

# National Park Authority Board Meeting

Agenda Item 8

## Mission Zero Route Map

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### *Paper for decision*

#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This paper accompanies the draft Mission Zero Route Map (Appendix 1), which presents Board Members with the rationale and proposed approach by which the organisation aims to be net zero in terms of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. If accepted the Route Map will become a key delivery plan in our efforts to help tackle the global climate emergency and contribute towards meeting the Scottish Government national target of a net zero nation by 2045.
- 1.2 Whilst the Route Map is a plan for a net zero National Park Authority, not at this time a net zero National Park, it does form an important foundation for our wider, longer term aspirations of realising a net zero National Park in the future.
- 1.3 The Route Map will also serve as a useful context when considered alongside Green Recovery Plans in the wake of the current global COVID pandemic, as it provides further food for thought in relation to how we best structure our estate, systems and operations in the face of rapidly changing operating environment.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Board are asked to:
  - (i) Note and approve the content of the draft Mission Zero Route Map, including the Principles in section 5iii, and;
  - (ii) Approve the target date of being a net zero organisation by 2030 latest.

#### 3. Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) and Our 5-year Plan

- 3.1 The particular outcomes that this strategy will help to deliver from the National Park Partnership Plan are:
  - Outcome 3: Climate Change, Priority 3.1: Climate Change;
  - Outcome 11: Sustainable Growth, Rural Development Priority 11.1 Low Carbon Economy Rural Diversification.
- 3.2 Within Our 5-year Plan the draft Mission Zero Route Map helps to deliver Priority 3: Sustainable Organisation

*'We will exemplify great practice as a sustainable, low carbon organisation, including targeting being plastic free, renewably-powered, and maximising use of electric vehicles. We will collectively consider, reduce and mitigate our impacts on climate change in everything we do and lead the way for others to do the same.'*

#### 4. Introduction

- 4.1 Board members will have noted, and some experienced directly, some of the effects of climate change in and around the National Park, including regular flooding events and landslips and road closures that negatively impact upon the communities and

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economy of the area. Less noticeable but still concerning are the rapid shifts in natural lifecycles, as species and habitats try to adapt to milder, wetter and windier conditions. The effects of the global climate emergency have very real, negative impact on all our lives, our places and our natural world at a local level, and these are predicted to increase in the future.

- 4.2 Board Members will also be aware from update papers to previous meetings that the Park Authority has been undertaking actions to help tackle the climate emergency for several years, such as reducing the level of fossil fuel use on our estate and vehicle fleet, and facilitating peatland restoration and tree planting projects that sequester carbon. We have been reporting these on an annual basis to the Scottish Government as one of our statutory public duties.
- 4.3 Over the past seven years our greenhouse gas emissions (most notably carbon dioxide) have reduced by 38% (from 310 to 222 tCO<sub>2</sub>e<sup>1</sup>) largely as result of two main drivers. These have been firstly, the decarbonisation of the national grid stemming from an increase in national renewable energy supplies, and secondly our own energy saving actions to reduce our carbon footprint such as investments in electric vehicles and lower energy lighting. Throughout this period we have continued to operate effectively and discharge our aims and objectives without any significant constraints resulting from a reduction in emissions.
- 4.4 Relatively speaking our carbon footprint as an organisation is a small one in public body terms. Regardless of this we are now required under the new Climate Change legislation and duties to reduce it further to net zero by 2045. The growing importance that the Scottish Government place on the threat from and response to the climate emergency is clear by the emerging policy and legislation agenda. In the new Climate Change regulations <sup>2</sup>, public bodies will soon have additional requirements; including setting targets for emissions reductions, setting the date they expect to become net zero, and their plans to align spending with these targets and how they will publish their progress to becoming net zero.
- 4.5 Whilst our actions to date have had positive impacts in helping to tackle the climate emergency and other associated benefits, they are not sufficient to meet the more recent ambition of being net zero as outlined by the Scottish Government in 2019. To some extent our climate actions to date could be classed as the 'low hanging fruit' and in order to deliver net zero at a corporate level we now need a step change in our approach. This has led to the creation of our Draft Mission Zero Route Map.

## 5. Reducing Emissions further

- 5.1. In 2017, as part of our Climate Change Action Plan, we partnered with students and staff from the University of Strathclyde to carry out a carbon audit of our three largest facilities at Carrochan, Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway and Balmaha Visitor Centre. The resulting report gave useful recommendations on carbon saving measures and potential investments and was used by our Facilities Team to inform management of these sites.

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<sup>1</sup> tCO<sub>2</sub>e –metric tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent.

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Government Climate Change Public Duties Amendment, 2020

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- 5.2. Building upon this work we decided earlier this year to engage consultants in the specific task of modelling our emissions and presenting a recommended trajectory for how these could be reduced through management interventions in order to meet a net zero target date by 2035 latest.
- 5.3. Through detailed engagement and discussions with the relevant staff, the consultants Practically Green, supported by the Sustainable Scotland Network, have presented a report <sup>3</sup> (soon to be published on our website) which outlines how we can feasibly become a net zero organisation before 2035. This is welcome news but it is important to flag to Members that this is based on the following assumptions. These are that:
- a range of capital investments in renewable technologies are made; including the installation of photovoltaic solar panel arrays, further lower energy lighting systems and air source heat pumps;
  - that resources are made available to maintain these new renewable systems;
  - we train and develop our staff to use these new buildings management systems;
  - the national grid continues to decarbonise and that we are able to capitalise on lower emissions factors as a result;
  - And that offsetting will be required to deal with residual emissions (see 5.5 below).
- 5.4. Staff estimate that based on the outline purchase costings supplied by the consultants, the scale of capital investment required to implement new renewable energy systems across our estate could be in the region of £500k, over a 3 year period should we decide to proceed. Additionally there will be ongoing maintenance and management revenue costs (at this point still unquantified). These will both be significant additional costs, but the consultants also highlight that energy saving measures will also mean that there will be some ongoing cost savings to utilities and the estate. Additionally it is assumed that in order to deliver national net zero ambitions that new funding and technical support measures will emerge from Scottish and UK governments to assist public bodies on their transition journeys.
- 5.5. A key finding of the consultant's report is that even with investment into emissions reduction measures, it will not be possible for the Park Authority to remove all emissions whilst still carrying out its required functions and operations. A residual low level of emissions (c.44 tCO<sub>2</sub>e) will persist and currently the only feasible method of removing these is to offset these through additional measures. The options for these measures, in order of preference include:
- Directly undertaking climate and emission friendly activity within or outwith the National Park to compensate for our corporate emissions, such as the carbon sequestering activities of peatland restoration or tree planting;
  - Increased production of onsite renewable energy to offset emissions, known as 'in-setting';

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<sup>3</sup> Net Zero Feasibility Study for Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority – Practically Green & Sustainable Scotland Network, October 2020.

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- Buying into commercially available offset schemes where funding is used to pay for climate friendly activities elsewhere.

5.6. As the scale of these residual emissions is projected to be small, it is estimated that offsetting costs associated with this will also be modest, but are not known at this time without further investigation by staff.

#### 6. Our approach to reaching Net Zero

6.1 The draft Mission Zero Route Map contains a set of Principles (section 5iii) which propose an organisational approach to achieving net zero and which are designed to help guide our decision making during the transition journey. These principles outline that we will:

- Reduce emissions before considering offsetting, favouring actions with multiple benefits for nature and people;
- Aim to bring the net zero date closer through early action;
- Work beyond the boundary of net zero, also aiming to reduce indirect emissions;
- Embed Mission Zero thinking and action across the whole organisation;
- Support people and partnerships to drive change;
- Be evidence led and learn as we go on our journey to net zero.

6.2 Board are asked to note these principles and be aware that in order for our Mission Zero to be successful then we must remain flexible in our approach, be ready to change and adapt our behaviours and operations, but always be mindful of the need to fulfil our existing obligations and other public duties. We are at the start of this journey towards net zero and while we are clear on our final destination, the route undoubtedly vary over time and be subject to change, particularly in relation to the exact costs and timings of when we may make investments in renewable energy technologies and systems, and pursue offsetting options.

#### 7. Proposed Mission Zero timescale

7.1 Following scrutiny of the consultant's report and consideration of an earlier draft Mission Zero Route Map, our Mission Zero Steering Group proposed that it was feasible and achievable to set a target date of 2030 for achieving net zero status. This was endorsed by the Executive Team on 5 November 2020, who are also comfortable with the estimated scale of required resources at this time, on the understanding that external funding and technical support will be required.

7.2 Board are now asked to support the target date of 2030 – a 10 year period of transition to becoming net zero.

7.3 If adopted it is proposed that annual Mission Zero progress reports will be submitted to the Board, in line with our current reporting requirements to Scottish Government.

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As stated in section 4.4 more detailed reporting and monitoring of net zero actions will soon be required for all public bodies.

### 8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The National Park Authority has made promising early progress with helping to tackle the climate emergency by reducing the emissions from its operations and estate. We are now required to raise our impact in this area and achieve net zero status, which we believe that we can do within the next 10 years. Board are asked to support the draft Mission Zero Route Map, the principles within it and a net zero target date of 2030.

Appendix 1 – draft Mission Zero Route Map

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