

# 2025-26 Annual Operational Plan Progress to February Appendix 1

## Agenda Item 13

### National Park Authority Board Meeting

09 March 2026

Paper for information

#### Annual Operational Plan 2025/26: Progress to February

Rating Key:

Complete	On Track	Behind Schedule	At Risk	Continued to 2026/27	Cancelled
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Reference and Corporate Plan Theme	AOP Deliverable	Progress Update to February	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.	Delivery programme complete for this year. Reviewed with rivers trusts and planning underway for next year.	Complete
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.	Work is underway to review the status of existing designated sites and list other potential sites effectively managed for nature restoration. Work on Inchcailloch Management plan progressing well.	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.	Good progress continues in delivery of final quarter of current NRF projects in Wild Strathfillan including establishment of new nursery at Loch Lomond and final planting and fencing projects.	<b>On Track</b>
R/A/04 Approach	Develop the Landscape Connections National Lottery Heritage Fund opportunity, including development of rhododendron programme through Estee Lauder funding.	Work starting on new long term plan for The Great Trossachs Forest and confirmation received that National Lottery Heritage Fund bid successful – development phase to start May 2026.	<b>On Track</b>
R/A/05 Approach	Develop the Resilient Farming Network, fulfilling our commitment to whole farm reviews and establishment of networks.	New staff member appointed, undergoing induction and starting to reconnect with farms with a view to program fully restarting April 2026.	<b>Continued to 2026/27</b>
R/A/06 Approach	Continue the delivery of the Peatland Action programme, targeting 11 projects which restore 865 ha. of blanket bog.	Eight projects will be completed in 25/6. Six projects have been completed delivering 626 ha of restoration plus improvements to earlier work. Two more projects are underway, aiming to deliver a further approx. 245 ha of restoration.  A pipeline of projects for 26/27 has been produced.	<b>On Track</b>
R/A/07 Approach	Progress actions identified in the Herbivore Delivery Plan with support from the steering group.	Ongoing support and monitoring of scheme. Processing of claims and payments underway to complete successful year 1 of the pilot, with sign up from 26 landholdings – more than a fifth of land in the National Park covered.	<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.	Around 165 ha. of new woodland creation has been delivered. This includes new woodland at the Rest and Be Thankful (36ha), Loch Katrine (74 ha of new planting plus 32 ha of natural regeneration) and Gartmore (13.5 ha), Crom Allt (6ha) and some smaller schemes.	<b>On Track</b>

		Four new woodland creation projects have continued to develop at Glenfalloch Estate (approximately 1100 hectares), Luss Estate (approximately 100 hectares), Glenogle Estate (approximately 170 hectares) and Woodland Trust Glen Finglas Estate (120ha).	
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.	<p>West Highland Way drainage work on track to complete by end of March 2026.</p> <p>Some work delayed due to Government spend-control process, followed by requirement to re-profile the project budget. Proposed phases now proceeding and on track to complete by end of March 2026.</p> <p>Audit of path infrastructure on West Highland Way north from Inversnaid to Derrydarroch underway.</p>	<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 sustainable transport in the National Park and deliver at least one pilot project in 2025/26.	<p>Q4 meetings of the Leadership Group and Stakeholder and Insights Forum were held in February.</p> <p>Funding applications submitted to Transport Scotland's People &amp; Place programme.</p> <p>Continued development of the Mobility Route Map through detailed milestones.</p> <p>The Trossachs Explorer evaluation report was published during February. Ongoing engagement with Stirling Council and funders to secure its return.</p>	<b>On Track</b>

		Continued development of the East Loch Lomond Park & Ride Study with long list of options identified and scored. Landowner engagement took place in February and there will be a wider stakeholder engagement during March. Final report due by 31st March.	
C/A/03 Approach	Grow our engagement programmes so that more and diverse audiences can learn, connect and act for nature and climate.	Reviews of 2025 carried out including development days with the Ranger Service to update internal processes and share best practice, and engagement partner meeting held to look forward at key plans for summer 2026.	<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.	Phase 1 Initial Engagements completed, 8 sessions in total. Key Themes and feedback being rationalised to inform phase 2 engagement. Evidence gathering in final stages. PID updated with sign off pending following GIS and Comms clarification.	<b>On Track</b>
C/A/05 Approach	Prepare and implement the operational management and reporting on the Joint Response Visitor Management Plan – Including Visitor Management Groups.	End of Season Report template has been amended following cross team conversations.  Initial end of season updates have been shared with VMGs including newly formed groups Cowal & Strathfillan and Glen Dochart. Post season VMG have been held, and planning has begun for the 2026 visitor 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.	Ongoing KPI review and tracking, preparing for season 2026. New Enforcement App in testing phase with view to implementing in mid-March aiming to streamline enforcement processes which incorporates efficient reporting functions.	<b>On Track</b>

<p>C/A/07</p> <p>Approach</p>	<p>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>	<p>Tarbet Phase 2 building work tenders have been submitted and the process of securing final approvals and appointing a preferred bidder is underway.</p> <p>Falls of Falloch, a preferred bidder has been appointed and works are scheduled to commence in spring.</p> <p>Rowardennan Phase 1 is currently paused whilst we work with Forestry and Land Scotland on a revised delivery timeline.</p> <p>Balloch Pierhead with West Dunbartonshire Council has re-started and further engagement is planned in March, following the Local Place Plan engagement. The design project is planned to complete mid-April</p>	<p><b>Continued to 26/27</b></p>
<p>C/A/08</p> <p>Approach</p>	<p>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>	<p>Place Programme Fund awards for this year have been made.</p> <p>Partnership working continues to be progressed focussed on East Loch Lomond, Arrochar, Balloch and Callander, with a community led focus in Callander, Arrochar.</p> <p>We have supported the Arrochar and Tarbet CDT and their Local Place Plan delivery.</p> <p>Detailed design work is nearing completion on final future phases at Tarbet to enable completion of the delivery of the site masterplan, subject to funding, in future years.</p>	<p><b>On Track</b></p>

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.	Specialist consultants have been onboarded and are operational. Consultants are liaising with the National Park Authority to facilitate the recruitment phase for the West Highland Way Trust. The Asset Transfer Agreement is in its final stage, pending imminent sign-off by all parties. Service Level agreement submitted and approved.	<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.	<p>The NPDG continues to meet timeously, maintaining strong momentum including a January meeting at Luss Distillery with VisitScotland as guest speaker and an upcoming March meeting at Beinglas.</p> <p>A formal response to the Scottish Government's proposed amendment to the Visitor Levy Bill was successfully incorporated into all collective feedback submitted during the consultation process.</p> <p>Visitor Levy implementation is progressing across partner local authorities.</p> <p>Partnership with Forth Valley Tourism group has progressed with the NPA participating in workshops to determine a creative narrative for the region.</p>	<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.	The Evidence Report was prepared via engagement with stakeholders in 2025, approved by National Park Board and submitted to the Scottish Government in December 2025. A Scottish Government Reporter was appointed to undertake a	<b>Complete</b>

		Gatecheck assessment of the evidence report in January 2026.	
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.	The first phase of engagement commenced 29 January 2026 with the start of an informal engagement calling for land, sites and ideas for the new Local Development and Land Use Plan. This engagement will run for 12 weeks until 23 April 2026.	<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.	Within this period the main focus has been submission of the Evidence Report and preparation for the call for land, sites and ideas with engagement designed to provide information and advice on this.	<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.	Support continues to be given to these communities to complete their Local Place Plans with some requiring more time extending into next financial year due to community capacity.	<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.	Due to reduced staff resource focus has been to support the establishment of the four Community Climate Action Hubs in 2025 and Local Place Plan preparation. Attention will now turn towards scoping a delivery support programme to assist local communities to deliver priorities in their Local Place Plans	<b>Behind Schedule</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.	Procurement documentation and guidance launched. Risk Appetite Statement drafted and to be presented to March Board.  Focus for rest of 25/26 is on embedding new processes and supporting wider organisation to use redesigned processes.	<b>Complete</b>

<p>D/A/02 Approach</p>	<p>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>	<p>An example Site Management Plan is being worked up to test the proposed template and inform further roll-out. Further consideration of strategic aims identified potential for incorporation of Climate Adaptation Plan into this process – currently in development as part of example plan.</p> <p>Fleet strategy is in place and used to manage the replacement of vehicles – complete.</p> <p>Asset Management solution is driving efficiencies within the organisation. We're finalising the system for use by the Ranger Service.</p>	<p><b>Behind Schedule</b></p>
<p>D/A/03 Approach</p>	<p>Develop an external funding strategy, delivery plan and appropriate governance structure.</p>	<p>Focus for 25/26 has been on lottery bid and other specific funding sources (in particular RTIF, SPT, Tactran). Residual capacity challenges have limited ability to progress organisational strategy and governance structure.</p>	<p><b>Continued to 2026/27</b></p>
<p>D/A/04 Approach</p>	<p>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>	<p>Net Zero Forward Look on pause due to staffing capacity challenges. Plan in place to recruit Net Zero technical lead.</p>	<p><b>Continued to 2026/27</b></p>
<p>D/A/05 Approach</p>	<p>Complete the National Park Authority's Climate Adaptation Plan.</p>	<p>Following further consideration of the strategic aims some of this will now be incorporated into the Site Management Planning work under the Estates Strategic actions (On Estate)</p> <p>Currently in development as part of an example Site Management Plan, which will test and inform further roll-out.</p>	<p><b>Continued to 2026/27</b></p>

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.	Net Zero National Park Route Map on pause due to staffing capacity challenges. Plan in place to address capacity through recruitment.	<b>Continued to 2026/27</b>
D/A/07 Approach	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.	We've published our third Gaelic Language Plan (2025–2030). We've held focused meetings on training, translation, and the wider promotion of Gaelic across the park. Our social media channels have featured Gaelic content, including place names on the TEX and Loch Venachar, helping raise awareness and encourage engagement.  Our next Gaelic Language Plan report is due in May 2026.	<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.	The Loch Lomond Byelaws campaign generated over 10k impressions with a 3.5% engagement rate* across 2 social posts.  The Nature Connections campaign delivered 96k impressions across 20 posts with a 3.5% engagement rate.  A paid campaign was also delivered in collaboration with YoungScot to reach more young people, with a focus on the Trossachs Explorer. This involved inclusion in Young Scot's monthly e-newsletter, issued to 109,204 members and featured on YS's social channels with have a combine reach of 55k.	<b>On Track</b>
D/P/01 People	Refresh our people strategy, including the completion of an organisational skills audit.	Survey for People & Engagement Strategy took place – a wide range of feedback received from staff. This has resulted in the 5 key	<b>On Track</b>

		<p>themes being re-enforced through that feedback, and the Strategy itself is currently being drafted.</p> <p>At the start of February, a new Mandatory training process was launched for all staff, with 8 different courses being tracked.</p> <p>New HR Hub created with a focus on skills and learning, with new section on Induction, Leadership Development and a Skills Development Library.</p>	
D/P/02 People	Deliver the first-year actions of our Equalities Outcomes for 2025-29.	Consultants are on track and meetings are scheduled for February to disseminate and finalise reports prior to financial year end. Planning commenced for first year review with intention to provide update to Board in June.	<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.	<p>Website content coordinator in post until the end of June, leading on the content audit and approach.</p> <p>Internal Project Team across directorates is in place and meet monthly.</p> <p>First draft of the site structure has been developed.</p> <p>Working towards an Oct/early Nov 2026 launch of the Beta site.</p>	<b>Continued to 2026/27</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.	Q4 Portfolio reporting meetings established for February 2026 and template reporting document updated. AOP and budget reporting integrated – planning for 2026/27 undertaken	<b>On Track</b>

		following Scottish Government budget announcement in January 2026.	
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.	<p>Process improvements are underway for the creation of the Statutory Accounts document which should deliver some efficiencies and increase resilience for the 25/26 cycle.</p> <p>As of January 2026 the Finance team has completed recruitment. The other process improvements will be deferred to 26/27 once the team members have completed training for their new roles.</p>	<b>Continued to 2026/27</b>
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.	<p>Idox migration completed in December.</p> <p>SWAN migration completed in December 2025.</p> <p>Disaster recovery paused due to incompatibility with new technologies. Investigating alternatives and will hopefully be resolved by end of March.</p> <p>Security Operations Centre/Security Information and Event Management in place.</p>	<b>On Track</b>
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.	Automation projects continuing across the board and areas of focus are being identified for 26/27.	<b>Continued to 2026/27</b>
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.	<p>Cases at Glen Fruin and Port Nellan resolved. Remediation of John Muir Way at Gouk Hill now underway.</p> <p>Ongoing work to resolve key cases at Glen Buckie, East Loch Lubnaig and Gartmore.</p>	

		<p>Liaising with Stirling Council re forthcoming replacement of School Burn Road bridge to manage impact on West Highland Way.</p> <p>Public/dog behaviour study ongoing at Conic Hill.</p> <p>Local Access Forum providing advice on Glen Buckie case. Next Forum meeting early March.</p>
<p>B/A/02 Approach</p>	<p>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>	<p>Major applications that have been under consideration for some time are drawing towards a decision and are expected to be presented to Planning and Access Committee before the end of Q4.</p> <p>There have been ongoing discussions and minor applications considered with the new investor for the Gold and Silver mine at Cononish - towards making adjustments to the on-site facilities in order to reach full production again by summer 2026.</p> <p>The new Fee Charter for the Planning Service was agreed by the Planning and Access Committee as introduced in the last update. The Charter has subsequently been implemented and we continue to work through consequential adjustments to procedures to accommodate the changes.</p> <p>We continue to work through the (three year programme) of other service improvements as set out in our 2025 Planning Improvement</p>

		Framework (as adopted by the National Improvement 'Champion' in January 26)
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>The A83 Rest &amp; Be Thankful Roads Orders are still pending resolution of the issues previously noted. We are continuing to liaise with TS's contractors over landslip and erosion management measures on either side of the existing road.</p> <p>A further new TPO has been made to update existing ones, bringing the total so far for the year to three. A fourth will hopefully be made by the end of March.</p>