

**National Park Partnership Plan**

**2024 - 2029**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment**

**Environmental Report**

**December 2023**

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1. **Non-technical Summary**

**1.1 Introduction**

This report summarises the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) of the National Park Partnership Plan 2024 -2029 (NPPP) published by Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority. SEA is required under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 to determine the environmental impacts of implementing the Strategy.

**1.2 Consultation Process**

The National Park Partnership Plan 2024 - 2029 was prepared during 2022 and early 2023 based on stakeholder engagement, monitoring of the current NPPP indicators of success, commissioned research and new national policy guidance and strategy.

Copies of the NPPP and SEA Environmental Report (including supporting figures and appendices) are available from the National Park Authority’s website at [www.lochlomond-trossachs.org](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org).

To ensure that the legislative requirements of the SEA process were followed, a draft version of this Environmental Report was sent to the three Consultation Authorities – SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland and NatureScot. All three consultation authorities provided detailed feedback on both the National Park Partnership Plan and the Environmental Report. The NPPP and SEA have since been updated and amended based on the feedback - see section 6.6 on page for further information.

The final NPPP and SEA were submitted to the National Park Board for approval in December 2023 and will be submitted to Scottish Ministers for final approval by March 2024.

**1.3 Purpose of the Environmental Report**

The purpose of this report is to identify any potential significant positive and negative environmental impacts from implementing the Plan. The effects of alternatives to the Plan are also outlined and evaluated in this report, as well as the actions to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse effects.

**1.4 Purpose and Contents of the National Park Partnership Plan 2024 - 2029**

The Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan presents a long-term vision to 2045 and actions for Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park over the next 5 years to help progress towards this vision. Once approved it will replace the current NPPP, covering the period from 2018 – 2023. The new Partnership Plan aims to identify key climate, nature, land use, tourism, recreation, transport, economic and social issues within the National Park, it will also identify strategic measures to address the issues and opportunities identified.

The strategy covers the full geographic area of the National Park and contains the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Purpose of this Plan
3. How this Plan is Different
4. How this Plan was Developed
5. How to Use this Plan
6. Part One – The Why
7. Uncomfortable Truths this Plan Aims to Tackle
8. Our Vision for 2045
9. Picturing the National Park by 2045
10. The Guiding Principles of this Plan
11. Restoring Nature
12. Creating a Low Carbon Place
13. Designing a Greener Way of Living
14. Measures of Success by 2029/30
15. Glossary
16. Knowledge Base

**1.5 Current State of the National Park Environment**

In order to fully explore the environmental consequences of the NPPP, the National Park’s environmental characteristics have been considered. Schedule 3(6) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 lists the range of environmental topics that should be included in the SEA. A list of key environmental characteristics was previously developed and refined by staff across the organisation for the SEA of the Local Development Plan, previous National Park Partnership Plan and most recently the Tress and Woodland Strategy. This included expertise in, planning, ecology, landscape, trees and woodlands management, access and environment. This list has been reviewed and updated for the purposes of this SEA. The key environmental characteristics are set out in the scoping report for this SEA [available here](https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Scoping-Report-NPPP-30062022.pdf) .

* 1. **Likely Significant Environmental Impacts of the Strategy**

The assessment has concluded that the National Park Partnership Plan will have an overall positive environmental impact as its key focuses are People, Place and the Environment. The NPPP has been prepared with an emphasis on the environment and all policies, aims, objectives and targets seek to address the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis.

There is some potential for potentially negative environmental impacts through the development of the Place Programme. It has been identified that the implementation of infrastructure works could result in temporary negative environmental impacts but mitigation measures have been suggested and are already in place to ensure the effects are minimal and temporary – see Table 10 for full assessment.

Section 9.1 details the potential cumulative environmental impacts of the NPPP. **This demonstrates that the overall positive effects likely to be realised through implementing the Plan. In particular, there are major positive effects predicted for biodiversity, population and human health and cultural heritage.**

A summary of the results of the assessment can be found in Section 7 and full details of the assessments are presented in Appendix One Environmental Assessment Tables.

* 1. **Alternative Approaches**

Having a National Park Plan (referred to as the National Park Partnership Plan as it guides the work of others, not just the National Park Authority) is a legal requirement required by section 11 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. This limits the options available for consideration of alternatives, as having no NPPP is not permitted. Carrying forward the current 2018 – 2023 NPPP was ruled out as it does not fully reflect or address the new and urgent issues facing the National Park.

While having no Partnership Plan is not an option, the level of detail and content of the NPPP has been considered during its development. The two options for the final NPPP were to develop a high level strategy/vision document with no spatial targets included or to produce a strategy which included spatial targets:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Alternatives** | **Description of options** |
| High Level Strategy with **no** spatial targets | A high-level strategy would be created for the National Park which sets out The National Park’s overarching aims and ambitions for the lifetime of the plan. |
| High Level Strategy **including** spatial targets | A high-level strategy would be created for the National Park which sets out the National Park’s key targets (specifically for Peatland and Woodland) and allows stakeholders and partners to understand the more specific aims and ambitions that the authority seeks to achieve. |

The ‘*High Level Strategy* ***including*** *spatial targets’* has been identified as the preferred approach for the NPPP as this secures the greatest positive environmental effects. This has been decided as the most effective method as it enables the National Park Authority and our key partners to focus their efforts, resources and time into key areas of work with measurable outcomes.

The National Park has set ambitious targets for both peatland restoration and woodland creation within the NPPP. The aim of this is to highlight to internal and external partners that resources and efforts will require to be increased if we are to achieve the targets set out within the Plan.

The environmental implications of this will be an increased effort to improve key areas of our nature network. If these targets were not included within the NPPP then the likelihood of reaching these goals within the lifetime of the Plan is reduced. It is therefore necessary for optimum environmental benefits to set goals and targets.

* 1. **Monitoring**

A monitoring framework was developed for the existing National Park Partnership Plan 2018–2023. The methodologies for monitoring the targets set out in the Plan were evaluated to assess their suitability for use in the new NPPP. A new monitoring framework with updated measures of success was established which will supersede the existing framework and ensure that targets set out in the Plan are evaluated effectively. The effects of implementation of the NPPP will be monitored during the lifetime of the plan.

**1.9** **Next Steps**

The NPPP is being submitted to the National Park Board and Scottish Ministers for final approval. Following approval of the finalised NPPP, a Post Adoption Statement will be produced detailing the ways in which the findings of the SEA Environmental Report, and the views expressed by consultees have been taken into account.

1. **Introduction**

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the NPPP is being undertaken to comply with the requirements of the Environmental Assessment Scotland Act 2005. As the Strategy may have significant environmental effects and it is a qualifying plan under the terms of the Act, a Scoping Report was produced in July 2022 and submitted to the Consultation Authorities via the Scottish Government’s SEA Gateway. Feedback on the proposed assessment methodology and consultation period for the Environmental Report was received from the Consultation Authorities in August 2023. Comments from the consultation authorities have been incorporated into the final assessment methodology and are summarised in Appendix Four below.

1. **Purpose of the SEA Environmental Report**

SEA is a requirement of the European Commission (EC) SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) – the SEA Directive – and the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The approach taken to this SEA has been informed by relevant EC and Scottish legislation as well as statutory and non-statutory SEA guidance. This report constitutes an Environmental Report in accordance with the requirements set out in the SEA Directive and the 2005 Act.

The 2005 Act is Scotland’s national legislative framework on SEA for implementation of the EU SEA Directive. In Scotland, SEA is a requirement for all public plans, programmes and strategies which may have a significant effect on the environment. The overall purpose of SEA is to protect the environment and promote sustainable development.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to set out key findings from the SEA process undertaken to date and the proposed next steps. It presents a summary of the environmental assessment of the NPPP 2024-2029 outcomes and priorities and is intended to support members of the public, the statutory Consultation Authorities and other stakeholders in responding to the consultation on the plan and its potential environmental effects.

1. **Details of the National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Responsible Authority:** | Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority |
| **Title of Plan, Programme or Strategy (PPS):** | Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029 |
| **Requirement for the PPS:** | Section 11 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 |
| **Subject of the PPS:** | Management of the National Park |
| **Period covered by the PPS:** | 2024 - 2029 |
| **Frequency of updates:** | Reviewed and updated every five years |
| **Geographic Area covered by the PPS:** | Area designated as Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park – see Figure One. |
| **Purpose and/or objectives of the PPS:** | The National Park Partnership Plan sets out the high-level vision for the National Park for the next five years. It focuses on improving the conditions for climate, nature and for people and sets out how resources should be focused to achieve these overarching aims. |
| **Contact:** | Laura Mowat MRTPI  Place Planner  Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority  National Park Headquarters  Carrochan Road  Balloch  G83 8EG  [Laura.mowat@lochlomond-trossachs.org](mailto:Laura.mowat@lochlomond-trossachs.org) |

**4.1 Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park area.**

The National Park covers an area of 720 square miles and is in proximity of large populated areas, including Glasgow and the central belt of Scotland. The National Park’s main landscapes consist of upland areas, including moorland & mountains. Woodlands and forest cover a large area of the National Park (30%), these forest areas include the Queen Elizabeth forest park in The Trossachs and the Argyll in Cowal. The National Park is a popular destination for outdoor recreational activities, including mountain biking and walking. The National Park has 22 large lochs, Loch Lomond being the largest. Loch Lomond is a very popular tourist destination, particularly in the summer months. The rivers are also an important feature of the landscape of the National Park. With around 50 rivers in the park, providing important habitats for marine species including Atlantic Salmon.

Map

Description automatically generated

*Figure One – Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park*

**4.2 Content of the National Park Partnership Plan 2024 – 2029**

The National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2024 - 2029 sets out how the National Park is to be managed to achieve its statutory aims which are outlined in the National Park (Scotland) act 2000. These are to: -

1. Conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area,
2. Promote the sustainable use of the natural resources of the area,
3. Promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public, and
4. Promote sustainable economic and social development of the area’s communities.

These aims are to be collectively achieved unless there is a conflict between the first aim and any of the other aims in which case the first aim must be given priority.

The National Park Partnership Plan provides the strategic contexts for the authorities’ functions and activities and importantly also those of other partner bodies operating in the national park.

The main purpose of the NPPP is to:

* set out the vision and overarching strategy for managing the National Park
* Guide the work of all public bodies and other partners to deliver the aims of the National Park set out the regional spatial strategy for the National Park
* Provide the strategic context for the local development plan and proposed Regional Land Use Framework
* Show how the National Park will contribute to the Scottish Government’s core purpose and National outcomes

The NPPP focuses on three key themes. These are detailed below:

1. Restoring Nature
2. Creating a Low Carbon Place
3. Designing a Greener Way of Living

By focusing on these key themes, the NPPP aims to tackle the twin crises of climate and nature whilst also ensuring that people who live, work and visit the park are a key consideration in the future of the National Park.

1. **Relationship to other Plans, Policies, Programmes and Strategies**

There is an extensive list of national policies and legislation, as well as European Union Directives, which are of relevance to preparing the NPPP. A review of relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies (PPS) has been undertaken and these are detailed in Appendix A of the Scoping Report, [available here.](https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Scoping-Report-NPPP-30062022.pdf) These will be kept under review, and updated where necessary, during the preparation of the NPPP.

1. **Methodology for the SEA**

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) involved completing the following stages:

**6.1 Establish the environmental baseline.**

A fundamental aspect of the SEA is to establish the environmental baseline from which the Plan’s future implementation is being assessed. The baseline is determined according to the scope of the assessment and Plan. The purpose of the SEA is to determine how the environmental baseline will be altered as a result of the Plan’s implementation. The environmental baseline is included in the 2022 NPPP Scoping Report, [available here.](https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Scoping-Report-NPPP-30062022.pdf)

**6.2 Develop the SEA objectives.**

To assist in assessing the impact of the NPPP on the environment, a set of SEA objectives and associated questions have been produced. These relate to the specific SEA environmental receptors and issues that were felt to have potential to significantly impact on the environment. Each element of the NPPP has been assessed against the objectives to determine significant positive and negative environmental impacts. The proposed SEA objectives and questions are fully compliant with the requirements of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

**6.3 Identify and Assess Alternative Options**

Part 2 Section 14 (20(b) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the Environmental Report to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan and reasonable alternatives to the plan, taking into account its objectives and geographical scope. Guidance advises that only reasonable, realistic and relevant alternatives are put forward and that it is helpful if these are sufficiently distinct to enable meaningful comparisons to be made of the environmental implications of each.

The initial scoping of the vision and objectives for the Plan was be undertaken via stakeholder engagement conducted via discussion papers, workshops and engagement with National Park Board Members and feedback/views shared over the period leading up the Plan preparation by a range of partners. The outputs of this work informed the development of options and reasonable alternatives where these existed.

Where alternative options do come forward, these will be considered against the SEA objectives using the methodology outlined in this report.

**6.4 Assess preferred Plan Options**

The assessment of the environmental effects and their significance is based on a consideration of how the Plan is likely to affect the environmental baseline and whether any anticipated changes to the environmental baseline will help or hinder the SEA objectives being achieved. An assessment sheet has been completed for each identified relevant element of the Plan and the results are summarised in Section 9.1 below.

A copy of the scoring matrix being used to score each element of the NPPP which is considered to require a full assessment is detailed below. An example of the table used to display the full assessment is also shown below.

**Scoring Matrix**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Significance of Effect** | |
| Element would have a major positive environmental effect in its current form as it would resolve an existing issue or maximise opportunities. **SIGNIFICANT.** | **++** |
| Element would have a **minor positive environmental** effect. | **+** |
| Effect of Element is **uncertain.** | **?** |
| **No connectivity** with the environmental Topic/Objective being assessed | **x** |
| Element would have **no predicted environmental** effects. | **0** |
| Element would have a **minor adverse environmental** effect | **-** |
| The Element would have a **major adverse environmental** effect as it would create significant new problems or substantially exacerbate existing problems. Consider exclusion of option. **SIGNIFICANT.** | **--** |

**Example extract from Assessment Table**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessor(s):** |  | | | |
| **Date of Assessment Completion:** |  | | | |
| **SECTION OF PLAN BEING ASSESSED:** |  | | | |
|  | **ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS** | | | |
| **SEA Objective:** | **Nature of Effect** | **Scoring: significance of effect before mitigation** | **Mitigation and enhancement** | **Scoring: residual significance of effect after mitigation** |
| **Biodiversity**  To protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and encourage habitat connectivity |  |  |  |  |

**6.5 Identify and incorporate mitigation.**

Mitigation has been identified for proposed options where a significant negative environmental effect is identified. In some cases, negative effects may be able to be mitigated through another objective, policy, and accompanying target and outcome. Additional mitigation may be required such as the modification or inclusion of an additional objective, policy, target and outcome, or monitoring indicator. Commencing the SEA process alongside the initial development of the NPPP helps to ensure that modification of the plan was achieved as the environmental issues are identified.

The approved NPPP will be subject to ongoing monitoring. It is intended to create a set of indicators to measure the impacts that the NPPP may have on the environment during its lifespan. The indicators will be based on the baseline information and the existing environmental issues and problems in the area. These indicators have been developed during the preparation of the NPPP and environmental assessment processes.

Monitoring measures and a review of the NPPP will be discussed in the Environmental Report and will form the Post-Adoption Statement after the NPPP is approved by Scottish Ministers.

Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the Environmental Report to outline how the SEA has been undertaken, and to be published for an appropriate consultation period a draft Environmental Report was released for consultation alongside the Plan.

A Habitats Regulation Appraisal has also been undertaken for the NPPP in accordance with the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 (as amended). There is a separate report for these findings.

**6.6 Consultation Period**

Following a proposed 12 week public consultation process on both the NPPP and Environmental Report, the consultation responses received have been collated, considered and incorporated into the development of the final Plan, ready for Scottish Ministers approval.

The SEA formed part of the suite of documents prepared for the 12 week consultation period and members of the public and partner organisations were offered the opportunity to comment on the report. There were no comments received to the Environmental Report from members of the public during this process.

To ensure that the legislative requirements of the SEA process were followed, the Environmental Report was also sent to the three Consultation Authorities – SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland and NatureScot. All three consultation authorities provided detailed feedback on both the National Park Partnership Plan and the Environmental Report. The NPPP and SEA have since been updated and amended based on the feedback.

Historic Environment Scotland highlighted several areas where the impacts on the historic environment had not been considered in enough detail. This was taken on board and the assessment tables updated to include the information provided by HES. There have also been new assessment tables appended which evaluate the mapping included in the final NPPP – this has been done to ensure that all spatial elements within the Plan have been thoroughly considered.

The mapping assessments tables have also been included as a result of comments made by NatureScot about the high-level nature of the Environmental Report. The inclusion of the mapping assessment will hopefully alleviate this concern and ensure that the assessment of the NPPP is comprehensive.

SEPA were supportive of the Environmental Report and the assessment methodology used and therefore no amendments were required as a result of their response.

The feedback from the Consultation Authorities has been valuable and has strengthened this Environmental Report and the NPPP.

**7. Summary of the results of the assessment of the Plan**

The detailed scoring assessments of the key elements of the Plan are set out in Appendix Two.

The assessment of the environmental effects of the Plan has been undertaken and options for mitigation to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for the environmental effects have been considered. Consideration has also been given to the policy requirements published in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF 4) and the Future Nature strategy published by the National Park Authority.

**7.1 Key Findings**

The environmental assessment has been undertaken against all the identified relevant elements of the NPPP. Given the strategic nature of the plan, many objectives, policies and actions have been screened out from the assessment. This is mainly due to uncertainties on the locations of where and when in the National Park the priorities will be delivered. It was concluded that undertaking further assessment at the lower-level plans, such as Local Development Plan and at project level, will ensure a more appropriate and informed assessment can be undertaken once the locations for the actions are identified.

Those parts of the plan that have gone through to detailed assessment have concluded that with the Plans emphasis on enhancing nature and climate, there will be overall positive environmental effects. Some uncertain effects on the environment have been identified for the actions linked to improvements at strategic visitor sites, however taking a strategic approach to these sites through the consideration of environmental issues within the Strategic Tourism Development Studies should ensure that any environmental effects are avoided, minimised or mitigated.

The effects of alternatives are also outlined and evaluated in this SEA, this has considered assessing the preferred ambitions for woodland planting and peatland restoration in this NPPP against even more ambitious targets and an alternative if there were no set targets.

The assessment of the targets concludes that there will be overall positive effects for both woodland planting and peatland restoration.

**8 Post Adoption Statement**

Once the Plan has received approval, a post adoption statement will be prepared outlining how the plan has been modified as a result of the SEA process.

**9 Conclusion**

The level and scope of the SEA is considered to be proportionate and this conclusion is generally supported by feedback from the Consultation Authorities on the Environmental Report. The feedback from the Consultation Authorities has shaped the final version of this SEA and alterations have been made as a result of comments made by SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland and NatureScot.

**9.1 Summary of the results of the assessment and identification of potential cumulative impacts**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Key element of strategy** | **SEA Environment Topics** | | | | | | | | |
| **Biodiversity** | **Landscape** | **Air Quality** | **Population and Human Health** | **Soil and Geology** | **Water** | **Climate** | **Material Assets** | **Cultural Heritage** |
| **Vision** | **++** | **++** | **++** | **++** | **++** | **++** | **++** | **++** | **++** |
| **SECTION 1 - Restoring Nature** | **++** | **++** | **++** | **0** | **+** | **++** | **++** | **x** | **+** |
| **SECTION 2 – Creating a Low Carbon Place** | **+** | **+** | **+** | **++** | **x** | **x** | **+** | **+** | **++** |
| **SECTION 3 – Designing a Greener Way of Living** | **x** | **+** | **0** | **++** | **+** | **+** | **+** | **++** | **++** |

**10 Environmental Assessment Tables**

**\*\****The policies, measures of success, outcomes, objectives and aims have been amended as a result of feedback from the consultation authorities and other stakeholders during the 12 week consultation period. The tables below have been updated to reflect the refined wording and the initial wording can be found in the draft environmental report* [*available here.*](https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Draft-NPPP-Environmental-Report-.pdf)

**10.1 Table 1 – Policy screening table**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **POLICY** | | **Reason for Screening IN/OUT** |
| **SECTION 1** | | |
| **Restoring Nature for Climate** | **Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park will be a net zero place by 2035 and will continue to work towards being carbon negative beyond that. A key focus to achieve this will be to significantly increase efforts to naturally absorb carbon in the landscape through a Nature Based approach.** | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| a) | Restoring significant areas of peatland and protecting this precious resource by repairing degraded peat soils and ensuring impacts from grazing animals are minimal. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. Any sites for peatland restoration will be identified through the emerging Peatland Strategy which will be subject to SEA. All sites will also be assessed for environmental impacts at project level. |
| b) | Increasing the quantity and quality of tree cover through planting and promoting natural regeneration by significantly reducing grazing animal pressure. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. Consideration of the environmental impacts will be taken at project level. |
| c) | Ensuring that efforts to sequester carbon also help restore nature and contribute to establishing new Nature Networks. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| d) | Working with land managers and communities to secure new sources of funding that provides new opportunities and help support a just transition to a net zero and nature positive National Park. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| **Restoring Nature for Healthy Ecosystems** | **The ongoing decline in nature in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park will be reversed by 2030 and there will be widespread restoration and recovery of nature by 2040. A landscape scale Nature Network approach will be taken improving and connecting core areas and expanding the links between these core areas across the National Park, contributing to Scotland’s 30x30 commitments.** | OUT – the policy is likely to encourage action which will have environmental impacts but as the projects have not yet been identified the policy is too general to assess. Any projects will be subject to separate environmental assessments. |
| a) | Improving the condition of existing Designated Sites where possible and delivering actions which protect and expand the special species and habitats found there. | **IN – potential for environmental impacts through improvement works.** |
| b) | Strategic landscape scale management to significantly reduce unsustainable deer and sheep grazing and browsing pressures and to allow the recovery and expansion of our tree cover and reduce trampling of fragile peat soils. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| c) | Taking a strategic approach to controlling Invasive Non-Native Species at a landscape scale. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| d) | Improving the freshwater and marine environments by restoring rivers and wetlands and increasing water quality by addressing diffuse pollution, sewage discharge, abstraction, impoundment and fertiliser run-off from land uses. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| e) | Expanding our connected network of trees with an increased proportion of native tree and shrub species and improving their quality through proactive management, including management of invasive Rhododendron. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| f) | Ensuring that peatland restoration programmes deliver multiple benefits including carbon sequestration, improved biodiversity and water storage. | OUT – the emerging Peatland Strategy will ensure than environmental impacts of peatland restoration are considered. This will be subject to a separate SEA. |
| g) | Fully adopting and delivering the principles of the National Planning Framework 4 and ensuring that new development in the Park takes a net gain approach to protecting and restoring nature on and around development sites. | OUT – NPF 4 has already undergone a SEA and therefore the principles adopted through this policy have previously been screened. The updated Local Development Plan for the National Park will also undergo a separate SEA – the NET Gain policy will be developed through this process. |
| **Restoring Nature through Sustainable, Regenerative Land Use** | **We will drive forward the recovery of nature by supporting positive land use change and more climate and regenerative land management practices.** | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| a) | Piloting a Regional Land Use Partnership through out new Local Development Plan, and from it delivering a Regional Land Use Framework to promote a collaborative approach to positive land use change delivering multiple benefits. | OUT – there has not yet been a location decided for the Regional Land Use Partnership and therefore it is not possible to determine the environmental impacts this might have. |
| b) | Ensuring planning policies support rural development which helps sustain land businesses, employment needs and local communities in a nature and climate friendly approach. | OUT – all planning policies will undergo SEA through the Development Plan process. It is not possible to determine environmental effects at this level. |
| c) | Working with national partners to secure more effective use of grants and subsidies which are tailored to support better outcomes for nature. This includes:   * Agriculture – delivering sustainable and regenerative agriculture to continue to support livelihoods, rural communities and food production whilst delivering restoration of our soils and water, expansion of tree cover and reduced grazing animal pressures on habitats. * Forestry – delivering timber production whilst expanding and improving a resilient and sustainable forest network that delivers more for the future. * Enabling the creation of new nature-based green jobs and skills by mapping out capacity and skills shortages and supporting opportunities to grow employment and knowledge. * Developing and piloting new funding models which can blend public and ethical private finance to support multi-year large scale nature restoration projects. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| **Engaging with Ethical Green Finance** | **To achieve ambitious nature restoration and climate targets it is recognised that this cannot be achieved through public funding alone. Ways to secure private green investment to achieve targets will be piloted and developed in collaboration with the Scottish Government and other UK protected landscapes. To ensure such finance is genuinely reducing the overall carbon emissions, supporting nature restoration targets and benefiting the wider rural economy we will only facilitate ethical private investment which:** | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| a) | Takes an integrated approach in supporting environmental, social and economic benefits and which responds to local needs and opportunities. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment |
| b) | Provides benefits across public, private and community interests and supports a just transition to a greener economy | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment |
| c) | Has included local engagement to inform land use decisions where possible by consulting on a proposed land management plan. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment |
| d) | Is from organisations that have made a public commitment to reaching Net Zero emissions by 2050 at the latest, with clear demonstrable activities to reduce emissions and signed up to a credible initiative to deliver on this commitment. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment |
| e) | Is not finance derived from income associated with environmental damage, the extraction of fossil fuels or any unethical practices. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment |
| **SECTION 2** | | |
| **Connecting Everyone with Nature** | **We will work to ensure that nature and recreation experiences are accessible to and informed by the needs of all groups in society. Our approach will focus on:** | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment |
| a) | Enabling and encouraging more underrepresented and protected groups to enjoy the National Park. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. This will be further assessed through the EQIA process and will be determined at project level. |
| b) | Ensure improved communication about the National Park into networks used by underrepresented audiences including to improve representation and participation in policy and decision making and to improve diversity generally in the work of the National Park Authority. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| c) | Ensuring that investment and visitor sites and infrastructure takes account of the accessibility needs of all abilities and cultures. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| d) | Encouraging local tourism and recreation businesses to improve accessibility in providing visitor offerings. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| e) | Ensuring that more young people enjoy an outdoor experience in the National Park and are inspired to care more for nature and the climate. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| **Improving Popular Places and Routes** | **We will ensure that the National Park Authority and its partners take a co-ordinated place-based approach to investing in higher quality visitor facilities across publicly owned sites to ensure a sustainable balance between local needs, environmental sensitivities and visitor demand. There will be a particular focus on ensuring improvements that enable sustainable travel, improved accessibility, visitor safety and responsible tourism.** | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| a) | Promoting a high quality landscape experience through design excellence, to enhance place and the landscape quality. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| b) | Supporting inclusion and improved accessibility by identifying and facilitating actions that support equality and diversity to secure barrier free/inclusive access that meets the needs of all users. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| c) | Delivering for climate and nature by leading a nature-based approach to design using the principles of both Future Nature and Mission Zero, protecting and enhancing biodiversity and capitalising on the benefits of nature, including the sustainable design, materials and maintenance and use. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| d) | Supporting more sustainable ways of travel both to and within the National Park (Modal Shift) strengthening service support through a network of integrated hubs; walking, cycling, accommodation of electric vehicle (EV) use and public and shared transport and the facilities required to increase uptake. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| e) | Supporting visitor management and dispersal encouraging people to visit our more resilient places, and using good design, information and better provision to support more responsible behaviors, reducing the need for visitor management operations and measures. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| **Low Carbon Travel for Everyone** | **We will work to ensure that the National Park Authority and its partners improve mobility services in the National Park to increase sustainable accessibility for all. Our approach will focus on:** | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| a) | Reducing the level of carbon emissions from travel to and from the National Park, contributing to achieving it being a Net Zero place by 2035. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| b) | Reducing the adverse impacts of traffic and parking on communities and the public’s enjoyment of the Park. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| c) | Increasing the proportion of visitors travelling sustainably by walking, wheeling and cycling and by using public and water transport. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| d) | Enhancing access for all residents to employment, education, community services and health opportunities and amenities. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| e) | Supporting the capacity of travel service providers to better respond to currently unmet travel demand and seasonality. | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| **SECTION 3** | | |
| **Developing and Investing in the National Park.** | **Nationally strategic development and infrastructure improvements associated with trunk road improvements, electricity transmission or hydro-electric power generation will be supported by ensuring opportunities to safeguard the environment and landscape qualities are maximised as well as creating enhanced opportunities for people to experience the National Parks special qualities.** | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |
| a) | Strategic cale development is likely to have an impact on the National Park and neighbouring planning authorities will be supported at Callander, Arrochar, Tarbet and Balloch through delivery of the southern expansion of Callander, needed to facilitate sustainable expansion of the town and to provide mixed uses in support of the development needs of both Callander and surrounding rural communities for which it acts as a service hub. The new Local Development Plan will re-consider the requirement for longer term land release beyond the currently identified mixed used development site for which a masterplan has been prepared to guide and support development. | OUT – all strategic development will undergo SEA through the Local development Plan and will also taken into account any new requirements coming out of NPF 4 which has undergone SEA. |
| b) | Strategic cale development is likely to have an impact on the National Park and neighbouring planning authorities will be supported at Callander, Arrochar, Tarbet and Balloch through the prioritisation of development and infrastructure within Arrochar and Tarbet that helps unlock constrained, vacant and derelict sites, bringing them back into use in ways that support identified community needs, low carbon local living and improves infrastructure for visitors to the area and travelling through it to Argyll. | OUT – LDP will identify sites and therefore the environmental effects will be assessed through the LDP SEA. |
| c) | Strategic cale development is likely to have an impact on the National Park and neighbouring planning authorities will be supported at Callander, Arrochar, Tarbet and Balloch through the delivery of tourism investment in Balloch as a core strategic tourism gateway location, with opportunities for improved transport interchange as well as job creation and wider economic regeneration with adjoining areas to the National Park. | OUT – LDP will identify sites and therefore the environmental effects will be assessed through the LDP SEA. |
| d) | Large scale wind farms will not be supported within the National Park in accordance with National Planning Framework 4. Wind Farm proposals adjacent to the National Park should be located and designed in ways that do not adversely impact on the special landscape qualities of the National Park. | OUT – there are no locations identified for this work and therefore it is not possible to assess the level of environmental impact. |
| **Developing and Investing in the National Park.** | **Development and infrastructure in the National Park will:**   * **Support tackling the climate emergency** * **Maximise opportunities to deliver or enable nature restoration,** * **Respond to meeting the needs of National Park communities and support more local living and working,** * **Support a just transition for local businesses towards a greener, low carbon economy.** * **Support growing a wellbeing economy including through opportunities for local wealth building and greater community-led development and project activity.** | OUT – too high level to enable meaningful assessment. |

**10.2 Table 2 – Measures of Success Screening Table**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **MEASURE/INDICATOR** | | **Reason for Screening IN/OUT** |
| **SECTION 1** | | |
| **A natural carbon sink** | 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. | **IN – potential for environmental effects and an understanding of the approximate locations enables assessment.** |
| Track the location and extent and condition of the National Park’s tree cover. Double the average annual rate of woodland expansion from 200 ha to 400 ha focusing on priority areas. | **IN - potential for environmental effects and an understanding of the approximate locations enables assessment.** |
| **A restored landscape for nature** | Track the percentage of land under effective conservation and restoration management. Establish baseline and increase the percentage year on year. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| Track completion of Herbivore Impact Assessments for all Deer Management Groups and measure average deer densities. Achieve nationally recognised target levels of average deer densities – currently a maximum of 5 deer per km2 in woodland and a maximum of 10 deer per km2 on the open hill. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **An exemplar of regenerative land use** | Track the number of pilot regenerative farming projects in the National Park and complete pilots on 5 land holding by 2030. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **SECTION 2** | | |
| **A Place for all to enjoy safely and responsibly** | Measure participation in and impact of Volunteering, Outdoor Learning and Youth Action programmes. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| Measure the number of people visiting the National Park every year. Track how representative our domestic visitors are of Scottish society. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **High Quality visitor infrastructure and facilities** | Track the investment in and completion of priority visitor infrastructure projects as part of our Place Programme and across the recreation path network. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **An inclusive, low carbon travel network** | 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. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Section 3** | | |
| **A greener and more diverse rural economy** | Track new or expanded numbers of jobs and skills development opportunities 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. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **More Resilient Rural Communities** | 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. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| Track the number of 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 evidence as necessary to help address local housing needs and the rural economy. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **A responsive approach to new development** | Measure the nature restoration and net zero outputs secured through delivering new development, including biodiversity net gains on and offsite. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |

**10.3 Table 3: Outcome Screening Table**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **OUTCOMES BY 2045** | | | **Reason for Screening IN/OUT** |
| **A Natural Carbon Sink** | | | |
|  | | Our ecosystems are in good health and helping Scotland adapt to and mitigate against the climate crisis with the National Park being an active, natural carbon sink. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **A Restored Landscape for Nature** | | | |
|  | 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 management priorities nature recovery. | | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **An exemplar of regenerative land use** | | | |
|  | The National Park is an exemplar of regenerative land use delivering a wider range of private, public and community benefits. | | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **A Place for all to enjoy safely and responsibly** | | | |
|  | Opportunities for everyone to value and enjoy the special qualities/benefits of the National Park safely. | | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **High quality visitor infrastructure and facilites** | | | |
|  | People have a high-quality experience visiting the National Park and are able to use great services, facilities and routes with less impact on nature or contributing to climate change. Communities see less impacts of tourism on everyday life. Nature is recovering more rapidly in less visited areas, where priority has been given to non-motorised access and recreation activity. | | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **An inclusive, low carbon travel network** | | | |
|  | The National Park has an efficient, inclusive rural transport sector, meeting the travel needs of both visitors and residents alike. | | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **A greener and more diverse rural economy** | | | |
|  | 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 green jobs. | | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **More Resilient Rural Communities** | | | |
|  | 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. | | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **A Responsive Approach to New Development** | | | |
|  | 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. | | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |

**10.4 Table 4: Objectives Screening Table**

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| **OBJECTIVE BY 2029** | | **Reason for Screening IN/OUT** |
| **Restoring Nature for Climate** | | |
| **Reduce Peatland Emissions** | Significantly reduce the amount of degraded, high emission peatland and create the conditions for carbon capture. | OUT – to high level for meaningful assessment. Impact from Peatland restoration will be subject to SEA when the Peatland Strategy is adopted. |
| **Increase Tree Cover** | Increase the extent, diversity, and health of tree cover across suitable areas of the National Park. | OUT – to high level for meaningful assessment. The Trees and Woodlands strategy has undergone a separate SEA where this objective was considered. |
| **Restore the Water Environment** | To increase the health and physical condition of freshwater and marine habitats in the National Park to create more resilient, natural ecosystems. | OUT – to high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Restoring Nature for Healthy Ecosystems** | | |
| **Restore Nature at Scale** | Restore nature at a large scale through the expansion, improvement and re-connection of priority habitats and eco-systems across the National Park to create functioning, resilient nature networks. | OUT – too high level to assess at this stage. Nature Networks will be assessed through the LDP process. |
| **Priorities land for nature** | More land in the National Park is prioritised for nature restoration, as part of Scotland’s 30 by 30 commitment. | OUT – this is a process therefore not suitable for assessment. |
| **Reduce Other Key Pressures** | Reduce other key pressures driving the decline of Nature in the National Park | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Restoring Nature Through Sustainable, Regenerative Land Use** | | |
| **Support more Regenerative Land Use** | To create more sustainable and regenerative land use and management within the National Park, that delivers greater benefits for all | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Invest in Nature Restoration** | Support increased public and ethical green financial investment in land to deliver an increase in land use change for climate and nature restoration. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Encourage land use that benefits everyone** | Encourage future land use and investment in natural capital that supports wider benefits for local communities. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Connecting Everyone with Nature and Climate** | | |
| **Inspiring Action for Nature and Climate** | Inspire and engage more people to take action for nature and climate by promoting understanding of the challenges facing our planet while increasing the wellbeing benefits of enjoying the outdoors. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Support Diversity and Inclusion** | Improve diversity and inclusion by creating more opportunities for previously under-represented groups to access and enjoy the National Park. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Support Safe and Responsible Access** | A wide range of enjoyable and safe visitor experiences which are managed in a way which is compatible with nature and climate considerations and supporting thriving communities. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Improving Popular Places and Routes** | | |
| **Deliver a multi-year Place Programme** | Provide higher quality assets across publicly managed sites with improvements striking a balance between local and visitor needs while delivering nature and climate benefits. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Improve travel infrastructure** | More of the National Park is accessible to people of all backgrounds through improved sustainable and active travel infrastructure that delivers a wider range of travel choices and itineraries | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Provide a high quality recreational path network** | People from a wider range of backgrounds enjoy a high-quality, well-maintained network of paths and routes meeting different needs and abilities | OUT – there is no mapping which details where the pressure points are and therefore no understanding of where maintenance is required. There will be assessments carried out at project level or through Planning applications. |
| **Low Carbon Travel for Everyone** | | |
| **Develop a new strategic transport partnership approach** | Transport and travel services are better planned, integrated and delivered to meet the travel needs of communities and visitors, and to reduce car dependency. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Make sustainable travel choices more attractive** | Sustainable travel choices will be promoted and priced to be more attractive and convenient to use. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Improve travel routes and services** | Public transport service providers are enabled to establish new routes and timetables to take advantage of currently unmet travel demand and realise economic benefits. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Transitioning to a Greener Rural Economy** | | |
| **Increase Sustainable Tourism** | The National Park visitor economy is thriving and transitioning to offer more low emission, nature connected tourism opportunities and celebrate local culture and heritage. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Support Low Carbon Businesses** | Businesses are reducing their carbon emissions and footprint as part of the transition towards a net zero economy. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Grow Green and Nature-based Jobs and Skills** | The National Park economy is transitioning to become greener and more diverse with an increase in the local workforce supporting green and nature-based jobs and skills. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Supporting Thriving Rural Communities** | | |
| **Enable more local living and working** | People living and working within the National Park are reducing their carbon emissions through both individual and community-led action. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Meet Housing Needs** | People who need to live and work in the National Park are able to do so by ensuring housing is available to meet identified community housing needs and the needs of the local workforce. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Build Community Wealth** | National Park communities and local businesses are fully harnessing the opportunities from economic transition and more wealth is being retained and recirculated locally. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Developing and Investing in the National Park** | | |
| **Deliver Strategic Development Needs** | National and locally identified strategic development needs are being planned and delivered. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Adapt to Climate Change and Restore Nature** | New development and land use is directly helping to create more climate resilient and nature rich places and networks | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Make the best use of Land and Assets** | Vacant and derelict sites are being brought back into use to support local communities and businesses or are restored to provide green infrastructure and support nature restoration | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |

**10.5 Table 5: Actions Screening Table**

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| **ACTION** | | **Reason for Screening IN/OUT** |
| **RESTORING NATURE FOR CLIMATE** | | |
| **1** | Scaling up of the Peatland ACTION programme, by securing increased land manager take-up, and additional support from private finance and carbon markets. | OUT – this is too general to meaningfully assess at this stage. The full environmental impacts will be assessed within the Peatland Strategy (which will be subject to SEA) and will also be assessed at individual project level. |
| **2** | Reducing damage to fragile peatland surfaces from herbivore trampling through preventative management. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **3** | Working with public and private partners to support land managers, communities, and businesses to deliver a faster expansion of healthy, diverse woodland and forest habitats in priority areas, through native regeneration, planting, and active management. | OUT – the Trees and Woodlands Strategy has already undergone SEA where this action was assessed. |
| **4** | Engaging with partner bodies, local communities, and land managers to trial and pilot nature restoration and climate adaptation projects on water bodies. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **5** | Delivering programmes of ecological restoration at targeted water bodies. | **IN – location of wetland Designated Sites are known so some high level assessment can take place.** |
| **6** | Engaging with emerging policy and legislation agendas that aim to deliver a ‘beyond compliance’ approach to restorative action for freshwater and marine waterbodies, including further work to deliver the Clyde Regional Marine Plan to benefit our sea lochs. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Restoring Nature for Recovering Ecosystems and Species** | | |
| **7** | Identifying a new Nature Network across the National Park that connects current Designated Sites and areas managed primarily for nature, with corridors of high nature value habitats and opportunities for large-scale recovery. (includes landscape-scale restoration projects at Wild Strathfillan, Great Trossachs Forest and Loch Lomond Rainforest) | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **8** | Creating partnership-led 5-year Delivery Plans for major habitat types (including Trees, Peatlands, Water & Wetlands) that deliver outputs and resources for landscape-scale nature recovery in priority locations | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **9** | Increasing the use of effective and focused legislative actions on compliance, and if necessary, enforcement to prevent deliberate mismanagement or neglect that leads to an erosion of nature at priority sites.. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **10** | Creating a new delivery-focused partnership forum to drive forward a collaborative approach to nature restoration as a key purpose on land owned or managed by public bodies, environmental charitable bodies, willing private land managers and for all Designated Sites. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **11** | Developing and delivering a Herbivore Management Strategy and associated Action Plans that drive forward a significant reduction in unwanted impacts from wild deer and livestock across the National Park that, by targeted management measures, leads to active recovery of ecosystems, including the natural expansion of tree cover and the protection of peat | OUT – this is a process and therefore not suitable for assessment. |
| **12** | Tackling Invasive Non-Native Species at a strategic, large-scale, with the aim of reducing the extent of target populations. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Restoring Nature Through Sustainable, Regenerative Land Use** | | |
| **13** | Facilitating a Regional Land Use Partnership and preparing a Park-wide Land Use Framework setting out collaborative, joined up land use change objectives, priorities, and opportunities across the National Park. | OUT – details of the Partnership and Framework have yet to be shared and therefore it is not possible to carry out a meaningful assessment. |
| **14** | Promoting the integration of regenerative land use practises within emerging area-based strategies prepared through the new Local Development Plan.. | OUT – this is a process and therefore not suitable for assessment. |
| **15** | Encouraging and supporting land managers to shift more suitable land towards low carbon and regenerative agriculture as a higher priority. | OUT – this is a process and therefore not suitable for assessment. |
| **16** | Working with land managers, local communities, and brokers to investigate and trial emerging ethical private funding and support mechanisms, such as carbon credit, biodiversity markets and donations that deliver public benefits, including for climate and nature. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **17** | Engaging in national level land reform policy discussions to advocate for a shift towards more sustainable, regenerative public land use support and regulation schemes. | OUT – this is a process and therefore not suitable for assessment. |
| **18** | Creating longer-term confidence for land managers and contractors by engaging in initiatives that scale and package up priority land use programmes more strategically and over multiple years (e.g., Peatland ACTION programme). | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **19** | Supporting and enabling local communities and land managers to engage with each other through Local Place Plans and other mechanisms in order to influence more collective land use decisions and opportunities for mutual benefit. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Connecting Everyone with Nature** | | |
| **20** | Continuing to develop the National Park Authority outdoor learning programme with a stronger focus on understanding Climate and Nature, whilst responding to national education priorities. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **21** | Ensuring young people have platforms to advocate and act, embedding their voice in policy and practice by growing membership, and skills of the Youth Committee and Junior Rangers. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **22** | Continuing to develop the National Park volunteering programme to expand opportunities to take action for climate, nature and engaging with visitors; to grow and diversify our volunteer cohort, and to ensure these opportunities also build the skills and wellbeing of our volunteers. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **23** | Working with local and national organisations to develop our collective delivery of climate and nature focused outdoor learning, outreach and volunteering opportunities | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **24** | Delivering local, regional and national public engagement initiatives, campaigns and interpretation strategies which embed the valuing of nature and landscape within visits and active experiences including well-being walks. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **25** | Engaging and supporting the growing sector of charities and voluntary organisations who work with a wide range of underrepresented and marginalised groups, to provide targeted outreach initiatives, support and resources for these communities to experience the National Park. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **26** | Agreeing our Mainstreaming and Equalities Outcomes for the National Park for 2025-2029, engaging with organisations for underrepresented or marginalised communities and partners, to ensure that the National Park is an inviting place for people of all backgrounds.  Continue to deliver and expand on the work of the ‘Park for All’ group to engage with organisations for underrepresented or marginalised communities and partners, to ensure that the National Park is an inviting place for people of all backgrounds. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **27** | Developing communication approaches to ensure all opportunities to access or become involved in the work of the National Park are reaching underrepresented groups. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **28** | Taking a partnership approach to visitor management to ensure co-ordination of the work of all public bodies with a role in supporting the safe and responsible enjoyment of the National Park. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **29** | Operating and keeping under review the Loch Lomond and Camping Byelaws to encourage positive behaviour and protect the National Park’s sensitive environment. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **30** | Co-ordinating a multi-agency approach to promoting visitor safety across responsible bodies to ensure the safe enjoyment of publicly managed and other popular visitor sites. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Improving Popular Places and Routes** | | |
| **31** | Coordinating investment plans by partner and public bodies through the Place Programme partnership and its agreed strategic approach on priority visitor infrastructure projects focusing in delivering benefits for:   * People and Place * Climate and Nature * Inclusion and improved accessibility * Modal shift to sustainable and active travel * Visitor management and dispersal | IN – the project work planned as part of this programme is likely to have environmental impacts. |
| **32** | Completing a Park-Wide Place Programme Delivery Route Map setting out infrastructure priorities for delivery across local destinations. This route map will align with national strategic priorities and multi-year funding streams. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **33** | Delivering accelerated projects on East and West Loch Lomond which are already well developed and have funding packages well progressed. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **34** | Ensuring all infrastructure programmes integrate digital and sensor tech to ensure infrastructure designs in monitoring and information gathering for ongoing work. | OUT – this action will be assessed at Local Development Place level. |
| **35** | Delivering Tarbet, Balloch and Callander travel connectivity initiatives to facilitate multi-modal and attractive journeys. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **36** | Establishing a strategic approach to public transport and EV infrastructure and EV car sharing opportunities which can enhance the wider mobility network and inclusion. | OUT – this action will be assessed at Local Development Place level. |
| **37** | Developing and delivering an active travel infrastructure programme across the National Park which ensures that walking, cycling and wheeling are built into the daily experiences of residents and visitors. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **38** | Managing and promoting the WHW in ways appropriate for a world-renowned experience of this nature. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment |
| **39** | Ensuring there is a path maintenance programme (lowland and upland) which ensures these valuable assets and experiences are protected for the longer term. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **40** | Addressing critical network gaps so that the local, regional and national networks are connected across the National Park and integrated into the wider transport network. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **41** | Supporting outdoor activity providers to enable the rental of equipment which supports growth in healthy nature connected recreation activity and enables visitors to travel light. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Low Carbon Travel for Everyone** | | |
| **42** | Establishing a new National Park Mobility Partnership and governance model where key partners share resources, assets, skills and revenue to enhance the low-carbon mobility choices for popular and essential journeys into and within the National Park. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **43** | Creating a partnership approach to sharing visitor/travel data and insights on unmet journey demand to inform transport service planning. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **44** | Establish a stakeholder group to support the National Park Mobility Partnership advising on delivery for communities of place and interest, including businesses | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **45** | Developing a strategic approach to setting pricing levels for travel and parking which will incentivise and support low carbon travel choices | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **46** | Delivering an integrated ticketing, marketing and communications package which supports sustainable travel choices and supports modal shift. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **47** | Developing new targeted transport services (including on water) meeting journey demand and an attractive alternative to the private car for both visitors and residents. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **48** | Taking a strategic approach to low-carbon transport service frameworks, contracts and subsidies (including for potential shift towards publicly owned services or network franchising). | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **49** | Delivering a collaborative recruitment drive to address existing vacancies which are hindering rural service development (including community transport initiatives). | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **50** | Developing and delivering a 5 year programme through the Mobility Partnership which adds targeted capacity to the low-carbon travel network through the growth in rail carriage, bus, E-taxi and car sharing fleet volumes. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Transitioning to a Greener Rural Economy** | | |
| **51** | Identifying and taking forward collaborative opportunities to address challenges and develop new tourism experiences, including those more closely connected with nature. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **52** | Establishing a baseline of green tourism accreditation Parkwide to determine how many businesses participate and to what level they are engaged in order to extend support and measure progress. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **53** | Increasing practical toolkits, guidance and other approaches to help tourism businesses maximise the market opportunities and benefits in low carbon tourism and business operations. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **54** | Increasing access for businesses to specialist technical advice, support, and opportunities for collaborative action as their sector transitions to net zero. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **55** | Continuing to support improvements to digital and telecommunications infrastructure to facilitate improvements in business operations. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **56** | Establishing a robust evidence base to identify existing skills gaps and labour shortages within the industry sectors that have a lead delivery role in achieving outcomes for climate and nature, focussing principally on nature, land management and transport | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **57** | Developing a Green and Nature Based Skills Action Plan to identify training needs and new employment opportunities. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Supporting Thriving Rural Communities** | | |
| **58** | Increasing community-led climate awareness, networking and action through the Forth Valley and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Community Climate Action Hub and supporting preparation and delivery of community led Local Place Plans. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **59** | Increasing community scale energy and heat generation, including opportunities for district heat networks and retrofitting renewables micro-technology to community buildings. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **60** | Increasing the extent of local food growing, sharing and distribution, including the identification of allotments in some communities where demand is established. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **61** | Improved Active Travel links within and between communities. (rural transport provision is included in Chapter 2) | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **62** | Supporting the retention of local services and facilities, alongside encouraging innovative new approaches towards rural service provision. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **63** | Exploring ways to support an increase in affordable rural housing delivery, including consideration of a new Rural Housing Enabler project to establish a pipeline of projects and unlock delivery constraints | OUT – this will be considered by the Local Development Plan which will be subject to SEA. |
| **64** | Identifying ways to make better use of existing housing, including ways to stem the loss of this to second and holiday homes and the potential for communities and businesses to acquire and manage housing. | OUT – this will be considered by the Local Development Plan which will be subject to SEA |
| **65** | Ensuring enough land is identified for new housing within the National Park through the New Local Development Plan informed by Local Place Plans and linked more closely to rural economic needs. | OUT – this will be considered by the Local Development Plan which will be subject to SEA |
| **66** | Supporting communities to fully realise opportunities arising from transition to net zero through increased capacity building support, training and skills development for community anchor organisations. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **67** | Supporting closer working between the public sector, land managers, businesses, and communities to grow the green economy, including opportunities for new business models, collaborative pilots and community led social enterprise. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **68** | Supporting communities to understand how they can engage in and inform land use decisions to help address identified local community needs, including more community influence and/or control of land and assets. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **69** | Establishing a new approach towards Community Wealth Building from new development to maximise benefits from investment to the National Park. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **Developing and Investing in the National Park** | | |
| **70** | Ensuring nationally strategic infrastructure development, identified in National Planning Framework 4, is designed and delivered in ways that are cognisant to the National Park’s special environmental and landscape qualities and maximise benefits to local communities, businesses and visitors | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **71** | Supporting the delivery of the strategic development needed at:   * Callander- to support sustainable expansion of the town and more local living outcomes, * Balloch - to improve Balloch as a main visitor and transport interchange hub for the National Park * Arrochar and Tarbet – to supports rural regeneration by focussing on vacant and derelict sites causing blight. | **IN – will be assessed through the mapping assessment table.** |
| **72** | Supporting communities to identify ways in which they can increase resilience to the impacts of climate change, particularly in relation to flooding and associated impacts on vulnerable areas, buildings, and local infrastructure. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **73** | Preparing a revised integrated spatial land use and development strategy, through the new Local Development Plan, to ensure the natural and built environment is better managed for, and protected from, the impacts of climate change | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **74** | Ensuring new development delivers positive outcomes for nature through securing biodiversity net gains and investing in local nature networks identified as part of the development of the new Local Development Plan. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **75** | Working with communities, through Local Place Plans and preparing the new Local Development Plan, to identify undeveloped and vacant sites within and around towns and villages and that could be brought into use or restored to improve local places and nature. | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **76** | Identifying the range of interventions required to facilitate bringing stalled sites back into use, including community right to buy, finance options and potentially Compulsory Purchase Orders, focussing on sites causing significant blight within local communities and/or are impacting on achieving net zero, nature restoration and/or sustainable local living outcomes | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |

**10.6 Table 6: Mapping Screening Table**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **MAP** | **Reason for Screening IN/OUT** |
| **SECTION 1** | |
| **Map 1 – Woodland** | OUT –a detailed assessment of the potential sites for woodland creation has already taken place as part of the Woodland Strategy SEA. |
| **Map 2 – Peatland** | OUT – the peatland map included does not demonstrate where Peatland Restoration project are to take place. The map highlights areas of broken peat but does not give further detail to clarify whether these are sites that are appropriate for peatland restoration. More detailed assessment will take place in the forthcoming Peatland Strategy SEA. |
| **Map 3 – Habitat Recovery** | IN – potential for environmental effects and an understanding of the approximate locations and extent of proposed habitat restoration enables assessment. |
| **Map 4 – Ecological Status of Water Bodies** | OUT – too high level for meaningful assessment. |
| **SECTION 2** | |
| **Map 5 Infrastructure Investment** | OUT – too high level of meaningful assessment |
| **SECTION 3** | |
| **Map 6 – Strategic Development** | IN – potential for environmental effects and an understanding of the approximate locations enables assessment. |

**11 Assessments Undertaken**

**11.1 Habitat Recovery and Designated Sites**

***Table 7: Improving the condition of existing Designated Sites***

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessor(s):** | **Laura Mowat** | | | |
| **Date of Assessment Completion:** | **28th February 2023** | | | |
| **SECTION OF PLAN BEING ASSESSED:** | *Policy –* ***Restoring Nature for Healthy Ecosystems Part (a)*** *‘Improving the condition of existing Designated Sites and delivering actions which protect and expand the special species and habitats found there.’* | | | |
|  | **ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS** | | | |
| **SEA Objective:** | **Nature of Effect** | **Scoring: significance of effect before mitigation** | **Mitigation and enhancement** | **Scoring: residual significance of effect after mitigation** |
| **Biodiversity**  To protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and encourage habitat connectivity | The improvement of existing Designated Sites within the National Park boundary will have a positive impact on biodiversity. This work will help to restore and enhance biodiversity at these nationally significant sites. | **++** | As the effects of nature restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same. | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Landscape**  To protect, enhance and restore the special landscape qualities of the National Park | The impact on landscape character can be subjective and will differ between each site. Overall the improvement of the Designated Sites should have an overall positive impact on the landscape quality. There is a risk that improving the sites could detract from people’s enjoyment of the site and the visual amenity. | **+** | Consider the impact on visual landscape quality when developing actions for each site and ensure that the improvement measures taken are suitable for each location. | N/A as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Air**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance air quality | Improving Designated Sites by planting more trees will likely improve air quality and this will act as a carbon sink. | **+** | As the effects of nature restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same. | N/A as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Population and human health**  To protect and improve human health, well being, inclusion and sustainable communities | N/A as not related to this objective. | **x** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Geology, minerals and soils**  To maintain and enhance soils and geodiversity assets. | Increasing biodiversity within Designated Sites will increase the resilience of the soil to environmental challenges. | **+** | As the effects of nature restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same. | N/A as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Water environment**  To protect and enhance the state of the water environment. | The creation and restoration of habitats in key parts of a catchment can contribute to reducing pressures, inputs and demands affecting the wider water environment, providing a range of ecosystem services including water purification and reducing run off of excess water from the land. | **+** | As the effects of nature restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same. | N/A as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Climate**  To help mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to its short and long term impacts | N/A as not related to this objective. | **x** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Material assets**  To protect material assets and promote the sustainable use of natural resources | N/A as not related to this objective. | **x** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Cultural heritage**  To protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment | N/A as not related to this objective. | **x** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Commentary** | It is considered that improving the designated sites within the National Park will have an overall positive impact on the environment – particularly for biodiversity. The designated sites within the National Park boundary are all important areas for biodiversity and therefore the aim of improving these sites will only increase their national significance. The projects to improve these sites have not yet been identified and decided and therefore a more meaningful and detailed assessment will be undertaken once the site-specific actions are understood. At a high level it is determined that this action will have a significant positive impact on the environment and no negative impacts have been identified. It has been noted within the mitigation actions that to ensure the positive environmental impacts are realised that the improvement actions for each site will need to be considered on a case by case basis. | | | |

***Table 8: MAPPING - Habitat Recovery Priority Areas in the National Park***

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessor(s):** | **Laura Mowat** | | | |
| **Date of Assessment Completion:** | *24/11/23* | | | |
| **SECTION OF PLAN BEING ASSESSED:** | *Map 3 – Habitat Recovery Priority Areas in the National Park* | | | |
|  | **ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS** | | | |
| **SEA Objective:** | **Nature of Effect** | **Scoring: significance of effect before mitigation** | **Mitigation and enhancement** | **Scoring: residual significance of effect after mitigation** |
| **Biodiversity**  To protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and encourage habitat connectivity | Widespread habitat recovery across the National Park will improve and enhance biodiversity by providing key species within the Park restored environments to thrive. Each of the three habitats highlighted on the map will support different species and therefore improvement at this scale will enhance the species richness of the National Park and also provide habitat connectivity. | **++** | As the effects of nature restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same. | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Landscape**  To protect, enhance and restore the special landscape qualities of the National Park | By improving the three key habitats highlighted on the map, the landscape of the National Park is likely to be noticeably altered – particularly with the level of woodland expansion included. This will result in an overall positive impact on the landscape, however, it should be noted that the there is a risk that improving the sites could detract from people’s enjoyment of the site and the visual amenity. | **+** | Consider the impact on visual landscape quality when developing actions for each site and ensure that the improvement measures taken are suitable for each location. . | **++** |
| **Air**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance air quality | Habitat restoration at this scale will have an overall positive impact on air quality as both the restoration of peatlands and the planting of trees will result in a reduction of carbon in the atmosphere. | **++** | As the effects of nature restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same. | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Population and human health**  To protect and improve human health, well being, inclusion and sustainable communities | N/A as not related to this objective. | **X** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Geology, minerals and soils**  To maintain and enhance soils and geodiversity assets. | The overarching aim to restore degraded peatland will improve soil quality and prevent erosion. Woodland creation and expansion projects will also have this same effect on soils and therefore will overall have a positive impact on the environment. | **++** | As the effects of nature restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same. | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Water environment**  To protect and enhance the state of the water environment. | The improvement of the three key habitat types at this scale will have a positive impact on the water environment. Focusing on water and wetland restoration will improve the species diversity in the waterways within the National Park which will in turn improve the water quality. Woodland expansion and peatland restoration projects will also have an overall positive impact on the water environment. | **++** | As the effects of nature restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same. | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Climate**  To help mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to its short and long term impacts | Degraded peatland can be a large source of carbon emissions whereas restored peatland acts as a carbon sink. The level of peatland restoration that is highlighted on the map will result in a significant reduction in carbon emissions. Woodland expansion and creation will also have a positive impact for the climate as the planting of trees will reduce the carbon within the atmosphere and overall improve air quality. | **++** | As the effects of nature restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same. | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Material assets**  To protect material assets and promote the sustainable use of natural resources | N/A as not related to this objective. | **X** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Cultural heritage**  To protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment | The levels of habitat restoration illustrated on the map are fairly widespread and could potentially impact on the historic environment. The planting of significant numbers of trees could result in historic assets being inaccessible or obscured from view and could also result in damage of historic sites due to tree roots. Peatland restoration could also have a negative impact on the historic environment and peat is a preservation material and therefore there could be historically significant sites within out peatland restoration areas. The restoration of these areas could potentially damage important historic assets. | **-** | Prior to commencing a habitat restoration project, the history of the site and the potential historic value should be understood to ensure that there are minimal negative impacts on the cultural heritage of the National Park. | **+** |
| **Commentary** | The map included within the NPPP illustrates the main priority areas for nature restoration efforts across three key habitat types – peatland, woodland and water/wetland. The mapping that has been included within the NPPP is high level and aspirational and demonstrates all the potential areas for habitat improvement. Specific projects have not necessarily been scoped out and when they are more detailed assessment can and will take place. This assessment has been completed with the view that all the priority areas highlight will be included in nature restoration projects during the lifetime of the Plan and that widespread habitat recovery will take place. The result of this has been found to be overwhelmingly positive for the key elements of the assessment criteria and will only have a potential negative impact on the historic environment if no mitigation measures are in place. The potential negative impacts on the historic environment could be the destruction of important historic assets or the inability to access historic sites due to increased woodland cover. Mitigation measures have been suggested in the table above to ensure this is not the case.  The improvement of the three key habitats across the National Park has been found to result in major positive impacts on biodiversity, climate, the water environment, soils and air quality. | | | |

**11.2 Table 9: Peatland Restoration**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessor(s):** | **Laura Mowat** | | | |
| **Date of Assessment Completion:** | **28th February 2023** | | | |
| **SECTION OF PLAN BEING ASSESSED:** | Restoring Nature for Climate Measure of Success: ‘*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*.’ | | | |
|  | **ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS** | | | |
| **SEA Objective:** | **Nature of Effect** | **Scoring: significance of effect before mitigation** | **Mitigation and enhancement** | **Scoring: residual significance of effect after mitigation** |
| **Biodiversity**  To protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and encourage habitat connectivity | Areas of degraded peatland are generally considered to be species poor. By restoring peatland it provides a habitat for a range of rare and threatened plants and animals. The restoration of peatland areas will therefore have an overall positive impact on biodiversity within the National Park. | **+** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same. | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Landscape**  To protect, enhance and restore the special landscape qualities of the National Park | The target for restoring 8000ha of Peatland will result in the sustainable management and restoration of this special landscape across large areas of the National Park. | **+** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same. | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Air**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance air quality | Peatland is a carbon sink and therefore restoring it will lock in carbon in the atmosphere and overall improve air quality. | **++** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Population and human health**  To protect and improve human health, well being, inclusion and sustainable communities | N/A not related to this objective. | **x** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Geology, minerals and soils**  To maintain and enhance soils and geodiversity assets. | The overarching aim to restore degraded peatland will improve soil quality and prevent erosion. | **++** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same. | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Water environment**  To protect and enhance the state of the water environment. | Peatland restoration aims to improve the water environment by improving drainage, water quality and reducing floodrisk. | **++** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same. | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Climate**  To help mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to its short and long term impacts | Degraded peatland can be a large source of carbon emissions whereas restored peatland acts as a carbon sink. Ensuring that the targets set out in the NPPP are met would result in significant environmental benefits. | **++** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same. | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Material assets**  To protect material assets and promote the sustainable use of natural resources | N/A as not related to this objective. | **x** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Cultural heritage**  To protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment | The greatest threat to the historic environment in peatland areas is the degradation of the peat itself. Peatland restoration aims to restore a healthy, functioning bog, and as such its outcome can fundamentally benefit the preservation of the historic environment. Nevertheless, ground works, such as those required by peatland restoration, have the potential to inadvertently damage the historic environment. | **-** | The location of any peatland restoration would need to consider any archeological, historic and cultural assets. Culturally significant assets within a Peatland restoration site should be logged and accurately recorded. | **+** |
| **Commentary** | It has been determined that if the peatland restoration target proposed within the NPPP is met, it will overall have a significant positive environmental impact. The restoration of the National Park’s peatland is a key priority for the NPPP and other relevant Plans and Strategies. The National Park are currently developing a Peatland Strategy which will provide more detail and will also be subject to SEA and each Peatland project is also assessed for environmental effects at project level. As an overarching aim, the peatland restoration target is likely to benefit the air quality, mitigate the effects of climate change, improve the water environment and enrich the soils. There are multiple environmental benefits to the Peatland Restoration work and it is considered that this work will have an overwhelming positive impact on the environment. | | | |

**11.3 Table 10: Woodland Creation**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessor(s):** | **Laura Mowat** | | | |
| **Date of Assessment Completion:** | **28th February 2023** | | | |
| **SECTION OF PLAN BEING ASSESSED:** | Restoring Nature for Climate Measure of Success: *Track the location, extent, and condition of the National Park’s tree cover. Double the average annual rate of woodland expansion from 200ha year to 400ha, focusing on priority areas* | | | |
|  | **ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS** | | | |
| **SEA Objective:** | **Nature of Effect** | **Scoring: significance of effect before mitigation** | **Mitigation and enhancement** | **Scoring: residual significance of effect after mitigation** |
| **Biodiversity**  To protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and encourage habitat connectivity | Woodland creation is considered to have a positive impact on biodiversity as it creates vital habitats as well as wildlife corridors which enable a more connected habitat network to form. | **++** | As the effects of woodland creation are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Landscape**  To protect, enhance and restore the special landscape qualities of the National Park | It is considered that woodland creation will have an overall positive impact on landscape quality, however, it should be noted that ensuring appropriate landscapes are selected for planting is key. | **+** | Scenario planning for woodland creation sites is already underway. This should be taken into consideration when selecting an appropriate location for planting. | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Air**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance air quality | Increased woodland cover will have a significant positive impact on air quality as trees sequester carbon from the atmosphere. | **++** | As the effects of woodland creation are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Population and human health**  To protect and improve human health, well being, inclusion and sustainable communities | N/A as not related to this objective. | **x** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Geology, minerals and soils**  To maintain and enhance soils and geodiversity assets. | Tree planting has a generally positive impact on soil quality and reduces soil erosion. | **+** | As the effects of woodland creation are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Water environment**  To protect and enhance the state of the water environment. | Woodland creation is likely to have an overall positive impact on the water environment as tree planting can improve water quality and reduce flooding. There are concerns that planting can occasionally reduce water quality by increasing the acidity of the water. | **+** | Tree planting near important water bodies should be carefully considered to ensure no adverse impact on water quality. This will be further assessed within the Trees and Woodlands Strategy. | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Climate**  To help mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to its short and long term impacts | Increasing the number of trees within the National Park will have a significant positive impact on the climate. Trees sequester carbon from the atmosphere and therefore help mitigate the causes of climate change. | **++** | As the effects of woodland creation are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Material assets**  To protect material assets and promote the sustainable use of natural resources | N/A as not related to this objective. | **x** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Cultural heritage**  To protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment | Increased tree cover in culturally significant places could reduce the public’s enjoyment of the site and ability to access important historic assets. The planting of trees in the vicinity of historically significant sites could also destroy buried archaeological deposits, weaken above ground stone features and hide earthwork features. | **-** | The location of any tree planting would need to consider any archeological, historic and cultural assets. This should be taken into consideration as part of an EIA. Further consideration will need to be given to tree planting schemes that do not meet the EIA threshold. | **+** |
| **Commentary** | The target proposed within the NPPP is overall likely to have a positive impact on the environment. The assessment completed above has displayed that increasing woodland cover within the National Park will have significant environmental benefits for biodiversity, air quality and climate change and also benefit the soil quality and overall landscape quality. The aim of the woodland creation target is to increase the level of woodland cover and also increase the number of native species within the National Park.  The assessment has noted that there is the potential that increasing the number of trees could negatively impact the cultural heritage within the National Park as it could result in reduced accessibility or visibility of important historic assets and also potential damage to historic features. It has been suggested in the mitigation targets that each woodland creation project should carefully consider this as part of an EIA to ensure there is not negative impact. | | | |

**11.4 Table 11: Place Investment Programme**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessor(s):** | **Laura Mowat** | | | |
| **Date of Assessment Completion:** | **28th February 2023** | | | |
| **SECTION OF PLAN BEING ASSESSED:** | *Improving Popular Places and Routes :* Coordinating investment plans by partner public bodies, through the Place Programme partnership and its agreed strategic approach on priority visitor infrastructure projects focussing on delivering benefits for:  - People and Place  - Climate and Nature  - Inclusion and improved accessibility  - Modal shift to sustainable and active travel  - Visitor management and localised dispersal | | | |
|  | **ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS** | | | |
| **SEA Objective:** | **Nature of Effect** | **Scoring: significance of effect before mitigation** | **Mitigation and enhancement** | **Scoring: residual significance of effect after mitigation** |
| **Biodiversity**  To protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and encourage habitat connectivity | The nature of the proposals are unknown and therefore their specific impact on biodiversity is not clear at this stage. | **?** | Ensure ecological advice is sought at each stage of the project development process. | + |
| **Landscape**  To protect, enhance and restore the special landscape qualities of the National Park | One of the overarching aims of the Place programme is to enhance visitors’ enjoyment and understanding of the landscape. | **++** | Ensure local and site specific issues are considered as part of the STID studies. This will ensure there are minimal impacts to the landscape quality. | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Air**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance air quality | By improving the visitor infrastructure there is a possibility that private car use increases which will adversely impact air quality.  The building out of these sites could also cause negative impacts to the air quality as it would result in increased construction traffic. | **-** | Ensure sites are accessible by public transport – The NPA Modal shift Strategy is taking this forward. Include electric charging points to encourage less polluting vehicles.  Make use of local suppliers to minimise travel of workers and materials to the construction site. | 0 |
| **Population and human health**  To protect and improve human health, well being, inclusion and sustainable communities | The investment programme aims to improve the visitor experience for locals and tourists. The aim is to promote active travel, outdoor recreation and a healthier lifestyle. | **++** | As the effects of Place Programme are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Geology, minerals and soils**  To maintain and enhance soils and geodiversity assets. | It is unknown at this stage the impacts that the various projects will have on soil at different sites. | **?** | Seek the advice of specialist to ensure projects will not have an adverse impact on soil quality. | 0 |
| **Water environment**  To protect and enhance the state of the water environment. | It is unknown at this stage the impacts that the various projects will have on water quality at different sites. | **?** | Ensure all projects receive specialist advice to minimize the impact on the water environment. | + |
| **Climate**  To help mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to its short and long term impacts | The Place Programme aims to encourage the use of public transport, electric charging vehicles and active travel routes with the end goal of reducing overall emissions throughout the National Park. | **+** | As the effects of Place Programme are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Material assets**  To protect material assets and promote the sustainable use of natural resources | The Place investment programme supports the use of sustainable materials and construction methods. The ambition is to use local materials and reduce the carbon footprint of the works by making use of local suppliers. | **+** | As the effects of Place Programme are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Cultural heritage**  To protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment | Cultural heritage is a key consideration of the Place programme. The aim is to ensure that visitors can enjoy the historic environment whilst ensuring it is protected. | **++** | As the effects of Place Programme are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Commentary** | The Place Programme is a five year infrastructure investment programme aiming to improve the visitor and living experience within the National Park. The environmental impacts of this programme are difficult to determine at this high-level but each project is subject to Planning regulations and will therefore be in line with the recently published NPF4 (which has been subject to SEA). The overarching aim of the Place Programme is to improve the infrastructure within the National Park to make it more sustainable and allow visitors to explore the National Park without increasing their carbon footprint. Each project has a clear environmental focus and sustainable approach and any potential negative impacts have had mitigation actions suggested. Overall the Place Programme will positively impact the cultural heritage and landscape quality of the National Park whist also aiming to improve, in the longer term, air quality and the climate. | | | |

**11.5 Table 12 – Map 6 – Strategic Development and Infrastructure in the National Park***.*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessor(s):** | **Laura Mowat** | | | |
| **Date of Assessment Completion:** | 24/11/23 | | | |
| **SECTION OF PLAN BEING ASSESSED:** | *Map 6 – Strategic Development and Infrastructure in the National Park.*  ***Arrochar and Tarbet*** *– focus on addressing vacant and derelict sites to support rural regeneration*. | | | |
|  | **ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS** | | | |
| **SEA Objective:** | **Nature of Effect** | **Scoring: significance of effect before mitigation** | **Mitigation and enhancement** | **Scoring: residual significance of effect after mitigation** |
| **Biodiversity**  To protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and encourage habitat connectivity | There is a concern that vacant sites that have been left unattended could have become important aspects of the nature network and the National Park’s ecosystem. It should be considered that developing on vacant and derelict sites could result in key species that have established their habitats on site could be disturbed by future development. | **-** | Any sites that come forward to be developed should be discussed with the Natural Heritage officer to ensure that there will be no adverse impacts to key species or important habitats.  Any sites that are developed should have a nature and biodiversity focus and include appropriate mitigate measures e.g. bat boxes etc. | + |
| **Landscape**  To protect, enhance and restore the special landscape qualities of the National Park | Vacant and derelict sites are generally considered to be a blight on the landscape and therefore the development of these sites will improve the visual amenity of the surrounding settlement and will have a positive impact on the landscape quality of the National Park. | **++** | As the effects of proposed project are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Air**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance air quality | N/A as not related to this objective. | **X** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Population and human health**  To protect and improve human health, well being, inclusion and sustainable communities | Vacant and derelict sites often result in negative health and wellbeing outcomes for those who live within the vicinity. By encouraging development on these sites the communities could be expanded and improved and the overall health and wellbeing of the residents of a settlement will be enhanced. | **++** | As the effects of proposed project are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Geology, minerals and soils**  To maintain and enhance soils and geodiversity assets. | It is unknown at this stage the impacts that the various projects will have on soil at different sites. | **?** | Ensure all site specific projects receive specialist advice to minimize the impact on the soil quality | **+** |
| **Water environment**  To protect and enhance the state of the water environment. | N/A as not related to this objective. | **X** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Climate**  To help mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to its short and long term impacts | N/A as not related to this objective. | **X** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Material assets**  To protect material assets and promote the sustainable use of natural resources | N/A as not related to this objective. | **X** | N/A as not related to this objective. | N/A as not related to this objective. |
| **Cultural heritage**  To protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment | There is the potential that some sites that have been left undeveloped are important historical sites and that doing the necessary ground work to begin building could disturb historically important assets. | **-** | Any development proposals that come forward should consider the potential for undiscovered historic artefacts on site. Historic mapping could be analysed to determine the likelihood of impacting areas of historical significance and an action plan should be developed to ensure their protection. | **0** |
| **Commentary** | Overall the development of vacant and derelict sites within this area of the National Park will have a positive impact on the environment and the overall landscape quality within this region. Vacant and derelict sites can have a negative impact on those who live in the vicinity if left undeveloped and therefore the most significant positive impact will be on those who live in the local communities. The development of vacant sites will support the local communities by improving the housing stock, improving the visual amenity of the area and encouraging rural regeneration. It should be noted that there is the potential for some negative impacts on biodiversity and cultural heritage but if thorough consultation is undertaken prior to developing the sites then this should not be a concern. Each site will be subject to planning controls and further, more detailed assessments of the above criteria will be undertaken at this stage for each specific site. Overall this proposed action will have a positive impact on the environment. | | | |

**11.6 Table 13 - Map 6 – Strategic Development and Infrastructure in the National Park***.*

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| **Assessor(s):** | **Laura Mowat** | | | |
| **Date of Assessment Completion:** | 24/11/23 | | | |
| **SECTION OF PLAN BEING ASSESSED:** | *Map 6 – Strategic Development and Infrastructure in the National Park*  ***Callander*** *– Southern expansion to meet strategic development needs of Callander and wider rural area.* | | | |
|  | **ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS** | | | |
| **SEA Objective:** | **Nature of Effect** | **Scoring: significance of effect before mitigation** | **Mitigation and enhancement** | **Scoring: residual significance of effect after mitigation** |
| **Biodiversity**  To protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and encourage habitat connectivity | There is a concern that the development of land to the south of Callander could have a negative impact on biodiversity. Previously undeveloped sites could be important aspects of the nature network and the National Park’s ecosystem. It should be considered that developing on these sites could result in key species, that have established their habitats on site, being disturbed. | **-** | Any sites that come forward to be developed should be discussed with the Natural Heritage officer to ensure that there will be no adverse impacts to key species or important habitats.  Any sites that are developed should have a nature and biodiversity focus and include appropriate mitigate measures e.g. bat boxes etc. | **+** |
| **Landscape**  To protect, enhance and restore the special landscape qualities of the National Park | Development proposals for this action have not been fully scoped out and therefore the landscape impact is difficult to determine. The building of homes on previously undeveloped land could result in a negative impact on the landscape quality of the National Park if the visual amenity of the site is not carefully considered. | **-** | Any forthcoming application for the development of Callander South will be subject to rigorous assessment of the landscape impact and therefore any negative impacts should be minimal after this process has taken place. | **+** |
| **Air**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance air quality | It is unknown at this stage the impacts that the various projects will have on air quality. | **?** | Ensure all projects receive specialist advice to minimize the impact on the air quality and ensure that there is not an overall negative impact. | + |
| **Population and human health**  To protect and improve human health, well being, inclusion and sustainable communities | The expansion of Callander will have a positive impact on human health and improve community wellbeing. Improving the infrastructure offer within this area will have a positive impact on those who live within Callander and those who live in the vicinity. It will also encourage more people to move into the area and improve the population diversity and encourage more sustainable communities. | ++ | As the effects of proposed project are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Geology, minerals and soils**  To maintain and enhance soils and geodiversity assets. | It is unknown at this stage the impacts that the various projects will have on soil at different sites. | **?** | Ensure all projects receive specialist advice to minimize the impact on the soils. | **0** |
| **Water environment**  To protect and enhance the state of the water environment. | It is unknown at this stage the impacts that the various projects will have on the water environment. | **?** | Ensure all projects receive specialist advice to minimize the impact on the water environment. | **+** |
| **Climate**  To help mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to its short and long term impacts | It is unknown at this stage the impacts that the various projects will have on the climate. | **?** | Ensure all projects receive specialist advice to minimize the impact on the climate. | **+** |
| **Material assets**  To protect material assets and promote the sustainable use of natural resources | N/A as not related to this objective. | **X** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Cultural heritage**  To protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment | N/A as not related to this objective. | **X** | N/A as no effects predicted | N/A as no effects predicted |
| **Commentary** | The detail of the proposals for the expansion of southern Callander are still largely to be defined and therefore the assessment has been carried out at a very high level. It is unknown at this stage what impacts development may have on the environment as the projects have not been finalised but some general assumptions can be made about the potential for negative biodiversity and landscape impacts. Mitigation measures have been suggested to ensure that the development of sites to the south of Callander result in positive impacts on these elements of the environment. The main positive impact that this proposal will have is for Population and Human Health. Investment in this area will result in improved communities with better access to facilities within their neighborhood. | | | |

**11.7 Table 14 - Map 6 – Strategic Development and Infrastructure in the National Park***.*

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| **Assessor(s):** | **Laura Mowat** | | | |
| **Date of Assessment Completion:** | 24/11/23 | | | |
| **SECTION OF PLAN BEING ASSESSED:** | *Map 6 – Strategic Development and Infrastructure in the National Park*  ***Balloch*** *– Investment that enhances Balloch as the main visitor and transport interchange hub for the National Park.* | | | |
|  | **ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS** | | | |
| **SEA Objective:** | **Nature of Effect** | **Scoring: significance of effect before mitigation** | **Mitigation and enhancement** | **Scoring: residual significance of effect after mitigation** |
| **Biodiversity**  To protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and encourage habitat connectivity | N/A as not related to this objective. | **X** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Landscape**  To protect, enhance and restore the special landscape qualities of the National Park | N/A as not related to this objective. | **X** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Air**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance air quality | By improving the visitor infrastructure there is a possibility that private car use increases which will adversely impact air quality within this specific location. By encouraging visitors to travel to this point and then take less polluting forms of transport for their onward journeys will decrease the levels of air pollution across the rest of the Park. | **-** | Ensure that public transport and active travel networks are well established and serve the main tourist destinations within the wider Park area. This should result in less private car usage and therefore and improvement in air quality across the National Park. | **+** |
| **Population and human health**  To protect and improve human health, well being, inclusion and sustainable communities | By improving services in Balloch, the health and wellbeing of the residents should improve. Defining Balloch as a transport interchange will bring more tourists through the town and therefore help improve the economy in the local area which will in turn benefit the local community too. | **++** | As the effects of proposed project are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Geology, minerals and soils**  To maintain and enhance soils and geodiversity assets. | N/A as not related to this objective. | **X** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Water environment**  To protect and enhance the state of the water environment. | N/A as not related to this objective. | **X** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Climate**  To help mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to its short and long term impacts | The reduction of private car usage across the national park will result in an overall decrease in carbon emissions and will therefore have a positive environmental impact.  It should be noted that while the overall car journeys across the Park may decrease if there are improved transport options from Balloch – there will still be a large number of visitors to Balloch in a private vehicle which could impact the carbon emissions in this area specifically. | **++** | As the effects of proposed project are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Material assets**  To protect material assets and promote the sustainable use of natural resources | N/A as not related to this objective. | **X** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Cultural heritage**  To protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment | N/A as not related to this objective. | **X** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Commentary** | One of the strategic development priorities highlighted within the National Park Partnership Plan is the development of Balloch into a transport interchange hub for the National Park. The details of this project are still high level but an assessment has been carried out on the broad impacts this could have for Balloch and for the National Park. Overall this project is considered to have a positive impact on the environment as the aim would be to reduce private car use and encourage onward travel from Balloch via public transport. This will have an overall positive impact on air quality across the Park and decrease carbon emissions provided that the public transport infrastructure is suitable to the needs of the visitors. This investment in Balloch could also have an overall positive impact for the residents and community of Balloch as the aim would be to bring more visitors to the area which would result in an increase in the level of tourist to the area – this could positively impact the local economy and provide jobs within the area. Overall the project is considered to have a positive environmental impact on the National Park. | | | |

**12**  **Alternative Options Considered**

**12.1 Peatland Target Alternative Options**

**TARGET: -** ***More than treble the average annual rate of peatland restoration from 240 ha to 840 ha, achieving at least 5,900 ha by 2030***

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| **Assessor(s):** | **Laura Mowat** | | | |
| **Date of Assessment Completion:** | **15/02/23** | | | |
| **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:** | **No spatial target is set for peatland restoration within the National Park.** | | | |
|  | **ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS** | | | |
| **SEA Objective:** | **Nature of Effect** | **Scoring: significance of effect before mitigation** | **Mitigation and enhancement** | **Scoring: residual significance of effect after mitigation** |
| **Biodiversity**  To protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and encourage habitat connectivity | No set target results in the cumulative environmental effects of peatland restoration being impossible to determine and therefore measuring impact (positive or negative) is also not possible. | **?** | Set targets and establish work programmes which make it possible to determine the environmental impacts of undertaking peatland restoration projects. | **+** |
| **Landscape**  To protect, enhance and restore the special landscape qualities of the National Park | No set target results in the cumulative environmental effects of peatland restoration being impossible to determine and therefore measuring impact (positive or negative) is also not possible. | **?** | Set targets and establish work programmes which make it possible to determine the environmental impacts of undertaking peatland restoration projects. | **+** |
| **Air**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance air quality | No set target results in the cumulative environmental effects of peatland restoration being impossible to determine and therefore measuring impact (positive or negative) is also not possible. | **?** | Set targets and establish work programmes which make it possible to determine the environmental impacts of undertaking peatland restoration projects. | **+** |
| **Population and human health**  To protect and improve human health, well being, inclusion and sustainable communities | No set target means it is not possible to identify impacts. | **?** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Geology, minerals and soils**  To maintain and enhance soils and geodiversity assets. | No set target results in the cumulative environmental effects of peatland restoration being impossible to determine and therefore measuring impact (positive or negative) is also not possible. | **?** | Set targets and establish work programmes which make it possible to determine the environmental impacts of undertaking peatland restoration projects. | **+** |
| **Water environment**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance the ecological status of water bodies | No set target results in the cumulative environmental effects of peatland restoration being impossible to determine and therefore measuring impact (positive or negative) is also not possible. | **?** | Set targets and establish work programmes which make it possible to determine the environmental impacts of undertaking peatland restoration projects. | **+** |
| **Climate**  To help mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to its short and long term impacts | No set target results in the cumulative environmental effects of peatland restoration being impossible to determine and therefore measuring impact (positive or negative) is also not possible. | **?** | Set targets and establish work programmes which make it possible to determine the environmental impacts of undertaking peatland restoration projects. | **+** |
| **Material assets**  To protect material assets and promote the sustainable use of natural resources | N/A as NPPP objective ? is not related to this objective. | **x** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Cultural heritage**  To protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment | N/A as NPPP not related to this objective. | **x** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |

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| **Assessor(s):** | **Laura Mowat** | | | |
| **Date of Assessment Completion:** | **15/02/23** | | | |
| **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:** | **The current 2018-2023 NPPP target is used for Peatland Restoration** | | | |
|  | **ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS** | | | |
| **SEA Objective:** | **Nature of Effect** | **Scoring: significance of effect before mitigation** | **Mitigation and enhancement** | **Scoring: residual significance of effect after mitigation** |
| **Biodiversity**  To protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and encourage habitat connectivity | The current target will provide some positive benefits for biodiversity whilst also balancing the need for other land uses however it is unlikely to deliver intended the intended scale of outputs by target dates identified. | **+** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Landscape**  To protect, enhance and restore the special landscape qualities of the National Park | The current target will provide some positive benefits for landscape by restoring degraded peatland however it is unlikely to deliver intended the intended scale of outputs by target dates identified. | **+** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Air**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance air quality | The current target ensures that there will be a significant improvement in air quality as a result of carbon sequestration from restored peatland however it is unlikely to deliver intended the intended scale of outputs by target dates identified. | **+** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Population and human health**  To protect and improve human health, well being, inclusion and sustainable communities | Positive impacts on Human health as peatland restoration will help mitigate climate change and support adaptation by holding back water and impacts of flooding. | **+** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Geology, minerals and soils**  To maintain and enhance soils and geodiversity assets. | The current target aims to have a significant positive impact however it is unlikely to deliver intended the intended scale of outputs by target dates identified. | **+** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Water environment**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance the ecological status of water bodies | The current target for peatland restoration within the NPA ensures benefits for water quality however it is unlikely to deliver intended the intended scale of outputs by target dates identified. | **+** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Climate**  To help mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to its short and long term impacts | The peatland restoration target will help mitigate the effects of climate change however it is unlikely to deliver intended the intended scale of outputs by target dates identified. | **+** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Material assets**  To protect material assets and promote the sustainable use of natural resources | The current target will support this objective however it is unlikely to deliver intended the intended scale of outputs by target dates identified. | **+** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Cultural heritage**  To protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment | There is a risk that increasing the number of peatland restoration projects could impact on the cultural and historic heritage by making heritage assets harder to access. | **-** | There needs to be consideration given to multiple land use options and ensuring that people have access to the historic environment. | **+** |

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| **Assessor(s):** | **Laura Mowat** | | | |
| **Date of Assessment Completion:** | **15/02/23** | | | |
| **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:** | **The NPPP increases the target for Peatland Restoration to that proposed within the Plan 2024-2029** | | | |
|  | **ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS** | | | |
| **SEA Objective:** | **Nature of Effect** | **Scoring: significance of effect before mitigation** | **Mitigation and enhancement** | **Scoring: residual significance of effect after mitigation** |
| **Biodiversity**  To protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and encourage habitat connectivity | Increased peatland restoration would result in an increase in threatened plants and animals that exist in peatland habitats. | **++** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Landscape**  To protect, enhance and restore the special landscape qualities of the National Park | A higher target would result in more areas of degraded peatland being restored contributing to protecting, enhancing and restoring upland landscapes, | **++** | There needs to be a holistic approach taken to land-use and landscape across the National Park. | **+** |
| **Air**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance air quality | Increasing the Peatland restoration target would result in an improvement in air quality. | **++** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Population and human health**  To protect and improve human health, well being, inclusion and sustainable communities | Positive impacts on Human health as peatland restoration will help mitigate climate change and support adaptation by holding back water and impacts of flooding. | **++** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Geology, minerals and soils**  To maintain and enhance soils and geodiversity assets. | Increasing the target for peatland restoration would improve soil quality and geodiversity. | **++** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Water environment**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance the ecological status of water bodies | Increasing the target for peatland restoration would improve the water environment. | **++** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Climate**  To help mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to its short and long term impacts | Increasing the target for peatland restoration would result in higher levels of carbon sequestration and therefore positive benefits for the environment. | **++** | As the effects of peatland restoration are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Material assets**  To protect material assets and promote the sustainable use of natural resources | The current target will support this objective however it is unlikely to deliver intended the intended scale of outputs by target dates identified. | **+** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Cultural heritage**  To protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment | There is a risk that increasing the number of peatland restoration projects could impact on the cultural and historic heritage by making heritage assets harder to access. | - | There needs to be consideration given to multiple land use options and ensuring that people have access to the historic environment. | **+** |

**Conclusion:**

The increased target for peatland restoration within the draft NPPP is considered to be at the right level in order to support increased peatland restoration at scale and pace. If the target was too low, as in the first assessment table, then the carbon released by exposed peatlands would have an overall detrimental impact on the environment. It is important that there is a focus on other elements of the ecosystem/nature network too. A holistic approach needs to be taken allowing consideration of other nature restoration work/land-use.

**12.2 Woodland Creation Target Alternative Options**

**TARGET: - *Double the average annual rate of woodland expansion from 200ha year to 400ha, focusing on priority areas.***

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| **Assessor(s):** | **Laura Mowat** | | | |
| **Date of Assessment Completion:** | **15/02/23** | | | |
| **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:** | **No spatial target is set for woodland creation within the National Park.** | | | |
|  | **ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS** | | | |
| **SEA Objective:** | **Nature of Effect** | **Scoring: significance of effect before mitigation** | **Mitigation and enhancement** | **Scoring: residual significance of effect after mitigation** |
| **Biodiversity**  To protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and encourage habitat connectivity | Without a target for woodland creation it is difficult to assess the effect on the environment. While there are locations specific within the Trees and Woodlands Strategy, without a numerical target it is not possible to estimate the impact of any project on biodiversity. | **?** | Set targets and establish work programmes which make it possible to determine the environmental impacts of undertaking woodland creation projects. | **+** |
| **Landscape**  To protect, enhance and restore the special landscape qualities of the National Park | Without a target for woodland creation it is difficult to assess the effect on the environment. While there are locations specific within the Trees and Woodlands Strategy, without a numerical target it is not possible to estimate the impact of any project on landscape quality. | **?** | Set targets and establish work programmes which make it possible to determine the environmental impacts of undertaking woodland creation projects. | **+** |
| **Air**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance air quality | Without a target for woodland creation it is difficult to assess the effect on the environment. While there are locations specific within the Trees and Woodlands Strategy, without a numerical target it is not possible to estimate the impact of any project on air quality. | **?** | Set targets and establish work programmes which make it possible to determine the environmental impacts of undertaking woodland creation projects. | **+** |
| **Population and human health**  To protect and improve human health, well being, inclusion and sustainable communities | N/A as NPPP not related to this objective. | **x** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Geology, minerals and soils**  To maintain and enhance soils and geodiversity assets. | Without a target for woodland creation it is difficult to assess the effect on the environment. While there are locations specific within the Trees and Woodlands Strategy, without a numerical target it is not possible to estimate the impact of any project on soil quality. | **?** | Set targets and establish work programmes which make it possible to determine the environmental impacts of undertaking woodland creation projects. | **+** |
| **Water environment**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance the ecological status of water bodies | Without a target for woodland creation it is difficult to assess the effect on the environment. While there are locations specific within the Trees and Woodlands Strategy, without a numerical target it is not possible to estimate the impact of any project on water qualtiy. | **?** | Set targets and establish work programmes which make it possible to determine the environmental impacts of undertaking woodland creation projects. | **+** |
| **Climate**  To help mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to its short and long term impacts | Without a target for woodland creation it is difficult to assess the effect on the environment. While there are locations specified within the Trees and Woodlands Strategy, without a numerical target it is not possible to estimate the impact of any project on the climate. | **?** | Set targets and establish work programmes which make it possible to determine the environmental impacts of undertaking woodland creation projects. | **+** |
| **Material assets**  To protect material assets and promote the sustainable use of natural resources | N/A as not related to this objective. | **x** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Cultural heritage**  To protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment | Without a target for woodland creation it is difficult to assess the effect on the environment. While there are locations specific within the Trees and Woodlands Strategy, without a numerical target it is not possible to estimate the impact of any project on cultural heritage. | ? | Set targets and establish work programmes which make it possible to determine the environmental impacts of undertaking woodland creation projects. | + |

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| **Assessor(s):** | **Laura Mowat** | | | |
| **Date of Assessment Completion:** | **15/02/23** | | | |
| **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:** | **The current 2018-23 NPPP target is used for woodland creation** | | | |
|  | **ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS** | | | |
| **SEA Objective:** | **Nature of Effect** | **Scoring: significance of effect before mitigation** | **Mitigation and enhancement** | **Scoring: residual significance of effect after mitigation** |
| **Biodiversity**  To protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and encourage habitat connectivity | The current target for woodland creation is not delivering the extent of woodland creation required to meet identified targets in the NPPP | **+** | As the effects of woodland creation are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Landscape**  To protect, enhance and restore the special landscape qualities of the National Park | Woodland creation will result in landscape change but will deliver overall positive effects for climate and nature however can potentially result in landscape change. | **?** | All tree planting would be subject to EIA and consideration should be given as to the appropriate landscapes for undertaking woodland creation projects. | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Air**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance air quality | Likely result in significant benefits for air quality as trees sequester carbon from the atmosphere however these are not being achieved to the extend envisaged. | **+** | As the effects of woodland creation are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Population and human health**  To protect and improve human health, well being, inclusion and sustainable communities | N/A as NPPP not related to this objective. | **x** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Geology, minerals and soils**  To maintain and enhance soils and geodiversity assets. | The current targets would likely have a positive impact on soil quality. | **+** | As the effects of woodland creation are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Water environment**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance the ecological status of water bodies | The target for woodland creation set out within the current NPPP will result in improved water quality. | **+** | As the effects of woodland creation are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Climate**  To help mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to its short and long term impacts | There will be benefits to the climate if the target set out in the current NPPP is achieved. | **+** | As the effects of woodland creation are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Material assets**  To protect material assets and promote the sustainable use of natural resources | N/A as NPPP not related to this objective. | **x** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Cultural heritage**  To protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment | There is a risk that increasing the number of woodland creation projects could impact on the cultural and historic heritage by making heritage assets harder to access. | **-** | There needs to be consideration given to multiple land use options and ensuring that people have access to the historic environment. | **+** |

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| **Assessor(s):** | **Laura Mowat** | | | |
| **Date of Assessment Completion:** | **15/02/23** | | | |
| **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:** | **The NPPP (2024-2029) increases the target for woodland creation.** | | | |
|  | **ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS** | | | |
| **SEA Objective:** | **Nature of Effect** | **Scoring: significance of effect before mitigation** | **Mitigation and enhancement** | **Scoring: residual significance of effect after mitigation** |
| **Biodiversity**  To protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and encourage habitat connectivity | An increase in woodland creation will overall improve this habitats health and resilience. There is a risk that this could impact on current land use and management and species. | **++** | Ensure there is a holistic approach to nature restoration and that other habitats and species are considered. | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Landscape**  To protect, enhance and restore the special landscape qualities of the National Park | Increasing the number of trees planted within the NPA will result in landscape change. | **?** | There needs to be a holistic approach taken to land-use and landscape across the National Park. | **+** |
| **Air**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance air quality | Air quality is likely to benefit significantly from an increased number of woodland creation projects. | **++** | As the effects of woodland creation are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Population and human health**  To protect and improve human health, well being, inclusion and sustainable communities | N/A as NPPP objective ? is not related to this objective. | **x** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Geology, minerals and soils**  To maintain and enhance soils and geodiversity assets. | Increasing the number of trees across the park is likely to improve the soil quality overall. | **+** | As the effects of woodland creation are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Water environment**  To prevent deterioration and, where possible, enhance the ecological status of water bodies | Increased tree planting is likely to improve the water environment. | **+** | As the effects of woodland creation are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Climate**  To help mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to its short and long term impacts | Increasing the target for woodland creation would result in higher levels of carbon sequestration and therefore positive benefits for the environment. | **++** | As the effects of woodland creation are positive, there is no need for mitigation or further enhancements. The scoring therefore remains the same | n/a as the scoring remains the same. |
| **Material assets**  To protect material assets and promote the sustainable use of natural resources | N/A as NPPP objective ? is not related to this objective. | **x** | N/A as no effects predicted. | N/A as no effects predicted. |
| **Cultural heritage**  To protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment | There is a risk that increasing the number of woodland creation projects could impact on the cultural and historic heritage by making heritage assets harder to access. | - | There needs to be consideration given to multiple land use options and ensuring that people have access to the historic environment. | **+** |

**Conclusion:**

The proposed Draft NPPP target is ambitious and will result in significant environmental benefits whilst still allowing other nature restoration work to take place to meet identified targets necessary to prevent the decline and then restore nature. It is necessary to ensure that a holistic approach is taken to nature restoration works as a there are multiple elements that make up a thriving eco-system.

**13 Summary of Responses to the SEA scoping report**

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| --- | --- |
| **Scoping Response Comment** | **Suggested Response/Action** |
| **Comments from NatureScot** | |
| Within Table 2 – Scoped Issues, Trends and Information Sources to be included in the SEA – designated / protected sites are noted specifically within the ‘Biodiversity’ and ‘Forests and Woodlands’ sections. There are three riverine Special Areas of Conservation within the NP (the Endrick Water, Tay and Teith SAC’s) which are an important factor in the ‘current state’ baseline, and trends in their status should be noted. We suggest that specific note of these sites might be a relevant addition to the ‘Water Environment’ section. | Agreed, to be amended and included in final report. |
| We agree with the intention set out in Table 3 – Issues scoped in/out – that all environmental parameters have been scoped in. | Noted. |
| We are pleased to note that a Habitats Regulations Appraisal will be undertaken for the Partnership Plan. Advice and guidance on this process is available here: Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans: Guidance for Plan-making Bodies in Scotland. | Noted. NatureScot will be consulted separately on the Habitats Regulations Appraisal of the Plan. |
| Paragraph 4.1(a) states that Table 1 summarises the environmental baseline for the assessment and key information sources, however this information is provided in Table 2, Table 1 is the SEA Timeline | This will be amended and updated in the final Environment Report document. |
| We note that throughout the Scoping report we are referred to as SNH. As our operating name is now NatureScot, for the avoidance of confusion would it be possible for you to update this please. | Noted. All references to SNH will be amended to NatureScot in the Environment Report. |
| **Comments from Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)** | |
| **PPS**  The PPS listed in Appendix A provides a good start at providing a background framework to the development of the plan. For information we have recently published updated Flood Risk Management Plans and River Basin Management Plans. The table also appears to omit the air quality strategy Cleaner Air for Scotland which may be relevant. | Noted, table to be updated for final Plan. |
| **PPS**  Some of the PPS included have been subject to SEA. Where this is the case you may find it useful to prepare a summary of the key SEA findings relevant to the plan. This may assist you with data sources and environmental baseline information and also ensure the SEA picks up issues or mitigation actions which may have been identified elsewhere. | Noted, to consider for final Plan. |
| **Baseline Information and Environmental Problems**  We hold significant amounts of environmental data which may be of interest to you in preparing the environmental baseline, identifying environmental problems, and summarising the likely changes to the environment in the absence of the PPS, all of which are required for the assessment. Much of this readily available on our website. Additional information may also be available from our Access to Information unit (foi@sepa.org.uk). | The information and data on the SEPA website has provided the National Park with useful information to assist with the preparation of the environmental baseline. |
| **Baseline Information and Environmental Problems**  Table 2 includes a good summary of baseline information sources on the aspects of the environmental issues which fall within our remit. We also consider the environmental problems described generally highlight the main issues of relevance for the SEA topics within our remit. We recommend you make reference to our SEA topic guidance notes for air, soil, water, material assets and human health which may point to additional information sources relevant to the plan. As noted above more recent versions of the RBMP and FRMPs have been published than those referenced in the table. | Noted, this is to be updated alongside the final Plan. |
| **Baseline Information and Environmental Problems**  We note that ‘Material Assets’ is missing from Table 2 and as this is to be assessed within the SEA, we recommend appropriate baseline information is gathered in advance of the assessment being completed. Our topic guidance on material assets may assist this. | Noted – this topic has been added. |
| **Scoping of Environmental Topics**  We agree that all environmental topics should be scoped into the assessment. | Noted |
| **Methodology for Assessing Environmental Effects**  We are satisfied with the proposed assessment methodology. We expect all aspects of the PPS which could have significant effects to be assessed. Where it is expected that other PPS are better placed to undertake more detailed assessment of environmental effects this should be clearly set out in the ER. | Noted – this has been set out within the policy, measure, aims, objectives and actions screening tables. Much of the content within the NPPP is considered to be too high-level to conduct meaningful assessment and therefore more detailed assessments will take place through the production of other plans. |
| **SEA Objectives**  We support the use of SEA objectives as assessment tools as they allow a systematic, rigorous, and consistent framework with which to assess environmental effects. | Noted – this approach has been taken forward into the Environmental Report |
| **SEA Objectives**  We are generally content with the proposed SEA objectives to be used in the assessment. However, we recommend the Water Environment objective is revised ‘*To protect and enhance the state of the water environment*’ as opposed to just focusing on the ecological status of water bodies. There are suggested sub-objectives and assessment questions in our water topic guidance. | This has been updated within the Plan and the objectives in the assessment tables. |
| **Alternatives**  We note alternatives are still being considered. Any reasonable alternatives identified during the preparation of the plan should be assessed as part of the SEA process and the findings of the assessment should inform the choice of the preferred option. This should be documented in the ER. | The alternative approaches to the development of the NPPP are set out in section 1.8. The alternative approaches to the specific targets set in the NPPP are set explored. |
| **Assessment Matrices**  We are content with the proposed detailed assessment matrix and welcome the inclusion of a commentary section to explain the rationale behind the assessment results. It is helpful if the assessment matrix also directly links the assessment result with proposed mitigation measures. | Noted – all assessment matrices have taken forward this approach |
| **Assessment Matrices**  When it comes to setting out the results of the assessment, please provide enough information to clearly justify the reasons for each of the assessments presented. It would also be helpful to set out assumptions that are made during the assessment and difficulties and limitations encountered. | Each of the assessment tables details the reasons behind the scoring decision and summarising commentary is provided at the bottom of each table to ensure the assessors understand the thinking behind each assessment. |
| **Mitigation and Enhancement**  One of the most important ways to mitigate significant environmental effects identified through the assessment is to make changes to the plan itself so that significant effects are avoided. The ER should identify any changes made to the strategy because of the SEA | No significant changes identified during the ing and assessment process. |
| **Mitigation and Enhancement**  We would encourage you to use the assessment as a way to improve the environmental performance of individual aspects of the final option; hence we support proposals for enhancement of positive effects as well as mitigation of negative effects. | The assessment tables have informed the Place Programme project development to ensure that environmental factors are taken into consideration in all aspects of the projects. |
| **Mitigation and Enhancement**  Where the mitigation does not relate to modification to the plan then it would be extremely helpful to set out the proposed mitigation measures in a way that clearly identifies: (1) the measures required, (2) when they would be required and (3) who will be required to implement them. | Noted and actioned. |
| **Monitoring**  We welcome the early consideration given to the proposed approach to monitor environmental effects. It would be helpful if the ER included a description of the measures envisaged to monitor the significant environmental effects of the plan | Noted and intended for the Final Plan and SEA report. |
| **Outcome of the Scoping Exercise**  We would find it helpful if the ER included a summary of the scoping outcomes and how comments from the Consultation Authorities were taken into account. | This table has been included within the Environment Report to highlight the outcomes of the scoping report and demonstrate how they have been considered as part of the development of the final report. |
| **Comments from Historic Environment Scotland (HES)** | |
| **Table 2: Scoped issues, trends and information sources to be included in National Park Partnership Plan SEA**  We recommend that you also consider adding the effects of climate change adaptation and mitigation on the historic environment; high quality development in historic places; and the need for a holistic approach to the environment which encompasses both natural and historic aspects to the key trends influencing the NPPP. | These issues have been added to the list of sub-objectives/questions for the assessment. |
| **Table 4: Proposed SEA Objectives and Assessment Questions**  SEA objectives and assessments questions can add most value when they reflect both the baseline (including key trends, pressures and opportunities), relevant PPS and the nature of the plan being assessed. Additionally, whilst we agree that it’s important to assess the likely effects on individual designated (and non-designated) assets, it’s also important to consider the historic environment at a scale of places and spaces. | The historic environment has been a key consideration throughout the assessment of the Plan. |
| **Identify and assess alternative options**  Your methodology suggests that preferred options will propose undergo more detailed assessment and evaluation in the Environmental Report than alternative options. You should note that para 3.23 of the [Scottish Government’s SEA Guidance](https://www.gov.scot/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-guidance/pages/3/) states that any reasonable alternatives covered within an assessment should be considered to the same level of detail as the preferred option. | The alternative approaches to the development of the NPPP are set out in section 1.8. The alternative approaches to the specific targets set in the NPPP are also considered. |
| **Relevant Legislation Plans Policies and Programmes and Related Environmental Objectives**  For information, the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) was superseded in 2019 by the [Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS)](https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/historic-environment-policy-for-scotland-heps/), which should be referenced here as the relevant document. | Noted. The relevant table in the Environment Report (Table ? Plans, Programmes and Strategies) has been updated accordingly. |