

Annual Operational Plan 2020/21: Progress to November 2020

Complete	On Track	Behind Schedule	Postponed to 2021/22 due to COVID-19	Cancelled due to COVID-19
----------	----------	-----------------	--------------------------------------	---------------------------

Bold items = COVID-19 recovery priority

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress (Nov 2020)	Rating
1. Taking and inspiring action to address the global climate emergency and nature crisis			
1.1 We will 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	The 'Mission Zero Route Map' will be presented to the Board at their December meeting for approval.	On track
	Develop a system to prioritise and record activity based on climate impact	A simple RAG rating scheme to identify emissions impacts is to be piloted as part of the budgeting process for 2021/22. This information alongside the foot printing tool set up for use in the annual project prioritisation is a first step towards more informed decisions around the prioritisation and governance of work with a climate impact.	On track
	Seek opportunities to actively participate in the UN's COP26 in Glasgow and use the event to showcase our work	Planning for the delayed event is continuing and we are active members of the relevant groups. Ready to action when required. Some initial engagement sessions were held in Nov '20 to share thinking about what Scotland can do prior to the rescheduled event itself.	Postponed to 2021/22 due to COVID-19

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress (Nov 2020)	Rating
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	10 grants are being awarded under the main grant scheme, accounting for the complete budget. Applications have been slower for the tree planting grant scheme but a number are expected by the second application deadline.	On track
	Support community organisations to increase momentum in community led partnerships or programmes, including seeking access to wider regional funding or capacity opportunities.	The Scottish Government's Supporting Sustainable Communities Fund Microgrant Scheme closed in September with all funds distributed by the Community Partnership. An application was made by the Community Partnership to the Scottish Government's Communities Recovery Fund and a decision is awaited. Decision also awaited on the NPA and Forth Environment Link submission to pilot a regional community climate action hub project.	On track
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	The Wild Park Delivery programme for 20/21 and 21/22 has been approved by the WP Steering Group. Delivery has been undertaken on a range of projects including riparian INNS on all major catchments in the Park, rhododendron control, river restoration, and continuing engagement with landowners on herbivore management. Discussions with landowners on woodland creation opportunities have continued.	On track

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress (Nov 2020)	Rating
	Deliver peatland restoration projects. Develop a programme approach to increase the scale of project delivery in line with Scottish Government ambitions	Blanked bog restoration work has been undertaken at Moor Park using AECS money and at Glen Finglas using Peatland Action Money. Tender documents are being issued for restoration at Glen Falloch. Self-seeded Sitka removal is being arranged for blanket bog at Braeval. Rhododendron removal at Blairbeich Raised Bog SSSI is underway.	On track
	Complete the Strathard Framework project which will pilot an approach to local development planning that also integrates land use planning	The Second Strathard Framework consultation forum was run successfully on Zoom in October. Drafting of the framework document is commencing and formal consultation on the draft will follow in due course.	On track
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	Work now restarting. Timeline shifted to June 2021 so that COVID-19 considerations can be fully absorbed.	Postponed to 2021/22 due to COVID-19.
	Progress key aspects of our Active Park, Healthy People plan such as developing new health projects.	No capacity across partners due to COVID-19 to fully consider and develop new projects at this time.	Postponed to 2021/22 due to COVID-19.

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress (Nov 2020)	Rating
	Support the delivery of Go Swim Loch Lomond in summer 2020, increasing participation from last year.	Event cancelled for 2020 in conjunction with delivery partner and sponsors. Marketing in place for Go Swim Loch Lomond 28 August 2021.	Cancelled due to COVID-19
	Explore new opportunities to promote outdoor swimming and water safety throughout the National Park	Significant progress has been made to install new Public Rescue Equipment and emergency 999 signage at NP sites around Loch Lomond. Site and Visitor risk assessment process is underway which will determine if additional water safety controls are required elsewhere. All RoSPA report recommendations are on track for completion. Currently liaising with partner local authorities and stakeholders to promote a consistent approach to water safety.	On track
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.	Create and deliver a programme of events and campaigns for the Year of Coasts and Waters	No events being held 2020-21. We are proposing minimal events programme 2021-22.	Cancelled due to COVID-19
	Work with partners on bringing investment for the future sustainability of the West Highland Way	Mid-way report approved by LEADER. Successful PR and online campaign Sept – Oct; commercial sub group set up to support income activity planning for next year.	Behind Schedule

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress (Nov 2020)	Rating
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	Online climate resources have been produced. Resources have been developed in the form of training sessions and online padlets to support schools within the NP to enhance use of their local space for nature connection and outdoor learning. One secondary school was supported in a field work session to contribute directly to the Moorlands as Indicators of Climate Change Initiative and used as a case study for other schools to understand how to use the NP for outdoor learning.	On track
	Continue to support our Junior Ranger, Youth Committee, educational travel grant and volunteer programmes	Volunteer activity has continued focussing on the priority areas of support. Work to support our Youth Committee continues, and they have been actively involved in Mobility As A Service product development, Net Zero planning and reviewing their #iwill pledge. The time available from Youth Committee members is reducing due to a return to school and a number of members have decided not to take part any more. We are planning a new recruitment drive to try to boost the membership. Both schools previously interested in running Junior Ranger programmes have decided to postpone until next year.	On track

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress (Nov 2020)	Rating
	Partnership delivery of over 1800 John Muir Awards	Award progress is significantly slower than planned, due to the impacts of COVID on groups. 359 awards completed to date. Target revised to 1000 awards, to reflect Covid impacts. We have seen an increase in the proportion of families and individuals taking part in the award.	Behind schedule
2.4 We will support the delivery of the Callander's Landscape Partnership to improve the natural and cultural heritage of the area	Progress and complete projects under each of the four themes: Restore, Explore, Heritage, and Engage	<p>A formal programme extension request has been submitted to National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). This seeks a 12-month extension to the programme, to 30/06/2022.</p> <p>Online lectures held on archaeology and wild swimming proving extremely popular. Four Modern Apprentices (MA) have now completed programmes in Hospitality and Adventure Tourism.</p> <p>Ongoing challenges around delivery timescales for Falls of Leny capital project, coupled with uncertainties of likely impact arising from increased visitor pressures post Covid, have resulted in decision to undertake a project review.</p>	Behind Schedule
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	The draft report was circulated internally and to joint funders (A&BC and WDC), with only minor feedback. Completion and sign off with the external consultants will be w/c 23 November.	Behind Schedule

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress (Nov 2020)	Rating
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	<p>The East Loch Lomond Visitor Management Group will meet in autumn to ensure that visitor management measures are discussed and agreed in preparation for the 2021 visitor season alongside key long term solutions.</p> <p>This will also be replicated in other areas of the National Park that have experienced heightened visitor pressures during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	Behind Schedule
3.3 We will continue to deliver commitments within the Camping Development Framework	Assess the barriers to camping for people with disabilities	Cancelled due to the importance of user testing and the reprioritisation of the programme to focus on the reduction of future visitor management pressures for the expected continuation of 'staycations' in the 2021 season.	Cancelled due to COVID-19
	Work with partners to increase low cost camping and motorhome facility provision at gateways to the National Park including West Loch Lomond and Callander	We will work with Local Authorities and Forest and Land Scotland to ensure that the 'Stay the Night' motorhome scheme is implemented sustainably and support increases in low cost tent based camping provision.	Behind Schedule

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress (Nov 2020)	Rating
	Ensure that campsites and permit areas are reopened safely in time for Phase 3 of the SG Routemap. Consider implications of likely staycation focussed recovery on demand for camping and camper van provision and facilitate others where possible.	Our campsites opening was extended into October to provide additional capacity. 2021 capacities will be considered during autumn and winter.	Complete
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	The first meeting of the group as a whole is scheduled for November. This will include representatives from Zero Waste Scotland and Keep Scotland Beautiful, who will give an update on the national litter strategy and picture outside of the Park, before local stakeholders will get a chance to discuss key priorities for next year.	On track
	Work with partners to develop and test litter prevention initiatives	As part of the development of the Litter Prevention Action Group, we have developed an action plan which we anticipate group members feeding their priorities into for the development of litter prevention projects for the subsequent year.	On track

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress (Nov 2020)	Rating
	Ensure the resumption of co-ordinated litter management with local authority partners and develop a litter prevention focussed strand to unlocking visitor campaigns and tie in with national campaigns.	<p>As well as the above external stakeholder litter management, we have an internal 'litter services' meeting planned whereby we will discuss fresh approaches for us to coordinate litter collection across teams in the NPA.</p> <p>Love It Like A Local is now under review with all of our digital communications from this season, in order to inform our approach to next year's visitor management communications.</p>	On track
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.	2019 Monitoring Report and Action Programme published. The timescale to develop the new Local Development Plan has been extended to 2024 (adoption). This allows plan preparation to align with implementation of the 2019 Planning Act and the new National Planning Framework 4 which is currently being developed and to which the new plan will require to comply.	On track
	Explore opportunities from the Government's focus on regional approaches to strategy, policy and delivery.	Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy prepared and submitted to Scottish Government in September. Feedback awaited from Scottish Government in January 2021 following which stakeholder engagement will be undertaken by end April 2021.	On track

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress (Nov 2020)	Rating
	Support communities in developing Community Place Plans	Support currently being provided to Killin and BLS (Balquhidder, Lochearnhead and Strathyre) communities who are at advanced stage in developing their plans. Strathfillan is receiving support but is at an earlier stage in terms of identifying community steering group.	On track
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.	While there has been some delay to the Act's implementation this year, we continue to engage informally and formally. Examples include two consultation responses to draft detailed provisions on permitted development rights and public pre Major application consultation. Our indicative Regional Spatial Strategy was also submitted to Government.	On track
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	Project has now restarted following pause for COVID-19. Current aim is to have charging in place at Tarbet and Inveruglas for April 2021.	Behind schedule
	Review our existing charges for services to determine whether they remain appropriate	Work unresourced and deprioritised due to COVID-19.	Postponed to 2021/22 due to COVID-19

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress (Nov 2020)	Rating
	Continue to explore opportunities to lever in external funding to help deliver our priorities	We continue to work with a range of external partners on funding opportunities. However limited staff capacity means that this requires further discussion to identify how best to approach a more co-ordinated internal plan for access to funding.	Behind Schedule
4.4 We will continue to address Health and Safety risks to our staff and the public	Improve our internal processes and policies	Focus has been on enabling COVID-safe working including putting in place appropriate policies and procedures. A number of existing policies currently under review.	On track
4.5 We will look at further improvements to the effectiveness of our corporate services.	Develop a strategy for cloud-based IT services	Initial research has been completed and found the move to cloud based services for our infrastructure to be cost prohibitive. Best approach is to maintain the 'Cloud First' approach for new services and product renewals. Focus is now on creating an overall Digital Strategy.	Cancelled
	Review our procurement processes to improve sustainability and ensure they remain efficient and robust overall	Resource currently reallocated and item deprioritised in light of COVID-19.	Postponed to 2021/22 due to COVID-19

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress (Nov 2020)	Rating
5. Delivering and Facilitating a Safe Recovery and Reopening of the National Park			
5.1 We will develop a phased reopening of National Park Authority visitor sites and facilities which ensures the health of communities, visitors and staff is protected.	Create and implement a phased reopening plan for National Park Authority facilities which aligns with the Scottish Government COVID19 Route Map and implementation of its relaxations.	All facilities other than the Balmaha Visitor Centre opened with some reduced capacities to allow for the introduction of COVID-19 safety measures. Summer services were extended until the end of October. Facilities are now operating at winter capacity and preparation is being undertaken for the 2021 visitor season with some COVID restrictions potentially remaining. DMMS closed starting Nov 20 th due to Level 4 restrictions in West Dunbartonshire.	On track
	Create a safe deployment plan for the Ranger Service and Land Operations Team	Deployment plan implemented gradually through June and July onwards	Complete
	Assess and implement any necessary safety measures and associated infrastructure are required before facilities can be opened, including toilets, camp sites and the Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway.	All required safety measures were completed before reopening and reassessed for winter opening where appropriate. These measures will be reassessed prior to the 2021 visitor season.	On track

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress (Nov 2020)	Rating
5.2 We will work with and co-ordinate other public bodies, NGOs, communities, businesses and landowners and work with national bodies to work towards a saferecovery.	We will establish a National Park Safe Recovery Action Group with our partners to co-ordinate facilities reopening, traffic management, visitor management (including enforcement) and communications to visitors and communities	The group continued to meet on a weekly basis until the end of October focussing on operation issues. It will continue to meet throughout the autumn and winter focussing on preparations for the 2021 visitor season.	On track
	Ensure regular communications with National Park community organisations both directly and working collaboratively with the Community Partnership.	The approach has continued, albeit with reduced updates to share, less content as a consequence. The Partnership has continued to issue newsletters and support area networks. A new series of community virtual meetings are planned, led by the Park Authority. Arrangements with the Partnership for the rest of the financial year are under discussion.	On track
5.3 We will work with business, agencies, local authorities, communities and other partners towards the recovery of our visitor economy.	Facilitate regular meetings of the National Park Destination Group to ensure awareness of issues facing tourism businesses, communicate these to Scottish Government and identify future actions.	Regular meetings have continued, with a focus on sharing of issues, opportunities and gaps in Government business support. The group have been issued with a survey to help inform the Group's potential work / priorities over the year ahead.	On track

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress (Nov 2020)	Rating
5.4 We will ensure the continuity of our planning service to determine applications and provide advice to assist applicants as they seek to adapt to new operating guidance that supports safe re-opening in line with the Government's Route Map.	Availability of responsive planning advice and the delivery of timeous planning decisions to support applicants who are adapting to and investing in recovery.	During this period there has been an increase in both applications and pre-application enquiries set against ongoing work to clear a backlog of cases. However, arrangements are more established, though there are still limitations and we are not able to work to the same levels as pre-pandemic. Proactive communications have been issues to main users.	Behind Schedule
5.5 We will engage with and advise a range of national organisations and groups to help develop policies, guidance and support as Scotland moves through the four phases of the National Route Map and develop a green recovery.	National guidance and support measures respond to the needs of the National Park area	CEO sits on the newly formed national Visitor Management Strategy Steering Group.	On track