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CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

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- Title:** *Path Signs*
- Prepared by:** *Pete Crane, Senior Visitor Services Officer*
- Purpose:** To update the Forum on development of a consistent approach to the design of path signs that meets Scottish Government guidance for core paths and to seek advice on key elements of the work.
- Advice sought:** The Forum is invited to give its advice on the following:-
- **Does the Draft Path Sign Guidance in Annex 1 follow the recommendations previously agreed by the LOAF (see para. 3 below)?**
  - **Does the LOAF endorse guidance for path signs that does not include the use of the word 'path' on the sign? This is contrary to national guidance.**

**Background**

1. The development of sign guidance is a discrete action in the Cairngorms National Park Plan: 'to develop and promote technical guidance for way-marking of paths in line with Park-wide policy.' It is also a requirement of the Land Reform Act (Scotland) 2003 that all core paths are signed.
2. It has previously been shown that path signs across the National Park are inconsistent and in many cases do not meet current best practice or the requirements for a core path sign.
3. Path sign design has been discussed on two previous occasions (February 2008 and May 2008) and the LOAF has agreed the following recommendations:
  - a) **Path signs should primarily look to the needs of people wishing to use paths.**
  - b) **Information presented on paths signs should be as simple as possible and should focus on destination, distance and direction.**
  - c) **A consistent approach to path signs should be adopted in the Cairngorms National Park and this should apply, in time, to all signed paths.**
  - d) **Sign design should reflect the character of the National Park including the use of sustainable materials.**
  - e) **Guidance should cover three principle settings for signs:-**
    - **Signs to the start of path networks (often in urban situations)**
    - **Path signs**
    - **Use of intermediate way marking**
  - f) **Design guidance for path signs in the Cairngorms National Park should be recognised as a 'local format' by all public agencies providing funds for path signs.**

- g) The designs for the Cairngorms 'local format' should be prescriptive using the key elements of national best practice and the areas of consensus from the workshop to produce detailed designs templates. Such designs will contain high contrast lettering of a standard font of set sizes, and outside urban situations be made of wood (locally sourced where possible) etc. Importantly, any design must be able to be made by a range of manufacturers.
  - h) In addition the design guidance should provide a short section of advice on the key design elements that make up an effective path sign for those who wish to develop their own suite of signs without the support of public funds.
4. The work covered by this paper only covers directional signs for paths and intermediate way marking. It does not include provision of route information, interpretation or signing of hazards/land management operations.

### Work to date

- 5. CNPA has commissioned Walking the Talk to assist in the development of Path Sign Guidance. A stakeholder workshop was held in April 2008 and the work has been discussed twice by the LOAF and once by the Cairngorms National Park Plan Delivery Team for Providing High Quality Opportunities for Outdoor Access.
- 6. The draft design guidance produced by Walking the Talk is attached in full in Annex 1. This guidance follows national best practice except that it is recommended that the word 'path' is not required on signs. It is felt that the use of green and white wooden signs are so clearly associated with path signs that there is no need to use the word 'path'.

### Further Work

- 7. Following discussion at the LOAF the guidance will be circulated to stakeholders for comment and discussed by the relevant Cairngorms National Park Plan Delivery Teams. The guidance will then be presented to the CNPA Board for formal approval. We do not envisage discussing the guidance again at the LOAF until the Outdoor Access Strategy is reviewed.
- 8. Once approved the document will be published as a technical annex to accompany the Outdoor Access Strategy for the National Park.

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### Annex 1 Some Examples of Current Path Signs in the Cairngorms National Park



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