

2026-27 Annual Operational Plan Progress to August

Agenda Item 13 – Appendix 1

National Park Authority Board Meeting

Monday 14 September

Paper for information

Annual Operational Plan 2026/27: Progress to August

Rating Key:

Complete	On Track	Behind Schedule	At Risk	Postponed to 2027/28	Cancelled
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Reference	AOP Deliverable	Progress Update (August)	Rating
Deliverables Coded to NPPP Chapter 1: Restoring Nature			
R/A/01x	INNS Delivery Plan: Deliver priority actions within the Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Delivery Plan to reduce pressures on nature.	All work for this year now contracted and control work underway.	On Track
R/A/02x	Landscape Connections: Deliver development-phase milestones for the Landscape Connections National Lottery Heritage Fund project.	Development work progressing well. Regular reporting on all programmes through Initiative steering group and Programme Board.	On Track
R/A/03x	Resilient Farm Network: Establish the Resilient Farming Network, delivering whole-farm reviews and peer learning networks to support regenerative land use.	Consultant now appointed and host farms signed up. First networking event took place at Balloch on 19th August and programme of events being developed for rest of the year.	On Track

R/A/04x	Peatland ACTION: Deliver the agreed programme targets to restore peatland habitats and reduce emissions.	One project is in delivery, 3 more are ready to go and one is out to tender. Development of 8 others is continuing. This includes the trial use of contractors to develop a restoration project and trialling joint work with Forestry and Land Scotland on 3 projects. The new Project Development Officer is now in post to help improve our understanding of the peatlands in the NP and ramp up our outreach work with new landowners.	On Track
R/A/05x	Herbivore Delivery Plan: Deliver priority actions from the plan with support from the steering group.	New schemes launched. 15 applications received so far for Deer Managers Training Grant (DMTG); 37 received for Deer Management Incentive Scheme (DMIS). 13 NRF applications relate to deer management.	On Track
R/A/06x	Woodland Delivery Plan: Continue delivery of the plan, including forestry casework and partner coordination to enable approval of new woodland creation.	Large woodland creation proposals continue to be processed. Scottish Forestry have received objections to two, which may impact delivery if not resolved. An Integrated Tree Networks farm event is being arranged for September.	On Track
R/A/07x	Nature Restoration Fund: Deliver agreed Nature Restoration Fund programme supporting habitat restoration and nature recovery.	Budget almost fully allocated and contracting progressing well. £1.2M cap and £400K rev awarded for 26-27, £1.136M cap and £390K rev allocated, £64K cap and £10K rev left in budget. So far: 10 agreements signed, 5 being drafted/checked, 7 approved and needing drafted, 5 expecting to be approved soon.	On Track
B/A/01z	Influencing: Influence partner infrastructure projects and strategic plans to deliver climate, nature restoration, landscape and recreation benefits.	The A83 R&BT proposals are still being considered by Scottish Government. Discussions have continued with SSEN and FLS about the discharge of planning conditions	Not RAG Rated

		for the Loch Long to Dunoon Transmission line. The Energy Consent Unit has issued consent for the Sloy pump storage hydro scheme.	
Deliverables Coded to NPPP Chapter 2: Creating a Low-Carbon Place			
C/A/01x	Core Paths: Maintain and enhance the Core Paths Network in line with agreed priorities to support sustainable access.	Phase 2 work on the West Highland Way between Marr Bridge and Conic Hill summit predominantly completed end of June.	On Track
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.	Establish governance arrangements Q2 meeting of the Stakeholder and Insights Forum was held in August with presentations from Community Transport Association, Climate Action Hubs and Countryside Trust. Representation on this forum continues to evolve. The Q2 meeting of the Leadership Group has been moved to November due to partner availability and continuing work on actions. Presenting at Regional Transport Partner Tactran's Board Meeting in September on the Mobility Route Map. Continuing to engage the wider network including Glasgow City Region Bus Alliance, Tayside Bus Alliance and Mini Switzerland in the Peak District. Adopt a shared Route Map This was achieved in June. Work to raise visibility of the Mobility Route Map continues.	On Track

C/A/03x	Sustainable Transport: Deliver priority transport pilots, studies and strategies that support development of improved sustainable transport services across the National Park..	Delivery of pilots Continuing to support Stirling Council's Connecting Community bus services. Hosted Mark Ruskell MSP and Councillor Alistair Tollemache on the Trossachs Explorer in August. Work to develop a West Loch Lomond Shuttle Bus for 2027 will begin in the autumn. Delivery of studies and strategies Ongoing discussions with partners and local stakeholders on ambitions for and developments on East Loch Lomond (including bus travel, car park operations, mobility hub and water travel). Procuring a consultant to deliver the Water Transport and Integration Study as part of Landscape Connections. This received 39 notes of interest and 8 bids. Inception meeting is due to take place in September.	On Track
C/A/04x	Inclusive engagement: Deliver inclusive engagement programmes enabling diverse audiences to learn, connect and act for nature and climate.	Summer delivery well underway with a full Volunteer Ranger calendar, with VRs out engaging people across the National Park. Second year delivery of our 'Awe Aye' nature photography has been well received, alongside delivery of our first nature connection sessions through the CEMVO MCAS lottery funded programme. The summer for these two projects will culminate in our second annual Peace Day celebrations in Balloch Country Park. A youth exchange with Northern Irish counterparts is planned, with a cohort visiting	On Track

		the National Park to meet with Youth Committee members to discuss youth action in protected landscapes. This will be followed by a reciprocal trip of 2 of our YC delegates visiting Northern Ireland.	
C/A/05x	Camping Byelaw Review: Deliver statutory public consultation on Camping Management Byelaw Review proposals and submit final recommendations to Ministers.	Public consultation on byelaws is ongoing until 18 Sep with a good level of engagement/responses. Work with external consultants is going well and an interim report based on responses to date is expected by the end of Aug. Two consultant-led public-facing consultation engagement sessions were successfully delivered. Project is currently within agreed budgets and being monitored. Overall health of the project is good. Team are working well and focussed. Milestones are being reached in good time in line with planning.	On Track
C/A/06x	Place Programme Delivery: Deliver the multi-year Place Programme, including accelerated visitor recreation site projects on East and West Loch Lomond	Delivering work at Falls of Falloch, Balloch Pierhead, Tarbet and East Loch Lomond. Falls of Falloch: Works were completed on site in June as planned, and the site reopened to the public on 1 July 2026. 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 still reviewing the Consultant Team's draft design report and cost	On Track

		plan. Specialist surveys to support detailed design and future planning applications have progressed. Tarbet Phase 1 EV chargers: SSE rescheduled completion of the upgrade of the electricity supply to the site to August; this work will allow installation of the EV chargers later this year. Tarbet Phase 2: Works continue on site and will extend into September. The car park and facilities remain open to the public, and, to date, works have progressed with minimal impact on operations. Changing Places toilet work is out to tender. East Loch Lomond: At Rowardennan, Phase 1 is currently paused whilst we work with Forestry and Land Scotland on a revised delivery timeline.	
C/A/07y	Place Programme Development: Establish a coordinated pipeline of transformational projects for future delivery through the Place Programme.	Engagement and support to communities and other public bodies continues with partnership working and a second year of the Place Programme Fund. Partnership working continues to be progressed focused on East Loch Lomond, Arrochar, Balloch and Callander, with a community led focus in Callander, Arrochar. We continue to work with Argyll and Bute Council around addressing site issues at Duck Bay and the Council are in the process of	On Track

		appointing a consultant to develop a masterplan for the site. The second year of the Place Programme Fund has been publicised with partners and the deadline for full applications for spend this year is 1 September 2026. Tarbet Phase 3: This project is paused as planned, with further work on a funding package to take place in 2027. As previously reported, this work supports development of the final future phases at Tarbet to enable completion of the delivery of the masterplan, subject to funding, in future years.	
B/A/03x	Access: Deliver Access Authority duties including maintaining the path network, facilitating the Local Access Forum and upholding access rights.	Casework ongoing at various locations, including Balmore (x2), Loch Lubnaig, Glen Buckie and Aberfoyle. Negotiations ongoing re reinstatement of John Muir Way/three Lochs Way at Gouk Hill. We continue to support St Fillans & Lochearnhead Community Councils with the next phases of the Lochearn Railway Path.	Not RAG Rated
Deliverables Coded to NPPP Chapter 3: Designing a Greener Way of Living			
G/A/01y	Local Development and Land Use Plan: prepare a draft spatial strategy and begin work on proposed plan, including appropriate targeted engagement	Initial Site Assessments (desk based) and Site Visits completed for all sites received for consideration. Preparation for Stage Two Site Assessment undertaken, including targeted engagement to support identification of potential sites for inclusion in the new LDLUP and preparation of new spatial strategy.	On Track

G/A/02x	Local Place Plans: Support remaining communities to produce Local Place Plans and establish a programme supporting delivery of community priorities.	Balloch Local Place Plan is complete and East Loch Lomond is finalising their plan for consultation. Check Ins completed with Community Development Trusts to clarify early priorities and identify capacity needs. Local Place Plan Delivery Fund Expressions of Interest issued in June.	On Track
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.	Participation in Visitor Levy Advisory Forums for Stirling and West Dunbartonshire Councils has been established for the NPA. Both authorities have also introduced dedicated resources to help accommodation providers collect and remit the fee. The NPA also sits on the Shadow Visitor Levy Advisory forum for Argyll & Bute. Perth & Kinross and Argyll & Bute local authorities are both currently undergoing legally mandated consultation periods for amended Visitor Levy proposals of a flat rate fee rather than a percentage. Results of these consultations will go before respective elected members in November, to discuss findings and decide on implementation. Stirling Council are currently developing a programme of works to ensure businesses are able to collect the levy.	On Track
B/A/02x	Planning: Deliver an effective Development Management service aligned with statutory planning functions and National Planning Improvement Framework priorities.	Springfield housing application remains to be determined - there has been some meaningful negotiation between the applicant and Stirling Council as Education Authority to enable	Not RAG Rated

		progress toward presenting a recommendation to our Planning and Access Committee The footbridge project in Callander continues to progress – although not submitted as an application for planning permission. Discussions continue with prospective developers of housing at the adjacent south Callander masterplan area to ensure provision is addressed for footpath links to the new bridge. Our recently appointed service design specialist continues to add great value in assisting implement tweaks to the Development Management service – picking up on the lead provided by the PIF Action Plan. Including ‘testing and feedback loops’ to ensure that adjustments – such as those made to our Pre-application inquiry form - have been worthwhile.	
Deliverables Coded to Delivering Our Corporate Plan 2025-2030			
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.	Focus in the last quarter has been on understanding Public Service Reform priorities and translating what this means for LLTNPA. Scottish Government confirmed no Medium Term Financial Strategy will be published in 2026 as such awaiting further details on Programme for Government and accompanying fiscal statement which is due in September. Once this is published, the MTFP assumptions will be updated and reviewed by	On track

		the Exec Team and next steps for presenting a final plan for approval will be laid out.	
D/S/01x	Risk Management: Embed organisational risk management framework across teams and decision-making processes.	Risk and Issue Management Framework update reviewed and approved by Audit and Risk Committee in June 2026 prior to operationalisation.	On track
D/S/02x	Process Improvement: Embed procurement policy, guidance and templates, including sustainability weighting within evaluation processes.	A new training programme is planned for the second half of the year and launches in the Autumn with a session on bid evaluation. We have successfully embedded community benefit realisation into two active tenders on Public Contracts Scotland. Additionally, our sustainability evaluation and award criteria now focus on two core elements: how a bidder operates, and their specific proposals for the contract.	On Track
D/A/02y	Monitoring & Performance: Establish internal performance tracking system aligned to NPPP and Corporate Plan priorities to support resource allocation and prioritisation	Planning engagement with partners following the September Board, utilizing the insights gathered from reflecting on delivery progress so far and the measures of success. Corporate Plan delivery progress assessment underway as part of existing tracking system.	On Track
D/P/01x	People & Engagement: Finalise People & Engagement Strategy and deliver Year 1 actions.	People & Engagement Survey complete. Best Companies survey due in September to further inform strategy and engagement.	On Track
D/S/03y	Digital Strategy: Deliver Digital Strategy priorities including records management improvements, AI policy development and Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation.	Cyber Essentials plus questionnaire returned: awaiting outcome. Work on AI policy begun. Meeting with departments to discuss usage and application of policy. Sensitivity Labels in progress, but roll out has not started. Exec agreement still required.	On Track

D/A/03x	Estates Strategy: Deliver Estates Strategy aligned with Public Service Reform priorities.	Commercial income paper developed for consultation with key stakeholders at the end of the visitor season. Site Management Plan draft progressing well – internal discussions on the templates to start in September. Work to align Site Risk Assessments and Visitor Risk Assessments into one streamlined document underway. Lease advertised for new cafe in Tarbet – Inveruglas cafe to follow shortly. All statutory and planned preventative maintenance activities are on track.	On Track
D/A/04x	Engagement campaigns: Deliver targeted engagement campaigns supporting National Park Partnership Plan, Corporate Plan and Gaelic Language Plan outcomes.	Public affairs strategic planning work is almost complete with an engagement plan for the remainder of 26/27 in place, a core narrative and engagement materials. Initial outreach to new elected representatives has delivered strong engagement to date with visits to the NP secured with Alyn Smith, Sjim Fairlie, Gillian Martin, Mark Ruskell, Malcolm Offord and Helen McDade. Proactive media engagement throughout the year has provided an opportunity to land clear and consistent messaging about our role and value, with coverage supporting public reassurance and education on jet skis and water safety, the role of our board via the local elections campaign and deer management via	On Track

		our herbivore positioning statement and delivery plan, for example. Local elections campaign complete.	
D/S/04x	New website: Design, test and launch accessible beta version of the National Park Authority website.	Project delivery remains On Track. The site build is complete, core team CMS training is finished, and we have entered User Acceptance Testing (UAT). Final content checks and document library migration happening, ahead of the main priority content upload phase in September. To ensure quality and accessibility, we are preparing a Private Beta testing phase with staff, volunteers, and targeted user groups from October - December. Scoping for the private beta phase is complete and currently subject to approval of additional capital budget. Without this additional funding, testing with users prior to public beta launch would be limited. All work would be delivered before the end of FY 26/27. Based on this timeline, the public beta site would launch Feb 2027.	On Track
D/P/02x	Equalities: Deliver Year 2 actions from Equalities Outcomes 2025–29.	Continued delivery of the previously mentioned priorities, with a remuneration policy being drafted for discussion with Exec, which will support future implementation of an equality forum.	On Track
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.	Delivery currently severely impacted due to key staff absence and unsuccessful recruitment. Exec Team members are in the process of reviewing staffing options, re-deploying internal	Behind Schedule

		staff capacity and commencing a re-recruitment exercise.	
D/A/06y	Net Zero - Climate Adaptation: Complete the National Park Authority Climate Adaptation Plan.	By allocating staff resource from Nature & Land Use Team drafting of plan is on track.	On Track
D/A/07y	Net Zero - Route Map: Develop a draft route map outlining approach to achieving a net zero National Park.	By allocating staff resource from Communities Team drafting of the route map is on track.	On Track
D/A/08x	Board transition: 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. Locally-elected direct elections concluded successfully on 9th July, returned by Stirling Council, resulting in 3 re-elected Members and 2 new Members. Induction process underway and progressing well. Interim governance arrangements to be presented to September Board.	On Track