



Topic: Economic development

Engagement version – June 2025

Requirements addressed in this section

Table 1 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section.

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)(a)	the principal physical, cultural, [economic], social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district,
Section 15(5)(b)	the principal purposes for which the land is used,
Section 15(5)(c)	the size, composition health and distribution of the population of the district,
Section 15(5)(ce)	the education needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and use of land on those education needs,
Section 15(5)(cf)	the extent to which there are rural areas within the district in relation to which there has been a substantial decline in population.

Links to evidence

- Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/8/contents>
- Equality Act 2010
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
- United Nations: Sustainable Development Goals
<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
- National Performance Framework
<https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>



- Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation: Delivering Economic Prosperity (2022)
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-strategy-economic-transformation-delivery-plans-october-2022/>
- Building Community Wealth in Scotland
<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/consultation-paper/2023/01/building-community-wealth-scotland-consultation-paper/documents/building-community-wealth-scotland-consultation-paper/building-community-wealth-scotland-consultation-paper/govscot%3Adocument/building-community-wealth-scotland-consultation-paper.pdf>
- Scottish Land Commission - Community Wealth Building and Land
<https://www.landcommission.gov.scot/our-work/good-practice/community-wealth-building>
- Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-vacant-derelict-land-survey-2023/>
- National Park (Scotland) Act 2000
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2000/10/contents>
- National Planning Framework 4
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/documents/>
- Tay Cities Regional Economic Strategy 2019 -2039
https://www.taycities.co.uk/sites/default/files/tay_cities_res_2019.pdf
- Regional Economic Strategy (North East of Scotland)
https://investaberdeen.co.uk/images/uploads/Regional_Economic_Strategy_0.pdf
- Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership Regional Economic Strategy 2025 – 2035 - Approved by the Highland Council on the 13/02/2025. Draft version available online (Agenda Item 9) at:
https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/5123/economy_and_infrastructure_committee



- Highland Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy to 2025
https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/23582/highland_indicative_regional_spatial_strategy_to_2050_-_refined
- Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal
<https://www.highland.gov.uk/cityregiondeal>
- Highland Outcome Improvement Plan 2024 - 2027
<https://highlandcpp.org.uk/about-hcpp/highland-outcome-improvement-plan/>
- Our Future Highland Delivery Plan 2024 – 2027
<https://www.highland.gov.uk/deliveryplan2024-2027>
- The Highland Council - Community Wealth Building Strategy 2024
https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/28728/community_wealth_building_strategy_2024
- Social Value Charter for Renewables Investment
<https://www.highland.gov.uk/socialvaluecharter>
- Perth and Kinross: Economic Wellbeing Plan 2020 – 2028
https://www.pkc.gov.uk/media/48604/Economic-Wellbeing-Plan/pdf/Economic_Wellbeing_Plan_Interactive.pdf?m=637655890904130000
- Perth and Kinross Draft Economic Action Plan 2025 - 2030
https://consult.pkc.gov.uk/communities/perth-kinross-local-economic-action-plan-2025-2030/supporting_documents/Appendix%20%20Draft%20Perth%20and%20Kinross%20Economic%20Action%20Plan.pdf
- Moray Economic Strategy 2022 – 2023: Towards Future Prosperity and Inclusive Growth.
<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file147200.pdf>
- Moray Community Wealth Building Strategy 2024
<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file157281.pdf>



- Moray Skills Investment Plan
<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file123482.pdf>
- Moray Skills Investment Plan Delivery Plan
<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file123483.pdf>
- Aberdeenshire Council developing a Community Wealth Building Strategy
<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/news/2024/dec/aberdeenshire-council-developing-a-community-wealth-building-strategy>
- Angus Council Economic Development Land and Property Strategy 2021 – 2030
https://www.angus.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/102_App1.pdf
- Angus Community Plan 2022 to 2030
https://www.angus.gov.uk/media/agenda_item_no_4_report_no_1223_angus_community_plan_2022_2230_app
- Angus Council Plan 2023 – 2028 (2024 Update)
https://www.angus.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-02/Report%2049_24_Council%20Plan-App1.pdf
- Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2022-27
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Cairngorms-National-Park-Partnership-Plan-full-version-FINAL.pdf>
- Heritage Horizons – Cairngorms 2030
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/working-together/cairngorms-2030/>
- Cairngorms National Park Authority Wellbeing Action Plan
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/boardpapers/22112024/241122Paper2WellbeingEconomyActionPlan.pdf>
- Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan Delivery Programme 2025
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Delivery-Programme-2025-final.pdf>



- Advie and Cromdale Community action Plan
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2013CromdaleAdvieActionPlan.pdf>
- Aviemore, Rothiemurchus & Glenmore Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Aviemore-Rothiemurchus-Glenmore-Community-Action-Plan-2024-.pdf>
- Ballater & Crathie Community Action Plan 2023
https://www.ballaterandcrathiecommunitycouncil.com/_files/ugd/ff0841_f2f9573586ef4cf3a753d7a57adcb57c.pdf
- Blair Athol Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Blair-Atholl-Struan-Community-Action-Plan-2023-final.pdf>
- Boat of Garten Action Plan Review 2018
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2018-Boat-of-GartenAction-Plan.pdf>
- Braemar Community Action Plan
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2017-BraemarAction-Plan.pdf>
- Carrbridge Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Carrbridge-Community-Action-Plan-2022.pdf>
- Dalwhinnie Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/DalwhinnieCAP2023Report.pdf>
- Dulnain Bridge Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Dulnain-Bridge-Community-Action-Plan-2024-1-1.pdf>
- Mount Blair Community Action Plan
https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/1013_18-Mountblair-and-Glenshee-Action-Plan.pdf



- Grantown on Spey Community Action Plan
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/160803-GrantownIconicPlan.pdf>
- Kincaig Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Kincaig-and-locality-Community-Action-Plan-2024.pdf>
Kingussie Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Kingussie-Community-Action-Plan-2025.pdf>
- Laggan Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Laggan-Community-Action-Plan-2022.pdf>
- Nethy Bridge Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Nethy-Bridge-Community-Action-Plan-2023-1.pdf>
- Newtonmore Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Newtonmore-Community-Action-Plan-2022.pdf>
- Strathdon Community Action Plan 2016
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/160601StrathdonActionPlan.pdf>
- Cairngorms Trust
<https://cairngormstrust.org.uk/>
- Cairngorms Business Partnership Business Barometer August 2024 Report
https://www.cairngormschamber.com/membernews_detail.html?nid=B3C1C19D-01DA-4242-B53E-CBFAA5606510
- Statistical areas used in the analysis of the Cairngorms National Park
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Statistical-areas-used-in-the-analysis-of-the-Cairngorms-National-Park.pdf>



- Scottish official statistics
<https://statistics.gov.scot/home>
- National Records of Scotland
<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/>
- Scotland's Census
<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/>
- Oxford Economics Report 2022
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Economic-Forecasts-Cairngorms-National-Park-2022.pdf>
- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020
<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/>
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- Broom DH, D'souza RM, Strazdins L, Butterworth P, Parslow R, Rodgers B, (2006) The lesser evil: bad jobs or unemployment? A survey of mid-aged Australians. Social Science & Medicine. 63(3):575-586
- Leach LS, Butterworth P, Strazdins L, Rodgers B, Broom DH, Olesen SC. (2010) The limitations of employment as a tool for social inclusion. BMC Public Health
- Cairngorms National Park - Resident and worker survey 2024 - 2025
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Resident-survey-report-Summary-report-v6.pdf>
- Gedikli, C. et al. (2022) 'The relationship between unemployment and wellbeing: an updated meta-analysis of longitudinal evidence', European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 32(1), pp. 128–144. doi: 10.1080/1359432X.2022.2106855.
- Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport
<https://greenfreeport.scot/>



- Cairngorms National Park Employment Land Audit 2025
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Cairngorms-National-Park-Employment-Land-Audit-2025.pdf>
- Local Development Plan 3: Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment
<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/230626LocalDevelopmentPlan3EqFSIA.pdf>

Summary of evidence

Policy context

National Performance Framework

The Scottish Government has 11 National Outcomes that the public sector must collectively deliver. The National Outcome for the economy sets out the following vision:

- To have a strong, dynamic and productive economy which creates wealth and employment across Scotland.
- The economy is competitive, and Scotland has good international trade, investment and export networks. Scotland is considered an attractive place to do business.
- The economy is inclusive and focused on improving the lives of all Scotland's people. Scotland needs to ensure the benefits of economic growth, wealth and opportunities are fairly shared. Access to labour markets and jobs is evenly shared.
- The sustainable economic growth is not achieved at the expense of Scotland's social interests or those of the environment. As such, Scotland's economy is ecologically accountable as well as socially responsible.
- Scotland regards the green economy and its rich ecological capital as a valuable development opportunity and actively progress advancements in these areas.'

When considering economic development in the Cairngorms National Park, the National Outcome for fair work and business also has relevance. Scottish Government's vision for this outcome is to successfully attract and retain new talent and fully support business and social enterprise taking seriously the wellbeing and skills of its workforce and providing good quality, fair work, training and employment support for all, with employers actively fulfilling their corporate responsibilities.'

This outcome relates the following United Nation's Sustainable Goals:

- Quality education
- Gender equality
- Affordable and clean energy



- Decent work and economic growth
- Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- Reduced inequalities
- Responsible consumption and production.

The Local Development Plan should also aim to support the National Outcome for Fair Work and Business and the outcome for communities. Community Wealth Building can support community resilience and investment in deprived communities.

Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation: Delivering Economic Prosperity 2022

The National Strategy for Economic Transformation, published in March 2022, sets out the need for a new culture of delivery where partners come together to deliver the actions needed to transform the Scottish economy. The Strategy sets out six economic programmes for the ten-year period, delivered through a phased approach. The six programmes are:

1. Entrepreneurial people and culture programme – the aim of the programme is to establish Scotland as a world-class entrepreneurial nation with a much stronger pipeline of scaling businesses and founded on a culture that encourages, promotes and celebrates entrepreneurial activity in every sector of the economy.
2. New market opportunities programme – seeks to capitalise on Scotland's strengths in areas such as renewable energy and hydrogen, financial services and fintech, space, industrial biotech and high value manufacturing to grasp new market opportunities.
3. Productive businesses and regions programme – seeks to deliver a step-change in Scotland's productivity performance, addressing regional inequalities in economic activity as well as boosting traditional and digital infrastructure. This includes addressing regional inequalities and making improvements to Scotland's infrastructure that will support transition to a greener economy. It is critical that these resources are shared in an efficient and equitable way across all parts of Scotland, including ensuring that traditional access challenges in the rural communities are addressed.
4. Skilled workforce programme – there is a need to address inequality in the workforce namely women, young people, lone parents, older and disabled workers, minority ethnic people and those with no or low qualifications, at present and those who have all been disproportionately impacted by Covid-19. The aging population and the requirement for people to work longer will lead to a greater need for in-work



engagement with the skills system to reskill or upskill in line with changing work demands.

5. Fairer and more equal society programme - Employability services need to help those furthest from the labour market into employment. Long-term unemployed (12 months plus) account for nearly a third of all unemployed in Scotland. Women and young people are already more likely to be employed in jobs with low pay. The aim is to reorient Scotland's economy towards wellbeing and fair work; to deliver higher rates of employment and wage growth, including for those who may face challenges in accessing the labour market; to significantly reduce structural poverty, particularly child poverty; and improve health, cultural and social outcomes for disadvantaged families and communities, particularly those in rural areas.
6. A culture of delivery programme - sets out the steps Scotland needs to take, the structures that need to put in place, and the landscape it needs to build to ensure Scotland can successfully deliver the National Strategy for Economic Transformation.

Further detail on the planned delivery of the above programmes please refer to the Strategy document in the links to evidence section. The Proposed Plan will seek to reflect and support the programmes the National Strategy for Economic Transformation.

Building Community Wealth in Scotland

The Scottish Government has adopted the internationally recognised Community Wealth Building (CWB) approach to economic development as a key practical means by which progress can be made towards realising Scotland's wellbeing economy vision outlined in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET). The commitment to Community Wealth Building legislation is re-iterated in National Strategy for Economic Transformation:

- 'Introduce Community Wealth Building legislation that builds on the successes and learnings of all of the Scottish Government community wealth building local and regional pilot areas in urban and rural Scotland.'

Part 1 of this consultation paper describes what Community Wealth Building is, provides an overview of Community Wealth Building activity in Scotland and outlines the background to and ambitions for Community Wealth Building legislation. Part 2 provides an opportunity to offer views on a legislative proposal and share perspectives on what is required to advance Community Wealth Building in Scotland. Part 3 provides details on how to respond to this consultation and next steps.



Community Wealth Building is a practical approach to economic development focused on five pillars of activity. These pillars are the key areas of focus due to the economic levers they represent. All of the pillars play a complementary role in the retention of wealth in local places and regions for the benefit of communities. Increased spend with local businesses and higher levels of inclusive or community forms of ownership means that more money stays in the communities that create the wealth through higher incomes, fairer employment opportunities and a greater say over the use of local and regional assets.



Figure 1 The five pillars of Community Wealth Building as set out by Scottish Government, 2023.

The document highlights the importance of the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024 in supporting Community Wealth Building in rural areas. Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024 includes enabling powers for Rural Community Led Development and Rural Networking to advance rural development. The



Act provides the opportunity to deliver both new and further support mechanisms relating to the wider management and utilisation of Scotland's natural assets that further rural development while still remaining aligned with European Union outcomes. The Act allows action and financial support to activities to contribute directly to rural and island communities whilst also enabling and supporting collaboration to allow capacity building and positive change.

Scottish Land Commission – Community Wealth Building and Land

The Scottish Land Commission has produced guidance for public bodies that own, manage, use, and influence the use of, land and buildings in Scotland, to help organisations to take actions that support Community Wealth Building. The Cairngorms National Park does not own or manage any of the land in the National Park but may influence the use of land within the Cairngorms National Park boundary.

Climate change: Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024 – 2029

The Scottish National Adaptation Plan sets out actions to build Scotland's resilience to climate change. The Adaptation Plan sets out a long-term vision and defines Scotland's priorities for action over the years 2024 – 2029.

Scottish Government's vision is for a resilient, inclusive and well-adapted Scotland as the climate continues to change. The Plan contains five outcomes, of which Outcome four: Economy, Business and Industry (B) is of direct relevance for this paper.

This outcome states that 'taking action to build greater resilience to climate risks, will be crucial to ensuring the long-term security and prosperity of Scotland's economy'. The Outcome sets out four objectives that collectively focus on how Scotland can build resilience to the economic impacts of a changing climate and maximise the innovation opportunities for businesses, people, and communities. The policies for this Outcome support Scotland's just transition to a climate resilient, net-zero economy.

Outcome four is supported by four objectives, which are summarised here:

Objective: Increasing business understanding of climate risks and adaptation action (B1)

This objective aims to ensure businesses understand the risks posed by climate change, and action they can take to build resilience, will be key to building a more climate-resilient economy. This objective details policy to:

- Support increased business understanding of climate risk.



- Publicly available advice and support for businesses on what to do about climate risks.
- Support for businesses and workers on managing multiple climate risks which includes flooding.

Objective: Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and aquaculture sector support (B2)

This objective acknowledges that Scotland's agriculture, forestry, fishing, and aquaculture sectors are central to Scotland's identity, and its economy. For many rural communities, the sustainability of the local community is inextricably linked to the agriculture and forestry sectors. These sectors rely on natural resources and as a result are particularly vulnerable to climate change and biodiversity loss. Protecting our natural capital that these industries rely on is a key adaptation action. The Scottish Government will work to ensure a just transition for farming and forestry, so that these industries can move towards practices which are responsive to Scotland's changing climate and which support both business productivity and viability. This objective calls upon farmers to change their practices to ensure their business resilience as the climate changes, but their actions will also enable wider benefits such as reducing the risk of downstream flooding and for Scotland's food security.

Objective: Innovation and business opportunities (B3)

The Scottish Government's National Innovation Strategy 2023 – 2033 sets the vision for Scotland to be one of the most innovative small nations in the world – with its strong natural assets and excellence across academic and business communities providing the basis. Innovation creates jobs, develops fresh, exciting opportunities and supports economic and productivity growth. While the innovation opportunities of the energy transition are recognised globally, the opportunities of the Adaptation and Resilience Economy are less-explored. This presents an opportunity for Scottish businesses to position themselves as innovators and gain competitive advantage.

Objective: Climate resilient economic development and supply chains (B4)

This objective acknowledges that climate change will have impacts across Scotland's whole economy, including upon workers, critical infrastructure, business productivity, for how we invest, for insurance and crucially upon access and the costs of many vital goods and services. Disruption to supply chains, resulting from an increasingly volatile climate, is among factors threatening sustained access and the costs of food and goods that are essential to sustaining Scotland's economy and public health.

Scottish Government understands a healthy population, is key to maintaining a thriving economy. Therefore, given the scale of impacts it is crucial that economic development



efforts, at both a national and regional level, encompass consideration of climate risks, include action to support resilience and explore opportunities. Action to manage vulnerabilities and build resilience of supply chains for vital food, medical goods and the critical raw materials needed to support Scotland's energy transition will be key and will involve both industry and the public sector.

National Park (Scotland) Act 2000

The National Park has four distinct aims as set out in The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000). The fourth aim is 'to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities'. The aims are all 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 (as set out in Section 9(6) of the 2000 Act).

National Planning Framework 4

The National Planning Framework 4 sets out the National Spatial strategy for Scotland. Its focus on the three main policy themes of sustainable, liveable and productive places aligns with Scotland's aim of delivering on the United Nations Sustainable Goals. National Planning Framework 4, in relation to economic development aims to improve people's lives by making sustainable, liveable and productive places. The National Planning Framework will also play a critical role in delivering the National Strategy for Economic Transformation and in community wealth building. Spatial principals outlined in the National Planning Framework aimed at Economic development include rebalancing development and rural revitalisation.

Policies primarily concerned with matters relating to economic development sit within National Planning Framework 4's Productive places theme. This topic considers matters relating specifically to matters covered by policies 25 and 26.

Policy 25: Community wealth building, states that local development plan's should be aligned with any strategy for community wealth building for the area and have spatial strategies that:

- Address community wealth building priorities
- Identify community assets
- Set out opportunities to tackle economic disadvantage and inequality
- Seek to provide benefits for local communities.



The Policy outcomes for Policy 25 are:

- Local economic development that focuses on community and place benefits as a central and primary consideration – to support local employment and supply chains.
- Support community ownership and management of buildings and land.

With respect to National Planning Framework 4 Policy 25, the Guidance advises that alignment of local development plans with strategies for community wealth building for the area can support a place-based approach to economic development. It suggests that this will be achieved through working in partnership with communities and businesses to build a strong resilient local economy. The approach to the spatial strategy may include prioritising use of brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings and directing development to existing centres to support sustainable communities.

Key Policy connections to Policy 25 include: 9, 15, 26.

Policy 26: Business and Industry, states that local development plan's should allocate sufficient land for business and industry, taking into account business and industry land audits, in particular ensuring that there is a suitable range of sites that meet:

- Current market demand
- Location
- Size
- Quality in terms of accessibility and services.

The Cairngorms National Park local development plan should also take account of local economic strategies and support broader objectives of delivering a low carbon and net zero economic recovery, and a fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.

Key Policy connections to Policy 26 include: 1, 2, 13, 14, 15, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29.

Tay Cities Region Economic Strategy 2019 – 2039

The Tay Cities Region (TCR) describes the area of East Central Scotland covered by the local authority areas of Angus, Dundee and Perth & Kinross and the north-east part of Fife. This includes areas of the Cairngorms National Park which are in the Perth and Kinross and Angus Council areas.

The overarching ambition is to increase the number of businesses and to create more better-paid jobs across the Tay Cities Region in order to improve access to opportunity



and increase the distribution of wealth and wellbeing within the region. The longer-term objective is to reduce unemployment / increase employment to levels better than the Scottish average by 2029 while increasing productivity and creating higher-paid jobs.

The Strategy highlights issues faced the National Park that include the impact of poor rural transport connectivity and digital connectivity on businesses, workers and visitors. Both transport and digital infrastructure are discussed / detailed in separate topic papers. The strategy acknowledges the important contribution of the rural economy to Scotland's overall economy.

Much of the Strategy is predominately aimed at the towns and cities outwith the National Park, however the Proposed Plan should have regard for the Strategy and development in the Perth and Kinross areas of the National Park should reflect the aims and ambitions set out in the document.

North East of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy

The Strategy, published in December 2015, sets out the 20-year economic strategy for the North East of Scotland (Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire). The strategy focuses on four main areas: investment in infrastructure, innovation, inclusive economic growth and internationalism.

The Strategy highlights that in 7% of the working age population in Aberdeenshire's most deprived places are 'employment deprived'. Furthermore in 15% of Aberdeenshire 20% most deprived areas, 15% of the total population are 'income deprived', with 14% of the working age population classed as 'employment deprived'. This highlights the challenge of growing the economy while tackling inequality.

The Strategy covers the area of Aberdeenshire that falls within the boundary of the National Park in relation to food, drink and agriculture and tourism. The vision set out in the strategy aims to 'capitalise on our natural heritage and quality of life and broaden our economic base by growing and developing our food and drink, agriculture and fishing, tourism, life sciences, business, financial and professional services, creative industries and new energy technologies' (Regional Economic Strategy, P21).

The North East of Scotland Food and Drink Strategy (2015). It aims to build on its strengths and focus on the expansion of non-local markets across the UK and export markets, collaboration with academia to innovate – particularly around nutrition and health - and to further develop links with local tourism and energy sectors to create



additional benefits by having a distinctive food and drink proposition (Regional Economic Strategy, P16).

In relation to the National Park Area, within Aberdeenshire, the strategy aims to:

- Improve digital and transport infrastructure.
- Maximise growth opportunities that capitalise on outstanding assets in golf, nature, culture and heritage and support growth of our indigenous industries.
- Help communities to support themselves by developing successful community enterprise and not for profit companies.
- Prioritise the feasibility and appraisal of A96 Corridor Improvements and other key arteries – which will improve access to and from the National Park to the North East Region.

Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership Regional Economic Strategy 2025 – 2035

The Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership (HIREP), formed in 2021, aims to promote inclusive growth through collaboration across sectors and member organisations. The Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Strategy focuses on harnessing growth opportunities, fostering innovation, improving infrastructure, and advancing a just transition to net zero. It outlines six core goals, including increasing affordable housing and maximising renewable energy benefits, and emphasises community wealth building.

The Strategy identifies the need for collaborative regional action and focusses on areas where working together is the most effective and efficient means to generate maximum impact and benefit.

The vision for the regional economic strategy is centred around the Highlands and Islands becoming a dynamic, connected, resilient, and prosperous region. This vision includes achieving a balanced and growing population, along with a thriving economy that prioritises community wealth building. The strategy also aims to position the region as a leader in Scotland's transition to net zero, while simultaneously enhancing the natural environment to ensure long-term sustainability and well-being for its communities.

The strategy's objectives focus on fostering innovation, business resilience, and sustainable communities. It emphasises the critical role of high-quality, affordable housing, efficient transport and digital infrastructure, and the region's leadership in transitioning to net zero. The strategy identifies six core goals:



1. Increase the profile and understanding of the Highlands and Islands to support effective policy and unlock regional investment.
2. Become a region which delivers high quality and affordable housing for residents.
3. Enhance the region's transport and digital infrastructure to become an exemplar of efficient rural connectivity.
4. Build resilience and competitiveness through place-based opportunities and stimulating an active culture of entrepreneurship and innovation.
5. Maximise the economic and community benefits from renewable energy investments and drive the regions move to net zero and climate resilience and adaption.
6. Develop a co-ordinated response to skills and labour requirements across the region.

Additionally, four cross-cutting themes are highlighted:

1. Community wealth building and benefit.
2. Innovation and entrepreneurship.
3. Population - growth and retention.
4. Just transition to net zero.

The Strategy will be supported by a comprehensive delivery plan, which will be developed in due course to ensure effective implementation and be refreshed every two years. It also aims to enhance the regions transport which includes revitalise efforts to deliver against commitments made regarding road enhancements to the A9 and A96 which can potentially bring economic benefits to the National Park.

The Strategy further aims to widen use and awareness of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) particularly for rural communities which have limited or no regular bus services. More information on transport in the National Park can be found in the sustainable transport topic paper which is available here:

- <https://cairngormsldp.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/sustainable-transport-survey/step1>

The Strategy also includes goals aimed at improving the digital infrastructure in the area. More information on digital matters in the National Park can be found in the Digital infrastructure topic paper which is available here:

- <https://cairngormsldp.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/digital-infrastructure-in-the-national-park-survey/step1>

The Cairngorms National Park Authority is a member of the Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership, and the Proposed Plan will reflect the goals set out in the Strategy.



Highland Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy to 2050

As part of the Highland Council response to the Scottish Government's preparation of National Planning Framework 4, the Council developed the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy. The Strategy highlights the assets and resources that the Highlands will contribute to the national setting. It also sets out and how highland council will collaborate with the Scottish Government and partner agencies at a national and local level to deliver on strategic national development priorities, national outcomes and delivery mechanisms to achieve a long-term sustainable vision for Highland in the period to 2050.

Effective infrastructure is fundamental for a thriving economy, for communities, and to address climate change. The Council strongly recognises the value of improving the entire transport system to accommodate a modal shift to a fully integrated sustainable travel network serving all communities, regions and traveller type.

The Strategy does not cover the area of the National Park, but includes the following cross boundary Highland Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy features that affect it:

- It is an important gateway featured in the Strategy between the Badenoch and Strathspey area of the National Park and South Inverness. This includes planned rail corridor improvements to the highland rail mainline, major trunk road corridor improvements along the A9 from Inverness to Perth and Kinross.
- The strategic long-distance cycling and walking network routes that traverse the National Park from Moray, through the Highland area and toward Perth and Kinross.
- Strategic electricity grid improvements.

Highland region also aims to capitalise on opportunities to further diversify the economy and support it with a high-performing digital network.

The Proposed Plan should have regard for the Highland Regional Spatial Strategy, and in particular the cross-boundary interventions. Further detail digital and transport infrastructure is provided by the published topic papers, produced as part of the Local Development Plan Evidence Report which are available here:

- <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Topic-paper-Digital-Infrastructure-Engagement-version.pdf>
- <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Topic-Paper-Sustainable-transport-Engagement-version.pdf>



Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal

The aim of the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal is to position the Highlands as a region of digital opportunity. The Deal contains a number of proposals under the following headings:

- A growing economy – to capitalise on the region's assets and tourist reputation. There is a need to develop high quality tourist attractions, which will increase the number of visitors to the region and encourage tourists to stay longer in the Highlands and increase spend. Which is also predicted to increase pay levels in the tourism sector.
- Enabling the economy – increase the provision of effective broadband and mobile coverage in the area, as well as providing 6,000 new homes, 1,800 of which will be affordable.
- A skilled economy - delivering the Science Skills Academy to promote science, technology, engineering and maths subjects through an innovative approach to learning and pilot a joint Highland Employability Programme to bring about transformational change to employability services.

The Inverness and Highland City Region Deal Annual Report 2023 / 2024¹ presents the progress of the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal between April 2023 and March 2024. There are no direct implications for the Proposed Plan arising from the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal however growth to the economy and increasing visitor numbers to the Highlands may affect the economy and especially promote tourism growth in the Cairngorms National Park.

Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport

The newly formed Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport company includes Port of Cromarty Firth, Port of Nigg (Global Energy Group), Port of Inverness, Highland Deephaven and Port of Ardesier (Haventus). The Highland Council alongside over thirty regional and national businesses, public sector organisations and academic bodies have collaborated to support what is the most transformative project in the Highlands for decades.

Green Freeport status will maximise local and Scotland-wide benefits from a pipeline of renewable energy projects placing the Highlands at the heart of the drive towards net-zero potentially creating up to 11,300 jobs locally and a total of 18,300 across the UK.

¹ See

https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/29601/inverness_and_highland_city_region_deal_annual_report_202324



The prospects over the next 10 years for major employment led housing growth are good with Highland having secured the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport, which may create significant numbers of new employment opportunities for National Park residents and a range of benefits to the wider region. The Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport project aims to diversify the Highland economy, accelerate local and national decarbonisation and attract people to new employment and education opportunities.

The development of the freeport is likely to have some cross-boundary implications, particularly in relation to housing need and demand. These matters will be covered in a topic paper on housing, to be engaged on later in 2025.

More information on the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport can be found here:

- <https://greenfreeport.scot/>

Highland Outcome Improvement Plan 2024 – 2027

This Improvement Plan is the overarching Plan for the Highland Community Planning Partnership. The aim is for the Plan to be the overarching plan and framework for the Highland area; a plan that expresses the key challenges and inequalities facing the area and how the Partnership and individual partners will address these.

The Plan highlights that in the Highland Council area (as a whole), by 2034 there is expected to be a 9% fall in the working age population and current 44.6% of young people leave school to enter employment in contrast to the Scottish average of 25.1%.

The Plan contains three strategic priorities:

- People – enable people to live independently, safe and well within their community.
- Place – work in partnership to develop sustainable and resilient local communities.
- Prosperity – creating opportunities for all people and places to thrive economically.

Outcomes associated with the 'Prosperity' priority include:

- Ensuring communities in Highland benefit from embedding community wealth building approaches into partnership activity.
- The collective use of physical assets to deliver better services, efficiencies and opportunities for communities.
- Ensuring young people have access to employment, education, training and recreational opportunities to retain and attract returners.
- People across Highland have improved access to career development opportunities.



- People in Highland benefit from maximising the area's natural capital and attracting investment.

Our Future Highland Delivery Plan 2024 – 2027

Highland Council's Our Future Highland sets out the programme for the five-year period up to 2027. The Plan makes commitments to secure social and economic change on behalf of Highland communities. The operational Delivery Plan shows how the Council will deliver on these commitments, through a major programme of transformation for the people and places, working in collaboration with others to create a vibrant and sustainable Highland area.

In terms of addressing the work force for the future, the Plan sets out the Council's aim to build cross sectoral career pathways, skills packages and partnerships to develop the future workforce of the Highlands to meet current and future business demand, attracting public / private investment and best practice. To achieve this Highland Council will:

- Engage with industry and business sectors to create jobs and pathways towards sustainable employment – being led by the business demand for workers.
- Align school curriculum offers towards the economic opportunities available to young people – building on the existing 'Developing the Young Workforce' practice.
- Strengthening the partnership approaches to provide support and opportunities for those furthest from economic achievement and success in the labour market.
- Recognise employers' achievements in improving the economic conditions people in the Highlands experience.
- Ensure that young people benefit from opportunities to undertake learning through digital delivery.

Social Value Charter for Renewables Investment

The Social Value Charter for Renewables Investment sets out the community benefit expectations from developers wishing to invest in renewables in the Highland area and what the Highland partnership – public, private and community – will do to support and enable this contribution. It aims to:

- Embed an approach to community wealth building into the Highland area.
- Maximise economic benefits from the natural environment and resources.
- Engage and involve relevant stakeholders to understand how it can continually improve its impact.
- Unlock economic opportunities for the area.



The Charter sets out a nine-point plan to:

1. Retain community benefit and enable a collaborative approach with local communities to create a mechanism for them to transfer their residual community benefit sums to a strategic fund to bring added value to their community.
2. Create a Strategic Fund and a Fund Partnership which will set out investment priorities for Highland communities.
3. Create legacy housing to support sustainable communities.
4. Support the development of the Highland Investment Plan projects.
5. Develop shared ownership models of investment in renewables.
6. Support skills and training initiatives.
7. Provide a Highland Project Bank, identifying community projects and initiatives to secure additional investment.
8. Fast-track for grid connections essential to growth.
9. Maximising socio-economic prosperity through the planning system.

Although it is unlikely there will be large scale renewable development within the Cairngorms National Park (and certainly not wind turbine development), such developments outwith the National Park boundary may produce financial benefits for communities inside the boundary.

Highland Council Community Wealth Building Strategy 2024

Highland Council's Corporate Plan 2022 – 2027 (priority 2.11) committed the Council to working with partners to develop a Community Wealth Building strategy.

The Strategy sets out a three-year vision for taking forward and embedding the Council's approach to Community Wealth Building. The proposed vision for the strategy is that Highland Council will retain greater wealth and maximise spending within and for the communities of the Highlands. The Strategy aims to deliver this through the five pillars of community wealth building: spending, fair employment, land and property, financial power and inclusive ownership.

Objective 3 (land and property) aims to promote community and local ownership models through both community asset transfer, which can include repurposing assets for local housing.

Highland Council has a well-developed Community Asset Transfer process to support communities to lease or take ownership of Council owned land or buildings. Since the introduction of the Community Empowerment Act in 2017, the Council has agreed to 48



transfers across the Highland region. The approach has been reviewed twice since its introduction in order to improve the experience and process for communities and encourage greater community ownership. The introduction of a community loans fund supports the Community Asset Transfer approach.

Other initiatives brought under the umbrella of community wealth building that could have positive impacts in the Badenoch and Strathspey area of the National Park include community transport support and business support particular for local start-ups and small and medium enterprises growth.

Perth and Kinross Economic Wellbeing Plan 2020 – 2028

Perth and Kinross local authority published the Perth and Kinross Economic Wellbeing Plan in 2021 which details actions for the Local Authority area under the three main headings of People, Business and Place. The Plan aims to ensure the recovery of the local economy following the Covid-19 pandemic. In response to the pandemic Perth and Kinross hope to 'make a swifter transition to a digital economy, to plan for clean growth and to support businesses to become more future focused' (P5). It was co-produced by Business Gateway Tayside, Federation of Small Businesses, Growbiz, Perth & Kinross Council, Perth Traders Association, Perthshire Chamber of Commerce and Perthshire Tourism Partnership.

The Wellbeing Plan builds on the existing strategy for economic growth which is assisted by the Tay Cities Deal (delivered through the Tay Cities Regional Economic Strategy). Key economic challenges faced by Perth and Kinross include:

- The need to diversify the economy.
- Attract new investment and higher value jobs.
- Improve the resilience for the rural economy.
- Retain young talent in the area.
- Improvements to digital infrastructure.
- Confront the climate challenge.
- Address the future of retail / town centres.
- Address the climate emergency.
- Grow the tourist economy.
- Economic growth in existing sectors as well as new low carbon and high value manufacturing areas.

Perth and Kinross' vision for a wellbeing economy translates to developing an economy that serves the people and communities first and foremost.



The Plan proposes a number of projects under the 'People' section, of significance to the area of the Local Authority within the Cairngorms National Park boundary is the Rural Employment Incentive project. The project will provide employers a financial incentive toward the costs of recruiting and retaining a young person in employment, including modern apprenticeships in the rural Perth and Kinross areas. Where an Employer commits to a new job or new Modern Apprenticeship for up to 52 weeks, it will receive £4500. Additional payments of £500 will be awarded to the employer if participant is paid the Accredited Living Wage upon completion of the 52 weeks.

Other funded projects delivered by Perth and Kinross under the 'People' theme include:

- REACH – aimed at reducing the rising unemployment, with additional support to help individuals get back into work.
- NOLB (No One Left Behind) – includes funding for business to offer 'inhouse' upskilling / training. With additional support for vocational and accredited training.
- Futures for Families – supporting parents to enter, re-enter or progress in employment.
- Skills and Employment Initiatives – Support for all ages of unemployed persons to become 'job ready'.
- Regional Skills Programme – with a particular focus on digital and key sector skills.

In terms of 'Business' actions in response to the lack of digitalisation to access e-commerce, Perth and Kinross launched the Business Gateway project to promote and maximise existing business support services.

Aimed at rural localities the Rural Micro-enterprises Support Project in partnership with Growbiz aims to support rural micro-enterprises (focusing on online delivery) via one-to-one sessions, webinars, mentoring, networking and peer support.

In terms of tourism, Perth and Kinross are addressing the lack of resilience in this sector through the Perthshire Responsible Tourism Destination project to develop Perthshire as a responsible tourism destination cultivating related products / services focusing on slow and green tourism (for example electric vehicle tourist routes, responsible practices amongst businesses, residents and tourists) in line with a revised Tourism Strategy and Action Plan. Other projects under the investment of clean growth innovation theme include:

- The Natural Capital Investment Fund – addresses the lack of economic benefits being utilised from natural assets.
- The Circular Economy / Waste Hub project.



Projects to help businesses help themselves in rural locations include the Rural Enterprise recovery project – smart villages, delivered by Growbiz, to develop smart villages (extension of existing project) by promoting the use of local services to help rural businesses and community enterprises to go digital.

In terms of projects under the 'Place' theme, the Digital Connections Programme aims to enhance rural digital connectivity. More detail can be found in the Digital Infrastructure topic paper.

In terms of transport infrastructure, the following projects are being pursued:

- Clean Green Access – to support the development of private hire / clubs for hire of electric vehicles, electric bikes / bikes in partnership with private vehicle hire companies or social enterprises as well as options for smart lift sharing schemes.
- Clean Green Delivery – aimed at increasing the use of environmentally friendly vehicles in delivery services.
- Parking PAYS – with an outcome to develop strategic transport corridors providing for access to and from Perth by car, bus and bike (some overlap with outcomes for the Perth People Place project).
- Camping Perth and Kinross – which aims to promote facilities for the motorhome / campervan market and increase investment in key car park sites for dedicated space and waste disposal (potentially through extended provision at PNR site around Perth and provide additional facilities at Council car parks in Highland Perthshire).

The Community Wealth Building project is an ongoing project to support Community Action Plans and Local Place Plans with a focus on building community wealth, enterprise, and resilience through co-design and co-production.

The Community and Placemaking Feasibility Grant aims to support ideas from local community organisations to deliver additional investment in localities this includes revenue grant for eligible towns or villages linking with participatory budgeting and crowdfunding.

Perth and Kinross Draft Economic Action Plan 2025 – 2030

The draft Perth & Kinross Local Economic Action Plan (2025 – 2030) is a roadmap designed to bolster the economic vitality and resilience of the area's community. It has been co-produced by all members of the Perth and Kinross Economic Partnership.

The Action Plan will replace the Perth and Kinross Economic Wellbeing Plan (2020 – 2028) which was approved in March 2021 to address the challenges arising from the



economic and social impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Economic Wellbeing Plan identified a range of interventions required to ensure recovery of the local economy. Since then, there have been several major changes to the economic and social context at a local, national and international level. Key objectives set out in the Plan include:

- Supporting our local businesses to grow, attract jobs and investment.
- Tackling inequalities.
- Supporting the transition to net zero.

While the majority of the actions proposed in the Plan relate to the urban centres and city of Perth, however the following actions may have implications for the Perth and Kinross area of the National Park:

- Prepare for early engagement with residents, businesses and tourism organisations on a local visitor levy.
- Options appraisal and implementation of recommended approach to deliver strategic and co-ordinated tourism destination marketing activity.
- Deliver the actions set out in the Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan. This includes investment in inclusive and accessible infrastructure, waste disposal network on A9, walking and cycling trails, and cycle infrastructure.
- Provide business and skills support to start-ups and grow childcare provision which meets the needs of parents / carers.
- Provide business and skills support to start-ups, and to support individuals to upskill / reskill to take up job opportunities or self-employment in the health & care sectors.

Moray Economic Strategy 2022: Towards Future Prosperity and Inclusive Growth

The Economic Strategy was produced by the Moray Economic Partnership which includes:

- The Moray Council.
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise.
- Moray Chamber of Commerce.
- Moray College part of the University of the Highlands and Islands.
- NHS Grampian.
- tsiMoray.
- Visit Moray Speyside, Federation of Small Businesses.
- Skills Development Scotland and Robertson Construction.

It incorporates the vision for Moray and high-level actions to deliver that vision.



The Strategy maintains the overall objective to grow and diversify the economy and focuses on achieving four outcomes:

- Qualification Levels – An increase across all ages and genders in qualifications relevant to growth sectors.
- Small Business Growth – More small and medium-sized businesses employing between 10 and 100 people.
- Talent Attraction, Retention and Return – More skilled, higher paid jobs that deliver net inward-migration in the 16 – 29 years age range.
- Business Competitiveness – An increase in capital investment and focused workforce development to strengthen competitiveness.

The Strategy was also developed in conjunction with the Moray Skills Investment Plan. It also reflects the Moray Growth Deal, Social Enterprise Strategy, Climate Change Strategy, Community Wealth Building Route Map and Tourism Strategy.

Moray Growth Deal

Moray Growth Deal brings together the Scottish and UK Governments, Moray Council, partners from across the public and third sector, and businesses. It aims to build on the existing strengths of Moray's culture, tourism, and manufacturing sectors, plus the development of other sectors. It aims to facilitate economic growth that is sustainable, fair and inclusive through eight strategic projects, with a total of £100m of investment. The projects which may have an impact on the part of Morayshire within the Cairngorms National Park boundary are:

- The Business Enterprise Hub which will support the scaling-up of existing small and micro-businesses, as well as providing support to start-ups, university spinouts and inward investors.
- Digital Health: creation of Scotland's National Digital Health and Care Innovation Centre with research and innovation in digital health, bringing commercial investments to Scotland and helping to establish new technologies including for use in smart homes and independent living.
- Bus Revolution: provision of a low-carbon, on-demand bus service to offer a rural alternative to private vehicle use. This will reduce social isolation among certain groups, along with providing access to employment opportunities.

It is estimated that 3,500 jobs will be created directly or indirectly by the Growth Deal. In line with the Local Authority's transition to net zero it is expected that opportunities for green job growth (for example in renewable energy, the circular economy, zero waste, and the nature-based sector) which will play a significant role in the changing economic employment landscape of the area.



Moray also aims to capitalise on its inland natural assets, to attract higher spending visitors, strengthening the positive economic impact of tourism in the area.

Moray Community Wealth Building Strategy 2024

Moray Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy sets out the following vision of 'creating a fair and equal society where our communities have a greater stake in Moray's economy' with a focus on people, place and planet.

As noted in the Community Asset Transfer Annual Report, Moray Council has long recognised the important role that the transfer of property can play in empowering communities and strengthening their resilience. The Council's Community Support Unit provides support to community groups at all stages of the Community Asset Transfer process. Where appropriate, the Council will use the transfer of assets to give more control to communities, helping to inspire them to find local solutions to community needs and become more sustainable in the long term.

The Strategy aims to:

- Facilitate and support community use and management of public assets to support the needs of the community.
- Assist local communities to take ownership or otherwise acquire control of vacant or underused public assets.
- Embed community benefit requirements into local planning policy.

Aberdeenshire Community Wealth Building Strategy

In December 2024, Aberdeenshire Council announced² it is developing a bold new strategy to safeguard the local economy and make it fairer and more sustainable for the benefit of its communities. Among the main focus points will be keeping and growing local spend by supporting businesses to bid for local authority and other public sector contracts. It will also support communities to realise their ambitions to hold a greater stake in the local economy, through a host of new opportunities including community asset transfers.

² See: <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/news/2024/dec/aberdeenshire-council-developing-a-community-wealth-building-strategy>



Angus Council Economic Development Land and Property Strategy 2021 – 2030

The Strategy aims to make a positive impact to sustain and increase business growth in the area, stimulate income generation, economic activity and job creation. It makes recommendations to be implemented over the ten-year period, to ensure that Angus maintains its economic foothold and benefits from existing and emerging growth sectors, the portfolio maintains its position as an important income and job generator and safeguards its valuable role in sustaining jobs and wider business activity in Angus.

The principal concern, highlighted in the Strategy, is that Angus is rapidly running out of available development land (land with planning consent, infrastructure created and actively being marketed without any impediments to development) and desirable sustainable commercial property. Angus Council wants to expand its commercial land and property market, intervening where the private sector has not delivered and meeting business demand for space to expand. To encourage and facilitate business investment and growth in local economy.

Angus Community Plan 2022 to 2030

The vision set out in the Plan for Angus is 'a great place to live, work and visit'. The Plan is set in the context of three key themes: Economy, People and Place.

The Plan sets out the following priorities for Angus in relation to the economy:

- Support Angus to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic growth, with particular focus on the long-term potential of private and public investment opportunities in offshore renewable energy.
- Encourage and invest in fair work opportunities for those that live, work and study in Angus.
- Support entrepreneurship across Angus.

Although there are only a small number of people living in the Angus area of the National Park the following actions could directly support those residents:

- Focus on improving employability, the median weekly wage and enhancing skills for local people to enable an increase in positive destinations for young people through delivery of the Local Employability Strategy and Delivery Plan.
- Supporting the rural economy through leadership training, community development, Agri-tourism, and skills development.



- Support the development of access to high-speed broadband throughout Angus and use of access to 5G networks and Internet of Things (IoT) networks.

Angus Council Plan 2023 – 2028 (2024 Update)

The Angus Council Plan 2023 – 2028 was approved in March 2023 and sets out the Council's vision, priorities and overarching strategic policy framework for the period up to February 2028. While the Plan covers a five-year period, several significant developments during 2023 have meant the Plan has been updated. The Council's priorities in relation to the economy sets out the following actions:

- To continue to support and deliver elements of the Tay Cities Deal.
- To support and deliver programmes that help people into work
- To support businesses to grow and invest in Angus
- To be more commercial in its approach to contracts and support growth of business locally whenever possible through a community wealth building approach.

Other priorities that have an effect on economic development include supporting young people and adults to access appropriate opportunities which allow them to progress in their learning.

Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2022 – 2027

The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2022 – 2027 sets out a strategy for building a wellbeing economy in the National Park and is the Economic Strategy for the National Park. The Partnership Plan explains how the aims of the National Park will be delivered together under a long-term vision of 'An outstanding National Park, enjoyed and valued by everyone, where nature and people thrive together'. It also has three long term outcomes that reflects the principles of a wellbeing economy:

1. Outcome for Nature: A carbon negative and biodiversity rich National Park with better functioning, better connected and more resilient ecosystems.
2. Outcome for People: A wellbeing economy that works for all the people of the Cairngorms.
3. Outcome for Place: A place that people want to live in, work in and visit that works for all.

The Partnership Plan sets out comprehensive actions over the period 2022 – 2027 to help deliver the long-term vision and outcomes. They tackle challenges that are related to a wellbeing economy in the context of the National Park and are delivered



by multiple partners across the National Park.

While the National Park Partnership Plan must be considered as a whole, the following outcomes are of particular relevance to this topic:

- B1 – Working-age population, which aims to encourage the proportion of young and working-age people in the National Park to increase relative to the total resident population, which remains stable.
- B2 – Wellbeing economy, which aims to develop a wellbeing economy that delivers social justice in a healthy ecosystem, drawing on the special natural and cultural qualities of the Cairngorms.
- B3 – Real Living Wage, which aims to increase the number of Real Living Wage employers in the National Park.
- B4 – Skills and training, which aims to increase skills and training opportunities for people in the National Park to meet business needs and ensure opportunities created by the growth in green jobs can be filled by residents and under-represented groups.
- B5 – Community assets and land, which aims to 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.
- B7 – Community-led planning and development, which aims to ensure that communities have up-to-date community action plans and are supported by a community-led local development funding programme, delivering the National Park Partnership Plan.

In addition, Policy C2 specifically addresses the need to support the development of a low carbon circular economy. This includes supporting businesses to lower their energy consumption, through direct and indirect emissions, better operational energy efficiency and opportunities to reuse, reduce, recycle, and reuse resources. The policy supports the increased take up of small-scale renewable energy generation to support onsite use. In terms of new business premises there is support for high standards of sustainable design and efficient use of energy and materials in construction. Furthermore, the policy supports alternative electric powered vehicle and bike use and the need for associated supporting infrastructure (for example, charging points).

The Partnership Plan is supported by other Action Plans such as the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan, Cairngorms Nature Action Plan, Local Development Plan and Active Cairngorms Action Plan that all set out work linked to a wellbeing economy.



Heritage Horizons – Cairngorms 2030

Across 20 long-term projects, Cairngorms 2030 will bring about transformational change in the Cairngorms, benefitting people's health and wellbeing, delivering on climate change and enhancing nature across the National Park. Cairngorms 2030 is a partnership of over 70 organisations supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The Park Authority was awarded £12.5 million by The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) to develop and deliver Cairngorms 2030 and become the UK's first net zero national park. The five-year delivery phase commenced in January 2024.

A key focus of Cairngorms 2030 includes projects aimed at Fostering healthier, happier communities. The aim is to develop an economy that benefits people and nature, and provide green solutions to public health issues by:

- Working with local businesses to create an economic model based on wellbeing not gross domestic product.
- Developing a National Health Service green health referral programme.
- Creating a unique outdoor Dementia Activity Resource Centre.
- Encouraging people to walk and cycle more in the National Park.

Wellbeing economy

The National Park Partnership Plan identifies that the Wellbeing Economy Action Plan will support the delivery of the economic strategy set out in the Partnership Plan. The concept of a wellbeing economy is a holistic one that reflects the entirety of work encompassed by the National Park Partnership Plan, but the Wellbeing Economy Action Plan is intended to provide a focus for partners work and collaboration.

A wellbeing economy is designed with the purpose of serving the wellbeing of people and planet first and foremost, as opposed to more traditional measures like gross domestic product (GDP). In doing so, wellbeing economies deliver social justice on a healthy planet. Working with Workers Education Association Scotland, this project will explore and design the foundations of what a wellbeing economy might look for communities, businesses and visitors in the National Park. It aims to provoke discussion and generate ideas and solutions that address long-term health, wealth and sustainability challenges, to help people and nature thrive together.



Nature recovery

This project will work with specific communities of land managers and landowners, to co-develop strategies for land management that increases the biodiversity and ecological health of their land while also considering Highland cultural heritage, traditions, and employment.

Cairngorms future farming

This project will help farmers in the Cairngorms National Park achieve lower carbon emissions and greater biodiversity on their farms without impacting their financial 'bottom line'. The project builds on work being undertaken around Scotland on reducing carbon emissions in farming but applies them to the specific circumstances of the Cairngorms. This is important to ensure that farms here can achieve carbon neutrality, improve their profitability and climate change resilience, while protecting and restoring the natural environment.

Green finance and community wealth building

The Cairngorms National Park has significant potential for peatland restoration, woodland expansion, flood management, low carbon farming, biodiversity offsetting and many other potential nature-based solutions. Working with the Palladium Group, National Parks Partnership, public bodies and local land managers, this project looks to pilot an approach that blends sources of public and private finance to deliver our net zero and biodiversity targets, whilst also providing long-term benefits (and income) for land managers, investors and local communities.

Six farms are participating in regenerative farming project which aims to reduce chemical inputs, improve habitats for wildlife and reduce their carbon footprints.

Deer larder project

The project led by the Park Authority and two farming families aims to address damage to farms and fragile habitats caused by high deer densities. The project benefits food banks and schools through regular donations of prepared protein-rich wild venison. The project also creates training opportunities and rural job.

The two farms involved, Glenkilrie near Blairgowrie and Knockbarry near Pitlochry, were awarded a grant to purchase and manage the deer larders, from which deer culled in and around the National Park will be butchered. A significant proportion of the venison processed – including lean and easy to cook mince, meatballs, burgers, and sausages – will be donated to foodbanks, local schools, and community kitchens. Importantly, to ensure the project becomes financially self-sustaining, venison from the larders will be



sold to local retail outlets, hotels, and restaurants through already established routes to market forged by the farming businesses involved.

Cairngorms National Park Authority Wellbeing Economy Action Plan

The National Park Partnership Plan identifies that a Wellbeing Economy Action Plan will support the delivery of the Economic Strategy set out in the Partnership Plan. The concept of a wellbeing economy is a holistic one that reflects the entirety of work encompassed by the National Park Partnership Plan, but the Wellbeing Economy Action Plan is intended to provide a focus for partners work and collaboration.

The Plan provides a working document for the Economic Steering Group and its partners on three priority areas for the economy in the National Park where focussed collaboration and coordination can better add value to other actions delivered by the Partnership Plan and Regional Economic Strategies.

The National Park Partnership Plan already has a range of actions under the three priority areas that are shown in Table 1 and provide a starting point for work which is monitored through the National Park Partnership Plan. However, the Economic Steering Group will explore better ways of delivering projects in each theme, so the Wellbeing Economy Action Plan is a working document that can adapt to partner's resources, to external funding opportunities and allow more collaborative working on those priority themes. It will be updated each year to reflect work that partners will undertake and reported annually to the National Park Authority Board in the context of the National Park Partnership Plan, delivery of Cairngorms 2030 and relevant delivery of Regional Economic Strategies. The Proposed Plan will have regard to the annual updates to the Wellbeing Economy Action Plan.

Table 1 Wellbeing Economy Action Plan – Actions from Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2022.

Theme	Actions from Partnership Plan
Business support	<p>A4 Deer and herbivore impacts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explore new models of public / private partnership for maintaining stalker employment in key areas of the National Park to achieve overall deer policy objectives. <p>B2 Wellbeing economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Support employers to gain accreditation for e.g. Disability Confident, Carer Positive and the Young Person's Guarantee (see People objective B10 – Park for All).



Theme	Actions from Partnership Plan
	<p>B3 Real living wage:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Undertake a Real Living Wage audit of employers in the National Park. 4. Promote best practice and provide regular reports.
Skills and training	<p>A3 Peatland restoration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase contractor and estate capacity while creating job opportunities through a peatland skills training programme (see People objective B4 – Skills and training). <p>B1 Working age population:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Develop a green skills / youth apprenticeship project to help grow a strong working age population. <p>B4 Skills and training:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Support skills and training programmes relevant to business needs and changes in land management within the National Park (see Nature objectives A2 to A6). 4. Develop scholarships and a mentoring scheme for young people who want to study and be employed in the National Park. 5. Develop targeted skills initiatives to support social enterprises (see People objective B5 – Community assets and land).
Community enterprise	<p>A14 Green investment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify opportunities to strengthen the role of communities and public authorities in land purchase decisions in the National Park through the next Land Reform Bill. <p>B5 Community assets and land:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Identify opportunities for community land ownership through a refreshed set of community action plans / local place plans. 3. Promote Scottish Land Commission Guidance and monitor compliance. 4. Support communities to acquire and manage assets / land through enhanced funding and training support (see People objective B7 – Community-led action planning and development).



Theme	Actions from Partnership Plan
	<p>B7 Community-led planning and development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">5. A refreshed programme of support for community action planning and local place plans.6. Develop and administer a new community-led development funding stream. <p>B11 Volunteering and outdoor learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">7. Support communities in maintaining and improving their local environment (path network, litter collection, open spaces, species and habitat work etc). <p>C4 villages and town centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">8. Review mechanisms available to the public sector to encourage regeneration of our town and village centres.9. Promote business and community-led collaborative projects to encourage local expenditure and supply chains

Cairngorms Economic Steering Group

The purpose of the Cairngorms Economic Steering Group is to coordinate the delivery of relevant parts of the Partnership Plan, specifically to:

- Keep an overview of the economic and social data required to feed into the management of the National Park, sharing data and identifying gaps as appropriate.
- Advise and assist the Park Authority with the delivery of the Economic Action Plan.
- Advise and assist the Park Authority with preparation of an annual review of progress made in delivery.
- Advise and assist on specific economic projects, initiatives and issues, specifically the wellbeing economy, community wealth-building, net zero initiatives and the circular economy.
- Advise on the development of a natural capital approach within the National Park which considers the value of the natural environment for people and the economy.
- Advise on the development of future policy and strategy.

The steering group consists of representatives from the following agencies and organisations:

- Aberdeenshire Council
- Aviemore and Glenmore Community Trust
- Ballater Business Association
- Blair Atholl Business Association



- Braemar Business Association
- Cairngorms Business Partnership
- Cairngorms Youth Action Team
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Grantown Business Association
- Growbiz
- The Highland Council
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Kingussie Business Association
- Moray Council
- Newtonmore Business Association
- Scottish Council for Development and Industry
- Scottish Enterprise
- Scottish Land and Estates
- Skills Development Scotland.

Cairngorms Trust

The Cairngorms Trust aim to inspire communities and visitors to support the landscapes, wildlife, local culture and economic health and to encourage sustainable and community led local development within the Cairngorms National Park. In relation to economic development, the trust aims to:

- Support projects that aim to support the development, enhancement, sustainability and Economic Health of the Cairngorms' rural communities.
- Contribute to delivering the rural development priorities of an agreed Local Development Strategy and / or the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan.
- Encourage and support community led local development initiatives through administering and awarding LEADER and other funds to community led projects within the Cairngorms.
- Award grants or loans, providing credit or other forms of assistance, financial or otherwise, to person undertaking projects, initiatives and / or activities which further its purpose or objects.
- Promote knowledge transfer and sharing in the delivery of sustainable rural development projects.

Community action plans

The following action plans identified issues and / or priorities relating to economic development In the Cairngorms National Park.



Advie and Cromdale Community Action Plan

The Action Plan sets out a number of priorities that if actioned could support economic growth including:

- Faster broadband (high priority).
- Improvements to visitor attraction information (high priority).
- A village shop (medium priority).
- Improvements to visitor attractions – for example pony trekking, railway walk and viewpoint (low priority).

Aviemore, Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

Under the theme of a 'socially connected community' the first priority addresses the need to 'provide housing that people who want to live and work here can afford'. The Plan highlights the need for 'affordable' to relate to local wage levels to support local employment.

Under the theme of 'an economically thriving community' there is a priority to improve opportunities for local employment / businesses, which includes the need to:

- Rebalance provision of local accommodation with second homes / short term lets to help support local businesses attract a sustainable workforce.
- Great control of non-licensed lets in the area.
- Support for new / small / pop-up businesses (near the main street).
- Create small office or workshop space for small businesses.

There is a priority to 'encourage development of derelict sites that have lain for too long' which included the following actions:

- Establish ownership of sites (in particular Laurel Bank) and any existing plans and timelines.
- Ref land opposite Myrtlefield: continue to push forward with ACE's plans for development. Need ongoing support from the Highland Council and the Cairngorms National Park Authority to smooth a Community Asset Transfer of this site.

There is also a priority to 'increase parking availability or better bus service for workers in the town (which is currently two to three hours currently max). The community set out the action to investigate the feasibility of a park and ride scheme in Aviemore. This also includes ascertaining the potential level of take up by those working in the village who require longer-term parking.



Under the theme of 'a culturally vibrant community' the community set the Ice rink as a priority with the following actions:

- To find a new permanent site.
- Extend the types of activities it can provide.
- Offer seating and a café onsite.

There is also a priority addressing Cairngorm Mountain, which proposes activities could be sustained and operated by the community, with improved access and new infrastructure (relacing funicular, introducing new Gondola).

Ballater and Crathie Community Action Plan 2023

One of the key focus areas outlined in the Action Plan is 'our local economy'. The following strategic goals are listed to support ensuring residents have access to opportunities for education, skills, employment (including community owned-enterprise, social connection and improved quality of life.

1. Affordable Business Units -attract and sustain new business enterprises through provision and marketing of community owned business units.
2. Sustaining hospitality and tourism in the area. This needs to include a response to the resource shortage in staff – through training, providing accommodation and transport that supports employment in these sectors.

Blair Atholl Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

The Action Plan specifically sets out an economic vision within one of its three main plan themes to deliver an economically thriving community. Within this theme the following economic priorities are set out:

- To bring vacant buildings back into use.
- To increase opportunities to attract business (and tourism) to the local area.
- To improve opportunities for local employment / businesses.

The Action Plan sets out a number of buildings that the community wish to bring back into use including: the Blair Atholl Railway Station, Struan Primary (address ownership for example Perth and Kinross Council (building) an estate (land), Manse, Calvine Primary, Estate houses (unused). The community would like to access financial support to renovate the buildings, where needed, with eco-friendly features.

The community is working on creating an identity / unique selling point for Blair Atholl to distinguish it from Pitlochry. The Plan looks at ways to increase tourism to increase the local economy and bring more visitors into the community, especially those visiting Pitlochry and House of Braur.



In terms of improving opportunities for local employment and businesses the Plan seeks to explore options for increased childcare provision in the area and provide more electric vehicle charging points for residents and visitors.

Boat of Garten Action Plan Review 2018

The Action Plan sets out a number of priorities that if actioned could support economic growth including:

- Small business units to attract new start-ups (possible land at railway?) (high priority).
- Improve transport links – integrated buses and trains (high priority).
- Increase childcare facilities (high priority).
- Improve information on local employment opportunities (high priority).
- Improve information for locals / visitors for example the 'What's On' publications (low priority).

Boat of Garten Community Action Plan was reviewed in early 2025 and an update is due to be published later in the year.

Braemar Community Action Plan

Theme five of the Action Plan sets out the actions for housing and economic development. In relation to economic development in Braemar the following actions are applicable:

- Locate premises and set up a 'so-called men's shed'.
- Conversion of Strachans in village centre – develop sustainable bar / leasing model.
- Improvements to digital connectivity / services.

Carrbridge Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

One of the key themes brought forward by the Action Plan was to deliver an economically thriving community. This will be delivered through improve support and assistance for local businesses and people trying to get into work and increasing opportunities to attract business to the area. The Plan further advocates for the need to offer Support for business start-ups and existing local businesses through:

- Reactivating the Carrbridge Tourist and Business Association – to be more than just for accommodation providers.
- Addressing the need for accommodation priority for staff working in local businesses,
- Investigating sawmill site for business park.

Local residents were asked what they would like to see for / in Carrbridge by 2030. The following responses relating to economic development were recorded:



- Actively attracting medium scale enterprise to the area.
- Better rationalisation and signposting of publicised walking tracks, using easily recognised symbols rather than colour coding, which fades, is hard to make out in low lighting and is difficult for anyone with any degree of colour blindness.
- Priority given to preservation of the woodland and marshland around the village for its amenity, conservation and carbon-storage value, over commercial forestry priorities. Choose minimum thinning and forestry management practices over wholesale clear felling.
- Small industrial units.
- Empty shops being used.
- See if a monthly or quarterly farmers market is a viable option.
- Campervan waste disposal facility.
- A village-run cafe or farmers market in the summer.
- Regular craft fair.
- Building project with young people.
- Skills building for young people to prepare them to seek local employment.
- Windfarm money to support people struggling financially.
- Use of the car park for outdoor refreshments.

Dalwhinnie Community Action Plan: Looking forward to 2030

In relation to economic development the Community Action Plan sets out the following priorities:

1. Increase opportunities to attract tourism & business to local area. This will be achieved through:
 - Setting up a local business forum to support businesses in the village.
 - Bringing local businesses together to see what form of group might work best to benefit all.
 - Agree on scope of any forum and what its key purposes are for example mobile bank visit, tourism signage on A9, parking facilities in village.
 - Find a site for designated campervan / motorhome parking, with relevant support facilities.
 - Talking with the community and the Cairngorms National Park Authority planning team regarding the Local Development Plan about possible sites and facilities new village website.
 - Seeking support from partners to access funding and be informed on best practice to develop a new website.
2. Improve opportunities for local development. This will be achieved through:



- Addressing planning issues for the village to help proposed business and residential development in and around A889.
- Engaging with Cairngorms National Park Authority and the Highland Council planners together, to resolve the issues that are contributing to planning being denied for development of housing and business use fibre broadband to be installed throughout village, for improved homeworking / business use.
- Investigating options and potential funding routes.

Dalnain Bridge Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

The Action Plan sets out a number of actions that support economic development in the Action Plan area. Under the 'socially connected community' theme the Plan sets out the following actions to improve community facilities:

- Supporting the existing Post Office.
- Setting up a community run café and possibly a shop in the village hall.

Mount Blair Community Action Plan

The Action Plan sets out the communities aim to work closely with the local estates to develop housing and job opportunities, to developed to sustain a viable community of people that can continue to live and work in the Glens. Theme seven: Housing and jobs, Priority two sets out the need for more support for new entrants on farms and other land-based job opportunities including the need to:

- Open dialogue with local estates about how the community can support initiatives which benefit provision of local housing, land-based employment and spin offs for the local economy linked to e.g. local produce, use of woodland, farming, country sports etc.
- Develop partnership projects.

Grantown-on-Spey Community Action Plan

The Action Plan supports two major projects that would benefit the local economy of Grantown on Spey by increasing visitor numbers, namely:

- The restoration and conversion of the former Grantown East Railway Station into a visitor attraction promoting the area's cultural heritage – after a period of operation this site has now closed due to not being financially viable and the site is again vacant at present.
- Secondly the extension of Strathspey Steam Railway to Grantown – this project is still live with work on the Transport and Works (Scotland) application ongoing – more details can be found in the Mobility topic paper.



Grantown-on-Spey's Community Action Plan was reviewed in early 2025 and an update is due to be published later in the year.

Kincraig and locality Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

Under the theme of 'socially connected communities' there is a priority to 'improve our public transport'. Actions to meet this priority include:

- The suggestion to implement a E-bus service running between Aviemore / Kincraig / Kingussie to help people access jobs, services, recreation. The first step in realising this goal will be to identify potential need and take up of an improved transport service for the community.

Under the theme of 'culturally vibrant communities' the Community would like to 'reinstate Kincraig train station as a stop' and install a new bus stop near the new housing in Kincraig. Both actions would increase transport options for employment opportunities further afield.

There was also a suggestion to 'revisit potential for community-run shop or pop up: increasing resident numbers makes this more viable'.

Kingussie Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

Under the theme of 'a climate conscious community' there are a number of suggestions that support improvements to the public transport serving the town and area, which could be beneficial to accessing employment opportunities in the area and further afield (for example in Inverness).

Under the theme of 'an economically thriving community' there are a number of suggestions of relevance to this topic paper:

- Support for the High Street which includes utilising empty and underused buildings on the High Street.
- Explore further community energy opportunities which includes looking to community wind, solar or another hydro scheme to provide community income.
- Improving opportunities for local employment / businesses which includes creating small local industrial units to grow local employment, creation of flexible co-working spaces and revitalising the towns online presence.

There is also a suggestion to pursue change of use of selected commercial premises on the High Street to explore the potential to convert empty shops into housing.



In terms of community wealth building there is a suggestion to bring Talla Nan Ros into community ownership. The suggestion is this could be used for housing or commercial development.

Laggan Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

Under the theme of 'a socially connected community' there is a priority 'to connect longer distance provision for example bus and train travel. This is aimed at supporting employment opportunities for people living in the area.

Under the theme of 'an economically thriving community' the Plan sets out the priority to 'increase opportunities to attract tourism and business to the local area. This includes potential investment in a serviced site for campervans, tents and motorhomes. There is also an action to increase and promote cycle routes and paths through the expansion of the biking facilities at Wolftrax.

There is also a priority for a 'strategy for local jobs and businesses' which includes the following actions:

- Providing assistance for local businesses: provision of small business units, which also included the need to consider the provision of local housing to support growth of local businesses.
- Developing a Business Development & Marketing Plan to promote Laggan

There is also an action to explore the feasibility of a local wood fuel business and management of the local forests.

Nethy Bridge Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

The Action Plan in Nethy Bridge addresses economic development through the theme: An economically thriving community. Under the theme there are three priorities listed namely:

- Review possibility of a community-owned renewable energy project.
- Investigate options for taking more assets into community ownership for example community owned camping and touring sites and acquiring buildings for environmental, cultural and social redevelopment to benefit the community.
- Improve opportunities for local employment / business – this includes developing a small industrial area for a local business hub and creating spaces for local co-working / hot desking. The use of Old Kirk has been suggested for this use.

When residents were asked what they wanted to see happen the following suggestions were also were put forward:



- Support our businesses by shopping local: to keep the shops, café, hotel in the village. Look at taking more land and assets into community ownership.
- Encourage re-introduction of a Post Office.
- Acquire Canmore in Dell Road for redevelopment to benefit the community.
- Install ATM facility.
- Installation of electric vehicle charging points.

Newtonmore Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

One of the key themes in the Action Plan is to enable Newtonmore to become an economically thriving community. To this end the following priorities are noted:

- Improve support and assistance for local businesses and people trying to get into work – including support for local business start-ups and existing local businesses and improve internet speed.
- Improve opportunities to attract tourism and business to the area. This includes exploring potential for a community owned energy company.

Other suggestions for improvement with regard to economic development from local residents include:

- Encourage a more vibrant, attractive main street: more shops, flowers, places to eat, local produce shop, local charity shop, re-route HGVs to use Coffin Road onto A9, manage Main Street congestion in the summertime.
- Improvements to transport links to Inverness and Perth.
- Encourage pop up shops on Main Street.
- Community to generate income for community development.
- Invest in non-commercial infrastructure for tourists.

Strathdon Community Action Plan 2016

The following key issues were raised through the Strathdon Community Action Plan regarding economic development in the area:

- Poor or no broadband access to the internet added a further substantial barrier to accessing further education opportunities and completing online training for work or school homework.
- A desire for local education opportunities was mentioned, specifically in information technology. Business, education, and employment opportunities are seen as key to attracting and retaining younger people in the area, which the wider population identified as important.
- Lack of childcare is a problem for parents who wish to return to work or education or seek to expand a business.



- A number of residents across the area run small businesses from home, partly as a result of their remote locations.
- It was widely considered that poor broadband causes problems for a variety of local businesses that range from hindering day-to-day administration to stalling business start-ups or progression.
- In addition, further expansion of small businesses is seen to be hindered by a number of factors, including a lack of suitable premises for storage or for service provision, and concern about the implications of taking on employees in terms of administration and costs.
- A significant number of people in the area are employed or run businesses in land industries, including forestry, tenant farming and land management for sporting estates. Particularly amongst the latter two, concerns were raised about the impact on sustainability of various aspects of land reform and other legislation.
- Alongside support for small businesses and start-ups the Action Plan seeks to explore the feasibility of small business units locally.

The community are in the process of finalising a new Action Plan which is expected to be published later in 2025.



Baseline of economic matters

This paper summarises a number of matters relating to economic development, including:

- The working age population
- Skills and education
- Economic activity
- Economic productivity estimates and projections
- Business and employment
- Employment land availability
- Community wealth building
- Sectoral employment estimates and projections
- Income and inequality
- Resident perceptions.

There are links between this policy area and climate change, digital infrastructure³, education⁴, energy⁵, health and safety⁶, heating and cooling⁷, housing, land use, soil and resources⁸, living well locally, tourism⁹, town centres and retail¹⁰ and zero waste¹¹.

Regional governance

Scottish Government define a wellbeing economy as 'a society that is thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions, and that delivers prosperity for all Scotland's people and places'. The concept is a key part of the vision of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation. The Wellbeing Economy Alliance Scotland are an organisation that promotes, campaigns for and encourages others to work towards a

³ See <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Topic-paper-Digital-Infrastructure-Engagement-version.pdf>

⁴ See <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Topic-Paper-Education-Engagement-version.pdf>

⁵ See <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Topic-Paper-Energy-Engagement-version.pdf>

⁶ See <https://cairngormsldp.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/v3/health-and-safety-survey?step=step1>

⁷ See <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Topic-Paper-Heating-and-cooling-Engagement-version.pdf>

⁸ See <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Land-use-soil-and-resources-Engagement-version.pdf>

⁹ See <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Topic-paper-Tourism-Engagement-version.pdf>

¹⁰ Topic papers on climate change, blue and green infrastructure, housing, living well locally and town centres and retail will be engaged on later in 2025.

¹¹ See <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Topic-Paper-Zero-waste-Engagement-version.pdf>



wellbeing economy. They identify five principles that underpin a wellbeing economy, namely dignity, participation, nature, purpose and fairness (Figure 2).

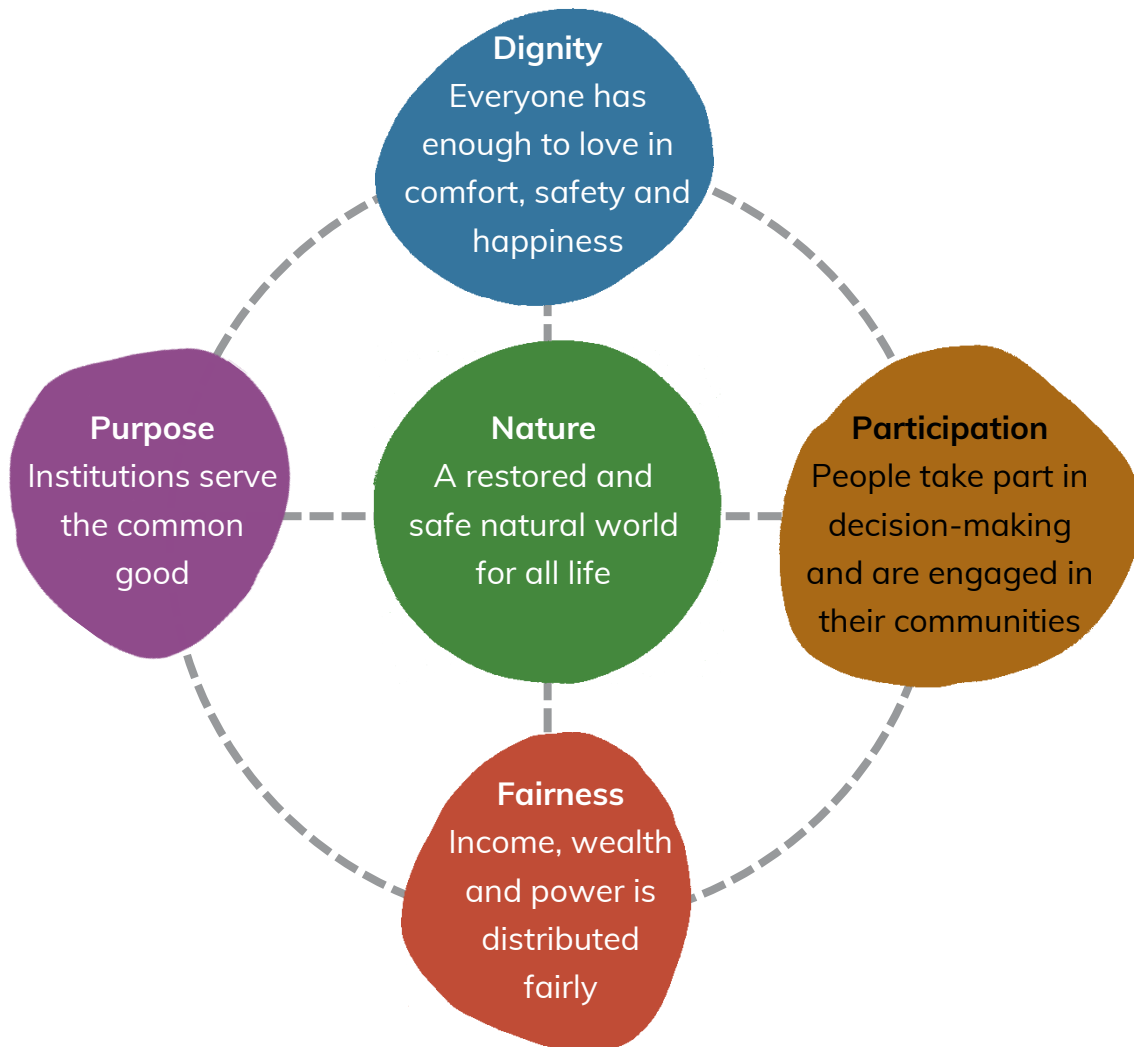


Figure 2 The five principles that underpin a wellbeing economy. The Wellbeing Economy Alliance Scotland.

The Cairngorms National Park is part of three regional economic partnerships with regional economic strategies for:

- The Highland and Islands
- North East of Scotland
- Tay Cities Region.

These strategies help deliver the National Strategy for Economic Transformation at a regional scale and coordinate the work of multiple public bodies and the private sector to support the economies of those regions. The Regional Economic Strategies direct most public sector work and resource to support the economy and help deliver the



National Park Partnership Plan. The Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Strategy in particular tackles the same issues across the Highlands and Islands as the National Park Partnership Plan identifies for the National Park. See page 15 for further information on the regional economic strategies.

Working age population

Population estimates

In 2022 the population of the National Park was estimated by the Scottish Census to be 17,531 people (Census table UV102b). The working age population (16 years to 64 years) of the National Park was estimated to be 10,256, equating to approximately 59% of the population (Figure 3). This is below the level, which was 63.6%. The working age population comprised of 5,087 (49.6%) males and 5,173 females (50.4%).

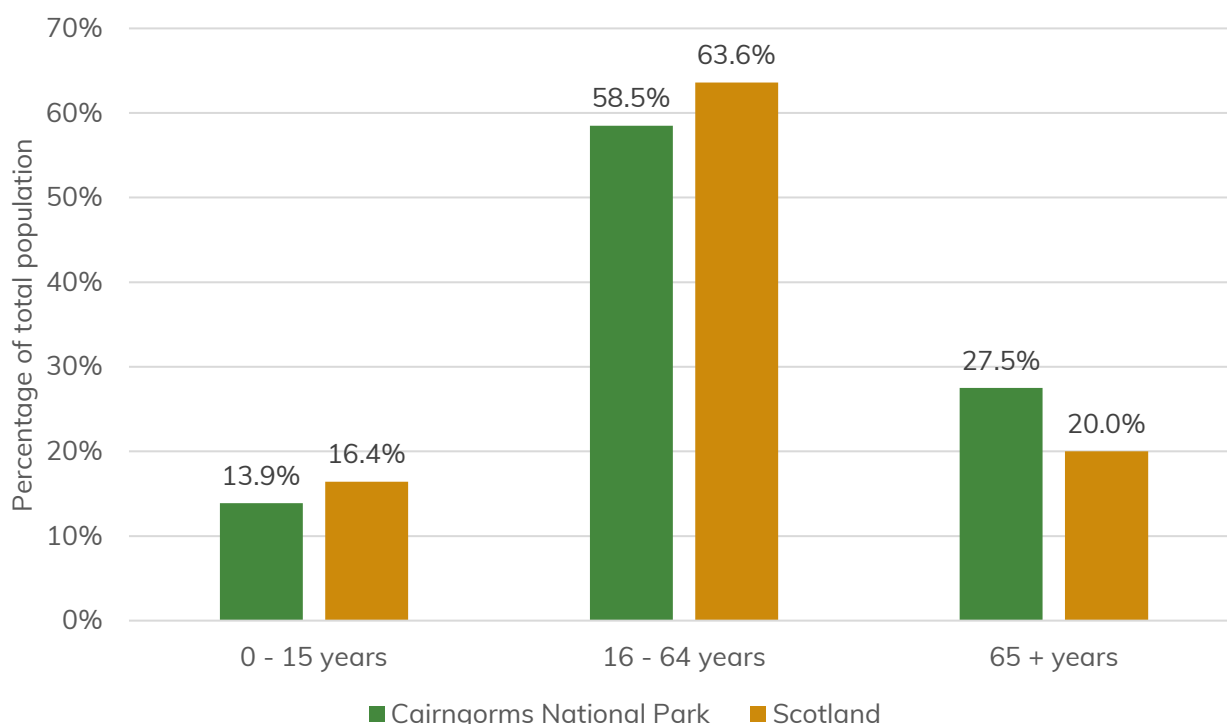


Figure 3 Proportion of the population by age group in Scotland compared to the Cairngorms National Park in 2022 (2022 Census tables UV102a and UV101b).

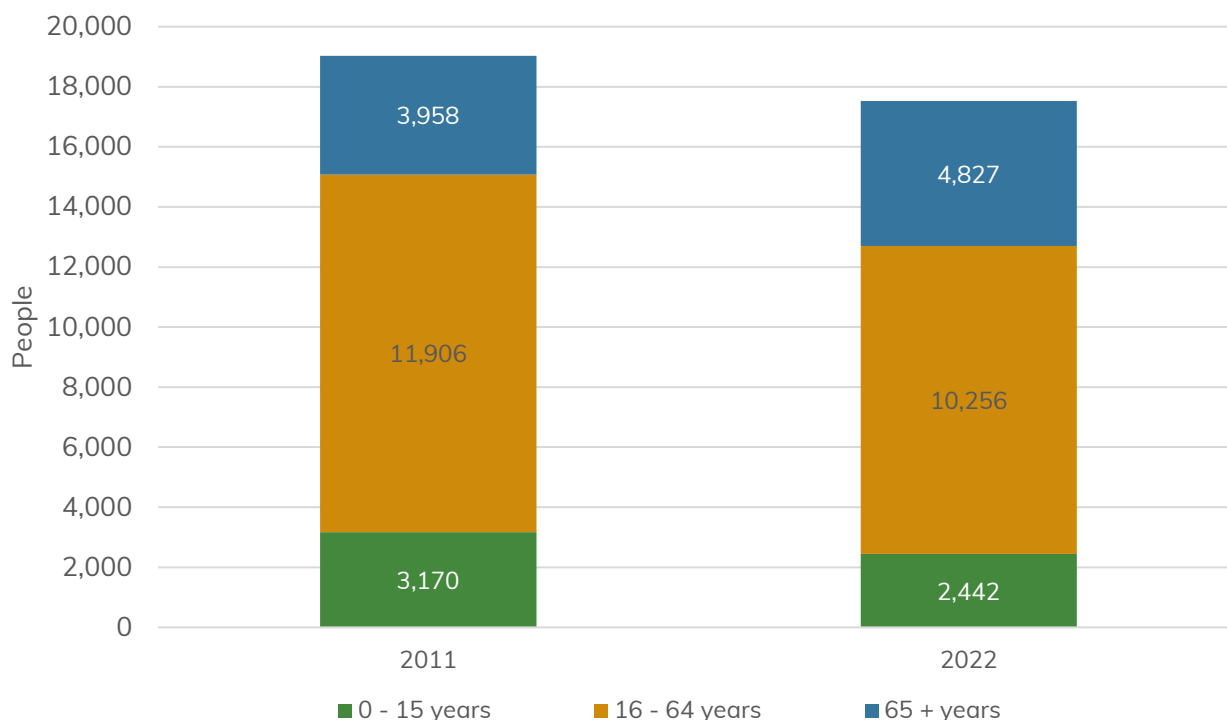


Figure 4 Comparison by age groups between 2011 and 2022 in the Cairngorms National Park (2022 Census table UV101b and 2011 Census table LC1117SC).

2011 and 2022 census data (tables LC1117SC and UV102b) indicates that there has been a decrease in the overall population in the Cairngorms National Park from 19,034 in 2011 to 17,531 people in 2022 (Figure 4). The working age (16 to 64 years) population has also decreased from 11,906 people in 2011 to 10,256 people in 2022 (Figure 4). The population of those of pensionable age (65 years and older) increased from 3,958 in 2011 to 4,827 in 2022 (Figure 4). However, there are several important caveats to consider when comparing these datasets, namely:

- The fact that the National Park is a non-standard geography.
- Issues with communal establishment usual population estimate in the 2011 census.

Information on these issues is presented within this supporting document:

- <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Statistical-areas-used-in-the-analysis-of-the-Cairngorms-National-Park.pdf>

The outcome of these issues is that while we may identify changes between censuses, there is uncertainty about the exact extent of those changes. Some comparisons may not be possible at all.

Population projections

Population projections for the Cairngorms National Park are produced by National Records of Scotland, with the most recent data at the National Park level available being the 2018 based projections. Population projection data will be included in the health and safety topic paper¹².

It is worth noting in this paper however that number of people of working age is projected to decrease from 11,588 in 2018 to 10,916 in 2043, representing a 5.8% reduction, greater than the decrease projected for Scotland, which is 3.8% (Figure 5).

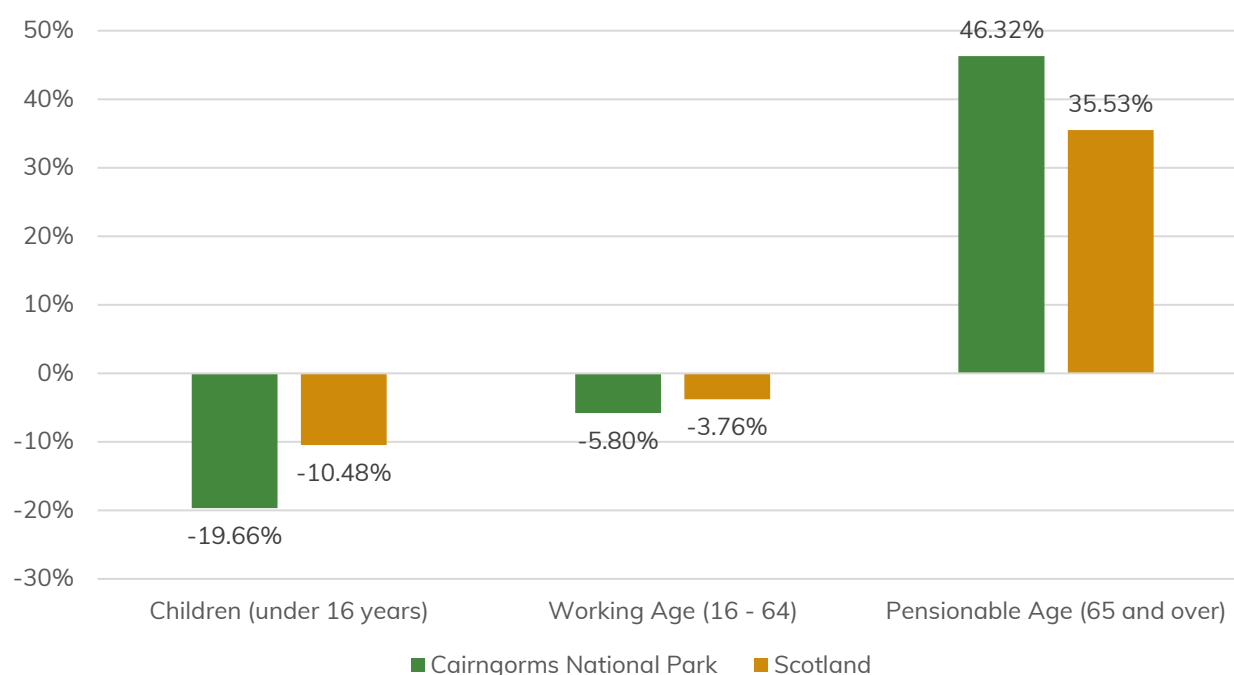


Figure 5 Principle projected population change in the Cairngorms National Park and Scotland 2018 – 2043 (National Records Scotland, 2018).

General health of the working population also affects the number of those working and more detail on the health of the working age population will be available in the health and safety paper.

¹² See <https://cairngormsldp.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/v3/health-and-safety-survey?step=step1>



Skills and education

Educational attainment of the working age population

According to the 2022 Census the Cairngorms National Park's population has a higher proportion of working age residents with educational attainment at degree level or above when compared to the five adjoining local authorities and national figures (Figure 6).

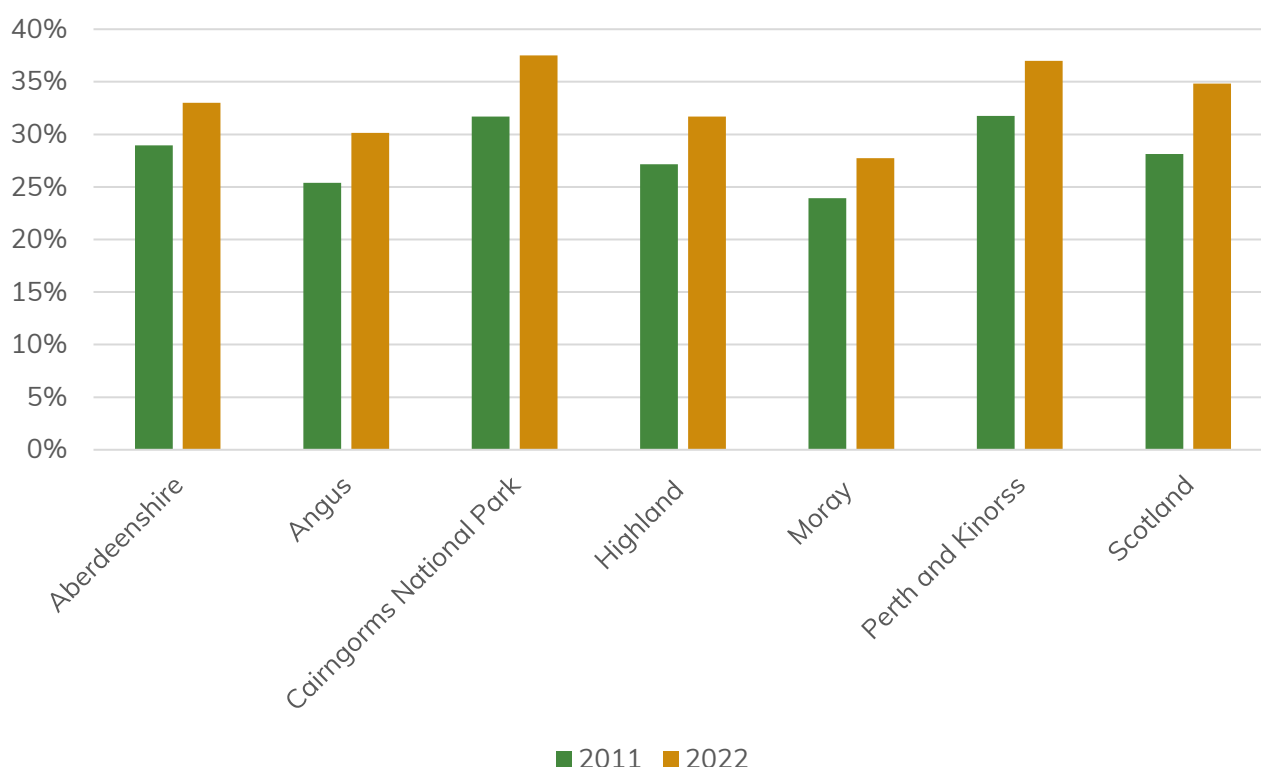


Figure 6 Proportion of adults (working age – 16 to 64 years) with degree level or above educational attainment in the Cairngorms National Park, Scotland and the five adjoining local authorities. Census 2022 table UV501b and Census 2011 table LC5102SC.

The proportion of working age people (aged 16 to 64 years) in the Cairngorms National Park with degree level or above educational attainment increased from 31.7% in 2011 to 37.5% in 2022 (Figure 6). This is higher than the national average of 34.8% people in Scotland reported having degree or higher educational attainment in 2022. Although across all the local authorities and in Scotland the proportion of people with degree or higher educational attainment increased between 2011 and 2022, the proportion of people in the Cairngorms National Park was highest in both census years (Figure 6).

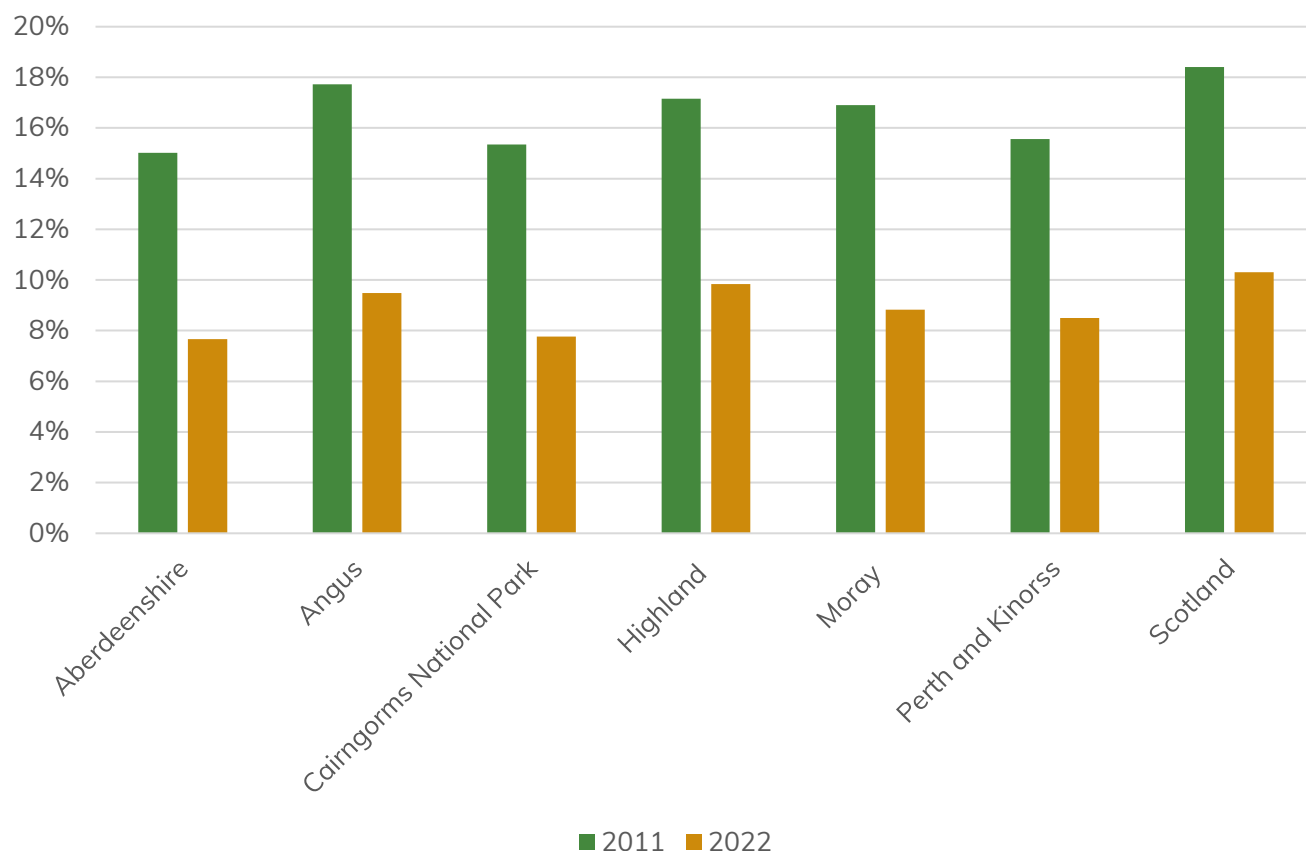


Figure 7 Proportion of adults (working age - 16 to 64 years) with no qualifications in the Cairngorms National Park, Scotland and five adjoining local authorities. Census 2022 table UV501b and Census 2011 table LC5102SC.

In 2022, the proportion of working age adults (16-64 years) with no qualifications (Figure 7) was lower in the Cairngorms National Park (7.8%) than the Scottish average (10.3%). It is roughly equal to Aberdeenshire (7.7%), but lower than Highland (9.8%), Angus (9.5%), Moray (8.8%).

The proportion of working age adults with no qualifications significantly reduced from 2011 to 2022 from 15.4% to 7.8%, representing similar reductions seen in all local authorities and nationally.

Educational attainment of school leavers

The score is a weighted average of the highest level of qualification achieved by school leavers, for all leavers within a data zone, over three academic years¹³. The score is based on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level of qualifications

¹³ A 3-year rolling average dataset, starting with the 3-year period 2011 / 2012 – 2013 / 2014. It is updated on an annual basis. Data shown is the most recent data available as of March 2025.

gained by leavers in National Qualifications and Skills for Work. These statistics are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with no data recorded for the period 2019 / 2020 – 2021 / 2022.

Data on publicly funded education indicates that school leavers within the Cairngorms National Park have above national and regional average educational scores¹⁴ – although the differences between local authorities are relatively modest (Figure 8). The relatively high average attainment for the people in the National Park may, in part be attributed to a lack of areas with severe deprivation.

The average attainment of school leavers has been steadily increasing since 2011 / 2012 – 2013 / 2014, rising from 5.6 to 5.7 in the most recent reported period (Figure 9). This increasing trend is also seen in the national figures, however the attainment of school leavers in the Cairngorms National Park has consistently been above the national average (Figure 9).

¹⁴ Using the Scottish Credits and Qualifications Framework for school leavers, the score is calculated by identifying the best level of qualification each pupil leaves school with. The score is calculated by multiplying the highest qualification level achieved by each pupil by a corresponding factor. Level 3 qualifications are multiplied by three, level 4 by four, level 5 by five, level 6 by six and level 7 by seven. This indicator looks at the highest qualification attained by each pupil, not the number of qualifications attained. For example, one pupil who leaves school with four level 3 qualifications will score three, whilst a pupil leaving school with one level 5 qualification will score five. The total score is then divided by the total number of school leavers in each geographical area. Data are based on an average of three years and include all school leavers in secondary schools and special schools. Data from independent schools are not included. This is because there is a lack of data zone level information, and independent schools may choose to sit GCSEs or other English qualifications for which we have no information. We do not hold Scottish candidate numbers of independent school pupils. The number of pupils on the roll is taken from the September pupil census for the relevant year, which was carried out 43 through ScotXed project. The year shown relates to the academic year: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/ScotXed>. (Scottish Index Multiple Deprivation 2020 technical notes).

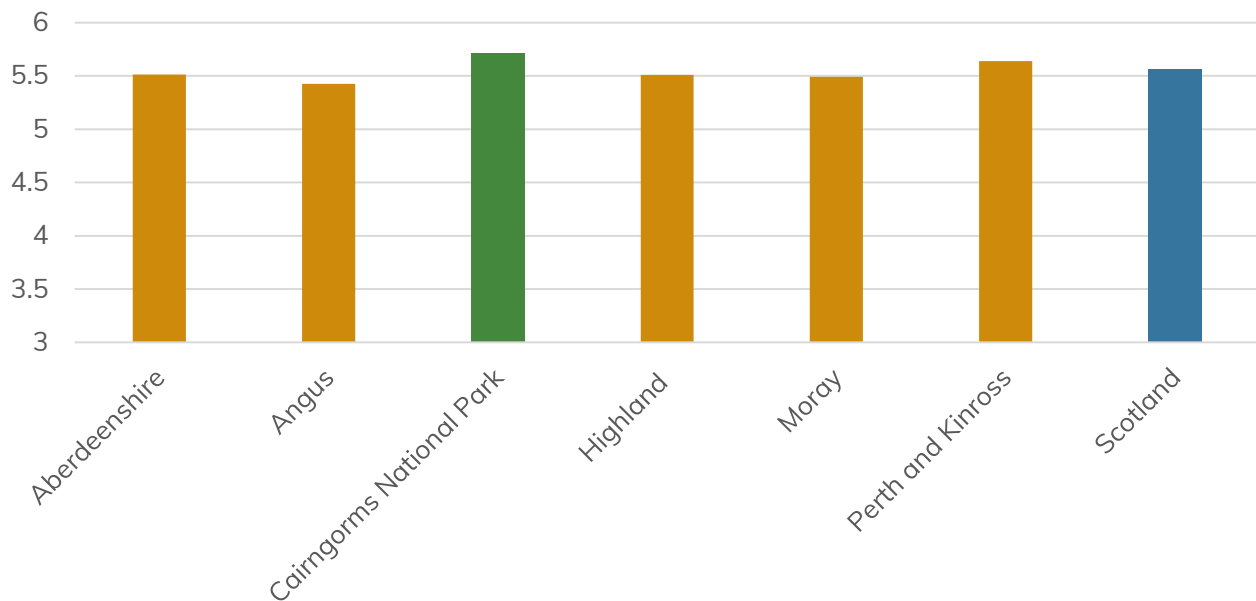


Figure 8 Educational attainment scores for people living in the Cairngorms National Park (data zone data) compared to the average figures from the local authorities and Scotland based on the intermediate data zone data for 2020 / 2021 – 2022 / 2023. Data from Statistics.gov Scotland. March 2025.

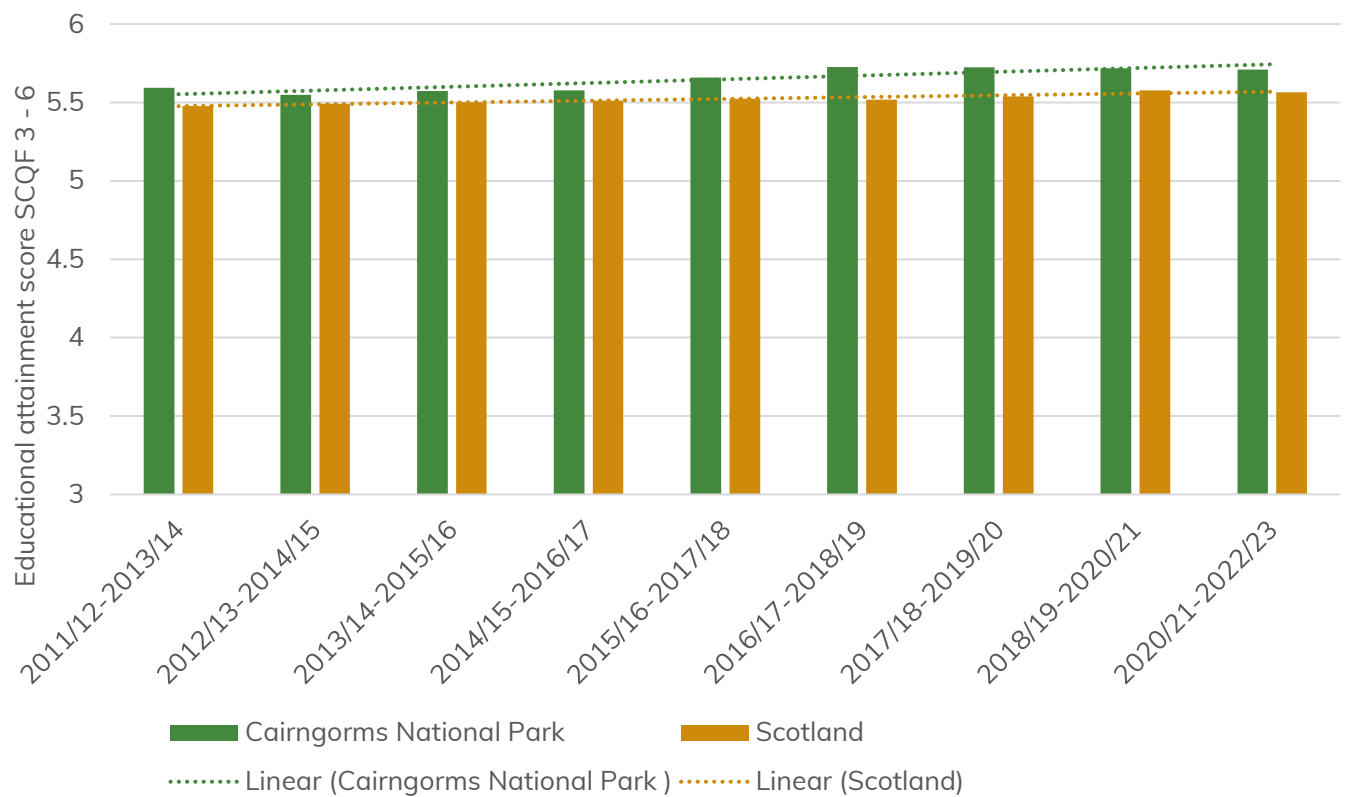


Figure 9 Educational attainment scores for people living in the Cairngorms National Park (data zones) compared to the average figures from Scotland (based on the intermediate data zone data) from 2011 / 2012 – 2013 / 2014 to 2020 / 2021 – 2022 / 2023. Note no data was reported for 2019 / 2020 – 2021 / 2022. Data from Statistics.gov Scotland, March 2025.



While the Cairngorms National Park is above the Scottish average for attainment, it is below average in terms of the proportion of 17 – 21 year olds attending UK universities (Figure 10) based on the most recent available data (SIMD¹⁵ 2020). Geographical location is likely to be a factor in this. These figures are based on young people's location prior to starting university and have been adjusted to allow for areas with large student populations, however issues with survey methodology also cannot be entirely ruled out.

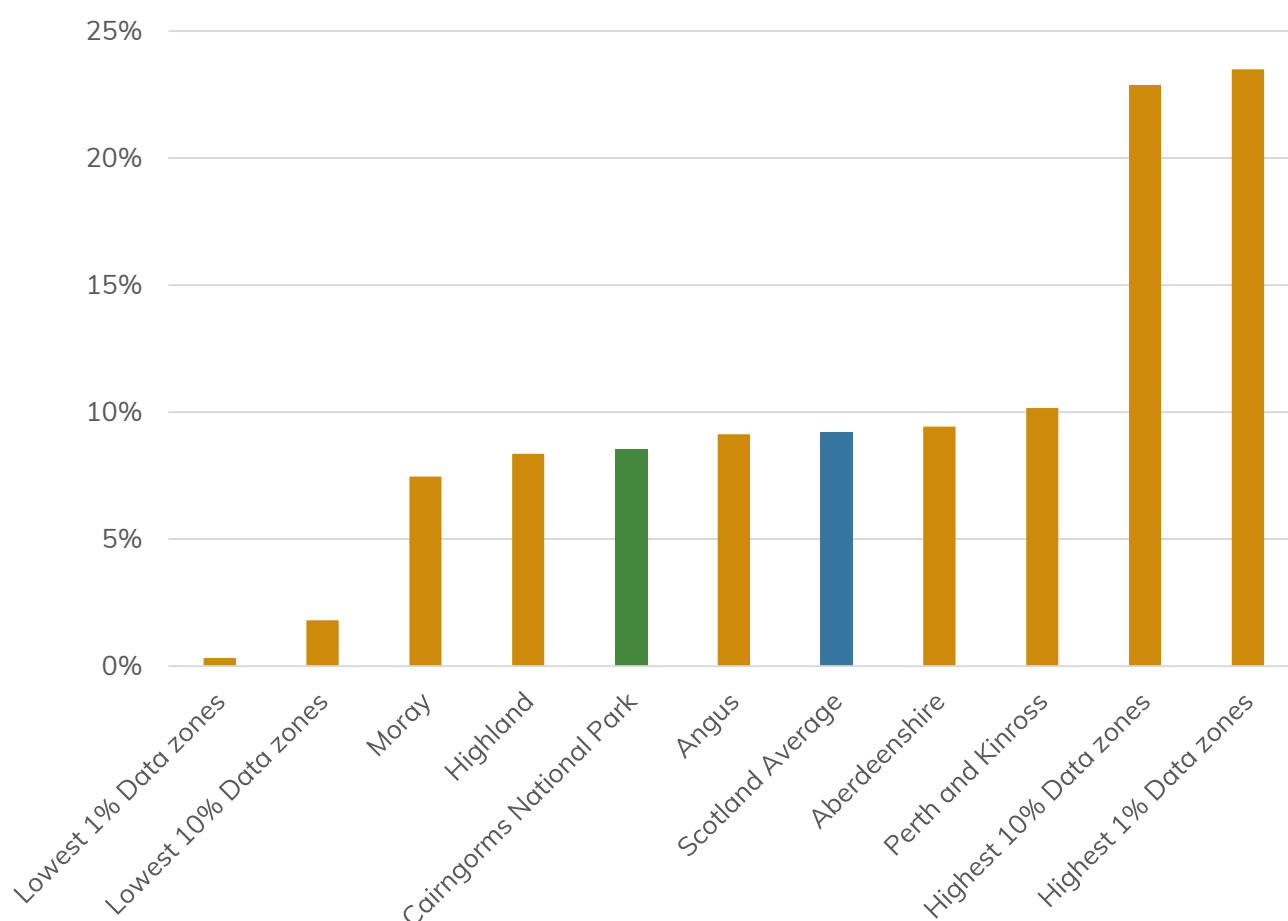


Figure 10 Proportion of 17-21yr olds starting a first degree at UK University 2015 / 2016 – 2017 / 2018 (Source: Scottish Index Multiple Deprivation 2020¹⁶). Data zone percentages are derived from the sum of all Scottish Data zones.

¹⁵ Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

¹⁶ See <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020v2-indicator-data/>



Economic activity

Rates of employment and unemployment for working age adults can provide a proxy indicator of economic and individual wellbeing within the Cairngorms National Park, with numerous studies indicating that unemployment reduces subjective wellbeing, Gedikli, C.et al, 2022¹⁷). 'While unemployment reduces wellbeing, poor wellbeing also leads to unemployment, indicating that individuals can become trapped in a cycle of unemployment and poor wellbeing' (Gedikli, C.et al, 2022) There is a debate to be had about whether being in a poorly characterised job is better or worse than not being employed at all. Some research suggest that wellbeing is still considerably better for those in poor quality employment over those in an unemployed position (Leach LS et al, 2010). However, there is also research suggesting that employment characterised by a number of factors including poor conditions, low remuneration, stress and uncertainty can be as negative for wellbeing as unemployment (Broom DH et al, 1993).

The data on employment and unemployment rates in the Cairngorms National Park has been drawn from Census 2022 and compared with previous Census data (2011). The data looks at the proportions of people who identified as being in a particular role or employment type, presenting a snapshot of the economic activity when the census' where completed. It should be noted that one person may have had two positions, for example, being a full-time student and also be employed in a part-time position.

Economically active population

For consistency and to allow comparison with earlier statistics, when discussing those who are economically active in the Cairngorms National Park and nationally, the figures include those who are economically active and full-time students. The statistics for 2022 are based on the population of the National Park or Scotland who are over 16 years of age.

In 2022, 61.6% of the population of the National Park over the age of 16 years (including full-time students) were reported as economically active (Census table UV601). This is slightly above the national proportion of 60.9%. In 2022 of those that were recorded as economically active (including full-time students) 97.9% of them were in employment (as an employee or self-employed) which is above the national average of 95.7% (Census table UV601).

¹⁷ Gedikli, C. et al. (2022) 'The relationship between unemployment and wellbeing: an updated meta-analysis of longitudinal evidence', *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 32(1), pp. 128–144. doi: 10.1080/1359432X.2022.2106855.



In terms of number of people, in 2022, there were 9,293 economically active people (including full-time students) in the Cairngorms National Park. Of these 7,091 were employed (2,056 were part-time employees and 5,032 were full-time employees). A total of 2,010 people were self-employed and 194 people were unemployed but available to work (Census table UV601).

Looking solely at the economically active population aged 16 years and over in 2022, in the Cairngorms National Park 54.2% were full-time employees, slightly lower than the national average of 59.9% (Figure 11). The proportion of the economically active population who are part-time employees, is roughly equal in the National Park (22.1%) and Scotland (22.2%). There is a higher proportion of economically active people in self-employed positions (with or without employees) in the Cairngorms National Park (21.6%) compared to national average figures (12.5%).

This higher proportion of self-employed working practices can be considered a typical characteristic of a rural economy and more commonly recorded in affluent rural areas (Williams, C.C., 2011¹⁸), reflecting the high proportion of independent and smaller businesses that are present in the National Park. In terms of the proportion of people who are economically active but unemployed and available for work this is far lower in the Cairngorms National Park at 2.1%, compared to 4.4% nationally.

¹⁸ Williams, C.C. (2011), 'Entrepreneurship, the informal economy and rural communities', *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, Vol. 5 No. 2, pp. 145-157. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17506201111131578>

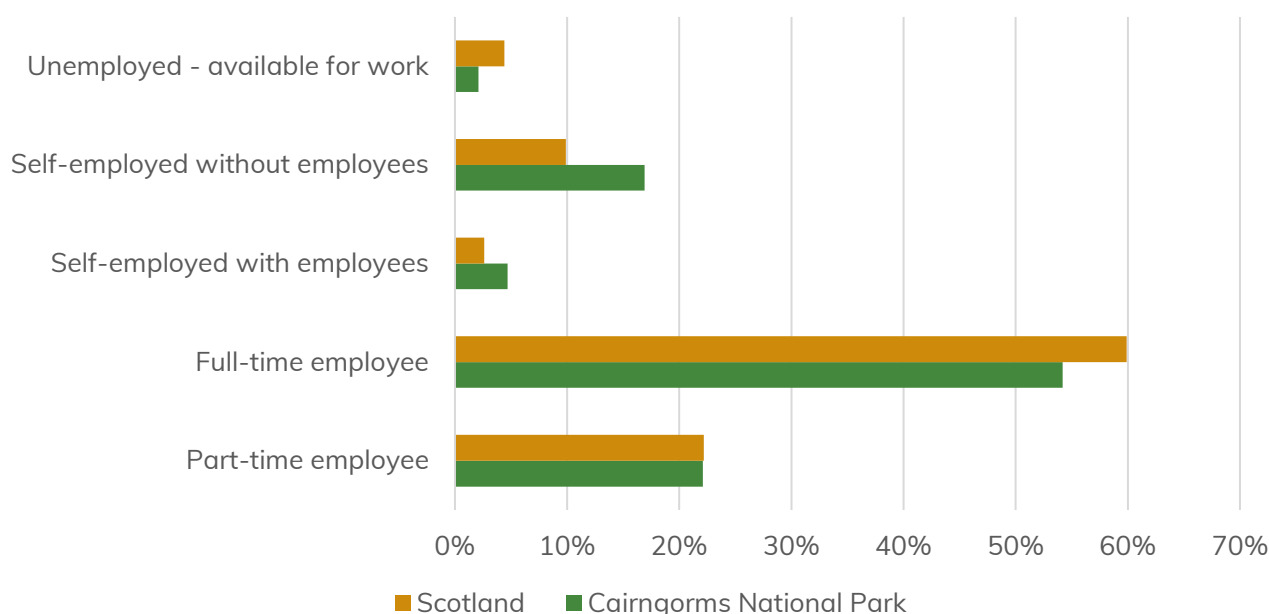


Figure 11 Proportional economic activity of the economically active population only aged 16 years and over (including full-time students) in the Cairngorms National Park and Scotland in 2022. Census table UV601

The datasets providing a detailed breakdown of economic activity from the 2022 and 2011 censuses are not directly comparable. The 2022 Census data on economic activity provides data on the population 16 years and over (Census table UV601). This is not directly comparable to the data collected in the 2011 census which gives a detailed breakdown of economic activity for only 16 to 74 years (Census tables KS601SC and QS601SC).

To compare the position from 2011 and 2022, the data on economic activity by age (Census table LC6107SC) has been used to allow a comparison with the population 16 years and over. This does however limit the categories that can be compared between the census years.

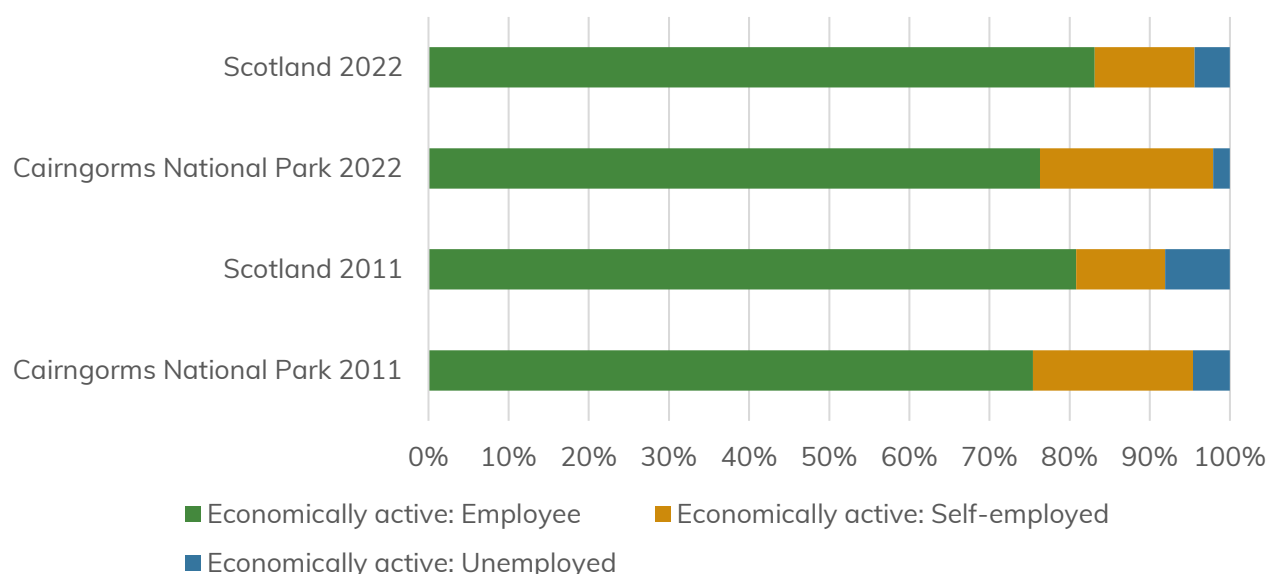


Figure 12 Economic activity of the economically active population only aged 16 years and over (including full-time students) in the Cairngorms National Park and Scotland in 2011 and 2022. Census table UV601 and Census table LC6107SC.

Figure 12 shows a comparison between the proportions of employed, self-employed and unemployed economically active people in the Cairngorms National Park and Scotland in 2011 and 2022. The proportion of economically active employed people has slightly increased from 75.4% in 2011 to 76.3% in 2022. This is lower than the proportional increase seen nationally, which increased from 80.8% in 2011 to 83.2% in 2022. The proportion of economically active people that are self-employed in the Cairngorms National Park has also slightly increased from 20.0% in 2011 to 21.6% in 2022. Again, this reflects the national trends, where the proportion of economically self-employed people increased from 11.1% in 2011 to 12.5% in 2022.

Figure 13 shows the proportion of the population (including full-time students) that are economically active in the Cairngorms National Park by data zone¹⁹. The areas with the lowest proportion of economically active people relative to the population, 16 years and over, are in parts of Ballater in Aberdeenshire (data zones S01006789 and S01006790) in parts of Grantown-on-Spey, and in Badenoch and Strathspey (data zone S01010546). In Ballater the data zones East Cairngorms 01 and 02 have only 52.9% and 49.3% respectively of the population were economically active. In the data zone

¹⁹ For more information on data zones in the Cairngorms National Park please refer to the Statistical areas used in the analysis of the Cairngorms National Park paper which can be accessed here: <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Statistical-areas-used-in-the-analysis-of-the-Cairngorms-National-Park.pdf>



covering part of Granttown-on-Spey (Badenoch and Strathspey North- 05) 52.6% of the population were reported as being economically active in 2022.

In contrasts the area with the highest proportion of economically active people in the population of those 16 years and above is in parts of Aviemore, in Badenoch and Strathspey Central (data zone S01010538). In this area 74.8% of the population are economically active.

Proportion of population that is economically active

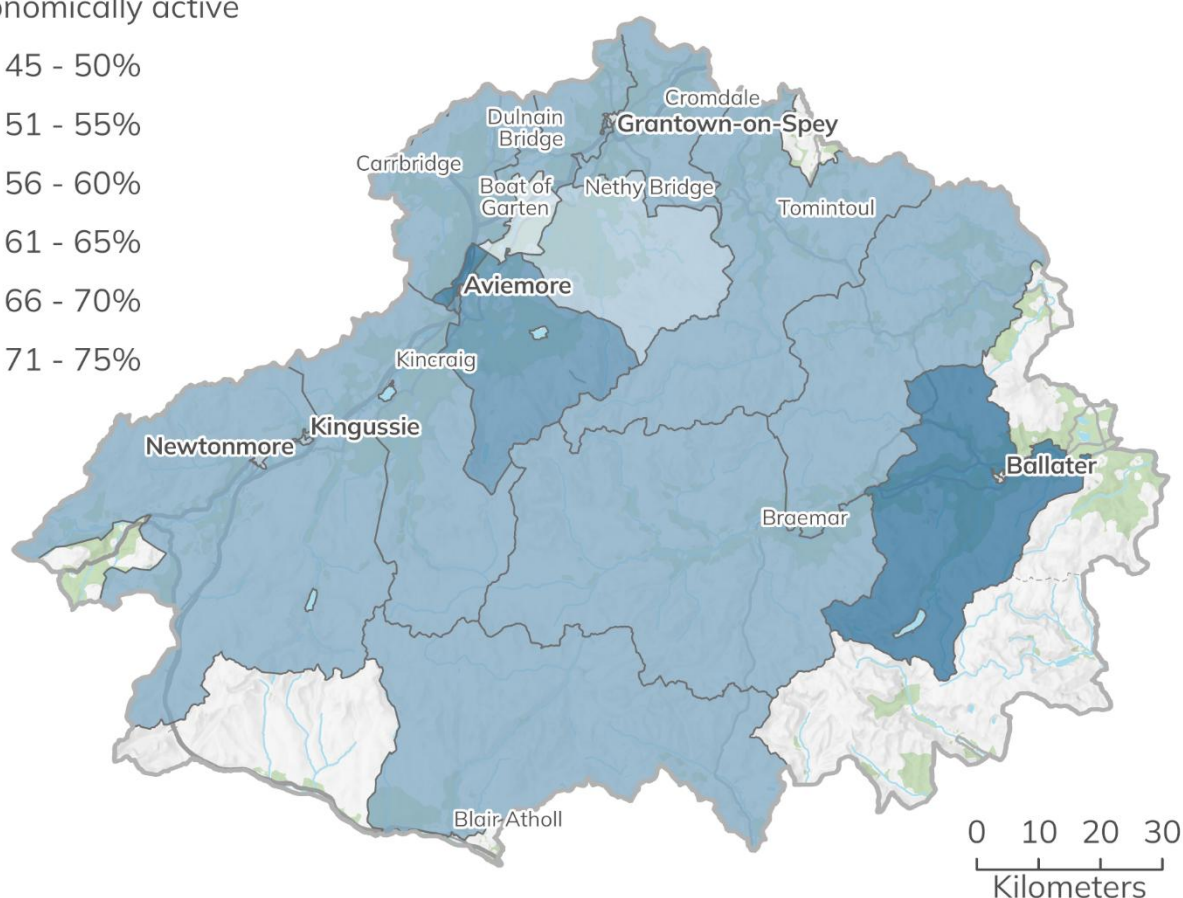
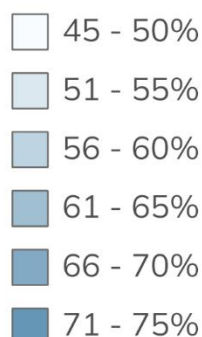


Figure 13 Proportion of the population aged 16 years and over (including full-time students that are economically active in the Cairngorms National Park. (Census table UV601). Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of His Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright and database right 2025. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number AC0000821810, Cairngorms National Park Authority. Contains data © Scotland's Census.

Other areas with higher proportions of people 16 years and over that are economically active included the area around Ballater, data zone for East Cairngorms-04 (S0100792) which had 70.5% of the population being reported as economically active. It should be noted that this data zone only contains 369 people.



Figure 12 also shows that the proportion of people economically active but unemployed reduced in the Cairngorms National Park from 4.6% in 2011 to 2.1% in 2022. Although this also reflects the falling national proportion of economically active people who are unemployed (from 8.1% in 2011 to 4.4% in 2022), the reduction in the National Park is greater proportionally than nationally.

Within the National Park, Figure 14 shows the proportion of the population aged 16 years and over (including full-time students) that are economically active but unemployed by data zone area²⁰ in 2022.

The areas of the National Park that have the highest proportions of the economically active population over the age of 16 years who are unemployed include parts of Grantown-on-Spey in Badenoch and Strathspey - 04 (data zone S01010545) which has 2.6% unemployed. In the area covering Braemar and surrounding in East Cairngorms -05 (data zone S01006793) the proportion of working age people aged 16 years and over who are economically active and unemployed is also 2.6%. The data zone covering northwest Aviemore, Badenoch and Strathspey central – 03 (data zone S01010538) has the third highest proportion of economically active people aged 16 years and over who are unemployed, recorded as 2.1% in 2022.

In terms of the areas with the lowest proportion of people over 16 years who are economically active but unemployed in 2022, the data zone covering Boat of Garten and Mains of Garten, Badenoch and Strathspey – 05 (data zone S01010540) was the lowest at 0.2%. In the areas covering Carrbridge the proportion of people over 16 years who are economically active but unemployed in 2022 was 0.4%. and surrounding, Badenoch and Strathspey Central – 06 (data zone S01010541) The third lowest area in terms of the proportion of people over 16 years who are economically active but unemployed was in parts of Aviemore east of Grampian Road, in Badenoch and Strathspey Central – 01 (data zone S01010536) where it was reported as 0.5%.

Despite the range of values for the proportion of people over 16 years who are economically active but unemployed in 2022 across the data zones covering the Cairngorms National Park, none of the individual areas were above the national average figures.

²⁰ For more information on data zones in the Cairngorms National Park please refer to the Statistical areas used in the analysis of the Cairngorms National Park paper which can be accessed here: <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Statistical-areas-used-in-the-analysis-of-the-Cairngorms-National-Park.pdf>



Proportion of population that are economically active but unemployed

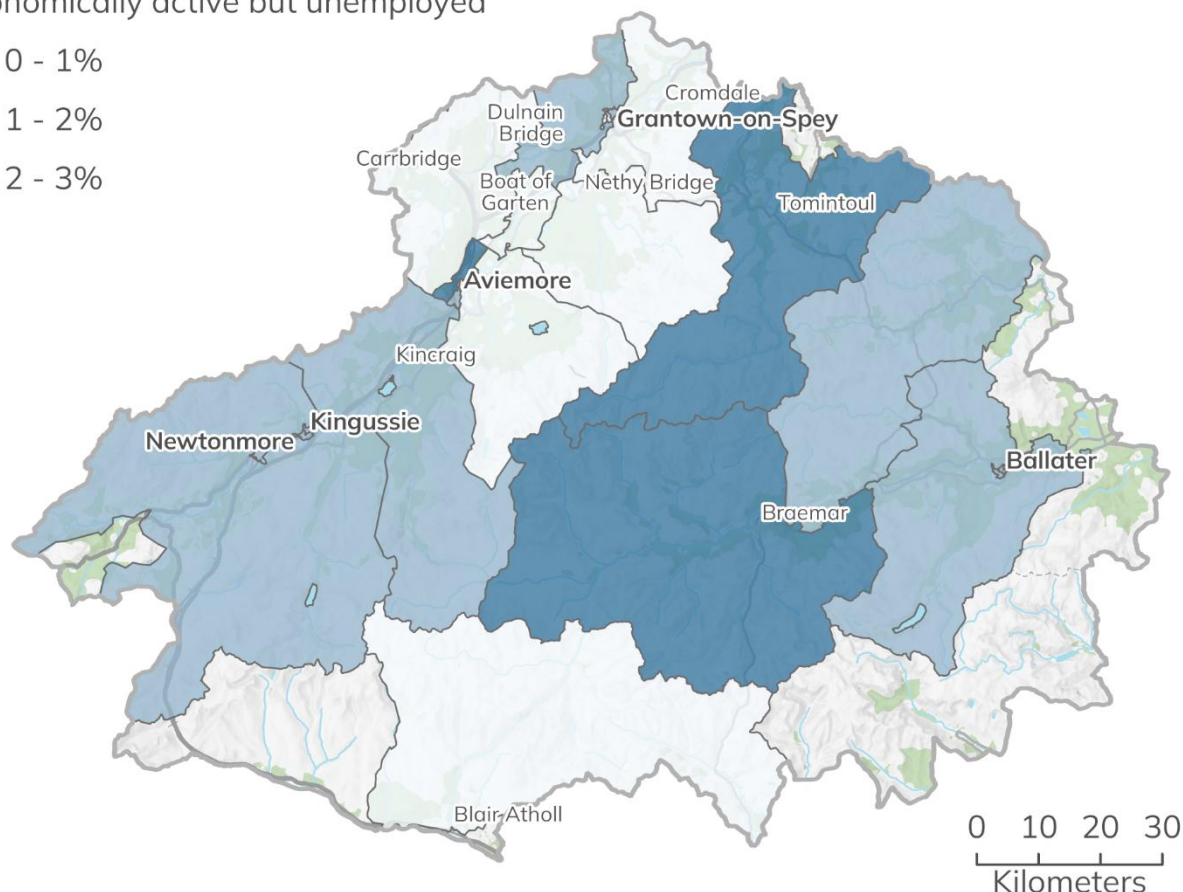
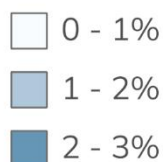


Figure 14 Proportion of the population aged 16 years and over (including full-time students) that are economically active but unemployed in the Cairngorms National Park by data zone. (Census table UV601). Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of His Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright and database right 2025. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number AC0000821810, Cairngorms National Park Authority.

Hours worked

Of those who are working, which includes self-employed and employed people, Scotland's Census estimated the number of hours worked of all people aged 16 years and over in the week before the census in 2022 (Figure 15). The largest difference between number of hours worked in the National Park and Scotland is in the 31 to 48 hours bracket. In the National Park 54.6% of people aged 16 and over worked 31 to 48 hours per week was proportionally lower than the national average of 61.5%. More people proportionally are working longer hours in the National Park (16.0%) compared to the Scottish average (10.0%) (Figure 15). The proportion of people working part time (less than 30 hours) in the National Park (29.4%) and in Scotland (28.5%) is similar (Figure 15).

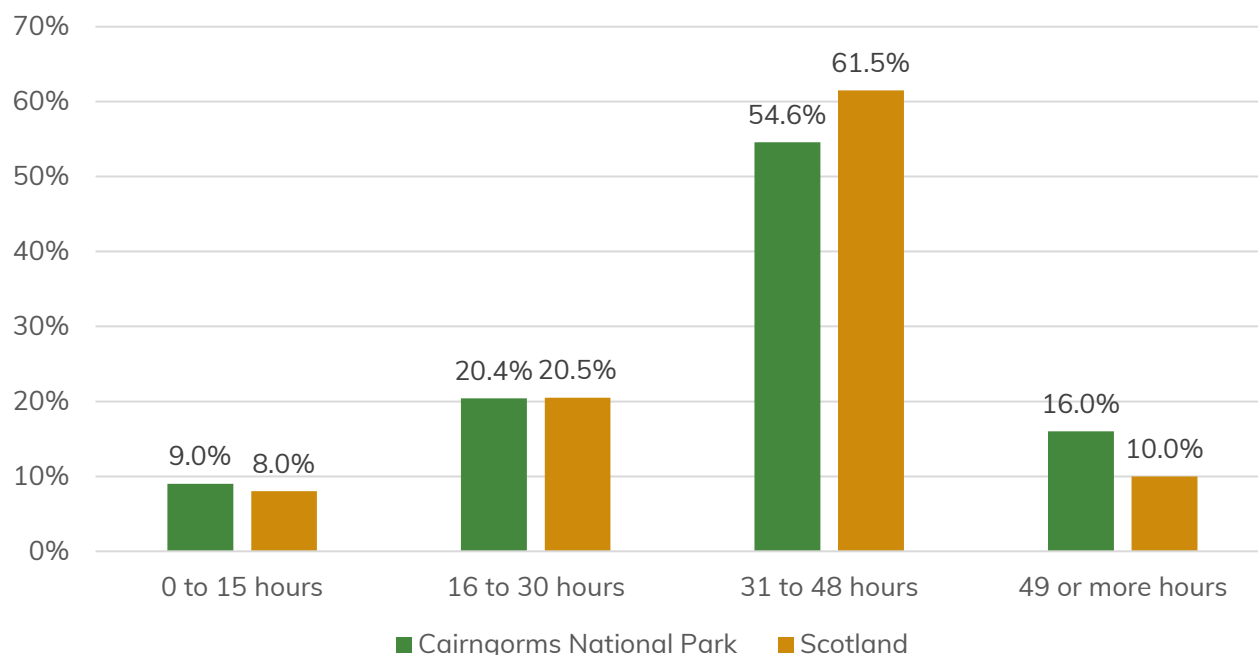


Figure 15 Hours worked of all people aged 16 years and over in the week before the census in the Cairngorms National Park and Scotland in 2022. Census 2022 table UV604.

In 2022, terms of the number of people, 819 people in the Cairngorms National Park were working 0 to 15 hours, 1,859 people were working 16 to 30 hours, 4,966 people were working 31 to 48 hours and 1,458 people were working 49 hours or more.

The data on hours worked can be broken down further by age as this data was also collected in the 2022 Census. In the National Park (Figure 16).

Of those working part time 0 to 15 hours per week the highest proportion (31.1%) were in the age range of 50 to 64 years (255 people). The smallest proportion of people (10.6%) working 0 to 15 hours were people in the 25 to 35 years age range (87 people) (Figure 16).

Of those working part time 16 to 30 hours per week the largest proportion of people (38.9%) were also in the age range of 50 – 64 years (722 people). The smallest proportion (7.7%) of people working 16 to 30 hours was in the 16 to 24 years age range (143 people) (Figure 16).



Of those working full time 31 to 48 hours per week, the largest proportion (34.1%) of people were in the 50 to 64 years age bracket (1,794 people). The smallest proportion (5.1%) of those working 31 to 48 hours were in the 65 years and over age range (255 people) (Figure 16).

Of those working 49 hours or more the largest proportion of people (39.9%) were in the 50 to 64 years age range (580 people). The smallest proportion of people (5%) working 49 hours and above were in the 16 to 24 years age range (73 people) (Figure 16).

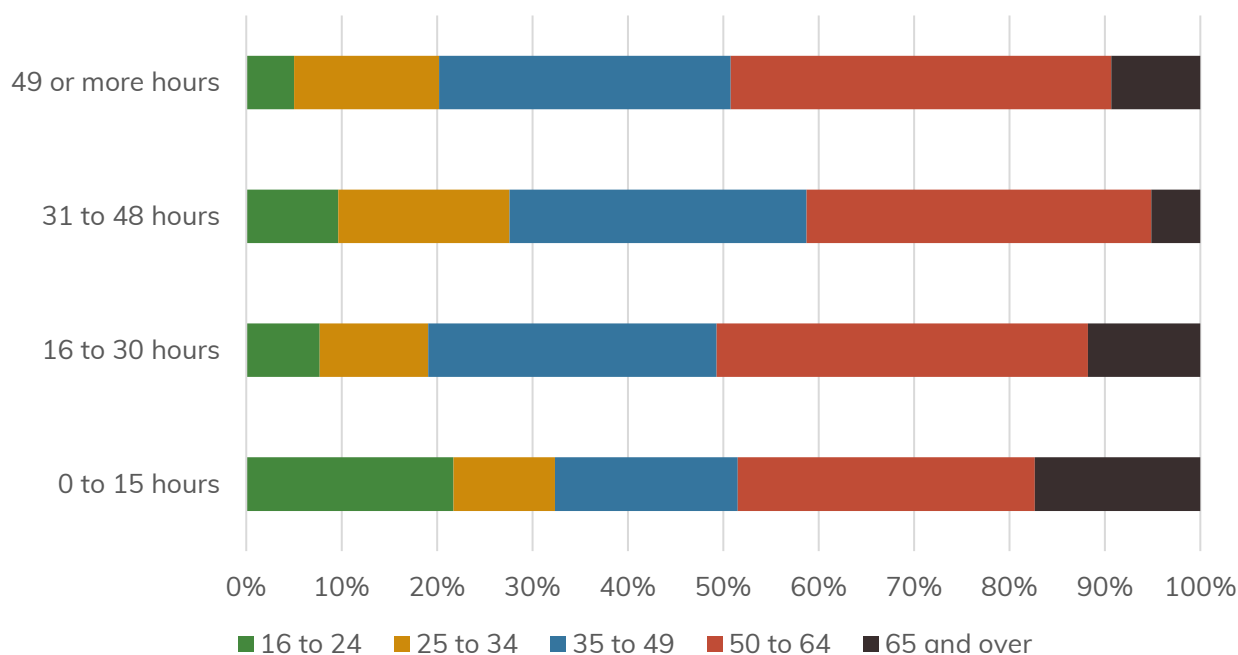


Figure 16 Hours worked by age of all people aged 16 years and over in employment the week before the census in the Cairngorms National Park 2022. Census 2022, table UV604b

The distribution of the hours worked by different age groups does differ somewhat from the National averages for Scotland (Figure 16 and Figure 17). One significant difference is the proportion of people working 0 to 15 hours who are aged 16 to 24 years. Nationally this is 34.6% whereas in the National Park it was 21.7%. This may in part be due to the low number of students residing in the National Park at the time of the Census due to the absence higher education facilities in the National Park.

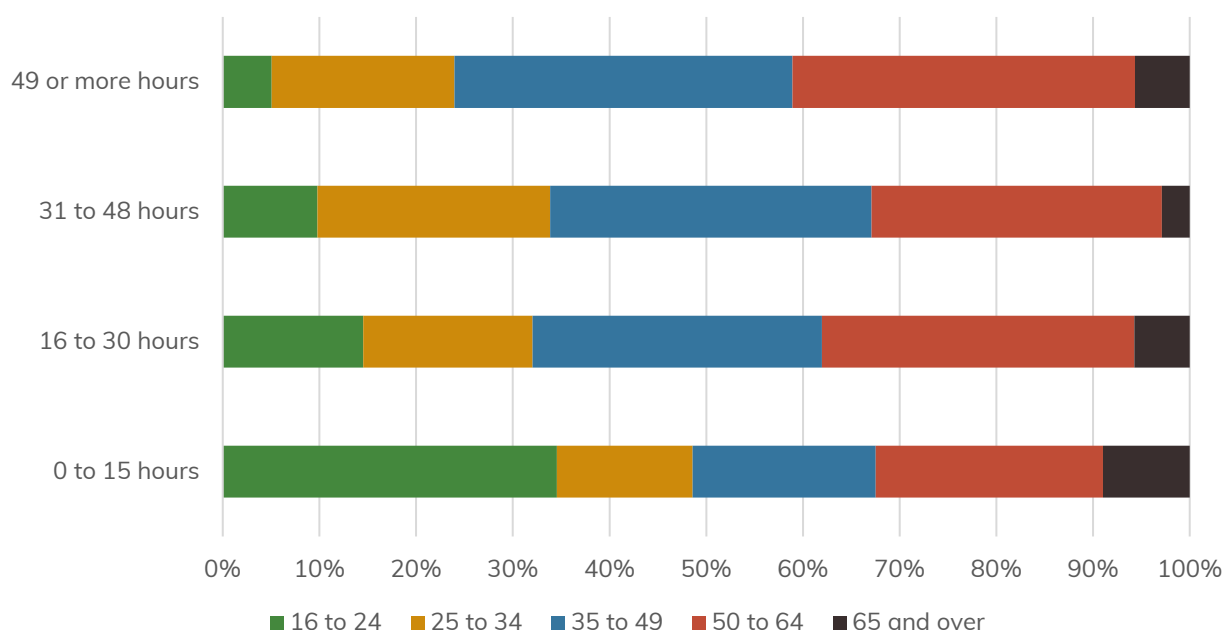


Figure 17 Hours worked by age of all people aged 16 years and over in employment the week before the census in the Cairngorms National Park 2022. Census 2022, table UV604b

Employment estimates and projections

The most accurate employment estimates for the National Park are derived from the 2022 Scottish Census. Information is available according to a number of outputs, namely:

- Industry (Table UV605) (see page 67)
- Occupation (Table UV606) (see page 70)
- National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (Table UV607) (see page 74)

Employment forecasts for the Cairngorms National Park have been prepared by Oxford Economics (2022) and provide an indication of the direction of change in employment in key sectors in the National Park. See page 76 for further information.

Employment estimates by industry

This census output provides estimates according to the industry in which a person works. It relates to their main job and is derived from the main activity of their employer or business.

As previously mentioned there have been changes to the way data is presented between the 2011 and 2022 Census years. The data on the type of industry people work in is now presented for all people aged 16 years and over whereas in previous years this was presented for people aged 16 to 74 years only. Therefore, the data



collected in 2011 and 2022 is not directly comparable at this time. Further releases of National Park geography data may include a breakdown of industry by age, as has been provided in previous years, at which point a comparison may be available.

The proportion of employees in different industrial sectors differs significantly from the national average (Figure 18) as may be expected in a rural economy with an additional strong focus on tourism. The largest proportion of people aged 16 years and over employed in the National Park are employed in the accommodation and food service activities sector, employing 14.4% (1,306 people). This is a significantly higher proportion than those employed in this sector across Scotland as a whole (6.9%) reflecting the strength of the tourism sector in the National Park. Compared to Scotland, there is also a higher proportion of people employed in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector, where in the National Park 4.6% (417 people) of 16+ population work in this sector, compared to just 1.6% nationally. Other notable differences, where a higher proportion of people work in a given sector include:

- Arts entertainment and recreation which employs 4.9% (447 people) of the 16+ population in the National Park, compared to 2.7% nationally.
- Administrative and service support activities, which employs 6.1% (553 people) of the 16+ population in the National Park, compared to 4.7% nationally.
- Construction – in the National Park this accounts for 8.4% (773 people), compared to 7.3% nationally.

Sectors in the National Park that employ lower proportions of the 16+ population than Scotland (Figure 18) include:

- Human health and social work activities, which employs 11.3% (1,306 people) of the +16 population in the National Park, compared to 14.6% nationally. This is still the second largest sector in terms of employment within the National Park.
- Public administration and defence; compulsory social security, which employs 5.8% (531 people) of the +16 population in the National Park, compared to 9.1% nationally.
- Financial and insurance activities, which employs 1.1% (104 people) in the National Park, compared to 4.3% nationally.

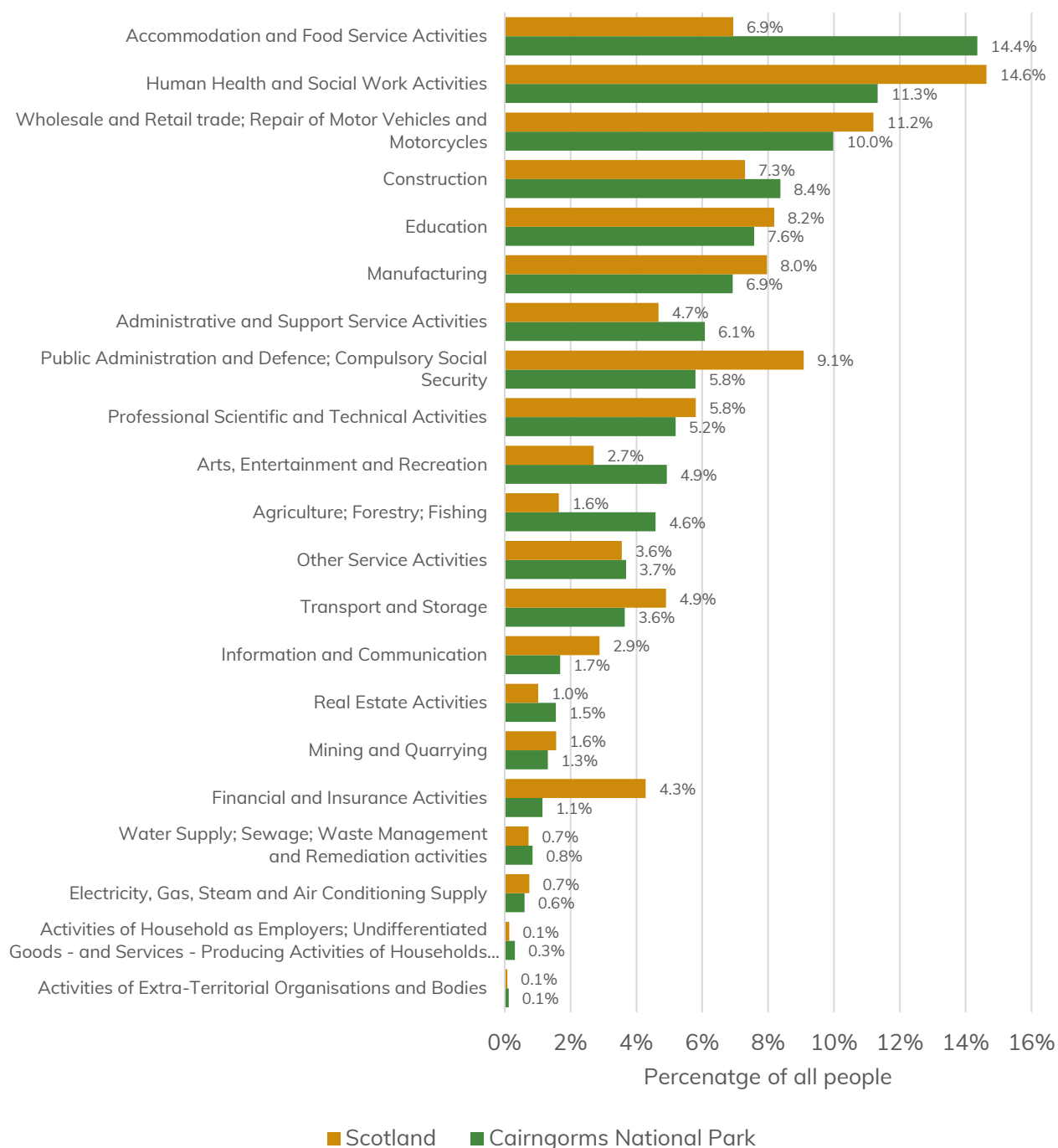


Figure 18 Proportion of all people by industry sector aged years 16 and over in employment the week before the census in the Cairngorms National Park and Scotland in 2022 (Source: Census 2022 table UV605).

In terms of numbers of people employed in each sector (Figure 20) the largest sector was accommodation and food services which employed 1,306 people in 2022. The human health and social work activities employed 1,031 people, and wholesale and



retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles employed 908 people. Sectors employing less than 100 people included:

- Activities of extra-territorial organisations and bodies (11 people).
- Activities of household as employers; undifferentiated goods and services producing activities of households for own use (28 people).
- Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (55 people).
- Water supply; sewage; waste management and remediation activities (77 people).

Employment estimates by occupation

This census output provides estimates according to the occupation held by a person. It relates to their main job and is derived from either their job title or details of the activities involved in their job. It is a useful counterpart to the industry data (see page 67), which does not reflect the actual occupations of those working within those sectors.

Figure 19 shows the proportions of the occupations of all people over 16 years in the National Park and in Scotland in 2022. In terms of proportional representation, the highest proportional occupation in the National Park were skilled trade occupations at 17.1% (1,553 people), professional occupations at 15.6% (1,422) and elementary occupations at 12.7% (1,158 people).

The biggest differences between the National Park and Scotland **iError! Reference source not found.**include:

- Skilled trade occupations, which account for 17.1% (1,553 people) of the 16+ population in the National Park, compared to 11.3% nationally.
- Professional occupations, which account for 15.6% (1,422 people) of the 16+ population in the National Park, compared to 20.7% nationally.
- Managers, directors and senior officials, which account for 11.3% (1,031 people) of the 16+ population in the National Park, compared 7.8% nationally.

The occupation accounting for the lowest number of people in the National Park is sales and customer service positions with 552 people, accounting for 6.1% of the 16+ population.

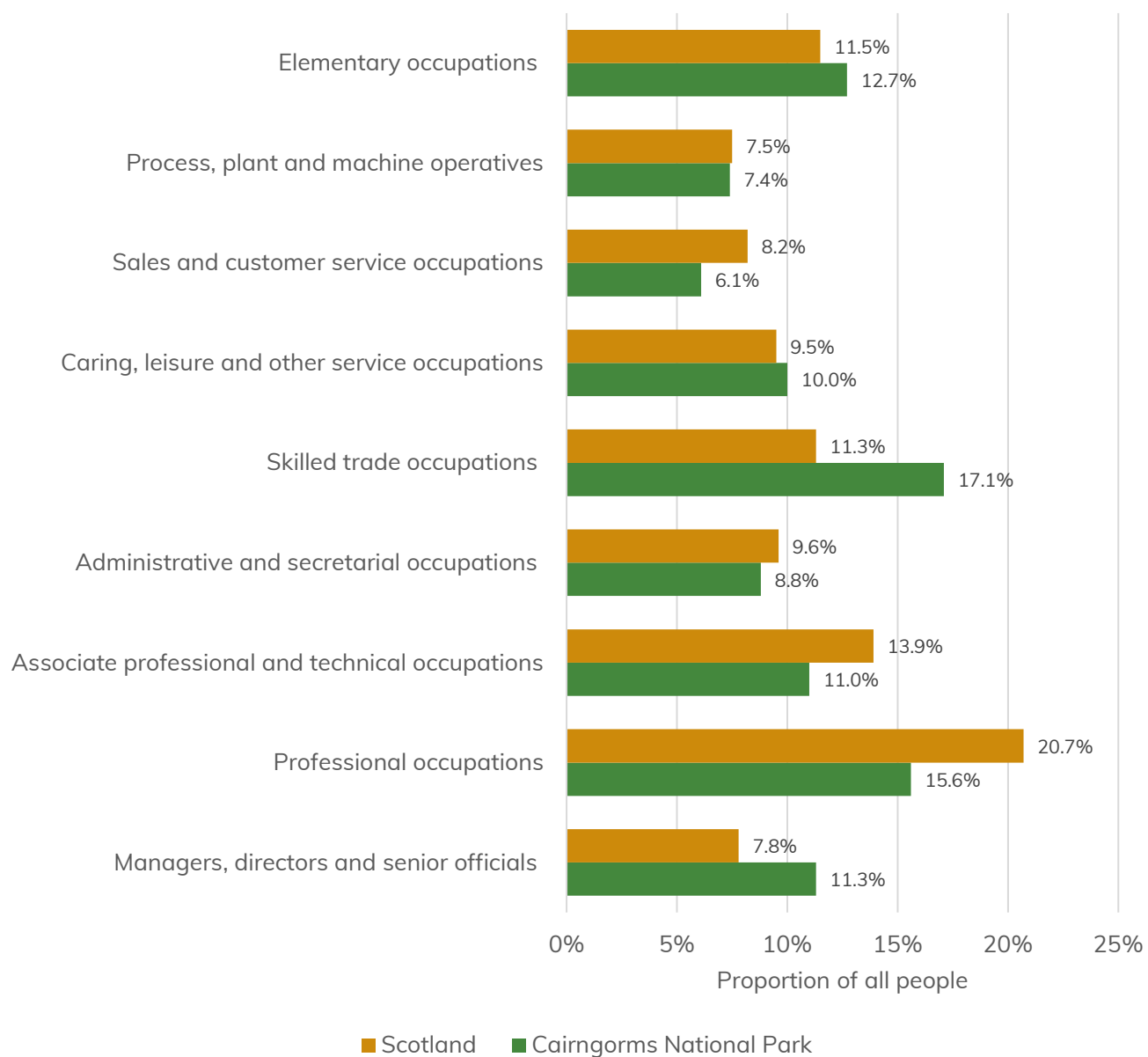


Figure 19 Proportions of occupations of all people aged 16 years and over in employment the week before the census in the Cairngorms National Park (Source: Census 2022 table UV606).

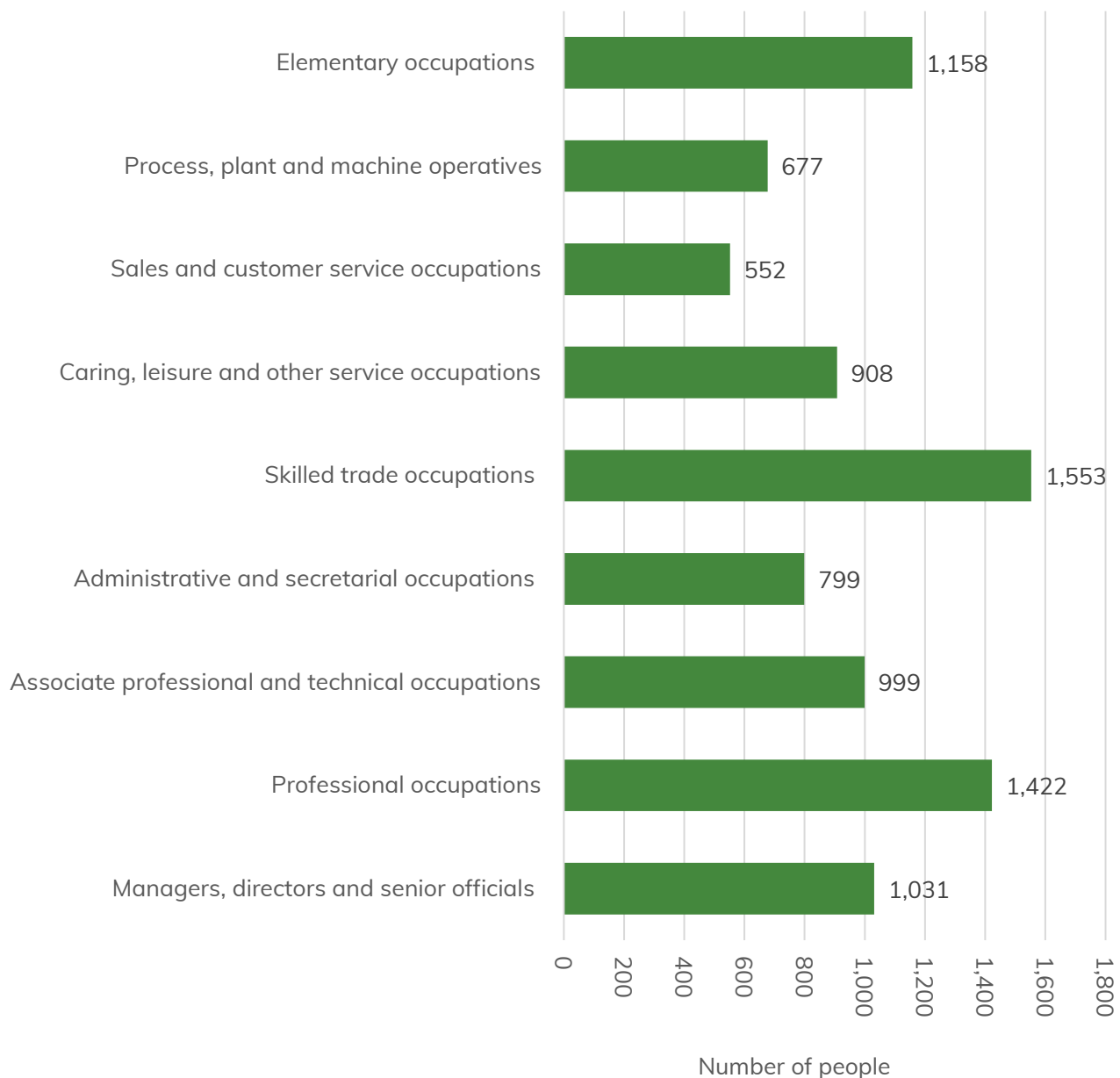


Figure 20 Number of people aged 16 years and over in employment the week before the census in the Cairngorms National Park in each occupation. (Source: Census 2022 table UV606).

Figure 20 shows a high level break down of the occupations of people in the Cairngorms National Park, however these can be broken down further into subcategories as shown in Figure 21. The largest subcategory of occupations in the National Park are elementary administration and service occupations, accounting for 878 people in 2022. Administrative occupations accounted for 615 people and other managers and proprietors accounted for 537 people.

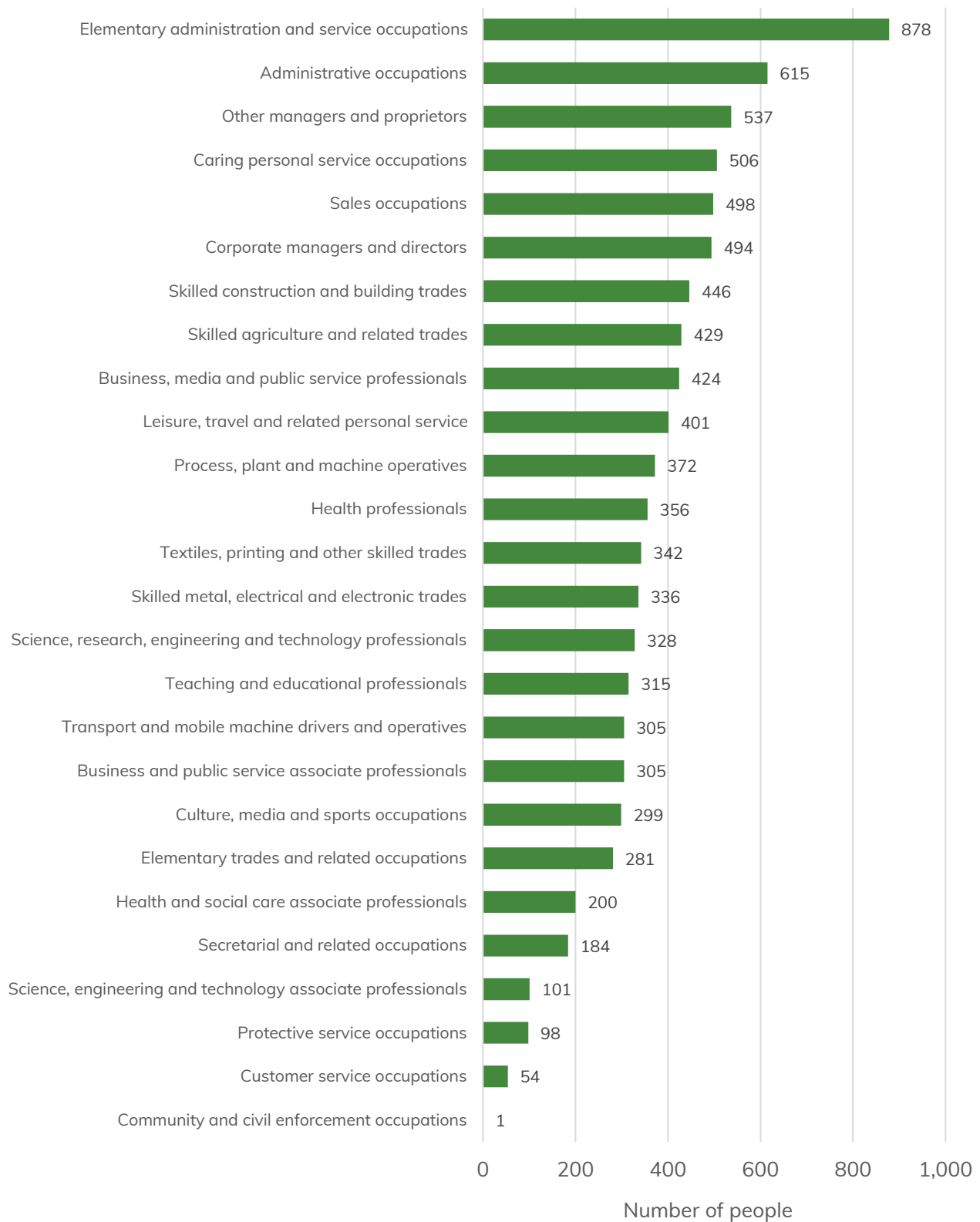


Figure 21 Number of people aged 16 years and over in employment the week before the census in the Cairngorms National Park in each sub-level occupation. (Source: census 2022 table UV606).



National Statistics Socio-economic classification (NS-SEC)

The National Statistics Socio-economic classification has been constructed to measure the employment relations and conditions of occupations. Conceptually, these are central to showing the structure of socio-economic positions in modern societies and helping to explain variations in social behaviour and other social phenomena. The National Statistics Socio-economic classification was developed from a sociological classification that has been widely used in pure and applied research, known as the Goldthorpe Schema (see Goldthorpe 1980 / 1987, 1997, 2007; Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992). More information on the methodology and use of National Statistics Socio-economic classification data can be found here:

- <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/otherclassification/s/thenationalstatistics socioeconomicclassificationnssecrebasedonsoc2010>

Figure 22 shows the National Statistics Socio-economic classification of the population aged 16 years and over in the Cairngorms National Park and Scotland in 2022. The largest three classifications in the Cairngorms National Park, in 2022, proportionally were lower professional and higher technical occupation (14.4%), routine (12.9%) and semi-routine (11.9%) occupations.

In 2022 there was a smaller proportion of people long-term unemployed in the National Park (0.4%) compared to the national average (0.8%). Similarly, there are also a far lower proportion of people in the National Park who have never worked at 3.5% compared to 6.0% nationally.

Other significant differences include:

- Own account workers – 11.4% of the population of the National Park aged 16 years and over compared to 6.0% nationally.
- Employers in small establishments – 3.8% of the population of the National Park aged 16 years and over, compared to 2.0% nationally.
- Full-time students – 3.4% of the population of the National Park aged 16 years and over, compared to 8.5% nationally.

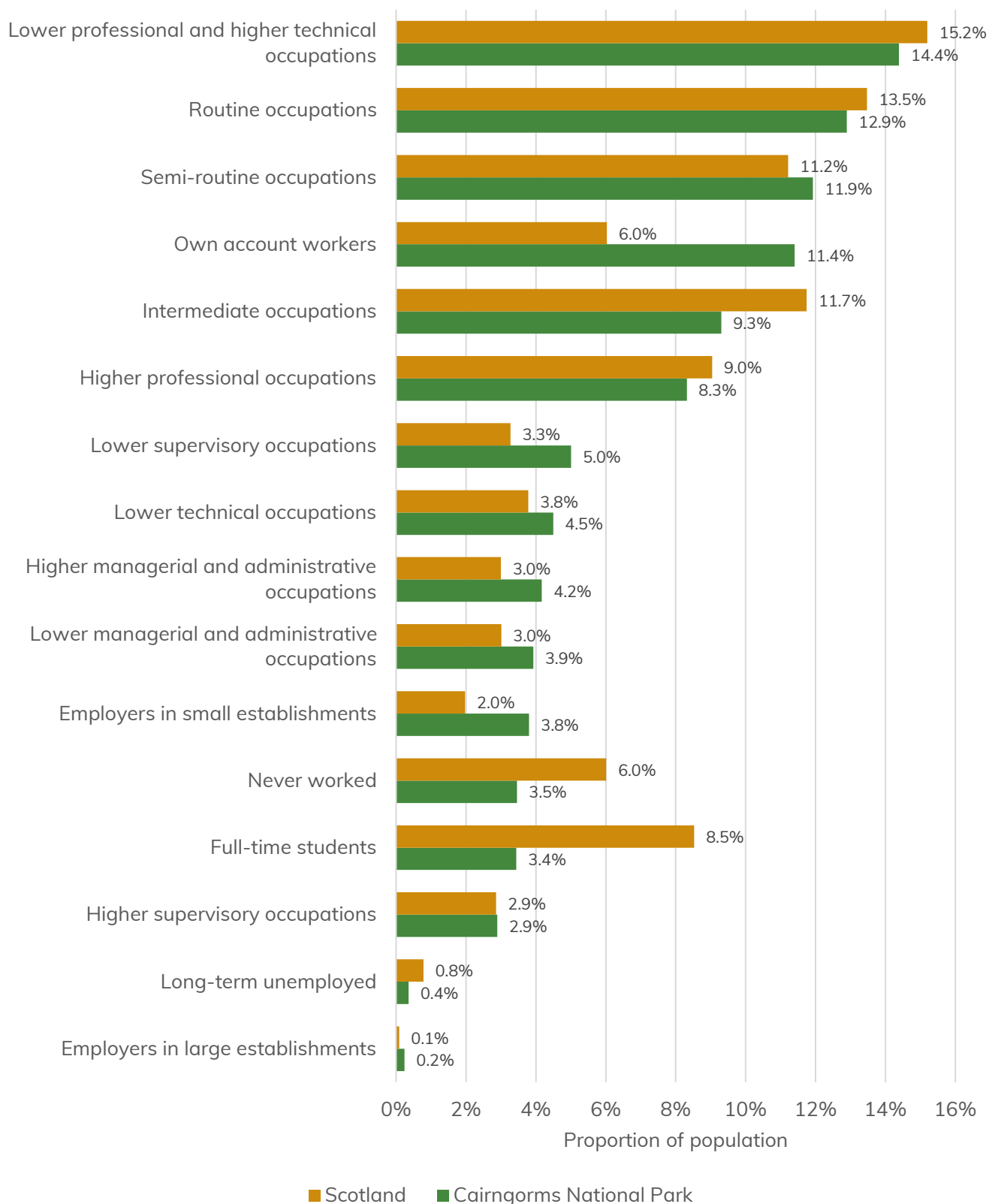


Figure 22 National Statistics Socio-economic classification (NS-SEC) of the population aged 16 years and over in the Cairngorms National Park and Scotland in 2022 (Source: Census 2022 table UV607).



Employment projections

Forecasts prepared for the Cairngorms National Park by Oxford Economics (2022) provide an indication of the direction of change in employment in key sectors in the National Park. The projections are from 2015 to 2032, and data is provided reporting on the med-term (2022 – 2025) and long-term change (2025 – 2032). It should be noted that the forecasts were produced before the Census data was released and as such are now established to not reflect the true position in 2022.

In the med-term (2022 – 2025) it is forecast that the largest growth sectors will be in the accommodation and food services and arts, entertainment and recreation increasing 7.3% and 7.0% respectively (equating to an estimated growth in around 200 overall positions, split between the two sectors). Over the longer term (2025 – 2032) growth in the accommodation sector is projected to slow to 4%, while the Arts, entertainment and recreation is expected to increase to 9.6% proportionally. Both of these sectors are integral to the Cairngorms National Park as a tourist destination.

The transportation and storage sector is projected to grow proportionally in the medium term by 4.7% but over the longer term is predicted to contract by 2.3%. Similarly, the wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles is projected to grow in the medium term but shrink over the longer term.

Significant proportional decreases are predicted for the mining and quarrying and manufacturing sectors in the medium term, increasing in the longer-term forecasts. However, it should be noted that due to the current low numbers of people employed in these sectors it is difficult to quantify the effect in terms of numbers of jobs in the Cairngorms National Park lost.

Note, new projections will be published in summer 2025 and these will inform the preparation of the Proposed Plan.



Employment projections by occupation

Mid-term projections 2022 – 2025

Figure 23 shows the percentage change in the proportion of occupations of people working in the National Park in the mid-term 2022 – 2025. The largest increase by occupation in the mid-term is forecast to be in the culture, media and sports occupations which are expected to increase by 9.4%. Other significant changes (with over 5% increases) include managers / and proprietors in agricultural services (+5.4%), textiles, printing and other skilled trades (+5.5%) and transport, mobile machine drivers and operatives (+5.6%).

In terms of absolute change in the number of people working in each occupation elementary occupations: specifically (clerical and service-related occupations) are forecast to increase by around 100 people, and managers, directors and senior officials are forecast to expand by around 100 people. In the mid-term the following sectors are forecast to decrease; protective service occupations (-4.5%), secretarial and related occupations (-0.9%) and teaching and research professionals (-0.8%).

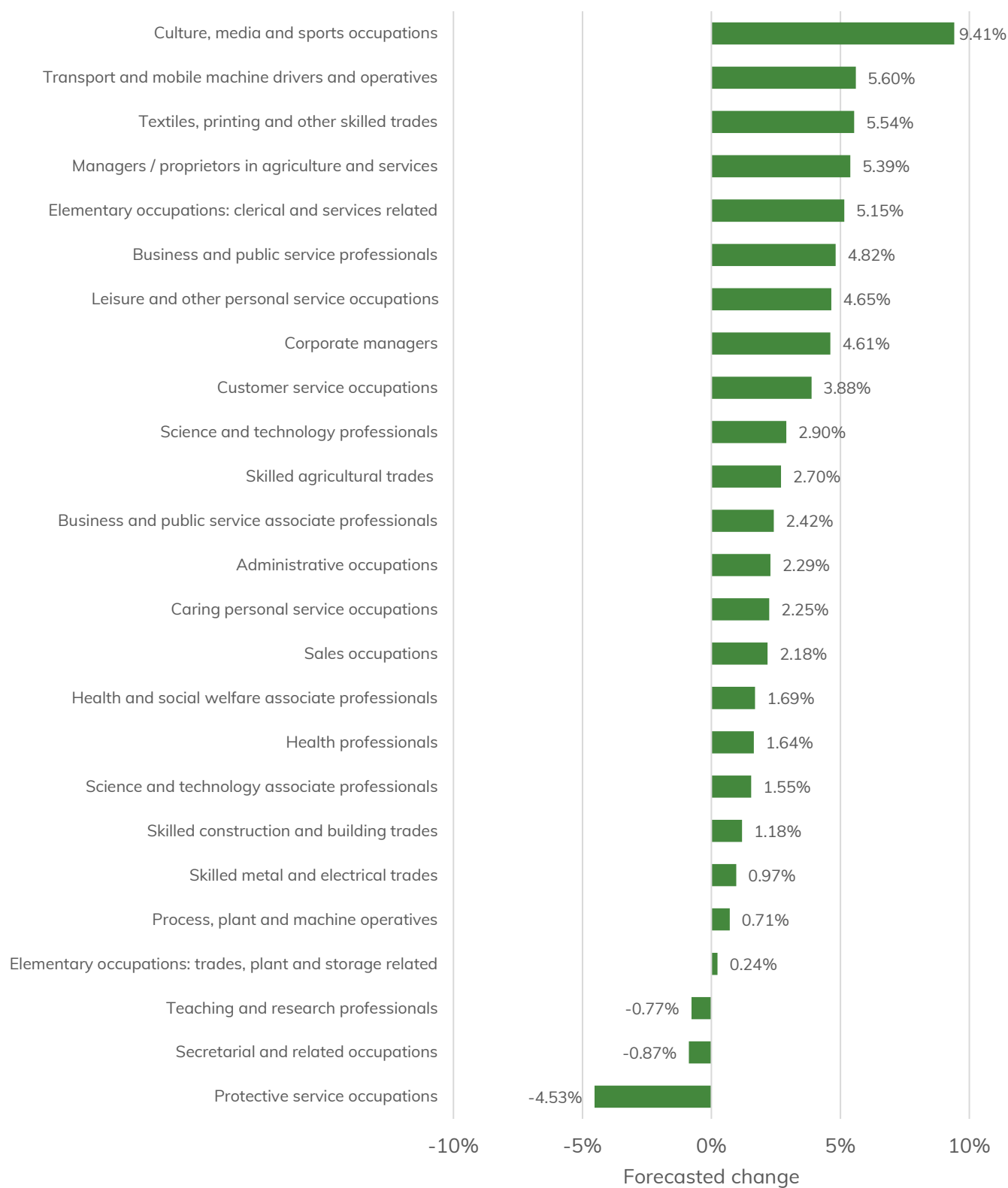


Figure 23 Forecast proportional change in the occupation of the people working in the Cairngorms National Park in the mid-term 2022 – 2025 (Source: Oxford Economics, 2022).



Long-term projections 2025 – 2032

Figure 24 shows the forecast percentage change in the proportion of occupations of people working in the National Park in the long-term 2025 – 2032. The largest change forecast in the long-term is expected to be seen in the culture, media, and sports occupations with a forecast increase in this occupation category of 15.5%. Other significant increases (above 5%) include caring personal service occupations (+5.7%), corporate managers (+5.4%) and health professionals (+5.1%).

Decreases are forecast for the protective service occupations (-8.5%) and secretarial and related occupations (-7.1%), with an absolute change in both occupations forecast to be zero people due to the low numbers of people already working in these occupations. Other occupations forecast to retract include:

- Teaching and research professionals (-1.3%).
- Science and Technology Associate professionals (-0.6%).
- Skilled metal and electrical trades (-2.4%).
- Sales occupations (-2.7%).
- Process, plant, and machine operatives (-1.7%).
- Elementary occupations, trades, plant, and storage related- (-2.3%).

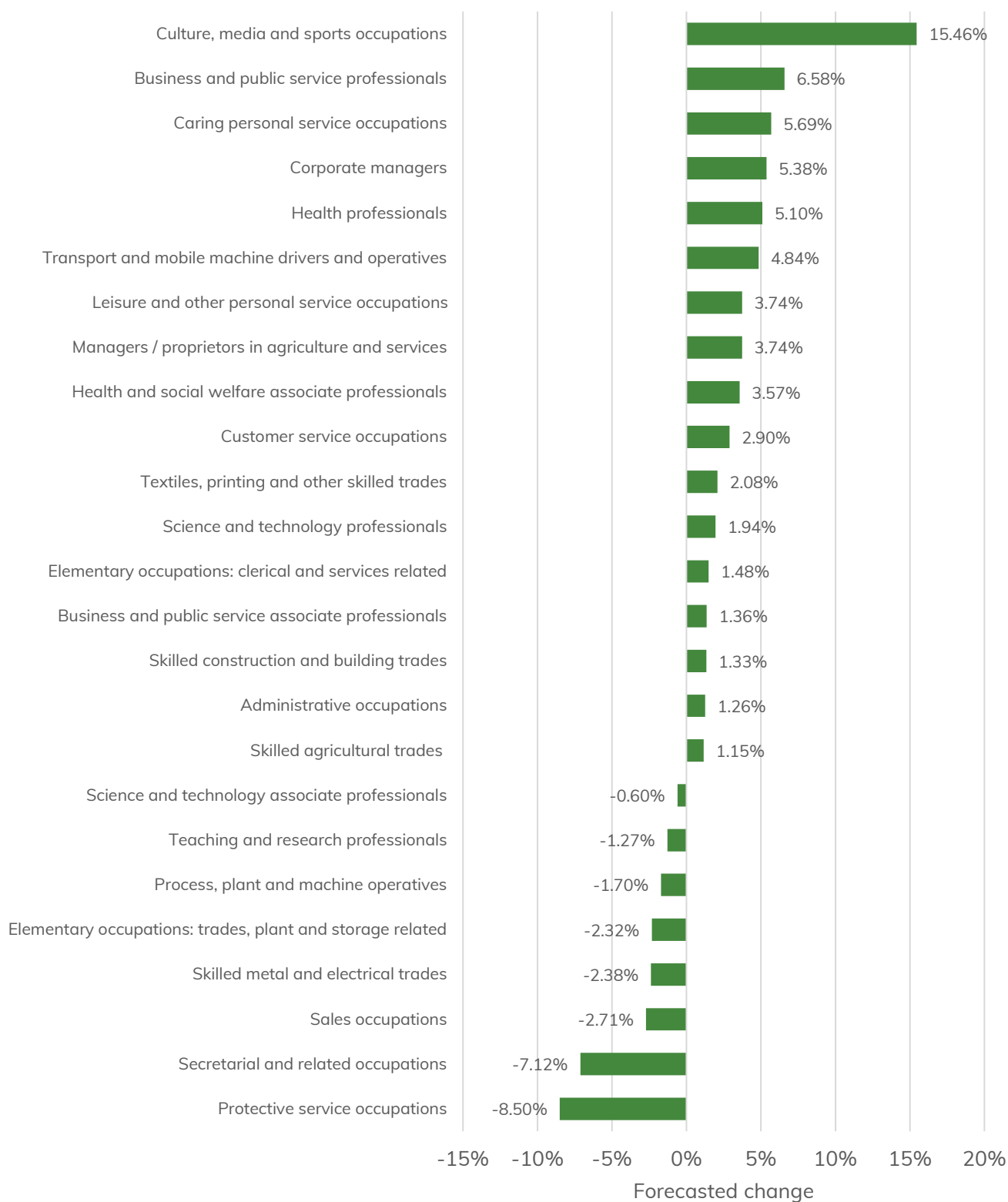


Figure 24 Forecast proportional change in the occupation of the people working in the Cairngorms National Park in the long-term 2025 – 2032 (Source: Oxford Economics, 2022).



In terms of absolute change in terms of people, it is forecast that the associate professional and technical occupations will increase by around 100 people. The data does not provide figures for the absolute change in terms of people in other occupations, due to the low numbers of people employed.

Total labour market requirements

The employment data provided by Oxford Economics also provides forecasts of total market requirement in the mid-term (2022 – 2025) and long-term (2025 – 2030) for the Cairngorms National Park. This is based on the current and forecast need created by the various estimated sectoral expansions or retractions in conjunction with estimates for people exiting the labour market. The latter can happen for a number of reasons, including but not limited to, retirement, out migration or a change in domestic situations. This leads to the replacement requirement. It is worth noting that all figures quoted for numbers of people are limited figures rounded to the nearest 100, which makes interpreting the data for minor category occupations difficult due to the low numbers of people in them.

Forecast 2022 – 2025

In the mid-term (2022 – 2025), it is forecasted that approximately 1,200 people will be required to fulfil the total requirement of occupations in the Cairngorms National Park. This is calculated be around 900 people required to fill existing or forthcoming vacant positions (replacement requirement) and a further 200 to fill positions as a result of market expansion. A limited number of the sectors in the National Park are forecast to require additional labour. The largest increase will be in elementary occupations (specifically clerical and service-related occupations) which is forecast to require an additional 300 people (Figure 25).

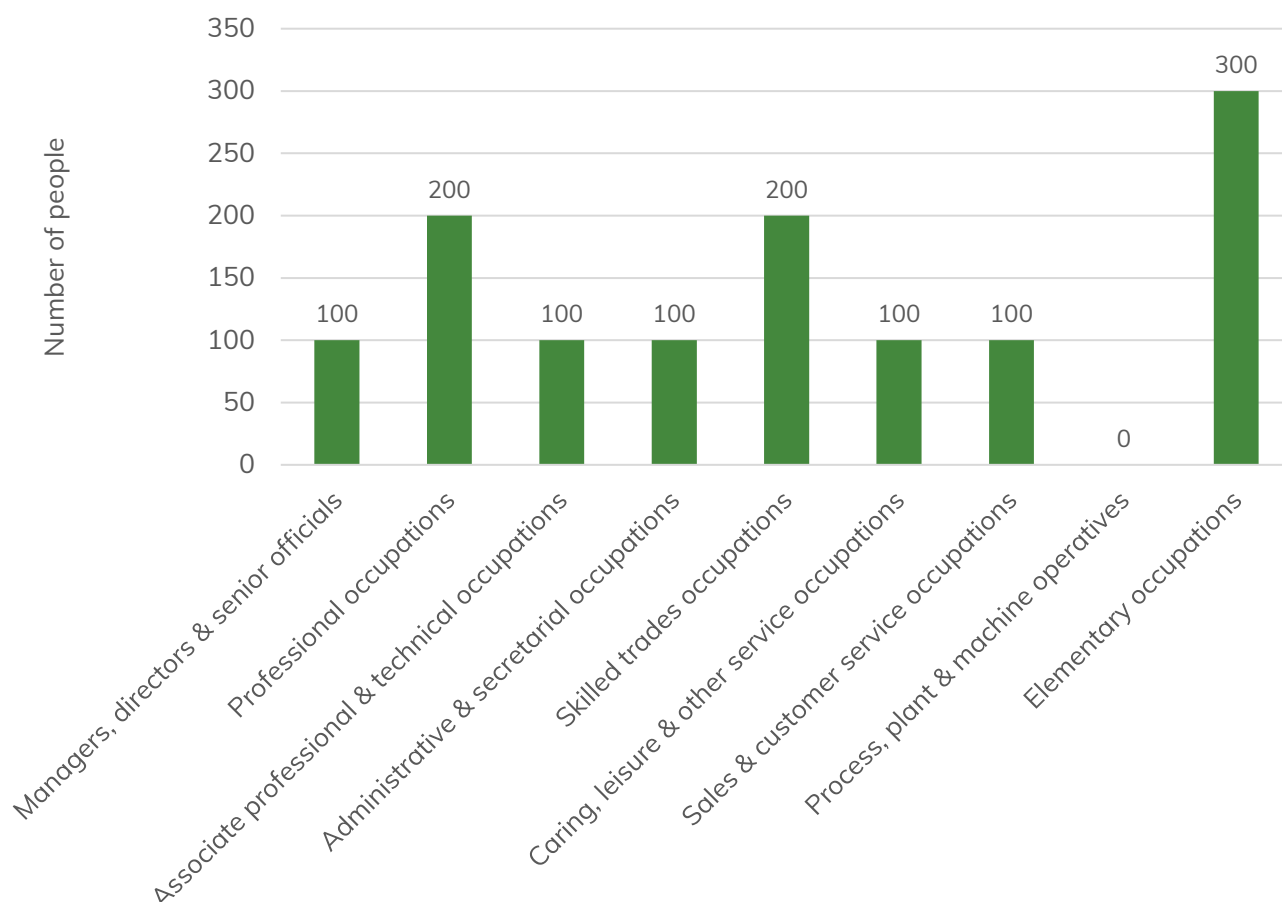


Figure 25 Total requirement of people by occupation (major categories) for the period 2022-2025 in the Cairngorms National Park (Oxford Economics, 2022).

In the mid-term the requirement by expansion is expected to be around 300 people, with around 100 people required in manager, director and senior official positions, and 100 in elementary occupations. The demand generated by replacement shows significant increase in the absolute change by people required to fill elementary positions (+300 people). Around 200 people will be required to by replacement for professional occupations, and around 100 people will be required in the following occupations: managers, directors, and senior officials, associate professional and technical occupations, administrative and secretarial occupations, skill trades, caring, leisure and other services and sales and customer service occupations. No requirement by replacement is forecast to be required in the process, plant, and machine operatives' occupations.

Forecast 2025 – 2032

In the long-term (2025 – 2032), it is forecasted that approximately 2,500 people will be required to fulfil the total requirement of occupations in the Cairngorms National Park



(Figure 26). This is calculated by 2,300 people required to fill existing or forthcoming vacant positions (replacement requirement) and a further 200 to fill positions as a result of market expansion. Over the long-term a larger range of sectors in the National Park are forecast to require additional labour. The largest increase remains the elementary occupations which is forecast to require an additional 600. Figure 27 shows the total replacement by occupation for the mid-term in the National Park.

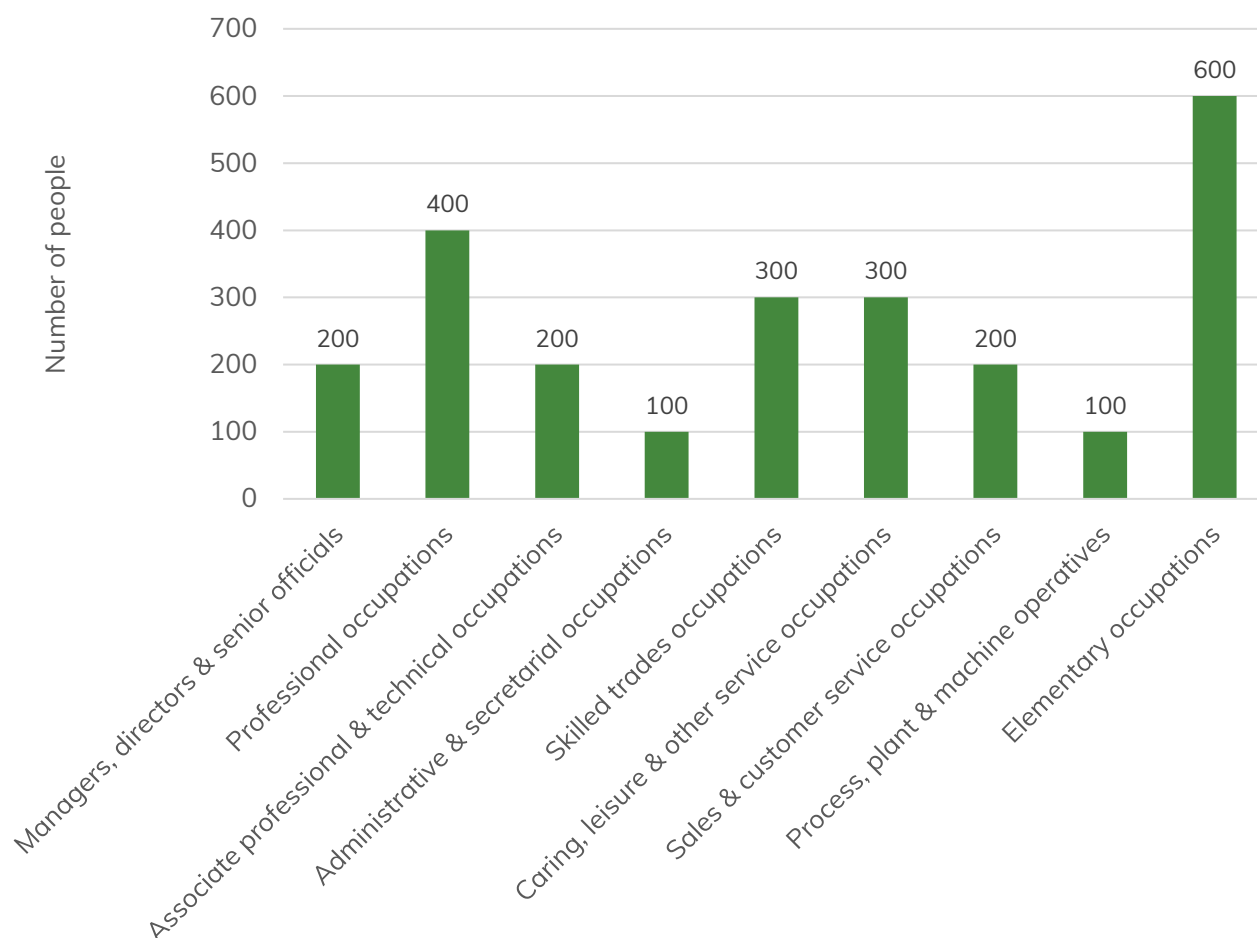


Figure 26 Total requirement of people by occupation (major categories) for the period 2025-2032 In the Cairngorms National Park (Oxford Economics, 2022).

In the long-term the expansion demand in the Cairngorms National Park will be mainly in the associate professional and technical occupations which will require an additional 100 people. It is not possible to identify where the remaining expansion will be required due to the low numbers of people required in each occupation.

In terms of replacement by demand, in the long-term all the major categorised occupations will require additional people. Elementary occupations will require an additional 600 people, and professional occupations will require an additional 400 people).

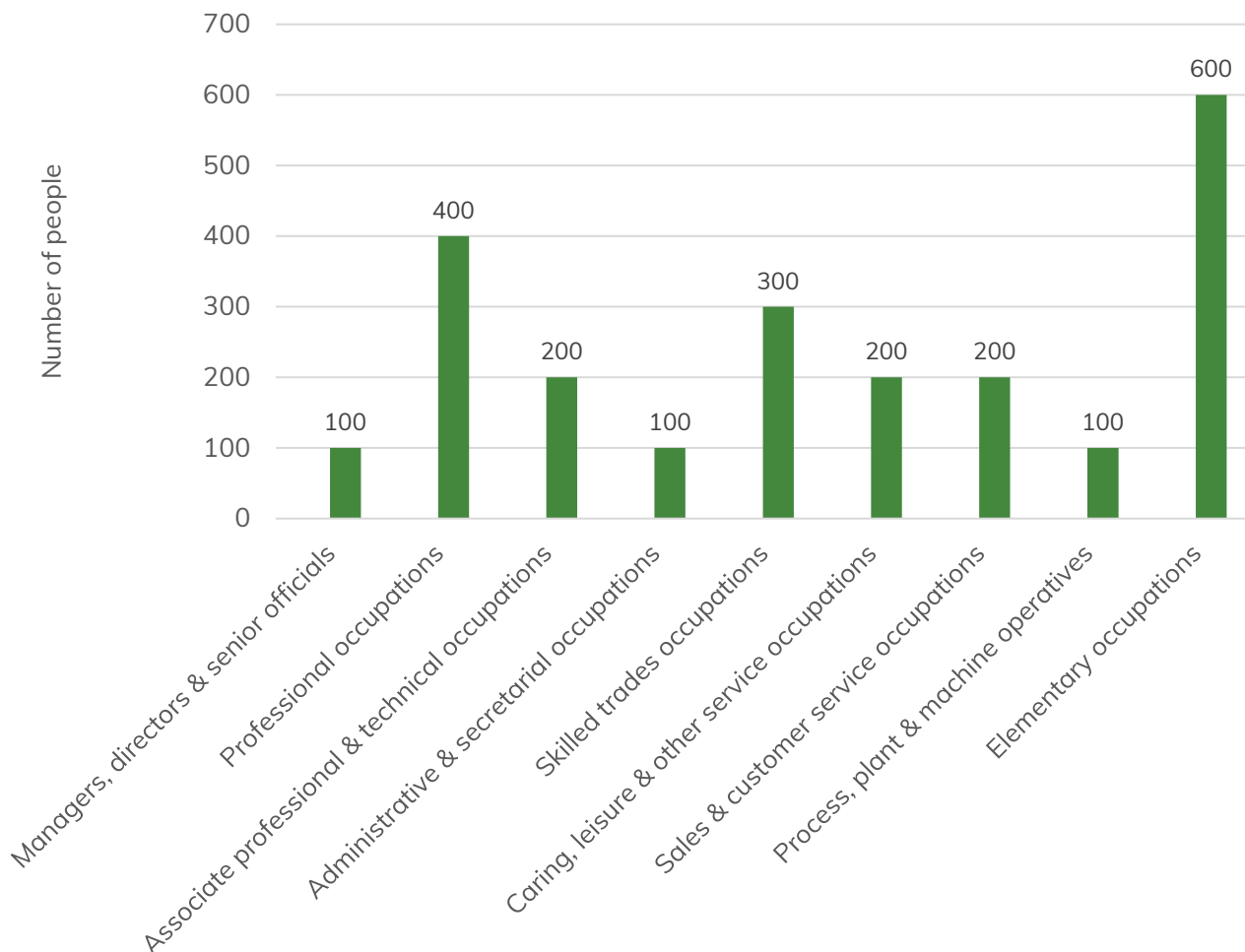


Figure 27 The forecast replacement demand (major categories) by occupation in the Cairngorms National Park for the period 2025-2032 (Oxford Economics, 2022).

When discussing the forecasted replacement demand in the Cairngorms National Park in the long-term it is useful to look at the minor (sub) categories for more clarity on the specific occupations that will be required (Figure 28). At this level the data reports that around 600 of the elementary occupations required will be clerical and service-related occupations. Teaching and research professionals, textiles, printing and other skilled trades, and sales occupations will all require around 200 additional people.

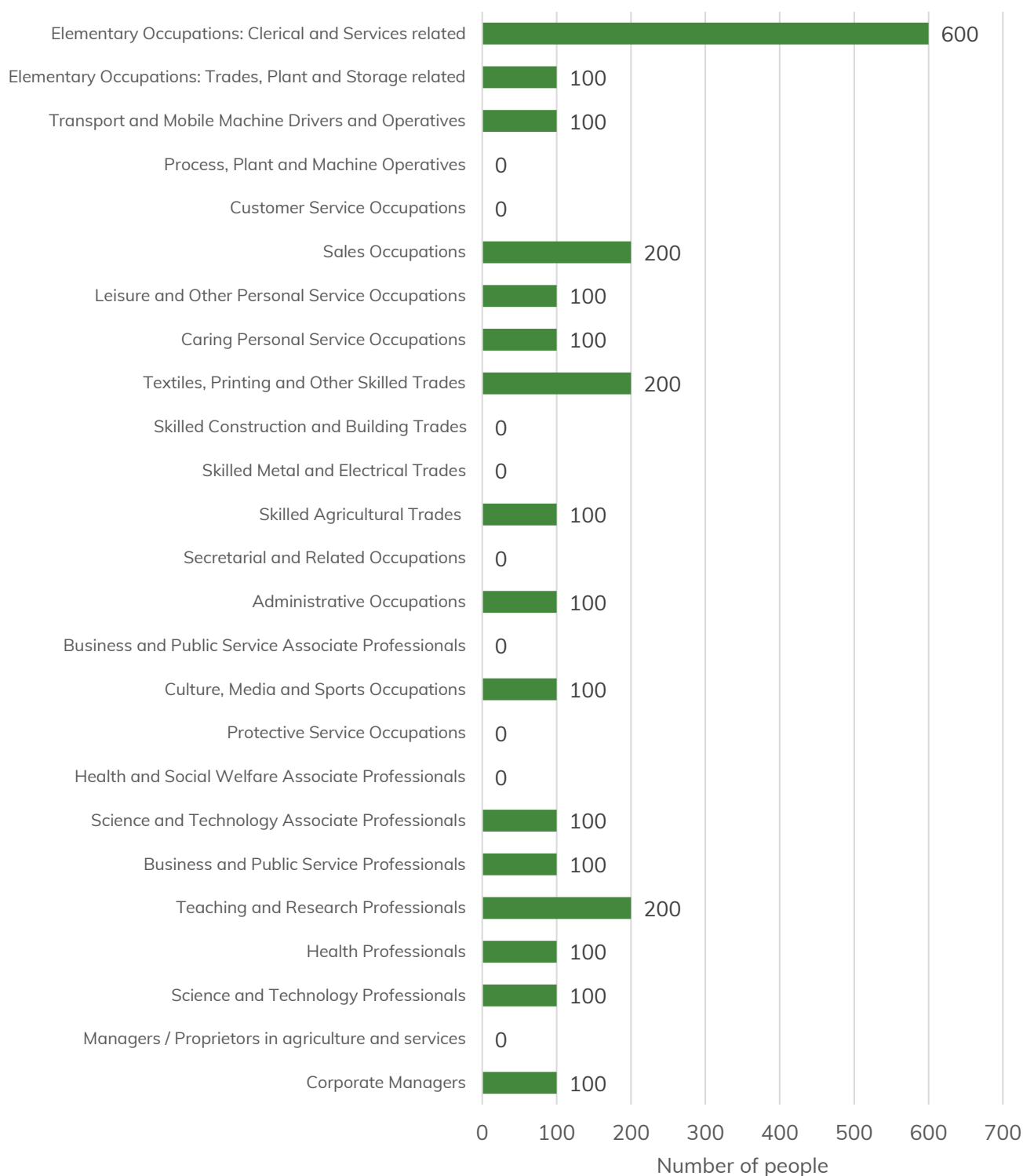


Figure 28 The forecast replacement demand (subcategories) by occupation in the Cairngorms National Park for the period 2025-2032 (Oxford Economics, 2022).



Economically inactive population

In 2022, 38.4% of the population of the National Park over the age of 16 years were estimated to be economically inactive (Census table UV601). This is slightly below the national proportion of 39.1%. Of those, 76.3% were recorded as being retired, which is significantly above the national average figure of 59.6% (Census table UV601 and Figure 29).

In 2022, there was a lower proportion of the economically inactive population in the Cairngorms National Park who were students (5.1%), compared to the national average (12.4%) (Figure 29). This may in part be explained by the absence of higher education institutions in the National Park, and may also be due to the students being at their term time addresses during the Census and not being recorded as usual residents in the National Park.

In 2022, the proportion of the economically inactive population who were recorded as long-term sick, or disabled was also significantly lower in the Cairngorms National Park (6.9%) compared to the national average (13.3%) (Figure 29). The proportion of the economically inactive population who were recorded as looking after home / family was also lower in the National Park (6.7%) compared to the national average (8.8%) (Figure 29).

In terms of the number of people, in 2022 in the Cairngorms National Park there was estimated to be 297 students and 4,420 retired people who were economically inactive (Census table UV601).

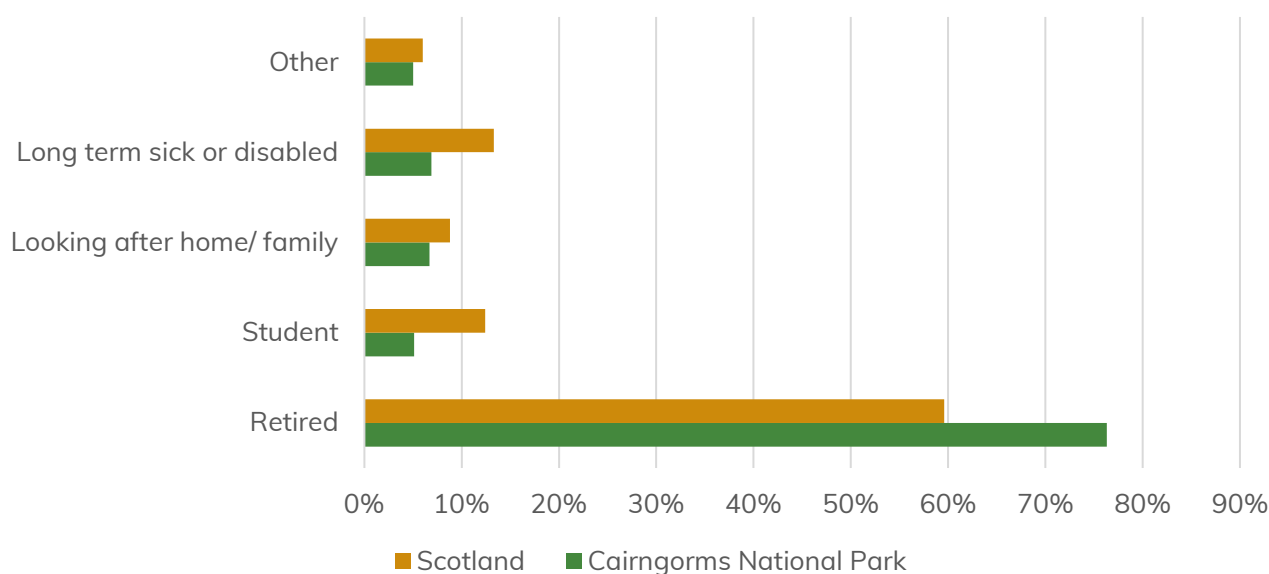


Figure 29 Proportional activity of the economically inactive population only aged 16 years and over (including full-time students) in the Cairngorms National Park and Scotland in 2022. Census table UV601.

Figure 30 shows a comparison between the proportions of retired, students and other economically inactive people in the Cairngorms National Park and Scotland in 2011 and 2022. The proportion of economically inactive retired people has slightly increased from 75.1% in 2011 to 76.3% in 2022. This does not reflect national trends, where the proportion of people who were recorded as retired in 2022 decreased from 59.9% in 2011 to 59.6% in 2022.

The proportion of the economically inactive population in the Cairngorms National Park who were students has decreased from 6.2% in 2011 to 5.1% in 2022 (Figure 30). A decrease is also noted in the national figures for the proportion of the economically inactive population who were students nationally falling from 13.5% in 2011 to 12.4% in 2022 (Figure 30).

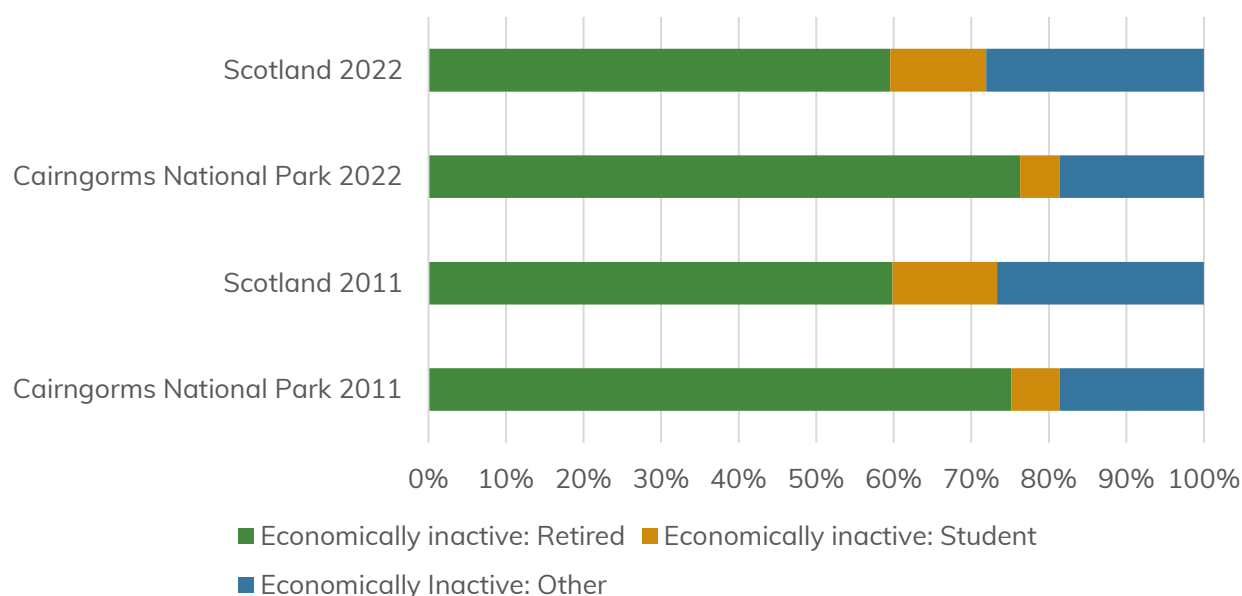


Figure 30 Activity of the economically inactive population only aged 16 years and in the Cairngorms National Park and Scotland in 2011 and 2022. Census table UV601 and Census table LC6107SC.

Economic productivity

Gross Value Added (GVA) is an economic productivity metric that provides a monetary value for the goods and services produced in an area. As with Gross Domestic Product (GDP), its contribution to wellbeing is contested, however it does provide one indicator of economic vitality. In 2022, a report by Oxford Economics (the most recent available data as of April 2025) offers an insight into the annual (forecast) Gross Value Added figures for the Cairngorms National Park, in addition to a breakdown of the annual sectorial contribution.

Figure 31 shows the total forecast for the Gross Value Added figures of all sectors in the Cairngorms National Park from 2015 to 2032 (based on the sum of the value of goods produced by each sector). In 2025 the Gross Value Added of the National Park was forecast to be worth £426.14m which represents a 2.25% decrease from the 2015 value of £435.94m. This may, in part, be attributed to the effects and slow recovery from the Covid-19 Pandemic which caused the Gross Value Added in the National Park to fall to its lowest recorded forecast level during the 2015 – 2023 period (£358.75m in 2020).



Figure 31 Total forecast Gross Value Added for the Cairngorms National Park 2015 – 2032 (based on 2019 prices) (Source: Oxford Economics, 2022).

Looking forward, the forecast from Oxford Economics provides an indication of how the total Gross Value Added in the Cairngorms National Park might perform over both the mid-term (2022 – 2025) and longer term (2025 – 2032). In the mid-term the Gross Value Added for the National Park is forecast to grow by 4.1% representing an additional £16.92m in terms of absolute change. Over the long-term, between 2025-2032 the Gross Value Added is expected to grow by 9.7% representing an increase in the Gross Value Added of £41.25m in terms of absolute change.

Data has also been provided showing the sectorial contribution to the Gross Value Added for industries present in the Cairngorms National Park (Figure 32). The largest contributing industry in 2025 is forecast to be real estate activities which contributing approximately 21.3% (£90.98m) of the total Gross Value Added. Other significant contributions are from accommodation and food service activities; 14.8% (£63.24m) and wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles; 11.4% (£48.46m).

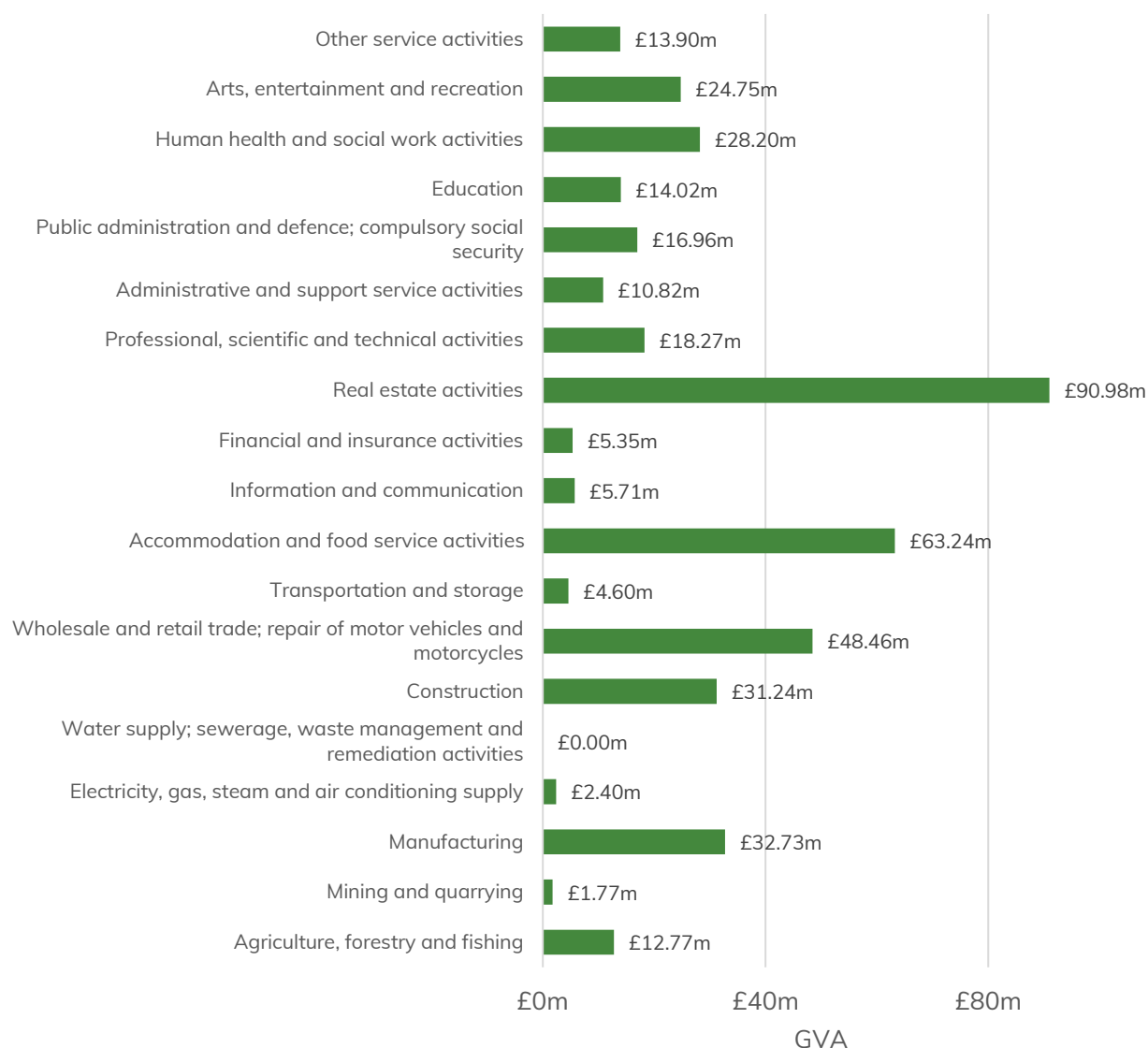


Figure 32 Sectorial forecast contribution to the total Gross Value Added by industry in the Cairngorms National Park in 2025 (Source: Oxford Economics, 2022).

Although Figure 32 gives a useful snapshot of the current forecasted Gross Value Added make-up in terms of industry contribution in 2025. Oxford Economics have provided forecast data from 2015 to 2032 which offers an insight into the longer-term trends within the various sectors in terms of growth or decline in the Gross Value Added figures. The data also provides forecasts for the performance of Gross Value Added by sector in the mid-term (2022 – 2025) and long-term (2025 – 2032) both of which will be looked at in this paper.



Mid-term change 2022 – 2025

Figure 33 shows the mid-term change forecasts for the Gross Added Value of different industries in the Cairngorms National Park. This shows that from 2022 to 2025 the largest sectors that were forecasted to grow were other service activities (+9.1%), professional, scientific and technical services (+7.6%) and information and communication (+7.4%).

Looking at the absolute change (Figure 34) in terms of financial impact of forecasted sectorial growth the largest contributors in the mid-term are real estate activities (+£4.06m, representing a 4.7% increase), accommodation and food service activities (+£3.03m representing a 5.0% increase) and construction (+£2.0m representing a 6.8% increase). The net increase in the mid-term in terms of combined Gross Added Value was forecasted to be £16.92m.

The largest proportional decrease in sectors in terms of the Gross Value Added is forecast to be mining and quarrying (-7.7% representing a loss of £150k between 2022 and 2025). The only other sector forecast to decline proportionally over the mid-term in terms of the Gross Value Added is administrative and support service activities (-0.5% representing a loss of £80k).

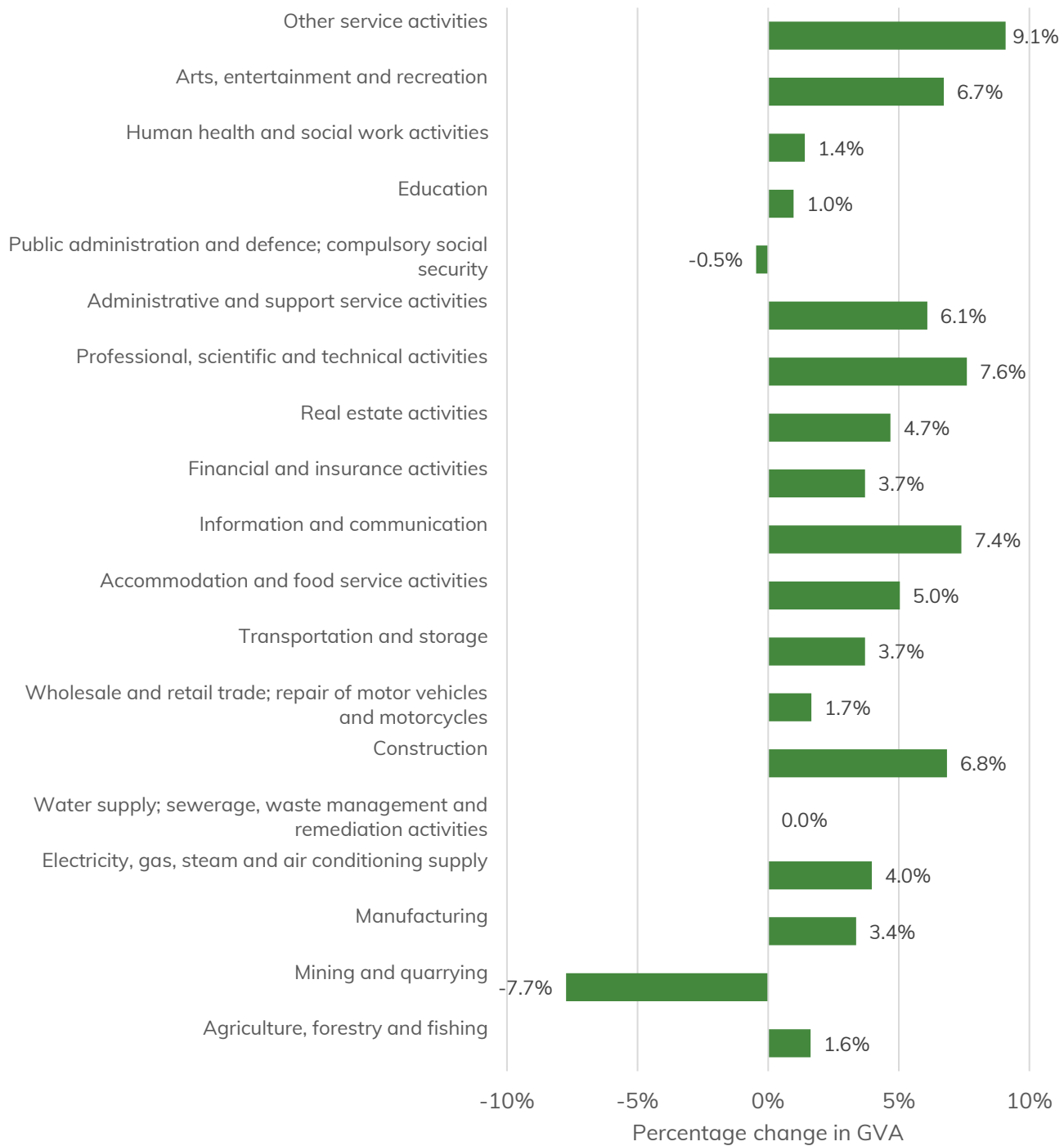


Figure 33 Forecasted change (%) in the Gross Added Value by industry mid-term 2022 – 2025 in the Cairngorms National Park. Oxford Economics 2022.

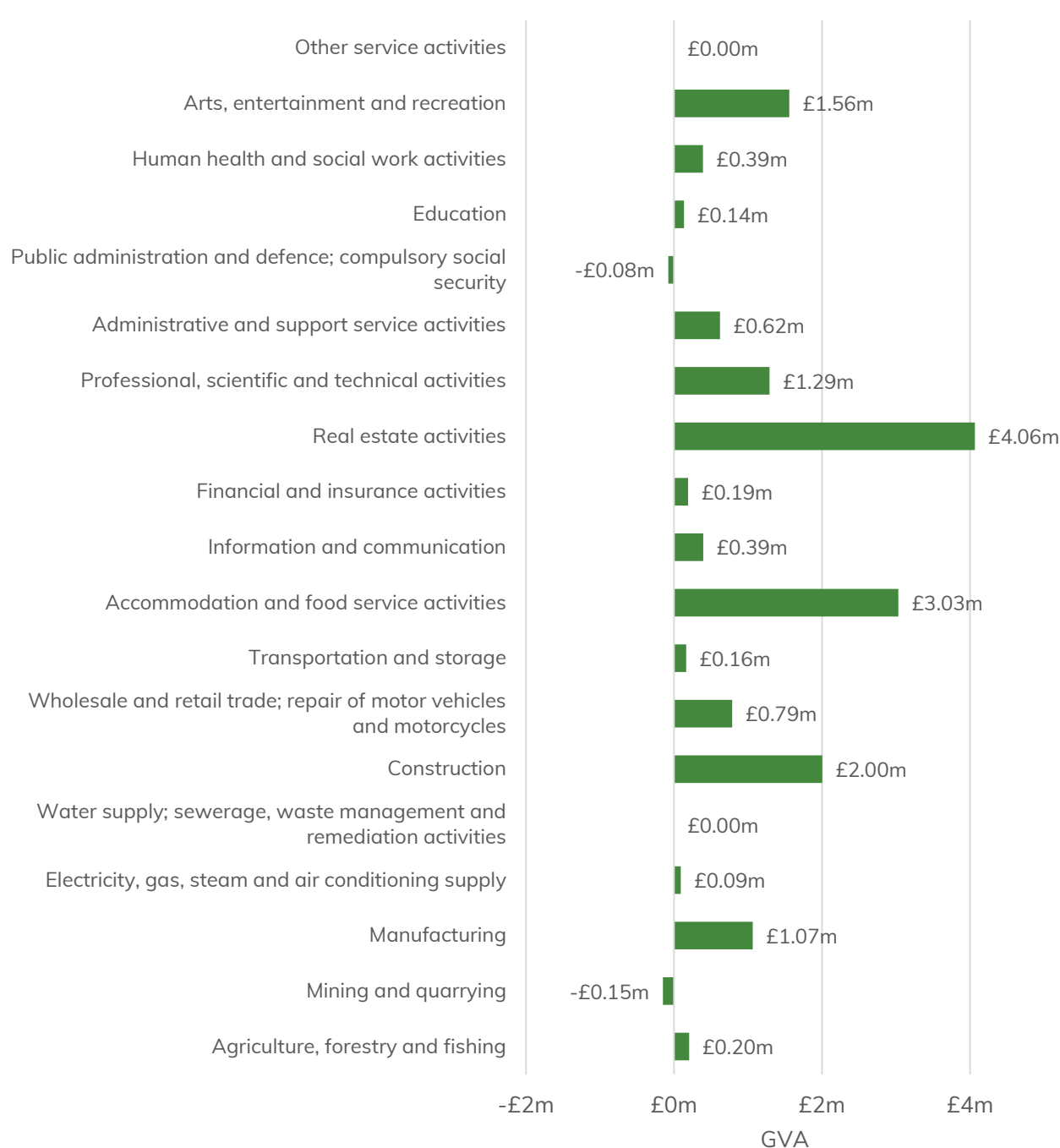


Figure 34 Forecasted absolute change (£) in the Gross Added Value by industry mid-term 2022 – 2025 in the Cairngorms National Park. Oxford Economics 2022.

Long-term change 2025 – 2032

In the longer term, proportionally the largest forecasted increase in the Gross Value Added is expected to be in the information and communication sector which is forecast to increase by 19.4% (Figure 35), however due to the low starting Gross Value Added value this only represents an increase of £1.11m between 2025 – 2032 (Figure 36).



In terms of forecasted absolute change (Figure 36), real estate activities will have the largest impact on increasing the Gross Value Added in the Cairngorms National Park between 2025 - 2032, a growth in Gross Value Added of £13.30m. Over the long-term, accommodation and food services activities Gross Value Added is forecasted to increase by £7.51m increasing 11.9% for the period (Figure 35 and Figure 36).

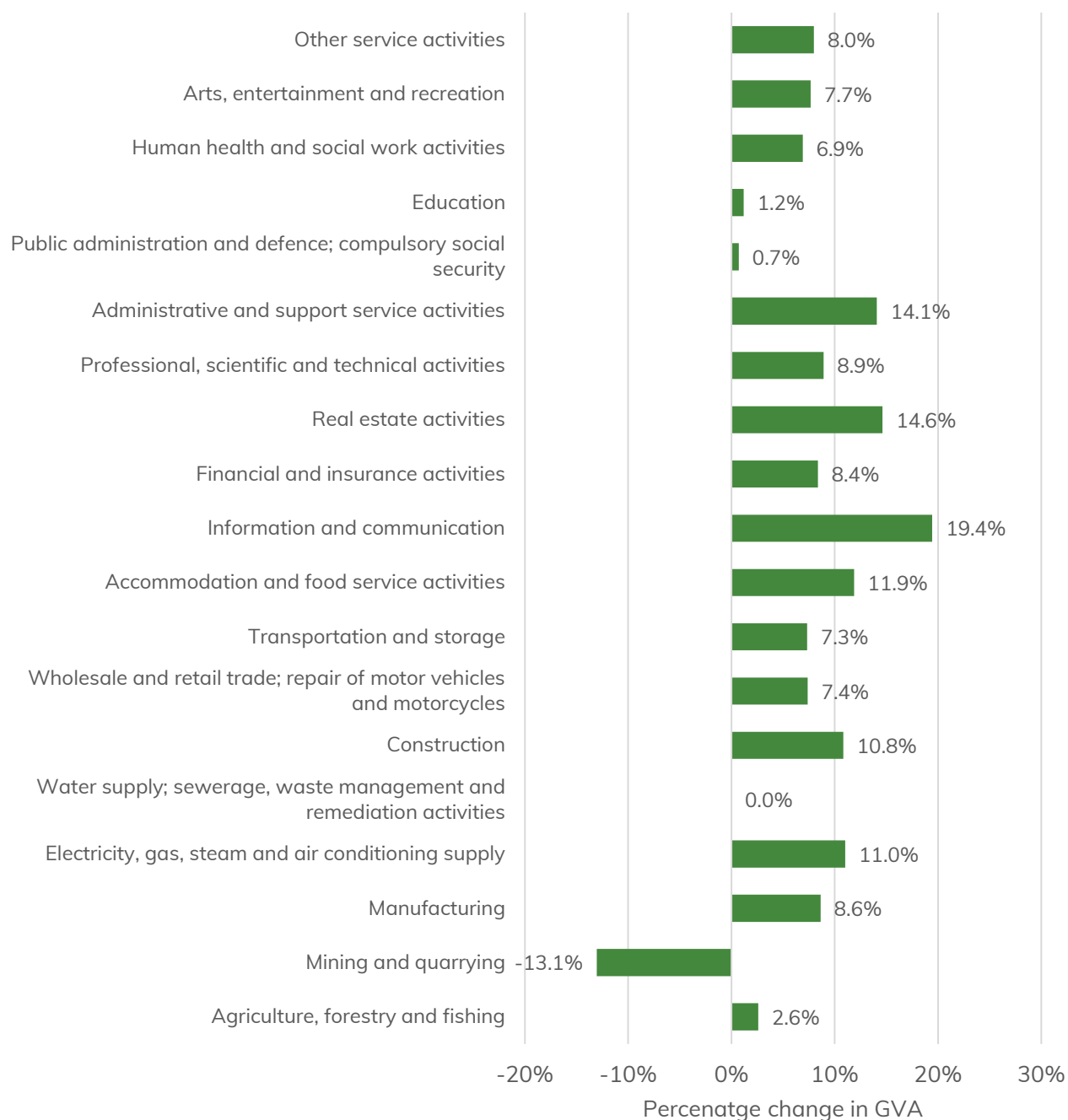


Figure 35 Forecasted change (%) in the Gross Added Value by industry long-term 2025 – 2032 in the Cairngorms National Park. Oxford Economics 2022.

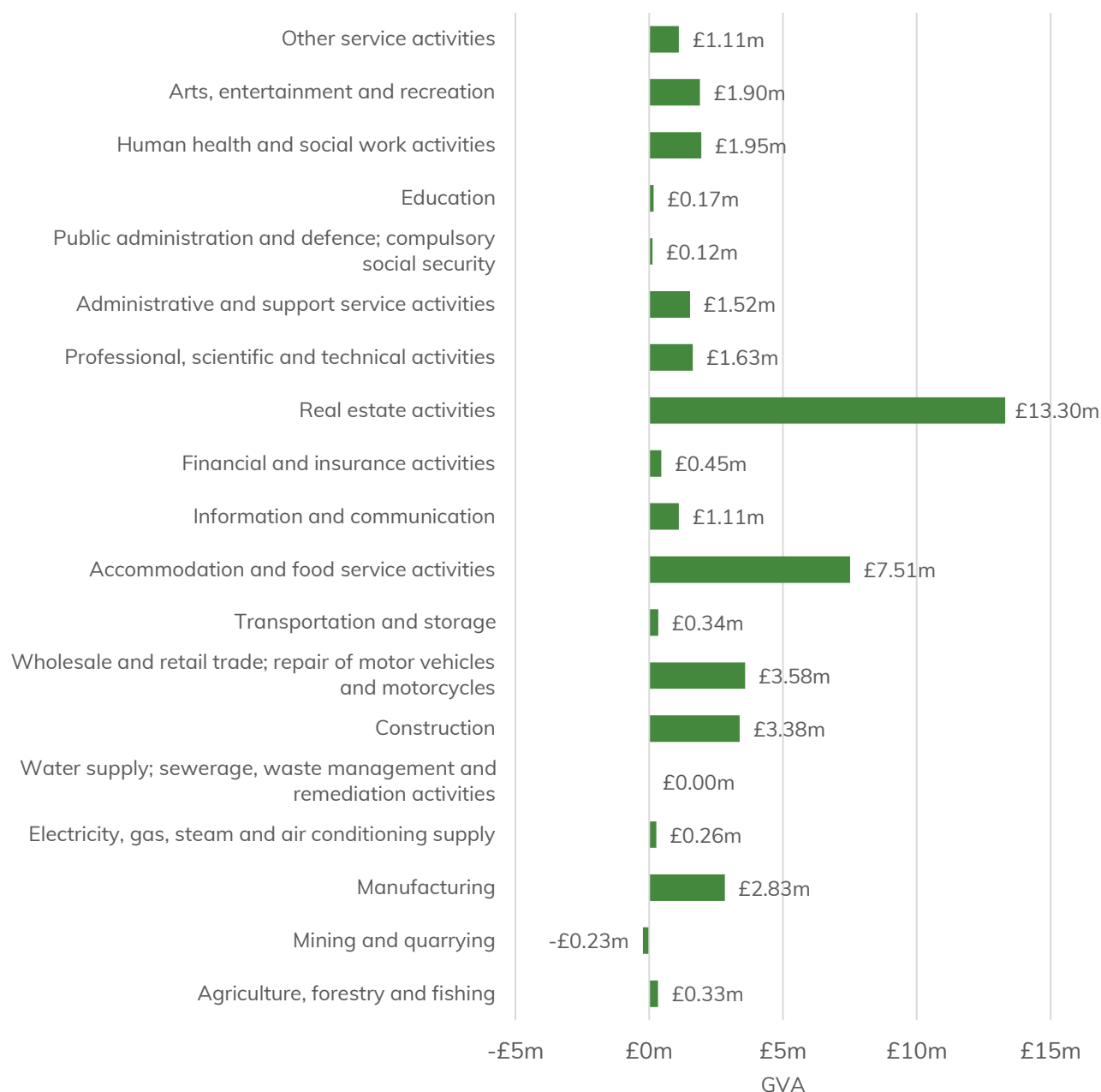


Figure 36 Forecasted absolute change (£) in the Gross Added Value by industry long-term 2025 – 2032 in the Cairngorms National Park. Oxford Economics 2022.

The largest five sectors in terms of forecasted contribution to the Gross Value Added in the Cairngorms National Park are real estate, accommodation and food service activities, wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicle and motorcycles, manufacturing and human health and social work activities (Figure 37).

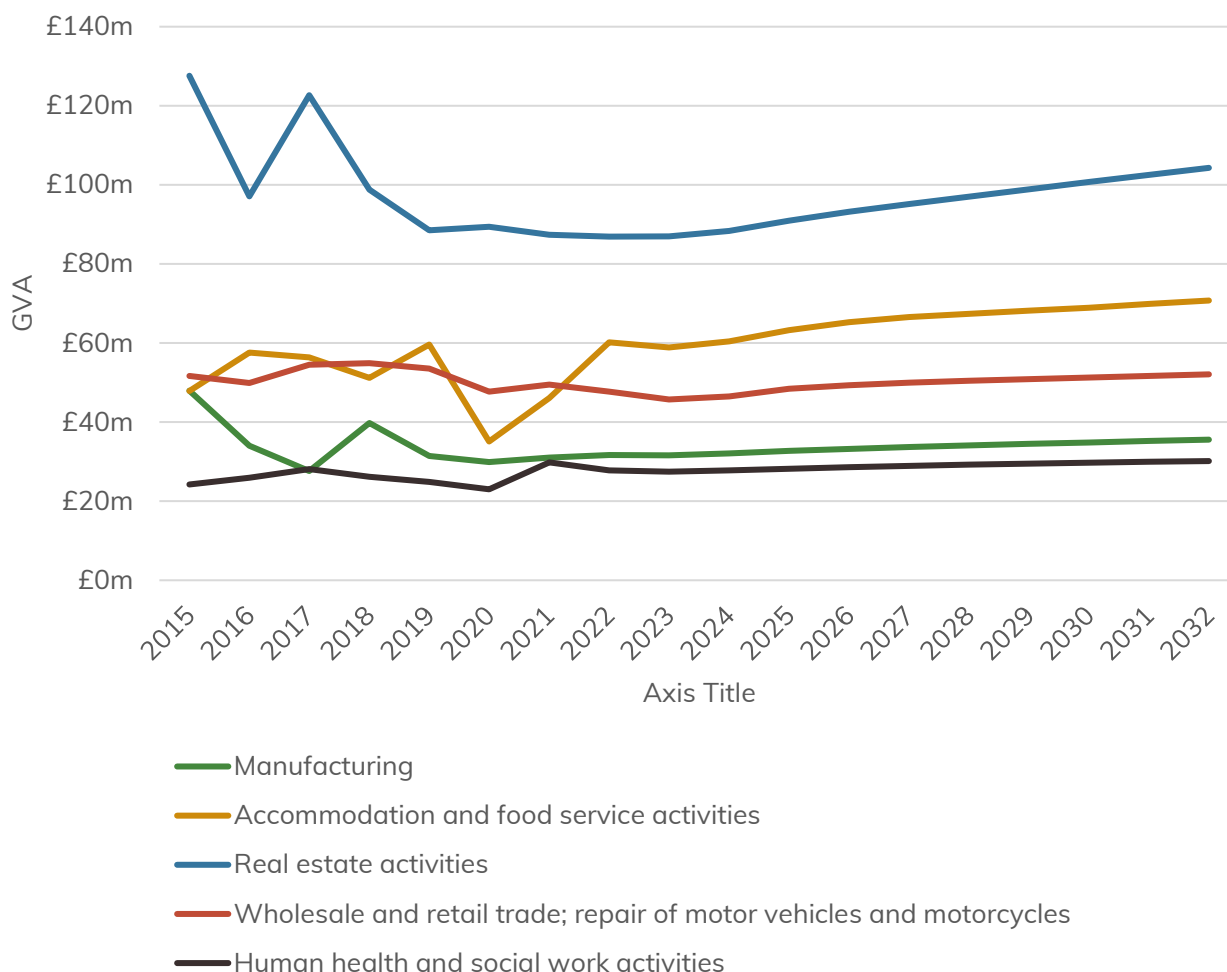


Figure 37 Forecasted Gross Value Added by sector for the five largest industries in the Cairngorms National Park 2015-2032 (Oxford Economics, 2022).

Business activity

Estimates of the number of VAT / PAYE²¹ registered private sector businesses (stocks²²) operating in Scotland are compiled by Business Scotland. Data is available at an Intermediate Zone level, from which an estimate for the National Park can be derived. The data which provided estimates up until 2022, was last updated in March 2024 and at present is the most up to date data available.

²¹ Value Added Tax / Pay as you earn.

²² A business (business stock) can be defined as the smallest combination of legal units (generally based on VAT and / or PAYE records) that is an organisational unit producing goods or services, which benefits from a certain degree of autonomy in decision-making, especially for the allocation of its current resources. Note a business carries out one or more activities at one or more locations.

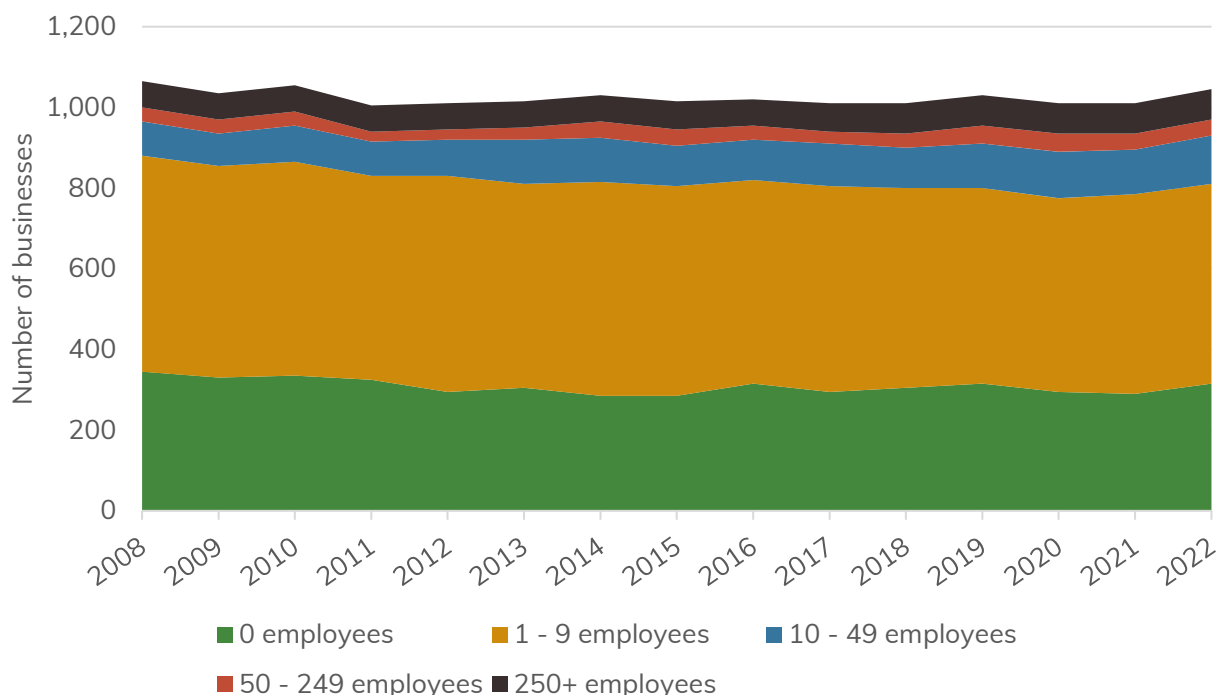


Figure 38 Number of registered businesses (stocks) in the Intermediate zones used as a proxy for the geography of the Cairngorms National Park by employee size band 2008 to 2022. (<https://statistics.gov.scot>)²³.

In 2022, it was estimated that there were approximately 1,045²⁴ registered businesses operating within the Cairngorms National Park. The majority of these, around 78%, were either self-employed proprietors with no employees or companies employing fewer than 10 people. A time series going back to 2008 shows that the number of registered businesses has remained relatively stable. Overall, there was a small drop in the total number of registered businesses over this time period, with a drop in the number of small business and a small increase in the number of businesses employing 10 or more people (Figure 38).

It should be noted that data on unregistered businesses is not available.

²³ These estimates are derived from Scottish Government's Intermediate Zones. Only Intermediate Zones covering the Highland and Aberdeenshire parts of the National Park have population weighted centroids within the National Park boundary. Therefore, the estimates do not include the Angus, Moray, Perth and Kinross areas of the National Park due to the lack of a suitable geography.

²⁴ Business counts are rounded to the nearest five.



Employment land

The adopted Local Development Plan (2021) allocates land for future economic development as well for the protection and support of existing businesses uses. These allocations accommodate a range of uses, including office, light industrial, tourism and mixed uses. The sites are monitored annually through the Local Development Plan Delivery Programme. The most recent Delivery Programme was published in March 2025.

Land allocated, in the Local Development Plan 2021, principally for Class 4, 5 and 6²⁵ uses totals 55.8 ha (Table 2). In addition, the Local Development Plan has 33.7 hectares of mixed-use land, which may include economic development, and 139 hectares of land for tourism and visitor infrastructure allocated²⁶. Cumulatively, this land equates to 228.5ha.

Table 2 Total allocated in the Local Development Plan for solely financial, professional and other services, business; general industrial and storage or distribution uses as defined by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997. (Cairngorms National Park Authority Employment Land Audit, 2025)

Settlement	Site reference	Use	Area (ha)	Undeveloped (ha)
Aviemore	ED1	Dalfaber Industrial Estate	5.9	0.7
Aviemore	ED2	Myrtlefield Industrial Estate	1.2	0
Aviemore	ED3	Granish	16.8	6.1
Ballater	ED1	Ballater Business Park	0.6	0
Grantown-On-Spey	ED1	Woodlands Industrial Estate	7.4	0.4
Kingussie	ED1	Council Depot	2.5	0
Kingussie	ED2	McCormacks Garage	0.1	0
Newtonmore	ED1	Rear of Cafe	1.3	0.8
Newtonmore	ED2	Industrial Park	4.2	1.2
Blair Atholl	ED1	Blair Atholl Sawmill Yard	3.5	0
Boat of Garten	ED1	Steam Railway Station	2.7	0
Braemar	ED1	The Ambulance Station	0.1	0.1
Braemar	ED2	The Mews	0.3	0
Carrbridge	ED1	Land at Railway Station	0.8	0.8
Carrbridge	ED2	Carr-bridge Garage	0.3	0

²⁵ Use classes as defined by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997: Class 4. Business; Class 5. General industrial; Class 6. Storage or distribution.

²⁶ Information about land allocated for tourism and visitor infrastructure use is provided in the Visitor Infrastructure topic paper.



Settlement	Site reference	Use	Area (ha)	Undeveloped (ha)
Carrbridge	ED3	Former Sawmill	3.7	3.7
Cromdale	ED1	Rosebank Cottage and surrounding land	0.3	0.3
Dunlain Bridge	ED1	Dulnain Garage	0.1	0
Kincraig	ED1	Baldow Smiddy	0.3	0
Tomintoul	ED1	Garage to North East	0.7	0.4
Tomintoul	ED2	Land by A939	1.2	0.6
Dalwhinnie	ED1	Garage Site	0.3	0
Dinnet	ED1	Former Steading	1.5	0.2

Employment land audit

The Park Authority carried out an employment land audit in May 2025 to support the Evidence Report. A summary of the report, reflecting the whole National Park area, has been included here. Further information and more detailed information on sites and settlements is included in the full employment land audit:

- <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Cairngorms-National-Park-Employment-Land-Audit-2025.pdf>

The Employment Land Audit acknowledges that there is a lack of data available in terms of constraints on the sites contained in this study. A more detailed and up-to-date analysis of site constraints will need to be undertaken. This will be undertaken as part of the review of the existing Local Development Plan 2021 allocations during the preparation of the proposed plan.

Land availability

As noted in the previous section land allocated in the Local Development Plan principally for Class 4, 5 and 6²⁷ uses totals 55.8 ha. The audit also included two additional sites which were surveyed and included. These are the Achnagonalin Industrial Estate (4.2ha), near Grantown-on-Spey, and the Old sawmill site, near Boat of Garten (4.1ha). There was an additional site identified in the report, namely the Lions Quarry site, however it was not possible to carry out an onsite audit due to access issues, so this was excluded in the summary of total employment land and undeveloped land.

²⁷ Use classes as defined by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997: Class 4. Business; Class 5. General industrial; Class 6. Storage or distribution.



Of the total employment land surveyed in the audit (64.1ha), approximately 30% was undeveloped and potentially available for further development.

In terms of employment land allocated in the Local Development Plan, the audit records 15.3ha of undeveloped employment land. There is an additional 4.1ha provided by the old sawmill site near Boat of Garten. This takes the total employment land available for development in the National Park 19.4ha.

Use classes in the National Park

The combined sum of footprints for all the buildings on both allocated and additional sites surveyed in the report was 100,780m². This represents a wide range of use classes present on the employment sites across the National Park, including: 1A, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9,10,11, mixed use class, sui generis, unknown and vacant buildings (Figure 39 and Figure 40).

In terms of m² footprint, use class 4 and 5 combined make up nearly half (approximately 44%) of all the building footprint by use class equating to 44,195m². Businesses with use class 11 make up 16%, use class 1A account for 15% and businesses registered as use class 6 equal 12% of the total building footprint of all buildings across all sites surveyed in the Employment Land Audit (Figure 39).

In terms of numbers of separate businesses by use class (Figure 40) the majority of businesses surveyed fell under the use class 1A (56 businesses, 36%) or use class 4 (48 businesses, 31%) accounting for 67% of all businesses.

There were five vacant units identified (Figure 40) with a total building footprint of 2,925m², ranging from 26m² to 1,723m², which could provide local businesses immediate spaces to occupy without the need to redevelop further sites.

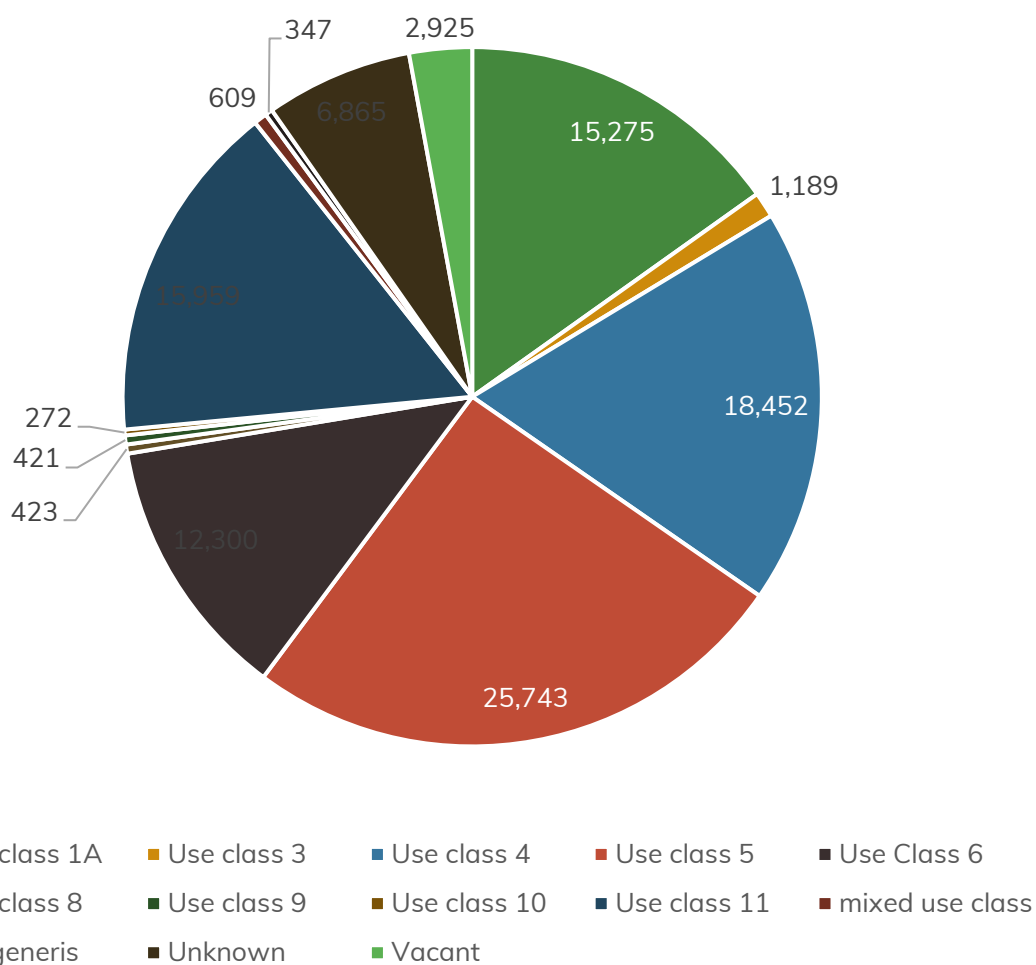


Figure 39 Breakdown of occupied buildings in terms of footprint in m² in the Cairngorms National Park by use class. May 2025.

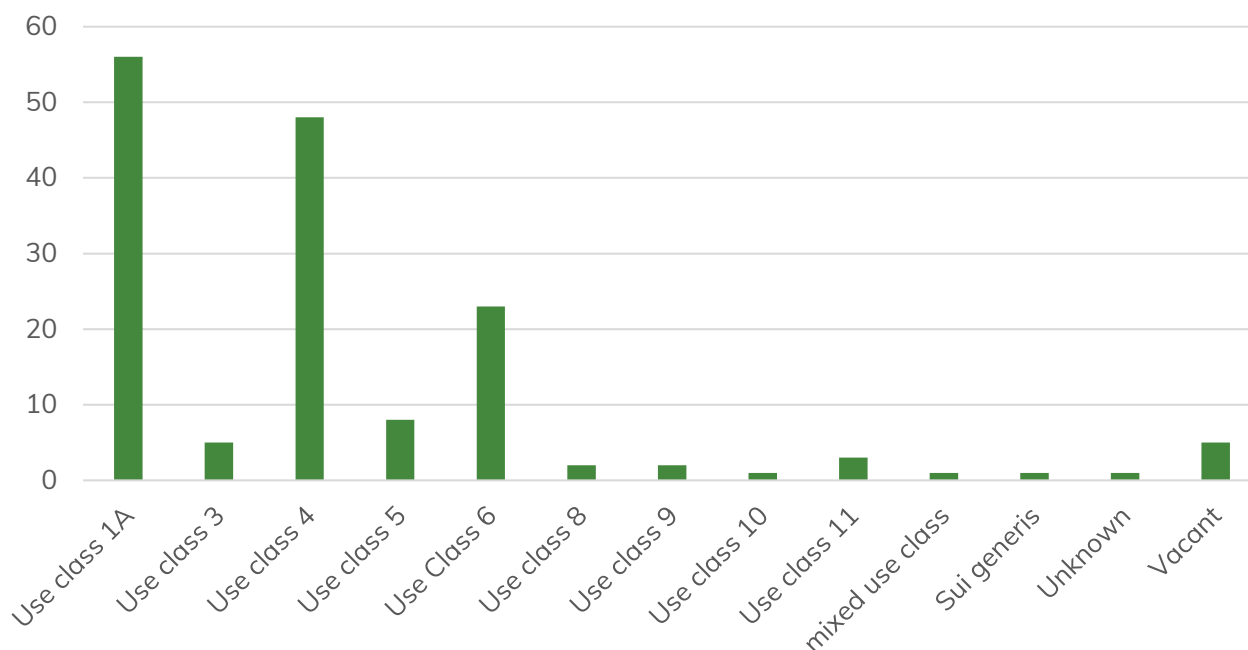


Figure 40 Number of individual units by use class present on all sites in the Cairngorms National Park. May 2025.

Vacant and derelict land

Information on vacant and derelict land within the Cairngorms National Park is provided by the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey, which is a national data collection undertaken to establish the extent and state of vacant and derelict land in Scotland.

More information on vacant and derelict land in the National Park is provided in the Land use, soil and resources topic paper which is available here:

- <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Land-use-soil-and-resources-Engagement-version.pdf>

Masterplan consent areas

The Scottish Government has indicated that Masterplan Consent Areas²⁸ could be used to support delivery of the Local Development Plan. In the Cairngorms National Park there are no existing or planned use of masterplan consent areas, so this is therefore not deemed a consideration for the Proposed Plan.

²⁸ The Town and Country Planning (Masterplan Consent Areas) (Scotland) Regulations 2024.



Business health

Each quarter the Cairngorms Business Partnership in collaboration with the Cairngorms National Park Authority commissions (produced by 56 Degree Insight) the Cairngorms National Park Business Barometer which seeks feedback from business operators across the Cairngorms National Park on a range of aspects including ongoing performance and confidence in the future which allows for a quarterly assessment of the 'health' of the economy in the National Park.

The Cairngorms Business Partnership is the Chamber of Commerce for businesses in the Cairngorms National Park, as an affiliate of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce we are the primary representative organisation and voice for the business community. The Cairngorms Business Partnership is funded by our 400 plus members from all corners and industries of the National Park.

Looking at the Cairngorms Business Barometer for the Autumn of 2024²⁹ gives a snapshot of the current 'health' of the economy. Running for over 15 years, the Cairngorms Business Barometer obtains feedback from businesses across the Cairngorms National Park on a range of aspects including ongoing performance and confidence in the future, providing a regular assessment of the 'health' of tourism in the Cairngorms National Park area. Fieldwork for the Autumn 2024 survey wave ran from 22 October to 25 November 2024 with businesses contacted and encouraged to participate by a range of channels including email invitations, social media, newsletters and promotion at the Cairngorms Business Partnership conference. By the survey deadline a total of 68 businesses had completed the survey, representing a wide range of business sectors as illustrated on the right. A similar profile of businesses responded to previous waves of the survey allowing direct comparisons.

The report highlights that while many have reported an increase in turnover during 2024 and are optimistic for further growth into 2025, a significant minority (over one in four) reported decreases in turnover and have a negative outlook for the next 12 months. While concerns over rising costs have eased to some extent since Autumn 2023, they continue to be a significant challenge, as do concerns over rising bureaucracy and wider tourism trends.

²⁹ At the time of writing (April 2025) this paper the most recent report available for the Autumn of 2024, published in December 2024 has been referenced here. The full report is available online at: https://www.cairngormschamber.com/membernews_detail.html?nid=B3C1C19D-01DA-4242-B53E-CBFAA5606510



Last six months

Comparing May to October 2024 with the same period in 2023, while 48% of businesses reported increased turnover, 26% stated that turnover had declined.

During May to October 2024, 70% of accommodation businesses reported average accommodation occupancy levels of 70% or more. Levels were similar to those reported in 2023. Most businesses have experienced an increase in cost during the last 6 months – most notably 83% stated that supplier costs were higher than in 2023.

Expectations for the next 12 months

Looking to the future, 39% of businesses expect turnover during the next 12 months to be higher than during the last 12 months but 26% reported expecting a decrease. While 36% of accommodation businesses expect average occupancy levels of over 70% over the next 12 months, a larger percentage expect them to average at between 50% and 69%. A similar result was obtained at the same point in 2023. While many businesses reported they expect costs to continue to increase during the next 12 months, expectations are improved on those recorded at the same time in 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Business confidence

Levels of confidence for the future remain varied, especially for the next three months. Levels of confidence for the next three months are lower than recorded at the same time in 2023. When asked what businesses see as longer-term opportunities, a wide range of areas were mentioned including growing new markets, diversification of offer and increased collaboration between businesses. Businesses would like to see more opportunities to work with other organisations, support on areas such as marketing and training and infrastructure improvements to help them to realise these opportunities.

Barriers and opportunities

In terms of barriers to profitable growth, when businesses were asked to rate a series of potential barriers, levels of bureaucracy/ legislation, supplier costs and national tourism trends were seen as the most significant issues. By comparison to same period in 2023, while concerns over bureaucracy / legislation remained at similarly high levels, ratings of barriers relating to costs and staff levels improved suggesting some easing of these concerns

Infrastructure

Asked to what extent organisations have a positive contribution to business, Cairngorms Business Partnership, VisitScotland and Cairngorms National Park Authority continue to be rated most positively. However, around half of businesses are



dissatisfied with the infrastructure in the National Park with calls to improve a number of aspects including public transport, housing and digital connectivity.

More detail about the tourist related economic position is included in the Tourism topic paper which is available here:

- <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Topic-paper-Tourism-Engagement-version.pdf>

Community wealth building

Community wealth building provides an alternative approach to economic development and a practical response that aims to keep wealth within a local area. It is often described as a people centred approach to economic development and aims to ensure every area and community can participate in, and benefit from, economic activity.

Community asset transfer

Community asset transfer allows community groups to request ownership, leasing or access rights for Council-owned property as well as property owned by other public bodies. As the National Park overlaps with five local authorities, where applicable, the respective community wealth building strategies have been included as evidence in this report. The Proposed Plan will need to look at ways in which it can facilitate a community wealth building approach in the area.

Existing community run organisations

There are a number of community owned and managed assets in the Cairngorms National Park, that have helped deliver a variety of projects benefiting their local communities. Table 3 shows the existing community owned and managed assets In the National Park and the community organisations that own or manage the assets.



Table 3 List of community owned or managed assets In the Cairngorms National Park.

Asset Name	Community	Asset type	Leased / owned	Community company ownership or management of asset
Carrbridge Village Hall	Carrbridge	Village hall	Owned	Carrbridge Village Hall Trustees
Carrbridge Bike Park	Carrbridge	Leisure facility	Permitted to operate by The Highland Council	Unknown
The Riverside Bowling Club Carrbridge	Carrbridge	Leisure facility	Sublet by community council	Riverside Bowling Club upkeep and management through Carrbridge Ahead (community company)
Cromdale Sports Pavillion	Cromdale	Leisure facility	Owned	Cromdale and Advie Community Development Trust
Public Toilets	Cromdale	Public toilets	Owned	Cromdale and Advie Community Development Trust
Cromdale Hall	Cromdale	Village hall	Owned	Cromdale Hall Trustees
Dalnain Village Hall	Dalnain Bridge	Village hall	Owned	Dalnain Bridge Public Hall
Tomintoul Discovery Centre	Tomintoul	Visitor centre	Owned	Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust
Smugglers Hostel, Tomintoul	Tomintoul	Visitor accommodation and camping	Owned	Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust
Old School site Tomintoul	Tomintoul	Community housing	Owned	Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust
The Green Hall	Tomintoul	Village hall	Owned	Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust
Richmond Memorial Hall	Tomintoul	Village hall	Unknown	Hall committee
Glenlivet Hall	Glenlivet	Village hall and camping	Owned	Community Hall Trustees
Laggan Wolftrax Centre	Laggan	Cycle track	Owned	Laggan Forest Trust Forestry Company Ltd



Asset Name	Community	Asset type	Leased / owned	Community company ownership or management of asset
Woodshed (behind forestry cottages)	Laggan	Woodshed	Owned	Laggan Forest Trust Forestry Company Ltd
Land at Gorstean Car Park	Laggan	Car park	Owned	The Laggan Forest Trust
Land from Gorstean Car Park West	Laggan	Land mixed use (circa 6 acres)	Owned	The Laggan Forest Trust
Land from forestry cottages to Mashie Burn	Laggan	Land mixed use (circa 13 acres)	Owned	The Laggan Forest Trust
Laggan Community Hall	Laggan	Village hall	Owned	Laggan Community Hall
6 Former Forestry Cottages, Strathmashie	Laggan	Community housing	Shared ownership community registered society - 1984	Laggan Community Housing Ltd.
Laggan Picnic Site and Play Park	Laggan	Community picnic area	Shared ownership community registered society - 1984	Laggan Community Housing Ltd
Newtonmore Village Hall	Newtonmore	Village hall	Owned	Newtonmore Village Hall Ltd
Newtonmore Community Wildcat Trail and Centre	Newtonmore	Wildcat trail, centre and experience	Unknown	Newtonmore Community Woodland Development Trust
Newtonmore Heritage Trail	Newtonmore	Heritage trail	Unknown	Newtonmore Business Association
Newtonmore Art Installation	Newtonmore	Community space	Unknown	Newtonmore Business Association



Asset Name	Community	Asset type	Leased / owned	Community company ownership or management of asset
Newtonmore Shinty Club, Pitch	Newtonmore	Sport and recreation	Owned	Newtonmore Camanachd Club
Newtonmore Golf Club	Newtonmore	Sport and recreation	Unknown	Newtonmore Golf Club
Newtonmore Tennis Club	Newtonmore	Sport and recreation	Leased	Newtonmore Tennis Club
Newtonmore Bowling Club	Newtonmore	Sport and recreation	Leased	Newtonmore Bowling Club
Newtonmore War Memorial	Newtonmore	War memorial, paths and trees / shrubbery	On community owned land but unsure of upkeep responsibility	Newtonmore Village Hall Ltd
Newtonmore Centenary Gardens and Newtonmore Picnic Site	Newtonmore	Gardens	On community owned land	Newtonmore Village Hall Ltd
Iona Gallery, Kingussie	Kingussie	Arts and culture venue	Leased from The Highland Council	The Society of Badenoch and Strathspey Artists
Kingussie Community Hydro - River Gynack	Kingussie	Hydro scheme	Owned	Kingussie Community Development Company
Gynack Birch Woods	Kingussie	Community woodland	Owned	Kingussie Community Development Company
Community Allotments, Kingussie	Kingussie	Allotments / community growing	Owned	Am Fasgadh Regeneration Company
Caberfeidh Horizons Bookshop and Community Hub, Kingussie	Kingussie	Retail / social enterprise community spaces	Owned	Caberfeidh Horizons
The Dell, Shinty Pitch, Kingussie	Kingussie	Sport and recreation	Owned	Kingussie Shinty Club



Asset Name	Community	Asset type	Leased / owned	Community company ownership or management of asset
Kingussie Golf Club and Caravan Site	Kingussie	Sport and recreation	Owned	Kingussie Golf Club
Kingussie Tennis Club	Kingussie	Sport and recreation	Leased from The Highland Council.	Kingussie Tennis Club
The Market Stance Playing Field	Kingussie	Sport and recreation	Leased from The Highland Council.	Kingussie Camanachd
Insh Community Woodland	Insh	Community woodland	Owned	Insh Community Holdings
Kincraig Village Hall	Kincraig	Village hall	Owned	Kincraig Community Hall Association
Village Green, Aviemore	Aviemore	Community space		Aviemore Community Enterprise Company
Riverside Park, Aviemore	Aviemore	Green space / garden	Leased from Seafeld Estate	Aviemore Community Enterprise Company
Riverside Park Southern Addition	Aviemore	Green space	Leased from Seafeld Estate	Aviemore Community Enterprise Company
Wishing Well, Aviemore	Aviemore	Blue space	Owned	Aviemore Community Enterprise Company
Aviemore Ice Rink	Aviemore	Sport and recreation	Rink owned, land leased	Aviemore and Glenmore Community Trust
Land at Morlich Place adjacent to Old primary School. 0.8 ha	Aviemore	Green space / garden	Owned	Aviemore Community Enterprise
Boat of Garten Community Hall	Boat of Garten	Community hall	Owned	Boat of Garten Community Hall
Woodland Wheels Pump Track	Boat of Garten	Sport and recreation	Owned	Boat of Garten Community Company



Asset Name	Community	Asset type	Leased / owned	Community company ownership or management of asset
Milton Loch and Woodlands, Boat of Garten	Boat of Garten	Community woodland	Owned	Boat of Garten Community Company
Boat of Garten Badger Hide	Boat of Garten	Nature space		Boat of Garten Community Company
Boat of Garten Community Garden	Boat of Garten	Green space / garden	Leased from Strathspey Railway Company	Boat of Garten Community Company
Nethy Bridge Community Centre	Nethy Bridge	Community centre	Owned	Nethy Bridge Community Centre
Nethy Bridge Playing Field	Nethy Bridge	Sport and recreation	Owned	Nethy Bridge Community Centre
Nethy Bridge Birch Wood	Nethy Bridge	Community woodland	Owned	Nethy Bridge Community Centre
Nethy Bridge Pond/ Duack Field	Nethy Bridge	Blue space	Leased	Nethy Bridge Community Centre
Abernethy Old Kirk	Nethy Bridge	Heritage asset	Owned	Abernethy Old Kirk Association
Abernethy Bowling Club	Nethy Bridge	Sport and recreation	Owned	Abernethy Bowling Club
Castle Roy	Nethy Bridge	Heritage asset	Owned	Castle Roy Trust
Abernethy Golf Club, Nethy Bridge	Nethy Bridge	Sport and recreation	Owned	Membership club who own the land.
Grantown YMCA Community Centre	Grantown-on-Spey	Community centre	Owned	Board of trustees
Grantown Museum	Grantown-on-Spey	Visitor facility / heritage	Owned	Grantown Museum and Heritage Trust
Anagach Community Woods, Grantown	Grantown-on-Spey	Community woodland	Owned	Anagach Woods Trust



Asset Name	Community	Asset type	Leased / owned	Community company ownership or management of asset
Grantown Golf Club	Grantown-on-Spey	Leisure facility	Leased	Grantown On Spey Golf Club
Burnfield Toilets	Grantown-on-Spey	Public toilets	Owned	Grantown Initiative
Community Storage Unit	Grantown-on-Spey	Container	Owned	Grantown Initiative
Blair Atholl Memorial Park	Blair Atholl	Green space	Owned	Blair Atholl and Struan Initiative
Blair Atholl Village Hall	Blair Atholl	Village hall	Owned	Blair Atholl Village Hall Ltd
Blair Atholl Bowling Club	Blair Atholl	Sport and recreation	Owned	Blair Atholl and Struan Initiative
Killiecrankie Village Hall	Killiecrankie	Village hall	Owned	Killiecrankie Memorial Hall Trust
Braemar Castle	Braemar	Visitor attraction	Leased	Braemar Community Limited
Tomrichton Community Woods	Braemar	Community woodland	Owned	Braemar Community Limited
Braemar Hydro Scheme	Braemar	Hydro scheme	Lease	Braemar Community Hydro
St Margarets Church, Braemar	Braemar	Arts and culture venue	Owned	St Margarets Trust
Auchtavan Cottage	Braemar	Visitor attraction	Leased	Braemar Community Limited
Braemar Community Garden and Orchard	Braemar	Allotments / community garden	Leased	Braemar Community Limited
Braemar Bowling Green	Braemar	Sport and recreation	Leased	Braemar Bowling Club
Braemar Curling Pond	Braemar	Sport and recreation	Leased	Braemar Curling Club
The Society Bridge	Braemar	Infrastructure / footbridge	Owned	Braemar Community Ltd



Asset Name	Community	Asset type	Leased / owned	Community company ownership or management of asset
Monega Bridge	Braemar	Infrastructure / footbridge	Owned	Braemar Community Ltd
Castleton Hall, Braemar	Braemar	Village hall	Leased (from Aberdeenshire council)	Castleton Hall Association
The Village Hall, Braemar	Braemar	Village hall	Owned	Village Hall Committee
The Highland Games Centre and Park, Braemar	Braemar	Visitor attraction	Owned	Braemar Royal Highland Society
Tourist Information Kiosk	Braemar	Visitor centre	Leased	Braemar Tourism Group
Braemar Golf Club	Braemar	Sport and recreation	Clubhouse owned; land leased (from Invercauld)	Braemar Golf Club
Victoria and Albert Halls, Ballater	Ballater	Community centre	Owned	Victoria and Albert Halls Ballater Trust
The Hut on the Green, Ballater "Old Mannie's Hut"	Ballater	Community space	Land leased for community as a social gathering point.	Old People over 50s Association
Ballater Caravan Park	Ballater	Visitor facility	Wholly Owned Subsidiary	Ballater Royal Deeside Ltd Vat registered business Ballater Community Enterprises Ltd. Wholly owned subsidiary of Ballater Royal Deeside.
Glenshee and Strathardle Visitor Centre.	Glenshee and Strathardle	Visitor centre	Leased	Glenshee and Strathardle Tourist Association
Kinord Hall	Dinnett	Village hall	Unknown	Kinord Hall management committee



Asset Name	Community	Asset type	Leased / owned	Community company ownership or management of asset
Glenbuchat Community Hall and Bothy, Glenbuchat, Strathdon	Glenbuchet	Village hall bothy / hostel	Owned	Glenbuchat Hall Community Association
Community Path Network and Visitor Centre	Nethybridge	Infrastructure / footpaths	Unknown	Explore Abernethy
Dalwhinnie Village Hall	Dalwhinnie	Village hall	Owned	Dalwhinnie Community Development Trust
Lonach Hall	Strathdon	Village hall	Owned	The Lonach Hall Community Association
Glenlivet Hall Phone Box	Tomitoul	BT phone box	Adopted on for community use	Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust
Tomnavoulin Store Phone Box	Tomitoul	BT phone box	Adopted on for community use	Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust
Pole Inn Phone Box	Tomitoul	BT phone box	Adopted on for community use	Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust

Village halls

Village halls are vital hubs in rural Scotland, providing essential services and encouraging community connection. They serve as multi-purpose venues for social, cultural, and educational activities, offering spaces for events, workshops, and community meetings. There is good provision of village halls in the Cairngorms National Park serving the dispersed settlements (Figure 41 and Table 3). The majority of the village halls are owned by community organisations or trusts (Table 3).

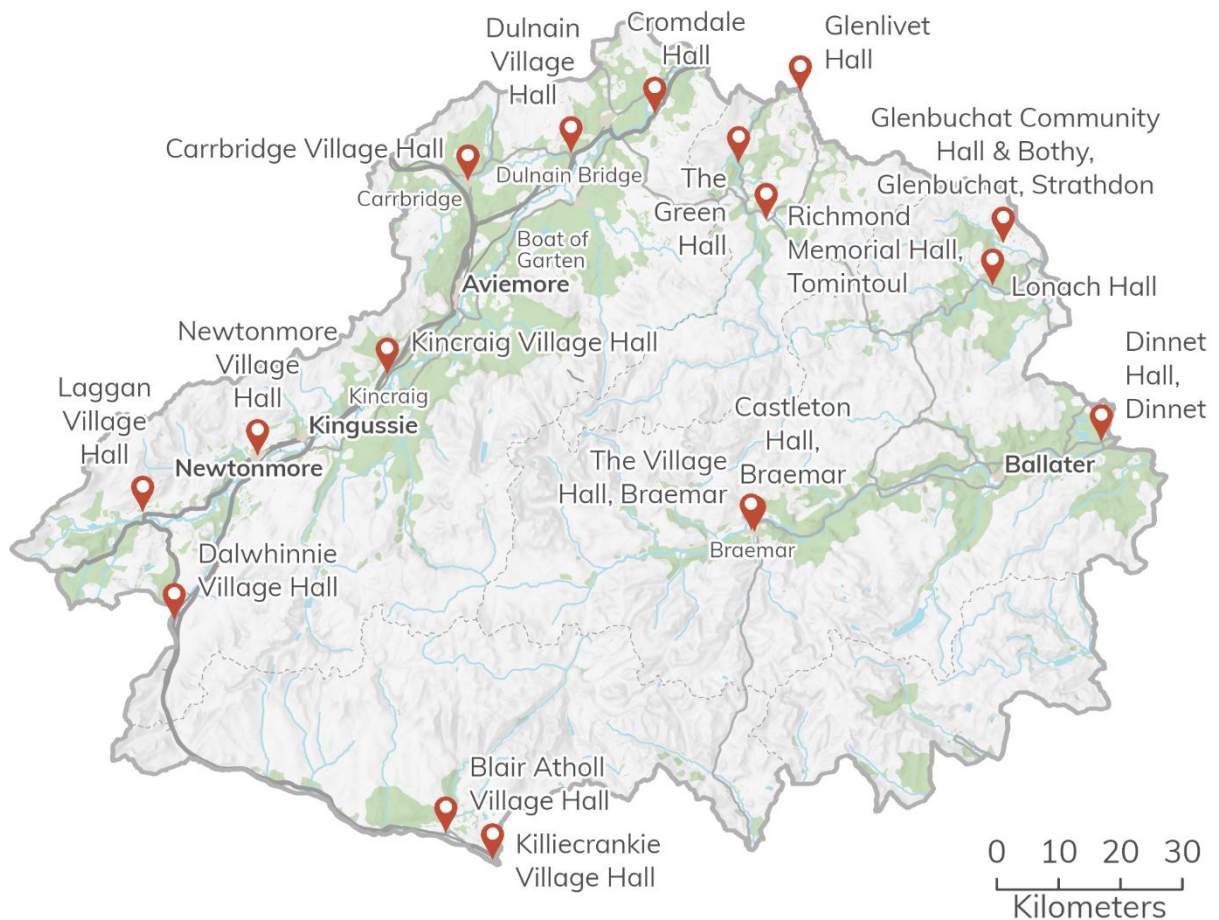


Figure 41 Village halls in the Cairngorms National Park. 2025.

Visitor infrastructure

Figure 42 show the community owned or run visitor infrastructure in the Cairngorms National Park. This includes visitor centres, visitor accommodation and camping sites, the Wildcat Trail, Centre and Experience, public toilets, car parking sites. More Information on the visitor Infrastructure in the National Park is available in the Sustainable tourism topic paper which is available here:

- <https://cairngormsldp.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/sustainable-transport-survey/step1>

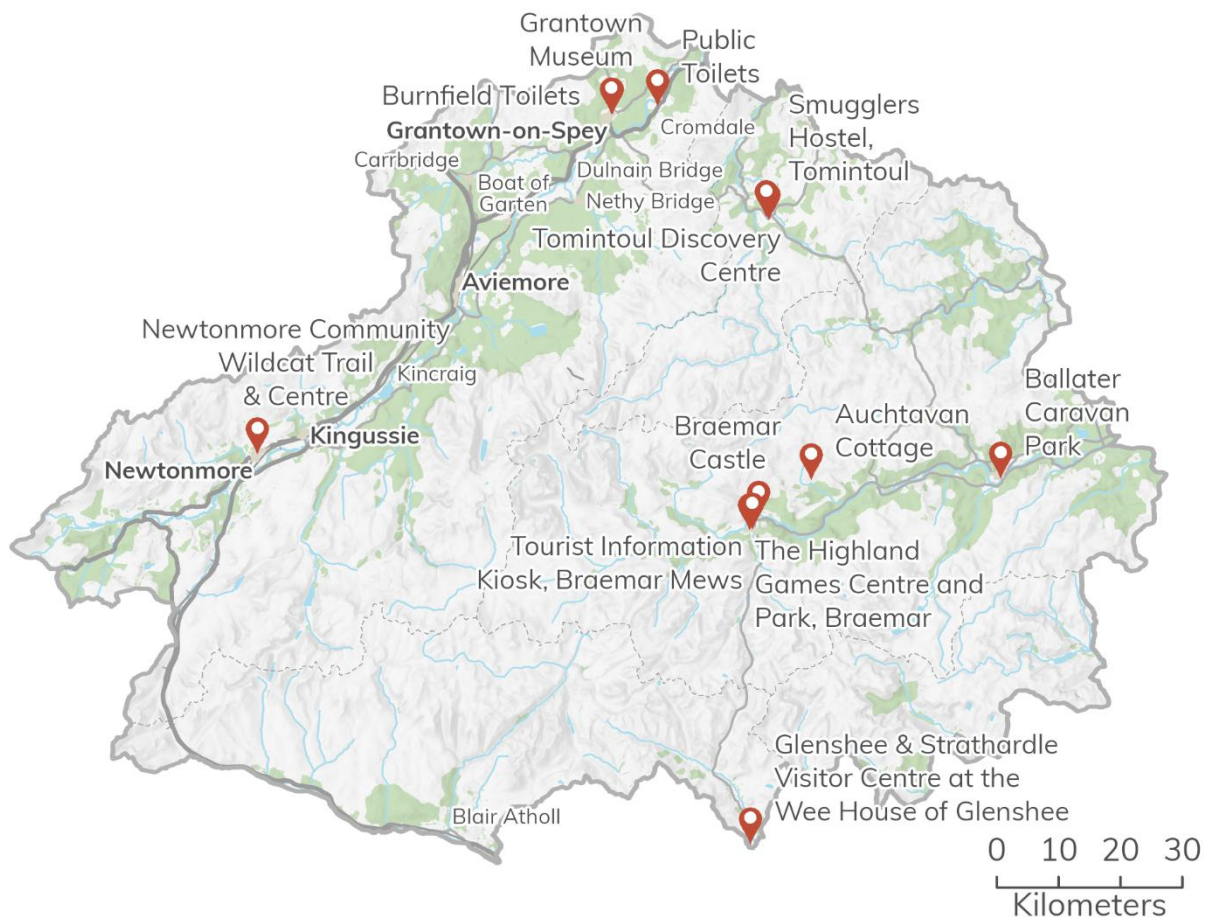


Figure 42 Community owned or managed visitor Infrastructure in the Cairngorms National Park. 2025.

Community land

Figure 43 shows the community owned or managed land in the Cairngorms National Park. This includes picnic areas, community space, community housing, car park, woodshed and BT phone boxes.

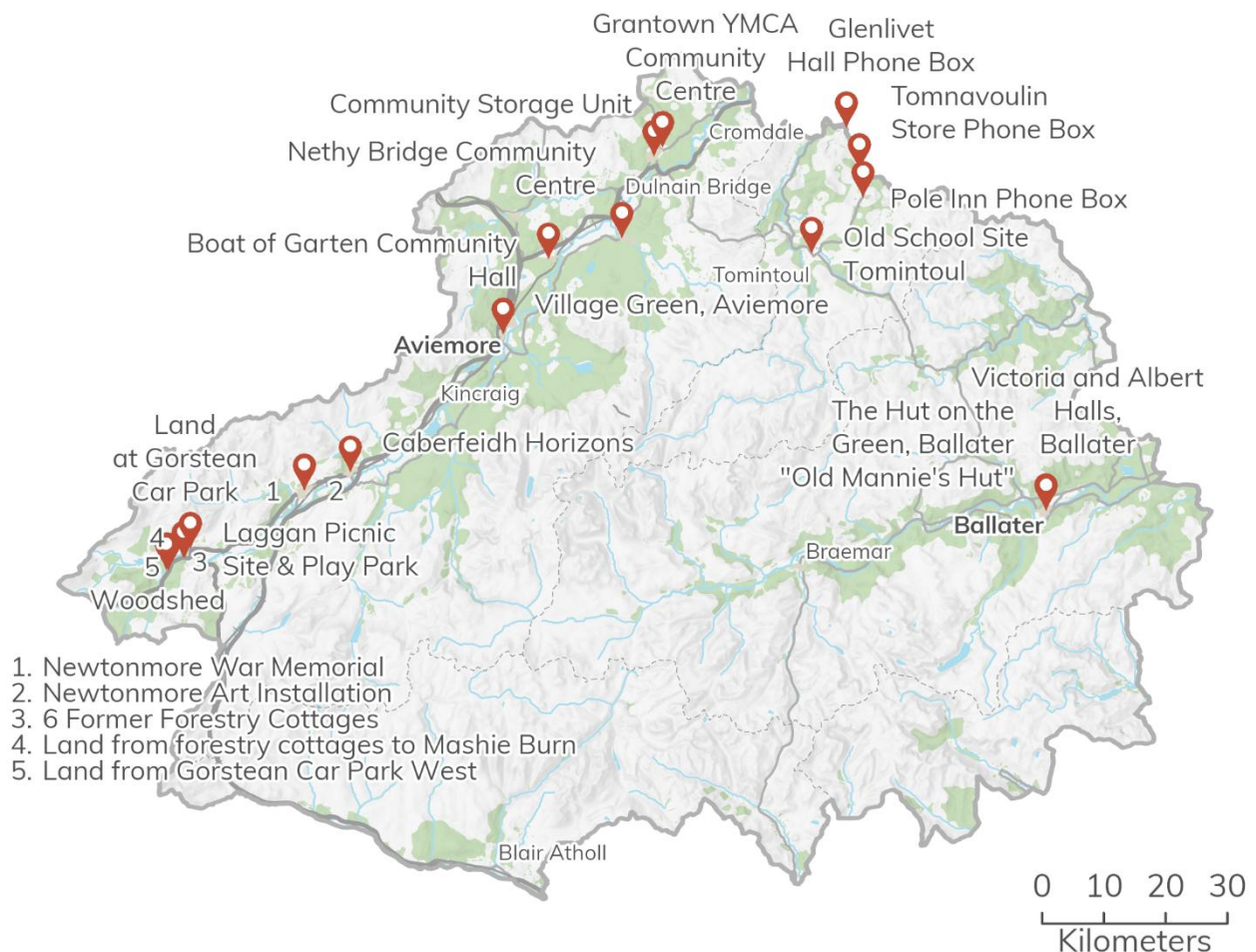


Figure 43 Community owned or managed land In the Cairngorms National Park. 2025

Green and blue spaces

Figure 44 shows the community owned or managed green and blue spaces In the National Park. They include community woodland, allotments and growing spaces. More detailed information on blue and green Infrastructure in the National Park will be available In the Blue and green Infrastructure topic paper to be engaged on later in 2025.



Figure 44 Community owned or managed green and blue assets In the Cairngorms National Park. 2025.

Arts and cultural heritage assets

Figure 45 show shows the community owned or managed arts and cultural heritage assets in the National Park. They include heritage trails, arts and culture venues and other heritage asset.

More Information on historic and cultural assets In the National Park is available in the Historic and cultural heritage topic paper which Is available here:

- <https://cairngormsldp.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/historic-and-cultural-heritage-survey/step1>

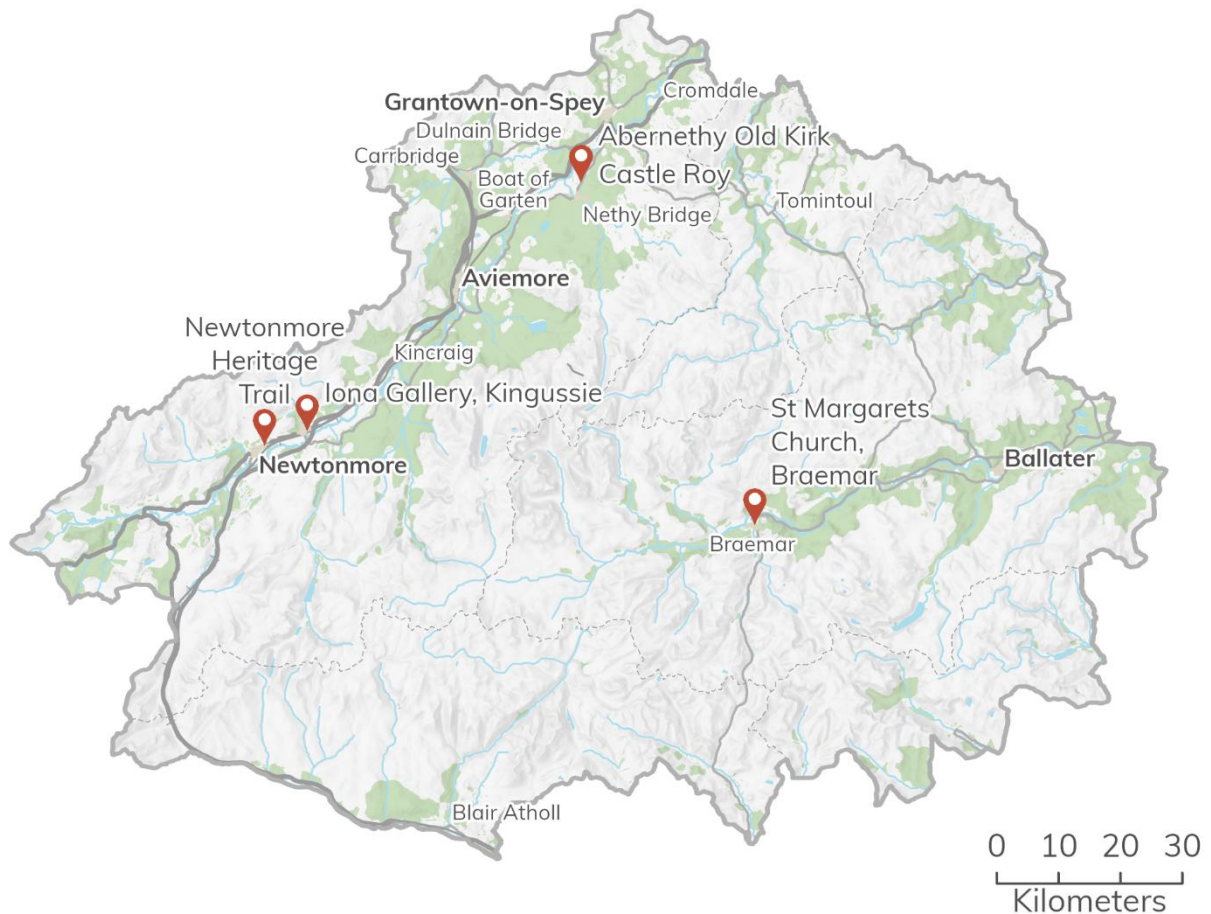


Figure 45 Community owned or managed arts and cultural heritage assets In the Cairngorm National Park. 2025

Sports and recreation assets

Figure 46 shows the community owned or managed sports and recreation assets in the Cairngorms National Park. These include golf courses, bowling clubs, shinty clubs and cycle facilities / tracks.

More Information on sports and recreation facilities in the National Park will be available In the Play, recreation and sport topic paper.

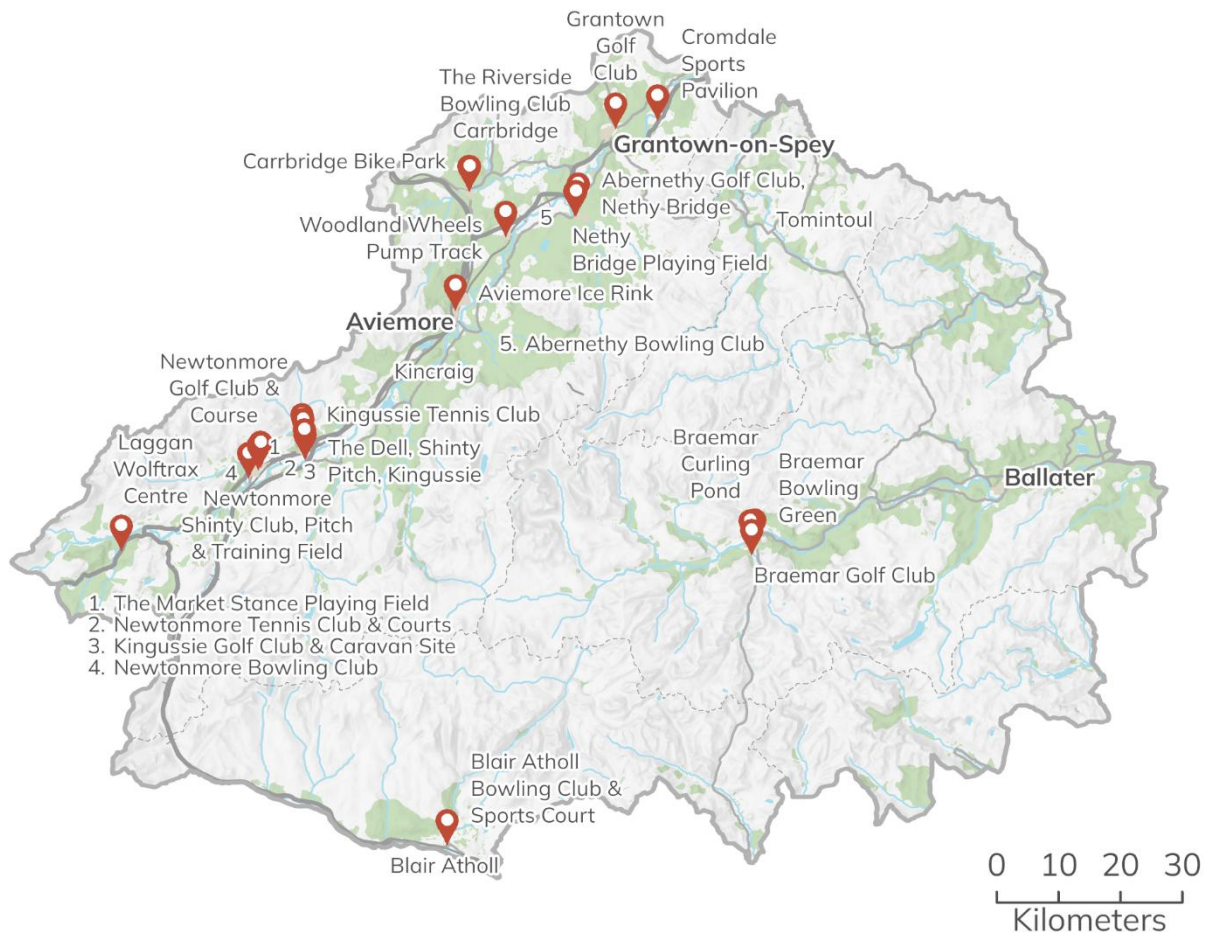


Figure 46 Community owned or managed sports and recreation assets In the Cairngorms National Park. 2025.

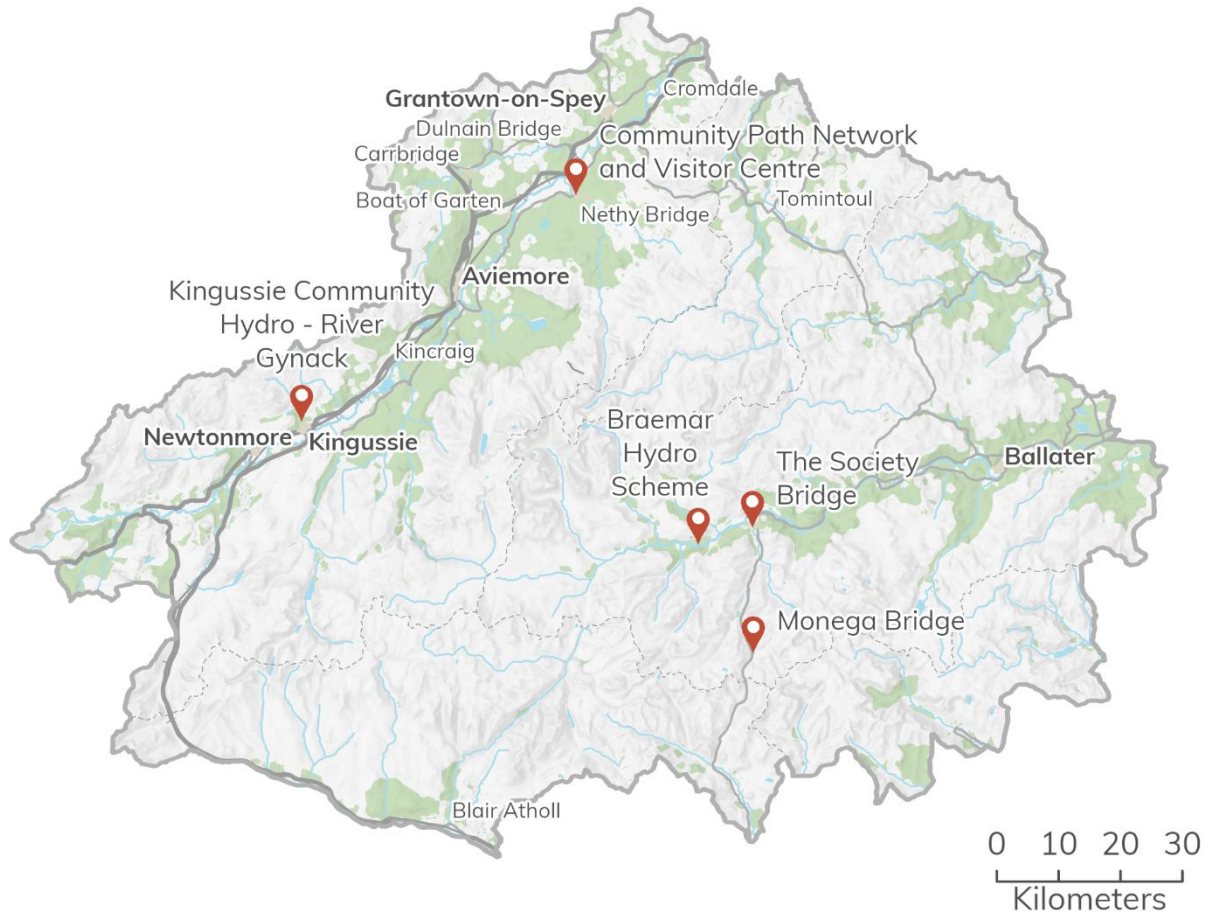


Figure 47 Community owned or managed energy assets In the Cairngorms National Park. 2025. Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of His Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright and database right 2025. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number AC0000821810, Cairngorms National Park Authority

Energy assets

Figure 47 shows the community owned or managed energy projects and Infrastructure assets in the Cairngorms National Park. More detail on community run energy projects is included in the Energy topic paper which is available here:

- <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Topic-Paper-Energy-Engagement-version.pdf>



Travel to work

Travel to work and other transport matters are covered In the Sustainable Transport topic paper which is available here:

- <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Topic-Paper-Sustainable-transport-Engagement-version.pdf>

Income and income deprivation

Previous economic reports have indicated that the Cairngorms National Park has an above average proportion of relatively low-paid jobs, in part due to the dominance of the tourism sector and that sector's proportion of relatively low-skilled and low-paid positions (See 2010 Economic and Social Health of the Cairngorms National Park, 2010³⁰)

There is very limited current income-related-data available for the exact geography of the Cairngorms National Park. The following pages present Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data on receipt-of-income related benefits and 'synthetic' modelled gross household income data from the Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA). It should be noted that the Centre for Housing Market Analysis modelled income data is produced for the purposes of assessing housing need and demand - the data is noted as being for research only, does not represent Official Statistics or National Statistics and has specified limitations with regards to use for assessing actual income levels.

One indicator of the measure of income in the Cairngorms National Park is provided by examining the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data. Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data relating to income deprivation is derived from the numbers of people in receipt of a range of income related benefits – further information on the methodology used is available in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation technical notes³¹

When comparing the Cairngorms National Park as a whole to the adjacent local authorities (Figure 48), it would appear that the National Park is outperforming 4 out of the 5 (and only marginally worse than Aberdeenshire) and in fact substantially outperforms the national average.

³⁰<https://www.cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/publications/14092010/CNPA.Paper.1635.The%20Economic%20and%20Social%20Health%20of%20the%20Cairngorms%20National%20Park%202010pp1-30,%20Sections%201-4.pdf>

³¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/simd-2020-technical-notes/>

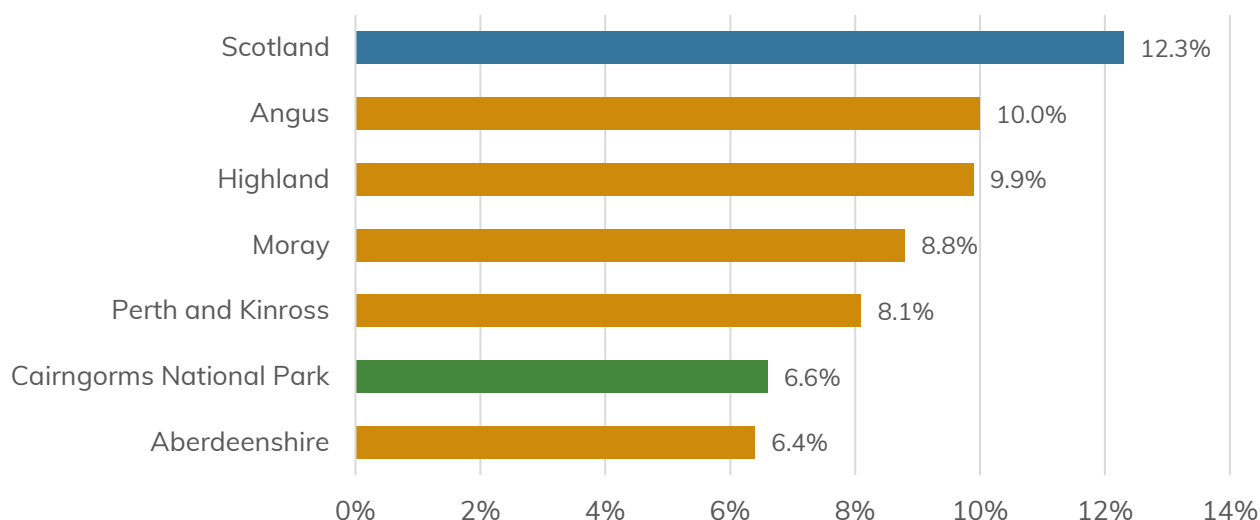


Figure 48 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020) Income deprivation rates (based on receipt of income related benefits) as proportion of the total population. (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation ³², 2020)

Although the data on income deprivation rates at a local authority level is encouraging, when the individual data zones are examined, it is clear the initial data does not provide a uniform reflection accounting fairly for the differing situations across the Cairngorms National Park. There is a significant difference between ‘the area surrounding Ballater’ to the most income deprived area in Aviemore (Figure 49). Just over half of the data zones (13 of 24) do in fact perform better than the National Park average which is 46% lower than the national Scottish average (Figure 49).

Overall, the data (Figure 49) shows the average proportion of people receiving the income related benefits is significantly below the Scottish average – however it can be seen that one data zone is slightly above the Scottish average, while the data indicates that 1,215 people within the Cairngorms National Park are receiving at least one of the range of income related benefits.

³² <https://simd.scot/#/simd2020/>

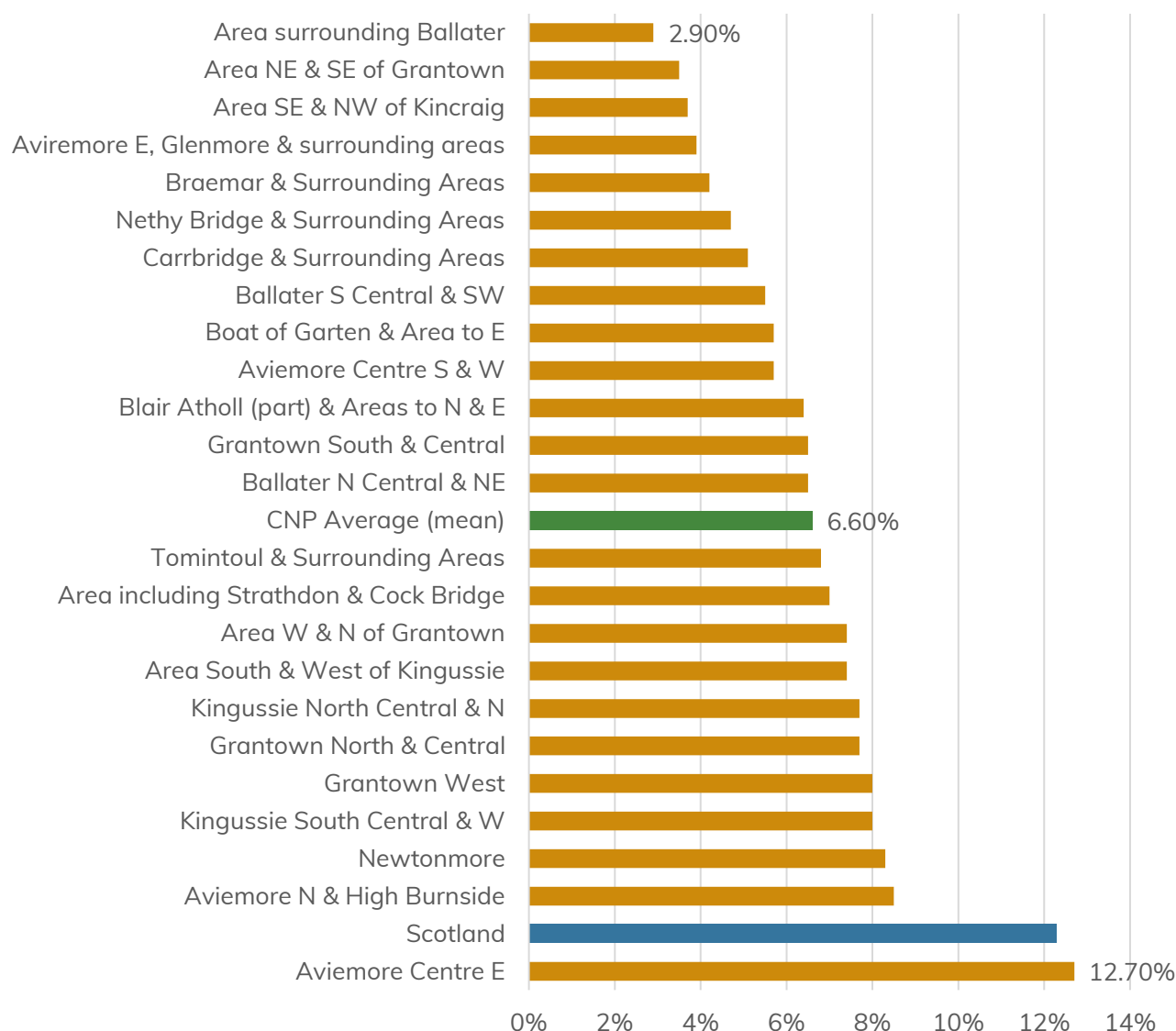


Figure 49: Income deprivation based on receipt of income related benefits (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020; further information on the methodology used available in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation technical notes³³)

Another indicator of the health of people's income in the Cairngorms National Park can be obtained by studying the data provided by the Scottish Governments Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA). The Centre for Housing Market Analysis in association with Heriot Watt University produces estimates for Gross Household Incomes by data zone. Although this does provide some indication of income levels in the National Park it should be noted that the estimates alone cannot be used to give an accurate picture of wealth or poverty in an area due to the other variable deductions

³³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/simd-2020-technical-notes/>



from income a household will experience (for example, housing costs and / or home heating and transport as a percentage of disposable income). Low-income data is used to calculate the percentage of an area's population that are experiencing relative low income³⁴ (Households whose income falls under 60% of the median gross income).

The Cairngorms National Park has relatively low levels of poverty in terms of households experiencing low income reported at 12.4% compared with 17.5% nationally. Out the five local authorities within the National Parks boundary, only Aberdeenshire has a lower proportion of low-income households than the National Park average (Figure 50).

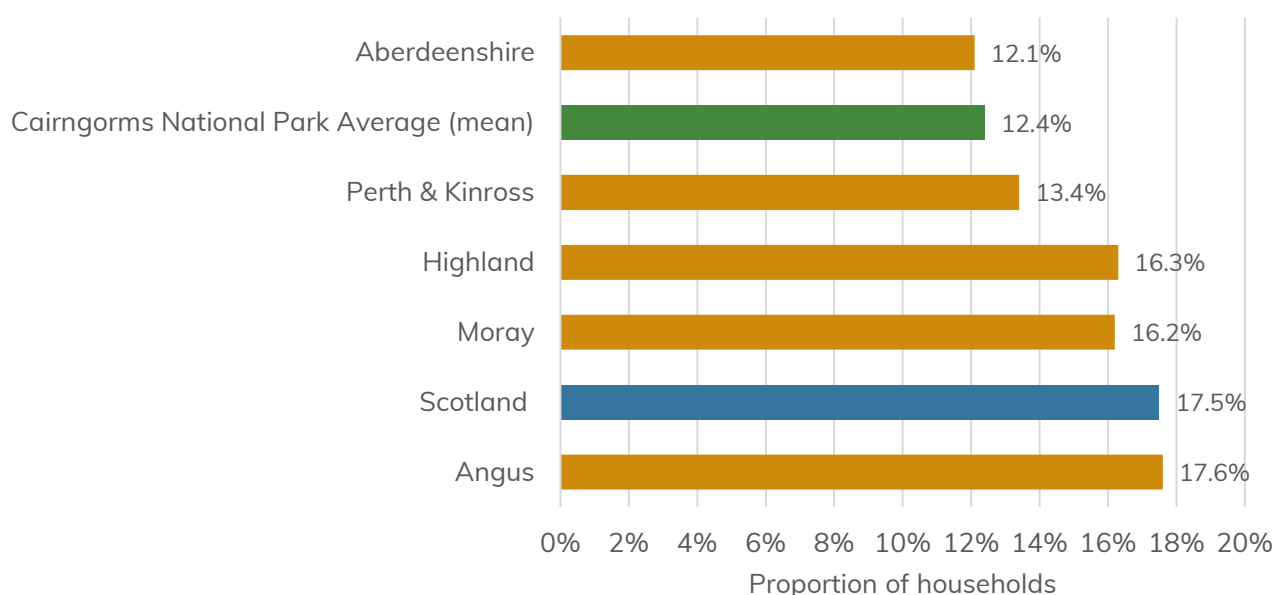


Figure 50 Proportion of households with under 60% of the median gross income (Centre for Housing Market Analysis³⁵, 2018).

Along with the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data presented (Figure 51) for income related benefits and the data for income estimates (Figure 52) it suggests that the Cairngorms National Park is significantly above the national average with regards to incomes.

³⁴ Not to be confused with Absolute low income which is a comparison to the median of the 2010/11 year allowing for comparisons over time.

³⁵ Based on Local Level Household Income Estimates (LLHIE), weekly (£), banded income for 2018. The Local Level Household Income Estimates are synthetic income modelling research for the year 2018 & exclude housing costs and adjustments for taxation³⁵ (Data from Heriot Watt University In association with David Simmonds Consultancy)

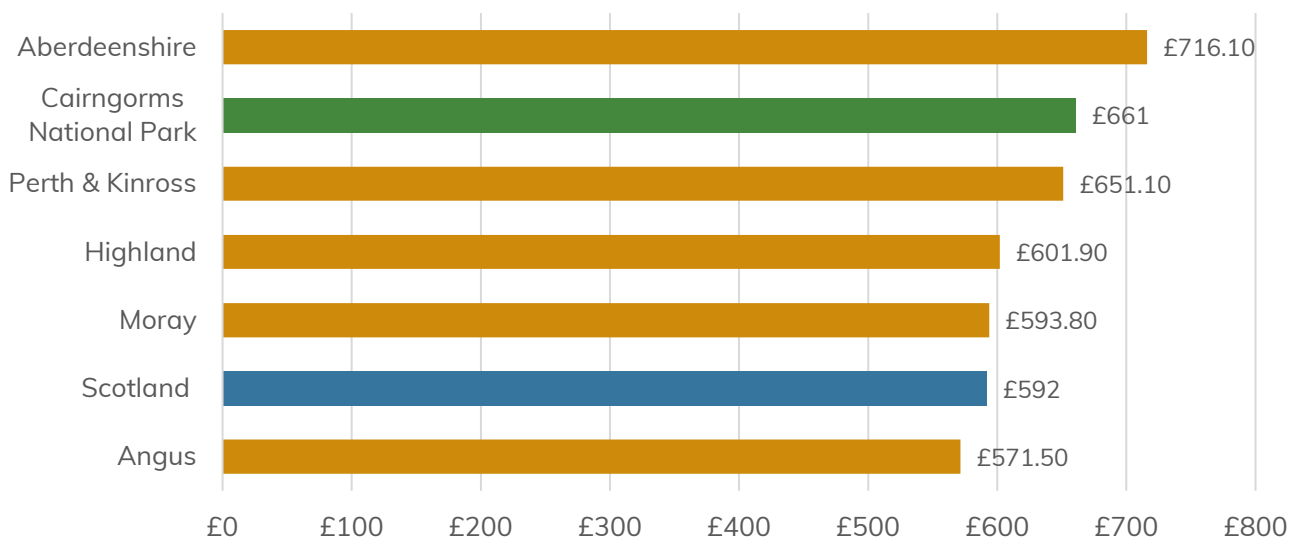


Figure 51 Gross Median weekly household income estimates (Centre for Housing Market Analysis ³⁶, 2018).

³⁶ Based on Local Level Household Income Estimates (LLHIE), weekly (£), banded income for 2018. The Local Level Household Income Estimates are synthetic income modelling research for the year 2018 & exclude housing costs & adjustments for taxation (Data from Heriot Watt University In association with David Simmonds Consultancy)

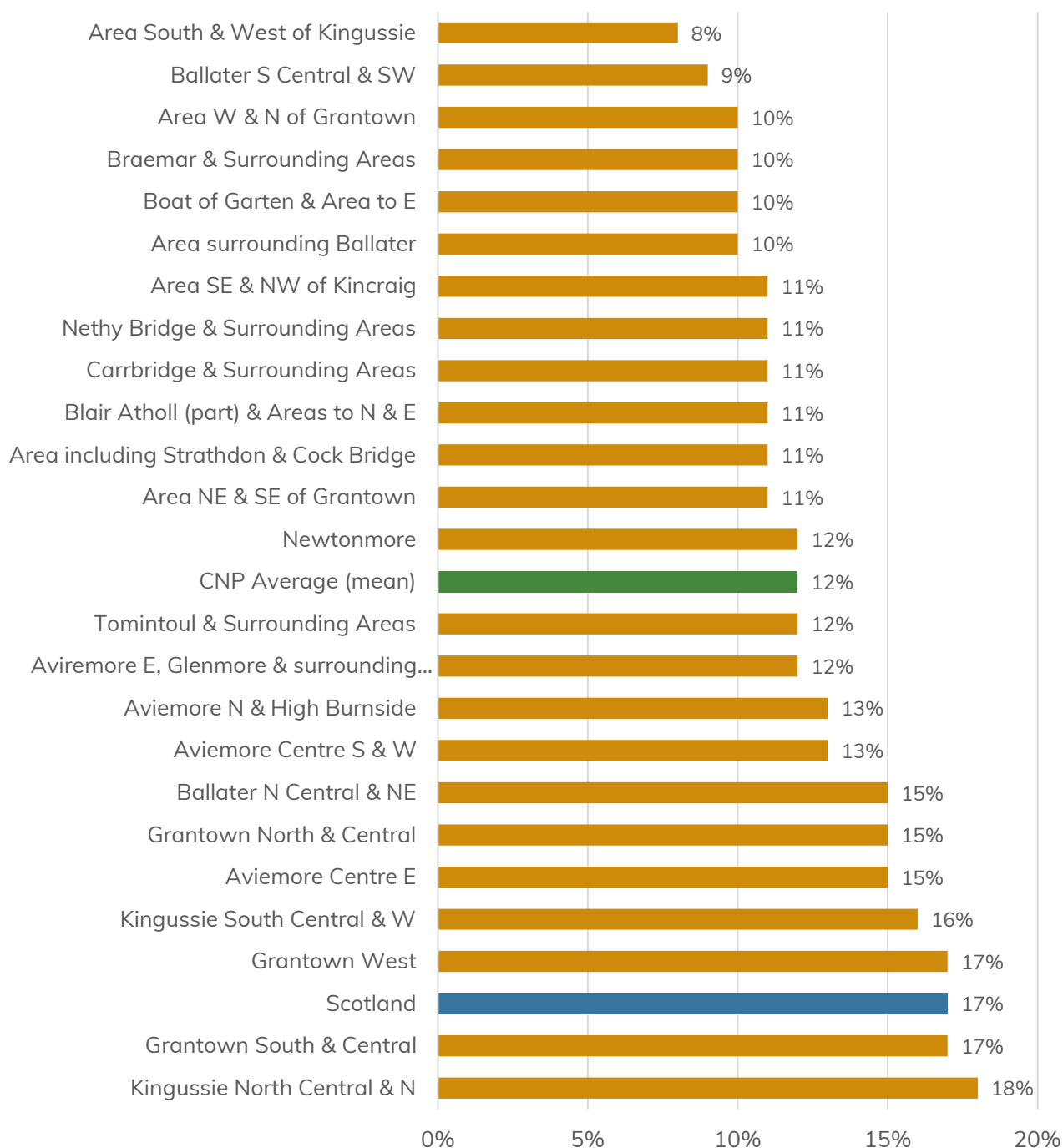


Figure 52: Proportion of households under 60% of the median income (Centre for Housing Market Analysis³⁷, 2018)

³⁷ Based on Local Level Household Income Estimates (LLHIE), weekly (£), banded income for 2018. The Local Level Household Income Estimates are synthetic income modelling research for the year 2018 and exclude housing costs and adjustments for taxation. Note these estimates are for use in housing affordability analyses. They are research only and they do not represent Official Statistics or National Statistics.



Inequality

Established in 2019, the Poverty and Inequality commission is a non-departmental advisory public body organisation that informs the Scottish Government regarding inequality and poverty in the Country.

Poverty in Scotland is a key driver of inequality and affects a large proportion of society. Across Scotland. The Poverty and Inequality Commission report (2020 – 2023) that 24% of children, 21% of working age adults and 15% of pensioners are currently living in poverty. They further report that 60% of the working age adults and 70% of the children in poverty come from homes where at least one adult is in employment (2020 – 2023). Therefore, while equivalent statistics do not exist for the Cairngorms National Park's geography, it should be noted that the relatively low levels of unemployment recoded here do not therefore preclude the existence of poverty in the area.

Poverty disproportionately affects those living with a disabled person, as 24% of those with a disabled member in the household live in poverty (2020 – 2023)³⁸.

The implications of financial inequality are broad and far reaching; for example, it has been reported that a child in a family in the highest 20% of earners will be approximately 13 months ahead in their vocabulary, when starting school, compared with children in families in the bottom 20% of earners (Cooper and Stewart, 2017³⁹). Therefore, the long-term impacts of inequality on life opportunities are outcomes are a key driver in the Scottish Governments emphasis on inclusive growth, while the government also hosts the Scottish Centre for Regional Inclusive Growth.

There is limited data available to comprehensively analyse inequality within the Cairngorms National Park, although the limited data presented in this report indicates that the National Park as a whole has relatively healthy wealth and the socio-economic attributes (Figure 53). However, due to its scale this data may obscure the presence of localised deprivation and inequality. For example, there are over 1,200 people receiving income related benefits (Figure 53) within the National Park, indicating that, based on receipt of income related benefits, at least 10.6% could be considered to be on low incomes.

³⁸ <https://povertyinequality.scot/poverty-scotland/>

³⁹ Cooper, Kerris and Stewart, Kitty (2017) Does Money Affect Children's Outcomes? An update. CASEpapers (203). Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London, UK.



Taking this into account alongside other data presented in this report regarding income and deprivation it is evident that inequality exists within the Cairngorms National Park.

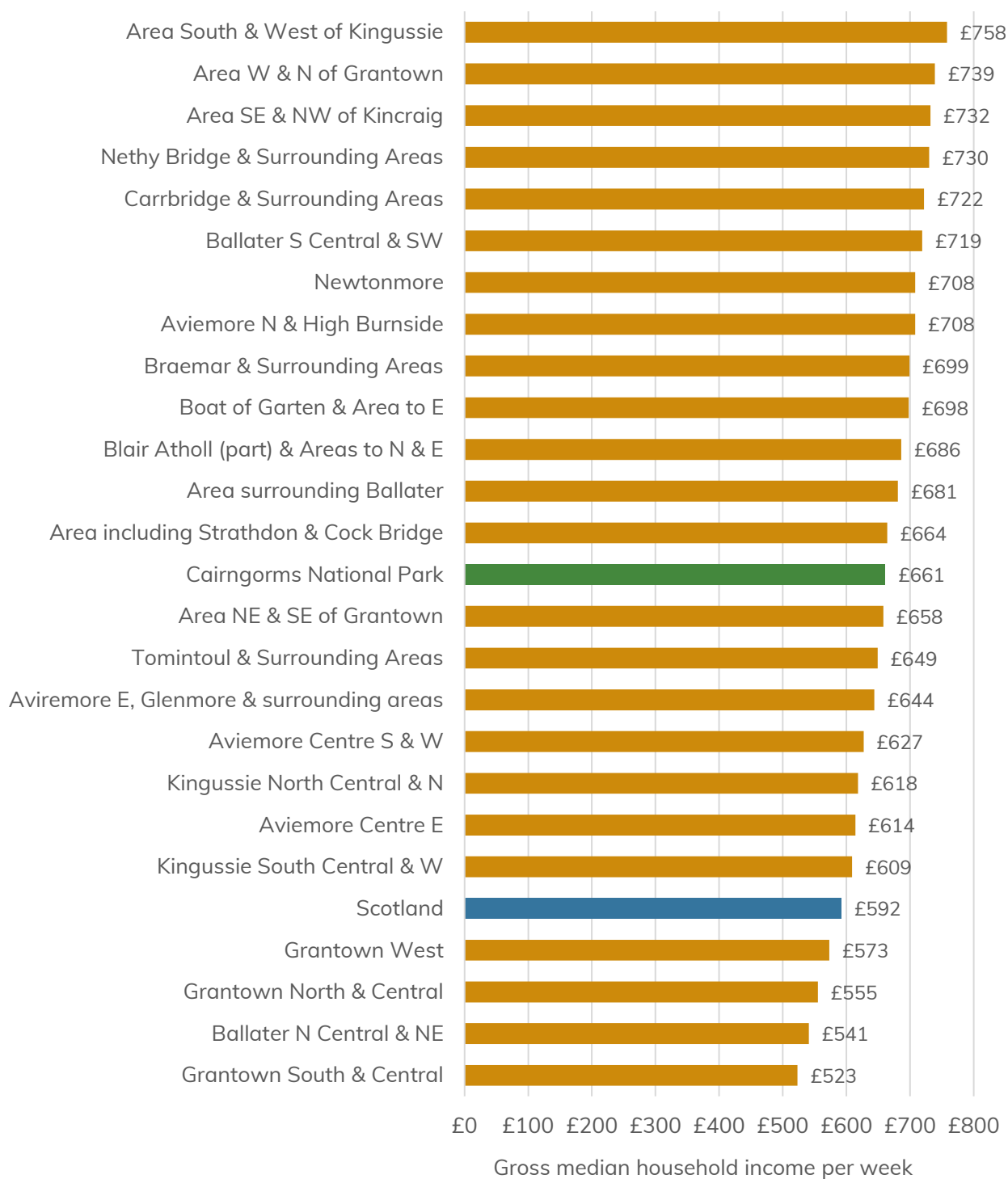


Figure 53 Gross median household weekly income estimates, with Cairngorms National Park and Scottish averages (Centre for Housing Market Analysis, 2018: Gross Household Income Estimates for National Park data zones sorted by Median Household income).



Gender based inequality

In 2022 the census recorded the population of the Cairngorms National Park at 17,531 people (2022 Census, table UV02b). This was comprised of 50.8% female (8,909 people) and 49.2% male (8,623), a more balanced distribution when compared to national figures for Scotland of 51.4% female and 48.6% male (2022 Census, table UV102a).

Census data for 2022, is not yet available at the time of writing (8 April 2025) which gives the breakdown of occupation of social grade between men and women for the Cairngorms National Park. When this data is made available it will be taken into account, at present the best available data remains the Census 2011 data.

Differences in social grade between men and woman is useful in assessing potential inequalities between men and woman in the Cairngorms National Park. According to the Census data (2011) more women (5,773) were employed in the National Park than men (5,628). Table 4 shows that more women occupied both Higher and intermediate managerial / administrative / professional positions and Supervisory, clerical, junior managerial / administrative / professional positions. There are a higher number of men in skilled manual worker positions, but far lower in the lowest pay grade / or unemployed positions.

Table 4 Gender based Social Grade Employment in the Cairngorms National Park

	Higher and intermediate managerial/ administrative/ and professional	Supervisory, clerical, junior managerial/ administrative/ professional	Skilled manual workers	Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers; on state benefit, unemployed, lowest grade workers	Total
Male	1057	1437	1977	1157	5628
Female	1082	1663	1722	1306	5773

Information on the gender pay gap is available by a Travel to Work Area, however only one of these, Aviemore and Grantown-on-Spey, is more or less contiguous with the National Park boundary and is of a scale useful for the purposes of measuring inequality within the National Park. According to the Office of National Statistics the median gender pay gap for this area in 2022 was 7.6%. The statistical robustness of this estimate is considered "acceptable" and is higher than the gap for Scotland as a whole, which is 3.7%.



Further Information on equality In the Cairngorms National Park is available in the latest Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment report which is available here:

- <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/230626LocalDevelopmentPlan3EqFSIA.pdf>

Cairngorms National Park - Resident and worker survey 2024 – 2025

The Cairngorms National Park Authority commissioned M·E·L Research to conduct a survey with those living and working in the National Park in 2024 – 2025. This survey is intended to establish a baseline, to be repeated every two years to report on local sentiment and experience among those living and working in the National Park. This report displays the results to this survey.

The research was conducted by M·E·L Research's using an online interviewing approach. The survey was set up using M·E·L Research's online survey platform. Links to the survey were distributed by the Cairngorms National Park Authority via its website, social media, local newspapers, posters in local towns and villages, and in communications such as Cairn magazine.

In total, 1,294 responses were received from residents living within the National Park (either as their primary residence, or one of two or more residences, excluding holiday homes), and 63 were received from those who live outside of the National Park. Responses among residents were weighted by age, using three age bands: 16 to 34 years, 36 to 64 years, and 65 years and over, against the age profile of the National Park, using data from the 2022 census.

Of those who completed the survey, over half (57%) both live and work in the National Park. Meanwhile 37% were resident in the National Park but didn't work within it, and 2% worked in the National Park but didn't live within it. Approaching six in ten (59%) of all respondents work in the National Park. This includes those who work at a location in the National Park, and residents who work from home in the National Park at least some of the time.

Of those who completed the survey, the majority (95%) of employed residents work within the National Park. Six in ten (61%) work at a location in the National Park all year round, while 26% work from home in the National Park, either solely, or in combination with working at a location outside of the National Park. 5% of those who live primarily in



the National Park work in a hybrid set up, where they split their time between working at a location in the National Park and working from home. With residents of the National Park tending to also work within it, the economic role that the National Park plays as a job provider is also therefore key to residents' lives. Among all of those who work in the National Park – regardless of whether they also live there – 62% work on location within the National Park, and 5% work in the National Park seasonally.

Perceptions of respondents to finding work in the National Park

The same proportions of surveyed employees in the National Park found it hard (55%) or easy (45%) to find a job as the proportion of residents who stated this. Residents who were more likely to state that it was hard for them to find a suitable job in the National Park area include:

- Residents who work from home in the National Park (73%).
- Those employed in the Education sector (72%).
- Those aged 16 to 34 years (64%) or 35 to 44 years (63%).
- Those who do not receive the Real Living wage (65%).

Further, of the residents surveyed who have tried to find work in the National Park, 61% have faced barriers when doing so, with jobs not being well paid enough the most common barrier faced (30%) Among residents, this rises to 68% of those who have lived in the National Park for less than 5 years, 73% of those aged 16 to 34 years, 71% of those aged 35 to 44 years and 71% of those aged 45 to 54 years, highlighting the greater barriers to accessing work that are faced by younger residents and those newer to living in the National Park.

The survey found that those aged 35 to 44 years and 45 to 54 years are more likely to face challenges in relation to there not being enough jobs suiting their required working patterns (17% and 16% respectively) and poor availability of affordable childcare (20% and 14% respectively).

It was reported that residents living in Aviemore are more likely to say that jobs are not well paid enough (28%), while those in Royal Deeside are more likely to say they can't get to locations where jobs are available (10%).

Four in ten (40%) residents, who responded, who are employed, in training or unemployed would benefit from support in their career development. Most commonly this is through training opportunities to attend training outside of work in the evening / weekend (20%), online training opportunities (18%) or training through work (17%).



Support in career development is particularly desired by those who work in person at a location in the National Park (43%), with a particular interest in attending training through their existing work in normal working hours (21%) and in their local area in the evenings and weekend (22%).

Eight in ten (79%) residents and employees who responded reported receiving the Real Living Wage. The responding residents who work part time (19%) or are self-employed (33%) are most likely to not receive the Real Living Wage, as are those who work in retail (31%), or who have lived in the National Park for 21 to 30 years (18%) or for 30+ years (19%). The report drew the conclusion that while newer residents face greater difficulty finding a job in the first place – longer-term residents are more likely to face challenges with the financial remuneration of the job that they hold.

The majority of residents are getting by at least 'alright' financially (80%); however, 14% report that they are concerned, having financial difficulties, or are not managing well. The proportion who are not managing well is higher than in the latest national data in the Scottish Household Survey (14% cf. 9%); however, it should be noted that this data was collected in 2023, so may not be reflective of the current national picture, given the increase in the cost of living in Scotland in 2024.

Of the residents who have moved to the National Park in the last five years (18%) or have lived in the National Park their whole lives (20%), those who work in person at a location in the National Park (19%), are self-employed (23%), are aged 16 to 34 years (25%) or 35 to 44 years (28%), or are not earning the Real Living Wage (34%) are most likely to feel that their household is not managing well.

Summary of implications for Proposed Plan

The proposed plan needs to be prepared in accordance with:

- The four aims of the National Park as set out in The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000), in particular the fourth aim 'to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities'.
- The spatial strategy and principles of National Planning Framework 4.



In its preparation the proposed plan should seek to:

- Give due consideration to supporting improvements in the digital infrastructure to support it⁴⁰.
- Acknowledge the demographic challenges of an ageing population which is more pronounced in the Cairngorms National Park compared to national averages. The proportion of people at pensionable age is predicted to increase, with the proportion of working age people (16 – 64 years) predicted to decrease from now till 2043.
- Support the delivery of housing to support the working population⁴¹. In the long-term (2025 – 2032), it is forecasted that approximately 2,500 people will be required to fulfil the total requirement of occupations in the Cairngorms National Park (Oxford Economics, 2022).
- Support development that addresses the increasing need for the health and care sector to support the ageing population⁴².
- Reflect the changing role town centres play in allowing the 20-minute neighbourhood principle⁴³ to be implemented with regards to local employment. This can include town centre regeneration⁴⁴ through the refurbishment of derelict buildings for employment uses and / or allocation of vacant land⁴⁵.
- Consider the need for support for higher education sites in the National Park. There are currently no higher education providers present in the National Park, however given the unique characteristics of the area, it is possible a satellite campus could be developed and further engagement with the education providers should be explored to establish if there is a potential need for land to be allocated.
- Identify and safeguard the locations of important community assets; reflect the community wealth building priorities for the Plan area set out by the local authorities Community Wealth Building Strategies and Plans; and take account of areas of economic disadvantage and inequality.

⁴⁰ See the Digital infrastructure topic paper for more details: <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Topic-paper-Digital-Infrastructure-Engagement-version.pdf>

⁴¹ Consideration of housing need and demand will be covered in the Housing topic paper, to be engaged on later in 2025.

⁴² See the Health and safety topic paper for further information on the health of the National Park's population and the implications arising from this: <https://cairngormsldp.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/v3/health-and-safety-survey?step=step1>

⁴³ Consideration of 20-minute neighbourhoods will be covered in the living well locally topic paper, to be engaged on later in 2025.

⁴⁴ Further consideration of town centres and retail will be covered in the Town Centres and retail topic paper, to be engaged on later in 2025.

⁴⁵ See the Land use, soil and resources topic paper for further information on vacant and derelict land: <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Land-use-soil-and-resources-Engagement-version.pdf>



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- Identify and allocate land for economic development, giving consideration to the location of any new economic allocations in relation to communities, access to services and all forms of travel and transport services⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ See the Sustainable transport topic paper for consideration of matters relating to the transport infrastructure and provision: <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Topic-Paper-Sustainable-transport-Engagement-version.pdf>