



Dear Emma

## **Core Paths Consultation Response - Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs**

I refer to the request for comments on the Core Paths Plan which has been the subject of a review this summer and trust the following comments are received in time to be taken into account:

**1. Current Core Paths Network and Outstanding Projects-** We support the current core paths network remaining in any updated plan along with most of the proposals which have not yet been implemented for a variety of reasons. We note good progress has been made with a number of path extensions and upgrades, but there is more to do on this front and particularly on sections of the popular West Highland Way.

**2. Southern Loch Lomond Path Links -** We note that little progress has been made with improving family friendly path links between Balloch and Gartocharn apart from undertaking a study of the potential to extend the existing roadside path. While we haven't seen the results of this study we understand the costs of this scheme were prohibitive and off road alternatives are being considered further. In the absence of any information on this we would encourage the Park Authority to pursue family friendly off road path options further and pursue the implementation of a scheme between Balloch, Gartocharn and Drymen within the time period of the next plan.

With the Woodland Trust completing path upgrades between Balloch Castle Country Park, Whinney Hill and the Water Board Road at Blairlinnans and the RSPB opening up some trails east of Gartocharn and the Drymen development trust making good progress with largely off highway path links between Drymen and Balmaha, there is a real opportunity to complete a family friendly off road route linking Balloch and Balmaha as part of a Loch Lomond path and trail network. This has been a long held ambition of the Friends and we would like to see this progressed further as a high priority in the next Core Paths Plan.

**3. Three Lochs Way Re-Alignment and Links with Luss-** We have been working closely with the power companies, Luss Estates and others in recent years progressing a detailed design for The re-alignment of the Three Lochs Way as part of the power companies' VIEW/VISTA OFGEM bid which we consider could be one of the most strategically important path network projects in the National Park that will result in the development of new off road paths in Glens Fruin, na Cairinn, Luss, Molloch and Douglas and then over the An – t'Sreang pass to Arrochar. Consequently we believe this major initiative should be featured in the updated core paths plan. The funding package is being developed in a way

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that will result in a major financial bond being secured to cover ongoing costs to avoid the failings in future proofing the maintenance of other major trails such as the West Highland Way and the John Muir Way.

Also at a recent stakeholder event on the realignment of the A82 between Tarbet and Ardlui which was organised by consultants Fairhurst Engineers in Arrochar, we took the opportunity to make the case that these works should facilitate the long sought extension of the Three Lochs Way north of Inveruglas to Ardlui and Inverarnan. We hope therefore that you will bear this in mind when drawing up your Core Path proposals for the northern reaches of Loch Lomond.

**4. Other Potential Routes-** Other potential routes which are a good fit for the criteria (some of which, like the old railway along Loch Earn, are currently being developed or are already in place) include the Lochgoilhead riverside path, Ben Lui mine access road, Glen Dochart, Balquhidder Glen to Loch Lomond and Glen Gyle to Loch Lomond (The recent powerline reinforcement works provides the opportunity to retain the temporary road, but in a modified landscaped way, to improve this route between Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond).

Other potential routes which should be considered are:

Loch Katrine Dam to Glasahoile, Loch Chon and Strath Ard,

Glen Kinglass to Glen Falloch,

Access routes to both Ben Vorlich's, Ben More and the other popular Crianlarich tops,

Ben Glass Falls and Beinn Chabhair access trail,

Ben Donich, Ben Dubh(Luss),

Inchcaillach trails,

Whinney Hill woodland trails, Lorn and Boturich access roads

The success of the Callander Landscape Partnership will result in the development of the path network around the periphery of the town providing, among others, safe all abilities public access to important natural features such as the Leny Falls . Once again we would recommend that these routes be recognised as Core Paths

Yours sincerely,

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Vice-Chairman

Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs