

CAIRNGORMS  
NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

ÙGHDARRAS PÀIRC NÀISEANTA A'  
MHONaidh Ruaidh

# Cairngorms National Park Authority

## Annual Review 2016/17



Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaìdh Ruaidh

Lèirmheas Bliadhnail 2016/17





Published by the Cairngorms National Park Authority

© CNPA 2017. All rights reserved.

ISBN 978-1-906071-88-2

Photography:

Cameron Cosgrove; CNPA: Jane Hope: Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland; Paths for All; VisitScotland/Jakub Iwanicki; VisitScotland/Kenny Lam; VisitScotland/Damian Shields; [www.cairngormlandscapes.co.uk](http://www.cairngormlandscapes.co.uk)

# CONTENTS

Foreword/Facal-toisich	4-5
Cairngorms National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2015-2018	8
National Parks' Delivery of Services in Scotland	12
Alignment Between National Park Authorities: Achievements in 2016/17	12
Delivering Sustainable Economic Growth	13
Delivery of Scottish Government's Strategic Outcomes	14

## Strategic Outcomes

Conservation	20
Visitor Experience	21
Rural Development	22

Park Authority Services	23
-------------------------	----

## Foreword

The Cairngorms National Park is the largest national park in the UK and is home to 18,000 people and visited by 1.8m visitors each year. Home to around a quarter of the UK's rare and endangered species, it has four of the five highest Scottish mountains, the largest remnants of Caledonian forest and some of the most spectacular and beautiful landscapes in Europe.

All of this puts a considerable responsibility on the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) but one we gladly shoulder. We always aim to work in partnership with others to deliver the National Park Partnership Plan and through that the statutory aims of the Park.

During the past year the CNPA has been working with others on the River Catchment Partnerships established on our three major rivers – the Dee, the Spey and the South Esk. If we are to address the impact that the changing climate is having on our rivers and the communities that live along them, it is essential we maintain the approach of looking at the whole run of the river. A great deal has been done through the Pearls in Peril project and through planting of native woodlands.

The Snow Roads project has been developed with the Scottish Government and the Cairngorms Business Partnership, promoting the stunning, mountainous route from Blairgowrie to Grantown-on-Spey. It is already attracting a great deal of national and international interest, and the three installations at Glenshee, Corgarff and Tomintoul are being widely discussed.

We have also been working with many local communities, including the community in Braemar, and the changes they have brought about, supported by ourselves and others, have been striking. The community-run Braemar Castle has invested in the overall visitor experience and there are plans for a new Games Heritage Centre, while the massive private sector refurbishment of the Fife Arms Hotel will have a very positive impact in the area and the Park.

Much has been achieved in the Cairngorms National Park – none of which could be attempted without the willing and active participation of other individuals and organisations. We all have a collective responsibility to care for this extraordinarily beautiful part of Scotland, and we can achieve a great deal by working together, sharing common values and common aims – as has been demonstrated over the years.

I commend this Annual Review to you and in doing so, would record my sincere thanks to all those who have worked with us to deliver all that has been achieved during the year. I know we can and will continue to work together in the years to come.

Peter Argyle  
Convener, Cairngorms National Park Authority  
board

## Facal-toisich

'S i Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh a' phàirc nàiseanta as motha am Breatainn, is i na dachaigh do 18,000 neach le 1.8m a' tadhal oirre gach bliadhna. Lorgas sa Phàirc an ceathramh cuid dhe na beathaichean is lusan as teirce am Breatainn, tha i le ceithir dhe na còig beanntain as motha ann an Alba, na pìosan as motha a tha air fhàgail de sheann choille na h-Alba agus cuid dhen àrainneachd is seallaidhean as àile san Roinn Eòrpa.

Tha a h-uile càil a tha seo a' cur uallach mòr air Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh (CNPA) ach tha sinn ga ghabhail gu toileach. Tha sinn daonnan airson a bhith ag obair an com-pàirteachas le buidhnean eile chum cur an sàs Plana Com-pàirteachais na Pàirc Nàiseanta agus, tro seo, amasan reachdail na Pàirce.

Tha CNPA air a bhith ag obair le buidhnean eile air Com-pàirteachasan Aibhne air trì aibhnichean mòra air Uisge Dè, Uisge Spè agus Easg Dheas. Ma tha sinn a' dol a dhèiligeadh ris a' bhuaidh a tha blàthachadh na cruinne a' toirt air aibhnichean is na coimhearsnachdan nan cois, feumaidh sinn a' cumail oirnn ri bhith a' coimhead ris na h-aibhnichean gu lèir. Thathas air tòrr a dhèanamh tron phròiseact 'Pearls in Peril' agus tro bhith a' cur chraobhan a bhuineas don sgìre.

Thathas air am pròiseact 'Snow Roads' a thoirt air adhart ann an co-bhuinn ri Riaghaltas na h-Alba agus Com-pàirteachas Gnìomhachais a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh, is e a' tarraing aire chun an rathaid àlainn, bheanntaich bho Bhlàr Ghobhraidh gu Baile nan Granndach. Tha tòrr a' nochdadh ùidh mar-thà aig ìre nàiseanta agus eadar-nàiseanta, le tòrr deasbaid a' dol air na tha ri fhaicinn aig Gleann Sith, Corr Gairbh agus aig Tom an t-Sabhail.

Thathas cuideachd air a bhith ag obair le tòrr choimhearsnachdan, coimhearsnachd Bhràigh Mharr nam measg; le leasachaidhean iongantach air tachairt ann le taic bhuainn fhìn agus bho

bhuidhnean eile. Le Caisteal Bhràigh Mhorr bho shealbh na coimhearsnachd, tha iad air airgead a chosg air a' Chaisteal chum turas nas fheàrr a bhith aig an fheadhainn a tha a' tadhal air; le planaichean ann airson Ionad Dualchais nan Geamannan. Bidh buaidh mhòr bhuannachdail cuideachd an lùib nan leasachaidhean mòra prìobhaideach a thèid a thoirt air adhart aig Taigh-òsta nam Fife Arms.

Thathas air tòrr a thoirt gu buil am Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh, ach cha bhiodh mòran idir air tachairt mura biodh deòin agus dìcheall nam buidhnean is daoine an bha an sàs ann. Tha e an urra rinn uile a choimhead às dèidh na ceàrnaidh àile seo de dh'Alba agus 's urrainn dhuinn an t-uabhas a choileanadh an co-bhuinn le buidhnean eile is sinn a' tarraing air an aon ràmh a thaobhar n-amasan agus na tha a' cunntadh dhuinn - mar a chunnaic sinn thar nam bliadhnachan.

Tha mì riaraichte m' ainmsa a chur ris an Aithisg Bhladhna seo agus bu chaomh leam mo thaing mhòr a thoirt dha na h-uile duine còmhla ris a tha sinn air a bhith ag obair thar na bliadhna a chum coileanadh gach nì a tha sinn air a thoirt gu buil. Tha mi cinnteach gun urrainn dhuinn, agus gum bi sinn ag obair còmhla thar nam bliadhnachan ri thighinn.



Peadar Argyle  
Ceann-suidhe, Bòrd-stiùiridh Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh







## The Cairngorms National Park Authority

The Cairngorms National Park is an outstanding part of Scotland and the UK. Its glacial landforms, wild arctic tundra and heather moorlands foster an enormous ecological diversity. Here, among ancient Caledonian pine forests, rivers, lochs and marshes, is where you can still find many of the UK's most threatened, localised and endangered species.

It is also home to around 18,000 people and supports numerous businesses. As well as our permanent residents, 1.8 million visitors flock here every year, largely for the exceptional quality of our outdoor pursuits. They come from down the road and increasingly from across the world. Building sustainable communities and businesses will ensure that future generations continue to benefit from this national asset.

The Cairngorms National Park is a special place for people, for nature, for enterprise and for enjoyment. Though by no means the sole guardian of these landscapes, the Park Authority has a unique role to play in providing leadership and bringing together the very many individuals and organisations that have an interest in the Park.

At the same time, we deliver our planning and access authority roles and encourage low carbon living, inclusion and the use of Gaelic through our Gaelic Language Plan. We also have a duty to deliver excellent everyday public services in this 'Park for All'.

We take the lead through means such as ensuring development and delivery of the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan: a five year plan prioritising the work and investment of a wide range of organisations who are active in the Cairngorms National Park.

We invite partners around the table to tackle the big issues, and our staff work on the ground to ensure that the right things happen in the right places at the right time. We also help to build capacity in community groups so they can work more effectively towards our collective goals.

Together we're working towards a time when the Cairngorms National Park will be mentioned in the same breath as established world-class National Parks like Yosemite, Fiordland and Jotunheimen. And we have evidence that we are getting there – with an increasing number of international visits by people interested in learning about how we and our partners manage the Cairngorms National Park.

With so many partnerships and plans in motion, the Cairngorms National Park Authority is the place where myriad paths converge. We can't get where we want to go without the continued support of our partners. It's our job to make sure that we're all heading in the same direction.

## Cairngorms National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2015-2018

The 2016/17 year reviewed here is the second year reporting to the 2015-2018 Corporate Plan. This Corporate Plan centres on the key priorities the CNPA will be focussing on over the three years of the Plan to deliver three strategic outcomes:

### Conservation

A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage of the Cairngorms National Park enhanced

### Visitor Experience

People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences (visitor experiences)

### Rural Development

A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities

These are supplemented by two support themes – Corporate Services and Communications. Key partners and a set of performance indicators have also been identified for each theme. Collectively, through these activities, we aim to work towards the National Park vision.





### **Cairngorms National Park Vision**

An outstanding National Park, enjoyed and valued by everyone, where people and nature thrive together

Our Corporate Plan sets out our role in helping to deliver the key priorities and realise these outcome, which is summarised in our CNPA Mission Statement and Values.

### **CNPA Mission Statement**

To lead the way in delivering for the Cairngorms National Park by:

- bringing people together toward a common purpose
- enhancing the Park for everyone
- inspiring new generations to be Park champions

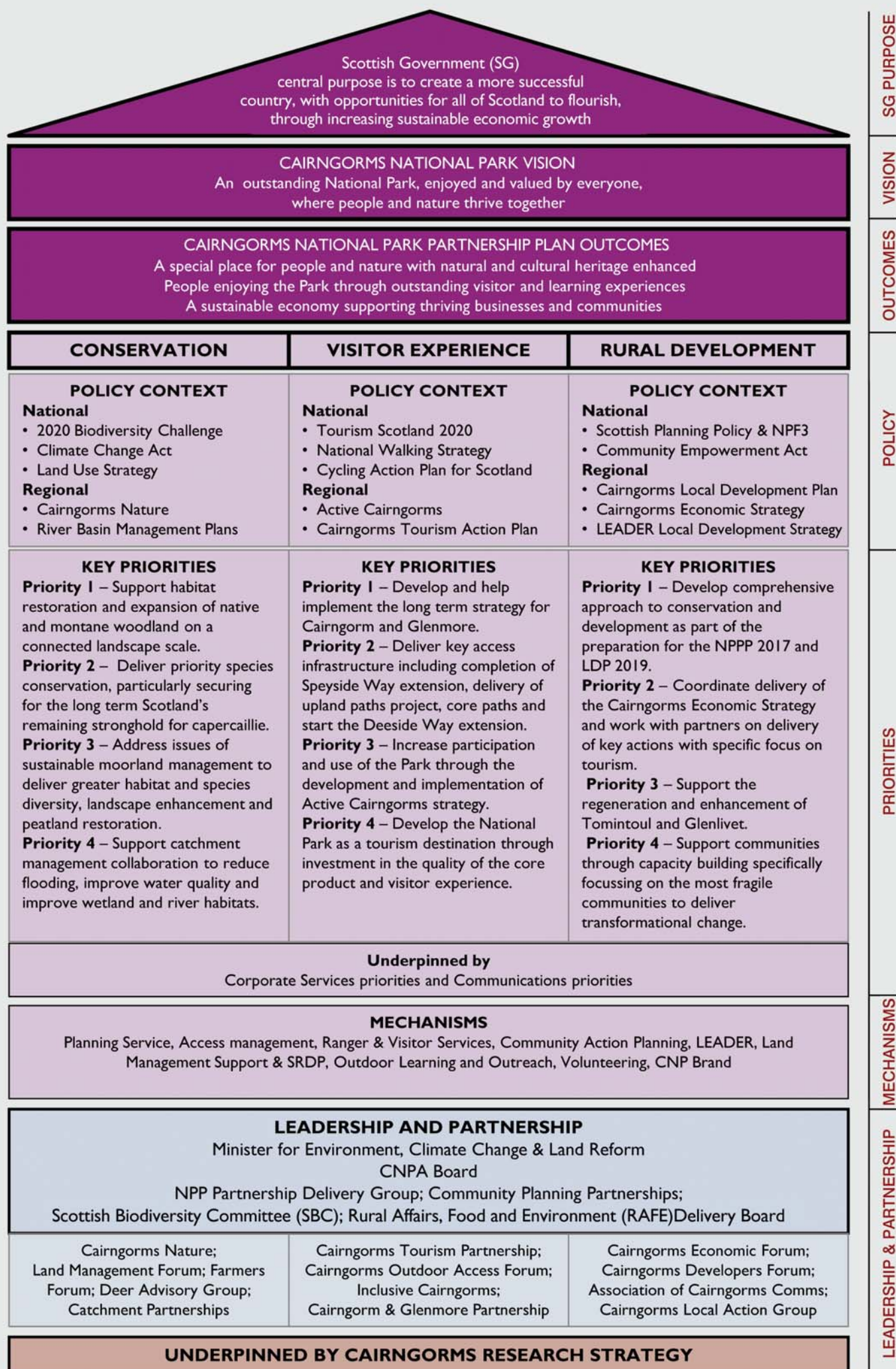
### **CNPA Values**

The CNPA is an open, inclusive, innovative and professional organisation, that behaves with integrity.

### **CNPA Role**

- Bringing partners together to deliver conservation at a landscape scale
- Ensuring the quality of visitor experience matches the quality of environment by co-ordinating investment in the core infrastructure
- Ensuring people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities are able to experience and enjoy the National Park
- Promoting investment in a diversified economy
- Helping communities plan and achieve their own visions
- Delivering a Planning Service to guide the right development to the right place
- Delivering effective, efficient and sustainable services
- Promoting the highest standards of governance, to support delivery of the Corporate Plan and the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan
- Raise the profile of the Park
- Create connection and commitment to care for the Park

See page 18 to 25 for case studies of work undertaken during 2016/17 to deliver these outcomes, as well as information about the Park Authority services.







## National Parks' Delivery of Services in Scotland

Scotland's two National Parks, Cairngorms and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, share the same four statutory aims. While there are differences of landscape, visitor impact and special qualities which distinguish each Park, both National Park Authorities (NPAs) are charged with achieving many common outcomes. Both NPAs are responsible for delivering a diverse range of similar services from managing planning development; administering grant schemes and supporting development of vibrant rural communities, to conserving and managing priority species; outreach education and visitor information and management.

### Alignment Between National Park Authorities: Achievements in 2016/17

Work between the two National Parks, the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) – a registered charity specialising in path works and environmental management activities – and other funding partners, has continued during the year on our largest collective project, The Mountains and the People project. Over 28km of mountain path works have now been completed of which around 13km are in the Cairngorms, with a programme of volunteering activity now fully underway and completion of the first cohort of trainees in the Cairngorms in the year. The Access Trust also rebranded in the year to reflect their growing delivery across Scotland from their roots in the Cairngorms, with the new name of the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland.

Our ongoing work in establishing and delivering collaborative working arrangements between Loch Lomond and the Trossachs and Cairngorms National Park Authorities has also continued. Developing and delivering shared services by the NPAs focuses on three aims:

1. Establishing more robust service delivery for two relatively small organisations with high risk of adverse impact to service delivery from staff absence or turnover.
2. Realising efficiencies in service delivery.
3. Establishing single support or policy platforms where justified by commonality of need by two organisations, while respecting the differences of organisational culture and local priorities of each partner.

We continue to demonstrate efficiencies through collective activities and shared services, with, for example, operating single, collective pay and job evaluation systems, and participating jointly in national initiatives like the Procurement Capability Assessments.

We share staff expertise and knowledge and, where most effective and economical to do so, undertake joint procurements and service delivery.

Both National Parks' senior teams and also Corporate Services management teams continue to meet regularly to build on these strengthened foundations and explore further ways of working more collaboratively, effectively and efficiently.





## Delivering Sustainable Economic Growth

The Park's four statutory aims are:

- to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
- to promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
- to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public; and
- to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

Collective and co-ordinated delivery of these statutory aims contributes to the Scottish Government's purpose, to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

In particular, we aim to make a significant contribution to the National Outcome – 'We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people'. In promoting partnership working and giving leadership to all those involved in the Cairngorms National Park, the Park Authority co-ordinates delivery of these four statutory aims through the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan. We worked closely with all our partners in 2016/17 to consult on and finalise a new National Park Partnership Plan for the Cairngorms to cover the period 2017 to 2022. The Plan was approved by Scottish Ministers in April 2017. Over the course of 2016/17, there have been a number of specific achievements with regard to delivering sustainable economic growth within the National Park.

- The Park Authority worked with the Cairngorms LEADER Local Action Group (CLAG) to become one of the first areas in Scotland to launch its live LEADER Programme. By 31 March 2017 we had helped support 18 community led local development projects in the Cairngorms, with a LEADER grant commitment of £1.1 million supporting investment of £2.2 million.

- We continue to work to further extend the Speyside Way from Kincaig to Newtonmore as a key piece of infrastructure to support development of our tourism and Active Cairngorms economies. This is further enhanced by the mountain paths delivered by the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (formerly COAT – the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust) within The Mountains and The People (TMTP) project mentioned previously, while we also explore the development of the Deeside Way.
- We continue to support the training requirements of our land based businesses within the Cairngorms, while supporting the next phase of SVQ2 qualifications for trainees within the TMTP project. The Park Authority remains focused on supporting and ensuring delivery of training relevant to the local economy.
- The Park Authority has worked throughout the year to promote the need for improved broadband provision to the Park's businesses, residents and visitors as a cornerstone of our economic and community development strategies. We have worked with Community Broadband Scotland while a community led initiative appeared the most viable means of implementing superfast broadband within the Park. This has now been overtaken by the Scottish Government's 'Reaching 100' (R100) programme. We will continue to reinforce the key need for superfast broadband provision to Park communities to those responsible for R100 delivery.

In conclusion, our work along with our partners, aims to establish exemplars of sustainable development within Scotland's rural economy – delivering sustainable economic growth within the Cairngorms National Park, while illustrating best practice that other rural areas in Scotland may follow.

## Delivery of Scottish Government's Strategic Outcomes

The CNPA has set out a business case demonstrating our contribution to the Scottish Government's purpose, creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth.

We achieve this through our work combining to contribute to nine of the Scottish Government's 16 strategic national outcomes.

Outcome 2	We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.
Outcome 4	Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
Outcome 6	We live longer, healthier lives.
Outcome 10	We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.
Outcome 11	We have strong resilient and supporting communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
Outcome 12	We value and enjoy our natural and built environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.
Outcome 13	We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.
Outcome 14	We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.
Outcome 16	Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

The Park Authority has adopted a suite of key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure its success in delivery of its Corporate Plan. Our monitoring against these KPIs is available through our reports to the CNPA board on our delivery in June and December each year, with the most recent report at the time of this publication, available on our website.  
[www.cairngorms.co.uk](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk)



# Strong, Sustainable Economy

## Top Facts and Figures

**Cairngorms**  
NATIONAL PARK  
Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh



### Strong Identity

#### Park Visitors

 **1.8m**  
per year

**91%** know they are in the Park

**50%** National Park status influenced decision to visit  
(63% of overseas visitors)

#### Park Businesses

 **200+**  
use Park brand

**79%** say Park status attracts first time customers

### Economic Collaboration



Strengthening Park economy by linking businesses and communities

### Celebrating Good Design



#### Design Awards 2016

**5** winners  
**9** commended  
**31** short-listed

#### Roads



Working with Transport Scotland to dual A9 by 2025

### Rural Development

**100%**

'called in' planning applications approved

#### Housing



**2500**  
housing land supply

**325**  
built in last five years

including **90**  
affordable

#### Renewable Energy Since 2011

Production



Woodfuel usage



### Supporting Land Based Businesses



**36**  
businesses strengthened through training subsidies

**518** staff benefiting from training

#### Guidance and Advice SRDP investment of

**£5.25 million**

between 2007-2013

#### Young Trainee Opportunities

Path Skills Certificate  
Environmental Conservation SVQ Level 2+

### Strengthening Communities

Community Development Officers **6** funded by CNPA



Fibre and mobile broadband widely available across the Park





# Empowering Communities

## Top Facts and Figures



**Cairngorms**  
NATIONAL PARK  
Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh

### Community-led Initiatives

£ **16+**  
million

invested via  
Cairngorms National  
Park partnerships

**19** community projects supported by  
Cairngorms LEADER 2014-2022  
**7** projects supported by  
Cairngorms Trust Small Grants

**90%**

communities  
with an  
Action Plan

**30**

active  
Development  
Trusts  
(or equivalent)

**4**

successful community  
development projects

**12**

community enterprises  
generating income

**6**

Community  
Development Officers  
funded by CNPA

**25%**

Awards from  
disadvantaged  
backgrounds

### Connecting with Nature

**28,500**

completed John Muir Award

**25%**

of Scotland's  
total Awards

### Learning New Skills

**300**

completed Junior  
Ranger Programme

**20**

involved in  
international  
events

### Education Grants Awarded

**£14,000**

**70**

schools

**27**

marginalised groups

**50%**

from deprived  
areas or who  
have never been  
to the Park

### Outdoor Learning Travel Grants

Resources  
for Curriculum  
for Excellence

### Community Leadership Programme

**869**

people inspired to  
engage with their  
environment

**48**

leaders from black and  
minority ethnic groups  
and marginalised  
communities

**23**

Walking to  
Health Groups

**200** miles  
signposted  
community  
path networks

**8**

communities  
supporting active  
travel to school & work

**17**

community  
path leaflets



**Healthier  
Lifestyles**



**Improving  
Accessibility  
For All** **£7.5**  
million

paths, bridges, signs,  
interpretations, leaflets



# Improving Public Services

## Top Facts and Figures



**Cairngorms**  
NATIONAL PARK  
Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh

### Working in Partnership

Co-ordinated management plan

**40+** partners

**20+** public sector organisations

### Leverage Figures

For every **£1** Grant-in-Aid received **£4** invested into Park

**£4m**  
Landscape Partnership funding bid for Tomintoul and Glenlivet

  
Local Development Plan in place for whole Park

### Shared services

Annual efficiency savings

CNPA saved  
**£1 1/2 million**  
over last 5yrs



### Planning Applications

**88%**

of planning applications with processing agreements in 2016/17

### Sustainable Travel Policy

**9.3%**

reduction in carbon emission in 2016/17

**136.75** tonne reduction since 2007

**£20 million** extra funding over last 10 years

- community-based projects
- land-based businesses
- improved access and recreation facilities



# STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

Conservation

Visitor Experience

Rural Development

*“The Park Authority is responsible for delivering a diverse range of services from managing planning development; administering grant schemes and developing vibrant rural communities, to conserving and managing priority species; outreach education and visitor information and management.”*







# CONSERVATION

## River Catchment Partnerships

The Cairngorms National Park Authority is financially supporting and working with three River Catchment Partnerships in the Cairngorms National Park – the Dee, the Spey and the South Esk.

While each has their own priorities, the objectives are similar across the catchments with sustainable flood management, an increase in riparian woodlands, habitat improvements and education and awareness raising being the main focus. The Catchment Partnerships involve multiple groups, organisations, land managers and statutory bodies as well as commercial and charitable interests.

All three catchments have benefited in the last year from EU LIFE funding through the Pearls in Peril (PiP) project with river restoration works having been carried out to help freshwater pearl mussel and salmon populations. The PiP project is a finalist in the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management awards 2017. The tributaries of the river Dee are benefiting from significant native woodland planting, increasing shade to cool water temperatures, improving habitat links and biodiversity and improving water quality.

In Glen Clova, a contour planting project – a proposal supported by the Park Authority to create around 200ha of new woodland with the aim of natural flood management to reduce impacts further downstream – will also have important biodiversity and landscape benefits.

With Storm Frank (December 2015) still fresh in the mind in Deeside, the Cairngorms National Park Authority has been working with the Dee Catchment Partnership, leading on developing opportunities for natural flood management, particularly through targeting woodland expansion in the area and peatland restoration work high up on the moorlands surrounding the Dee.

The CNPA has also funded the Spey Catchment Initiative to provide 20 metres of willow spilling bank protection in Aviemore as a demonstration for other sections of the Spey. Living willow is used to provide flexible bank protection, shading of the river to enhance fish and mussel habitat and provides a habitat in its own right.

Targeting woodland expansion to the most beneficial places and delivering key woodland linkages between catchments is a priority in the new Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan, as is tackling the 50 per cent decline in freshwater pearl mussels in the river Spey.





# VISITOR EXPERIENCE

## Snow Roads Scenic Route

The Snow Roads Scenic Route is generating a significant amount of interest with images regularly appearing on social media.

Compared to Route 66, USA; Stelvio Pass, Italy; the Great Ocean Road, Australia – this outstanding mountainous road linking Blairgowrie (A93) to Grantown-on-Spey (A939) via Braemar, Ballater and Tomintoul, is regularly used by classic car and motor bike enthusiasts and increasingly road cyclists. Offering an alternative to the A9, the route traverses the eastern Cairngorms through remote, wild and breathtaking landscapes.

In a partnership project between the Scottish Government and the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Britain's highest road is now part of the successful Scenic Routes project after benefitting from a range of enhancements designed to showcase the area's stunning scenery to all road users.

There are three installations and upgraded laybys on the route designed by competition winning young architects. The first installation was on the A939 at Corgarff. The Watchers is a group of cowled seats where people can sit and reflect on the views over Glen Avon and Deeside. At the layby at Creagan Nam Cam, Glenshee – at the famous Devil's Elbow – Connecting Contours is an inspiring viewpoint seat, path and visitor information point. And at Craighaulkie Quarry, near Tomintoul, an improved path takes you to an elevated viewpoint cube – Still – with stunning views of the Cairngorms.



The project takes its inspiration from a similar, successful initiative in Norway and aims to enhance visitors' experience of Scotland's landscape by creating innovatively designed viewpoints as well as harnessing new talent through competitions for recently qualified designers.

Along the route, people are spoilt for choice for things to do from castles and distilleries to art galleries and outdoor activities. To help promote the route and the attractions along the way, a project manager has been recruited by the Cairngorms Business Partnership. With funding support from Scottish Enterprise, the aim is for the Snow Roads project to become a world class scenic route, brought to life using the latest technology.



# RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## Braemar Focus

The village of Braemar, nestled in the foothills on the eastern side of the Cairngorms National Park, is a village going places! From five star accommodation, a community renewable energy supply, new paths and history coming to life on the doorstep, Braemar is about so much more than just its connections with royalty.

People in communities all across the area play a vital role in managing the Cairngorms National Park by preparing prioritised community action plans and leading delivery of their own projects. This is particularly evident in the Braemar where, with a population of only 450 people, there is an impressive array of projects being delivered.

Significant investment has been made in this popular village over the last few years by a number of different public and private bodies and the results are coming to fruition with more visitors and increased community confidence.

The comprehensive refurbishment of the Fife Arms Hotel into luxury visitor accommodation is almost complete after gaining planning permission from the CNPA in 2015, meaning this attractive B-listed building will make a major contribution to the Deeside and Cairngorms

National Park economy. The Fife Arms Hotel has been a prominent feature in the village of Braemar since it was built by the Duke of Fife in the late 19th century. The building represents the expansion of the tourist trade in Deeside in the wake of Queen Victoria's purchase of Balmoral and the coming of the railway to the area.

With support from the Park Authority and other public sector organisations, the Braemar community has been a real driving force in securing the village's future as a must visit destination, especially if you love history! Plans are in place for a new Highland Games Heritage Centre and the community is doing a great job in managing the Braemar Castle as a high profile visitor attraction.

Plans are also being prepared for extending the Deeside Way from Ballater to Braemar with initial investigations already well underway. And the village's community hydro scheme is now up and running with Braemar Community Hydro selling electricity generated by the scheme to the national grid, resulting in an income stream to fund other community projects in and around the village.





# PARK AUTHORITY SERVICES

## Overview

Much of the work undertaken by the Cairngorms National Park Authority, as outlined in this review, involves working in partnership with others, influencing, building relationships and facilitating projects through taking a lead or hosting roles where other delivery partners perhaps do not have the full operational or business systems capacity to deliver the full range of activities required.

Our staff and our organisational structures are therefore critical to our continued success. In 2016/17, we finalised the second phase of our Organisational Development Strategy, through which we aimed to improve and develop as an organisation through innovation, embracing digital technologies and the opportunities they afford, and seeking to improve our provision of services to the public. Our implementation of the first phase of this work established a co-ordinated change management programme where we improved our services we deliver internally and externally, and demonstrated our ongoing delivery of best value in management and use of the public resources we have responsibility for. We aim to harness this integrated change management programme once again in delivering a second phase of internal and external service improvements.

## Improving efficiency, effectiveness and economy

The Park Authority focuses on the delivery of best value, and on the improvement in efficiency, effectiveness and economy in exercising our functions. The contribution to the Scottish Government's National Outcome, that 'Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs' represents a key linkage between the Park Authority's corporate strategies and national policy.



We maintain our oversight of effectiveness of service delivery through a direct linkage between our complaints handling procedure and development of best value services. We ensure complaints and any other forms of feedback on our services are used to inform service development and help identify service improvements where these are required. We have overhauled our complaints handling service in 2016/17 to ensure that the service provides the best possible service to its users and also can make the most effective contribution to our own service improvement. We also value input from internal audit, which supported our work on complaints handling, and other areas of external review to identify potential areas for service improvement and enhanced effectiveness.

In terms of the Park Authority's delivery of efficiencies in its operations, we continue to deliver against target cumulative efficiency savings. Consequently, the Park Authority is able to maintain investment in projects within the National Park despite reductions in public sector funding, by redirecting these efficiency savings from organisational support into project investment.

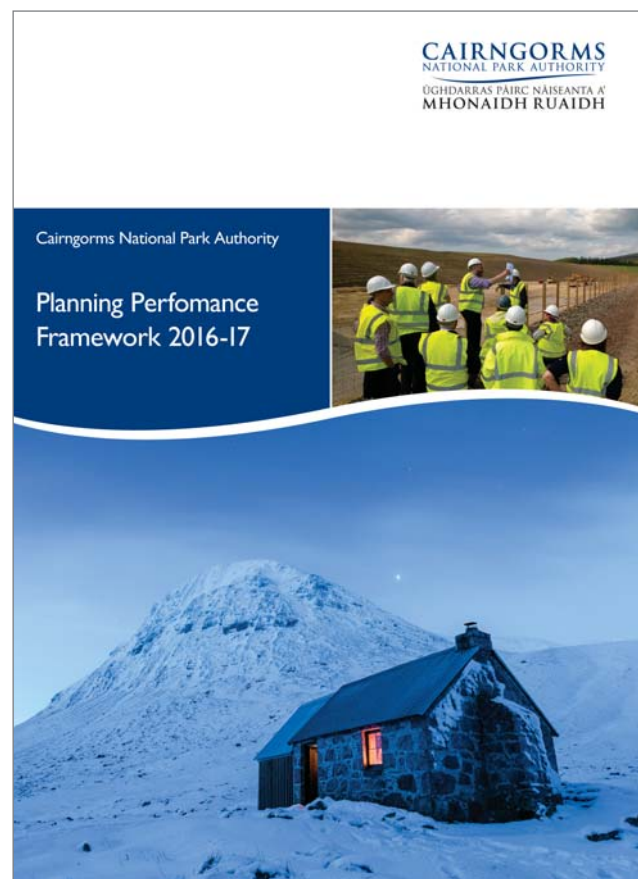
Our delivery of services through shared services and joint procurement with various partners has been a contributory factor to successful delivery of efficiency savings and also to development of economic, effective service provision. The Park Authority both delivers and receives shared services as a consequence of various joint delivery arrangements, in particular with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs NPA. All functional areas of corporate services have been involved in the development of these shared services arrangements: governance and standards, audit, human resources, finance, and information technology.

### Planning service delivery

The CNPA has continued to deliver an effective and efficient Planning Service over 2016/17, offering processing agreements on all planning applications and an uptake of processing agreements of 88%, up from 71% in 2015/16. Examples of planning applications approved in 2016/17 include the development of 10 affordable houses and 43 house plots at Granttown-on-Spey, an innovative affordable housing development on a former sawmill site at Rothiemurchus Estate and a small scale hydro power scheme on Glenmuick Estate near Ballater. No planning applications were refused by the CNPA during 2016/17.

We also:

- ran a successful Design Awards competition to showcase good design in the National Park;
- won a place-making award in the Scottish Government's Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning for the Speyside Way Extension from Aviemore to Kincaig;
- added to our series of Cairngorms Planning Advice Notes to provide easy to read advice for customers;
- undertook a project with school pupils from Granttown Grammar School;
- invited senior pupil's from Kingussie High School and Granttown Grammar School to attend a planning committee meeting and witness the democratic decision-making process in action;
- started work on our next Local Development Plan and new development briefs for key development sites.





## Gaelic Language Plan

The CNPA's first five year Gaelic Language Plan, adopted in 2013, focuses on four core commitments: identity, communications, publications and staffing.

Progress against the Plan during 2016/17 includes:

- educational resources in Gaelic about physical landscapes, rural land use, social subjects and environmental studies were sent to all schools in the Park and all Gaelic medium schools in Scotland;
- 26 organisations and 212 visitor facing employees have taken part in the 'Make it Yours' campaign which includes promotion of Gaelic and the Gaelic Place Names leaflet;
- three training sessions for land managers, community representatives and CNPA staff and board on 'Gaelic – Nature in the Landscape' were attended by 37 people including 7 members of staff;
- CNPA corporate information provided in Gaelic on 6 additional pages of the Cairngorms National Park website – [www.cairngorms.co.uk](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk).



## Am Plana Gàidhlig

Tha ciad Phlana Gàidhlig CNPA, a thàinig a-steach an 2013, a' cur fòcas air na ceithir prìomh amasan a leanas: aithne, conaltradh, foillsachaidhean agus luchd-obrach.

Rinneadh adhartas mar a leanas tron a' Phlana rè 2016/17:

- goireasan ionnsachaidh air cumadh na tìre, cleachdadh fearainn air an tuath, cuspairean sòisealta agus eòlas àrainneachd air an cur gu gach sgoil sa Phàirc agus do sgoiltean Gàidhlig air feadh na h-Alba;
- 26 buidhnean agus 212 luchd-obrach a tha a' dèiligeadh ris a' phoball air pàirt a ghabhail san iomairt 'Make it Yours' a tha a' tarraing aire don Ghàidhlig agus bileag air Ainmean-Àite Gàidhlig;
- trì seiseanan treànaidh dha manaidsearan-fearainn, riochdairean-coimhearsnachd agus dha buill a' bhùird agus luchd-obrach CNPA air 'Gàidhlig – Nàdar san Àrainneachd' le 37 daoine agus seachdnar luchd-obrachd an làthair;
- fiosrachadh corporra air CNPA ga thoirt seachad sa Ghàidhlig air sia duilleagan a bharrachd air làrach-lìn Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhònaidh Ruaidh – [www.cairngorms.co.uk](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk).







**Cairngorms National Park Authority**

14 The Square  
Grantown-on-Spey PH26 3HG

**[www.cairngorms.co.uk](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk)**

Email: [enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk)  
Tel: 01479 873535  
Fax: 01479 873527