



2023-24 Annual Operational Plan Progress to November

Agenda Item 11 – Appendix 1

National Park Authority Board Meeting

11 December 2023

Paper for information

Annual Operational Plan 2023/24: Progress to November

Rating Key:

Complete	On Track	Behind Schedule	At Risk	Postponed to 2024/25	Cancelled
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AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD Progress Update (November)	Rating
Theme 1: Tackling the twin challenges of the global climate emergency and nature crisis			
Develop monitoring and engagement plans to support the Future Nature Programme	Establish Future Nature programme reporting and monitoring.	We have developed a delivery plan reporting structure for the Future Nature operational group based on a similar programme overview to that used for HPPB. In terms of longer-term outcomes, we have now published the State of Nature report and commissioned a final piece of work with Ecosulis to establish an initial indicator dashboard. We will repeat the State of Nature including re-running the indicators every five years.	On track

	Produce a Future Nature engagement plan, informed by nature connection principles and behavioural insights.	Ongoing development of the work strand including an audience insights workshop delivered to explore influences on behaviours needed for priority audiences. Intention to draw these into the development of a comms plan, including new interpretation materials for BVC produced, as well as supporting project delivery. Scoping underway for landowner / farmer cluster engagement network, the school's Future Nature Network project and engagement partner network meeting for March 2023. WHW nature story map should be launched by FY end. Updated volunteer metrics allowing for better monitoring of nature projects should be operational for 2024-25.	On track
Taking action for nature	Publish a Herbivore Statement and Operational Delivery Workstream action plan for the National Park.	Statement and ODW action plan development delayed to align with NPPP. Timeline still to be scoped and still aiming for completion by March 2024.	Behind Schedule
	Expand delivery of the Peatland Action programme.	Recruitment now almost complete. 3 of the 4 projects for delivery this year are underway, and the 4th will start in January. The £150K capital budget for the 2 schemes that couldn't proceed has been returned to Scot Gov.	On track
	Accelerate the nature restoration programme through woodland improvement and expansion, water body improvements, INNS removal, and supporting and enabling improvement within targeted designated sites.	All partnership with Rivers Trusts underway - review of progress this year and planning for next year scheduled for Jan. Woodland delivery plan in scoping.	On track
	Enable and support key landscape scale projects, such	Good progress on all three landscape scale projects - TGTF review complete and plans for vision review early in the new	On track

	as Wild Strathfillan and the Great Trossachs Forest	year, Wild Strathfillan NRF delivery funding secured and project to start soon. Loch Lomond Rainforest project underway - initial ecological data analysed. Stakeholder event and consultation hub launch on 6th December.	
Develop new funding and policy options (including Green Finance) to deliver for biodiversity and climate	Deliver landscape score carding through Investment Ready Nature Scotland project and next steps for Revere partnership to explore a woodland carbon plus scheme and enable practical opportunities for land managers to deliver on the ground.	Landscape Finance Lab project on track for completion by the end of the financial year - summary of main options shared with exec and final report complete by the end of the year. FIRNS funding was successful - contracts and workplans being finalised for project to get underway before Christmas.	On track
	Development of a National Park Nature Network with enhanced opportunities for the promotion and application of nature-based solutions and natural infrastructure, including through the use of developer gains through the planning system, in line with NPF4	Limited progress since the previous update. Local Development plan work is proceeding more slowly than originally envisaged due to the ongoing workload for the NPPP. Options for delivering positive outcomes for nature are being explored through discussions on current casework.	On track
Upscale the pace of our Mission Zero programme, and consider the route to net zero for the National Park as a place	Install a new heating system powered by Air Source Heat Pumps in Carrochan, removing the aging biomass boiler and natural gas back up system.	Works started, due to complete mid-March 24.	On track
	Increase our use of solar electricity at Carrochan through the installation of PV Tiles/Panels and EV Chargers	Installation of PV Tiles/Panels started, due to complete mid-March 24.	On track

		EV infrastructure works tender due to go to pre-Christmas, at risk of delivery due to slippage in timescales due to longer lead time than anticipated for electrical upgrades.	
	Develop a Climate Adaptation Plan for the National Park Authority.	Capacity constraints continued in Q3. Nonetheless, Adaptation work scoped through investigation of good practice and comparable reports completed by other local authorities/public bodies Briefing paper prepared and tender being drafted to commission in Q4, subject to budget confirmation.	Behind Schedule
	Agree programmes with local tourism businesses on net zero planning and nature experiences with measurable outputs to meet NPA objectives.	<p>At the NPDG meeting in September, the Group agreed to set up a subgroup to ensure the partnership approach of the Plan's delivery includes local tourism businesses from the outset to address shared objectives and help to meet national targets. In particular, the subgroup will explore how tourism businesses can contribute to the development of the National Park as a low carbon destination and enable a greener economy. The subgroup will be facilitated by the Tourism Team.</p> <p>The agenda of the initial meeting on 21/11/2023 includes green tourism accreditation; developing tourism experiences - particularly those more closely connected with nature; the strategic development and promotion of sustainable travel options and how we monitor and measure progress across the various new activities. We'll also look at what advice and support businesses may need to transition to net zero and the resource and partnerships required.</p>	On Track

	Commence development of Route Map with delivery partners for the National Park as a place to become Net Zero.	Capacity constraints continued in Q3. Most pressing elements of the work have been progressed nonetheless, with the final NPPP being the most important focus for progress on net zero for the place. The Board was updated on our net zero evidence base and target-setting at the September strategy day. The final Plan has been strengthened with regards to net zero, including embedding a science-based and Paris-aligned pathway to net zero in the Plan, strengthening links to net zero across all its outcomes, objectives and actions particularly those in the critical areas of land use change and transportation, and aligning NPPP measures of success with the pace and scale set out in GHG footprint and net zero model.	Behind Schedule
Theme 2: Promoting sustainable low carbon destinations with people, places and communities at their heart			
Improve visitor infrastructure and enhance visitor experience across the National Park	Deliver phase 1 of a multiyear plan to reconfigure the Tarbet picnic site to better serve users (including better campervan and motorhome management), whilst also making greenspace improvements.	The project continues to progress well, albeit with a delay, and we are working with our preferred bidder to commence the Phase 1 project on site in January 2024. Phase 1 is running 2 weeks behind schedule, however because of the Christmas break this means a site start before then is not practical, therefore a delay to completion of one month is now expected, this may increase the impact on the early summer season however we will be actively seeking to manage the impact of this.	Behind schedule
	Commence detailed design work for a series of visitor infrastructure projects along East Loch Lomond, allowing development of detailed planning and funding applications.	Design work for Rowardennan Visitor Site has been tendered and we are aiming to appoint a consultancy team in December 2023. This is a partnership project with Forestry and Land Scotland and The National Trust for Scotland and requires close working with neighbouring landowners and stakeholders. The design phase is supported by a design grant from VisitScotland's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF).	On track

		Subject to NPA and partner staff resourcing then Balmaha is planned to follow.	
	Complete Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies (STIDs) for Callander and Strathard and Trossachs, and undertake a final park-wide review and consolidation STID.	<p>The completion deadlines of Q2 for Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies (STIDs) for both Callander and Strathard and Trossachs, have been revised to the end of Q3 to provide more time for the consultant to complete the final revisions following stakeholder and National Park Authority feedback. The Strathard and Trossachs Study was submitted by the consultants to the National Park Authority in late November.</p> <p>The park-wide review STID process has commenced alongside input into the NPPP and its mapping. This is being developed with an internal team and will consolidate work to date and identify further work required in priority locations. Informal engagement with key partner organisations has commenced.</p>	Behind schedule
	Undertake year two of the Conic Hill Path upgrades.	<p>Hamiltons Environmental Ltd have been awarded the Conic Hill path construction contract. They were due to start on 30 October but unscheduled maintenance of the helicopter fleet has meant stone uplift onto Conic Hill has been delayed until 11 December. The company has switched the work programme around and will start work on the timber steps within FLS land on 27 November before reverting back to stone pitching from 11 December.</p> <p>We have appointed Ironside Farrar as quantity surveyor/ contract management support via the Scotland Excel procurement framework. They will provide support for CDM regulations, Health and Safety file reporting and other contractual responsibilities.</p>	Behind schedule

		We have agreed a maintenance plan for the new path. Four maintenance runs will take place annually. We will use NPA Volunteers with supervisory responsibility shared between the Rangers, Access and LAnd Ops Teams. The first maintenance run took place on 24 October.	
Prepare to implement the updated Loch Lomond (Navigation) Byelaws, in a clear and easy to understand manner	Ensure operational readiness for the new Byelaws from 1 April 2024, including implementing a new registration database, monitoring framework, navigation guides, and videos.	Scottish Government Ministers approved the byelaws with minor changes and agreed an implementation date of the 1 st of November 2024. The current byelaws will remain in operation until then. The contractor for the new database has been appointed and working on the Discovery Phase of that workstream. The project team continue to work closely with the Scot Gov Digital Assurance Team and have completed the discovery assessment to allowing progression to the design phase. Planning permission has been granted for the new buoyage for the seven Low Speed Activity zones. A tender exercise is currently underway for this buoyage to allow for its installation prior to the 1 st of November 2024. Work is ongoing on a communications plan to ensure that loch users and stakeholders understand the new byelaws and how they will affect them.	On track
Empower our communities to take action for climate and nature	Support communities to establish Local Place Plans, including actions for climate and nature, in at least 4 areas'	Another four Local Place Plans are at validation stage to be registered. Once registered these plans carry material planning weight. Support is being given to five communities as they prepare Local Place Plans and to another four who are still considering the merits of preparing one. This work is likely to extend into 2024.	On track
	Establish a framework approach – with key public sector partners – to providing advice and support to communities who are seeking to deliver their Local Place Plans.	Another meeting of the Strathard Framework delivery partners was held in November, with a focus on housing. Scoping work to establish a wider delivery framework approach to support communities to deliver Local Place Plans has been initiated.	Behind Schedule

Improve sustainable transport services for visitors and communities	Complete early actions emerging from the Modal Shift Study, including a comprehensive National Park Active Travel Strategy, and the feasibility and early development work of gateway hubs at Balloch, Drymen/Balmaha, Dunoon and Aberfoyle.	Partner and funder discussions ongoing within development phase.	On Track
	Work with partners to pilot at least one visitor shuttle bus service at congested visitor hotspots.	Funder and partner discussions ongoing with aim for 2024 pilot service going to tender by January 2024. Viable services already designed and key funding allocations from 2023 secured for 2024.	Behind schedule
Support events and businesses to realise local economic benefit	Support delivery of a safe and enjoyable UCI Cycling World Championships 2023 event, providing a global stage for the National Park as an asset for the enjoyment of all.	Complete	Complete
	Facilitate the setup of an industry-led recruitment and retention programme for tourism and hospitality businesses.	Project ceased. A paper was prepared for the NPDG meeting on 16 November outlining project activity, outputs and issues. With no industry lead, external funding or management resource in place, the project has had to close. The NPA in-kind support was delivered and our part in this project is complete.	Complete

Theme 3: Developing the plans, people and processes to support the National Park Authority's next chapter			
Consult on and implement our future vision for the National Park	Consult on and finalise the new National Park Partnership Plan for submission to the Scottish Government, incorporating the Regional Spatial Strategy.	<p>Following consultation and further engagement with delivery partners, the final National Park (Partnership) Plan has been drafted and is with the Board for approval at their December 2023 meeting.</p> <p>Subject to Board approval, the Plan (which is intended to for the future Regional Spatial Strategy for the National Park) will be sent to Scottish Ministers for approval, with a view to formally launching the Plan in Spring 2024.</p>	On Track
	Prepare a proposed Local Development Plan for consultation which will include key steps of finalising the Plan's evidence based and undertake informal engagement.	Main focus is still on updating the evidence base to the draft an Evidence Report. New timeline for submission of this to Scottish Government by end March 2024. Work to prepare a new Local Development Plan will commence fully in January 2024 with a target date still to be determined for publication and consultation. Internal governance and resource across the teams to be scoped and identified first to inform timescales.	Behind Schedule
Identify the organisational change we want to see over the next 5 years	Develop a Corporate Plan that aligns to the Draft NPPP and highlights the journey of change the organisation will embark on.	An initial structure for the Corporate Plan has been drafted. Once the NPPP is finalised targeted workshops will be held in Jan/Feb after which the document will be compiled.	On Track
Take action to drive efficiencies and build resilience, including through partnering and collaborating with others	Actively engage with key Scottish Government initiatives including its new Public Sector reform work, and its work on new National Parks for Scotland.	Response to Public Sector Reform Commission submitted in September. Ongoing conversations with EELG partners in relation to efficiencies and shared services.	On Track

	Commence the discovery process to support the development of our Digital Strategy, including a review of the tools and systems we use.	Have begun discussions and planning on what our Digital Strategy will be. Reaching out to other National Parks to obtain advice or contacts to further discussions.	On Track
	Implement cloud-based disaster recovery capabilities which will increase business resilience.	<p>No further conversations with SG Cloud platform have taken place yet based on pause advised in August update.</p> <p>Discussions have begun with IDOX on costing and process involved for moving IDOX from local to Cloud hosting. Information has been passed to Exec in LLTNPA and CNPA to advise on costs and help obtain buy in from stakeholders.</p>	On Track