Abstract: This report advises the Committee of proposals to improve the link between Glen Prosen and the Cateran Trail in Glen Isla to complement the work being undertaken as part of the Eastern Cairngorms Access Project.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:

(a) agree to the installation of a bridge and associated path works in Glen Prosen as outlined in this report at an estimated cost of £25,000, this expenditure to be met from the Planning and Transport Capital Budget, Rural Initiatives for 2004/05;

(b) note that in the opinion of the Director of Planning and Transport in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance that the contract for the installation of the bridge comprises services previously identified to be of a specialist nature and should therefore, in line with previous decisions, be exempt from competitive tendering in accordance with Financial Regulations, Regulation 16.1.3(b)(ii);

(c) homologate the decision of the Director of Planning and Transport in consultation with the Convener and the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance to confirm the purchase of the bridge from Haley Engineering Ltd;

(d) authorise the Director of Law & Administration to draw up a land agreement covering the establishment of this link.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Eastern Cairngorm Access Project (ECAP) was approved in principle in November 2002 (Report no 1365/02 refers) and the details of the project approved in June 2003 (Report No 657/03). The latter report was based on the information available at the time but since then detailed survey work and negotiations with land owners on detailed provisions have continued to enable work to proceed.

2.2 One of the aims of ECAP was to provide a link between the paths in Glen Clova and Glen Prosen and the Cateran Trail in Perth & Kinross. This proposal originally involved walking on the C27 minor road for about 3.5 Kilometres. Since then Forestry Commission Scotland have begun timber extraction at the head of Glen Prosen an operation which will continue intermittently for the next 10 years. As the C27 is a narrow single track road with limited verges this raises the question of the safety of
walkers on this section of road particularly when the timber lorries are travelling down hill loaded.

3 PROPOSED WORKS

3.1 A car park is to be constructed as part of ECAP beside Prosen Church to encourage walkers to use Glen Prosen as a staging point on their walks. Unfortunately to access the Cateran Trail from there will mean not only walking on the C26 & C27, but also doubling back for about a kilometre. The local Landowner has suggested that a foot bridge could be put over the Prosen Water beside the car park and that he would be happy for walkers to traverse his land instead of walking on the public road. This idea has been followed up as it would represent not only a significant safety improvement but also offer a route with far greater amenity beside the Prosen Water.

3.2 The work will involve a short section of path and fence from the C26 beside Prosen Church, a 15m Aerial mast bridge on Gabion abutments, 60m of drainage through a wet section and 75m of stepped path over a steep section. Some culverts will also require to be formed at this location.

3.3 From the tenders received for work on the other ECAP contracts, it is clear that it would be advantageous to use the same type of bridge in Glen Prosen as was used for the crossings in Glen Clova. These bridges were procured through Forestry Civil Engineering as consultants as they hold the patent on the design. This work has previously been considered exempt in terms of the Council’s Financial Regulation FR16.1.3(b)(ii) due to the specialist nature of the work. Further, it has been shown that this procurement mechanism provided value for money.

3.4 The bridges are supplied by Haley Engineering Ltd who are licensed to fabricate the design for Forestry Civil Engineering. As they will shortly be delivering the bridges for Glen Doll from Devon, a saving of around £750 can be made by having the bridge for this link delivered at the same time. As time was required to fabricate the bridge, the Director of Planning & Transport in consultation with the Convener, the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance instructed the Director of Roads to place an order for the bridge to meet the planned delivery date.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 It has been estimated that the cost of creating this additional link will amount to £25,000 most of which (£15,500) will be taken up with the provision and construction of the bridge. The balance is for the minor fencing and path work coupled with some drainage improvements along the two kilometre route. The cost can be met from the Planning & Transport Capital Budget, Rural Initiatives for 2004/05.

4.2 Once the route has been created then some ongoing maintenance will be required. The bridge will need to be inspected annually by a suitably qualified person and the woodwork protection will require to be renewed every three years. The structure will only benefit visitors to the area and is of no direct benefit to the estate. The annual maintenance costs will be met from the Planning & Transport Revenue.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS
5.1 There are no human rights issues to be considered.

5.2

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Chief Executive and the Directors of Finance, Law & Administration, Leisure Services and Roads have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 The creation of this link along the banks of Prosen Water will provide a safe, high amenity walking route from Glen Prosen to the start of the current link with the Cateran trail at Cormuir.

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.

AA/AG/KW
4 October 2004

Alex Anderson
Director of Planning and Transport

KW/Reports04/Draft/CateranTrail
Cateran trail link in Glen Prosen- Fencing required from A – B 1.5 Kms to be provided under RSS Scheme