



Equality Outcome annual update for 2025/26

Agenda Item 10

National Park Authority Board Meeting

8 June 2026

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1. Purpose

1.1. This paper provides an update on the first year of delivery against the National Park Authority's Equality Outcomes for 2026-2029.

2. Recommendation

2.1. The Board are asked to note the contents of this report.

3. Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan and Our Corporate Plan

3.1. Our Equality Outcomes are designed to contribute to both strategic documents. In our National Park Partnership Plan, objective 2.1.2 outlines our commitment to supporting diversity and inclusion across the National Park. In our Corporate Plan, objective 2.2.3 explains our plans to champion equity, diversity and inclusion in our work.

4. Background

4.1. Under the Equality Act (2010) and the associated Public Sector Equality Duty, we are required to set ourselves Equality Outcomes every 4 years. These are the specific areas that we want to work towards, to reduce discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Whilst we have these statutory obligations, we also see enhancing equity, diversity and inclusion as the right thing to do.

4.2. In March 2025, Board members approved our current set of Equality Outcomes that run from 2025 – 2029. These are:

4.2.1. At all levels of the organisation, our staff, volunteers and Board better reflect the diversity of Scotland.

4.2.2. The National Park is a place for everyone, and we are supporting diversity and inclusion by continuing to remove barriers and improve services to meet the needs of all users.

4.2.3. We have embedded the needs of more diverse groups into our work through increased engagement and consultation.

4.3. As part of our commitment to maintain visibility of our equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), we decided to provide an annual update on progress, enhancing the biannual reporting we are required to do. This paper is the first of these voluntary updates, focusing on the first year of implementing these new Equality Outcomes. It focuses on the key achievements.

5. Outcome one: at all levels of the organisation, our staff, volunteers, and Board better reflect the diversity of Scotland.

5.1. Following on from previous successes with Boardroom Apprentices, in 2025/26 we developed a year-long Youth Committee Board shadowing role. This role provides a more formal opportunity for one of our Youth Committee members to have a place in the National Park Authority's Boardroom and further integrates the voices of younger people, an underrepresented demographic in Board positions, in our decision making.

5.2. Islay Jackson, the post holder, has contributed to 2 Board discussions. In her inaugural meeting in December 2025, Islay presented the outputs of the Youth Committee's youth survey to the Board, sharing the views of young people invested in the National Park. Islay's final Board meeting will be September 2026 and we hope to offer the position to another Youth Committee member, allowing another young person the chance to experience a Board position.

- 5.3. In addition to the above, colleagues have been working towards broadening our network to attract new and diverse talent to see us as a welcoming, prospective employer. Our HR and Education, Inclusion and Volunteer teams attended the CEVMO Equal Jobs Fayre in April 2026 promoting both paid work and volunteering opportunities at the Park.
- 5.4. We continue to offer reasonable adjustments through the recruitment process, and we recently received positive feedback from an applicant on their experience. Although unsuccessful, they commended the recruitment process, reinforcing our commitment to EDI and offering these adjustments where needed.
- 5.5. Work has been ongoing internally to build upon our inclusive culture and our staff's capacity to champion EDI. EDI training is a mandatory requirement for all staff to ensure fair, respectful and lawful workplace practices. The training covers: Equality – treating people fairly and addressing disadvantage, Diversity – recognising and valuing differences (e.g. race, gender disability), and Inclusion – creating a workplace where everyone feels respected and able to contribute.
- 5.6. Sexual harassment training was delivered to all line managers up to, and including, Executive level. The training helps EDI outcomes by setting clear expectations of respectful behaviours, raising awareness of what constitutes inappropriate conduct, and empowering staff to recognise, challenge and report issues confidently. It promotes a safer, more inclusive culture where everyone feels valued and protected. It reduces the risk of discrimination and bias and demonstrates the organisation's commitment to fairness and accountability. It also removes barriers that might otherwise prevent individuals from fully participating or progressing.
- 5.7. Our EDI policy has been reviewed to support positive workplace culture and legislative compliance. It serves to reinforce inclusive behaviours, ensure staff feel respected and supported, and to build trust and engagement.
- 5.8. We have also updated our staff EDI data to help us understand the diverse make-up of our organisation. We use this information to shape our Equality Outcomes and ensure that everyone experiences fair and equal opportunities. The data is kept strictly confidential and anonymised so individuals cannot be identified.
- 5.9. Finally, as one of our core processes that supports work across the organisation, we reviewed our Equality Impact Assessment process to make improvements, bringing in considerations of intersectionality as well as the protected characteristics. This was complemented with updated support materials and training for staff.

6. Outcome two: The National Park is a place for everyone, and we are supporting diversity and inclusion by continuing to remove barriers and improve services to meet the needs of all users.

- 6.1. Delivery of our engagement programme has been a particular highlight for us in 2025/26. We developed a comprehensive package of promotional and nature connection resources, including our nature journal, which can be used by all but have been specifically utilised to engage people and groups from underserved audiences.
- 6.2. We worked with Open Aye (CIC) to deliver a photo trail inclusion programme called 'Awe Aye'. This collaborative partnership supported 10 inclusion groups, with almost 100 individuals representing 20 different countries to have a nature connection focused visit to the National Park. This project culminated in our first Peace Day celebration in partnership with Scottish Forestry, welcoming back participants to share food and stories from their time in greenspace, building a wider sense of belonging in the National Park.
- 6.3. Combining the above project with the engagement sessions delivered by our Ranger Service, we supported 24 groups from underrepresented audiences to have a positive experience in the National Park over 2025/26.
- 6.4. We are also proud to have developed and launched a partnership project with CEMVO and Changeworks. 'Mobilising Community Action Scotland' is a 4-year National Lottery funded programme that aims to empower Scotland's minority ethnic communities to play a vital role in tackling the climate and nature crises at home, and enable deeper, more supportive connections with the Scottish natural environment. The nature connection strand that we're supporting will see community groups go through a journey of engagement with nature, starting from their local greenspace and culminating with a visit to the National Park. This project has a Stakeholder Advisory Group of people with expert insights into climate and nature, representing the ethnic minority communities we will continue to work with. The insights of this group have been invaluable and we look forward to this network, and project, growing over the coming years.
- 6.5. Focusing on the National Park's wider visitor services, the Place Programme has continued to embed accessibility and inclusion into the design and delivery of visitor infrastructure projects across the National Park.
- 6.6. Through the Programme, physical infrastructure improvements continued across several visitor sites. These are underpinned by recognised inclusive access standards including BS8300:2018 and the National Park Design Guide, which is being rolled out internally and with external consultants to help ensure a consistent, high-quality and inclusive design approach. The Design Guide is being applied across projects including Falls of Falloch,

Tarbet Pier, Rowardennan and Balloch Pierhead, and has been promoted to partners including BEAR Scotland working on behalf of Transport Scotland.

- 6.7. Key achievements included completion of an accessible picnic area at Tarbet Pier to support use by visitors of all abilities. Design improvement reviews, with a focus on inclusivity, were carried out on projects at Falls of Falloch, Rowardennan, Balloch Pierhead and a second phase of work at Tarbet Pier. These reviews included enhancements such as accessible parking improvements, upgraded toilet facilities, improved paths and surfaces, enhanced seating and resting opportunities, and safer circulation throughout sites.
- 6.8. The team also progressed plans for the National Park Authority's first Changing Places Toilet at Tarbet, incorporating stoma-friendly and inclusive design principles into the proposals. Wider work at Rowardennan continued to develop proposals for accessible 24-hour toilet facilities, inclusive signage, and safer pedestrian movement through the site.
- 6.9. Alongside direct delivery projects by the National Park Authority, partner delivery of the Place Programme priority projects also seeks to promote EDI access principles within wider visitor infrastructure proposals, for example the Callander Green Adventure Gateway.
- 6.10. Our Estates team have continued with their programme of improvements for our public facing sites. Highlights from this work include resurfacing parts of Milarrochy Bay car park, improving general accessibility for all across the site, particularly benefitting wheelchair and buggy users and adding an additional accessible parking space; repairing and replacing boardwalks and handrails at Inchcailloch; and improving the path network at our campsites, making the pitches and loch shore areas more easily accessible for a wider range of people with different abilities. We have also commenced an audit with AccessAble to create detailed accessibility guides for our visitor sites and replaced the hearing loops in Balmaha Visitor Centre and reception at Carrochan. The auditors will also provide us with a detailed report of improvement suggestions to inform our future programme of works.

7. Outcome three: We have embedded the needs of more diverse groups into our work through increased engagement and consultation.

- 7.1. In 2025/26 we carried out stakeholder engagement to inform two large scale projects that will culminate in 12-week public consultations. During the evidence gathering stage for the Local Development and Land Use Plan, we ensured that demographics who are often underrepresented in planning discussions were included. Making our community engagements as accessible as possible was a key principle, with a series of local workshops held in the evenings to facilitate more people to be able to

attend. We also reached out specifically to children and young people through an interactive session at McLaren High, a focused discussion with the Access Panel representatives to understand more about the needs of people with disabilities, and an outreach session with the Gypsy Traveller community.

- 7.2. The stakeholder sessions to inform the development of the Camping Management Byelaw reviews have also been designed to be accessible, with a mix of in person sessions in the National Park, which were offered on a flexible evening and weekend calendar to best suit the participants, as well as online discussions for those unable to attend in person. The consultation for the Byelaws is due in later summer 2026/27 and the team will continue to embed accessibility through the provision of easy read versions of the consultation documents.
- 7.3. We are building our new website with a direct focus on accessibility and inclusion for our core audiences. During the discovery phase, we engaged groups representing underrepresented and marginalised communities - including women's groups, people of colour, and LGBTQ+ networks - using 'tree testing' to shape an intuitive site structure. We have since continued this engagement to gather further feedback on our recent visual prototypes. Involving these groups throughout the process is vital; it ensures our new digital platform is intentionally designed from the ground up to eliminate barriers and be welcoming to everyone we serve.
- 7.4. Looking ahead, as the project moves into the content writing phase, we will focus on developing clear Tone of Voice guidelines and a comprehensive style guide. Aligned with Scottish Government best practice, these guidelines will ensure all future website content is written in a clear, plain, and accessible way, further reducing information barriers for our users.
- 7.5. Our digital presence continues to play a vital role in advancing our equality outcomes. This period, we published 17 social media posts under the 'Inclusive Place' banner, amplifying our work around Peace Day, regional Pride events, and our collaborative nature walk with Stirling Pride. This content resonated deeply with our audience, generating 61.5k impressions and a standout 5% engagement rate. Notably, Facebook posts highlighting Glasgow Pride and Stirling Pride received the highest levels of interaction, underlining our community's strong appetite for localised, visible support of LGBTQ+ inclusion.
- 7.6. Providing Gaelic content promotes cultural inclusion by celebrating Scotland's linguistic heritage and making our digital spaces more welcoming to speakers and learners alike. We published 21 posts that generated 101.5k impressions and a 3.3% engagement rate with

overwhelmingly positive sentiment, driven by content on the history of the Loch Goil name, a Callum MacLean video, and World Gaelic Week.

7.7. Two consultancy supported reports were delivered in 2025/26, both designed to give us greater insight into the diverse communities we want to embed in our work. The first was to explore the representativeness of the Scottish adult visitors to the National Park, and compare that to the 2022 Census, with the aim of better understanding who is, or isn't, coming to the National Park. This work is currently being reviewed by officers and will inform the National Park Partnership Plan measurements of success work.

7.8. The second piece of work explored the potential for an Equality Forum for the National Park. Building upon the success of other diversity panels, such as Cairngorms National Park Authority's Equalities Advisory Panel, the consultant carried out internal and external participatory-led research to explore models for integrating more diverse voices across our work. Before this work can be taken forward, a clear position in relation to remuneration for individuals sitting on these types of forums must be considered in line with our Framework Agreement from the Scottish Government. This work is ongoing and once complete, will inform the next steps for the Equality Forum.

8. Risks

8.1. Delivery Capacity and Resourcing: There is a risk to delivery of the Equalities Outcomes programme due to the absence of dedicated resource. Delivery is currently reliant on existing staff undertaking this work alongside wider operational responsibilities, which may affect pace and capacity to deliver agreed outcomes. There is also a risk that competing organisational priorities reduce the ability to sustain strategic equalities activity over time.

8.1.1. Mitigation: Equalities work will continue to be embedded within existing governance and work planning arrangements, with priorities monitored through our established oversight mechanisms. Opportunities to align workstreams and maximise available capacity will continue to be explored.

8.2. External Political and Policy Environment: The national political and policy landscape relating to equality, diversity and inclusion continues to evolve and may impact delivery of the programme. Increasingly polarised public debate and potential policy changes may create uncertainty, challenge, or differing stakeholder expectations.

8.2.1. Mitigation: The organisation will continue to ensure that its Equality Outcomes work remains evidence-based, proportionate,

and aligned with statutory duties and organisational values, while monitoring external developments and adapting approaching where required.

9. Next steps

9.1. Continue to deliver against the Equality Outcomes across all our work in 2026/27.

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