

Annual Operational Plan 2021/22: Progress to August 2021



Rating Key:

Complete	On Track	Behind Schedule	At Risk	Postponed to 2022/23	Cancelled
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AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	Year to Date (YTD) Commentary	Rating
1: Taking and inspiring action to address the global climate emergency			
1.1 Start to implement our Mission Zero Route Map to be a net zero organisation by 2030	Develop a detailed implementation plan for the next two to three years of investment and change within the National Park Authority	The core project team is operational, prioritising key budget spend. Capacity from all team members is limited, we are therefore postponing further work on scoping of the wider MZ actions until Q3. We have progressed data management and processing in line with the Public Bodies duty reporting for the 21/22 FY.	Behind Schedule
	Deliver infrastructure upgrades across our estate including heat pump installations, new electric vehicle charging points, and lighting upgrades	Procurement for Principal Designer underway, which will inform the order and amount of infrastructure works that can be completed this FY, though we already know that works to upgrade electrical loading capacities are required before any heat pump or significant new EV charging points can be developed. Programme of lighting upgrades continuing.	Behind Schedule
	Review our fleet requirements and create a new management strategy for our road vehicles to identify how we will electrify our fleet and curtail petrol/diesel along the way	Review of requirements will commence at end of the visitor season. Fleet audit finalised and relevant actions will be incorporated into the new draft strategy. Initial discussions on our approach to the draft strategy have commenced, and best practice examples from other organisations have been received.	On Track
	Engage our staff, Board, and volunteers to support and encourage positive behaviour changes to reduce emissions, including through a review of our organisational policies	Scoping sessions are taking place to consider internal teams' current understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to Mission Zero. We will then prioritise what organisational actions we will take to embed Mission Zero.	On Track
1.2 Work with our partners to deliver strategic change across the National Park	Build momentum for coordinated climate action within the National Park	Ongoing partner conversations are being held to gain insights into key areas of work, such as commuting emissions, fleet strategies etc. Initial conversations are also underway to progress work through Small World Consulting alongside other UK NPs to create a Net Zero baseline and target date for the National Park as a place.	On Track
	Leverage opportunities that the UN's COP26 in Glasgow provides	A fixed term COP26 Project Manager has been appointed. An internal project team will help us bring to life our COP26 activity, which will focus on three core areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging content – both online and via the media Educational materials to support learning and engagement Providing interesting voices, perspectives and speakers on relevant topics 	On Track

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1.2 Continued	Fund and support the Countryside Trust to work with communities and other stakeholders to develop and deliver local action for climate, nature and active travel.	<p>The Trust has recruited several new Board members and is filling the vacant Director post.</p> <p>We've been working with the Countryside Trust on their Sustainable Travel Project to explore behaviour related to sustainable travel.</p>	On Track
1.3 Integrate land use and development planning to help address climate and nature emergencies	Complete the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy and the Strathard Framework	Consultation on the Strathard Framework is complete and responses are being analysed internally and by external steering group. We expect to submit a final draft of the Framework to the October Planning and Access Committee for approval.	On Track
	Start the Regional Land Use Partnership pilot process	We are participating in Scottish Government led regular RLUP pilot coordination meetings with the four other pilot areas. Internal Project team to be established mid Aug with project controls being set up.	On Track
	Start to consider how future development could contribute to a zero carbon National Park as part of the new Local Development Plan	Local Development Plan work has commenced but is slow due to capacity. Initial mapping work on alignment between the LDP, NPPP and future RSS is being progressed. The project with Small World Consulting to outline a data oriented approach to working towards net zero emissions for the National Park as a place will provide a sound source of information for this work.	Behind Schedule
2: Restoring and protecting nature in the National Park			
2.1 Develop a future strategy for nature	Develop a Future Nature Route Map including more ambitious landscape-scale nature restoration projects	The draft Route Map was approved by the Board in June. Next steps to develop it have commenced. Final version is due at December Board Meeting.	On Track
2.2 Deliver Nature-Based Solutions projects.	Undertake peatland restoration and native woodland expansion projects	<p>Peatland restoration projects have been approved by landowners on two sites and Planning permission and procurement are underway. Details for the third site are being prepared for the owner.</p> <p>Our Woodland Creation Planning Fund and Small Scale Tree Planting grant schemes were launched in June. The Balquhiddy Woodland Creation Opportunity Project is being launched in August, where we are offering targeted consultancy visits to landowners in this area to suggest woodland creation opportunities to them.</p> <p>The Upper Teith Cool Rivers tree planting work for 2021 is being arranged. This uses a funding contribution from us to the Forth Rivers Trust. This year it includes a contribution from NPUK and is being used as matched funding for just under £350,000 worth of funding from Nature Scot's Biodiversity Challenge Fund to support a range of restoration and improvement measures within the Teith catchment.</p>	On Track

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2.2 Continued	Deliver targeted Wild Park projects and further develop a programme of funder-ready proposals.	Riparian INNS programmes are underway on three major river catchments. Mink control arrangements with FLS are underway. Discussions about the Forth Wetlands network and Cowal Action projects have commenced.	On Track
2.3 Broaden our engagement to lead diverse groups in valuing and taking action for nature	Provide easy ways for all visitors to the National Park to demonstrate and share their respect for nature during their visit	Responsible visiting campaigns and communications have continued over the Spring and Summer months with increased focus on responsible toileting, water safety and encouraging alternative hill/walking destinations to help disperse visitors to the most crowded areas. This season we have increased our work with influencers, bloggers and stakeholder groups to represent and reach wider and more diverse audience groups as well as asking stakeholders to share messaging with their networks on particular activities.	On Track
	Deliver our Junior Ranger programme, engage young people, and fund the education travel grant	A successful Junior Ranger programme has been delivered, and young volunteers have been out taking part in practical INNS removal. We are also continuing to work with schools and hard to reach groups to support visits to the NP as and when possible. The Youth Committee has met in person to start discussing priorities for the year ahead, including recruitment of new members.	On Track
	Support our volunteers in delivering more for nature	Our YTD numbers show that volunteering is increasingly attended. At the end of July we had nearly reached 2000 hours of volunteering activity, based on volunteer activities which are of highest priority to the NP.	On Track
3: Working collaboratively on positive solutions to growing visitor numbers			
3.1 Provide clear, consistent, and accessible visitor information	Implement our Joint Response Visitor Management Plan with partners, including shared engagement, infrastructure, and enforcement actions	The plan is being implemented, and it is helping us respond to an extremely busy visitor season. Enhanced resources across the partnership continue to have positive results. An initial partnership capital investment subgroup was convened. Two new Visitor Management Groups have been formed for Strathard and The Trossachs, and Callander and the surrounding area.	On Track
	Provide strategic guidance on national visitor management communications and create engaging National Park-focused campaigns	National Park campaigns have continued with increased focus on responsible toileting, water safety and encouraging alternative hill/walking destinations to help disperse visitors to the most crowded areas. Collaboration with partners at both local and national level has continued including the National Park playing a key role in a national TV campaign 'I love it so I look after it'.	On Track

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3.2 Improve visitor services infrastructure	Create a multi-year capital investment plan that considers what strategic investment would better support sustainable visitor management in the National Park	<p>The multi-year capital investment plan sits within the Place Programme. As part of this, and linked to the Visitor Management Strategy, we are developing Strategic Visitor Infrastructure Plans for five key tourism hotspot areas in the park which will set out a place based and strategic plan of capital investment over the next five years – together these plans will form the core of the multi-year capital investment plan.</p> <p>With funding secured from the Scottish Government COVID Recovery Task Force Funding via VisitScotland (managed by RTIF unit) we are currently out to tender for the first two of these strategies for East Loch Lomond and for West Loch Lomond. Work on these strategies will take place with Visitor Management Groups and other partners between September and December 2021 and the strategies will form the basis of a further bid to the fund to implement capital projects. Plans for the further three areas will follow behind this work, with an aim to advance these within this financial year.</p>	On Track
	Undertake specific improvements such as car park and path improvements, as well as identify a new tenant for our Luss Visitor Centre.	<p>We have engaged a contractor and are working with partners and communities to investigate the creation of additional seasonal parking safe path links at Loch Achray. Forestry and Land Scotland in consultation with the NPA and have constructed and opened an overflow car park at Rowardennan.</p> <p>Tender for the works identified for piers and pontoons is out to advert and additional anticipated budget requirement has been allocated. Anticipated that this work will be carried out at end of visitor season to minimise disruption.</p> <p>The whole timber structure of Cailness Bridge on WHW has been replaced, bringing this up to a good, safe condition for public use.</p> <p>We are seeking planning permission for repairs to the Conic Hill path and hope to construct part of the path in late 2021/ early 2022. It is anticipated that it could take up to three years to repair the whole path.</p> <p>Demolition work for Bracklin Bridge has been out to tender and returns are being processed. Luss VC tender process completed; liaison in progress with Preferred Bidder; Heads of Terms being concluded towards Lease stage.</p>	Behind Schedule

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3.2 Improve visitor services infrastructure	Further our work on income generation for the West Highland Way	Commercial activity is developing slowly in current economic climate. Work on charitable status and sponsorship potential will begin Q3.	Behind Schedule
	Deploy temporary measures to alleviate pandemic-related visitor volume pressures	<p>Temporary toilets in place at Rowardennan, Balmaha, Luss, Firkin Point, Tarbet and Inveruglas. This includes additional temporary toilets not originally planned for but needed to help manage water shortages at some sites. Increased bin capacity also in place at some sites.</p> <p>Implemented a significant increase in the servicing of sites, bins and toilets this year to address the large numbers of visitors. Despite the additional seasonal staff tasked with site cleansing, it has been challenging to deal with the large volume of human waste on land across the Park.</p> <p>The increased compliment of Rangers and Environment Officers this year, alongside additional field staff provided by Police Scotland, Local Authorities, Forestry and Land Scotland and Community Trusts are helping to ensure that the majority of visitor pressure related incidents are dealt with before they escalate.</p>	On Track
3.3 Implement the National Park Litter Prevention Strategy	Develop and deliver priority projects and targeted interventions, including those informed by engagement with the Litter Prevention Action Group	Continued focus on ensuring our own services are fit for purpose in light of continued visitor pressures, including increasing the capacity of bins at target sites. Review work of litter infrastructure and services to be completed for the end of the season to share learning with partners for continued place based improvements.	On Track
	Support regular, self-led volunteering activities, subject to COVID-19 restrictions.	<p>Programme of volunteering is ongoing. Stats from May (when our volunteering programme started) to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 multi-location volunteer events for litter, covering known problem areas for litter across the National Park. • Regular (generally weekly) single location volunteer routes in 3 target places. • 124 volunteer sign ups in total. • 301 bags litter collected. <p>Programme will continue until the end of September.</p>	On Track

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3.4 Explore and pilot sustainable visitor transport services	Develop strategic thinking on how to deliver transport services and infrastructure that will promote modal shift from private car use to access congested places	<p>Future Groups meetings continued and Bobby Good appointed at Sustainable Travel Board sponsor.</p> <p>Sustainable Transport and mobility study will be taken forward as part of a project coordination contract with support from SPT and Tactran. This will help prioritise actions for the NPA and partners to reduce reliance on car use to and within the National Park.</p>	Behind Schedule
	Work with partners to develop and deliver new transport pilot projects, subject to pandemic restrictions	<p>£50k secured from Smarter Choices Smarter Places for Sustainable Visitor Transport Co-ordination. Tender for Co-ordination consultancy developed as deemed preferable to internal post. First element of Sustainable Visitor Transport Coordination will not be contracted until end of Q2 – this is behind where we would like to be.</p> <p>Internal Sustainable Travel and Access Manager role recruitment process underway. £50k secured from Smarter Choices Smarter Places for Shuttle bus pilot project.</p>	Behind Schedule
4: Making our organisation, our people and the National Park more resilient through a green recovery			
4.1 Support the resilience of communities and the local economy in the National Park	Engage with communities to understand their priorities and work closely with public and third sector partners to coordinate support	Focus over last period on identifying community capacity support needs and promoting the NPA Green Recovery Grant Scheme, with a high number of community led applications received. Engagement with strategic partners to help coordinate community support. A Park-wide session for all Community Councils and Community Development Trusts is planned for early September with a focus on Community Place Plans.	On Track
	Use the National Park grant schemes and our planning role to support green recovery projects	The grant schemes have been launched. The main Green Recovery Fund received 24 applications worth £540K by the closing date – more than double the advertised amount of £250k. Applications are currently being assessed.	On Track
4.2 Use local place-making to support a green recovery in the National Park	Support more communities to prepare their own Community Place Plans to identify local place making priorities and actions needed to support lower carbon living and working within the Park	<p>Killin Community Place Plan is nearing publication stage (subject to final mapping amends). Strathfillan's Plan is due to be published imminently. Balquhidder, Locheranhead and Strathyre have completed all engagement and are currently drafting their plan. Support is being provided to Callander community as they begin to scope their new community place plan.</p> <p>A Local Place Plan event is scheduled for 1st September and will focus on awareness raising of Local Place Plans and our Local Development Plan as well as sharing recent good practice with idea of future work to shape support and common framework.</p>	On Track

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4.2 Use local place-making to support a green recovery in the National Park	Support the Destination Group, consisting of National Park tourism businesses, to help respond to the challenges and opportunities of the year ahead	The new Arrochar & Tarbet sub group has agreed strategic priorities for the area. After 18 months of online meetings, the NPDG will meet in person at Cameron House Hotel in September 2021.	On Track
	Support delivery of Callander's Landscape	The programme has entered its final year. Activities have re-commenced with practical volunteering activities underway and research projects exceeding expectation, with recent archaeological excavations at Dunmore Hillfort a particular success. Delivery of remaining projects is progressing well with Coilhallan All-Abilities Trail, Path Signage, Interpretation and Little Leny Meadow projects are now progressing after various delays over the last year. Falls of Leny remains at risk of completion within project term, as previously reported. Financial review shows the programme to be on track in terms of budget.	On Track
4.3 Implement post-pandemic ways of working for the National Park Authority	Develop a new model of working that overcomes some of the challenges of pandemic working while retaining the benefits of reduced commuting and better flexibility	The new model is now largely developed and ready for implementation. We will be taking a phased approach to office return, which will begin August 30 th , with the ultimate goal of a fully hybrid working model commencing later in the autumn. Significant staff communication and engagement continues to ensure the joint development of the model and smooth transition to the hybrid model.	On Track
	Determine how our Board and Committees will use virtual meetings in the future	On Board agenda for 13 th Sept 2021. Ongoing review by Board and Committee Manager, linking with ICT Manager to establish technology requirements for facilitation moving forwards.	On Track
4.4 Improve the organisations resilience	Making health, safety, and wellbeing improvements	A new Staff Communications & Wellbeing Group is getting up and running. Development plan to address H&S policy gaps in place; roll out of other H&S priorities under development.	On Track
	Identify ways to continue to supplement our core funding	£56k RTIF Fund secured. £100k funding from Scottish Government secured for Wild Strathfillan. £100k secured from Smarter Choices Smarter Places for Sustainable Visitor Transport Co-ordination and Shuttle Bus Pilot. Car Park Charging Project on track for implementation early 2022. £30k secured from Scottish Government for RLUP.	On Track
	Improve our digital services, including developing our skills, platforms, and disaster recovery	New ICT Engineer M365 has been recruited in order to lead the set up and roll out of Office 365. MS Teams migration is planned for September. Discussions continue with suppliers on Cloud based Disaster Recovery solutions and O365 Cloud based backup solutions. Review of Business Continuity Plan commenced.	On Track