

National Park Authority Board Meeting

Agenda Item 9

Chief Executive Officer Report



Paper for information

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide an overview of significant issues and developments in the National Park Authority's operating environment.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Board Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

3. Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan and/or Our 5-year Plan

- 3.1. The report discusses topics which cover a number of outcomes and priorities from across the National Park Partnership Plan and Our 5 Year Plan 2018-23.

4. Scottish Government

- 4.1. **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. These meetings are extremely useful forum to share emerging issues and Scottish Government policy.

- 4.2. The EELG Group's last meeting was hosted in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and Chaired by the CEO. The location provided an opportunity to showcase the work that is being progressed as the Strathard Project which is of significant interest as a pilot project to demonstrate a place based approach to delivering a range of national Land Use, Conservation and Natural Capital policy aspirations working alongside the local community. The meeting and visit included senior officials from partner organisations involved in the project such as SEPA, SNH, and Forestry and Land Scotland.

- 4.3. **Environment and Forestry Directorate Staff Meeting** - The CEO was invited to sit on a panel session to discuss with all Directorate staff how Scottish Government environmental policies and initiatives are being delivered on the ground.

5. Partnership Working

- 5.1. **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds** – The CEO and Director of Conservation and Visitor Services were invited to attend a site visit and to speak to the RSPB UK and Scotland Committee Board Members, including the Chief Executive, Mike Clarke and Chair, Mike Cox, on a visit to the Wards Estate, part of the Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve. The visit represented an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the collaborative work that has supported developments on the estate and the growing opportunities to engage people and particularly young people with nature. Many rare

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species are continuing to be identified on the site as conservation management approaches progress. National Park Authority. A group of National Park Authority Board members also recently visited the site.

- 5.2. **Police Scotland** – The CEO and Director of Conservation and Visitor Services met with Chief Superintendent Thom McLaughlan and Superintendent Mark Lundie as the lead divisional command for the National Park Operation Ironworks partnership. This provided an opportunity to reflect on the significant progress made on criminal and anti-social behaviour issues in the National Park and the changing priorities for future working.
- 5.3. The Operation Ironworks Report for 2018 has now been prepared by Police Scotland and is attached as an **Appendix** to this report. The partnership provides additional police resources from the three Police Scotland Command areas which cover the Park and sees them working with Park Rangers and Forestry Commission Scotland to tackle and deal with the minority of visitors who are responsible for criminality, disorder and anti-social behaviour within the Park. It is an intelligence led initiative which identifies the most problematic areas, peak dates and times of demand informing officers on where and when to carry out mobile, foot and cycle patrols.
- 5.4. The general trend continues to be a welcome decline in crime and anti-social behaviour, but a rise in issues associated with an increase in visitor numbers pressures. A growing problem seen in sharp focus last year was the indiscriminate parking and subsequent traffic congestion this caused at Balmaha and Rowardennan. This saw local Police officers deployed most weekends to assist road users and the local community who were affected by this issue. A short term solution was achieved by the strategic placement of Police “no parking” signage. Work is ongoing with Stirling Council and other key stakeholders to achieve a longer term solution to this issue for the forthcoming year.
- 5.5. The 2019 season is focusing Operation Ironworks resources in the following areas: seeking traffic management solutions for East Loch Lomond, continued patrols of loch shore areas to deter anti-social behaviour and enforcing the camping byelaws, along with the promotion of water and road safety messages.

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6. UK Context

- 6.1 **Glover Review** - In January 2018 the UK Government published a 25-Year Plan for the Environment. It set out an approach to protect landscapes and habitats in England and committed to undertaking a review National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). The review will not affect National Parks in Wales and Scotland which are the responsibility of the devolved administrations. The CEO and Convener met with Sarah Mukherjee from the Glover Panel to discuss how National Parks are managed in Scotland with a specific focus on Governance and engagement and outreach work. The Review is expected to report back to UK Ministers later in 2019.
- 6.2 **UK National Parks Fortnight** – Collaborative work on communications at UK level has recently had increased focus. 2019 is the 70th Anniversary of the creation of National Parks in England and Wales. The previously summer focused National Parks Week was moved to 6-21st April this year to focus promotional activity prior to the summer period. The fortnight was kicked off with a special BBC Countryfile devoted National Parks and which featured staff member Sheila Henderson who also runs a farm with her family on East Loch Lomond. A [promotional film](#) was produced by a UK National Parks post hosted at Carrochan and which along with other content has already achieved over 100,000 views on social media. The associated campaign achieved wide coverage in print and online media and a wide range of social media channels. Work is progressing to develop shared brand values for UK National Parks and the recruitment of dedicated communication staff hosted by the Broads Authority to continue this work. This is being delivered for the same financial contribution previously made to National Parks UK body which is now being wound down.

Appendix 1: Operation Ironworks Annual Report 2018

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