

Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan

[Please note that annexes to this Plan which are mentioned here (and highlighted) will be attached as part of final Plan preparation and are not presented here]

Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan 2023 - 2028

Introduction

Tourist numbers have seen steady growth since National Park designation in 2003. In 2019, the Cairngorms received an estimated 2 million visitors for the first time. Alongside that, visitor satisfaction rates had also climbed with an average satisfaction score of over 9/10. Visitors were also more likely to be attracted by National Park status, with 55% saying that it was an important factor in their decision to visit. Although most visitors were repeat customers, there was an increase in both first-time and overseas visitors.

The Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns changed everything, as it did for destinations around the world, as we attempted to address the twin challenges of the sudden collapse of the visitor economy and increased post-lockdown footfall at key countryside sites. This led to a range of issues including parking congestion, toileting and high levels of informal camping. This led to measures such as the establishment of a National Park Authority Ranger Team for the first time but has also emphasised the need for a strategic approach to investment in tourism infrastructure.

Aim

The Aim of this plan is to develop a more strategic approach to investment in, and maintenance of, tourism infrastructure in the Cairngorms National Park for the period from 2023 to 2028

Objectives

- Develop a clear picture of existing tourism infrastructure provision across the National Park
- Identify pressure points or gaps in provision on either a site specific or issue wide basis
- Identify and prioritise tourism infrastructure improvement solutions
- Develop identified opportunities/projects to “shovel ready” stage
- Develop a strategic approach to facility and path maintenance and upgrades
- Develop appropriate data gathering and asset management systems to support future management of tourism infrastructure.

This plan has been prepared to add value to the National Park Partnership Plan 2022 – 2027. The plan will serve the function of an internal management tool to prioritise local investment and to assist in directing CNPA resources but is the recognised strategic plan for the Park against which future bids for Rural Tourism Infrastructure funding applications can be assessed. The plan will therefore also include a number of investment priorities that will be taken forward by partner organisations.

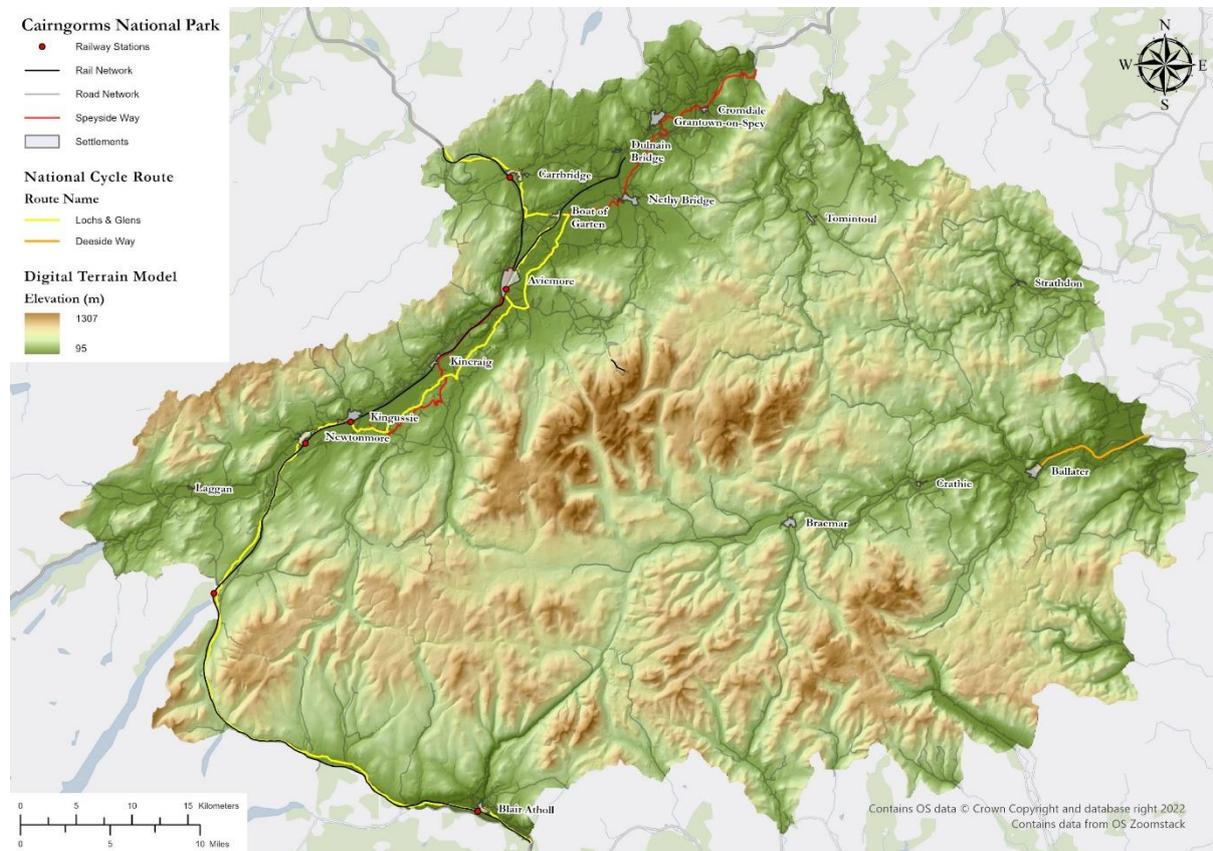
The plan will help identify a number of potential projects predominantly at visitor pressure points and give broad cost estimates. This will provide an agreed list of strategic priorities that can support funding applications by both CNPA and partners as well as facilitating quicker delivery of projects as further funding becomes available.

Background

The Cairngorms National Park

The Cairngorms is the UK's largest National Park at 4,528 sq km (6% of Scotland's land mass) and is home to one quarter of the UK's rare and endangered species. Around 18,000 people live in the National Park across the areas of Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland, Moray, Perth and Kinross, with

two million visitors enjoying this special place every year. Indeed, the visitor economy is more critical to the Cairngorms National Park than anywhere else in rural Scotland, accounting for 30% of the economy (GVA) and 43% of employment in the area.



The National Park has four distinct aims as set out by Parliament:

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

These aims are to be pursued collectively. However, if there is conflict between the first aim and any of the others, greater weight is given to the first aim to help ensure conservation of the natural and cultural heritage underpins the economic, social and recreation value of the Cairngorms National Park.

The Cairngorms National Park Authority helps coordinate the activities that help achieve these aims with the vision and overarching strategy for managing the National Park in the strategic “National Park Partnership Plan”.

Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan

Launched on 23rd August 2022, the National Park Partnership Plan sets out how all those with a responsibility for the National Park will coordinate their work to tackle the most important issues in the period from 2022-27. In particular, the Plan:

- Sets out the vision and overarching strategy for managing the National Park.
- Guides the work of all public bodies and other partners to deliver the aims of the National Park.
- Provides the strategic context for the Local Development Plan.
- Is the Strategic Regional Land Use Framework, Regional Spatial Strategy, Climate Action Plan and Capital Investment Strategy for the National Park.
- Is the Economic and the Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the National Park.

The document is arranged in three sections: Nature, People and Place with each section setting out the outcome that we want to achieve by 2045 (the year Scottish Government has committed to achieving net zero) as well as a series of long-term objectives and a set of actions and policies for the next five years. The National Park Partnership Plan is supported by a number of action plans that will help to deliver the objectives of the plan and the National Park aims.

Figure 9: Hierarchy of plans



This Tourism Infrastructure Plan provides additional detail on the National Park’s tourism infrastructure needs and the associated priorities that will primarily deliver against the People and Place themes. However, it should be noted that the interrelated nature of the different elements of the National Park Partnership Plan mean many actions will have impacts across all three themes.

Principal Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan Objectives & Actions related to Tourism Infrastructure Development	
Objective	Actions
B5. Increase the number of assets in community ownership or management, the number of social enterprises that generate a profit and the area of land where communities are involved in management decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support communities to acquire and manage assets / land through enhanced funding and training support
B10. There will be better opportunities for everyone to enjoy the National Park and the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, update and deliver the Active Cairngorms Action Plan, infrastructure plans and Tourism Action Plan

visitor profile will be more diverse, especially with regards to people who are disabled, from lower socio-economic backgrounds, LGBTQ+ and from minority and ethnic groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop targeted support programmes to overcome specific barriers to enjoying the National Park, including looking at business and infrastructure capacity
C5. Work to stabilise visitor numbers in the peak season, focusing growth on quieter months and on those areas that have the infrastructure and capacity to accommodate additional visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan to provide high-quality infrastructure at key visitor hotspots and for key sectors (e.g. camping and motorhomes).
C9. Welcome visitors and provide a high-quality experience while managing their impacts through providing better infrastructure and high-quality ranger services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a new Cairngorms Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan, Active Cairngorms Action Plan and Tourism Action Plan

Our Visitors

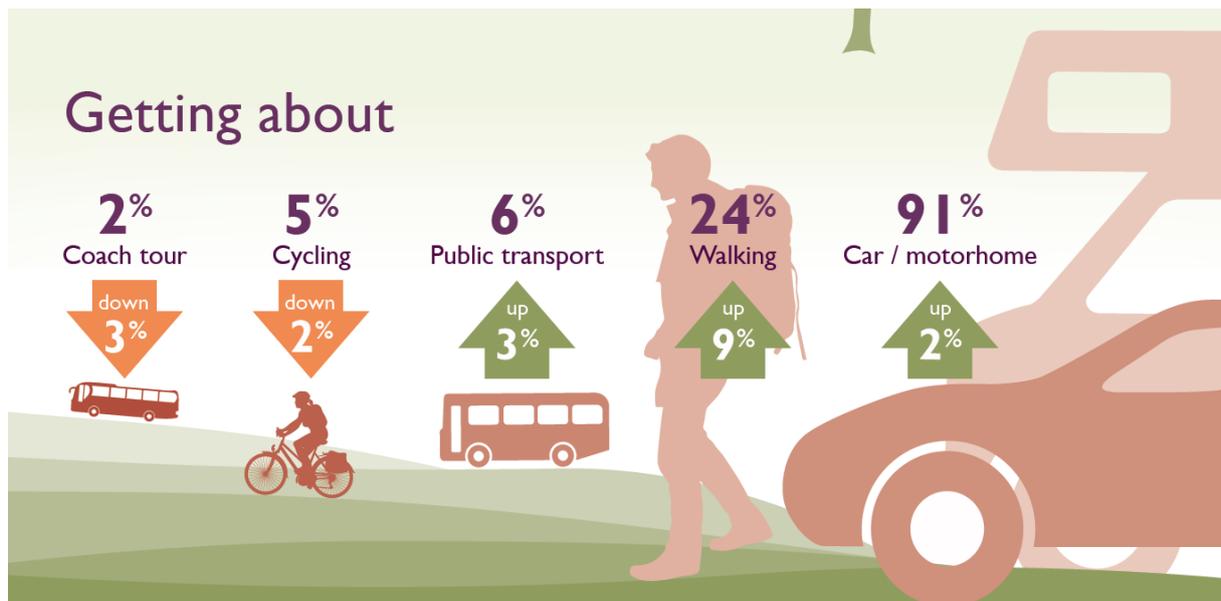
Around 2 million people visit the Cairngorms National Park every year from all over the world with more than half of the visitors coming from within Scotland, 25% from elsewhere in the UK and 21% international visitors from around the world. Over half are motivated to visit by the landscape and scenery.

Once here the most popular activities are:

1. Sightseeing - 61%
2. Low level walking - 57%
3. Visiting attractions - 45%
4. Photography, videos and social media - 28%
5. High level walking - 18%
6. Cycling - 13%
7. Winter sports - 8% and
8. Wildlife activities - 5%.



In terms of getting about once here, 91% use a private car or motorhome for some or all of their journeys with only 6% using public transport, 24% walking and 5% cycling.



Visitor satisfaction is generally extremely high, however areas consistently highlighted as needing improvement include provision of more public toilets and better public transport.

An Accessible National Park

The National Park Partnership Plan lays out a vision for a National Park that is genuinely welcoming to individuals of all backgrounds and abilities; that supports thriving, diverse communities; and that works for both nature and people. Integral to this is creating visitor infrastructure that removes or minimises barriers to access.

Around a fifth of adults living in Scotland have a long-term illness, health problem or disability, which limits their ability to participate in outdoor recreation. By addressing infrastructure issues such as availability of accessible toilets, clutter free pavements, accessible public transport and providing barrier free path networks, the intention is to remove or minimise disadvantage such that more people are more able to enjoy the National Park.

Although the Cairngorms already has some of the best path networks in Scotland, there is still work to be done to make more of them accessible to all. Many otherwise accessible trails have built in barriers such as some styles of gates, boulders or gates across entrances, steps to bridges or soft sections that preclude wheeling.

Insert 3 image Strip montage – new facilities at abernethy, rock barrier on path, active bike/trike?

Availability and accessibility of public toilets continues to be an ongoing issue throughout the Park with dated infrastructure that often does not match today's expectations. Many are provided and maintained by Local Authorities, but they are increasingly using third party comfort schemes to fill the gaps in provision. The CNPA will continue to work with partners to develop solutions to improve provision at key locations and support initiatives to develop fully accessible, year-round facilities and changing places toilets.

All proposals for new, upgraded or maintenance of infrastructure through this plan will be subject to an equalities impact assessment to identify realistic options for improving accessibility for people with protected characteristics. The practical solutions will vary depending on the project and availability of funding, but common options for exploration are likely to be:

- All abilities path surfacing
- Visual or textural guides on paths and within car parks
- Removal of physical barriers such as steps, slopes, stiles or awkward gates
- Provision of additional benches on paths where less mobile users are anticipated
- Installation of accessible bus stops and platforms
- Installation of or upgrading existing toilets to “changing places” toilet standard
- Installation of e-bike charging points
- Electric vehicle charging that incorporates suitable disabled parking and charging units that are fully accessible.

Our Nature

Insert landscape image or small block montage of mountain, forest, species

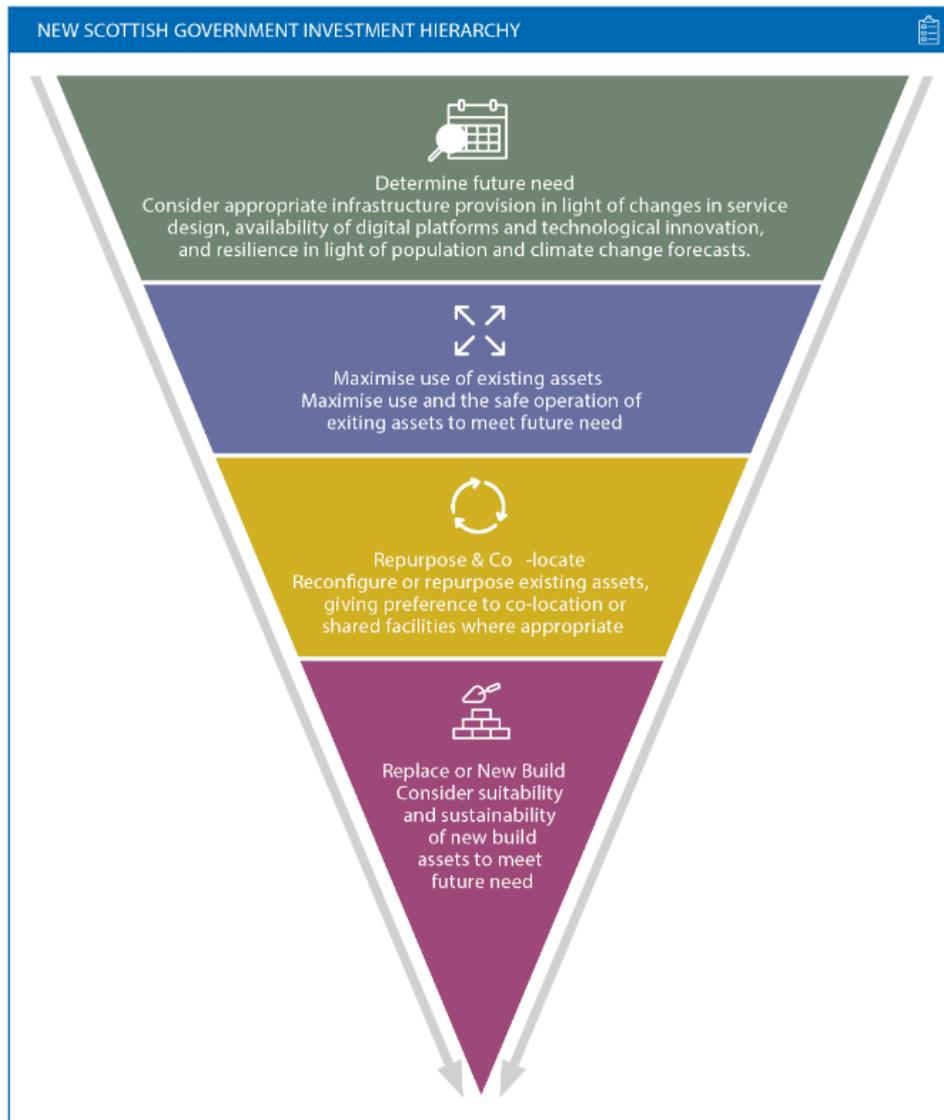
The Cairngorms National Park contains some of Scotland’s most iconic nature and landscapes. It contains 9 National Nature Reserves and four of the five highest mountains in the UK can be found here. Nearly half of the land in the National Park is considered ‘wild land’ and 49 per cent of the park has been recognised as being of international importance for nature and is protected. There are 19 Areas of Conservation, 12 Special Protection Areas and 46 Sites of Special Scientific Interest within the Park. Over a quarter of the UK’s rare and threatened species are found here including 80% of the capercaillie population.

As part of any infrastructure development, due consideration will need to be given to the impact that it may have on nature – both the natural environment in the immediate area but also wider impacts in relation to the current climate emergency and biodiversity crisis. To ensure such impacts are minimised a series of guiding principles will underpin any proposals for tourism infrastructure developments.

Insert a map – eg LDP 21 Fig 8 page 47 - designations covering the CNP

Guiding Principles for Tourism Infrastructure Development

In proposing infrastructure solutions to tourism pressures, there are a number of overarching principles that should be applied to any project. The climate and nature crisis is the single biggest challenge that we face, and it is critical that the Cairngorms National Park is an exemplar in achieving net zero through projects that deliver solutions to the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis. Firstly, any plans for infrastructure development should follow the Scottish Government’s Infrastructure investment hierarchy which specifies that priority should be given to maintaining and enhancing existing assets over new build.



At a more local level, the National Park Partnership Plan also identifies five guiding principles for capital investment in the National Park:

- **Green:** Infrastructure will contribute to delivering net zero and strengthen the natural and social capital of the National Park.
- **Cairngorms:** Infrastructure will focus on the needs of the National Park and will contribute to the long-term outcomes as set out in the Partnership Plan.
- **Employment:** Infrastructure will maximise local employment and support the development of a wellbeing economy.
- **Long-term:** Infrastructure investment will be focused on long-term solutions to key issues around visitor management, transport, flood management etc.
- **Equalities, diversity and inclusion:** Infrastructure will help to ensure that the Cairngorms is a Park for All.

In delivering any tourism infrastructure developments we will also ensure that: -

- Any development meets the policies set out in the Cairngorms Local Development Plan
- Any infrastructure development should be **of the right scale**, as well as being at the right location and with the right design. A facility should not be bigger than it needs to be and should be designed so it fits well with its surroundings.
- Any development is prioritising the potential of **active travel, minimising the potential of car journeys** as far as possible
- Any development should be respectful of the **environmental carrying capacity** of the site and immediate area most notably any disturbance or fragmentation of habitats that might be caused.
- Any development is respectful of the **physical carrying capacity** of the site by considering the number of visitors a site can reasonably welcome at any one time.
- Any development is respectful of the **social carrying capacity** of the site – i.e. developed, as far as possible, in partnership with the local community, to consider opportunities for communities to benefit from the facilities created including, where appropriate, the option of community ownership.

Investment in Tourism Infrastructure

Recent visitor pressures and the need for investment

Over the last decade or so, a new phenomenon has been the emergence of the Instagram or Trip Advisor effect whereby locations can suddenly become overnight “must visit” destinations through the promotion, planned or otherwise, by 3rd parties such as influencers. The Fairy Pools on Skye are the most obvious Scottish example of this but within the National Park, visitors to Lochan Uaine at Glenmore and Prince Albert’s Cairn on the Balmoral Estate (known as the Balmoral Pyramids) have dramatically increased due to social media promotion. This “instant popularity” is difficult to predict and CNPA and partners will need to remain nimble in responding to emerging infrastructure issues that are created as and where they may emerge.

The summers of 2020 and 2021 were unprecedented in terms of changes to visitor behaviour and distribution across the National Park. A combination of circumstances, including lockdown easing and the desire from visitors to experience the outdoors and nature, put significant new pressures on certain locations and highlighted key pressure points or gaps in provision. These challenges, which can negatively impact on local communities as well as the visitor experience included:

- Congestion, particularly on dead end roads,
- Capacity issues with car parks and campsites,
- Overspill parking such as on verges,
- Limited public transport and active travel options in many areas
- Availability (or not) of public toilets,
- Concentrations of informal/ “wild” camping at particular locations
- Environmental damage due to cumulative impacts of large numbers of people as well as direct damage from activities such as campfires
- Public health issues around toileting or motorhome waste disposal
- These issues were often exacerbated in areas that were close to main transport routes i.e. trunk roads and easily accessible from large population centres.

A return to more normal travel patterns, including the resumption of more overseas travel and many domestic events such as music festivals occurred in 2022 which helped reduce pressures. However,

the ongoing effects of social media promotion, the “discovery” of new locations such as the Cairngorms by domestic visitors during the pandemic (to which some will return) and a continuing rise in the numbers of electric vehicles, new motorhomes being registered and the numbers available for hire suggest ongoing investment will continue to be required.

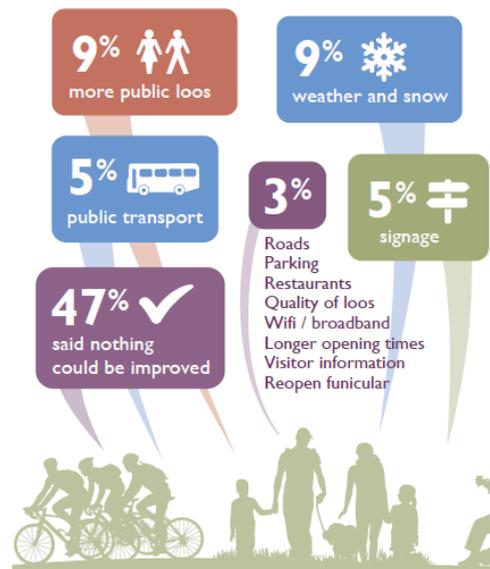
The Cairngorms National Park Authority undertake visitor surveys every five years and the data from the 2019 survey (and comparisons with earlier surveys) also give an indication of visitor’s levels of satisfaction with the infrastructure provided for them.

RATINGS

Facilities

Condition of paths & tracks	★★★★☆	4.30	up from 4.23
Signposts & signage	★★★★☆	4.20	up from 4.13
Provision of car parks	★★★★☆	4.19	up from 4.18
Public toilets	★★★☆☆	3.7	down from 4.03
Mobile phone reception	★★★☆☆	3.23	up from 3.09
Wifi access	★★★☆☆	3.18	up from 3.06
Public transport	★★★☆☆	3.1	down from 3.69

What could be improved?



Management of Visitors

Addressing many of the pressures described above requires a mix of more immediate solutions and longer-term investment. Many of the immediate activities such as ranger patrols, communications activity around appropriate behaviour and temporary parking or toilet facilities can be considered as mechanisms to assist with the “management of visitors” and these activities are documented in an existing Managing for Visitors Plan. The purpose of the Managing for Visitors Plan which is coordinated by the CNPA but delivered by a range of partners is to:

- Identify particular rural “hot” and “warm” spots that need particular attention and /or support
- Provide a warm welcome and support exceptional experiences for the public to enjoy the outdoors while mitigating any negative impacts from increased numbers at popular sites
- Reduce potential conflict between residents and visitors
- Promote collaboration across estate and organisational boundaries
- Improve the range of advice and access to this advice to promote good behaviour and reduce the impacts of irresponsible activity such as fires or wild toileting.
- Address small scale maintenance of sites

The Managing for Visitors Plan 2022 for the National Park is available [here](#) and attached as **Appendix 1**. It is anticipated that this approach will continue with more immediate activities that are typically addressed through deployment of staff defined in future Managing for Visitors plans while priorities for longer term capital investment in infrastructure are defined in this infrastructure plan.

Defining “Tourism Infrastructure”

As much of the infrastructure used by visitors is also used by residents in their day-to-day activities and because some provision is informal rather than formal it can be difficult to define exactly what

“tourism infrastructure” is. For the purposes of this plan, the following principles have been used to help define tourism infrastructure: -

- The facility should be primarily aimed at or used by visitors - including day visitors. General infrastructure which is more widely used by residents or businesses such as roads or waste & recycling centres are excluded.
- The facility must be publicly available - typically this will mean provision is by local authorities, communities, public sector partners such as Forestry & Land Scotland or NatureScot or NGOs such as National Trust for Scotland or Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.
- Private sector provision that isn't related to being a customer of the business – for example a rural car park provided by a privately owned estate for use by the public when accessing the countryside can be considered tourism infrastructure but those such as a hotel or visitor attraction car park provided primarily for their paying customers would not.
- Facilities are also included where a formal arrangement is in place to give access to non-customers such as toilets in the recognised comfort scheme partnerships supported by Highland and Perth & Kinross Councils or Electric vehicle charge points that are publicly available through the ChargePlace Scotland network.

Facilities included in the plan	Facilities NOT included in the plan
Rural car parking including roadside laybys or informal parking areas where these are used by visitors for an extended stop where the occupants park to undertake an activity away from the vehicle e.g., at the recognised start point for a hill walk.	Parking in larger settlements where a combination of formal car parks and on-street parking give adequate provision Car parks provided for the paying customers of a commercial business
Dedicated overnight parking for motorhomes	Commercially operated caravan and camping sites
Standalone motorhome waste disposal facilities	
Motorhome waste disposal facilities on commercial sites actively promoted as being available to non-residents	
Public toilets	Toilets in the premises of a commercial business provided only for their customers
Electric Vehicle charge points*	
Path and cycle networks and their associated signage	Footways and pavements that form part of the public road infrastructure
Cycling infrastructure including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bike parking / shelters • Bike racks • Public e-bike charging 	
Ranger bases & visitor information shelters	
Cairngorms National Park entry point markers on road, path and at Train stations	
The Snow Road Scenic Route viewpoint installations: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Still” 	

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Watchers” and • “Counting Contours” | |
|---|--|

* Although not necessarily dedicated “tourism infrastructure” Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points are included in recognition of the importance that having a good network of charging points is in giving visitors the confidence to visit and in recognition of the net zero ambition that underpins the National Park Partnership Plan.

Previous Investment in Tourism Infrastructure

Over the past 15 years there has been significant investment in tourism infrastructure and facilities across the National Park by landowners, the National Park Authority, partner organisations often with the support of funding from sources such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund. While the CNPA does not actually own or manage any of the land within the National Park, it does have a key role in supporting the provision of facilities that enhance the visitor experience through partnership project development, coordination, financial support or funding acquisition.

In recent years investment has included built facilities such as improved and upgraded ranger bases and visitor centres, the extension of the Speyside Way as well as a number of other paths and trails as well as projects such as improved toilets at Loch an Eilean outside Aviemore and new parking in Glen Muick near Ballater and at Clarack, Dinnet.

A map of the most recent infrastructure improvement works supported by the CNPA can be found at [Appendix 2](#).

The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund

The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) was established in 2018 by the Scottish Government and the Fund is managed by VisitScotland on its behalf. RTIF is designed to support collaborative projects which focus on improving the visitor experience in rural parts of Scotland that are facing pressure on their infrastructure and communities as a result of visitor numbers. There are two core elements in the RTIF criteria that describe the main objectives for tourism infrastructure projects: -

- 1. Alleviating existing or anticipated visitor pressures** - As a result of previous or anticipated increases in visitor numbers, there is a visitor and / or community pressure point which is likely to continue and needs to be addressed.
- 2. Provision of a quality visitor experience** – projects should provide high quality visitor facilities and infrastructure that lead to a positive impact on the local landscape and visitor economy while accommodating visitors with a wide variety of access needs.

To enable a more strategic approach to visitor infrastructure development and greater alignment with the objectives of [Scotland Outlook 2030](#) and the new [National Strategy for Economic Development](#), the RTIF criteria also require any actions proposed to meet a strategic need or address a gap. Priority will therefore be given to actions identified in a series of Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plans (of which this plan will be one).

Three of the recent investments in infrastructure referred to above and in [Appendix 2](#) have been funded through the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund: -

- Improvements to the car parking and toilet facilities and provision of waste disposal facilities at Muir of Dinnet.

- Active Glenmore, which provided pedestrian links between car parks, visitor attractions and accommodation to improve safety and access.
- Replacement of the toilets at Glenshee with new, fully accessible toilet facilities and showers with 24 hour / 365 day access, a grey and wastewater disposal point for motorhomes, new cycle facilities and an Electric Vehicle charge point (funding awarded but project not yet completed).

Getting to and around the Cairngorms National Park

How people get to and move around the Cairngorms is going to be one of the biggest changes and challenges in the National Park over the coming years as we seek to achieve our net zero and visitor management objectives. To achieve this there will be less use of private cars in future and a need to look at improved public transport to cater for visitors getting to and around the National Park, as well as site-specific solutions for key areas such as Glenmore.

There is a need to ensure that work in the National Park follows the hierarchy set out in the National Transport Strategy that promotes walking, wheeling, cycling followed by public transport and shared transport options in preference to private car use for the movement of people. Strategic targets include significantly increasing the proportion of visitors that arrive by public transport, increasing active travel and public transport usage once here and reducing the proportion of short journeys made by car.

Arriving in the National Park

Although walking, wheeling and cycling sit at the top of the transport hierarchy, the distances involved for most visitors coming here will tend to exclude these options for most, so the focus on influencing journeys to the National Park will tend to be on public transport.

While the public transport services and behaviour change activity to encourage increased use of public transport as a means of getting to the National Park are beyond the remit of this infrastructure plan, there is a role for this plan to identify infrastructure within the National Park that will support this change.

As many visitors coming into the National Park by public transport, particularly those coming for longer stays are likely to arrive in one of the towns or villages there is a need for an appropriate sense of welcome at rail stations and bus arrival points in these communities. Some elements of this welcome are quite modest such as the signs in railway stations indicating to the visitor that they have arrived in the National Park, but other more significant infrastructure may be required to help improve the visitor experience such as improved arrival facilities, local maps, information about onward travel, access to e-bikes or shelter for those waiting to depart.

Encouraging more visits by public transport may also require additional infrastructure at locations outside these main communities such as rural bus laybys, associated shelters and service or location information. This will be particularly important in encouraging those coming into the National Park on day trips to do so by public transport and as such is primarily this is expected to be along the A9 corridor between Killiecrankie / Blair Atholl and Carrbridge and in Deeside where existing services allow day visits by public transport.

Despite local and national efforts to encourage more use of public transport or active travel options, it is recognised that for the foreseeable future many people will continue to arrive in the National Park by private car. However, an increasing number are likely to arrive by electric vehicle (EV) – and

there is a consequent need to provide a suitable network of EV charge points. Proposals for these facilities which will also support people getting around the National Park are described in more detail on [page 19](#).

All road and National Cycle Network entry points to the National Park are marked with a granite monolith or boulder to provide a sense of welcome to visitors and rail stations have National Park welcome signs on the platforms. While these are not intended to be specific stopping points, some are likely to see some visitors who come by car or cycle stopping for photographs. This has implications for the CNPA in terms of the ongoing management and maintenance of the markers, and this is covered in the section on managing Cairngorms National Park Authority Assets on [page 31](#).

Getting around the National Park - Active Travel

One approach designed to reduce use of private cars in future, particularly for shorter journeys in and around communities is to increase levels of active travel. While much of the focus on active travel is commonly based on the needs of local residents, there are many instances where investments would be equally useful to visitors. The size of the towns and villages within the National Park lend themselves particularly well to visitors getting around without a car to access businesses such as accommodation, shops, cafés, restaurants, attractions and activities as well as travelling between communities & nearby attractions.

The CNPA is looking to investigate and develop solutions to increase the levels of active travel through the National Lottery Heritage Fund supported Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme. The development phase incorporating consultation and feasibility studies is under way and due to complete by June 2023. This will be followed by a delivery phase from late 2023 until 2030 which aims to connect communities with safe walking, cycling and wheeling active travel infrastructure and sustainable transport options which will benefit the 2 million annual visitors. The aspiration is that the Cairngorms National Park will become a rural exemplar for sustainable and active travel.

While the Heritage Horizons work will define more precisely what infrastructure is required and where, the current consultation is seeking to identify the need for facilities including: -

- New active travel routes
- Improvements to existing infrastructure to make them more suitable for walking, cycling and wheeling e.g. dropped kerbs or safe crossing points
- Bike parking / storage
- E-bike availability
- E-bike charging
- Route signage and related information on active travel routes

It is anticipated that most of the active travel priorities that will emerge from the Heritage Horizons consultation activity and subsequent options appraisal process will be focussed on routes within or immediately around communities as this would likely satisfy resident's most routine needs. In many cases this would also satisfy many visitors' needs but the nature of two unique visitor destinations suggest some particular active travel improvements from the nearby communities might be warranted – Glenlivet Bike Trails and Laggan Wolftrax. As visitors are going there to mountain bike and many will be doing so on their own bikes this is a market that could easily be encouraged to use bikes to travel to the destination if the right infrastructure was provided.

Although primarily considered as longer, leisure cycling routes, the two routes through the National Park currently or previously recognised by Sustrans as part of the National Cycle network – NCN7 from Killiecrankie to Carrbridge and NCN195 (Deeside Way) from Aboyne to Ballater can also be considered to form strategic links between a number of communities. Where sections of these routes could be improved to facilitate visitors moving around using active travel options these upgrades would warrant classification as tourism infrastructure improvements.

Active Travel Infrastructure Priorities

Location		Various	
Current issues / ambition for the location / need for investment		Limited good quality safe and well signposted / publicised facilities that allow visitors to access key visitor destinations by active travel methods (walking, cycling, wheeling).	
Ownership		Various owners	
Project summary			
The Cairngorms 2030 Heritage Horizons project will deliver a range of active travel networks and improvements to existing facilities within, and in some cases between, communities around the National Park. Current development work under way with contracted consultants will identify priorities and subsequently designs for these but available funding is likely to mean some routes aimed at visitor use cannot be provided through this initiative so further tourism infrastructure investment would be warranted.			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough Estimate)	Additional Information
To be defined through Heritage Horizons consultations and reporting	TBC	£ TBC	Heritage Horizons development stage work will identify anticipated costs
Estimated total cost		£ TBC	
Project delivery			
Anticipated project lead		CNPA	
Delivery partners		Sustrans, Local Authorities, Transport Scotland	
Permissions required		Landowner Lease <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Planning Permission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Scottish Water <input type="checkbox"/>	SEPA <input type="checkbox"/>
		Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
How does the project help address the climate and nature crises		Improving the infrastructure that supports active travel will encourage more people to travel around the Park by walking, cycling or wheeling. Much of this is anticipated to be improvements to existing infrastructure so impacts on nature should be minimal. Any new routes will need to be designed to avoid sensitive habitats and should be designed to provide new habitats through landscaping.	
Potential improvements to accessibility		Good design should allow routes to provide additional benefits to those who are less mobile through providing well graded, well surfaced routes that can also be used for leisure purposes.	

Potential barriers	To be identified through Heritage Horizons work
Potential match funding sources	Local Authorities, Transport Scotland, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Sustrans – part via Heritage Horizons programme
Future revenue streams	None identified as new infrastructure would become part of public sector managed roads and / or path infrastructure
Timescale	2024-2028

Getting around the National Park - Public Transport

Most public transport in the National Park is focussed on two linear routes – the A9 road corridor and Deeside. While the former gives a selection of both rail and bus options these are largely designed around the needs of people travelling through the area between Inverness and Perth / Edinburgh/ Glasgow so stops can be limited or times less convenient for more local journeys. Further services on a roughly hourly basis connect Aviemore with communities further down the Spey to Grantown-on-Spey while similar frequency services operate along the Dee between Aberdeen and Ballater with alternate services continuing to Crathie and Braemar.

Beyond these routes public transport is limited and, where it does exist, fairly infrequent with many services based around school times so often unsuitable for visitor use. With the exception of those between Highland Perthshire and Badenoch & Strathspey, direct connections between different visitor areas within the National Park are non-existent.

As described above under “arriving in the National Park” the public transport services themselves are beyond the remit of this infrastructure plan, but there is again a role for this plan to identify infrastructure within the National Park that will support increased use of those services that do exist such as improved shelter for travellers.

As with active travel routes, the CNPA Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme is in the middle of the development phase of a sustainable transport project with options expected by June 2023 followed by a delivery phase from late 2023. This project is seeking to develop ways that enable people to travel more sustainably and reduce car dependency in the Park including ensuring active travel facilities are integrated with public transport provision, making sustainable multi-modal journeys an easy and attractive option. This is anticipated to require investment in public transport infrastructure but specific projects will only be defined once the development phase is complete. However, where any individual tourism infrastructure projects are being taken forward consideration will be given to the inclusion of associated infrastructure that supports public transport at the time of the initial work to avoid the need to retrofit any further infrastructure.

A second Cairngorms 2030 Project is looking specifically at a sustainable transport plan for the Glenmore corridor which is widely acknowledged as the area of the National Park facing the most significant transport and parking pressures. Although formal proposals are yet to be developed improved public transport services and a related need for supporting infrastructure are anticipated to be part of the solution as is outlined in the project brief: - *“Deliver a comprehensive sustainable public transport service, make active travel easy and an attractive option and reduce vehicle journeys between Aviemore and Cairngorm Mountain.”* Projects that deliver the longer-term solution required will only be fully defined once the development phase is complete and may then take some time to be delivered. In view of the level of pressures at this location, some additional work is

required to address the worst issues in the shorter term, and this should include public transport improvements.

Public Transport Infrastructure Priorities

Location		Various	
Current issues / ambition for the location / need for investment		Limited public transport options that allow visitors to access key visitor destinations by public transport. Gaps in the infrastructure that supports the operation of public transport services or the integration between public transport and active travel.	
Ownership		Various owners	
Project summary			
<p>The Cairngorms 2030 Heritage Horizons project includes a suite of projects intended to deliver better public transport services across the National Park and to integrate these better with other sustainable transport modes. These include an overarching “Sustainable Transport in the Park” project which looks at identifying longer term needs (through to 2045) and two location specific projects - Upper Deeside Active and Sustainable Travel and a Glenmore Transport Plan. Development work is currently under way with contracted consultants who will make recommendations on the services and infrastructure priorities that should be implemented. As development work is under way, it isn’t possible to give precise details of the required infrastructure in this plan but once priorities are identified it is anticipated that some will include a requirement for further tourism infrastructure investment.</p>			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough Estimate)	Additional Information
To be defined through Heritage Horizons consultations and reporting	TBC	£ TBC	Heritage Horizons development stage work will identify anticipated costs
Estimated total cost		£ TBC	
Project delivery			
Anticipated project lead		CNPA	
Delivery partners		Local Authorities, Transport Scotland, Transport providers	
Permissions required		Landowner Lease <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scottish Water <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Planning Permission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SEPA <input type="checkbox"/>
How does the project help address the climate and nature crises		Improving the infrastructure that supports public transport services will encourage more people to use public transport to get to and around the Park. Infrastructure is anticipated to be at sites already developed such as roadsides so impacts on nature should be minimal.	
Potential improvements to accessibility		Infrastructure improvements should be designed to maximise accessibility for those with limited mobility. Improved public transport services should improve access	

	for those from lower economic brackets / non car owners.
Potential barriers	To be identified through Heritage Horizons work
Potential match funding sources	Transport providers, Local Authorities, Transport Scotland, National Lottery Heritage Fund, RTIF.
Future revenue streams	None from infrastructure itself; commercial income from operation of routes
Timescale	2024-2028

Getting around the National Park – Private Transport

As with travelling to the National Park it is recognised that for the foreseeable future many people will continue to make some of their journeys around the National Park by private vehicles and so adequate, well managed parking as well as the EV charge point infrastructure described earlier, will still be essential to cater for those moving around the National Park. Many of those travelling by private vehicles are also likely to be doing so in motorhomes or camper vans and as such will have some more specific requirements, and these are considered in the section on park wide issues on [page 24](#).

Electric Vehicle Charging points

Much work to deliver a network of EV charging points is already under way including Transport Scotland’s “Electric A9” project which aims to develop multiple EV charge place hubs along the route, to provide EV charging for long distance journeys as well as local charging for businesses and residents and charging at the destination. However, a denser network will be required and so, as well as additional provision in settlements, consideration will be given to providing EV charging at appropriate visitor locations.

Enhancing the EV charge point network

Location	Various		
Current issues / ambition for the location / need for investment	Limited provision of EV charging, particularly outside the main communities. A denser network of sites is required if EV drivers are to have confidence they can get to and around the area.		
Ownership	Various owners		
Project summary			
Provision of new EV charge points to create a network of sites across the National Park. Sites without provision that could be considered as the highest priorities are: -			
Dalwhinnie	Newtonmore	Kincaig	
Glenmore	Cairngorm Mountain	Carrbridge	
Nethy Bridge	Glenlivet	Lecht	
Strathdon	Cambus o' May	Crathie	
Glenshee (if not delivered via current RTIF project)			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough Estimate)	Additional Information
EV Charge Point	1 per location	£200,000	Costs likely to vary quite considerably depending on location
Estimated total cost		£200,000	
Project delivery			
Anticipated project lead	CNPA		
Delivery partners	Transport Scotland, Local Authorities, Public sector landowners, Private sector.		
Permissions required	Landowner Lease <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Planning Permission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Scottish Water <input type="checkbox"/>	SEPA <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
How does the project help address the climate and nature crises	Increasing the number and range of EV charge points will encourage use of EVs to get to and around the Park. Units are anticipated to be in existing car parks - so no direct impacts on nature.		
Potential improvements to accessibility	Infrastructure improvements should be designed to maximise accessibility for those with limited mobility. In particular charging units should be designed to support all users.		
Potential barriers / constraints	Uncertainty over levels of provision through other schemes, limited electricity network capacity in some areas, lack of suitable sites in some locations / land ownership		

Potential match funding sources	Transport Scotland, Local Authorities, RTIF, BMW Sponsorship
Future revenue streams	Commercial income from use of charge points
Timescale	2023-2025

As the Cairngorms includes many remote, sparsely populated areas, there will be areas where the underlying electricity distribution networks may not allow this. If this proves to be the case a more practical or financially viable location for such facilities may be outside the National Park - for example in places such as Edzell or Kirriemuir that act as the gateways to the Angus glens.

Although still an emerging technology as far as private transport is concerned, it will, also be important to keep a close watch on the development of Hydrogen fuel technologies and any implications this may have for related infrastructure in the National Park.

Getting to and around the Cairngorms National Park: Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan Objectives & Actions	
Objective	Actions
C7. Promote a modal shift towards sustainable and active travel in the way visitors and commuters get to, and everyone moves around, the National Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase active travel and public transport usage within the National Park. • 25% of visitors get to the National Park by public transport by 2045. • E-bike and adapted bike hire and charging facilities will be available in all main settlements and major visitor hubs by 2030. • Support Sustrans-led work on promoting and developing the Lochs and Glens Way (formerly National Cycle Network 7) and National Cycle Network 195. • Promote low-cost initiatives to access the National Park by public transport • Promote innovative approaches based on ‘mobility as a service’, demand-responsive transport initiatives, improved connectivity of bus routes, e-scooters, electric car schemes, car-share schemes etc.

Infrastructure Investment Priorities by area

In recognising the need for visitor infrastructure that is high quality and helps us to give every visitor a great experience, the National Park Partnership Plan identified 4 broad Visitor Infrastructure areas - Central Cairngorms, Cairngorm and Glenmore, Western Cairngorms and Eastern Cairngorms. These areas are further subdivided into 9 “visitor experience” areas

- Central Cairngorms
- Cairngorm and Glenmore
- Western Cairngorms

- Badenoch: The Storylands
- Strathspey
- Highland Perthshire
- Eastern Cairngorms (including the Snow Roads Scenic Route)
 - Tomintoul and Glenlivet (including International Dark Sky Park)
 - Royal Deeside
 - Angus Glens
 - Cateran Country

Insert map of visitor experience areas

Based on the feedback from visitors, partner organisations and the National Park’s family of ranger services as well as through the public consultation on the National Park Partnership Plan, the CNPA has identified a number of “hotspot” areas across the National Park. These are locations where there are considered to be particular pressures at multiple neighbouring sites or multiple pressures within a small area rather than simply a single pressure on a single site. They are also typically our iconic locations where the actual numbers of visitors were high and / or carrying capacity is less so the related pressures can be more severe. Reflecting the strategic remit of this plan, these locations are also ones that might be considered to be of greater tourism prominence nationally and where it might therefore be reasonable to expect a degree of national support to assist in addressing the pressures they face.

In other areas of the National Park there may be fewer pressures and / or a need to invest in further infrastructure to support the growth of tourism in that area. This in turn could help relieve pressures elsewhere while supporting the National Park Partnership Plan ambition “to see the benefits of the visitor economy being realised more widely across the National Park” and “more focus on those areas that have the infrastructure and capacity to accommodate additional visitors”.

To give a more local perspective of those differing infrastructure requirements across the National Park, each of the 9 visitor experience areas are considered in turn below. Further details are given for specific locations that include any pressures faced or anticipated needs as well as potential solutions, suggested investments and any known constraints.

Central Cairngorms

This is the core mountain area of the Cairngorms and with the possible exception of some path provision there is a presumption against infrastructure development in this area except at downhill ski areas.

Cairngorm and Glenmore

This is the most pressured area of the Cairngorms, and due to the high concentration of protected sites, also an area where careful planning and management is needed. A Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy was approved in 2016 and the Cairngorms Mountain Masterplan was approved in 2021.

Badenoch: The Storylands

Although generally quieter than some neighbouring areas, this area was the focus of investment over three year period to 2021 to promote the cultural heritage of the Park. A new brand was identified for the area (based on stories and the connection to the land) , an app was developed and community-led charity was established to manage the legacy of the project. The project officer

worked with local communities to identify a number of sites of heritage interest, some of which could also benefit from small scale infrastructure enhancements to improve access.

Strathspey

Stretching from Aviemore to Carrbridge and Grantown on Spey, this area includes many of the Park's busiest communities for tourism. While many of the pressure points created by visitors to this area are found in the neighbouring Cairngorm and Glenmore area there are also a number of pressure points that would benefit from further investment.

Tomintoul and Glenlivet (including International Dark Sky Park)

As one of the quieter areas of the National Park, this area has the capacity to accept more visitors. There are no notable pressure points but investment, including in facilities for those in motorhomes and / or travelling the Snow Roads could be used to slow visitors down and encourage longer stays in the area. The International Dark Sky Park was developed as part of an ambitious landscape partnership project, delivered over five years to 2020.

Royal Deeside

The busiest part of the Eastern Cairngorms sees a mix of both holiday visitors and day visits particularly from the more heavily populated Aberdeen area. The Snow roads also traverse the area bringing a number of touring visitors. As well as a number of pressure points which are particularly well visited at weekends there are some quieter areas that have some capacity to accept more visitors, notably in the north / Strathdon but infrastructure to support this is limited.

Angus Glens

The upper reaches of these long glens stretch into the National Park but due to the nature of the roads which are essentially long "cul de sacs" there is little through traffic except by foot or bike. However, in addition to visitors from further afield they can be popular day trip or even weekend destinations from the Angus towns and Dundee which leads to parking, camping or toileting pressures at some of the road ends particularly in fine weather.

Cateran Country

Although the main settlements in this area lie outside the National Park, the area sees a lot of through traffic from those heading northwards into the Park to Glenshee, Braemar and beyond. The area also forms the southern section of the Snow Roads scenic route. There are relatively few pressures at present but opportunities to slow visitors down to spend longer in this area do exist, most notably at sites that form part of the Cateran Eco museum or at Spittal of Glenshee which could become more of a gateway to the National Park.

Highland Perthshire

As well as being the southern gateway to the National Park on the A9 and the Highland Main Line railway, this area encompassing Killiecrankie and Blair Atholl is a popular holiday and day trip destination in its own right. Major private sector attractions at Blair Atholl and Bruar provide significant tourism infrastructure but some pressure points remain.

Project priorities by location

For each project identified a table using the format shown in the example below will be included.

Example!			
Location	Forest Car Park		
Current issues / ambition for the location / need for investment	Current car park often over capacity. Difficult access by public transport		
Ownership	Local Authority / private		
Project summary			
This project will deliver improved efficiency in the use of the current parking area and reduce inappropriate and potentially dangerous verge parking through marking of dedicated bays and provision of a dedicated bus drop off area.			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough Estimate)	Additional Information
Additional Car Parking	10 spaces	£10,000	
Bus drop off area	1 bus bay	£40,000	
Connecting path improvements	250m	£12,000	
Improved information, interpretation and signage	5	£26,000	Includes advance variable message road signage
Estimated total cost		£88,000	
Project delivery			
Anticipated project lead	CNPA		
Delivery partners	Local Authority		
Permissions required	Landowner Lease <input type="checkbox"/>	Planning Permission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Scottish Water <input type="checkbox"/>	SEPA <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
How does the project help address the climate and nature crises	Additional parking will reduce verge parking and damage. Better provision for public transport and active travel will support reductions in car use. New path will be routed to reduce levels of wildlife disturbance		
Potential improvements to accessibility	Improvements to the path from the car park will provide better access for all to the adjacent long-distance route		
Potential barriers / constraints	Requires landowner agreement. Sensitive habitats adjacent to car park		
Potential match funding sources	Local Authority, RTIF		
Future revenue streams	Car parking charges		
Timescale	2024		

Park-wide Infrastructure Investment Priorities

While in some circumstances, specific infrastructure like a car park or public transport required at a specific location, for other types of infrastructure it makes sense to create a network of facilities across the National Park. Precise locations may be of less relevance as long as the network of facilities is adequately promoted. Examples of this include waste facilities for motorhomes or EV

charge points as self-contained motorhomes can travel for around three days before needing to empty their waste tanks and most EV drivers will tend to gravitate towards the main communities for charging facilities. Another reason for developing some tourism facilities in networks is that suitable locations will often be dependent on other underlying infrastructure such as a suitable mains sewage system or a sufficiently high-capacity power supply – things that may be less commonly found in remoter areas.

Camper Van and Motorhome Facilities

It is estimated that there are over a quarter of a million motorhomes registered in the UK, increasing by almost 15,000 per year while many European countries have similar numbers relative to their population. Scotland is regarded as a key destination for Motorhomes both with domestic markets and in some of the main source countries for our international visitors. Unlike more traditional caravan holidays where visitors based themselves at a single location for much of the time, modern motorhome users (including those in hire vehicles) commonly tour around a larger area. These visitors may also spend some or even most of their time overnighing in places other than full-service campsites.

Overnight Parking: There is already a commercial market in terms of both existing caravan and campsites, and the emerging network of privately operated stopovers often described using the French name “Aire” but despite this some gaps in provision still exist.

To some extent, addressing this can be considered a business opportunity rather than a public infrastructure need - for example for landowners, farmers or crofters who have suitable land or for businesses such as restaurants or bars that may wish to offer such a service to drive additional trade. Most provision of these types of sites is therefore anticipated to be taken forward by the private sector but there may also be instances where there is a general need for more provision and a community organisation may seek to provide these. Recognising the National Park Partnership Plan ambition to increase the number of assets in community ownership or management, the CNPA will support communities to provide such infrastructure through enhanced funding and training support.

Waste disposal facilities: Although some motorhome users overnight some of the time in places other than full-service campsites, there is still a need for them to dispose of their waste responsibly. Some campsites do offer this service to non-staying guests (perhaps at a cost) and these are well promoted through the printed and online “Campervanning in the Cairngorms” guide produced by the Cairngorms Business Partnership.

Insert map of publicly available motorhome waste disposal facilities

However, consideration still needs to be given to the provision of a network of standalone facilities, particularly in areas where there may not be campsites nearby. Where a visitor site is identified for other improvements, consideration will be given to whether such provision is appropriate at that location.

One particular area where provision of a waste facility has been proposed is around Tomintoul and this could help support tourism and business growth in one of the areas of the Park receiving fewer visitors at present. This area currently has no full-service caravan and camping sites but two small, certified locations that cater for motorhomes overnighing as well as a number of areas are used for informal overnight parking. There are therefore no waste disposal facilities unless visitors travel as far as Deeside or Strathspey.

In some cases, most notably in the Angus Glens, the lack of underlying infrastructure in the upper reaches of these glens may mean these are better provided in or near gateway communities such as Edzell or Kirriemuir. This need is identified in a similar plan to this one being produced by Angus Council and it is expected that the CNPA would support these proposals and promote such facilities when created.

Affordable Camping

The National Park has had a good network of commercially run caravan and camping sites for many years while those seeking a “wilderness” experience have commonly camped in the high mountains and remoter glens. However, a more recent pattern of informal camping which doesn’t always fall within the Scottish Outdoor Access Code definition of wild camping (lightweight, done in small numbers, only for two or three nights in any one place. and well away from buildings and roads) has emerged most notably around Loch Morlich and Loch Kinnord. Some efforts to manage this through things like parking management are under way through the managing for visitors activity by CNPA and partners but there is a recognition that there will still be some demand for some form of “affordable camping”. A good example of this, provided by the local landowner can be seen on the edge of the Park in Glen Esk and exploring further options for such sites should be considered as it could address pressures elsewhere while also making access easier for sections of society who may otherwise be unable to visit the National Park.

Public Toilets

In relation to the areas’ population, the Cairngorms has a reasonable number of publicly available toilets but when considered alongside the number of visitors and the geographic area of the national park it is clear that some gaps remain. In addition, some facilities are becoming dated so don’t meet modern standards and quality and accessibility for some groups could be improved – for example by increasing the number of facilities meeting the Changing Places standard. Where there is a need for new or improved facilities at a specific site this is referred to in the table for that site above. However, options for improvements through partnerships with other providers including private sector should also be considered so as to provide a suitable network across the National Park.

The Snow Roads Scenic Route

The Snow Roads Scenic Route, running from Blairgowrie to Grantown-on-Spey was designed as a touring route that would take visitors through the quieter eastern Cairngorms in order to see the benefits of tourism spread more widely and evenly across the National Park. While much of this was achieved through signposting and marketing activity, three architectural installations were also constructed adjacent to the route to help create a sense of place and reasons to stop. While the significant levels of funding that would be required mean this may be less likely to be continued in the next few years, some smaller scale infrastructure improvements to give better access to existing features or attractions along the route are more feasible options.

Where there is a need for new or improved facilities at a specific site these are referred to in the table for that site above. To complement these investments and ensure consistency of provision and enhance the quality of the experience of travelling the route, some provision by private sector operators could be supported and / or promoted alongside public infrastructure e.g. an EV charge point at a garage, hotel or attraction.

Park-wide issues and themes: Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan Objectives & Actions	
Objective	Target / Indicator / Action
C5. Work to stabilise visitor numbers in the peak season, focusing growth on quieter months and on those areas that have the infrastructure and capacity to accommodate additional visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan to provide high-quality infrastructure at key visitor hotspots and for key sectors (e.g. camping and motorhomes)
C9. Welcome visitors and provide a high-quality experience while managing their impacts through providing better infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of public toilets within the National Park is maintained. • Increased public toilet facilities for people with additional needs. • Number of managed facilities for campervans increases. • Map accessible facilities, so people can identify in advance of their journey available accessibility support.

The Core Path Network

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 placed a duty on the Cairngorms National Park Authority to draw up a plan for a system of paths (“core paths”) sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area – which is known as the “Core Paths Plan”. The first Core Paths Plan was approved by the CNPA Board and the Minister for the Environment in 2010 with a more recent revision of the plan being adopted in 2015 (see Appendix 3). The objectives of the Core Path network included in the plan are to: -

- a) help to conserve the Park’s natural and cultural heritage and encourage people to enjoy it in a responsible way
- b) help those living and working on the land manage access
- c) help to deliver the priorities for each area identified in Active Cairngorms
- d) provide for a wide range of activities
- e) provide for a wide range of abilities
- f) include a wide range of popular routes; and
- g) include paths within, around and between communities and to public transport connections and places of local importance.

As well as it formally defining the Core Paths, the CNPA uses the Core Paths Plan to prioritise resources and path development projects and to support visitor management plans on sensitive sites. This includes supporting both the maintenance of the paths themselves as well as ancillary infrastructure such as bridges, gates, waymarking and signposting.

In describing the path network and the related future infrastructure investment it is convenient to consider paths in three groupings – low level or community paths, upland paths and long distance routes.

Community paths

There are over a hundred community paths and trails across the National Park. As well as providing an important resource for local residents, these paths are an essential part of the infrastructure used by visitors to the National Park and are therefore well promoted through a series of community path leaflets. Responsibility for the management and maintenance of the majority of these paths rests with the landowner or land manager but in certain circumstances support is provided by the CNPA. In a small number of cases the CNPA is responsible for maintenance through management agreements and details of the paths where the CNPA has this is included as [Appendix 4](#).

Upland paths

There are also many upland paths across the National Park and while in broad terms these are less heavily used than the community paths some are still subject to heavy use, most notably on some of the more popular hills. As their use is predominantly by more experienced walkers these are not as actively promoted by the CNPA but many are commonly promoted through hillwalking guide books and websites. As with low ground paths, responsibility for their management and maintenance rests with the landowner or land manager but in certain circumstances support can be provided by the CNPA.

Long Distance Routes

Speyside Way

[The Speyside Way](#) is one of four official Long Distance Routes in Scotland, the route links the Moray coast with the edge of the Grampian Mountains, following the valley of the River Spey, spanning a distance of approximately 85 miles / 137 km. It is one of four National Long Distance routes formally designated under the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967 and as such the local access authorities (Moray Council and CNPA) have a statutory duty to manage the route. To fulfil this obligation the CNPA have developed a plan for the future management and maintenance of the route which includes priorities for investment over the next five years. A copy of this plan is included as [Appendix 5](#).

Deeside Way

[The Deeside Way](#) runs from near the centre of Aberdeen to Ballater, largely following the line of the Old Royal Deeside Railway through woodlands and farmlands, for a total distance of 41 miles / 66 km. Approximately 11km of the route falls within the National Park running westwards from the Park boundary to the current terminus in Ballater. Within the National Park the route is currently managed and maintained by Aberdeenshire Council with support from the CNPA. The 2022-27 Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan includes a commitment to extend the route from Ballater to Braemar.

Cateran Trail

[The Cateran Trail](#), one of Scotland's Great Trails, is a 64 mile / 102 km long route through Perthshire and the Angus Glens, this is a circular route divided into five stages, following old drove roads and ancient tracks across farmland, forests, and moors. A small section of approximately 10km at the north end of the route passes through the National Park near Spittal of Glenshee. The route is managed and maintained by Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust who are engaged in a programme

to install multi-user gates along the route to allow better access for all visitors as well as for landowners.

Dava Way

[The Dava Way](#), another of Scotland’s Great Trails, links Forres in Moray with Grantown-on-Spey, a distance of 24 miles / 38 km following the old Highland Railway line and winds its way up to the Dava summit at 320m before descending into Strathspey. A small section of approximately 6km at the southern end of the route lies within the National Park. This allows walkers to connect to the Speyside Way through Grantown-on-Spey. The route is managed and maintained by the Dava Way Association - a SCIO run by a board of Trustees.

A range of improvements to the Dava Way and the Speyside Way in parts of Moray outside the National Park are included as part of Moray Council’s Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan which focusses on enhancing all six long distance active travel/leisure routes in rural Moray.

Accessible Path & Cycle network: Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan Objectives & Actions	
Objective	Actions
C8. Improve path, cycle and outdoor access networks to give outstanding opportunities to experience the natural and cultural heritage of the National Park to the widest range of people, while minimising disturbance to vulnerable species, habitats and sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the extension of the Deeside Way to Braemar. • Increase promotion of the Speyside Way and provide options for cycling. • Consider all potential mechanisms to reduce disturbance on key species and recreational impacts on high ground.

Management of Cairngorms National Park Authority Assets

The Cairngorms National Park Authority does not own any land in the Park but, as the responsible party for a number of “assets”, is considered as an ‘occupier’ of that land and consequently has a duty to show care towards people visiting that land. This duty of care forms the level at which it is reasonable to foresee any interventions that may be needed so that people do not suffer injury or damage. The occupier must consider injury or damage which may be caused as result of any dangers due to the condition of the property, or of anything done or omitted to be done by the occupier which is his legal responsibility. (Occupiers Liability (Scotland) Act 1960).

The CNPA as the responsible occupier, is thereby obliged to ensure that any fixed asset it is legally responsible for is maintained in a way that avoids potential harm to the public. CNPA assumes this responsibility and will discharge it through an agreed set of procedures that ensure appropriate management and maintenance of these assets.

Beyond office accommodation, which is outwith the scope of this paper, the CNPA are the custodian of three different types of fixed asset:

- National Park Entry Point markers – where the CNPA has agreements with landowners
- ‘Snow Roads’ Scenic Route installations – where the CNPA has agreements with landowners

- Paths directly managed by CNPA – through the CNPA having voluntarily entered into a path agreement with the landowner or because of legislation associated with long distance routes.

National Park Entry Point Markers

There are 29 granite markers at all road entrances to the Cairngorms National Park, except for the A97 approach. The granite markers belong to the CNPA and, although largely located on privately owned land or in the roads corridor, are CNPA's responsibility to manage. Agreements with land managers include the area around the markers and the view along the immediate verge. View clearing of the markers is generally undertaken by the relevant road authority (Transport Scotland and five local authorities).

There are 3 types of markers:



Type A: 4.5x3 Full Brand
(10 installations)



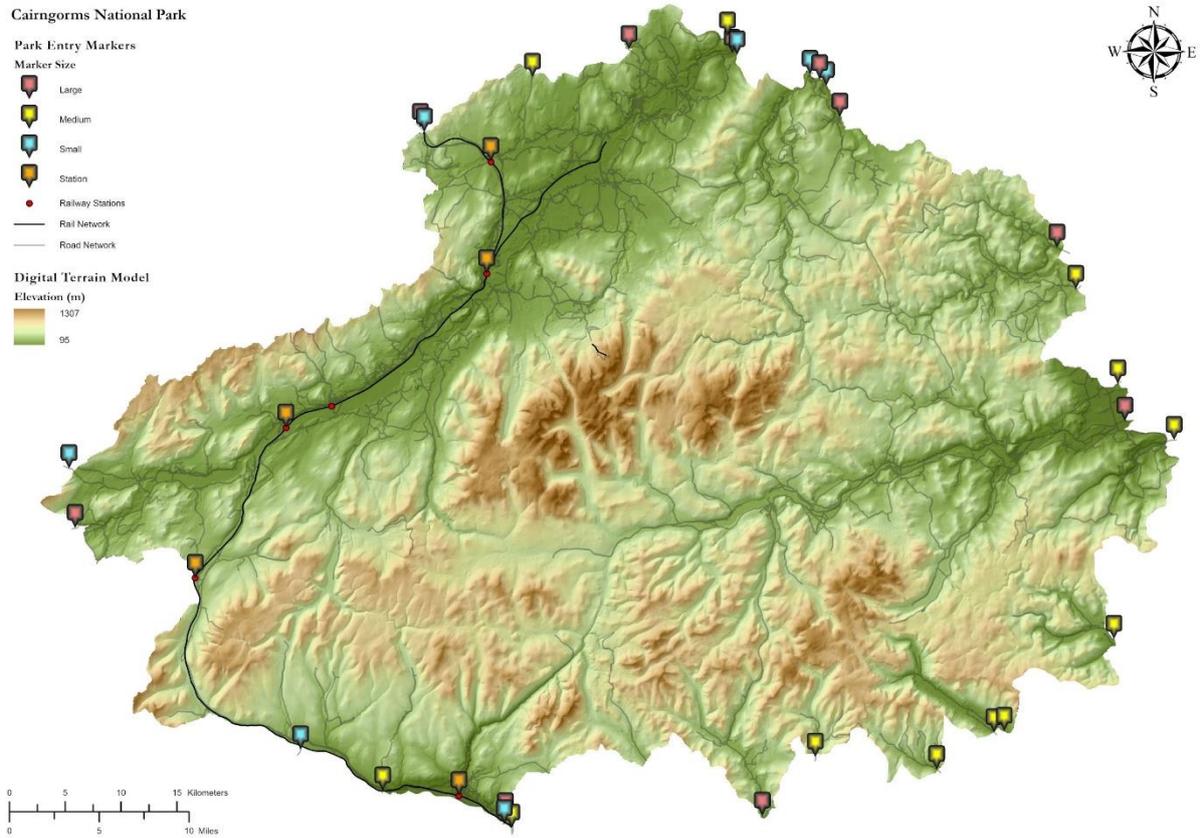
Type B: Boulder Osprey only
(13 installations)



Type C: Small Boulder
Osprey only
(6 installations)

National Park Entry Point Markers					
Location	Road	Type	Location	Road	Type
Grantown	A939	A	Advie	B9102	B
Mains of Dalvey	A95	A	Advie	Speyside Way	C
Drumin	B9136	C	Glenlivet	B9008	A
Glenlivet	Speyside Way Spur	C	Tomnavoulin	B9008	A
Glenkindie	A97	A	Rippachie	Unclassified	B
Ordie	B9119	B	Dinnet	A93	A
Bridge O' Ess	B976	B	Glen Esk	Unclassified	B
Glen Clova East	B955	B	Glen Clova West	B955	B
Glen Prosen	Unclassified	B	Glen Isla	Unclassified	B
Glenshee	A93	A	Killicrankie	B8079	B
Garry Bridge, Killicrankie	Unclassified	C	Blair Atholl	A9	A
Struan	B847	B	Dalnacardoch	Unclassified	C
Kinloch Laggan	A86	A	Garva Bridge	Unclassified	C
Slochd	NCN7	C	Slochd	A9	A
Carrbridge	B9007	B			

Additionally, five of the Highland main line railway stations within the National Park – Blair Atholl, Dalwhinnie, Newtonmore, Aviemore and Carrbridge have branded signs on the platforms to welcome visitors arriving by rail.



“The Snow Roads” Scenic Route Installations

There are three viewpoint installations on the Snowroads route that are owned and managed by the CNPA. These interactive art installations which are designed to be sat on/climbed into were constructed in 2015/6. All were built by approved contractors in accordance with detailed technical design and constructions drawings and planning permissions.



The Still
 A939 at Tomintoul quarry



The Watchers
 A939 at Corgarff



Connecting Contours
 A93 at Devil's elbow

Paths

The paths (and associated infrastructure such as fencing, gates and signage) considered as CNPA assets and to which this procedure for inspection and reporting are limited to those with path agreements or for which the CNPA has direct maintenance responsibilities arising from legislation (e.g., The Speyside Way). It should be noted that while obliged by legislation to produce a Core Paths Plan, the designation of any route as a core path does not lead to any direct management or maintenance implications for the CNPA. This liability still rests with the relevant landowner or occupier. The path network is however a CNPA priority for maintenance through grant aid. Where any safety or routine maintenance issue is picked up by CNPA staff, these are passed directly to the relevant land manager to address.

Procedures for Inspection and Reporting

In order to ensure public safety and legal compliance, the CNPA has developed an inspection and reporting system that includes three areas of activity each of which includes supporting actions. These areas of activity are: -

- Creating and maintaining a register of infrastructure
- Inspection procedures
- Management review

Full details of these procedures, which have been considered and approved by the Health & Safety Committee and Senior Management Team are included as [Appendix 6](#).

Monitoring and review

Many of the priorities and projects identified in this plan are derived from the more strategic objectives and related actions in the National Park Partnership Plan, while others are anticipated to be delivered through the Heritage Horizons Programme. As such these will be subject to the monitoring and review processes already in place for these. Other projects will relate to specific areas of work where an existing reporting process is in place - for example activity related to paths and long distance trails is reported to the Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum on a regular basis. To avoid duplication additional monitoring is not proposed for this plan but to complement the existing monitoring and to provide a single overview of tourism infrastructure related activity an annual summary will be presented to the Senior Management Team and relevant external groups such as the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership.

While this plan includes ambitions and a range of projects that are considered the main priorities in autumn 2022, it is recognised that visitor patterns may change or the range of facilities available may change e.g. through private sector developments or business closures. Similarly National Park authorities' powers or partners policies and public finance priorities may change so this plan should be subject to continual review. In particular, certain elements will require to be refreshed to reflect the outcomes of the Heritage Horizons development work due to conclude in summer 2023.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – 2022 Visitor Management Plan

Appendix 2 – Recent CNP Infrastructure projects summary / map

Appendix 3 – Core Path Plan

Appendix 4 – CNPA current low ground path maintenance commitments

Appendix 5 – Speyside Way Management Plan

Appendix 6 - Procedures for Inspection and Reporting of CNPA Assets