

National Park Authority Board Meeting

Final Minutes of Meeting held at 2.00pm on 17th March 2014
John Muir Suite, Carrochan, Balloch



Present: Linda McKay (Convener) Colin Bayes
Owen McKee (Depute Convener) Fergus Wood
David McKenzie William Nisbet
Angus Allan David Warnock
Lindsay Morrison George Freeman
James Robb Kate Sankey
Martin Earl David McCowan
Bob Ellis

In Attendance: Gordon Watson Jaki Carnegie
Bridget Jones Scott Nisbet
Iain Nicolson Mairi Bell
Fiona Logan Sandra Dalziel
Alan Bell Gwenda Diack
Nicola Arnott

Apologies: Hazel Sorrell
Petra Biberbach

Item	Title / Discussion	Action by
1	Welcome and Apologies The Convener opened the meeting and welcomed all those present. Apologies were received from Hazel Sorrell and Petra Biberbach.	
2	Declarations of Interest Willie Nisbet declared a pecuniary interest in relation to Agenda Item 14 – Conservation Update - due to land arrangements with RSPB Wards Estate.	
3	Minutes of Meeting held on 9th December 2013 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by Kate Sankey and seconded by Owen McKee.	
4	Minutes of Meeting held on 17th February 2014 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by Colin Bayes and seconded by Willie Nisbet.	
5	Matters arising Jaki Carnegie introduced the report. Members noted the closed actions and Jaki Carnegie gave the following updates on open actions:	

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	<p><u>Action from meeting on 17th February 2014</u></p> <p>Item 6 – The Onboard Guidance has not yet been published therefore training will take place later in the year. Action to be closed.</p> <p><u>Action from meeting on 9th December 2013</u></p> <p>Item 11 – Operation Ironworks – the final report has now been published on the board microsite. Action to be closed.</p> <p><u>Action from meeting on 9th December 2013</u></p> <p>AOCB – SNH camping leaflet - Gordon Watson has highlighted the issue at several meetings with SNH and letter will be drafted.</p> <p>Members commented that the Board Newsletter was very informative.</p> <p>DECISION: Members noted the report.</p>	
6	<p>Local Development Plan Main Issues Report</p> <p>Iain Nicolson introduced the report and explained that the recommendation is for approval of the Main Issues Report (MIR) for public consultation for a 10 week period and for delegation of finalisation to the Director of Operations. He handed over to Stuart Mearns, Forward Planning Manager, who gave an overview of the report.</p> <p>He explained that the MIR has been developed in consultation with communities and that key issues and evidence have emerged. He added that new developable land has been identified in the Arrochar/Succoth/Tarbet area and also in Callander. He added that these areas also offer potential for employment opportunities. He advised that Planning Aid Scotland will be delivering planning training in communities, specifically targeted at secondary age children and youth groups. He invited questions and comments from Members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members acknowledged the focus on families and young people and asked whether the large elderly population within the National Park could also be targeted for their views. Stuart Mearns advised that he was aware of the demographic and that all standard consultation arrangements will be followed along with additional opportunities to engage young people. Fiona Logan also emphasised that the team have taken on board this demographic and targeted their consultation accordingly. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural broadband was discussed and it was noted that there is also an objective in the National Park Partnership Plan to increase rural broadband provision. Fergus Wood asked whether an audit has been conducted on broadband services throughout the National Park and Stuart Mearns advised that some of the local authorities have invited residents to participate in a survey of broadband speeds. Iain Nicolson advised that 4G are looking at two sites within the National Park. Fergus Wood stated that broadband is vital to the rural economy and that the National Park should be strongly pursuing this objective. David McKenzie stated that BT are contracted to deliver 86% of rural broadband services. Lindsay Morrison requested that the MIR reflects this strengthened position on rural broadband. <p>ACTION: Stuart Mearns to amend MIR to reflect strengthened position on rural broadband services.</p> <p>The options for housing were discussed and Members commented on the options for financial contributions outlined on page 32. Members considered alternative options 1 and 2. Further clarity on threshold levels on the viability of developments was sought for situations where viability would trigger flexibility to amend financial contributions. Gordon Watson advised that threshold levels would not be specified in the MIR and the report sets out potential options for consideration. Stuart Mearns advised that details would be specified in Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance to be published at the next consultation. Members supported alternative option 2 as the preferred option to the Question 2 - Housing.</p> <p>Iain Nicolson advised that discussion is underway with local authorities to agree a protocol that secures any commuted sum for affordable housing to be retained within the National Park. James Robb asked if the Board could have sight of the protocol and Iain Nicolson advised that discussions are currently ongoing with Stirling Council and Argyll and Bute Council regarding the commuted sum protocol and that reports will be presented to the relevant committees at the local authorities and the National Park in due course.</p> <p>DECISION: Members:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Approved The Main Issues report for public consultation to include the following change: Preferred option to Housing question 2 to be changed to alternative option 2. ii. Agreed to a consultation period of 10 weeks starting in April 2014 iii. Agreed to delegate responsibility to the Director of Operations for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making any final minor editorial amendments and desktop publishing with the use of drawings, illustrations or 	<p style="text-align: center;">SM</p>

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	<p>diagrams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> publishing the accompanying Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment and Technical/Background Reports 	
7	<p>Budget 2014/15</p> <p>Jaki Carnegie introduced the report and advised that the report is presented as the operational and projects budgets. She reported that additional year end funds have been received from Scottish Government and that this funding has been committed to specific projects. She invited questions and comments from Members.</p> <p>Fergus Wood queried the distinction between the two types of signage in the proposed projects income/expenditure detail. Mari Bell explained that the threshold and village welcome signage are both types of threshold sign and the interpretation and information signage is designed to deliver interpretation and information throughout the National Park. The cost of the new engine for the patrol boat of £72k was queried. Fiona Logan advised that a decision had to be made whether to replace the patrol boat or to replace the engine and the replacement of the engine was chosen as this was the least expensive option. Jaki Carnegie advised that the figure for the Community Partnership SLA line for 2014/2015 should be £40k and not £30k as stated in the report and she stated that the paper would be updated with the correct figure.</p> <p>ACTION: Update the Proposed Income/Expenditure detail report to reflect £40k for the Community Partnership SLA for 2014/15</p> <p>DECISION: Members approved the 2014/15 budget and noted that the approved budget and any subsequent proposed variations will be monitored by the Delivery Group on behalf of the Board throughout the year.</p>	JC
8.	<p>Visitor Management Engagement</p> <p>Gordon Watson introduced the report. He explained that the report gives an overview of the proposed engagement with communities and stakeholders and that Appendix 1 gives details of the first three years of operating the East Loch Lomond Byelaws. James Robb asked whether the decrease in camping presented in the ranger patrol data in appendix 6 has resulted in displacement to other areas of the National Park. Gordon Watson advised that as there have been no new areas of camping pressure. The problem sites identified have exhibited the same problem issues as previously. Colin Bayes highlighted the importance of engaging with a wide range of additional stakeholders.</p>	

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	<p>DECISION: Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Approved the East Loch Lomond Byelaw Report for submission to Scottish Ministers; ii. Agreed to delegate final editorial amendments to the Director of Operations; iii. Noted and endorsed the proposed process and timetable for consulting on Visitor Management Options. 	
9.	<p>Wild Park 2020</p> <p>Scott Nisbet, Head of Conservation, introduced the report. He advised that the document sets out the conservation strategy for the years ahead up to 2020. He reported that Wild Park 2020 presents a clear long term vision and includes 90 biodiversity projects. He thanked the Board Steering Group who had given direction and assistance in delivering Wild Park 2020 – Kate Sankey, Willie Nisbet, Fergus Wood and Bob Ellis. He also thanked the staff involved in the delivery of Wild Park 2020 – Linda Winskill, Gwenda Diack, Allyson Blue, Alan Bell and Ewan Kinniment.</p> <p>Gwenda Diack gave a presentation which gave an overview of the document. She invited questions and comments from Members. Kate Sankey endorsed the document and stated that it will stand out both nationally and internationally and she commended the team on the accessibility of the document in terms of its presentation.</p> <p>DECISION: Members approved the final Wild Park 2020 plan and noted the proposals for further communications and promotion of Wild Park 2020.</p>	
10	<p>Chief Executive Officer's Report</p> <p>Fiona Logan introduced the report and advised that the third quarter has been a period of intense activity in terms of project delivery and partnership working. She highlighted the Scenic Routes exhibition which took place at The Lighthouse recently and the Environment Link Parliamentary event. She invited questions from Members. Owen McKee referred to the Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests statistics on page 5 and asked whether there is scope for any of these requests to be dealt with more informally. Jaki Carnegie advised that this process is currently being reviewed.</p> <p>DECISION: Members noted the report.</p>	
11	<p>Audit Committee Report on 2013 Activity</p>	

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	<p>Lindsay Morrison gave an overview of activity during 2013. He advised that a Risk Register has recently been developed and reviewed by the Audit Committee and is now recommended for approval by the Board. He reported that the three year contract for the internal auditors, KPMG, is now in its final year. He advised that a joint contract for internal audit is in place with Cairngorms National Park Authority and that this arrangement is currently being reviewed by both National Parks. He reported that the internal and external audits have both been completed on time. Willie Nisbet asked for further information on the Gateway Centre and Gordon Watson advised that LLTNPA is keen to progress the Legal Title to the Gateway Centre.</p> <p>DECISION: Members approved the Risk Register included at Appendix 1 and noted the contents of the report.</p>	
12	<p>Delivery Group Update</p> <p>Colin Bayes, Chair of the Delivery Group, gave a verbal update on the recent meeting of the Delivery Group and advised that they have had a post project discussion of Loch Lubnaig regarding lessons learned from the project. He reported that Corporate Plan performance and Planning performance statistics have been reviewed. He explained that the recent volume of run of the river hydro schemes has had an impact on Planning statistics. He reported that 82% of staff participated in the Best Companies staff survey.</p> <p>DECISION: Members noted the report.</p>	
13	<p>Planning & Access Committee Update</p> <p>Owen McKee, Chair of the Planning & Access Committee gave an update on the recent work of the Committee. He advised that the Committee have approved a revised Scheme of Delegation. He reported that the Inveruglas Scenic Routes planning application was approved by the committee in January 2014 and that the other Scenic Routes developments did not require planning permission.</p> <p>DECISION: Members noted the report.</p>	
14	<p>Conservation Update</p> <p>Scott Nisbet, Head of Conservation, invited questions and comments on the Conservation Update report. Members requested an update on 2.2.2 of the report regarding the decision not to use barges at the A82 Pulpit Rock</p>	

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	<p>upgrade works. Gordon Watson advised that the decisions regarding the infrastructure needed to complete the works are the responsibility of the contractor. He advised that the road will be used instead of barges. He added that he has no further information regarding the progress of the contract but that liaison with Transport Scotland is ongoing.</p> <p>Fergus Wood referred to partnership working with RSPB and expressed concern about the loss of cultural heritage due to the culling process for wild goats at Inversnaid. Scott Nisbet explained that the culling process is part of a management plan and is not eradication of the wild goats from this area. Fergus Wood requested that a watching brief is kept of the management plan programme.</p> <p>ACTION: Scott Nisbet to arrange for a watching brief of RSPB's management plan in relation to wild goats in the Inversnaid area.</p> <p>Owen McKee referred to 2.1.2 of the report regarding the Natural Heritage Grant Scheme project to improve designed landscapes and views from the road and asked if communication could be made to the public about the restoration of drystone dykes at the Leny Estate. Scott Nisbet agreed that the information about the project could be communicated via the Ben Ledi view.</p> <p>ACTION: Scott Nisbet to explore whether communication about the project to improve designed landscapes and views from the road could be made via the Ben Ledi View.</p> <p>An update on the RSPB Loch Lomond Nature Reserve was requested and Scott Nisbet advised that RSPB have offered to give an update to the NPA Board at a future date.</p> <p>The positive work on developing Flood Risk Management Plans with Local Authorities and SEPA was noted.</p> <p>DECISION: Members noted the report.</p>	<p>SN</p> <p>SN</p>
15	<p>Visitor Experience Update</p> <p>Mari Bell and Bridget Jones invited questions and comments on the Visitor Experience Update Report. Signage was discussed in relation to 2.1.1 and Fergus Wood advised that there is a willingness in Aberfoyle to put up welcome signage. Mari Bell advised that the NPA is working with communities throughout the National Park to install village welcome signage.</p>	

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	<p>The Outdoor Recreation Plan was discussed and the work on active travel links was noted. Members referred to Callander's aspiration to become the 'Outdoor Capital of the National Park' and requested that the Stirling to Callander active travel link is acknowledged. Bridget Jones advised that this would be reflected in the ORP implementation programme.</p> <p>ACTION: Bridget Jones to add the Stirling to Callander active travel link to the ORP implementation programme.</p> <p>DECISION: Members noted the report.</p>	BJ
16	<p>Rural Development Update</p> <p>Iain Nicolson introduced the report and drew Members' attention to the Development Management statistics in the report. It was noted that approval rate for applications is currently 96.2%. He reported that a workshop has been arranged by Scottish Government for LEADER Local Action Groups.</p> <p>DECISION: Members noted the report.</p>	
17	<p>AOB</p> <p>Fergus Wood raised the issue of rural pharmacies and the potential impact these have on rural GP practices and services. David Warnock gave apologies for the June meeting and announced that this may be his last NPA Board Meeting pending the outcome of the Local Member elections in July.</p> <p>Gordon Watson advised that works will continue to the Stoney-mollan roundabout.</p> <p>It was noted that Local Member elections will take place in July and Linda McKay advised that a brief update on the process will be given at the Board Meeting on 16th June.</p> <p>ACTION: Local Elections update to be included in the Board Meeting on 16th June.</p>	JC
17	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>16th June 2014</p>	

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Signed _____

Linda McKay
Convener