

arran high school mountain bike club

Dyemill Skills Trails Project

Landscape Assessment

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Site Description

The site is outwith the North Arran National Scenic Area and North Arran Wild Land Area and no parts are subject to any statutory nature conservation designations. The site comprises of a 6ha strip of young broadleaved trees. The site is surrounded by on its boundary by existing footpaths and/or Forest road. The highpoint of the site lies at its southern end, with the ground falling at first gradually and then steeply to the north. The woodland is currently owned and actively managed by Forestry & Land Scotland. Mature timber was last harvested around 2010 with stumps still visible.

The site is within between 330m and 700m of the Arran Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest [SSSI] and Special Protection area [SPA] but given the separation distance between these protected areas and our proposal, the features for which these sites are designated for will not be adversely affected. Access to and from these sites will not be affected by our proposal.

Proposal Description

Skills Trails

The area at Dyemill lends itself to short, fun and repeatable trails. Emphasis has been put on learning and progression of bike handling skills for a wide range of users. The Macro layout indicates where each of the MTB trail facilities, which are described below, will be located. The facility will have three descending trails catering for varying biker abilities on an all-weather type surface. The site shall be professionally designed and built to the required standards and regulations, with the appropriate signage and detailing of trail types and grading. The trails will have easy and practical access back to a safe start point with necessary signage. The material and equipment for the trails will be sourced and hired from local contractors and materials for neighbouring quarries.

The approved skills trails plan is to comprise of:

- A re-surfaced up-trail utilising the unused existing quad trail.
- A beginners Jump Line with a variety of skills features for learning and progression.

- A blue graded easy skills line with mellow berms and progressive rollable jumps.
- A red graded technical line; tight back to back berms, hip jumps, table tops.

Climbing Trail

This is an existing section of quad track, which is to be upgraded to a safe and sustainable finish. This 2m wide, aggregate surfaced 418m section of track will take riders up the hill to join the skills trail, blue trail and red trail sections. The climbing trail is to be re-graded and topped with a layer of crushed stone.

Jump Line

This 215m section of trail should be ride-able safely by all users with an emphasis on learning and progression. Consideration should be given to multi ability options. All jumps should be rollable without the requirement for 'air'.

Blue Grade Mountain Bike Trail

This 1.2m wide aggregate surfaced section of approximately 595m blue grade cross-country mountain bike trail is designed for beginner and improving riders. The trail flows down the hill with blue grade features with speed controlled by the trail shape. Grade reversals, rollers and berms are typical features on this trail.

Red Grade Mountain Bike Trail

This 1.2m wide aggregate surfaced section of approximately 327m red grade cross country mountain bike trail provides a more technical descent than the blue grade trail. The descent will be feature rich and provide an additional challenge to the blue trail.

Asphalt Pump track

A pump track is an off road cycling facility defined as a closed loop with closely spaced rollers and rolling features with tight, bermed corners. They provide a technical learning facility for the different disciplines and are considered a place where riders go to relax, ride themselves but also to watch other riders and socialise. Made from asphalt, pump tracks are very hard wearing, weather proof and require very little maintenance. The pump track will take up a footprint of 1500m² of asphalt.

Trials area

Bike Trials is a discipline of cycling in which the rider attempts to pass through an obstacle course without setting foot to ground. All features will be sustainable, locally sourced stone or wood, and should blend into their natural forest environment.

Signage

Signage will be used to guide, educate and warn riders of the risks of the activity. Signs are a necessary component of trail management and provide the user with information that will allow them to make informed choices. Interpretation signage will focus on the educational role particularly with regard to the safe riding of different technical features and control of speed on the trail. The signage, construction with sustainable materials where

possible, will contain information on safety and trail grading and a code of conduct.

Floodlights

We intend to cover the pump track area with sustainable LED floodlights powered, initially, by a silent generator housed in discrete and secure storage with wooden cladding. In collaboration with Arran Eco Savvy, we will explore sustainable energy systems to power the floodlights as they evolve and reduce in cost. Lighting will be low level, only targeted at specific necessary areas and closely controlled in terms of operation hours to avoid unnecessary light pollution. It is anticipated lighting will be used no later than 8pm during winter months and not used during summer months.

Nature Pond

There is an existing pond on site within only 30meters of the main forest access road. We will re-generate this to improve biodiversity while acting as an accessible educational resource with interpretation panels. A wheelchair accessible path will be installed to ensure inclusive use. We will also install outdoor furniture including picnic benches.

Shelter and Associated Outdoor Furniture

We will build an eco friendly shelter using local sustainable materials. The design of this shelter will be set as an open competition aimed at university architecture students. The shelter should be large enough for groups of twenty, open to all and serve as a focal point and social hub. We anticipate it will be used to avoid heavy downpours, visiting outdoor education groups eating lunch, families gathering and relaxing by the pump track. We will site the bike repair station and other features nearby.

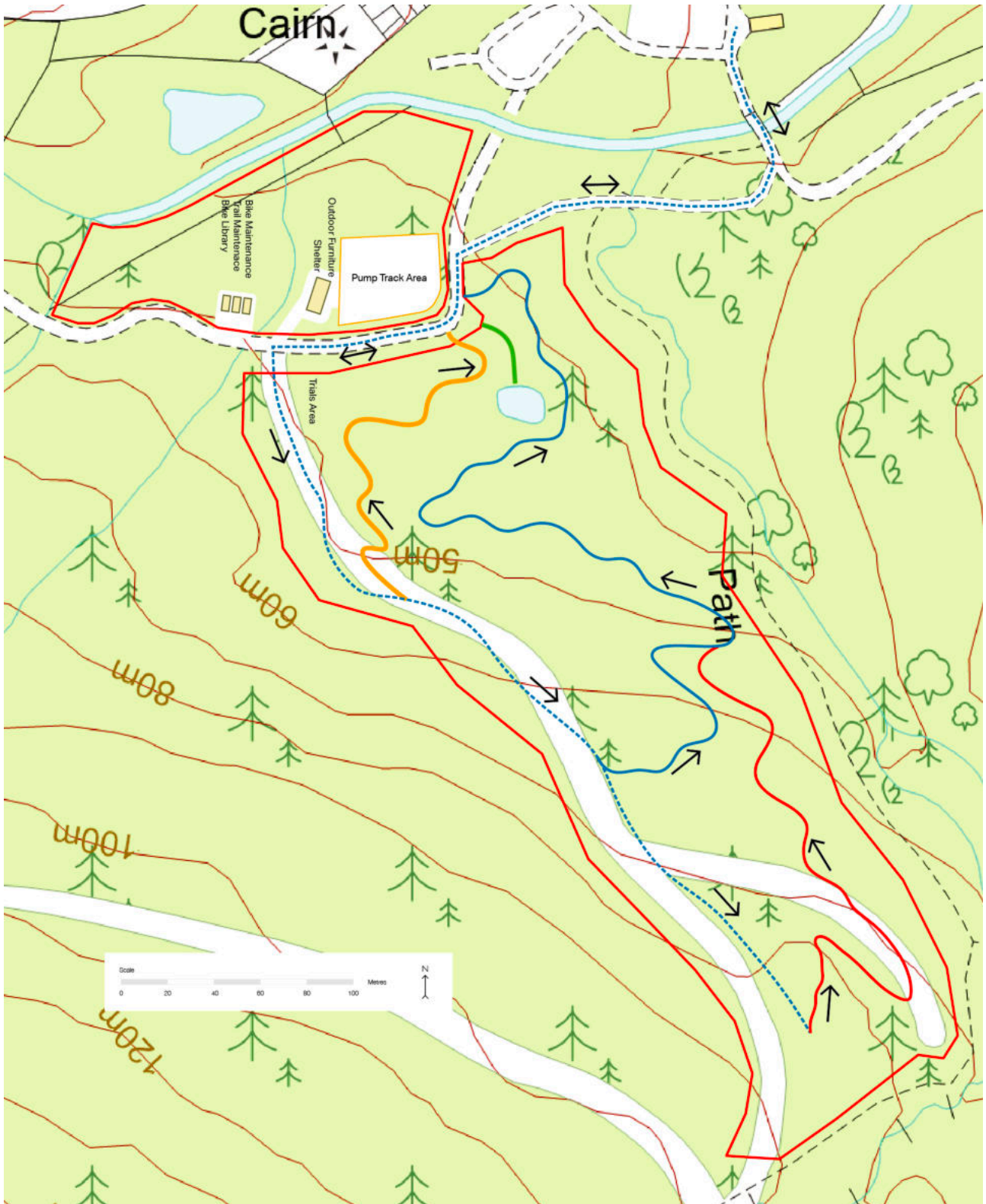
Public Bike Maintenance Resources

We will install and maintain a public bike repair station, solar powered spares vending machine and solar powered eBike charger which will also have USB sockets for charging phones which we consider essential safety devices. We will also install an eco bike wash sustainably harvesting rainwater. The bike wash will be accompanied with an interpretation board educating on biosecurity issues and promoting the use of the bike wash to clean all bikes and feet when leaving the site. Our bike wash sign will also promote the use of eco bike lubricants and bike wash detergents by linking the waste run off into Lamlash bay and the extended South Arran Marine Protected Area. The bike wash and repair facilities and generator shed will be clad in timber in keeping with the surrounding landscape.

Community Bike and Trail Maintenance Resources

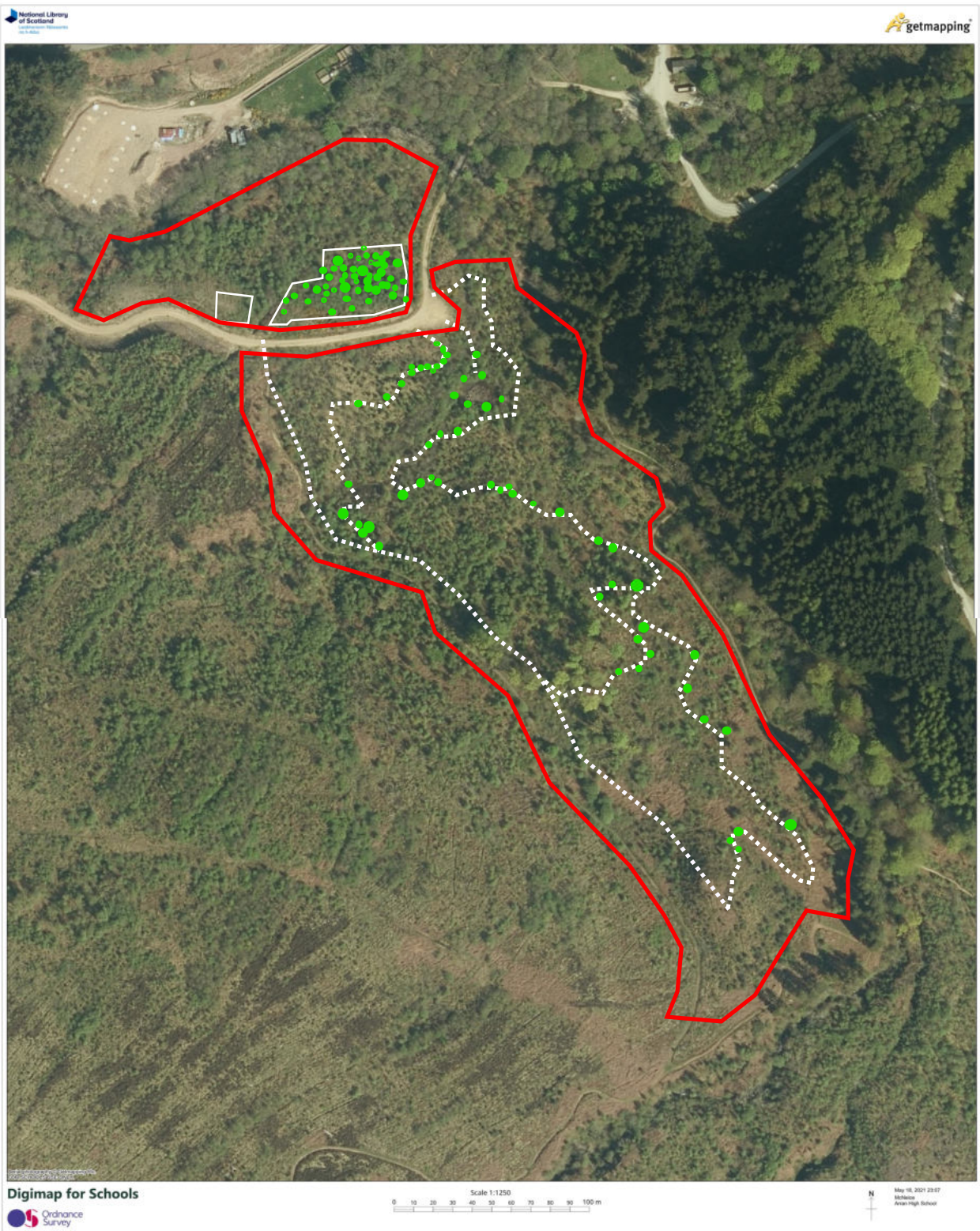
We will complete the conversion of our large box trailer into a mobile bike repair workshop. We will park it on site and ensure access is available to any member of the community through constituted groups like Arran Bike Club or Isle of Arran Velo Club. We will also make our extensive resource of trail maintenance tools available in a trailer parked on site. These will be available for any of our Island community groups for voluntary path repair and maintenance.

Site plan



Site boundary and location of trails, pump track, trials area, shelter and area for parking trailer

Impact on the Landscape



Location of trees requiring removal.

Loss of Trees:

Trees within 2m of all trails will be removed. The proposal will result in the loss of 107 young trees. To mitigate this loss we will plant at least one other, native broadleaved tree of benefit to the sites biodiversity for every tree removed. A number of the re-planted trees will be the native and critically endangered Arran Whitebeam (*Sorbus Arranensis*). All 107 trees to be removed are young, low quality and value and will be stacked in piles left to rot to the benefit of beetles and the birds that feed on them. Replanted trees will form additional screening which will not only help with landscape issues where gaps may be found but will also improve biodiversity benefit. Though most trees on site are young, as they grow they will provide improved visual and noise impacts of the trails.

Root Protection Area

In order to avoid damage to the roots or rooting environment of retained trees, the RPA will be plotted around each tree. This is a minimum area in m² which will be left undisturbed around each retained tree and will be implemented to BS 5837:2005.

Landscape Setting:

The application site is surrounded on all sides by forest. Some areas of adjacent forest are mature conifers. The site sits adjacent existing Forestry & Land Scotland maintained walking trails.



View of site and boundary looking North

The upper area of the application site is visible from the forest road to the west. However,

given the relative heights and the extent of tree cover, the visibility of the site is almost entirely restricted.

The east-facing flank of the site is within viewing distance of an existing walking trail but the proposed skills trail itself will be just beyond the skyline and not visible.



View from existing forest path on the east boundary

The only visually prominent component of the site will be the pump track and shelter. Even with strategic trees left in place it will be visible from the forest road. However, the only people using this forest road will be people accessing the site for the purpose of using it. From all other areas surrounding the site, visibility of the site by others is restricted

through topography and tree cover.



View of Pump Track area from forest road

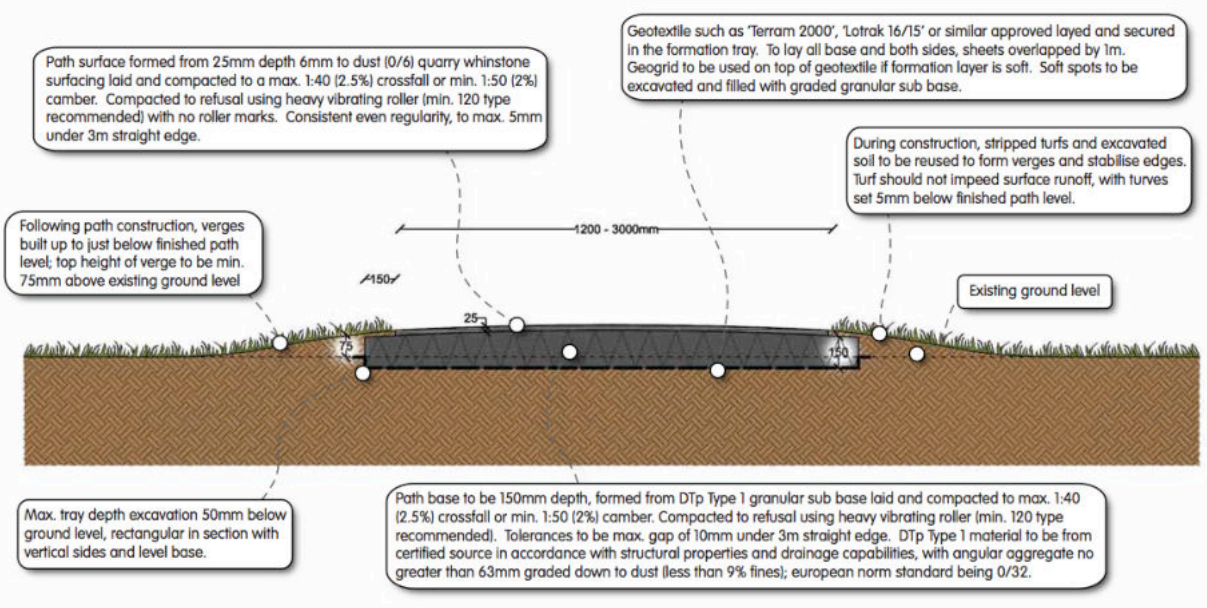
There will be no loss of woodland cover as a result of the mountain bike trail construction as every tree removed will be replanted with at least one other more suitable, native tree of benefit to the sites biodiversity.

Character - Scale, Design and Materials

The pump track would be located to the north of the site. The track will be finished in Asphalt and of a low height consisting of a circuit of rolling bumps, table-top jumps, and bermed corners covering a footprint of 1200m². The pump track will be appropriately landscaped and sympathetically incorporated into the existing forest.

Path/trail Construction

The mountain biking trails will be 1.2meter wide aggregate surfaced trails threading through the trees and are appropriate for this woodland setting. Path surface formed from 25mm depth 6mm to dust (0/6) quarry whinstone surfacing laid and compacted to a max. 1:40 (2.5%) crossfall or min. 1:50 (2%) camber. Compacted to refusal using heavy vibrating roller (min. 120 type recommended) with no roller marks. Geotextile to be used where required.



Scale 1:20 @ A4

Archaeology and Adjacent Scheduled Ancient Monument

The site is not located within an area of archaeological significance. There are nearby sites of interest including Lagaville Village and Meallachs Grave Chambered Cairn but the proposal site does not adversely impact on them.

Biodiversity and Ecology

The Ecological survey report submitted in support of the application concluded that the overall ecological value of the woodland is limited by the woodland's lack of maturity

In terms of species, the report concentrated on badgers and no evidence of badgers was found on site. In addition, no trees were of an age or condition to support bats. The site has limited potential to support birds. However, any clearance of vegetation should take place out-with the bird breeding season (March to August inclusive).

Neighbouring Amenity

Privacy:

The pump track is in excess of 200 meters to the nearest residential property. Sections of the mountain bike trails are in excess of nine meters to residential properties and are located further from residential properties than the existing public footpaths. There will be no overlooking or reduction in privacy as a result of the proposal.

At present the woodland is managed by Forestry & Land Scotland. The woodlands lack of

maturity and lack of diversity in terms of species and overgrown nature of the woodland has resulted in the woodland being an under-used resource for local residents.

Our proposal will result in the active management of the woodland. It is not considered that the amenity of residents will be affected in any greater a degree than the existing situation of forest paths and it would not be proportionate to request a Noise Impact Assessment be submitted in this instance.

There will be no impact on day lighting to existing buildings or sunlight to existing spaces.

Conclusion

The proposal improves and compliments neighbouring amenity, In terms of nature conservation, the proposal as described, is likely to have positive impact. No negative impact is expected on the landscape due to topography, tree cover and sympathetically deigned trails. Our proposed site is in an established forestry area and does not impinge on the Arran Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest [SSSI] and Special Protection area [SPA]. It does not impinge on the Local Nature Conservation Site, Allt Lagriehesk within Dyemill Wood either. No negative impacts on either are expected as a result of the proposal.

Referring to the Local Development Plan (**Adopted Local Development Plan (north-ayrshire.gov.uk)**):

Policy 15: Relates to Landscape Protection. Developments are supported that protect and/or enhance our landscape/seascape character, avoiding unacceptable adverse impacts on our designated and non-designated landscape areas and features.

Supporting Documents

The following documents have been submitted in support of the application:

- Business Case
- Design and access statement
- Landscape Assessment
- Ecological Survey Report
- SPA-Map
- SSSI-Map
- Technical Trail Feature
- Core Paths Plan
- Survey Data x 3
- Path Specification