



Appendix 1 – Measures of Success for 2025-26 Agenda Item 12

National Park Authority Board Meeting

14 September 2026

Paper for information

Appendix 1: 2025/26 update on progress against National Park Partnership Plan measurements of success

Chapter 1: Restoring Nature		
	Measurement of success	Update
Outcome 1.1: The National Park is a natural carbon sink	1a. Track the amount of restored peatland and monitor its condition using standard protocols. More than treble the average annual rate of peatland restoration from 240ha to 840ha, achieving at least 5,900ha by 2030.	This area of work and measure is on track with 1048ha of peatland being put on the road to recovery by the National Park Authority and delivery partners in 2025/26. 10-year post-completion monitoring was undertaken on 2 projects.
	1b. Track the location, extent, and condition of the National Park's tree cover. Double the average annual rate of woodland expansion from 200ha to 400ha, focusing on priority areas.	Whilst the target for this measure was not met in 2025/26, the overall area of work is considered on track. In 2025/26, 177ha of new woodland was created over 9 sites in the National Park. However, this belies the considerable development work going on which will see future years exceed the measure to a level that will equate to an average annual delivery area for the NPPP period in excess of 400ha/yr.
Outcome 1.2: a restored landscape for nature	2a. Track the percentage of land under effective conservation and restoration management. Establish baseline and increase the percentage year on year.	The methodology for this measure is now established, and as such this year's figure should be considered the baseline. Focusing on peatland restoration project areas, Forestry and Land Scotland woodland managed for conservation and all designated sites, the baseline figure for land under effective conservation and restoration management is 22.57% of the National Park area (42,055ha).
	2b. Track completion of Herbivore Impact Assessments for all Deer Management Groups and measure average deer densities. Achieve nationally recognised target levels of average deer densities - currently a maximum of 5	This area of work is on track. Whilst there have been no new Deer Management Group (DMG) deer counts carried out in the National Park since 2024/25. We have introduced annual reviews of latest data, status and actions for each DMG to give a more nuanced picture of deer management across the Park. The Measurement of Success has been updated

	deer per km2 in woodland and a maximum of 10 deer per km2 on the open hill.	to remove Herbivore Impact Assessments because these data are not currently available due to sporadic temporal and spatial data collection across the National Park, as well as data format and sharing issues. The woodland deer density target has also been removed as it is not currently possible to count deer in woodland habitats.
Outcome 1.3: an exemplar of regenerative	3. Track the number of pilot regenerative farming projects in the National Park and complete pilots on 5 land holdings by 2030.	There is no report against this measure for 2025/26 as this work area was delayed due to NPA staffing changes and recruitment for a role to deliver the Resilient Farmer's Network. However, resource was appointed at the start of 2026, and the pilots were instigated in 2026/27.

Chapter 2: Low-Carbon Place		
	Measurement of success	Update
Outcome 2.1: a place for all to enjoy safely and responsibly	2.1a Measure participation in and impact of Volunteering, Outdoor Learning and Youth Action programmes.	This area of work is on track. Overall in 2025/26, across all our volunteer, outdoor learning, inclusion and youth action programmes, we engaged a total of 2,518 unique people, totalling an estimated 23,140 engagement hours. We had 195 active volunteers who delivered 13,013.5 hours of volunteering across 597 opportunities. We supported a total of 92 schools and 2,058 young people through our outdoor learning programme, and 21 groups comprising of 244 participants through our outreach nature connection programme. 17 young people participated in our Junior Ranger programme, engaging with 23 different events and dedicating 672.5 hours to supporting the NPA. A further 10 young people took part in Youth Committee activities.
	2.1b Measure the number of people visiting the National Park every year. Track how representative our domestic visitors are of Scottish society.	The Moffat Centre report indicates that annual visits to the park have increased minimally to 4.544m 2025. This is comparable to numbers seen in 2024 and +1.13% higher than visitors recorded in 2019.

	Regarding visitor representativeness, the methodology for this measure is now established, and as such this year's figure should be considered the baseline. For this National Park Partnership Plan, we are now utilising the national Scottish People and Nature Survey as the data source, in place of the previously used visitor survey. Managed by NatureScot, this survey provides national trends of outdoor recreation, and from the 2025/26 survey we have a subgroup of responses of those people whose last visit was in the National Park. Note, due to the change in methodology, we are unable to draw a trend against our previous reporting, so this report should be seen as the baseline for the NPPP. Utilising the SPANS data set also limits us to triennial reporting, as opposed annual, so the next update will be from the 2026/27 national survey. National Park visitors, against national responses to the SPANS survey: - Are younger on average, with higher proportions ages 16-35 (47%) and fewer aged 55+ - Have a higher proportion reporting 'very good' health (27% vs 18% in SPANS total population) and fewer reporting limiting long-term conditions or disabilities - Are more ethnically diverse, with representation from minority ethnic groups above national levels (11% BAME visitors to the National Park vs 6% in SPANS total population) - Are equally balanced male to female - Have a higher proportion from the most deprived SIMD decile (17% vs 12% for the SPANS total population) – however, more describe themselves as very financially comfortable (14% NP vs 7% SPANS total population) - Urban visitors are overrepresented, particularly from Glasgow and surrounding areas (51% in 'large urban areas' vs 41% in SPANS total population) - Report higher nature connectedness
--	--

Outcome 2.2: high quality visitor infrastructure and facilities	2.2 Track the investment in and completion of priority visitor infrastructure projects as part of our Place Programme and across the recreation path network.	This area of work and measure is on track. There were zero completed priority visitor infrastructure projects (works are in progress to complete in 2026/27), and three completed strategic recreation path network projects (two sections of Lochearnhead Railway Path; NCN 7 Barrier Reduction near Kilmahog; Aber Bridge, Gartocharn) in 2025/26. Investment in Year 2 2025/26 was £600,000, comprised of £500,000 visitor infrastructure and £100,000 strategic recreation path network. Investment is reported to the nearest £100,000; audit work remains ongoing and figures could be subject to further change.
---	--	---

Outcome 2.3: an inclusive, low-carbon travel network	2.3 Monitor rural transport provision. Reduce transport emissions from travel to and from the National Park by at least 61% from the 2019 baseline by 2030.	This area of work and measure is on track following development of the methodology in 2025/26. A baseline was not reported in 2025 while the methodology was still being developed. However, as data for the measure had to be requested from external transport operators and authorities, the 2026 data collection provided an opportunity to retrospectively establish a 2025 baseline and demonstrate change in 2026. Data captures the number of public transport services (including bus and rail services), service frequency (number of bus and rail journeys) and capacity (number of seats on bus and rail services). Key findings: • <u>Services</u>: Public transport services increased by four compared with 2025 (17% increase), including new Ember services E16 and E14 and Stirling Council services C61 and C62. • <u>Frequency</u>: Total weekly service frequency increased by 172 in the peak period (6% increase) and 310 in the off-peak period (12% increase) compared with 2025, with increases evident in Sunday services provided by coach operators Citylink and Ember. • <u>Capacity</u>: Service capacity increased by 6,148 in the peak period (1% increase) and 10,490 in the off-peak period (2% increase) compared with 2025. This increase was attributed to bus capacity, with rail capacity unchanged. This indicator will likely evolve through the NP Mobility Partnership's Digital and Data Working Group.
--	--	---

Chapter 3: Designing a Greener Way of Living		
	Measurement of success	Update
Outcome 3.1: a greener and more diverse rural economy	3.1 Track new or expanded numbers of the jobs and skills development opportunities necessary to support transition to a nature positive and carbon negative National Park economy, including public transportation, regenerative agriculture, peatland and water restoration, woodland creation and management, and sustainable tourism. Establish baseline and increase year on year.	The methodology for this measure is now established, and as such this year's figure should be considered the baseline. The methodology utilises the most current data from the Office of National Statistics' Business Register and Employment Survey, providing insight into the largest employing sectors within the National Park. In addition to the largest employing sectors, we have also adopted NatureScot's methodology to estimate the number of the total that are particularly nature-based. As this methodology is not the same as the one used to present insight in last year's report, we cannot infer a trend from that report to this one. Utilising the most current 2024 data, the largest employing sectors in the National Park were: • Accommodation and food service activities (3,285 people / 40%) • Arts, entertainment and recreation (770 people / 9%) • Wholesale and retail trade (730 people / 9%) • Education (585 people / 7%) • Human health and social work activities (500 people / 6%) • Construction (470 people / 6%) • Agriculture, forestry and fishing (235 people / 3%) Utilising NatureScot's 2020 weighting methodology to get an estimate of the number of particularly nature-focused jobs within the National Park, of the total estimated 8,175 jobs within the National Park, 1,412 or 17% are considered particularly nature-based.
Outcome 3.2: more...	3.2a Track action by National Park communities to reduce their carbon footprint, restore nature and	The methodology for this measure is now established, and as such this year's figure should be considered the baseline. In subsequent years

	become more resilient to the impacts of climate change. All communities to have implemented actions by 2029.	we will be able to report more fully on actions taken. In 2025/26 we had 15 validated and registered Local Place Plans created by communities across the National Park. The priorities for action within these plans have been grouped by the themes of the NPPP. Of which, there are 68 priorities for restoring nature, 284 for low carbon place and 329 for greener way of living. The types of action prioritised under ‘Nature Positive’ include habitat management and increasing public access & understanding through interpretation. Those under ‘Low Carbon Space’ include sustainable travel and recreation infrastructure improvements. Under ‘Greener Way of Living’ there are a wide range of priorities to improve infrastructure, both physical and service provision. In 2025-26 communities have been delivering most strongly against greener way of living priorities, with progress such as: investigating the opportunity for a community owned Centre for Rural Learning and Skills; supporting capacity building and communications across community organisations; carrying out feasibility studies; looking at vacant and derelict land opportunities within the area; permanent toilet facilities, and green space/ play/ gather space for young people; commencing building works for affordable housing development; piloting a shop in the Village Hall and completing a bike skills park. Examples of progress against low-carbon place actions include much of the development and joint partnership work through both the McLaren Communities Futures group and the Southwest Stirling group, both of which have the support of the Scottish Government funded Community Climate Action Hubs. Communities have also been delivering fewer but significant initiatives for restoring nature. Examples include ownership and management
--	---	--

		of 'The Field' in Kinlochard and recruitment of project manager to support capacity and start to develop their community food growing/ nature restoration aims, and invasive species management and survey of the River Goil for flood mitigation and increasing biodiversity.
	3.2b Track the number of affordable new homes built, homes brought back into use as housing for local people, and numbers of second, holiday and Short Term Lets. Secure higher build rates than the minimum target of 30 new homes per year identified by NPF4, where evidenced as necessary to help address local housing needs and the rural economy.	Completions data for this reporting period is currently still being analysed and is not yet available for reporting. Approvals data is therefore used as an indication of development activity in relation to open market and affordable housing. 47 homes were approved during the annual reporting period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. Of these: • 40 are open market housing • 7 are affordable housing At the time of drafting the 2025 Evidence Report for the Local Development and Land Use Plan, it was identified that 799 short-term let licences had been granted since the licensing scheme was introduced in October 2023. Work is underway to prepare a new Local Development & Land Use Plan and the existing data on the numbers of short-term lets, empty homes, second homes, where available, will be collated and interrogated to inform this work. An example to note is the redevelopment of the former Torpedo Testing Site, by Arrochar, which is an allocated site for 'visitor experience' within the current Local Development Plan. The approved proposal is for mixed use, visitor accommodation with leisure development. This proposal will bring a long derelict site into positive use. The influence of the Development Management team has secured a biodiversity enhancement plan that will include woodland management and offsite compensatory woodland planting. Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) are to be removed, and extensive native planting will take place to create nature networks.

Outcome 3.3: a responsive approach to new development	3.3 Measure the nature restoration and net zero outputs secured through delivering new development, including biodiversity net gains on and offsite.	The methodology for this measure is in development, but we are able to report a baseline this year. The National Park at present is working on several options for measuring the nature restoration secured through the Development Management team's influence on delivering new development. The development management planners consult with the natural heritage advisors on development proposals (in planning applications) where there are opportunities for nature restoration, enhancement and species and habitat protection. For the financial year 2025/26, this has resulted in around 75 nature restoration focused planning conditions being applied to planning permissions which have been granted. It is not possible at this stage to provide an exact number of planning conditions for all developments because not all decisions are subject to a consultation with the Natural Heritage advisors - but by analysing the decision notices for 59 planning applications that were subject to consultation, it has been possible to provide the following data. It is important to recognise that this is a snapshot of data and an accurate means for recording this data will need to be established. We continue to work on this methodology to take account of all permissions granted. The conditions applied were across the following themes: - Protection of protected species, covering otters, bats, breeding birds and salmon, as well as sea mammals (17 conditions applied) - Removal of invasive non-native species, covering rhododendron (2 conditions applied) - Tree protection and woodland management, which included a condition for off-site woodland planting (13 conditions applied)
---	---	--

		- Biodiversity enhancement plans, to be approved by the Planning Authority (29 conditions applied) - Protection of water quality (10 conditions applied) - Protection of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (4 conditions applied).
--	--	--