



Appendix 1 Draft Consultation Report Agenda Item 6

National Park Authority Board Meeting

11 September 2022

Paper for information

DRAFT NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN
CONSULTATION UPDATE REPORT

An update on the formal consultation held between 26 April and 19 July 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority is required to prepare a National Park Plan every five years to guide the work of all those who have a role to play in managing the National Park and achieving a shared vision for the area. Since this all requires working with others, we refer to this as our National Park Partnership Plan ('NPPP').

Earlier this year, a Draft National Park Partnership Plan ('Draft Plan') was developed for consideration and comment from all of those who have a role to play in the delivery of the Plan and those who will be impacted by the outcomes and actions set out within it.

This Draft Plan differs from previous Partnership Plans in that it outlines a significant step change required to tackle the twin crises of the climate emergency and nature loss.

The impacts of these crises are already being felt here and now, so transformational change is needed in the way each of us lives, works and looks after the National Park to ensure that Loch Lomond and The Trossachs remains a special place for generations to come.

The Draft Plan sets out bold ambitions to ensure the widespread restoration of nature that is needed across the National Park and the aspiration to become a Net Zero National Park by 2040.

It outlines the proposed steps to be taken over the next five years (2024-2029) to achieve these ambitions and achieve a more positive future for people, nature and climate.

The vision for 2045 the Draft Plan sets out is that **the National Park will be 'a climate-resilient place, where people and nature thrive together'**.

While the National Park Authority is responsible for drafting and consulting on the Draft Plan, it is only with collective effort from a wide range of partners that we will be able to achieve lasting change.

The Draft Plan poses the questions:

- **If not here, where?**
- **If not now, when?**
- **If not all of us, who?**

Given the broader scope of this Draft Plan, a wider approach to engagement was required to inspire all stakeholders to engage in a conversation about the future of the National Park and co-design a Plan that will set us on track to achieve this longer-term vision.

This report provides a summary of the engagement approach and response to the Draft Plan so far. This will be used to inform the development of the final National

Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029 and the work that needs to happen between now and December 2023 to finalise the Plan.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Role of the National Park Partnership Plan and Managing Responses

- 2.1.1. The National Park Authority is required to prepare a National Park Partnership Plan ('Draft Plan') every five years to guide the work of all those who have a role to play in managing the area.
- 2.1.2. A Draft Plan was developed to allow a conversation around the future of the National Park with all of those who have a role to play in the delivery of the Plan and who will be impacted by the outcomes and actions set out within it.
- 2.1.3. While there is a statutory 12-week consultation period (26 April to 19 July 2023) for comments to be gathered on the Draft Plan, we took a broader approach to engagement ahead of and during the consultation in order to reach a wider range of people and organisations and to allow more people to take part in the conversation.
- 2.1.4. The primary channel for engagement, reading the Draft Plan and receipt of responses was the digital platform Commonplace, complemented by a range of online and in-person events, printed materials, activities and meetings and an overarching campaign to promote engagement.
- 2.1.5. Based on insight gathered via user research and our own experience, our [dedicated Commonplace site](#) was designed to provide ways for people to engage in the themes and content of the Draft Plan in a way that was appropriate for their needs and level of interest.
- 2.1.6. There was the option of:
 - a detailed survey for those choosing to review the full Plan,
 - a shorter 'Quick Survey' for responses to each of the three key sections of the Draft Plan
 - an interactive map where place-specific comments could be shared and the option to leave comments under a one of the three key sections of the Plan.
- 4.1.7. There was also an option to send a response via email, which a number of organisations and some individuals did.

2.2 Responses Received

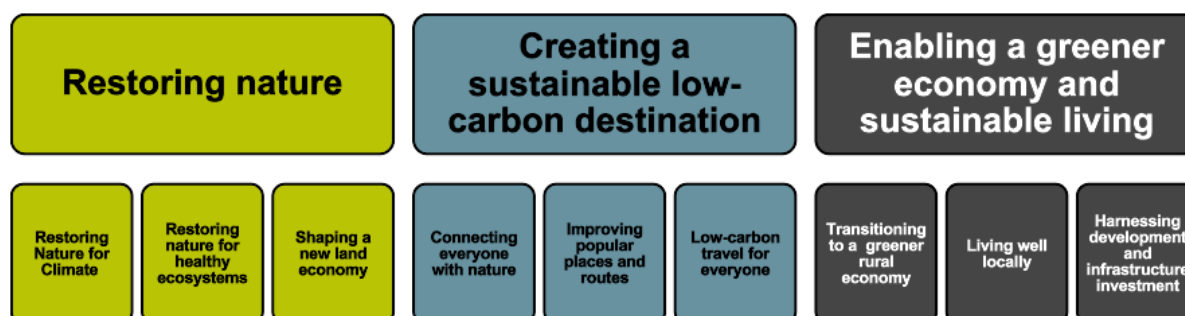
- 2.1. In addition to the broad range of face-to-face engagement achieved during the 12-week consultation period there were:
 - 2.1.1. More than **276,000 people reached** with Partnership Plan content on social media
 - 2.1.2. More than **3500 views** of the Partnership Plan page on the National Park website.
 - 2.1.3. **2260 visits** to the dedicated Commonplace platform

2.1.4. **233 responses to the consultation** (either via the full survey, quick survey or via email) and a **further 75 contributions** made via comments on the interactive map or within the key sections on Commonplace.

2.2. This is compared to 120 consultation responses to our previous Draft National Park Partnership Plan in 2017.

2.3 Summary of Responses

The Draft Plan was split into three key sections, each with three sub-sections within it:



The responses and contributions through this consultation are summarised in this report by the three key sections of the Draft Plan and more general insights gathered on people's lived experience of the National Park.

Over the coming months as we finalise the Plan these will be analysed and used as we engage further with stakeholders to inform preparation of the final Plan. This consultation update report provides a summary. A copy of all verbatim responses is provided (with individual responses anonymised) as an appendix to the September 2023 National Park Authority Board papers.

2.3.1 Restoring Nature – Summary of Responses

- a) There was broad support from both partner organisations and individuals on this section of the Draft Plan, with demonstrations of ongoing commitment from partners and an appetite to do more, particularly from communities.
- b) There was widespread agreement on the need for bold action.
- c) Strong partnership working was recognised as being essential to achieving real change.
- d) The majority of responses highlighted the significant role of land managers in terms of how land is used to benefit nature and climate.
- e) There were encouraging offers of support for monitoring nature; improving jobs, training and skills; and developing opportunities for community engagement.
- f) There was also support for exploring green finance options.
- g) The need for education and awareness raising on nature was highlighted.
- h) A number of barriers to achieving nature restoration were identified. These largely confirmed our understanding of the key barriers including:

- securing funding for nature restoration projects;
 - the need for a sound evidence base and monitoring, capacity of individuals and organisations;
 - the need for a more collaborative approach to Invasive Non Native Species with financial support for communities and land managers on this;
 - funding, skills and training, jobs and homes for people working in nature restoration;
 - contractor availability.
- i) There was a mixed response on the approach on herbivore management which some respondents suggesting this was too general and should be more focussed.
- j) Several responses also noted areas that would benefit from further clarification, expansion or inclusion in the final Plan.
- k) Some responses also felt there should be more reference to marine environment and agriculture, including land food production, in the final Plan.

2.3.2 Creating a Sustainable, Low Carbon Destination – Summary of Responses

- a) This theme generated a lot of interest and discussion.
- b) There was general support for the objectives set out in the Draft Plan and confirmation of the issues, particularly on travel and transport.
- c) Many of the partner organisations that responded have offered support and assistance with implementation of the Plan’s objectives. This will be explored further in subsequent meetings.
- d) Objectives on ‘Connecting everyone with nature’ were well supported with several stakeholders highlighting the role they can play in delivering these.
- e) The overwhelming consensus was that public transport and the active travel network across the National Park needs to be improved.
- f) Lack of public transport and active travel opportunities were highlighted as major barriers to people of different backgrounds being able to enjoy the Park and to people living and working here.
- g) It was generally agreed that a whole system approach is required to tackle this issue.
- h) It was also recognised that a more joined up approach is needed and some responses felt that identifying a lead organisation could help drive action.
- i) Several responses also highlighted the need to upgrade the road network, particularly the A82 and A83, to minimise disruption, and benefit the economic growth of the area.
- j) Some comments said that there should be greater consideration of the rail network and infrastructure across the National Park.
- k) A notable theme in responses was the perceived omission of access, outdoor recreation, visitor experience and visitor management within the Draft Plan.

- l) The more negative comments received primarily focussed on issues with existing transport and active travel networks rather than the content and direction of travel of the Draft Plan.

2.3.3 Enabling a Greener Economy and Sustainable Living – Summary of Responses

- a) There was less engagement and fewer comments on this section of the Draft Plan than the Restoring Nature or Creating a Low Carbon, Sustainable Destination sections, possibly due to the topics being more relevant to people living and working in the National Park than the wider audience, or a feeling that these topics have been covered through other forms of engagement. This will need to be explored further.
- b) Partner organisations generally supported the objectives set out on this theme, particularly on 'transitioning to a greener economy' and 'living well locally', with some individuals recognising the need for rural services and facilities, such as early education and childcare provision or local food/convenience shopping, to support retention of population.
- c) Fewer partners agreed with the aim of ensuring that the natural environment is at the forefront of decision-making on development, with some raising concerns that this might stifle delivery.
- d) Several people confirmed the issues identified in the Draft Plan around skills and labour shortages, particularly around green jobs, and agreed that more work is required to identify gaps and opportunities.
- e) The need for more affordable housing was a common theme and felt to be vitally important to ensuring the longevity of communities, supporting businesses and green jobs.
- f) While affordable housing was one of the main issues raised, not many partners suggested they could support delivery on this. This will require further investigation.
- g) There was some criticism of current local development policies on housing and tourism suggesting that it is easier to build visitor accommodation than housing in the National Park.
- h) Community engagement continued to be a strong theme in responses with several highlighting the need to educate communities on the Community Empowerment (Scotland 2015) Act to them take ownership of their areas and deliver the objectives of the Draft Plan.
- i) There were several references to the Draft Plan's approach to renewable energy development with calls for a more proactive stance particularly on wind turbines.
- j) Some place-based comments were received focusing on the Arrochar area regarding issues with marine litter, concerns about new housing, and the need for a significant scale new development to stimulate inward investment in the area.

- k) There was further support for improving Active Travel routes although it was noted that there was a lack of reference to the Outdoor Recreation Plan.
- l) Several comments again supported improvements to the A82 and A83, requesting stronger emphasis to this in the final Plan.
- m) It was suggested that the National Park should focus on delivering local, smaller scale projects in conjunction with larger strategic schemes. This would include improving the cycle network, footpaths etc. This could be achieved through the planning system and be informed by Local Place Plans.

2.3.4 Other comments received on the Draft Plan

Some more general comments were received which are summarised below.

- a) Several comments related to delivery and funding, highlighting the need for stronger partnership working to make it all happen.
- b) The need for ongoing transparency on the evidence base and rationale used to set targets for action was also raised by several responses.
- c) While there was general support for objectives, there were requests for these to be more SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely). The final Plan will review these and set clear priorities and targets.
- d) Comments were received from some individuals and partners regarding what they considered omissions or lack of referencing within the draft Plan to key topics that are part of the work undertaken by the National Park Authority or by others in the National Park. Further consideration is required in relation to references to these as we develop the final National Park Partnership Plan.
- e) . These included:
 - a. Marine Environment
 - b. Cultural Heritage, including Gaelic language
 - c. Historic Environment
 - d. Outdoor Recreation Plan
 - e. Visitor Experience and Management
- f) A few people chose to reflect their views via the consultation on the role of the National Park and National Park Authority, as well as other public agencies, with points of concern/dissatisfaction noted in general or regarding a particular decision or proposal.

2.3.5 Experiences of the National Park

A [Quick Survey](#) options was offered as a way to engage with a wider audience. This was developed, based on user research, to gather insight into people's lived experiences of and ideas for the National Park, rather than specifically ask people to respond to the detail of the Draft Plan.

Questions included asking what people most value about the National Park, their experiences of and any barriers to their enjoyment of the area. We also asked what people want the National Park to be like in 2045 and how this can be achieved, including consideration of the role they can take to help achieve this.

- A total of 162 Quick Survey responses were received.
- The most common things people said they value most about the National Park was '*access to nature*,' followed by '*outdoor recreation*', '*places to spend time with family or friends*' and '*a quality place to live*'.
- On challenges and barriers, the main concerns were littering, anti-social behaviour (littering, fires/BBQ's, noise, over-crowding, human and dog waste, environmental damage and jet skis), lack of parking and congestion/volume of traffic on the roads, inability to access the National Park via public transport or active travel routes.
- An improved public transport service and better active travel opportunities were welcomed as a way of reducing the numbers of cars currently on the roads.
- Affordable housing and jobs and services for young people were also raised by people responding via the quick survey.
- Many people cited increased visitor numbers, particularly since COVID, as a barrier to enjoying what the National Park has to offer.
- Some respondents also commented on development proposals at Loch Lomond as well as housing and holiday accommodation.
- In terms of roles people felt they could play in the future of the National Park, the two most common answers were to give more time and volunteer within the National Park as well as reducing their carbon footprint by using public transport, reducing the amount of private car use, increasing their use of active travel opportunities and educating people on the importance of alternative forms of transport.
- Around a third of respondents felt that communities will play a key role in helping to deliver the future of the National Park. Another common answer was a desire for increased numbers of rangers or police.
- When asked what barriers were perceived to making positive changes to the National Park the most common answers that emerged were funding, lack of public awareness and education.

3. ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION APPROACH

3.1 Designing our engagement

Through our day-to-day work as the National Park Authority, we are continually engaging with stakeholders including partner organisations, communities, visitors, businesses and landowners. The Draft Plan was developed based on the extensive knowledge and understanding gained through this ongoing engagement.

Given the broad scope of the Draft Plan, and the step change it represents, we needed a different approach than the traditional, one-size-fits-all formal consultation. While we are required to consult on the Draft Plan itself, we also wanted to engage a broader range of people in a conversation to raise awareness of the issues facing the National Park and help shape the future of the area, without them needing to

have to submit a full, formal consultation response to be involved. Based on our understanding of their needs, we tailored the approach to meet the needs of the different types of people and organisations we were keen to engage in this conversation. Ahead of the formal 12-week consultation period, we also commissioned some independent user research with key stakeholder groups we regularly work with and with people whose voices are less often heard during consultations, in order to co-design our approach to engagement.

User research was carried out with the following representative groups:

- [Disability Information Scotland](#) - charity providing information for people living with disability in Scotland.
- [Deafblind Scotland](#) - National charity for people with dual sensory loss.
- [Black Scottish Adventurers](#) - community encouraging enjoyment of Scotland's outdoors for people of all backgrounds.
- [YSortIt](#) - youth organisation charity in West Dunbartonshire.
- [Amina](#) - Muslim Women's Resource Centre in Glasgow.
- [National Park Youth Committee](#)
- A local Community Council representative

One of the insights we gained through this user research was that many people would be turned off by the terminology of a 'consultation' and by the perceived time required to take part in detailed surveys or meetings.

Instead, our research highlighted the importance of making it easier for people to get involved by providing more informal, 'light-touch' opportunities for them to engage in discussion, share ideas and experiences. It also emphasised the value of using existing events, channels and networks rather than asking people to give up time to attend specific events or activities solely focused on the Draft Plan.

Building on all of this, a multi-strand approach was developed to provide a range of opportunities for people and organisations to get involved in ways that best suited their needs and role in the Draft Plan.

In the lead up to the consultation launch, a series of informal partner discussions and stakeholder group sessions were also held with the National Park Youth Committee, community groups, land managers and businesses, to outline the themes of the plan and the consultation approach. Follow up meetings during the consultation on particular topics or issues were also offered. This helped ensure these stakeholders were aware of the consultation happening, understood how it would work and that they were encouraged to take part.

Having tested a number of different online systems, we selected [Commonplace](#) as the digital platform we would use to capture feedback and share updates during the consultation period. As well as our own experience of testing systems, we built on experience gained by our colleagues at Cairngorms National Park who also opted to use Commonplace for their Park Plan consultation.

3.2 Formal consultation

While we are required to hold a statutory 12-week consultation, we viewed this period as engagement to allow people to do more than simply agree or disagree with the content of the Draft Plan, but to input into the shaping of the final Plan, share ideas for delivery, shared their experience of the current situation and tell us where they can help improve the future.

The formal consultation period ran from 26 April until 19 July 2023. The primary channel for consultation, [Commonplace](#), complemented by a range of online and in-person events, activities and meetings and an overarching campaign to promote engagement.

Our dedicated [Commonplace site](#) was designed to provide different ways for people to engage in the consultation.

They could either:

- a) [Read the Draft Plan in full](#) and complete a Full Survey providing feedback on all or selected themes, outcomes and objectives, and share how they will help deliver these. This '[Full Survey](#)' option was specifically promoted to organisations.
- b) Complete a [Quick Survey](#) to share their experiences of and ideas for the National Park.
- c) Use an [interactive map](#) to share their comments on how specific places in the National Park make them feel, their experiences and if anything could be changed or improved.
- d) Or simple comment underneath any of the three key sections of the Draft Plan on Commonplace.

People could opt to make their responses on Commonplace public as soon as they posted them, or they could opt to keep them private. 80+% of people opted to make their response public, which allowed other visitors to our Commonplace site to see opinions being shared by other people and organisations in real time.

For ease of analysis and to allow people to read other responses we encouraged as many responses as possible to come via Commonplace. However, we understood that some people or organisations prefer to submit a response via email or letter. That option was always available and continued to be there even after the formal consultation period had ended and responses via Commonplace were no longer possible.

Some organisations and individuals opted to email their responses to the Draft Plan. These responses have been considered alongside those submitted via the Full Survey.

A [glossary](#) was included to improve accessibility and usability of the content for all audiences and people could sign up to receive updates via Commonplace as the consultation progressed.

3.3 Bringing the Draft Plan to life

While Commonplace was our 'shop front' for the consultation, we also reached out to stakeholders through a mix of events and meetings. Staff and Board members were provided with briefings and materials to talk about the Draft Plan at events and forums they attended.

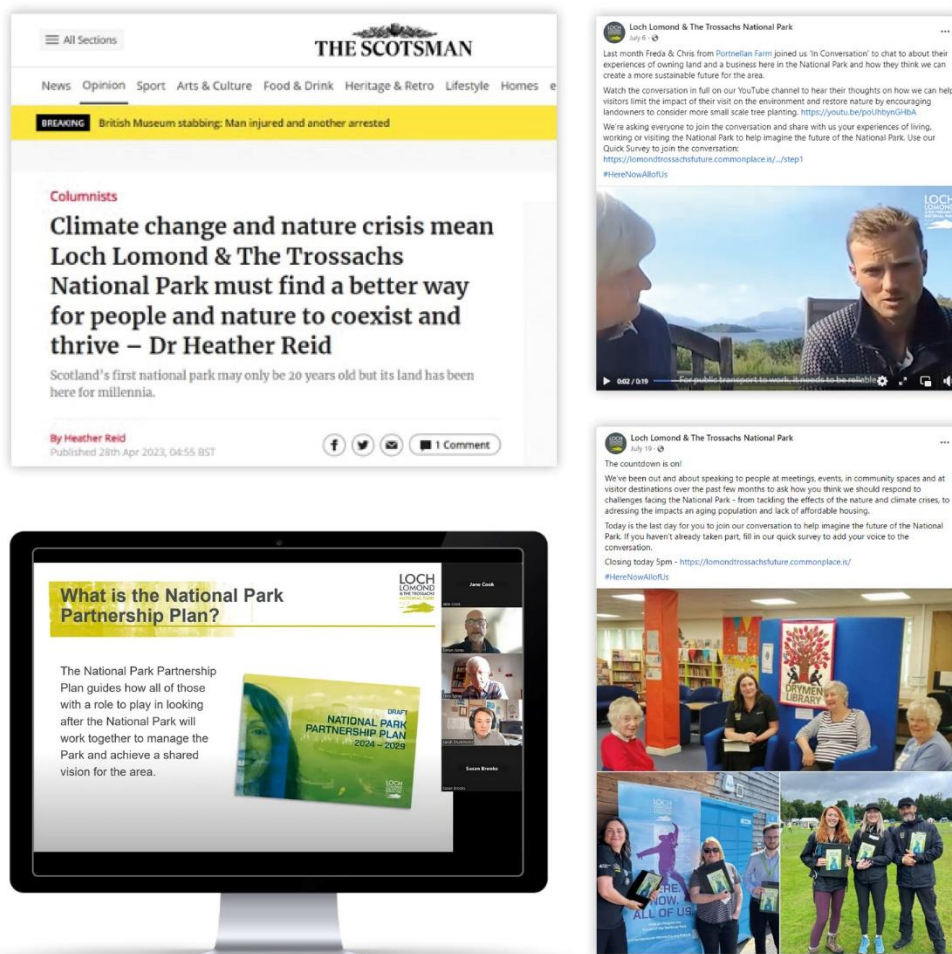
A survey of Board members confirmed that most used their networks to raise awareness and encourage people to get involved in the conversation about the future of the National Park, whether that was sharing with their professional networks, raising awareness in their local community or encouraging people to get involved in the consultation.

Training and materials were provided for National Park Rangers and volunteers to empower them to have conversations about the Draft Plan and promote the consultation at events and when engaging with visitors.

Meetings and events to bring the Draft Plan to life included:

- Discussing the Draft Plan at existing forums such as the Destination Group, Scottish Land and Estates and NFUS regional forums, Friends of Loch Lomond AGM, Scottish Outdoor Recreation Association.
- Senior level one-to-one meetings with key partners such as NatureScot, Transport Scotland, local authorities, SEPA, SRUC.
- Attending events including a Boots & Beards Family Day in Balloch, the Loch Lomond Highland Games in Luss, the UCI Cycling Championship community event in Balloch, and the Drymen Show.
- Staff and volunteers joined the Countryside Trust's Walk in the Park sessions to talk to these walking group members about the Draft Plan.
- Rangers included the Draft Plan to pupils when visiting local schools and during visits to the Park from school groups from outside the Park.
- The Draft Plan and its themes were also discussed with young people taking part in Junior Ranger activity sessions.
- A Future Nature launch event attended by Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity, Lorna Slater MSP, brought together landowners and managers, along with partner organisations, providing an opportunity to discuss the Draft Plan with this key stakeholder group.
- A dedicated session was held with the National Park Youth Committee to facilitate discussion before a response was submitted by the Committee.
- All Board members were provided with a briefing pack and examples of materials and content they could use to promote the different ways of engaging in the consultation amongst their networks and local connections.
- All managers were equipped with materials and messaging to share with partners and stakeholders at regular meetings they attended.

Examples of engagement activity:



A range of Partnership Plan specific engagement and promotional activities were also undertaken. The aim of these was to both spark conversation and where appropriate drive traffic to Commonplace.

Engagement activities included:

- [‘An Introduction to the Draft National Park Partnership Plan’ webinar](#) for members of the public to hear about the Draft Plan and ask questions. The webinar, hosted by National Park Board members Sarah Drummond and Chris Spray involved a good level of discussion following questions from those attending. A recording was then published online for anyone who missed the live session.
- A ‘Question Station’ was set up in Balmaha Visitor Information Centre focused on Draft Partnership Plan themes to prompt conversation with visitors.
- National Park staff went out into some communities to speak to local residents in key locations such as libraries, post offices and cafes.
- A toolkit of campaign materials, such as posters and leaflets, was distributed to partner organisations and businesses around the National Park
- A multi-channel social media campaign of content running throughout the consultation period. This included both organic (free) and paid for targeted posts,

and a mix of content promoting the consultation, highlighting key topics and featuring different voices to talk about specific areas of the Draft Plan. For example, a series of 'In Conversation' videos featured landowners, businesses owners and a former ranger talking about issues and opportunities relevant to them.

- A proactive campaign of media activity ran alongside the consultation distributing stories to local and national media. This successfully achieved a wide range of coverage including local news articles, broadcast media interviews and national media opinion pieces on key topics.
- Our regular e-newsletter, which is sent to more than 900 stakeholders, was used to highlight the consultation and encourage people to get involved throughout the campaign, as did additional news bulletins sent via Commonplace, which people were able to sign up to for updates on the consultation.

3.4 Engagement impact

In addition to the broad range of face-to-face engagement achieved during the 12-week consultation period there were:

- More than 276,000 people reached with Partnership Plan content on social media
- More than 3500 views of the Partnership Plan page on the National Park website.
- 2260 visits to the dedicated Commonplace platform
- 233 responses to the consultation (either via the full survey, quick survey or via email) and a further 75 contributions were made via comments on the interactive map or as comments within the key sections on Commonplace.

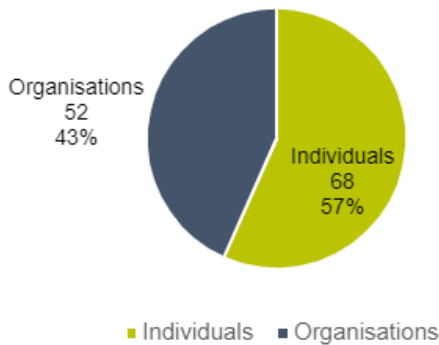
This is compared to 120 consultation responses to our previous National Park Partnership Plan in 2017.

4. WHO DID WE ENGAGE?

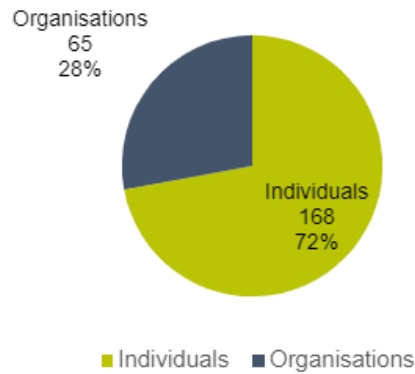
The consultation attracted a higher proportion of individual responses than in previous consultations with 168 individual responses and 65 responses from organisations.

This compares to 68 individual responses to 2017's draft Partnership Plan consultation. This higher level of response from individuals in 2023 (v 2017) is reflective of our aim to reach beyond delivery partners and bring more people into the conversation.

2017 Draft Plan consultation responses



2023 Draft Plan consultation responses



To monitor the reach and inclusivity of our engagement demographic data was collected where possible throughout the consultation period. This data was collected primarily online through Commonplace. Of course, no one was obliged to provide this information. All data was provided voluntarily, with an option to answer as many or as few of the demographic questions as people felt comfortable sharing, so the number of responses to each question is not identical.

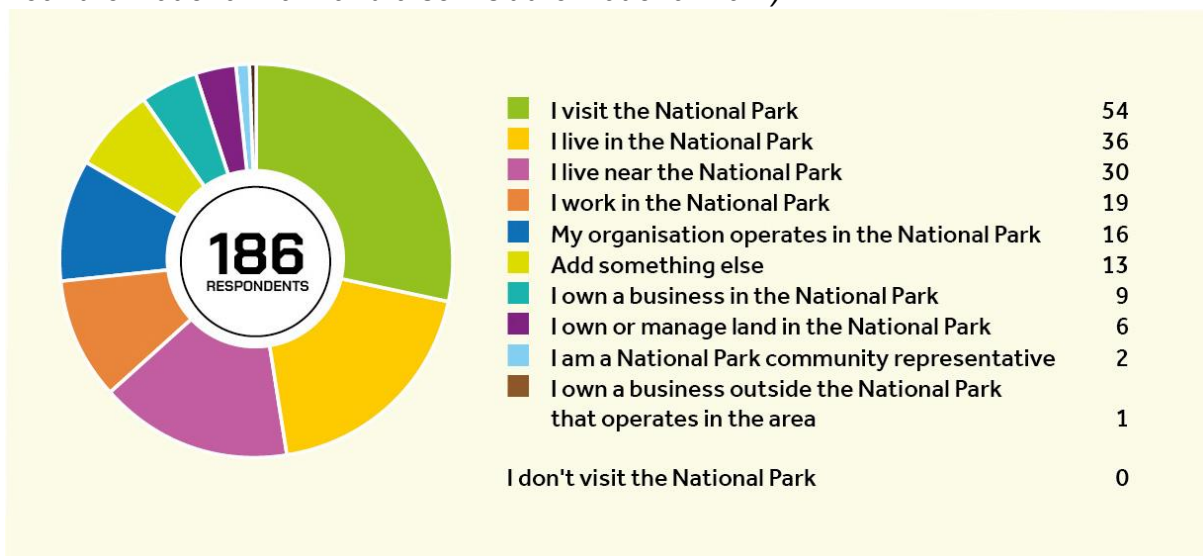
The wider, more informal nature of some of the engagement activities, such as social media and attendance at events means it was not possible to gather the same level of demographic data for each engagement.

4.1 Connection to the National Park

We asked people about their connection to the National Park. Our data shows a good spread of responses. The largest proportion of responses came from those who visit the Park, followed by those who live here and those who live near the Park.

Q: What is your connection to the National Park?

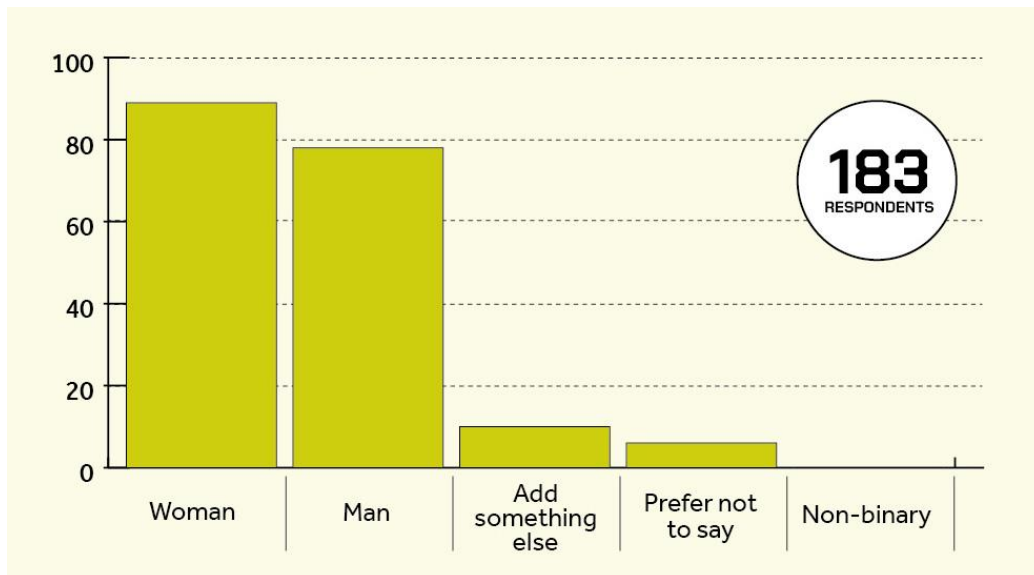
(NB: respondents could select more than category of connection e.g. They might live near the National Park and also visit the National Park)



4.2 Gender

Of the 183 people who responded to the question 'how would you describe your gender?' they would describe themselves as, there was a fairly balanced mix of women (89) and men responding (78). 10 respondents responded 'something else', six chose not to say and no one who answered this question described themselves as non-binary.

Q: How would you describe your gender?



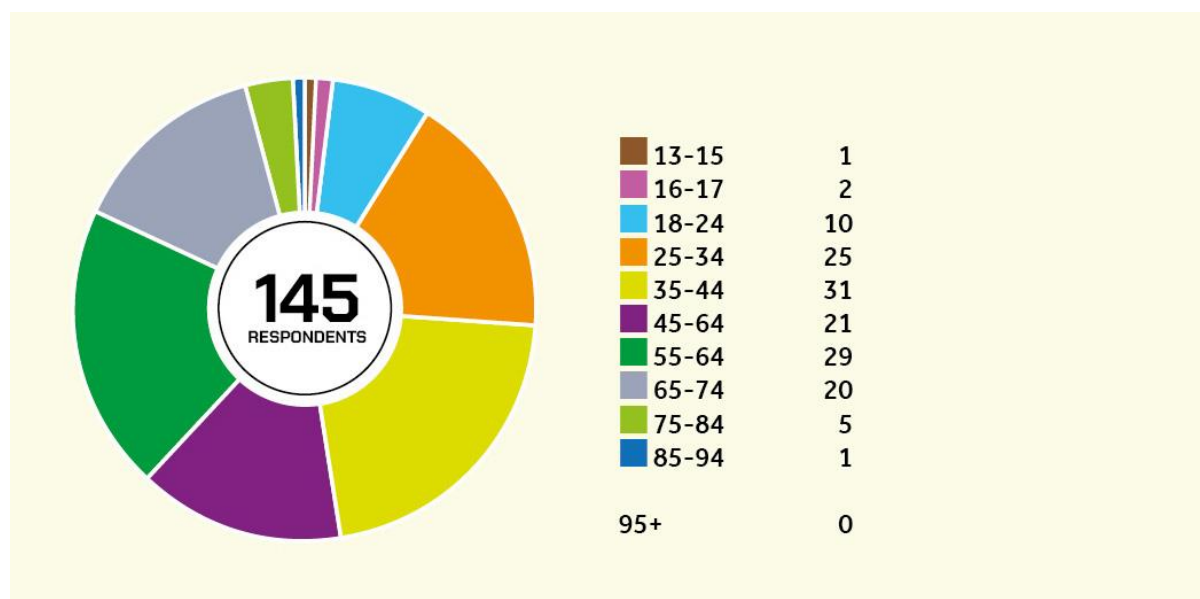
Gender	No of responses	Percentage of responses
Woman	89	49%
Man	78	43%
Add something else	10	5%
Prefer not to say	6	3%
Non-binary	0	0%
	183	100%

4.3 Age

When looking at which age groups respondents came from, there was a reasonable spread of ages apart from in the under 18 categories which was under-represented amongst those who chose to provide this information.

80% of respondents who shared their age came from the working age groups (18-64) with 35-44 year olds being the age group with the most responses (21%). While the number of 16-24 year-olds responding via Commonplace was low, it was anticipated that more young people would engage in the wider engagement conversations through social media and in-person where the same level of demographic information is not readily available.

Q: Which age group do you belong to?

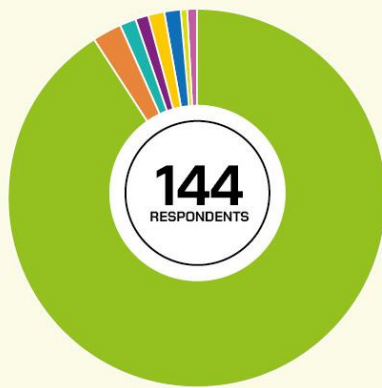


Age-group	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
13-15	1	1%
16-17	2	1%
18-24	10	7%
25-34	25	17%
35-44	31	21%
45-54	21	14%
55-64	29	20%
65-74	20	14%
75-84	5	3%
85-94	1	1%
	145	

4.4 Ethnicity

In terms of ethnicity, according to Scotland's Census 2011, Scotland's population was 96.0% white, 4.2% of people identified as Polish, Irish, Gypsy/Traveller or 'White: Other' and the population in Asian, African, Caribbean or Black, Mixed or Other ethnic groups represented 4%. While a direct comparison is not possible, the consultation respondents appear to be in line with the overall population in Scotland.

Q: What is your ethnicity?



White - Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	130
Other White	4
Asian/Asian British - Indian	2
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African	2
White - Irish	2
Add something else	2
Asian/Asian British - Pakistani	1
Other Mixed/Multiple ethnic	1
Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi	0
Asian/Asian British - Chinese	0
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean	0
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian	0
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African	0
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean	0
Other Asian	0
Other Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	0
Other ethnic group - Arab	0
Other ethnic group	0
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0

Ethnicity	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
White - Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	130	90%
Other White, please describe beginning White - " "	4	3%
Add something else	2	1%
Asian/Asian British - Indian	2	1%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African	2	1%
White - Irish	2	1%
Asian/Asian British - Pakistani	1	1%
Other Mixed/Multiple ethnic, please describe beginning Mixed/Multiple ethnic - ""	1	1%
	144	100%

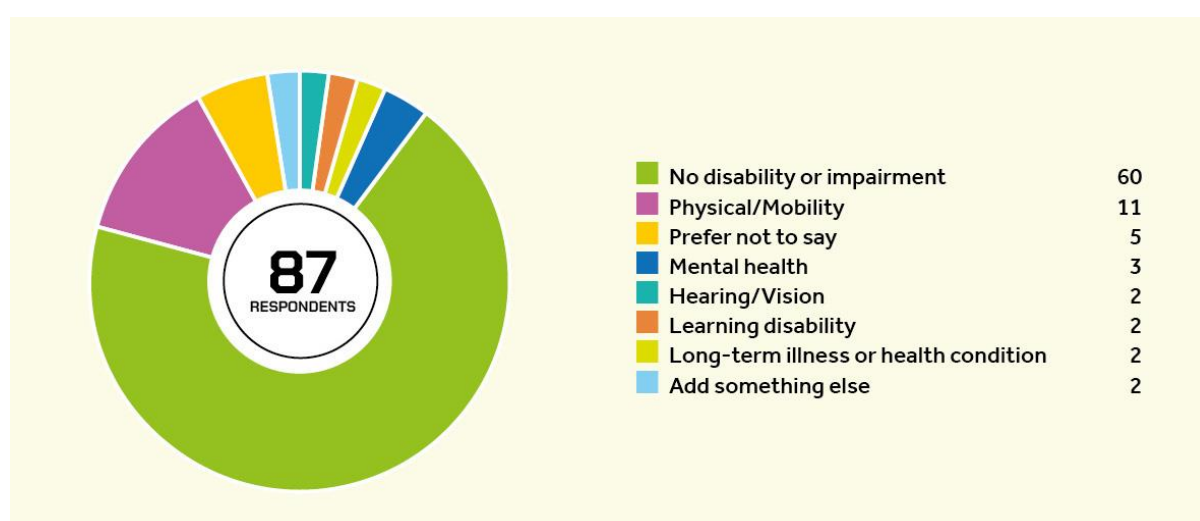
While there were other elements of our Draft Plan engagement (like the Boots & Beards Family Day we hosted in Balloch) that involved direct engagement with people from a more diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, this is not captured in the demographic data collected. It is important to engage a broad range of ethnic

minority communities in strategy development, so we will continue to work on this we will as we work towards publication of the final Plan.

4.5 Disabilities

In terms of disabilities, rather than opting for a binary yes/no choice question, we opted to include a wider spectrum of constraints to access, including physical/mobility, mental health, long term illness and learning disabilities. This will enable a richer understanding of barriers for Park users to consider in the design of future services and access. This will be taken forward when designing future engagement and consultations.

Q. Do you have long-term health problems or a disability that limits daily activity and/or travel?



Long-term health problem or disability	No of responses	Percentage of responses
No disability or impairment	60	69%
Physical/Mobility	11	13%
Prefer not to say	5	6%
Mental health	3	3%
Add something else	2	2%
Hearing/Vision	2	2%
Learning disability	2	2%
Long-term illness or health condition	2	2%
TOTAL	87	100%

5. RESPONSE SUMMARY

As outlined above, the consultation was primarily conducted on Commonplace and respondents could engage and comment on the Plan in several different ways:

- a) [Read the Draft Plan in full](#) and complete a Full Survey providing feedback on all or selected themes, outcomes and objectives, and share how they will help deliver these. This '[Full Survey](#)' option was specifically promoted to organisations.
- b) Complete a [Quick Survey](#) to share their experiences of and ideas for the National Park.
- c) Use an [interactive map](#) to share their comments on how specific places in the National Park make them feel, their experiences and if anything could be changed or improved.
- d) Or simply comment underneath any of the three key sections of the Draft Plan on Commonplace.

A number of consultation responses also came via email. The majority of these were from organisations with a small number from individuals. These responses did not necessarily follow the structure set out in the Commonplace consultation pages, but valuable insights were gathered through this method of consultation.

In person surveys carried out by National Park staff attending various events throughout the consultation period were then added to Commonplace and therefore are included within the Commonplace data in the final outputs of the online consultation.

6. RESPONSES ON 'RESTORING NATURE'

The 'Restoring Nature' section of the Draft Plan was broken down into three sub-sections:

- a) Restoring Nature for Climate,
- b) Restoring Nature for Healthy Ecosystems
- c) Shaping a New Land Economy

Overall, there was broad support for this section of the Draft Plan from both individuals and partner organisations with many identifying ways in which they can help deliver objectives and specific actions. The majority of those engaged acknowledged the need for bold action on restoring nature. Young people in particular called for ambition and boldness, referring to the vision for 2045 being a long way ahead, some 22 years from now.

There was widespread recognition that to achieve real change there needs to be strong partnership working with partner organisations, landowners, businesses, residents and visitors all having a role to play. The majority acknowledged the specific role of landowners in terms of how land is used to benefit climate and

nature. Several respondents also offered volunteer support on restoring nature and commented that more community engagement is needed to help drive the ambitions of this section forward.

Several respondents highlighted their involvement to date in the Future Nature Programme and confirmed their ongoing commitment towards nature restoration across the National Park at landscape scale. Examples of community-led action for nature were also given, evidencing an appetite from some communities to do more for nature, working with support from others.

Responses confirmed overall support for the objectives for peatland, trees and woodland. Several organisations said they can assist with improving monitoring for nature and restoring nature at a landscape scale. These are two key objectives for the National Park and having partner organisations to assist with these local and national aims is encouraging.

Also positive was the support offered in terms of improving jobs, skills and opportunities and help with engaging communities in land use decisions. Overall, there was general support for exploring ethical green finance options.

Through the Full Survey people were asked which delivery partners they feel have the biggest role to play in Restoring Nature. The Scottish Government and private land managers were named most consistently, followed by Forestry and Land Scotland.

The need for education and awareness raising on nature and climate for local residents, businesses and visitors, including young people living both inside and outside of the National Park, was also highlighted.

Several comments, particularly from those involved in deer management, indicated that there are some areas that would benefit from further clarification, expansion and inclusion within the final Plan. Some raised concerns about potential implications arising from investment in natural capital.

While the response to Restoring Nature was largely positive, we also asked people what barriers they perceive there are to delivering the objectives set out in the Draft Plan. The response largely confirmed our own understanding of the barriers which need to be addressed, including:

- the challenge of securing funding packages was frequently mentioned and the need for more long-term funding for developing and delivering nature restoration projects;
- the need for a sound evidence base, monitoring and tracking the state of nature, with acknowledgement that there are some gaps and that collectively improved monitoring is required to ensure that nature restoration efforts can be tracked to

ensure they are effective. As noted above, there were offers of support and expertise from other organisations to help develop this.

- capacity of individuals and organisations as a major barrier which should be acknowledged throughout this section of the Plan.
- the need for a more collaborative approach to Invasive Non-Native Species control and financial support for communities and land managers to assist with tackling this issue could be helpful.
- Funding, skills, training, jobs and homes for people working in nature restoration and contractor availability were confirmed as key barriers

Some respondents noted that there was limited mention of the water environment, including the marine environment. There were also some mixed responses to this section of the Draft Plan– particularly in relation to approaches to herbivore management. It was suggested that the approach to land management and herbivore pressures is too general and should be more focussed. Some comments were also made in relation to the lack of reference to agriculture in the National Park including land food production.

A small number of individual comments received via the interactive map on Commonplace, shared the opinion that nature restoration should be the ongoing focus of the National Park and that there is too much focus on increasing visitor numbers and generating income. Another suggested the need to reduce deer numbers while another proposed temporarily restricting access to areas that are the focus of nature restoration projects.

Restoring Nature conclusions

The positive response to this section of the Draft Plan is encouraging and demonstrates widespread agreement of the need to take bold action along with support from a range of stakeholders to achieve this.

The clearest message coming through responses on this was the need for strong partnership working and inclusion of communities within this.

The barriers and issues highlighted largely confirmed those already understood by the National Park Authority and questions raised focused primarily on how the objectives within the Draft Plan will be delivered or areas which may need more focus. A priority next step will be following up with all those who offered delivery support to confirm their role in the delivery of the final Plan.

Sample quotes:

“It's critical that we take action, even if it's expensive and difficult. Currently watching our rivers drying up and seeing the increasing risks of wildfires, floods and rising sea levels - all these pose risks to people and wildlife.” (Individual Response)

“Our biggest challenge and barrier to delivering for nature is securing funding to develop the projects that are needed to do this” (Organisation Response)

“Increased interest in land for carbon could squeeze out smaller interests and concentrate land in hands of fewer richer possibly absent landowners.” (Individual Response)

“I currently get involved in local community projects, but I will try and influence our local place plan which is due for renewal to ensure that there is a focus on climate change. ... a lot of people doing small things can make a difference as well as the essential larger scale projects.” (Individual Response)

7. RESPONSES ON CREATING A SUSTAINABLE, LOW-CARBON DESTINATION

The ‘Creating a Sustainable, Low-Carbon Destination’ section of the Draft Plan was broken down into three sub-sections:

- a) Connecting Everyone with Nature
- b) Improving Popular Places and Routes
- c) Low Carbon Travel for Everyone

This section generated a lot of interest and discussion across all channels, with support for the objectives set out in this section and widespread confirmation of the issues, particularly in terms of travel and transport.

Many respondents supported the objectives around ‘Connecting everyone with nature’ and highlighted how they can play a part in achieving these, either on land that they own and manage or through their own organisational remit.

The overwhelming consensus on this theme was that public transport within the National Park needs to improve alongside improvements to the active travel network. It was felt that the lack of public transport and active travel opportunities are a barrier to people from different backgrounds enjoying what the Park has to offer. It was also cited as a barrier to people living and working in the National Park including young people. Making it easier for people to travel to, from and around the Park without a car was also recognised as supporting the Net Zero aims of the National Park. It was generally agreed that a whole system approach is needed to address the transport and travel issue

It was recognised that for objectives on this theme to be delivered successfully there needs to be a more joined up approach from partner organisations and that identifying a lead organisation could help drive action.

Through the Full Survey we asked which organisations should be involved in ‘Creating a Sustainable, Low Carbon Destination’. A variety of organisations were

selected, but the most consistently named organisation was Transport Scotland as selected by all those who responded. ScotRail, VisitScotland and the neighbouring Local Authorities were also consistently named as key delivery partners.

The majority of partner organisations stated their support for the aims and objectives set out in this section. Several also identified objectives where their organisations could help with delivery, and highlighted where alignment can be achieved with other strategies, such as Regional Transport Strategies. As well as partner organisation support, there was also clear support from members of the public for the travel objectives set out within the Draft Plan.

There were suggestions made for specific locations where cycling infrastructure could be improved. It was also suggested that access to the water network for non-motorised vessels could be improved.

There were also several responses highlighting the need to upgrade the road network – specifically the A82 and A83. Doing this could, it was stated, lead to increased visitor numbers and higher economic growth for the National Park and businesses based here, as well as supporting the active travel network aims set out in the Draft Plan. This links to the ‘Enabling a Greener Economy and Sustainable Living’ section within the Draft Plan. It was also noted that improvements to the A83 are needed to minimise disruption caused by landslips.

Comments were also made that greater consideration should be given to the rail network and infrastructure, including stations, within the National Park to provide opportunities for integrated transport solutions and support visitor hubs.

Whilst supportive, a notable theme in this section of the Draft Plan concerned perceived omissions around access and recreation, visitor experience and visitor management. It was felt by some that there was either a lack of or insufficient reference to these matters, including the Outdoor Recreation Plan, approaches to powered watercraft and jet skis, funding for core paths, rangers and policing anti-social behaviour.

‘Creating a Sustainable, Low-Carbon Destination’ was the section of the Draft Plan attracting the most comments through the interactive map, of these stated that their experiences were either ‘mostly negative’ or ‘negative’ on a variety of issues with road and cycle infrastructure being a common theme and other commentary such as water access and public realm.

Active Travel event engagement

As part of the wider engagement programme, in-person surveys were carried out at several events. National Park staff went along to a [community cycling event held in Balloch](#), in preparation for the UCI Cycling World Championships, to find out more

about people's views on travel and transport, using a specially designed questionnaire.

People at the event were asked about their experiences of using public or active transport within the National Park.

In total there were 37 respondents who were happy to share their views and the responses that were received generally mirror those coming through the Commonplace survey.

While some of the respondents felt that the current public transport offer suited their needs, most respondents felt that improvements are needed to encourage more people to use it. The suggestions for improvement were more frequent services that cover a wider geographic area, are cheaper and more accessible to people with differing physical abilities.

The questions also sought views on cycling facilities across the National Park. Most people felt that a better-connected cycle network would improve their experiences of recreation within the National Park. It was also noted that the cycling infrastructure that is currently in place could be better maintained to allow for easier and safer use.

Creating a Sustainable, Low-Carbon Destination Conclusions

The overall response to this theme of the Draft Plan has been extremely positive with strong support for the aims and objectives. It was acknowledged that the scale of change required will need strong partnership working and solutions. Many commented on the role they can play in helping to deliver these. This will be explored further in subsequent meetings with stakeholders.

Where less positive comments were received, these primarily focussed on issues with existing transport and active travel networks rather than the content and direction of travel of the Draft Plan. However, there were notable comments received in relation to perceived omissions in this section of the Draft Plan around specific objectives and actions for outdoor recreation and visitor experience.

Sample quotes:

"I agree more needs to be done to increase the diversity of visitors to the park. For many, getting to the park is a barrier as they either don't own a car, poor bus links etc. Wider options for cheap shuttle buses would be good - a bit like the Sherpa bus service in Snowdonia" (Individual Response)

"There needs to be more opportunities for frequent, affordable and accessible sustainable transport that integrates with a safe and attractive active travel network."
(Individual Response)

“The National Park is not accessible to large proportions of the population due to poor transport links that are not accessible, available and affordable. There is limited connectivity between transport hubs and accessible natural experiences. Active travel modes of cycling, walking and wheeling connect people with nature they need better integration into mobility hubs.” (Individual Response)

“In particular, we support the objectives for a Whole Systems Approach, Incentivising Sustainable Travel Choices and Developing a Rural Transport Sector and are able to assist in developing and delivering the actions required to meet these objectives.” (Organisation Response)

8. RESPONSES ON ENABLING A GREENER ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING

‘Enabling a Greener Economy and Sustainable Living’ was broken down into three sub-sections:

- a) Transitioning to a Greener Rural Economy
- b) Living Well Locally
- c) Harnessing Development and Infrastructure Investment

This section of the Draft Plan received less engagement than the previous two themes. Possible reasons for this could be the slightly narrower audience for these topics which are most relevant to those living and working within the National Park, or that the objectives raised within this section are felt to have been considered already via other engagement, such as through communities preparing local place plans. For those who responded to all sections of the Draft Plan, survey fatigue may also have been a factor. This will require to be considered as part of the Plan finalisation stage to identify whether any follow up engagement is required.

All partner organisations who took part in the consultation supported the objectives around ‘Transitioning to a Greener Rural Economy’ and most suggested that their organisation could help deliver objectives on delivering a ‘wellbeing economy’. Support was expressed for local living objectives with recognition also from individuals of the need for rural services and facilities, such as early education and childcare provision or local food/convenience shopping, to support retention of population, particularly young people and families.

While several partners said that their organisation could help deliver positive local outcomes and help with identifying development opportunities across the National Park, fewer agreed with the aim of ensuring that the natural environment is at the forefront of decision making on development with some voicing concerns that development might be stifled.

As with the other two themes of the Draft Plan, the Full Survey asked who should be involved with delivering this theme. The answer with the most respondents felt that

landowners and land managers should have a more active role in transitioning to a greener economy and supporting the objectives set out within the Draft Plan. The second most selected answer was Scottish Forestry.

Several respondents confirmed the issues identified in the Draft Plan concerning skills and labour shortages, particularly within the green jobs sector and agreed that more work is needed to identify gaps and opportunities and therefore encourage young people to live and work in the National Park.

Another common topic raised was the need for more affordable housing. This was felt to be vitally important to ensure the longevity of the communities within the National Park, support local businesses and a growth in green jobs needed to deliver for climate and nature objectives.

While this was one of the main issues identified only a small number of partner organisations suggested that they could offer support in delivering this aim. Further consideration and investigation are therefore required to ensure this can be successfully achieved.

Some comments were also received in relation to the current local development plan policies on housing and tourism, regarding visitor accommodation, with some criticism that it is easier to get permission to build new visitor accommodation than housing in countryside areas of the National Park.

A common theme across all the sections within the Draft Plan has been the need for increased community involvement. The importance of educating communities to make use of the Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) 2015 was mentioned by several respondents. This will help communities take ownership of their areas and work towards delivering on the objectives set out within the Draft Plan. It was suggested that a useful measure to track economic growth would be to measure the numbers of social enterprises operating within the National Park.

There were several references to the Draft Plan's approach to renewable energy development, with consideration of introducing a more proactive stance towards this requested (specifically in relation to wind turbines).

There were limited comments relating to this section of the Draft Plan via the interactive map on Commonplace and the comments received focused only on the Arrochar area. These were on the level of marine litter that collects on the shore front and new housing not being in keeping with the character of the village. One landowner has suggested the need for significant development within the Arrochar and Tarbet area to act as an overall catalyst to stimulate inward investment and finance delivery of wider objectives for climate and nature.

It was also suggested that there should be a focus on delivering smaller scale, local projects in conjunction with larger strategic schemes. For example, improving the

cycle network and footpaths which could be achieved through the planning system and be informed by Local Place Plans.

There was also support for the National Park's aim of improving active travel routes, however it was again noted that there was a lack of reference to the Outdoor and Recreation Access Plan.

As with the previous section of the Draft Plan, several comments were received in support of improvements to the A82 and A83 trunk roads with some requesting stronger emphasis in relation to these in the final Plan.

Enabling a Greener Economy and Sustainable Living conclusions

While this theme didn't get the same level of engagement as the other two themes, those who did engage were generally supportive of the objectives identified within the Draft Plan. It is clear that housing across the National Park is a key issue as well as jobs and skills. Several comments related to land, development and infrastructure requirements that are of strategic significance and require to be considered further in the final Plan and preparation of the new Local Development Plan.

Sample quotes:

“Living in a National Park for me comes with a sense of responsibility for custodianship. Not to keep the place like some sort of museum or manicured tourist resort, rather to care for and enhance the natural environment.” (Individual Response)

“For every major plan, there needs to be an associated community impact/opportunity assessment (informed by Local Place Plans)” (Individual Response)

9. OTHER COMMENTS

Some general comments were received relating to delivery and funding, highlighting the need for stronger partnership working to achieve the outcomes and objectives set out in the Draft Plan.

The need for ongoing transparency on the evidence base and rationale used to set targets for action was also raised by several responses.

While there was general support for objectives, there were requests for these to be more SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely). The final Plan will review these and set clear priorities and targets.

Some responses to the consultation commented on topics which individuals and partner organisations felt were omissions to the Draft Plan. These included:

- Marine Environment

- Cultural Heritage, including Gaelic language
- Historic Environment
- Outdoor Recreation Plan

Whilst specific objectives were not identified in relation these, they do form important and statutory elements of the work of the National Park Authority and partners who have a responsibility for these areas and a role to play in delivery of them within the National Park. Further consideration is required in relation to reference to these in the process to prepare the final National Park Partnership Plan.

A few people chose to reflect their views via the consultation on the role of the National Park and National Park Authority, as well as other public agencies, with points of concern/dissatisfaction noted in general or regarding a particular decision or proposal.

10. EXPERIENCES OF THE NATIONAL PARK

The Quick Survey option was not designed to get specific responses to the contents of the Draft Plan, but to gather insights on people's lived experiences of the National Park and their ideas for its future.

This option was primarily aimed at residents and visitors, rather than organisations and groups, and allowed people to engage with the consultation without it being too time consuming. The information gathered will help inform the final draft of the Partnership Plan and subsequent policy documents developed by the National Park such as the Local Development Plan.

A total of 158 Quick Survey responses were received. These primarily came from local people, businesses and visitors. Six organisations also responded via the Quick Survey.

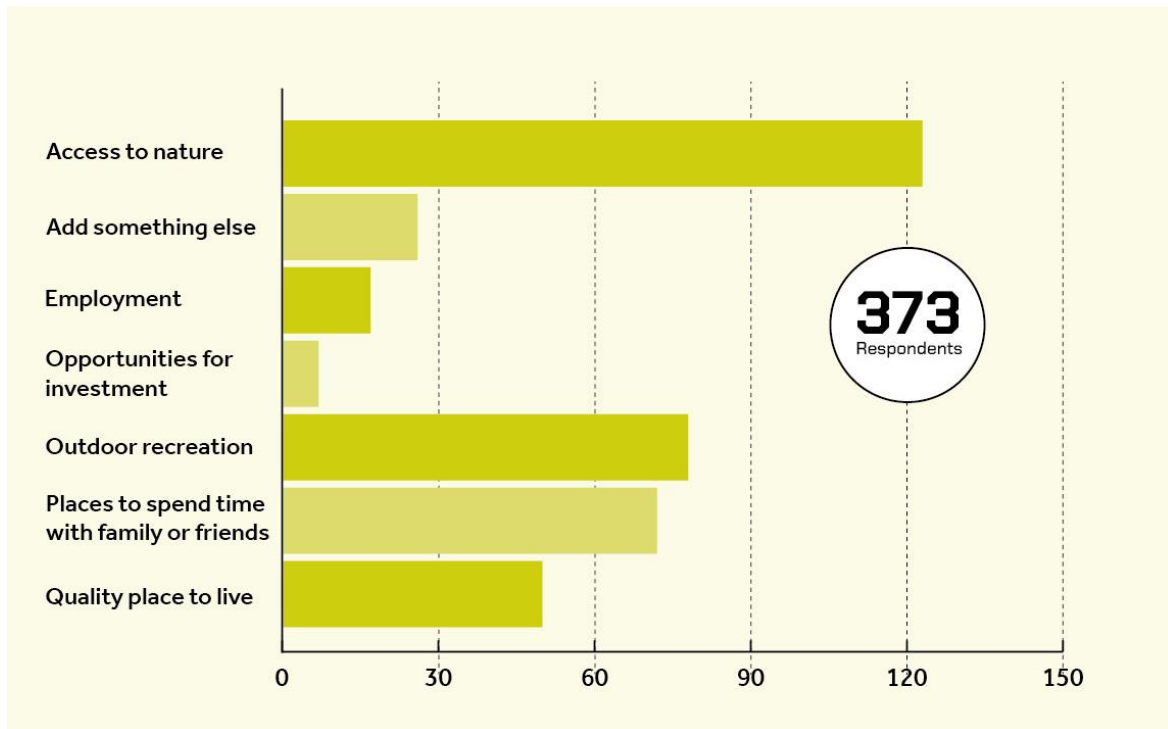
The majority of people responding, said they felt positively or very positively about the National Park. A small number said they felt very negatively. Many of those who responded felt proud to live here or to visit frequently with family and friends.

When asked to share their experiences, the responses were broadly positive, and any issues raised have been constructive. The main issue raised was anti-social behaviours, such as fires/BBQs, noise, over-crowding, littering, human and dog waste, jet-skis and damage to the environment. There were concerns raised that the National Park Authority does not have the resources or powers to control these issues and that more needs to be done to make the Park a more enjoyable place to be.

There were also comments concerning traffic congestion and lack of public transport as a barrier to people being able to visit the National Park and moving around. In parallel to this a lack of parking was also a concern. An improved public transport

service and better active travel opportunities were welcomed as a way of reducing the numbers of cars currently on the roads.

When asked what they value most about the National Park the most common answer was 'access to nature' followed by 'outdoor recreation', 'places to spend time with family or friends' and 'a quality place to live'.



We also asked people about future action and what role they can take. The two most common answers were to give more time and volunteer and reducing their carbon footprint by using public transport, reducing the amount of private car use, increasing their use of active travel opportunities and educating people on the importance of alternative forms of transport.

When asked who else needs to be involved in the future of the National Park the most common response was the need for more community involvement. Around a third of respondents felt that communities will play a key role in helping to deliver the future of the National Park. Another common answer was increased numbers of rangers or police.

When identifying barriers there are to making positive changes to the National Park, the most common answers were funding, lack of public awareness and education. Other comments cited the need for engagement and good relationships between agencies, communities, businesses and Scottish Government to better address some of the challenges faced within the National Park.

Suggestions to make the National Park more sustainable prompted a wide range of views and responses, with several overlapping comments including the need for

education and awareness raising, transport and travel options other than the car, affordable housing, land use and management and encouraging more responsible behaviours.

“As a visitor there is a lot I can do. I can consider using different methods of transport where available, I can contribute to monitoring of land or water quality by reporting things I see whilst visiting. I think visitors should take more responsibility as they are visiting a protected area...” (Individual response)

“Put communities in charge of what happens in their area. Work together more.” (Individual Response)

“We can provide a youth voice and a different perspective, as the next generation of people living and working in the National Park.” (Youth Committee Response)

11. CONCLUSION

The consultation and engagement response generally shows overall support for the key themes and contents of the Draft Plan.

It is clear that people value the National Park and feel proud to live, work and visit here. Access to nature came through strongly as the thing people most value about the National Park.

There were some specific topics in the Draft Plan which gathered particularly strong support such as the need for action on restoring nature and bold, joined up working on this across partner organisations, landowners and communities.

One of the major topics was support for a joined-up approach to improving travel options and infrastructure – both to support Net Zero aims, to make the National Park accessible to more people and to make communities more sustainable. Most partners acknowledged the need for a whole-systems approach to tackling this and offered their support to deliver change.

Housing, jobs and skills were recurring themes in the responses, agreeing with the need to create more sustainable, thriving local communities with a greener economy.

Across all three themes, respondents recognised the need for collaborative working. Engagement with communities was a recurring message across all themes.

As is to be expected, responses showed differing views on some topics between stakeholders.

Where there were more negative comments, these primarily served to reinforce the issues and challenges facing the National Park rather than contradict the approach set out to tackle these in the Draft Plan.

While the level of support for the themes in the Draft Plan was positive, it is recognised that there is an appetite for more detailed actions to be included in the final Plan. Follow up engagement is also needed with some key partners to clearly identify how they will support delivery of these actions.

There were also some topics raised which stakeholders felt needed a greater focus or specific acknowledgement in the final Plan, including outdoor recreation and visitor management, marine environment, cultural heritage and historic environment. These will be considered when developing the final National Park Partnership Plan 2024-29.

In terms of our approach to engagement, the response shows that taking a broader approach to reach more people as well as partner organisations has been successful with a larger proportion of responses from individuals received compared to the last Plan. While not all engagement methods provided specific responses to the topics, aims and objectives set out in the Draft Plan, this approach has helped to gather a wider perspective on people's experiences of and ideas for the National Park which will be used to inform the final Plan and other key strategies such as the Local Development Plan. This approach has also provided useful learning opportunities both on how to engage and how to track engagement in future.

12. NEXT STEPS

Our primary focus now is the development of the final National Park Partnership Plan.

The insights, experiences and concerns raised through this period of consultation, along with our and partners' experiences and knowledge to date, will be fully considered and used to inform the drafting of the Plan.

An important step will be to follow up with delivery partner organisations and other key stakeholder groups to agree their role in delivery and the actions where they will either lead or support delivery.

We will continue to update our Board, staff, partners and stakeholders on what we have heard so far and how this will be used to inform the final Plan.

The final draft National Park Partnership Plan 2024-29 will be presented to the National Park Authority Board in December 2023, ahead of submission to the Scottish Government for approval.

The Local Development Plan will be drafted in 2024 and will provide more detailed guidance on spatial development and land use activities in accordance with the strategic context set by the National Park Partnership Plan.