

Update on Future Nature Route Map

Agenda Item 7

National Park Authority Board Meeting

12 December 2022

Paper for information

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 1. | Purpose | 1 |
| 2. | Recommendations..... | 2 |
| 3 | Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan and/or Our 5-year Plan | 2 |
| 4 | Background | 2 |
| 5. | Partner and Stakeholder Engagement Actions..... | 3 |
| 6. | The role of the Route Map and the National Park Authority | 4 |
| 7. | Key Elements of the Route Map (see Appendix 1 for reference)..... | 5 |
| 8. | Budget and Resourcing | 5 |
| 9. | Success and progress so far | 6 |
| 10. | Next steps | 7 |
| 11. | Risks..... | 7 |

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to update the Board on the progress on Future Nature: an ambitious new multi-year strategic programme for restoring nature in the National Park.
- 1.2. The paper will outline activity and further progress since the Board received the last update in [March 2022](#) on the [draft Future Nature Route Map](#).
- 1.3. Progress includes the drafting of all core content for a final Route Map in preparation for publication by March 2023. The crucial element of this has been the partnership development which has enabled the Route Map to become a shared framework and delivery plan for all key stakeholders.
- 1.4. This paper includes a summary of the key elements of the Route Map in the attached slide pack (Appendix 1) and detail of the commitments

and implications for the National Park Authority as part of the wider partnership.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Board are asked to:

2.1.1 Note progress to date.

3 Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan and/or Our 5-year Plan

3.1 The Future Nature programme makes a contribution towards delivering the following Outcomes and Priorities of the Partnership Plan and objectives of Our 5-year Plan:

National Park Partnership Plan

- Outcome 1: Natural Capital, Priority 1.1: Habitats & Priority 1.2: Species
- Outcome 2: Landscape Qualities, Priority 2.1: Landscape & Heritage
- Outcome 3: Climate Change, Priority 3.1: Climate Change
- Outcome 4: Land Partnerships, Priority 4.1: Integrated Land Management
- Outcome 9: Health & Learning, Priority 9.1: Health Improvement, Priority 9.2: Engagement & Learning
- Outcome 10: Placemaking, Priority 10.1: Improving Towns & Villages
- Outcome 11: Sustainable Growth, Priority 11.1: Low Carbon Economy, Priority 11.2: Rural Diversification
- Outcome 12: Sustainable Population, Priority 12.1: Skills & Training
- Outcome 13: Community Empowerment, Priority 13.1: Supporting Capacity of Community Organisations, Priority 13.2: Supporting Community-led Action, Priority 13.3: Supporting Partnership Working

Our 5-year Plan

- Priority 5: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities
- Priority 7: Policy-making

3.2 The full Route Map will be complete by March 2023. It will inform the nature-related content of the new National Park Partnership Plan and the initial priority delivery actions will be embedded in the Partnership Plan.

4 Background

4.1. Following the National Park Authority signing the [Edinburgh Declaration](#) in December 2020, the Board were presented in June 2021 with [papers](#) that outlined the proposed Future Nature approach.

4.2. With support from the Board a series of engagement events then took place between October 2021 and January 2022 to develop the initial concept and

key themes of Future Nature. The aim of these events was to develop the new Future Nature approach being proposed by the National Park Authority and hear views on its development and delivery, with a call for support. The key headlines from these events were highlighted to Board in section 6 of the [March 2022 Board Paper](#).

5. Partner and Stakeholder Engagement Actions

- 5.1 Over the last six months the Future Nature Development Manager has built on and formalised this process of engagement and partnership development to ensure the final Route Map represents a shared vision and approach from all key stakeholders who will be essential to its success.
- 5.2 The Future Nature Development Manager developed the concepts in the initial Board papers into detailed draft content for the Route Map. This was then refined and developed through internal conversations both in the Nature and Land Use team, across other directorates and in meetings with key partners such as Scottish Forestry, NatureScot and Forestry and Land Scotland as well as a range of conservation charities and community groups.
- 5.3 This content was then presented at a series of thematic monthly meetings with a stakeholder working group developed from the former Wild Park Steering Group.
- 5.4 Each meeting covered an element of the key content of the Future Nature Route map and allowed for discussion and feedback on drafts of each element, both during the meeting and via email. The sessions have covered the topics shown in the table below.

| | |
|---------|---|
| June 22 | Overview – purpose and role of Future Nature |
| July 22 | Route map outline – vision and principles |
| Aug 22 | Future Nature and the National Park Partnership Plan – Cancelled due to the delay in detailed development of the Partnership Plan |
| Sept 22 | Delivery Plans for Future Nature |
| Oct 22 | Land use, mapping and spatial strategy |
| Nov 22 | Monitoring - Outcomes and indicators |
| Dec 22 | Review of final draft – sign up to Route Map |

- 5.5 The meetings have been well attended. Positive and constructive feedback has been received from partners ranging from Forestry and Land Scotland, NatureScot, and RSPB to Scottish Land and Estates, National Farmers Union Scotland and Lochgoil Community Development Trust. Follow up conversations and meetings have helped further develop elements of the Route Map and subsequent wider engagement activities have ranged from an

all-staff event which included a full session discussing how the National Park will respond to the Nature Crisis, and presentations and discussion with external stakeholders through events such as the Scottish Land and Estates Forum and the National Park Destinations Group.

- 5.6 The aim of this process has been that when the Route Map is finally published it be presented not as a stand-alone National Park Authority strategy but instead as a shared Route Map co-designed and with shared ownership and buy-in of key stakeholders – see the list of all partners involved in Appendix 2.

6. The role of the Route Map and the National Park Authority

- 6.1 As previous board papers have described, **Future Nature should be seen as a 15+ year strategic, iterative programme for the National Park Authority and partners, sitting alongside our other long term globally-focused initiative; a net zero National Park Authority (our Mission Zero), and beyond this a Net Zero National Park.**
- 6.2 The Future Nature Route Map does not have a specific statutory role but will play a crucial role by defining the long-term structure, framework and approach which will guide our delivery plans and nature focused outcomes until 2040.
- 6.3 It is the umbrella which covers all of our nature and land use work; from ecological and landscape advisory roles, to land use change projects such as peatland restoration and woodland expansion.
- 6.4 It is the mechanism to practically deliver the new Scottish Biodiversity Strategy at the National Park level. It will be integrated with the elements of National Planning Framework 4, the new Local Development Plan and other relevant climate change and land use legislation.
- 6.5 With a vision focused first on 2030 and then beyond to 2040, Future Nature will be divided into 5-year delivery intervals, with monitoring and reporting aimed at tracking and managing progress, using key indicators and targets both for the outputs we will deliver and the outcomes we want to achieve.
- 6.6 Our delivery plans will evolve and be iterative, but we must commit to consistently review, monitor and drive the overall approach and strategy up to at least 2040 if we are to achieve our long-term goals for nature restoration.
- 6.7 It is important to note that the National Park Authority cannot deliver the Future Nature Vision alone – what we are now committing to is using our resources as effectively as possible to support partnership working and show leadership, facilitation and coordination in the long-term monitoring, support and delivery of the Future Nature vision.

7. **Key Elements of the Route Map** (see Appendix 1 for reference)

7.1 The structure and framework of the Route Map is based around four key elements developed in consultation with partners:

7.1.1 - An overall **Vision, Objectives and Principles** (slide 3 in Appendix 1).

7.1.2 - A **Landscape scale approach**: Future Nature looks to work not on specific habitats or species but to work strategically at the landscape scale (slides 9-10 in Appendix 1).

7.1.3 - An iterative, annually reviewed **Delivery Plan**: the Route Map will establish the structure for this delivery plan as well as identifying initial priority actions and long term aims (slides 11-18 in Appendix 1).

7.1.4 - A long-term **Outcome based Monitoring Programme**: the Route Map will establish the monitoring framework through which we will track and report on indicators which can evidence if we are progressing towards the long term vision (slides 19-23 in Appendix 1).

8. **Budget and Resourcing**

8.1 Future Nature represents a step-change in ambition for nature restoration in the National Park. Delivering on this vision will require a corresponding step change in the funding, resourcing and policy support for nature restoration. The scale of finance required is likely to be in the tens to hundreds of millions of pounds over the coming two decades. To give some examples of scale:

8.1.1 Economic analysis commissioned by the Green Finance Institute identified a £15 to £27 billion gap in financing nature-related outcomes in Scotland.

8.1.2 Cairngorms Connect is an example of a large landscape project – its initial funding from the Endangered Landscapes Programme was £3.75million for five years of a 200 year vision.

8.1.3 In the National Park the Wild Strathfillan project, which includes work as part of the wider UK National Parks Revere Programme, is estimated to need an initial development fund of around £200,000 followed by £2million of delivery funding for the initial three year phase.

8.2 Delivery of large landscape nature restoration is therefore a long-term commitment which requires significant levels of funding. Those funds will need

to come from a range of grants, private investors and public finance and will require a partnership approach to delivery. This will include capitalising on emerging green finance initiatives (see 9.3 below).

- 8.3 The role of the National Park Authority will be to focus our resources to drive forward the programme, supporting, facilitating and leading partner and stakeholder engagement and delivery, alongside project development and delivery, monitoring and reporting.

9. Success and progress so far

- 9.1 Future Nature is already enabling the development and delivery of new approaches and projects. Officers and partners have been keen to ensure that the Future Nature Route Map does not become 'just another strategy' and the correct balance is achieved even in these early stages between developing strategy and partnerships whilst having an urgency to deliver action on the ground. We are pleased therefore to highlight a number of early elements in which we have been able to take action for nature and increase capacity for delivery.
- 9.2 Officers have been successful in attracting and managing an additional £250,000 in Scottish Government Nature Recovery Fund finance with a range of nature restoration projects now contracted and underway for completion by the end of the financial year. This is the first year Nature Recovery Funding has been allocated directly to the National Park Authority which had previously only been allocated to councils. This decision stems from the focus Future Nature has placed on delivering for nature being recognised at a national level. Projects being delivered range from the purchase of specialist equipment for meadow management, to projects to remove unwanted Sitka spruce regeneration and protect important designated sites. This has been a challenge with short notice that the funding would be available but has enabled positive conversations and kick started a number of projects with partners across the Park which align with the Future Nature approach.
- 9.3 Additional funding applications have been submitted and secured. These include a successful application for £95,000 to the Investment Ready Nature Scotland funding which will further develop green finance opportunities for key landscape projects.
- 9.4 Having identified The Great Trossachs Forest - the National Park's main established landscape scale nature restoration project - as an initial priority for Future Nature, officers have led partnership discussions to secure external funding for a new Programme Manager hosted by The Countryside Trust to lead the delivery and development of that project.

- 9.5 Officers have also been active in working with The Countryside Trust and a number of key estates to develop an application to the Nature Recovery Fund for a major landscape scale project in Strathfillan. An initial application, if successful, would provide £200,000 of development funding with the aim of carrying out detailed habitat surveys and planning to unlock a large-scale nature restoration project in the region of £2million.

10. Next steps

- 10.1 The next steps for officers are to complete the final working group sessions. Taking into account any further feedback and that of the Board, final content will be drafted and developed into a full Route Map ready for publication by March 2023.
- 10.2 Three pieces of external consultancy work have also been commissioned and are due to be completed early in the New Year. One is to provide landscape visualisations of the impact of Future Nature which will help to bring to life what nature restoration would look like in the Park. The second is developing the indicators and reporting dashboard required for long-term monitoring and the third is to develop mapping analysis for the National Park Nature Network
- 10.3 These elements will be incorporated into the final Route Map which will be brought back to Board for information at the March Board meeting.
- 10.4 The current working group was set up as a task and finish group with the aim of developing the Route Map. The final session will discuss next steps in setting up more formal governance structures and working groups. The correct balance of high level strategic and policy buy in alongside delivery structures on the ground will be essential if we are to achieve the Future Nature vision.

11. Risks

- 11.1 Risks remain similar to those highlighted to the Board in June 2021 and the update in March 2022. Those risks are reiterated here for reference:
- 11.2 Potential lack of Scottish Government, partner and key stakeholder support and buy-in, along with the inevitable resourcing constraints of delivering such an ambitious long term programme. National level policy and process changes, particularly around post Brexit-Common Agricultural Policy changes to subsidy and support systems will be key to influencing delivery, as well as being fundamental to shaping the landscape and farming in the Park in the coming years. This is an important area for senior level engagement at present

– to seek to embed Future Nature thinking into developing new agricultural and land reform policy.

- 11.3 A key risk to delivery and one which is strongly linked to underlying current constraints, is land manager buy-in. Without land manager support or permission, or in some circumstances the ability to enforce restorative action if deemed necessary (e.g. for damage to biodiversity through unsustainable herbivore numbers or unchecked Invasive Non Native Species populations), then action is not possible on private land. This situation requires careful consideration and an investment in time. Ultimately systemic and behavioural change is essential if we are to effectively see nature restoration taking place across a landscape scale, with multiple land managers both public, charitable and private.
- 11.4 Emerging carbon markets, private investment schemes, rising land prices, new forestry targets and other socio-economic and political factors could also impact on project development and delivery. However, and as previously stated to Board, there will be as many new opportunities emerging from these changes as there are risks.

Author(s):

*Dom Hall, Future Nature Development Manager
Simon Jones, Director of Environment & Visitor
Services*

Board Sponsor: *Prof. Chris Spray*

Appendix 1:

See attached slide pack

Appendix 2:

Draft section of the Route Map presenting the partners who have been involved in its development:

A Partnership

To deliver landscape scale nature restoration across the National Park will take a wide partnership and coalition of stakeholders who collectively develop and deliver the strategy, policy, engagement and delivery it will require.

The organisations below have all supported the development of this Route Map, have committed to its overall vision and principles and pledge to continue to work together to develop and deliver the projects and monitoring which will be collectively required if we are to be successful.

- Association of Deer Management Groups
- Argyll & Bute Council,
- Argyll Countryside Trust
- Buglife
- Cashel Forest Trust
- Central Scotland Raptor Study Group
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- Forth Rivers Trust
- Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority
- Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust
- Luss & Arden Development Trust
- Nature Friendly Farming Network
- NatureScot
- National Farmers Union Scotland
- Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust
- Plantlife
- RSPB
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Forestry
- Scottish Land and Estates
- Scottish Water
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
- Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)
- Stirling Council
- Strathfillan Community Development Trust,

- Scottish Wildlife Trust
- Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board
- West Dunbartonshire Council
- Woodland Trust