

**AYRSHIRE LEADER LOCAL ACTION GROUP
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
AND BUSINESS PLAN**

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Submitted by: South Ayrshire Council

May 2008

Fraser Associates
Management and Economics Consultants

in association with

the rural development company

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
1	<u>Introduction</u>	2
2	<u>Socio-economic Context</u>	14
3	<u>Environmental Context</u>	25
4	<u>Findings from Consultations</u>	32
5	<u>Strategy</u>	39
6	<u>Ancillary Issues</u>	50
Annex I	<u>Ayrshire LEADER Area Data Zones</u>	52
Annex II	<u>Ayrshire LEADER LAG Member Organisations and Roles</u>	54
Annex III	<u>Stakeholder Consultations and Topic Guides</u>	59
Annex IV	<u>Community Workshop Attendees</u>	68

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This document sets out the Local Development Strategy for the Ayrshire LEADER Local Action Group (LAG). A companion Business Plan has also been prepared to accompany the Strategy.

The Strategy and Business Plan have been developed over an 8-month period and followed initial consultation carried out by the local authorities in Ayrshire. Its structure and content reflect the Guidance prepared by the Scottish Government for prospective LEADER LAGs and good practice in EU-funded programme development.

At the time of its preparation, the Scottish Government were yet to produce definitive guidance on performance indicators and quantification of targets in LEADER Local Development Strategies.

1.2 The Ayrshire LEADER Area

The Proposed Ayrshire LEADER Area is a contiguous, geographically and culturally coherent area, comprising the whole of mainland Ayrshire excluding the major urban centres. It extends to some 2,819 square kilometres. It is largely rural in character although many of the settlements in North and East Ayrshire have formerly been the location of industrial activity, including metals, process industries and mining.

Following revisions to the LEADER Area as originally proposed, its population is now estimated at 148,843, distributed across:

- North Ayrshire 47,051 (31.6%).
- East Ayrshire 69,144 (46.5%).
- South Ayrshire 32,648 (21.9%).

The Data Zones which make up the Ayrshire LEADER area are listed in Annex I. A map of the area is provided as Figure 1.1.

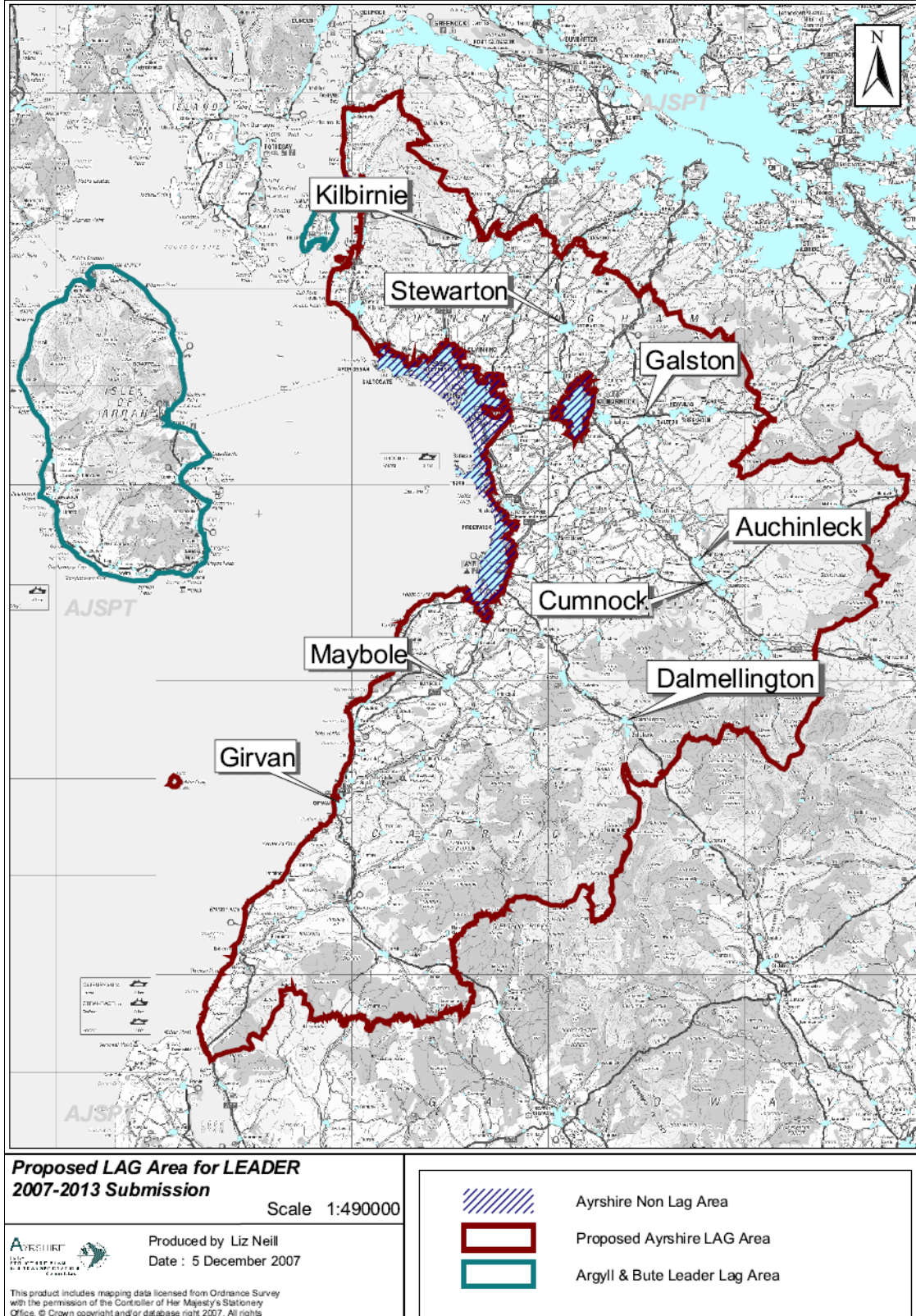
The majority of Ayrshire's population live in areas excluded from the LEADER Area within the main Ayrshire urban agglomerations of Ayr / Prestwick / Troon , Kilmarnock, Irvine / Kilwinning, the Three Towns – Ardrossan, Saltcoats & Stevenson and Largs. This excluded area also contains the majority of jobs and corresponds to the Core Investment Area defined in the Modified Draft Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan.

Within the LEADER Area the remainder of Ayrshire's population live in small towns and villages scattered throughout Ayrshire, but particularly concentrated within the northern and central areas of the region. The southern half of Ayrshire is characterised by a sparser settlement pattern and contains significant upland areas with very low population densities. Around half of the Leader Area population live in small towns of between 3,000 and 10,000 people. Around a quarter live in villages of between 600 and 3,000 people and a further quarter live in hamlets and open countryside.

Pan-Ayrshire the dominant land uses out-with the settlements are agriculture and forestry. Approximately 4,360 people are employed in agriculture and produced 3% of Ayrshire's GDP in 2000. The profitability of farming and the numbers of people

employed have been in decline over much of the last decade. There is a significant forestry resource that employs between 2,000 and 5,000 people directly and indirectly in Ayrshire and has seen employment gains from relatively recent investment in large processing plants in the area.

Figure 1.1: The Ayrshire LEADER Area



The proposed LEADER Area boundary has a fair-good fit with a number of other administrative and planning boundaries:

- the 3 Ayrshire Councils.
- Ayrshire & Arran Health Board.
- Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan / Ayrshire & Arran Woodland Partnership.
- Ayrshire Rivers Trust.
- The three Ayrshire Community Planning Partnerships.
- Community Right to Buy Eligible Areas.

The Ayrshire LEADER Area has a coherent cultural inheritance based on a shared geography and economic history focused around agriculture; extractive industries; and manufacturing.

The LEADER Area forms a geographically coherent area influenced by underlying geology, topography and river drainage systems. In summary the area comprises the Ayrshire Basin and the entire Western Coastal Edge of the Midland Valley of Scotland which is bounded by the Highland Boundary Fault to the north and the Southern Upland Fault to the south. Ayrshire has a natural boundary created by a ridge of hills in a broad arc to the north, east and south which also form the watershed for a series of river catchments draining through the Ayrshire lowlands to the sea (Garnock; Irvine; Ayr; Doon; Girvan and Stinchar). It is these river valleys and lowlands that the main transportation corridors and infrastructure networks utilise and in which the bulk of the settlements and population are found.

Historically, agriculture has been one of the principal influences on the evolution of a distinct character of Ayrshire, shaping land uses, settlement patterns and landscape—much of which still remains, particularly in the lowland areas based around dairying and along the coast, arable. On the higher ground and rougher pasture, sheep farming is the main agricultural activity with forestry and wind energy as the main viable alternatives - raising concerns about potential impacts. Over the past 80 years the development and expansion of forests has been one of the most significant changes in Ayrshire's landscape and woods and forests now cover approximately 21% of the total land area. Forestry Commission forecasts indicate that Ayrshire will experience a three-fold increase in commercially grown timber available for extraction between now and 2021. This resource provides considerable employment opportunities and potential economic benefits. Ayrshire already benefits from the presence of major downstream timber processing businesses, including the paper mill at Irvine and the chip-board mill at Auchinleck, but significant potential also exists in tourism and recreation.

The population, character, culture and appearance of large parts of the Ayrshire countryside have been shaped by the growth and subsequent decline of manufacturing and extractive industries over the last 250 years and which despite local variations have provided a unified cultural inheritance associated with manufacturing based on the Ayrshire coalfield. Initially driven by commercial farming, the growth of mineral exploitation and manufacturing expanded rapidly, based on textiles, particularly wool, cotton and linen. These developments in turn led to the rapid expansion of towns and the establishment of new industrial communities. Ayrshire's coalfield developed initially where the coal was at a shallow depth in east Ayrshire. The presence of iron ore promoted the development of Ayrshire's iron industry and a related fireclay and coal tar industry all served by a network of railways linking industrial areas to the Ayrshire coastal ports.

The 20th Century saw a steady decline of Ayrshire's heavy industry. The coal extraction industry has seen dramatic changes with shifts away from conventional mining to deep mining then to open cast methods which resulted in geographic shifts in investment, jobs and population and significant landscape changes. All of Ayrshire's ironworks had closed by the 1920's, leaving only Glengarnock Steelworks and a number of foundries to continue into the 1970's. Engineering industries similarly declined although a number of textile industries do continue. The decline of these 'traditional' industries has removed the economic base of several communities and has left some housing schemes built to house coal workers in unexpected countryside settings.

The causes of disadvantage in Ayrshire are many but often related to the long-term structural changes in the economy described above. As a result people are excluded from participating fully in the economic, social and cultural life of the community by virtue of low incomes, poverty, low skills, low levels of educational attainment, bad health and poor housing. This is reflected in relatively low levels of economic activity and high levels of unemployment and benefit claimants throughout large parts of Ayrshire, particularly in North and East Ayrshire which have above average concentrations of communities experiencing the highest and most persistent levels of multiple deprivation.

1.3 Ayrshire LAG Partnership

1.3.1 Local Action Group Name

The LAG is called the Ayrshire LEADER Local Action Group.

1.3.2 Accountable Body

The Accountable Body for the LAG is South Ayrshire Council.

1.3.3 Contact Details

The contact for the Ayrshire LAG and the Accountable Body is:

Billy McKissock
Rural Development Officer
South Ayrshire Council
Burns House
Burns Statue Square
Ayr
KA7 1UT

Telephone: 01292 616226
Fax: 01292 616211
E-mail: William.Mckissock@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

1.3.4 Membership of the LAG

At the time of finalising the Local Development Strategy and Business Plan, the partnership has 25 members: 9 public sector and 16 social and economic members. The membership is detailed in Table 1.1. The specific target groups of women, youth and small and micro businesses are represented, respectively, through the involvement of:

- WRVS and the inclusion of women among the nominated contacts for other partner organisations.
- Young Farmers Ayrshire.
- Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce and Scottish Rural Property and Business Association

Whilst a key contact is listed for each partner in Annex II, it is intended that other individuals may be involved in Ayrshire LAG activities as appropriate to contribute specific skills, knowledge or expertise.

TABLE 1.1: PARTNER ORGANISATIONS BY SECTOR	
Public Sector	Social and Economic Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Ayrshire Council • South Ayrshire Council • East Ayrshire Council • Ayrshire Structure Plan Team • Forestry Commission Scotland • Scottish National Heritage (SNH) • VisitScotland • Dalmellington Partnership • South Ayrshire Association of Community Councils • East Ayrshire Woodlands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ayrshire & Arran Farming and Wildlife Group (FWAG) • RSPB • Scottish Rural Property and Business Association (SRPBA) • West Kilbride Community Initiative • Scottish Power Renewables • Council for Voluntary Organisations (South Ayrshire) • Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry • Garnock Valley Community Transport • Coalfield Communities Federation • East Ayrshire North Communities Federation • North Ayrshire Council for Voluntary Service • National Farmers Union • Young Farmers Ayrshire • Dalry Business Group • Woman's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS)

The list of organisations in Table 1.1 is neither exclusive nor exhaustive. It is anticipated by the Ayrshire LAG, that inclusion of partner organisations will change over the lifetime of the Programme and that levels of input will vary during the period as is appropriate to complement the updated LEADER business plan over the period 2007/2013. The roles and remit of the Partner Organisations can be seen in Annex II.

1.3.5 Formation of the Local Action Group and Preparation of the LEADER Bid

Initially, the three Ayrshire Councils identified the opportunity to explore the feasibility of forming an Ayrshire-wide LAG to bid into the LEADER Programme. The three

Community Planning Partnerships supported this proposal and remitted the three Councils to report back with recommendations in due course.

Following initial discussions at Officer level within all three Councils, East, North and South Ayrshire, a wider consultation event was organised to gauge interest and support from those organisations likely to participate in such a LAG. North Ayrshire Council hosted this information event in Ardrossan on 15 June 2007, as an introduction to the concept of LEADER. This event was very well attended and many of the partners named in Table 1.1 above were represented at this meeting and confirmed their desire to participate in the development of an Ayrshire-wide LAG. They further confirmed their support for this process to be led by the three Local Authorities.

Following a period of more detailed discussions between the three local Authorities, relevant partners and the Community Planning Partnerships, it was agreed that a Steering Group should be formed to progress interest in a LEADER bid and, if successful, that South Ayrshire Council would take on the roles of Administrative Lead and Accountable Body for the Ayrshire LAG, with responsibility for staffing, financial management and administration of the Ayrshire LEADER programme.

A report was submitted to the South Ayrshire Council, Leadership Panel of 11 July 2007, recommending that South Ayrshire Council assume the responsibility of Administrative Lead and Accountable Body for the Ayrshire LEADER Programme 2007/13. Members of the Leadership Panel duly agreed with and accepted the recommendations of the report. Similar reports to the Council Leadership and Community Planning Partnership of East Ayrshire confirmed East Ayrshire's agreement to this proposal. North Ayrshire Council subsequently submitted outline proposals to both the relevant sub-group of the Community Planning Partnership and the North Ayrshire CPP board. Both bodies were supportive of the Ayrshire LEADER proposal.

The Steering Group met on several occasions during Autumn 2007 and, following further discussion at its meeting on 14 December 2007, it was concluded that a shadow Ayrshire LAG should be established to oversee the development of the Local Development Strategy and Business Plan, and to conclude the necessary agreements required between the partners to allow formal submission of the Ayrshire LEADER bid.

The shadow Ayrshire LAG was formed on 16 January 2008. Providing the bid for LEADER funding is successful, this body will become the constituted Ayrshire LAG. In meetings of the shadow Ayrshire LAG on 16 January 2008 and 3 April 2008, formal agreements were reached, including:

- the appointment of a LAG Chair.
- that South Ayrshire Council will act as Administrative Lead and Accountable Body.
- that a sub-group, known as the Bid Working Group, would be mandated to finalise both the Local Development Strategy and the Business Plan and to submit both documents to the Scottish Government on behalf of the Ayrshire LAG as the agreed bid for LEADER funding.

It is proposed that Ayrshire LAG staff will be located in the offices of the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan Team in Prestwick which is already jointly funded by the three Local Authorities and which will also provide administrative support. The Ayrshire

Joint Structure Plan (Growing a Sustainable Ayrshire) provides an overarching framework that brings together the aspirations of communities with those of business and industry, and the area's many supporting agencies and organisations. It is therefore apt that LEADER has a strong link with the Structure Plan Team.

1.4 Rural Engagement and Activity

1.4.1 Public Sector

In the context of the LEADER strategy, community engagement refers to the extent to which strategic agencies involve rural communities or community-based organisations in their economic and social regeneration. The consultations identified that there are different levels of organisational activity and engagement in the different Local Authority areas throughout Ayrshire.

The Structure Plan Team has a pan-Ayrshire remit as do a number of agencies for example SNH, VisitScotland, Communities Scotland and the Forestry Commission. In general terms a large proportion of Local Authority engagement occurs at a strategic level with the more direct engagement undertaken through partnerships with other agencies.

In the south of Ayrshire, South Ayrshire Council is engaged with a number of community groups through project work, examples here include Talbolton, Annbank and Ballantrae. The CPP team is involved in delivering the Rural Priority Service Initiative to improve access to services in rural and isolated communities. They are also involved in strategy and action plan development and have provided funding for initiatives such as Learning for Employment, care services for the elderly and sports services.

In the north of Ayrshire, North Ayrshire Council has been more directly involved in working with a number of community organisations, such as the Access Forum, the Tourism Forum and Path Networks. The Council's involvement has also included events and providing funding for community facilities. North Ayrshire Council works with partners and funds community involvement through, for example, the CVS. However, it was reported that the North Ayrshire CPP is primarily focused on urban areas, having limited involvement with rural communities.

In the east of the County, East Ayrshire Council engages with the rural community through the Community Planning Partnership. The CPP are involved in delivering the Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROA), the successor to the Coalfield SIP. Reflecting the rural nature of East Ayrshire, the ROA reaches out to rural and isolated communities. East Ayrshire Council has developed a number of environmental projects and have piloted a Restoring Communities Initiative in Auchinleck. East Ayrshire CPP have been involved in a range of schemes including transport, a care centre, a youth centre and employment programmes. As health is a big issue in the area they have developed a mobile Community Health Improvement Programme (CHIP) van.

Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire indicated that community involvement was not within their remit and that they had no specific rural remit. Their involvement is more on a project by project basis, for example they are currently working in Mauchline to enhance the tourism potential associated with Robert Burns. Since the restructure of the Scottish Enterprise network from 1st April 2008, Scottish Enterprise are likely to be even less involved in the rural agenda at a local level.

Communities Scotland has not had a great deal of involvement with rural communities although they have run a number of small funding programmes aimed at housing associations and community owned assets.

The Forestry Commission and SNH both have pan-Ayrshire remits and work in partnership with local authorities and other partner organisations to work with local community groups.

SNH is involved with communities through grant and funding applications. This project work coupled with a strategic overview have improved the quality of visitor experience at specific venues and also improved the management of some site areas. Forestry Commission have worked with the Structure Plan Team at a strategic level in developing forests and also been involved at community level in woodland creation and farm diversification. Through a process to gain consensus on what was sought from the woodland better community engagement in woodland activity has resulted and created a feeling of ownership and engagement.

Scottish Agricultural College is involved principally with the farming community. Increasingly, it is involved with development of golf courses and land issues associated with the aftermath of open-cast mining. Farm diversification schemes and the development of farmers markets have seen Scottish Agricultural College helping farmers to extend their involvement into the broader rural community.

VisitScotland is engaged in the rural community through a number of rural businesses that either advertise with them or are involved in their quality assurance scheme. VS are a member of the Tourism Forum and have funded the Challenge Fund. This fund, although not specifically rural, is targeted at marketing groups of businesses. VS has no remit to work with community groups, however as it is responsible for the marketing of Ayrshire it has an investment in the rural area being a vibrant and sustainable area for people to live and visit.

1.4.2 Non Public Sector

North Ayrshire Council for Voluntary Services provides support to new and existing groups and community organisations. It reports involvement with in excess of 2,500 groups of varying sizes across the area, a number being rurally-based. The proportion of these groups that are involved in local development activity is unclear. NACVS helps groups to develop projects and delivers a number of its own. It is currently involved in developing a searchable database to allow more effective profiling of community groups. This will allow groups to promote their activities, the general public to be able to identify where services are available and for policy makers to know the size and strength of the sector to create appropriate policies. North Ayrshire CVS have also been involved in local artist led initiatives, recycling schemes and quarry environmental projects.

The Farming and Wild Life Advisory Group (FWAG) is a membership organisation which engages predominately with farmers but also the general public. FWAG promoted and provided services associated with the Rural Stewardship scheme from 1997 which supported farmers for conservation work including retention or creation of employment. Projects that were covered by this scheme included dry stone dyking, pond creation and high value natural farming. This has led to improvement in the natural environment. FWAG has established partnership working arrangements with RSPB, SWT, SEPA and SNH.

The Chamber of Commerce in Ayrshire has over 700 members throughout Ayrshire and has just been awarded the Excellence in Membership Growth award at this year's national Chamber Awards. A number of these businesses are rural and over 65% of members have less than 10 employees. The Chamber is also involved in the Determined to Succeed scheme which integrates businesses and schools through work placements. The wind farm company AMEC are one of the partners within the Chamber and through them the Chamber are engaged in community projects.

Scottish Rural Property and Business Association (SRPBA), are a membership organisation representing the role and interests of those involved with rural property and businesses connected with the land with members throughout the rural area. The association comprises a number of different sub groups engaging them in areas such as rural enterprise and the environment. They provide a facilitation role, rather than a funding one and alert their members to opportunities as they arise.

The Young Farmers similarly are a membership organisation which draws in people from a farming background and from the surrounding rural towns and villages. It aims to bridge the gap between town and country and has a strong network of contacts. Young Farmers issue newsletters and hold social functions which encourage networking and provide opportunities for professional development.

The Ayrshire Women's Rural Institute (WRI) has at present 48 Institutes with approximately 2,100 members from all walks of life. Members are invited from all over the county, not just the rural areas. They organise social and sports events and encourage women from communities to get together to pass on ideas, knowledge and skills.

WRVS provides a range of services to help people in need who might otherwise feel lonely and isolated. It works with other charities and organisations, local authorities and the NHS, meeting needs in communities throughout England, Scotland and Wales. The WRVS with 75% woman membership will ensure that the Ayrshire LAG through delivery of axis IV LEADER will ensure that woman as a target group have their need represented in Ayrshire LAG business. The WRVS also works on small projects to the enhance the lives of the communities that it works with.

1.4.3 Barriers

The consultations highlighted a number of barriers to involving local people and businesses in development activity. These tended to be viewed differently by consultees from different organisations.

The barriers to local community engagement from a Local Authority point of view centred around capacity in absolute terms and particularly that of community groups. Concerns were raised that community groups were not currently working in partnership or at a strategic level. In North Ayrshire, community engagement, including in the rural areas, was reported to be low by a number of consultees. There is inconsistency in the coverage and capacity of Community Councils, and they are not a partner on the North Ayrshire CPP. Another barrier highlighted was the need to motivate people and give them clear and transparent goals. There is an awareness that it is important to manage unrealistic expectations from the community and to ensure a balanced view is taken.

Other organisations, such as SNH and Forestry Commission found that staff resources and time were the biggest barriers to their community involvement and that there was a need for an even-handed approach to be developed. It was seen to be

important to convey the relevance of policy to engage people and, if possible, to target key areas of need to match the available resource. Some consultees indicated that there was a need for confidence-building between certain groups within the private and public agencies.

From the point of view of the private and voluntary sectors, the biggest barrier to involving local communities was simply not being asked to be involved. It was commented that in some public-private partnerships the public sector tended to dominate, although the reluctance of some businesses to become financially involved was seen to not help the position.

In absolute terms, the most frequently identified barrier was time. However, the ability to work co-operatively and the need to demonstrate the value and relevance of becoming involved were also seen to be of high importance. A significant factor appears to be a shortage of people with appropriate skills, which makes engaging with the community all the harder. From the community perspective there was an express desire for the Councils to become more enterprising, become less risk averse and to demonstrate more of a 'can do' attitude.

1.4.4 LEADER Potential

The consultations indicated that there was strong potential to do more through LEADER, although consultees were not always sure how. As a pan-Ayrshire programme, there was seen to be potential to act as a catalyst to join-up existing funding streams and to encourage much more co-operative working. LEADER was seen to provide an opportunity to open up the rural network, to target ideas and projects and to encourage sustainable development. A key element of this is the need for LEADER to be integrated with the Community Planning Process rather than being allowed to or seen to stand alone.

Some consultees thought that LEADER could be used to extend and broaden existing initiatives, although this would have to be done carefully to ensure eligibility under the LEADER funding rules.

LEADER's requirement to ensure the public sector and community and voluntary sectors work in partnership was seen to be of great benefit as it encourages a 'done by, not done to' approach. This was seen as encouraging consensus and ownership and leading to community respect for development initiatives. There is a perceived appetite for local people to take control of local development, making it more relevant to them, whilst at the same time promoting responsibility, knowledge and appreciation.

LEADER was also seen as having the potential to get the private sector more involved in development activity than it has been to date. This is perceived to be a good thing in terms of long-term sustainability. It was suggested this could involve promoting the local food economy and establishing networks for renewable energy sources.

1.4.5 Innovation

Those consulted were convinced of the need for rural innovation but, as very few of them had any previous LEADER experience, had difficulty in providing any specific ideas on how to demonstrate this. Suggestions regarding potential innovation therefore tended to focus on the LEADER approach itself rather than project or thematic approaches.

The main elements of innovation were perceived to lie in LEADER being new to the area as an approach, the three local authorities working together in partnership with the private and voluntary sectors and the focus on a coherent rural strategy. Extending partnership to involve communities and businesses from rural areas to be involved was perceived by some as a further innovation. It was suggested by those who had worked with LEADER in other areas that, given the inherent complexities, it would be advisable to work within the existing LEADER model and to keep things as simple as possible.

Other suggestions included Ayrshire LAG members serving for a period of 3 years and that the management location should rotate, although this may be difficult in practice. LEADER was seen as an opportunity to engage new people into the process and to encourage people to work in partnership in a more corporate manner rather than focus purely on their own sector or field of expertise. This was acknowledged to be a considerable challenge however.

1.5 Strategy Development Methodology

1.5.1 General

The development of the strategy for Ayrshire LEADER has been facilitated by the consultants Fraser Associates in association with the Rural Development Company. Development of the strategy has taken account of the national guidance prepared by the Scottish Government.

The themes for the Ayrshire LEADER Strategy and Business Plan have been selected from the options set out in the national guidance and their scope defined taking account of the findings from the desk based socio economic and environmental analyses and the processes of community consultation and engagement laid out below.

1.5.2 Consultations

A programme of 20 interviews was conducted with relevant rural stakeholder groups and organisations; the sample of rural stakeholders was drawn together by the LEADER Steering Group. This included the main strategic agencies with responsibilities in the Ayrshire LEADER area, strategic partnerships including the three Community Planning Partnerships and a number of key rural community and business interests. All those nominated for interview were written to by the Steering Group advising them of the interview process and its purpose and requesting their participation. Interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis using a structured topic guide, the list of stakeholder consultees and the topic guide are attached at Annex III.

1.5.3 Community Workshops

Three community level workshops were conducted, one in each of the three Council areas, one in the morning, afternoon and evening. A list of invitees was developed from nominations from the three areas and again the Steering Group wrote to them advising them of the workshop process and its purpose and requesting their participation. The consultants then followed up this letter with a letter of invitation to participate in any of the three workshops. This approach was designed to afford the maximum possible opportunity to participate and resulted in a total of 43 participants

from the total of 91 invitees, a response rate of 44% reflecting a high degree of involvement. A full list of participants and their organisations is provided at Annex IV.

The purpose of the workshops was threefold:

- to raise knowledge and awareness of LEADER, the proposed approach and its potential for rural Ayrshire;
- to identify and establish from the community perspective what the rural regeneration assets, needs and opportunities are for rural Ayrshire; and
- to identify the relative importance and priority of these assets, needs and opportunities for the communities concerned.

Each of the workshops adopted a highly participative methodology which was designed to ensure that all had equal opportunity to engage and contribute to the process. This resulted in lively and informed debate and exchanges of views between areas sectors and organisations. Workshop findings were established and agreed by the participants themselves and were collated by the facilitating consultants. The summary of the workshop findings was then fed back to the participants by the consultants.

1.5.4 Additional Consultation and Adoption

The first draft of the Strategy was considered by the Steering Group in December 2007 and the first formal meeting of the Ayrshire LAG in January 2008. It was thereafter circulated to organisations that had participated in or been invited to the earlier consultations and workshops. Feedback received been taken into account in the refinement of the Strategy.

2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

2.1 General

This Chapter presents a brief socio-economic analysis of the Ayrshire LEADER area.

Partial statistical data are available at the level of the LEADER area itself via the Scottish Government recommended source www.sns.gov.uk. In response to our queries, the Scottish Government has acknowledged anomalies in these data and / or that data have been re-based between time periods.

A considerable portion of the analysis relies upon data that are available at Local Authority level, notably that relating to employment and the business base which has been sourced variously from the Annual Business Inquiry and NOMIS VAT records.

Some labour market data sets are sample-based and become less reliable and are not always additive when applied to small areas. Business base data sets are subject to rounding of statistics and suppression to preserve confidentiality.

The analysis covers the following topics:

- Population / working population.
- Access to services.
- Employment.
- Qualifications.
- Business stocks.
- Unemployment and worklessness.
- Deprivation.

2.2 Population

Between 2001 and 2006, the population of the Ayrshire LEADER area increased at a faster rate than in Ayrshire, and at a comparable rate to Scotland as a whole

Growth has been fastest in the northern and southern parts of the Ayrshire LEADER area, reflecting in-migration and housing development, while there has been a small decline in rural East Ayrshire.

The figures also reflect some pressure on the working age populations in the rural areas despite modest growth between 2001 and 2006. The proportion of the overall population of working age was similar to the overall Ayrshire average of just over 60.5% but below the Scottish average of 62.8% in 2006.

TABLE 2.1: POPULATION CHANGE							
	Total Population				Working Age Population		
	2002	2006	Change	Change (%)	Change 02-06	Change (%)	prop of pop 2006
Males							
EA LEADER	33288	33664	376	1.1	449	2.1	66.2
NA LEADER	21734	22432	698	3.2	410	3.0	63.6
SA LEADER	15458	15842	384	2.5	278	2.8	64.8
All LEADER	70480	71938	1458	2.1	1137	2.5	65.1
Ayrshire	174893	174958	65	0.1	218	0.2	64.8
Scotland	2431805	2469407	37602	1.5	37230	2.3	66.8
Females							
EA LEADER	35282	35480	198	0.6	175	0.9	57.6
NA LEADER	24246	24619	373	1.5	219	1.7	54.7
SA LEADER	16488	16806	318	1.9	85	0.9	56.5
All LEADER	76016	76905	889	1.2	479	1.1	56.4
Ayrshire	192167	191492	-675	-0.4	-430	-0.4	56.9
Scotland	2622995	2647493	24498	0.9	25521	1.7	59.1
All							
EA LEADER	68570	69144	574	0.8	624	1.5	61.8
NA LEADER	45980	47051	1071	2.3	629	2.3	59.0
SA LEADER	31946	32648	702	2.2	363	1.9	60.6
All LEADER	146496	148843	2347	1.6	1616	1.8	60.6
Ayrshire	367060	366450	-610	-0.2	-212	-0.1	60.7
Scotland	5054800	5116900	62100	1.2	62751	2.0	62.8

Source: www.sns.gov.uk

2.3 Access to Services

An indication of accessibility of key rural services is available in data on average drive time to service points.

Table 2.2 shows the average drive times to key services: post office, GP surgery, petrol, shopping, primary and secondary schools.

TABLE 2.2: AVERAGE DRIVETIMES TO KEY SERVICES (MINUTES)												
	Post Office		GP Surgery		Petrol		Shopping ¹		Primary School		Secondary School	
	03	06	03	06	03	06	03	06	03	06	03	06
EA L	3.4	2.4	3.6	3.0	5.4	3.7	5.3	9.3	3.0	2.3	-	7.7
NA L	2.9	2.6	3.5	3.1	6.0	3.2	5.3	13.4	3.2	2.6	-	8.3
SA L	3.7	2.4	4.8	3.4	11.7	4.3	7.0	7.4	3.7	2.4	-	7.8
All L	3.3	2.5	3.8	3.2	7.0	3.7	5.7	10.2	3.3	2.5	-	7.9
Ayrshire	2.9	2.3	4.2	3.2	4.8	3.1	4.4	11.1	2.9	2.3	-	6.1
Scotland	2.9	2.2	3.8	3.4	4.8	3.7	4.9	5.6	2.9	2.2	-	5.6

Source: www.sns.gov.uk
¹Shopping 03 is drive time to a supermarket; Shopping facilities 06 is a group of shops, which would typically include a supermarket or similar store.

The data suggest that the Ayrshire LEADER area population has fair access to Post Office, GP garage services and primary schools. Access to shopping and secondary schools requires longer journeys, suggesting a reliance on the key service centres and potential issues for excluded or disadvantaged groups such as single parents attempting to engage with the labour market or the benefit-dependent with the potential to work.

There is no consistent pattern of accessibility across the LEADER area broken down by Local Authority. The data suggest that accessibility has generally improved across the Ayrshire LEADER area between 2003 and 2006.

While the differences in drive times for most services between Ayrshire LEADER area and Ayrshire as a whole are not great, the difference will impinge particularly upon those who do not have access to a car or van and are reliant upon public transport.

2.4 Employment

Sustained economic growth since the mid-1990s has been reflected in increased numbers of jobs and higher levels of labour market participation across Scotland. This trend has only been reflected in part in Ayrshire.

The data in Table 2.3 indicates that the aggregate number of employees in Ayrshire was virtually unchanged between 2001 and 2005 at a time when the Scottish economy was moving ahead. However, this masks underlying variations at Local Authority level. In North Ayrshire, some 1,900 fewer people were in employment in 2005 compared with 2001, with many of these losses associated with closures at Volvo in Irvine and the former NATO base and pier at Fairlie. There has been modest job growth in East Ayrshire and just above average growth in South Ayrshire over this period compared with Scotland as a whole.

The analysis suggests that the Ayrshire economy is continuing to experience significant pressures. Furthermore, the considerably lower ratio of jobs to population in Ayrshire (0.34) compared with Scotland (0.47) suggests a high level of reliance on the wider Glasgow labour market area for job opportunities.

	2001	2005	Change	Change (%)
East Ayrshire	37,900	38,500	600	1.6
North Ayrshire	43,300	41,400	-1,900	-4.4
South Ayrshire	43,200	45,400	2,200	5.1
Ayrshire	124,400	125,300	900	0.7
Scotland	2,299,800	2,398,800	99,000	4.3
Source: ABI				

The key sectoral changes for each of the Local Authority areas are shown below in Table 2.4. Although there are some positive changes, the figures are dominated by growth in the public sector (+6,600 jobs), particularly in South Ayrshire. The sustainability of employment growth in the public sector is questionable, however. The fragility of the Ayrshire economy is seen in the significant job losses in manufacturing (-5,400) and finance sectors (-1,700), the latter of which has been growing strongly at the Scottish level. The analysis suggests that there is likely to be an ongoing reliance on the Glasgow and Lanarkshire areas for employment opportunities.

	East Ayrshire		North Ayrshire		South Ayrshire		Scotland	
	No.	Ch(%)	No.	Ch(%)	No.	Ch(%)	No.	Ch(%)
Manufacturing	4300	-30.6	6400	-34.0	5900	-3.3	229700	-19.4
Construction	2500	13.6	2300	35.3	1700	-29.2	131800	9.8
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	9600	7.9	10600	-1.9	13200	3.1	543600	-0.3
Transport and communications	2000	11.1	2400	0.0	3200	6.7	129300	-0.1
Banking, finance and insurance, etc.	4100	7.9	3600	-21.7	3300	-23.3	438900	11.3
Public admin, education & health	12800	13.3	12700	15.5	15400	28.3	725800	17.5
Other services	2300	-4.2	2600	8.3	2400	0.0	127100	2.3
Total (including suppressed sectors)	38500	1.6	41400	-4.4	45400	5.1	2398800	4.3

Source ABI (Agriculture and Fisheries, Energy and Water data suppressed).

2.5 Qualifications

Access to a skilled workforce is fundamental to the competitiveness of rural businesses and for their ability to adapt to changing market needs.

Tables 2.5 and 2.6 provide an indication of the skills base in Ayrshire based on a sample of the working age population. This data set is available at Local Authority and national levels only. Some caution is required in interpreting these data; SNS has conceded that they contain anomalies. In terms of the number of people in the Ayrshire districts with known qualifications, South Ayrshire stands out as the most qualified workforce in comparison with the Scottish average. In contrast, the proportion of the East Ayrshire workforce in possession of a qualification in 2005 was only 90% of the Scottish average.

Correspondingly, East Ayrshire also demonstrated a much higher proportion of its working population with no qualifications (29%) in 2005, which was double the South Ayrshire proportion and well above the Scottish average of 17%. The data suggest that the position in East Ayrshire worsened between 2001 and 2005, in contrast to the trend in the two other Ayrshire districts and in Scotland as a whole.

Total Working Age Population with Known Qualifications				
	2001		2005	
	No.	%	No.	%
E Ayrshire	59000	80	55000	75
N Ayrshire	63000	76	68000	82
S Ayrshire	61000	88	57000	83
Scotland	2593400	82	2646000	83
Total Working Age Population with No Qualifications				
	2001		2005	
	No.	%	No.	%
E Ayrshire	15000	26	16000	29
N Ayrshire	17000	27	13000	19
S Ayrshire	11000	17	9000	15
Scotland	530300	20	459700	17

Source: www.sns.gov.uk

In terms of higher-level qualifications, none of the three districts matches the Scottish average with regard to degree level qualifications. In 2005, just 13% of East Ayrshire's working age population held a degree or equivalent, compared with the national figure of 21%. The Ayrshire districts demonstrate a relatively better performance with regard to Highers attainment, though the proportion of population in possession of 3+ Highers was below the Scottish average in all cases.

TABLE 2.6: HIGHER LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS				
Total Working Age Population with 3 Highers or More				
	2001		2005	
	No.	%	No.	%
E Ayrshire	21000	61	25800	56
N Ayrshire	22000	64	33600	59
S Ayrshire	25000	70	27300	55
Scotland	1228000	69	1366600	61
Total Working Age Population with Degree Level Qualification				
	2001*		2005	
E Ayrshire			7000	13
N Ayrshire			10000	15
S Ayrshire			10000	18
Scotland			553000	21

Source: www.sns.gov.uk. * Data acknowledged as inaccurate.

2.6 Business Base

Ayrshire had a relatively low business density of 218 businesses per 10,000 population in 2005 compared with 253 at the Scottish level. This enterprise deficit is less reflected in the prevalence of self-employment, with 7.5% of working age population being self-employed, compared with 7.6% at the Scottish level.

TABLE 2.7: BUSINESS STOCK AND TURNOVER							
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Change	Change (%)
Registrations							
EA	220	210	195	210	230	10	4.5
NA	205	205	225	230	215	10	4.9
SA	235	250	260	260	240	5	2.1
Ayrshire	660	665	680	700	685	25	3.8
Scotland	10980	11130	11975	11975	11525	545	5.0
De-registrations							
EA	190	195	220	210	190	0	0
NA	215	200	190	205	180	-35	-16.3
SA	245	240	210	245	215	-30	-12.0
Ayrshire	650	635	620	660	585	-65	-10.0
Scotland	10960	10820	10935	10925	10160	-800	-7.3
Stock at End of Year							
EA	2515	2535	2510	2510	2570	55	2.2
NA	2430	2430	2470	2495	2530	100	4.1
SA	2785	2785	2850	2880	2900	115	4.1
Ayrshire	7730	7750	7830	7885	8000	270	3.5
Scotland	125405	125695	126750	127815	129180	3775	3.0

Source: NOMIS

Despite the limited of progress in terms of employment at County level, Table 2.7 shows that Ayrshire has been relatively successful in maintaining its stock of

businesses, with the modest growth of 3.5% experienced between 2001 and 2005 being slightly higher than the Scottish average. This reflects a small increase in business registrations, and improved survival rates as illustrated by reduced deregistration rates.

However, there are variances within Ayrshire: North and South Ayrshire experienced a sharp reduction in the number of business de-registrations in the period of analysis relative to the Scottish rate (although the absolute numbers involved are relatively small). East Ayrshire saw net growth in business stocks between 2001 and 2005, but at a slower rate than the other two areas.

Table 2.8 shows the key sectoral changes in Ayrshire's business stocks compared with Scotland as a whole. Although the stock in Ayrshire has been fairly well retained, there have been significant increases in the number of businesses in construction (125, 15.4%) and real estate services (195, 15.9%), while there has also been an above average increase in the number of tourism related businesses (85, 10.4%). Ayrshire's main losses have been in financial industries (-5, -20.0%) and public administration (-40, 5.8%), although the latter may be reflective of reorganisation.

Industry	2001	2005	Change	Change (%)	Change (%) Scotland
Agriculture; Forestry and fishing	1,350	1,330	-20	-1.5	-2.3
Mining and quarrying; Electricity, gas and water supply	10	10	0	0.0	17.9
Manufacturing	555	535	-20	-3.6	-1.6
Construction	810	935	125	15.4	12.1
Wholesale, retail and repairs	1,860	1,875	15	0.8	-0.7
Hotels and restaurants	815	900	85	10.4	9.0
Transport, storage and communication	365	380	15	4.1	7.3
Financial intermediation	25	20	-5	-20.0	5.4
Real Estate, renting and business activities	1,230	1,425	195	15.9	17.6
Public administration; Other community, social and personal services	695	655	-40	-5.8	-6.7
Education; health and social work	90	105	15	16.7	13.6

Source: NOMIS

2.7 Unemployment and Worklessness

Generally buoyant economic conditions in Scotland since the mid-1990s have seen a sustained reduction in the number of jobless, which historically has been more concentrated in urban areas.

There were 2,145 male Jobseeker Allowance claimants in the Ayrshire LEADER area in the second quarter of 2006. The number of male claimants fell by 470 between 2002 and 2006, equivalent to an 18% decline. This compared favourably with the

Ayrshire decrease of 15.1% and the position in Scotland of a decrease of 15.5% overall during this period.

TABLE 2.9: MALE UNEMPLOYMENT					
	2002	2006	Change	Change (%)	% 2006 Male working age population
EA	2700	2220	-480	-17.8	5.9
NA	3235	2880	-355	-11.0	7.0
SA	1925	1575	-350	-18.2	4.6
EA LEADER	1395	1170	-225	-16.1	5.3
NA LEADER	740	660	-80	-10.8	4.6
SA LEADER	480	315	-165	-34.4	3.4
Ayrshire LEADER	2615	2145	-470	-18.0	4.7
All Ayrshire	7860	6675	-1185	-15.1	5.9
All Scotland	80890	68335	-12555	-15.5	4.1

Source: www.sns.gov.uk, NOMIS

In terms of the proportion of the working age population, male unemployment was some 20% less in the LEADER area than in Ayrshire as a whole, but greater than at the Scotland level.

Within all three LEADER areas, there has been a reduction in male unemployment over the 2002 to 2006 period, mirroring the Scottish and Ayrshire trend. However, the figure for South Ayrshire at -34% shows the reduction in male unemployment was significantly above the average for the LEADER areas in Ayrshire, as well as the all-Ayrshire and Scotland averages.

Table 2.10 shows that although the absolute numbers involved are small, female unemployment declined in all areas of Ayrshire over the period from 2002 to 2006, but at a slower rate than for male unemployment.

There were 115 fewer Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants in the second quarter of 2006 compared with 2002 in the LEADER areas; this represents a reduction of 13.5% compared with a reduction of 7.4% at the Ayrshire level and 2.5% for the Scottish average.

TABLE 2.10: FEMALE UNEMPLOYMENT					
	2002	2006	Change	% Change	% 2006 Female working age population
EA	855	780	-75	-8.8	2.2
NA	1055	1015	-40	-3.8	2.5
SA	575	505	-70	-12.2	1.6
EA LEADER	450	400	-50	-11.1	2.0
NA LEADER	250	215	-35	-14.0	1.6
SA LEADER	150	120	-30	-20.0	1.4
Ayrshire LEADER	850	735	-115	-13.5	1.7
All Ayrshire	2485	2300	-185	-7.4	2.1
All Scotland	23180	22590	-590	-2.5	1.4

Source: www.sns.gov.uk, NOMIS

As for males, female unemployment was around 19% less in the LEADER area compared with Ayrshire as a whole, but still above the Scottish average. Similar to the position with male unemployment, the decline in claimants amongst females in the South Ayrshire LEADER area has been faster than the Ayrshire and national averages during this period.

Table 2.11 analyses JSA claimants by age, based on three age groups.

TABLE 2.11: JSA CLAIMANTS BY AGE					
	2002	2006	Change	Change (%)	% 2006 total population in respective age range
16 – 24 yrs					
EA	985	910	-75	-7.6	6.9
NA	1330	1210	-120	-9.0	8.2
SA	655	645	-10	-1.5	5.6
EA LEADER	555	515	-40	-7.2	6.8
NA LEADER	325	275	-50	-15.4	6.1
SA LEADER	155	115	-40	-25.8	4.1
Ayrshire LEADER	1035	905	-130	-12.6	6.1
All Ayrshire	2970	2765	-205	-6.9	7.0
All Scotland	29065	28125	-940	-3.2	4.7
25 – 49 yrs					
EA	1965	1550	-415	-21.1	3.8
NA	2235	1955	-280	-12.5	4.4
SA	1345	1005	-340	-25.3	2.8
EA LEADER	1000	770	-230	-23.0	3.3
NA LEADER	495	415	-80	-16.2	2.8
SA LEADER	350	225	-125	-35.7	2.3
Ayrshire LEADER	1845	1410	-435	-23.6	3.0
All Ayrshire	5545	4510	-1035	-18.7	3.7
All Scotland	57410	47470	-9940	-17.3	2.6
50 - 64 yrs					
EA	605	540	-65	-10.7	2.3
NA	725	720	-5	-0.7	2.6
SA	490	430	-60	-12.2	1.8
EA LEADER	290	285	-5	-1.7	2.0
NA LEADER	170	180	10	5.9	1.8
SA LEADER	115	95	-20	-17.4	1.5
Ayrshire LEADER	575	560	-15	-2.6	1.8
All Ayrshire	1820	1690	-130	-7.1	2.3
All Scotland	17470	15105	-2365	-13.5	1.6
Source: www.sns.gov.uk , NOMIS					

In broad terms the data show that each age group, and area of Ayrshire (East, North, South and the rural LEADER areas) have higher proportions of JSA claimants than the Scottish average in 2006, relative to their respective age range.

While the 25-49 year age group has the largest absolute number of JSA claimants, the 16-24 age group has the highest proportion of JSA claimants of the 3 age ranges and the 50-64 years age group had the lowest proportion of claimants. In each age range, there were proportionately fewer JSA claimants in the more rural LEADER areas than for the Local Authority area as a whole.

In the LEADER areas of North and East Ayrshire, unemployment among young people is notably higher than the Scottish average, indicating either limited employment opportunities or other barriers affecting those making the transition from school to work.

The South Ayrshire LEADER area experienced the biggest proportional reduction of JSA claimants across each age group from 2002 to 2006 and, with the exception of the 16-24 year age group, South Ayrshire also witnessed the biggest reduction of JSA claimants of the three Local Authority areas.

While the numbers of claimant unemployed has reduced markedly, there has been a trend at national level for the long-term unemployed to migrate from the unemployment register into an alternative form of benefit, particularly invalidity benefit. Re-integrating such benefit claimants with the labour market has become a key focus for action tackling economic exclusion.

TABLE 2.12: IB/SDA CLAIMANTS					
	2002	2006	Change	Change (%)	% 2006 working age population
Male					
EA	4785	4550	-235	-4.9	12.0
NA	5755	5175	-580	-10.1	12.5
SA	3845	3665	-180	-4.7	10.7
EA LEADER	2995	2780	-215	-7.2	12.5
NA LEADER	1550	1380	-170	-11.0	9.7
SA LEADER	975	980	5	0.5	10.6
Ayrshire LEADER	5520	5140	-380	-6.9	11.2
Ayrshire	14385	13390	-995	-6.9	11.8
Scotland	193830	175540	-18290	-9.4	10.6
Female					
EA	3505	3495	-10	-0.3	9.8
NA	4215	4045	-170	-4.0	9.9
SA	2785	2790	5	0.2	8.7
EA LEADER	2130	2050	-80	-3.8	10.0
NA LEADER	1085	1015	-70	-6.5	7.5
SA LEADER	725	755	30	4.1	8.8
Ayrshire LEADER	3940	3820	-120	-3.0	9.0
Ayrshire	10505	10330	-175	-1.7	9.5
Scotland	143820	137710	-6110	-4.2	8.8
All					
EA	8290	8045	-245	-3.0	10.9
NA	9970	9220	-750	-7.5	11.2
SA	6630	6455	-175	-2.6	9.7
EA LEADER	5125	4830	-295	-5.8	11.3
NA LEADER	2635	2395	-240	-9.1	8.6
SA LEADER	1700	1735	35	2.1	9.8
Ayrshire LEADER	9460	8960	-500	-5.3	10.2
Ayrshire	24890	23720	-1170	-4.7	10.7
Scotland	337650	313250	-24400	-7.2	9.8
Source: www.sns.gov.uk , NOMIS					

Within the Ayrshire LEADER area, the proportion of the working age population claiming Invalidity Benefit (IB) and Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) is slightly lower than for Ayrshire, but greater than for all of Scotland.

The IB/SDA claimant rate in the North Ayrshire LEADER Area is less than the national average in contrast to the LEADER area in the other two districts. Interestingly, claims within the South Ayrshire LEADER area increased between 2002 and 2006, against a general trend of decline in Ayrshire as a whole and at national level.

Comparing the proportions of the working age population on IB/SDA in Tables 2.12 and 2.13 highlights the significance of long-term claimants. The 2002 Green Paper reported that the average duration on IB had increased to 9 years from 3 years in 1985 and that once people had been on IB for more than a year, their chances of returning to work were severely diminished.

	2002	2006	Change	Change (%)	% 2006 working age population
EA	6005	6165	160	2.7	8.4
NA	7315	7020	-295	-4.0	8.5
SA	4830	4925	95	2.0	7.4
EA LEADER	3745	3760	15	0.4	8.8
NA LEADER	1945	1780	-165	-8.5	6.4
SA LEADER	1250	1315	65	5.2	7.4
Ayrshire LEADER	6940	6855	-85	-1.2	7.8
Ayrshire	18150	18110	-40	-0.2	8.1
Scotland	244670	242350	-2320	-0.9	7.5

Source: www.sns.gov.uk, NOMIS

Against this background, the increase in long-term IB/SDA claimants in the East and South Ayrshire LEADER areas is a matter for concern, while the reduction in North Ayrshire bears further examination for potential good practice.

2.8 Deprivation

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is produced at data zone level. Table 2.14 presents the percentage of data zones in each area within the 'worst' 10% and 20% zones across Scotland. For example, the East Ayrshire LEADER area had 11% of its data zones ranked among the worst 10% and 26% ranked among the worst 20% in Scotland in 2006.

	EA all at 10%	EA all at 20%	NA all at 10%	NA all at 20%	SA all at 10%	SA all at 20%
Services	9	21	6	13	7	20
Transport	9	22	7	13	8	22
Pub trans	10	28	6	12	7	17
Crime	10	19	11	25	7	14
Education	10	23	9	23	5	14
Employment	10	29	15	28	6	13
Health	12	28	9	27	6	17
Housing	0	0	1	3	0	1
Income	11	27	13	32	7	16
Overall	11	26	13	27	5	14

Source: www.sns.gov.uk

On the basis of their share of the worst 10% of Scottish data zones, the Ayrshire LEADER areas are either close to the average or better. There is only an indication of a greater share of income and employment deprivation in North Ayrshire. However, when analysed on the basis of their share of Scotland's worst 20% of data zones, a bleaker picture appears, at least for the LEADER area in East and North Ayrshire. East Ayrshire, in particular, is seen to be beset by above-average deprivation across the domains, in North Ayrshire access to transport and to services is less of an issue.

Interestingly, the classical rural disadvantage of access to services and transport are not particularly prominent, with the exception of public transport in the East Ayrshire LEADER area. Instead, the LEADER areas of North and East Ayrshire are notably disadvantaged in relation to crime, education, employment, health and income, phenomena that are most often associated with urban areas.

The South Ayrshire LEADER area is not without its problems. However, for the most part, the 20% level analysis suggests that these are less intensive and less concentrated than the Scottish average.

KEY ISSUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• While the population has been growing in North and South Ayrshire, in-migration has not halted a decline in East Ayrshire. The rural areas are struggling to maintain their working age population suggesting a lack of economic opportunities locally.• Access to services in terms of drive time is reasonably good. However deprivation indicators suggest that public transport and access to services for those without use of a car is problematic in some areas.• The relative lack of employment opportunities within Ayrshire is a matter for concern: recent decline in manufacturing and financial services jobs have been offset by a rapid expansion of the public sector, particularly in South Ayrshire. However, public sector growth is unlikely to be sustained and the area's dependence on the Glasgow / Lanarkshire labour market is likely to persist.• Lack of employment opportunities may be reflected in enterprise levels, which are growing slowly in East Ayrshire.• Skills levels in Ayrshire are unfavourable. The County has fewer people with higher level qualifications than the Scottish average while, in East Ayrshire, nearly a third of the working age population holds no qualifications at all.• There has been some success in reducing unemployment in rural areas, particularly amongst males. The unemployed 16-24 age group is proving to be the most difficult to shift in North and East Ayrshire, reflecting a lack of local opportunity and/or other barriers affecting young people in the transition from school to work.• Progress in reducing benefit dependency has been slower in rural Ayrshire than at the wider Ayrshire and national levels, although there are variations within the LEADER area. In the South Ayrshire LEADER area, benefit dependency has been increasing counter to the trend at the Ayrshire and Scottish levels.• The range and extent of deprivation varies across the LEADER area. The LEADER areas in North and East Ayrshire are experiencing above average levels of economic and health deprivation, more normally associated with urban areas. Access to services and transport/public transport are key issues facing some, but are less prominent as sources of deprivation than in many rural areas.

3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

3.1 General

This Chapter provides a summary of the principal natural and built heritage assets of Ayrshire. In the context of the Local Development Strategy, it represents assets, opportunities and constraints that have a bearing on the Themes to be selected. In the context of implementing the strategy, it reflects factors that should be taken into account in the design and selection of projects.

3.2 Statutory Designations

Ayrshire's natural heritage resource is made up of a range of habitats, containing a variety of species of plants and animals. European and United Kingdom legislation exists to protect some of these, and this is complemented by a variety of non-statutory designations. In many cases protection of specific species is achieved through protection of habitats.

Nationally, protection is given to sites through designation as a National Nature Reserve (NNR) or as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and there is a requirement through legislation to protect from adverse development.

The European Union also offers protection to sites through Special Protection Areas (SPA) under the Birds Directive and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Directive. These sites are collectively known as Natura 2000 sites.

Within Ayrshire, the main international designations are the Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) identified in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1: INTERNATIONAL DESIGNATIONS		
	SPA	SAC
East Ayrshire	Muirkirk and North Lowther Uplands	Aird Moss Merrick Kells*
North Ayrshire	Renfrewshire Heights Arran Moors	Bankhead Moss, Beith Cockinhead Moss Dykeneuk Moss
South Ayrshire	Ailsa Craig Glen App and Galloway Moors	Lendalfoot Hills Complex Merrick Kells*

Source: South Ayrshire Council, * Fall into both East and South Ayrshire

At the national level, the most common form of designation is the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) of which there are 75.

TABLE 3.2: NUMBER AND AREA OF DESIGNATIONS BY LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA (2008)			
District	SSSI	SAC	SPA
Number			
East Ayrshire	16	1	1
North Ayrshire	28	3	1
South Ayrshire	31	1	1
Area (ha)			
East Ayrshire	18,484	2,739	16,663
North Ayrshire	26,482	143	13,972
South Ayrshire	6,492	1,576	2,713
Proportion of Land Area by Local Authority Area (%)			
East Ayrshire	14.5	2.1	13.1
North Ayrshire	29.3	0.2	15.1
South Ayrshire	5.3	1.3	2.2

SSSIs account for around 25% of the land area of Scotland. Against this benchmark, it may be seen that North Ayrshire is slightly above average in this respect and East Ayrshire rather below. However, South Ayrshire has perhaps a surprisingly small proportion of its area under SSSI designation.

3.3 Biodiversity

The term biodiversity covers the wide range of variety that exists in nature - over 90,000 species in Scotland. However, biodiversity is under threat because of the unsustainable management of natural resources – this includes the felling of ancient forests, intensive agricultural practices, the over exploitation of the seas and rivers and industrial pollution.

A comprehensive biodiversity strategy for Scotland was published in 2004 and is being delivered by the Scottish Government and its partners in the Scottish Biodiversity Forum. The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 places a statutory duty on all public bodies and individual office holders to further biodiversity “*so far is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions*”.

In Ayrshire, the local authorities have worked with natural heritage agencies and others to produce an Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan. This complements a programme of individual action plans for 11 key species and 7 habitat plans as outlined below:

Habitat plans

Coastal
Wetland
Farmland
Grassland
Urban
Woodland
Upland

Species action plans

Brown hare
Hen harrier
Corncrake
Oyster plant
Pipistrelle bat
Song thrush
Water vole
Black grouse
Lesser white throat
Northern brown angus
Pink meadowcap

Source: Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan, 2001

3.4 Agricultural Land

The overall use of agricultural land in Ayrshire since 1991 has been relatively stable. However, there has been significant change in the type of agriculture taking place. This has included a reduction in the area of grazing land, and a significant increase in farm woodland and land taken up by farm buildings.

	1991	2005	% Change
Crops	11 062	10829	-4.9
Grass for mowing and grazing under 5 years	22 676	17 395	-12.3
Grass for mowing and grazing over 5 years	85 057	95 519	12.3
Rough Grazing	117 061	97 255	-16.9
Farm woodland	3 418	7 616	122.8
Other (roads, yards and buildings)	2 613	5 288	102.4
Total land	241647	235 083	-2.7
Source: SEERAD, 2006			

3.5 Woodlands and Forestry

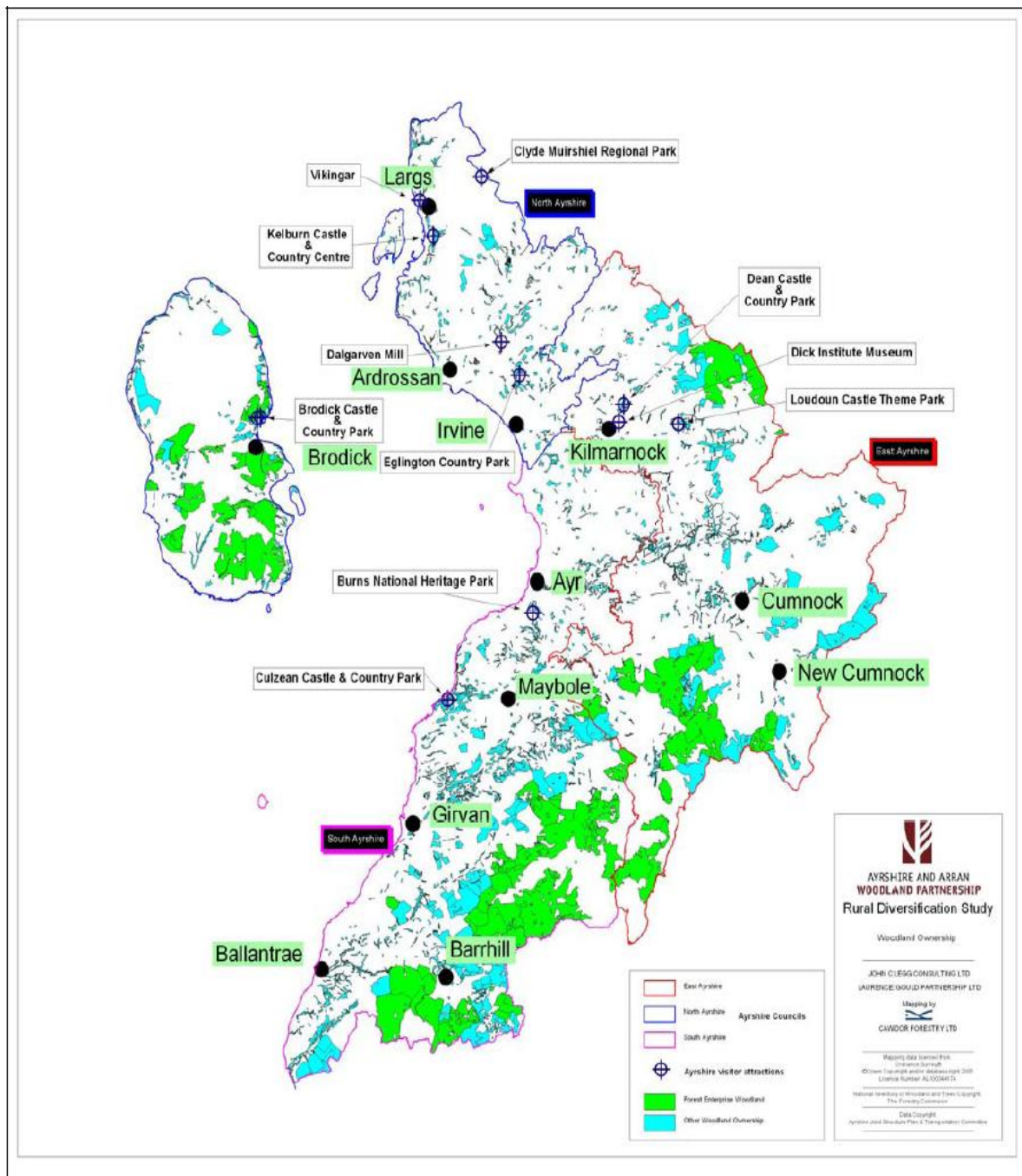
Trees, woodland and commercial timber form a major part of the landscape of Ayrshire and cover approximately 21% of the land area of Ayrshire and Arran. According to 2002 National Inventory of Woodlands and Trees¹ there is an estimated 65,660 ha of woodland in Ayrshire. This makes them potentially significant in the development in the rural economy.

The Ayrshire and Arran Woodland Strategy was published in 2003 with the aim of promoting the opportunities for trees, woodlands and wood products to contribute to the sustainable development of Ayrshire; by delivering economic development, improved quality of life and enhanced environmental excellence.

The pattern of woodland largely reflects site conditions, with the majority of coniferous woodlands in the south and east of Ayrshire and the broadleaved woodlands are small and scattered through the region. This is shown in Figure 3.1 which also shows the pattern of ownership and management of woodland.

¹ John Clegg Consulting (2006) *Ayrshire & Arran Woodlands, Their Present & Future Contributions of the Rural Economy*, September.

Figure 3.1. Geographical Distributions of Land & Woods Managed by Forestry Commission Scotland & Woods in the 'Other' Ownerships



Source: National Inventory of Woodlands & Trees, 2002 based on 1988 aerial photos

3.6 Coastline

The Ayrshire coast contains some of the most accessible coastal areas in Scotland. The range of users of the coast of Ayrshire brings with it a particular set of challenges and opportunities in both developing its potential and protecting the important habitats that it provides.

The coast provides significant maritime transportation (users range from deep water terminal users at Hunterston with large marine freighters, to ports at Ayr, Troon and Ardrossan) and is an economic resource as well as providing recreation and tourism opportunities.

In terms of water quality, the bathing water quality is high, meeting the mandatory standards established by the European Commission².

3.7 Landscape

Visitor surveys to Scotland suggest that the natural and built landscape of Scotland represents an important factor in encouraging people to travel to Scotland. However, it is less easy to quantify than other environmental resources.

In Ayrshire the landscape is a valuable resource and it includes a range of features of great geological and geomorphological interest. It makes a significant contribution to the economic, environmental and cultural life of the area.

Measuring the quality of landscape is acknowledged as difficult. However, designation exists to protect landscape – the National Scenic Area and the Sensitive Landscape Character Areas. In Ayrshire, a significant proportion of the land area is under some form of protection, as is shown in Table 3.4 below.

National Scenic Area (Arran)	24,292ha
Sensitive Landscape Character Areas (including the National Scenic Area)	160,914ha
Total Ayrshire Area	339,173ha
Source: Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan, Monitor 2006.	

3.8 Countryside Access

The provisions on access in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 are intended to create greater opportunities for people to enjoy the countryside without interfering unduly with the legitimate land management operations. There is a duty for local authorities to plan and enable access and develop a Core Path Network Plan for their area.

North and East Ayrshire Councils have produced formal Access Strategies:

- in East Ayrshire, the strategy is based around themes of healthy communities, tourism potential, environmental regeneration and sustainable transport. It is implemented through the Core Paths Plan and Action Zones.

² Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Transportation Committee (2006) *Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan Monitor*.

- in North Ayrshire, the strategy seeks to co-ordinate access opportunities on tracks, open land and inland water and is based around themes of economic prosperity, quality of life and environmental regeneration. It is implemented through action areas covering the district.

In South Ayrshire a Core Paths plan is in the process of being finalised. The Council also supports outdoor access through other policies relating to cycling routes and nature trails.

3.9 Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments

Ayrshire has a rich historic environment and cultural heritage and this is reflected in the many designations that are in place.

While Ayrshire possesses a relatively small number of scheduled monuments, it is well endowed with listed buildings and landscapes.

	Total	A	B	C
East Ayrshire	699	43	338	318
North Ayrshire	807	38	402	367
South Ayrshire	872	73	432	367

Source: State of Scotland's Historic Buildings, RGU/MLUI (Historic Scotland) 2006

	Gardens and Designated Landscapes	Conservation Areas
East Ayrshire	6	26
North Ayrshire	4	13
South Ayrshire	9	21

Source: Scottish Historic Environment Audit 2007

Tourism in Ayrshire and Arran accounts for 5.4% of the workforce in 2007, (STEAM) and £338m of tourist spend in 2007. The historic environment is an important element of tourism in Ayrshire and Arran, with the top visitor attractions largely reflecting the historic or cultural heritage of the area.

Attraction	2006 Visits	Free / Paid
Burns National Heritage Park, Ayr	302,894*	P
Dean Castle and Country Park, Kilmarnock	261,867*	F
Culzean Castle and Country Park, Ayrshire	187,398	P
Heads of Ayr Farm Park, Ayr	82,315*	P
Kelburn Castle and Country Centre, Fairlie	72,783	P
Brodick Country Park, Isle of Arran	51,501	P
Eglinton Country Park, Irvine	46,192	F
Brodick Castle, Isle of Arran	32,244	P
Dick Institute Museum, Kilmarnock	27,411	F
Scottish Maritime Museum, Irvine	20,085	P

* Estimate
Source: VisitScotland, Tourism in Ayrshire and Arran in 2006

4 FINDINGS FROM CONSULTATIONS

4.1 General

Perceptions of strategic organisations and interest groups in the Ayrshire LEADER area were researched through a combination of 20 face-to-face interviews and three workshops, to which a wide range of stakeholders were afforded access.

There was a large measure of consistency in the most common responses obtained through the interviews and workshops. Furthermore, many of the views expressed by stakeholders had resonance with the findings from the socio-economic and environmental analyses.

4.2 Perceptions on Assets, Needs and Opportunities

4.2.1 Strengths and Assets

Those consulted generally perceived the area positively. A range of strengths were identified many of which were connected to environmental quality, cultural and industrial heritage and access to markets:

- the natural beauty and diversity of the area, with its varied landscape (rolling hills, coast, river valleys) and associated high quality natural environment was the most frequently and strongly identified asset of the area. This was seen to be closely linked with, or to underpin, a number of the other assets and opportunities.
- the existing tourism and leisure offer, and its scope for further development, was perceived as a strength by many of those consulted. A variety of outdoor activities with different physical demands were highlighted, particularly golf, sailing and walking.
- the cultural heritage of the area was quite often identified as an asset although some stakeholders were keen to stress potential beyond Burns.
- the industrial and built heritage of the area and the associated local traditions were commonly identified as assets with development potential. Examples included prominent local buildings such as Dumfries House, together with industrial structures such as canals and former mills.
- the area is thought to be relatively well served with good hotels and restaurants.
- the proximity of the area to Glasgow, and the accessibility to large markets (e.g. for tourism, leisure activities, quality local foods, craft products and other goods), was seen as an important strength by a large proportion of those consulted.
- the residential offer of the area was perceived as being strong. Improving transport connections to the rest of Scotland and an image of being a 'good environment to live in' has driven a combination of in-migration, house-building and increased demand for local services.
- trunk road, rail, sea and air connections service and facilitate tourism and recreational activities in rural Ayrshire. These connections link the area's producers to markets and complement the locational advantage in its proximity to Glasgow and other large population centres.
- the rural people of the area and their drive to improve their lot was an asset identified by several respondents.

4.2.2 Weaknesses and Needs

A focus on rural development was seen as new in Ayrshire. A number of stakeholders expressed the view that Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire had been primarily focused on urban and coastal areas.

Those consulted mainly perceived rural regeneration needs to be different from urban regeneration needs in terms of degree rather than type, and this is largely borne out by the socio-economic analysis. Some variations were noted in different parts of Ayrshire.

The most commonly cited weaknesses and concerns were:

- the limited scale and narrow business base in rural Ayrshire and associated constraints on the volume and quality of employment opportunities. This was perceived as a particular issue in rural East and North Ayrshire and to impact disproportionately upon young people.
- transport infrastructure and services within the rural area including transport supporting travel-to-work and transport linking services for those who did not have access to a car.

A further range of weaknesses and needs were identified that were related to the attractiveness and sustainability of rural communities:

- services and community infrastructure in the rural area are seen to be challenged and to require improvement.
- health inequalities between rural areas and between rural and urban areas were highlighted and linked to variable access to health care.
- the level of incomers to the rural area was seen by some as contributing to housing pressure and to be impacting on demand for services.
- the economic rationale for some villages was seen to be challenged, with derelict shops, business closures and communities becoming less cohesive and self-sufficient. Increases in dormitory populations and commuting were perceived by some as being associated with this issue.
- small business sustainability was said to be challenged by changes in local population and markets, although some argued the reverse. The range of local business opportunities was perceived to be constrained.
- in some areas there are concerns over depopulation, population retention and local concentrations of deprivation.
- the youth offer in the LEADER area was perceived to be poor notwithstanding investment in sports facilities in some locations. Weak public transport outside peak periods was highlighted as a cause in North Ayrshire.

A number of weaknesses in local capacity and partnership were highlighted that have significant implications for the success of LEADER in Ayrshire:

- although there are a good number of community-based organisations with an interest in local development, many have limited experience of working in partnership on strategic issues.
- a history of inter-village rivalries and an associated lack of co-operation was perceived as a potential obstacle.
- engagement of communities in local development issues was widely reported by stakeholders as being very limited, with the exception of East Ayrshire.

4.2.3 Opportunities

The opportunity set for rural Ayrshire was perceived to be concentrated in a limited number of areas. However, most stakeholders considered that the area's environmental, cultural and heritage assets provided considerable leverage:

- growing demand for tourism and recreation in regional, national and international markets was seen as representing a key opportunity, with golf, sailing, walking and green tourism identified as growing segments.
- further housing development, leading to the attraction of additional residents to the area, was seen as a source of increased demand for local services and to represent an opportunity to internalise the spending power of residents.
- general consumer awareness of food quality and environmental issues, coupled with demand from visitors, were perceived as opportunities for premium and local food production.
- regulation and consumer awareness were seen as creating opportunities in renewable energy markets, notably wind farms and cultivation of biomass.
- social economy models were perceived as an opportunity to improve local services and to provide more employment opportunities in rural Ayrshire.

4.3 Perceptions on Thematic Priorities for LEADER

4.3.1 General

With the exception of the local authorities and a small number of organisations with a strategic remit, it was apparent that few stakeholders were able to comment meaningfully on the relative importance of the LEADER themes. While the interviews and workshops produced a fair analysis of conditions and opportunities in rural Ayrshire, outside of Rural Community Capacity, there was less clarity concerning the way forward and the distinctive role that LEADER could play.

In both interviews and workshops it was apparent that many stakeholders held inconsistent views. Broad brush assertions concerning priorities were often not substantiated in subsequent probing. When prompted, consultees tended to highlight the theme closest to their organisation's interest as being most important, with the result that analysis of stakeholder opinion tends to reflect the pattern of consultation.

The consultations and workshops encountered limited awareness of LEADER and what it could support. In several cases, the actions suggested were of doubtful eligibility or benefit, for example, childcare, close to production interventions in agriculture, town centre improvements and branding. Much of what was suggested for the primary sector falls more appropriately under SRDP.

Significant knowledge gaps were evident with regard to current provision and agency involvement.

The foregoing suggests that the Ayrshire LAG faces a challenging first year in developing the partnership, its capacity and thinking.

4.3.2 Rural Community Capacity

Extent of Agreement

There was broad agreement among consultees that Rural Community Capacity should feature as a theme, largely reflecting the area's lack of previous involvement in LEADER and its limited access in the past to community economic development support under the West of Scotland Structural Funds Programmes. Nevertheless, some strong experience among community groups was cited as a basis for development.

Several contributors argued that a successful Rural Community Capacity theme would require a strategic approach and focus.

Support, Groups, Locations and Issues

The consultations identified considerable existing activity by community-based groups, particularly, but not exclusively, in East and South Ayrshire, although projects supported had limited strategic character or intent. Nevertheless, it was suggested that some projects had potential as demonstrators.

Some issues around duplication of effort and additionality were highlighted, particularly in coalfield areas.

It was suggested that effort should be devoted to building links within and between communities and between activities.

The need to build capacity to participate among youth and disabled groups was highlighted as a priority by several consultees.

4.3.3 New Markets and Products

Extent of Agreement

The New Markets and Products theme was proposed as a priority theme only by consultees from the agriculture sector. There was broader support, however, for inclusion of a local produce dimension in support of tourism actions, or as part of a Revitalising Rural Communities theme.

The scope provided for this theme was seen as poorly differentiated from provision under the SRDP by some consultees. Others argued that the scale of resources potentially available under LEADER could not address the macro level trends in play.

4.3.4 Conservation of the Rural Environment

Extent of Agreement

It was apparent that some consultees found the title of this theme misleading. While relatively few proposed Conservation of the Rural Environment as one of the priority themes, many perceived the main strengths and opportunities of the area to derive from environmental factors (consistent with the findings in Section 4.2). It was recognised, however, that many of these aspirations could also be met under a Revitalising Rural Communities theme.

Existing Activity, Scope for LEADER Complementarity

Exploration of the issues suggested that there was scope for LEADER-supported actions under this theme to join up local environment tourism and leisure initiatives.

In exploring past project involvement, it was apparent that there was a considerable history of community involvement in small-scale community improvements, woodlands, and local heritage projects, although little in the way of innovation was identified. Nevertheless, there was a clear appetite for further projects of this nature and the theme appeared to represent a useful vector for community engagement

The consultations with land-based interests suggest that there was local take-up of environmental support under previous RDP schemes and that this is likely to continue under the SRDP. Potential scope was recognised for LEADER to expand the base of this activity beyond the farm gate and narrow confines of what achievable under agri-environmental support.

Scope was perceived to draw in a wide range of environmentally-focused funding, including SNH environmental grants, Forestry Commission, windfarm and landfill tax community windfalls and a range of private and charitable trust funding.

Considerable potential was seen for projects making the most of visitor attractions and their potential, including:

- West Kilbride Craft Village.
- Dumfries House and associated projects.
- Burns related attractions.
- the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere.
- the creation of a northern access to Galloway Forest Park.

4.3.5 Progressive Rural Economy

Extent of Agreement

There was an intermediate level of support for Progressive Rural Economy as one of the themes for Ayrshire LEADER, with advocates from a diverse range of organisations. This reflected the identification of the narrow employment base and limited employment as one of the principal weaknesses in the rural economy and being at the heart of community cohesion and sustainability. Scope for tourism-related employment creation was highlighted, although it was recognised that projects of this type could also be supported under the Revitalising Rural Communities and Conservation of the Rural Environment themes.

Existing Activity, Scope for LEADER Complementarity

Consultees reported that development needs of rural enterprise were only being addressed to a limited extent, at present. Scottish Enterprise was considered not to be strongly engaged in rural areas. It was suggested by some that there is an overall lack of strategy under this theme which LEADER could help to address.

This theme was seen as having some scope for community involvement, particularly in the form of social enterprise and capacity building approaches. However, few concrete ideas for early action were proposed.

4.3.6 Revitalising Rural Communities

Extent of Agreement

There was considerable support among consultees for Revitalising Rural Communities to be one of the themes for Ayrshire LEADER, although support from several consultees was conditional on the theme being interpreted to include an environmental / tourism dimension.

Those who were interviewed responded more fully to questioning on this theme than any of the others. It was perceived that there was considerable potential to engage people and communities. Its flexibility was seen to provide scope to address a broad range of issues across rural Ayrshire. However, several consultees also perceived a risk that flexibility could result in the dissipation of resources with limited effect and argued for a strong focus and strategic approach to be developed from the outset.

Apart from a strong focus on environment-related regeneration, the most commonly advocated foci were youth issues and community facilities / services. Providing focus, direction and opportunities for the young was seen as priority to make remaining in, or returning to, the area more attractive for young people and in addressing the problem of an ageing population in those areas where depopulation is occurring.

Existing Activity, Scope for LEADER Complementarity

The Revitalising Rural Communities theme was considered to bear similarities to projects already being taken forward by community groups across Ayrshire. It was expected to differ in terms of the extent of public sector engagement in community-led projects, with the exception of East Ayrshire, where such an approach was considered to be reasonably well developed.

Under the Revitalising Rural Communities theme, considerable scope was seen to link LEADER to other funding streams, including Local Authority mainstream budgets and lottery funding. Depending on the interpretation of the theme, there was scope to draw in funding sources identified under the Conservation of the Environment theme.

Greater scope was perceived to involve community interests in projects than under other themes. The potential to build upon investment under the Rural Community Capacity theme was also highlighted.

5 STRATEGY

5.1 Derivation of Strategy

Not all of the economic development needs of the Ayrshire LEADER area can be met through the LEADER Programme by virtue of the limited resources available. Accordingly, it is necessary to focus on those aspects of rural development that most reflect the interest and capability of the partnership organisations.

The strategic themes for Ayrshire LEADER have been selected taking into account:

- the findings of the socio-economic and environmental analyses.
- stakeholders' appraisal of the area's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.
- stakeholders' views on the most relevant themes and their priorities for action.

The selected themes for Ayrshire LEADER are:

- Theme 1: Rural Community Capacity.
- Theme 2: Revitalising Rural Communities.

5.2 Consistency of Strategy with the Policy Context

The investments proposed under Themes 1 and 2 are demonstrably compatible with and will make a significant contribution to Scottish and local policy orientations. The linkage between Scottish policy, local policy and the actions proposed under Ayrshire LEADER are highlighted in Table 5.1

TABLE 5.1: COHERENCE WITH NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT		
Policy / Strategy	Relevant Key Provisions	Reflection in Ayrshire LEADER Actions
Scottish Rural Development Programme	<p>Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underpinning performance and quality in the agriculture, food processing and forestry sectors. • Enhancing rural landscapes. • Promoting a more diverse rural economy and thriving rural communities. <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong and diverse economy. • A decent quality of life for all, including young people. • Quality, accessibility and choice of public services. • A flourishing natural and cultural heritage. 	<p>Theme 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for members of community-based organisations. <p>Theme 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in business and community enterprises involved in services, tourism and environmental management. • Training linked to employment opportunities, including for young people. • Facilitation of youth participation in governance structures • Conversion of premises and environmental improvements linked to tourism use. • Mitigation of environmental effects of tourism.
Rural Scotland, Better Still Naturally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broaden and strengthen the rural economy, including the skills base. • Protect, maintain and develop the natural and cultural assets. • Improve the accessibility and quality of services people and businesses depend on. • Address the challenges and opportunities of population change. • Promote social and economic inclusion. • Help to build resilient, sustainable rural communities. 	<p>Theme 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for members of community-based organisations. <p>Theme 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in business and community enterprises involved in services, tourism and environmental management. • Training linked to employment opportunities, including for young people. • Facilitation of youth participation in governance structures • Conversion of premises and environmental improvements linked to tourism use. • Mitigation of environmental effects of tourism.

<p>Scottish Government Economic Strategy</p>	<p>Aims to make Scotland wealthier and fairer; smarter; healthier; safer and stronger; and greener. Key objective is to generate increased and sustainable economic growth by focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning, Skills and Well-being. • Supportive Business Environment. • Infrastructure Development and Place. • Effective Government. • Equity. 	<p>Theme 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of strategic capacity and governance. • Training for members of community-based organisations. <p>Theme 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in business and community enterprises involved in services, tourism and environmental management. • Training linked to employment opportunities, including for young people. • Facilitation of youth participation in governance structures • Conversion of premises and environmental improvements linked to tourism use.
<p>Better Business: A strategy and action plan for social enterprise in Scotland</p>	<p>Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising the profile and proving the value of social enterprise • Opening up markets to social enterprise • Increasing the range of finance available to develop social enterprise • Developing the trading capacity of social enterprises by providing better business support 	<p>Theme 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for members of community-based organisations. <p>Theme 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in business and community enterprises involved in services, tourism and environmental management.
<p>Forward Strategy for Scottish Agriculture</p>	<p>Aims to establish a prosperous farming industry that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focuses on producing food and other products that customers want. • plays a role in sustainable rural development to help maintain the prosperity of rural communities. • is a leading player in protecting and enhancing the environment. • embraces change and new opportunities. 	<p>Theme 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in business and community enterprises involved in services, tourism, environmental management and food production. • Training linked to employment opportunities, including for young people. • Conversion of premises and environmental improvements linked to tourism use. • Mitigation of environmental effects of tourism.

<p>A Natural Perspective: Scottish Natural Heritage Corporate Strategy.</p>	<p>Aims to have a countryside and coast which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is productive. • supports thriving rural areas. • provides benefits and services for people living in towns. • is ecologically healthy and rich in biodiversity. • is varied in character and visually attractive • is accessible. 	<p>Theme 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in business and community enterprises involved in services, tourism and environmental management. • Training linked to employment opportunities, including for young people. • Conversion of premises and environmental improvements linked to tourism use. • Mitigation of environmental effects of tourism.
<p>Lowlands and Uplands Scotland ERDF / ESF Programmes 2007-13</p>	<p>Most Relevant Provisions ERDF Priority 2. Enterprise Growth Priority 4 Rural Development</p> <p>ERDF Priority 4 key objectives are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strengthen rural industries and diversification by supporting sector-wide diversification strategies, and the development of new sources of supply and production processes. • support development of key shared services to underpin rural diversification by developing local ICT and learning facilities, improving educational access; and facilitating community transport initiatives. <p>ESF Priority 1: Progressing into employment Priority 3: Improving access to lifelong learning</p>	<p>Theme 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for members of community-based organisations. <p>Theme 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in premises for multiple community use including the delivery of training. • Investment in business and community enterprises involved in services, tourism and environmental management. • Training linked to employment opportunities, including for young people. • Conversion of premises and environmental improvements linked to tourism use. • Mitigation of environmental effects of tourism. <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizontal integration of equal opportunities and focus on young people.

Ayrshire Structure Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Opportunities and Rural diversification. • Inactivity / Worklessness / NEETs. • Skills / learning. • Transport. • Environmental quality, exploitation, conservation. 	<p>Theme 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for members of community-based organisations. <p>Theme 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in business and community enterprises involved in services, tourism and environmental management. • Training linked to employment opportunities, including for young people. • Conversion of premises and environmental improvements linked to tourism use. • Mitigation of environmental effects of tourism.
East Ayrshire Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Learning. • Improving Opportunities. • Improving Health. • Eliminating Poverty. • Improving the Environment. 	<p>Theme 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for members of community-based organisations. <p>Theme 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in business and community enterprises involved in services, tourism and environmental management. • Training linked to employment opportunities, including for young people. • Potential delivery of health and care services through social economy model. • Conversion of premises and environmental improvements linked to tourism use. • Mitigation of environmental effects of tourism.

<p>North Ayrshire Community Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working and Training. • Healthy and Active. • Caring and Supportive. • Learning and Taking Part. • Clean and Green. • For You and Everyone. 	<p>Theme 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for members of community-based organisations. <p>Theme 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in business and community enterprises involved in services, tourism and environmental management. • Training linked to employment opportunities, including for young people. • Potential delivery of health and care services through social economy model. • Conversion of premises and environmental improvements linked to tourism use. • Mitigation of environmental effects of tourism. <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizontal integration of equal opportunities and focus on young people.
<p>South Ayrshire Community Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosperous South Ayrshire. • Healthy and caring South Ayrshire • Learning and Achieving South Ayrshire • Clean and Attractive South Ayrshire 	<p>Theme 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for members of community-based organisations. <p>Theme 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in business and community enterprises involved in services, tourism and environmental management. • Training linked to employment opportunities, including for young people. • Potential delivery of health and care services through social economy model. • Conversion of premises and environmental improvements linked to tourism use. • Mitigation of environmental effects of tourism.

<p>Securing the Future for South Ayrshire: South Ayrshire Council's Vision for the Future</p>	<p>Sets out Vision to "establish South Ayrshire as the most dynamic, inclusive and sustainable community in Scotland" through action under four Themes. The provisions of greatest relevance to Ayrshire LEADER are as follows.</p> <p>Prosperous, Learning and Achieving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the opportunities for business development and promote inward investment. • Improve the quality and continuity of education and training. <p>Healthy, Safe and Caring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackle poverty and help create employment opportunities. • Improve the quality and accessibility of health and care services. • Integrate and develop services for children and young people. <p>Ambitious, Forward-looking and Responsive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen sound governance and improve the scrutiny arrangements. • Improve community leadership and partnership working. <p>Clean, Attractive and Sustainable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance our natural and built heritage. • Adapt to the impacts of climate change and become more sustainable. • Promote civic pride. • Support and develop sporting, leisure and cultural opportunities. • Improve the viability of rural communities. 	<p>Theme 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of strategic capacity and governance. • Training for members of community-based organisations. <p>Theme 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in premises for multiple community use including the delivery of training. • Investment in business and community enterprises involved in services, tourism and environmental management. • Training linked to employment opportunities, including for young people. • Conversion of premises and environmental improvements linked to tourism use. • Mitigation of environmental effects of tourism. <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizontal integration of equal opportunities and focus on young people.
---	---	---

5.3 Strategy by Theme

5.3.1 Theme 1: Rural Community Capacity

Specific Objectives

By 2015, to develop local capacity to confront the Ayrshire LEADER area's development needs through training of 360 community activists across 70 rural communities.

Rationale

The rationale for a Rural Community Capacity theme in Ayrshire LEADER lies in the limited experience of community interests in taking part in strategic approaches to rural development. Although consultation found evidence of not insubstantial community activism, the vast majority of projects have been locally focused and piecemeal.

The absence of involvement in any of the previous three generations of LEADER is a notable challenge for the Ayrshire LAG and was reflected in limited understanding of the scope and purpose of LEADER among many of those who were interviewed, or took part in workshops connected with the development of the strategy.

If it is to be successful, the early years of Ayrshire LEADER will require a significant investment of effort and resources in building a partnership that is capable of addressing rural development in a strategic fashion.

Scope of Action

The strategy for the theme involves primarily revenue actions, although limited scope may also be provide for capital expenditures related to the organisation of community-based organisations.

The eligible scope for action includes support for:

- employment of amateurs to raise awareness of opportunities from the LEADER programme and to encourage participation by community-based organisations and resident groups, including young people, older people, women and other disadvantaged groups.
- promotional activities to raise awareness of LEADER and to encourage community solidarity with its objectives.
- co-ordination of community-based organisations and raising their capacity to address the rural development needs of the area in a strategic fashion.
- support for the formation, growth and development of community-based organisations.
- training of members of community-based organisations, including training in leadership, training in project management, training in accounting and other aspects of administration.
- assistance, including professional assistance, where appropriate, in assessing the feasibility of projects and in developing projects to the point where they can be considered for funding by the LAG.
- actions that help networking and exchange of good practice among community-based organisations and other community groups.

Integration of Innovation

Priority will be given to projects that involve innovative ways of working that are expected to improve the quality of outcomes and / or the value for money over conventional approaches.

Integration of Sustainability

Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate clear prospects for sustaining capacity created beyond the life of the project and / or demonstrate a contribution to environmental sustainability from its operation.

Final Beneficiaries

Agencies in the voluntary sector, including community groups, and other public and private bodies involved in local regeneration.

Target Beneficiaries, including Equality of Opportunity

Residents of the Ayrshire LEADER area.

Priority will be given to projects which contribute to equality of opportunity by engaging and addressing the needs of young people, older people, women and disabled people, in particular.

Resources and Weighting

The indicative financial allocation to Theme 1 is 30%.

Outcomes

THEME 1: RURAL COMMUNITY CAPACITY: PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS	
Indicator	Target
Outputs	
Number of projects financed	72
Number of beneficiaries supported	360
Results	
Number of participants that successfully ended a training activity	300
Gross number of jobs created	TBA
Number of communities participating	70
Number of new innovations (products or processes) developed	TBA
Number of best practice models transferred	40
Impacts	
Employment creation	TBA
Improvement in rural community capacity	TBA
The above are SRDP core indicators with greatest relevance to the scope of Theme 1. These indicators and targets are provisional and will be revised in line with forthcoming guidance from the Scottish Government.	

5.3.2 Theme 2: Revitalising Rural Communities

Specific Objectives

By 2015, to improve the economic performance of and social cohesion within the Ayrshire LEADER area through actions leading to the creation / safeguarding of 200 gross and improved services in 50 rural communities.

Rationale

The rationale for the Revitalising Rural Communities theme lies in a combination of the socio-economic and environmental analyses.

The socio-economic analysis reveals constraints in access to services by people who do not have access to private transport. The consultations highlight gaps in community facilities and services and limited employment opportunities in delivering services at local level. These weaknesses are held to constrain the attractiveness and sustainability of the rural communities.

The socio-economic analysis reveals persistent high levels of unemployment and weak educational attainment among young people. A trend in out-migration of young people appears to reflect limited employment opportunities in the LEADER area. The consultations highlight disengagement of young people from work and their community. Facilities for young people are relatively sparse and, in some locations, transport represents a barrier to participation in training, the labour market and in social activities.

The socio-economic and environmental analyses highlight the outstanding amenity value of rural Ayrshire and that the principal opportunities for growing the economy lie in tourism and leisure activities linked to environmental and cultural assets and their supply chain.

Scope of Action

The strategy for the Revitalising Rural Communities theme reflects the need to concentrate limited resources if they are to produce an appreciable impact. Accordingly, LEADER funding will be focused on integrated packages of action addressing three areas:

- Strengthening community facilities and services.
- Improving economic and social participation by young people.
- Supporting economic and environmental actions linked to tourism and leisure.

The eligible scope for action directed at strengthening community facilities and services comprises support for:

- conversion and refurbishment of premises for multiple uses including community and sports activities, the delivery of local services and the delivery of activities such as training.
- establishment costs and short-term revenue support associated with the development of local services that are not provided by the private sector, including through a social enterprise model.

The eligible scope for action directed at improving economic and social participation by young people comprises support for:

- the formation and operation of a youth council, or similar mechanism for involving young people in local decision-making and in identifying their development needs.
- the establishment and short-term revenue support for activities that are designed to tackle the transport needs of young people, including activities delivered through a social enterprise model.
- the development of sports and social activities for young people, including activities linked to community facilities and activities delivered through a social enterprise model.
- training linked to employment opportunities created with support from Ayrshire LEADER, notably those connected with local services, tourism and leisure development and environmental stewardship.

The eligible scope for action directed at supporting economic and environmental actions linked to tourism and leisure comprises support for:

- the construction and conversion of premises for use as visitor facilities.
- small-scale environmental improvements linked to tourism and leisure use.
- the construction of footpaths and associated signage.
- community management of environmental assets used for tourism and leisure purposes.
- advice, consultancy and small-scale financial support for investment by businesses and social enterprises involved in delivering or in supporting tourism and leisure activities, including local food producers.
- actions designed to mitigate the environmental impacts of tourism and leisure activity, including support to improve the environmental performance of tourism and leisure businesses.

Integration of Innovation

Priority will be given to projects that involve innovative ways of working that are expected to improve the quality of outcomes and / or the value for money over conventional approaches.

Integration of Sustainability

Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate clear prospects for sustaining capacity created beyond the life of the project and / or demonstrate a contribution to environmental sustainability from their operation.

Final Beneficiaries

Agencies in the voluntary sector, including community groups, and other public and private bodies involved in local regeneration.

Target Beneficiaries, including Equality of Opportunity

Residents of and businesses located in the Ayrshire LEADER area.

Priority will be given to projects which contribute to equality of opportunity by engaging and addressing the needs of young people, older people, women and disabled people, in particular.

Resources and Weighting

The indicative financial allocation to Theme 2 is 70%.

Outcomes

THEME 2: REVITALISING RURAL COMMUNITIES: PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS	
Indicator	Target
Outputs	
Number of projects financed	260
Number of beneficiaries supported	25,000
Number of participants in training	500
Number of training days received	TBA
Number of enterprises supported	TBA
Total volume of investment	TBA
Number of micro-enterprises supported/created	200
Number of new tourism actions supported	70
Total volume of investments (tourism)	£1.5m
Number of supported actions (services)	20
Number of communities receiving support for improved service provision	50
Total volume of investments (services)	£1.5m
Number of heritage actions supported	25
Total volume of investments (heritage)	£1.0m
Number of public-private partnerships supported	26
Results	
Number of participants that successfully ended a training activity	350
Gross number of jobs created	200
Number of communities participating	50
Number of new innovations (products or processes) developed	39
Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services	120,000
Number of new micro-enterprises supported remaining in business	100
Number of best practice models transferred	26
Impacts	
Employment creation	120
The above are SRDP core indicators with greatest relevance to the scope of Theme 2. These indicators and targets are provisional and will be revised in line with forthcoming guidance from the Scottish Government.	

6 ANCILLARY ISSUES

6.1 Partnership

The Ayrshire LEADER Partnership will contribute considerable additionality to economic and social development of Ayrshire's rural areas.

The Partnership brings together public agencies, social and economic organisations, many of which have not previously worked together. In seeking to be inclusive, membership of the Partnership goes well beyond the prescribed minimum of 50% social and economic partners.

The Partnership is novel in that it brings together organisations from across all three districts in Ayrshire to focus on the whole rural area. This has been challenging and involves a new way of working for the Local Authorities, in particular. However, it will provide greater scale and strategic scope for action and, thereby, will enable the Ayrshire LAG to better meet the needs of rural Ayrshire.

The formation of the Ayrshire LEADER Partnership has required the development of efficient and effective arrangements for co-ordination and decision-making and these are outlined in the Business Plan which complements this Local Development Strategy and encompass:

- lines of communication.
- mechanisms for co-ordination of effort.
- the use of a Decision Making Body for project approval.

6.2 Rationalisation

The Ayrshire Local Development Strategy and its implementation will address the Scottish Government rationalisation agenda in a number of ways.

Firstly, the development of the LEADER in Ayrshire at a County rather than at a district level has allowed the development of a collective partnership and administration where two or more LAGs with associated administration might otherwise have evolved. Ayrshire LEADER will operate with a single Accountable Body, with dedicated staff and from a central location serving all of rural Ayrshire.

Secondly, duplication of effort will be avoided through Ayrshire LAG staff working alongside Community Planning Partnership, Local Authority and the personnel of other partner organisations to identify opportunities for complementary initiatives. Arrangements made for links through the Ayrshire LAG membership to each of the Community Planning Partnerships will also help to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication of effort. Strong links with the SRDP RPAC for the area are in place through joint membership of both bodies by Forestry Commission, SNH and South Ayrshire Council representatives.

Thirdly, the processes for project applications and development support will require project holders to take account of parallel initiatives and policies, including the provisions of and initiatives being taken forward under the district Community Plans and the SRDP.

6.3 Co-operation

The consultations identified two very distinct areas of co-operation, locally and regionally where activity should be focused in the first instance. There were clear themes identified in both areas, organisational co-operation and tourism and recreation respectively.

The first area for co-operation was seen to be within Ayrshire its self. A number of consultees commented on the need for the three local authorities to work together to develop a pan Ayrshire view rather than focusing wholly on their own area. The connections and co-operation are seen as weak at present and would benefit from being improved, specifically in relation to other organisations that work with the local authorities. There also seems to be the need to build links and co-operation between communities, which have been rather competitive in the past. Building links and co-operation between private businesses in the rural area is seen to be of considerable value to the local economy.

The other area in which co-operation is seen to be important is in relation to tourism and recreation. Many consultees were keen to see improved co-operation with their geographical neighbours such as Dumfries and Galloway to promote the South West as an entity and clearly defined tourism destination. There was seen to be a need for cohesive marketing within Ayrshire and the South West. There is a desire to cooperate with other areas to promote golf, New Galloway Forest Park and the Ayrshire and Clyde coast.

With regard to future transnational co-operation the coast and sailing was seen as an area where co-operation with Northern and Southern Ireland was a strong possibility. The Biosphere and other projects contributing to promoting the whole of Ayrshire as a tourism destination were also identified as areas where transnational co-operation might be possible.

6.4 Sustainability

The LEADER Local Action Group in Ayrshire will actively pursue sustainable development principles and will reinforce these through its processes.

Proposals for support for the development of rural community and organisational capacity will be screened for additionality, efficiency and relevance to the area's priority needs and opportunities. Applicants will be required to consider how the capacity created will be sustained beyond the life of the Programme and, where appropriate, to develop a continuation strategy.

The LEADER Local Action Group in Ayrshire will promote environmental sustainability in two main ways:

- firstly, by supporting projects that are concerned with reclamation and management of environmental assets.
- secondly, by requiring all applicants to consider how their project may be configured to reduce environmental impacts. This may be achieved in a variety of ways including through the choice and sourcing of materials and the location and timing of delivery.

Annex I
Ayrshire LEADER Area Data Zones

Ayrshire LEADER Area

<u>Zonecode</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Zonecode</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Zonecode</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Zonecode</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Zonecode</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Zonecode</u>	<u>Population</u>
S01001283	491	S01001304	722	S01001365	644	S01004473	1018	S01004511	868	S01005543	797
S01001269	544	S01001305	751	S01001368	1020	S01004474	1015	S01004512	942	S01005544	728
S01001270	817	S01001306	701	S01001369	960	S01004475	501	S01004513	502	S01005545	851
S01001271	802	S01001307	1005	S01001372	773	S01004476	721	S01004514	561	S01005547	697
S01001272	706	S01001308	999	S01001373	635	S01004477	904	S01004515	944	S01005548	1003
S01001273	701	S01001310	747	S01001379	998	S01004480	984	S01004516	513	S01005549	980
S01001274	734	S01001311	606	S01001406	607	S01004481	569	S01004517	772	S01005561	872
S01001275	702	S01001312	774	S01001407	845	S01004482	922	S01004518	691	S01005566	543
S01001276	508	S01001314	724	S01001408	848	S01004483	706	S01004519	886	S01005579	809
S01001277	743	S01001315	961	S01001409	908	S01004484	993	S01004520	831	S01005611	725
S01001278	503	S01001316	981	S01001410	1058	S01004485	510	S01004521	787	S01005614	793
S01001279	987	S01001317	932	S01001411	578	S01004486	938	S01004522	608	S01005617	875
S01001280	608	S01001318	553	S01001412	946	S01004487	1037	S01004523	869	S01005628	940
S01001281	835	S01001320	935	S01001413	763	S01004488	708	S01004524	626	S01005637	996
S01001282	735	S01001321	545	S01001415	796	S01004489	848	S01004526	726	S01005639	768
S01001284	790	S01001322	822	S01001416	685	S01004490	708	S01004527	558	S01005640	536
S01001286	640	S01001334	881	S01001417	1034	S01004491	817	S01005522	628	S01005641	919
S01001287	901	S01001337	871	S01001418	944	S01004492	976	S01005523	879	S01005648	871
S01001288	922	S01001338	814	S01001420	604	S01004493	1042	S01005525	753	S01005652	717
S01001289	687	S01001340	778	S01001421	839	S01004494	889	S01005526	718	S01005655	883
S01001290	549	S01001341	920	S01001422	549	S01004495	684	S01005527	525	S01005666	913
S01001291	565	S01001342	867	S01004349	800	S01004497	844	S01005528	579	S01005667	778
S01001292	948	S01001343	990	S01004350	562	S01004498	599	S01005529	861	S01005668	903
S01001293	787	S01001344	833	S01004351	508	S01004499	690	S01005531	576		
S01001294	769	S01001345	815	S01004352	637	S01004501	574	S01005532	877		
S01001295	905	S01001349	1251	S01004353	921	S01004503	730	S01005533	785		
S01001296	750	S01001350	730	S01004366	620	S01004504	721	S01005535	845		
S01001297	790	S01001352	878	S01004372	974	S01004505	603	S01005536	925		
S01001298	909	S01001354	794	S01004373	564	S01004506	538	S01005537	778		
S01001299	943	S01001355	766	S01004408	572	S01004507	763	S01005538	885		
S01001300	980	S01001358	873	S01004461	603	S01004508	704	S01005539	908		
S01001302	694	S01001360	854	S01004471	616	S01004509	712	S01005540	799		
S01001303	611	S01001364	880	S01004472	735	S01004510	841	S01005542	787		

Annex II
Ayrshire LEADER LAG Member Organisations and Roles

Role of Member Organisations

Organisation	Representative	Role of Organisation
North Ayrshire Council	Dianna Whyte, External Funding Officer	Provides all Local Authority services. Leads on Community Planning. Part of the three Ayrshire Council group that initiated an Ayrshire LAG. Assists the Ayrshire LAG in facilitating the identification of the projects on the ground. Provides further external funding advice to proposed projects. Local rural knowledge and understanding of on the ground issues. Possible funding partner/funding advice partner. Previous experience with Leader through the WHELK Leader programme which included the and was an active member of both the local and strategic LAGs.
South Ayrshire Council	Billy McKissock Rural Development Officer (Lead partner representative and Ayrshire RPAC member) Lesley Cannon (Lead Officer)	Provides all Local Authority services. Leads on community Planning. Part of the three Ayrshire Council group that initiated an Ayrshire LAG. Assists the Ayrshire LAG in facilitating the identification of the projects on ground. Approved Applicant organisation – will provide project management and be responsible for compliance and financial management acting as intermediate beneficiary to hold Ayrshire LAG funding. Provide further external funding advice to proposed projects. Local rural knowledge and understanding of on the ground issues. Possible funding/funding advice partner. Will also provide access to relevant expertise as and when required in terms of Planning, Environmental Health, Information Technology etc Previously Lead Officer for the South Lanarkshire Leader+ Programme with detailed knowledge of setting up and running a new LAG.
East Ayrshire Council	Dave Hewet Senior Policy Advisor	Provides all Local Authority services. Leads on Community Planning. Part of the three Ayrshire Council group that initiated an Ayrshire LAG. Assists the Ayrshire LAG in facilitating the identification of the projects on ground. Provide further external funding advice to proposed project. Local rural knowledge and understanding of on the ground issues. Possible funding/funding advice partner.

Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Transportation Committee	Nigel Wallace Policy Officer,	Will provide a consistent strategic knowledge on planning and transport matters. As the team are funded by the three Ayrshire Councils they also provide a coherent economic view of Ayrshire as a whole. Based in Prestwick it is anticipated that the LAG's administrative centre will be located at the premises of the Structure Plan Team.
Forestry Commission Scotland	John Dougan Conservator (Ayrshire RPAC member)	The Forestry Commission will provide invaluable advice and assistance on all aspects of forestry activities, whether this be for sport, tourism or biodiversity. They will also provide valuable input with regard to skills training in woodland management, diversification opportunities and alternative fuel sources. The Forestry Commission have experience of and been involved in previous LEADER programmes. A possible funding/funding advice partner.
Scottish National Heritage	Graeme Walker	SNH will provide advice and expertise on all aspects of environmental significance. SNH will be fully involved in projects relating to Natura 2000 sites. Their experience in working to involve communities in their natural heritage will provide valuable input SNH bring experience from previous LEADER programmes. A possible funding/funding advice partner.
VisitScotland	Sandi Hellowell Regional Director	As tourism is a key economic driver, VisitScotland can offer the Ayrshire LAG valuable marketing advice, backed up by research and statistics. Projects aimed at the tourism market could considerably benefit from VisitScotland's internationally recognised brand as a partner organisation.
North Ayrshire Council for Voluntary Services	Jim Nichols	Provides a wide range of information and support services to voluntary and community groups. Also provides links to many other local, regional and national organisations and networks. Experience as LAG member with WHELK, South Strategic LAG for the previous LEADER + programme. Will help provide a link to North Ayrshire voluntary sector.
South Ayrshire Association of Community Councils	Peter Mason	Provide a valuable on the ground link to the Community Councils in Southern Ayrshire. The National Association has been involved in projects such as, road improvements, youth projects, environmental initiatives, upgrading of amenities and community initiatives.
Council for Voluntary Organisations (South Ayrshire)	Jess Dunabie	Will act as a valuable link to the South Ayrshire voluntary sector, fully incorporating the on the ground approach.
Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Helen McBride	Provide access to a valuable portfolio of services, designed to help build business relationships and develop useful new skills to boost organisation's

		ability to grow and be competitive. Will provide advice on the sustainability of projects
Coalfield Communities Federation	Ian Smith	Co-ordinating body for Community and Voluntary Organisations in the South of East Ayrshire, former mining communities. Represent Community and Voluntary Sector on the Community Planning Partnership and will play valuable role in providing bottom up approach. Have extensive experience of running rural community projects, including Coalfield Community Transport.
East Ayrshire North Communities Federation	Pamela Littlejohn	Co-ordinating body for Community and Voluntary Organisations in the North of East Ayrshire, former mining communities. Represent Community and Voluntary Sector on the Community Planning Partnership. Will be significant link to development of rural community led projects.
Ayrshire and Arran Farming and Wildlife and Advisory Group (Ayrshire and Arran FWAG)	Tommy Loudon	A farmer led organisation providing environmental and conservation advice to the agricultural industry. A charitable organisation that seeks to support and enthuse farmers to secure environmental benefits for their land. Ayrshire and Arran FWAG are a local organisation that is part of a UK wide organisation and has experience in advising land - based industries in previous land management contract schemes such as the Rural Stewardship Scheme.
National Farmers Union (Scotland)	Jimmy Young	The NFU Scotland promotes and protects the interests of the Scottish Farming Industry. As the representative body for agricultural industry NFU Scotland will play a vital role in engaging its members in the activities of the proposed LAG. It will also bring valuable experience through involvement in previous LEADER programmes.
RSPB	Zoe Clelland	An important partner that brings further valuable knowledge to the Ayrshire LAG in relation wildlife and Natura 2000 sites
Dalmellington Partnership	Mark Gibson	The Dalmellington Partnership has a growing track record and significant community development ambitions. A positive Ayrshire LAG partner.
Scottish Rural Property and Business Association	Chris Savage (Ayrshire LAG Chair)	The Scottish Rural Property and Business Association (SRPBA) uniquely represent the role and interests of those involved with rural property and businesses connected with the land. It embodies a proactive approach to property, business and enterprise in rural Scotland, building upon 100 years of experience. A valuable rural business link with experience of rural business needs. Brings the ability to demonstrate the wider benefits rural business' activities to the community and to the Scottish rural economy

West Kilbride Community Initiative	Maggie Broadley	Bring an emphasis that is firmly placed upon the delivery of facilities that will help promote community involvement and increase awareness of contemporary craft & design throughout North Ayrshire and beyond. Valuable members with experience in craft town development.
Scottish Power Renewables	Martin Mathers	Brings to the Ayrshire LAG vast experience in working with community groups in developing projects from grass roots levels. A funding member
East Ayrshire Woodlands	Bruce Davidson	East Ayrshire Woodlands is a partnership initiative comprising organisations representing forestry, economic development and conservation interests within the unitary authority area of East Ayrshire Council. Brings project experience to the Ayrshire LAG and is closely linked to the Galloway Forest Biosphere that stretches into both East and South Ayrshire.
Garnock Valley Community Transport	Moira Smith	Provides the Ayrshire LAG with valuable experience in rural transport and issues. Also provides useful knowledge of accommodation, attractions and events linking to rural tourism in the north part of Ayrshire.
Ayrshire Young Farmers	Raymond Crerar	Brings to the Ayrshire LAG and represents many of the interests and ideas of the rural youths. The Young Farmers are experienced in events and projects where the young people are delivering for themselves. It is expected that many innovative projects will emerge from this rural youth group..
Dalry Business Group	Ronald Stalker	Bring views and experiences of a small rural business group. Will inform the Ayrshire LAG of small business needs already experienced in this part of Ayrshire.
Women's Royal Voluntary Service	Sandra Robertson	WRVS provides a range of services to help people in need who might otherwise feel lonely and isolated. It works with other charities and organisations, local authorities and the NHS, meeting needs in communities throughout England, Scotland and Wales. The WRVS with 75% woman membership will ensure that the Ayrshire LAG through delivery of axis IV LEADER will ensure that woman as a target group have their need represented in Ayrshire LAG business. The WRVS also works on small projects to the enhance the lives of the communities that it works with.

Annex III
Strategic Stakeholder Consultations and Topic Guides

Interviewees conducted

Contact	Organisation
Dave Hewet / Lesley Cannon	East Ayrshire Council
Dianna Whyte and Louise Clark	North Ayrshire Council
Billy McKissock	South Ayrshire Council
Ian Johnson	Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan & Transportation Committee
Michael Wright	Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire
John Dougan	Forestry Commission
John Collie and Graham Walker	Scottish National Heritage
Katie Chan and Madeleine Sullivan	Communities Scotland
Andrew Leggate	Scottish Agricultural College
Catriona Mackie	VisitScotland
Jim Nichol and Craig Crosthwaite NACVS	Arran CVS
Bob Leitch	Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Tommy Loudon	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)
Luke Borwick	Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
Chris Doyle	South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership
Gwen Barker	East Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership
Justina Murray	North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership
Raymond Crerar	Ayrshire Young Farmers
Moraig Mair	Scottish Woman's Rural Institute

Interest and Community Group Questionnaire

Organisation	
Interviewee	

Preamble: In meeting with you today, I'm wanting to gather information and evidence to help in developing the LEADER Strategy and Business Plan for rural Ayrshire. I also hope that our discussion will make you more aware of the purpose and possibilities under LEADER and enable you to contribute further as the initiative develops.

Key Regeneration Issues in Rural Ayrshire

What would you identify as the key rural regeneration issues affecting rural Ayrshire, or the areas within rural Ayrshire with which you are familiar? What locations, sectors and social groups are most affected?
What do you regard as the main assets of rural Ayrshire? <i>Natural, environmental, cultural, physical, built, human, economic etc.</i>
What do you perceive to be the main development opportunities for the rural area?

Involvement in Rural Development Actions

Please describe any rural development activity or interventions that your organisation has been involved with over the past two years, and any associated funding committed.
What has been achieved?
What has worked well and what less well?
What is the potential to do more through LEADER (probe scope for complementarity with other policy and activity)?
To what extent have the rural development actions your organisation has been involved with been community-led / community inspired?
What advantages, if any, do you perceive from greater involvement of local people and businesses in leading or shaping development initiatives?
What barriers, if any, do you perceive to securing such involvement, (e.g. time, funding, skills)?

Scope of LEADER Strategy

This will be the first time that LEADER has operated in Ayrshire. It is anticipated that there may be a need to develop **Rural Community Capacity** to identify local opportunities and to develop / manage projects to address these.

To what extent do you agree with this view?
What groups and locations require support and with what issues?

Apart from **Rural Community Capacity**, there are four other Themes that LEADER can support. I would like to get your views on the potential for community-led actions under these Themes.

New Markets and Products is concerned with supporting business diversification by agricultural and land-based industries and with adding more value locally to primary produce.

Do you see this as a priority issue in rural Ayrshire? If yes, what are likely to be the target sectors / locations?
To what extent is this theme already addressed by agencies and funding streams in Rural Ayrshire? Are there gaps that LEADER could address? How might action under LEADER usefully complement existing effort?
To what extent do you see this area as having potential to be addressed by community-led action? How might community-led action add value or contribute innovation?

Do you have or are you aware of any projects under this theme which could be implemented early in the process?
Please describe, including likely costs and any other resources which may be available.

Conservation of the Rural Environment is concerned with natural, cultural and heritage projects that are driven by the community and have a wide community benefit.

Do you see this as a priority issue in rural Ayrshire?
If yes, what are likely to be the focus / locations for this activity?

To what extent is this theme already addressed by agencies and funding streams in Rural Ayrshire?
Are there gaps that LEADER could address?
How might action under LEADER usefully complement existing effort?

To what extent do you see this area as having potential to be addressed by community-led action? How might community-led action add value or contribute innovation?

Do you have or are you aware of any projects under this theme which could be implemented early in the process?
Please describe, including likely costs and any other resources which may be available.

Progressive Rural Economy is concerned with innovative actions to strengthen the economy other than primary industries in the LEADER area and might involve co-operative investments, extending participation in enterprise e.g. by young people and by women, local tourism initiatives, social enterprise.

Do you see this as a priority issue in rural Ayrshire?
If yes, what are likely to be the target sectors / groups / locations?

--

To what extent is this theme already addressed by agencies and funding streams in Rural Ayrshire?
Are there gaps that LEADER could address?
How might action under LEADER usefully complement existing effort?

--

To what extent do you see this area as having potential to be addressed by community-led action? How might community-led action add value or contribute innovation?

--

Do you have or are you aware of any projects under this theme which could be implemented early in the process?
Please describe, including likely costs and any other resources which may be available.

--

Revitalising Rural Communities is potentially more broadly based and could include aspects of the other Themes. It is aimed at developing community services and facilities with a particular emphasis on young people and other target groups.

Do you see this as a priority issue in rural Ayrshire?
If yes, what is likely to be the focus / target groups / locations?

--

<p>To what extent is this theme already addressed by agencies and funding streams in Rural Ayrshire? Are there gaps that LEADER could address? How might action under LEADER usefully complement existing effort?</p>
<p>To what extent do you see this area as having potential to be addressed by community-led action? How might community-led action add value or contribute innovation?</p>
<p>Do you have or are you aware of any projects under this theme which could be implemented early in the process? Please describe, including likely costs and any other resources which may be available.</p>

Overall, what do you consider to be two most suitable Themes for LEADER in rural Ayrshire?

Rural Community Capacity	
New Markets and Products	
Conservation of the Rural Environment	
Progressive Rural Economy	
Revitalising Rural Communities	

Co-operation

Co-operation is an essential part of LEADER and works best where there is common ground e.g. geography, issues, target groups or sectors or opportunity.

<p>In what areas do you see any scope for developing co-operative activity?</p>
<p>What scope, if any, do you see for innovation in or arising from co-operation?</p>

Involvement With LEADER

A key element in securing LEADER funding for rural Ayrshire will be demonstrating the commitment of partners and the leverage which can be achieved.

What role would your organisation be willing to play in the management and delivery of the programme?

--

What contribution would your organisation be able to make in terms of financial and other resources?
--

--

Annex IV
Community Workshop Attendees

A total of 42 people attended the three workshops which were conducted in Kilmarnock, Ardrossan and Maybole. Those participating and the organisations and communities they represent are listed below.

Dianna Whyte	North Ayrshire Council
Brian Shaw	Ayrshire Rivers Trust
Tommy Loudon	FWAG Ayrshire & Arran
Ann Rae	North Ayrshire Council
Roseanne Savage	Woodland Regeneration Forum
Wendy Young	Wood Regeneration Forum
Dave Donaldson	Dalmellington Partnership / East Ayrshire Council
Nick Prower	East Ayrshire Woodlands
Peter Coldwell	East Ayrshire Council
Anneke Freel	East Ayrshire Council
Zoë Clelland	RSPB Scotland
Susan Forster	East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative
Louise Kyle	East Ayrshire Council
Neil McGhee	East Ayrshire Council
Maureen Keirnan	Catrine Environmental Group
Neil McKenna	East Ayrshire Council
Adam Taylor	Visions Leisure Centre
Luke Borwick	Blair Estate Dalry & SRPBA
Stuart Cree	Ayr College
Charles Woodward	Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park
Bruce Davidson	East Ayrshire Woodlands
Ann Sinclair	Stewarton Woodlands Action Trust
Ros Cauchland	Stewarton Woodlands Action Trust
Sharon Genis	Cunningham Housing Association
Alistair Massey	Fairlie Community Council and Fairlie Fair-Trade Initiative
Peter Dale	Barr Community Council
Joe Darling	Tarbolton Land Fill Trust
Chris Savage	Cassillis & Culzean Estates & SRPBA
Peter Walker	May-Tag Ltd
George Gray	Girvan Community Council
Kathleen Don	North Ayrshire Council
Mike Ankers	South Ayrshire Access Panel
Helen Ankers	South Ayrshire Access Panel
Billy McKissock	South Ayrshire Council (observer)
Patricia Irving	Girvan Horizons
Nigel Wallace	Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan
Helena Menhenick	Dailly Community Council
Stuart Lyndsay	Girvan Horizons
Tricia Irving	Community Economic Development
David Holtom	Barr Hill Development Association