



Cairngorms National Park
Partnership Plan 2022-2027

People and nature thriving together



INSIDE: our plans for the future of the Cairngorms National Park and what they mean for you

People and nature thriving together

The Cairngorms National Park is changing. Last year, we asked you to help shape our new Partnership Plan and we're grateful to the nearly 1,500 of you who responded to the consultation. Whilst a process like this always requires compromise, I hope the information on the next few pages reflects the key priorities you identified.

We know this won't be easy. Tackling the climate and nature emergency in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, against the backdrop of a global pandemic and the ongoing war in Ukraine, will require bold and decisive action. But it also represents a huge opportunity for our National Park to lead the way, not just for the Highlands, but for Scotland and the rest of the world.

From ecological restoration to net zero, supporting young people to stay in the Park to transforming public transport and delivering increased affordable housing, the vision we've set out is ambitious but, crucially, it is achievable. We're proud to be working alongside over 100 partners to deliver it and we will need your help to turn these words into action.

Whether you agree with most of what we're proposing or even just a few key elements of it, the thing that unites all of us is a passion for making this place better. It's only by working together that we can ensure people and nature thrive in the Cairngorms National Park, both now and in the future.



Xander McDade
Convener





Our long-term vision:
‘An outstanding National
Park, enjoyed and valued
by everyone, where nature
and people thrive together.’

Aerial photo looking towards Newtonmore © James Stevens

Our priorities for Nature

The Cairngorms is the UK's largest national park, home to one quarter of the UK's rare and endangered species. We'll take action to protect and enhance the area's natural heritage.

1



1. Going beyond net zero

We will work with independent experts to achieve net zero and go beyond it well before Scotland's 2045 target.

2. Expanding woodland

We will join up and expand woodland across the Cairngorms, whilst protecting in-by-ye agricultural land.

2



3



3. Restoring peatland

We will trap carbon by restoring the equivalent of 40 football pitches per week of degraded peatland.



4. Helping habitats thrive

We will restore precious habitats across the Park and help species thrive, including action on capercaillie, beaver and raptors.

5. Reducing deer impacts

We will reduce the number and impact of deer and other herbivores to allow our woodland and peatland to recover.



6. Managing land sustainably

We will work with farmers and other land managers to encourage sustainable land management that delivers benefits for climate and nature.

7. Green investment

We will attract responsible private investment to help fund nature's recovery, sharing the benefits with communities, workers and landowners.



Images by Damian Shields / VisitScotland, Duncan Miller, Niall Benvie, Scotland: The Big Picture and Shaila Rao

Our priorities for People

We want people and nature to thrive together in the Cairngorms National Park. To achieve this, we will develop and support a local economy that works for all our communities.

1



1. A thriving population

We will increase the working-age population of the Park, supported by a growing number of Real Living Wage employers.

2

2. Focusing on wellbeing

We will put people and planet first by promoting local business, connecting people with nature and tackling inequality.



3



3. Developing green jobs

We will create apprenticeships and other training opportunities for local people to benefit from the growth in green jobs.

4



4. Being a Park for All

We will develop targeted programmes to tackle inequality and ensure that anyone can visit and enjoy the National Park.

5. Empowering communities

We will help communities shape the future of their area, including planning, land ownership and support for social enterprise.

5



6



6. Improving people's health

We will work with the NHS and other partners to connect people to nature and improve their mental and physical health.

7. Supporting volunteers

We will expand volunteer opportunities for people from all backgrounds, benefiting nature and participants' health and wellbeing.

7



Our priorities for Place

Anyone that wishes to live in, work in or visit the National Park should be able to do so, but we recognise that a number of barriers still exist. Here we set out how we will tackle them.

1



1. More affordable housing

We will increase access to affordable housing and reduce the number of second homes, vacant or short-term let properties.

2. Transforming transport

We will improve public transport for residents, commuters and visitors, better connecting communities and reducing private car usage.

2



3



3. Connecting communities

We will join up communities by increasing the number of safe and fully accessible paths and cycle routes across the Park.

4



4. Reducing tourism impacts

We will work with businesses to reduce the environmental impacts of tourism, ensuring the Cairngorms leads the way on sustainable tourism.

5. Welcoming visitors

We will encourage people to visit quieter areas of the Park and come outside peak season to reduce pressures on local communities.

5



6



6. Helping communities thrive

We will support local businesses and communities to ensure our village and town centres flourish, both now and in the future.

7. Celebrating cultural heritage

We will protect and celebrate the Park's rich cultural heritage, giving everyone the opportunity to learn about our historic environment and culture.

7



How your views shaped the plan

The formal consultation ran from September to December 2021 and we were delighted that more than half of responses came from people living or working within the National Park.

In total, over two thirds of respondents supported the draft plan's outcomes and objectives across the three themes of Nature, People and Place; however, there were a number of areas which you asked us to review. These comments – and our response to them – are summarised below.

You said...



Be more ambitious in tackling the climate and nature crises.



Take forward more species-specific activity and act on wildlife crime.



Prioritise affordable housing and controls on second homes and short-term lets.



Improve public transport, path and cycle networks across the Park.



Celebrate the Cairngorms' rich cultural heritage alongside the Park's Gaelic language commitments.

We listened...



We're working with independent experts to set a firm target, by 2023, for reaching net zero and carbon negativity.



Specific actions on wildlife crime, and on species including capercaillie and beaver, have been added.



Actions on second homes and short-term lets have been added, and affordable housing is now at the start of the Place section.



We're prioritising public transport and foot / cycle path improvements, particularly through Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 (see page 12).



Scots / Doric is now drawn out in the plan alongside Gaelic, as we celebrate the area's heritage and culture.



Over half of
responses came
from people
in the Park

Image of a dry stone wall being repaired © Ed Smith

Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030

If we're going to be successful in delivering the Partnership Plan, we'll need to change the way we do things. Our Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme is central to this.

Inspired by the Gaelic word Dùthchas – meaning the deep-rooted connection between people and nature – the programme puts the power to tackle the climate and nature crises in the hands of people who live, work and visit here.

Across 24 long-term projects, Heritage Horizons will bring about transformational change in the Cairngorms, benefiting health and wellbeing, delivering on climate change and enhancing nature across the National Park.

Heritage Horizons is an unprecedented partnership of over 45 organisations and is supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.



Image of two children in Anagach Woods © Rachel Keenan

The programme is on a larger scale than anything previously attempted in the UK, and aims to inspire rural and urban communities throughout Scotland and beyond to take action and make a difference.

In particular, Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 will focus on:



Putting residents at the heart of decision-making and giving them more say in future funding decisions.



Working with communities and partners to improve public transport and better connect the National Park.



Working with land managers to explore new ways of managing land, as well as restoring and enhancing large areas of peatland and woodland.



Developing an economy that benefits people and nature, and providing green solutions to public health issues including Covid-19 recovery, social isolation and dementia.

(Not quite) the final word

I'm enormously grateful to everyone who's contributed to the development of this Partnership Plan, but even if you haven't there will be plenty of opportunities to get involved and keep up to date with our progress in future.

We'll be basing our decisions on the best available evidence to help ensure we stay on track and this evidence will be published on our website where everyone can see it. From working with independent experts to track our carbon emissions, to creating a dedicated Cairngorms Nature Index to further our understanding of the Park's species and habitats, or sharing what we learn from the Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme in real time, we will be open and transparent in the work we take forward.

We're also changing the way we communicate with you. A couple of times a year we'll post out (on 100% recycled paper) a short update on key activities taking place within the National Park to give you a flavour of some of the major milestones being achieved in your area. We'll showcase the individuals and organisations behind the scenes that are helping make the Partnership Plan a reality and highlight opportunities for you to get involved.

In the meantime, for all the latest news from the National Park visit our website at cairngorms.co.uk. You can also sign up for email updates by visiting cairngorms.co.uk/newsletters or call us on 01479 873 535. Thanks again for your support.



Grant Moir,
Chief Executive





To view the full Partnership Plan:

 Call us on 01479 873 535

 Email enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk

 Visit cairngorms.co.uk/PartnershipPlan



Use your
phone to scan



This document was printed on 100% recycled paper using vegetable-based inks. Once you are done with your copy, please pass it on or pop it in the recycling.

Please
turn over



Image of red squirrel
© Peter Cairns / 2020VISION



Cairngorms
National Park

**Pàirc Nàiseanta a'
Mhonaidh Ruaidh**

Produced by the Cairngorms National Park Authority
14 The Square | Grantown on Spey | PH26 3HG

 01479 873 535  cairngorms.co.uk