



Appendix 1: DRAFT Annual Operational Plan 2023/24

Agenda Item 6

National Park Authority Board Meeting

13 March 2023

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1. Introduction

1.1. Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority Annual Operational Plan 2023/24 sets out our organisational priorities for delivery in the coming year. Our plan this year continues to build on previous successes and has an enhanced focus on the twin crises of the global climate emergency and nature loss.

1.2. The Plan builds on our work from the last two years, 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 continuing to work 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. For 2023/24 our primary focus will be on:

- Tackling the twin challenges of the global climate emergency and nature crises;
- Promoting sustainable low carbon destinations with people, places and communities at their heart; and,
- Developing the plans, people and processes to support the National Park Authority's next chapter.

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:

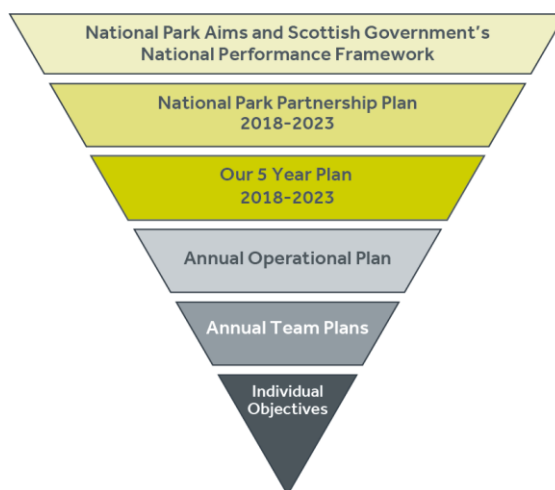
- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area
- To promote the sustainable use of the natural resources of the area
- To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public
- To promote sustainable 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 [2022/23 Programme for Government: "A stronger and more resilient 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 (2023/24) describes the specific organisational priorities and objectives for the year ahead. We will continue to build on our work from the last two years, including delivering on programmes and strategies approved by the Board. This includes a number of multi-year projects and programmes, such as Future Nature, Mission Zero, the Place Programme, and the Loch Lomond (Navigation) Byelaw review. This year we will be further working to reflect these priorities as we develop the next iteration of our strategic plans, involving extensive engagement and partnership working.



3. Tackling the twin challenges of the global climate emergency and nature crises

3.1. Tackling the twin challenges 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.

3.2. This year, we are again stepping up the scale and pace of change for the National Park, and for Scotland, ensuring that we play our part in tackling the twin crises as global citizens. 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 to achieve more for nature through our work as a Planning Authority, as well as finding practical opportunities to use peatland and forest carbon credits for on the ground delivery.

- **Taking action for nature:**

To tackle the nature crisis, we will focus on the development of a National Park Nature Network, with enhanced opportunities for the promotion and application of nature-based solutions and natural infrastructure. We will also accelerate our nature restoration programme through woodland improvement and expansion, water body improvements and invasive non-native species removal.

- **Develop new funding and policy options (including Green Finance) to deliver for biodiversity and climate:**

We will find enable practical opportunities to use peatland and forest carbon credits for delivery on the ground, removing challenges faced by land managers in working with emerging principles. We will also deliver landscape score carding through work funded by Investment Ready

Nature Scotland and use developer gains to support our work around nature-based solutions.

- **Upscale the pace of our Mission Zero programme, and consider the route to net zero for the National Park as a Place:**

We will invest significantly in renewable technologies across our estate, with installation of Air Source Heat Pumps, Photovoltaic Panels and tiles to reduce our emissions, and we will develop a climate adaptation plan. We will also work with partners to begin development of a route map for the National Park as a place to become Net Zero and work with local tourism businesses to deliver programmes on net zero planning and nature experiences.

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

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

- Priority 3: Sustainable Organisation
- Priority 4: Attractive, Accessible and Healthy Destinations
- Priority 7: Policy-making
- Priority 8: Communication and Engagement
- Enablers: Finance, Estate, Partnerships

4. Promoting sustainable low carbon destinations with people, places and communities at their heart

4.1. Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is one of the most popular destinations in Scotland, particularly over the summer season, which significantly increases the population. This brings with it complexities – managing the need for sustainable development and visitor infrastructure and the human impacts on the special qualities of the National Park is a delicate tightrope to walk.

4.2. We want to help people to have a high-quality experience visiting the National Park where they can access great services, facilities and routes with less impacts on nature or climate. We also want to help communities benefit from tourism whilst ensuring the impacts on everyday life are mitigated.

4.3. 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.

- **Improve visitor infrastructure and enhance visitor experience across the National Park**

We will deliver phase one of a multiyear plan focused on Tarbet picnic site that will ensure it is fit for purposes and better serves the mix of users it experiences. This includes work around piloting an Aires scheme, whilst development work is underway. We will also be commencing detailed design work for a series of projects along East Loch Lomond and furthering work to improve the Conic Hill path.

- **Empower our communities to take action for climate and nature**
We will empower our communities to establish Local Place Plans and support the undertaking of actions focused on improving climate and nature outcomes in local areas. We will also work with key public sector partners to establish a framework approach to providing advice and support to communities who are seeking to deliver Local Place Plans.
- **Improve sustainable transport services for visitors and communities**
We recognise the impact of transport services across the remote and rural areas of the National Park, and we will work to drive change in this area through the development of a comprehensive National Park Active Travel Strategy and through the development of gateway hubs at a number of areas around the Park. We will apply our learning from 2022/23 when working with partners to pilot a visitor shuttle bus service at congested visitor hotspots
- **Support events and business to realise local economic benefit**
We will work to support the delivery of the UCI Cycling World Championships which will provide a global stage for the National Park as an asset for the enjoyment of all. In addition to this, we will facilitate the set up of an industry-led recruitment and retention programme for tourism and hospitality businesses, increasing sustainability for local businesses across the National Park.

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

Outcome 5: Recreation Opportunities
Outcome 7: Visitor Economy
Outcome 8: Visitor Management

Outcome 10: Placemaking
Outcome 11: Sustainable Growth
Outcome 12: Community Empowerment

... 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 5: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities
- Priority 7: Policy-making
- Priority 8: Communication and Engagement
- Enablers: People, Finance, Estate, Partnerships

5. Developing the plans, people and processes to support the National Park Authority's next chapter

5.1. The National Park Authority are required to develop a number of plans, such as the National Park Partnership Plan, the Local Development Plan and our Corporate Plan. This cannot be done without the input from stakeholders, who in many cases, hold the keys to enabling success across key areas such as climate and nature. To ensure our ambitious future plans can be delivered, this year sees us focus on the development of both our people and the processes needed to support delivery, putting ourselves on a strong footing.

- **Consult on and implement our future vision for the National Park**
We will consult on our new National Park Partnership Plan, which will incorporate the Regional Spatial Strategy, and our Local Development Plan. Following feedback from stakeholders, we will submit a finalised version to Scottish Government.
- **Identify the organisational change we want to see over the next 5 years**
We will develop a new Corporate Plan that aligns with the draft National Park Partnership Plan and both evidences the rationale for change as well as sets out how that change can be achieved.
- **Take action to drive efficiencies and build resilience, including through partnering and collaborating with others**
We will actively engage with key Scottish Government initiatives, such as its new Public Sector Reform work and its work on new National Parks for Scotland to ensure the learning we have undertaken over the past twenty years is utilised to achieve the ambitions of Scottish Government. In addition to this, we will commence the discovery process to support the development of our Digital Strategy, which includes a review of the digital tools and systems we use and we will implement capabilities which will increase our business resilience.

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

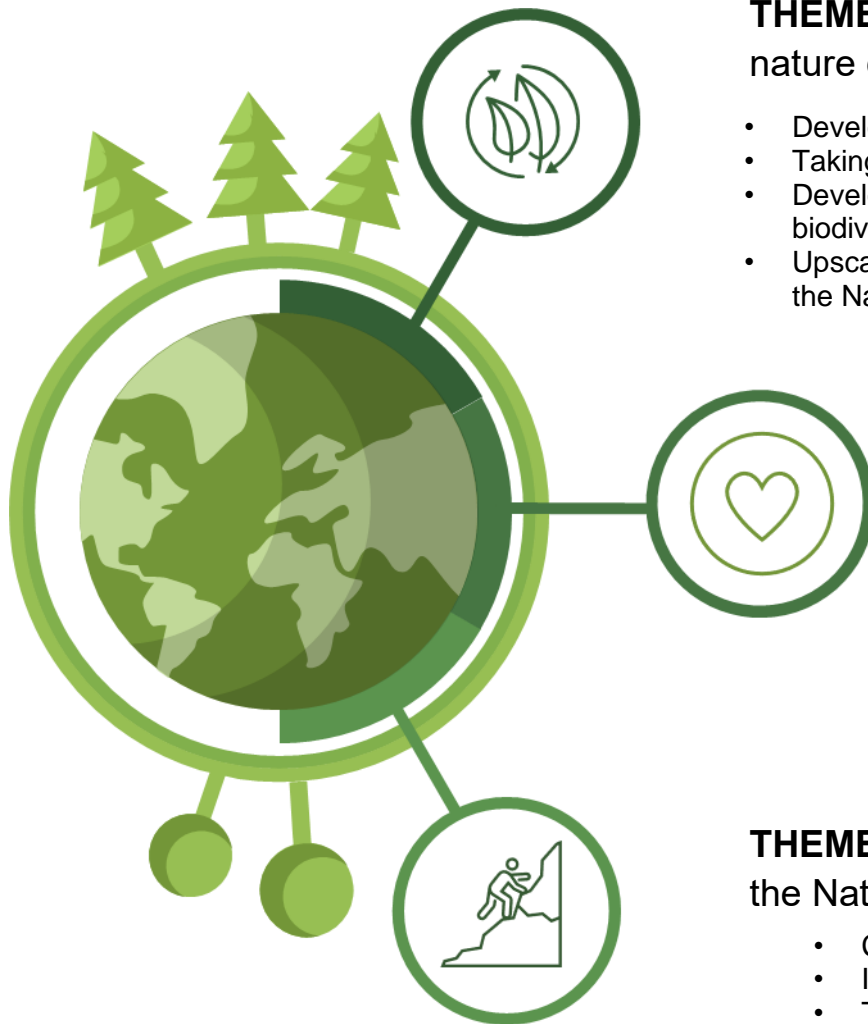
Outcome 1: Natural Capital	Outcome 7: Visitor Economy
Outcome 2: Landscape Qualities	Outcome 8: Visitor Economy
Outcome 3: Climate Change	Outcome 9: Health and Learning
Outcome 4: Land Partnerships	Outcome 10: Placemaking
Outcome 5: Recreation Opportunities	Outcome 11: Sustainable Growth
Outcome 6: Water Recreation	Outcome 13: Community Empowerment

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

- Priority 3: Sustainable Organisation
- Priority 7: Policy-making
- Priority 8: Communications and Engagement
- Enablers: Systems and Processes, People, Finance, Service Design, Partnerships

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable
Theme 1: Tackling the twin challenges of the global climate emergency and nature crisis	
Develop monitoring and engagement plans to support the Future Nature Programme	Establish Future Nature programme reporting and monitoring.
	Produce a Future Nature engagement plan, informed by nature connection principles and behavioural insights
Taking action for nature	Publish a Herbivore Statement and Operational Delivery Workstream action plan for the National Park.
	Expand delivery of the Peatland Action programme
	Accelerate the nature restoration programme through woodland improvement and expansion, water body improvements, INNS removal, and supporting and enabling improvement within targeted designated sites.
	Enable and support key landscape scale projects, such as Wild Strathfillan and the Great Trossachs Forest
Develop new funding and policy options (including Green Finance) to deliver for biodiversity and climate	Deliver landscape score carding through Investment Ready Nature Scotland project and next steps for Revere partnership to explore a woodland carbon plus scheme and enable practical opportunities for land managers to deliver on the ground
	Development of a National Park Nature Network with enhanced opportunities for the promotion and application of nature-based solutions and natural infrastructure, including through the use of developer gains through the planning system, in line with NPF4
Upscale the pace of our Mission Zero programme, and consider the route to net zero for the National Park as a place	Install a new heating system powered by Air Source Heat Pumps in Carrochan, removing the aging biomass boiler and natural gas back up system
	Increase our use of solar electricity at Carrochan through the installation of PV Tiles/Panels and EV Chargers
	Develop a Climate Adaptation Plan for the National Park Authority
	Agree programmes with local tourism businesses on net zero planning and nature experiences with measurable outputs to meet NPA objectives
	Commence development of Route Map with delivery partners for the National Park as a place to become Net Zero
Theme 2: Promoting sustainable low carbon destinations with people, places and communities at their heart	
Improve visitor infrastructure and enhance visitor experience across the National Park	Deliver phase 1 of a multiyear plan to reconfigure the Tarbet picnic site to better serve users (including better campervan and motorhome management), whilst also making greenspace improvements
	Commence detailed design work for a series of visitor infrastructure projects along East Loch Lomond, allowing development of detailed planning and funding applications

	Undertake year two of the Conic Hill Path upgrades
Prepare to implement the updated Loch Lomond (Navigation) Byelaws, in a clear and easy to understand manner	Ensure operational readiness for the new Byelaws from 1 April 2024, including implementing a new registration database, monitoring framework, navigation guides, and videos
Empower our communities to take action for climate and nature	Support communities to establish Local Place Plans, including actions for climate and nature, in at least 4 areas
	Establish a framework approach – with key public sector partners – to providing advice and support to communities who are seeking to deliver their Local Place Plans.
Improve sustainable transport services for visitors and communities	Complete early actions emerging from the Modal Shift Study, including a comprehensive National Park Active Travel Strategy, and the feasibility and early development work of gateway hubs at Balloch, Drymen/Balmaha, Dunoon and Aberfoyle.
	Work with partners to pilot at least one visitor shuttle bus service at congested visitor hotspots
Support events and businesses to realise local economic benefit	Support delivery of a safe and enjoyable UCI Cycling World Championships 2023 event, providing a global stage for the National Park as an asset for the enjoyment of all
	Facilitate the setup of an industry-led recruitment and retention programme for tourism and hospitality businesses
Theme 3: Developing the plans, people and processes to support the National Park Authority's next chapter	
Consult on and implement our future vision for the National Park	Consult on and finalise the new National Park Partnership Plan for submission to the Scottish Government, incorporating the Regional Spatial Strategy
	Prepare a proposed Local Development Plan for consultation which will include key steps of finalising the Plan's evidence based and undertake informal engagement
Identify the organisational change we want to see over the next 5 years	Develop a Corporate Plan that aligns to the Draft NPPP and highlights the journey of change the organisation will embark on
Take action to drive efficiencies and build resilience, including through partnering and collaborating with others	Actively engage with key Scottish Government initiatives including its new Public Sector reform work, and its work on new National Parks for Scotland.
	Commence the discovery process to support the development of our Digital Strategy, including a review of the tools and systems we use
	Implement cloud-based disaster recovery capabilities which will increase business resilience



THEME ONE: Tackling the twin challenges of the global climate emergency and nature crisis

- Develop monitoring and engagement plans to support the Future Nature Programme
- Taking action for nature
- Develop new funding and policy options (including Green Finance) to deliver for biodiversity and climate change
- Upscale the pace of our Mission Zero programme, and consider the route to net zero for the National Park as a place

THEME TWO: Promoting sustainable low carbon destinations with people, places and communities at their heart

- Improve visitor infrastructure and enhance visitor experience across the National Park
- Prepare to implement the updated Loch Lomond (Navigation) Byelaws, in a clear and easy to understand manner
- Empower our communities to take action for climate and nature
- Improve sustainable transport services for visitors and communities
- Support events and businesses to realise local economic benefit

THEME THREE: Developing the plans, people and processes to support the National Park Authority's next chapter

- Consult on and implement our future vision for the National Park
- Identify the organisational change we want to see over the next 5 years
- Take action to drive efficiencies and build resilience, including through partnering and collaborating with others