

**LOCH  
LOMOND  
& THE TROSSACHS  
NATIONAL PARK**



**National Park**

# Place Programme

**A PLACE BASED APPROACH TO VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT**

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# 1. Introduction

This paper sets out a new multi-year programme for capital investment in our visitor infrastructure - the National Park Place Programme. It is a position statement that outlines the principles, approach, and priorities across land ownerships and aims to deliver multiple benefits for visitors, communities, and businesses.

Taking a strategic approach, focused on where more impactful change can be made, it will also respond to and complement our work on the twin climate and nature crises.

The Place Programme will inform the upcoming update to the National Park Partnership Plan and the Local Development Plan. While it includes priorities and projects identified through our work with partners and engagement with stakeholders, it is not an exhaustive list. The projects will be annually reviewed and updated, developing a rolling multiyear programme.



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**The visitor infrastructure measures within the Place Programme follow a strategic approach that is both thematic and geographic within a place-based framework that is joined-up, collaborative, and participative.**

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## 2. What is a place-based approach?

The Place Programme is about how we make investment in our infrastructure happen as well as where we make it happen – a place led approach. It is a way of working that has at its core a drive to provide higher quality facilities that reflect a nature and climate conscious sustainable balance between local needs and amenity and visitor demand and experience.

**A place-led approach is about doing the right thing, with the right people in the right locality.**

The Place Principle promotes a shared understanding of place, and the need to take a more collaborative approach to a place’s services and assets to achieve better outcomes for people and communities. It’s a more joined-up, collaborative, and participative approach to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place.

It’s about understanding, appreciating and working with:

- Existing assets
- The surrounding landscape
- The place identity and the right type of intervention
- At the right stage, scale and location

And its achieved by:

- Gathering and mapping baseline information
- Engaging with communities, local authorities, third sector bodies, developers, agencies, relevant local businesses and service providers, and
- Ensuring place quality is prioritised in all decisions and investments

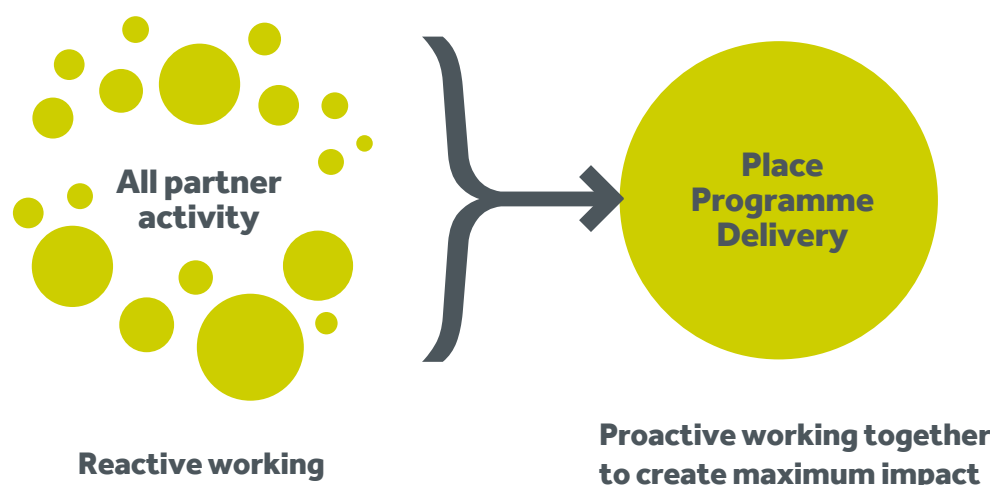


Figure 1 Benefits of a place based approach

### 3. Why do we need the Place Programme to invest in visitor infrastructure?



**Existing visitor infrastructure is, in the main, out of date or requires upgrading.**

As set out in the 2022 Joint Response Visitor Management Plan National Park partners are working with each other, and with local and national stakeholders, to develop a new, prioritised five year programme of visitor management infrastructure and service enhancements.

Changes in the National Park capital settlement now provide an opportunity to plan ahead with confidence to 2025/2026 and with that the opportunity to look beyond our own sites to develop a place-based strategic investment plan for the National Park's publicly owned and third sector visitor infrastructure.



**Our visitor infrastructure is not coping with peak demand, not meeting user needs and not supporting the people who live and work in the park.**

The drivers for this downward trend in the fitness for purpose of existing visitor infrastructure include: unprecedented visitor numbers driven by the pandemic, significant demand/need for visitor management activity, lack of co-ordinated investment by partners, and historic budget and resource constraints.



**Current visitor infrastructure does not support nature or our climate change adaptation including Mission Zero.**

This has resulted in negative impacts on communities, nature, landscape, businesses and visitor experience with examples of pressures being:

- Motorhome pressures
- Unprecedented litter issues
- Antisocial behaviour impacts
- Car-based congestion issues

It is unclear if the visitor season in 2022 will follow the same pattern of the previous two years, but the need for co-ordinated investment is clear.



There is now the opportunity, as made clear in the Joint Response Visitor Management plan, referenced earlier, to capitalise on a number of positive changes to take a longer-term strategic approach to raising standards of infrastructure in the National Park, supporting a Modal shift for transport and where appropriate developing our destinations.

The supportive environment for this includes:

- Significant budget uplift 2021/22: Includes five-year capital budget allocation for the National Park Authority.
- Strong public sector operational partnership and understanding of shared issues via the Safe Recovery Action Group
- Greater profile of visitor pressures and national activities, i.e., Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF)
- Increased community and business activity, including establishment of Visitor Management Groups and proactive investment and visitor management across the Park.

The level of investment required is significant to realise the benefits for people place, climate and nature and a clear strategic programme is essential in unlocking the level of resources required.

For example, the estimated funding via the Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies consultant reports indicates an anticipated total investment, spread over a five year plus period of:

<b>East Loch Lomond</b>	£3.15M - £3.95M ex VAT
<b>West Loch Lomond</b>	£4.50M - £5.65M ex VAT

The Place Programme provides the framework and indicative delivery for strategic investment in visitor infrastructure in the National Park over that five-year period. The programme includes an indicative delivery schedule for infrastructure intervention that will be prioritised for implementation, during and after the five-year period starting in 2021/22, which saw partners deliver several early action projects, and ending in 2025/26, with more detail provided for the first three years; highlighting early action 'accelerated projects' as part of a longer term responsive and iterative programme that will be reviewed annually with partners.

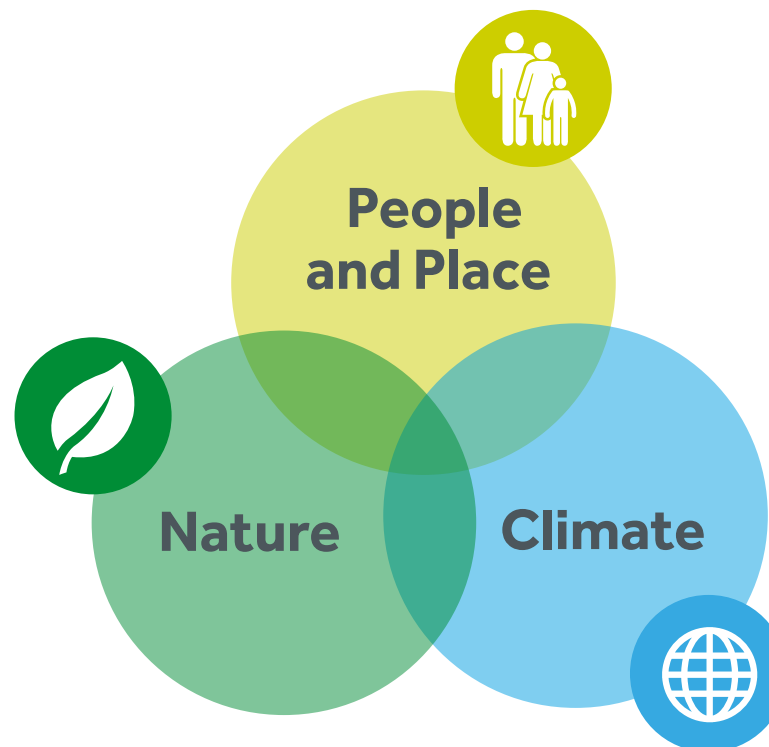


Figure 2 Overarching programme benefits



# Who is involved, and how?

## National Park Safe Recovery Action Group (NPSRAG)

The Place programme has been developed through engagement with the public body partners that collectively form the National Park Safe Recovery Action Group (NPSRAG) which was founded in 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 global pandemic and the subsequent increase in visitor pressures post-lockdown.

The NPSRAG comprises of: Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority – Facilitator, Police Scotland, Transport Scotland, Forestry & Land Scotland, Argyll & Bute Council, Perth & Kinross Council, Stirling Council, and West Dunbartonshire Council.

All partners also engage with a range of other organisations and individuals who have a stake in visitor management and the associated infrastructure in the National Park; local businesses, third sector bodies, land managers and local community representatives. Whilst these stakeholders are not directly members of the NPSRAG, their collective views and experiences have informed the creation and actions in this strategic approach through wider engagement for example, in areas where they are established, via Visitor Management Groups. These groups have been set up in the areas of the National Park that experience the most intense visitor pressures.

## Visitor Management Groups

To ensure that management decisions relating to visitors at a local level could be undertaken in an inclusive way during 2021, three additional Visitor Management Groups were set up in addition to the existing group for East Loch Lomond. These new groups cover: West Loch Lomond, Strathard & The Trossachs, and Callander & the surrounding area.

The groups are composed of representatives from local Community Councils and Community Development Trusts, businesses, landowners, Local Authorities and agencies such as Police Scotland, Transport Scotland, Forestry and Land Scotland and the National Park Authority.

In the coming years a significant focus for Visitor Management Groups will be working together to influence visitor infrastructure improvements. The groups are relatively newly formed and will take time to establish themselves in 2022, however early work for East and West Loch Lomond has been undertaken using additional funding made available from the Scottish Government through Visit Scotland's 'Strategic Tourism Development Fund' to assist with the development of visitor infrastructure studies. This will ensure that longer term projects can be developed to a stage where we can take advantage of additional funds such as the 'Rural Tourism Infrastructure Development Fund'. These studies and their development contributed to the Place Programme's place-based approach to strategic visitor infrastructure.



Figure 3 Extract from West Loch Lomond Strategic Infrastructure Development Study

# How we will deliver the Place Programme - our Approach

The visitor infrastructure measures contained within the Programme follow a strategic approach within a place-based framework to create a vision and strategy that is both thematic and geographic.

## Strategic approach within a place-based framework

This strategic approach to investing prepares the ground for the provision of higher quality facilities that reflect a sustainability climate and nature conscious balance between local needs and amenity and, visitor demand and experience.

The strategic approach to investment follows the hierarchy as set out in the Scottish Government's A National Mission with Local Impact: Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021-22 to 2025-26.

The mapping of the Government approach translated to the Place Programme Strategic Approach to Investment is as follows:

- Determine Future Need
- Maximise the life of existing assets
- Repurpose and co-locate
- Replace, create or build new assets.



Figure 4 Investment Hierarchy, based on new Scottish Government Hierarchy



## Estates Asset Management Strategy

The Place Programme will run in parallel with our forthcoming Estates Asset Management Strategy whose purpose is to establish an agreed approach for how we manage our estates and some specific non-estates infrastructure.

It will aim to define what the Park Authority Estate, estates assets and non-estates infrastructure are, identify what the baseline requirements for its management entails, and provide a high-level outline of the Park Authority's approach to providing and maintaining it to meet the organisations' needs.

The Place Programme focus will be on strategic investment in assets in the Park, where this goes beyond regular maintenance and management works.



# Infrastructure Investment Vision and Strategy

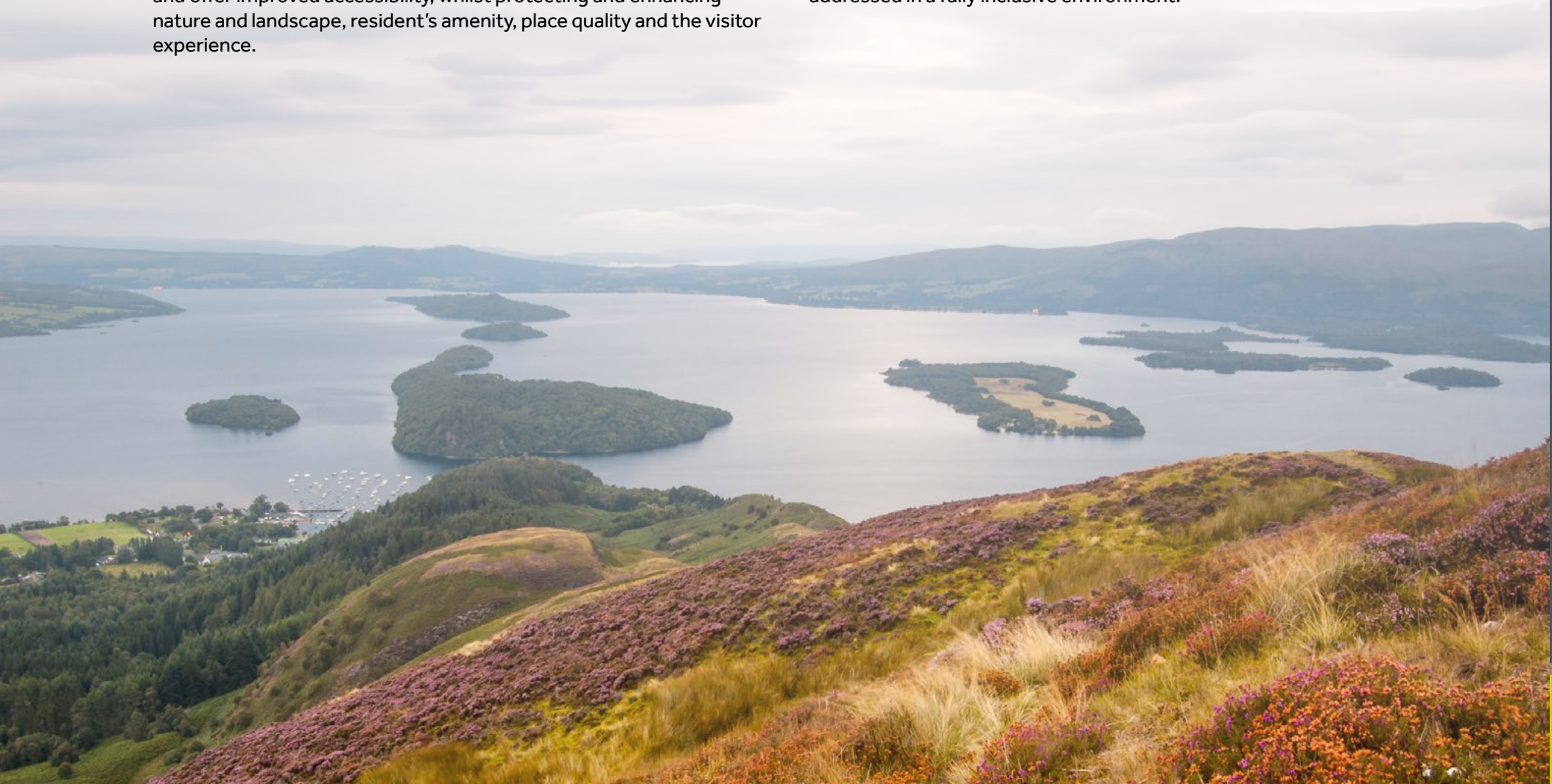
The Place Programme vision and strategy for investment is rooted in delivering with stakeholders for people, place and nature.

## VISION

The National Park Authority and its partners will invest in higher quality facilities that reflect a sustainable balance between local needs and amenity and visitor demand. A hierarchy of networked destinations is developed to offer more sustainable capacity. Enhanced facilities are provided that promote sustainable travel and offer improved accessibility, whilst protecting and enhancing nature and landscape, resident's amenity, place quality and the visitor experience.

## STRATEGY

The strategy for development of Visitor Infrastructure seeks to promote responsible tourism and quality visitor experience structured around interventions which support managed dispersal of visitors, encourage modal shift, promote sustainable development and ensure the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors are addressed in a fully inclusive environment.



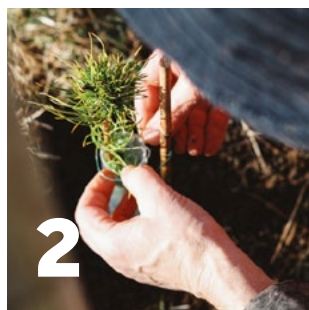
## Thematic priorities

Our Place programme work will be guided by a set of **five thematic priorities** achieving benefits for People and Place, Climate and Nature and they underpin the whole programme.



### Supporting Sustainable Development - people and place

Promoting a high-quality landscape experience through design excellence, for both visitors and communities, to enhance place quality and the Special Landscape Qualities of the National Park.



### Supporting Sustainable Development – climate and nature

Leading a nature-based approach to design which addresses the climate and biodiversity crises using the principles of both Future Nature and Mission Zero, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, and capitalising on the benefits of nature and considering sustainability of design, materials, maintenance, and use.



### Supporting inclusion and improved accessibility to the National Park

Identifying and facilitating actions that support equality and diversity to secure barrier free / inclusive access meeting the needs of all users.



### Supporting more sustainable ways of travel both to and within the National Park (Modal Shift)

Strengthening service support through a network of integrated hubs; walking, cycling, accommodation of electric vehicle EV use, and public transport and the facilities required to increase uptake and address private car use increases.



### Supporting visitor management and dispersal

Creating a flow of people to our more resilient places, and using good design and better provision to support more responsible behaviours whilst working together to ensure effective long term stewardship of our sites.



Examples of how the thematic priorities will be expressed on the ground include:

## PRIORITY 2

### Supporting Sustainable Development – climate and nature

This could include habitat improvements in our greenspaces such as wildflower meadows, and eco-friendly material choices for new facilities and/or upgrades.



## PRIORITY 4

### Supporting more sustainable ways of travel both to and within the National Park (Modal Shift)

This could include increased cycling facilities – parking, shelters, tool stations, and increased electric vehicle (EV) charging points

## Strategic Work

Two specific park-wide strategic pieces of work have commenced in 2022 to support delivery of these themes in the overall work of the Place Programme. These are:

**A Design Guide for Infrastructure in the National Park**, that will help us raise standards and ensure high quality and consistency of design of visitor infrastructure owned and/ or managed by the National Park Authority and influence the work of other public sector partners within the National Park.

**A Motorhome Sites Strategy Pilot for Arrochar and Tarbet**, that will pilot a Management Plan to develop an informed and holistic approach to managing the impacts of motorhome and campervan users in the National Park focussed in Arrochar and Tarbet.



## Geographic priorities

The National Park is 1,865 square km (720 square miles) and has a boundary length of 350km (220miles). It is a place of contrasts, from rolling lowland landscapes in the south to high mountains in the north, and has many lochs and rivers, forests, and woodlands. It is also a living, working landscape which has been influenced by people for generations and is visited and enjoyed by many for its recreational value.

The understanding of specific issues to areas is essential for effective partnership working, delivery and management across the National Park and we have facilitated the development of four local visitor management groups:

- East Loch Lomond
- West Loch Lomond
- Strathard and the Trossachs
- Callander Area.

Engagement with the following visitor management areas will be undertaken through existing structures:

- Loch Earn, Balquidder & Strathyre
- Balloch and access to Loch Lomond and Gartocharn
- Strathfillan and Glen Dochart
- Cowal

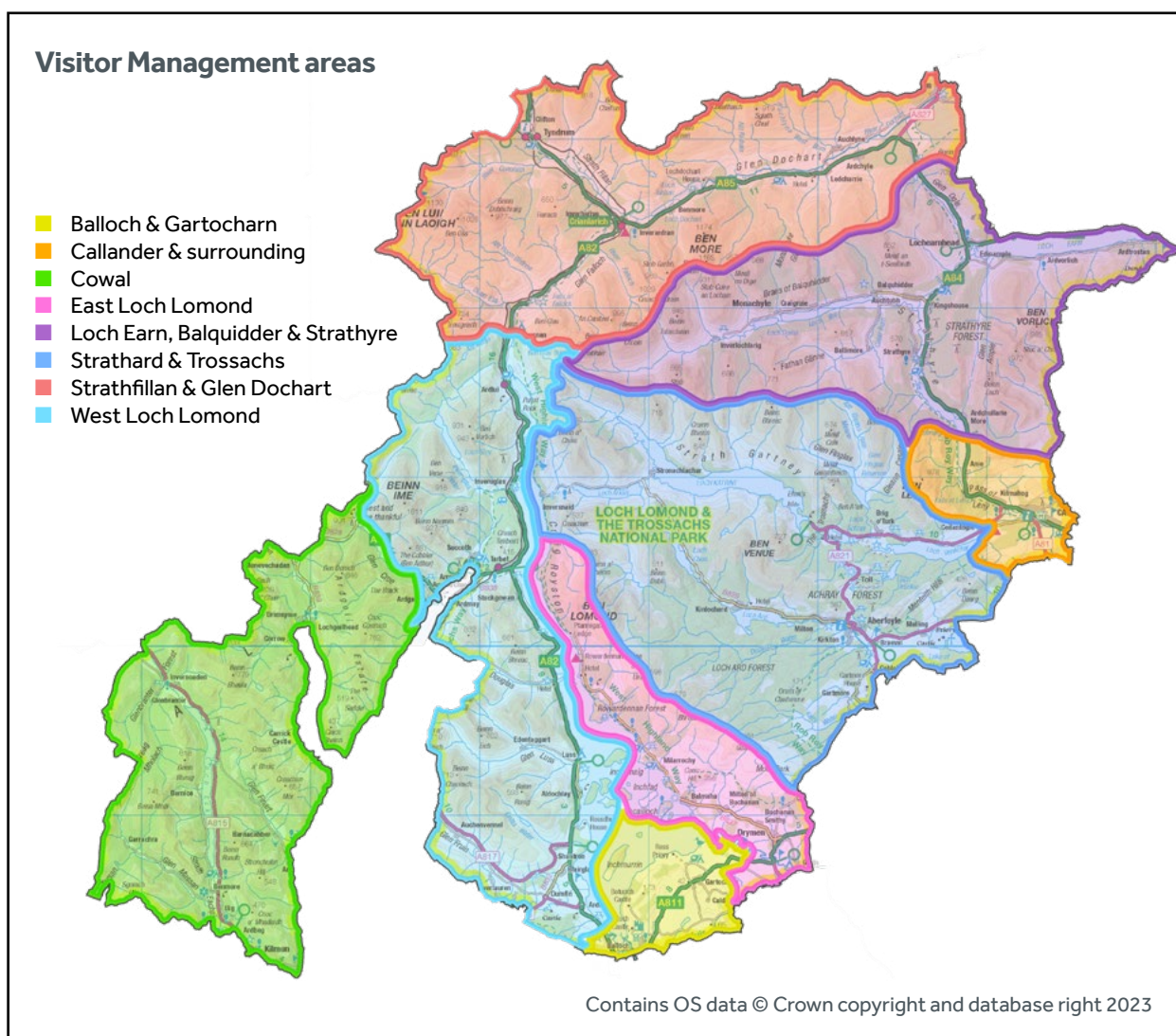


The map opposite shows the Visitor Management areas, noting that these relate to suggested effectiveness and management, are not fixed boundaries and are not intended to detract from the consideration of the National Park as a whole entity.

Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies are being developed to identify areas of opportunity and identify actions to strengthen tourism infrastructure supporting place, addressing the needs of both residents and visitors and create a framework to help secure additional funding for projects in the area.

Studies have been undertaken in East Loch Lomond, West Loch Lomond and have commenced in Strathard and Trossachs, and Callander. The Studies provide an overview for each area and the objectives are developed through the process. Objectives within the technical reports for the geographic areas have informed the Place Programme Indicative implementation programme.

A further park-wide consolidated study will be developed, complementing and incorporating the existing studies to help set the investment priorities and support funding opportunities for improving popular places and routes in the National Park.



## 6. Where we will deliver the Place Programme – Partnership Projects Summary

Projects that will deliver on our strategic aim and thematic priorities have been identified through the Strategic Tourism Infrastructure process and engagement with stakeholders. They have been collated in tables according to Visitor Management areas, providing an overall indicative summary of the programme projects by geographic area.

The Partnership Projects Summary tables list infrastructure interventions that will be prioritised for implementation, during and after the five-year period starting in 2021/22 and ending in 2025/6. The initial focus is on the period to 23/24 and this will inform ongoing discussion on delivery and be reviewed on an annual basis.

Those years, Years 1, 2 and 3 are planned and described in more detail based on what we know today, and the intention is that partnership projects summary programme will be regularly reviewed and revised annually to reflect the conditions at the time and plan ahead.

Delivery will depend on development, lead-in times and resources. It should be noted that whilst all partners will use their best efforts to prioritise and progress the actions listed in this programme, this is dependent upon sufficient resources and capacity being available.

Work is initially focussed on those areas that experienced the highest level of visitor pressure, particularly in the Covid-19 pandemic: East Loch Lomond, West Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies completed or in progress, and we have more evidence from these technical reports to inform the programme. There is also an early focus on the trunk road network out with these areas Strathyre, Loch Earn and Tyndrum. For all visitor management group areas outside East and West Loch Lomond, more detailed tables will be developed over the years as the Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies are completed.



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**Published by:**

**Loch Lomond & The Trossachs  
National Park Authority**  
Carrochan, Carrochan  
Road, Balloch G83 8EG

**t: 01389 722600**

**w: [lochlomond-trossachs.org](http://lochlomond-trossachs.org)**

**e: [info@lochlomond-trossachs.org](mailto:info@lochlomond-trossachs.org)**



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