

# 2026-27 Annual Operational Plan Progress to May (initial update)

## Agenda Item 13 – Appendix 1

### National Park Authority Board Meeting

Monday 08 June

Paper for information

#### Annual Operational Plan 2026/27: Progress to May (initial update)

Rating Key:

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| Complete | On Track | Behind Schedule | At Risk | Postponed to 2027/28 | Cancelled |
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| Reference   | AOP Deliverable  | Initial Progress Update (May)  | Rating          |
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| <b>Deliverables Coded to NPPP Chapter 1: Restoring Nature</b> |  |  |                 |
| R/A/01x   | <b>INNS Delivery Plan:</b> Deliver priority actions within the Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Delivery Plan to reduce pressures on nature.                     | Liaison underway to plan and contract programme of INNS control with river and fisheries trust partners                            | <b>On Track</b> |
| R/A/02x   | <b>Landscape Connections:</b> Deliver development-phase milestones for the Landscape Connections National Lottery Heritage Fund project.                           | New staff team in post and initial call for woodland sites complete. All programmes beginning process of planning and consultation | <b>On Track</b> |
| R/A/03x   | <b>Resilient Farm Network:</b> Establish the Resilient Farming Network, delivering whole-farm reviews and peer learning networks to support regenerative land use. | Work underway to appoint consultant and start work on baseline reviews for the three host farms.                                   | <b>On Track</b> |

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| R/A/04x  | <b>Peatland ACTION:</b> Deliver the agreed programme targets to restore peatland habitats and reduce emissions.   | The NPA are working to deliver 12 projects in 26/7 to undertake at least 782 hectares of peatland restoration. Scottish Water's delivery on their land at Loch Katrine will also continue.   | <b>On Track</b> |
| R/A/05x  | <b>Herbivore Delivery Plan:</b> Deliver priority actions from the plan with support from the steering group.  | Review of incentive scheme underway in readiness to launch new scheme for this year.   | <b>On Track</b> |
| R/A/06x  | <b>Woodland Delivery Plan:</b> Continue delivery of the plan, including forestry casework and partner coordination to enable approval of new woodland creation. | The development of several substantial woodland creation proposals continues. The EIA screening request for Glenfalloch is due to be submitted shortly.  | <b>On Track</b> |
| R/A/07x  | <b>Nature Restoration Fund:</b> Deliver agreed Nature Restoration Fund programme supporting habitat restoration and nature recovery.                            | First project proposals received and being scored and processed for delivery this year.  | <b>On Track</b> |
| B/A/01z  | <b>Influencing:</b> Influence partner infrastructure projects and strategic plans to deliver climate, nature restoration, landscape and recreation benefits.    | The A83 R&BT proposals will make further progress when a new Scottish Government Minister takes office.  | <b>N/A</b>      |
| <b>Deliverables Coded to NPPP Chapter 2: Creating a Low-Carbon Place</b> |   |  |                 |
| C/A/01x  | <b>Core Paths:</b> Maintain and enhance the Core Paths Network in line with agreed priorities to support sustainable access.                                    | Phase 2 surfacing and drainage works on the WHW between Marr Bridge and Conic Hill summit are underway – completion due June 2026.<br><br>Final snagging on the main Conic Hill path instructed.<br><br>Handrail repairs to two WHW bridges carried out following concerns raised through Access Team infrastructure survey. Major works on two bridges, plus replacement of steep timber ladder, all on WHW, planned for off-season 2026 – currently at early planning stage. | <b>On Track</b> |

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|         |   | Contractors currently on-site at WHW 'low path' at Ptarmigan, ELL, upgrading boardwalks, steps surfacing and drainage.   |                 |
| C/A/02y | <b>Mobility Partnership:</b> Establish governance arrangements for the National Park Mobility Partnership; adopt a shared Route Map so that partners can coordinate delivery of sustainable transport improvements. | Q1 meetings of the Leadership Group and Stakeholder and Insights Forum are to be held in May and June.<br><br>Finalising the draft Mobility Route Map through partner engagement. This will be presented at the June Board.  | <b>On Track</b> |
| C/A/03x | <b>Sustainable Transport:</b> Deliver priority transport pilots, studies and strategies that support development of improved sustainable transport services across the National Park..                              | Supporting Stirling Council to deliver the Trossachs Explorer alongside the new C61 and C62 bus services.<br><br>Scoping of a West Loch Lomond Shuttle Bus Pilot will continue throughout 2026/27. A decision to defer the pilot to 2027 was taken due to risks around timelines and funding.<br><br>Development of the East Loch Lomond Park & Ride Study will continue throughout 2026/27 to consider next steps through partner and stakeholder engagement. | <b>On Track</b> |
| C/A/04x | <b>Inclusive engagement:</b> Deliver inclusive engagement programmes enabling diverse audiences to learn, connect and act for nature and climate.   | Supporting Stirling Council to deliver the Trossachs Explorer alongside the new C61 and C62 bus services.<br><br>Scoping of a West Loch Lomond Shuttle Bus Pilot will continue throughout 2026/27. A decision to defer the pilot to 2027 was taken due to risks around timelines and funding.<br><br>Development of the East Loch Lomond Park & Ride Study will continue throughout 2026/27 to   | <b>On Track</b> |

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|         |  | consider next steps through partner and stakeholder engagement.  |                 |
| C/A/05x | <b>Camping Byelaw Review:</b> Deliver statutory public consultation on Camping Management Byelaw Review proposals and submit final recommendations to Ministers. | Initial Board engagement session held. Board paper, consultation pack and revised byelaws submitted to June board for approval and agreement to go ahead with public consultation. Tender for consultant for public consultation live. Statutory EQIA, DPIA and Consumer duty documents completed.   | <b>On Track</b> |
| C/A/06x | <b>Place Programme Delivery:</b> Deliver the multi-year Place Programme, including accelerated visitor recreation site projects on East and West Loch Lomond     | <p>Delivering work at Falls of Falloch, Balloch Pierhead, Tarbet and East Loch Lomond.</p> <p>Falls of Falloch: The contractor, McLaren Plant Ltd., started work on site at Falls of Falloch week commencing 6 April and the construction period will be approximately 12 weeks. The site will remain closed to the public for the duration of the work.</p> <p>Balloch Pierhead: Joint work with West Dunbartonshire Council on Phase 1 continues on the design of a New Operations Hub, pedestrian movement and paths as well as public spaces. The project team is reviewing the Consultant Team's draft design report and cost plan. Specialist surveys to support detailed design and future planning applications are progressing.</p> <p>Tarbet Phase 1 EV chargers: SSE have confirmed that they will complete the upgrade of the electricity supply to the site in July, this</p> | <b>On Track</b> |

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|         |   | <p>will allow installation of the EV chargers later this year.</p> <p>Tarbet Phase 2: The contractor for the café, Primext FM &amp; Small works Ltd., started work on site week commencing 4 May and the construction period will extend through the summer. The car park and facilities will remain open to the public for the duration of the work.</p> <p>East Loch Lomond: At Rowardennan, Phase 1 is paused whilst we work with Forestry and Land Scotland on a revised delivery timeline.</p>   |                        |
| C/A/07y | <p><b>Place Programme Development:</b> Establish a coordinated pipeline of transformational projects for future delivery through the Place Programme.</p> | <p>Engagement and support to communities and other public bodies continues with partnership working and a second year of the Place Programme Fund.</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>Positive meetings have taken place with Argyll and Bute Council around addressing site issues at Duck Bay, with Stirling Council around public toilets in Drymen.</p> <p>The second year of the Place Programme Fund will be publicised with partners in June.</p> <p>Tarbet Phase 3: Detailed design proposals are being finalised this quarter then this project will take a planned pause. As previously reported,</p> | <p><b>On Track</b></p> |

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|  |   | this work supports development of the final future phases at Tarbet to enable completion of the delivery of the site masterplan, subject to funding, in future years.   |                 |
| B/A/03x  | <b>Access:</b> Deliver Access Authority duties including maintaining the path network, facilitating the Local Access Forum and upholding access rights.     | <p>The Access Forum met in March and May. A Forum sub-group site visit in connection with an ongoing case with take place in Glen Buckie in May. Forum members have appointed their next Convenor who will take over in October.</p> <p>Casework ongoing at various locations, including Balmore (x2), Loch Lubnaig, Glen Buckie and Aberfoyle.</p> <p>Negotiations ongoing re reinstatement of John Muir Way/three Lochs Way at Gouk Hill.</p> <p>We continue to support St Fillans &amp; Lochearnhead Community Councils with the next phases of the Lochearn Railway Path.</p> | <b>N/A</b>      |
| <b>Deliverables Coded to NPPP Chapter 3: Designing a Greener Way of Living</b> |   |   |                 |
| G/A/01y  | <b>Local Development and Land Use Plan:</b> prepare a draft spatial strategy and begin work on proposed plan, including appropriate targeted engagement     | Focus has been on Call for Land, Sites and Ideas engagement and managing responses. Preliminary work undertaken to begin scoping the core elements of the spatial land use and development strategy for six sub areas.  | <b>On Track</b> |
| G/A/02x  | <b>Local Place Plans:</b> Support remaining communities to produce Local Place Plans and establish a programme supporting delivery of community priorities. | Programme of community check-ins taking place over April and May for all NP communities to confirm support needs, priorities for action and process for providing funding and other delivery support signposting.   | <b>On Track</b> |

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| G/A/03z | <p><b>Visitor Levy:</b> Engage with local authorities and stakeholders on visitor levy implementation and prepare organisational systems for compliance, including campsite collection where required.</p> | <p>Stirling Council and West Dunbartonshire Council are implementing the Visitor levy at 3% and 5% respectively. Collection will commence from 1 January 2027 for stays from 14 June 2027 in Stirling and from 1 October 2026 for stays from 1 July 2027 in West Dunbartonshire.</p> <p>Decisions on implementing the Visitor Levy remain pending for both Perth &amp; Kinross and Argyll &amp; Bute councils</p> <p>Work is underway to ensure Visitor Levy collection is embedded into the National Park's booking systems to ensure full compliance.</p>  | <b>On Track</b> |
| B/A/02x | <p><b>Planning:</b> Deliver an effective Development Management service aligned with statutory planning functions and National Planning Improvement Framework priorities.</p>                              | <p>Significant current applications in the pipeline for determination include the proposal for 66 houses at the allocated housing site in Drymen (Springfield Properties) - delayed pending negotiations on contributions to Stirling Council Education (primary school capacity).</p> <p>Pre-application engagement has commenced with proposals related to the South Callander Masterplan area. Most notably options around the new footbridge connection across the river to East Callander with the contractor appointed by Stirling Council who are funding the work. (The new primary School at the combined school campus is progressing well.)</p> <p>Work is progressing in engagement with the newly appointed Service Design specialist in the Comms team to assist develop new</p> | <b>N/A</b>      |

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|  |  | approaches to some elements of our service – in line with the aspiration of our Planning Improvement Framework Action Plan.  |                 |
| <b>Deliverables Coded to Delivering Our Corporate Plan 2025-2030</b> |  |  |                 |
| D/A/01y  | <b>Efficiencies:</b> 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. | Development of MTFP underway. Detailed session held with Exec Team and proposed scenarios and assumptions agreed. Discussions held with other NDPBs and National Parks to gather best practice.  | <b>On track</b> |
| D/S/01x  | <b>Risk Management:</b> Embed organisational risk management framework across teams and decision-making processes.   | Risk Management Framework update in draft form to be taken for approval at June Audit and Risk Committee prior to operationalisation.  | <b>On track</b> |
| D/S/02x  | <b>Process Improvement:</b> Embed procurement policy, guidance and templates, including sustainability weighting within evaluation processes.  | While initial training is integrated into G&P inductions, we are offering supplemental sessions to ensure the new policies and procedures are fully embedded   | <b>On Track</b> |
| D/A/02y  | <b>Monitoring &amp; Performance:</b> Establish internal performance tracking system aligned to NPPP and Corporate Plan priorities to support resource allocation and prioritisation                                      | Reporting meetings completed in May 2025 establishing alignment with NPPP measures of success and Corporate Plan objectives, alongside budget monitoring and AOP progress updates.   | <b>On Track</b> |
| D/P/01x  | <b>People &amp; Engagement:</b> Finalise People & Engagement Strategy and deliver Year 1 actions.  | Survey for People & Engagement Strategy complete – work has commenced on the strategy.   | <b>On Track</b> |
| D/S/03y  | <b>Digital Strategy:</b> Deliver Digital Strategy priorities including records management improvements, AI policy development and Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation.   | Work will begin on Cyber Essentials accreditations in June.<br>Work on AI policy will begin in June alongside testing of various AI functions in the wider business and structured management of back-end AI Admin tools.<br>Rolling out of Sensitivity Labels for business will begin in Q2 | <b>On Track</b> |

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| D/A/03x | <b>Estates Strategy:</b> Deliver Estates Strategy aligned with Public Service Reform priorities.  | Commenced development of our key aims for 26/27 delivery, to include the ongoing work on site management planning, legal reconciliations and disposals, Mission Zero and climate adaptation on our estate, as well as reviewing our approach to the commercial income raised through our piers and pontoons.   | <b>On Track</b>        |
| D/A/04x | <b>Engagement campaigns:</b> Deliver targeted engagement campaigns supporting National Park Partnership Plan, Corporate Plan and Gaelic Language Plan outcomes. | Communicating our role and value, foundational narrative; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultant in place for some public affairs work;</li> <li>• Local Elections Campaign;</li> <li>• CMB;</li> <li>• Trossachs Explorer</li> </ul>   | <b>On Track</b>        |
| D/S/04x | <b>New website:</b> Design, test and launch accessible beta version of the National Park Authority website.   | Project is on track. We're entering our second round of user testing in May with design prototypes, including users with accessibility needs.<br><br>Go-live of a public Beta site remains scheduled for November 2026. We are also scoping an optional private Beta phase ahead of this, which would allow us to test the working site with a controlled group of users before wider release. | <b>On Track</b>        |
| D/P/02x | <b>Equalities:</b> Deliver Year 2 actions from Equalities Outcomes 2025–29.   | Commenced development for year 2 delivery focuses, which will include the roll out of accessibility guides for public sites, enhanced accessibility through the Camping Management Byelaw review and internal review of equality forum suggestions.  | <b>On Track</b>        |
| D/A/05y | <b>Mission Zero:</b> Finalise and commence delivery of Phase 2 of our Mission Zero programme to achieve a net zero organisation by 2030.                        | Work is yet to commence in 2026/27 due to Porfoliio Manger sickness absence and Project  | <b>Behind Schedule</b> |

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|         |  | Manager vacancy. Staff resource and recruitment plan agreed and progressing.  |                        |
| D/A/06y | <b>Net Zero - Climate Adaptation:</b> Complete the National Park Authority Climate Adaptation Plan.  | Work is yet to commence in 2026/27 due to Porfoliio Manger sickness absence and Project Manager vacancy. Staff resource and recruitment plan agreed and progressing.  | <b>Behind Schedule</b> |
| D/A/07y | <b>Net Zero - Route Map:</b> Develop a draft route map outlining approach to achieving a net zero National Park.   | Work is yet to commence in 2026/27 due to Porfoliio Manger sickness absence and Project Manager vacancy. Staff resource and recruitment plan agreed and progressing.  | <b>Behind Schedule</b> |
| D/A/08x | <b>Board transition:</b> Manage governance transition following Board elections and Ministerial appointments, including induction, succession planning and governance. | Ministerial appointees confirmed and will formally join the Board in November 2026. Liaison with Stirling Council continues to deliver the local board member elections with nominations opening in May, closing in June and voting concluding on 9th July.<br><br>Governance and inductions plans are being monitored and implemented. | <b>On Track</b>        |