

National Park Authority Board Meeting

Agenda Item 11

2019/20 Annual Operational Plan Progress Report



Paper for information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper reports on our year-to-date progress (as at February 17, 2020) against the Annual Operational Plan 2019-20. Appendix 1 details how each deliverable within the plan is progressing.
- 1.2 The most recent report was progress to November 2019. Since that time, we have had strong delivery and many items have been completed. Nonetheless, a number have also been cancelled or postponed to next year.

2. Recommendation

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

3. Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan and Our 5-Year Plan

- 3.1. The Annual Operational Plan objectives are aligned with the 2018-2023 National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) and relevant priorities from Our 5 Year (Corporate) Plan. The plan itself is a key part of ensuring we have delivery plans in place over the period of the NPPP and Our 5-Year Plan.

4. Current Status

- 4.1. Of the 15 Priorities (Section 1 of Appendix 1):
 - 2 are complete
 - 7 are on track
 - 1 is behind schedule
 - 1 is at risk
 - 4 are postponed to next year
 - None are cancelled
- 4.2. Of the 84 Detailed Activities (Section 2 of Appendix 1):
 - 18 are complete
 - 46 are on track
 - 8 are behind schedule
 - 3 are at risk
 - 7 are postponed to next year
 - 3 are cancelled
- 4.3. Note that the 2019/20 Annual Operational Plan lists some items as both Priorities and Detailed Activities, so there is some overlap between sections 1 and 2.

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5. Discussion

5.1. In our December 2019 report to the Board in Annual Operational Plan progress, we noted that items were increasingly behind schedule or at risk due to external factors, unforeseen project challenges, and internal staff capacity.

5.2. Since then, there has been some good progress, with many more items complete, the majority of the remainder on track, and fewer items behind schedule or at risk. For example:

- We have now completed some key infrastructure work such as the RTIF West Loch Lomond projects to upgrade public toilets, bins, and car parks at Luss, Tarbet and Inveruglas. It also includes a new motorhome disposal point at Tarbet. The success of this work has been enabled by the commitment and capability of our staff, and it will mean a better visitor experience and better managed visitor pressures on infrastructure.
- We have submitted key reports to government, including our Core Paths Plan, our annual update to Scottish Ministers on the Camping Management byelaws, and our Scottish Public Body annual climate change report
- We have completed four successful Junior Ranger programmes, including one with a new partner school

5.3. We still have a number of items behind schedule and three at risk. The items that are behind schedule we continue to progress but given where we are in the year there is a chance they will be delivered in the next financial year. The three items at risk are:

- Developing four sites for peatland restoration: We have six site plans ready for implementation (with a further seven in preparation) but we are unlikely to meet the target this year due to external delays in SNH funding, landowner permissions and contractor availability.
- Developing and delivering two new Community Place and Action Plans: We are continuing to work with Strathfillan and Killin communities. Killin's plan is on track but Strathfillan is behind schedule due to additional time needed to work with the Steering Group.
- Delivering Callander's Landscape Projects – Falls of Leny: Falls of Leny remains behind schedule, and is at risk, but progress is being made to establish a phased approach to delivery. All other aspects of this multi-partner project, including securing match funding, are on track. Most notably is the successful completion

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of the new Callander Craggs path, completing the link from Callander to the Bracklinn Falls path.

- 5.4. We have also postponed a number of items to next financial year. The reasons for postponement vary, but include external factors, unforeseen project specific challenges, and internal staff capacity. As noted in our December 2019 report, we now forecast that we will achieve £364,000 in staff savings this year. We are using the additional savings to fund cost increases elsewhere. These staff savings have had an impact on our capacity to deliver. Nonetheless, we continue to progress the postponed projects on a slower track.
- 5.5. The cancellations are due to external factors, or because they have been superseded by other events or projects.
- 5.6. Staff continue to work hard to achieve the deliverables within the Annual Operational Plan and in many cases are going above and beyond to bring them to completion. In its budget and resourcing discussions, the Executive continues to consider the trade-offs associated with different options. On a day to day basis we are working to ensure staff are prioritising the most critical items while maintaining an appropriate and healthy work-life balance.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. Overall, we continue to make good progress on this year's Annual Operational Plan, though some items are off track. Staff capacity is being maximised, and the impacts of the current budget constraints on delivery are showing.

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