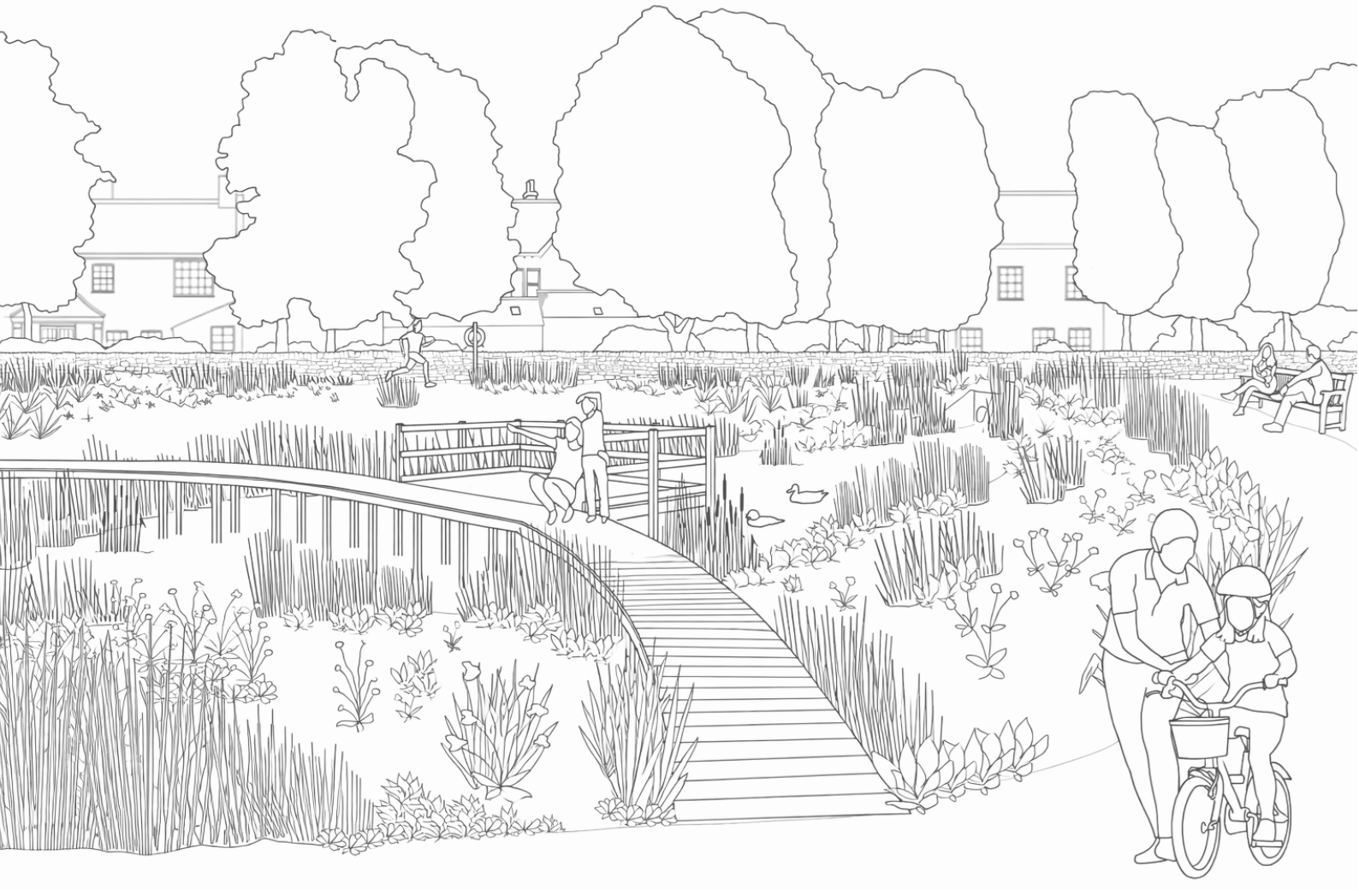
Cairngorms
National Park Authority
Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a'
Mhonaidh Ruaidh

Sustainable places

Schedule 8: Land use, soil and resources

Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan: Evidence Report

March 2026



Schedule 8: Land use, soil and resources

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(3)	where a local development plan contains policies or proposals for, or views as to, the occurrence of development on land owned by the planning authority, there is to be appended to the plan a schedule, in such form as may be prescribed, which identifies the land, states that it is so owned and refers to the policies, proposals or views in question.
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— i. the National Planning Framework and ii. 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)(b)	Are to have regard to such information and considerations as may be prescribed.

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

Table 2 Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 (CNPA684), regarding the issue addressed in this schedule.

Regulation	Requirement
Regulation 8(1)	a local development plan is to contain a map or maps (to be known as 'the Proposals Map') describing the policies and proposals set out in the local development plan, so far as practicable to illustrate such policies or proposals spatially.
Regulation 8(2)	where a local development plan is prepared by a National Park authority, the schedule of land ownership is also to include land owned by a local authority.
Regulation 9(2)(c)	any local development plan prepared for an area adjoining the local development plan area.

Links to evidence

Legislation

- CNPA003 - Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997
- CNPA004 - National Park (Scotland) Act 2000
- CNPA059 - Crofters (Scotland) Act 1993
- CNPA634 - Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill as passed
- CNPA684 - Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023

National documents

- CNPA008 - National Planning Framework 4
- CNPA060 - Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero: climate change plan 2018 – 2032 – update
- CNPA061 - Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy 2021 - 2026
- CNPA062 - National Development Plan for Crofting
- CNPA009 - Local development planning guidance
- CNPA076 - Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2023
- CNPA082 - The Scottish Soil Framework 2009
- CNPA083 - The State of Scotland's Soils 2011
- CNPA084 - Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045: Tackling the Nature Emergency in Scotland
- CNPA085 - Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024 – 2030
- CNPA099 - Aggregate minerals survey for Great Britain, 2023

Key agency documents

- CNPA075 - The Value of Crofting 2024
- CNPA053 - Buildings at Risk Register Review 2024
- CNPA095 - Climate change, land management and erosion in the organic and organo-mineral soils in Scotland and Northern Ireland
- CNPA096 - Geomorphological changes and trends in Scotland: debris-flows
- CNPA100 - Scotland's Geodiversity Charter

National Park Authority documents

- CNPA010 - Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2022 - 2027
- CNPA016 - Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021
- CNPA078 - Cairngorms National Park Town Centre Health Check Report 2023

- CNPA097 - Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 3 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2024
- CNPA1348 - Topic: Land use, soil and resources - engagement version

Local authority documents

- CNPA079 - Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2023
- CNPA080 - Highland Housing Land Audit 2023
- CNPA638 - 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan
- CNPA636 - Aberdeenshire Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017 – 2027 (website)
- CNPA637 - Angus Community Plan 2022 – 2030
- 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 Atholl Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
- CNPA065 - Grantown-on-Spey Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
- CNPA066 - Kingussie Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
- CNPA133 - Strathdon Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030

Data sources

- CNPA067 - CORINE Land Cover data
- CNPA068 - Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme 2003 – 2006 forest plans
- CNPA069 - Rural Development contracts – Rural Priorities 2007 – 2013 forest plans
- CNPA070 - Forestry Grant Scheme Woodland Improvement Grant long term forest plans
- CNPA071 - Rural Development contracts forest plans
- CNPA072 - Scottish Rural Development Programme management plans
- CNPA073 - Scottish Public and Crown Estate Land
- CNPA074 - Scottish Agricultural Census
- CNPA077 - Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land data – Scotland
- CNPA052 - Buildings at Risk
- CNPA646 - Scottish retail vacancy rates surge to 18-month high

- CNPA081 - Contaminated land
- CNPA086 - Carbon rich soils
- CNPA087 - Carbon and Peatland map 2016
- CNPA088 - Peatland condition
- CNPA089 - Peatland ACTION completed reported hectares
- CNPA090 - Peatland ACTION completed restoration footprints
- CNPA091 - Land capability for agriculture
- CNPA092 - Land capability for forestry
- CNPA093 - Soil sealing, compaction and erosion data
- CNPA094 - National Landslide Database
- CNPA098 - BritPits Database
- CNPA647 - JNCC Report 450: Ecosystem sensitivity and responses to change understanding the links between geodiversity and biodiversity at the landscape scale
- CNPA101 - Geodiversity of the Cairngorms National Park
- CNPA102 - Simplified bedrock geology
- CNPA103 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- CNPA104 - Geological Conservation Review sites
- CNPA105 - Second 100 International Union of Geological Sciences Geological Heritage Sites List of Candidates
- CNPA106 - Geomorphology of the Cairngorm Mountains
- CNPA260 - NatureScot SiteLink
- CNPA565 - Small area statistics on households and dwellings 2024
- CNPA735 - Land ownership - Scotland
- CNPA1332 - Council Asset Register - Scotland

Consultation material

- CNPA610 - NatureScot correspondence - Land use, soil and resources topic paper
- CNPA1340 - Evidence report engagement responses

Summary of evidence

Policy context

National Planning Framework 4

This paper covers a range of matters relating to National Planning Framework 4's (CNPA008) Sustainable Places and Productive Places spatial priorities.

Policy 5 Soils seeks to protect carbon-rich soils, restore peatlands and minimise disturbance to soils from development. It states that local development plans should protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally valued soils, including land of lesser quality that is culturally or locally important for primary use.

Policy 9 Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings seeks to encourage, promote and facilitate the reuse of brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings, and to help reduce the need for greenfield development. It states that local development plans should set out opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and empty buildings.

Policy 33 Minerals seeks to support the sustainable management of resources and minimise the impacts of the extraction of minerals on communities and the environment. It states that local development plans should support a landbank of construction aggregates of at least 10-years at all times in the relevant market areas, whilst promoting sustainable resource management, safeguarding important workable mineral resources, which are of economic or conservation value, and take steps to ensure these are not sterilised by other types of development.

Policy 8 states that local development plans should consider using green belts, to support their spatial strategy as a settlement management tool to restrict development around towns and cities. It states that green belts will not be necessary for most settlements but may be zoned around settlements where there is a significant danger of unsustainable growth in car-based commuting or suburbanisation of the countryside. Furthermore, it states that green belts should be identified or reviewed as part of the preparation of local development plans and that boundary changes may be made to accommodate planned growth, or to extend, or alter the area covered as green belt. Detailed green belt boundaries should be based on evidence and should be clearly identified in plans.

The Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2021 (CNPA016) does not identify any green belts within the National Park, therefore a review of boundaries is not possible. Based on the settlements identified within the National Park Partnership Plan's spatial strategy, the Park does not consider coalescence, an unsustainable growth in car-based commuting or the suburbanisation of the countryside to be a significant risk. Therefore, the Park Authority does not consider greenbelts to be an appropriate tool for managing development within the National Park and therefore none have been identified within the evidence report.

The North region's spatial priorities, which cover the National Park and are relevant to this policy area are:

- Protect environmental assets and stimulate investment in natural and engineered solutions to climate change and nature restoration, whilst decarbonising transport and building resilient connections.
- Support local economic development by making sustainable use of the areas' worldclass environmental assets to innovate and lead greener growth.

Legislation and national documents

National Parks (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).

Crofters (Scotland) Act 1993

The Crofters (Scotland) Act 1993 (CNPA059), as amended by the Crofting Reform etc Act 2007, Crofting Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, and Crofting (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2013, forms the legislative framework that governs the use of croft land in Scotland. The act sets out the definition for crofts and crofters and sets out duties crofters must meet to occupy croft land, including duties relating to residency, maintenance, cultivation and use.

Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero: climate change plan 2018 – 2032 – update

The document provides an update to the 2018 Climate Change Plan (CNPA060). 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 COVID-19 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 Government's 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.

It sets out a number of outcomes, that are supported by policies and proposals, relating to land use, land use change, forestry and agriculture. These are:

- We will introduce a stepped increase in the annual woodland creation rates from 2020 – 2021 to enhance the contribution that trees make to reducing emissions through sequestering carbon.
- Increase the use of sustainably sourced wood fibre to reduce emissions by encouraging the construction industry to increase its use of wood products where appropriate.
- To enhance the contribution of peatland to carbon storage, we will support an increase in the annual rate of peatland restoration.
- We will establish pilot Regional Land Use partnerships (RLUPs) over the course of 2021.
- A more productive, sustainable agriculture sector that significantly contributes towards delivering Scotland's climate change, and wider environmental, outcomes through an increased uptake of climate mitigation measures by farmers, crofters, land managers and other primary food producers.
- More farmers, crofters, land managers and other primary food producers are aware of the benefits and practicalities of cost effective climate mitigation measures.
- Nitrogen emissions, including from nitrogen fertiliser, will have fallen through a combination of improved understanding, efficiencies and improved soil condition.
- Reduced emissions from red meat and dairy through improved emissions intensity.
- Reduced emissions from the use and storage of manure and slurry.
- Carbon sequestration and existing carbon stores on agricultural land have helped to increase and maintain our carbon sink.

Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy 2021 – 2026

The Land Use Strategy (CNPA061) sets out our long-term vision for sustainable land use in Scotland, its objectives and key policies for delivery. The Strategy contains a vision for 2050, which is:

'A Scotland where we fully recognise, understand and value the importance of our land resources, and where our plans and decisions about land use will deliver improved and enduring benefits, enhancing the wellbeing of our nation.'

The vision is supported by three overarching land use objectives:

- Land based businesses working with nature to contribute more to Scotland's prosperity.
- Responsible stewardship of Scotland's natural resources delivering more benefits to Scotland's people.
- Urban and rural communities better connected to the land, with more people enjoying the land and positively influencing land use.

The Strategy does not set out new policies, instead it seeks to make land use more understandable and accessible to everyone, in support of a shift in the way we think about land, towards more inclusive conversations around how we use land and who should be involved in those decisions. From a development plan perspective, therefore, National Planning Framework 4 is the policy expression of its vision and objectives.

National Development Plan for Crofting 2021

The National Development Plan for Crofting (CNPA062) highlights the core elements necessary to ensure that crofting remains at the heart of our rural and remote rural communities, as well as delivering policy priorities for climate change mitigation and biodiversity.

The Plan contains a number of actions specifically relating to land-use and soil:

- Under the Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme the Scottish Government will ensure that environmental issues are considered for each investment carried out on land within an environmental designated area.
- The Scottish Government will continue to support and encourage management practices that support biodiversity.
- The Scottish Government will continue to provide funding to support the restoration of degraded peatland, and to explore the need to provide funding to support the maintenance of healthy peatland.
- NatureScot, in partnership with the Crofting Commission, will identify those areas of degraded peatland in the crofting counties with a view to prioritising engagement with crofters and common grazing committees.
- The Scottish Government is encouraging private sector forestry companies to support new forestry jobs in rural and remote Scotland.

- The Scottish Government, through the forestry grant scheme, will provide grant support to crofters and common grazing committees to support the sustainable management of existing forests and woodlands.
- The Scottish Government will introduce a forestry loan scheme to help crofters and grazings committees with the cash flow challenges associated with woodland creation.
- The Scottish Government, through Scottish Forestry, supports the Croft Woodlands Project to provide local advisers to help crofters and common grazings committees assess what is possible and realistic on the land and develop woodland proposals.
- The Scottish Government, through the forestry grant scheme, will provide grant support to crofters and common grazing committees to plant trees and create woodlands on croft and common grazing land.
- The Scottish Government, Scottish Forestry and the IUCN UK Peatland Programme, will continue to promote the Woodland Carbon Code and Peatland Code to provide opportunities for private sector funding to make more woodland creation and peatland restoration projects viable – for all landowners including crofters.

The Scottish Soil Framework 2009

The Scottish Soil Framework (CNPA082) sets out the vision for soil protection in Scotland, and formally acknowledges the important services soils provide to society. Its vision is

'That soils are recognised as a vital part of our economy, environment and heritage, to be safeguarded for existing and future generations.'

The main aim of the framework is to promote the sustainable management and protection of soils consistent with the economic, social and environmental needs of Scotland.

The framework is supported by the State of Scotland's Soil Report (2011) (CNPA083) which provides further evidential insight on the functions of soils, as well as on the nature and relative importance of the threats to soil quality.

From a development plan perspective, National Planning Framework 4 is the policy expression of the Soil Framework's vision and objectives.

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

The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (CNPA084) sets out the Scottish Government's ambition for Scotland to be Nature Positive by 2030, and to have restored and

regenerated biodiversity across the country by 2045. The Strategy states that soil health will be 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. Soils and species indicators also point to ecosystem health improvements and reveal which drivers are working positively or negatively across habitats and areas.

Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024 – 2030

The first Plan 2024 – 2030 (CNPA085) was published in conjunction with the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (CNPA084). Priority actions are described under the six objectives set out in the Biodiversity Strategy. The actions related to soil are:

- Ensure increased uptake of high diversity, nature-rich, high-soil carbon, low-intensity farming methods while sustaining high-quality food production.
- Provide guidance on sustainable use and management of soil in planning processes.
- Develop a route map (end of 2025) for soil security in Scotland including a review and update of Scotland's Soil Framework and action / implementation plan (2030).
- Develop evidence-based Soil Health Indicators that can be considered for inclusion in Whole Farm Plans and Forest Management Plans.
- Improve information for land managers on how to assess and interpret soil erosion risks and implement measures to avoid erosion (and other impacts on soil health related to climate change), including:
  - The impacts of extreme rainfall drought events on soils; and
  - Maps of soils that have been subject to anthropogenic degradation and are candidates for soil improvement programmes.
- Develop and promote clear guidance for practitioners on soil compaction and farm and forestry machinery contractors are engaged in ensuring appropriate use of equipment, uptake of decision-making tools and training, to minimise and ultimately avoid compaction damage to soils.
- Set up monitoring frameworks to assess change in soil health, based on evidence from the Natural Resources theme of the Strategic Research Programme (2022-2027).
- In 2025, as part of eligibility requirement for Basic Payment Scheme, businesses must undertake two from the following five baselines: biodiversity audit, carbon audit, soil analysis, animal health and welfare plan and integrated pest management plan as part of a revised rural payments process that encourages Nature Positive activities.
- In 2025 there will be new peatland and wetland standards under Cross Compliance which will prohibit a range of activities from being carried out on peatland and

wetland areas. We will continue to develop rural support mechanisms to incorporate further requirements to protect and enhance soil health, promote control of soil erosion / compaction and maintain / enhance soil organic matter through appropriate balance of input / outputs and nutrient levels.

- Develop upland-specific, best practice guidance on measures for upland restoration to regenerate peatlands, increase nature woodland cover, manage grazing, protect certain target species and priority habitats and increase habitat heterogeneity.
- Develop a national peatland monitoring framework that incorporates on-site and remotely sensed assessments of biodiversity indicators, climate resilience and associated functions within the wider landscape, hydrological and ecological network contexts.
- Following consultation in 2023, continue ongoing work towards implementing a ban on the sale of horticultural peat in Scotland.
- Implement legislation relating to muirburn and revise Muirburn Code to regulate the use of all muirburn and only allow burning on peatland by exception for limited purposes.
- Develop the targeting of peatland restoration for cost-effective delivery (i.e. identifying priority restoration projects) including for greater private investment in peatland restoration.
- Scale delivery of the Peatland Action programme, restoring the condition of peatlands as a key ecosystem in line with Net Zero targets as well as supporting the expansion and upskilling of the peatland restoration workforce.
- Public funding streams that contribute to nature restoration will be designed in a way that they can be matched or blended with private finance or investment, including new ways of using available Peatland Action funding to leverage other sources of finance for peatland restoration will be tested from 2025 / 2026.
- Enhance water and air quality and undertake water management measures to enhance biodiversity and reduce negative impacts. Key actions to deliver this are:
  - Protecting soils and enhancing soil health.
  - Reducing and targeting the use of inputs.
  - Protecting water courses from run off.
  - Peatland restoration.

Scotland's Geodiversity Charter 2018 - 2023

The Cairngorms National Park Authority is signatory of Scotland's Geodiversity Charter (CNPA100). The Charter encourages the promotion and management of Scotland's geodiversity and better integration of geodiversity into policy and guidance, consistent with the economic, social, cultural and environmental needs of Scotland.

Signatories commit to maintain, promote and enhance geodiversity as an integral part of nature, recognising its contribution to:

- Scotland's remarkable geoheritage.
- Historical and cultural development, intellectual growth and creative expression.
- Sustainable economic development and essential benefits for society.
- Supporting biodiversity and addressing biodiversity loss.
- Helping us understand Earth's history and providing knowledge that will help society to mitigate and adapt to climate change and sea level rise.
- Public health, quality of life, national well-being and reconnecting people with nature.

The Charter was designed to be time-limited. This approach accommodates periodic refocussing of the Charter to address additional needs and fresh challenges. The Charter is due for review and renewal. According to NatureScot, the Charter for 2024 - 2030, which is yet to be published, has a role in helping to address the nature and climate emergencies.

National Park Authority documents

Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2022 – 2027

The National Park Partnership Plan (CNPA010) is the Regional Land Use Framework for the National Park. Five regions across Scotland, including the Cairngorms National Park, were involved in the Regional Land Use Partnership and Regional Land Use Framework pilot programme from 2021 – 2023.

It is still uncertain what, if any, powers Regional Land Use Partnerships will have in future to direct public funding and this is pivotal in terms of how this approach will function. Within the Cairngorms National Park, the Park Authority has been tasked with creating the structures necessary to operate a partnership and framework and to trial how they might work in practice. However, during this pilot, the partnership and framework will not have powers to direct public funding.

The strategic approach to the partnership and framework pilot as relevant to this National Park Partnership Plan period is set out below. The Park Authority will take further direction from Scottish Government on how the partnership and framework should operate and, as such, the approach to partnerships and frameworks may change in the future.

The Partnership Plan provides the strategic context for the development of a pilot Regional Land Use Framework for the National Park using a natural capital approach. Natural capital is defined within the Partnership Plan as the world's stock of natural resources, which includes geology, soils, air, water and all living organisms. Natural capital 'assets' such as habitats and ecosystems provide a wide range of benefits to human wellbeing, known as 'ecosystem services'.

Natural capital within the context of this paper includes matters relating to soil and geology. Other matters, such are habitats and ecosystems are covered in papers specifically relating to those matters.

The Partnership Plan contains a number of specific actions relating to the use of land use.

Objective A1. Net Zero, which seeks to ensure the Cairngorms National Park reaches net zero as soon as possible, is likely to have a significant impact on land use across the National Park, although it does not contain any specific measures in itself, instead being delivered through a number of the Partnership Plan's other objectives, including:

- A2. Woodland expansion, which seeks to create a minimum of 35,000 hectares of new woodland cover by 2045.
- A3. Peatland restoration, which seeks to have a minimum of 38,000 hectares of peatland under restoration management by 2045.
- A8. Farming, which aims to reduce the carbon footprint of farms and conserve carbon rich soils.
- A10. Ecological network, which aims to connect habitats and ecosystem across all different types of land use.
- A11 ecological restoration, which seeks to have at least 50% of the National Park to be managed principally for ecosystem restoration by 2045.
- A14. Green investment, which seeks to see an increase in the amount of green finance per annum for projects that deliver multiple benefits, including, carbon reduction.

A number of these objectives, notably, Objective A3 and A8, specifically support the protection and restoration of carbon rich soils.

The Partnership Plan does not contain any specific objectives or policies on minerals or geodiversity. However, as geology is an important aspect of natural capital and that the Partnership Plan, as the Regional Land Use Framework, promotes a natural capital approach, then these matters are broadly included within its remit.

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 10 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

Land use, soil and resource issues are not considered in the Angus community plan (CNPA637).

2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan

Land use, soil and resource issues are not considered in the Highland outcome improvement plan (CNPA638). There are no references to land use, soil and resource issues in the Highland outcome improvement plan delivery plan (CNPA1091).

Moray Local Outcome Improvement Plan v2 (2016 - 2026)

Land use, soil and resource issues are not considered in the Moray Planning Partnership's local outcome improvement plan (CNPA639)

Perth and Kinross Community Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan) 2022 – 2032
Land use, soil and resource issues are not considered in the Perth and Kinross Community Planning Partnership's community plan (CNPA640).

Community action plans

The following action plans identified issues and / or priorities relating to empty properties and vacant and derelict land.

Aviemore, Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
The action plan (CNPA063) contains a priority to encourage the development of derelict sites that have lain for too long. It identifies the land at Laurel Bank as a target for action and seeks to establish ownership of sites and any existing plans and timelines.

Blair Atholl Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
The action plan (CNPA064) contains the following priorities:
- To bring vacant residential properties back into use as affordable housing.
- Too preserve the currently vacant buildings at Blair Atholl railway station.
- To invest in old buildings and sites for community benefit.

Grantown-on-Spey Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
The action plan (CNPA065) highlights the following issues:
- Empty commercial properties on the High Street and Square.
- The former Palace Hotel, which is currently vacant.

Kingussie Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
The action plan (CNPA066) identifies the following issues and priorities:
- Redevelopment of St Vincents for community benefit

Strathdon Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030
The action plan (CNPA133) contains a priority to find a use for the Lonach Hotel site, which is an empty building that is falling into disrepair.

Baseline of land use, soil and resource matters

This schedule summarises a number of matters, including the principal purposes for which land is used, vacant and derelict land, carbon rich soil, land capability for agriculture, minerals and aggregates and geoconservation.

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 10: Zero waste
- Schedule 13: Housing
- Schedule 16: Blue and green infrastructure
- Schedule 19: Flood risk and water management
- Schedule 21: Economic development
- Schedule 22: Town Centres and retail

Land use

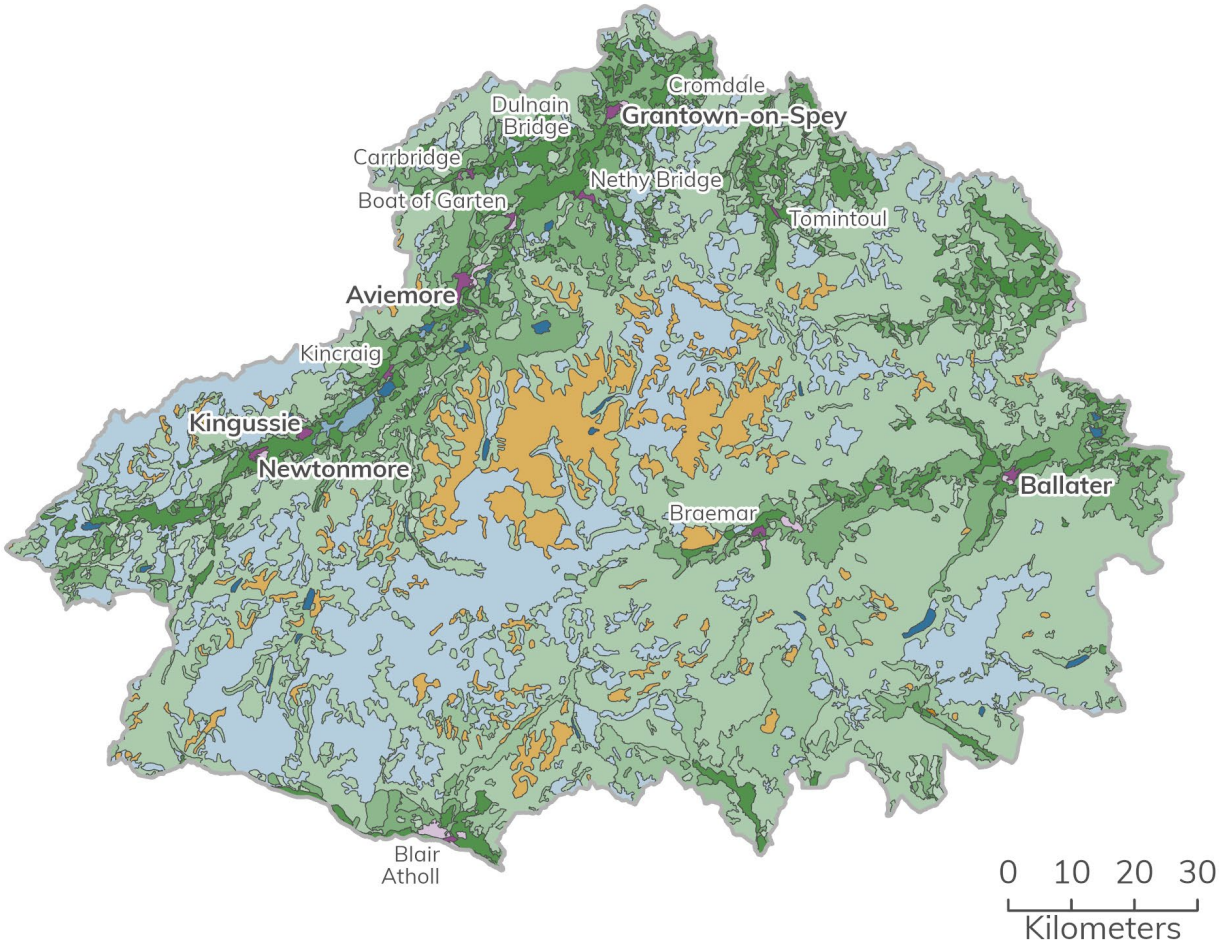
The principal purposes for which the land is used

Section 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended (CNPA003), states that local development plans should take into account the principal purposes for which the land is used.

The matter of land use is covered in several of the schedules of the evidence report, including those covering, natural heritage, housing and, town centres and retail, economic development. These deal with specific aspects of land use and how they are to be addressed in the preparation of the Proposed Plan. This section provides an overview of land use within the National Park and the broad changes that have taken place over a 28-year period.

There are numerous datasets that cover land use within Scotland. This report draws on data from the European Environment Agency's CORINE Land Cover dataset (CNPA067). In its current form, the CORINE Land Cover product offers a pan-European land cover and land use inventory with 44 thematic classes, ranging from broad forested areas to individual vineyards. The product is updated every six years, with the earliest dataset compiled in 1990 and the most recent update made in 2018. This allows for change to be monitored over time, although there are limitations in comparing non-consecutive inventories due to several factors, including methodological changes. This is particularly pronounced when comparing inventories that are more distant in time (for example, comparing 2000 and 2018 datasets).

According to the 2018 dataset (Figure 1) the two dominant types of land cover within the National Park are moorland and heathland, which covers around 2,000km^2 (44%) and peat bog, which covers around 950km^2 (21%). The use of these land cover types can vary but may include agriculture and sport (e.g. grouse shooting). Other land that may principally be used for agriculture covers around 590km^2 (13%), although around 315km^2 of this is classified as natural grassland and is therefore likely to be low intensity. Woodland accounts for around 650km^2 (14%). Developed land accounts for approximately 10km^2 (0.2%).



Corine level 3 land cover type

- Discontinuous urban fabric
- Industrial or commercial units
- Mineral extraction sites
- Sport and leisure facilities
- Non-irrigated arable land
- Pastures
- Land principally occupied by agriculture, with significant areas of natural vegetation
- Broad-leaved forest
- Coniferous forest
- Mixed forest
- Natural grasslands
- Moors and heathland
- Transitional woodland-shrub
- Bare rocks
- Sparsely vegetated areas
- Water bodies
- Water courses
- Inland marshes
- Peat bogs

Figure 1 Landcover 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).

Table 3 and Table 4 provide details of broad changes in land-cover between each update of the CORINE dataset. The changes do not represent every change within these periods and the later periods are not directly comparable with the earlier ones. Figure 2 shows where these changes occurred. The primary changes relate to land management with a relatively small amount attributed to some form of development.

Table 3 Changes in landcover in parcels of land that are 5 hectares (ha) or larger according to CORINE data 1990 – 2018 (CNPA067). Some figures may not sum due to rounding.

Landcover change 1990 - 2000			
Landcover in 1990 (ha)		**Landcover in 2000 (ha)**	
Coniferous forest	700.4	Moors and heathland	49.1
		Natural grasslands	29.3
		Pastures	14.2
		Transitional woodland-shrub	608.0
Moors and heathland	474.6	Coniferous forest	474.6
Pastures	87.7	Coniferous forest	87.7
Transitional woodland-shrub	718.0	Coniferous forest	707.6
		Natural grasslands	10.4
Landcover change 2000 - 2006			
Landcover in 2000 (ha)		**Landcover in 2006 (ha)**	
Coniferous forest	1288.4	Transitional woodland-shrub	1288.4
Transitional woodland-shrub	90.2	Coniferous forest	90.2
Landcover change 2006 - 2012			
Landcover in 2006 (ha)		**Landcover in 2012 (ha)**	
Burnt areas	132.4	Moors and heathland	132.4
Coniferous forest	310.5	Transitional woodland-shrub	310.5
Discontinuous urban fabric	27.2	Coniferous forest	17.6
		Construction sites	9.6
Moors and heathland	247.6	Burnt areas	247.6
Transitional woodland-shrub	2158.7	Coniferous forest	2099.1
		Moors and heathland	59.6

Landcover change 2012 - 2018			
Landcover in 2012 (ha)		Landcover in 2018 (ha)	
Broad-leaved forest	32.5	Road and rail networks and associated land	6.6
		Transitional woodland-shrub	25.9
Burnt areas	191.7	Natural grasslands	191.7
Coniferous forest	1543.1	Transitional woodland-shrub	1543.1
Mixed forest	28.1	Transitional woodland-shrub	28.1
Moors and heathland	26.9	Natural grasslands	26.9
Pastures	7.6	Construction sites	7.6
Transitional woodland-shrub	434.4	Coniferous forest	259.3
		Mixed forest	175.1

Table 4 Net-changes in landcover in parcels of land that 5 hectares (ha) or larger according to CORINE data 1990 – 2018 (CNPA067).

	Net change 1990 – 2000 (ha)	Net change 2000 – 2006 (ha)	Net change 2006 – 2012 (ha)	Net change 2012 – 2018 (ha)
Broad-leaved forest	0.0	0.0	0.0	-32.5
Burnt areas	0.0	0.0	+115.2	-191.7
Coniferous forest	+569.5	-1,198.2	+1,806.1	-1,283.8
Construction sites	0.0	0.0	+9.6	+7.5
Discontinuous urban fabric	0.0	0.0	-27.2	0.0
Mixed forest	0.0	0.0	0.0	+147.0
Moors and heathland	-425.5	0.0	-55.6	-26.9
Natural grasslands	+39.6	0.0	0.0	+218.6
Pastures	-73.6	0.0	0.0	-7.5
Road and rail networks and associated land	0.0	0.0	0.0	+6.6
Transitional woodland-shrub	-110.0	+1,198.2	-1,848.2	+1,162.8

The next release of the CORINE dataset is planned for 2026. It will have a 2024 base year.

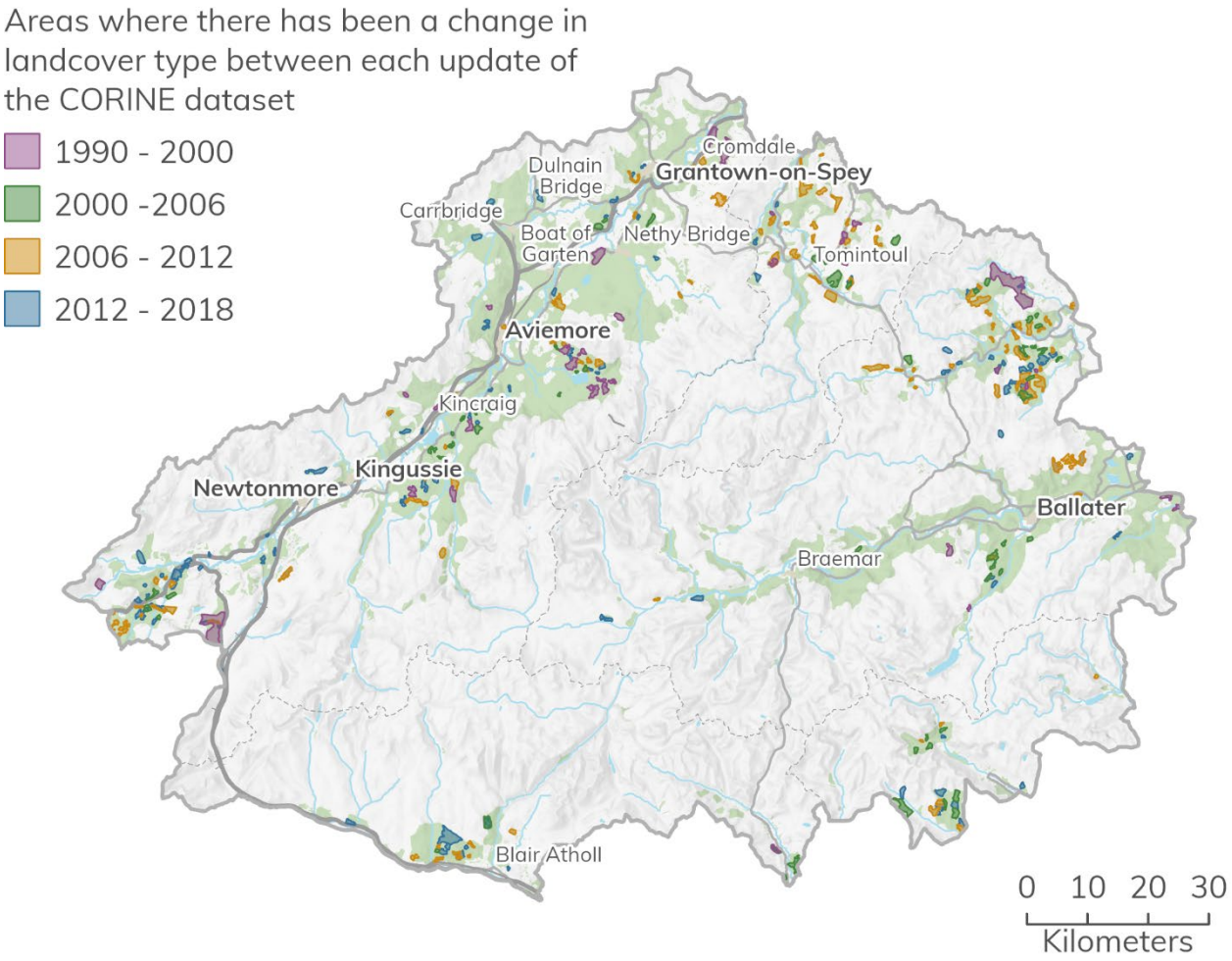


Figure 2 Changes in landcover in parcels of land that 5 hectares (ha) or larger according to CORINE data 1990 – 2018 (CNPA067). Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026. Contains data © European Union, Copernicus Land Monitoring Service 2026, European Environment Agency (EEA).

The biggest influence on how the land is managed is in most cases the landowner, but there are a range of other factors such as conservation designations, financial incentives, topography, climate, existing habitat and soils that greatly affect a landowner's objectives.

In terms of forest and woodland management, Scottish Forestry hold data on a range of programs, notably:

- Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme 2003 – 2006 forest plans (CNPA068).
- Rural Development contracts – Rural Priorities 2007 – 2013 forest plans (CNPA069).
- Forestry Grant Scheme Woodland Improvement Grant long term forest plans (CNPA070).
- Rural Development contracts forest plans (CNPA071).

- Scottish Rural Development Programme management plans (CNPA072).

It is not proportionate for the evidence report to provide details of these plans. However, these data sources may be of relevance during the preparation of the Proposed Plan, for example where proposals for development are submitted within a woodland setting. Further information on woodlands is provided in Schedule 5: Natural heritage.

Publicly owned land

Section 15(3) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (CNPA003) states that:

'Where a local development plan contains policies or proposals for, or views as to, the occurrence of development on land owned by the planning authority, there is to be appended to the plan a schedule, in such form as may be prescribed, which identifies the land, states that it is so owned and refers to the policies, proposals or views in question'.

The Cairngorms National Park Authority does not own any land or property in the National Park, however other public bodies do, including the local authorities who will use the local development plan to determine planning applications. This section therefore collates currently available information on public land ownership, which may need to be listed in a schedule, should the local development plan contain policies or proposals for development on that land. There is no requirement to prepare a schedule at the evidence report stage.

In December 2024 Scottish Government published data on publicly owned land, as well as land managed by Scottish Crown Estate (CNPA073). Figure 3 and Table 5 present this data, alongside additional data from NatureScot on land owned by Highland and Island Enterprise. Approximately 9% of the National Park falls within the ownership of these organisations, compared to 11% for Scotland as a whole.

Table 5 Publicly owned land, as well as land managed by Scottish Crown Estate, in the Cairngorms National Park (CNPA073).

Public body	Area (hectares)
Forestry and Land Scotland	17,672.1
NatureScot	3,737.7
Scottish Crown Estate	17,539.6

Public body	Area (hectares)
Scottish Water	166.5
Highlands and Islands Enterprise	1,497.2

This information may be useful for identifying opportunities to deliver wider public benefit during the preparation of the Proposed Plan.

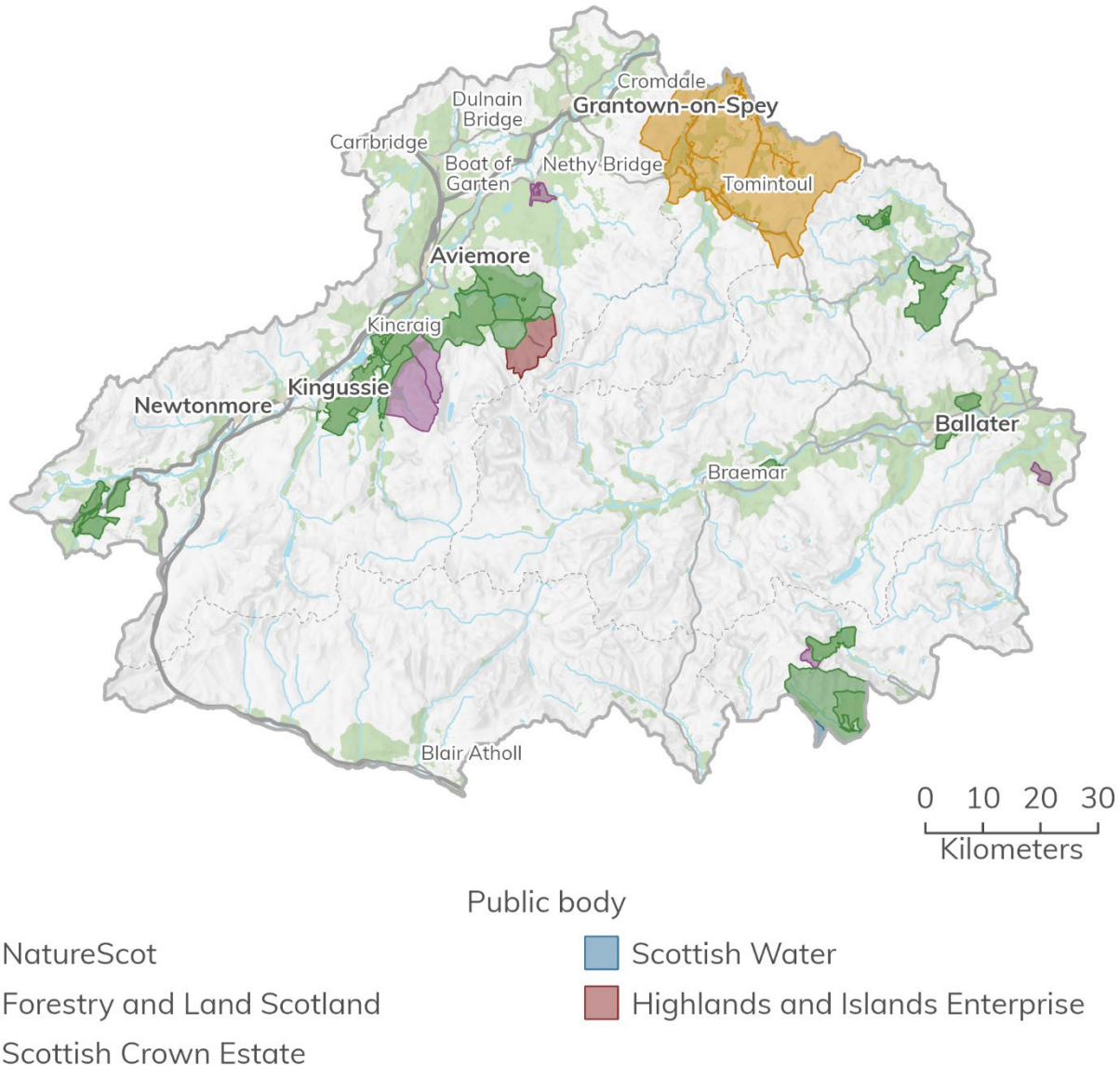


Figure 3 Publicly owned land, as well as land managed by Scottish Crown Estate, in the Cairngorms National Park (CNPA073). Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Data © Scottish Government and NatureScot 2026.

It should be noted that Scottish Government's data does not include land or properties owned by local authorities and there is no comprehensive publicly available dataset covering these assets. The point data presented in Figure 4 is publicly available (CNPA1332), however it is limited by the fact that there is no consistency in what different local authorities have identified as being in their ownership. For example, some list affordable homes, others do not. During the preparation of the Proposed Plan, the Park Authority will therefore need to work with the local authorities in identifying assets that the Proposed Plan should take account of.

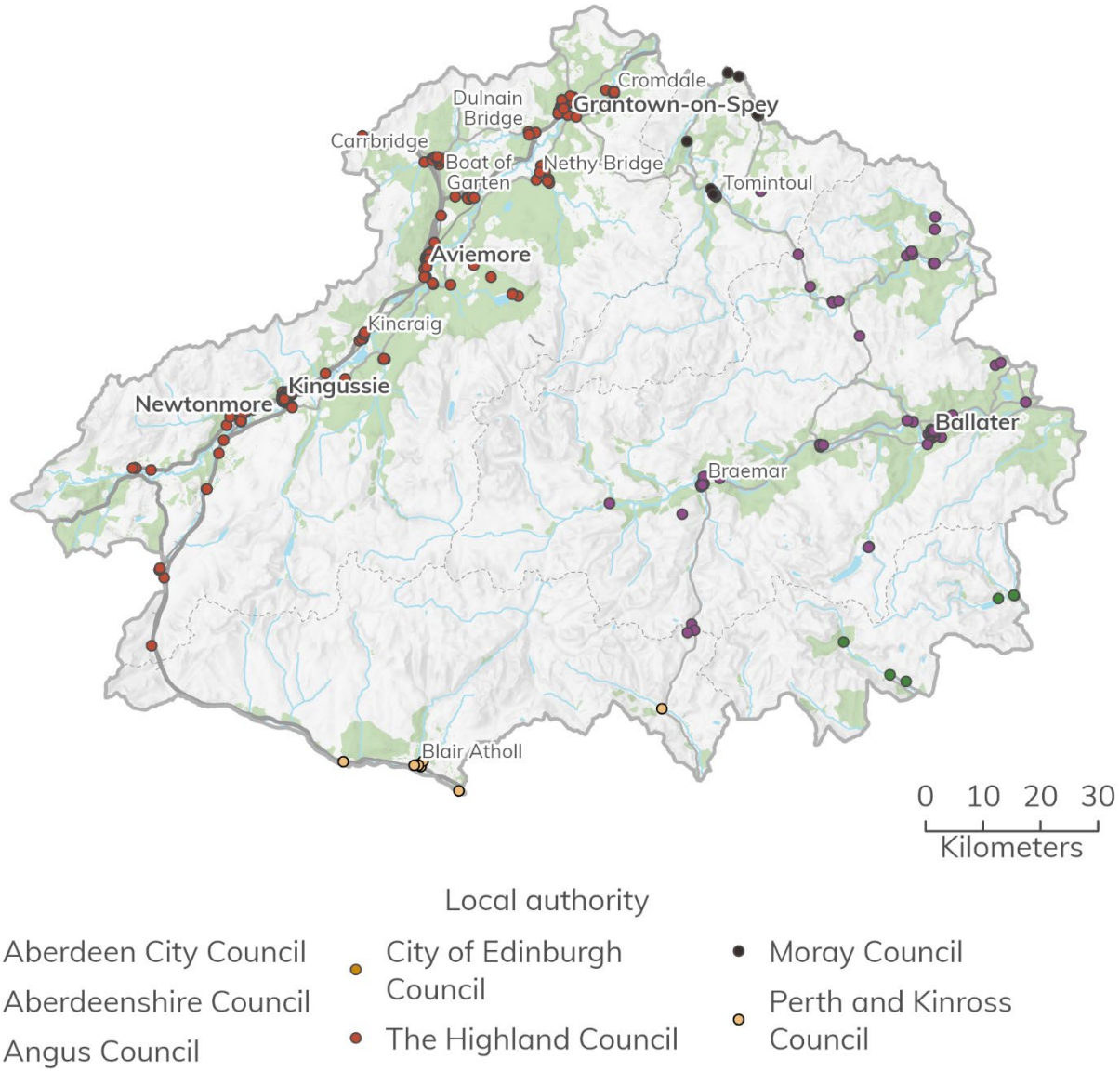


Figure 4 Land and properties within the ownership of local authorities within the Cairngorms National Park (CNPA735). Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Data © Scottish Government 2026 (CNPA1332).

Protected sites

Around 52% of the Cairngorms National Park is protected by some form of international or national nature designation (Figure 5) (CNPA260). These are:

- Sites of Scientific Interest
- Special Protection Areas
- Special Areas of Conservation
- Ramsar sites
- National Nature Reserves.

All protected sites are relevant for land use, soil and resource considerations. These are considered in detail in Schedule 5: Natural heritage.

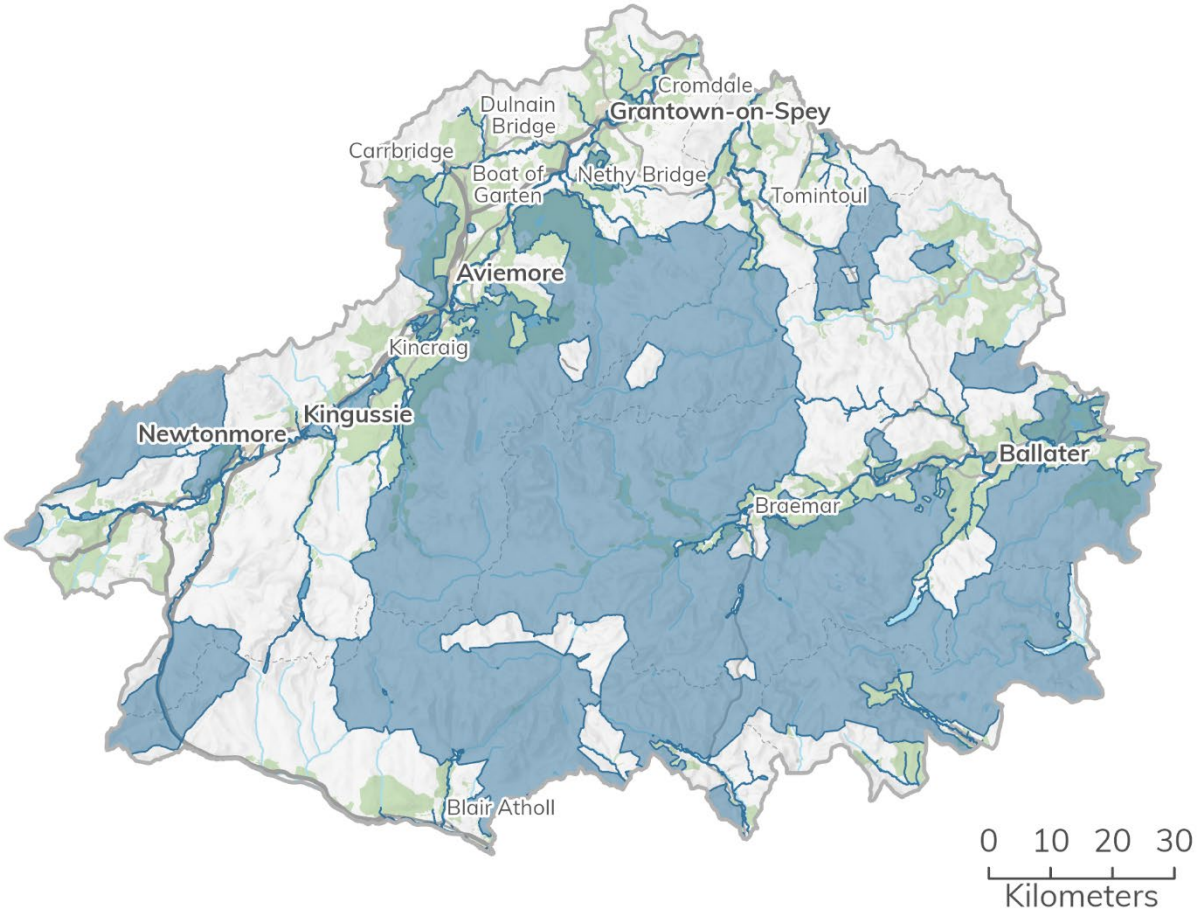


Figure 5 Land within Cairngorms National Park designated as either a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation, Ramsar site or National Nature Reserve. Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Data © NatureScot 2024 (CNPA260).

Land used for agriculture

It is difficult to estimate the precise area of land used for agriculture within the National Park. This is due to the agricultural parishes used to gather statistics for the Scottish Agricultural Census (CNPA074) not nesting within the boundary of the Cairngorms National Park. A sample of parishes must therefore be selected to form an aggregate. Based on a sample of parishes that best fit the National Park's geography[1], in 2023 there was approximately 570 agricultural holdings within or mostly within the National Park boundary.

According to the 2023 census, the total area of agricultural land, excluding common grazing, within these holdings was approximately 381,455 hectares, down from around 423,500 hectares in 2003. The majority of agricultural land is classified as rough grazing and this is where the greatest change in land use has occurred. All other types of agricultural land use have increased slightly over the time period (Figure 6).

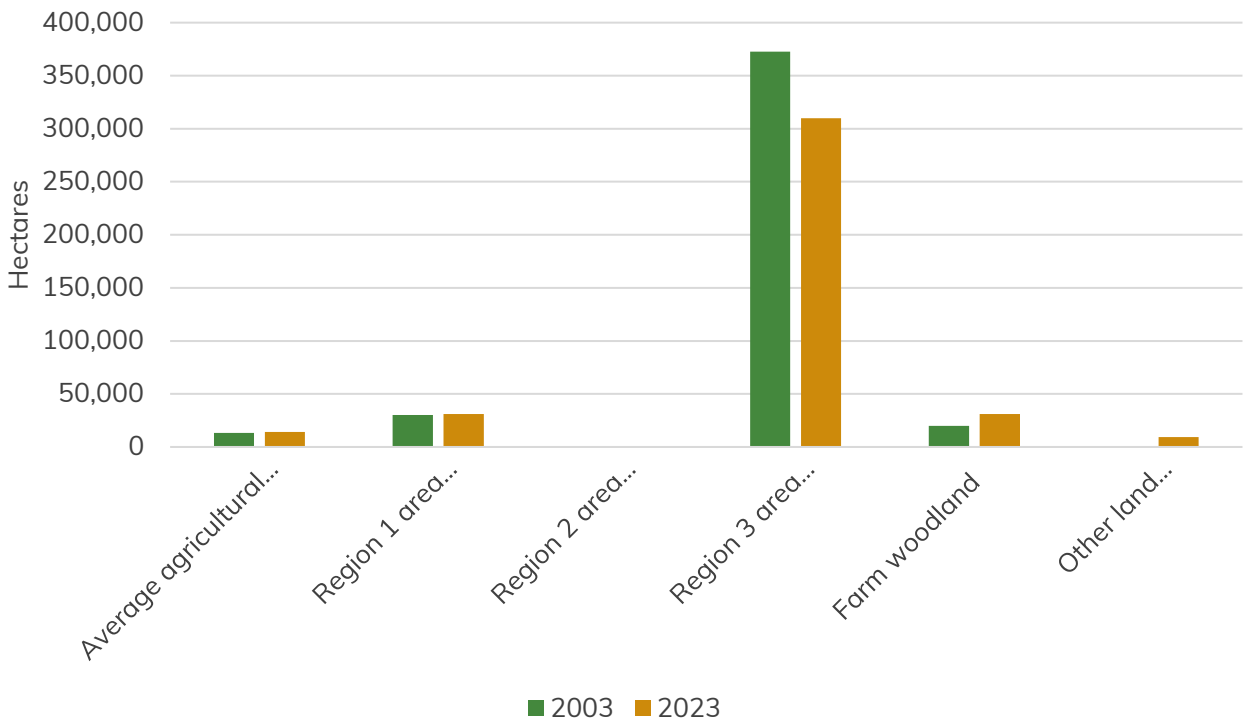


Figure 6 Area of agricultural land within or mostly within the Cairngorms National Park boundary according to 2003 and 2023 Agricultural Census (CNPA074).

[1] Reference numbers 16, 21, 38, 42, 43, 45, 234, 235, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 586 and 676.

Crofts

A croft is a small agricultural land holding, averaging 5 hectares. Crofting is a unique land tenure system found only in the Highlands and Islands and in designated areas of Scotland. Around 9% of Scotland's land area is held under crofting tenure, resulting in 21,514 crofts in Scotland in 2022 / 2023, with around 35,000 people living in crofting households. There are 92 croft holdings within the Cairngorms National Park, all within the area of The Highland Council (Figure 7).

The use of croft land is governed by specific legislation, namely the Crofters (Scotland) Act 1993 (CNPA059), Crofting Reform etc Act 2007, Crofting Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, and Crofting (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2013. Under this legislation, a crofter has a duty to cultivate the land or put it to a purposeful use. Cultivation includes activities such as keeping livestock or poultry, growing fruit, vegetables or other crops, growing fruit, vegetables or other crops, and planting trees and maintaining woodland. A purposeful use means any planned and managed use which does not adversely affect the croft, the public interest, the interests of the landlord or (if different) the owner, or the use of adjacent land. For example, this could include forestry, using the land for tourism and generating renewable energy.

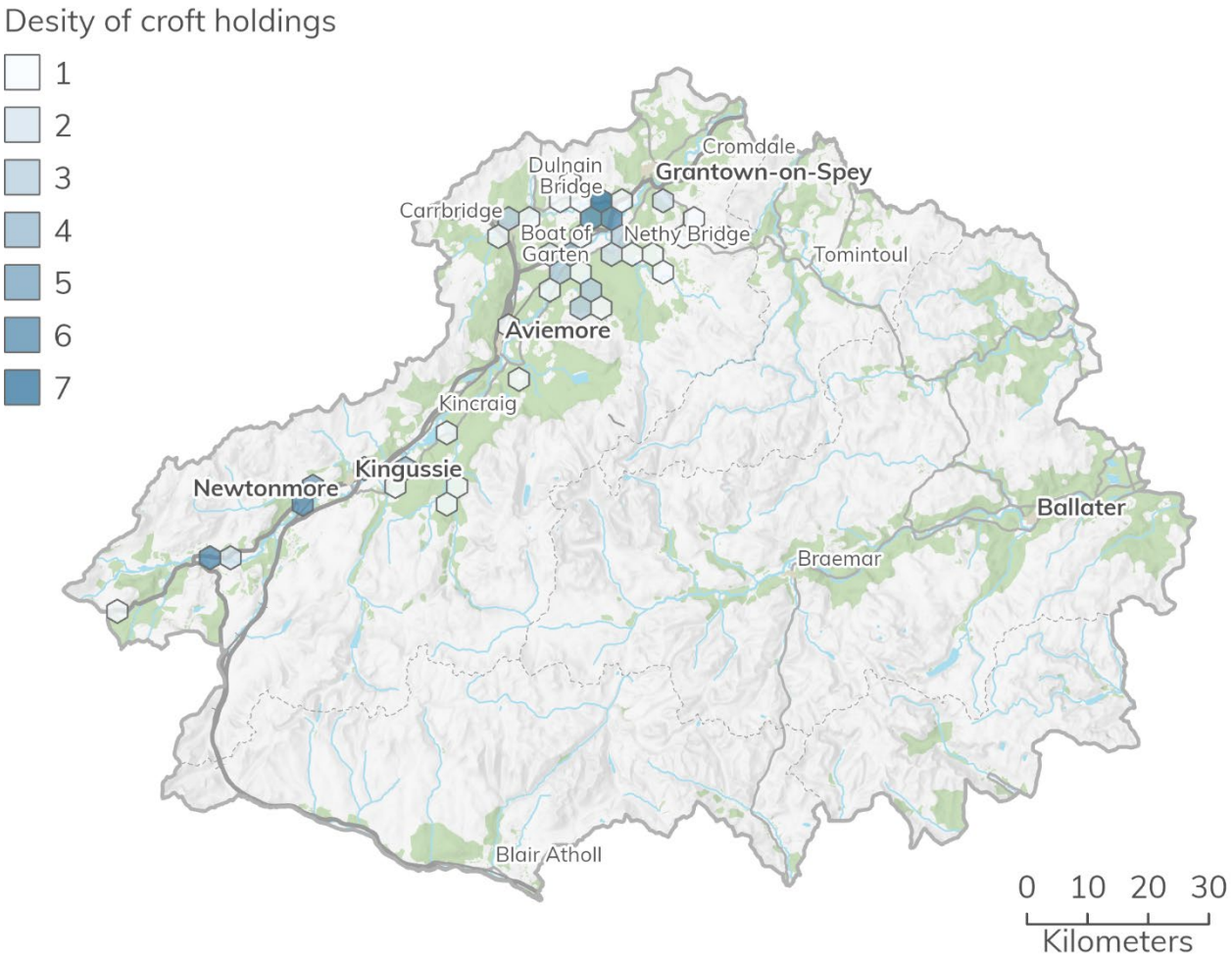


Figure 7 Density of croft holdings within the Cairngorms National Park. Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810.

Crofting's small-scale food production is traditionally characterised by a mix of livestock rearing and crop cultivation. Environmental benefits may stem from the small scale, diverse and often low-intensity nature of crofting agriculture. According to a 2024 report by Biggar Economics for the Crofting Commission (CNPA075), crofting legislation and support (predominantly from government, but also from some non-government organisations) helps to sustain these productive ecosystems, contributing to soil health, carbon sequestration, biodiversity, and maintaining landscape quality. The report states that a holistic way of measuring the value of crofting land use has not yet been established but regenerative agriculture, agroecology and nature-based solutions are all relevant. These solutions include peatland restoration and woodland expansion, contributing towards Scottish Government's net-zero ambitions.

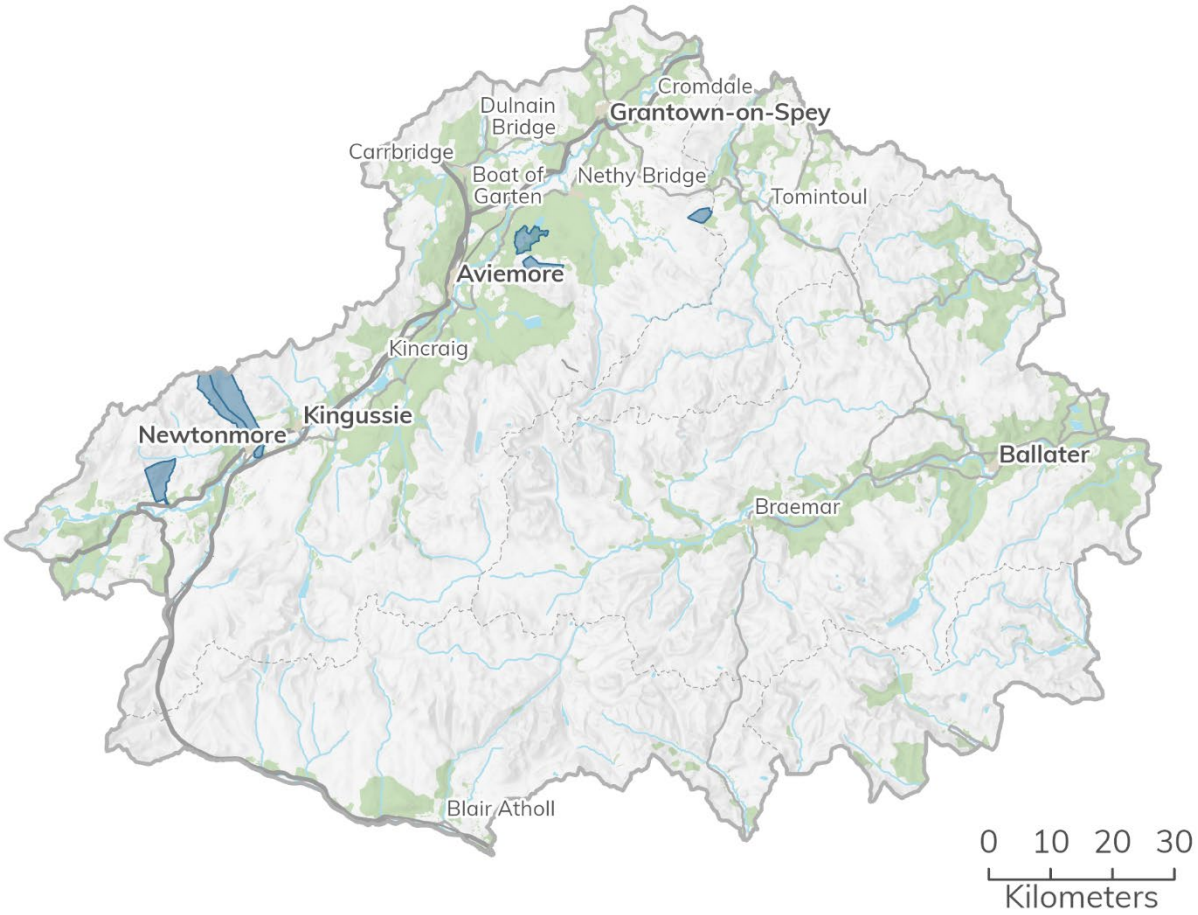


Figure 8 Mapped common grazing land in the Cairngorms National Park. Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Ordnance Survey Licence number AC0000821810, Cairngorms National Park Authority. Data © Scottish Integrated Administration and Control System 2026.

Crofts often share in common grazing, which may encompass large areas of land. Geographical data for the Cairngorms National Park is limited, however (Figure 8) presents data collected as of 2024. These areas may also encompass large areas of peatland, some of which may require restoration, as well as areas suitable for woodland expansion.

Empty buildings

Information on empty buildings can be derived from a number of sources, including:

- Vacant and derelict land survey
- Buildings at risk register
- Household estimates
- Town centre health checks.

Invercauld Gardens is the only site on the 2024 vacant and derelict land survey (CNPA076 and CNPA077) identified as having empty buildings. Its previous use is recorded as residential and its ownership is recorded as unknown.

There are 27 buildings at risk (CNPA052) in the Cairngorms National Park, 23 of which are vacant and a further two that are only partly occupied. They are relatively evenly split between Highland and Aberdeenshire areas of the National Park, with 12 located in the former and 15 in the latter. Only 6 of the buildings on the register are located within settlements (Figure 9).

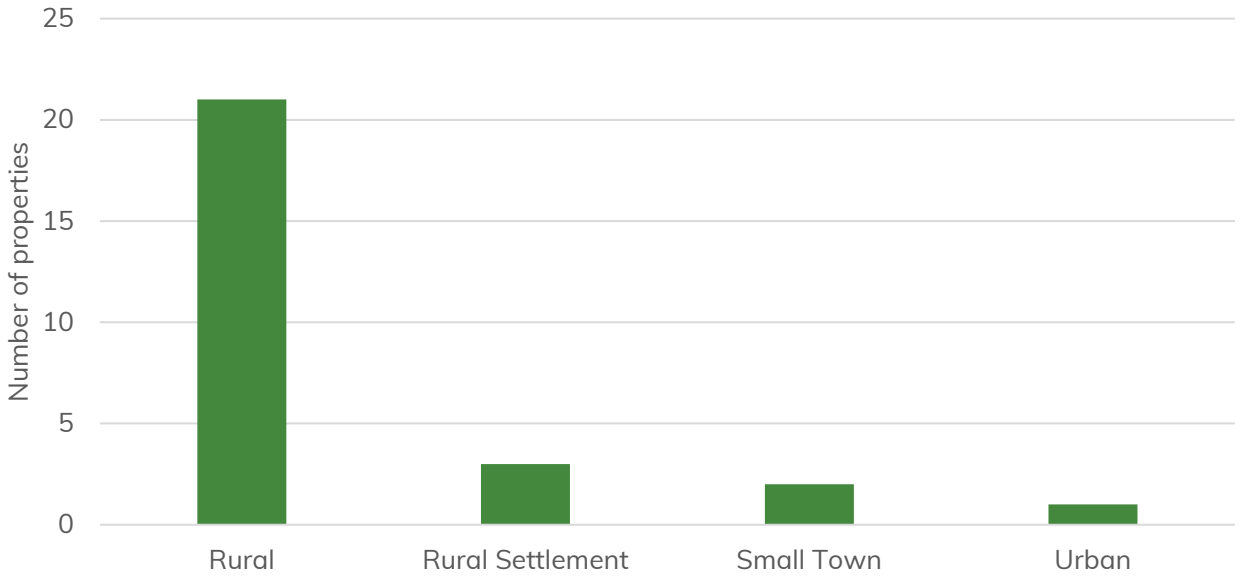


Figure 9 Location types of buildings at risk within the Cairngorms National Park (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 2023) (CNPA052).

Matters relating to buildings at risk, including their condition and risk status are covered in more detail in Schedule 7: Historic and cultural heritage[2].

According to Scottish Government's household estimates, in 2023 there were 632 vacant residential dwellings in the National Park, equating to approximately 4% of the housing stock (Figure 10). Of these 459 are classified as being long term empty dwellings[3] (CNPA565).

[2] It should be noted that as of September 2024, Historic Environment Scotland has taken the decision to pause the Buildings at Risk Register in order to consider long-term options for its future (CNPA053).
[3] These are generally properties which have been empty for more than 6 months and are liable for council tax.

Further consideration is given to ineffective stock, of which vacant residential dwellings are a component, in Schedule 13: Housing.

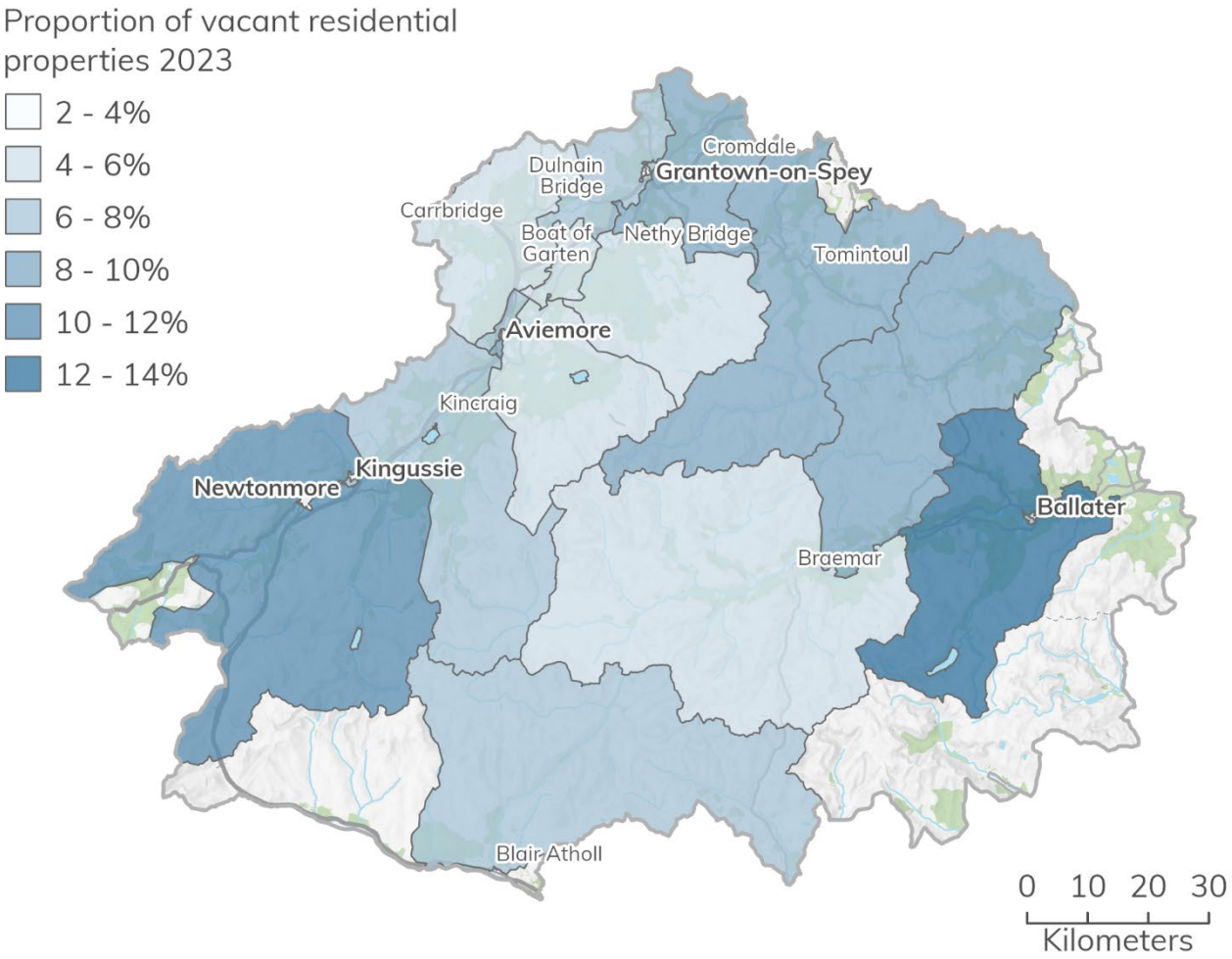


Figure 10 Proportion of residential properties in the Cairngorms National Park that are vacant. Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810 (CNPA565).

Town centre health checks in Aviemore, Ballater, Grantown on Spey, Kingussie and Newtonmore were carried out in 2016, 2018 and 2023 (CNPA079). Key to the consideration of this topic is the breakdown of commercial uses in the centres, including the change in vacancy rates (Table 6).

Table 6 Vacancy rates for commercial properties with town centre boundaries as identified in the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021 (CNPA079).

Centre	Number of vacant properties 2016	Proportion of vacant properties 2016	Number of vacant properties 2023	Proportion of vacant properties 2023	Change between 2016 and 2023
Aviemore	3	5%	6	8%	+3
Ballater	12	22%	2	3%	-10
Grantown on Spey	7	9%	7	9%	0
Kingussie	6	13%	10	17%	+4
Newtonmore	3	20%	1	7%	-2

The small size of the town centres means that small changes in the number of vacant properties can lead to large proportional changes between surveys. Generally, vacancy rates are relatively low compared to the Scottish average, which in quarter 2 of 2023 were 15.1% for high streets and 20.7 for shopping centres.

Vacant and derelict land

Information on vacant and derelict land within the National Park is provided by the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (CNPA076 and CNPA077), which is a national data collection undertaken to establish the extent and state of vacant and derelict land in Scotland. The data is collected from local authorities and the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority. Sites within Cairngorms National Park boundaries are surveyed by the local authorities covering its area.

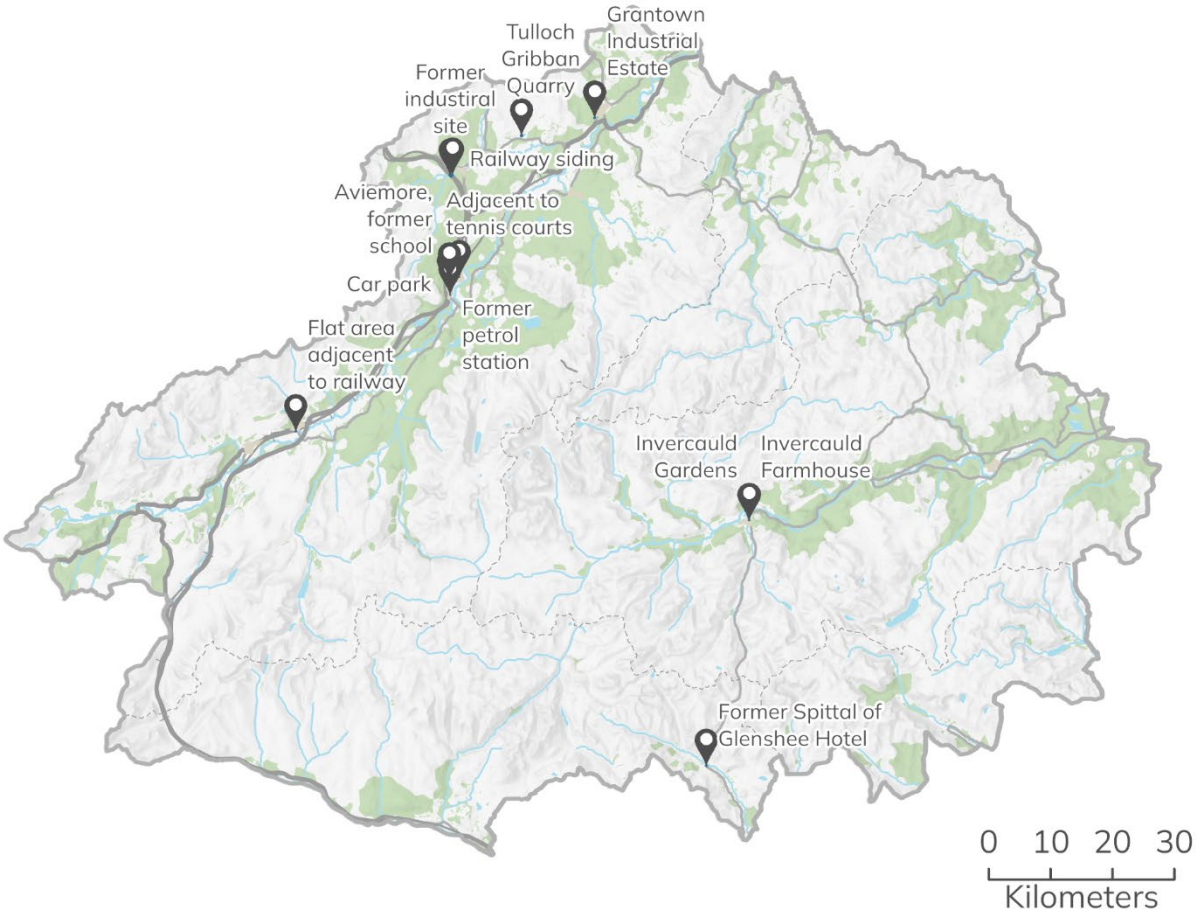


Figure 11 Sites identified by the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey within the Cairngorms National Park 2023 (CNPA076 and CNPA077). Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810.

Vacant land is land unused for the purposes for which it is held and which is viewed as an appropriate site for development. This land must either have had prior development on it or preparatory work must have taken place in anticipation of future development.

Derelict land (and buildings) is land which has been so damaged by development, that it is incapable of development for beneficial use without rehabilitation. In addition, the land must currently not be used for the purpose for which it is held or a use acceptable in the local plan. Land also qualifies as derelict if it has an un-remedied previous use which could limit future development.

For both vacant and derelict land, site records must be at least 0.1 hectares in size to be included in the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey.

There are currently 11 sites, covering a combined area of 11.2 hectares (ha), identified by the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey within the Cairngorms National Park (Figure 11 and Table 7). Of these sites 7.6ha are classified derelict, 3.4ha as vacant land and 0.2ha as vacant land and buildings (Figure 12). One site, the former primary school in Aviemore, was granted planning permission for 12 affordable houses in August 2023 (2023/0056/DET).

Table 7 Sites identified by the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey within the Cairngorms National Park 2023 (Source: Scottish Government, 2024) (CNPA076 and CNPA077).

Name	Local authority	Site type	Development potential	Ownership	Previous use	Area (ha)
Invercauld Farmhouse	Aberdeenshire	Derelict	Developable - medium term	Unknown private	Residential - housing	0.28
Invercauld Gardens	Aberdeenshire	Vacant land and buildings	Developable - undetermined	Unknown private	Residential - housing	0.22
Flat area adjacent to railway	Highland	Derelict	Developable - undetermined	Network Rail / Rail franchise holder	Transport	0.49
Car park adjacent to Scandinavian Village	Highland	Vacant land	Developable - undetermined	Ownership unknown	Transport	1.64
Adjacent to tennis courts	Highland	Vacant land	Developable - undetermined	Ownership unknown	Unknown	0.11
Former petrol station	Highland	Vacant land	Developable - short term	Unknown private	Storage	0.18
Former industrial site	Highland	Derelict	Developable - undetermined	Unknown private	Other general industry	2.7
Railway siding	Highland	Derelict	Developable - undetermined	Network Rail / Rail franchise holder	Transport	0.42
Grantown Industrial Estate	Highland	Derelict	Developable - short term	Unknown private	Storage	0.68
Tulloch Gribban Quarry	Highland	Derelict	Developable - undetermined	Other private	Mineral activity	2.02

Name	Local authority	Site type	Development potential	Ownership	Previous use	Area (ha)
Aviemore, former school	Highland	Vacant land	Unknown	Local authority	Education	1.43
Former Spittal of Glenshee Hotel	Perth and Kinross	Derelict	Unknown	Unknown private	Residential - hotels, hostels etc.	1.04

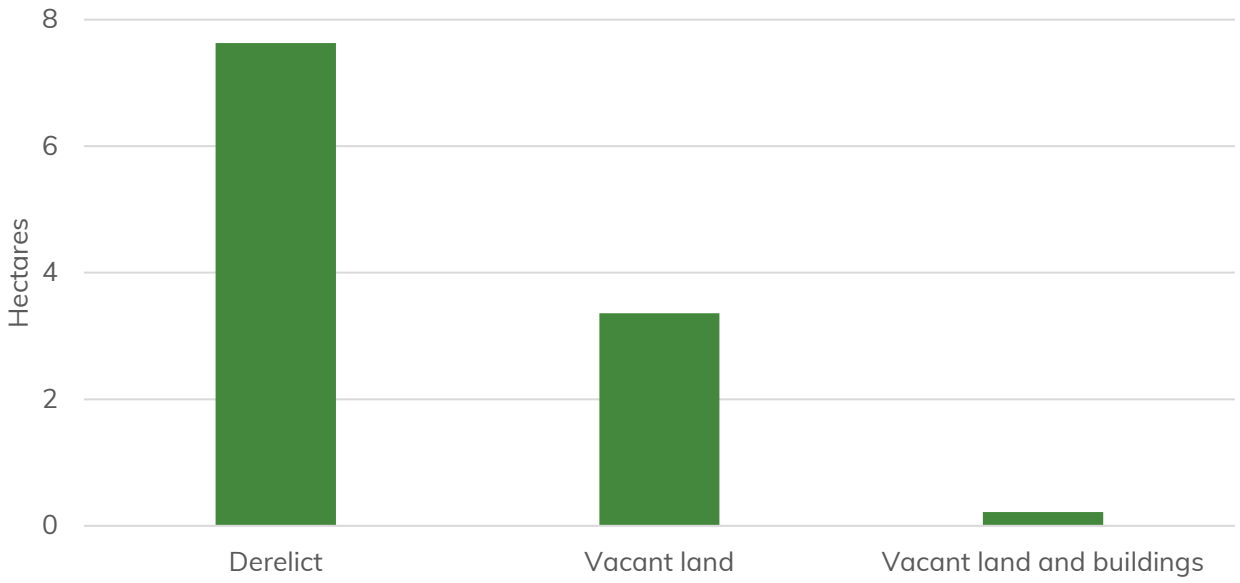


Figure 12 Types of vacant and derelict land in the Cairngorms National Park (Source: Scottish Government, 2024) (CNPA076 and CNPA077).

Overall, less 0.002% of the National Park's land is classified as derelict land, which suggests that it is not a significant issue for the area. While the overall land area is small, a key planning consideration is the proportion of the National Park's population living near to derelict land. It is estimated that around:

- 75% are living 1,000m+ from derelict land
- 18% are living 500m – 1,000 from derelict land
- 8%[4] are living less than 500m from derelict land
- 3% have been living less than 500m from land which has been derelict long-term[5].

Brownfield land

National Planning Framework 4 (CNPA008) defines brownfield land as land which has previously been developed. The term may cover vacant or derelict land, land occupied by redundant or unused buildings and developed land within the settlement boundary where further intensification of use is considered acceptable.

All of the sites identified on the vacant and derelict land survey (CNPA076 and CNPA077) within the National Park (Table 7) meet this definition. However, not all brownfield land is included within the survey.

[4] Figures do not sum due to rounding.
[5] Land that has been identified as being vacant and / or derelict prior to 2006.

The currently adopted Local Development Plan 2021 (CNPA016) contains allocations on brownfield land that fulfil a range of uses. Some of these sites are also identified by the vacant and derelict land survey (Table 8). A significant majority of the land allocated within the adopted Local Development Plan is brownfield or was already developed and allocated to protect existing uses (approximately 70%).

Table 8 Brownfield land allocated in the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021[6] (CNPA016, CNPA076 and CNPA077).

Allocation type	Total allocated land (ha)	Allocated land that is predominantly brownfield / already developed (ha)	Proportion of land that is predominantly brownfield / already developed	Allocated land that is identified by the vacant and derelict land survey 2023 (ha)
Community	10.7	9.1	85%	0.6
Economic development	55.8	55.8	100%	3.7
Housing	85.1	0.8	1%	0
Mixed use	33.8	33.8	100%	0
Tourism	114.1	110.8	97%	0
Total	299.5	210.3	70%	4.3

Land allocated in the current Local Development Plan will need to be reviewed for its effectiveness for it to be considered for allocation in the next Local Development Plan.

Housing land audits, which record information on housing sites that are over 5 units, contain further information on brownfield land. Table 9 provides information from the most recent housing land audits covering the National Park. It shows that alongside the Local Development Plan's allocated sites that there are a further two brownfield sites with planning permission within the National Park.

[6] An Camas Mòr (142 hectares) is not included in table as this is identified as strategic consent and not an allocation. The consent has now lapsed and the site is no longer considered and effective part of the housing land supply.

Table 9 Housing sites classified as brownfield by the housing land audits covering the Cairngorms National Park[7] (CNPA079 and CNPA080).

Housing land audit	Housing land audit reference	Allocated in Local Development Plan 2021	Site capacity (units)	Completions (units)	Remaining capacity (units)	Site area (ha)
Aberdeen City and Shire 2023 (CNPA079)	M/BR/H/011	Yes	15	0	15	0.4
Highland Council 2023 (CNPA080)	19/04385/FUL	No	27	0	27	0.6
	20/00322/FUL	No	8	1	7	0.06
	Aviemore_M1	Yes	128	49	79	33.1

Data on brownfield land that are not allocated in the Local Development Plan and / or does not fulfil the requirements for identification within the derelict and vacant land survey or housing land audits is not available. The Park Authority will need to consider the identification of brownfield land through the site selection process for the Proposed Plan.

Contaminated land

Land is legally defined as 'contaminated' where substances are causing or could cause significant harm to people, property or protected species as well as causing significant pollution to surface waters (for example lakes and rivers) or groundwater. Land can become contaminated by a variety of substances, from heavy metals to agricultural waste. The environmental, financial and legal implications of this can be substantial.

Local authorities are the primary regulator for the contaminated land regime (Scottish Environment Protection Agency also has certain responsibilities) to regulate activities and assist in the management and remediation of contaminated land.

There is no confirmed (and remediated) contaminated land within the National Park (CNPA081) and while localised contamination may exist at certain locations within National Park boundary, for example at sites formally used as sawmills, it is not of an order that is likely to cause significant harm to the wider environment. Therefore, while the potential for contaminated land can play a role in the assessment of proposed

[7] Angus, Moray and Perth and Kinross Council housing land audits do not identify any brownfield sites within the Cairngorms National Park.

development sites, there are no broader implications of the Proposed Plan's spatial strategy.

Soil

Soils cover most of the natural world, forming the foundation of all terrestrial ecosystems and services. They support key processes in biomass production and mass exchange with atmospheric and hydrological systems. Nearly all of the food, fuel and fibres used by humans are produced in soil. Soil is also essential for water and ecosystem health. It is second only to the oceans as a carbon sink, with an important role in the potential slowing of climate change. Soil functions depend on a multitude of soil organisms, which makes soil an important part of our biodiversity.

Although soils are a continually evolving, living and dynamic medium responding to external pressures and management, some activities such as development or pollution can mean their recovery or reformation cannot take place within human timescales. This means soils are a finite and essentially non-renewable resource.

The State of Scotland's Soil Report 2011 (CNPA083) identifies seven threats to soil functions:

- Loss of organic matter
- Sealing
- Contamination
- Change in soil biodiversity
- Erosion and landslides
- Compaction
- Emerging issues, such as genetically modified organisms, asbestos, nanoparticles and biochar.

This section of the evidence report deals with matters relating to soils within the Cairngorms National Park.

Carbon rich soils

The soils of the Cairngorms National Park are particularly rich in soil organic matter because the cool, moist climate encourages the retention of decomposed organic materials, with peatlands containing the largest quantities of organic soil. These soils are important global reserves of soil carbon and support important habitats and species.

Figure 13 (CNPA087) shows a measure of estimated peat depth while Figure 14 (CNPA086) shows the distribution of carbon and peatland classes across the National Park. It gives a value to indicate the likely presence of carbon rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat for each individually mapped area, at a coarse scale. Table 10 provides details on the carbon and peatland classes shown on Figure 14.

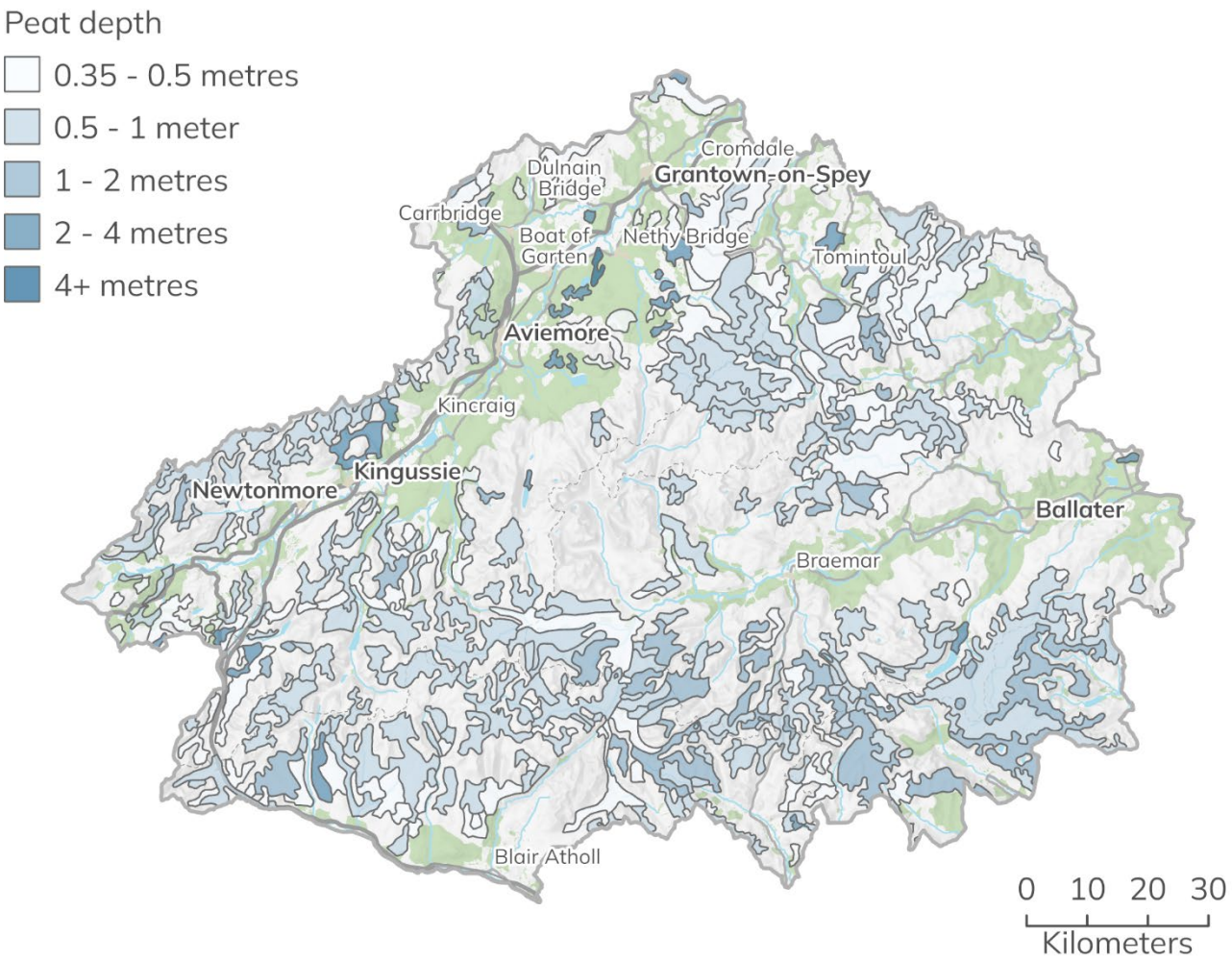


Figure 13 Depth of peat in the Cairngorms National Park (CNPA087). Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Contains data © James Hutton Institute 2026.

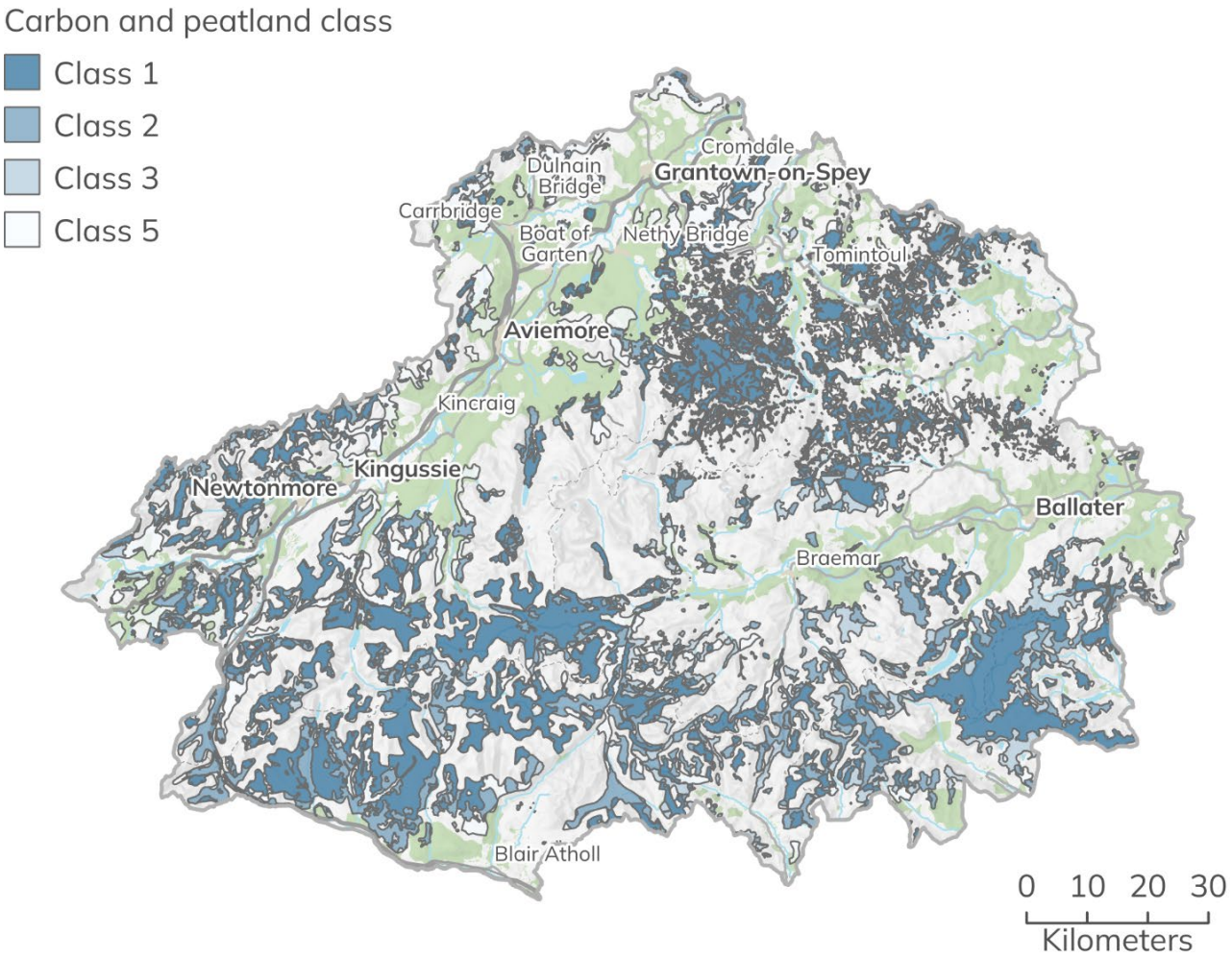


Figure 14 Carbon and peatland classes across the Cairngorms National Park (CNPA086). Table 10 provides information on the classes shown on this map.[8] Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Contains data © NatureScot 2026.

Table 10 Definition of carbon and peatland classes

Class	Class description	Indicative soil	Indicative vegetation
1	Nationally important carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat. Areas likely to be of high conservation value.	Peat soil	Peatland
2	Nationally important carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat. Areas of potentially high conservation value and restoration potential.	Peat soil with occasional peaty soil	Peatland or areas with high potential

[8] Class 4 soils are not included on the map as they are areas that are unlikely to include carbon-rich soils.

Class	Class description	Indicative soil	Indicative vegetation
			to be restored to peatland
3	Dominant vegetation cover is not priority peatland habitat but is associated with wet and acidic type. Occasional peatland habitats can be found. Most soils are carbon-rich soils, with some areas of deep peat.	Predominantly peaty soil with some peat soil	Peatland with some heath
5	Soil information takes precedence over vegetation data. No peatland habitat recorded. May also include areas of bare soil. Soils are carbon-rich and deep peat.	Peat soil	No peatland vegetation

Blanket bog is the second most extensive habitat within the National Park and is susceptible to erosion from human activity and impacted upon by grazing animals (e.g. deer and sheep). It is estimated that there are around 90,000 ha of impacted peatland in the National Park and 57,000 ha of this has experienced some form of erosion (Figure 15) (CNPA088).

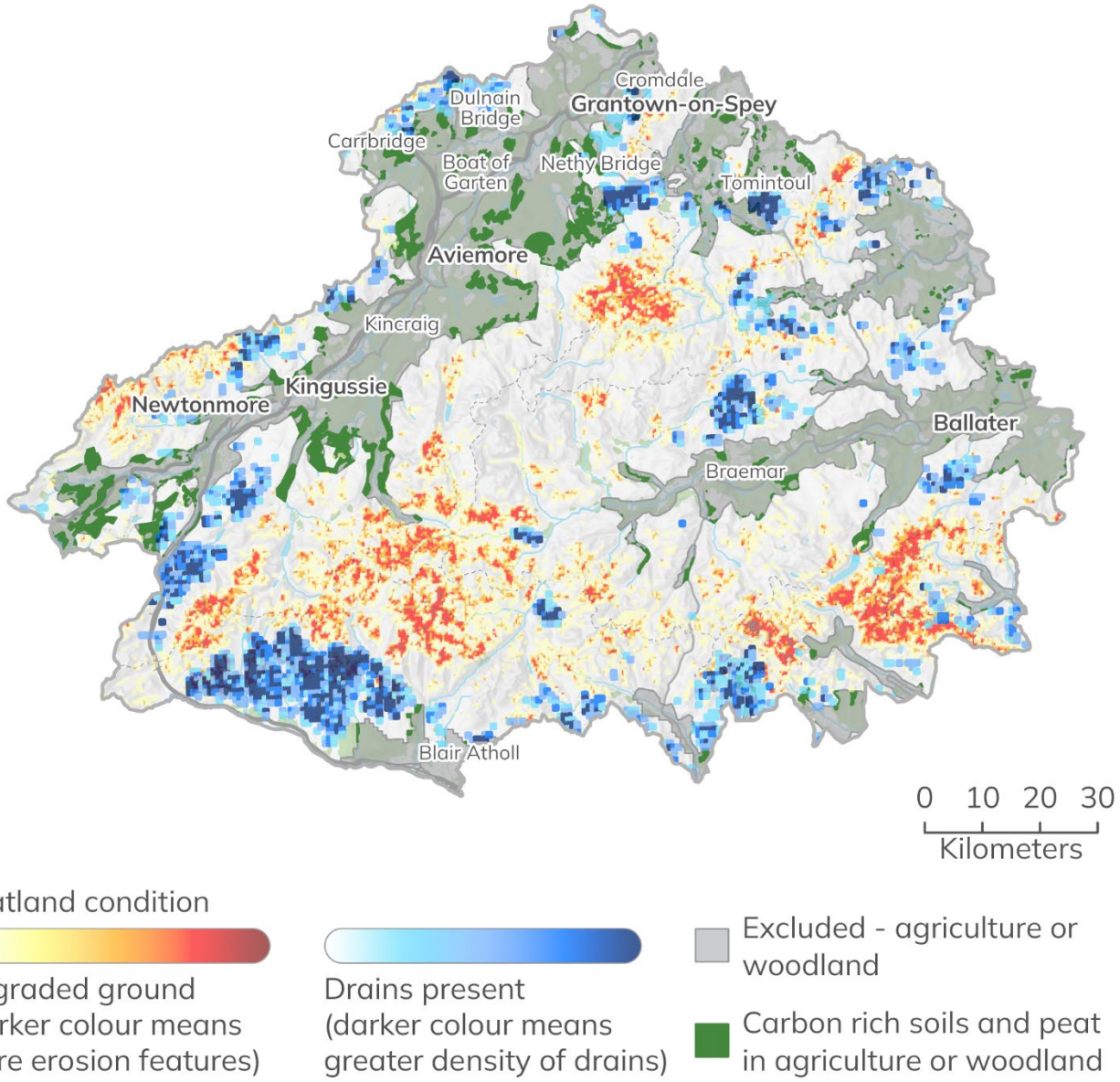


Figure 15 Condition of peatland within the Cairngorms National Park (CNPA088). Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810.

The National Park Partnership Plan (CNPA010) aims to have:

- A minimum of 38,000 ha peatland is under restoration management by 2045.
- 80% of all drains are restored by 2035.
- All erosion features are restored by 2050.

According to NatureScot's Peatland ACTION data, around 3,180 hectares of completed and in-progress restoration projects have been led by the National Park Authority between 2021 and 2024 (Figure 16) (CNPA089 and CNPA090).

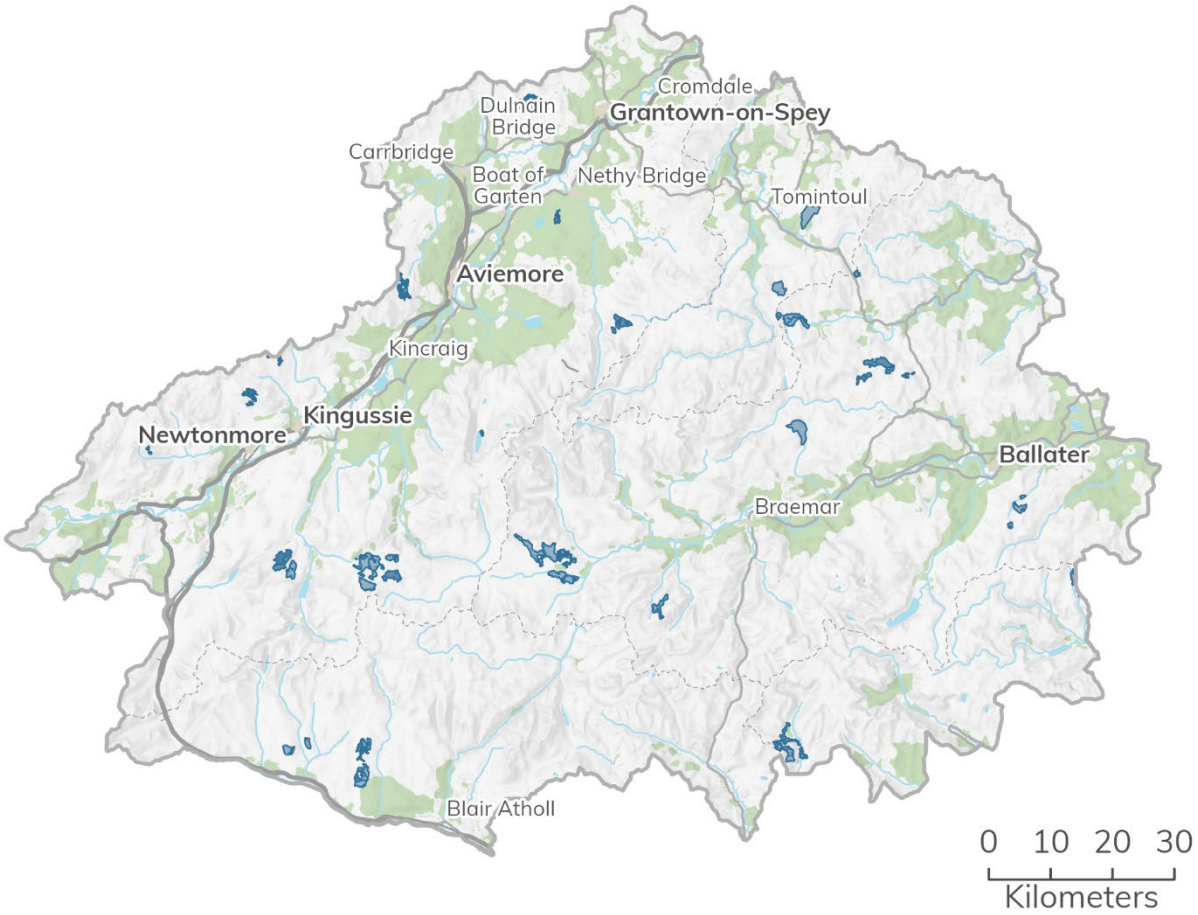


Figure 16 Peatland ACTION completed restoration footprints (CNPA089 and CNPA090). Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Contains data © NatureScot 2026.

Land capability for agriculture

Land Capability Classification for Agriculture mapping (CNPA091) provides detailed information on soil, climate and relief for those involved in the management of land use and resources. The classification ranks land from 1 to 7 based on its potential productivity and cropping flexibility determined by the extent to which its physical characteristics (soil, climate and relief) impose long term restrictions on its agricultural use. Land classified from 1 to 3.1 is prime agricultural land, while land classified as 3.2 to 7 is considered to be non-prime.

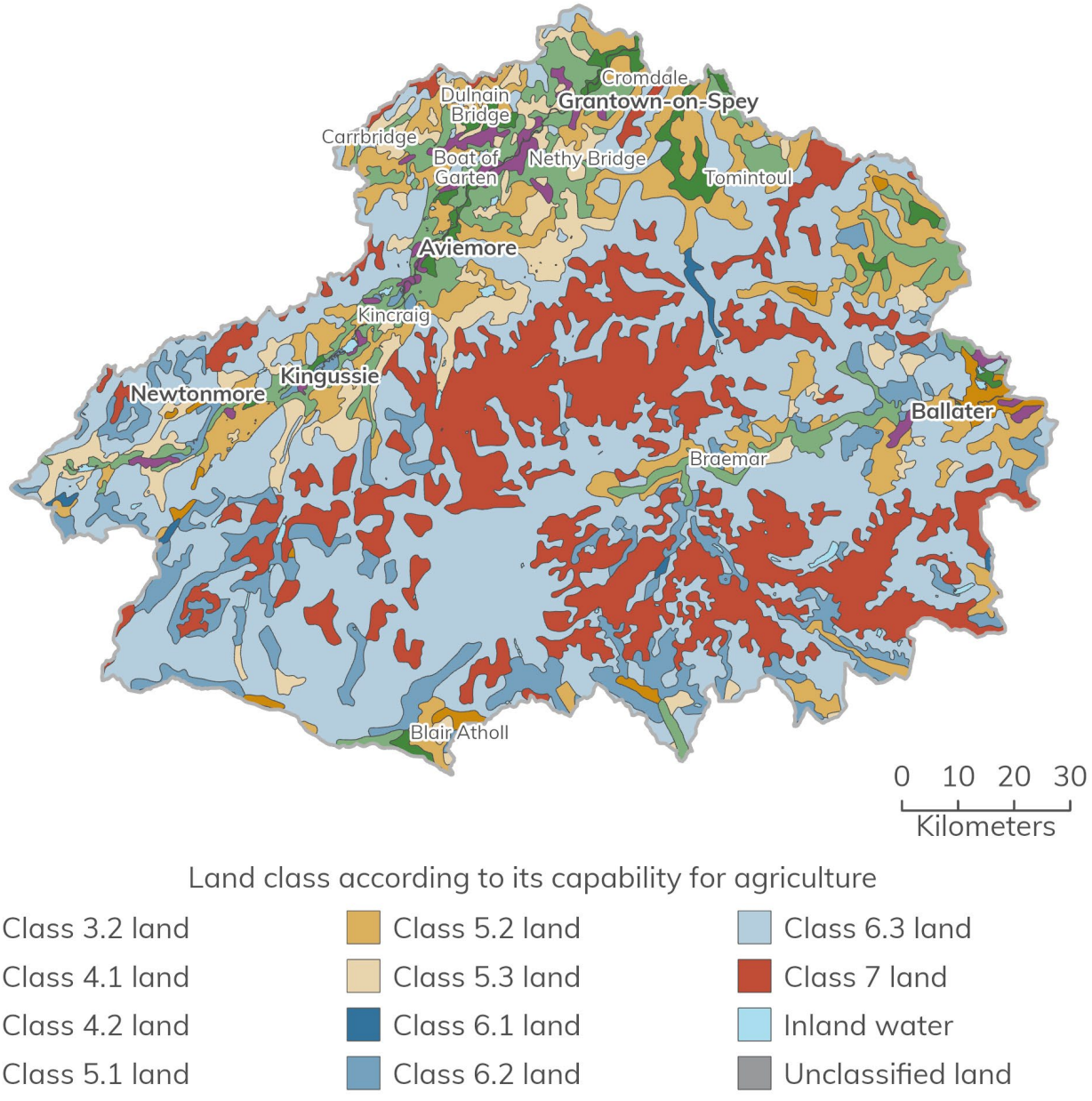


Figure 17 Land capability for agriculture within the Cairngorms National Park (CNPA091). Table 11 provides information on the classes shown on this map. Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Contains data © James Hutton Institute 2026.

There are no areas of prime agricultural land within the Cairngorms National Park, although there are areas of land in Strath Spey and Deeside within the 3.2 classification (around 1.2% of the National Park's total area), which denotes non-prime land that is limited by moderate climatic factors and may yield a moderate range of crops, with average production, but potentially high yields of barley, oats and grass. Most land

within the National Park is classified as 6 or 7 (around 73%), which denote areas of 'rough grazing only' and 'very limited agricultural value' respectively (Figure 17).

Table 11 Definition of land classes (CNPA091).

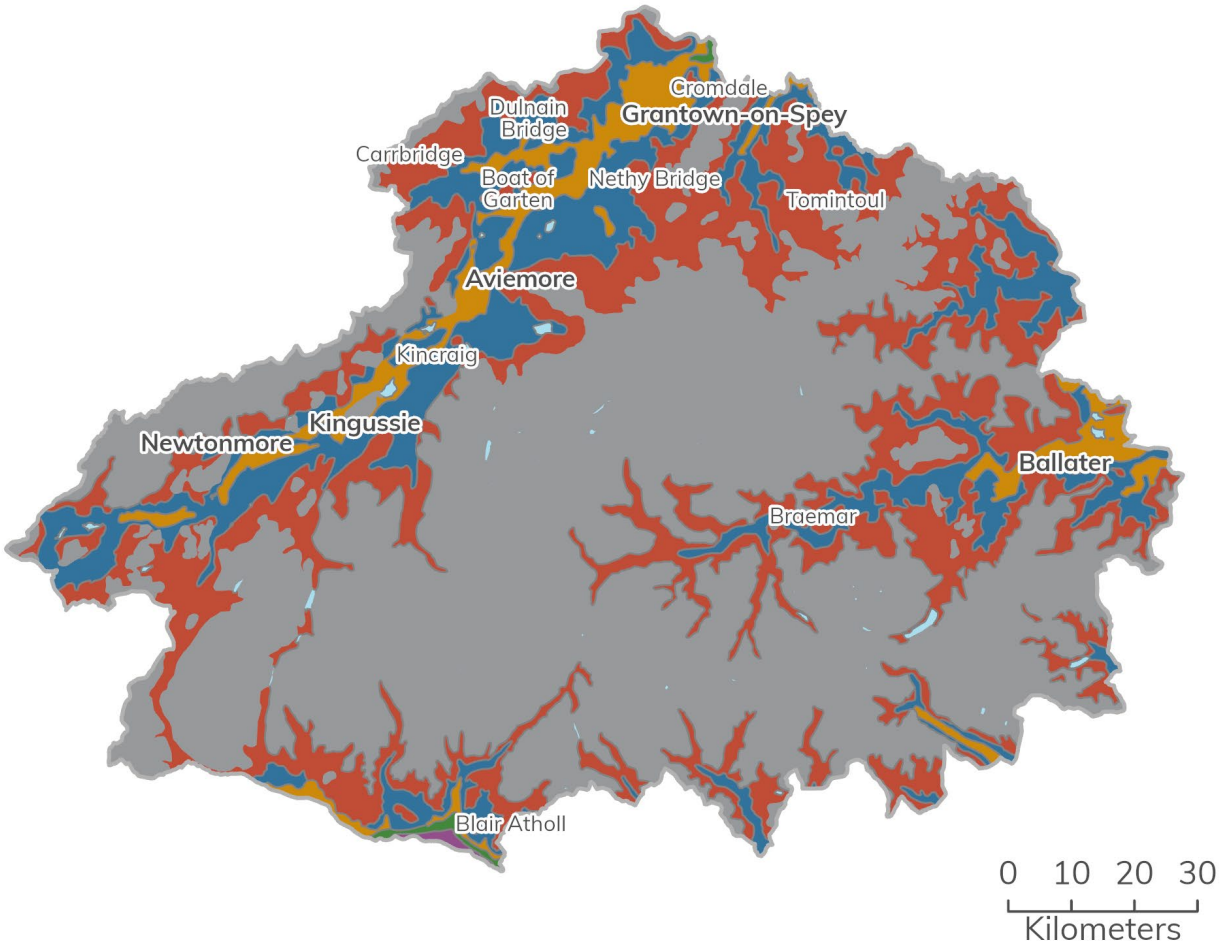
Class	Class description
1	Land capable of producing a very wide range of crops. Cropping is highly flexible and includes the more exacting crops such as winter harvested vegetables (cauliflowers, brussels sprouts, leeks), The level of yield is consistently high.
2	Land capable of producing a wide range of crops. Cropping is very flexible and a wide range of crops can be grown though some root and winter harvested crops may not be ideal choices because of difficulties in harvesting.
3.1	Land in this division is capable of producing consistently high yields of a narrow range of crops (principally cereals and grass) and / or moderate yields of a wider range (including potatoes, field beans and other common root crops). Short grass leys are common.
3.2	Land in this division is capable of average production but high yields of barley, oats and grass are often obtained. Other crops are limited to potatoes and forage crops.
4.1	Land capable of producing a narrow range of crops. Land in this division is suited to rotations which, although primarily based on ley grassland, include forage crops and cereals for stock feed. Yields of grass are high but difficulties of utilization and conservation may be encountered. Other crop yields are very variable and usually below the national average.
4.2	Land capable of producing a narrow range of crops. The land is primarily grassland with some limited potential for other crops. Grass yields can be high, but the difficulties of conservation or utilisation may be severe, especially in areas of poor climate or on very wet soils. Some forage cropping is possible and, when the extra risks involved can be accepted, an occasional cereal crop.
5.1	Restricted to grass production. Establishment of a grass sward and its maintenance present few problems and potential yields are high with ample growth throughout the season. Patterns of soil, slope or wetness may be slightly restricting but the land has few poaching problems. High stocking rates are possible.
5.2	Restricted to grass production. Sward establishment presents no difficulties but moderate or low trafficability, patterned land and / or

Class	Class description
	strong slopes cause maintenance problems. Growth rates are high and despite some problems of poaching satisfactory stocking rates are achievable.
5.3	Restricted to grass production. Land in this division has properties which lead to serious trafficability and poaching difficulties and although sward establishment may be easy, deterioration in quality is often rapid. Patterns of soil, slope, and wetness may seriously interfere with establishment and / or maintenance. The land cannot support high stock densities without damage and this may be serious after heavy rain even in summer.
6.1	Land capable only of use as rough grazing. Land in this division has high proportions of palatable herbage in the sward, principally the better grasses, e.g. meadow grass-bent grassland and bent-fescue grassland.
6.2	Land capable only of use as rough grazing. Moderate quality herbage such as white and flying bent grasslands, rush pastures and herb-rich moorlands or mosaics of high and low grazing values characterise land in this division.
6.3	Land capable only of use as rough grazing. This vegetation is dominated by plant communities with low grazing values. Particularly heather moor, bog heather moor and blanket bog.
7	Land of very limited agricultural value. Land with extremely severe limitations that cannot be rectified.

Land capability for forestry

The National scale land capability for forestry map (CNPA092) provides information on the potential for land to grow trees based on a number of factors including soil, climate and topography (Figure 18). The use of this land for forestry may yield a number of benefits, including carbon sequestration.

Further matters relating to woodlands and woodland expansion is covered in Schedule 5: Natural heritage.



Classes of land capability for forestry

- Class F1 - Land with excellent flexibility for the growth and management of tree crops
- Class F2 - Land with very good flexibility for the growth and management of tree crops
- Class F3 - Land with good flexibility for the growth and management of tree crops
- Class F4 - Land with moderate flexibility for the growth and management of tree crops
- Class F5 - Land with limited flexibility for the growth and management of tree crops
- Class F6 - Land with very limited flexibility for the growth and management of tree crops
- Class F7 - Land unsuitable for producing tree crops

Figure 18 Land capability for forestry within the Cairngorms National Park (CNPA092). Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Contains data © James Hutton Institute 2026.

Soil sealing and soil compaction

Policy 5 of National Planning Framework 4 (CNPA008) seeks to avoid the compaction and erosion of soils. Data on risks associated with these factors is limited, with only part of the National Park benefitting from risk-based mapping from compaction (Figure 19 and Figure 20) (CNPA093). The impact of development in this regard is limited and specific to the location and design of development sites. These issues are therefore unlikely to impact on the spatial strategy or policy content of the Local Development Plan. However, they may play a role in the choice of development sites and / or the identification of site-based requirements for allocations.

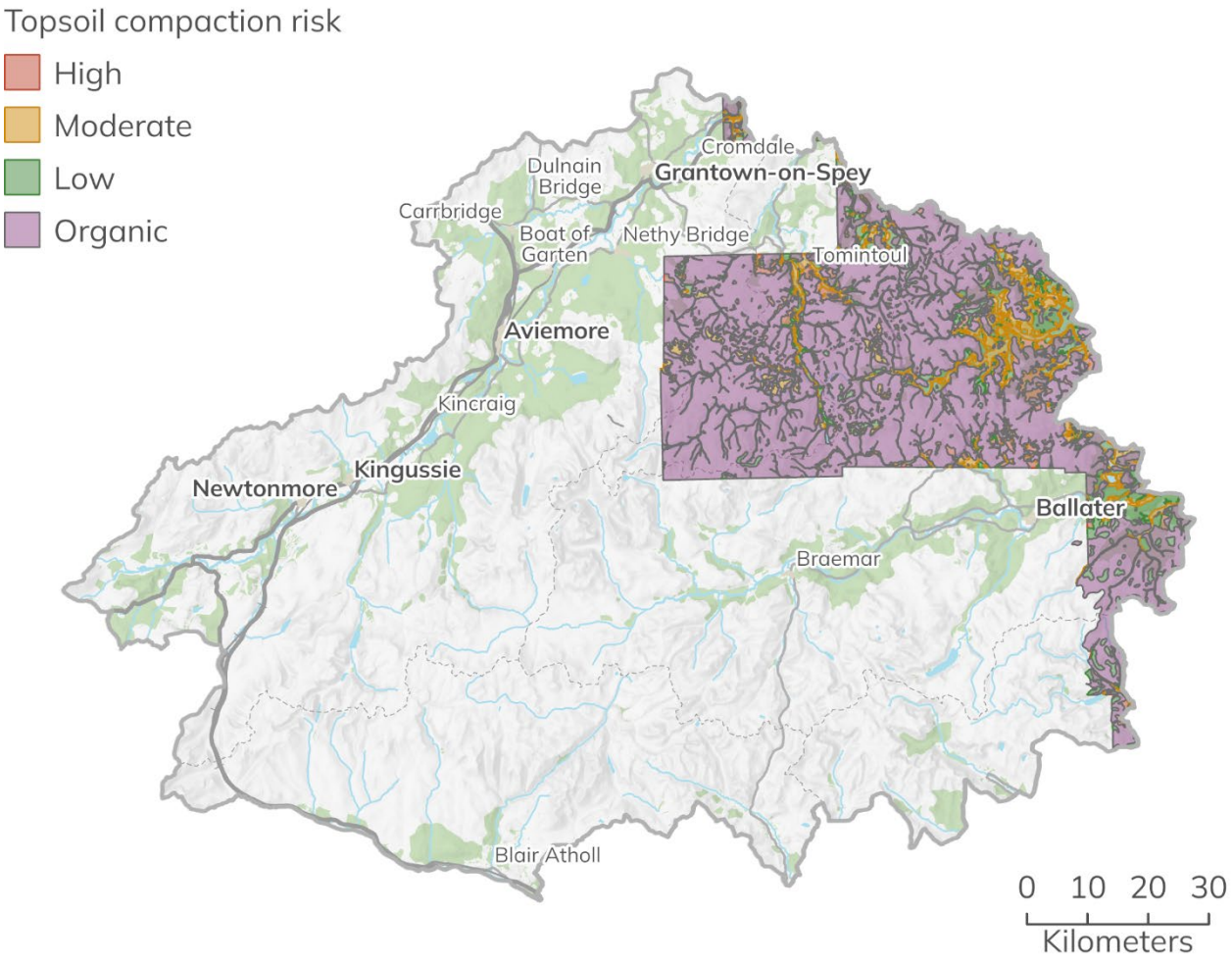


Figure 19 Risk of the topsoil becoming compacted due to the passage of machinery (CNPA093). Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Contains data © James Hutton Institute 2026

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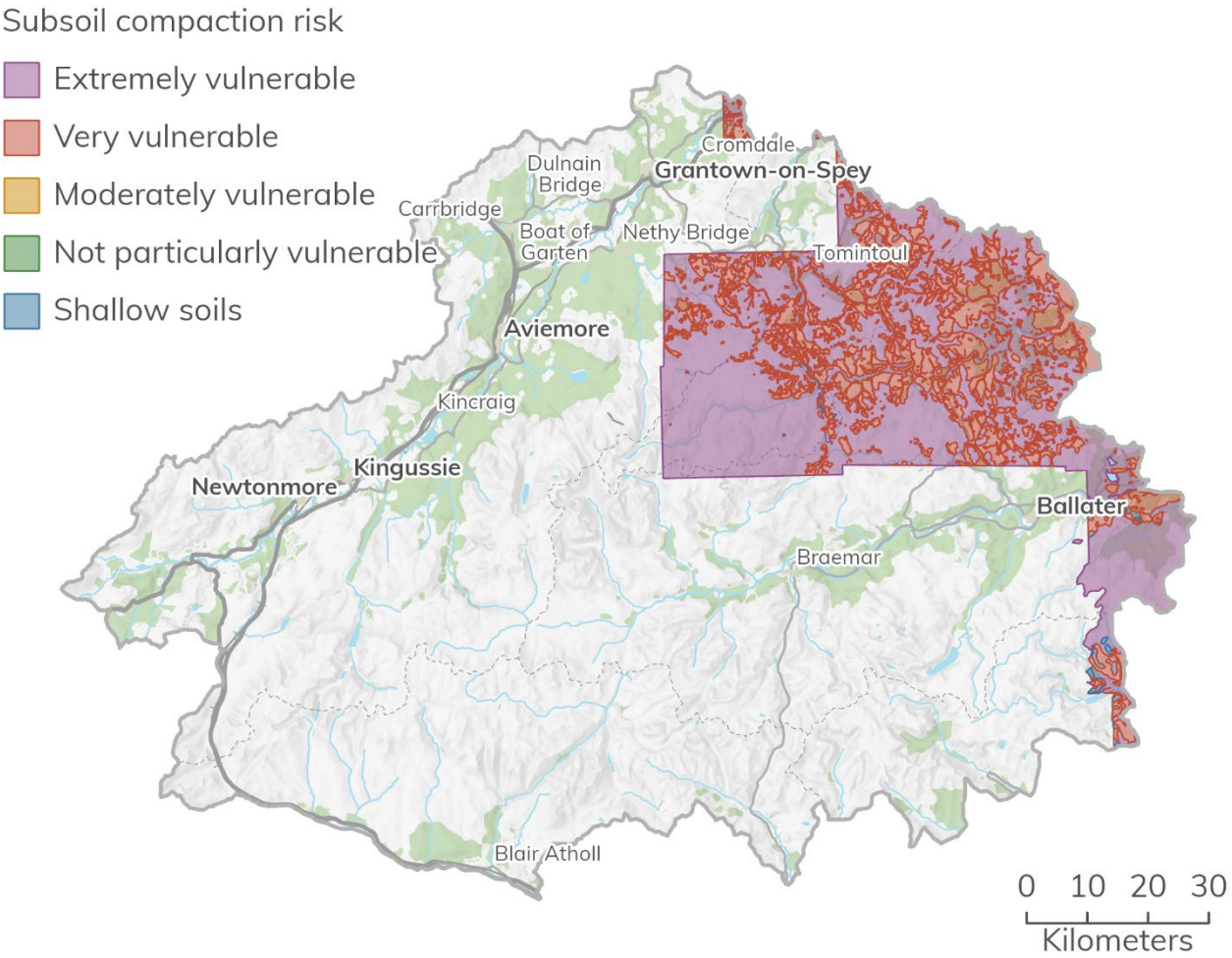


Figure 20 Risk of the subsoil becoming compacted due to the passage of machinery (CNPA093). Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Contains data © James Hutton Institute 2026.

Soil erosion and landslides

Soil erosion by water or wind is a natural process where soil particles become detached and are transported within the landscape. Features of soil erosion may be found throughout the Cairngorms National Park, with the area partially covered by risk mapping (Figure 21) (CNPA093). For example, landslides and debris flows are a relatively common occurrence on many of the National Park's hill slopes, which have been over-steepened by glaciation. The rate of soil loss via erosion and the incidence of landslides can be increased by removing the vegetation cover that protects the soil (e.g. ploughing to grow crops, deforestation or by engineering works). Tillage erosion also leads to the redistribution of soil downslope.

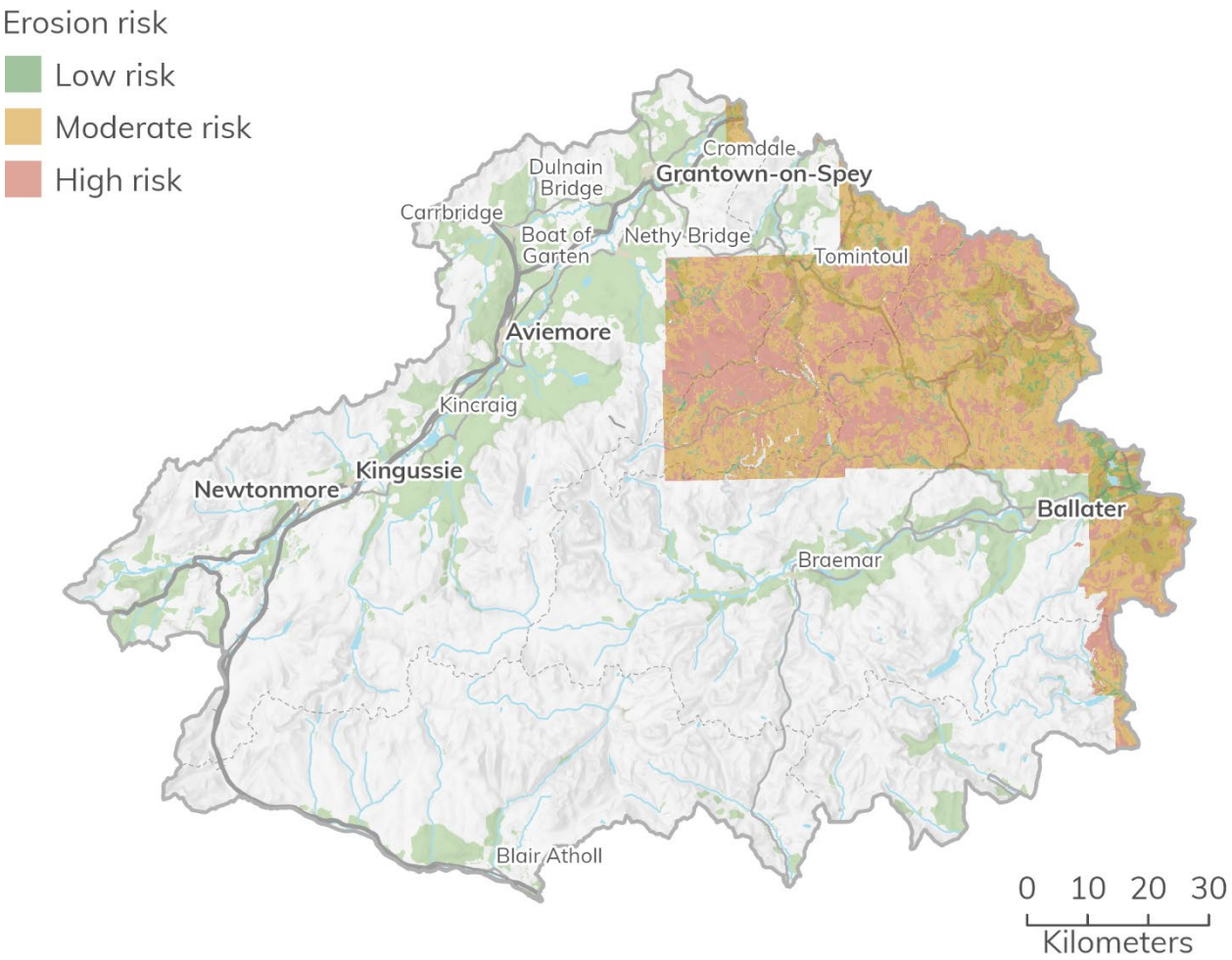


Figure 21 Simplified map of soil erosion risk within the Cairngorms National Park (CNPA093). Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Contains data © James Hutton Institute 2026.

The erosion of upland organic soils is also prevalent in some parts of the National Park, and in particular the Monadhliath Mountains, the southern part of which fall within its boundary. The mechanisms that lead to erosion in these soils are not fully understood although historic overgrazing by sheep and deer may be a contributory factor. There is also evidence that changes in climate over many years may be partly responsible for the development of gully systems in these areas.

Landslides and debris flows have occurred in clusters over the last 7,000 years which may be related to climatic factors such as the frequency of extreme rainfall events, although deforestation is also likely to be an important factor.

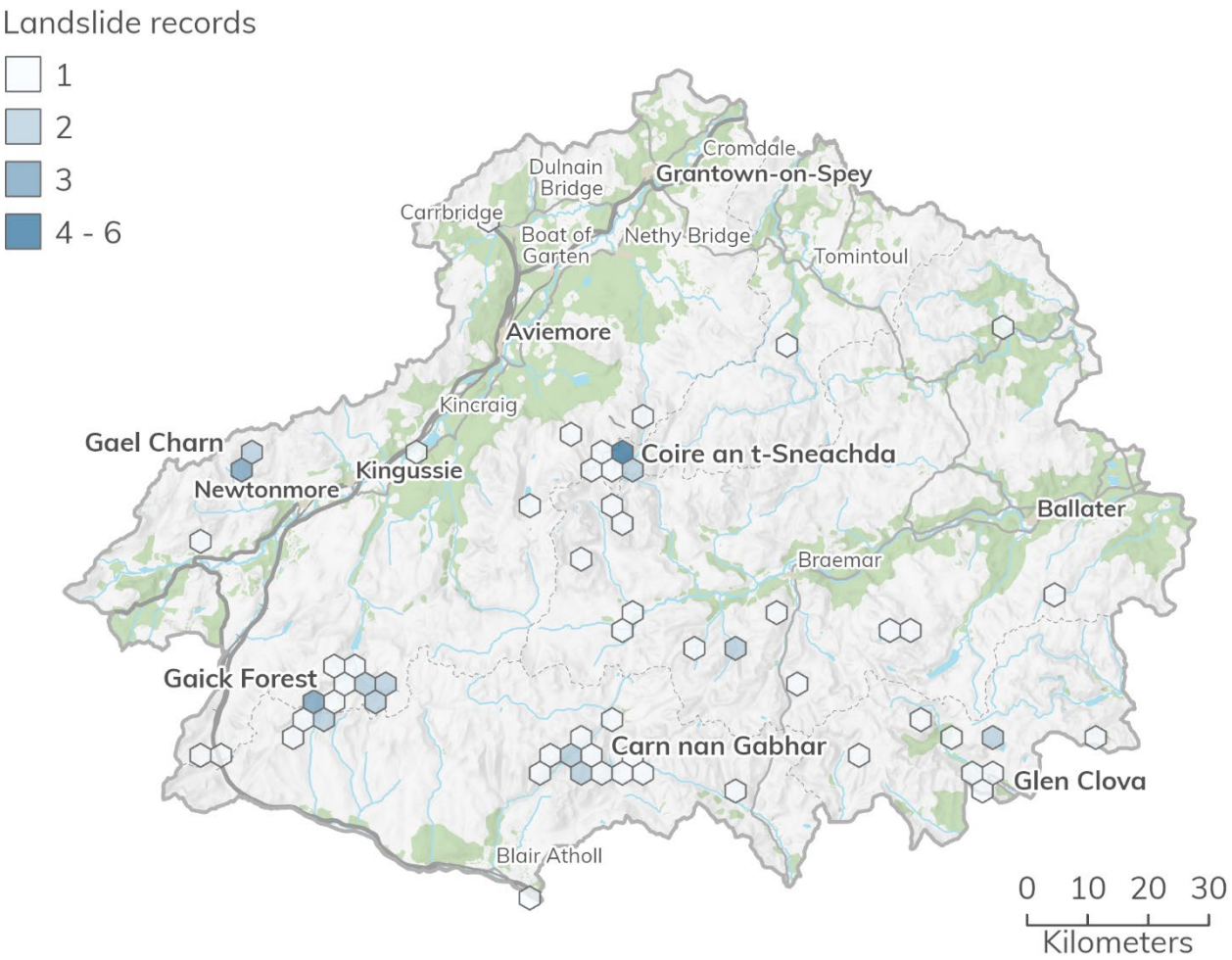


Figure 22 Density of landslide records on the National Landslide Database within the Cairngorms National Park (CNPA094). Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Contains data © British Geological Survey 2026.

Information on the extent and prevalence of historic landslides is provided by the British Geological Survey's National Landslide Database (CNPA094). The database identifies five clusters of recorded landslides within the National Park:

- Coire an t-Sneachda
- Gael Charn
- Gaick Forest
- Carn nan Gabhar
- Glen Clova.

Other locations are also recorded.

Landslide and debris flow activity is reported to have increased over the last 200 – 500 years and it is thought that localised extreme rainfall was the major contributing factor

to the Scottish landslides in 2004. Triggering of peat slides is also commonly attributed to intense rainfall events (CNPA095 and CNPA096).

Climate change is therefore likely to lead to an increase in the frequency of landslides and in the intensity of soil erosion (CNPA095 and CNPA096).

Cultural and locally important soils

According to Policy 5 of National Planning Framework 4 (CNPA008), local development plans are expected to protect locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally valued soils, including 'land of lesser quality that is culturally or locally important for primary use'.

While there is no nationally consistent definition of what constitutes 'land of lesser quality that is culturally or locally important for primary use', examples are provided on page 154 of National Planning Framework 4. These are:

- Food production
- Flood management
- Water catchment management
- Carbon storage.

Matters relating to food production (see pages 23 and 47) and carbon storage (see page 42 and 50) are covered elsewhere in this schedule. Details relating to flood management and water catchment management are covered in detail within the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report (CNPA097) prepared to support the preparation of the local development plan. The report identifies areas of flood risk, flood management schemes and proposals, locations where natural flood management techniques may be used, and past and current projects being undertaken to restore floodplains and wetland systems. These matters are be summarised in Schedule 5: Natural heritage, Schedule 19: Flood risk and water management, and Schedule 16: Blue and green infrastructure.

National Planning Framework 4 does not provide any examples of what might be classified as 'culturally' important. Examples of cultural and locally important soils may include crofting field patterns (Figure 7) and a broad range of soils that have been historically modified by historic practices. Very little holistic data exists regarding these cultural soils. Much of the impact of these soils is managed at a site level by information relating to the historic assets and places. The impacts of the spatial strategy on designed landscapes and historic sites (such as Properties in Care, Gardens and Designed Landscapes, Scheduled Monuments and records on the National Monuments Record of Scotland) are best identified in Schedule 7: Historic and Cultural Heritage on

the principle that the objective should be led by the significance of the site and not the soil that is a component of that site. It is therefore not considered any further in this paper.

Resources

Minerals and aggregates

The Cairngorms National Park forms part of the Highland, North East Scotland and Tay Area regions for the purposes of Aggregate minerals survey for Great Britain 2023 (CNPA099). This makes the Park Authority unique among planning authorities within Scotland, as the boundaries of all other authorities are contiguous with the boundaries of the regions. Table 12 provides a summary of the sale and consumption of primary aggregates within these regions in 2023.

Table 12 Summary of sales and consumption of primary aggregates in 2023 (thousand tonnes). Source: Aggregate minerals survey for Great Britain 2023 (CNPA099).

Region	Sales			Consumption		
	Total sand and gravel	Crushed rock	Total primary aggregate	Total sand and gravel	Crushed rock	Total primary aggregate
Highland	213	6,080	6,293	208	535	743
North East Scotland	324	808	1,131	459	786	1,245
Tay Area	504	692	1,196	303	1,240	1,543
Total	1,041	7,579	8,621	971	2,562	3,532

There are no active quarries or inactive quarries with planning consent within the Tay Area or North East Scotland regions of the National Park. These encompass Angus, Aberdeenshire, Moray and Perth and Kinross local authority areas.

Figure 23 and Table 13 provides details of quarries within the National Park that have planning permission and / or have planning applications pending decision. The following quarries currently have applications pending decision[9]:

- Alvie Quarry (Easter Delfour) (24/02574/S42)
- Meadowside Quarry (20/04784/S42)

[9] The planning applications are being determined by the Highland Council. The planning references provided are therefore those of the Highland Council,

- Granish Quarry (16/04604/FUL).

While Tullochgribban Quarry has consent to operate until 2042, it is not currently operational and is classified as long-term derelict land by the 2023 vacant and derelict land survey.

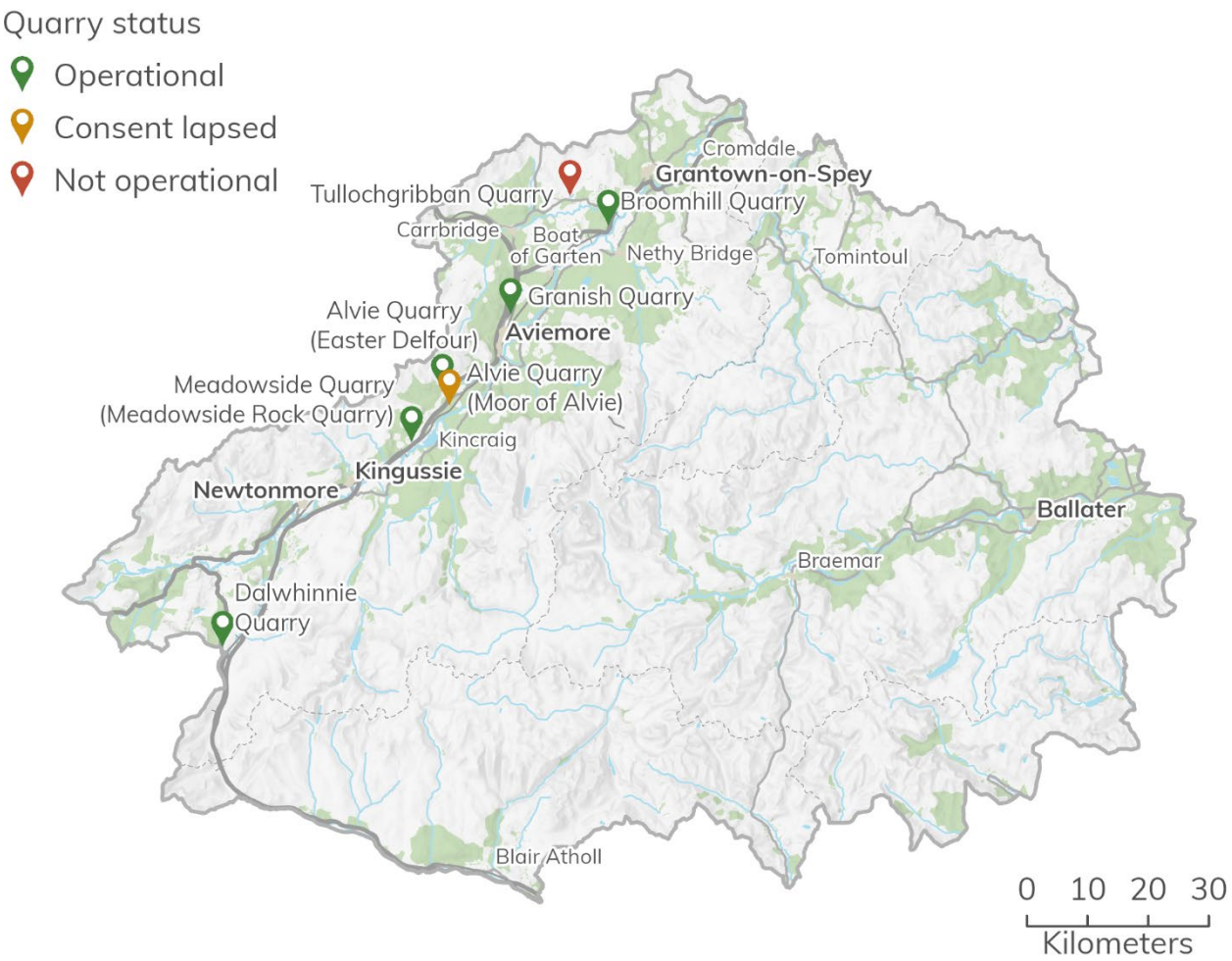


Figure 23 Quarries with consent or planning applications pending decision within the Cairngorms National Park. Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810.

Table 13 Quarries with consent or planning applications pending decision within the Cairngorms National Park.[10]

Quarry name	Location	Planning application reference	Consent expires	Status	Annual permitted reserves (tonnes)	Total permitted reserves (tonnes)	Material
Alvie Quarry (Easter Delfour)	Kincraig	00/00279/FULBS	2025	Operational	12,000	No data available	Igneous and metamorphic rock
Meadowside Quarry (Meadowside Rock Quarry)	Kincraig	15/01723/S42	2031	Operational	50,000 – 150,000	No data available	Igneous and metamorphic rock
Alvie Quarry (Moor of Alvie)	Kincraig	11/04428/FUL	2019	Consent lapsed	No data available	No data available	Sand and gravel
Granish Quarry	Aviemore	12/04734/S42	2028	Operational	No data available	No data available	Sand and gravel
Broomhill Quarry	Dulnain Bridge	18/01332/S42	2029	Operational	30,000	120,000	Igneous and metamorphic rock
Dalwhinnie Quarry	Dalwhinnie	18/01434/FUL	2054	Operational	70,000	250,000	Sand and gravel
Tullochgribban Quarry	Dulnain Bridge	07/00117/FULBS	2042	Not operational	No data available	No data available	Sand and gravel

[10] The planning applications references used in this table are those given by the Highland Council not the Cairngorms National Park Authority. This is due to some consents predating the designation of the National Park. Information supplemented with data from BritPits Database (CNPA094).

While data on permitted reserves and planning permission timescales is available for the National Park area, information on sales and consumption, as gathered and published in the 2023 aggregates survey, is not. This is because the data is commercially sensitive and cannot be published at the geography of the National Park without issues of disclosure arising. It is therefore not possible to calculate a landbank for construction aggregates within the market areas of the National Park as required by National Planning Framework 4 (CNPA008).

However, data on sales, consumption, exports and imports of primary aggregates (Table 12, Table 14 and Table 15) for the Highland, North East Scotland and Tay Area regions indicates that sales significantly exceed consumption and that the majority of extracted material is exported to other regions. The National Park Authority is therefore satisfied that there is sufficient access to construction aggregates within the National Park. Joint work with the Highland Council to ensure that data on the status of active quarries within the National Park is kept up to date teris ongoing.

Table 14 Summary of exports and imports of primary aggregates in 2023 (thousand tonnes). Source: Aggregate minerals survey for Great Britain 2023 (CNPA099).

Region	Exports			Imports		
	Sand and gravel	Crushed rock	Total primary aggregate	Sand and gravel	Crushed rock	Total primary aggregate
Highland	14	5,645	5,659	9	101	109
North East Scotland	0	73	73	136	51	187
Tay Area	216	50	266	14	599	613
Total	230	5,768	5,998	159	750	909

Table 15 Comparison of sales and consumption of primary aggregates in 2023 (thousand tonnes). Source: Aggregate minerals survey for Great Britain 2023 (CNPA099).

Region	Sales	Consumption	Sales as % of consumption	Net imports as % of consumption	Net exports as % of sales
	Total primary aggregates (thousand tonnes)	Total primary aggregates (thousand tonnes)			
Highland	6,293	743	847%	-	88%

Region	Sales	Consumption	Sales as % of consumption	Net imports as % of consumption	Net exports as % of sales
	Total primary aggregates (thousand tonnes)	Total primary aggregates (thousand tonnes)			
North East Scotland	1,131	1,245	91%	9%	-
Tay Area	1,196	1,543	78%	22%	-
Total	8,621	3,532	244%	-	59%

Geoconservation

Geo-conservation involves recognising, protecting, and managing sites and landscapes identified as important for their rocks, fossils, minerals, or other geological or geomorphological features of interest. Some of the concepts of geo-conservation are still being developed; however, in some areas a good deal has been achieved, particularly in the creation of Scotland's Geodiversity Charter. Policy 33 of National Planning Framework 4 (CNPA008) states that proposals for the sustainable extraction of minerals will not be supported if they are likely to result in significant adverse impacts on geodiversity.

There are many definitions of 'geodiversity', but the majority are variations on similar wording. Broadly, it may be defined as: 'The variety of rocks, minerals, fossils, landforms, sediments and soils, together with the natural processes which form and alter them'[11] (CNPA647).

As well as being of scientific and cultural importance, geodiversity makes an immense contribution to Scotland's economy, as a source of energy and materials, and as a visitor attraction through its contribution to our unique landscape. Crucially, geodiversity underpins biodiversity through providing mosaics of landforms, soils, water, nutrients and natural processes to support our nationally and internationally important habitats, species and ecosystems.

[11] https://cairngorms.co.uk/uploads/documents/Local-Development-Plan-Evidence-Report/External-documents/CNPA647-JNCC-Report-450.pdf

There are a range of designations that help to safeguard geodiversity within the Cairngorms National Park, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Geological Conservation Review sites. Indeed, geodiversity is part of the special qualities of the National Park.

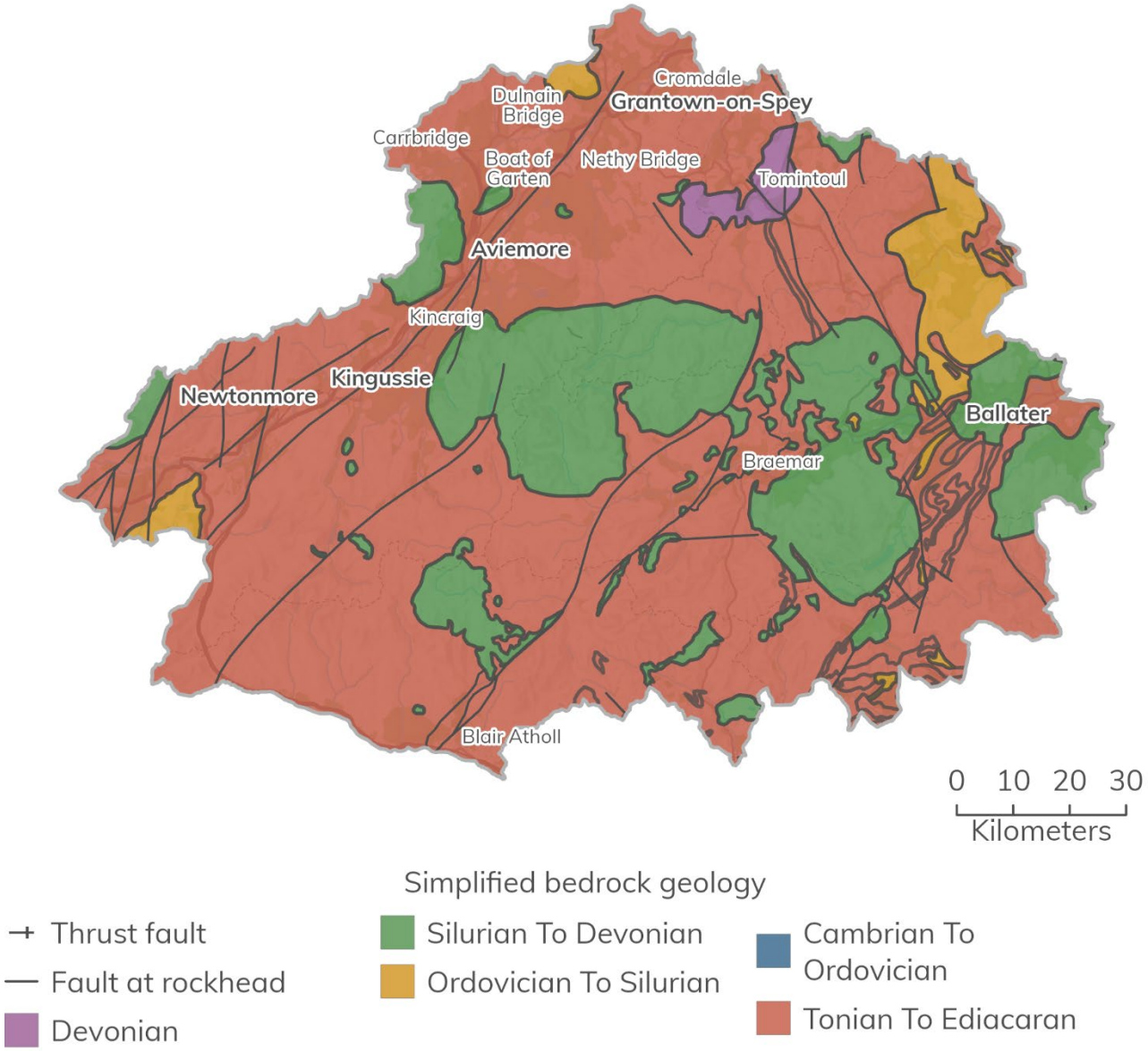


Figure 24 Simplified bedrock geology of the Cairngorms National Park by geological period (CNPA101 and CNPA102). Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Contains data © British Geological Survey 2026.

The landscapes of the Cairngorms National Park have a remarkable history stretching back to some 700 million years (Figure 24 (CNPA101 and CNPA102). The processes that have led to these old landscapes can be traced today in the rocks, landforms and soils beneath our feet and in the shapes of the straths and mountains around us. These

landscapes incorporate a wealth of information about past environmental change and in particular, the Cairngorm Mountains are considered to be one of the finest examples in the world of glaciated granite mountains, notable for their distinctive plateau surfaces, tors and glacially sculptured features. These mountains therefore represent a precious scientific, educational, environmental and earth heritage asset.

There are 16 Geological and Mixed Sites of Special Scientific Interest (CNPA103) within the National Park, covering an area of some 680 km^2 (around 15% of the National Park's area) (Figure 25).

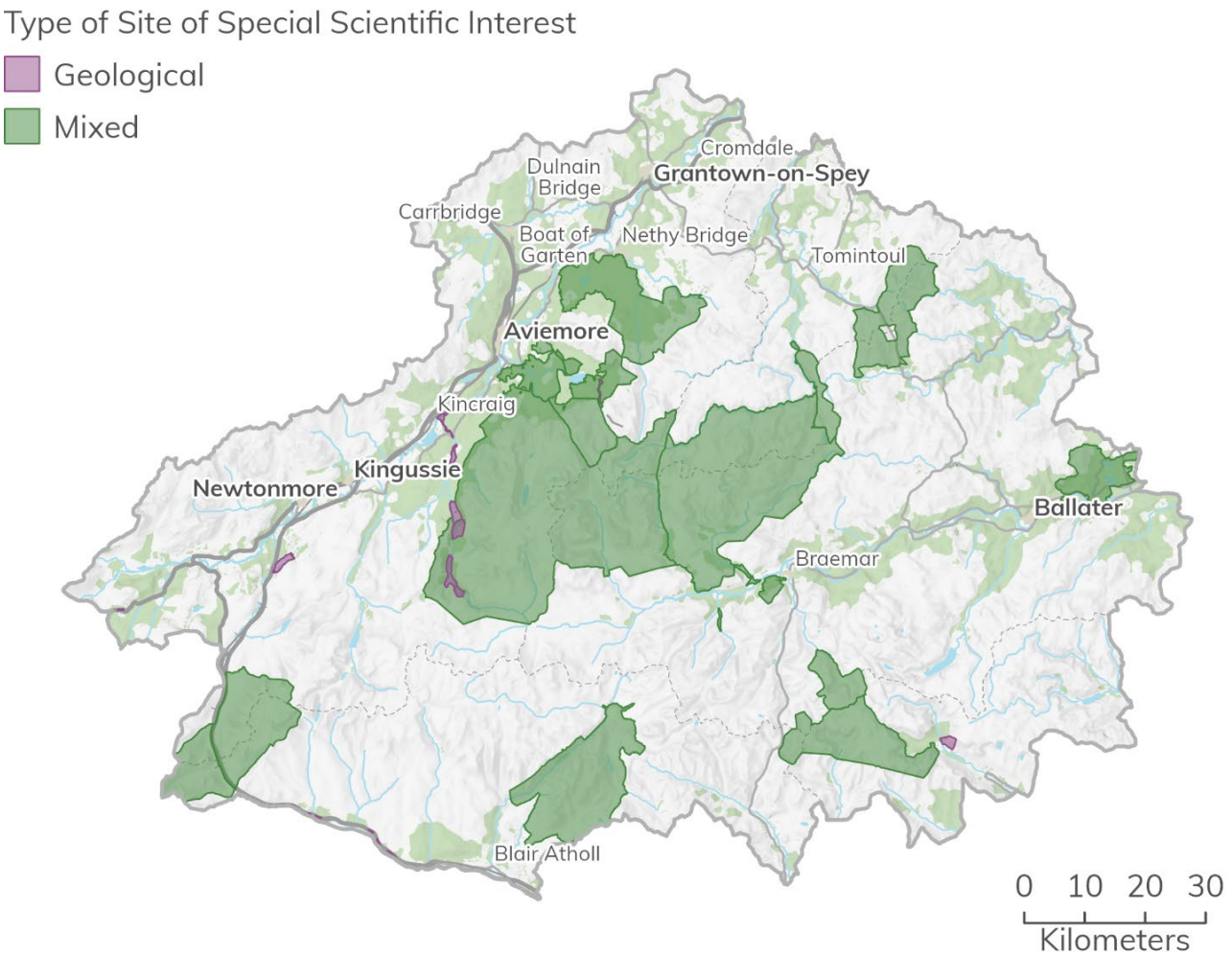


Figure 25 Geological and mixed Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the Cairngorms National Park (CNPA103). Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Contains data © NatureScot 2026.

Further protection is given to certain areas, which includes areas both within and outwith Sites of Special Scientific Interest, by the 39 Geological Conservation Review sites (CNPA104) within or overlapping the Cairngorms National Park boundary (Figure

26). Combined they cover an area of around 592 km^2, the vast majority of which lies wholly within the National Park itself. In fact, the majority of this area (around 526 km^2) is attributed to a single Geological Conservation Review site, the Cairngorms Mountains (site 2284), which is listed for its exceptional assemblage of pre-glacial, glacial, glaciofluvial and periglacial features.

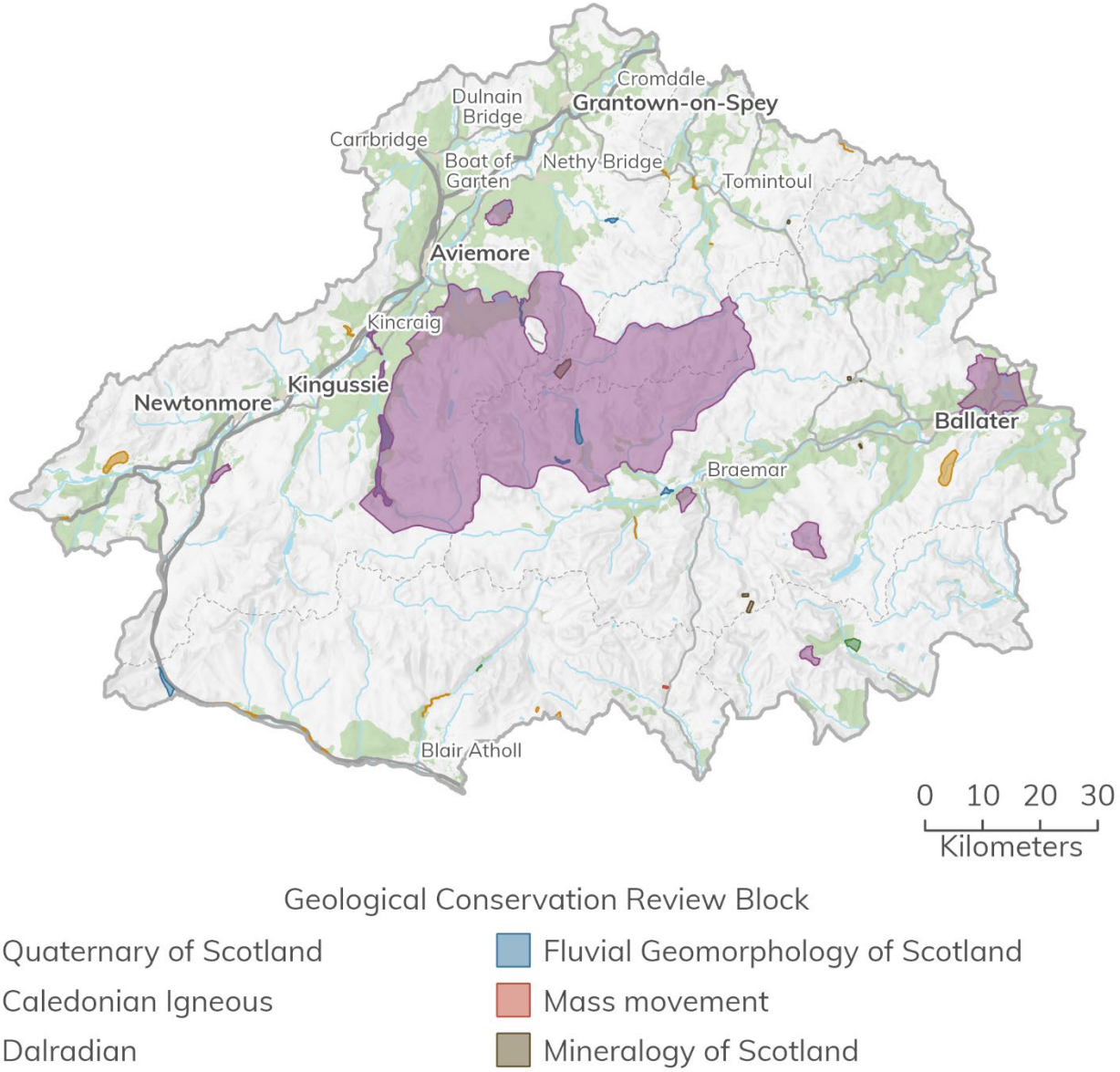


Figure 26 Geological Conservation Review sites within the Cairngorms National Park (CNPA104). Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Contains data © British Geological Survey 2026.

The Glen Esk Geological Conservation Review site has also been included on the Second 100 International Union of Geological Sciences Geological Heritage Sites List of Candidates as 'Barrow Zones, Scottish Highlands' (CNPA105). It represents the first

systematic study of regional metamorphism through analysis of index minerals in metamorphosed mudstones.

A report on the geodiversity of the National Park by the British Geological Survey on behalf of the National Park Authority was published in 2011. This report represented a first pass at selecting the most important localities for Local Geodiversity Sites in the National Park, based on available information and local knowledge of British Geological Survey geologists. Thirty-five bedrock geodiversity sites (including 23 Geological Conservation Review Sites) and fifty-four Quaternary sites (including 38 Geological Conservation Review Sites) were proposed as National Park geodiversity sites. These sites were not regarded as the final definitive list, but as a framework to which additional sites can be added as more information becomes available. They do not, unless covered by another form of protection, have any status in themselves. They do however offer further spatial information about the rich geodiversity of the National Park. Further information can be found in (CNPA101):

- https://cairngorms.co.uk/uploads/documents/Local-Development-Plan-Evidence-Report/External-documents/CNPA101-Geodiversity-of-the-Cairngorms-National-Park.pdf

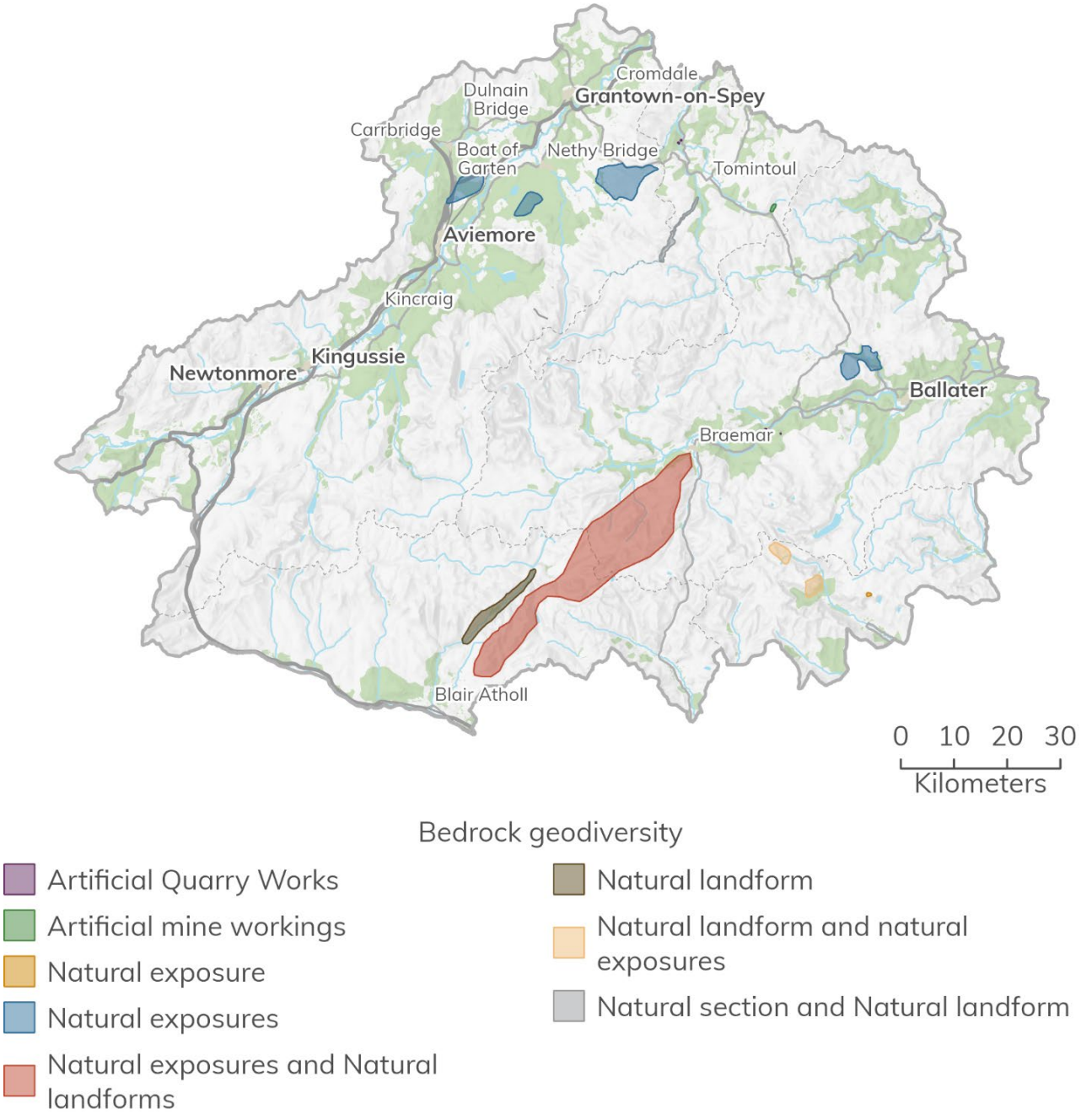
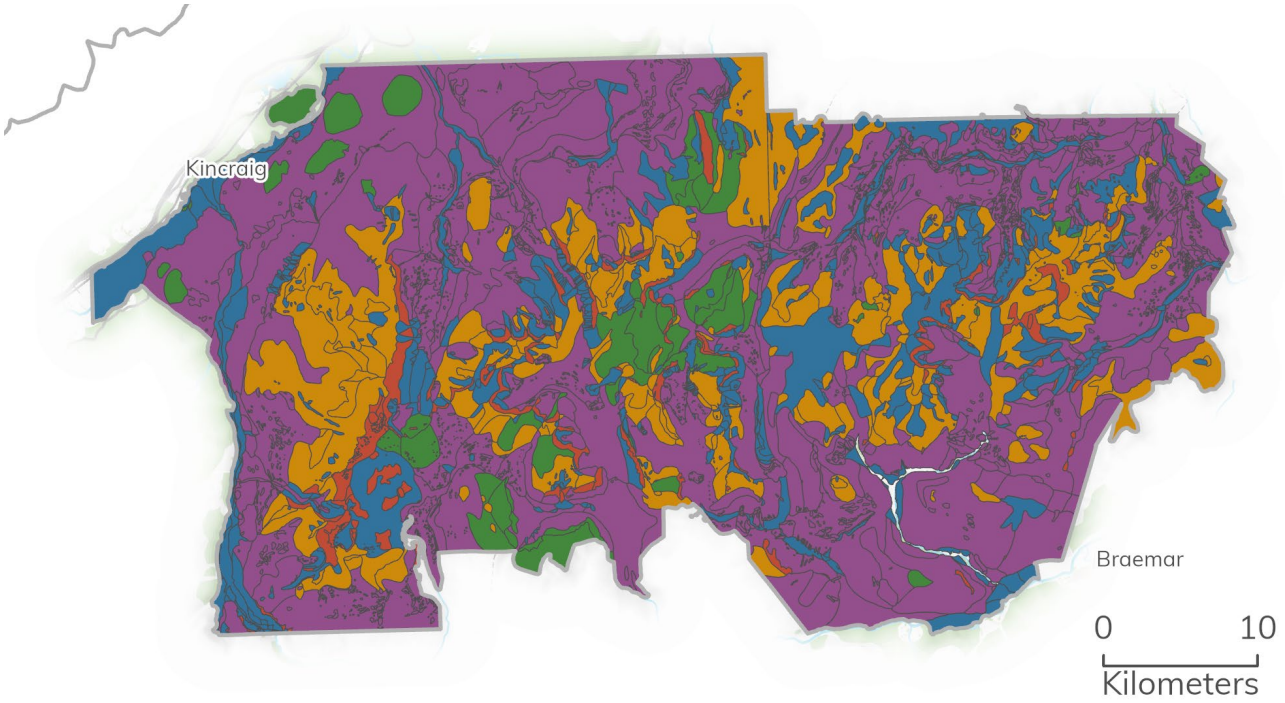


Figure 27 Bedrock geodiversity of the Cairngorms National Park (CNPA101). Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Contains data © British Geological Survey 2026.

Although British Geological Survey mapping is available for the whole of the Cairngorms National Park, detailed geomorphological information is more limited. However, NatureScot, along with the British Geological Survey, have compiled a spatial inventory of the geomorphology of the Cairngorm Mountains core area (Figure 28) (CMPA106).



General geomorphological landforms of the Cairngorm Mountains

- Landforms of glacial and glaciofluvial deposition (e.g. moraines, eskers, kames, kettle holes, drift, delta deposits)
- Landforms of glacial erosion (e.g. roche moutonnées, ice-scoured bedrock, thin regolith covered rock, corrie headwalls)
- Relict periglacial landforms (e.g. blockfields, boulder lobes, patterened ground, solifluction sheets)
- Postglacial and contemporary landforms and processes (e.g. acticve river corridors, peat, debris cones and slopes, large scale rockfall deposits, wetlands)
- Other landform types (e.g. rock outcrops, stable vegetated surfaces, torrs)

Figure 28 Geomorphological heritage of the Cairngorms Mountains (CNPA106). Cairngorms National Park Authority © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000821810. Contains data © British Geological Survey and NatureScot 2026.

The inventory identifies the location and extent of the main landform assemblages: landforms of glacial erosion; landforms of glacial and glaciofluvial deposition; relict periglacial landforms; and postglacial and contemporary landforms and processes. The spatial data is complemented by descriptions of the landforms and additional information on larger landscape features, the survival of relict non-glacial features and details of Late glacial and Holocene paleoenvironmental records. Together, they provide a basic source of information for the development of conservation management and interpretation of the Cairngorm Mountains.

The inventory highlights that understanding the links between geodiversity and biodiversity is particularly crucial for conservation management in dynamic environments such as the Cairngorm Mountains, where natural processes (for example, floods, sediment transport and flow regimes) maintain habitat diversity and ecological functions. It also highlights that consideration of geomorphological sensitivity is a vital part of working in sympathy with natural processes, in assessing natural hazards and implementing sustainable management of ecosystems, particularly under future climate change scenarios.

The inventory recommends that geomorphology is integrated in current monitoring programmes in the Cairngorm Mountains and that much more could be done to raise wider awareness of geodiversity interests within the overall framework for interpretation within the Cairngorms National Park. Issues include raising awareness of geodiversity per se, as well as the links between geodiversity and other elements of the landscape and land use.

Within the context of the Cairngorms National Park, the diversity of earth heritage interests also offers potential opportunities for local involvement in income-generating tourism.

Evidence gaps

The following evidence gap has been identified:

- It is not possible to calculate a landbank for mineral and aggregates in the National Park, due to issues of disclosing commercially sensitive information. This is not however regarded as an issue to due to other relevant information from the Aggregate minerals survey for Great Britain 2023 (CNPA099) which indicates that there is a sufficient landbank of construction aggregates within market areas covering the National Park.

Summary of stakeholder engagement

Public engagement on this schedule (see CNPA1348 for engagement version) was carried out from 26 August – 4 October 2024. Eight completed responses were received (CNPA1340). Following the public engagement, further direct engagement was carried out with the Crofting Commission and NatureScot (CNPA610) to agree changes to the schedule based on their comments.

Summary of implications for 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).
- The spatial strategy and principles of National Planning Framework 4.

The Proposed Plan should seek to:

- Identify opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and empty buildings.
- Protect carbon-rich soils.
- Support peatland restoration.
- Protect soils that are of local or cultural value.
- Limit soil sealing and soil compaction from development.
- Avoid development in areas of high erosion or landslide risk.
- Safeguard the natural heritage of the area.
- Safeguard the geological and geomorphological heritage of the area.

The Proposed Plan cannot identify a 10 year building aggregates landbank, however there is considered to be sufficient resource within the market areas covering the National Park. Existing locations of important workable mineral resources which are of economic or conservation value should however be identified and safeguarded.

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)
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency (C010)
- Crofting Commission (C013)

Historic Environment Scotland (C002)

Historic Environment Scotland welcome the reference and analysis of sites on the Buildings at Risk Register and the recognitions of connections with historic and cultural heritage matters. They also highlight their review of the Buildings at Risk Register which was published 3 September 2024. The review focused on assessing the impact of the Buildings at Risk Register in bringing buildings back in to use in order to make evidenced-based recommendations for its long-term future. Having considered the main findings, conclusions and options of the review Historic Environment Scotland has taken the decision to pause the Buildings at Risk Register in order to consider long-term options for its future.

Park Authority response

This information has been incorporated into the Evidence Report.

NatureScot (C004)

NatureScot is of the view that in general, the evidence does identify the characteristics of the Cairngorms National Park. They also agree that he correct implications have been identified. However, they have also requested the following additions and amendments:

- Table 3 could be even clearer if instead of focussing on time periods it focused on land uses.
- Further information and analysis on moors and heathland.
- Further discussion on land used as woodland, in particular in terms of management, fragmentation, and creation.
- Include reference to Scottish Government's Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018 – 2032.
- To help demonstrate the wider relationship to biodiversity within this topic paper, they advise stating that all protected sites are relevant for land use, soil and resource considerations, and we would suggest noting that these will be considered in more detail in the Natural Heritage section of the Evidence Report.
- In general, they would like to see more inter-relationships noted between this section of the Evidence Report and others; specifically connections between land use in general, vacant, and derelict land, brownfield land, soil, minerals, and aggregates, with the Natural Heritage, Climate Change and Landscape sections of the Evidence Report.
- Include reference to NatureScot's Carbon and Peatland map 2016.
- Include reference to Glen Esk in the Second 100 International Union of Geological Sciences Geological Heritage Sites.
- Include an implication that reflects the need to safeguard wider natural heritage.

Park Authority response
The Park Authority agree with all of these recommendations, and the schedule has been amended to reflect them, with the exception of two points, relating to Table 2 and data on the management of moors, heathlands and woodlands.

The Park Authority consider Table 3 to be appropriate as it shows the relationship between the old and new land cover types. However, it is agreed that further clarity could be provided and therefore an additional table (Table 4), that provides information on net-changes in land cover type, has been added to the schedule.

The Park Authority do not consider it proportional to go into detail on the management of moors, heathlands and woodlands as the management of these is diverse and dependent on multiple different landowners. However, it is possible to make reference to information that exists within the public domain on forest and woodland management where it may be of relevance to the Proposed Plan and so the schedule has been amended accordingly. Further detail on woodland management is set out within Schedule 5: Natural heritage. Further information has also been added on public land ownership. Again, the management of these landholdings is diverse, however it is considered to be worth inclusion due to the potential for greater public benefit that publicly owned land might bring.

NatureScot have confirmed that they are content with the changes made (CNPA610).

Crofting Commission (C013)

The Crofting Commission note that note that crofting is only referred to in the cultural context and that the socio-economic and environmental contributions that crofting can bring to the National Park should be given consideration, including the impact that legislation has on land use.

Park Authority response
The Park Authority agree that greater consideration could be given to crofting within the Evidence Report and that it is a matter that cuts across a number of policy areas. Therefore, additional information on crofting has been added in relation to land use, while matters relating to crofting are also covered Schedule 5: Natural heritage and Schedule 13: Housing. In a meeting on 11 November 2024, the Crofting Commission confirmed that they are happy with the changes.

Aviemore and Vicinity Community Council (C025)

Aviemore and Vicinity Community Council is of the view that there is a lack of detail on Vacant and Derelict Land. They state that there is not enough information to allow those outwith the Park Authority to identify the location of the sites.

Aviemore and Vicinity Community Council highlighted that their new Community Action Plan should be signed off and in the public domain in the near future, and that it must be referenced once available.

Park Authority response
The Evidence Report is a summary of the information required to prepare the Proposed Plan. It is not within the remit of the Evidence Report to consider site specific information - this which will take place during the preparation of the Proposed Plan. However, further geographical detail about the Vacant and Derelict Land in the National Park is available via the Improvement Service. A link to this has been added to the Evidence report.

The new Aviemore, Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Community Action Plan (CNPA063) was published in November 2024 and has been referenced within the Evidence Report.

Statements of dispute

Aviemore and Vicinity Community Council (C025)

Aviemore and Vicinity Community Council state that, while they note that An Camas Mòr has not been included in the figures for land availability for housing, as the planning consent has lapsed, that they have proposed this land use for over 20 years, stand by this land allocation.

They assert that the Park Authority have largely created the housing crisis in their community by not strategically planning housing and not actively assisting in enabling the delivery of developments such as An Camas Mòr. They state that the speed and scale of development for their community is far larger than planning cycle of the local development plan and 'this short-sighted approach has only further hindered our area'.

Park Authority response
An Camas Mòr is not allocated in the adopted Local Development Plan 2021; it is identified as a 'strategic consent'. However, that consent has now lapsed and the site is

not included as part of the effective land supply within the Highland Council's latest Housing Land Audit. It is therefore appropriate to exclude it from the figures in Table 8.

The identification of specific sites for allocation is outwith the scope of the Evidence Report. This will take place as part of the preparation of the Proposed Plan, during which all sites will need to be assessed according to the criteria set out within the site assessment methodology (See Schedule 3: Site assessment methodology for more information).

Lindsay Smith (C093)

Lindsay Smith states that 'Major change in land ownership on Deeside has and will change some of your statistics (Abergeldie)'.

Park Authority response

The Park Authority requested further information on what statistics had changed but did not receive a response. Therefore, it was not possible to make any amendments to the Evidence Report relating to this response.

Mark Wavering (C098)

Mark Wavering writes that the schedule 'identifies the characteristics of the National as they are currently or in recent history. An example of shifting baseline syndrome.'

He suggests 'a rigorous focus on planting native trees and a strong commitment to drastically reducing deer numbers' is needed. He goes on to say that the implications for the proposed plan need to have the replacement of the ancient Caledonian forest and an increase in biodiversity 'front and centre'

Park Authority response

The Evidence Report needs to contain sufficient information to Prepare the Proposed Plan and this is guided by Scottish Government's Local Development Planning Guidance (CNPA009) and engagement with stakeholders and the public at large.

The Local Development Plan does not play a significant role in driving woodland expansion and plays no role in managing deer numbers. These are however influenced by the Park Partnership Plan, which the Local Development Plan needs to align with. Support for woodland creation may be provided through the identification of nature networks. Matters relating to these are covered within Schedule 5: Natural heritage.