



Cairngorms
National Park Authority

Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a'
Mhonaidh Ruaidh

Formal Board Paper 1 Annex 1.23

13 March 2026

Paper 1

Annex 1.23



Cairngorms
National Park Authority
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Mhonaidh Ruaidh

Productive places

Schedule 23: Tourism

Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan: Evidence Report

March 2026





Schedule 23: Tourism

March 2026

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Requirements addressed in this schedule

Table 1 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended (CNPA003), regarding the issue addressed in this schedule.

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)(f)	Any change which the planning authority think may occur in relation to any of the matters mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (eb).
Section 16(2)(a)	To take into account— <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. The National Planning Framework andii. Any local outcomes improvement plan (within the meaning of section 6 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015) for the part of their district to which the local development plan relates,iii. Any registered local place plan (see schedule 19) that is for the part of their district to which the local development plan relates.
Section 16(2)(aa)	To have regard to the desirability of preserving disused railway infrastructure for the purpose of ensuring its availability for possible future public transport requirements.
Section 16(2)(b)	Are to have regard to such information and considerations as may be prescribed.
Section 16(2)(c)	May have regard to such other information and considerations as appear to them to be relevant.
Section 16B(3)(a)	The evidence report is to set out the planning authority's view on the matters listed in section 15(5) for land in the part of the authority's district to which the local development plan will relate,
Section 16B(3)(e)	Include such other matters as are prescribed.
Section 16B(4)(c)	The evidence report is also to include a statement on the extent to which the views expressed under paragraphs (a) and (b) have been taken into account in the report.
Section 264A	In the exercise, with respect to any land in a National Park, of any power under the planning Acts, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of exercising the power consistently with



Section	Requirement
	the National Park Plan as adopted under section 12(7)(a) of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 (asp 10).

Links to evidence

International documents

- CNPA002 - United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Legislation

- CNPA003 - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997
- CNPA004 - National Park (Scotland) Act 2000
- CNPA634 - Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill as passed
- CNPA664 - Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003

National documents

- CNPA008 - National Planning Framework 4
- CNPA060 - Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero: climate change plan 2018 – 2032 –update
- CNPA175 - Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism for a Sustainable Future.
- CNPA176 - Visit Scotland Visitor Management Plan
- CNPA084 - Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045: Tackling the Nature Emergency in Scotland
- CNPA085 - Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024–2030
- CNPA188 - Scottish Parliament (2022). Scottish Tourism Month 2022. Meeting of the Parliament. Accessed 06/06/2023.
- CNPA194 - The economic, social, and cultural impact of Scotland's snowsports sector 2022
- CNPA200 - Scottish Outdoor Access Code
- CNPA823 - Tourism in Scotland: the economic contribution of the sector

Key agency documents

- CNPA177 - Our Past Our Future; The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment
- CNPA179 - Our Past Our Future; The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment Delivery Framework 2023 – 2028



- CNPA183 - Cairngorm Mountain Masterplan
- CNPA196 - Assessing the economic impacts of nature-based tourism in Scotland
- CNPA199 - Sustainable Tourism
- CNPA201 - Scotland's Historic Environment Audit 2024
- CNPA815 - NatureScot Local Access Guidance for Water Users

National Park Authority documents

- CNPA010 - Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2022 – 2027
- CNPA016 - Cairngorms National Park Local Development 2021
- CNPA026 - Local Development Plan interactive map engagement report 2024
- CNPA027 - Cairngorms Youth Action Team Place Standard Tool Engagement 2024
- CNPA058 - Grantown Grammar School Place Standard Tool Engagement 2024
- CNPA178 - Cairngorms National Park Authority: Paths and trails
- CNPA180 - Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Action Plan 2023 – 2028
- CNPA181 - Cairngorms Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan 2023 – 2028
- CNPA182 - Cairngorms National Park Authority: Walking
- CNPA185 - Managing for Visitors Plan 2023
- CNPA187 - Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan (2015)
- CNPA191 - Cairngorms National Park STEAM Report 2023
- CNPA204 - The Economic, Social and Environmental Contribution of Landowners in the Cairngorms National Park
- CNPA334 - Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021 – Delivery Programme 2025
- CNPA528 - Cairngorms 2030 projects
- CNPA681 - Kingussie High School Higher Criminology Students Place Standard Tool Engagement 2024
- CNPA814 - Active Cairngorms Action Plan 2023 - 2028
- CNPA816 - Capercaillie Emergency Plan 2025 – 2030
- CNPA817 - Cairngorms Visitor Survey 2014 – 2015
- CNPA818 - Cairngorms National Park Authority Visitor Survey 2019 – 2020
- CNPA819 - Cairngorms National Park Authority Visitor Survey 2024 – 25 Finding Report
- CNPA821 - Cairngorms National Park Authority resident and work survey 2024 – 2025



- CNPA830 - Cairngorms National Park: Help us stamp out irresponsible camping!
- CNPA832 - Cairngorms National Park Authority: Title: Local Access Guidance at Loch Kinord - Proposals for 2022
- CNPA833 - Cairngorms Local development plan place standard tool engagement with Kingussie High School Youth Forum 2025
- CNPA834 - Local development plan place standard tool engagement with the Cairngorms National Park Junior Rangers 2025
- CNPA835 - Cairngorms Local development plan place standard tool engagement with Aviemore Neurodiversity Support Youth Group 2025
- CNPA893 - Cairngorms Capercaillie Project
- CNPA1104 - Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan engagement - gamification approach 2025
- CNPA1105 - Local Development Plan engagement – Planning Power with Cairngorms 2030
- CNPA1136 - Cairngorms Capercaillie Project: Trail Feathers Project
- CNPA1363 - Topic: Tourism - engagement version

Local authority documents

- CNPA237 - Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee Item 6: Badenoch and Strathspey Area Plan
- CNPA636 - Aberdeenshire Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017 – 2027 (website)
- CNPA637 - Angus Community Plan 2022 – 2030
- CNPA638 - 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan
- CNPA639 - Moray Local Outcomes Improvement Plan v2
- CNPA640 - Perth and Kinross Community Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan) 2022 – 2032
- CNPA1091 – 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan – Delivery Plan

Community action plans

- CNPA063 - Aviemore, Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
- CNPA064 - Blair Athol Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
- CNPA065 - Grantown-on-Spey Community Action Plan 2025
- CNPA066 - Kingussie Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030



- CNPA119 - Ballater & Crathie Community Action Plan 2030
- CNPA121 - Braemar Community Action Plan
- CNPA122 - Carrbridge Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
- CNPA123 - Cromdale and Advie Community Action Plan
- CNPA125 - Dalwhinnie Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
- CNPA127 - Kincaig Community Action Plan
- CNPA129 - Laggan Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
- CNPA130 - Mount Blair Community Action Plan
- CNPA131 - Nethy Bridge Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
- CNPA132 - Newtonmore Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
- CNPA133 - Strathdon Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
- CNPA331 - Dulnain Bridge Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
- CNPA374 - Boat of Garten Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

Data sources

- CNPA023 - Tomintoul and Glenlivet Cairngorms Dark Sky Park
- CNPA067 - CORINE Land Cover data
- CNPA189 - Economic forecasts for Cairngorms National Park 2022
- CNPA190 - Visit Cairngorms
- CNPA192 - Cairngorms Business Partnership Business Barometer Report Quarter 1 2024
- CNPA193 - Cairngorms Business Partnership Business Barometer Reports Quarter 1 2023
- CNPA195 - VisitScotland / Scottish Enterprise Scotland Golf Visitor Survey 2016 Final Report
- CNPA820 - Cairngorms Business Barometer 2024 Quarter 1 Summary of key results
- CNPA1247 - Badenoch Storylands
- CNPA1248 - Snow Roads Scenic Route
- CNPA1249 - CATERAN Eco museum
- CNPA1250 - Scotland's Great Trails: Speyside Way
- CNPA1251 - Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust: CATERAN Trail
- CNPA1252 - The Dava Way Association
- CNPA1253 - Cairngorms Creative Directory



Other relevant documents

- CNPA197 - Summary Report – The socioeconomic and biodiversity impacts of driven grouse moors and the employment rights of gamekeepers
- CNPA198 - Scotch Whisky's Economic Impact 2022
- CNPA202 - Scotways: Catalogue of Rights of Way
- CNPA203 - Visit Scotland: Motorhomes, caravans and camping tourism insights
- CNPA205 - Driven Grouse Shooting: Assessing the economic and social impacts of future options for grouse moor management
- CNPA825 - MTB Tourism
- CNPA658 - Walking Highlands: The Munros
- CNPA826 - Socio-economic and biodiversity impacts of driven grouse moors in Scotland: Part 1: Socio-economic impacts of driven grouse moors in Scotland
- CNPA827 - Socio-economic and biodiversity impacts of driven grouse moors in Scotland: Part 3: Use of GIS/remote sensing to identify areas of grouse moors, and to assess potential for alternative land uses
- CNPA828 - Visit Scotland: Motorhome and Camping Trips in Scotland (2023) Report
- CNPA829 - Scotch Whisky visitor centres become top visitor attraction in Scotland
- CNPA831 - Welcome to 1000 Huts
- CNPA1254 - Cairngorm Mountain Piste Map
- CNPA1255 - Visit Scotland: Map of The Lecht Ski Report
- CNPA1256 - Glenshee Ski Resort Piste Maps

Consultation material

- CNPA1340 - Evidence report engagement responses
- CNPA014 - Email - Highlands and Islands Enterprise on changes to schedules

Summary of evidence

Policy context

National Planning Framework 4

The National Planning Framework 4 (CNPA008) 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 (CNPA002). National Planning Framework 4, in relation to tourism, aims to deliver net zero alongside a wellbeing economy.



Policy 30 specifically addresses tourism, which is intended to encourage, promote and facilitate sustainable tourism development which benefits local people, is consistent with Scotland's net zero and nature commitments, and inspires people to visit Scotland. According to the policy Local Development Plans must:

- Support the recovery, growth and long term resilience of the tourism sector.
- Take account of relevant national and local sector driven tourism strategies.

And have a spatial strategy that:

- Identify suitable locations which reflect opportunities for tourism development by taking full account of the needs of communities, visitors, the industry and the environment.
- Identify areas of pressure where existing tourism provision is having adverse impacts on the environment or the quality of life and health and wellbeing of local communities, and where further development is not appropriate.

Other key policy connections include: 1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31.

Legislation and national documents

National Park (Scotland) Act 2000

The National Park has four distinct aims as set out in The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 (CNPA004). As outlined in Schedule 1: Plan outcomes, these will be amended by the Natural Environment Scotland (Scotland) Bill (CNPA634) once enacted. These are, as to be amended by the Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill:

- To conserve and enhance the area's natural and cultural heritage.
- To promote sustainable management and use of the area's natural resources.
- To promote public understanding and enjoyment of the area's natural and cultural heritage.
- To promote sustainable economic, social and cultural development of the area's communities.

All of the aims are relevant to the matters discussed in this schedule. 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).



Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018–2032: Securing a Green Recovery on a Path to Net Zero

The document (CNPA060) updates the 2018 Climate Change Plan. Since that Plan, Scottish Government have set new ambitious targets to end its contribution to climate change by 2045. Scottish Government have committed to reduce emissions by 75% by 2030 (compared with 1990) and to net zero by 2045. As Scotland emerged from the Covid 19 pandemic the Government identified an opportunity to rebuild the economy in a way that delivers a greener, fairer and more equal society. This Plan sets out the Governments approach to delivering a green recovery and sets out a pathway to deliver its climate change targets. In line with the 2018 plan, the focus is on the period up to 2032.

The Update recognises that Scotland's natural capital is one of its greatest assets and is central to the future net zero economy, developing thriving rural economies based around woodland creation, peatland restoration and biodiversity as well as sustainable tourism, food and drink and energy. Matters relating to woodland, peatland and biodiversity are covered in Schedule 5: Natural heritage.

The Update also aims to support people to shift to opportunities within sectors as part of the transition, such as ecotourism, it also acknowledges the importance of farmers, crofters and land managers, through their stewardship who manage the landscape vital for the tourism sectors success. The Proposed Plan should support the aims of the Climate Change Plan in relation to tourism development.

Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism for a Sustainable Future

Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism for a Sustainable Future (CNPA175) is the National Strategy for tourism in Scotland. It is delivered by the following partners: Scottish Tourism Alliance, Scottish Government, VisitScotland, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Skills Development Scotland. Recognising the importance of the tourism sector to Scotland's economic strategy, it supports the vision of Scotland becoming a 21st century tourism world leader. The strategy delivers strong focus on sustainability delivered through the four main priorities:

- Our passionate people – adoption of fair work practices and increased career mobility in the sector. Seeking to increase diversity in the sectors' workforce.
- Our thriving places – engage local communities to become stakeholders in the sector, to assist Destination Management Organisation's to manage tourism effectively and responsibly.
- Our diverse businesses – supporting the sector to become more entrepreneurial, agile and resilient. Also driving change to help the sector commit to sustainable practices.



- Our memorable experiences – recognising the need to ensure the sector is delivering inclusive and accessible destinations.

The Cairngorms Business Partnership act as the Destination Management Organisation for the National Park Area, delivered through www.visitcairngorms.com (CNPA190).

Scotland Outlook 2030 advocates for sustainable growth with everyone playing an active role, while protecting people and place. Its mission, recognising the need for increased inclusion is that; 'Together we will grow the value and positively enhance the benefits of tourism across Scotland by delivering the very best for our visitors, our businesses, our people, our communities and our environment.'

The strategy further highlights the need for net-zero within the tourism sector to contribute to the national ambition of a net-zero Scotland by 2045. To achieve its vision six national priorities have been identified namely:

1. Improving Digital Infrastructure and use in understanding the sector through data collection and analytics.
2. Strong policy that supports the 21st century tourism vision.
3. Access to public and private investment to ensure continued growth.
4. Improving connectivity – through better transport and digital connectivity infrastructure.
5. Better collaboration through stronger cross sector networking to improve collaboration delivering greater economic value.
6. Positioning Scotland's tourism industry both nationally and internationally to attract growth in both visitor numbers and employment opportunities.

Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045: Tackling the Nature Emergency in Scotland

The Strategy (CNPA084) sets out a clear ambition: for Scotland to be Nature Positive by 2030, and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity across the country by 2045. To deliver the vision set out in the Strategy, Scottish Government have identified a detailed set of outcomes which help define what success will look like across the land, rivers, lochs and wetlands in the National Park (and across Scotland broadly). The Proposed Plan should support the Outcomes set out in the Strategy relevant to the National Park, which are:

- Ecosystems will be diverse, healthy, resilient and deliver a wide range of ecosystem services.
- Protected areas will be larger, better connected and in good condition.



- The abundance and distribution of species will have recovered and there will be no loss of diversity within species.
- Scotland's internationally important species will have increased in numbers and have healthy resilient populations.
- Natural capital will be embedded in policy making.
- Nature-Based Solutions, such as tree-planting, peatland and blue carbon habitat restoration, will be central to Scottish Government's efforts to deliver NetZero and adapt to climate change.
- Harmful invasive non-native species (INNS) will be managed so that established invasive non-native species no longer degrade native habitats and species or impede their restoration and regeneration and new introductions are managed quickly and effectively.
- Biodiversity as a concept will be understood and valued across the population and embedded in educational curriculums.
- Nature Networks across Scotland's landscapes will underpin the resilience and health of species and habitats.
- Farmland practices will have resulted in a substantial regeneration in biodiversity, ecosystem and soil health and significantly reduced carbon emissions while sustaining high quality food production.
- Management of deer ranges, grouse moors and upland agriculture will be contributing to the regeneration of biodiversity in upland areas.
- Forest and woodland management will have led to sustainable natural regeneration; a greater diversity of woodland species; increased woodland cover with a healthy understorey, enhanced woodland connectivity; and improved integration of trees into other land uses.
- Soil health will have been improved by tackling loss of organic carbon, erosion, compaction, and the impacts of grazing, air pollution and climate change, and will function as a nature-based solution to flooding, erosion and biodiversity loss.
- The actions Scotland takes to improve biodiversity will create new green jobs and economic opportunities to supporting thriving communities.
- Towns and cities will include nature-rich environments close to all communities, contributing to Nature Networks and measurable increases in urban biodiversity.
- Multi-functional urban nature-based solutions will enable people and biodiversity to adapt to Scotland's changing climate by cooling the urban environment and managing extreme rainfall events, with blue and green infrastructure designed and managed to benefit biodiversity, provide habitats and allow wildlife to move through urban areas.



Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024 - 2030

The Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024 – 2030 (CNPA085) is a series of rolling delivery plans which form part of Scottish Government's strategic framework for biodiversity, in conjunction with the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (CNPA084). It includes actions needed to ensure Scotland is on track to achieving the vision and outcomes in the Strategy.

The Strategy Delivery Plan contains the most urgent priority actions which are aimed at putting Scotland on track to halting the loss of biodiversity and being nature positive by 2030. These actions will:

- Accelerate restoration and regeneration.
- Protect nature on land (and at sea), across and beyond protected areas
- Embed nature-friendly farming, fishing and forestry.
- Recover and protect vulnerable and important species
- Invest in nature
- Take action on the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss

The Delivery Plan sets out the action to 'Ensure grouse moor management sustains healthy biodiversity'. Grouse shooting is a key tourism attraction in the National Park and therefore bilateral implications apply to this action.

The action to 'Expand and enhance Nature Networks and ecological connectivity' in the National Park is key to providing a range of opportunities for local people and visitors, especially those in urban areas, to experience and connect with nature.

The Delivery Plan highlights the need to Undertake measures to reduce human pressures to give habitats and species (especially specialists; arctic / alpine) more chance of surviving and improve the status of red listed species in Scotland. This will need to be reflected in the National Park with careful visitor management measures to support this.

The Proposed Plan will have regard for the Strategy and the Delivery Plan and take it into account when designating land for tourism and recreation use which may directly or indirectly impact biodiversity.

Scottish Outdoor Access Code

In Scotland, you can go on to most land to enjoy the outdoors – as long as you behave responsibly. This is known as Scottish access rights delivered through the Scottish



Outdoor Access Code (CNPA200) and is different to the position in England and Wales. When you are enjoying the outdoors, you must follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Scottish access rights apply, for example, to hills and moors, forests and woods, beaches and the coast, rivers and lochs, parks and some types of farmlands. There are also some common-sense exceptions, including houses and gardens, other buildings and their yards or compounds, school grounds and places which charge for entry. Access rights include things like walking, cycling, climbing, horse-riding, kayaking, swimming and watching wildlife, but do not include things like shooting, fishing or access with motor vehicles.

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code is based on three key principles

- Respect the interests of others.
- Care for the environment.
- Take responsibility for your own actions.

The Code provides more detailed guidance on a range of different activities. Land managers must manage their land and water in a way that respects access rights, and the Code also provides guidance to help them do this.

Visit Scotland Visitor Management Plan

The Plan (CNPA176) is Visit Scotland's coordinated Scotland-wide strategic approach which aims to educate key audiences to enjoy Scotland's countryside responsibly. It pulls together the current and planned actions into a cohesive plan.

The Plan offers a vision of how the visitor experience in Scotland will develop over a ten year period. An action log records progress against its four strategy pillars:

- Educating our current and future visitors.
- Investing in Scotland's current and future visitor management infrastructure and services.
- Delivering a joined up and cohesive action plan across Scotland.
- Becoming and remaining a world leader in visitor management.

The Plan identifies the Cairngorms National Park as a key management hotspot. This approach to managing the challenges associated with this status are set out within the Park Authority's Sustainable Tourism Action Plan (CNPA180) and Sustainable Infrastructure Plan (CNPA181).



Key agency documents

Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment 2023

Our Past, Our Future (CNPA177) recognises the importance historic environmental to the visitor economy and a number of its priorities seek to encourage sustainable tourism. These are:

- Priority 1 – Delivering the transition to net zero, which will include work to reduce emissions from heritage tourism visits.
- Priority 2 – Empowering resilient and inclusive communities and places.
- Priority 3 – Building a wellbeing economy, which will include work to develop and share approaches to responsible tourism, ensuring tourism contributes to the economy without being detrimental to communities and the environment.

These priorities align with those of National Planning Framework 4 (CNPA008) and the National Park Partnership Plan 2022 – 2027 (CNPA010) and the Proposed Plan should support these through its spatial strategy.

To support Our Past, Our Future a Delivery Framework (CNPA179) has been published which serves as a roadmap for translating the strategy mission into actionable initiatives, workstreams and support. This framework outlines mechanisms, timelines and milestones to guide implementation. The framework is informed by detailed and summary baseline evaluation reports, which assess how the sector is currently performing against the published priorities and outcomes of the strategy, in terms of evidence and data.

Cairngorm Mountain Masterplan

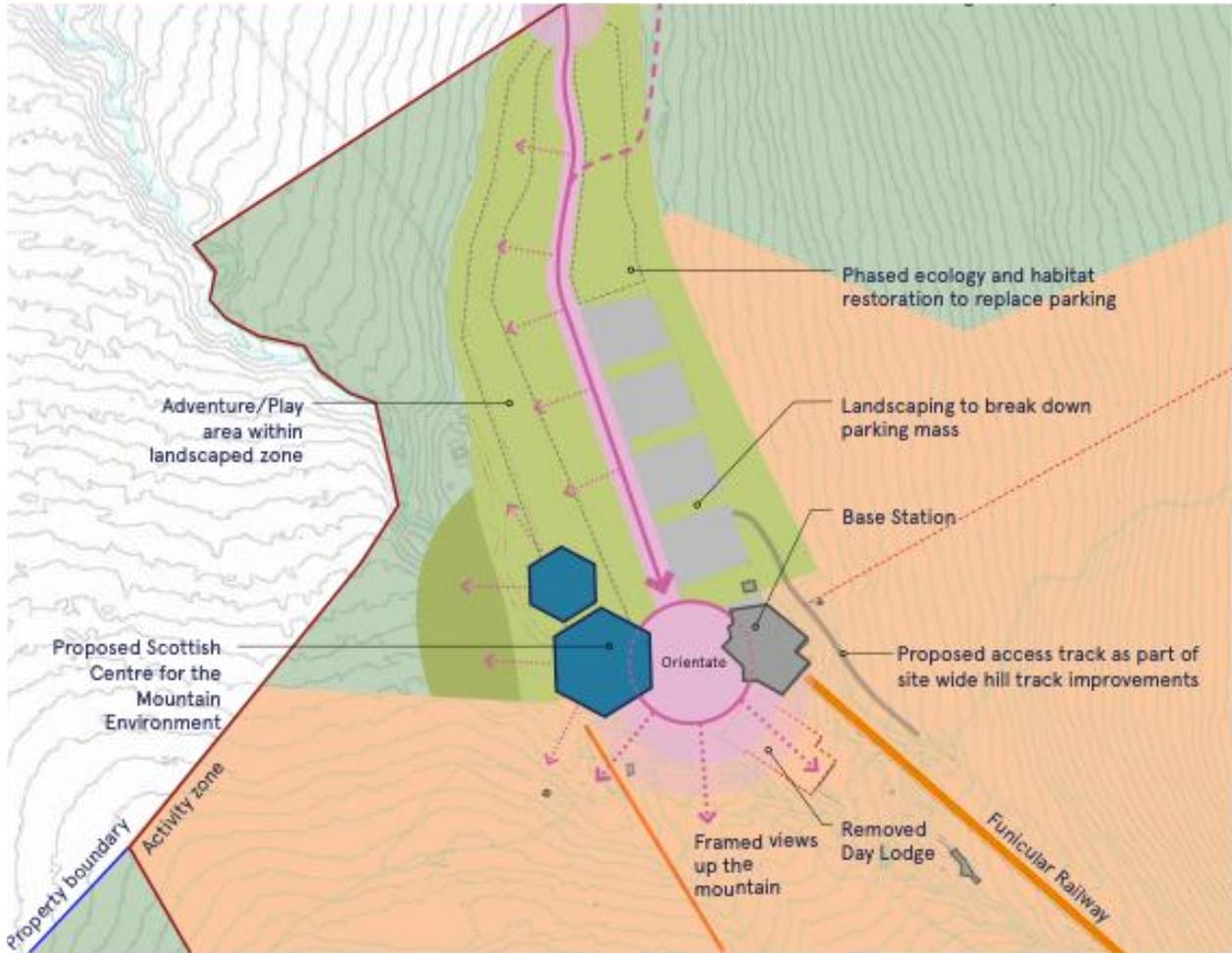
Cairngorm and Glenmore together constitute an iconic destination in the Cairngorms National Park. The area outlined in the Masterplan (CNPA183) attracts around 40% of all visitors to the National Park (and is in public ownership on behalf of the people of Scotland). The Cairngorm Estate is owned and managed by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the National Forest Estate is managed by Forest and Land Scotland. The area is of great importance for recreation and conservation, and its long term management is crucial for the local economy. A masterplan for Cairngorm Mountain was published in 2021 by Highlands and Islands Enterprise. The masterplan aims to harness and optimise Cairngorms potential in a sustainable way for the benefit of present and future generations. The masterplan covers the period of 25 years from 2021, with five yearly reviews.



The Masterplan is an intended framework to enable the Park Authority to consider the impact of future applications not only as individual projects but as contributors to a joined-up vision of Cairngorm's future that is based on targeted and public consultation.

One of the visions guiding principles to create year-round inclusive offerings for all users and all groups, supports objective C5 of the National Park Partnership Plan (CNPA010) to stabilise visitor numbers in the peak season, focusing growth during the off-peak. This will also contribute to the economic growth of the National Park and off-season employment within the tourism sector.

The masterplan's 25-year vision also aim to promote active travel and sustainable transport, by promoting the enhancement of local bus services serving the mountain, as well as providing facilities for electric car and bike charging at Cairngorm. The masterplan also sets out a pathway for de-carbonising the mountain facilities to attain net-zero, through the promotion of low-carbon transport and self-sufficiency through renewable energy on-site production. The masterplan includes proposals for development on the site to support its 25-year vision (Figure 1) which can be supported through the next Local Development Plan.



- As the primary entry point for the mountain estate, Cairngorm gateway should create a sense of arrival and drama. Views are framed on the approach by the Base Station and new Scottish Centre for the Mountain Environment. Pausing in this orientation space creates the opportunity for visitors to appreciate all that is available on the mountain.

- Approach (active travel)
- Activity zone
- Property boundary
- Funicular railway
- Proposed new chairlift
- Views
- Proposed trail
- Approach (active travel)
- Arrival and orientation
- Primary activity zone
- Landscaped buffer zone
- Ecology and habitat restoration
- Enhanced wilderness edge

Masterplan zone definitions in section 6.0 p.42
0 10 20 30m

40

Figure 1 Cairngorm Mountain 25-year Vision. Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 2021 (CNPA183)



The Cairngorm Mountain Masterplan sets out a number of key strategies derived from the vision's guiding principles and Highlands and Islands Enterprise's core objectives for Cairngorm Mountain.

The Visions guiding principles for Cairngorm Mountain are:

- Be a centre of excellence in sport, outdoor activities, education, research and mountain environment
- Develop snowsports
- Create year-round inclusive offerings for all users and groups
- Make full use of uplift infrastructure
- Optimise rather than maximise
- Respect the environment
- Complement range of Highland outdoor attractions
- Evolution of the Section 50 Agreement and Visitor Management Plan

The Highlands and Islands Enterprise Core objectives for Cairngorm Mountain set out in the Masterplan are:

- Operating model sustainability
- Develop opportunities to attract investment
- Excellent visitor experience for all
- Benefit the wider economy
- Social and community development
- Promote education and research opportunities
- Environmental sustainability
- Ecology and habitat restoration
- Equality, accessibility and inclusion

Key Strategies set out in the Masterplan are:

- An all-year round sustainable operating model
- Promote active travel and sustainable transport
- Scottish Centre for the Mountain Environment
- Mountain biking
- Access from Ptarmigan
- Cohesive ecology and habit restoration
- A mountain for all
- Excellent visitor services



- Decarbonise the mountain
- Monitoring implementation of new activities.

National Park Authority documents

National Park Partnership Plan 2022 – 2027

While the National Park Partnership Plan (CNPA010) must be considered as a whole, the following objectives are of particular relevance to this topic:

- B10. A Park for all aims to ensure that better opportunities for everyone to enjoy the National Park. This means promoting and supporting a visitor profile that is more diverse, especially in regard to people who are disabled, from low socio-economic backgrounds, LGBTQ+ and visitors from minority ethnic groups.
- C1. Housing aims to ensure that there is sufficient affordable housing stock to enable people to live and work within the National Park. The Partnership Plan sets out the need to understand better the economic and social dynamics behind second homes, vacant and short-term lets, and reduce the loss of existing or newly built properties to such uses.
- C5. Visitors to the National Park aims to stabilise visitor numbers in the peak season, focusing growth on quieter months and on those areas that have the infrastructure and capacity to accommodate additional visitors.
- C6. A sustainable destination aims to secure the National Park's reputation as an international exemplar in sustainable tourism and management of protected areas.
- C7. Transport to and around the National Park seeks to address the need to improve the public transport and active travel provision in the National Park for visitors (and residents). The targets set out by the policy will require additional infrastructure to support the goals. Specifically targets include: 20% of current journeys by visitors, commuters and residents to be completed by a means other than cars, and 25% of visitors to access the National Park by public transport. The latter is, to a great extent outwith the control of the Park Authority, reliant on improvements to national public transport operations. Provision in the Proposed Plan should be made for E-bike and adapted bike hire facilities and charging facilities in all the major visitor hubs by 2030.
- C8 Accessible path and cycle network seeks to address the need to improve the existing path, cycle and outdoor access networks in the National Park. To comply with the policy the Proposed Plan should encourage the development of additional safe and inclusive off-road or segregated on-road routes between communities by 2030.
- C9. High quality visitor experience addresses the need for better infrastructure to support increased capacity while reducing visitor impact. The Proposed Plan will



need to ensure development supports the need for increased toilet and changing facilities for people with additional needs (Policy C4).

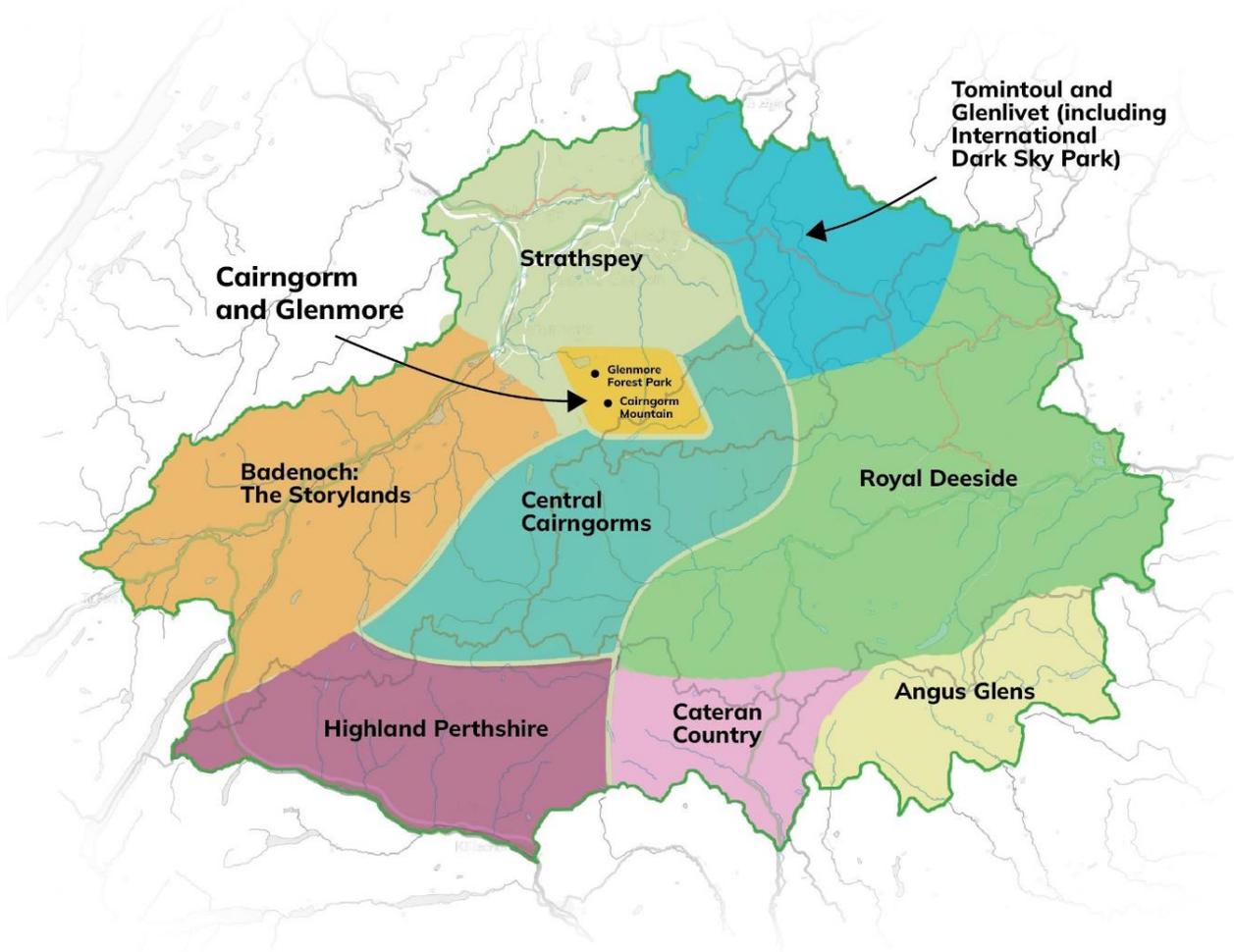


Figure 2 Visitor experience areas in the Cairngorms National Park. Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan, 2022 (CNPA010). Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026.

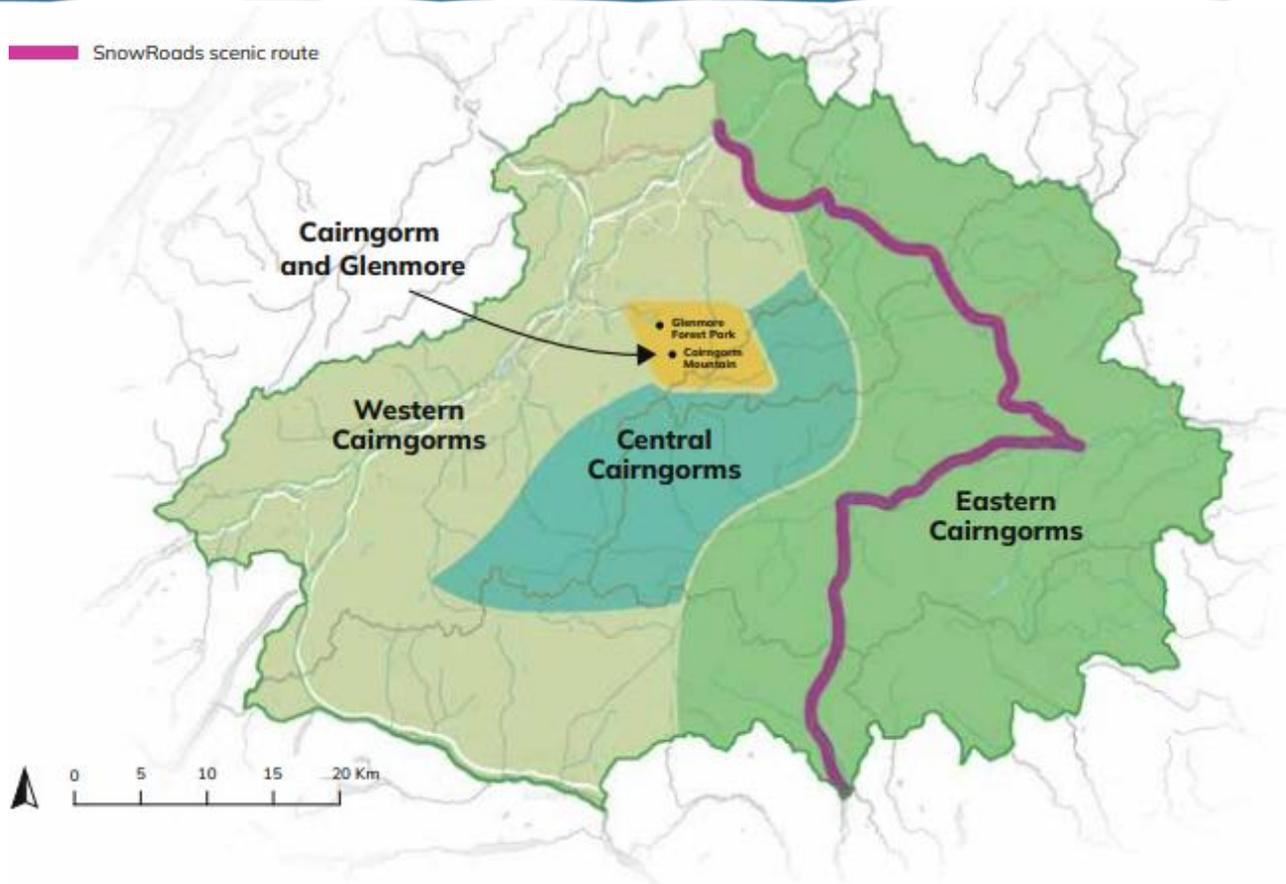


Figure 3 Visitor infrastructure in the Cairngorms National Park. Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan, 2022 (CNPA010). Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026.

Opportunities for future tourism growth can be supported through the Local Development Plan through the facilitating the rehabilitation of redundant rural buildings (Policy C3) and reduction of reliance on private car use for journeys in and around the National Park. New tourism development in the National Park will also need to positively contribute to the sense of place (Policy C3).

Policy C6 addresses the need to protect archaeological sites and their settings. The Proposed Plan should have regard for existing sites of cultural or historical relevance. Any proposed spatial strategy needs to also ensure it protects and enhances the built heritage and designed landscapes (Policy C6).

Cairngorms 2030

The Cairngorms 2030 projects (CNPA528) will support the delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan 2022 – 2027 (CNPA010). Projects that relate to tourism with regard to the preparation of the Proposed Plan include:

- Community arts and culture programme



- Active communities
- Cairngorms Active Travel Plan
- E-bike network
- Glenmore transport plan
- Sustainable transport in the National Park

Matters relating to transport in the Cairngorms National Park are covered in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport.

Cairngorms Tourism Partnership

The Cairngorms Tourism Partnership was established in 2014 and brings together tourism businesses and organisations with key public sector partners. During the preparation of the Proposed Plan, the Park Authority should engage with the Partnership to ensure its views and input are recognised. Meetings are generally held twice a year and the remit of the partnership includes:

- Drawing up and overseeing the implementation of a Cairngorms Tourism Action Plan (CNPA180) to set agreed priorities for the development and marketing of tourism.
- Input to the national tourism strategy and review of local alignment.
- Securing resources to ensure effective delivery of the Area Tourism Partnership Plan¹.
- Acting, where appropriate, as a lobbying body to further the interests of local tourism, hospitality and leisure industries.
- Acting as a link between public and private sectors.
- Acting as a vehicle to engage the industry.
- Promoting the importance of economic, environmental and social sustainability as a key consideration in all discussions and delivery.

Promoting the importance of economic, environmental, and social sustainability as a key consideration in all discussions and delivery. The tourism partnership consists of representatives from the following agencies and organisations:

- Aberdeenshire Council
- Atholl Estates
- Balmoral Estate
- Cairngorms Business Partnership
- Glenlivet Distillery
- The Highland Council
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise

¹ Integrated into the National park Partnership Plan (CNPA010).



- Landmark Visitor Centre
- Moray Speyside Tourism
- RSPB Scotland
- Strathdon Tourism Group
- VisitAberdeenshire
- VisitScotland
- Voluntary Action in Badenoch and Strathspey

Sustainable Tourism Action Plan 2023 – 2028

Sustainable Tourism Action Plan (CNPA180) sits within the wider context of the National Park Partnership Plan 2022 – 2027 (CNPA010) which acts as the overarching sustainable tourism strategy.

The Cairngorms National Park has been accredited with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas since 2005, shortly after designation as a National Park. Every five years the National Park reviews its progress in the previous five-year period, assessing what has changed and prepare a new strategy and action plan for sustainable tourism.

To support the delivery of the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan the Proposed Plan will need to:

- Make provision for the opportunity to support, encourage and promote community-led tourism enterprises in the National Park.
- Develop and implement mechanisms to reduce disturbance on key species and recreational impacts on high ground.

The Proposed Plan should also help promote investment in tourism assets produced by previous place-based initiatives (see Figure 2 and Figure 3), which include:

- Badenoch Storylands (CNPA1247).
- Snow Roads Scenic Route (CNPA1248)
- Tomintoul and Glenlivet Dark Sky Park (CNPA023) (also refer to Schedule 6: Landscape for more detail)
- Catearan Eco museum (CNPA1249)
- Speyside Way and Deeside Way (Figure 4).

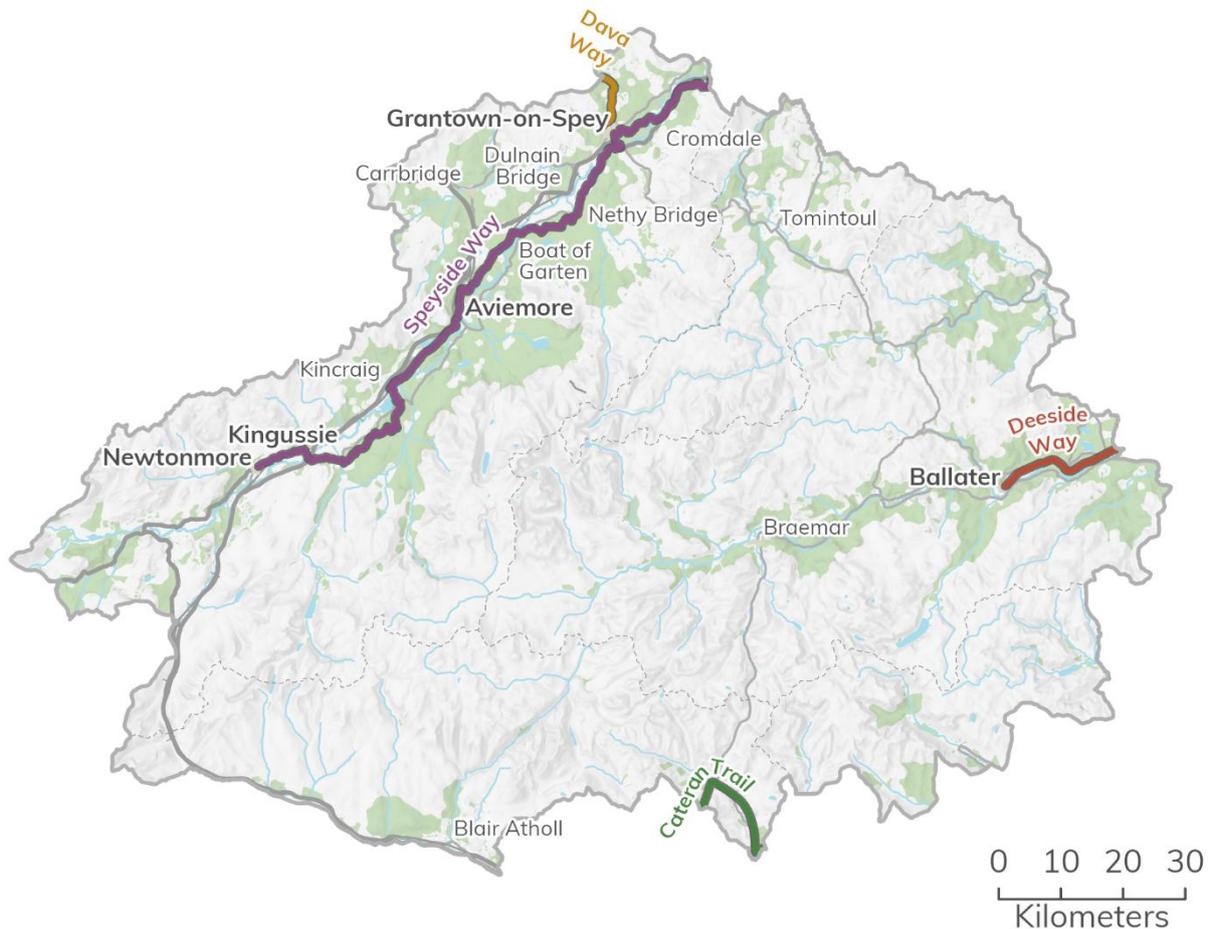


Figure 4 Long distance trails within the Cairngorms National Park. Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2026. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100040965, Cairngorms National Park Authority.

Alongside this Sustainable Tourism Action Plan sits a Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure Plan (CNPA181) that sets out a strategic approach to investment in, and maintenance of, tourism and visitor infrastructure in the Cairngorms National Park.

Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan 2023 – 2028

The Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan (CNPA181) sits within the wider context of the National Park Partnership Plan (CNPA010) which acts as the overarching sustainable tourism strategy for the National Park. The Proposed Plan should support the delivery of the Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan.

The Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure Plan has been prepared to add value to the new Park Partnership Plan by assessing the tourism infrastructure within the National Park through a process that includes:



- Developing a clear picture of existing tourism infrastructure provision across the Cairngorms National Park.
- Identifying pressure points or gaps in provision on either a site specific or issue basis.
- Identifying and prioritising tourism infrastructure improvements including those that can be delivered or taken to 'shovel read' stage in the near future.
- Developing a strategic approach to facility and path maintenance and upgrades.
- Developing appropriate data gathering and asset management systems to support future management of tourism infrastructure.

The Plan serves the function of an internal management tool to prioritise local investment and to assist in directing Park Authority resources. It is also the recognised Strategic Plan for the National Park against which future bids for Rural Tourism Infrastructure funding applications can be assessed.

The Plan helps identify a number of potential projects predominantly at visitor pressure points and give broad cost estimates for delivery. It provides an agreed list of strategic priorities that can support funding applications by both the National Park Authority and partners as well as facilitating quicker delivery of projects as further funding becomes available.

Many of the projects outlines in the Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure Plan are covered in more detail in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport, however they may also be listed in this schedule because of their relevance to the wider topic of tourism.

The proposed projects in the Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure Plan aim to address a wide range of identified problems at different locations across the National Park (Table 2) including:

- Improvements to signage
- Improvements access and parking management
- Improvements to the active travel networks
- Improvements to riverside access
- Extending the electric vehicle charging network
- Improvements to motorhome facilities and coach parking availability.

Table 2 Summary of the proposed projects for investment set out in the Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure Plan 2023 – 2028 (CNPA181).



Number	Location	Project type	Priority
1	Various	Rail Entry Point Signage	Medium
2	Various	Signage at Main Bus / Coach Entry Points	Medium
3	Various	Active Travel Infrastructure	Varies
4	Glenmore	Old Logging Way Active Travel Improvements	High
5	Various	Public Transport Infrastructure	High
6	Various	Enhancing the EV charge point network	Medium
7	Cairngorm Mountain	Cairngorm Mountain parking and active travel improvements	High
8	Glenmore	Parking management & visitor improvements	High
9	Ryvoan	Toilets and management of visitor pressures	Medium
10	Tullochgrue	Parking management	Medium
11	Loch an Eilean	Active Travel infrastructure and accessibility	High
12	Badenoch	Storylands Heritage sites parking	Medium
13	Glen Feshie	Parking management	Medium
14	Uath Lochans	Parking management	Medium
15	Feshie Bridge	Parking management & trail improvements	Medium
16	Kincraig Bridge	Parking and river access	Medium
17	Aviemore	Parking and transport facilities	High
18	Loch Pityoulish	Parking and improved access	Medium
19	Loch Vaa	Parking and improved access	Medium
20	Loch Garten	Trail improvements & car park connections	High
21	Grantown on Spey	Parking management	Medium
22	Tomintoul / Glenlivet	Motorhome facilities	Medium
23	Auchnerran	Parking & access improvements	Medium
24	Cambus 'oMay	Parking management & access improvements	High
25	Ballater	Coach Parking	Medium
26	Balmoral	Parking management & pedestrian access improvements	High
27	Angus Glens	Parking and sense of arrival improvements	Medium
28	Spittal of Glenshee	Motorhome, toilet and active travel facilities	Medium
29	Blair Atholl	Parking and active travel improvements	Medium



Number	Location	Project type	Priority
30	Various	Network of motorhome facilities	Medium
31	Snow Roads	Summit signage	Medium
32	Glenmore	Meall a' Bhuachaille path	Medium / High
33	Various	Core path network condition survey	High

Managing for Visitors Plan 2023

The Park Authority and its partners have been working within the national visitor management framework #RespectProtectEnjoy and the #CairngormsTogether framework to develop Managing for Visitors Plans for key areas in the National Park. The Managing for Visitors Plan (CNPA185) dovetails and support site-based visitor management plans and estate management objectives. The purpose of the Managing for Visitors Group is to:

- Provide a warm welcome and support exceptional experiences for the public to enjoy the outdoors.
- Mitigate any negative impacts from increased recreation in sensitive or popular sites.
- Reduce potential conflict between residents and visitors.
- Promote collaboration across estate and organisational boundaries, ensuring a positive visitor experience.
- Agree visitor infrastructure priorities for the area.

The group brings together the principal land managers from the public, private and third sectors, local authorities, NatureScot and emergency services.

The summers of 2020 and 2021 were unprecedented in terms of the changes that were seen in visitor distribution and behaviour in the National Park. A combination of circumstances, including the easing of lockdown policies and the desire of visitors to experience the outdoors and nature, put significant new pressures on certain locations in the National Park.

New arrangements for managing for visitors were put in place with partners during this time. These arrangements were comprehensively reviewed by the Park Authority Board and the arrangements were continued for 2022.

Future development will need to secure confidence within the communities in the National Park that the National Parks special landscape qualities are being considered and protected with regard to development. Regional partners, and potential



stakeholders for consultation, that are key to delivering the objectives of the Managing for Visitors Plan include:

- Local authorities
- Cairngorms Business Partnership
- Partner ranger services
- Land managers
- Owners / managers of key visitor sites
- NatureScot
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Fire and Rescue
- Volunteers and volunteer rangers

The focus of managing for visitors' measures will be on the proactive, safe management of key countryside sites simplified into two broad areas:

- Rural 'hot spots'
- Rural 'warm spots'

Figure 5 shows the identified rural 'hotspots' and 'warm spots' in the Cairngorms National Park. These locations have been identified as locations in the National Park that present a potential risk associated with tourism related infrastructure pressure during peak visitor periods.



The risk ratings used in Figure 5 for each site are defined as follows:

Hot	Very popular, pinch points on trails, could be on a dead-end road, limited parking and overspill sites, popular hills or beauty spots, bridges, heavily promoted by third parties, close to main transport routes, for example trunk roads and accessible from large towns.
Warm	Popular, parking previously sufficient for level of use, setting off point for hills or beauty spots and promoted by third parties, likely to experience overspill from nearby popular sites.

Rural 'hot and warm spots'

- 📍 Visitor 'hot spots'
- 📍 Visitor 'warm spots'

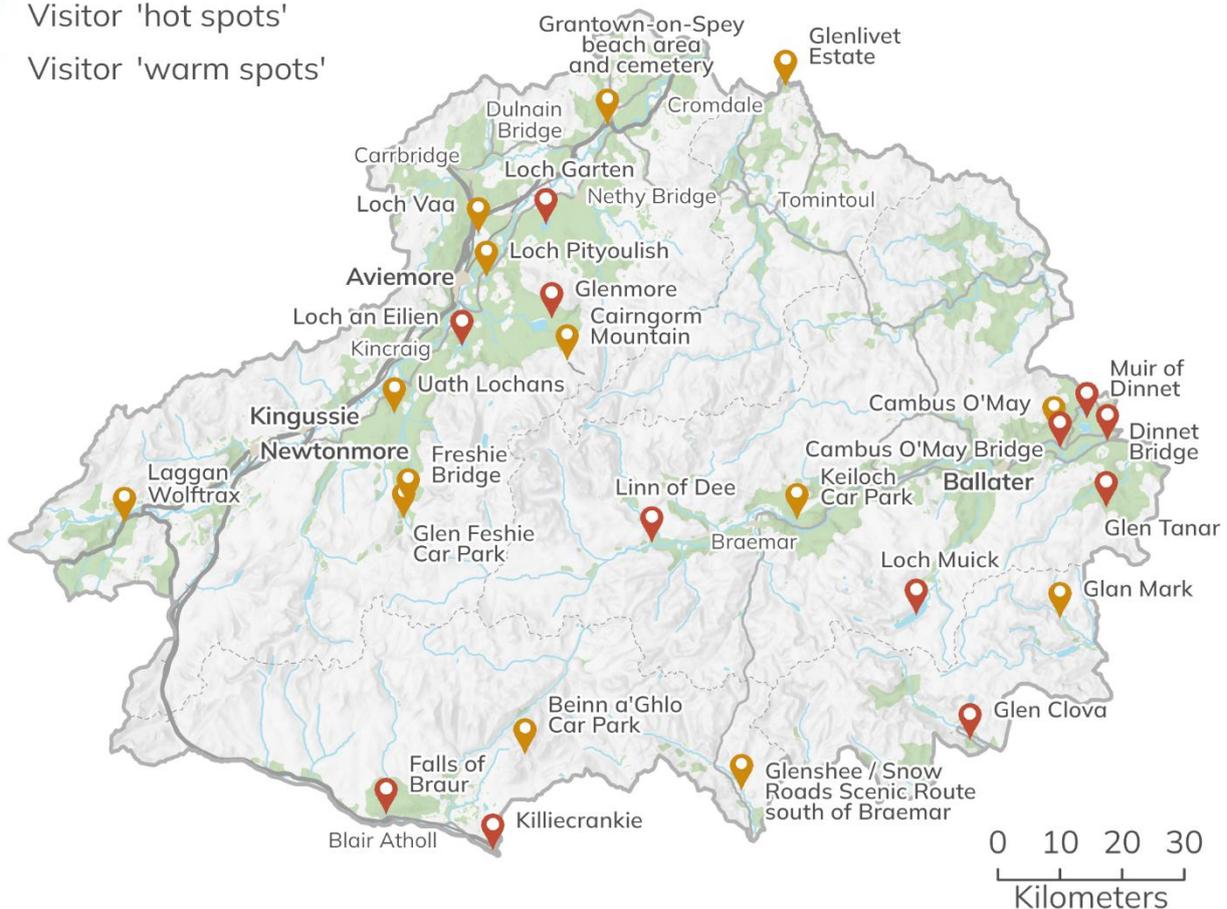


Figure 5 Rural visitor 'hot spots' and 'warm spots' in the Cairngorms National Park. Cairngorms National Park Authority Managing for Visitors Plan 2023 (CNPA185). Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2026. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100040965, Cairngorms National Park Authority.



Priorities identified in the Managing for Visitors Plan to which the Proposed Plan should have regard for include provision for are:

- Variable message electronic signs at various key locations.
- Potential for additional parking to serve tourist 'hot spots'.
- Additional toilets and accessible toilets and changing facilities.
- Additional signage to support active travel routes.

Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021 – Delivery Programme 2025

The Delivery Programme (CNPA334) sets out how the Cairngorms National Park Authority proposes to deliver the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021 (CNPA016). The aim of the Delivery Programme is to achieve the intended outcomes of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan, as set out in its vision, spatial strategy, policies and proposals. The Delivery Programme is the Cairngorm National Park Authority's main project management tool for the local development plan and will be used to help monitor progress.

Projects identified in the Delivery Programme of relevance to tourism in the Cairngorms National Park include:

- A9 Dualling – which is expected to be fully operational by 2035. More details on the delivery of the A9 dualling can be found in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport.
- Highland Mainline Rail improvements - Transport Scotland advises that the long-term goal is to achieve a fastest journey time of 2 hours 45 minutes between Inverness and the Central Belt with an average journey time of 3 hours and an increase to the number of passenger and freight paths per day.
- Cairngorm Mountain – see details in the next section on the Cairngorm Mountain Masterplan.
- Strathspey Railway Extension to Grantown-on-Spey - the organisation responsible have previously expressed an interest in restoring the line to Grantown-on-Spey, but as of yet no formal development application has been proposed or submitted to the Planning Authority.
- Active Communities project – including several projects underway to improve walking, cycling and wheelchair use routes such as minor traffic calming, pavements widening and crossing provisions. More detail on the Active communities' projects delivered through Cairngorms 2030 is available in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport .
- Dulnain Bridge to Grantown on Spey active route – delivering a safe off-road route with funding from the Scottish Government's Active Travel Transformation Fund. Expected timescale 2025 – 2030.



- Inverdrue to Coylumbridge path – a new path from the Rothiermurchus fishery entrance up to the B970 junction in Coylumbridge.

In terms of allocated sites in the Current (2021) Local Development Plan the following sites allocated for tourism are subject to planning permission:

- Blair Atholl - T3: Visitor Gateway - currently in operation as a visitor centre and retail / takeaway / bar units. Planning permission granted in February 2023 for erection of a marquee, bar-seating area and toilet block (23/00038/FLL – Perth and Kinross Council reference).
- Grantown-on-Spey – T1: Caravan Park - currently the majority of the site is in operation with some capacity for future development to expand the existing business. Detailed planning permission granted for extension to caravan site to provide 16 static holiday caravans in May 2024 (2023/0380/DET).

All other allocated tourism sites remain in operation with no change in 2025.

Core Paths Plan

The Park Authority has a duty under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 (CNPA664) to prepare a Core Paths Plan (CNPA187). Section 17 (1) of the Act states that the core paths network should be: ‘... sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout the area’. The Core Paths Plan is made up of a mixture of existing and new paths, which together provide a cohesive system.

The Park Authority uses the Core Paths Plan to priorities resources and path development projects. It also supports visitor management plans on sensitive sites and it helps ensure core paths are waymarked and signposted so that they can be promoted by communities and partners. Matters relating to active travel in the Cairngorms National Park and more detail on the core path network are covered in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport.

The 2015 Core Path Plan is currently under review with an updated Core Path Plan expected to be completed in late 2026. The preparation of the Proposed Plan will take into account any changes to the Core Paths Plan.

Active Cairngorms Action Plan 2023 - 2028

The Active Cairngorms Action Plan (CNPA814) sits within the wider context of the National Park Partnership Plan (CNPA010). The Active Cairngorms Action Plan supports the delivery of Cairngorms 2030 (CNPA528) to deliver by 2030 a National Park where people and nature thrive together. The Plan promotes the suitable promotion of the wide range of recreational opportunities available in the National Park to influence visitor



behaviour. The Plan also promotes learning about the Cairngorms and the way it is managed as a means of increasing understanding and appreciation of the National Park. The aim is that this will nurture an ethos of respect and a commitment to caring for the countryside by visitors.

Seven priority areas for action have been identified for the Active Cairngorms Action Plan:

1. Managing for visitors.
2. Minimising impacts on sensitive species and habitats.
3. Ranger services.
4. Public health in the outdoors.
5. Volunteer Cairngorms.
6. Youth and outdoor learning.
7. Paths, trails and outdoor access duties.

The Proposed Plan should support the aims of the Action Plan to make outdoor recreation safer, more accessible, and sustainable for everyone, while protecting the park's unique natural heritage and supporting local communities.

Capercaillie Emergency Plan 2025 – 2030

The Plan (CNPA816) aligns with the long-term vision of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (CNPA084) and the National Park Partnership Plan (CNPA010), to prioritize landscape wide restoration of the pinewood habitat to safeguard capercaillie. The Capercaillie Emergency Plan focuses on the immediate and targeted measures needed to ensure the species survival in the short-term (five years). The Plan identifies actions that will maximise existing opportunities and addresses specific gaps across a range of interventions to rapidly benefit capercaillie which in the context of tourism include measures to reducing disturbance.

Actions to reduce the impact of human disturbance are included in the Plan with Scottish studies showing that disturbance causes capercaillie to avoid up to 40% of otherwise suitable habitat. Over the last five years, the Cairngorms Capercaillie Project – led by the Cairngorms National Park Authority – has reduced levels of disturbance over hundreds of hectares of core capercaillie habitat by developing participatory and community-led solutions, including with the mountain biking community, bird watchers and dog walkers. The Proposed Plan should not support development that increased human disturbance and negatively effects capercaillie habitats.



Local authority documents

Local outcome improvement plans

Local Outcome Improvement Plans outline key priorities for each community board area that have been identified through a range of engagement processes and are based on the needs of local communities. They set out an approach to working with and empowering our local communities, enabling them to contribute to, influence and shape locally identified actions around the priorities to achieve improved outcomes for their areas. The five local authorities which overlap the Cairngorms National Park all have individual Local outcome improvement plans (in some cases referred to as community plans).

While the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan (CNPA010) is the source of the vision for the local development plan (as explained in Schedule 1: Plan outcomes) the local development plan may support the delivery of the vision and priorities of local outcome improvement plans. A summary of issues relating to this schedule for each local authority are set out below.

Aberdeenshire Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2017 – 2027

The Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (CPNA636) sets a ten year vision. One of two current priorities agreed in September 2024 is place based community planning. While there are no Local Place Plans registered covering any areas in the National Park, the Proposed Plan will have regard to the community action plans.

Angus Community Plan 2022 – 2030

The Angus Partnership's Community Plan (CPNA637) has a vision for 2030 that Angus is a great place to live, work and visit. 'Caring for our Economy' is one of three priorities to achieve the vision. The plan recognises that tourism is one of the main economic drivers for Angus. The commitments under this priority will indirectly benefit tourism.

2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan

Tourism issues are not considered in the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (CNPA638); however they will indirectly benefit from the place priority outcome that communities will benefit from being able to access support and services within local places.



2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan Delivery Plan

There are no references to tourism issues in the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan Delivery Plan (CNPA1091).

Moray Local Outcome Improvement Plan v2 (2016 – 2026)

Tourism issues are not considered in the Moray Planning Partnership's local outcome improvement plan (CNPA639), however actions relating to the identified priorities of developing a diverse, inclusive and sustainable economy; building a better future for our children and young people; empowering and connecting communities; and improving wellbeing of our population will indirectly support tourism.

Perth and Kinross Community Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan) 2022 – 2032

Tourism issues are not specifically considered in the Perth and Kinross Community Planning Partnership's community plan (CNPA640), however actions relating to the identified priorities of reducing poverty, digital participation, learning and development and employability will indirectly support tourism.

Badenoch and Strathspey Area Plan

The Plan (CNPA237) is an overview of local priorities and opportunities expressed in existing plans, strategies and recent community engagement, it aims to provide a clear statement of identified priorities, strengths, challenges, opportunities and community aspirations within one consolidated 'Plan', which can be referred to by Council services, public services, groups and organisations operating in Badenoch and Strathspey. This will help to ensure service provision, funding and developments reflect collective community wants, needs and priorities.

The Plan is split between three headings: People, Place and Prosperity. In relation to this schedule, under the Prosperity heading the plan addresses the following priority:

- Tourism and seasonal work

The Plan does not set out any specific actions arising from this priority but does acknowledge that tourism significantly contributes to the economy, supporting jobs and businesses. The significance of the area's natural heritage to communities' cultural identity and visitors places particular emphasis on:

- Sustainable tourism.
- Carbon neutral / negative economy.



The Plan reports that tourism accounts for around 60% of the economy in Cairngorms National Park and over 40% of its employment. Bringing opportunities for local communities and businesses, including farming businesses that wish to diversify and benefit from the tourism economy.

Under the Place heading the Plan also highlight the issues arising from the fact that the area is impacted by the effects of short term lets and second homes affecting housing. Matters relating to housing are covered in Schedule 13: Housing.

The Area Place Plan will serve as a foundational framework from which more detailed and targeted actions can be developed. The intention is that this will be an evolving plan, and this is the first version of an area plan for the Badenoch and Strathspey region. In the first instance an action plan will be created to set out the route for delivery of the priorities within the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Place Plan. The action plan will seek to:

- Further understand and develop priorities, in discussion across all sectors
- Set out to identify the best mechanism for delivery and the range of partners to be involved
- Assess potential barriers
- Assess potential funding opportunities

The Proposed Plan will take into consideration the Action Plan once it has been published and this will inform the preparation of the Proposed Plan.

Community action plans

There are a number of community action plans within the Cairngorms National Park that identify actions and priorities that relate to tourism and visitor infrastructure. A number of the plans set out actions that improve mobility in and around the National Park which can support the visitor economy. Matters relating to transport, active travel and movement around the National Park are covered in more detail in Schedule 11: Sustainable Transport.

Advie and Cromdale Community Action Plan

The Action Plan (CNPA123) sets out a number of priorities that if actioned could support tourism growth and visitor management including:

High priority items (based on number of votes):

- Better play parks



- Speyside Way - community notice board, more surfacing work, signage at Cromdale end
- Better signage in the village for cycle / walking routes to Granttown / Balmenach / Speyside Way
- Info on visitor attractions (for example Battle of Cromdale, Hill fort, Pipers Stone)
- Signed mountain Bike Trails (Anagach)
- Community web page
- Café in the village hall

Medium priority items:

- Village shop
- Walking trails (for example whisky trail from Cromdale to Balmenach with interpretation)
- Better maintenance of Tom-an-Uird field & viewpoint
- Bike / skate park
- Bus stop sign to prevent parking
- Better maintenance of Braes
- Better use of village noticeboard
- Village campsite – maybe with a village shop / café (near the pavilion).
- Improve picnic area

Low priority items:

- Road sign to indicate three-way traffic lights on crossing bridge
- Repairs cairns on Haughs
- Pony trekking for visitors
- Railway walk and viewpoint improvements (behind Cambrae)

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

In relation to tourism the Action Plan (CNPA063) set out the following priorities:

- Improve public transport to reduce the need for / use of car – This included the action to commission electric buses for regular access to Glenmore / Cairngorm Mountain.
- Improvements to the active travel network in and around Aviemore, as well as connecting Aviemore to other settlements including Carrbridge.
- Rebalance the provision of local accommodation with second homes / short term lets to help support local businesses to attract a sustainable work force – this would reduce the potential visitor accommodation.



- Maintain and have more use of the Village Green – this includes more live music events in summer, improve lighting and outdoor spaces / seating.
- Find a new permanent site for the Ice Rink and extending the activities it offers.
- Cairngorm Mountain – sustain activities to be operated by the community, projects include installing a Gondola from the Hayfield to the base station.

Ballater and Crathie Community Action Plan 2023

In relation to tourism, theme two of the Action Plan (CNPA119) named 'The Visitor Experience' sets out the need to maintain the existing assets, for example, The Old Royal Station, Balmoral Castle, Royal Lochnagar Distillery and the annual Highland Games to ensure the area 'represents the very best of Royal Deeside'.

One area of improvement noted in the Plan is to improve the signage and means of communication within the village, as it is deemed important that visitors are able to find out about local attractions, events and local services in an easy and clear manner.

The survey carried out as part of the Action Plan creation process suggested improvements in promoting existing events and attractions and expanding what is currently available. In particular, it is thought that additional entertainment events and cultural attractions would be a way of improving the visitor experience, as well as that of the local people. It was thought that the provision of a cultural museum / heritage centre would be popular in the village, and this could be coupled with the already well supported Ballater Local History Group so that the locals can play an active role in creating and maintaining a facility that illustrates Ballater's rich heritage.

Under the theme of 'Recreation and Leisure' the Action Plan also puts forward the community's desire to develop feasibility and funding for a new sports and leisure facility which could serve both local residents and visitors.

Blair Atholl Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

Under the theme: 'Blair Atholl: an economically thriving community' the Action Plan (CNPA064) sets out priorities which will have a bearing on improving tourism and visitor management in the community. They include:

- Improvements and investment in the Blair Atholl railway station.
- Completion of the A9 dualling.
- Refurbishment of Round House & Tilt Hotel.
- Improve visitor information across village and at House of Bruar / Pitlochry, to bring more people into the village to attractions and for things to do.



- Village trail for visitors – develop nature trails and develop wildcat trail.
- More electric vehicle charging points.

Boat of Garten Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

Under the theme of ‘a socially connected community’ the Plan (CNPA374) sets out the following actions that will benefit local tourism:

- Better public transport
- Improving parking options near the shop, pump track and takeaway.

Under the theme of ‘a climate conscious community’ there are a number of actions to improve active travel links including:

- Cycle / footpath from Drumullie to Boat of Garten.
- Complete path to Speyside Way.
- More cycle friendly routes, including route to Carrbridge.
- Extension to the all-abilities path
- Path across the moor from Craigie Avenue to Milton Loch.
- Better links around Milton Loch to old mill to create orbital path around the village.
- Ability to take bikes on the buses.

More information active travel is available in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport.

Under the theme of ‘an economically thriving community’ the plan sets out the action to provide a serviced campervan site with waste and water facilities.

Braemar Community Action Plan

In relation to tourism, one of the top priorities in the Braemar Action Plan (CNPA121) is theme one: Visitor experience. Under this theme the Plan addresses the need for better co-ordination of destination marketing initiatives both within the village and also with other nearby attractions such as Glenshee ski centre and mountain biking. More visitor accommodation is also required; to encourage more tourists to extend their stay in the area.

In terms of specific attractions in Braemar there were four major projects underway at the time of the Plan’s creation. Plans are in place to maintain and improve the Braemar Castle, develop a Performing Arts Centre at St Margaret’s, build a Highland Games Heritage Centre and construct a 5-star Hotel and Spa at the Fife Arms. There are also calls for a significant refurbishment of the Village Hall, a vital community asset.



Under the Active Braemar theme a number of the actions for improvement to trails and footpaths would also benefit tourism and support improvements to visitor infrastructure in the area.

Braemar Community Action Plan is currently under review and an updated version is expected to be published later in 2026.

Carrbridge Community action Plan: Looking to 2030

There are a number of priorities in the Community Action Plan (CNPA122) that support tourism and visitor infrastructure including:

- Use the community's natural assets to develop enterprise, business and tourism opportunities.
- Improve support and assistance for local businesses & people trying to get into work – this could include providing accommodation priority for staff working in local businesses.
- Increase opportunities to attract tourism and business to the local area. This priority includes the action to have a designated and supported site for campervans (waste, recycling and electric charging) and the creation of a community-run campsite for campers and tourers.
- Develop a heritage trail and enhance the bridge area (both used/ could be used by tourists).

Dalwhinnie Community Action Plan: Looking forward to 2030

Potential actions from the Dalwhinnie Community Action Plan (CNPA125) that would benefit tourism and visitor infrastructure are:

- Find a site for designated campervan / motorhome parking, with relevant support facilities. This would involve conversations between the community and Cairngorms National Park Authority planning team regarding the next Local Development Plan about possible sites and facilities.
- Improvements to local trails, oaths and cycle ways would also benefit tourism and visitor infrastructure in the area.
- Turn off streetlights from midnight till 5am to create a dark skies destination.

Dunlain Bridge Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

Within the Action Plan (CNPA331) under the theme of 'a socially connected community' the following actions would benefit the tourist economy and visitor experience in the village:

- Providing a local shop at the post office



- A community-run café at the village hall
- Upgrading the entry signs to the village to make it more welcoming and attractive
- Improving the picnic bench areas.

Under the themes of 'a climate conscious community' and 'a community for young people' there are a number of priorities that would benefit the visitor experience in the village including:

- Completing the path to Grantown-on-Spey
- Fixing the bridge so the barriers can be removed
- Develop/ connect more local pathways and cycleways to other villages
- Improving the playpark equipment / offering
- More bike friendly paths and a pump track.

There were also suggestions for:

- More accessible paths for wheelchairs and buggies.

• Making more of the Roche Moutonnée.

Mount Blair Community Action Plan 2013 – 2018

The isolated community stated in the Action Plan (CNPA130) that transport connection was an issue with no public transport connection to other major cities – which becomes a barrier for visitors wishing to visit. The community reported they struggle to encourage visitors from Blairgowrie and Pitlochry.

The main assets in the area are the natural resources and the Plan highlights the following actions under the priority to develop infrastructure to support outdoor recreation access:

- Develop and promote the local paths network.
- Develop local forests for recreational use.
- Marketing and promotion of the area as a hub for outdoor recreation (lay-bys, picnic areas, signage, leaflets, events).
- Develop infrastructure (including accommodation) to support outdoor recreation.

Grantown-on-Spey Action Plan: Looking to 2030

In relation to tourism and visitor infrastructure the Community Action Plan (CNPA065) sets out the suggestion to improve provision and management for campervans under the theme: 'an economically thriving community'. The suggestion includes:

- No campervans by riverside. Height restrictions to 'Bathing Pool' beach area and portable loos to encourage parking only in car park
- 'No fires' signage.



- Electric hookups in car park to encourage campervan parking there.
- Charge for car park?

Under the theme of 'a culturally vibrant community' the Action Plan sets out a number of actions under the two 'top' suggestions addressing The Square and the High Street. These actions would support the visitor economy and have links to other schedules in this report.

The actions for the Square include:

- Removing the (some) chains to give access to grass for wheelchairs, buggies.
- Undertaking a tree condition survey and programme for phased replacement. Use native trees. Same for Church Avenue.
- Providing dedicated paths across grass and down Church Avenue.
- Improving the poor aesthetic of new bins chained to concrete blocks – with a suggestion of some kind of wooden bin surround.
- Addressing parking issues, especially by the coop and at Maclean's Bakery.
- More benches and planting on the Square.
- Against pedestrianising the Square.

Actions for the High Street (to look more vibrant) include:

- Grants for refurbishment of shop fronts.
- Using one empty premises for encouraging pop-up shop run by local charities – can the Hub do this?
- Insist on a more uniform quality of shop signage – no plastic.
- Tool library?
- Promoting High Street shopping over online more – poster campaign.
- No wheelie bins on street.
- Museum and Hub to share visitor information role through the year.

Kincraig Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

In relation to tourism and visitor infrastructure the Community Action Plan (CNPA127) sets out a key theme for Public Toilets with the aim investigating the use of the Town Hall toilets for visitor use.

In terms of actions that would support tourism the Action Plan also sets out the following priorities:

- To reinstate the Kincraig train station as a stop.
- Repair parapet of Tromie Bridge.
- Find a use for the old A9 complex beside the garage.



- Improvements to local path networks for active travel.

Kingussie Community Action Plan Consultation Results: Looking to 2030

The suggestions in the Action Plan (CNPA066) supporting tourism and visitor infrastructure are closely linked to those supporting economic growth and mobility in Kingussie. Under the theme of 'an economically thriving community the plan sets out the following suggestions:

- Support for the High Street which includes developing a Kingussie Tourism Strategy to improve year-round tourism offering of town. Improved identity to promote Kingussie as a destination.
- Reinvigorating the Highstreet which includes improving accessibility and parking.

Under the theme of 'a climate conscious community' the plan sets out the following suggestions:

- Improve cycle pathways and facilities
- Improve footpaths and walking routes
- Create safer roads
- Improve public transport

There are also suggestions to:

- Improve what's available locally for young people
- Extend the opening times of the local recycling facility
- Provide more EV chargers to support visitors
- Improve to the public realm, gardens and Wolf of Badenoch trail.

Laggan Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

The Action Plan (CNPA129) sets out a number of priorities aimed at delivering an economically thriving community which include the following items relating to tourism and visitor infrastructure:

- Investment in serviced site for campervans, motorhomes, tents
- Make more of a 'Welcome to Laggan'
- Expansion of mountain biking facilities at Wolftrax
- Develop a 'Business Development & Marketing Plan' to promote Laggan – which can deliver visitor information and promote Laggan Heritage as an attraction for visitors to learn about the area.

A further priority brought forward by the community was to create a community shop for basics, linked with the food shed (suggested location Wolftrax), to serve the needs of visitors and community.



Nethy Bridge Community Action Plan: Looking forward to 2030

The Action Plan (CNPA131) sets out a number of priorities under the 'economically thriving community' theme one of which is directly applicable to tourism and visitor infrastructure. The priority to investigate options for taking more assets into community ownership - community owned / managed touring campsite with service facilities for tents, campervans and motorhomes.

Other changes in relation to visitor infrastructure the community would like to see by 2030 include:

- Support the community's businesses by shopping local: to keep the shops, café, hotel in the village and encourage the re-introduction of a Post Office.
- Installing ATM facility.

The Plan also supports the improvements in local paths, cycle ways and the Speyside way all of which will be beneficial in promoting the trails to visitors.

Newtonmore Community Action Plan: Looking forward to 2030

The Action Plan (CNPA132) includes the priority to increase opportunities to attract tourism and business to area which includes the action to improve signage of local attraction including village entrances through:

- Welcome signs to the village – make a statement.
- Vibrant signs with Gaelic name and maybe flowerpots for a positive village feel.
- Have a designated and supported site for campervans (waste, recycling and electric charging) Larger campsite for campers and tourers.
- Include electric hook up and other facilities for example bin, water, grey and brown water waste.

Further suggestions for improvement in the Plan include:

- Encourage a more vibrant, attractive Main Street: more shops, flowers, places to eat, local produce shop, local charity shop, re-route heavy good vehicles (HGVs) to use Coffin Road onto A9, manage Main Street congestion in the summertime.
- Cycling: better connections of cycle routes.
- Re-route Wildcat Trail from top of Calder Path north towards Allt Laraidh (link to Kingussie) / liaise with local people and maintain the Wildcat Experience, including surface path at golf course section (much loved by locals and visitors).
- Public toilets – to be maintained / managed / better sign posted / accessible similar to Kingussie.
- Create a direct link from village to the Highland Folk Museum.



- Cycle hire including electric bikes.
- Improve golf course.

Strathdon Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

Although the Action Plan (CNPA133) does not set out any specific priorities that directly relate to tourism there are a number of priorities that if delivered would support tourism in the area which include:

- Improving opportunities for local employment / business – which includes providing provision for a pub / eatery in the area, and community run bunk house.
- Looking at the redevelopment of Lochan Hotel site – however no further detail has been included.
- Continue to develop and maintain path network.

Baseline of tourism matters

This section provides baseline information on the following matters: visitor profile; travel and perceptions, the visitor economy and the economic impact of tourism in the National Park, tourism employment, accommodation and food services, visitor attractions; activities and infrastructure and visitor impacts on nature.

There are links between this policy area and:

- Schedule 1: Plan outcomes
- Schedule 3: Site assessment methodology
- Schedule 4: Climate change
- Schedule 5: Natural heritage
- Schedule 6: Landscape
- Schedule 7: Historic and cultural heritage
- Schedule 8: Land use, soil and resources
- Schedule 11: Sustainable transport
- Schedule 13: Housing
- Schedule 16: Blue and green infrastructure
- Schedule 19: Flood risk and water management
- Schedule 20: Digital infrastructure
- Schedule 21: Economic development
- Schedule 22: Town centres and retail



Visitor profile

Visitor surveys have been carried out within the National Park periodically since 2003 - 2004², with the most recent one carried out in 2024 - 2025 (CNPA819). Visitor surveys provide demographics on the visitors to the National Park. A summary of the most recent visitor survey (2024 - 2025) has been provided here. The research was conducted by M·E·L Research's face to face interviewing team, using a systematic sampling approach. Surveys were conducted across the year, in all months between May 2024 and April 2025, and on all days of the week. Interviewers were stationed at a range of 35 sites and locations across the National Park. 1,348 interviews were collected by these interviewers, and these results are used as the primary source of data in this report³ alongside data from previous visitor surveys commissioned by the Park Authority.

Demographics

In 2024 - 2025, 78% of visitors identified as White Scottish or other White British identities. 18% of all visitors were from another 'other' ethnicity, although most of these identified as European or American ethnicities. In the 2019 - 2020 visitor survey (CNPA818), 97% of visitors were White (unspecified whether this is UK or Scottish visitors).

In 2024 - 2025 respondents to the survey were asked their sex and gender. It is of note that the most frequent repeat visitors were more likely to be male than female, with 57% of those who visited 20 or more times in the past five years identifying their sex and gender as male, while 37% identified as female. Older visitors were also slightly more likely to be male, making up 56% of those aged 65 years and over, while 39% identified as female. This proportion was similar to in 2019 - 2020, when 56% identified their gender as male, and 44% as female.

In terms of sexual orientation, 50% of visitors in 2024 - 2025 identified as heterosexual / straight, 2% as gay or lesbian, 1% as bisexual and 47% preferred not to provide their sexuality.

² Visitor surveys have been completed by the Park Authority in 2003 - 2004, 2009 - 2010, 2014 - 2015, 2019 - 2020 and 2024 - 2025. It should be noted that the 2019 - 2020 (CNPA818) visitor survey only ran for 11 months, one month less than the others, due to the impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

³ The 1,348 responses collected by face-to-face interviewers have a margin of error of +/- 2.67 at the 95% confidence level. This means that for a statistic of 50%, the Park Authority can be 95% confident that the true statistic is between 47.23% and 52.67%. However, it is of note that the margin of error is higher for questions with a lower response rate.

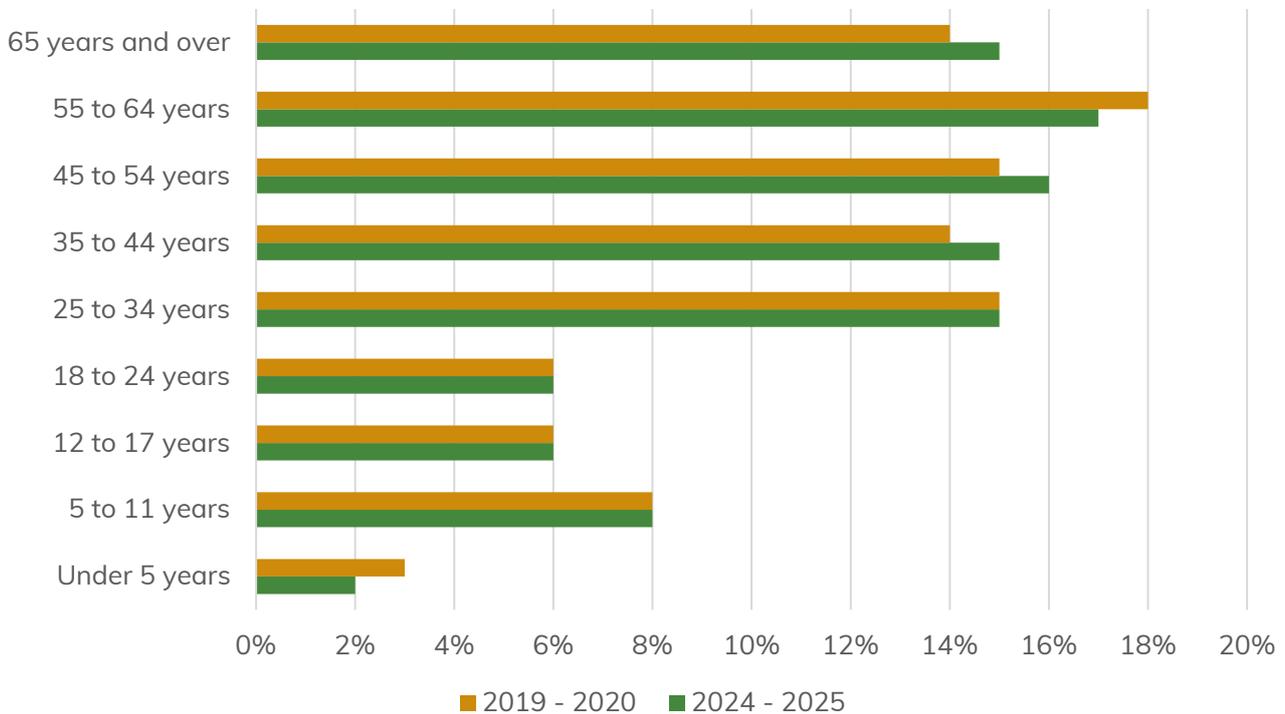


Figure 6 Age profile of visitors to the Cairngorms National Park in 2019 – 2020 and 2024 – 2025. Cairngorms National Park Visitor Survey 2024 – 2025 (CNPA819).

In terms of the age profile of visitors the visitor profile skews slightly older with 32% of visitors over the age of 55 years (Figure 6). 18% of visitor groups had children under the age of 18 years in them, although this was higher in Winter (28%) and lowest in Autumn (8%). Approximately 16% of visitors are under the age of 18 years. Visitors on trips of four to seven nights were more likely than those on trips of other lengths to be travelling with children aged 5 to 11 years (16%, compared to 11% of all visitors) and aged 12 to 17 years (13%, compared to 8% of all visitors).

Retirees included 29% of those aged 55 to 64, indicating that the National Park attracts retirees underneath the state pension age. Visitors on longer trips were more likely to be retired, with 34% of those staying for over seven nights being retired. They also made up 26% of visitors who had been to the National Park 20 or more times in the last five years.

Visitors from overseas, particularly those from Europe (excluding the UK), were most likely to be full time employed (74%) Visitors in Winter were less likely to be retirees than in other seasons, with only 17% of visitors in winter being retired, compared to 22% in



summer. Meanwhile, 12% of visitors in Winter worked part-time, compared to 6% in summer.

Retired visitors were more likely to be visiting the National Park to enhance their mental health (25% cf. 21%), with the most common activity retirees are hoping to engage in being “just relaxing” (76%), with this group significantly less likely to be engaging in more active pursuits. Those who are full time employed were most likely to be visiting to take part in outdoor pursuits (42%).

Table 3 Economic activity of visitors to the Cairngorms National Park in 2024 – 2025, 2019 – 2020, compared to the resident population (Census 2022). Cairngorms National Park Visitor Survey 2024 – 2025 (CNPA819).

	2024 – 2025 Visitor Survey	2019 – 2020 Visitor Survey	2022 Scotland Census (residents)
Full time employed	60%	55%	36%
Part time employed	7%	8%	12%
Self-employed	8%	6%	6%
Apprenticeship / training / student	2%	3%	9%
Retired	22%	24%	23%
Unemployed	1%	1%	13%
Prefer not to say	1%	0%	-

Looking at the social grade of visitors the data from the last visitor survey (2024 – 2025) showed that 78% are in the ABC1⁴ Social Grade and 17% in C2DE⁵. The proportion of visitors from these social grades is therefore at a similar level to residents. According to the 2024 - 2025 resident survey, 73% of residents of the Cairngorms National Park were in the ABC1 Social Grade. According to the 2022 Census 45% of residents in Scotland were in Social Grade ABC1 and 32% in C2DE. Therefore, when looking at the census data, ABC1 is over-represented in visitors to the National Park.

⁴ ABC1 social grade visitors represents those who reported the occupation of the main income earner as: Higher managerial, administrative or professional occupation (e.g., Chief Executive Officer, senior manager in large organisation), Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional occupation (e.g., university lecturer, teacher, midwife, senior nurse, middle management executives in large organisation, account director/manager), or, Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative, professional occupation (e.g., nurse, account executive, administrative assistant, student nurse/teacher, student living away from home).

⁵ C2DE social grade visitors represents those who reported the occupation of the main income earner as: Skilled manual occupation (e.g., nursing carer, bus driver, tradesperson), Semi-skilled / unskilled manual occupation (e.g., apprentice, trainee), or, Casual worker, unemployed with state benefits



Reasons for visit

Figure 7 (CNPA819) shows that the main reason for people visiting the Cairngorms National Park (61%) was to experience the beauty of nature. 38% of people stated take they were most hoping to take part in outdoor adventure activities.

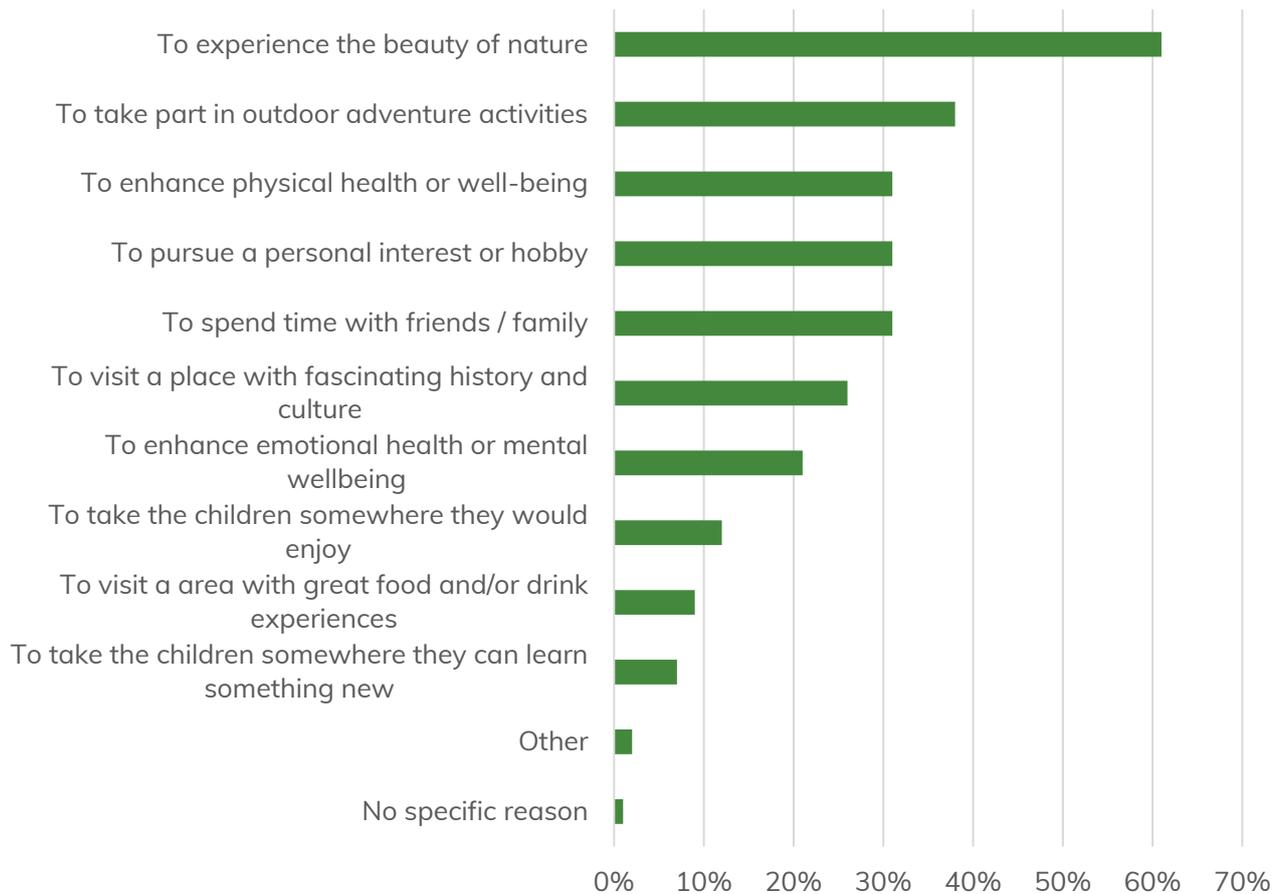


Figure 7 Visitor reason⁶ for visiting the Cairngorms National Park. Cairngorms National Park Visitor Survey 2024 – 2025 (CNPA819).

While the most common reasons for visiting were similarly likely to be motivations for both residents and visitors to the Cairngorms National Park, experiencing the beauty of nature was significantly more likely to be a motivation for visitors (62%) than residents (47%). This highlights the importance of the beauty of the National Park as a draw to external visitors.

⁶ Visitors were asked ‘what were you most hoping to get out of your visit to the Cairngorms National Park on this trip?’



The beauty of nature is also a key draw for first time visitors, 66% of whom cited this as a motivation for visiting. Meanwhile, the most regular visitors, those who have visited more than 20 times in the last five years, are more likely than others to cite taking part in an outdoor adventure activity as a reason for their visit (44%).

Visitors were also asked what activities, if any they would like to or have taken in part in during their visit to the Cairngorms National Park (Figure 8). 82% of visitors stated they have or would like to do general sightseeing while visiting the National Park. 71% stated they have or would like to 'just relax' and 60% stated they would like to or have done some walking under 3 miles. Overall, 79% of visitors stated they have or would like to do some form of walking during their visit. 21% stated they would like to or have done some form of cycling⁷.

Overall, 96% of visitors stated they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the availability of activities in the Cairngorms National Park in 2024 – 2025 (CNPA819).

Overnight visitors and those from outside of Scotland are more likely to visit to experience the beauty of nature and a place with fascinating history and culture. Meanwhile, day visitors are more likely than overnight visitors to be visiting for reasons linked to personal enrichment, such as pursuing a personal interest or hobby, or enhancing their physical health and wellbeing. Similarly, visitors from Scotland are more likely to visit to spend time with friends or family, to enhance physical health or wellbeing, or to take children somewhere they would enjoy, than other visitors.

⁷ Includes road cycling and off-road cycling / mountain biking and / or gravel biking.

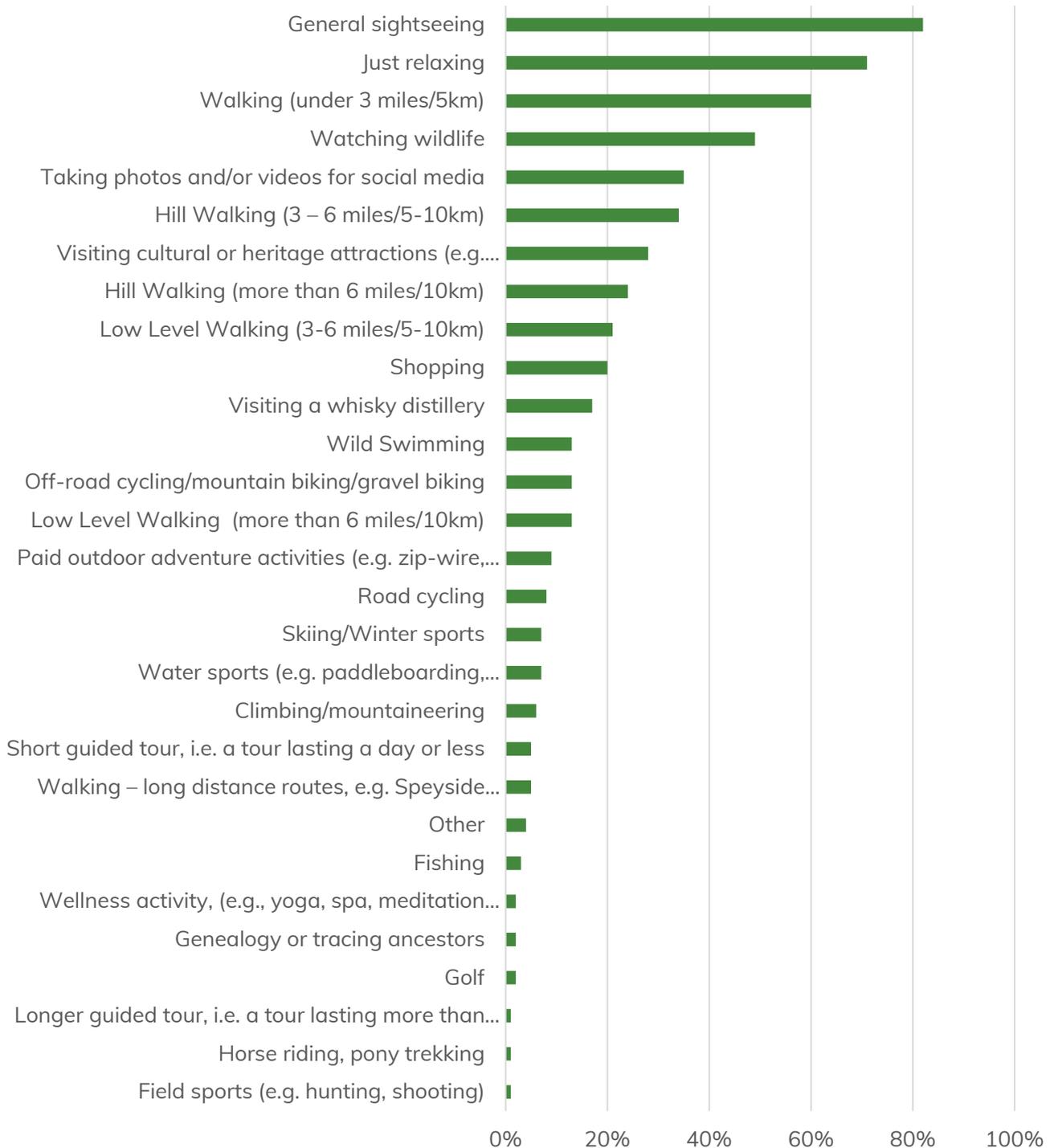


Figure 8 Activities which visitors to the Cairngorms National Park have or plan to take part in during their visit. Cairngorms National Park Visitor Survey 2024 – 2025 (CNPA819).



Approximately two-thirds (73%) of visitors surveyed in 2024 – 2025 (CNPA819) stated that the Cairngorms' National Park status is an important⁸ consideration when deciding where to visit. This is an increase from the last survey (2019 – 2020) (CNPA818) when approximately half (56%) of visitors stated that the Cairngorms' National Park status is an important consideration when deciding where to visit.

Accommodation

The most popular form of accommodation use by overnight visitors to the Cairngorms National Park remains hotels and motels accounting for 30% in 2024 -2025 (CNPA819) up from 25% in 2019 – 2020 (CNPA818). More information on hotel provision in the town centre in the National Park is available in Schedule 22: Town centres and retail.

First time or lapsed visitors (those who last stayed in the National Park more than 5 years ago) are significantly more likely to choose to stay in a hotel or motel (40% both) than the overall sample. Those who more regularly stay in the Cairngorms National Park, having stayed four or more times in the last five years, are significantly more likely to stay in self-catering accommodation (30%). Short stay overnight visitors are more likely to stay in a hotel (37%), with visitors staying for longer periods more likely to choose to stay in self-catered accommodation (36%).

There has been an increase in those staying in motorhomes both at designated sites and informal parking sites. Visitors opting staying in motor homes at designated sites rose from 8% in 2019 – 2020 (CNPA818) to 10% in 2024 – 2025 (CNPA819). Visitors opting to stay in motorhomes at informal sites also increased from 3% in 2019 – 2020 (CNPA818) to 7% in 2024 – 2025 (CNPA819).

Wild camping has also increased in the National Park with 4% of visitors choosing to wild camp in 2019 – 2020 (CNPA818) rising to 6% in 2024 – 2025 (CNPA819).

⁸ Either very important or quite important

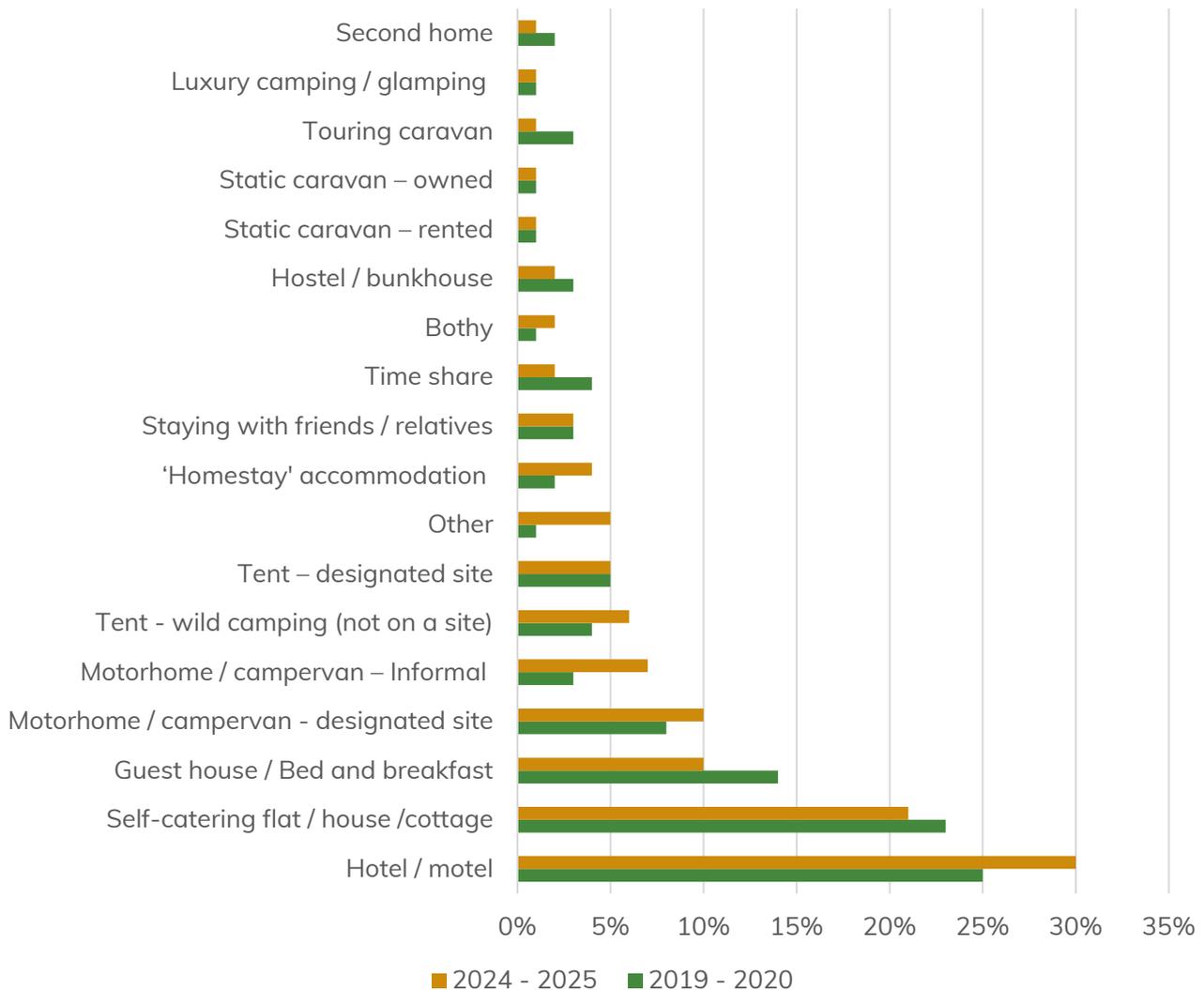


Figure 9 Accommodation used by overnight visitors to the Cairngorms National Park in 2019 – 2020 and 2024 – 2025. Cairngorms National Park Visitor Survey 2019 – 2020 (CNPA818) and 2024 – 2025 (CNPA819).

Visitors were also asked what would have been their preferred accommodation had it been available when they visited the Cairngorms National Park (Figure 10). The data shows that 29% visitors in 2024 – 2025 (CNPA819) would have preferred to stay in a hotel / motel if it had been available. A further 12% would have stayed in a guest house or bed and breakfast. In terms of self-catering, 21% would have opted for this type of accommodation if it had been available. The number of traditional hotels and accommodation is declining in many of the town centres in the National Park. More information on the availability of accommodation in town and village centres in the National Park is available in Schedule 22: Town centres and retail.

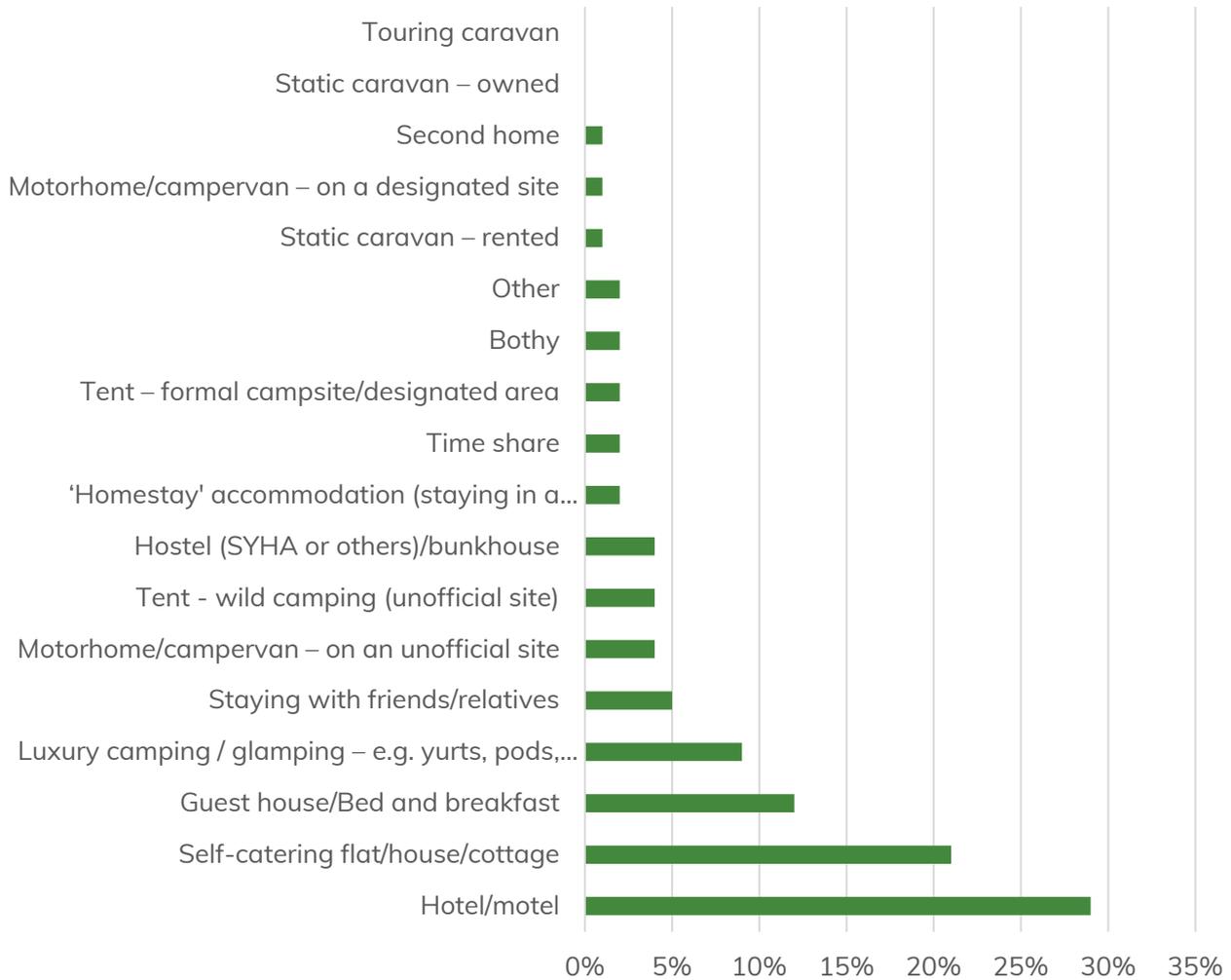


Figure 10 Visitors to the Cairngorms National Park preferred accommodation, if it had been available. Cairngorms National Park Visitor Survey 2024 – 2025.

Visitor travel

Visitors to the Cairngorms National Park make up a significant proportion of the people using and relying on its transport networks. In 2023, the National Park received an estimated 2.15m visitors. The Proposed Plan needs to take into account the additional pressures on the transport network and the movement of tourists to and around the National Park in its preparation. The analysis of visitor travel shown in this section is drawn from the visitor surveys from 2014 – 2015 (CNPA817), 2019 – 2020 (CNPA818) and 2024 – 2025 (CNPA819).

In terms of visitors travel to the Cairngorm National Park:

- Private car travel: 72% of visitors used private cars in 2024 – 2025. Up from 65% in 2019 – 2020 Slightly below 74% in 2014 – 2015.



- Motor homes / campervans: usage increased from 4% in 2014 – 2015 to 8% in 2019 – 2020, reaching 10% in 2024 – 2025.
- Motorbike travel: rose from 1% in 2019 – 2020 to 4% in 2024 – 2025.
- Public transport (bus and rail): declined from 7% in 2019 – 2020 to 4% in 2024 – 2025.
- Active travel (cycling and walking): remained steady at 3% in both 2019 – 2020 and 2024 – 2025.

In terms of visitor movement around the National Park:

- Private car usage: 70% of visitors used private cars to travel around within the National Park. Up from 65% in 2019 – 2020.
- Motorbike travel: increased from 1% in 2019 – 2020 to 4% in 2024 – 2025⁹.
- Motorhomes / campervans: usage within the National Park increased, reflecting broader travel trends.
- Active travel (walking and cycling): dropped significantly from 29% in 2019 – 2020 to 13% in 2024 – 2025. Cycling declined from 7% in 2014 – 2015 to 5% in 2019 – 2020, falling further to 3% in 2024 – 2025. Walking fell from 24% in 2019 – 2020 to 10% in 2024 – 2025.
- Public transport: train usage remained low at 1% in 2014 – 2015, 2% in 2019 – 2020 and 2024 – 2025. Bus usage declined from 4% in 2019 – 2020 to 2% in 2024 – 2025.

More detailed matters relating to visitor movement to and around the Cairngorms National Park drawn from the latest visitor survey data is available in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport.

Public transport

The proportion of visitors travelling to the National Park by public transport (bus and rail) has decreased from 7% in 2019 – 2020 to 4% in 2024 – 2025. There has been little change in the proportion travelling around the National Park by public transport. In 2024 – 2025 only 2% of visitors reported using public transport. The largest barriers to public transport use were reported as being poor public transport connectivity and lack of services. However, only 28% responded that public transport was either very (10%) or quite important (18%) when deciding where to visit on a day out in 2024 – 2025. 52% of visitors reported that they were satisfied (good) or very satisfied (very good) with the public transport in the National Park, and only 3% rated it as poor or very poor.

⁹ Mirrors the rise in the proportion of visitors reporting travelling by motorbike to the National Park.



The Proposed Plan should support the use of public transport as a meaning of getting to and around the National Park by visitors. This can be supported through ensuring new tourism allocation for site connect to or provide the provision to connect to existing public transport provision. More information on visitor perceptions and use of public transport in the Cairngorms National Park is available in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport.

Active travel

Only 13% of visitors in 2024 – 2025 stated they used active travel means (walking: 10% and cycling: 3%) to move around in the Cairngorms National Park. The Proposed Plan should support the use of active travel to and around the national park where possible supporting the sustainable travel hierarchy. This can be supported through ensuring new tourism allocation for site connect to or provide the provision to connect to existing active travel routes. More information on visitor perceptions and the use of active travel in the Cairngorms National Park is available in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport.

Facilities and services

Digital connectivity

Information on visitor experience of digital services in the Cairngorms National Park was not collected in the latest Visitor survey (2024 – 2025) (CNPA819). This section therefore presents data from the previous two visitor surveys conducted in the National Park.

Figure 11 (CNPA818) shows that in 2019- 2020 less than half of respondents (47%) gave a positive (good or very good) rating for mobile phone reception, with 22% rating this negatively (poor or very poor). The mean score for mobile phone reception reported in the Visitor Survey increased from 3.09 in 2014 / 2015 to 3.23 in 2019 / 2020 (the mean score is calculated whereby 1 is very poor and 5 is very good). Very similarly, 46% gave a positive rating for Wi-Fi access, while 24% rated it negatively (Figure 12). The mean score for visitor ratings of Wi-Fi also increased from 3.06 in 2014 / 2015 to 3.08 in 2019 / 2020. Further information on digital infrastructure in the National Park is available in Schedule 20: Digital infrastructure.

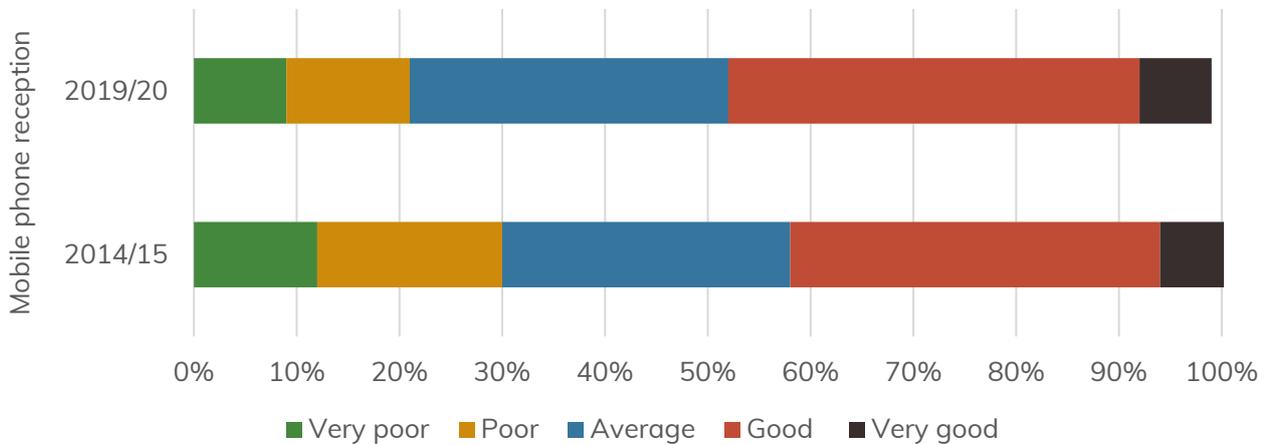


Figure 11 Rating of the Mobile phone reception in the Cairngorms National Park by visitors in 2014 / 2015 and 2019 / 2020. Cairngorms National Park Visitor Survey 2019 / 2020¹⁰ (CNPA818).

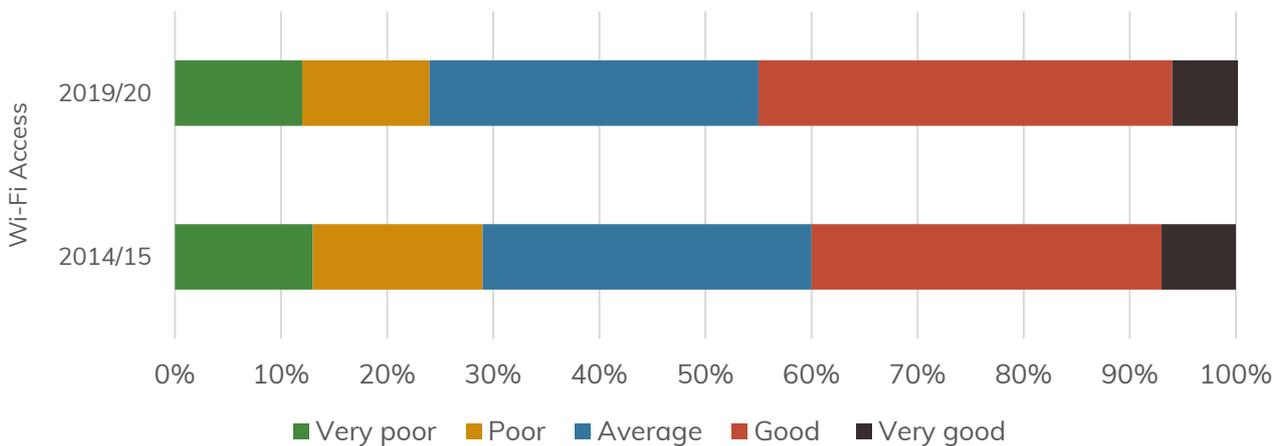


Figure 12 Rating of the Wi-Fi access in the Cairngorms National Park by visitors in 2014 / 2015 and 2019 / 2020. Cairngorms National Park Visitor Survey 2019 / 2020 (CNPA818).

Evaluation of facilities

Respondents of the Visitor Survey were asked to rate a number of facilities and amenities in Cairngorms National Park (Figure 13, Figure 14, Figure 15 and Figure 16). In the 2024 - 2025 Visitor Survey (CNPA819) 1,348 people participated, less than the 2,152 people participating in the 2019 - 2020 Survey (CNPA818) (roughly the same as the 2,220 in the 2014 – 2015 Survey (CNPA817)). The data shown here excludes those who did not use the facilities, i.e. those who responded, 'not used / applicable'. The data

¹⁰ Figures may not sum due to rounding



show that the majority rated the condition of paths and tracks, signage, car parks and public toilets as good or very good.

Paths and tracks, signage and car parks were rated as good or very good by a similar proportion of respondents, although paths and tracks received the highest rating overall. There have been improvements in the scores for these facilities since 2014 - 2015, with higher proportions rating them as very good in 2024 – 2025.

While the number of people rating the public toilets as very good in the National Park has decreased from 18% in 2019 – 2020 to 16% in 2024 – 2025, overall, the number of visitors who rated the provision of public toilets good or very good increased from 85% to 90%.

During the visitor surveys visitors were asked to rate the provision of car parks in the Cairngorms National Park. 97% of visitors reported that they were satisfied (good) or very satisfied (very good) with the provision of car parks in the National Park in 2024 – 2025 (Figure 16). More information on the importance of car parking and visitor perceptions of car parks in the Cairngorms National Park is available in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport.

The Proposed Plan should support visitor infrastructure that supports the visitor economy at appropriate locations or where gaps in provision have been identified or to support new tourism development.

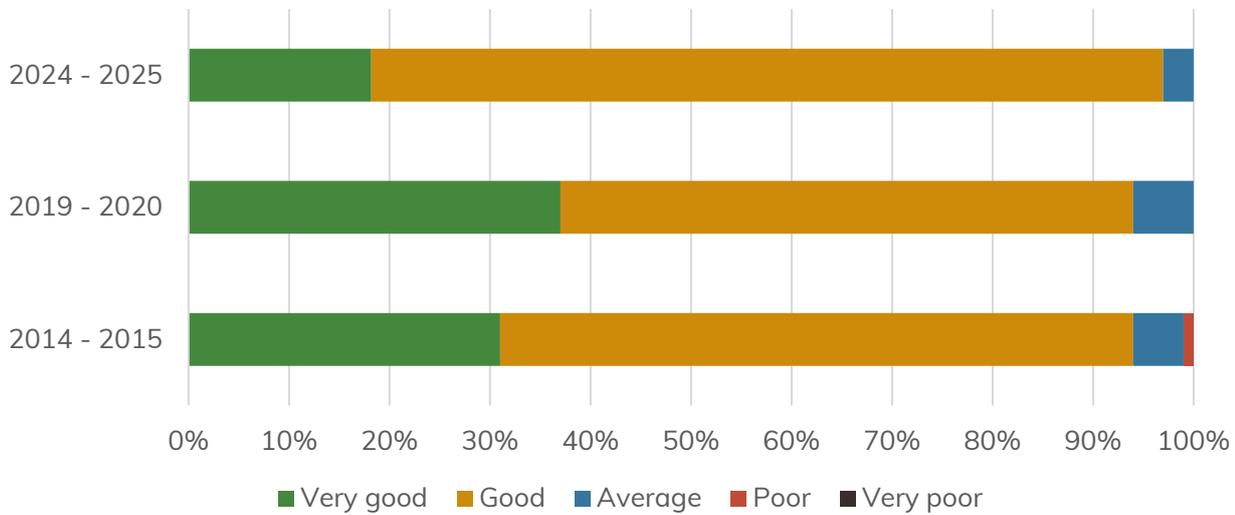


Figure 13 Visitor rating¹¹ of the condition of paths and tracks in the Cairngorms National Park by visitors in 2014 - 2015, 2019 – 2020 and 2024 - 2025. Cairngorms National Park Visitor Surveys 2014 – 2015 (CNPA817), 2019 – 2020 (CNPA818) and 2024 – 2025 (CNPA819).

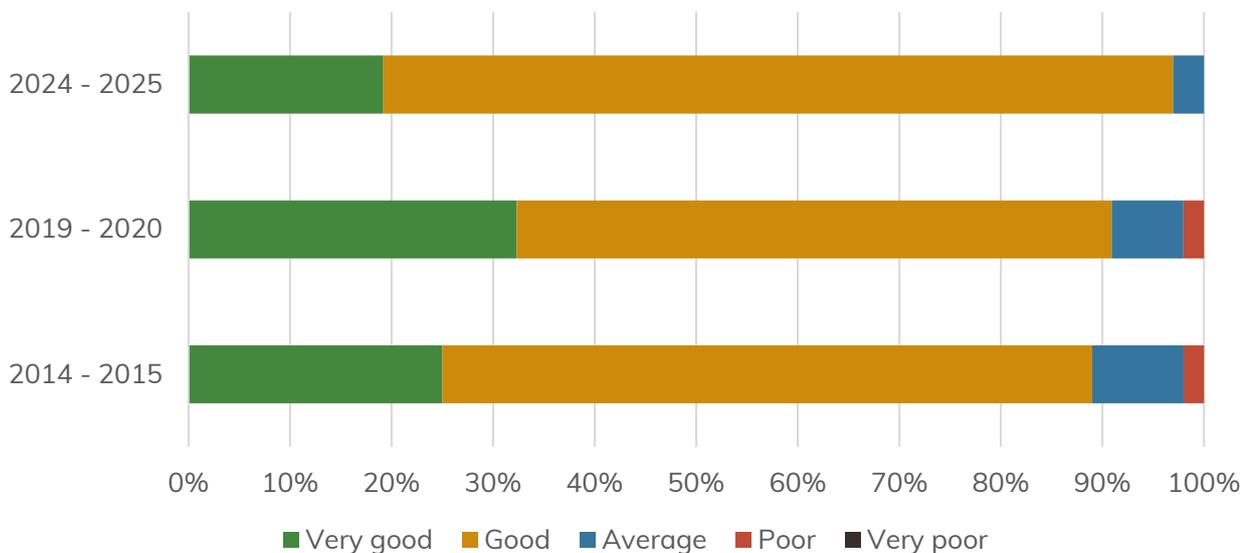


Figure 14 Visitor rating¹² of the signposts and signage in the Cairngorms National Park by visitors in 2014 - 2015, 2019 – 2020 and 2024 - 2025. Cairngorms National Park Visitor Surveys 2014 – 2015 (CNPA817), 2019 – 2020 (CNPA818) and 2024 – 2025 (CNPA819).

¹¹ During the 2024 – 2025 Cairngorms National Park Visitor Survey when visitors were asked how they rated facilities, the options had been altered to Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neither, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied. For the purpose of comparative analysis these have been substituted for Very good, Good, Average, Poor and Very poor to align with the options presented in previous surveys.

¹² During the 2024 – 2025 Cairngorms National Park Visitor Survey when visitors were asked how they rated facilities, the options had been altered to Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neither, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied. For the purpose of comparative analysis these have been substituted for Very good, Good, Average, Poor and Very poor to align with the options presented in previous surveys.

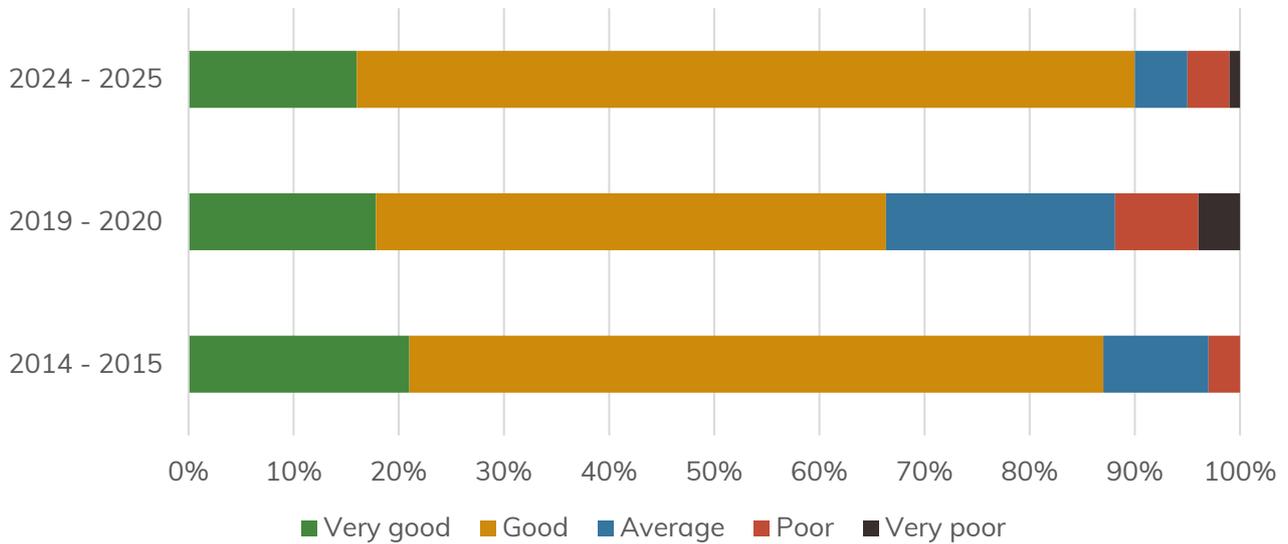


Figure 15 Visitor rating¹³ of the public toilets in the Cairngorms National Park by visitors in 2014 - 2015, 2019 – 2020 and 2024 - 2025. Cairngorms National Park Visitor Surveys 2014 – 2015 (CNPA817), 2019 – 2020 (CNPA818) and 2024 – 2025 (CNPA819).

¹³ During the 2024 – 2025 Cairngorms National Park Visitor Survey (CNPA819) when visitors were asked how they rated facilities, the options had been altered to Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neither, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied. For the purpose of comparative analysis these have been substituted for Very good, Good, Average, Poor and Very poor to align with the options presented in previous surveys.

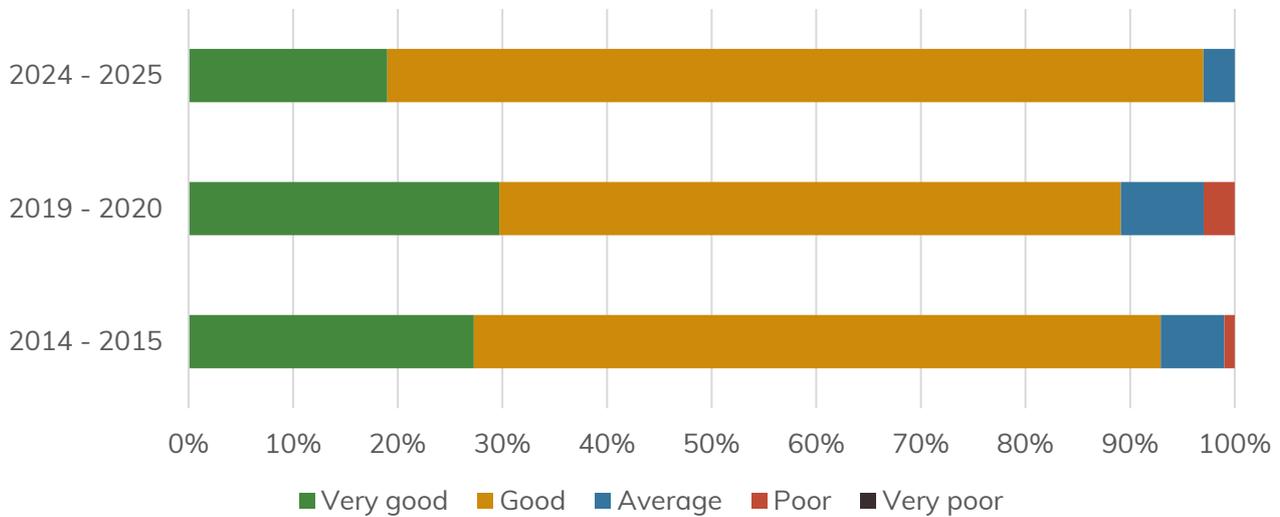


Figure 16 Visitor rating¹⁴ of the car parks in the Cairngorms National Park by visitors in 2014 - 2015, 2019 - 2020 and 2024 - 2025. Cairngorms National Park Visitor Surveys 2014 - 2015 (CNPA817), 2019 - 2020 (CNPA818) and 2024 - 2025 (CNPA819).

In terms of ease of access and accessibility, in 2024 - 2025, 92% of visitors were either very satisfied or satisfied with the ease of access and accessibility to facilities in the Cairngorms National Park (CNPA819).

Visitor survey: improvements

In the 2024 - 2025 Visitor Survey (CNPA819), when asked what could improve their trip, over half said there was nothing that could be improved, with infrastructure and transportation most commonly cited among those who did make suggestions for improvement. Most common themes among those who wrote in an improvement that could be made:

- **Infrastructure & Facilities (16%)**
Frequent mentions of public toilets, bins, and basic amenities.
Requests for better signage, cleaner facilities, and more accessible locations.
Need for accessible paths.
A general desire for more facilities to be open
- **Transportation (13%)**
Comments on parking issues, especially in busy areas like Aviemore and Loch Morlich.

¹⁴ During the 2024 - 2025 Cairngorms National Park Visitor Survey (CNPA819) when visitors were asked how they rated facilities, the options had been altered to Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neither, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied. For the purpose of comparative analysis these have been substituted for Very good, Good, Average, Poor and Very poor to align with the options presented in previous surveys.



Suggestions for improved public transport, including bus timetables and connections.
Desire for better quality roads and removal of potholes in roads
(Matters relating to transportation are covered in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport)

- **Natural Environment (5%)**

Calls to preserve the natural feel to the area.

- **Accommodation improvements (4%)**

Desire for more campervan sites, waste disposal points, and picnic areas.

Greater availability of campsites and Aires.

Better availability of cost-effective accommodation.

- **Season specific and weather (2%)**

A desire for different or better weather to that experienced by visitors.

Requests for more snow in ski areas.

Desire for year-round access and longer opening hours for shops and cafes.

Visitor economy

The Cairngorms National Park Authority receives an annual report generated using STEAM¹⁵ (CNPA191) to report on tourism specific economic impact modelling. STEAM data from 2020 and 2021 was affected directly by the Covid-19 Pandemic lockdowns and indirectly by resulting changes in visitor behaviour post lockdown. As a result, the figures for those years are likely to underestimate actual visitor numbers.

In 2023, the Cairngorms National Park received approximately 2.15m visitors, representing a 24.2% increase from 2022. This represents a third year of growth following the decline recorded in 2020 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. In 2021 visitor numbers increased 90.6% from the low numbers recorded in 2020 (which was a decrease on the 2019 figures of -73.0%). In 2022 they continued to increase from 1.1m in 2021 to 1.7m in 2022 (representing an increase of 62.7%).

Pre-pandemic, in 2019, the Cairngorms National Park received 2.067m visitors which has now been surpassed by the 2023 visitor number figures (Figure 17).

¹⁵ Owned and operated by Global Tourism Solutions (UK) Ltd.

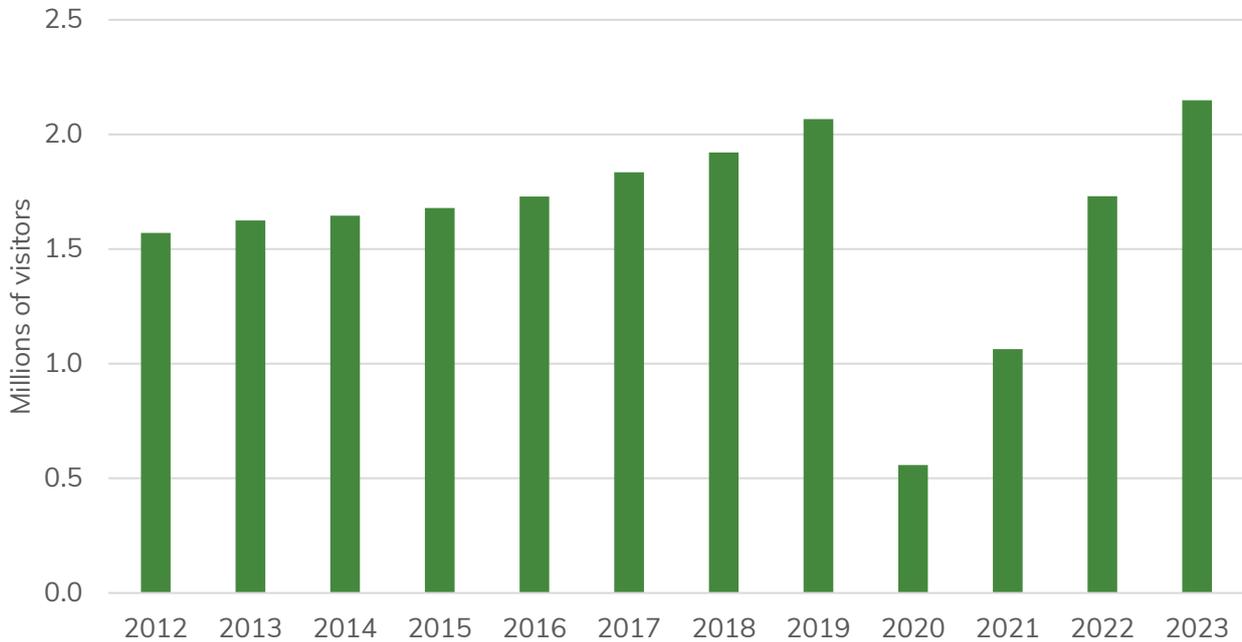


Figure 17 Annual visitor numbers (millions / year) to the Cairngorms National Park 2012 – 2023. Cairngorms National Park 2023 STEAM report, 2024 (CNPA191).

Between 2012 and 2023 the total average annual growth in visitor numbers was 3.3%, however this has not been uniformly seen in all months or seasons across the year. During this period the highest increase in visitor numbers has been during November and December which have seen reported visitor numbers increase by 74.7% and 85.2% respectively.

Between 2022 and 2023 the Cairngorms National Park has witnessed an increase in visitor numbers in 32.8% in quarter one, 23.8% in quarter two, 23.3% in quarter three and 19.8% in quarter four. These figures differ significantly from the previous years post Covid-19, which may signal growth rates and visitor numbers are reflecting the stability and trajectory seen before the Pandemic.

The Cairngorms National Park experiences seasonal variations in visitor numbers affecting the monthly number of people employed in this sector throughout the year.

Figure 18 shows the monthly visitor numbers from January 2018 to December 2023. In 2023 August received the most visitors with approximately 304,000 visitors. The least busy month in 2023 was January with approximately 101,000 visitors. The largest percentage increase in monthly visitor numbers during this period has been in January when in 2018 there were approximately 70,000 visitors, which in January 2023



increased to approximately 101,000 visitors representing a 44.3% increase. September saw the second largest increase in monthly visitor numbers from 2018 to 2023 with an increase of 30.8% from approximately 182,000 to 238,000 visitors.

July and October saw relatively little change in terms of visitor numbers, with percentage changes of -2.4% and 5.4% respectively. The largest reported decrease from 2018 to 2023 was in May when numbers fell from 228,000 visitors in 2018 to 212,000 in 2023 (representing a 7.0% decrease). It is worth noting that pre-pandemic in 2019 in June there were 232,000 visitors. This may indicate a changing pattern in domestic vacation patterns or that behaviour has not fully returned to re-pandemic patterns, which subsequent years data should be able to show

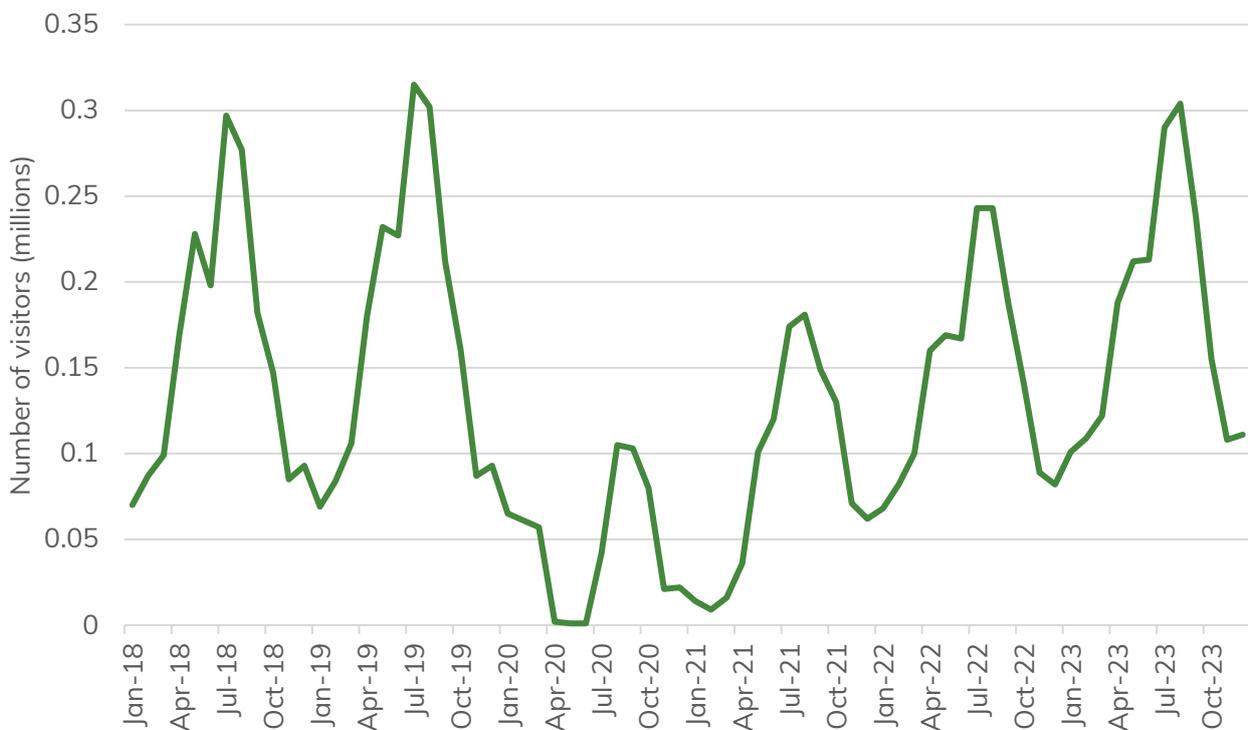


Figure 18 Monthly visitor numbers, January 2018 – December 2023. Cairngorms National Park 2023 STEAM report, 2024 (CNPA191).

Economic impact of tourism

Spending by visitors in Scotland generates approximately £11.5 billion of economic activity for the wider Scottish supply chain. It directly contributes around £6 billion to Scottish gross domestic product, and 8.5% of all businesses in Scotland are related to tourism (CNPA188).

The STEAM report (CNPA191) reported that in 2023 the economic impact of tourism in the Cairngorms National Park was reported at £419.33m (Figure 19) representing an



increase of 18.7% from 2022 (£353.38m) and 35.9% higher than the pre-pandemic figures for 2019 (£308.54m). This represents a strong recovery in terms of economic impact since the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The Covid-19 Pandemic had significant negative effects (-65.4%) on the economic impact of tourism in the Cairngorms National Park in 2020 (Figure 19 and Figure 20) with a reduction of £201.94m compared to the previous year. In 2019 the economic impact of tourism in the Cairngorms National Park was reported to be £308.54m. There was strong economic growth up to 2019, with an average increase of +7.5% annually from 2009 to 2019 representing an increase of +74.7% change for the period. In 2019 the highest growth was reported at +14.2% over twice the annual average and over 2% higher than in 2018 (+12.1% increase).

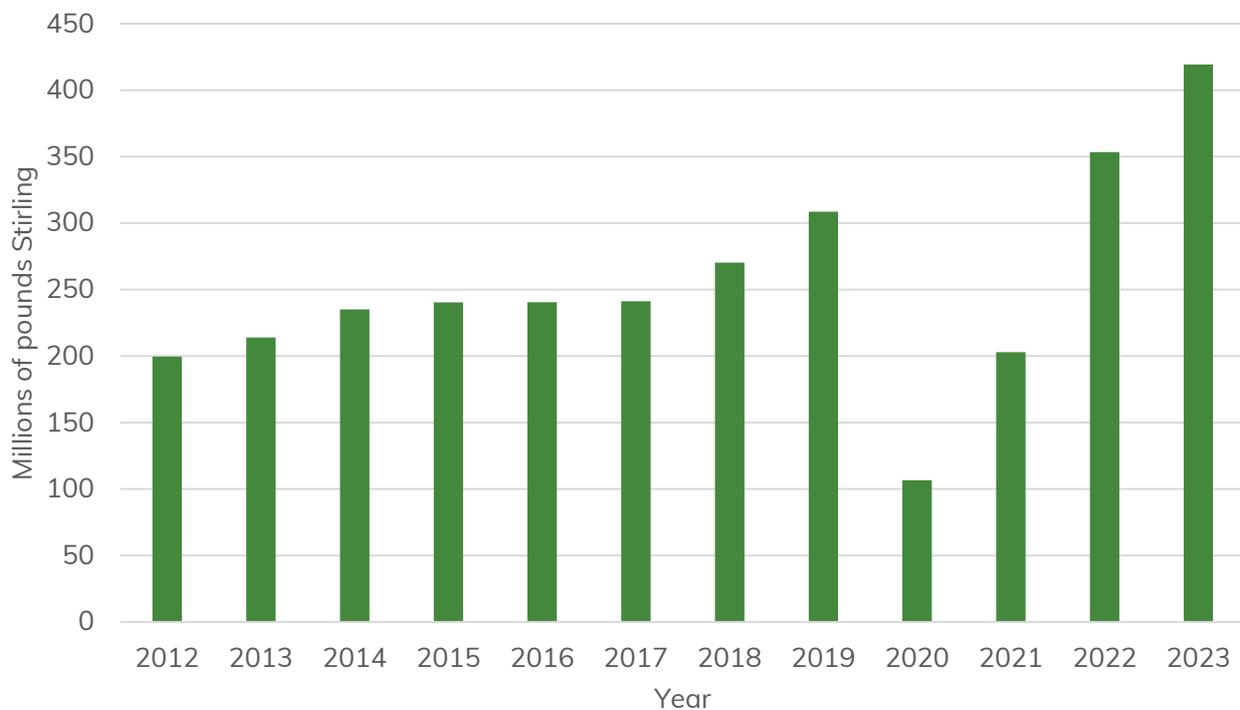


Figure 19 Annual economic impact from tourism 2012 – 2023 (£M). Cairngorms National Park 2023 STEAM report, 2024 (CNPA191).

Very little growth (approximately 0.04% increase) was recorded in 2016 in terms of economic impact of tourism in the National Park which reflects figures for the International Domestic Overnight Visitor spend for Scotland, from data published in the Scottish Government Tourism in Scotland: the economic contribution of the sector Report (CNPA823). It reported a marked reduction in the overnight visitor spend by domestic visitors in 2016.

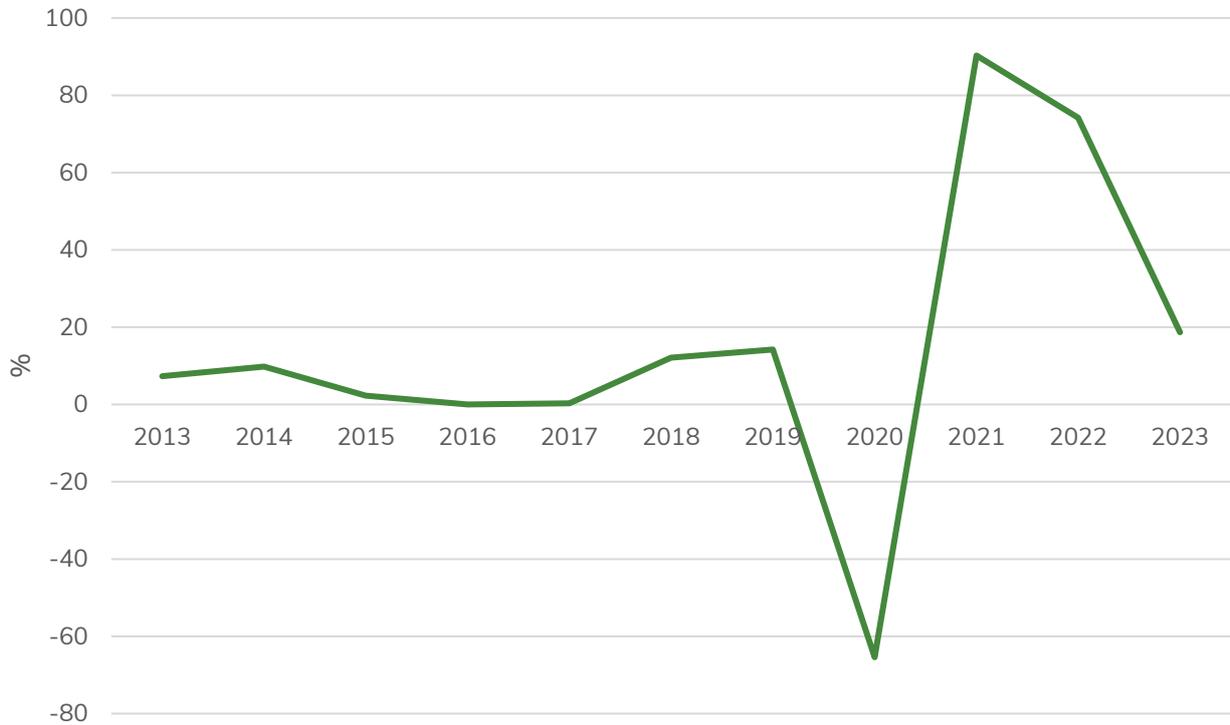


Figure 20 Annual percentage change in economic impact 2013 – 2023. Cairngorms National Park 2023 STEAM report, 2024 (CNPA191).

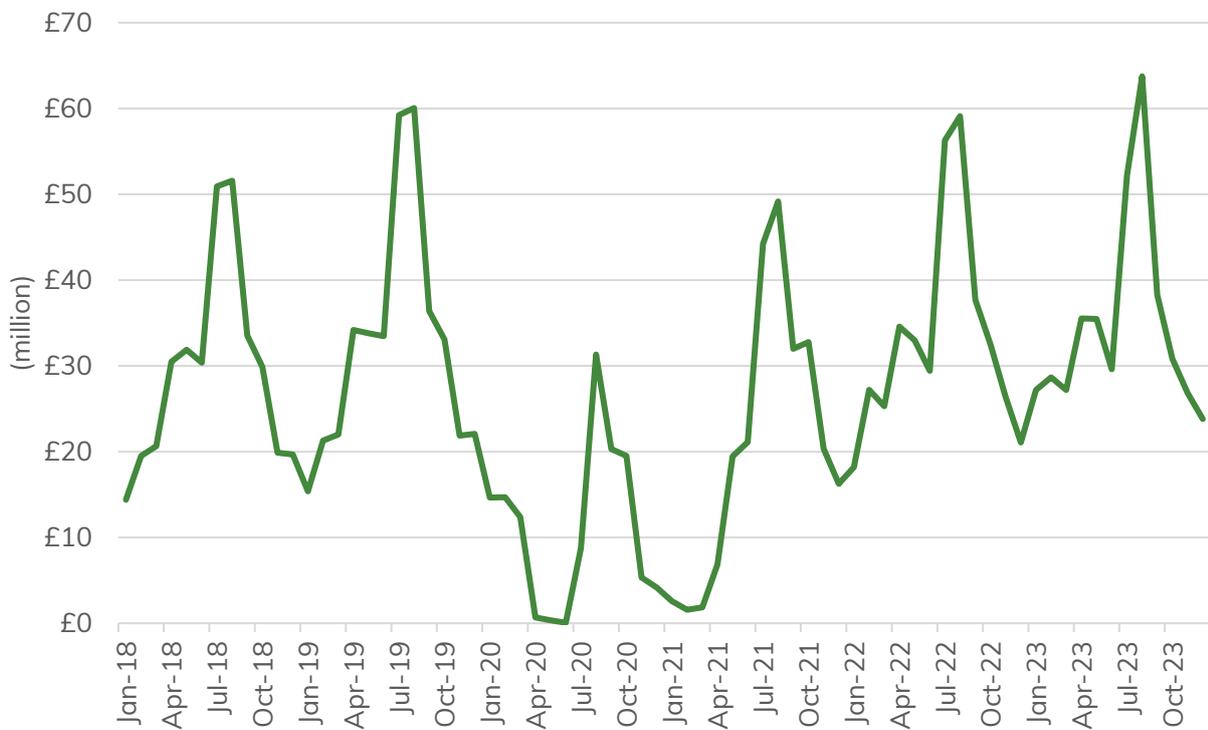


Figure 21 Monthly economic impact from tourism 2018 – 2023 (£M). Cairngorms National Park 2023 STEAM report, 2024 (CNPA191).



Monthly economic impact data reflects the seasonality of the tourism industry in Scotland reflecting the patterns seen in the monthly visitor numbers (Figure 18).

Figure 21 shows the changes in monthly economic impact of tourism in the National Park from January 2018 to December 2023. The largest percentage increase in monthly economic impact during this period has been in January when in 2018 when economic impact accounted for £14.39m which in January 2023 increased to £27.19m representing an 89.0% increase. February saw the second largest increase in monthly economic impact from 2018 to 2023 with an increase of 47.0% from £19.51m to £28.67m. July and October saw relatively little change with increases of 2.5% and 3.2% respectively from 2018 to 2023. The only month there was a reported decrease from 2018 to 2023 was in June when economic impact from tourism fell from £30.38m in 2018 to £29.61m in 2023 (-2.5%). It is worth noting that pre-pandemic in 2019 in June the monthly economic impact was £33.46m.

As the fluctuation for monthly economic impact reflect monthly visitor numbers this may indicate a changing pattern in domestic vacation patterns or that behaviour has not fully returned to re-pandemic patterns, which subsequent years data should be able to show.

The Covid-19 Pandemic had an effect on the monthly economic impact trends experienced prior to 2020. There was some limited recovery during the summer of 2020 coinciding with the lifting of the Covid-19 restrictions, however the peak visitor numbers seen in August produced an economic impact of only £24.27m approximately half of the £48.43m recorded in the previous year for the same month.

Between 2022 and 2023 the largest growth in terms of monthly economic impact was in January which saw a 69.5% increase from £16.04m to £27.19m. The smallest average monthly change between 2022 and 2023 was in July which increased 5.2% from £49.63m to £52.20m. This is only slightly lower than the average monthly increase for this month from 2012 to 2023 which was reported at 6.7%.

Over the longer period from 2012 to 2023 the highest average monthly change was reported in the month of January (18.8%) followed by November (17.8%). Again, using this data, the reported growth in April of 10.7% and in December of 15.5% supports the assertion that visitor spend is increasing during the school holiday periods outside the main summer break.

Further information on the wider economy of the National Park is available in Schedule 21: Economic development.



Economic impact of tourism: Indexed to 2022 prices to reflect inflation

The STEAM report (CNPA191) shows that in 2023 the total indexed (to 2022 inflation figures) economic impact of tourism between 2012 and 2023 was estimated to have contributed approximately £3.9 billion to the Cairngorms National Park economy (Figure 22). There was strong growth, in the two years preceding the Covid-19 Pandemic, with an 11.3% increase from 2018 to 2019. As previously mentioned, the Covid-19 Pandemic had a significant negative impact on the economic impact from tourism in the National Park.

In 2017 a significant contraction of 2.3% in economic impact was recorded despite visitor numbers increasing (Figure 17). This reflects the reduced growth seen in the unindexed figures earlier mentioned in this section (Figure 19).

In 2020 the indexed value of economic impact reduced by 66.4%, presumably wholly due to the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic. In 2021 and 2022, there was reported growth of 87.8% and 61.5% respectively. Economic impact increased modestly from 2022 to 2023 by only 4.6% perhaps representing signs of recovery in terms of the economy post Covid-19. Note the indexed figures report a more modest economic recovery when compared to those non-indexed figures mentioned earlier (Figure 20).

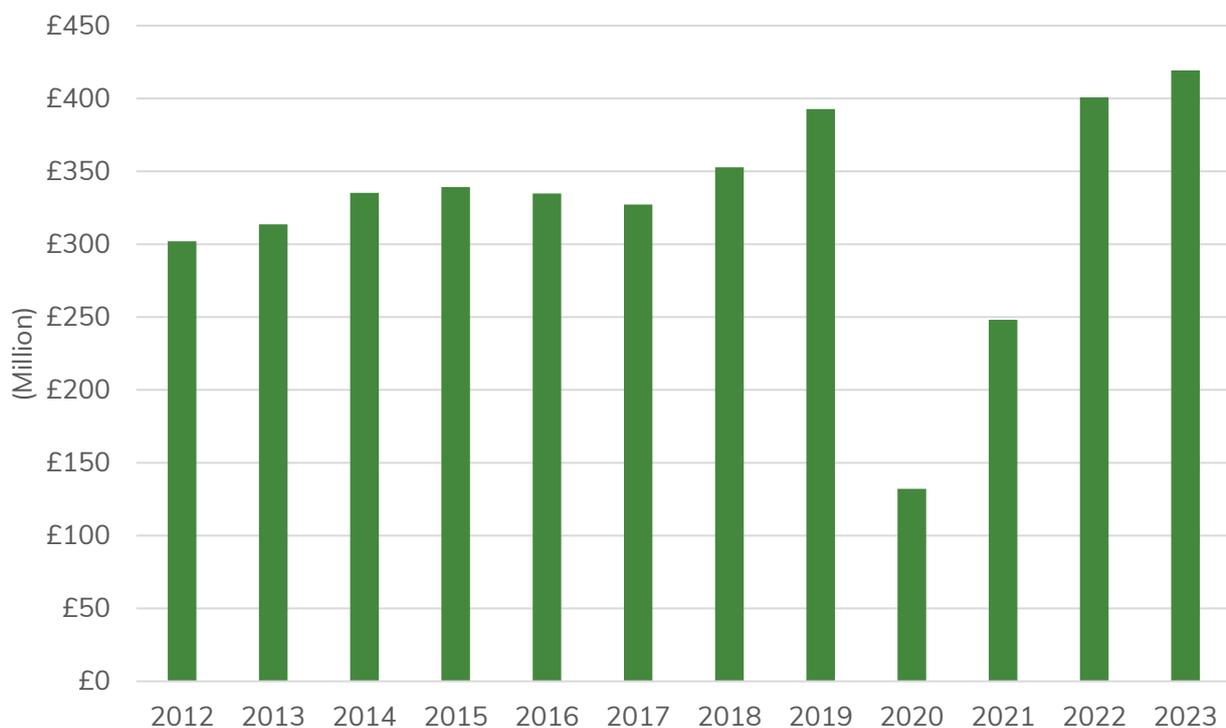




Figure 22 Annual economic impact from tourism (£M) indexed to 2023 inflation prices for the years 2012 – 2023. Cairngorms National Park 2023 STEAM report, 2024 (CNPA191).

Further information on the wider economy of the National Park is available in Schedule 21: Economic development.

Sectorial distribution of economic impact

The data, from the STEAM report (CNPA191), for the proportional sectorial contributions to the overall economic impact to the economy of the Cairngorms National Park (Figure 23) shows that, pre-pandemic in 2019, accommodation accounted for 26.5% of the total economic impact (not including related VAT) and indirect expenditure attributing 19.2%. Transport and the food and drink sectors contributed 13.6% and 13.8% respectively. The sectorial distribution was relatively stable from 2013 to 2019.

During the Covid-19 Pandemic (2020) there was a drop in the proportional contribution from VAT and shopping. In terms of economic figures (Figure 24), the impact from accommodation dropped from £103.97M in 2019 to £41.33M in 2020. Across all sectors there was a decrease in economic impact in 2020, with the largest reductions seen in the contribution of VAT to the economy. All other sectors reduced within the range of -60.3% (accommodation) to -69.1% (shopping).

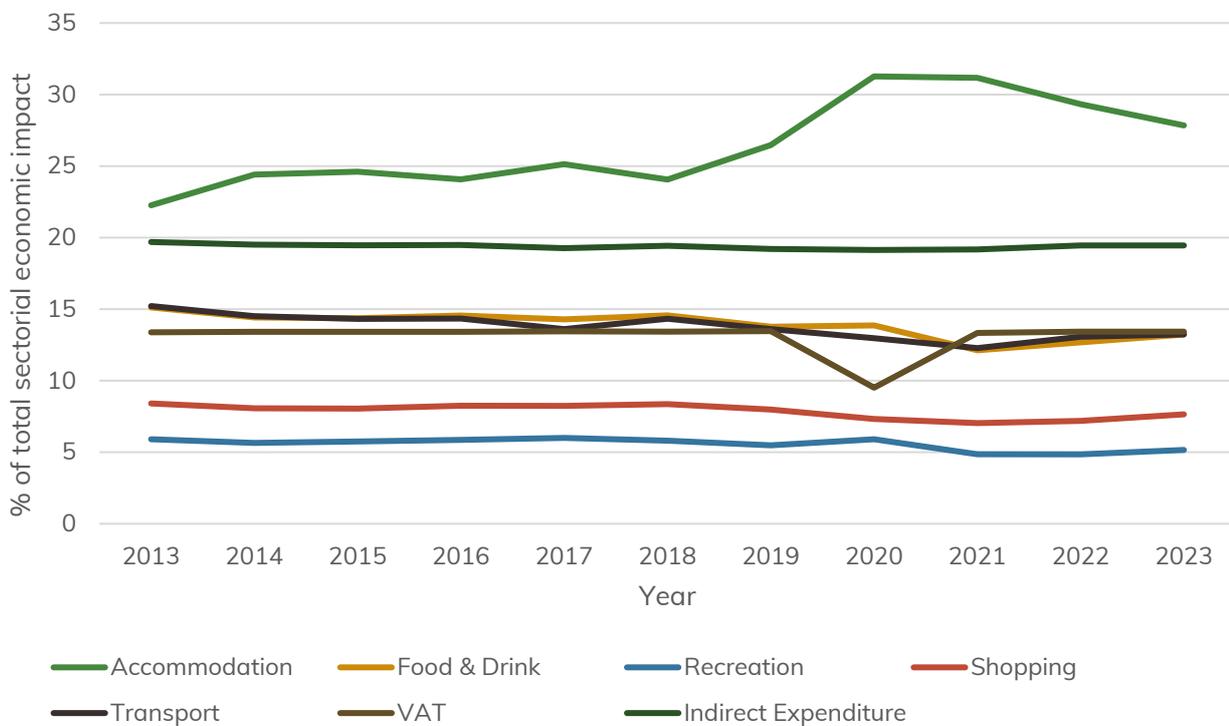


Figure 23 Annual proportional sectorial impact to the total economic impact of tourism in the Cairngorms National Park 2013 – 2023. Cairngorms National Park 2023 STEAM report, 2024 (CNPA191). Figures used have been indexed to 2023 inflation figures.



In 2023, accommodation was the biggest contributor (27.8%, £116.74m), followed by indirect expenditure (19.4%, £81.56m). Similar figures were reported for Food and Drink (£55.48m), Transport (55.53m) and VAT (56.30m), which were proportionally representative for 13.2%, 13.2% and 13.4% respectively.

Recreation remained the lowest contributor (£21.65m equating to 7.6% proportionally) which may reflect the seasonality of recreation activities; being mainly summer or winter-based activities with little cross-over.

In 2023 the economic impact from the accommodation sector has surpassed the figures from 2019 increasing by 23.3% (from £103.97m in 2019 to 116.75m in 2023). During the period from 2013 to 2019 accommodation classed economic impact increased proportionally until 2020, followed by a small reduction in 2021 and continues to fall in 2023 perhaps signalling a return to the relative stability seen before the Covid-19 Pandemic. The second largest changes seen during 2020 (during the Covid-19 Pandemic) where seen in the amount and proportions of VAT contributions to overall economic impact from tourism. In 2019 VAT contributed £52.90m (13.5%) which reduced to 12.58m (9.5%) in 2020, however in 2023 has returned to 13.4% which is equal (+ / - 0.1%) to the proportionality of VAT contribution to the economy in the period leading up the Pandemic.

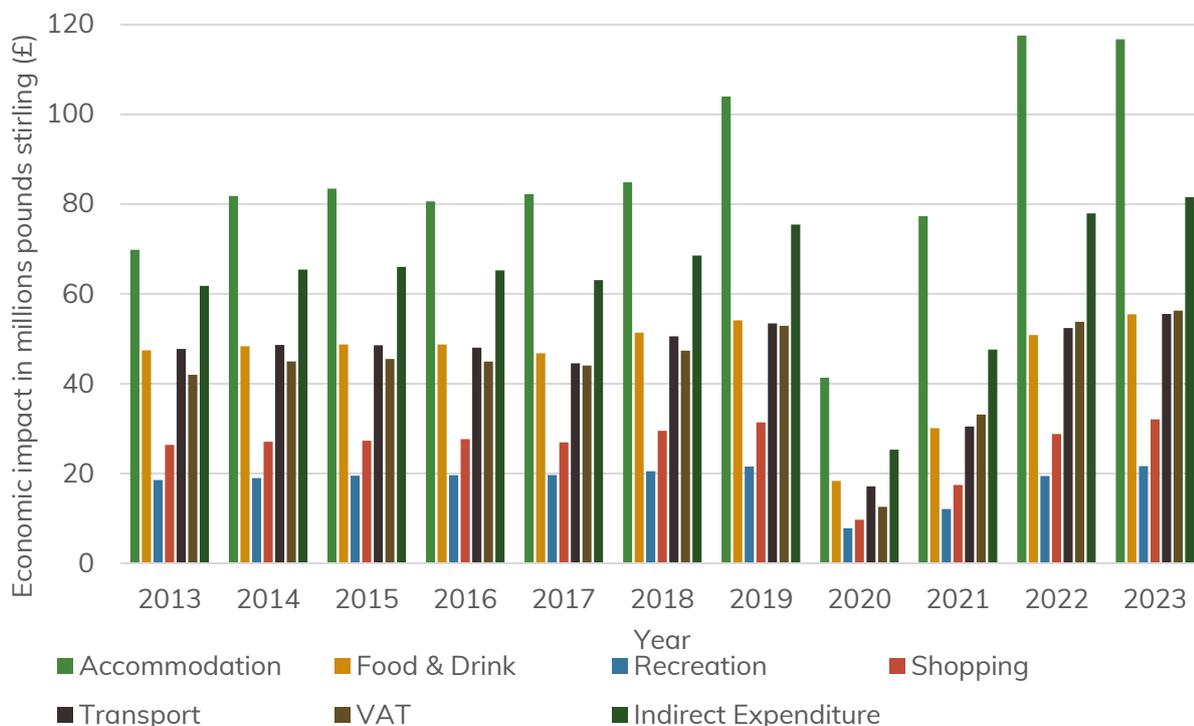




Figure 24 Annual sectorial contribution (£M) to overall economic impact (indexed to 2023 inflation figures) of tourism in the Cairngorms National Park 2013 – 2023. Cairngorms National Park 2023 STEAM report, 2024 (CNPA191).

Sectorial tourism employment

The 2023 STEAM report (CNPA191) shows there was an overall upward trend in the numbers of people employed in the Cairngorms National Park up until 2019, with a significant reduction of 2,905 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions in 2020 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic (Figure 25). Between 2013 and 2019 the numbers of people employed in tourism related positions in the National Park had increased by 14.1% (+735 full-time equivalent positions).

The decreases in employment figures for 2017 and then also in 2018 reflect the falling economic impact (seen in the indexed data, and a reduced growth rate in unindexed data) attributed to this sector in 2016 and 2017. As market confidence decreased after the fall in economic impact in 2016, it is possible businesses reduced staffing levels in anticipation of a lower expectancy of visitors in the following year.

Between 2020 and 2021 the total number of people employed either directly or indirectly in tourism increased from 3,037 to 3,877 (a 27.7% increase) representing a recovery in the tourism market and lifting of restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

In 2023 the overall number of people employed in the tourism sector were reported at 5,454 people (full time equivalents) are still 488 people less than the figures seen in 2019 (5,942 people). It is uncertain yet if the numbers of people employed in the tourism industry will return or surpass the numbers employed before the Covid-19 Pandemic in 2024.

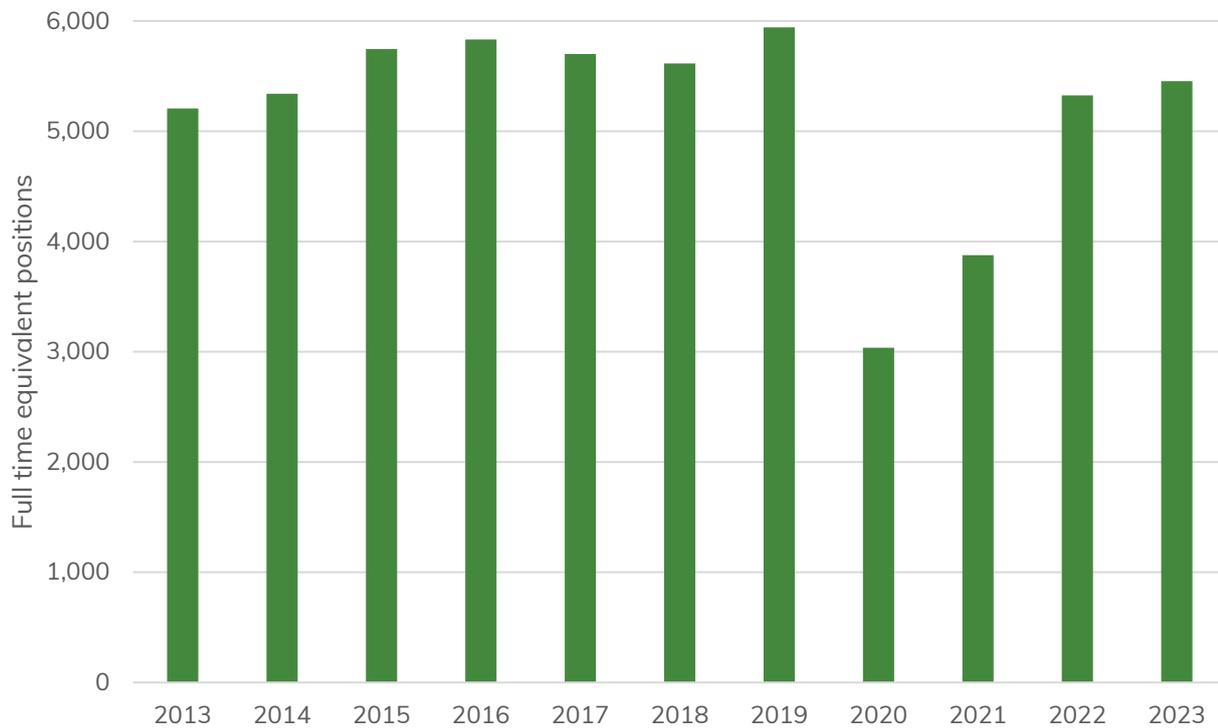


Figure 25 Total annual tourism employment in the Cairngorms National Park 2013 – 2023. Cairngorms National Park 2023 STEAM report, 2024 (CNPA191).

The profile of the proportions of people working in each sector contributing to the tourism sector changed significantly during 2020, coinciding with the Covid-19 Pandemic (Figure 26). The most pronounced changes were in accommodation which between 2013 and 2019 had ranged between 46.6% and 52.0%, in 2020 this increased to 64.7%. The largest reduction in proportional employment was seen in the transport sector which reduced from 11.6% to 7.3% potentially reflecting the imposed travel restrictions (Figure 26).

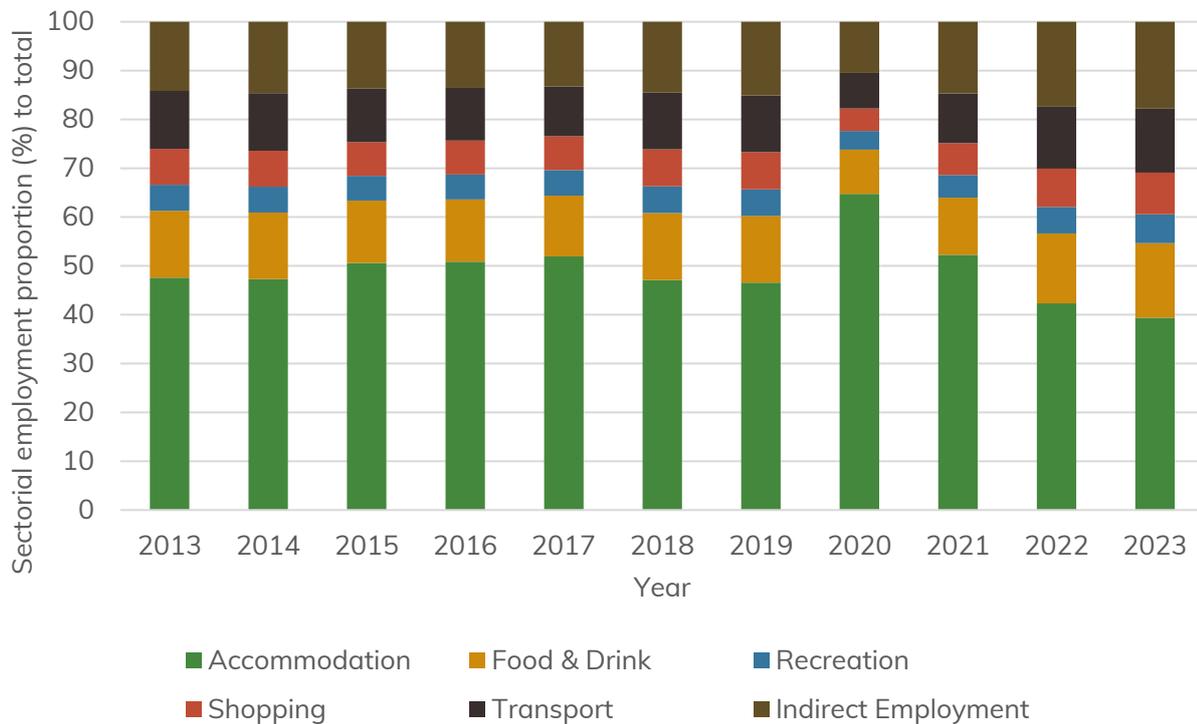


Figure 26 Proportion of employment by sector in tourism in the Cairngorms National Park from 2013 to 2023. Cairngorms National Park 2023 STEAM report, 2024 (CNPA191).

In the period from 2021 to 2023 the proportion of people working in the accommodation sector has fallen from 52% in 2021 to 39% in 2023 reflecting the increases in the proportion of people in all the other sectors increasing. The figures for the proportion of people employed in the accommodation sector has not returned to the number seen in 2019 when 49% of all employment was in the accommodation sector. In terms of the number of people in 2023, 2,149 people were employed in the accommodation sector 620 people less than in 2019 before the Pandemic.

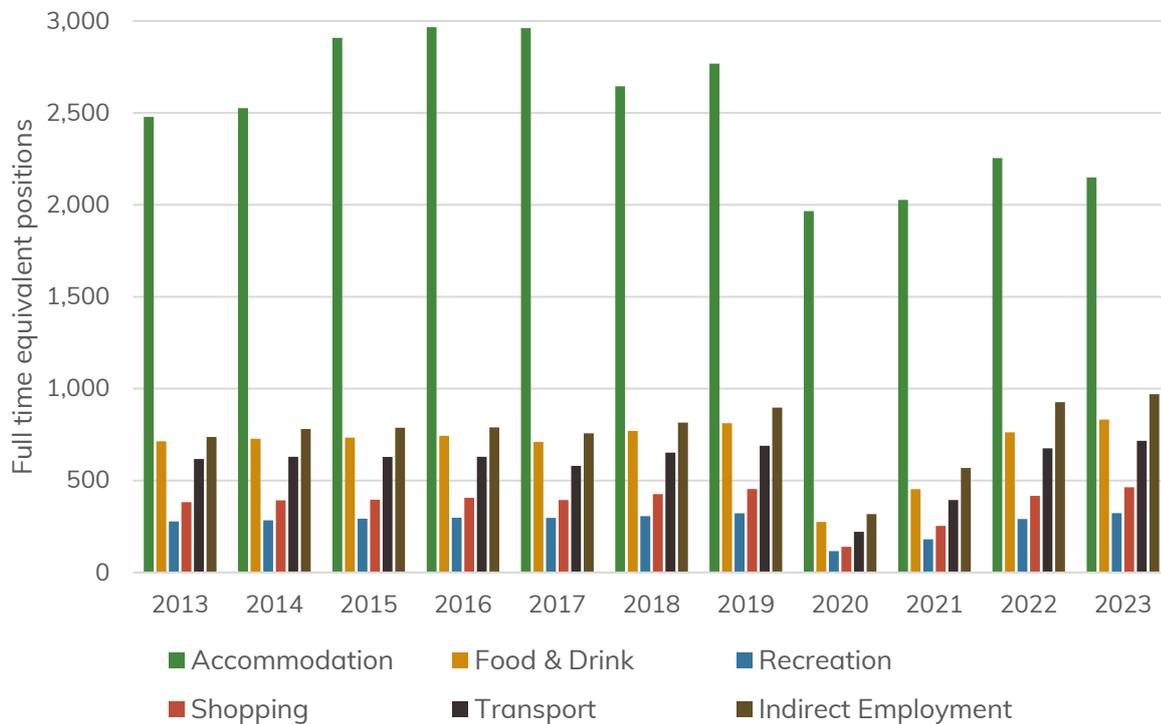


Figure 27 Number of people employed (full-time equivalents) by sector by year in tourism sector of the Cairngorms National Park 2013 – 2023. Cairngorms National Park 2023 STEAM report, 2024 (CNPA191).

In terms of numbers, there has been a slight increase (+ 20 people) in the numbers of people employed in the Food and drink sector from 2019 to 2023. One extra person employed in recreation from 2019 to 2023, 10 extra people in Shopping, and 27 additional people employed in transport. The number of people employed in indirect tourism employment has significantly increased between 2019 and 2023 from 897 people to 970 people (an increase of 73 people).

Seasonal employment

The Cairngorms National Park experiences seasonal variations in visitor numbers affecting the monthly number of people employed in this sector throughout the year. The 2023 STAEM report (CNPA191) shows the monthly figures for the number of people employed in tourism in the National Park (Figure 28) correlates to the changes to monthly visitor numbers (Figure 18).

Looking at the percentage change from 2022 to 2023 there was reduction in staff on the months of July (-7.3%) and October (-5.2%) (Figure 28) with a significant increase in the number of staff in January (+49.5%)

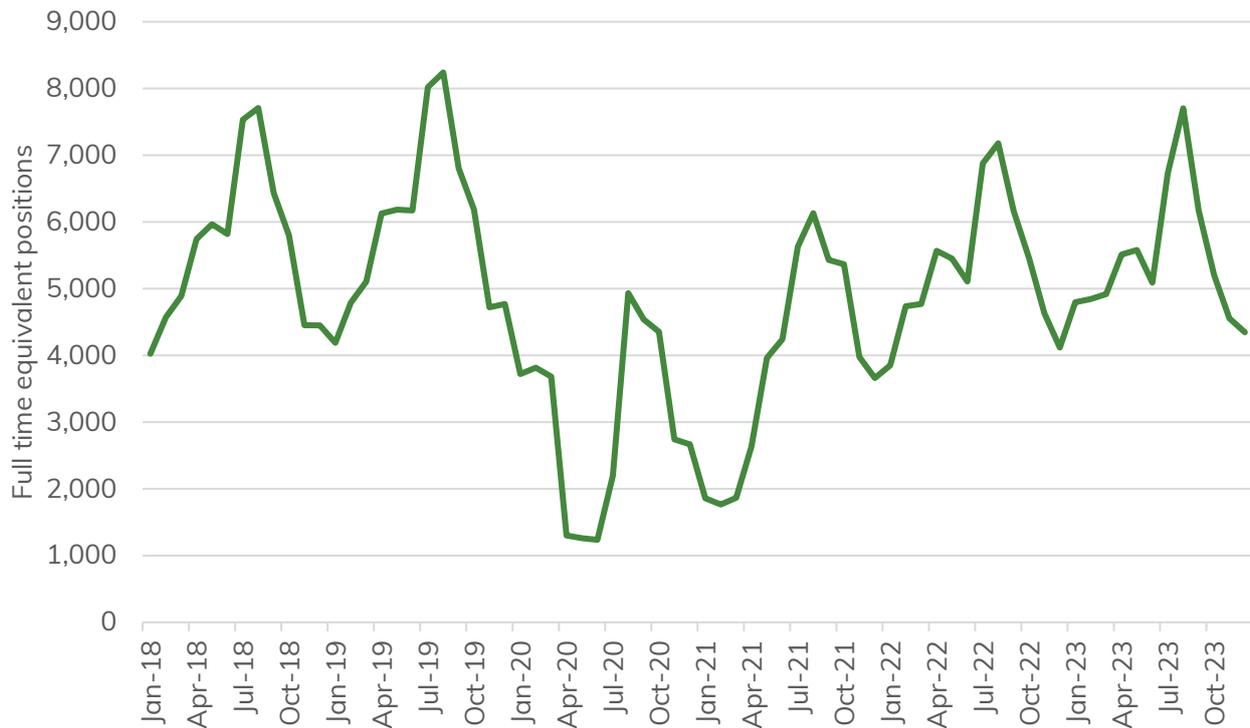


Figure 28 Monthly tourism employment (full-time equivalents) in the Cairngorms National Park 2018 – 2023. Cairngorms National Park 2023 STEAM report, 2024 (CNPA191).

Over the longer period from 2012 to 2023 the largest increase in monthly tourism employment has been in quarter four, which saw an increase of 13.2%, with the highest monthly increases seen in January (27.2%). There were also significant increases in this period in the number of people employed in November (19.3%) and December (15.9%) signalling an increase in demand during the winter period. This is also reflected in the average annual changes for November (+1.8%), December (+1.4%) and January (+2.5%) for the period. During the period (2012 – 2023) there was reduction in the number of people employed in the months of June recorded as a decrease of -1.2% and marginally decreases in March, -0.1% and July -0.2% (Figure 28).

Further information on the economy and employment in the National Park is available in Schedule 21: Economic development.

Accommodation and food services

Gross Value Added (GVA)

Data from Oxford Economics (CNPA189) provides estimates of current and forecasted Gross Value Added are available by industry for different sectors in the Cairngorms National Park from 2015 to 2032. An overview of all sectors is presented in Schedule 21: Economic development. Data for the Gross Value Added generated by accommodation



and food services activities for the National Park (Figure 29) gives an indication of the sector's contribution to the total estimated and forecasted Gross Value Added figure for the National Park. In 2023, the Gross Value Added from accommodation and food services activities was estimated to be £58.89m. This represents 14.5% of the total Gross Value Added from all sectors in 2023 for the National Park.

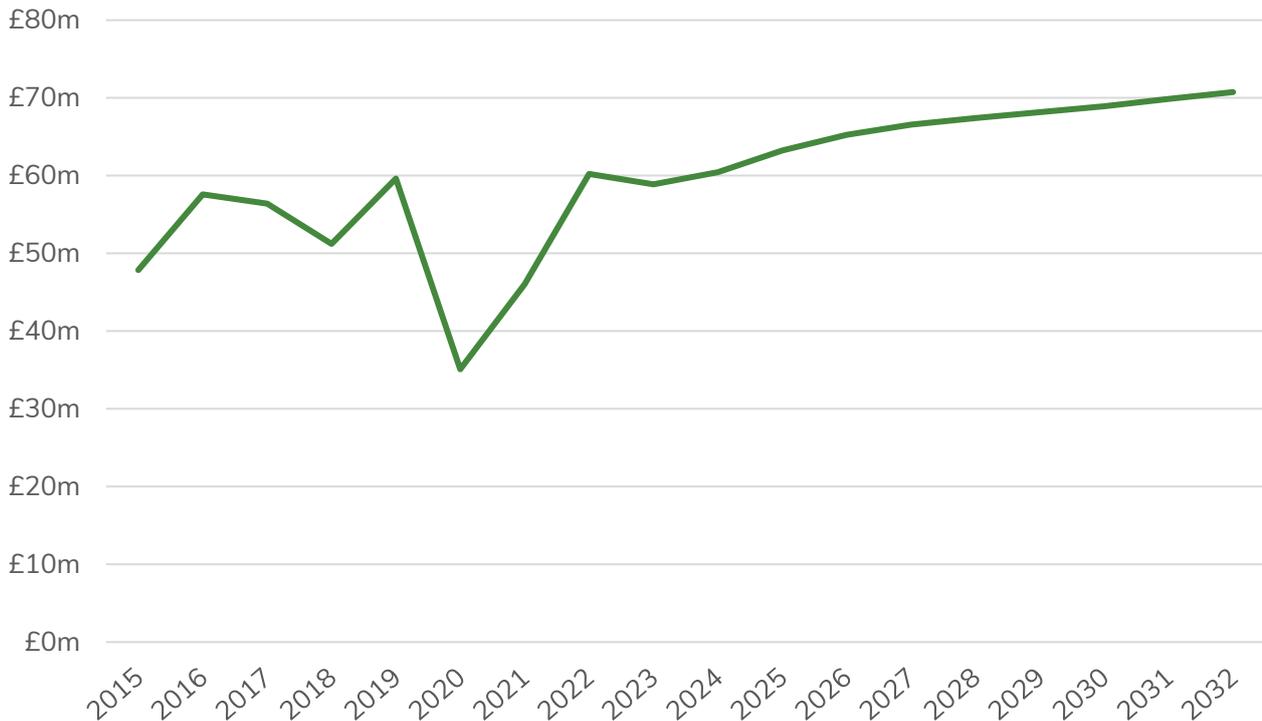


Figure 29 Forecasted Gross Value Added for the accommodation and food services sector in the Cairngorms National Park 2015 – 2032. Oxford Economics, 2022 (CNPA189).

Looking forward accommodation and food services activities are forecast to grow by 5.0% in the mid-term (2022 – 2025) representing an absolute change of £3.03m, and in the long-term (2025 – 2032) it is expected to grow by 11.9% representing an absolute change of £7.51m.

Employment

The report by Oxford Economics (CNPA189) also looks at the employment by sector and total future demand for people based on the growth forecast (and replacement demand). In 2023 the report estimates that accommodation and food services activities employed 1,80016 people. In the mid-term (2022 – 2025) this is expected to increase to 1,900 (7.3% increase) meaning approximately 100 more people will be required to fill

¹⁶ The data is provided rounded to the nearest 100, with calculations based on unrounded figures (CNPA189).



positions. In the long-term (2025 – 2032) the forecast is for 4.0% growth (representing approximately 100 additional positions).

In terms of the total requirement for people required to fill vacant positions in the National Park in the mid-term (2022 – 2025) this would be 400 people (which includes 300 people required due to replacement demand). In the long-term (2025 – 2027) the total requirement would be 800 people (this includes 700 people required due to the replacement demand).

Cairngorms Business Barometer

Each quarter National Park Authority and Cairngorms Business Partnership commission 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.

Looking at the reporting for quarter one of 2024 (CNPA820) gives a snapshot of the current 'health' of the economy. 68 business took part in the survey in quarter one of 2024. Although the report is not exclusively reporting on the tourism sector (the economy in the National Park is heavily reliant on this sector) it provides useful feedback in relation to tourism.

Comparing quarter one of 2024 (CNPA192) to the same period in 2023 (CNPA193) a larger percentage of businesses reported a decrease in both numbers of customers and levels of turnover.

One of the barriers to business profitability mentioned in the report was the closure of VisitScotland iCentres: Lack of clear communication on closures and the role of printed materials.

Given the profile of businesses taking part in the survey, many of those responding stated that they had no issues with staff recruitment or retention as they do not have any employees. However, around a fifth (22%) stated that recruiting new staff was either a major or moderate issue while 13% had issues with staff retention. Recruitment issues were often related to a lack of housing for staff and/or problems that had arisen since Brexit.



Visitor attractions

The Cairngorms National Park is the UK's largest National Park located in the Scottish Highlands and offers a wide variety of visitor attractions including water sports, snowsports, wildlife watching, whiskey tours and distilleries and some incredible high and low-level walking and cycling routes.

For simplicity the attractions have been grouped into the following themes in this section namely:

- Adventure and sports
- Nature-based tourism
- Heritage (including museums, castles and historic buildings / places)
- Distilleries
- Other

Adventure and sports

People visit the Cairngorms National Park for a number of reasons, however perhaps the most compelling reason being the adventure activities the area provides from skiing and winter sports, hiking and biking to water sports on one of the many lochs in the area.

Snowsports

It is estimated that in 2021 / 2022 the Snowsports sector contributed £20.1 million in net Gross Value Added to the Scottish economy, employing 510 net full-time equivalent jobs and £15.3 million in net wages. The sector in Scotland has seen little growth in recent years, with visitors to mountain centres in 2021 / 2022 was 66% lower than in 2015 / 2016, and 70% lower than in 2010 / 2011. Late snowfall, poor weather conditions, and the COVID-19 pandemic, have all impacted on visitor numbers (CNPA194).

The Cairngorms National Park is home to three out of Scotland's five mountain venues – Cairngorm Mountain, Glenshee and The Lecht (Figure 30). All three resorts now function with the aid of a snow factory. Supplementing these are three venues with dry ski slopes – Glenmore Lodge, Lagganlia Outdoor Centre and Loch Insh Watersports. Combined they provide approximately 142 full-time equivalent positions (around 30% of all snowsports full-time equivalent positions in Scotland) (Table 4).



Table 4 Employment by snowsport venues 2021 / 2022¹⁷. Scottish Government, 2023 (CNPA194).

Venue	Full-time	Part-time	Seasonal	Full-time equivalent
Cairngorm Mountain	34	6	50	50
Glenshee	14	2	40	25
The Lecht	23	19	40	43
Glenmore Lodge	3.5	3.5	10	8
Lagganlia	3.5	3.5	10	8
Loch Insh	3.5	3.5	10	8
Total	81.5	37.5	160	142

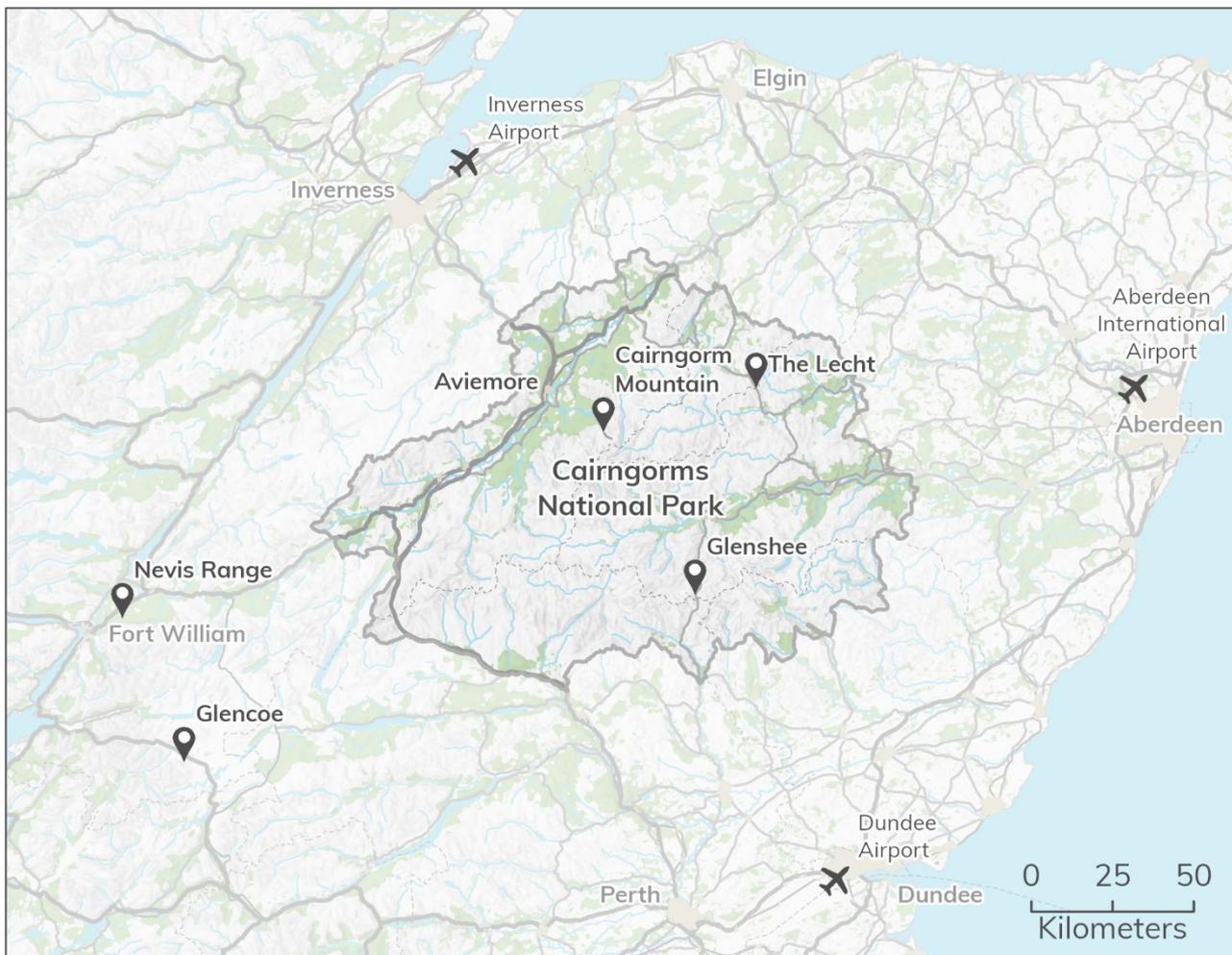


Figure 30 Map of mountain ski resorts in Scotland. Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2026. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100040965, Cairngorms National Park Authority.

¹⁷ Glenmore Lodge, Lagganlia Outdoor Centre and Loch Insh Watersports have had their employment levels estimated due to a lack of data return.



According to the 2019 – 2020 visitor survey, 7% of visitors to the Cairngorms area were there to take part in skiing and / or snowboarding. Of those surveyed in winter, 42% were visiting to take part in winter sports. In 2021 / 2022 the National Park's mountain venues received approximately 67,000 visitors, 80% of whom were day visitors. This represents 75% of visitors to all of Scotland's mountain snowsport venues (Table 5).

Table 5 Visitors to mountain snowsport venues 2021 / 2022. Scottish Government, 2023 (CNPA194).

Venue	Total visitors	Number of day visitors	Number of overnight visitors	% of day visitors	% of overnight visitors
Cairngorm Mountain	15,376	9,155	6,221	60%	40%
Glenshee	35,557	30,668	4,889	86%	14%
The Lecht	16,063	13,574	2,489	85%	15%
Total	66,996	53,397	13,599	80%	20%

Average visitor spend ranged from £29 - £90 for day visitors and £412 - £936 for overnight visitors, with visitors from outside the UK contributing the highest average spend (Table 6).

Table 6 Average spend by snowsport venue and visitor's origin 2021 / 2022. Scottish Government, 2023 (CNPA194).

Venue	Day visitors		Overnight visitors		
	Scotland	Rest of UK	Scotland	Rest of UK	Outside UK
Cairngorm Mountain	£29	£90	£433	£567	£936
Glenshee	£51	£75	£412	£654	£641
The Lecht	£57	£45	£458	£849	-

Cairngorm Mountain

Cairngorm Mountain is possibly the best known and most used ski and winter sport destination. Out of the three ski resorts it offers the most challenging runs, serving both Skiing and Snowboard users. It can accommodate a wide range of abilities with a dedicated beginners area serviced by a magic carpet at the foot of the mountain (Figure 31). Due to its location and altitude, it has potentially the longest season of operation with snow often lasting into April.



Figure 31 Map of the ski runs at Cairngorm Mountain. Cairngorm Mountain (Scotland) Ltd. 2024 (CNPA1254)

Its close proximity to Aviemore and its range of other activities make it particularly attractive as there are plenty of other activities nearby should the weather not be favourable for winter sports. The funicular railway (Scotland's only mountain railway) was closed during the 2023 / 2024 winter. When its service resumes it allows easy access to the top of the mountain and Ptarmigan restaurant, which is the highest in the UK at 1,097m above sea level.

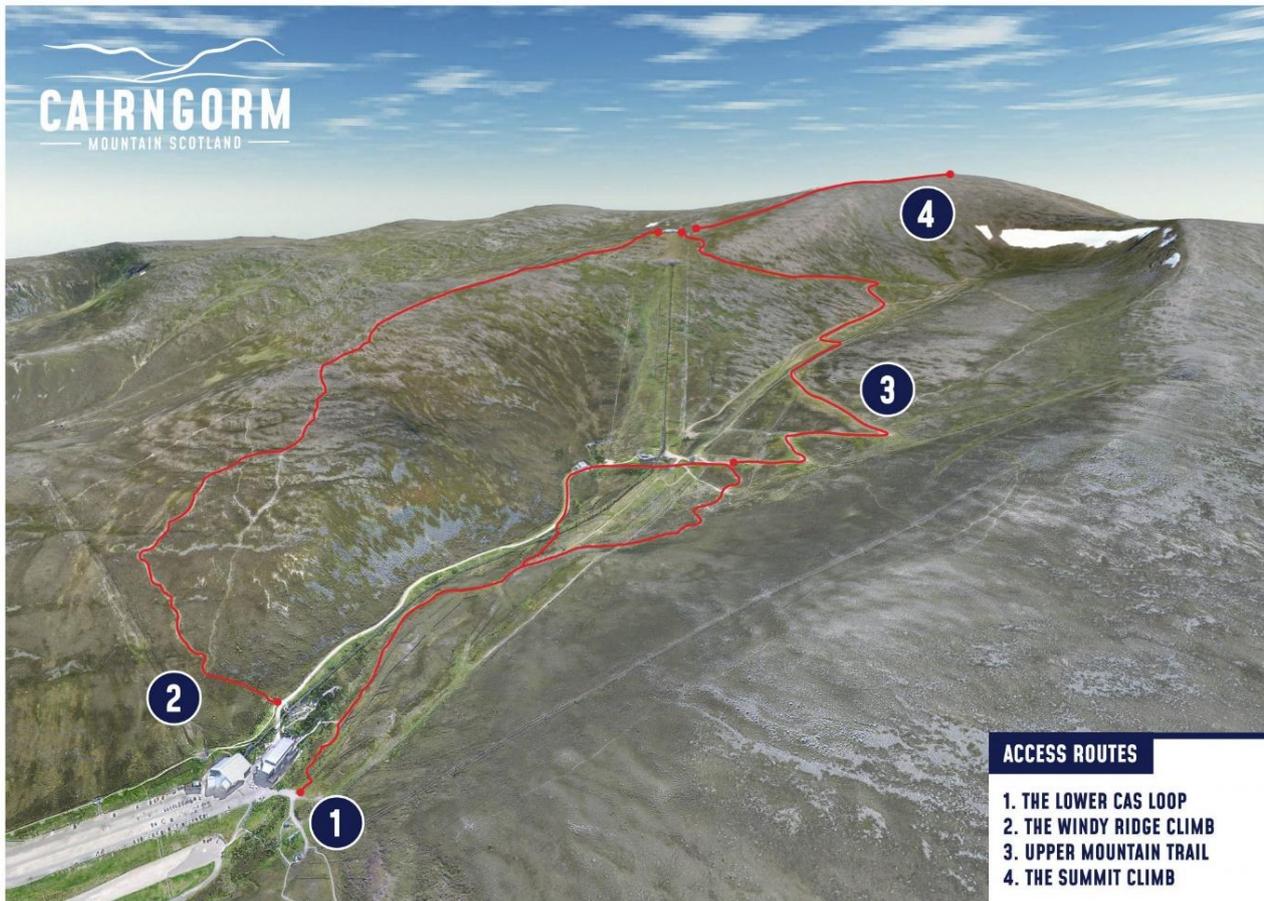


Figure 32 Map of walking routes at Cairngorm Mountain. Cairngorm Mountain (Scotland) Ltd. 2024 (CNPA1254)

In recent years Cairngorm Mountain has diversified to offer year-round activities for tourists including a Mountain Tubing Park, mountain bike trails, and guided mountain walks (Figure 32). The current mountain garden was introduced in 2001, offering a wildlife haven, viewpoints and hides to observe nature, a mountain garden storywalk and camera obscura.

Further information about Cairngorm Mountain is provided on page 14.

The Lecht

The Lecht Ski resort is located 645m above sea level in the Eastern Cairngorms on the mountain pass route (A939) between Strathdon and Tomintoul. It is the smallest of five ski centres in Scotland. It has 20 maintained ski runs and 14 lifts (1 chairlift and 13 ski tows) (Figure 33).



© VisitScotland. Map provided by Ashworth Maps & Interpretation Ltd. Height information sourced from Ordnance Survey mapping. © Crown Copyright.

Figure 33 Map of The Lecht Ski Resort, © Visit Scotland; Map produced by Ashworth Maps and Interpretation Ltd (CNPA1255). Height Information sourced from Ordnance Survey mapping. © Crown Copyright

In the summer months the destination has two mountain bike trails, which can be accessed with a bike via the chairlifts.

Glenshee

Glenshee is the largest skiing resort in Scotland and at its highest piste is 1,068m. The whole resort covers more than 2000 acres. It extends across four mountains and three valleys (Figure 34 and Figure 35) and contains 36 runs and 21 lifts and tows. The resort is run and managed by the Glenshee Snowsports Centre. It hosts a wide range of runs catering for all abilities with some of Scotland's most diverse terrain for snow sports.

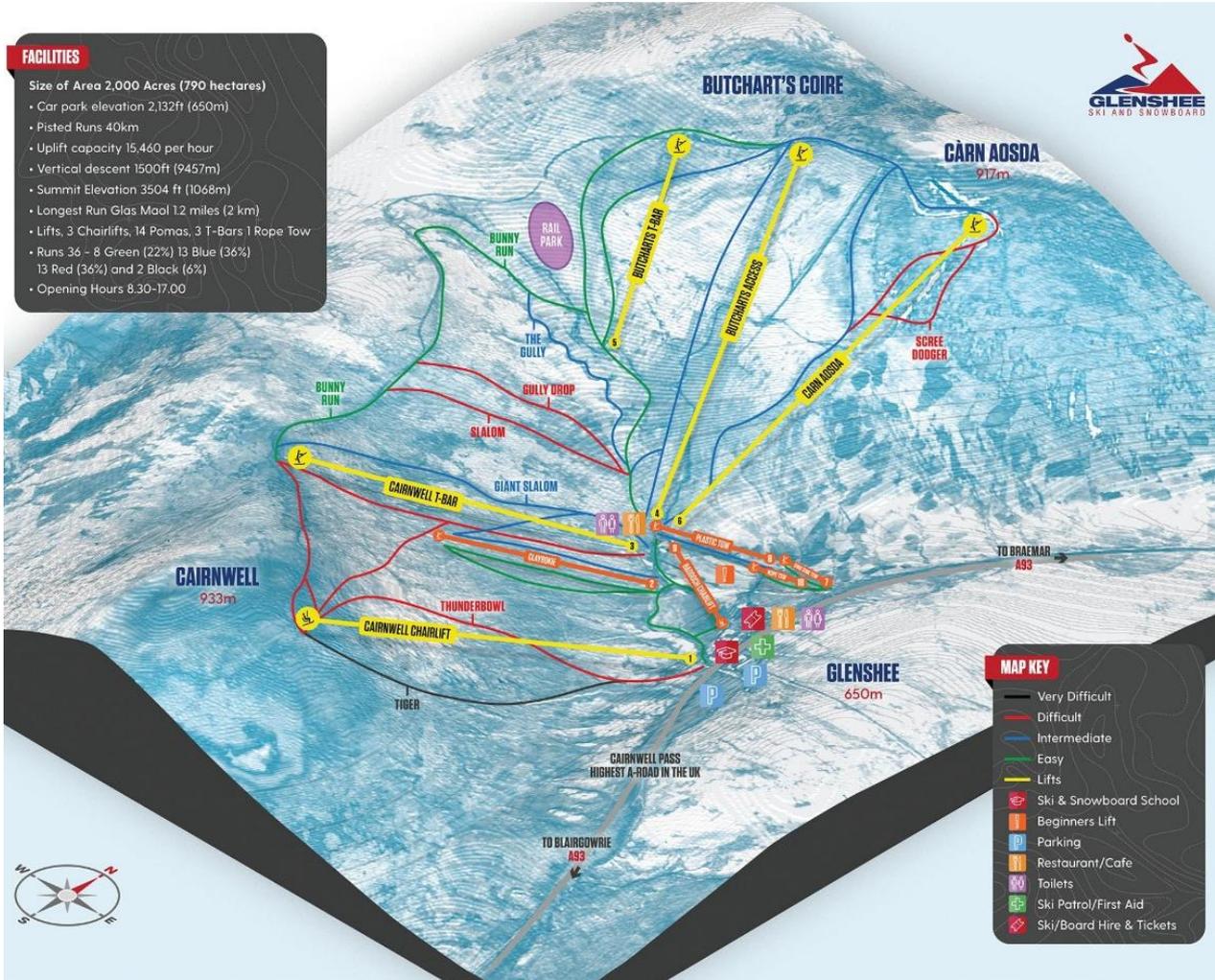


Figure 34 Map 1/2 Glenshee Ski Resort © Glenshee Snowsports Centre, 2024 (CNPA1256).

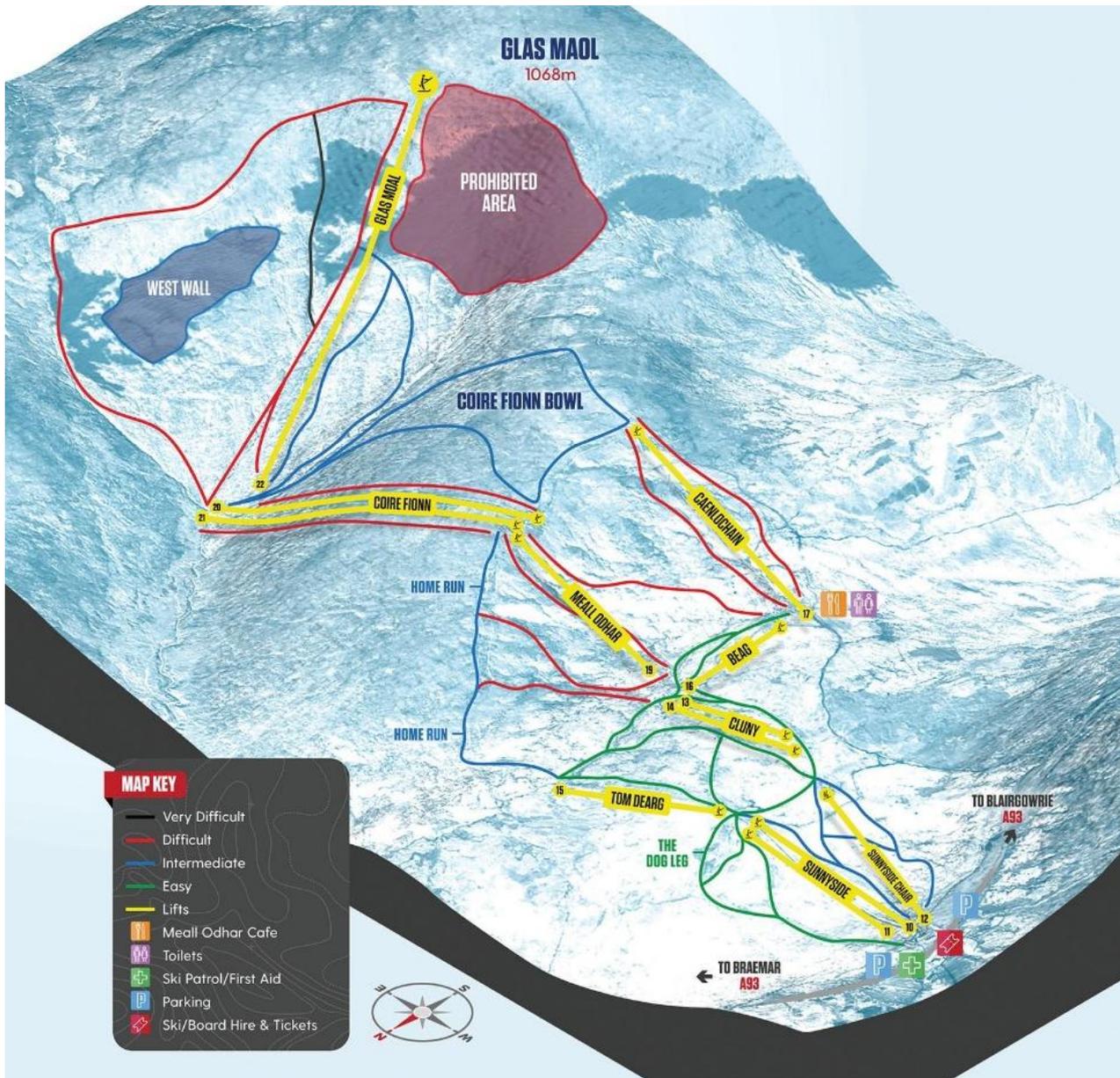


Figure 35 Map 2/2 Glenshee Ski Resort © Glenshee Snowsports Centre, 2024. (CNPA1256).

During the summer months Glenshee offers hiking and, mountain biking opportunities. The base café is open during the summer months, and the site offers a chairlift (weather permitting) offering a 285m elevation gain for mountain bikers.

Water sports

The Cairngorms National Park is well known for its clean rivers and deep lochs set against a backdrop of high mountains. It is in these mountains that many of Scotland's iconic rivers are sprung from the Dee to the Don and the Mark to the Tilt.



Sailing, windsurfing, paddle sports, rafting, swimming or gorge walking are all within easy reach of many of the towns and villages in the Cairngorms National Park including the Aviemore, Angus Glens, Royal Deeside, Glenlivet, Atholl and Glenshee areas. According to the 2019 - 2020 visitor survey, 1% of visitors to the Cairngorms area were there to take part in canoeing and / or kayaking activities.

There are two main water sports centres in the National Park located at Loch Morlich and Loch Insh (Figure 36). There are a number of other lochs and riverside opportunities for unregulated water sport use across the National Park.

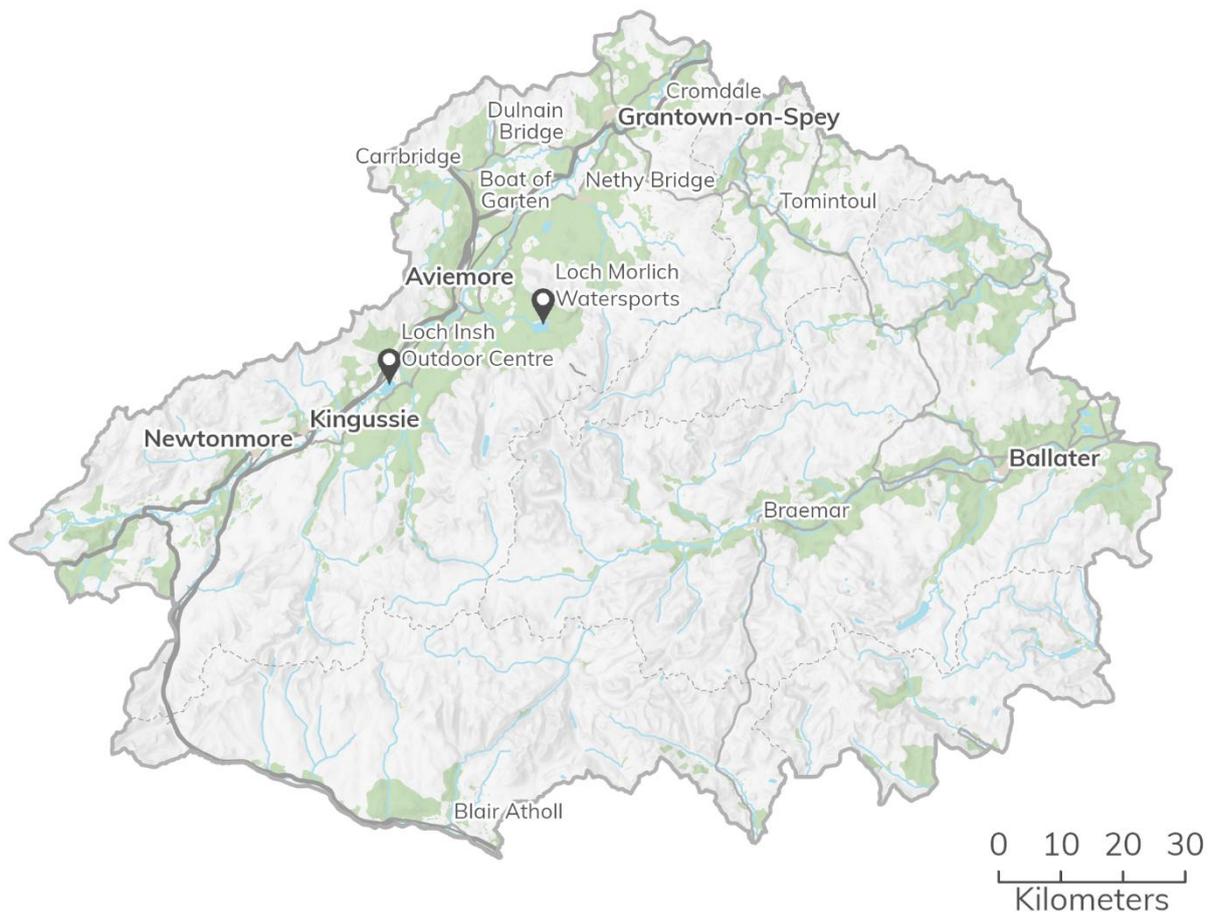


Figure 36 Map of the major outdoor water sports centres in the Cairngorm National Park. Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2026. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100040965, Cairngorms National Park Authority.



Loch Insh Outdoor Centre

Loch Insh is located at the lower end of Glen Freshie in the foothills of the Cairngorms Mountains. The river Spey widens out to form Loch Insh. The centre offers a range of water sport activities including sailing, paddle boarding, rafting and fishing.

Off-water activities at the centre include archery, play parks and a dry ski slope as well as various walking and mountain biking trails.

Loch Morlich Watersports

Loch Morlich offers over 1km of natural sand beach set against a background of the mountain ranges of the Cairngorms and Glenmore Forest. Loch Morlich Watersports offers a range of activities including stand up paddleboarding (SUP), kayaking, canoeing, and mountain biking.

Golf

In 2016 it was estimated that the economic value of golf tourism for the Scottish economy was around £286 million in output, 4,700 jobs and £154 million in Gross Added Value. The Highlands region was the second most important region in terms of gold tourism (second to Fife), which contributed £23 million in direct output (CNPA195).

There are thirteen golf courses in the Cairngorms National Park, offering differing difficulty levels, character and length, both 9 and 18-holes (Figure 37).



Number of holes

- 9
- 18

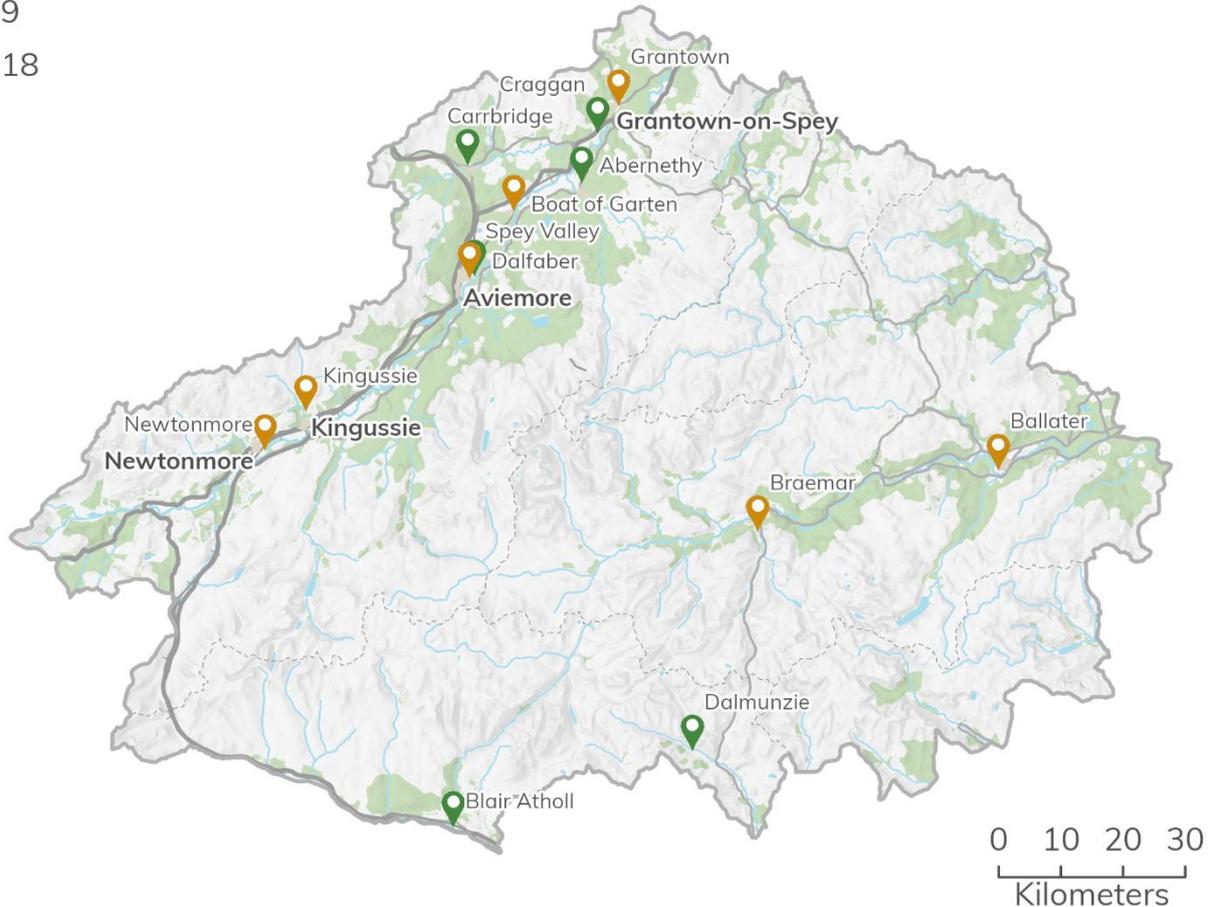


Figure 37 Map of showing the golf courses in the Cairngorms National Park in 2024. Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2026. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100040965, Cairngorms National Park Authority.

Highland Games

The Highland Games are events held in Scotland, during the spring and summer months, that celebrate the Scottish and Celtic culture. In the National Park the games (otherwise known as gatherings) are held at the following locations (Figure 38):

- Newtonmore Highland Games
- Ballater Highland Games
- Braemar Highland Gathering
- Blair Atholl Gathering
- Tomintoul Highland Games
- Lonach Highland Gathering and Games

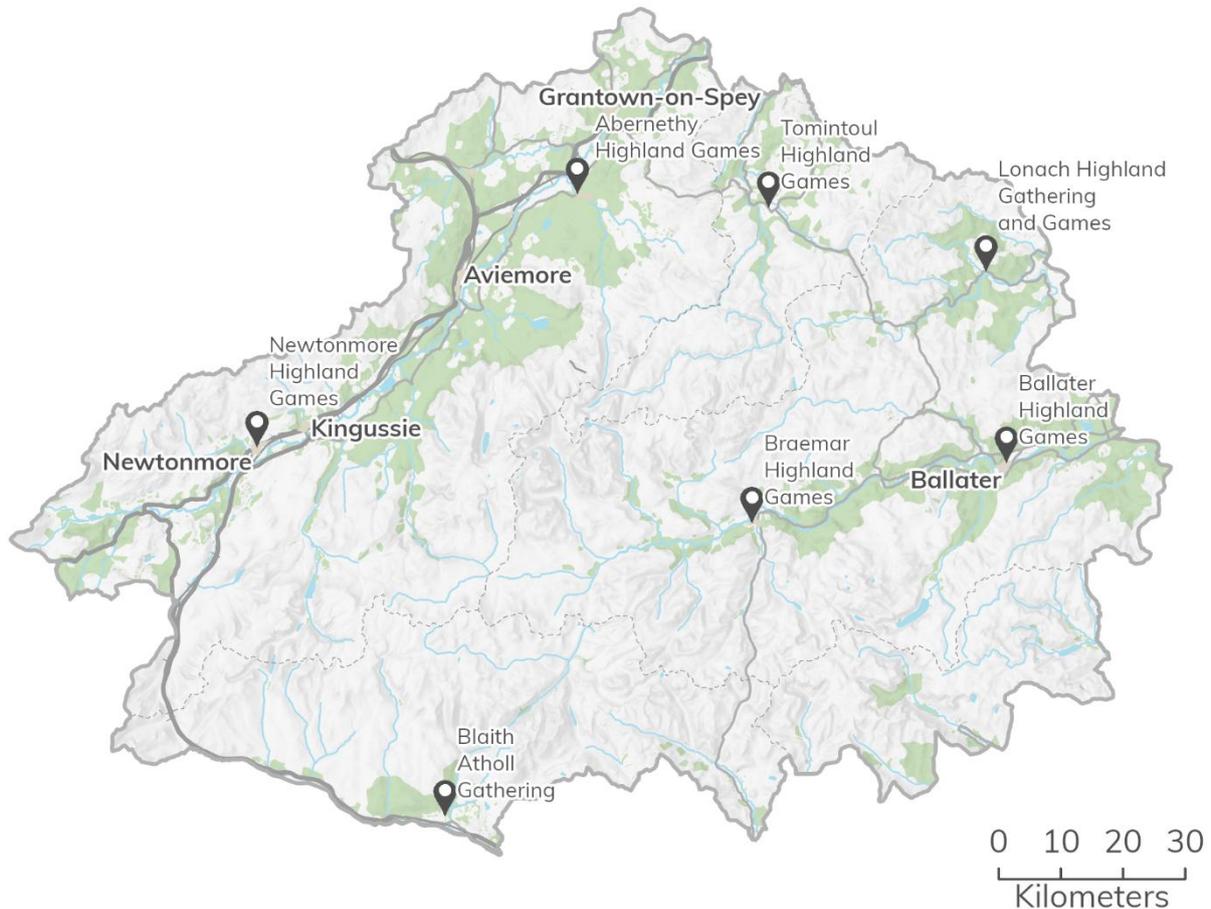


Figure 38 Map of the Highland Games locations in the Cairngorms National Park. Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2026. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100040965, Cairngorms National Park Authority.

The Braemar Gathering, held in September, is the biggest and most prestigious Highland Games event and enjoys the annual attendance of the Royal Family.

There are also smaller events such as the Abernethy Highland Games. The Abernethy Highland Games are one of the oldest Games in the country. Known as the 'Friendly Games' the Games was also originally the place of the annual Clan Grant Gathering.

Mountain bike parks

Every year, the global adventure tourism industry continues to go from strength to strength. Mountain bike tourists play a significant role in this growth, contributing millions of pounds to the Scottish economy (CNPA825). 21% of visitors surveyed in the last visitor survey (2024 – 2025) (CNPA819) stated that they would undertake some form of cycling while visiting. More information on active travel in the National Park is available in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport.



As a decline in winter snow and the challenges faced by climate change become more prevalent at the National Park's ski resorts, the inclusion and potential future expansion of mountain bike activities offers a potential new revenue stream and supports a year-round economy. According to the 2019 – 2020 visitor survey (CNPA818), 8% of visitors to the Cairngorms area were there to take part in cycling and / or mountain biking activities.

There are a number of mountain bike parks in the Cairngorms National Park (Figure 39), including:

- Cairngorm Mountain Bike Park at Cairngorm Mountain
- Laggan Wolftrax – owned and managed by Forestry and Land Scotland
- Glenlivet Mountain Bike trails (hire available)
- Glenshee Mountain Bike Track (with lift).

There are smaller bike parks in some of the settlements in the National Park including:

- Anagach Woods mountain bike skills park
- Carrbridge Bike Park
- Boat of Garten – Woodland Wheels Pump Track.

There are opportunities for bike hire in Boat of Garten, Grantown on Spey, Aviemore, Kingussie and Ballater. There are 37 other trails listed on the Visit Cairngorms website (CNPA190).

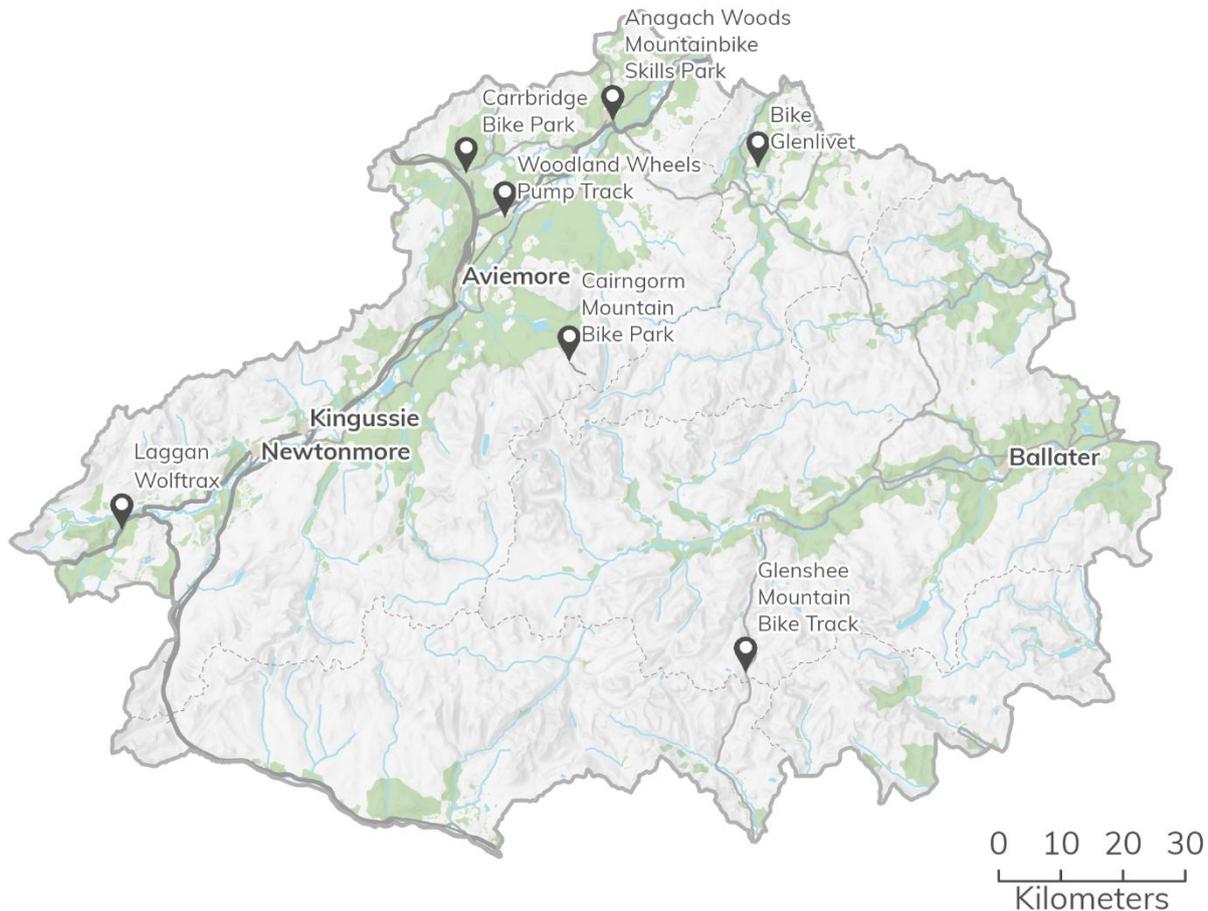


Figure 39 Map of the mountain bike parks in the Cairngorms National Park. Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2026. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100040965, Cairngorms National Park Authority.

Walking

The Cairngorms National Park covers an area with a distinct geography featuring very mountainous terrain and long river systems. Historically, this landscape has acted as a significant constraint to people travelling through the area and has prevented few modern roads penetrating far into the National Park, making it particularly rich in long distance historic paths and roads. 79% of visitors surveyed in the last visitor survey (2024 – 2025) (CNPA819) stated that they would undertake some form of walking while visiting. More information on active travel in the National Park is available in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport.

According to the 2019 - 2020 visitor survey (CNPA818), 25% of visitors to the Cairngorms area were there to take part in walking activities (other than hillwalking), while 17% were there to take part in hillwalking activities.



There are also 1,000kms of waymarked paths close to towns and villages that allow you to explore the area. There are 17 community paths leaflets available as well as two easy access guides: one in Badenoch and Strathspey and one in Deeside.

The villages and towns in the Cairngorms National Park have networks of community paths and trails. More information is available on the Cairngorms National Park website (CNPA178). More information on the main walking routes over hill passes in the Cairngorms National Park is also available online on the Cairngorms National Park website (CNPA182).

There are a number of long-distance routes within the Cairngorms National Park including:

- The Speyside Way is one of four official long-distance routes in Scotland, the route links the Moray coast with the edge of the Grampian Mountains, following the valley of the River Spey, spanning a distance of approximately 65 miles (Figure 4). More information on the Speyside Way is available on Scotlands Great Trails website (CNPA1250)
- The Deeside Way which runs from near the centre of Aberdeen to Ballater, following the line of the Old Royal Deeside Railway through woodlands and farmlands, for a total distance of 41 miles (Figure 4).
- The Cateran Trail is a 64 mile-long route through Perthshire and the Angus Glens, this is a circular route divided into five stages, following old drove roads and ancient tracks across farmland, forests, and moors (Figure 4). More information on the Cateran trail is available from the Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust (CNPA1251).
- The Dava Way links Forres in Moray with Grantown on Spey, a distance of 24 miles following the old Highland Railway line and winds its way up to the Dava summit at 320m before descending into Strathspey (Figure 4). More information on the Dava Way is available from the Dava Way Association (CNPA1252).

CROW is the national Catalogue of Rights of Way (CNPA202). Created by ScotWays in the early 1990s with the help of NatureScot (formally Scottish Natural Heritage) and local authorities, it amalgamates information about rights of way from a range of sources. Mapped at 1:50,000 scale, it's a digital record comprising maps of the routes along with an information sheet about each one. CROW does not include all rights of way – many of these are known only to local people and come to ScotWays' notice only when a problem arises. CROW is continually updated to take account of new information as it comes to ScotWays' attention. CROW also holds information about Heritage Paths, the routes recorded in its book on Scottish Hill Tracks, and information on all its signposts and other signposted routes.



Further matters relating to rights of way, core paths and active travel are covered in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport.

Mountaineering & Winter Mountaineering, Ski Mountaineering / Backcountry Skiing, Cross Country skiing in Glenmore together attract a significant number of visitors contributing to the local economy.

The mountainous terrain of the National Park is a particular draw for walkers. Certain categories of hill / mountain are particularly sought after and present particular pressures on the infrastructure and environment of the area. For example, 'Munro bagging' is popular. Munros are mountains in Scotland that are at least 3,000 feet high (approximately 914 metres) and are named after Sir Hugh Thomas Munro, (1856 - 1919) who was the first to publish a list of all the mountains of this type in the Journal of the Scottish Mountaineering Club in 1891. There are currently more than 50 'Munros' within the Cairngorms National Park (Figure 40).

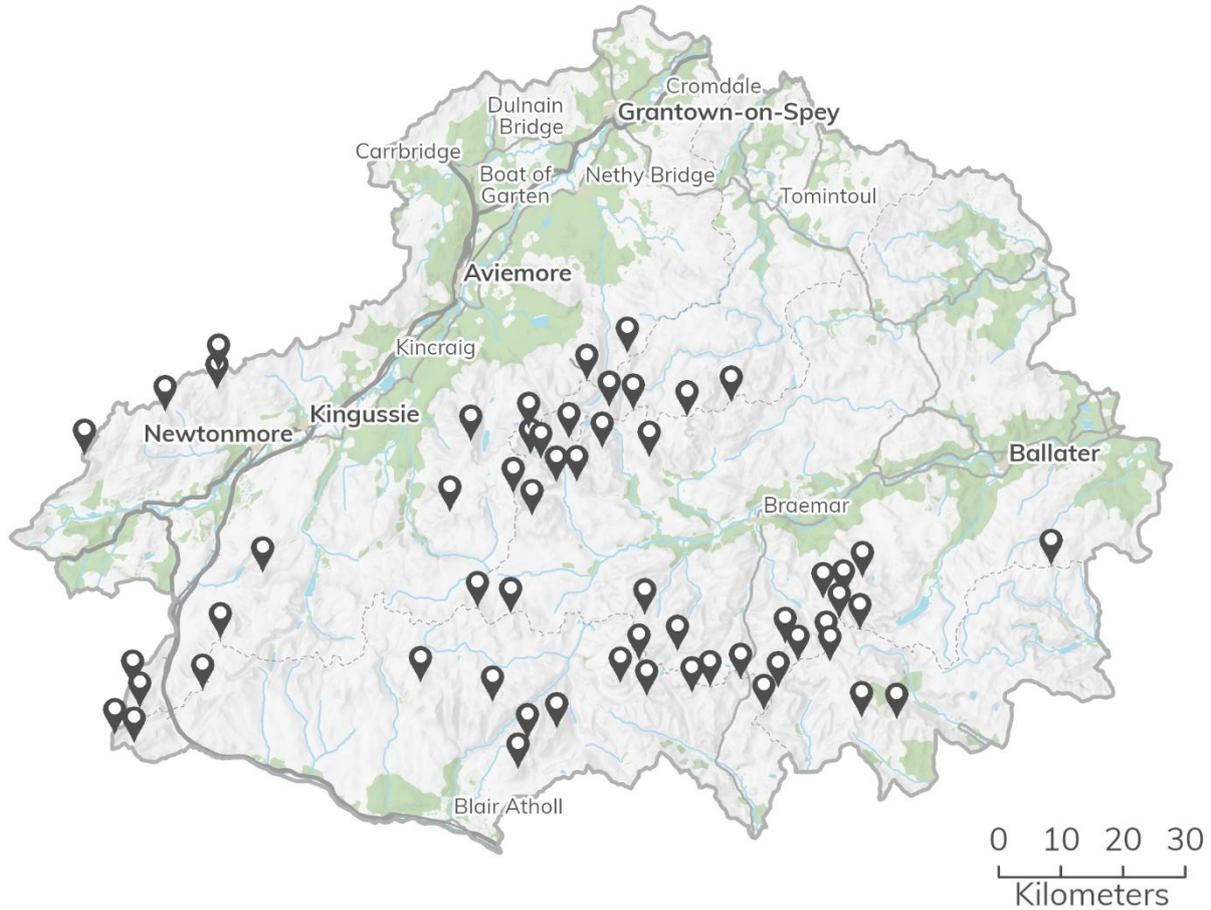


Figure 40 Munros within the Cairngorms National Park. Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2026. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100040965, Cairngorms National Park Authority.

General information on 'Munro bagging' and routes in the Cairngorms National Park as well as across Scotland can be found on the Walk highlands website (CNPA658).

Gliding

Cairngorm Gliding Club operates from the Feshie Airstrip at Feshie Bridge, near Kingussie.



Fishing

There are two main rivers in the Cairngorms National Park for fishing namely the River Spey and the River Findhorn. According to the 2019 – 2020 visitor survey (CNPA818), 1% of visitors to the Cairngorms area where there to take part in fishing activities. The most popular locations on the River Spey for fly fishing are at Grantown and Boat of Garten, with accessible riverside posts.

There are also a number of fisheries in the Cairngorms National Park including:

- Craggan Golf Course (near Grantown on Spey) offers stocked trout fishing ponds
- Rothiemurchus Fishing Centre

Loch fishing is also popular in the Cairngorms National Park including Loch Morlich, Loch Dallas, Loch Avon and Loch Vaa. There are also lochs available for coarse fishing. The main Lochs available for coarse fishing are Loch Pityoulish and Loch Insh.

Deer stalking and grouse shooting

The Cairngorms National Park is also a visitor destination for those wishing to partake in grouse shooting and stag stalking. A number of estates in the National Park host these activities including areas around Aviemore, Angus Glens, Royal Deeside, Glenlivet, Atholl and Glenshee.

As well as grouse shooting and stag stalking, many of the estates also offer pheasant and partridge shoots on lower ground, as well as clay shooting.

It is difficult to accurately estimate the socio-economic impact of these activities and the extent to which land within the National Park is managed for these purposes. At a national level, recent work has focused on driven grouse moors (CNPA197) and it is estimated that in 2009 grouse moor management and supporting activities made a total Gross Value Added contribution of £23 million to the Scottish economy (CNPA826) and could be an important component of some remote and fragile economies. A UK wide report commissioned by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (2022)(CNPA205) on assessing the economic and social impacts of future options for grouse moor management found that Grouse moors are expensive to manage, and most are loss-making in purely financial terms.

According to CORINE 2018 data (CNPA067), approximately 2,000km² (44%) of the Cairngorms National Park's landcover is moorland and heathland (Figure 41), although it is unknown precisely how much is used for grouse shooting. A methodology for



mapping is being developed by the James Hutton Institute which should help fill this information gap (CNPA827).

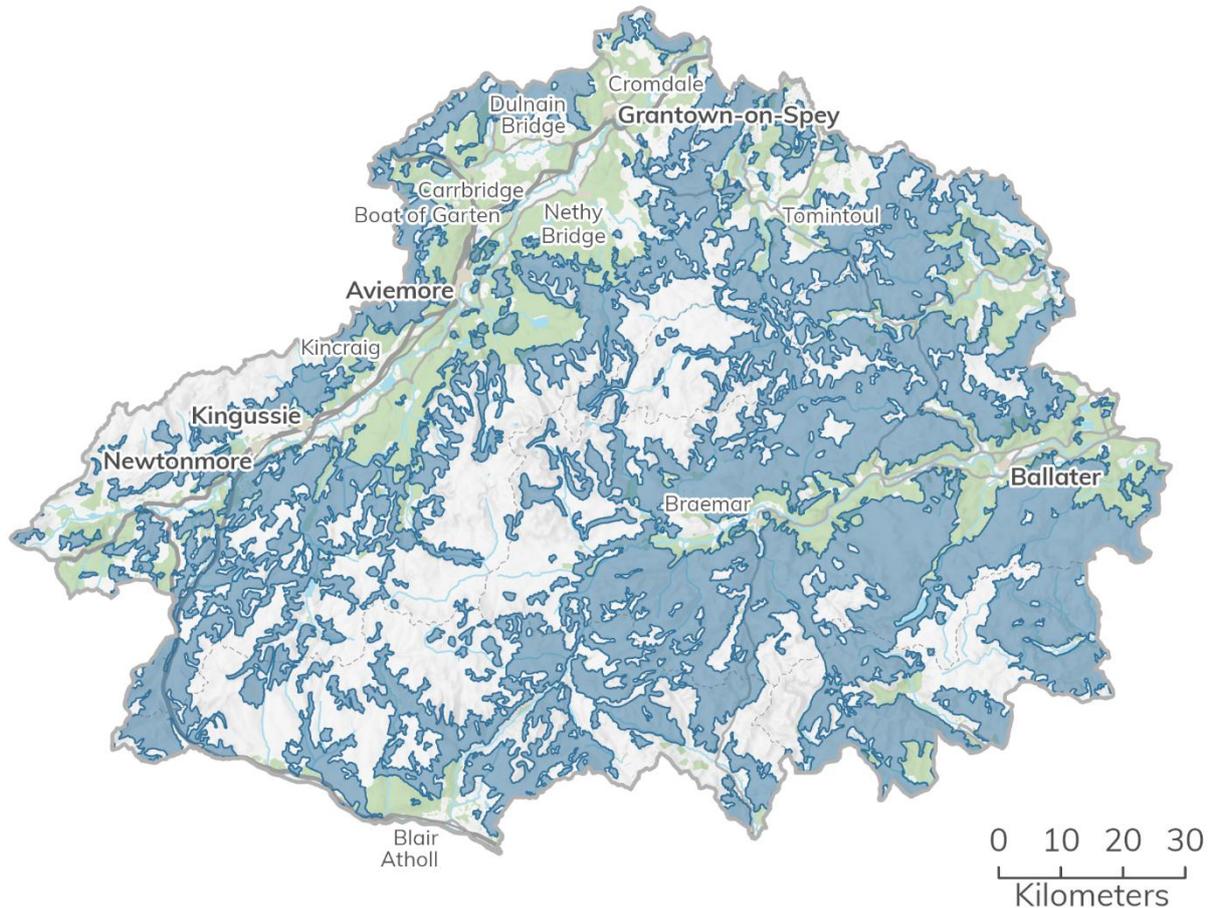


Figure 41 Land identified as moors and heathland within the Cairngorms National Park according to CORINE Land Cover data, 2018 (CNPA067). Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026. Contains data © European Union, Copernicus Land Monitoring Service 2026, European Environment Agency (EEA).

A report¹⁸ by Scottish Land and Estates and the Park Authority (2015) (CNPA204) indicated that at the time, in relation to sporting land uses (which included deer stalking and grouse shooting):

- Sporting land uses occurred on 41 landholdings, with fishing and red deer having the highest number of sporting days and red grouse and red deer the sporting activities most frequently ranked as being of high importance.

18

The Economic, Social and Environmental Contribution of Landowners in the Cairngorms National Park (CNPA204).



- Income from sporting was reported as being over £4.4M, including income from pheasant shoots (£1M), driven grouse (£755K), salmon (534K), deer stalking (488K) and venison sales (500K).
- Driven grouse shooting generated the highest return of £9,943 per sporting day compared to £729 per day of stag stalking. Reported expenditure (£6M) was higher than income and included 46% staffing costs and 23% repairs and investment costs. Average income was £131,521 compared to £189,987 expenditure with median income of £61,100 and expenditure of £79,199.

Further matters relating to land use are covered in more detail in Schedule 8: Land use, soil and resources.

Nature-based tourism

The natural environment is a key tourism asset in the Cairngorms National Park and across Scotland with the countries scenery and landscapes being the highest motivation for people to visit Scotland (CNPA199). More information on the natural environment in the National Park is available in Schedule 5: Natural heritage.

It was estimated that that total visitor spending in Scotland attributable to nature-based tourism per year was around £1.4 billion with around 39,000 associated full-time equivalent jobs (CNPA196). Furthermore, that spending on nature-based tourism is estimated to contribute nearly 40% of all tourism spend.

NatureScot's vision is for all visitors to have the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate Scotland's nature as part of a high quality visitor experience. Information on how NatureScot are working to achieve this can be found here:

- <https://www.nature.scot/doc/statement-naturescots-approach-and-contribution-tourism>

NatureScot aims to promote nature tourism opportunities through their website through the following opportunities:

- National Nature Reserves (NNRs)
- Scotland's Great Trails
- Scottish Outdoor Access Code
- National Walking and Cycling network

Wild Scotland

NatureScot works with a range of partners and stakeholders such as the Scottish Government, VisitScotland, the Scottish Tourism Alliance, Wild Scotland and a range of other destination management organisations and tourism interest groups.



The Cairngorms National Park attracts a significant number of people due to its natural offerings. It hosts a quarter of Scotland's native pine forest, a quarter of the UK's rare and endangered species, and five of the UK's six highest mountains. According to the 2019 - 2020 visitor survey (CNPA818), 18% of visitors to the Cairngorms area were there for the wildlife or to take part in bird spotting.

There are clear links between this schedule and the following schedules when considering nature based tourism:

- Schedule 4: Climate change
- Schedule 5: Natural heritage
- Schedule 6: Landscape

The following destinations cater for nature and wildlife orientated visitors (Figure 42):

- Loch Garten Nature Centre
- Rothiemurchus Centre
- Reindeer Centre
- Glenlivet Estate Office and Information Centre
- Highland Wildlife Park
- The Wildcat Centre
- Ranger centre Glen Clova
- The Virtual lek (Capercaillie) experience at Balmoral
- Glen Tanar Visitor Centre
- Glenmore Visitor Centre.

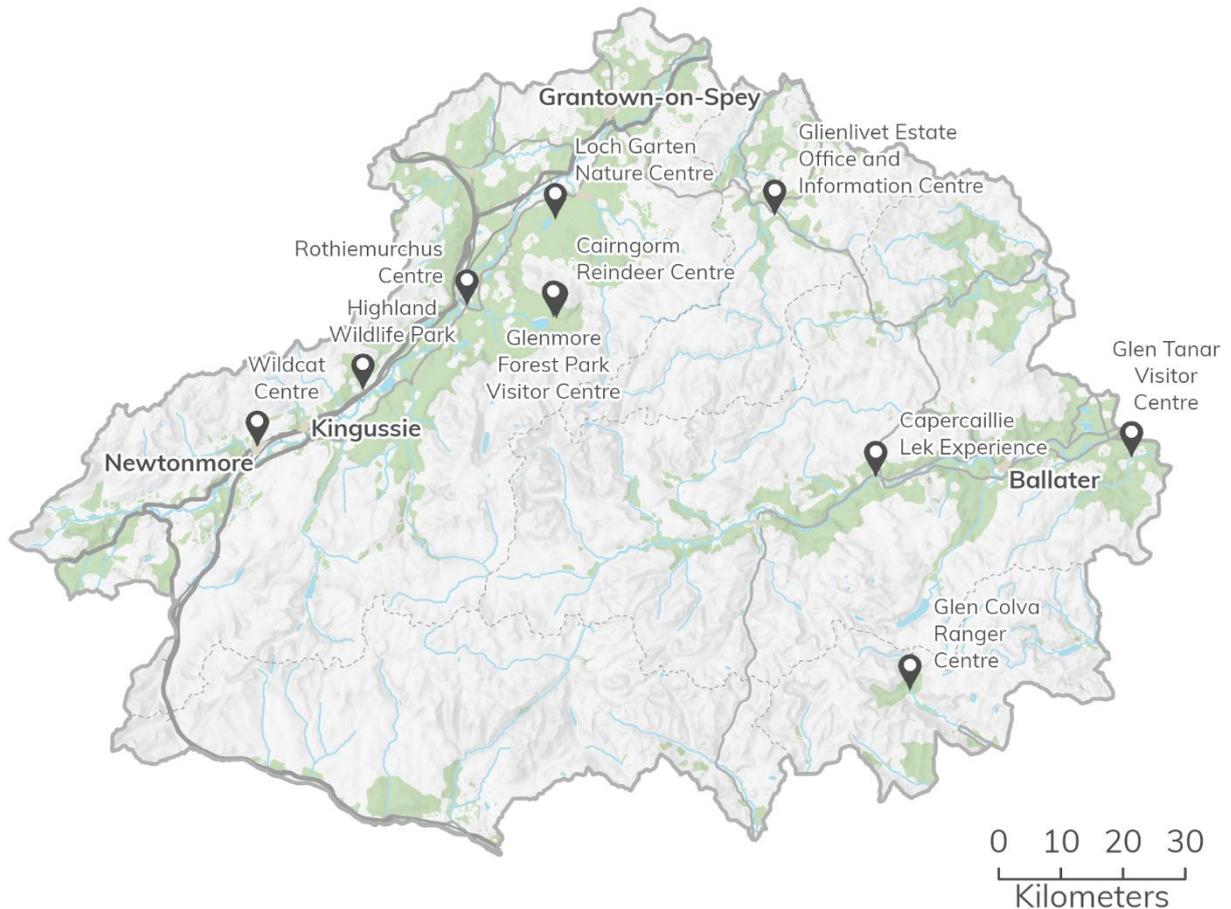


Figure 42 Map of nature orientated visitor centres in the Cairngorms National Park. Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2026. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100040965, Cairngorms National Park Authority.

Heritage tourism

According to Historic Environment Scotland (2024)(CNPA201), direct and indirect spend on the historic environment generates £6.0bn for Scotland's economy. £2.1bn is attributable to heritage tourism and £3.9bn attributable to repair and maintenance of pre-1919 buildings with industry suppliers. Furthermore, the Historic Environment Sector attracts an estimated 16 million visitors a year, in 2022. More information on the importance of the Historic Environment can be found in Scotland's Historic Environment Audit 2024.

Scotland's Historic Environment Audit (SHEA) (CNPA201) is an assessment of Scotland's historic environment. The Audit reports show in facts and figures that Scotland's historic environment is a unique asset that attracts millions of visitors each year and generates income and jobs across Scotland.



There are a number of museums and historic buildings to visit in the Cairngorms National Park. According to the 2019 - 2020 visitor survey¹⁹ (CNPA818), heritage destinations, such as castles and museums, were more popular with overseas visitors than those from Scotland and the rest of the UK.

Museums in the National Park include (Figure 43):

- Grantown Museum and Heritage Trust
- Highland Folk Museum
- Braemar Highland Games Centre
- Tomintoul and Glenlivet Discovery Centre
- Clan Macpherson Museum
- Old Royal Station, Ballater
- Blair Atholl Visitor Centre
- House of Braur Clan Museum.

Elements of the National Park's built and archaeological heritage are also heritage destinations, benefiting from their own visitor infrastructure. These include (Figure 43):

- Braemar Castle
- Castle Roy
- Blair Castle
- Drumin Castle
- Dalnaglar Castle
- Balmoral Castle
- Ruthven Barracks
- Corgarff Castle
- Blairfindy Castle
- Kindrochit Castle
- Glenbuchat Castle
- Knock Castle
- Old Brig O'Dee
- Carrbridge Packhorse Bridge
- Dun-da-lamh hillfort

¹⁹ This data was not collected in the 2024 – 2025 Visitor Survey (CNPA819).



Type of attraction

-  Museum / Visitor Centre
-  Castle / Fortification
-  Hillfort
-  Bridge

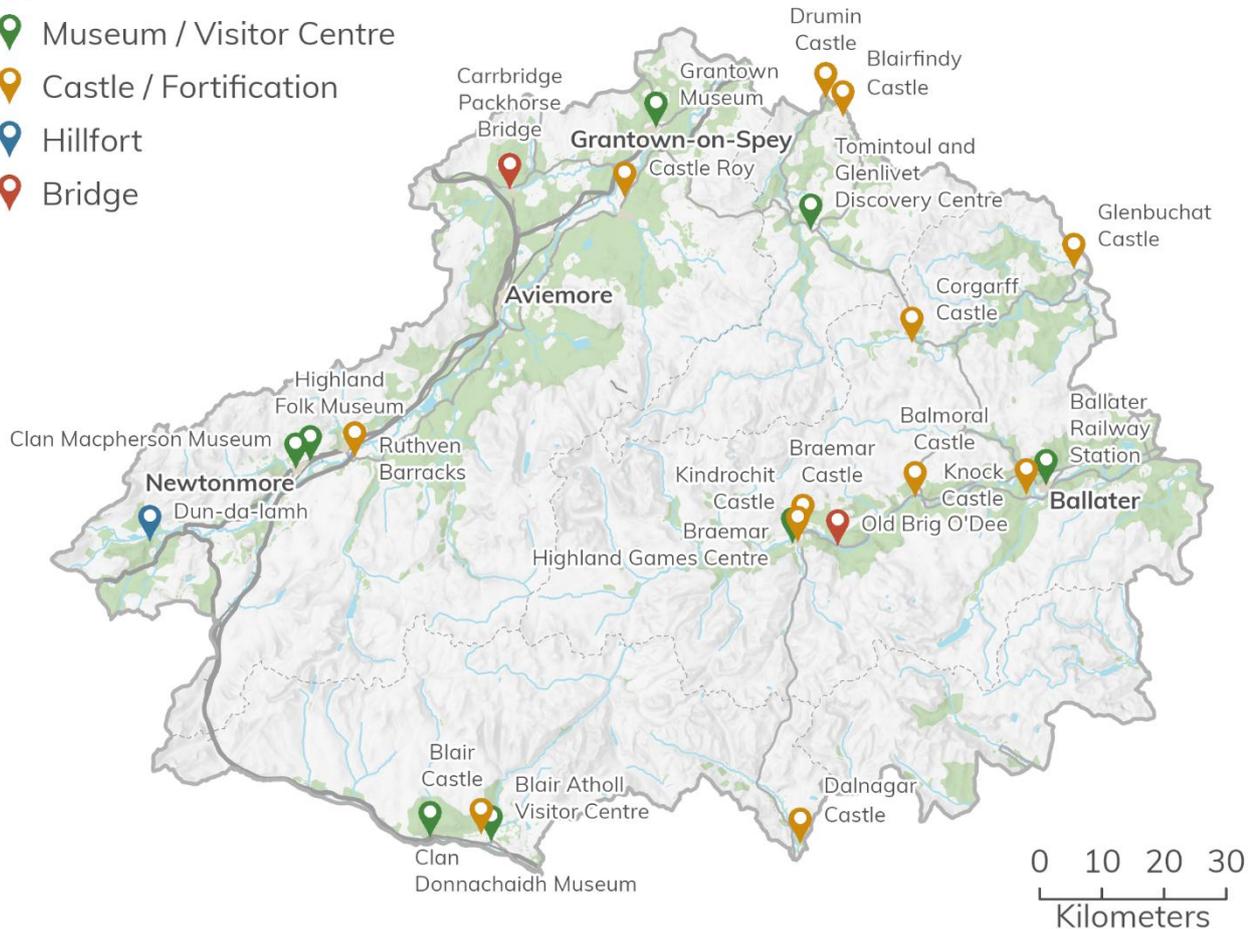


Figure 43 Map of the historic built environment heritage attractions and museums in the Cairngorms National Park. Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2026. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100040965, Cairngorms National Park Authority.

More information on heritage and culture sites in the Cairngorms National Park can be found in Schedule 7: Historic and cultural heritage.

Strathspey Steam Railway

The heritage train then travels from Aviemore to Boat of Garten and on to Broomhill. The railway takes you on a twenty-mile round trip along part of the original Highland railway mainline. As the train passes moorland, through woods and alongside the meandering River Spey, the magnificent Cairngorm Mountain scenery is ever present.

More information on current plans to extend the railway is covered in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport.

Art and creativity



With the support of the communities within the Cairngorms National Park, the Park Authority has mapped a Creative Directory (CNPA1253) which showcases the depth and breadth of creative activity, expertise and resources in the Cairngorms National Park. More than 80 Park creatives including poets, painters, sculptors and storytellers have contributed to the new directory which forms part of the Cairngorms 2030 community arts and culture programme.

Included in the directory (CNPA1253) are a number of arts galleries, exhibition spaces and heritage venues in the Cairngorms National Park, which host events and exhibitions, including:

- 1896 Gallery, Boat of Garten
- Boat of Garten Community Hall, Boat of Garten
- The Butterworth Gallery, Tarland
- Cromdale Village Hall, Cromdale
- Eleven41 Gallery, Kingussie
- Fused and Light / Chapel House arts, Kingussie
- Grantown Museum, Grantown on Spey
- The Iona Gallery, Kingussie
- Jeff Buttress, Carrbridge
- Loch an Eilein Gallery, Rothiemurchus
- Niven Photography, Nethy bridge
- Old Post Office and Café, Kincaig
- Spey Bank Studio, Grantown on Spey
- Saint Margaret's, Braemar

Distilleries

In 2022, it was estimated that the Scotch whiskey industry generated £5.3 billion Gross Value Added in Scotland and supported around 41,000 jobs (CNPA198). In the same year Scotch whisky visitor centres in Scotland received just over 2 million visitors, with a total spend of around £85,000,000. Associated with this visitor offer were 1,174 jobs (CNPA829).

The Cairngorms National Park is home to some world famous for whisky distilleries, with Royal Lochnagar, Dalwhinnie, Cairn Distillery and Glenlivet supporting visitor centres. Others can be visited by appointment. According to the 2019 - 2020 visitor survey²⁰ (CNPA818), distilleries were more popular with overseas visitors to the National Park than those from Scotland and the rest of the UK.

²⁰ This data was not collected in the 2024 – 2025 Visitor Survey (CNPA819).



Distilleries in the Cairngorms National Park include (Figure 44):

- Dalwhinnie Distillery
- Cairn Distillery
- Royal Lochnagar Distillery
- Tomintoul Distillery
- Glenlivet Distillery
- Tomnavoulin distillery
- Braeval Distillery

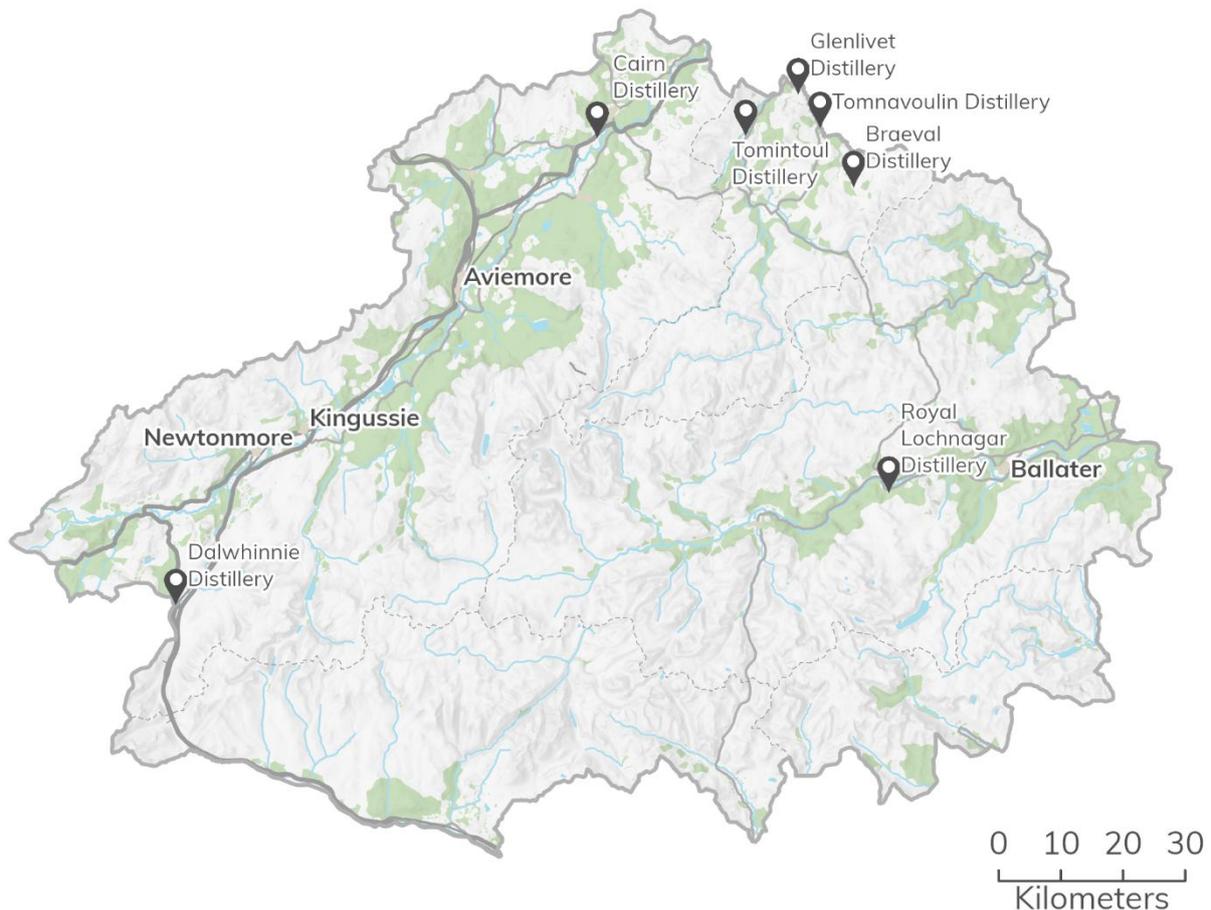


Figure 44 Map of the whisky distilleries in the Cairngorms National Park in 2024. Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2026. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100040965, Cairngorms National Park Authority.

Other

Landmark Forest Adventure Park



Landmark Forest Adventure Park is located in Carrbridge with easy access from the A9. It offers a variety of indoor and outdoor attractions. It offers a range of activities from theme park style rides to nature-based experiences. It is allocated in the current Local Development Plan (see Table 7).

Thunder in the Glens

Thunder in The Glens is a gathering of motorcycle enthusiasts, set in the Highland Resort, Aviemore, Scotland. The motorcycle enthusiasts then ride out / and visit through the settlements in the National Park

Visitor Survey data on attractions

In the latest survey (2024 – 2025) (CNPA819) visitors were not asked which attractions they visited or planned to visit so this section contained data collected in the 2019 – 2020 Visitor Survey (CNPA818). The majority of respondents (78%) visited at least one attraction during their trip to Cairngorms National Park.

Figure 45 shows the attractions visitors went to during their stay in the National Park. The most popular attractions (close to Aviemore) were Loch Morlich (23%), Cairngorm Mountain Ski Centre (15%), Loch an Eilein (16%), Rothiemurchus (11%). Other notable attractions were Balmoral Castle (13%) and Braemar Castle (8%).

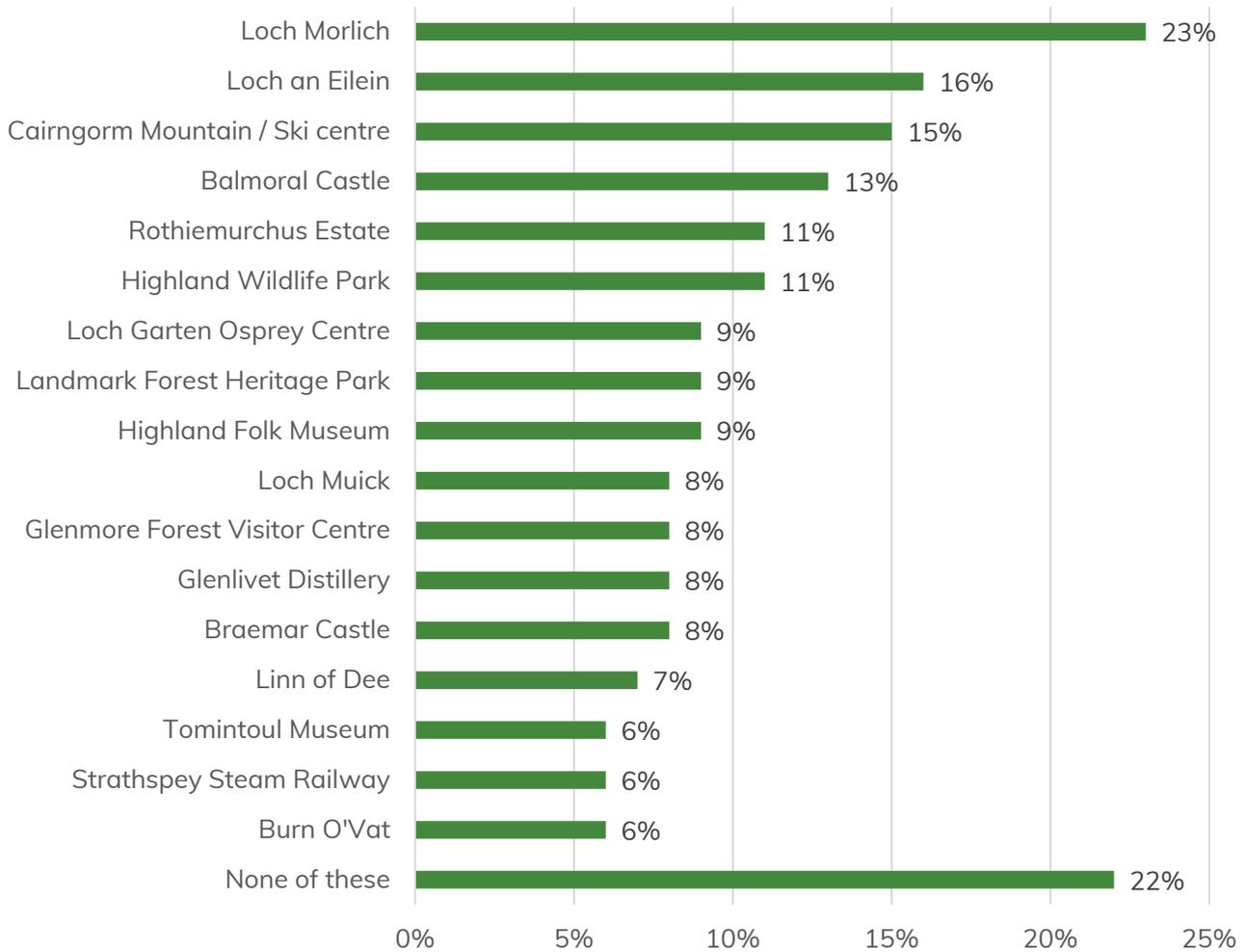


Figure 45 Top attractions within the National Park. Cairngorms National Park Visitor Survey 2019 / 2020 (CNPA818).

Wildlife attractions, such as the Highland Wildlife Park (11%) and Loch Garten Osprey Centre (9%) also featured highly.

Camping

Camping means different things to different people, for some it's hiking off alone into the woods or up a Munro where few venture (wild camping) while for others, it's pitching up in a campsite or caravan park where there are acres of wilderness, but you can still use a toilet, shower, and kitchen.

Camping, and even glamping, has become popular recently as this type of accommodation adopts an 'eco-friendlier' approach. In the Cairngorms National Park, there is a wide range of options from camping pods to campsites hidden in the woods.



According to the 2019 - 2020 visitor survey²¹ (CNPA818), , approximately 26% of overnight visitors to the Cairngorms area were staying in some form of camping / camp site accommodation (e.g. tent, caravan, motorhome).

Visit Scotland Reported (CNPA203) that in recent years, many areas in Scotland have experienced a large growth in the number of visitors using a motorhome, campervan, caravan or tent. While the benefits of tourism spending is very welcome, many places have also experienced challenges, including issues around waste, and inappropriate parking and overnight stops, conflicting with the needs of local communities.

Camp sites

There are a wide range of different serviced camping sites in the National Park, from the large family-friendly sites to intimate quiet spots of the beaten track. Campsites in the National Park include:

- Rothiemurchus Camp & Caravan Site
- Blair Castle Caravan Park
- Oakwood Caravan & Camping Park
- The Lazy Duck Basecamp
- Braemar Caravan Park and Camping Pods
- Badaguish Forest Lodges – Self-Catering Lodges, heated eco camping pods and educational group tent camping
- Glenmore Caravan and Camping site
- Dalraddy Holiday Park
- Cairngorms Motorhome Park
- Camping Pods, Blair Castle Caravan Park
- Kingussie Camping
- Laggan Glamping, Tigh an Each Bed and Breakfast and Laggan CL (Certified Location).
- Ballater Caravan Park
- Glenshee Ski Centre
- Braemar Caravan Park
- Cairngorms Glamping, Strathdon
- Tomintoul Bowling Club Caravan Site

Challenges relating to wild camping exist at certain locations, although the arising issues (e.g. fire risk, litter, etc) fall outwith the remit of the planning system (CNPA830).

²¹ This data was not collected in the 2024 – 2025 Visitor Survey (CNPA819).



The Motorhoming, Caravanning and Camping Survey (2023) cited in the Visit Scotland Motorhome and Camping Trips in Scotland (2023) report (CNPA203) showed that slightly more caravan users were more likely to pay for a fully provisioned site than a basic site.

Motorhomes

There are currently a number of daytime parking spots across the National Park. Despite this, challenges exist in relation to the use of motorhomes, which could indicate the need for further motorhome stopping sites and waste management facilities as supported by the Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan 2023 – 2028 (CNPA181).

Hutting

National Planning Policy Framework 4, Policy 30 (d) (CNPA008) states 'Proposals for huts will be supported where the nature and scale of the development is compatible with the surrounding area and the proposal complies with relevant good practice guidance.' In most areas of the National Park hutting is unlikely to be appropriate due to the potential adverse effects on the qualifying features of woodland natura site designations, in particular Special Protection Areas designated with Capercaillie as qualifying features. Matters relating to protected sites are covered in Schedule 5: Natural heritage.

More information on hutting in Scotland can be found here:

- <https://thousandhuts.org/> (CNPA831)

Access and parking

Access to and around attractions in the Cairngorms National Park and parking associated with tourism in the National Park are addressed in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport.

Short-term lets and holiday homes

The Cairngorms National Park Authority resident and worker survey (2024 – 2025) (CNPA821) found that finding suitable housing is one of the key challenges faced by National Park residents. Six in ten (60%) report that they found it difficult to find an affordable place to live in the Cairngorms National Park. Data on short term lets and second homes will inform the latest situation with regards to housing pressures and the tourism and hospitality workforce accommodation needs.



The Cairngorms Business Barometer – Quarter 1 2024 (CNPA192), provides some further insight into short-term lets from the business community with a lack of housing for the local population due to a high number of holiday homes noted. Data and information on short-term lets and holiday homes in the Cairngorms National Park addressed in Schedule 13: Housing.

Public toilets

The Park Authority has identified approximately 32 public conveniences within the Cairngorms National Park which support the visitor infrastructure and services. Data on public toilets in the Cairngorms National Park is covered in Schedule 13: Flood risk and water management.

Land availability

Within the current Local Development Plan (2021) (CNPA016) 134.9ha of land is allocated solely for tourism or visitor infrastructure with a further 33.7ha allocated for mixed use development which may include tourism or visitor uses (Table 7). The majority of sites identify and protect land that is already in use, while 14.6ha is available for future development. Further information about individual sites is presented in the Local Development Plan 2021 and any updates noted in the Local Development Plan Delivery Programme 2025 (CNPA334). Sites will need to be reviewed for their effectiveness during the preparation of the Proposed Plan, while additional sites may also need to be identified.

Table 7 Land allocated for tourism (including mixed use allocations) in the Local Development Plan 2021.

Settlement	Site reference	Use	Area (hectares)	Available (hectares)
Aviemore	M1 ²²	Macdonald Resort Aviemore	33	0
Aviemore	M2 ²³	Vacant site	0.7	0.7
Ballater	T1	Caravan Park	2.8	0
Grantown on Spey	T1	Caravan Park	11.3	0
Kingussie	T1	Caravan Park	2.7	0
Newtonmore	T1	Highland Folk Museum	20.3	0
Blair Athol	T1	Blair Castle Caravan Park	19.8	3.2
Blair Athol	T2	Caravan Park	0.5	0
Blair Athol	T3	Visitor Gateway	1.8	0

²² Mixed use allocation which can support tourism development.

²³ Mixed use allocation which can support tourism development.



Settlement	Site reference	Use	Area (hectares)	Available (hectares)
Boat of Garten	T1	Caravan Park	2.2	0
Braemar	T1	Caravan Park	5.5	0.7
Carrbridge	T1	Landmark Forest Adventure Park	45.2	10
Tomintoul	T1	Camping	2.3	0
Glenmore	T1	Camping	10.4	0
Glenmore	T2	Glenmore Lodge	6.4	0
Coylumbridge	T1	Camping	3.8	0

Tourist information offices

Visit Scotland announced the Ballater and Aviemore Icentre locations will close to the public in September 2025 as part of a wider closure of the Icentre services across Scotland.

After considering a wide range of research and insights, which looked at how visitors plan and book their holidays, Visit Scotland found that most visitors plan all aspects of their holiday before they leave home, gaining inspiration from online sources or tour operators and travel agents.

That means Visit Scotland have a much greater role to play in getting information to visitors at this earlier stage of their holiday planning. By doing this Visit Scotland explain they can influence where, when, and how long they visit.

Visit Scotland's new approach to visitor information sees them targeting the channels they know visitors use to maximise Visit Scotland's reach and influence in its key markets, ensuring Scotland is a 'must visit, must return' destination.

Minimising visitor disturbance on nature

The Park Authority is committed to reducing the impacts on sensitive species and habitats through the Cairngorms 2030 work (CNPA528) and targeted disturbance reductions initiatives delivered by the Access team.

The Active Cairngorms Action Plan (CNPA814) aims to ensure people and nature thrive together – and to maintain viable populations of sensitive species and safeguard fragile environments through significant planning and careful management activity. This area of work focuses on helping the public to engage positively with nature while, at the



same time, minimising disturbance from recreation. The overarching ambitions for this area of work are:

Reduce recreational disturbance and impacts on sensitive species and habitats.

- Gather information to inform future management measures.

Actions outlined in the Action Plan include:

- Developing and utilising methods for measuring the impact of disturbance on sensitive habitats and species – which is used to build a strong evidence base to help inform future management measures.
- Utilise spatial planning to prioritise the management of reductions in recreational disturbance to species and habitats.
- Reduce the impact of recreation on ground-nesting birds by implementing site-specific actions and initiatives with land managers.
- Delivering a 'Dog Friendly Cairngorms' package for the National Park that includes Supporting communities to create and develop dog walking spaces to meet the needs of dogs and reduce pressure on sensitive areas for wildlife. In addition to building knowledge and support by developing an active community of dog owners with information and understanding.
- Further development with users' best practice for bikes including supporting the delivery of the Mountain Biking Recreation Management Plan for Badenoch and Strathspey.
- Updating guidance on outdoor events to promote best practice.
- Working with wildlife and activity guides to develop specific local training and codes of conduct for sensitive sites and species for example twin flower, beavers, raptors and leks.

The Park Authority has been involved with the Trail Feathers Project (CNPA1136). In 2020, the Cairngorms Capercaillie Project (CNPA893) conducted a survey with 388 mountain bikers within the Cairngorms National Park. The survey found that almost all felt responsible for the environment they ride in and were willing to change behaviours to help protect it.

In response to these findings, a group of over 20 riders from the Badenoch and Strathspey area came together to help turn this consensus into action and create a plan to help the mountain biking community enhance and protect the environment it utilises. The group of riders, who represent a range of riding abilities and interests and include bike shop owners, mountain bike guides and members of the Badenoch and Strathspey Trail Association, took part in a series of action planning workshops in early 2021.



Through this process the group have become more informed about capercaillie, have been able to identify potential solutions, and have agreed a goal and set of actions to help deliver wins for capercaillie and the mountain biking community. Their goal is to unlock at least 100 hectares of capercaillie habitat with no net loss of trails.

This goal and the actions to achieve it are known as the Trail Feathers Project. The project has been funded and facilitated through the Cairngorms Capercaillie Project (CNPA893) and Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland, with support from the Badenoch and Strathspey Trail Association.

The Park Authority access team are continually responding to evidence to minimise disturbance to nature, biodiversity and priority species in the National Park through targeted locally specific projects driven by scientific need. Needs are identified internally through the conservation team or externally by suitably qualified third parties identifying a need to attempt to minimise negative impacts and disturbance by visitors. The projects are not focused on reducing visitor number but supporting behavioural change in order to minimise disturbance to nature. As the Park Authority is also the Access Authority it must ensure that any actions do not contravene the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 (CNPA664). The Park Authority is not considering a total ban on development in protected areas, priority species linked areas, or feeder areas to Special Areas of Conservation. Path development in a protected or biodiverse important areas, for example, would be supported if it supports the aims of minimising visitor disturbance in the area, by promoting responsible access to nature at a given site. More information on protected sites and priority species is covered in Schedule 5: Natural heritage.

There are a number of ways the Park Authority actively acts to attempt to reduce disturbance by visitors in the National Park, including:

- Supporting the marketing or curbing the 'over-marketing' of an area, through Tourism providers and the Cairngorms Business partnership.
- Campaigns through social media promoting responsible behaviour
- Ranger interaction with the public and online films
- Education, in person through the local school and school just outwith the National Park.
- Infrastructure delivery to alleviate and mitigate the negative impacts of visitors. Interaction with stakeholders for example with the work on the ongoing project to deliver the Mountain Biking Recreation Management Plan for Badenoch and Strathspey.



Another recent project undertaken by the Park Authority Access team was to help promote and change behaviours in relation to water use at Loch Kinord, at the Muir of Dinnet (CNPA832). New advice was put in place, through online campaigns, leaflets and physical signage to instruct water users at Loch Kinord not to take water-borne access (paddleboarding, kayaking, canoeing, inflatables) on the Loch between 1 March and 31 August. NatureScot introduced revised Local Access Guidance (CNPA815) asking visitors not to go on the water during the bird breeding season. The wildlife disturbance arising from non-exploitative recreation was well recognised and supported by ample published evidence.

Capercaillie

Capercaillie are a Scottish biodiversity list species. The Cairngorms Capercaillie Project, led by the Park Authority, has sought to improve the outcome for the remaining population of capercaillie by working with stakeholders and landowners to provide solutions to the current threats to the capercaillie population, e.g. habitat loss and fragmentation.

Across the Partnership, The Park Authority are carrying out works to minimise disturbance to capercaillie, especially through the breeding season of March-August.

The ranger services that operate in the Partnership area promote the 'Lek It Be' campaign led by the Cairngorms Capercaillie Project (CNPA893).

Messages are reinforced by seasonal signage and interpretation to encourage responsible activity by visitors. Alongside this campaign, teams on site are also working with local communities to identify ways to encourage recreation away from key areas for capercaillie at sensitive times of the year.

The Capercaillie Emergency Plan 2025 – 2023 (CNPA816) sets out the objective to reduce recreational disturbance in the priority areas relevant to capercaillie outlines in the Active Cairngorms Action Plan (2024 – 2028) (CNPA814) with an estimated expected budget requirement of £250,000.

Actions set out in the Plan to achieve the objective include the need to identify target areas within the priority areas (Figure 46) for managing recreational disturbance outlined in the Active Cairngorms Action Plan, to reduce the impacts of disturbance on Capercaillie and work with land managers to implement site-specific actions in those areas.

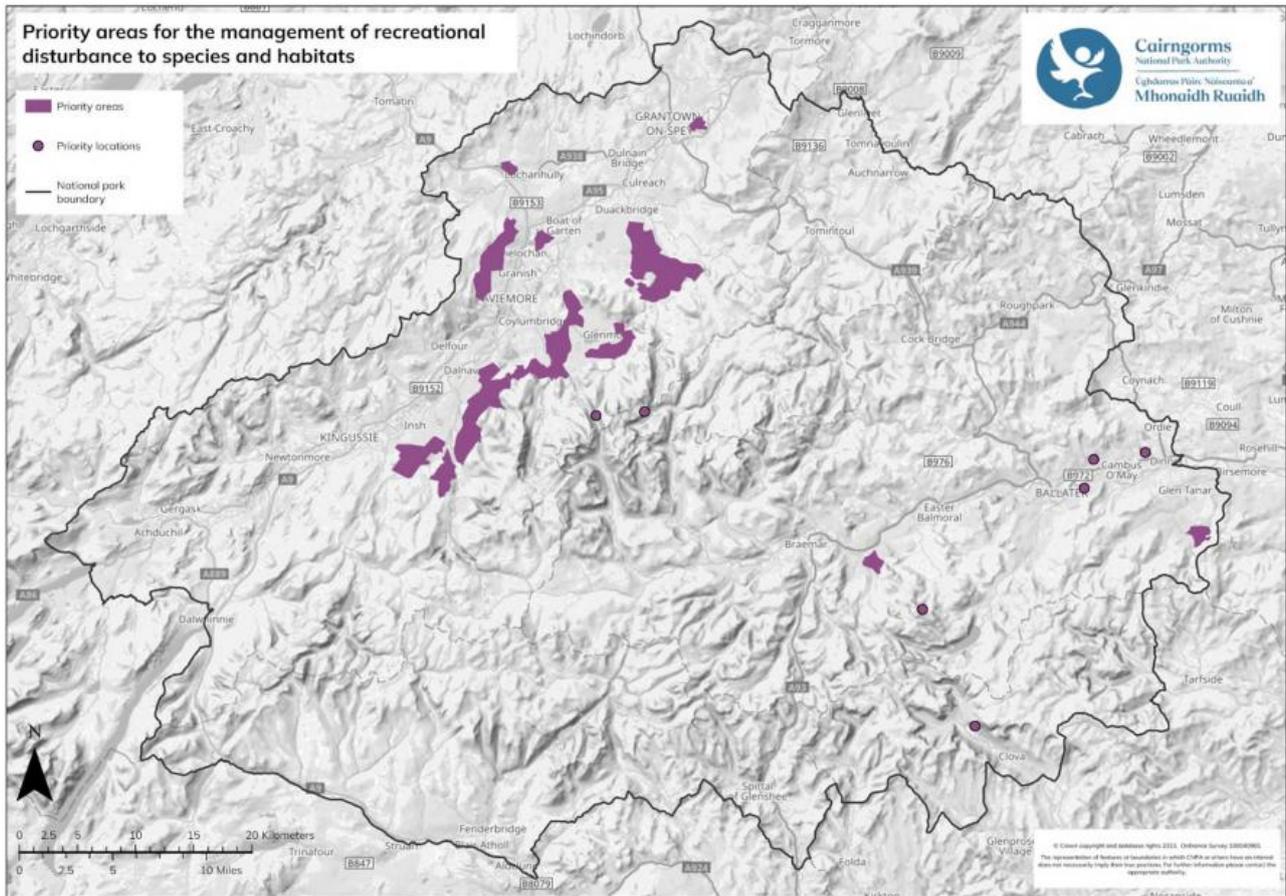


Figure 46 Map of the Priority Areas for the management of recreational disturbance to species and habitats. Active Cairngorms Action Plan 2023 – 202 (CNPA814).

Further detail on capercaillie is available in Schedule 5: Natural heritage.

Evidence gaps

No outstanding evidence gaps have been identified.

Summary of stakeholder engagement

Early online map based engagement revealed mixed views on tourism's economic benefits, with participants noting both opportunities for local job creation and pressures on infrastructure. Discussions frequently referenced camper vans, short-term lets, and the need to balance visitor numbers with community wellbeing and environmental sustainability (CNPA026).

Engagement with children and young people revealed concerns about visitor management, litter, BBQs, and seasonal pressures. Tourism was identified as a source of employment and there was some acknowledgment of the economic benefits of



holiday homes and visitor attractions. However, concerns were also mentioned about the rise of holiday homes and its impact on local communities (CNPA027, CNPA681, CNPA833).

Concern was raised about the impact of visitors on the road network, impacting on safety and increasing noise and air pollution in towns, such as Aviemore. Suggestions included introducing park and ride schemes and improving facilities to better accommodate visitors while minimising environmental impacts (CNPA834).

Some participants felt that tourists were prioritised more so than local residents within larger settlements, while others praised the area's skiing, scenic views, and natural attractions as key tourism assets (CNPA835).

Engagement with the Aviemore and Cairngorms 2030 Planning Power groups identified sustainable tourism as an important but sensitive issue. Participants supported maintaining the area's reputation for high-quality, nature-based experiences while avoiding over-tourism and pressure on local infrastructure. There was strong backing for managing visitor numbers, particularly during peak seasons, and for improving public transport and active travel connections to key destinations to reduce congestion and emissions. Participants emphasised the need for well-planned facilities, clear visitor management, and community benefit from tourism income, ensuring that local people share in its advantages while the environment and village character are safeguarded (CNPA1105, CNPA1104).

Public engagement on the schedule (see CNPA1363 for engagement version) was carried out from 26 August – 4 October 2024. Fourteen completed responses were received (CNPA1340).



Summary of implications for the Proposed Plan

Based on the available evidence and engagement with key agencies and other interested parties, the Park Authority consider this schedule to provide a sufficient evidence base on which to prepare the 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) (CNPA004), in particular the third aim 'to promote public understanding and enjoyment of the area's natural and cultural heritage' and the fourth aim 'to promote sustainable economic, social and cultural development of the area's communities'.
- Section 9(6) of the 2000 Act, which states that while the aims are to be pursued collectively, if there is conflict between the first aim and any of the others, greater weight is given to the first aim.
- The spatial strategy and principles of National Planning Framework 4 (CNPA008).

In its preparation the Proposed Plan should seek to:

- Support the viability of existing tourist infrastructure and identify land for new sustainable tourism development that supports the visitor economy while also protecting local communities from potentially adverse effects.
- Support sustainable tourism development that also manages tourism pressures on the natural environment and promotes responsible access where relevant.
- Support the delivery of the Park Authority's Sustainable Tourism Action Plan (CNPA180) and Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan (CNPA181).
- Align with the projects being progressed through the Cairngorms 2030 programme (CNPA528).
- Facilitate the delivery of sustainable travel infrastructure to support existing and future growth of the tourism sector.
- Support future tourism growth that supports low carbon development with circular economy principles at its heart (Policy 2 of the National Park Partnership Plan). This may include, increasing on-site renewable energy generation tourism sites, supporting existing businesses to reduce energy use, high standards of sustainable design and installation of bike and car charging facilities to visitor hubs.
- Take account of the priorities of community action plans and the recommendations from the latest visitor survey.
- Reflect the importance of the economic contribution of visitors to the overall economy of the Cairngorms National Park.



Statements of agreement

The following people / organisations agree that the evidence presented is sufficient to inform the preparation of the Proposed Plan:

- Historic Environment Scotland (C002)
- NatureScot (C004)
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise (C001)
- Highland Council (C020)
- Janet Kinnaird (C086)
- Bart Burza (C071)

Historic Environment Scotland (C002)

Historic Environment Scotland agree that the that the evidence correctly identifies the characteristics of the Cairngorms National Park and that it is sufficient to inform the Proposed Plan. They also requested that reference to Scotland's strategy for the historic environment, Our Past, Our Future.

Park Authority response

The schedule has been amended to reflect Historic Environment Scotland's comments.

NatureScot (C004)

NatureScot agree that the that the evidence correctly identifies the characteristics of the Cairngorms National Park, that it is sufficient to inform the Proposed Plan and that the correct implications are identified. They also requested the following amendments and additions:

- Identify more the inter-relationships between this schedule and Schedule 4: Climate change, Schedule 5: Natural heritage and Schedule 6: Landscape, including with the section on core paths and active travel.
- More detail on the need to achieve sustainable tourism, particularly in respect to the potential for high and damaging tourism pressures on the natural environment.
- Reference to the update to the Climate Change Plan 2018 – 2032.
- Reference to the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045
- Information from NatureScot on sustainable tourism:
<https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/social-and-economic-benefits-nature/tourism>
- Information on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.



Strengthen the implication about supporting sustainable tourism development, to include the need for sustainable tourism development that also manages tourism pressures on the natural environment and promotes responsible access.

Park Authority response

The schedule has been amended to reflect NatureScot's comments, including by adding a section on minimising visitor disturbance to the schedule.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (C001)

Highlands and Islands agree that the that the evidence correctly identifies the characteristics of the Cairngorms National Park, that it is sufficient to inform the Proposed Plan and that the correct implications are identified. They also requested that updated data on short term lets and second homes to inform the latest situation with regards to housing pressures and the tourism and hospitality workforce accommodation needs.

Park Authority response

Up-to-date data on short term lets and second homes is presented within Schedule 13: Housing.

The Highland Council (C020)

The Highland Council agree that the that the evidence correctly identifies the characteristics of the Cairngorms National Park, that it is sufficient to inform the Proposed Plan and that the correct implications are identified.

Aviemore and Vicinity Community Council (C025)

The Community Council did not agree that the evidence was sufficient to inform the preparation of the Proposed Plan. This was due to a number of reasons, some of which the Park Authority agrees with and some which the Park Authority dispute. The latter are summarised as statements of dispute. The following requested amendments and additions are agreed with:

- Include further information on post pandemic behaviours, including the use of motorhomes.
- Include further information from the Cairngorm Mountain Masterplan to encompass all mountain activities.
- Include further information on mountaineering, winter mountaineering, ski mountaineering / backcountry skiing, cross country skiing.



- Update information on Aviemore and Vicinity Community Action Plan, which was published following the start of engagement.

Park Authority response

The schedule has been amended to reflect these requests. Highlands and Islands Enterprise have confirmed that they are content with this approach (CNPA014).

ScotWays (The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society) (C055)

Scotways agree that the evidence correctly identifies the characteristics of the Cairngorms National Park, but that the National Catalogue of Rights of Way in Scotland (CROW), maintained by ScotWays, should form part of the evidence base.

Park Authority response

The schedule has been amended to reflect ScotWays comments.

Andrew Wilson (C067)

Andrew Wilson agreed that the evidence presented in this report is sufficient to inform the preparation of the Proposed Plan.

Janet Kinnaird (C086)

Janet Kinnaird agrees that the evidence correctly identifies the characteristics of the Cairngorms National Park and that it is sufficient to inform the preparation of the Proposed Plan. They requested:

- More direct engagement, face to face with residents.
- Consult local farmers and crofters.

Park Authority response

The Park Authority has undertaken considerable direct engagement with a range of audiences in the preparation of the Evidence Report. A summary of this is presented in the Evidence's Report's Statement of engagement.

Jack Welch (C085)

Jack Welch agrees that the evidence correctly identifies the characteristics of the Cairngorms National Park and that the correct implications have been identified. However, to reach sufficiency, they requested that information on hutting be included,



including Scottish Government guidance documents on planning and building standards.

Park Authority response

In most areas of the National Park, hutting is unlikely to be appropriate due to the potential adverse effects on the qualifying features of woodland natura site designations, in particular Special Protection Areas designated with Capercaillie as qualifying features (see Schedule 5: Natural heritage). However, the Park Authority have included general information on hutting as a potential tourist activity in some areas of the National Park. A note relating to National Planning Framework 4 Policy 30 (d) on hutting has also been inserted.

Statements of dispute

Aviemore and Vicinity Community Council (C025)

The Community Council do not agree that the evidence is sufficient to inform the preparation of the Proposed Plan. This is because:

- Sites like Beglan, near Badaguish, could be utilised to diversify the visitor pressures and are being allowed to disappear from our recognisable landscape.
- There is very little which assists residents and visitors to access facilities within our community, and without these, aspirations of achieving net zero are a falsehood.
- Investment in permanent publicly accessible, energy efficient infrastructure facilities in Aviemore, such as swimming and ice facilities, is essential to remove unnecessary travel and create a more accessible and weather resilient mix of facilities for both residents and visitors. These are essential toward achieving Net Zero targets.
- Concern that some of the projects discussed in the schedule have not been adequately discussed with residents or landowners.
- The balance between the community needs and the need of tourism is not fully addressed in the implications.

Park authority response

The Park Authority does not agree with Community Council's reasons and are of the position that the evidence is both proportionate and sufficient. This is because:

- It would not be proportionate for the Evidence Report to summarise information on every site or small business operation within the National Park and that the implications recognised the need for a diverse tourist offering.
- Schedule 9: Energy sets out the supportive position the Local Development Plan may take in delivering energy efficient buildings.



- Schedule 11: Sustainable transport highlights the need for the Local Development Plan to take an infrastructure first approach and support development in locations that well serviced by transport infrastructure. The Schedule also outlines the support the Local Development Plan may have in delivering new active travel and public transport infrastructure.
- However, mechanisms of funding the delivery of facilities fall outside the scope of the Local Development Plan.
- Engagement individual proposed projects fall outwith the remit of the Evidence Report. Many continue to undergo engagement, either through Cairngorms 2030, or other means.
- The Park Authority regard the implication on supporting 'the viability of existing tourist infrastructure and identify land for new sustainable tourism development that supports the visitor economy while also protecting local communities from potentially adverse effects' to reflect an understanding of the need to balance community and tourism needs.

Invercauld Estate (C044)

Invercauld Estate requested that further information on the socio-economic importance of grouse shooting be included. They recommended drawing evidence from the Park Authority / Scottish Land and Estates Report 'The Economic, Social and Environmental Contribution of Landowners in the Cairngorms National Park' 2014. They suggested more up to date data for the National Park should 'perhaps be commissioned'.

Park Authority response

The schedule has been amended to include a summary and reference to the report 'The Economic, Social and Environmental Contribution of Landowners in the Cairngorms National Park'. Evidence has also been drawn from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds report, 'Driven Grouse Shooting: Assessing the economic and social impacts of future options for grouse moor management in relation to the economic value of grouse shooting', which was more recently published in 2022. The Park Authority does not agree that the collection of more up to date data should be commissioned and that the Evidence Report's approach to the matter is proportional.

Bart Burza (C071)

Bart Burza agrees that the that the evidence correctly identifies the characteristics of the Cairngorms National Park and that it is sufficient to inform the Proposed Plan. They do not however consider that the correct implications have been identified, because:



- There should be a push to use railway network between Newtonmore up to Carrbridge.
- That the Park Authority should work with ScotRail and railway network providers to introduce a suburban rail, so that traffic can be reduced on the A9 and net zero objective met.

Park Authority response

The National Park are supportive of increasing rail usage between settlements within the National Park, however as outlined in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport, the use and control of the ScotRail services on the Highland Mainline is outwith the control of the Local Development Plan.

Lindsay Smith (C093)

Lindsay Smith agrees that the evidence correctly identifies the characteristics of the Cairngorms National Park. However, they do not think it is sufficient to inform the preparation of the Proposed Plan. This is because the closure of all staffed Visit Scotland tourist offices will have a serious impact on the visitor experience. Lindsay Smith also suggested the addition information on the pressures from and the provision of facilities for campervans / tent box / motorhomes, particularly in Deeside.

Lindsay Smith does not agree that the correct implications have been identified, because 'Housing, Fife Arms effect! Tourist offices, infrastructure (bridges, roads)'. It is inferred the respondent is referring to missing information / consideration in the implications.

Park Authority response

Visit Scotland announced the Ballater and Aviemore iCentre locations will close to the public in September 2025 as part of a wider closure of the iCentre services across Scotland. The Park Authority have made a note of the closures within the National Park.

The Evidence Report recognises the need to provide space, facilities and infrastructure for motorhomes. It is not within the remit of the Evidence Report to consider specific sites, which will take place during the preparation of the Proposed Plan.

Matters relating to housing are presented within Schedule 13: Housing. Matters relating to infrastructure are covered in a number of schedules, including Schedule 9: Energy, Schedule 10: Zero Waste, Schedule 11: Sustainable transport, Schedule 14: Education, Schedule 15: Heating and cooling, Schedule 18: Health and safety, Schedule 19: Flood risk and water management and Schedule 20: Digital infrastructure.



The Park Authority have attempted further engagement with the respondent but did not receive any replies to requests for further clarity on initial responses.

Andrew Wilson (C067)

Andrew Wilson agrees that that the evidence presented in this report correctly identifies the characteristics of the Cairngorms National Park. However, asked if 'so many camper vans coming here' can be stopped and stated that there was a 'need to say what makes the Cairngorms special in unambiguous language'.

Park Authority response

The National Park Authority cannot reduce the number of campervans visiting the National Park through the Local Development Plan. The Evidence Report's remit is not to explain why the Cairngorms National Park is special, it is to present sufficient information to prepare the Proposed Plan.

Fiona Gray (C081)

Fiona Gray agrees that the evidence correctly identifies the characteristics of the Cairngorms National Park. However, they do not agree that it is sufficient to inform the preparation of the Proposed Plan, stating that there was not enough input from local communities and that there is incorrect information for 'their area'. Fiona Gray does not think the correct implications have been identified citing that holiday homes were a problem with regards to housing availability.

Park Authority response

The Park Authority has undertaken considerable direct engagement with a range of audiences in the preparation of the Evidence Report. A summary of this is presented in the Evidence Report's Statement of engagement. Matters relating to short term lets and second homes are presented within Schedule 13: Housing.

The Park Authority have attempted further engagement with the respondent but did not receive any replies to requests for further clarity on initial responses.

Carol Turnbull (C074)

Carol Turnbull agree that the evidence presented in this report correctly identifies the characteristics of the Cairngorms National Park. Although stating that they did not know if the evidence is sufficient, they suggested the addition of information on transport and



parking at Cairngorm Mountain relating to snow sports. Carol Turnbull also wrote that there were major issues with parking for cars and motorhomes, including the provision of bins and toilet emptying facilities, in the National Park.

Park Authority response

Matters relating to transport are covered in Schedule 11: Sustainable transport, outlines the importance of the infrastructure first approach to planning. This includes information on the impact of visitors on the transport network. However, outwith the planning system, the Local Development Plan will not have an influence on the provision of public transport or parking.