

National Park Authority Board Meeting

Agenda Item 11

Chief Executive Officer Report



Paper for information

1. Purpose
To provide an overview of significant issues and developments in the National Park operating environment.
2. Recommendation
Board Members are asked to note the contents of this report and the attached documents focussing on Operation Ironworks for information.
3. Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan and/or Our 5-year Plan
The report discusses topics which cover a number of outcomes and priorities from across the National Park Partnership Plan 2018-23.

4. Scottish Government

- 4.1. **National Park Partnership Plan 2018-23:** Following her formal approval of the National Park Partnership Plan 2018-2023. Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Roseanna Cunningham MSP joined us in Callander on 14th March. She met with the CEO and Convener, pupils from St Modans High School and representatives from FABB Scotland - one of the third sector activity providers listed in the Plan - for a bike ride with a difference to showcase the work the group do to provide access opportunities in the Park for all abilities. The bikes provided by FABB are all specially adapted to help children and young people with disabilities to enjoy the fantastic recreation opportunities on offer here. This is just one example of the partnership working promoted in the Plan.

The Plan is now available on our website as a fully interactive document at www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/PartnershipPlan which includes an online system to find out which partners have agreed to help deliver the outcomes set out in the Plan is also available here.

STV joined us at the launch event and ran an exclusive story ahead of the public launch on Wednesday lunchtime and Wednesday evening. Other articles were also published in the Herald, Scotsman, Lennox Herald and Stirling Observer with Central FM running a short piece from James Stuart. A short [film](#) of the day is on our YouTube channel. Many partner organisations heavily promoted the Plan and their commitment to it through various social media channels.

Following the launch, the real work is underway with our partners to help achieve the ambitious outcomes set out in the Plan. Over the next few months we are planning a series of engagements with them to begin implementing the outcomes in the Plan. We will also be looking to hold an event with our partners later this year to reflect on

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these outcomes and the partnership working needed to make them a reality. Plans for this event will be firmed up over the coming months.

- 4.2. **Environment and Economy Leaders Group (EELG):** This group (formerly RAFE) brings together all of the CEOs of those organisations that sit within the Environment portfolio of Scottish Government and is chaired by the Director of Environment and Forestry, Bridget Campbell. Some meetings are chaired by the Cabinet Secretary and attended by organisational Chairs. These meetings are extremely useful forum to share emerging issues and Scottish Government policy and solicit advice from organisations involved in implementation.

Recent meetings have very much focussed on emerging policy to address the post-Brexit environment and the implications for land use and environmental priorities. A consistent strand is the imperative to demonstrate and promote Scotland's Environment as a critical part of promoting future prosperity.

- 4.3. **EELG Digital Strategy:** The CEO is the lead officer for the EELG Digital Strategy. This brings together the organisations in the EELG Groups and focusses on opportunities to contribute to the Scottish Government priority of transforming how public services are delivered online.

Key projects include the enhancement of the [Scotland's Environment website](#) as the repository of all open environmental data held by public bodies. The website has been enhanced to promote usability so that the data can be more effectively used either for research or for those requiring data to support applications for various types of permissions or licences.

A significant collaboration is the development of a common online licencing system that can be used by all public bodies who administer some form of environmental permission or licence. Various pilots are currently running involving SEPA and SNH. The Park Authority is considering piloting digitising the boat registration scheme on Loch Lomond as part of the project. Ultimately the ambition is that customers can obtain a wide range of environmental permissions through a single online portal.

- 4.4. **Glasgow 2018 European Championships:** Preparations are at an advanced stage to hold the European Open Water Swimming Championships at Loch Lomond Shores in Balloch on 5th to 12th August. The CEO recently met with the Minister for Public Health and Sport, Aileen Campbell to provide a briefing on the preparations.

A world-class elite open water swimming venue will be created at Drumkinnon Bay for the European Championships in August 2018. Hosting the European Open Water Swimming Championships is a major opportunity for the National Park to showcase its beautiful setting to a worldwide audience. A plan is being developed to help

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preserve user access to our facilities at the Duncan Mills Public Slipway for as much time as possible throughout the period of establishing the venue infrastructure.

As part of the Glasgow 2018 events an associated cultural programme is planned and this will include a programme to coincide with the Balloch element of the Euro Championships This is entitled 'Festival 2018: Balloch Loch Lomond' and will entail events and activities in the surrounding Balloch area on 11th August. Community groups from the local area have been awarded modest grants via the Our Place Loch Lomond Fund to be able to take part in the event alongside professional acts arranged through the Glasgow 2018 team.

5. National Parks UK

5.1. **National Park Partnerships LLP (NPPLL):** The CEO is the lead Executive on behalf of all 15 UK National Parks on the Management Board of NPPLL which comprises National Park representatives and non-executive members from the commercial sector. This Partnership was set up as a way for the UK National Parks to fundraise at a national level to supplement existing budgets. Each National Park has contributed £10k for the first three years of operation to fund two staff to work at national level. Further contributions may be required in future years but are anticipated to be offset with cash income distributed back to National Parks or through in-kind benefits which have a cash value.

The first commercial partnership to be secured is with Columbia Sportswear who will be supplying all National Park branded uniforms for the next five years free of charge, contributing to budget savings. The agreement is initially worth over £2M over five years with the possibility of other contributions during the period through merchandise sales for example. Columbia has also heavily promoted National Parks in national press and online campaigns. Staff will be kitted out in the new uniform in the coming weeks.

5.2. Further partnerships have been secured with Sykes Cottages and Forest Holidays. Loch Lomond and The Trossachs is one of three pilot Parks to benefit from a £5k contribution from Forest Holidays towards education work specifically targeted at young people. This will help expand our Junior Ranger programme in 2018/19 to allow a broader range of children to take part.

5.3. To support the work of NPPLL the UK National Parks have also decided to establish a national charity following an NPUK meeting attended by the Vice-Convenor. This would facilitate charitable giving and allow more opportunity to benefit from CSR initiatives in the commercial sector at national level. As members each National Park could nominate a trustee to the charity. Work is progressing to establish the charity later on this year. It is not envisaged to involve any additional contributions and the

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administration would be absorbed by the NPP staff. Members are asked to note this development and further information will be provided once further details of establishment are clarified. This would not impact on the activities of charities operating locally in individual National Parks.

6. Board Elections/Appointments

6.1. The process for inviting nominations to stand as candidates in the 5 National Park Local election wards closed on 31st May. We are pleased to report that there are a total of 24 candidates with every ward to be contested. (There were 14 candidates for the 2014 local elections.) Literature to encourage candidates to come forward emphasised the aspiration of Board diversity. Despite our efforts there has not been an increase in the number of female candidates standing for election. Postal ballot forms along with candidates' statements will be sent out from or around 14th June with the count due to take place on 5th July.

6.2. The process to fill five forthcoming vacancies in our Ministerial appointed Board places got underway with the adverts placed online by the Scottish Government Public Appointments team on 22nd May. The process is being managed jointly with Cairngorms National Park who also have five vacancies to fill. We are supporting the promotion of the vacancies again to secure both a high quality of suitably skilled candidates and interest from a diversity of backgrounds. These appointments must comply with the Scottish Government's 50:50 by 2020 policy for public body Boards. Interviews with shortlisted candidates by a panel including the Convener are expected to take place in late August in time for appointed Members to join the Board on 1st October (with one joining later on 31st March 2019).

7. Events

7.1 The Chief Executive recently spoke at Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Tourism Conference and Scottish Renewables Hydro Conference.

Appendix 1: Operation Ironworks Police Scotland Partnership
Attachment: Operation Ironworks Annual Report 2017

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