



For information

Title: Cairngorms Nature Action Plan

Prepared by: Sarah Henshall, Head of Conservation and
Carolyn Robertson, Cairngorms Nature Manager

Purpose

This paper presents an update on the development of the next Cairngorms Nature Action Plan.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- a) Note the revised timeline for production.
- b) Note the action plan structure.
- c) Note the example of approach with freshwater chapter.

Strategic context

1. The Cairngorms Nature Action Plan is one of the four main strategies that help deliver the National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP). Its role is to drive progress towards a National Park that is carbon negative, rich in biodiversity, and supported by healthier, better-connected and more resilient ecosystems.
2. The Action Plan provides the structure for how we deliver the nature-related priorities in the corporate plan, both through our own work and through the work we support in others.
3. The Nature Action Plan provides the overarching framework that brings together the Cairngorms Nature Index and the Cairngorms Nature Networks. The Index offers a clear, evidence-based picture of ecosystem health and trends across the National Park, while the Nature Networks identify where action is most needed to improve connectivity and resilience. By integrating both tools, the Action Plan ensures that priorities are informed by robust data and that interventions are



targeted where they will have the greatest impact- supporting a more coordinated, strategic and effective approach to restoring nature across the National Park.

4. The Action Plan does not replace national policies or strategies. Instead, it complements and builds on them. This includes, for example, the Scottish Forestry Strategy, the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and the Flood Resilience Strategy and River Basin Management Plans.
5. The Action Plan is a collaborative framework that guides and supports stakeholders across the National Park. It sets out the shared priorities and strategic direction for investing in and delivering a nature-rich, climate-resilient Cairngorms National Park.

Stakeholder engagement

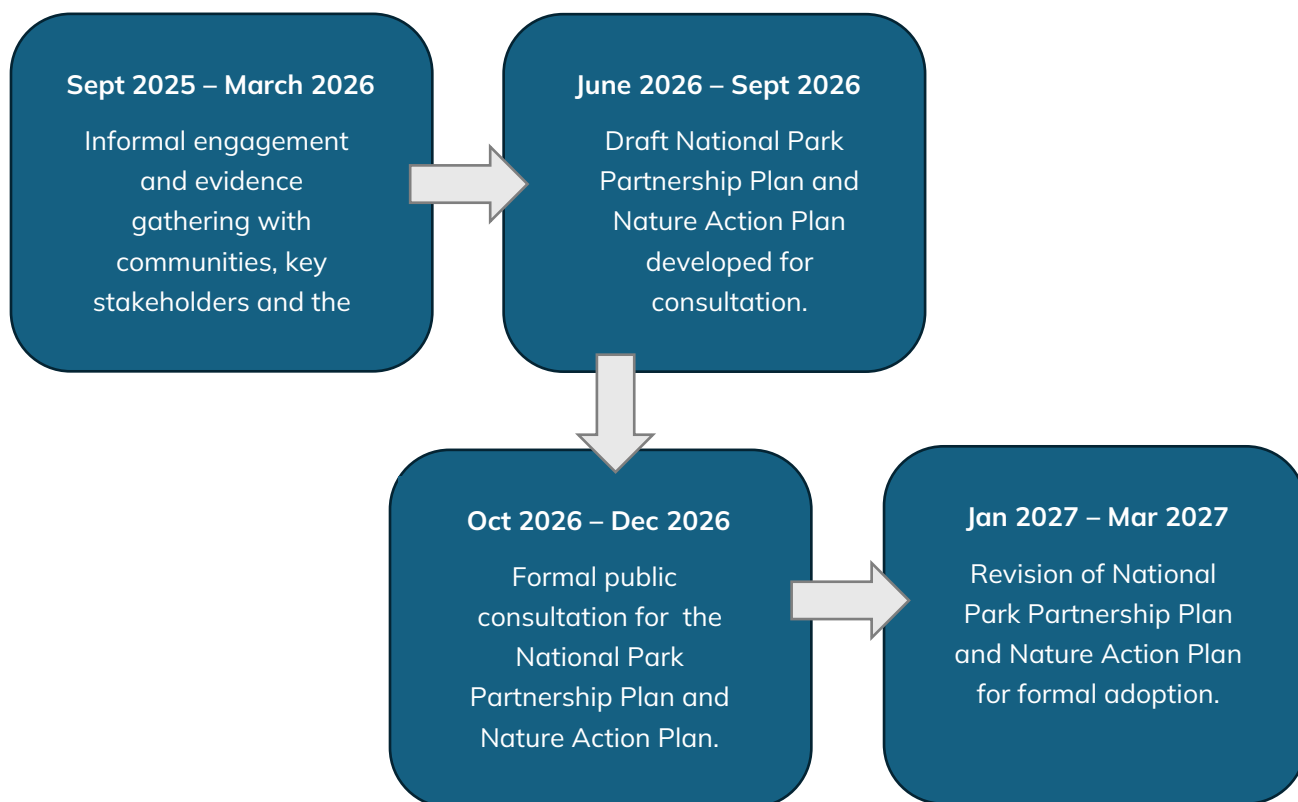
6. The [Cairngorms Nature Strategy Group](#) is the primary stakeholder engagement mechanism for strategic input and oversight of the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan. The group comprises a range of organisations and land managers with an active role in the development of projects and delivery of biodiversity gain in the National Park.
7. Membership of the Strategy Group has been updated to best support its functions with regard to a new Action Plan, new NPPP and National policy agenda. For example, new members of the Strategy Group include representatives from all River Catchment Partnerships in the National Park and Royal Zoological Society Scotland.
8. Park Authority Board member Peter Cosgrove has a dual role as Chair of both the Cairngorms Nature Strategy Group (CNSG) and the Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group (CUAG). Peter is working to strengthen links between CUAG and CNSG, and to improve coordination with the Cairngorms Agricultural Advisory Group (CAAG).
9. Cairngorms Nature Strategy Members have recently begun discussions about how the new Nature Action Plan can deliver community benefits with the need for early, proportionate and trust-building engagement. Additional resource may be required to support effective engagement, drawing on learning from Cairngorms 2030.



10. The Action Plan will include a set of principles for community benefits, incorporating community wealth-building approaches such as skills development, education and job creation. Community benefits will need to be clearly defined within the context of the Action Plan, with indicators built in to monitor progress and impact, and to help strengthen community capacity over time to play a more active role in nature restoration. Partners may need support or upskilling in applying this approach.
11. In addition to targeted engagement with communities and other key stakeholders as part of the Action Plan's development, a formal, six-week consultation will be carried out as per the timeline described overleaf.

Timetable for developing the action plan

12. The Action Plan will be developed in tandem with the NPPP.
13. The aim is that the Board will sign off the NPPP and Nature Action Plan for submission to Scottish Ministers in March 2027. The flow chart below sets out the key dates for the development of the plan.
14. The engagement work during September 2025 to March 2026, builds on the substantial data collected over the past 18 months via the residents' survey, visitor survey, Community Action Plans and the Local Development Plan (LDP) consultation.
15. Developing the Action Plan during the time period set out below will allow for full consideration of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy [delivery plan](#), Scotland's Flood Resilience Strategy and any provisions in the forthcoming Natural Environment Bill.
16. To date, with support from the Cairngorms Nature Strategy, a draft structure has been developed for the Nature Action Plan, a draft vision and a template chapter focused initially on freshwater ecosystems using the draft Cairngorms Nature Index and Cairngorms Nature Networks to identify priority actions.



Implications

17. Cairngorms Nature is a core part of the Park Authority's work, driving delivery of the NPPP and strengthening the collaborative partnerships that support increased biodiversity and climate resilience across the National Park. The programme is coordinated by the Cairngorms Nature Manager, with delivery supported through the Park Authority's operational budget.
18. The development of the Action Plan is a collaborative process. Strong, ongoing commitment to its delivery is central to the Park Authority's relationships with land managers, agencies, organisations and communities, and underpins progress across many areas of the NPPP.



Success measures

19. The Cairngorms Nature Action Plan 2027 – 2032, representing clear actions to deliver, and report on, NPPP objectives, will be published with the support of a wide range of stakeholders in March 2027.

Sarah Henshall
25 November 2025
sarahhenshall@cairngorms.co.uk

Carolyn Robertson
25 November 2025
carolynrobertson@cairngorms.co.uk