Welcome to Glen Nevis: A Framework for Sustainable Tourism in Glen Nevis GLENEST

March 2021

NatureScot
Scotland's Nature Agency
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

'This project report is supported by NatureScot, through the Better Places Green Recovery Fund'.

Our project partners are: Forestry and Land Scotland, Glen Nevis Estate, High Life Highland, Jahama Highland Estates, John Muir Trust.

Executive Summary

The Nevis Partnership (NP) appointed Bryden Associates at the end of February 2021 to complete this study in four weeks - by the end of March 2021. Although constrained by Covid restrictions, the study is the result of an intensive process of information gathering and analysis via desk top research, site appraisals and key stakeholder consultation.

The study sets out:

Introduction

Part 1: Short Term Challenges; Solutions; and Sources of implementation funding.

Part 2: Road map to deliver Sustainable Tourism in Glen Nevis – Outlining challenges, solutions, options appraisal, and income generation.

The study has confirmed the importance of Glen Nevis (and Ben Nevis) as a world-famous visitor and tourist destination in Scotland and established the sensitivities and challenges of the area. It has highlighted the priorities that need attention and the level of resource and commitment required.

Covid-19 has provided an opportunity for the Nevis Partnership to reset its future and what it takes to ensure long-term sustainable tourism for Glen Nevis. Equally, we must live with and manage Covid-19 and know that its impact has not dented growth in CO_2 emissions and climate change.

To date visitor management has been largely concerned with minimising the negative impacts and less attention has been placed on understanding the visitor experience. Whilst Glen Nevis and Ben Nevis are iconic destinations with international appeal, there is a lack of supporting visitor infrastructure and management mechanisms with a full perspective on sustainability.

To ensure Glen Nevis is enjoyed by future generation, the NP and its individual partners will have to make some tough decisions. Tourism and government must be persuaded to put new long-term resources into this unique national landscape that drives the visitor economy, benefits people, and local communities, but where shortfalls have been identified.

Scotland has 11 National Outcomes including one on the Environment

Scotland is a beautiful country, and we are blessed with abundant natural resources and architecture to rival the best in the world. Through this Outcome we recognise that it is our duty to protect and enhance these assets as essential to our economy, culture, way of life and the wellbeing of future generations.

Working to address the challenges Glen Nevis is facing will take a combined effort and some innovative solutions. Partners cannot afford to delay efforts to address a move towards a more holistic tourism offering, with a focus on sustainable economic, environmental, and social outcomes.

At the Inception Meeting no red lines were identified by the Client Team. We have set out actions and ideas which not everyone may agree with, but as independent consultants it is important to show that these have been considered as part of this project.

Key Positives

- A Nevis experience improves people's wellbeing – it is a 0.5 million visitor destination
- Environment not in bad shape considering pressures – duty to protect
- Landscape Partnership successfully delivered capital investment on visitor infrastructure – paths and bridges with car parks to follow
- Some quality award winning individual businesses – Glen Nevis Estate and Youth Hostel –
- Partners – Jahama, JMT and FLS have longer term (individual) objectives

Key Negatives

- Covid recovery preparedness
- Lack of data on visitor numbers, impacts and experience – key sustainable demand metrics
- In adequate infrastructure (car parks, toilets, focal visitor hub) relative to growth in visitor demand
  - 33% more parking spaces since 2001 but 100% more visitors
  - Same number of public toilets as in 2001
  - Fewer ranger type posts

- Partnership not functioning effectively
- Lack of core resource funding - financial sustainability is weak
- Weak social sustainability – links with community
- Transport sustainability – promoting sustainable travel is slow

Part 1 Short Term Challenges - Recommendations

Co-ordinated response

Action 1: Immediately form a new Glen Nevis Visitor Management Response Group with a strong independent chairperson. 6 key tasks for group are set out in Part 1 report.

Communications reset

Action 2: Prepare a simple communication strategy.

Stewardship and enforcement restart

Action 3: Establish a human resource availability base record. The base should list available personnel and detail availability and shift patterns based on the Action 1 calendar of holidays/peak times etc to ensure appropriate cover and co-ordination are in place.

Action 4: Prepare mechanisms underpinned by a calendar covering the period Easter to October listing school, 'trade' and bank holidays. Weekends, known large events (e.g. Commercial charity events and Ben Nevis race) and weather forecasts can be added to predict periods of maximum demand.

Action 5: Seek clarity on what enforcement options would be available, including who can carry out enforcement, and possible trigger points leading to their imposition.

Resources

Significant short term Covid recovery public resources are available with key sources listed in main report. Must make applications within specified dates.

Part 2 Road map to deliver Sustainable Tourism in Glen Nevis - Recommendations

The road map is based on 7 pillars of destination sustainability.

1 Environmental sustainability

2 Social sustainability

3 Economic sustainability

4 Risk

5 Sustainable demand

6 Sustainable Transport/Mobility

7 Sustainable Accommodation

1 Environmental Sustainability (ES)

Action ES 1

Path network condition surveys will be undertaken and recorded on a GIS data base for asset management purposes.

Action ES 2

NP will establish a formal incident recording system to establish a baseline for solutions.

Action ES 3

Water quality in the River Nevis will achieve a high rating by 2025.

Action ES 4

Management measures will address impacts on species and habitats and mitigation/solutions.

Action ES 5

On carbon emission the NP will establish a tourism carbon baseline, a verifiable audit process and targets for improvements to reach 75% by 2030 and 100 % by 2045.

Action ES 6

Clear plan for waste/litter management and toilet provision

2 Social Sustainability (SS)

Action SS 1

In partnership the NP will undertake the following audits and set appropriate targets and solutions/actions.

- Accessibility – against the BT Countryside for All Standards and Guidelines;
- Training schemes and opportunities;
- Volunteering;

Action SS 2

In partnership the NP will undertake an audit of resident sentiment and opinion and address issues.

Action SS 3

NP to explore with all businesses in the Glen provision of Quality Assurance support to meet social and sustainable assurance standards.

3 Economic Sustainability (ES)

Action ES 1

NP will explore options for 'grant in aid', capital and revenue project funding support showing how core funding provide coordinated support and meets planned outcomes for recovery in line with the National Performance Framework. To make a well-constructed approach to Scottish Government for sufficient funds to aid recovery and build a sustainable future.

4 Risk (R

Action R 1

NP to develop safety plan(s)/fact sheets for Glen Nevis with costed actions.

Action R 2

NP to develop and deliver a product knowledge, safety awareness and site visit programme for people employed in the local tourism industry.

Action R 3

NP to develop and deliver a heritage and authenticity programme to be available online.

Action R 4

NP to explore the value of a local place plan for Glen Nevis.

5 Sustainable Tourism Demand (STD)

Action STD 1

A Nevis barometer/ observatory to include mechanisms for:

1 Quantitative Visitor Survey – install a counter network.

2 Qualitative Visitor Survey – regular surveys.

3 Customer database development in line with GDPR requirements.

Action STD 2

Signage review leading to development of signage manual and subsequent rationalisation.

Action STD 3

Development of a Mountain Management App to provide a digital platform.

6 Sustainable Transport and Mobility (STM)

Action STM 1

Glen transport audit and review with solutions and recommendations.

Action SMT 2

Short term – by 2025:

- Road corridor improvements in place – clearway and signage improvements;
- Advance warning signs in place;

- Seasonal road closures in place for upper Glen;
- Car parking charge elements in place, pricing, capacity, and management;

<u>Action SMT 3</u>

Long term 2030:

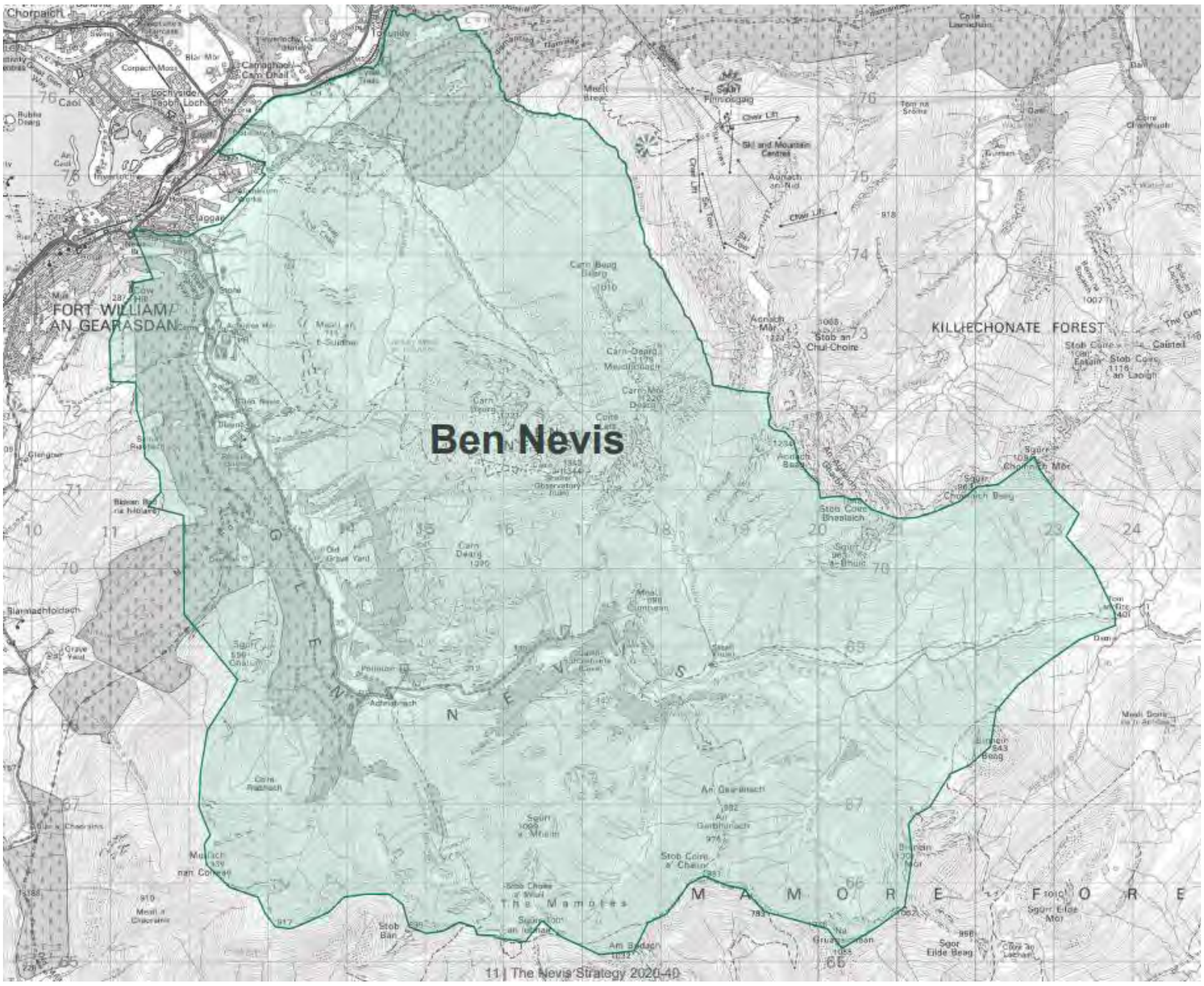
- E-Bike fleet available;
- Micro mobility around sites improved;
- Automated Number Plate Recognition option;

<u>7 Sustainable Accommodation (SA)</u>

Action SA 1

NP to explore greater joined up working arrangements with accommodation providers, to make the Glen a more sustainable place for the community, employees, and guests though commitment to low carbon processes and activities.

Map – Source Nevis Strategy 2020 -40.



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Fáilte go Nibheis |Frèam air son turasachd seasmhach an Gleann Nibheis.

INTRODUCTION

GLENEST – Glen Nevis Sustainable Tourism.

Contents

1 Overview

Glen Nevis (and Ben Nevis) has a deep gestalt in the consciousness of the people of Scotland (and the people of the UK) that transcends ownership and policy agendas and ensures its continued popularity. It has National Scenic Area (NSA) status with its rich cultural heritage overlaying prominent geology, topographical features and sensitive environments and designated habitats and species.

In 2019, around 450,000 people in, perhaps, 200,000 vehicles (assuming an average of 2 per vehicle plus minibuses/coaches/foot/cycle) entered the Glen along 12km of tarmac road, mainly for tourism purposes. Visitation patterns are seasonal with most visiting between Easter and October and mostly using space along the road corridor, some paths and a few Glen destinations, some of which are environmentally sensitive – such as Steall Meadows.

87% of visitors to the Highland come for the scenery & landscape, compared with 50% for Scotland as a whole[1]. Glen Nevis reported a 30% annual increase in visitors from 2016 to 2019 with 70% of people coming from the UK and 40% from 2019 to 2020 with 100% from the UK. 'Visitor - vehicle and boot traffic', UK wide interest and multiple benefits expectations, difficult – even controversial – means issues in Glen Nevis have always ebbed and flowed. However, trends suggest recent levels of growth (and challenges) may continue, as has been the case in comparable Highland locations such as Skye, Cairngorms National Park and the NC500.[2]

2020 brought Covid-19, major disruptions and loss of income for some. **In 2019 Highland received 2.9 million visitors. Yet despite lock down in 2020 this more than doubled to 6.1 million people staying for 13 million visitor nights.** Traffic congestion and reported incidents highlighted constraints on capacity and the effects of underinvestment and put the Glen under pressure as never before – people are feeling frustrated. Covid-19 has exposed underlying weaknesses and tensions, shining a bright light on many existing issues, and has led to a discussion on longer term sustainable tourism management.

In order to prepare for the post Covid recovery and ensure a synergy of resources the Nevis Partnership are seeking two outcomes:

Part 1: Short Term Challenges; Solutions; and Sources of implementation funding

Part 2: Road map to deliver Sustainable Tourism in Glen Nevis – Outlining challenges, solutions, options appraisal, and income generation

To date the conventional approach to visitor management in the Glen has been largely concerned with minimising the negative impacts through repairs, more infrastructures and building local capacities. Less attention has been placed on understanding visitor trends, in particularly their motivations and expectations and the experiences they demand. Post the Covid-19 epidemic these will be different and during the period of Covid-19 it is recognised that the Glen, along with other countryside sites, has started to attract new market segments.

Significant pivots of change are the immense values now placed on our outdoors and nature as key components of health, well-being and travel motives, alongside omnipresent social media. Public policy/funding is now shaped around resilience and adaptation to other strategic drivers such as climate change, net zero, Tourism Declares and land stewardship.

[1] Tourism Committee | The Highland Council
[2] Visitor_Management_Report_09.03.2021_final_lr_original.pdf (johnmuirtrust.org)

The tourism economy has an important role in helping communities recover from the impacts of Covid-19, but the symptoms of over tourism will not be tolerated.

Nevis Partnership work has shifted from infrastructure to securing both its financial future, viability and delivering measures to cope with anticipated increased demand for outdoor recreation and the accompanying changes in visitor behaviour.

2 Area covered by this report

When Glen Nevis is referred to in the report this can generally thought to be the Glen essentially below the 400m contour. But firm boundaries have been avoided as cause and effect is actually far wider. The following descriptions are used to characterise the Glen.

Lower Glen

Lower Glen sees the heaviest levels of use from both visitor and locals and has the highest capacity to absorb people. The Glen begins at the Bridge of Nevis, on the A82 within the town of Fort William. The lower Glen is part of the Fort William settlement area. Heading south to the Nevis Visitor Centre, the Glen is flanked by rough grazing on the Achintee side of the river with forestry to the west on the slopes of the Mamores. Achintee is the start of the original Ben Nevis path. By bridge from the centre, is a short link to this path. Native woodland is creeping across the Achintee Grazings over the rocky slopes below Carn Dearg to Polldubh. Glen Nevis Estate is an accommodation hub, with restaurant, campsite, touring pitches, static caravans, wooden pods, and self-catering accommodation is on the Glen floor. A second link to the Ben path is across the bridge at the Youth Hostel, a little further south beside the road. The West Highland Way drops through FLS-owned land and into the lower Glen before finishing in Fort William.

Middle Glen

The Middle Glen is perhaps least used with most visitors passing through, although with easier access to level open ground means this part of the Glen is attractive for wild campers. The forest area to the west affords excellent views across the Glen to Ben Nevis. Beyond the cattle grid and the Youth Hostel the middle of the Glen is dominated to the west by extensive commercial forestry and there are a range of access points from the road, though rough grazing, down to the River Nevis. At the Lower Falls, at the foot of Stob Ban, there is a car park and a bus turning area. At Polldudh the road crosses the River Nevis then, as a single track with passing places, turns sharply east and climbs 200m over about 2km to a final 'benched' turning circle come car park (Steall Falls) at the end of the public road.

Upper Glen

The Upper Glen is the most scenic part of the Glen, but the topography confines most visitors to the narrow 'corridor' along the road and key nodes like the Lower Falls and Steall. The Water of Nevis rises on Binnein Mor (in 1929 part of the upper catchment was diverted to the Treig Scheme) and on its 22km journey to Loch Linnhe it flows through the popular hanging valley and grass meadow of Steall past Steall Falls, Scotland's second-highest waterfall, with a single drop of 120 metres accessed by a three-strand cable bridge. Below Steall, the river bursts through a tight boulder strewn gut and drops down a Himalayan style wooded gorge 140 metres to the main glen. A steep rocky path traverses along above the gorge connecting Steall meadow with the car park at the end of the public road below the spectacular 400m

Eoghainn waterslide. The further the visitor moves away from the public road, the more demanding the routes tend to become.

3 Key visitor management locations

We set out below a table highlighting the level of risk of visitor/user pressure (High, Medium, Low) at key points within the study area.

Area		Risk Level
Lower Glen		
1	Main Glen entry point – new (A82) and old Nevis Bridge	L
2	Curling ponds and bridge	M
3	Eas a Chlaiginn	M
4	Braveheart car park and Cow Hill link	M
5	Achintee – Ben Nevis path	H
6	Nevis Visitor Centre and bridge	H
7	Youth Hostel and bridge	H
8	Glen Nevis campsite	M
9	Back door' from/to West Highland Way	L
Middle Glen		
10	Lower Falls and Bridge	H
11	Polldudh Crags	H
12	Lower Falls/ Paddy's Bridge path	H
Upper Glen		
13	Road end Steall car park	H
14	Steall Gorge	M
15	Steall Meadow and Falls	H
16	'Back door' from/to Loch Treig/Corrour	L

Land ownerships in Glen Nevis are:

- Jahama (includes Achintee and Mamores plus buildings at Polldubh and Steall
- FLS (West side of the Glen)
- JMT (summit of Ben Nevis and Steall Meadow)

- Glen Nevis Estate (Glen floor with mixed accommodation and Coire Mhusgain and Stob Ban) plus buildings at Achriabhach
- Highland Council (Visitor Centre, toilets and Car Parks leased to Highlife Highland)
- Various others – SYHA – Youth Hostel

4 Key visitor activities

In 2018 approximately 450,000 people visited Glen Nevis. (Nevis Summer Journal 2019 No 7). Summiting Ben Nevis is a key motivation for many visitors. Approximately 36% of Glen visitors also take the path to Ben Nevis. But as Figure 1 below shows, not everyone who visits is interested purely in energetic outdoor activities. Passive and low-intensity experiences are important for many people with age, disabilities, health, and fitness being key determinants. Inclusive experiences should be a key part of the visitor product.

Active high intensity	Medium intensity	Low intensity
Summiting Ben Nevis	Glen floor cycle	Scenic drive
Munro walk	Steall Gorge walk and views	Waterfall, picnic, views
Climb	Riverside loop-walk	Ascent to viewing point
Section of multi-day walk	Wildlife watching	Photography/ social media
Wild camp/bivouac	Camp/stay in un-serviced site	Camp/stay in serviced site

All visitors, individual and group based, are seeking a satisfying and memorable experience. No one size fits all and the Glen must cater for different needs. During the 'visitor less' 'lockdown period' local people were out and about using the same resources as visitors, frequenting the same public spaces, and performing similar activities in their leisure time. Most will be using facilities closer to the Glen entrance accessible on foot or bike. Ben Nevis is the ultimate destination for many.

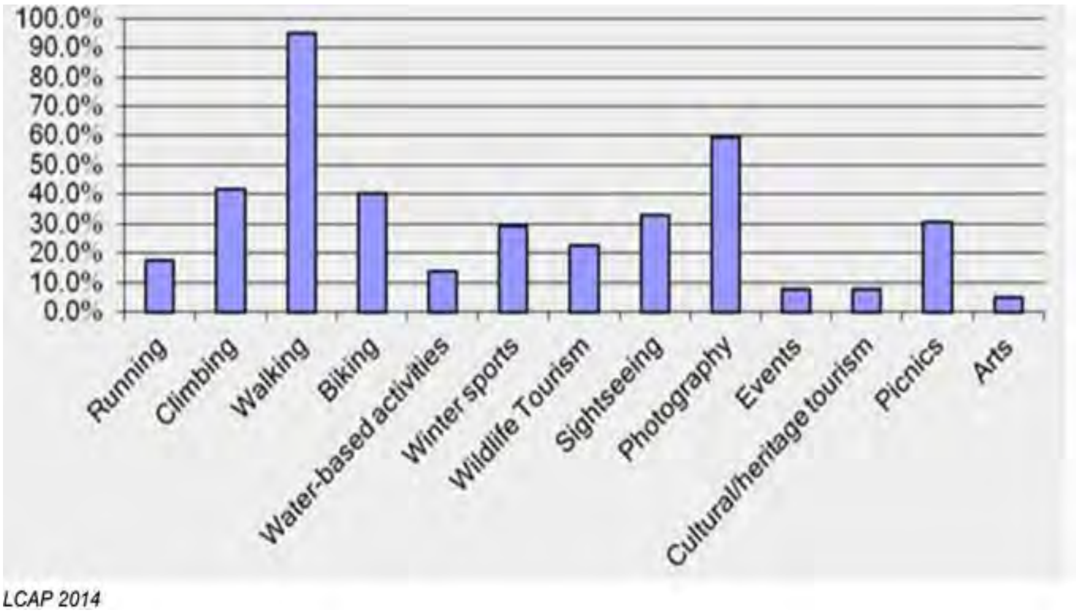

Figure 1 NLP Community Consultation and Visitor Survey (2013). Participants were asked - *In what activities do you participate in Glen/Ben Nevis.*

The intensity of use has created reported problems of path erosion, litter and wild toileting along with issues related to vehicle movements and wild camping. However, there are opportunities linked to shaping visitor behaviour and income generation.

5 Outlook

Overall, the outlook for tourism and hospitality businesses is very precarious in the near future. However, there is pent up consumer demand as demonstrated by advanced bookings.

Euro Monitor International predicts 66.4% of consumers[3] globally want to have a positive impact on the environment through their daily actions in 2021, but in the UK:

- 20% less spending in 2021 compared to 2019
- 3- 5-year recovery, with 2023 baseline recovery at the earliest
- In that time the main source market for Scotland (and Glen Nevis) will be the UK domestic market

As we emerge from lock down there will be sector and activity protocols in place around social distancing, wearing masks, cleaning and sanitising etc (which will impact on business performance and the visitor experience). Recovery for some will be value driven with a sustainability pivot. Scepticism about technology reduced during lockdown so digital approaches will be key in terms of promoting the produce and engaging with visitors. Trip Advisor notes that searches for nature and outdoor are up 40% and trends are pointing towards countryside, nature based, wellbeing activities becoming more popular more quickly. Which offers opportunities for both Glen Nevis and Ben Nevis.

An expanded tourism market assessment is set out in the Part 2 Report - Appendix 5

Primary stakeholder consultation

During the four weeks given to prepare this report consultation took place with the following partners and agencies in the area:

Nevis Partnership

Jahama Estate

Forestry and Land Scotland

High Life Highland

John Muir Trust

NatureScot

Community Council

Highland Council - officers from roads, waste, planning, tourism

Glen Nevis Estate

Local THC Elected Member

Cairngorms National Park Authority

[3] Source: Euromonitor Consumer Lifestyles Survey, fielded January 2021

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GLENEST PART 1

Short term challenges, solutions, and sources of implementation funding.

Part 1 addresses visitor impacts and capacities rather than the direct threat of Covid – 19 infection spreading. Other public authorities are charged with infection control.

1 Tackling short term management issues

During June to October 2020, Glen Nevis experienced detrimental issues as a result of both irresponsible behaviours and facility capacities being exceeded at times.

- **Ben Nevis Path: August 2019 - 1211 visitors | August 2020 - 3504 visitors +66%**

Glen Nevis is not unique, these challenges have also been reported at other destinations. Similar issues are expected to re-occur when Covid-19 travel restrictions are lifted in April/May 2021.

GLENEST Part 1 identifies the issues, proposes solutions, and explores possible resourcing/funding opportunities. **These are priority issues which the Glen needs to address immediately.**

1.1 The Covid–19 threat in a Glen Nevis context

As of March 2021, acknowledged experts believe that outdoor recreation - as Glen Nevis mainly provides - plays a very small role in virus transmission and risks are relatively low. As more people are vaccinated this risk will decrease further[1].

Mark Woolhouse – Professor of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at the University of Edinburgh and a member of the SPI-M modelling subgroup of SAGE told the science and technology committee:

"The other thing, quite clearly, is outdoor activities. Again, there was evidence going back to March and April (2020) that the virus is not transmitted well outdoors. There's very, very little evidence that any transmission outdoors in happening in the UK."

Lucy Yardley OBE, Professor of Health Technology at the Universities of Southampton and Bristol sits on the SAGE committee said:

"It's a really important message, and this is the right time to push it home. The difference between indoor and outdoor is huge. Every report about restrictions and enforcement focused on outdoor contexts distracts from the places where transmission is really happening."

Dr Müge Çevik, a Lecturer in Infectious Diseases and Medical Virology at the University of St said:

"We have known for some time that only about 10% of transmission events are linked to outdoor activities."

Dr Julian Tang, Consultant Virologist at the University of Leicester, explained that:

"Generally, the more open a space, the less likely the novel coronavirus can become concentrated in one area in the air and then inhaled by another person, which can result in infection."

A 2020 paper (yet to be peer reviewed) by **Japanese medical researchers** found:

"The odds that a primary case transmitted Covid-19 in a closed environment was 18.7 times greater compared to an open-air environment."

[1] Access to the outdoors during the current coronavirus outbreak: guidance for the public and land managers | Scottish Outdoor Access Code (outdooraccess-scotland.scot)

1.2 The impact of the Covid-19 crisis on Glen Nevis

Glen Nevis and Ben Nevis is a destination which has both national and international appeal. These 'natural assets/resources' draw people to the area and in turn help to drive the local economy and the absence of visitor spend has been keenly felt. Notwithstanding a low risk from outdoor activities, tourism in Glen Nevis does have pinch points - people travelling from other parts of the UK, or even internationally, with greater levels of infection and then mingling in crowded and under ventilated spaces in tourism accommodation, eating places, shops and in over used toilets. Outdoor pinch points may be path entrances and gates along with people passing close on paths.

In putting people's welfare first, the Scottish Government brought in special measures around unnecessary travel, essential purposes, and party size. As of March 2021, it seems likely there will be a phased process of lifting restrictions over the coming months, beginning on the 26th of April although the situation is far from certain. But, currently, this suggests that some tourism and hospitality places and businesses may open or become more popular before others. For example, self-catering before hotels as indoor dining is cited as one of the riskiest activities people can do amid the pandemic.

2 Understanding changes in visitor behaviour and values and their effects

Appendix 1 describes the changes and their effects in Glen Nevis. They can be summarised as:

- Change in visitor profiles
  - 'New visitors' less familiar with the area (and less experience of using the countryside for recreational purposes)
- Changes in visitor values and behaviours
  - More reported selfish and anti-social behaviour – with facilities like toilets closed in the short-term
- Traffic and car parking
  - More vehicles in the Glen, roadside stacking as car parks reached capacity
- Toilets, litter, fires, camping, dogs, path use
  - Evidence of increased pressure due to these activities, but baseline measures not in place to estimate true extent
- Resource and staffing availability
  - Staff on furlough/shielding (and potential reluctance to deal with some reported issues)
- Impacts and changes on host communities
  - Fear of infections
  - Less tolerance of irresponsible behaviour
  - More scrutiny of the visitor industry

Some of the issues identified were evident in Glen Nevis prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Where people's behaviour has changed, primarily due to COIVD-19 control measures, and evidence is available, it has been included.

3 What needs to happen

The Nevis Partnership is in a difficult position as a community body with no land assets, statutory powers, or core finance/revenues. Leading a response to a national pandemic in a nationally significant area – Ben Nevis and Glen Nevis, is very challenging.

There is an opportunity for the Nevis Partnership, on behalf of the Glen, to feed into relevant national groups such as VisitScotland's Visitor Management Group and three subgroups - Infrastructure, Prevention & Regulation and Communications & Marketing. The latter group are particularly considering how to reach new audiences and develop a consistent and imaginative approach to communication of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC)[2].

However, given the changes in visitor behaviour and their effects noted in Appendix 1 and timescales for 2021, an emergency response is required.

In the short term, collaborative and co-operative partnership working is essential. Clear consistent information provision and timely communication with stakeholders, the local community and visitors will be vital.

Four priority short term themes have been identified (See Appendix 2 for more detail):

1. Co-ordinated response
2. Communication reset
3. Stewardship and enforcement restart
4. Resourcing

3.3 Co-ordinated response

Action 1: Immediately form a new Glen Nevis Visitor Management Response Group with a strong independent chairperson to be tasked with:

1. Keeping key players well-informed, united, and working well together through agreed protocols between bodies on sharing information, resources, and staffing
2. Setting up data-collection and monitoring exercises around visitor numbers and movement patterns
3. Liaison with community interests to address issues and concerns
4. Developing a Commercial Events protocol – parking, litter, charging, insurance etc. in line with CIF guidance. For areas that are SSSI and/or SAC certain operations require NatureScot consent.
    - Chartered Institute of Fundraising - Outdoor UK challenge events (ciof.org.uk)
    - Guidance - Outdoor events in Scotland - guidance for organisers and land managers.pdf (outdooraccess-scotland.scot)
    - untitled (cairngorms.co.uk)
5. Feeding into responses and discussion to share good practice, get better access to funding sources and to enhance visitor experiences
    - At local level with bodies like the Chamber of Commerce
    - At regional level with funding bodies like the Highland Council and HIE

[2] NatureScot (outdooraccess-scotland.scot)

- At a regulatory level with bodies like the Highland Council, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Lochaber MRT
  - At sectoral level with bodies like Forestry and Land Scotland and National Parks?
  - At national level with bodies like Visit Scotland, NatureScot, MCS
6. Understanding Push and Pull visitor decision factors at work over next 12 months
   - Prepare calendar of school holidays (across Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England), bank holidays, weekends Easter to October (helping to forecast future visitor movement during peak and super peak periods)
   - Prepare overlay of weather forecast to predict good weather (which impacts on visitor movements)

3.4 Communication reset

Action 2: Prepare a simple communication strategy to include:

1. Agreed joint and consistent communication messages.
2. Best use of social media to communicate messages to target groups (agree protocols to ensure consistent messages across tourism and other linked businesses). Also monitor social media for early warning about any issues/problems which are being reported online.
3. Create or Adopt (an existing) a 'social media tool kit' to be developed and shared with local businesses, partners, stakeholders – highlighting how to communicate on social media and what to communicate[3]. Possibly in tandem with Chamber of Commerce[4].
4. Expand NEVIS LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP - HOME (nevispartnership.co.uk) web based information – Car parking and toilet information example being Current status of car parks and toilets in the National Park - Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park (lochlomond-trossachs.org)
5. Holding Zoom briefing meetings with residents, Local Authority Councillors and Community Councils about measures in place and to hear of local issues.
6. Advising, education on and promotion of Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC). The SOAC defines access rights and responsibilities and provides detailed guidance on what are and what are not acceptable behaviours[5][6].
7. Installing temporary signage as required. May need fast response. E.g. period of dry weather needing 'High fire risk' signs' erected along the Glen.
8. Ensure keeping of records and lessons learned from 2021 (which will be particularly useful in terms of preparing for 2022 and for future strategic planning).
9. Ensure there is a way (emergency 24/7 phone, email) available to receive communications / information / feedback from visitors on the ground which NP (and others) can react to.

Please see: Responsible Visitor Management - News | VisitScotland.org

[3] Resources to promote responsible access in 2021 | Scottish Outdoor Access Code (outdooraccess-scotland.scot)
[4] Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, along with partner organisations VisitScotland , Forestry and Land Scotland, Keep Scotland Beautiful, National Park Authorities, NatureScot, Scottish Tourism Alliance (STA), Wild Scotland and Zero Waste Scotland are working together on a responsible tourism campaign to target new and novice outdoor enthusiasts with the aim of influencing them to enjoy our outdoor spaces more, and in a respectful way. The campaign calls on visitors to #RespectProtectEnjoy Scotland.
[5] Wild Camping in Scotland | VisitScotland
[6] The Scottish Outdoor Access Code - COVID-19 Guide | VisitScotland

See Appendix 2 for more detail

3.5 Stewardship and enforcement restart

Action 3: Establish a human resource availability base record. The base should list available personnel and detail availability and shift patterns based on the Action 1 calendar to ensure appropriate cover and co-ordination are in place.

Action 4: Prepare mechanisms underpinned by a calendar covering the period Easter to October listing school, 'trade' and bank holidays. Weekends, known large events (e.g. Commercial charity events and Ben Nevis race) and weather forecasts can be added to predict periods of maximum demand.

Primary visitor management stewardship based on applying SOAC will be by 'Ranger' staff already operating in Glen Nevis. These will be

- John Muir Trust – Conservation Officer
- Nevis Partnership – Seasonal Rangers
- The Highland Council – share of additional Seasonal Ranger staff
- Forestry and Land Scotland – new Seasonal Rangers

Area servicing by statutory providers

- Highland Council waste operatives - emptying bins, litter picking and dealing with fly tipping
- Access officer and Local Outdoor Access Forum

Events servicing arrangements by

- Jahama Estate
- Highland Council
- JMT

Secondary servicing by local businesses through information and reminders to customers and guests from:

- High Life Highland
- Glen Nevis Estate
- Outdoor activity providers
- Other customer facing outlets

Volunteer stewardship will be focused on

- Maintenance (paths etc)
- Clearance – litter, 'dirty' camping
- Fire patrols during high-risk periods

Back up services (in case of major fire/flood or another similar emergency)

- Highland Council
- Estate staff
- Mountain Rescue
- High Life Highland

Enforcement services

For reasons such as safety, parking, traffic flow the Highland Council may impose emergency, temporary or more permanent Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).

Clearways that will prohibit vehicles from stopping on certain entire road sections can be introduced as TROs.

Normally, there is a statutory consultation period but in 2020 in some locations similar to Glen Nevis roads were closed by Police Scotland and emergency TROs (with signs and double yellow lines) were imposed very quickly thereafter.

Highland Council officers can enforce parking restrictions and award fixed penalty notices. Police Scotland officers may also award fixed penalties and can report individuals to the Procurator Fiscal.

In terms of 'ramping up' stewardship beyond the SOAC, if required, to enforcement there are other categories of criminal behaviour that are statutory offences. These are set out in Annex 1 to the SOAC. Common law also provides for 'catch all offences' such as breach of the peace or malicious mischief.

Action 5: Seek clarity on what enforcement options would be available, including who can carry out enforcement, and possible trigger points leading to their imposition.

3.6 Resourcing

Local sources

Partner resources and direct visitor pay back

- Nevis Partnership
  - Car park charges imposed at Lower Falls
- FLS
  - Car park charges to be imposed at Braveheart from this season
- Glen Nevis Estate
- Jahama Estate
- John Muir Trust
- High Life Highland
  - Car park changes imposed at Visitor Centre car park – revenue to HH
- Donation
  - Path cairns x 3 – revenue to Friends of Nevis
  - Securing donations from commercial events held in the area
  - Securing donations at car parks which do not have a charge? Eg Donation at Achintee and Steall Falls.

Regional sources

- Covid recovery funding
  - HIE
  - THC has allocated £1.5 million of one-off funding for 21/22
  - THC has also allocated an additional one-off fund of £100k to each Ward for 21/22 (criteria yet to be announced). This is in addition to the recurring £26k already held by each Ward
- Traffic management
  - THC has allocated £100k to each Ward to be spent largely on roads. Community to make the case for Glen Nevis.

National sources

- Scottish Government - Scottish Tourism Phase 1 Recovery projects. 10 projects - £25 million – indications on allocations by May 2021
- Nature Scot – Better Places Green Recovery Fund Round 2. Applications by 9th April 2021 and can provide up to £75,000 per site for work that can be delivered by May 2021. Better Places Green Recovery Fund 2 - eligibility and outcomes | NatureScot
- Visit Scotland - RTIF 4th Round – through the Highland Council EOI by 13 August 2021 Rural Development Fund - Funding | VisitScotland.org
- Scottish Rural Development Programme SRDP – IPA scheme February to June 2021 Improving Public Access (ruralpayments.org)
- Utilise Grant finder tools for other sources.

Part 1 Appendices

Appendix 1: Changes in visitor behaviour and their effects

Covid & related behavioural issues	Observed and reported effects in Glen Nevis
Change in visitor profiles	
Visitor holidaying 'in country' and/or taking a staycation	More domestic/local visitors (day trip and overnight) with more vehicles – possible change in visitor profile – age, ethnicity, prior site experience, length of stay, frequency of visits.
Visitors bound by C-19 protocols, guidance/regulations to travel distance limits	Increase pressure on sites close to larger settlements, where people travel short distances to recreate.
Visitors bound by C-19 guidance/regulations to group size, meetings, and social distance	Increase in vehicle numbers as people travel separately causing further capacity issues for car parks and road network.
Unemployment and furlough have reduced disposable incomes but increased the leisure time available for more people and may change use time patterns.	Glen Nevis offers low-cost recreational options – e.g., walking/cycling etc. Larger numbers of people coming to recreate. May be more mid-week activity. Home workers less tied to weekends.
Fewer 'charity, corporate, commercial events	Fewer groups in Glen Nevis or on Ben Nevis but many events postponed – not cancelled - until restrictions lifted (which may lead to further pressures later in the season)
Changes in visitor behaviours	
Visitors have been displaced into the outdoors from other (indoor) leisure activity and event options	'New' types of visitors may be less familiar with responsible access and behaviour norms in remote countryside locations (including leave no trace principles). Changes in exercise/recreation regimes and economic constraints on spending (e.g. gym memberships) may bring new audiences to locations like Glen Nevis.
Pent up demand in Scotland and the wider UK and the lockdown 'pressure cooker' effect	Anecdotal and official reports indicate that noncompliant and challenging behaviours from visitors was more widespread in 2020. Very extreme behaviour experienced in the immediate weeks following release of lockdown – potential that bad behaviours of the few were adopted by people who would not normally act like that due to the abnormal situation and intensity.
Rapid response to upcoming periods of good weather.	In 2020 good weather forecasts coinciding with holiday periods or even weekends gave rise to rapid escalation of visitor traffic. Equally wet weather may both reduce visitor activity and Covid risk
Use of technology to get info.	Scepticism about technology – reduced during lockdown
Preference for known 'honey pot' destinations and limited willingness to go at other times	Overcrowding at key sites and concentrated in certain time windows
Tourism bodies and tourism businesses developing substantial	Marketing of Glen Nevis sites did not include sufficient responsible behaviour messages and adoption of such

and well-resourced marketing campaigns to entice visitors back to the Highlands	messages – assuming they even saw them – amongst some visitors was partial.
Anti – social behaviour	Reported increase in non SOAC compliant behaviours /criminal damage etc. Police Scotland diverted from other priorities to attend
Traffic and car parking	
Roadway congestion in Glen Nevis. Roadway with 19th century origins unsuited to traffic levels	Road users experienced difficulties with movement, on busy days, causing delay, damage, and irritation. Camper van drivers without the experience or skills to safely navigate the road. Traffic and parking – restricted passing places; hindered access for emergency and service vehicles; blocked resident access; blocking field gates providing access to livestock; restricted community events like funerals. Police Scotland had to divert resources to deal with immediate traffic issues. Appendix 3 details the plans Highland Council has for putting Waiting Restrictions (double yellow lines) on part of the route in 2021/22
Car park capacity	Congestion at popular trailheads and honeypot sites, led to parking in undesignated areas. Pedestrian safety concerns due to limited roadway visibility. Small scale bumps and dings as vehicles squeezed into tight spaces – causing aggravation and insurance costs
People actively discouraged from using public transport and requirements for social distancing reduce capacity for remaining provision	Greater use of more private vehicles caused further capacity issues for car parks. There is uncertainty over how readily people will start to use public transport again in the early months after we emerge from lockdown.
Parking regulations not enforced, or un-enforced	Roadsides were overwhelmed with vehicles – especially at peak periods – good weather, holidays etc. Also, a level of 'leakage' as car parking charges are not being paid.
With a desire to be self-contained increased numbers of people using campervans. (Reported demand for new second hand and hires far outstripping supply)	Pressure on existing car parking space; lack of disposal facilities for waste (dumping of waste taking place in lochs and woods, including around car park edges and in public toilets causing blockages, damage, pollution and building/drainage maintenance issues)
Multiple type of vehicles pressed into service as 'camper vans'	Increase in inexperienced camper van users. Larger vehicles occupying multiple spaces and reducing capacity. More likely to seek out 'informal' roadside sites.
Decreased number of tour buses and travel trade visitors	Car parks used by buses as much as normal. When Covid-19 restrictions are lifted there could be issues with increased conflict between coaches, smaller buses, cars/campervans all expecting to be able to access these car parks.
Toilets, litter, fires, camping, dogs, path use	
Public toilet services/comfort scheme options reduced or closed due to the restrictions and struggling to cope with increased	Higher costs when open due to cleaning requirements. Responsible visitors resort to poor toileting behaviour that would not be acceptable if a better alternative existed,

demand and change of public behaviours.	including toileting around car parks, footpaths and behind closed public toilet buildings.
Increase in casual litter around popular sites and paths. Bins not emptied as frequently as necessary – especially at peak times and weekends – or are of insufficient volume	More litter is reported to be evident in Glen Nevis along paths and at popular sites. Bins are overflowing and litter may be spread by wind and/or scavenging animals/ birds. Some of this litter is either not collected and/or collection at a future time incurs more cost and effort. Litter can impact on wildlife and domestic animals. Covid – 19 measures may require separate plastic containers, so no one has to touch anyone else's food and drink, which along with masks etc may add to litter volumes. It is not clear if any litter could be classed as fly-tipping.
Recycling and separation of waste	Almost impossible to do in Glen Nevis as waste tends to be mixed and is often contaminated.
Unrealistic public expectations of litter removal by a third party	Increase in 'polite littering' – leaving litter (often in bags) in countryside locations and at overnight camping spots.
Poor individual management of lighting fires, fire sites and fire rings – non SOAC compliance	Reported increase in lighting fires and leaving fire rings. Users not adopting 'leave no trace' and cutting green wood – perhaps due to inexperience. Increased risk of wildfires if campfire gets out of control.
Commercial camp sites closed or operating at lower capacity	People wishing to camp having to look for 'wild' sites.
Poor camping practice – non SOAC compliance	Reported increase in 'abandoned' camping equipment with associated litter, fire, and toileting issues. In good weather especially, as pubs are closed increased alcohol consumption while camping may play a part in poor practice – but no records exist to confirm this effect
Poor management of dogs by their owners - non SOAC compliance	Reported increase of incidents attributable to dogs either not on a lead or under close control. Actions leading to damage by the dog and/or injury or death to the dog.
Narrow paths (walk, cycle, run) Pinch points at entrances, gates, styles and bridges	Difficulties in maintaining social distancing. Certain groups ignore social distancing. Stepping off hard path increasing path erosion.
Noise – camper vans	Reported disturbance – music etc at night in locations like Polldudh where vans are parked up.
Resource and staffing availability	
Countryside staff on furlough, redeployed, ill or shielding means reductions in public sector and NGO staffing resources on the ground	Staff with limited ability to patrol, monitor or advise. Little, if any, Rangers / Volunteer 'boots on the ground' time interacting directly with visitors (and responding to host community needs). Difficulties for those staff that were on the ground in physically accessing overcrowded sites and moving around all of them safely.
THC and public sector budget resources and priorities are prioritised to health and economy	Access to PPE for staff, insufficient vehicles for single travel. Generated income from visitors used to support services much reduced.
Impacts on host communities	
Host communities and their services under pressure to serve local needs	Constraints on medical services and other essential supplies – food shops etc. Emergency vehicle access/mountain rescue demands

'Strangers' in community	Gives rise to stress and anxiety, sometimes resistance through prohibition signs, locked gates, blocked off parking space. Unwillingness to suggest alternative routes. Upset and even hostility from both host and visitors when confrontation over behaviour/parking etc

Appendix 2: Key short-term tasks in more detail

Factor or issue	**Short term actions**	**Limitations**
	CO-ORDINATED RESPONSE	
Marketing and Comms (pre arrival)		
National profile	Feed into two national campaigns – led by VisitScotland and NatureScot – that will set the overall framework for Easter	NP capacity
Sector profile	Feed into specific groups for motorhomes and campervans, wildfires, littering and SOAC.	NP capacity
Facilities that are open or available	Clarity on what commercial accommodation, camp sites, car parks, toilets are open and detail on access/ booking opportunities and constraints	
Space – new places to explore	Give more attention to domestic UK visitors and communicate about less busy places where visitors might find even greater space	
Activities providing social distancing	Give more attention to domestic UK visitors and promote activities like bike/e-bike or using local guides to get away from the crowds and explore new areas within the Glen and nearby areas	
Consistent and up to date messages	Glen Nevis smart messaging from NP and all partners - Tread Lightly in Glen Nevis	
Using special qualities NSA, Wildland etc	Glen Nevis and Ben Nevis are iconic landscapes *In the Cairngorms NP, the importance of the NP brand in attracting first time visitors has grown significantly with 72% of businesses stating that the Park had a high level of influence compared to the historic average of 54%.*	
Suggested itineraries	Aimed at getting walkers, and cyclists to explore the Glen without a vehicle. These will identify key heritage points of interest and landscapes that can be either physically visited, viewed from afar or learnt about though digital media.	Lack of knowledge of visitor travel patterns in the Glen
Dispersal	Opportunity to also sign post visitors on peak days away from Glen to other local places of interest – the "hidden gems"?)	
Events protocols	These should highlight necessary permissions, resources, actions, liabilities around events (size to be defined)	Groups arriving early morning, occupying the car parks etc
Data		
Weather forecasting	Weather mainly affects spontaneous trips so forward scan on forecasting to anticipate 'good' days and plan and resource accordingly	Lack of flexibility in shift patterns etc

Events planned and actual	Events may ‘bunch up’ to later in the summer – need to know in advance Need to create an events data base – who, what, when, where, why?	Event managers not contacting in advance
Lack of intelligence on visitor numbers and behaviours	Gather visitor data asap to enable decisions to be made on ‘hard data’. Install counters to assess vehicle use of road, car parks and use of path networks	Difficult to manage without data. Cost to gather and analyse data
Lack of data on actual costs of damage and disturbance	Gather true costs – tangible and intangible (reputation) of policing, disturbance and disruption to Glen Nevis. Be clear on cost to public purse and private businesses on inaction through strategic risk assessment	Unwillingness to spend to save
Collaboration		
Address any ‘Blame game’ issues about the responsibility of others	Collective responsibility and action through a Glen Nevis protocol with agreement over pragmatic solutions and compromise. Accept mistakes will happen and ensure lessons are learned.	Unwillingness to share resources and cooperate across administrative and geographical boundaries
Improved collaboration between stakeholders	Need to ‘up the game’ with a joined-up approach from partners and/or multi agency approach. What matters to the Glen and set aside differences to achieve it. An organisational framework which brings together the different stakeholders and interests making it possible to prepare plans to provide for visitors, to decide on the location and scale of visitor infrastructure and to get things done, whilst respecting the interests of local landowners and managers	Staff capacity used chasing grants money Without more resource – just moving the pieces around. Conflict between user groups. Historical tensions and mistrust between agencies and partners.
COMMUNICATION		
Messaging		
Appropriate communication Information and messages on acceptable behaviours	Ensure consistency of messaging that people know: - where they are welcome - where there is appropriate infrastructure and provision suitable for their needs - what the value and significance of the area is that they are visiting - what is responsible behaviour - who they can speak to if they have a concern - what they can do to reduce their impact on the environment - where the current issues / areas to avoid on day of visit	Resources and joined up messages. Conflicting messages – businesses wishing to encourage trade and site managers having to deal with excesses leading to ‘No and negative ’ type messaging

	Code of conduct for visitors to the area should utilise, for example, a simplified set or messages around the SOAC *On camping* • True wild camping is defined as no more than 3 nights in one location, well away from buildings, roads, historic structure and not in enclosed fields. *On car parking outside designated car parks* • Car parking is not blocking entrances or making it difficult for others and using a car park if one is nearby *Fires and Fire Rings* • If you do wish to light an open fire, keep it small, under control, and supervised. Remove all traces before you leave. During dry weather and in wooded area fires should be avoided altogether *Human Waste* • If you have to 'go' urinate and bury waste more than 30m away from water bodies *Dogs* • should be under proper control at all times (on lead or close) and their waste picked up or disposed of responsibly The 7 Leave No Trace guidelines may also be deployed Plus, others messaging about being safe in hill country, water, steep ground, poor visibility, ticks	
Ensure key messaging is deployed	Ensure design and print work is underway asap Using multiple media channels particularly cost-effective social media	Cost of print and distribution
Suite of other resources that can be used by all partners	Digitised online path guides and other interpretive materials	
Signs	Install temporary variable message signs at Glen entrance. Employ temporary signage as required e.g. at Lower Falls Bridge. Ensure signs make it clear that car park income is visibly hypothecated demonstrating it pays for visitor facilities – bins, litters, paths. Highland Council rationalising all their signage for start of 2021 season (see detailed examples of signage rationalisation plans in appendix 4)	Managing introduction and removal of signage at short notice Potentially 'clutters' the landscape
STEWARDSHIP		
Staffing		

Boots on the ground	Bring existing staff off furlough. Seasonal staff to start work asap to safely welcome visitors to Glen Nevis as Covid-19 restrictions ease. On the ground Glen Nevis services provided by ~~a~~ joint teams of Rangers and volunteers/stewards who can spot problems as they emerge, act as a link between landowners, visitors, and the managing authority, provide information and interpretation services. Training such Visitor Monitoring, Emergency Outdoor first aid, Leave no Trace Awareness, Art of Guiding Organise volunteers and carry out practical construction, maintenance work on the ground and ‘adopt a path’ incentives. willing and able supply of volunteers largely through Friends of Nevis.	Finding, funding, training suitable employed staff and volunteers
Existing workers	Change shift patterns etc in relation to bin emptying and litter collection to ensure peak times and weekends are covered. Similarly, for cleaning and restocking toilets. Enforcement staff should be available on sunny days	Reluctance amongst staff in respect of changing shift patterns, overtime payments etc
Litter, fly tipping, and abandoned camping equipment	Most visitors wish to dispose of litter responsibly if given the opportunity. Handing out biodegradable bin bags for reinforcing the message of leaving nothing behind. More effective deployment of the workforce and equipment that already exists could see more litter collected. Public involvement with litter picking with visitors being invited to collect litter and to carry full bin bags to collection points. Public helping to collect the litter from harder to reach areas and brought on to the path for easier collection. Handing out litter pickers and bin bags to the public. Larger bins accommodate more and larger bags of litter – may take up car park spaces.	Insufficient bins and emptying regime. Litter collection is labour intensive and takes time. Larger industrial sized bins - are unsightly – more so than green 300 litre wheely bins – but can be screened
Single use plastic	The creation of plastic-free zones as a longer-term aspiration but of 24/7 running drinking water points at Achintee, Nevis Centre and Youth Hostel where visitors can refill their own reusable bottles should be an achievable goal. HLH to sell reusable drinks bottles at a premium cost, with positive and effective marketing to let visitors know x pence per sale contributes to path work and they get a lovely souvenir to take home with them	Lack of genuine recycling options

Human waste and irresponsible toileting	Improvised toilet provision – Lower Falls Temporary zero discharge waterless toilets – pump out every 6 months. Deploy in advance. Collect user fees	Covid-related additional cleaning costs
Irresponsible camping – 'dirty camping'.	On the ground Glen Nevis services provided by a joint team of Rangers and volunteers/stewards who can spot problems as they emerge. Most visitors wish to act responsibly if given opportunity and advice. Mounding earth in certain areas can dissuade campers.	Unwillingness to commit budget, train and deploy in advance.
Dogs disturbing wildlife and livestock	On the ground Glen Nevis services provided by a joint teams of Rangers and volunteers/stewards who can spot problems as they emerge. Most visitors wish to act responsibly if given opportunity and advice.	Unwillingness to commit budget, train and deploy in advance
Fires getting out of control	On the ground Glen Nevis services provided by a joint team of Rangers and volunteers/stewards who can spot problems as they emerge. Most visitors wish to act responsibly if given opportunity and advice. Advice to never light an open fire during prolonged dry periods or in areas such as forests, woods If fire risk low to bring their own wood and have fire on shingle beach rather than on grass, to remove every sign of fire site, and encouraged to bring a stove or a fire bowl next time. Opportunity for visitors to book pre-erected BBQs at specific sites	Unwillingness to commit budget, train and deploy in advance
Infrastructure		
Improved recreational infrastructure – paths and bridges	Investment in path and visitor infrastructure repairs delivers benefits to local tourism businesses and other recreational users. Prioritise key repairs	Feasibility of delivering, as many are complex with long lead-in times and cannot be fixed or created in a few short months, during partial lockdown
Car parking congestion and capacities	Improve efficiency of space for cars/motorhomes in existing car parks – needs clear bay marking and stewards on peak days. Improve signage and one-way traffic flow Enforcement of charges where charging takes place (and consistency in charging policy) Temporary car parks in field adjacent to Nevis visitor centre	Cuts in capital budgets Lack of revenue funding Cost to enforce – clearways etc. Cost to collect parking charges Police involvement and fixed penalty notices

	Concessions – coffee/ ice cream with share of turnover ring fenced for site management/litter collections Some sort of added value/ discount card scheme on car park tickets for people to spend in Fort William (ensures local community buy in)	Car parking displacement and damage to road verges Impeded access for emergency vehicles Safety issues for NM users if route is shared with vehicles Rangers into traffic management roles in car parks
Camper vans	Visitor friendly guide to direct campervans to best locations Create campervan facility at Nevis Visitor Centre car park for summer, which could help to generate additional revenue.	
Anti-social behaviours		
Excessive traffic and parking problems, often on narrow rural roads	Temporary Traffic Order (TTO) e.g. June – Sept) for: a) beyond Lower Falls b) and/or entire road Enforcement – fixed penalty notices for transgressors and the uncooperative	People were being kept out, perhaps necessarily, but with no alternatives offered
	RESOURCING	
Resourcing		
Budget	Identify NP budget available for 2021. Identify additional funding from partners. Invite similar transparency from all partners to evidence what budget is available for what	Means uncertainties regarding the seasonal operation for 2021 and into the future, which makes both short and long-term planning challenging
Winning additional funding	Apply to Covid Recovery Funds of various types at regional and national level	Resource intensive to apply to multiple funding pots

Appendix 3: Proposed Glen Nevis Waiting Restrictions (Highland Council)

Proposed Glen Nevis Waiting Restrictions Part 2

10/06/2020 15:10:32

Lines

Override 1

Override 2

Override 3

Override 4

OS copyright

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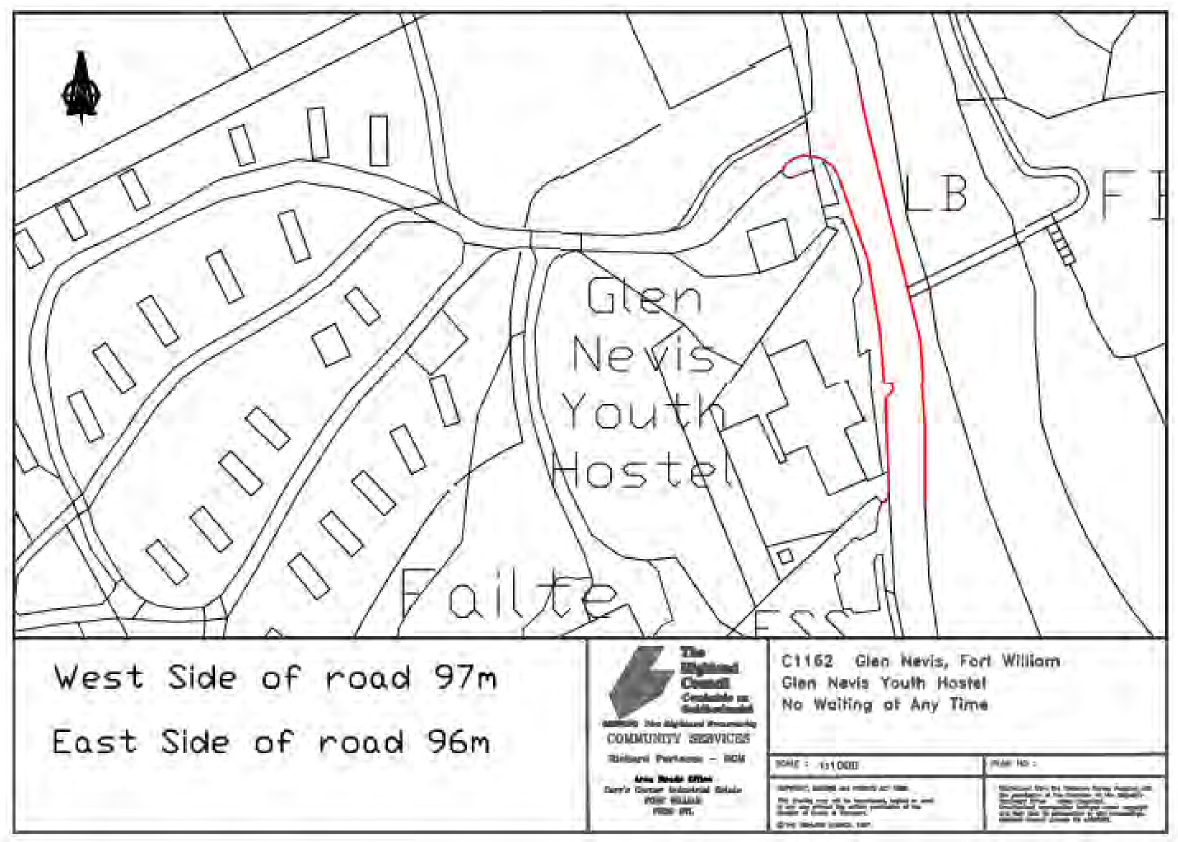

Appendix 4: Road Signage Rationalisation in the Glen – Highland Council

File below gives access to details of the 11 locations in the Glen where improvements to signage will be made by Highland Council in 2021:

Glen Nevis Signage Improvements.docx

Welcome to Glen Nevis: A Framework for Sustainable Tourism in Glen Nevis GLENEST

March 2021

'This project report is supported by NatureScot, through the Better Places Green Recovery Fund'.

Our project partners are: Forestry and Land Scotland, Glen Nevis Estate, High Life Highland, Jahama Highland Estates, John Muir Trust.

PART 2

GLENEST – A roadmap to 2030[1] to deliver sustainable tourism in Glen Nevis. For People, Place and Community.

Sustainable tourism has multiple definitions. For this roadmap, sustainable tourism is defined as environmental, social and economic sustainability, risk around tourism as well as sustainable tourism demand, transport and mobility and accommodation/services.

This approach brings in the more complex thinking needed for genuine sustainable tourism which under pins more direct issues including financial viability and visitor management. The term 'footprint' is used in various ways. In Glen Nevis this means the sum of the emissions and the impacts (positive and negative) that arise throughout supply chains of activities and products for the 450,000 visitors to the Glen.

Post Covid, there is a desire amongst partners to position the Nevis area as an exemplar of sustainable tourism, although this means a committed approach to a framework requiring baselines, targets, and actions to be agreed.

What partners do generally agree is that visitor expectations and behaviours have significantly changed and when coupled with wider climate and economic change - **'doing nothing is not an option'.**

[1] 2030 has been selected at it is the date when the Scottish Government is legally committed to being 75% toward net Zero in 2045

1 Imagining a future for sustainable tourism

1.1 Vision

"To involve the people of Lochaber, and beyond, in an outcomes and solutions focused road map for better and more sustainable tourism in Glen Nevis".

The Roadmap vision is nested within the NEVIS STRATEGY 2020 - 40 – 100 YEAR VISION

The Nevis landscape will be a place of contrasts; not only wild land, but also a land inhabited by those who work, live and visit the area. It will bring together both the local community and visitors whose passion for this beautiful landscape will create an interdependent relationship between the landscape and people that is thoughtful, sustainable and stable.

The Nevis landscape will be a mosaic of habitats complete with established native woodland. It will be a biodiverse area brimming with life; Ben Nevis and Glen Nevis will be iconic not only for the highest peak in Britain, but more importantly, for a healthy wild ecosystem, connected to neighbouring landscapes via wildlife corridors, and capable of mitigating the negative effects of climate change. By collectively caring for our landscape, we will have learned to reduce our impact on nature and in the process secure not only the future of the area but also our own health and wellbeing.

1.2 A future Glen Nevis 'story' that all partners can buy into might be

What will it look and feel like in 5-, 10- or 20-years' time?

Glen Nevis will be a unique, dramatic, natural, and cultural, welcoming landscape where people will want to spend time, recreate meet, rest, watch nature and natural beauty and enjoy and then to travel to and through the wider Fort William area and beyond.

A revitalised Glen Nevis will have interconnecting trails, visitor hubs with refreshments, engaging interpretation and information and a mix of accommodation. A cycle track to the end of the Glen is at the heart of the vision which will significantly reduce vehicle traffic along the famous Glen. Carbon consciousness will be high. Targeted investment in the visitor product and supporting infrastructure will ensure Glen Nevis continues to meet the needs and expectations of visitors and the community and remains a tier one destination for domestic and overseas visitors.

A full overhaul of the road corridor will strip away unnecessary clutter, segregating walkers and cyclists from remaining vehicles. Largely car-free cycle/walking routes will then connect to Nevis Range and the new Forest Resort, FW2040 locations, West Highland Way and Great Glen Way/Caledonian Canal. A connected Glen will give full 4G/5G mobile coverage and blue tooth connectivity for real time information.

Transparent baseline data, measures and accreditation will provide robust evidence that targets and ensures outcomes around the visitor footprint are being met and contribute to national goals like Net Zero by 2045.

This programme of change will enable Glen Nevis to re-position itself as a key ***sustainable destination*** *of choice within Scotland.*

1.3 A just and inclusive route to sustainable tourism

The Glen has a long tradition of tourism and outdoor activities. Changes in the Glen have to work for everyone – key land holders, residents, attracting new visitors, and making sure visitors return.

Changes must meet people's access needs, in that it allows residents to go about their daily lives and encourages local businesses to flourish, particularly as Fort William and Lochaber look to make a strong, green, and sustainable recovery from the Covid crisis.

2 What does success look like?

Becoming a premier sustainable world-class tourism destination and channelling visitor and user passion for Glen Nevis to achieve what is possible for this iconic living landscape and the Glen Nevis of tomorrow?

The Nevis Partnership will an asset owing, resilient and self-sustaining organisation leading a National Landscape management approach.

Could this be the first Highland Glen to adopt an approach – comparable to a high performing Scandinavian style valley planning system with sustainable tourism at it core – but uniquely Scottish and suited to local conditions and environment?

2.1 Key sustainable tourism parameters in Glen Nevis

Supply-side factors – from the perspective of the producer (landowners/managers)

- Sufficiency of management data to guide targets, decisions, and resource allocation
- Measurable core environmental and social condition
- Capacity and quality of transportation infrastructures public roads, car parks
- Quality and sufficiency of non-market
    - visitor facilities (toilets, seating, scenic viewpoints)
    - signs and way markers
    - path infrastructure, surfacing, bridges
    - resource to minimise impacts of wild camping, wild toileting, and fires
    - resource to ensure appropriate levels of public health and human safety
    - resource to manage events
- Improved provision and promotion of services for motorhomes
- Enough of the right staff in the right place at the right time
- Sufficiency of effective partnership working, shared decision making and resource optimisation
- Sufficiency of reliable and consistent revenue sources to deliver 'public good' outcomes
- Commitment to continuous improvement

Demand-side factors – from the perspective of the consumer

- Confirmation of Covid – 19 confidence
- Quality and seamlessness of the visitor's experience
- Experiences that align with visitor needs, beliefs, and values
- Meeting visitor expectations of service quality and choice
- Consumer trust in messages (What do you want us (the consumer) to do, to feel?)
- Providing demonstrable ways of supporting the local environment and community

- Providing honest independent information and evidence of accreditation on sustainability standards around the tourism offer

2.2 A focus on the visitor experience

There appears to be little readily available data on what people like and do not like about visiting Glen Nevis, nor about their values and beliefs. For many adults, past behaviour, and experiences such as holidays or school trips, subjective norms (challenge of summiting Ben Nevis) and destination images conveyed in Instagram will influence intentions towards visiting places like Glen Nevis.

But, despite marketing exciting and dramatic outdoor images of climbing, downhill mountain biking, backcountry skiing, hill running, stalking etc, findings and observations, such as they are, reveal a majority preference for more passive rather than highly active experiences in Glen Nevis.

Tourism destinations, such as Glen Nevis, have self-evident good natural environments and attractions. Being amongst them, for many, can set the scene for absorbing, albeit rather vague, concepts of meditation, peace, and tranquillity (getting away from it all). Some people want to do the right thing for the environment and sustainability. The Glen is also steeped in history and, for some, it is a source of authenticity and cultural inspiration with outlets through literature, film, art, and photography.

Vague or not, given their value in providing promising 'saleable' visitor experiences for visitors, nature, sustainability, and heritage are core resources for business managers and activity providers – but are easily lost. For example, tranquil resources can become fragile if an "urbanising the rural" infrastructure construction approach of place hardening goes too far.

If they go looking for it, the current experience on offer does allow some visitors to see, hear, taste, feel and even smell something that is uniquely Scottish – uniquely Highland – uniquely Glen Nevis. Experience is less obviously extending to supporting the local economy, using local services such as guides and purchasing local produce, such as venison, to consume, take away or order remotely at a later date.

It is worth emphasising that a moderate degree of crowding appears to be well tolerated in places, such as on Ben Nevis. This seems to suggest that some visitors, in specific contexts, are seeking social interactions, perhaps camaraderie or 'shared adversity'. Some crowding may be positive as long as it is adequately handled by other facilities such as car parking and toilets and bins.

Historically, visitor management in special areas has been concerned largely with visitor impacts and emphasis has been placed on managing negative impacts. This has involved controlling visitor numbers, attempting to modify visitor behaviour, and also modifying the resource.

These approaches can be divided into 'hard' and 'soft' categories. 'Hard' visitor management approaches involve physical management, regulatory management, and economic management. That said, local users may value places and conditions differently to domestic and international users and may consider current crowding or hardening in the Nevis landscape to be intrusive.

‘Soft’ approaches make use of experience education and interpretation. While the approach of managing impacts has its merits, and has met with some success, it has tended to assume that the visitor is ‘guilty until proven innocent’. Such an approach has also tended to ignore the role of visitor experience in relation to visitor management.

Beyond the confines of accommodation providers like Glen Nevis Estate, visitor management currently favours low investment, low-use facilities like paths with minimal signage and way marking. This is more in tune with a ‘conservation’ ethos and experience . This suits

- Visitors who are more self-reliant
- Visitors who are more biocentric
- Visitors who are more specialised in their activity and attached to the area
- Repeat visitors who are less negatively related to price

The ‘fail’ points of this approach

- Core elements like capacity and footprint emission and impacts are given less priority
- Places constraints on experience for those who are visiting for the first time, are less experienced or able
- Visitors are inevitably pushed towards fewer more accessible places
- Revenues are scant and investment inconsistent

That said, there are plans for provision of high-use infrastructure tangentially placed beside main visitor routes into the Glen - such as at the re profiled Braveheart Car Park, the Lower Falls Car Park and the redevelopment of the Nevis Visitor Centre and car park.

Varying styles of signage

3 The Nevis Partnership

The main vehicle for co-ordinating the road map is the Nevis Partnership. Formed in 2002, it is a Private Limited Company by guarantee, SC235028. It is also a Scottish Charity - The Nevis Partnership, SC033418.

The Nevis Partnership was formed to benefit principally the community of Lochaber. In 2021 new articles were adopted. The original objects are retained but membership has been restructured. New directors will be appointed at an EGM in April 2021. Key points in the new articles are:

3.1 Objects (consistent with furthering the achievement of sustainable development)

1) The advancement of community development (including the advancement of rural regeneration) principally within the Community.

2) To safeguard, restore, enhance, manage, and promote awareness, enjoyment and of the natural and cultural heritage and landscapes, including their wild country characteristics, of the Nevis area of Lochaber as described in the current Nevis Strategy, in ways which are sustainable and contribute to the well-being of the local and wider Lochaber communities, and, in particular, within the Nevis area by seeking:

(a) to secure strategic and other funding and support, and act directly, or through others, to advance the implementation of the current Nevis Strategy in so far as it is compatible with these objects, and to keep progress on this and other initiatives under review,

(b) to protect, enhance, restore, and manage the biodiversity, built and cultural heritage and scenery, and wild land characteristics of perceived naturalness of the land cover, ruggedness of terrain, remoteness from public roads, ferries or railway stations, visible lack of buildings, roads, pylons and other modern artefacts

(c) to reclaim, restore or otherwise improve land for environmental protection or enhancement purposes and/or to create public amenities,

(d) to widen the appeal of, and encourage participation in, the use and care of the landscape, while reducing vehicle use and impacts,

(e) to ensure an effective planning framework and encourage good planning and design,

(f) to develop and maintain effective, integrated and partnership-based management approaches and arrangements,

(g) to consult, advise and involve local residents, landowners/managers and businesses, the wider Lochaber communities, businesses and education centres, and other interest groups, in caring for and managing the Nevis Area

3.2 Members and Directors

- Ordinary members – open to individuals who are resident in Lochaber.
- Associate members - open to individuals who are not ordinarily resident in Lochaber and who support the objects and activities of the company.

Form Board comprising of up to 12 directors, including one Nevis Residents appointed director. Three quarters of directors must be ordinary members. Chair who is not an ordinary member does not have a casting vote. Director may appoint ordinary/associate members as a director to fill vacancies.

Support may be provided by corporate organisation membership and an Advisory Board comprising of landowners. Neither have voting rights.

3.3. Powers

The constitution provides the Nevis Partnership with 27 powers including:

- Management of community land
- Establishment of a centre providing for community learning etc
- Raise funds, secure loans and accept grants, donations, legacies
- Invest surplus as appropriate
- Acquire property
- Operate a subsidiary

Since 2002, NP has facilitated and raised funds for remarkable, beyond expectation upgrades in Glen Nevis, benefiting recreationists, landowners, and conservation interests, to high pressure 'front-line' paths and facilities - protecting the Glen and mountain environment with unobtrusive yet durable infrastructure builds and projects. Notable success include the five-year long Nevis Landscape Partnership with other strategic areas of work including:

- 2001 Strategy for Environmental and Visitor Management in the Nevis Area
- 2006-2008 Ben Nevis Mountain Path Heritage Programme
- 2009-2011Sense of Place - Glen Nevis & Ben Nevis Mountain Track
- 2014 -19 Nevis Landscape Partnership Programme
    - 2014 Sustainable Futures Interpretation, Installation, and Information Project
    - 2014 – 2017 Sustainable Futures: Erosion & Minimal Impact
    - 2015 Onwards Future Forests
    - 2015 – 2017 Riverside All-Ability Path & Bridge
    - 2015 – 2017 Polldubh Paths
    - 2015 – 2019 Nevis Volunteer Ranger Training Programme
    - 2018 Glen Nevis Integrated Infrastructure Steering Group (GNISS)
- 2019-2020 Lower Falls Visitor Facilities Improvement
- 2020-40 Nevis Strategy proposes a 100-year vision

3.4 Governance approach

The Nevis Partnership does not own land in the Glen but operates as a facilitator and enabler – bringing people together and addressing duplication of effort and partner tensions. To carry out this role and oversee the roadmap the Nevis Partnership needs to be a robust and viable legal structure, with good governance, paid staff and consistent income streams to provide for baseline monitoring, future target setting and long-term planning. The new articles widen the membership base and are compliant with Community Asset Transfer (CAT) and Community Right to Buy (CRtB) criteria.

Notwithstanding the momentum and pride in successes of the Nevis Partnership, tourism in Glen Nevis seems to be mainly steered by "traditional" visitor management outcomes, singular land ownership objectives, professional knowledge, pursuit of grant funding, and the formal power/brand of public bodies (we understand the reasons why this current approach has been adopted).

The 2019 NLP evaluation review highlighted the need to have skills and experience available alongside the challenges of coordination amongst a number of part time project staff. Long term ‘corporate memory’ loss to the NP was reported, due to high turnover of project staff as funding ends. Funding changes also gave rise to the ‘shoehorning’ of existing staff into other roles for which they may not be well suited. This pattern is unsettling to staff structures, skills and experience and makes developing the visitor experience, undertaking longer term maintenance of assets, and developing new project proposals much more difficult.

The 2019 Nevis Field Centre Report also noted “*Grant and project funding can create significant outputs and outcomes; however the continual pursuit of grant and project funding creates uncertainty within the organisation and can lead to significant challenges in recruiting and retaining members of staff, building and retaining momentum with partners and supporting wider core aims and objectives of the charity.”*

These factors are symptomatic of the ‘sine wave peaks and troughs’ project-based funding approach with little core unrestricted revenue generation capacity to cover the troughs. Tensions are associated with financial spend, planning and management responsibilities, especially in these ‘lean’ periods and are contributing to the challenges the Nevis Partnership and Glen Nevis are experiencing.

Whilst there has been co-operation, stakeholders identified limitations to joined up thinking between private sector and public sector partners. Strategic planning (with resultant strategic documents) remains individual and joined up outcomes that collectively benefit the local area lack baselines, robustness, and longevity.

Stakeholders have commented that a majority of people in Fort William appear to be disconnected from the ‘land’ that surrounds their local community. The new articles are intended to address this but as yet are untested.

Tensions also occur in the context of strategic planning for the area, with FW 2040 (developed by an alliance of Community Councils) acting as the place-based approach for the wider Fort William area but appearing not to recognise the importance of Ben Nevis itself and in turn Glen Nevis.

3.5 Management responsibilities

Primacy of decisions on individual land holdings and occupier’s liability lies with the four main landowners. All operate with their own objectives, supply chains and management information. Burdens and benefits are unequally distributed as are agreements for NP staff to work on the ground across landholdings, which is key for effective overall deployment and delivering a consistent and seamless visitor experience.

The Nevis Partnership does carry some liabilities associated with capital investment delivered through the Landscape Partnership. The Nevis Visitor Centre bridge is owned and maintained by the Highland Council[2]. Other M&M agreements are in place for a 10-year fixed time period[3].

[2] Nevis Partnership confirmed 23 March 2021

[3] NEVIS LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP 10 Year Management and Maintenance Plan April 2019

Localised issues like car parking impacting on the cemetery access and vehicles spilling from places like the Youth Hostel and Youth Hostel Bridge access onto the neighbouring land holding in an ad hoc fashion are examples of cross boundary operational challenges.

3.6 Other partners

Friends of Nevis (FON) was established in 2008 to help look after and manage Ben Nevis and the surrounding area. A SCIO SC383413 Scottish Charity No. SC041711 FON coordinates volunteers on tourism related projects such as regular work parties carrying out path repairs, litter collection and event management. FON operate the three donation cairns on the Ben Nevis paths. FON also work with the Nevis Partnership to provide and manage volunteer involvement in projects, including ways for commercial operations like outdoor providers to engage staff and customers as volunteers.

3.7 Finance

The Nevis Partnership and several other local groups believe that money raised locally should stay local. Public bodies such as Highlife Highland and Highland Council collect income corporately and then redistribute that income on a pan-Highland basis, based on greatest need. It is not clear if there is a carbon footprint weighting on supply chain income i.e funding used from visitor vehicles to support high energy use facilities like swimming pools.

This has generated a sense that not everything is as transparent as it should be between partners. A shared understanding of partner responsibilities and demands could help reduce this mistrust.

The 2019 NP evaluation review highlighted that when the NLP Programme was assembled it was assumed that "*delivery partners would have stable budgets and staff availability for the duration of the delivery phase. However, there was sustained pressure on public sector finances meaning that expected contributions were harder to secure and capacity of partner organisations was severely compromised.*"

The financial report 2020 notes that the Nevis Landscape Partnership is in "*a time of significant uncertainty*". The current NP business model will remain unviable unless core funding is secured. The Nevis Partnership is currently supported by time limited transition funding from NatureScot and SportScotland. Direct income comes from parking fees at the Lower Falls.

3.8 Nevis Partnership going forward

To deliver the road map the Nevis Partnership needs a reset; constitutionally and financially. The refreshed constitution provides opportunities for both renewed community engagement and gaining a national voice. That national voice needs to call for secure, long term core funding for Scotland's national mountain and glen and/or support for acquisition of revenue generating assets plus a plan with statutory weight.

Relationships with partners, landowners, the community, and visitors in the context of sustainable tourism are likely to be more easily controlled in a framework of participatory management, whereby there is an emphasis on flexibility through a process of regular negotiation. Participatory management styles need to be developed as a means of avoiding (as well as resolving) disputes between interests. Informal management styles already exist, characterised by day-to-day adaptable decision making.

4 Tourism PESTLE – Nevis SWOT and options analysis

3.9 Sustainable tourism in the context of the national strategy

Sustainable and responsible tourism – the values of consumers continue to evolve and there is a recognised trend that some consumers are making conscious decisions in respect of the places which they visit and behaviour whilst on holiday based on their own personal environmental beliefs and the 'green credentials' of the destination. Prior to starting their journey, tourists are increasingly being presented with options about how to offset CO2 footprint produced by their journey to reach the destination. At one level, we can see this in the way some cafes and restaurants are talking about the provenance of the food which they source from local producers.

The Sykes Staycation Index 2019 is an annual report produced by Sykes Cottages[4], which is based on customer research highlighted that "20% (of participants) want to book more sustainable holidays in 2019."

Visit Scotland produces an annual insight trend report, the report for 2020, published in February 2020 focusses on sustainability. The report comments on the emergence of Transformational Tourism, which is *"a movement among consumers to travel with purpose and cause. Maximising their time, giving something back to the destination they visit and consciously off-setting the impact of their travel."* [5]

The Visit Scotland report further highlights a number of 'mega drivers' over the medium-term horizon (the next 10 years to 2030) which will fundamentally impact on the tourism marketplace. Two of these are particularly relevant and present opportunities for Glen Nevis, in terms of its credentials linked to sustainability (environmental, social and economic) and positioning itself as the 'get away from it all destination' for people living in urban centres.

Environmental sustainability: *"Individuals are increasingly aware of the personal impact of their behaviours.* ***This is increasingly having profound effects on behaviours relating to consumerism, travel,*** *food and work…"*

Growing global urbanisation: *"It is estimated that three-fifths of the world's populations will live in urban areas by 2030…Urbanisation and migration are influencing consumer behaviours and activities. Wellness and betterment are already seen as an antidote to the 'always on', connected, FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) challenges of an increasingly urban society.* ***Opportunities for destinations that can provide a balance of rural, urban, unique and authentic that provides an alternative to what may to some be a generic urban existence*** *will develop in parallel to the ongoing expansion of this global urbanisation."*

In terms of forecasting future visitor numbers, environmental considerations (consumer behaviour along with the introduction of strategic government policies and changes to legalisation) are already starting to raise a number of questions. In the medium to long-term:

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[4] Sykes Cottages are one of the UK's leading self-catering accommodation booking agents

[5] Insight Department: Trends 2020. Travelling towards transformational tourism. February 2020. VisitScotland

(1) In respect of the international tourism market will there be a reduction in international visitors to Scotland?

(2) Given increasing environmental awareness (and action by some members of society) will residents in Scotland and the UK take less overseas trips in the future? If they do, where will they take their domestic holidays in the UK? Will they be inclined to take holidays closer to home rather than in traditional 'destinations' such as Cornwall, Pembrokeshire or the Highlands, which often require a long drive as they are located away from large urban centres of population?

Destinations such as the Lake District, may have a lower carbon footprint per visitor than Glen Nevis given the proximity of large urban population bases on its doorstep such as Greater Manchester and Merseyside.

In the UK as the average temperature rises and weather patterns change does this also present opportunities and potentially help to encourage people to take more domestic breaks in the UK. Again, the Sykes Staycation Index research noted *"29% opted to take a UK break because of the heatwave in 2018."*

Also, when generation 'Alpha' (people born between 2010 and 2024 – the children of 'Millennials') who are living in an increasingly urbanised society start to book their first independent holidays over the next 15 years, what destinations will they be visiting and what experiences will they be seeking? How does Glen Nevis position itself to respond to their specific needs? There may be an opportunity to create a 'levy' of some form which is re-invested into relevant projects for community cohesion as well as wildlife and habitat management.

There will be opportunities for destinations which can offer transformative experiences and sustainable travel in the post Covid era.

As of 2021 Tourism PESTLE (External to Glen Nevis)

Political	Reduced public spending, net zero, Covid, land reform
Economic	Less disposable income, higher cost of air travel,
Social	Demographics Authenticity, activity and adventure, health and wellbeing eco-tourism
Technological	Smart phones, contactless, EVs, e bikes
Legal	Charity Law, Health and Safety, Occupier Liability
Environmental	Climate change – uncertainty biodiversity loss

As of 2021 Tourism SWOT (internal to Glen Nevis)

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• Established iconic destination with high-level of existing throughput of visitors and expected growth • Basic visitor infrastructure in place	• NP has a lack of resources, including sustainable finance, to deliver tourism and other projects • Current provision of visitor infrastructure does not meet needs of 21st Century visitor

• Long established committed local businesses	
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Increasing visitor numbers over the long-term • Investment in visitor infrastructure and marketing to delivery experience which meets the needs of visitors • Securing assets and 'ongoing revenue' for NP (create less reliance on grant funding) • Refresh and develop strong "brand" identity within the marketplace (if investment secured to develop infrastructure) • NP working in partnership with other organisations to develop and deliver visitor offer	• Overwhelmed with visitors once lock down restrictions are lifted • Key stakeholders within NP not able to agree a way forward within short timeframe or implement action plan • Breakdown of relationships within NP • Unable to secure capital funding to deliver projects between now and summer season • Albeit unlikely decline in visitor numbers (if expectations are not met)

5 The Sustainable Tourism Road Map - moving forward

Under many parameters such as environment, Glen Nevis has much of what it takes to compete with the very best destinations internationally and could be world class.

Scotland was the first country to join Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, and the Scottish Government is legally committed to reducing emissions by 75% by 2030. However, in achieving a world class label much work needs to be done. A number of different tools and frameworks are available to help with sustainable tourism roadmaps.

For example, Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP), a framework designed by the US National Park Service to manage carrying capacity in their national park system. When Nevis Range was established a Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) model was imposed as a planning condition around the concept of carrying capacity.

Frameworks have further evolved to encompass a wider definition of sustainability. The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is one practical tool that enables places to develop tourism sustainably based on 5 principles:

1. Giving priority to protection;
2. Contributing to sustainable development;
3. Engaging all stakeholders;
4. Planning sustainable tourism effectively;
5. Pursuing continues improvement.

Sustainable transformation – Seven Pillars approach

Normally applied at a country-wide level, Euromonitor International's Sustainable Travel Index[6] has been adapted as a framework to incorporate the wider sustainable tourism interests in the Glen. In establishing the Sustainable Tourism GLENEST roadmap for Glen Nevis, Euromonitor's seven sustainable tourism pillars are used as the framework for the action plan. They are environmental, social and economic sustainability, risk around tourism as well as sustainable tourism demand, transport and mobility and accommodation/services. Where appropriate other principles will be included.

It is interesting to note in the Index smaller Scandinavian, Baltic and European countries set the pace. Sweden, Finland, Austria, Estonia, and Norway occupying the top five places. The 17 United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also offer a blueprint.

The roadmap's seven framework pillars each begin with a definition, describe the current situation (footprint) and then the 2030 destination and recommended actions required to get there. The actions, as far as is practical, recognise trade-offs between the seven pillars. But also, that

- All that is important and within the Glen Nevis influence should be included
- Actions should be easy to describe
- A baseline should be established with attainment dates (short 2025, long 2030)

[6] wpSustainableTravelIndex-v0.3.pdf (euromonitor.com)

- actions should be part of a wider pathway to improved wellbeing for visitors, residents, and the local economy

5.1 Environmental sustainability (ES)

5.1.1 Definition

Defined by environmental condition through issues such as habitat and water conditions, direct recreational and visitor pressures, and carbon emissions.

5.1.2 Current status

It is acknowledged that tourist use of the Glen does create environmental risk to upland habitats and species and contributes to path erosion, waste, and traffic. For example, more visitors/users means desire line trails in sensitive environments, such as at the Red Burn and the climbing crags at Polldubh. Vegetation and plants may be trampled, thin soils degraded, wildlife disturbed, and aquatic resources contaminated.

Systematic recording of visitor impacts on the environment is weak. Habitats and species are subject to pressures from a variety of sources including recreation and tourism. Effects like trampling and path braiding are easy to observe. Establishing causal links, for example on changes to species home range size or breeding success is much more difficult. Where information exists, it is not always effectively used in the management of sites.

The east side of the Glen is within the Ben Nevis SAC:SSSI. Site condition monitoring of 17 designation features[7] shows that out of 17 SAC qualifying features 50% are in an unfavourable condition.

- Favourable maintained 8/17
- Unfavourable recovering 3/17
- Unfavourable no change 5/17
- Unfavourable declining 1/17

Much of the west side is a commercial forest managed by Forestry and Land Scotland with environmental criteria and UKFS guidelines contained in the 2015-25 Glen Nevis land management plan[8]. The forest is a major feature in the enclosed landscape of Glen Nevis and particularly from Ben Nevis. It is mostly seen in views from the lower sections of the walkers' path to the summit of Ben Nevis and from the visitors' facilities on the floor of the glen near Achintee. Forest restructuring will support key species including hen harrier, black grouse, red squirrel, pearl-bordered fritillary, and chequered skipper alongside native woodland habitats.

Water is a major commodity for Glen Nevis. The River Nevis is a heavily modified water body. Drainage in the glen characterised by a series of small, steep watercourses running straight downhill to the river. SEPA River quality condition monitoring shows that the surface water environment in the Glen could be better. Top rating is high, followed by good, moderate, poor, and bad.

- River Nevis in 2014 was rated moderate with the expectation of it rising to good in 2021.
- The Allt a Mhullinn condition remains as bad. [9]

[7] Mid-West-DMP-Version-3.0.pdf (deer-management.co.uk)
[8] Glen Nevis land management plan - Forestry and Land Scotland
[9] Water Environment Hub (sepa.org.uk)

Direct visitor impacts

The direct impacts of recreational and tourism activities may also be viewed through the lens of recorded incidents August to December 2020 as shown below. Whole Glen - 95 fires and fire sites and dug over a total of 58 fire pits. No figures are recorded for camping or toileting issues. FLS report[10] the West Highland Way is showing signs of deterioration due to wear and tear and increasing pressure. Braveheart car park has also suffered from storm damage and high usage.

In the absence of baseline figures and a measure of Ranger effort, meaningful relative impacts may not be calculated, but reported absolute impacts seem moderately high.

Litter 

Litter is waste which is disposed of "on the go" in a bin, discarded deliberately or as a result of an accidental escape from a car or a rucksac.

- Lower Glen - 34.5 bags of litter
- Upper Glen - 38 bags of litter
- Steall - 19.5 bags of litter
- Total 92 bags - 4.2 bags per km of glen

(Ben Nevis 46 bags - 7.2 bags per km of Ben Nevis path)

Litter bins vary in quality and effectiveness – both at the start of the ben path.

The capacity to provide litter bins is finite. This determines the type, size, and location of litter bins, how they are used by the public, how much litter is collected and how frequently they require to be emptied and by whom. There is a logic in placing them in areas of high footfall, through routes and near where people stand, sit or purchase take way food and drink.

Waste varies from packaging and plastic and organic waste like fruit skins to specific waste streams like BBQs, dog waste, and sanitary waste like nappies. Legislation assumes or require

[10] Glen Nevis Forest Management Plan 2015 -25

that waste should be segregated and separately collected. This is extremely difficult in remote rural locations and separate bins are not usually possible.

Toilets 

There is shortage of public toilets in the Glen. Toilet provisions remain the same as in 2001 whereas visitor numbers have doubled. There is no mains sewage treatment in Glen Nevis. Treatment is by private systems.

Bioclere Clearwater Wastewater treatment unit at the visitor centre. Less than ideally situated in front of the visitor centre and on the flood plain close to the river. (Installation or replacement date unknown)	

Additional waterless toilets are planned for the Lower Falls, it remains to be seen how management will cope. Evidence from elsewhere, (Skye, Loch Lomond) point to a preference for flush toilets at high use sites. Post Covid regular cleaning will be a priority as will non-contact features for flush, hand wash and door securing mechanisms.

Provision of foul water disposal services for motorhomes and caravans is provided for customers at Glen Nevis. There is no public service for motor home foul water disposal in Glen Nevis[11].

Note:

1. The construction of toilets may at first sight seem a simple operation. However, when all the issues are considered – unknown ground conditions and water supply, the difficulties of treating human waste to a high standard, building design, maintenance, and seeking approval from the regulatory authorities – the cost and effort involved can be considerable. For a toilet installation further up the Glen than the Visitor Centre suitable for year-round use by 50,000 plus people , a budget of around £250,000 plus significant management time may be a minimum starting point. Charging for toilet use may be an and/or option in association with car park charging. Operating costs could be £10 -11,000 per annum.
2. Composting and waterless toilets, using solar panels for energy have been installed in some locations where mains water is unavailable. They tend to need more maintenance than conventional toilets and benefit from a staff presence. Smell may be an issue during periods of high use or warm weather.

[11] Home - Campa

Countryside furniture

Countryside furniture is often installed as part of capital projects , but maintenance regimes to ensure care and safe condition and post Covid cleaning will be an issue.

Emissions CO_2

Carbon emissions are complex to calculate and may be based on estimates, but they do give an idea of how much is at stake. A full 'footprint' is desirable, as a ' toeprint' often misses out some or most of the actual emissions.

In the 2020 Carbon Baseline for Cumbria report[12] it was found that the driving emissions of visitors to Cumbria are three times the UK average; their emissions from eating out and recreational activities are also higher than residents'. They account for 49% of Cumbria's consumption-based greenhouse gas emissions, although 36% of those emissions come from travelling to and from Cumbria.

It might be expected that Glen Nevis could have a similar picture and the return journeys to the main markets are more than Cumbria - a minimum of 200 miles. One they are in the Glen, exhaust pipe greenhouse gas emissions from 200,000 vehicles per annum driving, say, 20 miles, up and down could be around 480 tonnes[13] of CO_2 per year - roughly equivalent to a municipal swimming pool. Travel by car to the area could increase this by a factor of 10 or more. Bed nights in the Glen could generate 20-25kg CO_2 per person per night in serviced accommodation plus all meals and supply chain footprint. Based on, say 400 bedspaces with 60% occupancy that would provide a CO_2 volume of over 2,000 tonnes.

5.1.3 2030 Destination Outcomes

By 2030 Glen Nevis will have a landscape comprised of a better woodland upper margin of upland birch and native pinewood to blend better with the surrounding landscape and riparian woodland on the glen floor. New wildlife habitat will be created and maintained, water quality will have improved to High. Landscape scale conservation will be well underway

[12] A Carbon Baseline for Cumbria (slacc.org.uk)
[13] 4 million miles at 120gm per mile

with ground vegetation restoration creating more robust landscape for visitors and increasing carrying capacity. Alder, birch, and pine will frame the paths leaving the Glen floor providing visitors with a habitat transitional experience as they climb higher.

Carbon consciousness is high and consumption and impact-based reporting is important for looking at the climate change and habitat impacts that visitors to the Glen and businesses in the Glen have through their entire time spent in the Glen.

The significance of impacts on the environment and what level of impact is acceptable (e.g. temporary, permanent etc) has been determined. Partners understand what mitigation needs to be applied and the mechanisms for achieving any desired change.

A clear programme of visitor management will be in place to address path management, trailheads, waste and littering, non SOAC compliant wild camping, motor home/camper van servicing and toileting. It is likely public motor home wastewater disposal facilities will be located in Fort William.

5.1.4 Actions to get to destination

Action ES 1

The underlying metamorphic geology of Glen Nevis paths is quite robust. However, path network condition surveys will be undertaken and recorded on a GIS data base. UPAG Survey auditing process 1- 5 scale Ref Upland Path Management.[14] Repair effort will be prioritised.

Action ES 2

NP will establish a formal incident recording system to establish a baseline for defined incidents like fires, litter, irresponsible camping etc and quantify their cause, scale and ecological impact. The distribution and types of incidents will be recorded in order to identify solutions which could be simple as more education/ social media messages[15], bins, provision of BBQ sites, wild camping locations etc.

Year on year impacts reductions (not the same as fewer visitors) will be sought and waste recycling opportunities improved.

Action ES 3

Water quality in the River Nevis will achieve a high rating by 2025.

Action ES 4

Management measures will address impacts on species and habitats where there is evidence tourism pressures are significantly detrimental and support measures which further the achievement of favourable conservation status.

Action ES 5

[14] www.nature.scot/upland-path-management-standards-delivering-pathprojects-scotlands-mountains

[15] https://youtu.be/6Q-uCXIxhBY

On carbon emission the NP will establish a tourism carbon baseline and verifiable audit process. Visitors will be given lower carbon options and partners to pledge a 50% reduction by 2025 and 75% by 2030.

<u>Action ES 6</u>

Clear strategies are required for waste management and toileting[16]. As a guide for visitor public places [17]

- Female = 1 cubicle per 550 women and female children.
- Male = 1 cubicle or urinal per 1,100 men.
- 1 unisex accessible toilet cubicle for every 10,000
- 1 unisex baby changing facility per 10,000

[16] where-to-go-leaflet.pdf (mountaineering.scot)

[17] Loo Of The Year Awards

5.2 Social sustainability (SS)

5.2.1 Definition

Defined by visitor inclusivity and the quality of life and wellbeing of the local workforce, volunteers and community based on the right to a decent wage, education training and rewarding volunteering opportunities.

5.2.2 Current status

Inclusion

Visitor infrastructure should accommodate human needs. The all-ability path and bridge access provide excellent routes for the less able. Accessible toilets and space for infants, children and people with special needs are basic needs and provision is very limited (See Action ES 6) . Statistics provided by Changing Places in 2019 show that only 1% of attractions, under 1% of parks and 29 actual museums and art galleries in the UK have a registered Changing Places toilet.[18]

Each individual visitor is as important and as valued as the next person. The topography of the Glen imposes physical constraints to access. However, where reasonable, barriers should be removed, and quality of opportunity choices provided. Inclusive tourism is a key part of sustainable tourism.

Styles creating barriers and can be safety hazards and have occupier responsibilities

Work force

There are partner concerns over availability of labour for the tourism sector and Brexit has created uncertainty around attracting workers from Europe. Other sectors like aquaculture and renewable energy are offering better pay and conditions.

5.2.3 2030 Destination Outcomes

Inclusion

[18] http://www.changing-places.org/install_a_toilet/case_studies/_cpad2019_venue_stats_.aspx

Given the emergence of new technologies, Glen Nevis shall have a good range of different ways for people to access, learn about, and experience Glen Nevis and its values without actually needing to physically visit.

Everyone working to provide public access in the Glen has a legal responsibility under the Disabilities Discrimination Act not to discriminate against disabled people including those with sensory or intellectual impairments. Whist recognising the integrity of the topography and landscape, unnecessary barriers, where possible, will be removed.

An accomplished team

NP has established a staffing model that can work across landholdings, with complementarity between partner-based services and staff. The flexibility of the NP ranger-based service is crucial to effective overall deployment and is the combination that makes this the best way forward for the Glen Nevis.

There is more trust and creativity from all Glen Nevis partners, including community, NGOS and private entities, and any collateral effects (restrictions on private mobility, behaviour change and initial decreases in turnover for some business operations) of significant measures like road closures to achieve sustainable tourism goals have been overcome.

In terms of wider employment conditions for those working in the glen doing important task supporting sustainable tourism they are paid a good living wage and there is security of tenure for key staff and good options for training, childcare, and travel to work choices.

The new NP constitution has attracted well connected 'champions' as directors who can assist with access to political and financial support in a 'national mountain' context.

Training

West Highland College (WHC) UHI and other training providers are addressing skills gaps and generating and exporting home-grown talent to other destinations and locations. Fort William remains home to a burgeoning WHC School of Adventure Studies. The UHI campus in Fort William provides real opportunities to develop research capacity to a greater extent. WHC has a range of working relations with partners, including student volunteering and placements, co-teaching on courses, small research projects, and sitting on project boards. UHI has the Centre for Mountain Studies based in Perth.

The NP offer training for an NVQ in Environmental Conservation and this is extended to Modern Apprentices (MA) as part of the Green Recovery. THC scheme offers MA places for approx. 18 months and costs at £20k per annum per MA. The Kickstart scheme is another option for engaging young people. Participants on minimum wage can still claim Universal credit 25 hours per week.

Inspiring dedicated individual volunteers and volunteer work crews (e.g. on company ESG programmes) come to work in the Glen and operate as Glen stewards through the 'Adopt the Glen' scheme. NGOs like the JMT and Scottish Mountaineering bring their membership and staff with capacity, expertise, and innovative approaches. An inclusive approach to volunteering is in place.

Commercial/fee based guiding operations, mountaineering clubs and organisations provide a stewardship role and mentor young people. New personnel with little or no previous knowledge of sustainable tourism (because they may come to the Glen from a background in other sectors) may find the service blueprints and the additional GIS baseline information and audits on visitor flows, behaviour, and movement of different visitor groups that they incorporate beneficial.

Volunteering

An overall volunteer coordinator for all volunteer groups - Friends of Nevis work parties, John Muir Trust work parties will be in place.

Volunteering is an activity likely to attract people in the future. Accommodation is a problem for non-locally resident volunteers. Volunteers may also be attracted from other sectors – charitable, educational, corporate, etc.

Education

Develop a range of Glen Nevis education materials that enables future generations to understand the significance of Lochaber's mountain environments and future sustainable energy production and encourages their exploration.

5.2.4 Actions to get to destination

Action SS 1

In partnership the NP will undertake the following audits and set appropriate goals.

- Accessibility[19] – against the BT Countryside for All Standards and Guidelines[20]
- Training schemes and opportunities
- Volunteering

Action SS 2

In partnership the NP will undertake an audit of resident sentiment and opinion.

Goal for 75% of Lochaber residents to be happy with tourism activity and supportive of the planned visitor management measures in Glen Nevis by 2025

Action SS 3

NP to explore with all businesses in the Glen, Quality Assurance Support to meet assurance standards.

Designation as a 'Fairtrade Zone' to support the area's promotion of ethically and locally sourced food, drink, and other products within the local visitor economy.

[19] Countryside For All Guide - Paths for All | Paths for All
[20] Outdoor Access Design Guide - Paths for All | Paths for All

5.3 Economic sustainability (ES)

5.3.1 Definition

Defined as the Glen's ability to achieve responsible economic growth, integrating with the wider local economy, public and private sector.

5.3.2 Current status

Tourism is a great contributor to the regional economy of Lochaber however, other industries such as aquaculture, timber, agriculture, and aluminium play a big role too. These other sectors generally adhere to similar values and have similarly high-level sustainability targets like carbon reduction. But often with better salaries than the hospitality, tourism, outdoor activities, and conservation they may attract skilled local labour out of these sectors making tourism recovery more difficult. Hospitality and tourism may even be playing catch up as many small tourism businesses are under capitalised and some barely meet basic compliance levels. Hence working with bodies like the Chamber of Commerce is important, which will encourage improvement and further partnership working across organisations.

Integration

Glen Nevis overlaps with other co-terminus master plans and brands.

- FW2040 is a place-based strategy with 4 purposes for delivering change A Great Place to Live | A Connected Place |A Place Facing Water |A Place with Collective Ambition | Addressing climate change and ecological emergency Part of WH&I LDP. But
    - No formal recognition of Glen Nevis
    - Largely an infrastructure/ build programme as opposed to service delivery
    - NP partners report little engagement on this strategy
- Nevis Forest and Mountain Resort Master Plan (Forestry and Land Scotland's 20-year, £25million) to create a Nevis Forest and Mountain Resort Development which is a world class destination in its own right and from which all attractions of Fort William and the wider Lochaber region can be explored.
- Lochaber Geopark, An Outdoors Playground, sculpted by Nature and boasting some of the best geology in the world. But currently not registered as a UNESCO geopark.
- Outdoor Capital of UK - brand used by the Lochaber Chamber of Commerce to promote Lochaber as the best place in the UK to experience the outdoors, including ability to host world championship level events such as mountain biking.
- West Highland Way and link to Great Glen Way (both Scotland's Great Trails)
- WHLDP There are several policies that may be applicable to different forms of development within this area of "countryside" within Glen Nevis (this excludes that entrance part of the Glen that forms part of the Fort William urban area. Policies 28, 29, 31, 32, 35, 43, 44, 47, 51,52, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 64, 65, 66, 67, 74, 75 and 77 are most relevant, which can be found in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan 2012

Finance ***£££***

As noted in Section 3 above while successful in securing capital funding the NP does not have access to operational funding to delivery the necessary visitor management out comes. In 2001,annual operational costs were estimated for years 2006/7 at £461k the NP has not reach that in 2021.

5.3.3 2030 Destination Outcomes

The NP has avoided frugal short termism that encourages a 'race to the bottom' and only tears and strains the environmental, social, and economic fabric of the Glen further apart rather than repairing it and enhancing it. The NP has made a strong **'leg up not hand out'** case to Scottish Government showing how core funding meets planned objectives in line with the National Performance Framework. [21]

The NP is a more established and resilient organisation and is raising earned revenue from multiple sources including partner contribution (cash and in kind) leased assets like the Lower Falls CP which should be achieving 50% margins on 80% occupancy. However, using car park space for information, interpretation etc. may reduce car park capacity and if vehicles are parked in spaces longer as people spend more time in the area and there continues to be a strategic goal of vehicle reduction with more people using the bus, this may affect revenues in the longer term.

Elsewhere, NP have developed additional revenue streams from bike hire and shuttle bus concessions through to online donations, commercial sponsorship (linked to specific capital projects and staff posts), a share of any tourism levy linked to bed nights (if introduced by the Highland Council) may provide NP with income for public interest infrastructure. Surplus from NP trading subsidiaries is reinvested within Glen and Ben Nevis to support the ongoing management and development of this iconic destination.

In considering new infrastructures or investment in hubs, NP have explored clearly preferred targets to focus limited investment funds and raise a secure long term revenue source.

Projects with particular endowments, such as accessible footfall and existing infrastructure attributes and few limitations that could be improved at low to moderate cost would be preferred. This indicates that a good return on investment would be possible. (See projects in 5.3.4 below)

Purchasing local products and services

Local businesses are encouraged to use Glen Nevis as an economic asset and making the business more distinct and helping it stand out from its competition and appear more authentic with greater appeal to target audiences.

Businesses will recognise the economic value to their business of access networks and paths with long term solutions to their upkeep that are used by their guests. Businesses will see the roles they can play in the future of Glen Nevis and not seek to attract types of tourism if this is not in the interest of Glen Nevis or of the Fort William community.

Preference given to locally based providers, trades, and supply chains if they can demonstrate the appropriate standards of provenance, traceability and quality. For example, promotion of local guides and products like local venison in various forms from fresh meat cuts to charcouterie being readily available to visitors. NP have developed a quality 'Nevis' kitemark assurance scheme which local businesses can apply to join.

Weekly payment of all suppliers to support start-ups and small companies will be the norm. Support will be available for new, innovative sustainable tourism businesses in the area.

[21] National Performance Framework | National Performance Framework

5.3.4 Actions to get to destination

Action ES 1

NP will explore options for ‘grant in aid’, capital and revenue project funding support showing how core funding provide coordinated support and meets planned outcomes for recovery in line with the National Performance Framework.

Contact with

- Elected representatives, public bodies, Outdoor Capital
- Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment
- Scottish Government (SG) Culture, Tourism and Major Events Directorate

Grant in aid

From Scottish Government to support core costs of managing Ben and Glen Nevis as Scotland’s National Mountain.

The ‘National Mountain Ltd’ through a revitalised Nevis Partnership – revised constitution allows for both Membership from Lochaber Area and Membership from Associates (National Interest). This allows for national focus and accountability to be in place and will help to attract high profile ‘ambassadors’ or ‘champions’ (both individuals and brands) to the NP.

The Glen and Ben Nevis are unique national assets that everyone should be able to enjoy, value and care for. Development of ‘The National Mountain Ltd’ concept to seek core funding commitment from both public - central government, third sector and private partners. Developing a ‘brand identity’ will be a critical part of this initiative. Parallels with World Heritage Sites, National Museums, National Forest, National Botanic Garden, National Parks and Scotland’s Great Trails. Concept could be further developed to encompass Scafell and Snowdon in a National Summits Partnership (which could lead to efficiencies in the operation of NP and wider opportunities).

Direct Grant

Beyond those funding sources developed in Part 1 of the GLENEST report

RTIF- Round 4

Administered by VisitScotland and is open to local authorities and National Park Authorities to apply or in partnership with their communities.

Highland Coastal Communities Fund

This fund has a number of rounds. Autumn 2021 is expected as the next round. Community groups can apply.

Highlands and islands Enterprise

Community development support

Regeneration Capital Grant Fund

Application through THC to Scottish Government for regeneration projects in disadvantaged communities.

Scottish Land Fund (SLF)

New £10 million fund for community asset purchases opening in May/June.

SSE Sustainable Development Fund

Fund due to open in Autumn 2021

<u>Other sources of funding</u>

Philanthropy through a Nevis Foundation

- The Carman Family Foundation
- The Bently Foundation
- John Muir Trust
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- The Woodland Trust
- The Nineveh Trust
- The Brown Forbes Memorial Fund Scotland
- Hugh Fraser Foundation
- Brewdog
- Scottish Mountaineering Trust

Crowd Funding

Businesses sponsoring activities

Outdoor equipment business sponsors and branded products for sale through shop

Individual legacy donations

Visitor generated revenues

- Car park charges
- Donations

<u>Investment in Tourism Focused Asset</u>

1 "The Nevis Exchange"

Ex Edinburgh Woollen Mill, Nevis Bridge, Belford Road/A82 retail building at entrance to the Glen, has been identified by the Nevis Partnership. Was previously trading as Ben Nevis Highland Centre. Currently believed to be vacant but 'For sale/for lease' status is unknown as is any likely acquisition cost or burdens. Beyond this brief scoping option, no further investigation has been carried out for this report.	

Rationale

This location would deliver substantial footfall and is already configured as a visitor attraction with significant car parking. With the right product a target of 50,000 – 100,000 would seem achievable – in excess of projected numbers for the Nevis Field Centre as it would appeal to a wider market. An imagined reconfiguration could be along the lines of *"The Nevis Exchange" or "The Nevis Embassy" in the Outdoor Capital* – Because our mountain and Glen matter. Given the nature of the proposal the Nevis Partnership would be advised to consider operation through a commercial subsidiary trading company with the parent charity owning any asset.

The distance from the existing Nevis Visitor Centre reduces direct competition and adds additional capacity. Given its location the site could support both passing trade and contribute to the evening economy. With walking distance of many accommodation providers, it would provide a visitor 'node' towards the north end of Fort William and provide a link between town and mountain. Historically, it was the original end of the WHW.

Purpose

To encourage Nevis's visitors of all types and abilities to act and visit a venue providing core services, toilets, catering, retail etc but, critically, also communication and reflection on sustainable tourism. The venue would place people into Nevis and convey complex concepts and ideas, looking beyond immediate events of the day, visualising change, and turning people's attention to the future. The venue would attain the highest Green Tourism grading standard. It would also become an important resource and social meeting space for members of the local community.

The venue might include:

- Exhibitions (mountain stories and science, historic collection (images, maps, artefacts)
- Events/ Talks/Films (Travelling exhibitions – other national mountains)
- Restaurant/Bar/café
- Space for (1) 'pop up street' food and (2) artists, craft and other producers (outdoor equipment) providing ~~a~~ small home businesses and a place to test the market

- Web cam, Viewpoint and Photo point – path up onto Cow Hill to get a view of the Ben
- Central booking point for outdoor activities
- In-house managed shop – higher value and higher margin house brand products and exclusive items plus a choice selection of second hand and current mountain books. Fiction, picture books, mountain cookbooks and guidebooks plus other non-fiction titles on mountain topics. Online shop offering. Reproduction photographs and posters
- Outreach (education and 'Nevis in a Box' travelling to other locations)
- Library, archive
- Base for sustainable transport and bike hire up the Glen
- Base for Nevis Partnership and co-location of partners (NP already exploring co location with Chamber of Commerce). Would bring an additional revenue stream.

An attractive product would be open to sponsors – for example.

10-year commitment Summit Package eg £300/pa

- Free entry to exhibition
- Names on sponsor board/annual dinner
- Discount to events/coffee/meals
- Newsletter etc
- Tree planted in your name
- Guided walk with expert

5-year commitment Polldubh Package eg £150/pa

- Five free entries to exhibition
- Names on sponsor board
- Newsletter etc
- Discount on coffee etc
- Tree planted in your name

2-year commitment Steall Package eg £50/pa

- Two free entries to exhibition
- Invitation to events
- Newsletter etc

Reference

Reinhold Messner's legacy project – six museums in the Alps | Financial Times (ft.com)

2 Community Mountain

Explore community purchase of Achintee Grazings and possible future sub lease/ formal partnership arrangement with JMT property. The Nevis Partnership now meets the definition of a Community Body, defined in section 19 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, and required for both Community Right to Buy (CRtB) registration and accessing finance from the Scottish Government Scottish Land Fund (SLF).

This would place the entire main Nevis path into community ownership. Clearly ownership would allow the Nevis Partnership greater clarity in meeting their objectives. Ownership would bring a wide range of responsibilities and liabilities. Equally, if they were willing sellers, current owners would secure a capital payment and reduce their exposure and liabilities imposed by visitor access.

Land ownership would also provide the NP with an asset which could be used both the generate revenues and as security on future loan capital. Community ownership can provide a ‘hedge’ against future uncertainty should current landownership arrangements change. Ownership provides an opening to a wider range of land use support funding from woodlands to managed grazing. Ownership also allows a more secure movement towards landscape scale outcomes.

5.4 Risk (R)

5.4.1 Definition

Defined as major man-made risks to sustainability like the Covid-19 pandemic or climate events like flood and fire. In a mountainous location visitor risk needs careful consideration. Also risks like damage and erosion faced by the natural and cultural assets that travel and tourism businesses depend upon. Risk and uncertainty is present in the planning system with developers free to make repeat applications.

Reputational damage can occur very quickly through social media reporting if poor experiences become more frequent. Credibility damage and accusations of 'green wash' if claims of sustainable positioning cannot be supported by credible data or robust accreditation.

5.4.2 Current status

The Scottish Climate Change Plan highlights the need to expect more unpredictable weather (freeze, fires, winds, floods). These have the potential to impose cumulative and catastrophic effects on visitor infrastructures and access networks. Storm Frank on Deeside in December 2015 destroyed entire path networks and riverside businesses with recovery still underway. Figure 1 shows the scale of future impacts on property and infrastructure that might be expected.

Figure 1: River Nevis Flood warning 29 March 2021

Management agencies have a legal obligation to warn visitors of the potential risks or hazards they may encounter. People visiting these areas also have an obligation to consider their own safety and the safety of others. "Social conflict over how responsibility is shared among multiple parties can erupt quickly and powerfully following a hazard event"[22].

Lochaber has a long experience of dealing with multiple mountain incidents and a good working system on rescue is believed to be in place. However, prevention through good advice and preparedness is essential.

For Glen Nevis in future, rainfall is predicted to increase in total amount and intensity. Uncertainty around greater storminess, snow and freeze events will increase. Extreme weather events are one of the biggest risks for Glen Nevis.

Equally, recent dry spells, sometime when there still snow on the hills, have given rise to large scale wildfires. Fires on a large scale can threaten property, even life and set back habitats and natural regeneration.

Local heritage – tangible and intangible - can be at risk as tourism develops in an area. Research by VisitScotland shows that 51% of people visiting Scotland were interested in Gaelic or Gaelic culture.

5.4.3 2030 Destination Outcomes

Place making is underway encompassing a broad range of activities to improve the physical quality of the Glen - including planning, transport, development, and landscapes in order to create more sustainable and healthier places.

Resilience is in place against weather patterns in Glen Nevis that influence visitor activity choice/behaviours, facility design and maintenance. Design resilience such as porous surfaces on car parks, surface drainage and tree retention beside water courses even at micro path building level has been employed.

Visitor are exposed to high levels of personal advice around mountain safety including weather and avalanche forecasts, UV, pollen and tick[23] forecast and appropriate actions and equipment. There are plans and processes in place which set out clear liabilities and responsibilities to address any conflicts that may emerge in the event of a traumatic facility failure or loss (such as a bridge) or visitor incident.

Glen managers will be vigilant of approaching weather systems and have warning systems in place for unpredicted and adverse events to protect the health and safety of visitors and employees and key assets. All of which are factored into capital and maintenance budgets.

Conservation of archaeological and heritage features in the Glen, also subject to visitor and climate pressures are now a high priority. With sites like Dun Deardail being an important part of the visitor offering (the heritage offer has helped to attract new special interest visitors to the Glen).

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[22] Gstaettner, AM , Lee,D, Weiler B, Rodger,K Visitor safety in recreational protected areas: Exploring responsibility-sharing from a management perspective Tourism Management Volume 75, December 2019, Pages 370-380

[23] Ticks and Lyme disease | Tick leaflet (highland.gov.uk)

Regular and transparent reporting will reduce risk of reputational damage.

5.4.4 Actions to get to destination

Action R 1

NP to develop safety plan(s)/ fact sheets[24] for Glen Nevis to address fire, flood and other emergencies and arrangements for associated installations such as Public Access Defibrillators, advance warning signs (e.g. during high fire risk). Forecast of various kinds will be available online and in visitor centres.

Action R 2

NP to develop a product knowledge, safety awareness and site visit programme for people employed in the local tourism industry[25]. This will include a basic knowledge of Glen Nevis – geography, heritage, Gaelic names, natural features, and safety advice about making the most of a visit to Glen Nevis.

Utilise programmes such as iKnow Partner programme | VisitScotland.org

Action R 3

NP will develop a heritage and authenticity programme to be available online. This will include a Gaelic element to hear the correct pronunciation of place names and mountains and how words and phrases are pronounced. Other heritage materials from past and relatively recent history (industry, climbing, mountaineering and hill running) will be made available.

Action R 4

NP to explore the value of a local place plan for Glen Nevis. The Local Place Plan boundary need not be hard and fast.

Local Place Plans though Schedule 19 of Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 allow for local place plans to become statutory guidance in the local development plan. The Nevis Partnership now meets the definition of a Community Body, defined in section 19 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, and required to lead Local Place Plan development.

A Local Place Plan for the Glen could provide a statutory 'blueprint' for managing future development in Glen Nevis and placing more control in community hands. It will identify and help drive projects. Encourage others to do projects or services which will support the local community. Inform future planning policy. Help others to adapt their activities or proposals to support delivery of community aspirations.

[24] Tourism-Emergency-Management-Fact-Sheet-ver-4.pdf (sapphirecoast.com.au)
[25] Make It Yours - top tips, guidance, FREE promotional materials - Cairngorms National Park Authority

5.5 Sustainable tourism demand (STD)

5.5.1 Definition

Defined by understanding and managing demand, avoiding over tourism and getting the right balance between visitor and host community. Hard data forms the bedrock of understanding and responding to demand.

Experiences in 2020 showed what can happen without planning and investment. Some destinations with similar pressures have opted to manage 'over tourism' through periods of closure/caps on numbers. In principle this is an approach we can/want to avoid by careful visitor management but achieving this will require investment from stakeholders and tourism businesses.

5.5.2 Current status

The Glen sits together with Ben Nevis – the highest mountain in the UK. Recognisable and visible from much of Scotland. Inspires human experience and shapes the identity of Fort William and Lochaber. Google pages results when searching for the following terms:

- Ben Nevis, Scotland 503,000 results
- Glen Nevis, Scotland 300,000 results
- Fort William, Scotland 1,780,000
- Snowdon, Wales 659,000 results
- Scafell Pike, England 432,000 results

It is reported Snowdon got 780,000 in 2018 (walkers and railway) , Mount Fuji 300,000 and Mont Blanc 30,000. Projections place Snowdon as on track to be the world's first million visitor national summit by 2030. It has been described as *'less of a mountain/ more of a visitor attraction'*. Marketing and supplying the Nevis experience is undertaken by multiple parties. Controlling consumer demand for a Nevis experience to conserve fragile and finite resources means understanding demand and applying interventions where appropriate.

People

Current indications are that Ben Nevis attracts around 180,000 visitor per annum but experienced 60% growth 2019 - 20 in August and September comparisons. Twenty years ago, the Nevis strategy highlighted poor visitor number data as a real management issue. This has still not been satisfactorily resolved. There is a pressing need for an updated reliable strategic counter network giving real time accurate data. The Nevis Visitor Centre numbers are another example.

- Over the last 3 years, they are broken down by month and are shown in Appendix 1.
- But, in 2020 many visitors were not counted as they parked, used the toilets, and then walked up Ben Nevis avoiding entering the visitor centre due to Covid-19.
- No measures in the car park exist to assess compliance and non-compliance.
- In 2020 the centre only reopened in mid-July and the figures for are believed to be hugely underestimated.

The status of the current locations of the people counters are as follows:

- Ben Track counter - NN 13924 71816
- Youth hostel counter - NN 12985 71859 - No longer in use – data only to 2015
- Allt a' Mhullin counter - NN 14861 47937
- Steall Gorge counter - NN 17025 69172 - No longer in use, moved Ben tracker after it was vandalised. Data only to 2015
- All abilities path – location to be added

Appendix 2 shows the numbers counted at these locations every year since 2006 and the substantial gaps in data.

In summary, Figure 2 illustrates an indicative pattern of visitor numbers at various locations all showing a pronounced upwards trend.

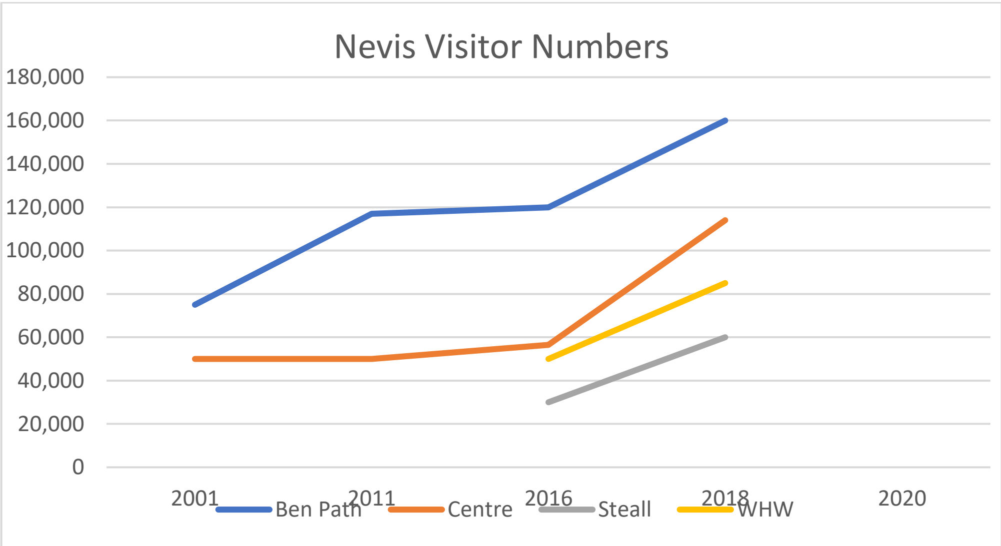

Figure 2: Recorded visitor numbers for Ben Nevis path, Visitor Centre, WHW and Steall path

Note: Ben path = Nevis Visitor Centre, Achintee and Youth Hostel bridge accesses. Steall path based on estimates from previous counter data and vehicle counts. Nevis Visitor centre based on Highlife Highland counts.

Using data for the Visitor Centre alone, Figure 3 shows the clear peak in July and August but with sizeable 'shoulders' in May/ June and September/October.

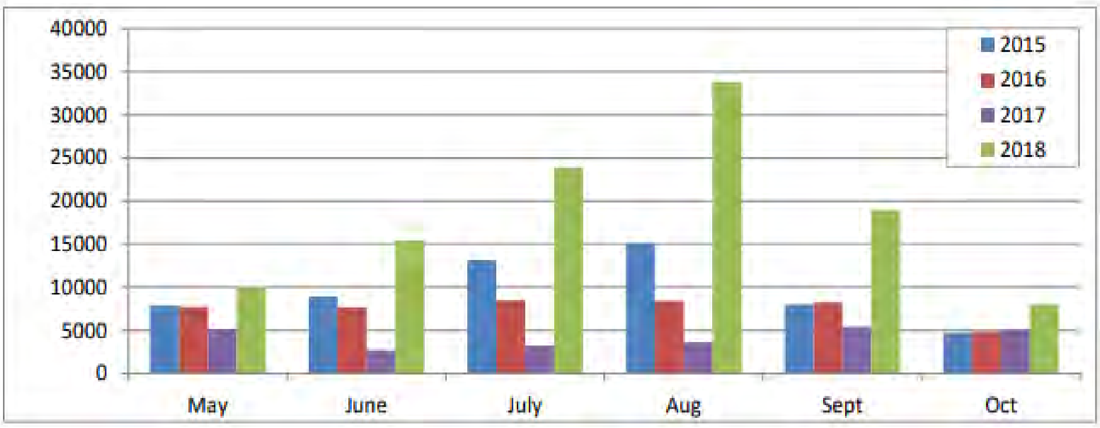

Figure 3: Visitor number through Glen Nevis Centre 2015-18. This change coincided with the opening of the new bridge and all abilities path

5.5.3 2030 Destination Outcomes

Available data on visitors is now being turned into information that can enable fast and effective decision making to ensure positive outcomes. Personal data on visitors is also being collected and this is being used to support targeted online information, behaviour change messaging and marketing initiatives.

Congestion or capacity issues can be communicated to visitors pre arrival and give people the real-time information they need to make good choices. Many visitors to Glen Nevis already understand its susceptibility to damage or tourism pressures and will intend to act responsibly.

Visitor behavioural effects and strategic influences are to

- Enjoy Glen Nevis
- Be inspired by Glen Nevis
- Act with responsibility and sensitivity
- Contribute positively through practical actions (picking up litter) and financial (making donations, buying local)

These effects and behaviour changes are caused by messages delivered through

- The Glen Nevis Newsletter – digital and print free to pick up.
- Online multimedia resources - digital and social media, podcasts, blogs
- Instagram accounts (e.g. Glen Nevis Estate) good and bad photos and links between the NP and landowners accounts
- Promotional leaflets, films, articles, and presentations.
- Open public events
- Health, wildlife, culture walks
- Direct exposure to conservation, outdoor, path industry and tourism bodies
- Online Travel Agency (OTA) Reviews – Trip Advisor, Walk Highland

Visitor densities

Certain resource levels and capacities may not easily be changed or may incur high costs if changed; this may be the case for parking facilities, paths and hubs. Post Covid-19 visitor densities will be important. Visitor density threshold at busy sites will be a minimum of 10m2 per person.

Branding

In the context of Nevis, a brand is the way the Ben and Glen are perceived by those who experience them. More than simply a name in this context the Nevis brand is the recognisable feeling the place evokes. A feeling that live in the minds of everyone who experiences the place: residents, people who make their living here, directors, employees, partners and, importantly, visitors.

Unavoidably, Nevis sits as a 'sub brand' with in the wider Outdoor Capital brand, although it is probably a major essential constituent and driver.

Tying the brand to mega drivers like carbon neutrality and responsible behaviours could have a major influence on how the place moves forward and strategic actions. Public partners, such as the Highland Council and Forestry and Land Scotland, are effectively tied into government policy on this and tourism is a significant net contributor.

Commitments to becoming carbon neutral would not necessarily mean reducing visitor numbers, more offering new opportunities for people to visit in a more sustainable way. It would of course require a carbon baseline from which to launch improvements. Improvement would need verification and activities and businesses some form of independent accreditation

Qualitative Visitor Surveys will further explore push/ pull factors. "Push" factors can include motivations, experiences from prior visits and characteristics of the travel party; "pull" factors can include a destination's topography as well as time factors.

An in-depth analysis of different Glen Nevis customer segments is necessary for the development of well-targeted management strategies. Decision-making such as where to go on holiday requires individuals to make predictions in the present about what they will enjoy in the future.

In order to make decisions, people often intuitively visualise themselves being on each visit then make predictions about how they will feel in that situation. Will I be happy when I go to Glen Nevis knowing I can?

- Enjoy climbing a mountain safely
- Easily find enough interest for all the family
- Easily find safe off-road places for my children to cycle/walk
- Enjoy a place that is clean and litter free
- See some wildlife
- Walk to interesting places without getting told I'm not welcome

Increasing the intensity of the positive affective forecast, should consequently initiate a stronger urge to travel to the Glen and to act responsibly.

5.5.4 Actions to get to destination

Action STD 1

A Nevis barometer/ observatory [26][27]

To be established to gather more accessible and available information though survey work to establish robust baselines and then set targets for increases or improvement and measure success. Sound data will also help to justify funding and evidence outcomes. Data to include:

1 Quantitative Visitor Survey

[26] http://www.visitscotland.org/pdf/Visitor%20Survey%20Toolkit.pdf

[27] https://www.nature.scot/management-people

A new reliable network of sensors and counters to monitor volumes and patterns of visitor and traffic linked to existing equipment. Installation of counters at key points on the access network with options for installing satellite transmission of data from counters direct to desktops. Such capacity is valuable but will incur additional cost.

Budget: 5 x Radio Beam Bike and People Counter – battery operated counter plus data logger and software £10,000. Annual satellite logger option licence £300 per year per counter.

2 Qualitative Visitor Survey

Commitment to undertake visitor surveys regularly (e.g. every 5 years for major resurvey) and to use a consistent methodology so trends can be seen. Survey work must focus on aspects of the visitor experience including

- Visitor profile – home base, age, length of stay, party size and composition
- Awareness of special qualities of Glen Nevis
- Are they feeling welcome?
- What do they love about Glen Nevis?
- What do they not like and what needs to be improved?
- Are they using 'Active Travel' (e.g. walking, wheeling, cycling) to get around the Glen?
- Are other forms of travel being used to access the Glen (e.g. hop on/ hop off shuttle service)?

Commitment to use cost effective 'ad-hoc' online surveys to carry out research on specific areas of interest to NP.

3 Customer database development

As part of programme of customer research capture customer data to develop 'visitor database' to be used (along with social media) for targeting information aimed at changing behaviour. This may include conventional marketing information but could be used to help with crowd funding and influencing pro- environmental choice. It is well documented that claims of concern for the environment do not always result in behaviour which demonstrates this concern.

<u>Action STD 2</u>

<u>Signage review</u>

Carry out a review of signage - repair, removal and declutter (see Appendix 3 in part 1 of this report, showing sign rationalisation programme planned by Highland Council for 2021 season ahead). Partners need to identify which signs can be removed without loss and these should be taken down as soon as possible. This should include a review of 'trailhead' guidance and interpretation where people depart to enjoy the area – such as the start of the Ben path.

Create a Nevis signage manual [28]– guide needed showing gradual replacement programme from all relevant partners[29]. Development/ creation of a new signage co - brand - linked to whatever new structure is proposed. Agree purpose and effectiveness of signs.

The best messages for behaviour change: • Encourage positive action • Highlight the special features of a place • Keep the text brief and easy to understand • Make the requests straight forward.

<u>Action STD 3</u>

<u>Mountain Management App</u>

Development of a connected Nevis Mountain Management App for visiting Glen and Ben Nevis. App will enable users to source information so they know they are: Good to Go and they can

- Hire a guide and/or some outdoor gear
- Get a recommended kit list and timings
- Get some Nevis stories – Clement Wragge and place names
- Time your climb and track yourself against Findlay Wild
- Find Car parking spaces and even book and pay in advance
- Make a donation pledge or Buy a Ben Nevis lottery ticket
- Take a photo at the Nevis bridge – arrives on your phone as you climb
- Get weather forecast and weather updates – arrive on your phone as you climb – includes temperature/wind speed etc on summit
- Order a picnic box for your day out – click and collect
- Book a post climb physio appointment or massage chair
- Book a post climb drink/meal
- Descend a different way – order a taxi back to your vehicle
- Order a venison BBQ box for your campsite or self-catering to eat or take home
- Order a certificate or a t shirt
- Get a tree planted in a Nevis Forest to offset their trip, celebrate or memory.

Budget £25,000

[28] Signs Guidance for Farmers and other Land Managers | NatureScot
[29] untitled (pathsforall.org.uk)

5.6 Sustainable transport and mobility (STM)

5.6.1 Definition

Defined by the quality and energy efficiency of its transport infrastructure, the level of transport emissions and the availability of a diverse range of transport and mobility options.

5.6.2 Current status

Public road corridor

The Belford Road roundabout to Steall Gorge car park road corridor provides access to Glen Nevis, offering visitors the opportunity to engage with features including the highest peak in the UK and stunning post glacial and cultural landscapes. This is a historic road, built for 19th century traffic, trying to provide visitors with opportunities to be inspired through personal connections with these resources.

Visitor car traffic generates visual, noise and atmospheric pollution – affecting people and wildlife – and increases traffic congestion, necessitating road widening, yellow lines and leading to pressures such as verge damage and safety.

Twenty years after the 2001 strategy 'official ' car parking spaces have increased by about 30% whereas visitor numbers have increased by over 100% . Current over reliance on cars to access key honeypot sites and the chronic parking problem at busy times of year is failing the NP charitable object of:

"d) to widen the appeal of, and encourage participation in, the use and care of the landscape, while reducing vehicle use and impacts."

It also means that communities and facilities like the cemetery suffer negative impacts, whilst the visitor experience is not as good as it could be.

Heavy visitation rates in the Glen based on individual motorised transportation raise issues of sustainability through vehicle emissions as well as protection of Glen resources and attributes. People do drive up the Glen for pleasure. The Glen road is the key product in the destination being the principal mechanism visitors use to travel around. This leads to the paradox that while private motorised traffic is perceived as a threat to the environmental and recreational quality, few concrete actions are implemented to change the status quo.

It cannot be overemphasised that without the road and car parks functioning effectively problems will remain and continue to negatively impact on the 'experiences' of some visitors.

High impact measures like road closures and enforced shuttle buses and hard management controls like high car park charges and parking enforcement are highly effective but may be unpopular. Business may fear that there will be negative economic consequences. Low impact measures like public transport publicity campaigns, cycling improvements, parking control, route hierarchies, traffic calming, and signage are proportionately less effective but may be more acceptable.

Car parking P

All car parks in the Glen have the potential to raise income from car parking. Appendix 4 shows what income this could potentially generate, based on a number of assumptions. The models are indicative but clearly show the potential that exists.

Logically enhanced provision at car parks should incur higher charges, but equally in creating a destination people may stay longer meaning a slower turn over of car parking spaces and less income. Messaging choice – Pay and Display OR Contribute and Conserve may affect revenues.

But which arrival volume number should be used for the design of the facilities and day-to-day operations? Designing for peak days may increase costs but designing for an average day may result in insufficient capacity for a large number of days during the year.

NP entered a 25-year lease from February 2019 with Jahama Estate for the Lower Falls CP. Previously the leaseholder was the Highland Council who still own the ticket machines.

Lease conditions means all the income goes to the NP. General maintenance (litter clearance, scrub management, maintenance of the car park surface/potholes) is the responsibility of the NP.

Currently the only hard cost is the coin collection by G4S and maintenance of the machine. New contactless ticket machines owned by NP will be enabled by the new EE mast going up on FLS ground above Achriabhach (consented October 2020).

Currently there are insufficient car park spaces which leads to inappropriate verge parking along the upper Glen Nevis single track road. There are no designated space for large motor homes, and they tend to occupy the coach parking spaces or multiple car spaces.

Group minibuses where people and equipment are being unloaded or loaded tend to take up more space. There is a lack of toilet provision beyond the visitor centre leading to a prominence of waste issues.

There is no public bus stop/drop off – currently the public bus uses the Achriabhach forestry access 210m from the car park. Inadequate signage to paths available from this location. Informal overnight camping and campervan parking outside the SOAC with the associated waste and campfire issues. Self-seeded trees have also reduced light and views.

There is no intension to significantly expand the car park as it will work in tandem with improved public transport to the area. With RTIF Round 3 support, the Lower Falls CP will be reconfigured to

- Maximise parking space (with designated accessible and campervan parking bays)
- Install a sheltered area for a new public bus stop with perch style seating to encourage public transport use within the glen
- Provide engaging information/interpretation, donation point and bike racks
- Provide two new waterless accessible toilet facilities
- Create a picnic area with accessible picnic tables as per those on all ability path
- Create approx. 60m link path to Lower Falls and the path network beyond to encourage walking in Glen Nevis and improve safety of visitors viewing the falls; and
- Create of a 210m link path to Achriabhach to link Lower falls Car park to the Forestry tracks at this end of Glen Nevis.

The upgrade should

- increase NP revenues but will also increase management and maintenance costs, (toilets / bus shelter)
- create more a 'mini destination' – with a viewpoint, short walks and links to the existing path networks either side of the car park

Public Transport

There is a bus service up the Glen. Timetables not suited early start or late finishes (hill walkers/climbers) so people take their own transport in preference. As noted above bus stopping place and timetables are not clear.

The following service buses run along Glen Nevis

- No 41: Glen Nevis Youth Hostel Twice daily, no Sunday service
- No 42: Service operates from May to October from 09.30 to 17.00
- Glen Nevis Youth Hostel from 09.30 to 17.00 (6 runs, 3 of which go to Lower Falls)
- The fare from town to Lower falls is £3.50 single or £5 return.

A new hop on/hop off shuttle bus service was planned for 2019 (by NP and Lochaber Environmental Group) pre-pandemic, run by Shiel buses. This was postponed due to Covid, but plans should be rapidly made to run this as a pilot for the season ahead.

E vehicles

Appendix 4 shows location of 4 proposed EV charging hubs in Fort William

E-Bikes

Lochaber Environmental Group developing the Nevis Visitor Centre into a charging point, drop off and collection point for e-bikes in Glen Nevis. (Appendix 4 also shows map of the other proposed sites locally).

Active travel – bike, wheel and walk

The Nevis Centre is in the process of planning some day trip routes (through Sustrans – Active Travel Grant Scheme) that can be enjoyed from the Caledonia Way that incorporates Ben Nevis Visitor Centre as part of a Glen Nevis loop. These routes will then be linked to Sustrans' network and be shown on information displays and online mapping.

Micro mobility

Micro mobility movement around the Glen on foot in time and space and the placing of signs, maps, panels in the Glen are not well understood. This may make it very difficult for visitors who are unfamiliar with the Glen to plan their visit and most significant, the map, signage and actual geography do not always match.

5.6.3 2030 Destination outcomes

Innovative and sustainable solutions are in place to ensure movement around the Glen that enhance people's experiences and are positive for climate change, the economy, community, and health and wellbeing. Agreement on utilising a shuttle service both as a visitor management tool and as a commercial demand driven service to generate revenue and employment.

Modal shift from the private vehicle to the bus is achieved because alternative transportation is meeting the needs of visitors by being cost effective, frequent, integrated and running on an extended daily schedule, whereas restrictions on private mobility should be clear and unavoidable.

Particular attention has been paid to visitors who can hardly be shifted from private to public means of transport (e.g. people with reduced mobility). In this case, particularly when the available buses do not have ad hoc equipment, special permits for private motorised access are guaranteed.

The logistics and ongoing cost of a shuttle bus system with multiple vehicles, storage, passenger vehicle parking, weather shelters on route has been overcome.

Push messaging technology delivers bus times direct to individual phones in the location.

A penalty charge is the last thing anyone wants to experience whist on holiday or a day trip but even assuming options are available charges applied will still deter people from

- Parking in formal car parks
- Using public toilets if located in car park

Hence reasonable availability, information and enforcement measures will be in place

- Parking arrangements out with the Glen - needs a level of discussion in Fort William to establish park and ride especially at busy periods or for events
- Car parking infrastructure should be adequate – ratio of places to visitors (temporary overflow car parks on peak days can be readily opened)
- Penalties in in places where necessary and enforced
- Information available showing re-investing in remedying infrastructure deficits any of the money extracted from visitors

Notes:

1. Dependence on the collection of charges and penalties as a revenue may mean more assertive charging and enforcement – especially if managed by an outside body. Increase in penalty enforcement charges which deliver much more than a car park fee can benefit car park contracts with private operators and incurs major public disquiet.
2. The Lake District NPA moved away from this approach and have installed - Park with Ease - incorporating touch screen technology, the system lets visitors to the national park pay

by cash or credit card both on entry and on exit or even after they have returned home or up to 10 days after they have parked.

3. Seasonal road closures have been employed in a few comparable locations, but the issues identified above for the Park and Ride option are also likely to apply. Road closures in the Upper Derwent Valley in the Peak District National Park are made with the purpose of creating a more relaxing environment for walkers and cyclists. On Sundays throughout the year, and Saturdays and Bank Holidays from Easter until the end of October, the road beyond Fairholmes to the end of the valley is closed to motor vehicles. A frequent minibus service operates between Fairholmes and King's Tree at these times, and blue badge holders may continue to drive up the valley respecting other road users.
4. A Park and Ride arrangement would require a significant 'up front' investment in a suitable parking area in Fort William and a contract with a suitable shuttle bus provider (reliability would be vital) and liability insurance for all concerned. Parking arrangements could require 'change of use' permission from the Highland Council. Visitors arriving at the site by shuttle bus would require shelter, toilets, and refreshments. To create a 'cost neutral' operation visitor income from a shuttle bus fee would have to cover the operational cost.

<u>5.6.4 Actions to get to destination</u>

<u>Action STM 1</u>

Glen transport audit and review. Reference both SOAC and Highway Code[30].

<u>Action SMT 2</u>

Short term – by 2025

<u>Advance warning signs</u>

Permanent variable message signs (VMS) deployed at entrance to the Glen, with temporary VMS located midway up and at the top to warn people on where to park and of any penalties that might be applied. Real time car park updates – share via Traffic Scotland web site, VMS and blue tooth messages.

Scrolling signs have been installed for some years beside the approach road to Cairngorm Mountain to provide information to visitors on operating times, Car Park capacity and weather conditions.

Managers at Cairngorm Mountain control sign content and consider the signs provide invaluable assistance for visitor management.

[30] Waiting and parking (238 to 252) - The Highway Code - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Road closures in place

Road closed at Lower Falls. Part or whole day. Peak time deployment – fully open in winter season. One way exit for cars arriving early or late. Controlled access for Steall Gorge Shuttle and others or restrict by permit (Blue Badge/ online booking) all or part of the road.

Car parking charge elements in place

- Parking charges by installing contactless/cashless ticket machines – revenue source for NP
- Improved signage and one-way traffic flow
- Improved bay marking and layout
- Season ticket for frequent users and options for a passport type charge for using more than one car park on the same day
- Minibus rate less than combined rate for two cars to support group use
- Have one day a week free, for people who are time rich but cash poor
- Preference to Blue Badge users
- Seasonal concessions – coffee/ ice cream with share of turnover ring fenced for site management
- Some sort of discount associated with car park tickets for people to spend locally
- EV charging hubs in car parks – revenue source for NP

Action SMT3

Long term 2030

E-Bike fleet

Readily available and in use to replace/reduce personal vehicle use in Glen Nevis. Most bike batteries supply from 30 -100 miles of assisted power – 4 trips up and down Glen Nevis? Most e-bikes recharge using a conventional domestic electric outlet and can be rechanged overnight when not in use. Secure storage is available for high value e-bikes to combat theft.

Still delivers health benefits as cycling takes physical effort and riders still have to deal with the weather. Bike rentals are delivering income for the NP.

Spinal cycle route up the Glen

Similarly, new forms of tourism, e.g. cycling tourism, may become more popular if roads are less crowded, which implies a re-arrangement of the tourism offer, including infrastructure investments (e.g. bicycle parking, bicycle transport on shuttle bus and related service development (e.g. rental systems, bike-friendly hotels).

Automated Number Plate Recognition

For those who don't wish to use efficient, accessible and free or cheap alternatives, consider installing cameras on the car parks with seamless prebooked car parking tickets option. Link this to the development of the Nevis Mountain Management App that can be downloaded on to a smartphone. Use of technology is not about making it harder for people to enjoy the countryside, it should be made easier. Reservation systems would be far quicker and cheaper to implement and address a part time problem.

Micro mobility around sites

Micro mobility around the Glen on foot in time and space has been improved. Movement patterns and the placing of new/improved paths, signs, maps, panels in the Glen are well understood. A more tailored approach to visitor management has been adopted offering easy access to specific areas of high aesthetic values and cultural value, for example, through viewing platforms, and providing separate trails for cyclists and hikers.

Levels of interest in activities like photography and nature have been followed through with provision. Examples might include:

- Outdoor adventure playground with part covered area for all weather use
- Wildlife feeding stations - for woodland birds and red squirrels
- Development of new nature-based experiences – hides for raptors and black grouse
- Viewpoints and photo point for key features or key times – evening light on the Ben
- Art works or installations to draw people to mini destinations
- Glen heritage trail

Trail side exhibits

5.7 Sustainable accommodation (SA)

5.7.1 Definition

Defined by the resource usage of accommodation options and the diversity of supply with a wide range of options such as short-term rentals, motorhome, caravan and camping formats available to visitors.

5.7.2 Current status

The mountain landscape and Ben Nevis in particular attracts thousands of sightseers, walkers, and climbers, many of whom base themselves in the tourist accommodation of camp site, youth hostel or chalets in Glen Nevis.

- Four fields of camping pitches plus touring caravan / motorhome pitches (some hook ups). Approximately 400 pitches
- Self-catering accommodation (mixed statics and purpose-built cabins and pods accommodation) - 50 units
- Bar and restaurant facility, which is open to non-residents

Loyal customer base with people returning to the Glen on a regular basis. Summer is the main season, but investment in year-round accommodation – cabins and pods has grown the market. A good winter season – with snow cover is also beneficial in attracting visitors to accommodation in the Glen. Covid-19 related staycations like to boost popularity, at least until international options open up. Patterns moving towards more multiple short breaks (holiday snacking).

Principal employer in the Glen. Glen Nevis Estate has 25 full time equivalent employments – although flexes with up to 120 employees in the peak season. Youth Hostel has around 10 employee at peak times.

Glen Nevis Campsite has won awards – Campsite of the Year in 2017 and operate to a high standard. The Youth Hostel has a Gold Green Business Award indicating excellent standards of environmental performance.

5.7.3 2030 Destination Outcomes

Accommodation in the Glen continues to be provided by an established family tourism business with an associated farm. The Youth Hostel continues to provide affordable a sustainable accommodation for all. Business continues to think and operate around extended timescales over 'mutigenerational' terms and to apply good sustainability practice. The season has also been extended by development of more nature-based tourism products and operations at 75 % towards net zero. .

5.7.4 Actions to get to destination

Action SA 1

NP to explore greater joined up working arrangements with accommodation providers[31], to make the Glen a more sustainable place for the community, employees, and guests though commitment to activities like

- Quality Assurance – Green Business Accreditation – Gold Standard
- Working conditions, sustainability, and fair terms of trade for workers
- Participating in the Mountain Management App
- Support for facility maintenance used by guests – paths etc

[31] Responsible Tourism: Visitor Guide for Businesses | VisitScotland.org

6 Cross cutting projects

6.1 A sustainable tourism hub for the Glen

A well-designed visitor centre can increase visitor satisfaction, build visitor excitement, and improve the safety and security of visitors. They can house information, act as an orientation point, provide interpretation and core services like toilets, baby-changing stations, catering, gift shops and other auxiliary and administrative services. Specific areas can be set aside as space for events and training, Ranger base (including working yard) and space for partners.

With sufficient space a visitor centre can hold and entertain visitors who come at peak times/or wet weather by providing a 'show' as the first step of their visit. Repeat visitors may take a different route or bypass the visitor centre all together.

Hub size is critical, and this means knowing about audiences, group sizes, and visit patterns - Annual trends, Seasonality, Day of the month, Day of the week, Special days and holidays, Time of the day. Designing for peak days may increase costs but designing for an average day may result in insufficient capacity for a large number of days during the year.

A state-of-the-art community and learning hub providing amenities to meet 21st century learning while adopting sustainable design principles. A passive approach to energy to be embraced in the design, with the building orientation, form factor and building fabric all contributing to making an energy efficient building. The centre could also potentially offer accommodation for volunteers on work parties,

External space

Outdoor spaces designed with sustainability in mind, including a sustainable drainage strategy, the inclusion of a mountain and Glen garden and naturally formed external play spaces. A more major adventure playground suited to a wider range of ages could be situated close by. The introduction of a covered outdoor play space would add to the attractiveness of the visitor centre and help to generate potential higher levels of usage from the local community, particularly outside of the main tourist season.

Option 1 Nevis Visitor Centre

NP put in a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Expression of Interest to Highland Council/ High Life Highland in January 2020 for the Nevis Visitor Centre and land. Their desire is for a hub that provides accommodation, education, and training space as well as visitor orientation, interpretation, mountain safety etc).

The CAT Stage 1 Expression of Interest (which is non-statutory at this stage) has been logged by the Council, and HC has sent NP details on costs (profit and loss), income, staffing, finances, facilities etc. HC has explained to NP the cross-subsidy model applied by HLH in that profit generated from one site is used to balance the books across their overall portfolio.

It is then up to NP to submit a full CAT request (which is statutory) to HC seeking the asset to be transferred to them. NP would need to include full details of their business case, evidence of community support, key outcomes, including enhanced levels of community benefit etc (as per the application process on the Council's website). This has not yet been received by HC. HC then has up to 6 months to respond.

Stage 2 is where HC assesses the CAT application and looks at such things as the group's capacity to deliver their business plan, skills, resourcing (initially and longer term) etc. HC has up to 6 months to reach a decision.

Stage 3 involves negotiation of the contract (subject to HC agreeing the transfer). This could take up to 6 months but could be extended by agreement. Stages 2-3 could take 12-18 months.

If HC does not agree to the transfer, then NP could appeal, and this would in the first instance be heard by Elected Members. If refused again, then NP could appeal to Scottish Government.

It is our understanding that HC has indicated to NP that they are unlikely to agree to a CAT of the Nevis Centre

A feasibility study was commissioned in early 2021 by Highlife Highland through Highland Council to investigate options with the aim of enhancing the customer/ visitor experience of the centre by increasing the centre's footprint. This would accommodate a café (with 100 covers), larger retail area, extension of the car park, development of interpretation and development of the education side for the Rangers. The Ranger Service has secured funding for an outdoor classroom, which will be located on land directly behind the Visitor Centre.

Option 2 Nevis Field Centre

The Nevis Field Centre Feasibility Study has assessed the viability and sustainability of a centre in Glen Nevis. Based on 40,000 visits to the centre and range of supplementary revenue streams surplus income was assumed by year 4 of operation.

A capital expenditure of £2.7 million was identified for an 885m2 building with a further £1.6m million for a 675m2 accommodation block. It was assumed that VAT recovery would be at 90% and process excluded land purchase costs.

Funding sources identified included the Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund, National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Lottery Community Fund, Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Highland Council, and other charitable foundations.

The favoured location was the Braveheart Car park site. Access to land at this site would require a successful CAT and subsequent land purchase from Forestry and Land Scotland. Outright purchase currently seem unlikely as this site provides a main entrance point to the forest – lease options may be possible.

6.2 Maintaining resilient sustainable tourism services and infrastructure

Infrastructures and path works are very much in the public eye through user access to social media – especially at iconic sites. Poor conditions can be very quickly reported leading to reputational damage. Impact is also on ecosystem services in the Glen – water, air, soils, biodiversity but much of this is externalised.

Management oversight and responsibilities for all facilities is essential. Replacement asset value (RAV) figures vary from 2 - 5% per annum. In simple terms, assuming a Glen Nevis value or GDP of approximately £10 million (60/40 private/public) – approximately £300,000 might be required or roughly £0.66 per visitor Glen wide.

Lifespan and paths/car parks/ toilets costs are inverse functions as they age and will be subject to increased maintenance demand. Unless constructed with higher use in mind, popular sections and equipment will become a higher priority quicker than others if they are more heavily used. Certain areas, for example paths vulnerable to water flow or freeze thaw, will require significantly more resources than others. Timber bridges or signs in damp locations may rot faster than those is better ventilated locations. Facilities in more popular areas may be more likely to be damaged deliberately.

Dealing with liabilities and responsibilities[32]

Landowners report some concerns about exposure to public liabilities in terms of:

- Use of paths and other visitor infrastructures by commercial events such as charity fund raisers or competitive sporting events
- Third-party work force e.g. Contractors or more frequently, Rangers working on their land

Ultimately the landowner or occupier of the land owes a duty of care to all persons entering their land and must take reasonable care to see that person does not suffer an injury. Generally, the occupier will owe a duty of care if it could have been reasonably foreseen that harm would be caused to a person because of the occupier's act or omission. The level of care and responsibility and foreseeability is generally defined by case law.

Liability is explicitly excluded if the visitor willingly accepts risks such as those mishaps inherent in quite ordinary activities like walking or swimming. This provision also relates to the general legal principle known as '*volenti on fit injuria'* which means that if a person knowingly participates in a risky activity, for example rock climbing, they will have taken to have accepted the risk of injury if they have an accident. For children, the principal duty is with their parents.

For activities beyond those permitted under the SOAC participants have to seek consent from landowners and occupiers and that consent may require evidence of suitable insurances being in place for the duration of time land is being used. For activities taking place across multiple landholdings a consistency of approach is desirable as where one landownership ends, and another begins may not be obvious.

[32] A Brief Guide to Occupiers Legal Liabilities In Scotland.

Part 2 Appendices

Appendix 1: Nevis Centre Visitor Numbers over past 3 years (Source: Highlife Highland)

Year	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2017/ 18	3,164	5,168	2,723	3,245	3,646	5,443	5,109	1,335	943	781	1,264	1,886
2018/ 19	3,852	9,948	15,436	23,909	33,774	18,985	8,044	1,674	897	703	1,454	2,181
2019/ 20	10,905	15,424	17,585	26,227	32,727	19,364	8,051	2,463	925	1,226	2,269	350
2020/ 21	-	-	-	4,523	35,200	10,387	6,093					

Appendix 2: Visitor Numbers via People Counters from 2006 (Source: Highland Council)

	Location	Chapman Wood	Mountain Track	Steall Gorge Path	Glen Nevis Youth Hostel	Allt A' Mhuilinn
	Grid Ref	NN147758	NN137718	NN172692	NN129718	NN148479
	Conver Factor	2	2	2	0.58	1.7
	January					
	February					
	March					
	April		4742	4831	518	
2006	May		8618	5553	3175	
	June		13492	6755	4714	886
	July		16704	11124	6317	1181
	August		17541	13168	6859	872
	September		9867	6349	4106	896
	October		4669	4553	1769	439
	November		1280	1666	1042	256
	December		862	1689	517	364
	TOTAL	**0**	**77775**	**55688**	**29017**	**4894**

	Location	Chapman Wood	Mountain Track	Steall Gorge Path	Glen Nevis Youth Hostel	Allt A' Mhuilinn
	January		734	1505	317	942
	February		1594	2612	702	3280
	March		1919	2312	856	2659
	April		6219	5645	2254	1303
	May		9429	6620	3216	649
	June		16237	6744	5226	788
2007	July		15699	9707	5512	740
	August		18168			1049
	September		11330			
	October		5575			
	November		1437			
	December		1142			

	TOTAL	**0**	**89483**	**35145**	**18083**	**11410**

	Location	Chapman Wood	Mountain Track	Steall Gorge Path	Glen Nevis Youth Hostel	Allt A' Mhuilinn
2008	January		880	3852		
	February		1585	3852	651	1188
	March		2853	3852		422
	April		3769	3852		499
	May		13648	3852		906
	June		16233	3852		229
	July			3852		
	August			3852		
	September			3852		
	October		3553	3852	1066	
	November	341	1313	3852		278
	December		1281	3852		906
	TOTAL	**341**	**43530**	**46224**	**1066**	**4428**

	Location	Chapman Wood	Mountain Track	Steall Gorge Path	Glen Nevis Youth Hostel	Allt A' Mhuilinn
2009	January	686	861	1554		1004
	February	1157	1252	2203		2373
	March	1152	1754	2303		2135
	April	753	7075	6605		1096
	May	157	13299	7181	4207	1030
	June		17396	7140	5386	1360
	July		20611	10771	6412	1311
	August		21477	11768	6372	1150
	September		12002	5532	2541	1073
	October		6092	4442	1797	903
	November		1288	1206	428	273
	December		38	207	207	
	TOTAL	**3905**	**103145**	**60941**	**27350**	**13708**

2010	Location	Chapman Wood	Mountain Track	Steall Gorge Path	Glen Nevis Youth Hostel	Allt A' Mhuilinn
	January	1365	631	4906	354	208
	February	2757	1002	7180	588	4123
	March	3128	1563	8190	740	4107
	April	2137	4285	19780	2043	2704
	May	1197	13212	28506	4974	1557
	June	1591	17992	25814	7092	1864
	July	1134	16945	34222	6799	1426
	August	1870	19899	42544	7635	2368
	September	1551	11653	20196	5089	1702
	October	595	5355	17290	2343	1148
	November		1131	5348	598	1426
	December		413	2794	260	1602
	TOTAL	**17325**	**94081**	**216770**	**38515**	**24235**

2011	Location	Chapman Wood	Mountain Track	Steall Gorge Path	Glen Nevis Youth Hostel	Allt A' Mhuilinn
	January		776	1013	1281	1725
	February		1075	1913	1576	2834
	March	768	1599	1827	7648	2354
	April	746	9342	6066	9569	1218
	May	570	12215	5963	11314	894
	June	669	19273	7172	19850	974
	July	945	22502	11609	23397	1698
	August	750	21149	15994	21633	1072
	September	564	10976	2013	12322	617
	October		11863	4541	4202	481
	November		4476	1385	1155	380
	December		1404	1583	1443	1224
	TOTAL	**5012**	**116650**	**61079**	**115390**	**15421**

2012	Location	Chapman Wood	Mountain Track	Steall Gorge Path	Glen Nevis Youth Hostel	Allt A' Mhuilinn
	January	1279	831	1041	1141	2322
	February	1430	1264	1979	1810	2680
	March	929	2622	5173	2852	1969
	April		6543	6911	7097	909
	May		12425	10704	11255	948
	June		22566	20121	6964	1312
	July		19293	30716		1351
	August		20643	22697		1359
	September		12280	4934		906
	October		5456	1461		832
	November		1268	1431		164
	December		869			
	TOTAL	**3638**	**106060**	**107168**	**31119**	**14752**

2013	Location	Chapman Wood	Mountain Track	Steall Gorge Path	Glen Nevis Youth Hostel	Allt A' Mhuilinn
	January		1083	1481	294	1561
	February		1229	631	565	3321
	March		2112	3001	775	2576
	April		3793	4737	1241	1151
	May		13196	8435	3959	1086
	June		20744	29806	5482	1152
	July		21175	24224	6226	1772
	August		20851	36039	6066	1211
	September		11949		3134	1050
	October		4783		876	621
	November		1304			709
	December		561			221
	TOTAL	**0**	**102780**	**108354**	**28618**	**16431**

2014	Location	Chapman Wood	Mountain Track	Steall Gorge Path	Glen Nevis Youth Hostel	Allt A' Mhuilinn
	January		665	1307	265	1251
	February		910	2079	472	1826
	March		1594	2373	640	1815
	April		6370	6227	1903	250
	May		9998	7439	4034	17
	June			7686	5528	21
	July		21458	11542	5931	22
	August		25078	13710	6077	25
	September		15941	6508	3386	23
	October		5722	4257	1204	12
	November		1624	1578	428	168
	December		908	1302	281	967
	TOTAL	**0**	**90268**	**66008**	**30149**	**6397**

2015	Location	Chapman Wood	Mountain Track	Steall Gorge Path	Glen Nevis Youth Hostel	Allt A' Mhuilinn
	January		717	2331	241	1304
	February		1529	2118	537	3193
	March		2781	2397	812	2127
	April		7565	5815	1737	1370
	May		13799	4855	3354	1325
	June		21680	271	5034	1037
	July		17235	280	5847	530
	August			14	5558	
	September			4920		
	October			872		
	November		168			56
	December		355			86
	TOTAL	**0**	**65829**	**23873**	**23120**	**11037**

	Location	Chapman Wood	Mountain Track	Steall Gorge Path	Glen Nevis Youth Hostel	Allt A' Mhuilinn
2016	January		1015			
	February		1992			
	March		4283			
	April		6341			
	May		17375			
	June		11855			
	July					
	August					
	September					
	October					
	November					
	December		1135			
	TOTAL		**43996**	**0**	**0**	**0**

	Location	Chapman Wood	Mountain Track	Steall Gorge Path	Glen Nevis Youth Hostel	Allt A' Mhuilinn
2017	January		1475			
	February		1742			
	March		1363			
	April		No data			
	May		No data			
	June		No data			
	July		No data			
	August		No data			
	September		No data			
	October		No data			
	November		No data			
	December		No data			
	TOTAL	**0**	**4580**	**0**	**0**	**0**

	Location	Chapman Wood	Mountain Track	Steall Gorge Path	Glen Nevis Youth Hostel	Allt A' Mhuilinn
2018	January		No data			
	February		No data			
	March		No data			
	April		7258			
	May		21907			
	June		28782			
	July		30634			
	August		31973			
	September		20050			
	October		8449			
	November		2276			
	December		1454			
	TOTAL	**0**	**152780**	**0**	**0**	**0**

	Location	Chapman Wood	Mountain Track	Steall Gorge Path	Glen Nevis Youth Hostel	Allt A' Mhuilinn
2019	January		473			
	February		1916			
	March		3057			
	April		10207			
	May		17688			
	June		23915			
	July		25586			
	August		26882			
	September		17047			
	October		6856			
	November		1697			
	December		537	1387		
	TOTAL	**0**	**135861**	**1387**	**0**	**0**

2020	Location	Chapman Wood	Mountain Track	Steall Gorge Path	Glen Nevis Youth Hostel	Allt A' Mhuilinn
	January		440	1202		1962
	February		934	1469		1840
	March		760	1235		1682
	April		123	275		333
	May		391	430		402
	June		529	Counter moved to Ben path		500
	July		8544			1368
	August		22178			3504
	September		23787			2430
	October		No data			1224
	November		No data			416
	December		No data			
	TOTAL	**0**	**57686**	**4613**	**0**	**15661**

Appendix 3: Car Parking and Toilets – potential for income

Visitor Facilities	Ownership	No of Parking Spaces	Spaces for Coaches	Occupancy Levels	Evidence of Overspill Parking	Charging	Income/ Potential Income *Not including capital and staffing levels*	Toilet Facilities	What else could be done or is panned	Other comments
Achintee ***Assumptions:*** *Cars – 70:20:10 split on tariffs paid:* *70% all day.* *20% half day, paying up to 4 hrs.* *10% 1 hr.* *65% occupancy through the year.*	Jahama	22		Full during the season	Verge parking both in car park and along single track road.	No. 3 Ben Nevis Cairns – at start of path Suggest rates: £6/ day £4/ up to 4hrs £2/ hr	<u>If enforced:</u> 22 spaces. Assume 70:20:10 split on tariffs paid. 15 spaces x 65% occupancy x £6 x 1 event per day x 365 days = £21,353 less VAT = **£17,794** 4 spaces x 65% occupancy x £4 x 2 events per day x 365 days = £7,592 less VAT = **£6,327** 3 spaces x 65% occupancy x £2 x 3 events per day x 365 days = £2,270 less VAT = **£3,559** **Total: £27,680**			

							(if full compliance) <u>Unenforced:</u> National average minimum compliance without enforcement is 60% **Total: £16,608**			
Visitor Facilities	Ownership	No of Parking Spaces	Spaces for Coaches	Occupancy Levels	Evidence of Overspill Parking	Charging	Income/ Potential Income *Not including capital and staffing levels*	Toilet Facilities	What else could be done or is panned	Other comments
Braveheart Without accurate visitor numbers ***Assumptions:*** *Cars – 70:30 split on tariffs paid:* *70% all day.* *30% 1 hr* *65% occupancy*	Forestry & Land Scotland	60, plus 4 blue badges	Height barriers prohibit this	Full during busy season	Up to 30 cars spill onto pavements during peak times	2 new ticket machines (cash and electronic) to be installed in June 2021. FLS have decided: £3/ day £1/ hr Payment on a voluntary basis for	<u>If enforced:</u> 60 spaces. Assume 70:30 split on tariffs paid. 42 spaces x 65% occupancy x £3 x 1 event per day x 365 days = £29,894 less VAT = **£24,912** 18 spaces x 65% occupancy x £1 x 3 events per day x 365 days = £12,812 less VAT = **£10,677**	No – close to visitor centre	FLS removed height barriers for 2021. Catering van being introduced in May 2021. FLS Seasonal Rangers to be appointed from May 2021 to help with management.	Some camping and associated fires/mess.

through the year						season 2021.	**Total: £35,589** (if full compliance) <u>Unenforced:</u> National average minimum compliance without enforcement is 60% **Total: £21,353**			
Visitor Facilities	Ownership	No of Parking Spaces	Spaces for Coaches	Occupancy Levels	Evidence of Overspill Parking	Charging	Income/ Potential Income *Not including capital and staffing levels*	Toilet Facilities	What else could be done or is panned	Other comments
Nevis Visitor Centre (and car park) Using relatively accurate visitor numbers ***Assumptions:*** *2.5 visitors per car based on numbers of visitors recorded by counters.*	Highland Council (leased to High Life Highland	128, plus 4 disabled bays	5	Full during busy season. Total visitors in 2019/20 = 139,166 (March 2020 figure averaged from previous 2 years)	Up to 30 cars parked on the road during peak times.	£6/ day £2/ hr	Based on actual visitor numbers: 139,166 A coach will carry on average 50 passengers, assume x2 per day x 240 days per year = 24,000. Walkers and cyclists etc assume x10 per day x 240 days = 2,400.	Yes No charge. 1 accessib le toilet. 7 female cubicles, 4 male cubicles + 5 urinals.	Feasibility study underway in 2021 for expansion to vc and car park. Potential for overflow car park this season near vc. CAT	Do toilet opening hours reflect demand? Open earlier in morning and later in evening

2 coaches/ day (each 40 passengers) *10 walkers, cyclists/ day* *2 minibuses/ day (each 9 passengers).* *Cars - 50:50 split on tariffs paid.*							Minibus average 9 passengers x 2 per day x 240 days = 4,320. Total by car (139,166 – 30,720) = 108,446 2.5 persons/ car = **43,378 cars** 43,378 x £6 (half paying £6; half paying £2 x 3 events) = £260,268 less VAT **Total: £216,890** <u>Unenforced:</u> National average minimum compliance without enforcement is 60% **Total: £130,134**			
Visitor Facilities	Ownership	No of Parking Spaces	Spaces for Coaches	Occupancy Levels	Evidence of Overspill Parking	Charging	Income/ Potential Income *Not including capital and staffing levels*	Toilet Facilities	What else could be done or is panned	Other comments

Youth Hostel	No car park as such	N/A	N/A	N/A	General informal layby parking	No		Yes, for customers only. No charge	Potential drop-off/ turning area for coaches	Overspill onto Glen Nevis Estate land
Visitor Facilities	Ownership	No of Parking Spaces	Spaces for Coaches	Occupancy Levels	Evidence of Overspill Parking	Charging	Income/ Potential Income *Not including capital and staffing levels*	Toilet Facilities	What else could be done or is panned	Other comments
Lower Falls Without having accurate visitor numbers **Assumptions:** *Cars - 50:50 split on tariffs paid.* *65% occupancy through the year*	Jahama Estate (in process of being leased to Nevis Partnership in 2021)	56	4	Hugely underused car park	No	Yes if meter is switched on. Currently suggested that users contribute a donation of £1 per hour and £4 for the day. Suggest using same rate as for Nevis Centre: £6/ day £2/ hr	<u>If enforced:</u> 56 spaces. Assume 50:50 split on tariffs paid. 28 spaces x 65% occupancy x £6 event per day x 365 days = £39,858 less VAT = **£33,215** 28 spaces x 65% occupancy x £2 x 3 events per day x 365 days = £39,858 less VAT = **£33,215** **Total: £66,430** (if full compliance) <u>Unenforced:</u>	No	Improve information and signage directing people to park here rather than Steall. Potential car park expansion. Area could be relandscaped to create viewing area to side of bridge. With dedicated walking lane/path from car park to keep large coach parties	Used as informal turning circle. Part of a successful bid with HC for Rural Tourism Infrastructure Funding in 2021. When does work start? Is there a maintenance contract in place?

							National average minimum compliance without enforcement is 60% **Total: £39,858**		off the road. Informal parking area could be cordoned off as seating area. Potential for composting toilets	
Visitor Facilities	Ownership	No of Parking Spaces	Spaces for Coaches	Occupancy Levels	Evidence of Overspill Parking	Charging	Income/ Potential Income *Not including capital and staffing levels*	Toilet Facilities	What else could be done or is panned	Other comments
Steall Falls ***Assumptions:*** *Concentrating car parking at Lower Falls and not promoting car parking here*	Highland Council	35	No	Full during busy season	Volume of traffic can be up to 4x capacity	No Donations through an App?		No	Potential road closure encouraging people to park at Lower Falls. REAL Time information alerting people to car park full. Potential for donations through an App.	HC – designated as a turning area and not a car park. Often small campervans parked overnight. Bottleneck - car park and road unsuitable for current high levels of use.

Glen Nevis-wide Suggestions	• Options for parking charges to include a range e.g. day, weekend, week – linked to benefits associated with opportunity to spend locally • Consistent charging policy across all car parks makes it easier for the visitor and gives out a consistent message. • Pool resources to fund 1 or 2 seasonal Ranger posts. Link to new seasonal Ranger posts being introduced by FLS and HC this season. • Information to include details on North Face car Park as this can also give good access on to the Ben. • Landscaping to discourage verge parking at key locations. • Clear visitor access strategy required directing visitors and informing them. • Introduce bike racks at key car parks. • Potential use of Highland Comfort Scheme – relaunch by HC in 2021 • Campervan waste disposal – better signposting needed directing people to where they can best dispose their waste.

Appendix 4   Location of new EV Charging Hubs in Fort William (Source: High Life Highland)

Appendix 5 - Tourism marketplace assessment

COVID-19 and tourism

It is important to acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic has emerged during 2020 and at the time of writing Scotland, England and Wales remain in a further period of national lockdown. COVID-19 has impacted significantly on the recreation, tourism and wider hospitality sectors in the immediate term, although the longer-term implications remain unknown.

The cyclical nature of national, regional, and local lockdowns (and tiers) creates a degree of uncertainty both in the minds of visitors and tourism businesses (with associated costs based on re-opening and closing at short notice). This uncertainty can also make it difficult to plan for the future.

The impact of the lockdowns and tiered system of managing COVID-19 and potential ending / reduction of the furlough scheme will lead to higher levels of unemployment. This will impact on available disposable income and the wider tourism and hospitality sector which represent areas discretionary spend. We also need to recognise that COVID-19 has reduced the availability of capital and revenue funding from Councils and other organisations.

The rollout of the first approved vaccine in the UK in early December 2020, the second vaccine in January 2021 and the approval of a third vaccine is positive news for the tourism, and recreation sectors along with the wider visitor economy. However, city-based destinations and attractions mainly based 'around indoor experiences', are likely to face further challenges (market and financial).[33]

National governments in Scotland and England (early March 2021) have announced roadmaps out of lockdown, although that is not to say that local, regional, and further national lockdowns will not be reintroduced at short notice to cope with future outbreaks of COVID-19.

The latest research published in January 2021 from VisitScotland on behalf of the Scottish Tourism Emergency Response Group (Covid Impact Tourism Industry Survey –Wave 3) set out the findings from research among tourism businesses. The research identified that the outcome of reopening tourism businesses in Scotland in the Summer and Autumn had a mixed impact. 19% of businesses in Scotland did not reopen and 35% did worse than expected. For 21% of respondents, turnover was as expected and encouragingly 25% of businesses reported that they did better than expected. At the regional level, 14% of

[33] Brexit also continues to provide a degree of uncertainty and will further impact on the UK economy and the supply of labour for tourism businesses across the UK

businesses in the Highlands region did not reopen, 32% did worse than expected. For 28%, turnover was as expected and again encouragingly 25% of businesses reported that they did better than expected.

However, for Scotland, 78% of businesses reported that their turnover was lower than normal levels in 2019 (compared to 76% for businesses located in the Highlands). The average decline was 60% (compared to 57% for businesses located in the Highlands).

The impact of COVID-19 in the tourism sector will continue to be felt throughout 2021, 2022 and beyond. The research identified that 33% of tourism businesses in Scotland are very likely and 23% fairly likely to reduce staff over the coming months (this compared to 34% and 18% respectively for tourism businesses in the Highlands). Perhaps, of greater concern is the long-term viability of the businesses, with 21% reporting that they have run through their cash reserves with a further 26% reporting that they will run out of cash within the next three months. **73% of businesses expected to make it through the crisis, with 7% believing that they will have an opportunity to grow their business.**

Tourism in Scotland

During 2019 Scotland recorded positive growth in tourism[34]. The number of overnight trips and spend were at their highest level over the preceding 10-year period. **Total (domestic and international) overnight tourism** saw an 11% increase in visits (to 17,528,000), 12% increase in nights (to 74,724,000) and 12% increase in spend (to £5,865m).

In 2019, the number of **overnight visits by residents from Great Britain** increased by 17%, the number of nights increased by 15% and spend by 16%. This was largely driven by significant growth recorded by residents in Scotland taking a holiday in Scotland – the number of visits increased by 33%, (which represents 1.9m more trips than the previous year), nights by 38% and spend by 37%.

In 2019, there was a decline in the number of visits generated from the **international market** (-7%) but both the number of nights and spend increased by 8% and 7% respectively.[35] The increase in spend is related to a longer length of stay. Historically, there has been an upward trend in international visitors to Scotland with visitor numbers increasing year-on-year between 2015 and 2018 (increasing from 2,635,000 to 3,729,000). The most important overseas market was the USA, which generated 18% of all overseas visits.

[34] Insight Department Key Facts on Tourism in Scotland 2019, VisitScotland, published November 2020
[35] Excluding visits from Northern Ireland which showed strong growth across visits, nights and spend

Average annual occupancy across different categories of accommodation providers varied. Hotels reported an average occupancy of 71%, guest houses / B&B 50%, self-catering units 48%, hostels 60% and touring sites 41%. Interestingly, during 2019, occupancy increased significantly for hostels (by 5%) and touring pitches (by 7%).

In 2019, the total number of **tourism day visits** decreased by approximately 3% to 133,600,000 (the lowest level since 2011) but spend showed growth of 6%. Between 2015 and 2019 there has been an overall decline in day trips.

VisitScotland's COVID-19 Consumer Sentiment Tracker provides a monthly update (last round January 2021). Looking ahead during 2021 the latest report based on research carried out between 11th January and 13th February 2021 highlighted[36]:

- *"Fewer than 1/3 of UK and Scotland adults are confident that an overnight UK trip would go ahead at any point this spring (March-June). Within the summer months (July-Sept) confidence rises, although it is not until August that more than ½ of UK adults are confident **and not until September that a majority of Scotland residents are confident**.*

- ***There is limited evidence that the vaccine will lead to an immediate boost in leisure behaviour**.*

- *Overall, 1 in 7 UK (and Scotland) residents anticipate taking an overnight UK trip this Spring, rising to 1 in 4 in the summer. **These figures are already higher than trip predictions for Summer 2020 showing more confidence than last year (likely to be vaccine related).***

- *Looking at the UK population overall, **we continue to see that the majority of 2021 Scotland Spring intenders (59%) live outside of Scotland (41% of Scotland residents) with 69% from outside Scotland intending a Summer break here.** This is a repeat of the pattern that was seen in 2020 but when it came to reality, **the balance shifted in favour of Scotland residents. This is likely to be the case again if government restrictions/concerns around domestic travel persist**.*

- *Scots currently remain very loyal to staying in Scotland for their next break. **The majority of Scotland resident intenders (64%) are planning on staying in Scotland in the Spring (March-June). In the Summer (July-September), 61% of Scots are planning taking their next overnight trip in Scotland.** The next most loyal*

[36] https://www.visitscotland.org/research-insights/coronavirus-insights/uk-market

audiences for choosing Scotland are those in the North East (25% Spring / 29% Summer) and Yorkshire/Humberside (16% / 12% respectively). ***15% of London residents are also planning a trip to Scotland in the Summer.***

- ***Scotland Spring intenders are most likely to stay in a countryside or village on their trip, followed by mountains or hills****. In Summer, rural coastline becomes more popular particularly with Scotland residents.* ***Once again, intenders are less likely to choose a city or large town in the Spring.***

- ***The Highlands remains the most favoured destination for Spring and Summer intenders living within and outside Scotland.***

- *As has been the trend, UK and* ***Scotland residents anticipate conducting more visits to outdoor areas and engaging in more outdoor leisure/sports during Spring/Summer trips."***

Tourism in the Highlands

At a regional level during 2019 whilst the overall number of visits (overnight and day) declined by 8% (compared to 2018) to 12,486,000 the actual number of overnight visits/trips increased by 30% (2,907,000), nights by 23% (to 11,516,000) and all spend by 46% (to £1,553m).[37]

Looking at the data for 2019 in more detail, the actual number of day visits declined by 15% (to 9,579,000) during the period yet spend increased by 80% (to £776m).

If we review the breakdown between international and domestic overnight visits/trips the number of international overnight visits/trips declined by 15% (-10% from Europe, -17% from North America and -24% from the rest of the world). The actual number of nights only declined by 5% and spend by 2%. The average length of stay of international visitors increased by 11% to 4.4 nights. Whereas **domestic overnight tourism recorded a 45% increase in visits/trips (63% growth from visitors based within Scotland and 21% from the rest of Great Britain).** Domestic overnight visits accounted for 9,487,000 nights (£575m in spend) and international overnight visits accounted for 2,029,000 nights (£202m in spend). **In the Highlands region domestic tourism was the driver of growth during 2019.**

During 2019, the average length of stay of domestic overnight visitors recorded a decline of just under 10% to 3.9 nights.

[37] Insight Department, Highland Fact Sheet 2019, VisitScotland. Published December 2020.

A total of £777m in spend was generated by overnight visitors whereas day visitors generated £776 m in 2019.

The seasonal visitation patterns of overnight international and domestic tourists to the Highlands region are set out below:

Seasons	International	Domestic (Scotland and rest of GB)
Jan to Mar	7%	17%
Apr to Jun	34%	28%
Jul to Sep	47%	35%
Oct to Dec	12%	21%

Average annual occupancy across all categories of accommodation providers varied. Hotels reported an average occupancy of 70%, guest houses / B&B 44%, self-catering units 55% and hostels 60%.

In the table below we set out trends in terms of overall visits generated by domestic and International overnight visitors to the Highlands between 2015 and 2019.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Domestic	1,751,000	1,575,000	1,713,000	1,690,000	2,448,000
International	495,000	514,000	560,000	538,000	459,000
Total overnight	**2,246,000**	**2,089,000**	**2,273,000**	**2,228,000**	**2,907,000**

The number of total overnight night visits increased by just under 30% between 2015 and 2019. This growth is driven by a significant increase being recorded in overnight visits being generated by the domestic market during 2019. If we look at the market between 2015 and 2018, overall total overnight visits declined from 2.246m to 2.228m.

In terms of the marketplace day visitors (day tourism) accounted for 9,579m visits and overnight tourisms accounted for 2,907m visits/trips.

There is limited data available on the local Lochaber marketplace. Although the Nevis Field Centre report (April 2019) notes “As the “Outdoor Capital of the UK”, a major tourist through route to much of the Northern Highlands, Skye and the Outer Hebrides, Loch Ness and the Great Glen and Inverness, and as the location for a number of nationally and internationally significant festivals and events, **we approximate that Fort William, and its surrounding area, could see up to 50% of the total tourist market."**

Key implications

- Given the low population base within the surrounding area (just under 14,000 residents)[38] the market will continue to be driven by the visitor / tourism market, which is transitory in its nature and harder to reach (compared to the residential population base), which has implications in terms of behaviour change

- It is recognised that Ben Nevis has a cachet and special qualities which will continue to draw in visitors from across the UK and overseas, once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. It is likely that growth in the short term will be driven by domestic visitors from Scotland and the rest of the UK (England in particular)

- Given the impact of COVID-19 on tourism business and the need to claw back some of the "missing revenue" it will be difficult to reduce / introduce a cap on visitor numbers which will impact negatively upon tourism businesses located in Fort William and wider area.

- There is an opportunity related to encouraging people to visit during the shoulder periods. Although poor weather during shoulder periods will impact on the attractiveness of Glen Nevis as a destination for general visitors. Whilst this is unlikely to significantly reduce visitor number during the peak period it could help to bring around a stronger year-round product, helping to reduce seasonal fluctuations in tourism jobs and occupancy etc

- The market in terms of visitor numbers is driven by the day visitor market, which places additional strain on the road network and environment. A key question is: 'Can day visitors be converted to stay overnight on mini or micro breaks?'

In the post COVID recovery period and 'era', the key growth areas are likely to be:

- Domestic tourism overall (residents living in Scotland and taking a break in Scotland are likely to increase in the short-term – holidaying closer to home

- Many operators report pent up demand among group tour operators which is likely to create a 'spike' in demand once restrictions ease in respect of the pandemic.

[38] Nevis Field Centre, Final Report, April 2019

- Currently, the opportunities for GB residents to take a break abroad are limited, although the opening up of 'safe travel corridors' to destinations such as Greece will impact on this (although this is unlikely to recover to pre-COVID levels)

- Depending on national policies, some limited recovery with overseas tourists visiting Scotland during 2021[39]. In terms of the UK VisitBritain noted in December 2020 "Overall, VisitBritain is forecasting 16.9 million inbound visits in 2021. While this is an increase of 73% on this year, it is less than half of the 40.9 million visits the UK saw in 2019. Inbound visitor spending is forecast to reach £9.0 billion in 2021. Although up 59% on 2020, it is less than a third of the all-time spending high of £28.4 billion seen in 2019."[40]

- Strong VFR market with likely growth as people stay where they feel secure and safe

- High demand for self-catering (offers greater flexibility and individual 'control' of the visitors' environments) and camping breaks. Under the Thatch, with a focus on luxury cottages, reported a 300% increase of sales during the first 12 days of February 2021 compared to the same period during 2020. Pitchup has also reported significant growth in bookings.[41]

- Continued breaks (for existing and new markets) in destinations where visitors can experience the outdoors, maintain a degree of social distancing and breathe 'clean air.' Clearly the natural and open setting of Glen Nevis and links to a wider network of outdoor recreation sites will continue to be a strong draw for visitors.

A critical element looking to the future will be to build up data on existing visitors to Glen Nevis (and the wider) area. This needs to include:

1. Identifying overall visitor numbers with counters at key entry / exit points alongside qualitative research – enabling year-on-year monitoring

[39] Although it is interesting to note that research commissioned by VisitBritain, VisitScotland, Welsh Government and London & Partners among overseas visitors identified that "Overall, 7 in 10 respondents would consider an international leisure trip in 2021, showing a resilient desire to travel despite pandemic uncertainties." International Recovery Research, Wave 1 – January 2021, Fieldwork: 2nd – 16th December 2020

[40] https://www.visitbritain.org/visitbritain-inbound-tourism-forecast-2021-predicts-first-signs-slow-recovery

[41] https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2021/feb/12/britons-ignore-ministers-and-rush-to-book-uk-summer-holidays

2. Introduce a programme of cost-effective annual visitor research to understand more about existing visitors. This could be completed relatively cost effectively via the use of an online service platform such as Survey Monkey. Helping to identify for example:

   - Group size / composition
   - Dwell time
   - Origins of visitors
   - Monitoring quality of visitor experience
   - Motivations
   - Behaviour (and activities undertaken
   - Future development opportunities

End.