



Sustainable Tourism Action Plan

Annual Update 2023/24 - Draft for CTP discussion

In delivering the actions below, all of which will help to deliver the National Park Partnership Plan, there are two overarching priorities:

1. Businesses, visitors and wider stakeholders should be engaged in the journey to Net Zero and nature recovery.
2. Communities and local residents should be involved in tourism decision-making where it affects them.

<p>NATURE</p> <p>Outcome: A carbon negative and biodiversity rich National Park with better functioning, better connected and more resilient ecosystems.</p> <p>Research shows that the majority of our visitors are attracted by the landscapes and wildlife that make this such a special place. We want to deepen that connection with the natural environment, presenting visitors with opportunities to make a positive contribution through visitor giving, volunteering and responsible behaviour choices.</p> <p>Delivering against National Park Partnership Plan objectives: • A1 – Net zero • A13 – Species recovery</p> <p>Delivering against Scotland Outlook 2030: • Destination net zero</p>	
ACTIONS	Lead Partners
<p>1. Visitor investment</p> <p>Encourage visitor investment in the National Park through visitor-giving, carbon offset schemes and other incentives, connecting visitors with the place through financial and emotional buy-in.</p>	<p>Cairngorms Trust, CNPA, CBP</p>
<p>The Cairngorms Trust continues to receive voluntary donations from the public to support projects within the National Park. For the period April-December 2023 these donations totalled over £8k, including £3,382 donated through businesses working with the Trust.</p>	
2. Climate Action Plan	CBP



<p>Develop and implement a business-led Climate Action Plan that engages businesses in opportunities to lower their carbon footprint.</p>	
<p>CBP have developed a Climate Action Plan which has been shared with businesses. Over 79% of objectives have been achieved and a revised plan will be created for future focus. An event is planned in partnership with Zero Waste Scotland (part funded by CNPA) around reducing food waste, planned for 12th March at MacDonald Aviemore Resort. CNPA and CBP are also in discussions with Green Tourism Ltd. around options for bespoke National Park accreditation schemes.</p>	
<p>3. Technological solutions Investigate technological solutions to engage visitors and nudge them towards responsible choices in a way that enhances their experience of the destination.</p>	<p>CNPA, VisitScotland</p>
<p>CNPA have been working with partners including Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority and VisitScotland to scope out the development of a visitor welcome app for Scotland's national parks. This includes commissioning a research project to benchmark comparator apps across Scotland, the UK and the Europe, and asked potential audience members what they would expect from such a product. Subject to sourcing appropriate budget, we anticipate an app being developed in 2025 / early 2026, once redevelopment projects for the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond websites have been completed.</p>	
<p>4. Pre-arrival visitor information Develop a programme that supports business engagement with customers in advance of their visit, including information about biodiversity and responsible enjoyment.</p>	<p>CBP, CNPA</p>
<p>The "Love Nature, Love Cairngorms National Park' responsible enjoyment project was launched to CBP members in October 2023, & since then an ongoing programme of engagement with members has sought to support their understanding of, engagement with, & use of the project assets.</p> <p>Four seasonal pre-arrival email templates have also been developed & are ready for roll-out to members, designed to deliver a consistent destination-wide welcome, including messages about researching & booking ahead, promoting events, engaging with destination social media, & sign-up to ongoing consumer comms.</p> <p>This work has been supported through Park Authority-led channels (web and social media) as well as via VisitCairngorms and individual business accounts.</p>	



<p>5. Reducing species disturbance. Develop and implement mechanisms to reduce disturbance on key species and recreational impacts on high ground.</p>	<p>CNPA, NatureScot, Ranger Services, CBP</p>
<p>The Cairngorms Capercaillie Project is nearing completion, having worked with key communities including visitors, businesses, dog walkers and mountain bikers to develop action plans that protect capercaillie and other vulnerable species.</p> <p>CBP’s cycling mapping project is expanding to offer new routes in Blair Atholl, Tomintoul & Glenlivet and Grantown-on-Spey. The aim is to encourage riders to carry on through sensitive areas (routes also avoiding area altogether) without raising awareness of nature sensitivity which could encourage disturbance.</p>	

<p>PEOPLE</p> <p>Outcome: A wellbeing economy that works for all the people of the Cairngorms. Tourism forms a major sector of the local economy but there are opportunities to improve the value it adds to the lives of local residents and communities, developing and promoting hospitality as a career and supporting communities to benefit from the visitor economy.</p> <p>Delivering against National Park Partnership Plan objectives: • B2 – Wellbeing economy • B4 – Skills and training • B5 – Community assets and land • B8 – Gaelic language and culture • B10 – A Park for all</p> <p>Delivering against Scotland Outlook 2030: • Our passionate people • Our diverse businesses</p>	
<p>ACTIONS</p>	<p>Partners Lead first</p>
<p>1. Community-led tourism Support, encourage and promote community-led tourism enterprises and develop a community tourism network for the National Park.</p>	<p>Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey, Scotland’s Community Tourism Network, Cairngorms Business Partnership</p>
<p>CNPA provided support to SCOTO for their first annual conference which was held at Duke of Gordon hotel, Kingussie in March 2023.</p>	



<p>2. Resident research Monitor residents' attitudes to tourism in their community through regular surveys and informal open meetings.</p>	Park Authority
<p>Alongside the regular visitor survey, CNPA have contracted for the first time a regular resident survey which will capture consistent data through a biennial online survey to capture the view of people living and working with the National Park. The first wave of research is likely to take place in late summer 2024.</p> <p>CNPA are also developing a suite of face to face drop-in events to cover a range of topics, likely in Braemar, Kingussie or Newtonmore, and Grantown during 2024. Attitudes to tourism within the community will form part of this engagement.</p>	
<p>3. Cultural heritage Strengthen cultural events through visitor engagement with Gaelic and other languages, music, storytelling and built heritage.</p>	Park Authority, Cairngorms Business Partnership
<p>CNPA has commissioned preparatory work to explore the potential for establishing a Cultural Heritage Network for the Cairngorms National Park. The contract was awarded to SCOTO and final report is due by 31 March 2024.</p> <p>CBP have been supporting Badenoch Heritage activity around the Badenoch Storylands project, attending Badenoch Heritage Festival and giving recommendations to engage more visitors and locals in programme promotion and development. A clearer strategy of what the festival wants to achieve would be of benefit.</p>	
<p>4. Fair work and wellbeing Identify measures and support needed to encourage fair work practices and a wellbeing economy in the tourism industry.</p>	Park Authority, Cairngorms Business Partnership
<p>A Wellbeing Economy Action Plan is in development and will be discussed by the CNPA board in February 2024. Fair work first and living wage conditions are now a requirement within all contracts, grants and work issued by CNPA.</p> <p>Cairngorms Business Partnership hosted a guest question from CNPA in the latest Business Barometer (Q1) survey to help establish business attitudes to the Real Living Wage. There will be ongoing development of this work in partnership with CBP for tourism sector.</p>	
<p>5. Employment, training and skills Promote the Cairngorms as an exceptional destination to work in the hospitality industry and</p>	Cairngorms Business Partnership, Highlands and Islands Enterprise / Scottish



develop a training initiative to strengthen links between local schools / further and higher education organisations and the hospitality sector.	Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland
CBP have supported Ballater Business Association in a project with Aboyne Academy alongside SDS and CBP to promote and encourage hospitality training and skills as career choices. They are also in discussion with Kingussie High School and Grantown Grammar School about hospitality skills.	
<p>6. Business engagement Review and refresh the 'Make it Yours' business engagement programme to ensure it meets the needs of our partners and informs and inspires frontline staff.</p>	Park Authority, Cairngorms Business Partnership
Work has focussed over the last year on refreshing the National Park brand and engaging businesses in the revised brand charter. The Make it Yours online video continues to be promoted as an asset for training front-line staff, and options for re-instating face-to-face training events are being assessed for Spring 2024.	
<p>7. Equalities, diversity and inclusion Encourage a more diverse range of visitors to the Cairngorms by addressing barriers identified by underrepresented groups and people from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, and support training for frontline hospitality staff to offer a warm welcome to visitors of all backgrounds.</p>	Park Authority
Alongside the expansion of a dedicated Equalities Advisory Panel – which advises the Park Authority on a range of equalities issues – CNPA has developed partnerships with a range of organisations to take forward work in this area. These include Black Professionals Scotland, Able2Adventure and LGBT Youth Scotland, the latter of which runs a 'charter' scheme for organisations seeking to be better allies to the LGBTQ+ community. 18 months after we first signed up – and having reviewed everything from our comms approach to our recruitment practices and staff training – we recently submitted evidence to secure our bronze award. Elsewhere, inclusion has been woven into the fabric of CNPA's website redevelopment project, including an aspiration to achieve a minimum AA (and up to AAA) standard in terms of website accessibility. We have also commissioned a range of photography and video featuring under-represented audiences, which is used across the full suite of National Park channels. to offer a warm welcome to visitors of all backgrounds.	
8. Local visitor levy	Local authorities, Park Authority



<p>Engage with stakeholders to ensure that Scottish Government’s proposals for a local visitor levy meet the needs of the Cairngorms National Park.</p>	
<p>The Visitor Levy bill continues to move through parliament. CNPA were represented at Scottish Parliamentary Committee tourism levy workshop in Aviemore in Oct 2023 and have submitted a consultation response that highlighted 5 key points.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The need for any scheme introduced by the five partner local authorities to recognise the tourism objectives within the National Park Partnership Plan 2. Ensuring that the net proceeds of any scheme are not used solely to provide services that are delivered by local authorities 3. The need for local consultation on the design of a visitor levy scheme 4. Support for the duty to keep a separate account for scheme 5. Comment on the types of accommodation covered by a levy 	

<p>PLACE Outcome: A place that people want to live in, work in and visit that works for all. Visitors contribute not just economically but socially to life in the National Park, supporting investment in infrastructure, businesses and events to help create thriving communities. We want to spread these benefits by developing and promoting assets in communities with additional visitor capacity, and encouraging visits at traditionally quieter times of year.</p> <p>Delivering against National Park Partnership Plan objectives: • C1 – Access to housing • C5 – Visitors to the National Park • C6 – A sustainable destination • C8 – Accessible path and cycle network • C9 – High-quality visitor experience Delivering against Scotland Outlook 2030: • Our thriving places • Our memorable experiences</p>	
<p>ACTIONS</p>	<p>Partners Lead first</p>
<p>1. Tourism infrastructure Produce a Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan that defines the priorities for investment in tourism infrastructure for the next five years and seek additional funding for delivery.</p>	<p>Park Authority, VisitScotland</p>
<p>An initial version of the Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan was approved by CNPA Board in November 2022. A revised plan is being produced for Spring 2024 to incorporate appropriate Cairngorms 2030 projects.</p>	



<p>2. Visitor accommodation Monitor the implementation of the new short-term let licensing arrangements and the development of measures such as the short-term let control areas, and ensure that we maintain an appropriate range of accommodation for visitors.</p>	<p>Park Authority, local authorities</p>
<p>Regular updates are received from local authority partners about progress on processing short-term let licensing applications. In late January the CNPA planning committee agreed to note their support for the Highland Council's non-statutory short-term let control area planning policy. Public information meetings about the control zone are planned for later in February 2024.</p>	
<p>3. Tourism assets Promote and invest in tourism assets produced by previous place-based initiatives – including Badenoch: The Storylands, SnowRoads Scenic Route, Tomintoul and Glenlivet Dark Sky Park, Catearan Eco-museum, the Speyside Way and Deeside Way.</p>	<p>Cairngorms Business Partnership, Park Authority, VisitScotland</p>
<p>CBP continue to lead on promotion and development of tourism assets, including:</p> <p>Badenoch the Storylands: Work has included an influencer visit in October 2023, new image and video content captured for promotion and local business use, business workshops in Dec 2023 on using the brand to connect with visitors and PR including a front page feature in The Times Alba.</p> <p>Snow Roads: A digital grant has been secured to bring SnowRoads brand under VC.com site, reducing operating costs and improving the visitor experience. PR opportunities are also being explored.</p> <p>Tomintoul & Glenlivet Dark Sky Park – work has focused on training for businesses on Dark Sky product development, and initial feedback on bookings for these experiences have been positive.</p> <p>Speyside Way: There have been initial conversations with Badenoch Connections around luggage transfers along route, work on content creation to promote the trail to audiences, and exploration of PR opportunities and influencer collaboration in partnership with Visit Moray Speyside.</p>	
<p>4. Reducing seasonality Support development of new products and events to encourage visits at quieter times of year, particularly</p>	<p>Park Authority and Cairngorms Business Partnership</p>



<p>through the winter months. Commission destination marketing campaigns to foster growth at traditionally quieter times of year and to encourage longer stays, with increased value to the local economy.</p>	
<p>Winter development sessions were delivered by CBP in Grantown, Ballater and Aviemore and presented at CBP conference in November 2023, focusing on the winter campaign, Where Winter Comes to Life and encouraging appropriate product development to support the campaign, including an offer to work with businesses on a one-to-one basis. The winter campaign is ongoing until March 2024, including a recently launched hero film.</p> <p>An event planners guide is a new resource which was developed with businesses and landowners to encourage event organisers to maximise the benefit of events to local economy.</p>	
<p>5. Business support Develop opportunities for businesses to use their location in a National Park to build sustainable growth through branding, product development and targeted marketing.</p>	<p>Cairngorms Business Partnership, Park Authority</p>
<p>Following the refresh of the Cairngorms National Park brand CNPA & CBP organised a series of four workshops (three in person and one online) to discuss with businesses what materials & resources would be most relevant to their business. This has informed the redevelopment of our overall brand charter scheme, with a new web portal and a series of new resources created / in development, from an image library to itineraries, merchandise and training opportunities. These will be progressed further over the next 12 months.</p>	
<p>6. Partnership working Build on the partnership structures and policies developed in response to the Covid-19 lockdowns as a model for resilience against future uncertainty.</p>	<p>Park Authority</p>
<p>The Managing for Visitors group continues to meet fortnightly or monthly as required to Plan for, and discuss, visitor issues and communications.</p>	