



Annual Report on Best Value 2025/26

Agenda Item 14

National Park Authority Audit and Risk Committee

Tuesday 2 June 2026

Paper for approval

Contents

1. Purpose.....	1
2. Recommendation(s).....	1
3. Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan and/or Our Corporate Plan..	1
4. Introduction	1
5. Annual Report on Best Value 2025/26	2
6. Appendices	4

1. Purpose

1.1. To present the Annual Report on Best Value for 2025/26

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 2025/26

- 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 2025/26 will be discussed at the June 2026 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 Delivering Our Corporate Plan. The 2025/26 Annual Operational Plan also saw updates to board being made on Cross-cutting and Enabling Functions for the first time, allowing us to make more visible some of the 'business as usual' work of the organisation as a Planning and Access 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"> • Developed the Landscape Connections National Lottery Heritage Fund opportunity • Designed an inclusive and engaging campaign to encourage people and organisations to get involved at key stages in preparation of the next Local Development and Land Use Plan for the National Park. • Continued the delivery of the Peatland Action programme, achieving restoration in 2025/26 of 1048 ha. of blanket bog. • Developed the National Park Mobility Partnership to enhance sustainable transport in the National Park • 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. • Engaged with and advised a range of national organisations and groups to help develop policies, guidance and support.
Effective Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported communities in the establishment of Local Place Plans. • Continue to implement the long-term invasive, non-native species (INNS) delivery plan, controlling

	<p>riparian INNS through National Park Authority staff and partnership with the Rivers and Fisheries Trusts and mink control with Forestry and Land Scotland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Partner working with Cairngorms National Park Authority in relation to services and systems and in sharing and learning from good practice in policy and initiatives development. • We continue to subscribe to National Parks Partnerships. • Actively engaged with key Scottish Government initiative on public service reform.
Governance & Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesigned key internal governance processes to streamline and increase organisational transparency and efficiency including procurement, contract management and contribution legal agreements. • Prepared and submitted to Scottish Government the Evidence Report for our next Local Development and Land Use Plan • Delivered 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 • Undertook the recruitment process for five ministerial appointees to the Board, including the completion of a skills matrix • Continued the Strategy in Action series of Board Development opportunities • 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
Use of Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed and tested 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. • Automated key financial operational and reporting processes to create efficiencies and increase resilience.
Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55% of the deliverables within the Annual Operational Plan have been achieved with a further 10% being partially achieved by year end and 34% were carried over to 26/27.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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"> ▪ 100% at Loch Chon campsite ▪ 100% at Loch Achray campsite ▪ 100% at Inchcailoch ▪ 90% at permit areas
Sustainability <i>(cross-cutting theme)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued the development the second phase of our 10-year Mission Zero programme to achieve a net zero organisation by 2030. • All Board and Committee papers remain electronic only, except where there is an accessibility requirement to provide alternative formats.
Equality <i>(cross-cutting theme)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking part in the UK Government’s Boardroom Apprentice programme to offer experience of Board membership. • Delivered the first-year actions of our Equalities Outcomes for 2025-29.

6. Future work

- 6.1 We are planning more focused work on Best Value during 2026/2027, including:
- reviewing and updating the Best Value Policy;
 - making the link between our AOP actions and the Best Value themes more transparent; and
 - refreshing our processes which support continuous improvement.
- 6.2 An update on this work will be provided to the December Audit and Risk Committee.

7. Appendices

- 7.1. Appendix 1 - Best Value Policy.

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