



## **PROJECT PLAN 2005-2008**

To Accompany 'Fresh futures' Funding Bid

1. Background

Paths development is already underway in Moray.

The Moray Local Access Strategy produced by The Moray Council is now operational. Under the auspices of the Strategy a partnership funded development project "The Moray Local Access Project" was set up with the following now having been achieved:

- a) Public Consultation exercise to establish Strategic & Local Needs.
- b) Production of prioritised GIS based Moray Local Access Development Plan (MLADP) for a 15-year 'roll out' period.
- c) Development of some priority routes identified in the MLADP – funded until end 2004.
- d) Promotion of developed paths through production of various publications and leaflets. funded until end 2004.

## **2. Need for a new – 'Quality of Life' Paths Project**

A new project is required to consolidate and expand on the previous Moray Local Access Project undertaken during 2002 – 2004. The Moray Local Access development Plan was established from an extensive public consultation exercise carried out in 2002/2003. Priority routes have therefore been derived from specifically identified community needs. Whilst some of the paths identified have already been developed and promoted there is still much more that needs to be done. Furthermore the existing 21 Local Access Groups that operate across Moray require further support in efforts to improve and manage their Local Paths Networks.

Fundamental to the new project is the premise that to maximise the 'quality of life' benefits from paths there needs to be a holistic approach based on comprehensive overall '*management*' of path networks. This will not just therefore include initial development of existing and new paths but also ongoing efforts to sustain and promote the routes to maximise on an ongoing basis the full range of benefits to be derived.

Whilst there is a need for the project to deliver priorities identified in the MLADP there is also justification on the basis of National Policy Directives. National policymakers are increasingly focussing improvements in public outdoor access as a way of achieving a raft of objectives in terms of sustainable transport; social inclusion, health and sustaining fragile rural communities such as exist across Moray. The new project will contribute to national policy targets by ensuring continuance of physical access improvements and promotion to maximise the multiple social, economic and environmental benefits to be derived.

## **3. Overall Objective of the Project**

The Moray Local Access Strategy aim underpins the project namely... ***"to satisfy the public's need for access and to maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits to the Moray area within the limited resources available"***. This is deemed to be the overall project objective.

## **4. Qualification Requirements, Project Criteria and Management Principles**

For a path to be included as a 'Quality of Life' path it simply has to have been identified within the MLADP. This is because the plan was originally derived from a rigorous public consultation exercise from which paths were prioritised on the basis of local identified needs and maximising overall economic, social and environmental benefits. Priority paths identified in the MLADP will be most likely to possess the ideal combination of elements which can best contribute to improving the overall 'quality of life' for people. These routes are what people have identified as the most important and this is where project resources will be targeted.

Paths contribute to Quality of Life in many ways. They are freely available and accessible to a wide range of users. They also provide opportunities for conducting healthy activities and improving mental well being. By connecting settlements to a wide range of locations, paths can help to improve understanding of the natural heritage and the general environment all around people. Promoted paths can bring economic benefits to fragile communities in the form of tourism. Within and between settlements better quality

paths can help reduce car journeys through creating off road commuter opportunities thus helping to protect the environment. Overall 'quality of life' derived from paths depends upon the unique combination of all of these elements.

Quality of Life Paths can simply be defined as ***"Paths that will through ongoing management have a positive impact on the populace at large by bringing about benefits including; social inclusion and community; economy and tourism, understanding of environment; better health; optimising of multiple use and sustained accessibility"***.

These benefits then are the criteria that establish a Quality of Life Path and are also the elements to monitor and evaluate to determine how a path, once resources have been committed to its management, has actually improved life quality for the community in general.

It is necessary to establish **Management Principles** for the paths to ensure that a minimum standard of quality is achieved to fully realise the range of benefits to be derived. These are as follows: -

- i) Paths should always be fit for the intended purpose in terms of surface, gradient, and barrier features taking account of the design requirements inherent from multiple use. Ongoing path management should also be operated on the basis of 'fit for purpose'. Detailed path design will be advised by the following publications:
  - Signage – Signpost Guidance (PFAP)
  - Lowland Path Construction – A Guide to Good Practice
  - Upland Pathworks (Path Industry Skills Group)
  - Countryside Access Design Guide (SNH)
  - Upland Path Management (Upland Path Advisory Group)
- ii) Path design and aspect should always maximise the opportunities for features of interest to be shown to best advantage.
- iii) All routes managed should feature signage as an integral part of project development with map boards sited in central locations within principal and secondary settlements featuring local networks. Path network promotion should incorporate development of 'Local Identity'.
- iv) Where practical, routes should be segregated from areas of intensive farming practices (e.g. crops, livestock etc).
- v) Path Networks Management should always be based upon maximising 'best value'.
- vi) Paths should be promoted to focus on the specific benefits of access.

## **5. Project Detail**

The project is simply about committing resources for management of *Priority 1 and 2 paths* identified in the Moray Local Access Development Plan (MLADP) to maximise the 'Quality of Life' benefits that have the potential to be derived. The project duration is over 3 years (2005-2008). Project resources can be used to achieve further enhancements to paths already worked on and also improvements to other paths where no work has yet taken place.

The '**Path Management' Measures** to be applied to Quality of Life Paths include the following:

- i) **Physical Works** – This includes surfacing, vegetation control, drainage, signage, way-marking, signage, interpretation infrastructure and other works, which will improve and sustain the accessibility of an existing path. Work can involve enhancement of an existing path and it's environment or involves physical creation of new path links. Inclusive as part of 'physical works' are legal costs associated with access agreements with landowners and the setting of joint public liability

insurance for the access groups. All work will be carried out with the aim of achieving the standards contained within the project management principles.

Moray possesses a numerous and diverse range of paths and tracks. Whilst some work has been done to improve these many are still not fully used to their full potential due to poor physical condition, low public awareness, and landowner inertia. Work will concentrate on making these paths more 'accessible'.

A 'corporate' Moray style will be developed for signage, way-marking and promotional materials whilst still allowing for the expression of local identity through formulation of logos and emblems which can be incorporated on all materials.

In some cases development of local paths network will require new 'links' to be constructed to complete gaps in access route provision. This can sometimes involve a major upgrade to an existing path or will involve creating a totally new route. Due to the considerable expense involved such works will only be undertaken where there is an identifiable justification based on local need and multiple benefits.

ii) **Promotion** – This will be targeted to raise awareness of paths and the overall benefits to be derived. This is essential to develop a 'Moray Product' in terms of outdoor access. Production of conventional printed publications will be carried out together with the use of IT, to ensure as wide a target audience as possible. All materials will be formulated through the appropriate Local Access Groups. A 'Marketing Plan' will be produced which will deliver the overall approach. Measures will include:-

- a) General leaflets and publications – For path routes and networks.
- b) IT - website development and linkages / CD-ROM.

Includes production of an all inclusive interactive CD-ROM capable of storing the vast amount of access information in a searchable data base format allowing the user to tailor routes to their needs based upon simple criteria such as health and to experience a virtual tour on their desk top.

iii) **Interpretation / Education** – Designed to improve understanding of and enjoyment of natural and cultural heritage to be experienced along path networks and to educate about the personal benefits to be derived in taking more access particularly with regards to improved health. The programme will include production of education pack for schools/clubs highlighting the benefits of access and a Moray Health Walks Leaflet, detailing all health walks in Moray using a simple rating system allowing the public to plan and ultimately progress through the walks improving their health. This will be produced in partnership with Moray Health Promotions. Erection of on site interpretation infrastructure although relevant to this part of the project will be developed as part of physical paths works.

- iv) **Local Media Promotion** – This is required to maintain an ongoing public profile through development of a series of press articles and notices focusing specifically on themes of local interest relating to the paths network. This will involve working closely with Local Access Groups to supply ongoing information. Costs will principally relate to time spent by a public relations consultant on preparation of articles and costs of posting notices.
- v) **Monitoring / Evaluation** – This is required to assess whether the full benefit of implementing quality of life paths are being derived. This will be achieved through a combination of installing footfall counters at varying locations, survey and questionnaire techniques, recording 'hits' on websites and take up of leaflets. The evaluation process will involve consultants assisting with base line / subsequent surveys once routes are developed and promoted producing an analysis and results report at the end of the project.
- vi) **Moray Access Officer** - Whilst the Council have a permanently employed Access Manager who will co-ordinate and oversee the project, an Access Officer will be required for the 3 year duration of the project. This person will ensure practical delivery of path development projects from initial negotiations through to completion. The Officer will work closely with the 21 voluntary Local Access Groups across Moray in an enabling and support role. This will ensure 'best value' and that there is ongoing sustainable management of the Local paths networks.

## 6. Project Outputs and Costs

MEASURE	OUTPUT	COST	BASIS
<b>1. Physical Works</b>			
a) Accessible Paths	100km of which 40km to be additional	£150,000	£1,500 per km
b) New Paths	5km	£60,000	£12,000 per km
<b>2. Promotion</b>			
a) Leaflets	7	£17,500	Development, Printing & Distribution £2,500 each
b) Web Site development	1	£10,000	Developing Site and / or Linkages
c) CD ROM	1	£10,000	Development, Production & Distribution
<b>3. Interpretation/Education</b>			
a) Education Pack	1	£6,000	Folder & Sheets, Development, Printing & Distribution
b) Health Walks Leaflet	1	£4,000	Development, Printing & Distribution
<b>4. Local Media Promotion</b>	Min 20 Press Articles/Notices	£4,500	Article Development & Production Costs
<b>5. Evaluation/Monitoring</b>	Report of Findings-Consultants	£7,500	Measurement, Analysis & Report
<b>6. Employment of Moray Access Officer</b>	1 post (3 year contract)	£66,000	3 year salary costs including travel, training, subsistence and superannuation
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£335,500</b>	

## 7. Project Delivery Mechanisms

The Project will be overseen by a Partnership Management Group (PMG) comprising the principle funding partners, detailed in Section 10, and also other relevant agencies such as Forest Enterprise (FE) Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board (AGTB) Moray Health Promotions and The Paths for all Partnership.

The Moray Council will operate as 'lead' agency for the project. The chair will revolve between members for each meeting, held on average once every two months. The P.M.G. will have overall responsibility for overseeing strategic delivery of the project including:

- Project management, evaluation and monitoring
- Meeting the requirements of relevant funding bodies
- Ensuring suitable information flow between the project and relevant staff in partner organisations to ensure a consistent approach
- General Management and support to Project Staff
- Budget overview and decisions on fund disbursement
- Resolution of issues and formulation of project policy to ease and direct implementation.
- Ensure priorities are addressed in terms of allocation of scarce resources
- Ensure 'best value' is maximised.

Whilst the project extends for a limited period of 3 years it is considered important to ensure that the project benefits are sustained beyond that period. Key to this is the need to ensure ongoing sustainable management of the path networks. Central to this approach will be the Local Access Groups and existing Moray Council Maintenance Arrangements. In the long term a more comprehensive solution will be required.

The Council have a responsibility under the new Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 to set up an Access Forum. The Council will explore the setting up of the forum as a 'trust' which can thereafter seek funding for the ongoing management and promotion of parts or all of the Moray Paths Networks. This is the intended long-term solution for ongoing sustainability of the paths financed through this project.

The project will be delivered by the Moray Access Manager and the Access Officer. The Manager will be responsible for statutory duties placed on the Council by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and for overall co-ordination of the project. He will submit regular progress reports to the P.M.G. The Officer will implement the project supervised by the Manager. Both posts will be employed through the Moray Council. The new project will directly contribute to practical delivery of the objectives of the Land Reform Legislation by working towards a sustainable ongoing management regime for path networks, which maximises the benefits. Part of this approach will involve dovetailing efforts with others such as Land Managers, Forest Managers and Ranger Services.

Practical Delivery of the project will be focussed through the Local Access Groups.

## **8. Community Focus – Local Access Groups**

Volunteer Local Access Groups will operate a central role in management and promotion of their Local Paths Networks. The project will work in partnership with these groups operating a support and enabling role through funding priority paths project and by providing direct input and assistance from the project staff.

The Local Access Groups will play a crucial role in engendering local support and 'ownership' of the paths networks. Overall effort will be channelled through these groups which are constituted in a variety of ways from informal associations to companies limited by guarantee.

The project staff will be there to help the groups with the following on a day to day basis:

- Project planning
- Landowner agreements
- Statutory permissions
- Technical advice
- Public consultation
- Contract documentation
- Tendering
- Management of contracts/site works

- Maintenance schedules/risk assessments
- Legislative framework
- Monitoring/evaluation
- Preparation of promotional materials
- Distribution of promotional materials
- Seeking additional funding

The groups meet regularly to discuss progress and future planning of access improvements. Volunteers give their time freely which can simply be to contribute to meetings but often involves the carrying out of physical paths works and fund raising activities.

Each of the groups have signed up to the 'Moray Local Access Development Plan' and the priority routes identified for their respective areas. Not every part of Moray is covered by a Local Access Group. In these instances the project staff will require to take the lead role consulting with existing community groups such as Community Councils. Where possible project staff will encourage new Local Access Groups to be formed.

There are currently 21 Local Access Groups existing in Moray which are involved to varying degrees in improving outdoor access in their areas. These groups are listed as follows:

<u>GROUP</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
Buckie Community Council	Buckie
Burghead Footpaths Group	Burghead
Cottage Wood Community Association	Keith
Cullen Tourist Initiative	Cullen
Cullen, Deskford and Portknockie Heritage Group	Cullen Area
Dava Way Association	Forres
Drummuir 21	Drummuir nr. Keith
Findochty Community Council	Findochty
Fochabers in Bloom/Fochabers Footpaths	Fochabers
Forres Community Woodland Trust	Forres
Forres Footpaths Trust	Forres
Friends of Ben Rinnes	Mid Speyside
Grange Footpaths Group	Grange
Keith and District Cultural and Heritage Group	Keith
Lhanbryde Community Challenge	Lhanbryde
Moray Mountain Bikers	Across Moray
Mortlach Area Leisure Trails Group (M.A.L.T.)	Dufftown
Mosstodloch Amenities Association	Mosstodloch
Portknockie Community Council	Portknockie
Quarrelwood Association	Elgin
Speyside Footpaths Network Group	Mid Speyside

## 9. Marketing and Promotion

A specific **Marketing Plan** will be devised for the new project, which will feature details of promotion, Interpretation/Education and Local Media Promotion. The emphasis on these elements is based on the premise that just developing and improving paths is not enough to ensure their usage. It is clear that the paths 'product' needs to be marketed to a wide range of groups and individuals to ensure 'getting the message across' about the benefits to be derived. Part of this approach will involve integration with other efforts namely:

- Health initiatives – work alongside existing Moray Paths to Health Scheme and Moray Health Promotions to increase healthy usage of paths, persuade health practitioners to spread the message about the health benefits of using the paths network.

- Ranger Services – work closely with the Moray Coast Ranger Service, FE Ranger Service and the Speyside Way Ranger Services particularly in relation raising the profile of specific routes, activities and events.
- Events – Link into specific events such as Moray Environment week and the Spirit of Speyside Walking Festival.
- Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board – use A.G.T.B's organisational resources to persuade more visitors to come to Moray for activity tourism and outdoor access.
- Local Access Groups – involve at all stages of design, production and distribution of promotional and interpretative materials.
- Moray Council Cycling Officer – work with officer to increase cycling on the paths network.

A considerable part of the project will involve raising awareness through production of promotional materials and use of IT. Partners such as Forest Enterprise and AGTB will assist by making available their IT and information distribution networks.

Monitoring and evaluation of the effects of marketing and promotion will be the responsibility of the Access Staff assisted by consultants and the Local Access Groups.

## 10. Funding Sources

The principle funding partners are as follows:

Scottish Natural Heritage	£90,000
The Moray Council	£90,000
Fresh Futures	<u>£155,500</u>
	<u>£335,500</u>

Finance will also be sought from 'Fresh Futures'. The specific contributions from each organisation require to be established prior to any 'Fresh Futures' or SNH grant offer.

## 11. Timescale

It is intended to commence this project on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 terminating 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008. If successful this will effectively allow for a transition from the previous Moray Local Access Project due to finish at the end of 2004. Much will depend on The Moray Council securing 'core' funds to draw down adequate finance from the respective partners and grant sources.

A detailed **project programme** will be agreed by the project partners at the start of the project. This will specify target dates for key outputs over the 3-year period. This will guide project staff and focus their overall efforts and workload on a day to day basis.