

Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan

Consultation and Engagement Process - Stage 1

Community Engagement & Results – Aviemore

Introduction

The core paths plan process targeted four main interest groups to engage with, these included; communities, land managers, people who recreate in the National Park (visitors and residents including businesses, national organisations and clubs e.g. Ramblers, Scottish Canoe Association, Cairngorm Club etc.) and visitors to the National Park (those who may not specifically come to the Park to recreate but may do so whilst they are here). The following report details how the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) engaged with the Aviemore community, the people who participated in the engagement process and the feedback and results that they provided.

Engaging with the Aviemore Community

The engagement period ran from 1st September to 30th November 2006. Questionnaires for the community were made available on the CNPA website, through contacting the CNPA directly and at a drop-in event. The Aviemore questionnaire was also distributed throughout the community via the Aviemore Free Press. The community drop-in event was run to enable people in Aviemore and the surrounding area to find out more about core paths planning and to advise the CNPA of the routes, paths and areas that are important to them and why. The drop-in event also provided the community with an opportunity to view the results of a core paths pilot exercise that was run in September 2005.

The event was held at the Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore on Tuesday 26th September from 2:30pm to 7:30pm. CNPA staff Sandra Middleton and Adam Streeter-Smith ran the event with assistance from Community Liaison Officer Anna Barton. The drop in was run in partnership with another consultation centred on the proposals for the new primary school.

Drop-in Event Promotion

The event was advertised in the Badenoch & Strathspey Herald and was also the subject of a press release. Invitations were sent out to all local land owners/tenants and the community council. An email invitation was sent out to a wide range of local activity providers, businesses and individuals. Posters were displayed around the village a week in advance of the event and fresh posters were put up on the day of the meeting including a large board outside the event.

Drop-in Event Format

Participants were provided with a core paths planning leaflet which included details of the core paths plan process in the Cairngorms National Park and Frequently Asked Questions. The leaflet was made available to participants along with questionnaires and maps to record their views. A questionnaire containing a map was available for each settlement in the Park as well as for the wider areas of the Park. Large maps of the wider area were also available to help people identify routes outwith settlements. There was also an opportunity for people to record their views on the path network in the area in relation to what they thought was good or bad about it or what could be improved, this was recorded in an 'H-Diagram' format.

Drop-in Event Feedback

Approximately 60 people attended the event, a total of 24 questionnaires were completed at the event and a number of people took questionnaires away to complete in their own time. Participants were asked to complete an evaluation sheet of the event, the results recorded are as follows;

	% of Participants Responding		
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied
Location	90%	10%	0%
Venue	90%	10%	0%
Timing	70%	30%	0%

*Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan
Community Engagement Results March 2007*

Questionnaires	90%	10%	0%
Information Available	90%	10%	0%
Opportunity to speak to staff	90%	10%	0%

* "very good" "very helpful"

Participants in the Engagement Process

Throughout the 3 month period a total of 43 questionnaires were completed for the Aviemore settlement. To help the CNPA gauge whether or not the process successfully engaged with a wide enough cross section of the community, the questionnaires asked people to provide information on their gender, age group and where they live. The results are shown below.

Participants by Gender

Male	57%	Female	43%
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Participants by Age Group

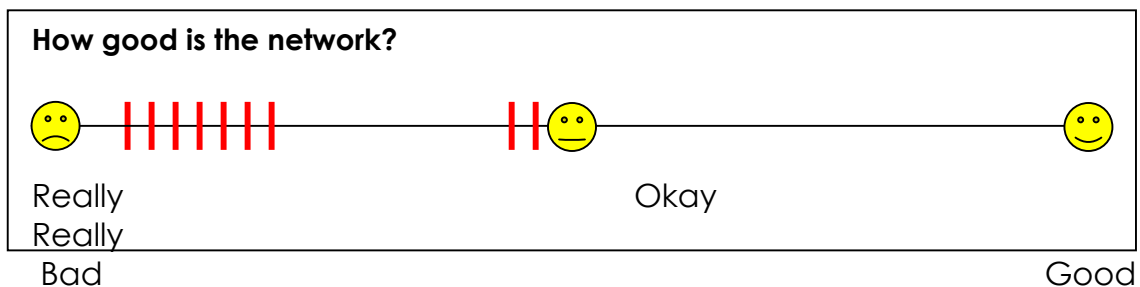
Under 16	9%	16 - 24	0%	25 - 44	30%	45 - 64	42%	65 - 74	12%	Over 75	5%
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Where people came from

% of people from each place who completed questionnaires					
Aviemore	60%	The Aviemore Community Council Area	5%	Elsewhere	30%

Results of the Engagement Process

At the drop-in event people were asked their views about the path network in and around Aviemore. Participants were asked to place a mark on a line to show what they thought of the network. The results are shown below.



People were also asked what they think is good and bad about the network and what could be improved. The results are shown below, the comments are recorded exactly as written by participants.

Comments on the Aviemore Network		
What is bad about the	What is good	How the network could

network?	about the network?	be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing developments have been put before path hence no network • No paths around Aviemore • What orbital path • We need paths through the Milton Wood • We need the path to Craigellachie NNR upgraded • Is there a path network? • I thought "orbital" meant to go round something Aviemore Orbital path doesn't go even half way round Aviemore! • No fence around the golf course required • The Aviemore Orbital route only circulates Milton Park • We need paths to join up with the Badenoch Way (one recorded – "good idea") • We need to protect to and around Speyside Golf Course (two agreed) • Dangerous Access Points at butchers burn to allow young people to drink at the Spey • Lack of access to the Spey (one agreed) • Lack of path round the centre and through the centre • Is there a paths network round Aviemore? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The access to the Spey for Canoeists is pretty good with regular easy points • Paths between houses are good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier (more) access points onto Loch Insh for boaters • Better signposting (two agreed) • Improve paths along river side (five agreed) • Remove obsolete fences and erect safe strong stiles over new fences • Stiles need to be sturdy and strong and not too high – some people have difficulty owing to poor balance • Making sure new housing developments include paths • Protect all existing paths • We need detailed maps of paths that can be used by horse riders. I have lived in Aviemore for 38 yrs and have no idea where I can ride I mainly ride on Alvie and Glenfeshie area.

In general discussion with participants at the drop-in event, people were very negative about developments blocking access and the lack of an orbital route.

Map Results

People were asked to identify the paths that are important to them on a map in the questionnaire, they were also asked to identify any new routes or areas that they would like to have easier access to and were encouraged to make comments. Participants at the event were given the opportunity to annotate large maps highlighting their popular routes in detail and also adding comments. Where someone made a comment on the maps this has been listed in a table shown in Annex 1, the routes identified can be viewed on a map in Annex 2. Each comment has a number attributed to it to enable cross-referencing with the map in Annex 2 (only where the comment is specific to a geographic area). The routes shown in a solid line are those which people identified as being important to them. The dashed lines are proposed routes that people identified.

Questionnaire Results

A total of 43 questionnaires were received for the Aviemore area. The responses to each of the questions are outlined below.

What outdoor activities do you currently do in and around Aviemore?

Activity	% of respondents who undertake the activity
Low level walking	91%
Dog walking	37%
Hillwalking	67%
Running	33%
Getting about in a wheelchair	5%
Walking with a pushchair	5%
Cycling on-road	72%
Cycling off-road	63%
Horse-riding	0%
Watersports	12%
Wintersports	42%

Other*	16%
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*Other activities identified were 'cycling on tracks', 'Wild life watching and Angling', 'camping', 'Teaching mountain bike leadership using local trails, tracks and cycle paths', 'electric chairs', 'Orienteering', and 'cross country skiing'.

Why do you do these activities?

Reason	% of respondents who identified the reason
To keep fit/healthy	86%
Enjoying the Countryside	88%
Travel to work/school	16%
Getting about	51%
Other*	7%

*Other reasons identified were, 'work', 'teaching socialising family walks', 'to go to the shops'.

What activities would you like to see better opportunities for in and around the area?

Activity	% of respondents who identified the activity
Low level walking	65%
Dog walking	14%
Hillwalking	21%
Running	9%
Getting about in a wheelchair*	9%
Walking with a pushchair	5%
Cycling on-road	40%
Cycling off-road**	37%
Horse-riding	2%
Watersports	5%
Wintersports	9%

None	5%
Other***	14%

The following comments were made:

* 'Try walking with a wheelchair from Grampian View to the village, kerbs impossible'

** 'cycle paths beside roads'

*** 'Walking in the woods above Grainish', 'Guided walks from Ptarmigan to top of Cairngorm', 'Cycle lanes extended or paths next to roads whole way from Glenmore to Aviemore', 'Like to see a really good ramp/halfpipe etc for the skate boarding youngsters. All it is is holes in the ground covered with concrete - see Livingston!! Cheap. It's a disgrace there isn't one.', 'cycle routes that link & walks that are circular', and ' Orienteering'.

Would better opportunities for these activities encourage you to;

Reason	% of respondents who identified each activity
Walk to work/school	9%
Cycle to work/school*	23%
Try new activities	23%
Get fit	33%
Get outdoors more	47%
Other**	9%

Reasons identified were;

* 'my children'

** 'Less fencing or more styles', 'Get to work faster by bike', 'Avoid roads /cars' and 'enjoy it more'.

Summary

During the public engagement process it was found that there is a need for a co-ordinated and promoted network around Aviemore and in particular there is a strong desire to see the completion of an orbital route. There is a great deal of concern that access appears restricted to the new Aviemore Highland Resort and on to Craigellachie and also on to the golf course.

The most popular path identified was the Speyside Way towards Boat of Garten (identified by 61% of respondents), Other very popular paths were the Aviemore Orbital (identified by 59% of respondents) and the

network of paths across the A9 in the woodlands north of Craigellachie Nature Reserve. The nature trail and riverside path also featured as popular routes.

Most activities proved popular in the area although low-level walking, was by far the most popular, followed by on-road cycling and then hillwalking. Most people doing activities did so to enjoy the countryside and also to keep fit and healthy, a lot of people also did them just to get about but few people do so to get to work or school. There was some demand for better low-level walking routes and for opportunities for cycling on and off road.

Reflections

The drop-in was generally well attended with positive feedback and a number of people have returned questionnaires since. The engagement process has failed to capture any data from the 16-24 age group in the Aviemore area. Generally the feedback about the network was not positive and many people felt that there were too many barriers to access in and around the community. Quite a large proportion of people identified that better opportunities would enable them to cycle to work or school.

Next Steps

The issues raised and the information gathered throughout the process will be used to inform the development of selection criteria for core paths. The selection criteria will then be used to select core paths for the Cairngorms National Park. The selection criteria and maps of the selected paths will be drawn up into an Interim Draft Core Paths Plan which will be completed by the end of March 2007. This Plan will then be made available for the public to make comment.

Cairngorms National Park Authority

1 March 2007

sandramiddleton@cairngorms.co.uk

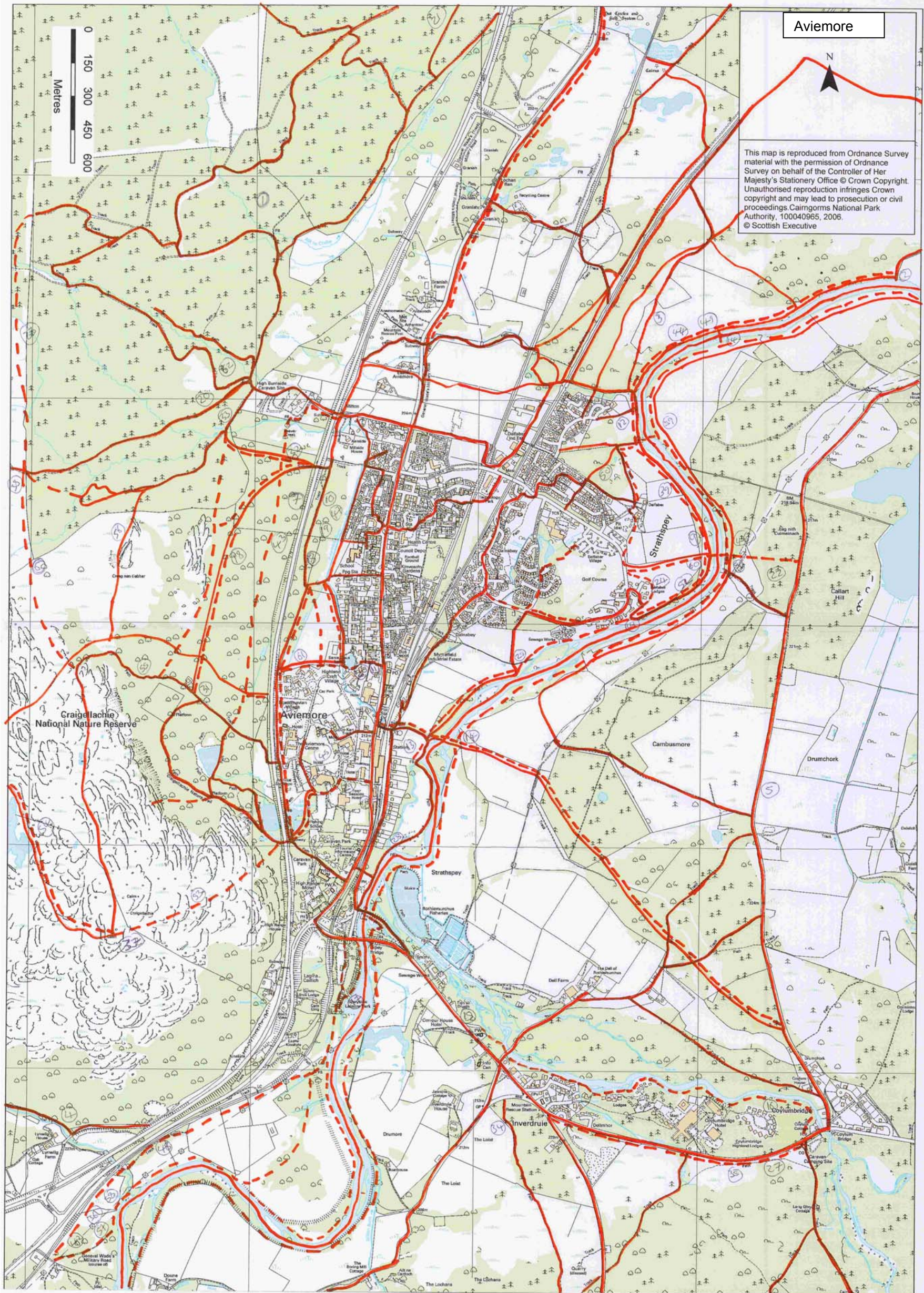
Annex 1 - Comments received on maps at the events and in the questionnaires

Where the comment relates to a geographic area on the map the number of the comment has been written on to the map in Annex 2.	
No.	Comment (as written by respondent)
1	Potential for improvement of links/encouragement of access to these woods
2	There was a track on the side of the Spey could this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Be upgraded b. Signposted c. Ensure that it is not taken over by the Golf Course
3	This section of the Speyside way is not accurately marked. The path/cycle route is further west
4	Burma Road to Carrbridge
5	Back road used for cycling
6	Link Craigellachie with "the waterfalls path"(stile over deer fence)
7	I like to exercise here because there is always somewhere to walk
8	Path links through AHR need to be established to Milton Wood, Village and Craigellachie
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10	This path in particular needs to be signposted and improved from Old Bridge Inn to Dalfaber. Aviemore needs better information on paths especially for visitors i.e. a leaflet would be good.
11	Proper paths round Milton Wood and connection to centre vie pony fields
12	Remove fence from Tesco car park
13	Route improved for cyclists/ new gate
14	New park land are giving access to the river
15	A footbridge crossing somewhere along this stretch of the Spey would open up a huge amount of walking/cycling opportunities-most circular routes restricted by where can cross the river/railway
16	Safe cycle route from Aviemore –Glenmore required for locals and tourists
17	There used to be a path round back of hotel and coming to the B970 at the church

18	I would like to see a path out of Aviemore through Speyside Highland Leisure Park or other side B9152 and via underpass to walk south beside the river currently no access through SHLP as caravan is across where path used to be.
19	gone/overgrown
20	Milton Wood – There are several “informal” paths in the wood. The boggy bits could be improved but not made over formal
21	New path to form a circuit from old saw mill by existing track west to boundary fence (which has a dangerous stile) fork left (south)to waterfall (898132) new track to Lochan Dubh (898120) thence to summit Craigellachie to link with existing path coming up by Loch Pulladern
22	we ski this trail
23	Cycle link needed from B970 to Aviemore to make NCN7 more effective as commuter link from Nethy and Boat
24	High level links would be great e.g. for running
25	Complete the orbital path along the river bank if possible
26	Needs small bridge here
27	Access opened next to Tescos to give access by foot to Scout Hut. This could be a gate which swing shut. This would save 2 horrendous car journeys to drop off/pick up kids from Scouts
28	Extension of the excellent cycle path to Glenmore
29	Needs some work on Bridge
30	Very strange having to report to a gate official to take a route to Craigellachie
31	I have used a faint path round back of Scandinavian Village and Highland Hotel for years to run a circuit around Aviemore. Its an excellent option if the other side of A9 is not possible to complete the Orbital path
32	Take the missing gap in the orbital footpath under the A9 to join Milton Woods with Craigellachie
33	Take away the very dangerous wire fence beyond the animal underpass. Cyclists use the path but the wire is almost invisible
34	The circular route from summit of Craigellachie around the back of the hill past the waterfall through the deer fence and down to Milton underpass = brilliant route
35	Requires surfacing (400 metres)
36	High priority walking and cycling (and horse riding) to Loch Morlich etc

37	To Ballater feasible in flood plain?
38	View and orientation table
39	High level link to Findhorn valley
40	Existing path needs surfacing
41	electric buggy
42	Not an official link I climb over low fence to access track through timeshares
43	Extension of the Speyside Way
44	Completion of Aviemore orbital route
45	Golf Course distinctly out of bounds and shouldn't be
46	Access to Craigellachie harder since Macdonalds shut car park and put man on gate. Path to Tesco car park from Macdonalds car park should be core path – important to community. Difficult to mark the path from the back of Tescos car park to the resort and across to NNR should be unblocked.
47	Pedestrian bridge across Spey at north end of village would enable a good loop down to the Dell and back
48	Keen to see paths in Milton Wood stay as they are- no upgrade required
49	Link Speyside Way from Dalraddy to Aviemore
50	There are some areas where it is possible to walk but where fences prevent access from one area to another e.g. around Craigellachie. It would be useful to have access from north of Craigellachie Nature Reserve through to Lynwilg Dalfaber Road at Dalnabay is blocked by a gate. This is ok for bikes, but not for people on motorised trikes (disabled people)
51	Re-instate discouraged by golf course
52	Preserve- frequent use by Aviemore residents
53	Footbridge
54	Riverside path
55	Construct
56	Long walk to hills above nature reserve
57	Improve
58	Improve and improve access- forestry gates locked
59	We need an extension to the Speyside Way
60	Link to Badenoch Way or Speyside Way extension

61	Bridge to give riverside circular walk
62	this could be signed and on an orientation panel
63	To link the routes in existence now
64	signed routes into the Monadhliath



Annex 2 – Paths Identified
— Paths identified as being
- - - - New Paths identified