



Paper 3

Annex 1



Sustainable Tourism Action Plan

Annual Update 2025/26

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

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

Nature

Outcome: A carbon negative and biodiversity rich National Park with better functioning, better connected and more resilient ecosystems.

Research shows that the majority of our visitors are attracted by the landscapes and wildlife that make this such a special place. We want to deepen that connection with the natural environment, presenting visitors with opportunities to make a positive contribution through visitor giving, volunteering and responsible behaviour choices.

Delivering against National Park Partnership Plan objectives:

- A1 – Net zero
- A13 – Species recovery

Delivering against Scotland Outlook 2030:

- Destination net zero

Actions	Lead Partners
1. Visitor investment Encourage visitor investment in the National Park through visitor-giving, carbon offset schemes and other incentives, connecting visitors with the place through financial and emotional buy-in.	Cairngorms Trust, Park Authority, Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP)
The Cairngorms Trust continues to receive voluntary donations from the public to support projects within the National Park, with donations in 2024/5 of £5,370.	



2. Climate Action Plan Develop and implement a business-led Climate Action Plan that engages businesses in opportunities to lower their carbon footprint.	CBP
CBP have employed a graduate through Zero Waste Scotland's Graduate Scheme to develop a circular economy toolkit. This was designed to work with businesses and provide valuable information, tips and best practices for businesses operating in the Cairngorms region. Through listening to a variety of stakeholders, we were able to produce a toolkit that highlighted the great work already being done by a number of businesses but also ensure we were providing them with support that aligned with their business developments. Delivery of the Cairngorms 2030 programme continues, with business engagement in many of the projects.	
3. Technological solutions Investigate technological solutions to engage visitors and nudge them towards responsible choices in a way that enhances their experience of the destination.	Park Authority, VisitScotland
The Park Authority continue to sit on the national digital visitor management group and are now also represented on the Scottish Tourism Data Partnership, which brings together academic, industry and public sector partners with a view to developing projects that will give accessible and timely insights for tourism decision-making. Discussions have been taking place with partners including Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) and VisitScotland to build on work undertaken by LLTNPA in gathering and sharing real-time visitor data. It is anticipated that the next stage of this work could lead to development of a visitor-facing app. The Park Authority continues to contract digital spatial visitor data through Active Xchange on a trial basis. Some changes have been made to the system, but there have been limited useful results to date. We also continue to investigate other digital data options in partnership with other National Parks. National Parks Partnerships now have an agreement in place with Vodafone which may yield useful data.	



4. Pre-arrival visitor information Develop a programme that supports business engagement with customers in advance of their visit, including information about biodiversity and responsible enjoyment.	CBP, Park Authority
CBP have continued to provide businesses with content that can be presented to guests either on arrival or in their pre arrival correspondence. To promote this, they ran a number of online and in person events with members to highlight the availability of the content and to explain the benefits of having this for members. Visit Cairngorms continues to promote the responsible enjoyment messaging through its content with visitors (email / social media / PR) and strive to ensure that it is shared with a diverse audience and not just key visitor demographics.	
5. Reducing species disturbance. Develop and implement mechanisms to reduce disturbance on key species and recreational impacts on high ground.	Park Authority, NatureScot, Ranger Services, CBP
The introduction of beavers to the National Park has seen a lot of interest. As part of the project a new Beaver Trail was waymarked on Rothiemurchus Estate as a focus for visitor interest and to minimise disturbance. Further investment to monitor impacts has been agreed for 2026, but to date there has been no evidence of any visitor disturbance. CBP have facilitated a number of meetings between event organisers and other stakeholders to ensure that any larger scale participant event has considered the impact on the environment. CBP have strived to ensure that all views on these events are listened to and that there is a balanced view between economic growth and disturbance to the local environment/species.	



People

Outcome: A wellbeing economy that works for all the people of the Cairngorms.

Tourism forms a major sector of the local economy but there are opportunities to improve the value it adds to the lives of local residents and communities, developing and promoting hospitality as a career and supporting communities to benefit from the visitor economy.

Delivering against National Park Partnership Plan objectives:

- B2 – Wellbeing economy
- B4 – Skills and training
- B5 – Community assets and land
- B8 – Gaelic language and culture
- B10 – A Park for all

Delivering against Scotland Outlook 2030:

- Our passionate people
- Our diverse businesses

Actions	Partners
1. Community-led tourism Support, encourage and promote community-led tourism enterprises and develop a community tourism network for the National Park.	Lead first Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey, Scotland's Community Tourism Network, Cairngorms Business Partnership

The Park Authority has supported Aviemore and Glenmore Community Trust to develop community assets including the development of Glenmore Visitor Centre.

SCOTO, Scotland's community tourism network, ran a 'Press Pause' workshop in Tomintoul as part of the development Moray Tourism Strategy.

Through support of Marr Area Partnership and Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey, the Park Authority supports communities to have the opportunity to identify their own priorities and tackle the issues which are important to them. In 2025, four updated Community Action Plans have been launched, from Kingussie to Strathdon.



2. Resident research Monitor residents' attitudes to tourism in their community through regular surveys and informal open meetings.	Park Authority
Planning is underway for the second wave of the Resident and Worker survey, which is likely to take place slightly later than originally envisaged to avoid confusion with consultation on the next National Park Partnership plan (NPPP). The Park Authority continue to run and attend a wide variety of community engagements events including community events in Ballater, Strathdon and Aviemore reaching over 150 residents. Staff also attended a range of other community events including Kincaig Fun Day, Grantown Show and the CBP conference.	
3. Cultural heritage Strengthen cultural events through visitor engagement with Gaelic and other languages, music, storytelling and built heritage.	Park Authority, CBP
A landmark cultural heritage networking event, developed by a short-term working group of nine cultural heritage practitioners, took place in October 2025 in Boat of Garten. The event brought together 65 people, all involved in or passionate about cultural heritage in the National Park. Cairngorms National Park Event report - exploring a cultural... The Park Authority committed to fund a follow-up meeting in March 2026 with the aim of working towards a shared understanding of what can be taken forward to make a positive impact for cultural heritage in the National Park. The £50,000 Communities and Cultural Heritage Fund launched in October 2025, supported by the Park Authority and delivered by the Cairngorms Trust, offered grants ranging from £2,500 to £10,000 to projects that support communities and celebrate our shared cultural heritage. VisitCairngorms.com continues to be a valuable resource for people looking to find out more about heritage in the Cairngorms National Park when they are researching their upcoming holidays. The What's On page is consistently in the top 10 most viewed pages of the website. This section of the site connects the visitor audience with local events in the area that have been created by many heritage groups and organisation. Looking forward they will continue to promote relevant heritage information to visitors	



during the inspiration part of their journey as they continue to develop our offering to a wider audience

The Park Authority's updated Gaelic Language Plan was approved in February 2025 and reporting on the first year of the Plan will be submitted to Bord na Gaidhlig by end May 2026.

4. Fair work and wellbeing

Identify measures and support needed to encourage fair work practices and a wellbeing economy in the tourism industry.

Park Authority, CBP

CBP have been engaging with NHS Scotland to provide a number of workshops and information sharing events focussed on staff wellbeing, as this has been highlighted as a major concern by many businesses. At the CBP conference in November 2025, NHS Scotland and mental health charities had a stand in the main event space and also ran workshops throughout the day. All workshops were well attended and feedback has been very positive from those who attended.

5. Employment, training and skills

Promote the Cairngorms as an exceptional destination to work in the visitor economy and develop a training initiative to strengthen links between local schools / further and higher education organisations and the tourism and hospitality sector.

CBP, Highlands and Islands Enterprise / Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland

The Park Authority continues to promote routes into the countryside careers through the Cairngorms Junior Ranger Project and the annual recruitment of trainee rangers.

CBP has continued to gain evidence from the business community on specific training and skills they feel they are lacking in the area, to better coordinate more relevant support from other stakeholders. They have been in talks with DYW and Business Gateway to collaborate more closely and better support various business sectors.

At the CBP conference in November 2025, local high schools were again invited to participate in the event and start to make connections with local businesses. Kingussie High School this year took a stand in the main event space to demonstrate what they have been learning about in school which gave potential future employers some insights into what has been delivered at school level.



CBP have also been working closely with Highland Council on their Workforce for the Future Charter. They have given feedback to the programme and will be promoting it to our members through regular channels when some changes have been made.

A rural careers event “Your Future Here” is in the planning stages for later in 2026.

6. Business engagement

Review and refresh the ‘Make it Yours’ business engagement programme to ensure it meets the needs of our partners and informs and inspires frontline staff.

Park Authority, CBP

The Make it Yours online video continues to be promoted as an asset for training frontline staff, and the Park Authority are assessing options for a wider roll-out of face-to-face sessions, probably tied to other events.

7. Equalities, diversity and inclusion

Encourage a more diverse range of visitors to the Cairngorms by addressing barriers identified by underrepresented groups and people from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and support training for frontline hospitality staff to offer a warm welcome to visitors of all backgrounds.

Park Authority

The Park Authority continues to work in partnerships with a range of organisations to take forward work in this area, including Black Professionals Scotland, Able2Adventure and LGBT Youth Scotland.

The results of the 2024/5 visitor survey were discussed with the Park Authority’s Equalities Advisory Panel, who advised that more focussed work on low-income visitors should be a priority. Work on this area of concern is likely to take place in 2026/7.

CBP have been working with Highland Council on their Workforce for the Future Charter, looking to make more jobs and careers more accessible to people who feel they have faced significant barriers in the past when seeking employment.

CBP continues to gather evidence from businesses about challenges they face when advertising to underrepresented groups. Many face challenges due to dated buildings and infrastructure, in these cases they are signposting businesses to any funding



opportunities that are available to them or linking them in with the relevant planning officers.

8. Local visitor levy

Engage with stakeholders to ensure that Scottish Government's proposals for a local visitor levy meet the needs of the Cairngorms National Park.

Local authorities,
Park Authority

The Visitor Levy (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill was introduced on 06 January 2026 and is currently at Stage 2. This will give local authorities more flexibility, notably by allowing the option of a fixed rather than percentage-base fee.

The Park Authority continue to liaise with Local Authorities on their visitor levy plans, research and consultations.

Place

Outcome: A place that people want to live in, work in and visit that works for all.

Visitors contribute not just economically but socially to life in the National Park, supporting investment in infrastructure, businesses and events to help create thriving communities. We want to spread these benefits by developing and promoting assets in communities with additional visitor capacity and encouraging visits at traditionally quieter times of year.

Delivering against National Park Partnership Plan objectives:

- C1 – Access to housing
- C5 – Visitors to the National Park
- C6 – A sustainable destination
- C8 – Accessible path and cycle network
- C9 – High-quality visitor experience

Delivering against Scotland Outlook 2030:

- Our thriving places
- Our memorable experiences



Actions	Partners Lead first
1. Tourism infrastructure Produce a Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan that defines the priorities for investment in tourism infrastructure for the next five years and seek additional funding for delivery.	Park Authority, VisitScotland
The Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan 2023-28 was updated in light of Cairngorms 2030 projects. After a hiatus, the national Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund ran again in 2025. A successful application was made for funding towards Loch Morlich Beach car park improvements which are being carried out by Forestry and Land Scotland in winter / spring 2026. A number of smaller projects have also been undertaken directly by the Park Authority or thorough grant support to partners	
2. Visitor accommodation Monitor the implementation of the new short-term let licensing arrangements and the development of measures such as the short-term let control areas and ensure that we maintain an appropriate range of accommodation for visitors.	Park Authority, local authorities
Short-term let licensing databases have been used to update the bed stock files for the STEAM model which estimates the volume and value of the visitor economy, giving more robust data for monitoring going forward.	
3. Tourism assets Promote and invest in tourism assets produced by previous place-based initiatives – including Badenoch: The Storylands, Snow Roads Scenic Route, Tomintoul and Glenlivet Dark Sky Park, Cateran Eco-museum, the Speyside Way and Deeside Way.	CBP, Park Authority, VisitScotland
VisitCairngorms.com continues to be the number one destination website for the area to inspire visitors and provide them with all of the necessary information ahead of their trip. For key assets such as Snow roads, Dark Skies etc. CBP have wherever possible made as much information as possible on visitcairngorms.com rather than directing traffic to other websites. This has resulted in more time being spent on the site and allows them to provide more reliable and up to date information. CBP have started a	



complete revamp of their online content to ensure the information they provide is factually correct and continues to score highly on any search engine algorithms.

4. Reducing seasonality

Support development of new products and events to encourage visits at quieter times of year, particularly through the winter months. Commission destination marketing campaigns to foster growth at traditionally quieter times of year and to encourage longer stays, with increased value to the local economy.

Park Authority and CBP

CBP have continued to work with a variety of stakeholders to run the “Where Winter Comes to Life” again for another year, with funding support from the Park Authority. They have increased the amount of PR work we have done in recent years and ensured that it aligns with wider marketing efforts to best utilise resources.

STEAM data for 2024 shows a notable increase in visitor numbers and spend in the off-peak winter months, and initial business feedback for December 2025 was very positive.

5. Business support

Develop opportunities for businesses to use their location in a National Park to build sustainable growth through branding, product development and targeted marketing.

CBP, Park Authority

There are currently [51 businesses](#) signed up to the redeveloped Cairngorms [brand charter scheme](#).

The Park Authority continue to support businesses through funding and service-level agreements with Growbiz and the CBP.

GrowBiz has supported 135 clients across the Park with 1:1 support so far in 2025/26.

CBP has facilitated a number of sessions between members and the Park Authority to explore the development of a “Made in the Cairngorms” brand that could open new opportunities for businesses operating in the area. This new branding could also potentially encourage new business opportunities in the area.



Through working with a number of members, CBP has developed more workshops that have been aimed at showcasing the importance of branding in the “customer journey”. They have held workshops across the entire park as they look to collaborate with other organisations and businesses to increase consumer awareness and spend in the area

6. Partnership working

Build on the partnership structures and policies developed in response to the Covid-19 lockdowns as a model for resilience against future uncertainty.

Park Authority

The Managing for Visitors group continues to meet fortnightly over the summer months, and monthly during the winter, to share information on visitor pressures and co-ordinate communications and messaging. They have been particularly heavily involved in developing plans around the introduction of the new fire byelaw.

The Park Authority is represented on all the National Visitor Management sub-groups co-ordinated by VisitScotland.

The Cairngorms Tourism Partnership continues to meet three times a year.