

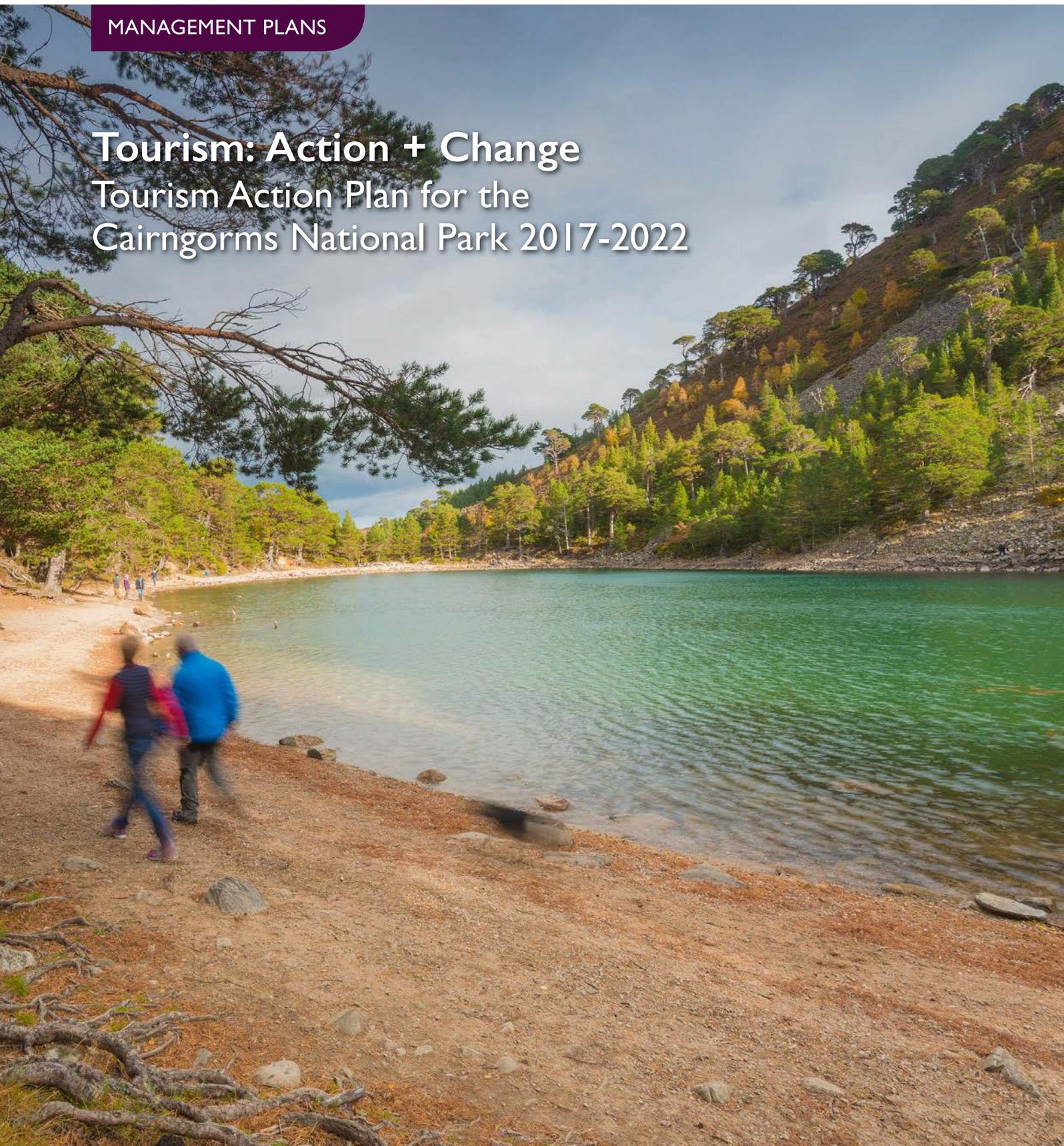


**Cairngorms**  
NATIONAL PARK  
Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh

MANAGEMENT PLANS

# Tourism: Action + Change

## Tourism Action Plan for the Cairngorms National Park 2017-2022



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## Foreword

It is not hard to see why people choose to visit the Cairngorms National Park. It is an awe-inspiring landscape with outstanding wildlife and a great range of activities and adventures on offer. Along with these great opportunities to enjoy the place comes a huge responsibility for everyone involved, to care for and protect the very assets that attract people to come here.

Tourism is incredibly valuable to the Cairngorms National Park accounting for nearly a third of the economy. Feedback from our visitors tells us that we are doing well in managing the area but there is scope for improvement, particularly in the consistency of the visitor experience. Making improvements could turn the reputation of the destination from very good to truly excellent.

A great deal has been achieved over the last 14 years since the National Park was established and now it is the time to focus our attention on a refined list of actions to address those issues and opportunities that can make a real difference to the area.

The Action Plan has been developed in partnership with a range of public, private and voluntary organisations including the Cairngorms Business Partnership, VisitAberdeenshire and Moray Speyside Tourism. All of the partners will be fundamental to the success of this Plan and many will take direct responsibility for the delivery of the actions. By delivering these actions, we can work towards the vision of the area becoming an outstanding National Park which inspires visitors, protects our natural environment, and helps businesses and communities prosper.

**Paul Easto, Cairngorms National Park Authority Board member and Chair, Cairngorms Tourism Partnership**



## Facal-toisich

Chan eil e duilich a thuigse carson a tha daoine a' tadhal air Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh. Tha i na h-àrainneachd iongantach le beartas bheathaichean, thachartasan agus thursan rim faighinn innte. A' dol maille ris na cothroman seo, tha dleastanas air a h-uile duine againn coimhead às dèidh na pàirce agus nan rudan a tha a' tàladh dhaoine thuice.

Tha turasachd gu math cudromach dhan Pàirc Nàiseanta; 's i an tritheamh cuid de dh'eaconamaidh na sgìre. Tha beachdan luchd-tadhail ag innse gu bheil iad riaraichte leis an dòigh sa bheil sinn a' làimhseachadh na pàirce, ach gu bheil cothroman ann airson gnothaichean a leasachadh; chum is gum bi gach turas chun na pàirce a cheart cho tlachdmhor a h-uile uair a thig duine a thadhail oirre. Le corra leasachadh ga dhèanamh oirre, faodaidh a' phàirc a dhol bho a bhith na 'àite math' gu bhith na 'àite mìorbhaileach'.

Tha sinn air adhartas mòr a dhèanamh thairis air na 14 bliadhna bhon a chaidh a' phàirc a stèidheachadh agus tha thìde againn a-nise coimhead ris na duilgheadasan is cothroman a dh'fhaodas piseach mòr eile a thoirt air an sgìre.

Chaidh am plana-ghnìomha seo a dheasachadh ann an co-bhuinn ri measgachadh bhuidhnean poblach, prìobhaideach agus saor-thoileach; a' gabhail a-steach Com-pàirteachas Gnìomhachais a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh, Buidheann Turasachd Siorrachd Obar Dheathain agus Buidheann Turasachd Mhoireibh agus Taobh Abhainn Spè. Tha na buidhnean seo uile gu bhith gu math cudromach gus am plana a thoirt gu buil, le diofar bhuidhnean an urra ri diofar ghnìomhan. Le bhith a' coileanadh nan amasan seo, thèid ceumannan a ghabhail chum a' phàirc a dhèanamh na Pàirc Nàiseanta chliùiteach a tha a' toirt tlachd mhòr dha luchd-tadhail, a tha a' dìon na h-àrainneachd agus a tha a' cur taic ri gnìomhachasan agus coimhearsnachdan na sgìre.

**Paul Easto, ball bùird-stiùiridh Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh agus cathraiche air Com-pàirteachas Turasachd a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh**

## Tourism in the Cairngorms National Park



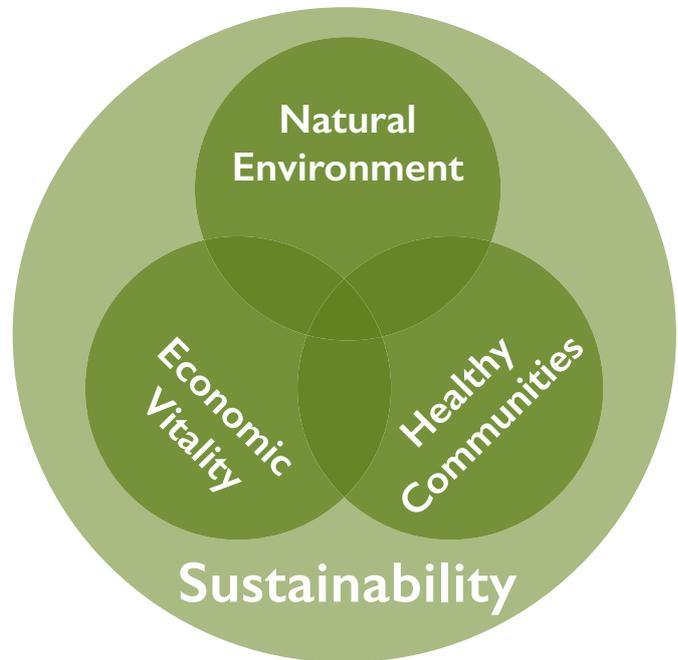
**Tourism in the Cairngorms National Park accounts for:**

**43%** of our jobs    **30%** of our economy<sup>1</sup>

The area appeals to visitors because of the fantastic natural assets, the great visitor infrastructure, and the strong visitor offering. We are proud to be the first National Park in the UK to be awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.

The status of the Cairngorms as a National Park provides a powerful opportunity for developing and promoting the area's tourism potential and ensuring that the destination is managed sustainably – environmentally, economically and socially.

<sup>1</sup>The Economic & Social Health of the Cairngorms National Park, Cogentsi, 2010



## Developing the Action Plan

This Action Plan has been developed by the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership (CTP) which brings together the key businesses and agencies involved in tourism.

The Plan sets out the priority actions over the next five years to deliver sustainable tourism in the Cairngorms National Park.

The first stage in developing this Plan was to review delivery against the previous Action Plan as well as the mid-term review of the National Tourism Strategy, 'Tourism Scotland 2020' and other regional tourism related plans and strategies. This process identified a range of issues, opportunities, and priorities for an updated Tourism Action Plan for the Cairngorms National Park which links to these wider strategies.

The CTP used this review and the feedback from the consultation on the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan to produce this Action Plan.

## Delivering the Action Plan

Delivery of the Action Plan will be coordinated by the CTP which brings together the key businesses and agencies involved in tourism. It is overseen by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Board who also oversee several other forums and groupings that are required for sustainable management of the National Park. CNPA staff will provide the essential linkages between these groups.

The Action Plan will be prioritised for delivery by the CTP on an annual basis with lead partners agreed for each action. These lead partners will coordinate delivery groups for each action as appropriate and report back to the CTP on progress. Linkages between the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership and those partnerships and groups, delivering related plans and strategies will be essential to its success. These include:

- Cairngorms Nature Partnership
- Active Cairngorms Partnership
- Association of Cairngorms Communities and Local Action Group



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## Managing the Cairngorms National Park

The overall management plan for the National Park is the National Park Partnership Plan. It is prepared every five years, approved by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Board and signed off by Scottish Government Ministers.

The Partnership Plan sets the long-term Vision and the high level Outcomes for the Park and guides how all the partners will work together to ensure that the four aims of the National Park are achieved in a coordinated way.

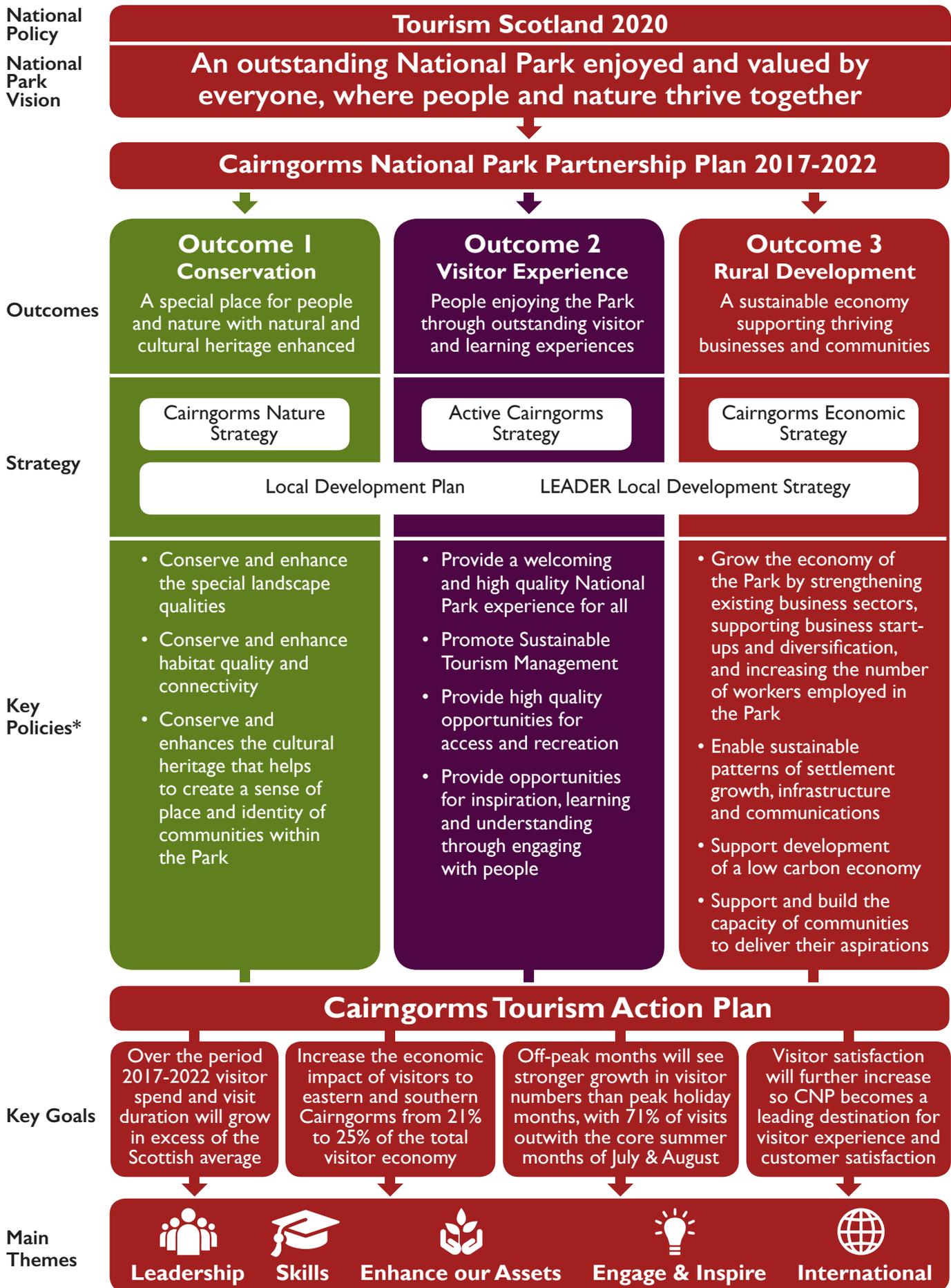
To translate that work into practical action a number of Strategies and Action Plans are prepared on a rolling basis. These set out a combination of spatial policies, work programmes and projects.

Tourism, by its very nature, touches on many aspects of the management of the Park. To take a truly sustainable approach all this work has to be considered together – the links and relation to other work are shown in the Strategic Overview on the following page.



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# Strategic Overview



\*For full policy context, see the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022 at [www.cairngorms.co.uk](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk)



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## Making a Change

The Cairngorms Tourism Partnership (CTP) brings together the key businesses, organisations, and agencies involved in tourism in the Cairngorms National Park. The partners will prioritise action on an annual basis, lead delivery, and be accountable for and monitor change over the five year period of the Plan.

A lead partner has been agreed for each action in this Plan and will be responsible for leading and reporting on delivery against these actions. These lead partners will be supported by CTP members (and others as appropriate) to develop and oversee a delivery plan for each action.

### Theme 1 – Leadership



#### Overview

Effective leadership is fundamental in ensuring the delivery of sustainable tourism and a growing visitor economy in the Cairngorms National Park. The Cairngorms Tourism Partnership was established in 2015 bringing together business and public sector partners to support delivery of the previous Tourism Action Plan. The CTP will be fundamental in ensuring that **Cairngorms Tourism: Action + Change** delivers results.

More information about the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership and its members can be found at [www.cairngorms.co.uk](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk)

#### Actions

#### Lead Partner

1. Secure and build on the progress made by the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership (CTP) to ensure effective delivery and accountability of the Tourism Action Plan.

Cairngorms Tourism Partnership (CTP) Chair

2. Ensure the Action Plan is industry-led and has meaningful buy-in from businesses, communities and the public sector.

CTP Members

## Theme 2 – Skills



### Overview

People are at the heart of the visitor economy and considerable opportunity exists to further enhance the experience of customers to the Park. At the same time employment in the tourism sector is often perceived as being poorly paid, unskilled, and short term. As a result, many businesses find it difficult to recruit and/or retain staff to deliver the outstanding customer experience we all aspire to. Over the five years we want to see a concerted effort to promote skills through staff training and support.

### Actions

3. Secure partnerships with further and higher education organisations to develop education initiatives which support the growth of tourism and the hospitality sector as a career path.
4. Deliver business support and staff training programmes to enable continued development of our tourism businesses with a particular focus on digital capability.

### Lead Partner

CTP

Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP)

## Theme 3 – Enhance our Assets



### Overview

The Cairngorms National Park is already the most important single area in the UK for nature conservation – it is of European and global importance. The quality, variety and extent of species and habitats are exceptional, many of which are internationally rare and all are set within high-quality landscapes. This is complemented by a rich cultural heritage and sits alongside our extensive investment over recent years in path networks and visitor infrastructure. Over the next five years there is a need to further develop, enhance and promote our strategic assets.

### Actions

5. Pilot a 'Total Quality Destination Approach' to visitor infrastructure and enhancing the visitor experience and identify opportunities for investment and development of key assets into outstanding visitor experiences.
6. Developing and enhancing key strategic assets and working to turn these assets into outstanding visitor experiences with a focus on:
  - Roads: Snow Roads Scenic Route and A9
  - Paths: Speyside Way and Deeside Way
  - Areas: Cairngorm & Glenmore and Tomintoul & Glenlivet
  - Activities: Cycling and Low Level Walking
7. Develop an approach to enable businesses, visitors, and communities to engage in the management and maintenance of the natural assets and visitor infrastructure through interpretation, volunteering opportunities and donations.

### Lead Partner

VisitScotland (VS)

CBP and Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA)

CNPA and CBP

## Theme 4 – Engage and Inspire



### Overview

One of only two National Parks in Scotland, the Cairngorms National Park is a very special place. Whilst the Cairngorms is a destination for visitors in its own right, it is also an experience and an attraction for visitors to Scotland and the UK as a whole, whether as a day trip or overnight stay. Over the Plan period we want to develop the potential of the National Park brand to attract visitors, encourage them to stay longer, to enjoy the Park without damaging it and to invest in the area.

### Actions

8. Develop and deliver a programme of training and tools for businesses and communities to engage them with the National Park as a brand and to enable them, in turn, to engage our visitors and get involved in effective and collaborative marketing activity.

### Lead Partner

CTP

9. Develop the Cairngorms National Park as an integral part of the 'iKnow Scotland' initiative both at a local, regional, and national level and deliver an effective network of visitor information points and targeted marketing activity based on the Cairngorms National Park Regional Marketing Strategy.

VS and CNPA



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## Theme 5 – International



### Overview

National Parks are an internationally recognised brand. Research tells us that the status of the Cairngorms as a National Park is increasingly important in influencing the decision of our visitors and in particular our overseas visitors, to come here (Source: Visitor Survey). International visitors are more likely to stay longer and spend more than domestic visitors therefore growing the visitor economy without necessarily growing the visitor numbers and pressures. International markets are a key component of the growth strategy for Scotland and over the Plan period we want to see the linkages to National Parks made more strongly.

### Actions

10. Identify key target international growth markets for the Cairngorms National Park and;

- develop marketing activity to target these markets; and,
- work with businesses and partners to ensure the visitor experience delivers for these groups.

### Lead Partner

VS and CNPA

## Monitoring and Review

The Cairngorms National Park Authority Board will agree a set of indicators for delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan. These are monitored over the five year period of the Plan and will be utilised by the CTP to measure progress. In addition, the CTP will directly monitor and report on progress on each theme and action within the Action Plan. The CTP will also monitor progress against each of the three key goals identified for the Tourism Action Plan.



© David Gowans

### Cairngorms Tourism Action Plan Monitoring

Key Goals	Over the period 2017-2022 visitor spend and visit duration will grow in excess of the Scottish average	Increase the economic impact of visitors to eastern and southern Cairngorms from 21% to 25% of the total visitor economy	Off-peak months will see stronger growth in visitor numbers than peak holiday months, with 71% of visits outwith the core summer months of July & August	Visitor satisfaction will further increase so CNP becomes a leading destination for visitor experience and customer satisfaction
Data Source	STEAM (Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor)*			Cairngorms National Park Visitor Survey
Frequency	Annual	Annual	Annual	Every 5 years
Baseline	*VisitScotland are currently tendering for a Scotland-wide volume and value tourism model	2015 STEAM figures 'Rest of Park' has 34% visitor numbers, 23% visitor days and 21% economic impact	2015 STEAM figures: Sept-June 70.15% visitor numbers 71.39% visitor days	Visitor Survey 2014/15 Overall visitor satisfaction: 8.76 / 10

### Membership of the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership

Public Sector Representation	Destination Management Organisations	Private Sector and NGOs
Aberdeenshire Council	Cairngorms Business Partnership	Atholl Estates
Cairngorms National Park Authority	Moray Speyside Tourism	Balmoral Estate
Highland Council	VisitAberdeenshire	Glenlivet Distillery
Highlands and Islands Enterprise		Landmark Visitor Centre
VisitScotland		Natural Retreats
		Royal Society for Protection of Birds
		Voluntary Action in Badenoch & Strathspey

# Our Visitors

**1.7** million  
visitors  
every year

## Here to Help

There are a number of visitor information centres and ranger bases throughout the Park who can help you plan and make the most of your visit!

**98%**

YOUR word of mouth is very important!  
visitors come on recommendation from family and friends.



**54%** from Scotland



**25%**

elsewhere in the UK



**21%**

from overseas



Most are in family groups of all ages

**91%**



of visitors know they are in a National park

**79%**



of businesses said National Park status is good for business

**63%**



of overseas visitors said being a National Park was an important reason to visit

**47%**



were able to describe the Park brand

## What do our visitors want?

Visitors want quality, sustainable, authentic and distinctive experiences.

- SEE** breathtaking landscape and scenery
- DISCOVER** lots of new and interesting things
- ENJOY** a range of outdoor activities
- RELAX** and experience unspoilt nature
- BE FASCINATED** by history and culture

SOURCE: VISITSCOTLAND

“When our company rebranded as the Cairngorm Brewery it was the best decision we ever made... the Brand reinforces the natural qualities of our award winning beer!”

*Sam Fairclough*  
Cairngorm Brewery

“When on holiday...we need lots of space and lots of outdoor activities”.

Visitor

Make it Yours

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



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