



Aberdeenshire Countryside Access Strategy

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



What is the Aberdeenshire Countryside Access Strategy?

The Countryside Access Strategy is a document which will set out policies and proposals on how access to the countryside in Aberdeenshire will be developed and managed in the future. It will be important in deciding where new footpaths, cycleways or bridleways in your area will be provided.

What is meant by Countryside Access?

In the strategy, Countryside Access means provision and management of routes such as footpaths, cyclepaths and bridleways for quiet informal recreation into and around the countryside from towns and villages. It also means the provision of access areas such as picnic sites, small nature reserves etc, where there is opportunity for quiet recreation and access to the countryside.

Who is the Countryside Access Strategy for?

The strategy is for everyone who has an interest or involvement in the countryside access in Aberdeenshire. The initial document has been developed by Aberdeenshire Council with the help from other funding partners BUT, we are now looking for involvement from all kinds of people to help shape the process including landowners, community councils, user and interest groups, individual members of the public and public bodies.

Does it cover the area I live in?

Yes-the strategy will cover the whole of Aberdeenshire. One of the reasons for preparing the Strategy is to help us ensure a generally consistent approach to countryside access across Aberdeenshire. A framework document will provide guiding policies for the whole of Aberdeenshire (this is the document currently available for comment). Area Action Plans will then be developed in each of the six Council areas, focusing on the needs for access in each individual area. We are looking for information to include in these.



The main proposals in the Countryside Access Strategy are:

- To develop a network of access routes across Aberdeenshire, made up of:
 - Local Networks**-routes and public access areas, easily accessible from towns and villages.
 - Strategic Networks**-long and middle distance routes (Formartine and Buchan Way, Deeside Way, Coastal Footpaths etc.) and access areas such as Forests and Country Parks.
 - Linking Routes**-providing a connection between local and strategic networks.
- To create access through agreement and partnership with all interested parties but especially local communities, landowners, path users and public bodies.
- To provide access for all sections of the population including people with disabilities, the elderly and families with young children.
- To take into account Aberdeenshire's environment, ensuring it does not suffer as a result of improved access to the countryside and making improvements wherever possible.
- To make sure routes are well signposted, safe and well maintained and that information on routes is readily available to local residents and tourists.
- To make sure that everyone is aware of conflicting issues in the countryside and the need for responsible use.
- To identify the need for visitor facilities such as car parks, public toilets etc, associated with new or existing countryside access.
- To secure funding to carry out work to improve access to the countryside in Aberdeenshire.

There may be other issues which you feel should be covered as well...

What do you think?

Your views will be very important in helping shape the Strategy. We particularly need you to tell us where you walk, cycle or ride at the moment and where you would like to be able to go. After you complete and return the questionnaire, we will be able to finalise our proposals and start work on providing new routes near you!



The Aberdeenshire Countryside Access Strategy is being prepared to help manage the demand for access to the countryside in Aberdeenshire. We would like your views on the proposed programme for action and the issues which you feel are important. Your answers will help us to develop and manage access to Aberdeenshire's countryside in the future.

This leaflet summarises the key points of the Countryside Access Strategy and is followed by a questionnaire on the contents of the Strategy and public access in your local area. Your responses to these questions will be very important in deciding how access to the countryside will be provided and managed in Aberdeenshire however, please do not feel that you have to answer them all if you do not want to. Make your comments in the spaces provided and return to the address shown.

Copies of the full Countryside Access strategy document are available at your local Council Office and Library or you can request a copy from the address shown below.



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