

Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan

Consultation and Engagement Process - Stage 1

Community Engagement & Results – Upper Donside

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 public for the Upper Donside area, the people who participated in the engagement process and the feedback and results that they provided.

Engaging with the public for the Upper Donside area

The engagement period ran from 1st September to 30th November 2006. Questionnaires for the Upper Donside area were made available on the CNPA website, through contacting the CNPA directly and at drop-in events across the National Park. In Upper Donside, a community drop-in event was run in Strathdon to enable people 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. Questionnaires were also made available for Strathdon and a feedback report for Strathdon is also available.

Participants in the Engagement Process

Throughout the 3 month period a total of 10 questionnaires were completed for the Upper Donside area and additional 23 specifically for the Strathdon area. To help the CNPA gauge whether or not the process successfully engaged with a wide enough cross section of people, 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	30%	Female	70%
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Participants by Age Group

Under 16	0%	16 - 24	0%	25 - 44	30%	45 - 64	60%	65 - 74	0%	Over 75	10%
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Where people came from

% of people from each place who completed questionnaires			
Upper Donside	80%	Elsewhere	20%

Results of the Engagement Process

Map Results

People were given the opportunity to provide their views on the Upper Donside area via questionnaires and at events. 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 events throughout the National Park were asked 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 by people for the Upper Donside area are shown 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 10 questionnaires were received for the Upper Donside area. The responses to each of the questions are outlined below.

What outdoor activities do you currently do in and around Upper Donside?

Activity	% of respondents who undertake the activity
Low level walking	90%
Dog walking	70%
Hill walking	60%
Running	0%
Getting about in a wheelchair	0%
Walking with a pushchair	20%
Cycling on-road	30%
Cycling off-road	10%
Horse-riding	20%
Watersports	0%
Winter sports	20%
None	0%
Other	0%

Why do you do these activities?

Reason	% of respondents who identified the reason
To keep fit/healthy	100%
Enjoying the Countryside	90%
Travel to work/school	20%
Getting about	60%
Other	0%

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	70%
Dog walking	40%
Hill walking	50%
Running	10%
Getting about in a wheelchair	30%
Walking with a pushchair	70%
Cycling on-road	10%
Cycling off-road	30%
Horse-riding	10%
Watersports	10%
Winter sports	20%
None	0%
Other*	10%

*Other activities identified were, 'Nordic Walking trails'.

Would better opportunities for these activities encourage you to;

Reason	% of respondents who identified each activity
Walk to work/school	50%
Cycle to work/school	40%
Try new activities	50%
Get fit	50%
Get outdoors more	80%
Other	0%

Summary

During the public engagement process it was found that access to and across the River Don needs to be improved, however, there was a

lack of consensus on any specific crossing points. There is demand for promotion of circular routes in the area and in Corgarff and Strathdon in particular. The most popular paths identified were over Mona Gowan towards Candacraig. The right of way from Cockbridge to Tomintoul via Inchrory was also very popular.

Low level walking was by far the most popular activity in the area followed by dog-walking and hill-walking with all of the respondees doing activities to keep fit and healthy and many to enjoy the countryside. There was high demand for better low-level walking routes, particularly for walking with a push-chair.

Reflections

There was a relatively low response for the Upper Donside area although combined with the response from the Strathdon area the level of information obtained for the area was good. The age range of participants was limited and there were far more responses from females than from males. A lot of information was compiled on maps at many of the events throughout the National Park. In particular there was a good response from people who attended the outdoor activities workshops that were held in Ballater and Aviemore.

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.

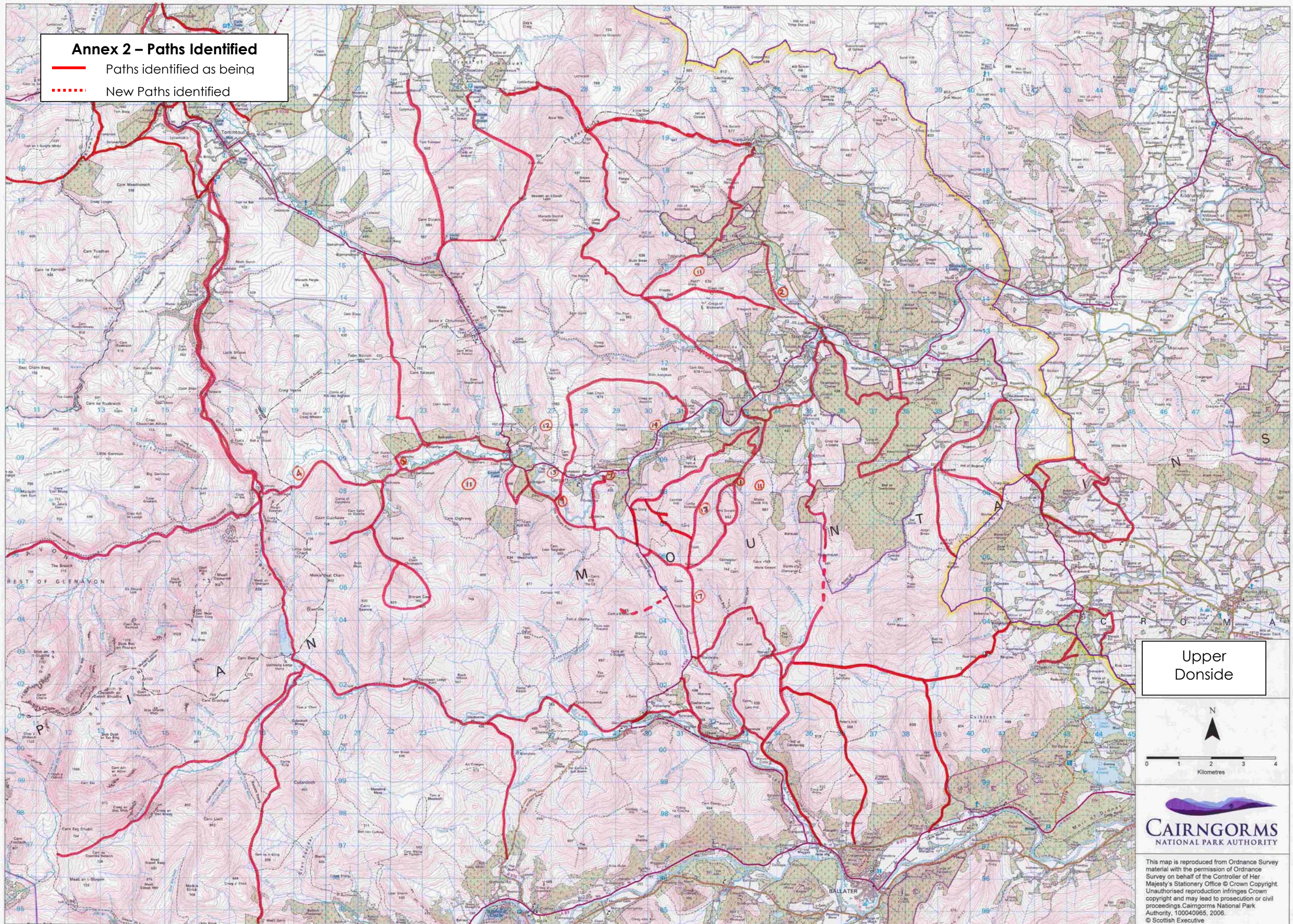
Cairngorms National Park Authority

1 March 2007

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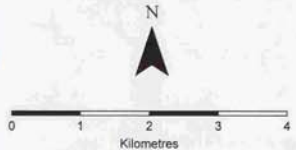
Annex 1 - Comments received on maps at events and in the questionnaires

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	Footbridge? Quite flat – would be good to adapt for wheelchairs
2	Popular horse-riding route – part LMC funded
3	Bridge over Don – a circular route for walkers
4	This path to link Ballater to Glen Gairn to Old Military Road Corgarff – to Tomintoul via Inchroy to link with extension of Speyside Way. Good for locals + tourist walkers alike an official route
5	Footbridges could be built simply with 2 raised telegraph poles, or Scots Pine (current wind blown in forest) then planks & guide rail. River is narrow in Corgarff. <i>(not numbered on map in Annex 2)</i>
6	Historically there used to be 3 or more footbridges over the Don. We definitely need some circular routes, for locals + visitors to create more attraction
7	Bridge here over Don
8	More circular routes
9	Bridge here over Don
10	There could be a community decision process over where to place bridges The M. Road needs to be made into a circular walk with new path off main Rd. <i>(not numbered on map in Annex 2)</i>
11	Some work to be done on promoting paths & circular walks. (possible job for UDAT)
12	Circular route at Corgarff
13	Riverside trail around the howe at Corgarff with historical Development
14	Cycle paths from Strathdon - Corgarff
15	Bridges across certain points of River Don to join access walks
16	A lot of my recreational activity is not done on actual paths. Also I enjoy walking where no-one else walks! I Also walk outside the Park.
17	Existing tracks and paths in right places but not in good condition and some with locked access
18	Locked gated tracks



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

Upper
Donside



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