



ramblers scotland
at the heart of walking

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29 November 2016

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Dear Sir or Madam,

Response to 2017-22 Corporate Plan discussion paper

Ramblers Scotland welcomes the opportunity to comment on SNH's Corporate Plan. We broadly support the substance of the discussion paper and our response below relates to the Ramblers Scotland perspective on the issues raised.

What are the key drivers affecting your plans for 2017-22 and beyond?

Within our own Strategic Framework, there are three ambitions which act as a context for our work at Ramblers Scotland. These are:

- ***A Scotland designed for walking***: improving access to the outdoors, protecting the outdoor environment and promoting walking and outdoor recreation
- ***Helping everyone find their feet***: promoting active, healthy lifestyles, playing a role in the National Walking Strategy delivery
- ***Connecting people through Ramblers Scotland***: supporting member programmes, training and supporting our members, developing a range of volunteering opportunities, and communicating effectively.

How do these affect the drivers for SNH in the next five years?

As the government agency which promotes outdoor recreation and protects the landscape, the drivers for Ramblers Scotland noted above are closely related to much of the work of SNH. It is particularly important that SNH carries out those roles which cannot be done by others. This includes championing the importance of Scotland's inspiring landscapes and natural environment, coupled with our world-class access legislation, to all sectors of government.

What do you think should be the most important areas of activity for SNH given these drivers?

Public funding continues to be squeezed and it is perhaps inevitable that, for example, investment in infrastructure and promotion for outdoor recreation and active travel is being reduced by access authorities. Yet there is also a widespread recognition of the need to encourage more healthy, active lifestyles and in particular an awareness of the added benefits to health of being active in the natural environment. But people who aren't currently active will not be encouraged to get outdoors more often if they don't find an accessible, welcoming countryside. SNH plays an important role in emphasising the clear links between physical and mental health, the economy, social justice and the need for investment in path provision and the upholding of Scottish access rights by access authorities.

What are the main changes you envisage for your organisation that we need to be aware of?

We are working on an initiative to engage more people in our work with the aim of bringing about a wider understanding and appreciation of Scotland's natural heritage, the inspiration and many benefits to be gained from enjoying outdoor recreation in Scotland, all based on the firm foundation of our access rights and responsibilities. This work is being done with the goal of enabling a longer-term change in culture and behaviour in Scotland, to see ourselves as an outdoor nation similar to the way in which Scandinavian culture is embedded in the outdoors.

What opportunities do you see for collaborative working with SNH?

We are hugely supportive of the work of SNH in promoting the Natural Health Service, green infrastructure and the national walking and cycling network. We are very happy to be involved in promoting and delivering these programmes. We also are keen to see the wider public interest in sustainable land use and land management upheld through the work of SNH, for example in sustainable deer management and the use of good practice guidance developed for hilltrack and windfarm construction. We will continue to promote responsible access in collaboration with SNH.

Is SNH right to construct its programmes around focussing on investing in natural assets and delivering benefits for people and society?

It is important that SNH has a role in helping to address inequalities in society which are relevant to the environment, for example in terms of improving access to high quality greenspace, path networks and the wider countryside, enabling communities of place and of interest to be involved in decision-making and also ensuring that the public interest in sustainable land use is upheld.

We have identified some principles to help us to guide our approach to our work. Are you happy with these?

Yes.

We trust these comments are helpful but would be very happy to discuss these issues further at any time.



Yours faithfully,

Helen Todd
Campaigns & Policy Manager