



## Highland Core Path Implementation Programme (HCPIP) GUIDANCE TO COMMUNITY APPLICANTS

### General

The Highland Core Path Implementation Programme (HCPIP) aims to improve accessibility to the Core Path Network in The Highland Council area by upgrading paths and promotion of the path networks by signposting. Improvements will be focussed on increasing accessibility by removing barriers and upgrading path surfaces and drainage, the approximate standards HCPIP aims to achieve on projects are detailed below.

The funding is only available within The Highland Council area that is not within the Cairngorm National Park or the city of Inverness, proposals within these areas may on exception be considered, but only where the greater benefit is to the wider Highland region.

The Highland Council will invite applications from community groups to take forward proposals on their own initiative. Highland Council Access Officers will assist communities to whatever degree is required to deliver individual projects as well as taking the lead on some projects.

### Community Applications

Application will be invited during a 3 month period between May and July 2010. Access Officers will promote the scheme to community groups and others, offering advice and guidance as required. Deadlines for the 2010 applications will be **30<sup>th</sup> July 2010**.

Should the HCPIP be well subscribed by more suitable and competent projects than can be completed in 2010, these projects may be carried forward to the next year or two without the need for the community group to apply again. Initially communities may be limited to one core path improvement per area depending upon total number of applications. Further invitations for community applications may also not be required if this is the case. Otherwise application periods will be available in April 2011 and April 2012, with all project work to be completed by April 2013. Projects should be completed within 1 year of the proposal being accepted

Whilst the programme is for Core Paths, paths not identified as core paths may be considered for funding where the applicant can show the proposal extends or links in to the core path network and demonstrate demand for its use.

The Core Path Network maps can be found on The Highland Council website by typing '**Core Path Network Plans**' into the Search box.

## Use of funding from the HCPIP

We have estimated that the average cost per project to £13,000 towards upgrade works or promotion of core paths and the core path network. This should enable a target of 45 projects over three years to which The HCPIP can provide 100% of costs. In exceptional circumstances we will fund up to the value of £25,000 for a project.

All projects can only be agreed upon acceptance by The Highland Council of a quote from a suitable contractor for the works proposed in accordance with councils Contract Standing Orders, Dec 2008. Works over £3 000 will require three quotes, the maximum amount available for a project is £25,000. There is no minimum amount.

However, in order to help community groups realise their ambitions, the HCPIP proposes the following options to ease the financial and logistical challenges community groups may face when developing medium to large scale projects:

- Community councils will be able to use contractors that are on an agreed council framework agreement for path work. This will ease the burden upon the community groups of meeting the councils contract standing orders.
- Upon the completion of agreed works, The Highland Council will process/pay the contractor(s) invoices directly and will not require receipted invoices from the applicants.

## Path Accessibility Standards

Proposed works will be partly assessed against a set of accessibility standards. The criteria scoring used for identifying core paths in this area has been used as a basis for prioritising possible improvement works and will also be referred to when assessing community proposals. These factors include proximity to areas of settlement/visible levels of high usage, length of path network to be improved and how this may be used to access a greater part of the path network'.

Value for money and sustainability of the proposals will be used for scoring applications.

## Sign Design and Standards

The Highland Council has a statutory obligation to sign core paths and will be undertaking such works separately from the community applications part of the HCPIP scheme. However, signage for routes that form part of a network that links to a core path may be considered as part of the community applications HCPIP scheme. A standard style of sign is available for ordering through The Highland Council for community applicants to use on the paths and tracks they are proposing to promote. The standard style will be preferred unless there is an already established local style.

## Path and Sign Maintenance

Standard signs on core paths installed through this project will be maintained by The Highland Council. Local sign styles installed through this project must be maintained by the community group or other third party if agreed by The Highland Council.

Fully accessible gates\* installed on core paths will be maintained by The Highland Council.

Path work or other works funded by HCPIP must be maintained by the applicant or other third party agreed by The Highland Council. A 10 year period of maintenance is expected from the applicants on work, signs and other materials produced through the HCPIP.

\* Gates to meet BS5709 for type of use expected on the path, pedestrians only or pedestrian and other users. Kissing gates will only be acceptable on pedestrian only paths, which are only likely in exceptional circumstances given that priority will be given to projects that aim to improve accessibility to all users of the core path network.

## Land Owner Agreement/Consulation

Applicants should consult with the land owner or land manager prior to submitting the form to The Highland Council

Works may require planning or other environmental consents before the project can be completed, if you believe that your project may require such consents then please contact The Highland Council area contact as soon as possible.

## The Highland Council Area Contacts

Mr Matt Dent – Sutherland and Edderton  
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Mr Philip Waite – Ross and Cromarty  
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Mr Donald Kennedy – Skye and Lochalsh  
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Mr Alastair Stewart – Lochaber  
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Mr Stewart Eastaugh – Rural Inverness, Nairn and Badenoch & Strathspey  
01463 702186, [stewart.eastaugh@highland.gov.uk](mailto:stewart.eastaugh@highland.gov.uk)

Mr David Barclay – Caithness  
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HCPIP Administrator  
01463 702288, [access@highland.gov.uk](mailto:access@highland.gov.uk)

## **Accessibility Standards**

The following standards will be used as a guide to assessing the requirement for core paths to be upgraded, and identify the areas that will benefit the most for increasing opportunities.

### **Surface**

Should be hard and firm in good weather. Un-surfaced paths are acceptable if levels of use do not lead to mud after heavy rain, otherwise surfacing expected. Nominal standing water (small puddle) at most times of the year acceptable but preferably dry surface in summer months. Protrusions/rocks/roots etc less than 100mm. Any potholes/rutting for less and 10m along path

### **Surface Width**

Usable path surface should be at least 1.2m wide where only pedestrian access is expected. Where any other use is likely, horse/pedal cycle etc, the walking surface should be ideally 2.5-3m

### **Restriction**

Any gap (between posts, through gates etc) along route to be minimum 1.2m

### **Gates/Stiles**

Should be avoided if possible, self closing bridle/wicket gates are to be used in. Kissing gates should only be used if a bridle/wicket gate is not practicable and if scope of use of the route will not be restricted by the installation of a kissing gate. A stile should only be considered as a very last resort, costs will not be claimable through the scheme.

### **Walking Tunnel**

At least 0.5m verge from path edge and 2.1m high clear walking tunnel.

### **Gradient**

Path gradient to be less than 1:10

### **Steps**

Where gradient unable to avoid use of steps, maximum riser height 200mm and minimum platform/tread 240mm. All riser heights and tread widths should be uniform.