

## Active Cairngorms Action Plan Review

### Introduction

We are currently developing the Active Cairngorms Action Plan, and are looking to garner the views of key stakeholders as to what the priority actions going forward should be. The higher-level work is already complete, and we are not seeking to identify new strategic objectives as these are already in place as part of the previous consultation and development of the National Park Partnership Plan. What we are now needing to do is develop the specific actions to deliver those strategic objectives.

The Highland Green Health Partnership is asked to:

- Take note of progress to date;
- Consider the actions and advise on matters relating to health including any additional actions required;
- Advise if appropriate about how the team could further improve their approach.

Panel members are also invited to study emerging actions in more detail and to provide feedback after the meeting (i.e. by e-mail).

### Background

Revision of the Active Cairngorms Action Plan (see annex 1) has been identified in National Park Partnership Plan 4 (NPPP4), see figure one, and is a key means to deliver many of the NPPP4 objectives.



Figure 1- Hierarchy of Plans

The proposed aim for the Active Cairngorms Action Plan is:

*Our aim is for all residents and visitors to enjoy and use the Park responsibly everyday.*

The Active Cairngorms Action Plan is structured around the following priority areas of work:

1. Managing for Visitors- Our approach to managing visitor pressures at key hotspots:
2. Minimising recreational impacts on sensitive species and habitats:
3. Ranger Services and Ranging:
4. Green Health
5. Volunteer Cairngorms
6. Youth and Outdoor learning
7. Paths and trails

Within each of these areas a series of actions to be delivered over the next 5 years is being developed. These actions largely reflect work that is ongoing as well as additional work required to deliver the NPP4 objectives already identified. As a partnership plan relevant partners will be identified.

Currently Park Authority staff are consulting key stakeholders on the actions required to deliver the NPP4 objectives. It is anticipated that a revised draft will be circulated for consultation in late September early October with the CNPA Board adopting the plan at the end of November with publication in early 2024.



## Annex 1- Draft Active Cairngorms Action Plan

### Plan Structure

Aim- Our aim is for all residents and visitors to enjoy and use the Park responsibly everyday.

#### **Nature**

**A7: Reduce wildfire risk by developing an integrated wildfire management plan for the National Park**

**A13: Ensure species thrive in the National Park with key assemblages across the Cairngorms within the semi-natural landscape.**

#### **People**

**B9: Mental and physical health**

**B10: A Park for All**  
**B11: Volunteering and outdoor learning**

#### **Place**

**C5: Visitors to the National Park**  
**C7: Transport to and around the Park**

**C8: Accessible path and cycle network**

**C9: High-quality visitor experience**

**C10: Cultural heritage**



#### Key priorities

1. Managing for Visitors
2. Minimising impacts on sensitive species and habitats
3. Ranger Services and Rangering
4. Green Health

#### Monitoring

6. Youth and Outdoor learning
7. Paths and trails

For the key priority identified delivering the actions below, all of which will help to deliver the National Park Partnership Plan, there are principally **two** overarching priorities:

### Managing for Visitors

The pandemic summers of 2020 and 2021 were unprecedented in terms of the changes that were seen in visitor distribution and behaviour in the Park.. A combination of circumstances, including the easing of lockdown policies and the desire of visitors to experience the outdoors and nature, put significant new pressures on certain locations in the Park. Areas of the Park popular with visitors (see map) saw huge increases in visitor pressures and instances of anti-social behaviour. New arrangements for managing for visitors were put in place with partners during this time including Increase In ranger on the ground and coordinated awareness raising campaign's as well as significant Investment In Infrastructure.

Looking ahead the overarching priorities for this area of work is:

1. Reduce potential conflict between residents and visitors:
2. Promote collaboration across estate and organisational boundaries ensuring a positive visitor experience.

ACTIONS	Lead Partners	NPP Objectives
Provide clear guidance on recreational activities such as camping and barbecues	CNPA, SFRS, Managing for Visitors Group	A7, A13,
Pilot habitat recovery measures at key visitor hotspots		A13
Develop management agreements and guidelines at key visitor hotspots and sensitive sites		A13,



Promoted paths on key hotspots will be maintained to a high standard.		
Maintain the Managing for Visitors Group		
Develop standard signage for promotion of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code		
Continue to develop and promote 'tread lightly' as the main means to promote the Scottish Outdoor Access Code in the Park including in accessible formats		
Support and develop a range of resources for land managers to promote responsible access on their land including provision of land management signs, leaflets and posters.		
Deliver a programme to support best practice within land management sector on safe guarding access rights		
Guidance and support to land managers to reduce access obstructions		
Install people counters on key paths and car parks using real-time data to manage visitors pressures		

#### Case study example

### Minimising impacts on sensitive species and habitats

To enable nature and people thrive together it is clear that to maintain viable populations of sensitive species such as caper and safeguard fragile environments such as the core mountain areas intensive visitor management measures are needed. These will focus on enabling the public to engaged positively with nature while at the same time supporting quiet areas for nature to thrive.

Looking ahead the overarching priorities for this area of work is:

1. Reduce recreational disturbance to key sensitive species:
2. Reduce recreational impacts on sensitive habitats.



<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>Lead Partners</b>	<b>NPP Objectives</b>
Develop a disturbance map identifying key sensitive species and sites		A13
Develop best practice for the management of bikes and especially e-bikes on sensitive sites including the plateau		
Reduce the impact of recreation on ground nesting birds such as capercaillie by implementing site specific actions from The Cairngorms Capercaillie Framework Legacy Plan		
Develop a 'dogs welcome' package for the Park including web resources publications and identified dog walking areas.		
Update Outdoor Access Events Guidance		
Develop innovative techniques to reduce upland path erosion		
Maintain priority upland paths		
Expand 'Adopt a Path' Scheme.		
Review and update the Upland Path Audit		

### Case study

## Rangers and Rangering

Rangers working in the Park play a crucial role in helping people to understand, engage with and safeguard the natural and historic environment in places that people come to enjoy. Rangers work closely with disadvantaged groups, local communities and young people, helping to look after nature and connect more people with it.

Looking ahead the overarching priorities for this area of work is:

1. To maintain a high profile network of Cairngorms' rangers, connecting people with an outstanding National Park. Working collaboratively to provide an innovative, inspirational and professional service.
2. Providing a career pathway into Rangering.



ACTIONS	Lead Partners	NPP Objectives
Coordinate use of public funds to deliver Ranger Service coverage across the whole Park		
Maintain a network of Ranger Services in the Cairngorms		
Develop a programme of training to support a committed competent and skilled workforce		
Promote the benefits of ranger services in addressing biodiversity loss and climate change		
Develop career pathways for young people into rangering.		

Case study

## Green Health

With an ageing population, more people with multiple conditions, chronic illness and long term mental health issues living in the Park developing green health opportunities can respond to these pressures. The Parks natural environment is a resource that can be used to help tackle some of our key health issues. The Active Cairngorms Action Plan is about a step change in the use of nature-based solutions to deliver health outcomes

Looking ahead the overarching priorities for this area of work is:

1. Improving access to health enhancing opportunities in nature
2. Reducing inequalities through additional support for disadvantaged groups

ACTIONS	Lead Partners	NPP Objectives
Embed pathways to green health and nature within health, social care and education	NHS / CNPA (C2030)	



Maintain up to date information for green health opportunities and promote widely within communities	CNPA / community green health networks	
Nurture strong community networks that will provide, and support access to, recreational opportunities for wellbeing	CNPA / local Voluntary Action hubs / community green health networks	
Increase volunteering opportunities linked to green health activities – e.g. volunteer rangers, health walks, etc.	CNPA / PfA	
Liaise with specific community support organisations to support particular groups: e.g. carers/young carers, ethnic minorities, seasonal workers	CNPA / community networks	
Promote green health opportunities throughout visitor information	CNPA	
Support initiatives for active and sustainable travel to access green health opportunities	CNPA	
Develop dementia friendly walks in each community		
Deliver a Health Walk programme		
Develop targeted promotion activities for those living sedentary lifestyles for example Green Health Week		

## Case study

### Volunteer Cairngorms

Delivering more environmental volunteering opportunities and developing Volunteer Rangers are a key means of delivering National Park Partnership Plan.

Looking ahead the overarching priorities for this area of work is:

1. Develop a world class Cairngorms National Park Volunteer Ranger service:





2. Raise awareness of existing environmental volunteering opportunities across the Cairngorms National Park.

ACTIONS	Lead Partners	NPP Objectives
Increase the number of Volunteer Rangers to 200 by 2030		
Liaise with specific community support organisations to support particular groups: e.g. carers/young carers, ethnic minorities, seasonal workers to access green volunteering opportunities		
Maintain Volunteer Cairngorms portal		
Deliver outreach volunteering programme to excluded groups		
Maintain awareness of environmental volunteering.		

Case study

## Outdoor Learning

- 1.
- 2.

ACTIONS	Lead Partners	NPP Objectives
Promote and manage use of the John Muir Award in the national park.		
Deliver Junior Ranger programmes to 5 local secondary schools.		
Deliver monthly Junior Ranger activities in Badenoch & Strathspey and on Deeside.		
Promote and manage Cairngorms NP Education Travel Grant.		



Develop and facilitate Cairngorms Youth Action Team events programme.		
Deliver CNPA Ranger Service led education sessions for primary schools in the national park.		

## Case study

## Paths and trails

Since the Park's designation in 2004, we have built our access network in partnership with land managers who have been maintaining and developing paths. With a focus on upgrading and maintaining these paths, developing and enhancing our unique path network underpins the Park's quality as a tourism destination, tackles health inequalities, supports active lifestyles and active travel and connects people with nature.

Looking ahead the overarching priorities for this area of work is:

1. Community path networks will be well promoted:
2. Community path networks will be barrier free.

<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>Lead Partners</b>	<b>NPP Objectives</b>
Review and publish updated core path plan		
Develop a more robust basis for path investment		
Maintain suite of community path leaflets		
Develop online promotion of community paths		
Install, update and replace community path signage across the National Park		
Install, update and replace community path network map boards		
Support community path groups to improve accessibility of community path networks		



Implement targeted visitor monitoring programme through strategic review of existing monitoring at indicator sites (lowland paths, upland paths, trailheads, core paths and LDRs) with additional monitoring to be carried out where gaps are identified.		
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Case study
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## Monitoring and Review

*List of Acronyms:*