

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK  
**Core Paths Plan Draft**



# How to Comment

This document is published for use during a public consultation period which runs for three months to 30 June 2008. Please see Section 4 (see page 12) of this document for advice on how to comment.

To assist you in your response you will find a Comment Form on the following pages. An electronic version of this form can be found at:

**<http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/access/corepaths>**

**Comments, which must include your name and address, are requested at any time before 30 June 2008 and should be sent to:**

**Cairngorms National Park Authority  
FREEPOST NAT 21454  
GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY  
PH26 3BR**

**Please note that all responses will be made public.**

Please contact the Cairngorms National Park Authority if you wish to discuss the Draft Core Paths Plan or to arrange a meeting:

Cairngorms National Park Authority  
14 The Square  
Grantown-on-Spey  
Moray  
PH26 3HG

Tel: 01479 873535

Fax: 01479 873527

Email: [corepathsplan@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:corepathsplan@cairngorms.co.uk)

The document is available to view at the Cairngorms National Park Authority offices in Grantown-on-Spey (as per address above) and Ballater (Albert Memorial Hall, Station Square) or at a number of local libraries and post offices within the Park.

Alternatively the consultation document can be downloaded from the Cairngorms National Park Authority website: **[www.cairngorms.co.uk/access/corepaths](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/access/corepaths)**

A Strategic Environmental Assessment has been carried out and an Environmental Report prepared to accompany this Plan.

It can be viewed at: **[www.cairngorms.co.uk/access/corepaths](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/access/corepaths)**

For a large print version of this publication, please contact the Cairngorms National Park Authority on tel: **01479 873535**

COVER PHOTOS: CNPA, David Gowans, Paul Tomkins/VisitScotland/Scottish Viewpoint, Upper Deeside Access Trust



## Form for supporting or objecting to the Draft Core Paths Plan

**Please note that all responses will be made public and are not valid without a full name and postal address.**

Please read the explanatory notes inside the front cover and in Section 4 (see page 12) of the Draft Core Paths Plan before completing this form and return it by **30 June 2008**. Please use this form to set out your objections to or comments in support of the draft Core Paths Plan quoting the path reference number where appropriate. Further copies of this form can be photocopied, obtained from the CNPA offices or printed from our web site where you can also complete it electronically.

[www.cairngorms/access/corepaths](http://www.cairngorms/access/corepaths)

### 1. Your Details (\*indicates a compulsory field.)

Title		First Name*		Last Name*	
Responding on behalf of:		(if applicable)			
Postal Address*					
Postcode*				Telephone	
Email					

2. Do you think that the proposed core paths network is sufficient to give people reasonable access throughout the area?	<i>Please tick one</i>			
	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Please state clearly and fully the grounds of your objection or support to the Draft Core Paths Plan, continuing on a separate sheet where necessary.

**Form for supporting or objecting to the Draft Core Paths Plan (continued)**



4. If objecting, please indicate what change (s) you are seeking to the Draft Core Paths Plan which could resolve your objection, continuing on a separate sheet where necessary.

Signature		Date	
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**Please return your completed form to:**

Cairngorms National Park Authority  
FREEPOST NAT 21454  
GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY  
PH26 3BR

Forms should be returned no later than **30 June 2008**. After that date you will be contacted by a representative of the Cairngorms National Park Authority with regard to your objections.

**OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

Reference:

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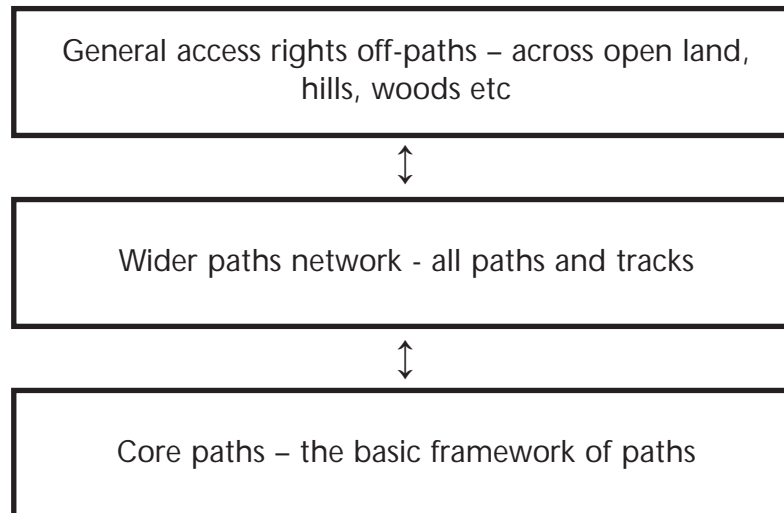
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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1** Across Scotland, all of the local authorities and national park authorities are working to identify and designate networks of core paths, which will make it easier for everyone to enjoy the outdoors responsibly. The core paths network can include both existing paths and proposed new paths. When the Plan is implemented, work will need to be done to construct and improve some of the paths and to make them more user friendly for a wider range of activities and abilities. As such the Plan must be realistic as to what can be delivered on the ground. Future reviews of the Plan will allow us to consolidate and expand this network where appropriate.
- 1.2** This document sets out the proposed core paths network for the Cairngorms National Park and seeks people's views. This document is a Draft Core Paths Plan for public consultation and has been developed from the consultation on the Interim Draft Core Paths Plan which was consulted on in 2007. The specific questions that we would like people to address are set out in Section 4, 'Have Your Say' (see page 12).
- 1.3** The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 ('the Act') provides everyone with non-motorised access rights<sup>1</sup> to almost all land and inland water in Scotland, as long as they are used responsibly. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code provides detailed guidance on the responsibilities of people exercising access rights and managing land and water. All access authorities have a duty under the Act to prepare a Core Paths Plan and to keep it under review. The purpose of the Core Paths Plan is to identify a system of paths which are, '... sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area'<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.4** The network of core paths will provide the basic framework of paths that gives people access throughout the Cairngorms National Park. These paths will satisfy the needs of both visitors and local people for getting about and will link into a much wider path network and beyond. To achieve this, the development of the core paths network is likely to comprise a mixture of existing paths and some new paths, which together will provide a coherent system. It is important to note that core paths are not intended to limit people's access rights but to complement them. Access rights can be thought of as operating across three overlapping levels as shown in the diagram on the following page.

<sup>1</sup> Access rights do extend to a person with a disability who is using a motorised vehicle or vessel built or adapted for use by that person subject to the Highway Code being adhered to.

<sup>2</sup> Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, Part 1, Chapter 5, Section 17(1).



- 1.5** Core paths will provide opportunities for everyone, including walkers, cyclists, horse riders and canoeists. The core paths network will enable people of all ages and abilities to move around their area whether it is for getting to the shops, walking the dog or enjoying the outdoors. Most core paths will be located on the lower ground and there will be especially good provision close to communities. Rivers too can be designated as core paths.
- 1.6** The long term aspiration is that the process will lead to a widespread and highly visible network of paths across Scotland that are easy and attractive to use. The benefits of this new network will contribute very positively to improving people’s health, stimulating more physical activity, social inclusion and the minimisation of carbon emissions to help address climate change. Core paths will also have a very important role to play in ensuring that people can easily experience the special qualities of the Cairngorms National Park in a way that reduces the potential for conflict with those who manage the land.
- 1.7** The development of high quality opportunities for outdoor access is identified in the Cairngorms National Park Plan as a priority for action over the next five years. The Core Paths Plan will help greatly in achieving this aim. By identifying a network of paths within the Plan the paths will be protected and positively managed. The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) will be able to prioritise where resources should be used in improving and developing the paths network.



## 2. Developing the Core Paths Plan

### The Process

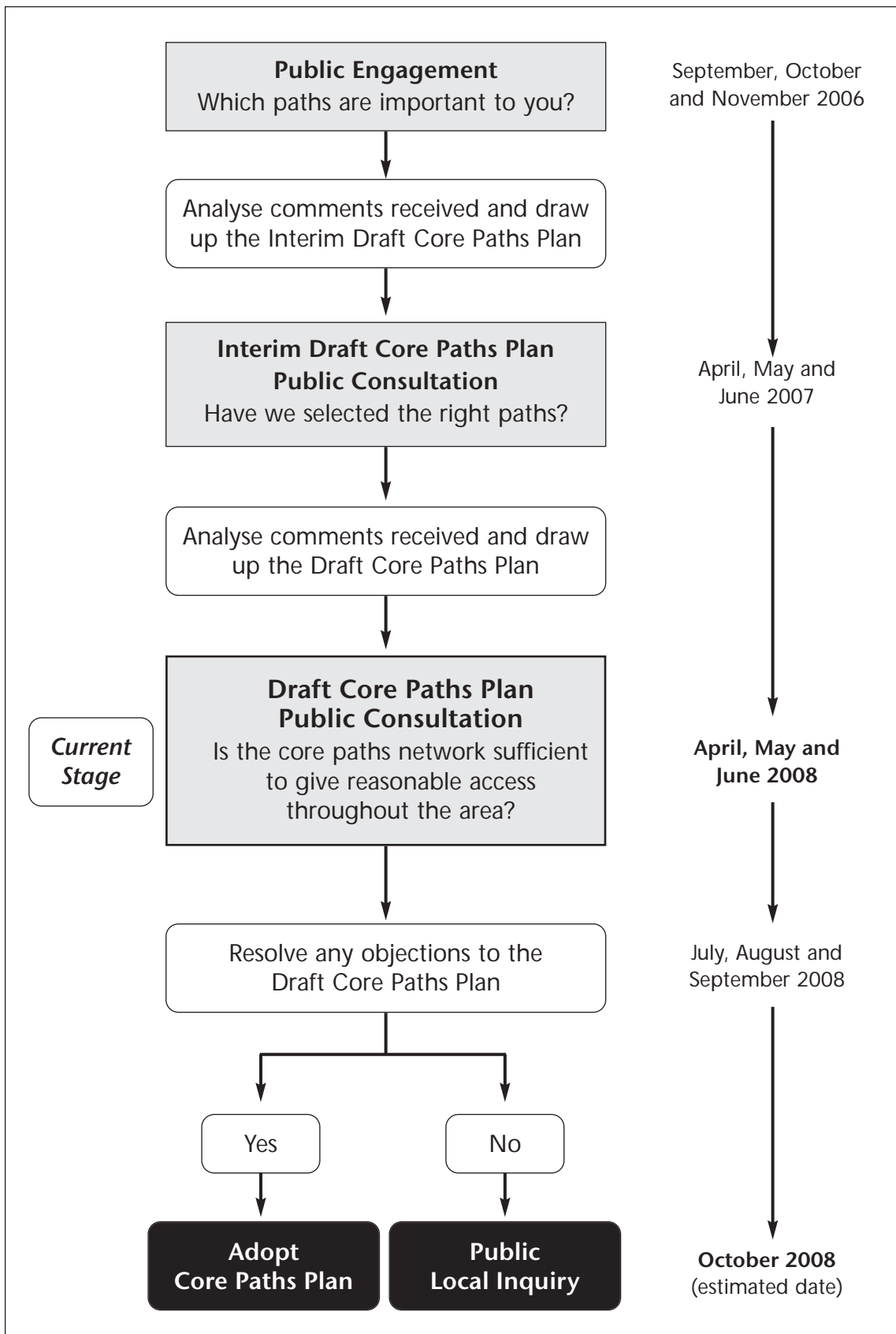
- 2.1** The process of developing a Core Paths Plan for the Cairngorms National Park began in September 2006. The Cairngorms National Park Authority encouraged people representing a wide range of interest groups to tell the Authority which paths they value and why, what they use the paths for, and what concerns they might have. A report detailing who got involved and what they said during this first stage is available for download from the Park Authority website or on request. The information obtained at that time was then used to draw up the Interim Draft Core Paths Plan.
- 2.2** The Interim Draft Core Paths Plan was made available for public consultation during April to June of 2007. Over 550 people got involved in the consultation and provided comments on the Plan. The main issues arising from the consultation relate to the aim and criteria used to select paths and the inclusion in the network of: waterways, paths in upland areas, all promoted paths, rights of way, the Speyside Way, and quiet roads and pavements. There was also a large number of comments received relating to specific paths. A report detailing what people said during this second stage in the consultation process is also available for download from the Park Authority website or on request. All of the comments received during the consultation have now been analysed and used to help draw up this Draft Core Paths Plan.
- 2.3** Once the consultation on the Draft Core Paths Plan is complete the Plan will be revised, where appropriate, then adopted and implemented. If at the end of the consultation period there are any objections to the Plan that cannot be resolved then a Public Local Inquiry may be necessary to determine the outstanding issues. A flow diagram showing the process and timeline is shown on page 9.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment and Natura

- 2.4** All plans such as the Core Paths Plan are assessed to ensure that they do not have a negative impact on the environment. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been used to help develop the Draft Core Paths Plan. This process ensures that the proposed network of paths contributes to the management of pressures on sensitive natural and cultural heritage and land management operations (eg by encouraging access away from sensitive areas).
- 2.5** The aim and objectives of the Draft Core Paths Plan have been assessed along with the core paths network for each area of the Park. The Draft Core Paths Plan has a strongly positive effect in relation to enabling responsible access for all, improving air quality and maintaining a healthy population. It also has a positive effect on improving energy efficiency and reducing waste and pollution. It has a neutral effect on conserving and enhancing the diversity of species and habitats as well as the historic environment. No negative effects have been recorded.
- 2.6** The assessment and its findings are detailed in the Environmental Report which is subject to public consultation alongside this Draft Core Paths Plan. If you wish to view or comment on the Environmental Report then you can do so using the details inside the front cover of this Plan.
- 2.7** In addition to the SEA, the Park Authority has been working in conjunction with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to carry out Natura Appropriate Assessments. These assessments will ensure that any proposed core paths which pass through or near to a Natura 2000<sup>3</sup> designated site, are assessed for their potential impact.

<sup>3</sup> Natura 2000 designated site – sites protected by European legislation designed to promote the conservation of the most seriously threatened habitats and species.

## The process of developing a Core Paths Plan for the Cairngorms National Park



## 3. Selecting the Core Paths Network

- 3.1 An aim and objectives have been established for the Core Paths Plan to help identify the paths to be included in the core paths network. The objectives were previously referred to as 'Selection Criteria' in the Interim Draft Core Paths Plan – this change along with a number of others affecting the inclusion or exclusion of paths has been a direct consequence of the public consultation.

### Aim

The Core Paths Plan will help people to enjoy and understand the special qualities of the Cairngorms National Park by identifying a network of paths which offer a wide range of high quality outdoor access opportunities.

### Objectives

The core paths network will:

- a) **Help to conserve the Park's natural and cultural heritage and encourage people to enjoy it in a responsible way;**
- b) **Help those living and working on the land;**
- c) **Help to deliver the priorities for each area identified in the Outdoor Access Strategy;**
- d) **Provide for a wide range of activities;**
- e) **Provide for a wide range of abilities;**
- f) **Include a wide range of popular routes; and**
- g) **Include paths within, around and between communities and to public transport connections and places of local importance.**

3.2 The paths that are selected to make up the network can include:

- existing paths and tracks
- paths that need to be built
- quiet roads
- pavements
- waterways

3.3 Where appropriate the core paths network will be well promoted, signposted and waymarked and the paths will also be marked on Ordnance Survey and other maps. We need to ensure that any path included in the core paths network is fit for use or can be made fit for use within a relatively short time period after the Plan is adopted. This may mean that a path has to be upgraded or even built and, as such, it needs to be reasonable that the relevant agreements, planning permissions, assessments, finance and works can all be achieved in a two year time frame. If a suitable path has been identified during the process but it cannot be made ready within two years of the Plan being adopted, then it will be considered for inclusion as a core path in a future review of the Core Paths Plan.

## 4. Have Your Say

- 4.1 This document is a draft version of the Core Paths Plan and has been written to enable people to view and comment on the proposed core paths network before it is finalised. We want to know what you think about the Plan and fundamentally whether or not the network selected is sufficient to give you reasonable access throughout the area.
- 4.2 The network is shown on maps in **Section 6 of this Plan** (see page 17). Each path has a unique reference number next to it and a description of the path is given in the relevant table on the opposite page from the map. Please use the reference number when commenting on a particular path.
- 4.3 To make it easy for you to comment, and to ensure that we can deal with comments as quickly and efficiently as possible, we have developed a standard form which can be found at the front of this document. Further copies can be obtained by contacting us. Alternatively, the form is available on our website at <http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/access/corepaths>. You can submit the form to us via the website, by post or at the two Cairngorms National Park Authority offices, in Grantown-on-Spey and Ballater. Please contact us should you wish to discuss the Draft Core Paths Plan or to arrange a meeting. A helpdesk will be operating throughout the consultation period. The telephone number is 01479 873535.
- 4.4 **Please note that we cannot accept a comment form or consultation response without your full name and address. All comment forms and consultation responses will be made available to the public.**
- 4.5 If you would like to know more about the core paths planning process, there is a useful free guide to good practice that is published by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Paths for All Partnership. It can be viewed using the following web link: [http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/upload/Core\\_Paths\\_Plans.pdf](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/upload/Core_Paths_Plans.pdf). Please contact your nearest SNH office for a printed copy.
- 4.6 We would like to hear from people **by 30 June 2008**. All of the comments received will be read, analysed and considered and the Plan revised accordingly. The next steps are described in Section 7 (see page 45).

## 5. Frequently Asked Questions

### What is a core paths network?

The core paths network will provide the basic framework of routes, '... sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area'<sup>4</sup>. The network will help meet the needs of local people and visitors by providing a range of high quality outdoor access opportunities which help people to enjoy and understand the Cairngorms National Park's special qualities.

### What is a Core Paths Plan?

A Core Paths Plan is a plan containing lists and maps showing the network of core paths, their relationships to other paths and information on how the core paths were selected.

### Why do we need a Core Paths Plan?

The duty to prepare a Core Paths Plan is one of the key innovations arising from the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. The network of managed and promoted paths that will emerge will provide a basis for delivering wide social, economic and environmental benefits for the Cairngorms National Park and beyond. Core paths will also have a very important role to play in ensuring that people can easily get around and enjoy the special qualities of the Park in a way that minimises the potential for conflict with people who manage the land.

### What will core paths be like?

Most core paths will be easy to find and to follow, well sign-posted, appropriately maintained and, as far as possible, free from barriers or obstructions. The paths do not have to be of a specific type or quality – they can range from a simple trail through the grass to a formal path with a tarmac surface. Rivers too can be designated as core paths. Some of the more challenging core paths in upland and remote areas will require people to be more self-reliant.

### Which paths will be designated as core paths?

The paths shown on the maps in this document are proposed core paths. They have been identified in consultation with the public. They include paths to allow people to move in, around and between communities as part of their daily lives (eg to shops and schools) and also recreational paths. The network includes many existing paths as well as some proposals for new paths.

<sup>4</sup> Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, Part 1, Chapter 5, Section 17 (1).

## How will the core paths be promoted?

Clear sign-posting will be required and appropriate information will be provided using leaflets, map-boards and websites. This information will encourage the use of the paths by a wide range of people and create confidence in their use. The core paths network will also be shown on Ordnance Survey and other maps. Some of the more challenging core paths in upland and remote areas will not be waymarked and will therefore require people to be more self-reliant.

## How will the core paths network be managed?

The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) will be responsible for the overall management of the core paths network. The specific management functions include keeping accurate records on core paths, their installations and infrastructure; helping put together maintenance programmes; ensuring core paths mapping is kept up to date and available for all to see; monitoring requirements for removal of obstructions from core paths, reinstatement after ploughing, and dealing with any complaints; ensuring information on the core paths network is accurate for reporting purposes and answering enquiries; and storing and referencing path inspection records.

## How will the core paths be maintained?

It will be important that the core paths are well maintained and easy to use. A partnership approach will be required between whoever owns the land, public bodies, community groups and funding agencies. The Park Authority will be the lead public body in making sure this work takes place but are unlikely to be able to fund all necessary maintenance on every path. It is therefore likely that a range of imaginative solutions will need to be found, depending on the local circumstances. Where necessary the CNPA will be able to enter into path agreements to delineate, create or maintain paths.

## Who will use core paths?

Core paths will be used by a wide range of local people and visitors. Taken as a whole the core paths network will cater for all types of users including walkers, cyclists, horse riders, people with disabilities and canoeists. But not all individual paths will need to be designed or managed for every type of user.



## What about paths that are not designated as core paths?

The Cairngorms National Park Outdoor Access Strategy<sup>5</sup> provides a framework for the management of outdoor access across the whole of the Park over the next five years. In particular many of the upland paths, which will not generally be designated as core paths, will need to be looked after. The Strategy has specific policies and actions that will help guide the maintenance and improvement of path provision.

## When will the Core Paths Plan be reviewed?

Future reviews of the Core Paths Plan will be done in conjunction with the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan. In the interim period, if a land manager needs to permanently divert or re-align a core path to assist with land management operations then this can be done through discussion with the CNPA. If the diversion is only temporary then this can be dealt with as it would be on any other path, in line with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

## Will land managers' liabilities be increased by the designation of core paths?

Visitor safety is very important and an 'occupier' of land (eg land owner, tenant farmer, etc) has a duty to show care towards people on that land. This duty of care will be the same to all visitors whether or not they are on core paths. If an accident or injury occurs and proceeds to legal action, the courts will have to analyse all the relevant circumstances of the case in deciding on liability. The issue of whether or not the person is on a core path will not, on its own, be a deciding factor. Further guidance and advice on this matter is available by contacting the Cairngorms National Park Authority or a legal adviser.

## Who will fund the core paths network?

The core paths network will be funded in much the same way as access projects are at present. This is done by the CNPA and other bodies working together and using grants from funding bodies. The Core Paths Plan will help to prioritise where this funding should go to ensure that the best value for the public is obtained.

<sup>5</sup> Enjoying the Cairngorms: Cairngorms National Park Outdoor Access Strategy 2007-2012 (CNPA 2007), is available on the CNPA website or on request.

## What will happen when core paths cross beyond the Park boundary?

The Cairngorms National Park is surrounded by five different local authority areas, each of which is developing a Core Paths Plan for their area in line with national guidance. A cross-border working group has been set up to try and ensure that the core paths network links up across the boundaries.

## Can core paths be on water?

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 gives a right of responsible access to most land and inland water and allows for waterways to be core paths. The associated guidance published by the Scottish Executive in 2005 advises that the core paths network should provide for all forms of recreational access, including canoeing and kayaking. Many of the rivers in the Cairngorms National Park are highly designated for their sensitive habitats and species and are also vital to the economy of the area, particularly for angling. A right of responsible access already exists for people wishing to canoe or kayak on the rivers and the River Spey in particular already experiences high levels of use. Where appropriate, designation of a waterway as a core path will ensure it is possible to manage access on the river for the benefit of all those who use it. It is important that this management is done in conjunction with all interested parties to ensure that it is effective.

## 6. The Proposed Core Paths Network

### Overview

**6.1** The Cairngorms National Park Outdoor Access Strategy 2007-2012<sup>6</sup> identifies areas of the Park which have similar characteristics for outdoor access. These areas have been used in the development of the Draft Core Paths Plan. An overview map showing these areas and the core paths network across the Cairngorms National Park is shown on page 19. Thereafter there is a map of each area followed by more detailed maps of the settlements within that area. Opposite each map is a brief description of the proposed core paths network for the area and a table displaying a list of the proposed core paths with reference numbers. The total length of the proposed core paths network is shown below in Figure 6.1 below. This table also shows the length of different types of path.

**Figure 6.1 - Length of Proposed Core Paths Network**

Type of proposed core path	Total length (kilometres)
Existing path or track	702 km
Proposed new path	22 km
Existing pavement	8 km
Existing road	58 km
Water	89 km
Total Length of proposed core paths network	879 km

**6.2** In some cases a path that appeared in the Interim Draft Core Paths Plan may have been re-aligned or removed completely. There are also some new paths that have been proposed since the last consultation. If you would like to find out why a change has been made or how your previous comments have been dealt with please contact us. In some cases we have judged that it will not be possible to put a path in place within the two year time frame (see Section 3, paragraph 3.3 of this document – page 11) and where this occurs we have indicated it on the maps. In these cases we recognise that the route is important and we should continue working to achieve it. The route may then be considered in a future review of the Core Paths Plan. A full list of all of the proposed core paths in the Cairngorms National Park can be found in Annex 1 – see page 46. This list also indicates where a path was proposed as a core path in the Interim Draft Core Paths Plan but is no longer proposed as a core path in the Draft Plan.

<sup>6</sup> Enjoying the Cairngorms: Cairngorms National Park Outdoor Access Strategy 2007-2012 (CNPA 2007), is available on the CNPA website or on request.

## List of Maps

MAP NO	AREA/SETTLEMENT
<b>1</b>	<b>Cairngorms National Park</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Central Cairngorms</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Eastern Cairngorms</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Upper Deeside</b>
5	Linn of Dee
6	Braemar
7	Crathie
8	Glen Tanar
9	Ballater
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