

CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

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<b>Title</b>	Core Paths Plan Review – Update
<b>Prepared by</b>	Adam Streeter-Smith, Outdoor Access Officer
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of this paper is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to highlight the work to date as we move to the formal consultation,</li><li>• to consider the impact the designation of the new routes will have on the <i>fit for purpose</i> target for the Core Paths Plan, and</li><li>• for the Forum to advise on how they wish to formally respond to the Draft Core Paths Plan.</li></ul>

**Advice Sought**

- a) Do members wish to respond to the consultation on the Draft Core Paths Plan formally as a Forum?
- b) If so, could the Forum accommodate their discussion and response within the allocated meeting time of a normal Forum meeting or would they wish for the afternoon to be set aside (bearing in mind the need for as high a turnout as possible)?
- c) Forum members are invited to consider the format of the Forum response and select a member to pull together their response.

**Background**

1. Since the last meeting staff have been writing informally to Estates and other partners for their views on the proposed additions to the Core Paths Plan that will be taken forward to the Formal review. Most responses have been welcoming with some minor changes made to the proposals to reflect land management issues. Annex I illustrates those additional routes being taken forward to the formal review.
2. Park Authority staff have also undertaken a Habitats Regulations Appraisal, required under Article 6(3) of the EC Habitats Directive, on those routes that cross or pass close to European designated sites. This has flagged up some issues in relation to those sites with Capercaillie and changes have been made to the proposed plan to mitigate against those impacts.

**Impact on the fit for purpose assessment of the core paths network**

3. Back in August 2008 the Forum advised on the principle of monitoring the core paths network. The aim of the monitoring process is to provide an overall assessment of the degree to which core paths in the network are “Fit for Purpose” so that CNPA can:
  - a) Measure progress towards the National Park Plan outcomes;
  - b) Report to the CNPA Board, Local Outdoor Access Forum and interested members of the public; and
  - c) Plan where further work is required to improve the core paths network for members of the public.
  
4. Currently 51% of the network is Fit for Purpose. The inclusion of the new paths will have a slight, but positive increase in this percentage.

### **Formal Consultation**

5. The CNPA has a statutory duty to consult the Forum on the draft Core Paths Plan. The May meeting presents a good opportunity for the Forum to respond as a body to the Plan. The main requirement of the Plan is that it should be, “sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area.”<sup>1</sup> This is the question that the Forum should address in any response they wish to give.
  
6. To date, the Forum has given the Park Authority advice on Core Paths Planning which has been recorded in the minutes of meetings. However, if the Forum decides to respond to the Plan as a statutory consultee, it is strongly recommended that the Park Authority staff do not have a hand in the discussion or in the collation of the response.
  
7. Individual Forum members are at liberty to respond directly to the CNPA on the Draft Plan from a personal perspective. The purpose of the Forum’s response is detailed in paragraph 5 above. The deadline for a response will be the end of June 2013
  
8. The Forum are invited to consider the following questions:
  - a) Do members wish to respond to the consultation on the Draft Core Paths Plan formally as a Forum?
  - b) If so, could the Forum accommodate their discussion and response within the allocated meeting time of a normal Forum meeting or would they wish for the afternoon to be set aside (bearing in mind the need for as high a turnout as possible)?
  - c) Forum members are invited to consider the format of the Forum response and select a member to pull together their response.

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<sup>1</sup> Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, Part 1 – Access Rights, Chapter 5 Local Authority Functions: access and other rights, Section 17(1) page 13

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**Paper 1 Core Paths Plan Review- update 5<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

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5<sup>th</sup> February 2013

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