West Highlands & Islands Core Path Plan Review 2015/16- Skye and Lochalsh

Consultative Report

Introduction

The development of the existing core path plan was part of The Highland Councils duties given in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 (LR(S)A 2003). The existing plan was adopted by the full council in September 2011 after the plan had been through the statutory consultation process and also a Public Local Inquiry (PLI).

This core path review is for the areas of Skye and Lochalsh in the Highland Council Core Paths Plan. The review will take place alongside the consultation process for the new West Highland and Island Development Plan. A single plan, West Highlands and Islands Core Paths Plan will be produced by combining with Wester Ross and Lochaber, then, where appropriate the Core Paths will be shown on the Local Development Plan.

This Consultative Report has been produced as part of a review process, it is not a DRAFT Core Paths Plan as set out in Section 17 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Correspondingly the promotion of this Consultative Report is not the public notice of a Core Paths Plan as set out in Section 18 of the same act.

Public comments are welcome but the council is not seeking formal objections to the proposals at this stage. Any objections will be treated the same as other comments and should any proposal be put forward in a Draft Core Paths Plans the council will give notice, as set out in section 18, at a future date.

<u>Aims</u>

The review aims to;

- 1. Improve connectivity of the current plan by utilising existing routes.
- 2. Check that existing routes remain at an acceptable minimum standard for public use.
- 3. Review mapping of existing plan to identify change of line of routes or identify where upgraded/new routes have been constructed or used differently by the public.
- 4. Consider the recommendations of the Public Local Inquiry report on The Highland Councils first core paths plan.

Proposed Changes to Core Paths

A Call for Core Path Changes was issued to all community councils, ward members, organisations and identified landowners. Any comments relating to specific paths have been included within this report. Any comments relating to specific paths have been included within this report. These may include a change in route, the addition of a path or the removal of a path from the Core Paths Plan.

A desk top survey has been carried out by officers, based on local knowledge and experiences from carrying out core path surveys. The proposed new routes and modifications detailed in this report come from this desk top survey and also suggestions made to The Highland Council since the adoption of the first core path plan. Only preliminary ground survey work may have been carried out directly related to this core path plan review at the current time.

In November 2015 the proposed core path changes at this stage were considered by the Skye and Lochalsh Local Access Forum and their support, opposition or comments have been included in this report.

What is a core path?

There is no strict definition of what a core path should be from the LR(S)A 2003, the act does however define a core path plan as a system of paths sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area. With this in mind it should be understood that the existing plan was designed to fulfil this sufficiency of path network.

Proposed core paths not currently in use by the public, say requiring works or upgrades, should have a reasonable likelihood of being delivered within 3 years of the reviewed plan been adopted. The adoption of a path or route as a core path places no duty on The Highland Council to carry out new path construction, upgrading works or maintenance of the route. The Highland Council does have powers to carry out works on a core path but these are discretionary and are aimed as ensuring routes remain free from obstruction and are not intended to be used for new path construction.

As well as the sufficiency of network the council shall have a statutory regard to the following points when reviewing the core path plan.

- the likelihood that persons exercising rights of way and access rights will do so by using core paths;
- the desirability of encouraging such persons to use core paths; and
- the need to balance the exercise of those rights and the interests of the owner of the land in respect of which those rights are exercisable.

Inclusion of minor public roads, footways, Long Distance Routes (LDRs), other long distance trails and public rights of way (PRoW).

The lack of inclusion of minor roads in the core path plan was something that raised objections in the consultation stage of the existing core path plan. The objections were not resolved and the matter was taken up at the Public Local Inquiry (PLI). The reporter for the PLI did not propose the objected to routes to be included in the core path plan but did recommended that the council establish if there was a justification for inclusion of minor roads when the plan is reviewed.

Another objection raised during the consultations for the existing core path was the lack of routes and connectivity of proposed routes within the wider area. This objection was again not resolved and the matter was addressed during the PLI by the reporter. The reporter recommended the council considers a range of strategic routes in the review of the core path plan.

The Highland Council considers the inclusion of more routes, as described above, to be a benefit but with the concern that the inclusion of too many routes would render the path plan meaningless in terms of it statutory objective to provide a "basic" network. Also it should be considered that roads are already managed on a statutory basis under numerous road acts. The council, indeed any person, can promote the use of a road as parts of a path network without the requirement for the road to be a core path. Within an urban or large village settlement the council considers the public are reasonably expected to be aware of the extent of the public road network for them to exercise their right of access along the road without a requirement for the road or footway to be adopted as a core path.

As for longer distance Public Rights of Way many of these are very variable in character and condition thus may not provide the minimum standard for the entire length.

In light of the reporter recommendations the council has produced a detailed table listing the route types, as mentioned above, that should be considered within the core path plan review that were not generally included in existing core path plans.

Proposals In This Consultative Report

There are two levels of proposals set out in this Consultative Report.

Firstly there are proposals which clearly meet the aims of the core paths plan review set out above and are known to be in an appropriate condition. These are the routes intended to be proposed as candidate core paths.

• Proposals that clearly meet the aims of the core path plan review are highlighted in a purple hue text box.

Secondly there are proposals that may meet the aims of the review but either further onsite investigation is required and/or further consultation with the various stakeholders is required, be that landowners, land managers or local community groups. This Consultative Report seeks to assess public comment on these routes as potential core paths but the council is not proposing them at the present time.

• Proposals to further investigate a route are highlighted in an orange hue text box.

This Consultative Report has been produced as part of a review process, it is not a DRAFT Core Paths Plan as set out in Section 17 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Correspondingly the promotion of this Consultative Report is not the public notice of a Core Paths Plan as set out in Section 18 of the same act.

Public comments are welcome but the council is not seeking formal objections to the proposals at this stage. Any objections will be treated the same as other comments and should any proposal be put forward in a Draft Core Paths Plans the council will give notice, as set out in section 18, at a future date.

Path Changes by Settlement Zone

Achmore (settlement ref - SL01)

The Achmore settlement zone, situated on the south shore of LochCarron consists of two settlements, Achmore and Stromeferry. The land use is mainly forestry and one of the current core paths is in the Stromeferrry Community Woodland. The other path is an informal waymarked route from Fernaig Road to Portchullin. There has been no new or upgraded routes since the first Core Path Plan proposals and no remote, longer distance routes to the required standard. At the time of the first Core Path Plan a section of the main recreational route in the Stromeferry Woodland was damaged by storms with no immediate plans for remedial work. This section has now been repaired and it is proposed that it is included as part of the forest core path with the management track removed.

• Modify Core Path SL01.02 to include repaired section. See Map SL01



Balmacara (SLO2)

The Balmacara settlement zone has a network of core paths mainly owned and maintained by The National Trust for Scotland or Forest Enterprise providing circular routes of varying length and links into the neighbouring settlements of Kyle and Plockton. Refurbishment work has been undertaken on the path that runs north from core path SL02.01, Balmacara to Scalpaidh, skirting round Loch Scalpaidh and finishing at the Balmacara to Erbusaig minor road and is proposed as a candidate core path.

Improvements to recreational access has been undertaken at Ard Hill Forest and is included in Forest Enterprise's Website as a place to visit. The network is proposed as candidate core paths

- Candidate Core Path SL02.09(C) from SL02.01 Balmacara to Scalpaidh Core Path to Balmacara to Erbusaig public road. See map SL02a
- Candidate Core Path SL02.10(C) Ard Hill Forest Network. See map SL02b





Broadford (SL03)

Broadford, together with Harrapool is the second largest settlement in the Isle of Skye. The other settlements included in this area are Luib and Strollamus situated beside the A87 as it skirts round the Skye coast line and Torrin and Heaste sitting on the shores of Loch Slapin and Eishort respectively.

On the outskirts of Broadford a new signposted forest track now links the two ends of core path SL03.06, Broadford to Camas na Sgianadin creating a popular circular route round Cnoc na Cachaille for visitors and locals. The circular route is proposed as a candidate core path A small section of forest management track is no longer significant since the completion of the circular route and it is proposed to remove it.

A coastal path between core paths SL03.03 Suardale to Boreraig and SL03.02 Camas Malag to Suishnish was not considered during the drawing up of the first core path plan but further investigation would suggest that this would be a negotiable route to those of average walking ability and would link existing core paths.

The old road between Broadford and Drumfearn does not start until 800m from Skulamus and crosses the the A851 Armadale at one point but is popular with dog walkers and joggers and the good condition of the tarmac surface provides access opportunities for the nearby Skye Disabled Ramblers. The Broadford and Strath Community Company with assistance from The Highland Council Ranger Service have also installed interpretation panels of the Black Lochs section of the road further adding to the amenity of the route.

- Extend Core Path SL03.06 to create circular route, see map SL03a
- Candidate Core Path SL03.11(C) Old Sleat Road between Broadford and Drumfearn, see map SL03b
- Candidate Core Path SL03.12(C) Coastal link between Core Paths SL03.02 and SL03.03, see map SL03c







Carbost (SL04)

The Carbost settlement zone in the west of Skye includes the main village of Carbost and the settlements of Satran, Drynoch, Crossal and Eynort. It also includes the Black Cuillin Mountains with its many hill paths leading onto various sections of the ridge.

Over the last 5 years the Coire na Chriche path, popularly known as the Fairy Pools path, has become the second busiest walking route in Skye and Lochalsh after the walk to the Old Man of Storr due to newspaper acticles and social media. The council has recently widened the path to accommodate this surge in numbers and it is proposed that the route should be included as a candidate core path.

Within the Glenbrittle Circular Track a shorter loop can be undertaken from Eynort. This loop is promoted by Forest Enterprise and it is proposed that this should be included in the Glenbrittle Forest Core Path

- Candidate Core Path SL04.07(C) leading to the Fairy Pools (see Map SL04a)
- Include short loop in Glenbrittle Core Path SL04.03 (see Map SL04b)





Dornie (SL05)

Ardelve and Bundalloch. It includes in its area the world famous visitor attraction Eilean Donnan Castle. Currently there is only one short core path in the area, a coastal walk between Lower and Upper Ardelve.

There is a hill route that would link Bundalloch and Camus-luinie and it is proposed to investigate it's suitability as a core path.

• Investigate route SL05.02(C) Bundalloch to Camus-Iuinieas , see Map SL05



Dunvegan (SL06)

With Dunvegan village at the centre of the settlement zone the area extends to Skinidin in the west, Roskill to the south and Claigan to the North where the path to the hugely popular Coral Beach commences. The Community Council are considering whether to further develop plans to create a footpath between the campsite and Lonmore and Lonmore and Kilmuir road end. Both would be strong core path candidates and would be included as proposals if it becomes clear that the community council do intend to fund the proposals.

Edinbane (SL07)

Edinbane village is the main settlement with a series of small settlements between the village and Suledale at its eastern end. To the south it includes half of the Edinbane Windfarm track, extends to Greshornish Point in the North and the Waternish road junction to the west.

The local community company has funded work to extend old sections of road that links Flashader to Core Path SL07.04, Tayinloan to Fanks road end and it is proposed to include this as a candidate core path.

The community company are considering a proposal to develop a path between Flashader and the Upper Edinbane road end which would be the final section of a multi user access route between the village of Edinbane and Suledale. This section of path would be considered as a core path if the development is complete within the timescale of the review.

A short path exists between upper Edinbane and the village centre. It is proposed to investigate this as a potential core path.

The new windfarm track links Edinbane with core path SL28.01, Loch Caroy to Glen Vic Askill. Windfarm tracks are constructed to a high standard and are usually of a gentler gradient then forestry tracks providing good multi user access opportunities including disabled scooter ramblers. It is proposed to investigate this as a potential core path.

- Candidate Core Path SL07.05(C) Extention of Core Path SL07.04 Tayinloan to Fanks Road End, See map SL07a
- Investigate route SL07.06(C) Upper Edinbane to village centre, SL07.06(A) , see Map SL07b
- Investigate route SL07.07(C) Wind farm track linking Edinbane with Glen Vic Askill SL07.07(A), see Map SL07c







Elgol (SL08)

Elgol settlement zone comprises the Strathaird Peninsular and part of the Red Cuillins including the summits of Blaven and Marsco. Along with Elgol the other settlements include Glasnakille Kilmarie and Drinan.

The Glensligachan path between Sligachan and Camasunary links with Core Path SL08.03, Kilmarie to Camasunary, it is also a section of the unofficial long distance route, 'The Skye Trail' and it is proposed to investigate this as a proposed core path.





Flodigarry (SL09)

Flodigarry on the north east side of the Trotternish Peninsular comprises a series of small settlements from Digg in the south to Balmaqueen in the north. It includes the core path leading out to Rubha Hunish and the footpaths into the Quiraing, one of the most popular destinations for visitors to Skye.

The Staffin Trust are currently applying for funding for a number of new routes throughout East Trotternish including Loch Sheanta to Brogaig within the Flodigarry settlement zone. If this route is developed within the timescale of the review it shall be considered for core path status.

Geary (SL10)

The settlement zone of Geary comprises almost all of the Waternish peninsular and along with Geary includes the settlements of Trumpan, Gillen, Halistra and Stein. There was only one core path, SL10.01 Stein to Gillen included in the first core path plan and there has been no significant access developments since then.

Glendale (SL11)

Apart from the northern peninsular of this settlement zone, the area is community owned.

Glendale has two core paths in its area, the route out to Neist Point which is one of the most popular walking routes in Skye and the other is Ramasaig to Lorgill which is the first section of a right of way that continues along the coast to Orbost. The entire coastal route from Ramasaig to Orbost would be consistent with including more remote linking routes, especially as there are core paths at each end, but site investigation established that there are long sections where there is no evidence of path/ desire line and unless there was an intention to, at the very least, waymark the route, it is not considered suitable for core path status

Glenelg (SL12)

Along with the main settlement of Glenelg other settlements include Bernera, Eilanreach and to the south Arnisdale and Corran, one of the more remoter settlements in the Highlands.

There is potential to extend and link some of the core paths in the area. Presently core path SL12.03, Moyle Forest Track only extends to the first main junction meeting the wider network of forest tracks. A new track has been built near Suardalan that would link up wider network paths and tracks eventually meeting Core Path SL12.02 Balvraid to Srath a Chomair.

At the east end of core path SL12.02 a right of way through Ghleann Aoidhdailean links to Core Path SL12.07 Corran to Dubh Lochain. The nature of the route and walking conditions are unknown and it is proposed that it should be further investigated.

Improvement work has been undertaken through Coire Chorsalain and is part of a circular route featured in a walks information board in Corran. It is proposed to include it as a candidate core path, SL12.10(C)

Past SL12.07 the right of way continues east to Kinloch Hourn in the Lochaber core path area. Reasonable walking conditions persist for most of this route and it is proposed that it is included as a potential core path.

- Extend Core Path SL2.03 linking to SL12.02 , See map SL12a
- Candidate Core Path SL12.09(C) extending SL12.07 to Kinlochourn. See map SL12b
- Candidate Core Path SL12.10(C) Coire Chorsalain See map SL12c

Investigate route SL12.11(C) linking SL12.02 and SL12.07, see Map SL12d









Inverinate (SL13)

A new long distant waymarked route from Affric to Kintail has been created which links Core Path SL13.03, Innes a Chrotha to Dorusdain and IN05.06 Loch Affric Circuit in the Inverness and Nairn Core Path area. It is proposed that it is included as a candidate core path core.

The Falls of Glomach is a popular destination for visitors and the hill path has been repaired and refurbished in various phases since the early 90s. It is proposed to investigate it's suitability as a core path.

- Candidate Core Path SL13.04(C) section of Affric to Kintail Long Distance Route, see Map SL13a
- Candidate Core Path SL13.05(C) path to Falls of GLomach, see Map SL13b





Kensaleyre (SL14)

The settlement zone of Kensaleyre lies along the A87 from Prabost road end in the south to the settlement of Kingsburgh in the the north.

The only core path is the old road from the south end of Kensaleyre to Prabost road end. Funds secured by the community has linked this path to another section of the old road and it proposed to include this as a core path.

• Extend Core Path SL14.02(C) to link to SL23.04, See map SL14



Killilan (SL15)

The settlement zone of Killinan comprises mainly of privately owned estates and is very sparsely populated. The two main settlements are Sallachy and Camus-luinie to the east with remote mountain hinterlands characteristic of the North West Highlands to the west.

Two potential core paths to be investigated are already mentioned in other settlement zones. Refer to SL05 Dornie , Bundalloch to Camus-luinie and SL13 Inverinate, Falls of Glomach

Kilvaxter (SL16)

The settlement zone of Kilvaxter in the north west of the Trotternish peninsular comprises a series of settlements from Totscore in the south to Duntulm in the north. Popular visitor attractions include Duntulm castle and the monument to Flora Macdonald.

At Kilmuir Manse a track built for the maintenance of water utility infrastructure and it has been suggested that it could link to core path SL16.02 Sneosdale Heribusta circular enhancing the path network in the area. It is proposed to investigate this as a potential core path.

• Investigate route SL.16.03(C) Utilities track linking to SL16.02, See Map SL16



Kyle(SL17)

The settlement zone of Kyle comprises of the main village of Kyle with further small settlements at Badicaul and Erbusaig on the road to Plockton. The east of the area is unpopulated hill land.

Since the first core path plan, where a circular route within the Plock of Kyle was included, a local trust has developed more paths on the small peninsular which expands the network of paths and better links the amenity area to the village. It is proposed to include them as core paths.



Kyleakin (SL18)

The settlement zone of Kyleakin comprises of the main village of Kyleakin with the small settlement of Kylerhea to the east being the only other populated area. Since the initial core path plan a route within the forestry above Kyleakin that was designed specifically as a mountain bike course is no longer used for that purpose and it proposed to include this path as an addition to the forest network.

Forest management tracks further to the west are popular with dog walkers and could be linked to the recreational network by a section of the old Kyleakin to Broadford road. It is proposed to investigate this as a potential core path.

- Extension to Kyleakin Forest Network SL18.02. See map SL18
- Candidate Core Path SL18.04(C) , Link from Candidate Core Path SL18.03(C) to forest management tracks. See map SL18



Plockton (SL19)

The settlement zone of Plockton comprises of the main village of Plockton with the settlements of Duirinish and Drumbuie to the west and mainly forestry to the west and south of the zone.

At the time of the first Core Path Plan access to the shore at Port Luinge (Coral Beach) was in a very poor state only negotiable by the very able. NTfS have since refurbished the path and people counter data indicates that it is a popular route. It is proposed that this route is included as a core path.

• Candidate Core Path SL19.09(C) , Path to Coral Beach. See map SL19



Portnalong (SL20)

The settlement zone of Portnalong includes the townships of Portnalong and Fiskavaig on the shores of Loch Bracadale and Loch Harport to the north and extending 2 miles down the coast beyond Talisker Bay in the south of the zone. There has been no significant access developments since then.

Portree (SL21)

The Portree settlement zone is large in area and includes the settlements in Braes and Sconser to the south as well as the settlements of Achahork and Torvaig overlooking the town of Portree, the largest settlement in Skye and the administrative centre.

In the town of Portree there have been additions to the path network since the first core path plan.

Funded by a Highland Council Development and Infrastructure Projects Team a link was made between the Home Farm Housing Estate and the Council owned Leasgeary Nature Walk which is already a core path and it is proposed that it is included as a potential core path.

The Portree Environmental Group, a voluntary organisation which concentrates it's activities looking after the core path Ben Chracaig (Scorrybreck Circuit), built a section of path in order to avoid the need to go through a farm steading at the north end of the route. It is proposed that this is included as a core path and the farm steading section removed.

New footpaths built by the Viewfield Garden Collective, supported by the owner of Viewfield House meets up with Portree Forest core path (SL21.02). It is an important addition to the network of paths in the Portree area and it is proposed that it is included as a potential core path.

Outwith Portree, in the Sconser area the community have built a short circular path at the start of the Sligachan to Camasunary path which is very popular with visitors to the island as a place to stop and stretch legs, at the start it has it's own parking and interpretation and sections are suitable for wheelchair access. It is proposed to investigate this as a potential core path.

- Candidate Core Path SL21.04(C) , Link Core Path SL21.04 to Home farm. See map SL21a
- Modify Core Path SL21.07 to avoid farm steading. See map SL21b
- Candidate Core Path SL21.13(C) , New path round Viewfield House linking to Core Path SL21.02. See map SL21c







Raasay (SL22)

The settlement zone of Raasay, which also includes the smaller island of Rhona to the north has a comparatively high number of core paths in terms of geographical area and population. Many are included in leaflets and are also promoted by signposts and waymarkers.

A promoted path that was not included in the first core path plan is the path down to the shore at Inver. Various projects have been undertaken to improve the path over the years and it is proposed to investigate this route as a proposed core path reflecting the efforts of the community to keep it to a standard suitable for a wide range of abilities.

Another promoted path that was not included in the first core path plan is the approach to Dun Caan commencing from the most northerly section of the Burma Road core path. This would complement the core path to Dun Caan that commences from the Arnish road. Walking conditions along this path have to be assessed and it is proposed to investigate this route as a potential core path.

• Candidate Core Path SL22.12)C) Inver footpath to shore

• Propose to investigate as core path footpath to Dun Caan from Core Path SL22.02 Burma Road See Map SL22b





Skeabost Bridge (SL23)

The settlement zone of Skeabost Bridge includes Treaslane to the north, Borve to the east and Glenmore in the south.

Core paths in this zone and neighbouring zones are characterised by old roads that give safe pedestrian access away from the A87 and A850. Since the first core path plan various projects have made further strategic links between these old roads and to settlement road ends.

A section of old road between Bernisdale road end and the old manse at Glenbernisdale has been cleared and refurbished including a section of roadside pavement and it is proposed that this route is included as a potential core path.

A section of old road that runs parallel with the A87 opposite Borve has been cleared and refurbished and a section of new path has linked this to Core Path SL23.03, Carbost to Borve Old Road. Along with the work mentioned in the Kensaleyre settlement zone these improvements give continuous pedestrian access by means of township roads, old roads and new pathwork between Park Bernisdale and Kensaleyre.

It is proposed that all these improvements are included as potential core paths.

- Extend Core Path SL23.01 Skeabost to Carbost to Bernisdale road end (see Map SL23a)
- Candidate Core Path SL23.07(C) linking core paths SL23.03 and SL23.04 (see Map SL23b)





The settlement zone of Sleat comprises the Sleat peninsular and extends north to include Drumfearn, Kinloch and Ben Aslak.

A promoted route that is part of the Clan Donald forest walks was missed in the first consultation and it is proposed that it is included as a candidate core path

The Broadford to Drumfearn old road is proposed as a core path and is already referred to in Settlement Zone SL03 (Broadford)

•	Candidate Core Path SL24.08(C) Home Farm forest walk (see Map 24)



Staffin (SL25)

To the north, the settlement zone of Staffin extends just short of the Uig hill road and to the south the outskirts of Portree with the Trotternish ridge and the coast defining it's western and eastern boundaries respectively.

As with the Flodigarry settlement zone, The Staffin Trust are currently applying for funding for a number of new routes throughout East Trotternish. If these routes are developed within the timescale of the review they shall be considered for core path status.

Struan (SL26)

The settlement zone of Struan extends up to Ose and Glem Vic Askill in the north, Drynoch in the south and a boundary shared with Skeabost and Portree settlement zones over open moorland and forestry in the east.

There has been no significant access developments since the first core path plan.

Uig (SL27)

In the north the settlement zone of Uig extends to Creag Liath and meets the Trotternish Ridge at Bioda Buidh. In the East if follows the ridge down to Bealach na Leacaich . Glen Hinnisdale defines its southern boundary.

Since the first core path plan, work has been done to extend SL27.01, Idrigill Path to a viewpoint and it is proposed that this extension is included as a core path.

The Kingsburgh Forest Trust has created circular walks with the Kingsburgh Community Woodland at Glen Hinnisdale and it is proposed that these routes are included as proposed core paths.

Extend Core Path SL27.01 to viewpoint.. See map SL27a

Candidate Core Path SL27.06(C) Kingsburgh Community Woodland Paths. See map SL27b





Vatten (SL28)

The settlement divides into two areas, west and east. In the west the area extends to Idrigill Point and Healabhal Bheag and includes the settlements of Orbost, Roag and Greep. In the east the area extends to Glen Vic Askill and included the settlement of Harlosh, Vatten, Caroy and Balmeanach.

A new windfarm track links Edinbane with core path SL28.01, Loch Caroy to Glen Vic Askill. Windfarm tracks are constructed to a high standard and are usually of a gentler gradient then forestry tracks providing good multi user access opportunities including disabled scooter ramblers. It is proposed to investigate this as a potential core path. (See Edinbane SL07)