Rural Skills Investigation

Foundations for Recovery

On behalf of:

North Carrick Community Benefit Company

by

CEIS Ayrshire

Executive Summary

In its role in working for the benefit of communities in North Carrick, North Carrick Community Benefit Company (NCCBC) commissioned a range of research and development (R&D) activities for investment-ready projects, one of which sought to produce a Rural Skills Investigation and Proposals for North Carrick based on an assessment of current skills and gap analysis. This work was undertaken on its behalf by CEIS Ayrshire.

This report explores rural skills definitions, provision and development in North Carrick. It represents the initial step in understanding rural skills within this specific context and provides suggestions on future development of rural skills training and provision within North Carrick to develop a skilled workforce across the community.

Through in-depth interviews with employers/ training providers and desk-based research the report examines the definition of rural skills in North Carrick, the current provision of rural skills, training gaps and areas of opportunity

Research revealed that there are high levels of training opportunities for trainees particularly across the technical skills areas however there are a number of challenges faced by both trainees and employers working in rural skills industries in North Carrick. The primary concerns were 1) accessibility and 2) cost

Research revealed a need for new solutions to address the identified barriers/challenge of

- A wide range of required skills with no formal guidance on specific basic or core skills
- A plethora of training options
- Employer concerns around retention of staff (post training) and return on investment
- Costs of travel, time off work.
- The need for soft skills training
- The gap in funded support for career changers and mature students

A number of options for further consideration were proposed for North Carrick. These included:

- Bridging the financial gap for employers
- Developing a rural skills passport
- Creating a profitable network – North Carrick Rural Skills Network
- Including soft skills training within the 3rd sector training portal that would be accessible for rural sector professionals.

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1. Introduction

The North Carrick Community Benefit Company (NCCBC) administers grant funding from renewable energy sources and other sources for the benefit of the communities of North Carrick in South Ayrshire. Under the project title of Foundations for Recovery, NCCBC has secured UK Community Renewal Fund monies to research and develop a number of investment ready projects across a number of themes. The purpose of this project is to deliver investment for South Ayrshire's coastal and rural Carrick region.

The project has been developed with reference to three themes of capacity-building: building the individual, building the community, and building the organisation. These themes have in turn been further divided into 6 project strands.

The third strand of the project relates to rural skills development. This is defined within the brief as: development of a Rural Skills Plan based on an assessment of current skills and gap analysis. This was achieved through the use of in-depth interviews with employers and training providers working in or with knowledge of North Carrick and a desk based exercise to build an understanding of the training landscape and the options available to trainees.

1.1 Research Questions

To explore the concept of rural skills in North Carrick a number of research questions were created to guide the study. These were designed to direct the research and to ensure that it was possible to fulfil the brief.

1	What is the definition of rural skills in North Carrick?
2	What is the provision of rural skills within North Carrick currently?
3	What is the rural skills training gap in North Carrick
4	Are there emerging areas that are an opportunity for rural skills development in North Carrick?

2. Policy Context

There are a number of national and local policies that it is necessary to be aware of when considering the subject of rural skills within the context of North Carrick.

2.1 Scotland's Future Skills Action Plan

Skills are a key determining factor on people's ability to participate and progress in the labour market. 'Providing people with opportunities to develop skills – irrespective of who they are and where they live – is a key driver of inclusive growth'[1] Scotland's economy has grown in recent years, however this statement should be caveated in that this information was published pre-COVID. This growth is largely attributed to the investment that has been made in skills development within Scotland, with Scotland outperforming the UK on unemployment and labour outcomes for women and young people.

The skills gap however tends to be more prevalent within Scotland when compared to the rest of the UK. There has been a consistent decline in skills development within employment settings and gaps are widening in areas where there are specific skills requirements e.g. manufacturing.[2] It is possible that future skills requirements may have an impact on both the types of training offered and the skills required by individuals looking to access the job market. It is anticipated that digital innovation (automation) will have an impact on the jobs available however it is not currently possible to predict this impact.

The action plan focuses on four themes: 1) increasing system agility and employer responsiveness, 2) enhancing access to upskilling and retraining opportunities, 3) ensuring sustainability across the skills system, 4) accelerating the implementation of the learner journey review.

2.2 Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland: 2019-2021

The Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland focuses on building understanding of rural skills within Scotland proposes development actions to ensure that there is a conclusive plan in place to help people living within rural communities to develop their skills to allow them to secure employment opportunities now and into the future. This is necessary as 'the

[1] Scotland's Future Skills Action Plan, 2019, p.3, Scotland's Future Skills Action Plan (www.gov.scot)
[2] Scotland's Future Skills Action Plan, 2019, Scotland's Future Skills Action Plan (www.gov.scot)

development of fit for purpose skills has an important role in supporting continued economic recovery and inclusive growth'[3]

The Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland focuses on five areas that seek to support people to develop their skills and increase their chances of employment: 1) To better understand the skills rural employers need and align provision to support this, 2) To provide individuals with accessible education and skills provision to secure, sustain and progress their careers in rural areas, 3) To develop the current workforce in rural areas through upskilling and reskilling, 4) To build a secure pipeline for the future, 5) To take a coordinated, strategic approach to tackling skills in rural areas.

2.3 LANTRA Springboard for Rural Skills (2021)

Lantra's Springboard for Rural Skills project aims to increase and diversify the network of instructors supporting quality assured training in Scotland's land-based, aquaculture and rural industries. This need was identified by training providers, employers and industry organisations such as the Scottish Crofting Federation and Skills for Farming Group, to support higher levels of diversity and better succession planning in the sector.

The instructor network development project is helping to: support the upskilling and reskilling of new entrants and career changers, including those impacted by redundancy (which have increased as a result of COVID-19); support increased rural business resilience, adaptation and diversification through a more skilled workforce; help to clear the waiting list for short courses caused by the extended restrictions; and help to support Scotland's 'green recovery' and climate emergency response objectives.

Complementary training and support ranged from instructional techniques and health and safety to first aid, technical refresher courses and mentoring by experienced instructors. Targets for gender, age, geographic and 'skill set' diversity have all been achieved.

2.4 Regional Skills Assessment Ayrshire (2022)

The regional skills assessments (RSAs) aim to develop an evidence base to inform future investment in skills within individual areas. The RSAs are contextualised within each region and therefore provide comparative data to that provided in national level reports. The relevant RSA to this project is the RSA for Ayrshire, there is no distinction made within the report between North and South Ayrshire and as such it is possible that these figures will not

[3] SDS (2019), Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland: 2019-2021, Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland | Skills Development Scotland

be directly transferrable to North Carrick however the RSA provides information on the areas of focus for Ayrshire in general.

Key points: 1) Ayrshire's dependency ratio will be 76% by 2043 compared to 60% in Scotland, 2) COVID-19 has had an uneven impact on some groups including young people, older, workers, women, disabled people, and minority groups, 3) in Scotland around 46% of jobs have high potential to be automated, 4) 'green jobs' are central to recovery and Ayrshire is well placed to benefit from these opportunities.

In 2021 Ayrshire's GVA was forecasted to be £6,639m (4.5% of Scotland's total). This share of GVA ranks in the middle third of RSA regions for GVA. Pre-Pandemic Ayrshire's economy was growing by 0.6% each year however this figure contracted sharply during the Pandemic with a 9.8% contraction in growth between 2019-2020. This contraction was significantly greater than that experienced across Scotland as a whole. GVA is predicted to return to pre-pandemic figures in 2022 and is growth is forecast to average 1.8% per year between 2021-2031.

The highest contributing industries in Ayrshire were: 1) accommodation and food services, 2) other service activities, 3) administrative and support services, 4) information and communication, 5) arts, entertainment and recreation. Job openings are expected to be focused in a number of these sectors e.g. wholesale and retail, human health and social work, accommodation and food, and transportation and storage. Across all projected growth occupations, the qualifications with the greatest requirement are likely to be SCQF 7-10.[4]

The Employer Skills Survey (ESS) was designed to gather information on the skills challenges being faced by employers. The most common skills gap causes across Scotland were: 1) employees being new to their role, 2) training being incomplete or not received, 3) an inability to recruit staff with the required skills, creating a need to upskill, 4) inability to recruit staff with the required skills.

[4] SDS (2022), 'Regional Skills Assessment: Ayrshire March 2022', PowerPoint Presentation (skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk)

3. Market Analysis - North Carrick

The following section outlines key information points on the area of North Carrick and are provided for context to demonstrate the specifics of the area in order to contextualise the proposed plans.

3.1 Geographic Area

The focus of this project North Carrick and area of South Ayrshire that includes: Dunure, Minishant, Maybole, Kirkmichael, Straiton, Crosshill, Kirkoswald, Maidens, and Turnberry. The data used for the analysis is drawn from the electoral ward of Maybole, North Carrick and Coylton and the local authority of South Ayrshire (figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Electoral ward and local authority

Figure 3.2 identifies the main towns and villages that make up North Carrick (image 2, left) the makeup of the area using the Scottish Urban Rural Classification (image 1, right).

Figure 3.2 LEFT: Map of North Carrick 6 Fold Definition RIGHT: North Carrick Area
Source: LEFT: Scottish Urban Rural Classification (2005) RIGHT: NCCBC (2022)

North Carrick is a predominantly rural area with all parts of the area falling into the rural classifications using the Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification[5]. Looking at figure 2.1 most parts of North Carrick are classed as accessible rural (light green) or remote rural (dark green). The only exception to this is the Maybole which is an accessible small town. Most people living within North Carrick are however considered to live in rural areas. For an in-depth discussion of the rural/urban mix of North Carrick when compared to South Ayrshire and Scotland see annex 1 section 1.1.

3.2 Population Profile

According to the 2011 census the electoral ward of Maybole, North Carrick and Coylton (hereafter referred to as North Carrick) has a population of 14,054 which makes up 13% of South Ayrshire's population. Across the two areas, the largest proportion of the population are aged 25-49 (30+) and the lowest proportion of the population are aged 16-24 (10%). The highest proportion of households are owned outright or owned with a mortgage or loan. Looking at house type the highest proportion of households in North Carrick are detached whole houses/bungalows (36%). Education information showed that there was a high proportion of people over the age of 16 within the area with no qualifications 30% (*n*=3538) of people aged over 16 held no qualifications with the next highest proportion being people

[5] Scottish Urban Rural Classification (2005)

who held level 1 qualifications (23%, *n*=2782). Full population profile with accompanying data can be found in annex 1 section 1.2.

Comparison to the National Average

Other research[6] provides a comparison in demographic profile between the Scottish average and North Carrick (defined as the community council areas of Dunure, Minishant, Maybole, Crosshill, Straiton and Kirkmichael, and Kirkoswald, Maidens and Turnberry).

- *Population:* North Carrick has a higher elderly population (23.9%) than the Scottish average (18.9%)
- *Households:* North Carrick (23.3%) has a higher proportion of pensioner households than the Scottish average (20.9%)
- *Deprivation:* 22.4% of children in North Carrick live in relative low-income families which is higher than the Scottish average of 17.2%
- *Health:* 16.4% of people living in North Carrick have limiting long-term illnesses; this is higher than the Scottish average (15%)
- *Education:* 31.9% of people living in North Carrick have no qualifications which is higher than the Scottish average of 26.8%
- *Skills and Economy:* North Carrick has a higher proportion of self-employed people than the national average (10% v 7.5% nationally)

3.3 Employment and Business Base

The number of working people by their level of economic activity in the week leading up to the 2011 census is summarised annex 1 section 1.4-1.5. 69% of people in North Carrick were categorised as economically active with highest proportion of people in the full-time employee category. In 2021, South Ayrshire had 3,865 enterprises registered, employing 35,010 people and generating a turnover of £6.2 million[7]. A sector breakdown of registered enterprises is provided in *Table 3.9*. *Wholesale and retail trade; Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles* account for the largest proportion of registered enterprises across South Ayrshire (18%). Rural industries (Agriculture, forestry and fishing) accounted for 10% (*n*=410) of all enterprises in South Ayrshire. The majority of enterprises were operating with fewer than 5 employees (70%).

3.4 North Carrick Community Action Plans

North Carrick sits within the council of South Ayrshire but has a significantly different makeup when compared to South Ayrshire. It is largely made up of areas that are classified as rural whether that be accessible or remote. Communities within rural areas are more

[6] Source: Community Enterprise

[7] *Source: Businesses in Scotland. (2021). The Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/businesses-in-scotland-2021/*

likely to be reliant on their local infrastructure to provide solutions to the challenges they face. The communities were consulted in 2019 to gain an understanding of the key issues individuals living within North Carrick were facing. A summary of these action plans by sub-area is provided below.

Table 3.1 Summary North Carrick Community Action Plans

Area	Priorities	
Crosshill, Straiton, Kirkmichael	1. More community events using local facilities 2. Protect and enhanced wildlife habitats in the villages 3. Opportunities for socialising between young people in different communities 4. Improved local retail offer	5. Improve the playparks in each village 6. Better cycling and walking infrastructure 7. Increased traffic safety and road improvements 8. Improve public transport
Dunure	1. Improved use of outdoor space, activities making use of the waterfront 2. More clubs, festivals and community events 3. Improve the look of the village particularly the harbour	4. Improvements to the school 5. Facilities and improvements to kennedy park 6. Traffic calming and road improvements 7. Tourism destination development
Kirkoswald, Maidens, Turnberry	1. More activities for families and young people and more community initiatives and events 2. Protect and enhance the natural environment with a focus on wildlife, habitats and scenic views 3. Better marketing of the area and its businesses	4. Disabled access improvements, increased traffic safety, road improvements 5. Making the most of the local area including existing and new facilities enhancements
Maybole	1. More activities and community events 2. Improve the appearance of the town 3. Encourage new local businesses	4. Upgrade the play park and skate park 5. Champion safer roads for walking and cycling 6. Improve leisure and sports facilities
Minishant	1. Improve the appearance of Minishant and make it more environmentally friendly 2. More community events, involving more people 3. Improved play parks and play areas 4. Improve the woods for activities	5. Pub, community café or social space for all of the community 6. Traffic calming and car parking 7. Better quality and more leisure facilities

4. Rural Skills

There has been significant structural shift in the Scottish labour market since the 1970s with those seeking employment in traditional industries such as manufacturing, agriculture, and mining decreasing.[8] 'The development of fit for purpose skills has an important role in supporting continued economic recovery and inclusive growth'[9]

The increase in digital innovation and the changes to the economy post Brexit and post COVID-19 draw questions around how communities and rural areas can upskill to ensure that people have the best possible chance of securing employment within their area. Professor Keep in his work on skills depreciation argues that to ensure that the skills required for our future economy are developed there should be a focus on lifelong learning and the provision for adult learning.[10] This statement would appear to be congruent with the community consultations as there was a feeling within the area that there was a need to provide both adults and young people with opportunities to upskill on a regular basis to be equipped to complete the roles and jobs required within a community setting.

4.1 Defining Rural Skills

To explore the concept of rural skills it is first necessary to define rural skills within the context of North Carrick. Rural skills can refer to different skillsets within different contexts for instance within some contexts rural skills can mean those skills that would only be required within rural contexts e.g. drystone walling or hedging (Cotswolds National Landscape, 2022) whereas other definitions take a more holistic view (Skills Development Scotland, 2019).

Taking this broad definition of rural skills will have the maximum benefit to those living within the area of North Carrick by increasing the career and skills development options for those who choose to live and stay within their local area. This would mean that rural skills covered a variety of industries including hospitality and manufacturing however it is necessary to consider that rural skills will mean different things to different areas. As this is part of a larger piece of work it is expected that a number of transferrable skills required for these industries will be covered by the work of the community skills section and as such this part of the investigation will focus on rural skills in the traditional sense of the definition. This was

[8] Scotland's Future Skills Action Plan, (2019), Scotland's Future Skills Action Plan (www.gov.scot)
[9] SDS (2022), 'Regional Skills Assessment: Ayrshire March 2022', PowerPoint Presentation (skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk)
[10] Keep, E. (2019), 'The impact of digital innovation on education, training and skills – some initial thoughts' cited in 'Scotland's Future Skills Action Plan' (2019)

supported by the opinions of those working in rural industries within North Carrick and in support agencies across Scotland.

The interview participants were initially asked to identify what they thought the term rural skills meant. Most respondents thought that rural skills largely referred to: agriculture, forestry and to some extent aquaculture. The support agencies identified that for other geographies there would be other industries included e.g. horticulture, environmental conservation, equine, and arboriculture but that for North Carrick the main areas for consideration are: agriculture and forestry. There was also a recognition that it is necessary to distinguish between rural skills and the rural economy. The rural economy being a term that could include a much broader range of industries for example engineering and renewables.

The definition of rural skills that will be used to explore rural skills provision will therefore be led by these discussions with the main focus of the remainder of the work considering ***rural skills for North Carrick as those which apply to agriculture and forestry***.

4.2 Rural Industries Output and North Carrick

There are 6,240,908 hectares of agricultural land in Scotland of which Ayrshire accounts for 236,187 hectares with a total of 2,697 holdings. This total is split across a range of possible land outputs. Crops and fallow within Ayrshire account for 4% of activity while grass and rough grazing make up the remaining 96% when compared with Scotland at a whole where the split was 10.3% (crops and fallow) and 89.7% (grass and rough grazing). This means that there is a total of 216,804 hectares of farmland in Ayrshire that is predominantly being used for the purpose of grass and rough grazing.

As with the previous population figures it is challenging to drill these figures down to provide a clear representation of North Carrick however it is possible to see from figure 2.1 (annex 2) that the majority of farmland within North Carrick is of a high quality with most areas falling into class 2 and class 3. This map is interesting however as it seems to suggest that for North Carrick there is a high volume of land that is capable of producing high yields when compared with the rest of the country. The percentage of land being used for crops and fallow are considerably lower across the country than the percentage of land being used for grass and grazing. More information on agriculture in Ayrshire can be found in annex 2.

4.3 Rural Skills and North Carrick (interview findings)

Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders working in North Carrick and rural skills support agencies. These interviews were conducted by videocall using the topic guide that can be found in annex 4. While it was not possible to secure a high volume of interviews the

3 interviews conducted were each over an hour long and provided a clear depth of knowledge and understanding of both North Carrick and rural skills.

Rural Skills for North Carrick

North Carrick is an area that is largely concerned with land based rural skills spanning across the agriculture and forestry industries. The participants were asked to outline the skills they felt were important for the area. The results largely fit within this pattern with the skills identified as those that would accompany roles in farming, forestry, estate management and some game keeping.

> *'Skills required for people in the workforce – all of the **building skills**, especially traditional so looking at traditional properties that are 100 years old. Then starting to move into the forestry skills, **chainsaw, strimmer and tree planting**. Then to me there's a range of let's call them farming skills, working with **livestock, tractor driving, machine operation**. And then one that cuts across all of those **estate maintenance, fencing, grass-cutting, grass maintenance, dry stone walling**. This is thinking very much about the practical skills and finally gamekeeping skills, some of the skills that would be needed here like **mole control**'*
>
> *(Participant 1)*

The core skills identified by participant 1 demonstrate the need for a range of skills to be secured by individuals who hope to work in rural industries in North Carrick and demonstrate the breadth of skills that may be required from an individual. Interestingly, the focus of the discussion across all participants was on practical skills attainment rather than academic development. The participants felt that to be employable within the rural skills sector in North Carrick the priority should be placed on the attainment of core practical skills that would cut across industries e.g. building skills and basic machinery operation.

Gamekeeping was mentioned by a number of participants with some commenting that it was a dying discipline however there were some who mentioned gamekeeping skills with reference to pest control and identified the need to think about this within the context of North Carrick.

> *Another possible focus is Game Keeping. Deer numbers are increasing and not just across the Highlands meaning that there will be a need for control' (participant 3)*

The deer population is increasing and appears to be migrating and it is possible that these skills will become more necessary in the future. From these conversations it appears that there are a number of core rural skills that would be required for a trainee to enter this industry. These are difficult to define as there are different requirements depending on the route that is followed but based on the conversations it would appear that these core skills are likely to be: 1) tractor driving and machine operation, 2) basic building skills (fencing and repairs), 3) grass maintenance, 4) basic forestry skills (chainsaw and strimming).

IT Skills

The second core skills group that was mentioned related to the need to understand that technology in the field was always changing. It was therefore important that while individuals honed their practical skills they were also upskilled in basic computer literacy as this would be a core part of the job they were expected to do.

'Then moving into the IT skills that are needed, increasingly there are forms of computer software that are required.' (Participant 2)

IT skills are necessary for any job within the modern global economy and it is interesting that while the definitions of rural skills continue to include only those skills that would be specific to the rural sectors, the participants were clear that it is necessary to also think about the trainees and their skills development in a holistic sense that generated individuals who had a well rounded set of skills that were relevant to the current workplace.

Soft Skills

The final set of skills mentioned by the participants were soft skills covering a range of different requirements that would be required to engage in running a business. These covered areas such as customer service, time management, organisational skills, and people management. This was discussed by participant 3:

'Recognising the needs for transferable skills that help people working land-based skills. The really important ones, like people and communication skills. This is being felt particularly by farm businesses' (participant 3)

There were also concerns raised around how to build the confidence of young people or people who are new to the sector so that they feel comfortable to walk into a room and to participate in training.

'young people are required to be confident enough to walk into a room and take part in training or start a new job' (participant 1)

These soft skills therefore feel important to the future of rural skills. The industry is becoming more competitive and there is a need to develop skills that help those working to sell their products or services but also to be able to communicate with others they are working with or to feel confident in their ability to engage in training.

Challenges for Trainees

The challenges that trainees experience when trying to access training were largely around access. This can be separated into two categories: 1) geography, 2) community. It was understood that there was training available in all rural skills required for North Carrick and this was supported by the findings of the desk research (section 4.4) however it was felt that the location of North Carrick presented a barrier for young people particularly in accessing training opportunities. This was expressed by participant 3:

'Access to training can be a problem. For land based we've got SRUC Scotland who are active down in Dumfries and near Edinburgh and Fife. They do support Scotland wide but the proximity of those colleges is not much consolation for people in North Carrick and there are some excellent land based examples from UHI and Argyll College. Ayrshire College do have some expertise.' (participant 3)

Participant 1 agreed with this opinion saying:

'Where is the training available? SRUC used to do a full range of the specific rural skills. Cost is also a concern and how do young people join those two dots together. So, if the training is in one place and they need to get there and they don't have a driving license. Then when we talk about access – it is that specific how do they get there. If they are already in employment, how do they get time off work – does the employer see the benefit of the training' (participant 1)

The main training providers for rural skills courses are all located outside of North Carrick with little local provision for these types of training. In order to access training, the trainee must be willing and able to travel often at their own expense to engage in training opportunities. This can be challenging when thinking of the cost of the course and the additional elements e.g., travel but also the cost of loss of earnings for the day. As participant 1 identifies if the trainee is currently in employment, they will need to take time off to access training and this can present a barrier in a number of ways 1) cost of transport, 2) cost of training, 3) loss of earnings, and 4) loss of face with employer.

Additionally, cost can be a barrier for those wishing to enter rural sectors because '*funding generally dries up once the person reaches the age of 25' (participant 3).* This can create barriers for career changers and mature students who wish to work in the sector:

> *'Funding is largely available for younger people where the sector benefits from career changers and mature new entrants but limited funding is available for these groups.' (participant 3)*

Another barrier to trainees accessing training is that there is no formal guidance on the specific basic or core skills required. Historically, the agriculture industry has relied on family ties and groups to run farms with the business being passed down between the generations however this model has lost its sustainability and there is now often a need for farmers children to look for alternative employment. This also has an impact on the training infrastructure as previously basic skills e.g. tractor driving would have been taught to children organically on the farm. This presents problems for young people who wish to enter the industry as without these connections it can be difficult to gain some of the fundamental skills required. This is discussed by participant 1:

> *'A lot of the rural skills require a series of courses, often the way you would access the training is by knowing someone who would teach you the basics' (participant 1)*

Currently therefore in order to access some of these basic skills it is necessary for the community to support young people or new entrants and to provide opportunities for these basic skills to be learnt.

Challenges for Employers

The final set of questions aimed to better understand the employer perspective when it came to skills training. Cost was identified as a barrier for trainees to accessing training but this was also identified as a clear concern for employers as well, with participant 3 commenting that *'one of the barriers is that employers still see training as a cost rather than an investment'.* This is discussed in the excerpt below.

> *'Historically you would have always looked for prospective employees to come with the skills you were looking for but now we are so short on labour supplies and then you have to train them and the greatest risk is that you spend time on training them and then they leave once they have got the training' (participant 1)*

It would seem that the training costs are an additional challenge for employers due to the fact that once trainees have been fully trained, they are instantly more attractive to others

and are therefore able to move on to another position easily, leaving their previous employer with an untrained workforce. This presents a challenge to the employer as they cannot employ someone and not train them with the right skills but once they have they are likely to lose that person thus they see little to no return on investment.

'the law says they cannot operate without certificates of confidence so they need to be trained but once they are trained they will go elsewhere' (participant 2)

This situation has been exacerbated in North Carrick as there is a significant shortfall in skills across the area that is impacting both the desire and capacity to send staff on training courses:

'Shortfall in skills across the area, resources are being used to maximum capacity. In the last 4 or 5 years we have seen businesses go from full staff complements to half so this impacts the ability of the organisation to allow staff to access training' (participant 1)

Funding is also a concern for employers as while the apprenticeship schemes available are helpful, apprenticeships only fund the training of the staff member and do not cover salary costs. This means that if an employer is to take on an apprentice they are taking on a staff member who cannot work independently and who has to take additional time off for training. This means that the organisation is often running at a staffing deficit while also incurring the additional cost of paying a salary to someone who is not able to work on their own. This can lead to training provision being under subscribed:

'Previous training in the area has been undersubscribed – it was targeted at businesses but there was a very small uptake. Businesses can't afford to have people have time off to access training' (participant 1)

An additional challenge is that at a national level the numbers of individuals engaging in rural apprenticeships are miniscule when compared with those engaging in other areas such as health and beauty, this can mean that funding is not always in place to provide adequate training for young people are trainees.

'We still have challenges getting public funding for some of the land use apprenticeships because the numbers are so small when compared with other sectors' (participant 3)

As employers are unwilling to pay for training due to tighter budgets and risk of loss of investment this decrease in the availability of apprentices for young people in the rural skills sector places additional barriers for those wishing to work in the sector.

4.4 Assessing the Rural Skills Gap (desk research findings)

Rural skills are provided at different levels by different categories of providers. Scottish Rural Agricultural College is a key provider offering a range of courses that focus on rural skills. University of West of Scotland and Ayr College also provide courses that have elements of rural skills. Training is provided at the national level by third party organisations such as Lantra and Rural Skills Scotland. Trainees are also accessing specialist training e.g. traditional skills from specialist training providers. This can make it challenging to understand where to start if you are looking to pursue a career in a rural skills area as there would appear to be many different options for accessing training and development.

Course Offerings

Courses were offered from NC level up to SQA 7 depending on the individual's aspirations and requirements. The academic courses also included a practical element with some of the core rural skills being included within the course content e.g. tractor driving. These courses included a placement element where learners were able to mix theory and practice by working alongside their studies. It was unclear whether these placements were arranged by the university or whether it was mandatory that the individuals had a placement host prior to applying for and starting the course.

Technical Skills Training

The desk research identified a wealth of providers for technical skills and demonstrated the breadth of training that is available under the term rural skills. The search was largely confined to land-based training programmes and demonstrated the need for continuous training and accreditation within the sector. Many specialist skills required additional training and there were multiple disciplines that offered beginner, intermediate and advanced options e.g. forestry. More detailed information can be found in annex 2 section 2.3.

There appeared to be no shortage in suppliers of training required to complete the jobs needed in the rural sector in North Carrick. This concurs with the interview data which highlighted that while many had to travel to access training, there are multiple training opportunities available. The interviewees agreed that replication of services in the area was not necessarily the solution but that it would be beneficial to consider how potential trainees were able to access training and how this was made available to them.

4.5 Conclusions

The wealth of specialist skills required to work in the land-based sector presents a clear challenge to individuals and their employers.

The interviews identified the main skills required to be those that relate the land based sector, specifically the technical skills that would be needed to complete a job. When considering these technical skills it becomes clear from the desk research that the scale of options available present a significant challenge to skills providers, trainees and employers. It is also necessary for trainees to complete multiple courses across the disciplines for instance a lot of the technical skills have a beginner, intermediate and advanced level qualification or are broken down into specific skills e.g. the chainsaw qualification has multiple variations depending on equipment.

Barriers to training were also discussed and were described by the participants are largely:

1. Access to training due to geography
2. Access due to cost
3. Access due to not being able to take time off

Resistance from the employers side was also expressed:

1. Inefficiency of having to train new staff each time they recruit
2. Lack of proficient staff within the area
3. High cost of training and retaining a trainee

Employers are experiencing tighter budgets and margins and have found that trainees often work for them for a limited time in order to gain basic transferrable qualifications and then move on to further employment once their time as a trainee has passed. This means that the employer is not seeing the benefits of investing in their staff. This has created a situation where employers are unwilling to take on untrained staff but without the infrastructure in place for trainees to access training it is possible that there will not be a consistent pipeline of employees to move into positions as they arrive.

5. Vision Plan for North Carrick

This investigation aimed to explore rural skills within North Carrick to provide recommendations on possible routes to support rural skills development within the area. The primary data collection revealed a number of challenges being faced by both trainees and employers working in rural skills industries in North Carrick. The primary concerns were 1) accessibility and 2) cost. These will be explored within the context of solutions presented in this section.

5.1 Bridging the gap for employers

The major demand across North Carrick and the agricultural sector is in the skilled trade sector. Agriculture and horticulture have almost five times more skilled trade roles (48% of the workforce) than the average for other professions (11%), according to figures provided by the land-based training organisation Lantra[11]. These technical skills are all gained by trainees through individual courses with additional qualifications and top qualifications common within the rural skills industry. This places a great pressure on both trainee and employer to find a way to support this continuous professional development. A solution which could relieve this pressure is the development of a North Carrick Training Funding Portal. This would be applicable to North Carrick in a number of ways:

1. A key challenge in the industry is that while there are apprenticeships available for trainees and employers to make use of. The salary of an apprentice is the responsibility of the employer with the apprenticeship only covering the cost of training. Trials have been carried out in the Highlands where the apprenticeship model is redesigned, and funding is offered to employers to pay for apprenticeship salaries. When this funding was introduced the number of apprenticeships being offered increased[12]. It would appear therefore that by offering the additional incentive of salary support employers were more likely to take on apprentices.
2. Another potential route for consideration is funding for career changers and mature students. There is evidence to suggest that post-pandemic people are considering career changes and are seeking new opportunities in rural communities. While more people are starting to consider rural industries there is limited funding to support these career changes. It is possible that a funding service for over 25s to engage in training and employment in rural industries would support these career changers and provide opportunities for those living in North Carrick.

[11] What skills do agricultural employers really want? - Farmers Weekly (fwi.co.uk)
[12] Lantra (2021)

5.2 Rural Skills Passport

The UKRS portal provides employers with the option to look for course by sector, when searching the courses available for rural sectors (agriculture, arboriculture, and livestock) each result provides 4 pages of options. The wealth of courses required across the different sectors makes it challenging to identify the core technical skills required to work in a rural industry. Employers identified the need for a core number of technical skills e.g. tractor driving and machine operation, basic building skills, and basic grass maintenance. One of the challenges cited was that there were not enough trained candidates available and that due to budgetary restrictions employers were unwilling to take on untrained candidates as this was time consuming and did not demonstrate a high return on investment.

A possible solution to this would be the creation of a rural skills passport model for North Carrick. This would require further investigation and community consultation to identify the correct mix of skills and training but could add real value to young people living within the area. It would help to upskill individuals but also reduce training costs as it may be possible with larger cohort sizes to arrange for training to be delivered locally and have the trainer travel rather than the individual trainees. There are a number of steps to be considered to conceptualise this idea:

1. Community consultation to identifying the best mix of core rural skills for trainees with the option to add on specialist skills e.g. forestry or traditional skills
2. Designing the 'passport model' that defines the skills required to be an attractive employee.
3. Liaising with skills providers to understand the possibility of delivering the different training courses in tandem
4. Investigating learning options to possibly develop a Whitelabel North Carrick rural skills training portal to include all training course e-learning and online learning.

The rural skills passport model has not been tried within the rural sector but would be a similar model as that employed within the construction industry. The CSCS card[13] is not a legal requirement. The law states that anyone on a building site must be competent in health and safety and the CSCS card demonstrates competency. Build UK represents the construction industry in the UK and insist on people on their sites having a CSCS card. This could be an interesting idea to model and pilot in North Carrick to create a standard for rural skills training and qualification.

[13] What Qualifications Do You Need For Construction? - Essential Site Skills

5.3 Profitable Networks

Rural skills hold a long-standing tradition in rural areas with many of these skills required to work in the industry being passed down within families. This has created a situation where young people often expect to develop a number of core skills organically e.g. tractor driving. This can create a barrier for individuals who want to work in the sector but do not have a family history or connection with the industry. A possible solution to this barrier which would add value to the young people of North Carrick would be creating a rural skills network across North Carrick. The benefits of this would be that employers could use this network to share costs e.g. training and labour and people who are furthest away from the industry would have a central point to access.

This network could act as:

1. A point of contact for young people or career changers looking to get involved in the rural skills sector
2. A resource sharing process for employers
3. A route for centralising training opportunities.

It is possible that a modular apprenticeship could be considered as a role offered fully funded within North Carrick. This could be developed in network where a number of apprentices are taken on for the area rather than for the individual employer and the trainee moves around different businesses to experience rural skills in different areas. This could involve a placement in farming, forestry and estates.

5.4 Soft Skills Training

A clear skills requirement that was identified within the desk research and the interview data is the requirement for rural trainees to engage in soft skills training. The most required skills were those that would be relevant across all sectors including communication, customer service, organisational skills, and time management. It is possible that these skills could be catered for within the work carried out within the other strands of this lot; Third Sector Training Academy and Online Portal. It is suggested that these skills are considered alongside that work and a provision made to open soft skills training up to the community at large rather than focusing solely on the Third Sector.

6. Conclusions

This research aimed to explore rural skills definitions, provision and development in North Carrick. It represents the initial step in understanding rural skills within this specific context and provides suggestions on future development of rural skills training and provision within North Carrick to develop a skilled workforce across the community.

The research questions have been answered as follows:

1. Rural skills in North Carrick have been investigated using primary research and desk research and the area is identified as one where rural skills will be those that refer directly to agriculture, forestry and estate management.
2. Rural skills training across Scotland was explored and it was found that there are high levels of training opportunities for trainees particularly across the technical skills areas.
3. The training gap in North Carrick was assessed and it was found that there were a number of barriers for individuals accessing training including the perceptions of their employers around the return on investment for each training course.
4. The data was assessed and a number of options for further consideration were proposed for North Carrick. These included:
    a. Bridging the financial gap for employers
    b. Developing a rural skills passport
    c. Creating a profitable network
    d. Including soft skills training within the 3rd sector training portal that would be accessible for rural sector professionals.

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SAC18121910 South Ayrshire Performs-App1.pdf (south-ayrshire.gov.uk)

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WAM - Crosshill Comm Plan.qxd (nccbc.org.uk)

Annex

Annex 1 – Population Overview

This annex provides an overview of the population, economic business base, and workforce profile of South Ayrshire to provide context of the larger area that North Carrick is a part of. It also highlights some key projects and initiatives that have relevance to this project.

1.1 Urban/Rural Classification

The Scottish Executive defines all areas within Scotland as either urban or rural. This is calculated using population density and drive times as primary indicators. It further divides rural areas using the categories of 'remote' and 'accessible'. These categories can be defined as:

Rural areas – these are those that generally have a settlement population of less than 3,000 and can be split into:

1) Remote rural – these areas are those with a population of less than 3,000 and with a drive time of greater than 30 minutes to the nearest settlement with a population over 10,000
2) Accessible rural – areas that have a population lower than 3,000 and a less than 30 minutes drive to the nearest settlement with a population over 10,000[14]
3) Remote small towns – settlements of between 3,000 and 10,000 people and with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more

Urban areas – these are areas that generally have more than 10,000 and can be split thus:

1) Accessible small towns – settlements of between 3,000 and 10,000 people and within 30 minutes drive of a settlement of 10,000 or more
2) Other urban areas -settlements of 10,000 to 125,000 people
3) Large urban areas – settlements of over 125,000 people

The geographic area of North Carrick is categorised as anything from accessible rural to remote rural depending on the area with no parts of the area being considered as non-rural or urban. The data is split by region and using this classification the most appropriate region to

[14] SUP Land-Based Rural Skills 1 (sup.org.uk)

consider is that of South Ayrshire. While this will not encapsulate the full scope of North Carrick it provides information that can be used to better understand the core make up of the area.

Geographic Area	Population
South Ayrshire	112,140
North Ayrshire	138,090
Scotland	5,466,000

Figure 1.1 Population Figures by Geography
Source: Scottish Urban Rural Classification (2005)

Figure 1.1 shows the proportion of resident populations in South Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and Scotland by urban-rural classification.

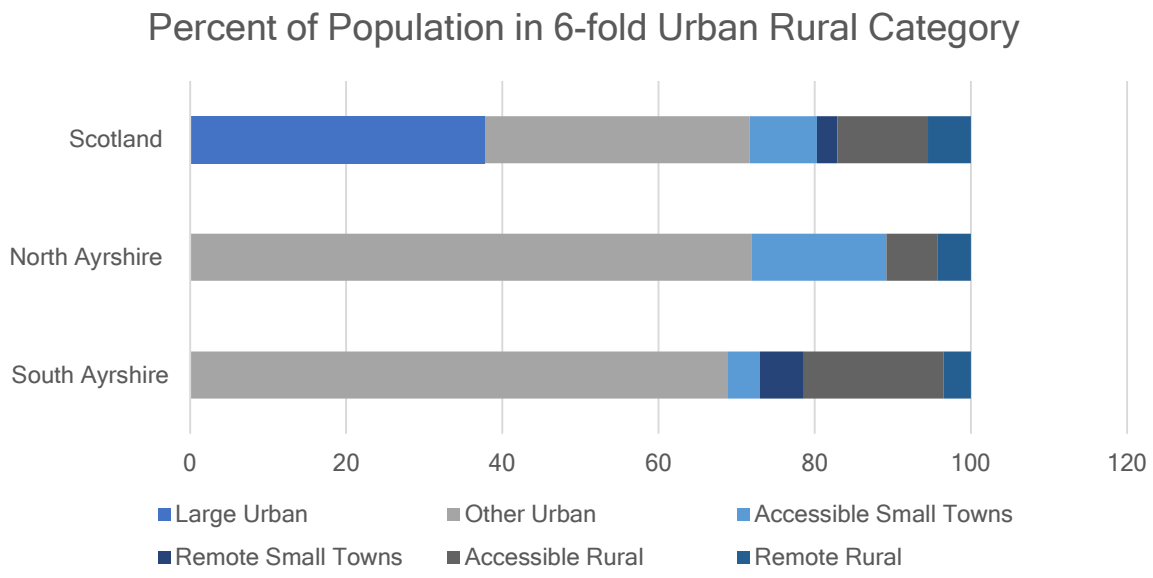

Figure 1.2 Population by Urban Rural Category
Source: Scottish Urban Rural Classification (2005)

For both South and North Ayrshire there is a high proportion of the area that is categorised as other urban. This means that the majority of the population are living in settlements that are between 10,000 and 125,000 however by looking at the map for the area we can see that the area of North Carrick has a significantly more rural makeup. The numbers are being skewed by the high levels of population who live in and around Ayr who are included within the figure for South Ayrshire. The largest area within North Carrick as shown on the map is Maybole which is classified as an accessible small town.

Figure 1.3 LEFT: Map of North Carrick 6 Fold Definition RIGHT: North Carrick Area
Source: LEFT: Scottish Urban Rural Classification (2005) RIGHT: NCCBC (2022)

By considering figure 1.3 it becomes clear that while the available population figures do not provide granular detail to create a specific figure for North Carrick the map identifies the extent to which North Carrick is largely a rural community. If this is considered in more detail by using the population % figures it is possible to extrapolate a population figure that is closer to providing an overview of the area.

Area	Other Urban	Accessible Small Town	Remote Small Town	Accessible Rural	Remote Rural
South Ayrshire	77,264	4,597	6,279	20,073	3,924
North Ayrshire	99,286	23,889	0	8,975	5937
Scotland	1,852,974	470,076	142,116	634,056	300,630

Figure 1.4 Population figures by number
Source: City Population (2020)

If we were to remove the individuals who lived in other urban within South Ayrshire it would become apparent that 34,873 people live within areas that are classified as anything ranging from accessible small town to remote rural. What is interesting about these figures when compared to a similar area (North Ayrshire) there are a much higher number of people in South Ayrshire living in accessible rural and remote rural areas.

1.2 Population Profile

Age Profile

According to the 2011 Scottish Census, the electoral ward of Maybole, North Carrick and Coylton has a population of 14,054 which makes up 13% of South Ayrshire's population. Across the two areas, the largest proportion of the population are aged 25-49 (30%+) and the lowest proportion of the population are aged 16-24 (10%).

Table 1.1: Age profile of population in electoral wards South Ayrshire, Scottish Census 2011

	Maybole, North Carrick and Coylton	**%**	**South Ayrshire**	%
All people in households	**14,054**		**111,270**	
0 to 15	2,440	17	18,348	16
16 to 24	1,424	10	11,107	10
25 to 49	4,480	32	33,873	30
50 to 64	3,190	23	24,620	22
65 and over	2,520	18	23,322	21

Households

Across the two areas, the highest proportion of household types are owned outright (34%+) or owned with a mortgage or loan (34%+). In both areas, 29% of households are rented, with the highest proportion rented through the local authority (16%).

Table 1.2:Proportion of individuals owning or renting homes in South Ayrshire, Scottish Census 2011

	Maybole, North Carrick and Coylton	**%**	**South Ayrshire**	%
All households	**6,157**		**51,286**	
Owned: Owned outright	2,069	34	18,041	35
Owned: Owned with a mortgage or loan	2,168	35	17,271	34
Owned: Shared ownership (part owned/ part rented)	7	0	104	0
Rented: Council (Local authority)	973	16	8,092	16
Rented: Other social rented	187	3	1,743	3
Rented: Private landlord or letting agency	577	9	4,813	9
Rented: Other	76	1	549	1
Living rent free	100	2	673	1

Household Type

Overall, Maybole, North Carrick and Coylton have a higher proportion of households that are whole house or bungalows (81%) and a lower proportion of houses that are classed as flats, maisonettes or apartments (19%) than South Ayrshire (74% and 26% respectively). Specifically, the highest proportion of households in Maybole, North Carrick and Coylton are *detached* whole houses/bungalows (36%) and in South Ayrshire, there is an equal proportion of *detached* houses/bungalows to *semi-detached* houses/bungalows (27%).

Table 1.3 Household Types South Ayrshire, Scottish Census 2011

	Maybole, North Carrick and Coylton	**%**	**South Ayrshire**	%
All households	**6,157**		**51,286**	
Unshared dwelling: Whole house or bungalow	4,986	81	37,829	74
Unshared dwelling: Whole house or bungalow: Detached	2,199	36	13,779	27
Unshared dwelling: Whole house or bungalow: Semi-detached	1,559	25	13,730	27
Unshared dwelling: Whole house or bungalow: Terraced	1,228	20	10,320	20
Unshared dwelling: Flat, maisonette or apartment	1,166	19	13,370	26
Unshared dwelling: Flat, maisonette or apartment: Purpose-built block of flats or tenement	1,081	18	12,113	24
Unshared dwelling: Flat, maisonette or apartment: Part of a converted or shared house (including bed-sits)	50	1	939	2
Unshared dwelling: Flat, maisonette or apartment: In a commercial building	35	1	318	1
Unshared dwelling: Caravan; other mobile; temporary structure	5	0	58	0
Shared dwelling	0	0	29	0

Education

The statistics regarding highest level of qualification in *Table 1.4* indicate that education qualifications are very similar in both areas. Maybole, North Carrick and Coylton have a slightly higher proportion of people aged 16 and over that have no qualifications (30%) and have a lower proportion of the population who have obtained level four and above (22%) in comparison to South Ayrshire (29% and 25% respectively).

Table 1.4 Qualification levels South Ayrshire and Maybole, North Carrick and Colyton Wards, Scottish Census 2011

Highest Level of Qualification	Maybole, North Carrick and Coylton	%	South Ayrshire	%
All people aged 16 and over: Total	11,860		94,419	
All people aged 16 and over: No qualifications	3,538	30	26,925	29
All people aged 16 and over: Level 1	2,782	23	20,828	22
All people aged 16 and over: Level 2	1,700	14	13,217	14
All people aged 16 and over: Level 3	1,225	10	9,704	10
All people aged 16 and over: Level 4 and above	2,615	22	23,745	25

Comparison to the National Average

Other research[15] provides a comparison in demographic profile between the Scottish average and North Carrick (defined as the community council areas of Dunure, Minishant, Maybole, Crosshill, Straiton and Kirkmichael, and Kirkoswald, Maidens and Turnberry).

- *Population:* North Carrick has a higher elderly population (23.9%) than the Scottish average (18.9%)
- *Households:* North Carrick (23.3%) has a higher proportion of pensioner households than the Scottish average (20.9%)
- *Deprivation:* 22.4% of children in North Carrick live in relative low-income families which is higher than the Scottish average of 17.2%
- *Health:* 16.4% of people living in North Carrick have limiting long-term illnesses; this is higher than the Scottish average (15%)
- *Education:* 31.9% of people living in North Carrick have no qualifications which is higher than the Scottish average of 26.8%
- *Skills and Economy:* North Carrick has a higher proportion of self-employed people than the national average (10% v 7.5% nationally)

[15] Source: Community Enterprise

1.3 Economic Activity

Economic Activity

The number of working age people by their level of economic activity in the week leading up to the 2011 census is summarised in *Table 1.5.* The census defines economic activity as whether a person aged 16 and over was working or looking for work in the week before the census. Rather than a simple indicator of whether or not someone was currently in employment, it provides a measure of whether or not a person was an active participant in the labour market. Across the two areas considered, 66%+ of people aged 16-74 are classed as economically active. Maybole, North Carrick and Coylton has a slightly higher proportion of the population in full-time employment (37%) than South Ayrshire (35%).

Table 1.5 Economic activity in South Ayrshire and Maybole, North Carrick and Colyton Wards, Scottish Census 2011

	Maybole, North Carrick and Coylton	**%**	**South Ayrshire**	%
All people aged 16 to 74	10,770		83,196	
Economically active: Employee: Part-time	1,486	14	12,075	15
Economically active: Employee: Full-time	3,948	37	29,369	35
Economically active: Self-employed	1,082	10	6,671	8
Economically active: Unemployed	491	5	4,031	5
Economically active: Full-time student	299	3	2,547	3
Economically inactive: Retired	1,867	17	16,529	20
Economically inactive: Student	437	4	3,244	4
Economically inactive: Looking after home or family	397	4	2,966	4
Economically inactive: Long-term sick or disabled	589	5	4,359	5
Economically inactive: Other	174	2	1,405	2
Unemployed people aged 16 to 74: Aged 16 to 24	153	1	1,225	1
Unemployed people aged 16 to 74: Aged 50 to 74	100	1	821	1
Unemployed people aged 16 to 74: Never worked	61	1	461	1
Unemployed people aged 16 to 74: Long-term unemployed	189	2	1,578	2

Travel/ Transport

The most common method of transport used across the 2 areas by those traveling to work or study is driving a car or van (46%+) as detailed in *Table 1.6*. In Maybole, North Carrick and Coylton, there is a lower proportion of people that travel on foot (13%) in comparison to South Ayrshire (16%).

Table 1.6: Method of transport South Ayrshire and Maybole, North Carrick and Colyton Wards, Scottish Census 2011

Transport to Place of Work or Study	**Maybole, North Carrick and Coylton**	**%**	**South Ayrshire**	%
All people	9,072		66,979	
Work or study mainly at or from home	1,216	13	7,812	12
Underground, metro, light rail or tram	3	0	30	0
Train	151	2	2,225	3
Bus, minibus or coach	990	11	6,864	10
Taxi or minicab	109	1	526	1
Driving a car or van	4,429	49	30,679	46
Passenger in a car or van	850	9	6,603	10
Motorcycle, scooter or moped	21	0	149	0
Bicycle	40	0	738	1
On foot	1,193	13	10,823	16
Other	70	1	530	1

To gain an understanding of an area and the opportunities available within it, an indicator can be the economic activity of the area. Figure 1.5 shows the GVA of South Ayrshire, the information available was from 2012 however what this information shows is that GVA of South Ayrshire is rising at a slower rate when compared to the rest of the country.

	1997 (n)	2012 (n)	Change (%)
Scotland	61,355	106,342	73
East Ayrshire & North Ayrshire mainland	2,400	2,929	22
South Ayrshire	1,257	1,917	53

Figure 1.5 GVA 1997 & 2012 selected geographies (GVA in £ million)
Source: Regional Gross Value ADDED (Income Approach) NUTS3 Tables (ONS)

In terms of employment 72.3% of people in South Ayrshire were economically active or in employment compared with 74.3% nationally with 23.9% of people earning less than the

living wage in 2019[16] of the remaining people living in the area the majority of those who were economically inactive were either students or retired (figure 1.6). Most recent data for North Carrick demonstrates that in 2016 11.6% of the population in North Carrick were employment deprived[17].

All People	South Ayrshire (level)	South Ayrshire (%)	Scotland (%)
Total	17,600	27.0	23.8
Student	3,000	17.2	25.9
Looking after family/home	2,100	12.0	16.3
Temporary sick	!	!	2.1
Long-term sick	5,100	29.2	29.4
Discouraged	!	!	0.7
Retired	5,200	29.7	15.3
Other	#	#	10.4

Figure 1.6 Economic Inactivity (Jan 2020-2021)
Source: nomisweb (2022)
 # Sample size is too small for reliable estimate; ! estimate is not available since sample size is disclosive

[16] SAC18121910 South Ayrshire Performs-App1.pdf (south-ayrshire.gov.uk)
[17] Socio-Economic Profile for South Ayrshire (arcgis.com)

1.4 Employment

One of the challenges with building a profile for North Carrick level of ease to access data that is drilled down to the specific level required to build a picture of the area. GVA is often an indicator of the profitability of employment within an area. Ayrshire as a whole is expected to demonstrate growth across all areas of industry over the next 10 years.

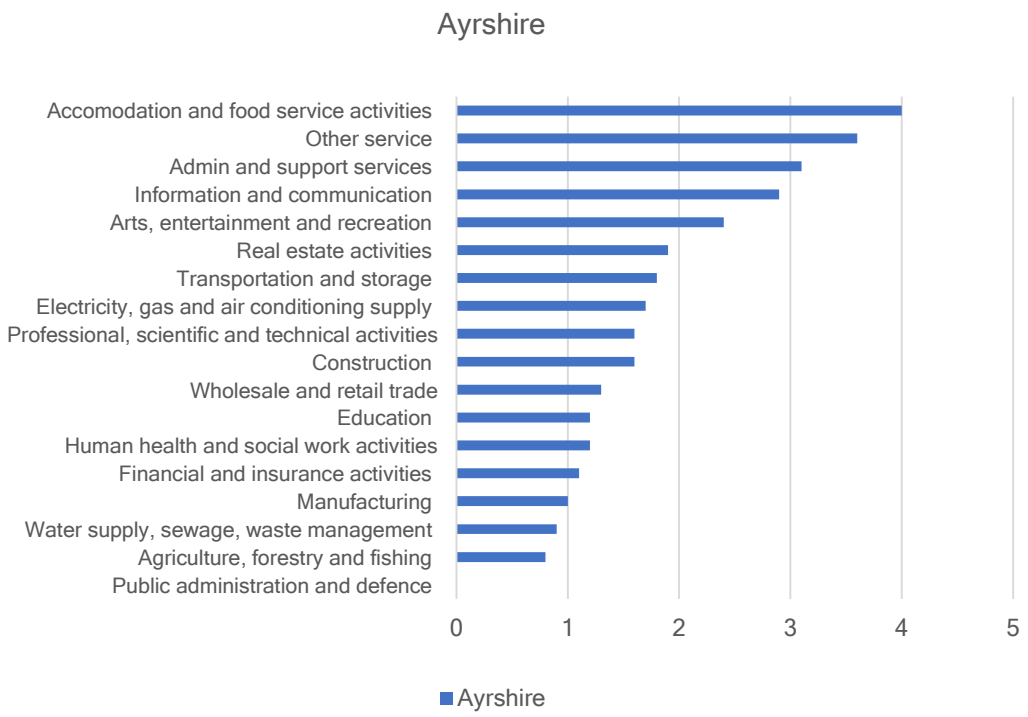

Figure 1.7 Forecast average annual GVA change by industry (%) (2021-2031) Ayrshire
Source: Skills Development Scotland (2022)

The areas where the most change in GVA is predicted in Ayrshire over the next 10 years is in accommodation and food service activities with a 4% increase expected. Agriculture, forestry and fishing are expected to grow across the area by 1%.

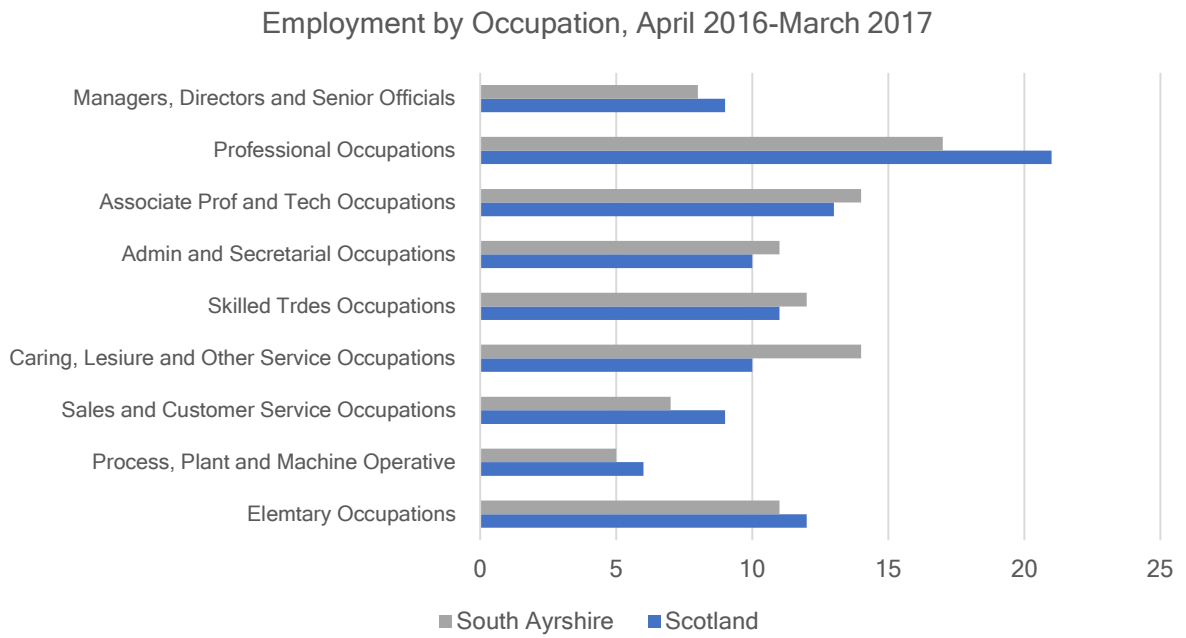

Figure 1.8 Forecast Employment by occupation (%) (2016-2017) Ayrshire
Source: Skills Development Scotland (2022)

The largest employment industry in South Ayrshire and Scotland is the public admin, education and health sector. Compared with Scotland, proportionally there are more South Ayrshire residents employed in this sector than Scotland (36% vs 31%) while there are proportionally fewer employed in banking, finance and insurance sector than Scotland (12% vs 16%). In other industry sectors there is very little difference in proportions between South Ayrshire and Scotland. The smallest employment is in the agriculture and fishing sector (2%)[18].

1.5 Business Profile

Business and Innovation Statistics published by the Scottish Government provide insight into the number of enterprises operating in Scotland, defined as including the following types: Companies (including Building Societies); Sole Proprietors; Partnerships; Public Corporations/Nationalised Bodies; Non-profit making bodies and mutual associations. The business stock estimates for 2021 reflect changes in the business population following the start of the pandemic. In 2021, *Table 1.7* shows that South Ayrshire had 3,865 enterprises registered, employing 35,010 people and generating a turnover of £6.2 million[19]. A sector breakdown of registered enterprises is provided in *Table 1.8*. *Wholesale and retail trade;*

[18] Socio-Economic Profile for South Ayrshire (arcgis.com)
[19] *Source: Businesses in Scotland. (2021). The Scottish Government. https://www.gov.scot/publications/businesses-in-scotland-2021/*

Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles account for the largest proportion of registered enterprises across South Ayrshire (18%).

Table 1.7 Number of registered enterprises, employment and turnover in South Ayrshire

Business Size	Number of Enterprises	Total Scottish Employment	Total Scottish Turnover (£m)
Small: 0-49 employees	3,460	14,740	1,221
Medium: 50-249 employees	125	5,530	869
Large: 250+ employees	285	14,740	4,087
Total **not exact due to rounding*	**3,865**	**35,010**	**6,177**

Table 1.8 sector breakdown of registered enterprises

Sector	Number of Registered Enterprises
A Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	410
B Mining and Quarrying	5
C Manufacturing	205
D Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	10
E Water supply; Sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	10
F Construction	445
G Wholesale and retail trade; Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	705
H Transportation and storage	135
I Accommodation and food service activities	335
J Information and communication	125
K Financial and insurance activities	60
L Real estate activities	140
M Professional, scientific and technical activities	495
N Administrative and support service activities	265
P Education	45
Q Human health and social work activities	165
R Arts, entertainment and recreation	105
S Other service activities	205
Total	**3,865**

Table 1.9 shows that the largest proportion of businesses in South Ayrshire in 2021 have 0-4 employees (70%), followed by 5-9 employees (15%), and the smallest proportion of businesses have 50+ employees (4%).

Table 1.9 Numbers of enterprises by employee size band

Employee Size band	Number of Enterprises
0-4 employees	2,910
5-9 employees	605
10-14 employees	240
15-49 employees	305
50+ employees	105
Total	**4,170**

Note: Totals may not equal the sum of the constituent parts due to rounding

Between 2019 and 2020, South Ayrshire saw a 2% decrease in the number of registered enterprises to 3,840[20]; this represents 2% of all enterprises in Scotland. However, from the period 2010-2020, the growth rate for business stock in the local authority was positive (+4%).

[20] *Source: Volumes and Trends by Local Authority. (2020). The Scottish Parliament.* *Scotland's Business Base: Facts and Figures | Scottish Parliament*

Annex 2 – Rural Skills Sector

This section outlines the nature and extent of the land-based sector. It highlights the demand and supply of skills and employment within South Ayrshire and North Carrick.

2.1 Defining Rural Skills

In order to explore the concept of rural skills it is first necessary to define rural skills within the context of North Carrick. Rural skills can refer to different skillsets within different contexts for instance within some contexts rural skills can mean those skills that would only be required within rural contexts e.g. drystone walling or hedging (Cotswolds National Landscape, 2022) whereas other definitions take a more holistic view (Skills Development Scotland, 2019).

Rural skills seem to be defined largely as those which will be required to engage with specialist work in rural environments. The descriptions provided by universities and educational providers focus on developing specific skills e.g. agricultural, landscaping, or habitat preservation however the policy context identified a need to upskill rural areas in a variety of industries including tourism, creative industries, and energy.

In line with this the definition that will be used of rural skills within the context of North Carrick is that developed by Skills Development Scotland in their Skills Action Plan 2019-2021.

> *'a broad holistic definition of rural skills has been used. Whilst traditional sectors including farming, forestry, and fishing still have an important role to play in rural areas, so increasingly do activities across a wide range of sectors including tourism, creative industries, energy, manufacturing and others. Rural areas also have requirement for a range of cross-cutting skills including digital skills and higher level leadership and management skills.' (SDS, 2019, p.5)*

Initially this broad definition of rural skills will be used to explore rural skills as it is expected this will have the maximum benefit to those living within the area of North Carrick by increasing the career and skills development options for those who choose to live and stay within their local area.

Source	Definition
Skills Development Scotland (2019)	‘a broad holistic definition of rural skills has been used. Whilst traditional sectors including farming, forestry, and fishing still have an important role to play in rural areas, so increasingly do activities across a wide range of sectors including tourism, creative industries, energy, manufacturing and others. Rural areas also have requirement for a range of cross-cutting skills including digital skills and higher-level leadership and management skills.’
North East College Scotland (2022)	This course will provide you with an in-depth introduction to some of the land-based disciplines and can include Estate Maintenance, Crop Production, Soft Landscaping, Animal Handling, Animal Husbandry and Employability Skills for Land-based Industries.
Apprenticeships.scot (2022)	Whether you’re a keen farmer or a passionate conservationist, there’s a career opportunity for you in the rural skills sector in Scotland. This sector covers environmental management, travel and tourism, agriculture, renewable energy and much more. Manage Scottish forests, fisheries and farms. Learn traditional rural skills that have been practised for centuries. Preserve landscapes, habitats and species for future generations.
Highland Perthshire Communities and Land Trust (2022)	Throughout the course we will be working with local contractors and trainers to offer a mixture of certified training (chainsaw use/ brushcutter/ pesticide use) as well as uncertified work experience with local contractors/ land managers and on site with the project officer and other HPCLT representatives (fencing, dyking, footpath work and habitat/woodland management).
SQA (2022)	This Rural Skills Course allows candidates to begin to develop some of the basic practical skills necessary to work in most of the land-based disciplines — areas such as agricultural livestock, equine industries, horticulture, landscaping, agricultural crops and animal care. The Course also provides the opportunity to explore the very diverse employment prospects that exist in land-based industries. There is then a choice of a plant or an animal route, where candidates can develop some of the basic skills for the chosen route.

2.2 Defining the Land Based Sector

There are 6,240,908 hectares of agricultural land in Scotland of which Ayrshire accounts for 236,187 hectares with a total of 2,697 holdings.

	Ayrshire		Scotland	
Crops and fallow:	holdings	hectares	holdings	hectares
Wheat	93	1,624	2,695	107,480
Barley: Winter	83	1,079	1,990	48,803
Spring	249	4,008	6,824	242,090
Total	269	5,087	7,278	290,893
Oats, triticale and mixed grain	21	198	1,803	32,471
Rape for oilseed and linseed	0	0	1,082	31,855
Potatoes	c	c	2,598	28,491
Peas and beans for combining	c	c	180	2,320
Stockfeeding crops(1)	69	479	2,618	17,041
Vegetables for human consumption	37	67	2,087	18,635
Orchard and soft fruit	32	2	941	2,165
Bulbs, flowers and nursery stock	19	18	416	1,019
All other crops	54	332	2,311	16,541
Fallow land: 5 years or less	77	334	4,848	26,073
more than 5 years	44	181	1,279	4,679
Total crops and fallow	**472**	**8,671**	**12,989**	**579,661**
Grass and rough grazing:				
Grass under 5 years old	500	7,171	11,982	187,429
Grass 5 years old and over	2,229	109,182	37,958	1,126,627
Sole right grazing	880	90,599	22,314	3,146,714
Common grazing	7	1,180	1,125	581,282
Total grass and rough grazing	**2,570**	**208,132**	**49,039**	**5,042,053**
Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA)(2)	2,636	**216,804**	50,922	**5,621,714**
Woodland	938	16,113	15,393	529,170
Other land	1,267	3,271	22,363	90,025
Total agricultural area(3)	**2,697**	**236,187**	**51,863**	**6,240,908**

Figure 2.1 Number of holdings with crops and grass
Source: Scottish Agriculture Tables, Scottish government (2020)

This total is split across a range of possible land outputs. Crops and fallow within Ayrshire account for 4% of activity while grass and rough grazing make up the remaining 96% when compared with Scotland at a whole where the split was 10.3% (crops and fallow) and 89.7%

(grass and rough grazing). This means that there is a total of 216,804 hectares of farmland being used in Ayrshire that is predominantly being used for the purpose of grass and rough grazing.

As with the previous population figures it is challenging to drill these figures down to provide a clear representation of North Carrick however it is possible to see from figure 2.1 that the majority of farmland within North Carrick is of a high quality with most areas falling into class 2 and class 3. This map is interesting however as it seems to suggest that for North Carrick there is a high volume of land that is capable of producing high yields when compared with the rest of the country. The percentage of land being used for crops and fallow are considerably lower across the country than the percentage of land being used for grass and grazing. Figure 2.1 would seem to suggest that for North Carrick a key element of agriculture is crop growing.

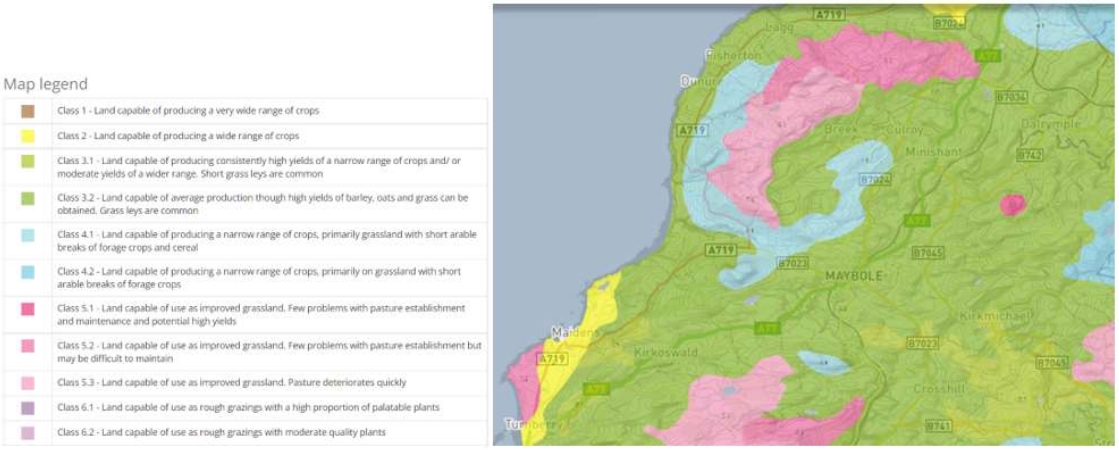

Figure 2.2 Soil Quality Map
Source: Environment.Gov.Scot (2022)

The other key area to consider when looking at agriculture in Ayrshire is livestock. The breakdown of livestock by category for Ayrshire is shown in figure 2.3. The largest livestock output is poultry followed by sheep and cattle. When compared to Scotland as a whole this proportion is largely typical. When looking at the map of the area to better understand the specifics of North Carrick pink areas are those that would be relevant for lifestock rearing. There are limited pink areas and it is therefore likely that North Carrick is more likely to be engaging in crops and grassland.

	Ayrshire	Scotland
Female Dairy Cattle	56,748	265,042
Female Beef Cattle	49,875	689,598
Male Cattle	21,354	253,406
Calves	52,329	519,681
Total Cattle	180,306	1,727,727
Sheep	437,438	6,669,100
Pigs	407	319,265
Poultry	684,115	14,861,679
Horses	2,776	34,422

Figure 2.3 Number of Livestock by Region
Source: Scottish Agriculture Tables, Scottish government (2020)

2.3 Rural Skills Providers

The previous section identified that based on the land compositions present in North Carrick the most relevant rural skills are likely to be those relating to agriculture and forestry. It is also necessary to note at this point that there is one active harbour in North Carrick however after consultation with stakeholders within the community it was decided that aquaculture and fishery were not core skills requirements for those living within North Carrick The following tables demonstrate 1) the skills that are identified by recruitment and employment websites as key to rural professions and 2) the breadth of training available to individuals within the sector.

Summary of transferrable/required skills for Agricultural workers

Source	Skills	Website
Farm Management	1. A foundation of agronomy knowledge: This includes soils, pest management principles, nutrient management, crop growth and development, and crop diagnostics. 2. A foundation of technology knowledge: The ability to work and utilize spatial software; move data around efficiently; and understand how sensors. telematics, and controllers fit in the system. 3. A foundation of agricultural economics: An understanding of the business, the farmer's expected revenues and costs, how to calculate returns on technology investments, and how farmers manage production, marketing, and enterprise risks. 4. Analytical skills: Basic farm math of calculating field areas, input rates, and crop stands; equipment calibration; how to set up a valid field comparison; differentiating real numbers from normal field variation. 5. Communication skills: Listening and asking questions to understand the customer's operation, needs, and preferences; communicating value as much as product features. 6. Ethics: Acting for the right reasons. Considering people and environmental consequences along with profit motives.	6 Essential Competencies For Any Precision Agriculture Staff (farmmanagement.pro)
Farmers Weekly	The major demand is in the skilled trade sector. For example, jobs like stockmen or combine drivers, where technology is advancing quickly. Agriculture and horticulture have almost five times more skilled trade roles (48% of the workforce) than the average for other professions (11%), according to figures provided by the land-based training organisation Lantra. The industry needs people coming out of further education at Higher Level 3 Apprenticeship grade – just below degree standard. And they don't necessarily require straight horticultural or agricultural management qualifications. They could have qualifications in technology and engineering, which can be applied in an agricultural context, she says. "The role of arable worker has changed to what would be better described as crop technician," he says. "It is now a mixture of practical knowledge combined with the IT know-how to interpret and act upon swathes of data being produced by equipment. The individual has to be a high-calibre decision-maker.	What skills do agricultural employers really want? - Farmers Weekly (fwi.co.uk)
Zippia	Green House Irrigation Systems DIG Farm Equipment Heavy Equipment Other Skills Manual Labour Weather Conditions	15 Essential Agriculture Worker Skills For Your Resume And Career - Zippia

Graduate Farmer	Farm operation skills Value chain knowledge Marketing skills Crop and animal management skills Time management Record keeping Interpersonal skills Technical skills	Basic skills that every farmer needs (graduatefarmer.co.ke)
National Careers Service	• feed and look after farm animals • treat animals and crops to prevent disease • operate milking machinery on dairy farms • plough fields, sow seeds and harvest crops • operate and repair farm machinery like tractors, ploughs and combine harvesters • maintain farm buildings • trim hedges, clear drains and ditches and mend fences and walls	Farm worker | Explore careers | National Careers Service
Health and Safety Executive	Recognised standards of formal training and/or competence are normally required for specific tasks or work activities such as: ▪ using chainsaws, ▪ tree work, ▪ applying pesticides, ▪ driving all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) such as quad bikes, ▪ operating fork-lift trucks or telescopic materials handlers, ▪ sheep dipping ▪ first aid. Health and safety VQs are specific to agriculture and horticulture and are available at two levels of ability. The VQs should be supplemented with additional technical training for more specific operations eg for skills such as fork lift truck, chainsaw or ATV driving as necessary.	Agriculture: Training and Vocational Qualifications (VQs) (hse.gov.uk)
National Improvement Hub	Possible career options Sheep farmer Solicitor Aquaculture Livestock husbandry Nutritionist Game and wildlife Forestry Dairy farming Land agent Agronomist	Rural skills - Careers in the rural industry in Scotland | Practice exemplars | National Improvement Hub (education.gov.scot)

Rural Skills Training Providers

Provider	Courses		Website
Rural Skills Training	• dry stone dyking • woodland crafts and coppicing • hedge planting, laying and restoration • horticulture, especially polytunnel culture, fruit growing and orchards	• woodland management • fencing and other boundaries • garden and landscape design	Rural Skills Training in Scotland & Northern England – Home
Royal Agricultural University	• excavator 360 degree below 10 tonnes • first aid • food handling and hygiene • forklift rough terrain telescopic • hedge laying • agricultural vehicles • chainsaw maintenance, cross cutting and felling • litter picking and environmental maintenance • making tax digital • Woodchipper	• manual handling • aerial cutting trees • tree climbing and aerial rescue • location and avoidance of underground apparatus • professional bed bug control • professional wasp and bee control • responsible and effective control of rodents • rodent control on farms • tractor driving	Rural skills | Royal Agricultural University (rau.ac.uk)
Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)	Environmental conservation Estate management Agriculture, forestry, arboriculture Introduction to rural working: • Tree and Shrub Planting • Species and Habitats: an Introduction • Constructing Rural Features • Woodland Skills	• Basic Tractor Operations • Small Powered Machinery Operations • Aquaculture: An Introduction to Finfish Production • Tree Identification • Forestry in Britain • Gardening Skills • Estate Maintenance	Rural & Estate Skills | SRUC
Scottish Qualification Association? (SQA)	▪ understanding of the workplace and the employee's responsibilities ▪ for example time-keeping, appearance, customer care ▪ self-evaluation skills ▪ positive attitude to learning ▪ flexible approaches to solving problems ▪ agricultural crops and animal care	▪ adaptability and positive attitude to change ▪ confidence to set goals, reflect and learn from experience ▪ agricultural livestock ▪ equine ▪ horticul	Skills for Work: Rural Skills National 4 (SCQF level 4) - SQA
UK Rural Skills (UKRS)	• advanced cereals • pulse crops and vegetables • spray operators • pitch groundsmand • crop protection	• Soil examination and cultivation management • Sugar beet agronomy • Wheat agronomy • Weather analysis	Course finder | UK Rural Skills

	• soil and water management • soils • waste to land • water management and irrigation • broadleaf identification • cab controlled crane and sling • environmental awareness training • combi tractor mower • combine operation • control plant growth • crop walk for sprayers • cross compliance and environmental stewardship • ecology field survey • effective application of pesticides • enrich your soils • FACTS • Environmental health check – farm • Silage • Calulating basic ration • Fertiliser • Food hygiene • Grain drying	• Grainsore/storeman good practice • Grassland management • Harvest crop by hand • Health and safety – harvest • Baling • Hoist crane • Irrigation • Crop maintenance • Tillage • Pesiticides • Side loader • Reach truck • Nozzle seminar • Mole catcher • Straddle truck Z4 • Pest control • Place plant material • Plant identification • Ploughing • Reducing water pollution • Seeding • Sewage and sludge	
Lochview Rural Training	• Practical lambing • Agricultural machinery maintenance courses • Animal health	• Practical crofting • Beginners guide to crofting • Poultry keeping	Home | Lochview Rural Training Centre | Rural Training & Skills Development Highlands
North East Scotland College	• Agriculture • countryside	• management • landscape horticulture	Rural Skills - North East Scotland College (nescol.ac.uk)
Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust	• Emergency Outdoor First Aid (BASP) (1 day) • Risk Assessment and Site Safety (1 day) • LANTRA 2 Day Chainsaw Maintenance and Cross-cutting • LANTRA 2 day Brushcutters/Trimmers – Maintenance and Operation • LANTRA 2 Day Safe Application of Pesticides Using Handheld Equipment • LANTRA 2 Day Sit Astride ATV (Novice Operator)	• Ropes Training (1 day) • Introduction to Dry Stone Walling (2 days) • Introduction to Woodland and Habitat Management (1 day) • Tree planting, Aftercare and Maintenance (2 days) • Introduction to footpath work (2 days) • Fencing Building, repair and restoration (3 days)	Rural Skills Training | HPCLT

		• Habitat and Wildlife Monitoring (2 days	
University of Highlands and Islands (UHI)	• Practical countryside skills (eg. fencing, foot paths, outdoor structures, working with timber, using tools and machinery) • Habitat studies: surveys and monitoring • Habitat management in Scotland • Countryside recreation and access • Countryside interpretation • Landscaping	• Volunteering in environmental conservation • John Muir Explorer Award • Industry training awards as above • Embedded development of core and essential skills • Management • Evaluating results • Understanding visitor services provision	NQ Level 5 Countryside Skills with Ranger Training (uhi.ac.uk)

Annex 3 – North Carrick Overview

All information provided in this annex comes from the Community Action Plans commissioned by NCCBC to better understand community needs. These are provided as a guide North Carrick and to demonstrate the breadth of the area.

3.1 **Crosshill, Straiton, and Kirkmichael**

Crosshill

Crosshill is located 3 miles (5km) south east of Maybole in South Ayrshire. The area was first settled by Irish immigrants in the late 1800s. Most came to Ayrshire as hand loom weavers. At its height, countless Crosshill women were employed as needle workers and almost all the men worked as hand loomers. They constructed many single-storey cottages, a few of which can still be found on Dalhowan Street. Crosshill has a population of approximately 480 people which has reduced by about 1% over the past 10 years.

Straiton

Straiton is a village on the River Girvan in South Ayrshire in Scotland, and dates back to 1760 when the village was laid out by Thomas, Earl of Cassillis. The village was mainly built in the 18th century, with low single-storey cottages on either side of the main road, but also has some more recent housing.

There are 170 households in Straiton including outlying farms and cottages; the primary school has approximately 16 pupils. The village has a shop, a pub / hotel, village hall and local cafe. It has a total of eleven accommodation businesses with over 100 bed spaces available and is a popular holiday destination for many visitors. The village's public toilets were closed by South Ayrshire Council in 2008 and subsequently re-opened under the management of the village community. Donations are invited to cover the £3500 annual running costs.

Kirkmichael

The Dyrock Burn runs through the core of the village of Kirkmichael, which started life as the focus of a well populated rural parish served by its church. Today it is a largely white harled small village set amid the rolling hills of South Ayrshire, a ten mile drive south of central Ayr. Its origins date back to the 13th century when John de Gemmelstoun founded a church beside the Dyrock Burn here, which he dedicated to St. Michael.

Kirkmichael is centred around two intersecting streets, largely occupied by white cottages built for handweavers in the 1790s. A striking building is the red stone McCosh Hall on Patna Road. This serves as the village hall and in 1898 was gifted to the village by the estate of John McCosh, an army surgeon and pioneering photographer that served with the Indian Medical Service. At the junction of Patna Road and Straiton Road lies the white-painted Kirkmichael Arms, a long one-storey village inn.

The village of Kirkmichael has a community run village shop and café, a not-for-profit, community run shop that sells general groceries and household items as well as local products, and a range of eat in and takeaway snacks including tea, coffee, home-made soup, filled rolls and home baking. The village is also home to the Kirkmichael Primary School, located in new purpose built facilities that opened in 2014.

3.2 Dunure

Dunure is a small fishing village in South Ayrshire, located on the coast of the Firth of Clyde approximately five miles from Ayr. The first buildings in the lower Dunure village were erected in the early nineteenth century. Dunure Harbour is a square basin with a breakwater quay that was improved by the Earl of Cassillis in 1811 at a cost of £50,000. It is topped off by a locally common cylindrical stone harbour light. Kennedy Hall within the village dates from 1881 and Dunure House from 1800. With Limekilns being a common feature throughout the harbour and Dunure. Dunure Castle today stands in ruins on the Carrick coast, overseeing and once protecting Dunure Harbour. The site dates back to the 13th century, when the Kennedy family was granted lands in 1357 and built the castle. However the remains are 15th and 16th century. When in use, the castle consisted of two distinct parts: a keep and a lower building. It is reputed that Mary Queen of Scots stayed at Dunure Castle for three days in 1563. Today the castle is surrounded by the Kennedy Park, a play area and picnic spot with parking for the many cars that visit Dunure during the summer months.

3.3 Kirkoswald, Maidens and Turnberry

The Kirkoswald, Maidens and Turnberry Community Council area is located midway between the towns of Maybole and Girvan. Much of the area has been influenced by the important role of Clan Kennedy.

Kirkoswald

The village of Kirkoswald lies on the A77 some four miles southwest of Maybole and a mile inland from the coast at Maidens. As the name implies, the village started life as the home to an

ancient church serving a wider rural parish dedicated to Oswald of Northumbria, who is said to have won a battle here in the 7th century. The old church, which was built in 1244 and houses the baptismal font of Robert the Bruce, is now a ruin in the grounds of the modern church, which was built in 1777 to a design by Robert Adam. Kirkoswald is also noted for its connection with Robert Burns, who attended school while staying in the village, and would later base the characters Souter Johnnie and Kirkton Jean, made famous in Tam o' Shanter, on village locals John Davidson, Jean Aird and Douglas Graham and whose graves can be found in the parish churchyard. Kirkoswald today has the popular free National Trust for Scotland attraction Souter Johnnie's Cottage, a Post Office, the Richmond Hall, a restaurant on the site of the old school house where Robert Burns studied, a house and garden retail offer, a glass craft studio and Whisky Experience.

Maidens

The former fishing harbour of Maidens on the coast of the Firth of Clyde, is some six miles west of Maybole. Rocks known as the "Maidens of Turnberry" form a natural harbour, with the present harbour built by the Marquess of Ailsa in the mid-19th century. The village lies two miles north of the ruinous Turnberry Castle, ancient seat of the Earls of Carrick and likely the birthplace of Robert the Bruce. By the time the castle was slighted, never to be rebuilt, Maidens had established itself as a viable settlement. By the end of the 1300s it was helping supply "Coif Castle", a tower house built during that century on sea cliffs two miles northeast of the village. Over time, Coif Castle became Culzean Castle, the former home of the Marquess of Ailsa, the chief of Clan Kennedy. Today the Castle and Country Park together form one of the most popular visitor attractions in southwest Scotland in the care of the National Trust for Scotland. This in turn, supports the visitor economy with Maidens becoming a popular holiday location with a number of static and touring caravan sites.

Turnberry

The growth of Maidens was aided still more by another local development: golf arrived on the scene with the building of a course, and subsequent village at Turnberry a little over a mile south of Maidens, in 1903. The following year the Glasgow and South Western Railway began building a large luxury golfing hotel at Turnberry which opened concurrently with a new railway line built between Ayr and Girvan, on which Maidens also gained a station. A second golf course was added at Turnberry in 1912. After purchase and further investment of over £200m the Turnberry resort is now part of the Trump group of luxury hotels, winning Scottish Hotel of

the Year at the 2018 Scottish Hotel Awards. The Ailsa golf course has hosted four Open Championships and with enhancements and the creation of five new holes has become one of the highest ranked golf courses in the UK and Ireland

3.4 Maybole

Maybole is a small town built on a sloping hillside overlooking the Southern Uplands. It is situated 9 miles (14 km) south of Ayr (see map) and 50 miles (80 km) southwest of Glasgow. The town has three primary schools: Cairn Primary, Gardenrose Primary and St Cuthbert's Primary. The secondary school for Maybole is Carrick Academy.

Maybole has huge significance as the ancient capital of Carrick. As a result of its longevity and central role as Carrick's ancient capital, the town boasts an array of historical figures who have lived or spent time there: • Robert the Bruce would have known the area well with Maybole being located only seven miles from Turnberry Castle, his childhood home. • For centuries it was the stronghold of the Kennedy Family, known as the Kings of Carrick who resided at Culzean Castle, only five miles from Maybole on the coast. • It was the location for a famous debate in 1562 between John Knox and the last Abbot of Crossraguel on the doctrine of the Mass. • Sir Gilbert Blane who discovered in the 1700s that limes helped to prevent scurvy lived in Maybole. • John Loudon McAdam, the famous road maker, was schooled in Maybole until 1770. • Robert Burns, whose parents met and married in Maybole, visited his life-long friend William Niven in Maybole for many years. • Scottish artist Robert MacBryde was born in the town in 1913. • General Dwight Eisenhower was a frequent visitor to the town which he always considered to be, "his Scottish hometown". In 1946, the Freedom of the Burgh was conferred on him by the townspeople. • In the nineteenth century the town was a centre for boots and shoe manufacturing. At its peak the annual production by the Maybole factories was over 1 million pairs of boots and shoes with thousands employed

3.5 Minishant

With a population of approximately 750, Minishant is located five miles south of Ayr and about three miles north of Maybole on the A77. The Culroy Burn runs through Minishant and the village is surrounded by open farmland and woodlands. History depicts Minishant as a weaving village with two factories that specialised in blankets. The village has grown in recent years, with developments of new houses at each end of the village. The primary school has approximately 35 pupils and seven staff, including the Head Teacher which is a shared role with Crosshill Primary School. The school aims to provide a vibrant learning community around six core values. There are a small number of play areas and the war memorial dates to 1920. Many

residents commute into Ayr, or Maybole for work and being on the A77, it is an accessible commute to Glasgow by car or by train from Maybole or Ayr. Minishant businesses include The Minishant, formerly an Inn but now a restaurant open seven days per week that underwent an extensive renovation in 2012. Minishant Store provides post office facilities, newspapers and grocery supplies and there is a long-established Mower and Garden Tool Repairs and Services. The Lady Coates Memorial Church, dating to 1877 and closed in the mid 1980s, was a popular Indian restaurant for many years but has recently been converted into a five bedroom Airbnb accommodation offer.

Annex 4 – Data Collection Instruments

4.1 Rural Skills Explorative Research

Stakeholder Topic Guide

Background

We are working with CEIS Ayrshire to carry out research on behalf of North Carrick Community Benefit Company (NCCBC) as part of an employability study in North Carrick (South Ayrshire). NCCBC have identified you as a potential stakeholder for this project and such we are very interested in your opinions. The interview takes about 30 minutes and is done over the phone. The research is entirely anonymous and confidential. If you are agreeable I'd like to arrange a time and date that might suit you to do the interview.

Introduction

- Thanks very much for your time today.
- Can you tell me a little about your job and what you do?
- What do you know about NCCBC (if anything)? – how would you describe them to a colleague?
- (If a relationship) Can you tell me a little bit about your role and your relationship with NCCBC?
    - How long have you had a relationship with them?
    - Can you tell me about how you have worked with them before?
- (If no relationship) Do you think you have any areas of common interest with NCCBC in the work you do?

Perceptions of Rural Skills

NCCBC are interested in understanding the rural skills requirements of North Carrick and how people can be upskilled in rural skills. This first section of questions aims to understand more about your perceptions of rural skills and what that means to you and the community.

- What does the term rural skills make you think of?
- Which areas do you think rural skills refer to?
- What are the most important areas that rural skills refers to in North Carrick?

Understanding rural skills in North Carrick

- What are the skills that are most needed in area?

- What are some of the challenges in employing people within your area of expertise/ RSs?
- What skills are most needed by your organisation/organisations?
- What skills are most lacking with applicants?

Rural Skills for the future

- One of the things we are interested in is future proofing the area to make sure that people can access training that is most appropriate to their roles.
    - What do you think rural skills for the future look like?
    - Are there any areas that you think will become important in North Carrick that are not at the moment?
    - Is there anything else that you would like to mention that you feel is relevant that we haven't covered?