

2025-26 Annual Operational Plan Progress to August

Agenda Item 11

National Park Authority Board Meeting

Monday 15 September 2025

Paper for information

Annual Operational Plan 2025/26: Progress to August

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	Progress Update to August	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.	All contribution and partnership agreements in place and delivery underway	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.	Engagement work has commenced on the Inchcailloch management plan. New ownership of Inchmoan and scope for management discussed with NatureScot.	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.	We continue to work closely with Wild Strathfillan and The Great Trossachs Forest – both will be receiving funding through our NRF	On Track

		allocation and progress continues on the ground.	
R/A/04 Approach	Develop the Landscape Connections National Lottery Heritage Fund opportunity, including development of rhododendron programme through Estee Lauder funding.	After extensive development and partnership work the application was submitted to National Lottery Heritage Fund in August. We expect to hear towards the end of the calendar year.	On Track
R/A/05 Approach	Develop the Resilient Farming Network, fulfilling our commitment to whole farm reviews and establishment of networks.	Work on hold due to staff vacancy but plans progressing on recruitment and first phases of delivery.	Behind Schedule
R/A/06 Approach	Continue the delivery of the Peatland Action programme, targeting 11 projects which restore 865 ha. of blanket bog.	Target agreed with SG is reduced to 843 ha. First contract is signed, and work is underway. 3 more projects have gone through procurement.	On Track
R/A/07 Approach	Progress actions identified in the Herbivore Delivery Plan with support from the steering group.	The incentive scheme has secured support from NatureScot, with a launch date targeted for 1 October. The training scheme is live, with nine applications approved to date. Two deer larders have been procured for the East Loch Lomond area—one funded through Nature Restoration Fund and the other via a successful Community Led Local Development application.	On Track
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.	Engaged with Scottish Forestry's public consultation and additional community meeting for Strathyre Larch Removal Plan. Further discussions and site visits held with Forestry and Land Scotland for works to road and West Highland Way (WHW) required for Ptarmigan Larch Management Plan.	On Track
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.	Invitation To Tender about to be advertised for upgrade of WHW north of Mar Bridge and barrier reduction on NCN7.	On Track

		<p>Next phases of Loch Earn Railway Path (LERP) prepped but awaiting match-funding from Sustrans. Way forward agreed for Aber Bridge replacement.</p> <p>Legal agreement drafted for works on WHW at Ptarmigan acting as agents for FLS.</p>	
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 sustainable transport in the National Park and deliver at least one pilot project in 2025/26.	<p>The NP Mobility Partnership governance arrangements continue to develop through ongoing Leadership Group meetings. The first Stakeholder & Insights Forum meeting took place on 26th August.</p> <p>The Mobility Route Map is under development.</p> <p>The second year of the Trossachs Explorer pilot was launched in July by bus operator McColls. In the first six weeks, over 3,000 passengers travelled, 49% travelled for free and 100% of scheduled trips ran.</p> <p>Ongoing discussions with Stirling Council on the East Loch Lomond Transport Study but this has not yet been commissioned.</p>	On Track
C/A/03 Approach	Grow our engagement programmes so that more and diverse audiences can learn, connect and act for nature and climate.	Programmes are continuing to deliver – summer inclusion projects are progressing well, the Youth Committee is open for applications for new members and their youth issues survey is open and receiving good coverage, and the volunteering applications were open until the end of August.	On Track
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.	Good progress made in finalising Scoping Doc, PID is complete, and capacity mapping. Evidence Report is building and on track for	On Track

		Stakeholder Engagement in late October. Board and Exec milestones are scheduled.	
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.	On Track
C/A/06 Approach	Review the effectiveness of the first operational season of the new Loch Lomond byelaws and make adjustments as required.	Data being collected through registration database and enforcement reports. Speed detection trials have been conducted. Due to staff capacity, CCTV process and policy is still in development.	Behind Schedule
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.	Design and construction information production is progressing across Tarbet Phase 2, Falls of Falloch, and Rowardennan, with a short delay that we are seeking to recover. The Rowardennan planning application is approved and Falls of Falloch is in the determination period. Options for moving forward with the Balloch Pierhead Improvement Action Plan were reviewed with West Dunbartonshire Council.	On Track
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>The new Place Programme Fund specifically directed at partner route map priority project development is now open on our website.</p> <p>Two submissions of expressions of interest have been received.</p> <p>Partnership working is being progressed focussed on East Loch Lomond, Arrochar, Balloch Pierhead and Callander to develop pipeline projects for future delivery years.</p>	Behind Schedule

		Argyll & Bute Council remain delayed in progressing with their RTIF bid for Glen Loin facility in Arrochar.	
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.	<p>The West Highland Way Trust was established in July and is now operational. The transition period for the full transfer of assets from the NPA is currently underway.</p> <p>A fundraising campaign for the Trust is underway and has generated positive media coverage and income.</p>	On Track
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.	<p>Destination Group (NPDG) meeting was held in May ahead of peak season with the Autumn meeting scheduled for September. A Visitor Levy meeting with Stirling Council and the NPDG will take place in September.</p> <p>Tourism Team engaging with local authorities on Visitor Levy consultations. A focused Visitor Levy meeting with WDC and NPDG businesses to take place in September.</p> <p>NPA supported a regional business tour of Stirlingshire businesses organised by the NPDG Vice Chair.</p> <p>Engagement with the NPDG Chair and relevant businesses in the Argyll & Bute region is in progress to plan a similar event for this area of the Park.</p>	On Track
G/A/01 Approach	Prepare and engage on the Evidence Report for our next Local Development Plan, then submit to Scottish Government.	Stakeholder engagement is complete, and we are finalising our content for the Evidence Report.	On Track

		Stakeholder engagement included direct working with Key Agencies, in-person events in six areas of the National Park, an in-person event with Land Managers, an online briefing and online surveys on our website.	
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 Q3. Work focus remains on the Evidence Report stage. Spatial land use planning including Nature Networks is covered in the contributing Topic Papers.	On Track
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.	Campaign continues to focus on the Evidence Report, with a series of in-person workshops and complementary designed materials, a landing and subpage of the website created and targeted communications with specific contacts.	On Track
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 and Port of Menteith Local Place Plans are complete, validated and are now on the register of Local Place Plans on our website. Funding contribution agreements for 2025-26 are now in place with Balloch & Haldane, Croftamie, East Loch Lomond and Ardentinny and work on Local Place Plans is progressing to schedule.	On track
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.	We continue to scope out options for a delivery support Action Plan. Work continues to support Climate Action Hubs across all National Park Communities.	On track
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.	Delegated Signing Authority – guidance published, training delivered and ongoing monitoring taking place. How to get your legal agreement signed correctly guidance / webinar on intranet and drop in staff training delivered.	On Track

		<p>Procurement guidance and templates have been developed and reviewed within the G&P team.</p> <p>Contract management guidance has been developed.</p> <p>Contribution Legal Agreements – Funding Agreement Guidance (and Peatland Funding Agreement Guidance) is published on intranet and operational.</p>	
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>The Fleet Management Strategy has been approved.</p> <p>Initial development of Site Management Plans underway, now also in conjunction with internal teams to capture nature-based solutions and climate adaptations. Amendments are being made and as a result the timeline for finalisation of the Site Management Plans is behind schedule.</p> <p>The new Asset Management Solution officially went live on 1st April.</p>	Behind Schedule
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.	Behind Schedule
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.	Site audits and options appraisal covering 11 Mission Zero sites complete. Final report provides independent and detailed decarbonisation recommendations to reach net zero for NPA sites, forming the basis for the second half of the MZ programme.	On Track

		Detailed invitation to tender (ITT) being developed by a cross-organisational team for the procurement of a design team for Phase 2 – to be issued by end the September 2025.	
D/A/05 Approach	Complete the National Park Authority's Climate Adaptation Plan.	<p>Initial Risk Assessment of key NPA sites underway, based on the NP climate change risk assessment.</p> <p>Internal engagement to 'ground truth' the Risk Assessment and decide risk response actions being integrated with work currently underway to develop detailed Site Management Plans for the NPA estate.</p>	On Track
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>Work continues on the draft Route Map (or 'Climate Action Plan'). Working closely with a small group of officers from other NPAs we are finalising the UKNP-wide template and shared text (due in September).</p> <p>Informal feedback on our first report to the Carbon Disclosure Project on achieving a net zero national park recognised the strength of our evidence base, and the targets and actions of the Partnership Plan. Areas for improvement include publishing a climate action plan, establishing a mid-term (2030) emissions target, and area-wide adaptation. The first submission also serves as our baseline; work has commenced on this year's submission as we start to track our progress over time.</p>	On Track
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 programme of commitments within the Gaelic Language Plan is underway and on track. This includes internal staff training and	On Track

	the use, learning and promotion of Gaelic in line with the commitments of the 3rd edition of our Gaelic Language Plan.	social media content about Gaelic place names within the National Park and on the route of the Trossachs Explorer.	
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.	Our Nature Connections and Loch Lomond Byelaws campaigns are now live following successful launches. We attended the World Drowning Prevention Day event organised as part of our ongoing involvement with Water Safety Scotland. The Byelaw campaign activity will continue throughout the visitor season and renew in 2026 as required.	On Track
D/P/01 People	Refresh our people strategy, including the completion of an organisational skills audit.	<p>Draft learning framework due to go to Executive team for review. Sets out learning approach within organisation. First step in undertaking Learning Needs Analysis is the development of core competencies, which will be consulted on with staff post Exec.</p> <p>Mapping the end-to-end employee lifecycle to ensure that we have mapped appropriate touchpoints. This feeds into the development of our People and Engagement Strategy.</p> <p>Scoping of a new HR system underway. A new system will enable us to move on elements that impact other staff – position management, training, etc.</p> <p>Progress behind schedule due to key staffing vacancy (HR Manager). Recruitment is underway.</p>	Behind Schedule
D/P/02 People	Deliver the first-year actions of our Equalities Outcomes for 2025-29.	Work is ongoing to embed the updated ways of working with the Park for All group. In	On Track

		discussion with consultants to receive proposals for 2 key projects.	
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.	Discovery work is progressing well. Original delivery timescale for a beta version of the site (March 2026) is impacted by changes in staffing. Recruitment has been successful for key post. Reworked project plan underway.	Behind Schedule
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.	Q2 Portfolio reporting meetings established for August 2025 and template reporting document created. AOP and budget reporting integrated.	On Track
D/S/03 Systems	Automate key financial operational and reporting processes (purchase orders, management accounts, Scottish Government reporting, Statutory Accounts and Fixed Asset reporting) to create efficiencies and increase resilience.	Scoping exercise undertaken for management accounts. Purchase order automation project scheduled to commence subject to finance team capacity.	On Track
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.	Idox migration currently underway. SWAN migration circuit order has begun; project should complete by mid-December. DR migration will pick up again in Q3 with aim to carry migration to cloud DR in Q4 2025/26	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 ongoing to resolve long-standing core path obstruction at Gartmore. Ongoing action on other casework, including at Loch Voil, Glen Ogle and Carrick Castle. Working with forestry contractor on reinstatement of John Muir Way, Gouk Hill, after harvesting.	

		<p>Working group set up to investigate and trial solutions to uncontrolled dogs at Conic Hill.</p> <p>Preparing for LLTAF meetings in September and November. Link to LLTAF blog in community bulletin. Ongoing engagement with Gravelfoyle to improve users' understanding of shared space.</p>
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.	<p>New planning applications continued to be received at an average of 30 per month. Determinations have kept pace so that the team carries around 110 live applications at any one time. For this period significant resource has continued to be required for ongoing major applications and appeals - as well as targeted enforcement action.</p> <p>New recruitment in July of two planning officers has kept the team at full strength, accounting for 2 officers moving to positions with other authorities.</p> <p>Our National Planning Improvement Report and Action Plan for 2024/25 was submitted to Scottish Government in June and endorsed by the Minister.</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>Biodiversity Net Gains secured with Scottish & Southern Energy Networks for transmission network refurbishment.</p> <p>Progress with A83 Rest & Be Thankful including wildlife and landscape work discussed with Road project team.</p>

		4 Tree Preservation Orders Made in 24/5 have all been Confirmed. 3 further TPOs reviewed in 25/6.
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