



# Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017 – 2022

## ISSUES REPORT



June 2016

## **ACTIVE CAIRNGORMS ISSUES REPORT**

### **I. NATIONAL POLICY**

The following national policies and outcomes directly influence the work undertaken by CNPA and inform our priorities and actions for delivery.

#### **I.1 Scottish Government: Active Scotland Outcomes**

The Active Scotland Outcomes Framework sets out Scotland's aims to promote a more active Scotland through sport and physical activity. These Outcomes aim to 'support the delivery of National Outcomes and ultimately to the Scottish Government's overarching purpose of creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish'.

Active Scotland outcomes:

- We encourage and enable the inactive to be more active
- We encourage and enable the inactive to stay active throughout life
- We develop physical confidence and competence from the earliest age
- We improve our Active infrastructure – people and places
- We support wellbeing and resilience in communities through physical activity and sport
- We improve opportunities to participate, progress and achieve in sport

These national outcomes are addressed in the three themes of Active Cairngorms: Active Places, Active Management and Active Promotion.

#### **I.2 A More Active Scotland: Building a Legacy from the Commonwealth Games (2014)**

Work has been undertaken over the past year with NHS Health Scotland and other partners to create the National Physical Activity Implementation Plan linking directly to the Government's active legacy ambitions for the Commonwealth Games.

The plan informs the work delivered by CNPA to encourage more people to be physically active.

#### **I.3 The National Walking Strategy (2014)**

The National Walking Strategy seeks to raise greater awareness of the benefits of walking, particularly to health and the wider environment. It also explores the barriers to walking and how these can be overcome.

The National Walking Strategy informs the work delivered by CNPA to encourage more people to walk as part of their everyday lives.

#### **I.4 Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (2013)**

The Cycling Action Plan for Scotland is a framework for delivering more cycling in Scotland.

The framework informs the work delivered by CNPA to encourage more people to use their bike for recreation and active travel.

### **1.5 Tourism Scotland 2020 (2012)**

The Tourism Scotland 2020 National Strategy sets out the role of tourism in Scotland and priorities for action. It identifies ‘Nature, heritage and activities’ as one of Scotland’s assets which is a key attraction of the Cairngorms National Park.

The strategy informs the work delivered by CNPA to encourage more people to visit the National Park and use our access infrastructure, which directly supports the tourist industry.

### **1.6 SNH's Rangers in Scotland Policy**

Rangers promote the enjoyment, understanding and care of Scotland’s outdoors through: the first-hand provision of information, advice and activities; interpretation; the management of sites and facilities; and seeking to secure responsible behaviour.

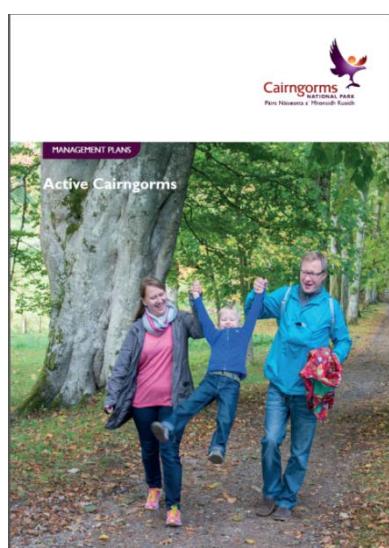
The policy informs the work delivered by CNPA when coordinating the visitor management priorities for the Park’s 14 Ranger Services.

## **2. CNPA DRIVERS OF CHANGE**

### **2.1 National Park Partnership Plan 2012**

The National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP, 2012) provides the strategic direction for what happens in the National Park. It sets out five-year outcomes and identifies how these will be implemented and delivered. Whilst the purpose of this evidence report is to inform the next NPPP, the current NPPP (2012) provides the direction for the delivery of the national strategies in the Cairngorms National Park including Active Cairngorms.

### **2.2 Active Cairngorms**



The Active Cairngorms Strategy (2015) sets out the CNPA’s priorities and actions for delivery. It contributes to the delivery of the Scottish Government’s Active Scotland Outcomes, builds on the legacy of the 2014 Commonwealth Games and delivers the long-term outcome (3) of the National Park Partnership Plan (2012): ‘People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences’. Delivery requires partnership working across the National Park, involving the NHS and many other local service providers.

The Active Cairngorms programme aims to promote and utilise the health benefits of outdoor activity for residents

and visitors to the National Park by making it easier and safer for people to move around the Park whatever their age, ability or background; to be more physically active, to learn about, care for and appreciate the Park. The Strategy also directs the development, management and promotion of non-motorised outdoor access in the Cairngorms National Park and contains an 'Action Plan' for the delivery of its objectives (set out below). It is divided into 3 themes:

- **Active Places:** Designing places that encourage physical activity
- **Active Management:** Champion recreational management best practice and environmental appreciation
- **Active promotion:** Promoting healthy lifestyles using Park facilities

The objectives of these themes are set out in the tables below<sup>1</sup>:

<b>Active Places: Objectives</b>		
Improve design of existing outdoor and active travel infrastructure		
Work with partners to design places that encourage physical activity		
<b>Policy</b>		<b>Priorities</b>
1	Improve path provision and quality for people of all abilities	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of core paths to be barrier free and signed appropriately by 2020.</li> <li>• Support development of Aviemore Active Travel Hub</li> </ul>	
2	Provision of cycling, horse riding and waterbourne routes and infrastructure	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a multi-use active travel route from Newtonmore to Cromdale: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Extend the Speyside Way (proposed National Cycle Route 79) from Aviemore to Newtonmore by 2016.</li> <li>○ Upgrade existing Speyside Way to multi-use path from Cromdale to Boat of Garten by 2017.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop <i>Cycling Scotland</i> 'Cycle Friendly Communities' along Highland main railway line: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Kingussie to be developed as exemplar cycle friendly community from 201g.</li> <li>○ Develop remaining main stations from 2017</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Extend Deeside Way (National Cycle Route 195) to multi-use path from Ballater to Braemar by 2020.</li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup>[Active Cairngorms \(2015\) Outdoor Access Strategy for the Cairngorms National Park](#)

<b>Active Management: Objectives</b>	
Reduce the environmental impact of outdoor recreation conservation priorities	
Encourage responsible sharing of outdoor space between different users	
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Priorities</b>
3	<p>Increasing understanding and enjoyment of the Park's special qualities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everybody should have opportunities to enjoy the Park's special qualities in a sustainable and responsible way (Scottish Outdoor Access Code).</li> <li>• Reduce impact of recreational disturbance to ground nesting birds such as capercaillie by supporting the delivery of recreational management plans and implementation of Capercaillie Framework.</li> <li>• Continue to develop 'Tread lightly' Campaign focusing on reducing impact of irresponsible dog walkers and reduction of wildfires.</li> </ul>
4	<p>Management of organised outdoor events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event organisers should follow CNPA events guidance and look for locations and times of year that do not disturb sensitive wildlife or significantly affect other recreation takers. Events should also provide additional economic benefits to communities.</li> <li>• Large scale events should be discouraged in the central core of the high mountains.</li> </ul>
5	<p>Investment in Active Travel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase of sites with voluntary car parking charges to finance active travel facilities and path maintenance.</li> </ul>



<b>Active Promotion: Objectives</b>		
Increase levels of physical activity of residents and visitors		
Inspire and empower residents and visitors to develop a sense of responsibility for the National Park		
<b>Policy</b>		<b>Priorities</b>
6	Promoting healthy lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure everyone knows about the opportunities.</li> <li>• Actively target those that are least active by developing a GP health walk referral scheme.</li> <li>• Promote activities suitable for all the family.</li> <li>• Inspire children to enjoy the outdoors</li> </ul>
7	Developing appropriate visitor information about outdoor recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the wider opportunities for everyday exercise and outdoor recreation such as cycling, canoeing, cross country skiing, climbing and hill walking.</li> <li>• Support and promote community Sport hubs – signposting inactive and active people on how to be more active.</li> <li>• Adopt Scotland's national Path Grading System on all core paths by 2020.</li> </ul>
8	Volunteering and community empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate and grow the 'Walking to Health' Programme.</li> <li>• Work with Cairngorms Nature partners, including landowners and NGOs to identify volunteering opportunities for community volunteer groups.</li> <li>• Develop a voluntary ranger scheme based around local communities.</li> </ul>

### 3. TRENDS AND DATA

- 21% of Scotland's adult population is physically inactive.
- Physical inactivity is the second biggest cause of mortality, leading to 2,500 deaths in Scotland every year.
- Increasing outdoor physical activity can lead to improvements in many health conditions, from heart disease to mental health issues.
- The biggest gain is to target people living sedentary lifestyles where inactivity is the norm; these include older adults, young girls and those living with long term medical conditions. (Scottish Government, Active Scotland Framework, 2014)

#### 3.1 Scotland's People and Nature Survey (SPANS)

SPANS is a quantitative research survey which helps us understand how people in Scotland use, enjoy and value the natural environment. Within the Cairngorms:

- 86% of Park residents visit the outdoors for leisure each year;
- 59% at least once a week and;
- 21% every day;
- 43% of visits are within 2 miles of home and;
- 68% of those will be from the back door;

- 52% of all visits will be with a dog;
- 85% of all visits will be walking and
- 8% cycling (*included on and off road*):

Finally 78% will be on established paths (*promoted and maintained*)

Active Cairngorms aims to continue to increase the number of people accessing the outdoors on foot, bicycle or other form of non-motorised transport.

### **3.2 Activity within the Cairngorms National Park**

- 43% of visits to the countryside are within 2 miles of residence
- 46% of residents in the National Park visit the countryside everyday
- 85% of visits to the countryside involve walking and 47% involve walking between 2 and 8 miles
- 28% of visits to the countryside by residents will be to walk in woodland and forest
- 52% of visits to the countryside are with a dog
- The National Park has 3 Ski Centres, 3 Mountain bike centres, 9 outdoor activity centres, 12 Ranger services and 16 community path leaflets.
- There are 8 communities with active travel audits and action plans – Grantown-on-Spey, Nethybridge, Boat of Garten, Carrbridge, Kingussie, Newtonmore, Braemar and Ballater.

Active Cairngorms aims to increase the number of responsible active visits to the outdoors (Cairngorms National Park Authority, Active Cairngorms, 2015).



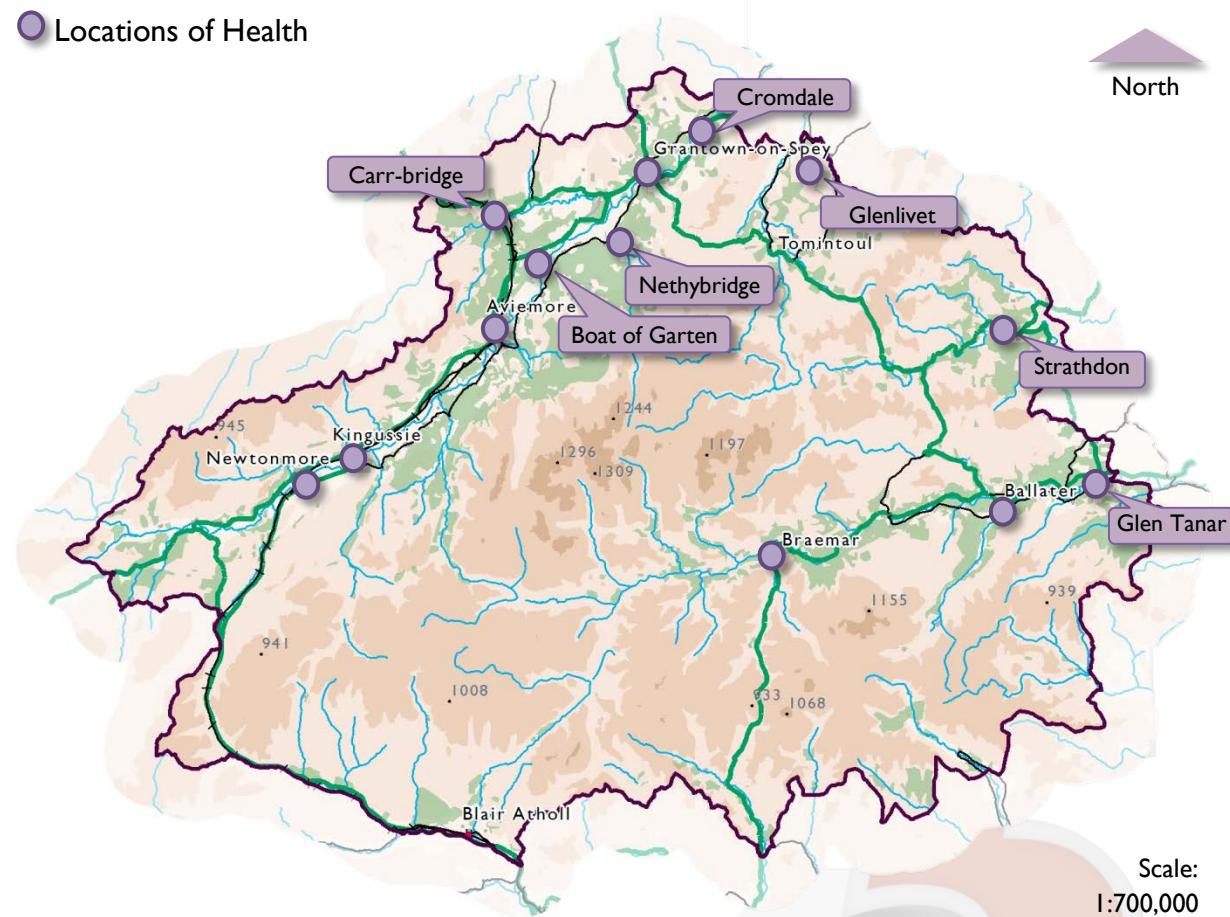
### 3.3 Active Cairngorms: Health Walks

The Active Cairngorms Health Walks project supports volunteers to deliver health walks in towns and villages across the National Park.

Health Walks are short, safe, social, local, low level, with a trained volunteer to lead the way.

Health Walks are targeted at those who find it difficult to be active in their daily lives (including older adults and people living with medical conditions). In addition to the volunteer led activity, it's an opportunity for participants to explore their local area and meet new people. Research suggests health walk projects deliver physical and mental health improvements and economic benefits to society.

Scaling up and expanding our Health Walk project is a priority. There are currently 34 active health walk groups operating in and to the east of the National Park (Map 1 shows those within the National Park).



**Figure 1** Locations of Health Walks throughout the Cairngorms National Park.

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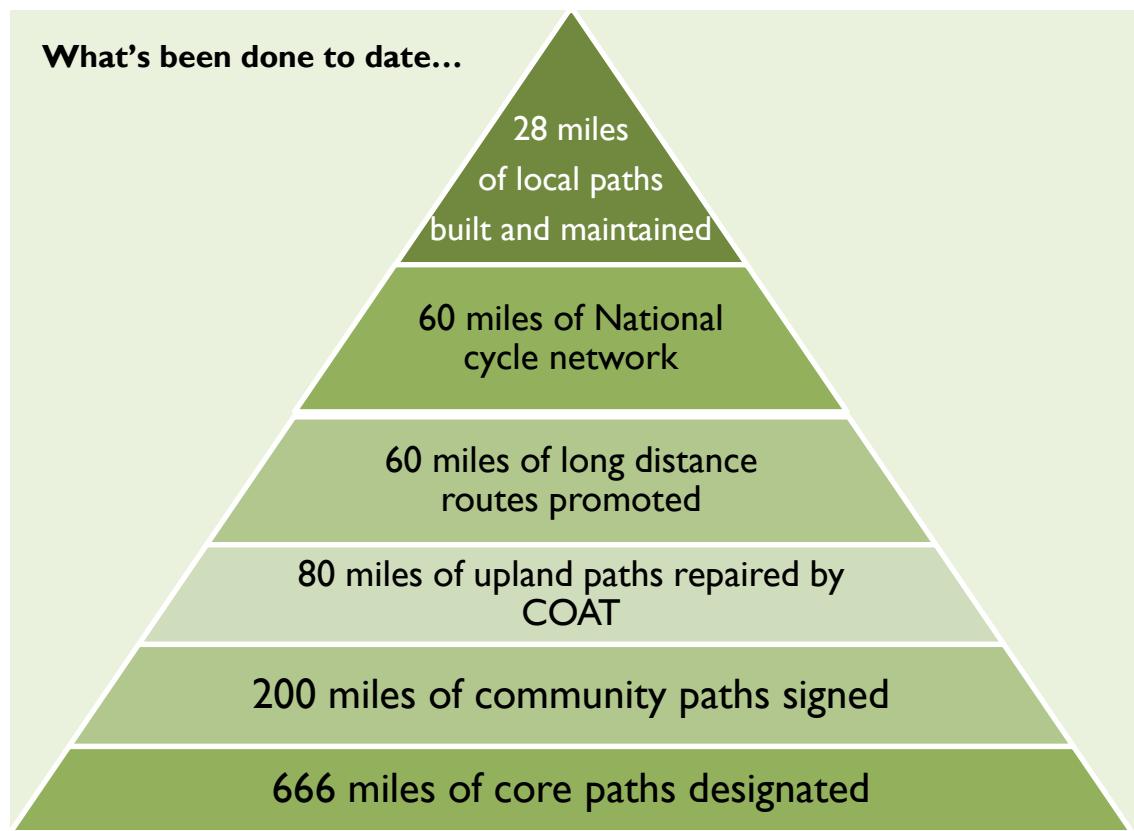
### 3.4 The Natural Health Service

The Park is working in partnership with Scotland's Rural Affairs, Food and Environment (RAFE) Delivery Board and the National Strategic Group on Physical Activity to take forward an Action Plan for developing our 'Natural Health Service'. This investment in the environment improves physical and mental health and wellbeing through:

- a) improved access to opportunities for physical activity and contact with nature;
- b) reduction of emissions via active travel; and
- c) the provision of clean, safe and attractive places to live and learn

The Cairngorms National Park has the high quality access infrastructure, destination appeal and partnerships required to promote increased physical activity by providing a range of benefits through recreation, volunteering, learning and active travel.

### 4. DEVELOPMENT TO DATE



In addition:

- 4,026 health walks were delivered between April 2011 and March 2015
- Opening of the Speyside Way extension from Aviemore to Kincraig.

Active Cairngorms aims to increase the number of people partaking in health walks and using local path networks.

## 5. WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

- Make the most of the National Park's infrastructure and brand identity as part of Scotland's Natural Health Service;
- Residents and visitors will enjoy and use the Park for physical activity at least once a day;
- Target people currently living sedentary lifestyles where inactivity is the norm; these include older adults, young girls and those living with long term medical conditions;
- Support and promote the Active Cairngorms Partnership to jointly deliver on social, environmental and health care outcomes;
- Continued/enhanced delivery of health walks through the Active Cairngorms Health Walks Project;
- Co-ordination of environmental volunteering opportunities; and
- Deliver active travel enhancements in Aviemore that deliver improved transport connections for visitors and residents.

## 6. MECHANISMS

### 6.1 Active Cairngorms Partnership

The Active Cairngorms Partnership was formed in October 2015. It brings together a wide range of bodies involved in health promotion from the NHS, Local Authorities, NGOs and recreational user groups. The partnership encourages multi agency co-ordination to deliver the Active Cairngorms Strategy and Action Plan.

### 6.2 Legacy 2014 Physical Activity Fund (2016)

CNPA has been awarded £70,000 from the Legacy 2014 Physical Activity Fund. The funding will allow us to:

- scale up our **health walks partnership** programme;
- start a medical practice **outdoor physical activity referral programme**;
- create a physical activity pathway for health walk participants that signposts and encourages them to remain active by joining local sports and social clubs; and
- develop an activity monitoring platform to evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes.

The evaluation from this project will inform and direct future work delivery.

### 6.3 Volunteering

Environmental volunteering has long been acknowledged as a way of engaging people in healthy activity.

**Volunteering activities** in the Park are a significant resource and have a big impact on delivery and engagement. Environmental volunteering has long been acknowledged as a way of engaging people in healthy activity.

There is an opportunity to consider coordination of volunteering holistically across the shared objectives and outcomes for participation in Cairngorms Nature, Active Cairngorms and broader community development aims. We are currently reviewing volunteering in the National Park with an aim of improving opportunities for social, environmental and health outcomes.

## 7. KEY QUESTIONS

- How can levels of physical activity among residents and visitors be increased?
- How can environmental volunteering opportunities be better co-ordinated and promoted to engage people?

## 8. RESEARCH AND REPORTS

- The Active Cairngorms Partnership will work with delivery partners to commission research and evaluate projects.
- The James Hutton Institute and The University of Strathclyde will evaluate the medical practice referral Legacy 2014 project which is currently in progress.
- Activity monitoring and project evaluation during year one of Active Cairngorms will allow targets to be set for future delivery and identify priorities for the next National Park Partnership Plan (2017).

## 9. REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- **A More Active Scotland: Building a Legacy from the Commonwealth Games (2014)** Scottish Government (<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0044/00444577.pdf>)
- **Active Cairngorms (2015)** Cairngorms National Park Authority ([www.cairngorms.co.uk](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk))
- **Active Scotland Outcomes**, Scottish Government (<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/Sport/Outcomes-Framework>)
- **Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (2013)** Transport Scotland ([http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/system/files/uploaded\\_content/documents/tsc\\_basic\\_pages/Environment/CAPS\\_2013\\_-\\_final\\_draft\\_-\\_19\\_June\\_2013\\_0.pdf](http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/system/files/uploaded_content/documents/tsc_basic_pages/Environment/CAPS_2013_-_final_draft_-_19_June_2013_0.pdf))
- **Legacy 2014 Physical Activity Fund (2016)** (<http://www.spiritof2012trust.org.uk/legacy-2014-physical-activity-fund>)
- **National Park Partnership Plan (2012)** Cairngorms National Park Authority ([www.cairngorms.co.uk](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk))
- **Rangers in Scotland Policy (2008)** SNH (<http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/B311863.pdf>)
- **The National Walking Strategy (2014)** Scottish Government (<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00452622.pdf>)
- **TNS. 2014. Scotland's People and Nature Survey 2013/14.** Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 679. (<http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A1471713.pdf>)
- **Tourism Scotland 2020 (2012)** Scottish Tourism Alliance (<http://scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Scottish-Tourism-Strategy-TourismScotland2020.pdf>).