

Argyll and Bute Council

**Habitats  
regulations  
appraisal  
of the  
Argyll and Bute  
Core Paths plan**

October 2014

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## **1. Introduction and Context**

### **Background**

- 1.1. Article 6(3) of EC Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive) requires that any plan or project, which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site, but would be likely to have a significant effect on such a site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to an 'appropriate assessment' of its implications for the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.
- 1.2. Regulation 49(1) of the Habitats Regulations (The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994) sets out that in light of the conclusions of that assessment, and subject to the provisions of Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, the competent authority; in this instance Argyll & Bute Council, shall agree to a plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or sites concerned and, if appropriate, having obtained the opinion of the general public. If this cannot be ascertained then the plan or project can only be consented if there are no alternative solutions and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. Article 6(4) provides that if, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site, and in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected.
- 1.3. The requirements of the Directive have been transposed into domestic legislation in Scotland through a combination of the Habitats Regulation 2010 (in relation to reserved matters) and the 1994 Regulations.

## 2. The Land Reform Scotland Act 2003 Section 17 - Core Paths Plan

- 2.1. The Land Reform Scotland Act 2003 Section 17 - Core paths plan, places the following duty on all Scottish Local Authorities;

*(1) It is the duty of the local authority, not later than 3 years after the coming into force of this section, to draw up a plan for a system of paths ("core paths") sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area.*

*(2) Such a system of paths may include—*

*(a) rights of way by foot, horseback, pedal cycle or any combination of those, being rights which are or may be established by or under any enactment or rule of law;*

*(b) paths, footways, footpaths, cycle tracks or other means of access (however described but not falling within paragraph (a) above) which are or may be provided by or under any enactment other than this Act;*

*(c) paths which are or may be delineated by a path agreement under section 21 or a path order under section 22 below;*

*(d) other routes, waterways or other means by which persons may cross land.*

*(3) In drawing up the plan, the local authority shall have regard to—*

*(a) the likelihood that persons exercising rights of way and access rights will do so by using core paths;*

*(b) the desirability of encouraging such persons to use core paths; and*

*(c) the need to balance the exercise of those rights and the interests of the owner of the land in respect of which those rights are exercisable.*

*(4) The plan may consist of or include maps showing core paths and, where it does not, shall refer to such maps.*

- 2.2. It should be noted that Argyll & Bute Council is only responsible for the development of a Core Paths Plan for those parts of the local authority that lie out with the area managed by Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority which has already produced its own Core Paths Plan. The "Core Paths Plan" referred to throughout this report is for that part of Argyll & Bute out with the National Park.
- 2.3. Argyll & Bute Council has carried out a number of public consultations in order to identify the paths that communities most value and use. It should be noted that the plan is intended to provide a network "*sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout there are*". There is no objective measure of sufficiency however the proposed network is believed to provide this in most areas, for most communities.
- 2.4. Core Paths will contribute to a number of policy agendas including, Health, Tourism, Transport, and Economic Development. The main purpose of the plan is to ensure that paths which benefit communities are protected from obstructions and not lost when land is developed. The emphasis is on making better use of the existing path network and ensuring that it continues to attract tourists. Significant growth in the use of the existing network is not envisaged.

- 2.5. The plan does not include proposals for the improved management of paths in Argyll and Bute, something which the Council cannot directly carry out in the absence of a significant maintenance budget; neither will it lead to any development of new paths where they do not already exist. Maintenance work may be undertaken but limited to drainage, surface repair and the repair of structures i.e. bridges to maintain the status quo. Indeed for many of the paths there is no need to do anything other than provide signage and way marking. Although there will, it is hoped, be an increase in the use of the Core Path Network this will be spread across the whole network and is likely to be focused on paths that are already popular. This potential for a slight increase in use has been considered in the HRA.
- 2.6. The provision of signage and improved maintenance of the paths will rely on the work of local communities through Community Councils, land managers and government agencies such as Scottish Canals, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Forestry Commission. Voluntary sector organisations including the National Trust for Scotland, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Mull & Iona Community Trust, Isle of Bute Landscape Partnership and many others will also be key players. Any proposal to significantly upgrade or improve a path is likely to require planning permission. If the path which is being proposed for upgrading is on or close to a NATURA2000 site it will require an HRA based on the specific proposals at that time.
- 2.7. In total the Finalised Draft of the Core Paths Plan published in January 2011 proposes 1,092 miles of Core Paths. A number of objections were made to the Core Paths plan on the basis that it did not include these paths or they were proposed for deletion from the plan, therefore the final figure may be around one hundred miles higher following the outcome of the Local Inquiry.
- 2.8. In broad terms one third of the network is on adopted public roads, a third is on land managed by the Forestry Commission Scotland, mostly managed coniferous woodland, whilst the remainder is on privately owned land.
- 2.9. Core Paths will be highlighted on published OS maps including the 1:25,000 Explorer Series; shown as a purple line overlaid onto the existing path or track on the map. The Core Paths Plan will be promoted on the Council's website where the public will be able to get more information on the nature of the path i.e. are there stiles, steep gradients, the surfaces etc. This will also provide an opportunity to publish information regarding the need to keep dogs on a lead at certain times of year etc.

#### **Bird Nesting and Roosting Signage**

- 2.10. It has been identified that as a result of designating the Core Paths there will be an opportunity to provide users with additional information that will lead to a reduction in the disturbance of ground nesting and roosting birds at the appropriate times of year. There are already a few locations where signs have been used in the past. Dog walkers who allow their pets to roam away from them inadvertently disturb ground nesting birds during the summer or roosting or foraging birds during the winter. In order to address this issue on the following SPAs the Council will provide additional information on its website version of the Core Paths Plan as well as signage on the paths. The locations where the signs are required and the three types of signs are listed in the table overleaf.

Paths where signage advising people to keep dogs on a lead will be installed during 2014 to protect the SPA species.

SPA Name	Path No.	Path Name	Interest: SPA	Restricted Period
Rinns Of Islay	C056(b)	Kilchoman to Kilchiaran	Corncrake (breeding)	15 April - 31 August
Tiree wetland and coast	C007	Balephetrish to Vaul via ringing stone	Dunlin oystercatcher, redshank ringed plover (breeding) Greenland barnacle goose Greenland white-fronted goose (non-breeding)	All year
	C008	Loch Aulaig to Gott Bay	Dunlin Oystercatcher redshank ringed plover (breeding) Greenland barnacle goose Greenland white-fronted goose (non-breeding)	All year
Inner Clyde	C264(a) C264( b)	Ardmore point circular	Redshank (non-breeding)	1 August - 15 April
	C510	Cardross shore path	Redshank (non-breeding)	1 August - 15 April
	C518	Moss road, Cardross	Redshank (non-breeding)	1 August - 15 April

Appropriate signage similar to that shown below will be used in these areas





## Improving Core Paths

- 2.11. The Core Paths Plan does not itself propose to improve the network of paths, nor will it secure any resources to deliver an improved network. Funding for path improvements is only likely to be possible external funders and is only likely to become available over a period of several years to improve the paths including signposting and way-marking. It is thought that up to half of the proposed Core Paths already have some directional signage. The majority of the routes are already promoted in guide books, leaflets and on websites.
- 2.12. Any improvements to Core Paths are likely to be carried out by a mixture of third parties, local communities, and land managers rather than the Access Authority - Argyll & Bute Council. It is likely that many of these will seek assistance and guidance from the Access Team at Argyll and Bute Council and at this stage advice can also be sought from Scottish Natural Heritage where designated sights may potentially be affected.

It is known that although approximately half of the proposed Core Paths have adequate signage the remainder do not. Therefore a significant effort will be made to install signage and way markers where required to assist the public and reduce the disruption of land management activities and disturbance to species or damage to habitats. Survey work to date has established that where improvement works are required this is often limited to clearing back overgrown vegetation or fallen trees and minor drainage much of which can be achieved by hand clearance of existing ditches.

Where larger scale works are required i.e. the replacement of bridges, construction or upgrading of considerable lengths of paths or tracks they will generally require Planning Applications and are also likely to be funded through Agri-Environment schemes funded through the Scottish Government. In either instance Scottish Natural Heritage will be consulted on the proposals. Where a significant upgrade of a path or track within a Natura 2000 Site is proposed this will be subject to a specific Habitats Regulations Appraisal which will determine if there is a likely significant impact on the designated site and will identify if changes to the design of the proposals are required to mitigate the effects of the proposed works.

- 2.13. Promotional activities including books, leaflets and webpages are unlikely to lead to a significant increase in use since there is already considerable promotion of the paths by parties other than Argyll & Bute Council, which is not linked to their designation as Core Paths. Any increase in use attributable to the Core Path designation is likely to be marginal. There is currently very little information available on the current numbers of people using the paths and it will not be possible to accurately quantify any increase. It is likely that those paths that are already busy will see the greatest increase in use; these paths will generally be in areas which are close to urban centres and are relatively accessible to the public.

With the exception of the Inner Clyde SPA the SPAs and SACs are all some distance from the busiest and most accessible areas of Argyll & Bute being away from the main urban centres, main roads and more often than not on islands or in upland areas that are difficult to reach. In addition the need to travel to the islands by air or ferry creates a further barrier to a significant increased use of the paths. For those designated sites on the islands the availability of accommodation for visitors at present frequently limits the number of visitors on the smaller islands such as Tiree, Coll and Colonsay therefore any increase in the use of paths will be limited. Therefore the Core Paths that are in remote areas will see little increase in use due to their geographical location.

There are no paths which enter the Inner Clyde SPA, three paths run close to the boundary, however the majority of the site is tidal mudflats which are difficult to walk on and the designation of the Core Paths will not encourage people to do so.

- 2.14. A number of the proposed Core Paths pass through Natura 2000 sites designated to protect species of national and international importance. However many of these follow public roads and all will follow existing paths, farm tracks, forestry and estate roads. These paths will be the focus of this Habitats Regulations Appraisal to determine whether or not they are likely to have a significant effect upon the qualifying features and where this is the case if mitigation would be appropriate or if a change to the plan is required.

❖ Note – Aspirational Paths

Aspirational Paths in the plan record a desire expressed by the public to link two places and indicate a possible route for the path between them. These paths will only be constructed in the event that the community takes the initiative to develop the path and secure funding to build it. In the event that funding can be secured for the path it will require planning permission which will allow appropriate checks to be made and if necessary for the proposed route of the path to be altered to ensure that its impacts are minimised. For All Natura Sites SNH is a statutory consultee. In the absence of a fixed route for the Aspirational Paths it has not been considered possible to carry out a meaningful assessment. The Aspirational Paths will not be promoted to the public through maps and leaflets but will be used to ensure that routes are protected when there is development. An HRA will be required before an Aspirational Path that passes through a Natura 2000 can be upgraded. Indeed the impacts upon the designated site would have to be considered during the initial design stage of the project. Once constructed a new path is likely to be considered for inclusion in the Core Paths Plan at its next review.

- 2.15. The Core Paths Plan is currently the subject of a Local Inquiry conducted by a team of Reporters appointed by the Directorate for Planning & Environmental Appeals on behalf of the Scottish Ministers. The outcome of this is expected shortly. All the potential routes have been assessed although subject to the outcome of the Inquiry some may be deleted from the plan.

### 3. Habitats Regulations Appraisal

- 3.1. The term 'Habitats Regulations Appraisal' encompasses the decision on whether the Argyll & Bute Core Paths Plan should be subject to appraisal, the 'screening' process for determining whether an 'appropriate assessment' is required, as well as any 'appropriate assessment' that may be required. An appropriate assessment is only required where it is determined that a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and the plan or project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site.
- 3.2. This report assesses whether the routes proposed for designation in the Core Paths Plan are likely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. The assessment considers whether the direct or indirect effects of the paths on the protected habitats and species are significant. The in-combination effects of the plan in conjunction with other plans was not considered to require assessment.
- 3.3. Certainty that the Core Paths Plan would not adversely affect the integrity of the NATURA sites is required if the Plan is to be adopted in all but exceptional circumstances where there are no alternative solutions and imperative reasons of overriding public interest<sup>1</sup>. In doing this, cognisance must be given to the qualifying interests and their conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites. Where there is a possibility of such adverse effects on site integrity, it may be possible for these to be avoided through mitigation.
- 3.4. The subjective nature of determining the significance of potential effects is often challenging; however, guidance is offered from the Waddenzee case in which the European Court of Justice ruled that a plan or project should be subject to appropriate assessment "*if it cannot<sup>1</sup> be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that it will have a significant effect on the site, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects*"<sup>2</sup>.

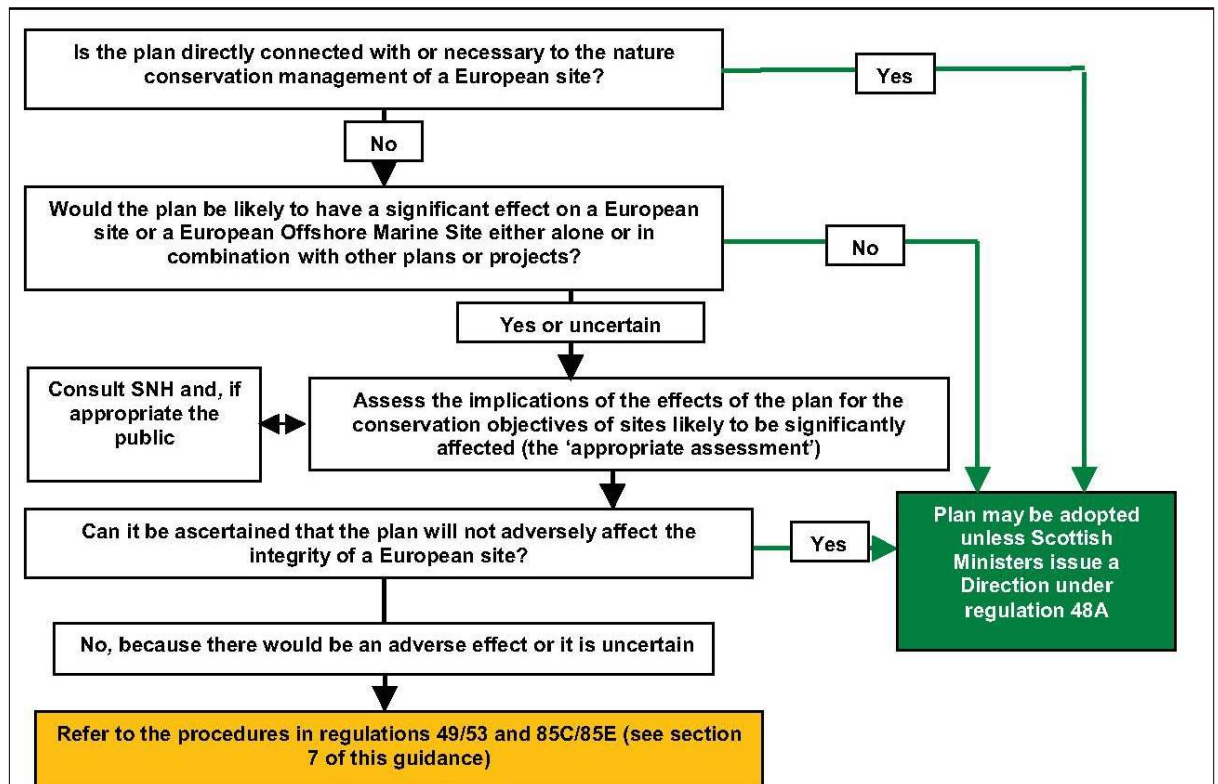
**Figure 1: Procedural Requirements for HRA**

Taken from; SNH: Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans: Guidance for Plan-Making bodies in Scotland

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation 85C of The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2007

<sup>2</sup> See paragraph 45 of European Court of Justice case C-127/02 dated 7th September 2004, 'the Waddenzee ruling'



### Establishing the need for Habitats Regulations Appraisal

- 3.5. The first stage in the process is to establish whether the Core Paths Plan qualifies in terms of its need for assessment. Regulation 85B of the Habitats Regulations and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive provides guidance in this respect. Article 6(3) states:

*“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”*

- 3.6. The Core Paths Plan is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any Natura 2000 sites. A determination must therefore be made as to whether the plan would result in likely significant effects upon any such sites, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. This is the 'screening' stage of the process.
- 3.7. The Core Paths Plan identifies 859 proposed Core Paths throughout Argyll & Bute in order to encourage access along clearly defined routes. The Plan does not advocate any form of development (other than signage) and is a series of maps identifying proposed Core Paths in essence an audit of paths that are already used by the public. In almost all instances these paths are recorded on maps, way-marked, promoted in guidebooks and on websites by a range of interests including landowners, private individuals, communities, SNH, FSC and by the authors of guidebooks. However, 161 or 19% of the proposed routes run through either an SAC or an SPA both designations are Natura 2000 sites and for this reason it was considered that further assessment was necessary in order to determine the likelihood of any adverse impacts upon the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites.

## **4. Argyll & Bute Core Paths Plan**

- 4.1. Argyll & Bute Council is required to develop and adopt a Core Paths Plan as one of the key requirements of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, see section 17-20 of the Act. The guidance states that Core Paths should “provide the basic framework of routes sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area. This basic framework of routes will link into, and support, wider networks of other paths”. It should be noted that Core Paths are not limited to land routes but may also consider and incorporate water routes and or subterranean routes.
- 4.2. In order to develop the Core Paths Plan between the spring of 2006 and 2009 Argyll & Bute Council, with the assistance of the Argyll & Bute Local Access Forum, worked toward the production of a Core Paths Plan which will be formally adopted by the local authority. The plan relates to the whole of Argyll & Bute, out with the National Park and identifies paths that meet people’s needs whether that is getting from home to work or school; to enjoy the countryside; to undertake some form of recreational pursuit e.g. cycling, horse riding, canoeing, or to use routes as part of a healthier lifestyle.
- 4.3. The paths do not meet a particular standard are not constructed to a standard specification – they could be a tarmacked minor road, a loose stone surface such as a forest or estate road, or a natural grass surface etc. All the paths / routes identified exist, some are recognised as being Public Rights of Way, the majority of paths will be those to which the public has the right of responsible access though it is possible that paths may incorporate sections to which pass through areas where the public *do not* have the right of responsible access e.g. farmyards.
- 4.4. The development of the Plan has been in accordance with, “*Core Paths Plan – a guide to good practice*” which was produced by Scottish Natural Heritage and Paths for All Partnership and has followed the process detailed overleaf;

### The Development of the Argyll and Bute Core Paths Plan:

Date	Actions
<b>2001-2002</b>	Consultancy identifies 129 Potential Core Paths
<b>2002- 2006</b>	Further Work to Identify Core Paths
<b>2007</b>	Core Paths Identified - Consultation with Land Managers and Communities
<b>2009</b>	<b>Argyll and Bute Core Paths Plan Consultative Draft Published</b> identified 312 proposed Core Paths and introduced the categories of Aspirational Paths (110) and Launching Points (157) for the first time in the plan
<b>2010</b>	Developed the Finalised Draft of the Core Paths Plan, analysing representations on the Core Paths Plan revising and preparing the Finalised Draft Document
<b>2011</b>	<b>Finalised Draft Published &amp; Consultation</b> 853 representations on the Plan from 274 individuals and organisations. Objections were recorded against 74 Core Paths, 23 Aspirational Paths, 15 launching points and 9 deleted paths. In addition objectors proposed 1 New Launching Point and 22 New Core Paths to address claimed insufficiencies in the Core Paths Plan. Following this process 138 reports were produced for the remaining outstanding valid objections to the Core Paths Plan.
<b>2012</b>	<b>Objection Reports Produced</b> 138 Objection reports were completed for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 62 Core Paths or sections of Core Paths</li> <li>• 15 Launching Points</li> <li>• 9 Deleted Paths</li> <li>• 22 New Paths</li> <li>• 1 New Launching Point</li> <li>• 24 Aspirational Paths</li> </ul> <b>Consultation with “Interested Parties”</b> The Objection Reports were then the subject of a limited consultation with “Interested Parties”. Scottish Natural Heritage was sent a paper copy of those reports relating to Nature Conservation objections. The responses received were incorporated into the Objection Reports before being passed on to the Access Forum.
<b>Dec 2012 –Jan 13</b>	<b>Obtaining the Statutory Advice of the Access Forum</b> The council then consulted the Access Forum which gave the Council their statutory advice on the proposals which was added to the Objection Reports
<b>Feb 2013</b>	<b>Officer’s Final Recommendations</b> The Access Officers then made their final recommendations based on the advice given to the Council by the Access Forum Members. The reports were then submitted to the Scottish Government’s Directorate of Planning and Environmental Appeals for an expected Local Inquiry on the Core Paths Plan.
<b>2013</b>	<b>Core Paths Plan and Objection Reports submitted to the DPEA for a Local Inquiry which will resolve the Objections to the Plan.</b> The reporters are currently waiting for the decision to be made on the need to subject the plan to an SEA. Once this is resolved they will be able to finalise their report and submit it to the Scottish Ministers.

- 4.5. Once the Finalised Core Paths Plan has been formally adopted by Argyll & Bute Council the routes will be shown as base information in relation to our Local Development Plan and will become a material consideration for any relevant planning application submitted to the Council.
- 4.6. The overall purpose of the plan is to identify a network of paths which act as a framework throughout Argyll & Bute, meeting the needs of residents and visitors to the area. This network will work in conjunction with existing and proposed routes to develop an expanded path network which will provide opportunities for walking, cycling, and horse-riding for commuting, recreation and tourism.

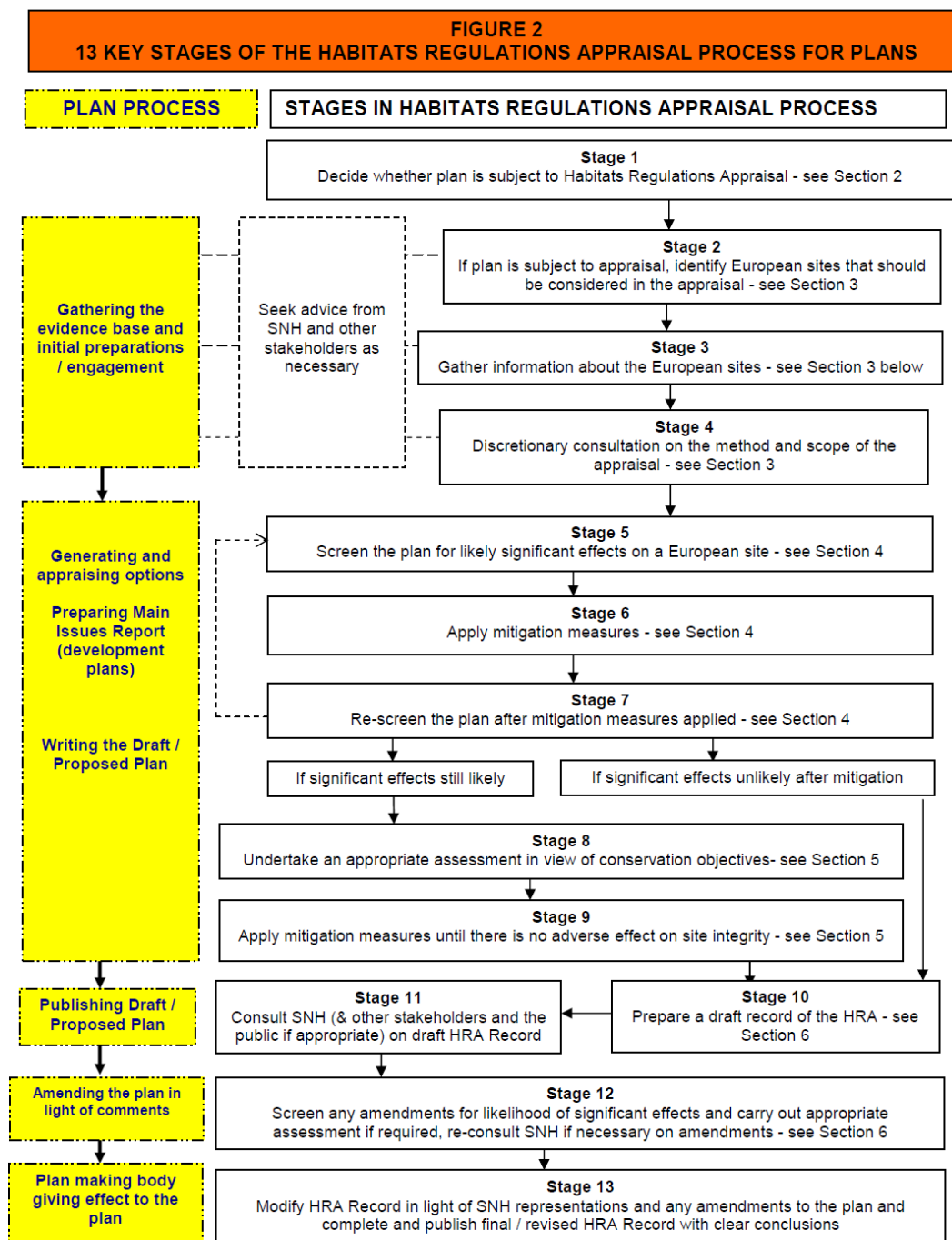
4.7. The Core Paths Plan contributes to a number of policy agendas including;

- Health - Local path networks will give many residents the opportunity to get out and about in their local communities, contributing to better health outcomes and wellbeing.
- Tourism - Good path networks are becoming increasingly economically important as they attract tourists and encourage them to stay longer and spend more money. Many of the businesses such as Bed and Breakfasts or pubs and hotels which benefit from increased tourism tend to be locally owned so profits are retained locally. Larger leisure developments such as the Portavadie Marina increasingly recognise the benefits of having access to a good path network for visitors who may wish to walk or cycle during their stay and are actively using this local asset to attract visitors to the area.
- Transport - A number of the proposed Core Paths provide routes that people regularly use to move in and around their local areas. A few provide pedestrian or cycle friendly off road links between neighbouring communities giving people an alternative to driving or public transport. Some Core Paths provide off road routes from home to school for children, to work for adults and will be used for a variety of recreational purposes as well.
- Economic Development - As well as the direct economic impact of increased tourism a good path network that provides easy access to the outdoors helps employers attract the best employees from outside the area. In an increasingly competitive world with a highly mobile workforce people will choose to live in Argyll and Bute because of these opportunities as opposed to other areas that can offer greater career opportunities and higher pay.

## 5. Methodology for the Appraisal of the Core Paths Plan

- 5.1. The Scottish Habitat Regulations do not prescribe a particular methodology for carrying out the appraisal; however, SNH produced a guidance document in August 2012 which has been used to form the basic methodology for this appraisal. This guidance is entitled *Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans: Guidance for Plan-Making bodies in Scotland*. The guidance outlines a number of key stages to the process which are outlined in Figure 4-1. These key stages are broadly used to inform the process of the appraisal.

**Figure 2: Key stages of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal Process**



Taken from SNH: *Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans: Guidance for Plan-Making bodies in Scotland*



## 6. Identifying the European Sites and Paths to be Appraised

- 6.1. There are 30 Special Areas of Conservation and 22 Special Protection Areas making a total of 52 Natura 2000 sites located within Argyll & Bute. It is not necessary to consider every Natura 2000 site in Argyll & Bute in the appraisal since the effect of the Core Paths will not extend beyond the immediate area where the path is located and an appraisal was only required for those sites directly affected by a path. Similarly no Natura 2000 sites out with the Argyll & Bute boundary will be affected by the proposals in the Core Paths Plan.
- 6.2. Using the GIS it was possible to identify which Natura Sites were within 50 metres of a proposed Core Path, these have been marked in bold on the lists below;

### 30 Special Areas of Conservation (See Map 1)

- |                                  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • <b>Ardmeanach</b>              | • <b>Loch Etive Woods</b>           |
| • Ben Heasgarnich                | • Loch Fada                         |
| • Ben Lui                        | • Loch Lomond Woods                 |
| • Coladoir Bog                   | • <b>Mingarry Burn</b>              |
| • <b>Coll Machair</b>            | • <b>Moine Mhor</b>                 |
| • <b>Eilean na Muice Duibhe</b>  | • Mull Oakwoods                     |
| • Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mor | • <b>Oronsay</b>                    |
| • Feur Lochain                   | • Rannoch Moor                      |
| • <b>Firth of Lorn</b>           | • <b>Rinns of Islay</b>             |
| • Glac na Criche                 | • <b>South-East Islay Skerries</b>  |
| • <b>Glen Creran Woods</b>       | • <b>Tarbert Woods</b>              |
| • Glen Shira                     | • <b>Taynish and Knapdale Woods</b> |
| • <b>Loch a' Phuill</b>          | • Tayvallich Juniper and Coast      |
| • <b>Lismore Lochs</b>           | • <b>Tiree Machair</b>              |
| • <b>Loch Creran</b>             | • Treshnish Isles                   |

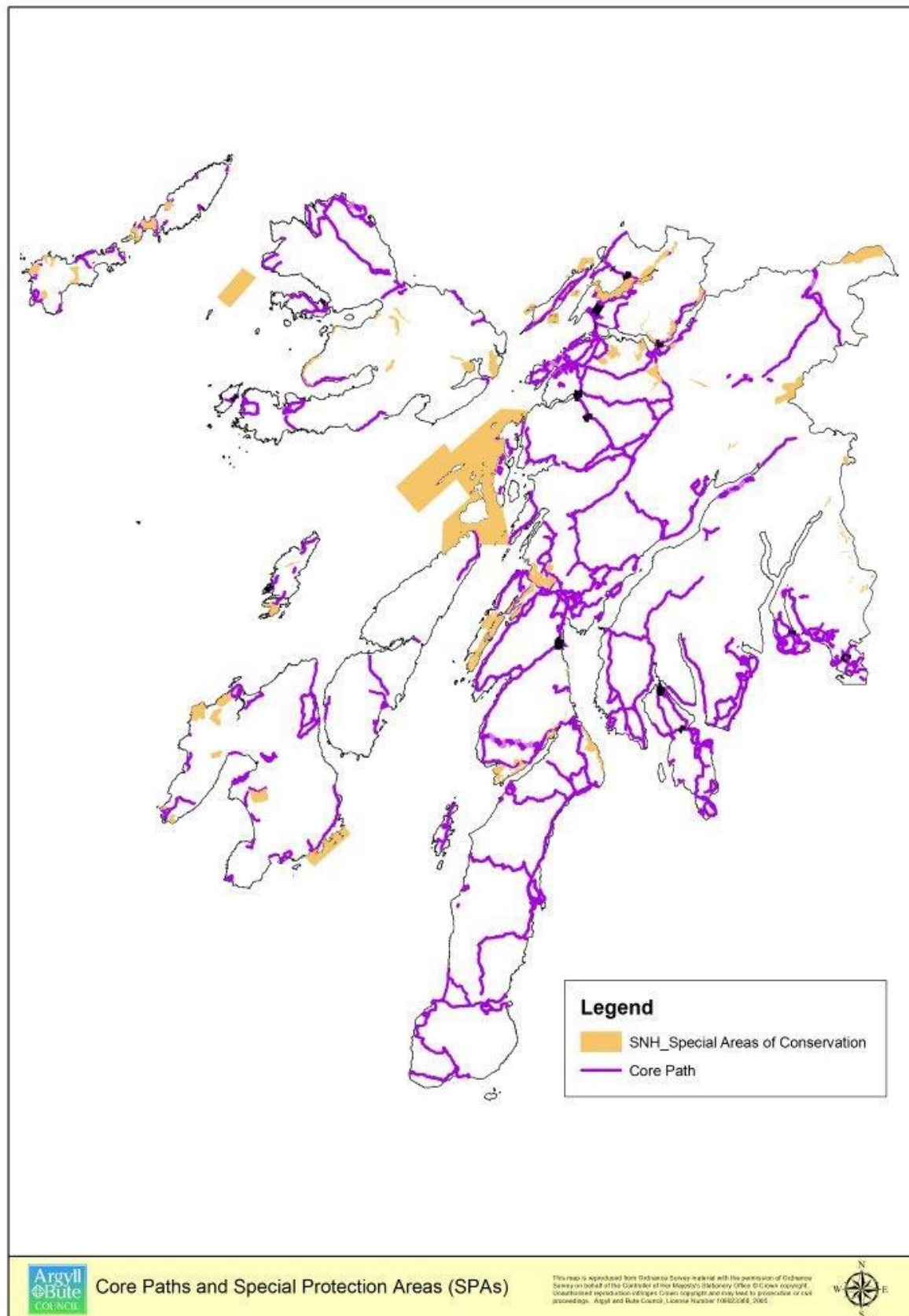
Core Paths enter 15 of the 30 SACs which are highlighted above in bold.

### 22 Special Protection Areas (See Map 2)

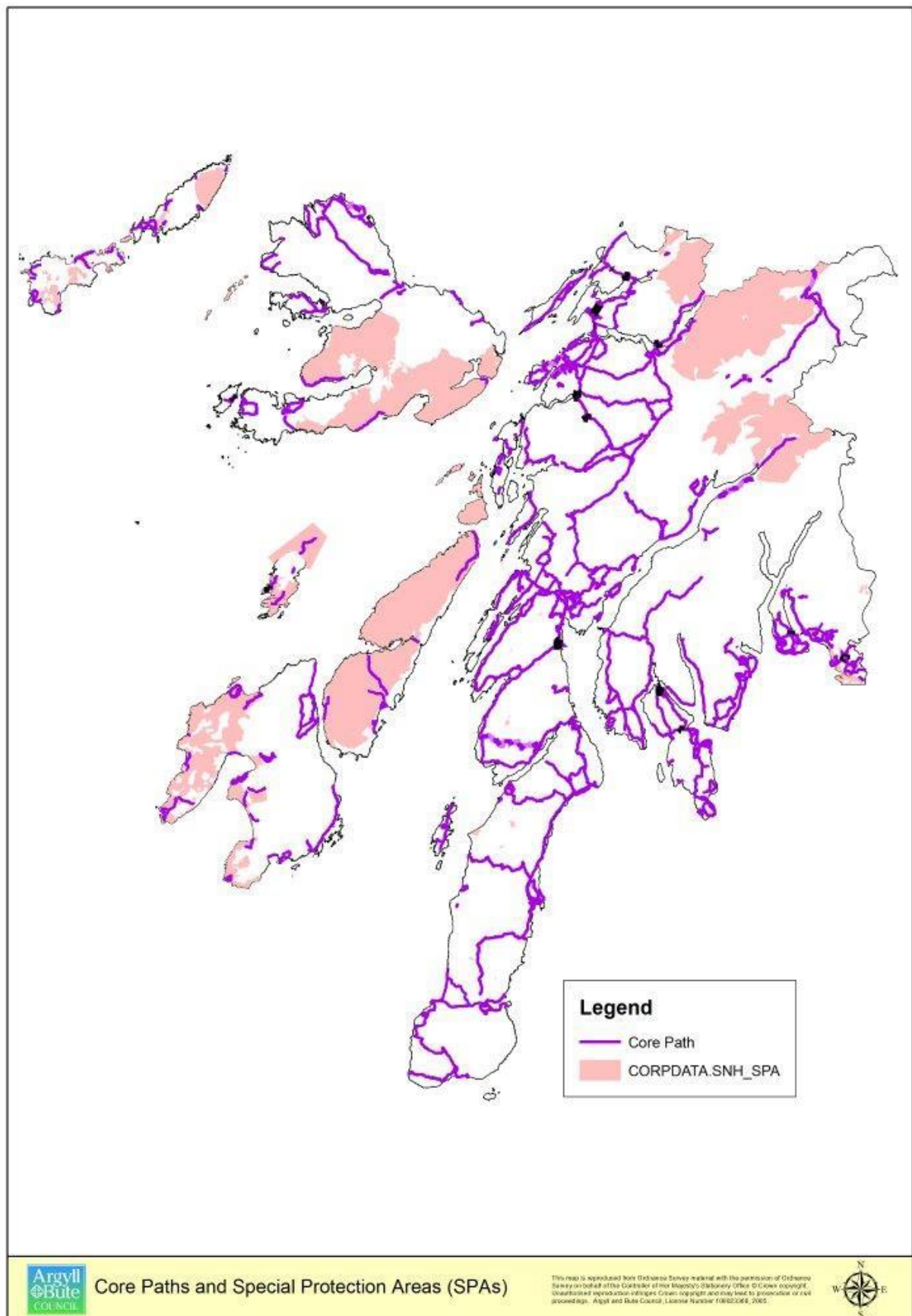
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Bridgend Flats, Islay                      | • Knapdale Lochs   |
| • <b>Cnuic agus Cladach Mhuile</b>           | • <b>Laggan, Islay</b>   |
| • Coll                                       | • Loch Lomond  |
| • <b>Coll (corncrake)</b>                    | • <b>North Colonsay and Western Cliffs</b>                           |
| • Eilean na Muice Duibhe (Duich Moss), Islay | • <b>Oronsay and South Colonsay</b>                                  |
| • Glas Eileanan                              | • Rannoch Lochs  |
| • <b>Glen Etive and Glen Fyne</b>            | • <b>Rinns of Islay</b>  |
| • <b>Gruinart Flats, Islay</b>               | • <b>Sleibhtean agus Cladach Thiriodh (Tiree Wetlands and Coast)</b> |
| • <b>Inner Clyde</b>                         | • <b>The Oa</b>  |
| • <b>Jura, Scarba and the Garvellachs</b>    | • <b>Tiree (corncrake)</b>   |
| • <b>Kintyre Goose Roosts</b>                | • Treshnish Isles  |

Core Paths enter 14 of the 22 SPAs which are highlighted above in bold.

## Map 1 Core Paths & Special Areas of Conservation



## Map 2 - Core Paths & Special Protection Areas



## **7. Assessment of Core Paths for their Potential Effects**

- 7.1. In order to assess the impact of the Core Paths Plan on the Natura 2000 sites, SAC's and SPA's, it was necessary to know why these areas are protected and what factors are currently affecting each site before assessing the impact of the proposed designation of a Core Path close to or across the protected area.
- 7.2. The following process was followed to complete an appraisal of the impacts of each Core Path on the affected Natura 2000 sites.

### **General Information**

- 7.3. The Core Paths Plan proposes 859 existing paths for designation as Core Paths, with a total length of 1,092 miles. 161 proposed Core Paths run through or within 50metres of a designated site and could potentially interact with a Natura 2000 site. Each of these routes has been screened, in order to identify where there are potential interactions with Natura 2000 sites.
- 7.4. The Core Paths Plan identifies the network of paths across Argyll & Bute for non-motorised use by the public. All Core Paths exist on the ground and are already well used by the public and in many instances are already promoted in books, leaflets and on websites.
- 7.5. All of the routes which have been identified as potentially affecting Natura 2000 sites are well established routes and have been in use for a number of years, providing opportunities for people of all abilities to walk and cycle and ride horses. It is anticipated that the formalisation of these routes through the Core Paths Plan will therefore result in a small increase in the number of people using these routes.
- 7.6. In order to take the appraisal further it is necessary to consider the potential implications of designating Core Paths upon the designated sites in general i.e. what effects could the designation of these routes have on the species and habitats. The following potential impacts have been considered during the assessment process;
  - small increases in the number of people using the paths
  - dogs being walked on the paths which may disturb birds in particular
  - disturbance of fauna and damage to habitats on and around the paths caused by recreational use
  - disturbance of fauna and damage to habitats caused by maintenance work, hand dug drainage of the path surfaces, path repairs and the installation of signage etc.
  - erosion as a result of the increased number of people accessing the paths could damage habitats
- 7.7. All the factors that are influencing the Natura 2000 sites were considered in order to identify if the activities associated with the designation of the Core Paths would exacerbate the existing threats to the sites. For all of the sites included in the appraisal a range of factors that currently influence them were considered including the management of agriculture, forestry and the development of renewable energy.

## **Approach**

- 7.8. The Council's GIS System was used to generate a list of the Core Paths and the designated areas each passes through. A 50m buffer was applied to each path to pick up paths close to a designated area. Following discussions with SNH it was agreed that only those areas of Argyll & Bute that are designated as internationally important NATURA sites were relevant to this process following the 2012 guidance. NATURA Sites include Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).
- 7.9. It should be noted that in some instances the areas of an SAC and an SPA coincided. Where this happened the path was assessed separately in the light of the impacts on the qualifying interests of both designations.

## **Assessment of Impacts**

- 7.10. The paths that passed through or within the 50 meter buffer of SPAs or SACs were then then considered in terms of the qualifying features and the nature of the path. Information regarding the qualifying features, and conservation objectives was obtained from SNH's SiteLink website: [http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/portal/page?\\_pageid=53,910284,53\\_920284&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL.%20See%20table%20X%20in%20Annex%20B%20](http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/portal/page?_pageid=53,910284,53_920284&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL.%20See%20table%20X%20in%20Annex%20B%20)
- 7.11. The qualifying interests potentially affected will vary between the different sites, but effects should relate to these interests for the site's classification (SPAs) or designation (SACs). It is necessary to consider how the proposed routes set out within the Core Paths Plan may affect the achievement of the conservation objectives.
- 7.12. This section outlines each of the Natura 2000 sites that are included in the appraisal and provides details of the following;
- Site name and feature category
  - Vulnerabilities to change& factors influencing the site
  - Path number, name and length in metres
  - An assessment of each path and its impacts on the designated area
  - Determination whether or not it is likely to have a significant effect upon the site.
- 7.13. Each path was screened for Likely Significant Effect using knowledge of species and habitats, knowledge of the path route, photographs taken when surveying the path, and Ariel photography available on the GIS. For instance where the proposed Core Path follows the line of a public road or established farm track the view was taken that there would be no significant effect arising from the designation because there will be no additional loss of habitat or significantly increased disturbance of species in the area.

## 8. Screening of Special Areas of Conservation

- 8.1. **Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)** are designated under the European Habitats Directive to protect internationally threatened habitats and species listed in Annex 1 of the directive. 72 of the proposed Core Paths pass within 50 m of or through areas designated as SACs. These included areas of;

- Alder woodland
- Calcium-rich nutrient poor lochs and pools
- Clear water lochs
- Dunes
- Grassland
- Machair
- Mixed woodland
- Mud flats
- Raised bogs
- Salt meadows
- Western oak woodlands

These areas were also designated to protect a range of animal and plant species including;

- Freshwater pearl mussels
- Marsh fritillary butterflies
- Otters
- Slender naiad (a fresh water plant)

- 8.2. These areas are designated to protect habitats that are important for a range of flora and fauna. Therefore an assessment was made for each of the 72 paths that entered these areas or were adjacent to them. This looked at the potential for the proposed path to damage the qualifying features and the conservation objectives; the habitat or species and determine whether or not it is likely to have a significant effect upon it. The assessment considered the qualifying features, the conservation objectives, the type of path and its position within the designated area. This was used to assess whether or not there was more likely to be a likely significant effect upon the qualifying interests.

### Notes

- 8.3. The assessment of the impacts of designating the Core Paths on the SACs considered the type of path, whether it is a road, forestry road, agricultural track or trod path. Since all of the paths are already used by land managers and the public there is already a level of disturbance arising from their use for land management as well as recreation. The proposed Core Paths all follow routes that already exist, with around one third being public roads. Of the remainder all have been used for land management purposes, agriculture and forestry, for many years before being promoted for public use.
- 8.4. The Core Paths Plan does not propose the construction of any new paths or substantial upgrading of any of the existing paths. Where this does happen as a result of communities or landowners attracting external funding an HRA will be conducted where appropriate.
- 8.5. If the path is already promoted and the nature of this is known it has been recorded. The majority of the paths are already promoted in a variety of ways including signage, leaflets, guidebooks, and online. In addition almost all of the paths are shown on OS mapping at 1:25,000 or 1:50,000 scales.

- 8.6. The paths in SACs are all located in remote or difficult to access areas, mainly on islands where the need to travel by ferry or air means that people will not generally visit for a day. The limited amount of accommodation on the islands limits the number of visitors and therefore the use of the paths and consequent disturbance of species. The designation of a path as a Core Path is not expected to generate a significant increase in the numbers of people using it. Any significant increase in the use of paths will be most likely on paths close to the main urban areas particularly Helensburgh. The proposed Core Paths that pass close to the Inner Clyde SPA near Helensburgh do not enter the protected area and are already popular with walkers and are set back a short distance from the shoreline.
- 8.7. The assessment considers whether there is likely to be an increase in the number of people using the path and what effect this will have before assessing whether this will be likely to have a significant effect upon the qualifying interests, habitats and species, in the designated area.

**Table 1 - Screening of paths passing through Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)**

overleaf is a list of the SACs through which a Core Path passes and an Assessment of the effects of each path on the designated area.



**Table 1. Screening of paths passing through Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)**

SAC Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SAC Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
<b>Ardmeanach</b>	Ardmeanach SAC - Species-rich grassland, Tall herb communities, vegetated sea cliffs	<p>The species-rich Nardus grassland at Ardmeanach thrives on soils with a turnover generated by natural erosion of cliffs and a balanced grazing regime. Neither of these is likely to change in the foreseeable future. The hydrophilous tall herb communities occur primarily on inaccessible cliff ledges. Part of the site is owned by the National Trust for Scotland.</p> <p>There is a need to maintain the condition and extent of the maritime cliff and calcareous grassland habitats by ensuring grazing and trampling pressure are managed in order to maintain the condition and extent of the montane and vascular plant assemblages. The site is also vulnerable if grazing is not controlled by reducing deer numbers which will help to maintain and enhance the population of slender Scotch burnet moth.</p>	<b>Ardmeanach</b>	<b>C042(a)</b>	Burg Walk, Mull	3,423	No	Existing vehicle track and trod paths visible on Ariel Photography. This is a route to the Fossil Tree promoted by the NTS. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
<b>Coll Machair</b>	Coll Machair - Clear water lochs, Dune Grassland, Humid Dune Slacks, Machair, Shifting Dunes, Slender naiad	<p>The dune and Machair vegetation is dependent upon traditional, extensive grazing regimes. Increased stocking density or the application of agri-chemicals could be damaging. The high rabbit population has had a detrimental impact on the vegetation, but this is being addressed through a control programme which is reducing numbers. The standing water interest is potentially susceptible to nutrient enrichment or agrichemical input; however the surrounding land is not intensively farmed, being mainly rough grazing, so the risk is low, though adjacent land management will be kept under review. Management which is compatible with the nature conservation interests has been secured over most of the site through management agreements, entry into Agri-environment schemes and by RSPB nature reserve management.</p> <p>It is important to maintain both the range and quality of sand-dune, dune-slack and Machair loch plant communities by maintaining stocking at a level which ensures that the habitat continues to support key species. To maintain the water table and water quality of the in Loch Ballyhaugh and the Machair lochs at no lower than their existing levels to encourage the nationally-rare Irish lady's tresses and the slender naiad. Stock feeding causes localised damage to vegetation through trampling and enrichment and it should be confined to agreed areas.</p>	<b>Crossapol and Gunna</b>	<b>C012</b>	RSPB car park to Ben Feall, Coll	1,759	Part - Unclassified-ZU037 -	Existing public road and farm tracks shown on OS Map. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C013(a)</b>	Feall Bay to Calgary Point, Coll	2,025	No	Existing tracks visible on Ariel Photography. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C013(b)</b>	Feall Bay to Calgary Point, Coll	3,079	No	The majority of the path follows the foreshore or a track visible on Ariel Photography. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C014</b>	Crossapol Bay, Coll	3,715	Intersects with the public road - ZU037	Existing Farm Tracks and paths shown on OS Map and Ariel Mapping. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C015(a)</b>	RSPB Car Park to Port na Luing, Isle of Coll	149	Part - Unclassified - ZU037	This path follows the public road for the whole of its length therefore disturbance is unlikely. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C480</b>	C15 amendment, Tiree	519	No	Path across intensively grazed land close to farm buildings along the boundary of the SPA. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>Totamore Dunes and Loch Ballyhaugh</b>	<b>C016</b>	Totronald to Hogh Bay, Coll	913	No	Existing Tracks visible on Ariel Photography. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C017</b>	Ballyheagh to Ban Hogh, Coll	693	No	Route already promoted in more than one guide book. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C474</b>	C16 extension, Hogh Bay, Coll	1,180	No	Existing Farm Tracks shown on OS Map. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>



**Table 1. Screening of paths passing through Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)**

SAC Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SAC Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
<b>Eilean na Muice Duibhe</b>	Depressions on peat substrates, Blanket bog	The site contains a network of old drains, which together with commercial peat workings have had an adverse effect over large areas of the site. Under a S15 management agreement and a Nature Reserve Agreement, work is underway to block the drains and ditches and to restore high water levels, which is having a positive effect.	<b>Eilean na Muice Duibhe</b>	<b>C419</b>	Laggan Bridge to Corrary, Bowmore, Islay	3,756	No	The proposed Core Path follows an existing estate track to the north of a river which forms the northern boundary of the SAC and is outside the designated area. The path is also a claimed Public Right of Way. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
<b>Firth of Lorn</b>	Firth of Lorn - Reefs off shore	Current activities undertaken at traditional levels are not seen as damaging to this site. A management scheme for the site will be developed to ensure that the conservation objectives for the site are not compromised by any potential activity which could be damaging to the marine communities present.  Land based paths along the shore close to the SAC are unlikely to be factors that influence the site.	<b>None Recorded</b>	<b>C117</b>	Craignish Point, Ardfern	1,429	No	Path intersects with the boundary of the Firth of Lorn SAC but does not enter it therefore there is no impact upon the protected area. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C186</b>	Puilladobhrain ROW, Clachan Seil	687	No	Path intersects with the boundary of the Firth of Lorn SAC but does not enter it therefore there is no impact upon the protected area. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C187</b>	Clachan-Seil to Clachan bridge	1,472	Yes - B844	Path intersects with the boundary of the Firth of Lorn SAC but does not enter it therefore there is no impact upon the protected area.  The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C190</b>	Barr Mor, Seil	1,625	No	Path intersects with the boundary of the Firth of Lorn SAC but does not enter it therefore there is no impact upon the protected area. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C192(b)</b>	Easdale circular	1,198	No	Path intersects with the boundary of the Firth of Lorn SAC but does not enter it therefore there is no impact upon the protected area. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C451</b>	Cuan Ferry to Stac na Morain, Luing	1,586	No	Path intersects with the boundary of the Firth of Lorn SAC but does not enter it therefore there is no impact upon the protected area. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
<b>Glen Creran Woods</b>	Glen Creran Woods - Mixed Woodland, Western Atlantic Woodland, otter	This is a three-part site. The boundary encompasses areas of extant ancient semi-natural woodland and areas of former semi-natural woodland which were planted with commercial conifer crops. Most of the introduced conifers have now been removed and Forest Enterprise is committed to removing the rest. By natural regeneration, the semi-natural woodland will expand to occupy its former range. An EU LIFE bid is being pursued to assist woodland management including control of Rhododendron ponticum which has spread into the northern section of the site. Part of the site is managed as a National Nature Reserve.  Glasdrum National Nature Reserve constitutes part of the site. This section of the site attracts large numbers of visitors, many of which come to see the butterfly interest of the site. This area includes a circular walk open to the public.	<b>Glen Creran Woods</b>	<b>C152(c)</b>	Oban to Appin (National Cycle Network)	3,105	Part-Unclassified - ZU037	Oban to Fort William Cycle Route follows boundary of SAC but does not enter it therefore there is no impact upon the protected area. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C180</b>	Glasdrum Nature Reserve, Loch Creran	1,057	No	Short path built by SNH at Glasdrum Wood NNR presumably subject to HRA at the time of construction. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C181</b>	Glen Creran, Elleric pine martin trail	1,653	No	Existing Promoted Walks on FCS land presumably subject to HRA at the time of construction. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
<b>Lismore Lochs</b>	Lismore Lochs - Calcium-rich nutrient poor lochs and pools	Changes in the nutrient level of the lochs due to alteration of agricultural practices or other developments could impact upon the special interest of the site. SNH will work with adjacent land managers to ensure that management practices are not damaging to the site. A monitoring programme is under development.	<b>Lismore Lochs</b>	<b>C153</b>	Lismore Island	17,429	Part -B8045	The majority of this path is on Adopted Public Roads, one section is a path shown on the OS map which passes along the southern boundary of the Lismore Lochs SAC but does not enter it therefore there is no impact upon the protected area. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>

**Table 1. Screening of paths passing through Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)**

SAC Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SAC Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
<b>Loch a' Phuill</b>	Loch a' Phuill SAC - Nutrient rich lochs which are often dominated by pondweed	<p>The surrounding land is partly Machair common grazings, and partly small fields with damp pasture; any improvements or increase in fertiliser applications would have implications for the water quality in the loch. The loch is occasionally used for water extraction by West of Scotland Water Authority when insufficient groundwater supplies are available nearby, and can experience a significant water level fall in very dry summer periods; SNH staff will liaise with WSWA to address this issue. Recreational activity on the loch is limited to occasional fishing or boating.</p> <p>It will be important to maintain the water quality of Loch a' Phuill and the surrounding smaller lochs, and their associated flora and fauna, in particular, the important aquatic plant communities of Loch a' Phuill by maintaining appropriate livestock regimes.</p>	<b>Ceann a' Mhara to Loch a' Phuill</b>	<b>C326</b>	Barrapol to Balephuill Bay, Tiree	1,603	No	Path leading from the waste water treatment works along an existing farm track to the beach and then along the foreshore. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C476</b>	C3 extension, Loch a Phuill, Tiree	110	No	Path across intensively grazed land close to Water works which extends 110metres into the SAC from the boundary. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
<b>Loch Creran</b>	Loch Creran; Reefs - Inshore sublittoral rock (Marine)	<p>The biogenic reefs in Loch Creran are only known to survive in one other (significantly smaller) European location, and their biology is presently poorly understood. They are vulnerable to direct physical damage from underwater operations and may be at risk of indirect impacts related to changes in water quality, hydrodynamics and sedimentation regimes. Activities which could affect the reefs include laying of moorings, diving, some types of fishing, industrial discharge, and construction of jetties or other structures. More research is required into the fragility and vulnerability of the reefs. It is expected that, with careful planning and the co-operation of users, most of the current activities within the loch can continue to be accommodated without significant impact on the reefs. It is expected that a management forum will be established to assist the process of dialogue between interested parties.</p> <p>None recorded however land based paths along the shore close to the SAC are unlikely to be factors that influence the site.</p>	<b>None Recorded</b>	<b>C152(b) (amended i)</b>	Creggan Caravan Park, Appin	2,067	No	Path comes close to the boundary of the Loch Creran SAC but does not enter it therefore there is no impact upon the protected area. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C152(f)</b>	Oban to Appin (National Cycle Network)	935	No	Path comes close to the boundary of the Loch Creran SAC but does not enter it therefore there is no impact upon the protected area. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C152(f) (amended )</b>	Oban - FW NCN Ferlochan, Sealife Centre	1,978	No	Path comes close to the boundary of the Loch Creran SAC but does not enter it therefore there is no impact upon the protected area. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C465</b>	Creggan Caravan Park, Appin	1,538	No	Path comes close to the boundary of the Loch Creran SAC but does not enter it therefore there is no impact upon the protected area. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
<b>Loch Etive Woods</b>	Loch Etive Woods SAC - Mixed Woodland, Alder Woodland, Western Oak Woodland and Otter	<p>This woodland complex is owned by both private owners and Forest Enterprise (FE). The management of FE land is considered compatible with the conservation objectives of the site, with FE carrying out restoration work where necessary including removal of non-native conifers. Much of the private land has been entered into Woodland Grant Schemes (WGS) and positive management has resulted in livestock being excluded and bracken being controlled to allow natural regeneration. This will enable expansion and enhancement of the woodlands to secure their long-term future. The main threats to the site come from invasive species such as Rhododendron and overgrazing by deer and domestic livestock. FE actively tackles these issues on their ground and the WGS schemes assist to combat the threats on private ground.</p> <p>It is important to maintain the extent of woodland habitats and bryophyte habitat, and where appropriate to enhance existing woodland habitat, excluding deer and stock from the site and reduce the present browse pressure to allow the establishment of tree seedlings.</p> <p>A track runs through the site which services the properties on the north-east shore of Loch Etive and is also proposed as a Core Path and is a right of way. Although outside the designated area, repairs and realignment of the track may have an impact. By liaising closely with track users over road maintenance and improvements the risk of works impacting on the surrounding woodland areas will be minimised. This track is used by recreationists, including walkers, mountain bikers and the occasional four wheel drive vehicles.</p>	<b>Ard Trilleachan</b>	<b>C156(d)</b>	Bonawe to Glen Etive (modified)	2,978	No	Existing Vehicular Track, path and claimed Public Right of Way which passes through the SAC. Damage to the woodland habitats arising from recreational use is not a significant threat to the designated site. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C408</b>	Glen Etive, new section	647	No	Existing Vehicular Track, path and claimed Public Right of Way which passes through the SAC. Damage to the woodland habitats arising from recreational use is not a significant threat to the designated site. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>Barran Dubh</b>	<b>C517(a)</b>	Inverawe to Glenkinglass (a)	5,062	No	Existing Vehicular Track, path and claimed Public Right of Way which passes through the SAC. Damage to the woodland habitats arising from recreational use is not a significant threat to the designated site. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>Bonawe to Cadderlie</b>	<b>C156(a)</b>	Bonawe to Glen Etive (modified)	6,866	No	Existing Vehicular Track, path and claimed Public Right of Way which passes through the SAC. Damage to the woodland habitats arising from recreational use is not a significant threat to the designated site. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>Glen Nant</b>	<b>C196(a)</b>	Glen Nant, Kilchrenan	548	No	Existing Promoted Walks on FCS land. Damage to the woodland habitats arising from recreational use is not a significant threat to the designated site. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C196(c)</b>	Glen Nant, Kilchrenan	790	No	Existing Promoted Walks on FCS land. Damage to the woodland habitats arising from recreational use is not a significant threat to the designated site. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C300(b)</b>	Kilchrenan to Taynuilt	8,414	Whole - B845	Adopted Public Road for the whole of its length, which is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>

**Table 1. Screening of paths passing through Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)**

SAC Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SAC Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
<b>Mingarry Burn</b>	Mingarry Burn - Freshwater Pearl	The main direct threat to the freshwater pearl mussel population is from pearl-collecting. Indications are that very little of this has taken place so far, probably due to this being a small, remote and inaccessible site. The site owners/occupiers fully appreciate the need for confidentiality regarding the mussels; however designation as a SAC puts the site into the public domain thereby increasing the likelihood of the interest becoming more widely known. The site lies within commercial forestry plantations managed by Forest Enterprise, and the main indirect threats are from forestry operations affecting water quality (through increased siltation, for example). However adherence to current standards of good practice should help to maintain the interest. Discussions are also underway with FE over development of more specific management guidelines.	<b>None Recorded</b>	<b>C035(b)</b>	Quinish Glengorm link	1,746	No	Crosses Mingarry Burn SAC on existing bridge /ford c10 metres, the impact of recreational users is not likely to be significant. The presence of a promoted route may help to deter anyone seeking to illegally gather fresh water pearls from the burn. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
<b>Moine Mhor</b>	Moine Mhor - Raised Bog, W.Oak Woodland, Marsh Fritillary Butterfly, Salt Meadows, mud/salt flats and Otter	<p>This impressive site consists of a matrix of internationally important habitat types. Moine Mhór National Nature Reserve covers 502 ha of mainly degraded or active raised bogs. The NNR Management Plan includes actions to aid recovery. Consideration is being given to management of the remainder of the site particularly for marsh fritillary butterfly.</p> <p>There is a need to manage grazing to protect the upland oak woodland and promote regeneration of the oaks. There is also a need to increase the wetness of the estuarine raised bog by blocking drains to promote the diversification of bog vegetation and to maintain a low nutrient content within the bog.</p> <p>Management practices need to maintain the open grassland of the saltmarsh to support the marsh fritillary through grazing management.</p>	<b>Moine Mhor</b>	<b>C107(c)</b>	Ardrihaig to Crinan- tow path	4,093	Part - Unclassified	Crinan Canal Towpath, and is already heavily used therefore it is unlikely that there will be any habitat damage to the SAC from this path. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C107(d)</b>	Ardrihaig to Crinan- tow path	3,122	Part - C Class	Crinan Canal Towpath, and is already heavily used therefore it is unlikely that there will be any habitat damage to the SAC from this path. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C108</b>	Moine Mhor, Bellanoch	658	No	Short path built by SNH at Moine Mhor NNR which was presumably subject to an HRA or equivalent assessment at that time. The impact upon the SAC will not be significant. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C109(a)</b>	Cycle route from Bellanoch to Kilmartin (modified)	7,016	Part - Unclassified	Adopted Public Road for the whole of its length which is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C138</b>	Crinan woodland walk	1,863	Part - C Class	This popular woodland walk does not enter the designated area but does end on the Crinan Canal Towpath a few metres away from the boundary of the designated area. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C327(a)</b>	Crinan Canal	4,810	Part - B8025	Crinan Canal - Core Path on Water which passes just out with the boundary of the protected area. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C455</b>	Dalriada Dalvore-Dunadd section	4,107	No	Path built in partnership with SNH, skirts the edge of Moine Mhor NNR for 380m. The path was built in partnership with SNH in 2010 therefore it is assumed that an HRA was produced at the time. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C456</b>	Dalriada Dalvore-Barsloisnach section	2,647	Yes - Unclassified	This path is entirely on public roads and terminates a short distance from the boundary of the SAC without entering it. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C458</b>	Dalriada No9 Lock Crinan Canal-Dunamuck	3,025	No	Path built in partnership with SNH, skirts edge of Moine Mhor NNR and passes through an area of Western Oak Woodland where it is unlikely to cause significant of damage to habitats or disturbance of species. At the time the paths were built in 2010 it is assumed that SNH would have required an HRA. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
<b>Oronsay</b>	Oronsay - Machair	The Machair habitat is dependent on the continuation of an extensive grazing regime. The area is currently managed as a nature reserve by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, grant-aided by Scottish Natural Heritage, which aims to ensure appropriate management of this habitat.	<b>Oronsay and South Colonsay</b>	<b>C045(b)</b>	The Priory - Ornsary	1,845	Yes - Unclassified	This path follows an adopted road for almost all of its length from the Oronsay Causeway as far as the Adam and Eve Cottages on Oronsay. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links to Colonsay, the tidal causeway and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>



**Table 1. Screening of paths passing through Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)**

SAC Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SAC Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
Rinns of Islay	Rinns of Islay SAC - Marsh fritillary butterfly	<p>The metapopulations of marsh fritillary on the Rinns of Islay depend on a low to moderate grazing pressure to maintain favourable sward heights and composition. At present, the butterfly population is in good condition under current agricultural practices, although on-going monitoring of the species is required to distinguish natural fluctuations in the populations from any adverse results of habitat change or the impact of changes in grazing management.</p> <p>Bog habitat needs extensive grazing to maintain the vegetation communities present as well as providing habitat for other species.</p>	Rinns of Islay	C054	Ardnave Point, Gruinart	1,898	No	Existing farm track across grazing land part of which is a claimed Public Right of Way that provides access to Ardnave House and Farm. The path follows the boundary of the SAC and is unlikely to damage habitats. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C058(b)	Portnahaven circular	3,001	Part - Unclassified	The entire length of this path is a public road which is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C511	Ardnave Point, Loch Gruinart, Islay	4,887	No	This path does not enter the SAC but comes close to the northern boundary of the protected area. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	No Likely Significant Effect
South-East Islay Skerries	Phoca vitulina Common seal	<p>Human activities within the site are relatively low key and include creel fishing, yachting and a seal-watching business. At present the levels of human activity in the area, including the seal-watching trips, are tolerated by seals. The remote nature of the site suggests that future development and increased disturbance is unlikely. The threat of pollution from shore-based activities is low due to the remote nature of the site.</p> <p>Management of the site to maintain common seal populations and distribution will be achieved by managing levels of human activity around the islets and Skerries at or near current levels to avoid disturbance to seals, particularly during breeding seasons.</p>	Ardmore, Kildalton and Callumkill Woodlands	C292(a)	Ardbeg to Kildonan Church and Cross	2,208	Yes - C class	This path which follows a public road comes close to the boundary of the South East Islay Skerries SAC. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C292(b)	Ardbeg to Kildonan Church and Cross	4,153	Yes - C class	This path which follows a public road comes close to the boundary of the South East Islay Skerries SAC. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	No Likely Significant Effect
Tarbert Woods	Tarbert Woods - Western Oak Woodland	<p>Control of colonisation by Rhododendron is being conducted through several management agreements. Forest Enterprise rangers undertake regular deer-culling on many parts of the site to minimise the impact of browsing on regeneration. Browsing impacts are also being reduced by the elimination of domestic grazing. Bracken has become dominant in parts of the woodland, though this is being controlled by agreements.</p> <p>Management prescriptions for the site include controlling the spread of Non-Native species including beech, Sitka spruce, and rhododendron along with deer control to maintain and extend the woodland and to continue to improve the condition of the upland oak woodland. This will help to maintain the species diversity and protect the habitat of the bryophyte and lichen assemblages.</p>	Ardpatrick and Dunmore Woods	C295(c)	Inverneil to Tarbert via Kilberry NCN	14,814	Whole -B8024	The entire length of this path follows the public road which is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	No Likely Significant Effect
			Artilligan and Abhainn Srathain Burns	C100	Meall Mhor, Tarbert	5,897	No	Vehicle Track /Forestry Road to radio Mast which is a popular local walk, the impact on the designated area of woodland habitat will not be significant. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	No Likely Significant Effect
			Glen Ralloch to Baravalla Woods	C295(b)	Inverneil to Tarbert via Kilberry NCN	6,884	All - B8024	Adopted Public Road along its whole length which will not impact upon the designated area. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	No Likely Significant Effect

**Table 1. Screening of paths passing through Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)**

SAC Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SAC Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
<b>Taynish and Knapdale Woods</b>	Taynish and Knapdale Woods - Western Oak Woodland, Marsh fritillary butterfly, Otter and Clear water lochs	<p>At Taynish, management programmes are in place to encourage typical native woodland species whilst controlling those which are non-native. Certain open areas are being maintained by light livestock grazing as habitat for marsh fritillary. In the Knapdale part of the SAC, Forest Enterprise will fell all mature Sitka spruce and encourage regeneration and expansion of the native oak woodland through management of deer populations and control of non-native species. The Taynish section of the site is a National Nature Reserve.</p> <p>Management priorities include maintaining the low to moderate nutrient quality in the lochs to maintain the wetland habitats that supports the diverse population of dragonflies. Woodland management to improve the habitat for bryophytes and lichens, increase their numbers through woodland management.</p> <p>Maintain naturally-dynamic woodland, the important woodland communities and associated flora and fauna. Safeguard and enhance the population of marsh fritillary butterflies.</p>	<b>Knapdale Woods</b>	<b>C133(a)</b>	Faery Isles FC cycle route	2,002	No	Forest Road on FCS land, promoted cycle route. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C133(a)</b>	Faery Isles FC cycle route	43	Part -C class	Forest Road on FCS land, promoted cycle route. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C133(b)</b>	Faery Isles FC cycle route	3,857	No	Forest Road on FCS land, promoted cycle route. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C134(a)</b>	Barnluasgan FC all abilities circular walk	605	No	Forest Road on FCS land, promoted cycle route. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C134(b)</b>	Barnluasgan FC all abilities circular walk	155	No	Forest Road on FCS land, promoted cycle route. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C134(c)</b>	Barnluasgan FC all abilities circular walk	659	No	Forest Road on FCS land, promoted cycle route. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C460</b>	Loch Barnluasgan to Viewpoint	1,224	No	Forest Road on FCS land, promoted cycle route. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>Taynish Woods</b>	<b>C132(a)</b>	Taynish reserve woodland circular	974	All- Unclassified	Adopted Public Road which is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C132(b)</b>	Taynish reserve woodland circular	692	All - Unclassified	Adopted Public Road which is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C132(c)</b>	Taynish reserve woodland circular	2,885	No	Existing Vehicular Tracks and paths in Taynish NNR promoted by SNH. The impacts on the designated area arising from recreational use will not be significant. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C132(d)</b>	Taynish reserve woodland circular	1,475	No	Existing Vehicular Tracks and paths in Taynish NNR promoted by SNH. The impacts on the designated area arising from recreational use will not be significant. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C132(e)</b>	Taynish reserve woodland circular	526	No	Existing Vehicular Tracks and paths in Taynish NNR promoted by SNH. The impacts on the designated area arising from recreational use will not be significant. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C136</b>	Taynish Bar Mor trail	1,445	No	Existing Vehicular Tracks and paths in Taynish NNR promoted by SNH. The impacts on the designated area arising from recreational use will not be significant. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C439</b>	Tayvallich School to Hall	231	No	Short path through public park area close to the boundary of the SAC. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C497</b>	Linne Mhuirich spur, Taynish	207	No	Existing path to picnic tables in Taynish NNR promoted by SNH. The impacts on the designated area arising from recreational use will not be significant. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C498</b>	Sgeir an Fheoir, Taynish	989	No	Existing Vehicular Tracks and paths in Taynish NNR promoted by SNH. The impacts on the designated area arising from recreational use will not be significant. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>

Table 1. Screening of paths passing through Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

SAC Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SAC Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
Tiree Machair	Tiree Machair - Naturally nutrient rich lochs, shifting dunes, dune grasslands, humid dune slacks, Machair and shifting dunes with marram	<p>The Machair and dune habitat benefits from the continuity of traditional low-intensity grazing by sheep and cattle. The areas of wet Machair are potentially vulnerable to drainage. The substrate is sandy and therefore vulnerable to erosion if subjected to excessive disturbance, for example through extraction. This is being addressed through a strategic approach to sand and gravel use in partnership with the local authority. The freshwater interest comprises a Machair loch, surrounded by marsh, swamp and rough grazing, and risk of enrichment or pollution is low. There is good co-operation from recreational users of the loch (anglers and windsurfers). Water levels can fall in dry summers, and if this becomes a significant issue, action will be taken to address it. Over much of the site, appropriate management is ensured through SNH management agreements, entry into agri-environment schemes and RSPB nature reserve management.</p> <p>Access for recreational activities must consider the habitat and species destruction caused by windsurfing, trampling and car parking around Loch Bhasapoll, Tràigh Thodhrasdail, and Tràigh Chornaig.</p>	Hough Bay and Balevullin Machair	C005	Kilkenneth to Hough, Tiree	1,390	No	Existing Farm Tracks shown on OS Map. There is a threat to the habitats as a result of vehicles crossing the designated area which is being managed locally; however non-motorised users do not pose a significant threat to habitats. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C006	Balevullin to Hough, Tiree	1,810	Part - Unclassified	Existing Farm Tracks shown on OS Map. There is a threat to the habitats as a result of vehicles crossing the designated area which is being managed locally; however non-motorised users do not pose a significant threat to habitats. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C475	C5-C6 extension Hough Bay, Tiree	920	No	Existing Tracks visible on Ariel Photography. There is a threat to the habitats as a result of vehicles crossing the designated area which is being managed locally; however non-motorised users do not pose a significant threat to habitats. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitats or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.	No Likely Significant Effect

## **Summary of the Screening of Special Areas of Conservation**

- 8.8. All of the proposed Core Paths are already used by the public and the majority of routes follow existing roads and surfaced tracks constructed by land managers. Almost all of the proposed Core Paths are already promoted for use by the public in leaflets, books or on websites.
- 8.9. All the SAC's are some distance from the busiest and most accessible areas of Argyll & Bute being away from the main urban centres, main roads and more often than not on islands or in upland areas that are difficult to reach. In addition the need to travel to the islands by air or ferry creates a further barrier to a significant increased use of the paths. For those designated sites on the islands the availability of accommodation for visitors at present frequently limits the number of visitors on the smaller islands such as Tiree, Coll and Colonsay therefore any increase in the use of paths will be limited. Therefore the Core Paths that are in remote areas will see little increase in use due to their geographical location.

The majority of SACs are remote from the main urban areas and transport corridors, and are difficult to get to which reduces the number of people able to visit each. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in damage to habitat or disturbance of species. The potential for an increase in the numbers of people using the Core Paths on islands is restricted by existing ferry links and the availability of accommodation for visitors to the island.

- 8.10. Following consideration of the proposed Core Paths it was concluded that there was already some loss of habitat and disturbance of species attributable to the public roads, tracks used for forestry or agriculture and paths which all existed prior to the development of the Core Paths Plan. The proposed Core Paths that pass close to or through SAC's are not likely to cause any further significant increase in damage to the habitats or increased disturbance of areas that are important for the protected habitats and species. Many of the paths pass along the edge of the designated areas therefore the likelihood of damage to the habitats or disturbance of species will be very low. Where the paths pass through the designated areas they have already been promoted widely and it is unlikely that there will be a significant increase in the level of use.
- 8.11. Having carried out an Assessment of the Core Paths Plan and the individual paths on the Special Areas of Conservation it is concluded that there is no Likely Significant Effect upon the designated habitats and species arising from the proposal to designate the network of Core Paths recorded in the Argyll & Bute Core Paths Plan.

## 9. Screening of Special Protection Areas

9.1. **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)** are designated under the European Birds Directive to protect areas of importance for bird species which are listed in Annex 1 of the directive. 89 of the proposed Core Paths pass within 50 m of or through areas designated as SPAs. These are protected to ensure the availability of wintering and breeding areas for a wide range of bird species including;

- Chough
- Common scoter
- Corncrake
- Dunlin
- Golden eagles
- Greenland barnacle
- Greenland white-fronted geese
- Guillemots
- Hen harriers
- Kittiwake
- Light-bellied geese
- Oystercatcher
- Redshank
- Ringed plover
- Turnstone
- Whooper swan

9.2. These areas are designated to protect areas of habitat that are important for bird species. Therefore an assessment was made for each of the 89 paths that entered these areas or were adjacent to them. This looked at the bird species which were listed as the qualifying features and the conservation objectives, the type of path and its position within the designated area. This was used to assess whether or not there was more likely to be a likely significant effect upon the qualifying interests.

### Notes

- 9.3. The assessment of the impacts of designating the Core Paths on the SPAs considered the type of path, whether it is a road, forestry road, and agricultural track or trod path. All of the paths are already used by land managers and the public there is already a level of disturbance arising from their use for land management as well as their promotion for recreational use. The proposed Core Paths all follow routes that already exist, with around one third being public roads. Of the remainder almost all have been used for land management purposes, agriculture and forestry, for many years before being promoted for public use.
- 9.4. The Core Paths Plan does not propose the construction of any new paths or substantial upgrading of any of the existing paths. Where this does happen as a result of communities or landowners attracting external funding an HRA will be conducted where appropriate.
- 9.5. If the path is already promoted and the nature of this is known it has been recorded. The majority of the paths are already promoted in a variety of ways including signage, leaflets, guidebooks, and online. In addition almost all of the paths are shown on OS mapping at 1:25,000 or 1:50,000 scales.
- 9.6. The paths in SPAs are all located in remote or difficult to access areas, mainly on islands where the need to travel by ferry or air means that people will not generally visit for a day. The limited amount of accommodation on the islands limits the number of visitors and therefore the use of the paths and consequent disturbance of species. The designation of a path as a Core Path is not expected to generate a significant increase in the numbers of people using it. Any significant increase in the use of paths will be most likely on paths close to the main urban areas particularly Helensburgh. There are four paths which pass close to the boundary of the Inner Clyde SPA which is the only designated area close to Helensburgh and these are considered in the screening.



- 9.7. The assessment considers whether there is likely to be an increase in the number of people using the path and what effect this will have before assessing whether this will be likely to have a significant effect upon the qualifying interests, habitats and species, in the designated area.
- 9.8. The paths were also assessed to identify if there were any “in-combination impacts” where the effect of the Core Paths Plan and the Local Development Plan which individually had no significant impact combined to potentially have a significant impact. Two SPAs were identified as requiring the in-combination impact of the two plans to be assessed. These were;
- Laggan, Islay - a proposed mixed use development is planned and there is the potential that more people would use the Core Paths in the SPA which could have an impact on the geese which use the area during the winter.
  - Inner Clyde – a proposed housing development near to Cardoss is planned and there is the potential that more people would use the Core Path close to the boundary of the SPA which could have an impact on the redshank which use the area during the winter.

**Table 2 - Screening of paths passing through Special Protection Areas (SPA)** overleaf is a list of the SPAs through which a Core Path passes and the assessment of the effects of each path on the designated area.

**Table 2. Screening of paths passing through Special Protection Areas (SPA)**

SPA Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SPA Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
<b>Cnuic agus Cladach Mhuile (Mull coast and hills) SPA</b>	Cnuic agus Cladach Mhuile SPA - Golden Eagle	Golden eagle overwinter survival is influenced by carrion availability whilst live prey availability influences eagle productivity. High densities of domestic livestock and/or wild deer on this site ensure plentiful supplies of carrion. However, in some areas high herbivore densities suppress vegetation and therefore degrade the habitat necessary to sustain wild prey numbers. Management measures that address grazing pressures are being developed. Inappropriate design and management of forestry or native woodland could reduce eagle foraging areas but this is controlled through Woodland Grant Schemes and liaison with managers. Human activities that could cause disturbance (e.g. deer stalking, recreational pursuits) are currently at levels compatible with eagle interests. Provision of advice and funding to landowners and recreation groups plus existing legislation prevents serious disturbance. A Management Scheme is currently being developed for the whole of the site.	<b>Ardmeanach</b>	<b>C042(a)</b>	Burg Walk, Mull	3,423	No	Existing vehicle track and trod paths visible on Ariel Photography. This is a route to the Fossil Tree promoted by the NTS. Disturbance of Golden Eagles is unlikely since the path is already used by people. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C042(b)</b>	Burg Walk, Mull	6,059	No	Existing vehicle track and trod paths visible on Ariel Photography. This is a route to the Fossil Tree promoted by the NTS. Disturbance of Golden Eagles is unlikely since the path is already used by people. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island and accommodation. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>South Mull Coast</b>	<b>C400</b>	Carsaig Arches, Carsaig Bay, Mull	1,481	Yes - C class	Popular path along the coast shown on OS Map at 1:25,000 a vehicular track leading to a local farm. The path follows the shore above the high water mark in an area that is not likely to be feeding habitat for golden eagles. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island and accommodation. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C401</b>	Carsaig Arches, Mull	4,947	No	Popular path along the coast shown on OS Map at 1:25,000. The path follows the shore above the high water mark in an area that is not likely to be feeding habitat for golden eagles. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>None Recorded</b>	<b>C039</b>	Croggan to Portfield, Loch Spelvie	1,990	No	The path follows an existing vehicle track serving two houses and is not likely to be valuable feeding habitat for golden eagles. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>

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SPA Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SPA Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
<b>Coll (corncrake)</b>	Coll(Corncrake) SPA - breeding Corncrake	The site is predominately under low intensity agriculture, which is crucial to maintaining the corncrake interest. Part of the site is covered by an RSPB Reserve which is managed principally for corncrakes. In addition, to help maintain corncrake habitat and encourage sympathetic management for the birds a management scheme has been introduced specifically to underpin the SPA classification.	<b>North East Coll Lochs and Moors</b>	<b>C018</b>	Torastan to beach, Coll	<b>579</b>	No	This path crosses an area of grazing to reach a beach and is likely to be popular with visitors. It is entirely to the north west of the public road whilst the designated area is to the south east of the road. The path is only included because it falls within the buffer around the SPA. Any increase in disturbance of corncrakes and other ground nesting birds will be limited.  The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>Crossapol and Gunna</b>	<b>C012</b>	RSPB car park to Ben Feall, Coll	<b>1,759</b>	Part - Unclassified	The southern section of this path follows the public road for 600m with the remaining half of the path following a farm track across existing grazing. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in the disturbance of corncrakes and other ground nesting birds, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C014</b>	Crossapol Bay, Coll	<b>3,714</b>	No	Path following a farm track across an area of sand dunes, recorded on OS maps used by the residents to access Crossapol farm. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and the availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in the disturbance of corncrakes and other ground nesting birds or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C015(a)</b>	RSPB Car Park to Port na Luing, Isle of Coll	<b>150</b>	Part - Unclassified	This path is only 150m in length and is for the most part a public road leading to the RSPB Car Park. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and the availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in the disturbance of corncrakes and other ground nesting birds or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C480</b>	C15 amendment, Tiree	519	No	Path across intensively grazed land close to farm buildings, which follows the boundary of the designated area for a short distance. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and the availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in the disturbance of corncrakes and other ground nesting birds or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>Totamore Dunes and Loch Ballyhaugh</b>	<b>C016</b>	Totronald to Hogh Bay, Coll	<b>912</b>	No	Substantial farm track across an area of grazing land, part of a circular walking & cycle route around the island. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and the availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in the disturbance of corncrakes and other ground nesting birds or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>None Recorded</b>	<b>C015(b)</b>	RSPB Car Park to Port na Luing, Isle of Coll	752	No	Existing vehicle track to house passes on opposite side of the field boundary beside the SPA but does not enter the designated area. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and the availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in the disturbance of corncrakes and other ground nesting birds or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C507</b>	Uig to Breachacha beach, Coll	1,003	No	Path following track to farm proposed for deletion by the Council. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and the availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in the disturbance of corncrakes and other ground nesting birds or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C507 (amended )</b>	Uig to Breachacha beach, Coll	263	No	Path close to Garden House proposed for deletion by the Council. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and the availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in the disturbance of corncrakes and other ground nesting birds or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>

**Table 2. Screening of paths passing through Special Protection Areas (SPA)**

SPA Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SPA Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
<b>Glen Etive and Glen Fyne</b>	Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA - Breeding Golden Eagles	<p>Golden eagle survival overwinter is influenced by carrion availability whilst availability of live prey has an influence on breeding success. High densities of livestock in some parts of this site ensure plentiful supplies of carrion but they can suppress vegetation and therefore degrade the habitat necessary to sustain wild live prey numbers. The site is considered to be robust and in reasonable condition, although parts of it are suffering from overgrazing. These issues are being addressed through the Scotland Rural Development Programme. The main land use on the site is deer stalking. Parts of Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA are known to be considered by developers as suitable for wind farm development. Development proposals are considered via statutory process and Scottish Natural Heritage has a role in ensuring that the requirements of the EC Birds and Habitats Directives are met. Disturbance by hill walkers is not considered to be a threat at current levels but any increase should be monitored appropriately.</p> <p>There are hydro developments and forest restructuring/felling is planned or consented, close to/within the site. Proposals are assessed to ensure that the requirements of the EC Birds and Habitats Directives are met.</p>	<b>Ard Trilleachan</b>	<b>C156(d)</b>	Bonawe to Glen Etive (modified)	2,978	No	Existing Vehicular Track, path and claimed Public Right of Way shown as a track or path on OS mapping at 1:25,000 scale. Disturbance by hill walkers is not considered to be a threat to the SPA at current levels. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, in remote area such as this and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>Ard Trilleachan Doire Darach</b>	<b>C408</b>	Glen Etive, new section	647	No	Existing Public Right of Way shown as a path on OS mapping at 1:25,000 scale. Disturbance by hill walkers is not considered to be a threat to the SPA at current levels. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, in remote area such as this and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C193(b)</b>	Tyndrum, Bridge of Orchy, Inveroran Hotel	<b>4,278</b>	Yes - C class	This path follows a public road through the SPA. Disturbance by hill walkers is not considered to be a threat to the SPA at current levels. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, in remote area such as this and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>Doire Darach None Recorded</b>	<b>C193(c)</b>	Tyndrum, Bridge of Orchy, Inveroran Hotel	3,588	Yes - C class	Existing track show on OS map, part of West Highland Way. Disturbance by hill walkers is not considered to be a threat to the SPA at current levels. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, in remote area such as this and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C156(c)</b>	Bonawe to Glen Etive (modified)	<b>3,143</b>	No	This path follows a forestry track which marks the southern boundary of the SPA for a short distance. Disturbance by hill walkers is not considered to be a threat to the SPA at current levels. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, in remote area such as this and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>None Recorded</b>	<b>C193(a)</b>	Tyndrum, Bridge of Orchy, Inveroran Hotel	<b>896</b>	Yes - C class	This path follows a public road which marks the boundary of the SPA. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, in remote area such as this and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C193(b)</b>	Tyndrum, Bridge of Orchy, Inveroran Hotel	4,581	No	The West Highland Way is a promoted path which already attracts 30,000 users per annum. The majority of the path follows existing paths and tracks recorded on OS maps and will only have a very minor impact upon the SPA. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C194</b>	Druimliart Memorial, Inveroran, Bridge of Orchy	1,125	No	Existing vehicular track follows boundary of SPA for a short distance. Disturbance by hill walkers is not considered to be a threat to the SPA at current levels. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, in remote area such as this and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C202</b>	Clachan, Cairndow (Tree house path)	<b>539</b>	No	This path is outside the area designated as an SPA close to the Garden Centre and visitor facilities at Cairndow. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C204(a)</b>	Glen Fyne, Cairndow	<b>3,259</b>	No	This path, which is a claimed Public Right of Way, follows a private road which marks the boundary of the SPA and provides vehicular access to the Hydro scheme further up Glen Fyne. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C204(b)</b>	Glen Fyne, Cairndow	<b>1,854</b>	No	This path, which is a claimed Public Right of Way, follows a private road which marks the boundary of the SPA and provides vehicular access to the Hydro scheme further up Glen Fyne. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C204(c)</b>	Glen Fyne, Cairndow	3,162	No	This path, which is a claimed Public Right of Way, follows a private road which marks the boundary of the SPA and provides vehicular access to the Hydro scheme further up Glen Fyne. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C517(b)</b>	Inverawe to Glenkinglass	<b>3,508</b>	No	Existing vehicular tracks and claimed Public Right of Way following the boundary of the SPA. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C517(c)</b>	Inverawe to Glen Kinglass	<b>2,443</b>	No	Existing vehicular tracks and claimed Public Right of Way following the boundary of the SPA. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>NP020</b>	Forest Lodge, Black Mount Estate	5,039	No	This is a section of the West Highland Way on Black Mount Estate and attracts c30,000 walkers per annum and follows the former county road, which is still used by the estate. Disturbance by hill walkers is not considered to be a threat to the SPA at current levels. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, in remote area such as this and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>



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<b>Gruinart Flats, Islay</b>	Gruinart Flats, Islay - Breeding and Non-breeding Chough, Greenland Barnacle geese, Greenland white-fronted geese, Light-bellied geese	<p>The most significant threat to the interest is agricultural intensification. SNH has encouraged the maintenance of existing practices sympathetic to the interest through its own management agreements and through the encouragement of management agreements under Agri Environment schemes.</p> <p>Maintain the populations of barnacle, Greenland white-fronted and light-bellied Brent geese by encouraging appropriate grassland management under the Islay Local Goose Management Scheme and ensure that minimal disturbance occurs on roost areas. Increase the populations of chough by continuing with current grassland management practices, especially cattle grazing on key areas and by developing a scheme with land managers to provide continued support. Monitor the condition of the sand dune feature and ensure balance between chough interest and dune habitat is maintained by careful management of grazing levels.</p> <p>Maintain and improve existing habitats including coastal grassland, semi-natural woodland, and heather moors through grazing management, avoiding drainage and uncontrolled burning. This will benefit chough, corncrake, whooper swans, Greenland white-fronted and Greenland barnacle geese. Maintain suitable nesting and roosting sites and habitat for all of the notified, wintering and breeding, bird species within the designated area. Minimise disturbance of nesting and roosting birds by low-key management of recreation and by giving due consideration to any disturbance effects in management decisions; low levels of disturbance also aid wintering wildfowl. Liaison with landowners, local anglers and other users will help minimise potential habitat disturbance.</p>	<b>Gruinart Flats</b>	<b>C061(a)</b>	Loch Gruinart dunes	154	No	Farm track visible on Ariel maps and OS mapping, a claimed Public Right of Way. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C061(b)</b>	Loch Gruinart dunes	176	No	Farm track visible on Ariel maps and OS mapping, a claimed Public Right of Way. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C061(c)</b>	Loch Gruinart dunes	1,327	No	Farm track visible on Ariel maps and OS mapping, a claimed Public Right of Way. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C061(d)</b>	Loch Gruinart dunes	676	No	Farm track and path visible on Ariel maps and OS mapping, a claimed Public Right of Way. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance of geese, choughs and other ground nesting birds, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C061(e)</b>	Loch Gruinart dunes	1,548	No	Farm track visible on Ariel maps and OS mapping, a claimed Public Right of Way. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance of geese, choughs and other ground nesting birds, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C061(f)</b>	Loch Gruinart dunes	362	No	Path visible on Ariel maps and OS mapping, a claimed Public Right of Way. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance of geese, choughs and other ground nesting birds, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C061(g)</b>	Loch Gruinart dunes	1,900	No	Farm track visible on Ariel maps and OS mapping, a claimed Public Right of Way. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance of geese, choughs and other ground nesting birds, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C511(ame nded)</b>	Ardnave Point, Gruinart	<b>1,946</b>	No	Existing signposted path following farm track and then the foreshore already well used by residents and visitors. Designation of this path supported by SNH and RSPB on line proposed. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance of geese, choughs and other ground nesting birds, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>Rinns of Islay</b>	<b>C054</b>	Ardnave Point, Gruinart	1,898	No	Vehicle track recorded on OS mapping visible on Ariel mapping, a claimed Public Right of Way. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance of geese, choughs and other ground nesting birds, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C511</b>	Ardnave Point, Loch Gruinart, Islay	4,887	No	Path route originally proposed but now amended to follow the coast avoiding areas where birds breed and additional way marking and advisory signage will be provided to ensure people keep to the route reducing disturbance on this RSPB reserve. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance of geese, choughs and other ground nesting birds, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>

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SPA Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SPA Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
Inner Clyde	Inner Clyde SPA - Non-Breeding Redshank	<p>The site consists almost entirely of tidal mudflats with a shoreline of unmanaged semi-natural coastal vegetation. The land adjoining the SPA comprises about 50% agricultural land, 20% designated recreational areas, 20% abutting road and railway embankments and 10% industrial land. Industrial activity is not as intensive as it was formerly, with the major installations now comprising a large container terminal at Greenock and a petroleum storage area at Bowling. Contingency plans are in place in case of oil spills. The channel of the Clyde is maintained at 10m depth (high tide) by dredging although at current levels this is not thought to conflict with the nature conservation interest of the site. Three sewage works adjoin the site. Longer-term improvements in water quality may influence the overall productivity of the site in future years. A strategy for monitoring future changes is under consideration.</p> <p>Maintain the extent and condition of saltmarsh habitat by ensuring that it is protected from damaging impacts including coastal squeeze due to erosion, the decline in grazing and development, coastal protection etc. Maintain the extent and forage value of intertidal sand and mudflats by minimising or avoiding mechanical damage, dredging and harmful pollution which may affect the availability of suitable foraging habitat for wildfowl. Maintain or increase the populations of wintering waterfowl and waders by minimising disturbance from development or inappropriate recreational use of adjoining land. It is important that any land management practices – existing and proposed – and any land use changes are carefully planned to avoid disturbance to wintering birds. SNH will assist land managers and others in planning existing or proposed land uses in a manner sensitive to the needs of the natural features. Access to the site and adjoining land should follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC) to ensure disturbance to the wintering birds is minimised. Informal bait and cockle collecting is a frequent occurrence, and may cause temporary and localised disturbance to roosting or feeding wildfowl. At current levels, this activity is unlikely to have an adverse effect on the distribution and abundance of important bird species.</p>	Inner Clyde	C264(a)	Ardmore Point Circular, Cardross	767	Yes - A814	Adopted Public Road for its whole length. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C264(b)	Ardmore Point Circular, Cardross	3,015	Yes - Unclassified	Popular local path around Ardmore Point, shown on OS map which follows the landward boundary of the SPA. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path may lead to a small increase in the number of users, however this is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
				*C510	Cardross shore path	2,243	No	Popular local path shown on OS map which follows the landward boundary of the SPA. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path may lead to a small increase in the number of users, however this is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect*
				C518	Moss road, Cardross	1,807	Yes - A814	Existing Track amended so that it no longer enters the SPA and gives access to a woodland area. The path is a claimed Right of Way however it is possible that it may not be designated as a Core Path following the Local Inquiry because it would require the public to use a private level crossing. The path is already used at a low level, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users because it does not lead anywhere, and it is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
				D017	Ardoch to Dumbarton shore path	1,141	No	Existing path along the shore identified as a Public Right of Way which runs along the edge of farmland, parallel to the northern boundary of the SPA and does not enter it. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users because it is difficult to get to and is not part of a network at present. Designation is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in use therefore any increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat is not likely to be significant.	No Likely Significant Effect
<p><b>* Possible In-Combination Impact in conjunction with the Local Development Plan</b></p> <p>The Local Development Plan proposes a housing allocation H 2001 at Geilston Farm, Cardross has a notional capacity of some 146 houses. The allocation is not located immediately adjacent to the Inner Clyde SPA but is located on the edge of the settlement of Cardross. The Inner Clyde SPA extends to an area of some 1824 hectares of inter-tidal foreshore on both banks of the estuary of the River Clyde. Although the site is some 0.6km from the boundary of the SPA and will not have a direct impact, it is connected to the shore by a proposed Core Path (C510) that would lead walkers towards the shore and then eastwards towards Cardross, a circular route of some 2.4km which is likely to be popular with residents including dog walkers from the new housing allocation. The increase in recreational activity, particularly with dogs could have a significant impact on the qualifying interest (wintering Redshank). The Core Paths Plan indicates mitigation through the provision of signage asking dog owners to keep their dogs on leads, which has already been erected. It is considered that there should be additional mitigation measures put in place in respect of the proposed housing allocation as follows.</p> <p><b>Mitigation</b></p> <p>It is proposed to add the following statement to the mini-brief for the site contained in the Draft Action Programme which is a component part of Supplementary Guidance:</p> <p><b>“For planning permission to be granted, development proposals must ensure that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity and qualifying interests of the Inner Clyde Special Protection Area/Ramsar site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, through recreational disturbance (in particular dog exercising). To demonstrate this, a Recreation Management Plan should be prepared to accompany the planning application, for the approval of the planning authority in consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage”.</b></p> <p>It should also be noted that any development proposals considered for the allocation would be required to comply with all other relevant policies within the LDP including policies to protect the integrity of Natura sites (SG LDP ENV 2 – Development Impact on European Sites).</p> <p>In view of the foregoing, it is considered that the housing allocation H 2001 will not have a significant effect on the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of the Inner Clyde SPA subject to the mitigation measures described above.</p>									

**Table 2. Screening of paths passing through Special Protection Areas (SPA)**

SPA Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SPA Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
<b>Jura, Scarba and the Garvellachs</b>	Jura, Scarba and the Garvellachs SPA - Aggregations of Breeding Birds - Golden Eagles	Golden eagle survival overwinter is influenced by carrion availability whilst availability of live prey has an influence on breeding success. A large population of wild deer on this site ensures plentiful supplies of carrion. The main land management practice within the site is deer stalking. There are several renewable energy developments (wind and hydro) planned within and out with the site boundary and Scottish Natural Heritage is working closely with the Planning Authority to ensure continuing compliance with the requirements of the EC Birds and Habitats Directives. Current levels of access (e.g. deer stalking, recreational pursuits) are considered to be compatible with eagle interests.  There are renewable energy developments (wind and hydro) planned and consented close to/within the site. Proposals are assessed to ensure that the requirements of the EC Birds and Habitats Directives are met.	<b>Kinuachdrach</b>	<b>C053</b>	Corryvreckan	10,768	No	Vehicle track as far as house at Kinuachdrachd, then path recorded on OS mapping, visible on Ariel mapping. This is a well-known route and already publicised. The current level of use by hill walkers is not considered to be impacting on the eagles present on the SPA. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>West Coast of Jura</b>	<b>C422</b>	Evans Walk, Glen Batrick, Jura	8,487	No	Popular approach to the west coast of Jura shown on 1:25,000 OS Mapping. This is a well-known route and already publicised. The current level of use by hill walkers is not considered to be impacting on the eagles present on the SPA. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>None Recorded</b>	<b>C049</b>	Feolin Ferry to Cnocbreak village	4,530	Yes - A846	Existing vehicle track visible on Ariel Photography and OS Map serving Ornsary Farm - Passes the site of a major Hydro scheme. This is a well-known route and already publicised. The current level of use by hill walkers is not considered to be impacting on the eagles present on the SPA. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C051(b)</b>	Keils and Cill Earnabail	<b>782</b>	Yes - A846	Path along public road entirely out with the SPA. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C052(a)</b>	Corran River/Sands	<b>1,292</b>	Yes - A846	Path along public road entirely out with the SPA. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C420</b>	Three Arch Bridge to the Paps of Jura	3,940	No	Popular approach to the Paps of Jura visible on Ariel Mapping. The current level of use by hill walkers is not considered to be impacting on the eagles present on the SPA. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C423</b>	Tarbert to Loch Tarbert, Jura	1,516	Yes - A846	Existing vehicle track shown on OS Maps. This is a well-known route and already publicised. The current level of use by hill walkers is not considered to be impacting on the eagles present on the SPA. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
<b>Kintyre Goose Roosts</b>	Kintyre Goose Roosts - Non-breeding Greenland white fronted geese	There are no known significant threats to the interest on the site at present. A recent draft research report has indicated that further monitoring of the site is required in order to determine the significance of disturbance that may occur through forestry activities (all 5 lochs are adjacent to forest plantations) and wildfowling. SNH will address any significant threats brought to light by such monitoring through management agreements with private owners and occupiers and through liaison and agreement with other competent authorities. It is necessary to ensure that the suitability of the site for the wintering population of Greenland white-fronted geese is maintained by protecting the shore and roost habitat from any reduction. It is also necessary to ensure disturbance of roosting geese by forestry, fish farming and wildfowling is minimised.	<b>Kintyre Goose Lochs</b>	<b>C088(j)</b>	Campbeltown to Cloanaig	5,198	No	The Kintyre Way follows a Forestry Road that skirts edge of SPA, any disturbance will be limited to a very small proportion of the area and will be at an insignificant level during the winter months. The path is already widely promoted, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C088(k)</b>	Campbeltown to Cloanaig	<b>4,266</b>	Part - Unclassified	The Kintyre Way follows a Forestry Road that skirts edge of SPA, any disturbance will be limited to a very small proportion of the area and will be at an insignificant level during the winter months. The path is already widely promoted, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>



Table 2. Screening of paths passing through Special Protection Areas (SPA)

SPA Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SPA Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
Laggan, Islay	Laggan, Islay - Non-breeding Greenland Barnacle geese, Greenland white-fronted geese	The most significant threat to the interest is agricultural intensification. SNH has encouraged the maintenance of existing practices sympathetic to the interest through its own management agreements and through the encouragement of management agreements under Agri-Environment schemes. It will be necessary to maintain the suitability of the site for the internationally important wintering populations of Greenland white-fronted and barnacle geese in order to meet national and international obligations. The suitability of the site will be maintained by managing the geese roosting and feeding areas within Laggan Peninsula and Bay for the wintering populations of Greenland barnacle and white-fronted geese. It is also important that the area remains relatively undisturbed with little recreational pressure to enable the continued usage of the area by geese. The Airport lies adjacent to the site although air traffic disturbs the geese while feeding, airport operations do not have a significant impact on the site.	Laggan Peninsula and Bay	*C068(c)	Bowmore to Saltpan Point circular	641	No	Path along foreshore. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect *
				*C068(d)	Bowmore to Saltpan Point circular	4,923	Short Section on Unclassified Road	Path along foreshore and farm tracks, any disturbance will be limited to a very small proportion of the area and the site which has not been identified as being vulnerable to recreational pressure. The existing vehicle track is visible on Ariel Photography and OS Map and part has been claimed as a Public Right of Way. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect *
				*C068(e)	Bowmore to Saltpan Point circular	1,187	Yes - Unclassified	The entire length of the path follows an Adopted Public Road for the whole of its length. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect *
				C069	Laggan Bay dunes, Bowmore	3,043	Part on Unclassified road	Existing minor road, farm track, and path. The existing vehicle track is visible on Ariel Photography and OS Map and has been identified as a Public Right of Way. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C070	Glenegedale to Laggan Bay dunes	2,388	No - Private Road	Existing Vehicular Track serving a quarry; recreational use is likely to have a much less significant impact on the SPA than vehicles accessing the quarry and quarrying activity. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
* Possible In-Combination Impact in conjunction with the Local Development Plan									
The Local Development Plan proposes a Mixed Use Allocation (MU3002 /MAST 1/6) 190m to the north of the SPA immediately south of Bowmore. The 10.64Ha of land will comprise 90 homes, 1.9Ha of industrial business use, and 2Ha of open space/community use. There is a concern that this will increase recreational use of the Core Paths identified above. The increased use of the paths within the SPA was identified as having the potential to lead to increased disturbance of geese feeding and roosting in this area. The Habitat Regulations Appraisal for the Local Development Plan Pages 64 – 67 discusses this in more detail. It has been concluded that although it is not technically possible to close a Core Path the Council will erect signage advising walkers to use alternative routes during the wintering period.									
In addition planning consent has recently been granted for a new distillery at Gartbreck where visitors may add to pressure on the paths. However, it has been accepted that the CPP mitigation measures (path signage) will not result in an adverse effect on the SPA, and SNH had advised that the distillery proposals would not require the submission of an HRA in respect of the proposals. In order to ensure that the impacts of recreational use (principally walking) are properly considered in relation to the SPA it is suggested that appropriate mitigation measures should include the submission of a Recreation Management Plan with any planning application(s) or masterplan.									
Mitigation									
It is proposed to add the following statement to the mini-brief for the site contained in the Draft Action Programme which is a component part of Supplementary Guidance:									
“For planning permission to be granted, development proposals must ensure that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity and qualifying interests of the Laggan Special Protection Area, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, through recreational disturbance. To demonstrate this, a Recreation Management Plan should be prepared to accompany the planning application, for the approval of the planning authority in consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage”.									
It should also be noted that any development proposals considered for the allocation would be required to comply with all other relevant policies within the LDP including policies to protect the integrity of Natura sites (SG LDP ENV 2 – Development Impact on European Sites).									
It is concluded that the mixed use Allocation 3002 and associated Masterplan MAST 1/6 will not have a significant effect on the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of the Laggan SPA subject to the mitigation measures described above. However it should also be recorded that the proposals represent a <b>minor residual effect</b> that should be taken into account for later in-combination assessment of other plans or projects.									
North Colonsay and Western Cliffs	North Colonsay and Western Cliffs SAC & SPA -Birds - aggregations of breeding Seabirds, Guillemots, Kittiwake, Chough breeding and Chough non-breeding	The chough population on the site is threatened by the intensification of agriculture. The maintenance of traditional agricultural practices is encouraged on the site through payments available through Agri-Environment schemes and through SNH management agreements with owner/occupiers. It will be necessary to maintain the population and distribution of chough populations within the site by avoiding excessive disturbance of nesting chough and maintaining the coastal grassland habitats.	North Colonsay	D029	Balnahard Beach, Colonsay	5,220	No	The majority of this path follows existing agricultural tracks recorded on OS Maps. The path is already promoted to residents and visitors. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance of Choughs and other ground nesting birds) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users on Colonsay, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect



**Table 2. Screening of paths passing through Special Protection Areas (SPA)**

SPA Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SPA Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
<b>Oronsay and South Colonsay</b>	Ornsary and South Colonsay - Breeding Birds Choughs and Corncrake	<p>Oronsay and South Colonsay SPA is mostly a mixed livestock farming area. The Oronsay part of the site is an RSPB nature reserve managed mainly for chough and corncrake. The Colonsay part of the site includes two farms which have areas of in bye grassland and hill and coastal grasslands which are extensively grazed.</p> <p>Parts of the site are popular with walkers, and recreational activity largely focuses on the more easily accessible beaches, but it is unlikely that these activities result in disturbance to chough or corncrake.</p> <p>The chough may be vulnerable to alterations in the grazing regime resulting in changes to sward height and composition, and potential reduction in animal dung, important for the invertebrate populations on which chough feed. An RSPB reserve management plan is in place for Oronsay which maintains a grazing regime to manage the dune grassland and Machair in a condition suitable for feeding chough. On Colonsay there are no management agreements currently in place but SNH are exploring appropriate grassland management options under the SRDP Rural Priorities Scheme to maintain cattle management for the benefit of chough.</p> <p>Chough generally nest in natural sites within the SPA. There is one artificial nest within a building which is currently disused.</p> <p>Corncrake may be vulnerable to changes in farming practice, particularly changes in mowing regimes on improved grassland and a reduction in the areas of early and late cover due to grazing changes. RSPB manage the in bye grassland on Oronsay for corncrake and work with another farmer, on the part of Colonsay which supports most of the corncrake, to manage corncrake habitat. There are also options under the SRDP Rural Priorities Scheme to encourage management for the benefit of corncrake.</p>	<b>Oronsay and South Colonsay</b>	<b>D028</b>	Ardsknish, Colonsay	4,581	No	Existing promoted path already well used by residents and visitors. Majority of the path follows existing paths and tracks recorded on OS maps. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance of Choughs, Corncrakes and other ground nesting birds) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to Colonsay. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C045(a)</b>	The Priory - Ornsary	1,927	No	Existing vehicle track visible on Ariel Photography and OS Map serving Ornsary Farm. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance of Choughs, Corncrakes and other ground nesting birds) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to Colonsay. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C045(b)</b>	The Priory - Ornsary	1,845	Yes - Unclassified	Existing vehicle track visible on Ariel Photography and OS Map crossing an area of foreshore to link Colonsay with Ornsary Farm and RSPB Reserve. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance of Choughs, Corncrakes and other ground nesting birds) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to Colonsay. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C046</b>	Ardsknish, Colonsay	<b>1,979</b>	No	Existing promoted path already well used by residents and visitors. Majority of the path follows existing paths and tracks recorded on OS maps. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance of Choughs, Corncrakes and other ground nesting birds) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to Colonsay. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>D028</b>	Ardsknish, Colonsay	4,581	No	Existing promoted path already well used by residents and visitors. Majority of the path follows existing paths and tracks recorded on OS maps. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance of Choughs, Corncrakes and other ground nesting birds) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to Colonsay. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>

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SPA Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SPA Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
Rinns of Islay	Rinns of Islay- Breeding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common Scooter</li> <li>Corncrake</li> <li>Chough</li> <li>Hen Harrier</li> </ul> Non-Breeding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chough</li> <li>Greenland white-fronted geese</li> <li>Whooper Swan</li> </ul>	<p>The Rinns is a large and complex site. Much of the SPA interest is sustained by low intensity agricultural activity. Elements of the interest are threatened by intensification of farming, drainage, inappropriate grazing levels and afforestation. Currently the pressure of change is relatively low and the extensive nature of the site lends a certain robustness to the interest. SNH has around 30 management agreements with owner/occupiers to encourage management of the site which is beneficial to the SPA interest. Other management incentives are available through Agri-Environment Schemes.</p> <p>The factors that influence the site include the need to manage habitats for chough by ensuring cattle graze the area to provide short grass and cow pats with invertebrate food for the choughs as well as providing foraging and nesting sites. On the bog habitat there is a need to continue the current extensive grazing to maintain the vegetation communities present as well as providing habitat for other species. Grazing on the Rinns of Islay has to be managed to favour remnant semi-natural woodlands for a sustainable mix of scrub and open habitats. Suitable habitat for all of the notified, wintering and breeding, bird species; protect nesting and roosting sites needs to be maintained. The disturbance of nesting and roosting birds needs to be minimised through the low-key management of recreation and by giving due consideration to any disturbance effects in management decisions. The populations of Greenland white-fronted and Greenland barnacle geese need to be maintained at current levels within limits of acceptable change. Suitable habitat for whooper swans needs to be maintained by managing livestock grazing, water management and bracken. The low levels of disturbance also aid wintering wildfowl. Heather on higher ground and moors needs to be managed to regenerate and sustain a varied vegetation structure which benefits birds of prey. The lochs will also be important for birds, especially common scoter and whooper swan, other invertebrates and plants of open water bodies. To help to minimise the potential habitat disturbance it will be necessary to liaise with landowners, local anglers and other users.</p>	Rinns of Islay	C055	Saligo Bay, Kilchoman	413	No	Path to beach across grazing 413metres in length. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C056(a)	Kilchoman to Kilchianran	2,397	Yes - C class	Farm track and well defined path visible on Ariel maps and OS mapping. Southern section of this path skirts the boundary of the SPA and is a claimed Public Right of Way. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C056(b)	Kilchoman to Kilchianran	1,578	No	Farm track and well defined path visible on Ariel maps and OS mapping. Southern section of this path skirts the boundary of the SPA and is a claimed Public Right of Way. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C057	Octofad to Portnahaven, Rhinns of Islay	3,424	Yes - Unclassified	Adopted Public Road. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C058(a)	Portnahaven circular	1,811	Yes - Unclassified	Half of this path is on a public road with the remainder being a path on the foreshore or grazing land and is visible on Ariel maps. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C058(b)	Portnahaven circular	3,001	Yes - Unclassified	Adopted Public Road which is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C058(c)	Portnahaven circular	596	Yes - Unclassified	Adopted Public Road which is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C060	Uiskentuie to Traigh an Luig the Strand	2,514	No	Path following narrow strip of land between road and foreshore close to southern boundary of SPA. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C512	Octofad to Portnahave extension	2,806	Yes - Unclassified	Adopted Public Road which is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
				NP025	Henderson Croft, Portnahaven, Islay	394	Yes - Unclassified	Existing Farm/ Residential Track which is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
				NP026	Portnahaven backlands, Islay	408	No	Path proposed for deletion by the Council. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect

**Table 2. Screening of paths passing through Special Protection Areas (SPA)**

SPA Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SPA Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
<b>Sleibhtean agus Cladach Thiriodh (Tiree Wetlands and Coast)</b>	<p>Sleibhtean agus Cladach Thiriodh (Tiree Wetlands and Coast) –</p> <p>Breeding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dunlin</li> <li>Oystercatcher</li> <li>Redshank</li> <li>Ringed Plover</li> </ul> <p>Non-breeding;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greenland White-fronted geese</li> <li>Greenland Barnacle geese</li> <li>Ringed Plover</li> <li>Turnstone</li> </ul>	<p>Sheep and/or cattle grazing is the main land use over most of the site; the continuation of low-intensity grazing regimes will help to maintain the special interest of the site. Crofters undertake occasional ditch creation or clearance on the wet moorland areas, and in some cases this is likely to affect the qualifying interests. However this will continue to be addressed through management agreements or agri-environment schemes as necessary.</p> <p>Groundwater extraction for public use takes place from Loch a'Phuill and its vicinity and could have a localised impact on the qualifying interests; this issue is addressed through discussion with the local water authority. Small-scale sand and gravel extraction takes place from intertidal and Machair areas, and is locally impacting on the qualifying interest. However, this issue is being addressed through the development of an aggregates strategy by a partnership between SNH, the local authority and islanders. Much of the site is entered into an agri-environment scheme which promotes overall conservation management.</p> <p>The factors that influence the site include the need to manage the habitat to maintain breeding and wintering bird populations on the site. Heavier grazing on the dry Machair west of the loch allows grassland waders to feed and breed, whilst lower levels of grazing in the wetter areas provides cover for nesting wetland waders and waterfowl, plus winter forage for Greenland White-fronted Geese. The breeding bird colonies of the Ceann a' Mhara cliffs and around the loch, as well as the wintering geese, are sensitive to disturbance. Excessive areas of bare sand in the Machair and sand dune complex caused by vehicular traffic, parked cars and livestock disturbance should be avoided. Access for recreational activities may damage the habitat and species. Activities that have the potential to destroy habitats include sand yachting, windsurfing, trampling, and off road car parking around Loch Bhasapoll, Tràigh Thodhrasdail, and Tràigh Chornaig. Disturbance to nesting sites should be avoided by suitably managing sand surfing, foot traffic from recreational usage or off road car parking.</p>	<b>Ceann a' Mhara to Loch a' Phuill</b>	<b>C326</b>	Barrapol to Balephuill Bay, Tiree	<b>1,603</b>	No	Path leading from the waste water treatment works along an existing farm track to the beach and then along the foreshore. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C476</b>	C3 extension, Loch a Phuill, Tiree	110	No	Very short path across intensively grazed land close to water treatment works. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>Hough Bay and Balevullin Machair</b>	<b>C006</b>	Balevullin to Hough, Tiree	<b>1,811</b>	Part - Unclassified	Path following a public road and then a farm track across the Machair leading to the beach. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat. availability of accommodation for visitors to the island and accommodation.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C475</b>	C5-C6 extension Hough Bay, Tiree	<b>921</b>	No	Path across the Machair parallel to the beach visible on Ariel mapping. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
			<b>Sleibhtean agus Cladach Thiriodh</b>	<b>C001</b>	Balinoe to Sorobaidh Bay, Tiree	<b>208</b>	No	Path across grazing land linking public road to the foreshore. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C007</b>	Balephetrish to Vaul via The Ringing Stone, Tiree	4,474	No	Parts of this path follow existing tracks across grazing land. The route is already promoted in guidebooks. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C008</b>	Loch Aulaig to Gott Bay, Tiree	2,858	Yes - B8069	Existing vehicle track following the edge of the SPA. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C009</b>	Salum to Miodar, Tiree	<b>2,100</b>	No	Existing vehicle track following the southern edge of the SPA. The path is already used, designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat. The potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island and accommodation.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C010</b>	Caolas to Port Ban, Tiree	<b>1,600</b>	Part - Unclassified	Public Road and then vehicle track leading to house at Port Ban. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>
				<b>C412</b>	Kilkenneth, Tiree	826	No	Popular path to the coast shown on OS Map at 1:10,000. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect</b>



**Table 2. Screening of paths passing through Special Protection Areas (SPA)**

SPA Site Name	Site Name and Feature Category	SPA Vulnerabilities to Change & Factors influencing the site	Name of any Associated SSSI	Path Number	Path Name	Length in Metres	Adopted Road Part or whole	Path Attributes & Impacts	Likely Significant Effect?
The Oa	The Oa - Breeding Chough	<p>The Oa SPA is mostly a mixed livestock farming area. Most of the site is a RSPB nature reserve managed for the chough. Parts of the site are popular with walkers, and recreational activity largely focuses on footpaths and the more easily accessible beaches and caves, although breeding chough are potentially vulnerable where informal recreational activity takes place close to their cave/ building nest sites. However, these sites lie within the RSPB-managed land where visitors are encouraged to use other areas. The choughs may be vulnerable to alterations in the grazing regime resulting in changes to sward height and composition, and potential reduction in animal dung, important for the invertebrate populations on which chough feed.</p> <p>The factors that influence the site include the need to maintain the population of chough by avoiding significant disturbance to nest sites. Most of the nest sites are remote and inaccessible but any disturbance to nesting chough can affect breeding success e.g. people accessing nesting caves to camp. Managing grazing to maintain habitats in suitable condition to support invertebrate populations on which chough feed. The mosaic of habitats within the site supports a variety of invertebrates on which chough feed.</p>	The Oa	C071	Kintra to Standing Stones, Port Ellen	2,973	Yes - Unclassified	Existing track shown on OS map and Ariel map, part claimed Public Right of Way. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C073(a)	Mull of Oa circular	1,922	Yes - C class	Promoted path to monument on RSPB reserve. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
				C073(b)	Mull of Oa circular	1,520	No	Promoted path to monument on RSPB reserve. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect
Tiree (corncrake)	Tiree (Corncrake) - breeding Corncrake	<p>The site is predominantly under low intensity agriculture, which is crucial to maintaining the corncrake interest. In order to help maintain corncrake habitat and encourage sympathetic management for the birds a management scheme has been introduced to underpin the classification.</p> <p>The factors that influence the site include the need to ensure that care is taken to avoid erosion and destruction of the sand dunes by sand yachting, off road car parking, and by agricultural and recreational land use. Disturbance to nesting sites should be avoided by suitably managing sand surfing, foot traffic from recreational usage or off road car parking.</p>	Sleibhtean agus Cladach Thiriodh	C002	Mannel to Hynish, Tiree	1,875	Yes - B8066	The majority of this path is on a public road then an existing vehicle track serving three houses. The provision of a way marked route will reduce the area that is impacted by disturbance by focussing it onto one route. The path is already used and the potential for an increase in the number of people using the Core Path (and associated increase in disturbance) is restricted by existing ferry links and availability of accommodation for visitors to the island. Designation as a Core Path is unlikely to significantly increase the number of users, and is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance, or damage to foraging / nesting habitat.	No Likely Significant Effect

## Summary of the Screening of Special Protection Areas

- 9.9. All of the proposed Core Paths are already used by the public and the majority of routes follow existing roads and surfaced tracks constructed by land managers. Almost all of the proposed Core Paths are already promoted for use by the public in leaflets, books or on websites.
- 9.10. With the exception of the Inner Clyde SPA all are some distance from the busiest and most accessible areas of Argyll & Bute being away from the main urban centres, main roads and more often than not on islands or in upland areas that are difficult to reach. In addition the need to travel to the islands by air or ferry creates a further barrier to a significant increased use of the paths. For those designated sites on the islands the availability of accommodation for visitors at present frequently limits the number of visitors on the smaller islands such as Tiree, Coll and Colonsay therefore any increase in the use of paths will be limited. Therefore the Core Paths that are in remote areas will see little increase in use due to their geographical location.

There are no paths which enter the Inner Clyde SPA, three paths run close to the boundary, however the majority of the site is tidal mudflats which are difficult to walk on and the designation of the Core Paths will not encourage people to do so. This SPA was the subject of an In-Combination Impact Assessment as a result of proposals in the Local Development Plan for housing nearby.

- 9.11. Two SPAs, Laggan Islay and Inner Clyde required an In-Combination assessment which examined the combined impact of developments close to the designated areas and proposed Core Paths. These concluded that developers must prepare a Recreation Management plan so that any negative impacts are mitigated. This has been recorded in the HRA for the Local Development Plan and will be written in to the planning conditions for the sites.
- 9.12. Following consideration of the proposed Core Paths it was concluded that there was already some loss of habitat and disturbance of species attributable to the public roads, tracks used for forestry or agriculture and paths which all existed prior to the development of the Core Paths Plan. The proposed Core Paths that pass close to or through SPA's are not likely to cause any further significant increase in the disturbance of areas of habitat that are important for the protected species. Many of the paths pass along the edge of the designated areas therefore the likelihood of damage to the habitats or disturbance of species will be very low. Where the paths pass through the designated areas they have already been promoted widely and are used by land managers for agricultural and forestry management which creates a level of disturbance which is unlikely to significant increase.
- 9.13. Having carried out an Assessment of the Core Paths Plan and the individual paths on the Special Protection Areas it is concluded that there is no Likely Significant Effect upon the designated habitats and species arising from the proposal to designate the network of Core Paths recorded in the Core Paths Plan.

## **10. Summary of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Natura 2000 Sites**

- 10.1. It is concluded that the inclusion of any of the proposed routes contained within the Argyll & Bute Core Paths Plan are not likely to result in any significant adverse effects upon the integrity and qualifying interests of any Natura 2000 sites. As such, a further assessment is not required.
- 10.2. If following adoption of the Core Path Plan any of the following activities (which are out with the scope of this Plan), are proposed on paths that are close to or cross an SAC or SPA they would require a further Habitats Regulations Appraisal to ensure that the proposal will not adversely affect site integrity;
- constructing new paths,
  - upgrading existing paths,
  - changing maintenance regimes,
  - or improving promotion in ways that are likely to significantly increase path use or change the type of use.