



2023-24 Annual Operational Plan Progress to 31 March (End of Year)

Agenda Item 13 – Appendix 1

National Park Authority Board Meeting

10 June 2024

Paper for information

Annual Operational Plan 2023/24: Progress to End of Year

Rating Key:

Complete	Partially Achieved	Continued to 2024/25	Cancelled
----------	--------------------	----------------------	-----------

AOP Activity	AOP Deliverable	YTD Progress Update (February)	Rating
Theme 1: Tackling the twin challenges of the global climate emergency and nature crisis			
Develop monitoring and engagement plans to support the Future Nature Programme	Establish Future Nature programme reporting and monitoring.	Future Nature Indicators Dashboard has been completed by Ecosulis.	Complete

	Produce a Future Nature engagement plan, informed by nature connection principles and behavioural insights.	Contributed engagement statistics to the draft overall Future Nature report and continued to focus on establishing the improved project management process for next year.	Partially Achieved
Taking action for nature	Publish a Herbivore Statement and Operational Delivery Workstream action plan for the National Park.	Progress delayed due to staff absence and resource vacancy in team, albeit work now back underway and recruitment for vacancy live. Workstream actions to be reviewed through Strategic Deer Board. Completion of work moved to 24-25.	Continued to 24/25
	Expand delivery of the Peatland Action programme.	Four restoration projects were completed at Ardvorlich, Cashel, Glen Falloch and Glen Finglas, delivering a total of 448.3 ha. Difficult ground conditions arising from high late winter rainfall and snow in late March slowed work and reduced our final total slightly.	Complete
	Accelerate the nature restoration programme through woodland improvement and expansion, water body improvements, INNS removal, and supporting and enabling improvement within targeted designated sites.	All INNS and river restoration work for 23-24 has been completed, with final reports and evidence of delivery received.	Complete
	Enable and support key landscape scale projects, such as Wild Strathfillan and the Great Trossachs Forest	Recruitment process for a replacement coordinator at TGTF underway. Countryside Trust recruitment for new Wild Strathfillan team complete and project now underway. Scoping complete for Lomond Rainforest.	Complete
Develop new funding and policy options (including Green Finance) to deliver for biodiversity and climate	Deliver landscape score carding through Investment Ready Nature Scotland project and next steps for Revere partnership to explore a woodland carbon plus scheme and enable practical	Landscape Finance Lab completed with dissemination meeting in March complete and successful. Discussions for next steps continue and FIRNS project with Palladium will continue.	Complete

	opportunities for land managers to deliver on the ground.		
	Development of a National Park Nature Network with enhanced opportunities for the promotion and application of nature-based solutions and natural infrastructure, including through the use of developer gains through the planning system, in line with NPF4	Liaison is underway with various internal and external stakeholders on Nature Networks to develop material for the LDP evidence base. Liaison is also underway with AECOM and Nature Scot to contribute to the development of a GIS based Nature Network tool being developed as part of a CivTech Challenge. Discussions are continuing with infrastructure developers about delivering biodiversity gains.	Continued to 24/25
Upscale the pace of our Mission Zero programme, and consider the route to net zero for the National Park as a place	Install a new heating system powered by Air Source Heat Pumps in Carrochan, removing the aging biomass boiler and natural gas back up system.	Works carried over into May 24, practical completion due to conclude in June 24.	Continued to 24/25
	Increase our use of solar electricity at Carrochan through the installation of PV Tiles/Panels and EV Chargers	Installation of PV panels on back elevation complete, change in specification on front elevation from PV tiles to PV panels delayed completion of works to May 24, practical completion expected to conclude in June 24.	Continued to 24/25
	Develop a Climate Adaptation Plan for the National Park Authority.	Climate risk deep dive held with the Audit & Risk committee in March 2024 Consultancy support completed in March 2024, successfully deepening our Understanding of National Park-specific Climate risk. Dissemination workshop held with members of Exec and Operational Managers with a focus on the headlines of the research and next steps for Adaptation Planning.	Continued to 24/25

		Please note that the scope of this activity was expanded in Q3 to cover the National Park as a whole, not NPA alone, with a corresponding lengthening of the timescales for the full Adaptation Plan process.	
	Agree programmes with local tourism businesses on net zero planning and nature experiences with measurable outputs to meet NPA objectives.	<p>The benchmark of NP businesses enrolled in Green Tourism at 31/3/24 is 20 (Gold x7; Silver x9; Bronze x4). The VisitScotland-recognised scheme will be promoted by NPA via NPDG to all NP local businesses, not only the tourism sector.</p> <p>The new WHW Nature Story Map was launched to consumers and promoted to WHW businesses via newsletters and workshops at Drymen & Crianlarich to enhance nature experiences and encourage responsible behaviour. Usage being measured via online analytics.</p>	Complete
	Commence development of Route Map with delivery partners for the National Park as a place to become Net Zero.	Capacity constraints continued throughout Q4, with staff resource necessarily focused on Mission Zero to a much greater degree than originally planned. Resolution of the MZ capacity gap is in hand and it is expected that work will resume more fully on the next steps of net zero National Park in 2024/25.	Continued to 24/25
Theme 2: Promoting sustainable low carbon destinations with people, places and communities at their heart			
Improve visitor infrastructure and enhance visitor experience across the National Park	Deliver phase 1 of a multiyear plan to reconfigure the Tarbet picnic site to better serve users (including better campervan and motorhome management), whilst also making greenspace improvements.	<p>Tarbet Visitor Site's first construction section of Phase 1 works was successfully handed over and opened in time for the Easter weekend, as planned.</p> <p>Routine, proactive communications have been undertaken with community stakeholders and site neighbours.</p>	Continued to 24/25

		<p>Package of community benefits offered to community by contractor included school engagement and education, work experience for young people as well as local employment opportunities.</p> <p>Unforeseen increase to Japanese Knotweed removal and breaking out of rock contributed to the potential delay of one month, continued to work with contractor to manage the potential impact of this.</p>	
	Commence detailed design work for a series of visitor infrastructure projects along East Loch Lomond, allowing development of detailed planning and funding applications.	The draft masterplan was substantially complete (90%) by the end March, and fully complete by 5 April. The progress made will allow the development of final masterplan for a detailed planning application and funding applications.	Continued to 24/25
	Complete Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies (STIDs) for Callander and Strathard and Trossachs, and undertake a final park-wide review and consolidation STID.	<p>The Strathard and The Trossachs and the Callander studies were both completed within the 23/24 and overviews have been presented at the corresponding Visitor Management Group pre-season meetings. The full studies will be included in the June 2024 Place Programme agenda item at June Board prior to publication on the website.</p> <p>The Park-wide study work continued and will be presented in the form of an overview Route Map to deliver the Place Programme and is on track for inclusion in the June 2024 Board Report for review, prior to finalisation and publication.</p>	Continued to 24/25
	Undertake year two of the Conic Hill Path upgrades.	Contractors continued work comprising stone pitching and cross-drains on path section 4 throughout the winter months with budget spent on time at the year end. The overall project remains on schedule to complete by November 2024.	Continued to 2024-25
Prepare to implement the updated Loch Lomond (Navigation) Byelaws, in a	Ensure operational readiness for the new Byelaws from 1 April 2024, including implementing a	<p>The project team have continued to focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Database development and user testing 	Continued to 2024-25

clear and easy to understand manner	new registration database, monitoring framework, navigation guides, and videos.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing landowner agreements for the installation of new Buoyage • Preparation for summer communications • Development of the Monitoring Framework <p>Work in March has been balanced against other priorities for the project team which have predominantly been focussed on preparation for the visitor season.</p>	
Empower our communities to take action for climate and nature	Support communities to establish Local Place Plans, including actions for climate and nature, in at least 4 areas'	Seven Local Place Plans have now been registered. Four are in the process of being registered and one is due to be submitted for registration. Support is being provided to two communities as they continue to prepare Place Plans and to another five as they prepare to start the process or are considering starting in 2024/25.	Complete
	Establish a framework approach – with key public sector partners – to providing advice and support to communities who are seeking to deliver their Local Place Plans.	Meetings continue with the Strathard Framework delivery partners. Desk based scoping work to establish wider delivery framework continues along with mapping of priorities emerging from Local Place Plans.	Complete
Improve sustainable transport services for visitors and communities	Complete early actions emerging from the Modal Shift Study, including a comprehensive National Park Active Travel Strategy, and the feasibility and early development work of gateway hubs at Balloch, Drymen/Balmaha, Dunoon and Aberfoyle.	Partner and funder discussions continuing including with Transport Scotland, Regional Transport Partnerships and Sustrans.	Partially Achieved
	Work with partners to pilot at least one visitor shuttle bus	Detailed viable service offer has been proposed by an operator and we are working to complete the funding package.	Partially Achieved

	service at congested visitor hotspots.		
Support events and businesses to realise local economic benefit	Support delivery of a safe and enjoyable UCI Cycling World Championships 2023 event, providing a global stage for the National Park as an asset for the enjoyment of all.	Complete	Complete
	Facilitate the setup of an industry-led recruitment and retention programme for tourism and hospitality businesses.	Complete	Complete
Theme 3: Developing the plans, people and processes to support the National Park Authority's next chapter			
Consult on and implement our future vision for the National Park	Consult on and finalise the new National Park Partnership Plan for submission to the Scottish Government, incorporating the Regional Spatial Strategy.	NPPP approved by Scottish Ministers in February 2024.	Complete
	Prepare a proposed Local Development Plan for consultation which will include key steps of finalising the Plan's evidence based and undertake informal engagement.	Timeline has been reviewed and extended to allow more time for the evidence gathering and reporting stage of the new plan making process. This is now December 2024. This is based on experiences of other authorities and advice from Scottish Government which indicate more work is required at this stage than originally envisaged.	Continued to 24/25
Identify the organisational change we want to see over the next 5 years	Develop a Corporate Plan that aligns to the Draft NPPP and highlights the journey of change the organisation will embark on.	Decision made to present the final version of the Corporate Plan to the December 2024 Board meeting to allow further development of the delivery plan for the NPPP alongside the Corporate Plan. September Strategy Day to be used to present progress to Members before finalisation.	Partially Achieved
Take action to drive efficiencies and build resilience, including	Actively engage with key Scottish Government initiatives including its new Public Sector	Actively engaged in Scottish Government work on Public sector reform and its work on new National Parks for Scotland throughout 2023/24.	Complete

through partnering and collaborating with others	reform work, and its work on new National Parks for Scotland.		
	Commence the discovery process to support the development of our Digital Strategy, including a review of the tools and systems we use.	Supplier has been identified and initial documentation to contact them has been created.	Partially Achieved
	Implement cloud-based disaster recovery capabilities which will increase business resilience.	Planning to begin on migration of IDOX to cloud in June/July.	Continued to 24/25