



Annual Operational Plan 2020/21: Final Progress Report

Appendix 1

National Park Authority Board Meeting

14th June 2021

Paper for information

Complete	Target partially achieved due to COVID-19	Postponed to 2021/22 [due to COVID-19]	Cancelled [due to COVID-19]
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Bold items = COVID-19 recovery priority

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	Final Progress Report	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	Mission Zero Route Map approved at December Board meeting.	Complete
	Develop a system to prioritise and record activity based on climate impact	RAG rating tool was put in place to inform internal budgeting process. Further discussion required on how to develop this further for future decision-making.	Complete

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	Seek opportunities to actively participate in the UN's COP26 in Glasgow and use the event to showcase our work	Initial work began in 2020/21 to identify opportunities. Further update in progress report on 2021/22 AOP.	Postponed to 2021/22 due to COVID-19
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	23 grant new agreements were progressed in total and £113k was paid. This included 11 agreements under the main scheme, 9 small scale tree planting grants and 3 community capacity grants.	Complete
	Support community organisations to increase momentum in community led partnerships or programmes, including seeking access to wider regional funding or capacity opportunities.	The Agreement with the Countryside trust was signed and our contribution paid. Work on developing a Wild Strathfillan programme was also progressed.	Complete
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	<p>A range of Wild Park projects have been completed. These include direct work or work with partners on the removal of invasive rhododendron, and Riparian INNS control.</p> <p>We also supported and funded research into woodland creation, as well as direct tree planting. Engagement with all the Deer Management Groups across the Park has continued to support management for deer that will help to promote natural regeneration of native woodlands.</p>	Complete

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	Deliver peatland restoration projects. Develop a programme approach to increase the scale of project delivery in line with Scottish Government ambitions	<p>Three peatland restoration projects were successfully undertaken.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moor Park totalled 68 ha of moorland and had 7.4 km of grips blocked. Glen Finglas included a 100 ha site on the Moine nan Each where 22.7 km of hags were reprofiled and 3.7km of grips blocked. Glenfalloch included an 82ha site on the Gleann Nan Caorainn where 18km of grips were blocked and 1km of hags reprofiled. 	Complete
	Complete the Strathard Framework project which will pilot an approach to local development planning that also integrates land use planning	An online community and partner engagement exercise and meeting was completed and the core of the Strathard Framework was produced, for final edits and public consultation in 2021/22.	Postponed to 2021/22
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	In light of ongoing COVID-19 impacts, proposal to defer plan until March 2022 submission	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
	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. Funding and bookings intact to carry forward to 2021.	Cancelled due to COVID-19

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	Explore new opportunities to promote outdoor swimming and water safety throughout the National Park	Draft Water safety policy completed, to be finalised following further internal and external engagement. Progress made to carry out and complete Site risk assessments around Loch Lomond before we can focus the project towards our other owned and managed sites in the NP. The risk assessment process will carry-on into 2021/22. Significant progress made to work with local authorities and partners to provide a consistent approach to water safety infrastructure, monitoring and messaging.	Complete for 20/21, further work into 21/22.
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	Minimal programme in place 21/22, honouring prior commitments only. We are on the national working group for Year of Coasts and Waters 2020-21 which plans to evolve into Year of Scotland's Stories 2022.	Postponed to 2021/22 due to COVID-19.
	Work with partners on bringing investment for the future sustainability of the West Highland Way	Final report submitted to NatureScot by NPA on behalf of the WHW management group for project delivery up to 31/3/21. Retail product launched April 2021. Business Development role extended to April 2022 by external funding enabling further development of commercial activity including fundraising and exploration of charitable status for WHW in 2021.	Complete
2.3 We will continue to develop and deliver volunteer, education and outreach opportunities, to ensure people from a wide range of	Embed climate change and nature crisis education in all of our outdoor learning activities	Education Padlet has been produced with a focus on climate. Ongoing delivery of online sessions and the planning of a climate training session for John Muir Award providers within the NP.	Complete

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backgrounds are enjoying, valuing and helping to manage the National Park.	Continue to support our Junior Ranger, Youth Committee, educational travel grant and volunteer programmes	Due to the pandemic our delivery has had to be very different over the last year. However the ongoing work to engage with young people has still been successful. Youth Committee meetings continue and they are feeding into the Future's group development. In addition, our volunteer work has been fantastic; being able to support volunteers to deliver for the NPA even during challenging restrictions. The total number of volunteer hours in 20/21 was over 1800hrs. Effective planning is in place for the 21/22 season. As the constraints have eased we are starting to see a significant increase in requests for education and outreach support.	Complete
	Partnership delivery of over 1800 John Muir Awards	Ongoing low level take up of the award (384 for the period of this plan) but this has increased as restrictions have eased. Focus on delivery of training sessions and links to wider programmes such as Callander's Landscape to enhance award delivery.	Target partially achieved due to COVID-19
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>COVID-19 impacted significantly on the delivery of the programme however project milestones were revised and significant progress to be made in Q4 on progressing arrangements for delivery of remaining capital projects including paths, signage and interpretation as well as digital legacy planning.</p> <p>A particular success for the programme was the (necessary) switch to digital engagement with very strong success in terms of reach and numbers engaged.</p>	Complete
3. Addressing the changing challenges posed by substantial visitor numbers			

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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	Visitor Survey 2019-20 signed off December 2020 and data in use and being shared with external colleagues. Update shared with Board in March 2021.	Complete
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	A meeting undertaken on the 12 th of March was well attended and a second meeting is planned for May 2021. An RTIF submission was made on the 5 th of May for ELL with the aim delivering an outline infrastructure plan that future projects can be drawn from to reduce visitor pressures in the area. The group will inform the development of this plan and future projects.	Complete
3.3 We will continue to deliver commitments within the Camping Development Framework	Assess the barriers to camping for people with disabilities	This action will be incorporated into the 5 year infrastructure capital investment programme. All infrastructure projects will consider barriers to access for disabled people and this will include camping provision.	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	Seven FLS 'Stay the Night' sites were selected. These provide 26 bookable spaces for motorhomes on a one night basis. Additional camping provision will be sought in 2021/22 incorporated into the 5 year infrastructure capital investment programme.	Postponed to 2021/22 due to COVID-19
	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 2020 to provide additional capacity. Campsites reopened April 26 th , 2021.	Complete

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<p>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</p>	<p>Establish a National Park wide litter prevention steering group</p>	<p>Second meeting held to discuss immediate priorities, though local authorities in particular are stretched due to ongoing COVID-19 impacts. Focus on immediate work as opposed longer term strategic focuses.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
	<p>Work with partners to develop and test litter prevention initiatives</p>	<p>Pragmatic approach in light of the expected additional visitor numbers to focus effort on enhancing litter services and ability to deal with litter. Resulting in recruitment to increase our litter servicing resource, enabling us to manage our own sites more effectively, support partners across the Park to deal with litter and flytipping better and to deliver a cross-Park volunteering programme.</p> <p>Alongside our own visitor management campaign, we have also advised on the development of the national litter prevention campaign, which is due to launch in spring next year.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
	<p>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>	<p>As before.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>4. Continual improvement in delivering our core functions, including how we plan and use our resources, and meet our statutory requirements and duties</p>			
<p>4.1 We will support place making at regional and local community level</p>	<p>Undertake preparatory work (monitoring, evidence gathering, early engagement / training) to support the next Local Development Plan.</p>	<p>Monitoring Report delayed to Q1 2021.</p>	<p>Postponed to 2021/22</p>

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	Explore opportunities from the Government's focus on regional approaches to strategy, policy and delivery.	Completed Q4 2020 and Q1 2021.	Complete
	Support communities in developing Community Place Plans	Ongoing support to three communities. Strathfillan has made good progress and three stakeholder workshops were held in February (young people, businesses and community). Draft storymap prepared to support engagement for Killin.	Complete
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.	The Government's programme to implement the Act continues into 2021-22, no specific changes were required during this period.	Complete
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 restarted following pause for COVID-19. Planning application under consideration. Current aim is to have charging in place at Tarbet and Inveruglas for late summer or autumn 2021.	Postponed to 2021/22 due to COVID-19
	Review our existing charges for services to determine whether they remain appropriate	Consideration of charges not taken forward in 2020/21 due to COVID-19.	Postponed to 2021/22 due to COVID-19
	Continue to explore opportunities to lever in external funding to help deliver our priorities	There has been some success in leveraging in funding this year, including by working in partnership through Callander's Landscape and the Countryside Trust. We were recently approved as a pilot for Regional Land Use Partnerships and await further discussions with Scottish Government on next steps.	Complete

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4.4 We will continue to address Health and Safety risks to our staff and the public	Improve our internal processes and policies	We have put in place significant COVID-safe measures this year. A number of health and safety policies have also undergone review.	Complete
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.	Cancelled
	Review our procurement processes to improve sustainability and ensure they remain efficient and robust overall	Resource currently reallocated in light of COVID-19. This will also link into our Mission Zero work in future.	Postponed to 2021/22 due to COVID-19
5. Delivering and Facilitating a Safe 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.	2020 reopening plan implemented with end of season report to December 2020 Board.	Complete
	Create a safe deployment plan for the Ranger Service and Land Operations Team	Deployment plan for 2020 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 2020 reopening and reviewed ahead of 2021 season.	Complete

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<p>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 safe recovery.</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>The group continued to meet through 2020/21 and remains active.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
	<p>Ensure regular communications with National Park community organisations both directly and working collaboratively with the Community Partnership.</p>	<p>Regular e-bulletins have continued to be issued to communities from the Partnership. Area based virtual forums were led by Park Authority staff in January.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>5.3 We will work with business, agencies, local authorities, communities and other partners towards the recovery of our visitor economy.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Regular NPDG meetings have continued with recent focus on tourism business re-opening and recovery, government grant opportunities and VM issues. Recovery planning support will continue into 2021-22.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Availability of responsive planning advice and the delivery of timeous planning decisions to support applicants who are adapting to and investing in recovery.</p>	<p>We have continued to determine planning applications, provide pre-application advice and operate the planning helpline throughout the period. Limitations of remote working continue to be addressed. There has been a high volume of planning applications and enquiries. Nevertheless, for tourism businesses seeking adaptations to their premises to aid re-opening, we have been able to provide pragmatic advice and relaxations in line with Government guidance.</p>	<p>Complete</p>

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<p>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.</p>	<p>National guidance and support measures respond to the needs of the National Park area</p>	<p>CEO sits on the national Visitor Management Strategy Steering Group. National #RespectProtectEnjoy campaign responded to the needs of the National Park.</p>	<p>Complete</p>