

National Park Authority

Audit & Risk Committee Meeting

Agenda Item 11



Annual Report on Best Value 2017/18

Paper for approval

1. Purpose

To present the Annual Report on Best Value and a revised Best Value policy.

2. Recommendation

Members are asked to review and approve this report, and to note the revised policy at **Appendix 1**, which demonstrate 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.

The Best Value policy was approved in March 2017 and the financial year 2017/18 is the first year of reporting against the policy. As part of the process of preparing the Annual Report on Best Value it was identified that the policy could be streamlined to make more efficient use of existing reporting, rather than require additional reports to be prepared. Therefore the policy has been revised and approved by the Executive Team and is attached at **Appendix 1** for information. This 2017/18 Annual Report on Best Value is based on this revised policy and shown below.

4. Annual Report on Best Value 2017/18

The main monitoring tool for continuous improvement is the reporting against Annual Operational Plan targets presented to the Delivery Group in 2017/18. For 2018/19 this reporting will be presented to the Board:

- The majority of the objectives were achieved demonstrating continuous improvement and best value.

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- 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.

Vision & Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Park Partnership Plan approved by Board and Scottish Ministers • Commercial Strategy approved by Board • Budget and Annual Operational Plan for 2018/19 approved by Board
Effective Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park Authority role in Great Trossachs Forest NNR formalised • Engagement with Transport Scotland on landscape objectives for the design of A82 upgrade from Tarbet to Inverarnan • £694k of funding secured and 4.5km of path delivered with partners • Mountains & The People project completed 6 path improvements (13km), and 8 trainees attained SVQ level 2 • Contribution to Stirling Council's proposals for the City Deal • Supporting the Community Partnership to empower and provide structured support for our communities • Successful bid to HLF for Callander Pass Landscape Partnership Scheme • Facilitation of 4 Local Access Forum meetings
Governance & Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual update on implementation of camping byelaws provided to Ministers • Local Development Plan monitoring framework in place • Land Reform Act issues recorded and progressed • Preparation for introduction of GDPR achieved • Approval of Records Management Plan
Use of Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent reviews on tenanted sites completed • Handover of the Gateway Centre to the sub-tenant complete • Ranger Service Operational Deployment Plan achieved with exception of water / island patrols affected by adverse weather • All Your Park Phase 2 signage installed • 1,037 volunteer ranger visitor engagement days achieved
Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% reduction in the number of complaints received in relation to two tenanted properties • Monthly reporting on Loch Chon occupancy during the season

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly reporting on Your Park / camping related web traffic, social media metrics and engagement activities • Planning decision timescales consistent with national average for local and householder applications • Byelaw Enforcement and Litter Fixed Penalty Notices tracked and reported
Sustainability <i>(cross-cutting theme)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £328k funding secured for 6 peatland sites • Increase in red squirrel / decrease in grey squirrel sightings • 3 landholdings submitted applications to Agri-Environmental and Climate Change Scheme and 1 to Forestry Grant Scheme • 14 landholdings undertaking Upland Habitat Impact Assessments for Deer Management • 928 practical conservation volunteer days achieved • Climate Change Action Plan published
Equality <i>(cross-cutting theme)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park Mobility scooter scheme expanded into two new sites in the Aberfoyle and Callander areas • Delivery of Junior Ranger programme with 2 high schools • Over 6,950 John Muir Awards achieved over project life including 1,636 through work with inclusion groups • 4 'Backbone' groups supported to visit the National Park (engagement with BME/minority communities) • Plan developed with partners for participation in the Year of Young People (2018) • New inclusive imagery available for all publications • Publication of Equalities Mainstreaming Report

5. Conclusion

We have continued to demonstrate our compliance with the Best Value Guidance during 2017/18 and the revised policy has created further efficiencies in relation to the reporting of our achievements.

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