

Annual Operational Plan 2016-17

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Introduction

The National Park Authority Annual Operational Plan 2016-17 sets out our priorities for delivery for the year. Specifically, it sets out:

- what we intend to do
- what we intend to achieve and
- how we will measure and report on our performance, over the coming year.

This Annual Operational Plan is prepared during a significant year of change for the National Park. It sets out what the National Park Authority will do during 2016-17 to deliver the current National Park Partnership Plan (2012-17), now in its final year. An important task for 2016-17 will be to prepare a new Partnership Plan looking towards the next five year period setting out new priorities for the Park Authority and its partners, taking account of changing national priorities, while responding to local issues and opportunities.

For 2016-17 there are a number of specific drivers for change that have shaped our priorities, these are:

- **Your Park** – Most significant this year for the Park Authority is the prioritisation of resources to ensure the successful delivery of Your Park following approval by Scottish Ministers to introduce camping bylaws with four Camping Management Zones from March 2017.
- **Climate Change** – National Parks are regarded as major players in the drive to tackle climate change and contribute to achieving national targets with the imperative that the Public Sector leads by example.
- **Public Sector Reform:** partnership/prevention/people/performance – The focus is on putting people and communities at the centre of delivery and policy making. At the same time it helps ensure that public services are sustainable in the face of a challenging financial climate and that public services make the best use of technology.
- **Partnerships** – more than ever before, there is a determination to work smarter between public bodies and with the Third Sector. With our key partners, particularly within the Rural Affairs, Food and Environment (RAFE) Directorate, the four Local Authorities that cover the Park, Cairngorms National Park Authority and our other National Park Partnership Plan partners we will be integral to leading or supporting transformational change.
- **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015** – This Act aims to encourage decision making at community level. It will give communities more powers to take on land and buildings and to have a say on how their services are delivered. The Act aims to increase the pace and scale of public service reform through a focus on outcomes and community planning partnerships. It includes new statutory duties for National Park Authorities and will further influence our work through new duties for our Public Sector partners and new rights for our communities.

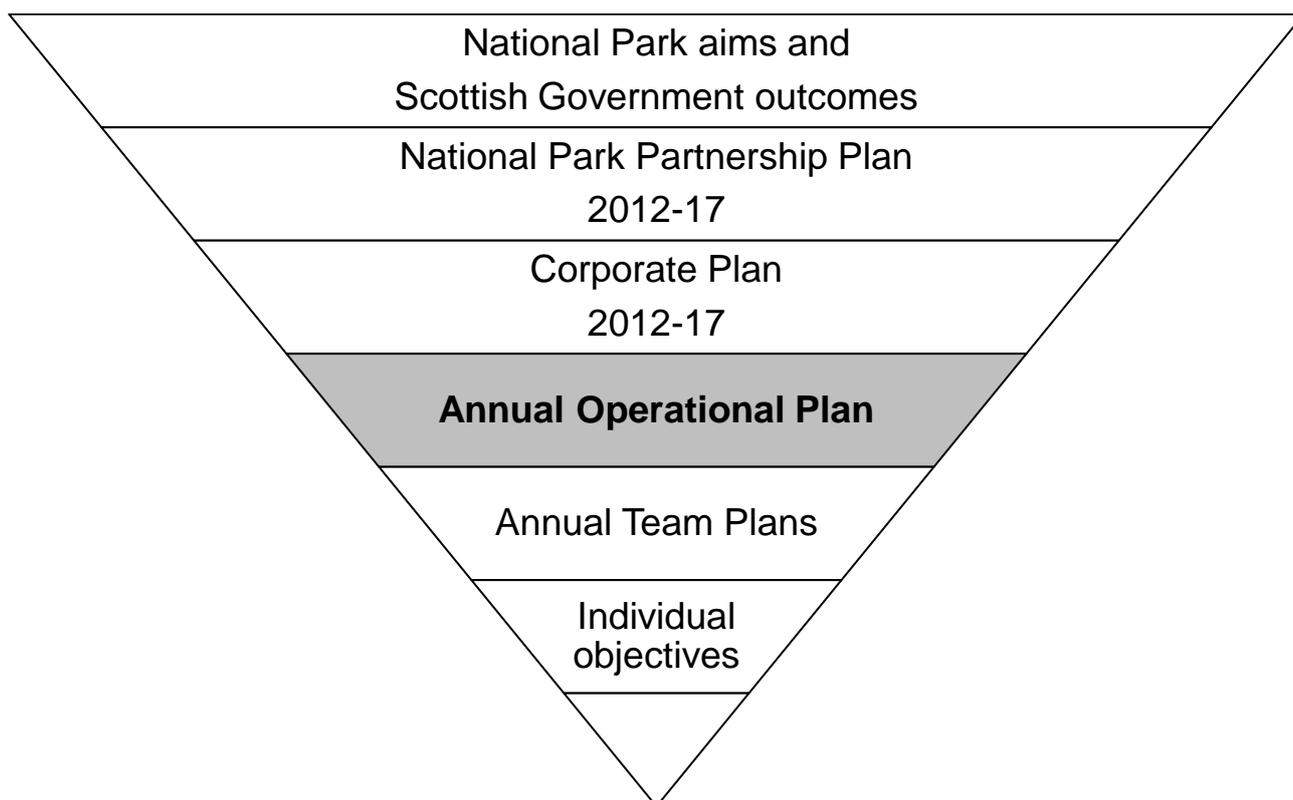
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In the context of delivering against Public Service Reform and declining budgets, we will continue to effectively manage our finances, prioritise and innovatively deploy our resources to maximise the contribution we make.

Along with our partner organisations which comprise the Rural Affairs, Food and Environment (RAFE) Delivery Board we will drive alignment, shared priorities and joint delivery to secure maximum public good. This will include finding new ways to share or deliver better services to customers and communities.

Our Annual Operational Plan in context



Strategic context:

The National Park Authority was established to achieve four key aims laid out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. These are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area
- To promote the sustainable use of the natural resources of the area
- To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public
- To promote sustainable social and economic development of the communities of the area

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We contribute to the [national outcomes](#) and strategic objectives of the Scottish Government. The extent to which we contribute to Scottish Government's priorities and outcomes is fundamental to our own success as a Park Authority in delivering for Scotland. The 2015-16 [Programme for Government](#) clearly sets out the expectations of all public bodies.

Our [National Park Partnership Plan](#) (2012-2017) describes the vision and outcomes for the whole National Park area and contributions required from many different organisations over a five year period to help achieve our shared vision for the National Park.

The [Corporate Plan](#) (2012-2017) expresses the business objectives of the Park Authority and outlines how we will contribute to the National Park Partnership Plan and to the broader National Park aims.

This [Annual Operational Plan](#) (2016-17) describes the specific business priorities and objectives for the year ahead.

The priority objectives included within this Annual Operational Plan (2016-17) will be used as the basis of monitoring and reporting progress to the Delivery Group and Board.

Our Priorities in 2016-17

1. Transforming the quality of visitor experience on our busiest lochshores through the implementation of **Your Park**, by delivering camping infrastructure and management, operations to administer byelaws and high quality visitor communications.
2. Ensuring that the natural environment of the Park is valued, protected and enhanced for future generations, and plays an important role in mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.
3. Encouraging and supporting improvement in the consistency and quality of service and recreation offerings to visitors to the Park.
4. Improving the quality of life for residents and enjoyment for visitors through increased engagement in the Park through education, volunteering and outreach opportunities.
5. Promoting a [sustainable](#) pattern of new developments meeting economic and community needs within strong, resilient, empowered and supportive [communities](#).
6. Ensuring that we are a high performing organisation delivering excellent statutory and regulatory services and exemplify good practice in the use of public funds, corporate governance, policies, systems and procedures.

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1. Your Park

Following approval by Scottish Ministers on 26th January 2016 for the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws, our top priority will be the delivery of Your Park in time for the byelaws coming into force in March 2017.

Priority Outcome for this year:

Transforming the quality of visitor experience on our busiest lochshores through the implementation of **Your Park**, by delivering camping infrastructure and management, operations to administer byelaws and high quality visitor communications.

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
Finalise a Camping Development Plan and implement actions prioritised for 2016/17	- 300 camping places available by 1st March 2017
Design, trial and implement systems to support operational delivery	- Campsite and camping permit system functional by 1st Jan 2017 - Operational system ready for the end Feb 2017
Design and install signage	- Design framework agreed May 2016 - Signage in place by end of Feb 2017
Implement communications plan.	- Deliver internal and external communications plan by March 2017 - Litter and responsible camping awareness campaign completed by October 2016
Design, trial and implement a ranger patrol deployment model	- Two trial periods of implementation model by end of season 2016 to inform development of model for 2017 - Implementation of new operational model from 1st March 2017 - Police Scotland National Park Policing Plan aligned with Your Park actions and outcomes agreed by end of February 2017 - Forestry Commission Scotland operational alignment agreed by end Feb 2017 - Training given to all frontline staff in enforcement processes for camping management byelaws by end of February 2017 - Evaluation of training to ensure high levels of staff confidence in ability and

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<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
	knowledge to enforce byelaws by end of February 2017
Implement Fixed Penalty Notice litter and fly-tipping powers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fixed Penalty Notice management systems and processes established by May 2016 - Ranger Service trained to use FPN powers by May 2016

Beyond Your Park, our priorities are focused within our key themes of:

- Conservation,
- Visitor Experience (including engagement)
- Rural Development

As an organisation we are focused on delivering excellence in regulatory and statutory services & good governance.

2. Conservation

National Park Partnership Plan (2012-17) Outcome: An internationally-renowned landscape where the natural beauty, ecology and the cultural heritage are positively managed and enhanced for future generations.

Priority Outcome for this year:

Ensuring that the natural environment of the Park is valued, protected and enhanced for future generations, and plays an important role in mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement 'Wild Park' to contribute to the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving red squirrel and black grouse sightings and populations in targeted areas by November 2016 - Active management of <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> taking place throughout Loch Katrine catchment by March 2017 - Complete Woodland Habitat Network Action Plan by June 2016 - Assist two estates in entering Woodland Grant Schemes by March 2017 - Working with local Deer Management Groups, produce two Deer Management Plans by December 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop whole farm and estate plans for reduction of diffuse pollution and achieving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three plans produced by March 2017 - Complete assessment of implemented

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<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
favourable condition of SSSIs in the Park	positive outcomes from Whole Farm/Estate Plans by March 2017

3. Visitor Experience

National Park Partnership Plan (2012-17) Outcome: A high quality, authentic experience for visitors, with many opportunities to appreciate and enjoy the natural and cultural heritage, within an internationally renowned landscape that compares to the best on offer around the world.

Priority Outcome for this year:

Encouraging and supporting improvement in the consistency and quality of recreation and service offerings to visitors to the Park.

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maximise the use of our public assets to provide a high quality visitor experience and stimulate private investment and economic growth, particularly targeting Gateway Centre, Luss Visitor Sites, Rowardennan, Balmaha, Milarrochy and Tarbet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secure a tenant for the Gateway Centre or minimise 2017/17 financial liabilities by September 16 - Secure an appropriate use/tenant for Luss Visitor Centre/Pier by January 2017 - Refurbish kiosk at Rowardennan and secure a tenant by July 2016 - Agree heads of terms for the operation of Balmaha car park by July 2016 - Increase the number of water based activities available at Tarbet and Milarrochy between April and September 2016 - Develop a commercial strategy for Milarrochy to include, activities, car parking, boat launching and camping provision -market opportunity for 2017 season – June 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Realise the potential of our walking, cycling and water routes to maximise the benefits from recreation and health activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - West Highland Way strategy and sustainable management plan developed by December 2016 - Waterbus plan implemented - Stable or increased path usage figures from people counter network compared to 2015/16 - 12 new walking route cards available online by June 2016 - 2 canoe/kayak route cards available online by August 2016

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<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 kms of improved path delivered through community links or active travel partnership projects by March 2017 - Green Exercise Partnership/Natural Health Service pilot options developed - The Mountains and the People project elements for the National Park are completed as per the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) delivery programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a programme of signature events including optimising the benefit of the Great Scottish Swims, 2015's Year of Food and Drink, exploit 2016's Year of Innovation, Architecture & Design and plan for a successful 2017 Year of History & Heritage and 2018's European Open Water Swimming Championships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10% increased participation in the Great Scottish Swim by September 2016 - Achieve national media coverage for 2016's Year of Innovation, Architecture & Design for scenic route viewpoints between April 2016 and March 2017 - Event schedule agreed for 2017's Year of History & Heritage by February 2017 - Promote four business led food and drink events to achieve 60,000 visitors - Increased visitor numbers using Loch Lomond Shores, Luss and Balmaha visitor data by February 2017

4. Visitor Experience - engagement

National Park Partnership Plan (2012-17) Outcome: A high quality, authentic experience for visitors, with many opportunities to appreciate and enjoy the natural and cultural heritage, within an internationally renowned landscape that compares to the best on offer around the world.

Priority Outcome for this year:

Improving the quality of life for residents and enjoyment for visitors through increased engagement in the Park through education, volunteering and outreach opportunities.

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver Ranger Service Operational Deployment Plan including land and water based patrolling and management of the visitor facilities at DMMS, Balmaha and Milarrochy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3015 days spent on visitor engagement by Ranger Service by March 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to develop, expand and deliver well planned, strategically aligned and transformational volunteering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1000 Volunteer Ranger visitor engagement days achieved by March 2017

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<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
opportunities, education and outreach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with at least 10 partners to ensure that a wide range of volunteer projects are available by March 2017 - Delivery of a Junior Ranger programme with 2 High Schools by the end of June 2016 - Delivery of 3 Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) sessions by the end of March 2017. - Deliver a 'Developing the Young Workforce' programme as part of SG's 'Investing in Youth Plan' by March 2017 - 1,300 John Muir Awards achieved by July 2016 - 1 'Backbone' residential supported and 3 Community Leadership Project group visits to the National Park by the end of March 2016

5. Rural Development

National Park Partnership Plan (2012-17) Outcome: In the National Park businesses and communities thrive and people live and work sustainably in a high quality environment.

Priority Outcome for this year¹:

Promoting a [sustainable](#) pattern of new developments meeting economic and community needs within strong, resilient, empowered and supportive [communities](#).

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopt Local Development Plan - Promote opportunities for Plan delivery - Engage with communities, partners, landowners and communities to support delivery - Determine planning applications against the new Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Development Plan Adopted by December 2016 - Programme of promotion, awareness and delivery support in place by March 2017 - Supplementary and Planning guidance adopted March 2017 - Monitoring Framework in place by March 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support delivery of key areas of future growth, including Callander South, Balloch and Arrochar area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With Stirling Council prepare Strategic Infrastructure Fund guidance for Callander by March 2017 - Support Callander Partnership in delivery

¹ Development Management activities and outcomes are reported within the statutory compliance section of the plan.

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<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - of an update to the 2011 Charrette – integrated with Community Action Plan update - Identify potential funding sources, stakeholder engagement and route plan for delivery by March 2017 - In partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council, Scottish Enterprise and Balloch stakeholders agree the programme of actions from the ‘LIVE in Balloch’ charrette by Sept 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop community capacity to deliver projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through the Community Partnership support the preparation of updated Community Action Plans for Callander and Strathard by March 2017 - Invite proposals for grant assistance, through a revised Grant Scheme, from community organisations by January 2017 - Provide core funding to the Community Partnership that supports the empowerment and structured support for our communities - Through the Community Partnership, establish a new phase of support for skills development in our young people by March 2017 - Establish a sub-LAG for the LEADER programme by March 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Built Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review existing Heritage Repair Grant Scheme by September 2016. Consider options to ensure greatest community benefit in improvements to the built environment including our heritage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support Callander Pass Landscape Partnership Scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with the Project Board establish Project Delivery, including the appointment of the Development Officer and sub groups by May 2016 - Meet project timelines for delivery of Landscape Action Plan for Stage 2 bid – due August 2017

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6. Excellent Regulatory and Statutory Services & Good Governance

Priority Outcome for this year:

Ensuring that we are a high performing organisation delivering excellent statutory and regulatory services and exemplify good practice in the use of public funds, corporate governance, policies, systems and procedures

	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
Statutory Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target continual improvement in the management of, compliance with and delivery of accessible and high performing statutory and regulatory functions and reporting thereof; 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction in planning ‘legacy’ cases to less than 2% of applications received by March 2017 - Planning decision timescales to be consistent with national average for local and householder applications - Establish new approaches to communication of Development Management by March 2017 - Roll out as good practice internal specialist advice model by March 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project plan for statutory review of core paths plan in place by March 2017 - Access cases reporting integrated into UNIFORM system by March 2017 - 80% of Land Reform Act queries resolved within NPA enforcement procedure timelines - Four Local Access Forum meetings facilitated by March 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enforcement of Byelaws (Loch Lomond 2013 and East Loch Lomond Camping 2011) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Byelaws systems and new Ranger deployment model successfully implemented by March 2017. - Reducing level of byelaw contraventions on East Loch Lomond between March 2016 levels and March 2017 - Reducing level of byelaw contraventions on Loch Lomond between March 2016 levels and March 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fixed Penalty Notices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fixed Penalty Notice recording system in place and utilised by staff by May

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<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of the 2017-2022 National Park Partnership Plan 	<p>2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fixed Penalty Notice recording system generating appropriate reports for Park Authority management from June 2016 - 60% of Fixed Penalty Notices issued result in payment of fine within allowable period in Park Authority Fixed Penalty Notice policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-consultation stakeholder engagement by end May 2016 - Draft consultation paper and associated assessments by end of August 2016 - National Park Partnership Plan approved by Park Authority Board and submitted to Scottish Ministers by 31 Aug 2017 (within 2017-18 Operational Plan)
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Regulatory Requirements & Good Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target continual improvement in the management of, compliance with and delivery of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best Value - Annual Accounting - Internal Audit - Risk Management - Financial and Budget Management - Procurement - Freedom of Information/Environmental Information Regulations/Data Protection Subject Access Requests - Complaints - Public Records Management - Equalities & Diversity - Health & Safety - Human Resource Management - Carbon Management & Climate Change - Legal Agreements and Memorandums of Understandings - Board Administration and Good Governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compliance with statutory requirements, deadlines and reporting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development and implementation of a Strategic Asset Plan and implementation of the Commercial Development Strategy and Estates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Functioning Asset Management System by March 2017 - Five-year Maintenance Management Plan by September 2016

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	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
	Management System.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic Estates and Asset Management Plan for Authority land and buildings by June 2016 - In partnership with FCS, develop a pilot plan for the management of East Loch Lomond sites by September 2016 - Increase income by £100K (net of associated costs) by March 2017
Organisational Excellence	- Strategically-aligned communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launch new customer-focussed and search engine optimised (SEO) website by the end of Q1 2016/17 - Train all website administrators in the use of the new website's content management system, principles of search engine optimisation and writing for the web by the end of Q2 2016/17 - Increase website visits by 25% (from the 2015/16 baseline) by the end of 2016/17 - Deliver relevant and engaging communications via social media, growing our audience reach (number of times our posts are seen) by (20% versus 2015/16) by the end of 2016/17
	- Delivery of the multiple benefits of shared services working, in particular, with our RAFE and Local Authorities partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shared services/effective partnership working being delivered within – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communications - Health & Safety - People Development - Sharing Expertise - Equality & Diversity - Digital & ICT systems/infrastructure - Climate change - Procurement - Facilities & Estates maintenance
	- Delivery of Organisational Development Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achieve project plan objectives within the themes of developing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership - Ourselves - Culture - Infrastructure - Knowledge - Communications