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Kenny Auld  
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1<sup>st</sup> February 2018

Dear Kenny

## **CONSULTATION ON THE REVIEW OF THE LOCH LOMOND & TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK CORE PATHS PLAN**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the review of the Core Path Plan. The Review map is clear and easily accessible, as is your criteria and justification for additions and realignments.

Mountaineering Scotland's interests lie with access to hills and hilltops, and to climbing crags that lie within enclosed land, and for there being a sufficiency of routes in the Park enabling access to hilltops and crags.

We see the main need for Core Paths, in the context of recreation access to the mountains, to enable access from and to car parking areas and bus stops, to give walkers and climbers clear and easy access through built and intensively farmed land, past dykes and fences, to get to and from the open hillside. This is desirable in urban & suburban land, enclosed agricultural land, and plantation forestry where potential obstacles and confusing routes may be present.

The provisions of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 enable a right of access to most land, and in the upland areas we believe that this is sufficient to ensure recreational access for hillwalkers, climbers and snowsport tourers. The additional provision of Core Paths in the mountains adds little to the general right of access, as long as it is exercised responsibly.

Popular mountain paths are already well promoted through guidebooks, websites and social media. We are content for routes to the summits to remain open to choice, allowing walkers and climbers to find their way to their destination. There may be more than one route to a hilltop, letting walkers and climbers plan and navigate their routes up and down.

We note that Core Paths extend to the tops of Ben Lomond, Ben Venue, Ben Ledi and Ben Arthur. Promotion on particular routes through the Core Path maps may very well raise issues of erosion from footfall on these indicated routes.

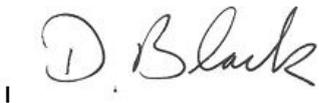
The maintenance of paths can be expensive. In a situation of reducing budgets for public works it seems likely to us that scarce resources will be focussed increasingly on statutory functions, with Core Path status potentially being a criterion for resource allocation. Core Path status may have an

unintended consequence of focussing on a few mountain locations. We would urge the National Park Authority to look at management of upland paths from a position of need across the whole Park, as a means of protecting the environment.

It is probably beyond the scope of this Core Plan Review consultation to look at provision of Core Paths from the main transport routes, through enclosed agricultural land and forestry plantation, to the mail hill destinations. It would be a significant piece of work to map each and every such route, with the possibility that it would fail to reach your criteria threshold for Core Path status. However, the provision of such maintained routes is a worthy and needful project, and we would be happy to work with the National Park Authority to identify where difficulties may be encountered by hillwalkers and climbers.

We hope you find these comments helpful, and please do contact us if you wish to discuss anything further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Black". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'D' and a trailing flourish.

**Davie Black**  
**Access & Conservation Officer**  
**Mountaineering Scotland**