

# Working Draft Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan

## Foreword

*To be added*

## National Parks in Scotland

Scotland's National Parks are national assets. They are internationally recognised visitor destinations that showcase the very best of Scotland's environment.

Our National Parks can be models of sustainable rural development, generating growth, enhancing landscapes and biodiversity, supporting thriving communities and getting the best from our land. They are models of a collaborative approach to management delivering for people and place. The collective management of Scotland's National Parks contributes directly to the central purpose of the Scottish Government: *To focus the Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth*; and to the delivery of Scottish Government outcomes.

Scotland's National Parks share four aims 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.
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Both National Parks have a partnership plan which sets out the approach to managing each National Park, reflecting the special qualities, challenges and opportunities of each. The plans are therefore different but they share some basic principles that guide the management of both of Scotland's National Parks.

## National Park Principles

Our environment underpins delivery

Conserving and enhancing the environment is central to National Parks. This underpins delivery of all four aims and is integral to the sustainable development approaches needed to support communities and businesses to protect these areas for future generations.

Parks for All

National Parks are for people everywhere to enjoy. They should provide opportunities for all regardless of physical ability, age or income.

Trialling new approaches

National Parks are a real opportunity to trial new approaches beyond business as usual that meet the needs of these areas. They are geographical areas in which new approaches can be developed within a significant but discrete area that can then be rolled out across Scotland.

#### Tourism and visitor management

National Parks are national tourism assets that need sustainable approaches to visitor management, balancing the needs of visitors, communities and conservation to deliver high quality destinations.

#### Acting on climate change

As Scotland's largest designated landscapes, National Parks have a significant role to play in mitigating and adapting to climate change. National Parks have a large role to play, including sensitive renewable energy development, but this should not be carried out at the expense of the special qualities.

#### Partnership

National Parks are the responsibility of all, not just the National Park Authorities. Key public bodies should identify in their corporate plans how they contribute to delivering the National Park Plan and through that, Scottish Government outcomes.

## **1. Welcome to the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan**

This is the management plan for the Cairngorms National Park. It is a plan for all those with an interest in and responsibility for managing the National Park, not just the National Park Authority. This includes public bodies that are obliged to have regard to the plan in carrying out their functions, but also the private and voluntary sectors including businesses, land managers and communities who are integral to managing the Park.

These interests come together in a National Park Partnership and this plan identifies the direction and priorities to which partners agree to direct their effort and resources in the National Park over the next five years.

In particular the National Park Partnership Plan:

- Sets out the vision and over-arching strategy for managing the Park;
- Provides focus and priorities at a time of limited financial resources;
- Provides a strategic context for the Local Development Plan;
- Shows how the four aims of the National Park can be achieved together, benefiting people and place.

The plan is not about trying to capture everything that happens in the National Park. It sets out the strategic direction and priorities, identifying the things that we think will make the biggest contribution to a successful National Park over the coming years.

## **2. Our Vision for the Cairngorms National Park**

Our long-term vision for the Cairngorms National Park is:

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

We will see three outcomes achieved together:

- A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities;
- A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage enhanced;
- People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences.

Running through the whole plan is the ambition to become a low carbon National Park. This is a headline ambition for this area to play our part in delivering Scotland's climate change targets. This means responding and adapting to climate change and its practical implications for people and place, developing the opportunities of a low carbon economy and securing stewardship of the significant carbon stores locked into the land and forests of the Cairngorms.

### 3. Where we are now

The Cairngorms National Park is the UK's largest National Park at 4528 square kilometres, comprising about 6% of Scotland's land area.

#### ***Some facts and figures***

- About 17000 people live in the National Park. The population, including the proportion of 18-24 year olds, has been growing steadily since 2001.
- About 1.4 million people visit the National Park each year
- The National Park is home to 25% of the UK's threatened bird, animal and plant species
- Half of the area of the National Park is designated as being of European importance for nature conservation
- The National Park is centred on the largest area of arctic mountain landscape in the UK and contains the largest extent of semi-natural pine forest in the UK.
- Four of Scotland's five highest mountains are within the National Park.

#### ***The special qualities of the Cairngorms National Park***

##### **THE MOUNTAINS: UNIQUE & INFLUENCING**

There are no other mountains in Britain like the Cairngorms. Massive granite domes with corries and passes scooped out; broad rolling plateaux more like the arctic than the UK; nowhere else is consistently higher, colder or wilder. The mountains dominate the Park and have an effect on the way we live and the landscapes we live in.

##### **THE WILDLIFE: EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY AND VARIETY**

The National Park is a hotspot for British wildlife: a collection of very big, highly natural and well connected different types of habitat that are a wildlife stronghold for Britain's rare and endangered species.

##### **THE PEOPLE: LIFE AMONGST THE MOUNTAINS AND FORESTS**

The common experiences of life in and around the mountains, forests, moorlands and straths bring together people kept apart by the high mountains. People may be miles apart by road, go shopping to a different city and even have different words for the same things but we all share the challenges and joys of finding work, managing the land and living with the climate and the environment in the Cairngorms.

##### **RECREATION: ENJOYING THE WILDNESS & SPACE**

The National Park is Britain's wild heart: an accessible wilderness with a sense of remoteness and naturalness that inspires passion both in those who live here and those that visit. And lots of different people enjoy it in lots of different ways. The quality and variety of landscapes mean there's a huge range of activities, made exceptional because of their setting.

Further analysis of the special qualities can be found in a range of sources including:

- The Special Landscape Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park; Scottish Natural Heritage; Commissioned Report No. 375 (summary at Annex X)
- The Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Cairngorms Wildness Mapping (*web ref*)

The special qualities underpin the designation of the National Park and the delivery of all four aims together. All partners should seek to conserve and enhance the special qualities by applying the following principles.

### **Principles for conserving and enhancing the special qualities**

**Recognise the value of the special qualities to all** – the special qualities underpin the area’s designation as a National Park, but also its appeal as a visitor destination, a place to live and work, and much of the economy. Conserving and enhancing the special qualities is not a stand-alone action, but is integral to delivering all four aims of the National Park.

**Plan for change** – places change and evolve over time. The special qualities we value today are the result of long running changes in the past and that evolution should continue. Some change is unforeseen, at other times we actively seek to make change. We should plan for and actively manage change to ensure that the National Park continues to evolve while keeping what gives the area its special character.

**Think through the generations** – some kinds of change can have near immediate effect, whereas others may take years and possibly generations to have a noticeable effect. When planning for change we should look to achieving not only short term benefits but make longer-term changes that benefit our own and future generations.

**Think Local, National and International** – The national and international status of the National Park and its special qualities mean we have a responsibility to take account of the local, national and international interests in conserving and enhancing the special qualities.

**Valued by Many, managed by few** – The role of land managers with direct responsibility for conserving and enhancing the special qualities should be recognised, supported and communicated. Conserving and enhancing the special qualities needs active management.

**Think beyond the boundary** – the special qualities of the National Park are connected to and benefit the surrounding areas, as well as being influenced by what happens around the Park. Cross boundary effects of activities on the special qualities of the National Park should be considered in managing change both in and around the National Park.

**Use and share clear information** – clear, transparent and understandable information should be used and made available to all to guide planning, action and decisions affecting the special qualities.

## Challenges and Opportunities

### *Delivering the aims together*

The ongoing challenge in managing a successful National Park is the challenge of delivering all four aims together, as they were intended when set out by the Scottish Parliament. The Cairngorms National Park is a complex place, combining an internationally important environment with a fragile rural economy and a renowned visitor destination. This brings inevitable tensions, and it is the approach to resolving these tensions and achieving the aims collectively that underpins the purpose of the National Park designation.

Where there appears to the Park Authority to be a conflict between the aims of the Park, the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 requires that greater weight be given to conserving and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage. This is a sustainable development approach in action, which all partners should take to ensure that the environment, with which the economy and visitor experience is so interwoven, remains special for future generations.

### *The economy*

The Park's economy is based around a series of fragile sectors with relatively low wage structures. Tourism is a real strength, but compared with other parts of Scotland, it is a disproportionate part of the economy of the Park, in terms of value and employment, particularly in Badenoch and Strathspey. Farming, forestry and wild game are all also distinctive parts of the employment structure of the Park<sup>1</sup>.

The dominance of these sectors means that many of the people working in the Park are relatively worse off than people in other parts of Scotland. This has straightforward implications for the amount of money spent in the local economy by them, and for their ability to pay for necessities such as housing, transport and energy. It is exacerbated by the attractiveness of the Park as a place to move to by those who have generated wealth elsewhere.

The economy of the Park is also closely linked to surrounding areas, particularly the Inverness area and parts of Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen. It is estimated that as much as 20% of the working population of the Park commute to work in other places and that more than 15% of the workers in the Park commute to it from other places. The links with Inverness are particularly strong for commuters to the Park. Around 10% of workers in the Park live in the Inverness area.

### *Economic challenges and opportunities*

The long term challenge is to help develop a strong and sustainable economy within the Park that is resilient to future pressures, increases prosperity and opportunity for the people and communities who work and live here. Our definition of a sustainable economy is one characterised by: economic growth and development delivered within the limits of the environment, supporting the special qualities of the Park; a strong, healthy and just society; good governance and responsible use of science.

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<sup>1</sup> The Economic and Social Health of the Cairngorms National Park 2010, [www.cairngorms.co.uk](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk)

To get there we need to strengthen the existing sectors and businesses, as well as broaden the economic opportunities of the Park, encouraging new business sectors to start up and to grow. This growth and diversification needs to take place within the framework of special qualities of the Park, the natural systems and outstanding environment that make it a special place. It means careful planning and support for business that exploits the best opportunities and helps business deliver environmental sustainability.

In the short term, there are clear challenges over the next few years. Public sector finances will be constrained and private sector finances are likely to be constrained for the period of this plan, bringing real challenges for people and businesses in and around the Park. Increasing fuel, energy and other commodity prices impact the profitability and viability of business and living costs for everyone. This requires all sectors to work together to stimulate economic growth and secure the most effective investment in a period of change.

### ***Population***

The population of the National Park has grown since it was established in 2003. It was estimated to be around 15,500 people in 2003 and around 17,000 people in 2012. The growth in population has largely been in Badenoch & Strathspey, which has around three quarters of the total population of the Park, and has been driven by people moving to the area either to work or to retire.

Without the migration of people to the Park, the population would shrink and the proportion of older people would grow as young people leave the Park for work, education and training. The migration of people to the Park and to Badenoch and Strathspey in particular has helped to slow the overall ageing of the population, with new young workers and families replacing those who move away. In other parts of Park there has been less in migration (there are fewer jobs and fewer homes in these areas) and it is likely that the populations are ageing more than in Badenoch and Strathspey.

### ***Population challenges and opportunities***

A challenge for much of rural Scotland is how to slow the loss of young people and workers from rural areas towards the city regions. Economies need people to work, and active communities have a mix of people of different ages, skills and interests.

The economy of the Park and the communities of the Park need working age people. If the economy is to grow, the Park needs to at least maintain the numbers of working age people and probably increase their numbers. There are two challenges for the Park. The first is how to slow the migration of young people from the Park. That means providing more and better opportunities to train, develop, work and live in the area in ways that encourage them to stay. The second challenge is how to attract workers to come to or to return to the Park. That also means providing opportunities to work and live in the area that are attractive to them.

### ***Habitats and species***

The National Park is home to rare habitats, particularly Caledonian pine woodland and arctic-alpine habitats, and includes an important proportion of Scotland's moorland habitats. The Park is also home to over a quarter of the UK's rare and threatened species. For some, including wading birds, invertebrates, and Scottish wildcat, it is the most important area in

the UK, Perhaps the most striking statistic is that Badenoch and Strathspey holds about 80% of the UK capercaillie population.

Over half of the area of the National Park is designated through the Natura 2000 network as being of European importance for specific nature conservation interests. These range from river systems flowing through the Park to forests, moorland and the highest arctic-like summits, and from species such as salmon and otter, to golden eagle and capercaillie.

### ***Habitats and species challenges and opportunities***

The long-term challenge is to enhance the habitats and species of the Cairngorms that are so integral to its special qualities, while also maintaining the socio-economic benefits delivered through land management. In the short-term there are also challenges facing particular species, such as capercaillie, for which innovative management approaches, both to habitat management and managing impacts from recreation and other pressures are needed.

The high proportion of land designated through national and European networks brings a particular focus to management and there remains a significant challenge to bring all these sites into favourable condition. The extent of designations itself also poses longer-term challenges to our ability to manage change and adaptation in habitats and species and to managing the interaction of different habitat types that are for different reasons important but where expansion of one is inevitably at the expense of another – for example montane woodland and moorland.

Taking an ecosystems approach to management brings opportunities to address these longer-term challenges, manage natural systems as a whole, work across ownership boundaries and also to engage support for the value of the natural systems of the Cairngorms.

### ***Climate change and weather events***

*To be added incl:*

- *Climate trends*
- *Wintersports*
- *Flood risk*
- *Habitat and species resilience*
- *Carbon storagelland management*



#### 4. Our Long Term Direction

Given the context and challenges facing the Park, we set out three long term outcomes that we want to achieve which will guide our work in the long and short term to deliver our vision for the Park:



**A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities means that by 2030:**

1. The special qualities of the Park will have stimulated **growth and diversification in the economy** and the Park will be an economic asset to the wider regional economy.
2. There will be **fast and reliable IT and telecommunications** as well as **fast, safe transport links** from the Park to other parts of Scotland that meet the needs of residents, visitors and business.
3. There will be **more jobs and a wider range of employment opportunities** for people in the National Park. People will be able to develop their skills from school onwards to meet their own and business needs.
4. Households and businesses will be successfully **adapting to a low carbon economy**: minimising energy use, waste and greenhouse gas emissions, and increasing their environmental sustainability. Enough renewable energy will be generated in the Park to power most households and businesses.
5. There will be **thriving and sustainable communities** throughout the Park that are confident to share their ideas, experience and culture in actively shaping their own future and enjoying a sense of ownership of the National Park.
6. The **workforce of the Park will have grown**; Young people will find it easier to train and to work in the Park; to return to the Park; and the Park will continue to attract workers.
7. People working in Park will find it easier to **access housing that meets their needs**.
8. Many people living in the Park and visiting it will save money and maintain their health by **using off-road routes to travel** between many communities and places in the Park instead of private car.
9. New development will be as sustainable as possible and **good design** that fits the landscapes and heritage of the Park will be standard. Older buildings and development will be adapting to modern standards of efficiency and design thought improvements and renovations.

**A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage enhanced means that by 2030:**

1. The distinct character of the Cairngorms **landscape** and its diverse mix of mountains, straths, glens, forests and farmland will continue to be conserved and enhanced, shaped by natural processes and positive management.
2. The sense of **wildness**, particularly in the high montane areas, will be enhanced and renowned as a particular special quality of the area that continues to be enjoyed by many.
3. The Park will continue to have a rich **biodiversity** which will be better connected and able to adapt to a changing climate. Areas of national and international importance will be exemplars of good management, set within a broader network of well managed habitats.
4. The important **geodiversity** record in the Park will be well managed and conserved.
5. The importance of natural systems to maintaining what we need and value in the Park will be better understood and will lead to better management to maintain healthy **ecosystems** and that benefits they provide us with.
6. There will continue to be an **active and productive land management** sector that conserves and enhances the special qualities; produces high quality local and seasonal food; timber and woodfuel; and helps mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.
7. The **built heritage** of the Park will be safeguarded and adapting to changed uses and needs. New buildings will complement or enhance the setting of older buildings, including the settlement pattern and character.
8. The **archaeological evidence and material records** of previous generations will be well recorded, cared for and safeguarded in the most appropriate ways. It will be easy for communities and visitors to discover the significance and importance of past ways of life in the Park.
9. The **cultures and traditions** associated with the people and communities of the Park will be well recognised and continue to evolve as part of a living culture that secures tomorrow's cultural heritage.

**People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences means that by 2030:**

1. The Cairngorms National Park will be **renowned** in Scotland and internationally as a protected area and will be an important part of Scotland's national identity.
2. The Cairngorms National Park will be an internationally recognised **world class sustainable tourism destination** that consistently exceeds residents' and visitors' expectations in terms of quality of environment, services and experience.
3. There will continue to be an excellent and integrated network of routes to enjoy **outdoor access** across the Park that meets the needs of residents and visitors.
4. There will be an even higher quality and increased range of **outdoor recreation** activities available and accessible to a wider range of people of all abilities to enjoy the Park.
5. People enjoying outdoor access and recreation in the Park, as well as those who manage the Park will understand **responsible behaviour**, and why it supports the enjoyment and management of the Park by all.

6. **Interpretation** of the National Park will be of an internationally high standard, helping people to understand and enjoy the area by revealing the significance and meaning of the National Park and its special qualities.
7. The Park will be a significant **national learning resource** that provides opportunities to develop and to learn from school onwards about the special qualities, sustainable development, and its special management needs.
8. The Park will be a focus for **research and knowledge exchange** that provides useful information to those who manage the Park and work in it, leading to better management and more sustainable business and communities.

## 5. Delivery

The National Park Partnership Plan will not be delivered in isolation. Delivery will be an integral part of the partners' wider contributions to delivering the Scottish Government's outcomes and its central purpose to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

Delivery relies on effective partnership between organisations but also between individuals, businesses, customers and visitors, all sharing both the responsibilities and benefits of being in a National Park. It also relies on effective joining up between this plan and other regional plans and strategies that influence key issues in the National Park, such as housing strategies and community planning partnerships.

Other plans and strategies for particular topics or issues will show how parts of this National Park Plan will be delivered, for example through the Local Development Plan, Sustainable Tourism Strategy, or Outdoor Access Strategy. The corporate and operational plans of partners will set out their contributions to delivery as part of their business.

*To be added: Diagram showing relationship of NPP with*

*-National Park strategies and plans: LDP, STS, OAS, EDDS, LBAP, FWF, DF, CAPs*

*-Regional strategies and plans: CPPs, housing, RBMPs*

*-National strategies and plans: Scotland Performs, LUS, EDS,*

*-Organisational strategies and plans: corporate plans*

For each of the three long-term outcomes, this section of the plan sets out:

- The five-year outcomes we want to achieve by 2017;
- The indicators and targets we will use to judge how successful we have been in achieving the outcomes;
- The policy priorities that will help to achieve the outcomes;
- The programmes of work that will help achieve the outcomes and the partners responsible.

The work packages identified in each programme are not intended to be exhaustive or to detail all activity, but are the core of delivery action that we are collectively committed to deliver over the next five years. They should not restrict the development of other projects and proposals that may deliver more, or more effective ways of delivering the outcomes that may emerge.

### ***Delivering the outcomes together***

Delivery of the plan should be approached in the round. The outcomes of the plan, just like the aims of the Park, should be delivered collectively and in a co-ordinated way. It is this integration that lies at the heart of being a National Park, and at the heart of realising the benefits for both people and place.

A practical management plan has to break down this overall whole into coherent parts, in this case around three long-term outcomes, to provide focus and clarity. We recognise, though, the interconnections and dependencies across all parts of the plan. Successful

implementation will depend on all partners taking a co-ordinated approach to delivery of the plan as a whole. One part of it cannot be achieved successfully without the other two.

### **Delivery Structures**

Delivery of the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan will be overseen by the partnership which will meet at least once per year to review progress of the plan as a whole.

Delivery of programmes identified in the plan will be led by those partners identified here as co-ordinating partners, with the support of other partners as appropriate. In many cases, programme teams or project groups will be the most effective way to bring together the necessary partners to plan, co-ordinate and monitor delivery.

The Cairngorms National Park Authority will lead co-ordination of delivery arrangements, monitoring and reporting.

### **Advisory Forums**

In addition to partners directly involved in delivery, there is a much wider range of organisations and representative groups that have an interest in influencing the management of the Park and can contribute significant expertise and advice. To provide a focus for these interests to engage in the Park we facilitate the following advisory forums:

- Economic Forum
- Outdoor Access Forum
- Land Management Forum
- Sustainable Tourism Forum
- Cairngorms Deer Advisory Forum
- Inclusive Cairngorms

### **Monitoring and Review**

Monitoring of the National Park Plan comprises two strands:

- State of the Park review – monitoring long-term trends against a small number of key indicators;
- Progress review – monitoring delivery of what the partnership plan says we will do.

*Timetable and process to be added*

## **Research Strategy**

The Cairngorms National Park Authority will co-ordinate a research strategy to support delivery and long-term planning.

The Cairngorms has long been a focus for natural science research, creating a rich set of information already informing management. Increasingly, researchers are interested in the socio-economic context of the Park, and in the collaborative management model of the National Park itself which is relevant to approaches to protected area management around the world. As part of an international network of protected areas, our management of the Cairngorms National Park should draw on the resource of research and lessons from elsewhere, as well as continuing to contribute our experience to current debates.

We want to promote cross discipline research that addresses the management issues of the Park; to encourage connections between researchers and those working to manage the Park that informs the research as well as sharing its results; and to make the most of the opportunity the Park presents to contribute to wider research agendas.

To support this we will launch a web-based research forum to connect researchers with an interest in or working in the Cairngorms; provide an easy way to share and access relevant research; and share current research needs and priorities. We will also seek to establish the National Park as Scotland's first 'Long-Term Socio-Ecological Research' (LTSER) site, part of a European network of areas promoting integrated cross-discipline research. LTSER status will help bring together the range of research institutions working in the Park to share information and collaborate.

## **Delivering long-term outcome 1: A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities**

The communities and economy of the National Park, like that of Scotland, face a real challenge and opportunity in adapting to a global economic downturn over the next few years. The Park has many economic assets from its distinctive economic sectors; strong businesses, and attractiveness as a place to live and visit; connections to other parts of Scotland; and its recent history of young inward migration that is unusual in rural Scotland. The National Park Plan can help to make the most of these assets by setting a clear direction to support and maintain this positive position.

A thriving economy is the underpinning for thriving communities, and the basis for continued investment by both public and private sectors in the environment, infrastructure and facilities that make the Cairngorms a special place. Supporting the economy is therefore integral to achieving our vision and all four aims of the National Park.

Looking to the future, this plan sets a clear aspiration for growth of the economy of the Park that matches the Scottish Government's purpose. This is not growth at the expense of what makes the Park a special place. It is growth that builds on, conserves and enhances those special qualities. It is growth that supports the Park and its communities, which means in turn that we can make the most of the National Park as an asset for Scotland.

It will mean growing existing business sectors and encouraging new sectors to start up. We want this to lead to more jobs and better paid jobs within the Park. We also want to increase the opportunities for young people and existing workers to become better skilled for work within the Park and be able to take up new opportunities.

We want to maintain the migration of young workers and families to the Park to fill existing and new jobs, start new businesses, and maintain the younger parts of the population. This is likely to mean that the population of the Park increases. The Park Plan looks to the planning system and Local Development Plan to provide for sufficient inward migration towards 2017, with appropriate housing and business land provision made within the capacity already identified for future growth. We will monitor how effective our approach is over this period to 2017. If migration patterns change; or if other pressures mean that economy does not grow; or if it grows substantially, we may need to alter our approach beyond 2017.

Communities in the Park will change in future whether or not the economy grows. There are real challenges for most communities in the Park as well as a desire to have more influence over how they change. We want to support communities meet these challenges and help them take a bigger role in planning for their future.

The Park and life in the Park is closely linked with other parts of Scotland. People commute to and from the Park for work in surrounding places such as the Inverness, Elgin, Aberdeen, and even Central Belt areas. People from the Park also use these places for services and products. Clearly, people come to enjoy places and activities in the Park from neighbouring areas, across Scotland, the UK and around the world.

There are approximately 17,000 people currently living in the National Park. Although the population of the Park is getting older, the majority of the population is of working age and

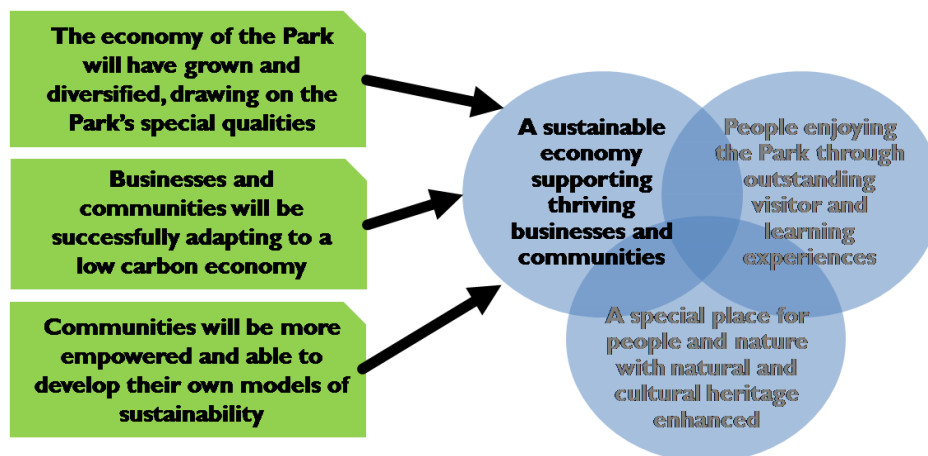
there are many children growing up in the Park. For these people in particular, a strong and diverse economy, with opportunities to work in rewarding, well paid jobs, is an important part of life. It helps people to live fulfilling lives, to plan for their future and those of their families. It is also important in the Park because it helps to provide some financial parity with others, particularly older households, who come to the Park from elsewhere and who may be able to pay more for services and basic requirements such as housing.

Strengthening the economy, through supporting business, diversifying business as well as helping people develop and train towards employment will help support current and future workers and will help support vibrant communities. In order to do it, there needs to be a supply of skilled workers. Over time, more skills should be developed from within the Park as training and development matches the needs of people and business in the Park. At this point in time however, many people leave the Park to develop skill and employment opportunities, and are replaced by other workers who see opportunities in the Park. Migration of people to the Park (both workers and retired people) has helped to support the economy and communities of the Park.

#### *Acting on climate change*

Both business and communities will be affected by climate change during the life of this plan and beyond. The government is committed to reducing green house gas emissions through policy and action, and fossil fuel prices are likely to rise and to be volatile. Both of these will increase costs to businesses and households unless they adapt by becoming more efficient, and using alternative sources of energy.

There are opportunities for business and households to adapt well and even to profit from changes. Work to deliver this outcome includes the ambition to move towards a low carbon economy. Being more efficient in using energy and generating renewable energy can both save money and generate money. The planned action includes promotion of renewable energy generation in ways that are consistent with the special qualities of the Park, helping to make our contribution to national targets and improving energy efficiency and reducing energy costs in households and businesses.





<b>5 year outcomes, indicators and targets</b>		
<b>5 year outcomes:</b>	<b>How will we measure progress? (indicators)</b>	<b>What does success look like? (2017 targets)</b>
- The economy of the Park will have grown and diversified, drawing on the Park's special qualities	Business confidence reported through Cairngorms Business Barometer	Increase
- Businesses and communities will be successfully adapting to a low carbon economy	Number of jobs created  % population living within connection of high speed broadband or equivalent	To have grown by twice % population increase  75%
- Communities will be more empowered and able to develop their own models of sustainability	Carbon footprint  Communities with community development trusts or businesses	Reduction  Increase of 50%

**The following policy priorities will help to deliver these outcomes:**

To grow the economy of the Park by strengthening existing business sectors, supporting business start-ups and diversification, and increasing the number of workers employed in the Park.

- a) To support the diversification of existing land-based businesses.
- b) To encourage growth of business sectors that draw on the special qualities of the Park such as sustainable tourism and food and drink.
- c) To broaden the economic base of the Park into sectors such as creative industries, renewable energy, and making stronger links with higher and further education.
- d) To slow outward migration of young people; to encourage their return; and the inward migration of workers to the Park to meet business and community needs.

Enable sustainable patterns of settlement growth, infrastructure and communications.

- a) To consolidate the role of the existing main settlements of Aviemore, Ballater, Grantown-on-Spey, Kingussie and Newtonmore, as well as the proposed new community of An Camus Mor, as the most sustainable places for future growth.
- b) To provide any additional flexibility in future land supply for housing and business land at small sites around a wider range of settlements.
- c) To respond to the economic challenge to 2017 by: providing for a high in migration to Badenoch and Strathspey in housing land requirements towards 2017; in other parts of the Park to provide a land supply that maintains vibrant communities; and to review the effectiveness of each approach in stimulating and supporting the economy when planning beyond 2017.

- d) To support sensitively designed improvements to the A9 and other trunk roads and main railway line as an integral part of enhancing the connectivity of the Highlands.
- e) To plan and improve integrated and sustainable local transport networks that allow for safe travel off road and link with public transport.
- f) To plan for and support improvements to the information technology network.
- g) To plan for and support improvements to the mobile communications network that improve access to new generation technology and minimise the need for visually intrusive infrastructure.

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

- a) Increasing renewable energy generation that is compatible with conserving the special qualities of the National Park, especially biomass and hydro. Due to adverse impacts on the special qualities windfarms are not appropriate in the National Park or where they affect its landscape setting.
- b) Supporting businesses and communities to use less energy, reduce emissions, generate low impact renewable energy and plan for a changing climate.
- c) Promote high standards of sustainable design and efficient use of energy and materials in construction.

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) Supporting innovative approaches to providing affordable housing to meet local needs
- c) Aligning community planning processes to simplify support to communities
- d) Engaging communities effectively in the long-term management of the National Park and in projects or programmes that affect them.

**The following programmes provide a focus for action to deliver these outcomes:**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Key work packages</b>	
1. Supporting Business	1a. Enterprise Forum, economic strategy development and implementation 1b. Skills and training 1c. Food and Drink development 1d. Growing the Cairngorms Business Partnership	CBP, HIE, SE, LAs VisitScotland, CNPA Skill Development Scotland Soil Association Scotland, Scotland Food and Drink
2. Infrastructure and communications improvements	2a. Improving IT and mobile communications connectivity 2b. Improving access to housing for local needs	HIE, SE, LAs, CNPA, Telecoms Companies, SG Community Trusts & Companies, Registered Social Landlords, Land Owners, Rural Housing Enablers, Developers

3. Low Carbon Cairngorms	3a. Renewable Energy Generation 3b. Low Carbon Living 3c. Low Carbon Land Management	Energy Savings Trusts, Community Energy Scotland, Zero Waste Scotland, LAs, SE, HIE, Historic Scotland, Keep Scotland Beautiful SG, FCS, SNH, SLE, NFUS, CNPA
4. Community Empowerment	4a. Community Action Planning 4b. Community Capacity Building 4c. Cairngorms LEADER	CNPA, LAs, CDOs, Community Development Trusts and Companies, CBP, LANTRA, SDS, ESF, Robertson Trust, Community Trusts & Companies, Cairngorms Leader and LAG
5. Building vibrant places	5a. Planning the Best Development 5b. Delivering the most effective Planning Service 5c. Tomintoul Regeneration Strategy	CNPA, LAs, HIE, The Crown Estate

### **I Supporting Business**

This programme is about growing and diversifying the economy of the Park. It should help lead to more businesses starting up, more and better paid jobs, and businesses becoming more confident in their ability to succeed.

#### **Ia. Enterprise Forum, economic strategy development and implementation**

An economic forum for the Cairngorms National Park will be established to bring together private and public sector groups to plan for economic growth and diversification in and around the National Park. It will complement the work of other regional Economic Forums around the Park. The forum will be led by the private sector and will be responsible for developing and implementing an economic growth and diversification strategy that draws on the special qualities of the Park. Delivering the Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism in the Cairngorms National Park (work package 9a) will also contribute significantly.

Coordinating Partners: CBP, HIE, SE, LAs, CNPA

#### **Ib. Skills and training**

Many different organisations provide training, support and advice for business in and around the Park. This work package is about helping make sure that training, support and advice is tailored to the needs of businesses in the Park wherever possible, and particularly to provide focus on youth training and development through rural and wider business skills apprenticeships leading to employment within the Park. The work package is closely linked to packages 4b and 11a.

Coordinating Partners: CBP, HIE, SE, LAs/Business Gateway, CNPA, Skills Development Scotland, LANTRA

#### **Ic. Food and Drink development**

Action will build on the successful establishment of the Cairngorms Food for Life project, developing local and regional networks of producers, processors and consumers of food and drink products leading to more resilient business, lower energy use and costs, and more local spend on local food and drink products.

Coordinating Partners: Soil Association Scotland, Scotland Food and Drink, CNPA, SE, HIE

#### **1d. Growing the Cairngorms Business Partnership**

The Cairngorms Business Partnership is a not for profit private sector organisation that promotes business in the Cairngorms, supports business development, and provides an advocacy service for business. It is supported by its members and by funding from a range of public sector organisations to deliver services. This work package will continue the development of the Business Partnership, maintaining and improving the services it provides, increasing its financial independence and reducing its reliance on public sector support.

Coordinating Partners: CBP, HIE, SE, VisitScotland, LAs, CNPA

### **2. Infrastructure and communications improvements work packages**

This programme will deliver improvements to infrastructure and communications in the Park. It does not specifically tackle transport or public transport. There are long term plans to improve and upgrade Trunk Roads, the rail line, local road networks, and public transport links that are led by national and local government, and will happen when resources permit. Instead, the programme focuses on two critical areas for the next five years: to improve IT and mobile communications speed and connections; and to develop bespoke housing solutions for the needs of communities.

#### **2a. Improving IT connectivity**

Many businesses and communities and people are not able to communicate, work or grow in the ways they want because IT and mobile communications are too slow, or don't exist in the Park. This work package will find ways of making real improvements to IT and mobile communications throughout the National Park to meet the current and future needs of business, communities and visitors.

Coordinating Partners: HIE, SE, LAs, CNPA, Telecoms Companies, SG

#### **2b. Improving access to housing for local needs**

Communities across the National Park want to ensure that new housing and affordable housing meets their needs. This is against a backdrop of reduced public funding for affordable housing as well as less finance for private development. This work package brings together the Local Authorities as housing authorities, Rural Housing Enablers, Housing Associations, developers and land owners to improve the targeting of new housing and to make sure local needs are reflected in allocation policies. It is about piloting new approaches, such as community ownership of land and property, and supporting closer work with communities to find the best bespoke solutions. There are current examples of this in Boat of Garten, Ballater and Tomintoul. The work package has close links to workpackage 4a and 4c.

Coordinating Partners: Local Authorities, Community Trusts & Companies, Registered Social Landlords, Land Owners, Rural Housing Enablers, Developers

### **3. Low Carbon Cairngorms**

This programme is about making sure the National Park demonstrates its contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as well as helping people adapt to the effects of climate change and increasing costs of energy. There are opportunities to significantly change the way households and businesses use energy to reduce waste and increase efficiency as well as moving energy production to renewable sources that fit the Park and its outstanding natural and cultural heritage.

#### **3a. Renewable Energy Generation**

We will support communities, households, land managers and businesses to install appropriate renewable energy generation technologies. In particular, this work will include advice, support and information as well as proactive provision through planning policies and identifying opportunities. There are particular opportunities for the Cairngorms National Park to contribute to national targets through woodfuel, hydro and geothermal technologies.

Coordinating Partners: CNPA, Community Energy Scotland

#### **3b. Low Carbon Living**

The most significant changes we can make to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions come from reducing the amount of energy we use or waste. The added benefit of reducing energy needs is that it helps to offset the effects of increasing fuel prices and avoid fuel poverty. A lot of support has gone to households in the Park and other rural parts of Scotland to improve insulation and energy efficiency of homes and buildings. It has been targeted at the quickest wins, often missing older, colder and more traditional buildings that create the built heritage and history of the Park, and are more difficult or expensive to adapt. The Park is one of the coldest parts of Scotland and many people continue to live in traditional buildings that were built to last. This work package will investigate practical ways of improving the energy efficiency of traditional buildings to make them fit for the future. It will then test approaches and develop a programme of affordable measures that help the people who live in them improve their energy efficiency.

Coordinating Partners: Energy Savings Trusts, Community Energy Scotland, Zero Waste Scotland, LAs, SE, HIE, Historic Scotland, Keep Scotland Beautiful

#### **3c. Low Carbon Land Management**

The Cairngorms National Park has a lot of carbon stored in the peatland, soils and plants. Keeping the carbon there, and where possible storing more, is important to slow global climate changes. This is a work package that will help land managers store and capture as much carbon in the soils and woodland of the National Park as possible. It means providing targeted advice and support for land managers on good practice, the benefits and rewards.

Coordinating Partners: SG, FCS, SNH, SLE, NFUS, CNPA

### **4. Community Empowerment**

Each community in the Park has its own unique character, set of needs and hopes for the future. However, most are faced with similar challenges such as maintaining and improving community assets; improving the way local services are delivered; maintaining or improving the quality of life for different groups of the community; all against a backdrop of less public money to help pay. This programme is about supporting the communities of the National

Park in planning for their future needs and tackling the issues or challenges they face as well as dealing with the responsibility it brings.

#### **4a. Developing Community Action Planning**

This work package is to continue support for communities to plan for their own futures, helping improve the ways it is done and the opportunities it provides the whole community. This means public agencies supporting communities to undertake and review community action plans and helping to deliver them, but also means sharing best practice and the most successful examples between communities and public agencies. The work package is linked to work package 4b below. The greater the capacity of a community to do what they want, the greater the value there is to community planning.

Coordinating Partners: LAs, Community Development Officers

#### **4b. Community Capacity Building**

This work package will deliver skills and training, advice and support that helps communities develop their aspirations and adapt to changing circumstances. The work package will focus on helping communities develop social enterprise; community owned and operated businesses that provide revenue or other benefits for the community. It will also help share experience and skills between communities across the Park and other parts of Scotland, sharing best practices, effective solutions, and the challenges faced in different places.

Coordinating Partners: LAs, Community Development Officers, CBP, LANTRA, SDS, CNPA, ESF, Robertson Trust, Highlands and Islands Community Enterprise Zone (HISEZ), Community Trusts & Companies

#### **4c. Cairngorms LEADER**

The Cairngorms LEADER fund supports rural development projects in the Park as part of a European LEADER fund helping rural development across Europe. Although the Cairngorms LEADER funds now committed to the end of 2012, work is underway to establish a Cairngorms LEADER fund from 2013 as part of the next LEADER Programme. If successful, the fund will continue to provide support for community and rural development projects in the Park during this Park Plan.

Coordinating Partners: Cairngorms LEADER & Local Action Group

### **5. Building Vibrant Places**

This programme is about getting the right kinds of development in the right places at the right times to support the economy of the Park and the communities of the Park. It is about sensible planning for future needs, about maintaining what is special about the Park, and making sure the places we live and work in are safe, attractive places we want to stay. It is also about improving the effectiveness and efficiency of planning services provided by the public sector to help the customers of the services whether they are communities, businesses or individuals.

#### **5a. Planning the Best Development**

Preparing and delivering the Local Development Plan will provide the blueprint for where and how good development should happen in the right places in the National Park. It will support communities and business developing and changing as well as protecting the special qualities of the National Park from development that would erode them. It is being prepared by the CNPA and is used by all the Local Authorities as well as the CNPA who

make planning decisions in the Park and guides developers to the right places and the right forms of development.

Coordinating Partners: CNPA, LAs

### **5b. Delivering the most effective Planning Service**

The planning service in the National Park is provided by the five local authorities and the CNPA. The customers of the service are the communities and businesses in serves, prospective developers as well as those who would be affected by future development. All planning authorities have annual planning service improvement plans to improve the effectiveness of their service for customers. In the National Park, the CNPA leads the service improvement and will continue to plan for improvements through for example: providing training for community councils; holding developers forums; speeding up decision-making. This work package will improve the planning service for the customer. As well as practical improvements to the existing system, the package will investigate alternative ways of providing the service to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

Coordinating Partners: CNPA, LAs

### **5c. Tomintoul Regeneration Strategy Implementation**

In 2011, following the closure of two hotels as well as potential withdrawal of some key council services from Tomintoul, a partnership of organisations and the community recognised a potential economic crisis for Tomintoul as other businesses experienced a sharp drop in customers. During 2011, a regeneration strategy for Tomintoul was developed by a range of organisations including the Crown Estate, HIE, the CNPA and Moray Council with the support of the community. The delivery of that strategy, by the local community, and the other partners is an important piece of work to ensure Tomintoul continues to be a vibrant and thriving community.

Coordinating Partners: CNPA, HIE, Moray Council, Tomintoul Community and Development Trust

## **Delivering long-term outcome 2: A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage enhanced**

The landscape, wildlife, towns and villages of the Cairngorms National Park all make up its special character and identity. They are the result of a combination of natural processes, land use and settlement development over time and they will continue to change over time. We want to make sure that as it changes, the Park keeps its special character and identity, continuing to be a special place to live, work and visit for future generations.

The spectacular landscapes of the Park tell stories of past ways of life in the Park as well as of the current uses of land. More than half of the Park is designated as being of European importance for specific nature conservation interests. The National Park as a whole is of national importance for its natural and cultural heritage.

Given the scale of the Park and the interconnections between the aims of the Park, the principles of an ecosystems approach should guide work to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Park. This approach recognises the connections between natural systems, the way we use them and the things we depend on them for such as clean water, timber or recreation opportunities. It means we need to work beyond the boundaries of individual ownership or management units, at a catchment or landscape scale.

We want to maintain the mix of landscape and land uses, while enhancing some particular habitats including woodland, moorland and wetland. Woodland expansion brings significant benefits including carbon storage, landscape enhancement, habitat connections, timber and economic returns and flood management, where it is well planned. The challenge is to target changes so that they do not compromise the benefits delivered by the farm land of the straths or the extensive moorlands. There is however, significant room to retain and develop a patchwork of habitats that delivers an even more effective mix of benefits, by working with both sound science with the varied motivations of land managers.

The Cairngorms is a working landscape. Many of the special qualities we enjoy today are the result of past land use management as well as natural processes. Its evolution as a working landscape will continue, with farms, crofts and estates playing a central role in shaping the landscape, habitats and species; providing many of the economic and recreation opportunities; and continuing to be integral to the cultural fabric of the Park.

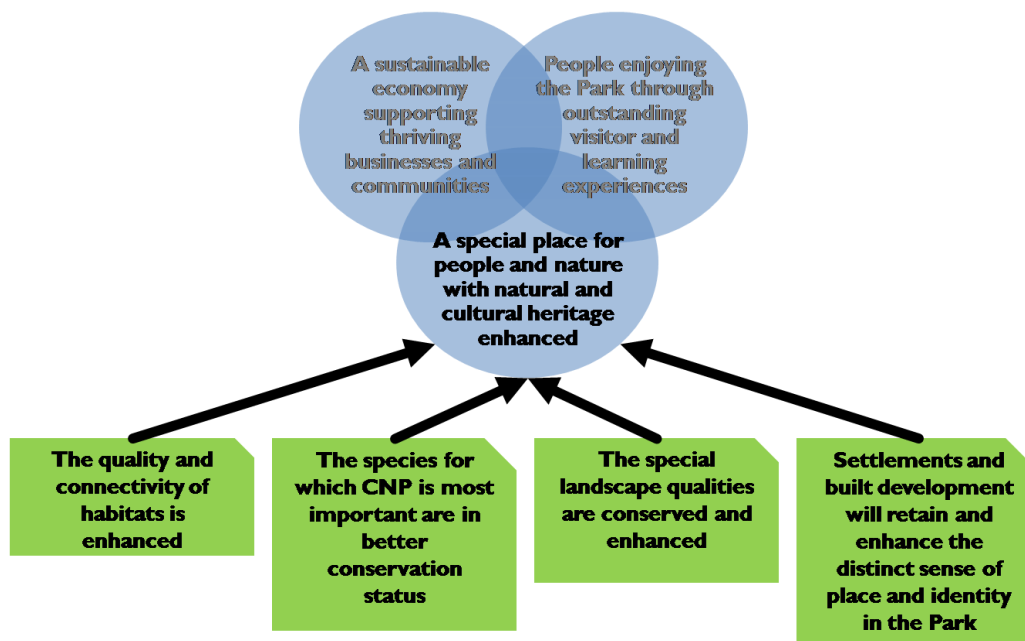
The towns and villages of the Park, including fine examples of the planned town tradition, are integral to the sense of place and identity. They are of course the spaces where residents and visitors spend most of their time. The public spaces and built environment in settlements need investment, in some cases conservation, and in other cases innovative new approaches to ensure they remain well functioning places with a distinct sense of identity.

### ***Acting on climate change***

Managing and responding to the effects of climate change on natural systems is vital to achieving this long-term outcome. The policies and work packages below support work to manage peatlands, woods and moorlands to store and secure more carbon. They also support action to improve the health of habitats and the connections between habitats to help them and the species that rely on them adapt to changes in climate. Other work such as catchment management planning will help to make sure the decisions we take about the



management of land are considered on a big enough scale, maintain the high water quality, reduce the effects of temperature rises on rivers and reduce flood risks to town and villages.



<b>5 year outcomes, indicators and targets</b>		
<p><b>5 year outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The quality and connectivity of habitats is enhanced.</li> <li>- The species for which CNP is most important are in better conservation status</li> <li>- The special landscape qualities are conserved and enhanced</li> <li>- Settlements and built development will retain and enhance the distinct sense of place and identity in the Park</li> </ul>	<p><b>How will we measure progress? (indicators)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of woodland</li> <li>Water quality</li> <li>Active conservation for LBAP priority species</li> <li>Estates participating in Wildlife Estates Initiative</li> <li>Retention of qualities of wildness</li> </ul>	<p><b>What does success look like? (2017 targets)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase of 5% in total woodland area</li> <li>Maintenance or increase in water quality status</li> <li>Targets identified in LBAP achieved</li> <li>75% of estates in the Park</li> <li>Equivalent or increased area of the Park characterised as high or medium wildness</li> </ul>

**The following policy priorities will help to deliver these outcomes:**

Support a long-term planned approach by land-based businesses to delivering environmental, economic and social benefits. In particular, support land management to continue to deliver multiple benefits that enhance the special qualities, support the economy and provide enjoyment.

Enhance the resilience of habitats, species and land use to climate change with a particular focus on:

- a) Collaborating through river catchment management plans
- b) Enhancing the health and connectivity of habitats
- c) Securing effective management of peat and carbon-rich soils

Enhance the special landscape qualities (refer to European Landscape Convention?), with a particular focus on:

- a) Conserving and enhancing wildness qualities;
- b) Enhancements that also deliver habitat improvements;
- c) Enhancing opportunities to enjoy and experience the landscapes of the Park;

Enhance habitat quality and connectivity, with a particular focus on:

- a) Woodland enhancement and expansion
- b) Wetland enhancement and expansion
- c) Delivering ecosystem services including flood management, carbon sequestration and storage, timber and food production

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

Caper Black Grouse Golden Eagle ??????

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

- a) Protecting archaeological sites and their settings and promoting understanding of their significance
- b) Protecting and enhancing the built heritage and designed landscapes
- c) Promoting opportunities to enjoy and celebrate the cultural heritage of communities in the Park

Support collaboration across ownership boundaries and between interests to reduce conflicts between species and wildlife management and other land uses in areas including:

- a) Deer management
- b) Wildlife Crime
- c) species reintroductions

**The following programmes provide a focus for action to deliver these outcomes:**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Key work packages</b>	<b>Coordinating Partners</b>
5. Building Vibrant places	5d. Quality in Design 5e. Townscape enhancement	CNPA, LAs
6. Nature and Wildlife	6a. Cairngorms Wildlife Partnership 6b. Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan 6c. Cairngorms Landscapes 6d. Catchment management 6e. Designated sites management 6f. Scotland's National Parks Mountain Paths Restoration Project	CNPA, CWP, RSPB, CMPs, SNH, FCS COAT

7. Supporting Land Management	7a. Land Management Training 7b. Advice and Support Services 7c. Wildlife Estates Initiative	CNPA, SLE, SNH, FCS, NFUS
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## **5. Building Vibrant Places**

This programme spans outcomes 1 and 2. As well as getting the right kinds of development in the right places to support the economy of the Park, it is also about maintaining and improving the quality of design and sense of place that characterises towns and villages in the Park.

### **5d. Quality in Design**

This work package is about improving the standard of design of new development and public spaces in the National Park, ensuring they fit and enhance the landscapes and heritage of the Park as well as providing a good experience for people and business now and in the future. There are a number of areas within the work package including: using planning policy to deliver high quality development and attractive public spaces; promoting good design through the Cairngorms National Park Design Award; supporting conservation and enhancement of town and village centres where there is an opportunity and need to do it.

Coordinating Partners: CNPA, LAs

### **5e. Townscape enhancement**

The cultural heritage of the towns and villages of the Park is integral to the identity of the area's communities and to the experience of the Park as a place to live, work or visit. This package of work will identify opportunities to enhance the sense of place, public space and amenity within the towns and villages of the Park, including improvements to conservation areas.

Co-ordinating Partners: CNPA, LAs

## **6. Nature & Wildlife**

This programme focuses work to conserve and enhance the natural heritage of the Park. In particular, it includes action to improve the condition of habitats, support species that require special management measures, and to manage the nationally and internationally important nature conservation sites in the Park. It also includes work designed to improve the overall health of ecosystems in the Park, connecting beyond the Park's boundaries.

### **6a. Cairngorms Wildlife Partnership**

A new partnership will be established to build on the work of the Local Biodiversity Action Partnership, bringing together the effort, expertise and resources of a wide range of public, private and voluntary organisations delivering nature conservation in the Cairngorms. The partnership will prioritise, co-ordinate and deliver projects to conserve and enhance habitats and species, implementing the revised Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Coordinating Partners: CNPA plus wide range of partners

### **6b. Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)**

The Cairngorms LBAP is the plan that identifies what is important about the species and habitats in the Cairngorms. It prioritises the most effective work that can be done to

maintain and improve habitats and species. A new action plan will be published for 2012-17 to focus the collective effort of partners in biodiversity conservation.

Coordinating Partners: CNPA

### **6c. Cairngorms Landscapes**

Cairngorms Landscapes is an ambitious package of work to enhance the habitats and landscapes of the Park across management units at a landscape, or ecosystem scale. It includes work to expand and enhance woodlands, enhance wetlands, and support collaboration to enhance landscapes across the Park. It includes projects delivered through the RSPB Cairngorms Woodland Futurescape project, the Strathspey wetland and waders project, and a proposed landscape partnership project at Glenlivet and Tomintoul.

Coordinating Partners: CNPA, SNH, FCS, RSPB

### **6d. Catchment Management**

Water that falls in the Cairngorms National Park feeds streams and rivers leading to some of Scotland largest and most famous rivers such as the Dee, Spey and Tay. They are the main sources of water for tens of thousands of people and businesses inside and outside the National Park, as well as plants and animals that live in their clean waters. The amount of water in them, the speed it flows, amount they flood, and the cleanness of it, are all affected by how we use land around them. Catchment management is an effective way to collaborate, bringing people together to manage this resource at a meaningful scale. In particular, this work package will deliver action through existing groups on the Rivers Spey, Dee and South Esk, and seek more focus on the River Don.

Coordinating Partners: River Dee Catchment Management Partnership (CMP), River South Esk CMP, River Spey CMP

### **6e. Designated sites management**

There are lots of places in the National Park that are designated for specific nature conservation value. Over half the area of the Park is designated as being of European importance for nature conservation through the Natura 2000 network. The Scottish Government has set a target for 95% of the sites across Scotland to be in 'favourable condition' – for the plants animals and habitats to be doing well or being managed in way that should improve them. This effort is an integral part of conserving and enhancing the condition of habitats and species across the Park as a whole. Scottish Natural Heritage leads the work to make sure the sites are managed well and monitors the condition of sites.

Coordinating Partners: SNH

### **6f. Scotland's National Parks Mountain Paths Restoration Project**

Both Scotland's National Parks have famous and spectacular mountains that people enjoy walking on. Over many years and lots of feet, the paths that people have walked on some mountains have become visual scars on the mountains. This project will improve mountain paths in both the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Parks, making the scars smaller. Just as importantly, it will find ways of paying for the upkeep of the paths in the future so that they lead to long lasting improvements in the mountain landscape.

Coordinating Partners: COAT

## **7. Supporting Land Management**

Most land within the Park is owned and managed by private individuals or businesses. The management of the land shapes the landscapes we value, the habitats and species, and special qualities, as well as being an integral part of the economy and employment opportunity in the Park.

### **7a. Land Management Training**

This work package will provide training that supports land managers. It will continue the work of the Cairngorms Land Based Business Training Scheme (LBBT) that coordinated subsidised and practical training courses for over X00 individuals between 2007-2012. The courses provided are designed to help land managers and businesses as well as to provide benefits to the public from the land.

Coordinating Partners: CNPA, SLE, SNH, FCS, NFUS

### **7b. Advice and Support Services**

Land Managers get advice and support from public sector organisations who provide advice and financial support, from membership organisations such as Scottish Land and Estates, and the National Farmers Union Scotland, from private business and from colleges and universities. This work package will improve the provision, co-ordination and targeting of these services in the Park to help land managers as well as the organisations that provide them. It will also support the networks of advice and discussion that bring land managers together with other groups and organisations. The key groups are the Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group (CDAG), Deer Management Groups, the Cairngorms Land Management Forum, the Cairngorms Farmers Forum and wildfire groups.

Coordinating Partners: SLE, NFUS, CNPA, SNH,

### **7c. Wildlife Estates Scotland Initiative**

The Wildlife Estates Scotland Initiative was developed by Scottish Land and Estates to demonstrate how estates can be well managed for biodiversity as well as game species and other uses. It will share best practices, provide clear information to different groups and help to resolve conflicts between different uses or management of land and the range of species that need it. The scheme has already been piloted in the Cairngorms National Park. This work package will support wider implementation of the initiative across the National Park and help guide, enhance and demonstrate good biodiversity management by estates.

Coordinating Partners: SLE

### **Delivering long-term outcome 3: People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences**

People visiting and enjoying the National Park expect a high quality experience, whatever their particular interests. A National Park is an international brand that carries a high level of expectation for all aspects of people's experience, from their very first contact with the National Park. Whether you are a child at school, a resident, a nearby frequent visitor or a one-off tourist, you can enjoy the Park; learn about it and from it. What you experience, how you experience it, and the level of help or guidance you need and get will influence how you enjoy and think about the Park.

High quality visitor experiences are supported by the infrastructure of visitor centres, car parks, promoted paths and core paths throughout the Park. Investment in the development and maintenance of this infrastructure helps manage the impacts of visitors, inform them, and give them high quality experiences of the Park and its special qualities. The fantastic outdoor recreation opportunities are an asset for residents and visitors that are enjoyable and help people live healthy lifestyles. Encouraging more use of them by people who would benefit most has potential to improve the health of many people through exercise.

The growth of tourism business in the Park has happened because people enjoy coming here and experiencing it for themselves. The potential benefits of tourism and the potential problems of unmanaged visitors to the Park are recognised and planned for through the Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Strategy. It sets a path for how tourism can develop sustainably and how to avoid problems from it. It also makes a strong case for the use of the Cairngorms National Park brand as a way of both attracting customers, and of reinforcing what is special about the Park and why it needs special management.

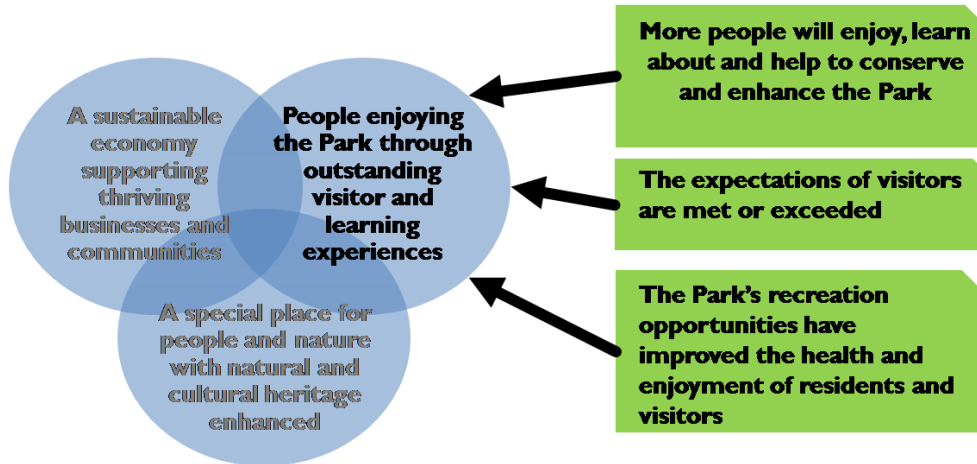
We want to see continued development of sustainable tourism, increasing the quality of experience for visitors and their understanding of what makes the Park special. This means promotion of opportunities and development of products, but it also means providing the highest possible standards of service, good advice, clear information and tailored interpretation and engagement with customers. This requires coordination between organisations and businesses and for organisations to put the customer first.

National Parks have been successfully embedded in the Curriculum for Excellence for pupils in the National Park and throughout Scotland. Pupils can learn about the Park and why it's special to them as well about other subjects through being outside. We want this support to continue to help today's pupils become the custodians of the Park in future with opportunities for further training, development and employment in the Park. Beyond school, there are many organisations who provide structured learning and development opportunities in the Park. Helping people find the experiences they want, whether that is a commercial service or product, a structured experience, or an opportunity to volunteer and help manage the Park, helps them get the most from the Park.

#### ***Acting on climate change***

Although it is possible to travel to the Park without using a private car, it will always be hard to travel between remote places in without a private vehicle. Public transport options are often too costly to provide on routes that are infrequently travelled. However, as far as possible, people should be able to travel between neighbouring villages and between nearby visitor attractions by off road routes. Most neighbouring communities in the Park are linked

by off road routes and many could be in future. These routes can provide an opportunity to travel (particularly by bike) without cars for many visitors as well as residents. We want to improve this network and the supporting infrastructure so that travel by bicycle in particular becomes a cheap and easy option for visitors to the Park as well as residents travelling between places.



<b>5 year outcomes, indicators and targets</b>		
<b>5 year outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More people will enjoy, learn about and help to conserve and enhance the Park</li> <li>- The expectations of visitors are met or exceeded</li> <li>- The Park's recreation opportunities have improved the health and enjoyment of residents and visitors</li> </ul>	<b>How will we measure progress? (indicators)</b> <p>Visitor satisfaction reported in Cairngorms Visitor Survey</p> <p>Number of people making one or more visits to the outdoors each week</p> <p>Number of volunteer days spent caring for the Park</p>	<b>What does success look like? (2017 targets)</b> <p>Increase</p> <p>Increase greater than national average</p> <p>Increase by 100%</p>

**The following policy priorities will help to deliver these outcomes:**

Provide a welcoming and high quality National Park experience for all

- a) Putting the Visitor/customer focus first
- b) Implement and review the Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism in the Cairngorms National Park
- c) Support the network of ranger services in the National Park
- d) Building on the Cairngorms brand and the promise it delivers

Provide high quality opportunities for access and recreation, with a particular focus on:

- a) Ensuring a high quality functional network of core paths and long distance routes
- b) Promoting the health benefits of outdoor recreation
- c) Identifying areas where particular management measures are needed in relation to delivering a high quality visitor experience and safeguarding sensitive environments

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

- a) Young people
- b) Opportunities to deliver the curriculum for excellence
- c) Promoting a sense of shared ownership and responsibility towards Scotland's National Parks and rural environment

**The following programmes provide a focus for action to deliver these outcomes:**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Key Work Packages</b>	<b>Coordinating Partners</b>
8. Leading Sustainable Tourism	8a. STS implementation 8b. Cairngorm, Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Strategy	STF, CBP, CNPA FCS, HIE, Highland Council, Rothiemurchus Estate, Cairngorm Mountain Ltd, CRAGG partners
9. Active Cairngorms	9a. Delivering and reviewing the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Strategy 9b. Delivering Health Walks 9c. Developing cycling	CNPA, COAT, NHS, CBP, Scottish Mountain Bike Development Cluster, SUSTRANS, Transport Scotland
10. Outdoor Learning	10a. Using National Parks in the Curriculum 10b. Learning from the Park 10c. Volunteering to support nature	Education Scotland, LAs, CNPA, RSPB, NTS, BTCV
11. Sharing the Stories	11a. Coordinating training and support for visitor managers/communicators 11b. Developing & delivering inspiring campaigns 11c. Community Heritage Project support (Aviemore & Kingussie Community Heritage Project)	CBP, CNPA, VisitScotland, RCAHMS
12. Visitor and Access Infrastructure	12a. Management of Core Paths and outdoor access 12b. Maintaining and improving high quality visitor facilities	CNPA, COAT, CBP, VisitScotland

### **8. Leading Sustainable Tourism**

Tourism is a key part of the economy of the Park. This programme is to ensure that tourism develops sustainably, contributing to a strong sustainable economy and that we manage the potential impacts of visitors to the Park to keep it a special place.

#### **8a. STS implementation**

The Cairngorms was the first national park in the UK to be awarded the Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas by the Europarc Federation in 2005, and was re-awarded the Charter in 2011. The Charter is a reward for being able to demonstrate different sectors are working together to make sure tourism develops in a sustainable way,



respecting the natural and cultural heritage of the area and the views and needs of local communities. The different groups are brought together through a Sustainable Tourism Forum which develops a Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism to guide their work. Delivering the strategy and the actions and projects it sets out is an important bit of work for a number of organisations, and is expected to be a key part of a future economic growth and diversification strategy for the Park (work package 1a).

Coordinating Partners: Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Forum, CBP, CNPA

### **8b. Cairngorm, Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Strategy**

The Cairngorm, Rothiemurchus and Glenmore area is the most heavily visited area of the Park and also one of the most sensitive environments. It has a wide range of visitor attractions and sites, many sensitive habitats and species, and is managed by a range of different land owners and organisations with different objectives. The current strategy for the area will be refreshed, updated and implemented to enhance the visitor experience and avoid or minimise disturbance to the sensitive habitats and species that make it special.

Coordinating Partners: CNPA, FCS, HIE, Highland Council, Rothiemurchus Estate, Cairngorm Mountain Ltd, CRAGG partners

## **9. Active Cairngorms**

The Park is a fantastic recreation resource, with many opportunities for different physical activities in a spectacular place. It has places for wintersports, water sports, and outstanding outdoor access opportunities that allow people to enjoy being outside and taking physical exercise in all sorts of ways from gentle to strenuous. This programme is about making sure the potential health benefits for residents and visitors to the Park are exploited, maintaining a healthy and active population.

### **9a. Delivering and reviewing the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Strategy**

The Cairngorms Outdoor Access Strategy establishes the priorities for outdoor access planning and management in the Park. It helps to manage access where there is potential conflict between land managers and outdoor access and between sensitive species of habitats and outdoor access. It identifies opportunities to improve infrastructure or to encourage more use of what's already there. The access strategy will be reviewed to help promote the Active Cairngorms work, developing opportunities to improve health and coordinating the agencies involved. It will also use the most up to date evidence on the effects of recreation on sensitive habitats and species to improve management.

Coordinating Partners: CNPA

### **9b. Delivering Health Walks**

The Health Walks initiative has been successfully running at a number of places within the Park for a few years. It has been very successful at helping people who would otherwise not walk go out on regular guided walks with other people and gain real physical and mental health benefits. It has been coordinated by the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust but with the enthusiasm and support of many dedicated volunteers. This work package will support and grow the Health Walks project creating more opportunities to deliver lasting health benefits to those who benefit most.

Coordinating Partners: COAT

### **9c. Developing cycling**

The Park has a very strong network of off-road routes that can be used for cycling for recreation and for active travel between communities, visitor attractions and services. This work package will focus on improving the access to and awareness of these routes, establishing and missing links, ensuring trunk roads improvements provide suitable off road links, and developing the wider infrastructure and support services for cyclists using these routes as well as the road network. It brings together the private sector, voluntary sector and public sector.

Coordinating Partners: CBP, Scottish Mountain Bike Development Cluster, Sustrans, Transport Scotland, CNPA

### **10. Outdoor Learning**

This programme is about making sure the opportunities to learn about and learn from the Park are promoted, supported and coordinated as effectively as possible. The various ranger services around the Park as well as visitor management staff at sites and centres support this programme through their work.

#### **10a. Using National Parks in the Curriculum**

A project between both Scottish National Park Authorities and Learning and Teaching Scotland (now Education Scotland) helped to show how schools could use outdoor learning in National Parks to best effect. It has been very successful and the Schools in and around the Park regularly use the opportunities that the Park provides. This work package is to ensure that the work to develop the project and to support teachers and educators is supported and remains an important part of the curriculum for pupils in and near the Park as well as across Scotland.

Coordinating Partners: Education Scotland, LAs

#### **10b. Learning from the Park**

There are many opportunities to learn about the Park and from being in the Park that people find helps their development or enjoyment of it. Local Authorities provide community-based and adult learning opportunities for people and other schemes such as the John Muir Award and Cairngorms Junior Rangers provide structured ways developing skills and knowledge based around the Park. This work package is about making sure that the opportunities provided through these and other schemes and businesses, are signposted to the right customers.

Coordinating Partners: CNPA, LAs, John Muir Award

#### **10c. Volunteering to support nature**

This work package is to develop the opportunities for practical volunteering to support nature in the Park. It will be led by the RSPB and National Trust for Scotland who already provide volunteering opportunities on the land they own and manage in the Park. However, the work will explore any practical opportunities to extend opportunities to other public or privately managed sites in the Park.

Coordinating Partners: CNPA, RSPB, NTS, BTCV

## **11. Sharing the Stories**

This programme is about helping people find out about the special qualities of the Park, getting their own insight into what makes it a special place and why it needs special care.

### **11a. Coordinating training and support for visitor managers/communicators**

The most effective way of communicating with people is often by talking with them. The people who have the best chance of communicating with visitors are the visitor and customer facing staff of businesses, visitor centres, ranger services. This work package is to coordinate the training, materials and support for these people to help them do their jobs and provide a good service to the visitor to the Park or places in it. This work package is closely linked to private sector businesses who are often the main contact for visitors to the Park.

Coordinating Partners: CBP, CNPA, VisitScotland

### **11b. Developing & delivering inspiring campaigns**

There are many organisations and businesses who run campaigns within the Park and beyond the Park that are designed to attract people; raise awareness or promote opportunity; or to reinforce or change people's behaviour. They can be very effective tools, but for them to have the greatest effect they need to be coordinated, targeted and to have consistent messages about the Park. This work package is to help develop the Cairngorms National Park brand, and to lead to more effective and inspiring campaigns.

Coordinating Partners: CBP, CNPA

### **11c. Community Heritage Project support**

The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments Scotland is coordinating a project between Aviemore and Kingussie that will support the local communities to discover, explore and record their past. The project provides expert help so that people can excavate and record the finds at sites, and piece together their heritage and past ways of life. The project offers a basis for further support to other communities to take forward work to investigate, interpret and make the most of their local cultural heritage.

Coordinating Partners: The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments Scotland (RCAHMS)

## **12. Visitor and Access Infrastructure**

This programme is about making sure the visitor and access infrastructure (that is used by residents and visitors to the Park), is maintained and developed to provide these customers with the high quality services they need. It also provides the first line of management to avoid conflict between people enjoying the Park and those who are managing it or working it day to day.

### **12a. Management of Core Paths and outdoor access**

The core paths and other promoted paths within the Park are one of its most valuable assets. They provide high quality opportunities to enjoy the Park for people with many different interests and abilities. Most outdoor recreation takes place on these routes and they help to manage the effects of people recreating as well as helping them experience the Park. The ongoing management and improvement of these routes (for example work

package 10c and helping make cycling between communities easier) is a critical part of managing the Park. This work package includes the CNPA's duties as the access authority for the Park to uphold wider access rights and encourage responsible behaviour.

Coordinating Partners: CNPA

**12b. Maintaining and improving high quality visitor facilities**

This work package focuses on developing the visitor facilities in the Park to maintain, update and improve them. There are many different types of visitor facility: from VisitScotland Visitor Information Centres; to visitor centres at attractions such as castles, museums and activity centres; to hotels and individual businesses; to car parks, lay-bys and viewpoints. There is no single approach to these places, but each one helps to inform the customer's experience, whether they are a visitor or a local person. The higher the standard across these places the more likely the customer is to be satisfied.

Coordinating Partners: CBP, CNPA

**Annex 1**

Special Landscape Qualities Summary

<b>Table 2.1 – Special Landscape Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park</b>	
<b>The Mountains and Plateaux</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The unifying presence of the central mountains</li> <li>• An imposing massif of strong dramatic character</li> <li>• The unique plateaux of vast scale, distinctive landforms and exposed boulder-strewn high ground</li> <li>• The surrounding hills</li> <li>• The drama of deep corries</li> <li>• Exceptional glacial landforms</li> <li>• Snowscapes</li> </ul>
<b>Moorlands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive moorland, linking the farmland, woodland and the high tops</li> <li>• A patchwork of muirburn</li> </ul>
<b>Glens and Straths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steep glens and high passes</li> <li>• Broad farmed straths</li> <li>• Renowned rivers</li> <li>• Beautiful lochs</li> </ul>
<b>Trees, Woods and Forests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dark and venerable pine forest</li> <li>• Light and airy birch woods</li> <li>• Parkland and policy woodlands</li> <li>• Long association with forestry</li> </ul>
<b>Wildlife and Nature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dominance of natural landforms</li> <li>• Extensive tracts of natural vegetation</li> <li>• Association with iconic animals</li> <li>• Wildness</li> </ul>
<b>Visual and Sensory Qualities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Layers of receding ridge lines</li> <li>• Grand panoramas and framed views</li> <li>• A landscape of many colours</li> <li>• Dark skies</li> <li>• Attractive and contrasting textures</li> <li>• The dominance of natural sounds</li> </ul>
<b>Culture and History</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinctive planned towns</li> <li>• Vernacular stone buildings</li> <li>• Dramatic historical routes</li> <li>• The wistfulness of abandoned settlements</li> <li>• Focal cultural landmarks of castles, distilleries and bridges</li> <li>• The Royal connection</li> </ul>
<b>Recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A landscape of opportunities</li> <li>• Spirituality</li> </ul>
<p>Source: The Special Landscape Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park; Scottish Natural Heritage; Commissioned Report No. 375</p>	