

CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

Title: *Core Paths Planning – the next steps*

Prepared by: *Fran Pothecary / Sandra Middleton*

Purpose: This paper updates the Forum on the Board meeting of 18 January 2008, and advises on the next steps towards the formal consultation stage.

Background:

1. At the last meeting of the LOAF in November 2007, Forum members were asked to provide advice on a number of issues relating to core paths planning. The advice received was presented to the Board of the CNPA in January 2008. The advice was noted by the Board and a number of recommendations based on this advice were then approved. In line with these approvals the Draft Core Paths Plan has now been completed ready for publication and a third and final consultation.
2. The LOAF is a statutory consultee on this Draft Core Paths Plan and has assisted in its development by providing advice to the CNPA throughout the process. Further LOAF member involvement in the process has taken place through membership of the Steering Group and the Project Board. The Steering Group was set up to provide specific advice on the process of developing a Core Paths Plan. Forum members Andrew Wells, Nonie Coulthard, Helen Geddes and Debbie Greene make up the Steering Group along with Ross Watson of the CNPA Board. Dick Balharry, Convener of the LOAF, is a member of the Core Paths Planning Project Board which takes decisions on the running of the project to develop the Core Paths Plan.
3. Once the Core Paths Plan is adopted the CNPA will work with partners to implement it. As a result of the core paths planning process, some of the proposals within the Interim Draft are already under way and being taken forward by partner organisations.

Approval of the Draft Plan by the CNPA Board

4. At their meeting on 18 January 2008 the Cairngorms National Park Authority Board were presented with a paper seeking their approval to complete the Draft Core Paths Plan and to carry out a formal public consultation on it. They agreed the following recommendations to:
 - a) note the advice received from the Local Outdoor Access Forum
 - b) note the feedback received during the consultation on the Interim Draft Core Paths Plan
 - c) approve the revised aim and objectives for the Draft Core Paths Plan
 - d) approve the proposed changes to the network for public consultation
 - e) consider the options for inclusion of waterways within the core paths network and approve inclusion of the River Spey
 - f) give approval to undertake a formal consultation on the Draft Core Paths Plan

Next Steps

CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM
Paper 3 – Core Paths Plan – the next steps 26 February 2008

1. Following the Board meeting, the proposed core paths network was revised and a Draft Core Paths Plan is now being completed ready for consultation. A rough Draft was sent to Scottish Government officials for informal advice. It is intended that we will move to the formal (and final) consultation stage between April and June 2008.
2. The CNPA has a statutory duty to consult the Forum on the draft Core Paths Plan. As such the May meeting presents a good opportunity for the Forum to respond as a body to the Plan. The main requirement of the Plan is that it should be, “sufficient for the purpose of giving the public give reasonable access throughout their area.”¹ This is the main question that the Forum should address in any response they wish to give.
3. To date, the Forum has given the Park Authority advice on Core Paths Planning which has been recorded in the minutes of meetings. However, if the Forum decides to respond to the Plan as a statutory consultee, it is strongly recommended that the Park Authority staff do not have a hand in the discussion or in the collation of the response.
4. Individual Forum members are at liberty to respond directly to the CNPA on the Draft Plan with their own personal interests and issues at heart. The purpose of the Forum’s response would be to distil common concerns and issues relating to land management, recreation and communities in relation to Core Paths, and reflect these back to the Authority. The deadline for a response will be the end of June 2008.
5. The Forum are invited to consider the following questions:

Questions:

- a) Do members wish to respond to the consultation on the Draft Core Paths Plan formally as a Forum?
- b) If so, could the Forum accommodate their discussion and response within the allocated meeting time or would they wish for the afternoon to be set aside (bearing in mind the need for as high a turnout as possible)?
- c) Forum members are invited to consider the format of the Forum response and indicate a recorder from amongst their membership to pull together their response.

Fran Potheary
Outdoor Access Officer
February 2008

Sandra Middleton
Outdoor Access Officer
February 2008

¹ Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, Part 1 – Access Rights, Chapter 5 Local Authority Functions: access and other rights, Section 17(1) page 13