for the SEA of its OSS. It therefore does not seek to scope out any environmental issue. As a result the assessment will include consideration of the following SEA issues which are all scoped in:

- Biodiversity, fauna and flora
- Population and human health
- Soil
- Water
- Air
- Climatic factors
- Material assets
- Cultural heritage
- Landscape

There will also be consideration of the inter-relationship between these factors and cumulative impacts

Environmental Issues

3.2 The extent of environmental information with relevant analysis for Dumfries and Galloway available at the time of this Scoping Report is regarded by the Council as sound but requiring further coordination and analysis for the OSS. It provides a basis from which to move and to prepare this Scoping Report and initiate work on this OSS and its SEA.

3.3 Environmental issues at an area-wide level that have been identified are as follows:

- BIODIVERSITY, FLORA AND FAUNA:

The conservation of biodiversity is an important part of open space management. Biologically diverse open spaces contribute to the diversity and sustainability of the wider landscape, provide a range of ecosystem services and provide opportunities for people to experience nature close at hand. Dumfries and Galloway has an extensive and varied range of environments creating a wide collection of habitats and is widely known for the diversity of its wildlife partly due to its wide topographical variations. The region forms the southern limits of many northern species and the northern limit to many southern species.

- POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH:

Open spaces provide an important role in local communities especially in relation to public health and recreational opportunities. The quality of the physical environment is important for health and wellbeing and open spaces are seen as having an invaluable role in promoting health opportunities, increasing life expectancy and reducing health inequalities through motivating people to visit them and take exercise.

Tourism is the single most important rural industry in the region and is the only sector that is growing annually, although the tourism economy of the region is considered to be fragile and underdeveloped. Good quality open spaces, incorporating recreational opportunities, have an important role to play in enhancing tourism.

- SOIL:

Soil is a complex, and variable medium comprising mineral particles, organic matter, water, air and living organisms which can provide an important habitat in their own right. The soils reflect the glacial past and the climate rather than solid geology. Only at higher elevations and on the steeper slopes is the underlying rock type evident in soil formation. Peaty soils make up the majority of soil types in the region.

Impacts on soil quality, and on the function of soils in storing carbon, can occur in areas of low pH/high carbon soils. Open space and vegetated areas can contribute positively to soil and slope stabilisation, particularly in relation to increased rainfall associated with climate change.

- WATER:

Open spaces, and SuDS which may form part of them, have the potential to contribute to catchment wide approaches to flood management by slowing run-off response times. The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 puts a requirement on all involved in the management of flood risk to consider natural flood management. Open Space therefore has a role to play in reducing flood risk.

- AIR:

Open space tends to have a positive effect on air quality. Air quality within the region is generally of a high quality in terms of national air quality objectives.

- MATERIAL ASSETS:
Open space resources are generally seen as a key asset in providing important community facilities, recreation and physical activity opportunities and improving the quality of the environment and residents' quality of life. There can be pressure to develop open space or to sell Council owned land both to generate income and to relieve maintenance burdens.
- CLIMATIC FACTORS:
Up until relatively recently, the climate has undergone fluctuations but has remained relatively stable since the last ice age. However, the global temperature is now rising and there is evidence that rainfall patterns are changing, sea levels are rising, glaciers are retreating, arctic sea-ice is decreasing and the incidence of extreme weather is increasing.

Open spaces play an important role in the carbon cycle and in mitigating climate change effects. Growing concerns about climate change suggest that mitigation responses may become increasingly important.

Recent climate change guidance suggests that the climate of the region will remain wet and mild, although there is an expectation of increased frequency of extreme weather events. These may result in threats to wildlife habitats.

- CULTURAL HERITAGE:
Our whole environment has a historic dimension that contributes to its quality and character. It has been shaped by human and natural processes over thousands of years. The context in which specific historic features sit and the patterns of past use are part of our historic environment. The historical, artistic, literary, linguistic, and scenic associations of places and landscapes are some of the less tangible elements of the historic environment. These elements make a fundamental contribution to our sense of place and cultural identity. The historic value of the features found in some open space and the landscapes they create are recognised.
- LANDSCAPE:
Landscape constantly changes due to the influences of natural and/or human forces. Sometimes these changes are subtle and imperceptible, reflecting gradual shifts in land management or climate whilst at other times the changes can be more dramatic or intense, such as when mineral sites are worked and restored or new development takes place. The region has a wide range of landscape types, identified in the D&G Landscape Assessment, and this diversity is considered to be one of the region's major assets.

Open space within and adjacent to settlements have great potential to enhance and enrich the landscape. They can also be a significant force for landscape change. Urban woodlands, for example, can create new habitats, enhance views, absorb activity and bring people closer to nature in both town and country. Very often they are the

defining element of the landscape, shaping and enclosing space, framing views and providing colour, texture and scale.

Environmental problems

3.4 Table 3 below indicates and describes some of the existing environmental problems and issues which the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires to be considered within the Environmental Report.

Table 3: Existing Environmental Problems relating to the OSS

Problem	Implications for OSS
Potential erosion of urban greenspace through pressures of development and lack of management.	Supports policies in LDP which protect open space; Provides framework for management decisions.
Pollution and noise caused by excessive vehicles.	Aims to improve quality and multi-functionality of open space e.g. can provide noise buffers between residential areas and roads.
Localised flooding close to watercourses exacerbated by climate change.	Need to protect water margins and improve / increase open space around watercourses.
Limited Opportunities for biodiversity within the urban environment.	Increase open space in urban areas or change management practices to encourage wildlife e.g. by creating more natural spaces.
Urban environments can be harsh and unappealing due to lack of greenery.	Increase open space and promote “greening” of streets e.g. through green roofs, street trees etc.
Developments do not always reflect or enhance local landscape character.	Aim to increase quality of open space including for visual amenity / landscape value
The public often lack environmental awareness.	Aim to improve access to natural spaces e.g. through creating new access routes, signage, interpretation boards.
Urban residents lack opportunities or awareness to access greenspaces.	Aim to increase accessibility and connectivity between residential areas, open space and wider green network.
Greenspaces are sometimes poorly managed and maintained.	Aim to increase quality of open space, including making spaces more multi-functional.
Greenspaces do not form cohesive networks which limits their value as wildlife corridors and for recreation.	Aim to avoid fragmentation of green networks and increase connectivity between spaces.
There can be conflicts between outdoor access and conservation interests which may affect wildlife habitats.	Supports access strategy.
Environmental quality may be reduced over the long term through erosion of tree cover and wildlife habitats.	Supports policies in LDP seeking to protect open space; Provides framework for management decisions.

Spread of non-native invasive species.	Provides framework for management decisions.
Poor environmental quality of allotment gardens in some instances.	Provides framework for management decisions.
Lack of safe off road opportunities for cycling and walking.	Supports access policies in LDP, Outdoor Access Strategy and Local Transport Strategy.
Threats to protected areas /designated sites. Threats to locally valued wildlife.	Supports policies in LDP seeking to protect open space; support biodiversity and wildlife conservation objectives.

SEA Objectives for OSS

3.5 Following initial consideration of: the SEA issues, existing baseline information and the objectives of the OSS, SEA Objectives of assessment for the OSS have been derived and are shown in Table 4. It is anticipated that these will be refined as part of the interaction between SEA and the developing OSS. The refined objectives will be used in the assessment for the Environmental Report.

Table 4: SEA Objectives for the OSS

SEA Topic	SEA Objective	Indicators
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	To help implement the objectives of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy	Condition of designated sites Loss of designated sites
	To halt the loss of biodiversity and continue to reverse previous losses through targeted action for species and habitats	Additional designated sites LBAP species/habitats stable or increasing
	To increase awareness, understanding and enjoyment of biodiversity and engage many more people in conservation and enhancement	Invasive Species control/expansion
	To restore and enhance biodiversity in all our urban and rural environments through better planning, design and practice	
	To develop an effective management framework that ensures that biodiversity is taken into account in all decision making	
	To ensure that the best new	

	<p>and existing knowledge on biodiversity is available to all policy makers and practitioners</p> <p>Encourage tree planting and habitat creation initiatives.</p> <p>Consolidate and develop networks of greenspace and wildlife corridors including any missing links.</p> <p>Ensure adequate protection given to designated conservation sites and habitats.</p>	
Population and Human Health	<p>To increase the opportunities for access to and enjoyment of open space by all sectors of society</p> <p>To maximise the role of open space in contributing to quality of life</p> <p>To maximise the role of open space in contributing to health and wellbeing</p> <p>To maximise the role of open space in creating safe, pleasant and good quality new development</p> <p>Promote travel options based on walking and cycling and provide appropriate networks</p> <p>Develop programmes to raise levels of environmental awareness</p> <p>Provide better information and interpretation on greenspaces to residents and visitors</p> <p>Provide off road path provision and safe routes to schools and business</p> <p>Promote community gardening and allotment projects</p>	<p>Number of improved access routes</p> <p>Number of cycle paths</p> <p>Open space audit quantity and quality</p> <p>Amount and quality of new open space provided as part of new development</p> <p>Number and type of improvement projects for existing open space</p> <p>Number of people using open space</p> <p>Satisfaction with quality of open space</p>
Soil	To contribute to sustainable soil management	Changes in areas where soils are unsuited to productive woodland expansion

Water	Encourage more naturalistic approaches to watercourse management emphasising retention of natural vegetation to absorb run off	Ecological status of waterbodies
Air	To maximise the role of open space in contributing to air quality	Air quality trends
Climatic Factors	To further increase the role of open space in achieving carbon sequestration Provide accessible, high quality open space to reduce the need to travel to access open space To ensure that open space planning and management take account of the need to adapt to climate change	Accessibility data from Open Space Audit Details of projects relating to climate change and open space
Material Assets	To manage, maintain and promote efficient use of material assets in accordance with the type and function of open spaces	Quality and usage data from open space audit / Council assessment records
Cultural Heritage	Need to identify areas that are particularly sensitive to change To further promote the protection and enhancement of the historic environment To further increase awareness and understanding of cultural heritage related to open space	Number and condition of designated and non designated sites
Landscape	Encourage more planting within new development and existing greenspace Promote an integrated approach to local design and distinctiveness with planners and developers Work with stakeholders to ensure that higher standards of maintenance are implemented Protect the landscape from intrusive development Provide increased	Amount of open space lost to development Quality data from Open Space Audit Number of type of projects relating to open space improvements e.g. new access routes / provision of new signage, information boards etc.

	opportunities for people to appreciate the landscape through use of open space	
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Alternatives

3.6 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires consideration of reasonable alternatives to the plan to be identified, described and evaluated. The consideration of alternatives relates to the means by which the objectives of the plan can be met by different approaches.

3.7 Potential reasonable alternatives have been identified as follows:

- Option 1 – Maintain status quo:** Given the need to have a strategic response to recent financial pressures and budget restrictions that all Councils face, the need to maximise developer contributions towards open space, as well as the need to address other priorities such as responding to the effects of climate change, if a Strategy were not now produced, the following issues could be anticipated: open space may become poorly managed which may lead to a deterioration in the quality of the urban environment and may not fully satisfy the expectations of the public; there would not be a mechanism to co-ordinate the work of agencies, local authorities and other interest groups involved in the delivery of open space management; there would also be less opportunity for local people to influence the way that greenspaces are managed in the future.
- Option 2 – Produce a very high level strategy without taking account of open space audit data:** Although a strategy could be produced which simply provided a broad framework, this would not provide an opportunity to set out the standards which have been formulated. These have Council-wide implications and otherwise would only be found within the Supplementary Guidance on Open Space. This would not be the appropriate location for these strategic standards and would limit the use of them to only planning applications.
- Option3 – Produce a detailed strategy informed by open space audit data and the needs and priorities of different Council services:** This is felt to be the best option as it will provides the appropriate framework to set out a range of Council wide standards which can be used for a number of different Services. This will also provide the mechanism by which to set out the results from the Council’s first ever open space audit.

3.8 The three options outlined above will be assessed against a simplified assessment framework (laid out in Table 5 below) using the agreed SEA objectives and the evaluation framework shown in Table 6.

Table 5: Assessment Framework for Alternatives

SEA Objective	Option 1	Option 2	Option3
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna			
Population & Human Health			
Soil			
Water			
Air			
Climatic Factors			
Material Assets			
Cultural Heritage			
Landscape			

Methodology for Assessing Environmental Effects

3.9 The assessment will examine each of the main components and objectives of the OSS against the SEA objectives set out in Table 4.

3.10 The following table (Table 6) outline the proposed assessment frameworks for assessing environmental effects and identifying the proposed measures envisaged for preventing, reducing and offsetting significant adverse effects.

3.11 Table 7 indicates the proposed evaluation framework to be included in the evaluation column shown in Tables 6.

Table 7: Evaluation Framework

Impact	Positive impact	Small positive impact	Neutral impact	Unknown impact	Both positive and negative impacts	Small negative impact	Negative impact
Score Symbol	++	+	0	?	+/-	x	xx

4. NEXT STEPS

4.1 Table 8 below sets out the main stages and milestones in the development of the OSS.

Table 8: Next Main Stages in Production of the OSS

Date	Stage
Jan 2014	Scoping Report submitted to SEA Gateway
Feb - March 2014	Engagement with wider Council Services and relevant Committee
March – May 2014	Public consultation on Draft OSS and Environmental Report
Sept 2014	Report back the outcome of the public consultation with recommended final strategy for Committee approval
Dec 2014	Adopt and Publish OSS
Jan 2015	SEA Post Adoption Statement

4.2 It is proposed that public consultation will last for a 6 week period.