

AGENDA ITEM 8

APPENDIX I

MONITORING REPORT

Cairngorms National Park Local
Development Plan 2015

Monitoring Report for 2015/16 to 2020/21

June 2021

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Introduction

The 2015 Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted on 27th March 2015. This monitoring report provides an overview of how the LDP was used during the period 2015/2016 – 2020/2021, being the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth year of its implementation, by the National Park Authority and the Local Authorities whose area it covers. It also considers how the LDP was used by DPEA and Local Review Bodies for appeals.

Context

The 2015 LDP was the first development plan that covered the whole of the National Park, replacing the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan 2010 and the Perth & Kinross Council Highland Area Local Plan 2000, which covered the part of Perthshire added to the Park in 2010. The LDP set out policies and proposals for the development and use of land for a 5-10 year period. It gave a broad indication of the scale and location of growth up to year 20, as well as providing the basis for the assessment of all planning applications

made across the National Park during during the reporting period of 2015/16 to 2020/21.

The Scottish Government believes that the planning system is essential to achieving its central purpose of creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth. This involves promoting and facilitating development in the most appropriate places while protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment. The 2015 LDP, with its policies and sites allocated for development, was the main tool to deliver that during the reporting period. It provided guidance to developers and investors, and allows local communities and the general public to be involved in shaping the future of their area.

Summary of key points

Over the monitoring period of 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2021:

- 2139 planning applications were submitted for development within the National Park, of which 102 were subsequently withdrawn or found not to require planning permission.
- Of the applications determined, 1948 were approved and 89 refused – an average approval rate of around 91%.
- Highland and Aberdeenshire areas had the highest number of applications, with Angus having the fewest.
- During the monitoring period the National Park Authority called in and determined around 7% of applications.
- The main policy most referred to in planning reports is Policy 3 (Sustainable Design).
- Sub-policies were not routinely recorded in planning reports, however the sub-policies mostly referred to were 1.7 (Alterations to existing houses), 3.1 (Design Statements), 3.4 (Alterations to the existing building stock) and 9.2 (Conservation Areas).

- The Park Authority has taken a more direct role in applications that trigger the policies that support economic growth, natural heritage and landscape interests (Policies 2, 4 and 5) when compared to Local Authorities.
- There were 21 valid appeals against refusal of planning permission; 20 referred to LDP policies in the decision notice, with 8 referring to sub-policies.
- 7 appeals were against the Park Authority; 4 were allowed, 2 dismissed, and 1 withdrawn.
- Of the 23 valid appeals against Local Authority decisions, 11 were allowed (permission granted) and 12 dismissed (refusal upheld).
- Policies 1 (new housing development), 3 (sustainable design), and 5 (landscape) were the most commonly referred to in appeal decisions.

Applications

This section provides some general statistics about the number of applications received and determined by the CNPA and the Local Authorities.

Over the monitoring period of 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2021, 2139 planning applications were submitted within the National Park, with 2042 going forward to determination. Highland and Aberdeenshire areas had the highest number of applications, with Angus having the fewest (Figure 1).

119 applications were not determined, being withdrawn or found not to require planning permission.

During the monitoring period, 1948 applications were approved and 89 refused (Figure 2), an average approval rate of around 95.6%. This fluctuated annually during the monitoring period, with the lowest being around 90% in 2017/18 and the highest being around 99.2% in 2020/21.

On average, the National Park Authority determined around 6.7% of applications. The remainder were determined by the Local Authorities. This fluctuated annually during the monitoring period, with the lowest amount being determined by the Park Authority being in 2017/18 at around 3%, with the highest being around 9.6% in 2018/19. Figures 3 and 4 overleaf show the year on year variation in applications determined by the Park Authority compared to Local Authorities.

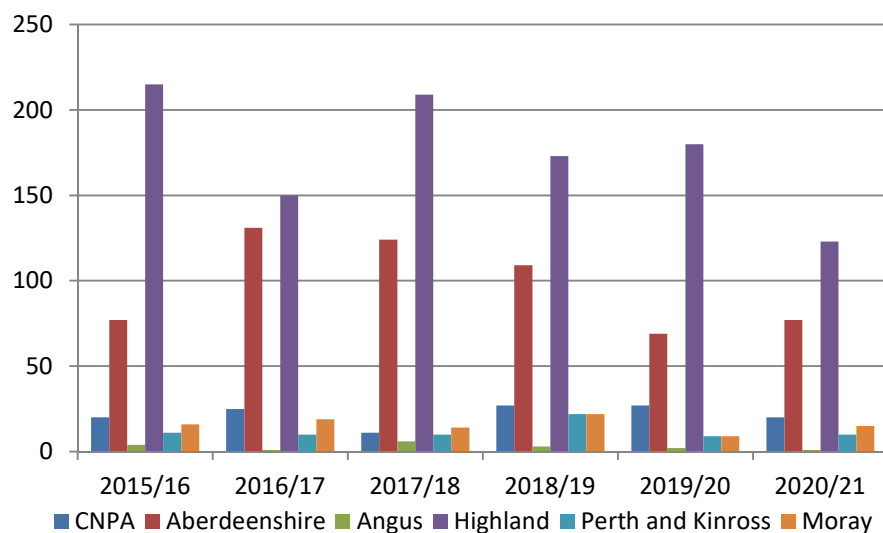


Figure 1: Total number of applications determined by the different Authorities during April 2015 – March 2021.

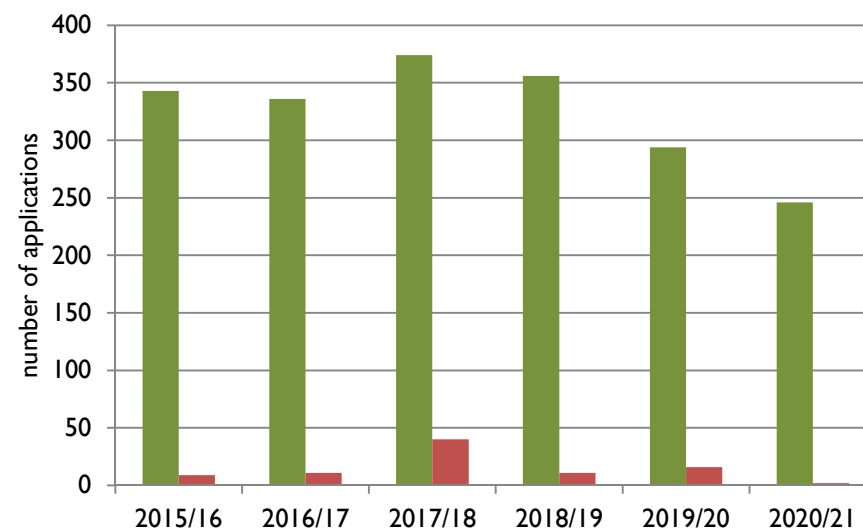


Figure 2: Total number of applications determined by year during April 2015 – March 2021. Approved in green, refused in red.

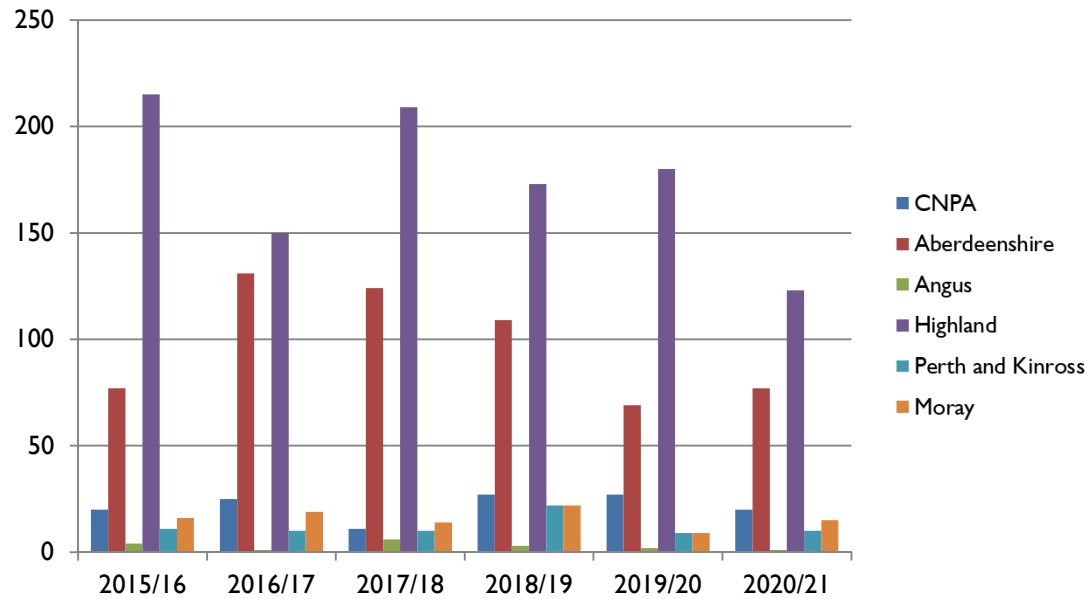


Figure 3: Applications approved by the different Authorities using the Cairngorms National Park 2015 Local Development Plan by year, for the period April 2015 to March 2021.

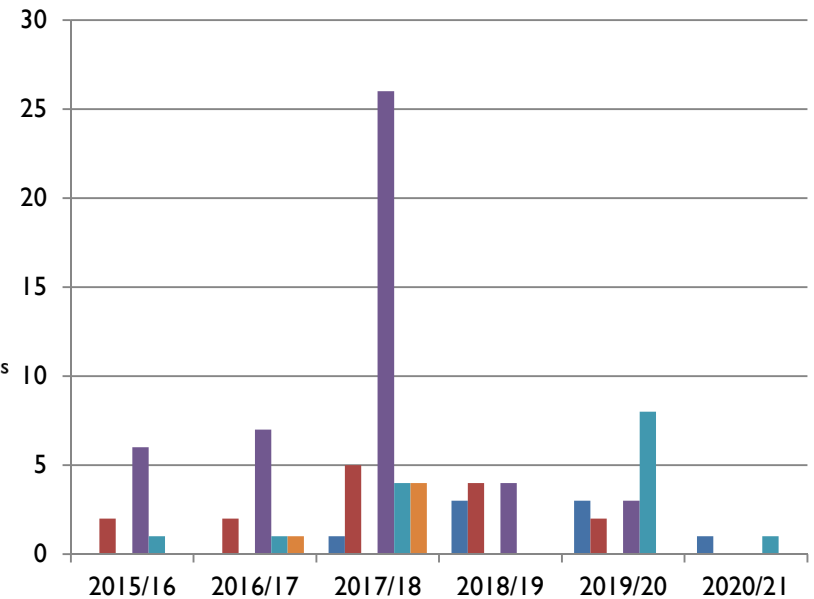


Figure 4: Applications refused by the different Authorities using the Cairngorms National Park 2015 Local Development Plan by year, for the period April 2015 to March 2021.

Policy Use

This section provides information on how each policy and sub-policy was used during the monitoring period. Figure 5 provides a summary of this information for the policies, allowing easy comparisons to be made. The most commonly used policy was Policy 3 Sustainable Design. This is unsurprising given that the policy should apply to most forms of development.

Main policies

Figures 6 and 7 overleaf give an indication of the types of applications determined by the Local Authorities and those called in by the Park Authority in relation to main policy use. For example, as would be expected given the Park aims, the Park Authority has taken a more direct role in applications that trigger the policies that support economic growth, natural heritage and landscape interests (Policies 2, 4 and 5) when compared to Local Authorities.

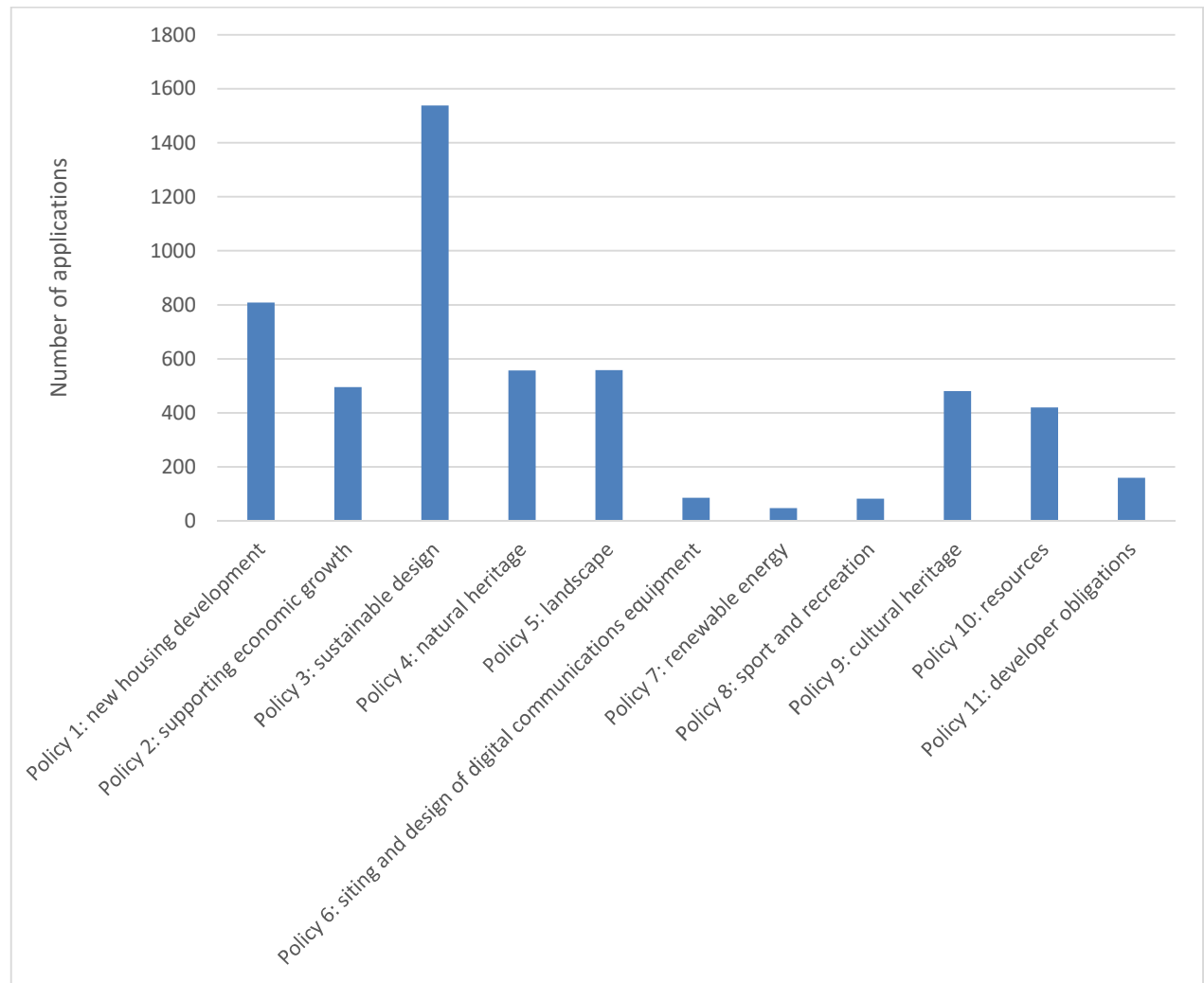


Figure 5: Policy use in decision making during April 2015 - March 2021

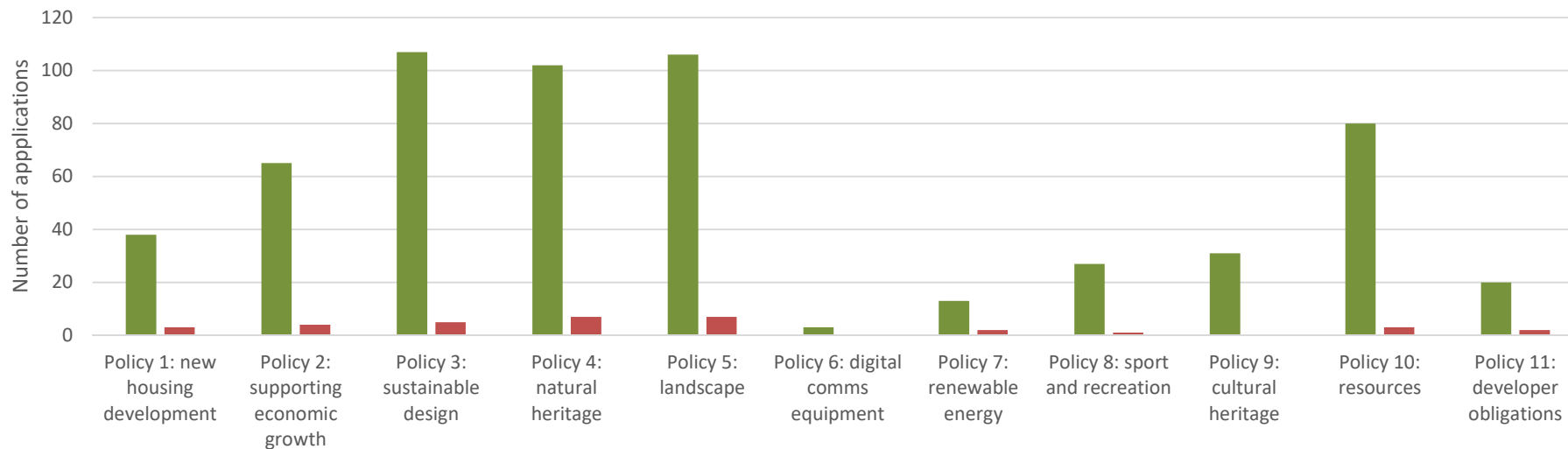


Figure 6: Summary of decisions made by CNPA during April 2015 – March 2021 that refer to specific policy types. Approved in green, refused in red.

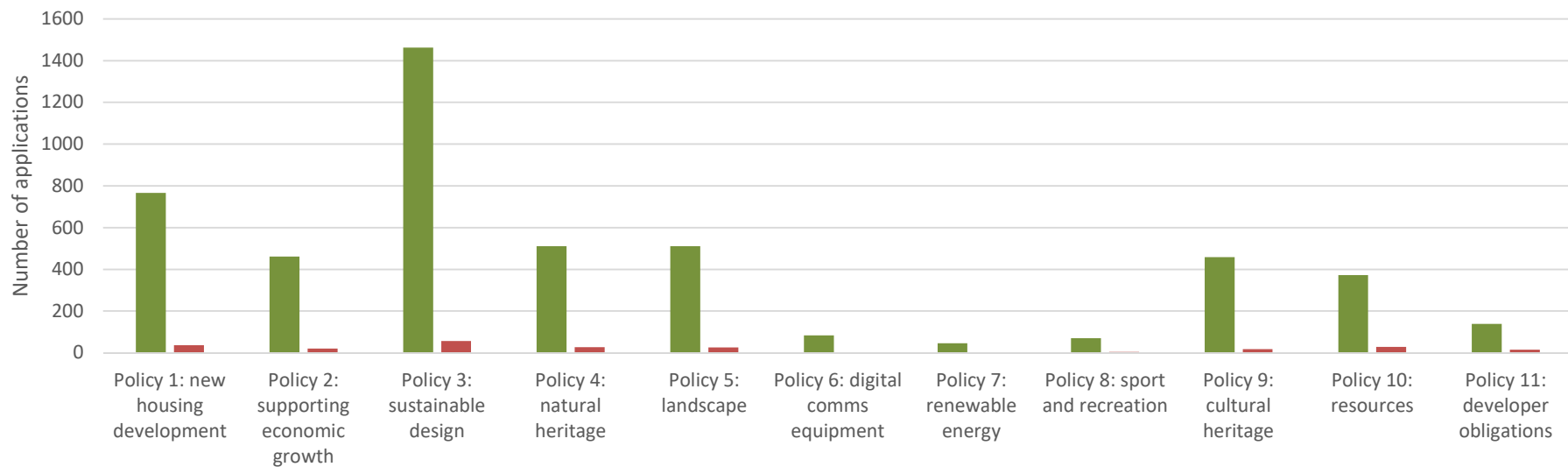


Figure 7: Summary of decisions made by Local Authorities during April 2015 – March 2021 that refer to specific policy types. Approved in green, refused in red.

Sub-policies

With the exception of Policies 5 (Landscape), 6 (Siting and design of digital communications equipment) and 11 (Developer Contributions), all policies have sub-policies that sit below them, each of which deal with different aspects of the Policy's concerns. Some sub-policies are relevant to all aspects of a particular development, for example sub-policy 3.1 Design Statements could be applied to all applications, while others would apply only in specific situations, for example sub-policy 1.8 on Conversions.

Planning reports have tended to include information on when main policies have been used when determining applications. However information on when sub-policies have been used has not been included in all planning reports. It is therefore not possible to gain a fully representative picture of how sub-policies have been used over the monitoring period, as the data is incomplete*. Nonetheless information on the number of times sub-policies were referred to in decision making is presented in Table 1.

*Under reporting may be due to the way the sub-policies have been numbered in the LDP 2015. The 2021 LDP seeks to address this by hierarchically numbering each sub-policy, which is hoped to encourage better recording of sub-policy use.

	Policy 1: new housing development	Policy 2: supporting economic growth	Policy 3: sustainable design	Policy 4: natural heritage	Policy 7: renewable energy	Policy 8: sport and recreation	Policy 9: cultural heritage	Policy 10: resources
Percentage of times main policy only referred to in decisions	31%	21%	45%	21%	25%	19%	19%	11%
Percentage of times sub-policies referred to in decisions	17%	7%	20%	9%	1%	1%	7%	4%

Table 1: Proportion of applications during April 2015 – March 2021 where sub-policies have been referred to in planning reports, and where the main policy has been referred to (note not all reports included information on when sub policies were used, so the data presented below is unlikely to be fully representative of sub-policy use).

Policy I New Housing Development

Maintaining high quality places where communities can be sustainable and thrive is key to the long-term success of the National Park. This should be undertaken in a way that makes the optimum use of resources, integrates with services and facilities, and promotes the highest standards in design and environmental quality.

The 2015 LDP aimed to enable and actively support the delivery of new housing that is affordable and meets community needs, in turn supporting and growing the economy.

During the period April 2015 to March 2021, the policy was used 844 times in total. CNPA used the policy 41 times and Local Authorities used it 803 times (Figures 8 and 9). It was referred to in around 36% of decisions to approve applications and around 42% that were refused. Figure 10 shows this information geographically.

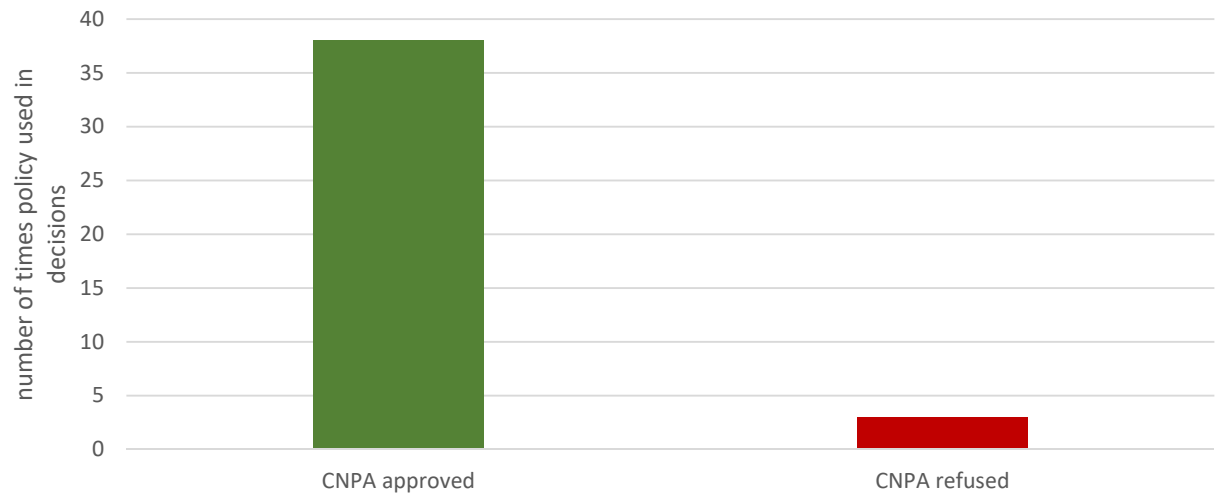


Figure 8: Number of applications determined by CNPA using Policy I during April 2015 – March 2021.

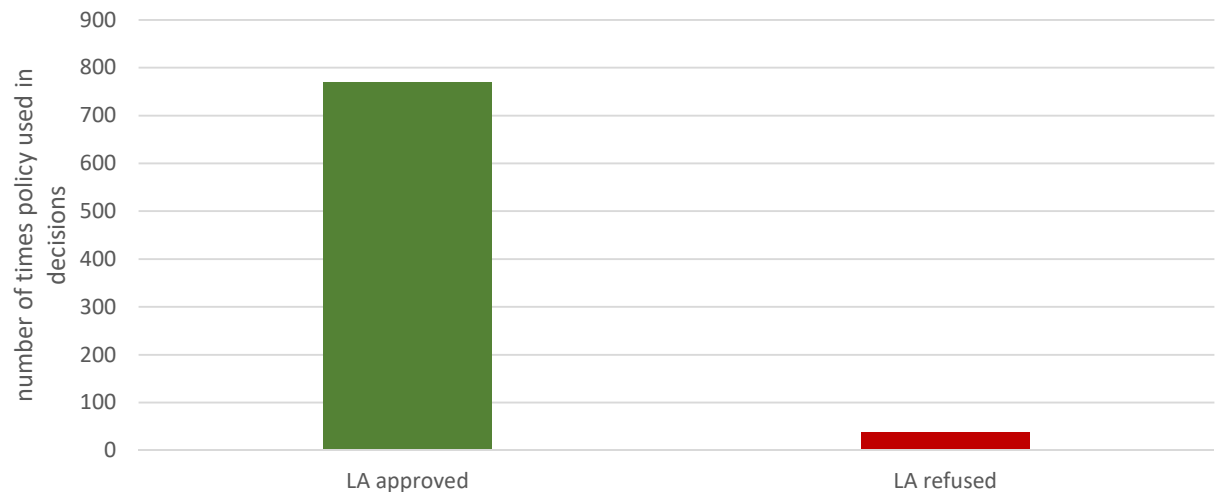


Figure 9: Number of applications determined by the Local Authorities using Policy I during April 2015 – March 2021.



Policy I New Housing Development

- refused
- approved

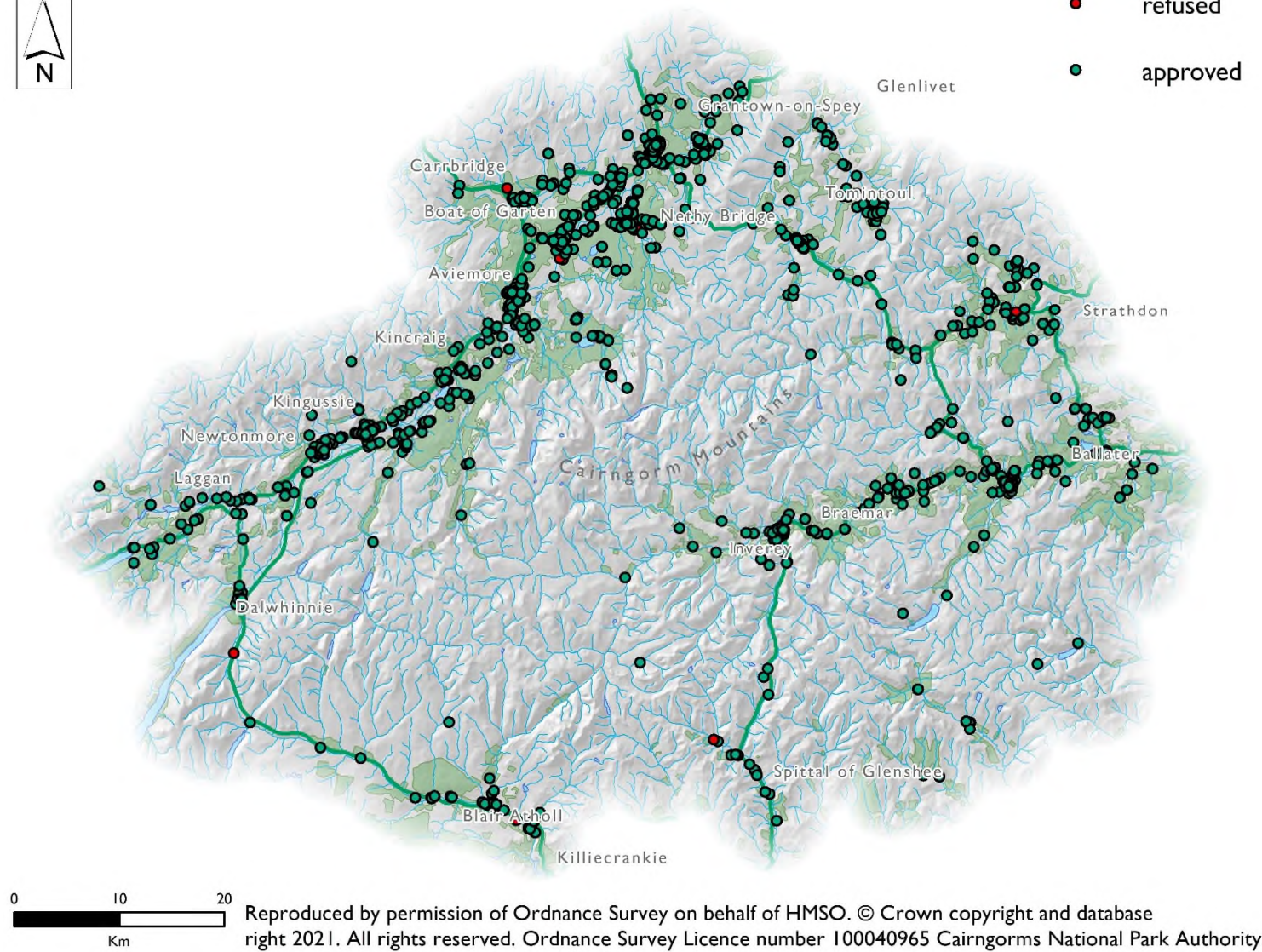


Figure 10: Location of planning applications where Policy I New Housing Development was used.

Policy 2 Supporting Economic Growth

Sustainable growth in the economy of the Park is at the heart of supporting our communities, helping them become and remain vibrant and attractive places for people to live and work.

The 2105 LDP had an important role to play in addressing the economic, social and environmental issues facing towns, settlements and rural areas within the Cairngorms National Park and facilitating successful economic growth in the future.

During the period April 2015 to March 2021, the policy was used 564 times in total. CNPA used the policy 69 times and Local Authorities used it 495 times (Figures 11 and 12). It was referred to in around 38% of decisions to approve applications and around 37% that were refused. Figure 13 shows the information geographically.

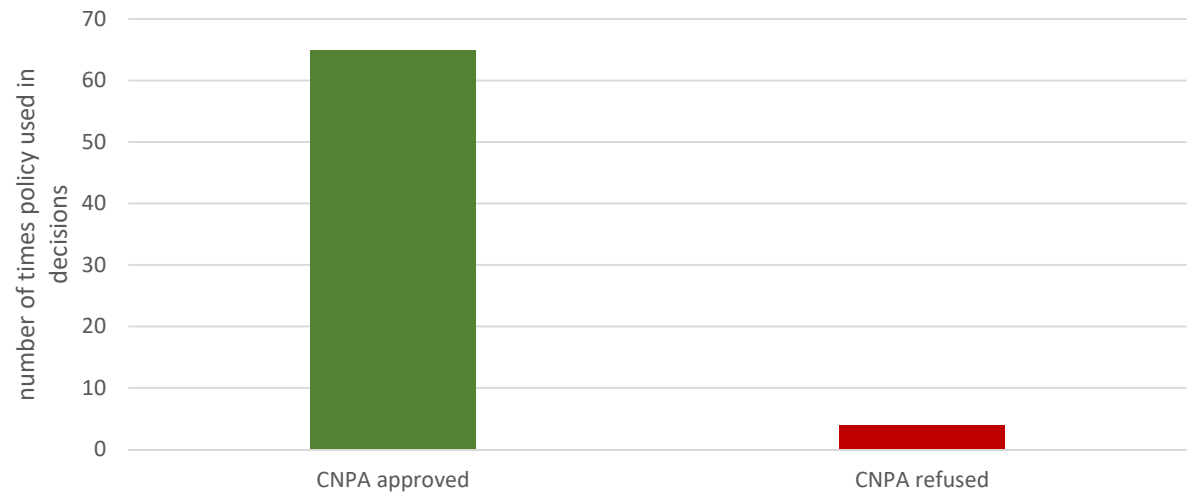


Figure 11: Number of applications determined by CNPA using Policy 2 during April 2015 – March 2021.

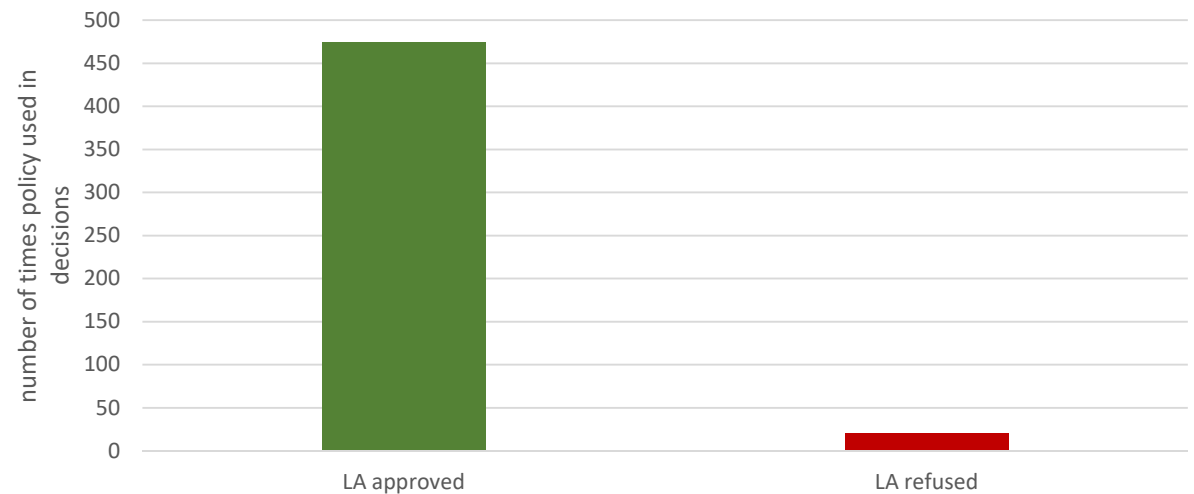


Figure 12: Number of applications determined by the Local Authorities using Policy 2 during April 2015 – March 2021.



Policy 2 Supporting Economic Growth

- refused
- approved

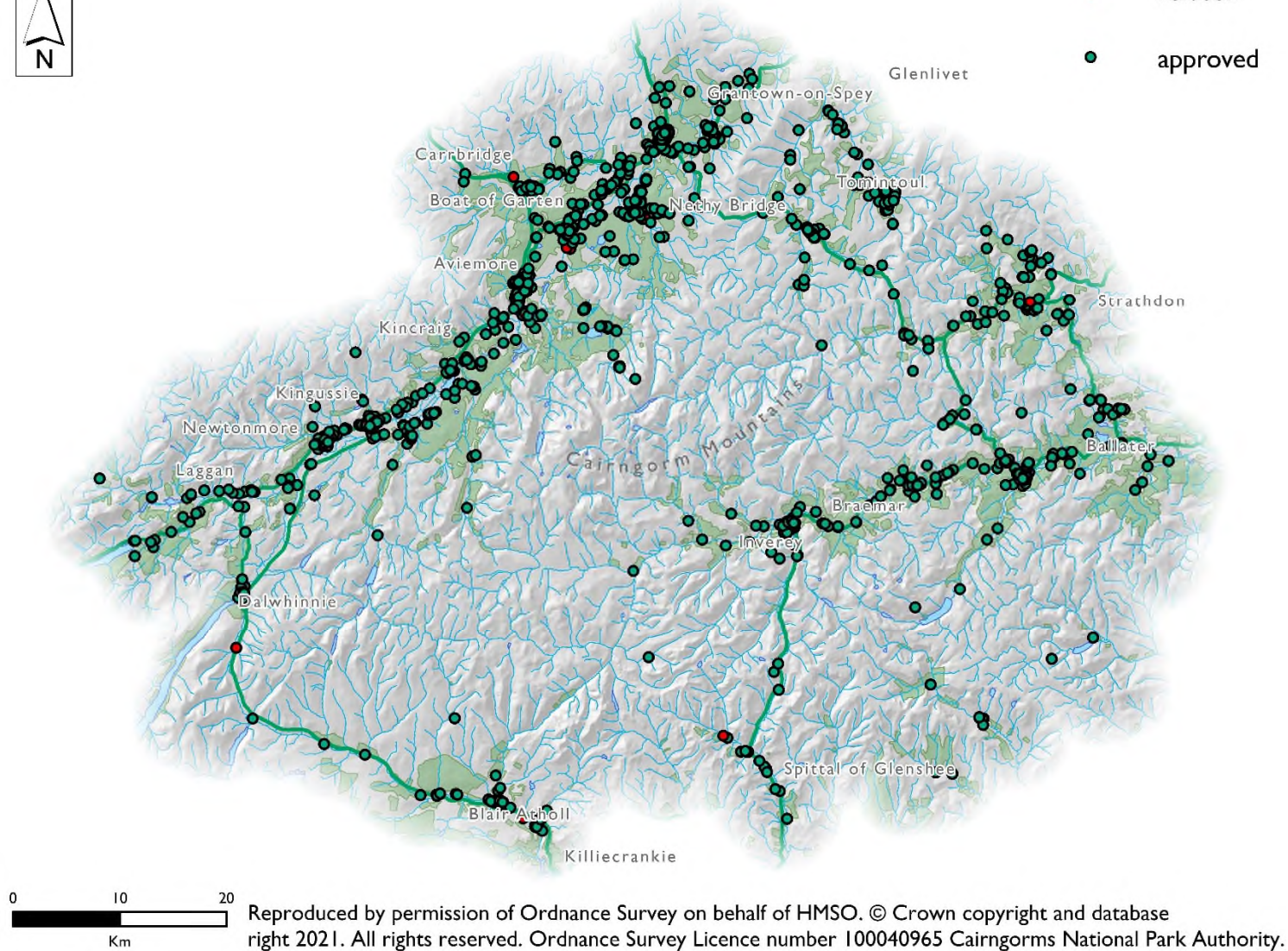


Figure 13: Location of planning applications where Policy 2 Supporting Economic Growth was used.

Policy 3 Sustainable Design

The distinctive character and identity of the Cairngorms National Park's natural and built heritage and settlements contribute to the qualities that make it special. The contribution that built development makes to our sense of place and quality of life is important to those who live and work in and visit the Park. Good design is key to achieving development fit for a National Park.

The policy aimed to ensure that all development, not just the expensive or iconic, delivers high standards of design and contributes to the sense of place.

During the period April 2015 to March 2020, the policy was used 1651 times in total. CNPA used the policy 112 times and Local Authorities used it 1539 times (Figures 14 and 15). It was referred to in around 82% of decisions to approve applications and around 66% that were refused. Figure 16 shows the information geographically.

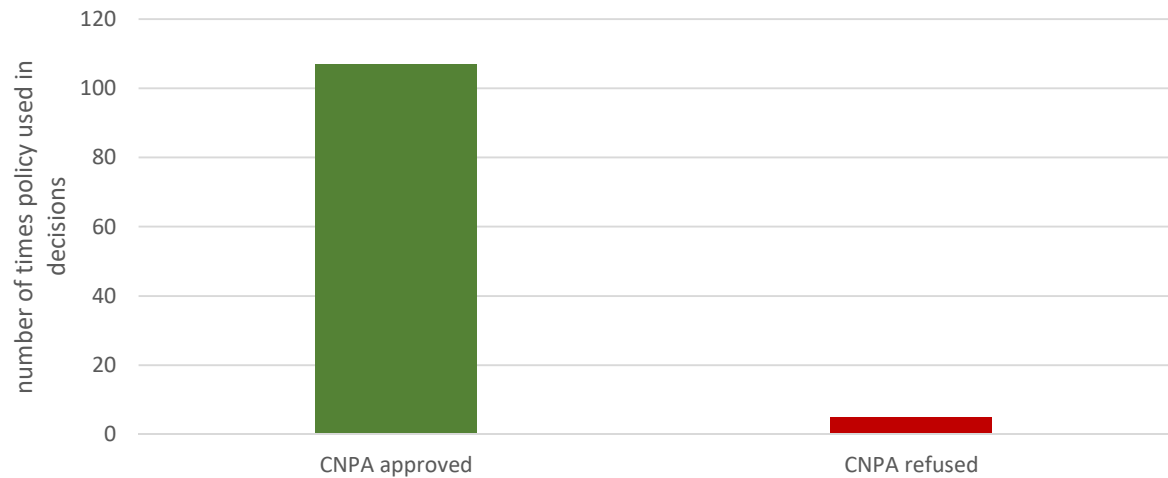


Figure 14: Number of applications determined by CNPA using Policy 3 during April 2015 – March 2021.



Figure 15: Number of applications determined by the Local Authorities using Policy 3 during April 2015 – March 2021.

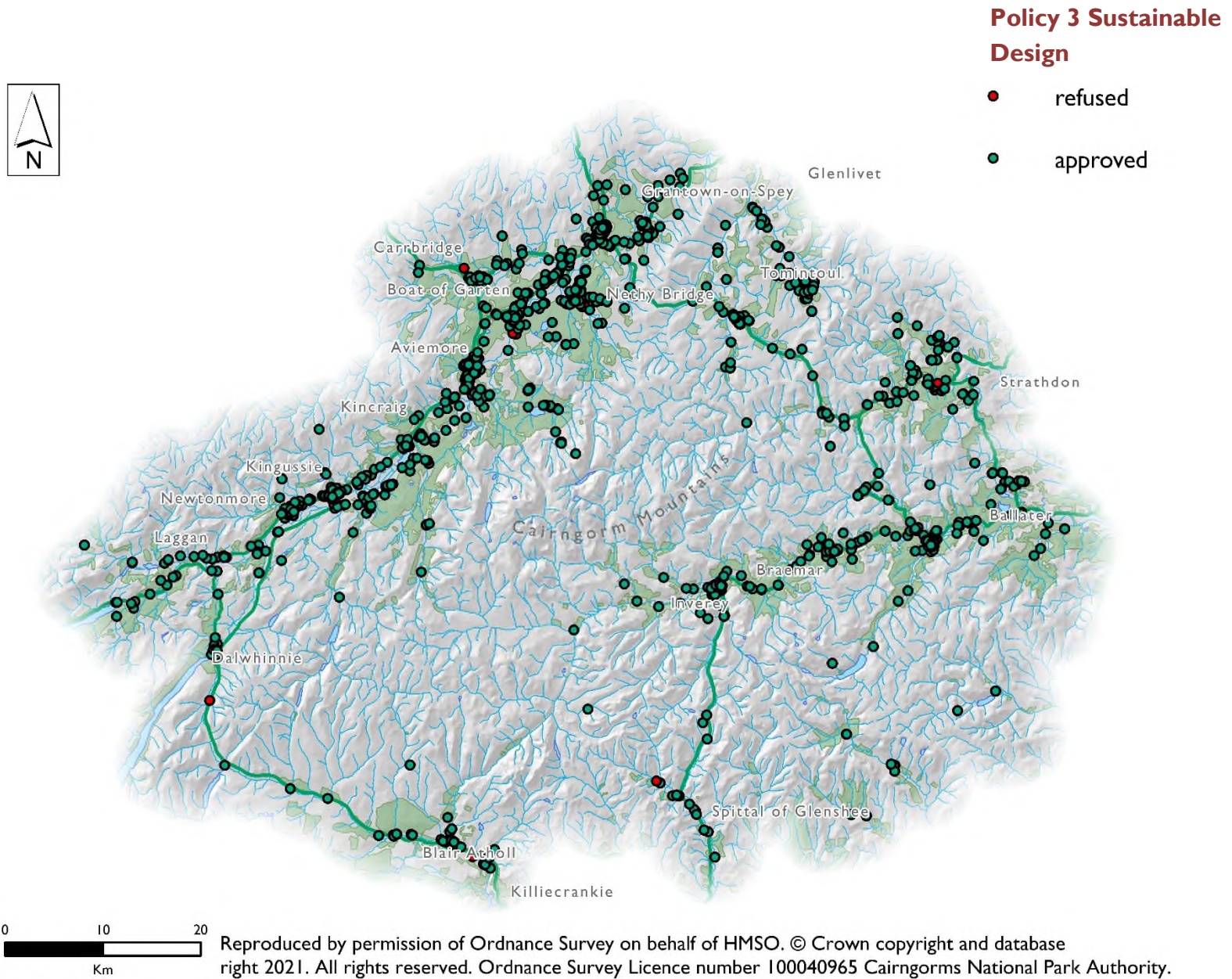


Figure 16: Location of planning applications where Policy3 Sustainable Design was used.

Policy 4 Natural Heritage

The range and quality of natural heritage in the Cairngorms National Park is unique in the UK and is internationally valued. A result of natural processes and land management, many of the special habitats and species of the Cairngorms need active management to continue to thrive. The unique natural heritage underpins all four aims of the Park, and the special qualities created as a result are valued by residents, visitors and those who care about the Park. Safeguarding habitats and species is key to the long-term success of the Park. The policy will ensure that development conserves and enhances the outstanding natural heritage of the Cairngorms National Park. It offers the necessary level of protection from adverse development and enables enhancement. During the period April 2015 to March 2021, the policy was used 666 times in total. CNPA used the policy 109 times and Local Authorities used it 557 times (Figures 17 and 18). It was referred to in around 54% of decisions to approve applications and around 61% that were refused. Figure 19 shows the information geographically.

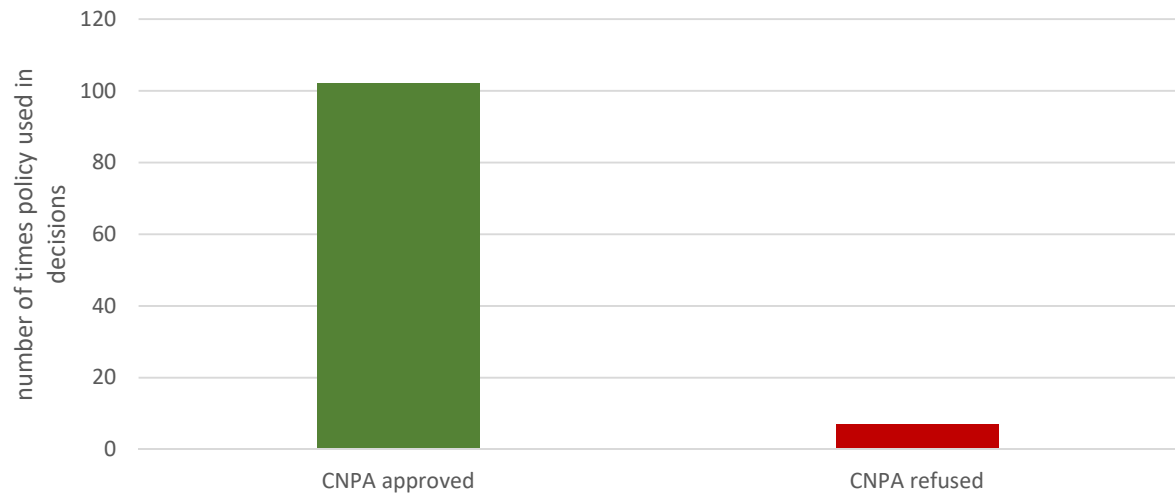


Figure 17: Number of applications determined by CNPA using Policy 4 during April 2015 – March 2021.

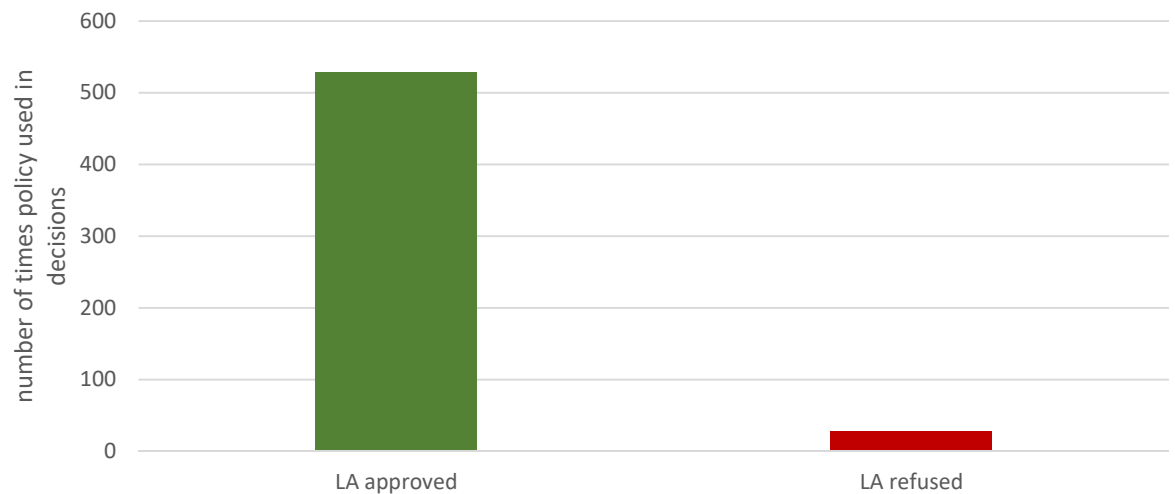
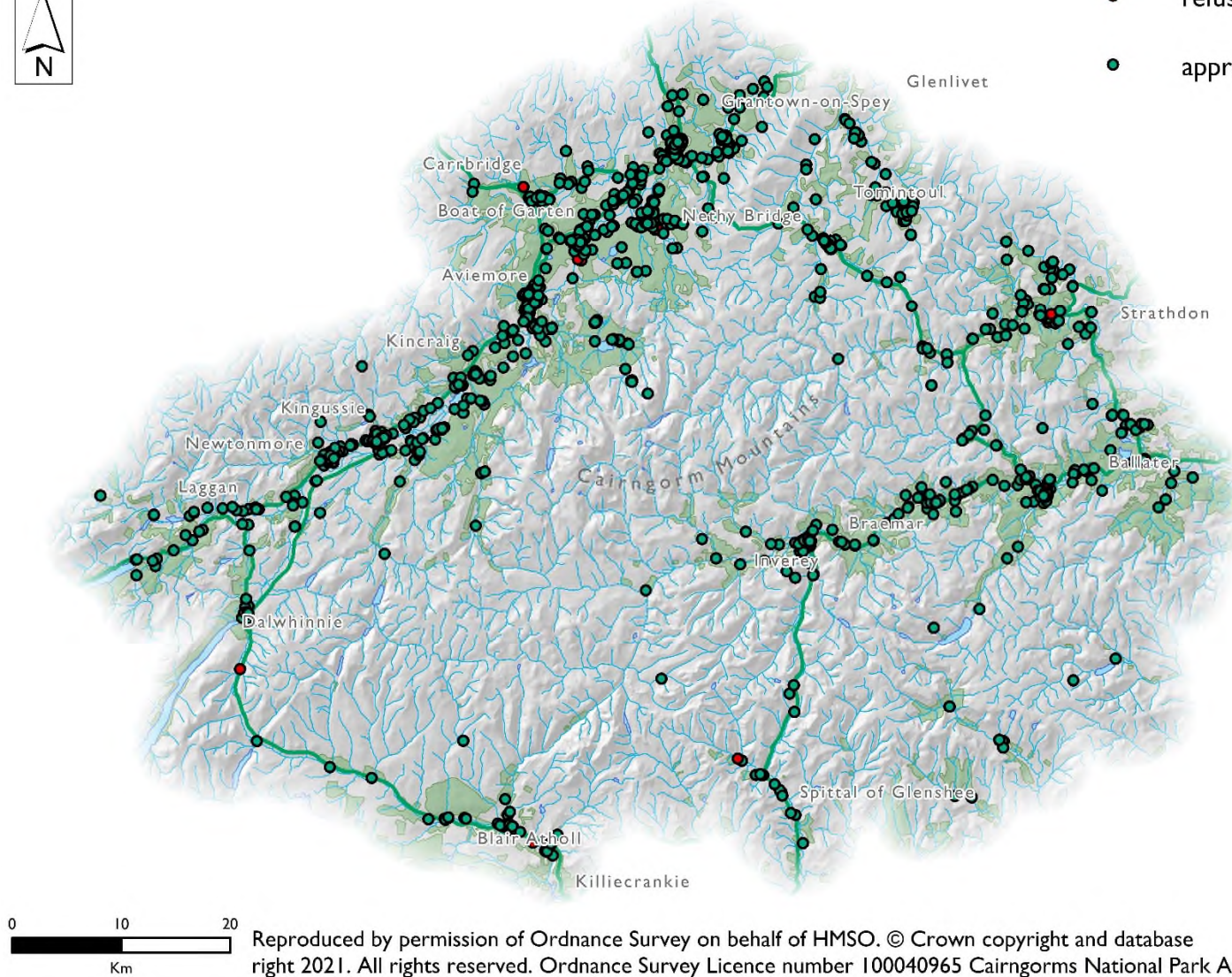


Figure 18: Number of applications determined by the Local Authorities using Policy 4 during April 2015 – March 2021.



Policy 4 Natural Heritage

- refused
- approved



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Figure 19: Location of planning applications where Policy 4 Natural Heritage was used.

Policy 5 Landscape

The landscapes of the Cairngorms are one of the National Park’s most valuable assets, underpinning its character, designation and the appeal of the area as a place to visit, live and invest. The experience of large scale wildness in the National Park is particularly distinctive in UK terms.

The policy sought to conserve and enhance the diverse and spectacular landscapes of the National Park by ensuring that only development which conserves and enhances the special landscape qualities of the Park will be supported. It supported development that contributed to landscape enhancement and protects against development that would erode valued landscape qualities.

During the period April 2015 to March 2021, the policy was used 671 times in total. CNPA used it 113 times and Local Authorities used it 558 times (Figures 20 and 21). It was referred to in around 56% of decisions to approve applications and around 60% that were refused. Figure 22 shows the information geographically.

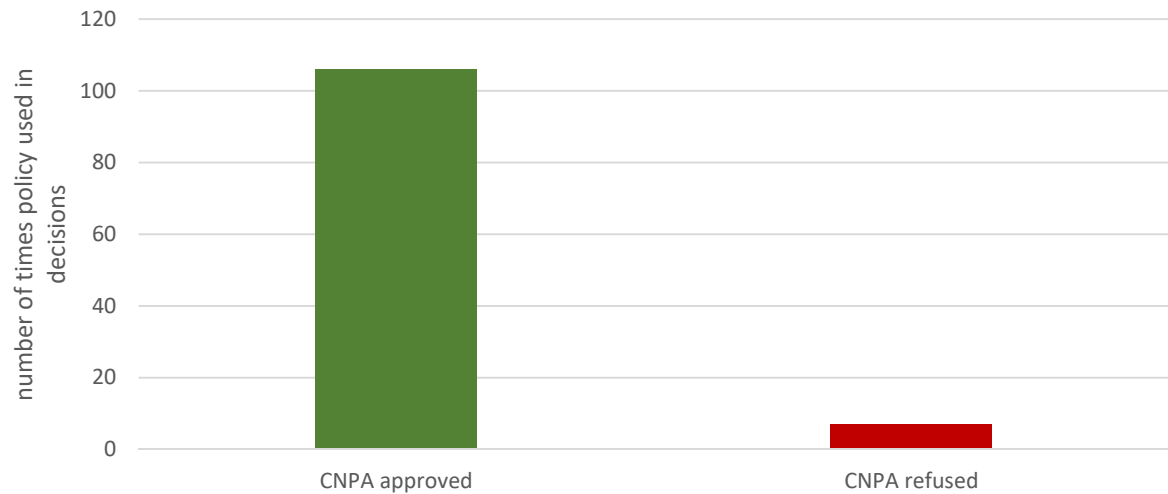


Figure 20: Number of applications determined by CNPA using Policy 5 during April 2015 – March 2021.

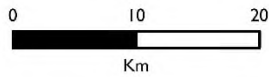
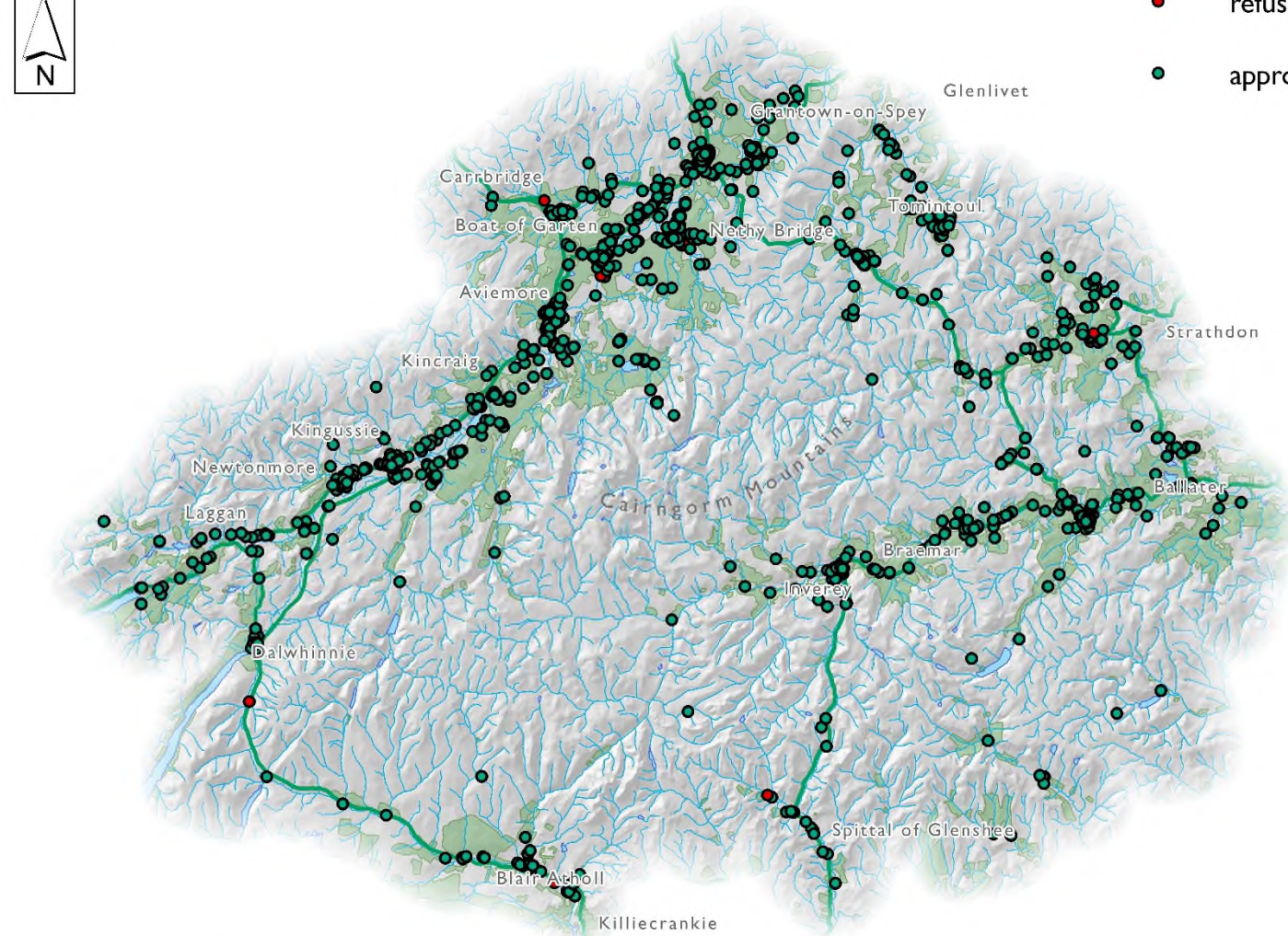


Figure 21: Number of applications determined by the Local Authorities using Policy 5 during April 2015 – March 2021.



Policy 5 Landscape

- refused
- approved



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Figure 22: Location of planning applications where Policy 5 Landscape was used.

Policy 6 The Siting and Design of Digital Communications Equipment

The policy is intended to support world class digital technology through the provision of the most up to date networks to serve homes and business premises, whilst ensuring that all such infrastructure installations are sited and designed to keep environmental impacts to a minimum.

During the period April 2015 to March 2021, the policy was used 88 times in total. CNPA used the policy three times and Local Authorities used it 85 times (Figures 23 and 24). It was referred to in around 3% of decisions to approve applications and around 1% that were refused. Figure 25 shows the information geographically.

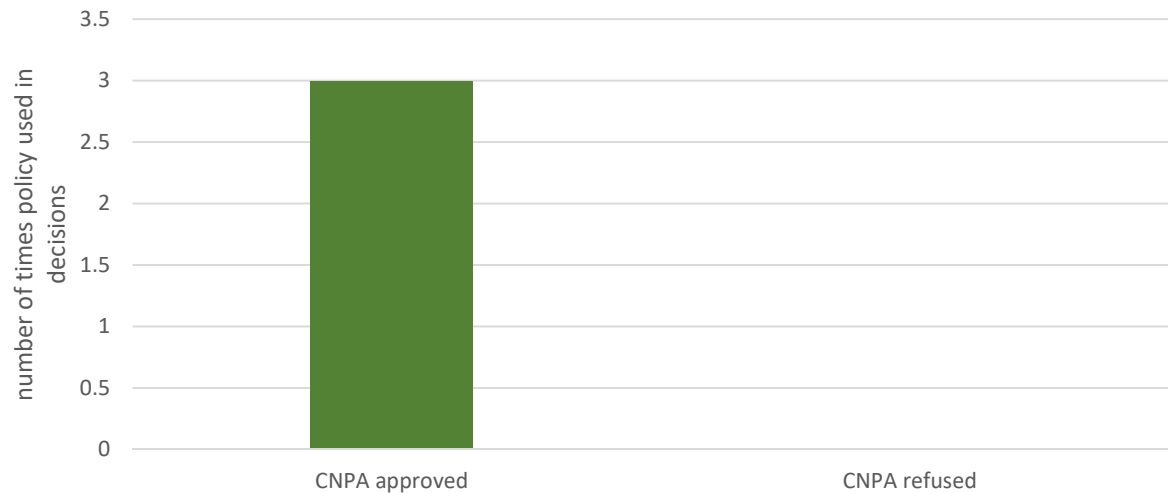


Figure 23: Number of applications determined by CNPA using Policy 6 during April 2015 – March 2021.

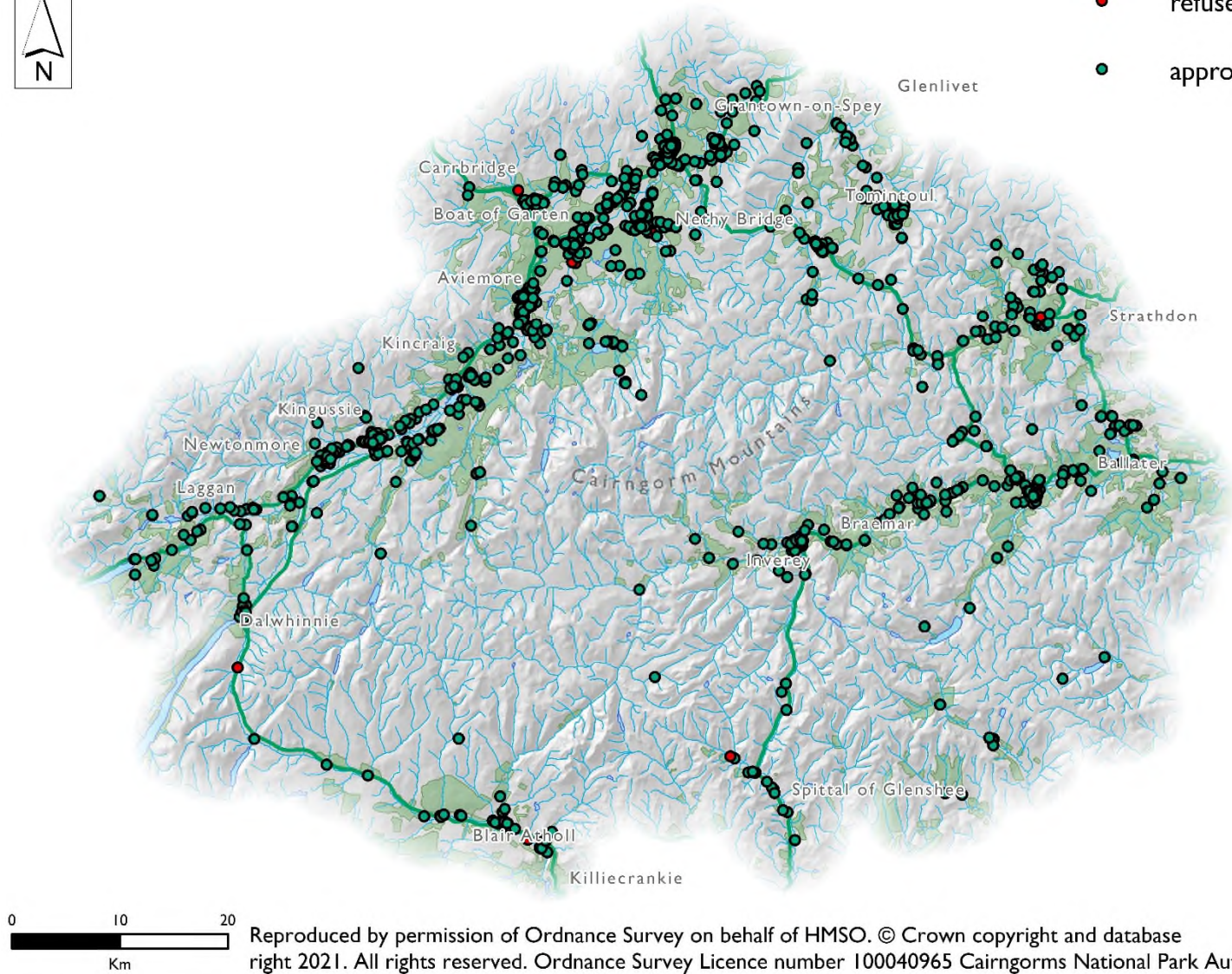


Figure 24: Number of applications determined by the Local Authorities using Policy 6 during April 2015 – March 2021.



Policy 6 The Siting and Design of Digital Communications Equipment

- refused
- approved



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Figure 25: Location of planning applications where Policy 6 The Siting and Design of Digital Communications Equipment was used.

Policy 7 Renewable Energy

The National Park has an abundance of natural resources which provide options to generate renewable energy. This includes energy from biomass, hydro, solar, heat pumps, anaerobic digestion, energy from waste and some wind energy.

The policy aimed to enable appropriate renewable energy generation by harnessing the Park's natural resources in a way which achieves the collective delivery of the four aims of the Park. It set a framework to harness this energy potential, allowing the National Park to play its part in addressing the issues of climate change and fuel poverty.

During the period April 2015 to March 2021, the policy was used 62 times in total. CNPA used the policy 15 times and Local Authorities used it 47 times (Figures 26 and 27). It was referred to in around 6% of decisions to approve applications and around 13% that were refused. Figure 28 shows this information geographically.

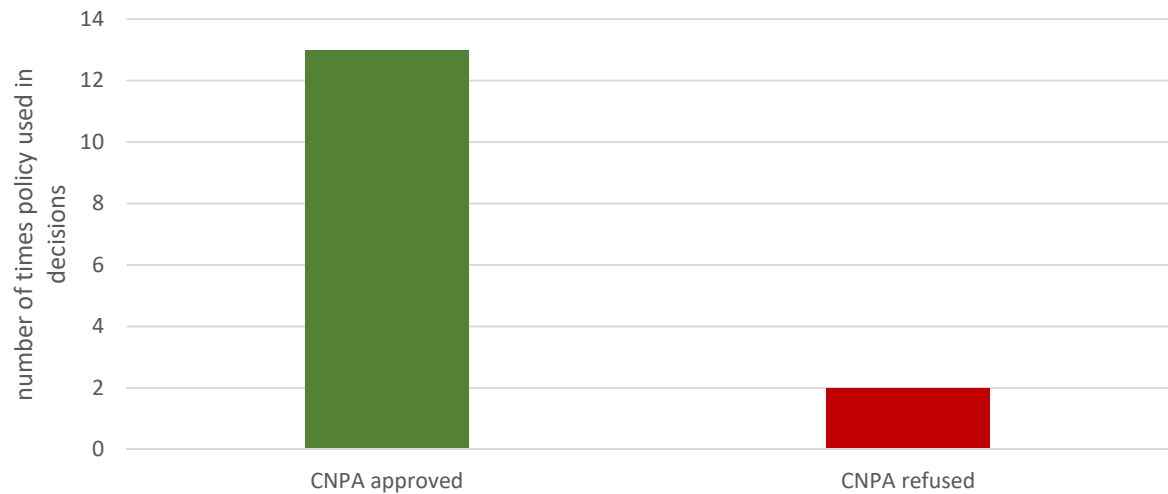


Figure 26: Number of applications determined by CNPA using Policy 7 during April 2015 – March 2021.

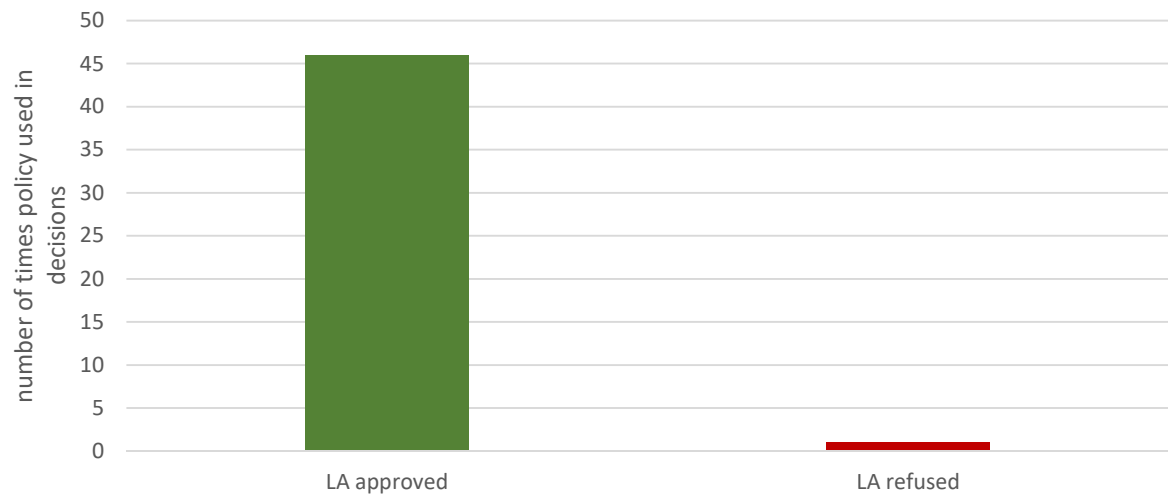


Figure 27: Number of applications determined by the Local Authorities using Policy 7 during April 2015 – March 2021.



Policy 7 Renewable Energy

- refused
- approved

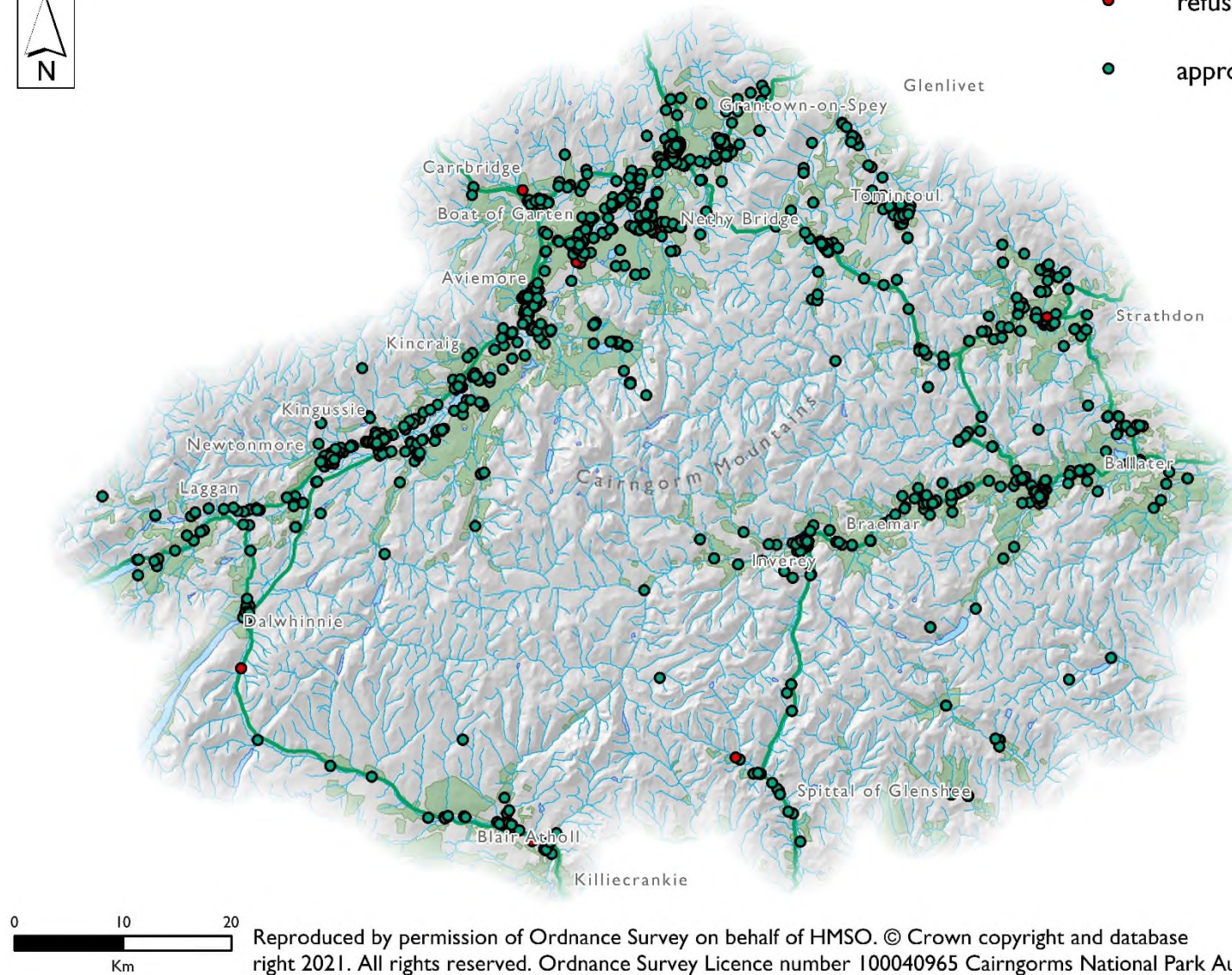


Figure 28: Location of planning applications where Policy 7 renewable Energy was used.

Policy 8 Sport and Recreation

The National Park offers outstanding opportunities for formal and informal recreation, from sports pitches and sports centres to ski centres, golf courses and mountain bike centres, and a network of paths that links communities to the countryside. There are also many other public and amenity open spaces, ranging from public parks, landscaping schemes within large-scale developments, community sports hubs and formal equipped play areas.

The policy aimed to ensure the needs of local communities and visitors for recreational space and facilities are accommodated, and existing facilities protected. This included informal and formal recreation provision.

During the period April 2015 to March 2021, the policy was used 110 times in total. CNPA used the policy 28 times and Local Authorities used it 82 times (Figures 29 and 30). It was referred to in around 13% of decisions to approve applications and around 9% that were refused. Figure 31 shows the information geographically.

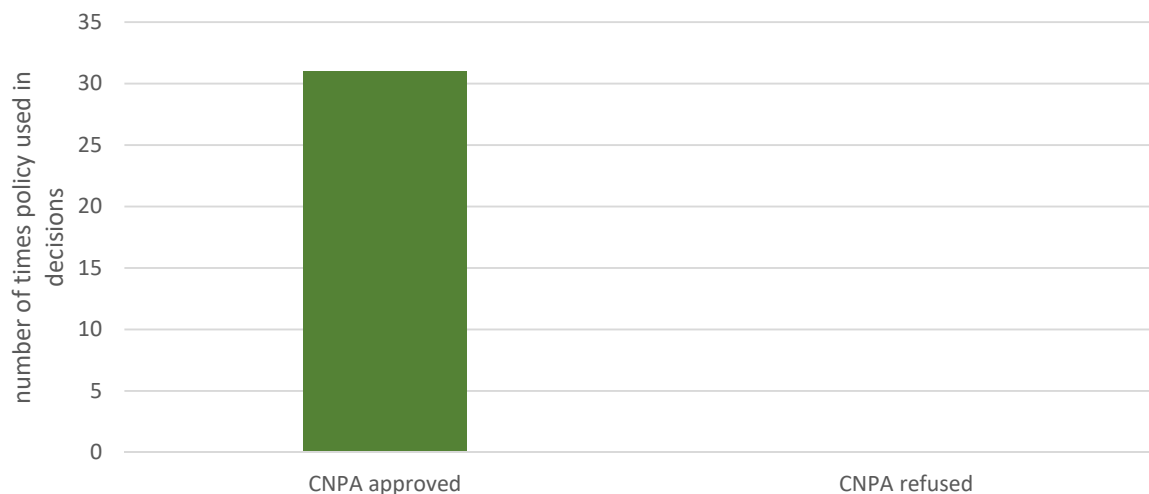


Figure 29: Number of applications determined by CNPA using Policy 8 during April 2015 – March 2021.

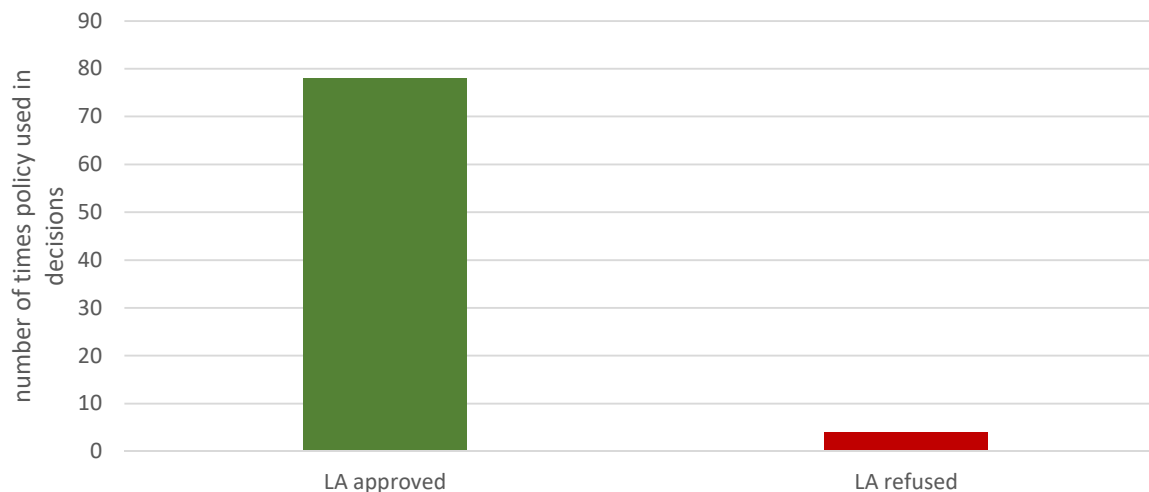


Figure 30: Number of applications determined by the Local Authorities using Policy 8 during April 2015 – March 2021.



Policy 8 Sport and Recreation

- refused
- approved

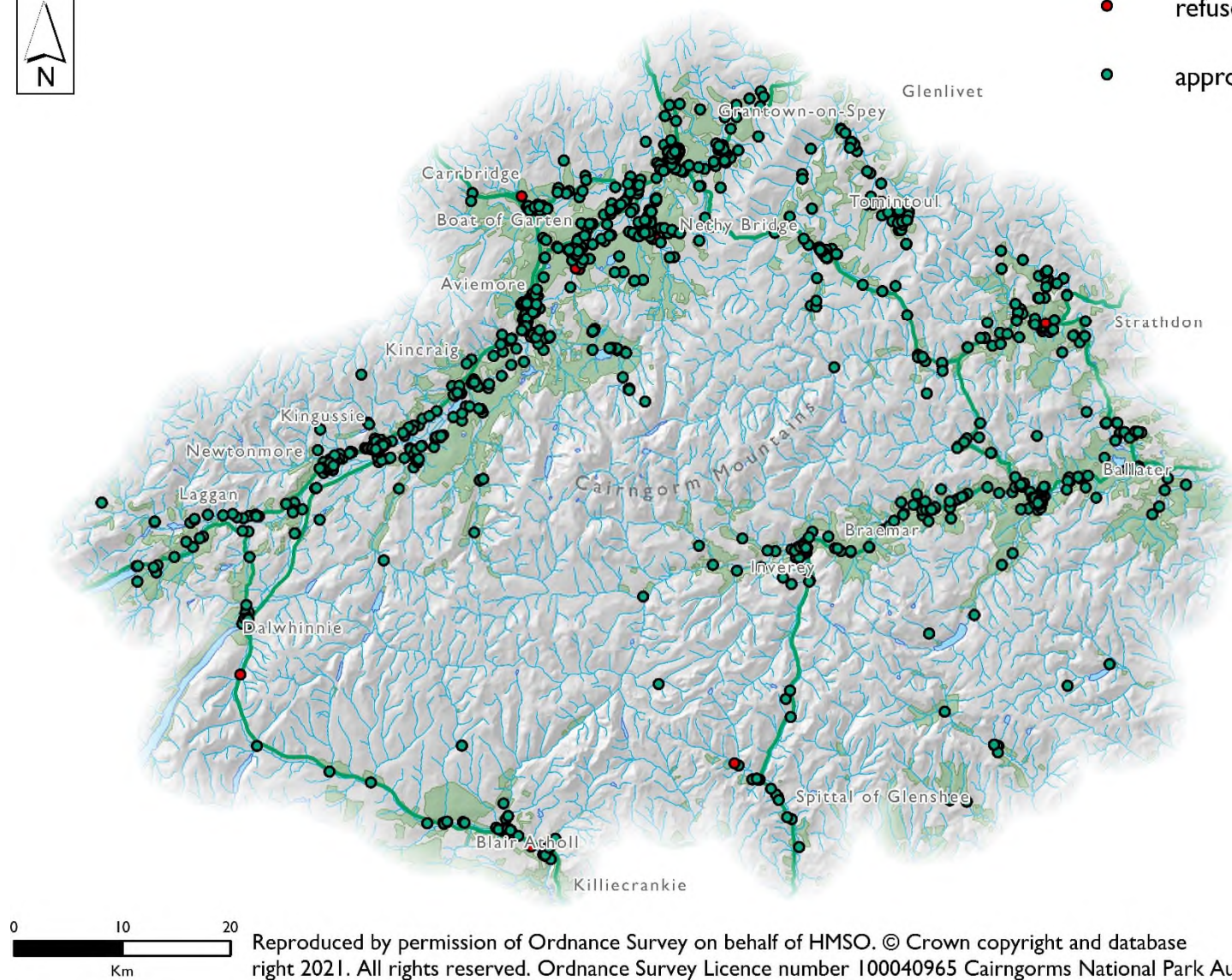


Figure 31: Location of planning applications where Policy 8 Sport and Recreation was used.

Policy 9 Cultural Heritage

The cultural heritage of the Cairngorms ranges from archaeological remains to internationally significant listed buildings, important architectural and historic townscapes, historic gardens and landscapes, to ancient routes through the National Park. All of these provide a clear link to the history of this part of Scotland and the part it played over time to create the National Park and communities we know and value today.

The policy aimed to conserve and enhance the rich cultural heritage of the National Park. It had a key role in ensuring all development made an appropriate contribution to the conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage in the National Park.

During the period April 2015 to March 2021, it was used 512 times in total. CNPA used the policy 27 times and Local Authorities used it 481 times (Figures 32 and 33). It was referred to in around 25% of decisions to approve applications and around 11% that were refused. Figure 34 shows the information geographically.

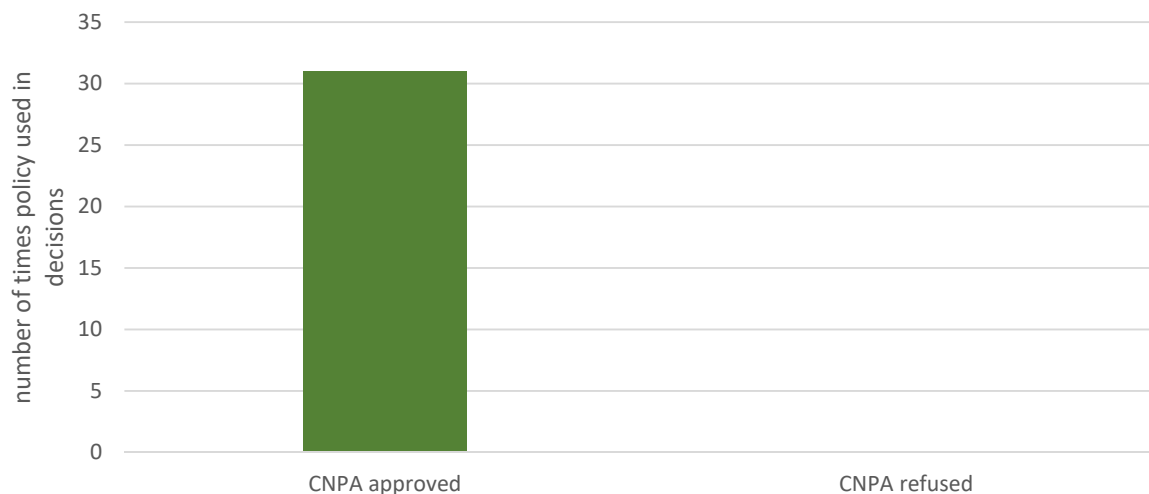


Figure 32: Number of applications determined by CNPA using Policy 9 during April 2015 – March 2021.

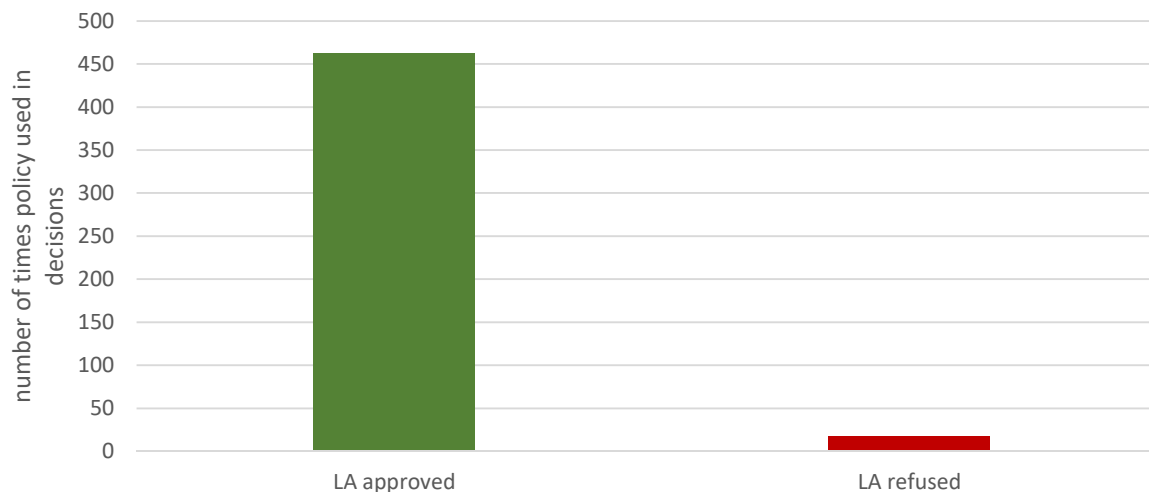


Figure 33: Number of applications determined by the Local Authorities using Policy 9 during April 2015 – March 2021.

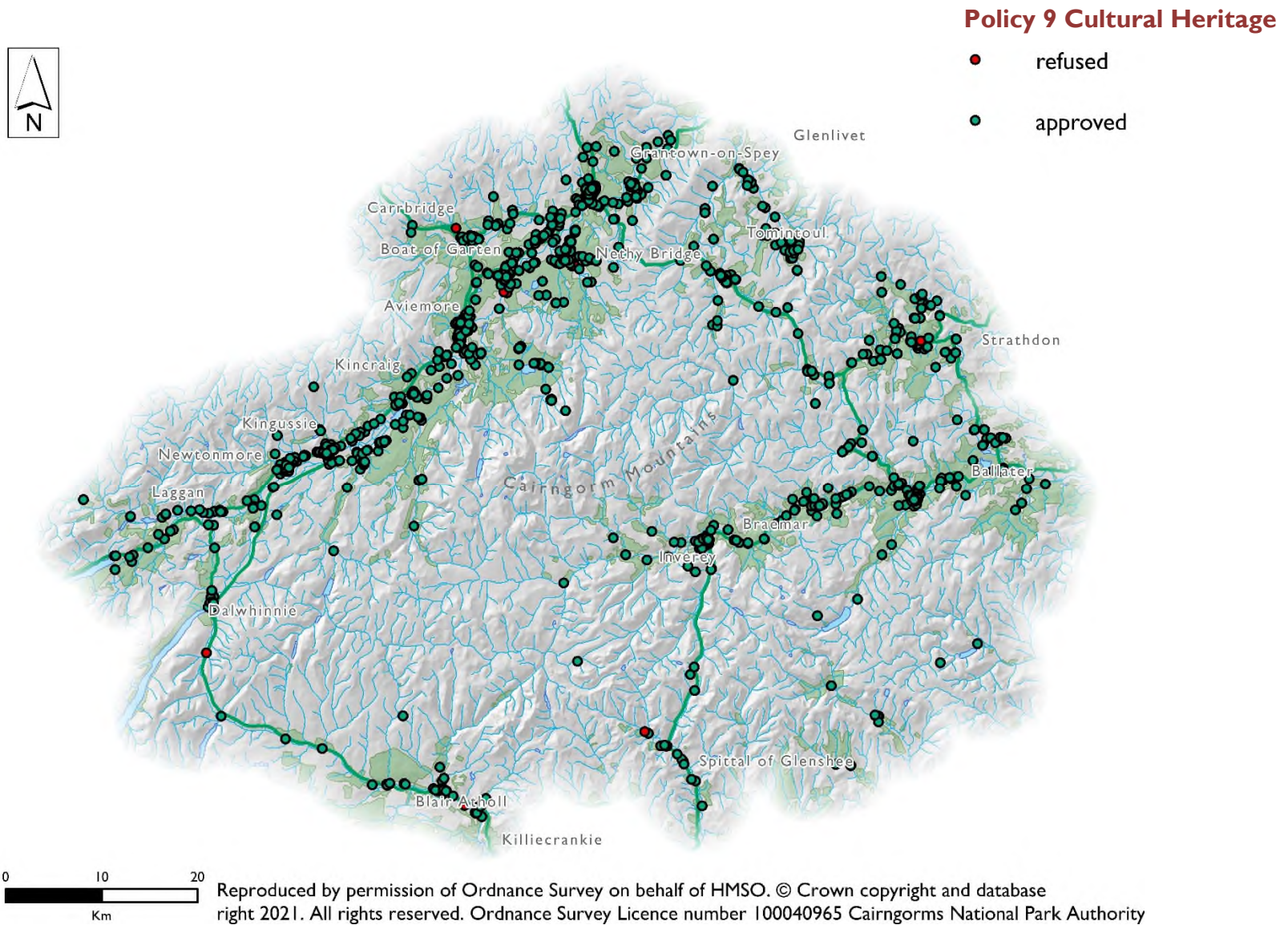


Figure 34: Location of planning applications where Policy 9 Cultural Heritage was used.

Policy 10 Resources

Reducing our consumption and protecting our limited resources is integral to conserving what is important about the Park, and helping our communities adapt to more sustainable way of living. The policy aimed to reduce the overall resource use footprint of the National Park. It sought to protect resources, while facilitating appropriate development in ways that create a net positive outcome. It complemented legislative obligations beyond the requirements of planning law, and allowed sufficient flexibility to adapt to changes and developments in technology and research associated with the protection and exploitation of resources.

During the period April 2015 to March 2021, the policy was used 503 times in total. CNPA used the policy 83 times and Local Authorities used it 420 times (Figures 35 and 36). It was referred to in around 42% of decisions to approve applications and around 37% that were refused. Figure 37 shows the information geographically.

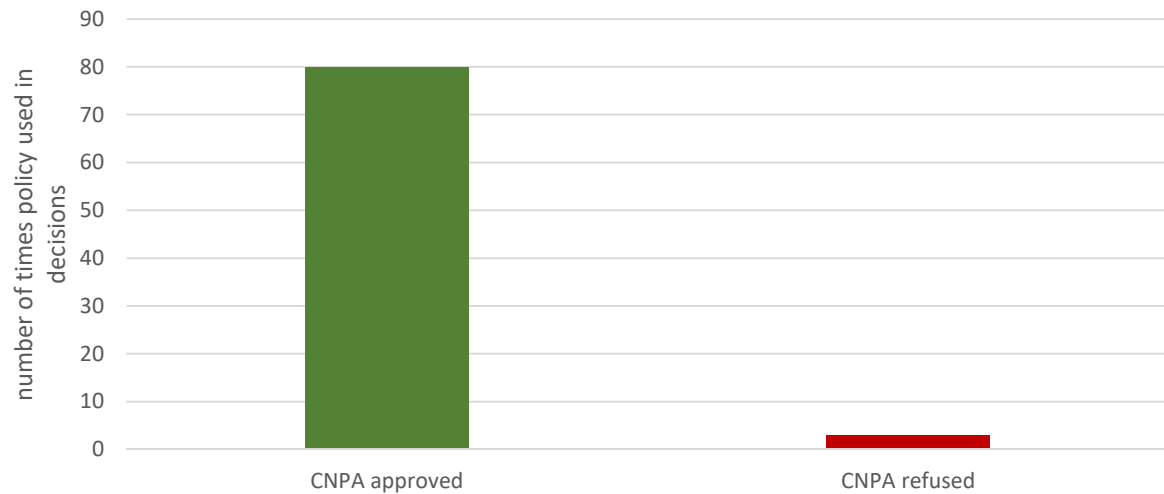


Figure 35: Number of applications determined by CNPA using Policy 10 during April 2015 – March 2021.

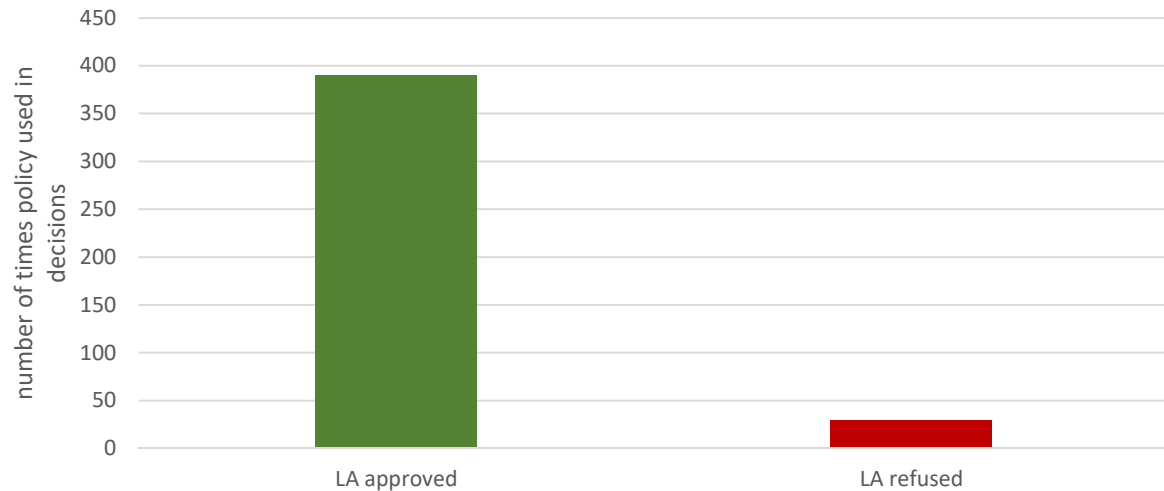
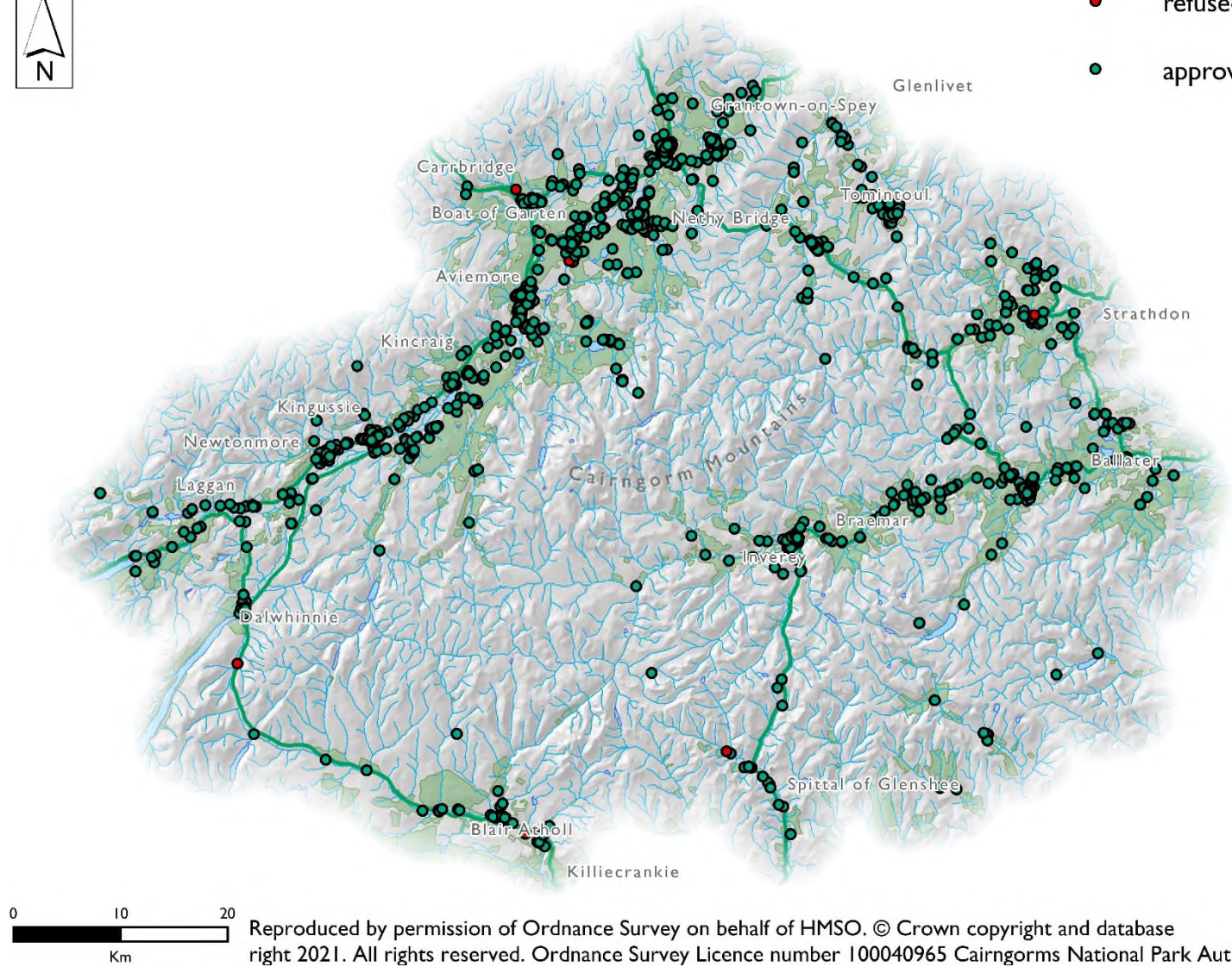


Figure 36: Number of applications determined by the Local Authorities using Policy 10 during April 2015 – March 2021.



Policy 10 Resources

- refused
- approved



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Figure 37: Location of planning applications where Policy 10 Resources was used.

Policy 11 Developer Contributions

New developments can have an impact on facilities, services and infrastructure outwith the development site. It is important that these impacts are addressed as part of the development, so that communities are not disadvantaged as a result. Developer contributions can help to overcome problems in granting planning permission by reducing, eliminating or compensating for some negative impacts arising from the proposed development.

The policy aimed to ensure the delivery of a range of improvements that may be needed as a result of new development, while ensuring that contributions are at an appropriate level that maintains viability for the developer. During the period April 2015 to March 2021, the policy was used 181 times in total. CNPA used the policy 22 times and Local Authorities used it 159 times (Figures 38 and 39). It was referred to in around 12% of decisions to approve applications and around 22% that were refused. Figure 40 shows the information geographically.

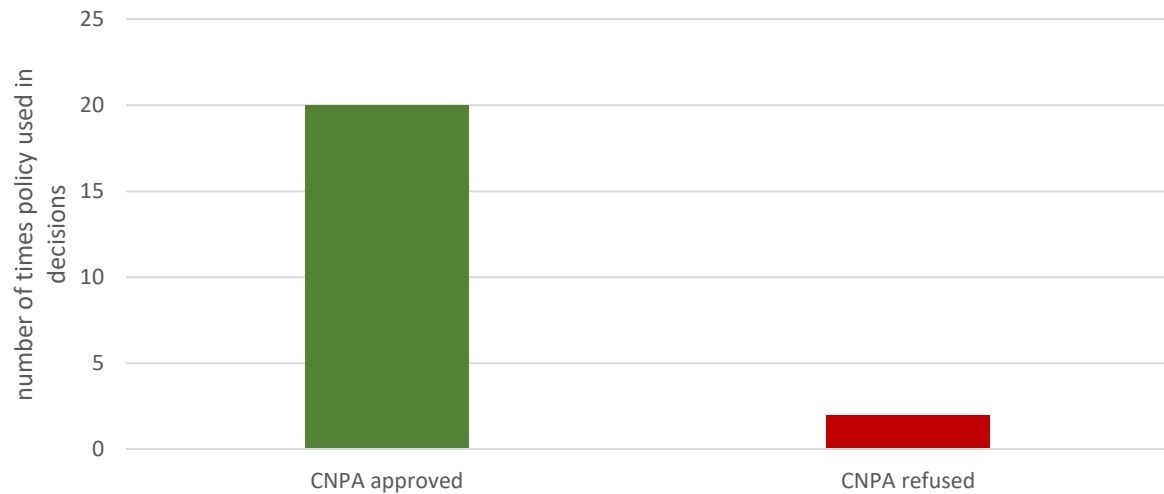


Figure 38: Number of applications determined by CNPA using Policy 11 during April 2015 – March 2021.

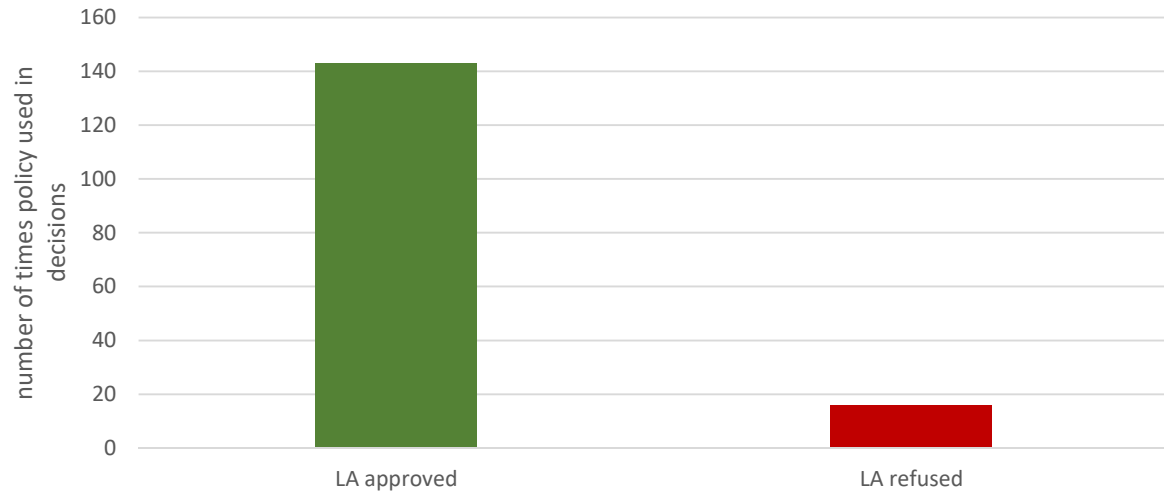
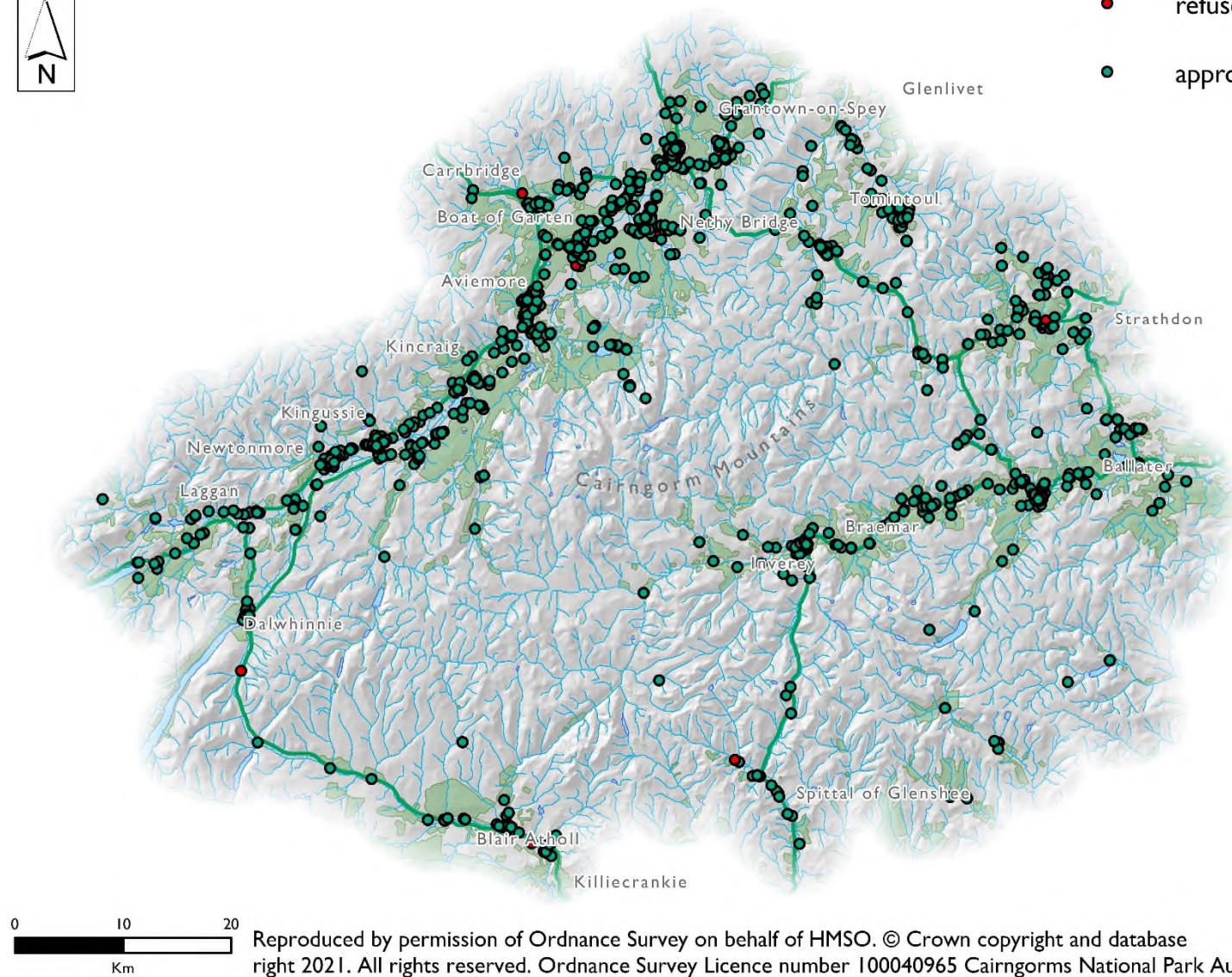


Figure 39: Number of applications determined by the Local Authorities using Policy 11 during April 2015 – March 2021.



Policy 11 Developer Contributions

- refused
- approved



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Figure 40: Location of planning applications where Policy 11 Developer Contributions was used.

Appeals

Where available, information was gathered on the number of appeals made to Planning and Environmental Appeals Division of Scottish Government and the Local Review Bodies of Local Authorities during the monitoring period. Records of 34 appeals were found. Of these, there were 21 appeals were against refusal of planning permission. 20 referred to LDP policies in the decision notice, with 8 referring to sub-policies. The policies and sub-policies referred to are shown in Table 2. Policies 1 (new housing development) and 3 (sustainable design) were the most commonly referred to in appeal decisions. There were 7 appeals were against a decision by the Park Authority. Of these; 4 were allowed (planning permission granted), 2 dismissed (refusal upheld), and 1 withdrawn. There were 23 valid appeals against Local Authority decisions, of which 12 were allowed (permission granted) and 11 dismissed (refusal upheld).

2015 LDP policy use, 2015/16 to 2020/21	Number of times referred to in appeal decisions
Policy 1 New housing development	12
Policy 1.6 Affordable housing provided using cross subsidy from other housing	1
Policy 1.7 Alterations to existing houses	2
Policy 2 Supporting economic growth	4
Policy 2.2 Tourism and leisure development	4
Policy 3 Sustainable design	15
Policy 3.1 Design statements	2
Policy 4 Natural Heritage	6
Policy 4.3 Other important natural and earth heritage sites and interests	3
Policy 4.4 Protected species	3
Policy 4.5 Other biodiversity	2
Policy 4.6 All development	1
Policy 5 Landscape	6
Policy 8.1 New development	1
Policy 9 Cultural heritage	2
Policy 9.1 National designations	1
Policy 10 Resources	2
Policy 11 Developer contributions	2

Table 2: Policies referred to in appeal decision notice.

Allocated Sites

Detailed monitoring on the status of the LDP's allocated sites is reported in the Plan's Action Programme. Therefore, for site information, the Action Programme should be referred to – available via the link on <https://cairngorms.co.uk/planning-development/ldp-2021/>.