

Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan

Consultation and Engagement Process - Stage 1

Community Engagement & Results – Cromdale

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 Cromdale community, the people who participated in the engagement process and the feedback and results that they provided.

Engaging with the Cromdale 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 community drop-in event was run to enable people in Cromdale and the surrounding area to find out more about core paths planning and to advise the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) of the routes, paths and areas that are important to them and why. The community drop-in event was run together with the Grantown on Spey events to enable people in Cromdale 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 two events were held at the Inverallan Church Hall, Grantown on Spey on Tuesday the 14th of November from 5pm to 7pm and on Saturday the 18th of November from 2:30pm to 4pm. CNPA staff Murray Ferguson and Fran Potheary ran the Tuesday event and Adam Streeter-Smith with Stewart Easthaugh of Highland Council ran the Saturday event.

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 12 people attended both events and a total of 4 questionnaires were completed at the event and a number of people took questionnaires away to complete in their own time. 5 questionnaires were completed for the Cromdale settlement. Participants at the drop in events were asked to complete an evaluation sheet of the event, the results recorded are as follows;

	% of Participants Responding			
	Very Useful	Useful	Not Useful	Waste of Time
Location	63%	37%	0%	0%
Venue	67%	33%	0%	0%

Bad

Good

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 Cromdale Network		
What is bad about the network?	What is good about the network?	How the network could be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor signage from the village to highlight the Speyside Way and Anagach Woods • No riverside walks-daft considering how close the river is! • No obvious routes to the Cromdale Hills or the distilleries – signage would be good! (seconded by another participant) • Some car parking? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The links to the Speyside Way, Anagach Woods, the riverside and the Cromdale Hills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village orientation panels indicating waymarked / signed routes (leaflets don't work as well, aren't as sustainable and cost a fortune to update!)

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 5 questionnaires were received for the Cromdale area. The responses to each of the questions are outlined below.

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

Activity	% of respondents who undertake the activity
Low level walking	80%
Dog walking	20%
Hillwalking	80%
Running	40%
Getting about in a wheelchair	20%
Walking with a pushchair	60%
Cycling on-road	100%
Cycling off-road	80%
Horse-riding	0%
Watersports	20%
Wintersports	20%
None	0%
Other*	0%

*Other activities identified were 'wildlife watching', and 'wildlife watching, berry and mushroom picking'.

Why do you do these activities?

Reason	% of respondents who identified the reason
To keep fit/healthy	100%
Enjoying the Countryside	100%
Travel to work/school	20%
Getting about	80%
Other*	0%

*Other reasons identified were 'visit family and friends' and 'visit family/friends and socialise with them'.

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	80%
Dog walking	0%
Hillwalking	40%
Running	0%
Getting about in a wheelchair	0%
Walking with a pushchair	40%
Cycling on-road	80%
Cycling off-road	80%
Horse-riding	0%
Watersports	0%
Wintersports	0%
None	0%
Other	0%

Would better opportunities for these activities encourage you to;

Reason	% of respondents who identified each activity
Walk to work/school	0%
Cycle to work/school	0%
Try new activities	20%
Get fit	40%
Get outdoors more	60%
Other*	0%

*Other reasons identified were 'explore the vicinity of Cromdale'.

Summary

During the public engagement process it was found that there is a need to link up the Cromdale paths better with the wider network and there are some specific issues with locked gates.

The most popular paths identified were the riverside path towards Grantown on Spey (being identified by 100% of respondents) and the Speyside Way through Anagach Woods (again identified by 100% of respondents). Other popular paths included the Speyside Way to Aberlour and the river side path towards Aberlour on the north side of the river (60% and 80% respectively)

Most activities proved popular in the area although on-road cycling was by far the most popular followed by low-level walking, off-road cycling and hill-walking. Most people doing activities did so to enjoy the countryside and also to keep fit and healthy but a high proportion of residents do so just to get about. There were similar and quite high levels of demand for better low-level and cycling routes, and there was a comparatively high demand for better pushchair access. A large proportion of respondents indicated that better opportunities for different activities would encourage them to get outdoors more.

Reflections

The Cromdale community were poorly represented in the process and this must be addressed in the next round of consultation. Those who did get involved, however, provided some very valuable input.

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

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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	No access- gate locked on Sundays and on Saturday night have to climb over
2	Path up to Craig Roy very over grown needs improved
3	Gate locked on Sunday's –have to carry a pushchair over. Understand reasons for locking but side gate for non-vehicular access is all that's required
4	The River Spey is a fantastic route for multi or single day canoes trips (one other agreed)
5	Better signage within Cromdale to Speyside Way and Anagach Woods paths and new upgraded river side ones
6	All paths in Anagach for cycling walking and riding
7	Upgrade the old railway link between Cromdale and Grantown on Spey to create a circular route with current north side paths needs 5 bridges
8	Create a link with the Cromdale hills from Cromdale and Balmenach
9	Old railway to Cromdale would be a good walking/cycling route but very wet/muddy and no bridges over the burns
10	Consolidate and upgrade riverside path on the north side and waymark/sign poss to AA level
11	Riverside path is really good but a bit hard to find best route around Craigory
12	Riverside walk needs more publicity- pamphlets etc

