

## Stevenston Beach Coastal Study – Overview

North Ayrshire Council has undertaken a study considering how the Stevenston Beach area has changed and how it is likely to change in the future. This was prompted by issues raised in the Ayrshire Shoreline Management Plan.

The study recognises the importance of the area in terms of:

- Its essential recreational and amenity value
- Alongside, its ecological importance, recognised by its partial designation as a Local Nature Reserve



### Coastal Change

The shoreline has in the past significantly changed and continues to change in response to storms, with areas of natural erosion. In the future, the rate of change will increase with climate change, in particular with sea level rise.

- While recognising the uncertainty as to how rapidly sea level rise is happening, sea level may realistically be expected to increase by around 0.5m over the next fifty years (potentially by as much as 1.2m over the next 100 years)

The way in which we use and manage the coast also imposes changes:

- From the very basic pressure imposed by people walking through the dunes, damaging the vegetation and allowing wind-blown sand erosion
- To the way in which intervention or imposing hard structures have and can alter the development of the shoreline and may shift the balance of erosion and accretion

### This Consultation

Understanding this ongoing process of change frames the discussion as to how we can respond to change and adapt the way in which we use and manage the coast. **This consultation aims to raise the awareness within the community and with individuals of the challenges being faced by coastal change.** The focus is on how management may influence the shoreline but this has also to be viewed from the wider perspective.

**The underlying principle for management is to allow the coast to develop naturally.**

Locally, however, there are issues where some form of intervention might be an aspiration or even necessary, but equally might still not be deliverable. Key aspects are:

- Management of the Slipway and the interface between the hard defence of the Promenade and the natural dune to the east
- Management of the erosion to the colliery spoil headland, with the potential need to realign the path
- Management of the Stevenston Burn and presently redundant footbridge.
- In the longer-term, the potential to allow increased flooding to the dune slack slightly further back along the course of the Burn, with the idea of increasing biodiversity

This all has to be viewed from the point of view as to how access is managed throughout the area.

Any sustainable approach to management has to be developed in open discussion with the residents, the community and other stakeholders. Some basic questions are posed but we would value views on any of the issues being raised.