



2023-24 Annual Operational Plan Progress to August

Agenda Item 11

National Park Authority Board Meeting

11 September 2023

Paper for information

Annual Operational Plan 2023/24: Progress to August

Rating Key:

Complete	On Track	Behind Schedule	At Risk	Postponed to 2024/25	Cancelled
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AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD progress (August)	Rating
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.	New format for overall programme reporting developed to align HPPB, AOP and overall programme reporting for Future Nature. Good working structure now in place and continuing to add details of projects and partner contribution. We are also reviewing next step for longer term outcome monitoring following the State of Nature and Indicators reports.	On track
	Produce a Future Nature engagement plan, informed by nature connection principles and behavioural insights	Confirmed new staff lead on the engagement plan. Draft plan including principles and basic monitoring options drafted and discussed at meeting of relevant teams delivering nature engagement work. All teams reviewing identified work within the engagement strand to be collated into the programme management spreadsheet / process (as per line above).	On track
Taking action for nature	Publish a Herbivore Statement and Operational Delivery Workstream action plan for the National Park.	Draft plan underway further to Partner meeting in June with update to be provided at September ODW meeting. Timeline for wider engagement to be scoped.	On track
	Expand delivery of the Peatland Action programme	Recruitment is underway for the additional posts. 6 restoration projects are on track for delivery this FY. Development of others including the AECS funded scheme is progressing for delivery next year. Two schemes that could have been delivered this year will be delayed to next year due to the need to scale them up to a size more suitable for Peatland Code.	On track

	Accelerate the nature restoration programme through woodland improvement and expansion, water body improvements, INNS removal, and supporting and enabling improvement within targeted designated sites.	Contribution agreements have been signed with Argyll Fisheries Trust, Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust and Forth Rivers Trust	On track
	Enable and support key landscape scale projects, such as Wild Strathfillan and the Great Trossachs Forest	NRF match funding agreement has been signed and contribution sent to CT. New employee has started as TGTF Coordinator for CT	On track
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	Work on IRNS project progressing well - stakeholder mapping and score carding complete - now narrowing down to selected opportunities to scope in more detail. Palladium work continuing to progress - awaiting results of FIRNS and other funding opportunities to develop the final platform.	On track
	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	Scoping has begun to define the workstreams and project plan required for delivering the LDP work including our approach to achieving positive outcomes for nature (biodiversity net gain).	On track
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	Air Source Heat Pumps/Heating system tender pack live, deadline for returns 28.08.23, reasonable level of interest, including a number of site visits. Tender evaluations booked in for 30.08.23.	On track
	Increase our use of solar electricity at Carrochan through the installation of PV Tiles/Panels and EV Chargers	As above for Solar PV works. Tender pack for EV chargers being prepared for publishing in late Sep 23.	On track
	Develop a Climate Adaptation Plan for the National Park Authority	Climate Action Manager recruited and will take forward organisational adaptation planning in Q3-4. Mission Zero governance review and refresh completed and approved by	Behind Schedule

		Exec team, with included the establishment of adaptation as a dedicated workstream.	
	Agree programmes with local tourism businesses on net zero planning and nature experiences with measurable outputs to meet NPA objectives	Case study presented by NPDG depute chair: <i>Oak Tree Inn Net Zero Strategy</i> on 25 May to 10x local tourism businesses with notes distributed to a further 24 contacts. Another 11x individual NP-based businesses were reached via WHW presentations. Wider engagement on Nature and Net Zero is being conducted across the business sector to collect intel to identify which NP operators are not yet participating; which businesses are interested and may be encouraged towards greener delivery; and which are already engaged in measurable activities which can be used to influence others. This audit will include those who are members of recognised Green Award accreditation schemes.	On Track
	Commence development of Route Map with delivery partners for the National Park as a place to become Net Zero	Capacity constraints continued in Q2 and while these will remain in part they will begin to lessen with the Mission Zero governance review approving the establishment of Net Zero National Park as a dedicated project (separate to Mission Zero) and identification of a new lead officer. Deliverables and resourcing of the Net Zero National Park project to be scoped in Q3. Most pressing elements of the work have been progressed in Q2 nonetheless, including dissemination and publication of GHG footprint and net zero model, mapping of key delivery partner net zero commitments, coordination and collaboration with all UK National Parks on net zero planning and implementation, and leveraging the 12-week consultation on the Draft NPPP to start external consideration of the proposed net zero target date of 2040 (7 years after modelled target date).	Behind Schedule
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	The full redevelopment proposal was granted Planning Permission on 13 July 2023. Work is planned to start later this year on a £1.5M first phase delivery project, which is supported by a £750,000 grant from VisitScotland's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF). Phase 1 is currently out to tender on Public Contracts Scotland (posted 20 July 2023) with a return date of 6 September 2023. The project continues to progress well and to programme.	On track
	Commence detailed design work for a series of visitor infrastructure projects along East Loch Lomond, allowing development of detailed planning and funding applications	Q2 continues to focus on assembling project teams and preparatory work, with staff resource due to increase in September. Resourcing is being directed towards Rowardennan Visitor facilities. Subject to NPA and partner staff resourcing then Balmaha is planned to follow.	On track
	Complete Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies (STIDs) for Callander and Strathard and Trossachs, and undertake a final park-wide review and consolidation STID	Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies (STIDs) for Callander and Strathard and Trossachs remain on-track for completion in Q2. The park-wide STID is delayed owing to a lack of staff resource and time pressure from other projects within the programme, it is now planned to commence in early Q3.	Behind schedule (park-wide only)
	Undertake year two of the Conic Hill Path upgrades	The Conic Hill path construction contract was re-tendered on 7 July with a 7 August deadline for submissions. Out of four bids received, three were from upland path contractors with relevant experience. At the time of writing (21 August) we do not yet have a preferred bidder but will hopefully appoint within the next two weeks. We also tendered for quantity surveyor/ contract administration support for CDM regulations, Health and Safety file reporting and other contractual responsibilities. This was from 17 July to 14 August but we received no submissions. We are currently discussing next steps. We have developed a maintenance plan and schedule for the new path. Discussions are taking place about which NPA Teams will take on maintenance responsibility.	Behind schedule

<p>Prepare to implement the updated Loch Lomond (Navigation) Byelaws, in a clear and easy to understand manner</p>	<p>Ensure operational readiness for the new Byelaws from 1 April 2024, including implementing a new registration database, monitoring framework, navigation guides, and videos</p>	<p>Work focus has been focussed on the appointment of a contractor to develop the new boat registration database. This process has been completed and development will start in August 2023. This database will be developed using the Scottish Approach to Service Design a method that has been used by the project team in the procedural review element of the project. The team are working closely with the Scot Gov Digital Assurance team. The planning permission submission for the new buoyage is being submitted in August to enable a winter deployment. Ongoing conversations are being held with Scot Gov colleagues to confirm an implementation date for the byelaws and any amendments that the Minister may require.</p>	<p>On track</p>
<p>Empower our communities to take action for climate and nature</p>	<p>Support communities to establish Local Place Plans, including actions for climate and nature, in at least 4 areas</p>	<p>4 Local Place Plans now registered and placed on our website. Full report and briefing to be provided to next Planning and Access Committee. Support currently being given to 4 communities actively preparing new plans and two at early stages of consideration.</p>	<p>On track</p>
	<p>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.</p>	<p>Meeting held in August with Strathard Framework delivery partners to focus on flooding, next meeting scheduled for November with housing focus. Support given to several communities to progress actions within their local place plans with wider dissemination (internal and external) programmed for Autumn.</p>	<p>On track</p>
<p>Improve sustainable transport services for visitors and communities</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The Futures group meeting on August 15th was deemed a success providing a springboard to develop enhanced partnership and governance discussions as outlined as key actions. Our CEO will be meeting SPT CEO within August. The Place Programme is covering the early gateway hub development work. The National Park Active Travel Strategy work is being reconsidered due to changes in available funding from Sustrans. The team are feeding into both the TACTRAN and SPT Active Travel Strategies.</p>	<p>On Track</p>
	<p>Work with partners to pilot at least one visitor shuttle bus service at congested visitor hotspots</p>	<p>The market was unable to provide an operator for a service in the Trossachs nor Tarbet/Arrochar area. Follow up conversations with partners and funders has indicated general agreement that the best next steps are to confirm</p>	<p>Behind schedule</p>

		<p>funding with Smarter Choices Smarter Places in October 2023 so that a tender can go to market in December 2023 for enhanced chance of market delivery for a 2024 season service. The Sustainable Travel Programme team will be discussing the best partnership approach to addressing bus driver recruitment and retentions issues. A large step forward has been made where a quality service for Arrochar/Tarbet/Lochgoilhead has been designed which integrates into train and waterbus services.</p>	
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	<p>The Balloch Community Cycling Hub, which we created jointly with WDC as part of the build-up to the 2023 UCI cycling world championships was delivered successfully at Loch Lomond Shores in June. Funded by EventScotland and WDC, 157 pupils and teachers took part from six local primary schools (three classes cycled to the event); 67 suppliers, entertainers, volunteers and staff participated and 7,994 visitors were clicked into the event over the three days. Several thousand more visited from the adjacent Sunday Farmer's Market and we used the event as an opportunity to engage with the community within our NPPP survey consultation period.</p> <p>The UCI Men's U23 and Women's Elite Road Races which commenced from Balloch Bridge on 12th and 13th August went extremely well with reasonably good crowds of spectators and no incidents. It was a superb, well-orchestrated major event. UCI enabled networking opportunities where we developed local and national agency contacts, helpful for our own objectives of active travel, local business development and creating a low carbon destination.</p>	Complete
	Facilitate the setup of an industry-led recruitment and retention programme for tourism and hospitality businesses	<p>This industry-led project has been shelved. We provided office space, sought further funding (unsuccessfully) and facilitated links to SE training assets and with businesses to encourage participation in the project. The initial start-up funds ran out in July and the grant anticipated from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was not awarded. The need for the</p>	At Risk

		project still exists and while it may yet be possible to secure alternative funding, the lead business contact managing the programme has stepped down. The tourism team is exploring options.	
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	Formal 12-week consultation on Draft NPPP closed 19 th July. Interim update on consultation is being presented for noting by the Board in September ahead of final recommended NPPP being presented to the Board for approval in December 2023. Ongoing engagement with key delivery partners will continue as the recommended NPPP is being finalised to help secure buy-in for delivery.	On Track
	Prepare a proposed Local Development Plan for consultation which will include key steps of finalising the Plan's evidence based and undertake informal engagement	New staff in post from mid August. Work programme being reviewed in light of staff changes and temporary reduction in teams capacity. Initial evidence base established last year has been reviewed and next step is to refine this further into an evidence report for submission to Scottish Government. Work due to commence across internal teams to scope spatial strategy and integration of land use and development themes including biodiversity net gain arising from developments.	Behind Schedule
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	There will be another Operational Managers session, focused on the Corporate Plan in September, after which drafting will start in earnest.	On Track
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.	Continuing to engage with the relevant workstreams. Good progress was made in relation to one fully shared service, however, staff turnover has delayed this slightly.	On Track
	Commence the discovery process to support the development of our Digital Strategy, including a review of the tools and systems we use	Not yet started – was moved to Q4 so technical projects could be completed.	On Track
	Implement cloud-based disaster recovery capabilities which will increase business resilience	Conversations with the SG Cloud Platform team have continued. DR replication solution has been research and costed.	On Track

		<p>Project paused while IS investigate options for IDOX hosting in regards to the eplanning systems. This would simply the Cloud DR project and mean DR, Backup and Oracle database management would be managed by IDOX and release GIS staff time. Project will commence once decision is made regarding IDOX hosting.</p>	
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