Avoch to Munlochy and Drumderfit Active Travel Link update

TBI Admin meeting 28-02-23 Anne Thomas

The working group continues to meet fortnightly. We were alarmed when it looked like the Council had not prioritised the Avoch to Munlochy and Drumderfit Active Travel Link and indeed the report to the Infrastructure Committee was not on their list as it was stated that it was in progress.

Councillors were given the impression that a Sustrans funded project officer would be able to take on 3 rural projects, but whilst this was applied for, Sustrans had refused as they already fund one officer (Lizbeth) and other Councils do not have any resource. We are still pursuing the idea of TBI applying to Sustrans for a project officer who might be able to be embedded in the Council. We approached Transition St Andrews who employ an active travel officer at Sustrans’ suggestion to see if we could copy their model, but have not had a response.

We were encouraged to meet with the Peffery Way group which we did and were impressed that they have succeeded in gaining a Path Order covering one landowner to enable them to proceed with their project, though we gather they still need to do the same for another landowner. They have managed to build small parts of the route gradually, so that much of it is now open.

Their suggestions were

1. That we had some legal advice. We have approached the lawyer they recommended, but not yet had a response.
2. That we apply for planning permission as soon as possible, recognising that this will need to be amended at a later date when we have further details as they found this very helpful, so exploring this. This is something we can spend the money we have awarded on, We still have about £6000 left of our award and the planning fee is currently £900. We will probably have to apply for a change control to take this money into the next financial year.
3. If a Community Council applies on our behalf we would only have to pay half the planning fee. We approached Avoch and Killen CC and had a conversation with one of the community councillors.
4. Approach the Access Team in the Council as they found them very helpful. We had a meeting with Phil Waite about 3 years ago. We have written to him including a copy of the original letter signed by Malcom Macleod in April 22, which promised a meeting with landowners.
5. Recognise that Council resources are limited and try to do as much as possible as a group e.g write letters ready for them to send.

The Path Order is only one of various options open to us and obviously we'd prefer to come to individual agreements with landowners/ tenants so that this is not necessary.

At present our plans are fairly detailed, though we have not quite completed Sustrans stage 2 (of 4) as there were further details to work out especially going through Munlochy and the approach to Avoch. Details are [here](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1g3PHTdAfn75el6rQS6ERu809WtBXSva0/view?usp=sharing). We also have some other necessary documents.

Sustrans wanted landowner issues resolved before awarding more funds for design but have agreed that our existing award could be used for applying for planning permission and a certain amount of advice.

On Thursday we received a letter from Lizbeth on behalf of Neil Young saying that 2 members of the Active Travel Team had written to the landowners/tenants offering to them individually next week. We had not been informed that this was happening. It may have been in response to us chasing up the previous letter, responses and outcomes and copying it to Phil Waite. We have not heard from Phil Waite directly. We have suggested that someone from the working group attends.