



Draft minutes of meeting held on 12 June 2023

Agenda Item 3

National Park Authority Board Meeting

11 September 2023

Paper for approval

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Present

Heather Reid (Convenor) (HR)
Claire Chapman (CC)
Hazel Sorrell (HS)
Sarah Drummond (SD)
Ronnie Erskine (RE)
Christopher Spray (CS)
Maurice Corry (MC)
William Sinclair (WS)
Gerry McGarvey (GM) – From Item 6 onwards
Sid Perrie (SP)
Iain Shonny Patterson (ISP)
David Mackie (DM)

Apologies

David Fettes
Zain Sehgal
Richard Johnson
Rhona Brock
Martin Earl

In Attendance - National Park Authority Staff

Gordon Watson (GW), Chief Executive Officer

Stuart Mearns (SM), Director of Place

Simon Jones (SJ), Director of Environment and Visitor Services

Anna MacLean (AM), Director of Engagement & Innovation

Dougie Smith (DS), Board & Committee Manager & Proper Officer

Samantha Stubbs (SS), Head of People and Assets

Deborah Sandals (DSa), Place Projects Manager (Item 6)

Kenny Auld (KA), Head of Visitor Services (from Item 5 until Item 12)

Susan Brooks (SB), Communities and Place Planning Manager (Item 8)

Jane Kemp (JK) Head of Governance and Performance

Emma Hislop (EH), Communications Manager (online, Item 8)

Emma Yendell (EY) Estates Manager (Item 5)

Ali Cush (AC) Education and Inclusion Advisor (Item 12)

Items and Actions**Item 1: Welcome and Apologies**

The Convener opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees. She advised that this meeting, as well as being physically accessible to members of the public today, is available to view via a livestream on our website.

HR reminded all Members to speak clearly into the microphones provided and not to speak over each other so that those following online are able to follow proceedings with clarity.

The Convenor welcomed all members of the public observing today's meeting.

HR asked the Members and National Park representatives participating in this meeting to introduce themselves.

Apologies were noted from David Fettes, Zain Sehgal, Richard Johnson, Martin Earl and Rhona Brock.

Item 2: Declarations of Interest

CS noted he is a Board member of the Countryside Trust. This does not affect participation in any Items at this meeting.

Item 3: Minutes of the Board Meeting held 12 June 2023

The minutes were proposed by CS and seconded by MC. The minutes were approved by Members present.

DECISION: The minutes of the Board Meeting held on 12 June 2023 were approved by majority vote.

Items and Actions

Item 4: Matters Arising

HR introduced the matters arising.

GW gave an update on one incomplete action from the previous meeting, the CivTech data was incomplete and not available for the Board's visit to Conic Hill, KA team plan for future update to be made when available.

No further comments were received.

DECISION: Members agreed to **note** the report.

Item 5: Estates Strategy

HR advised that the purpose of this paper is to seek Board approval for the organisation's proposed Estates Strategy.

The paper was introduced by GW and EY.

GW stated that to date decisions about the National Park Authority's Estate have been made on a case-by-case basis, with reference to the relevant National Park Partnership Plan and Corporate Plan aims, or where specific initiatives have required the improvement or creation of assets e.g. campsites to enable camping byelaws. However, until now there has been no overarching strategy document that sets out how we want to use our Estate to achieve the broader goals of the National Park.

GW advised that to fill this gap, the proposed Estates Strategy aims to:

- describe how the strategic contribution of our Estate can be leveraged for the benefit of the National Park
- establish the principles we will apply when taking decisions about our Estate
- set the priorities for the future development and maintenance of our Estate
- establish criteria for the National Park Authority's involvement in off-Estate infrastructure

GW discussed the 3 objectives and early priority actions set out in the strategy plan:

- To Enable Efficient National Park Authority Operations

Items and Actions

- To Support National Park Strategic Priorities
- To Deliver Quality Provision for Visitors & Communities

HR reminded Members to keep in mind that this is an overarching strategy when deciding on this report.

A detailed discussion and questions from Members followed.

ACTION: KA to follow up with FLS re: management at Ardentinnny

ACTION: DSa to follow up with ISP re: Mental health and wellbeing

DECISION: All Members in attendance agreed to **Approve** the proposed Estates Strategy described in this paper and attached as Appendix 1, with the minor amendment detailed below.

ACTION: Sections 7.7 – 7.9 to be updated to be more explicit in the lack of commercial purpose. [EY]

Item 6: Place Programme Delivery Update

GM joined the meeting and HR introduced him.

HR advised members that the purpose of this paper is to update the Board on the progress on delivery of the National Park Place Programme, A Place-based Approach to Visitor Infrastructure Investment; the first co-ordinated multi-year strategic capital investment programme for the National Park's visitor infrastructure.

The paper was introduced by SM and DSa.

The Board are asked to:

- **Note** the integration with National Park Authority Estates strategy.
- **Note** progress in 2022/23.
- **Note** the direction of budget and resources in 2023/24 including:
 - a) the update to the partnership delivery programme, May 2023 (Appendix 1: National Park Place Programme: Partnership Projects Summary update May 2023)
 - b) the amendment to the position statement, to reflect the move, as noted in the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) from eight individual Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies to four detailed studies in areas of most pressure (existing and in-progress) and a single park-wide consolidated study to set the investment priorities and support funding opportunities across the National Park

Items and Actions

(Appendix 2: National Park Place Programme: Section amendment – Geographic Priorities)

- **Consider and suggest opportunities** to influence continued resourcing of public sector landowner engagement and investment.

SM gave a recap of the aims and objectives of the programme and progress on priorities of 2023-24 and what had been delivered. SM summarised the priorities and planned work for 2023-24 including an amendment, in line with the 2023-24 AOP, to the approach to Strategic Infrastructure Development Studies across the National Park.

DSa updated the Board on the progress of the following headlines:

- Progress in year from National Park and Local Authority
- Delivery Action
- Local Authority
- Direction of budget 23/24
- Proposed amendment

A detailed discussion and questions from Members followed.

DECISION: Members in attendance agreed to **Note** the report.

Item 7: Convener's Report

Verbal update presented by HR. Topics of discussion included:

- Bracklinn bridge opening
- Visit to Luss
- SSEN pylon removal
- Upcoming meeting with Stirling Council on NetZero
- Meeting with Cairngorms National Park
- Partnership event around US National Parks
- Glenfalloch Estate visit
- Launch of the consultation for assessment framework for new NP
- Ministerial appointment is progressing after various meetings.

HR thanked DS for the new online appraisal form and advised 5 board appraisals have been completed so far, appointments will be emailed to all other members before September.

Items and Actions

Item 8: CEO Report

The paper was presented by GW.

GW provided a summary overview of progress on the main strategic areas of work being undertaken in the organisation as well as significant external activities.

AM gave a detailed update on progress to date from the National Park Partnership Plan draft consultation process.

ACTION: Board Members to be included in upcoming staff weekly updates on NPPP [AM]

DECISION: Members agreed to **note** the report.

Item 9: 2022/23 Annual Operational Plan Progress Report

The paper was introduced by GW and SS.

SS provided the final progress report on the 2022/23 Annual Operational Plan. Appendix 1 details progress on each deliverable within the plan.

DECISION: Members agreed to **note** the report.

HR noted thanks from the Board to all staff for their work throughout the year.

Item 10: 2023/24 Annual Operational Plan Progress Report

The paper was introduced by GW and SS

SS reported on the progress against the 2023/24 Annual Operational Plan. Appendix 1 details progress on each deliverable within the plan.

DECISION: Members agreed to **note** the update.

Item 11: Finance Update

The paper was introduced by GW and JK.

JK gave the board an update on the Draft management accounts 2023, budgets and funding.

DECISION: Members agreed to **note** the update.

Items and Actions

Item 12: Equalities Mainstreaming Report

HR advised that the purpose of this paper is to share our recently published Equalities Mainstreaming and Equalities Outcomes progress report and its findings.

The paper was introduced by SS and AC.

AC highlighted the stated outcomes:

- Outcome 1: At all levels of the organisation, our staff, volunteers, and Board better reflect the diversity of Scotland
- Outcome 2: The National Park is an inviting place for people of all backgrounds
- Outcome 3: Our policy and external funding decisions improve equality for individuals and groups with protected characteristics

AC gave an update on the key achievements in relation to the 3 outcomes and mainstreaming equality in the reporting period include:

- A new pilot one-year Board position to work closely with us to improve representation of ethnic minorities in the outdoors sector and to help the organisation better engage with ethnic communities.
- We formally adopted hybrid working for our staff and reduced the working week to 35 hours. Combined, these create a more inclusive and supportive workplace.
- Trialed a camping loan kit scheme with The Kurdish Women Community Group, made up of refugees and asylum-seeking women based in Glasgow. Women and their children camped (many for the first time) for two nights at the National Park Campsite at Loch Achray supported by National Park Volunteer and Campsite Rangers.
- Published our draft National Park Partnership Plan, with the key principle that the National Park is for everyone and we can only achieve its aims as part of a just transition towards a fairer, greener future. Equality is a common thread that runs through the document, including in sections that cover how we can connect people from all backgrounds with nature, reaching people who don't currently access the National Park, promoting sustainable transport, and enabling diverse and thriving communities. To support this, we have designed our consultation and engagement programme to foster input from people whose voices are less often heard during such consultations.

ACTION: SS to follow up with SD re: nature of data gathered

DECISION: Members agreed **to note** the report.

Items and Actions
Item 13: Committee and Group Highlights Verbal updates were provided by the Chairs of the various Committees about the significant activity they have undertaken since the last Board meeting. ACTION: Countryside Trust to be included in planning for September Board/Strategy Day [DS]
Item 14: Any Other Business None
Item 15: Date of Next Meeting The next scheduled meeting of the Board is Monday 11 September 2023. This will be combined with the Board's annual strategy day on Tuesday 12 September

Signed

Heather Reid, Convener