

Appendix 1 Annual Operation Plan

Agenda Item 5

National Park Authority Board Meeting

9 March 2026



Introduction

The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority Annual Operational Plan [AOP] sets out our proposed organisational priorities for delivery in the coming year.

It does not detail all core business of the organisation, although it does try to capture some of the 'business as usual' activity of the organisation, which has not always been apparent in previous iterations of the AOP. It sets out specific activities and deliverables we propose to undertake this year to drive change towards the Objectives and Outcomes of the National Park Partnership Plan 2024-29 and our Corporate Plan 2025-2030.

In 2026/27 we will continue to build on our work from previous years, including delivering on programmes and strategies approved by the Board. This includes a number of multi-year projects and programmes, such as Future Nature, Mission Zero, and the Place Programme.

The 2026/27 Annual Operational Plan is centred on the three Chapters of our National Park Partnership Plan, as well as our Corporate Plan for 2025-2030 and the three themes within it.

National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029

Chapter 1: Restoring Nature

Chapter 2: Creating a Low-Carbon Place

Chapter 3: Designing a Greener Way of Living

Corporate Plan 2025-2030

Theme 1: Our Approach

Theme 2: Our People

Theme 3: Our Systems

Background

The National Park Authority was established to achieve four key aims laid out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. These are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area
- To promote the sustainable use of the natural resources of the area
- To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public
- To promote sustainable social and economic development of the communities of the area

We contribute to the national outcomes and strategic objectives of the Scottish Government. The extent to which we contribute to Scottish Government's priorities and outcomes is fundamental to our own success as a National Park Authority in delivering for Scotland. The 2025/26 Programme for Government: "Building the Best Future for Scotland" sets out the Scottish Government's most recent expectations for Scotland.

Our National Park Partnership Plan (2024-2029) which was approved by the NPA Board in 2023/24 describes the vision and outcomes for the whole National Park area and contributions required from many different organisations as delivery partners over a five-year period, to help achieve our shared vision for the National Park as a thriving place that is nature positive and carbon negative.

Our Corporate Plan 2025-2030 was approved by the NPA Board in December 2024 it gives our Staff, Board members, Scottish Ministers and those with an interest in the organisation, a clear view of the NPA's strategic direction for the next five years. 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.

Guided by the NPPP and our Corporate Plan, this Annual Operational Plan for 2026/27 details the organisation's focus for the year, taking into account Scottish Government priorities and funding available through the organisation's annual Grant in Aid allocation.



Reading Our Annual Operational Plan for 2026-2027

The tables of deliverables set out below have four columns*:

1. Reference

This column is primarily for internal use, but it follows this pattern:

Capital Letter/Capital Letter/Number/Lower Case Letter e.g.: D/A/01y

- The first capital letter tells us which National Park Plan section the deliverable belongs to:
 - R – Restoring Nature
 - C – Creating a Low-Carbon Place
 - G – Designing a Greener Way of Living
 - D – Delivering Our Corporate Plan
 - B – Cross Cutting and Enabling Functions
- The second capital letter tells us which Corporate Plan Theme the deliverable belongs to:
 - A – Approach
 - S – Systems
 - P – People
- The number tells us the sequencing of the deliverable within its section and theme.
- The lower-case letter at the end tells us whether the deliverable is:
 - x – being delivered by the National Park Authority this year
 - y – being established by the National Park Authority this year
 - z – being influenced by the National Park Authority this year

2. Deliverable

This column is where the deliverable itself is set out. The bold text shows the area of work and is followed by a description of the activity to be undertaken.

3. NPPP Objective

This column maps the deliverable to a specific objective in the National Park Partnership Plan. This is to help streamline reporting against the NPPP and to ensure that our AOP is contributing to our long-term strategic vision.

4. Board Strategic Oversight

This column shows where, alongside the NPPP and Corporate Plan, strategic oversight of the deliverable sits with the Board. This includes references to strategic documents which have been approved, future strategies to be presented and regular updates – all of which are published publicly.

* the final table 'Cross Cutting and Enabling Functions' has 3 columns: *Reference, Deliverable and NPPP Link*

The sections of the Annual Operational Plan 2026/27 are organised by the three chapters of the NPPP, a fourth section titled 'Delivering Our Corporate Plan', and a fifth section reflecting cross-cutting and enabling functions.

1. Restoring Nature

Nature underpins human existence through the benefits and services it provides, such as food, air, water, materials, health, and economic wealth. Halting the ongoing decline and then reversing the loss of nature is not just beneficial for wildlife, it is in all of our interest.

Restoring nature is about us supporting our natural environment to bounce back from damage and decline to become healthier, resilient, and ultimately more bountiful and productive.

Our 2026/27 AOP aims to progress the objectives of this first Chapter of the National Park Partnership Plan through the actions set out in Section 1 of the Annual Operational Plan Table of Deliverables.

These actions support the following objectives for 2029 in of our National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029 Delivery Framework:

Objective 1.1.1: Reduce Peatland Emissions

Objective 1.1.2: Increase Trees Cover

Objective 1.1.3: Restore the Water Environment

Objective 1.2.1: Restore Nature at scale

Objective 1.2.2: Prioritise land for Nature

Objective 1.2.3: Reduce Other Key Pressures

Objective 1.3.1: Support Regenerative Land Use

Objective 1.3.2: Invest in Nature Restoration

Objective 1.3.3: Encourage land use that benefits everyone

2. Creating a Low-Carbon Place

Approximately four million visitors come to the National Park each year to enjoy and benefit from its natural beauty, rich heritage and recreational opportunities.

People feeling connected to nature benefits not only their wellbeing but inspires them to act in ways that are more likely to benefit the environment. That connection can mean different things to different people, from feeling the benefit of taking in a spectacular view, to ensuring they take their litter home after a visit, to taking part in conservation volunteering.

However, we know that the range of people currently visiting the area does not reflect the diversity of our society. The popularity of the National Park also creates pressures and challenges resulting in impacts on our natural environment and behaviours which aren't compatible with the Scottish Government's ambitions to become a Net Zero Nation by 2045.

As we face the challenges of the climate and nature crises head on, there is real opportunity to transform the National Park into a more sustainable, low carbon destination.

We can only do this by creating opportunities for people to connect to landscape and nature sustainably, with the clear rules and incentives in place to influence positive

behaviours, and infrastructure and services which facilitate great experiences whilst also protecting climate and nature.

Our 2026/27 AOP aims to progress the objectives of this second Chapter of the National Park Partnership Plan through the actions set out in Section 2 of the Annual Operational Plan Table of Deliverables.

These actions support the following objectives for 2029 in of our National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029 Delivery Framework:

Objective 2.1.1: Inspire action for nature and climate

Objective 2.1.2: Support Diversity and Inclusion

Objective 2.1.3: Support safe, responsible access

Objective 2.2.1: Deliver a multi-year Place Programme

Objective 2.2.2: Improve travel infrastructure

Objective 2.2.3: Provide a high-quality recreational path network

Objective 2.3.1: Develop a new strategic transport partnership

Objective 2.3.2: Make sustainable travel choices more attractive

Objective 2.3.3: Improve travel routes and services

3. Designing a Greener Way of Living

How people live, work and experience the National Park needs to change to respond and adapt to the nature and climate crises, as well as to support thriving communities into the future.

The National Park's rural economy must adapt to support this; becoming greener, more diverse and more equitable than it is now, generating and retaining more wealth locally.

For communities to be more sustainable and resilient to the impacts of climate change, for them to play a part in tackling the nature crisis and to benefit from the transition of our economy, support must be available. Communities need access to good services, housing and transport that allows people to live and work here for years to come. This Plan aims to tackle these systemic issues.

The way we approach development in the National Park needs to change too, with this having an increasingly important role in helping to address the climate emergency, restore nature and support rural communities.

Our 2026/27 AOP aims to progress the objectives of this third Chapter of the National Park Partnership Plan through the actions set out in Section 3 of the Annual Operational Plan Table of Deliverables.

These actions support the following objectives for 2029 in of our National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029 Delivery Framework:

Objective 3.1.1: Increase Sustainable Tourism

Objective 3.1.2: Support Low Carbon Businesses

Objective 3.1.3: Grow Green and Nature-based Jobs and Skills

Objective 3.2.1: Enable more local living and working

Objective 3.2.2: Meet housing needs

Objective 3.2.3: Build Community Wealth

Objective 3.3.1: Deliver Strategic Development Needs

Objective 3.3.2: Adapt to Climate Change and Restore Nature

Objective 3.3.3: Make the best use of Land and Assets

4. Delivering Our Corporate Plan

In addition to actions to deliver outcomes within each of the three chapters of the National Park Partnership, our Annual Operational Plan includes a fourth section to reflect the activity being undertaken this year to deliver the organisation's Corporate Plan 2025-2030.

This section of the AOP will play a key role in ensuring that the Corporate Plan is the useful and used document which it is intended to be and sets out the annual actions we as an organisation are taking to meet the aspirations of Our Corporate Plan.

Ensuring that the AOP, Corporate Plan and NPPP are appropriately aligned is important for both our operational delivery and the meeting of our strategic aims.

Our 2026/27 AOP aims to progress the objectives of the Corporate Plan through the actions set out in Section 4 of the Annual Operational Plan Table of Deliverables.

5. Cross-cutting and Enabling Functions

The final section of our Annual Operational Plan reflects areas of core business delivery for the year which cut-across and enable the outcomes and objectives of the NPPP and Corporate Plan.

This section also aims to ensure that the AOP better reflects the operational work being resourced and undertaken across the organisation throughout the year.

Our 2026/27 AOP aims to progress the cross-cutting and enabling actions set out in Section 5 of the Annual Operational Plan Table of Deliverables.

These pieces of further core business will not be subject to 'RAG' ratings in the AOP Progress Updates to the Board on a quarterly basis, but there will be a short narrative update on each.

2025/26 AOP deliverables are coded to the three themes of the Corporate Plan 2025-2030.

1. Our Approach

Outcome: By 2030 we will have increased our influence with others and delivered our organisational and statutory responsibilities in an effective and efficient way that helps achieve the NPPP vision.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Deliver our organisational and statutory responsibilities as effective, efficient cornerstones focused on delivering the NPPP
- 1.2 Grow diverse income and resources to deliver the ambitions of the NPPP
- 1.3 Hold ourselves and NPPP delivery partners to account in delivering the priorities set out in the NPPP and in our Corporate Plan

2 Our People

Outcome: By 2030 we will have a strong mix of positive workforce culture, diversity and skills that help achieve the NPPP vision.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Review and update our People Strategy and internal engagement to embed the organisational priorities and cultural approach needed to deliver the NPPP.
- 2.2 Develop and support our staff to have the collaborative approach and the specialist skills needed to deliver their roles.
- 2.3 Continue to champion and work towards increased equity, diversity and inclusion in all we do

3 Our Systems

Outcome: By 2030 we will have systems and processes that are resilient, adaptable and designed to meet user needs and help achieve the NPPP vision.

Objectives:

- 3.1 Refresh our operating model by consciously designing it around delivery of the NPPP and Corporate Plan.
- 3.2 Deliver automation and efficiency opportunities that allow staff to focus on delivering the NPPP vision.
- 3.3 Make the most of digital and data opportunities to be better informed, more resilient, efficient and secure.

Annual Operational Plan 2026/27 Tables of Deliverables

Section 1: Restoring Nature

Reference	Deliverable	NPPP Objective	Board Strategic Oversight
R/A/01x	INNS Delivery Plan: Deliver priority actions within the Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Delivery Plan to reduce pressures on nature.	1.2.3 Reduce Other Key Pressures	Future Nature Route Map (2021); Future Nature Update Paper (Annual)
R/A/02x	Landscape Connections: Deliver development-phase milestones for the Landscape Connections National Lottery Heritage Fund project.	1.2.1 Restore nature at scale	Future Nature Route Map (2021); Future Nature Update Paper (Annual)
R/A/03y	Resilient Farm Network: Establish the Resilient Farming Network, delivering whole-farm reviews and peer learning networks to support regenerative land use.	1.3.3 Encourage land use that benefits everyone	Future Nature Route Map (2021); Future Nature Update Paper (Annual)
R/A/04x	Peatland ACTION: Deliver the agreed programme targets to restore peatland habitats and reduce emissions.	1.1.1 Reduce peatland emissions	Future Nature Route Map (2021); Future Nature Update Paper (Annual)
R/A/05x	Herbivore Delivery Plan: Deliver priority actions from the plan with support from the steering group.	1.3.3 Encourage land use that benefits everyone	Future Nature Route Map (2021); Future Nature Update Paper (Annual)
R/A/06x	Woodland Delivery Plan: Deliver Year 2 of the plan, including forestry casework and partner coordination to enable approval of new woodland creation.	1.1.2 Increase Tree Cover	Future Nature Route Map (2021); Future Nature Update Paper (Annual)

R/A/07x	Nature Restoration Fund: Deliver agreed Nature Restoration Fund programme supporting habitat restoration and nature recovery.	1.3.2 Invest in Nature Restoration	Future Nature Route Map (2021); Future Nature Update Paper (Annual)
---------	--	------------------------------------	---

Section 2: Creating a Low-Carbon Place

Reference	Deliverable	NPPP Objective	Board Strategic Oversight
C/A/01x	Core Paths: Maintain and enhance the Core Paths Network in line with agreed priorities to support sustainable access.	2.2.3 Provide a high-quality recreational path network	Core Paths Plan (2021)
C/A/02y	Mobility Partnership: Establish governance arrangements for the National Park Mobility Partnership; adopt a shared Route Map so that partners can coordinate delivery of sustainable transport improvements.	2.3.3 Improve travel routes and services	Mobility Partnership Route Map (to be presented)
C/A/03x	Sustainable Transport: Deliver priority transport pilots, studies and strategies that support development of improved sustainable transport services across the National Park.	2.3.2 Make sustainable travel choices more attractive	Sustainable Transport Board Update (Annual)
C/A/04x	Inclusive engagement: Deliver inclusive engagement programmes enabling diverse audiences to learn, connect and act for nature and climate.	2.1.1 Inspire action for nature and climate	Equalities Outcomes 2025 - 2029 (2025)
C/A/05x	Camping Byelaw Review: Deliver statutory public consultation on Camping Management Byelaw Review proposals and submit final recommendations to Ministers.	2.1.3 Support safe, responsible access	Camping Management Byelaws (to be presented)
C/A/06x	Place Programme Delivery: Deliver the multi-year Place Programme, including accelerated visitor recreation site projects on East and West Loch Lomond.	2.2.1 Deliver a multi-year Place Programme	Place Investment Strategy (2022); Place Programme Delivery Route Map (2024); Place Programme Update (Annual)

C/A/07y	Place Programme Development: Establish a coordinated pipeline of transformational projects for future delivery through the Place Programme.	2.2.1 Deliver a multi-year Place Programme	Place Investment Strategy (2022); Place Programme Delivery Route Map (2024); Place Programme Update (Annual)
---------	--	--	--

Section 3: Designing a Greener Way of Living

Reference	Deliverable	NPPP Objective	Board Strategic Oversight
G/A/01y	Local Development and Land Use Plan: prepare a draft spatial strategy and begin work on proposed plan, including appropriate targeted engagement	3.3.1 Deliver Strategic Development Needs	Local Development and Land Use Plan (to be presented)
G/A/02x	Local Place Plans: Support remaining communities to produce Local Place Plans and establish a programme supporting delivery of community priorities.	3.2.1 Enable more local living and working	Local Development and Land Use Plan (to be presented)
G/A/03z	Visitor Levy: Engage with local authorities and stakeholders on visitor levy implementation and prepare organisational systems for compliance, including campsite collection where required.	3.1.1 Increase Sustainable Tourism	Board Reporting and Updates (as required)

Section 4: Delivering Our Corporate Plan

Reference	Deliverable	Corporate Plan Objective	Board Strategic Oversight
D/A/01y	Efficiencies: Establish a medium-term financial plan aligned with Public Sector Reform priorities, including mechanisms to measure organisational impact and continue to identify and embed process improvements.	1.1 Deliver our organisational and statutory responsibilities as effective, efficient cornerstones focused on delivering the NPPP	Corporate Plan 2025-2030 (2024)
D/S/01x	Risk Management: Embed organisational risk management framework across teams and decision-making processes.	3.1 Refresh our operating model by consciously designing it around delivery of the NPPP and Corporate Plan.	Corporate Plan 2025-2030 (2024)
D/S/02x	Process Improvement: Embed procurement policy, guidance and templates, including sustainability weighting within evaluation processes.	3.1 Refresh our operating model by consciously designing it around delivery of the NPPP and Corporate Plan.	Corporate Plan 2025-2030 (2024)
D/A/02y	Monitoring & Performance: Establish internal performance tracking system aligned to NPPP and Corporate Plan priorities to support resource allocation and prioritisation.	1.3 Hold ourselves and NPPP delivery partners to account in delivering the priorities set out in the NPPP and in our Corporate Plan	Corporate Plan 2025-2030 (2024)
D/P/01x	People & Engagement: Finalise People & Engagement Strategy and deliver Year 1 actions.	2.1 Review and update our People Strategy and internal engagement to embed the organisational priorities and cultural approach needed to deliver the NPPP.	Corporate Plan 2025-2030 (2024)

D/S/03y	Digital Strategy: Deliver Digital Strategy priorities including records management improvements, AI policy development and Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation.	3.3 Make the most of digital and data opportunities to be better informed, more resilient, efficient and secure.	Corporate Plan 2025-2030 (2024)
D/A/03x	Estates Strategy: Deliver Estates Strategy aligned with Public Service Reform priorities.	1.1 Deliver our organisational and statutory responsibilities as effective, efficient cornerstones focused on delivering the NPPP	Corporate Plan 2025-2030 (2024); Estates Strategy (2023)
D/A/04x	Engagement campaigns: Deliver targeted engagement campaigns supporting National Park Partnership Plan, Corporate Plan and Gaelic Language Plan outcomes.	1.1 Deliver our organisational and statutory responsibilities as effective, efficient cornerstones focused on delivering the NPPP	Corporate Plan 2025-2030 (2024)
D/S/04x	New website: Design, test and launch accessible beta version of the National Park Authority website.	3.3 Make the most of digital and data opportunities to be better informed, more resilient, efficient and secure.	Corporate Plan 2025-2030 (2024)
D/P/02x	Equalities: Deliver Year 2 actions from Equalities Outcomes 2025–29.	2.3 Continue to champion and strive for greater equity, diversity and inclusion in all we do	Equalities Outcomes 2025-2029 (2025)
D/A/05y	Mission Zero: Finalise and commence delivery of Phase 2 of our Mission Zero programme to achieve a net zero organisation by 2030.	1.1 Deliver our organisational and statutory responsibilities as effective, efficient cornerstones focused on delivering the NPPP	Mission Zero Route Map (2020); Mission Zero Update (Annual); Corporate Plan 2025-2030 (2024)
D/A/06y	Net Zero - Climate Adaptation: Complete the National Park Authority Climate Adaptation Plan.	1.1 Deliver our organisational and statutory responsibilities as effective, efficient cornerstones focused on delivering the NPPP	Mission Zero Route Map (2020); Mission Zero Update (Annual); Corporate Plan 2025-2030 (2024)

D/A/07y	Net Zero - Route Map: Develop a draft route map outlining approach to achieving a net zero National Park.	1.1 Deliver our organisational and statutory responsibilities as effective, efficient cornerstones focused on delivering the NPPP	Net Zero Route Map (to be presented); Corporate Plan 2025-2030 (2024)
D/A/08x	Board transition: Manage governance transition following Board elections and Ministerial appointments, including induction, succession planning and governance.	1.1 Deliver our organisational and statutory responsibilities as effective, efficient cornerstones focused on delivering the NPPP	Corporate Plan 2025-2030 (2024)

Section 5: Cross-cutting and Enabling Functions

Reference	Deliverable	NPPP Chapter Link
B/A/01z	Influencing: Influence partner infrastructure projects and strategic plans to deliver climate, nature restoration, landscape and recreation benefits.	Restoring Nature
B/A/02x	Planning: Deliver an effective Development Management service aligned with statutory planning functions and National Planning Improvement Framework priorities.	Creating a Low-Carbon Place
B/A/03x	Access: Deliver Access Authority duties including maintaining the path network, facilitating the Local Access Forum and upholding access rights.	Creating a Low-Carbon Place