

INVESTIGATION OF OPTIONS FOR A PROPOSED EXTENSION TO THE SPEYSIDE WAY LONG DISTANCE ROUTE BETWEEN AVIEMORE AND NEWTONMORE

BACKGROUND

With growing local interest in seeing the route extended to the south, the partners of the Speyside Way Management Group agreed to appoint on contract, a Development Officer to investigate the options for extending the route from its current terminus in Aviemore, to Newtonmore. In the spring of this year, Alastair Macleod was appointed as Development Officer and he conducted an investigation of possible route options between April and July.

MAIN TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The core functions of the contract post were to become familiar with route options and the history of this planned extension to the LDR, and to identify a preferred route on the ground in consultation with landowners. Consultation with local community and other interests also formed a key part of the job. Guidance from the Speyside Way Management Group was given throughout. The key areas of work are summarised as follows:

1. Familiarise with route extension options, and history of the project to date.
2. Check out options on ground in consultation with landowners and interested parties
3. Submit a report and advise the Speyside Way Management Group on a range of options for developing the route extension.

METHODOLOGY

Prior to investigations on the ground being undertaken, a desk exercise was conducted with the relevant landowners, agencies and other interested parties to establish the whereabouts of routes considered previously, any constraints which had been identified then, and where any environmentally sensitive areas were located. In general, however, the project was approached without preconceptions as to where the route should go. Meetings were held with landowners and their agents and tenant farmers, plus a wide range of interested parties including Community Councils, Community Associations, Development Trusts, organisations and agencies, local footpath groups and user-groups. Views were sought on potential options for the extension of the Speyside Way and notes were made of all points raised. Route options were inspected in the field to gain a general impression of their condition and whether they were 'fit for purpose'. No attempt was made at this stage to assess in detail path condition or to quantify new build.

Section 1 below lists the contacts made by the Development Officer and Section 2 lists all the routes investigated. An overview of all the routes investigated is provided as Map 1.

SECTION 1: CONTACTS

Landowners and Occupiers

Alvie & Dalraddy Estates
Dunachton Estate
Forestry Commission Scotland
Invereshie Estate
Invertromie Estate
Kinrara Estate
Pitmain Estate
Rothiemurchus Estate
Ralia Estate
Ballinluig Farm
Ballintean
Balnespick Farm
Corarnstilbeg Farm
Gordonhall Farm
Kingussie Golf Club
Loch Insh Watersports
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Scottish Natural Heritage

In addition, contact was made with a number of tenants of Kinrara Estate, as well as a number of individual households with property adjacent to any one of the route options.

Community Groups & Local Representatives

Aviemore & Vicinity Community Council
Aviemore Footpaths Group
Dalnavert Co-operative
Cairngorm Rothiemurchus & Glenmore Group
Kinraig & Vicinity Development Projects Ltd
Kinraig & Vicinity Community Council
Kingussie Business Association
Kingussie & District Community Council
Kingussie Footpath Group
Newtonmore Community Council
Newtonmore Community Woodland Trust
Rothiemurchus & Glenmore Community Association
Cllr Basil Dunlop
Cllr Gregor Rimell
Cllr Sheena Slimon

Other Interests

Highland Access Project
Highland Council Ranger Service
Highland Council Roads Department
Scottish Executive, Enterprise and Transport (for A9 Trunk Road)
Ramblers Association (Badenoch & Strathspey Branch)
Scottish Rights of Way & Access Society

SECTION 2: ROUTE OPTIONS INVESTIGATED (see Map 1)

- Option A:** Aviemore to Feshiebridge via B970 minor road (not mapped)
- Option B:** Aviemore to Feshiebridge via Coylumbridge, Loch an Eilein and the ‘Thieves’ road through Inshriach Forest
- Option C:** Aviemore to Dalraddy via the edge of the B9152 and the Kinrara Estate road
- Option D:** Aviemore to Dalraddy via the edge of the B9152 and alongside the railway line
- Option E:** Aviemore to Dalraddy via the west side of the A9 and the ‘upland edge’
- Option F:** Dalraddy to Kinraig via the Badenoch Way
- Option G:** Kinraig to Feshiebridge via Invereshie Farm road
- Option H:** Kinraig to Uath Lochans via Loch Insh
- Option J:** Feshiebridge to Insh via Uath Lochans, and from Insh to Tromie Bridge via the Badenoch Way
- Option K:** Feshiebridge to Tromie Bridge via River Feshie and Corarnstilbeg
- Option L:** Tromie Bridge to Ruthven
- Option M:** Ruthven to Newtonmore via the River Spey (not mapped)
- Option N:** Ruthven to Newtonmore via Kingussie and the Sustrans cycle route
- Option P:** Ruthven to Newtonmore via Kingussie golf course, Loch Gynack and Aultlarie
- Option Q:** Ruthven to Newtonmore via the Invertromie Estate and Ralia Estate on the east side of the River Spey