

Cairngorms National Park

Economic Action Plan 2019 - 2022

1. Introduction

The Cairngorms National Park covers 6% of Scotland and is the UK's most important place for wildlife and the conservation of nature. It is home to around 18,000 people who live in towns, villages and dispersed rural communities. The National Park's outstanding natural and cultural heritage attracts around 1.9 million visitors each year, underpinning many jobs.

There is increasing interest in Scotland in the concept of "natural capital" which describes the stocks of natural assets on which our lives depend and which aims to highlight the connections between natural resources and economic development. If ever there was a place where these connections are both obvious and important then it must be in the Cairngorms National Park.

Our long-term Vision for the area is set out in the National Park Partnership Plan:

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

The word "thrive" comes from an old Norse word meaning to flourish and prosper and is a good word to summarise our approach: growing the economy and the natural capital of the Park sustainably and in an inclusive way.

This Action Plan is a plan for all the relevant organisations in the area, in the public, private and third sectors. We want to ensure that we work well together to deliver the strategy set out in the National Park Partnership Plan and to focus our efforts on priority issues in the years ahead.

2. Strategic Context

National Context

The National Performance Framework and Scottish Economic Strategy set out the Government's vision for sustainable and inclusive economic growth:

Scotland is to be a leader in the technological and social innovations of the future. There are plans to harness that innovation to boost productivity and business competitiveness, improve lives for the better across all of Scotland, and to export our solutions, goods and services to the rest of the world. Competitive, innovative businesses focused on best practice, leadership and management are vital to delivering this vision. They support sustainable jobs, incomes

and our quality of life. The Government is committed to work in partnership with business to deliver the kind of economy that we want.

In October 2018 Scotland's Economic Action Plan was launched, highlighting, amongst other things, the importance of the rural economy, where 20% of Scottish population live, and making commitments to:

- support the development of a diverse and healthy rural economy through the growth of traditional and non-traditional sectors
- invest in our infrastructure to deliver housing, improved access to services and connectivity enabling improved sustainable and inclusive economic growth
- deliver a rural skills action plan to ensure that rural enterprises have access to a highly-skilled workforce

In September 2018 the National Council of Rural Advisers recommended in their final report that "...a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive rural economy can only be achieved by recognising its strategic importance – and effectively mainstreaming it within all policy and decision-making processes." The Council further recommended the establishment of a Rural Economic Framework, aligned to the National Performance Framework to enable a new approach and delivery model for rural policy, development support and investment. A new Scottish Government Rural Economy Action Group met for the first time in October 2019, chaired by Carol Tannahill, the Scottish Government's Chief Social Policy Adviser.

The declaration by Scottish Government in April 2019 of the global climate emergency and the recent royal assent for the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 also provide an overarching theme for the development of a sustainable economy in the Cairngorms National Park.

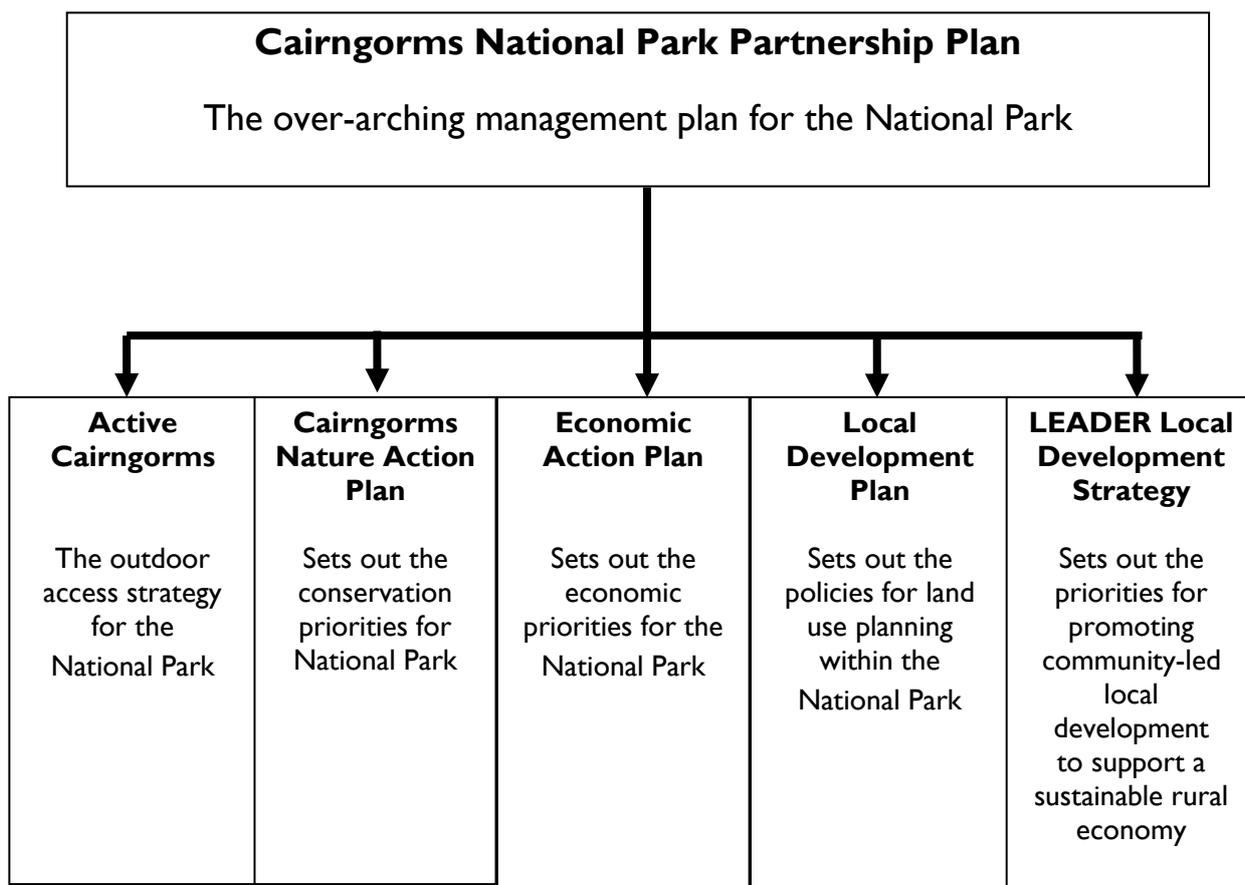
The Cairngorms National Park context

The Cairngorms National Park is the largest Park in the UK and was designated in September 2003 with four aims set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000:

1. To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area
2. To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area
3. To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public
4. To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities

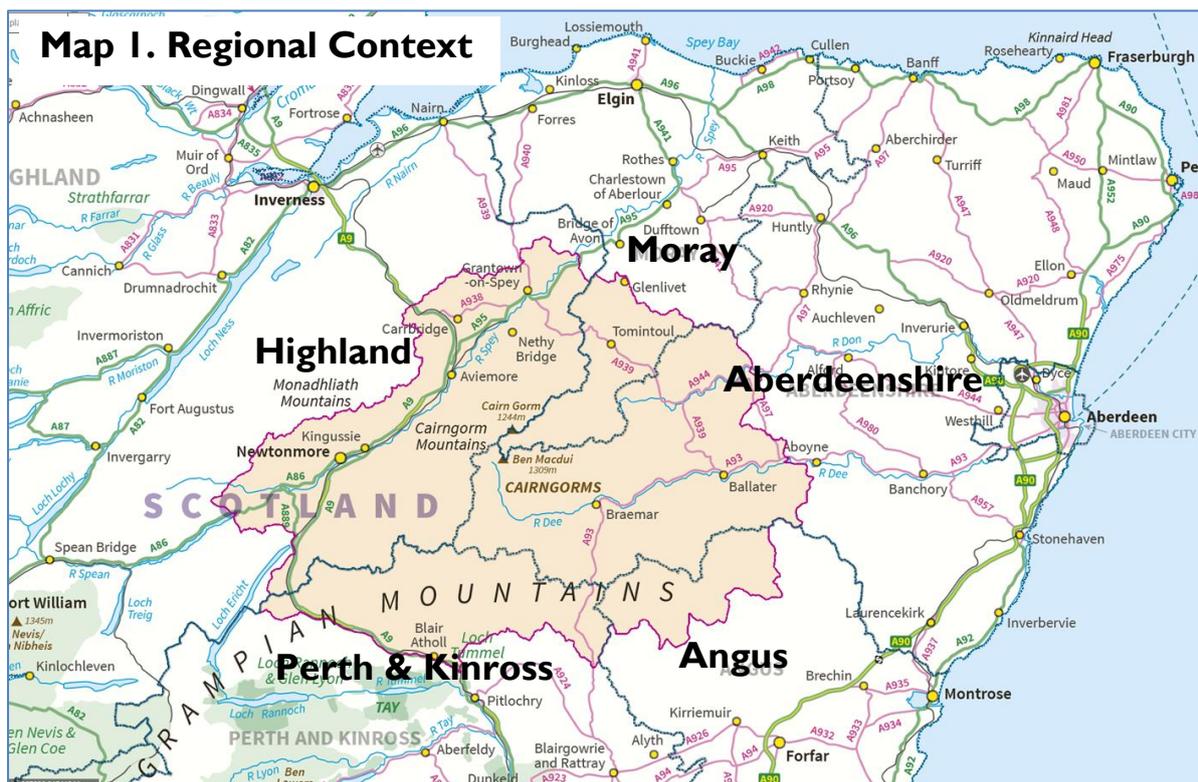
These four aims are to be delivered by all relevant organisations working together. The purpose of the National Park Authority (CNPA) is "...to ensure that the National Park aims are collectively achieved... in a coordinated way". The legislation also makes it clear that if it appears to CNPA that there is conflict between the first aim and any of the other aims then the Authority must "...give greater weight..." to the first aim.

This integrated approach to delivery of the four aims is encapsulated in the National Park Partnership Plan and in the subsidiary action plans as shown in the diagram below.



There are several other initiatives within the National Park that are taking forwards work-streams that are directly relevant to the economy of the area:

- The Cairngorms Tourism Action Plan sets out actions required to deliver the Park’s status under the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism – delivery is overseen by the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership.
- The Cairngorms Forest Strategy to encourage forest and woodland expansion, increase employability in the forestry sector and encourage innovation in the use and marketing of native forest products.
- The various Community Planning processes that take place within each local authority area, in line with national requirements, and their associated Local Outcome Improvement Plans.
- The City Region Deals that are being implemented (e.g. Inverness City Region; in Aberdeen Aberdeenshire and the Tay Cities) and that are in development (e.g. in Moray)



The National Park is already covered by the various Economic Strategies which have been developed, based on the five local authority boundaries, each of which is supported by a range of economic partnerships and forums. For example, the Moray Economic Strategy sets out the vision and high level actions to deliver a successful and vibrant economy over a 10 year period 2019 to 2029, coordinated by the Moray Economic Partnership. Opportunity North East is the principal public–private partnership focussing on economic growth in Aberdeenshire and Moray (for the food and drink sector).

From an organisational perspective, Highlands and Island Enterprise (HIE), Scottish Enterprise (SE) and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) all have operating plans to deliver the Scottish Government’s economic priorities and Scotland’s Economic Strategy in their areas. And each of the five local authorities in the Park have specific economic development functions and powers.

The successful delivery of all these plans and strategies is dependent on the work undertaken by the businesses, land managers, communities, charities and other parts of the public sector – all working well together in mutual support and cooperation.

3. The Economic Strategy for the Park

The strategy for promoting a sustainable economy in the Park is set out within the National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022 which has been signed off by Scottish Ministers and is available at <https://cairngorms.co.uk/working-partnership/national-park-partnership-plan>.

The Partnership Plan identifies nine Priorities, across three Long-term Outcomes: Conservation, Visitor Experience and Rural Development. The Long-term Outcome for Rural Development is: “A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities” and the specific challenges to be addressed in achieving this are set out below.

THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Delivering housing that meets the needs of communities:

- *Increasing the supply of affordable housing, and ensuring that it remains affordable in the long-term.*
- *Helping to reduce the proportion of second homes by making sure that when new housing is built more of it is accessible to and targeted at people working in the National Park.*
- *Securing an appropriate level of public funding and making the most effective use of it to deliver affordable housing and infrastructure to meet local needs.*
- *Helping communities make the most of the right to buy land in order to secure local housing solutions.*
- *Meeting the bulk of housing needs by the existing larger sites in the Local Development Plan and, in the future, enabling communities to grow in a more small-scale ‘organic’ way.*

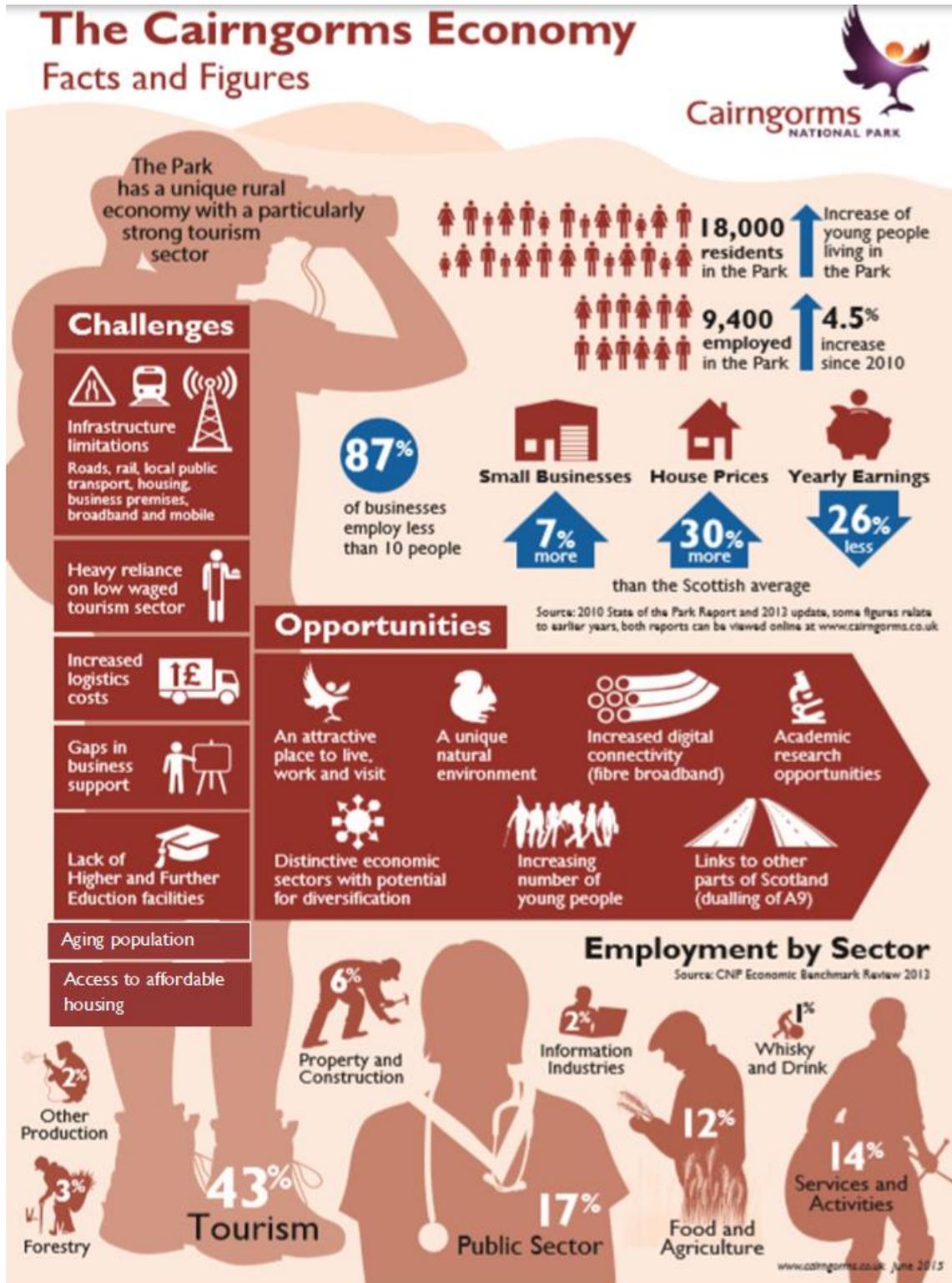
Community-led Development and Regeneration

- *Identifying those communities most in need of support and building their capacity to get the most out of opportunities to shape their places*
- *Making resources available to support community aspirations*
- *Giving communities control over assets and helping them maximise their returns*
- *Increasing community resilience*
- *Strengthening local democracy and participation*
- *Supporting and encouraging a partnership approach between and within communities*

Strengthening and diversifying the economy:

- *Strengthening the tourism sector – a sustainable approach – visitors staying longer and spending more*
- *Encouraging start-ups and business diversification*
- *Improving access to housing for workers*
- *Improving digital communications – especially in remoter areas*

A summary of the economic strategy that is set out in the Partnership Plan to address these challenges is provided at Annex A.



[New infographic to be prepared for publication]

4. Review of strategic context

The relevant strategic factors that have been taken into account in preparing this Action Plan are summarised below.

Global Climate Emergency and Loss of Biodiversity

There is very significantly increased public awareness and political attention being given to these important issues due to the recent reports by the Committee on Climate Change and Inter-governmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. The Scottish Government have declared a climate emergency and are committed to net zero emissions by 2045. The First Minister said in May 2019 on biodiversity ‘...that the difficulties, complexities and challenges are not to be underestimated but that we all want Scotland to be leading the way’. The need to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss will have implications for the National Park and specifically land use, managing increased flood risk, housing, transport and tourism. We need to ensure that growth in the Park economy is sustainable and helps to meet the target of net zero emissions and the biodiversity targets. The collation of evidence to influence the next National Park Partnership Plan will take place over the next year but, given the urgency of climate risks, some significant actions require to be taken now. [Note: CNPA response to climate emergency is being considered in Board paper on 6 December 2019]

Brexit

Depending on what happens with the UK Government’s proposals to leave the European Union there are likely to be significant implications for the rural economy. There are already signs of adverse impacts on the labour market, causing particular concern in the tourism sector, and which appear likely to continue under most Brexit scenarios. The Federation of Small Businesses estimates that 41% of businesses in the Highlands and Islands employ EU citizens compared to an average of 25% across Scotland. The most recent quarterly survey of business confidence undertaken by the Cairngorms Business Partnership (to June 2019) recorded levels below average and highlighted tourism trends and staffing levels as the main challenges of doing business. The Highland Council highlighted concerns about upland farming if WTO rules are implemented. EU funding has supported business, communities and infrastructure projects in recent decades, for example through the Cairngorms Leader programme. Although there are likely to be some replacement schemes, there is little clarity on how future funding programmes will be developed. The potential loss of community-led local development funding and changes to agricultural support mechanisms are a significant risk to the rural economy going forward.

Enterprise Review and Regional Economic Partnerships

The city/region growth deals have provided funding for long-term economic development in the local authority areas overlapping the National Park. The deals are leading to significant infrastructure investment and stronger marketing of the regions as places to do business. The Cairngorms National Park supports the marketability of the wider regions by providing unrivalled landscapes and recreational opportunities. Following the Enterprise Review, the Strategic Plan for the Enterprise and Skills Board was published in October 2018, giving new strategic direction to the enterprise and skills agencies - Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council. Scottish Enterprise launched its new Strategic Framework 2019-22 in May 2019 with a focus on collaboration and an ambition to “build vibrant economic communities across Scotland, spreading wealth and well-being”. Skills Development Scotland recently produced a Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland 2019 – 2021. And in September 2019 the Scottish Council

for Development and Industry's Rural Commission produced a report with 42 recommendations about People, Place and Productivity.

Infrastructure Improvements

We have made very significant progress in delivering on the capital investment priorities set out in the National Park Partnership Plan and an update on progress and plans is presented in the Action Plan below.

With regards to digital connectivity, the availability of broadband services and mobile coverage on 3G and 4G networks has improved significantly since 2015, especially in the main settlements. By January 2019 86.4% of premises had access to fibre broadband at speeds of over 24Mbs. Looking ahead, the Scottish Government's R100 programme will significantly extend superfast broadband to provide access to all homes and businesses that have not yet been connected. This investment in the most rural areas of the Park will be welcome and must be sustained. Most communities in the National Park, and much of the transport network, is now covered by either 3G or 4G mobile data services and there are plans in place to address particular gaps.

A Place for Investment

There are increasingly positive signs that the Park is seen as good place to invest. Significant private sector investment is under way in Braemar with the refurbished Fife Arms hotel open since December 2018; the renovation of the Invercauld Hotel is currently under way. In Strathspey, significant new tourism facilities have been developed at Grantown East and a new distillery is under construction alongside the proposed steam railway extension to Grantown.

Funding from Scottish Government has allowed the CNPA, working with partners, to bring in around £14 million of additional funding over the last five years to help deliver projects covering outdoor access, nature conservation, health, tourism infrastructure and developing our local communities. For example, there are four significant projects underway funded by National Heritage Lottery Fund – the Mountains and the People, Capercaillie, Tomintoul/Glenlivet Landscape Partnership and the Badenoch Great Place Projects. In 2019 the Cairngorms Connect project has seen the start of a multi-million pound investment in nature conservation and re-wilding on four estates in the west of the Park. The CNPA was also successful in securing funds via Peatland Action totalling £2.1 million and is working closely with Scottish Forestry on woodland expansion.

LEADER funding in the region of £4 million has been distributed to a variety of community-led projects during this time allowing community groups to develop and deliver priority actions for their own communities. 32 projects were approved covering 13 different communities, with a further 14 projects covering the entire Park or regions of it. There has also been investment of £1.6 million in farm diversification and enterprise initiated by and supported through the LEADER process since 2015. Meanwhile, we are seeing a growing trend for community-led organisations and social enterprises within the Park to develop and take control of assets to act as a basis for their future development.

The Cairngorms Business Partnership have been successful in developing new investment streams for the Snow Roads Scenic Route (from Scottish Enterprise Destination Development Fund) to build business collaboration and new digital products and, more

recently, for marketing (from the VisitScotland Growth Fund). CNPA has secured Scottish Government funding through the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (via VisitScotland) for two significant projects on National Natures Reserves at Dinnet and Glenmore, providing enhanced parking, toilets, paths and signposts; all to alleviate tourism pressure.

All of this investment has benefited the visitor economy. The number of visits has grown from 1.3m visitors in 2003 to 1.9m in 2018 – that is a 4.7% increase on 2017. The most recent results from the STEAM Tourism impacts study are available at <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/CNP-2018-Narrative.pdf>

As we move forwards, investment in the natural capital of the Park – and people’s ability to enjoy it sustainably – will be prioritised. This will be done through conserving peatlands, further promotion of woodland expansion, landscape-scale conservation and investment in sustainable tourism infrastructure, etc. Such programmes will be a key part of preparations for the next National Park Partnership Plan.

Predicted changes in population

There is a significant awareness across Scotland of the importance of maintaining and enhancing the working age population in rural areas. There are national statistical projections of a gradually ageing population in the Cairngorms and elsewhere. These projections have been taken into account in developing the allocation of land for built development within the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2020. This Plan has allocated land to accommodate an increase in population by 7% over the period to 2030. The Europarc Youth Manifesto, which was significantly developed by young people from Cairngorms and which was launched in Aviemore in September 2018 and, highlighted the priorities for young people living and working in Protected areas .

Delivery of Housing

There are significant issues with deliverability of housing on some allocated sites – several sites have had been allocated in the Local Development Plan for many years and have repeatedly been granted planning permission but no houses have been built. Across the Park house prices have risen steadily and remain higher than the national average. Many business, especially around Aviemore and in Braemar, are experiencing problems housing key staff and see this as adversely affecting their ability to serve customers and a barrier to growth. More housing is being bought as second and holiday accommodation – Scottish Government research estimated in September 2019 that short-term lets had tripled across Scotland between 2016 and 2019. In the Cairngorms there are signs of increasing community concern about the social impact of short-term lets. The proposed Local Development Plan 2020 will, once approved, increase the proportion of affordable housing from 25% to 45% in some communities but further measures will be required to make housing more available to people who live and work in the Park.

Ski Centres

A significant review of uplift facilities at Cairngorm Mountain by Highlands and Islands Enterprise in 2018 identified a programme of recommendations for uplift improvements and other facilities. However, the closure of the funicular railway at Cairngorm Mountain for ground investigations since late 2018 has created considerable uncertainty about the facility. There is need for a concerted effort to ensure a viable and sustainable way forward is found. CNPA led the development of the Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy (2016) and a set of

principles to help guide development at Cairngorm. A new masterplan for the site is shortly to be prepared, led by HIE, and will be welcome step forwards. At both the Lecht and Glenshee there is a need to continue to invest in recreational facilities and energy supply, while diversifying the activity offering, in order to underpin their role in the regional economies and for visitors.

Towns and Villages

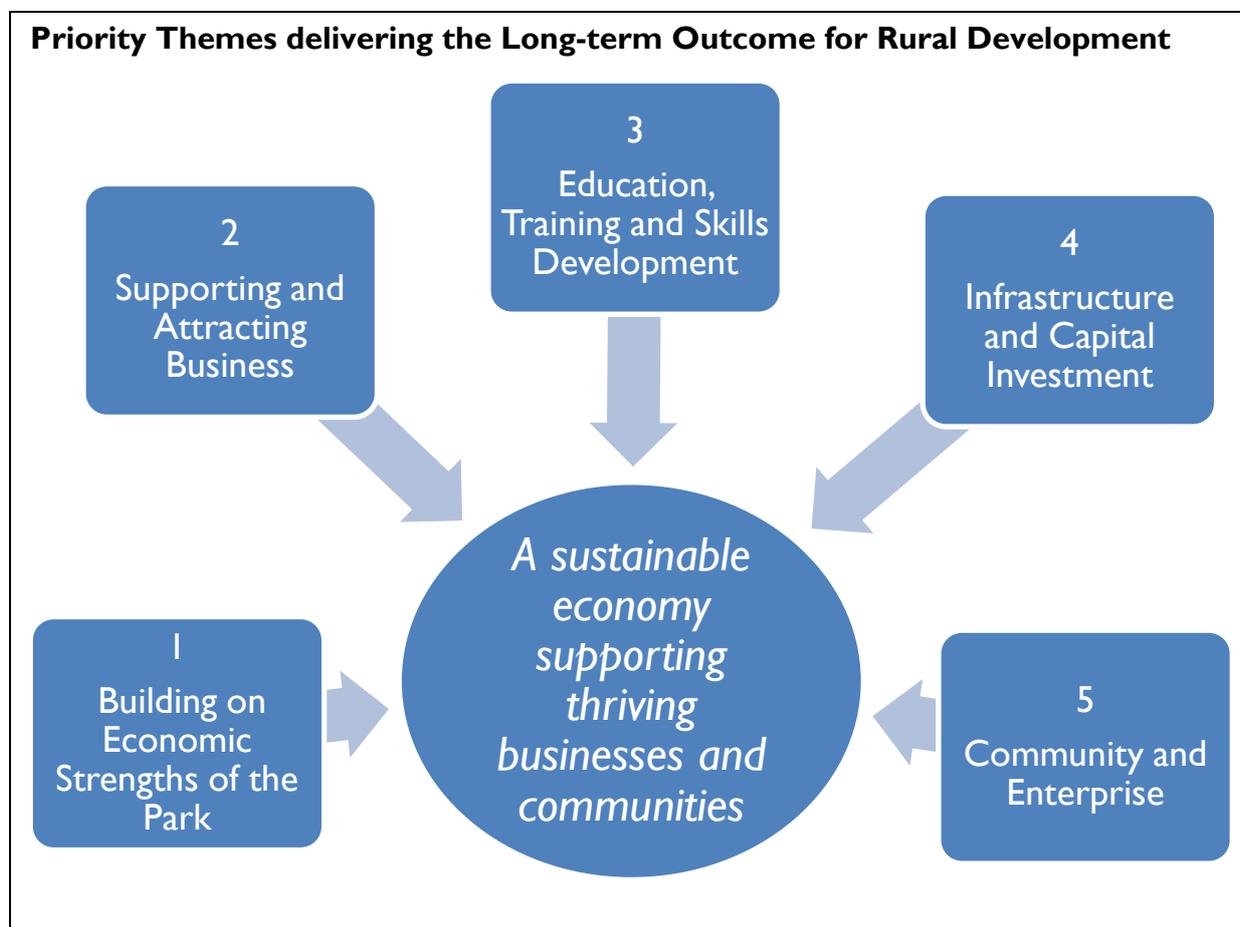
The town and villages of the National Park are very important and are valued by locals as service centres, and by visitors for the number and character of small, independent shops. Research in 2017 by Federation of Small Businesses on Scotland's entrepreneurial towns highlighted that Newtonmore was the second most entrepreneurial town in the Scotland with Kingussie in 15th place. However, like other parts of Scotland the retail sector is suffering challenges and there are a number of vacant units on most of the smaller towns and villages; recent bank closures have added to this issue. The investment from the Town Centre Fund in 2019/20 is most welcome. A further concentrated effort is needed, in conjunction with local business associations and community groups, to encourage local spending and visitor footfall in high streets, investment in town centres and the coordinated development of public investment and facilities.

Availability and use of data

We have good data about some aspects of the Park (e.g. tourism data) and we collect specific information about business attitudes (e.g. CBP Business Barometer). However, it continues to be challenging to access, collate and analyse socio-economic data in a way that is meaningful at the National Park scale. There are several reasons for this: data is frequently collected for different spatial units overlapping the National Park, typically local authority boundaries; and some specific studies do not highlight the National Park as a geographic unit. These issues are compounded by the fact that in rural areas the statistical data available does not always illustrate well the real life challenges that people face. During the consultation on the Plan a number of useful suggestions were made for additional sources of data and research that could be used to develop policy and to chart progress. This area of work does require greater attention in future, especially as we start to prepare for the next National Park Partnership Plan. In the meantime, a good evidence base has been collated for the preparation of the Local Development Plan 2020, covering topics from Housing to Economic Development, and is available at <https://cairngorms.co.uk/authority/publication/459/>.

5. The Economic Action Plan

Five priority themes have been developed to structure the Economic Action Plan and provide focus.



I. Building on the Economic Strengths of the Park

Actions	Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wages: Investigate and promote adoption of a living wage scheme for the Cairngorms National Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CNPA, FSB, CBP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forestry: Pilot a woodland challenge fund scheme to incentivise woodland planting and forest expansion and the uptake of the Forestry Grant Scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CNPA and Scottish Forestry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Development Frameworks: Pilot new approach to Rural Development Frameworks with estates and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CNPA, Crown Estate, Scottish Land and Estates

I. Building on the Economic Strengths of the Park

<p>communities to provide long-term planning for land use, business development and housing across estates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture: Build the case for a regionalised approach to future support for land management in the Cairngorms • Cairngorm Mountain: Develop a long-term masterplan and investment package for Cairngorm Mountain as part of the Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy. • Glenshee and the Lecht Ski Centres: Develop plans to invest in and diversify these sites to sustain local employment and enhance the visitor experience • Economic and social data: work to improve the availability and use of economic and social data on the Park. • Tourism: Implement the Tourism Action Plan and work to achieve continued retention of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism through the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership [Hyperlink to TAP] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNH, SAC, NFUS, CNPA • HIE, Cairngorm Mountain (Scotland) Ltd, CNPA, THC, Community Trust • SE, HIE, P&K Council, Aberdeenshire Council • CNPA, Scottish Government, HIE, SE • CNPA
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2. Supporting and Attracting Business

Actions	Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing delivery: Undertake a review of vacant and derelict land and property, stalled development sites and impacts of short-term lets, to identify interventions and opportunities for public interest development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNPA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-led Housing Delivery: promote new community-led approaches to delivery of housing in communities across the Park using Rural Housing Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNPA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business-led Housing Delivery: Pilot and encourage business-led housing projects and agreements with developers to prioritise housing for local workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNPA, BSW Timber, Cairngorm Brewery • CNPA, Local authorities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of Short-Term Lets: Implement scheme to control short-term lets using new powers available through Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 which are due to come into force by end of 2020 • Attracting talent and investment: Promote work/ lifestyle/ cultural benefits of the Cairngorms National Park through development of website content • Supporting business: Investigate potential for new models of business support including community-led and social enterprise models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CoHI Talent Attraction Group • CNPA, Growbiz; Local Authorities; HIE/SE
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3. Education, Training and Skills Development

Actions	Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circular economy and adaption to climate change: Develop a business–led initiative to promote the circular economy of the National Park and to help businesses adapt to climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cairngorms Business Partnership, CNPA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital training: deliver training for Tourism sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cairngorms Business Partnership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills: Continued delivery of Skills Investment Plans and Rural Skills Action Plan throughout the Park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Development Scotland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and environment: Promotion of the VIBES Award scheme and other measures to promote the connections between business and nature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNPA, SEPA, CBP

4. Infrastructure and Capital Investment

Actions	Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital connectivity: Plan and deliver the Scottish Government “Reaching 100” Programme to deliver superfast broadband to every premises and enhance mobile connectivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Government/ HIE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Investment Priorities: Continue to deliver on the Priorities as set out the NP Partnership Plan while working to increase investment over time in the natural capital. An update on progress and plans is presented below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNPA and specific project partners for each project
Capital investment Priority	Update on progress and plans

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Paper 3 Annex 3 6th December 2019

Enhancement of visitor facilities at Glenmore	Forest and Land Scotland have completed a revised visitor management plan for Glenmore. Funding has been secured from Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund for a new multi-use path in Glenmore to link car parking and visitor facilities for completion in 2020.
Speyside Way and Deeside Way extensions	Speyside Way to be extended to Newtonmore and launched April 2020; Proposed new path from Braemar to Old Bridge of Dee has planning permission.
Active Aviemore project	Sustrans funding application for first phase of active travel improvements made in 2019. Project on hold until funding secured.
Aviemore community hospital project	Construction underway following approval of planning permission in April 2019. Completion and opening expected 2021.
A9 Dualling Project	The A9 dualling programme has commenced – Alvie to Dalraddy section was completed in 2017. Transport Scotland published draft Orders for all sections with the Cairngorms National Park in 2018. Work is under way to design new active travel path between Aviemore and Carrbridge for completion along with A9 by 2021.
Highland Folk Museum enhancements	Funding application made to support development of residential facilities to progress towards view to year round opening
Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership	Project is in year 4 of delivery of £3.6M project and is developing capital assets including Tomintoul Discovery Centre, Scalan Seminary, bird hides, restored paths and the world's most northerly Dark Sky Park. Project complete by Sept. 2020.
The Mountains and The People project	Project has upgraded 44.2km of paths, 83% the 53km target, by late 2019.
Restoration of degraded peatland through the Peatland ACTION Project	1600 Ha of peatland in the Park under restoration management by mid 2019.
Further development at Macdonald Aviemore Resort	Land with planning permission for 130 houses now sold to housebuilder and development expected to start early 2020.
Completion of the major refurbishment of the Fife Arms Hotel, Braemar	The newly renovated Fife Arms Hotel was officially was opened in early 2019. Renovation of Invercauld Arms in under way and due to open in 2020
Delivery of key housing sites identified in the Local Development Plan	Sites in Beachen Court, Grantown on Spey, Carr Road, Carrbridge; and Spey House, Aviemore are all under construction. Final plans have been approved for housing at the Old School in Ballater, Dalfaber in Aviemore, at Kingussie, Newtonmore, Dulnain Bridge and further phases of Beachen Court. Planning permission in principle was granted for An Camus Mor in April 2019.
Improvements to Highland mainline railway and stations	New Caledonian Sleeper trains came into service in 2019. New timetable with more frequent service and better connections to be introduced mid-2020. Enhanced station facilities and connections to visitor experience are planned.
Strathspey Steam Railway extension to Grantown-on-Spey	The draft Order under the Transport and Works Scotland Act was submitted in April 2019 and formal permission expected to be sought early in 2020. The project is being planned in conjunction with upgrade of A95 Trunk road, proposed new distillery and new paths connecting two communities
Enhancing facilities at Cairngorm Mountain	HIE invested in snowmaking facilities and is planning improvements to beginners area. Assistance has been provided to Aviemore and Glenmore Community Trust to strengthen their vision for community ownership/management. Long-term master plan and funicular railway business case to be made up by 2020.
Highland Wildlife Park enhancements	Development funding has been awarded to RZSS to progress plans to create Scotland's Wildlife Discovery Centre which will enhance visitor facilities. Plans are also in place, with a £3.2m EU Life Grant, for a Wildcat Restoration Centre of national significance.

Cairngorms Connect	Cairngorms Connect is a partnership of neighbouring land managers, committed to an ambitious 200-year vision to enhance habitats, species and ecological processes across 600 Km ² within the Park. The Endangered Landscapes Programme awarded a £3.75m grant which, with partners, brings the total investment to £9m in biggest habitat restoration project in UK.
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5. Community and Enterprise

Actions	Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people: Develop a programme of action with young people to maximise opportunities, and address barriers, to living and working in the Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cairngorms Youth Action Group, CNPA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart Villages/Town centres: Develop a pilot network of three smart villages based on village scale collaboration using digital technology (Grantown, Ballater/Braemar and Badenoch) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growbiz; CNPA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in community-led development: Secure continuity of investment in local enterprise development, including farm diversification to follow on from current Leader programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNPA, The Cairngorms Trust
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an entrepreneurial culture: Develop a programme of events to stimulate a positive and creative approach to doing business within Park in all sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurial Scotland, CNPA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social enterprise training: Review arrangements to follow-on from Social Enterprise Academy training project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIE, CNPA, The Cairngorms Trust
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TICK Transport project: Deliver transport project to investigate innovate approaches to rural transport including enhanced e-bike provision and integrated transport information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cairngorms Trust
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with Business Associations: Promote collaboration between Business Associations and projects to promote business sustainability, especially in town centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNPA, Business Associations, local authorities

6. Delivery and monitoring

The arrangements for delivery will be based on:

- Coordination of activity through the Cairngorms Economic Steering Group including CNPA (chair), Cairngorms Business Partnership, Federation of Small Businesses, local authorities, Highland and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise and Skills Development Scotland.
- Preparation of an annual review of delivery (using high-level Red - Amber - Green assessment) associated with the Action Plan and consideration by the CNPA Board along with the relevant partners. Targets to be developed at the first meeting of the Cairngorms Economic Steering Group.
- Enhanced CNPA engagement with the Business Associations across the Park and facilitation of local business network meetings
- Co-design with the Cairngorms Youth Action Group of specific projects and initiatives that take forwards all of the actions identified above in a way that addresses the concerns and interests of young people.
- Enhanced communications as part of CNPA Communications Plan about the many rural development success stories in the Park and the interdependence of the economy and the Park's natural capital

Annex A: Summary of the Economic Strategy as set out in the National Park Partnership Plan 2017 - 2022

I. The Priorities and Agendas for Action

In order to address the Rural Development Challenges identified in the Partnership Plan, “Agendas for Action” were developed for each of the priority areas of work including Economic Development and Housing. Due to the integrated nature of the Partnership Plan, any activity delivered relating to the nine Priorities plays a role in supporting the economy of the National Park – for example, investment in woodland expansion increases biological diversity, enhances the landscape for visitors and provides additional recreational experiences and new economic opportunities. All of the Priorities are therefore important to the delivery a sustainable economy of the Park; but the two most significant Priorities to the economy of the Park are reprinted below.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: AGENDA FOR ACTION

Partners will deliver the current Economic Strategy for the Park to 2018 and then review, focussing on action plans for key business sectors:

- a) *Developing sector-specific plans to tackle investment, enhance skills through stronger links with higher and further education, improve long-term resilience and increase average wages, as well as building business on the natural capital of the National Park;*
- b) *Supporting Cairngorms Community Broadband* to deliver superfast broadband in the “hardest to reach” parts of the Park;*
- c) *Continuing to improve physical infrastructure, including access to affordable housing and digital connectivity;*
- d) *Maximising the opportunities for businesses, communities and visitors from the A9 dualling project;*
- e) *Review implications and options for the farming sector as changes in long-term support become clearer;*
- f) *Using the next Local Development Plan (LDP) to identify new sites for business use and expansion and the delivery of the LDP to target investment that opens up those sites to business.”*

** The Cairngorms Community Broadband project has been suspended and the Scottish Government now leads development of broadband in rural areas through the Reaching 100 (R100) Programme..*

HOUSING: AGENDA FOR ACTION

Partners will respond to the unique housing challenges and pressures within the Park by developing a special approach that is based on:

- a) *Reducing the proportion of second homes in new developments by ensuring the new housing development is targeted at meeting local needs as far as possible;*
- b) *Maximising the proportion of new housing that is affordable in perpetuity;*

- c) *Identifying sites in the next Local Development Plan where the affordable housing contribution will be more than the normal national maximum of 25% because of acute affordability pressures and the shortage of supply;*
- d) *Using the next Local Development Plan to manage the nature of new open market housing so it is better targeted towards local needs (e.g. by seeking a greater mix of house types and sizes, with an emphasis towards smaller homes in new developments);*
- e) *Applying flexible planning policies to promote majority affordable housing developments and encourage the use of innovative delivery models to maximise the number of affordable homes that are built;*
- f) *Targeting public sector funding towards the National Park and to sites with the greatest potential for delivering affordable housing;*
- g) *Supporting communities to deliver community-led housing solutions, including by making the most of powers to buy land and taking a more pro-active role in management where appropriate;*
- h) *Promoting high standards of sustainable design and energy efficiency in new homes to ensure they are affordable in terms of lifetime running costs.*

2. Policy for Economic Development

The Partnership Plan has a comprehensive policy framework that guides development and provides continuity over the long-term. The policy relating to economic development is reprinted below.

Policy 3.1 Economic Development

Grow the economy of the Cairngorms National Park by strengthening existing business sectors, supporting business start-ups and diversification, and increasing the number of workers employed in the Park through:

- a) *maintaining the population of the National Park and maintaining or growing the proportion of the working age population;*
- b) *supporting the diversification of existing land-based businesses*
- c) *encouraging growth of business sectors that draw on the special qualities of the Park such as sustainable tourism and food and drink;*
- d) *broadening the economic base of the Park into sectors such as creative industries, renewable energy, and making stronger links with higher and further education;*
- e) *increased provision for business land where there is an identified need and demand; and to support the use of land for small business particularly within settlements*
- f) *slowing outward migration of young people; to encourage their return; and the inward migration of workers to the Park to meet business and community needs;*
- g) *provision of a housing land supply that supports migration of young people and workers to the park and maintains vibrant communities*
- h) *reducing the proportion of vacant and second homes to support community vibrancy by ensuring that new housing development best meets local needs*
- i) *maximising the proportion of new housing development that is affordable in perpetuity.*

3. Targets and indicators for Rural Development in the National Park Partnership Plan

A simple set of targets and indicators have been developed for all of the Priorities within the Partnership Plan. Arrangements are in place with partner organisations to ensure they are monitored and delivered. Regular reports are provided to the CNPA Board.

Rural Development:

Theme	Targets	Indicators
Affordable Housing	Deliver 200 new affordable houses by 2022	Number of completions
Community enterprise	Increase number reinvesting surplus profit into community projects	Number of enterprises – baseline is 4 in 2017
Relevance of National Park to businesses	Maintain or improve businesses' perceptions of the NP's influence on customer attraction and profitability	Number of businesses reporting on perception of the Park through the Cairngorms Business Barometer
Digital connectivity	More than 30% uptake of high speed broadband through Cairngorms Community Broadband Project.	Note: The Scottish Government now leads development of broadband in rural areas through the R100 Programme. New target is provision of access to superfast broadband (more than 30Mbps) by 2021 to 100% of premises.