

# Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan, SEA scoping

## Baseline information

### Topic 7 – Landscape and cultural heritage

<b>Contents</b>	
Questions for consultation authorities	I
Context	2
Special qualities of the Park landscape	2
National Scenic Areas	4
Landscape character	4
Wildness and Wild Land Areas	5
Historic landscape	8
Scheduled monuments	9
Gardens and designed landscapes	10
Battlefields	10
Planned towns and Conservation Areas	10
Listed buildings	11
Buildings at risk	11
Linguistic heritage	13
Proposed SEA objectives	15

### **Questions for consultation authorities**

1. Is there anything missing from the Topic baseline?
2. Are there any errors in what is presented?
3. Are there any new initiatives, research projects, plans, programmes or strategies or other things that will be reporting / implemented over the next 12-18 months that are relevant to the Topic, which may need to be included as the SEA progresses?

## **Context**

Landscape is the shape and diversity to our surroundings, the product of thousands of years of interaction between man and nature, encompassing the physical and cultural environment. Landscape is important, because it links culture with nature, and the past with the present. Landscapes also have a strong influence on peoples quality of life and the economy, and contribute to both national identity and local distinctiveness. The protection of high quality and highly valued landscapes therefore is important both for its own sake and for the health, social and economic wellbeing of individuals and communities.

At 4,528 square kilometres, and comprising 6% of Scotland's land area, the Park is amongst the largest protected landscape in the UK. The Cairngorm mountains are a massif of expansive proportions and a sub-arctic environment. There are no other mountains like them in Britain. The mountains dominate the Park and have an effect on the way people live and the landscapes they live in. The landscapes of the Park also include straths and glens, settlements and farms, woodland, moorland, rivers and lochs. Landscapes change daily, seasonally and year by year as the light changes, as crops are harvested, as trees grow, as houses are built and others fall into ruin and as rocks weather and erode.

The landscape has been shaped by and includes evidence of past activities and land uses. The cultural heritage of the Park includes elements of the landscape and built environment.

## **Special qualities of the Park landscape**

The key characteristics of the whole of the Park have been identified and described within discrete landscape character areas. These areas are all different but within each one there is a consistency of character influenced by different factors such as the topography, land use, settlement and the way the landscape is experienced. Within the glens and straths there tends to be more diversity of landscapes in a smaller area, whereas in the uplands the landscape tends to be similar over much larger areas.

In 2010 work was conducted to identify the 'Special Qualities' of the Cairngorms National Park landscape, carried out by SNH and the Park Authority. The special qualities identified reflect distinct landscape characteristics and visual amenity and how these are experienced and valued within the Park.

Table I provides a summary of the special qualities identified. Full details can be found in The Special Landscape Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park via

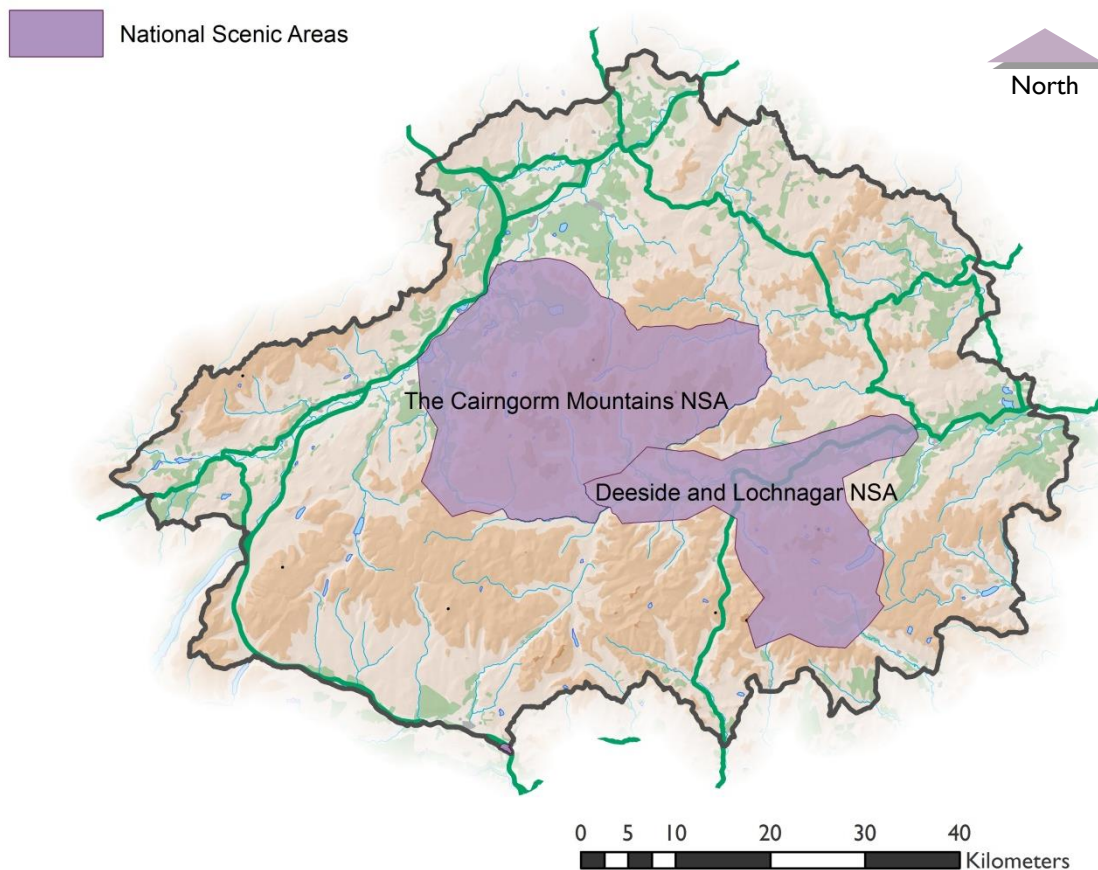
<https://www.nature.scot/snh-commissioned-report-375-special-landscape-qualities-cairngorms-national-park>.

**Table I** - summary of the special qualities of the Park

<b>General Qualities</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Magnificent mountains towering over moorland, forest and strath.</li> <li>– Vastness of space, scale and height.</li> <li>– Strong juxtaposition of contrasting landscapes.</li> <li>– A landscape of layers, from inhabited strath to remote, uninhabited upland.</li> <li>– ‘The harmony of complicated curves’.</li> <li>– Landscapes both cultural and natural.</li> </ul>	
<b>The Mountains and Plateaux</b>	<b>Trees, Woods and Forests</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The unifying presence of the central mountains.</li> <li>– An imposing massif of strong dramatic character.</li> <li>– The unique plateaux of vast scale, distinctive landforms and exposed, boulder strewn high ground.</li> <li>– The surrounding hills.</li> <li>– The drama of deep corries.</li> <li>– Exceptional glacial landforms.</li> <li>– Snowscapes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Dark and venerable pine forest.</li> <li>– Light and airy birch woods.</li> <li>– Parkland and policy woodlands.</li> <li>– Long association with forestry.</li> </ul>
<b>Moorlands</b>	<b>Wildlife and Nature</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Extensive moorland, linking the farmland, woodland and the high tops.</li> <li>– A patchwork of muirburn.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Dominance of natural landforms.</li> <li>– Extensive tracts of natural vegetation.</li> <li>– Association with iconic animals.</li> <li>– Wild land.</li> <li>– Wildness.</li> </ul>
<b>Glens and Straths</b>	<b>Visual and Sensory Qualities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Steep glens and high passes.</li> <li>– Broad, farmed straths.</li> <li>– Renowned rivers.</li> <li>– Beautiful lochs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Layers of receding ridge lines.</li> <li>– Grand panoramas and framed views.</li> <li>– A landscape of many colours.</li> <li>– Dark skies.</li> <li>– Attractive and contrasting textures.</li> <li>– The dominance of natural sounds.</li> </ul>
<b>Culture and History</b>	<b>Recreation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Distinctive planned towns.</li> <li>– Vernacular stone buildings.</li> <li>– Dramatic, historical routes.</li> <li>– The wistfulness of abandoned settlements.</li> <li>– Focal cultural landmarks of castles, distilleries and bridges.</li> <li>– The Royal connection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A landscape of opportunities.</li> <li>– Spirituality.</li> </ul>

## National Scenic Areas

Two National Scenic Areas (NSAs), the Cairngorm Mountains NSA and Deeside and Lochnagar NSA, are located entirely within the Park boundary, largely centred on the highest mountain plateau at its core (figure 1), but also including lower hills and areas of moorland, woodland and inhabited strath. Combined, the two NSAs cover an area of around 1,072 square kilometres, which equates to just under 25% of the land area of the Park.



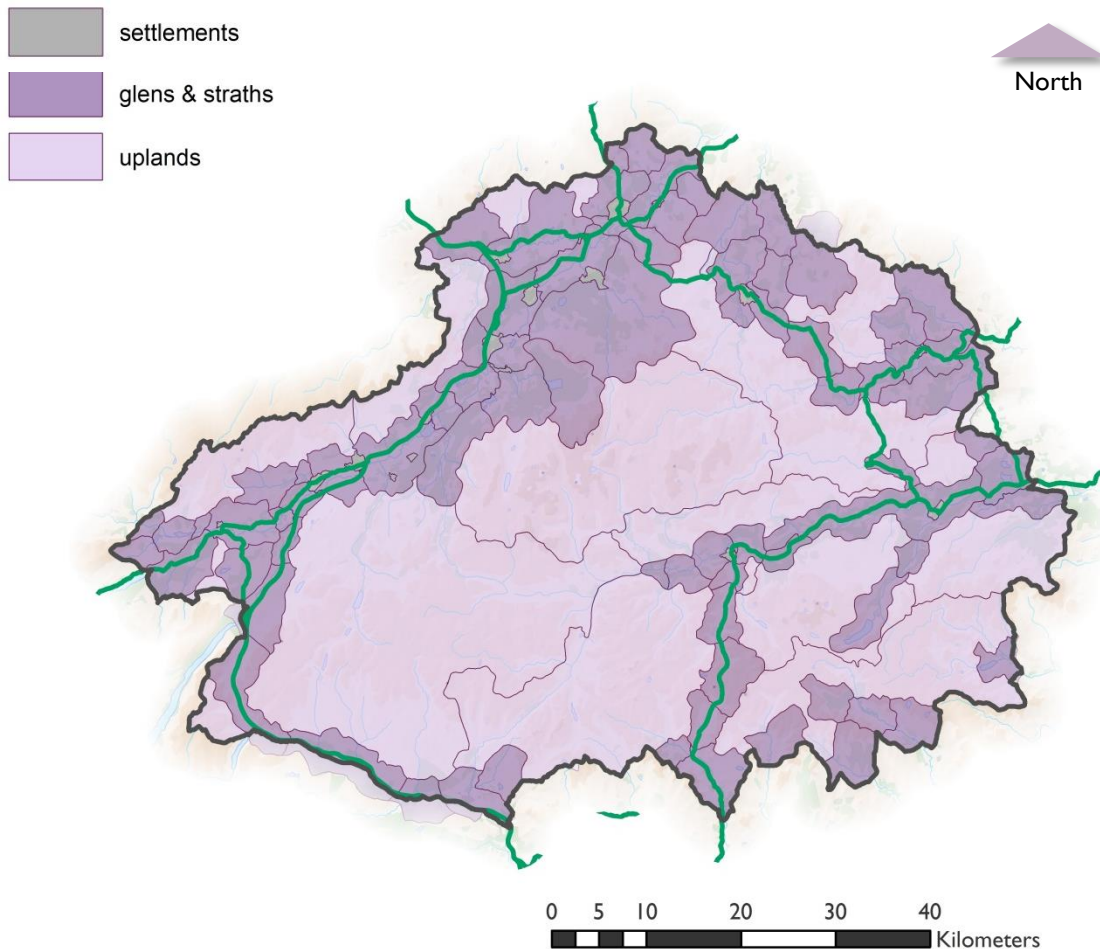
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**Figure 1** - National Scenic Areas within the Park

(The third NSA is the Loch Tummel NSA, which very slightly overlaps the Park boundary at Killiecrankie, near Blair Atholl.)

## Landscape character

The whole of the National Park can be characterised into different landscape character areas, belonging to either its Uplands or Glens and Straths (figure 2).



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**Figure 2** - broad categories of landscape character in the Park

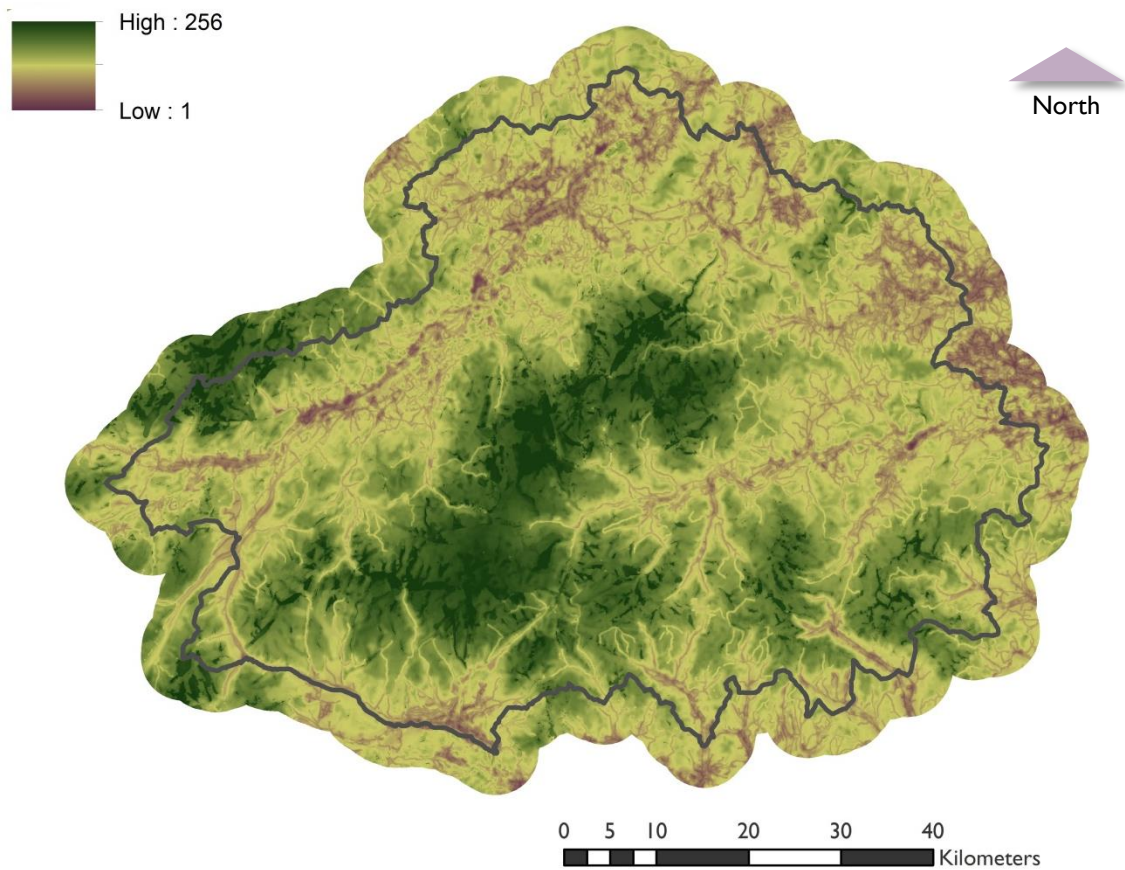
Within each area, although there may be variation, there is a consistency of character formed by the topography, land use, history, settlement and development as well as the way the landscape is experienced. Within the glens and straths there is more diversity of landscapes in a smaller area, whereas in the uplands the landscape tends to be similar over much larger areas.

### **Wildness and Wild Land Areas**

Wildness is a quality experienced by people when visiting places of a certain character. Measuring wildness is inherently difficult, as people respond differently according to their personal experience and their expectations of a place.

However, SNH devised a methodology to objectively consider wildness through four physical attributes being present. The attributes were the perceived naturalness of the land cover; ruggedness of the terrain; remoteness from public roads, ferries or railway stations and the visible lack of buildings, roads, pylons and other modern artefacts. These attributes were measured and mapped before being combined to provide a measure of relative wildness (figure 3)

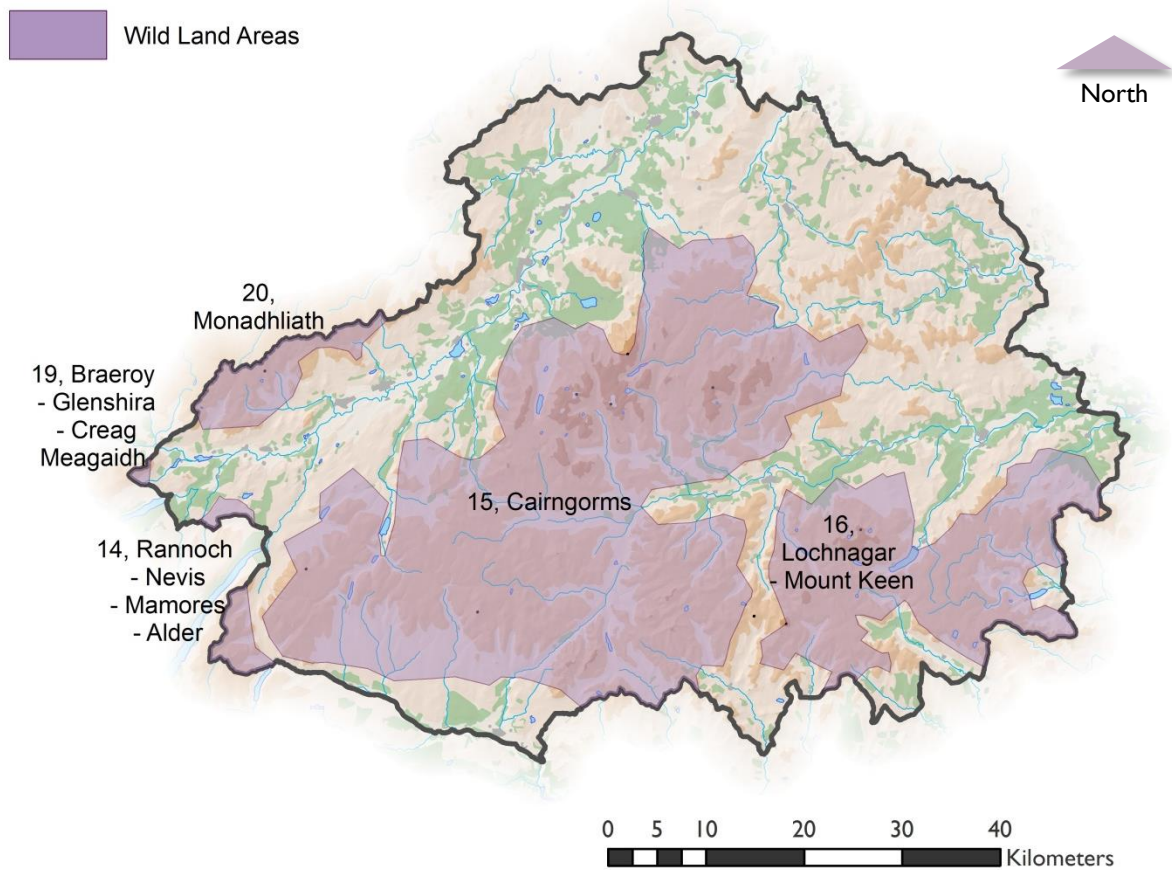




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**Figure 3** – SNH relative wildness mapping for the Park

Based on the work carried out to measure relative wildness, SNH published a new map of Wild Land Areas, which represent the most extensive areas of high wildness in Scotland. Around 2,100 km<sup>2</sup>, or 46%, of the Park has been identified as a Wild Land Area. Five areas have been identified within the National Park (figure 4): Rannoch - Nevis - Mamores - Alder, Cairngorms, Lochnagar – Mount Keen, Braeroy - Glenshirra - Creag Meagaidh, and Monadhliath.



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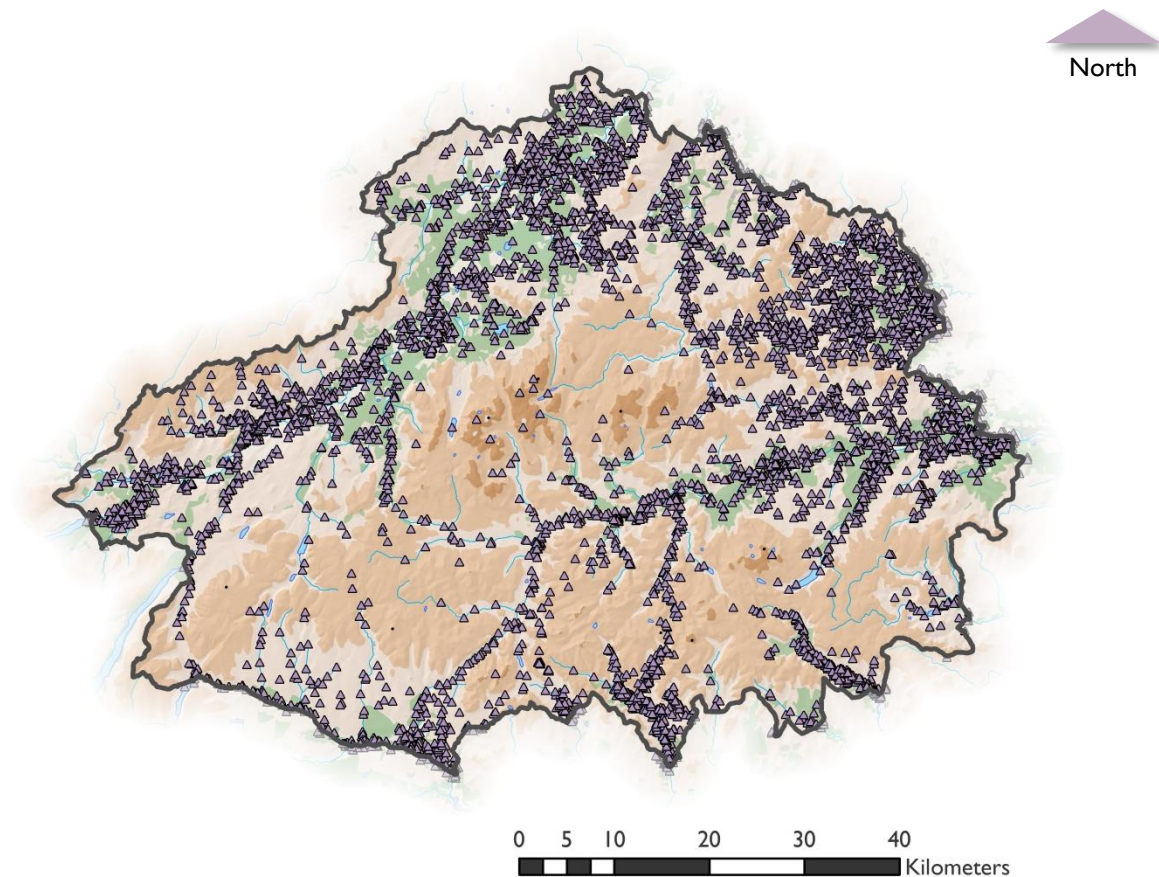
**Figure 4** - Wild Land Areas within or overlapping the Park

Areas 15 and 16 are almost entirely located within the National Park, while the other three only just overlap its boundary.



## Historic landscape

The landscape seen today is the result of a complex interplay of climate, geology, geomorphology, soil development, vegetation succession and herbivore impacts, along with human elements linked to settlement, transport, farming and forestry. Figure 5 identifies where historical archaeological records, as held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and others, occur in the Park. These provide an indication of where human activity has occurred in the past.



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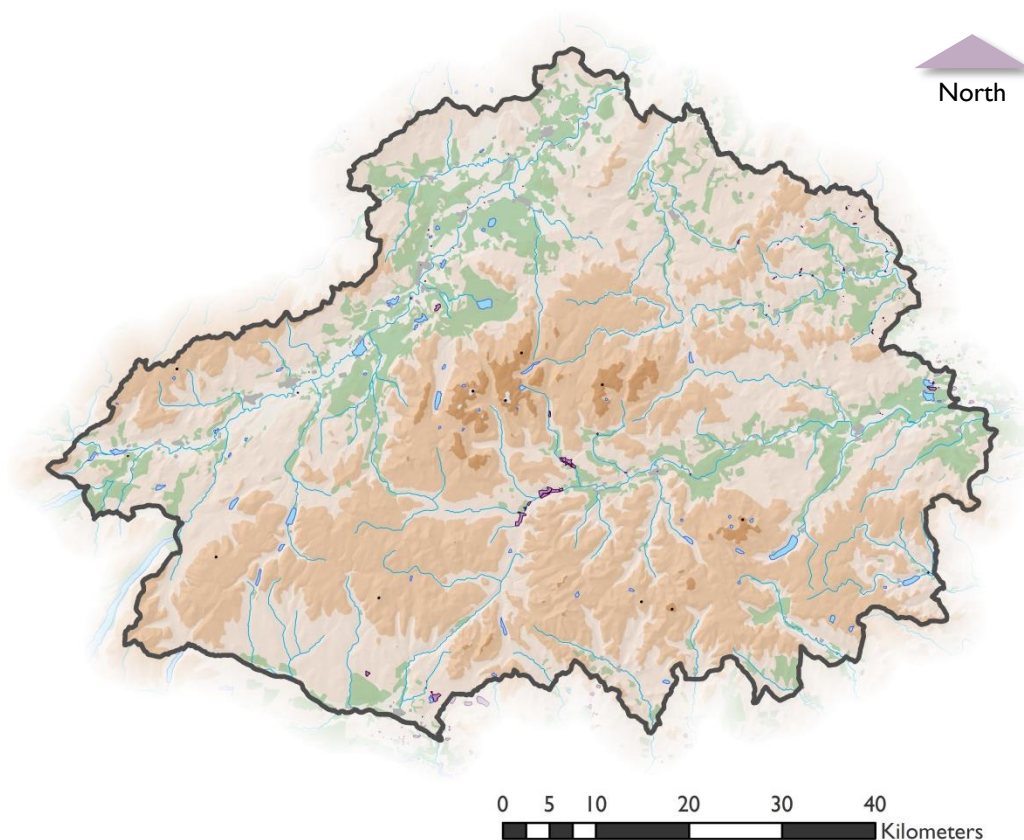
**Figure 5** - distribution of National Monuments Record sites in the Park

Although some still exists, much of the earliest evidence of human activity in the Park has been lost to subsequent human activity. For example, similar to the rest of rural Scotland, the landscape of the Park was transformed during the late-18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Improvement, as this period was known, resulted in a revolution in the agricultural practices of the area, with the landscape reorganised as regular fields were laid out, farm steadings replaced, farms amalgamated into larger units and improved cropping regimes were introduced alongside other measures to improve productivity, such as underground drainage. In the uplands, the reorganisation saw the wholesale depopulation of the large areas to create large scale sheep grazings and shooting estates.

The archaeological evidence found in the Park is of cultural significance because it relates to areas or periods for which there are no written records. It is therefore of importance for understanding the development of the current landscape.

### **Scheduled monuments**

Scheduled Monuments are nationally important sites, buildings and other features of artificial construction given legal protection under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (Historic Environment Scotland, 2019). There are 110 scheduled monuments recorded within the National Park (figure 6).



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**Figure 6** - location of Scheduled Monuments in the Park

The Scheduled Monuments in the Park represent a diverse range of evidence of previous time. They include chambered burial cairns and associated stone circles of late Neolithic age, examples of Iron Age defensive remains such as the aforementioned Dun-da-lamh hill fort, Pictish remains such as the 8<sup>th</sup> century Loch Kinnord Cross Slab, military structures such as the 18<sup>th</sup> century Hanoverian fort of Ruthven, and industrial remains such as the 18<sup>th</sup> / 19<sup>th</sup> century ironstone mine-crushing mill at the Well of Lecht.

## Gardens and designed landscapes

There are 11 gardens and designed landscapes within the Park that are identified on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes (table 1).

**Table 1** - historic gardens and designed landscapes within the Park, by Local Authority area

Aberdeenshire	Highland	Perth and Kinross
Balmoral Castle Candacraig House Glen Tanar Invercauld	Aultmore Castle Grant Doune of Rothiemurchus Inshriach Nursery Kinara	Blair Castle Falls of Bruar

With the exception of Inshriach Nursery, which is a specimen nursery, all other Inventory gardens and designed landscapes relate to country houses and estates.

## Battlefields

There are two battlefields identified on the Inventory of Historic Battlefields, maintained by Historic Environment Scotland, the site of the battle of Cromdale on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1690, and the site of the battle of Killiecrankie on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1689. The former battlefield is in Highland, while the latter falls within Perth and Kinross. The site of the Battle of Glenlivet (3<sup>rd</sup> October 1595) in Moray, falls just outside of the Park boundary. It should be noted that not all battlefields within the Park are listed in the Inventory, with the sites of the Battle of Invernavon (1370 or 1386) and Battle of Culblean (30<sup>th</sup> November 1335) being important examples.

## Planned towns and Conservation Areas

Planned towns are a feature of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Scotland. The Park contains five of importance: Ballater, Blair Atholl, Tomintoul, Grantown-on-Spey and Kingussie. The latter three were created as market towns for the surplus food that resulted from higher productivity on the increasingly productive farms. Town plans were drawn up and often specified the type of house that the landowner wished to encourage. Comparatively spacious permanent houses built of stone with slated roofs, glazed windows and usually comprising a single storey and attic with three or five rooms were often proposed, all placed within a rational and carefully thought out street plan. This is in direct contrast to the ad hoc dark, single-storey, single-room dwellings made from turf or rubble with a thatched roof that would have been more typical in villages at this time.

Parts of the planned towns of Ballater, Grantown-on-Spey and Blair Atholl have been designated as Conservation Areas, which are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. The Park also has a further two Conservation Areas within its boundary at Braemar and Inverey.

### Listed buildings

The Park contains around 753 buildings or structures of special historic or architectural interest, which are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. Of these, 56 are within Category A, 341 in Category B and 356 in Category C. Listing buildings and structures recognises their historic importance and aims to safeguard their architectural and historic value for the future.

### Buildings at risk

The Buildings at Risk Register (BARR) for Scotland highlights properties of architectural or historic merit throughout the country that are considered to be at risk or under threat. A building at risk is usually a listed or unlisted building within a conservation area, which meets one or several of the following criteria:

- vacant with no identified new use
- suffering from neglect and/or poor maintenance
- suffering from structural problems
- fire damaged
- unsecured
- open to the elements
- threatened with demolition

To be at risk, a building does not necessarily need to be in poor condition, it may simply be standing empty with no clear future use. Many buildings at risk are in this latter category. From the latest available data, 31 buildings were recorded as being at risk in the Park (table 2).

**Table 2** - buildings on the buildings at risk register in the Park

Building	Listing	Condition	Category of Risk	Date of Assessment
Badden Cottage; Thatched Cottage, Kincaig	C	Very poor	High	13 November 2013
Cottage at Dalnahaitnach, Carrbridge	Unlisted	Poor	Moderate	28 June 2013
Cottage at Glenbanchor, Newtonmore	Unlisted	Very poor	Moderate	6 July 2012

<b>Building</b>	<b>Listing</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Category of Risk</b>	<b>Date of Assessment</b>
Cottage & Kennels, Woods of Glen Tromie, near Kingussie	Unlisted	Fair	Low	July 2001
Braeruthven, near Ruthven Barracks, Kingussie	Unlisted	Very poor	Critical	20 July 2009
Croft Cottage, Blaragie, Laggan	Unlisted	Very poor	High	20 June 2013
Upper Tullochgrue Farm, Aviemore	Unlisted	Very poor	High	28 June 2013
Old Cromdale Church of Scotland Manse Steading, Cromdale	B	Very poor	Critical	28 June 2013
Old Crubenmore Bridge, over River Truim, Newtonmore	B	Poor	Moderate	28 June 2017
17-19, Castle Road, Grantown-on-Spey	C	Poor	Low	28 June 2013
Garvamore Barracks; King's House, Garva Bridge	A	Fair	Low	20 June 2013
55 Golf Road, Ballater	Unlisted	Fair	Low	7 August 2013
The Old School, School Lane, Ballater	C	Fair	Moderate	7 August 2013
Queen Victoria's Picnic Lodge, Mar Lodge Estate, Braemar	C	Poor	High	6 August 2013
Derry Lodge, Mar Lodge Estate, Braemar	C	Fair	Moderate	6 August 2013
6 Castleton Terrace, Braemar	C	Poor	Moderate	6 August 2013
St Margaret's Episcopal Church (Former), Castleton Terrace, Braemar	A	Poor	Moderate	6 August 2013
Mitchell-Forbes Mausoleum, Strathdon Churchyard, Bellabeg	B	Poor	Moderate	7 August 2013
Jeannie's Mother's House, Glenbuchat	C	Very Poor	High	7 August 2013
Dulax Farm Steading, Glenbuchat	B	Poor	Moderate	7 August 2013
Dulax Farmhouse, Glenbuchat	B	Very Poor	High	7 August 2013
Auchernach House North Lodge, Auchernach	C	Poor	Moderate	7 August 2013
Auchernach House Doocot, Auchernach	B	Very Poor	High	7 August 2013

Building	Listing	Condition	Category of Risk	Date of Assessment
Auchernach House Walled Garden	B	Very Poor	High	18 August 2010
Begg's House Steading, Badenyon	C	Very Poor	High	7 August 2013
Cottage at Glenbanchor, Glenbanchor	Unlisted	Very Poor	Moderate	6 July 2012
Mill of Bellabeg, Bellabeg	B	Poor	Low	7 August 2013
Mill of Glenbuchat, Glenbuchat	B	Very Poor	High	7 August 2013
Begg's House, Badenyon	B	Very Poor	High	7 August 2013
South Steading with mill wheel, Scalan	B	Poor	Moderate	18 August 2015
North Steading with stable and mill wheel, Scalan	A	Poor	Moderate	19 August 2015

However it should be noted that the BARR does not include all buildings at risk in the Park, just those that have been reported to or identified by Historic Environment Scotland. Some buildings that may be of historical merit and would otherwise fall under the BARR criteria, for example the former Struan Hotel in Carrbridge, but have not been reported or recorded, are not included.

### Linguistic heritage

Located near the centre of Scotland, and owing to the restrictive nature of its mountainous terrain, the Cairngorms National Park occupies a position where many of the linguistic and cultural differences found in Scotland intersect. The language used in place names in the Park often has historical meaning that describes the landscape, place, wildlife or activities that could or are still found there.

Within the National Park two minority languages, both of which have undergone significant language shift towards English, are still spoken: Scottish Gaelic and Scots. The languages belong to contrasting linguistic families.

- Gaelic, which was brought to Scotland from Ireland in around AD 500, was once spoken throughout the area. Though the 2011 recorded that the language was spoken by a very small proportion of the population (around 2.2%, down from around 3.1% in 2001 Census) in the Park, it is a visible and inseparable part of the identity of the area, as it continues to dominate the names of places, both built and natural.



- Scots, which takes the form of its Northern / North-eastern dialect, Doric, is also spoken in the Park, but is stronger in the east where the influence of the lowlands is greatest. The language has also seen a fall in use, with around 5,400 (29.3%) of the National Park's population claiming to be able to speak it in the 2011 Census.

Despite apparently having a greater number of speakers than Gaelic, an analysis of the Scots language skills remains difficult. For example, the 2011 Census was the first to collect information on the Scots language and therefore no detailed information on trends is available. Secondly, research carried out prior to the census suggested that people vary considerably in their interpretation of what is meant by 'Scots'. It is therefore likely that the census statistics reflect a very broad definition of the language.

## Proposed SEA objectives

SEA main objective	Sub-objective
<b>7a: Protect and enhance the character, diversity and special qualities of the landscapes of the Park</b>	Will there be an effect on the special qualities of the National Park landscapes?
	Will there be an effect landscape character and local distinctiveness?
<b>7b: Protect and enhance the character, diversity and special qualities of the landscapes of the Park</b>	Will there be an effect on the historic and cultural environment and assets (including linguistic)?