

Active Cairngorms

Consultative Draft

12th January 2015 – 10th April 2015

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Introduction

Welcome to the consultative draft of Active Cairngorms – a revised outdoor access strategy for the Cairngorms National Park.

To raise awareness of and encourage participation, Active Cairngorms will be open to public consultation from 12 January 2015 to 10 April 2015. During this period the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) will formally consult on Active Cairngorms via our website at www.cairngorms.co.uk. Hard copy reports are available on request.

The consultation will be promoted to our stakeholders including; Inclusive Cairngorms, Land Management Forum, Tourism Forum, Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum and through social media including the Active Cairngorms Twitter account @CNPActive

The CNPA is seeking general comments on the strategy and specific feedback on the following questions:

1. Is the overall aim of encouraging residents and visitors to be active outdoors every day an appropriate ambition for Active Cairngorms?
2. Are the priorities identified in the three strategic themes the best focus for activity to deliver Active Cairngorms?
3. Does Active Cairngorms contain the right policies to promote and manage outdoor access in the National Park?
4. Will the Action Plan deliver the strategy, and what can you or your organisation contribute to the Action Plan?
5. Will the monitoring framework provide a clear indication of the on-going effectiveness of the strategy?
6. Ranger Services across the National Park are key partners in supporting the delivery of Active Cairngorms. Is the current provision of rangers best placed to help deliver the strategy?

Following the consultation, Active Cairngorms will be amended as necessary and presented for adoption by CNPA by June 2015. If you would like to discuss any aspect of the strategy or consultation, please contact:

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Let's get moving

I.1 When we think about National Park's, we think about conserving the unique environment and its species, protecting those at risk and supporting the economic and social life of its residents. What if one of the species we considered at risk was not one of the plants, birds or animals, but the humans who live in or visit the Park?

I.2 We now know that physical inactivity is killing us. It is the second biggest cause of mortality, leading to around 2,500⁽¹⁾ premature deaths in Scotland every year. We also know that increasing physical activity can lead to improvements in many conditions, from heart disease to mental health issues.

I.3 Can we help? Can we work with the environment to preserve it and ourselves for the future? The Cairngorms National Park is a very special place. From the high mountain plateaux and ancient forests to the sparkling lochs and rivers, the landscape inspires and shapes our lives.

I.4 Active Cairngorms aims to make it easier and safer for people to move around the Park whatever their age, ability or background; to be more physically active, to learn about, care for and appreciate the Park.

Our aim is for all residents and visitors to use the Park for physical activity once a day.

I.6 Physical activity doesn't have to involve special equipment, or getting hot and sweaty. It's as simple as walking to the shops or taking the dog out for a walk.

Just 30 minutes ⁽²⁾ walking a day is enough to make a significant difference to your health. But if you want to cycle to school or work, go horse riding, paddle on a loch, run through our forests or go hill walking, then Active Cairngorms aims to make that experience easier and more accessible for all.

I.7 One and a half million people visit the Park every year. The provision of high quality outdoor facilities and activities is vital to our tourism product and is a major contributor to the Park's economic success. Active Cairngorms will help our visitors access the beauty of the Park in an active way. Our work can influence changes in behaviour that last as long as the holiday memories.

I.8 Active Cairngorms is divided into three themes where we can make the biggest difference:

Active Places Active Management Active Promotion

This document highlights our priorities and an action plan for delivery. It contributes to the delivery of the Scottish Government's implementation plan "A More Active Scotland: Building a Legacy from the Commonwealth Games" and the long-term outcomes of the Cairngorms National Park Plan.

Delivery requires partnership across the Park, involving local authorities, land managers, NHS and many different local service providers.

The prize is a Park that leads Scotland in integrating physical activity into everyone's everyday life, leading to a healthier, happier population and cherished environment.

(1) Scottish Government Physical Activity Implementation Plan, 2014 (2) NHS Choices, 2014.

Strategic Overview

NATIONAL POLICY	A More Active Scotland: Building a Legacy from the Commonwealth Games National Walking Strategy Cycling Action Plan for Scotland Tourism Scotland 2020		
NATIONAL PARK VISION	An outstanding National Park enjoyed and valued by everyone, where people and nature thrive together		
OUTCOME	Cairngorms National Park Authority Partnership Plan (2015-2018) Outcome 3: People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences		
VISITOR EXPERIENCE Five year outcomes	More people will enjoy, learn about and help to conserve and enhance the Park	The Parks recreation opportunities have improved health and enjoyment of residents and visitors.	The expectations of visitors are met or exceeded.

Active Cairngorms

AIM	Residents and visitors will enjoy and use the Park for physical activity at least once a day		
THEME	ACTIVE PLACES Designing places that encourage physical activity	ACTIVE MANAGEMENT Champion recreational management best practice and environmental appreciation	ACTIVE PROMOTION Promoting healthy lifestyles using Park facilities
POLICY	Improving path provision and quality for people of all abilities	Increasing understanding and enjoyment of the Parks special qualities	Community empowerment and volunteering
	Provision of cycling, horse riding and waterborne routes and infrastructure	Management of organised outdoor events Investment in Active Travel	Improving information about outdoor recreation opportunities
GUIDANCE	Cairngorm Outdoor Access Forum NHS Local Health Forums Inclusive Cairngorms		

Active Places



Cairngorms
NATIONAL PARK
Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaigh Ruaidh

What's been done to date

Core Paths
679 miles
Designated

Promoted long distance routes
Includes all of existing Speyside Way, Cateran Trail, Badenoch Way, Dava Way
60 miles

Building and maintaining local paths
Since 2008 **28 miles**

National cycle routes
60 miles

£7.5 million

Total expenditure on paths in the Park since 2006 (CNPA, COAT, EU, Lottery, Local Authorities and others)

COAT Repair of upland paths
Two multi-million pound Heritage Lottery Funded projects
80 miles

The place to be active

43% of visits to the countryside are within 2 miles of residence

46% of residents in the Park visit the countryside once a day

85% of visits to the countryside involve walking and of that 47% involve walking between 2 and 8 miles

28% of visits to the countryside by residents will be to woodland and forest

52% of visits to the countryside are with a dog

200 miles
Signed community path networks
Paths signed in and around communities

Created Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT)
Path design and construction, mountain paths, health walks and adopt a path scheme.

Top 10 Activities in the Cairngorms

Data Cairngorms National Park Visitor Survey, 2009/10

- 1 General sightseeing **76%**
- 2 Visiting attractions **30%**
- 3 Walking – low level **29%**
- 4 Taking photographs **26%**
- 5 Eating out **19%**
- 6 Watching wildlife **18%**
- 7 Skiing/Winter sports **17%**
- 8 Walking – high level **12%**
- 9 Other **7%**
- 10 Cycling/Mountain Biking **5%**

Investing in our future

Cycle paths linking communities
19 miles

Core paths to be developed and improved
Based on those that fail fit for purpose for path surface
65 miles

Long distance routes to extend
Speyside Way **15 miles**
Deeside Way **17 miles**

8 Communities with active travel audits and actions plans supporting active travel to school and work
Grantown-on-Spey, Nethybridge, Boat of Garten, Carrbridge, Kingussie, Newtonmore, Braemar, Ballater

Designing places that encourage physical activity

2.1 The Cairngorms National Park is home to 18,000 residents and welcomes over 1.5 million visitors every year.

2.2 Developing and enhancing our unique outdoor assets underpins the Park's quality as a tourism destination and creates opportunities for business growth.

2.3 These assets also help the people of Scotland enjoy more active and healthier lifestyles. Designing active places will help residents to use active travel for short, everyday journeys and

encourage visitors to leave the car behind and use our path and public transport network to explore the Park.

2.4 Since the Park's designation in 2004, we have built our access network and land managers have been maintaining and developing community assets. We will now focus on upgrading and maintaining these assets, particularly on active travel links to encourage more children and adults to use our network to reach school, work and for leisure.

Designing all ability routes that link to destinations is key to increasing use of our access network. Routes that lead to landscapes, wildlife, heritage sites, shopping and dining, as well as outstanding outdoor activities will increase activity levels. It's not why would you, it's why wouldn't you?

Active Places: Objectives		
Improve design of existing outdoor and active travel infrastructure		
Work with partners to design places that encourage physical activity		
Policy (Appendix A)		Priorities
1	Improving path provision and quality for people of all abilities	100% of core paths to be barrier free by 2020
		Support development of Aviemore Active Travel Hub
2	Provision for cycling, horse riding and waterborne routes and infrastructure	Develop a multi-use active travel route from Newtonmore to Cromdale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend the Speyside Way from Aviemore to Newtonmore by 2016 Upgrade existing Speyside Way to multi use path from Cromdale to Boat of Garten by 2017
		Develop <i>Cycling Scotland</i> 'Cycle Friendly Communities' along Highland main railway line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kingussie to be developed as exemplar cycle friendly community from 2015. Develop remaining main stations from 2017
		Extend Deeside Way to multi-use path from Ballater to Braemar by 2020

Active Management

National Park
being protected,
conserved
and enhanced

1748
sq miles
6% of Scotland

Sustaining our resources

Promoting well
managed events
in the Park

Organising an Event?
Read CNPA
supplied
key guidance
Status: **Priority** ☒

Working with over 100 estates
to promote responsible
access to land and water

Why the Cairngorms National Park is special



The Park is home to 25%
of the UK's threatened bird,
animal and plant species

25%

Key messages
communicated to
residents and visitors



18,000

Residents living
in the Park



1.5million

Visitors to the
Park each year

Visitors to wildlife and nature
reserves in the Park each year



158,000

£

Economic Impact

2.6
billion

**Contributed from
Outdoor visits**

To the Scottish economy per year
(Scottish Recreation Survey)

210
million

Spend in Cairngorms

(CNP STEAM Report, 2012)

Analysis by Sector of Expenditure

(CNP STEAM
Report, 2012)

£million

Accommodation	45
Food and drink	30
Recreation	12
Shopping	16
Transport	30

Total Direct Revenue **133**

Indirect Expenditure 50

VAT 27

TOTAL **210**

Champion recreational management best practice and environmental appreciation.

3.1 Publicly owned land in the Cairngorms, such as the National Forest Estate, provides high quality access infrastructure, which helps to facilitate physical activity. Land managed by private estates, charities and trusts also plays a key role in welcoming visitors and contributes substantially to the outdoor experiences available for residents and visitors.

Encouraging responsible sharing of outdoor space between different users, whilst reducing the impact on our protected species and habitats is our management goal.

3.2 It is important that outdoor recreation does not adversely impact ground-nesting birds. For example, the Park is home to 80% of the UK's Capercaillie population. However, an increasing body of research indicates Capercaillie avoid areas with high levels of human disturbance and can be excluded from otherwise suitable habitat.

In some areas, the number of Capercaillie that the forest networks can support could be reduced by recreational disturbance. We must ensure that any rise in recreational use doesn't negatively impact our protected species and habitats.

Active Management: Objectives		
Reduce the environmental impact of outdoor recreation on conservation priorities		
Encourage responsible sharing of outdoor space between different users		
Policy (Appendix A)	Priorities	
3	Increasing understanding and enjoyment of the Parks special qualities	Everybody should have opportunities to enjoy the Park's special qualities in a sustainable and responsible way
		Reduce impact of recreational disturbance to ground nesting birds such as Capercaillie by supporting the delivery of recreational management plans
		Continue and develop 'Tread Lightly' Campaign focusing on reducing impact of irresponsible dog walkers and reduction in wildfires
4	Management of organised outdoor events	<p>Event organisers should look for locations and times of year that do not disturb sensitive wildlife or significantly affect other recreation takers. Events should also provide additional economic benefits to communities.</p> <p>Large-scale events should be discouraged in the central core of the high mountains</p>
5	Investment in Active Travel	Increase number of sites with voluntary car parking charges to finance active travel facilities and path maintenance

Active Promotion



Cairngorms
NATIONAL PARK
Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaigh Ruaidh



Ski Centres 3

Munros 55

Corbetts 26



Mountain Bike Centres 3



Welcome to Nature's Gym

On your marks, Get set... **GO**...
...Lets get active Cairngorms



Outdoor Activity Centres 9



Community Path Leaflets 16



Ranger Services 12
Helping you to understand and enjoy the Outdoors

Why Exercise...

It's medically proven that people who do regular physical activity have:

- 30% lower risk of early death
- up to a 35% lower risk of coronary heart disease and stroke
- up to 50% lower risk of type 2 diabetes
- up to 20% lower risk of breast cancer
- up to 30% lower risk of depression
- up to 30% lower risk of dementia

Source: NHS choices

Recommended physical activity levels

Children (-5): 180 mins every day
Youths (5-18): 60 mins every day
Adults (19-64): 150 mins every week
Adults (65+): 150 mins every week

Active promotion to date

2,004

Health Walks Delivered (COAT)

From April 2011 – Jan 13



16 Communities with path leaflets:

Aviemore	Boat of Garten	Glen Clova	Laggan
Atholl	Carrbridge	Glen Esk	Nethybridge
Ballater	Dalwhinnie	Grantown-on-Spey	Strathdon
Braemar	Dulnain Bridge	Kingussie	Tomintoul

Tread Lightly in the Park: Responsible access campaign

Also produced promotional boards, maps, flags and banners.

over **8,000** leaflets

Promoting healthy lifestyles using the Park's facilities

4.1 Promotion of the wide range of recreational opportunities available in the Park is key to influencing behavioural change. Our aim is that people living in or visiting the Park know the health benefits of physical activity and where and how to be active.

4.2 We will promote the Park's outdoor assets as an easy and free way to be active as part of a daily routine.

4.3 Environmental volunteering has long been acknowledged as a way of engaging people in healthy activity. We will create pathways to health, wellbeing and employment. This includes promoting opportunities for the social and institutional mechanisms that enable physical activity, like social and sports clubs, buddy schemes and informal networks.

The biggest gain is to target people currently living sedentary lifestyles where being inactive is the norm.

Active Promotion: Objectives		
Increase levels of physical activity of residents and visitors		
Empower residents and visitors to develop a sense of responsibility for the National Park		
Policy (Appendix A)	Priorities	
6	Promoting healthy lifestyles	Ensure everyone knows about the opportunities
		Actively target those that are least active
		Promote activities suitable for all the family
		Inspire children to enjoy the outdoors
7	Developing appropriate visitor information about outdoor recreation opportunities	Promote the wider opportunities for recreation for cycling, canoeing, climbing and hill walking
		Support and promote Community Sport hubs – signposting inactive and active people on how to be more active
		Adopt Scotland's national Path Grading System on all Core Paths by 2020
8	Volunteering and community empowerment	Coordinate and grow the 'Walking to Health' Programme
		Work with Cairngorms Nature Partners, including landowners and NGO's to identify volunteering opportunities for community volunteer groups
		Develop a Voluntary Ranger scheme based around local communities

Monitoring

It is important that our work is specific and measurable. Active Cairngorms and its action plan will be reviewed annually following the collection of baseline data.

What	Partners	When?
Local health indicators for main centers of population. (Only partial baseline data currently available)	NHS	Gather baseline health and activity levels by end 2015. Report on baseline and targets end 2015.
Path use indicators (Only partial baseline data currently available)	CNPA, Land Managers	Report on baseline and indicators by mid 2015. Deliver visitor-monitoring strategy by 2016.

Other monitoring sources: NHS Data zones – SNH SPANS, Walking for Health Statistics - National Walking Strategy monitoring - Scottish Household Survey - Private and Public Estates - Ranger Services - People counters on paths - Membership of local clubs – Number of volunteers and hours.

Appendix A:

Outdoor Recreation and Access Policies

The following table details the outdoor recreation and access policies adopted by The Cairngorms National Park Authority.

Policy	Key detail
1 Improving path provision and quality for people of all abilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A consistent approach should be taken to path creation, repair and maintenance of paths and trail heads (access hubs) in the National Park to ensure routes are 'fit for purpose'. The priorities will be: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Core Paths b) Official Long Distance Routes and National Cycle Network c) Mountain paths identified in the 'Scotland's National Parks –The People and the Mountains Project' 2. Opportunities should be available for a full range of experiences for people of all abilities focussing on a geographic spread of barrier free, well surfaced, multi use, shallow gradient routes. 3. Increase use of bicycles for leisure and functional trips through delivery of the CNP Cycling Action Plan.
2 Provision for cycling, horse riding and waterborne routes and infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Path and facility upgrades should take into account horse-riding, cycling and water-borne access. 2. We will work with and support partners to sustain and enhance opportunities for waterborne activities including responsible recreation on the Rivers Spey and Dee.
3 Increasing understanding and enjoyment of the Park's special qualities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to support and encourage enjoyment of the Park and the special qualities through responsible participation in non-motorised recreation. 2. Active management measures should be applied and monitored at popular recreational sites in the National Park to maximise visitor enjoyment, safeguard health and safety, maintain or enhance the quality of the environment and minimise adverse effects of recreational use. 3. Develop management at sensitive natural and cultural heritage sites to reduce negative impacts of recreation while maintaining a high quality visitor experience. 4. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code should be promoted by a range of partners including ranger services, outdoor providers, clubs, national governing bodies and land managers using simple, consistent and easily understood messages. 5. There should be a particular emphasis on the protection of the outstanding natural heritage of the National Park.

Outdoor Recreation and Access Policies

Policy		Key detail
4	Management of organised outdoor events	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organised outdoor events should follow CNP Guidance and take place in locations and at times of year that do not disturb sensitive wildlife or significantly affect other recreation takers. Events should also provide additional economic benefits to communities. 2. The sense of wildness and space in the central core of the high mountains of the National Park is one of the outstanding special qualities of the area. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Scottish tradition of self-reliant access will be maintained with no new path signs and waymarking, no new bridges, and no new bothies or 'man-made' mountain shelters. b. There is a presumption against large-scale events this area.
5	Investment in active travel facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive management of motorised traffic at popular locations for recreational use is required. Car park charging schemes at key sites for outdoor access and recreation are appropriate where; a designed facility is provided, income generated is demonstrably reinvested in visitor infrastructure, charging does not create additional parking problems outwith the site and discounted schemes are available for regular and concessionary users.
6	Promoting healthy lifestyles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encouraging less active people to take more regular physical activity in the outdoors will improve the physical and mental health of the population. All infrastructure improvements, signage and access promotion should make it easier for less active and sedentary people to access the countryside
7	Developing appropriate visitor information about outdoor recreation opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information about outdoor access opportunities should be provided in print and digitally and be understandable by a range of users. These should follow the guidance in CNP Path Leaflet and new national grading system. 2. Publications should be available in electronic format across a range of devices.
8	Volunteering and community empowerment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environmental volunteering will be encouraged and promoted throughout the Park.

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Active Cairngorms

Draft Action Plan

12th January 2015 – 10th April 2015

Active Cairngorms		Active Places				
No	Action	Lead	Partner (s)	Delivery plan		
				Short (1-2 year)	Medium (3-4 year)	Long (5 + year)
Path Development						
1	Upgrade and extend Speyside Way from Cromdale to Newtonmore to multi use cycle path					
2	Develop Deeside Way cycle path extension from Ballater to Braemar					
3	Design, develop and promote cycle hubs along Highland main railway line.					
4	Support development of multi use paths on trunk roads					
5	Deliver Scotland's National Park - The Mountains and the People HLF funded project					
6	Deliver Regional Walking and Cycling Strategy Action Plan					
7	Support development and expand Community Planning and Physical Activity Groups					
8	Support development of "Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland" Highland Cluster Regional Development Plan					
9	Support community path groups through Local People Local Paths Programme					
10	Path upgrades to Lairig Ghru, Meall a Bhuachaille, Loch Morlich beach (all abilities).					
11	All CNP Long Distance Routes to be surveyed biennially					
12	100% of core paths to be brought up to fit for purpose standard by 2020.					

Active Cairngorms		Active Management				
No	Action	Lead	Partner (s)	Delivery plan		
				Short (1-2 year)	Medium (3-4 year)	Long (5 + year)
Conservation						
1	Reduce the impact of recreation on ground nesting birds (e.g. Capercaillie) by implementing site specific actions from The Cairngorms Capercaillie Framework					
2	Support land managers to deliver recreational management plans					
3	Key Cairngorms Trailheads to be 'fit for purpose' for intended recreational use					
4	Monitor and report on impacts on habitats and species caused by recreation.					
Management						
5	Develop and promote ranger events programme					
6	Encourage recreational facilitation by 3rd party business on national forest estate					
7	Implement targeted visitor monitoring programme through strategic review of existing monitoring at indicator sites (lowland paths, upland paths, trailheads, core paths and LDRs) with additional monitoring to be carried out where gaps are identified.					
8	Secure a sponsor for the Speyside Way and increase opportunities for revenue generation via website development.					
Guidance						
9	Support and develop a range of resources for land managers to promote responsible access on their land i.e. Land management signs, leaflets and posters					
10	Implement project to gather community health statistics for Blair Atholl, Kingussie, Aviemore, Grantown on Spey, Ballater and Braemar.					
11	Develop a "dogs welcome" package for the Park including web resources publications and identified dog walking areas					
12	Support and advocate uptake and use of the Heading for the Scottish Hills initiative.					
13	Support development of community led camping site proposals.					

Active Cairngorms				Active Promotion		
No	Action	Lead	Partner (s)	Delivery plan		
				Short (1-2 year)	Medium (3-4 year)	Long (5 + year)
1	Develop a sustainable community based physical activity and environmental volunteering programme in the Park					
2	Develop targeted promotion activities for those living sedentary lifestyles					
3	Continue to develop and promote "tread lightly" as the main means to promote the Scottish Outdoor Access Code in the Park					
4	Develop a physical activity marketing plan for core paths, long distance routes and community paths					
5	Identify, support and develop Cycle Friendly Employers					
6	Implement physical activity actions from Local Authority Single Outcome Agreements					
7	Monitor implementation of Active Cairngorms and prepare baseline health statistics. Baseline to be reported at end of year 1.					
8	Work with housing developers to promote active travel facilities through the production and delivery of new resident promotional packs.					
9	Support 'Make it Yours' campaign					
10	Expand 'Adopt a Path' Scheme					
11	Support development of Road Cycling 'sportives'					
12	Deliver "Physical Activity Pathway" for walking and cycling. Support development of volunteering projects through identified training to increase levels of activity (health walk - lowland hill path - Munros - hill skills and qualifications					
13	Deliver a Tour de Cairngorms walking route. Work with Cairngorms Business Partnership to identify accommodation providers and promotion plan.					