

REPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 20 JANUARY 2022

GRANT FUNDING AWARD – BRAEMAR TO INVERCAULD PATH

1 Executive Summary/Recommendation

1.1 The Committee is asked to consider the provision of grant funding to the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland to progress the creation of a path between Braemar and Invercauld as detailed in **Appendix 1** to the report.

1.1.1 The path will be delivered in partnership between Aberdeenshire Council, Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) and Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland with Aberdeenshire Council and CNPA co-funding the project equally and Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland delivering.

1.1.2 The project is the first stage as part of a larger objective to extend the Deeside Way from Ballater to Braemar.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 Approve the award of a grant of up to £100,000 to the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland.

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 The CNPA are a key strategic partner and share aims and objectives with Aberdeenshire Council for delivery of active and sustainable travel projects within the Aberdeenshire area of the national park.

2.2 The Cairngorm National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2017 – 2022 was endorsed by Infrastructure Services Committee on 6 October 2016 (Item 8 refers) and the plan specifically highlights the Deeside Way for action.

2.3 The creation of the Braemar to Invercauld path will meet 2 objectives in the NPPP:

a) Increase the percentage of visitors using active travel during their stay to 19% by 2022.

b) Increase the economic impact of visitors to eastern and southern Cairngorms National Park from 21% to 25% by 2022.

2.4 These objectives align with the Council's Local Transport Strategy main theme of traveling less, travelling actively and travelling effectively as well as the specific aims of:

- Reducing Non-Sustainable Journeys
- Increasing Active Travel

- Make Travel More Effective
- Improving Health
- Reducing Carbon Emissions from Transport

3 Discussion

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to consider the detail of the project to extend the Deeside Way, designated NCN 195 on the National Cycle Network. The Braemar to Invercauld path is the first stage of this extension proposal to connect Braemar to the Deeside Way at Ballater.
- 3.2 The Deeside Way Extension Feasibility Study – Walking the Talk compiled by CNPA highlighted that the western section from Braemar to Invercauld was the highest priority section for completion.
- 3.3 Aberdeenshire Council and CNPA are working with Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (OATS) to deliver the path and it is proposed that Aberdeenshire Council and CNPA will co-fund the path equally and that OATS will deliver the project.
- 3.4 **Appendix 1** provides detail to the initial 1.9km extension that has planning consent for a rolled dust, rural path appropriate for the area and how it will link in with the existing path network.
- 3.5 OATS have recently developed cost for the first phase of the extension which are estimated to be in the region of £200,000. The breakdown of these costs are:

Footway	£124,929
Drainage	£7,730
Infrastructure	£5,920
Tree Work	£520
Site Set Up	£1,180
Project Management	£11,222
Contingency (10%)	£14,028
Total excluding VAT	£165,529
Total including VAT	£198,635

- 3.6 Aberdeenshire Council and CNPA will provide 50% each of the costs of the project as grant funding to OATS. CNPA have board approval to fund 50% of the project.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 This report helps deliver the Strategic Priorities “Infrastructure” and “Resilient Communities” within the Pillar “Our Environment”
- 4.2 This report helps deliver the Strategic Priority “Health and Wellbeing” within the Pillar “Our People”

4.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation is agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial	X		
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland		X	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		X	
Climate Change and Sustainability		X	
Health and Wellbeing	X		
Town Centre First		X	

4.4 There are financial implications associated with the recommendations of this report. The funding will be provided through the Capital Plan allocation to Cycling and Walking and can be accommodated through the existing budget. The "Following the Public Pound" procedure has been followed when considering this grant award.

4.5 There are no staffing implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

4.6 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals set out above. It is included as **Appendix 2** and no negative impacts have been identified.

4.7 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level [Corporate Risk Register](#).

Risk	Explanation/Mitigation
ACORP001 Budget Pressures	Officers will seek to maximise Government funding. The delivery programme can be extended as dictated by funding availability. Delivery of capital schemes can provide upgrades to existing infrastructure and so reduce future revenue pressures.
ACORP007 Social Risk	The activities aim to support and deliver on social inclusion policies around travel.
ACORP010 Environmental Challenges	The activities will support more active and sustainable travel in and across our communities.

The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level [Directorate Risk Registers](#)

Risk	Explanation/Mitigation
BSSR001 Balancing The Books	Officers will seek to maximise Government funding. The delivery programme can be extended as dictated by funding availability Delivery of capital schemes can provide upgrades to existing infrastructure and so reduce future revenue pressures.
ISSR001 Active Travel	Active Travel is one of the key priorities of the Council and is identified on the Infrastructure Services Risk Register. This report details the interventions that officers are progressing to meet this priority.
ISSR004 Climate Change	Supporting Active and Sustainable travel by providing infrastructure, promotion and encouragement will help the Council to deliver on its Climate Change obligations.

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section F2.4 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to a grant award to external organisation of more than £50,000.

Alan Wood
Director of Environment and Infrastructure Service

Report prepared by Martin Hall, Strategy Manager, Environment and Sustainability
6 January 2022

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Project Outline

Appendix 2 – Integrated Impact Assessment

Appendix 1

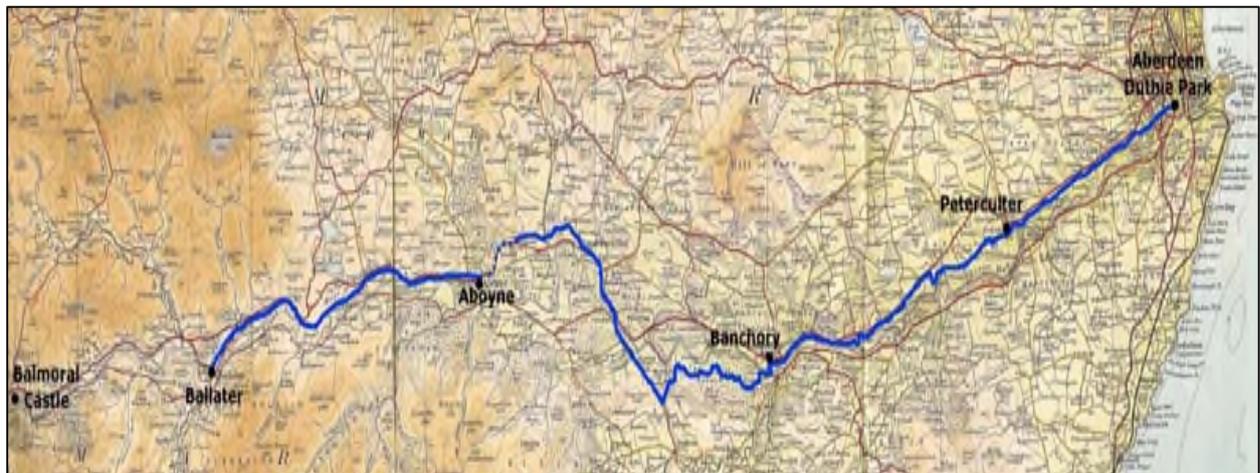
Deeside Way NCN195

First Stage Extension – Braemar to Invercauld Bridge

Strategic Context

1. The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017-22 identifies Deeside Way as an agenda for action;

4a Maintaining and upgrading key off-road routes including Speyside Way & Deeside Way
2. The Deeside Way extension has potential to support two key NPPP targets
 - a) Increase the percentage of visitors using active travel during their stay to 19% by 2022:
 - b) Increase the economic impact of visitors to eastern and southern Cairngorms National Park from 21% to 25% by 2022.
3. The existing **Deeside Way** runs some 41 miles from Aberdeen, via Banchory to Ballater. Much of the way the route utilises the old Royal Deeside Railway line. The route has been designed for use by wide range of people with good access for walkers, cyclists and, in many places, horses. Recognising this multi-use function, the route is also promoted by Sustrans as **National Cycle Route 195**. Sustrans are currently reviewing NCN195 to determine sections for improvement and potential extension.

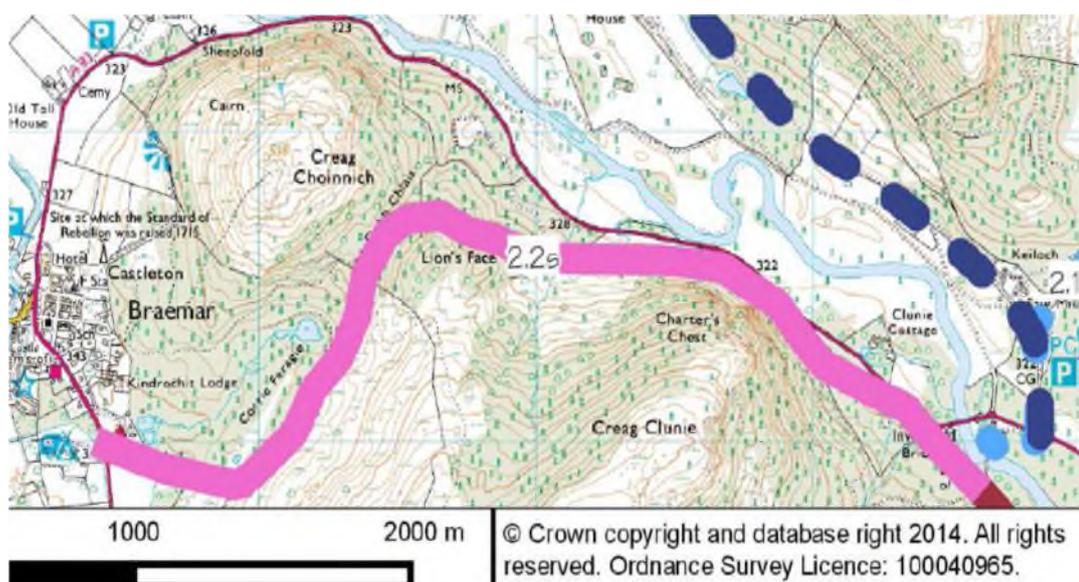


4. The route offers a scenic and relatively gentle 'end to end' experience but importantly it also acts as a community link, connecting both settlements and visitor attractions with potential to both engage visitors with sustainable active travel and increase their stay length in Deeside.
5. The old railway ends at Ballater and so any extension will need to utilise existing paths or will require new path construction.

Appendix 1

Background

6. Two reports in 2014 identified the need and potential to build the route
 - a) The Deeside Way Business Development Opportunities – Tourism & Leisure Solutions (T&LS).
 - b) Deeside Way Extension Feasibility Study – Walking the Talk (WtT).
7. The route from Ballater to Braemar can be considered in three discrete sections:
 - a) Ballater to Crathie,
 - b) Crathie to Invercauld Bridge,
 - c) Invercauld Bridge to Braemar.
8. The Deeside Way Extension Feasibility Study identified that the western section from **Braemar to Invercauld Bridge** was the highest priority. The land owner, Invercauld Estate, has indicated a willingness to see the path constructed and the Braemar Path Group and Braemar Tourism Group are both very keen to see the path developed. Investment in improving the path would support considerable private and third sector investment in **Fife Arms Hotel, Highland Games Centre, Braemar Castle and Mar Lodge**.
9. This section comprises 1.9km of new path that has planning consent for a rolled dust, rural path. This new path links to an existing 2.3km of promoted path. The new path would run through Creag Clunie and the Lion's Face SSSI and Ballochbuie Special Protection Area as show below.



Appendix 1

10. The new path proposed links with the currently promoted community paths can be seen here <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Braemar-Paths-for-Web.pdf>
11. Current work by Visit Aberdeenshire and North East Adventure Tourism on **NE Long Distance Route** confirms the desire to see the Deeside way extended to support their much longer proposal. Their work identifies existing paths through Balmoral Estate that could be alternatives to the mid-section of Crathie to Invercauld Bridge proposed in the original Deeside Way Extension Feasibility Study.
12. The full route extension will also be considered in detail as an active travel option as part of the successful Heritage Horizons Lottery Bid **Cairngorms 2030**.

Next steps

13. **Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland** has produced 2021 cost estimates of £200,000 to construct the new path and with upgrades and improvements to the existing 2.3 km. CNPA has identified £100,000 funding allocated to support the building of this stage with a further £100,000 support being required from partners.
14. Formal land owner agreement will be required to undertake the build and ongoing maintenance. The landowner gave 'consent' for the planning application, and ongoing discussion indicating agreement will be forthcoming with CNPA as the Access Authority.
15. If full funding support is available for OATS building could start (weather dependent) in early 2022 with completion by summer 2022.

Pete Crane

Head of Visitor Services

Cairngorms National Park Authority

Aberdeenshire Council

Integrated Impact Assessment

Grant Award - Braemar to Invercauld Path

Assessment ID	IIA-000329
Lead Author	Martin Hall
Service Reviewers	Chris Menzies
Subject Matter Experts	Susan Forbes
Approved By	Ewan Wallace
Approved On	Thursday January 06, 2022
Publication Date	Thursday January 06, 2022

1. Overview

This document has been generated from information entered into the Integrated Impact Assessment system.

Assessment into the impacts of funding the creation of a rural path between Braemar and Invercauld

During screening 1 of 10 questions indicated that detailed assessments were required, the screening questions and their answers are listed in the next section. This led to 1 out of 5 detailed impact assessments being completed. The assessments required are:

- Health Inequalities

In total there are 2 positive impacts as part of this activity. There are 0 negative impacts, all impacts have been mitigated.

A detailed action plan with 0 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by ewan.wallace@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

The remainder of this document sets out the details of all completed impact assessments.

2. Screening

Could your activity / proposal / policy cause an impact in one (or more) of the identified town centres?	No
Would this activity / proposal / policy have consequences for the health and wellbeing of the population in the affected communities?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e) in the Council or community and / or the procurement, use or disposal of physical resources?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the resilience to extreme weather events and/or a changing climate of Aberdeenshire Council or community?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have an impact on people and / or groups with protected characteristics?	No
Is this activity / proposal / policy of strategic importance for the council?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy reduce inequality of outcome?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's rights?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's wellbeing?	No

3. Impact Assessments

Children's Rights and Wellbeing	Not Required
Climate Change and Sustainability	Not Required
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty	Not Required
Health Inequalities	No Negative Impacts Identified
Town Centre's First	Not Required

4. Health Inequalities Impact Assessment

4.1. Health Behaviours

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Healthy eating		Yes		
Exercise and physical activity	Yes			
Substance use – tobacco		Yes		
Substance use – alcohol		Yes		
Substance use – drugs		Yes		
Mental health	Yes			

4.2. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Exercise and physical activity	Creation of new path will provide greater opportunities for the community to chose active travel as a mode of transport.
Mental health	Physical Activity can positively impact on mental health

4.3. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Other Evidence	Strategy Documents	Local, Region and National Strategies highlight the importance of improve active travel infrastructure to promote improvements to physical and mental health. The Health and Transport Action Plan provides additional evidence in this area.	Supports the position of creating additional active travel infrastructure to improve physical and mental health.

4.4. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

The evidence provided supports the outcomes of this assessment