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28 May 2003

LP-3 INVERURIE

Please ask for: Direct Dial: Linda Mathieson 01467 628380

Anne Baillie Bailies of Bennachie Birchbank Burnhervie Inverurie AB51 5JO

Dear Ms Baillie

## ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS STRATEGY AREA WORKSHOPS 2003

We would like to invite you to the latest round of Access Workshops. This time focusing on the local authorities role under the new access legislation (Part 1 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act), specifically those duties involving/affecting local communities, i.e.

- Local Access Forums
- Core Path Planning

Local Access Forums were covered in the workshops run in November 2001. Attached is a summary of these workshops.

Since the November 2001 workshops, the Land Reform Bill has been passed by Parliament and given Royal Assent. The Bill will however not come into force until there is an approved version of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC). A consultation document on the Code has recently been published by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). Closing date for comments is 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003. For copies of this document contact Bridget Dales, Tel: 01738 458565 or e-mail soacconsultation@snh.gov.uk

Once the final draft of the SOAC has been reviewed and approved by Ministers and the Scottish Parliament the access legislation will come into effect. This is expected to be Spring 2004. Prior to this a set of guidance notes for local authorities on their duties and powers relating to the access legislation is to be produced by the Scottish Executive. Meantime Aberdeenshire Council access staff would like to engage with the local community on outline proposals for the establishment of the Local Access Forum(s) and the Core Paths Plan for Aberdeenshire.

This year's workshops will begin with an overview of the access legislation followed by two workshop sessions, the first on Local Access Forums and the second on Core Path Plans.

If you are interested in attending one or more of the Area Workshops, please complete and return the attached attendance slip, so that appropriate seating and catering arrangements can be made for numbers anticipated.

Yours sincerely

Linda Mathieson

Environmental Planner (Strategic)

LM/HAR

PTO for Workshop Timetable and Programme

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#### WORKSHOPS

#### ALL 6.45PM - 9.30PM

AREA STEINIM VG DEVONORS bos	DATE	LOCATION
Banff & Buchan (East)	10 <sup>th</sup> June	Fraserburgh Lighthouse Museum
North Marr	11 <sup>th</sup> June	Huntly - Gordon Arms
Banff & Buchan (West)	12 <sup>th</sup> June	Banff Springs Hotel
Buchan	17 <sup>th</sup> June	Old Deer - Aden Arms
Garioch	18 <sup>th</sup> June	Inverurie – Kintore Arms
South Marr	19 <sup>th</sup> June	Aboyne – Boat Inn
Kincardine & Mearns	24 <sup>th</sup> June	Stonehaven - St Leonards Hotel
Formartine	26 <sup>th</sup> June	Tarves – Aberdeen Arms

### **OUTLINE PROGRAMME**

TIME	ITEM	
6.45pm	Tea/Coffee	
7.00pm	Introduction	
7.05pm	Overview of the access legislation and Scottish Outdoor	Access Code
7.30pm	Question time / Discussion Period	
8.00pm	Workshop 1 Local Access Forum(s) for Aberdeenshire	
8.25pm	Workshop 1 Feedback	
8.40pm	Workshop 2 Core Path Plan for Aberdeenshire	
9.05pm	Workshop 2 Feedback	
9.20pm	Wrap up and close	

## WORKSHOP 2 - ACCESS FORUMS FOR ABERDEENSHIRE

Number of Forums	Area Responses	Comments
1 os posociavo blueW	1 Group (Marr South)	
2 service doscutes artifansobredA	2 Groups (Kin.& Mearns)	Based on a     Lowland/Upland spilt
3 colfetnessures  Evanvari suitaire ano so	4 Groups (1 group each from Marr North and Marr South and 2 groups from Banff & Buchan/Buchan)	<ul> <li>Lowland (2)/upland(1)</li> <li>North/Central/South split</li> </ul>
4 off somethin your red as Scottist Executive/Ecottist Scottist Executive/Ecottist ext the Park Authority will	1 Group (Garioch)	<ul> <li>Base on topography – could be difficult to define boundaries.</li> <li>Would be a more manageable number.</li> </ul>
5 legal value of (8 ovingualisments teach legal of the control of	Was a suggestion from Garioch	Base on 5 key towns however this would not provide balanced representation across Aberdeenshire
6 and an Abertanesia 6	5 Groups (1 group each from Marr North, Garioch, Kin & Mearns and 2 groups from Marr South)	<ul> <li>Some groups feel 6 would be too many to manage.</li> <li>Would have clear Forum boundaries.</li> <li>Would be difficult for Agencies to field reps for all the Forums.</li> </ul>
7	1 Group (Marr South)	
Other	6 Groups - One Strategic Forum supported by a range of local groups. (1 Banff and Buchan/Buchan, 2 Formartine, 3 Garioch)	Two Tier Approach     would enable Straegic     Group to be more     neutral and deal with     broad issues but local     groups could feed in     specfic issues that     could not be resolved     locally.

SERDEENSHIRE Comments	ACCESS FORUMS FOR A	Two tier approach could lead to confusion and duplication.
	1 Group (Marr South)	Would overcome some of the transport issues.     More consistent
Based on a     Lowland/Opland spilt	2 Groups (Kin & Means)	approach across Aberdeenshire.
e   Lewland (2)/upland(1	4 Groups	Will allow greater representation.

Generally the groups found it difficult to get a consensus for one solution however there were a number of groups who eventually felt the two tier approach may be the best option. There are however a number of external factors that may influence the final decision including the expected guidance note from Scottish Executive/Scottish Natural Heritage on Local Access Forums. Another influencing factor will be the establishment of the Cairngorms National Park and whether the Park Authority will have responsibility for a Park Area Access Forum.

Many attendees felt that the more Forums the better (max 6) to allow local representation but appreciated that this would create a significant administrative burden to the Council. Travel costs also need to be a consideration in the numbers and locations of the meetings.

The Council will now wait until the Guidance Note expected in late February early March is produced before proceeding with the establishment of the Aberdeenshire Forum(s).

# Reply Slip - Aberdeenshire Countryside Access Strategy Workshops June 2003

Please list below names of those attending and which workshop they will be attending.

NAMES	WORKSHOPS ATTENDING
	WORKSHOPS ATTENDING

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will not be attending	any of the	Access	Workshops.
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NAME:	

Return to:

Linda Mathieson

Planning & Environmental Services

Aberdeenshire Council

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Or e-mail: linda.Mathieson@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

If the address or contact name is incorrect on the attached letter or if you wish to be removed from the Aberdeenshire Access contacts list, please let us know.