# Scotland considers doubling second home charge in national parks to ease rural housing crisis



Plans to tackle the rural housing crisis in Scotland include a proposal to double the charge for purchasing second homes in national parks such as the Cairngorms. The Scottish Greens are urging political parties at Holyrood to support increasing the “additional dwelling supplement” on newly bought properties to as high as 16%.

Currently, within the Cairngorms National Park, an estimated 12% of all houses are classified as second homes. This figure rises to more than 20% in areas like Badenoch, Strathspey, and Deeside, which encompass popular tourist destinations including Aviemore and Braemar. By contrast, the national average stands at approximately 1%.

The national park authority has noted that the high volume of second homes creates distinct challenges for the region. Ross Greer, MSP for the Scottish Greens, highlighted the impact on local communities. Speaking to the Press and Journal, he said, “Our national parks are iconic and beautiful places, but the families who actually live there are being pushed out by second home owners. Young people in particular are too often forced to leave the communities they grew up in after being outbid by those wealthy enough to buy a second property. Too many properties are used as cash cows for short-term lets.”

This issue is set to be addressed within the Scottish Government’s broader housing bill, which includes provisions on renters’ rights. While the Cairngorms National Park authority recognises the economic and social benefits that second homes can bring, they also acknowledge that their presence can intensify affordability pressures for local workers.

Concerns in the community are growing. In Braemar, fears have been expressed that the primary school could close if young families are unable to afford housing locally. A tradesman from the Royal Deeside village revealed that he was compelled to build his own home due to the area's soaring costs, which local property data confirms. Homes in Braemar have sold for an average price of just over £396,000 in the past year, marking a 22% increase since 2019, according to the UK property site Rightmove.

Efforts to curb the impact of holiday homes have already been implemented. Highland Council has introduced short-term let controls in Badenoch and Strathspey, requiring homeowners to obtain extra planning permission before advertising properties as holiday accommodations. The additional dwelling supplement was also raised from 6% to 8% at the end of last year, and the proposed increase to 16% would represent a further significant rise.

However, not all stakeholders are supportive. Fiona Campbell, chief executive of the Association of Self-Caterers, cautioned against measures that target Scotland’s tourism sector. She told the Press and Journal, “Raising false hopes about tackling homelessness by hitting Scotland’s tourism sector is a cynical ploy which ignores the reality of Scotland’s housing crisis. Policy should instead focus on real solutions: repurposing long-term empty homes across Scotland and accelerating the construction of genuinely affordable housing.”

The outcome of the proposal to raise the additional dwelling supplement, part of wider housing reforms, remains under consideration at Holyrood as policymakers seek to balance the interests of local communities, tourism, and housing affordability in Scotland’s national parks.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

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