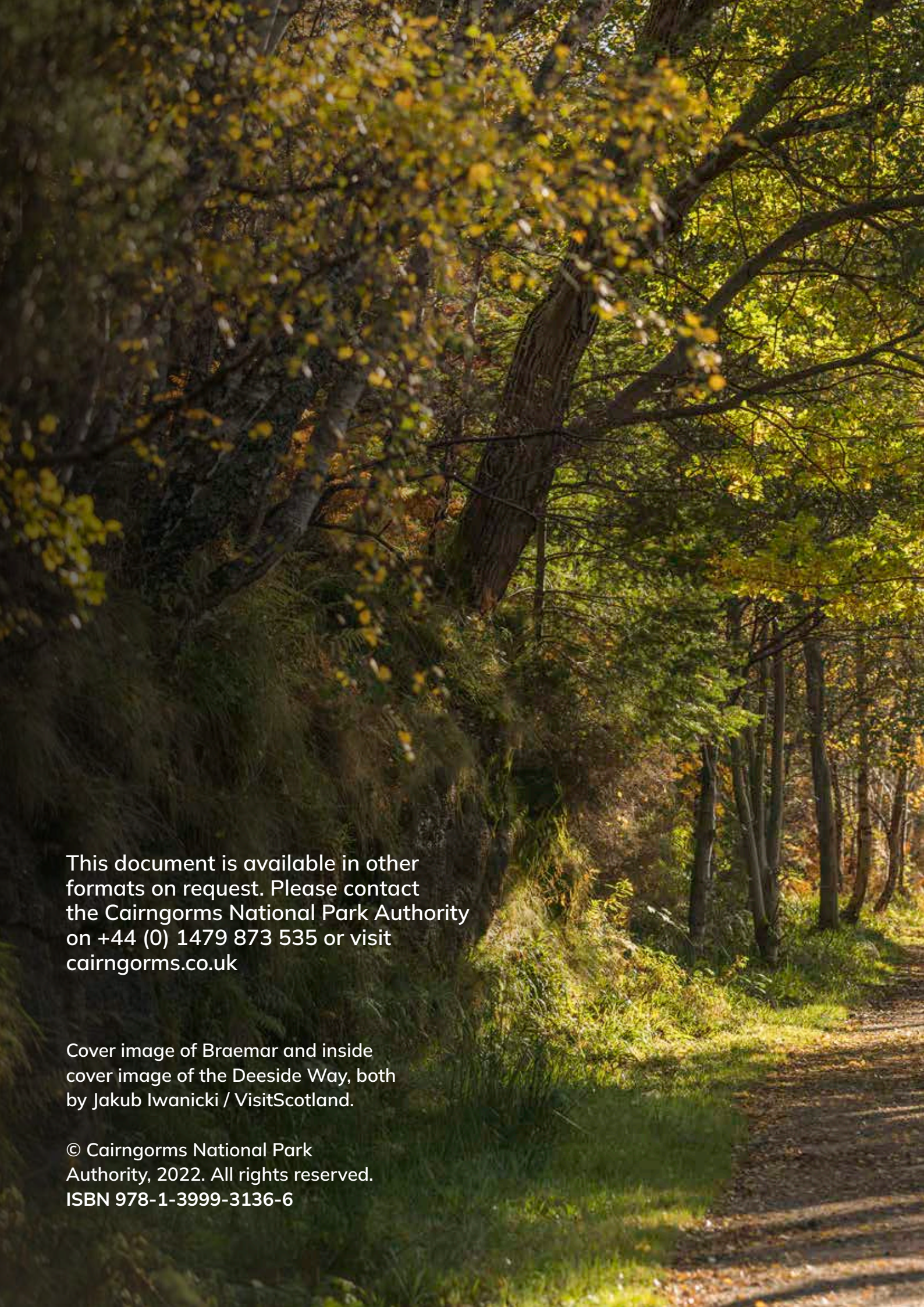




Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2022-27

**Plana Com-pàirteachais Pàirc
Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh 2022-27**



This document is available in other formats on request. Please contact the Cairngorms National Park Authority on +44 (0) 1479 873 535 or visit cairngorms.co.uk

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Ministerial foreword



Lorna Slater MSP

The nature and climate crises require leadership and action and this National Park Partnership Plan does both for the largest national park in the UK. We have experienced significant changes since the last Partnership Plan was published in 2017 and it was heartening to see nearly 1,500 people take part in the consultation on the future of this special place.

The climate and nature crises are the biggest challenges we face and it is critical that the Cairngorms National Park is an exemplar in achieving net zero, developing nature-based solutions and helping Scotland meet its targets as part of a just transition.

The Partnership Plan offers an opportunity to ensure that nature is at the heart of our decision-making for the future. We need to deliver an economy that supports people to thrive whilst also protecting and nurturing nature, not exploiting it for short-term benefit and long-term harm.

This generation's goal, and that of all governments, must be to leave things better than we found them for future generations to enjoy.

To address the climate and nature crises, we need to act at unprecedented speed and scale across all parts of society. That is why the Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme is so

important to ensuring that we do the right things at scale, taking the people who live, work in and visit the Park with us.

Meeting the objectives within this Partnership Plan will mean hard choices need to be made. There are ambitious targets to increase the number of affordable houses, improve active travel and public transport, reduce deer numbers and other herbivores to enable woodland expansion, restore and manage peatland to reduce carbon emissions, and to have 50% of the National Park managed principally for ecosystem restoration, which will bring wider landscape, biodiversity and people benefits. This is not tinkering around the edges, this is fundamental change that we need to see and support.

This Partnership Plan will focus delivery on our shared ambition for a carbon negative and biodiversity-rich National Park with better functioning, better connected and more resilient ecosystems, a place where people want to live, work and visit, underpinned by a wellbeing economy that works for all the people of Scotland.

It sets out an approach that listens to and involves communities in the National Park, giving us the best possible chance together to deliver a decarbonised and nature-based economy where people and nature thrive together.

National parks can do so much for Scotland and this plan shows the ambition and the pragmatic application that will be needed to meet the challenges of the next 25 years.

Lorna Slater MSP, Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity

Ro-ràdh bhon Mhinistear

Tha an èiginn nàdair is gnàth-thìde feumach air ceannas agus gnìomh, agus sin dìreach na tha Plana Com-pàirteachais na Pàirce Nàiseanta seo a' lìbhrigeadh airson na pàirce nàiseanta as motha san Rìoghachd Aonaichte. Tha sinn air atharrachaidhean mòra fhaicinn bho chaidh am plana com-pàirteachais mu dheireadh fhoillseachadh ann an 2017 agus bha e na thoileachas dhuinn gun do ghabh faisg air 1,500 neach pàirt anns a' cho-chomhairle air na tha an dàn don àite shònraichte seo.

'S e èiginn gnàth-thìde agus èiginn nàdair na dùbhlain as motha a tha romhainn agus tha e deatamach gum bi Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh na h-eisimpleir ann a bhith a' coileanadh net zero, a' leasachadh fhuasglaidhean stèidhichte air nàdar agus a' cuideachadh Alba gus na targaidean aice a choileanadh mar phàirt de dh'eadar-ghluasad cothromach.

Tha am plana com-pàirteachais a' toirt cothrom dhuinn dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil nàdar aig cridhe ar co-dhùnidhean airson an ama ri teachd. Feumaidh an eaconamaidh againn a bhith a' cuideachadh dhaoine gus soirbheachadh ach aig an aon àm a' dìon agus ag àrach nàdar, gun a bhith a' gabhail brath air airson buannachd sa gheàrr-ùine a dh'adhbharaicheas cron san fhad-ùine.

Feumaidh gur e amas a' ghinealaich seo, agus amas gach riaghaltais, rudan fhàgail nas fheàrr na lorg sinn iad airson nan ginealaichean ri teachd.

Gus dèiligeadh ri èiginn gnàth-thìde agus èiginn nàdair, feumaidh farsaingeachd is astar na h-obrach a bhith aig ìre nach fhacas a-riamh roimhe thar gach pàirt den chomann-shòisealta. Sin as coireach gu bheil am prògram, Dùthchas: Monadh Ruadh 2030, cho cudromach airson dèanamh cinnteach gun dèan sinn na rudan ceart aig an ìre cheart, a' toirt nan daoine a tha a' fuireach, ag obair agus a' tadhal air a' Phàirc

còmhla rinn. Le bhith a' coileanadh nan amasan sa phlana com-pàirteachais seo feumar roghainnean cruaidh a dhèanamh. Tha targaidean àrd-amasach ann airson an àireamh thaighean aig prìs ruigsinneach a mheudachadh, siubhal gnìomhach agus còmhhdail phoblach a leasachadh, àireamhan fèidh is luibhearan eile a lùghdachadh gus leudachadh choilltean a dhèanamh comasach, talamh mònach ath-nuadhachadh agus a riaghladh gus sgaoilidhean carboin a bhacadh, agus 50% den Phàirc Nàiseanta a bhith air a riaghladh gu sònraichte airson ath-nuadhachadh eag-shiostaim, a bheir buannachdan nas fharsainghe do chruth-tìre, bith-iomadachd agus daoine. Is e atharrachadh bunaiteach a tha seo a dh'fheumas tachairt agus tha e deatamach gun toir sinn taic dha.

Bidh am plana com-pàirteachais seo a' cuimseachadh air ar miann coitcheann airson Pàirc Nàiseanta carbon-àicheil a tha beairteach le bith-iomadachd 's a bheil eag-shiostaman ag obair ann an dòigh nas fheàrr, nas eadar-cheangailte agus nas seasamhaiche, àite far a bheil daoine airson a bhith a' fuireach, ag obair agus a' tadhal, le taic bho eaconamaidh sunnd a tha ag obair do shluagh na h-Alba air fad.

Tha e a' stèidheachadh dòigh-obrach a bhios ag èisteachd ri coimhearsnachdan sa Phàirc Nàiseanta agus gan toirt na lùib, a' toirt dhuinn an cothrom as fheàrr gus eaconamaidh neo-charbonaichte agus stèidhichte air nàdar a lìbhrigeadh còmhla far am bi daoine agus nàdar a' soirbheachadh.

Faodaidh pàircean nàiseanta uimhir a dhèanamh airson Alba agus tha am plana seo a' sealltainn an àrd-mhiann, agus obair chiallach a bhios a dhìth gus coinneachadh ri dùbhlain an ath 25 bliadhna.

Lorna Slater BPA, Ministear airson Sgilean Uaine, Eaconamaidh Chearcallach agus Bith-iomadachd

National Park aims

The Cairngorms is the UK's largest national park at 4,528 sq km (6% of Scotland's land mass) and is home to one quarter of the UK's rare and endangered species. Around 18,000 people live in the National Park across the areas of Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland, Moray, Perth and Kinross, with two million visitors enjoying this special place every year.

The National Park has four distinct aims as set out by Parliament:



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.



To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

These aims are to be pursued collectively. However, if there is conflict between the first aim and any of the others, greater weight is given to the first aim (as set out in Section 9.6 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000). This helps ensure conservation of the natural and cultural heritage underpins the economic, social and recreation value of the Cairngorms National Park. The Partnership Plan embeds this approach in the strategy for the National Park that is approved by Ministers and sets the framework for all public bodies that work within the Cairngorms, from organisations like NatureScot and the five local authorities to Transport Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Skills Development Scotland. The plan is also supported and delivered by a range of private and voluntary organisations.



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

What is a National Park Partnership Plan?

The National Park Partnership Plan sets out how all those with a responsibility for the National Park will coordinate their work to tackle the most important issues. In particular, this plan:



Sets out the vision and overarching strategy for managing the National Park.



Guides the work of all public bodies and other partners to deliver the aims of the National Park.



Provides the strategic context for the Local Development Plan.



Is the Strategic Regional Land Use Framework and Regional Spatial Strategy for the National Park.



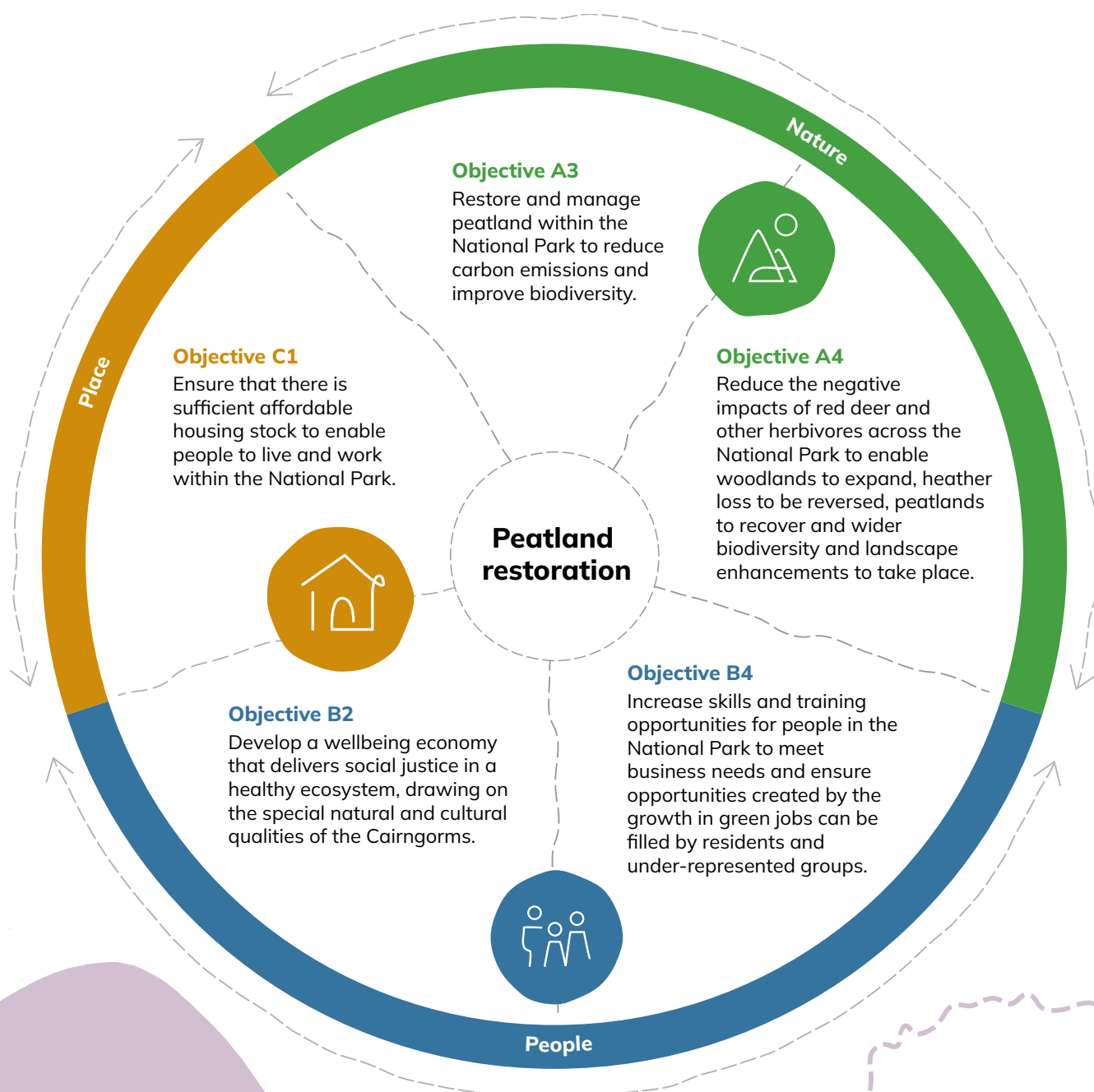
Is the Economic and Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the National Park.

The document is arranged in three sections: Nature, People and Place. In each section we set out on overall outcome that we want to achieve by 2045 (the year Scottish Government has committed to achieving net zero), plus a series of long-term objectives and key targets or indicators of progress. Each of these targets is supported by a set of actions and policies for the next five years.

We are aware that individuals reading the Partnership Plan will have different interests and priorities; however, we would recommend considering the plan as a whole to see how the four aims of the National Park will be delivered collectively. As an example:

To meet the target for peatland restoration there will need to be a change to deer management in the National Park. To enable the scale of peatland restoration to be delivered we will need to increase investment in skills and training of people to deliver this work, which in turn will be an opportunity for economic diversification within the Cairngorms economy. Finally, if we are going to have local contractors who undertake this work, we will need to invest in training and have the right level of affordable housing that allows people to live and work in the area. In this way, all the long-term objectives are interrelated, as the diagram below illustrates:

Figure 1: How objectives are interrelated





The wider policy landscape

There have been significant changes in the policy landscape since the last Partnership Plan was published in 2017. A climate emergency and nature crisis have been declared. The UK has left the European Union and its policy framework, and the Covid-19 pandemic – and our collective need to recover from its impacts – is at the forefront of policy discussion. There is also a deepening cost-of-living crisis and a desire to move to an economy that works for everyone, with the wellbeing of our citizens at its heart.

National policy framework

As a whole, this Partnership Plan is guided by Scottish Government's National Performance Framework and by the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The documents listed on the page opposite are the key national policy documents that underpin the approach taken in this plan.

The Cairngorms National Park also has a significant role to play in delivering the policy ambitions of Scottish Government. This is focused on Scotland being a place to innovate, trial new ways of thinking and show ambition to tackle the key challenges of our time. The National Park has done this in the past on issues like windfarm or hilltrack policy, on increasing the percentage of affordable housing up to 45% in certain villages and towns, and pursuing ambitious projects like Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030. This National Park Partnership Plan looks to promote the National Park as a place to trial solutions to some of the most pressing issues facing Scotland as a whole.

Nature



- A Future Strategy for Scottish Agriculture
- Climate Change Plan 2018 – 2032
- Deer Working Group – Scottish Government Response
- Environment Strategy for Scotland
- Grouse Moor Management Review – Scottish Government Response
- Land Use Strategy for Scotland 2021 – 2026
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 2022, Biodiversity Statement of Intent, Edinburgh Declaration
- Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plans

People



- Equalities Duty
- Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement
- National Gaelic Language Plan
- Nature-based Jobs and Skills Action Plan
- Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation
- Scotland's Public Health Priorities
- Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland
- Volunteering for All

Place



- Cultural Strategy for Scotland
- Housing to 2040 Strategy
- Let's Get Scotland Walking – National Walking Strategy
- National Planning Framework 4
- National Transport Strategy
- Scotland Outlook 2030 – Responsible Tourism for a Sustainable Future
- Strategic Transport Projects Review 2

Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030

It is easy to feel powerless in the face of a global climate emergency and nature crisis. But we believe it doesn't have to be this way. Inspired by the Gaelic word Dùthchas – meaning the deep-rooted connection between people and nature – Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 is putting the power to tackle the climate and nature crises in the hands of people who live, visit and work in the UK's largest national park.

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

Heritage Horizons is an unprecedented partnership of over 45 organisations and is supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, with thanks to the National Lottery players.

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



Putting local people 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 active travel connections across 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 priorities including Covid-19 recovery, social isolation and dementia.



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Dualchais
Heritage
Fund

Heritage Horizons:
Cairngorms 2030 is putting
the power to tackle the
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largest national park

Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030



Climate conscious communities

Increasing awareness and deepening understanding of the climate emergency and its relevance to residents, communities, landowners and businesses in the National Park.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1.



Climate learning and education

Putting the voices of young people at the heart of decision-making in the National Park, empowering and inspiring our young people and educators to take forward pro-environmental behaviours and activity.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, B1, B7, B10 and B11.



Community arts and culture

Bringing together the National Park's creative sector and communities to identify and develop activities that create a greater connection to our landscapes and foster a sense of place.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: B8, C10.



Community-managed grant scheme

Helping achieve our net zero and wellbeing economy targets by giving communities the power to define, design, fund and deliver projects that matter most to them.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A14, B2, B5, B6, B7, B10, C3, C4 and C10.



Effective community engagement and outreach

Shaping the way we engage with people in the National Park, ensuring individuals and communities feel empowered, want to contribute and have the resources to effect real change.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: B5, B6, B7 and B10.



Active communities

Developing active travel infrastructure to make it easy, safe and enjoyable for residents and visitors to walk, cycle or get around using a wheelchair. This is split into four projects focused on Aviemore, Badenoch and Strathspey, Ballater and Braemar, and Blair Atholl and Killiecrankie.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, B7, B9, B10, C4, C5, C6, C7 and C9.



Cairngorms Active Travel Plan

Developing a Cairngorms-wide active travel network that integrates with public transport, helping reduce private car use and encourage residents and visitors to travel more actively in the National Park.

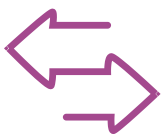
Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, B7, B9, B10, C4, C5, C6, C7 and C9.



E-bike network

Reducing personal car use by visitors and residents through an accessible network of e-bikes, and engaging and inspiring people to use e-bikes as a regular mode of transport.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, B7, B9, B10, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8 and C9.



Glenmore transport plan

Designing a new sustainable model of transport in the Cairngorms' busiest visitor hotspot to reduce reliance on private vehicles, in turn reducing carbon emissions from transport in the National Park.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, B7, B9, B10, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8 and C9.



Sustainable transport in the National Park

Focusing on Deeside, Angus and Highland Perthshire, we will make it easy to get around without a private car by improving sustainable transport options in the National Park.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, B7, B9, B10, C4, C5, C6, C7 and C9.

Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030



Cairngorms future farming

Working with six pilot farms in the National Park to demonstrate how a transition to net zero (or even carbon negative) farming can be delivered practically and profitably in the Cairngorms.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, A8, A10 and B4.



Climate resilient catchments

Increasing climate change resilience to reduce the risk of flooding in the National Park and ensure that rivers continue to deliver for the people and wildlife that depend upon them.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, A2, A3, A8, A9, A11 and A14.



Deer management

Engaging a broad range of people involved in deer management to develop strategic land use plans that will support land managers through the economic and environmental changes associated with reducing deer numbers, and mitigating the impact of deer on the environment.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, A2, A3, A4, A11 and B4.



Green investment plan

Blending public and private finance to deliver our net zero and biodiversity targets, whilst also providing long-term benefits for land managers, investors and communities.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, A2, A3, A5, A8, A13, A11 and A14.



Landscapes and communities

Exploring how communities perceive, experience and value the landscapes of the National Park, identifying special landscape qualities and establishing community preferences for landscape change.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, A10, A12, B2, B5, B7, B11, C9 and C10.



Peatland restoration

Repairing around 3,500 ha of damaged peatland over a five-year period, storing CO₂ and delivering significant ecological benefits through restoration.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, A3, A5, A10, A11, A13 and A14.



Regional Land Use Partnerships

Helping all those who have a stake in land management and land use understand their rights and responsibilities and learn how they can get involved in the work of Regional Land Use Partnerships.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A8, A9, A10, A11 and A14.



Woodland expansion

Helping absorb and store large amounts of CO₂ by increasing woodland cover in the National Park by 1,000 ha over the next five years.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, A2, A10, A11, A13 and A14.



Dementia activity resource centre

Creating the country's first outdoor resource centre specifically designed to support people living with dementia, their families and carers, enabling enjoyment and exploration of the outdoor environment.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, B2, B3 and B9.



Public health and the outdoors

Working with NHS Highland and partners in a range of sectors to deliver a unique public health programme focused on improving health and wellbeing through access to nature and the outdoors.


Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, B2, B9 and B10.



Wellbeing economy

Developing a new economic model for the National Park that benefits people and nature, whilst protecting the planet's resources and special qualities of the Cairngorms for future generations.

Relevant partnership plan objectives: A1, A10, B2, B3, B4 and B9.



It is essential that we
strike the right balance
to ensure the National
Park thrives for both
nature and people
in the future



Striking the right balance

One of the key points around a management plan that takes a long-term view (in this case 25 years and beyond) is the need to be realistic and make clear that there will be trade-offs.

The dial cannot be 'turned up' on everything. We will look for areas where we can deliver multiple benefits and mitigate impacts, but we will also be honest about areas where compromise will be required.

For example, the climate is changing and this will affect the species and habitats that can survive in the Cairngorms National Park. Scaling up nature recovery and ecosystem restoration may mean a change to the abundance and distribution of certain species. Equally, it might not be possible – or indeed desirable – to get all features on designated sites into favourable condition if our collective goal is long-term ecological restoration. There may be a need for controls on holiday rental properties to ensure housing is affordable for local people.

These are all points of reasonable debate – and we have heard views on all sides during the extensive consultation on this plan – but it is essential that we strike the right balance to ensure the National Park thrives for both nature and people in the future. This means having difficult conversations with people from all walks of life who care about the National Park and making important decisions, backed up by

the best available evidence, for the long term. As the data and evidence changes over the next five years we will also need to adapt and change our approach to managing the National Park, reflecting the best knowledge available.

Fair and just transition

To address the climate and nature crises, we will need to act at unprecedented speed and scale across all parts of society. Change of this nature is never easy and we need to be careful to bring everyone with us on the journey. It will be crucial that we do not impact any one group of people unduly, and that we use the resources and economic changes to bring benefits to as wide a range of people as possible. This is what we mean by a fair and just transition.

Balancing the objectives contained within this plan with some of the fundamental changes that they will bring about will require careful discussion and weighing-up of different priorities. Understanding and addressing concerns about the changes to current ways of life does not negate the need for transformative action, but it will make it easier to pursue those aims collectively. Hard choices will still need to be made; however, an approach which listens to and involves communities of place and interest in the National Park has the best possible chance of delivering a decarbonised and nature-based economy where people and nature thrive together.

Outcome for Nature

A carbon negative and biodiversity rich National Park with better functioning, better connected and more resilient ecosystems

1



2



3



6



Nature

5



4





Image of a large emerald moth by Malcolm MacGarvin

What does that look like?

1

Moorland is more diverse

Moorland is more structurally diverse, providing a greater range of habitats for plants, insects, birds and mammals, and supporting a thriving rural economy.

2

Woodland is expanding

Woodlands are larger and more natural, delivering benefits for biodiversity, carbon storage, water quality and flood mitigation.

3

Peatlands are restored

Thousands of hectares of peatland have been restored, trapping CO₂, aiding species recovery, improving water quality and reducing flooding risk.

4

Rivers are reconnected

Rivers have been restored and reconnected to create thriving wetlands and floodplains, helping mitigate the impacts of climate change.

5

Species are recovering

Species are recovering within a network of connected habitats and are less reliant on targeted conservation activity.

6

Farming is carbon neutral

Farming is carbon neutral or carbon negative, helping combat climate change, enhance species diversity and provide a sustainable source of food.

Outcome for People

A wellbeing economy that works for all the people of the Cairngorms




People





Image taken in Anagach Woods by Rachel Keenan

What does that look like?

1

Communities are empowered

Residents are more involved in the way land is managed, with the number of community-owned or managed assets and social enterprises increasing.

2

Wellbeing comes first

Communities are healthier, happier and more resilient, benefiting from a diverse local economy that puts wellbeing and the environment first.

3

Green jobs are growing

There has been a significant increase in the number of green jobs, with skills and training opportunities available for people to meet the growing demand.

4

The Cairngorms is a Park for All

The Cairngorms is a true 'Park for All', welcoming and supporting people from more diverse backgrounds to live, work and visit here.

5

Volunteering is on the rise

Hundreds of volunteers are helping look after the landscape of the National Park, bringing benefits for nature and for their own health and wellbeing.

6

Young people stay and thrive

The proportion of young and working-age people has stabilised and begun to increase, supporting thriving communities and a robust economy.

Outcome for Place

A place that people want to live in,
work in and visit that works for all



Place



Image of two tourists in Aviemore by Liam Anderstrem

What does that look like?

1 Housing is more affordable
More people have access to affordable housing in the National Park and the proportion of second homes, vacant properties and holiday lets has decreased.

3 Communities are connected
Communities across the National Park are better connected by a network of fully accessible paths and cycle routes, improving people's health and wellbeing.

5 Cultural heritage is celebrated
The area's rich cultural heritage is cared for and celebrated in communities across the Cairngorms, from events and interpretation to storytelling and music.

2 Transport is more sustainable
People increasingly choose to leave their car at home, with residents and visitors being more active and making regular use of low and zero carbon transport.

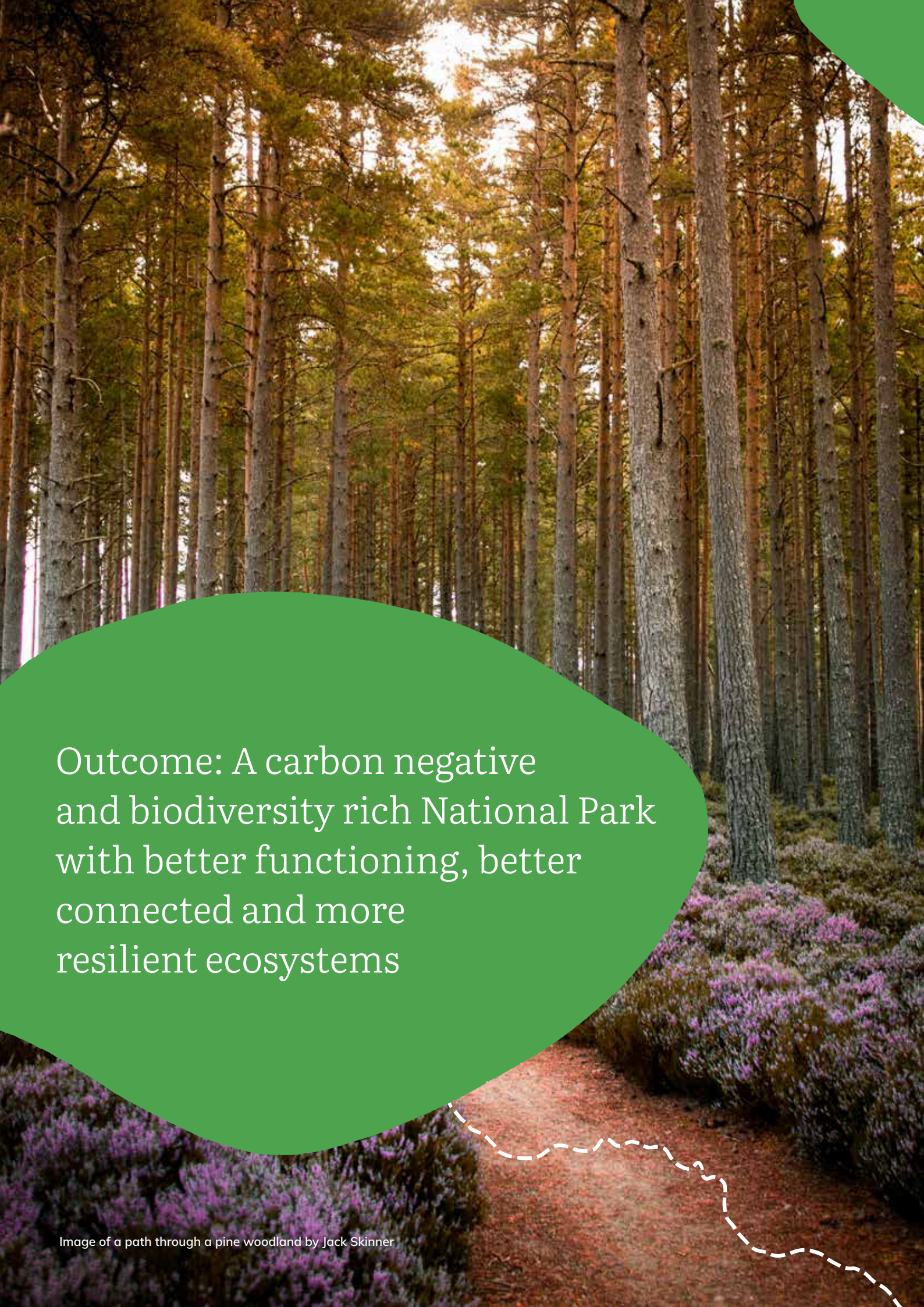
4 Visitor facilities are first class
Visitors choose to stay longer and travel at different times of year, supported by improved infrastructure and high-quality ranger services.

A scenic landscape photograph of Uath Lochans. In the background, a large, hazy mountain range is visible under a grey sky. A vibrant rainbow arches across the sky, starting from the right side and extending towards the left. The middle ground is dominated by a dense forest of evergreen trees, with some deciduous trees showing yellow autumn foliage. A calm lake is nestled within the forest, reflecting the surrounding greenery. The foreground shows more trees and the edge of the lake. A large, semi-transparent purple shape is overlaid on the lower left side of the image, containing white text. White dashed lines are visible in the top left and bottom right corners of the image.

This plan sets out how all
those with a responsibility
for the National Park will
coordinate their work



Our plan
for the future

A photograph of a path through a pine woodland. The path is covered in brown pine needles and leads into the distance. On either side of the path are dense bushes of purple heather. The background is filled with tall, slender pine trees with green needles. A large, irregular green shape is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text. A dashed white line follows the path from the bottom right towards the green shape.

Outcome: A carbon negative
and biodiversity rich National Park
with better functioning, better
connected and more
resilient ecosystems

Image of a path through a pine woodland by Jack Skinner

Nature

The interaction between people and nature is central to addressing many of the challenges we face in the National Park and in society more generally. There is a need to find solutions to the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis that have nature at their heart.

As the UK's largest protected area – home to one quarter of the UK's rare and endangered species – the Cairngorms should be a rural exemplar of this approach, and in this section we identify a range of measures to conserve and enhance nature in the National Park. This means addressing a number of significant land use and ecological issues over the next 25 years that will continue to have positive effects in the National Park for the next 200 years.

We do not pretend that this process will be easy. Achieving the kind of systemic change we are talking about will require a massive collective effort across all areas of society. We need to ensure that this takes place as part of a just transition, supporting people in different sectors to both take new opportunities and share traditional skills that will be needed to deliver this plan. We have set out a range of measures to support people and jobs across the National Park in the People and Place

sections of this plan, and we believe that there will be significant opportunities over the next 25 years for all those currently involved in land management. Alongside this, additional jobs will be created in areas such as peatland restoration, river restoration, species management and habitat enhancement.

There is also a need to base our approach on the best available data and to adapt as we proceed to ensure we are delivering the long-term targets set out in the plan. We have set out a series of targets and indicators alongside each objective and we will be reporting on these on an ongoing basis, tracking our progress and informing future decision-making.



A1. Net zero

The climate and nature crisis is the single biggest challenge that we face and it is critical that the Cairngorms National Park – as the largest protected area in the UK – is an exemplar in achieving net zero, developing nature-based solutions and helping Scotland as a whole meet its targets as part of a just transition.

The Park Authority is working with independent experts to establish the National Park's existing carbon footprint and will use this to present a route map to net zero (and beyond) during 2023. This will present an ambitious but realistic action plan based on the best available evidence, helping us identify and track the key steps we need to take over the coming years.



OBJECTIVE

Ensure the Cairngorms National Park reaches net zero as soon as possible and contributes all it can to helping Scotland meet its net zero commitments.



TARGET

- By 2023, establish the timeframe within which the Cairngorms National Park will be net zero and set a target for becoming carbon negative.



INDICATOR

- Annual independent progress report on net zero for the Cairngorms National Park.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Carbon audit and baseline established for the Cairngorms National Park in 2022.
- Establish a date for the Cairngorms National Park to be net zero and carbon negative by 2023.
- Establish a Community Climate Action Hub for the National Park.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (*see page 12*).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

All partners



It is critical that the Cairngorms
National Park – as the largest
protected area in the UK – is an
exemplar in achieving net zero

A2. Woodland expansion

Woodland expansion to join up our existing woodlands is crucial to deliver biodiversity and landscape benefits, capture and store carbon dioxide, provide a sustainable source of timber, improve water quality and help reduce the risk of flooding.

Our guiding principle in the National Park is 'the right tree in the right place for the right reason', and this is especially true for planting associated with carbon sequestration and the woodland carbon code. There is also a need to ensure that the relatively limited area of in-bye land in the National Park continues to play a part in the nation's food security and is protected from wholesale conversion to woodland.

Diverse, well-planned, climate-resilient and productive woodland will continue to generate economic and conservation benefits in the National Park. This plan sets out a direction for woodland that is about increasing areas of natural regeneration; however, planting and fencing will still be required in some places, notably those with limited seed sources and where there is conflict with herbivore impacts (especially in the early years of the plan). Fencing is recognised as an important tool for woodland management but it can have negative impacts. Its use should be carefully considered and, before fencing is agreed, establishment through herbivore management should be encouraged where the surrounding land use context is favourable.

Finally, there is a need to recognise that the management of existing woodlands plays a key role in delivering biodiversity, recreation and economic outcomes and there needs to be a continued focus on long-term forest planning, habitat enhancement, high-quality timber production, rural employment, responsible access and community engagement.



OBJECTIVE

Increase the amount of woodland in the National Park to support larger, more natural woodlands, expanding in places up to a natural treeline, providing connections across river catchments and around the central core of the mountains.



TARGET

A minimum of 35,000 ha of new woodland cover created by 2045, which:

- a) Includes a minimum of 80% native woodland.
- b) Includes a minimum of 10,000 ha of natural regeneration without planting.
- c) Results in no wholesale conversion of enclosed, in-bye agricultural land to forestry.
- d) Minimises the amount of fencing in the National Park by favouring establishment through herbivore management and removing redundant fences.



ACTIONS BY 2027

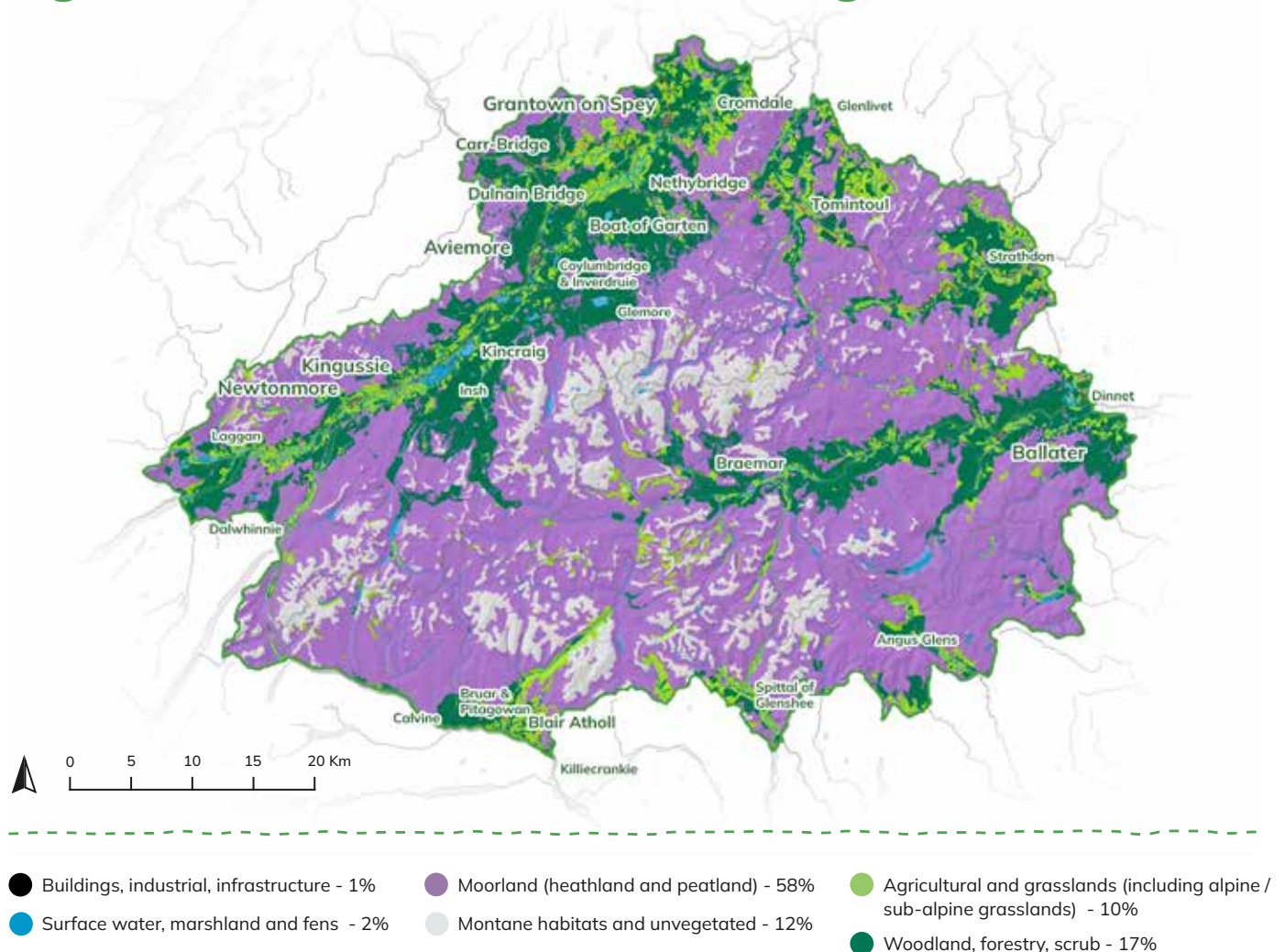
- Expand woodland by a minimum of 7,000 ha through the delivery of the Cairngorms National Park Forest Strategy and targeted grant schemes.
- Ensure all scales of woodland are considered and supported, including agro-forestry, and that at least 2,500 ha is achieved through natural regeneration without planting.
- Work with land managers to ensure existing woodlands are managed for a range of benefits including timber production, public access, biodiversity etc.
- Work to deliver improvements to woodland deer management planning in forest plans.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (see page 12).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Scottish Forestry, Forest and Land Scotland, landowners, NatureScot, ConFor

Figure 2: Current habitats of the Cairngorms



A3. Peatland restoration

Degraded peatland produces 10% of Scotland's carbon emissions and preventing these emissions is a vital part of the national drive to reach net zero by 2045. Within the Cairngorms National Park, we estimate there are around 90,000 ha of impacted peatland and 57,000 ha of this has experienced some form of erosion. Peatland restoration also helps store carbon: restoring one hectare of actively eroding peat saves up to 19 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent each year.

We want the Cairngorms to become a centre of excellence in repairing degraded peatland and providing long-term jobs in peatland restoration and management (*see People objective B4 – Skills and training*).

The restoration of peatland stops the loss of carbon, benefits biodiversity, improves water quality and helps alleviate flooding. This is one of the key deliverables that the Cairngorms can undertake to help Scotland meet its net zero targets. There is a need to ensure that our peatland and woodland work is closely integrated to ensure the best outcomes for the National Park.



OBJECTIVE

Restore and manage peatland within the National Park to reduce carbon emissions and improve biodiversity.



TARGET

- A minimum of 38,000 ha peatland is under restoration management by 2045.
- 80% of all drains are restored by 2035.
- All erosion features are restored by 2050.



ACTIONS BY 2027

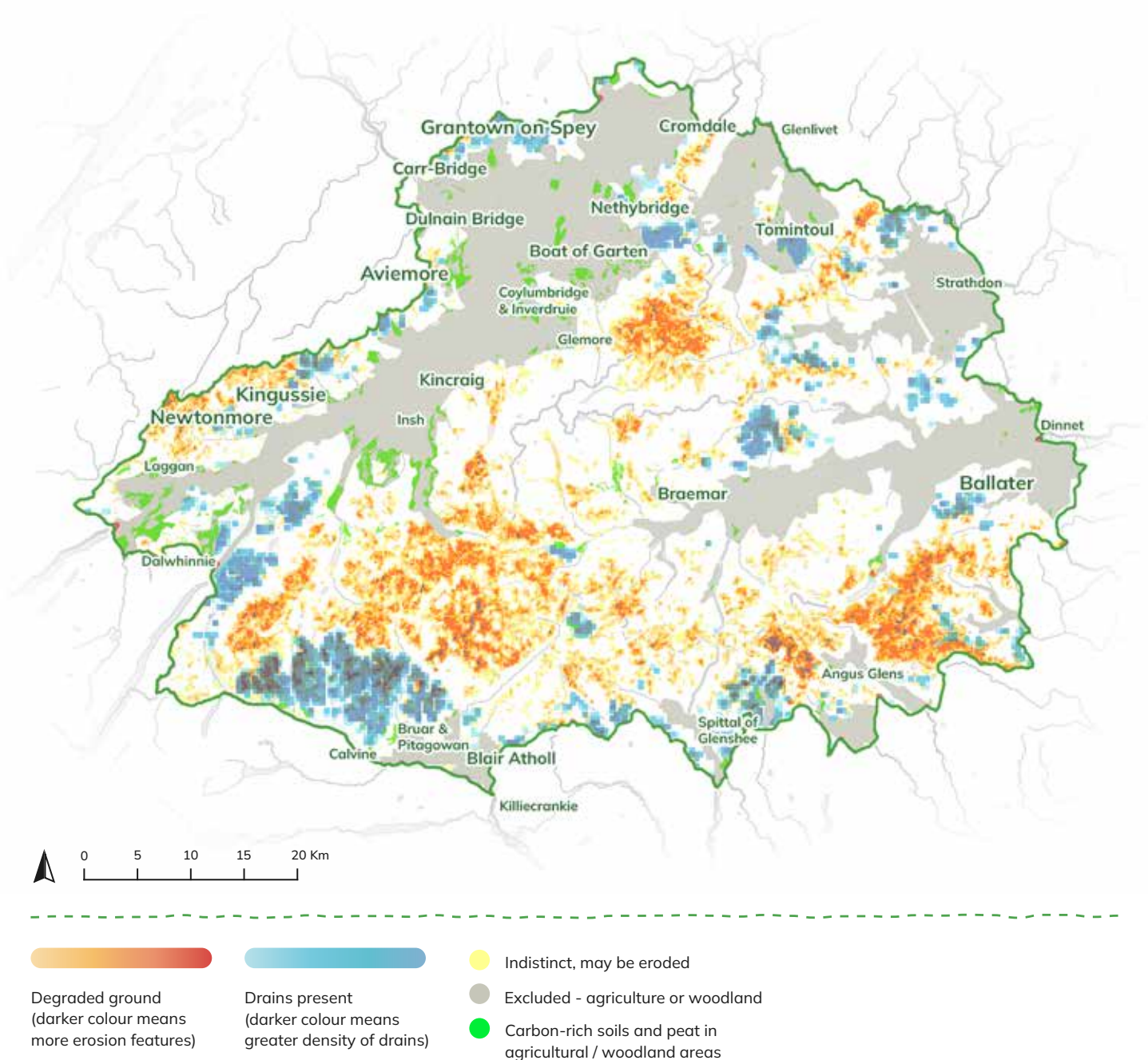
- Restore a minimum of 6,500 ha of peatland.
- Increase contractor and estate capacity while creating job opportunities through a peatland skills training programme (*see People objective B4 – Skills and training*).
- Develop guidance on the integration of peatland restoration and woodland expansion in the National Park.
- Explore protection options for peatland restoration from herbivores.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (*see page 12*).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Skills Development Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise, NatureScot, private contractor businesses, landowners, deer management groups, Scottish Land and Estates

Figure 3: Peatland in the Cairngorms National Park



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Deer are important species
in the National Park, but
we need to reduce their
environmental impact
in key areas

A4. Deer and herbivore impacts

Deer are important species in the National Park, providing income, employment and enjoyment. However, we need to reduce the impacts of deer and other herbivores in key areas of the National Park to enable peatland and woodland work to proceed at the scale necessary to meet our climate and nature commitments. In particular, we need to reduce deer numbers where they are having a significant impact on existing habitats or preventing beneficial habitat change.

As an example, on peatland restoration sites with deer densities of between ten and 12 per km², we regularly see negative impacts and damage to restoration work. Given the scale of the task, the sensitivity of peat to trampling and the slow-growing nature of our upland vegetation, it is difficult to conceive how we can restore significant areas of eroded peat without deer reductions. Fencing many of these areas would be impossible and, even if it were possible, the compensation culls associated with the fencing would be very large.

An average deer density across a deer management group area of five to eight per km² will allow for differences within a deer management group area for ecological restoration, sport shooting and so on, whilst helping to deliver the overall objectives of the Partnership Plan.

There is a need to deliver public interest priorities (peatland restoration, woodland creation etc) alongside private interests and build on the work to reduce deer numbers and impacts already happening in the National Park. We also need to consider how best to support estates to deliver deer management targets and how best to support stalking employment and the skills that will be needed to do this work over the long-term.



OBJECTIVE

Reduce the negative impacts of red deer and other herbivores across the National Park to enable woodlands to expand, heather loss to be reversed, peatlands to recover and wider biodiversity and landscape enhancements to take place.



TARGET

- Average open range red deer densities in each deer management group are a maximum of five to eight per km² by 2030.
- Non-native sika and fallow deer will be contained within their current distribution in the National Park by 2030.



INDICATOR

- Impact of herbivores on Partnership Plan ecological restoration targets (peatland, woodland and structural diversity in moorland).



ACTIONS BY 2027

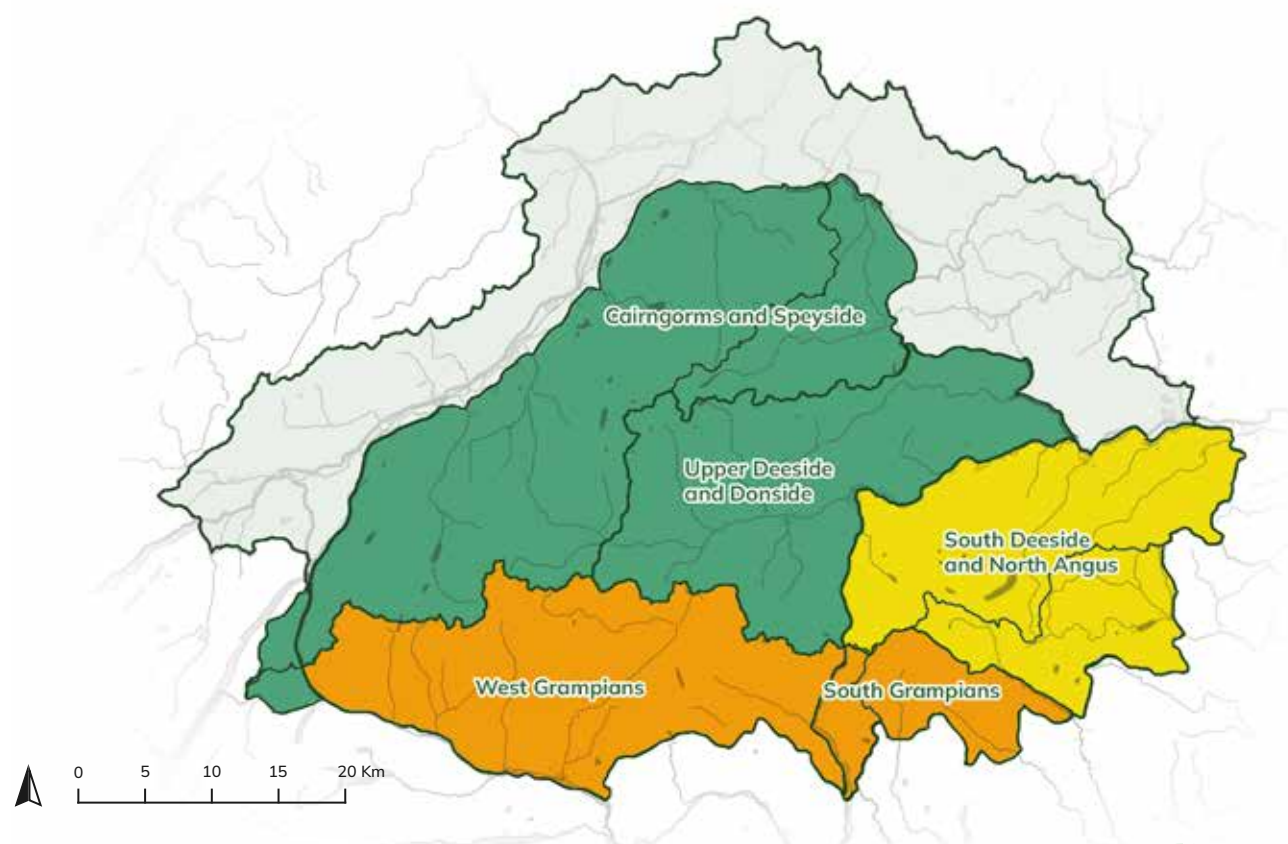
- Work in partnership with deer management groups to produce strategic land use plans which explore a wide range of income streams (including from natural capital), reduce habitat impacts and deliver a wide range of public and private benefits.
- Explore new models of public / private partnership for maintaining stalker employment in key areas of the National Park to achieve overall deer policy objectives.
- Explore the use of measures of deer and herbivore occupancy across the National Park and investigate how those measures might be used to improve the management of herbivores and, specifically, reduce deer impacts on restoration targets.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (see page 12).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

NatureScot, deer management groups, environmental NGOs, British Deer Society, Scottish Gamekeepers' Association, Association of Deer Management Groups, British Association of Shooting and Conservation

Figure 4: Deer densities by deer management group



- Cairngorms and Speyside: <5 deer per km² (2016 data)
- Upper Deeside and Donside: 6-7 deer per km² (2016 data)
- South Deeside and North Angus: 10 deer per km² (2022 data)
- West Grampians: 20 deer per km² (2022 data)
- South Grampians: 16 deer per km² (2022 data)

A5. Moorland management

Moorland management plays a significant role in supporting a range of habitats and species in the Cairngorms and is an important part of its culture and economy. During the lifetime of this plan a new national licensing regime for grouse moors is due to be introduced by Scottish Government.

Delivering sustainable grouse moor management is a key part of this plan. In particular, this means greater species and structural diversity on grouse moors, with more pockets and strips of trees and shrubs on moorland edges, steep slopes, in gullies and around woodland remnants. It means identifying further opportunities to make space for nature recovery alongside – and as part of – moorland management; and specifically wanting to see an end to raptor persecution.

This plan aims to work with moorland managers to adapt to and mitigate against the twin nature and climate emergencies, while working to maintain estate incomes through market adjustment and other income sources, eg carbon markets.



OBJECTIVE

Increase the sustainability of moorland management in the National Park to ensure greater species and structural diversity in moorland areas.



TARGET

- A measurable and sustained increase in the home range, occupation and breeding success of golden eagle, hen harrier, merlin and peregrine across the National Park.



INDICATOR

- Increased species and habitat diversity on grouse moors, linking together a natural transition from woodland to montane scrub to upland heath.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Introduction of grouse moor licensing and other elements of the Independent Review of Grouse Moor Management within the Cairngorms National Park.
- Support knowledge exchange and sharing of good practice from the East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership to other parts of the National Park.
- Develop and support estate management plans and Wildlife Estates Scotland accreditation.



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Scottish Government, NatureScot, landowners, environmental NGOs, Scottish Land and Estates, Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, British Association of Shooting and Conservation, East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership, Wildlife Estates Scotland

A6. Gamebird management

There are significant releases of non-native gamebirds in the National Park, but information on their impact upon native biodiversity needs to be better understood. The regulatory framework around releases of species is not consistent at present, meaning that a licence is not required to release pheasants and partridges, but is required to release beaver or red squirrels.

There is a need to gather data on releases of non-native gamebirds and determine their impacts on native wildlife. Depending on what these impacts are, changes may need to be made to the overarching regulatory framework.



OBJECTIVE

Ensure that all pheasant and partridge shoots adhere to best practice and that all gamebird releases are sustainable and do not negatively impact on native biodiversity.



TARGET

- Gamebird releases have no negative impact on native biodiversity.



INDICATOR

- Impacts of gamebirds released around the National Park each year.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Establish a baseline for the number of gamebirds released in the National Park and assess their impact on native biodiversity.
- Depending on the evidence gathered, investigate the use of Park Authority powers to regulate gamebird releases and develop a regulatory approach if required.



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

NatureScot, landowners, environmental NGOs, Scottish Land and Estates, Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, British Association of Shooting and Conservation



Moorland management
plays a significant role
in supporting a range of
habitats and species in
the Cairngorms

A7. Fire management

Muirburn is used as a management tool in the Cairngorms to improve grazing, to increase grouse densities, to create firebreaks and to create seed bed conditions for tree regeneration. It is a potentially dangerous tool which should only be carried out by skilled, trained practitioners, operating in line with best practice and with the new licencing regime when this is in place. It should not be used on deep peat.

The management of wildfires is separate from muirburn. Wildfires release carbon, can damage or destroy sensitive and rare habitats, can kill species and pose a significant risk to people and property.

There is a need to have a robust approach to fire in the National Park and to ensure we have the resources to deliver on the ground. The changing climate heightens the risk of wildfire across the National Park and we need to respond accordingly.



OBJECTIVE

Ensure that all managed burning (muirburn) follows best practice as defined by the muirburn licensing scheme, supporting habitat restoration and recovery.



TARGET

- Reduce wildfire risk by developing an integrated wildfire management plan for the National Park.



INDICATOR

- All muirburn will comply with regulations set out in the muirburn licensing scheme, including stopping burning on deep peatlands as defined by the licensing regime.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Conduct an audit to establish an accurate baseline for the extent of deep peat in the National Park.
- Introduce and support a muirburn licencing regime in the National Park.
- Develop an integrated wildfire management plan for the National Park, including strategic firebreaks.
- Develop and agree a National Park approach on campfires and barbecues.



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Scottish Government, NatureScot, Scottish Land and Estates, landowners, Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, environmental NGOs, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

A8. Farming

Farming is an important land use in the National Park and will continue to be so in the future. A significant area of the National Park is farmed and, to achieve our net zero and biodiversity targets, we need to prioritise activity that reduces farming’s carbon footprint, enhances species diversity, helps local food production and builds resilience through joining up habitats and ecosystems. The transition to a low carbon future, delivering a sustainable, productive and profitable agricultural sector, is a key part of the future of the National Park and is part of a just transition.

Rural payments drive much of the farming activity in the National Park. These payments are changing and can support farmers taking an integrated approach to managing their land, delivering a range of public benefits (from carbon reduction to flood mitigation) in return for public support.

As part of this change we are establishing a Regional Land Use Partnership and Framework for the National Park, which will help national and local government, communities, landowners and stakeholders work together to reach net zero and find ways to ensure a wide range of people are involved in and benefit from land use decisions.



OBJECTIVE

Work with farms in the National Park to reduce their carbon footprint, conserve soil carbon, encourage sustainable production and deliver increased biodiversity on in-by land.



TARGET

- Carbon and biodiversity plans are in place for farms across the National Park by 2028.



INDICATOR

- Target rural payments to support sustainable food production, reduce carbon, increase and maintain the health of habitats and ecosystems, enhance biodiversity and help connect different habitats across the National Park.
- Establish a Regional Land Use Partnership and Framework for the National Park by 2023.

An aerial photograph of a river and wetland system in Glenfeshie, Scotland. The river flows through a landscape of brown peatlands and green forests. A large green oval is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text. A dashed white line follows the river's path from the bottom left towards the green oval.

River and wetland systems
across the National Park
are key to addressing many
environmental issues, from
flooding to biodiversity loss



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Agree carbon and biodiversity management plans with farmers in the National Park to help guide their activities.
- Develop nature-friendly farming projects (woodland, waders, species-rich grassland) as part of the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan.
- Develop and establish a Regional Land Use Framework and Partnership.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (see page 12).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

National Farmers' Union of Scotland, Cairngorms Farmers' Forum, Scottish Land and Estates, NatureScot, Quality Meat Scotland, farmers, landowners, environmental NGOs, Scottish Land and Estates, Scottish Forestry, Crown Estate Scotland

A9. Freshwater systems

River and wetland systems across the National Park are key to addressing many environmental issues, from flooding to biodiversity loss. Restoring these systems to their natural state and reconnecting them with their floodplains will increase our resilience to climate change, improve water quality, create larger flood buffer zones and help store excess water. They will also provide essential habitats for wildlife to thrive.

The management of our water, the impacts that both droughts and flood events are having on the National Park, and the likely impacts of climate change around the world make this is a key area of focus over the next 25 years.



OBJECTIVE

Restore and connect rivers to thriving wetlands and floodplains as part of a wider restoration of the National Park's freshwater systems, helping mitigate the impacts of climate change.



TARGET

- 70% of our rivers are in good ecological condition by 2045, with ecological structure, function and productivity not deviating significantly from a near-natural system condition.



INDICATOR

- The Cairngorms Nature Index (see Nature objective A12 – Cairngorms Nature Index) will establish a baseline and measure change in river naturalness. This is aligned with the Water Framework Directive and enhanced by indicators.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Deliver catchment management plans.
- Develop and agree a long-term approach to water management and abstraction to help alleviate flood and drought issues.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (see page 12).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Catchment management partnerships, Scottish Water, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, local authorities

A10. Ecological network

Establishing an ecological network across the National Park will help sustain wildlife populations into the future. It will ensure that habitats and species are more resilient to climate change and human pressures – increasing connectivity and functionality – and will reduce conflicts between land uses as we seek to make optimum use of land in the National Park.

Projects that work at a wider landscape scale deliver benefits over large areas and require new ways of working between multiple land managers, owners, agencies and anyone else with an interest in land. It is essential that woodland, moorland, farmland and other land uses in the National Park are managed in collaboration with one another to benefit nature.

A revisited set of designated sites across the National Park should form the backbone of an ecological network and be at the centre of coordinated action across wider countryside management.



OBJECTIVE

Connect habitats and ecosystems across all different types of land use in the National Park to create an ecological network, which will bring wider landscape, biodiversity and people benefits.



TARGET

- Establish a framework for an ecological network across the National Park by 2025.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Develop Cairngorms Nature Networks – a spatial mapping of potential strategic areas for expanding, enhancing and increasing connectivity of habitats and species in the National Park.
- Undertake a call for new nature restoration sites in the National Park that deliver ecological functionality and look to secure long-term funding.
- Review and develop our approach to designations in the National Park to help deliver ecological restoration and contribute to ecological networks and net zero, in line with the new Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.
- Develop NatureScot conservation advice packages.



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Cairngorms Nature partnership, NatureScot

All. Ecological restoration

2020 to 2030 is the UN decade of ecological restoration. As the UK's largest national park, we have a key role in halting the loss of biodiversity by 2030 and seeking its restoration by 2045.

Ecological restoration is not about returning to a point in the past, nor is it about everywhere becoming a wilderness. In the Cairngorms National Park, ecological restoration means increasing the amount of land that delivers for nature, improving ecological functionality and resilience, connecting up our fragmented habitats, and looking ahead to a future of restored and regenerated landscapes.

We need to ensure that people are at the core of this and are still able to live and work on the land. There are great examples in the National Park of areas undergoing ecological restoration that are also delivering real socio-economic benefits for individuals, communities and local businesses.

Restoring ecosystems in the National Park will improve our resilience to flood events, to drought and to disease. It will also be a key part of the Cairngorms economy, driving tourism and jobs in areas like peatland restoration, deer stalking and woodland management, and delivering greater public benefits in the long term.



OBJECTIVE

Improve ecosystem functionality and resilience across the National Park by increasing the area of land managed principally for ecological restoration.



TARGET

- At least 50% of the National Park to be managed principally for ecosystem restoration by 2045 (see *Nature objective A12 – Cairngorms Nature Index*).



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Work with Cairngorms Connect, the East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership and others to expand the area of the National Park under ecosystem restoration.
- Develop case studies demonstrating what success looks like, share knowledge and agree an appropriate monitoring framework.



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Cairngorms Nature partnership, Cairngorms Connect, East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership, deer management groups

The Cairngorms Nature Index will provide a more complete understanding of the National Park's species, habitats and ecosystems

A12. Cairngorms Nature Index

This Partnership Plan is underpinned by robust evidence and data, ensuring that the activities we are proposing lead to demonstrable improvements on the ground. Data will also help identify and inform any changes that are required in our delivery mechanisms as we move towards 2045.

The Cairngorms Nature Index is crucial to this process, providing a baseline for the quality and extent of key ecosystems in the National Park and a robust framework to monitor change and evaluate success over time.

We will use this data to better target resources and action in the National Park, and to understand the impact that our policies and projects are having to ensure that we are able to meet our 2030 and 2045 targets for biodiversity.



OBJECTIVE

Develop a more complete understanding of the National Park's species, habitats and ecosystems, and help monitor long-term progress through a dedicated Cairngorms Nature Index.



TARGET

- Develop and roll out the Cairngorms Nature Index by 2024.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Establish the Cairngorms Nature Index.
- Establish a Cairngorms Nature Atlas / data portal.
- Monitor changes in Special Landscape Qualities.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (see page 12).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Cairngorms Nature partnership

A13. Species recovery

The Cairngorms National Park is home to 25% of the UK's rare and endangered species. Ecosystem restoration is key for delivering in the medium to long term, but we must at the same time protect vulnerable species and ensure they get back on a sustainable footing, less reliant on targeted action and recovering within a network of habitats.

The scale of the climate and nature crises we face means that some tough choices will need to be made, particularly around single species interventions within overall ecological restoration. We also need to work hard to make sure that illegal activity that impacts species (including raptor persecution) is stopped and made culturally unacceptable.

Where necessary, we will look to reinforce existing populations and reintroduce lost species as part of a suite of measures to restore biodiversity in the National Park.



OBJECTIVE

Ensure species thrive in the National Park with key assemblages across the Cairngorms within the semi-natural landscape.



TARGET

- Species Recovery Curve (see figure 5 below) – priority species progress from research to developing solutions to sustainable management.



ACTIONS BY 2027

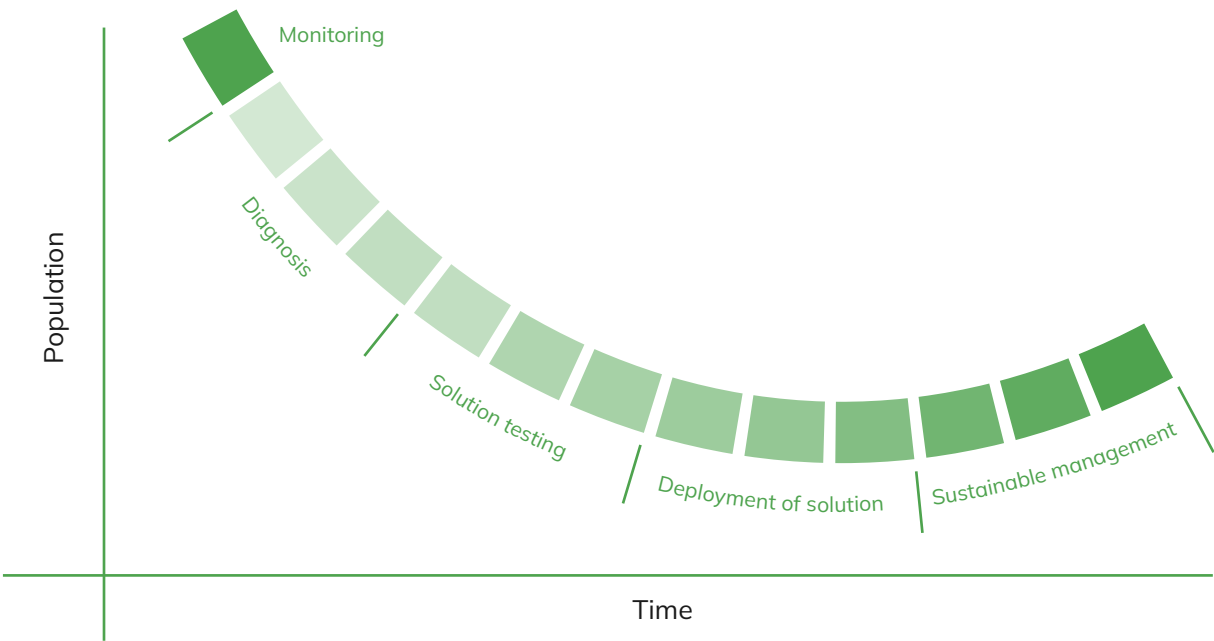
- Deliver species recovery plans for priority species through the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan.
- Deliver a work programme to support capercaillie conservation in the Cairngorms, based on best available evidence.
- Facilitate beaver translocation in the Cairngorms National Park.
- Reduce wildlife crime in the National Park, with a specific focus on eliminating it as a constraint on raptor numbers and range occupancy.
- Deliver the Cairngorms Raptor Project, in partnership with land managers and raptor study groups.



PARTNERS
(alongside the
Park Authority)

Cairngorms Nature partnership

Figure 5: Species Recovery Curve



A14. Green investment

Private green investment has the potential to deliver positive outcomes for the National Park if it works for the people of the Cairngorms as well as investors and landowners. There is potential to attract significant funding to support employment and generate funding for communities from the assets that surround them.

We need to ensure that there is a clear framework for this investment, and we also need to ensure that funding does not just go to areas of historically degraded land, but also funds the activities required to keep land in good ecological health. This investment has the potential to help deliver many of the objectives outlined in this plan.

We believe that the purchase of land for green investment must deliver long-term benefits and be in the public interest. Benefits must be shared between the owner and local communities. Management of any land within the National Park should not focus on any one objective to the exclusion of others (eg carbon, sport or renaturalisation); it should seek to integrate multiple objectives.



OBJECTIVE

Use private green investment in the National Park to fund nature's recovery and share the benefits between communities, landowners, workers and wider society.



TARGET

- The Cairngorms National Park attracts an increasing amount of green finance per annum for projects that deliver multiple benefits (carbon, biodiversity, flood mitigation, community).



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Trial a green finance project for peatland restoration in the National Park.
- Explore green finance opportunities at a landscape scale and for a wider range of benefits, including local community benefit.
- Identify a pipeline of projects within the National Park over the next five years.
- Identify opportunities to strengthen the role of communities and public authorities in land purchase decisions in the National Park through the next Land Reform Bill.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (*see page 12*).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

NatureScot, Scottish Land Commission, environmental NGOs, Scottish Land and Estates, National Parks Partnership

Nature policies 2022 - 2027

Tackling the
climate and
nature crises

Image of Loch Insh by James Stevens



Policy A1

A timeframe within which the Cairngorms National Park will be net zero will be set by 2023, alongside a target for becoming carbon negative, contributing to the delivery of net zero for Scotland by 2045. This will be supported by:

- a) Focusing on nature-based solutions.
- b) Being a rural exemplar in achieving a just transition.
- c) Working with businesses, land managers, communities and visitors across the National Park.
- d) Developing a wellbeing economy (see *People policy B1*).

Policy A2

The management and use of land should deliver multiple benefits and help deliver the Regional Land Use Framework. This will be supported by:

- a) A long-term, planned approach by land-based businesses to delivering environmental, economic and social benefits.
- b) Support for land managers to plan and deliver environmental and social benefits, underpinned by sound economic businesses.
- c) Working with farmers, crofters, communities and land managers to optimise local food production where factors such as supplier capacity, supply chains and consumer markets are favourable.
- d) Applying a regionally-targeted approach to rural payments to deliver the most appropriate range of public benefits to the National Park.

- e) Developing an approach to private green investment in the National Park to fund nature's recovery and share the benefits between communities, landowners, workers and wider society.
- f) Research to support management options.

Policy A3

Enhance the resilience of habitats, species and land use to climate change, pest and disease risks. Ensure that the integrity of designated sites is maintained, with a particular focus on:

- a) Collaborating on land use and flood management, including natural flood management, through river catchment management plans.
- b) Enhancing the health and connectivity of habitats.
- c) Encouraging new woodland creation that complements other land uses and the landscapes of the National Park. This should support forest habitat connectivity, be compatible with moorland management and should not adversely impact on local agricultural priorities, including no wholesale conversion of enclosed, in-bye land.
- d) Securing protection and restoration of degraded peatland, and sustainable management of peat and carbon-rich soils to maintain and improve their ability to store carbon.
- e) Ceasing fires on deep peat and reducing burning on shallow peat soils through licensing.



- f) Reducing red deer and other herbivore (roe deer, fallow deer, sheep and hare) numbers where needed across the National Park to enable woodlands to expand, heather loss to be reversed, peatlands to recover and wider biodiversity and landscape enhancement to take place.
- g) Applying a 'green engineering first' approach to flood management and water storage within catchments in the National Park.

Policy A4

Conserve and enhance the special landscape qualities of the National Park, with a particular focus on:

- a) Wildness qualities.
- b) Maintaining and promoting dark skies.
- c) Supporting woodland expansion that maximises opportunities for long-term enhancement of landscape and wildness qualities and limits short-term negative impacts through early engagement and good scheme design.
- d) Delivering enhancements that also provide habitat improvements.
- e) Enhancing opportunities to enjoy and experience the landscapes of the National Park.
- f) Applying a presumption against new constructed tracks in open moorland and, where agreed, ensuring new tracks are constructed to a high standard.

Policy A5

Conserve and enhance habitat quality and connectivity, while ensuring the integrity of designated sites is maintained, with a particular focus on:


- a) Supporting woodland creation and management, especially natural regeneration and riparian woodlands, delivering more natural and native woodland cover to create habitat connections between catchments and minimise the need for fencing.
- b) Creating a more natural transition from woodland to montane scrub to upland heath, with more structural and species diversity. Linking habitats together sympathetically, with pockets and strips of trees and shrubs on moorland edges, steep slopes, in gullies and around woodland remnants.
- c) Conserving and enhancing wetlands.
- d) Protecting and improving the freshwater environment.
- e) Delivering a combination of ecosystem services, including natural flood management, carbon sequestration and storage, timber and food production.
- f) Managing public greenspace and transport networks for biodiversity enhancement and habitat connectivity.
- g) Supporting off-site mitigation from development that contributes to ecological networks.



Policy A6

Conserve and enhance the species for which the Cairngorms National Park is most important, with a particular focus on:

- a) Species whose conservation status is in decline or at risk.
- b) Tackling and reducing the impacts of invasive non-native species.
- c) Tackling and reducing wildlife crime.
- d) Minimising disturbance to sensitive species in particular locations at certain times of year.
- e) Engaging people on species that are important in the National Park.
- f) Promoting biological recording of species in the National Park.
- g) Undertaking appropriate work for species reintroductions or reinforcement as required.
- h) Taking an adaptive management approach that reflects changing evidence and policy.



Outcome: A wellbeing
economy that works
for all the people of
the Cairngorms

People

The Cairngorms is home to around 18,000 people living in the numerous towns and villages that make up the National Park, covering areas of Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland, Moray, and Perth and Kinross. Just over 8,000 people are employed in the area in sectors ranging from manufacturing and construction to land management, retail and health and social work, with tourism being a particularly important aspect of the local economy (directly responsible for around 43% of employment in the area). Each year over two million visitors travel to the Cairngorms from all over the world, drawn to the stunning scenery and rich natural and cultural heritage of the UK's largest national park.

The publishing of this plan coincides with the most acute cost-of-living crisis in a generation and this – coupled with the after-effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the climate emergency and nature crisis – requires us to take a more radical approach to ensure the people and economy of the Cairngorms National Park thrives, both now and in the future. We believe that the development of a wellbeing economy, where society and nature live in harmony, and where people enjoy a fair

distribution of resources and live in healthy and resilient communities, is central to ensuring that we have a National Park that works for everyone. It is crucial that the Cairngorms National Park continues to be a place where people can live and work, and that young people have even better opportunities to stay and thrive.

There will be significant changes to the economy over the coming decade and we need to ensure that people have the skills that are needed for these changes. The communities of the National Park continue to play a central role, and we are committed to supporting their aspirations and delivering on their key priorities as part of this Partnership Plan.



B1. Working-age population

There has been strong growth in the overall population of the National Park over the past 20 years. However, the focus now is on the need to increase the working-age population to ensure that local services can be supported. A stable population with a strong working-age component – which is also diverse and inclusive – will support thriving and sustainable communities and a successful local economy.

Young people are a key part of a sustainable population but require access to education, training, development, employment and housing in order to remain in (or indeed migrate to) the National Park. A strong working-age population is also key to the delivery of many of the objectives set out in this plan.

The Cairngorms Youth Action Team has a key role to play in advocating for young people in the National Park, and in developing projects and plans that meet their needs and encourage young people to remain in (or come to) the area.



OBJECTIVE

The proportion of young and working-age people in the National Park increases relative to the total resident population, which remains stable.



TARGET

- The proportion of young people and working-age people in the National Park relative to the total resident population increases between 2020 and 2045.



INDICATOR

- The population stabilises between 2020 and 2045.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Develop and implement a Local Development Plan.
- Develop a green skills / youth apprenticeship project to help grow a strong working-age population (see *People objective B4 – Skills and training*).
- Grow the influence and level of youth participation in the Cairngorms Youth Action Team.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (see *page 12*).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Local authorities, landowners, developers, Cairngorms Business Partnership, Cairngorms Youth Action Team, Countryside Learning Scotland



A stable population
with a strong working-age
component – which is also
diverse and inclusive –
will support thriving and
sustainable communities

B2. Wellbeing economy

The development of a wellbeing economy is key for the Cairngorms as the economy recovers from the pandemic and we tackle a cost-of-living crisis. We need to continue to develop an economic model that benefits people and nature, aiming for a more equitable distribution of wealth, health and wellbeing; promoting local expenditure, encouraging sustainable inward investment whilst protecting the planet's resources for future generations and other species.

In developing a Wellbeing Economy Action Plan, we will also tackle cost-of-living issues and explore long-term solutions to issues such as rising heating costs, how to deliver a just transition etc in the Cairngorms.



OBJECTIVE

Develop a wellbeing economy that delivers social justice in a healthy ecosystem, drawing on the special natural and cultural qualities of the Cairngorms.



TARGET

- Develop Cairngorms Cornerstone Indicators and a Wellbeing Economy Action Plan by 2023.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Develop Cairngorms Cornerstone Indicators for a wellbeing economy to track key social and economic data and trends.
- Develop and implement a Wellbeing Economy Action Plan with targeted support and development measures for key sectors.
- Support employers to gain accreditation for eg Disability Confident, Carer Positive and the Young Person's Guarantee (*see People objective B10 – A Park for All*).
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (*see page 12*).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Skills Development Scotland, Zero Waste Scotland, Growbiz, local authorities, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, environmental NGOs

B3. Real Living Wage

The Real Living Wage is an indicator of quality of life, allowing people to access housing and other essential services. The Real Living Wage is the only UK wage rate that is voluntarily paid by almost 10,000 UK businesses who believe their staff deserve a wage which meets everyday needs – like the weekly shop, or a surprise trip to the dentist.

We want to see the number of businesses in the National Park that pay a Real Living Wage increase and to help employers and others to be recognised for this. Moving to a higher wage economy will help to retain employees, help to develop a wellbeing economy and help offset some of the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis.



OBJECTIVE

Increase the number of Real Living Wage employers in the National Park.



TARGET

- The Park will have an increasing number of Real Living Wage employers and will aim to have the highest proportion in rural Scotland by 2030.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Undertake a Real Living Wage audit of employers in the National Park.
- Promote best practice and provide regular reports.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (see page 12).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Cairngorms Business Partnership, local authorities

B4. Skills and training

A just transition is at the heart of our collective approach to net zero. The nature of many jobs will change in the National Park over the coming years as a low carbon economy is created. This means that there are opportunities for new jobs, but also that some traditional jobs (including those in land use and tourism) may evolve over time.

We will need to ensure that there are training opportunities for people to enter into expanding areas of work such as deer management and peatland restoration, as well as providing support to retrain for future job opportunities in a low carbon economy.

Encouraging and supporting businesses throughout the National Park to use nature-based solutions to support a diverse economy and employment will help make the Cairngorms an exemplar for rural economies across Scotland and the rest of the UK.



OBJECTIVE

Increase skills and training opportunities for people in the National Park to meet business needs and ensure opportunities created by the growth in green jobs can be filled by residents and under-represented groups.



TARGET

- There are an increasing number of apprenticeships within the National Park.



INDICATOR

- An increasing number of people are employed in green jobs such as peatland restoration, deer management etc.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Support skills and training programmes relevant to business needs and changes in land management within the National Park (see *Nature objectives A2 to A6*).
- Develop scholarships and a mentoring scheme for young people who want to study and be employed in the National Park.
- Develop targeted skills initiatives to support social enterprises (see *People objective B5 – Community assets and land*).
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (see *page 12*).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Skills Development Scotland, local authorities, Growbiz, Cairngorms Business Partnership, Highland and Islands Enterprise, Countryside Learning Scotland, higher education institutes



The nature of many jobs will change in the National Park over the coming years as a low carbon economy is created

B5. Community assets and land

Giving communities more power to own or manage assets (including land) is a key part of delivering this plan. Increased community involvement in the management of land will improve the delivery of public benefits to communities, supporting their health and wellbeing and that of the wider economy. This has been shown in places across Scotland where the community has become more involved in the management of land in which they live.

Social enterprises have a good track record of delivering tangible benefits for their local communities in the National Park. A foundation for sustainable and resilient communities is to have an asset that can provide value, employment and a real focus for community benefit. Where a social enterprise generates profit, other projects and services for the community can be supported.



OBJECTIVE

Increase the number of assets in community ownership or management, the number of social enterprises that generate a profit and the area of land where communities are involved in management decisions.



TARGET

- The numbers of assets in community ownership or management increases year on year from 2021.




ACTIONS BY 2027

- Identify opportunities for community land ownership through a refreshed set of community action plans / local place plans.
- Promote Scottish Land Commission guidance and monitor compliance.
- Develop targeted skills initiatives to support social enterprises (see *People policy B5*).
- Support communities to acquire and manage assets / land through enhanced funding and training support (see *People objective B7 – Community-led planning and development*).
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (see *page 12*).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Land Commission, Scottish Land Fund, development trusts

A background photograph of an open-air market. In the foreground, several people are looking at potted plants. A man in a bright orange hoodie is looking at a plant, while a woman with sunglasses stands next to him. To the right, a man in a green shirt and a wide-brimmed hat is tending to plants. The background is filled with more people and lush greenery, creating a vibrant community atmosphere.

Increased community
involvement in the management
of land will improve the delivery
of public benefits to communities,
supporting their health
and wellbeing

B6. New approaches to citizen participation

There is a real opportunity through Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 to increase citizen participation, empower local communities and directly engage people in making decisions that affect their local area, addressing issues that matter to them. This will include decisions on the delivery of services provided by the public sector.



OBJECTIVE

Strengthen the participation structures that support planning and decision-making at a local level.



TARGET

- Review approaches to community participation and engagement in decision-making and develop an improvement plan by June 2023.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (*see page 12*).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Scottish Land Commission, local authorities, community councils, development trusts

B7. Community-led planning and development

Community-led planning has been at the heart of the Cairngorms National Park since it began in 2003 and many rounds of community action planning have been undertaken since, leading to significant changes in all the communities of the National Park.

There is a need to support communities through local community funding and this was previously delivered through the EU-funded LEADER programme. We want to ensure that the aspirations of communities are met, community resilience is enhanced and that a community development fund appropriate for the National Park is developed and in place during this plan period.



OBJECTIVE

Communities have up-to-date community action plans and are supported by a community-led local development funding programme, delivering the National Park Partnership Plan.



TARGET

- All communities have community action plans in place that are no more than five years old.
- A new scheme is in place to deliver funding for communities, at least equivalent to the old LEADER programme.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- A refreshed programme of support for community action planning and local place plans.
- Develop and administer a new community-led development funding stream.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (see page 12).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Voluntary Action in Badenoch and Strathspey, Cairngorms Trust, development trusts, Marr Area Partnership



There is a real opportunity
through Heritage Horizons:
Cairngorms 2030 to increase
citizen participation

Image of a consultation in Aviemore by Ross Elder

B8. Gaelic language and culture

Gaelic is part of the cultural and natural heritage of the National Park and has a vibrant part to play in its future. There is a need to support the continued use of Gaelic and maintain it as an active language and culture within the communities of the National Park.



OBJECTIVE

Encourage greater use of Gaelic in the National Park.



TARGET

- Increased opportunities for individuals and communities to engage with Gaelic language and culture.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- All public bodies implement their Gaelic language plans in full.
- Develop a suite of support tools for Gaelic, in collaboration with local businesses and community / cultural groups.



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Public bodies, Cairngorms Business Partnership, local businesses and community / cultural groups



Image of shinty sticks and a ball by Ed Smith

B9. Mental and physical health

As we all know, healthier individuals have an improved quality of life and this in turn helps reduce the demands on our already stretched public health system. Preventative action at an early stage can have an impact on long-term public health outcomes, but we need a systemic change in how we address these issues. Through Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 we believe the National Park can become a rural exemplar in this area.



OBJECTIVE

Improve the mental and physical health and wellbeing of the people of the National Park through greater connection with nature and the outdoors.



TARGET

- There will be green health referral programmes in place in all GP practices in the National Park.




ACTIONS BY 2027

- Review, update and deliver the Active Cairngorms Action Plan.
- Extend the health walks programme to every community in the National Park.
- Increase the number of opportunities for green volunteering.
- Make greater use of green health directories to support self-led green health activities.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (*see page 12*).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

NHS, Paths for All, environmental and other NGOs, local authorities, Sustrans

A man and a woman are looking at a map outdoors. The woman, on the left, is wearing a dark green sweater and a patterned headband with sunglasses. The man, on the right, has a beard and is wearing a light blue shirt. They are both looking down at a map that the woman is holding. The map is orange and white, with some text visible. A large blue oval is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text. The background is a blurred green landscape.

Anyone, no matter who they are,
where they come from, what their
beliefs or their needs are, should
be able to visit and enjoy the
Cairngorms National Park

B10. A Park for All

Anyone, no matter who they are, where they come from, what their beliefs or their needs are, should be able to visit and enjoy the Cairngorms National Park. We recognise that a continued focus on equalities is imperative, particularly at the current time, following a global pandemic and in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis that has exacerbated inequalities in our society.

We have also recognised in the last few years the need to engage more proactively with external equalities experts. To this end we reconstituted our Equalities Advisory Panel in 2020, bringing together experts from across the public, private and third sector to provide evidence-based feedback, guidance and advice, grounded wherever possible in lived experience.

Residents of the National Park should have opportunities to benefit from living in a spectacular natural environment with a strong sense of community. There is also a need to provide targeted support across the National Park to ensure that programmes and projects contribute to reducing inequalities for residents and visitors alike.

Finally, we also need to ensure that a wider range of people are involved in, benefit from and support activities that protect and enhance nature and tackle climate change in the National Park. Tackling the climate emergency and nature crisis can only be done by taking people with us: local communities, workers in the rural economy, visitors, under-represented groups and so on.



OBJECTIVE

There will be better opportunities for everyone to enjoy the National Park and the visitor profile will be more diverse, especially with regards to people who are disabled, from lower socio-economic backgrounds, LGBTQ+ and from minority and ethnic groups.



TARGET

- Visitors to the National Park will more closely resemble the overall demography of Scotland.



INDICATOR

- Resident and visitor values and attitudes to key issues in the National Park are regularly evaluated.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Work with the Cairngorms Equalities Advisory Panel to address systemic issues and deliver a Park for All.
- Review, update and deliver the Active Cairngorms Action Plan, infrastructure plans and Tourism Action Plan.
- Grow the role, remit and influence of the Cairngorms Youth Action Team (see *People policy B1*).
- Develop targeted support programmes to overcome specific barriers to enjoying the National Park, including looking at business and infrastructure capacity.
- Conduct regular surveys of residents' and visitors' values and attitudes to key issues in the National Park.
- Refresh the Park for All campaign to address barriers to participation from groups / sectors that are under-represented in the National Park.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (see page 12).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Equalities Advisory Panel, NatureScot, VisitScotland, ranger services, Cairngorms Youth Action Team

B11. Volunteering and outdoor learning

Volunteering delivers tangible benefits to the management of the National Park, as well as to the physical and mental wellbeing of those participating in volunteering. It also provides excellent training opportunities and experience for future employment. We want to see an expansion of the opportunities available for volunteering in the National Park, ensuring they are open to people from all backgrounds.

Outdoor learning continues to be an important component in creating a lasting connection between people and nature in the National Park whatever their age, background or circumstances. We will work with other national parks, partners and communities to provide meaningful opportunities for people to experience and care for nature in the Cairngorms, and support communities in maintaining and improving their local environment.



OBJECTIVE

Increase the number of volunteer days spent caring for the National Park, taking an inclusive approach to volunteering recruitment.



TARGET

- At least 200 volunteer rangers in the National Park by 2030.
- Increase the number of National Park volunteer days every year.



INDICATOR

- An increase in the number of John Muir Awards undertaken within the National Park.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Review, update and deliver the Active Cairngorms Action Plan.
- Develop and expand the volunteer, junior ranger and John Muir Award programmes.
- Support communities in maintaining and improving their local environment (path network, litter collection, open spaces, species and habitat work etc).
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (*see page 12*).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

EUROPARC, ranger services, Volunteer Cairngorms, landowners



We want to see an expansion
of the opportunities available for
volunteering in the National Park

Image of two volunteers at Glen Tanar
by Will Boyd Wallis

People policies 2022 - 2027

Giving communities
a greater say in the
future of their area



Policy B1

Deliver a wellbeing economy in the Cairngorms which strengthens existing business sectors, supports business start-ups, develops green jobs, supports diversification and the circular economy, and maintains the number of workers employed in the National Park. This will be achieved through:

- a) Maintaining the population of the National Park and maintaining or growing the proportion of the working-age population.
- b) Supporting the diversification of existing land-based businesses and ensuring that the traditional skills of the sector are harnessed.
- c) Encouraging growth of business sectors that draw on the special qualities of the National Park, such as sustainable tourism, ecological restoration and food and drink.
- d) Supporting business start-ups and diversification that delivers circular economy benefits.
- e) Promoting the Real Living Wage for the Cairngorms National Park.
- f) Broadening the economic base of the National Park into sectors such as the creative industries and renewable energy, making stronger links with higher and further education.
- g) Increasing provision for business land where there is an identified need and demand, and supporting the use of land for small business, particularly within settlements.
- h) Slowing outward migration of young people, encouraging their return, and supporting the inward migration of workers to the National Park to meet business and community needs.
- i) Providing a housing land supply that supports young people and workers and maintains vibrant communities.
- j) Reducing the proportion of vacant and second homes to support community vibrancy, ensuring that new housing development best meets local needs.
- k) Maximising the proportion of new housing development that is affordable in perpetuity, using short-term let control areas and licensing of short-term let properties to manage the impact of second homes and short-term lets on the housing market (and the availability of housing for residents and workers).

Policy B2

Support and build the capacity of communities to deliver their aspirations, with a particular focus on:

- a) Supporting communities to plan for their own futures, develop and implement projects, engage the support of partners and share good practice.
- b) Encouraging innovative approaches to providing affordable housing to meet local needs.
- c) Supporting communities and landowners to work collaboratively on the management of land for shared benefits.
- d) Aligning community planning processes to simplify support to communities.
- e) Engaging communities effectively in the long-term management of the National Park and in projects or programmes that affect them.
- f) Supporting community and public sector control of land for development where appropriate.



Policy B3

Provide high-quality opportunities for access and recreation whilst limiting negative impact on wildlife and communities, with a particular focus on:

- a) Ensuring a high-quality functional network of active travel, core paths and long-distance routes.
- b) Promoting the health benefits of outdoor recreation and GP-led green health referrals.
- c) Identifying areas where particular management measures are needed in relation to delivering a high-quality visitor experience, whilst safeguarding sensitive species and environments.
- d) Promoting responsible behaviour in enjoying and managing access.

Policy B4

Provide opportunities for inspiration, learning and understanding through engaging with people, with a particular focus on:

- a) Reaching out to equalities groups and young people.
- b) Creating opportunities to support the delivery of the Curriculum for Excellence and education beyond school.
- c) Promoting and enhancing volunteering opportunities.
- d) Promoting a sense of shared ownership and responsibility towards Scotland's national parks and rural environment.
- e) Promoting knowledge exchange and sharing development experience between rural areas nationally and internationally.
- f) Celebrating Gaelic language and culture.

Policy B5


Support under-represented groups to visit, work and live in the National Park and ensure a Park for All, with a particular focus on:

- a) Providing equal access and opportunities that are affordable for all.
- b) Promoting targeted opportunities to support people from protected groups to visit and enjoy the National Park.
- c) Increasing our understanding of barriers to inclusion and access to nature for hard-to-reach groups through improving baseline data and data-gathering methods.
- d) Addressing any barriers to participation.
- e) Improve promotion and quality of opportunities for hard-to-reach groups to become involved with and access the National Park.
- f) Ensuring that the infrastructure of the National Park is designed and maintained to be as accessible as possible to people with the widest range of abilities.
- g) Working in partnership with local businesses, the health sector and community groups to improve inclusion and access to the National Park.
- h) Improving reporting processes and effective feedback loops to increase engagement with protected groups.
- i) Improving digital accessibility and inclusive communications, in particular publications, video / streamed content and the National Park website.
- j) Diversifying and improving representation of protected groups in consultation and promotional material.



Promoting the health benefits of outdoor recreation

Image of two walkers at Meall a' Bhuachaille path by Jakub Iwanicki / VisitScotland



Outcome: A place that people
want to live in, work in and
visit that works for all

Place

Since its inception in 2003, the Cairngorms National Park has been most successful when a broad range of people come together to find the right solutions for their specific area. Over the next few years, there are a number of significant challenges around housing, transport and tourism that we need to address collectively. Finding the right solutions to make a significant difference for our residents and visitors will not be easy, particularly as we must do so with nature and climate at the heart of everything we do.

The work that has taken place already – such as increasing affordable housing provision to 45% in certain towns – is a step in the right direction; however, we now need more radical solutions if we are to truly deliver the desired objectives and outcomes. Our Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme includes a range of ambitious projects to improve physical infrastructure and amenities in the National Park, from a Park-wide e-bike network and large-scale public transport improvements to a unique dementia activity resource centre near Glenmore. The programme brings together over 45 partners across the public, private and third sectors and represents the single largest public investment in the Cairngorms National Park to date.

Access to affordable housing came out very strongly in the public consultation and we acknowledge that, like many other rural communities across the UK, there is a significant risk of local residents – and in particular young people – being priced out of the market. Whilst there is no silver bullet, tackling the number of second homes, vacant properties and short-term lets should increase available housing stock, and we will set ambitious targets on new housing development to ensure the majority is for social rental, mid-market rental or other affordable categories, and that this remains the case in perpetuity.



Image of shops on Aviemore high street by Liam Anderstrem

C1. Access to housing

Access to housing for people who live and work in the area is a key issue for the Cairngorms National Park. We need to increase access to affordable housing and the housing market in the Cairngorms requires urgent change to support local, essential housing for workers and young people.

This cannot be addressed through housebuilding alone. We need to understand better the economic and social dynamics behind second homes, vacant and short-term lets, and reduce the loss of existing or newly-built properties to such uses. There is also a need to support housing which addresses the needs of the ageing resident population, those facing economic hardship, people with disabilities, ethnic minority communities and LGBTQ+ communities.



OBJECTIVE

Ensure that there is sufficient affordable housing stock to enable people to live and work within the National Park.



TARGET

- A maximum of 15% of all housing stock in the National Park will be second homes, vacant or short-term let properties by 2040.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Introduce short-term let control areas and short-term let licensing to increase the supply of mid-market properties available for local residents and workers.
- Secure investment in the private rented sector to provide long-term housing for workers and local people.
- Develop partnership approaches led by local businesses and community-led initiatives to address accommodation needs for workers and local people.



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Local authorities, Scottish Land and Estates, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Cairngorms Business Partnership



We need to increase access
to affordable housing
across the National Park

Image of an affordable housing development
in Tomintoul by Alpha Projects

C2. New housing

In order to provide access to housing for key workers and those on low incomes, new housing will need to be delivered for these groups in ways that have not been achieved before. There is a need to increase considerably the amount of housing that is affordable to those living and working in the National Park. There is also a need to identify housing specifically for holiday lets rather than as part of general housing allocations.

This plan focuses on increasing the amount of affordable housing (in perpetuity) for those that wish to live and work in the National Park. This is a crucial issue if we wish to see a just and fair transition to a low carbon economy.



OBJECTIVE

Deliver new housing in the National Park and ensure as much as possible is secured for key workers and / or to resolve affordability issues.



TARGET

- By 2030, 75% of new housing is for social rental, mid-market rental or other affordable categories that provide affordability in perpetuity.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Deliver at least 200 new affordable and mid-market rental homes through local authority strategic housing investment plans and affordable housing delivery programmes.
- Use the next Local Development Plan to identify further locations where more than 25% affordable housing is required and bring this up to 75% affordable overall.
- Support communities to deliver community-led housing solutions, including by making the most of powers to buy land and taking a more proactive role in management where appropriate.



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Local authorities, housing providers, Scottish Government, Communities Housing Trust, Rural Housing Scotland, development trusts, Scottish Land and Estates, Cairngorms Business Partnership

C3. Housing and community benefit

Control of land is key to the delivery of developments that bring real public benefit to communities at the time and place they are needed. Whilst this objective proposes a major role for communities and public bodies in housing, private landowners and developers still have a significant part to play in delivering housing in the National Park.



OBJECTIVE

Work with communities to ensure that the majority of land allocated for development around villages and towns in the National Park is controlled by communities or public bodies to help manage long-term development needs.



TARGET / INDICATOR

- The percentage of developable land in community or public body ownership is increasing.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Review options and funding for public sector purchase of allocated development land.
- Support communities to use all possible options to access land for the developments they need.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (*see page 12*).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Local authorities, Scottish Government, Scottish Land Commission, Community Land Scotland

C4. Village and town centres

Numerous opportunities and challenges have faced the town and village centres of the National Park as shopping habits have changed. New businesses and activities will need to be supported to ensure these spaces continue to provide services and value to communities. In general, commercial properties should remain so and should only be converted to residential as a last resort.

The concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods is one way of to ensure that services are accessible, help tackle societal causes of inequality, and reduce social isolation and loneliness. 20-minute neighbourhoods are places that are designed so that residents can meet their day-to-day needs within a 20-minute walk or cycle of their home; however, this concept will clearly require some translation in a rural context, where services and people are more dispersed.



OBJECTIVE

Ensure villages and town centres in the National Park are thriving places where people live, shop and meet.



TARGET

- An increasing number of 20-minute neighbourhoods (or rural equivalent).



INDICATOR

- The percentage of vacant commercial properties on high streets of the National Park reduces.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Review mechanisms available to the public sector to encourage regeneration of our town and village centres.
- Promote business and community-led collaborative projects to encourage local expenditure and supply chains.
- Develop a rural approach to the 20-minute neighbourhood concept in the National Park.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (*see page 12*).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Local authorities, Scottish Government, Federation of Small Businesses, Cairngorms Business Partnership, Growbiz, Sustrans



We want our villages
and town centres – and
the communities they
support – to thrive

C5. Visitors to the National Park

Visitors to the National Park have increased from 1.3m to 2.1m since the National Park was established. Whilst this has provided a welcome boost to the local economy, it has increased pressure on infrastructure, services and the environment during peak periods, particularly since the boom in staycations post-pandemic. The availability of housing for people working in the National Park is stretched and this is impacting on the potential of businesses to meet customer demands and provide high-quality services.

Visitors will remain an essential part of the economy of the National Park. Our ambition is to see the benefits of the visitor economy being realised more widely across the National Park and pressures eased, with more focus on the off-peak season.



OBJECTIVE

Work to stabilise visitor numbers in the peak season, focusing growth on quieter months and on those areas that have the infrastructure and capacity to accommodate additional visitors.



TARGET

- Growth in visitor numbers is concentrated at off-peak times of year and in areas with capacity.



INDICATOR

- Length of visitor stays increase.
- Visitor satisfaction levels remain high.




ACTIONS BY 2027

- Review, update and deliver the Cairngorms Tourism Action Plan to promote areas with geographic and / or seasonal capacity in a sustainable manner.
- Develop a Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan to provide high-quality infrastructure at key visitor hotspots and for key sectors (eg camping and motorhomes).
- Collect and share high quality data on visitor numbers, behaviour, perceptions and aspirations.



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Cairngorms Tourism Partnership

A scenic landscape photograph of Loch Morlich. In the foreground, four people are on a sandy shore. One person is sitting in a blue folding chair on the left, facing away from the camera. Another person is kneeling in the center, petting a white and black dog. To the right, a woman in an orange jacket and a man in a dark jacket are standing, looking towards the water. The lake is calm, and the background features rolling hills and mountains under a cloudy sky. A large, semi-transparent orange shape is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text.

We will work to
stabilise visitor
numbers in the
peak season

C6. A sustainable destination

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is a positive indicator that the management of the National Park is being undertaken in a sustainable way, in line with international standards of best practice. We will continue to use it as a means of benchmarking our work to create a truly sustainable visitor destination.



OBJECTIVE

Secure the National Park's reputation as an international exemplar in sustainable tourism and the management of protected areas.



TARGET

- The National Park continues to be accredited with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas and the Glasgow Declaration (Climate Action in Tourism).



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Submit a Tourism Action Plan to EUROPARC by 2023 and secure accreditation.
- Maintain our status with the Glasgow Declaration (Climate Action in Tourism).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

EUROPARC, Cairngorms Tourism Partnership

There is a need to improve public transport to cater for residents, commuters and visitors

Image of someone waiting for a bus in Aviemore by Liam Anderstrem



C7. Transport to and around the Park

How people get to and move around the Cairngorms is going to be one of the biggest changes in the National Park over the coming years.

There is a need to improve public transport to cater for residents, commuters and visitors, and to move to a hub and spokes model (where one central 'hub' location caters for lots of smaller 'spokes') for key visitor destinations.

There will be less use of private cars in future and a need to look at site-specific solutions for key areas of the National Park, such as Glenmore. And we need to make it easier for people to get to work in the National Park more sustainably.

This is a key issue for the Cairngorms and one which we need to focus on to achieve our net zero and visitor management objectives. There is a need to ensure that work in the National Park follows the hierarchy of transport needs as set out in the National Transport Strategy.



OBJECTIVE

Promote a modal shift towards sustainable and active travel in the way visitors and commuters get to, and everyone moves around, the National Park.



TARGET

- 20% of current journeys by visitors, commuters and residents within the National Park do not take place by car by 2030.
- Increase active travel and public transport usage within the National Park.
- 25% of visitors get to the National Park by public transport by 2045.
- E-bike and adapted bike hire and charging facilities will be available in all main settlements and major visitor hubs by 2030.
- Key public transport options will have capacity for people to bring bikes to the National Park by 2030.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Work to ensure bike capacity as part of the Highland Main Line development.
- Support Sustrans-led work on promoting and developing the Lochs and Glens Way (formerly National Cycle Network 7) and National Cycle Network 195.
- Promote low-cost initiatives to access the National Park by public transport (*see People objective B10 – A Park for All*).
- Promote innovative approaches based on 'mobility as a service', demand-responsive transport initiatives, improved connectivity of bus routes, e-scooters, electric car schemes, car-share schemes etc.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (*see page 12*).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Local authorities, Sustrans, Hitrans, Nestrans, Tactran, Transport Scotland, community transport companies

We will improve path, cycle and outdoor access networks so everyone can experience the natural and cultural heritage of the Cairngorms

C8. Accessible path and cycle network

The National Park already has some of the best path networks in Scotland. This will further enhance them and provide safe, accessible alternatives to the private car for local travel for both residents and visitors. This will contribute directly to improved public health outcomes. There is a need to ensure that the pedestrian environment in towns and villages is safe and accessible.

There is also a need to ensure that the way people use the fantastic path and cycle routes within the National Park does not have any negative impacts on species, archaeology or habitats within the Cairngorms.



OBJECTIVE

Improve path, cycle and outdoor access networks to give outstanding opportunities to experience the natural and cultural heritage of the National Park to the widest range of people, while minimising disturbance to vulnerable species, habitats and sites.



TARGET

- Increase the number of kilometres of safe and inclusive off-road or segregated on-road routes between communities by 2030.



INDICATOR

- All core paths are in good condition and accessible to the widest possible range of users.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Develop and implement a new Cairngorms Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan.
- Review the Active Cairngorms Action Plan.
- Complete the extension of the Deeside Way to Braemar.
- Increase promotion of the Speyside Way and provide options for cycling.
- Consider all potential mechanisms to reduce disturbance on key species (*see Nature objective A13 – Species recovery*) and recreational impacts on high ground.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (*see page 12*).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Local authorities, Sustrans, Scottish Enterprise, landowners, Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland, Managing for Visitors Group

C9. High-quality visitor experience

Good management for visitors increases capacity while reducing the impact of their visit. This in turn helps maintain the special qualities people come to enjoy within the National Park, including our local communities. There is also a need to ensure that the way we manage for visitors is linked in with our work on nature, especially around disturbance issues and to ensure we meet our climate targets.

There is also a need to ensure that our visitor infrastructure is of high quality and helps us to give every visitor a great experience of the UK's largest national park.



OBJECTIVE

Welcome visitors and provide a high-quality experience while managing their impacts through providing better infrastructure and high-quality ranger services.



TARGET

- Number of public toilets within the National Park is maintained.
- Increased public toilet facilities for people with additional needs.



INDICATOR

- Number of managed facilities for campervans increases.
- Visitor satisfaction levels remain high.
- Number of rangers employed within the National Park is stable or increasing.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Develop and implement a new Cairngorms Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan, Active Cairngorms Action Plan and Tourism Action Plan.
- Support the implementation of the Cairngorm Mountain masterplan.
- Support a coordinated family of ranger services across the National Park.
- Map accessible facilities, so people can identify in advance of their journey available accessibility support.



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Landowners, NatureScot, Scottish Government, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, local authorities, Cairngorm Mountain (Scotland) Ltd, NatureScot, Highland Council, local community, Managing for Visitors Group, rangers

Figure 6: Visitor infrastructure in the Cairngorms

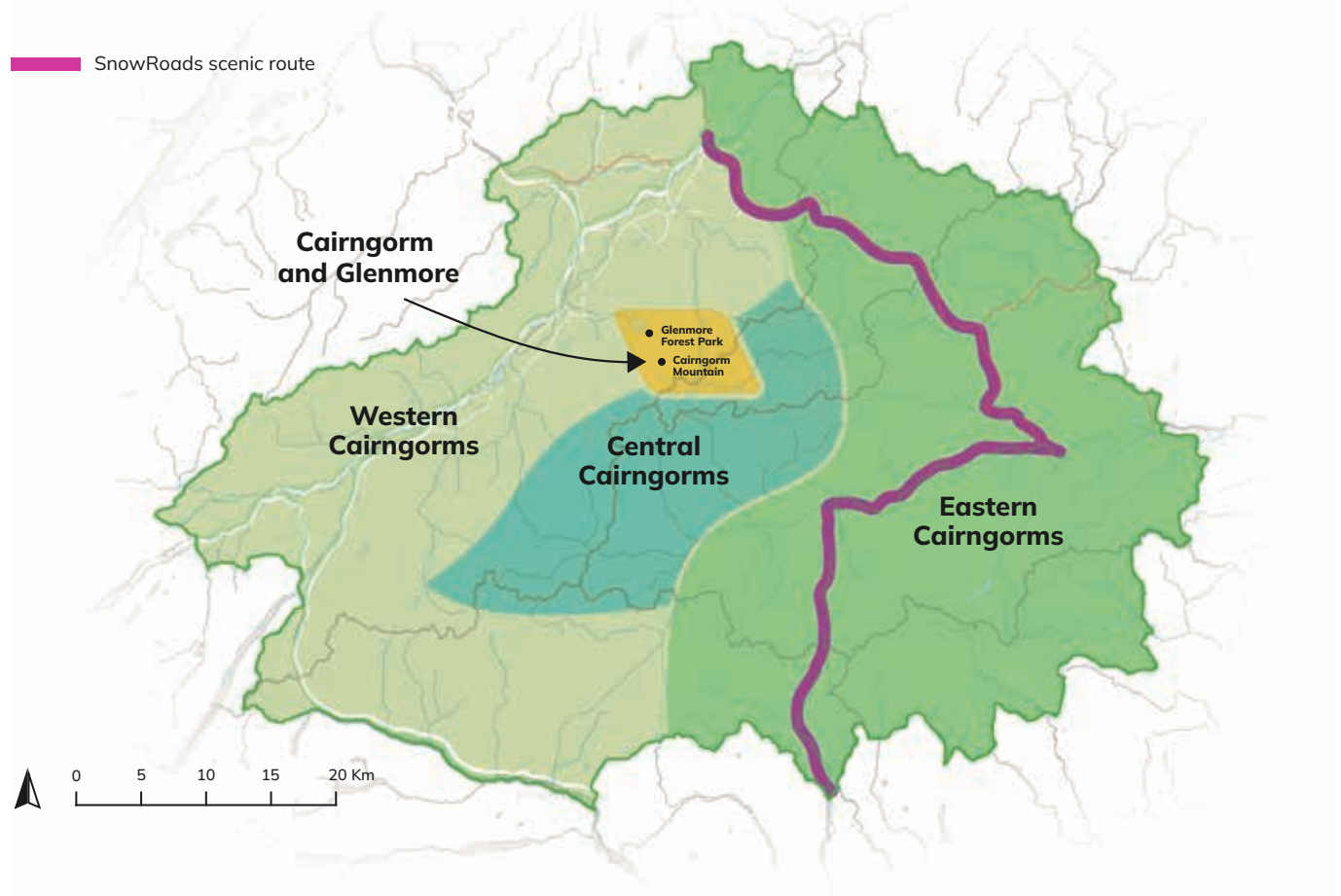
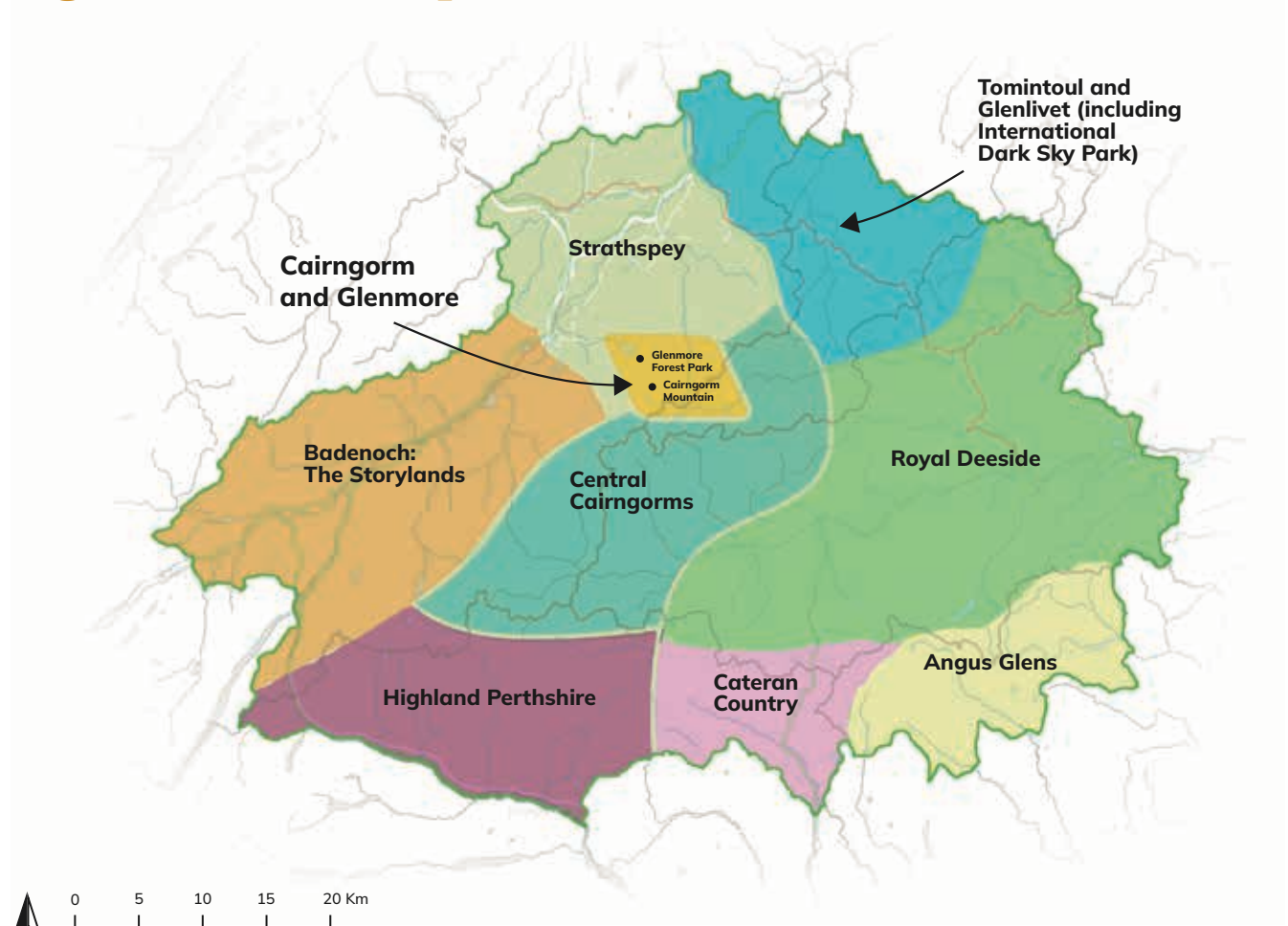


Figure 7: Visitor experience areas



C10. Cultural heritage

The historic environment, history and culture of the National Park is a foundation of our communities and economy that is not always shared or valued sufficiently. There is also a key link between the culture of the Cairngorms and the natural environment itself, with people having played such a significant role in shaping the landscapes of the National Park for centuries. There are opportunities to develop the cultural heritage assets of the National Park as part of a move to a wellbeing economy.

There is also a need to recognise the role of Scots / Doric in the National Park (alongside that of Gaelic) and to support its use where appropriate.



OBJECTIVE

Safeguard and promote the Park's cultural heritage and provide opportunities for everyone to experience and learn about the National Park's outstanding historic environment, history and culture.



TARGET

- A Cairngorms cultural heritage network is established and flourishing.



INDICATOR

- An increasing number of community-led cultural heritage projects are delivered.



ACTIONS BY 2027

- Develop a Cairngorms cultural heritage network, building on the success of the Badenoch: The Storylands project, Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership and Cateran Ecomuseum.
- Provide grant funding for community heritage projects that contribute to a cultural heritage network.
- Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (see page 12).



PARTNERS (alongside the Park Authority)

Cairngorms Business Partnership, VisitScotland, local authorities, development trusts, Highlife Highland, Historic Environment Scotland, local cultural organisations



The historic environment,
history and culture of the
National Park is a foundation
of our communities
and economy

Place policies 2022 - 2027

Improving infrastructure
for communities, businesses
and visitors alike



Policy C1

Enable sustainable patterns of settlement development, infrastructure and communications while maintaining the integrity of designated sites by:

- a) Consolidating the role of the strategic settlements identified in the current and future Local Development Plans as the most sustainable places for future growth and the focus for housing land supply.
- b) Providing any additional flexibility in future land supply for housing at small sites around a wider range of settlements.
- c) Supporting sensitively-designed improvements to the A9 and other trunk roads and the main railway line as an integral part of enhancing the connectivity of the Highlands.
- d) Planning and improving integrated and sustainable local transport networks that allow for safe off-road travel and link with public transport.
- e) Planning and improving integrated public transport that meets the needs of residents and visitors to the National Park.
- f) Planning and supporting improvements to the information technology network.
- g) Planning and supporting improvements to the mobile communications network that improve access to next generation technology and minimise the need for visually-intrusive infrastructure.

Policy C2

Support the development of a low carbon, circular economy, with a particular focus on:

- a) Increasing renewable electricity and heat generation, especially biomass, hydro, solar, small-scale wind turbines and heat exchange pumps that are compatible with conserving the special qualities of the National Park and maintain the integrity of designated sites. Large-scale wind turbines are not compatible with the landscape character or special landscape qualities of the National Park. They are inappropriate within the National Park or in areas outside the National Park where they adversely affect its landscape character or special landscape qualities.
- b) Supporting businesses and communities to use less energy, reduce emissions, improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings, generate low impact renewable energy, reduce, reuse and recycle resources, and plan for a changing climate.
- c) Maximising the benefits to communities through direct use of locally-generated energy or, where sold to the grid, reinvesting income to support community development.
- d) Promoting high standards of sustainable design and efficient use of energy and materials in construction.
- e) Electrifying public transport and increasing cycle-carrying capacity on trains, buses and in taxis.
- f) Installing electric car and bike-charging facilities at visitor hubs when investing in upgrades or refurbishment, where electricity supplies allow it.



Policy C3

Enhance the design and sense of place in new development and existing settlements, in particular:

- a) Enabling new development which contributes positively to the sense of place.
- b) Promoting a high standard of sustainable design, energy efficiency, sustainably-sourced materials and construction in new development.
- c) Supporting the retention and enhancement of local character.
- d) Facilitating the rehabilitation of redundant rural buildings and recycling of resources.
- e) Ensuring road upgrades and improvements respond to local landscape character.
- f) Promoting active travel and public transport provision and reducing the reliance on private motor vehicles.

Policy C4

Develop plans to help manage visitor pressure in key areas, including:

- a) Ensuring high-quality facilities and infrastructure are designed to manage the effects of visitor pressures on the natural heritage and communities.
- b) Ensuring that the upgrading or refurbishment of visitor hubs improves accessibility for all potential users and incorporates disabled access toilets and Changing Places facilities where possible.
- c) Enhancing the provision of ranger services to deliver a warm visitor welcome and promote responsible access.
- d) Reducing fire risk by limiting or excluding barbecues and open fires in key areas of the National Park, such as in areas of woodland and peatland.

- e) Reducing impacts on sensitive habitats.
- f) Ensuring appropriate transport management to facilitate and enhance the visitor experience.

Policy C5

Promote sustainable tourism management, with a particular focus on:

- a) Taking a coordinated approach to responsible tourism and management of the Cairngorms National Park as a visitor destination.
- b) Delivering a visitor / customer experience that spans organisational boundaries.
- c) Providing high-quality, coordinated information, setting individual visitor experiences in the context of the wider National Park.
- d) Building on and promoting the National Park brand and the promise it delivers.

Policy C6

Conserve and enhance the cultural heritage that helps to create the sense of place and identity of communities within the National Park by:

- a) Protecting archaeological sites and their settings and promoting understanding of their significance.
- b) Ensuring appropriate advice and investigation for archaeology is used to inform proposals for land use change.
- c) Protecting and enhancing the built heritage and designed landscapes.
- d) Promoting opportunities to enjoy and celebrate the cultural heritage of the National Park, including the arts, sports, natural history and community heritage.



Enabling new
development which
contributes positively
to the sense of place

Complementary strategies

Capital investment

There is a need for sustained investment in the capital infrastructure of the National Park to aid the transition to a net zero economy and to ensure that the National Park is able to manage the two million visitors that come each year sustainably. This section sets out the high-level strategic approach to capital investment over the next five years. A Strategic Tourism Investment Plan is currently being developed by the Park Authority and its partners and will form a significant part of the case for capital investment in the National Park going forward.

We have identified five guiding principles for capital investment in the National Park:



Green

Infrastructure will contribute to delivering net zero and strengthen the natural and social capital of the National Park.



Cairngorms

Infrastructure will focus on the needs of the National Park and will contribute to the long-term outcomes as set out in the Partnership Plan.



Employment

Infrastructure will maximise local employment and support the development of a wellbeing economy.



Long-term

Infrastructure investment will be focused on long-term solutions to key issues around visitor management, transport, flood management etc.



Equalities, diversity and inclusion

Infrastructure will help to ensure that the Cairngorms is a Park for All.



G. & J. G. SMITH LTD
The Glenlivet Distillery
1102 40.3
1960
G. & J. G.

G. & J. G. SMITH LTD
The Glenlivet Distillery
5809 40.6
1977
G. & J. G.

G. & J. G. SMITH LTD
The Glenlivet Distillery
6972 41.4
1981
G. & J. G.

G. & J. G. SMITH LTD
The Glenlivet Distillery
1605 40.6
1967
G. & J. G.

G. & J. G. SMITH LTD
The Glenlivet Distillery
4018 41.5
1970
G. & J. G.

G. & J. G. SMITH LTD
The Glenlivet Distillery
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1968
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G. & J. G. SMITH LTD
The Glenlivet Distillery
4825 41.6
1972
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G. & J. G. SMITH LTD
The Glenlivet Distillery
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G. & J. G. SMITH LTD
The Glenlivet Distillery
5355 41.9
1974
G. & J. G.

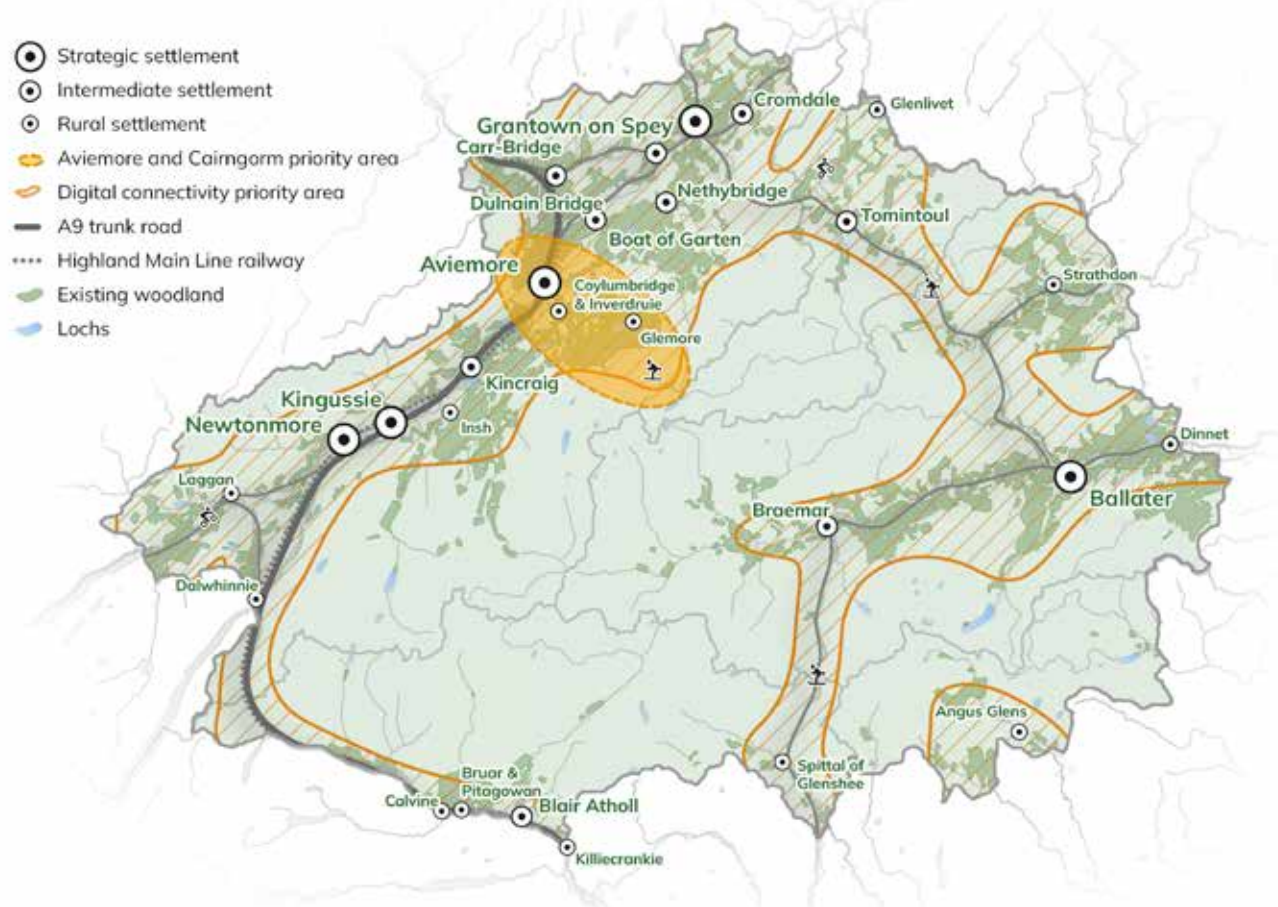
G. & J. G. SMITH LTD
The Glenlivet Distillery
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1979
G. & J. G.

G. & J. G. SMITH LTD
The Glenlivet Distillery
7573 41.6
1983
G. & J. G.

G. & J. G. SMITH LTD
The Glenlivet Distillery
3656 41.9
1968
G. & J. G.

Image of barrels at Glenlivet by Liam Anderstrem

Figure 8: Strategic developments in the Cairngorms



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Regional Spatial Strategy

The National Park Partnership Plan is the Regional Spatial Strategy for the Cairngorms National Park that is required by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. It sets out the long-term spatial strategy in terms of strategic development, in the context of the wider range of priorities identified to deliver the aims of the National Park in a collective and coordinated way. Figure 8 above summarises the strategic developments that are required in the National Park in the future to contribute to the long-term vision for the National Park, and the delivery of the long-term outcomes and objectives of the National Park Partnership Plan in each of the Nature, People and Place themes.

Given that the Cairngorms National Park is a relatively remote rural place, with mostly small

communities but high visitor numbers, there are relatively few individual and discrete strategic developments identified. However, there are a number of strategic development areas and priorities that are identified where multiple small but interconnected developments will support transformational change for Nature, for People and for Place that is significant at a national level.

Regional Land Use Framework and Partnership

Five regions across Scotland, including the Cairngorms National Park, are involved in the Regional Land Use Partnership (RLUP) and Regional Land Use Framework (RLUF) pilot programme from 2021-23. Scottish Government is committed




Image of twinflower by Mark Hamblin / 2020VISION

to trialling this approach as a route to achieving land use change that contributes to Scotland and the UK's climate change targets. The proposal for RLUPs was first set out in Scotland's Land Use Strategy in 2016, and the Climate Change Act in 2019 brought renewed ambition to the proposal.

It is still uncertain what, if any, powers RLUPs will have in future to direct public funding and this is pivotal in terms of how this approach will function. Within the Cairngorms National Park, the Park Authority has been tasked with creating the structures necessary to operate RLUP/Fs and to trial how they might work in practice. However, during this pilot, the RLUP/Fs will not have powers to direct public funding.

The strategic approach to the RLUP/F pilot as relevant to this National Park Partnership Plan period is set out below. The Park Authority will take further direction from Scottish Government on how RLUP/Fs should operate and, as such, the approach to RLUP/Fs may change in the future.

Our approach to our pilot RLUP – as a decision-making partnership for governance – is to utilise the existing Cairngorms National Park Authority board, with technical assistance from the Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group (CUAG) and other Cairngorms forums as required. The Park Authority board gives a level of democratic and community-led focus to governance, whilst CUAG adds further technical and professional expertise in land management matters. We will

also draw up specific terms of reference for CUAG involvement in the RLUP pilot to avoid any potential conflicts of interest.

This National Park Partnership Plan provides the strategic context for the development of a pilot RLUP for the National Park using a natural capital approach. The Park Authority will combine – and represent spatially – the aims and objectives contained within the National Park Partnership Plan and other relevant, pre-existing strategies, such as the Cairngorms National Park Forest Strategy and the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan. We will also utilise other existing data, mapping and expertise within the Park Authority and amongst our stakeholders, to highlight the quality and quantity of natural capital resources present across the Cairngorms National Park area.

Research

The work across the National Park needs to be underpinned by high-quality research that is specific to the management needs of the National Park. The Park Authority will look to produce a high-level research plan for the National Park, setting out the key needs within six months of the adoption of the Partnership Plan. This will also be underpinned by the knowledge exchange and research project that is part of the Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme (see page 12).

How we will deliver the plan

A collective effort

All public bodies must 'have regard to' the National Park Partnership Plan in taking forward work in the Cairngorms National Park; however, the plan cannot be delivered by the public sector alone. It needs businesses, landowners and third sector organisations within the National Park to play their part, helping tackle the climate emergency and nature crisis and delivering on the priorities that matter for the area. There are a number of different ways that the plan will be implemented:



Partnership

Working with organisations and people across the National Park to deliver the plan.



Incentives

Providing help to secure public benefits through payments and other incentives.



Regulation

Ensuring that legislation is adhered to within the National Park.

On the whole, work will be delivered through partnership working, with joint approaches to funding and delivery. However, where there are issues that are not being addressed, consideration will be given to regulatory approaches within the National Park.

Hierarchy of plans

The National Park Partnership Plan is the high-level management plan for the National Park and is the Economic Strategy, Sustainable Tourism Strategy, Regional Spatial Strategy, Climate Action Plan and the Regional Land Use Framework (see *Figure 9 on page 106*). It is supported by a number of action plans that will help to deliver the objectives of the plan and the National Park aims. The Climate Action Plan is a key requirement of our Glasgow Declaration commitments. Public bodies in the National Park will also prepare Gaelic language plans and equality outcomes plans that will be significant in influencing activity within the area.



Image of a golden eagle by Lorne Gill

Figure 9: Hierarchy of plans



Key National Park forums and groups

Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group

The Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group (CUAG) was established in 2018 and draws its membership from organisations and groups which have an interest in upland management issues in and around the Cairngorms National Park. Meetings are held two or three times a year, depending on the level of business to discuss, and are chaired by a Park Authority board member, with the Park Authority providing secretariat support. Its main functions are:

- To promote better communication and understanding between all organisations with an interest in upland management in the Cairngorms National Park.
- To advise the Cairngorms National Park Authority on upland management and, in particular, integration of the different land management sectors within the National Park.
- To share examples of good practice and strengthen the skills base in the sector.
- To share the latest research relevant to upland management in the Cairngorms to inform future land use strategy.

CUAG membership is drawn from the following organisations and groups which have an interest in upland management issues in and around the Cairngorms National Park. When appropriate, other invited specialists are asked to join specific meetings:

- Association of Cairngorms Communities
- Association of Deer Management Groups
- British Association for Shooting and Conservation
- Cairngorms Connect
- Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust
- James Hutton Institute
- National Trust for Scotland
- NatureScot
- North East Mountain Trust
- RSPB Scotland
- Scottish Forestry
- Scottish Land and Estates
- University of the Highlands and Islands
- Representatives from the farming, forestry, gamekeeping and wider land management communities

Cairngorms Nature Strategy Group

The Cairngorms Nature Strategy Group brings together professionals from a range of organisations with an active role in the delivery of biodiversity gain in the Cairngorms National Park. The group comes together to provide guidance to – and collectively oversee the implementation of – the Cairngorms Nature Action

Plan and wider Cairngorms Nature partnership. The objectives and functions of the Cairngorms Nature Strategy Group are:

- To provide strategic leadership of Cairngorms Nature to make a measurable difference to biodiversity in the Cairngorms National Park.
- To inspire and provide support to individual and community involvement in local conservation projects.

- To coordinate and maintain an overview of progress in biodiversity management across the whole National Park.

The Strategy Group consists of representatives from the following agencies and organisations:

- Cairngorms Connect
- Crown Estate Scotland
- Dalhousie Estates
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- Marr Area Partnership
- National Farmers' Union of Scotland
- National Trust for Scotland
- NatureScot
- RSPB Scotland
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
- Scottish Land and Estates
- Wildland Limited



Image of two people deer stalking on Balmoral Estate by Ed Smith

Cairngorms Economic Steering Group

The purpose of the Cairngorms Economic Steering Group is to coordinate the delivery of relevant parts of the Partnership Plan, specifically to:

- Keep an overview of the economic and social data required to feed into the management of the National Park, sharing data and identifying gaps as appropriate.
- Advise and assist the Park Authority with the delivery of the Economic Action Plan.
- Advise and assist the Park Authority with preparation of an annual review of progress made in delivery.
- Advise and assist on specific economic projects, initiatives and issues, specifically the wellbeing economy, community wealth-building, net zero initiatives and the circular economy.
- Advise on the development of a natural capital approach within the National Park which considers the value of the natural environment for people and the economy.
- Advise on the development of future policy and strategy.

The steering group consists of representatives from the following agencies and organisations:

- Aberdeenshire Council
- Aviemore and Glenmore Community Trust
- Ballater Business Association
- Blair Atholl Business Association
- Braemar Business Association
- Cairngorms Business Partnership
- Cairngorms Youth Action Team
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Grantown Business Association
- Growbiz
- The Highland Council
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Kingussie Business Association
- Moray Council
- Newtonmore Business Association
- Scottish Council for Development and Industry
- Scottish Enterprise
- Scottish Land and Estates
- Skills Development Scotland

Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum

The Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum advises the Park Authority and others on matters relating to outdoor access. The forum is made up of individuals representing land management, community interests, recreational users and public agencies. The objectives and functions of the forum are:

- To act as the local access forum for the Cairngorms National Park and to undertake the functions of that body in terms of Section 25 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.
- To advise the Park Authority in the review of the Core Paths Plan.
- To advise the Park Authority in the review of its Outdoor Access Strategy.
- To advise the Park Authority, and any other person or body consulting it, on the existence and delineation of rights of way and the exercise of access rights.
- To promote responsible access and land management through assisting the Park

Authority in publicising the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

- To promote discussion and the sharing of knowledge, awareness and good practice in outdoor access matters.

- To support the provision of appropriate infrastructure that improves responsible access to the countryside for all.
- To offer advice that will assist in the resolution of outdoor access disputes.

Cairngorms Equalities Advisory Panel

The Park Authority is fully committed to improving equality, accessibility and inclusion in all areas of its work. In September 2020, the Park Authority established the Equality Advisory Panel, made up of individuals with expertise in education, community representation, disability advocacy, mental health, poverty and socio-economic disadvantage, health and social care, gender, LGBTQ+ advocacy and working with ethnic minority communities. The forum provides informed, evidence-based feedback, guidance and advice to support the Park Authority to:

- Ensure statutory public sector equality duties are delivered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (and other relevant equality legislation).
- Embed equality and inclusion in the Park Authority's strategies and corporate processes.
- Critically assess and appropriately mitigate the impact of Park Authority decisions on equality groups through robust equality impact assessment procedures.
- Ensure best practice in equality and inclusion approaches to the Park Authority's work.
- Promote the equality and inclusion work of the Park Authority and partners within the National Park.

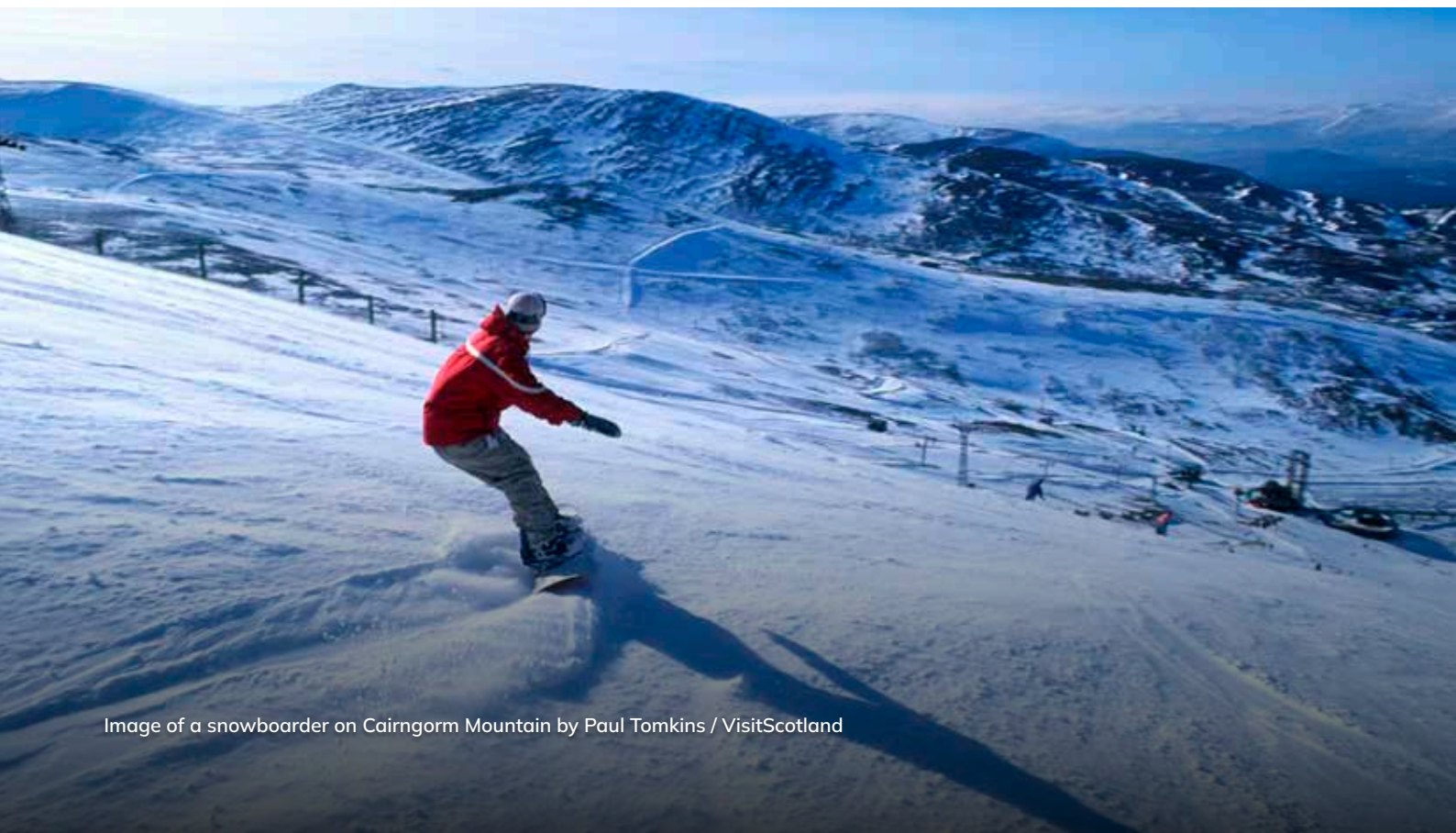


Image of a snowboarder on Cairngorm Mountain by Paul Tomkins / VisitScotland

Cairngorms Tourism Partnership

The Cairngorms Tourism Partnership was established in 2014 and brings together tourism businesses and organisations with key public sector partners. Meetings are generally held twice a year and the remit of the partnership includes:

- Drawing up and overseeing the implementation of a Cairngorms Tourism Action Plan to set agreed priorities for the development and marketing of tourism.
 - Input to the national tourism strategy and review of local alignment.
 - Securing resources to ensure effective delivery of the Area Tourism Partnership Plan.
 - Acting, where appropriate, as a lobbying body to further the interests of local tourism, hospitality and leisure industries.
 - Acting as a link between public and private sectors.
 - Acting as a vehicle to engage the industry.
- Promoting the importance of economic, environmental, and social sustainability as a key consideration in all discussions and delivery.

The tourism partnership consists of representatives from the following agencies and organisations:

- Aberdeenshire Council
- Atholl Estates
- Balmoral Estate
- Cairngorms Business Partnership
- Glenlivet Distillery
- The Highland Council
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Landmark Visitor Centre
- Moray Speyside Tourism
- RSPB Scotland
- Strathdon Tourism Group
- VisitAberdeenshire
- VisitScotland
- Voluntary Action in Badenoch and Strathspey

Cairngorms Managing for Visitors Group

The Park Authority and its partners have been working within the national visitor management framework #RespectProtectEnjoy and the #CairngormsTogether framework to develop Managing for Visitors plans for key areas in the National Park. These Managing for Visitors plans dovetail and support site-based visitor management plans and estate management objectives. The purpose of the Managing for Visitors Group is to:

- Mitigate any negative impacts from increased recreation in sensitive or popular sites.
 - Reduce potential conflict between residents and visitors.
 - Promote collaboration across estate and organisational boundaries, ensuring a positive visitor experience.
 - Agree visitor infrastructure priorities for the area.
- Provide a warm welcome and support exceptional experiences for the public to enjoy the outdoors.

The group brings together the principal land managers from the public, private and third sectors, local authorities, NatureScot and emergency services. It generally meets every two weeks and is chaired by a representative from the Park Authority.



Image of a rowan tree sapling



Glossary of terms

- **20-minute neighbourhoods** – places that are designed so that residents can meet their day-to-day needs within a 20-minute walk or cycle of their home.
- **Active travel** – making journeys in more physically active ways, such as walking, using a wheelchair or mobility aid, cycling, or scooting.
- **Affordable housing** – housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on modest incomes, including social rented accommodation, mid-market rented accommodation, shared ownership, shared equity, discounted low cost housing for sale including plots for self-build, and low-cost housing without subsidy.
- **Assemblage / species assemblage** – a group of species that exists in a particular habitat.
- **Biodiversity** – the variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat, a high level of which is usually considered to be important and desirable.
- **Cairngorms Nature Action Plan** – Cairngorms Nature is a partnership for people and organisations to come together with a common desire to safeguard and enhance the outstanding nature of the Cairngorms National Park. The Action Plan describes the most important priorities over the five years between 2019 and 2024 and provides a focus for the work of partners. It has three main aims: landscape-scale conservation, focused action for priority species and involving people.
- **Cairngorms Nature Index** – a tool to help establish a baseline and framework for monitoring the health of the National Park's habitats, species and ecosystems.
- **Carbon markets / trading** – the buying and selling of credits that permit a company or other entity to emit a certain amount of carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases.
- **Carbon negative** – emitting less than zero carbon dioxide and carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) greenhouse gasses.
- **Carbon sequestration** – a natural or artificial process by which carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere and held in solid or liquid form.
- **Circular economy** – an economy in which products, services and systems are designed to maximise their value and minimise waste. It is an all-encompassing approach to life and business, where everything has value and nothing is wasted. In simple terms, it can be explained as 'make, use, remake' as opposed to 'make, use, dispose'.
- **Citizens' assembly / jury** – a representative group of citizens who are selected at random from the population to learn about, deliberate upon and make recommendations in relation to a particular issue or set of issues.

- **Climate emergency** – a situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it.
- **Compensation culls** – fences that prevent access to areas of ground that deer rely on for forage or shelter may increase the risk of suffering or winter mortality through starvation and exposure. In order to reduce this risk, NatureScot recommends that deer 'dependent' on the fenced-off area should be culled. Cull-setting is calculated using information on numbers and movement of deer that rely on the area.
- **COP15** – the UN Biodiversity Conference of the Parties, which will take place in Montreal, Canada from 5 to 17 December 2022. Despite ongoing efforts, biodiversity is deteriorating worldwide and this decline is projected to worsen unless urgent action is taken. COP15 will convene governments from around the world to agree a new set of goals for nature over the next decade.
- **COP26** – the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties, which took place in Glasgow from 31 October to 13 November 2021. COP26 brought together delegates including heads of state, climate experts and negotiators to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- **Deer management groups** – groups of estates or other landholdings that share access to a discrete population or herd of deer that is managed as a common resource.
- **Ecological network** – the basic, joined up infrastructure of existing and future habitat needed to allow populations of species and habitats to survive in fluctuating conditions.
- **Ecosystem functionality** – the capacity of natural processes and components to provide goods and services that satisfy human needs, either directly or indirectly.
- **Green engineering** – using natural methods in the place of more traditional hard engineering, eg a green roof or a pond that provides sustainable urban drainage.
- **Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030** – a project, led by the Park Authority and involving over 45 partners, to tackle the climate emergency, protect and enhance biodiversity, and deliver meaningful improvements to people's health and wellbeing across the Cairngorms National Park.
- **In-by land** – that part of a farm which is used mainly for arable and grassland production and which is not hill and rough grazing.
- **Just transition** – the concept that justice and equity should form an integral part of the transition towards a low-carbon world.
- **Knowledge exchange** – a two-way exchange between researchers and research users to share ideas, research evidence, experiences and skills. It refers to any process through which academic ideas and insights are shared, and external perspectives and experiences are brought into academia and / or a project.
- **Local Development Plan** – enables the right kind of development to happen in the right place to help deliver the aims of the Cairngorms National Park. All planning applications in the National Park are assessed against this plan.
- **Muirburn** – the practice of burning off old growth on moorland to encourage new growth.

- **National Planning Framework 4** – a long-term plan for Scotland, developed by Scottish Government, that sets out where development and infrastructure is needed to support sustainable and inclusive growth.
- **Natural capital** – the world's stock of natural resources, which includes geology, soils, air, water and all living organisms. Natural capital 'assets' such as habitats and ecosystems provide a wide range of benefits to human wellbeing, known as 'ecosystem services'.
- **Natural regeneration** – the process by which woodlands are restocked by trees that develop from seeds that fall and germinate in situ.
- **Natural treeline** – the natural edge of the habitat at which trees are capable of growing.
- **Nature / biodiversity crisis** – the rapid loss of species and the rapid degradation of ecosystems across the planet. Scientists predict that, on our current trajectory of habitat loss and global warming, between one third and one half of all species will face extinction by the end of this century. Their disappearance will upend ecosystems and destabilise human civilisations.
- **Nature-based solutions** – actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human wellbeing and biodiversity benefits.
- **NatureScot conservation advice packages** – documents prepared by NatureScot to help owners and occupiers, competent and relevant authorities, and anyone else with an interest in protected sites to help protect and manage them effectively.
- **R100 programme for ultrafast broadband** – a commitment by Scottish Government to provide access to superfast broadband of 30 Megabits per second to every home and business in Scotland.
- **Real Living Wage** – an hourly rate of pay set independently and updated annually (not to be confused with UK Government's National Living Wage). It is calculated according to the basic cost of living in the UK and employers choose to pay the Living Wage on a voluntary basis.
- **Regional Land Use Framework / Partnership** – a framework to help national and local government, communities, landowners and stakeholders work together to find ways to optimise land use in a fair and inclusive way, meeting local and national objectives and supporting the journey to net zero. This approach will be piloted in five locations across Scotland: the Cairngorms National Park, Highland Council area, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, North East region (Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Councils), and the South of Scotland (Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders Councils).
- **Regional Spatial Strategy** – long-term strategy for an area of land that identifies the need for strategic development; the outcomes to which strategic development will contribute; priorities for the delivery of strategic development; and its proposed locations, shown in the form of a map or diagram.
- **Resilient ecosystems** – a biological community of interacting organisms and their surrounding environment that are able to respond to change or disturbance by resisting damage and recovering quickly.
- **River catchments** – the area of land, including the hills and mountains, woodlands and buildings which water drains from, before flowing into streams, rivers and lochs.

- **Rural payments** – financial support provided to farmers and other land managers to provide specific goods and services on their landholding, as defined by Scottish Government. These were formerly delivered as part of the Common Agricultural Policy prior to the UK's exit from the European Union.
- **Strategic Projects Review 2** – a Scotland-wide review, led by Transport Scotland, of the strategic transport network across all transport modes, including walking, wheeling, cycling, bus, rail and car, as well as reviewing wider island and rural connectivity.
- **Structural diversity** – grasses, trees, shrubs, mosses and other vegetation of all different shapes, sizes and heights.
- **Wellbeing economy** – a new economic model that puts the wellbeing of people and planet first. Rather than pursuing economic growth through narrowly-defined indicators such as GDP, a wellbeing economy monitors and values more fundamental areas such as health, nature, education and communities.
- **Woodland carbon code** – a scheme administered by Scottish Forestry but available UK-wide. The code allows the owners of new woodland planting schemes to calculate the total carbon sequestration their woodland will achieve over the lifetime of the trees.

Organisations and groups listed in this plan

- **Association of Deer Management Groups (ADMG)** – the Scottish organisation established in January 1992 to represent its member deer management groups, currently around 50 in number and mainly covering the open hill red deer range and adjoining land.
- **Backbone** – a leading Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic outdoor environmental education organisation, acknowledged on a national and global platform for successfully addressing diversity and inclusion in the sector.
- **British Association of Shooting and Conservation (BASC)** – provides advice, training and political representation on all aspects of shooting, including firearms, wildfowling, stalking, game shooting and pest control.
- **British Deer Society (BDS)** – promotes deer conservation, education, research and management best practice to ensure a healthy and sustainable deer population in balance with the environment.
- **Cairngorm Mountain (Scotland) Ltd (CMSL)** – the operating company behind Cairngorm Mountain. Covering over 1,400 ha, Cairngorm Mountain has been a premium Scottish attraction for decades, appealing to nature lovers, families, walkers and climbers, and winter sports enthusiasts.
- **Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP)** – the chamber of commerce for businesses in the Cairngorms National Park, with over 400 members from all corners and industries of the National Park.
- **Cairngorms Connect** – the UK's largest habitat restoration project which will restore habitats and natural processes across a contiguous area of 60,000 ha in the Cairngorms National Park.

- **Cairngorms Farmers' Forum** – a network that aims to support farming and crofting businesses in the National Park. The forum centres around economic, environmental and social sustainability.
- **Cairngorms National Park Authority** – the organisation set up to ensure that the unique aspects of the Cairngorms – the natural environment of the National Park, its wildlife and its people – are looked after, both now and in the future. The Park Authority provides leadership to all those involved in the Cairngorms and works in partnership with a range of communities, businesses, non-governmental organisations and public sector partners to deliver practical solutions on the ground.
- **Cairngorms Nature Partnership** – an informal partnership open to people and organisations from all backgrounds, looking to deliver an ambitious action plan for nature in the National Park by 2050.
- **Cairngorms Tourism Partnership** – established in 2014 to bring together tourism businesses and organisations with key public sector partners within the National Park.
- **Cairngorms Trust** – the operational name for the Cairngorms Local Action Group Trust. The Trust aims to inspire communities and visitors to support the landscapes, wildlife, local culture and economic health of the National Park, and to encourage sustainable and community-led local development.
- **Cairngorms Youth Action Team (CYAT)** – a group that gives young people a platform and a voice to engage with the natural and cultural heritage of their local rural communities. The group is made up of people aged 14-26 from across the National Park who want to create positive change.
- **Catchment Management Partnerships** – bring together the interests of everyone involved with specific river catchments within the National Park, including statutory agencies, research institutions, organisations and interest groups, land managers and individual householders to help protect water quality.
- **Communities Housing Trust (CHT)** – a registered charity and social enterprise focused on building sustainable rural communities across central and northern Scotland.
- **Community Development Trusts** – large and small, rural and urban, mainland and island-based communities all over Scotland are setting up development trusts to help their neighbourhoods flourish through community-led activity, partnership working and enterprise.
- **Community Land Scotland (CLS)** – a charity and membership organisation for community landowners and aspiring community landowners.
- **Confederation of Forest Industries (ConFor)** – the trade association for the forestry industry in the UK. It was established to represent forestry and wood-using businesses, from nurseries and growers to wood-processing end users.
- **Countryside Learning Scotland** – based in Perthshire, Countryside Learning Scotland is an education charity which meets the need for outdoor learning in secondary schools (primarily). The charity provides a variety of educational, training and career opportunities, and encompasses all areas of the countryside, from recreation to traditional land uses, helping to sustain Scotland's countryside through education.
- **Crown Estate Scotland** – the public corporation of Scottish Government responsible for the management of land and property in Scotland, owned by the monarch in right of the Crown. It is responsible for a range of rural, coastal and marine assets.

- **Deer Management Groups (DMGs)** – comprise groups of estates or other landholdings that share access to a discrete population or herd of deer that is managed as a common resource. Groups have been set up over the last 30 years with support from NatureScot, with the responsibility for the conservation and control of all four species of deer presently found in Scotland.
- **East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership (ECMP)** – a partnership of the Park Authority and five estates across the National Park (Mar Lodge, Mar, Balmoral, Glenavon and Glenlivet) to contribute to the four aims of the National Park through moorland management. Specifically, the purpose of the partnership is to collaborate on a landscape scale across land holdings on woodland and scrub expansion, peatland restoration, raptor and other priority species conservation, and landscape enhancement.
- **Environmental non-governmental organisations (eNGOs)** – not-for-profit groups in the environmental sector that function independently of government, eg WWF Scotland, RSPB Scotland, Scottish Wildlife Trust etc.
- **Equalities Advisory Panel** – established in 2010 to provide informed, evidence-based feedback, guidance and advice to support the Park Authority in its commitment to equality, accessibility and inclusion.
- **The EUROPARC Federation** – the largest network of European Protected Areas, representing hundreds of responsible authorities and thousands of protected areas across 37 countries.
- **Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)** – a UK business organisation representing small and medium-sized businesses.
- **Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS)** – the Scottish Government agency responsible for managing our national forests and land.
- **Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT)** – a British charitable organisation promoting game and wildlife management as a part of nature conservation, whilst working with the shooting and hunting community.
- **Growbiz** – provide free support services for anyone considering becoming self-employed, starting or growing an existing small business or social enterprise in rural Scotland.
- **Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)** – the Scottish Government's economic and community development agency for the Highlands and Islands region. The agency's role is to develop sustainable economic growth across the region.
- **Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)** – the statutory regional transport partnership covering Eilean Siar (Western Isles), Orkney, Highland, Moray and most of the Argyll and Bute area.
- **Highlife Highland** – a regional organisation in Scotland, responsible for cultural and sports provision in the Highland Council area. Its activities include running libraries, museums and leisure centres.
- **Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI)** – an independent charity which supports, encourages and inspires work with community groups, clubs, charities and other third sector organisations throughout the Highlands.
- **Historic Environment Scotland** – an executive non-departmental public body responsible for investigating, caring for and promoting Scotland's historic environment.
- **Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB)** – a charity devoted to Scotland's environment, with a vision for a clean, green, sustainable Scotland. The charity has three goals: to combat climate change, tackle litter and waste, and protect and enhance the places people live, work and visit.

- **Local authorities** – local authorities in Scotland provide a range of public services, such as education, housing and planning, social care, roads and transport, economic development, environmental protection, and waste management. There are five local authorities within the National Park boundary – Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland, Moray, and Perth and Kinross – home to around 18,000 people in total.
- **Managing for Visitors Group** – the Park Authority and its partners worked alongside the national #RespectProtectEnjoy campaign and the regional #CairngormsTogether framework to develop Managing for Visitors plans for key areas in the National Park for spring and summer 2021. These plans were designed to provide a warm welcome and support exceptional experiences for the public to enjoy the outdoors; mitigate any negative impacts from increased recreation in sensitive or popular sites; reduce potential conflict between residents and visitors; promote collaboration across estate and organisational boundaries ensuring a positive visitor experience; and agree visitor infrastructure priorities for the area.
- **Marr Area Partnership** – a registered charity formed in 1998 by a group of volunteers to help local communities help themselves. The nature of their work has changed over time but the same broad aims apply: they seek to support communities in the Marr area to develop and grow into thriving, successful communities with secure economic, environmental and social futures.
- **National Farmers' Union of Scotland (NFUS)** – an organisation that promotes and protects the interests of the country's farming industry. It has approximately 10,000 members who are farmers, crofters and others involved in Scottish agriculture.
- **National Health Service (NHS) Scotland** – the publicly-funded healthcare system in Scotland, and one of the four systems which make up the National Health Service in the UK. It operates fourteen territorial NHS boards across Scotland, seven special non-geographic health boards and NHS Health Scotland.
- **National Parks Partnership** – the UK's 15 national parks work at a national level with a range of commercial, sustainability and philanthropic partners via the National Parks Partnership and the charitable entity the UK National Parks Foundation.
- **NatureScot (NS)** – formerly known as Scottish Natural Heritage, NatureScot is the public body responsible for Scotland's natural heritage, especially its natural, genetic and scenic diversity.
- **Nestrans** – the Transport Partnership for Aberdeen City and Shire, developing and delivering a long-term transport strategy for the region. Nestrans also take forward strategic transport improvements that support and improve the economy, environment and quality of life across Aberdeen City and Shire.
- **Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland** – the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland is an environmental charity promoting sustainable public access. They develop, build and repair paths, mountain habitats and trailhead facilities that satisfy the needs of the public, landowners and communities, while conserving and protecting the country's natural heritage.
- **Palladium Investment Group** – Palladium work with governments, communities, civil society, corporations and investors to formulate strategies, build partnerships and implement programmes that have a lasting social and financial impact. In July 2021, the group embarked on a unique partnership with the UK's national parks and secured funding for its first three nature restoration pilots in the Cairngorms, New Forest and North York Moors National Parks.
- **Paths for All** – a Scottish charity which champions everyday walking for a happier, healthier, greener Scotland.

- **Police Scotland** – the national police force of Scotland. It was formed in 2013, with the merger of eight regional police forces in Scotland, as well as the specialist services of the Scottish Police Services Authority, including the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency.
- **Quality Meat Scotland (QMS)** – an executive non-departmental public body of the Scottish Government. It promotes the red meat sector and markets the Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb brands.
- **Rural Housing Scotland (RHS)** – a national charity which supports community action on rural housing issues by providing practical support for community-led housing initiatives and campaigning to secure more affordable housing in rural Scotland.
- **Scottish Enterprise (SE)** – a non-departmental public body of the Scottish Government which encourages economic development, enterprise, innovation and investment in business.
- **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)** – the national fire and rescue service of Scotland. It was formed by the merger of eight regional fire services in the country on 1 April 2013.
- **Scottish Forestry (SF)** – is the public body responsible for forestry regulation, policy and support to private landowners in Scotland. It was formed on 1 April 2019, to take over some of the responsibilities of Forestry Commission Scotland, which was dissolved.
- **Scottish Gamekeepers' Association (SGA)** – represents Scotland's gamekeepers, stalkers, ghillies, wildlife managers and rangers. The association represents and defends the interests of its members and promotes education and best practice in gamekeeping, highlighting the contribution its members make to Scotland's economy, environment, biodiversity and larder.
- **Scottish Land and Estates (SLE)** – champions and supports rural businesses that provide economic, social and environmental benefit to the countryside. From campsites to community owners and country estates, its members represent a diverse community passionate in promoting rural Scotland.
- **Scottish Land Commission (SLC)** – a non-departmental public body working to create a Scotland where everybody can benefit from the ownership and use of the nation's land and buildings. The Commission works with a wide range of stakeholders to stimulate fresh thinking, support change on the ground and, where appropriate, make recommendations to Scottish Ministers for legislative and policy change.
- **Scottish Land Fund** – supports rural and urban communities to become more resilient and sustainable through the ownership and management of land and land assets. Funded by the Scottish Government and delivered in partnership by The National Lottery Community Fund and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, it offers grants of up to £1 million to help communities take ownership of the land and buildings that matter to them, as well as practical support to develop their aspirations into viable projects.
- **Scottish Water** – Scottish Water is a statutory corporation that provides water and sewerage services across Scotland. It is accountable to the public through the Scottish Government.
- **Skills Development Scotland (SDS)** – the national skills agency of Scotland, helping people achieve career success and supporting businesses with their goals and growth.

- **Sustrans** – a UK walking and cycling charity, and the custodian of the National Cycle Network. Its flagship project is the National Cycle Network, which has created 12,763 miles of signed cycle routes throughout the UK, including 5,273 miles of traffic-free paths.
- **Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership (Tactran)** – the Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership (Tactran) aims to deliver a socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable transport system that promotes the health and wellbeing of all citizens.
- **Transport Scotland** – the national transport agency for Scotland, delivering the Scottish Government's vision for transport.
- **VisitScotland (VS)** – the national tourism organisation for Scotland. Their main aim is to contribute significantly to the advancement of Scottish tourism by giving it a presence in the global marketplace and benefiting the whole of Scotland.
- **Voluntary Action in Badenoch and Strathspey (VABS)** – a local organisation whose mission is to support third sector organisations (community and voluntary groups, social enterprises) throughout Badenoch and Strathspey. VABS is part of the Highland Third Sector Interface and has offices in Grantown on Spey.
- **Volunteer Cairngorms** – run by the Park Authority, Volunteer Cairngorms supports and develops volunteering opportunities for nature and the environment across the National Park.
- **Wellbeing Economy Alliance Scotland (WEAll)** – a collaboration of organisations, alliances, movements and individuals working towards a wellbeing economy, delivering human and ecological wellbeing.
- **Wildlife Estates Scotland (WES)** – an initiative, led by Scottish Land and Estates, which aims to promote the best habitat and wildlife management practices, build recognition and raise standards through the introduction of an objective accreditation system.
- **Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS)** – a not-for-profit environmental organisation, funded by the Scottish Government and European Regional Development Fund, Zero Waste Scotland exists to lead Scotland to use products and resources responsibly. Using evidence and insight, they inform policy and motivate individuals and businesses to embrace the environmental, economic and social benefits of a circular economy.



Image of three cyclists exploring Corrie Fee in Glen Clova by Luigi Di Pasquale / VisitScotland

