

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	6 November 2012
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	The Glens and Deeside Way
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/12/232

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is in response to Councillor Ian Yuill's Motion to this Committee on 13th September 2011 about the creation of a new long distance path route between Aberdeen and Perthshire. (At that time it was suggested that it could be called the Pictish Way).

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Note the content of this report.
2. Support the principle of the long distance route but take no further action until all authorities along the route are engaged in the project.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no other implications.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 At its meeting of 13th September 2011 this Committee approved Councillor Ian Yuill's Motion *"amongst other things, to request officers to participate in the Royal Deeside, Angus and Perthshire Way Steering Group which was already discussing the establishment of the "Pictish Way", and that officers report back to the next meeting of the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee regarding the terms of the motion, and in particular detailing the outstanding aspects*

required to establish and signpost the proposed "Pictish Way", as well as the financial cost of achieving this".

- 5.2 An interim report was presented to the Committee at its 31 January meeting. This provided an update explaining that Angus Council intended to commission a feasibility study that would consider if the proposed route in its entirety was achievable, whether there is demand for it and providing details of the works required to bring it up to a fit for purpose standard.
- 5.3 Following completion of the feasibility study a meeting of the Steering Group, renamed the Pictish Way Steering Group was held in Forfar on the 25th of August. This was attended by the Senior Planner from the Environmental Policy Team and Councillor Yuill.
- 5.4 The principal issues that arose from consideration of the feasibility study were the resource implications for the local authorities taking on the route development and the continuing maintenance of the gap sections between established paths or tracks. The whole route would need to be in place and be brought up to a fit for purpose standard before it could be promoted and land owner negotiations would be needed prior to this. Within Aberdeen City there is a relatively short length of the route and this is already in place as the Deeside Way. Other local authorities' areas have longer lengths of the route and gaps that would be more costly to resolve. The resource implications for these authorities would be much greater. At the last two Steering Group meetings there have been no representatives from Aberdeenshire Council or the Cairngorms National Park Authority. Large sections of the route pass through their areas and therefore their support for the project would be crucial.
- 5.5 There would then be significant financial and legal (liability and landowner negotiation) issues with the route being developed jointly by local authorities and the Cairngorm National Park Authority. However, there are examples of long distance routes (e.g. the Rob Roy Way) having been developed 'virtually' and promoted as a concept online by private individuals. Interest and use (under access rights provided by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act) grows gradually, and more official route development can follow as and when possible. The potential economic benefits of the route are recognized and there is broad support from the Steering Group but the shorter term resource and legal implications suggest that a more practical first step would be the development of the 'virtual' route. A member of the Steering Group has undertaken to develop a website describing and illustrating the route.
- 5.6 There was also discussion on the name of the route. There already is a Pictish Trail in the Highlands and there was agreement that Glens and Deeside Way would be a more appropriate title. The precise start and finish of the route is not specified but it is quite clear that there is the opportunity to link Aberdeen (via the Deeside Way) with Pitlochry.

6. IMPACT

The Single Outcome Agreement's Wealthier and Fairer outcome is most directly relevant to this report, as the long distance path could attract leisure tourists to the city, although none of the actions listed in the SOA relate to such a project. This also relates to the Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking objective of Aberdeen being an even more attractive place in which to do business. This could support the EP&I service priority within the 5 Year Business Plan of encouraging future economic and business development in the city.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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