

Speyside Way extension

Consultation on the section from Aviemore to Dalraddy

15 September 2006 to 27 October 2006

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Overview

There is widespread support for the extension of the Speyside Way from Aviemore to Newtonmore. This view emerged from a public consultation undertaken in early 2005. Whilst there was overwhelming support for the route to be extended, there were a number of detailed concerns about the preferred route and a range of other options were proposed.

To ensure that we fully understand all the pertinent issues and to enable the Cairngorms National Park Authority Board reach a conclusion on the best option, we are seeking your views on the 2 feasible routes that remain valid. These are shown on the attached map and are referred to as the Loch Alvie and Wade Road options. In updating the Park Authority Board on the outcomes of this consultation we will advise on the feasibility of all the options that have been considered.

All those who were consulted on the extension in early 2005 will be included in this consultation. The consultation period will run through to **Friday, 27 October 2006**. Thereafter, a report will be prepared for the Cairngorms National Park Authority Board, with the final responsibility for progressing the route through to Ministerial approval resting with Scottish Natural Heritage.

BOB GRANT

Senior Outdoor Access Officer

(For and on behalf of the Speyside Way Management Group)

Background

A public consultation was undertaken in early 2005 to find out if there was public support for an extension of the Speyside Way from its current terminus in Aviemore to Newtonmore. In addition, the consultation sought views on a preferred route linking these two settlements. Whilst there was overwhelming support for the route to be extended, there were a number of detailed concerns about the preferred route and a range of other options were proposed. The Cairngorms National Park Authority Board considered the proposed extension on 23 September 2005. The Board approved, in principle, the development of the extension noting that a number of issues remained to be resolved. Staff were delegated with the task of dealing with these outstanding issues. Since that time the Speyside Way Management Group¹ has been exploring these other options and discussing some of the concerns raised with various interested parties. The vast majority of issues raised have now been resolved but the most significant remaining issues concern the section between Aviemore and Dalraddy.

To ensure that we fully understand all the pertinent issues and to enable us to reach a conclusion on the best option, we are seeking your views on the 2 feasible routes that remain valid. These are shown on the attached map and are referred to as the Loch Alvie and Wade Road options.

In reaching our decision to consult on these 2 options we have looked afresh at all the possible means of taking the route from Aviemore to Dalraddy. One route, which was considered before the initial consultation and which was favoured by a number of respondents during the consultation was a route through Rothiemurchus and Inshriach to Feshiebridge. Having received advice from Scottish Natural Heritage on all the potential routes, this option has considerable drawbacks in relation to natural heritage issues which are unavoidable at the southern end of this route. The area in question contains Capercaillie and is a Special Protection Area as defined in the European Habitats Directive. It is anticipated that the increased use associated with designation as a long distance route would have a significant impact on the Capercaillie population.

A further option was the one originally consulted upon. This took a high line from the Burma Road at Allnachriche and descended diagonally across the hillside, passing above Ballinluig Farm and crossing the A9 at the same location as the Allt an Fhearna. There was very little public support for this option.

¹ The Speyside Way Management Group is made up of representatives from the Cairngorms National Park Authority, The Highland Council, Moray Council and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Options

To assist in the understanding of the options a brief description is given of the routes which should be read in conjunction with the enclosed map. In addition, a short table shows a summary of the pros and cons of each route. These have been compiled from the feedback received during detailed discussions with stakeholders and from the knowledge of the Speyside Way Management Group.

Loch Alvie

The route (shown as a blue line on the map) exits Aviemore on the B9152 and takes the underpass under the A9(T) 200 metres south of the junction with the B970. From the west side of the A9(T) the route skirts under the cliff and leaves the A9(T) picking up an existing track that leads past a quarry and emerges onto the tarred road that leads in an arc, crossing the Allt na Criche to the field edge that is then followed to the curtilage of Lynwilg Farmhouse, close to the A9(T). From there the route passes around the building and then follows the field margin again before passing under the A9T and emerging into a field on the east side of the A9(T). The route then follows the edge of this field, passes below the house at Druim Mhor on an existing track and runs parallel with the shore of Loch Alvie until it crosses the Allt an Fhearna. From there the route follows the track leading towards the B9152 and Caravan Park at Dalraddy.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scenically attractive with open views across Strathspey to the Cairngorm mountains;• Relatively straightforward to implement;• Links into Aviemore more straightforward than the alternative;• Potentially cheaper to implement;• Reduced natural heritage considerations compared to the alternative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concerns of impact on commercial value of estate;• Concerns from property owners on privacy and security;• Potential impact on livestock fields;• More impact from traffic noise due to proximity of A9;• Potential impact on shooting and associated activities;• Cost of new bridge.

Wade Road

Finding a satisfactory route to exit Aviemore is challenging. There are 2 possible options but both involve walking along the road margin for varying distances. The first option (which is not shown on the map) follows the B9152 using the grass margin all the way to the junction with the minor track that leads to the start of the Wade Road at (Grid ref. NH881102). A path could be constructed within the road corridor for parts of this section but there are restrictions in relation to topography and roadside barriers that would preclude the construction of a path throughout the full length of this section. The alternative, (shown as a red line on the attached map), follows the road margin through the first road cutting and then picks up a track opposite Kinakyle which swings back towards Aviemore briefly before dropping under the railway line. From there the route mainly follows the field edge beneath the railway embankment and emerges at the same start of the Wade Road at the grid reference shown above.

Thereafter, the route follows a track that runs west of the Bogach and which peters out as it nears the outflow of a marshy area that flows into Loch Alvie (the Allt Dibheach). South of the marshy area an agricultural track is joined that runs parallel to the railway line before crossing an open field and meeting with the tarred private road that leads to Kinrara. The route follows the tarred road west, crossing the railway line and exiting at the Dalraddy caravan park.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The route provides the most direct line between Aviemore and Dalraddy; • There is a historical association with the line that would add further appeal to those using the route; • Scenically attractive as it provides a mix of woodland and open views to the west; • It has already been established that this is a popular option from a number of consultees from the original consultation exercise. • It is some distance from the busy A9 and so will be less noisy with less exposure to fast moving traffic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to find a satisfactory link south from Aviemore to the start of the off-road track at Grid ref. NH881102 with at least some of the route following the road margin. • Likely to be expensive to construct path alongside railway line and will require a bridges over the Allt na Criche and the Allt Dibheach; • Extensive area of grazing that may cause concerns to the tenant farmers through proximity to livestock • Concerns from adjacent property owners and land owners; • Some natural heritage issues that will require sensitive path creation.

It will be clear from the above that there are positive and negatives aspects of both options. The challenge for those involved in the proposal to extend the route is to meet the community desire to complete the extension of the route through to Newtonmore by ensuring that the best option is selected. This can only be achieved if all the benefits and drawbacks for each option are fully identified.

How to comment

To take this forward we therefore require answers to the following questions:

- 1. Are there additional factors, not summarised in the table above, that require to be considered by the Speyside Way Management Group?**
- 2. Which is your preferred option and why?**

If you require further information or would like to meet to discuss any aspect of this consultation please let us know. Please encourage others who you know may have an interest to respond. The consultation period will run through to 27 October 2006 and responses should be sent to:

**Catriona Campbell,
Speyside Way Extension Consultation
Cairngorms National Park Authority
14 The Square
Grantown on Spey
PH26 3HG**

OR

e-mail us at; outdooraccess@cairngorms.co.uk
(the subject line should read 'Speyside Way Consultation')

Next Steps

The consultation response will be analysed by the Speyside Way Management Group and thereafter a report on the favoured option will be passed to the Cairngorms National Park Authority Board. It will then be for Scottish Natural Heritage to provide a costed report to Ministers on the proposed route. The final decision on whether to confirm the route rests with Ministers.