

# Annual Report on Best Value 2024/25

## Agenda Item 11

### National Park Authority Audit and Risk Committee

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025

Paper for approval

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#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. To present the Annual Report on Best Value for 2024/25

#### 2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1. Members are asked to review and approve this report which demonstrates compliance with the Best Value Guidance for Accountable Officers.

#### 3. Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan and/or Our Corporate Plan

- 3.1. Best Value is an enabler to achieving the delivery of Our Corporate Plan by ensuring that we maximise the value we achieve from our resources.

#### 4. Introduction

- 4.1. Under our Best Value policy (**see Appendix 1**), it is the role of the Audit & Risk Committee to review and approve the Annual Report on Best Value to ensure compliance and report as needed to the Board.

## 5. Annual Report on Best Value 2024/25

- 5.1. The main monitoring tool for continuous improvement is the reporting against Annual Operational Plan presented to the Board on a quarterly basis. The final progress report for 2024/25 will be discussed at the June 2025 Board meeting.
- 5.2. The majority of the deliverables within the Annual Operational Plan were achieved or partially achieved and the Executive Team are proud of what teams throughout the organisation were able to accomplish over the year, making significant progress on the key themes of the Annual Operational Plan: Restoring Nature; Creating a Low-Carbon Place; Designing a Greener Way of Living; and A Developing and Efficient National Park Authority.
- 5.3. The following table frames some of the achievements of the Annual Operational Plan and 'business as usual' work in relation to each Best Value theme:

Vision & Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presented and had approved at Board and Ministerial level, our 2025-2030 Corporate Plan, which sets a bold and ambitious strategic direction for the National Park Authority to deliver our National Park Partnership Plan</li><li>• Worked with partners and stakeholders to create a 5-year woodland delivery and monitoring plan to increase and record the rate of woodland creation and improve woodland quality</li><li>• Produced a joint vision and shared ways of working for a landscape-scale approach to improving our water environment with key Future Nature partners.</li><li>• Continued to engage actively with the process for a proposed new National Park in Scotland.</li><li>• Continued to work closely with key partner organisations in the delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan including local authorities, NGOs and key public bodies.</li><li>• Engaged with and advised a range of national organisations and groups to help develop policies, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Effective Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supported communities in the establishment of Local Place Plans.</li><li>• Continued to deliver key landscape partnership projects including beginning large scale delivery in Wild Strathfillan and applying for development funding for a Loch Lomond Rainforest project.</li><li>• Continue to build on the success of our Joint Visitor Management Response Plan with our partners to co-ordinate facilities, traffic management, visitor management (including enforcement) and communications to visitors and communities.</li><li>• Partner working with Cairngorms National Park Authority in relation to several back office and procured services and systems and in sharing and learning from good practice in policy and initiatives development.</li><li>• We continue to subscribe to National Parks Partnerships.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively engaged with key Scottish Government initiative on public sector reform</li> </ul>
Governance & Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertook a Board Effectiveness Audit, providing assurance in the structure and management of the board governance</li> <li>Continued the Strategy in Action series of Board Development opportunities</li> <li>Updated our Staff Register of Interest, as per the Staff Register of Interest Policy, and provided reminders in relation to in-year updates to interests</li> </ul>
Use of Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with the Palladium group continue the exploration of a trial ethical green finance mechanism to bring additional carbon market funding for woodland creation in the Park.</li> <li>Leveraging workflow tools to automate cross organisation processes</li> <li>Enhancements to existing systems, such as finance, estates and HR to maximise automation opportunities</li> <li>Undertake a strategic review of our assets, alongside our business processes and structures, to progress our Estates Strategy</li> </ul>
Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>54% of the deliverables within the Annual Operational Plan have been achieved (up from 40% in 23/24), with a further 17% being partially achieved by year end (no change from 23/24) and 29% were carried over to 25/26 (down from 43%).</li> <li>Positive feedback from visitors staying in campsites or permit areas remains high, with the below figures representing the number of people very likely or quite likely to recommend staying: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% at Loch Chon campsite (up from 97%)</li> <li>100% at Loch Achray campsite (up from 94%)</li> <li>100% at Inchcailloch (not previously reported)</li> <li>90% at permit areas (static)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Sustainability (cross-cutting theme)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued to undertake the capital works required to meet our Mission Zero commitments, including the conclusion of work at Carrochan.</li> <li>Continued the development of the National Park Authority's Climate Adaption Plan.</li> <li>Mission Zero update presented to National Park Board, outlining progress towards our 2030 net zero target.</li> <li>All Board and Committee papers remain electronic only, except where there is an accessibility requirement to provide alternative formats.</li> </ul>

Equality (cross-cutting theme)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking part in the UK Government's Boardroom Apprentice programme to offer experience of Board membership</li> <li>• Developed and had approved by Board our Equalities Outcomes for 2025-2029</li> </ul>
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## 6. Appendices

### 6.1. Appendix 1 – Best Value Policy.

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