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## CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

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**Title:** UPDATE AND FORWARD LOOK

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**Purpose:** This paper provides an update on the main areas of work both undertaken and planned towards delivery of the five year outcomes in the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-17.

### CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2012-17.

**Long term outcome:** People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences

#### Key work package 9 - Active Cairngorms

1. **2014 Commonwealth Games Legacy Physical Activity Fund** - CNPA has now secured £67,325 from the Legacy 2014 Physical Activity Fund. The money will be used to help tackle the barriers to exercise many people face and will see the expansion and rebranding of the existing CNPA Health Walks programme. In the last two years, the 32 Walking to Health groups in the Park have delivered over 2,000 health walks between them, encouraging more people to get back into regular physical activity. The funding will allow scaling up of the health walks programme; start a GP referral programme, creation of a physical activity pathway and development of an activity monitoring platform.
2. **Active Cairngorms Partnership – Update**
  - a) The first Partnership meeting was held on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015.
  - b) The James Hutton Institute and Strathclyde University have agreed to act as project evaluation partners for the 2014 Legacy project.
  - c) Alan Melrose (current health walks co-ordinator) will work FTE from October 2015 to September 2016 as overall co-ordinator.
  - d) Discussions are underway with three medical practices in the Park to implement GP referrals (Aviemore, Ballater and Tomintoul/Glenlivet).
  - e) The 2014 Legacy Project will be formally initiated and monitored from Jan/Feb 2016.
3. **CNPA Nordic Walking Programme**
  - a) £18,000 of Education Scotland funding has been secured to operate a Nordic Walking programme targeting female secondary school pupils.
  - b) CNPA Outdoor Learning Officer, Alan Smith, will deliver the project.

## Key work package 12 - Visitor and access infrastructure

### 4. Management of core paths and outdoor access:

- a) **Asbestos related path closures, Carrbridge** – The Cemetery Path through Ellan Wood is to be reopened after work is carried out to remove traces of asbestos from the path surface. Once complete it will be closely inspected twice a year and should further contaminated material appear it will be removed as quickly as possible. Specialist contractors will commence work on site on 5<sup>th</sup> November. This will be followed as soon as possible thereafter by measures to reinstate the path surface to an appropriate standard.
- b) **Speyside Way Extension** – The new path was officially opened by Jamie Hepburn MSP, Scottish Government Minister for Sport, Health Improvement and Mental Health, on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September. COAT has now started surveying the remainder of the proposed extension from Kincaig to Kingussie. An automatic people counter has also been installed near to the Allt Dhibhich, this will allow accurate monitoring of path users to inform funders and visitor recording.
- c) **Polhollick Bridge Refurbishment** – Polhollick footbridge near Ballater was officially reopened on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October. A civic ceremony took place, hosted by Aberdeenshire Provost Hamish Vernal followed by a community walk. The bridge was at risk of closure for some time due to being in need of repair. The popular Seven Bridges Walk can now be completed. The work cost £300,000.
- d) **Upholding Access Rights** – access casework continues to be reported and dealt with according to protocols. An update will be presented under Agenda Item 2.

## Other National Park Initiatives/Matters

5. **HLF Tomintoul / Glenlivet** – A contract has now been let to carry out surveys of the Tomintoul Spur (Speyside Way) and a new low level path linking Glenlivet Distillery and Blairfindy Castle (Blairfindy Castle is programmed for repair and improvement as part of the HLF funded project). The survey work has so far identified a number of areas where investment is needed including removal of barriers, path surface upgrade and drainage works. Proposals are also being examined for permanent re-routing to deal with the long standing diversion at Glenlivet. The project delivery budget is £360k.
6. **A9 Dualling** – The CNPA have now submitted Stage 2 consultation responses to designs for the Pitagowan (Bruar) to Glen Garry and Pitagowan to Killiecrankie sections. The responses have identified where the dualling schemes will need to address the specific requirements of non-motorised users both in respect of continuity of existing access when the dualled A9 is operational and road design factors. Issues relating to road crossings (underpasses/overbridges), impacts on existing NCR7 (proximity to carriageway/traffic volume), consolidation of paths and safety have been raised.

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