

# 2025-26 Annual Operational Plan Progress to May (initial update)

## Agenda Item 10

### National Park Authority Board Meeting

Monday 09 June

Paper for information

#### Annual Operational Plan 2025/26: Progress to May (initial update)

Rating Key:

Complete	On Track	Behind Schedule	At Risk	Postponed to 2026/27	Cancelled
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Reference and Corporate Plan Theme	AOP Deliverable	Initial Progress Update (May)	Rating
R/A/01 Approach	Continue implementation of long-term invasive, non-native species (INNS) delivery plan, controlling riparian INNS through National Park Authority staff and partnership with the Rivers and Fisheries Trusts and mink control with Forestry and Land Scotland.	Work underway on contribution agreements with the three rivers and fisheries trusts. These will enable them to start on this year's programme of riparian INNS control.	On Track
R/A/02 Approach	Develop delivery plans for the designated sites which include targeted projects, including Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve, Inchmoan and Blairbeich Bog and Inchcailloch management plans.	Actions for further delivery (as opposed to formal delivery plans) are in the early stages of development, including work with external partners and at specific sites.	On Track
R/A/03 Approach	Progress our flagship landscape scale projects, including supporting delivery of Wild Strathfillan programme through match funding and staff support.	Ongoing positive progress but remaining challenges to get projects over the line in timescale.	On Track

R/A/04 Approach	Develop the Landscape Connections National Lottery Heritage Fund opportunity, including development of rhododendron programme through Estee Lauder funding.	Bid progressing well and on track to submit in August.	<b>On Track</b>
R/A/05 Approach	Develop the Resilient Farming Network, fulfilling our commitment to whole farm reviews and establishment of networks.	Capacity challenges mean decision is to be made on future resourcing.	<b>Behind Schedule</b>
R/A/06 Approach	Continue the delivery of the Peatland Action programme, targeting 11 projects which restore 865 ha. of blanket bog.	Project development and procurement for 25/6 is underway. A review of programme outputs and costs is underway in relation to previous out-turn, in discussion with SG Peatland Restoration Delivery team, to improve forecasting.	<b>On Track</b>
R/A/07 Approach	Progress actions identified in the Herbivore Delivery Plan with support from the steering group.	Project scoping for incentive scheme, training project and venison infrastructure commission. Action Plan to be finalised and decision taken on role and remit of steering group.	<b>On Track</b>
R/A/08 Approach	Deliver year 1 of Woodland Delivery Plan including forestry case work, liaison with Forestry and Land Scotland, Scottish Forestry and other partners with the shared aim of approval for 400ha. of new woodland creation.	Working with partners to explore new woodland creation – woodland delivery plan actions progressing. Resource challenges require review.	<b>Behind schedule</b>
C/A/01 Approach	Continue work to maintain and improve the Core Paths Network within the National Park, including priority sections at Gartocharn, Loch Earn and the West Highland Way.	Site visits underway or scheduled to inform specifications for works at Gartocharn, Loch Earn and West Highland Way. Resolution of snagging issues at Conic Hill - schedule agreed with contractor over 1 year retention period. Planning applications submitted for NCN 7 barrier reduction works.	<b>On Track</b>
C/A/02 Approach	Develop and deliver the National Park Mobility Partnership arrangements around targeted shared resources and create a funding pipeline and Route Map for a programme of works/pilots which enhance	The NP Mobility Partnership continues to develop through ongoing Leadership Group meetings and working groups being	<b>On Track</b>

	sustainable transport in the National Park and deliver at least one pilot project in 2025/26.	<p>established to explore sharing resources and efficiencies across partners.</p> <p>A key output for the programme this year will be a Mobility Route Map which is under development.</p> <p>A Car Park Study is progressing, consolidating data and economics of future car park operations across partners along the East Loch Lomond corridor (Drymen to Rowardennan). Once complete and funding is secured, the next steps are to explore transport services along the corridor.</p> <p>The programme is developing a funding proposal through the wider NP Future Nature Heritage Lottery bid and looking at appropriate funding calls through EU Horizon.</p> <p>Work is progressing to launch a second year of the Trossachs Explorer Shuttle Bus Pilot in July.</p>	
C/A/03 Approach	Grow our engagement programmes so that more and diverse audiences can learn, connect and act for nature and climate.	All our core engagement programmes are underway, including the Volunteer Ranger summer season. Bespoke inclusion camping project delivered with LGBT Youth Group at Loch Achray. Resources to support engagement in development alongside the wider comms Nature campaign in development.	<b>On Track</b>
C/A/04 Approach	Begin a review of the Camping Management Byelaws and undertake stakeholder engagement in preparation for the statutory consultation in 2026/27.	Internal Scoping meetings ongoing. Additional resources secured (Visitor Services Advisor	<b>Behind Schedule</b>

		24-month secondment). Confirmation of completion date as 1st March 2027.	
C/A/05 Approach	Prepare and implement the operational management and reporting on the Joint Response Visitor Management Plan – Including Visitor Management Groups.	JRVMP prepared and shared with partners and communities. 5 VMG and JNPVMG meetings held pre-season.	<b>On Track</b>
C/A/06 Approach	Review the effectiveness of the first operational season of the new Loch Lomond byelaws and make adjustments as required.	Monitoring framework, methodology prepared, data sets gathered and prepared.	<b>Behind Schedule</b>
C/A/07 Approach	Design, progress and deliver high quality visitor recreation sites and facilities as Part of the Place Programme across publicly managed sites at West Loch Lomond (Tarbet Phase 2), Falls of Falloch, East Loch Lomond (Rowardennan) and Balloch Pierhead.	<p>Work is progressing across Tarbet Phase 2, Falls of Falloch, and Rowardennan, with a short delay that we are seeking to recover</p> <p>The Rowardennan planning application is currently in the determination period, and subject to conditions being met, has been awarded £400K RTIF grant funding.</p> <p>The Balloch Pierhead Improvement Action Plan is included in the June Board Place Programme Paper.</p>	<b>Behind Schedule</b>
C/A/08 Approach	Develop and coordinate a pipeline of transformational projects for future delivery through Place Programme partnership working to facilitate higher quality assets across publicly managed sites in the National Park.	<p>Owing to lack of staff resource Argyll &amp; Bute Council are unable to progress with their RTIF bid for Glen Loin facility in Arrochar.</p> <p>All other partner work is progressing well and of note is Callander's Community led Green Adventure Gateway project. RTIF Design Grant funding, with Stirling Council as RTIF lead, is being further developed.</p> <p>A new small Place Programme Fund specifically directed at partner route map priority project development is being set up.</p>	<b>Behind Schedule</b>

C/A/09 Approach	Support the effective establishment of the West Highland Way Trust in taking on its responsibilities as an operational Trust and continue to enhance the sustainability of the long-distance route.	Establishment of trust is expected 1 July 25 – finance and asset transfer agreements are being progressed	<b>On Track</b>
C/A/10 Approach	Support businesses in the National Park on the transition to a green economy and work with the National Park Destination Group on delivery of its annual plan, including the group's engagement with, and facilitating the best outcome for the National Park of, the introduction of any new Visitor Levy by local authorities in the area.	Delivery of DG annual plan is on track, including subgroup meeting with Stirling Council re: visitor levy. DG Group Meeting took place 15/05/25, next one due September. Climate and Nature subgroup of DG continue to look at Green Economy – haven't met in a while – plan to restart engagement in Q3 after a busy summer season	<b>On Track</b>
G/A/01 Approach	Prepare and engage on the Evidence Report for our next Local Development Plan, then submit to Scottish Government.	Consultation Draft Topic Papers are now on the website and will be consulted on for an 8-week period, closing Thursday 10th July 2025. These technical reports, designed to set out the baseline information that is reviewed by Scottish Government, are supplemented with map-based summaries for different areas of the National Park.  Workshops will be held in each of the six areas to help explain the Local Development Plan process and show the key points we have identified. The first workshops took place in West Loch Lomond and in Cowal w/c 19 <sup>th</sup> May.	<b>On Track</b>
G/A/02 Approach	Begin the preparation of a draft Local Development Plan that delivers against National Park Partnership Plan outcomes and incorporates spatial land use planning including Nature Networks.	Scheduled for Q2. Work focus remains on the Evidence Report stage. Spatial land use planning including Nature Networks is covered in the contributing Topic Papers.	<b>On Track</b>

G/A/03 Approach	Design an inclusive and engaging campaign to encourage people and organisations to get involved at key stages in preparation of the next Local Development Plan for the National Park.	The first stage of the campaign focused around the Evidence Report launched online on 15 May 2025.	<b>On Track</b>
G/A/04 Approach	Support communities across the National Park who have not yet produced a Local Place Plan to do so – including Croftamie, East Loch Lomond, Trossachs, Port of Menteith, Ardentinny and Balloch & Haldane.	Trossachs LPP completed their consultation period and finalised their LPP which has now been validated, Port of Menteith LPP consultation period concluded end March, and is in the process of being validated, Croftamie LPP is in the early drafting stages, a little behind their timetable and will require funding to contract support to review final version of LPP. Ardentinny are similarly beginning to compile their LPP having completed their initial engagement phases. Preparatory work to enable 2025-26 contribution agreements carried out with agreements required for: Balloch & Haldane, Croftamie, East Loch Lomond, Ardentinny.	<b>On track</b>
G/A/05 Approach	Scope out options for delivery support of community-led projects and programme activity - including Community Climate Action Hubs - in collaboration with partners and the Local Place Plan Advisory Group.	A framework was developed to map all the actions listed in every registered LPP to date and support resources available to NP communities. An assessment process has been drafted to prioritise which projects can be supported by NPA staff to deliver the greatest impact on NPPP priorities, which will be followed by the development of a support Action Plan in collaboration with communities and partners. Continued support to the climate action hubs ensured consistent support is developed across all NP communities.	<b>On track</b>

D/A/01 Approach	Redesign key internal governance processes to streamline and increase organisational transparency and efficiency including procurement, contract management and contribution legal agreements.	<p><b>Procurement and contract management</b> Work is ongoing to deliver the new procurement strategy, policy and guides by end of June.</p> <p><b>Contribution legal agreements</b> Funding Out guidance and templates complete and in use. Regular reviews taking place. Key staff have been trained.</p>	On Track
D/A/02 Approach	Develop the long-term delivery plan for our Estates Strategy, including the finalisation and implementation of site management plans and Fleet Strategy and driving efficiencies using Asset Management Solution.	<p><b>Fleet Management Strategy</b> The Fleet Management Strategy has been approved.</p> <p><b>Site Management</b> Templates for the Site Management Plan have been developed, and a comprehensive review of land-based Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) has been completed.</p> <p><b>Asset Management</b> The new Asset Management Solution officially went live on 1st April. In the interim period between decommissioning the previous system and launching the new platform, approximately 350 planned and reactive maintenance tasks were successfully completed. A self-reporting portal has been introduced for the Ranger Service, eliminating the need for email-based work order submissions to the Estates Team. The portal also enables real-time status updates on reported tasks.</p>	On Track

D/A/03 Approach	Develop an external funding strategy, delivery plan and appropriate governance structure.	Due to capacity challenges this is scheduled for Q3/Q4	<b>Behind Schedule</b>
D/A/04 Approach	Finalise the development of and commence the second phase of our 10-year Mission Zero programme to achieve a net zero organisation by 2030.	<p>Site audits and options appraisal covering all Mission Zero sites underway and due to complete in Q2.</p> <p>Detailed invitation to tender (ITT) being developed by a cross-organisational team for the procurement of a design team for Phase 2.</p> <p>Monitoring kit installation at DMMS &amp; BVC is being progressed.</p> <p>Completion of EV charger works carried over from 24/25 (subject to landowner agreement &amp; utility company input).</p>	<b>On Track</b>
D/A/05 Approach	Complete the National Park Authority's Climate Adaptation Plan.	Scheduled to commence in Q2.	<b>On Track</b>
D/A/06 Approach	Begin the development of a draft Net Zero National Park Route Map outlining the approach to achieving a net zero national park, in collaboration with the 15 UK National Parks.	<p>Outline Route Map drafted. Joint work sessions held with UKNPs on collective approach to NZNP Route Maps. Joint template and timeline nearing completion.</p> <p>Awaiting feedback on our 2024 carbon disclosure (delayed). Commenced work on our 2025 disclosure.</p> <p>Response submitted to the consultation on the new draft statutory guidance for the public body climate change duties.</p>	<b>On Track</b>



D/A/07 Approach	Deliver a cross-organisation programme of activity to encourage the use, learning and promotion of Deliver a cross-organisation programme of activity to encourage the use, learning and promotion of Gaelic in line with the commitments of the 3rd edition of our Gaelic Language Plan.	Our third edition of our Gaelic Language Plan was approved by Bòrd na Gàidhlig in March 2025. The programme of commitments within in will begin being actioned in Q2 2025/26.	<b>On Track</b>
D/A/08 Approach	Design and deliver a series of campaigns to raise awareness, influence decision making and drive action on key outcomes set out in the National Park Partnership Plan and Corporate Plan.	Nature Connections and Loch Lomond Byelaws campaigns have been developed for the season.	<b>On Track</b>
D/P/01 People	Refresh our people strategy, including the completion of an organisational skills audit.	Draft of People Strategy to be completed and shared with Exec in Q2.  Skills Matrix to be drafted and roll-out planning work underway.	<b>On Track</b>
D/P/02 People	Deliver the first-year actions of our Equalities Outcomes for 2025-29.	Report published and website updated. Foundational actions setting up PM reporting processes for this year (and full reporting period) established. Park for All group increasing meeting frequency to 6-weekly to support delivery. Updated EqIA template and resources now available, training drafted.	<b>On Track</b>
D/S/01 Systems	Design, test and launch an accessible Beta version of the new website for the National Park Authority based on insights gained through audience research.	Digital agency appointed, internal project team agreed and onboarding sessions take place in May 2025. Project approach and timeline aligned with requirements set out in project brief.	<b>On Track</b>
D/S/02 Systems	Design and test an internal system for tracking performance and delivery against NPPP and Corporate Plan priorities to aid decision-making on resource allocation and prioritisation of activity.	Q1 Portfolio reporting meetings established for May 2025 and template reporting document created. AOP and budget reporting integrated.	<b>On Track</b>
D/S/03 Systems	Automate key financial operational and reporting processes (purchase orders, management accounts, Scottish Government reporting, Statutory Accounts and	Scoping exercise undergoing for management accounts. Purchase order automation project	<b>On Track</b>

	Fixed Asset reporting) to create efficiencies and increase resilience.	scheduled to commence after year end completes in June/July.	
D/S/04 Systems	Continue essential migration of services to increase resilience and efficiency, including the Scottish Wide Area Network service, IDOX e-planning service and Disaster Recovery (DR) Service.	Initial planning for Idox migration began in mid-May.  Initial planning meeting for SWAN2 complete and DR changes meeting to happen once Idox migration timeline is identified.	On Track
D/S/05 Systems	Implement actions from Digital strategy, including consideration of the use of technology to support visitor management across the National Park as a place.	Final Digital Strategy Output agreed with Agilysis.	On Track
B/A/01 Approach	Undertake Statutory Access Authority work and take actions to maintain the path network as required—including facilitating the Local Access Forum (LLTAF), upholding Access Rights, and delivering our Core Paths Plan.	Action scheduled to resolve long-standing core path obstruction at Gartmore. Ongoing action on other casework, including at Glen Buchie and Loch Lubnaig.  New behaviour-management signage installed at Conic Hill (stay on the path, dog control, litter, etc).  LLTAF meetings/site visit scheduled. Action underway to improve LLTAF d profile and perception of independence.	
B/A/02 Approach	Operate an effective Development Management service which, as a key part of delivering our statutory planning function, influences development proposals to deliver our vision for the National Park. We aspire to ongoing service improvements in line with the National Planning Improvement Framework.	With regard to the delivery of ongoing Service Improvements, the recent preparation of our annual Improvement Report (NPIF) delivers in terms of Section 5 (Cross cutting and Enabling functions) of the AOP. We aspire to ongoing service improvements in line with the National Planning Improvement Framework’.	

		<p>Having an Improvement Action Plan for the service - looking up to 3 years ahead and reviewed annually - aligns with the NPPP and our Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan considers the environment in which the Park Authority is operating and how we can work efficiently and collaboratively to offer value for money.</p> <p>In terms of the NPPP, the Action Plan aligns most directly with Outcome 3.3 - keeping our service up to date to 'deliver a responsive approach to new development' – ensuring our Planning service, as a key cross cutting and enabling function, is fit to respond across all relevant objectives.</p>
B/A/03 Approach	Effectively manage the National Park Authority's role in influencing and advising other statutory public bodies developing relevant infrastructure projects while delivering biodiversity enhancement, landscape and recreation benefits.	<p>A83 Rest and Be Thankful – environmental steering group continues to meet, progressing through statutory process.</p> <p>Windfarm casework ongoing.</p>