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## CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

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- Title:** Update and look forward for the next 3 months
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- Purpose:** This paper provides an update and flavour on the main areas of work undertaken to deliver the key themes in the Outdoor Access Strategy by the CNPA staff and partners.

### Advice Sought:

Forum members are asked to note the work undertaken. Any questions, comments or suggestions are very welcome.

### Action Theme 1: Improving path provision and quality

#### IMPLEMENTING THE CORE PATHS PLAN

1. **Core Paths Plan** – The Minister for the Environment has directed the CNPA to adopt the Core Paths Plan subject to one modification:
  - The Removal of LBS145 (the road between Nethybridge and the Braes of Abernethy junction) – this route is all on public road and is approximately 9km in length.

This means that the final plan will have:

- 254 core paths
- Over 900km or 579miles of path

Next steps will be to seek Board approval to adopt the plan on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2010 as well as the implementation plan. This will also influence Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust's (COAT's) next business plan.

2. **COAT** - have been moving projects forward very quickly as part of their current two year business plan a flavour of which is:
  - Planning permission has been sought for a new route bridge over the River Don linking the community with the Lonach Hall.
  - A new route linking Dinnet with Glen Tanar (UDE4) has been surveyed and planning permission has been submitted.
  - Planning permission will shortly be sought for the riverside path in Dulnain and agreements are close to being finalised.
  - The Mountain Heritage Project has received a favourable response from two major funders: European Regional Development Fund which has given approval and Heritage Lottery Fund which has provided Stage 1 approval. It is anticipated that the 4 year programme of works will commence this summer. All told the project value will be in excess of £2 million.

3. **The Speyside Way** - Project planning is under way for the development of the extension. Work for the next few months will focus on getting agreements and permissions in place before planning applications are made for the new sections. Funding for the extension will be sought concurrently with planning and agreements.
4. Management of the existing route will have new arrangements in place from 1 April. Each Access Authority will take responsibility for the management and maintenance of the route within their own area. A small resource will be given to Moray Council to deal with questions and queries that arise from members of the public.

### **Action Theme 2: Promoting responsible outdoor access and management**

5. **Scottish Outdoor Access Code** - SNH has just embarked on a process to gather information to review the Code. This is primarily to determine when a review of the Code may be required.
6. **Promoting outdoor access opportunities responsibly** - CNPA is continuing with its focus on dogs as the key message from the code with a number of initiatives planned over the next few months.
7. **Responsible promotion of outdoor opportunities** - The CNPA has been developing guidance on this issue and will be seeking Board approval in March to publicise it. Timely as other parties such as the SRPBA have raised this as an issue.
8. **National Outdoor Access Events Review by the National Access Forum** - A subgroup of the NAF is taking forward the development of national guidance on outdoor events, building on the work undertaken by the CNPA, with EventScotland providing a link to event organisers. The group has met once and a draft is in preparation.

### **Action Theme 4: Promoting sustainable transport for the enjoyment of the Cairngorms National Park**

9. **Cairngorms Explorer Guide** - finance committee agreed a downsizing of this guide into a leaflet promoting sustainable travel but not including the timetables.
10. **Heather Hopper** - current usage for this service is not as high as hoped despite considerable efforts to market the service over the last 3 years. CNPA Board together with Highland and Aberdeenshire Councils has agreed to no longer support the service which will result in its closure. Other sustainable transport opportunities are currently being explored.

### **Action Theme 5: Promoting healthy lifestyles**

11. **Health Walks** - COAT in partnership with Walk Deeside has recently appointed a coordinator for Badenoch and Strathspey.

### **Other National Park Initiatives**

12. **Sustainable Tourism Strategy-** The existing strategy and action plan is being redeveloped to keep our Europarc Charter status. In line with the marketing framework being developed by the Cairngorms Business Partnership.
13. **Landscape Framework-** Is a spatial tool being developed by the CNPA to look at part of the Park or the whole of the Park, making sense of the geographical and cultural aspects when planning for change.

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**February 2010**

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