

CAIRNGORMS
NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

ÙGHDARRAS PÀIRC NÀISEANTA A'
MHONaidH RUaidH

Cairngorms National Park Authority

Annual Review
2015/16



Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaìdh Ruaidh

Lèirmheas Bliadhnail 2015/16



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Foreword

There can be no doubt that the Cairngorms National Park is not only an area of outstanding landscape, rich in nature but is also hugely important for the economy of Scotland. It is home to 18,000 people and is one of the few rural areas where the population is rising.

The most recent Visitor Survey demonstrates the extent to which visitors are brought into the area by the National Park status, particularly overseas visitors. It shows that they come with high expectations which are not only met but also exceeded. 98% of those surveyed said they would recommend the Park to their friends. 93% said they would visit again. These are very encouraging statistics.

The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) has been working through 2015/16 with Visit Scotland and the Cairngorms Business Partnership to promote the Park as a place to visit during the spring and autumn, traditionally the quieter seasons. With the £20,000 invested in this work by the CNPA drawing in significant additional funding from partners, a focused and effective campaign was run and plans are now in place for new campaigns next year.

The CNPA has also been very busy promoting activity through Active Cairngorms, our outdoor access strategy. A great deal of work has been done to encourage visitors and residents to make

the most of our tremendous outdoors and to walk or cycle, whether for recreation or for commuting. The CNPA has been working with our partners in the NHS on this essential area of work, promoting and developing Health Walks across the Park. These are led by dedicated volunteers; we owe them a great deal.

The peatlands within the Park are massively important, not only for their ecological value and for storing huge volumes of carbon, but also for natural flood management. Healthy peatlands in our hills can hold back rainwater run-off with a positive effect on rivers and flooding. The CNPA has been involved in award-winning work to repair and restore peatland across the Park in 2015/16 with work carried out across some 750 hectares. The results have been impressive and the project has generated wide interest.

These are just three areas where the CNPA has been working with partners to deliver real benefits for residents and visitors – and indeed for Scotland as a whole; this is a National Park after all! The Annual Review gives more detail on 2015/16 and I am delighted to present this excellent record with sincere thanks to all those who have helped to deliver these benefits.

Peter Argyle, Convener
Cairngorms National Park Authority Board

Facal-toisich

Chan e a-mhàin gu bheil Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh na pàirc le àrainneachd àlainn de bheartas nàdair, ach cuideachd cho fìor chudromach 's a tha i dha eaconamaidh na h-Alba. Tha i na dachaigh dha 18,000 duine le àrdachadh a' tighinn air an àireamh-sluaigh a tha a' fuireach ann.

Tha sgrùdadh a rinneadh bho choinn goirid air luchd-tadhail na Pàirce a' sealltainn cho tarraingeach 's tha inbhe a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh mar Phàirc Nàiseanta dha luchd-tadhail; gu h-àraidh dha luchd-tadhail bha thall thairis. Is e toradh an rannsachaidh gu bheil an fheadhainn a tha a' tighinn ann a' sùileachadh gum bi a' Phàirc na àite sònraichte, ach a rèir an rannsachaidh, bha i na b' fheàrr fiù na bha dùil aca a bhiodh i. Thuir 98% dhen a chaidh a cheasnachadh gum moladh iad a' Phàirc ri luchd-eòlais agus thuir 93% gun tigeadh iad a thadhail oirre a-rithist. Tha sinn a' faighinn misneachd mhòr às na figearan seo.

Tha Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh (CNPA) air a bhith ag obair fad 2015/16 le Visit Scotland agus le Comunn Gnìomhachais a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh a tharraing aire chun na Pàirce mar àite-tadhail as t-earrach agus as t-fhoghar, nuair is dual dhith a bhith sàmhach. Thathas air £20,000 a chosg air an obair-rannsachaidh seo leis an CNPA; suim a tha a' tarraing a-steach maoinachadh mòr bho bhuidhnean eile, agus tha a-nise iomairt mhòr èifeachdach ann le planaichean airson iomairtean ùra an ath-bhliadhna. Tha an CNPA air a bhith ag obair gu dripeil a' togail inbhe na Pàirce tro Active Cairngorms - ro-innleachd chur-seachadan air a' bhlàr a-muigh – le obair mhòr a' dol air adhart a' feuchainn ri toirt air luchd-tadhail is muinntir an àite a thighinn a-mach chun na h-àrainneachd sònraichte againn a choisreachd no air baidhseagal, mar chur-seachad no 'son siubhal chun an àite-obrach. Tha sinn air a bhith ag obair le buidhnean eile fo bhratach an NHS air a' phìos-obrach chudromach seo, a' tarraing aire gu Cuirtean Slàinte tron Phàirc. Tha an obair seo ga toirt air adhart le daoine saor-thoileach agus tha sinn fad nan comain.

Tha mòintichean na Pàirce air leth cudromach, chan e a-mhàin airson an luach nan cois a thaobh fiadh-bheatha agus gu bheil iad nan stòrasan mòra carboin, ach gu bheil iad cuideachd cudromach a thaobh làimhseachadh thuiltean. Faodaidh mòintichean air taobh bheanntan bacadh a chur air uisge bho bhith a' ruith sìos nan leathaidean is a' cur thairis nan aibhnichean. Tha CNPA air a bhith an sàs an obair aithnichte a' càradh is a' toirt air ais mòintichean na Pàirce an 2015/16 le obair ga dèanamh air feadh 750 heactairean.

Tha toraidhean na h-obrach seo air a bhith iongantach dha; rìribh leis a' phròiseact a' tarraing aire mòran. Chan e seo ach dìreach trì dòighean sa bheil CNPA air a bhith ag obrachadh le buidhnean eile chum fìor bhuannachdan a choileanadh dha luchd-turais is muinntir an àite agus dha Alba gu lèir – 's e fìor phàirc nàiseanta a th' innte! Tha an sgrùdadh bliadhna seo a' toirt dhuinn barrachd fiosrachaidh air na thachair thar 2015/16 agus tha e na tlachd mhòr dhomh fiosrachadh a sgaoileadh air na thàinig às an obair mhòr; shoirbheachail seo le taing mhòr don fheadhainn a chuidich sinn chum nan toraidhean seo.



Peter Argyle, Neach-gairm
Bòrd-stiùiridh Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a'
Mhonaidh Ruaidh



THE OLD
COLLEGE
OF
SCALAN
—
1717-1799

The Cairngorms National Park Authority

The Cairngorms National Park is an outstanding part of Scotland and the UK. Its glacial landforms, wild arctic tundra and heather moorlands foster an enormous ecological diversity. Here, among ancient Caledonian pine forests, rivers, lochs and marshes, is where you can still find many of the UK's most threatened, localised and endangered species.

It is also home to around 18,000 people and supports numerous businesses. As well as our permanent residents, 1.7 million visitors flock here every year, largely for the exceptional quality of our outdoor pursuits. They come from down the road and increasingly from across the world. Building sustainable communities and businesses will ensure that future generations continue to benefit from this national asset.

The Cairngorms National Park is a place for people, a place for nature, a place for enterprise and a place for enjoyment. Against this backdrop, the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) possesses the ideal vantage point. Though by no means the sole guardian of these landscapes, the Park Authority has a unique role to play in providing leadership and bringing together the very many individuals and organisations that have an interest in the Park.

At the same time, we deliver our planning and access authority roles and encourage low carbon living, inclusion and the use of Gaelic through our Language Plan. We have a duty to deliver excellent everyday public services in this 'Park for All'.

We take the lead through means such as ensuring development and delivery of the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan: a five year plan prioritising the work and investment of a wide range of organisations who are active in the Cairngorms National Park. We invite partners around the table to tackle the big issues, and our people work on the ground to ensure that the right things happen in the right places at the right time. We also help to build capacity in community groups so they can work more effectively towards our collective goals.

Together we're working towards a time when the Cairngorms National Park will be mentioned in the same breath as established world-class National Parks like Yosemite, Fiordland and Jotunheimen. And we have evidence that we are getting there – with an increasing number of international visits by people interested in learning about how we and our partners manage the Cairngorms National Park.

With so many partnerships and plans in motion, the Cairngorms National Park Authority is the place where myriad paths converge. We can't get where we want to go without the continued support of our partners. It's our job to make sure that we're all heading in the same direction.



Cairngorms National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2015-2018

The 2015/16 year reviewed here is the first year reporting to the 2015-2018 Corporate Plan. This new Corporate Plan centres on the key priorities that the CNPA will be focussing on over the three years of the Plan to deliver three strategic outcomes:

These are supplemented by two support themes – Corporate Services and Communications. Key partners and a set of performance indicators have also been identified for each theme.

Conservation

A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage of the Cairngorms National Park enhanced

Visitor Experience

People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences (visitor experiences)

Rural Development

A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities



Collectively, through these activities, we aim to work towards the National Park vision.

Cairngorms National Park Vision

An outstanding National Park, enjoyed and valued by everyone, where people and nature thrive together.

Our Corporate Plan sets out what our role is in helping to deliver the key priorities and realise the three strategic outcomes, all of which is underpinned by the CNPA's Mission and Values.

CNPA Mission Statement

To lead the way in delivering for the Cairngorms National Park by:

- bringing people together toward a common purpose;
- enhancing the Park for everyone;
- inspiring new generations to be Park champions.

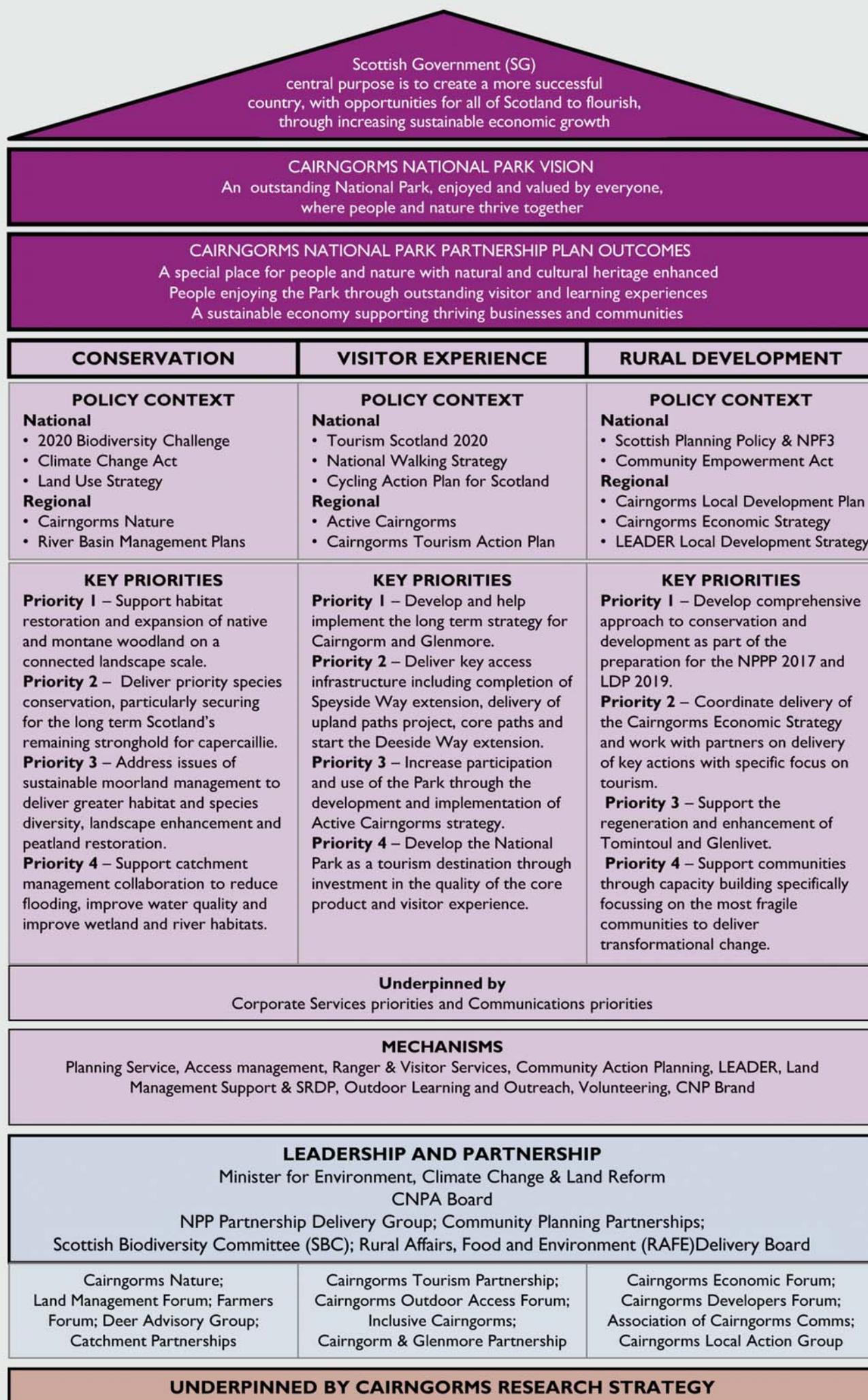
CNPA Values

The CNPA is an open, inclusive, innovative and professional organisation, that behaves with integrity.

CNPA Role

- Bringing partners together to deliver conservation at a landscape scale;
- Ensuring the quality of visitor experience matches the quality of environment by coordinating investment in the core infrastructure
- Ensuring people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities are able to experience and enjoy the National Park;
- Promoting investment in a diversified economy;
- Helping communities plan and achieve their own visions;
- Delivering a Planning Service to guide the right development to the right place;
- Delivering effective, efficient and sustainable services;
- Promoting the highest standards of governance, to support delivery of the Corporate Plan and the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan;
- Raise the profile of the Park;
- Create connection and commitment to care for the Park.

See page 18 to 25 for case studies of work undertaken during 2015/16 to deliver these outcomes, as well as information about the Park Authority services.





National Parks' Delivery of Services in Scotland

Scotland's two National Parks, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs and the Cairngorms, share the same four statutory aims. While there are differences of landscape, visitor impact and special qualities which distinguish each Park, both National Park Authorities (NPAs) are charged with achieving many common outcomes. Both NPAs are responsible for delivering a diverse range of similar services from managing planning development; administering grant schemes and developing vibrant rural communities, to conserving and managing priority species; outreach education and visitor information and management.

Alignment Between National Park Authorities: Achievements in 2015/16

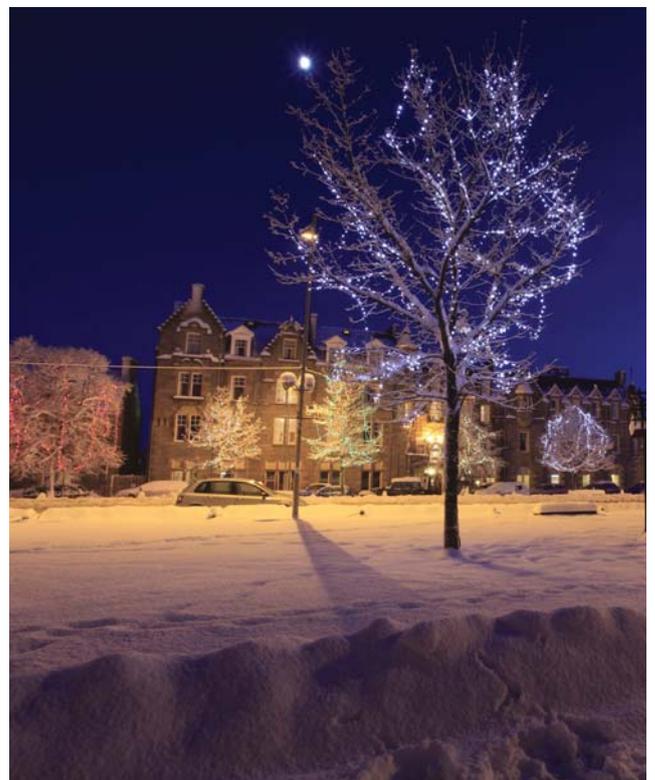
Work between the two National Parks, the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) – a registered charity specialising in path works and environmental management activities – and other funding partners, has led to our largest collective project. Funding of over £3 million has been secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund toward The Mountains and The People project. When combined with our and other partner funding, the total project value is in excess of £6 million over the period to 2020. The project commenced in 2015/16 with a multi-partner steering group convened by COAT overseeing a very successful first phase of delivery to March 2016. The first phase of path works were delivered in both National Parks, and recruitment commenced for the first cohort of trainees based in Balloch.

Our ongoing work in establishing and delivering collaborative working arrangements between Loch Lomond and the Trossachs (LLTNPA) and Cairngorms National Park Authorities (CNPA) has also continued. Developing and delivering shared services by the NPAs focuses on three aims.

1. Establishing more robust service delivery for two relatively small organisations with high risk of adverse impact to service delivery from staff absence or turnover.
2. Realising efficiencies in service delivery.
3. Establishing single support or policy platforms where justified by commonality of need by two organisations, while respecting the differences of organisational culture and local priorities of each partner.

We continue to demonstrate efficiencies through collective activities and shared services, with, for example, operating single, collective pay and job evaluation systems, and participating jointly in national initiatives like the Procurement Capability Assessments. We share staff expertise and knowledge and, where most effective and economical to do so, undertake joint procurements and service delivery.

Both National Parks' senior teams and also Corporate Services management teams continue to meet regularly to build on these strengthened foundations and explore further ways of working more collaboratively, effectively and efficiently.



Delivering Sustainable Economic Growth

The Park's four statutory aims are:

- to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
- to promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
- to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public; and
- to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

Collective and coordinated delivery of these statutory aims contributes to the Scottish Government's purpose, to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

In particular, we aim to make a significant contribution to the National Outcome – 'We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people'. In promoting partnership working and giving leadership to all those involved in the Cairngorms National Park, the Park Authority coordinates delivery of these four statutory aims through the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan, which was launched by Ministers in May 2012.

Over the course of 2015/16, there have been a number of specific achievements with regard to delivering sustainable economic growth within the National Park.

- The Park Authority worked with the Cairngorms LEADER Local Action Group (CLAG) to secure almost £3 million in EU LEADER funding within the Cairngorms and has supported the CLAG in its incorporation as a Charity and in being one of the first areas

to open its programme for funding applications. The CLAG has focused on its investment theme of seeking to grow the economy of the National Park as one of its initial priorities for project applications in its launch.

- Opening of the Speyside Way extension from Aviemore to Kincaig has added a key piece of infrastructure to support development of our tourism and Active Cairngorms economies. This is further enhanced by the mountain paths delivered by Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) within The Mountains and The People (TMTP) project mentioned previously.
- We continue to support the training requirements of our land based businesses within the Cairngorms, while supporting the next phase of SVQ2 qualifications for trainees within the TMTP project. The Park Authority remains focused on supporting and ensuring delivery of training relative to the local economy.
- The Park Authority has helped bring together and coordinate a working group toward development of a Community Broadband Company, aiming at providing superfast broadband services to those rural communities in the National Park who will not benefit from the national roll out of services planned for the period to 2020. Access to key telecommunications facilities is essential to deliver sustainable economic growth within the Cairngorms National Park's rural communities.

In conclusion, our work along with our partners, aims to establish exemplars of sustainable development within Scotland's rural economy – delivering sustainable economic growth within the Cairngorms National Park, while illustrating best practice that other rural areas in Scotland may follow.

Delivery of Scottish Government's Strategic Outcomes

The CNPA has set out a business case demonstrating our contribution to the Scottish Government's purpose, creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth.

We achieve this through our eight programmes of work combining to contribute to nine of the Scottish Government's 16 strategic outcomes.

Our work makes a contribution to the following national strategic outcomes.

Outcome 2:	We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.
Outcome 4:	Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
Outcome 6:	We live longer, healthier lives.
Outcome 10:	We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.
Outcome 11:	We have strong resilient and supporting communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
Outcome 12:	We value and enjoy our natural and built environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.
Outcome 13:	We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.
Outcome 14:	We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.
Outcome 16:	Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

The Park Authority has adopted a suite of key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure its success in delivery of its Corporate Plan. Our monitoring against these KPIs is available through our reports to the CNPA board on our delivery in June and December each year, with the most recent report at the time of this publication, available at www.cairngorms.co.uk

Strong, Sustainable Economy

Top Facts and Figures



Cairngorms
NATIONAL PARK
Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh



Strong Identity

Park Visitors

1.7m
per year

91% know they are in the Park

50% National Park status influenced decision to visit (63% of overseas visitors)

Park Businesses

200+
use Park brand

79% say Park status attracts first time customers

Economic Collaboration



Strengthening Park economy by linking businesses and communities

Celebrating Good Design



Design Awards 2012

3 winners
12 commended
20 short-listed
56 entries



Working with Transport Scotland to dual A9 by 2025

Rural Development

100%

'called in' planning applications approved



1500
full planning permission

1000
built

250
affordable

Renewable Energy Since 2011

Production



Woodfuel usage



Supporting Land Based Businesses



37
annual average businesses strengthened through training

532 staff benefiting per annum

Guidance and Advice

SRDP investment of

£5.25 million

between 2007-2013

Young Trainee Opportunities

Path Skills Certificate
Environmental Conservation SVQ Level 2+

Strengthening Communities

Community Development Officers **6** funded by CNPA



Community Leaders

Superfast broadband coming 2015 to:

- Tomintoul
- Grantown-on-Spey
- Aviemore



Empowering Communities

Top Facts and Figures



Cairngorms
NATIONAL PARK
Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaigh Ruaidh

Community-led Initiatives

£ **16+** million invested via Cairngorms National Park partnerships

228 Community projects supported by LEADER



25% Awards from disadvantaged backgrounds

Connecting with Nature
27,000 completed John Muir Award
25% of Scotland's total Awards

Community Leadership Programme
869 people inspired to engage with their environment
48 leaders from black and minority ethnic groups and marginalised communities

Learning New Skills
232 completed Junior Ranger Programme
20 involved in international events

Education Grants Awarded
£8,000+
44 schools
10 marginalised groups

50% from deprived areas or who have never been to the Park

Outdoor Learning Travel Grants
Resources for Curriculum for Excellence

32 Walking to Health Groups
19 community path leaflets
200 miles signposted community path networks
8 communities supporting active travel to school & work

Healthier Lifestyles

Improving Accessibility For All **£7.5** million
paths, bridges, signs, interpretations, leaflets

Improving Public Services

Top Facts and Figures



Cairngorms
NATIONAL PARK
Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh

Working in Partnership

Co-ordinated management plan

40+ partners

20+ public sector organisations

Leverage Figures

For every **£1** Grant-in-Aid received **£4** invested into Park

Shared services

Annual efficiency savings

CNPA saved **£ 1/2 million** over last 5yrs



Planning Applications

14% faster

determination speed in 2013/14 of like for like local applications than the national average

Sustainable Travel Policy

40.5% reduction in carbon emission since 2007

22,978 tonne reduction

£ 20 million extra funding over last 10 years

- Community-based Projects
- Land-based businesses
- Improved access and recreation facilities

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

Conservation

Visitor Experience

Rural Development

“The Park Authority is responsible for delivering a diverse range of services from managing planning development; administering grant schemes and developing vibrant rural communities, to conserving and managing priority species; outreach education and visitor information and management.”





CONSERVATION

Peatland restoration

Peatlands are internationally important! They store over three billion tonnes of carbon – 20 times that found in all of Britain’s forests. With more than half found in Scotland, they represent Scotland’s single largest carbon store on land. They provide a home for a variety of specialist plants and animals, can reduce flood events, provide clean drinking water and are a valuable asset for sporting managers.

Quite simply – caring for our peatlands means protecting wildlife and habitats and helping to store more carbon.

Peatland Action, led by Scottish Natural Heritage in partnership with the CNPA, has seen a number of very successful projects to restore damaged peatlands in the National Park and as a result, is directly contributing to the Government’s targets on climate change mitigation.



Peatland restoration is an important area of work for the Cairngorms National Park Authority as the process of carbon storage can only happen if peatlands are healthy and functioning. In the Park, peatland restoration work has used innovative methods including restoring bare peat through the application of a living carpet of sphagnum mosses while eroded hags were re-profiled and re-vegetated using 8-tonne excavator. Work has been carried out at Mar, Glenlivet, Balmoral and Candacraig Estates, Invereshie & Inshriach National Nature Reserve and Glenshee Ski Centre.

Those pioneering works, coupled with the effective collaboration between land managers and the CNPA, led to the project being recognised at the RSPB’s ‘Nature of Scotland’ awards in November 2015 where the project scooped the Innovation Award. Ensuring the peatlands of the Cairngorms National Park remain healthy and functioning long into the future remains a priority for the CNPA and features strongly in the emerging National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022.



VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Active Cairngorms

We know that physical inactivity is the second biggest cause of mortality, leading to around 2,500 premature deaths in Scotland every year. We also know that increasing physical activity can lead to improvements in many conditions, from heart disease to mental health issues. Active Cairngorms wants residents and visitors to enjoy and use the Park for physical activity on a daily basis and in doing so improve their health and wellbeing.

Active Cairngorms is the outdoor access strategy for the Cairngorms National Park. It aims to make 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.

Ensuring that it is easy for people to walk or cycle to work or school instead of taking the car is a major part of the strategy, ensuring there are good paths in the right places.

With 1.7 million visitors per year and 18,000 residents, the Park can help prompt good changes for people with its great path network. Integrating physical activity into peoples' everyday lives by making it easy for them is key to delivering Active Cairngorms and in turn, supporting the Scottish Government's drive for us all to lead healthier lifestyles.

With this in mind, a great deal of background work has been going on over the past year to test a medical practice referral scheme using the great outdoors to combat a range of physical and mental health problems. The partnership between NHS Grampian, NHS Highland and the CNPA, supported by Commonwealth Games Legacy 2014 funding, will see patients prescribed daily physical activity, using the Active Cairngorms Health Walks Groups as providers.



Health walks are designed to be short and safe with benefits for everyone but especially those with heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, dementia, diabetes, those suffering from depression or people who want to lose weight.



With Commonwealth Games Legacy 2014 and Paths For All funding, new groups have been established in recent months, taking the number of Health Walks Groups in and around the National Park to 32. Early in 2016, the project celebrated 12 years and the clocking up of over 50,000 volunteer hours.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Collaborative marketing

The Cairngorms area has always been a popular visitor destination but since becoming a National Park in 2003, visitor numbers have increased and, according to the most recent visitor survey, customer satisfaction is on the up too. 96 per cent of visitors interviewed said they loved the Cairngorms National Park and 98 per cent said they would recommend the Park to others, while 93 per cent said they would visit the Cairngorms National Park again.

Impressive as those results are, increasing the numbers of visitors throughout the year – as opposed to the traditionally busy summer holiday months – is a priority for the Cairngorms National Park Authority, working together with VisitScotland and the Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP).

This year saw a very successful joint campaign to promote the Cairngorms National Park as a great place to visit in the spring and autumn months, traditionally quieter times in terms of the tourist trade.

A mixture of funding – including £20,000 from the CNPA, VisitScotland Growth Fund awarded to the CBP, CBP's own funds and Highland and Aberdeenshire Council funding for already existing area campaigns – meant that VisitScotland was able to market the Park very effectively, focusing on the adventure loving visitors as well as those who like to take things a little easier and may already have a passion for the area.

With the collaborative marketing campaigns consisting of a mixture of press advertising, mail shots, targeted emails and social media, the value of the CNPA's contribution was significantly more than the £20,000 invested by the Park Authority.

As a result of the success of this first collaborative marketing campaign, the CNPA, VisitScotland and the CBP are teaming up again to deliver new campaigns for autumn 2016 and spring 2017, with a view to enticing people here during those off peak times and visiting the less obvious areas – the secret gems – of the Cairngorms National Park.



PARK AUTHORITY SERVICES

Overview

Much of the work undertaken by the Cairngorms National Park Authority, as outlined in this review, involves working in partnership with others, influencing, building relationships and facilitating projects through taking a lead or hosting roles where other delivery partners perhaps do not have the full operational or business systems capacity to deliver the full range of activities required.

Our people and organisational structures are therefore critical to our continued success. In 2015/16, we completed implementation of our agreed, two-year Organisational Development Strategy, through which we aimed to improve and develop as an organisation through our leadership, people, culture, knowledge, facilities and communications.

Implementation of this work established a coordinated change management programme where we improved our services which we deliver internally and externally, and demonstrated our ongoing delivery of best value in management and use of the public resources we have responsibility for.

Our significantly improved staff survey results in autumn 2015 evidenced our internal successes in delivering our planned improvements. We acknowledge we still have work to do and this will be drawn together in a follow-up Organisational Development Strategy to span 2016 to 2018.

Improving efficiency, effectiveness and economy

The Park Authority focuses on the delivery of best value, and on the improvement in efficiency, effectiveness and economy in exercising our functions. The contribution to the Scottish Government's National Outcome, that 'Our public services are high quality, continually



improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs' represents a key linkage between the Park Authority's corporate strategies and national policy.

We maintain oversight of effectiveness of service delivery through a direct linkage between our complaints handling procedure and development of best value services. We ensure complaints and any other forms of feedback are used to inform service development and help identify improvements where these are required. We overhauled our complaints handling service in 2015/16 to ensure that it provides the best possible service to its users and also can make the most effective contribution to our own service improvement. We also value input from internal audit, which supported our work on complaints handling, and other areas of external review to identify potential areas for service improvement and enhanced effectiveness.

In terms of the Park Authority's delivery of efficiencies in its operations, we continue to deliver against target cumulative efficiency savings. Consequently, the Park Authority is able to

maintain investment, through its Operational Plan, in projects within the National Park despite reductions in public sector funding, by redirecting these efficiency savings from organisational support into project investment.

Our delivery of services through shared services, particularly with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority, has been a contributory factor to successful delivery of efficiency savings and also to development of economic, effective service provision. The Park Authority both delivers and receives shared services as a consequence of these arrangements.

All functional areas of corporate services have been involved in the development of these shared services arrangements: governance and standards, audit, human resources, finance, and information technology. We also work collaboratively with a range of other public bodies. For example, our collaboration in a joint procurement process led by Scottish Natural Heritage has helped secure Best Value in service provision through appointment of a new internal audit service provider.

Planning service delivery

The CNPA has continued to deliver an effective and efficient Planning Service in 2015/16, with a significant reduction in timescales for decision making on local planning applications to an average of 14.6 weeks, from 22.2 weeks in the previous year. At the same time, the CNPA has continued to offer processing agreements on all planning applications it called in to provide applicants and the CNPA planning service with more certainty and security about the timescales for decision making. 71% of applications determined in 2015/16 had a processing agreement. Examples of planning applications approved in 2015/16 include the redevelopment of the Fife Arms Hotel in Braemar, which will create a 5 star hotel in this remote rural

community, and two further landmark stopping points for the Snow Roads Scenic Route Initiative. No planning applications were refused by the CNPA during 2015/16.

The planning service has continued to improve its customer service, with the publication of a planning service charter that sets out the standards customers should expect from the CNPA's planning service, adoption of development briefs for key housing sites in the Local Development Plan, production of additional Cairngorms Planning Advice Notes to provide easy to read advice for customers, introduction of Planning Service Newsletters to inform customers of changes and developments in the planning system that affect the National Park, replacement of our customer satisfaction survey and participation in the Scottish Government's pilot project to put into practice the principle of the National Town Centre Toolkit.

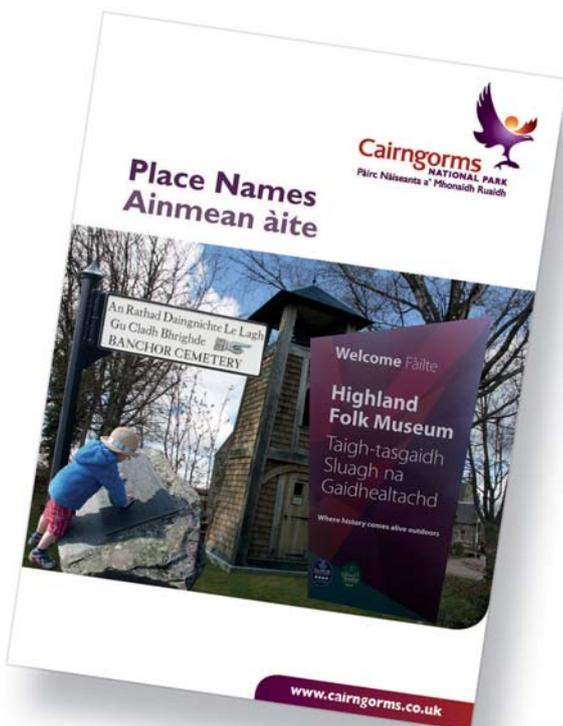


Gaelic Language Plan

The CNPA's first five year Gaelic Language Plan, adopted in 2013, focuses on four core commitments: identity, communications, publications and staffing. Progress against the Plan during 2015/16 includes: eight bi-lingual signs put in place outside the CNPA offices in Grantown-on-Spey, guidance and training for staff on handling Gaelic language enquiries, the CNPA's ability to deal with enquiries, in Gaelic promoted on our website, a reprint of the Gaelic Place Names leaflet, a weekly 'Gaelic' tweet on Cairngorms News twitter account (with 4300 followers), and the successful submission of an application to the Gaelic Language Action Plan Implementation Fund to help promote the use of Gaelic with third parties.

Am Plana Gàidhlig

Tha Plana Gàidhlig còig-bliadhna an CNPA, a thàinig gu bith ann an 2013, stèidhte air còig prìomhachasan: fèin-aithne, conaltraidhean, foillseachaidhean agus luchd-obrach. Tha an t-adhartas a rèir a' Phlana rè 2015/16 a' gabhail a-steach: ochd soidhnichean dà-chànanach taobh a-muigh oifisean an CNPA am Baile nan Granndach, stiùireadh agus trèanadh dha luchd-obrach air dèiligeadh ri conaltradh tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, comas an CNPA air dèiligeadh ri daoine a tha a' cur fios chun CNPA tron Ghàidhlig, ath-fhoillseachadh air bileag air ainmean-àite Gàidhlig, tweet Gàidhlig ga sgaoileadh gach seachdain air a' chunntas twitter Cairngorms News (le 4,300 ga leantainn), agus iartras soirbheachail gu GLAIF gus brosnachadh a thoirt dha cleachdadh na Gàidhlig le buidhnean treas pàrtaidh.



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NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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