

---

# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

---

## FOR DECISION

**Title:** SUBMISSION OF DRAFT REVISED CORE PATHS PLAN  
WITH OBJECTIONS TO THE DIRECTORATE FOR  
PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL APPEALS

**Prepared by:** Adam Streeter-Smith, Outdoor Access Officer

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the steps taken to date to remove objections to the revised Core Paths Plan and seek approval to submit the revised Core Paths Plan with outstanding objections to the DEPA.

### **Recommendations**

*That the Planning committee acknowledges the work done to date in removing the objections and approves the submission of the Plan along with the outstanding objections to the Minister.*

### **Executive Summary**

The public consultation into the revised Core Paths Plan resulted in the lodgement of 19 objections to the Plan. Of these, staff have been able to resolve 12 through negotiation and minor amendments to the Plan. The outstanding objectors have intimated they are unwilling to remove their objection so therefore the Plan must be submitted to Ministers who will instruct the Directorate of Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) to conduct a local inquiry.

---

## FOR DECISION

### Background

1. The formal consultation on the revised Core Paths Plan as Supplementary Guidance came to a close on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 2013. A total of 33 representations were received of which 19 have been assessed as valid objections. Such objections require a change in the plan as well as a name and address and to be submitted within the consultation period.
2. Where an objection to the Plan remains outstanding then Scottish Ministers will not direct the CNPA to adopt the Core Paths Plan without a Local Inquiry being held. It is likely that an Inquiry will take the form of written submissions rather than a full hearing. The Reporter will assess whether or not the core paths network would be sufficient to provide reasonable access throughout the area should the objection be upheld.
3. Broadly, the objections fall into four categories:
  - a. Those relating to the management of Capercaillie;
  - b. Those relating to an ongoing access issue (flooding on the Tulloch Moor Road);
  - c. Mountain paths; and
  - d. Perceived lack of provision in the network around Kingussie and Newtonmore.
4. Specific objections to note (see annex 1) relate to the desire to see:
  - a) GR17 the Thieves Road between Loch an Eilein and Feshiebridge removed.
  - b) LBS124 the Highburnside to Craigellachie path removed;
  - c) The removal of the proposed Spey Bridge in Aviemore.
5. The Thieves Road (GR17) crosses an important Capercaillie SPA. SNH in their advice on the route consider that its designation as a core path would not have a significant impact on the designated features. The Cairngorms Outdoor Access Forum support the route's inclusion as a means to ensure resources supporting visitor management are put in place and this is consistent with our approach that core paths should be where the necessary management effort and resources are required.
6. There are two objections to the designation of a new route between Highburnside and Craigellachie National Nature Reserve one from the Estate and one from the Aviemore Community Council. Both effectively cite lack of demand and the impact of A9 dualling. We maintain the view that the exclusion of the route would affect the sufficiency of the plan and that once developed it would provide an invaluable link to the National Nature Reserve.
7. The Estate has objected to the inclusion of a proposed bridge over the Spey linking the An Camus Mor site with Aviemore. The basis of their objection is lack of need and deliverability within a reasonable time frame. The need for a bridge is clearly demonstrated in the proposed Local Development Plan and is supported by the Aviemore Active Travel Audit. With a resolution to grant planning permission in place and a clear desire to see the bridge in place early in the development timeline, we maintain the view that this should be designated as a core path. It will be integral to

the functioning of An Camas Mor as a sustainable community and a priority for delivery.

### Other objections

8. Annex I summarises all of the objections and representations and indicates what changes to the plan are being sought. The objections which staff have been unable to resolve and which staff consider will not be withdrawn are highlighted.
9. Other amendments sought included the removal of routes in Carrbridge, Glen Loch and Ballater. Others sought minor modifications to existing routes and changes to the text of the plan.
10. Through a combination of correspondence and meetings staff have been able to resolve 12 objections. In order to secure this there has been a few minor amendments to the Plan.

### Natural and Cultural heritage implications

11. The revised Core Paths Plan was subject to Habitats Regulation Appraisal (HRA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and was assessed with the LDP. As highlighted above further detailed advice was sought and considered on paths such as the Thieves Road. No significant issues were identified that cannot be addressed through appropriate mitigation.

### Recommendation

12. **That the Planning Committee approves the submission of the revised Core Paths Plan and outstanding objections to the DEPA.**
13. Once the planning committee has approved the submission of the revised Core Paths Plan with objections to the Minister, staff will contact all outstanding objectors informing them of the decision and asking them to formally remove their objections. It is possible that the objectors may seek to avoid going to Inquiry and remove their objection. Those remaining will be informed of the process and their details and objection with our supporting statement will be submitted to the Minister who will, in turn, instruct the DPEA to hold an Inquiry.

**Adam Streeter-Smith**  
**21 November 2013**  
**adamstreetersmith@cairngorms.co.uk**