



# Appendix 1: DRAFT Annual Operational Plan 2022/23

## Agenda Item 5

### National Park Authority Board Meeting

14th March 2022

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#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority Annual Operational Plan 2022/23 sets out our organisational priorities for delivery in the coming year. Our plan this year continues to build on previous successes and, at its heart is a focus on the twin crises of the global climate emergency and nature loss.
- 1.2. The Plan builds on our work from last year, which established the framework for restoring and protecting nature in the National Park, as well as taking and inspiring action to tackle the global climate emergency. While our work remains grounded in our [National Park Partnership Plan \(NPPP\) 2018-23](#), and [Our 5-Year Plan 2018-23](#), this year we will be working to reflect these heightened priorities as we develop the next iteration of these strategic plans, and others, involving extensive engagement and partnership working.
- 1.3. Like many organisations across Scotland, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority, and all those we work with here and beyond, continue to be impacted by the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the past two years, we have worked alongside our partners to deliver on our

priorities, whilst adjusting our work plans and actions to address the continued challenges created and exacerbated by the pandemic.

1.4. Whilst we expect to see the easing of international travel restrictions further into 2022, we also expect to see the rise in the number of visitors to the National Park to continue; those returning to rekindle their passion for the area and those who first visited in 2020/2021 and have been captivated by our National Park.

1.5. For 2022/23 our primary focus will be on:

- Renewing our strategic vision
- Tackling the twin crises of nature loss and the global climate emergency
- Investing in People and Places across the National Park
- Transitioning to a resilient future for the organisation

1.6. We expect the pandemic to continue to test our resilience this year, but the National Park Authority has a wealth of strengths to draw upon to help it continue on the path of recovery from the pandemic; our people and partnerships are what make us effective in achieving our goals and delivering outcomes for the National Park. It is crucial for us to support and develop them in order to build and enhance our own organisation's resilience so that we can accomplish all that is set out in this plan.

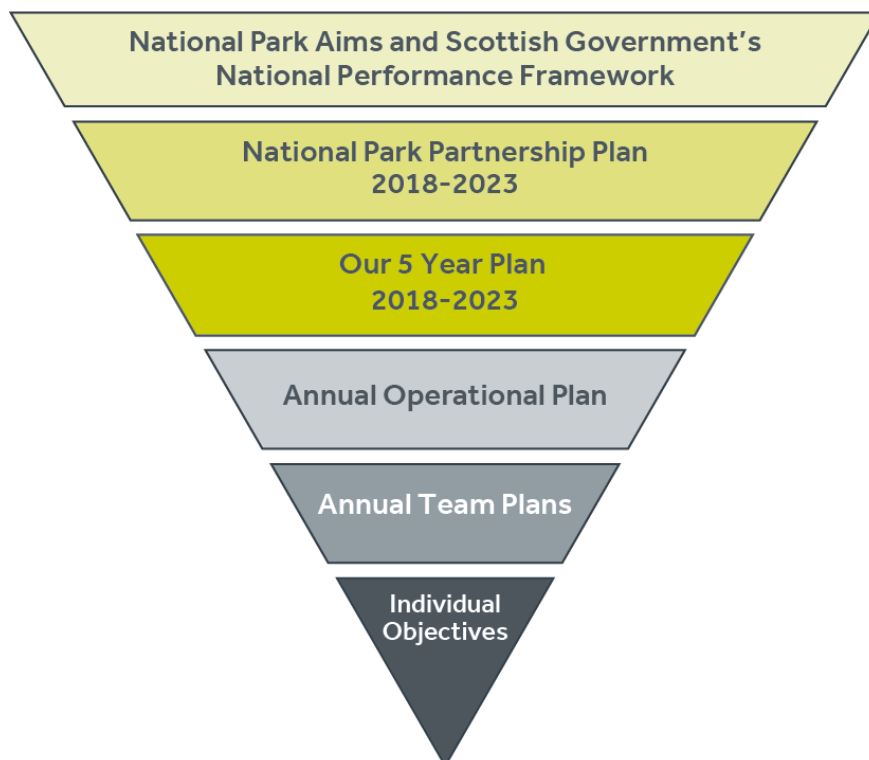
## 2. Background

2.1. 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

2.2. 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 [2021/22 Programme for Government: "A Fairer, Greener Scotland"](#) clearly sets out Scottish Government's expectations for Scotland.

- 2.3. 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.
- 2.4. Our 5-Year Plan (2018-2023) expresses the organisational 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.
- 2.5. This Annual Operational Plan (2022/23) describes the specific organisational priorities and objectives for the year ahead.



### 3. Renewing our strategic vision

3.1. A number of our foundational plans, including the National Park Partnership Plan, are reaching their established end points. Since these were put in place, we have experienced the seismic impact of COVID-19, and the need to sharpen our focus on the global climate emergency and nature crisis has only become more urgent. Combined with our upcoming Board appointments and elections, this is a pivotal moment for us and our partners to take a step back and reimagine what a carbon-neutral, nature rich, prosperous future for Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park will look like.

- Develop a future vision for the National Park

Throughout 2022, we will engage with stakeholders, including voices less often heard, to design our next National Park Partnership Plan, which will establish the overarching vision for the National Park that we, and our partners, will work together

to achieve. In tandem, to ensure that the role of new development and infrastructure is clearly set out we will begin to prepare a new Local Development Plan. This is also timely to ensure the Plan reflects the new [National Planning Framework 4](#).

- Elect and appoint new Board Members with diverse skills and backgrounds

We will implement plans to actively encourage candidates from diverse backgrounds to stand for election to the National Park Authority Board. We will also work with local authorities and Scottish Government to ensure that nominated board members bring the skills and experiences we need to help us address our big strategic challenges and we will ensure our Board Members are well equipped and informed about the National Park, ensuring that they are able to make the right decisions for nature, climate, our communities and place.

- Ensure our strategic plans and decisions consider a wide range of voices

We want our National Park to be a park for all; with this in mind, we will listen to lesser heard voices who have a shared interest in the National Park and bring them closer to decision-making where possible. It is crucial that our Partnership Plan and Local Development Plans recognise the challenges faced by and opportunities for all.

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

- Outcome 1: Natural Capital
- 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 7: Policy-making
- Enablers: Service Design, Finance, Systems and Processes, Partnerships

#### **4. Tackling the twin crises of nature loss and the global climate emergency**

4.1. Tackling the twin crises of nature loss and the global climate emergency are equally urgent and important, but not one and the same. They are intricately related and common threads of cause and effect weave between them, but they are separate issues caused by different, multiple pressures and as such we cannot assume that by tackling one we are tackling both.

4.2. Nature-based solutions such as woodland expansion, peatland restoration and river restoration bring mutual benefits for both nature and climate, but we must also focus on actions that deliver specifically on net zero and nature restoration ambitions. Examples include modal shifts in transport behaviours and energy consumption to reach net zero, alongside tackling unsustainable herbivore pressures or invasive species populations to restore healthier, resilient ecosystems.

4.3. For us to achieve more and bigger outcomes for nature and to address the global climate emergency at the pace required, it is imperative that barriers to success are overcome by all partners. Through this work we will also be exploring opportunities that help create more green jobs to deliver a more climate and nature friendly economy in the future and as a way of supporting a just transition for local communities and businesses.

- Implement our Future Nature Strategy

In order to deliver outcomes for nature, we will develop our multi-year Future Nature delivery programme, with ambitious landscape-scale restoration projects. We will also continue to collaborate with UK National Parks to trial approaches to green finance investment in nature, including by progressing the Wild Strathfillan project alongside [Revere](#).

- Work with others to maximise the nature potential of land within the National Park, including through nature-based solutions to climate change

We will undertake further work on our Regional Land Use Partnership pilot and develop a Regional Land Use Framework, engaging with key stakeholders, aligning with Scottish Government objectives on climate change and biodiversity, and we will support a partnership approach to implement the Strathard Framework delivery plan to integrate land use and development planning to help address the climate and nature crises.

- Implement our Mission Zero route map

We will further progress our Mission Zero commitment to be a Net Zero organisation by 2030, through investment in our Estate to further reduce our carbon emissions, taking us closer to our goal. This will include development and implementation of behaviour change tools and interventions that support low carbon transitions.

- Develop our Net Zero National Park approach

We recognise that we need to do more than become a Net Zero organisation, so this year, we will begin work to establish what is needed for the National Park as a whole to reach net zero emissions, through establishment of a carbon baseline, and consideration of potential routes to support this to be achieved.

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 9: Volunteering
- Outcome 10: Placemaking
- Outcome 11: Sustainable Growth

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

- Priority 3: Sustainable Organisation
- Priority 5: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities
- Priority 7: Policy-making
- Priority 8: Communication and Engagement

- Enablers: Estate, Service Design, Partnerships

## 5. Investing in People and Places across the National Park

Over the summer season, the population of the National Park increases significantly, as does the need for suitable infrastructure that helps manage the volume of people enjoying this special place. The National Park Authority will work in partnership to deliver a number of improvements and enhancements to infrastructure and visitor experience right across the area, to deliver strategic investments to alleviate some of the biggest challenges faced and support our transition to making the National Park Net Zero.

### 5.1. Improve visitor infrastructure and enhance visitor experience across the National Park

- We will develop a multi-year capital investment plan for visitor facilities; this will seek to facilitate and enable improvements across a number of sites that will improve and enhance visitor experience, and lead to a reduced impact on the local environment and communities as a result of the right infrastructure being in place to better manage visitor numbers. For example, we are exploring innovative approaches to take forward a new site in the Trossachs at Loch Achray that supports sustainable transport capacity, waste management and reduces dangerous car parking.

### 5.2. Supporting our communities to improve their places

- In partnership, we will support delivery of the remaining Callander Landscape Partnership projects by October 2022 and prepare for the planned end of the project. This will include monitoring and evaluation activities, as well as ensuring that there is a clear plan in place to deliver the legacy actions agreed with partners. We will also work with communities to support the development of three Community Place Plans.

### 5.3. Improve sustainable transport services for communities and visitors

- We will develop a strategic approach to reducing car use by visitors to lessen the impact on the climate, manage congestion and reduce irresponsible parking. As a first step we will work with partners to pilot a visitor shuttle bus service for either East Loch Lomond or The Trossachs to demonstrate positive actions that can be replicated across the National Park to tackle congestion and irresponsible parking, as well as helping to reduce climate impacts.

### 5.4. Work with partners on joined-up approaches to improving visitor services

- We will build on our successes from 2021 by implementing the 2022 Joint Response Visitor Management Plan, and engage with stakeholders to progress the Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plans. We will seek ways to

move towards a more sustainable future for the West Highland Way and its infrastructure.

- We will work with stakeholders to support post-pandemic tourism business green recovery, as well as support area specific groups with business-led initiatives to support sustainable economic development and visitor services.

#### 5.5. Ensure the Loch Lomond (Navigation) Byelaws are fit for the future

- We will begin the process of reviewing the Loch Lomond (Navigation) Byelaws, working with stakeholders to identify and address existing and emerging issues on the Loch, ensuring that these Byelaws are fit for the future.

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

- Outcome 5: Recreation Opportunities
- Outcome 6: Active Recreation
- 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
- Priority 8: Communication and Engagement
- Enablers: Estate, Service Design, Partnerships

## 6. Transitioning to a resilient future for the organisation

6.1. For the National Park Authority to achieve its outcomes, we need to ensure that the appropriate mechanisms that support the organisation are in place. We will further increase our capacity to deliver through new ways of working that allow our teams to be flexible and respond to the needs of the organisation and National Park, whilst being supported with increased IT capabilities.

- Establish clear strategic approaches to managing our assets

We will produce an Estates Strategy that sets out how we will target maintenance, repair and renewal activity for assets within our responsibility. This strategic approach will increase long-term sustainability of our assets through forward-looking planning and investment.

- Support the individual work-life balance and wellbeing of our staff whilst delivering on the National Park outcomes

We will implement, review and refine a post-pandemic hybrid model of home and office working that enables both flexibility and productivity benefits for staff and the organisation.

We have already seen significant positive impacts on productivity in 2021/22, such as a decrease in sickness absences, and attracting a wider pool of talent for vacancies, and we expect to see more of this as we move towards implementation of our hybrid model of working.

- Ensure our digital capabilities meet the needs of the business

We will invest in fit for purpose digital systems and skills to support our operational needs, enabling our teams to transition to our hybrid model of working, whilst also developing and implementing new measures that support secure remote working and robust cyber security risk mitigation, ensuring business systems are protected.

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

- Outcome 1: Natural Capital
- 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 7: Policy-making
- Enablers: Service Design, Finance, Systems and Processes, Partnerships



AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable
<b>Theme 1: Renewing our strategic vision</b>	
Develop a future vision for the National Park	Create a new five-year National Park Partnership Plan that establishes the overarching vision for the National Park that we and our partners will work together to achieve.
	Prepare a draft new Local Development Plan that will guide development within the National Park to ensure it furthers environmental, social and economic objectives.
Support the election and appointment of new Board Members with diverse skills and backgrounds	Encourage candidates from diverse backgrounds to stand for election to the National Park Authority Board, and work with Local Authorities and the Scottish Government to nominate Board Members that bring the skills and experiences we need to help us address our big strategic challenges.
	Implement clear transition, induction and training plans for our Board through a year of change.
Ensure our Board and staff consider a wide range of voices in developing strategic plans and decisions	Engage widely in the development of new strategic plans, including with lesser heard groups and points of view to ensure our Plans consider their needs and perspectives.
	Further the work of our Youth Committee and the involvement of Young People in determining the future of the National Park.
<b>Theme 2: Tackling the twin crises of nature loss and the global climate emergency</b>	
Implement our Future Nature Strategy	Develop our multi-year Future Nature delivery programme with ambitious landscape-scale nature restoration projects.
	Collaborate with UK National Parks to trial approaches to green finance investment in nature, including by progressing the Wild Strathfillan project alongside Revere.
Work with others to maximise the nature potential of land within the National Park, including through nature-based solutions to climate change	Progress our Regional Land Use Partnership pilot to develop a draft Regional Land Use Framework that aligns with Scottish Government objectives on climate change, biodiversity, and a 'green recovery'.
	Establish the Strathard Framework delivery plan with a community led partnership approach that integrates land use and development planning around priorities for climate and nature.
	Deliver up to six new peatland restoration projects covering over 520 hectares.
Implement our Mission Zero route map	Invest in our Estate to reduce carbon emissions and use renewable technologies.

	Develop and implement behaviour change tools and techniques that support low carbon transitions.
Develop our Net Zero National Park approach	Begin work to establish what's needed and potential routes for the National Park as a whole to reach net zero emissions.
<b>Theme 3: Investing in People and Places across the National Park</b>	
Improve visitor infrastructure and enhance visitor experience across the National Park	Develop a multi-year capital investment plan for visitor facilities, including through a strategic approach for sub-areas of the National Park.
	Design and construct a replacement Bracklinn Bridge.
	Subject to required consents and agreements, build a new strategic facility in the Trossachs at Loch Achray that delivers multiple benefits such as a step change in sustainable transport capacity and a reduction in dangerous car parking.
	Undertake improvements to the Conic Hill path to better support its growing usage.
Supporting our communities to improve their places	Ensure a legacy for Callander's Landscape Partnership - Support the Partnership's delivery of the agreed remaining projects; prepare for programme close, monitoring and evaluation; and ensure legacy actions are agreed and in place.
	Work with up to three communities to support their development of Community Place Plans.
Improve sustainable transport services for communities and visitors	Develop a strategic approach to reducing car use by visitors to lessen the impact on the climate, manage congestion and reduce irresponsible parking.
	Work with partners to pilot at least one visitor shuttle bus service at congested visitor hotspots
Work with partners on joined-up approaches to business recovery and improving visitor services	Implement the Joint Response Visitor Management Plan for the 2022 visitor season.
	Engage with stakeholders to begin the preparation of the Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plans for Strathard, the Trossachs and Callander and the surrounding area.
	Work with our partner West Highland Way managing authorities to support tourism recovery by engaging with local businesses and communities on funding opportunities for the future sustainability of the route and its infrastructure.

	Work with the National Park Destination Group, its area groups and individual businesses on activities which expedite tourism business recovery and enhance visitor experience.
Ensure the Loch Lomond (Navigation) Byelaws are fit for the future	Begin a review of the Loch Lomond (Navigation) Byelaws, working with stakeholders to identify and address existing and emerging issues on the Loch.
<b>Theme 4: Transitioning to a resilient future for the organisation</b>	
Establish clear strategic approaches to managing our assets	Produce an Estates Strategy that sets out how we target maintenance, repair and renewal activity for assets within our responsibility.
Support the individual work-life balance and wellbeing of our staff whilst delivering on the National Park outcomes	Implement, review, and refine a hybrid model of home and office working that enables both flexibility and productivity benefits for individuals and the organisation.
Ensure our digital capabilities meet the needs of the business	Invest in fit for purpose digital systems to support our operational needs.
	Develop and implement new measures that support secure remote working and cyber security risk mitigation.

## THEME ONE: Renewing our strategic vision

- Develop a future vision for the National Park
- Support the election and appointment of new Board Members with diverse skills and backgrounds
- Ensure our Board and staff consider a wide range of voices in developing strategic plans and decisions

## THEME TWO: Tackling the twin crises of nature loss and the global climate emergency

- Implement our Future Nature Strategy
- Work with other to maximise the potential of land within the National Park, including through nature-based solutions
- Implement our Mission Zero route map
- Develop our Net Zero National Park approach

## THEME THREE: Investing in People and Places across the National Park

- Improve visitor infrastructure and enhance visitor experience across the National Park
- Supporting our communities to improve their places
- Improve sustainable transport services for communities and visitors
- Work with partners on joined-up approaches to business recovery and improving visitor services

## THEME FOUR: Transitioning to a resilient future for the organisation

- Establish clear strategic approaches to managing our assets
- Support the individual work-life balance and wellbeing of our staff whilst delivering on the National Park outcomes
- Ensure our digital capabilities meet the needs of the business

