



The Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum

Title: Paper 2- Active Cairngorms Action Plan Delivery Update

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Purpose

LOAF Members are asked to:

- a) Note the progress towards delivery of the objectives contained within the Active Cairngorms Action Plan
- b) Comment and advise on any matters relevant to the delivery of the Active Cairngorms Action Plan.

Background

The Active Cairngorms Action Plan is one of a series of plans that sit below the National Park Partnership Plan and describe specific activities that will be undertaken by the Park Authority to support the delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan objectives. The Active Cairngorms Action Plan complements the Sustainable Tourism and Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plans, which collectively describe the Park Authority and partners work in relation to the tourism industry and the management of visitor impacts on the Park.

Active Cairngorms Action Plan Progress

Appendix 1 provides an update on progress towards each of the objectives included within the plan. Following the structure of the plan itself, these updates are separated into sections reflecting the seven priority areas for action; -

1. Managing for visitors
2. Minimising impacts on sensitive species and habitats
3. Ranger services
4. Public health in the outdoors
5. Volunteer Cairngorms
6. Youth and outdoor learning
7. Paths, trails and outdoor access duties

Annex 1- Active Cairngorms Action Plan Delivery



Managing for visitors	Key measurable outputs	Delivery period	Notes on 2024 delivery
Develop the Managing for Visitors Group to bring together key public sector partners, land managers and businesses and participate in national arrangements.	Meetings delivered	Ongoing	Fortnightly meetings held between April and October moving to monthly meeting held in the winter.
Influence visitor behaviour through a series of initiatives that include:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting messaging that visitors should 'tread lightly' as the main means of promoting the Scottish Outdoor Access Code in the National Park 	Updated Tread lightly in the Park concertina leaflet	Ongoing	Tread lightly leaflet re-printed and Fire leaflet update, both in circulation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing clear guidance on recreational activities such as wild camping and water sports 	Updated informal camping advice note Water users advice published	Water sports - March 24. Camping - May 25	Water access guidance note written, consulted on and published.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing standard signage for key messages that promote the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and supporting land managers to use signs to help them promote responsible access 	Caper and dogs on lead signs distributed Updated SOAC posters.	Caper signs - end Feb 24. SOAC posters - ongoing.	New Caper sensitive site sign produced and distributed to relevant land managers in Mar 24.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a wide range of audiences are engaged with through the use of different platforms, accessible formats, and different languages 	Tread lightly messaging available in foreign languages	Ongoing	Tread Lightly leaflet available in 10 languages - available to download from National Park website.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working well with Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to reduce rural crime and ensure appropriate enforcement measures are in place 	Standard operating procedures agreed with all relevant forces	Ongoing	Police Patrols with rangers organised in Glenmore and Deeside with operational orders written for each Police division involved. Guidance for ranger services produced partnership with Police Scotland on when and



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			how to escalate incidents to 101 and 999.
Develop dedicated campaigns for new audiences in partnership with partners to positively influence specific visitor behaviours such as fires, toileting and roadside or overnight parking	Revised and update Cairngorms Business partnership SOAC materials	2026/2027	To be developed
Consult on options around fire byelaws for the National Park [inclusion in plan subject to Board decision in Nov 23]	10 week public consultation completed	2024/2025	Initial consultation completed spring 2024. Further consultation on wording under way in autumn 2024
Investigate the viability of a visitor welcome app for the Cairngorms National Park, providing guidance to visitors and giving real-time data on visitor distribution	Visitor facing app developed	March 2026-March 2027	Linked to delivery of new website which is under development
Develop our capability to collect and analyse information about visitor distribution and behaviour spatially using digital technology.	Annual visitor data report published	2025/2026	To be developed
Deliver a programme to support best practice within the land management sector on safeguarding access rights to reduce access obstructions	2 events delivered	2026/2027	To be developed
Minimising impacts on sensitive species and habitats			
Develop and utilise methods for measuring the impact of disturbance on sensitive habitats and species – to be used to build a strong evidence base to help	Monitoring and evaluation framework in place	April 2025-March 2026	To be developed



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inform future management measures			
Utilise a spatial plan to prioritise the management of reductions in recreational disturbance to species and habitats	Map published	April 2024-March 2025	Discussions underway with key partners to identify key management measures for sensitive sites.
Reduce the impact of recreation on ground-nesting birds by implementing site-specific actions and initiatives with land managers	Management agreements in place	Ongoing	Ranger patrols undertaken on identified sensitive sites
Develop and deliver “Dog Friendly Cairngorms” package for the National Park including:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting communities to create and develop dog walking spaces to meet the needs of dogs and reduce pressure on sensitive areas for wildlife. 	Boat of Garten pilot delivered 2 community dog walking initiatives delivered	2025-2028	Boat of Garten community dog walking pilot completed in October 2024. Community campaign delivered based on behaviour science principles. Positive changes witnessed ie more dogs on leads and improved Caper breeding indicators. Pilot to continue with phase II to respond to feedback, include work with wider audiences / nearby sites and further investigation of dog walking space.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build knowledge and support by developing an active community of dog owners with 	Community dog walking group in place	2025-2028	To be developed



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information and understanding.			
Develop further with users best practice for bikes including supporting the delivery of the Mountain Biking Recreation Management Plan for Badenoch and Strathspey	Trail Feathers development plan delivered	Ongoing	Mapping of informal trails on sensitive sites in Aberdeenshire nearing completion. Will be used to develop a management plan going forward
Update guidance on outdoor events to promote best practice	Updated guidance published	2025	To be developed
Work with wildlife and activity guides to develop specific local training and codes of conduct for sensitive sites and species e.g., twin flower, beavers, raptors and leks.	Code of conduct produced Training sessions run	Ongoing	Access officer presented to wildlife / activity guides at two Beaver training sessions (April 2024). Lek it Be campaign ran in Spring with supporting dawn ranger patrols.
Ranger Services			
Coordinate and develop the family of ranger services to ensure coverage and deployment across the whole National Park and alignment with national arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of regional ranger groups and for each a schedule of meetings, training and work programmes. • Annual ranger get together. • Development of Ranger handbook and induction programme. 	Ongoing	3 regional ranger groups have been set up and have met 4 times this year. Meetings consist of site visits and sharing best practice, with formal meetings covering training, key messages, partnership working and communications.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent data collection across services to feed into national reporting programmes. 		
<p>Develop the Ranger Managers Group that brings together public sector and site-specific ranger services to ensure a coordinated approach and to feed into the national arrangements for rangers.</p>	<p>Annual managers meeting. Involvement in agendas and minutes from regional ranger group meetings and annual get-together</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>Update newsletter to go to ranger managers in November 2024 detailing activity through the year and plans going forward.</p>
<p>Develop the programme of training to develop best practice and a committed and skilled workforce</p>	<p>CNP Family of Ranger Services annual training programme, shaped from regional ranger groups and the core competencies of a professional ranger as identified by SCRA.</p>	<p>March 2025- March 2026</p>	<p>Training delivered to family of rangers this season (Mar-Oct) - Police Scotland, Scottish fire and rescue Service, safe and Sound conflict management, Listen up Speak Up child protection training.</p>
<p>Develop skills and new career pathways to help people into employment with ranger services</p>	<p>Trainee ranger training programme developed promoting this and other</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>4 trainee rangers completed a 3 month traineeship in 2024, with training and skills delivered through professional bodies and</p>



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	programmes ran by partners.		partner ranger services across the National Park.
Public Health and the Outdoors			
Embed pathways to green health and nature within GP Practices, social care and education	Number of referrals via GP and self-referral options	2024-2029	Total referrals to date - 50 (Oct 2024), with 62% uptake. Ongoing 6-monthly meetings with GP Practices and Health & Social Care Teams delivered to promote project.
Make Green Health opportunities more visible:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain up-to-date information for green health opportunities and promote widely within communities: 	Monthly What's On for B&S Network Content published on THTN Website	2024-2029	Posters and leaflets have been made for communities, primary care (Vision users) and secondary care NHS staff. Finalised by Comms team (Oct 2024) and shared more widely with NHS Highland comms team.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop "green health" information on the CNPA website: 	Green Health web page	April 2025 to March 2026	Website content created for new website launch.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Green Health Week 	Green Health Week activities delivered	ongoing	Completed May 2024. Comms plan and programme to be developed for May 2025.
Nurture strong community networks that will provide, and support access to, recreational opportunities for wellbeing:			



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop Green Health opportunities with key players: 	<p>Continued email correspondence to the Badenoch and Strathspey Green Health Network with monthly event updates, quarterly in-person meetings, and promotion/funding of appropriate training.</p>	<p>2024-2029</p>	<p>Spring network meeting held in March 2024 hosted by Trail Therapy/Cairngorm Confidence Outdoors. Summer network meeting held in August 2024, hosted by Grantown Hub. Winter network meeting planned for December 2024. Training needs identified: Mental Health First Aid Training and funding guidance. Monthly newsletter issued to network. Continue to identify and add new members to the network (60+ members Oct 2024).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Ranger Services to integrate Green Health into the wider learning and engagement work (e.g. school visits, Junior Rangers etc). 	<p>Collaborative projects and varied pathways to Green Health</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>In progress. Challenges with capacity to support individual young people (unless with a parent/guardian or carer). Collaborative work with Volunteer Cairngorms to identify opportunities for referrals and increase provision.</p>
<p>Liaise with specific community support organisations to support particular groups, e.g., carers and young carers, ethnic minorities, seasonal workers, etc</p>	<p>Ongoing - targeted support through Green Health Week</p>	<p>2024-2029</p>	<p>Green Health Week 2024 - identified specific groups to invite to events. Will apply similar method to GHW 2025.</p>



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Develop dementia-friendly walks in each community within the National Park	Number of Health Walks accredited as 'Dementia Friendly'	2024-2029	Dementia Friends online training will be offered to all Health Walk Leaders in November 2024 with a view to assessing interest in becoming Dementia Friendly accredited Health Walks. MW recently undertaken refresher training from Paths for All in Dementia Friendly Health Walk Leader training ready to train volunteers. Staff from Badaguish Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre have begun attending Health Walks with clients
Develop and promote a health walks programme in each community of the Park	Number of Health Walks supported	2024-2029	In the process of establishing a new Health Walk in Kinraig: New leader identified and trained, aiming to launch in Spring 2025. Trialling new approach to Health Walk delivery in partnership with the Highland Wildlife Park. Continuing to support 11 existing Health Walks across the National Park area with training, publicity, guidance and celebration
Develop targeted promotion activities for those living sedentary lifestyles (for example, Green Health Week, World Mental Health day, Nature Festival etc,) to	Green Health Week/ Requires support from Comms	2024 - 2029	Comms plan for 2025 being developed with Cairngorms2030.



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deliver and promote Green Health opportunities.			
Volunteer Cairngorms			
Increase the number of volunteer rangers to meet the needs of partners and the CNPA:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of recruitment programmes 	Volunteer Ranger recruitment takes place at least annually	2024-2029	New volunteers started early 2024. Next Volunteer Ranger intake will be late 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and evaluate the demand and need of partners who provide opportunities for Volunteer Rangers: 	Ongoing partnership reviews with existing partners. Engagement with new potential partners	2024-2029	Currently undertaking annual review of Volunteer Ranger involvement with partners across the National Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain high quality volunteer management and the Volunteer Cairngorms portal: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities on CERVIS portal for VRs Ongoing surveys and feedback to monitor quality of volunteer experience 	2024-2029	4234 hours of VR activities in 2024 (as of 21 October) across 21 partner organisations/landowners. 896 hours of VR training delivered. Trialled VR-led training, with demand for more from VRs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and deliver high quality Volunteer Ranger Programme and monitor capacity of CNPA to deliver it. 			



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<p>Develop and manage the Volunteer Experience Programme to specifically encourage new and under-represented groups into volunteering (e.g. carers and young carers, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ people, disability audiences, seasonal workers, etc)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement groups each year to support VEP visits 	<p>2024-2029</p>	<p>4 separate groups (1 new) have been involved in the VEP in 2024, with 169 participant places filled.</p>
<p>Increase volunteering opportunities linked to green health activities, and support a vibrant community of volunteer Health Walk Leaders across the Park to deliver a Health Walks Programme with a health walk in every community</p>	<p>Support to communities seeking to develop their own green health opportunities</p>	<p>2024-2029</p>	<p>To be developed</p>
<p>Promote awareness of environmental volunteering:</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertising opportunities through the Volunteer Cairngorms portal 	<p>Grow the number of partners and opportunities advertised on the portal</p>	<p>2024-2029</p>	<p>Opportunities - both new and existing - continue to be advertised through the CERVIS portal for the public. 2166 volunteering hours delivered through Volunteer Cairngorms in 2024 (as of 21 October) across 15 separate organisations/landowners</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing / supporting a series of awareness/ recruitment events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events held 	<p>2024-2029</p>	<p>To be developed</p>



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting value of environmental volunteering through media outlets. 	Communications (with comms support) through CNPA and Volunteer Cairngorms channels	2024-2029	Communications continue to be ongoing through CNPA (social media and Cairn magazine) and Volunteer Cairngorms channels (newsletter). Specific volunteering opportunities offered as part of UK-wide National Parks Big Weekend of Volunteering with associated collaborative publicity with NPUK
Create a Cairngorms Litter Network to coordinate and encourage community-based litter picking and support relevant littering awareness campaigns	Number of online meetings	2024-2029	To be developed
Young People and Outdoor Learning			
Promote and manage the use of the John Muir Award in the National Park to promote and inspire young people	Number of JMA delivered in schools and by outdoor centres	Ongoing on annual basis	Currently on hold until John Muir Trust decision on the future of the award, expected to be made in mid 2025
Deliver Junior Ranger programmes to six local secondary schools and monthly Junior Ranger activities in Badenoch and Strathspey and Deeside	6 JR schools programmes delivered 2 monthly programmes delivered	Ongoing on annual basis	256 Junior Rangers have taken part in 114 sessions through work with six local secondary schools and our monthly groups in Badenoch and Strathspey and Deeside. 38 partners, including 17 Ranger services, have delivered a mix of practical conservation, ecological monitoring,



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			land management, SOAC and creative activities. A group of 15 Junior Rangers journeyed through the heart of the Cairngorms over three days immersing themselves in the natural environment and undertaking conservation activities.
Deliver education sessions for all schools in the National Park to promote Scottish Outdoor Access Code and outdoor learning	Number of sessions delivered to schools	Ongoing on annual basis	Ranger Team have delivered SOAC sessions to 292 pupils from Ballater Primary, Aboyne Primary, Speyside HS and Kingussie HS. Team have now set up programmes to deliver SOAC sessions to all the S1s annually at Kingussie and Speyside. A teachers' workshop was also delivered at Websters HS (Kirriemuir) in partnership with NatureScot. 15 teachers attended.
Collaborate with other public sector partners to deliver and develop national education and skills-development programmes	Attend national Scottish Government Outdoor Learning meetings	Ongoing on annual basis	Staff attending regular Scottish Government Outdoor Learning Group
Promote and manage the Cairngorms National Park education travel grant which supports school and other education groups to access the Park	Number of travel grants awarded	Ongoing on annual basis	35 grants issued which break down into 10 x Secondary Schools, 23 x primary schools, and 2 x 'other' (Grampian Society for the Blind and Bad & Strath Mental Health Team).



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Develop and facilitate the Cairngorms Youth Action Team events programme	Deliver residentials, youth volunteering days and administer youth fund	Ongoing on annual basis	
Support continuing youth collaboration with other national parks, youth initiatives and events to share and celebrate best practice, e.g. through EUROPARC or Youth Parliament events	Participate in NPUK and EUROPARC youth development projects	Ongoing on annual basis	
Paths, trails and outdoor access		Plan	
Review and publish an updated Core Paths Plan by end of 2026	Community consultation undertaken Plan published	Consultation - 2025/2026 Plan published 2026	Project planning underway
Refresh the Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum to ensure it plays an active role in advising on all aspects of the Active Cairngorms Action Plan	New members recruited	2024-2025	LOAF group met in person for project visit in June, and two new members recruited to the group.
Develop more robust range of data-gathering tools as a basis for supporting visitor management and path investment priorities including:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a strategic review of monitoring at indicator sites (lowland paths, upland paths, trail-heads, core paths and Long Distances Routes) 	Audit of counters completed	2026-2027	To be developed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of people counters and other data gathering technologies to measure usage on key paths and car parks 	Review of ActiveXchange system and agreed way forward	2024-2025	ActiveXchange trialled in 2024 but with limited success so discontinued. Other options to be explored



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Promote path networks across the Park by:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining a suite of community path leaflets in paper and accessible digital formats 	All leaflets feature path grading Leaflets reviewed on 5 yearly cycle	Review and update 4 leaflets - 2024, 4 leaflets - 2025. 6 leaflets - 2026-2028.	Strathdon leaflet reviewed and published in collaboration with local path group. Review of Laggan and Dalwhinnie leaflets started likely to be completed in Spring 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting partners to deliver appropriate publications (e.g. Hill Tracks Leaflet) 	Updated Hill Tracks Leaflet	2027-2028	To be developed
Ensure paths around communities are well-signposted and waymarked with good community map boards in every community across the National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sign post plan developed Programme of sign replacements Walk panels installed in communities 	Speyside way sign posts - 2024-2025 Community replacements 2025-2028	Installation of new waymarking along Speyside Way from Aviemore to Park boundary (beyond Cromdale) underway. Expected to be completed by end of 2024.
Support and expand the number of community path groups to deliver path projects through funding, training and sharing best practice	Community path group training event delivered	2026-2027	Under development
Review the Upland Path Audit to identify investment priorities for the upland path network and develop innovative techniques to reduce upland path erosion	Revised upland path audit published	2025-2026	Under development
Expand the existing 'Adopt a path' scheme to promote volunteer-led approach to cover all upland paths in the Park	Increase from 47 upland paths to 50 upland paths	Ongoing	Under development