

## CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

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- Title:** Ranger Services in Cairngorms National Park
- Prepared by:** Adam Streeter-Smith, Outdoor Access Officer
- Purpose:** To update the Forum on the Ranger Framework Review and seek advice on the need for better Ranger Service provision.

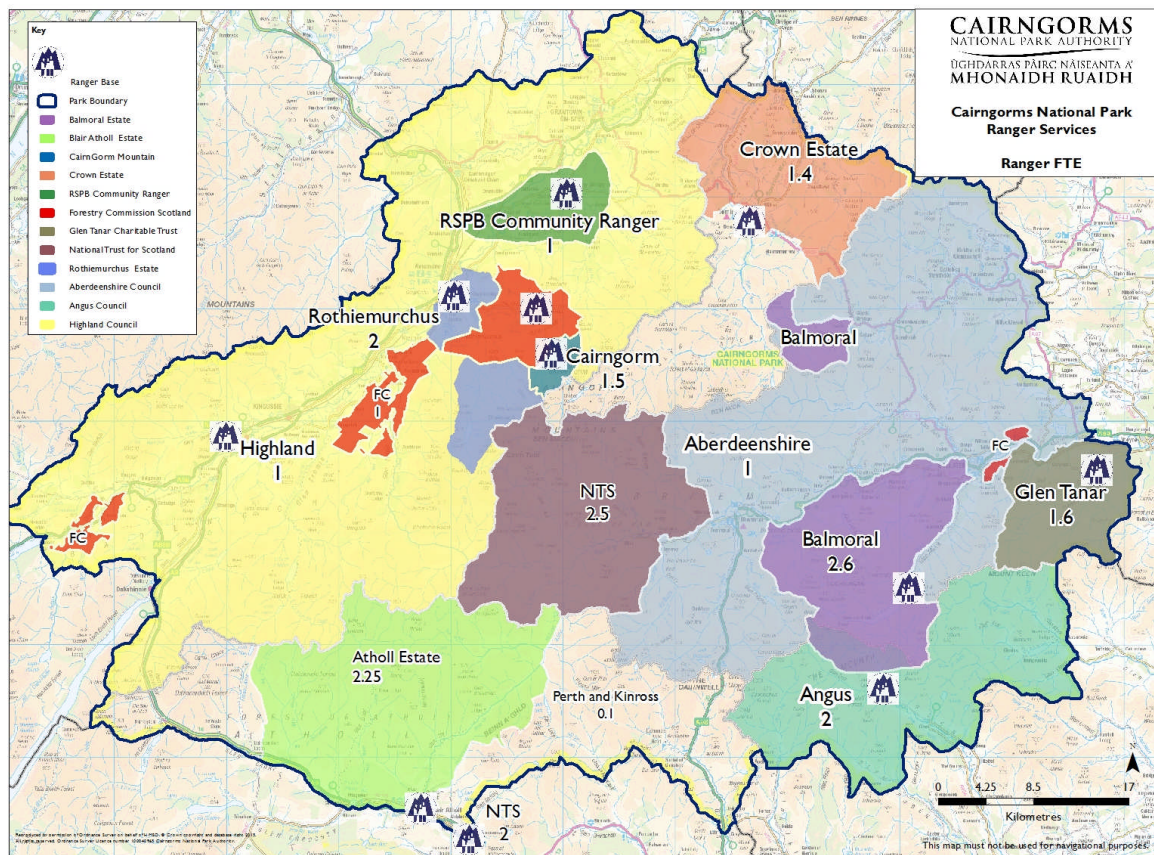
### Advice Sought

- a) Does the LOAF agree that there is a need for better Ranger Service provision, especially in Badenoch and Strathspey, to promote responsible behaviour and deliver Active Cairngorms and Cairngorms Nature?
- b) Are there any other mechanisms available to deliver greater Ranger coverage that we haven't considered?

### Background

1. Visitor Services has undertaken a review of the current funding and support for Ranger Services in the Park because:
  - a) Residents and visitor numbers are increasing each year, and recreational patterns are changing meaning that the distribution of rangers set over a decade ago does not meet current needs;
  - b) There are new strategies which require Ranger Services for delivery;
    - i. Cairngorms Nature;
    - ii. Active Cairngorms;
    - iii. Capercaillie Framework;
  - c) There is a need to ensure continued funding puts services on a more sustainable footing. However public sector funding is declining and we are already seeing some reduction in funding support for rangers.
2. There are currently 14 ranger services operating in the National Park, 9 of which receive funding from the CNPA. The majority of these services were in existence prior to designation of the National Park. Each service is managed and funded by a range of partners including local authorities, private estates and NGO's. Map one illustrates where Ranger Services are operating in Cairngorms National Park.

Map one shows the extent of the each of the Services coverage.



Map I- Ranger coverage in the National Park

3. The *Partnership Framework for Ranger Services in the Park* sets out the vision for Ranger Services as:

***A high profile network of Cairngorms' rangers connecting people with an outstanding National Park. They work collaboratively to provide an innovative, inspirational and professional service. They are committed to enhancing public enjoyment, understanding and care of the outdoors, focused on maintaining the quality and relevance of their work and recognised, valued and supported by their employers, other related professions and the public.***

## **The future role of Ranger Services in the Park**

4. Discussions with Ranger Services on the Capercaillie Framework has identified that ranger coverage in Strathspey (including Glenmore) isn't sufficient as there are not enough rangers. The emerging Cairngorm and Glenmore strategy identifies the need for an increase in ranger provision.
5. The reduction in Highland Council Rangers means that coverage in Badenoch is very poor. The lack of a ranger if unresolved would have an implication for visitors as well as the successful delivery of the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan and Active Cairngorms. Visitor pressure on Capercaillie is not an issue in this area.
6. Geographical coverage by Ranger Services in Deeside could be better targeted to address visitor pressures in and around Braemar and Cambus O'May where there are issues with camping, litter and anti-social behaviour.
7. Consideration of the three areas leads to the following initial conclusions:
  - The site (estate)-based services work well and continue to be a very cost effective model for delivering the service;
  - We want to increase the ranger presence in Strathspey;
  - Provision in Deeside could be better targeted.

**Q Does the LOAF agree that there is a need for better Ranger Service provision, especially in Badenoch and Strathspey, to support promote responsible behaviour and deliver Active Cairngorms and Cairngorms Nature?**

## **Mechanisms for delivery**

8. All Ranger Services across the Park operate effectively within the constraints of their budgets and staff resources and are highly valued by both residents and visitors. It is apparent though that the site based services are better placed to meet the future demands in the National Park and are best placed to promote "tread lightly". In going forward the CNPA would like the flexibility to develop new Ranger Service partnerships with Estates and NGO's to ensure adequate coverage across the Park.

9. Establishing a viable core of Volunteer Rangers, supported by a Volunteer Coordinator, also has the potential to supplement existing “professional” ranger coverage. The existing Ranger Services still play a vital role in visitor management, delivery of park wide strategies and the junior ranger project.
  
10. Environmental volunteering is important because it cuts across a number of SG outcomes and Park outcomes. Volunteer Rangers would be to act as local champions for volunteering recruiting volunteers within their community to undertake practical works, biological monitoring and support visitor management.

**Q Are there any other mechanisms available to deliver greater Ranger coverage that we haven't considered?**

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