



Board Schedules 2024 and 2025

Agenda Item 7

National Park Authority Board Meeting

13 March 2023

Paper for decision

1. Purpose.....	1
2. Recommendation(s).....	1
3. Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan and/or Our 5-year Plan.....	1
4. Background.....	1
5. Virtual attendance at Board, Committee and Group meetings	2
6. Next steps	3
7. Appendices	3

1. Purpose

1.1. To provide Members with a proposed schedule of meeting dates for the National Park Authority Board, Committees and Groups for 2024 and 2025.

1.2. To provide Members with an update on our approach to virtual attendance and hybrid meetings.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. Members are asked to **review and approve** the provisional schedules of meeting dates for the National Park Authority Board, Committees and Groups for 2024 and 2025 attached as Appendix 1 and 2.

2.2. Members are invited to **note** the approach to remote attendance/hybrid meetings outlined at 5.1 to 5.5.

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

3.1. Our meetings allow us to report to and engage with Board members, enabling the delivery of the Outcomes and Priorities of the National Park Partnership Plan 2018-23 and our 5-year Plan.

4. Background

- 4.1. A provisional schedule of meeting dates has been identified for the National Park Authority Board, Committees and Groups for 2024 and 2025. The frequency of these meetings is in accordance with the Standing Orders and Terms of Reference for the Board, Committees and Groups of the National Park Authority.
- 4.2. The proposed pattern of meetings has remained largely unchanged from previous Board Schedules, including the incorporation of 'flex' dates for Planning & Access Committee to allow meetings to take place according to demand of business. Futures Group meetings have been adjusted to occur quarterly, in line with the Futures Group next steps planning.
- 4.3. The September Board Meetings in both 2024 and 2025 have been scheduled for the third Monday of the month (usually it would be the second Monday). This is to allow a more manageable period between the Audit and Risk Committee (scheduled for the first Tuesday of the month) and the Board Meeting, as the Annual Report and Accounts go to September Board, following scrutiny at September Audit and Risk Committee.
- 4.4. Meetings can be added to, or removed from, the Board Schedule in accordance with the relevant Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegation or Terms of Reference.
- 4.5. At present a September date in each year has been identified to focus on strategy and Board development, although training and development opportunities for the Board will be arranged throughout the year.
- 4.6. Meetings are currently scheduled to be held at National Park Authority Headquarters although the venue will be confirmed on the publishing of the papers for each meeting.

5. Virtual attendance at Board, Committee and Group meetings

- 5.1. In late 2022 we completed our upgrade of the audio-visual equipment in our Boardroom at Carrochan. Amongst other functionality, this gives us better capability for livestreaming our public meetings and gives us the option to host hybrid meetings where some members attend online and others in person.
- 5.2. Whilst hybrid meetings are permissible under our Standing Orders and provide additional flexibility for Members to fit their Board role around their other commitments, they also have some drawbacks. For example, it is more difficult for all participants to pick up on non-verbal communication during the meeting, Members lose the ability to build

relationships with each other and staff ahead of meetings and during breaks, and discussions need to be more strictly managed with less free flow.

5.3. We are therefore planning for attendance at Board, Planning and Access Committee, and Audit and Risk Committee meetings to be in-person by default. Should extenuating circumstances arise that mean an individual Board Member can only attend if they join remotely, they can do so. Such extenuating circumstances should be communicated to the Convener/Chair with as much notice as possible – as per the Standing Orders, remote attendance will be at their discretion. Extenuating circumstances might include, for example, last minute travel cancellations, severe weather, or unforeseen caring responsibilities. In addition, the Convener/Chair may decide, in consultation with the CEO and Proper Officer, to hold a fully remote meeting should an in-person meeting be infeasible. Members are responsible for ensuring that they have a stable internet connection when attending a meeting remotely, as should they be unable to connect, or lose connection for a significant section of the meeting, they will be deemed to be non-attending.

5.4. Statutory meetings (Board, Planning & Access Committee and Audit & Risk Committee) will continue to be livestreamed on our website, and in-person access provided for members of the public. Livestreaming and hybrid meeting capabilities will only be available for public meetings held at National Park Headquarters, not at other locations, though in-person public access will still be available.

5.5. The Convener/Chair, in consultation with relevant staff, will decide on a case-by-case basis whether other Board groups and sessions will be held in person, fully online, or hybrid. This includes the Chairs and Executive Group and Futures Group, as well as Board away days, induction days, and training days and sessions.

6. Next steps

If approved, these provisional meeting dates will be scheduled in staff and Board member diaries and published on our website as provisional meeting dates at the start of each year.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft 2024 meeting schedule

Appendix 2 – Draft 2025 meeting schedule

Author: Dougie Smith, Board and Committee Manager

Executive Sponsor: Pete Wightman, Director of Corporate Services