



# THE MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL OF SCOTLAND

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## SCOTTISH CLIMBING WALLS:

### The National Facilities Review Appendix 2

#### The Future: objectives beyond 2010

After almost twenty years encouraging and supporting climbing wall development, initially seeing a series of small 'Local Walls' established, then focusing on large scale walls for the past ten years, the MCoFS has helped establish a network of 'Regional' centres that cater for most of the main centres of population. The focus from 2010 is on the development of facilities which target grass roots climbing development – that of 'School Walls' and play-park outdoor 'Boulders', which will encourage participation, allow for competitions and act as feeders to the Regional Centres.

However, there remain deficiencies in regional availability; quality; competition suitability; provision of adequate training/coaching facilities; and style of climbing wall offered.

In assessing the future options for development the MCoFS will act independently from any wall developers, shall maintain confidentiality, and will act on behalf of climbers best interests. In doing this the MCoFS will develop its strategy based on climbers' needs and strategic development, not commercial interests, and shall maintain impartiality in commercial decisions.

*[The process for gaining support from the Council is contained in a separate Information Sheet].*

The MCoFS will consider future development based on two aspects of provision, Wall Classification and Wall Style.

#### Boulder Parks:

Current provision of artificial climbing walls as free facilities within town parks is extremely fragmented, all current facilities are far too small a scale to be regarded as significant and the design is inappropriate for the sport. The MCoFS will support the building of more suitable 'boulder parks' catering for novice, children and adult recreational climbers where most appropriate.

These walls have proved to be very popular in other parts of the UK and significantly contribute to the awareness of the general public of climbing. There are areas of large populations across Scotland, where outdoor bouldering is not available and the provision of bouldering for local dedicated climbers would be advantageous. This has to be weighed against the suitability of an outdoor facility regarding weather conditions (and possibly Midge!) and indoor provision. It is most probable that such boulders would be most popular in the east and the south of the country.

**Primary Strategic Sites:** Edinburgh (City Central), Perth, Ayr, Stirling, Inverness, Aberdeen, Dumfries, Newton Stewart, Irvine, Isle of Arran, Hawick, Falkirk, Dunfirmline, Glenrothes

**Secondary Strategic Sites:** Glasgow (South: East Kilbride/Motherwell), Dundee, Peterhead, Elgin, Dingwall, Thurso, Greenoch, Nairn, Cumbernauld, Dunbar

## School Walls:

A database of existing walls at primary schools and high schools is maintained on the MCoFS website and the numbers of walls are increasing. However, in order to establish the player pathways and competition networks detailed in the MCoFS Strategic Plan, there remain gaps which we shall encourage to be filled: this is the area of priority for the Strategy over the coming period 2010-2013. MCoFS will encourage, support and offer advice on design for any proposed school wall project.

### Primary Schools

Local Authority Areas that already have a number of schools with facilities will be the focus to establish the necessary numbers of venues for inter-school competitions. Local Authority areas currently lacking in any facility, will be encouraged to begin facility development:

**Primary Strategic Sites:** Highland Region, Argyll & Bute,  
Perth and Kinross

**Secondary Strategic Sites:** Fife, Borders

### High Schools

Few Local Authority Schools have suitable climbing wall facilities. The MCoFS will support the building of any new wall project. The focus will be on new school proposals where facilities can be included in initial design. We will also help find suitable venues within established schools in areas that can be linked into a network.

## Local Walls:

There are two aspects to small wall development, that of existing and that of new facilities. Some existing local facilities are old and are no longer meeting the needs of the local climbing community or are too small for current demand and would benefit from being up-graded. There are other areas where provision of a local facility would be advantageous.

EXISTING – Callander, Dingwall, Dunfirmline, Edinburgh (Meadowbank), Fort William, Gairloch, Glasgow (Kelvin Hall), Linlithgow, Oban, Ullapool, Stornoway (Isle of Lewis), Aviemore, Brae Head (Glasgow), Peak Wall (Stirling)

**Primary Strategic Sites:** Campbelltown, Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy,  
Dunoon, Elgin, Fraserburgh,  
Isle of Arran, Isle of Skye, Newton Stewart, Orkney,  
Shetland, Gairloch

**Secondary Strategic Sites:** Dumfries, Borders Towns, Ullapool, Oban

## Regional Centres of Excellence:

Catering for larger populations, provision of larger centres is currently fractured across the country. There are three wall styles possible and suitability at any one Regional site will be made on an individual basis:

- Main walls with an emphasis on Lead climbing (Tall Walls)
- Bouldering Walls (segregated areas)
- Winter Style Walls (Artificial – Dry-Tooling)
- Traditional Gear Leading Routes

There are two aspects to any future strategy:

- Existing facilities that had the potential to be regarded as Regional Centres have often phased development over several years. Initially they would not have met the criteria as a Regional Centre, but may now do so. The MCofS will assess their suitability to be regarded as Regional Centres and help future development to meet the criteria.

**EXISTING ENDORSEMENT** – Inverness (Climb Caledonia), The Ice Factor (Kinlochleven), Transition Extreme (Aberdeen)

**Primary Strategic Upgrade:** Glasgow (Cliff Hanger), Edinburgh (Alien Rock),

**Secondary Strategic Upgrade:** Dundee (Avertical World)

- There are still major conurbations (and large climbing communities) that are not serviced by any modern climbing wall and require action to establish Regional Centres.

**Primary Strategic Sites:** Perth / Stirling, Glenrothes, Dumfries, Borders

**Secondary Strategic Sites:** Ayr, Thurso, Elgin,

## Large-scale Dedicated Bouldering Only Venues

This development is relatively recent with the establishment of ‘The Works’ in Sheffield, ‘The Climbing Academy’ in Bristol and Climb Newcastle in England and The Climbing Academy project in Glasgow. It coincides with the exponential growth in interest in bouldering across the world and the extensive development of bouldering venues across the UK. The MCofS will investigate support for such walls on an individual basis, linked to our support for Regional Centres.

## Scottish National Climbing Centre

This development has been established with full support from MCofS at the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena at Ratho Quarry (EICA: Ratho), incorporating the National Indoor Rock Climbing Centre. The MCofS will continue to be involved in the development of the National Centre into the future.

**EXISTING:** Edinburgh (EICA: Ratho)

## Scottish National Ice Climbing Wall

This has been established at The Ice factor, Regional Centre at Kinlochleven. Other potential projects for developing indoor ice walls will be considered in light of this on an individual basis.

**EXISTING:** Kinlochleven (The Ice Factor)

## Competition Walls:

These remain in short supply on a regional basis in Scotland. These walls would have to be capable of hosting Scottish National and British standard events.

**EXISTING:** Inverness, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Kinlochleven  
**Primary Strategic Sites:** Perth / Stirling, Glenrothes, Dumfries,  
Borders, Orkney, Shetland,  
**Secondary Strategic Sites:** Ayr, Thurso, Elgin, Dundee

## Instructional Walls:

These have not been developed to any extent as yet. They should ideally be separated from other climbing areas if incorporated into a larger project.

**EXISTING:** Aviemore (Glenmore Lodge); Kinlochleven (The Ice Factor)  
**Primary Strategic Sites:** Aviemore (Glenmore Lodge): upgrade  
**Secondary Strategic Sites:** Edinburgh (EICA:Ratho)

## Adventure Walls:

These also have not been developed in Scotland. The MCofS will investigate further and make decisions as and when proposals arise.

## Winter Style Walls (Ice and Artificial):

With winter climbing being possibly more popular in Scotland than rock climbing, there is an opportunity to cater for sport-specific training (and fun recreation) by developing 'ice walls' at strategic venues. As a large number of climbers visit particular climbing areas on extended 'holidays' from abroad (including the rest of the UK and Ireland), and with the vagaries of Scottish winter weather, then there is potential to offer an alternative.

It would be applicable to have such a facility in the National Indoor Climbing Centre where such climbing competitions could be held.

It would also be beneficial to have facilities at the National Outdoor Training Centre which offers next-step training to outdoor winter mountaineering.

**EXISTING:** Kinlochleven (The Ice Factor) (ice);  
Aviemore (Glenmore Lodge) (artificial - small)  
**Primary Strategic Sites:** Aviemore (Glenmore Lodge): ice & artificial  
**Secondary Strategic Sites:** Edinburgh (EICA:Ratho): artificial

## Provision Summary March 2010:

Bouldering Parks, Primary Schools, High Schools, Local Walls, Universities, Regional Centres, National Centres

	Current Facility	MCoFS endorsed / supported (where applicable)	Upgrade Possible	In Planning	New Facility Required
<b>FACILITIES</b>					
Boulder Parks	None	-	None	None	Major town & city parks
Primary School Network	Highland	-	-	-	All LA areas
	Argyll & Bute	-	-	-	
	Western Isles	-	-	-	
High School / Community Campus Network	Kinross	-	-	Aberfeldy	All LA Areas
	-	-	-	Perth	-
Local Wall Network	Gairloch	Y	Gairloch	Orkney	Shetland
	Ullapool	-	Ullapool	-	Campbellton
	Callander	Y	-	-	Glenrothes
	Dingwall	-	-	-	Kirkcaldy
	Dunfirmline	Y	-	-	Dunoon
	Meadowbank	-	-	-	Elgin
	Fort William	-	-	-	Fraserburgh
	Kelvin Hall	Y	-	-	Isle of Arran
	Linlithgow	Y	-	-	Isle of Skye
	Stornoway	-	-	-	Borders
	Brae Head	Y	-	-	Dumfries
	Peak Wall (Stirling)	Y	-	-	Newton Stewart
		-	-	-	Oban
Universities	Edinburgh	Y	-	-	-
	RGU	Y	-	-	-
Regional Centre Network	Inverness	Y	Glasgow	-	Ayr
	Kinlochleven	Y	Edinburgh	-	Borders
	Aberdeen	Y	Dundee	-	Perth
		-	-	-	Glenrothes
		-	-	-	Dumfries
		-	-	-	Borders
		-	-	-	Thurso
		-	-	-	Elgin
Dedicated Bouldering Walls	None	-	-	-	Major Cities only
National Indoor Centre	EICA: Ratho	Y	-	-	-
National Outdoor Centre	Glenmore Lodge	Y	-	Glenmore Lodge	Glenmore Lodge

## Current Provision:

Compiled from initial research undertaken by MCoFS (08.03.10)

(Refer to MCoFS walls database at: <http://www.mcofs.org.uk/find-climbing-wall.asp/> and school climbing walls list at: <http://www.mcofs.org.uk/active-schools-walls.asp>)

1 National Indoor Centre (EICA: Ratho)

1 National Outdoor Training Centre (Glenmore Lodge)

3 Designated Regional Centres (Inverness, Aberdeen and Kinlochleven)

4 Large Local Facilities (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen)

25 Local Walls

2 University walls (modern design - Edinburgh University, RGU, Aberdeen)

104 Primary School Traverse walls

3 High School walls (modern design)