

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE 10 SEPTEMBER 2002

SUBJECT: ANGUS GLENS PATH NETWORK (PILOT), PROGRESS REPORT

JOINT REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND THE DIRECTORS OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORT AND LEISURE SERVICES

Abstract: This report updates the Committee on the outcome of the pilot study to investigate development opportunities bringing socio-economic benefits to the Angus Glens (Clova, Doll and Prosen cluster area), commissioned by Angus Council in March 2002.

1 RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a) note the contents of the Angus Glens Path Networks (Pilot) consultancy study and action plan to develop opportunities for a path network in the Glens Clova, Doll and Prosen area;
 - b) note that the Partners intend to report back the findings of the pilot study to the relevant Angus Glens Communities in September 2002;
 - c) note the action taken so far to pursue development opportunities arising from the proposed Action Plan; and
 - d) agree the expenditure of £1,745 towards the set-up costs for the walking festival to be met from the Economic Development Revenue budget for 2002/3.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Committee is referred to Article 9 of the minute of the Policy and Resources Committee of 5 February 2002, which records that the Committee approved the appointment of a consultant to undertake a pilot study in the Glen Clova, Doll and Prosen area.
- 2.2 In partnership with Scottish Enterprise Tayside (SET), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the Cairngorms Partnership, and Forest Enterprise, Angus Council has contributed £3,100 towards the costs of a pilot study, estimated at £12,000. In-kind support has also been provided by Council officers from the Economic Development Unit of the Chief Executive's Department, Planning & Transport, Leisure Services, the Community Education Services and from the Angus Rural Partnership and the Angus and Dundee Tourist Board.
- 2.3 The committee is referred to Article 14 of the minute of the Economic Development Committee of 25 April 2002 which records that the committee approved the establishment of the Tayside Rural Development Facilitator Project.

3 CONSULTANCY STUDY ANALYSIS

- 3.1 In March 2002, Roger Smith Access and Tourism Consultant, and associate Jim Maison, were appointed by Angus Council to undertake the pilot study, the objective of which was:

“to work with landowners, business interests and residents of the study area to identify a core path network which the community itself would, with public sector assistance, promote, waymark and maintain and from which commercial opportunities could be developed for the socio-economic benefit of that community”.

- 3.2 The pilot study “Developing Path Networks in the Angus Glens”, was issued to the Partners in mid-June 2002. A copy of the executive summary is appended to this report.
- 3.3 The study report contains a total of 27 recommendations for path development (including longer trails); community partnership; marketing and promotional initiatives; and public transport development. The report also presented an Action Plan with costed proposals for the three years to 31 May 2005.
- 3.4 The cost of the study, originally estimated at £12,000, was only £9,100. However some additional work has since been commissioned to provide detailed costings of the proposals and to further survey and investigate practical issues associated with proposals in the action plan. This will bring the final costs in line with the approved expenditure of £12,000.

4 FOLLOW UP ACTION

- 4.1 In consultation with the Partners, the following actions have been identified for early development, as follows:

- A presentation of the findings of the study will be made by the consultant and partners to a public meeting, probably in the Dykehead Hotel in late September. Residents of the Glens, landowners, community councils and interest groups will be invited to attend.
- recommendation 9 – Continue discussions with Balmoral Estate over higher level route from Glen Doll via Jock’s Road and Bachnagairn (Development of Walking Tourism in Eastern Cairngorms).
- recommendation 22 – Organise an Angus Glens Walking Festival for Spring 2003.

Development of Walking Tourism in Eastern Cairngorms

- 4.2 In consultation with the Vice Convenor of Economic Development in July 2002, officers of the Council’s Economic Development Unit, Planning & Transport and Leisure Services Departments met with officers from Aberdeenshire Council and the Upper Deeside Access Trust (UDAT) at the latter’s request.

- 4.3 UDAT and Aberdeenshire Council have developed proposals for major repairs to high level cross border footpaths, associated improvement of parking/picnic facilities, development of links with lower level and towns footpaths and development of improved signage, interpretative and marketing material. These proposals in themselves would be insufficient to attract the external funding that is essential but if linked with similar proposals in Angus it is anticipated that a good case for support could be made for both Heritage Lottery and European Regional Development Funding.
- 4.4 In Angus, opportunity exists to establish a package of walking ranging from high level cross boundary walks, through linked paths across the Glens to path networks around Brechin and Kirriemuir. In time, an Angus Glens Access Trust, similar to UDAT could be established to manage the project.

Angus Glens Walking Festival

- 4.5 Council Officers led by Leisure Services, in partnership with Scottish Enterprise Tayside (SET) and the Angus and Dundee Tourist Board, have set up a Steering Group to oversee the organisation of an Angus Glens Walking Festival over 4 days, from 29 May until 1 June 2003.
- 4.6 Roger Smith, Access & Tourism Consultant, has been appointed to establish the festival for a fee of £2,000. SET has agreed a contribution of £1,500 leaving a balance of £500 to be met from the Tayside Rural Development Facilitator Project. A mail-shot card will be sent out to walkers registered on the Visitscotland and Walking Wild databases (18,000 names). The membership response is normally about 20% with a 5% conversion rate, giving an estimated 900 participants (50% local and 50% visitors).
- 4.7 A more detailed report on progress being made to establish the proposed Walking Festival will be submitted in due course. In the meantime it is proposed that the aforementioned mailshot should be initiated at an estimated cost of £3,900. The database established and held by Angus and Dundee Tourist Board will be used for future promotions associated with walking in the Angus Glens.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of the extension to the contract with the Consultant is £2,950. This sum falls within the original budget for the pilot study and will be met by the original partners on a pro rata basis in accordance with approved expenditure detailed in Report No 189/02.
- 5.2 Proposals for the development of Walking Tourism in Eastern Cairngorms are still being worked up and detailed costings are not yet available. It is however anticipated that the majority of the match funding required from the Council can be met from planned expenditure on for example, "Paths for All" around Brechin and Kirriemuir and repairs/improvements to car parks and picnic sites in the Glens. A contribution of £20,000 per annum for three years (commencing 2003/4) is anticipated from the Economic Development Capital Budget towards joint marketing of the Eastern Cairngorms with Aberdeenshire. An outline Capital Project Appraisal has been prepared for this project. The application for European and Heritage Lottery Funding for this project needs to be submitted by 25 October, in advance of the next Policy & Resources Committee. It is therefore proposed that worked up

proposals for this project be referred to the Economic Development, Recreation and Cultural Services and Planning & Transport Policy Committees in October for approval.

- 5.3 The total set-up cost for the Walking Festival (£5,900), i.e. the database, the mailshot plus the commission to establish the festival can be met through the Tayside Rural Development Facilitator Project. This project attracts ERDF funding at an average of 45% i.e. £2655. The net cost to the Council taking account of the SET £1500 contribution is therefore £1745, which sum can be met from the Economic Development Revenue budget for 2002/3. There will be further as yet undefined costs associated with this event (e.g. Transport) but it is estimated that the outright total will not exceed £10,000 and these costs will also attract ERDF support.

6 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Directors of Leisure Services, Planning and Transport, Education, Finance, and Law & Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The development of a properly waymarked and promoted footpath and Walking Festival in the Angus Glens potentially provides development opportunities for existing businesses, landowners and residents in the Angus Glens. Any development would enable them to take commercial advantage of increased visitor numbers to improve the diversity of income generation and to create and safeguard job opportunities. Implementation of these initiatives is intended to encourage visitors to Angus to stay longer and enjoy their visit more.

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

DV/PD/MR

25 July 2002

A B Watson
Chief Executive