

## THE DRAFT STIRLING COUNCIL CORE PATHS PLAN – UPDATE

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### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update of the action that has been taken so far with regard to the Draft Stirling Council Core Paths Plan and to provide a first opportunity for Members to discuss any matters arising.

### 2 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Draft Stirling Council Core Paths Plan has now been produced and consultations have begun. 152 copies of the Plan have been distributed to groups, individuals, libraries and local offices so far. The full Plan is also available on the Council website. The programme of Community Council area visits has now started with 40 people attending the first meetings in July 2006.
- 2.2 2067 copies of the Paths and Countryside Access Survey 2006/07 questionnaire have been distributed with a 43% response rate. The initial analysis of the responses from the Stirling Sounding Board has been produced.
- 2.3 Work is continuing to prepare for the surveying of all the proposed Core Paths in order to establish their condition and any work that may be required. Discussions on the possibility of a strategic environmental assessment are ongoing.

### 3 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 That Members note the action taken so far.
- 3.2 That Members suggest further locations for distribution of the Plans, provide initial feedback on the process so far and observations on the Plan itself.

### 4 CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 requires all access Authorities to prepare a draft Core Path Plan by February 2008.

- 4.2 To produce the draft for the Stirling Council area the Countryside Service are following, approximately, the process set out in the Paths for All Partnership *Core Paths Plans a Guide to Good Practice*. As part of the process the Countryside Service have set a series of monthly progress meetings to ensure that all the actions necessary are undertaken within an appropriate timescale and that nothing is forgotten. The agenda for these meetings will be used below to show what actions have happened and what has yet to occur.

### **Consultation Strategy**

- 4.3 The Paths and Countryside Access Questionnaire 2006/07 results from the Stirling Sounding Board have now been analysed and a report will be presented later in this meeting.
- 4.4 The table below shows the distribution and returns for the questionnaire as of 14 August 2006.

<i>Method of distribution</i>	<i>No distributed</i>	<i>No. returned</i>
Stirling Sounding Board	1300	719
Countryside Service	696	108
Internet	71	71
Totals	2067	898 (43% return)

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment**

- 4.5 As was verbally reported at the last meeting, the Scottish Executive disagrees with the Council's assessment that no Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required. Discussions have been held with the Council's SEA Officer and the Council still believes that no SEA is required.
- 4.6 Further discussions have occurred with the Scottish Executive and the Senior Access Officer will shortly be meeting with the Consultation Authorities, Historic Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage to discuss the reasoning for their decisions.

### **Preliminary Assessment**

- 4.7 As Members will be aware the first version of the Stirling Council Draft Core Paths Plan has now been produced.

### **Second Round Consultation**

- 4.8 152 copies of the Draft Stirling Council Core Paths Plan had been distributed by 14 August 2006. Recipients include; the Stirling Area Local Access Forum, Local Councillors, neighbouring Access Authorities, national user and Land Management organisations, all Council Libraries and Local Offices, all Community Councils and known Local Access Groups. We are now looking for other local organisations and locations where copies of the Plan could be sent.
- 4.9 The full Plan is also available to view on the Countryside Service website ([www.stirling.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.stirling.gov.uk/countryside)) where comments can also be submitted in electronic format.
- 4.10 The first consultation meeting took place in Bridge of Allan on Wednesday 12 July and Saturday 15 July 2006. Despite the local paper not running the advert prior to the Wednesday meeting a total of 16 people attended whilst a further 24 people attended the Saturday meeting. As was hoped the meeting

also attracted people from other parts of the Council area and not just from Bridge of Allan.

- 4.11 The second consultation meeting will take place in Pleas on Saturday 19 August and Monday 21 August 2006 and a verbal update will be provided at this meeting.
- 4.12 There are a further 24 meetings scheduled for this year which will cover 15 Community Council areas. The remaining 20 Community Council areas will be covered in 2007 and a detailed timetable will be drawn up in due course.
- 4.13 All responses to the Plan must be in writing and include the personal details of the person making the comment. All comments that are received are uniquely numbered and added to a database. All respondents receive a card telling them when their response was received and what number it has been given.
- 4.14 Comments have so far been received from 15 people with the majority in favour of the Plan.

### **Route surveying**

- 4.15 A programme of route surveying is being prepared to ascertain the condition of the proposed Core Paths and the work that will be required to bring them up to an usable standard.
- 4.16 This will use a global positioning system and geographic information system to accurately locate all the items of furniture and required work along a route. All the results will be stored in the Council's Countryside Access Management System where, using generic prices, the cost of bringing the entire network into a usable condition will be calculated.
- 4.17 The criteria for a usable standard will be partly determined by the results of the Paths and Countryside Access Survey 2006/07. The prices used to determine the cost of bringing the Core Paths up to that standard will be based on the experiences of the Countryside Service in carrying out similar activities. The survey methodology is currently being developed jointly by the Countryside Service and Forth Valley GIS.

## **5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The process is in accord with the Council's policy on promoting local democracy and community leadership by providing an opportunity for local people to directly contribute to the development of the Core Paths Network.
- 5.2 It is also in accord with the Council's policy on promoting social inclusion by allowing anybody with an interest in Core Paths to express their opinions.
- 5.3 It supports the Council's sustainability aim by ensuring an appropriate network of paths is proposed that the public is known to want and will use. This will help to reduce reliance on the private car for some journeys.
- 5.4 It helps to deliver the aim of developing quality and best value by providing an opportunity for the public to ensure that the Council provides what they want, thus reducing wastage of time and resources.

## 6 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 Consultations are ongoing.

## 7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The estimated cost of producing the Draft Stirling Council Core Paths Plan is £50,000 excluding staff time.


## 8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003: Stirling Council Core Paths Plan, Stirling Area Access Forum 26 April 2006 and Environment Committee 11 May 2006.

Author(s)

Name	Designation	Tel No/Extension
RICHARD BARRON	SENIOR ACCESS OFFICER	01786 443482

Approved by

Name	Designation	Signature
RICHARD BARRON	SENIOR ACCESS OFFICER	

Date 16 August 2006

Reference \_\_\_\_\_