

Annual Operational Plan 2020/21



Introduction

Our Annual Operational Plan 2020/21 sets out our priorities for delivery for the year.

In recent years, working alongside our partners, we have achieved a considerable amount for and with our communities, our visitors and other stakeholders. Together we have improved the environment, supported our communities, created life-long memories for our visitors, and helped build health and resilience through the National Park. Our work is grounded in our National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2018-23, and Our 5-Year Plan 2018-23, and we continue to monitor the progress of these.

For 2020/21 our focus will be on:

1. Taking and inspiring action to address the global climate emergency and nature crisis
2. Enhancing our visitor experience, volunteering, and active living opportunities
3. Addressing the changing challenges posed by substantial visitor numbers
4. Continual improvement in delivering our core functions, including how we plan and use our resources, and meet our statutory requirements and duties

We continue to see huge potential within the National Park, in terms of the value of its natural capital, communities, businesses, and our own people. The National Park Authority is in a strong place in terms of the calibre of our people and being at the forefront in terms of delivering important work such as important action to address the climate emergency. By focusing our work in 2020/21 on the above themes we will be able to continue to make the most of the National Park for current generations while preserving it for future ones.

This year our Annual Operational Plan looks different to previous years. The new format focuses more on our key deliverables for the coming year so that there is a clearer picture of the change we are setting out to accomplish. As a result there are a variety of tasks that are no longer directly highlighted in our Annual Operational Plan, but are nonetheless important and continuing at pace. This new format is part of our commitment to continual improvement in how we do things to ensure we are fulfilling our duties, commitments, and aspirations effectively and efficiently.

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Background

The National Park Authority was established to achieve four key aims laid out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. These are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area
- To promote the sustainable use of the natural resources of the area
- To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public
- To promote sustainable social and economic development of the communities of the area

We contribute to the national outcomes and strategic objectives of the Scottish Government. The extent to which we contribute to Scottish Government's priorities and outcomes is fundamental to our own success as a National Park Authority in delivering for Scotland. The 2019/20 'Protecting Scotland's Future' programme clearly sets out the Scottish Government's expectations for Scotland.

Our National Park Partnership Plan (2018-2023) describes the vision and outcomes for the whole National Park area and contributions required from many different organisations over a five year period to help achieve our shared vision for the National Park.

Our 5-Year Plan (2018-2023) expresses the business objectives of the National Park Authority and outlines how we will contribute to the National Park Partnership Plan and to the broader National Park aims.

This Annual Operational Plan (2020/21) describes the specific business priorities and objectives for the year ahead.

1. Taking and inspiring action to address the global climate emergency and nature crisis

The global climate emergency and nature crisis has taken new prominence nationally and internationally. In November this year, Glasgow will host UN's COP26 which will add further momentum to the issue. The National Park is well positioned to take real action to respond, both in terms of our own organisational response as well as working with partners across the National Park and beyond. From land use and land management, sustainable tourism and travel, community resilience, and our own estate, there is a large amount we can do, building on our significant efforts to date.

1.1 *We will make transformational organisational changes to maximise our role and action in the climate and nature emergencies.* This includes creating a Mission Zero Route Map for our own activity and that within the National Park. We will develop a system that lets us prioritise and record activity based on climate impact by the end of March 2021. With the UN's COP26 being held in Glasgow in November 2020, we will seek opportunities to actively participate as a National Park and to use the event to showcase our work.

1.2 *We will support our communities, land managers and businesses in the transition to zero carbon.* Our National Park Grant Schemes will assist our communities and land managers to deliver local actions that help address the global climate emergency and nature crisis. We will also provide funding and support to community organisations to increase momentum in community led partnerships or programmes, including looking for ways to access wider regional funding or capacity opportunities.

1.3 *To support habitat management and improvement, we will work with partners to better manage land for climate and nature within the National Park.* We will deliver peatland restoration projects, and provide advice and support to landowners and communities to establish new woodlands, and tackle invasive non-native species. We will also complete the Strathard Framework project which will pilot an approach to local development planning that also integrates land use planning.

These actions support the following outcomes of our National Park Partnership Plan 2018-2023...

- Outcome 1: Natural Capital
- Outcome 2: Landscape Qualities
- Outcome 3: Climate Change
- Outcome 4: Land Partnerships
- Outcome 10: Placemaking
- Outcome 11: Sustainable Growth

... and the following priorities of Our 5-Year (Corporate) Plan 2018-2023

- Priority 3: Sustainable Organisation
- Priority 8: Communication and Engagement

2. Enhancing our visitor experience, volunteering, and healthy living opportunities

There remains great opportunity for us to enhance the ability of all (visitors, workers, volunteers and communities) to have safe, positive and meaningful experiences within the landscape of the National Park. Focusing on this theme this year means we are continuing to build opportunities to enhance lives through new learning, better health, or economic and business development.

2.1 *We will continue to promote ways to get active in the outdoors.* This includes finalising our draft 'Active Park, Healthy People' plan to support and improve recreation opportunities for everyone. We will progress key aspects of the plan, such as developing new health projects. Through partners we will support the delivery of the signature Go Swim Loch Lomond event in summer 2020, increasing participation from last year and exploring new opportunities to promote outdoor swimming and water safety throughout the National Park.

2.2 *We will celebrate and leverage national themes and campaigns such as Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters, and the West Highland Way's 40th Anniversary.* This includes creating and delivering a programme of events and campaigns for the Year of Coasts and Waters, and working with partners on bringing investment for the future sustainability of the West Highland Way.

2.3 *We will continue to develop and deliver volunteer, education and outreach opportunities, to ensure people from a wide range of backgrounds are enjoying, valuing and helping to manage the National Park.* All of our outdoor learning activities will have embedded climate change education within them. We will continue to support our Junior Ranger, Youth Committee, educational travel grant and volunteer programmes, and we will bring about partnership delivery of over 1800 John Muir Awards.

These actions support the following outcomes of our National Park Partnership Plan 2018-2023...

- Outcome 3: Climate Change
- Outcome 5: Recreation Opportunities
- Outcome 6: Water Recreation
- Outcome 7: Visitor Economy
- Outcome 9: Health & Learning

... and the following priorities of Our 5-Year (Corporate) Plan 2018-2023

- Priority 2: Visitor Infrastructure
- Priority 4: Attractive, Accessible and Healthy Destinations
- Priority 6: Fundraising
- Priority 7: Policy-making
- Priority 8: Communication and Engagement

3. Addressing the changing challenges and opportunities posed by visitor numbers

We welcome 4 million visitors to the National Park every year, reflecting the successes achieved by us and partners in creating and preserving a place where people want to come to experience all the National Park has to offer. However, we must continue to work together with partners to ensure the National Park remains a place for all to enjoy. For us, this means working with partners to consider opportunities to improve accessibility within the National Park. It also means ensuring the infrastructure within the National Park remains resilient and fit for purpose for the large number of visitors who come here.

3.1 *We will complete a Visitor Survey to identify visitor types, behaviour, and tourism market trends.* This will inform our efforts to work with partners to provide services that enable visitors to enjoy the National Park in a responsible and sustainable way.

3.2 *We will continue to develop effective approaches to the sustainable management of visitor pressures in the National Park with a focus on traffic management.* This includes working with partners and communities in the East Loch Lomond Visitor Management Group to sustainably reduce visitor pressures along the route from Drymen to Rowardennan, with a view to public transport provision and litter reduction.

3.3 *We will continue to deliver commitments within the Camping Development Framework.* This includes work to assess the barriers to camping for people with disabilities, and working with partners to increase low cost camping and motorhome facility provision at gateways to the National Park including West Loch Lomond and Callander.

3.4 *We will work with partners on litter and waste prevention to minimise the environmental impact of litter and waste and improve the experience of those visiting, working in, and living in the National Park.* We will establish a National Park wide litter prevention steering group. We will also work with partners to develop and test litter prevention initiatives.

These actions support the following outcomes of our National Park Partnership Plan 2018-2023...

- Outcome 7: Visitor Economy
- Outcome 8: Visitor Management
- Outcome 11: Sustainable Growth

... and the following priorities of Our 5-Year (Corporate) Plan 2018-2023

- Priority 1: Litter
- Priority 2: Visitor Infrastructure
- Priority 4: Attractive, Accessible and Healthy Destinations

4. Continual improvement in delivering our core functions, including how we plan and use our resources, and how we meet our statutory requirements and duties

Our core functions as a public body relate to the priorities set out above and within the NPPP and Our 5-Year (Corporate Plan). For example, how we carry out of our functions related to Planning will impact the National Park’s resilience to climate change and how visitors experience the National Park. In order to be effective and responsive in these functions we must seek continual improvement in how we go about our work and how we fund it.

4.1 *We will support placemaking at regional and local community level.* This includes undertaking preparatory work such as monitoring, evidence gathering, early engagement and training. to support the next Local Development Plan, exploring opportunities with the growing regional approach to strategy, and supporting communities in developing Community Place Plans.

4.2 *We will implement changes introduced by the Planning Scotland (Act) 2019.* We will review our internal processes to ensure they are compliant with the new legislation and identify any new opportunities that the new legislation presents.

4.3 *We will identify ways to supplement our core funding to help sustain and improve the services we deliver.* We expect to implement car park charging at some additional sites in order to cover some of the costs we face in providing visitor infrastructure. We also plan to review our existing charges for other services to determine whether they remain appropriate within the broader fiscal environment. We will continue to explore opportunities to lever in external funding to help deliver our priorities.

4.4 *We will continue to address Health and Safety risks to our staff and the public.* This includes improving our internal processes and policies.

4.5 *We will look at further improvements to the effectiveness of our corporate services.* This includes developing a strategy for cloud-based IT services. It also includes reviewing our procurement processes to improve sustainability and ensure they remain efficient and robust overall.

These actions support the following outcomes of our National Park Partnership Plan 2018-2023...

- Outcome 3: Climate Change
- Outcome 10: Placemaking
- Outcome 11: Sustainable Growth
- Outcome 12: Sustainable Population
- Outcome 13: Community Empowerment

... and the following priorities of Our 5-Year (Corporate) Plan 2018-2023

- Priority 3: Sustainable Organisation
- Priority 5: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities
- Priority 6: Fundraising

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Annual Operational Plan 2020/21: Draft reporting template

Complete	On Track	Behind Schedule	At Risk	Cancelled/ Postponed
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AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress	Rating
1. Taking and inspiring action to address the global climate emergency and nature crisis			
1.1 We will make transformational organisational changes to maximise our role and action in the climate and nature emergencies.	Create a Mission Zero Route Map for our own activity and that within the National Park		
	Develop a system to prioritise and record activity based on climate impact		
	Seek opportunities to actively participate in the UN's COP26 in Glasgow and use the event to showcase our work		
1.2 We will support our communities, land managers and businesses in the transition to zero carbon.	Deliver the National Park Grant schemes to assist our communities and land managers to deliver local actions that help address the global climate emergency and nature crisis		
	Support community organisations to increase momentum in community led partnerships or programmes, including seeking access to wider regional funding or capacity opportunities.		

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress	Rating
1.3 To support habitat management and improvement, we will work with partners to better manage land for climate and nature within the National Park.	Provide advice and support to landowners, partners and communities to establish new woodlands, and tackle invasive non-native species		
	Deliver peatland restoration projects		
	Complete the Strathard Framework project which will pilot an approach to local development planning that also integrates land use planning		
2. Enhancing our visitor experience, volunteering, and active living opportunities			
2.1 We will continue to promote ways to get active in the outdoors.	Finalise our 'Active Park, Healthy People' plan		
	Progress key aspects of our Active Park, Healthy People plan such as developing new health projects.		
	Support the delivery of Go Swim Loch Lomond in summer 2020, increasing participation from last year		
	Explore new opportunities to promote outdoor swimming and water safety throughout the National Park		
2.2 We will celebrate and leverage national themes and campaigns such as	Create and deliver a programme of events and campaigns for the Year of Coasts and Waters		

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress	Rating
Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters, and the West Highland Way's 40th Anniversary.	Work with partners on bringing investment for the future sustainability of the West Highland Way		
2.3 We will continue to develop and deliver volunteer, education and outreach opportunities, to ensure people from a wide range of backgrounds are enjoying, valuing and helping to manage the National Park.	Embed climate change and nature crisis education in all of our outdoor learning activities		
	Continue to support our Junior Ranger, Youth Committee, educational travel grant and volunteer programmes		
	Partnership delivery of over 1800 John Muir Awards		
3. Addressing the changing challenges posed by substantial visitor numbers			
3.1 We will complete a Visitor Survey to identify visitor types, behaviour, and tourism market trends	Complete a Visitor Survey that informs our efforts to work with partners to provide services that enable visitors to enjoy the National Park in a responsible and sustainable way		
3.2 We will continue to develop effective approaches to the sustainable management of visitor pressures in the National Park with a focus on traffic management	Work with partners and communities in the East Loch Lomond Visitor Management Group to sustainably reduce visitor pressures along the route from Drymen to Rowardennan, with a view to public transport provision and litter reduction		

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress	Rating
3.3 We will continue to deliver commitments within the Camping Development Framework	Assess the barriers to camping for people with disabilities		
	Work with partners to increase low cost camping and motorhome facility provision at gateways to the National Park including West Loch Lomond and Callander		
3.4 We will work with partners on litter and waste prevention to minimise the environmental impact of litter and waste and improve the experience of those visiting, working in, and living in the National Park	Establish a National Park wide litter prevention steering group		
	Work with partners to develop and test litter prevention initiatives		
4. Continual improvement in delivering our core functions, including how we plan and use our resources, and meet our statutory requirements and duties			
4.1 We will support place making at regional and local community level	Undertake preparatory work (monitoring, evidence gathering, early engagement / training) to support the next Local Development Plan.		
	Explore opportunities from the Government's focus on regional approaches to strategy, policy and delivery.		

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress	Rating
	Support communities in developing Community Place Plans		
4.2 We will implement changes introduced by the Planning Scotland (Act) 2019	Review our internal processes to ensure they are compliant with the new legislation and identify any new opportunities the new legislation presents.		
4.3 We will identify ways to supplement our core funding to help sustain and improve the services we deliver	Implement car park charging at some additional sites		
	Review our existing charges for services to determine whether they remain appropriate		
	Continue to explore opportunities to lever in external funding to help deliver our priorities		
4.4 We will continue to address Health and Safety risks to our staff and the public	Improve our internal processes and policies		
4.5 We will look at further improvements to the effectiveness of our corporate services.	Develop a strategy for cloud-based IT services		
	Review our procurement processes to improve sustainability and ensure they remain efficient and robust overall		