

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**  
**PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**  
**COMMITTEE**

Agenda Item	15
Report No	PDI 36/15

**3 JUNE 2015**

**OUTDOOR ACCESS STRATEGY 2015-18**

**Report by Director of Development and Infrastructure**

**Summary**

This paper summarises the process the Council has undertaken to produce the current Outdoor Access Strategy and highlights some of its achievements. Work is currently underway to develop a new strategy and the attached paper represents a draft for consultation.

Members are invited to:

- note the report, comment on its content; and
- consider and approve the proposed limited consultation, following which an amended paper will be presented for approval at a future Committee.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The previous Highland Council Access Strategy 2008-11 was completed in 2008, and was the successor to the Highlands and Islands Access Strategy which was completed in 2000 ahead of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. This Act imposed a duty for access authorities to develop their own access strategies.
- 1.2 Over the period of the 2008-11 strategy the following aims have been achieved:
- consultations, proposals and adoption of the Highland Council Core Paths Plan;
  - commence the process of reviewing these plans in conjunction with the Local Development Plans process;
  - implementation of improvements and maintenance works, through both the Highland Council budget and a successful application for funds through the European LEADER Programme; and
  - continuation and enhancement of the 6 Local Access Forums, that provide advice and guidance to the Council on access issues.

## **2. Proposed priorities and actions for the Outdoor Access Strategy 2015-18**

2.1 The priorities for the Outdoor Access Strategy 2015-18 are guided by the Single Outcome Agreement, the Programme of the Highland Council 'Working together for the Highlands', and the Development and Infrastructure Service Plan 2012-2017.

The relevant Priority Themes are:

- Cross-cutting themes – Gaelic, Equalities and Climate Change
- Working together for the economy
- Working together for children and young people
- Working together for caring communities
- Working together for better infrastructure
- Working together to empower communities

### 2.2 Actions

Gaelic – implementation of bi-lingual signage on core paths and the use of Gaelic headings in publications.

Equalities – delivering path improvements to enable increased access for as wide a range of groups and individuals as possible.

Climate change – the provision of a better path structure and promotion of walking and cycling as alternatives to car use contribute to the Council's climate change targets.

### 2.3 Economy

The access strategy will continue to develop walking, cycling and horse-riding opportunities, including delivery of path projects. It will enhance the tourism product to attract and retain more visitors to the Highlands and contribute to the Council's Green Tourism targets.

### 2.4 Children and young people

The strategy will work closely with schools, communities, planners and the safe routes to school team to further enhance safer routes to school.

### 2.5 Caring communities

It will provide opportunities for recreation and everyday exercise that contributes to healthy lifestyles through increasing physical activity.

### 2.6 Infrastructure

It will contribute to the Green Transport Strategy and linking the path network to visitor facilities and the public transport system.

## 2.7 Empowering communities

The strategy will assist communities with access projects, providing specialist advice and assisting their search for appropriate funds.

## 3. **Draft Outdoor Access Strategy consultation**

3.1 It is proposed that there will be a short 3 month consultation period where agencies and the main stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on the proposed content and actions arising from the strategy document.

3.2 Consultees will include:

- Forestry Commission Scotland;
- Scottish Natural Heritage;
- National Trust for Scotland;
- Scottish Wildlife Trust;
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds'
- Scottish Canals;
- Scotways;
- Scottish Land and Estates;
- Community Groups, such as Community Councils and Community Path Groups; and
- Local Access Fora

This list is not exhaustive and other consultees will also be approached.

3.3 The consultees will be asked to consider:

- whether the Vision Statement is appropriate; and
- whether the aims and targets are appropriate and reflect where we should be going over the next three years.

## 4 **Implications**

### 4.1 Resource

There are no additional resource implications arising from this report other than sourcing external funding to further enhance the path network and work with local communities.

### 4.2 Equalities

There are no additional equalities implications arising from this report. The Strategy aims to make as many of the access routes as possible accessible to those with additional needs and in the most deprived areas of the Highland Council administrative area.

### 4.3 Gaelic

Access signage complies with the Council's Gaelic policy and aims to support and enhance the Gaelic language and culture where appropriate.

4.4 Rural implications

There are no additional rural implications arising from this report. The Access Team operates in the rural as well as the urban environment and contribute substantially to their enhancement.

4.5 Legal, Climate Change/Carbon Clever/ Risk

There are no additional legal, climate change/Carbon Clever, or risk implications arising from this report.

**Recommendation**

Members are invited to:

- note the report, comment on its content; and
- consider and approve the proposed limited consultation, following which an amended paper will be presented for approval at a future Committee.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 18 May 2015

Author: George Duff, Countryside Manager (Ext 2279)

# Outdoor Access Strategy

## Ro-innleachd airson Cothrom air a'Bhlàr A-muigh

2015-2018

## Foreword

### Facal on Chathraiche

Eleven years on from the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 passing into law, a greater understanding of people's rights and responsibilities regarding access has developed throughout the Highlands.

Outdoor Access activities are proven to benefit both the physical and mental well-being of those who take part in them. They are also vital to the area's tourism-based economy.

Landowners and managers, walkers, cyclists and horse-riders alike have worked together with The Highland Council and Government Agencies to source funding to develop a more cohesive network of routes.

That is why our Access Strategy is more important than ever. We need to keep focusing on what needs to be done to continue to improve the access resource in The Highland Council area for both local residents and visitors. This links closely with the priorities of local and central government and is seen as an important strategic initiative for The Highland Council.

I, therefore, welcome this document and, most importantly, support the targets and actions included for the period of the strategy.

**Councillor Thomas Prag**  
**Chair of the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee**



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## Introduction

### Ro-ràdh

The benefits of access have been well documented and this strategy aims to encourage more people to visit the outdoors. Being outdoors, active and sociable are all key protective factors in mental health and being active is increasingly seen as the single most important thing we can do for our physical health.

This strategy aims to continue the work of the previous strategy and focuses on social, health, economic and environmental benefits through enhanced access provision.

If we can persuade more adults and children to walk or cycle to work and school there will be benefits to the environment. The more people visit their open spaces, parks, forests and beaches, the more they are likely to understand, appreciate and protect the environment around them.

See Appendix 1 for examples of the plans and policies whose themes encompass what we are trying to do.

### **Vision statement**

We will continue to develop a high quality and renowned access network, based on local and visitor needs and aspirations, which respects and reflects local character and provides clear social, health, economic and environmental benefits.

### **The area**

Although the northern mainland and the Inner Hebrides, which together make up the Council's administrative area, are the least populated part of the British Isles, they are extremely significant in terms of their share of the national outdoor access resource.

This area has a unique image associated with its special physical characteristics and cultural identity. Within it are six area identities, each with their own characteristics, which together offer a suite of access opportunities of national importance.

For many people Caithness is characterised by big skies and rugged sea cliffs. For others it means rich farmland or an unforgettable end to their Land's End to John O' Groats cycle trip.

Spanning Scotland, Sutherland also offers great cycling. For those on foot there is a huge range of multi-day, high mountain possibilities. Sutherland's more remote and spectacular landscapes can also be explored by canoe.

Ross and Cromarty also stretches from coast to coast. Some of Britain's most iconic mountain and rugged coastline scenery graces Wester Ross with mountains such as Stac Pollaidh, An Teallach and the Torridon range. Easter Ross and the Black Isle are

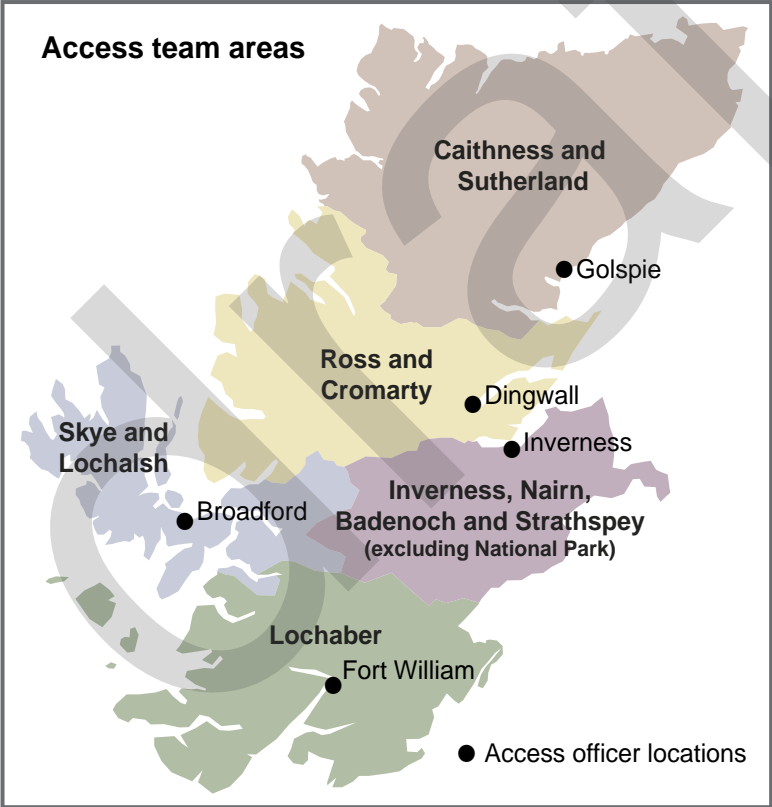


rich in forests and have some of Highland’s best farmland. Many people may identify more with the Firths and their rich bird and mammal life.

Skye and Lochalsh has strong connections to the sea. Its communities are small and widely dispersed. Lochs Hourn and Coruisk will be familiar to mountaineers adventuring on the hills of Knoydart and Skye. Storr, Trotternish, Glenelg and Neist are no less dramatic destinations.

Lochaber suits its role as the Outdoor Capital of the UK. The terminus for two of Scotland’s Long Distance Routes and the start of many more personal, corporate and charity adventures, it attracts thousands every year. Ben Nevis, Glencoe and Ardnamurchan are playgrounds for activities as diverse as parascending and scuba-diving.

Dominated by Loch Ness and the Moray Firth, Inverness and Nairn complement each other very well. The high mountains of the south and west give way to the delights of golden beaches and miles of forest tracks.



### Our duties

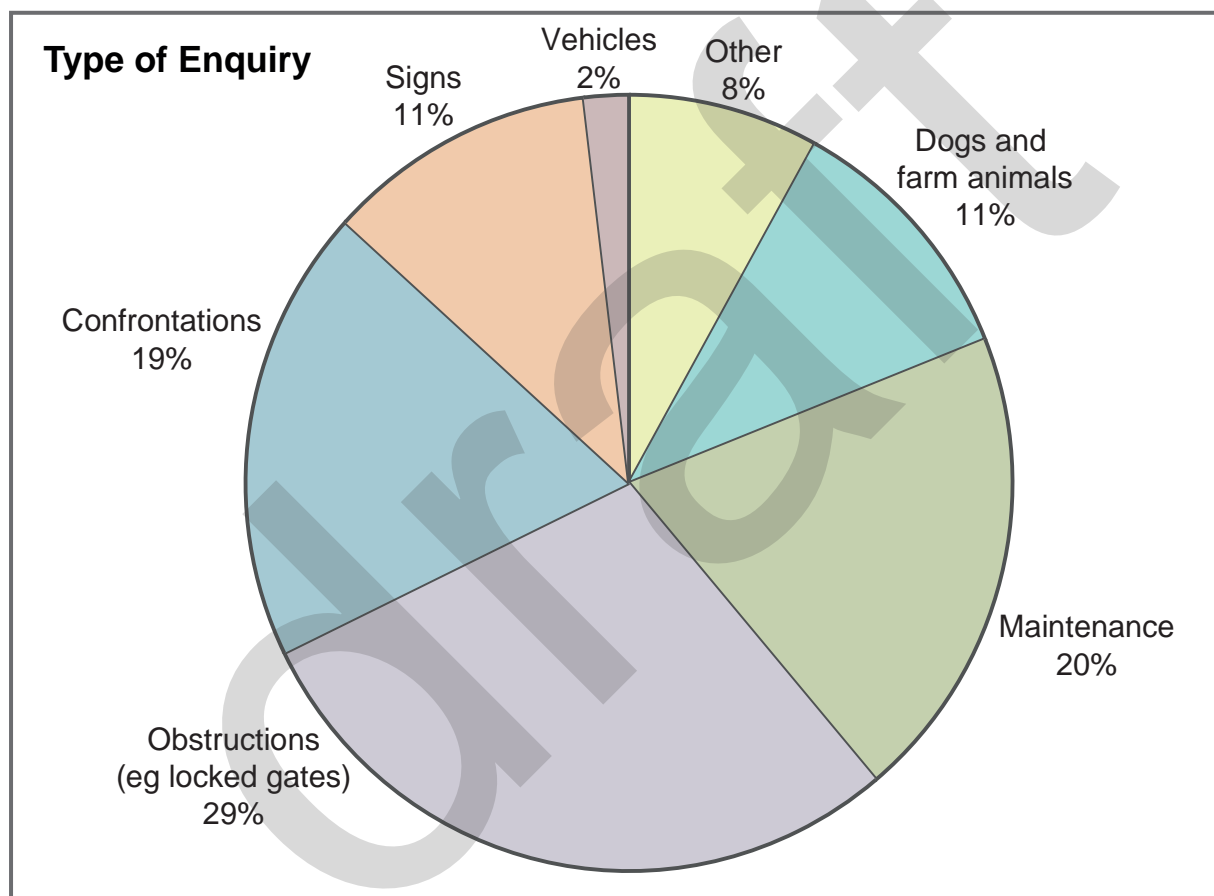
In early 2005 the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 came into force following the adoption of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Anticipating the extra duties, which are, upholding rights of access, drawing up a core paths plan, setting up Local Access Forums, and promoting the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, The Highland Council established an outdoor access team in 2004. There are now five access officers covering Sutherland and Caithness, Ross and Cromarty, Skye and Lochalsh, Lochaber and Inverness and Nairn.

## **Upholding rights of access**

### **Advice, complaints and enquiries**

Since the inception of the Act, the access team has dealt with a wide variety of access enquiries and complaints both from the public and land managers. Typical issues have been locked gates, deterrent signage and uncontrolled dogs. While it has been a challenge interpreting new and untested legislation, most issues have been resolved through negotiation and practical help.

For the four years between 2010 and 2014 the access team dealt with 993 enquiries.



The access team has also been asked for more general advice from a number of sources including community councils, solicitors, land agents and managers, and utility companies, as well as Councillors and Council colleagues.

More generally the team has worked with community councils, local trusts and access user groups, giving support and advice on improving access opportunities and amenity. This has ranged from path surveys and costings for local groups to joint access auditing exercises with disabled rambler groups.

## **Exemption Orders - temporary suspension of access rights**

The Council has the responsibility for dealing with applications requesting temporary exemption of land from access rights. Since 2005 the Council has dealt with 54 applications for exemptions lasting up to five days.

## **Planning and forestry consultations**

The access team has responded to consultations related to developments and proposals, including major pre-application consultations, Woodland Grant Schemes and individual applications for planning permission. It aims to ensure consistency with general access rights and specific policies such as the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and local development plans.

On average the access team comments on 50 planning applications and 40 forestry applications each year.

## **Drawing up a Core Paths Plan for the area**

Under the Act The Highland Council, as the Access Authority, was tasked with producing a Core Paths Plan to cover its area. Core paths aim to satisfy the basic needs of local people and visitors for general access and recreation and to provide links to the wider path network throughout the area. They comprise a mixture of existing paths with some new paths. These paths are mainly close to where people live and range from tracks worn into natural ground to paths constructed to a high specification.

In drawing up the Plan, extensive consultation took place with the community, including evening drop-in events and meetings together with contact with all known land owners. Then a rigorous selection process was undertaken, involving scoring each identified route against criteria to produce the routes that would make up the draft core paths plan. A second round of consultation produced the final draft of six individual area plans which were combined as The Highland Council Core Paths Plan. Following approval by the Scottish Government, this plan was adopted on 21 September 2011 by The Highland Council Planning, Environment and Development Committee.

There are 1,175 core paths throughout The Highland Council area, with a total length of 2,576 kilometres. Although not a statutory duty, it was recognised that many core paths would need some improvements to make them as accessible as possible. The Council with support from the Highland LEADER programme installed a £570,845 suite of projects. By the end of the project 67 paths had been improved throughout the area, increasing access for a greater number of access user groups and of

abilities within those groups. Also included within the funding was the signposting of most of the unsigned core paths in the area, as well as local walks leaflets and information panels.



The access team has also developed 20 path improvement projects through an allocation of capital funds for Council owned or managed paths.

**Core paths by area**

Area	Number	Length (km)
Caithness and Sutherland	402	763
Inverness and Nairn	249	609
Lochaber	158	396
Ross and Cromarty	243	529
Skye and Lochalsh	123	279
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,175</b>	<b>2,576</b>

**Setting up Local Access Forums**

Section 25 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 placed a duty on each local authority to establish at least one local access forum for its area. Given the large geographical area it covers, The Highland Council established six local access forums in line with the area covered by each access officer. The functions of a forum are to provide advice when requested to do so by the local authority and to provide assistance in any dispute resolution in relation to the exercise of access rights, the delineation and existence of rights of way and the drawing up of core paths plans.

The maximum number of forum members is 12 including two Councillors (three in Inverness and Nairn). The forums were appointed by the Council to include a balanced representation, with three members selected from each of the following categories:

- land managers - estate owners, farmers, crofters, foresters
- access users - walkers, cyclists, horse riders, canoeists, disabled users
- community groups - community councils, environmental organisations, local path development groups

**Promoting the Scottish Outdoor Access Code**

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code provides detailed guidance on the responsibilities of those exercising access rights and of those managing land and water. Working with The Highland Council Ranger Service, the access team has been active in raising awareness of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code throughout the Highlands. This has included taking stands at outdoor events, such as agricultural shows and community events, arranging quizzes and puppet shows for primary school children, disseminating leaflets and posters to locations such as tourist information centres and veterinary practices and speaking to landowners and land managers.

## What we are going to do

### Na tha sinn a' dol a dhèanamh

The aim for access in the Highlands is that the network will contribute positively to the themes of the Development and Infrastructure Service Plan 2014-17 (Service Plan), which in turn link directly to the Programme for The Highland Council 2012-17 (Highland Council Programme) and the third Single Outcome Agreement.

The following Service Plan themes form the foundations of the Access Strategy's objectives, which include specific actions and targets described below.

### Cross cutting themes

- a) The Highland Council is committed to the principle of equal respect for Gaelic and English languages and thus produced the Gaelic Language Plan 2012-16.

**Action 1:** The access team will take a leading role on Action 1.0.2 of the Service Plan by implementation of bi-lingual signage on core paths, where agreed by local wards, and the use of Gaelic headings in publications.

**Target:** 75% of all core paths signposted in Gaelic by 2019.

- b) The Highland Council is committed to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration.

The access team contributes directly by promoting the use of walking and cycling as alternatives to car use and providing better infrastructure to enable this.

- c) The Highland Council will implement the Fairer Highland Action Plan 2012-17 and Equalities Act 2010.

**Action 2:** The access team will lead on Action 3.0.4 of the Service Plan, which is also Outcome 2 Action 30 of the Fairer Highland Action Plan - footpath consultation and accessibility. This will ensure that path improvements enable increased access for all-abilities and that signs and publications respect those with visual impairments.

**Target:** Improve five paths each year to permit easier access.

## Corporate theme 1: The economy

The Highland Council will prioritise and support the creation of jobs in the Highlands.

The Service Plan has lead responsibility for 19 Highland Council Programme commitments. The access team will contribute to at least five of these commitments as below:

- d) Working with public and private sector partners to maximise the tourism potential of the Highlands. The Service Plan 1.6.3 commits to explore and develop destination and green tourism opportunities.

**Action 3:** The access team will continue to develop walking, cycling and horse riding opportunities. These are widely acknowledged as primary activities for many visitors to the Highlands.

**Target:** Work on five projects each year that improve access opportunities for tourism.

- e) The Highland Council will work with the Cairngorms National Park Authority. The access team will lead on Action 1.7.2 of the Service Plan, which aims to assist in the delivery of the National Park Plan via ranger and access activities.

- f) As part of Action 1.8.2 in the Service Plan deliver the annual Capital Programme.

**Action 4:** The access team will work with the projects team to implement capital projects that improve the core paths network on Council owned or managed assets.

**Target:** Three projects each year.

- g) The Service Plan 1.18 retains a commitment to land reform.

**Action 5:** The access team has contributed evidence to the Land Reform Review Group, commissioned by the Scottish Government, which is part of Service Plan Action 1.18.3.

**Target:** Achieved.



- h) Action 1.20.2 of the Service Plan commits to developing and delivering a successor LEADER programme. The access team successfully delivered a programme of works under the 2010-13 LEADER programme and will consider utilising this funding source again.

**Action 6:** Review, consider and seek alternative funding sources for the next phase of the Core Path Improvement Programme.

**Target:** To complete this action by the end of 2015.

## Corporate theme 2: Children and younger people

The Highland Council will work to ensure the best possible quality of life for children and young people in the Highlands. Understandably this theme is the main priority of other Services while the Service Plan commits to the 'eco-schools' programme and development of the UHI campus.

- i) The access team, however, can contribute to Action 24 of The Highland Council Programme by ensuring that more safe routes to school are developed and promoted to encourage healthier and greener travel.

**Action 7:** The access team will work with schools, communities, planners and the safer routes to school team to ensure more, safe school routes are developed or improved.

**Target:** Five new or improved routes completed each year.

## Corporate theme 3: Caring communities

The Highland Council will seek to provide the best quality of life possible for those in need of support. The emphasis of this theme is primarily outwith the remit of the Development and Infrastructure Service. There are two elements of the work of the access team that can contribute to its delivery:

- Providing opportunities for recreation and everyday exercise that contribute to healthy lifestyles.
- Achieving the national aims of promoting walking and increasing levels of physical activity within the Highlands.



## Corporate theme 4: Better infrastructure

The Highland Council will deliver a transport and infrastructure programme fit for the 21st century. The access team can contribute to two of the Actions of The Highland Council Programme:

- j) The access team will work with others to expand cycle routes across the Highlands and support improvements to cycle safety.
- k) The access team will have an interest in the Green Transport Strategy and aims to contribute to it, given its extensive knowledge of walking and cycle routes and motivations for both leisure and necessity.

**Action 8:** The access team will contribute to the Green Transport Strategy consultation.

**Target:** To submit comments when requested.

- l) Involvement in j) and k) will ensure that the access team contributes to sustainable transport and an increase in cycling, walking and public transport, as safe and healthy alternatives to the car, and will meet the following aims:
  - Link the path network with long term aspirations for public transport.
  - Link outdoor recreation with visitor facilities.

## Corporate theme 5: Better housing

While the access team has no direct involvement in the housing programme there are elements that it will seek to ensure. These are:

- Link the current path networks that exist around settlements.
- Integrate the path network within existing residential areas.
- Ensure that access to the path network is possible from all new housing developments.

## Corporate theme 6: Empower our communities

The Highland Council will empower our communities and continue to decentralise control. We will work together with people living and working in our various communities and engage them in the work of their Council. The access team has a role to play in four of the actions under this theme as below:

- m) The majority of access complaints and enquiries come directly to access officers and these will be resolved efficiently.

**Action 9:** We will continue to respond to all enquiries within 14 days and increase the number of issues resolved at first contact.

**Target:** 90% of all enquiries responded to within 14 days, with 50% resolved at first contact.

- n) The access team will promote community empowerment and 'ownership' of the access network.

**Action 10:** The team will provide technical assistance where there are community proposals to enhance local access networks.

**Target:** Five new community access projects assisted.

**Action 11:** The team will encourage local volunteer groups to adopt routes in their area and provide practical advice on monitoring and maintaining these routes.

**Target:** Five local volunteer groups assisted.

**Action 12:** The team will continue auditing tracks and paths in the Highland area, liaising with disabled access groups and identifying opportunities for wheelchair users, disability scooter users and other user groups.

**Target:** 100% of all core paths appropriately audited over the timeframe of this Strategy.

- o) The access team will encourage and advise community councils and local trusts when they are considering path leaflets, information boards, websites or other media to promote their access network.

**Action 13:** The team will encourage signage of suitable wider network paths to complement the signed core paths in the area.

- p) The access team will continue to develop the Highland core paths network in conjunction with partners.

**Action 14:** The successor LEADER programme will be a funding option that we will consider. It will support and give practical advice to landowners and managers wishing to develop public access related measures that may be included in the next Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP).

**Action 15:** The team will monitor access numbers using people counters on core paths and significant wider network paths throughout the area, in order to aid prioritisation of funding and provide relevant user data for any group seeking funding for access.

**Target:** User numbers profiled on 10 individual routes each year.

## Corporate theme 7: Strong and safe communities

We will work to build safer, stronger communities. The access team can contribute to a number of objectives under this theme although not directly referenced within The Highland Council Programme or the Service Plan. These are as follows:

- q) Provide and enhance safe access routes that link communities with local facilities. The Service Plan OS 3.9 is committed to the provision of sustainable transport networks, focusing on safe routes to school.

**Action 16:** The access team will ensure that multi-user access is considered for any new developments incorporating new and enhanced access opportunities where practicable.

**Target:** Advise on new and enhanced access opportunities for a minimum of 20 new planning applications.

- r) Ensure the safeguarding and enhancement of the rich, natural and cultural heritage and environmental resource. The Service Plan OSR.5 commits the Council to the protection, conservation, promotion and interpretation of the historic environment in the Highlands.

**Action 17:** The access team will continue to provide technical advice on appropriate and sustainable access provision to locations of natural and cultural heritage.

**Target:** Advise or assist on ten access projects to natural and cultural heritage locations, during the period of the Strategy.

- s) The path network will highlight places of cultural and natural interest.

**Action 18:** The access team will link with schools and youth charities to encourage and provide advice on path building and maintenance as part of their environmental activities.

**Target:** Advise or assist ten schools or youth charities, during the period of the Strategy.

**Action 19:** The access team will encourage local community groups to develop their local network of paths, advising on best practice in relation to path construction, gates and other structures, signposting and interpretation.

**Target:** Ten community groups advised each year.

## Other service commitments

The main focus of the access team's activities is highlighted under OSR.3 in the Service Plan, which states: "As Access Authority under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, implement a system of core paths in Highland - contributing to all themes". The adopted Highland Core Paths Plan must be reviewed when it is thought appropriate, or when Ministers direct the Council to do so.

The network of core paths aims to be sufficient to provide reasonable access throughout the area. Since Local Development Plans influence the way changes are made in each area, it is appropriate to review the Core Paths Plans in parallel with those Local Development Plans.

**Action 20:** The Local Access Forums will be reviewed, re-organised and operational.

**Target:** Six operating and fully quorate Local Access Forums by 2015.

**Action 21:** The Core Paths Plans for each Highland area will be reviewed over the next five years as they become aligned with the Local Development Plans. The review will be used as an opportunity to:

- Consider the recommendations of the Public Local Inquiry report from the first Highland Core Paths Plan and any subsequent reports.
- Improve connectivity between and within settlements by utilising existing routes.
- Review mapping of the existing plan to highlight changes to the lines of routes or identify where upgraded or realigned routes are used differently by the public.
- Ensure current routes can be used by the public.
- Identify new routes in and around areas proposed for development.

The review process will involve:

- Calling for changes to the core paths network.
- Drawing up an initial plan for consultation.
- Inviting comments on that initial plan.
- Producing a Draft Core Paths Plan for consultation.
- Looking at the changes to routes to assess their impact, accessibility and function.

**Target:** Complete Caithness and Sutherland Core Paths Plan Review by December 2015.

**Target:** Commence West Highlands and Islands Core Paths Plan Review by December 2015 with completion expected in 2017.

**Target:** Commence Inner Moray Firth Core Paths Plan Review by December 2017.

**Action 22:** The Highland Core Path Implementation Programme (HCPIP) will be continued and consideration of LEADER funding will be given along with any other alternative funding sources.

**Target:** Develop a successor to HCPIP by April 2015.

draft

## Conclusion

### Co-dhùnadh

This strategy has outlined how The Highland Council plans to develop further the area's access resource over the next four years.

Much has already been achieved through resolving access disputes, negotiating solutions to access issues and improving the core path network through erecting signage, improving path surfaces and developing new links. The aim is to continue this work over the period of this strategy. The challenge, however, will be to source funding to enable this to be achieved. Budgets in all organisations continue to be under pressure and so it is important to ensure that more partnership projects are pursued to deliver on our mutual priorities.

The contents of this document are, therefore, recommended to all agencies, individuals and partners with an interest in outdoor access in the Council's area.

draft

## Appendix 1: Policy links

### Pàipear-taice 1: Ceangalan Poileasaidh

<b>Local</b>	Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan
	Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan
	West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan
	A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework
	Inverness City Vision
<b>Regional</b>	Carbon Management Plan
	Working together for the Highlands 2012-2017
	The Highland Council's Single Outcome Agreement 3
	Highland-wide Local Development Plan
	Supplementary Guidance on Sustainable Design
	Supplementary Guidance on Developer Contributions - Consultation Draft 2012
	Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy 2006
	Regional Transport Strategy
	Local Transport Strategy
	The Highland Council Core Paths Plan
	Supplementary Guidance on Open Space in New Residential Developments
	Physical Activity and Sport Strategy
	Highland Greenspace Audit
	Play Matters 2012-2015
	Green Networks Supplementary Guidance
The Highland Council's Equality Plan: A Fairer Highland	
<b>National</b>	National Performance Framework
	Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003
	National Planning Framework 3
	The National Strategy: Tourism Scotland 2020
	National Physical Activity Implementation Plan
	Good Places Better Health
	A More Active Scotland
	Let's Get Scotland Walking
	Scottish Forestry Strategy
	Cycling Action Plan for Scotland
	Let's Make Scotland More Active (Reviewed 2008)
	Woods for Learning
	River Basin Management Plans
	Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009
<b>International</b>	Agenda 21
	Kyoto Protocol
	Climate Challenge

**Skye and Lochalsh Area****Highland Core Path Implementation Programme**

Uig: Idrigill Path (SL27.01) Path surface improvement and stabilisation to recreational path.	2011
Uig: Woodland Walk (SL27.03) Path surface improvement to wheelchair standard, installation of easy opening gate and wheelchair accessible picnic bench.	2011
Flodigarry: Shulista to Rubha Hunish (SL09.01) Intermittent path work and drainage through waterlogged sections of popular visitor route.	2010
Strathaird: Elgol to Glasnakille Road (SL08.01) Improvements to circular route allowing for a wider range of abilities, including installation of bridge.	2011
Inverinate: Forest Track (SL13.02) Opening up and resurfacing of overgrown track to link existing forest roads and providing circular route for the community.	2011
Struan: Link Path (SL26.02) Extending old road to link outlying settlement with main village.	2012
Kyleakin: Community Hall to village centre (SL18.01) Improving main village recreational route for a wider range of abilities.	2012
Dunvegan: Healaval Forest (SL06.02) Path surface and drainage improvement to a network of forestry paths.	2012
Edinbane: Edinbane to Greshornish Road end (SL07.02) Extending old road to link Edinbane with nearby core and wider network paths.	2012
Portnalong: Fiskavaig to Talisker (SL20.03) Intermittent path work and drainage through waterlogged sections of historic Right of Way.	2012



Glenelg: Corran to Gleann Dubh Lochan (SL12.07) 2012  
Re-alignment to start of path diverting route away from spate levels of nearby river.

Flodigarry: Balmaqueen Link Path (SL09.02) 2013  
Intermittent path work and ramped cross drains through burns, field drainage and waterlogged areas.

Uig: South Cuidrach to Earlish (SL27.04) 2013  
Gates, stiles and waymarkers replacing informal barriers at fence lines along the route and short section of new path.

Sleat: Dalavil (SL24.03) 2014  
Intermittent path work to avoid four river crossings.

Number of core paths signed: 43

### **Development and Infrastructure Capital Projects**

Skeabost Bridge: Clach Ard Stone to Columba Isle (SL23.02) 2008  
Linking important cultural sites in the area and creating circular walk for the community.

Carbost: Hill Path (SL04.05) 2009  
New link path to primary school and centre of village.

Portree: Leasgeary Link Path (SL21.04) 2010  
New section of path to connect Home Farm housing development with central path network in Portree.

Skeabost Bridge: Skeabost to Carbost (SL23.01) 2011  
Work to overgrown section of old road and installation of roadside pavements to link up entire route.

## Ross and Cromarty Area

### Highland Core Path Implementation Programme

Seaboard: Shandwick Beach Path (RC42.02) Construction of all-abilities path and picnic area, concrete ramp with handrail to beach. 120m	2011
Seaboard: Seaboard Front path (RC42.05) Construction of all-abilities path and picnic area. 630m	2011
Lochcarron: Cnoc na Straing (RC29.07) Clearance of path surface and gorse, fencing on path side.	2011
Lochcarron: Smithy-New Kelso path (RC29.04) Scrape of surface and some re-surfacing, large scale drainage works. 300m	2011
Shieldaig: Village path (RC43.03) Installation of steps and improved surface. 50m	2011
Shieldaig: Aird Path (RC43.01) Path construction, steps and drainage.	2012
Fortrose: Chanonry Point Path (RC18.02) Construction of all-abilities path and picnic area. 318m	2011
Avoch: Old railway line path to Fortrose (RC07.01) Improve surface and drainage for all-abilities. 443m	2011
Achiltibuie: Polbain Peat Track (RC01.04) Improve surface and drainage.	2012
Dingwall: Craig Wood path (RC13.03) Construction of easier access path with drainage. 660m	2012
Gairloch: Low Road Link (RC19.05) Re-surface and path re-alignment to reduce gradient. 136m	2012
Poolewe: Tollie to Slatterdale path (RC37.02) Path construction, new bridge, drainage works and stepping stones. 586m	2012

Alness: Riverside Path (RC03.07)	2012
Path surfacing, re-grading sections for easier access, non-slip surface added to bridge. 235m	
Cromarty: Reeds Park (RC11.02)	2012
Scraping and re-constructed surface for easier access. Drainage works and new gate. 785m	
Ullapool: Posties Path (RC49.01)	2012
Path construction and drainage works.	
Kildary: Milton Woods	2013
Path construction and re-surfacing for all-abilities. 1182m	
Strathpeffer: Jamestown Path (RC45.05)	2013
All-abilities path construction and drainage. 868m	
Invergordon: Polish Memorial Circuit (RC23.02)	2013
All-abilities path construction and re-surfacing and gates. 418m	
Torridon: Shore Path (RC48.01)	2014
All-abilities path construction and re-surfacing and gates. 460m	
Tain: Moss Road and Links paths (RC46.04)	2014
Path re-surfacing for easier access and drainage.	
Number of core paths signed: 112	
Number of leaflets: 3 (Easy access paths in Ross and Cromarty, Paths Around Strathpeffer, Paths Around Ullapool)	

### **Development and Infrastructure Capital Projects**

Muir of Ord: Lily Loch Path (RC32.09)	2010
Re-surfacing for all-abilities and replacement of boardwalk.	
Tain: Links Path (RC46.08)	2010
Removal of broken concrete slabs and replacement with tarmac path.	
Contin: Rogie Falls Bridge (RC10.02)	2010
Replacement of suspension bridge over falls.	

Invergordon: Academy path 2009  
Re-surface of broken concrete path with tarmac.

Dingwall: Shore Path (RC13.04) 2007  
Surfacing and raising of path level as prone to flooding.

Ullapool: Riverside Paths (RC49.02, RC49.03)  
Re-surfacing and re-grading of paths.

Gairloch: Beach Path (RC19.06) 2008  
Replacement of broken boardwalk with surfaced path and new bridge.

## **Lochaber Area**

### **Highland Core Path Implementation Programme**

Ballachulish: All-abilities link (LO05.03) 2011  
Provide all-abilities access to picnic site.

Strontian: Ardnastaing Common Grazings (LO24.06) 2011  
Surface path and install gates to improve popular tourist and school path.

Invergarry: Riverside Path (LO11.01) 2012  
Replace water crossings and re-surface sections to reopen circular path.

Mallaig: Mallaig Circular Walk (LO17.01) 2013  
Improve surface and link path to housing development.

Sonachan: Link path (LO12.05, LO12.06) 2013  
Surface public right of way in order to improve local network.

Number of core paths signed: 7

## Inverness and Nairn Area

### Highland Core Path Implementation Programme

Croy: Feabuie Road to Newlands of Culloden (IN08.27) 2011  
Path creation and upgrading with new easy-opening gate. 300m.

Foyers: Foyers to Inverfarigaig (IN17.05) 2012  
Path upgrading, step-building and chain handrail on a popular tourist route that is now part of the South Loch Ness Trail. 170m.

Whitebridge: Dell to Foyers (IN25.01) 2012  
Development of the South Loch Ness Trail improving the accessibility of a popular walk and public right of way. 660m.

Nairn: Firhall to Howford Bridge (NA04.03) 2011  
A modest improvement to a well-used path that also served to develop community capacity. 10m.

Stratherrick: Allt na Goibhre to Trinloist (IN17.12) 2012  
The completion of a missing link, a built (floating) path across a boggy section of forest. 130m.

Stratherrick: Garthbeg to Migovie (IN25.02) 2012  
An upgrade in surfacing and the installation of drainage on the Trail of the 7 Lochs; a route identified for horse riders but used by walkers, runners and cyclists. 930m.

Number of core paths signed: 5

### Development and Infrastructure Capital Projects

Balloch: Brookfield to Sunnyside 2009  
Partnership project helping to deliver cycleway between Sunnyside and Culloden Road. 1.5km.

## Caithness and Sutherland Area

### Highland Core Path Implementation Programme

Dunnet: Dunnet Forest (CA05.01) New path surface on existing route.	2011
Halkirk: Halkirk Riverside (CA06.02) Rebuild of path previously washed away in storm.	2012
John O’Groats: West Shore Path Upgrade (extension to CA07.11) Extension to core path from John O’Groats along the West Shore.	2012
Lybster: Coastguard Lookout/Swiney Hill Path Upgrade (CA10.01) Path upgrade to Lookout Path and new link to Swiney Hill.	2012
Dunnet: West Dunnet Path Upgrade (CA05.13) New path surface and drainage.	2012
Brora: Jubilee Walk East (SU06.06) New steps, handrail and drainage to core path.	2014
Tongue: Strath Tongue (SU24 .06) New bridge over burn on core path.	2014
Durness: Loch Meadaidh (SU11.08, SU11.09) Two phases of path upgrade, new drainage and realignment of existing path. New gates to replace stiles.	2011 and 2013
Dornoch: Station Wood (SU09.10) New path surfacing.	2013
Edderton: Balblair Wood (RC15.01) New path and drainage.	2012
Golspie: Dunrobin Castle Wood (SU12.09) New path surface and drainage.	2013
Golspie: Dunrobin Wood Link Path and Golspie-Brora Coastal Path (SU12.09. SU12.01) Vegetation clearance and new “raised” path.	2013

Kinlochbervie: Loch Innes (SU15.05) New path and drainage.	2012
Culrain: Loch Coire (SU08.03, SU03.01) Extension to existing core path to Loch Coire.	2011
Stoer: Point of Stoer (SU23.01) New path at ravine section of path.	2012
Rogart: Rogart Forest, Rovie - Meall Mor (SU20.01) Upgraded path between core paths.	2013
Scourie: Scourie Peat Road (SU22.04) Upgraded and new link paths from peat roads and Leathad Woodland.	2013
Bonar Bridge: Loch Migdale (Spinningdale Wood) (SU05.01) Upgraded core path to Loch Migdale, improved drainage.	2012

Number of core paths signed: 96

### **Development and Infrastructure Capital Projects**

Lairg: Clash Breac Extension of footway as part of core path.	2009
Golspie: West Drummuie Link New path to link Drummuie to West Drummuie and Ben Bhraggie Forest.	2008
Golspie: Big Barn to Uppat Path upgrade and path reinstatement due to fallen trees and standing water.	2009
Golspie: Big Burn New link path from Backies to Big Burn Cottage and path upgrade in Big Burn.	2007
Ardgay: Gearrachaille Wood Path upgrade, new paths.	2009