



Draft Core Paths Plan

Report on Stage 3 Formal Consultation

Introduction

This report details the process and findings of the third and final round of consultation and engagement on the Cairngorms National Park Draft Core Paths Plan and accompanying Environmental Report. This formal consultation took place from 1st April to 30th June 2008. Prior to this there were two earlier rounds of public engagement and consultation. These took place from September to November 2006 and April to June 2007. Reports detailing the findings of these consultations are also available on the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) website or on request.

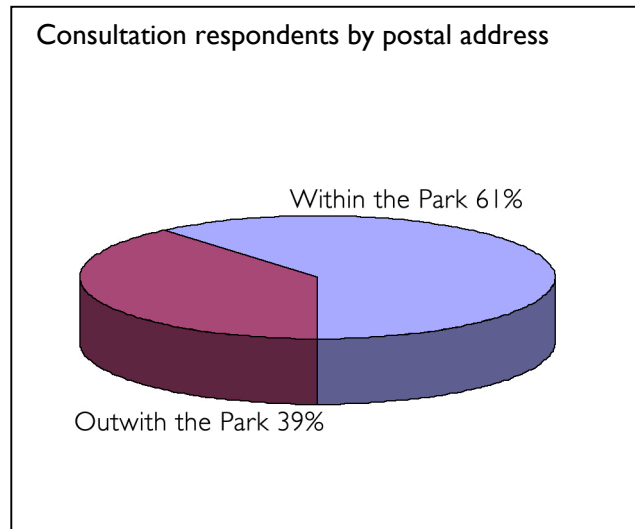
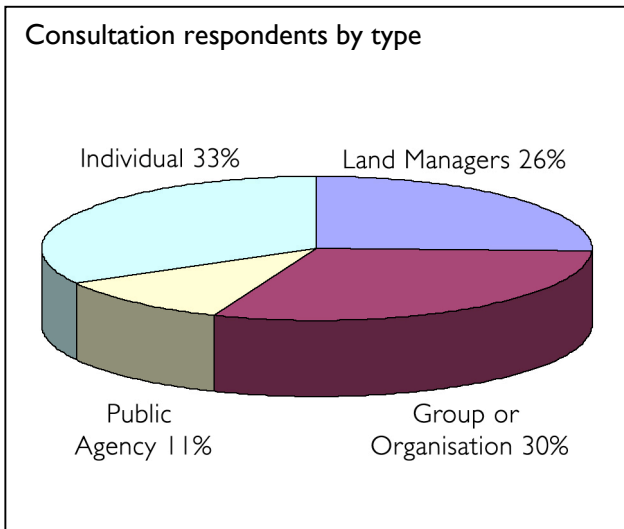
The Process

Copies of the Draft Core Paths Plan and Environmental Report were made available to view at the CNPA offices, on the CNPA website and at libraries and post offices throughout the National Park. The consultation was publicised in a variety of ways including adverts in the local press and on the CNPA website. Land managers directly affected by the Plan were sent a copy of the Draft Core Paths Plan prior to the commencement of the consultation. All other land managers were informed of the consultation. Copies of the Plan were also sent to a wide range of consultees including Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum (LOAF) as statutory consultees. The Plan and consultation was also the subject of discussion at a number of meetings and forums across the Park.

Previous rounds of consultation have engaged over a thousand people, groups, organisations and public agencies in the core paths planning process. All of these received a newsletter, 'Paths for the Park', at the beginning of April 2008. The newsletter advised people that the Draft Core Paths Plan and Environmental Report were out for consultation. It also informed people where they could view copies and how to comment on it.

Responses

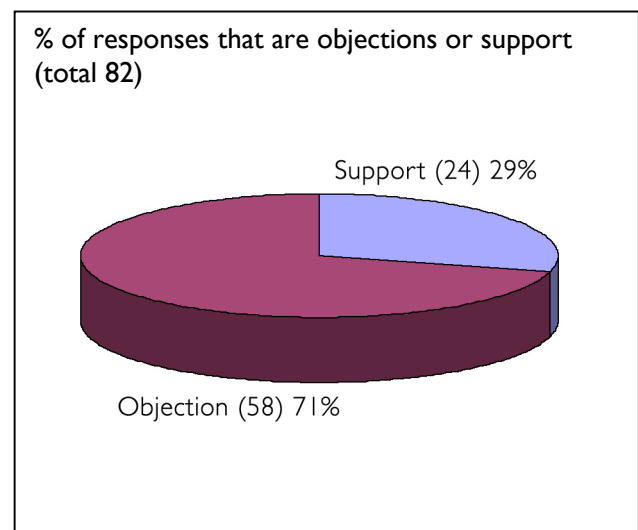
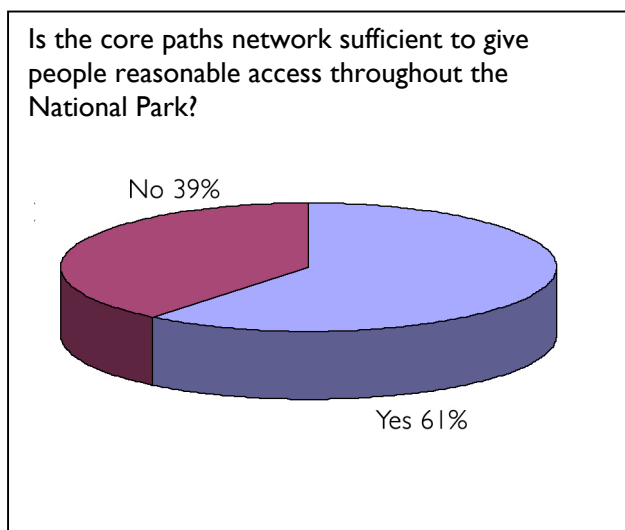
A total of 82 written responses to the Draft Core Paths Plan were received. A breakdown of who responded is shown in the charts on the following page,



What People Said

Respondents were asked to submit their comments on the standard form provided inside the front cover of the Plan and online of which 55% did so. The form asked them to indicate whether or not they think the proposed core paths network is sufficient to give people reasonable access throughout the area. The results are shown in the chart below.

Respondents were also asked to state the grounds for their objection or support for the Draft Core Paths Plan. Where someone requested a change to be made to the Draft Core Paths Plan this was treated as an objection. If someone objected they were then asked to indicate what changes they would like to see made to the Plan in order to resolve their objection. The number of people who wrote in to object to or support the Plan is shown in the chart below. A number of the objections also contained support for the Plan as a whole but are labelled as an objection.



Full details of all those people who responded and a summary of what they said is shown in Annex I of this report.

Main Issues Arising From the Consultation

The main issues arising for each area of the Cairngorms National Park are summarised below.

Central Cairngorms (Map 2 of the Draft Core Paths Plan)

A number of people objected to the inclusion of paths within this upland area on grounds of safety. In contrast to this there were also a number of objections to the Plan on the grounds that more routes should be designated within this area including the Gaick, Mingaig, Glen Tromie, Glen Avon, and Clas Fhearnaig.

Eastern Cairngorms (Map 3 of the Draft Core Paths Plan)

As with the Central Cairngorms area a number of people objected to the inclusion of paths within this upland area on grounds of safety. In contrast to this there were also a number of objections to the Plan on the grounds that more routes should be designated within this area including the Firmouth, Mounth Road, Capel Mounth and Jock's Road. The Angus Council are proposing the inclusion of the Firmouth within their Core Paths Plan and noted the possible lack of cross boundary continuity between the Angus and Cairngorms National Park Plans.

Upper Deeside (Map 4 to 10 of the Draft Core Paths Plan)

There was general support for the proposed network in this area. A number of comments relating to specific paths were received. These included 4 objections to the proposed water access point at Dinnet Bridge (UDE63) and possible Natura issues at Pannanich Hill. There was support for provision of an off-road path for a small section of the 7 Bridges Walk at Ballater.

Upper Donside (Map 11 & 12 of the Draft Core Paths Plan)

4 letters of support were received for the proposals around Strathdon, particularly the proposed new bridge over the River Don. A number of land management issues were raised in relation to the Ben Newe Woodlands area. There was some support for a long distance route linking Corgarff with Ballater and the wider network.

Glenlivet & Tomintoul (Map 13 to 15 of the Draft Core Paths Plan)

There was support for the proposed network within this area. Comments were received identifying the need to link up with the Moray Council core paths network in this area. This may require the designation of a further core path within to link to the Glen Fiddich Right of Way.

Lower Badenoch & Strathspey (Map 16 to 23 of the Draft Core Paths Plan)

The proposal to designate the River Spey as a core path has prompted a large number of representations – 9 objections and 5 letters of support. There were a number of objections to the Plan on the grounds that Street of Kincardine was not well enough catered for within the proposed network. There was both support for and objection to the proposed network in Dulnain Bridge. A number of objections were received requesting the inclusion of the access path from the Aviemore Highland Resort to the National Nature Reserve in Aviemore. There was some comment on the need to consider inclusion of more roads in the network for example sections of the National Cycle Network that are on road.

Upper Badenoch & Strathspey (Map 24 to 27 of the Draft Core Paths Plan)

The proposal to designate the River Spey as a core path has prompted a large number of representations – 9 objections and 5 letters of support. There were no objections to the proposed network within Newtonmore, Dalwhinnie or Laggan. There were some comments received relating to paths in the wider area, particularly in relation to future development of mountain bike trails in the Laggan area.

Glenmore & Rothiemurchus (Map 28 of the Draft Core Paths Plan)

An objection was received to proposed designation of some paths in this area in relation to environmental issues and funding availability. Further objections were received requesting re-alignment of the Sluggan path at Badaguish and requesting inclusion of the Thieve's Road and Craggowrie paths.

Environmental Report

Running concurrently with the Draft Core Paths Plan consultation was the consultation on the Environmental Report for the Plan. This was part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process. Responses were received from the three Consultation Authorities, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and Historic Scotland. All three were content with the scope, level of detail and assessment of the environmental impacts of the designating the core paths network. A specific comment was made with regards to possible disturbance to a Capercaillie Lek and Heronry. Further comments were made on the monitoring framework for the SEA objectives particularly in relation to wilderness characteristics. Revisions will be made to the Environmental Report and a post adoption statement produced. The statement will set out how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Core Paths Plan and the measures taken to monitor significant environmental effects.

Next Steps

The CNPA are now working with interested parties to try and resolve objections received. This may involve a specified change to the Plan, or some other particular resolution, with the objector then withdrawing the objection. Recommended alterations to the Plan and any objections that we have been unable to resolve will be presented to the CNPA Board for decision in October. If all objections are withdrawn then the CNPA can move to adopt the Plan. If any outstanding objections remain, however, then the Plan will be subject to a Local Inquiry. Further guidance on the local inquiry process can be found on the CNPA website or made available on request. If a local inquiry is necessary it is not possible at this stage to identify a timescale for this.

Cairngorms National Park Authority

31st July 2008

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Annex I – Summary of Representations

This table is intended to provide a brief summary only. Each objection or letter of support can be viewed in full on the CNPA website or at the CNPA offices.

Ref.	Path No. or Description	Summary of Objection or Support
3/1	UDE63	Potential significant impact on farming operations, commercial fishing activities and potential damage to the river bank. Would wish to see the path removed from the Plan.
3/2	All Central Cairngorms proposals and Dulnain Bridge network.	Wishes to see additional link paths put in place in Dulnain Bridge to link Skye of Curr, Heather Centre and Croft James to LBS96 and also the quiet roads linking up the network. Wishes to see the removal of all exposed high level routes for reasons of safety.
3/3	Support for Ballater network	Wishes for proposed links between existing paths to be carried through and signage connecting routes whether within villages or between communities improved also. Fully supportive of and encouraged by the plans and hope to see some effects on the ground in the not to distant future.
3/4	No Comment	No Comment
3/5	Boat of Garten	Supportive of the proposals for the area including the River Spey. Considers, however, that the removal of LBS65 and the lack of a route from Street of Kincardine adjacent to the B970 to Auchgourish Gardens and then on to the Tulloch Moor Road at Glencairn means that the plan is not sufficient for the Boat and Street of Kincardine Community.
3/6	LBS71	Expressed support for route proposed between Drumuillie and Milton, near Boat. Was surprised that Wades Road at Carrbridge had not been included, was also concerned that the route between Loch Insh and Ruthven Barracks was very long.
3/7	No Comment	No Comment
3/8	No Comment	No Comment
3/9	Kincraig	Considers that the lack of a proposed route between Kincraig and the watersports is an omission. Would like LBS128 to be re-labelled as "Brae to Hall path". Alignment of Badenoch Way at Braeriach Road is not correct, as is the alignment of LBS46. LBS125 should be extended to include loch side path around Kirk. LBS110 should be extended to Lagganlia.
3/10	LBS10, 134 and 56	Notes with pleasure that it is no longer proposed to use part of track bed for footpath purposes, but that instead the path could take a route through farmland to the immediate west of the land. It appears that part of the path is proposed to be routed through the section of the station site which we propose to develop as a car/coach park. In principle we welcome this element of the proposal and look forward to coming to an agreement with the CNPA over such matters as detailed route, construction, maintenance and public liability.
3/11	Strathdon	Supports the Plan
3/12	UDE59	Concerned that haven't heard about this route before, should be in place before designating it a core path.
3/13	CC6 & CC7	Requests re-alignment at Lagganwald as per previous agreement with the Moray Council.

Ref.	Path No. or Description	Summary of Objection or Support
3/14	None	Keen to see a definitive map of routes suitable for mountain biking in the Park. No objection to the Plan.
3/15	CC3 & CC4	Concern that these upland routes should not be promoted to the public for safety reasons. Any promotion should be accompanied by appropriate, sufficient and specific safety information on all publications, media and access points. Signage should be sensitive to the landscape.
3/16	GT3 as appeared in Interim Draft Core Paths Plan (idCPP)	Inclusion of part of the route GT3 which appeared in the idCPP to ensure a link between the Park network and the Moray Council network.
3/17	None	Generally supportive of the Plan with a number of comments relating to horse-access on routes, cross-border paths and upland paths.
3/18	Glen Tromie, Gaick and Minigaig	Would like to see the Gaick, Minigaig and Glen Tromie designated as core paths. General comments on format of Plan.
3/19	Jock's Road and Capel Mounth	Surprised and disappointed to see that these two routes have not been included.
3/20	EC8, UDE28 and UDE20	General comments about safety, responsible behaviour, maintenance and paths beyond communities. Specific suggestions in relation to the alignment/extension of EC8 around Loch Muick and linking to the car park and also privacy at the Old Brig O'Dee and the need for an off-road route on the Ballater 7 Bridges Walk.
3/21	Golf course woods route, LBS89 and Sliemore woods	Request for inclusion of 3 further paths within the Plan.
3/22	Carr-Bridge	Incorrect alignment of routes around the golf course - may be OS mapping issue
3/23	Dulnain Bridge	Supportive of routes but keen to see them made suitable for cycling, particularly links between Dulnain and Nethy and Dulnain and Grantown.
3/24	Cycling	Needs provision of safe cycle routes
3/25	River Spey	Objection due to potential economic impacts, need to regulate the number of paddlers on the Spey. Wishes to know what will be done to improve access and egress points and where, questions distribution of people on river as people are attracted to white water sections and what education will be done.
3/26	River Spey	As above
3/27	River Spey	Too many paddlers on the Spey who do not respect the anglers, possible impact on economy without contribution to the upkeep of the river.
3/28	Aviemore - LBS30, LBS124 and Badenoch Way	Asks why LBS30 has been removed - particularly as now threatened by a new development. The Badenoch Way does not conform to their preferred route and they are supportive of LBS124.
3/29	River Spey	There is no requirement for paths in upland areas. Need to be flexible about making changes to the Plan both now and in the future. River Spey should not be a core path as per Spey Fishery Board response.

Ref.	Path No. or Description	Summary of Objection or Support
3/30	Central Cairngorms	Proposals for Coire Cas & Coire na Ciste car parks connection.
3/31	River Spey	Concern that designation will increase use of Spey by paddlers and therefore cause environmental damage and disturbance to fish and anglers. Potential damage to economic interests also.
3/32	GR6 & GR7	Extend GR7 to go from Meall a'Bhuachaille to Craiggowrie and re-route GR6 past Badaguish Outdoor Centre.
3/33	Rothiemurchus	Objection to inclusion of core paths on Rothiemurchus due to narrow nature and poor surfacing. Also wishes to object until there is a commitment that the CNPA will fund maintenance on these paths.
3/34	Kingussie	LBS73 - new connection, Ruthven Barracks to Invertromie and return by Torcroy Bridge, connection between Acres Road and Tombraidh Wood.
3/35	Lairig Ghru	Improve surface to link Deeside Way and Speyside Way
3/36	General comments	Need for appropriate promotion of routes and questions the benefits of inclusion of waterways in the network.
3/37	River Spey	Concern of loss of income from anglers if paddler numbers increase.
3/38	Strathdon	Supportive of proposals, particularly the Bridge over the Don.
3/39	Loch Gamhna to Inshriach link & upland paths	Wishes to see old thieves' road included and raises concern over promotion of remote paths.
3/40	UDO11	Concern over safety, conservation and need for this route to proposed as a core path, particularly in relation to forestry operations.
3/41	River Spey	As per correspondence, concern over increasing paddler numbers on the Spey and associated littering, conflict and supportive of Spey Fishery Board response.
3/42	UDO12	Issues with forestry operations, increased burden and expectations on land managers for maintenance, forestry operations planned for 15 years time, limited use of path. Contradictory advice from FCS and CNPA on forestry operations and public access.
3/43	Boat of Garten and GR6	Communities of Mullingaroch, Street of Kincardine and Auchgourish are not connected to the core paths network with the exception of LBS121. Need to re-instate proposal of LBS65 from Interim Draft Core Paths Plan. The core paths network does not therefore fulfil its objectives without it. Not all core paths need to link up in a 'network' but need to ensure that there are options near to where people live. Link LBS65 and LBS121 then include short section of road through Street of Kincardine to Mullingaroch then re-joining the riverbank path. LBS65 could then connect to GR6 at the far end using a short section of road. Proposed route also fulfils all objectives and the priorities identified for the area in the Outdoor Access Strategy.
3/44	UDO5/6	Supportive of inclusion of UDO5 & UDO6.
3/45	Glen Tanar	No concerns for the area.
3/46	UDO10	Issues with forestry operations, increased burden and expectations on land managers for maintenance, forestry operations planned for 15 years time, limited use of path. Contradictory advice from FCS and CNPA on forestry operations and public access.

Ref.	Path No. or Description	Summary of Objection or Support
3/47	All Central Cairngorms proposals	Objection to inclusion of upland routes on the grounds of safety.
3/48	Corgarff	Requests inclusion of Old Military Road and routes to connect up Corgarff with Ballater, Tomintoul and beyond.
3/49	Glenlivet	Support for Core Paths Plan, need to ensure links across boundaries for GT5, GT9, GT24 and GT5. Need to consider appropriateness of multi-use, need for flexibility for land management operations and consideration of the benefits of a round the Park route.
3/50	UDE63	Concerns over angling, conservation, silt, livestock, parking and privacy issues.
3/51	UDO5	Supportive of proposal but would like to see improved car parking, litter and dog foul bins along the route.
3/52	LBS128	Concerns over the route of the path in relation to housing development but willing to find an alternative route.
3/53	Dulnain Bridge	Safety concerns over new path proposed in Ballintomb Wood as it leads onto a main road. Much work is required to develop the paths which the land owner is not willing to undertake. The Wester Laggan Access track may also be dangerous as it is used regularly by farm vehicles.
3/54	Aberdeenshire	Supportive of plan particularly within Donside and also the inclusion of the Deeside Way. Some safety concerns relating to appropriate promotion of roads within the network and the need to link up cross-border paths.
3/55	Corgarff	There is a requirement to connect Corgarff with Ballater to encourage people into the area. A path is suggested using the Old Military Road at Corgarff, the track along Glen Fenzie and completion of a link over Scraulac.
3/56	UDE59	Need to consider appropriate information in relation to responsible behaviour on core paths to ensure no detrimental impacts to the angling industry and wildlife.
3/57	UDE63	Objection to inclusion of the path - no grounds given.
3/58	General comments	Concern that too many paths have been selected and that this will mean that resources are spread too thin. Concern that core path designation will lead to 'upgrade' of all paths to a specific standard and the detriment this may have to experience on these paths and the funding availability.
3/59	UDE34, UBS20 & UBS22	Proposed amendments to these routes and concern over the suitability and possible promotion of some routes for different use types.
3/60	Angus Glens	Generally good links to the proposed network in the Angus Council area. Suggests, however, that the CNPA should include the Firmouth in order to link up with the proposed core paths network in Angus.
3/61	LBS1	Strongly supports inclusion of River Spey as a core path and states that designation would not lead to an increase in users
3/62	LBS1 and LBS116 and the Gaick	Fully supportive of the inclusion of the River Spey as it is a valuable resource for canoe touring and for youngsters learning to kayak. Supports the inclusion of LBS116 - Speyside Way- but would like to see a commitment for the route to be upgraded for cycle use and it would make a safe cycle route between Grantown and Nethy Would like to see the Gaick pass included in the Core Paths Plan as this popular route would give access to the eastern part o the Park and Highland Perthshire.

Ref.	Path No. or Description	Summary of Objection or Support
3/63	Deeside & Upland Paths	Wishes to see extension and inclusion of a number of upland paths e.g. Glen Avon, Clas Fhearnaig and the Mounth Road as well as the inclusion of lower level paths at Glen Muick, Ballochbuie, Sghor Buidhe, Cambus O'May and Ordie. Suggests linking up UDE62 and UDE25 at Crathie.
3/64	UDE63	Objection to inclusion of this path in the core paths network due to potential for compounding access issues at the site, conflict between paddlers and anglers, disturbance of fish, parking and traffic issues.
3/65	LBS3	Objection to the inclusion of this path in the core paths network because it does not meet all of the objectives and is not suitable for all users, does not address community need nor the Outdoor Access Strategy. Will impact upon farm business.
3/66	Speyside Way and Sustrans Route 7	The plan needs to demonstrate better links and show better integration with existing transport network. To do this more sections of quiet road should be included for example at Glen Muick. Existing routes such as NCN should be core paths along their entirety, this includes through settlements.
3/67	Upland paths, LBS112, LBS127	Raises concerns about the mapping of core paths on 1:25,000 maps which would lead to extra promotion and a rise in irresponsible behaviour on an NNR. Would not like to see LBS112 and 127 as core paths on health and safety and disturbance to wildlife grounds
3/68	Boat of Garten	Would like to see a core path designated to Loch Vaa and then linking to the cycle path at the Kinveachy junction which would make a new circular route for Boat of Garten. Would like to see the riverside path from Spey Bridge down to and past Street of Kincardine reinstated as a core path.
3/69	Park Wide	Historic Scotland welcomes the preparation of the plan. There are a number of routes which pass over and close by scheduled monuments any planned works should first be discussed and agreed with Historic Scotland.
3/70	LBS1,4,30,33,34,35,71,87,95,96,124,131,136 and 137	The Estate objects to the inclusion of the named paths on a number of grounds principally because they may conflict with estate management activities, pose a safety risk to users, not suitable for multi-use, will lead to conflict between users and may not be deliverable within the two year time frame.
3/71	Upland Paths CCI,2,3,4,5	Objects to inclusion of CCI,2,3,4,5 as designation would have an impact on wilderness quality, more events and increased use will impact on infrastructure. States that rescuers will be exposed to greater risks due to more inexperienced walkers needing help.
3/72	Environmental Report	SEPA is satisfied with the assessment of all the routes and that this level of assessment represents good practice.
3/73	UDE34, Aviemore and General Comments	Requirement to carry out an Appropriate Assessment for UDE34. Need to include a link from Aviemore to the Craigellachie National Nature Reserve. Need to address community consultation demands for off-road cycling and hillwalking opportunities around Crathie, links between Ballater and Loch Muick, horse-riding opportunities in the Eastern Cairngorms, an off-road link in the 7 Bridges Walk at Ballater, circular routes at Corgarff and routes accessible for wheelchairs at Carr-Bridge.
3/74	LBS3	Objection to the inclusion of the path on the grounds that it will conflict with forestry management, an increase in use will lead to increased liability, cost implications of managing users during forestry operations and lack of funding.

Ref.	Path No. or Description	Summary of Objection or Support
3/75	LBS1	Highlights that upholding access rights is more important than the designation of core paths but that core paths can add and help access authorities, highlights that core path designation won't increase numbers on the river and that designation would help target resources for better management
3/76	Kincraig LBS110, LBS1 and a path between Aviemore and Kincraig	There is currently no path for pedestrian access between Aviemore and Kincraig. Objects to LBS110 as the current route interferes with farm management and passes very close to a house, suggests that the Badenoch Way to Loch Insh water sports centre best serves the community and visitor need. Objects to LBS1 on the grounds that the river can not be used both ways, increased use will conflict with fishing interests and health and safety.
3/77	Street of Kincardine	Objection on the basis that without LBS65 the plan does not provide the opportunity for the public to access GR6 and for the small community at Street of Kincardine to be linked to a wider path network.
3/78	GR1,2,3,4,5 and CC3	Objection on the basis that environmental issues have not been fully address particularly in relation to Natura 2000 sites and that the issue of integrating public access with land management has not been fully addressed.
3/79	Boat of Garten and GR6	Communities of Mullingaroch, Street of Kincardine and Auchgourish are not connected to the core paths network with the exception of LBS121. Need to re-instate proposal of LBS65 from Interim Draft Core Paths Plan. The core paths network does not therefore fulfil its objectives without it. Not all core paths need to link up in a 'network' but need to ensure that there are options near to where people live. Link LBS65 and LBS121 then include short section of road through Street of Kincardine to Mullingaroch then re-joining the riverbank path. LBS65 could then connect to GR6 at the far end using a short section of road. Proposed route also fulfils all objectives and the priorities identified for the area in the Outdoor Access Strategy.
3/80	General including upland areas, long distance routes and the River Spey	Indicates a need for an overarching recreation strategy for the Park and identifies a need to indicate which paths are suitable for different use types to enable assessment of provision. Identifies a need to develop appropriate information and infrastructure for varying mobility needs. Concern is raised about the way in which consultees are classified within the consultation process and also concern in relation to the over engineering of paths. Suggests the inclusion of a selection criteria to address potential negative impacts of the Plan on wildlife. Identifies the need for some Mounth Roads and Monadhliath paths to be included in the Plan with promotion appropriate to the areas as per recommended for other upland paths. Concern raised over potential impact of a Bridge being built over the Dee at Braemar. Supportive of proposal to designate the River Spey as a core path. Note the need to possibly downgrade as well as upgrade some paths and the need to clarify potential for closures and diversions of core paths. Identify a need to ensure that paths in the montane core are not waymarked or engineered to make them easier to use.
3/81	Ballater	Request for a new wheelchair accessible path linking the Cinder path in Ballater to the Deeside Way.
3/82	LBS1	Asserts that greater use will adversely impact on the SAC, will make the CNPA liable for administrative costs and liable for loss of fishing rights.