

National Park Authority

Audit & Risk Committee Meeting

Agenda Item 12



Annual Report on Best Value 2018/19

Paper for approval

1. Purpose

To present the Annual Report on Best Value.

2. Recommendation

Members are asked to review and approve this report which demonstrates compliance with the Best Value Guidance for Accountable Officers.

3. Contribution to Our 5 Year Plan

Best Value is an enabler to achieving the delivery of Our 5 Year Plan by ensuring that we maximise the value we achieve from our resources.

3. Introduction

In April 2015 we evidenced that we complied with the Best Value guidance and in the financial years 2015/16 and 2016/17 we reported our compliance with the duties of Best Value against specific action plans, one of which was the development of a Best Value policy.

A revised Best Value policy was approved in June 2018 (refer to **Appendix**) and this is the second Annual Report on Best Value based on this revised policy.

4. Annual Report on Best Value 2018/19

The main monitoring tool for continuous improvement is the reporting against Annual Operational Plan targets presented to the Board.

- The majority of the objectives were achieved demonstrating continuous improvement and best value.
- Any notable exceptions to the above arose from staff turnover and from reprioritising staff resources onto urgent and important activities which demonstrates the most effective use of our resources.

The following table summarises some of the achievements in relation to each Best Value theme.

National Park Authority

Audit & Risk Committee Meeting

Agenda Item 12

Annual Report on Best Value 2018/19

Vision & Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our 5-Year Plan approved by Scottish Ministers • Budget and Annual Operational Plan for 2019/20 approved by Board
Effective Partnerships	<p>The development of the 2018-2023 National Park Partnership Plan involved significant engagement with a broad and diverse range of stakeholders. The resultant plan alongside Our 5-Year (Corporate) Plan provides the framework to guide, support and direct the activities of organisations and partners to work together to secure a successful and sustainable future for the National Park. Effective partnerships examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Loch Achray Campsite, on Forest and Land Scotland owned land • Year 4 delivery of The Mountains and The People project • Peatland restoration working with landowners and SNH to support Scotland's Climate Change Plan outcomes • Callander's Landscape includes 15 partners from across the community, public sector, voluntary organisations, local businesses and landowners who will work together to deliver 19 projects in and around Callander • Strathard Partnership • Supporting Forth Rivers Trust to deliver tree planting initiatives with landowners • Working in partnership with Police Scotland, Project Ironworks continues to reduce anti-social and irresponsible behaviour • Cairngorms National Park Authority in relation to a number of back office and procured services and systems and in sharing and learning from good practice in policy and initiatives development. • The Environment and Economy portfolio of Scottish Public Bodies has a valuable Leadership Group to support effective partnership working and share good practice within the portfolio. • Progressing the delivery of the Litter priority has already resulted in some good partnership working with litter authorities, Zero Waste Scotland, Keep Scotland Beautiful and community/volunteer groups. • The first major partnership five-year deal with Columbia Sportswear resulted in all UK National Parks' rangers and staff receiving their new sponsored kit. • Vango are our official camping partner to promote responsible camping, and also enable more people from disadvantaged backgrounds to enjoy camping in the National Park.

National Park Authority

Audit & Risk Committee Meeting

Agenda Item 12

Annual Report on Best Value 2018/19

Governance & Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second annual update on implementation of camping byelaws provided to Ministers • Revised Governance structure implemented • 5 locally elected members appointed, 5 new Ministerial appointments and 1 Ministerial re-appointment made • Board member programme of induction and training delivered • Core Paths Plan consultation commenced
Use of Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued to secure effective medium and short term tenanted arrangements on our sites. • Over 8,500 Volunteer Ranger visitor engagement hours delivered • Continued focus on using limited resources to leverage other significant levels of funding; Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund – West Loch Lomond, Heritage Lottery Fund – Callander’s Landscape.
Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feedback received from visitors who camped in a camping management zone; 90% of the 1,600 people who responded to the customer feedback survey said that they would be likely to recommend staying over in a permit area • Regular updates provided and improvements made on visitor management challenges and successes throughout March to September visitor season • Planning decision timescales consistent with national average for local and householder applications • Byelaw Enforcement and Litter Fixed Penalty Notices tracked and reported • There were 21 cases where barriers to responsible public access were removed
Sustainability <i>(cross-cutting theme)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Peatland Restoration projects were completed • Hosted the International Union for Conservation of Nature Peatland Conference • 302 ha of new woodland approved for establishment • Trees and Woodland strategy currently being consulted upon • 2 landholdings submitted applications to Agri-Environmental and Climate Change Scheme • Over 7,000 practical conservation volunteer hours delivered • Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Annual Reporting Climate Change Action Plan published • 3 vehicle electric charging points installed • Electricity use decreased by 60,000kWh
Equality <i>(cross-cutting theme)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of 3 Junior Ranger programmes

National Park Authority

Audit & Risk Committee Meeting

Agenda Item 12

Annual Report on Best Value 2018/19

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieved Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 “gender representation objective” for a public board that 50% of non-executive members (Ministerial appointments) are women• Outdoor Festival For All hosted in Balmaha to help families and young people from excluded or marginalised communities access and enjoy the great outdoors• Publication of 2019 Equalities Mainstreaming Report• As part of the delivery of the Year of Young People action plan a National Park Youth Committee was established, made up of 11 dedicated and enthusiastic young people. Representatives attended a Board meeting.
--	---

5. Conclusion

We have continued to demonstrate our compliance with the Best Value Guidance during 2018/19.

Author: Jaki Carnegie, Director of Corporate Services
Executive Sponsor: Gordon Watson, CEO/Accountable Officer