



Appendix 1: Draft Annual Operational Plan 2024/25

Agenda Item 5

National Park Authority Board Meeting

11 March 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1. Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority Annual Operational Plan 2024/25 sets out our organisational priorities for delivery in the coming year. Our plan this year has been updated to reflect the structure of the recently approved [National Park Partnership Plan 2024-29](#).

1.2. The Annual Operating Plan does not encompass all the operational work undertaken by the National Park Authority – it draws out key deliverables which aim to progress our strategic direction.

1.3. For 2024/25 our focus, in line with our National Park Plan, will be on:

- **Restoring Nature;**
- **Creating a Low-Carbon Place;**
- **Designing a Greener Way of Living, and;**
- **A Developing and Efficient National Park Authority**

2. Background

2.1. The National Park Authority was established to achieve four key aims laid out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. These are:

- **To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area**
- **To promote the 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 social and economic development of the communities of the area**

2.2. We contribute to the national outcomes and strategic objectives of the Scottish Government. The extent to which we contribute to Scottish Government's priorities and outcomes is fundamental to our own success as a National Park Authority in delivering for Scotland. The [2023/24 Programme for Government: "Equality, Opportunity, Community"](#) sets out the Scottish Government's expectations for Scotland.

2.3. Our National Park Partnership Plan (2024-2029) which was approved by the NPA Board on 11th December 2023 describes the vision and outcomes for the whole National Park area and contributions required from many different organisations over a five-year period to help achieve our shared vision for the National Park.

2.4. The National Park Authority is currently in the process of finalising our 5-year Corporate Plan for 2024-29 which will run alongside the National Park Plan and detail how we as an organisation will fulfil our role in the strategic delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan.

2.5. This Annual Operational Plan (2024/25) describes specific organisational priorities and objectives for the year ahead. We will continue to build on our work from the last two years, including delivering on programmes and strategies approved by the Board. This includes a number of multi-year projects and programmes, such as Future Nature, Mission Zero, the Place Programme, and the implementation of the Loch Lomond (Navigation) Byelaw review.



3. Restoring Nature

3.1. 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.

3.2. 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.

3.3. Our 2024/25 Annual Operating Plan aims to progress the objectives of this first Chapter of the National Park Partnership Plan through the following deliverables:

- Restoring Nature for Climate:**
 We will continue to expand the delivery of the Peatland Action programme of work; create a 5-year woodland delivery and monitoring plan; and produce a joint vision and shared ways of working for a landscape approach to our water environment.
- Restoring Nature for Healthy Ecosystems:**
 We will continue to deliver key landscape partnership projects; finalise the National Park Priority Area Herbivore Action Plan; deliver a capital programme of Nature Restoration; and develop a National Park Nature Network
- Restoring Nature through Sustainable, Regenerative Land Use:**
 We will develop the regenerative land use programme.

These actions support the following objectives for 2029 in of our National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029 Delivery Framework:

- Objective 1.1.1: Reduce Peatland Emissions
- Objective 1.1.2: Increase Tress Cover
- Objective 1.1.3: Restore the Water Environment
- Objective 1.2.1: Restore Nature at scale
- Objective 1.2.2: Prioritise land for Nature
- Objective 1.2.3: Reduce Other Key Pressures
- Objective 1.3.1: Support Regenerative Land Use
- Objective 1.3.2: Invest in Nature Restoration
- Objective 1.3.3: Encourage land use that benefits everyone

4. Creating a Low-Carbon Place

- 4.1. Approximately four million visitors come to the National Park each year to enjoy and benefit from its natural beauty, rich heritage and recreational opportunities.
- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. 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.
- 4.4. 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.
- 4.5. 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.

4.6. Our 2024/25 Annual Operating Plan aims to progress the objectives of this second Chapter of the National Park Partnership Plan through the following deliverables:

- **Connecting Everyone with Nature and Climate:**
We will implement the updated Loch Lomond Byelaws; begin early stakeholder engagement on the review of the Camping Management Byelaws; and continue to support and develop the West Highland Way Management Group
- **Improving popular Places and Routes:**
We will complete the upgrades to the path on Conic Hill; Complete Phase 1 of the infrastructure improvement works at Tarbet; continue our Masterplanning work; and continue to maintain and improve our Core Paths Network.
- **Low Carbon Travel for Everyone:**
We will work with partners to produce sustainable travel and mobility strategies; enable a National Park Mobility Partnership; and work with partners to establish a multi-year programme of piloting and developing new sustainable transport services.

These actions support the following objectives for 2029 in of our National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029 Delivery Framework:

- Objective 2.1.1: Inspire action for nature and climate
- Objective 2.1.2: Support Diversity and Inclusion
- Objective 2.1.3: Support safe, responsible access
- Objective 2.2.1: Deliver a multi-year Place Programme
- Objective 2.2.2: Improve travel infrastructure
- Objective 2.2.3: Provide a high-quality recreational path network
- Objective 2.3.1: Develop a new strategic transport partnership
- Objective 2.3.2: Make sustainable travel choices more attractive
- Objective 2.3.3: Improve travel routes and services

5. Designing a Greener Way of Living

5.1. 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.

5.2. 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.

5.3. 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.

5.4. 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.

5.5. Our 2024/25 Annual Operating Plan aims to progress the objectives of this third Chapter of the National Park Partnership Plan through the following deliverables:

- **Transitioning to a Greener Economy**
We will explore new funding models in the areas of natural capital and green investment and develop green tourism action plans with the National Park Destination Group.
- **Supporting Thriving Rural Communities**
We will consult on and design the latest edition of the National Park Authority's Gaelic Language Plan; support communities to produce Local Place Plans; and support the delivery of existing Local Place Plans.
- **Developing and Investing in the National Park**
We will prepare and submit the Evidence Report for the Local Development Plan and begin to prepare an innovative and engaging draft LDP.

These actions support the following objectives for 2029 in of our National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029 Delivery Framework:

- Objective 3.1.1: Increase Sustainable Tourism
- Objective 3.1.2: Support Low Carbon Businesses
- Objective 3.1.3: Grow Green and Nature-based Jobs and Skills
- Objective 3.2.1: Enable more local living and working
- Objective 3.2.2: Meet housing needs
- Objective 3.2.3: Build Community Wealth
- Objective 3.3.1: Deliver Strategic Development Needs
- Objective 3.3.2: Adapt to Climate Change and Restore Nature
- Objective 3.3.3: Make the best use of Land and Assets

6. A Developing and Efficient Organisation

6.1. In addition to actions to deliver outcomes within each of the three chapters of the National Park Partnership, our Annual Operating Plan

includes a fourth chapter to reflect the organisational development and efficiency measures required to drive our work.

6.2. Our 2024/25 Annual Operating Plan aims to progress the objectives of the National Park Partnership Plan through the following deliverables:

- **Mission Zero**
We will continue the capital investment works required to meet our Mission Zero commitments; and review the priorities and timeline for the second phase of our 10-year Mission Zero Programme.
- **Net Zero National Park**
We will continue the development of the NPA's Climate Adaption Plan, and; start the development of a draft Net Zero National Park Route Map.
- **Developing Our Organisation**
We will undertake the migration of services into the cloud.
- **Becoming a More Efficient Organisation**
We will undertake a strategic review of our assets, and develop/invest in our digital skills and infrastructure and review our manual processes to achieve at least 5% efficiency saving.

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable
Chapter 1: Restoring Nature	
Key National Park Authority Delivery Vehicles: Future Nature Route Map , Corporate Plan 2024-29, Regional Land Use Framework	
Restoring Nature for Climate	Continue to expand the delivery of the Peatland Action programme of work, aiming to deliver 690 hectares of restoration at sites across the Park.
	Work with partners and stakeholders to create a 5-year woodland delivery and monitoring plan to increase and record the rate of woodland creation and improve woodland quality.
	Produce a joint vision and shared ways of working for a landscape-scale approach to improving our water environment with key Future Nature partners including local Rivers and Fisheries Trusts.
Restoring Nature for Healthy Ecosystems	Continue to deliver key landscape partnership projects including beginning large scale delivery in Wild Strathfillan and applying for development funding for a Loch Lomond Rainforest project.
	Finalise a National Park Priority Area Herbivore Action Plan with support from agencies and relevant Deer Management Groups and continue with programme of Herbivore Impact Assessment training for land managers.
	Deliver a capital programme of Nature Restoration including projects such as Invasive Non-Native Species control in The Great Trossachs Forest and habitat restoration and water course tree planting with the Rivers and Fisheries Trusts.
	Development of a National Park Nature Network and an approach to securing biodiversity enhancement through the use of developer gains through the planning system, for inclusion in the draft Local Development Plan.
Restoring Nature through Sustainable, Regenerative Land Use	Develop the regenerative land use programme covering soil health, biodiversity audits and soil carbon knowledge exchange for year 1 and trial on 3 pilot land holdings working with the owners / managers.
	Working with the Palladium group continue the exploration of a trial ethical green finance mechanism to bring additional carbon market funding for woodland creation in the Park.

Chapter 2: Creating a Low-Carbon Place	
Key National Park Authority Delivery Vehicles: Corporate Plan 2024-29, Place Programme, Joint Response Visitor Management Plan, Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal & Modal Shift Report , Greenhouse Gas Assessment and Pathway to Net Zero , STIDs	
Connecting Everyone with Nature and Climate	Implement the updated Loch Lomond Byelaws – including fully operational user database and operational readiness for 1 November 2024
	Conduct an internal review of the Camping Management Byelaws and begin early stakeholder engagement in preparation for the statutory review due to take place in 2026.
	Continue to develop and support the West Highland Way management group to enhance the sustainability of the route. With the group, set up a new charitable organisation to establish an expanded programme of fundraising to support the maintenance of the path.
Improving popular Places and Routes	Complete the upgrades to the path on Conic Hill, concluding all works on the ground and fully reopening.
	Complete Phase 1 of the works at Tarbet and complete the design of Phase 2.
	Continue the masterplanning work to be undertaken at Rowardennan and explore the works to be undertaken at Balmaha as part of the Place Programme.
	Establish a partnership to oversee the preparation of a masterplan for the Balloch Pierhead area, which will also consider wider linkages and co-ordinated actions.
	Complete the Park-wide strategic tourism infrastructure consolidating study in the form of an overview Route Map, focused on the priority areas identified in the National Park Partnership Plan, to deliver the Place Programme.
	Continue work to maintain and improve the Core Paths Network within the National Park, including priority sections at Gartmore and the West Highland Way.
Low Carbon Travel for Everyone	Working with partners such as Transport Scotland, Sustrans, Local Authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships produce targeted sustainable travel and mobility strategies and action plans
	Develop and deliver partnership arrangements around targeted shared resources which enable a new National Park Mobility Partnership and create a Route Map for enhanced sustainable transport in the National Park

	Work with partners to establish a multi-year programme of piloting and developing new sustainable transport services, including community transport alongside land and water bus initiatives
Chapter 3: Designing a Greener Way of Living	
Key National Park Authority Delivery Vehicles: Corporate Plan 2024-29, Local Development Plan, Local Place Plans, Regional Spatial Strategy	
Transitioning to a Greener Economy	Work with partners to explore new funding models in the areas of natural capital and green investment, including developing understanding of impacts and governance requirements. Including exploring Green Finance mechanism for the NP with partners such as Revere
	Develop green tourism action plans in conjunction with local tourism and hospitality industry partners, working in partnership with the National Park Destination Group.
Supporting Thriving Rural Communities	Write, design and undertake consultation on an updated Gaelic Language Plan
	Support remaining communities to produce Local Place Plans - including Croftamie, East Loch Lomond, and Balloch & Haldane.
	Scope out options for delivery support for community-led projects, Local Place Plans and programme activity - such as Community Climate Action Hubs - in collaboration with partners and the Local Place Plan Advisory Group.
Developing and Investing in the National Park	Prepare, and submit to Scottish Government, the Evidence Report for the Local Development Plan
	Begin to prepare an innovative and engaging draft Local Development Plan for consultation which drives forward the Outcomes of the National Park Partnership Plan.

Chapter 4: A Developing and Efficient National Park Authority

Key National Park Authority Delivery Vehicles: Corporate Plan 2024-29, [Mission Zero Route Map](#), [Greenhouse Gas Assessment and Pathway to Net Zero](#)

Mission Zero	Continue to undertake the capital works required to meet our Mission Zero commitments, including the conclusion of work at Carrochan
	Review priorities and timeline for the second phase of our 10-year MZ programme to be a net zero organisation by 2030
Net Zero National Park	Continue the development of the National Park Authority's Climate Adaption Plan
	Start the development of a draft Net Zero National Park Route Map outlining the approach to achieving a net zero national park
	Undertake the migration of services into the cloud, removing need for local disaster recovery for critical services/infrastructure
Becoming a More Efficient Organisation	Undertake a strategic review of our assets, alongside our business processes and structures, to progress our Estates Strategy
	Develop/invest in our digital skills and infrastructure and review our manual processes to achieve at least 5% efficiency saving by <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Leveraging workflow tools to automate cross organisation processes- Enhancements to existing systems, such as finance, estates and HR to maximise automation opportunities- Exploring potential benefits associated with creating central data repository to be used for reporting