

# National Park Authority Board Meeting



## Corporate Update

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*Paper for information*

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides a summary updates progress on corporate outcomes, objectives and recent highlights/lowlights since the last report to the Board.

### 2. Highlights

- 2.1 Following the roll out of the new performance appraisal process 'My Performance Review' the first formal mid-year reviews are now underway and due to be complete by the end of November. An evaluation of the process to date involving volunteers from all teams across the organisation will be carried out in January 2015.
- 2.2 Following the Cabinet reshuffle on Friday 21 November we are delighted that Richard Lochhead remains as our Cabinet Secretary and we welcome Aileen McLeod as our new Minister for Environment & Climate Change. We will be scheduling opportunities to thank Paul Wheelhouse, who has moved to the role of Minister for Community Safety & Legal Affairs, for his unwavering and invaluable support of the Park over the last two years. We will seek Board and our Sponsor teams' support to engage with our new Minister.
- 2.3 Our relations with Scottish Government continue to be positive. Keith Connal, Depute Director of the Natural Resources Sponsor team has now returned to post after his secondment. Keith will be a key link in the Chief Executive and Board Appointment recruitment processes over the coming months.
- 2.4 Our Director, Bob McIntosh is retiring at the end of February 2015. We will advise Board members of his successor when this is known. We will identify opportunities to thank Bob McIntosh for his excellent support and to engage with our new Director.
- 2.5 Involvement on UK National Parks commercialisation project continues, an update on which will be provided at this Board meeting.
- 2.6 An ENFOR agencies planning workshop with each of the environmental bodies allowed for a diverse range of experiences and strategic planning to be shared. A further workshop has been scheduled for early December.
- 2.7 Our relations with key partners continue to be very constructive with productive engagements held over the autumn period with Scottish Enterprise, SportScotland, RSPB and Forestry Commission Scotland.

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- 2.8 Significant effort was devoted to present a progress update on the Your Park project to all key partners and stakeholders before the consultation period opened. The Executive and Project Teams continue to listen to our communities, businesses, landowners and Community Councils during this consultation period.
- 2.9 Recruitment for the Ministerial Appointed Board vacancy is well underway. The closing date for applications is 25 November with interviews expected to be held on 17 and 18 December.
- 2.10 An informative session at The Lodge, Aberfoyle with Forestry Commission Scotland allowed for Board and Executive to experience their impressive new facilities and build on positive relationships.
- 2.11 Linda McKay presented the 100,000<sup>th</sup> John Muir Award at a ceremony held in Balfron High School in November which recognised the support that the National Park gives to the outdoor opportunities that John Muir award celebrates.
- 2.12 The first community-led hydro scheme in the Park and the first to be built on Forestry Commission Scotland land was officially opened by Fiona Logan at the beginning of November. This is a great live example of delivering one of the main aims of the Park to support local communities in order to sustain thriving local economies.
- 2.13 Operational Delivery – During the last quarter, there continues to be a diversity of project delivery across Conservation, Visitor Experience/Visitor Management and Rural Developments teams, which is outlined in detail in the update papers. I would particularly like to highlight successes in being shortlisted in the RSPB Nature of Scotland awards in November, the awards won by architects John Kennedy, Angus Ritchie and Daniel Taylor at the Glasgow Institute of Architects Design Awards for the scenic routes installations, the commendation for the supplementary planning guidance for renewable energy attended by Derek McKay, the Minister for Planning and Local Government as well as the work to progress on Your Park and LIVE Park.

### 3. Progress

#### 3.1 Marketing and Communications

*Corporate Plan Outcome: Informed and engaged stakeholders; communities, visitors, strategic partners, staff and Scottish Government*

- 3.1.1 In October, the National Park Authority launched the Your Park consultation which aims to improve the experience on and around the Park's busiest lochshores. The approval from the National Park Authority Board to proceed with the consultation and the subsequent launch of the consultation received widespread media coverage across online; TV; radio; specialist, national,

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regional, local, and community press, and on relevant outdoors blogs and forums. Overall, this high profile coverage has been balanced and measured. As part of the awareness raising campaign we developed a bespoke website ([www.thisisyourpark.org.uk](http://www.thisisyourpark.org.uk)) and accompanying social media presence including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr pages. Taking on learning from LIVE Park, we have used targeted social media to alert people the blog facility on the site, using this to discuss in more detail relevant topics and issues. A series of consultation events have been held around the Park to allow anyone interested in finding out more to have a face-to-face discussion with visitor management representatives from the Park. These have been promoted locally, online via Facebook and Twitter and via the relevant community councils. The consultation runs until 12 January 2015 and this proactive approach to positive dialogue on the subject will continue throughout the process.

- 3.1.2 The next stage of the LIVE Park consultation is now underway, with the 6 week Additional Sites Report consultation accepting comments until 5pm on Friday 19 December 2014. This phase of consultation is to seek views on 18 additional development sites proposed in response to the Main Issues Report consultation over the summer period, two of which, both in Callander, have been assessed as preferred by the National Park Authority to be taken forward for future housing development.

The LIVE Park website ([www.ourlivepark.com](http://www.ourlivepark.com)) was updated with information on the Additional Sites Consultation and a copy of the Additional Sites Report is available for download from here, as well as from local libraries. Social media feeds are being regularly updated with details of the consultation and signposting to the website for more information. A press release was issued and public notices placed in the press to alert people to the consultation and a full page advert will appear in the December edition of the Ben Ledi view to target and inform the Callander community of the two new preferred sites in their area.

- 3.1.3 Following the announcement of the National Park chief executive officer Fiona Logan's resignation, an active recruitment campaign has begun to find a replacement. To support the recruitment advertisement for the post, a bespoke microsite was developed to present all information about the role and what is involved ([www.lochlomond-trossachsceo.org](http://www.lochlomond-trossachsceo.org)). The closing date for applications is 28 November 2014.

### 3.2 Staff Engagement

*Corporate Plan Staff Engagement Outcome: Informed and engaged stakeholders; communities, visitors, strategic partners, staff and Scottish Government*

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3.2.1 The 2014 Best Companies survey was launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> September and once again we achieved an 80% response rate; the same high level of response as last year. The results are in and as you will see from the attached chart, we are delighted to see an increase in our employee engagement from last year, confirming that we are heading in the right direction. We have started rolling out the results amongst staff and, as with last year, teams will prepare actions plans to continue to target improvements staff engagement.

### 3.3 Financial Report

*Corporate Plan Financial Outcome: Exemplify good practice in the use of public funds, corporate governance, policies, systems and procedures.*

3.3.1 The financial position for the six months ended 30 September 2014 is that we realised Net Income of £641k as compared with budgeted Net Income of £245k. Project expenditure continues to be lower than we had planned for this stage of the year however we still expect to achieve delivery of all projects. A forecast at the end of quarter 2 was carried out and this shows an additional £9k of expenditure in comparison with budget. We are now forecasting an outturn over-spend for the year of £110k. We have approached our sponsor department to request support for exceptional items, such as the Local Board Member elections, and we have been advised to show our forecast out-turn in our next financial return to Scottish Government. The management accounts, including the Q2 forecast are attached at Appendix 1 to this report and the key variances are explained below.

3.3.2 Operating income was slightly behind budget with actual income being £4,002k v budget of £4,027k. Planning fee income is £25k lower than budget but this has improved significantly in October and is expected to be only £2k less than budget for the full year. The full year forecast is expected to be £50k lower than budget and this reflects the impact of the Gateway centre: reduced rental income and debt write off.

3.3.3 Operating expenditure was £143k less than budget (actual £3,118k v budget of £3,260k). The forecast for the year is that operating costs will be £200k less than budget and this under-spend results from salary savings of £45k in relation to lower than expected seasonal ranger costs and a delay in filling vacant posts. We are also forecasting to capitalise £125k of staff costs on projects to accurately reflect the real cost of our capital works that are funded by capital grant in aid. All managers were tasked with either remaining on budget or reducing costs where possible and this generated a further £30k of operational cost savings.

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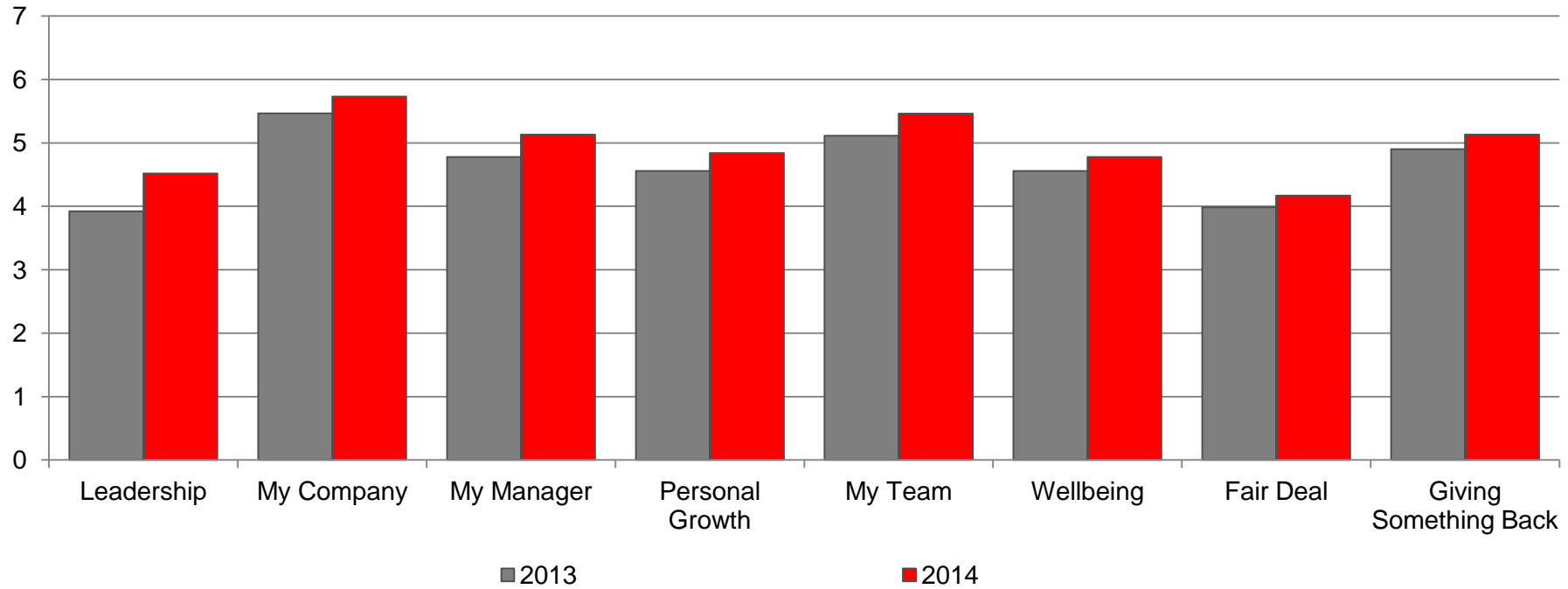
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- 3.3.4 Project income is £25k lower than budget YTD because we received income in relation to the Pontoon at Drumkinnon Bay in 2013-14 which we had expected to receive in the current year. This has been offset by an increase in the income received from the sale of vehicles. This variance is expected to reduce to £13k for the full year.
- 3.3.5 Project expenditure is £303k less than budget YTD mainly because of the timing of the actual costs versus the budget profiles.
- 3.3.6 Overall net expenditure on projects is £278k behind schedule but we have forecast this to be on target for the full year and managers are fully aware of the requirement to deliver their project budgets in total. The forecast for the year is that we will increase net project expenditure by £161k and this has been funded by the operational savings referred to above. The total forecast net project spend is £1.7m and £1.2m of this is in relation to capital projects where we have an obligation to achieve full spend of the capital grant in aid funding.

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# Best Companies Staff Engagement Survey results



National Accreditation Score	2013	608	One to watch
	2014	651	One to watch
		7%	Improvement
Score to reach 1 ★		660	