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East Dunbartonshire Core Path Plan

Introduction

1.0 Welcome to East Dunbartonshire's Core Paths Plan. The core path route maps, which accompany this text, can be found on the East Dunbartonshire Council website. Each path has been selected following careful public consultation and a consideration of the Core Path selection criteria. The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 (sections 17 – 20) set out that each Local Authority must draw up a Core Paths Plan that *"provides the basic framework of routes sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area. This basic framework of routes will link into and support wider paths."* The Council believes that this Core Path Plan gives the people of East Dunbartonshire a path network that enhances the daily quality of life.

2.0 What is a Core Path?

A Core Path can be a remote and grassy path or black tarmac and urban. Not every path in East Dunbartonshire is adopted as a Core Path. Core Paths are well used, connect people to where they want to go and connect to each other. The Core Path network will form a strong skeleton of routes. Those paths not designated as Core Paths will flesh out this skeleton, completing the network and fulfilling important roles as local paths. Paths designated as Core Paths may eventually be formally mapped on the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Explorer Map series as a dashed purple line. As with other Core Paths Plans across Scotland not every user will be able to use every Core Path. However, we will aim to ensure that the least restrictive boundary crossings and access points will be installed on our Core Paths. To help people navigate the network, Core Paths will be signposted and will be promoted.



3.0 Other Paths

The Core Paths Plan is not a complete record of every path in the district and Core Paths may link to other path networks within East Dunbartonshire. The Core Path plan consultation process both highlighted gaps in the path networks and produced some good ideas for future routes. If and when these “aspirational” paths are developed then they can be considered for inclusion in the plan. It is anticipated the plan will be reviewed after five years. Modifications, new Core Path proposals and reclassification of paths can be considered and these may be subject to the appropriate consultation process.



4.0 Principles

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 states that a Core Path Plan should be “sufficient for purpose”. In this draft plan *sufficiency* has been judged on the outcomes of the consultation process. The extent of the path network has been established by the views expressed during public consultation.

The Core Paths Plan has been developed according to the following principles

- The Core Path Network will bring our communities together. Paths will start and finish near where people live. Paths will link people to their town centres, work places and schools.
- Through time each Core Path will be sign posted at key access points and the least restrictive access option will be used where gates and barriers are required.
- Core Paths will be “fit for purpose”. This means that a path should be of a standard appropriate for the anticipated users and location. A Core Path in the Campsie Fells can be a simple sheep track while an urban Core Path may have street lighting and bitumen surface.
- The Plan is the foundation for building our path network; - a network that will provide many benefits. Most importantly it will secure a fundamental entitlement, the freedom to walk unimpeded through our towns, villages and countryside.
- The Forth and Clyde Canal, Allander/Kelvin Way, and the Strathkelvin Railway Way provide the basic scaffolding for the Plan. Connecting into this are the second tier of routes identified as having special importance to local communities. The network is fully fleshed out by local or less used routes that will not be Core Paths but contribute in their small way to the greater whole.

5.0 Objectives

The Core Path plan will provide for walkers, cyclists, and horse riders of all abilities. The Core Path Network identified in this document has been shaped by the need for the Core Path network to deliver the following objectives.

- The Core Path Plan will improve the **health and well being** of our communities by delivering a path network that gives everyone opportunities for uncomplicated everyday physical exercise.
- The Core Path Plan will support the reduction of **traffic congestion and pollution** by providing everyone with opportunities to make journeys on foot and by bike.
- Building on the growth in walking and cycling the Core Path Plan will **support local business** by bringing visitors to the area, using our key routes such as the West Highland Way, the Forth and Clyde Canal and the Campsie Hills as destinations.
- The Core Path Plan will support **good farming** and land management and **minimise irresponsible behaviour** by proactively managing access to the countryside.



6.0 The Wider Strategic Position

The Council, through the Corporate Development Plan, and with its Community Planning Partners, in the Single Outcome Agreement has set out the corporate priorities for East Dunbartonshire. It is intended that the provision of a Core Path Plan will contribute to the local outcome: East Dunbartonshire has an increasingly attractive and accessible built and natural environment for our residents and visitors.

7.0 The Development of the Core Paths Plan

The development of the Core Path Plan was carried out in terms of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the associated guidance. Over 1000 East Dunbartonshire residents, representative of all communities, were involved in the early consultation process which identified the routes to be considered for inclusion. The routes were then assessed against a series of criteria and in consultation with East Dunbartonshire Access Forum the Draft Core Path Plan was drawn up. This draft plan was then subject to a period of formal consultation. A small number of objections and other representations were received. These were considered by the Access Panel and the Council and the necessary modifications made to the Plan.

8.0 Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is carried out to assess the possible affects this Plan could have on the Environment. The SEA examines every aspect of the plan: objectives, criteria and principles as well as the possible environmental impact of each path. This plan can be read in conjunction with the SEA document.

9.0 Management of the Core Path Network

The Core Paths listed in the Plan are already in daily use. For the majority of routes little will change other than the legal status of the path concerned. The legislation governing Core Paths does not oblige the Council to maintain paths designated as Core Paths, but Council will endeavour to upkeep routes to their current standards. In line with the Legislation governing Core Path Planning East Dunbartonshire Council intends over time to sign post all paths formally adopted as Core Paths.

10.0 Cross Boundary Routes

Paths do not stop at Council boundaries and this Core Path Plan includes paths that continue into neighbouring authorities. Consideration is being given nationally to put all of Scotland's Core Paths on a single website so the national network can be viewed as a whole.

11.0 Criteria

The following criteria were used to select the candidate paths. The paths selected meet the majority or all of these criteria:

- 1 demonstrate sufficient demand during the public consultation process
- 2 provide links between communities
- 3 be fit for purpose
- 4 make circular routes and comprehensive networks
- 5 connect to town centres, schools and other public facilities
- 6 contribute to efficient land management and minimise irresponsible behaviour
- 7 make links across council boundaries and connect to the wider regional and national network
- 8 encourage and provide access to sites of natural, cultural and built heritage
- 9 support opportunities for sustainable regeneration, tourism and housing development

