
CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

Title:	Reviewing the Core Paths Plan
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Purpose	This paper highlights the current lack of core paths in Highland Perthshire, outlines the process to review the current Core Paths Plan to address this and seeks advice on the current objectives of the Core Paths Plan.

Advice sought

Advice is sought from members on the current objectives of the Core Paths Plan (CPP) and asks if they are “fit for purpose” to support the adoption of new core paths.

Background

1. At the time of the adoption of the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) CPP, Perth and Kinross Council were the Access Authority for Atholl and Glenshee and had progressed their plan to the formal consultation stage. The extension to the National Park boundary occurred before the Perth and Kinross Core Paths Plan had gone through the Inquiry process. At the time of the Inquiry, Perth and Kinross Council were no longer the Access Authority for Atholl and Glenshee and therefore the paths shown in Annex I have never been adopted as core paths – indeed this part of the Park has no designated core paths.
2. Clearly there is a need to adopt these candidate core paths (subject to them meeting the National Parks Core Path Plan objectives) as core path designation is a significant tool in:
 - Prioritising path development (construction and maintenance);
 - Securing and protecting paths with regard to development;
 - Ensuring there are reasonable opportunities for everyone to enjoy the countryside and;
 - Supporting land managers through visitor management measures.
3. Section 20 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 gives the CNPA the power to review the adopted plan *at such times as they consider appropriate and on Ministers requiring them to do so*. The current guidance on Core Path Planning states no timescale on this requirement to review core paths plans but it is expected that at the earliest opportunity core paths plans will be incorporated into Local Development Plans. A commitment has already been given in the Main Issues Report to review the Core Paths network which would be used to identify key links across the Park, improving connectivity.

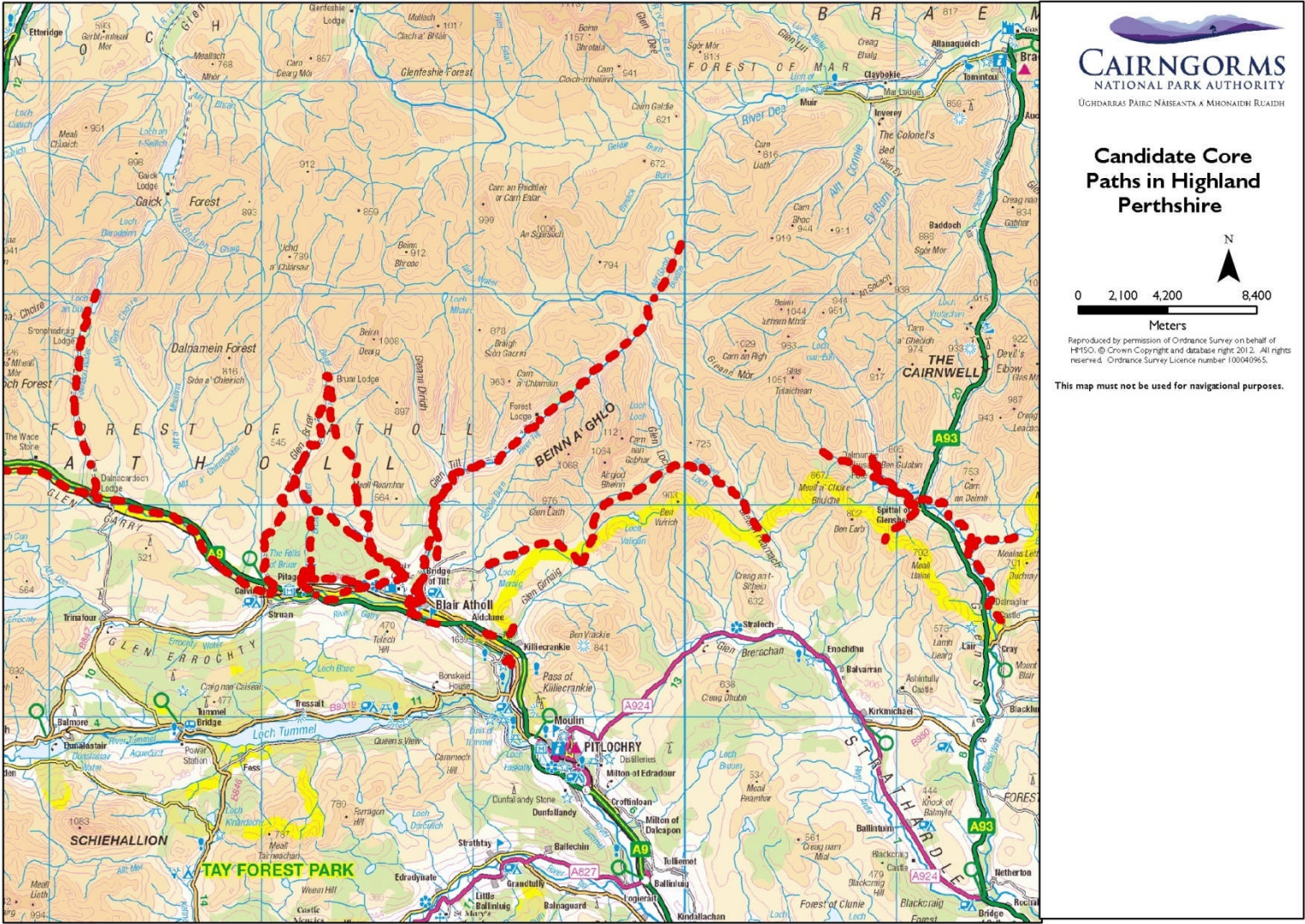
4. We have sought advice from SNH and Scottish Government colleagues to satisfy ourselves that our interpretation of the legislation is correct. Advice received confirms that in undertaking a review of the existing plan we would open up the possibility of existing paths being open to fresh objections. There is some risk of inviting people to re-address issues that have already been decided upon but as most of these have already been through due process we consider that we can deal with them without significant resource implications.
5. The development of the first Core Paths Plan was resource intensive in respect of staff time and financial impact. This time around we will keep the exercise as lean and as focused as we possibly can, while ensuring the process is open and transparent. We are of the view that the current level of core paths designation is broadly sufficient and that, with the exception of the paths described in paragraph 1, we only anticipate making very modest changes. We can use the informal stages as outlined in Annex 4 to refine this focus.
6. Any changes to the Core Paths Plan will have to be assessed against the objectives of the plan, (see Annex 2), which have already been subject to extensive consultation. However the opportunity arises to reconsider if we have the right objectives in light of the vision and strategic objectives (see Annex 3) of the next National Park Plan.

Advice is sought from members on the current objectives of the Core Paths Plan and asks if they remain “fit for purpose” to support the adoption of new core paths.

Next steps

7. Annex 4 of this paper sets out the timeline involving the key consultees for the informal part of the consultation.

Annex I – Proposed Core Paths in Highland Perthshire



Annex 2- Current Core Path Plan Vision and Objectives

Vision

The Core Paths Plan will help people to enjoy and understand the special qualities of the Cairngorms National Park by identifying a network of paths which offer a wide range of high quality outdoor access opportunities.

Objectives

The core paths network will:

- a) Help to conserve the Park's natural and cultural heritage and encourage people to enjoy it in a responsible way;
- b) Help those living and working on the land;
- c) Help to deliver the priorities for each area identified in the Outdoor Access Strategy;
- d) Provide for a wide range of activities;
- e) Provide for a wide range of abilities;
- f) Include a wide range of popular routes; and
- g) Include paths within, around and between communities and to public transport connections and places of local importance.

Annex 3 Vision and Strategic Objectives of the Draft National Park Plan

Vision

An outstanding National Park, enjoyed and valued by everyone, where nature and people thrive together.

Strategic objectives

- To ensure the Cairngorms National Park is a special place where the natural and cultural heritage is conserved and enhanced.
- To develop a sustainable economy that supports thriving and resilient business and communities.
- To ensure the Cairngorms National Park delivers an outstanding visitor experience and is an international benchmark for sustainable tourism.

Outcomes relating to outdoor access

Success in people enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences means that:

1. There will continue to be an excellent and integrated network of routes to enjoy **outdoor access** across the Park that meets the needs of residents and visitors.
2. There will be an even higher quality and increased range of **outdoor recreation** activities available and accessible to a wider range of people of all abilities to enjoy the Park.
3. People enjoying outdoor access and recreation in the Park, as well as those who manage the Park will understand **responsible behaviour**, and why it supports the enjoyment and management of the Park by all.

Annex 4 – Proposed time line and activity for the informal review of the Core Paths Plan

Activity	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Onwards
LOAF advice on informal review	8th						
Advice from the Sustainable Tourism Forum	23rd						
Advice from Inclusive Cairngorms							
Advice from the Land Management Forum							
Advice from Community Councils and Associations (led by Karen Major as part of Local Development Plan discussions)							
Further advice from LOAF on proposed changes to Core Paths Plan				21st			
Board Approval to formally consult on the review of the core paths plan						26th	
Thereafter will follow timetable for adopting the Development Plan							