



# Update on Future Nature Route Map

## Agenda Item 13

### National Park Authority Board Meeting

13 March 2023

Paper for information

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1.	Purpose .....	1
2.	Recommendations.....	2
3.	Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan and/or Our 5-year Plan .....	2
4.	Background .....	2
5.	Delivery Programme.....	3
6.	Budget and Resourcing .....	4
7.	Next steps .....	5
8.	Risks.....	6

#### 1. Purpose

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.

The paper will outline activity and further progress since the most recent update in [December 2022](#).

As proposed in that update the content reviewed in December has now been incorporated in the finalised Route Map (see Appendix 1). Subject to final design and editing amendments, the Route Map content is now complete and ready for adoption by all the partners. We are scheduling a public launch aligned with our overall communications plans, including the forthcoming new National Park Partnership Plan consultation. This launch is likely to be in May 2023 but will be confirmed nearer the time.

This paper (sections 5 and 6) also includes additional details of the developing Future Nature Delivery Plan and the commitments made on the part of the National Park Authority to help implement this plan.

## 2. Recommendations

2.1. Board are asked to:

2.1.1. Note progress to date.

2.1.2. To suggest any relevant opportunities and channels for wider dissemination and engagement of partners and local communities that members feel they may be able to assist with.

## 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 current 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 Route Map is also fully reflected within the nature-related content of the *new* National Park Partnership Plan draft.

## 4. Background

4.1. As presented at previous board meetings, since the [Edinburgh Declaration](#) in December 2020, the Board have seen regular update papers which proposed and developed the Future Nature approach. [[December 22](#), [March 22](#), and [June 21](#)].

- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. The Future Nature Development Manager was appointed in January 2022 and has had the role of developing the overall Future Nature approach into a full strategic Route Map, with a delivery plan and building the partnership of organisations needed to deliver this plan. The details of the internal and external engagement and partnership development were contained in the Board update in the December 2022 [paper](#) (section 5).
- 4.4. We have been pleased with the enthusiasm and buy-in for the aspiration of nature restoration in the National Park which has been reflected in extensive engagement from Board members, officers and partner organisations in the development of the Route Map which we are proud to present in full in appendix 1. We look forward to working with partners with urgency to build a delivery programme to match the vision.
- 4.5. It is important to reiterate here, as previous papers have stated, that the publication of the Route Map is just the starting point for a long-term commitment required from the National Park Authority and partners to do more for nature as a way of tackling the global biodiversity crisis. The National Park Authority cannot deliver the Future Nature vision alone, nor within the current system of land use in Scotland, which produces fundamental constraints to nature restoration at scale. Continuing to build a strong partnership approach will be crucial, as will be the need to engage in promoting reform to land uses, specifically agriculture and forestry, at a regional and national level.

## 5. Delivery Programme

- 5.1. The Future Nature Route map provides a long-term strategy and framework for delivery up to 2040. More detailed delivery and workplans will therefore continue to evolve throughout the period of the plan.
- 5.2. We need to begin our nature restoration now and act with urgency. The Route Map identifies initial priority actions for the coming years in the form of Stage 1: Initiation (2022-3) and Stage 2: Instigation (2024-5). These stages will deliver immediate action and lay the foundations for future delivery cycles - Stage 3: Protection (2026-2030) and Stage 4: Restoration (2030-2040).
- 5.3. **The stages of the Route Map are designed to focus on our two main objectives of (i) reversing the decline in nature in the Park by 2030 and (ii) ensuring the widespread restoration of nature in the Park by 2040.**

5.4. Appendix 2 shows the delivery programme up to 2025 with the key projects. It shows how these projects are being embedded into wider reporting and governance structures such as the Annual Operating Plan, the National Park Partnership Plan and the governance of specific projects such as the Great Trossachs Forest Steering Group.

5.5. Work is underway with key partners who have signed up to the Route Map to agree and communicate their commitments to supporting and delivering its vision. These commitments from partners will be critical in reaching the scale of ambition required and the agreements will be integral to building further detail and commitment to the delivery plan.

## **6. Budget and Resourcing**

6.1. The [December 2022 Board update paper](#) (section 8) gave examples of the scale of overall funding required to deliver large scale nature restoration across the National Park which is likely to be in the tens of millions of pounds over the coming two decades.

6.2. As also described these significant levels of funding will need to come from a range of sources, such as grants, ethical private investors and public finance and will require a partnership approach to securing and delivering them.

6.3. The National Park Authority will need to commit ongoing resources to specific areas of the delivery plan as well as working to secure additional external funding and partner commitment. Officers are working on more detailed resourcing plans which break down these short and long-term requirements enabling us to maintain the resources to continue existing projects and carry out our statutory duties. At the same time this will ensure us supporting, facilitating and leading more community and private land manager engagement, project development and delivery, monitoring and reporting.

6.4. Early commitments made by the Park Authority to develop this resourcing include:

6.4.1. Taking a lead on driving forward, managing and coordinating the Future Nature Partnership. We have resourced this through committing to the Future Nature Development Manager post as a permanent position. Additionally, we have allocated extra staff resource to focus on the development and delivery of nature restoration projects.

6.4.2. Reviewing the deployment of our Ranger Service and our Education and Volunteering programmes to free up more time and resource to directly support nature restoration delivery. We will develop plans to embed nature connection, understanding and opportunities to act in the experience and management of all our visitors and those on Education, Volunteering and training programmes.

6.4.3. Work is now underway on a new project to develop our green finance programme, with £95,000 funding recently secured from the Investment Ready Nature Scotland (IRNS) Grant Scheme. Additionally, we have now finalised funding of £92,000 from Scottish Water matched by The Great Trossachs Forest partnership organisations for a new two-year post hosted by [The Loch Lomond and Trossachs Countryside Trust](#) to take forward coordination and development of The Great Trossachs Forest partnership. We have also worked closely with The Countryside Trust to help them secure approximately £250,000 of new development funding from the [Scottish Government's Nature Recovery Fund](#) for the Wild Strathfillan project and that work is also now underway.

6.4.4. We have committed to the development on a new monitoring framework for nature having already commissioned work on a new 'State of Nature' report and development of a new Indicator Dashboard. These will provide a reporting structure of key indicators (such a percentage of woodland cover or status of key sites) as well as an independent baseline review for our current State of Nature. We are committed to further development of the indicators and review of the State of Nature every five years.

6.5. We are working on a long-term resourcing plan. This needs to balance the commitments of the Park Authority, and the need to leverage in new funding and resources from elsewhere. With this in mind we do not envisage in the short-term, substantial changes in our current resourcing levels, unless these can be supported by new income streams. Nevertheless, we believe that to deliver the level of ambition reflected in Future Nature we (and our partners) will need to increase staffing and delivery resource levels. The growth of our Peatland ACTION team is an example of how we are scaling up to deliver more for nature – and climate.

## **7. Next steps**

7.1. The key focus is now to step up delivery on the ground. We need to continue core work on areas such as tackling invasive rhododendron and riparian invasive non-native species, woodland expansion, peatland restoration, deer and sheep management and riverbank restoration. National Nature Reserves and other Designated Sites (also known as [Protected Areas](#)) will be priorities for action. We will need to bring forward further funding through ethical green finance and grant programmes – stepping up delivery in The Great Trossachs Forest, moving to delivery in Wild Strathfillan and begin project scoping and development for other landscape partnerships such as the Loch Lomond Rainforest Basin. We will also focus on delivery tied to key national priorities such as work on strategic deer management, developing next steps for the Regional Land Use Partnership and developing plans for Nature Networks and

embedding nature restoration within our (and others) Local Development Plans.

7.2. As these projects and proposals are further developed, we need to finalise the associated commitments from partners and establish the partnership agreements and reporting and governance structures needed to deliver the priority actions.

## 8. Risks

8.1. The largest overall risk to the successful delivery of nature restoration is at a national level and its importance to how Future Nature unfolds cannot be understated. Without the reform of current land use policy, funding and regulation we and our partners cannot succeed to the level required to reverse the continuing decline in nature.

8.2. As an organisation and at a Park-wide scale we are also dependent upon partner and land-manager buy-in and action. These risks are detailed in previous Future Nature Board papers. [[December 22, March 22, June 21](#)].

8.3. At a time of challenging national budgetary positions there is also a risk we are unable to grow the staffing resource and fill key skills gaps. Without that there is a risk that we are unable to leverage growing potential opportunities for increased funding or to have the core resources required for effective management of those projects.

8.4. Specific to this stage of the development there is a risk of lost momentum once the energetic working group which has contributed to the Route Map development looks to move on to delivery amidst ongoing uncertainty over the next few years on key issues such as land reform, agricultural funding and green finance. It will be crucial to retain momentum by finding ways to fund and deliver projects on the ground to retain and build momentum placing the National Park in a position to be ready to capitalise as these key policy considerations develop over the next two to three years. Board members are asked to support us maintaining this momentum through their networks and contacts.

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**Appendix 1:**

*See attached Route Map*

**Appendix 2:**

*Delivery table below*

**Appendix 3:**

*Agreed Delivery Partners*

## Appendix 2: Delivery Table to 2025

	Work Area	Priority Actions	Reporting and Governance	Progress and Status – March 2023
<b>Future Nature Route Map</b>				
Overall Strategy delivery	Future Nature - partnership management, monitoring and reporting	Delivery agreements with key partners.		Route map has provided strong framework and work has been commissioned on State of Nature and indicators. This work needs to be reviewed and monitoring and reporting structure established.
		Set up programme management, reporting and monitoring structure.		
<b>PATHWAY 1: Action for Nature</b>				
<b>ADDRESSING KEY THREATS</b>				
Addressing Key Threats	Herbivore Pressure	Production of herbivore management statement, monitoring and reporting.	Reporting into National Deer Management Work	Initial draft herbivore statement in progress.
		Development and delivery of focused projects in key landscapes.		Planning underway for work in Strathfillan and link established with National Deer Management work for which the National Park has been included as a priority area.
	Invasive Non-Native Species	Develop INNS status reporting and criteria for the Park.	NPA team to produce annual report on INNS status.	Good existing programme on riparian INNS is progressing.
		Continue and expand delivery on riparian INNS with NPA and Rivers Trusts.		Ongoing monitoring and maintenance in Fillan, Dochart, Earn, Teith, Forth, Endrick & East Loch Lomond. Extend Riparian INNS management coverage in West & South Loch Lomond.



		Development of rhododendron programme - need to carry out surveys and find delivery funding on landscape level - eg Rainforest Basin.		There is a need to develop more funding and project capacity, especially for rhododendron control
	Water quality	See below under water network		
	Climate change	Align work on net zero with the Nature Based solutions within Future Nature (i.e. woodland expansion, peatland restoration and water body improvements)		Initial work started to link delivery targets on woodland and peatland to the aspirational targets from Small World Consulting report.
<b>MANAGE KEY NETWORKS</b>				
<b>MANAGE KEY NETWORKS</b>	Woodland Expansion	Review woodland network expansion and restoration targets to develop and action delivery plans.	Action plans to be developed with FLS and SF  Woodland creation indicators in National Park Partnership Plan	Working closely with FLS and SF to review current targets and where we can address barriers to woodland expansion.

	Peatland Restoration	Publish long term peatland strategy	Annual Operating Plan	New peatland strategy drafted with delivery plan to step up rate of peatland restoration.
		Increase rate of restoration on priority Peatland Action sites	Peatland Action Reporting  Peatland indicators in National Park Partnership Plan	
	River and Wetland Restoration	Develop National Park water network strategy and delivery plan to incorporate opportunities for initial pilots and trials		
Protect and Restore existing nature: Sites	Identify priority designated sites for action	Action plan to be developed with NatureScot	Development of plan begun with NatureScot. Targeted implementation – eg on pinewood SSSI at Collie Coire Chuilc	

			Indicator in NPPP	
	Protect and Restore existing nature: Plant and animal species	Protect and Restore existing nature: Plant and animal species		Primary focus of Future Nature is on habitat and landscape scale. We will review existing and new species plans to highlight those which require specific action not captured by landscape scale projects, for example supporting beaver translocation.
	Deliver landscape scale restoration	Expand capacity within The Great Trossachs Forest	TGTF steering group	Funding secured for new post to coordinate The Great Trossachs Forest which will provide the capacity to bring together reporting, delivery plans and secure funding for expansion of the work on existing and neighbouring sites.
		Develop vision and funding for Wild Strathfillan	Wild Strathfillan Steering group	Countryside Trust have secured NRF funding for development phase. Strong partnership developing to put in place detailed plans for large scale nature restoration.
		Develop new landscape scale approach focused on rainforest in Loch Lomond Basin		
<b>PATHWAY 2: Mainstreaming Nature Friendly Processes and Governance</b>				
	Strategy and Policy	Embedding nature restoration principles and where appropriate projects into all new strategic		Future Nature Routemap key element in developing new National Park Partnership Plan.

		development plans and policies that cover the National Park.		Extensive internal engagement and buy in to embedding Future Nature across all Park policies and work
	Nature Positive Development	Engage in and influence national 30by30 and Nature Networks development. Embed this approach into new Local Development Plans	Informal connection to national Nature Network group  Annual Operating Plan	Initial report commissioned to review possible nature network approach for the National Park. That work will complete March 2023. Follow up work will then be required to review and work out the mechanism to embed in planning system
	Regional Land Use Partnership	Deliver RLUP pilot report	Reporting into National RLUP pilots  Annual Operating Plan	Pilot work progressing but some uncertainty over long term national strategy.
	Agricultural and Forestry Subsidies and Grants	Support take up of FGS and roll out of new agricultural support scheme to deliver nature friendly farming in the Park		Working closely with SF (see woodland network in pathway 1). Currently lack national clarity and sufficient capacity to influence development of future agricultural support schemes

	New Funding models	Complete initial feasibility research for ethical green finance for Wild Strathfillan through the Revere project	Informal reporting into National Green Finance work	The Revere work will complete its first phase in March 2023. We have secured additional funding through NatureScot's IRNS funding to support work by Landscape Finance Lab to explore alternative landscape scale funding opportunities. We are developing a strong theoretical understanding but there are still considerable barriers to delivering funding in practice. We will need to work closely with consultants, landmanagers and the Scottish Government to address these barriers and convert the potential into delivery on the ground
		Develop green finance opportunities for key landscape projects across the National Park	Annual Operating Plan	
	Jobs and Skills	Develop thinking on opportunities for green jobs and skills		Initial work commissioned as part of NPPP process. Need to review the work and assess the best role for the NPA and key partners in supporting the expansion of nature based green jobs and skills.
<b>PATHWAY 3: Raising Awareness and Inspiring Action for Nature</b>				
	Nature Literacy	Development of improving Nature literacy and connection behaviour change model and programme		Initial paper drafted to review the overall behaviour change aims and priority target audiences of pathway 3. Based on that structure we will be reviewing all our engagement, education and visitor programmes to ensure they support Future Nature aims.

	Nature Based Visitor Experience	Ranger service to deliver nature connection events and activities	Annual Operating Plan	Ranger service carrying out extensive review of capacity and skills to free up ranger capacity to deliver nature volunteering, community engagement and education programmes alongside their visitor management priorities
		Future Nature messaging to be rolled out to visitor centres and into other programmes		
	Education and Outreach	Realign our educational and outreach resources and programme with nature (and climate) priorities and key messages	Annual Operating Plan	Education and outreach team reviewing existing programme to align with aims and messages for Future Nature and identify gaps where new programmes are required
		National Park local schools 'Nature Network' scoped and delivered		
	Community Empowerment	RLUP pilot "Lighting a Spark" in Loch Goil	RLUP reporting	RLUP Lighting a Spark programme underway and to complete by March 2023. We will review this and how it can support roll out of nature messaging and support of communities who want to embed in Local Development Planning
		Review of community identified nature projects in Strathard as part of the Strathard Framework process		
Volunteering for Nature	Develop Citizen Science programme for volunteers to assist with Future Nature Monitoring	Annual Operating Plan	The volunteer team have carried out an initial review of the volunteer programme and in particular plan to review our Citizen Science programme to create more opportunities to feed into the Future Nature monitoring through programmes such as River Guardians.	

### Appendix 3 – List of Agreed Delivery Partners

At the time of writing, the list below are the organisations who have finalised their agreed to become Future Nature partners. A number of other organisations are expected to be added before the launch in May.

Organisation
Alliance of Scotland's Rainforest
Argyll & Bute Council
ACT (Argyll & Bute Countryside Trust)
Buglife
Cashel Forest Trust
Central Scotland Raptor Study Group
Forestry & Land Scotland
Forth Rivers Trust
Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs
Lochgoil Community Trust
Loch Lomond & the Trossachs Countryside Trust
Nature Friendly Farming Network
NatureScot
National Farmers Union Scotland
Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust
Plantlife
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Scottish Forestry
Scottish Land & Estates

Scotland's Rural College
Scottish Wildlife Trust
Strathfillan Community Development Trust
Stirling Council
Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board
Woodland Trust