



For Information

**Title: Geographical distribution of grants and contracts
awarded during the financial year 2025/26**

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Purpose

This paper responds to a request for analysis of how much expenditure has been directed to organisations, individuals, or businesses within the National Park versus outside the National Park.

Recommendations

The Resources Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the information provided.

Strategic context

1. The Park Authority is committed to taking action in support of community wealth building in its interactions with organisations, individuals, and businesses within or near to the boundaries of the park.
2. It has scope to achieve this through the award of grant funding in support of community initiatives, and also through its procurement strategy.
3. The Park Authority has recently taken action to improve the data collected on both grant awards and procurements and this dataset now provides information on the geographical distribution of grants and contracts.
4. The Cairngorms 2030 (C2030) programme includes the provision of a Community Fund in which the community has been involved in co-design. No awards have yet been made from this fund, but applications will be received from the end of August 2026.



Strategic risk management

5. Procurement in Scotland is highly regulated; however, regulation is less stringent where procurements are for goods, services or works that are of low value.
6. The Park Authority applies the principles set out in the legislation to both regulated and unregulated procurements but has scope to provide opportunities to suppliers and contractors within the park. The procurement strategy is explicit in requiring a balanced approach that observes the principle of open and fair competition, as defined in legislation, while also seeking opportunity to provide community benefit.
7. The Procurement Manager is working with the Engagement Team to offer advice and guidance to local businesses to enable them to bid successfully for advertised procurements.
8. There are a number of methods by which local businesses can be enabled to compete with larger organisations including
 - a) Education and guidance.
 - b) Breaking procurements into several components of smaller scale (known as 'lotting').
 - c) Developing lists of approved suppliers.
 - d) Creating 'frameworks' of pre-assessed local suppliers.
9. Care must be taken to ensure that such approaches, do not contravene procurement regulations.

Geographical analysis

10. The newly developed registers for grants and contract awards have been used to provide data on the geographical distribution of funds. The processes around completion of these registers are in an early stage of operation, and the dataset is not complete. However, it does provide sufficient information to allow indicative analysis of geographical spread.
11. The results of this analysis are shown in Annex 1. The data shows that
 - a) 100% of grants were awarded within the Park
 - b) 23% of contracts were awarded within the Park



- c) Overall, 70% of grants and contracts were awarded to the benefit of the community within the Park.

- 12. Of those contracts awarded outside the Park, £1.4 million related to regulated procurements; of this value, £1.1 million (80%) was for the Active Communities design work on the transport projects, delivered under the C2030 programme. This contract was awarded to Mott Macdonald and is serviced from their Inverness office.
- 13. In total, there were five regulated procurements during the year to 31 March 2026. Of these, one was awarded in the Park, two were awarded in England, and two (including that with Mott Macdonald) were awarded to organisations based elsewhere in Scotland. Regulated procurements are those of greatest value, and it is less likely that organisations within the park will be able to meet the requirements of the largest of these contracts.

Conclusions

- 14. The analysis provided shows the Park Authority's contribution to community wealth-building within the park.
- 15. We aim to improve procurement opportunities for suppliers and contractors within the park through development of our procurement approach. KPIs have been set up to measure the progress of this initiative. We hope to see improvements towards the end of the 2026/27 financial year.
- 16. The distribution of the C2030 Community Fund will add £1 million to the financial resources already deployed in the park.

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10 August 2026

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