



National Park Partnership Plan – Final draft for Board Approval

Agenda Item 5 – Appendix 1

National Park Authority Board Meeting

11 December 2023

Paper for decision

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DRAFT FOR BOARD APPROVAL

FOREWORD – *to be inserted once approved by National Park Authority Board and Scottish Ministers*

INTRODUCTION

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is a unique place and a special landscape. Things are, and should be, done differently here to maximise the benefits that can be provided for nature, climate and people.

Globally, we are facing twin crises of the climate emergency and nature loss. Both crises are happening here and now in the National Park, in fact many of the impacts are being felt even more deeply and obviously here, so it is not enough to simply do what we have always done.

The National Park Authority is making a step change in how it responds to these crises but cannot do it alone. There are many people and organisations who have a role in securing a positive future for the National Park. Some who have been here for generations, some who are the stewards of the land, and those from within and outside the Park who will play a part over the coming years.

Tackling the nature and climate crises is not separate to supporting the rural economy and our communities. In fact, working together to address these will provide a range of wider benefits for the National Park and its people, including more investment, business, and employment opportunities. Alongside this, we must address other challenges facing our economy and communities such as recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and issues around housing, jobs and skills. Together we need to find ways to adapt and prosper in the face of the changes needed in the National Park.

We also know that while the National Park has seen an increase in some people visiting and taking part in outdoor recreation opportunities, this isn't the case for everyone, and we need to tackle inequality of access to the National Park.

This Plan is about transformation in the face of huge challenges. Transforming the way each of us live, work in, visit and look after the National Park to achieve a more positive, sustainable future for us all.

Here.

Now.

All of us.

PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The National Park Partnership Plan guides how all of those with a role to play in looking after the National Park will work together to manage the Park and achieve a shared vision for the area.

A National Park Plan is required under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 to set out a National Park Authority's policy for (a) managing a National Park; and (b) coordinating the exercise of an Authority's functions in relation to a National Park and the functions of other public bodies and office holders to the extent that they affect a National Park, with a view to ensuring that the National Park aims are collectively achieved in a co-ordinated way.

While the National Park Authority is responsible for drafting and consulting on National Park Plan, the actions within it require collaboration across a wide range of partners. None of this is possible without significant, collective effort. That is why we refer to this National Park Plan as our Partnership Plan.

With that partnership working in mind, throughout this Plan, 'we' refers to all partners and stakeholders who have a part to play in delivering the outcomes set out here. Under each section (see Appendices for Delivery Framework), there is a list of named 'delivery partners' who will be responsible for delivering the priorities for action set out there.

The Aims of National Parks in Scotland (as set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000) are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area
- To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area
- To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public
- To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities

These aims are to be pursued collectively. However, if there is conflict between the first aim and any of the others, greater weight must be given to the first aim (section 9.6 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act). The National Park Partnership Plan 2024-29 will be the National Park Plan for Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park.

The Scottish Government is proposing changes to elements of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, including the composition of the aims and the duties of public bodies in relation to achieving the aims and delivering National Park Plans. These changes are expected to come into force by 2025. The proposed strengthened emphasis on National Parks playing a leadership role in tackling the twin nature and climate crises is already being reflected by the priorities set out in this Plan.

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduces a new type of plan called a Regional Spatial Strategy which is a long-term spatial strategy for an area for strategic development. The part of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 that requires Regional Spatial Strategies to be prepared and adopted is not yet in force, however it is intended that this National Park Partnership Plan will also become the draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the purposes of public consultation and further procedure.

This Plan's role in delivering national policy

Scotland's National Parks are not only a key part of the nation's identity and culture but play an important role in delivering benefits for Scotland as a whole. As beautiful and special landscapes they are loved and valued by many people underpinning our sense of place, our heritage, and our local and national identity. They also have the potential, arguably, a duty, to significantly contribute towards Scotland achieving key policy outcomes, particularly in relation to nature, climate and as exemplars of thriving places.

The Scottish Government declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and has set a target of becoming a Net Zero Nation by 2045. This Plan sets out how Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park will help Scotland to achieve that goal and deliver on national outcomes around nature and climate, as well as supporting our people and economy.

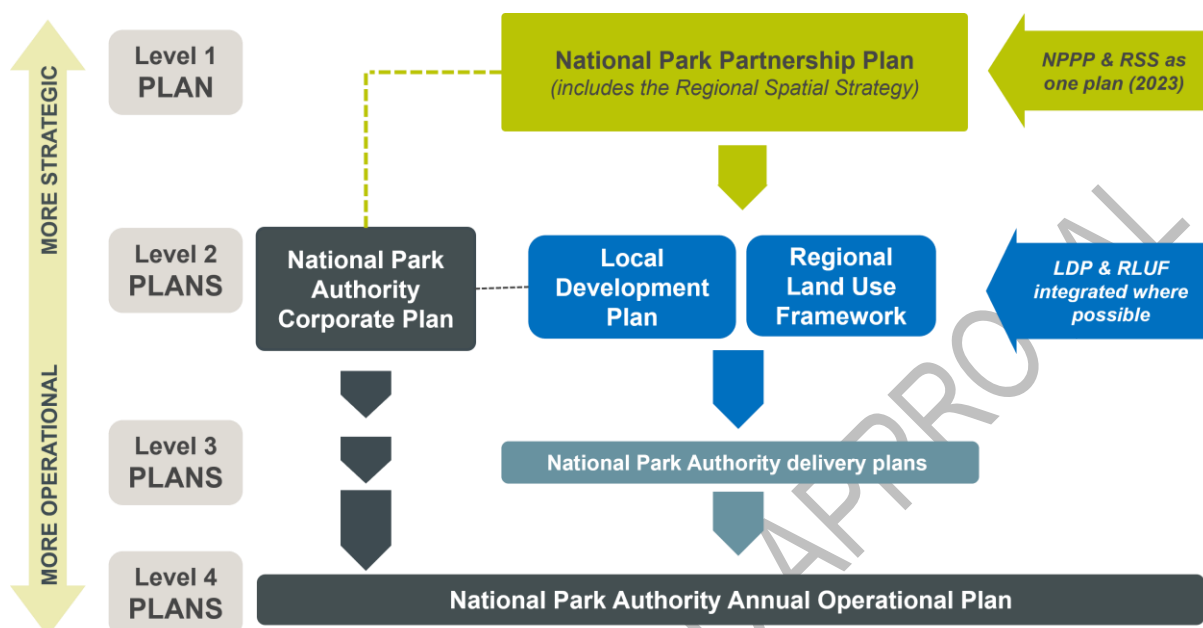
This Plan will support delivery of the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework and the following key national policy documents:

- Creating Places
- Cultural Strategy for Scotland
- Environment Strategy for Scotland
- Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement
- National Gaelic Language Plan
- National Marine Plan
- National Planning Framework 4 Land Use: Getting the Best from our Land Strategy 2021-2026
- National Transport Strategy
- National Walking Strategy
- Nature Based Jobs and Skills Action Plan
- Our Past, Our Future: Scotland's National Strategy for the Historic Environment
- Rural and Islands Housing Action Plan
- Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism for a Sustainable Future
- Scotland's Forestry Strategy
- Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation
- Scotland's Public Health Priorities
- Strategic Transport Projects Review 2
- The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy
- Volunteering for All: National Framework
- Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plans

This Plan as the overarching Plan for the National Park Authority

As well as guiding the work of partner organisations with responsibilities for areas of the National Park, the Partnership Plan is the overarching plan for the National Park Authority. It sets the priorities for the National Park Authority's work and all other strategic and operational plans as set out in Figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1: Relationship between the NPPP and other Plans



HOW THIS PLAN IS DIFFERENT

This Plan takes a different approach to previous National Park Plans.

This is because during the period of our previous [National Park Partnership Plan 2018-23](#), the context within which the National Park Authority and our delivery partners work has completely changed – we are recovering from the impacts of a global pandemic, adjusting to the UK leaving the EU, and the need to respond with greater urgency to the twin climate and nature crises has escalated significantly.

The role of National Parks is also changing. Nationally, the role of Scotland’s National Parks is being reconsidered and consulted on by Scottish Ministers, with recognition that National Parks can provide leadership for nature recovery and significantly contribute to becoming a Net Zero Nation.

This Plan was developed while a national discussion has been underway on this changing role for National Parks. While this had not been concluded as this Plan was prepared, we know that there is a greater emphasis on delivering for climate and nature for Scotland’s National Parks. This Plan has been written and consulted on with that focus.

It is no longer enough to do what we have always done. Transformational change is needed, with a long-term approach coupled with immediate, urgent action to tackling these challenges.

That’s why this Plan goes beyond the usual five-year timescale of previous Partnership Plans, with a vision for the National Park by 2045.

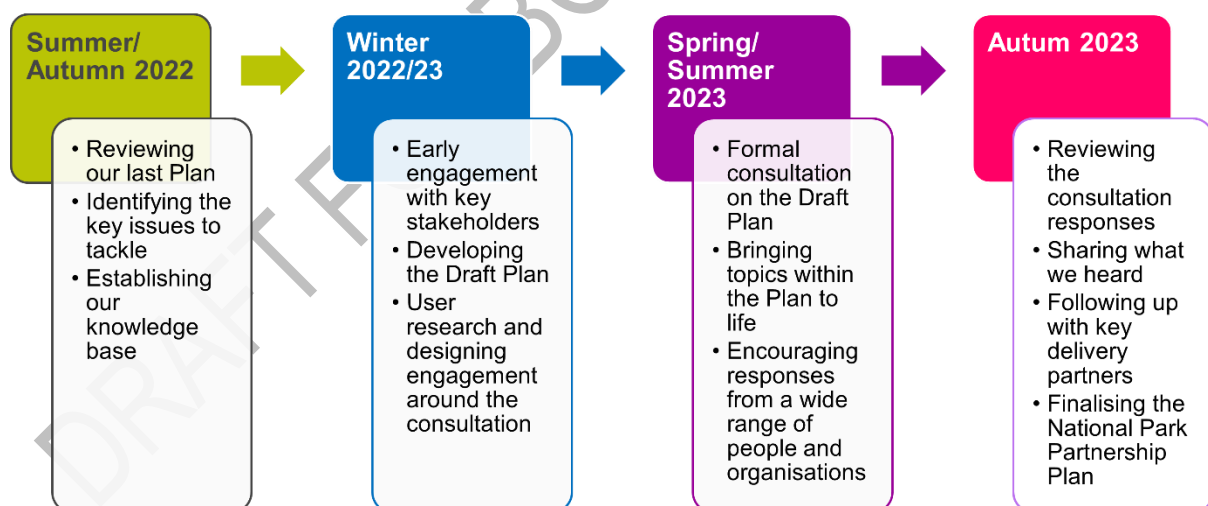
The nine outcomes in this Plan paint a picture of what the National Park will be like by 2045.

The 27 Objectives and 76 Actions of the Plan then set out the most important steps to be taken over the next five years to create the momentum needed towards achieving that longer-term vision.

HOW THIS PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

The National Park Partnership Plan was developed following extensive dialogue with a wide range of partners and stakeholders. It involved facing up to some uncomfortable truths and looking at these from a variety of perspectives to find answers together. As well as involving those who have a role to play in delivering the Partnership Plan, the conversation was opened up to all of those who will be impacted by it too, including those who live, work and visit the National Park and those who face barriers to enjoying the benefits the Park can offer. This broader conversation helped gather a wider range of experiences of the National Park and ideas for its future. A report was prepared for the National Park Authority Board summarising the approach we took and summarising the key points to come out via responses to the consultation and what we heard during that time.

FIGURE 2: THE PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THE PARTNERSHIP PLAN



HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This Plan is for everyone who has a role to play in its delivery or will be impacted by it. It is specifically designed to be used as a guiding reference tool for delivering action to achieve a more positive future for the National Park.

The Plan is divided into two parts:

1. **The Why** – explaining the context for this Plan, the challenges facing the National Park, Scotland and the world, and the role the Park must play in addressing these.
2. **The What, Who, How and When** – setting out a framework for delivery through clear Outcomes, Objectives, Actions, and Measurements.

Everyone is encouraged to read both parts of the Plan in full first. Part Two can then be used as a stand-alone reference tool for delivery over the next five years.

PART ONE – THE WHY

Our National Park matters to all of us, to Scotland and to the planet, but it can't and won't stay the same.

This is a unique moment in time – we have a small window of opportunity to make transformational change in the face of huge challenges.

This Plan is different because change is needed here, now and from all of us.

WHY NOW?

We are facing unprecedented challenges to nature, to climate and to our lives that depend on them.

The Paris Agreement, adopted by 196 Parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in 2015 set the overarching goal of limiting global warming. Following this, Scotland became one of the first nations to declare a Global Climate Emergency in 2019 and has set a target of becoming a Net Zero Nation by 2045.

Failing to reduce emissions and limit global warming will result in far more severe climate change impacts, including more frequent and severe droughts, heatwaves, storms, and rainfall.

We will increasingly experience these extremes in Scotland. It is projected that from 2020-2049 rainfall in Scotland will increase by up to 55% during certain months of the year, while other times of the year are projected to become drier. Our temperatures are projected to see substantial warming of up to 4°C between May and November and approximately 2-3°C in the winter. These differences may not sound significant but their impact on land and nature, and everything that relies on them, will be stark. For example, some upland areas of central Scotland are expected to shift from having a water surplus to being in deficit, having a significant impact on peatlands which are crucial to lock carbon in the ground.

The impacts of the climate emergency are becoming more and more real to those living, working, and visiting the National Park, with more frequent flooding and landslips seriously damaging people's homes, communities, businesses and lifeline transport links.

Our warmer and wetter climate also threatens nature, with some habitats and species struggling to adapt to these quickly escalating changes. More frequent extreme weather events and rising temperatures mean that we will see more of these impacts here. For example:

- more blue-green algae blooms in lochs (potentially deadly to dogs and toxic for humans)
- more tree diseases affecting our forests (bad for nature and bad for the timber industry)
- challenging conditions for agriculture, such as spread of livestock diseases leading to higher vet costs
- increasing pressure on infrastructure, such as roads, paths and bridges
- significant impacts on society from increased flooding, landslides, storms, wildfires, and drought

There are other factors we must address too, such as the way people visit and get around the National Park. The dominance of car travel is a major contributor to carbon emissions here. As well as reducing emissions, providing more sustainable travel options for visitors and residents will reduce pressures on communities, make it easier for those without a car to access the National Park and get around it, improving the experience for everyone whilst also tackling inequality of access.

Just as crucially as the Climate Emergency, we also face a Nature Crisis, which is closely linked but is its own distinct challenge. Following the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services [Report](#) of 2019 which outlined the shocking state of global biodiversity decline, the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy re-emphasised that globally biodiversity is declining faster than at any other time in human history. And despite this being a National Park, even here nature is real trouble. Nearly a fifth of even our most special, designated sites for nature are in decline. We are losing nature at a scale never experienced before and failing to achieve the necessary impact in nature restoration that is needed if we are to ensure that a healthy, functioning natural environment continues to work for future generations.

The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy includes a commitment to protecting 30% of land and seas for nature by 2030 (referred to as '30 by 30') and ensuring that every local authority area has a Nature Network to improve connectivity between nature-rich areas across Scotland.

Our [Future Nature routemap](#) sets out why by 2030 we must halt nature loss in the National Park and ensure biodiversity begins to increase and thrive.

While facing these twin environmental crises, we are emerging from a global pandemic and adjusting to the UK leaving the European Union, facing challenging economic and public sector funding circumstances.

For the National Park to thrive, together we must adapt to and shape a new, positive, greener future and in doing this make sure that everyone benefits from this.

WHY HERE?

National Parks have a significant role to play in securing a more sustainable future for the planet and for Scotland. As big, largely undeveloped landscapes, the very nature of our National Parks means they can play a key role in helping Scotland reverse the decline in nature and mitigate climate change, by capturing and storing carbon through repairing degraded peatlands and expanding woodlands.

They can support communities and businesses to adapt and become more resilient to the impacts of climate change; help remove barriers so people of all backgrounds can benefit from access to nature; and inspire and inform the billions of visitors each year to help protect nature and live more sustainably.

As a much-loved place with a high profile and close cultural ties for many generations, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park's location close to urban Scotland offers the potential to influence change beyond its boundaries, amongst its millions of visitors, testing innovative policy with a place-based approach.

WHY HERE – Going Beyond Net Zero

A Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Assessment carried out for each of the UK's National Parks has provided a detailed carbon footprint and a proposed pathway for each Park to become a Net Zero place.

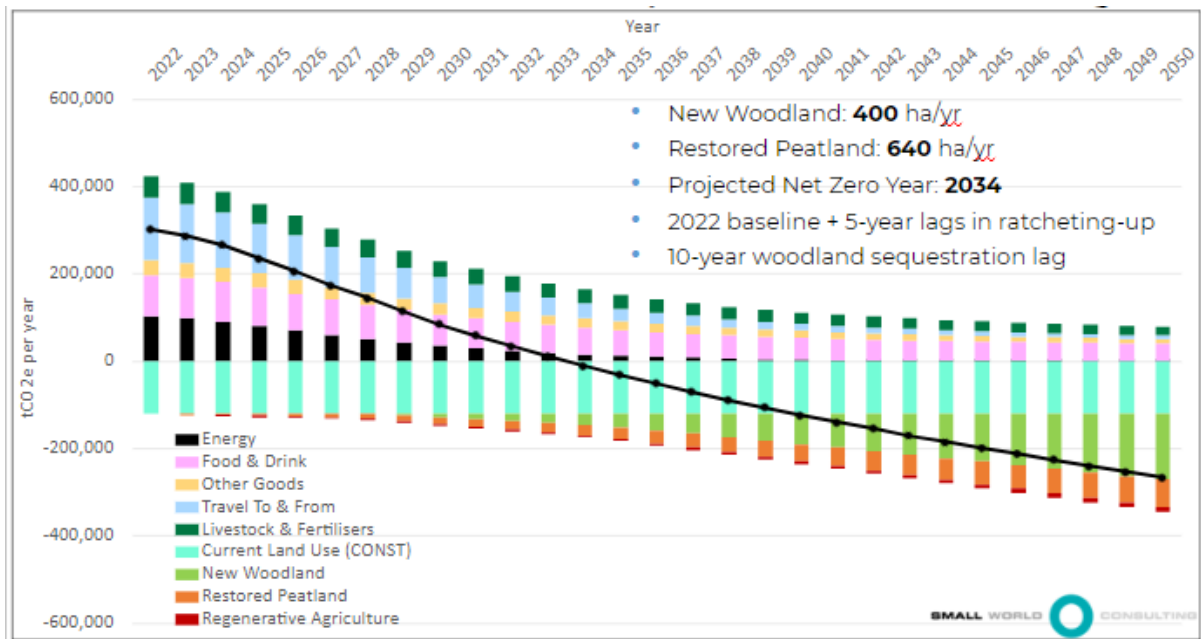
The [GHG assessment for Loch Lomond & The Trossachs](#) shows that the National Park has the capacity to go from being an emitter, as it currently is, to being a significant source of sequestration, or a 'carbon sink', helping Scotland achieve its ambition to be a Net Zero Nation by 2045.

This means that the superpower of this National Park's landscape is that it can transform, going beyond Net Zero and becoming carbon negative, absorbing more carbon than it emits, helping Scotland and the wider world reach its ambitious climate targets.

In order to be aligned with Scotland's national and international commitments on climate change and to keep up with the pace and scale of action needed, we want Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park to be a Net Zero Place as soon as is practically possible. If our combined efforts exceed current targets then this may be as early as 2033, but we need to be Net Zero no later than 2035.

Through the actions in this Plan, we want to contribute to achieve Net Zero by 2035 and being a carbon negative place beyond that. As a landscape with huge potential to absorb greenhouse gases, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park can play an important role in helping Scotland achieve its ambitions to become a Net Zero Nation by 2045.

FIGURE 3: ‘CLIMATE WITH NATURE’ PATHWAY TO NET ZERO AND BEYOND IN THE NATIONAL PARK



These targets are highly ambitious based on the current pace of change, so require a significant stepping up of ambition and action. However, as the National Park has not only the opportunity but a responsibility to help Scotland become a Net Zero Nation and support the goal of the Paris Agreement, the Vision and Outcomes set out in this Plan match that ambition.

WHY HERE – Reversing Nature Loss

We need the same level of ambition for nature. Despite our collective efforts so far, Scotland, including our National Parks, is losing nature at a scale never experienced before and failing to achieve the necessary impact in nature restoration that we need if we are to ensure that a healthy natural environment is left for future generations.

Pressures from over-grazing, pollution, invasive non-native species and a rapidly changing climate mean that many of our iconic habitats and species are in decline and are in danger of becoming increasingly rare and therefore vulnerable.

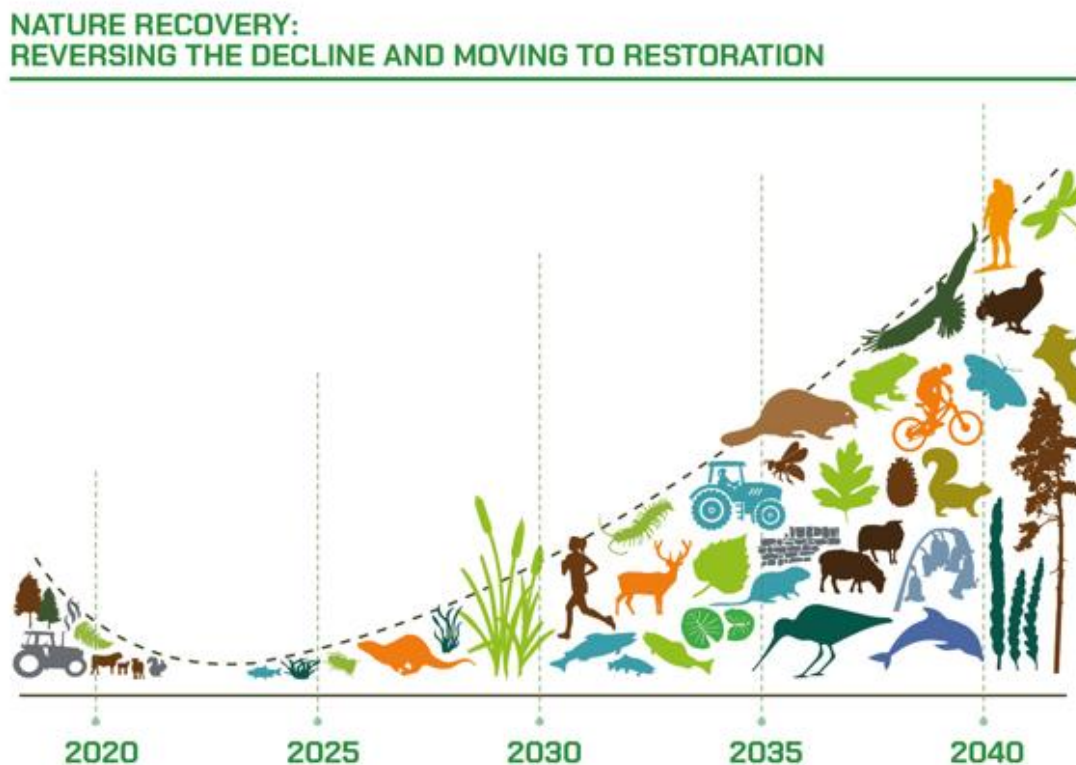
Despite the decline, the Park still holds nationally important populations of rare habitats such as Atlantic rainforests and is home to over 300 national priority species and over 60 Designated Sites recognised for their special habitats and species. These are the jewels in the crown of the National Park’s natural environment, and it is vital that they are in a healthier state if we are to regenerate nature more widely. They provide the key pieces in creating a large-scale jigsaw of greater biodiversity across the landscape.

It’s no longer enough to just conserve what we have. We need to actively halt the ongoing decline and then reverse the ongoing loss of nature. This is in our interest, as well as for other species, as nature underpins human existence through the

benefits and services it provides, such as food, air, water, materials, health, and economic wealth. A healthy ecosystem is one where each element functions well and in balance to support its full range of habitats and species.

Through this Plan and the [Future Nature Route Map](#) we have set a course to meet the national [30x30 ambitions for restoring nature](#).

FIGURE 4: PATHWAY TO RESTORING NATURE IN THE NATIONAL PARK

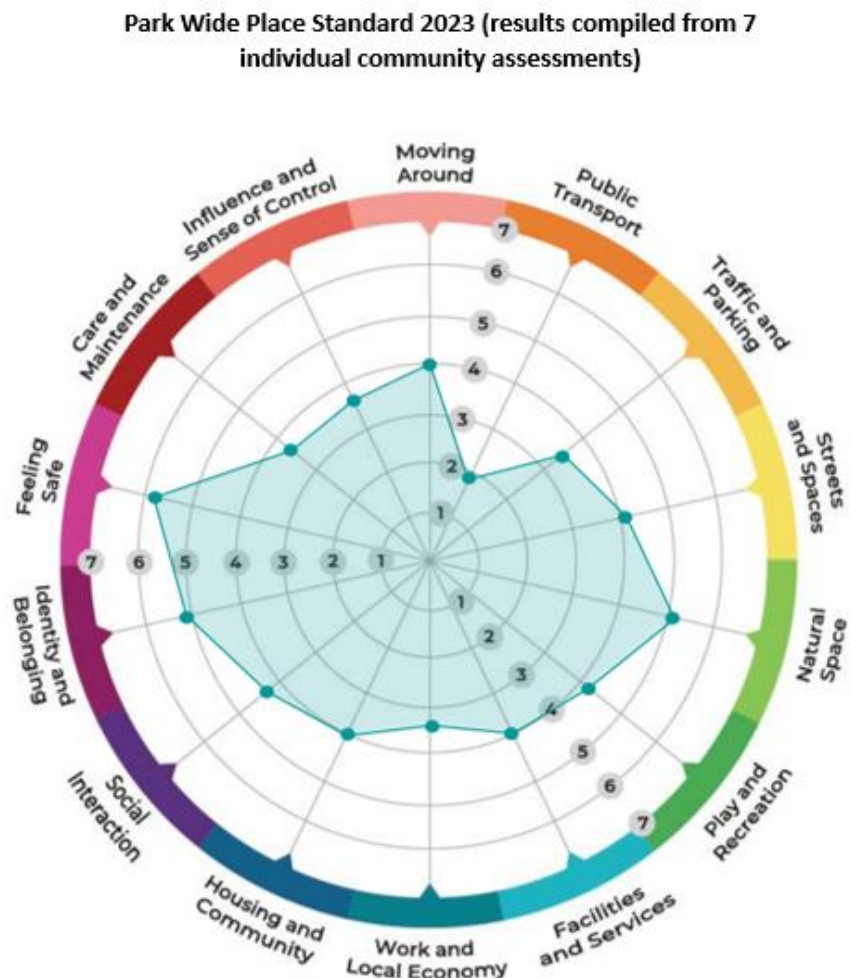


WHY HERE – Helping Communities Thrive

Many of the National Park’s communities have assessed the quality of their places through their [Local Place Plans](#) and using the [Place Standard tool](#). Figure 5 shows the combined results of assessments undertaken at the time of writing this Plan (taken from seven recently completed Local Place Plans from communities across different parts of the National Park. We work with 20 communities in total and will update this when new assessments are undertaken). Despite geographic differences, the results so far are very similar across communities and common concerns identified are issues around lack of public transport, available housing, jobs, and rural services. The consultation on the Draft Partnership Plan also identified these as significant issues. These are essential ingredients to support thriving places and rural communities.

The tool assesses 14 themes about a place, the higher scores located closer to the outside of the circle are considered to be strengths for a place, whilst lower scores, closer to the middle of the circle, are themes needing improvement.

FIGURE 5: INDICATIVE PLACE STANDARD RESULTS (COMPILED FOR NATIONAL PARK LEVEL)



**Results are compiled from Place Standard assessments undertaken by the following communities: Balquhider, Lochearnhead & Strathyre, Callander, Drymen, Lochgoil, Killin & Ardeonaig, Strathfillan and St Fillans.*

The cost of living and other economic pressures on the public sector and local authorities is presenting challenges for delivering rural services. Post COVID-19 and the UK leaving the EU, many of the National Park's businesses are also experiencing skills shortages and recruitment challenges. On top of this, the National Park's population has a lower proportion of young and working-age people compared to the national average. This is also one of the most expensive places in Scotland to buy a house with commuting, retirement and an increased desire for

rural living and holidays post COVID-19, driving up housing pressures and land values.

We want to support our rural communities to thrive by stemming population loss and providing more opportunities for younger and working-age people to be able to live and work in the National Park in sustainable ways, and in different ways with a lower carbon footprint– living more locally as much as possible.

This is not a choice *between* creating a place that works for climate and nature *OR* for people. This Plan is about future-proofing the National Park for people, nature *and* climate.

UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTHS THAT THIS PLAN AIMS TO TACKLE

- Nearly a fifth of even our most special, designated sites for nature are in decline. [Future Nature Route Map](#).
- Over 50,000 hectares of peatlands may currently be degraded, releasing greenhouse gases, and contributing towards climate warming. [Future Nature Route Map](#).
- [Adaptation Scotland](#) estimates that winter rainfall in Scotland will increase by 8–19% over the coming decades with rainfall events becoming more intense all year round, leading to an increase in flooding.
- 79% of visitors arrive in the National Park by car and 73% explore the area by car according to our 2019/20 Visitor Survey. If there is no intervention, [car-based travel is predicted to increase nationally by 40% by 2037](#).
- The National Park is one of the most expensive places in Scotland to buy a house. [National Park Housing Market Research 2022](#).
- 75% of National Park households cannot afford average house prices and 43% cannot afford lower value house prices. [National Park Housing Market Research 2022](#).
- The National Park’s population has a lower proportion of young and working-age people compared to the national average. [National Records of Scotland](#)
- Invasive non-native species remain widespread [Future Nature Route Map](#).
- Approximately 50% of water bodies may not be in good ecological condition [Future Nature Route Map](#).

Looking at all of these challenges together may seem overwhelming but through our collective work and the consultation on the Draft Plan, it is clear that the shared ambition and energy to address these is there. This Plan and the long-term vision it sets out, will harness that ambition and energy into clear, measurable actions.

OUR VISION FOR 2045

By 2045...

the National Park is a **thriving place** that is **nature positive** and **carbon negative**.

What does this mean?

A **thriving place** is one where our communities and businesses can live and work in sustainable and climate resilient places, and people can meet most of their daily needs as locally as possible, supported by a good range of services, homes, jobs, and training opportunities. People living, working, and visiting the Park feel connected to it as a valued place, with positive relationships with the area's nature, landscape, culture, and heritage, as well as with one another, ensuring strong social networks and supporting health and wellbeing.

Nature positive means that nature loss has been halted and reversed so that nature in the National Park is more abundant. Through the work set out in the Future Nature Route Map, we have committed to ensure the decline in nature has been halted by 2030 and that there is widespread restoration of nature across the National Park by 2040.

Carbon negative (or carbon sink) means that the National Park as a place (both through its land and the activities that take place here) is absorbing more carbon than it emits. Our aim is to become a Net Zero National Park by no later than 2035. This target date would mean that the National Park is supporting the level of change needed for the UK to meet its obligations under the Paris Agreement and will help Scotland become a Net Zero Nation by 2045.

PICTURING THE NATIONAL PARK BY 2045 – what will it be like?

(Examples of how this might be brought to life in the designed version of this Plan can be found in the Appendices)

By 2045 the National Park has thriving, beautiful landscapes with native wildlife becoming more abundant and habitats such as woodlands, peatlands and waterbodies becoming healthier and more resilient to change.

Invasive non-native species are in decline while our woodlands have become more species-rich and are regenerating naturally. Degraded peatlands have been repaired or are in recovering condition. Together our forests and peatlands are nationally important carbon stores helping to reduce the impacts of the climate emergency.

Natural flood management techniques, such as woody debris dams, are widely used to help mitigate flooding in the National Park, with land managers supported by public and private funding for their regenerative management practices. Land is now recognised for the multiple benefits it provides, including its intrinsic landscape qualities, cultural connections to the past as well as the nature-based services and benefits such as stores of carbon, water, and biodiversity richness. Many landowners

have engaged in green finance schemes, which have taken place in several places across the National Park and have secured significant private finance and investment in nature restoration.

There is a more diverse economy with tourism and rural businesses having adapted and diversified so that they are more resilient and prospering across the National Park both in farming and sustainable, nature and culture-based tourism, nature conservation, sporting, and forestry. Their efforts have not only benefitted the rural economy and communities but have also helped tackle the nature and climate crises by reducing emissions and restoring nature.

More working age young people and families from a diverse range of backgrounds live in the National Park, taking advantage of new green jobs, skills, and other business opportunities as well as an increase in affordable housing.

Visitors and residents travel to, from and around the National Park using a well-connected and affordable system of public transport and active travel services, such as shuttle buses, waterbuses, and cycle routes.

Visitors from all backgrounds value and feel connected to nature whilst enjoying great services and facilities in popular places where tourism and hospitality businesses are thriving and providing local jobs.

Communities are active and empowered, with well-established local organisations leading innovative projects that improve their places and contribute to tackling the twin climate and nature crises, working in partnership with land managers, public bodies, and the local business community.

The National Park's towns and villages, including the built and historic environment, have become more climate resilient, with new developments planned and located in ways that meet communities needs so that they are built sustainably and protected from the extremes of the changing climate.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THIS PLAN

This Plan is based on these key principles:

- National Parks have a duty and opportunity to deliver for Scotland and beyond – our decisions will take this into account.
- The scale and urgency of the nature and climate crises will drive our priorities.
- The change that is needed means we can't and won't shy away from uncomfortable truths or tough decisions.
- We will prioritise actions that bring us closer to our longer-term vision.
- We can't do this alone. We'll only make a real difference if we all see ourselves as stewards.
- We want to bring everyone who lives and works in the National Park or visits it with us – as part of a just transition towards a fairer, greener future.

PART TWO – THE WHAT, HOW, WHO AND WHEN

This is the delivery framework part of the Partnership Plan. It sets out the key Outcomes, along with the rationale behind them, that we need to achieve by 2045, along with how we will do this.

An overview of the Vision, Outcomes and Objectives is provided first in Figure 6 below, the ‘Partnership Plan on a Page’.

This is followed by a more detailed breakdown for each Outcome, which includes, any policies which we will follow to guide how we approach this issue, followed by specific Objectives which will need to be achieved within the next five years to set us on a path towards achieving the longer-term Vision and Outcomes by 2045.

Each Objective has a set of Actions, Measurements and a list of partners that will play a role in delivering them. The Plan also notes the current status of each Objective, to highlight whether work is already in scope or underway in this area, or if this will be a completely new area of work for delivery partners to undertake within the next five years. This part of the Plan will be kept updated throughout the life of the Plan to keep track of the status of each area of work.

FIGURE 6: The Partnership Plan on a Page
A larger scale version of this is also supplied as an Appendix to this Plan.

Vision for 2045	By 2045 Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is a thriving place that is nature positive and carbon negative									
Chapter	RESTORING NATURE			CREATING A LOW-CARBON PLACE			DESIGNING A GREENER WAY OF LIVING			
Chapter sections	Restoring Nature for Climate	Restoring Nature for Healthy Ecosystems	Restoring Nature through Sustainable, Regenerative Land Use	Connecting Everyone with Nature and Climate	Improving popular Places and Routes	Low Carbon Travel for Everyone	Transitioning to a Greener Economy	Supporting Thriving Rural Communities	Developing and Investing in the National Park	
OUTCOMES BY 2045 By 2045 the National Park is/ has...	A natural carbon sink	A restored landscape for nature	An exemplar of regenerative land use	A place for all to enjoy safely and responsibly	High quality visitor infrastructure and facilities	An inclusive, low carbon travel network	A greener, more diverse rural economy	More resilient rural communities	A responsive approach to new development	By 2045
OBJECTIVES FOR 2024-2029 What we need to do now to be on track to achieving the 2045 outcomes	Reduce peatland emissions	Connecting nature at landscape scale	Support more regenerative land use	Inspiring action for nature and climate	Deliver a multi-year place programme	Develop a new strategic transport partnership approach	Increase sustainable tourism	Enable more local living and working	Deliver strategic development needs	By 2029
	Increase tree cover	More land managed for nature	Invest in nature restoration	Support diversity and inclusion	Improve travel infrastructure	Make sustainable travel choices more attractive	Support low carbon businesses	Meet housing needs	Help adapt to climate change and restore nature	
	Restore the water environment	Reduce key pressures on nature	Encourage land use that benefits everyone	support safe, responsible access	Provide a high-quality recreational path network	Improve travel routes and services	Grow green & nature-based jobs and skills	Build community wealth	Make the best use of land and assets	

Chapter 1: RESTORING NATURE

Nature underpins human existence through the benefits and services it provides, such as food, air, water, materials, health, and economic wealth. Halting the ongoing decline and then reversing the loss of nature is not just beneficial for wildlife, it is in all of our interest.

Restoring nature is about us supporting our natural environment to bounce back from damage and decline to become healthier, resilient, and ultimately more bountiful and productive.

Challenges

The state of our natural environment is largely one that is under pressure from human-generated activities.

Carbon emissions

Our peatlands and forests hold an estimated 22 mtCO₂e between them yet this is not all secure. In fact, our peatlands are currently a large source of greenhouse gas emissions in the National Park, as exposed and drained peatland soils actively release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

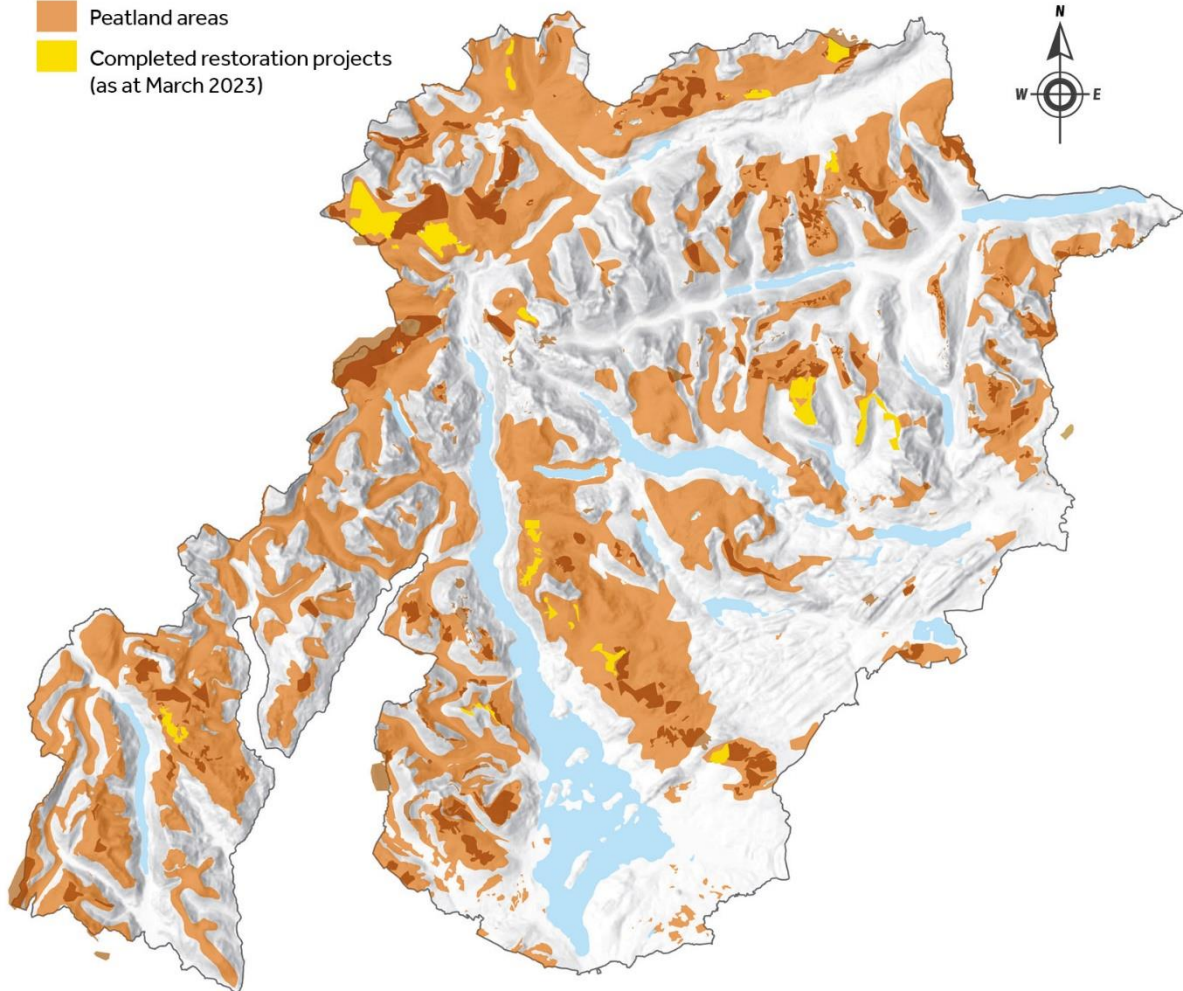
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MAP 1: Peatland cover in the National Park

PEATLAND COVER IN THE NATIONAL PARK

This map shows the overall extent of peatlands across the National Park including broken peatlands and areas where peatland restoration has been completed so far.

-  Broken peatland
-  Peatland areas
-  Completed restoration projects (as at March 2023)



The representation of features or boundaries in which LLTNPA or others have an interest does not necessarily imply their true positions. For further information please contact the appropriate authority. © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 100031883

Our forests and woodlands have great potential to store even greater volumes of greenhouse gases and act as a large carbon sink, but to do so they need to expand and regenerate more freely and naturally, less impacted by browsing animals, invasive Rhododendron and increasing levels of tree diseases exacerbated by a warming climate.

Nature

Many of our freshwater and marine waterbodies are subject to multiple pressures driven by human activities within and beyond the Park. Unnatural levels of nutrients

from land use run-off, ageing septic tanks, sewage overflow, marine litter and artificially constrained water courses combined with the climate change impacts of rising water temperatures and increase in flooding events, mean that in places the Park's water environment of needs restoration. Sea level change and more frequent storms from climate change also means that our coasts are changing rapidly.

Land use

How we use land and water needs to change to address the climate and nature crises as well as continuing to deliver food and timber production, recreational benefits and supporting a fair transition to sustain a viable and greener rural economy that involves supports sustainable rural communities.

There are also challenges in filling the jobs and growing the skills needed to manage nature and land use, such as contractor capacity and associated specialist infrastructure and mechanisms to deliver peatland restoration, woodland expansion, wild deer and invasive species control at scale, and other nature restoration projects.

Opportunities

Nature Based Solutions

Our natural environment could be our greatest ally in tackling the climate emergency with our peatlands trees and soils capable of capturing and storing huge amounts of carbon, and healthy forests and water courses helping to lessen the impacts of extreme weather events such as landslides and flooding.

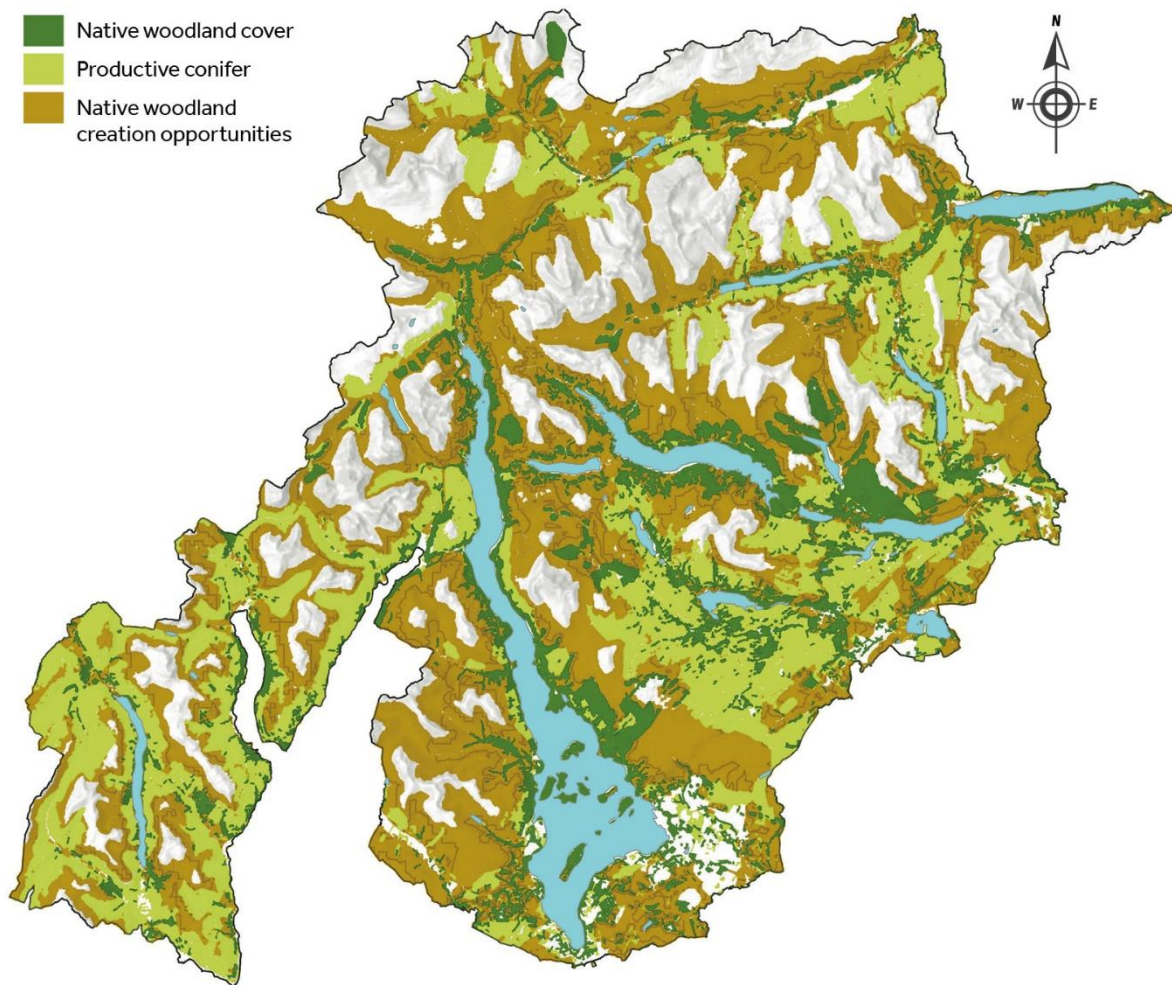
Nature can also help us become more resilient to a changing climate and adapt to it. By allowing freshwater courses to flow more naturally, we will better adapt to the challenges of climate change by slowing down and storing floodwaters. Natural coastal habitats such as saltmarshes can help buffer sea level change and seagrass beds can store 'blue' carbon around some shores.

Expanding and improving the quality of our forests and woodlands through active management, including new planting, re-stocking, natural regeneration and better management of grazing animals and Invasive Non-Native Species, will increase their health and resilience and expand connected forest corridor networks.

MAP 2: Woodland cover and native woodland creation opportunities in the National Park

WOODLAND COVER & NATIVE WOODLAND CREATION OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NATIONAL PARK

This map shows the extent of woodland cover across the National Park, including the existing areas of native woodland, areas of productive conifer used for timber production, and the opportunities to create more native woodlands.



The representation of features or boundaries in which LLTNPA or others have an interest does not necessarily imply their true positions. For further information please contact the appropriate authority. ©Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 100031883 Woodland Cover Data based on Scottish Forestry Data © Scottish Forestry

By developing a living Nature Network approach focusing on the three key habitat networks of woodlands and forests, peatlands and water we could expand, re-connect and repair nature across a larger scale in the Park and beyond. This would see our plant, animal and bird species spread and grow, increasing their resilience in the face of climate change.

integrated, becoming more attractive and supportive for land managers at the same time as preventing practices that erode nature. Improving soil health through regenerative farming will also reduce emissions and create benefits to farmers.

The global movement to address climate change has also captured the attention of financial markets and this has been reflected in increasing land values in the Park linked with the potential for carbon credits to bring new income for land managers. Although still a young financial market the expansion of carbon, and potentially biodiversity, credit schemes could bring significant new finance to help deliver nature restoration. If managed well and in an ethical manner this could also bring benefits to local communities.

As well as the emergence of private finance, the future of public funding for agriculture is also changing. The Scottish Government has consulted on an Agriculture Bill, with implementation expected by 2026. Through this process there is a need to consider how some incentives traditionally applied to agriculture should also apply to land uses delivering nature and climate outcomes.

Nature Based Opportunities

While there are challenges in terms of the jobs and skills needed to manage nature and land use, there is significant potential to create more of these opportunities by establishing a sustainable pipeline of nature restoration projects over the coming years. For example, publicly or privately funded projects will be needed to build confidence and assets for existing contractors and new businesses for local produce such as venison.

This in turn will support the transition of the National Park's rural economy through a green recovery, provide a wider range of employment opportunities for people to live and work here, and support visitors to enjoy our beautiful landscapes and engage with the true value of nature.

The Scottish Government is keen to see more community engagement and transparency in land management decisions. There has been consultation on further proposed Land Reform measures around this, such as, for example, a potential requirement for landholdings over a certain size to prepare compulsory land management plans. The National Park Partnership Plan will have a key role in guiding such plans, building on examples such as the [Strathard Framework](#)

A new framework and partnership with local and national stakeholders, such as a Regional Land Use Partnership could ensure agreement on clearer land use priorities which would guide how future funding is targeted. Along with the Local Place Planning approach this could also allow local communities to be better engaged in decisions around land use and ownership.

Developing models for blending ethical private, public investment and new income generation streams in land use change and restoration work could provide opportunities from the growing interest from investors in a way that also benefits our local communities and businesses.

Successes so far

There are already good examples of land management practices in the National Park that show how land can be managed differently to restore nature and still maintain the production of food and timber.

At Glen Finglas in the Trossachs, The Woodland Trust has for over 20 years protected and expanded the special native woodlands of the area while maintaining a viable farming operation. At Loch Katrine, Forestry and Land Scotland, working with Scottish Water, has created 3000 hectares of new woodland and are embarking on a 500 hectare programme of peatland restoration.

Some of our local groups, such as Inverary and Tyndrum Deer Management Group have been effective at reducing upland deer populations in a joined-up way and use Herbivore Impact Assessment monitoring to support management and control plans.

Over the past seven years, the Peatland ACTION programme has restored more than 1,200 hectares of degraded peatland across the National Park, working with local land managers to improve the condition of uplands, which have traditionally been used for livestock and deer grazing.

In Lochgoilhead, the local community and Argyll Fisheries Trust have been working with owners to protect and enhance eroding riverbanks to improve habitats and water quality to benefit fragile fish populations.

Please refer to the Appendix to read the Delivery Framework for Chapter 1: Restoring Nature.

Each Delivery Framework details the:

- Outcomes for 2045
- Objectives for 2024-2029
- Actions to deliver those objectives
- Measures of success by 2029
- Any relevant policies (if applicable)
- The role of the National Park Authority in delivery
- Other delivery partners involved
- What stage delivery is currently at

Chapter 2: CREATING A LOW-CARBON PLACE

Introduction

Approximately four million visitors come to the National Park each year to enjoy and benefit from its natural beauty, rich heritage and recreational opportunities.

People feeling connected to nature benefits not only their wellbeing but inspires them to act in ways that are more likely to benefit the environment. That connection can mean different things to different people, from feeling the benefit of taking in a

spectacular view, to ensuring they take their litter home after a visit, to taking part in conservation volunteering.

However, we know that the range of people currently visiting the area does not reflect the diversity of our society. The popularity of the National Park also creates pressures and challenges resulting in impacts on our natural environment and behaviours which aren't compatible with the Scottish Government's ambitions to become a Net Zero Nation by 2045.

As we emerge from the pandemic and face the challenges of the climate and nature crises head on, there is real opportunity to transform the National Park into a more sustainable, low carbon destination.

We can only do this by creating opportunities for people to connect to landscape and nature sustainably, with the clear rules and incentives in place to influence positive behaviours, and infrastructure and services which facilitate great experiences whilst also protecting climate and nature.

Challenges

Experiences

Our 2019/20 Visitor Survey found that the main motivation for visiting the National Park was to enjoy the beautiful scenery, this was mentioned by 60% of all respondents. The Visitor Survey also found that 97% of respondents agreed that being in the National Park improves their mood and sense of wellbeing. The consultation on the Draft National Park Partnership Plan also confirmed that connection to nature is the number one reason people value the National Park.

Post COVID-19, more and more people are enjoying the outdoors, with increases in activities such as hillwalking, paddleboarding and open water swimming. For example, a 2022 NatureScot study stated there had been a 10% increase in non-powered, water-related activities such as swimming, fishing and paddleboarding between 2019 and 2022. So, the potential to encourage even more people to connect with nature and act in ways that help tackle the climate and nature crises is huge. However, while many more people are enjoying the outdoors, the visitor profile of those enjoying the National Park doesn't fully reflect the diversity of Scotland's population and more must be done to support people of all backgrounds to be able to benefit from the National Park.

For example, only 1 in 10 of respondents in our most recent Visitor Survey reported a long-term health condition or a disability. In contrast, 20% of people reported a long-term health condition or disability in the 2011 census.

This challenge is not unique to the National Park, nor is it new. According to recent Scottish Government research:

“Since 2012, there has been a significant increase in the number of adults participating in outdoor recreation on both an annual basis and a weekly basis. However, increased participation has not been seen across all groups, such as those with a long-term illness or disability, or among minority ethnic groups.”

Infrastructure and services

The visitor sites and infrastructure in the National Park – car parks, toilets, piers, paths – both those managed by the National Park Authority and other organisations, were all largely established prior to the National Park's designation in 2002. While there have been upgrades and improvements over time, the way people enjoy the National Park has also evolved.

The 'stress test' on rural visitor destinations and recreational facilities across Scotland resulting from increase in visitors due to the COVID-19 pandemic brought stakeholders, third sector, businesses and communities closer together to accelerate action to increase visitor facilities, improve real time information and extend ranger patrols. This was supported by targeted national funding for 'boots on the ground' over the last three years. However, it has also confirmed where long-term change is needed. While there has been investment in upgrades and improvements over the years, until recently there has not been a real joined up strategic approach looking across all publicly owned visitor sites in the National Park.

We also need to consider how resilient our existing infrastructure and routes are to the impacts of climate and how it could better support nature. For example, increased rainfall damages paths and bridges on popular routes including the West Highland Way. Further developing and investing in services and infrastructure could reduce the impact of both visitor demand and climate change. In particular, a well-maintained path network (both upland and lowland paths) which integrates with transport and facilities is crucial to people's connection to nature and landscape.

While in some places where there isn't the capacity for high volumes of visitors and cars, and which are important for nature, we need to manage volume to protect habitats and quieter visitor experiences.

Travel

The dominance of car travel is a major contributor to carbon emissions of the National Park, with visitor travel to and from the area being the largest (34%) of the six main categories of emission reduction targets. 79% of visitors arrive in the National Park by car and 73% explore the area by car according to our 2019/20 Visitor Survey. Large parts of the National Park can't be reached without a car and long-standing systemic constraints make travel to many areas of the Park exclusive to car users. This results in high and ever-increasing volumes of cars which in turn brings high emissions, congestion, visitor management pressures and inequality of access to recreational opportunities.

Public transport across the country and within the National Park is designed primarily with residents in mind and misses the opportunity to meet demand from visitors that could help support more travel services for all. Many local people, particularly young people, do not feel current services meets their needs.

Tackling this lack of choice in rural public transport is a crucial part of becoming a Net Zero National Park. The National Park Authority is highly dependent on action by

partners, including, Regional Transport Partnerships, Local Authorities and transportation operators, for this to become a reality.

There is also currently a skills gap and shortage of labour for key roles in the transport sector. This became evident when a lack of bus drivers in rural areas was the key reason transport operators cited for being unable to tender for a funded shuttle bus pilot in the National Park in 2021 and 2022.

Addressing these issues requires a long-term, strategic and 'whole system' approach. It requires the reprioritisation of sustainable modes of transport and the active de-prioritisation of the private car.

Opportunities

Experiences

There is an important opportunity over the next five years to ensure a broader spectrum of visitors to the National Park. With millions of visitors on our doorstep, it is right that this National Park makes the most of the connection and influence it has with the people who choose to visit every year.

Through the [Future Nature Route Map](#) by 2030 we aim to further develop widely available, inventive engagement and education opportunities around nature. This will provide opportunities for all communities, including those groups that may be normally excluded, to learn about and experience nature in the National Park.

Infrastructure and services

A long-term coordinated approach to visitor services and infrastructure, combined with continued partnership working to managing negative behaviours and impacts, would have huge benefits for visitors, communities and businesses as well as supporting climate and nature objectives.

Providing a high-quality experience for visitors in popular places, through improved services and facilities, would reduce impact on the daily lives of our communities.

A [Visitor Levy](#), if well managed and implemented equitably in the National Park, could provide additional funding to invest in the National Park's visitor infrastructure and facilities.

A better designed, organised and managed network of visitor sites could also make the make it easier to manage visitor pressures and reduce the need for enforcement action.

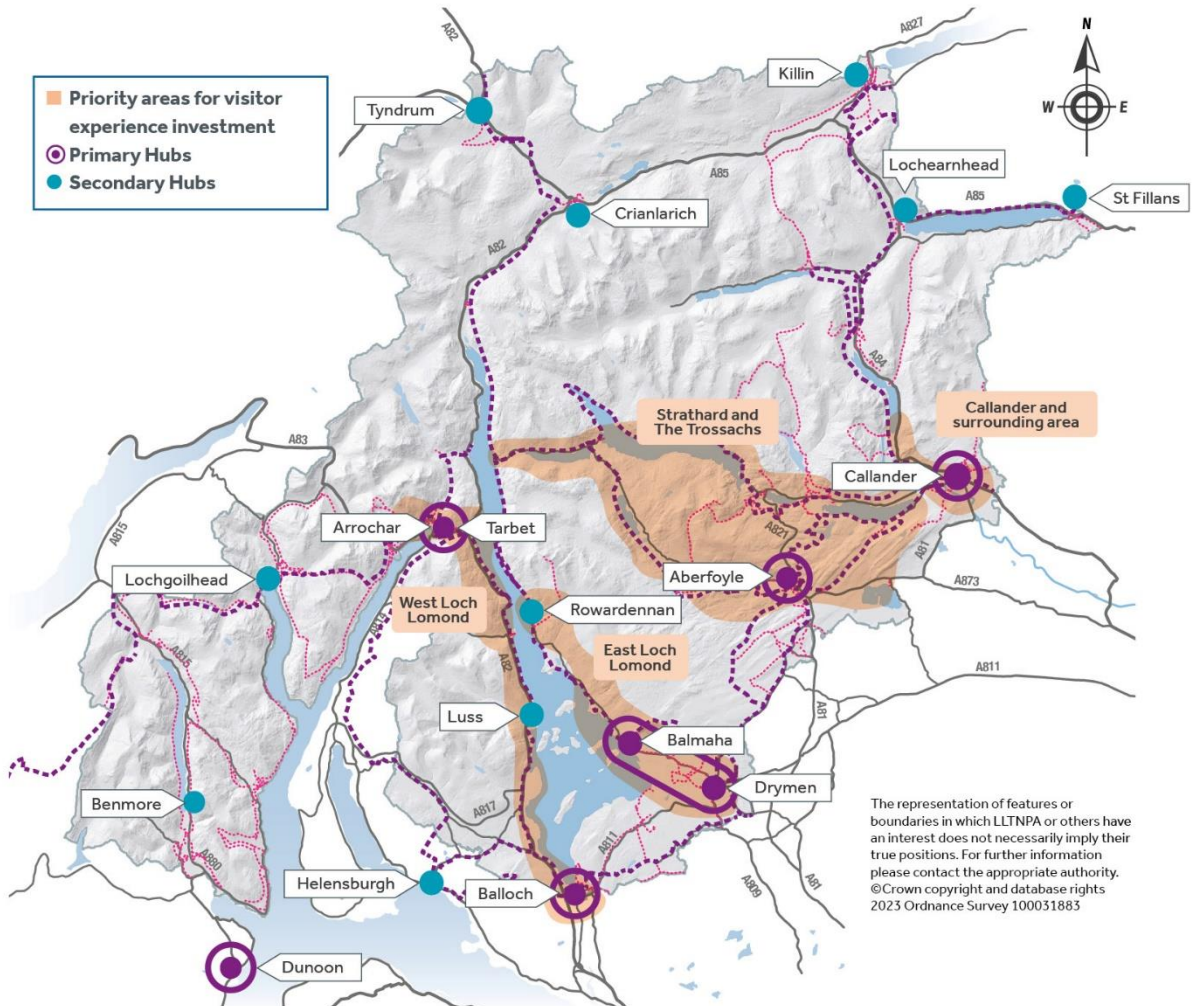
Meanwhile, in less visited areas, including remote hilltops, forests and glens away from roads and facilities, prioritising non-motorised access and recreation, will allow nature to recover more rapidly.

Infrastructure investment at key visitor hubs, such as at Balloch, Callander and Arrochar/Tarbet can provide more sustainable ways for people to travel to, from and within the National Park through improved and joined up sustainable and active travel options.

MAP 4: Infrastructure Investment Priorities in the National Park

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PRIORITIES IN THE NATIONAL PARK

This map shows the priority areas and locations identified in the National Park Place Programme for strategic investment in infrastructure as well as the key visitor hubs for facilities, path networks and sustainable transport options.



Priority areas

- Callander and surrounding area
- East Loch Lomond
- West Loch Lomond
- Strathard and The Trossachs

Primary Hubs

- Aberfoyle
- Arrochar & Tarbet
- Balloch
- Callander
- Dunoon
- East Loch Lomond

Secondary Hubs

- Benmore
- Criarlach
- Helensburgh
- Killin
- Lochearnhead
- Lochgoilhead
- Luss
- Rowardennan
- St Fillans
- Tyndrum

Path Network

- Promoted Long Distance Routes
- Other Core Paths

Travel

Many of the issues and challenges around travel are not unique to the National Park. However, what is most relevant here is the scale of visitor travel and the opportunity to be an exemplar of a low emission rural transport system that is more inclusive and attractive, meeting the needs of both visitors and residents.

We know this *is* possible. We can draw on examples of successful sustainable travel initiatives in other National Parks both in the UK, such as Eryri/Snowdonia National Park, and abroad, such as Cap de Creus Natural Park in Catalonia or Banff National Park in Canada, to develop this new integrated system, where buses, trains, ferries and opportunities to cycle, wheel and walk safely are well coordinated.

Successes so far

Examples exist from across the Park of where people have engaged with nature and cultural heritage, travelling through natural landscapes and towns and villages in a low carbon way enjoying a range of recreational pursuits and active travel.

Many kilometres of multi-use paths and activities have been created in both lowland and upland areas to facilitate this recreation and travel including the Lochearn Railway path, the Mountains and The People project and Cycle in the Park.

The successful Walk in the Park scheme managed by the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Countryside Trust has grown from just seven walkers to over 250 participants in a few years, leading organised health walks in six local towns and villages.

Alongside many regular adult volunteers who enjoy working close to nature, hundreds of children planted trees as part of a COP26 legacy project to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss in the Park through the 'Roots for the Future' project, supporting pupils from 11 local schools to work with Park Rangers creating small areas of woodland in their school grounds.

Please refer to the Appendix to read the Delivery Framework for Chapter 2: Creating a low-carbon place.

Each Delivery Framework details the:

- Outcomes for 2045
- Objectives for 2024-2029
- Actions to deliver those objectives
- Measures of success by 2029
- Any relevant policies (if applicable)
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Chapter 3: DESIGNING A GREENER WAY OF LIVING

Introduction

How people live, work and experience the National Park needs to change to respond and adapt to the nature and climate crises, as well as to support thriving communities into the future.

The National Park's rural economy must adapt to support this; becoming greener, more diverse and more equitable than it is now, generating and retaining more wealth locally.

For communities to be more sustainable and resilient to the impacts of climate change, for them to play a part in tackling the nature crisis and to benefit from the transition of our economy, support must be available. Communities need access to good services, housing and transport that allows people to live and work here for years to come. This Plan aims to tackle these systemic issues.

The way we approach development in the National Park needs to change too, with this having an increasingly important role in helping to address the climate emergency, restore nature and support rural communities.

Challenges

Rural Economy

The National Park's landscapes, natural environment and cultural heritage are the very reason there is a tourism economy, but the way that people currently visit the National Park is not sustainable or compatible with ambitions to become a Net Zero Nation by 2045. It is impacting on our natural environment and creating pressures on some communities.

How people want to experience the National Park is also changing. Spending on nature-based and wellness tourism is a growing trend, with a 2019 VisitScotland Insight study finding that 42% characterised a wellness holiday as including "experiencing fresh air and being outdoors", while "peace and quiet" came in at 41%. The tourism sector is responding to new type of tourism with many new business models emerging, despite many businesses experiencing the most difficult operating circumstances in a generation, with escalating operating costs, skills shortages and recruitment challenges.

As the same time the sector needs to reduce its impact on climate and nature with additional green skills and expertise needed across various specialisms, including digital, transport, renewable energy and construction.

It's not only the tourism sector that will need to evolve. With the changing approach to land use to tackle climate change and nature loss, there will need to be significant growth in nature-based green jobs and skills, alongside associated training, skills development and establishing career pathways.

Communities

We know that people being able to meet their needs locally is one way in which we can both reduce our emissions and create the conditions for thriving communities. Our communities rely on each other and the towns and villages around the National Park to access shops, health care, education, employment and a range of other services and facilities. Travel between, and in many cases within communities, can be challenging without a car, especially for young people.

Availability of affordable housing and transport are two of the biggest issues creating barriers to more working age and young people being able to find homes and take up jobs in the National Park.

Despite an increase in affordable housing in recent years, commuting, retirement and an increased desire for rural living are key factors driving up housing pressures, alongside increasing numbers of second homes and short-term holiday lets. Whilst these can be beneficial to the visitor economy, some communities are concerned that we have reached a tipping point with too many homes being used as holiday lets, removing them from the local housing system.

While many communities are proactively leading local action to address these issues, community-led action relies on local people with the confidence and skills volunteering their time and expertise. Not all communities are currently in a position, to identify and take action. It is important that communities are able to influence and benefit from the changes to the Park's economy and the opportunities this could bring to support community needs and help grow [community wealth](#).

Development and investment

There continues to be considerable development interest in the Park, mainly for housing and tourism-related developments, however some places do not have capacity for more development due to environmental constraints or lack of rural infrastructure. Beyond what has already been identified in the current National Park [Local Development Plan](#) and is already in the pipeline for delivery, it is not envisaged that any significant new sites for development will be needed in the period of this Plan.

There is already a legacy of undeveloped vacant and derelict sites in and around towns and villages, for example at Arrochar and Tarbet, with some causing significant blight within communities. If more traditional interventions do not stimulate development on these sites, it is likely that methods such as compulsory purchase, community right-to-buy, or innovative finance options will be needed.

The re-use of brownfield sites (land which has previously been developed) outside towns and villages will require re-consideration for its potential to aid local living, the rural economy, local wealth building and the biodiversity value of the site.

Where new development is needed, challenges that remain include availability of suitable land, development costs remaining extremely high and either limited, or a lack of, existing infrastructure. This is affecting the viability and delivery of much

needed development in small rural communities and causing delays to delivery of affordable housing at some locations.

[Adaptation](#) is needed to help communities become more climate ready and manage the impacts of the changing climate on the natural, built and historic environment.

We are increasingly witnessing more heavy, intense periods of rainfall, resulting in increased river, coastal and surface flooding damaging local infrastructure, buildings, the environment and cutting off some communities entirely. Landslips have blocked strategic road links on both the A83 and A85 Trunk roads as well as minor local roads in the National Park.

Increased temperature fluctuations can damage and disrupt energy supplies and transmission infrastructure, and impact on other '[ecosystem services](#)' in the National Park that we often take for granted – for example water (both quality and availability). Hotter, drier summers increase instances of water scarcity and wildfires. While these weather changes impact the natural environment, they also affect our historic and built environment. For example, impacts on buildings such as overheating or poor weather resistance and material deterioration.

Opportunities

Rural Economy

Tourism businesses in the National Park are well placed to respond to the increasing interest in 'voluntourism', sustainable holidays, carbon-aware itineraries, locally sourced produce and eco-friendly accommodation. Many already work hard to reduce their environmental and climate impact by training their staff in the Park's nature, collaborating to deliver connections with public transport and communities, and taking action to repair and enhance their local environments.

This sector also has a significant role as ambassadors for the National Park through their interaction with visitors and opportunity to connect with a broad range of people on climate and nature. There is opportunity for businesses to enhance visitors' experience, build a bond with our landscape and keep important aspects of the Park's cultural and heritage (like Gaelic language) alive as part of their visit.

Many businesses are already taking steps to reduce their carbon footprint by making changes to their energy usage and waste systems and supporting local supply chains. The opportunity and the need for all businesses to do this cannot be understated.

There is a need to identify requirements for growing the nature-based green jobs and skills sector as we all do more to tackle the twin nature and climate crises. Partners in the National Park will work together to establish key areas of focus on this. NatureScot's [Nature Based Jobs and Skills Action Plan for 2023-2024](#) provides a useful context by illustrating the broad range and scope of jobs required in this sector.

Communities

Living well locally means people can meet their daily needs as close as possible to where they live or work, with a good range of rural services and facilities, more local food growing and energy generation along with active travel or public transport options. Living and working more locally will make residents less dependent on car journeys, cutting carbon emissions and nurturing more vibrant, healthy communities. Home or hybrid working and options to work from local business hubs, like those in Aberfoyle and Drymen and being trialled using local village halls as multipurpose venues, also supports greener, local living and working.

[Local Place Plans](#) are already beginning to say more on climate and local living and are an important tool in supporting this transition.

Collaborative initiatives to support communities, such as the [Community Climate Action Hub for the Forth Valley](#) region (which includes the National Park area) will help to facilitate networking between individual community groups, identify funding opportunities and develop local plans to progress local led climate action.

The next Local Development Plan can help to ensure new housing meets the needs of communities and the economy by facilitating an increase in affordable housing. Partners will need to work together to provide a wider range of affordable housing including mid-market rent, low cost or shared ownership. The next Local Development Plan can seek to protect housing from not being lost to holiday lets and second homes by considering how Short Term Let Control areas might help some communities.

Small businesses, community organisations and social enterprises could comprise a bigger part of the National Park's economy, helping to create and circulate local wealth more within rural communities. Development and private investment in the National Park's natural resources for sequestration could potentially also help build community wealth and support rural communities. This includes direct community involvement in land or mutual agreements between developers, investors, land managers and communities to identify how benefits can be shared more equitably.

Ensuring communities are supported to maintain and [build capacity](#) in their local community organisations, through supporting more local people, including young people, to get involved could result in more social enterprises being established and create local job, training and skills development opportunities.

Development and investment

[National Planning Framework 4 \(NPF4\)](#) is clear that to respond to the climate emergency and nature crisis, all investment and development must contribute to making Scotland a more sustainable place. It identifies a large part of the National Park, alongside other areas of central and northern Highlands of Scotland, to become an overall net carbon sink, locking in more carbon than it releases into the atmosphere.

Being a National Park doesn't mean there should be no development, it means we have an enormous opportunity to respond in ways that will help deliver both national outcomes and local benefits.

Through its planning role the National Park Authority can pro-actively guide new development and infrastructure within the National Park that is more closely aligned to facilitating the [land use change](#) required to deliver for climate and nature, while also meeting the needs of those living and working here. Nature recovery can be secured through identifying opportunities for investment in natural capital, strengthening nature networks and enhancing biodiversity on site as part of development delivery.

There is also a need to invest in existing rural infrastructure to repair, improve and strengthen its resilience towards the impacts of climate change. The location of the National Park means it hosts nationally strategic infrastructure including the A82, A83, A84 and A85 Trunk Roads, the West Highland rail line, electricity transmission infrastructure and a large hydro-electric power station at Sloy, Loch Lomond.

As well as the ongoing maintenance and investment required for this infrastructure, a number of these assets have also identified or planned improvements supported by NPF4. The design and delivery of these can ensure these also contribute to enhancing the nature and landscape of the National Park.

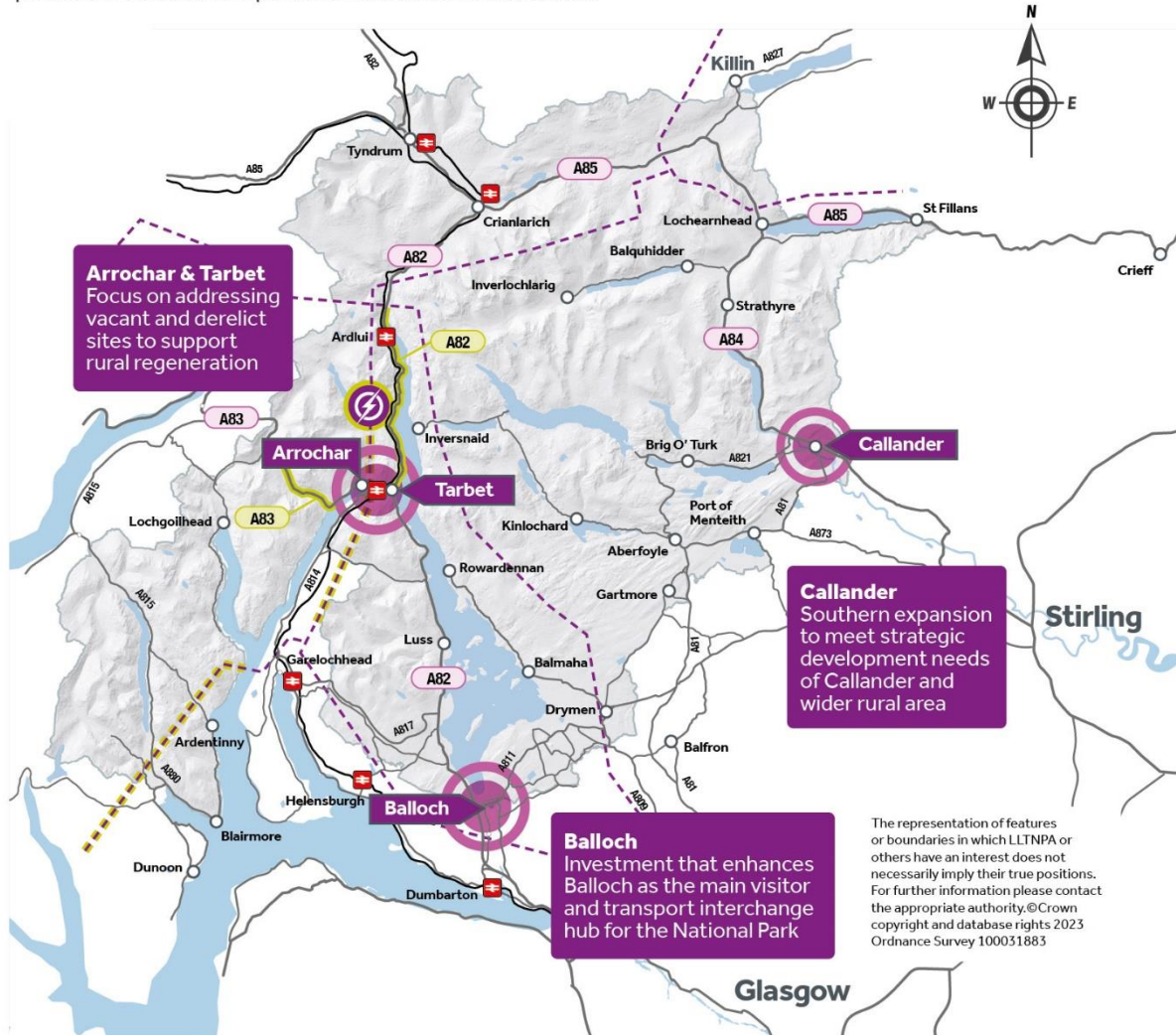
Adaptation is needed to help communities to become more 'climate ready' and manage the impacts of climate change on the natural, built and historic environment. This includes both natural environmental (such as natural flood management techniques) and engineered solutions to help build resilience for both people and nature.

Communities can help manage the impacts climate is having on nature – in our forests, woodlands, lochs and rivers, as well as influence the behaviours, systems and land use changes now needed to help us all adapt to living with climate change.

MAP 5: Strategic Development and Investment in the National Park

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE NATIONAL PARK

This map highlights the key areas in the Park for strategic development priorities, planned infrastructure improvements and core infrastructure.



National Strategic Infrastructure

- A82 Trunk Road Network
- West Highland Railway Line
- Sloy Hydro Electric Power Station
- Electricity transmission lines (indicative)

Planned improvements

- A82 Tarbet to Inverarnan
- A83 Ardgartan to Cairndow
- Dunoon to Loch Long
- Sloy to Garelochhead
- Sloy Hydro Electric Power Station

Strategic Development and Investment Locations

- Balloch
- Callander
- Arrochar & Tarbet

Successes so far

Communities in the National Park are already delivering to support local living. For example, community-led action on local energy generation via community-owned run of river hydro schemes; local food growing and distribution; scoping of local community-run transport enterprises; community-based health walks/cycling groups

and community run business hubs. We can build on these examples to encourage and empower all communities in the National Park to take action towards living well locally, adapting to the Climate Emergency and delivering for nature.

A pilot project in Drymen explored with the community how people can live more locally, linking with surrounding communities. The findings of this are summarised in '[Drymen and the villages of East Loch Lomond: Living Well Locally Vision and Routemap](#)' and were used by the community to inform their Local Place Plan.

A pilot project integrating land use and planning has been trialled in the Strathard area of the National Park. The '[Strathard Framework](#)' was prepared jointly by the Strathard Community Council, the Strathard Community Development Trust, the National Park Authority and Stirling Council. It identifies the development and infrastructure needs for the area alongside opportunities for investment in natural capital. The focus now is on delivery across all partners. This approach has helped test and consider how similar rural land use and planning frameworks might work in other areas of the National Park.

Please refer to the Appendix to read the Delivery Framework for Chapter 3: Designing a Greener Way of Living.

Each Delivery Framework details:

- Outcomes for 2045
- Objectives for 2024-2029
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Measurements of Success by 2029/30

Vision	By 2045 Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is a thriving place that is nature positive and carbon negative
Vision Component	Measurement of Success
• Nature Positive	Assess the State of Nature in the National Park every five years against the baseline year of 2023. Halt decline in nature by 2030 and see widespread restoration by 2040.
• Carbon Negative	Measure the greenhouse gas footprint of the National Park every five years against the baseline year of 2019. Reach Net Zero GHG emissions by 2035 and become a sink for emissions thereafter.
• Thriving Place	Assess the Quality of the National Park as a place every year by reviewing future community led and prepared Place Standard assessments against a baseline year of 2023. Co-develop targets for 2030 with communities.

Restore Nature Outcomes by 2045	Measurement of success (to ensure we are on track to achieving 2045 long term outcome)
<p>1.1 A natural carbon sink</p> <p>Our ecosystems are in good health helping Scotland adapt to and mitigate against the climate crisis with the National Park being an active, natural carbon sink.</p>	<p>1a. Track the amount of restored peatland and monitor its condition using standard protocols. More than treble the average annual rate of peatland restoration from 240 ha to 840 ha, achieving at least 5,900 ha by 2030.</p> <p>1b. Track the location, extent, and condition of the National Park's tree cover. Double the average annual rate of woodland expansion from 200ha to 400ha, focusing on priority areas.</p>
<p>1.2 A restored landscape for nature</p> <p>The long-term decline in nature in the National Park will be halted by 2030 and there will be widespread restoration by 2040, with an expansion of large-scale, connected habitat networks where land</p>	<p>2a. Track the percentage of land under effective conservation and restoration management. Establish baseline and increase the percentage year on year.</p> <p>2b. Track completion of Herbivore Impact Assessments for all Deer Management Groups and measure average deer densities. Achieve nationally recognised target levels of</p>

management prioritises nature recovery.	average deer densities - currently a maximum of 5 deer per km ² in woodland and a maximum of 10 deer per km ² on the open hill.
<p>1.3. An exemplar of regenerative land use</p> <p>The National Park is an exemplar of regenerative land use delivering a wider range of private, public and community benefits.</p>	3. Track the number of pilot regenerative farming projects in the National Park and complete pilots on 5 land holdings by 2030.

Creating a Low Carbon Place Outcomes by 2045	Measurement of success (to ensure we are on track to achieving 2045 long term outcome)
<p>2.1. A Place for all to enjoy safely and responsibly</p> <p>There are opportunities for everyone to value and enjoy the special qualities/benefits of the National Park safely.</p>	<p>1a. Measure participation in and impact of Volunteering, Outdoor Learning and Youth Action programmes.</p> <p>1b. Measure the number of people visiting the National Park every year. Track how representative our domestic visitors are of Scottish society.</p>
<p>2.2. High quality visitor infrastructure and facilities</p> <p>People have a high-quality experience enjoying the National Park and are able to use great services, facilities and routes with less impact on nature or contributing to climate change.</p>	2. Track the investment in and completion of priority visitor infrastructure projects as part of our Place Programme and across the recreation path network.
<p>2.3. An inclusive, low carbon travel network</p> <p>The National Park has an efficient, inclusive rural transport sector, meeting the travel needs of both visitors and residents alike.</p>	3. Monitor rural transport provision. Reduce transport emissions from travel to and from the National Park by at least 61% from the 2019 baseline by 2030.

Designing a Greener Way of Living Outcomes by 2045	Measurement of success (to ensure we are on track to achieving 2045 long term outcome)
<p>3.1. A greener and more diverse rural economy</p> <p>The National Park has a zero carbon and more diverse rural economy, in which businesses thrive and the local workforce has grown through an increase in nature and climate-based jobs.</p>	<p>1. Track new or expanded numbers of the jobs and skills development opportunities necessary to support transition to a nature positive and carbon negative National Park economy, including public transportation, regenerative agriculture, peatland and water restoration, woodland creation and management, and sustainable tourism. Establish baseline and increase year on year.</p>
<p>3.2. More resilient rural communities</p> <p>National Park communities are leading the way on net zero, nature-friendly, living and working, with their needs being met more locally supported by a thriving local rural economy which benefits all.</p>	<p>2a. Track action by National Park communities to reduce their carbon footprint, restore nature and become more resilient to the impacts of climate change. All communities to have implemented actions by 2029.</p> <p>2b. Track the number of affordable new homes built, homes brought back into use as housing for local people, and numbers of second, holiday and Short Term Lets. Secure higher build rates than the minimum target of 30 new homes per year identified by NPF4, where evidenced as necessary to help address local housing needs and the rural economy.</p>
<p>3.3. A responsive approach to new development</p> <p>New development and infrastructure is more responsive to the needs of communities, the rural economy, land use and management, directly benefitting people, climate and nature.</p>	<p>3. Measure the nature restoration and net zero outputs secured through delivering new development, including biodiversity net gains on and offsite.</p>

Glossary

Active Travel

Making a journey by non-motorised modes of transport, such as walking, wheeling and cycling, that could otherwise be made by motorised modes such as cars, buses or trains. Such journeys tend to be 'functional', i.e. for getting from A to B, (e.g., travelling to employment, education, community facilities or leisure destinations). Active travel modes can also be used for recreational purposes, but this would be classed as 'active recreation' as opposed to active travel.

Affordable housing

Good quality homes that are affordable for people on lower incomes. This can include social rent, mid-market rented, shared-ownership, shared-equity, housing sold at discount (including plots for self-build), self-build plots and low-cost housing without subsidy.

Biodiversity

The variety of life on earth essential for sustaining the ecosystem that provides us with food, fuel, health, wealth, and other vital services.

Biodiversity credits

A standard for assigning financial value to biodiversity for financial market trading and investment. Biodiversity credits are similar to carbon credits, which allow investment in projects that capture and store carbon.

Brownfield

Land which has previously been developed, including vacant and derelict land, land occupied by redundant or unused buildings and developed land.

Browsing animals

Animals feeding on leaves, soft shoots, or fruits of high-growing, generally woody plants such as trees and shrubs. This is contrasted with grazing, which means animals feeding on grass or other lower vegetations.

Carbon credits

A carbon credit is a tradable certificate or permit representing the right to emit a set amount of carbon dioxide or the equivalent amount of a different greenhouse gas (tCO₂e).

Carbon negative

Emitting less than zero carbon dioxide and carbon dioxide equity equivalent (CO₂e) greenhouse gasses.

Carbon sequestration

The long-term removal, capture, or storage of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to slow or reverse atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) pollution and to mitigate or reverse climate change.

Carbon markets

A market system where carbon credits are sold and bought.

Carbon sink

Anything natural or otherwise, that accumulates and stores some carbon-containing chemical compound for an indefinite period and thereby removes carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere.

Climate adaptation/climate change adaptation

Responding to the changes in climate that we have seen over the last few decades whilst preparing for the changes we will face as climate continues to change.

Climate mitigation/climate change mitigation

Efforts to reduce or prevent greenhouse gas emissions which have an impact on global temperatures and reducing the current concentration of carbon dioxide by enhancing carbon sinks (for example, increasing the area of forest).

Community climate action hub

A Scottish Government led initiative to support a network of regional community hubs to provide a joined up regional approach to climate change action.

Community wealth building

A people centred approach to local economic development, that redirects wealth back into the local economy and places control and benefits into the hands of local people.

Diffuse pollution

The release of potential pollutants from a range of activities that, individually, may have no effect on the water environment, but, at the scale of a catchment, can have a significant effect.

Designated sites

Areas that are protected for their natural features of special interest and to ensure the features remain in good health for all to enjoy, now and in the future. The designation of sites may be called for by international directives and treaties, domestic legislation and policy, or local needs and interests. Also known as protected areas.

Ecosystem

An area where plants, animals, and other organisms (living parts), as well as non-living parts (air, soil, water, weather) interact as a system.

Green jobs

Green jobs include those in renewable energy, the circular economy and zero waste, and the nature-based sector with wider 'green skills' sitting on a spectrum ranging from highly specific requirements in sectors directly supporting the transition to net zero such as energy, transport, construction, agriculture, and manufacturing, through to more general requirements across all sectors to thrive in a net zero economy.

Herbivore pressures

The negative impacts that grazing and browsing animals, such as wild deer and

livestock can have on trees and other vegetation through eating fresh growth, stripping bark and trampling.

Just transition

For the Scottish Government a just transition is both the outcome – a fairer, greener future for all – and the process that must be undertaken in partnership with those impacted by the transition to net zero. It supports a net zero and climate resilient economy in a way that delivers fairness and tackles inequality and injustice.

Land Use Change

Changes to the way land is used, managed or owned to deliver multiple outcomes for climate, nature and people.

Mass transit corridor

The movement of people from urban areas using public transport such as buses and trains.

Montane woodland

Small tree and low shrub species, such as dwarf willow and birch found on higher slopes and rocky outcrops in upland areas.

Natural capital

The world's stock of natural resources. This includes air, water, minerals, and all living things.

Nature-positive

Reversing the current declines in nature, so that species and ecosystems begin to recover.

Natural riparian woodlands

Woodland along rivers and water courses. It serves very important functions in our landscapes, in regulating natural processes and in mitigating extreme events like flooding. Native woodland in the riparian zone is a vital part of the water ecosystem.

Nature networks

A joined-up system of places important for wild plants and animals, on land and in water. It allows plants, animals, seeds, nutrients and water to move from place to place and enables the natural world to adapt to change, providing plants and animals with places to live, feed and breed. Effectively functioning nature networks will connect existing nature rich areas through habitat corridors, habitat 'stepping stones', or habitat restoration areas.

Net Zero

The balance between the amount of greenhouse gas produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere. We reach net zero when the amount we add is no more than the amount taken away. **Net Zero Nation**

A nation in which the amount of greenhouse gas emissions put into the atmosphere is balanced by the amount taken out by sequestration - resulting in net zero emissions.

Paris Agreement

The legally binding international treaty on climate change.

Peatland/s

Land defined by peat soil or peaty soil types. This means that 'peat-forming' vegetation is growing and actively forming peat, or it has been grown and has formed peat at some point in the past.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

A type of designated site (see description of designated site above). Areas of land and water that are designated as they best represent Scotland's natural heritage.

Special Areas of Conservation

A type of designated site (see description of designated site above). Areas of land and water that are designated to protect one or more special habitats and/or species listed in the Habitats Directive.

Sustainable

Meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations.

Third sector

The third sector includes charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups, delivers essential services, helps to improve people's wellbeing and contributes to economic growth. It plays a vital role in supporting communities at local level.

Voluntourism

A form of tourism in which travellers participate in voluntary work, typically for a charity.

DRAFT FOR BOARD APPROVAL

Knowledge Base

The National Park Authority has drawn on different types of knowledge for this Plan, including national policy; practitioner knowledge; good practice examples; discussions with partners and stakeholders; publicly available research reports, and research we have commissioned.

You will see direct references where appropriate within the Plan itself. If you would like to read more, some of the key sources of insight for the Plan are listed below.

Throughout the Plan

- Future Nature (National Park Authority)
- A greenhouse gas emissions assessment and target scenario for Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority (Small World Consulting)
- Reviews of progress on the Indicators of Success of the 2018-23 National Partnership Plan (National Park Authority)

Restoring Nature

- State of Nature 2023 Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park (Ecosoulis)
- Edinburgh Declaration (National Park Authority as signatories)
- Interim Principles for Responsible Investment in Natural Capital (Scottish Government)
- Key drivers for land manager decision making in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and opportunities for addressing constraints to woodland creation (SEFARI Fellowship)
- Strathard Framework (National Park Authority)
- Scotland's Climate Week: Letter from National Park Youth Committee
- Community benefits from investment in natural capital, A Discussion Paper (Scottish Land Commission)

Creating a Low-Carbon Place

- Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal & Modal Shift Report (Ansons Consulting)
- Improving Nature Connectedness in Adults (Open Access Academic Journal)
- Equalities Mainstreaming Report and Equalities Outcomes 2021-2025 (National Park Authority)
- Outdoor recreation - understanding the drivers of participation: research (Scottish Government)

- [The Role of Wellness in the Visitor Experience](#) (Visit Scotland)
- Nature Scot professional advice on [Sustainable Tourism](#)
- [Place Programme and Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Studies](#) (National Park Authority)
- [2022 Progress Report to Parliament](#) (UK Climate Change Committee)
- [STPR2 Strategic Transport Projects Review](#) (Transport Scotland)
- Futures Group (NPA Board committee) [discussion paper on sustainable transport](#)
- Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (GTS)
- [2019/20 Visitor Survey](#) (Progressive).

Designing A Greener Way of Living

- [National Planning Framework 4](#) (Scottish Government)
- [Scotland Climate Change Plan Monitoring Report 2022](#) (Scottish Government)
- [Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation](#) (Scottish Government)
- [Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan 2020-2025](#) (Skills Development Scotland and Scottish Government)
- [Highlands and Islands Enterprise Reports](#) on Optimising carbon sequestration for community wealth building in Argyll and Bute
- [Nature based jobs and skills Action Plan 2022-2023](#) (NatureScot)
- [Local Place Plans](#)
- [Operation of Housing System within Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park 2022](#) (Arneil Johnston).
- [Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Local Development Plan](#)
- [Strathard Framework](#) (National Park Authority)
- [Community Climate Action Hubs](#) (Scottish Government)
- [Short Term Let Control Areas](#) (Scottish Government)
- [Drymen and the villages of East Loch Lomond: Living Well Locally Vision and Routemap](#) (National Park Authority)