

Annex 4

Operational Plan 2025/26

Corporate plan			Financial requirements £				Staff resource FTE	
Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
A1	Net zero							
	Delivering baseline report, monitor and annually report on progress towards Cairngorms National Park achieving net-zero and subsequently acting as a carbon sink	Climate Adaptation Fund		200,000			0.25	
	Lead on delivering Cairngorms 2030, empowering people to contribute to net zero ambitions	See cairngorms 2030 programme						
A2	Woodland expansion							
	Deliver 1,000 hectares (ha) of new or expanded woodland with new and innovative uses of the Forest Grant Scheme as part of Cairngorms 2030.	Two woodland creation schemes are in preparation on Atholl Estates. These will enhance biodiversity and landscape around Glen Fender and Dalnamein.				48,000 Plus funding given directly to partners	0.7	0.3
	Promote and administer a Woodland Challenge Fund to support land managers in the preparation of Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS) applications.	This funding is designed to reduce the cost of developing woodland creation proposals by funding some surveys and the creation of plans.	12,000					
A3	Peatland restoration							
	Support and finance the restoration of peatland, with 6,500 hectares restored by 2027	We aim to run at least 12 peatland restoration projects across the Cairngorms National Park in 2025-26. Within these projects we aim to bring some 1500ha of peatland under restoration.	20,000	3,000,000			8.5	0.5

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A4	Deer and herbivore impacts							
	Work with Deer Management Groups, as part of Cairngorms 2030, to deliver strategic land management plans to support a reduction in deer numbers.	Deer reductions are being achieved in some areas of the Cairngorms National Park through a Section 7 Agreement. We have sought to incentivise deer reductions in high density areas through a venison subsidy scheme. The results of that scheme will be evaluated in March 2025. This evaluation will then influence subsequent discussions with Deer Management Groups (DMG).	10,000				0.8	0.2
	Species management - geese	Resident greylag geese in the Dulnain strath and parts of Strathspey have been subject to control for 18 months. There is some evidence that resident numbers have reduced significantly. Numbers will be assessed by Sep 25 and decisions made on future control.	15,000					
	Investigate and trial models which achieve policy outcomes and retain skills and employment in the sector	Red Deer Hind Incentive Scheme Income from NatureScot (Nature Recovery Fund)	40,000 (40,000)					
	Cairngorms 2030 3 Nature Recovery					550,000		
A5	Moorland management							
	Lead the East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership (ECMP) as a demonstration of sustainable moorland management delivering both public and private interests.	We will fund projects which enhance moorland management and biodiversity within ECMP.	20,000	10,000			0.4	
A6	Gamebird management							

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Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
	Establish baseline and assess impact of gamebird releases on native biodiversity. Produce report and recommendations on potential options based on impact assessment.	A partnership project with Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) is underway to determine numbers of gamebirds released within six catchments in the Cairngorms National Park. Further work in subsequent years will seek to determine the ecological and socio-economic impacts of those releases.					0.1	
A7	Fire management							
	Develop an integrated wildfire management plan	Communication of the fire byelaw to the public by a range of means including physical signage across the Cairngorms National Park.	75,000				0.1	
	Establish a baseline of deep peat	Estate muirburn plans will need an assessment of peat depth across each estate. The methodology determining how this should be carried out is being developed but it is likely there will be a need for land managers to roll this out across much of the Cairngorms National Park in 2025/26.						
A8	Farming							
	Deliver Cairngorms 2030 Future Farming projects supporting farmers in achieving carbon neutrality and helping address the twin crises in the context of a profitable farm business.					251,000	1.2	0.6
	Work with partners to support farmers and crofters through transitions	Nature Friendly Farming- ie waders, species rich grassland and flood resilience projects / initiatives. Supporting delivery of enhancing farmland biodiversity and building resilience to climate change alongside productive farm businesses. Support biodiversity and carbon auditing.	21,000	63,500				
A9	Freshwater systems							

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Aim	Park Authority delivery	Thumbnail sketch	Resource	Capital	NRF	C2030	Operational plan	C2030
	Deliver Cairngorms 2030 Climate Resilient Catchment projects demonstrating restoration complimentary to surrounding land use that benefits communities and wildlife.					466,000	0.4	1.6
	Develop long term approach to water management and abstraction	Support Catchment Management Partnerships and Fisheries Boards. Three full time employees (FTE) supported to develop and deliver restoration projects across Dee, Esk and Don catchments		82,000				
		River and wetland restoration research and monitoring. Evaluate success of methods and biodiversity response, inform future works.	13,000					
A10	Ecological network							
	Design, deliver and showcase a template for Nature Networks to guide habitat restoration priorities and support land use decision making.	Opportunity mapping and design including Glenshee montane woodland scheme and pollinator plan. Production and design of Nature Networks map, call for sites.	39,000				0.6	
	Develop, publicise and administer a system for encouraging land managers to engage with creating Nature Networks including a call for sites.	Montane, pond, aspen and riparian woodland network delivery. Multiple projects working with delivery partners ie aspen network with Trees for Life		30,000	60,000			
A11	Ecological restoration							
	Define and establish a baseline on land managed principally for ecosystem restoration. Encourage more land in the National Park to be managed principally for ecosystem	Freshwater ecological restoration focused on riparian planting and large woody structures.			30,000		0.7	

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	restoration to meet the target in the Park Plan.							
		Support development and delivery of the Dee Catchment Resilience Strategy	5,000					
		Delivering wood ant and narrow-headed ant captive rearing and translocation work based on feasibility work in 2024	10,000		15,000			
		Restoration grazing feasibility study and workshop	15,000					
	Facilitate landscape scale partnerships	Supporting the Angus Glens and landscape scale partnerships and initiatives ie workshops.	10,000					
A12	Cairngorms Nature Index							
	Design, deliver and showcase a Cairngorms Nature Index	Website portal development and engagement. Analysis and data cost.	32,000				1.0	
A13	Species recovery							
	Lead on beaver reintroduction.	Preparatory works for year three releases, ongoing survey and monitoring; delivery of management and mitigation plan; research, comms and engagement.	60,000					
	Lead on a capercaillie emergency plan and long -term strategy.	Support delivery of the project Legacy and Emergency Plan including contribution to staff cost of project coordinator staff and reinforcement feasibility study.	34,000					
	Lead on the Cairngorms raptor project.	Survey and monitoring focusing on merlin; support for hen harrier surveys in ECMP, raptor tagging, research and engagement.	49,000					
	Freshwater pearl mussel	Delivery of Recovery Strategy activities including Spey in catchment translocation Autumn 2025. Support development of			70,000			

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		captive breeding for Dee population. Survey work on Don.						
	Species recovery partner project support	Supporting Cairngorms Nature Action Plan partnership projects- Rare Invertebrates Cairngorms (RIC), Rare Plants x 2, Saving Wildcats, Skills for Bees, Strathspey Farming for Waders (SFFW), Wader Monitoring post. Survey of priority species and Cairngorms Nature Index (CNI) indicator species.	7,500		45,000			
	Comms and engagement	Land management and Cairngorms Nature engagement, showcasing conservation and land management activities and best practice across the Cairngorms National Park.	5,000					
	Lead oversight of delivery of Cairngorms Nature Action Plan. Coordinate and support Cairngorms Nature partnership and Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group	Lead oversight of delivery of Cairngorms Nature Action Plan including investment portfolio. Production and launch of new Cairngorms Nature Action for 2025 - 2030.	26,500					
A14	Green investment							
	Pilot approaches to blended public and private finance to deliver net zero and biodiversity targets, whilst also providing long-term benefits for land managers, investors and local communities.	Continue with the Delnadamph pilot peatland restoration project in partnership with Canup Ltd and Palladium and learn lessons from it. Continue to monitor developments in this field through liaison with Scottish Government (SG), Scottish Land and Estates (SLE), West Estates Scotland (WES) and others.						Partner activity
	Cairngorms 2030 6 Green finance and community wealth building					15,000		
B1	Working-age population							
	Deliver and monitor Local Development Plan 2021	Deliver and monitor LDP 2021	LDP costs under Place (C1)					

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	Lead development of new Local Development Plan (LDP)	Building the evidence base for the next LDP and starting early engagement with partners and the public on the evidence.						
	Lead the coordination and development of Cairngorms Youth Action Team		Cairngorms Youth Action Team supported via CLLD funding (Corporate objectives)					
B2	Wellbeing economy							
	Lead the development of Cornerstone Indicators	Cornerstone indicators used to monitor NPPP and Wellbeing Economy Action Plan.					0.2	0.2
	Lead development of Wellbeing Economy Action Plan to integrate economic and community-led development							
	Cairngorms 2030 7 Wellbeing economy					5,000		
B3	Real Living Wage							
	Promote the development of Real Living Wages through Economic Steering Group as part of Wellbeing Economy Action Plan	Information sharing and promotion of real living wage benefits and value to businesses and economy.					0.1	
B4	Skills and training							
	Develop the Park Authority as exemplar of good practice in youth training and skills – emphasis on Planning Service, Peatland, Ranger Service and Outdoor Access and Corporate functions	Junior Ranger programme used to generate interest in countryside careers. Four seasonal trainee ranger posts offered each summer.	45,000				0.6	
	Financially support targeted skills initiatives, mentoring schemes and collaborative business organisations (e.g. Growbiz,	Grants to community-focused organisations, including Growbiz, Cairngorms Business Partnership and Countryside Learning Scotland.	45,000					

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	Countryside Learning Scotland, Cairngorms Business Partnership)							
B5	Community assets and land							
	Coordinate and promote the development of Local Action Plans / Local Place Plans	Programme of refreshing Local Action Plans underway and incorporating a clearer spatial framework to help inform the planning process.					0.2	
B6	New approaches to citizen participation							
	Cairngorms 2030 15 community managed grant scheme 11 effective community engagement					252,000 204,000		6.1
B7	Community-led planning and development							
	Coordinate and promote the development of Local Action Plans / Local Place Plans		75,000					
	Act as accountable body or other supporting role as required to underpin delivery of CLLD in Cairngorms.		60,000				0.3	1.0
	Cairngorms 2030 12 Climate learning and education					12,000		
B8	Gaelic language and culture							
	Develop the Gaelic Language Plan for the Park Authority						0.2	

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	Promote Gaelic especially through work on sustainable tourism, community development and relevant heritage projects		3,500					
B9	Mental and physical health							
	Lead development and delivery of Active Cairngorms Action Plan	Supporting volunteer led Health Walks programme through training, advice and developing new Health Walk groups.	5,000					
	Deliver Cairngorms 2030 projects Cairngorms 2030 8 Public health and the outdoors 9 Outdoor dementia resource centre	Green Health link workers liaison with NHS / GP practices to offer green health opportunities / nature prescriptions				3,000 94,000		1.0
B10	A Park for All							
	Lead on developing delivering new Active Cairngorms Action Plan	Support for Youth Action Team and their activities (includes Youth LAG/ funding programme). Junior Ranger programme. Engagement activity including in schools through Countryside Rangers.	75,000					
	Deliver the Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan and Sustainable Tourism Action Plan.	Direct capital investment and grant aid to partners to deliver improved / more accessible facilities and path network - see C9						
	Develop Equalities Mainstreaming Report and Plan							
	Refresh and promote Park for All campaign	Activity continuing for 2025/26 through B9, B11 & C8.						
	Lead coordination of Equalities Advisory Panel	Work by the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) 18 members will continue, with monthly						

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		meetings and ongoing advice on developing our projects, plans and strategies.						
B11	Volunteering and outdoor learning							
	Lead on delivering new Active Cairngorms Action Plan							
	Lead on recruitment / training / coordination of volunteers to care for Park	Recruitment and resourcing of volunteers and subsequent training. Operation of a volunteering portal to match volunteers with organisations / land managers offering volunteer opportunities. Work with third sector partners to offer volunteer opportunities for disadvantaged groups.	40,000				2	
C1	Access to housing							
	Deliver and monitor Local Development Plan 2021	Deliver and monitor Local Development Plan 2021						
	Lead development of new LDP	Building the evidence base for the next LDP and starting early engagement with partners and the public on the evidence.	78,000				3	
	Support community-led housing network	Bringing community housing projects together to share knowledge and experience.						
C2	New housing							
	Deliver and monitor Local Development Plan 2021	Deliver and monitor Local Development Plan 2021						
	Lead development of new LDP	Building the evidence base for the next LDP and starting early engagement with partners and the public on the evidence.					4	
	Coordinate community-led housing network	Bringing community housing projects together to share knowledge and experience.						
C3	Housing and community benefit							
	Promote Review through Wellbeing Economy Action Plan						2	

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	Lead development of new LDP	Building the evidence base for the next LDP and starting early engagement with partners and the public on the evidence.						
C4	Village and town centres							
	Promote Review through Wellbeing Economy Action Plan						1.2	
	Lead development of new LDP	Building the evidence base for the next LDP and starting early engagement with partners and the public on the evidence.						
C5	Visitors to the National Park							
	Deliver Sustainable Tourism Action Plan and Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan.	Infrastructure Plan now updated. Infrastructure investment supported through grants programme.	20,000				1.1	
	Lead the development of Active Cairngorms Action Plan							
	Undertake visitor surveys and collate and share visitor data		20,000					
C6	A sustainable destination							
	Deliver Sustainable Tourism Action Plan and Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan.	Infrastructure Plan activity under C9. Advice provided to partners and communities to support their projects.						0.2
	Cairngorms 2030 13 Climate conscious communities					10,000		
C7	Transport to and around the National Park							
	Deliver Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan.	Most transport delivery via C2030						4.6
	Cairngorms 2030 17 Cycle friendly Cairngorms 18 Active communities 19 Sustainable travel 20 Changing travel behaviours					324,000 337,000 119,000 49,000		

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C8	Accessible path and cycle network							
	Speyside Way, community paths and upland path maintenance	Investment in path upgrades and ongoing maintenance of elements of path network for which the Park Authority is responsible, notably the Speyside Way.	45,000	61,000			1.0	
C9	High quality visitor experience							
	Deliver Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan	Direct investment in path improvements and grant aid to partners to deliver new or improved infrastructure.		312,000				
	Develop and deliver Active Cairngorms Action Plan.	Undertaking of statutory access duties including promotion of responsible behaviour. Use of digital approaches for monitoring of path network.	15,000				3	
	Coordinate family of Ranger Services	Management of the Park Authority ranger service and support / advice / training to partner ranger services. Grant aid to partner ranger services.	240,000					
C10	Cultural heritage							
	Lead development of Cairngorms Cultural Heritage network as part of Wellbeing Economy Action Plan with focus on community involvement and interpretation		25,000				0.6	1.2
	Cairngorms 2030 14 Communities arts and culture					26,000		
	Cairngorms 2030 10 Landscape and communities					64,000		
Communications objectives								
	Communications	Ongoing communications management: publications and interpretation, stakeholder engagement, social media, website etc.	173,000	25,000			6.3	1.0

