

Angus Council Core Paths Plan

Adopted 23 November 2010

Including amendments dated 25 January 2012, 28 February 2012 and 16 August 2016.

Preface

This document is the adopted Core Paths Plan for the Angus Council area. It was adopted by the Council on 23 November 2010. This edition includes a number of subsequent minor amendments, made on 25 January 2012, 28 February 2012 and 16 August 2016. It does not cover the part of Angus which is within the Cairngorms National Park; a separate plan has been prepared by the Cairngorms National Park Authority.

This Plan can be viewed on the Council website at:
www.angus.gov.uk

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Introduction

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 introduced a statutory right of responsible access to most land in Scotland. The Act also placed a number of new duties on local authorities and national parks authorities (access authorities). One of these duties is for each authority to draw up a core paths plan.

Although access rights apply to most land, many people prefer to use paths. A well marked, clearly defined system of core paths will encourage people to enjoy the outdoors. Suitable provision of core paths can also assist in managing access, particularly over agricultural land. Core paths plans should be 'sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area'.

Core paths form the basic framework of paths, linking with other access provision. Any route across land or inland water can be a core path. The core paths network as a whole should provide access opportunities for the full range of access takers, including walkers, cyclists and horseriders, of varying abilities. Some core paths will be surfaced paths suitable for all abilities use; others will be rough tracks; grass paths; or routes across open land.

Preparing the Core Paths Plan

The Angus Council Draft Core Paths Plan was published in April 2008, following a lengthy consultation and selection process.

Extensive informal consultation was undertaken prior to preparation of the Plan, concluding in December 2006. This included distribution of questionnaires, and a series of informal drop-in sessions throughout Angus. The consultation identified over 800 paths for consideration as possible core paths. Claimed public rights of way, paths promoted in publications, and paths currently managed by landowners were also considered.

Potential routes were initially assessed against a series of criteria relating to the demand for the route, and its potential function. Routes which were retained after this initial assessment were then subjected to a further assessment, taking into account land management issues, path condition/cost, and environmental considerations. The majority of the paths were surveyed at this stage, and extensive land manager consultation was undertaken. The overall sufficiency of the core paths network was also considered at this stage, in consultation with the Angus Local Access Forum, before the final selection of paths was made.

The Draft Core Paths Plan was subjected to a statutory consultation period between 25 April and 18 July 2008, during which 79 objections and 44 other representations were received. After consideration of the representations the Council agreed a number of changes to the Plan, and 17 objections were subsequently withdrawn.

The outstanding objections were referred to Scottish Ministers in November 2009, and Ministers instructed a Local Inquiry. Following the Local Inquiry, Scottish Ministers directed the Council to adopt the Core Paths Plan, with modifications, on 14 September 2010. The Core Paths Plan was adopted by the Council on 23 November 2010.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) be carried out to assess the environmental impact of strategies or plans developed by the public sector. The Council has carried out an SEA for the Core Paths Plan, taking into account aspects of the environment including impacts on water, biodiversity, cultural heritage and human health. Consultation on the SEA Environmental Report was undertaken at the same time as consultation on the Draft Core Paths Plan. Comments were received from SNH, SEPA, and Historic Scotland, and have been taken into account. Following adoption of the Core Paths Plan, the SEA Environmental Report will be finalised, and a post adoptive statement will be prepared.

Managing the network of core paths

There is no requirement for the Council, the landowner or anyone else to maintain core paths. There was however an expectation that the core paths network as a whole would be fit for use by the public and adequately signposted within 2 years of adoption. The Plan therefore only identified paths which were available for public use at the time of adoption, or likely to require only minor work to make them available.

Arrangements for management of individual core paths vary depending on local circumstances. Many of the core paths are managed by local community groups, by landowners, by the Council, or by other organisations.

Where management arrangements for core paths were not in place, the Council identified any requirements for signposting, maintenance and minor improvements. The Council has been implementing a programme of minor works to help ensure that these core paths are fit for use. Further implementation of this programme will depend upon availability of funding, and may involve other organisations as well as the Council. The Council has powers to maintain core paths where it considers it appropriate to do so. The Council will not undertake any path works on sensitive natural or cultural heritage sites until an assessment of any likely significant effects has been undertaken.

Review

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 makes provision for local authorities to review core paths plans when they consider it appropriate, or when required to do so by Ministers.

This edition includes a number of diversion agreed by the Council on 28 February 2012 and 16 August 2016. The changes are detailed in the list of amendments.

