

Committee Leadership Positions – Interim Governance Arrangements

Agenda Item 5

National Park Authority Board Meeting
14 September 2026

Paper for decision

1.	Purpose	1
2.	Recommendation(s).....	1
3.	Contribution to NPP and/or Our Corporate Plan	1
4.	Background.....	2
5.	Board Change and Proposed Interim Arrangements	4
6.	Risks	6
7.	Next steps.....	6

1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of this agenda item is to provide members with the context and information relating to how changes to Board membership impact on Committee Leadership positions and seek approval for the outlined interim governance arrangements pending the holding of elections at the March 2027 Board meeting.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. To **approve** the interim governance arrangements for the committee leadership positions as set out at 5.4 and 5.5 to operate until the holding of elections at the March 2027 Board meeting.

2.2. To **note** the previously approved interim governance arrangements for the Convener and Depute Convener positions set out at 4.5.

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

- 3.1. Ensuring that committee leadership positions are filled in line with the relevant processes and that there is appropriate membership of committees/groups which allows them to function effectively supports good governance which underpins all Outcomes and Priorities of the National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029 and Our Corporate Plan 2025-2030.

4. Background

- 4.1. The current Convener (Dr Heather Reid) was appointed at the December 2025 Board Meeting on a three-year term (in accordance with the Standing Orders).
- 4.2. The current Depute Convener (Cllr Martin Earl) was appointed at the December 2025 Board Meeting on a three-year term (in accordance with the Standing Orders).
- 4.3. Appointments to all other Board governance positions (see table below) were last undertaken and approved at the December 2024 Board Meeting on a two-year basis, due for re-appointment at the December 2026 Board Meeting.

Term	Role	Appointee	End of Board Appointment Period
December 2024 to December 2026 (or end of appointment period, whichever is earliest)	Chair of Planning and Access Committee	Claire Chapman	31 October 2026
	Depute Chair of Planning and Access Committee	Richard Johnson	9 July 2026
	Chair of Audit and Risk Committee	Ronnie Erskine	31 October 2026
	Depute Chair of Audit and Risk Committee	David Mackie	July 2030
	Chair of Futures Group	Sarah Drummond	31 October 2026
	Depute Chair of Futures Group	Shonny Paterson	July 2030
	Countryside Trust Representative	Christopher Spray	31 October 2026
	Local Access Forum Representative	David Fettes	July 2030

4.4. Committee Membership makeup (see table below) was last undertaken and approved at the December 2024 Board Meeting on a two-year basis, due for re-consideration at the December 2026 Board Meeting. (Subsequent approval was given to add Mark Irvine to Planning and Access Committee following his nomination to the Board by Argyll & Bute Council). Members in square brackets have since left the Board. Members marked with an asterisk will leave the Board on 31 October 2026.

Planning and Access Committee	Audit and Risk Committee	Futures Group
Claire Chapman* Chris Spray* Martin Earl Hazel Sorrell David Fettes David Mackie [Richard Johnson] Colin Lee Shonny Paterson Mark Irvine	Ronnie Erskine* Maurice Corry David Mackie Martin Earl Chris Spray*	Sarah Drummond* Gerry McGarvey Rhona Brock Shonny Paterson [Sid Perrie]

4.5. Board approved a paper at the December 2025 meeting setting out the interim governance arrangements for the position of Convener and Depute Convener as below:

Leadership Term	Role	Holder	Board Term End Date (*potential to continue)	Proposed Interim Arrangement (if required)
December 2025 to December 2028 (or end of appointment period, whichever is earliest)	Convener	Heather Reid	31 October 2026	Depute Convener to assume Convener duties from November 2026 to March 2027 when elections will take place, allowing newly appointed Board Members the opportunity to complete their inductions and consider standing for leadership positions.
December 2025 to December 2028 (or end of appointment period, whichever is earliest)	Depute Convener	Martin Earl	September 2027*	Election to be held at September 2027 Board Meeting (only applicable in the case that holder does not continue to hold a Board Position)

5. Board Change and Proposed Interim Arrangements for Board Governance

5.1. The election of five Locally-elected Board Members concluded on Thursday 9 July 2026 – a process overseen by Stirling Council as the Returning Officer. Three Members were re-elected through this process, and two new Members were elected.

5.2. Five of our six Ministerially appointed Members will come to the end of their terms on 31 October 2026. As they have all served the maximum two terms, this will result in five Board Members to change from this date. The Scottish Government recruitment process for the appointment of new Board Members concluded in early 2026 and the new Members will assume their roles from 1 November 2026.

5.3. There will be Scottish Local Authority elections in May 2027. There is the potential for up to six Local Authority-nominated Board Members to change later in the year, following on from those elections.

5.4. It is proposed that the election of Committee Leadership Positions be postponed by one Board Meeting to March 2027 (moved from December 2026 as per 4.3 above) for the following reasons:

- 5.4.1. To allow all new Members to complete their internal induction sessions prior to the nomination period for leadership positions.
- 5.4.2. To allow all new Members to complete their external, Scottish Government-mandated *On Board* training prior to the nomination period for leadership positions.
- 5.4.3. To allow Committee Membership to be agreed at the December 2026 meeting (as per 4.4 above), enabling new Members to join committees in line with their stated preferences prior to the nomination period for leadership positions.

5.5. The proposed interim governance arrangements for committee leadership positions are set out in the table below. It is anticipated that for each committee or group below, approximately two meetings will be held under the proposed interim arrangement

Leadership Role	Incumbent	End of Appointment to position	Interim Arrangement Until Committee Leadership Elections (March 2027)
Chair of Planning and Access Committee	Claire Chapman	31 October 2026	Depute Convener of the Board to assume Chair Duties from the end of the current Chair's tenure <i>(subject to approval by Members of PAC prior to each meeting held, in line with PAC Standing Orders)</i>
Depute Chair of Planning and Access Committee	Richard Johnson	9 July 2026	Vacant
Chair of Audit and Risk Committee	Ronnie Erskine	31 October 2026	Depute Chair's appointment to be extended to 8 th March 2027 with them assuming Chair Duties from the end of the current Chair's tenure
Depute Chair of Audit and Risk Committee	David Mackie	7 December 2026	Extended to March 2027
Chair of Futures Group	Sarah Drummond	31 October 2026	Depute Chair's appointment to be extended to 8 th March 2027 with

			them assuming Chair Duties from the end of the current Chair's tenure
Depute Chair of Futures Group	Shonny Paterson	7 December 2026	Extended to March 2027
Countryside Trust Representative	Chris Spray	31 October 2026	Vacant November 2026 – March 2027 (<i>relationship to be maintained and managed by Director of Environment and Visitor Services</i>)
Local Access Forum Representative	Davy Fettes	7 December 2026	Extended to March 2027

6. Risks

- 6.1. There is an organisational governance risk associated with failing to ensure elected interim Board leadership which allows the Board and Committees to function effectively and provide appropriate strategic leadership to the organisation.

7. Next steps

- 7.1. Committee membership will be next updated at the Board Meeting of December 2026; preference forms will be circulated to Members in advance
- 7.2. A nomination period for Committee Leadership Positions will open in January 2027, following the conclusion of all induction activities for new Members and the completion of Committee membership
- 7.3. Proposed appointments – with elections as required – will be put to Members for approval at the March 2027 meeting of the Board. Any competitive elections will be decided by a secret ballot as per the Standing Orders.

Author(s): Douglas Smith, Corporate Performance Manager and Proper Officer
Executive Sponsor: Gordon Watson, Chief Executive Officer