

National Park Authority Board Meeting



Rural Development Update

Paper for information

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides a summary update on progress towards achieving Rural Development objectives and recent highlights (and lowlights, if any) since the last report to the Board.

2. Highlights

- 2.1 Great feedback from the Scottish Government on our third Annual Planning Performance Framework Report for 2013/14. This is the Government's main review of Scottish Planning Authorities performance and ongoing service improvements.
- 2.2 We are continuing to see increases in development activity on the ground, with work beginning on three further 'run-of-river' hydro-electric schemes - Upper Falloch, Derrydarroch and a scheme at 'Burn O Mar' near Milton of Buchanan.
- 2.3 The Luss and Arden Community Development Trust's, Luss Hogback stone project secured indicative grant funding from Historic Scotland for repair, interpretation and volunteer training with match funding from our own Built Heritage Repair Scheme.
- 2.4 Applications to amend conditions and the agreement attached to the Cononish Goldmine planning permission, approved in January, were efficiently and quickly handled by the Board and Officers.

3. Lowlights: Not applicable.

4. National Park Partnership Plan outcome:

- 4.1 In the National Park businesses and communities thrive and people live and work sustainably in a high quality environment.

5. Corporate Plan outcome:

- 5.1 A sustainable pattern of new developments meeting economic and community needs.
- 5.2 Active and empowered communities.

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6. Development Management Progress:

Planning Performance

6.1 In December 2014 a very positive feedback report was received from the Scottish Government on the National Park's 2013/14 Planning Performance Framework (PPF) submission. The PPF is a compulsory submission required of all Planning Authorities in Scotland. This key document focuses on continuous improvement of our service, efficient processing of planning applications and the provision of advice and a proactive Development Planning service. It sets out progress with service improvements planned and the priorities looking forward until June 2015. Scottish Ministers see this as key in order to ensure planning supports the Government's economic development strategy. The Minister's feedback report includes the following conclusions :

- 'The National Park Authority is one which embraces the PPF culture including many yearly improvements over a wide range', and;
- 'This year's figures show a general shortening of timescales for deciding all applications ,which is welcome'

Notable Casework

- 6.2 The development of run-of-river hydro power schemes continues to be a significant work area. Four new planning applications were approved prior to the turn of the year, the work on these cases being project managed to coincide with a separate deadline within the renewable industry related to a further reduction in 'feed-in tariffs'. In addition to these new permissions, work has got underway on implementing previously consented hydro power developments. Two at Glenfalloch Estate near Crianlarich and a scheme at 'Burn O Mar' near Milton of Buchanan by Montrose Estate. Reaching this point in a development requires continued input on planning and conservation staff in order to agree details associated with the fulfilment of a number of planning conditions.
- 6.3 Applications to amend conditions of the Cononish Goldmine planning permission – together with associated adjustments to the supporting legal agreement – were approved at the full Board meeting in January – and subsequently quickly issued formally to the applicant. The new planning permission allows for increases in specified elements of the on site operating hours and extends the planning permission for a further 3 years.

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7. Forward Planning Progress

LIVE Park

- 7.1 The 'Additional' sites consultation, which sought feedback on our assessment of new or amended sites submitted during the LIVE Park consultation in 2014, resulted in 55 representations from 43 individuals/bodies during November and December. The most amount of comments received concerned the proposed Balgibbon Drive housing site in Callander. The report of all comments received was published in February with all representations being reviewed as we draft the Proposed Local Development Plan to bring to the Board.
- 7.2 Successful community and partner engagement has continued focusing on Buchanan and Callander areas and ensuring that partner organisations are supporting the update of our policies and guidance prior to the formal 6 week consultation planned for May and June on the Proposed Local Development Plan and associated Guidance.

Community Grant Scheme

- 7.3 The National Park Community Grant Scheme panel, made up of locally elected members and chaired by Petra Biberbach met on 2 February to award grants for the governance and development of Community Development organisations and their volunteers (administration grants of up to £800) and for 'Soon, Seen, Successful' projects (Project Grants of up to £1,500). These are small, quick win projects which help implement current Community Action Plans.
- 7.4 The following community groups received Administration Grants:
- Ardentinny Community Trust Ltd
 - Arrochar and Tarbet Community Development Trust
 - Benmore and Kilmun Community Development Trust
 - Callander Community Development Trust
 - Croftamie Community Trust Ltd
 - Drymen Community Development Trust (Enterprise Co)
 - Gartmore Community Trust Ltd
 - Killin and Ardeonaig Community Development Trust Ltd
 - Kilmarnock Community Trust
 - Lochgoil Community Trust Ltd
 - Luss and Arden Community Development Trust Ltd
 - Sandbank Community Development Trust

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- St Fillans Community Trust
- Strachur Community Development Co.

- 7.5 The following community groups received 'Soon Seen Successful Grants':
- Balquhidder, Lochearnhead, and Strathyre Community Trust - Benches (Childrens' Playground and War Memorial)
 - Benmore and Kilmun Community Development Trust - Upgrade Graham's Point Heritage Play Park
 - Croftamie Community Trust Ltd - Environmental improvements to the Village
 - Drymen Community Development Trust (Enterprise Co) - Drymen Square and Mainstreet Planter Renewal
 - Gartmore Community Trust Ltd - Village Hall External Notice-board
 - St Fillans Community Trust - Village appearance improvements

Skills Partnership

- 7.6 Two new films exploring the skills and careers that are vital to local communities and the rural economy were premièred by the Skills Partnership in February ahead of being distributed to schools and careers services across Scotland. The films are available online at <http://www.thecommunitypartnership.org.uk/skills-partnership-2/skills-videos/>
- 7.7 Young people and employers who live, learn and work in and around the National Park are the 'stars' of the films, with some attending an evening's event at LL&TTNP's headquarters to see themselves on the big screen for the first time. The launch event also introduced a new Big Lottery Young Start-funded project called 'Park Previews', which will see the Skills Partnership working with partners to promote meaningful work experience opportunities across the National Park in 2015. This is proposed to be part funded by the NPA in 2015-2016.

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Built Heritage Repair Grant (BHRG)

- 7.8 The BHRG is experiencing another successful year with 6 projects delivered, one on site, another to start at the beginning of March. Three very different BHRG projects have been completed in Main Street, Gartmore.



Cobblers Cottage, Gartmore – removal of paint and re-pointing with lime mortar



Hazel Cottage, Gartmore – replacement of non-traditional windows and door, with timber sash and case double glazed units and traditional style timber door with matching glazing pattern.

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Murray House, Gartmore – replacement of concrete tiled roof with slate.

- 7.8 This year it has been possible to offer match funding to the Luss and Arden Community Development Trust to support their Ancient Monument Grant Application to Historic Scotland (HS) for the restoration and interpretation of the Luss Hogback Stone and associated volunteer training. HS has confirmed that the grant application has been successful, subject to a scope of works being agreed. We are confident that the project will go ahead over the summer/autumn 2015.



LEADER Update

- 7.9 The Local Development Strategies (LDS) and Business Plans of the two main Programmes within the National Park (Forth Valley & Lomond and Argyll & the Islands) have now been approved subject to recommendations by the Scottish Government.

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- 8.0 The Programmes are making the relevant changes and resubmitting to Scottish Government for final approval, with timescales and budgets finalised at this point. There has been with no single deadline set by the Government for resubmission and sign-off. Programmes will be able to commence once final approval has been received and it appears that both Programmes are hoping to launch in April 2015.
- 8.1 The feedback provided by Scottish Government did not directly reference, and appears not to cut across, the agreed arrangements for the Park's area. Officers are working with both programmes as they meet the recommendations and begin to implement the LDS.

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