

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Planning Committee: 5 February 2008

Subject : Proposed Draft Core Paths Plan

1 Purpose

- 1.1** To inform the Committee of the preparation of the West Dunbartonshire Proposed Draft Core Paths Plan, and to seek approval for the Plan to be the subject of public consultation.

2 Background

- 2.1** Section 17 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 places a duty on all Local Authorities to produce a Core Paths Plan by February 2008. The Plan will provide a system of paths (core paths) 'sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area'.
- 2.2** The West Dunbartonshire Core Paths Plan will cover all of the Council area except that part of the Council area within the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park. All access issues within the National Park are the responsibility of the National Park Authority.

3 Main Issues

- 3.1** West Dunbartonshire Council has previously undertaken a series of public consultation events with local communities and interested groups resulting in the production of the three Local Outdoor Access Plans for Dumbarton, the Vale of Leven and Clydebank to Bowling, which identify a series of routes throughout West Dunbartonshire.
- 3.2** The West Dunbartonshire Local Access Forum has agreed a set of criteria which have been applied to the routes identified in the Local Outdoor Access Plans and all other existing paths in West Dunbartonshire to ensure the paths put forward as proposed Core Paths for the next round of public consultation meet the requirements of the Land Reform Act and the local communities. This also meets

the requirements of the Core Paths Planning good practice guidelines issued by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Paths for All Partnership.

- 3.3** The Proposed Draft Core Paths Plan will consist of a series of maps covering West Dunbartonshire (excluding the National Park Authority area) identifying the paths which meet the agreed criteria and all other known routes, and text identifying the issues and processes behind the Plan. Copies of the Proposed Draft Core Paths Plan have been placed in Members rooms for information.
- 3.4** The consultation on the Proposed Draft Core Paths Plan will consist of
- six public 'drop-in' sessions at various venues in West Dunbartonshire,
 - copies of the Plan will be sent in CD format to all interested parties including local communities and land managers,
 - paper copies will be available in all libraries, and
 - the full consultation including an on-line response form will be available on the West Dunbartonshire Council web site.
- The second round of public consultation will take place from 3 to 31 March 2008.
- 3.5** The information gathered during the second round of public consultation will be considered and evaluated and a Draft Core Paths Plan prepared. This will be reported back to Committee for consideration and thereafter published for a formal 12 week consultation from June to August 2008. If there are any formal objections to the Draft Core Paths Plan which cannot be resolved during this period then the matter will be referred to the Scottish Government who will appoint a Reporter to hold a local inquiry in order to resolve the matter. Assuming there are no issues, the West Dunbartonshire Core Paths Plan could be formally adopted and lodged with the Scottish Government in September 2008.
- 3.6** Core Paths will be shown on all Ordnance Survey Maps in Scotland. Councils may 'do anything which they consider appropriate for the purposes of maintaining a core path, keeping it free from obstructions or encroachment, and providing the public with direction signs.'
- 3.7** A Strategic Environmental Assessment will require to be undertaken for the Core Paths Plan, and this is currently underway.
- 3.8** West Dunbartonshire Council will not achieve the target date set by the Scottish Government of February 2008 for producing its Core Paths Plan as a result of personnel shortages over the past 18 months. However considerable progress has taken place in the past 3 months in progressing the Proposed Draft Core Paths Plan in order that it can be lodged with the Scottish Government in September this year. The Government has been informed of this and has accepted this position.

4 Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no known personnel issues.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1** Financial provision has been made for the preparation of the Core Paths Plan in the relevant budgets. The Strategic Environmental Assessment is at the stage of a scoping exercise and likely costs of full preparation are currently being evaluated.

6 Risk Analysis

- 6.1** There are no known risks to the Council; the preparation of the Core Paths Plan is a statutory requirement under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1** The preparation of the West Dunbartonshire Proposed Draft Core Paths Plan represents a key step towards fulfilling the Council's statutory duty under Section 17 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. The preparation of previous Outdoor Access Plans has assisted in the preparation of the Proposed Draft Core Paths Plan and this stage of public consultation will further assist the preparation of the Finalised Plan to be submitted to the Scottish Government.

8 Recommendations

- 8.1** The Committee is recommended to:
- agree that the West Dunbartonshire Proposed Draft Core Paths Plan undergo a period of public consultation; and
 - note the progress with, and the proposed timetable for preparation of the West Dunbartonshire Core Paths Plan.

Elaine Melrose

Executive Director of Housing, Environmental & Economic Development

Date: 22 January 2008

Person to Contact : Donald Petrie
Access Officer
Tel : 01389 737376
E-mail : Donald.Petrie@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendices : None

Background Papers : West Dunbartonshire Access Strategy
Access Consultation in and around Dumbarton
Clydebank to Bowling Access Action Plan
Vale of Leven Area Local Path Network

Wards Affected : All