



**GLENDALOUGH AND WICKLOW MOUNTAINS
NATIONAL PARK**

Draft Visitor Experience & Management Masterplan

Appendix C1

Management and Delivery Structures

Author: Consarc Design Group

Management and Delivery Structures

Section C of the Masterplan identified the need for new management structures to implement the proposals and guide future, co-ordinated development and visitor experience management.

These Management Structures need to include positive involvement of the state bodies, local government, the local community and a wide range of environmental, recreational and commercial interests. This Appendix contains some case studies of a number of bodies elsewhere in Ireland and in the UK where similar issues have guided management structures.

It is not proposed that any one of these provides an ideal model for what is the best mechanism for Wicklow but that their structure and activities are instructive in how the same issues have been addressed in other areas.

MOURNE HERITAGE TRUST

The Mourne Heritage Trust

Mourne Heritage Trust is an independent limited company and a registered charity established to meet an identified need for locally based, strategic management of the Mourne AONB. The model of a trust-based partnership was agreed in 1997 by Environment and Heritage Service (now Northern Ireland Environment Agency) and Northern Ireland Tourist Board, in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the three local councils of Banbridge, Down and Newry & Mourne respectively. (Newry, Mourne and Down are now amalgamated and Banbridge Council is now part of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council).

The Trust's mission statement is: 'To sustain and enhance the environment, rural regeneration, cultural heritage and visitor opportunities of the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and contribute to the well-being of Mourne's communities.'

Mourne Heritage Trust is overseen by a Board of Trustees which gives a strategic lead to the management of the AONB. In order to do this it brings together in partnership a range of stakeholders including environmental, landowning, tourism, community, recreation and other relevant interests.

The Trust has a core staff led by a Chief Executive and including professional countryside services, sustainable tourism and administrative staff. From time to time temporary staff are employed for activities such as path repair or dealing with the peak of countryside management work in the summer months. A number of other staff are employed in specific projects roles and currently include volunteer coordinators, a Mourne Mountains Landscape Partnership team and a mountain bike ranger.

Board Members

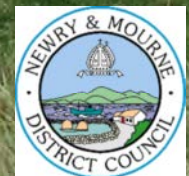
Board Member	Primary Interest
Mr Desmond Patterson (Chairman)	Farming
Dr Arthur Mitchell (Vice Chair)	Environment
Mrs Rosemary Chestnutt (Treasurer)	Tourism Business
Ms Isabel Hood (Company Secretary)	Environment
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Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

MOURNE HERITAGE TRUST



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Introduction

This report provides a final review of outputs against the themes and actions outlined in Mourne Heritage Trust's Strategic Operational Plan (SOP) 2007 - 2010. This plan set a framework to complement and give coherence to the Trust's individual Service Level Agreements and Funding Letters of Offer in guiding the activities which MHT aimed, subject to resources, to undertake during the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2010. It was developed in partnership with core funding agencies, together with local communities and other groups/individuals with an interest in the work of the Trust, a process that involved both one to one and public consultations. The purpose of this document is to report back on achievements against the objectives set for the 2007 to 2010 period.

Structure

After the objectives of the Plan are set out achievements are reported in turn against each of the Key Performance Areas identified in the SOP namely

- **Natural Environment Enhancement and Protection**
- **Visitor Management and Visitor Services**
- **Built and Cultural Heritage**
- **Sustainable Tourism**
- **Creating Awareness and Promoting Understanding**
- **Strategic and Cross-Cutting Initiatives**

Each section commences with an 'At a Glance' summary, colour coded as follows:

Green – Activities that, in the period, were ongoing core MHT services

Blue – Projects undertaken against which significant progress was made and expectations met or surpassed

Red – Projects against which limited progress has been made against expectations

There then follows in each section a brief narrative detailing the actions taken that contributed to the progress made.



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Outcomes

In total 54 from 60 action areas were in the green and blue categories and therefore the plan can be said to be 90% completed.

It should be noted that even in relation to those areas coded red, there has in every case been some activity to report. In other words there are none against which no progress at all has taken place and in quite a number of cases, as outlined, the ground work has been laid for significant progress against these themes in the next planning period.

Future Plans

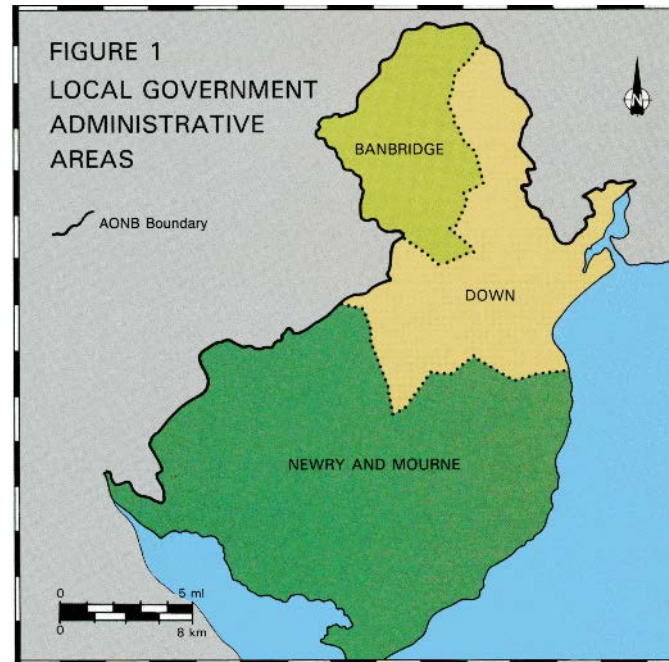
It should also be noted that for the incoming period the Trust's Strategic Operational Plan has been superseded by the Mourne AONB Management Plan which was launched in April 2010 and is accompanied by an Action Plan setting out targeted activities for the next five years, not only for MHT but provides a broader agenda for a range of other key actors.

Our review of the Strategic Operational Plan, among many other activities, informed the AONB Management Plan process. In Appendix 3 to this document we provide an indication of the how the activities set out in the former are reflected in the latter.



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Area of Activity - Mourne AONB



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Brief Highlights of Achievements detailed in this report

Natural Environment Enhancement and Protection

- ✓ Introduction and successful operation of Mourne Access Ranger to complement ongoing Mourne Area Ranger
- ✓ Mourne Conservation Volunteers and Volunteer Rangers contribution of £42,760 value of labour to AONB management
- ✓ Youth Ranger Programme catering for 29 young people and exhibiting strong impacts on personal development
- ✓ Implementation of Natural Heritage Outreach Project delivering on the Mourne Biodiversity Action Plan through community engagement
- ✓ Development of and achievement of funding for a programme of upgrades for key access routes and eroded sections of the uplands, including development of site specific approaches for the Mournes
- ✓ Significant work with Safer Mournes Partnership, developing agreed approaches to wildfire management and anti-social behaviour
- ✓ Development of Silent Valley Tree Nursery and *Trees for Mourne* project to encourage planting by landowners of native woodland using stock grown from seeds of ancient Oak woodland in Rostrevor. 40 acres planted at four sites by end of the period
- ✓ Survey and mapping of genetically distinct Mourne Juniper and development of methodology for propagation
- ✓ Programme of coastal events comprising 'Shore Footed' summer 2008 programme of events including seashore safaris, coastal walks, and boat trips; 'Cool Seas Roadshow, Beachwatch litter lift events; Seal Survey; Whale Watch and Cranfield Family Fun Days.

Visitor Management and Visitor Services

- ✓ Development of best practice advice and guidelines for mass participation events published on www.outdooreventsni.com
- ✓ Visitor Development Masterplan for the Silent Valley and a Masterplan for upgrade of path network emanating from the Mountain Park
- ✓ Active Lifestyles Programme providing 1,827 work days for people with special needs, notably learning disabilities
- ✓ Achievement of funding from Big Lottery for retention and expansion of Active Lifestyles Programme until 2014 to cater for a greater range of disadvantaged groups and develop additional volunteer sites
- ✓ Establishment of a Mourne Outdoor Recreation Forum, in conjunction with SportNI
- ✓ Completion and promotion of phase II of the Silent Valley Nature Trail
- ✓ Maintenance and development of the Mourne Way long distance walking route
- ✓ Visitor site enhancements at Binders Cove Souterrain, Granite Trail, Bloody Bridge, Trassey Track, Leitrim Lodge and Cnocnafeola along with regular repair and improvement of visitor infrastructure at upland car parks

Built and Cultural Heritage

- ✓ Searchable online database of cultural heritage materials and resources designed and custom built for www.mourne/live.com
- ✓ Mourne Heritage Trail brochure designed and launched
- ✓ External evaluation of Mourne Homesteads Programme completed and Open days and tours of the seven Mourne Homesteads properties restored

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- ✓ Award of a Diploma from Europa Nostra, the European Union's Cultural Heritage Awards and 2nd place in ECOVAST 'Best in Heritage World Exhibition 2008' in Dubrovnik, Croatia for Mourne Homesteads
- ✓ Design and publication of '*Homes and Heritage*' illustrating key messages regarding re-use of vernacular buildings
- ✓ Collaboration with the Follies Trust to successfully raise funds for the restoration of Lord Limerick's Follies at Tollymore

Sustainable Tourism

- ✓ Development and Promotion of a Mournes Signature Project Action Plan on behalf of NITB and other partners
- ✓ Detailed Capital Investment Programme and submission to NITB securing ring fencing of £4m for Mournes Signature Project
- ✓ Tourism Development Scheme and multiple applications for match funding for the above programme
- ✓ Scoping and development of a Master plan for a Mourne Coastal Route and Scenic Loops
- ✓ Scoping and development of a Mourne Information Points Programme
- ✓ Achievement of re-accreditation with the EU Charter for the period 2008 – 2013, becoming the first region in the UK to do so
- ✓ Hosting an International Workshop on Sustainable Tourism in Belfast
- ✓ Networking with Mourne Tourism Businesses
- ✓ Tailored training programme for Food and Hospitality Businesses in conjunction with Armagh Down Tourism and Southern Regional College, including promoting the use of local produce and other tourism issues and catering for 113 participants over 10 workshops
- ✓ Production of a Mourne – Cooley – Gullion Geotourism project and €1.6m funding application submitted to Interreg IVA
- ✓ Achievement of funding for and commissioning of four 'gateway' pieces of public art for Clough, Corbett, Rathfriland and Warrenpoint and achieving funding for commissioning of a further 8 pieces.

Creating Awareness and Cross Cutting Initiatives

- ✓ New interpretive guides on key natural heritage features (in line with NITB brand for NI) including Mourne Landscapes Guide; Mourne Flora and Fauna Guide; Butterflies and Where to Find Them poster; Red Squirrel Panel and Conservation Handbook; Seal Spotting Poster
- ✓ Average of over 11,000 hits per month to mournelive.com
- ✓ Comprehensive audit and collation of data undertaken to produce a 'State of the AONB' report
- ✓ Registration of 192 members to Friends of Mourne
- ✓ Input to the development of government policy in areas including agriculture, rural development, tourism, and environment
- ✓ Five Local Produce Promotional events and cookery demonstrations and flagship 'Encouraging & Promoting Mourne Products' event
- ✓ Study visits to Flavour of Tyrone & Good Food Circle and County Leitrim
- ✓ Funding achieved and tender for AONB Geographical Information System
- ✓ Extensive research and consultation Programme resulting in completion of an AONB Management Plan
- ✓ Several external audits completed along with a detailed external review by FGS McClure Watters

Aims and Objectives

Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

The aims and objectives of the Strategic Operational Plan are set out below against each of the Key Performance Areas

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 1 - NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ENHANCEMENT AND PROTECTION

Strategic Aim:

‘Safeguard, enhance and promote appreciation of the quality and diversity of the landscapes and biodiversity of the Mourne and Slieve Croob Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and to manage and influence change appropriately’

Objectives:

- *‘To initiate, coordinate and implement an integrated programme of actions to support landowners and others to maintain, restore and enhance the biodiversity and landscapes of Mourne and Slieve Croob Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and manage and influence change appropriately.’*
- *‘To identify, co-ordinate and implement research into aspects of landscape and biodiversity,*
- *To promote appreciation & understanding, and educate and inform widely regarding the character, protection and enhancement of the Mourne and Slieve Croob Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.’*

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 2 – VISITOR MANAGEMENT AND VISITOR SERVICES

Strategic Aim:

‘To provide and maintain opportunities for public enjoyment, education and recreation within the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB in ways which safeguard the environment and protect land management and community interests’

Objectives:

- *‘To promote the development of a range of strategic projects which will enhance the visitor infrastructure within the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB’*
- *‘To promote the development of a programme of activities which offer opportunities for public information, enjoyment, recreation, education and health promotion’*
- *‘To provide a strategic framework and integrated approach for sensitive interpretation in Mourne and Slieve Croob’*
- *‘To engage with landowners and other stakeholders in relation to access issues and seek to identify and address concerns and opportunities for partnerships’*

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 3 – BUILT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE



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Strategic Aim:

'To identify, promote, safeguard and enhance the built and cultural heritage of the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB'

Objectives:

- *To identify the built and cultural heritage within the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB, and represent built and cultural heritage interests to statutory and other relevant organisations*
- *To help research, co-ordinate and promote best practice in management of built and cultural heritage within the AONB'*
- *To initiate and stimulate actions to protect and enhance key aspects of the built and cultural heritage of the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB*

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 4 – SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Strategic Aim:

'To promote rural regeneration through the development of appropriate sustainable tourism initiatives in the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB'

Objectives:

- *'To research, co-ordinate and promote best practice in management, provision and promotion of sustainable tourism initiatives within the AONB'*
- *'To deliver a programme of actions to stimulate the development of a thriving rural tourism sector based on the natural, cultural, social and recreational resources of the AONB'*
- *'To develop appropriate partnerships with similar initiatives elsewhere'*
- *'To engage the private sector in the strategic management and development of Tourism in the AONB'*



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KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 5 – CREATING AWARENESS AND PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING

Strategic Aim:

‘To create awareness and promote greater understanding of the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB as a unique and special area to local regional, national and international audiences.’

Objectives:

- *‘To co-ordinate and promote best practice in the provision of information on the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB’*
- *‘To deliver a structured programme of communications to inform and educate a wide audience on the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB, and the work of the Mourne Heritage Trust.’*
- *‘To develop the Mourne and Slieve Croob website, www.mournelive.com, as a key information and communications hub for the Mourne and Slieve Croob area’*



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Natural Environment Enhancement and Protection - At a Glance Summary

Ref	Description	Status
1A	Mourne Countryside Management Service	
1B	Mourne Ranger Service	
1C	Policy formation and consultation	
1D	Mourne Conservation Volunteers and Volunteer Rangers	
1E	Co-ordination of Mourne Biodiversity Action Plan	
1F	Youth Ranger Programme	
1G	Biodiversity Research Programme	
1H	Mourne Farmers' Liaison Group	
1I	High Mournes Management Programme	
1J	Schools and Community Environment Projects	
1K	Silent Valley Tree Nursery and Trees for Mourne	
1L	Natural Heritage Outreach Programme	
1M	Mourne Coastal Action Programme	
Ref	Description	





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1A Mourne Countryside Management Service

- The Countryside Team carried out work identified under the various Service Level Agreements and terms of grant offer with NIEA. This included:
 - biannual maintenance of 64 stiles,
 - biannual maintenance on 7 tourist cycle trails and 2 long distance walking trails,
 - monthly maintenance works to 13 key upland and countryside car parks,
 - weekly litter lift at 21 sites throughout the AONB,
 - 3 maintenance cuts and flailing of hedges of 43 public footpaths per annum.

- Significant efficiency improvements were effected through acquisition of both a compact tractor and flail. The countryside service, however, continued to be constrained by the fact that only a single full time team is in place and thus issues such as erosion, litter control, wall repair, invasive species management etc. were not addressed as comprehensively as demand requires.

Countryside Management



Maintenance of public car parks, stiles, cycle routes, interpretation panels and public rights of way.



Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010 Green Lanes

Stiles



- 64 Stiles across the AONB
- Maintenance March/April
 - Replacement of non-slip surfacing
 - Repairs to structure
 - Paint with wood preservative (80litres)



Maintenance of 43 green lanes

- 11 Banbridge
- 32 Down
- 1 Newry and Mourne

Totalling over 40kms (the largest single maintenance contract of PROW undertaken in Northern Ireland).

Includes:

- Strimming
- Hedge Flailing
- Obstruction removal
- Surface repairs
- Rubbish removal



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1B

Mourne Ranger Service

- The Mourne Ranger Service liaised with visitors and landowners to identify and address environmental and visitor management issues, as well as managing the Countryside Service and Volunteer Programme. Significant issues have included:
 - liaison with and advice to organisers of a number of large scale events,
 - regular dialogue with ramblers groups to discuss access issues,
 - liaison with landowners, PSNI and NIEA with regard to the misuse of quad bikes and scramblers at a number of key visitor locations.
 - achievement of landowner support and involvement for key access projects, such as, fencing and path maintenance on the Brandy Pad, near the Bloody Bridge, and at the Trassey Track
 - development of procedures for surveillance and reporting of anti social behaviour at remote countryside locations in conjunction with Down DC Enforcement Officers and PSNI Neighbourhood Police.
 - developing detailed specifications for upland path renewal programme.

Note: Please See Appendix 1 for Landowner Contact Days and Appendix 2 for examples of Visitor Contacts. Please note in the former individual farmers have been left anonymous but can be evidenced to core funders in confidence if required.

- A Mourne Access Ranger was recruited and began work in July 2009 as a pilot project. Funded by the Mourne Access Fund from NIEA, this provided for more consistent liaison with landowners in key visitor hot spots and identification of practical mitigation works. Key activities included:
 - Engaging with users groups in specific areas re appropriate countryside access and obtaining visitor feedback.
 - Significant monitoring of anti social behaviour at key visitor sites – engagement with offenders, liaison with Council Enforcement Officers and Police.
 - Several infrastructure interventions as agreed with landowners to provide better visitor management including fencing at Tullybrannigan/Tollymore, drainage and realignment works at Trassey Track to improve and maintain walking surface, fencing at Leitrim Lodge, enhanced drainage and signage at Bloody Bridge and Crossone, signage enhancements at Cnocnafeola.
 - Several key negotiations with landowners at visitor hot spots to provide better visitor management including: securing permissive path agreement from landowners at Bloody Bridge to enable repair of quarry track to facilitate emergency services and walkers; plans for further fencing at Bloody Bridge and small bridge construction; and liaison with landowners for track improvements at Banns Road
- In attempts to further develop the Ranger Service funding was secured from Esmee Fairburn Foundation (March 2009) for a Silent Valley Ranger to focus specifically on environmental and visitor management in the Mountain Park and catchment. However, Northern Ireland Water was unable to provide the anticipated match funding and no alternative source had been found by the end of the period.



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Mourne Ranger Service



Environmental Monitoring, Volunteer Activities, Landowner and User Engagement, Visitor and Environmental Management Projects



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1C	<p><u>Policy formation and consultation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant policy and consultation documents and requests were responded to. 																																																									
1D P1	<p><u>Mourne Conservation Volunteers and Volunteers Rangers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mourne Conservation Volunteers and Volunteer Rangers significantly enhance AONB management as the following table summarises. <table border="1" data-bbox="338 518 1630 718"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2"></th> <th colspan="3">07/08</th> <th colspan="3">08/09</th> <th colspan="3">09/10</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Days</th> <th>Value</th> <th>Events</th> <th>Days</th> <th>Value</th> <th>Events</th> <th>Days</th> <th>Value</th> <th>Events</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>MCR</td> <td>130</td> <td>£6'500</td> <td>23</td> <td>85</td> <td>£4'250</td> <td>18</td> <td>76</td> <td>£3'800</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VR</td> <td>181*</td> <td>£12'670</td> <td></td> <td>103</td> <td>£7'210</td> <td></td> <td>119</td> <td>£8'330</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>311</td> <td>£19'170</td> <td></td> <td>188</td> <td>£11'460</td> <td></td> <td>195</td> <td>£12'130</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*Includes 3 Global Exchange Programme participants who contributed 79 days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This represents a total of 694 volunteer days across the period, equivalent to £42,760 of labour As can be seen the number of volunteer events was reduced over the period. This was as a result of how best to focus volunteer opportunities and what is the most efficient way to match volunteers to specific, achievable projects and produce tangible results on the ground. In other words to produce more positive impacts from a more focused programme The reduced number of events also facilitated the development of the Special Needs Volunteers involved in the Active Lifestyles Project, reported elsewhere, and the introduction in spring / summer 09 of weekend and evening ranger rounds to better address anti-social behaviour and to improve visitor interfaces Volunteer Rangers have proven the best value to the Trust in terms of output, flexibility, and staff support. Volunteer Rangers have acted in small teams or individually. They can organise and co-ordinate their own work schedules as agreed with the Area Ranger, to complete set tasks / projects. Building small specialised VR teams will be key for future MHT work in the mountains. For 2010 MHT has four students from Queen's University signed up as VR's and will also start to build specialised path teams with interest from Mourne walking groups to sign up as VR' expressed. 										07/08			08/09			09/10			Days	Value	Events	Days	Value	Events	Days	Value	Events	MCR	130	£6'500	23	85	£4'250	18	76	£3'800	16	VR	181*	£12'670		103	£7'210		119	£8'330		Total	311	£19'170		188	£11'460		195	£12'130	
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<p>1E P1</p>	<p><u>Co-ordination of delivery of Mourne Biodiversity Action Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funding for the Mourne Biodiversity Action Plan (MBAP) process, including an Officer, came to an end just prior to the commencement of the period of this plan. Progress against delivery of the Action Plan therefore was made through a number of actions outlined under other headings including 1I – High Mourne Management Programme, 1J Schools and Community Environment Projects and 1K – Silent Valley Tree Nursery and Trees for Mourne and 1L - Natural Heritage Outreach Programme ▪ In Year 2 of this period (2008/09) awareness and commitment from partners to the MBAP was re-invigorated by the Natural Heritage Outreach Officer (NHOO), following a gap in staffing of this work area. New ‘partner’ groups as well as previously contacted groups in the wider community were engaged. This two year project funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and NIEA completed in February 2010 and key achievements against the MBAP are highlighted below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Red Squirrel – Working in partnership with Forest Service and Tollymore Forest Park Red Squirrel Group (TFPRSG) to raise awareness and action for this species, including working with school groups, finding sponsors for squirrel feeders, helping TFPRSG become a constituted charitable body and producing interpretive materials and conservation guidelines. ○ Juniper –developing a Juniper Restoration Project in order to secure the future of Mourne’s declining and genetically distinct, juniper population. A conference took place in autumn 2009 with input from expert practitioners from Great Britain and led to the commencement of a programme of propagation of juniper for future planting. ○ Coastal - Monitoring of interaction of Seal and Salmon populations and other actions. See also 1M – Coastal Action Programme
<p>1F P1</p>	<p><u>Youth Ranger Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Youth Ranger Programme took place in each of the three years of this plan period. ▪ In total 29 Young People were provided with a day per week in the school summer holidays with numbers catered for increased from 8 in Years 1 and 2 to 13 in Year 3. ▪ Activities included scrub clearance, navigation training, vegetation survey, biodiversity survey, stile building, and litter picking. The project featured on Radio Ulster’s <i>Your Place and Mine</i>. ▪ Samples of feedback received, from both participants and parents, were published in the 2007/2008 MHT annual report and attested to the very strong impacts on the personal development of the young people involved, as well as on their environmental awareness.



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<p>1G P2</p>	<p><u>Biodiversity Research Programme</u></p> <p>A number of pieces of work were undertaken under this programme as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vegetation survey of the Eastern Mournes Special Area of Conservation (SAC) ▪ Invasive species monitoring ▪ Wildfire monitoring ▪ Review of data on erosion hot spots in the High Mournes ▪ Impact of quad bike/scrambler misuse on habitats ▪ Juniper study in the Annalong Valley ▪ Seal monitoring in Carlingford Lough in partnership with Loughs Agency, NIEA and Tara Seal Research ▪ Aquatic invasive species study in Carlingford Lough ▪ Monitoring of Red Squirrel Populations ▪ Heathland Habitat Survey at Silent Valley Mountain Park
<p>1H P2</p>	<p><u>Mourne Farmers' Liaison Group</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Farmers' Liaison Group met twice early in the period and provided particular input to the Safer Mournes Partnership and on management issues at the Silent Valley, including grazing. However, the group did not meet in the later part of the plan period. This was because the meetings had become somewhat counter productive due to some participants focusing on the National Park issue, hindering full and open discussion on other issues. ▪ Instead, officers focused on liaising with NIAPA and UFU reps to explore ways of rejuvenating the group and in particular on developing day to day contacts with farmers, with our ability to do so enhanced by recruitment of a second ranger. ▪ Project development was also a key focus with a visit from Burren Life farmers was facilitated and a special one off meeting attended by over 50 farmers. ▪ Two information surgeries in Warrenpoint and Castlewellaan were held to engage farmers on the Mourne Access Grant. A number of local landowners were recruited to the Trees for Mourne project – see 1K below. ▪ Study visit of Mourne farmers to Newport, County Mayo to examine access issues.
<p>1I P2</p>	<p><u>High Mournes Management Programme</u></p> <p>A number of pieces of work were completed under this programme as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management of invasive species in the high Mournes ▪ A condition survey on specific key access routes to identify issues relevant to visitor usage was also undertaken at Trassey, Happy Valley, OTT, Bloody Bridge and Carrick Little. Results were analysed to identify necessary visitor management improvements and a number of these have been completed. ▪ MHT chaired the Safer Mournes Partnership (2 Full forum meetings, and 2-4 sub-group meetings p.a.) to develop policy coordination and initiatives to mitigate the impact of wildfires and anti-social behaviour, primarily in the High Mournes.



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- This included development of a Review of Emergency Service Access and recommendations for enhancements. A Wildfire prevention project was scoped and developed through the Safer Mourne Partnership and awaits funding. The project aims to raise awareness, run training courses and develop scrub management programmes to reduce the impact of wildfires on heathland. Dialogue with Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service has secured commitment to Northern Ireland and Borders Wildfire seminar towards developing a Northern Ireland Wildfire Forum.
- Design and securing of funding for a programme of stone pitching and path upgrades to address priority areas suffering from erosion and enhance access, including for emergency vehicles
- An Invasive Species Project was developed aiming to deliver on NI & Mourne Biodiversity Action Plan targets to remove invasive species in Mourne. A major grant application was submitted to NIEA & liaison with government bodies and 'Invasives NI'. MHT hosted a one day Invasive species training course for NI Environment Link and the NI Protected Areas Network.
- Silent Valley Catchment Ranger Project including monitoring of conservation and recreation impacts and development of relevant projects was developed. Esmee Fairbairn funding was secured and the project is awaiting match funding.
- Consolidating aspects of a number of the initiatives outlined above, among others, an application was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Landscape Partnership to concentrate on the Mourne Mountain Landscape Character Area (the High Mourne) was developed and submitted.



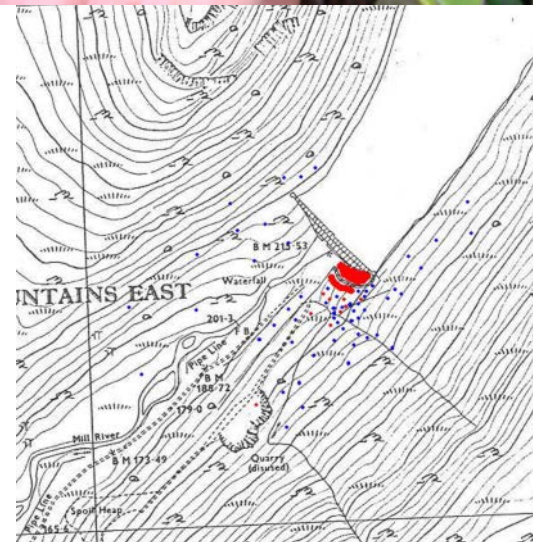
Working with Fire Service in detection, reporting and prevention of wild fires



Maintaining Key Access Routes



Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010 Surveying For and Tackling Invasive Species





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1J

P2

Schools and Community Environment Projects

- Schools and community environmental projects were catered for in Year 1 within the constraints of human resources including Kilkeel Primary School wildlife garden, 4 school conservation projects at Silent Valley, advice on plans for a local nature reserve at Kilbroney Park and participation in an Environmental Conference in December 2007 organised by St Malachy's, Castlewellan, Kilkeel High and Shimna College. Funding was secured from Landfill Communities Fund for environmental enhancement at Attical.
- In Years 2 and 3 this area of work befitted from the Natural Heritage Outreach Project (NHOP) which included
 - developing several programmes with schools on biodiversity topics including Red Squirrels and Wildflowers and advice on wildlife projects
 - securing £10,000 from NIEA grant scheme to fund Marine Conservation Society's interactive 'Cool Seas Roadshow' to visit all Mourne in Summer/Autumn 2009 schools delivering coastal and marine biodiversity messages
 - delivering regular workshops on biodiversity topics such as birds, invertebrates and wildflowers at Kilkeel Library and wildflower workshops in Attical

Among the various groups the Trust liaised with are the following:

- **Annalong Community Development Association**
- **Atticall Community Assoc** – Habitat and Landscape Enhancement
- **Ballykinler Wildlife Group**
- **Ballymartin Community Assoc** – Beach Clean
- **Brackenagh West School** – Wildlife Garden
- **Bryansford Community Group** – Restoration of landscape feature in partnership with Forest Service
- **Burrenbridge Community Association** - Initial exploration of possible projects
- **Kilbroney Preservation Society** – Kilbroney Meadow
- **Kilkeel Angling Club** – Opportunities for research in Carlingford Lough explored
- **Kilkeel Primary School** – Nature Garden
- **Mill Bay Residents Group** – Native planting
- **Newcastle Community Forum** – Environmental impact of various developments and community garden.
- **Newcastle Field Club** – Awareness raising on local biodiversity
- **Newcastle Garden Society** - Juniper Propagation
- **Nicholson's Strand Residents** –Over wintering and nesting birds
- **Rostrevor Residents Association**
- **Saint Josephs' High School Newry** – Habitat Management Skills Project
- **Shannaghmore OEC Youth Groups** – Habitat Management
- **Shimna College** – Landscape Plan



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<p>1K P2</p>	<p><u>Silent Valley Tree Nursery and Trees for Mourne</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The tree nursery at Silent Valley was brought to completion and now stocks over 12,000 native Irish oak and hazel ▪ An approach to a 'Trees for Mourne' project to encourage native planting was developed. Liaison with DARD has identified options to develop Trees for Mourne through Agri-environment schemes and Woodland Grant scheme. ▪ The first Trees for Mourne sites on private land were planted at Silent Valley, Ballyward, Tullyree and Whitehill/ Slieve Croob covering 40 acres in 'new' native woodland.
<p>1L P2</p>	<p><u>Natural Heritage Outreach Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Natural Heritage Outreach Officer (NHOO) was recruited in February 2008 to work with community groups, individuals, schools, local businesses, Access for all groups, local NGO's and government departments. In addition to projects reported elsewhere the following advances may be noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Silent Valley – Working with NI Water and other stakeholders to raise awareness and interest in natural heritage of the valley. ○ Events and workshops including: 4 x International Dawn Chorus walks – Tollymore and Silent Valley , butterfly walks, annual Big Garden Birdwatch at Atticall, Kilkeel and Tollymore Park, 'Shore Thing' coastal training, butterfly ID and survey workshop; Red Squirrel Event at Tollymore Forest Park – 420 attendees and covered by Radio Ulster; Childrens' summer camp on Red Squirrel; Open days at Silent Valley in conjunction with NIW; Moth night at Kilbroney Centre; Autumn Wildlife Workshops; Fungal Foray at Mourne Park; Juniper workshop (covered by BBC Newsline); Celebration of Mourne Natural Heritage Event at Mourne Park ○ Project development with local groups including Tollymore Red Squirrel Group; Mourne Anglers; Newcastle Garden Club ○ Development of methodologies and mechanisms for Red Squirrel conservation and propagation of genetically distinct Mourne Juniper. ○ Regular newsletter, e-zine and press releases.



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**Mourne Juniper
Restoration
Project**





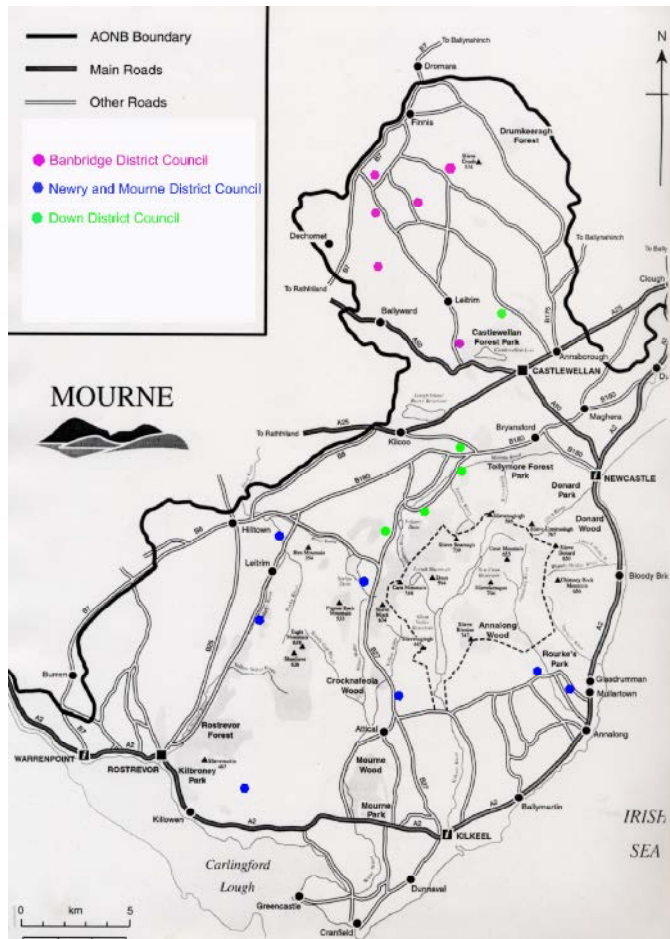
Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

<p>1M P3</p>	<p><u>Mourne Coastal Action Programme</u></p> <p>A number of elements contributed towards an enhanced programme of awareness raising and action along the AONB coast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'Shore Footed' summer 2008 programme of events around the coast including seashore safaris, coastal walks, and boat trips with 3 flagship events throughout the season. (£ 5,000 funding from Loughs Agency) ▪ £10,000 in grant aid from NIEA secured to fund coastal awareness workshop – 'Cool Seas Roadshows' - for all Mourne schools in summer/autumn term 2009 (as reported above) ▪ Discussions with local anglers and fishermen has increased seal survey effort in Carlingford Lough, including training local students to carry out seal surveys and increased understanding of the need for seal conservation among local fishing communities. ▪ Litter lifts and shore surveys with Kilkeel High School and Shimna College ▪ Training of Outdoor Education Centre Staff to include beach survey as regular educational activity with school and youth groups. ▪ Events run in collaboration with Marine Conservation Society's 'Beachwatch' coastal clean-up weekend on 3rd week in September 2008 and 4 x Beachwatch events at a number of locations on Mourne coast in 2009 ▪ Establishment of Marlin Life Information network (MarLIN) Shore Thing survey sites around Mourne coast with local groups. ▪ Cranfield Family Fun Day in 2009 involving a range of coastal activities ▪ Whale watch event 2009 ▪ As reported in more detail elsewhere plans were developed for enhanced visitor access and interpretation at a number of sites along the Mourne coast and outline design delivered as well as securing funding for two sites at Mill Bay and Narrow Water.
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Amenity Sites and Car Parks maintained by MHT

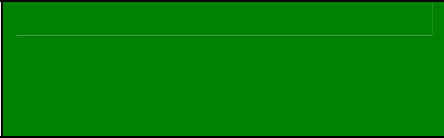





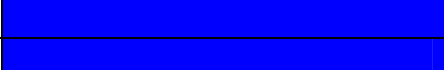


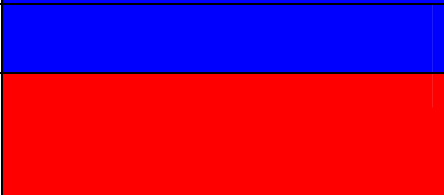


Cycle Routes Maintained by MHT



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Visitor Management and Visitor Services - At a Glance Summary

Ref	Description	Status
2A	<u>Mourne Countryside Recreation Working Group (MCRWG)</u>	
2B	<u>Guided Walks Programme</u>	
2C	<u>Policy formation and consultation</u>	
2D	<u>Visitor Monitoring Programme</u>	
2E	<u>Mourne Countryside Recreation Strategy</u>	
2F	<u>Active Lifestyles Programme</u>	
2G	<u>Visitor Site Development Programme (New Sites)</u>	
2H	<u>Mourne Countryside Recreation Forum</u>	
2I	<u>Visitor Site Enhancement Programme (Existing Sites)</u>	
2J	<u>Access Trail Enhancement Programme</u>	
2K	<u>Traffic and Transport Initiative</u>	





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Ref	Description
2A	<p><u>Mourne Countryside Recreation Working Group (MCRWG)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MCRWG was been held in abeyance initially in consideration of the hopes to establish a Mourne Access Forum led by NIEA. This met once in November 2007 before being replaced by a smaller Mourne Access Committee involving key agencies which MHT has hosted. This latter committee has taken on many of the functions of CRWG.
2B	<p><u>Guided Walks Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2007 for the first time walks were themed around aspects of cultural heritage, combining opportunities to access and enjoy the natural heritage of the AONB with appreciation of that heritage. A similarly themed walks programme was provided in 2008 incorporating 13 such events Total participation in walks was 62, equating to an average of 6 per walk. Formal evaluation of the walks demonstrated a high level of satisfaction with the routes and content among those participating but attendances were relatively low when set against costs of advertisement, walk leaders etc. After review, in 2009/10 walks provision gave way to a more broadly based series of events as reported at 1L and 1M above, complemented by MHT actively promoting walks programmes delivered by private sector outdoor activity professionals.
2C	<p><u>Policy formation and consultation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant policy and consultation documents and requests responded to.
2D P1	<p><u>Visitor Monitoring Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor questionnaires were undertaken in summer and early autumn in 2007 A condition survey of important visitor access routes to the high Mourne and questionnaires targeted at users, landowners and recreational activity providers were undertaken in 2008 Maintenance and analysis of network of Visitor Counters installed across 23 sites and upgrading of equipment was carried out annually New counters were installed at Silent Valley Nature Trail in 2008.



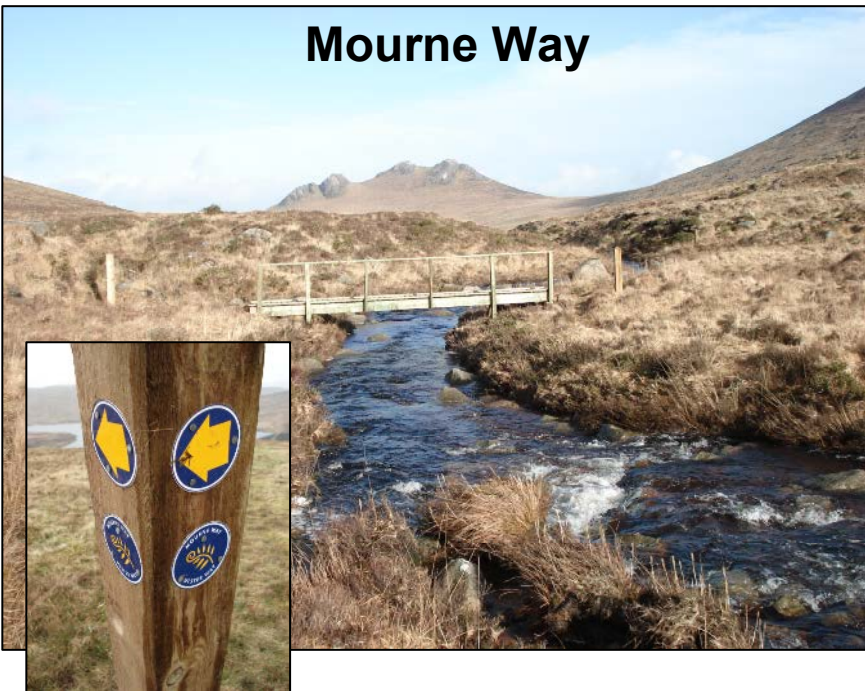
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WALKING TRAILS

Newcastle Challenge Trail



Granite Trail



Mourne Way



Silent Valley Nature Trail



Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

2E	<u>Mourne Countryside Recreation Strategy</u>
P1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Countryside Recreation Strategy (CRS) was superseded by the CAAN Access Study of the Mournes (2007). As outlined in 2A MHT has been centrally involved with the stakeholder group implementing the study recommendations. Issues relating to the updating of the CRS were fed into this group. ▪ A number of actions reported under 1I (High Mournes Management Programme) contribute to implementation of both CRS and the CAAN Access study. Other relevant work undertaken includes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scoping of possible improvements to access and recreation information on mournelive.com (in conjunction with review of website as a whole) ○ Implementation of Pilot Access Ranger project (to be submitted for funding from Mourne Access Fund) ○ Audit of Coastal Access and development of plans for improved access at over 20 key sites (in conjunction with work towards Mourne Signature Project Action Plan). ○ Development of best practice advice and guidelines for mass participation events which are now drawing significant visitors and published on www.outdooreventsni.com. MHT assumed key promotion role and advisory function in relation to events and has liaised with event organisers accordingly ○ Masterplan for upgrade of path network emanating from Silent Valley Mountain Park, in conjunction with CAAN. ○ Assessment of need and development of approach and terms of reference for strategic review of entire Mourne path network, which now awaits funding
2F	<u>Active Lifestyles Programme</u>
P1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This project provided opportunities for vulnerable adults, notably those with learning and/or physical disabilities ▪ In 2007/08 there were 102 Active Lifestyle group days including Special Needs groups, schools and Youth Rangers. There were 502 individual work days; 421 Special Needs, 44 Schools and 37 Youth ▪ The level of participation was increased in 2008/09 with 656 individual work days including 556 Special Needs and 63 Youth across 95 Active Lifestyle group days. The Trust also hosted several Corporate Group days which included 537 for Special Needs, 63 for Youth and 55 for other volunteers ▪ In 2009/10 there were 96 Active Lifestyle group days for Special Needs Adults groups, Youth Rangers and Adult Volunteers. The level of participation increased again with 669 individual work days ▪ The Special Needs groups contributed significantly to structural improvements in the Nursery including building new raised beds, seed beds and fences and installing drains. They participated in successful management of the Native Oaks raised in the tree nursery and the first major planting of trees from the nursery for the creation of new woodland was completed. The Nursery also diversified further with additional new vegetable crops, herbs and fruit bringing all available space into cultivation ▪ Active Lifestyles was featured in a BBC Newsline report in April 2009 which highlighted the benefits of gardening activities to mental and physical health. Feedback from participants, carers and parents in an evaluation attested to very strong personal development benefits complementing environmental outputs



Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010 Active Lifestyles Project



✓



Visitor services - access for all



Feedback on Active Lifestyles Project

Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

- ✓ *'This is by no means token volunteering but gives our group the opportunity to be environmentally responsible adults regardless of their disability, giving them a sense of pride. The programme also has physical benefits, by means of the moderate activity involved in the work and promotes an active lifestyle'*
- ✓ *'The activities provided have a positive impact on the health and well being of our clients (with learning disabilities). Parents and carers remark on how the clients have grown in self esteem and confidence with increased independence.'*
- ✓ *'There is also a positive 'ripple' through effect as parents/ carers/ families/ community benefit fromthe volunteer having an improved attitude/ outlook due to positive volunteering experiences.'*

Feedback on Youth Rangers

- ✓ *'The opportunity you availed to my son was exceptional. The development and learning he achieved has been immeasurable and has given him a clear direction in his proposed career path. The pride and enthusiasm my son and his fellow participants gained was clear to see at the 'award' ceremony. What a sense of achievement and camaraderie that I believe few other summer schemes could offer.'*
- ✓ *'I want to thank all of you for giving my daughter such wonderful experiences. Behavioural difficulties mean she has spent a lot of time isolated from her peers. I do not know if it is the activities, the leadership or the group, but it works!! It has helped my daughter develop her communication skills and enabled her to work as part of a team'.*
- ✓ *'One of the main things my son learned was team building and working with others. He learned he had to work with others to achieve the tasks the rangers were set'.*
- ✓ *'My son got the chance to make friends which is not easy for him as he has ADHD and also he got to explore and learn about the outdoors'.*

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2G	<u>Visitor Site Development Programme (New Sites)</u>
P2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultations and site meetings were undertaken with 8 private landowners regarding possible visitor site developments including guarded car parks, camp sites, catering etc. Two of these were included in plans and funding applications for the Mourne Coastal Route while others continued to develop their plans to submission of planning application stage assisted by the Trust.

On-site interpretation



Maintenance

- Removal of graffiti; Rust removal; Re-painting of stands



Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

<p>2H P2</p>	<p><u>Mourne Countryside Recreation Forum</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The formation of the planned Mourne Countryside Recreation Forum was postponed pending the establishment of a Mourne Access Forum as a recommendation of the CAAN Access Study. Mourne Heritage Trust assisted and advised EHS in relation to an inaugural meeting of the forum in November 2007 after which that initiative was put in abeyance ▪ MHT, in conjunction with SportNi, established a Mourne Outdoor Recreation Forum which met twice in 2009 and was well attended and welcomed by key stakeholders. It brings together user groups (walking clubs, mountain runners etc), activity providers, outdoor education groups, NGOs and others to provide a two way means of communication on and focus for exploration of key issues. It is envisaged that the Forum will continue to meet at least twice per annum.
<p>2I P3</p>	<p><u>Visitor Site Enhancement Programme (Existing Sites)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Mourne Countryside Team carried out a programme of works to complement the contracted out upgrade of 13 upland car parks across the AONB . This was completed late Spring 2007 ▪ The previously mentioned audit of coastal amenity sites and plans for significant upgrade of a number of these (precise number to be confirmed pending funding) will contribute significantly to visitor site development. Significant work was undertaken in 2008/09 on this project including outline site development plans. In January 2009 funding applications for 15 sites were submitted to NITB and at the end of the period been passed to Economic Appraisal stage. Separate applications were made for match funding from the Rural Development Programme ▪ Other site enhancements included fencing work at Binders Cove Souterrain, upgrades to the surface of the Granite Trail in Newcastle and regular repair and improvement of visitor infrastructure at upland car parks along with biodiversity enhancements such as wildflower planting ▪ A Visitor development masterplan was produced for the Silent Valley and, in conjunction with CAAN and other partners, proposals for masterplans for the three Forest Parks in Mourne were brought forward.
<p>2J P3</p>	<p><u>Access Trail Enhancement Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A phase II of the Silent Valley Nature Trail - turning the former linear route into a circular one and providing access for people with disabilities to a greater range of environments - was designed and funding attracted ▪ In October 2008, the completed trail was formally launched by Minister Conor Murphy and attracted significant publicity. A promotional brochure for trail was designed, produced and distributed ▪ In January 2008, the Mourne Way on which Mourne Heritage Trust collaborated with Newry and Mourne and Down DC's was formally opened. Regular quarterly inspection and required follow up, such as path upgrades and temporary re-routing at Yellow Water Bridge, was undertaken as well as liaison with CAAN and Sports Council re problem areas, works needed to facilitate mass participation events, and volunteer monitoring of the trail. ▪ In 2008 Scott Wilson Ltd. were appointed to undertake design work, building on work of MHT project group, on opportunities for







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	<p>enhanced walking provision. Proposals were developed for improving surfacing/ access/signage etc and to raise awareness of walks that are not obvious to the visitor. The Master plan submitted to NITB for Signature Project funding includes a walking specific section that lays out what can be achieved in the short to medium term. Longer term opportunities have been identified and will be pursued by MHT in consultation with Councils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A review of the current access provision at Silent Valley with recommendations for walking and cycling was undertaken in conjunction with CAAN and NIW and complements the Scott Wilson Report. ▪ The £400,000 Stone pitching programme reported under High Mournes Management programme will significantly contribute to enhancement of access routes. By the end of the period final design had been completed after liaison with NITB and DFP to establish final project parameters. Detailed specifications have been completed and recruitment of Project Manager undertaken with a view to a start of June 2010 ▪ Smaller scale trail enhancements included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fencing, path upgrade and signage works on the Brandy Pad at Bloody Bridge. The work involved close liaison with the landowners and a good working relationship has been established. As a result a project to further repair the Brandy Pad up to the Crannog quarry by the Mourne Wall has been agreed along with a permissive path for emergency services from the Ballagh Road to access the Brandy Pad (grant application pending) ○ Construction of new fence at Trassey Track below the sheep fold where landowner's fence had been damaged and fencing at Leitrim Lodge ○ Repair work to public rights of way at Wild Forest Lane and Ballywillwill Lane after flash flooding. ○ Enhanced fencing at Tullybrannigan/Tollymore along with drainage and path realignment ○ Works at Trassey Track to improve and maintain walking surface ○ Specifications and funding applications for upgrade of sections of Mourne Way and brokering agreement for investment by Oxfam in upgrade of this route in line with their use for fundraising events.
<p>2K P3</p>	<p><u>Traffic and Transport Initiative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Terms of reference was agreed for a sustainable Transport Review in Mourne. Initial research in the form of scoping meetings with both Translink and private coach hire companies and a car parks survey took place. Research was furthered in 2008 by a Masters student of Town and Country Planning looking at the scope for sustainable transport initiatives for the Mourne AONB. ▪ Key transport issues were raised at a meeting with Minister Murphy (DRD). Follow up action by way of contact from a designated officer in Roads Service is awaited for a meeting to discuss main roads related issues including vehicular access to Silent Valley, access to and parking in Newcastle, Mourne Coastal route signage issues and facilitation of access to Slieve Croob area. ▪ The Trust contributed to the work of the Newcastle Steering Committee on traffic issues in and around this key gateway.



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Built and Cultural Heritage - At a Glance Summary

Ref	Description	Status	
3A	<u>Policy Formation and Consultation</u>		
3B	<u>Cultural Heritage Audit and Database Development</u>		
3C	<u>Development of Cultural Heritage Trail</u>		
3D	<u>Mourne Cultural Heritage Interpretation Programme</u>		
3E	<u>Evaluation of Mourne Homesteads Programme</u>		
3F	<u>Built and Cultural Heritage Information Service</u>		 <p>Annalong Cornmill</p>  <p>Binders Cover Soutterain</p> 
3G	<u>Vernacular Building and Restoration Guidance and Promotion</u>		
3H	<u>Built Heritage Revolving Fund/Building Preservation Trust</u>		
3I	<u>Traditional Skills Training Programme</u>		
3J	<u>Village Enhancement Programme</u>		

Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

Ref	Description
3A	<p><u>Policy Formation and Consultation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant policy and consultation documents and requests were responded to, including significant input to the important draft PPS 14 and PPS 21 in relation to rural housing
3B P1	<p><u>Cultural Heritage Audit and Database Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This audit was completed and a searchable online database of cultural heritage materials and resources designed and custom built for www.mournelive.com
3C P1	<p><u>Development of Cultural Heritage Trail</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A trail route was designed to incorporate a range of culturally important sites. Bespoke art work was commissioned to complement detailed research on interpretation information in a trail brochure which was launched in June 2009 and widely promoted
3D P1	<p><u>Mourne Cultural Heritage Interpretation Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural heritage fact sheets and detailed interpretative information were produced to complement the Heritage Walks programme and published on www.mournelive.com Plans and proposals were developed for interpretation of identified key themes – including traditional farming, water supply, granite quarrying and folklore – and formed a major element of a detailed application to the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme for a £2m ‘Mourne Mountain Kingdom’ project. This was submitted in November 2009 and confirmed as successful in April 2010
3E P2	<p><u>Evaluation of Mourne Homesteads Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A comprehensive external evaluation was completed by the Cardiff Research Group involving a programme of consultations, surveys and economic analysis was produced. The evaluation assessed the impact of Mourne Homesteads at local and regional level. Both a full and summary report was produced and circulated to a wide range of interest groups. The report provides a strong endorsement of the impacts of the project while raising recommendations for future activity, a number of which were incorporated into the HLF application referred to immediately above Award of a Diploma from Europa Nostra, the European Union’s Cultural Heritage Awards 2007 2nd place in ECOVAST ‘Best in Heritage World Exhibition 2008’ in Dubrovnik, Croatia
3F P2	<p><u>Built and Cultural Heritage Information Service</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Trust continued to provide a proactive and reactive information service relating to built and cultural heritage Cultural Heritage education events were undertaken in line with European Heritage Open Days at Silent Valley and other locations The online searchable database resulting from the cultural heritage audit referred to above is a significant enhancement to the Information Service. As a result of the achievements in particular of the Mourne Homesteads scheme the Mournes continued to be seen and used as an area of best practice in relation to built heritage



Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010 BUILT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE INFORMATION AND EVENTS





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<p>3G P2</p>	<p><u>Vernacular Building and Restoration Guidance and Promotion</u></p> <p>A number of measures contributed to this programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and publication of ‘<i>Homes and Heritage</i>’ a pictorial booklet illustrating the renovations undertaken through Mourne Homesteads and relating key messages regarding re-use of vernacular buildings • Open day and tours of Mourne Homesteads Properties in May 2007 and June and September 2008 • Review of “<i>Traditional Buildings in Ireland: A Homeowners Handbook</i>” and identification of enhancements for a proposed second edition. By the end of the period a substantial re-draft had been produced awaiting publication • Contribution to development of proposals for a Northern Ireland design guide to accompany PPS 21 • Collaboration with the Follies Trust to successfully raise funds for the restoration of Lord Limerick’s Follies at Tollymore
<p>3H P2</p>	<p><u>Built Heritage Revolving Fund/Building Preservation Trust</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Options for follow-up activity to the Mourne Homesteads Scheme were considered in the external evaluation of that project including a Revolving Fund/Buildings Preservation Trust. Consultations have been undertaken with Hearth Housing Association regarding possibilities for a joint venture or expanding from the latter. The current housing market and wider economic situation along with constraints on staffing in MHT have militated against further progress ▪ Initial research was undertaken regarding the use of sustainable and energy saving technologies in vernacular dwellings, including ongoing work by a Masters student, with a view to a possible pilot scheme ▪ Provision for vernacular building restoration was included in the successful HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme
<p>3I P3</p>	<p><u>Traditional Skills Training Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In the absence of a formal programme, traditional skills training was also provided on an ad hoc basis to Mourne Conservation Volunteers ▪ The evaluation of Mourne Homesteads included a review of the traditional skills training and has provided guidance for future activity. ▪ A very significant element of traditional skills training was included in the successful HLF bid for a landscape partnership, including dry stone wall building and hedge laying
<p>3J P3</p>	<p><u>Village Enhancement Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Town and Village Enhancements were included as a priority in the Mourne Signature Project Action Plan ▪ In agreement with NITB a public art project was pursued as a means to stimulate village enhancement through interpretation of aspects of local heritage. After submission of a detailed plan & business case, funding was secured from the Arts Council for a Mourne Public Art Programme. ▪ By the end of the period 4 gateway pieces had been commissioned and selected for Clough, Corbett, Rathfriland and Banbridge for installation in 2010. Funding had also been secured for commissioning of 8 further pieces for which funding capital funding can then be sought ▪ Many of the sites included in proposals for the Mourne Coastal route will also contribute to the village enhancement programme at locations such as, Annalong, Ballymartin, Dundrum and Rostrevor



Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010 BUILT HERITAGE FEATURES OF MOURNE



Dry stone Wall



Lazy Beds



Granite Kerbstones



Bellows used in
Granite Quarrying



Follies at Bryansford




Legananny Dolmen



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Sustainable Tourism - At a Glance Summary

Ref	Description	Status	
4A	<u>Policy Formation and Consultation</u>		 
4B	<u>EU Sustainable Tourism Charter Development</u>		
4C	<u>Development of Mournes Signature Project Action Plan</u>		
4D	<u>Co-ordination of Delivery of Mournes Signature Project Action Plan</u>		
4E	<u>Mourne Tourism Forum Development</u>		
4F	<u>Green Tourism Accreditation Scheme Development</u>		  <p>EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS</p>
4G	<u>Tourism Information Point Development</u>		
4H	<u>Inter- Regional Tourism Initiatives</u>		
4I	<u>Sustainable Tourism Education Programme</u>		
4J	<u>Sustainable Tourism Business Development Programme</u>		

Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

Ref	Description
4A	<p><u>Policy Formation and Consultation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant policy and consultation documents and requests responded to. This included significant input into the NI and Mourne Branding project by NITB (background info, workshops, one to one interviews), the new Tourism Strategy 'SFA II', DETI tourism strategy and PPS 16, planning policy statement for tourism
4B	<p><u>EU Sustainable Tourism Charter Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Trust achieved re-accreditation with the EU Charter for the period 2008 – 2013, becoming the first region in the UK to do so. This was presented at the Europarc Conference in Stromstad, Sweden in September 2009. A detailed portfolio on sustainable tourism work during the last five years was submitted to support the re-application and a two day inspection visit undertaken in Autumn 2008 ▪ Scoping work took place on developing a methodology for implementation of Part II of Charter, extending accreditation to Tourism businesses, including the establishment of baseline criteria for entry into the scheme along with research on revised and localised sustainable tourism guidance. Informal discussions continued with local businesses regarding the possibility of them applying for Part II of the Charter and an application submitted to the Rural Development Programme for roll out ▪ In October 2008 the Trust jointly hosted a Europarc Atlantic Isles Workshop on Sustainable Tourism in Belfast with Field Visits to the Mournes and the Causeway Coast. This attracted the largest ever number of registrations for an Atlantic isles workshop. ▪ The Trust also continued to represent Northern Ireland within the Europarc network including attendance at the following events. Europarc Conference and General Assembly in Brasov, Romania, Sept 2008 and Sweden 2009; Charter Network Meetings in the Cairngorms, Scotland and Alpi Maritime, France, June 2007 and June 2008 respectively; Europarc Atlantic Isles Network meeting Newcastle Upon Tyne, November 2007 and Edinburgh November 2009 ▪ In recognition of its achievements in promoting sustainable tourism the Trust was invited to speak at the Sustainable Tourism Workshop in the Best of Britain and Ireland Trade Fair at London Olympia in March 2010
4C	<p><u>Development of Mournes Signature Project Action Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Signature Project Action Plan was completed by December 2007. The action planning process involved research, including visitor and business surveys and a policy context review, along with extensive consultations, both on a one to one basis with key stakeholders and in business workshops in Warrenpoint and Newcastle ▪ Along with NITB the Trust produced a promotional summary of the action plan designed to promote awareness of and participation in implementation of the plan



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Outdoor Activities in Mourne





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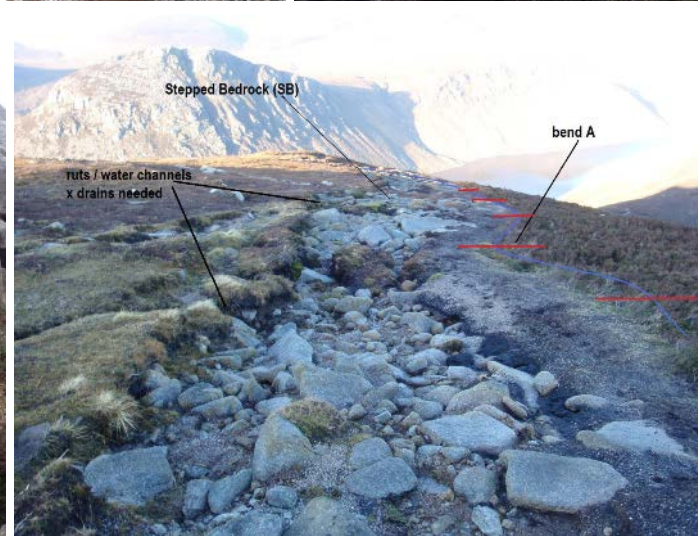
4D

Co-ordination of Delivery of Mournes Signature Project Action Plan

- Between January and March follow up work was undertaken on with various agencies including Northern Ireland Water, Forest Service, Loughs Agency, DETI, Heritage Lottery Fund, CAAN and Planning Service (Downpatrick & Craigavon), to develop plans for implementation of projects outlined in the Signature Project Action Plan. This led to a Capital Development Action Plan being agreed with NITB and a business case was subsequently completed to support allocation of funds to the Mourne Signature Project
- This plan was subsequently used to guide completion of Masterplans for a Mourne Coastal route and Silent Valley developments (both drawn and costed by Scott Wilson based on audits and a proposals drawn together by MHT)
- After completion of this preparatory work detailed proposals and business cases were submitted in January 2009 to the Mourne Tourism Development Scheme Funding
 - Mourne Coastal Route & Amenity Site Development
 - Development of Silent Valley Mountain Park
 - Upland Path Programme
 - Public Art Programme and
 - Mountain Bike Trails (submitted by CAAN)
- Follow up work included
 - liaison with NITB officials re TDS funding
 - negotiation of funding contributions from Loughs Agency Northern Ireland Coastal and Marine Forum, NIEA and Sport Ni (the latter unsuccessful due to government funding cuts)
 - 17 separate applications and supporting information submitted to the Rural Development Programme and are pending.
 - assisted with the signage study for the Coastal Route, achievement of match funding from Councils and procurement of detailed design services for coastal route sites
 - community consultations and liaison with landowners (local authorities, National Trust and private) and input to planning
- By the end of the period design and funding processes for two sites (Narrow Water and Mill Bay) and detailed design commenced for the remaining priority sites



Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010 Planning of Upland Path Upgrade Works



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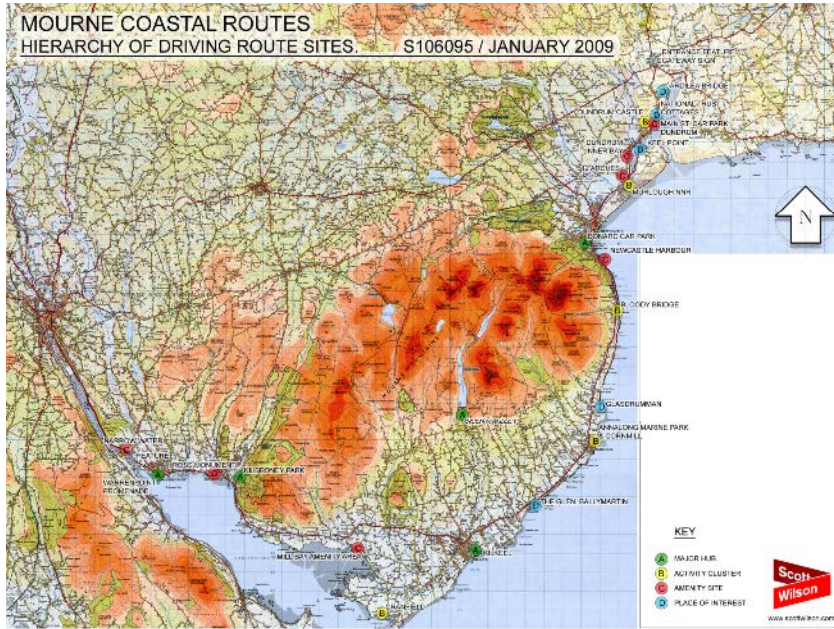
<p>4E</p>	<p><u>Mourne Tourism Forum Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In the early part of the plan period precedence was given to consultations on the Signature Project Action Plan which involved many Forum members over specific meetings of the Mourne Sustainable Tourism Forum ▪ Subsequently the Trust provided initial stimulation & advice and ongoing secretariat to the Greater Newcastle and Slieve Croob Area Tourism Business Group which formed in October 2008. The group met with Council, NITB and INI representatives, Minster Foster and local elected representatives to identify and lobby on local issues, including a National Park, transport issues and marketing. The membership of this group includes a number of the Tourism Forum members so there is an element of overlap ▪ An application was developed and submitted to the Rural Development Programme for a Mourne Sustainable Tourism Programme which will, among other things, provide training and resources for local tourism business in relation to local product knowledge and the unique natural and cultural characteristics of the area. This will enable them to help their customers to ‘uncover our stories’ in one with the NITB brand
<p>4F</p>	<p><u>Green Tourism Accreditation Scheme Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Trust lobbied SEUPB and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and NITB for creation of a NI wide Green Tourism Accreditation Scheme drawing upon examples of successful initiatives from MHT’s pilot activity and providing relevant information ▪ NITB has subsequently included a ‘green thread’ in its new strategy and carried out scoping work on a green accreditation scheme for Northern Ireland with significant input from MHT. The Trust continued to build its research base on latest Green Tourism practices, technologies etc to ensure up to date information is available for any future activity. The RDP application for roll out of the EU charter includes provision for accreditation of local tourism business
<p>4G</p>	<p><u>Tourism Information Point Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Mourne Information Centre in the Newcastle Office was upgraded ▪ Tourism Information Points were included in the Signature Project Action Plan and an audit undertaken to identify existing and potential new information points and the level of provision that is and should be provided ▪ After consultation with key stakeholders/site owners Information Point enhancement at a range of AONB wide locations was included within the Signature Project application and a Mourne Information Programme submitted to the RDP and is pending. ▪ The Trust agreed with SportNi the inclusion of a Mourne Information Point in the new Northern Ireland Mountain Centre at Tollymore

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4H	<p><u>Inter- Regional Tourism Initiatives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As well as significant action against a Mourne – Cooley – Gullion Geotourism project (further reported at 6E) the concept of a related Border Gateway Centre was developed and communicated to key agencies and policy makers (including Ministers). A detailed concept paper was produced and aroused significant interest from agencies such as NITB, Fáilte Ireland, DETI, DRD, Dept of Foreign Affairs (RoI) and Local Authorities but the project is lacking a lead agency and progress uncertain ▪ The Trust has also explored with East Border Region Ltd and Louth County Council the possibility of extension of the Mourne Coastal Route Signage to the South of the border ▪ Revisions to the Mourne, Cooley and Gullion Geotourism project will now see it incorporate complementary actions across the East Border Region
4I	<p><u>Sustainable Tourism Education Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A 'Mourne Awareness Programme' for local businesses was written into the Signature Project Action Plan and the need for locally specific information and training endorsed by businesses and the NITB Branding exercise ▪ In response, as previously mentioned, an application for a Mourne Sustainable Tourism Programme has been designed and submitted to the Rural Development Programme. This includes, among other things, local FAM trips, training of local guides and tourism business staff ▪ MHT participated in the tourism sub-group of the South Eastern Tourism Workforce Development Forum, led by Southern Regional College in which it has championed the need for tourism businesses to be better equipped with knowledge of the attributes of the local area in respect of natural and cultural heritage and activity opportunities and for a local knowledge aspect to customer service training to complement generic service skills
4J	<p><u>Sustainable Tourism Business Development Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A tailored training programme for Food and Hospitality Businesses was delivered in conjunction with Armagh Down Tourism and Southern Regional College, including promoting the use of local produce and other tourism issues. 10 workshops took place catering for 113 participants ▪ Throughout the period a one to one advice service was provided to existing and aspiring tourism businesses including hotels, self catering and activity providers ▪ The previously mentioned Rural Development Programme applications for a Mourne Sustainable Tourism Project will provide further business development support, notably the roll out of Part II of the EU Charter.



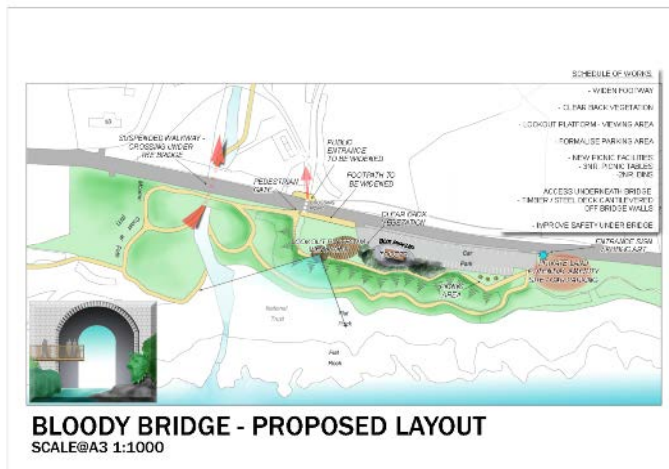
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Burren Roundabout



Clough Roundabout

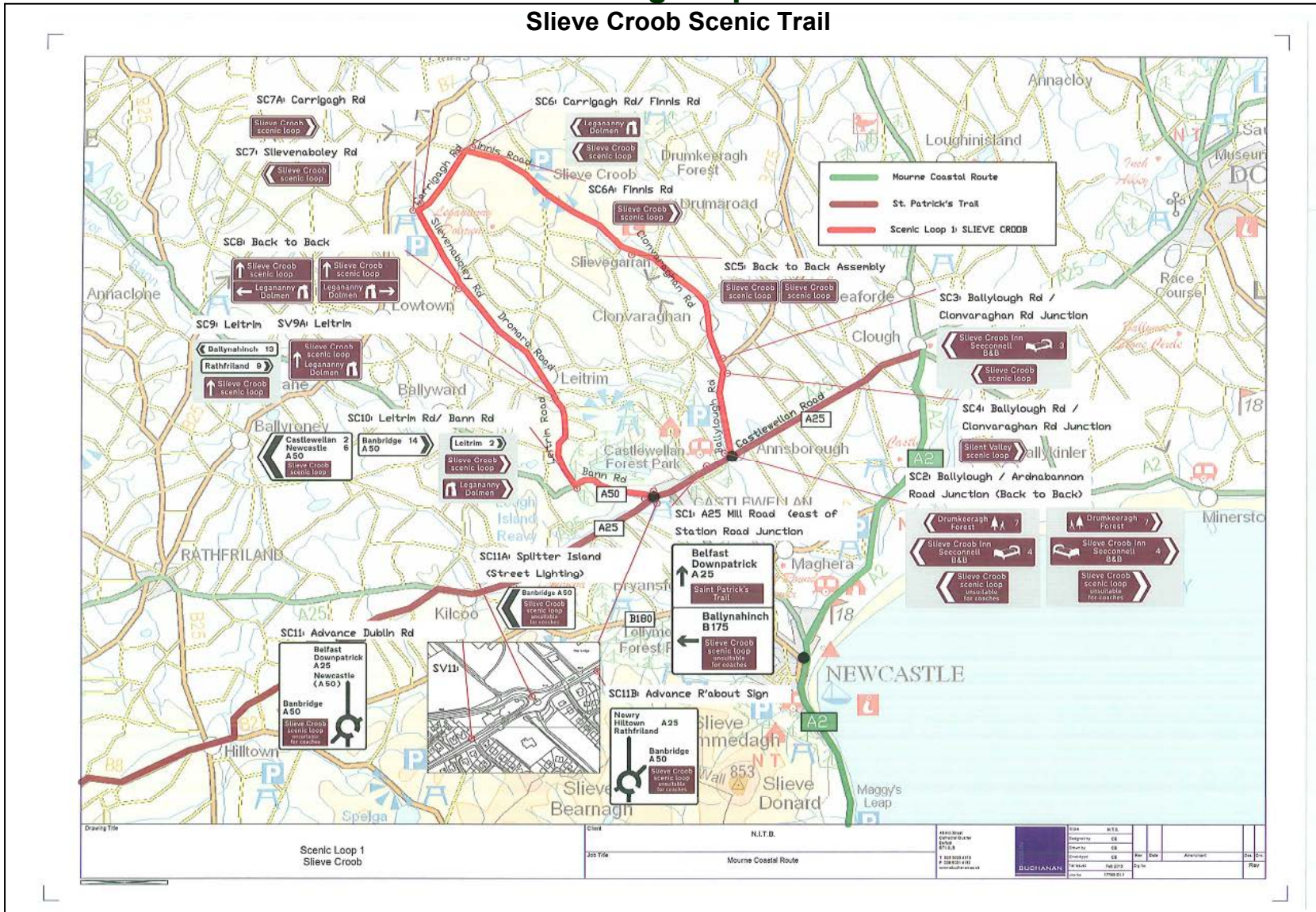


**Planning the
Proposed Mourne
Coastal Route**



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Slieve Croob Scenic Trail





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Creating Awareness and Promoting Understanding - At a Glance Summary		
Ref	Description	Status
5A	AONB Information Service	
5B	Publicity and Public Awareness	
5C	Community and Statutory Agency Liaison and Consultation	
5D	Friends of Mourne	
5E	Networking	
5F	Mourne AONB Website Management and Promotion	
5G	Development of 'State of the AONB' Indicators	
5H	Mourne Information and Interpretation Publications	
5I	Mourne Matters Publication	



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Ref	Description
5A	<p><u>AONB Information Service</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Trust continued to provide an information service at its Mourne Information Centre in Newcastle, by face to face, phone and through www.mournelive.com. Relocation of this service to the Newcastle Centre will enhance co-ordination with the Tourism Information Centre. ▪ The Trust produced and disseminated a “Walking in the Mournes” file to ensure consistency of information provision as well as to raise awareness of :- less well known walks, safety issues, events etc)
5B	<p><u>Publicity and Public Awareness</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Trust has continued to publish activities, events and issues through the local press and also in both regional and national television and radio features. Significant examples included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BBC Countryfile, BBC One Show, ○ BBC NI Newslines and Good Moring Ulster (Mourne National Park Proposals, Juniper, Tree Nursery, Activities for people with learning disabilities, focus on erosion, quad bike misuse). ○ Support and information to journalists from Irish Independent, Irish Times, London Times, London Independent and others. Presentation on Mourne at ‘Best of Britain and Ireland Tourism Show, London Olympia.
5C	<p><u>Community and Statutory Agency Liaison and Consultation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff and Trustees continued to develop links and consult with a wide variety of community groups, statutory agencies and elected officials as follows. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The various sub-groups convened by the Trust, including Natural Heritage, Built Heritage, Farmers’ Liaison Group and Safer Mournes Partnership provided communication mechanisms with a range of statutory and non-statutory partners and the Mourne Outdoor Recreation Forum provided a new mechanism ○ The Trust conducted a review of its stakeholder liaison functions in 2008/09 culminating in a Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan. The assistance of marketing and communications departments in the University of Ulster was brought in to examine ways to implement this process. The first stage of this work is underway in the form of a review of opportunities for use of online social media ○ The Trust continued to facilitate regular requests from local groups and schools for talks on a range of subjects and regular meetings were held with local elected representatives ○ The Trust contributed to a range of relevant government consultation exercises as necessary to highlight implications for Mourne of various policy proposals, including those identified throughout this report

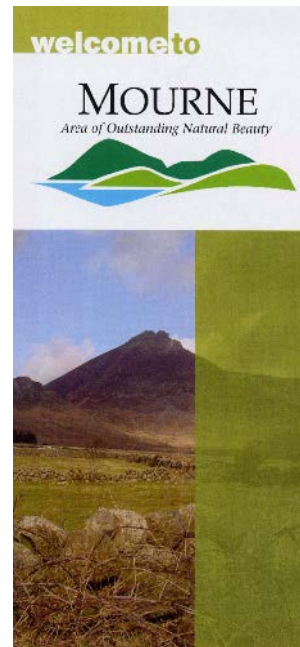
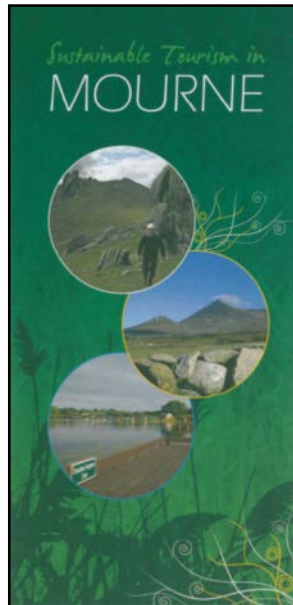
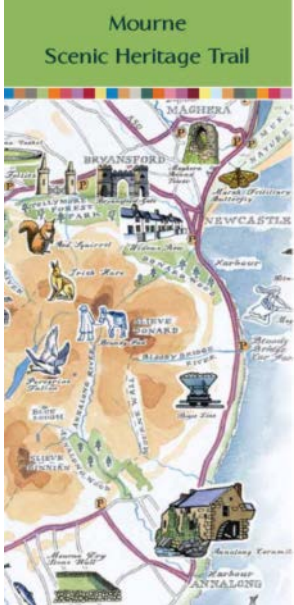
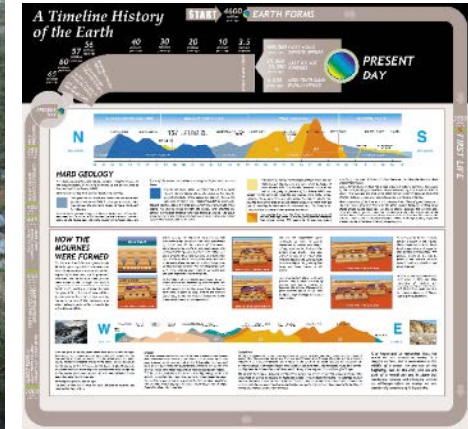
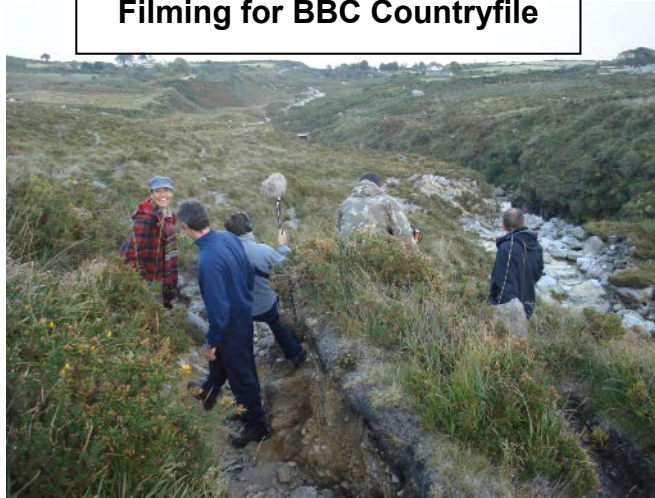


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Association of AONBs



Filming for BBC Countryfile



Creating Awareness





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5D	<p><u>Friends of Mourne</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promotion and recruitment of Friends of Mourne continued with a particular increase in 'Life' Friends of Mourne. ▪ By April 2009 Friends of Mourne had increase to 192 registered members. A scoping exercise undertaken in 2010 identified the 'Just Giving' website as a means to encourage more ad hoc donations to support the work of Mourne Heritage Trust and to complement the more formal Friends of Mourne
5E	<p><u>Networking</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Trust continued to work with and be members of a wide range of networks and partnerships, both promoting Mourne interest and keeping up to date on best practice. Hosting of study, familiarisation and other visits to the Mourne AONB continued to be an important function. Among these were visits from Ministers Foster, Gildernew, Murphy and Poots ▪ MHT assumed the Chair of the Northern Ireland Protected Area Network and as previously reported been very active in the Europarc network as well as contributing to Northern Ireland Environment Link ▪ Two major events were central to the networking role namely the Europarc Atlantic Isles Seminar in Belfast in 2008 and national association of AONBs Conference in Coleraine in 2009, both hosted in conjunction with CCGHT
5F	<p><u>Mourne AONB Website Management and Promotion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing updating of the website took place on a regular basis. ▪ Usage statistics showed a total of 142,869 hits over the year 2008/09. This represented an average of 11,905 hits per month to the site, a very significant increase on the 6,573 hits per month in 2007/08 and close to the peak level of usage which occurred in 2006 coinciding with the extensive public consultations on A Mourne National Park. The figures appear to suggest a significant increase in the day-to-day use of the website to replace the 'issue specific' volume that accompanied the consultations. Unfortunately due to a fault with the host server usage numbers for 2009/10 are incomplete. ▪ A detailed assessment of www.mournelive.com was completed to scope and cost upgrade options, which currently await funding. In particular the new design is more visitor facing and includes a content management system ▪ In addition a review of the potential for MHT to make use of online social networking sites including Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, was commissioned with the University of Ulster and is ongoing at the end of the period ▪ Significant additions to the website in this plan period include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ specific website developed for Tollymore Red Squirrel Project ○ online leaflet for the Silent Valley Nature Trail ○ downloadable Mourne Recipe Cards ○ searchable database of cultural / heritage resources ○ upgrade of the natural heritage section ○ new mini-site 'Promoting Mourne Products' ○ French translation of key elements ○ Mourne Management BLOG and 'Twitter' feed ○ Scoping and preliminary design of the creation of a tourism business directory on www.mournelive.com



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<p>5G</p>	<p><u>Development of 'State of the AONB' Indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A comprehensive audit and collation of data was undertaken to produce a 'State of the AONB' report. This establishes an initial baseline from which to monitor special features of the AONB and will be continually reviewed ▪ The Trust continued routinely to inspect and maintain its network of electronic vehicle and pedestrian counters ▪ The condition assessment of key access routes into the high Mournes previously reported has contributed to the knowledge base on the condition of these heavily used areas. Existing data on erosion within the Mourne Wall was also revisited and updated and used to plan the stone pitching project ▪ The Trust also put in place a methodology for assessment of condition of upland heath in the Eastern Mournes SAC and undertook an annual monitoring programme
<p>5H P2</p>	<p><u>Mourne Information and Interpretation Publications</u></p> <p>The Trust continued to widely distribute its existing AONB information as well as producing a range of new publications and materials. New resources created include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New interpretive guides on key natural heritage features (in line with NITB brand for NI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mourne Landscapes Guide ○ Mourne Flora and Fauna Guide – What to see and where • Seal Spotting Poster • Butterflies and Where to Find Them poster • Red Squirrel Panel and Conservation Handbook • Juniper Conservation handbook • 7 new interpretive panels at various locations • Heritage walks brochure • 'Encouraging and promoting Mourne Produce' leaflet, complemented by a DVD of a cookery demonstration using local produce and a suite of attractive 'Mourne Recipe Cards' promoting use of local ingredients • Mourne Cultural Heritage Trail leaflet, including map, artwork and site information • Online searchable database of cultural / heritage resources of cultural heritage resources. • Easy reference section in annual reports providing key facts and figures about the Mourne AONB • Regular e-zine accompanying the natural heritage outreach project with a circulation list of some 200, including local NGO's who then forward to their own membership respectively
<p>5I P3</p>	<p><u>Mourne Matters Publication</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attempts to identify funding for a publication have not come to fruition with many funders expressing reluctance to fund 'stand alone' publications. Staff resource to prepare material and content for such a publication is also a challenge in the absence of a dedicated communications function. The e-zine mentioned immediately above has partially filled the gap in the absence of Mourne Matters.



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Strategic and Cross-Cutting Initiatives - At a Glance Summary

Ref	Description	Status	
6A	<u>Planning Comments on Significant Proposals</u>		
6B	<u>Policy Formation and Consultation</u>		
6C	<u>Mourne National Park</u>		
6D	<u>Mourne Branding Initiative</u>		
6E	<u>Geodiversity</u>		
6F	<u>AONB GIS System Development</u>		
6G	<u>AONB Management Plan</u>		

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Ref	Description
6A	<p data-bbox="280 376 922 408"><u>Planning Comments on Significant Proposals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="280 411 2042 507">▪ The Trust reviewed its policy in relation to input to planning matters, in which it has no formal role and/or dedicated resource for this purpose, and endorsed a continuation of the approach of commenting only in exceptional circumstances and on significant planning applications <li data-bbox="280 510 2042 576">▪ Those dealt with included the following proposals hotel developments, wind turbines, offshore wind farm in Dundalk Bay, new breakwater at Kilkeel Harbour, Narrow Water Bridge and aircraft flight path changes over the Mournes and Slieve Croob
6B	<p data-bbox="280 580 772 612"><u>Policy Formation and Consultation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="280 616 2042 681">▪ The Trust continued to provide input to the development of government policy in areas including agriculture, rural development, tourism, and environment <li data-bbox="280 684 2042 831">▪ The main input, among many others, has been the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007–2013, the experience of the Mourne Homesteads Scheme fed into draft PPS14 and helped shape PPS 21, Review of Environmental Governance, DRD Review of Regional Development Strategy, Forest Service Recreational And Social Use Strategy Draft, PPS 16 proposals for a tourism planning policy and Proposals for redesignation of the Lecale and Strangford AONBs
6C	<p data-bbox="280 852 589 884"><u>Mourne National Park</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="280 887 2042 983">▪ The Trust, through its Chairman as a member of the National Park Working Party and CEO as observer, provided input to the completion of the Working Party's Report to the Minister (September 07). The Trust also provided significant background information from this work. <li data-bbox="280 986 2042 1082">▪ A National Park Position Statement and Information sheet was produced for public information and presentations given at the request of Assembly Environment, and Agriculture and Rural Development Committees respectively, the local MP, MLAs and a variety of local audiences. <li data-bbox="280 1085 2042 1222">▪ The Trust convened a local interests group to meet with Minister Foster (May 2008) and subsequently for Minister Wilson (2009) and provided detailed briefing to Councils and NITB for their meetings with Ministers. The Trust also met with Minister Wilson shortly before his announcement of his intention to pursue primary legislation for national parks in Northern Ireland, later endorsed by Minister Poots. <li data-bbox="280 1225 2042 1291">• Several meetings were undertaken with DoE Planning and Environmental Policy Group and input was provided to their work on draft legislation and business case for National Parks in Northern Ireland <li data-bbox="280 1294 2042 1351">• Significant input to a study team from Queens University researching attitudes across NI (excluding the Mourne area) to investing in a possible Mourne National Park



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<p>6D</p>	<p><u>Mourne Branding Initiative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Five Local Produce Promotional events were held and cookery demonstrations with emphasis on sourcing and showcasing local produce were given at the Green Living Experience, Castlewellan ▪ A flagship ‘Encouraging & Promoting Mourne Products’ event was held in November 2007 with over 100 attendees and conference speakers from across the UK and Ireland ▪ In May 2008 a ‘Bringing Producers and Retailers Together Event’ was held in Castlewellan to conclude a training and mentoring programme and offered an opportunity for individuals and organisations in the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB involved in, or thinking about, setting up a small business in the food, hospitality and tourism sectors to come together. There were 46 participants ▪ Two study visits took place on Flavour of Tyrone & Good Food Circle – (11 participants) and County Leitrim (Organic Centre, The Food Hub, Western Organics Network) – (13 participants) ▪ A promotional set of Mourne Recipe Cards was produced to promote use of seasonal local produce ▪ A Mourne Branding Scoping Study was undertaken. A report was circulated to local authorities, economic development and rural development agencies, elected reps and framing organisations along with a tailored briefing paper. Positive feedback was received and it is hoped the scoping study will influence, among other things, delivery of the Rural Development Programme ▪ As reported elsewhere significant input from MHT branding research, including the activities above and Signature Project Action Plan process, was provided to NITB branding exercise.
<p>6E</p>	<p><u>Geodiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Significant action took place in relation to promotion of Mourne – Cooley – Gullion Geotourism. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A detailed concept paper and costings, developed in conjunction with project partners and the International Centre for Local and Regional Development, formed the basis for a Geopark Implementation Plan. ○ Promotion of the concept saw it selected as one of only four initiatives for the ‘Newry-Dundalk Twin City Strategy’ by an Inter-Governmental Steering Group (DSD Ni and DoE RoI) for an implementation study. This was launched jointly in January 2009 by Ministers Murphy (Northern Ireland) and Minister Gormley (Ireland). ○ Presentations were given to the Department of Foreign Affairs (RoI), Cross Border Regional Development Conference 2008 and Geoparks Ireland Conference. ▪ A funding application for Interreg IVA application was submitted (June 2008). Application was rejected by SEUPB – Dec 2008 – but after an appeal process (Feb 09) referred back to the Interreg Steering Group. A range of revised options was prepared and costed for consideration by the Committee and a new joint application for €1.6m submitted in conjunction with the East Border Region Partnership (February 2010). ▪ A Mourne-Cooley-Gullion Geological Field Guide was completed in conjunction with Louth County Council and launched by John Gormley TD, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, (RoI) in March 2010.



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6F	<p><u>AONB GIS System Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ After scoping work on GIS possible uses in 2007/08 a NIEA grant was secured to develop GIS system and acquire high quality GPS equipment. By the end of the period a tender exercise had taken place and appropriate system selected.
6G	<p><u>AONB Management Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funding was secured for preparation of an AONB Management Plan and an officer employed from March 2009 to March 2010. ▪ Desk Research through this period was complemented by innovative approaches to consultation (e.g. at livestock marts, sheep sheering events) and the formation of a broadly based Steering Group. ▪ A comprehensive Management Plan and Action Plan were compiled for publication and launch by Minister Poots in April 2010.
<p>Corporate Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All external audits were completed including a Third Party Organisation Review by Dept of Enterprise Trade and Investment and various project specific audits. ▪ Considerable time was spent providing information to inform an external review of AONB management in Mourne and Causeway Coast and Glens by FGS McClure Watters. A final report was completed in July 2009. ▪ Three Year Funding agreement from NIEA achieved – 53% of required funding for 2010-2013. ▪ A major internal efficiency review was undertaken in January 2010 in response to government funding cut backs and identifying significant savings, notably through overhead reduction. ▪ An Outline Fundraising Plan was produced in February 2010 to capitalise on the Trust’s charitable status and brand. 	

Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

FGS McClure Watters Review of MHT (2009) – Key Findings

- **Positive assessment of performance**
 - **From stakeholder consultations & analysis of data**
- **‘MHT has successfully delivered against each of its Key Performance Areas, either directly through core activities or development and implementation of priority projects’**
 - **ability to identify local needs and pursue funding**
 - **range of areas MHT has delivered on is significant**
- **‘It is clear from analysis MHT is facing a number of funding constraints affecting its future stability and ability to sustain its strong performance’**
- **‘Opportunities for financial savings limited’**
- **Having analysed need, review recommends**
 - **secure and longer term funding streams**
 - **strengthening of the legislative base**
 - **AONB condition & performance monitoring arrangements**
 - **enhanced staffing structures**



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APPENDIX 1 – AREA RANGER CONTACT LOG FOR LANDOWNERS AND AUTHORITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCESS

CONTACT	SITE	INITIAL DATE	FOLLOW UP MEET.	ISSUES (R: resolved, OG: ongoing)	
Farmer	Bloody Bridge	April 07	3	Property flooding Trespassing on private lane and driveway, disturbance around house and verbal abuse from walkers and cyclists Damage to gates and fences by walkers	R R OG
Farmer	Bloody Bridge	June 07	4	Trespassing and damage to gates and fences by walkers Disturbance to livestock – walkers dogs Fires Erosion to grazing ground / degradation of heathland by walkers Wash out of quarry track (on behalf of all grazers in area)	R OG OG OG OG
Farmer	Bloody Bridge	Aug 08	0.5	Trespassing and damage to gates and fences by walkers Disturbance to livestock – walkers dogs Fires Erosion to grazing ground / degradation of heathland by walkers	OG
Farmer	Bloody Bridge	Aug 08	0.5	Trespassing and damage to gates and fences by walkers Disturbance to livestock – walkers dogs Fires Erosion to grazing ground / degradation of heathland by walkers Top ground used as drinking den – disturbance and litter	OG
Farmer	Bloody Bridge	March 09	1	Site lines to property entrance blocked by tree and hedge on National Trust ground	R
National Trust	Bloody Bridge	May 07	6	Relay concerns of neighbouring farmers, resolve issues on access with neighbouring farmers	OG
Farmer	Ballagh / Spences	Aug 07	0.5	Fences and gates damaged by groups bouldering on Crockhorn R.	OG
Farmer	Ballagh / Donard Wood bndry	Sept 09	0.5	Mountain bikers causing serious risk on a private lane	R
Farmer	Trassey – Happy Valley	April 07	4	Damage to gates, litter, livestock disturbance by walkers Dry stone wall damaged by walkers Verbal abuse from walkers	OG R



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APPENDIX 1 – AREA RANGER CONTACT LOG FOR LANDOWNERS AND AUTHORITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCESS

CONTACT	SITE	INITIAL DATE	FOLLOW UP MEET.	ISSUES (R: resolved, OG: ongoing)	
Farmer	Trassey Track	April 07	2	Damage to ground, disturbance of livestock by walkers Threatened with physical abuse from campers	R
Farmer	Trassey car park	May 08	1	Litter, damage to fence, disturbance of livestock by walkers and drinking / parties at Trassey car park	R
Farmer / car park and accommodation provider	Trassey	April 07	4	Flood damage – lower Trassey track Flood damage - upper Trassey track Stile access Link track – Meelmore to Trassey track Damage to dry stone walls Verbal abuse and litter from camping Disturbance to livestock from walkers dogs	R OG R OG R OG OG
Farmer	Trassey	Aug 09	0.5	Disturbance due to drinking, camping and vandalism at Trassey car park	R
Farmer	Trassey	Oct 09	0.5	Disturbance / loss of sheep (1-2 per year) from dogs, threat of physical abuse from walkers	OG
Farmer	Trassey – Tollymore	Sept 08	3	Damage to walls, gates, disturbance of livestock by walkers. Flooding / wash out of lane	OG
Down District Council Countryside Officer and enforcement officers	Trassey, Happy Valley, Ott, Moneyscalp, car parks	June 09	10	Drinking, vandalism and littering at car parks – ongoing throughout the year	OG
Down District Council Countryside Officer	Mourne Way Newcastle Challenge Trail – Tollymore – Trassey – Fofanny	continuous	6	Assess, plan works needed to maintain sites	R / OG
Farmer / Accommodation provider	Moneyscalp	Sept 08	2	Advice on managing site for conservation Plant Oakwood as part of MHT Trees for Mourne project	R
Farmer	Tollymore	Aug 09	2	Disturbance / harm (from broken glass etc) and fatality (Ave 3 sheep per year)	R



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APPENDIX 1 – AREA RANGER CONTACT LOG FOR LANDOWNERS AND AUTHORITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCESS

CONTACT	SITE	INITIAL DATE	FOLLOW UP MEET.	ISSUES (ongoing)	(R: resolved, OG: ongoing)
				to livestock from camping and dogs	
Farmer / accommodation	Hanna's Close / Kilkeel	April 07	5	Manage site for conservation	OG
Farmer	Attical	July 08	0.5	Quad damage to heathland, walls and gates	OG
Farmer	Attical	June 09	1	Trespassing, disturbance to livestock, littering and broken glass causing harm to livestock	R
Farmer	Batts	April 07	0.5	Walkers leaving gate open	R
Farmer	Sandbank	Sept 09	1	Develop camping facility	OG
Farmer	Hilltown	Sept 09	1	Develop fishing and equestrian facility	OG
Farmer	Leitrim Lodge	July 08	0.5	Damage to fence from car park users	R
Farmer	Dunnywater	Sept 09	0.5	Disturbance, trespassing from late night drinking	OG
Farmer	Finis	Jan 08	4	Fence repair	R
Mourne Park Golf Course	Mourne Park Golf Course	May 07	1	Advise on native tree planting	R
Farmer	Lacken Bog	Nov 07	1	Setting up conservation project in Lacken Bog	-
Mourne Grange		Dec 07	1	Trees for Mourne project	-
Water Service	Eastern Mournes SAC Fofanny	continuous	10	Erosion control – plan and implement work on paths in high mournes Invasive species control – Rhododendron, Cotoneaster Funding, planning, oversee construction of Silent Valley Nature Trail Survey Mourne wall Path survey	OG



Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

APPENDIX 1 – AREA RANGER CONTACT LOG FOR LANDOWNERS AND AUTHORITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCESS

CONTACT	SITE	INITIAL DATE	FOLLOW UP MEET.	ISSUES (ongoing)	(R: resolved, OG: ongoing)
				Vegetation survey Litter lifts in high mounes Maintain stiles in high mounes Juniper restoration project	
Forest Service	Glen River Happy Valley	continuous	2	Litter lift Litter lift / repair fence	OG
Forest Service		continuous	10	Trees for Mourne Project Tollymore Red Squirrel Project Safer Mournes Partnership Installation of Newcastle Challenge Trail Invasive species clearance	OG
Down District Council	29 Public Rights of Way within the Mourne AONB	continuous	15	Continuous maintenance, site meetings with Countryside officer and when necessary residents or landowners	OG
Banbridge District Council	11 Public Rights of Way within the Mourne AONB	continuous	10	Continuous maintenance, site meetings with Countryside officer and when necessary residents or landowners	OG
Farmer Liaison Meetings - on average attended by approx 30 farmers	Mourne AONB	continuous	6	National Park Access, trespassing, liability, livestock disturbance, damage to fences/gates etc	OG

TOTAL CONTACT / MEETINGS: 121

NOTE: Contact days do not include admin time, and time spent carrying out practical work on the ground for each of the contacts listed in the above table – this can vary from 1 day to 5 weeks depending on issues.



Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

Appendix 2 – Typical Ranger Contact With Visitors & Groups

CONTACT	SITE	DATE	NUMBER	ISSUES
Green Living Fair	Castlewellan	Aug 07	30 p.a.	AONB management issues
Shannaghmore OEC	Shannaghmore	May 07	3	Red squirrel conservation, access to Donard park
Duke of Edinburgh group	Ben Crom	Sept 09	7	Invasive species in the mountains
Shannagh-More Outdoor Education Centre	On their site & Crossone etc	Sept 09	2	Red squirrel cons work & access issues
Tollymore Mountain Centre	Ott	Dec 07	3	Help repair paths
Killowen Outdoor Education Centre	Ott	Dec 07	4	Help repair paths
Mourne Ramblers & Wee Binnian walking groups	Silent Valley	Aug 08	10	Issues between landowners and walkers – try to find common ground and good practice
Regular mountain walkers / enthusiasts through volunteering group	High Mournes	Ongoing	300+	Litter, fencing, dry stone wall repair, path erosion, invasive species clearance
Belfast Royal Academy pupils	AONB	Dec 07	20 p.a.	Litter lift high Mournes
Contact with walkers while working on practical projects in mountains	Trassey track - Fencing 4 weeks Trassey drainage work 3 days Trassey dry stone wall repair 10 days Bloody Bridge fencing and path work 5 weeks Brandy pad pathwork 5 days Litter lifts 10 – 15 days per year	Jan / Feb 07 Sept 09 Sept 08 – March 09 Jul – Sept 08 Aug 09 07/08/09	15 10 5 10 10 20	Path work / erosion Path work / access Damage to farmers ground Pathwork / access issues Pathwork / erosion Impact of walkers / litter
Shimna College	Shimna College, Newcastle	May 07, Sept 08	4	Develop Red squirrel conservation, develop wildflower area
Mourne International Walking Festival / man water stops	AONB	Aug 07 / Aug 08 / Aug 09 2 days per year	30 p.a.	Walking / and general info about the Mourne AONB
Business in the Community	Silent Valley	June 07 - 2 groups on different days	80	Invasive species clearance at Silent Valley nature trail and Ben Crom
Kilkeel P.S.	Kilkeel primary school	4 days over period May 07 – May 08	15	Plan, cost and build wildlife area for pupils. Plant area with one of the classes
Crossgar Gardening Society	Crossgar	Nov 08	20	Talk on management issues in the Mourne AONB



Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

Appendix 3

MOURNE HERITAGE TRUST

STRATEGIC OPERATIONAL PLAN

**Review of 2007-2010 and implications
for 2010-2013**

6th January 2010



Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the Trust's initial consideration regarding which elements of its Strategic Operational Plan for 2007-2010 will continue into the 2010 – 2013 period.

This plan has largely been superseded by the Mourne AONB Management Plan which is currently under development and will be completed by March 2010. The management plan, of which MHT will be the 'custodian', will provide a broader agenda action for a greater range of actors.

Please note that in instances below where an action area is referred to as 'ongoing' this indicates that it will be going into the next 3 year period and should not be taken to imply that the anticipated progress has yet to be achieved. In many of these cases all or significant elements of these action areas have been completed or will have been completed by March 2010, but further action is planned to build on this progress and further address that area of activity.

Conclusion

The review of the strategic operational plan outlined below has already informed the AONB management plan process. It is considered that there is at present little need for change in the broad thrust of the Trust's Plan and that along with the Management Plan into which its actions will be incorporated it provides an appropriate direction of travel.

Recommendation

Board consider the enclosed review and provide comments as appropriate.



Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 1 - NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ENHANCEMENT AND PROTECTION

Strategic Aim:

'Safeguard, enhance and promote appreciation of the quality and diversity of the landscapes and biodiversity of the Mourne and Slieve Croob Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and to manage and influence change appropriately'

Objectives:

'To initiate, coordinate and implement an integrated programme of actions to support landowners and others to maintain, restore and enhance the biodiversity and landscapes of Mourne and Slieve Croob Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and manage and influence change appropriately.'

'To identify, co-ordinate and implement research into aspects of landscape and biodiversity,

'To promote appreciation & understanding, and educate and inform widely regarding the character, protection and enhancement of the Mourne and Slieve Croob Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.'

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Status</u>
1A	Mourne Countryside Management Service	Ongoing
1B	Mourne Ranger Service	Ongoing
1C	Policy formulation and consultation	Ongoing
1D	Mourne Conservation Volunteers and Volunteer Rangers	Ongoing
1E	Co-ordination of delivery of Mourne Biodiversity Action Plan	Ongoing
1F	Youth Ranger Programme	Ongoing
1G	Biodiversity Research Programme	Ongoing
1H	Mourne Farmers Liaison	Ongoing
1I	High Mournes Management Programme	Ongoing
1J	School and Community Environmental Projects	Ongoing
1K	Silent Valley Tree Nursery and Trees for Mourne	Ongoing
1L	Natural Heritage Outreach Programme	Completed but progress made will be built upon through Stakeholder Engagement Plan
1M	Mourne Coastal Action Programme	Ongoing

Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 2 – VISITOR MANAGEMENT AND VISITOR SERVICES

Strategic Aim:

‘To provide and maintain opportunities for public enjoyment, education and recreation within the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB in ways which safeguard the environment and protect land management and community interests’

Objectives:

‘To promote the development of a range of strategic projects which will enhance the visitor infrastructure within the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB’

*‘To promote the development of a programme of activities which offer opportunities for public information, enjoyment, recreation, education and **health promotion**’*

‘To provide a strategic framework and integrated approach for sensitive interpretation in Mourne and Slieve Croob’

‘To engage with landowners and other stakeholders in relation to access issues and seek to identify and address concerns and opportunities for partnerships’

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Status</u>
2A	Mourne Countryside Recreation Working Group	Ongoing as Mourne Access Committee and Mourne Outdoor Recreation Forum
2B	Guided Walks Programme	Removed due to lack of cost effectiveness uptake – Trust now signposting to private sector providers
2C	Policy formulation and consultation	Ongoing
2D	Visitor Monitoring Programme	Ongoing
2E	Mourne Countryside Recreation Strategy	Ongoing as implementation of Mourne Access Study
2F	Active Lifestyles Programme	Ongoing and to be expanded to three times current provision
2G	Visitor Site Development Programme (New Sites)	Ongoing
2H	Mourne Countryside Recreation Forum	Ongoing as Mourne Outdoor Recreation Forum
2I	Visitor Site Enhancement Programme (Existing Sites)	Ongoing
2J	Access Trail Enhancement Programme	Ongoing
2K	Traffic and Transport Initiative	Ongoing as visitor dispersal through Mourne Coastal Route and Loops and under AONB Mgmt Plan as encouragement of provision of collective transport for users.

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 3 – BUILT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

Strategic Aim:

‘To identify, promote, safeguard and enhance the built and cultural heritage of the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB’

Objectives:

‘To identify the built and cultural heritage within the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB, and represent built and cultural heritage interests to statutory and other relevant organisations’

‘To help research, co-ordinate and promote best practice in management of built and cultural heritage within the AONB’

‘To initiate and stimulate actions to protect and enhance key aspects of the built and cultural heritage of the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB’

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Status</u>
3A	Policy formulation and consultation	Ongoing
3B	Cultural Heritage Audit and Database Development	Completed
3C	Development of Cultural Heritage Trail	Completed but will be built upon by NITB Mourne Branding initiative and Mourne Coastal Route.
3D	Mourne Cultural Heritage Interpretation Programme	Ongoing as roll out of Mourne Brand
3E	Evaluation of Mourne Homesteads Programme	Completed
3F	Built and Cultural Heritage Information Service	Ongoing
3G	Vernacular Building Restoration Guidance and Promotion	Ongoing as revised Homeowners handbook and input to Mourne Design Guide
3H	Built Heritage Revolving Fund/Building Preservation Trust	Considered not feasible in current financial climate
3I	Traditional Skills Training Programme	Subject to funding
3J	Village Enhancement Programme	Ongoing – initially as Mourne Public Art programme

Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 4 – SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Strategic Aim:

‘To promote rural regeneration through the development of appropriate sustainable tourism initiatives in the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB’

Objectives:

‘To research, co-ordinate and promote best practice in management, provision and promotion of sustainable tourism initiatives within the AONB’

‘To deliver a programme of actions to stimulate the development of a thriving rural tourism sector based on the natural, cultural, social and recreational resources of the AONB’

‘To develop appropriate partnerships with similar initiatives elsewhere’

‘To engage the private sector in the strategic management and development of Tourism in the AONB’

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Status</u>
4A	Policy formulation and consultation	Ongoing
4B	EU Sustainable Tourism Charter Development	Ongoing
4C	Development of Mournes Signature Project Action Plan	Completed
4D	Co-ordination of Delivery of Mournes Signature Project Action Plan	Ongoing
4E	Mourne Tourism Forum Development	Ongoing
4F	Green Tourism Accreditation Scheme Development	Ongoing in conjunction with NITB
4G	Tourism Information Point Development	Ongoing
4H	Mourne/Gullion/Cooley Tourism Initiative	Ongoing as M-C-G Interreg Geotourism Project
4I	Sustainable Tourism Education Programme	Ongoing subject to funding
4J	Sustainable Tourism Business Development Programme	Ongoing subject to funding

Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 5 – CREATING AWARENESS AND PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING

Strategic Aim:

'To create awareness and promote greater understanding of the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB as a unique and special area to local regional national and international audiences.'

Objectives:

'To co-ordinate and promote best practice in the provision of information on the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB'

'To deliver a structured programme of communications to inform and educate a wide audience on the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB, and the work of the Mourne Heritage Trust.'

'To develop the Mourne and Slieve Croob website, www.mournelive.com, as a key information and communications hub for the Mourne and Slieve Croob area'

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Status</u>
5A	AONB Information Service	Ongoing
5B	Publicity and Public Awareness	Ongoing
5C	Community and Statutory Agency Liaison and Consultation	Ongoing
5D	Friends of Mourne	Ongoing
5E	Networking	Ongoing
5F	Mourne AONB Website Management and Promotion	Ongoing
5G	Development of 'State of the AONB' Indicators	Incorporated into AONB Management Plan and State of AONB reports
5H	Mourne Information and Interpretation Publications	Ongoing
5I	Mourne Matters Publication	Has not been possible to fund a published newsletter



Review of Strategic Operational Plan 2007 – 2010

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 6 – STRATEGIC AND CROSS-CUTTING INITIATIVES

Ref	<u>Action</u>	<i>Status</i>
6A	Planning Comments on Significant Proposals	<i>Due to lack of resource and planning expertise this will only be confined to planning policy, not applications with the latter considered only in exceptional circumstances.</i>
6B	Policy Formulation and Consultation	<i>Ongoing</i>
6C	Mourne National Park	<i>Awaiting developments. Trust will input to consultations on primary legislation for NI based on its extensive experience of the Mourne National park debate.</i>
6D	Mourne Branding Initiative	<i>Completed. Subject to fining there may be further work in conjunction with local authorities.</i>
6E	Geopark Designation	<i>Ongoing as Mourne – Cooley-Gullion Geotourism project with decision on whether to proceed with application for Geopark designation to deferred.</i>
6F	AONB GIS System Development	<i>Ongoing</i>

RIVER NORE

Nore Vision Cross Departmental Links draft two 18/04/21

Background

In the last three years Nore Vision has become a strong community-based initiative working to improve the quality and understanding of the environment of the Nore Catchment for everyone who lives in, works in or simply visits the area.

Led and funded primarily by Kilkenny Leader Partnership, Laois Partnership, North Tipperary Development Company and South Tipperary Development Company work to date has included educational initiatives involving community representatives from all walks of life as well as local involvement in physical works to improve habitats, eradicate invasive species and remove litter.

There are now 1400 individuals registered as Friends of the Nore, over 500 individuals who have undergone Environmental Training as part of the programme and literally hundreds of others who have participated in events covering citizen science, oral history and farm walks to name but a few

The Nore Vision Training in Action to April 1st 2021

Farm Walks(8) :

Durrow
Ballingarry, Coon
Ballyragget
Freshford
Bennetsbridge
Clonakenny
Corbetstown
Abbeyleix

Education (5):

Kilkenny
Freshford
Inistioge
Lismacken
Durrow

Invasive Species:

Kilkenny
Bennetsbridge
Thomastown
Ballingarry
Mullinahone
Freshford
Durrow

Oral History:

Castlecomer, Windgap
Ballingarry, Lismacken
Kilkenny, Kells

Litter Picks:

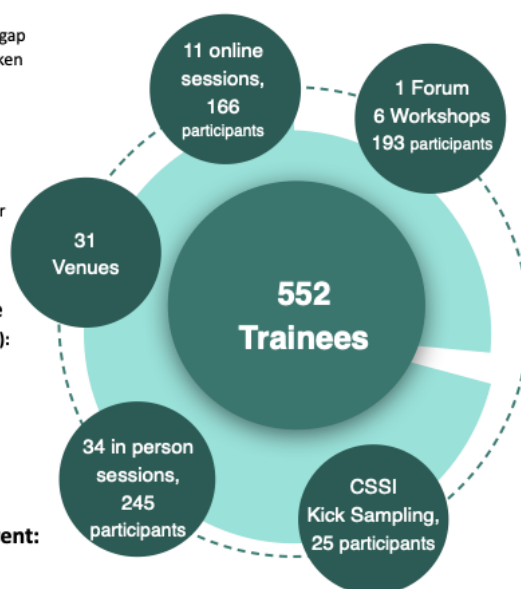
Kilkenny, Brega
Ballingarry, Kells
Callan, Castlecomer
Ballingarry, Pooke
Windgap,

Citizen Science (Intro & Advanced):

Kilkenny
Freshford
Durrow
Bennetsbridge
Thomastown
Ballingarry

Community Event:

Ballingarry
Castletown



Other Highlights

- Over 1,400 Friends of the Nore
- Bi-Weekly KK People Diary
- Tipperary Star feature
- KCLR interviews & Programs
- Engagement with other River Catchment organisations
- Governance structure imminent
- 1st FORUM meeting; 83 attendees
- 3 Farming Workshops
- 1 Citizen Science Workshop
- 1 Invasive Species Workshop
- 1 Amenities Workshop
- Adopt a bridge CSSI initiative



of the events.

The extent of community participation and cross sectoral collaboration in all areas of Nore Vision's work has exceeded all expectations. The potential to build on the success to date is based on the energy and enthusiasm that has been so evident at community level and the desire of those communities to secure the capacity to deliver enhanced levels of locally enabled and empowered activities.

The Ask - core funding 2022-2025

Funding for the current stage of the initiative will run out at the end of May 2021. Whilst it is likely that the four primary funders may be in a position to provide a reduced amount of funding to secure some of the ongoing work until the end of 2021, Nore Vision is seeking core funding to guarantee its programmes for the period 2022/2025. The required level of funding is as included in Appendix 1.

Research has shown (*Changes, Challenges and Opportunities in the Irish Uplands - Irish Uplands Forum 2019*) that the biggest threat to vibrant Community groups such as Nore Vision is an over

reliance on volunteers who inevitably suffer from “burn out” after a number of years. Core funding to such groups allows for ongoing co-ordination, administration and a degree of project works that maintain momentum whilst allowing other sources of funding and sponsorship to be secured.

Structured for Delivery

Nore Vision has recently established itself as a Company Limited by Guarantee, **THE NORE RIVER CATCHMENT TRUST**. The primary object of the Company as contained in the recently adopted constitution is:

To work towards the conservation, protection, rehabilitation and improvement of the catchment which comprises the Nore river, its tributaries and their land catchment in the Counties of Laois, Tipperary, Carlow and Kilkenny.

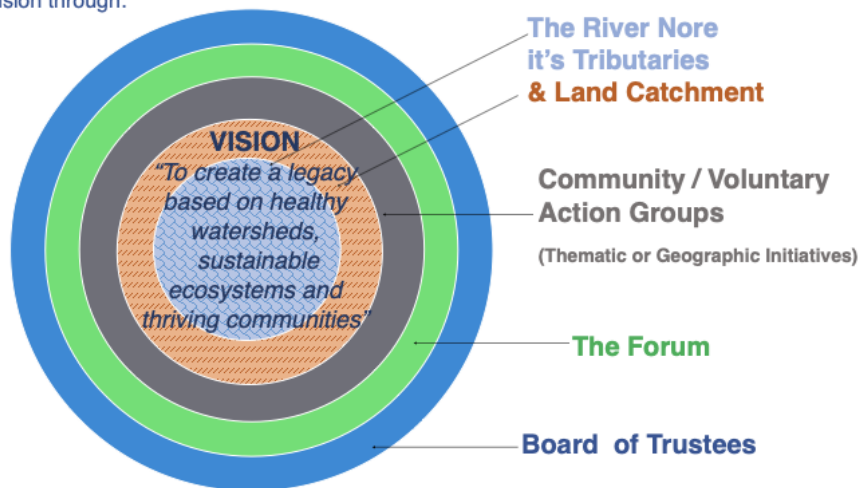
The full range of company objects is included as appendix II.

The company structure includes the establishment of a Board. The names of the current Board are contained in appendix III. There is provision in the constitution, and it is the intention of the board to include additional statutory and community board representatives over the coming months. In addition, the role of the range of sectoral and community interests through the Friends of the Nore is

Proposed Governance Structure of the Nore River Catchment Organisation

With the River Nore, its Tributaries and land Catchment at the centre all groups collaborate to achieve the vision through:

- Partnerships and collaboration;
 - Education, stewardship and monitoring;
 - Shared ownership and action;
 - Responsible decision-making;
- In perpetuity



x

enshrined in the company structure as illustrated in the following diagram

Delivering National Policies and Programmes

The preceding paragraphs and the above structure clearly show the breadth of the reach of Nore Vision and its relevance and capacity to a wide range of Government policies and programmes including (but not exclusive to)

- Rural Development
- River Basin Management
- Landscape
- Biodiversity (Natural Heritage)
- Agri- Environment
- Native Woodlands
- Inland Fisheries
- Outdoor Recreation
- Cultural and Built Heritage.

Each of these policies and /or programmes require active and empowered community led groups if they are to meet their objectives. Nore Vision has the structure and track record to mobilise these groups and offers unrivalled access to the widest possible range of related community interests in the area.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2021 -2025

A major objective (inter alia) of this plan is Enhancing Participation, Leadership and Resilience in Rural Communities. Specifically, this policy seeks to create more sustainable and cohesive rural communities where all people can get involved in the development of their community. **Nore Vision** can play a specific role in assisting this Government ambition through providing a structure for investment in communities to enhance their social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing and quality of life.

RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT PLAN 2018 -2021

Building on the requirement to establish Local Authority Waters and Community Offices to help people get involved in improving water quality, **Nore Vision** has an established record with the provision of training for local people. It has the confidence and trust of many individuals and local groups which wish to maintain long - term involvement in this work.

NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY PLAN 2017 -2021

A key objective of this plan (under review) is to establish enhanced appreciation of the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services amongst local communities and the general public. **Nore Vision** through its educational, training and other complementary programmes for the public at large has already contributed to this National Plan through citizen science in particular and ongoing management of invasive species. Subject to sufficient state investment it has the capacity and ability to continue to expand this work.

NATIONAL LANDSCAPE STRATEGY 2015 - 2025

In seeking to strengthen public participation the NLS contains a specific action (Action 9) to provide appropriate support to public participation initiatives to ensure landscape management is effective, efficient, and informed by best practice. Actions 16, 17 and 18 as they relate to establishing innovative approaches, raising awareness of landscape character and the European dimension to landscape management are all Actions to which **Nore Vision** can make a valuable future contribution.

NATIVE WOODLANDS CONSERVATION SCHEME

The significant role that effectively managed and established native woodlands can have within river catchments has been well documented. The enhancement of these benefits is a major objective of this national scheme. **Nore Vision** through the networks established with other sectoral and community-based groups such as Woodlands of Ireland is ideally placed to liaise with landowners and farmers on the development of the scheme within the Nore catchment.

AGRI ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMES

The landowning and farming panels already established by **Nore Vision** have proved adept at coordinating actions which can result in access to funding through European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs). The first tranche of EIPs in Ireland in areas ranging from Wicklow to Donegal to Clare were successful primarily as a result of funding being channelled through community led groups such as Nore Vision. The potential to secure greater levels of funding is enhanced by the establishment of Nore Vision as the Nore River Catchment Trust. The Trust now requires ongoing financial input to realise that potential.

INLAND FISHERIES

Nore Vision, as a result of its origins in the Nore River Trust and its work on water quality and river infrastructure improvements, is ideally placed to advance the work of the Angling Council of Ireland recently established (November 2020) by Minister Ryan. This work together with its ongoing involvement with fishermen throughout the catchment offer an invaluable resource to Inland Fisheries Ireland.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

There is immense potential to expand and develop opportunities for outdoor recreation throughout the Nore catchment. This has been ably demonstrated through the success of the Nore River trail, a series of looped walks within the catchment and the ongoing use of the river itself for a range of water-based activities. Working with bodies such as Blueway Ireland Partnerships, the Irish Uplands Forum and Chomhairle na Tuaithe, **Nore Vision** can deliver projects that improve the wellbeing of all its communities.

CULTURE 2025

Ireland's cultural policy recognises the need for a unified approach to implementation of a wide range of cultural policies, including those of direct relevance to our built, natural and cultural heritage. If this policy and Ireland's national planning framework Project Ireland 2040 is to succeed in its objective of supporting business and communities to realise their potential, it will need to invest in community led organisations such as **Nore Vision**. The Nore catchment is home to a rich variety of our built natural and cultural heritage. Its river-based mills and fish passes pay tribute to the work and vision of many individuals and communities in the past. Oral history projects such as that captured by Nore Vision show how these stories of people and place remain meaningful and significant today.

Cross Departmental Support

On the basis of the above and taking in to account the range of different government departments involved, it would be hoped that a lead Department in Government might be in position to secure funding from other Departments for the delivery of Nore Vision's three-year programme.

CHAIRMAN

Michael Starrett

On behalf of the Board of the Nore River Catchment Trust

Appendix I – Request for Support

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENT 2022 - 2025

Resource Request of Government *The Nore Vision* request that the Government that it resources the initiative as a three-year pilot project to demonstrate the value and potential of broad-based catchment-scale plans. Budget requested:

- ***Coordination and Administration costs- €100,000 X 3-years = €300,000.***

To cover costs of a *Project Coordinator* (AP- HEO scale equivalent), *Project Administrator* (CO scale equivalent), and related support costs (office, meetings, publicity, etc.)

- ***Project Action Funds = €200,000***

Seed funding to continue the work initiated in the LEADER project actions and to expand on those to fulfil the potential of the initiative. The Nore Vision partners hope to match these funds from other stakeholder and partner contributions.

Total €500,000

Appendix II – Company Constitution

NORE RIVER CATCHMENT TRUST (THE NORE VISION)
limited by guarantee.}

{company

Main Objects

To work towards the conservation, protection, rehabilitation and improvement of the catchment which comprises the Nore river, its tributaries and their land catchment in the Counties of Laois, Tipperary, Carlow and Kilkenny.

This will be done through collaboration with stakeholders, structured community involvement and, as appropriate, adherence to and implementation of applicable local, national and international policies and programmes for sustainability climate change, biodiversity and social wellbeing.

It will include the natural, cultural and built heritage of the catchment particularly that associated with the rivers.

The Company will support the advancement of environmental protection, recreation opportunities, enterprise support or other improvement for the benefit of the general public and particularly those who reside within the catchment area.

Supporting Objects

As objects incidental and ancillary to the attainment of the Main Object, the Company shall have the following supporting objects:

To be a catalyst and leader to achieve long-term collaboration required between State, Statutory, Local Authorities, voluntary and community organisations, landowners, farmers and individuals to ensure that there is one collaborative strategy and plan in place and successfully implemented on an on-going basis to balance & optimise the environmental, recreational and enterprise-support of the Nore River Catchment.

To advance the education of the public, or any association, institution, voluntary organisation, company, local authority, administrative or governmental agency or public body or representative body in: -

- (a) The understanding of rivers, river corridors and river catchments, including their fauna, flora, biodiversity, economic or social activity, and river catchment management.
- (b) The need for, and benefits of, conservation, protection, rehabilitation and improvement of aquatic environments.

THE FRIENDS OF THE NORE CATCHMENT TRUST

The Directors shall establish an unincorporated association which shall be called The Friends of the Nore River Trust and which shall be composed of persons and organisations relevant to the activities of the company and for the purpose of facilitating engagement between the company and its stakeholders.

Appendix III – Directors Names and Experience Profiles

NORE RIVER CATCHMENT TRUST DIRECTORS

Michael Starrett

- Chairperson. Retired Chief Executive, *The Heritage Council*.

Tony Walshe

- Local businessman. Retired local authority Director of Service.

Suzanne Champion

- Head of Business Development at *Inland Fisheries Ireland*

Jim Finn

- Farmer, Broadcaster and Chairperson of *North Tipperary Development Company*, Member of IFA

Amanda Greer

- Ecologist, Project Manager at *Envirico* Consultancy

Dennis Drennan -

Farmer, Chairperson of the Board of *Kilkenny LEADER Partnership*, Chairperson of the Farm and Rural Affairs Committee of *ICMSA* and representative to *ASSAP*

Anne Marie Maher

- Board Director of *Laois Partnership Company*, Community Volunteer

Bobby Weymss

- Angler, Former Chairperson of *Nore River Trust*, Chairman of *Thomastown Men's Shed*, *Woodlands of Ireland*

LOCH LOMOND AND THE TROSSACHS

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority

The National Park Authority Board is made up of seventeen Board Members. Five members are elected by the community and twelve are appointed by Scottish Ministers, six of these following nomination by the Local Authorities. Our Members are led by the Convener, and Depute Convener.

Our Board agree the overall direction of the Park Authority. They also oversee the work of the Chief Executive and National Park staff. Our Board meets in public at least three times a year and agendas and papers for these meetings are posted online before each meeting.

Five members elected by postal ballot of the local electorate. Bob Darracott, Billy Ronald, Martin Earl, Willie Nisbet and David McCowan were elected on 5 July 2018. Their term of office runs until July 2022.

These members represent the five wards in the National Park. They bring to the board their valuable understanding and perspective of the Park's local businesses and communities, and also champion, represent and help deliver our objectives within the Wards they represent.

Six members appointed by Scottish Ministers (following assessment of applicants in accordance with the rules issued by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Scotland).

They bring a national perspective to the board and specific expertise from a range of subjects relevant to the Park, such as: nature conservation; outdoor recreation; rural business development and enterprise; planning and land use; education; communication; and business management. Ministerial appointees also represent and champion the interests and objectives of the Park Authority on national forums, with national partners and at Government level.

James Stuart (Convener)
Claire Chapman
Dr Sarah Drummond
Ronnie Erskine
Dr Heather Reid
Professor Christopher Spray

Six members appointed by Scottish Ministers following nomination by the Local Authorities within National Park boundaries (Argyll and Bute, Stirling, West Dunbartonshire, and Perth and Kinross).

These Members cement the key strategic relationship between us and our partner local authorities. Local authority appointees champion and deliver our objectives in the local authorities they represent and bring the local authority perspective and expertise to our Board.

Vacant position (Stirling)
Graham Lambie recently passed away, please refer to our tribute.
Danny Gibson (Stirling)
Murray Lyle (Perth & Kinross)
Diane Docherty (West Dunbartonshire Council)
Iain Shonny Paterson (Argyll & Bute)
Bobby Good (Argyll & Bute)



National Park Partnership Plan

Plana Com-pàirteachaidh na Pàirce Nàiseanta

2018 | 2023

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Facal-toisich

'S e àite fìor shònraichte a th' ann am Pàirc Nàiseanta Loch Laomainn is nan Tròisichean. Le a cruthan-tìre àlainn, a beartas nàdarra, a cothroman air leth airson cur-seachadan agus a coimhearsnachdan is dualchas beòthail, 's e deagh stòras airson Alba a th' innte.

Cho math ri bhith a' tarraing ceithir millean neach-tadhail gach bliadhna a tha a' toirt togail mòr do dh'eaconamaidh na turasachd, tha buannachdan farsaing aig a' Phàirc Nàiseanta – chan ann a-mhàin airson na sgìre fhèin ach airson na dùthcha air fad.

Tha iad seo a' gabhail a-steach a bhith a' cur an aghaidh na buaidh aig atharrachadh cliomaid tro bhith ag ath-stèidheachadh tòrr choilltean is bhlàr-mòna, a' cruthachadh choimhearsnachdan seasmhach tro thaigheadas air prìsean reusanta agus a bhith a' cruthachadh obair is trèanadh airson òigridh. Tha a' Phàirc cuideachd a' cruthachadh chothroman gus cur ris an t-sunnd agus slàinte aig daoine de gach seòrsa tro chur-seachadan is a bhith a' gabhail tlachd às a' bhlàr a-muigh.

Tha Plana Com-pàirteachaidh na Pàirce Nàiseanta airson 2018-2023 a' cur an cèill lèirsinn àrd-amasach airson a bhith a' leudachadh bhuannachdan àrainneachdail, sòisealta agus eaconamach na Pàirce thairis air an ath chòig bliadhna.

Gus seo a thoirt gu buil, bidh feum air co-obrachadh eadar farsaingeachd de bhuidhnean, coimhearsnachdan agus gnìomhachasan le Ùghdarras na Pàirce Nàiseanta aig an stiùir. Tha fios gum bi dùbhlain romhainn ach togaidh am Plana seo air na coileanaidhean susbainteach anns a' Phlana Com-pàirteachaidh mu dheireadh airson na Pàirce Nàiseanta airson 2012-17 ann a bhith a' togail càileachd tursan an luchd-turais, a' toirt cumhachd do choimhearsnachdan gus na guthan aca a thogail mu na bhios a' tachairt do na bailtean mòra is beaga aca san àm ri teachd.

Cuideachaidh dòighean-obrach aonaichte a thaobh stiùireadh fearainn gus an fhiadh-bheatha is na h-eag-shiostam air leth a dhion is a leasachadh, agus gus a bhith a' dèanamh deagh fheum de stòrasan nàdarra na Pàirce.

'S e fìor dheagh àm airson na Pàirce Nàiseanta a tha seo agus tha am Plana a' sealltainn nan àrd-amasan a th' aig Ùghdarras na Pàirce agus a chom-pàirtichean còmhla airson an àite shuaicheanta seo.



Roseanna Choineagan BPA
Rùnaire Caibineit airson na h-Àrainneachd,
Atharrachadh na Gnàth-shìde agus
Ath-leasachadh Fearainn

Foreword

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is a truly special place. With its wonderful landscapes, rich natural resources, vast opportunities for recreation, and its vibrant communities and heritage, it is a fantastic asset for Scotland.

As well as attracting four million visitors a year and the huge boost this provides to the visitor economy, the benefits the National Park can offer are far reaching - not just for the area itself, but for the whole country.

These include helping to tackle the impacts of climate change through extensive peatland and woodland restoration, creating sustainable communities through affordable housing and the creation of employment and training for young people. The Park also provides opportunities to help improve the health and wellbeing of people from all backgrounds through recreation and enjoyment of the great outdoors.

The National Park Partnership Plan 2018-2023 sets out an ambitious vision for further widening the environmental, social and economic benefits of the Park over the next five years.

This will require collaboration between a wide range of organisations, communities and businesses, with the National Park Authority leading the way. There are no doubt challenges to tackle but this Plan will build on the significant achievements of the previous National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017 in raising the quality of the visitor experience and empowering communities to have a say in the future of their towns and villages. Integrated approaches to land management will also help to protect and enhance the unique wildlife and ecosystems and harness the Park's natural capital.

It is an exciting time for the National Park and this Plan embodies the ambition the Park Authority and its partners share for this iconic place.



Roseanna Cunningham MSP
Cabinet Secretary for the Environment,
Climate Change and Land Reform



Introduction

What is the National Park Partnership Plan?

This Plan is the overarching vision to guide how all those with a role in looking after the National Park will work together over the next five years to ensure a successful, sustainable future for this iconic place.

The National Park Partnership Plan guides the work of not just the National Park Authority but of all the organisations and other partners involved in managing the area and making the overarching vision a reality.

The Plan sets out how we will work together to tackle key issues within the National Park and to widen the many social, environmental, cultural and economic benefits it offers.

A National Park Partnership Plan is required under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 with the purpose of ensuring the collective and co-ordinated achievement of the statutory aims of National Parks.

It also shows how the National Park will contribute to the achievement of national outcomes set by the Scottish Government.

Our long term vision

We want the National Park to be an internationally-renowned landscape where...



Conservation & Land Management

Nature, heritage and land are valuable assets, managed and enhanced to provide multiple benefits for all.

Visitor Experience

There is a high quality, authentic experience for people from all backgrounds. There are many opportunities to enjoy recreation activities and appreciate the area's outstanding natural and cultural heritage within an internationally-renowned landscape.



Rural Development

Businesses and communities thrive and people live and work sustainably in a high quality environment.



Paddleboarding on Loch Lubnaig

Challenges & opportunities

To secure a thriving, beautiful National Park for the future we must strike a balance between all of the conservation, visitor experience and rural development objectives of the Park.

This is a complex task...

It will require a balanced approach and involve a wide range of partners to ensure that the special qualities making the National Park such an internationally important place are protected and enhanced, whilst at the same time making the most of the many benefits the National Park has to offer for people, communities and the economy

Some of the key challenges facing the National Park include:

- › Protecting and enhancing natural resources for future generations.
- › Conserving and enhancing the area's special landscape.
- › Facilitating better integrated management of land and water to provide wider benefits for people and nature.
- › Attracting and retaining more skilled working age and young people.
- › Encouraging people of all abilities and backgrounds to enjoy the outdoors.
- › Supporting a thriving visitor economy.
- › Addressing and mitigating the impacts of climate change.
- › Investing in towns and villages' built and historic environment, public spaces and infrastructure.

- › Pressure on available resources to invest across all communities and landscapes.
- › Getting more people to experience the health and wellbeing benefits of connecting with nature and being active in the outdoors.
- › Building capacity in local communities to support their development.

We will also need to take into account and adapt to the potential impacts of any changes on the national and international political landscape.

Each of these challenges also presents an opportunity and we are confident that by coordinating our efforts through this ambitious plan we can successfully deliver on these issues.

Measuring Success

By 2023 we want to be able to clearly demonstrate that the National Park Authority and its partners have worked together to make a difference. To do this a series of **targets** and **indicators** have been set out in each chapter. These will be regularly reviewed throughout the period of the plan to ensure that we are on track to achieve our outcomes.

Delivering for Scotland

As well as addressing the issues and opportunities within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, the National Park Partnership Plan also sets out how we will address national priorities and achieve benefits for Scotland beyond the National Park boundaries.

By leading successful partnerships, our National Parks contribute significantly to the Scottish Government's Purpose:

“To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth”



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

National Parks bring clarity of focus in addressing a range of interrelated rural issues at a regional and local scale ensuring better co-ordinated delivery and best use of limited public resources. This also makes our National Parks a perfect place to innovate and develop new solutions.

This Plan provides the unified approach that can:

- › Manage and improve the condition of our natural assets on a landscape scale
- › Promote, test and implement innovative solutions to rural issues
- › Widen the range of benefits that the National Park's outstanding environment can provide to Scotland's people and its visitors

Why we have National Parks?

Scotland has two National Parks, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park and Cairngorms National Park. Scotland's National Parks share four aims set out by the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000:

- › To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area
- › To promote 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 economic and social development of the area's communities

These aims are to be pursued collectively. However, if there is conflict between the first aim and any of the others then greater weight must be given to the first aim (section 9.6 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act).

National Park Authorities are dedicated to delivering for the people of Scotland. We strive to make a difference and we firmly believe we're better able to do that by working together. We take a partnership approach to making things happen and we're proud of the results we deliver, together, for this very special part of Scotland.



Learning about nature on Conic Hill

Delivering national benefits

Throughout this plan you will see how here in the National Park we aim to address some key issues, not just for the benefit of the National Park itself but for Scotland as a whole.

These are the national priorities that this Plan contributes to.



Sustainable Economic Growth

Our National Parks' growing international reputation as 'must visit' destinations can contribute significantly to sustainable economic growth in rural Scotland, supporting business growth, attracting investment and providing more jobs and training opportunities, especially for young people.



Climate Change

Woodland expansion, peatland restoration and active travel in National Parks deliver climate change mitigation. Our integrated approach to land use planning can also help deliver significant adaptation and resilience for communities within National Parks and in surrounding lower river catchments.



Valuing Nature and Reversing Biodiversity Loss

Covering around 9% of Scotland, including some of the most important areas for rare and threatened species, Scotland's National Parks deliver landscape scale conservation. Large scale habitat enhancement together with priority species action in National Parks makes a significant contribution to meeting Scotland's 2020 Biodiversity Challenge.



Natural Capital

Scotland's National Parks exemplify the connections between nature, our economy and our quality of life. With over six million visitors each year, our National Parks are national assets that protect and enhance the natural capital underpinning tourism, land-based businesses and our rural communities. Covering the upper catchments of some of Scotland's major rivers, our National Parks are key places to connect the value of land management with wider community and economic benefits.



A Park for All

Scotland's National Parks are for everyone to enjoy, whether they call Scotland home or visit from around the world. People of all ages, abilities and backgrounds should have the opportunity to experience these landscapes and take advantage of the many important benefits they provide.



Community Empowerment

Building on the strong foundation and legacy of community capacity building and action planning, communities in our National Parks are increasingly taking the lead in local development and regeneration. There is growing potential and opportunity for communities to provide services, manage assets and deliver projects.



Health & Wellbeing

National Parks can enable people to improve their health and wellbeing by getting active and connecting with nature. The growing network of recreation routes and opportunities within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs, and its close proximity to Scotland's urban population, offers significant scope to work with the health sector and increase participation in outdoor activity to support better health outcomes.

What success looks like



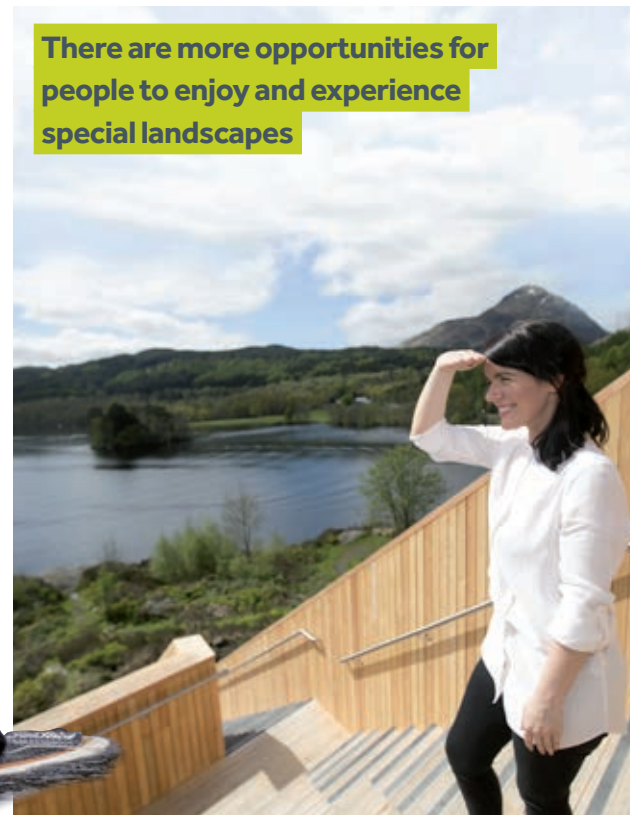
The Park's natural resources are enhanced for future generations



People from a range of backgrounds benefit from connecting with nature



More people of different abilities and interests are enjoying the outdoors



There are more opportunities for people to enjoy and experience special landscapes



All visitors to the National Park feel they have a high quality experience



There are more opportunities to safely enjoy water activities



Visitor pressures are being sustainably managed



The natural environment is better managed to tackle the effects of climate change



Landscape-scale partnerships are delivering more integrated land management



Communities are better empowered to influence and lead decisions that affect them



Businesses are working better together to create a thriving visitor economy



Businesses are growing and diversifying to ensure a more sustainable future



There is improved investment in our towns and villages



More skilled, working age and young people live and work in the National Park



There is a wider range of housing options available within the National Park



Conservation & Land Management

Our vision

Nature, heritage and land are valuable assets, managed and enhanced to provide multiple benefits for all.

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is home to some of the most iconic wildlife and landscapes in Scotland and draws visitors from across the globe.

Its famous lochs, forests, mountains and heritage are an historic part of the Scottish culture and make a huge contribution to the country, being a haven for nature and the benefits that come from it. Across the Park, 67 sites are designated for their special nature conservation value.

However, the natural environment of the Park faces significant threats including:

- › Impacts on freshwater and marine water bodies from problems such as pollution from surrounding land uses.
- › Unsustainable levels of wild and domesticated grazing animals in some upland and woodland areas, leading to reduced tree cover and the erosion of soils, which are important carbon stores.
- › The spread of invasive non-native species which displace our rich native wildlife.
- › The impacts of climate change leading to warmer, wetter weather patterns and a subsequent increase in flood events, major landslides and rapid shifts in natural ecosystems.

Our aim is to work towards overcoming these threats and achieving a vision of improving ecosystems, in order to create a more sustainable long term future for both people and nature.



Looking west over Loch Ard

What we want to achieve

Outcome 1: Natural Capital

The Park's natural resources are enhanced for future generations: important habitats are restored and better connected on a landscape scale.

Outcome 2: Landscape Qualities

The Park's special landscape qualities and sense of place are conserved and enhanced with more opportunities to enjoy and experience them.

Outcome 3: Climate Change

The natural environment of the Park is better managed to help mitigate and address the impacts of climate change.

Outcome 4: Land Partnerships

New landscape-scale partnerships deliver better integrated management of the land and water environment, providing multiple benefits for nature and people.

Achieving these outcomes will help to deliver the following national strategies:

- › Scotland's 2020 Biodiversity Challenge
- › Land Use Strategy
- › Scottish Forestry Strategy
- › River Basin Management Plan
- › Flood Risk Management Strategy
- › Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach
- › Climate Change Plan
- › National Marine Plan
- › Marine Litter Strategy
- › Scottish Landscape Charter

Our guiding principles

To realise our Conservation vision we recognise that:



- › How land is managed will change to provide wider public benefits, particularly social and environmental benefits, as well as ensuring economically viable land based businesses.
- › Land management objectives will be increasingly guided by the need to support healthy habitats and ecosystems which build resilience to the effects of climate change.
- › Land use change needs to respect important landscape characteristics such as wild land qualities or important historic landscape and cultural heritage features.
- › The services our land can deliver for wider public benefit are significant and could be increased to promote better natural flood management, carbon storage, timber production and water resource use.
- › Wider landscape scale benefits will require more collaboration across land holdings.
- › Action is required to address threats to the National Park's most important species and habitats, including invasive non-native species, visitor and development pressures, unsustainable grazing and diffuse pollution.

Outcome 1: Natural Capital

The Park's natural resources are enhanced for future generations: important habitats are protected, restored and better connected on a landscape scale.

Helping to deliver these National Benefits



Sustainable
Economic
Growth



Climate
Change



Valuing
Nature



Natural
Capital

Why is this important?

The stunning and varied wildlife and landscapes found in the National Park attract people from around the world to visit, live and work.

Ecosystems

The living ecosystems of the area also provide vital stocks of natural capital, from which flow benefits from nature such as water, timber, energy, food, recreation and enjoyment. Conserving and enhancing our natural heritage is the first aim of Scotland's National Parks.

Species and habitats

The area also holds strategically important populations of species, such as Atlantic salmon, golden eagle and red squirrel; and habitats of high biodiversity value, like native oakwoods and peatlands, which contribute to a national ecological network. Wildlife species are an integral part of the natural environment and people's connection with it.

Woodlands

The planted forests and native woodlands in the National Park are of national importance both in terms of timber production and their rich biodiversity. They also play an important role in mitigating climate change by storing an estimated 2,505,000 tonnes of carbon and slowing water flow, which can help reduce flooding and stabilise slopes prone to landslides.

Woodland cover is already extensive in some areas, such as the Trossachs and Cowal, but much less so in upland areas, such as Breadalbane. There are opportunities to increase the benefits of woodlands by creating more extensive and better connected forest and native woodland networks, whilst recognising the need for sensitive siting of new plantations.

Waterbodies

The varied lochs, rivers, burns and peatlands not only contribute to the beauty and natural wealth of the region, but also provide drinking water, renewable energy production, livelihoods and recreational opportunities. In a rapidly changing climate the health of these ecosystems is essential. The restoration and enhancement of degraded waterbodies and peatlands, in order to aid their water and carbon storage natural functions, are highly important, as is their role as major sources of drinking water and hydro-electricity generation.

The coasts and narrow sea lochs of the National Park lie close to the mouth of the Firth of Clyde and are integral to the history and heritage of the region. Rich coastal and marine wildlife, combined with tranquil, secluded seascapes make this a popular area for low key marine tourism and a gateway area to the internationally renowned west coast and islands.



Looking north from Ben Venue over Loch Katrine and The Great Trossachs Forest

Making it happen

These are our priorities for action:

Conservation Priority 1.1

Habitats

We will work with others to deliver multiple benefits from nature including natural flood management, carbon storage, and sustainable timber and food production. Specific habitats for focus include:



Red squirrel © SWT Alan Laing



Oakwood near Aberfoyle



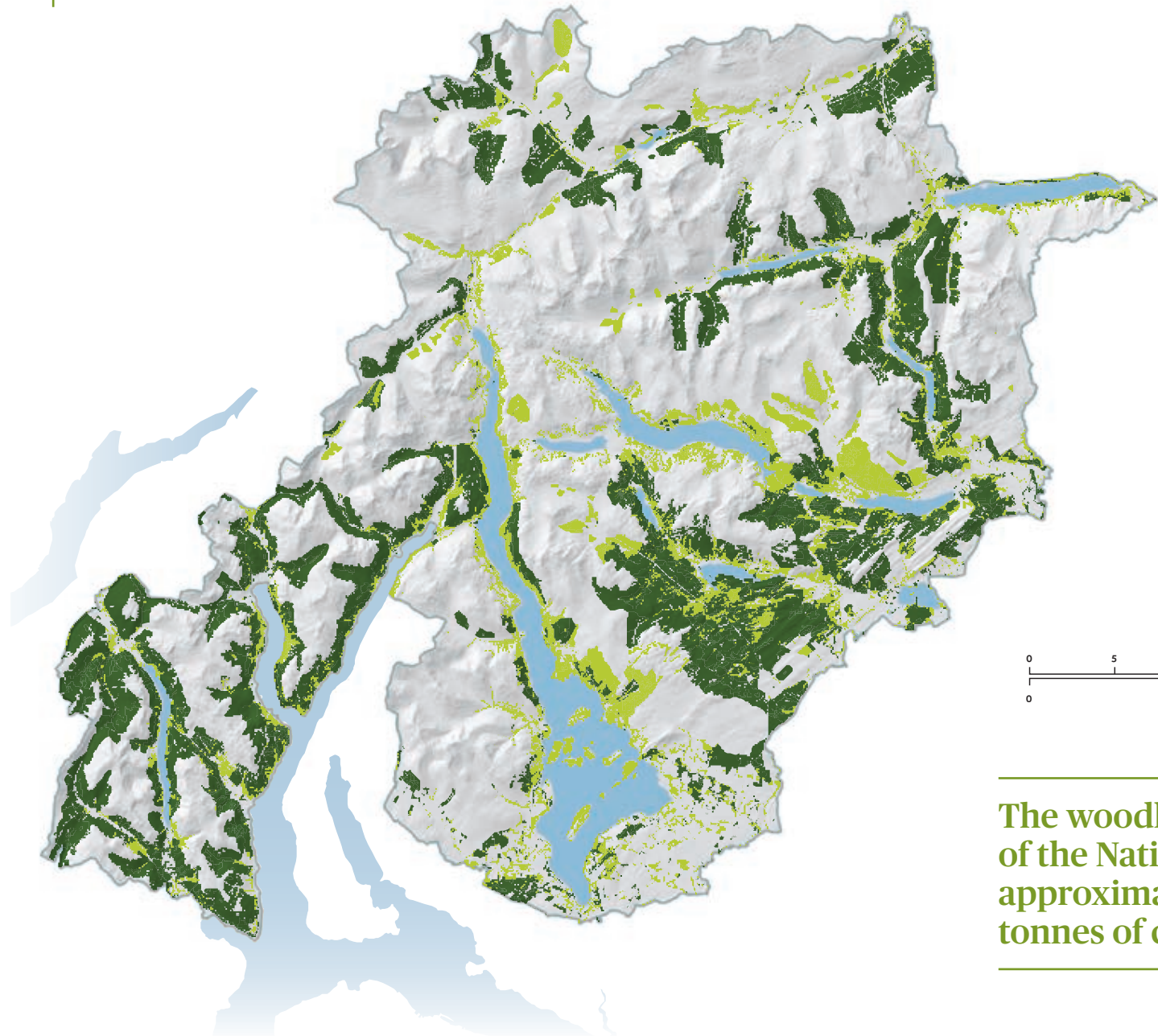
Water vole © FCS Isobel Cameron

› Woodlands

The National Park Authority's priority will be supporting and encouraging land managers with advice and resources to expand and manage native woodland and restructure plantations. We will produce a Woodland Strategy highlighting the opportunities for native woodland expansion and management. Our key focus will be on areas with sparse woodland cover and the restoration of native upland woodland and scrub habitats, particularly along hillside burns, and also waterside woodlands on the banks of rivers, burns and lochs in the lowland areas of the Park.

› Freshwater and Marine

Working with key partners such as SEPA and Marine Scotland, the National Park Authority's priority and focus will be on supporting the restoration of naturally-functioning river and loch systems, particularly in and around the wilder parts of the Park. This will be done by taking a catchment-by-catchment approach to tackling diffuse pollution and improving water quality, flows and wetland habitat. We will work towards encouraging natural flood management solutions, as demonstrated by projects such as the Strathard Partnership and highlight the problem of marine litter in Loch Long.



Key

- Native woodland
- Productive Conifer

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Ordnance Survey 100031883
Data source: Forestry Commission Scotland

The woodlands and forests of the National Park hold approximately 2.5 million tonnes of carbon.

Conservation Priority 1.2

Species

Whilst the National Park Authority's main focus will first and foremost be on the wider health of ecosystems and habitats which support species, it will also support targeted work on key species whose conservation status is in decline or at risk, with a focus on:

- › Tackling and reducing the impacts of invasive non-native species such as Rhododendron, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and Grey squirrel with a strategic, landscape-scale approach.
- › 'Flagship' species that are gauges of natural health and representative of key, threatened habitats in the Park. These species help engage people with the natural environment and the benefits it brings. These include 'flagship' species targeted for action under Wildpark 2020, the National Park's current biodiversity action plan:
 - Red Squirrel (woodland)
 - Black Grouse (upland)
 - Brown Trout (freshwater)
 - Gannet (marine)



Who can help deliver Outcome 1?

Listed below are partners who have committed to helping deliver these outcomes (Lead Delivery Partners) and those who could provide further support (Support Delivery Partners).

Lead Delivery Partners:

- › Scottish Natural Heritage
- › Forestry Commission Scotland
- › Forest Enterprise Scotland
- › Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
- › Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Division (RPID)
- › Scottish Land & Estates
- › Fisheries Trusts
- › Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Countryside Trust
- › Deer Management Groups

Support Delivery Partners:

- › Private and NGO Land Managers
- › Local Authorities
- › National Farmers Union Scotland
- › RSPB
- › Scottish Wildlife Trust
- › National Trust for Scotland
- › Confederation of Forest Industries
- › Marine Scotland
- › Transport Scotland
- › Clyde Marine Planning Partnership
- › Woodland Trust Scotland
- › Scottish Water
- › Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs

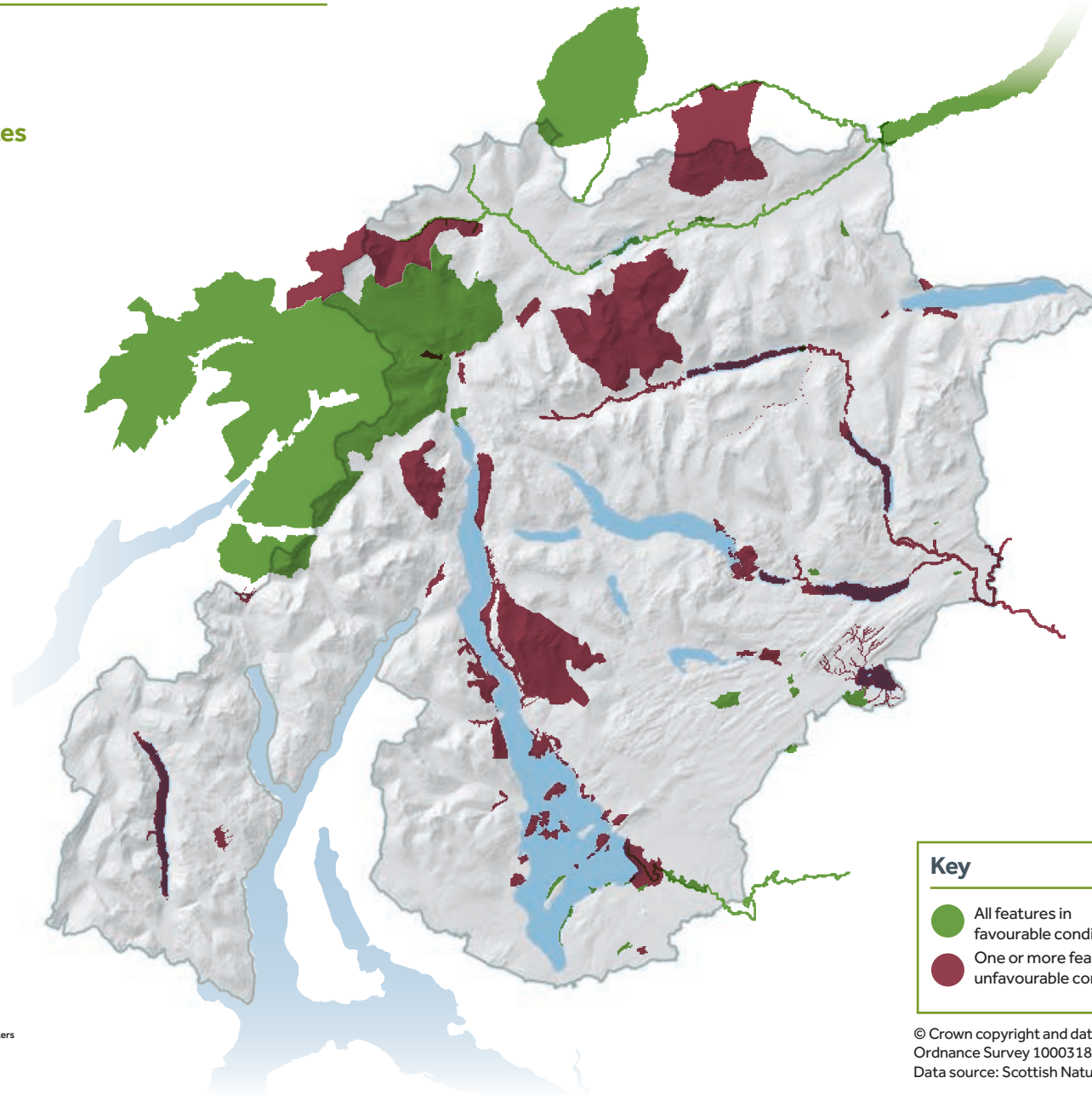
Map | Pressures affecting our designated sites

2

Across the National Park, 67 sites are designated for their special nature conservation value.

Key pressures affecting our designated sites include:

- › unsustainable levels of grazing
- › invasive non-native species, and
- › water quality issues



Key

- All features in favourable condition
- One or more features in unfavourable condition

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Ordnance Survey 100031883
Data source: Scottish Natural Heritage

Outcome 2: Landscape Qualities

The Park's special landscape qualities and sense of place are conserved and enhanced with more opportunities to enjoy and experience them.

Helping to deliver these National Benefits



Valuing Nature



Natural Capital



A Park for All



Health & Wellbeing

Why is this important?

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park lies on the doorstep of 50% of Scotland's population and attracts over four million visitors every year.

Special landscapes

Its special landscapes include lochs, coastlines, forests and striking contrasts where the lowlands and highlands meet, with significant areas in the north still retaining a wilder feel. These have been created and shaped by both natural and human forces over millennia, and are continuously evolving as the climate and the use of the land changes. The area also has a rich historic environment which is valued by residents and visitors alike.

Safeguarding Qualities

This rich mix of natural and man-made features combine to define the scenic diversity of the National Park. There is a continuing need to both safeguard and enhance the scenic and experiential qualities of the National Park, which lie at the very heart of the identity, attractiveness and economic life-blood of this special place.

It is important that we ensure that key areas of the National Park where people get to experience the inspiring vistas found here are recognised and enhanced. This means that key transport routes, such as trunk roads and the West Highland railway line, along with the settlements in the Park, continue to provide good lines of sight to the stunning views of the iconic landscapes found here.

Valuing nature

The beautiful landscapes and cultural heritage offer visitors, many from urban areas, the opportunity to experience and learn about nature, tranquility and history first hand. These physical and emotional connections are vital in fostering a sense of understanding, respect and ultimately value for the Park's environment and heritage.

As a society we protect and cherish those things that we value, so our aim is to ensure that the natural and historic environment of the Park is respected and valued by all. Sadly, this is not always the case, which can lead to negative impacts such as littering and other inappropriate behaviours.

We will work to engage with and educate our visitors to promote further understanding of and respect for nature.



'LookOut' Scenic Route viewpoint, Loch Doine

Making it happen

These are our priorities for action:

Conservation Priority 2.1

Landscape & Heritage

The National Park Authority, and its partners, will work to conserve and enhance the special landscape and cultural heritage qualities of the area by:



Major road improvements on the A82 at Pulpit Rock

- › Ensuring that developments and projects recognise the need to protect and, where possible, enhance the qualities of wildness, tranquillity, dark skies and the historic environment.
- › Supporting projects that enhance opportunities to enjoy landscapes, particularly along major transport routes and around settlements, including implementing a strategically planned and designed upgrade to the A82 between Tarbet and Inverarnan, and continuing to review landslip management measures on the A83 at The Rest and Be Thankful.
- › Prioritising spatially targeted landscape enhancements that also deliver improvements for nature such as woodland creation, re-structuring of commercial forestry blocks, wetland restoration or tackling invasive non-native species.
- › Safeguarding and restoring tranquil loch-shores through initiatives including the Your Park camping management programme and Respect Your Park campaign.

Who can help deliver Outcome 2?

Listed below are partners who have committed to helping deliver these outcomes (Lead Delivery Partners) and those who could provide further support (Support Delivery Partners).

Lead Delivery Partners:

- › Scottish Natural Heritage
- › Forestry Commission Scotland
- › Forest Enterprise Scotland
- › Historic Environment Scotland
- › Transport Scotland
- › ScotRail
- › Police Scotland

Support Delivery Partners:

- › Private and NGO Land Managers
- › Local Authorities
- › Scottish Land & Estates
- › National Farmers Union Scotland
- › John Muir Trust
- › Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs
- › Friends of the West Highland Lines




Map | Special Landscape Qualities

3

We will enhance the National Park's special landscape qualities and enjoyment of them by:

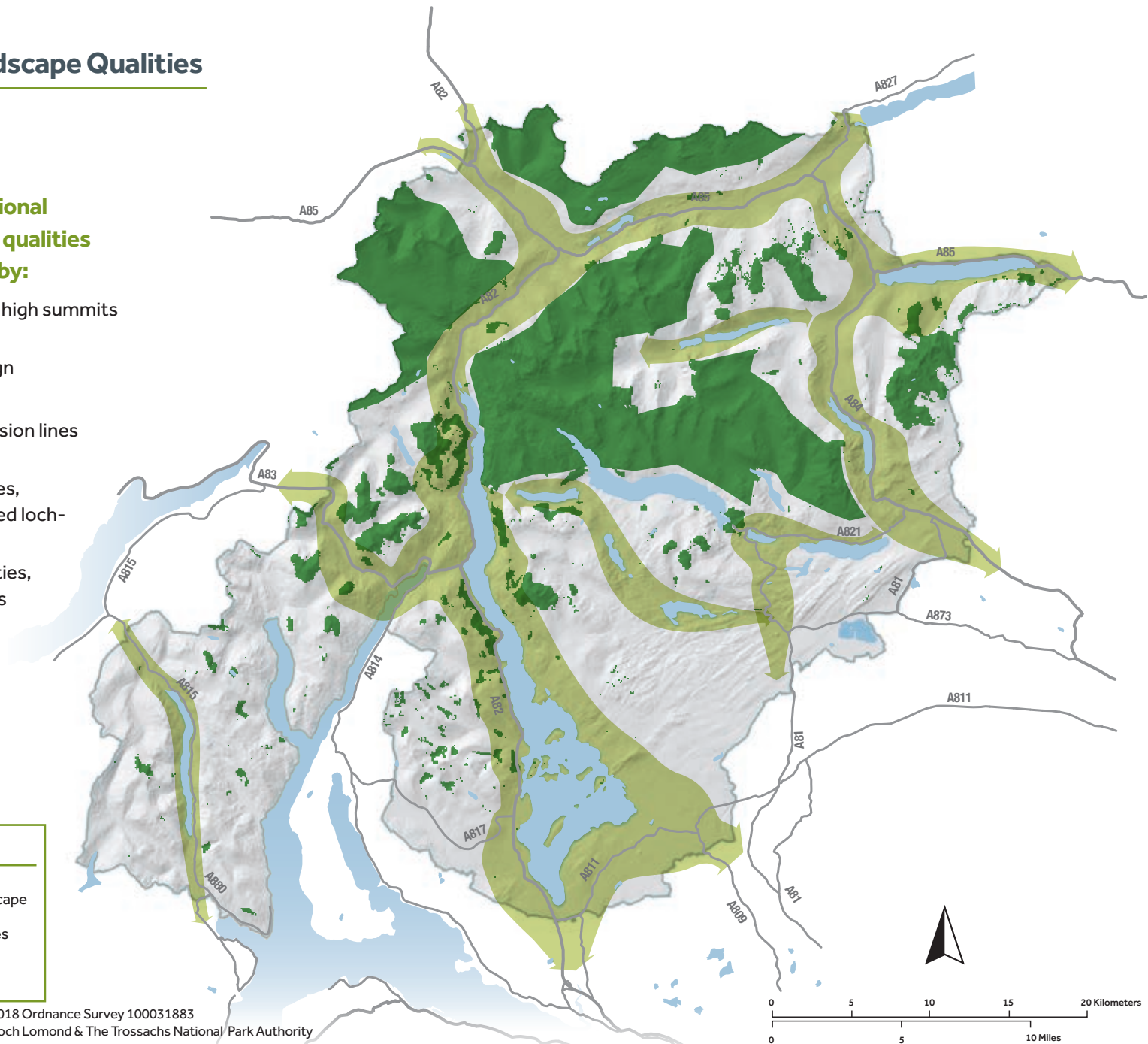
- › Protecting views to lochs, high summits and landmark features
- › Improving woodland design
- › Celebrating dark skies
- › Undergrounding transmission lines where practical
- › Protecting tranquil qualities, particularly on undeveloped loch-shores
- › Protecting wild land qualities, particularly in upland areas

Key

-  Main travel corridors where people experience the landscape
-  Areas with wild land attributes
-  Roads

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Data source: Scottish Natural Heritage, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority

This map is based on our report: "Wildness Study in the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park" and the 2014 Scottish Natural Heritage map of wild land areas.



Outcome 3: Climate Change

The natural environment of the Park is better managed to help mitigate and address the impacts of climate change.

Helping to deliver these National Benefits



Sustainable
Economic
Growth



Climate
Change



Valuing
Nature



Natural
Capital

Why is this important?

The impacts of climate change present very real challenges to our native habitats and species and to our communities and economy in the National Park, particularly in relation to the increasing frequency of flood events and loss of biodiversity.

Flooding risk

Large areas of the National Park, including the Loch Lomond basin, Loch Earn basin, the Forth and Teith rivers, Strathfillan and coastal areas round Loch Long, fall within Potentially Vulnerable Areas to flooding.

Rainfall patterns

As seasonal temperatures and rainfall patterns continue to rapidly change we will see some of our species put under the dual pressures of adapting to a warmer, wetter climate and the emergence of new plant diseases.

More prolonged and intense periods of rainfall have seen some of our grazed hillsides become saturated and unstable, contributing to some major landslides and significant disruption to strategic transport routes, such as the A83 at The Rest and Be Thankful and the A85 at Glen Ogle.

Dynamic Ecosystems

These threats require us to work to create more dynamic and resilient natural ecosystems where habitats are allowed to adapt to a changing world. For example, alternative management in some upland areas could reduce the risk of downstream flooding events.

The National Park Authority, as a public body, has a key role in contributing to adaptation and mitigation of climate change effects, including working with others to reduce carbon emissions and to capture carbon stores.



Peatland restoration at Auchlyne & Suie Estate © Tracks Ecology

Making it happen

These are our priorities for action:

Conservation Priority 3.1

Climate Change

Our focus will be working with partners and communities to better adapt to, and mitigate against, the impacts of climate change by building resilience and collaborating on land use and water management initiatives which capture carbon and reduce flooding impacts.



Demonstrating taking a peat core on the Comer Estate

These will include supporting:

- › Natural flood management projects.
- › Sensitively sited woodland enhancement and expansion.
- › Building resilient habitat networks.
- › Peatland restoration projects upstream of flood risk communities, including Aberfoyle and Callander.
- › Implementation of the Clyde and Loch Lomond, Forth, and Tay Flood Risk Management Plans that cover the Park.

Who can help deliver Outcome 3?

Listed below are partners who have committed to helping deliver these outcomes (Lead Delivery Partners) and those who could provide further support (Support Delivery Partners).

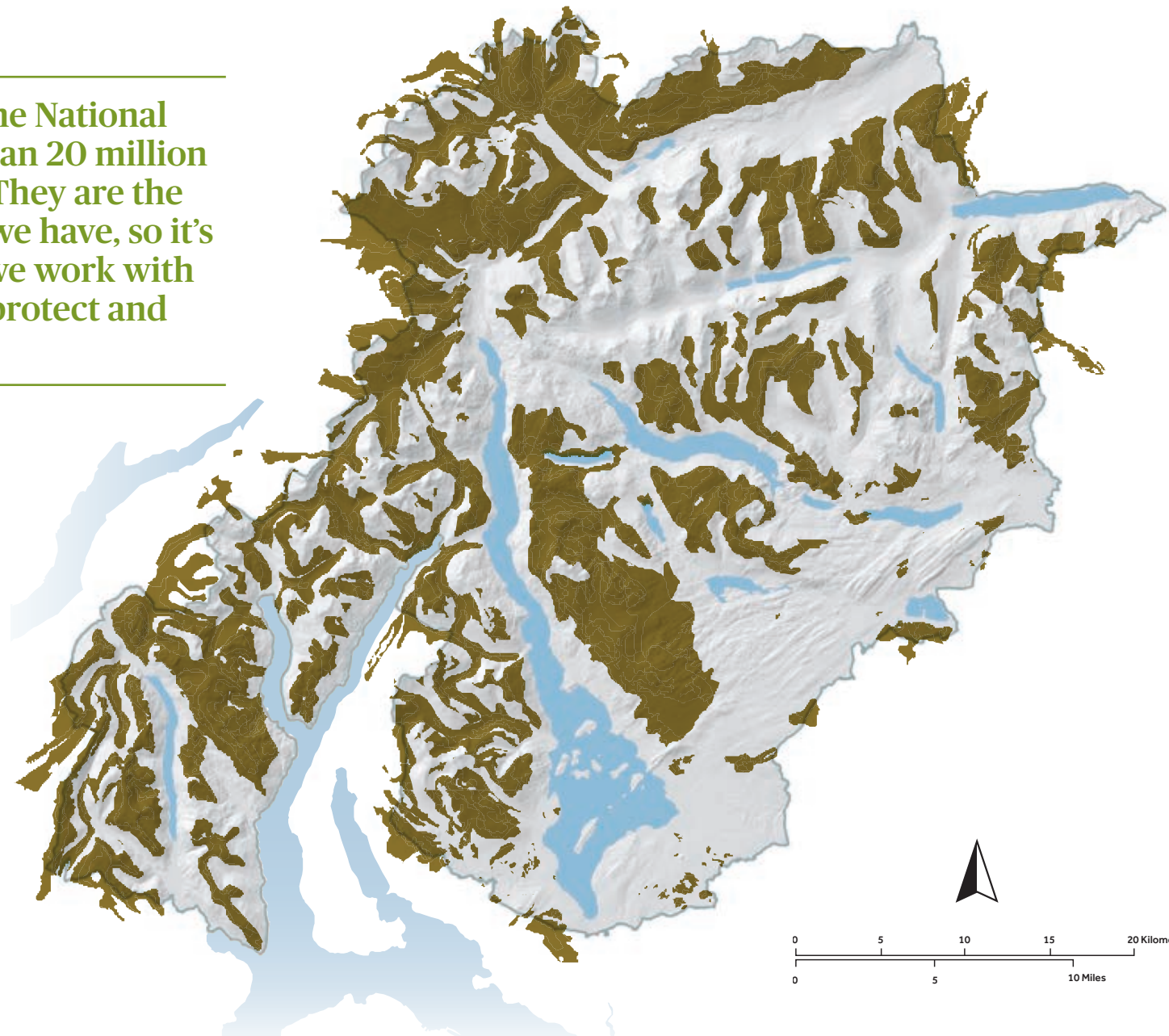
Lead Delivery Partners:

- › Scottish Natural Heritage
- › Forest Enterprise Scotland
- › Forestry Commission Scotland
- › Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
- › Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Division (RPID)
- › Confederation of Forest Industries

Support Delivery Partners:

- › Private and NGO Land Managers
- › Clyde Marine Planning Partnership
- › Local Authorities
- › Scottish Land & Estates
- › National Farmers Union Scotland
- › Scottish Water
- › John Muir Trust
- › Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Community Partnership and local communities

The peatlands of the National Park store more than 20 million tonnes of carbon. They are the best carbon store we have, so it's vitally important we work with land managers to protect and restore them.



Key

● Peatland

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2017 Ordnance Survey 100031883
Data source: Scottish Natural Heritage

Outcome 4: Land Partnerships

New landscape scale partnerships deliver better integrated management of the land and water environment providing multiple benefits for nature and people.

Helping to deliver these National Benefits



Sustainable
Economic
Growth



Climate
Change



Valuing
Nature



Natural
Capital

Why is this important?

Over the life of this plan it is essential to work in partnership with others to deliver better stewardship of land and water across the public, private and community owned areas that together make up the National Park.

Integrated Management

Better integration of land and water management, across different land ownerships, will be key to increasing resilience in a changing world where more sustainable use of the National Park's natural resources becomes increasingly important.

Restoration and enhancement

Scotland's 2020 Biodiversity Challenge sets out to deliver the international United Nations Aichi Biodiversity target for restoring 15% of degraded ecosystems. In the National Park our biggest contribution can be through restoring and enhancing the habitat quality of the large scale woodland, upland and wetland ecosystems that are found here.

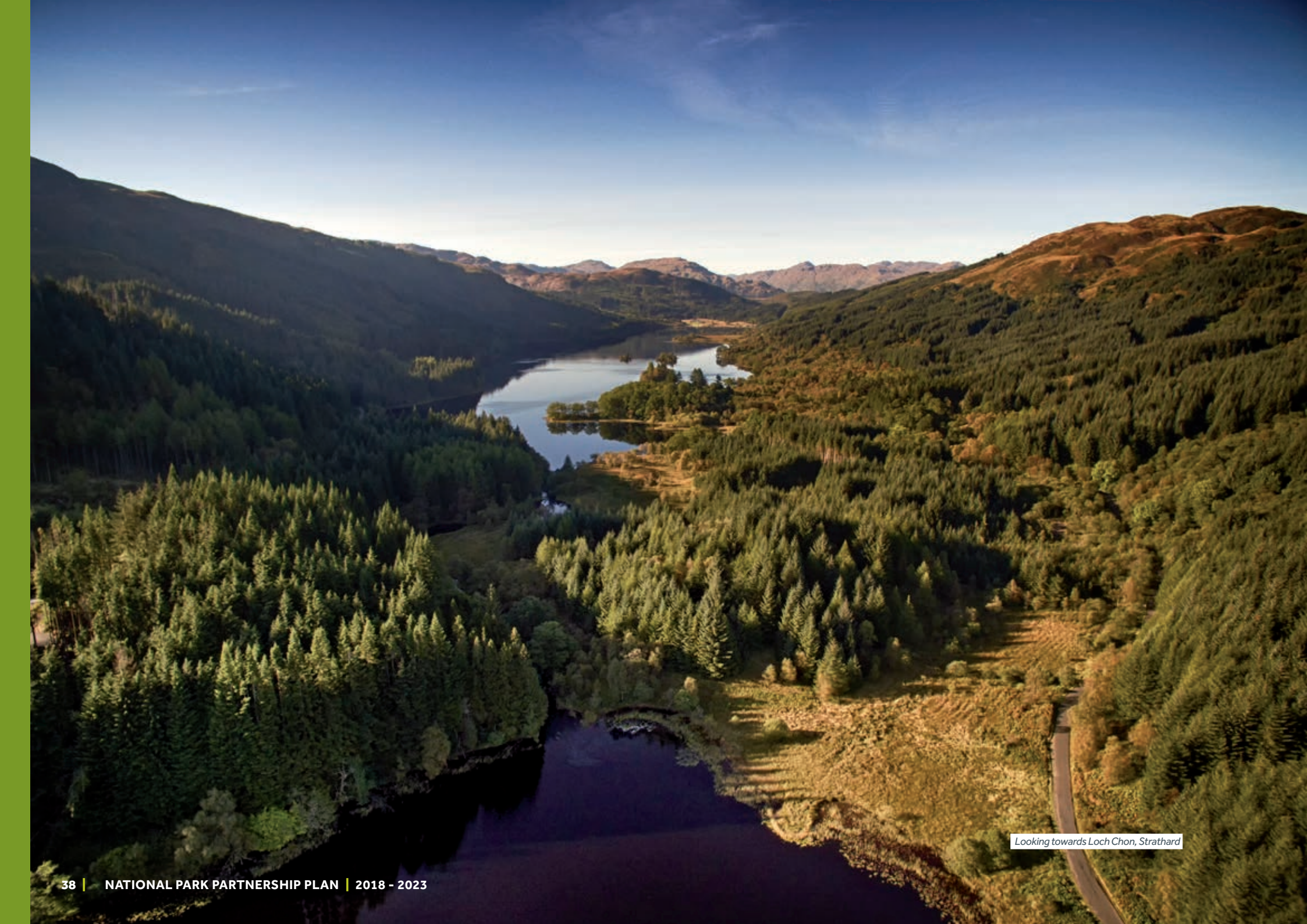
The majority of these habitats (56%) are owned by private landowners, with 31% being held by state agencies and 4.5% by environmental Non-Governmental Organisations. Therefore it is important that we establish effective, mutually beneficial partnerships with land managers and find innovative approaches to trialling and piloting large-scale habitat restoration and land management projects.

Land Use Partnerships

The Scottish Government's Land Use Strategy 2016 identifies the creation of new Regional Land Use Partnerships as a policy that will bring people together for the better understanding and integration of land use. We wish to lead the way to help deliver this action by establishing and facilitating new Land Use Partnerships in the National Park. These will operate at landscape-scale and across land ownerships in order to deliver better stewardship of land and water across public and private land, and involve local communities. We will also support the aims and objectives of the Callander Landscape Partnership to provide multiple benefits for nature and people.



Looking south west towards Callander, from Easter Bracklin Farm © Gill Corden



Looking towards Loch Chon, Strathard

Making it happen

These are our priorities for action:

Conservation Priority 4.1

Integrated Land Management

To achieve better integrated and more sustainable land management in the National Park we will:



Overlooking Loch Voil, Balquhidder

- › Work with land managers and communities to establish and facilitate Land Use Partnerships operating at landscape and catchment scales, across multiple land ownerships in key areas of the National Park. Examples include the Strathard Partnership and Callander Landscape Partnership.
- › Support Deer Management Groups to achieve sustainable, long term deer impact management in the Park. This will be done through the development of Deer Management Plans and associated Habitat Impact Assessments, focusing efforts on areas with adverse grazing impacts, and the support of new Deer Management Groups in parts of the Park where none exist.
- › Support land managers to plan and deliver multiple environmental and social benefits, alongside economic return, through the creation and delivery of Integrated Land Management Plans for land management businesses.
- › Develop a co-ordinated management plan to enhance the wooded Loch Lomond Islands and their habitats.

Building on Success

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES STRATHARD PROJECT

This exciting partnership project, launched in 2017, aims to identify land management solutions in Strathard that will help reduce flood risk downstream in and around Aberfoyle. It will also deliver other improvements to the local environment and wildlife, helping to manage natural resources sustainably in a changing climate.

Integrated land management delivers multiple benefits for nature and people. We want to extend collaborative projects across the National Park.

1 Upper Tay INNS project

- › Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) control along water bodies

2 Glen Dochart Partnership

- › Conservation of wading birds

3 Callander Landscape Partnership

- › Accessible natural and cultural heritage
- › Path network and new bridge
- › Meadow and woodland management

4 The Great Trossachs Forest

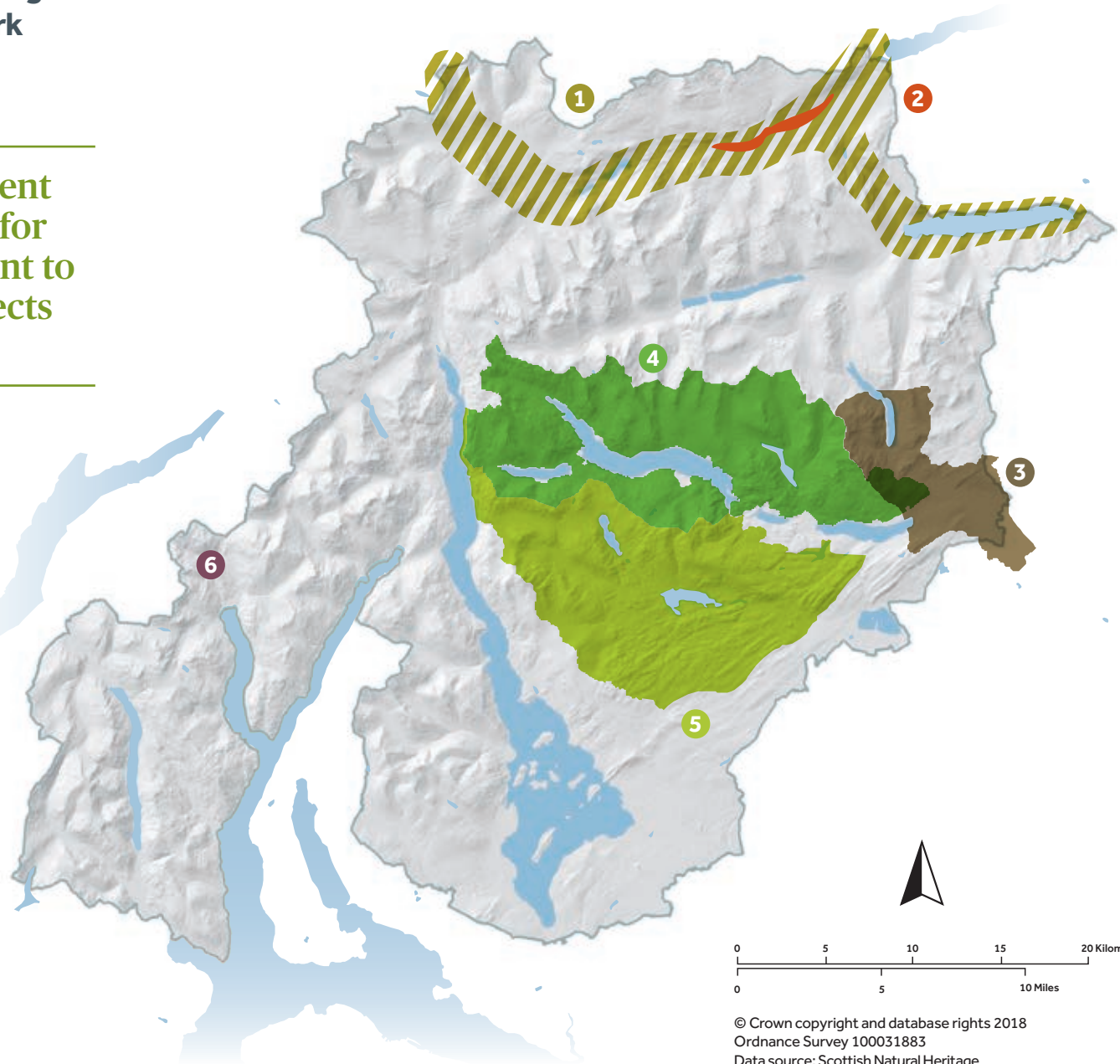
- › Native woodland expansion
- › New National Nature Reserve
- › Path network

5 Strathard Partnership & Aberfoyle

- › Peatland restoration

6 Hell's Glen project

- › Rhododendron control



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 Ordnance Survey 100031883
 Data source: Scottish Natural Heritage

Who can help deliver Outcome 4?

Listed below are partners who have committed to helping deliver these outcomes (Lead Delivery Partners) and those who could provide further support (Support Delivery Partners).

Lead Delivery Partners:

- › Scottish Natural Heritage
- › Forest Enterprise Scotland
- › Forestry Commission Scotland
- › Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
- › Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Division (RPID)
- › Local Authorities
- › National Farmers Union Scotland
- › Marine Scotland

Support Delivery Partners

- › Private and NGO Land Managers
- › Scottish Land and Estates
- › RSPB
- › National Trust for Scotland
- › Fisheries Trusts
- › Confederation of Forest Industries
- › Deer Management Groups
- › Scottish Water
- › Woodland Trust Scotland
- › John Muir Trust
- › Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Countryside Trust



Clearing rhododendron

Conservation & Land Management

Indicators of success

How will we measure success by 2023?

Area of new woodland

 2000 hectares of woodland expansion by 2023

Area and condition of restored peatland

 2000 hectares of restored peatland by 2023

Percentage of designated sites in favourable condition

 Increase from 2017 baseline of 76% of designated site features to 80% by 2023

Percentage of water bodies achieving at least good ecological condition

 Increase from 2016 baseline of 44% to 59% by 2023



Visitor Experience

Our vision

An internationally renowned landscape where there is a high quality, authentic experience for people from all backgrounds.

There are many opportunities to enjoy recreation activities and appreciate the area's outstanding natural and cultural heritage.

National Parks are major tourism attractions in countries around the world. Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park itself attracts millions of visitors every year because of its world-renowned natural beauty, extensive outdoor recreation opportunities, its close proximity to the large population centres of central Scotland and accessibility by road and rail.

Pressures in Popular Areas

This volume of visitors presents us with both great opportunities and some significant challenges. Traditionally, the National Park's visitor profile is predominantly high numbers of day visitors in periods of good weather.

Historically this has meant a highly seasonal, weather dependent visitor economy that creates significant visitor pressures in some of the most popular areas of the Park.

Without appropriate management these pressures have a negative effect on the experience for visitors to these popular areas. They can also affect the quality of environment, economy and community life.

Raising quality

In recent years significant progress has been made in placing Loch Lomond & The Trossachs on the world stage as a 'must visit' National Park. The previous National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017, raised both the level of ambition and the quality of visitor experience in the National Park.

The visitor economy has benefited from the provision of a wider range of excellent tourism offerings and recreation opportunities, as well as the introduction of better management of areas facing pressures from significant visitor numbers. Businesses in the Park will need to keep adapting to changing expectations of both domestic and international visitors to continue to grow.

This plan aims to build on these achievements and further develop our focus on raising the level of ambition to ensure that the quality of visitor experience in the National Park is truly world class.



Selfie at the top of Conic Hill

What we want to achieve

Outcome 5: Recreation Opportunities

The National Park has a wide variety of well promoted and managed outdoor recreation opportunities providing for a range of abilities and interests.

Outcome 6: Water Recreation

There are more opportunities to enjoy water-based recreation and sporting activities across the Park's lochs, rivers and coasts while maximising safety for all users and protecting the quality of water environments.

Outcome 7: Visitor Economy

The Park's visitor economy is thriving with more businesses and organisations working together to create a world-class destination.

Outcome 8: Visitor Management

The most popular parts of the National Park which experience pressures are managed to ensure that the quality of environment, visitor experience and community life are protected and enhanced.

Outcome 9: Health & Learning

People from a wider range of backgrounds are enjoying, valuing and helping manage the National Park. It is used more as a place for people to realise the personal health and wellbeing benefits of connecting with nature and being active in the outdoors.

Achieving these outcomes will help to deliver the following national strategies:

- › Tourism Scotland 2020
- › Active Scotland Outcomes
- › National Walking and Cycling Network
- › National Walking Strategy
- › National Physical Activity Implementation Plan
- › Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning – Education Scotland
- › Marine Tourism Strategy for Scotland

Our guiding principles

To realise our Visitor Experience vision we recognise that:

- › There is a need to balance continuing investment in developing new recreation routes with the need to ensure the existing network is maintained to a high standard and includes a good range of opportunities for people of all abilities.
- › Some recreation routes should be developed and managed to enable more active travel journeys to and within the National Park that promote health benefits and help reduce car use.
- › The number of people visiting the National Park by car has not reduced and there is a need to provide more appealing transport alternatives which better use active travel and rail infrastructure and offer more convenient services to popular destinations.
- › The promotion of more water recreation opportunities and facilities needs to be balanced with the need to ensure improved water quality, protect important water bodies and waterside habitats, minimise conflicts between different recreation uses and a safe experience for water users.
- › The management of the National Park needs to support local business confidence to invest in providing the experiences and services that visitors and residents are looking for and to support jobs and economic growth in a way which celebrates and fits with an internationally important landscape.



Loch-side walk along Loch Chon

- › There are some parts of the National Park where the number of visitors at peak times cannot be accommodated sustainably, and where demand and some negative visitor behaviour will have to be managed to prevent damage to the environment and local community life and have a good visitor experience.
- › Long term investment in and co-ordinated management of visitor infrastructure and facilities is required from both the public and private sector, and across a range of visitor sites and land ownerships, if a good quality experience and reduced impacts are to be achieved.
- › The proximity of the National Park to a large urban population is an opportunity to get more people active in the outdoors to improve their physical and mental health, and to learn more about its natural environment. It can also help facilitate both young people and those experiencing disadvantage to be able to visit the National Park.
- › There is a need to ensure long term sustainable solutions to balancing the provision and promotions of recreational infrastructure and activities with protecting natural and cultural heritage.

Outcome 5: Recreation Opportunities

The National Park has a wide variety of well promoted and managed outdoor recreation opportunities providing for a range of abilities and interests.

Helping to deliver these National Benefits



Why is this important?

There is a wealth of recreation opportunities available within the National Park but we must make sure that these are well promoted and managed so that these can be enjoyed by as wide a range of people as possible. It's also important that we respond to changes in demand for recreational facilities and the growing popularity of new activities.

Paths network

The National Park Authority and a wide range of partners, including communities, have already invested significantly in improving recreational paths and facilities. This has been guided most recently by the National Park's Outdoor Recreation Plan and Core Paths Plan.

However, the existing paths network needs to be improved with some additional strategic links being created, improvements to local paths and finding long term solutions to ensure the overall network is maintained and promoted to a high standard.

Sensitive environments

The popularity of the Park's mountains means they are subject to path erosion and need concerted efforts to protect these sensitive environments and to allow positive and safe visitor experiences.

The Park Authority must lead efforts with partners to tackle these issues and build on the achievements already made under the previous plan to ensure that the range of outdoor recreation opportunities are well promoted and managed for all to enjoy.



Making it happen

These are our priorities for action:

Visitor Experience Priority 5.1

Path Provision

Improving and extending the National Park's recreational path network by:

- › Ensuring that the National Park Core Paths are reviewed and fit for purpose.
- › Restoring 22 mountain paths and delivering training and volunteering opportunities through the Mountains and The People project (see 'Building on Success' below).
- › Investing in recreational routes in the landscape around Callander through the Callander Landscape Partnership.
- › Enabling the development of the cross-Scotland Pilgrim's Way as a national development by connecting the Tyndrum to St Fillans section passing through the National Park.
- › Developing key active travel linkages between communities.



Visitor Experience Priority 5.2

Path Maintenance

Developing ways to resource the required investment to maintain high quality path networks (including through visitor and charitable giving), particularly the West Highland Way and other long distance routes and Core Paths in the National Park.

Building on Success

THE MOUNTAINS AND THE PEOPLE PROJECT

The Mountains and The People, is a five year project, launched in 2015, to preserve, improve and restore the unique upland habitats in Scotland's National Parks as well as creating training and volunteering opportunities.



Making it happen

These are our priorities for action:

Visitor Experience Priority 5.3

Active Travel

Promoting greater use of the National Walking and Cycling Network in the national Park for recreation and active travel and promoting better linkages from existing public transport hubs and services.



Horse riding near Drymen



Cycling on National Cycle Route 7, Glen Ogle

Who can help deliver Outcome 5?

Listed below are partners who have committed to helping deliver these outcomes (Lead Delivery Partners) and those who could provide further support (Support Delivery Partners).

Lead Delivery Partners:

- › Forest Enterprise Scotland
- › Scottish Natural Heritage
- › Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland
- › Community Development Trusts
- › Community Councils
- › ScotRail
- › Sport Scotland
- › Sustrans
- › Callander Landscape Partnership

Support Delivery Partners:

- › Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Access Forum
- › Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Countryside Trust
- › Local Authorities
- › Paths for All
- › Transport Scotland
- › Third Sector Activity Providers

Map Strategic Recreation Network









6

Visitor Experience

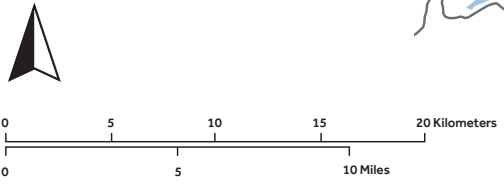
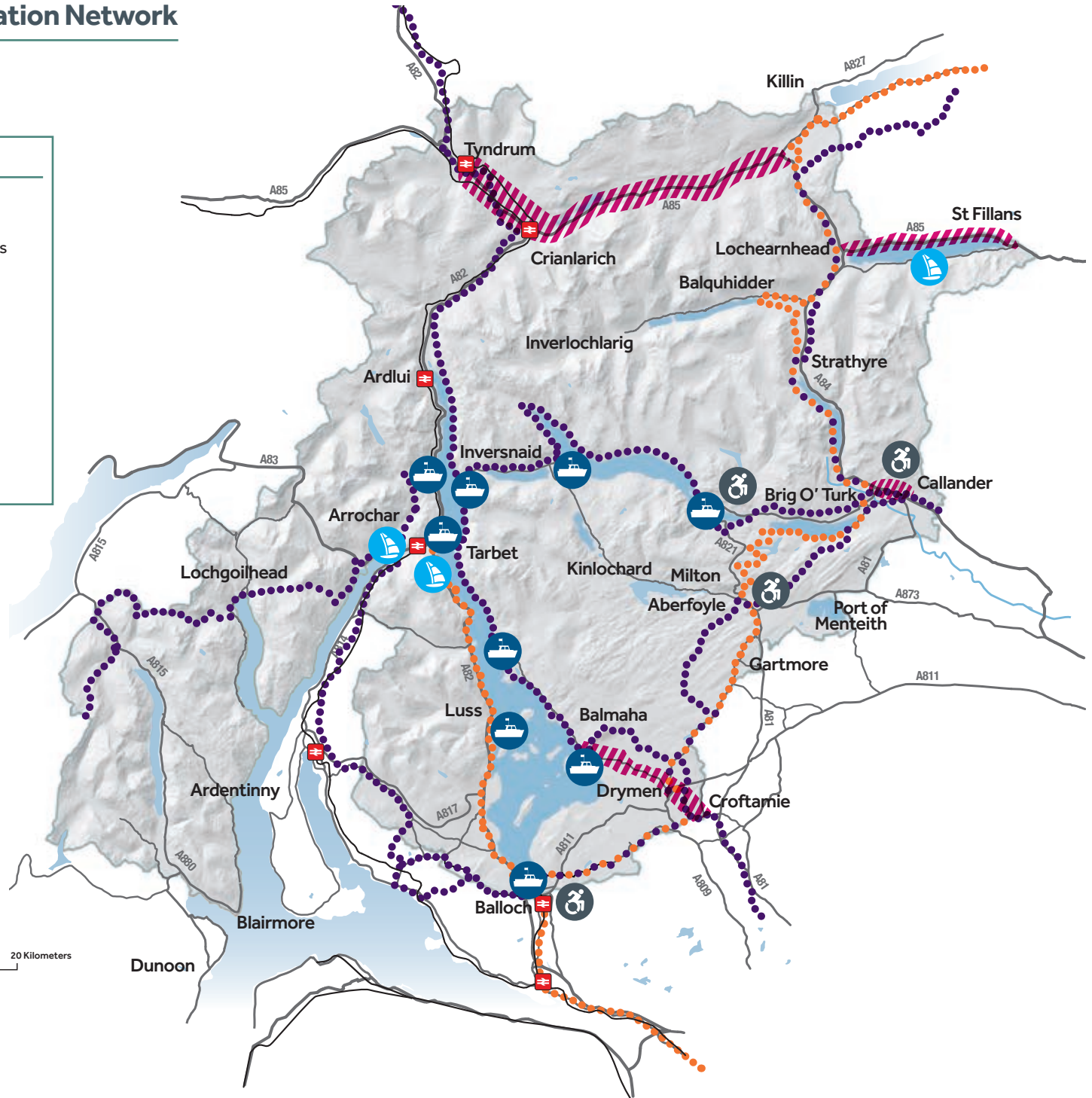
Outcome 5: Recreation Opportunities

Priority 5.3

Key

-  Park mobility sites
-  Waterbus departure points
-  Piers/ pontoons for water recreation
-  Strategic future routes
-  Long Distance Routes
-  National Cycle Network
-  Railway/ Train station
-  Roads

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 Ordnance Survey 100031883
 Data source: Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority



Outcome 6 Water Recreation

There are more opportunities to enjoy water-based recreation and sporting activities across the Park's lochs, rivers and coasts while maximising safety for all users and protecting the quality of water environments.

Helping to deliver these National Benefits



Climate change



Natural Capital



Community Empowerment



Health & Wellbeing

Why is this important?

Many of the lochs in the Park are popular for water-based sport and recreation activities, with changing trends in what people come here to do. For example, we are seeing growth in the popularity of canoeing, open-water swimming and new activities, such as paddleboarding.

Water-based recreation

Boating and fishing continue to be popular and the availability of boating facilities (publicly-accessible piers, pontoons and moorings) continues to fall short of demand.

The well-established Loch Lomond Byelaws continue to work effectively, helping our Ranger Service to achieve balanced management of the loch in a way that enables a wide range of recreational activities, while minimising conflicts.

Marine tourism

The success of the Loch Lomond Waterbus has made better use of the Loch's piers with services now also connecting Loch Katrine. It has benefited our lochside communities, in addition to established cruise and ferry offerings, by providing an appealing sustainable transport alternative to journeying by car.

The Scottish Marine Tourism Strategy identifies that there is further potential to capitalise on and grow water-based tourism in the Park.

This can be done through continued investment in infrastructure, the promotion of routes, activities and itineraries, as well as linking Clyde coastal and inland waters by improving facilities on Loch Lomond, Loch Long and Loch Earn. Appropriate pier infrastructure may also be required to accommodate the Maid of the Loch as efforts continue to bring this historic paddle steamer back into operation.

The other lochs have the potential to support more non-motorised activities. So it's important that we work with partners to further develop the opportunities on our lochs, rivers and coasts in the National Park.



Paddleboarding on Loch Lubnaig



Making it happen

These are our priorities for action:

Visitor Experience Priority 6.1

Water Facilities

Securing investment in more publicly accessible boating and recreational facilities, such as piers, pontoons and moorings for a range of users, particularly on Loch Lomond, Loch Long and Loch Earn.

Visitor Experience Priority 6.2

Waterbus Network

Encouraging the development of the Waterbus network on Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine and enabling new opportunities on Loch Long.

Visitor Experience Priority 6.3

Water Recreation

Encouraging more participation in established and emerging water recreation activities such as fishing, kayaking, canoeing, open water swimming and board sports by promoting suitable locations and itineraries as well as clear water safety advice.

Who can help deliver Outcome 6?

Listed below are partners who have committed to helping deliver these outcomes (Lead Delivery Partners) and those who could provide further support (Support Delivery Partners).

Support Delivery Partners:

- › Local Destination Organisations
- › Community Development Trusts
- › Community Councils
- › VisitScotland
- › Enterprise and Skills Agencies
- › SportScotland
- › Clyde Marine Planning Partnership
- › Maid of the Loch - Loch Lomond Steamship Company
- › The Royal Yachting Association Scotland
- › Watersports governing bodies
- › Scottish Canoe Association



Sea kayaking on Loch Long

Outcome 7: Visitor Economy

The Park's visitor economy is thriving with more businesses and organisations working together to create a world-class destination.

Helping to deliver these National Benefits



Natural Capital



Sustainable Economic Growth



Community empowerment



Health & Wellbeing

Why is this important?

Businesses and organisations in the National Park have taken great strides in adapting and innovating to better provide for the dynamic and ever changing tourism demand in recent years.

Adapting to expectations

The accommodation offering has seen many positive investments and there has been a rise in visitors using self-catering accommodation, managed campsites and hotels from 2011 to 2015.

The National Park's reputation as a top-quality food destination has seen a strong increase in the number of people coming to the area for its food and drink. The growing number of annual festivals and events showcasing local food and drink producers are also attracting thousands of people to the area.

A calendar of high quality events is attracting more visitors to the National Park including the increase in outdoor sporting events like the Great Scottish Swim. This success of this event helped attract the 2018 European Championships Open Water Swimming competition to Balloch.

Enjoying the landscape

The award-winning Scottish Scenic Routes Initiative has brought iconic architectural installations attracting fresh audiences to these locations by improving opportunities to stop during journeys to enjoy the landscape.

However, significant opportunity remains to make more of the Park's rich wildlife, landscapes and the wide range of recreation activities that attract longer staying visitors. These include cycling, high quality paddle sports, long-distance walking and open-water swimming – although this requires careful management in areas with significant existing boat use. Creative use of publicly owned and managed sites can help provide more visitor services and activities.

The National Park's road, rail and long distance path network represent some of the best scenic routes in Scotland with stunning views of the area's lochs and mountains.

The West Highland Line offers an outstanding rail experience but opportunities to come here via local stations are currently under-promoted.

Visitor information

Visitor feedback also shows that it can be a challenge to get the right information to plan and enjoy a trip to Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, particularly, working out the best way to visit and link together experiences in different areas. This is compounded by the current lack of fit for purpose broadband and mobile connectivity in many parts of the Park.

Alongside an improving hotel and self-catering offering, there is a need for more camping, bunkhouse and overnight motorhome stops on popular routes to meet visitor expectations of a full range of accommodation options to choose from.



The Great Scottish Swim, Loch Lomond



Onion Bread £2.50

White cob £1.50

TEAR 'N' SHARE TOMATO + MOZZARELLA £3.00

POPPY SEED BLOOMER £1.50

te meal 50

75p or £4

Plain 75p or 6 for £4

SPICY BEETROOT & BLACK PEPPER £2.50

Walnut bread £2.50

Large wholemeal Bread £2.00

HARVESTER WHEATFLOUR, MULTIGRAIN SEEDS, CORNBREADS, APPLE, CUCUMBER, CRACKED, FRESH PEPPERS, PARSLEY, GARLIC, OLIVE OIL, MUSTARD, LEMON JUICE, MUSTARD £3.00

Cherry 75p or 6 for £4

Apple & Cinnamon 75p or 6 for £4

Banana & Raisin 75p or 6 for £4

Loch Lomond Food Festival

FRESH BAKED

Making it happen

These are our priorities for action:

Visitor Experience Priority 7.1

Growing Tourism Markets

Encouraging new and established tourism businesses to innovate and collaborate by capitalising on growing markets linked to:

- › Walking, cycling and canoeing
- › Camping and motorhomes
- › Nature based tourism
- › Marine tourism
- › Food and drink
- › Business tourism
- › Signature Events
- › Cultural Heritage including Gaelic language
- › Film and TV locations
- › Accessible tourism

Visitor Experience Priority 7.2

Information & Connectivity

Making it easier to find out what the National Park has to offer and ensure the connectivity for businesses to grow and collaborate by:

- › Facilitating better joined-up, consistent and relevant visitor information, particularly on digital platforms.
- › Providing advice and online resources for tourism businesses in the National Park.
- › Facilitating business collaboration through events and digital engagement.
- › Providing a good Ranger and Volunteer Ranger visitor welcome service.
- › Securing better Superfast Broadband, public Wi-Fi and mobile telephone network coverage

Who can help deliver Outcome 7?

Listed below are partners who have committed to helping deliver these outcomes (Lead Delivery Partners) and those who could provide further support (Support Delivery Partners).

Lead Delivery Partners:

- › Enterprise and Skills Agencies
- › VisitScotland
- › Scottish Futures Trust

Support Delivery Partners:

- › Destination Business Groups
- › Community Development Trusts
- › Community Councils
- › Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs
- › ScotRail
- › Local Authorities
- › Transport Scotland
- › Scottish Tourism Alliance
- › RSPB
- › Estates and Landowners
- › Royal Botanic Gardens Scotland
- › Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Outcome 8: Visitor Management

The most popular parts of the National Park which experience pressures are managed to ensure that the quality of environment, visitor experience and community life are protected and enhanced.

Helping to deliver these National Benefits



Natural Capital



Sustainable Economic Growth



Community empowerment



A Park for All

Why is this important?

High visitor numbers can put pressure on our most accessible and popular places and landscapes within the Park, particularly on lochshores, in picturesque towns and villages, and along popular paths.

Alleviating pressures

These pressures take a number of forms, from congestion of car parks, litter, irresponsible or anti-social behaviour, to general wear and tear on the environment from the cumulative effect of high volumes of people visiting these areas throughout the season.

The National Park's road network can become very busy at peak times and problems can be exacerbated by illegal or irresponsible parking.

The safety of all road users can be threatened by vehicles travelling at unsafe speeds.

We see a continuing need to address these issues through the right combination of engagement and education, investment in facilities and, where necessary, management measures and regulation to help alleviate pressure, change behaviours and prevent damage.

Visitor facilities

Much public investment has already been targeted on raising the quality of visitor facilities in the busiest areas such as improving car parks, toilets, information points, litter facilities, viewpoints and providing campsites.

This approach has achieved transformational improvements to East Loch Lomond and parts of The Trossachs through the 5 Lochs Visitor Management Plan. Continuing to find solutions which prevent these problems will support the more sustainable use of busy sites and give confidence for the private sector to play a role in providing new visitor offerings.



A warm welcome from one of our Rangers at Loch Chon campsite

Making it happen

These are our priorities for action:

Visitor Experience Priority 8.1

Visitor Management

Ensuring locations experiencing visitor and recreational pressures are well managed with the appropriate combination of infrastructure investment, education and regulation, including:

- › Ensuring designated Camping Management Zones provide for sustainable levels of camping and motorhome use, including new managed facilities, alongside other visitor activities.
- › Strengthening efforts to prevent and manage litter more effectively at popular visitor sites and routes, and address marine litter issues on Loch Long.
- › Developing car parking and traffic management measures to address peak traffic pressures at some locations such as East Loch Lomond.
- › Delivering educational campaigns with partners to promote responsible enjoyment of the Park's environment, including safe use of its road network.

Visitor Experience Priority 8.2

Public Transport

Improving public transport options for travelling to and within the National Park including:

- › Making more use of existing railway and active travel infrastructure.
- › Encouraging more convenient services to popular destinations and providing better travel information at strategic transport hubs surrounding the Park.



Waterbus on Loch Lomond

Who can help deliver Outcome 8?

Listed below are partners who have committed to helping deliver these outcomes (Lead Delivery Partners) and those who could provide further support (Support Delivery Partners).

Lead Delivery Partners:

- › Forest Enterprise Scotland
- › Transport Scotland
- › Local Authorities
- › Police Scotland
- › Zero Waste Scotland

Support Delivery Partners:

- › Keep Scotland Beautiful
- › Scottish Natural Heritage
- › Clyde Marine Planning Partnership
- › Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs

Map 7 Visitor Infrastructure Investment Priorities

7

Visitor Experience

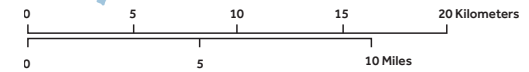
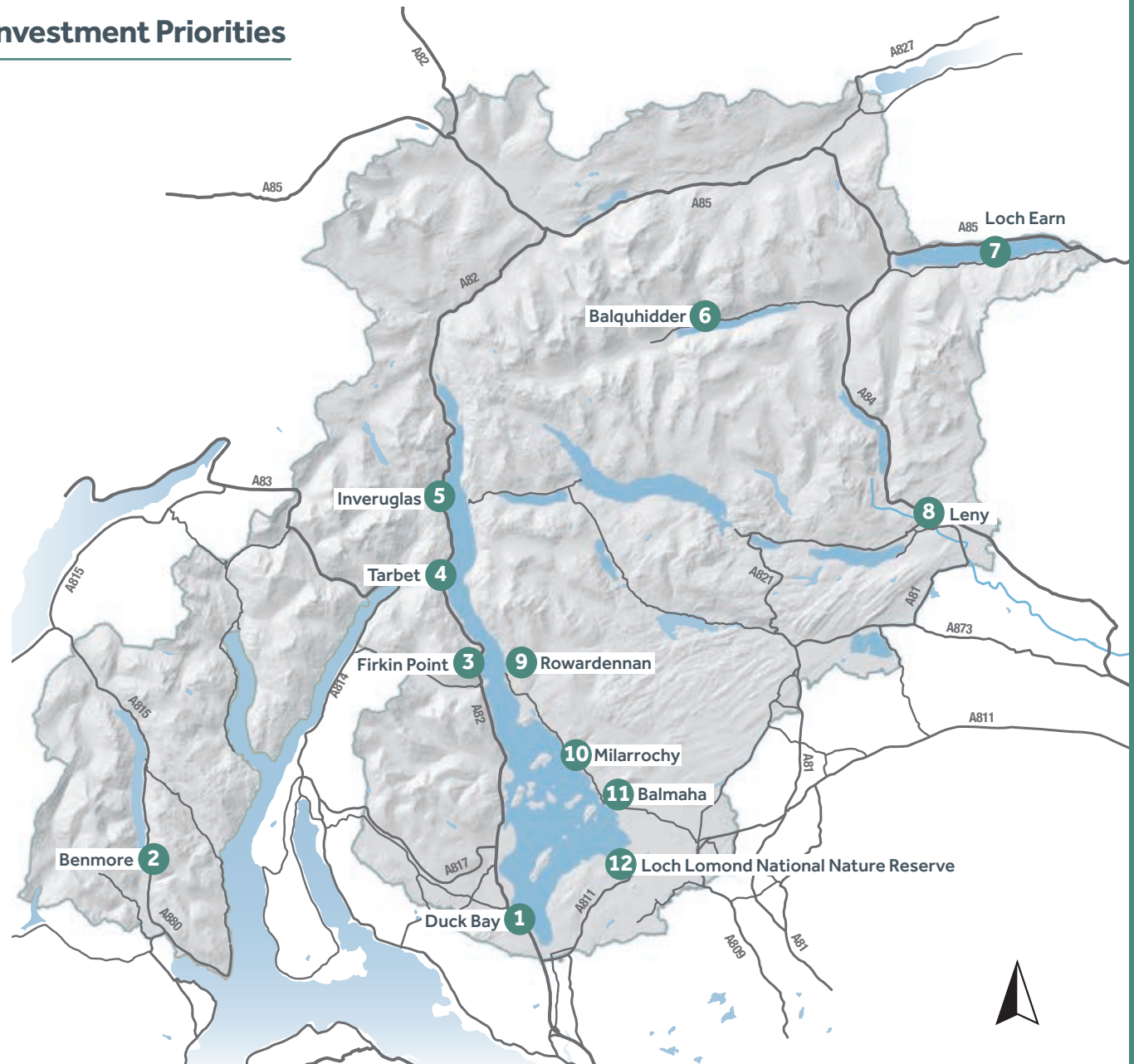
Outcome 8: Visitor Management

Priority 8.1
Priority 8.2

Key

	Paths		Camping
	Visitor facilities		Toilets
	Parking		Commercial Opportunities
	Motorhomes		Loch Access

1		✓	✓	✓		✓		
2	✓	✓	✓			✓		
3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
4		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	✓		✓	✓	✓			
7				✓	✓	✓		✓
8	✓	✓	✓					
9	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
10	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
11	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
12	✓	✓	✓					



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Outcome 9: Health & Learning

People from a wider range of backgrounds are enjoying, valuing and helping manage the National Park. It is used more as a place for people to realise the personal health and wellbeing benefits of active recreation and connecting with nature.

Why is this important?

For many people the National Park provides their first experience of the 'wild outdoors', whether it's marvelling at the tranquillity of a quiet loch, climbing their first mountain or camping for the first time.

Encouraging people of all ages to enjoy and be confident in the outdoors will help promote healthy lifestyles, valuing nature and understanding of responsible use of the countryside.

Health and wellbeing

The contribution that the environment can make towards improving health and wellbeing is well recognised, benefiting both physical and mental health, as well as social wellbeing. The National Park has a wide range of easily reached and inspiring outdoor experiences which could help address health issues for people living within easy reach of the National Park.

The National Park Authority now has a well-established Volunteer Ranger Service as well as conservation volunteers supporting our work and that of other local organisations and communities.

The number of people volunteering in the National Park has grown significantly and in our annual volunteer survey 80% of volunteers indicated that volunteering benefited their health and wellbeing. There is significant scope for us to create further partnerships and volunteer opportunities as a way of supporting many of the priorities identified in this Plan.

Helping to deliver these National Benefits



Natural Capital



Climate change



Sustainable Economic Growth



A Park for All



Health & Wellbeing

Young people

A range of high quality outdoor learning opportunities are currently offered to young people in the National Park. This helps give them a range of skills and experiences that encourage the value of nature and the outdoors. The National Park's rich cultural heritage also provides a learning resource, including the promotion of the Gaelic language.

It's also important to get more young people involved in influencing policies and decision making as well as the co-design of services. The National Park Authority can also have an influential role in creating training and apprenticeship opportunities and helping to develop the young work force in the National Park.



Walk in the Park group

Reaching a wider audience

There is scope to engage with a wider range of groups in society and support recreational enjoyment, responsible behaviour and stronger appreciation of the need to look after the environment.

There are still many people living in nearby urban areas who have never visited the National Park and may lack the means, confidence or knowledge to do so. Further partnerships could be developed to create more, valuable opportunities to visit, enjoy and learn about the National Park.



Learning about nature on the way up Conic Hill

Making it happen

These are our priorities for action:

Visitor Experience Priority 9.1

Health Improvement

Improving how the National Park can be used to support health improvement, strengthening links to health focused activities such as walking, outdoor learning and volunteering programmes as well as sports hubs, award schemes, outdoor activity providers, active travel opportunities and Park mobility schemes.



Walk in the Park group

Visitor Experience Priority 9.2

Engagement & Learning

Increasing opportunities for engagement, volunteering and education activities, especially for young people and those who are experiencing disadvantage or have difficulty in accessing the National Park.



Outdoor learning with Al-Meezan group

Visitor Experience

Indicators of success

How will we measure success by 2023?

Proportion of people travelling to and around the National Park by public or active transport

- Reduce proportion arriving by car from 2015/16 Visitor Survey baseline of 85%
- Increase proportion exploring by foot, water and bike from the 2015/16 Visitor Survey baselines of 39%, 26% and 8% respectively
- Reduce proportion exploring by car from 2015/16 Visitor Survey baseline of 62%

Number of young people having an outdoor learning experience in the National Park

- At least 2500 young people per year over the Plan period

Proportion of people taking part in active recreation

- Increase from 2015/16 Visitor Survey baselines of 24% for active sport and 49% for low-level walking

Reported public experience of the Park's settlements and landscapes

- Increase in proportion of people reporting a good quality experience

Number of volunteers and volunteer hours

- Increase by 20% from the 2017/18 baseline by 2023

Overall value of the visitor economy

- Increase from 2016 STEAM baseline of £340m by 2023

Who can help deliver Outcome 9?

Listed below are partners who have committed to helping deliver these outcomes (Lead Delivery Partners) and those who could provide further support (Support Delivery Partners).

Lead Delivery Partners:

- Local Health Partnerships
- Area Health Boards
- Community Planning Partnerships
- Paths for All
- John Muir Trust
- Local Authorities
- Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Countryside Trust
- Young Scot
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Callander Landscape Partnership

Support Delivery Partners:

- Woodland Trust Scotland
- RSPB
- National Trust for Scotland
- The Great Trossachs Forest
- Forestry Commission Scotland
- Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs
- Bòrd na Gàidhlig
- Third Sector Activity Providers



Ardentinny beach



Rural Development

Our vision

In the National Park businesses and communities thrive and people live and work sustainably in a high quality environment.

Rural development in a National Park context is all about supporting thriving rural communities and a sustainable, growing, rural economy, within a heavily visited and strongly protected rural area, where conservation is to the fore.

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park's unique environment and special qualities provide many opportunities for sustainable economic growth and diversification.

Strong partnership working can deliver the best economic and social use of our land, buildings and assets for the benefit of people living, working and visiting the area.

Aligned to this is the need to mitigate and address the challenges of climate change to improve quality of life, health and wellbeing and to enhance the overall experience of people visiting the National Park.

As a planning authority, the National Park Authority can encourage development which will improve the physical fabric of our towns and villages, and support a more integrated and strategic approach to rural land use and development.

Our communities are extremely well placed to take forward the new opportunities arising out of community empowerment and land reform legislation. This will enable them to have more say and involvement in service delivery, decision making and control of their future.



High quality landmark building, Ripple Retreat, on the banks of Loch Venachar © Kettle Collective

What we want to achieve

Outcome 10: Placemaking

The National Park's towns, villages and countryside are enhanced with investment in the built and historic environment, public spaces and infrastructure.

Outcome 11: Sustainable Growth

The rural economy has been strengthened through sustainable business growth and diversification.

Outcome 12: Sustainable Population

Population decline is being addressed by attracting and retaining more skilled working age and young people within the National Park and the development of a better range of housing options.

Outcome 13: Community Empowerment

The Park's communities are supported to influence and deliver actions that improve their quality of life and place.

Achieving these will help to deliver the following national strategies:

- › National Planning Framework 3
- › Scottish Planning Policy
- › Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
- › Land Use Strategy 2016-21
- › Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016
- › Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

Our guiding principles

To realise our Rural Development vision we recognise that:

- › If a declining and rapidly aging population cannot be addressed then there is a threat to the sustainability of local communities and services as well as to local business growth.
- › The National Park's towns and villages need to be developed to balance both community and visitor needs through a combination of promoting appropriate quality new developments, conserving historic townscapes and designing better public spaces for people to use.
- › There is a pressing need for more housing which better meets the needs of working families and young people while at the same time accommodating needs of an aging population.
- › The capacity of communities and community organisations must continue to be supported and community action planning facilitated to empower more communities to own and manage assets and deliver more projects and services themselves.
- › There is a need to facilitate more accommodation and higher standards of infrastructure (including broadband) which provide opportunities for new and growing businesses.
- › There is a need to ensure long term sustainability in balancing the need for rural development, with protecting natural and cultural heritage.



Outcome 10: Placemaking

The National Park's towns, villages and countryside are enhanced with investment in the built and historic environment, public spaces and infrastructure.

Helping to deliver these National Benefits



Natural
Capital



Climate
Change



Community
Empowerment



Health &
Wellbeing

Why is this important?

The National Park is home to around 15,168 people living in towns and villages, and throughout the rural areas. Its towns and villages are varied and diverse in their size and characteristics, and retain a strong sense of place and local distinctiveness.

These range from the Victorian-influenced Clyde coastal communities in Cowal; to planned estate villages and towns in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs such as Luss, Gartmore and Callander; and highland villages in the north of the Park such as Strathyre, Killin and Crianlarich. We also have numerous small, dispersed rural communities, some relatively remote and some accessed only by single track roads.

Opportunities and challenges

Our location, so close to central Scotland's cities and towns, creates many opportunities for tourism and business investment as well as access to employment, labour pool, services and facilities - particularly hospitals, and secondary and further education.

This proximity to the cities also brings challenges, including visitor pressures and congestion in some towns and villages at peak times of the year, development pressures, and an expensive housing market.

The opportunities and challenges differ considerably between the more accessible and pressured, southern and eastern parts of the National Park and the more remote rural areas in the north and west.

Community engagement

Over the past five years the Park Authority has undertaken extensive engagement with our communities, businesses and landowners through charrettes (design-led workshops) and community action planning.

These efforts to work collaboratively have produced strong visions for the Park's towns and villages. Callander and Balloch have important roles as visitor hubs, while Arrochar and Tarbet have significant potential if marine facilities are developed, to take advantage of their lochside locations. The focus for the coming years is on delivering the ideas and projects generated to enhance places, building on the partnership working already established.

Making it happen

These are our priorities for action:

Rural Development Priority 10.1

Improving Towns & Villages

Supporting new development, infrastructure and public realm improvements, which facilitate and link to active travel opportunities, focussing on Arrochar, Tarbet, Balloch and Callander (as well as villages identified as 'Placemaking Priorities' in the Local Development Plan). These are illustrated on Map 8 overleaf.



Artist's impression developed as part of Balloch public realm improvement options © 7N Architects

We will work collaboratively to deliver projects that enhance the National Park's towns and villages.

Tyndrum

- › Encourage improvements to public realm
- › Support the creation of a village hub

Arrochar and Tarbet

- › Enhance as a marine water recreation hub
- › Improve loch-side infrastructure
- › Create central village hub in Arrochar
- › Encourage redevelopment of derelict sites

Blairmore

- › Support village green improvements and new uses
- › Promote marine access opportunities

Balloch

- › Support village centre and station square public realm improvements
- › Encourage 'charrette' vision
- › Support Balloch Castle and Country Park regeneration/improvement

Drymen

- › Support village square enhancement

Aberfoyle

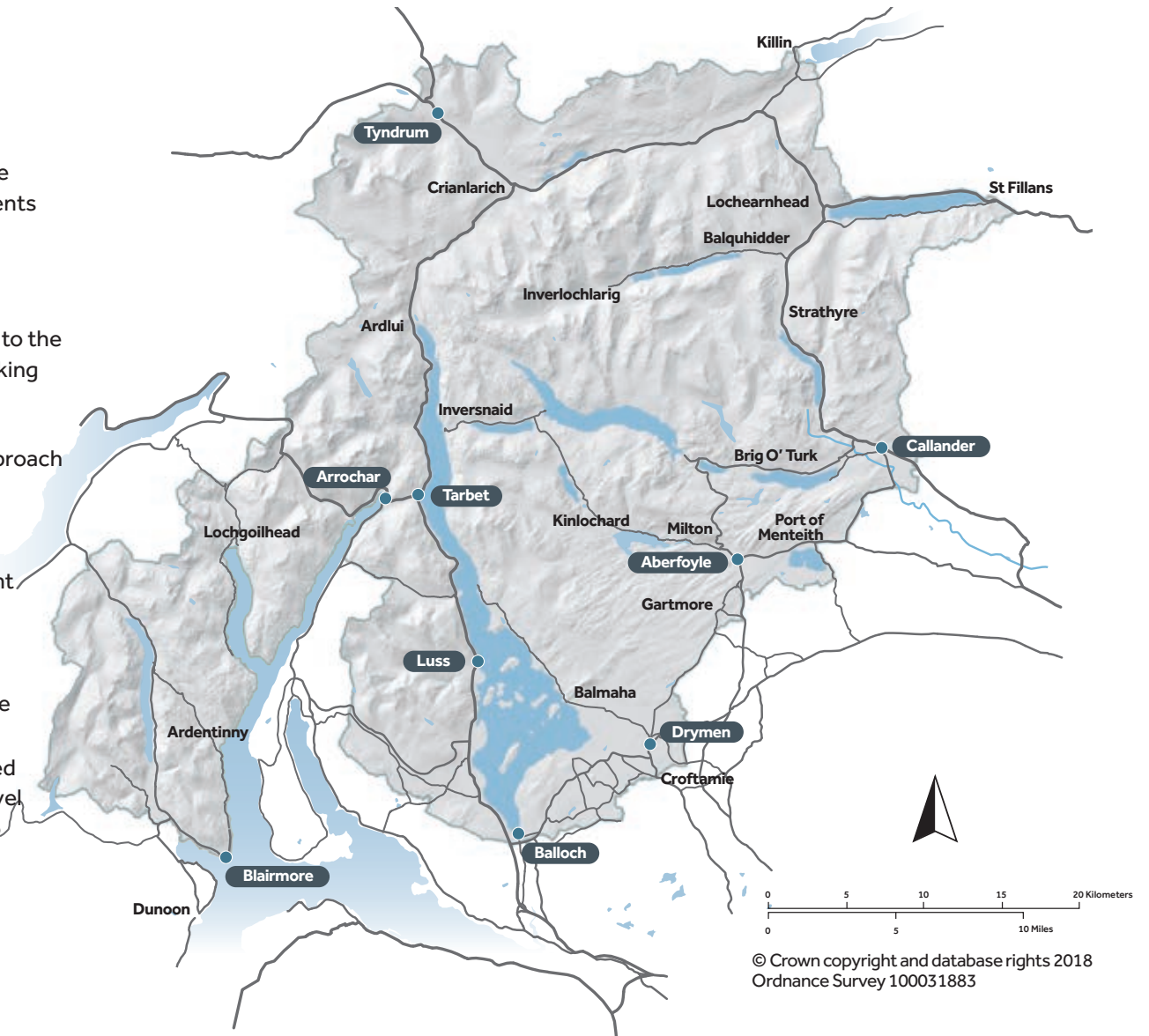
- › Encourage village centre public realm improvements
- › Support work to better manage flood risk

Luss

- › Support improvements to the management of car parking

Callander

- › Support masterplan approach to southern expansion including:
 - new road bridge
 - economic development
 - housing
 - leisure
 - tourism
 - community open space
- › Support town centre improvements, improved public realm, active travel links and safer routes to schools



This is not exhaustive but illustrates key initiatives, identified as 'Placemaking Priorities' in the Local Development Plan.

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Ordnance Survey 100031883

Making it happen

These are our priorities for action:

Rural Development Priority 10.2

Built Heritage

Conserving and enhancing the built and historic environment, including the repair and restoration of traditional and landmark buildings.



Blairmore Hall

Rural Development Priority 10.3

Improved Resilience

Improving resilience to the effects of climate change, including flooding in towns and villages (and affecting sites and buildings) and encouraging high quality development that embodies low and zero carbon technologies.



Passivhaus, Gartocharn © Paul Saunders

Who can help deliver Outcome 10?

Listed below are partners who have committed to helping deliver these outcomes (Lead Delivery Partners) and those who could provide further support (Support Delivery Partners).

Lead Delivery Partners:

- › Local Authorities
- › Landowners
- › Developers
- › Businesses
- › Community Development Trusts
- › Community Councils

Support Delivery Partners:

- › Historic Environment Scotland
- › SportScotland
- › Transport Scotland
- › Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
- › Heritage Lottery Fund
- › Forest Enterprise Scotland
- › Paths for All

Outcome 11: Sustainable Growth

The rural economy has been strengthened through sustainable business growth and diversification.

Helping to deliver these National Benefits



Sustainable
Economic
Growth



Climate
Change



Natural
Capital

Why is this important?

Overall, the rural economy of the Park is performing well with growth in accommodation, outdoor recreation, infrastructure improvements, and the food and drink offering over recent years.

There's also been a notable rise in development activity, particularly in renewables, housing and tourism investment. However, the rural economy still faces significant challenges.

Business diversification

Whilst it has grown and diversified over recent years, it remains highly seasonal and reliant on traditional sectors. Many rural businesses are operating at very small margins and traditional land management sectors typically rely on off-farm employment to supplement incomes.

The Park offers many opportunities for business growth and diversification, including primary production of, and support to, the food and drink sector as well as more integrated land management approaches.

Adapting to climate change

We must also take into account that weather and flooding can significantly affect business viability in areas of the Park, particularly in Aberfoyle and Callander.

Adverse weather can also cause damage to some of our key transport infrastructure, including trunk roads such as the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful and the A84 at Glen Ogle.

Connectivity

Poor quality broadband (speed, consistency and availability) is regarded as a constraint to business operations, growth and start-ups. It also affects communities, visitors and potential investors in the Park. While improved broadband is now available in a number of communities, through the current Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband Programme, this does not cover the entire area.



Excellent food and drink on offer in the National Park

Rural
Development

Outcome 11:
Sustainable
Growth

Making it happen

These are our priorities for action:

Rural Development Priority 11.1

Low Carbon Economy

Supporting the transition towards a lower carbon economy through greater energy efficiency, reduced waste and greenhouse gas emissions and appropriate renewable energy generation with a focus on small scale, low carbon opportunities.



Rural Development Priority 11.2

Rural Diversification

Supporting land managers to diversify with increased use of more rural planning strategies outside our communities linked to the National Park Local Development Plan.



Rural Development Priority 11.3

Infrastructure for Business Growth

Increasing workspace provision and access to training and support for new business start-ups and development, including more focused rural business support and digital hubs.

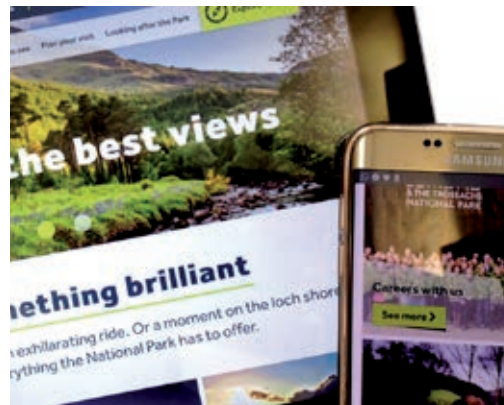


Community Action Planning in Callander

Rural Development Priority 11.4

Broadband & Mobile Coverage

Improving broadband and mobile coverage/speed via current and emerging investment programmes and community led projects.



Who can help deliver Outcome 11?

Listed below are partners who have committed to helping deliver these outcomes (Lead Delivery Partners) and those who could provide further support (Support Delivery Partners).

Lead Delivery Partners:

- › Local Authorities
- › Landowners and Land Managers
- › Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband
- › National Farmers Union Scotland
- › Scottish Land & Estates

Support Delivery Partners:

- › Enterprise and Skills Agencies
- › Business Gateway
- › Community Broadband Scotland
- › Scottish Natural Heritage
- › VisitScotland
- › Zero Waste Scotland

Outcome 12: Sustainable Population

Population decline is being addressed by attracting and retaining more skilled working age and young people within the National Park and a better range of housing options.

Helping to deliver these National Benefits



Natural
Capital



A Park
for All



Community
Empowerment



Health &
Wellbeing

Why is this important?

The National Park's population is both ageing and declining and its changing demographic is influenced by multiple factors. Some areas of the National Park experience rural disadvantage in terms of their seasonal economy, limited access to public services, public transport and employment opportunities.

Ageing population

The Scottish population as a whole is an ageing one, however within the Park it is the loss of population within the economically active age groups that is creating an increasingly imbalanced age profile. We need to make focused efforts to ensure there are more opportunities for younger people and those of working age, to remain and move into the National Park. This includes supporting access to training and jobs. Employment forecasts show future demand for jobs, arising mainly from people leaving the job market due to retirement or other reasons and a supply of skills is needed to enable businesses in the Park to remain sustainable and grow.

Affordable homes

We also need more homes in the National Park to sustain and support our rural economy, as well as meeting communities' housing needs. The popularity of the area as a place to live, particularly the high demand for commuting, retirement and second/or holiday homes, makes it one of the most expensive areas in Scotland to purchase a home.

With around 70% of the houses sold being purchased by people from outside the National Park, access to housing is extremely difficult for many local people, younger households and those not able to afford full market value for a home. While our Local Development Plan identifies that an increase in housing in the Park is required to address this, there needs to be a continued focus on funding for rural housing and support for infrastructure costs which are higher within the rural areas.



Callander Youth Project offers skills and training opportunities for young people

Making it happen

These are our priorities for action:

Rural Development Priority 12.1

Skills & Training

Identifying and addressing skills and training needs, and provision of skills development support (working collaboratively with industry associations, training providers and employers including delivery of the Developing Young Workforce agenda).



Receiving certificates after completing the 'Cook with Callander Youth Project' programme

Rural Development Priority 12.2

Affordable Housing

Facilitating and encouraging investment in more affordable housing provision, including identifying new delivery models for affordable self-build and private rent options.



Affordable housing in Kilmun

Rural Development Priority 12.3

Local Services

Supporting improved local service delivery and infrastructure, safeguarding rural facilities, including improving public transport links in and around the National Park.



New pontoon in Balmaha © Dave Arcari

Who can help deliver Outcome 12?

Listed below are partners who have committed to helping deliver these outcomes (Lead Delivery Partners) and those who could provide further support (Support Delivery Partners).

Lead Delivery Partners:

- › Local Authorities
- › Housing Associations

Support Delivery Partners:

- › Community Planning Partnerships
- › Skills Development Scotland
- › Education Providers
- › Young Scot
- › Community Development Trusts
- › Community Councils
- › Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Community Partnership
- › Local Businesses
- › Scottish Land & Estates
- › Landowners
- › River Forth Fisheries Trust

Outcome 13: Community Empowerment

The Park's communities are supported to influence and deliver actions that improve their quality of life and place.

Helping to deliver these National Benefits



Sustainable
Economic
Growth



Valuing
Nature



Natural
Capital



A Park
for All



Health &
Wellbeing

Why is this important?

Our communities are the heart of our National Park. Having active, informed and inclusive communities with the ability to engage in community planning and the planning process, is vital to achieving improved quality of life and place.

Empowering communities

Engaging actively with planning will help our communities to benefit from the new powers contained in the Community Empowerment and Land Reform legislation, as well as the proposed changes to the Scottish Planning System. These changes aim to give people a stronger say and role in planning their own community and potentially include the ability for communities to prepare their own 'Place Plans'.

Communities within the National Park already undertake their own local action planning work and lead on project delivery. Many are very well placed to benefit from these emerging new rights, including community ownership of buildings and land with potential for social enterprises and income generation.

However, ongoing support is required from a range of partners to maintain community capacity to enable our communities to benefit from these new opportunities.

This is not only good for communities, but also means that this activity can support the wider aims and outcomes of the National Park.

Improving services

Community Planning Partnerships have been established for each of the four local authority areas that cover the National Park. These bring together the key public and third sector agencies in order to improve the way local services are provided within local communities and enable greater decision making at local level.

It is important that public services are designed to reflect the needs of the Park's rural communities and that there is community representation when identifying priorities set out in the Local Outcome Improvement Plans and new Locality Improvement Plans. This brings new opportunities for our communities and having a strong third sector partner in the National Park Authority and the priorities set out in this section, should be reflected in these Plans.

Making it happen

These are our priorities for action:

Rural Development Priority 13.1

Supporting Capacity of Community Organisations

Supporting communities to maintain good organisational capacity with effective Community Development Trusts and Community Councils actively involved in decision making that influences local service delivery.



The Community Partnership's annual 'Gathering'



Building on Success

CALLANDER LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP

The Callander Landscape Partnership is a £1.5 million Heritage Lottery Fund Grant Award for a community led partnership project. It will use Callander's unique position on the Highland Boundary Fault to establish the town as the 'Outdoor Capital of the National Park'. This will include the creation of visitor interpretation, a cycling and walking network, and training opportunities in the surrounding countryside.

Making it happen

These are our priorities for action:

Rural Development Priority 13.2

Supporting Community-led Action

Supporting communities, through Local Action Planning, to develop and lead on project delivery, village enhancements and to own, or share ownership, and manage assets (including income generation and social enterprise opportunities).

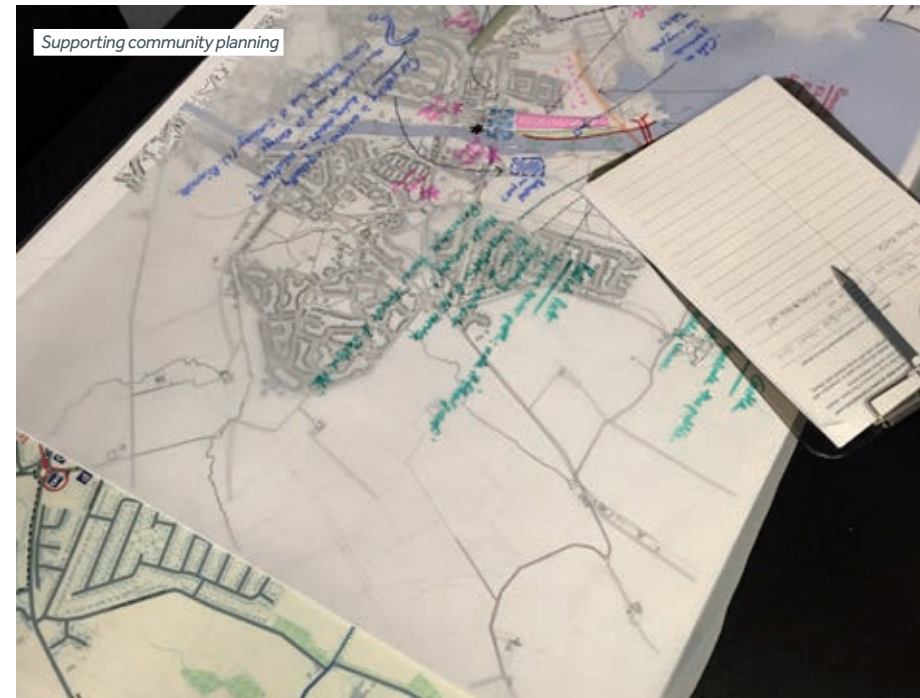


Blairmore Landscape Project

Rural Development Priority 13.3

Supporting Partnership Working

Supporting communities to work in partnership with others to deliver large scale projects with multiple benefits.



Supporting community planning

Rural Development

Indicators of success

How will we measure success by 2023?

Number of new homes built and proportion of affordable homes

 375 homes over the Plan period with a minimum of 25% being affordable

Number of projects delivering well-designed, sustainable places

 Delivery in 3 communities per year of the Plan

Number of community-identified projects delivered

 Delivery of 3 projects per Community Action Plan by 2023

Number of new skills development opportunities from projects in the National Park

 Increase opportunities in the National Park over the Plan period

Who can help deliver Outcome 13?

Listed below are partners who have committed to helping deliver these outcomes (Lead Delivery Partners) and those who could provide further support (Support Delivery Partners).

Lead Delivery Partners:

- › Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Community Partnership
- › Community Planning Partnerships
- › Local Authorities
- › Community Development Trusts
- › Community Councils

Support Delivery Partners:

- › Development Trust Association Scotland
- › Social Enterprise agencies
- › Third sector interfaces, support and funding agencies
- › Business Gateway
- › Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs
- › Paths for All
- › Callander Landscape Partnership



Affordable housing in Luss

Outcomes & priorities - at a glance

Conservation & Land Management

Outcome 1: Natural Capital

The Park's natural resources are enhanced for future generations: important habitats are restored and better connected on a landscape scale.

Priority 1.1: Habitats

Priority 1.2: Species

Outcome 2: Landscape Qualities

The Park's special landscape qualities and sense of place are conserved and enhanced with more opportunities to enjoy and experience them.

Priority 2.1: Landscape & Heritage

Outcome 3: Climate Change

The natural environment of the Park is better managed to help mitigate and address the impacts of climate change.

Priority 3.1: Climate Change

Outcome 4: Land Partnerships

New landscape-scale partnerships deliver better integrated management of the land and water environment providing multiple benefits for nature and people.

Priority 4.1: Integrated Land Management

Visitor Experience

Outcome 5: Recreation Opportunities

The National Park has a wide variety of well promoted and managed outdoor recreation opportunities providing for a range of abilities and interests.

Priority 5.1: Path Provision

Priority 5.2: Path Maintenance

Priority 5.3: Active Travel

Outcome 6: Water Recreation

There are more opportunities to enjoy water-based recreation and sporting activities across the Park's lochs, rivers and coasts while maximising safety for all users and protecting the quality of water environments.

Priority 6.1: Water Facilities

Priority 6.2: Waterbus Network

Priority 6.3: Water Recreation

Outcome 7: Visitor Economy

The Park's visitor economy is thriving with more businesses and organisations working together to create a world-class destination.

Priority 7.1: Growing Tourism Markets

Priority 7.2: Connectivity

Outcome 8: Visitor Management

The most popular parts of the National Park which experience pressures are managed to ensure that the quality of environment, visitor experience and community life are protected and enhanced.

Priority 8.1: Visitor Management

Priority 8.2: Public Transport

Outcome 9: Health & Learning

People from a wider range of backgrounds are enjoying, valuing and helping manage the National Park. It is used more as a place for people to realise the personal health and wellbeing benefits of connecting with nature.

Priority 9.1: Health Improvement

Priority 9.2: Engagement & Learning

Rural Development

Outcome 10: Placemaking

The National Park's towns, villages and countryside are enhanced with investment in the built and historic environment, public spaces and infrastructure.

Priority 10.1: Improving Towns & Villages

Priority 10.2: Built Heritage

Priority 10.3: Improved Resilience

Outcome 11: Sustainable Growth

The rural economy has been strengthened through sustainable business growth and diversification.

Priority 11.1: Low Carbon Economy

Priority 11.2: Rural Diversification

Priority 11.3: Infrastructure for Business Growth

Priority 11.4: Broadband & Mobile Coverage

Outcome 12: Sustainable Population

Population decline is being addressed by attracting and retaining more skilled working age and young people within the National Park and a better range of housing options.

Priority 12.1: Skills & Training

Priority 12.2: Affordable Housing

Priority 12.3: Local Services

Outcome 13: Community Empowerment

The Park's communities are supported to influence and deliver actions that improve their quality of life and place.

Priority 13.1: Supporting Capacity of Community Organisations

Priority 13.2: Supporting Community-led Action

Priority 13.3: Supporting Partnership Working



Indicators of success

How will we measure success?

Key indicators will be used in order to establish whether the National Park Partnership Plan is delivering what it has set out to achieve and having a positive effect on the National Park. The Park Authority and its partners will track and report on the Indicators of Success. They will provide a regular snapshot of progress and be used to continually refine delivery against our outcomes.

1 Area of new woodland



2000 hectares of woodland expansion by 2023

2 Area and condition of restored peatland



2000 hectares of restored peatland by 2023

3 Percentage of designated sites in favourable condition



Increase from 2017 baseline of 76% of designated site features to 80% by 2023

4 Percentage of water bodies achieving at least good ecological condition.



Increase from 2016 baseline of 44% to 59% by 2023

5 Proportion of people travelling to and around the National Park by public or active transport



- › Reduce proportion arriving by car from 2015/16 Visitor Survey baseline of 85%
- › Reduce proportion exploring by car from 2015/16 Visitor Survey baseline of 62%
- › Increase proportion exploring by foot, water and bike from the 2015/16 Visitor Survey

6 Proportion of people taking part in active recreation



Increase from 2015/16 Visitor Survey baselines of 24% for active sport and 49% for low-level walking

7 Overall value of the visitor economy



Increase from 2016 STEAM baseline of £340m by 2023

8 Reported public experience of the Park's settlements and landscapes



Increase in proportion of people reporting a good quality experience

9 Number of volunteers and volunteer hours



Increase by 20% from the 2017/18 baseline by 2023

10 Number of young people having an outdoor learning experience in the National Park



At least 2500 young people per year over the Plan period

11 Number of new homes built and proportion of affordable homes



375 homes over the Plan period with a minimum of 25% being affordable

12 Number of projects delivering well-designed, sustainable places



Delivery in 3 communities per year of the Plan

13 Number of community-identified projects delivered



Delivery of 3 projects per Community Action Plan by 2023

14 Number of new skills development opportunities from projects in the National Park



Increase opportunities in the National Park over the Plan period

Indicators of success

How will we measure success?

Glossary

In this Plan we use some specialist terminology. Here is a short glossary to help explain some of the terms.

Term	Definition/ Explanation	Term	Definition/ Explanation
Ecosystems/ecosystems services	An ecosystem is a community of living organisms together with the non-living components of their environment (things like air, water and mineral soil), interacting as a system. Ecosystems services are the processes by which the environment produces natural resources utilised by us all, such as clean air, water, food and raw materials.	Natural flood management techniques	Techniques designed to use natural landscape and floodwater processes, rather than hard engineering to reduce the impacts of flooding.
Wild Land	Largely semi-natural landscapes that show minimal signs of human influence based on the 2014 Scottish Natural Heritage map of wild land areas. See: www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape-change/landscape-policy-and-guidance/landscape-policy-wild-land	Landscape scale management	Management at a water catchment area and sub-catchment area scale that has a holistic approach to achieving multiple benefits for society, the environment and the economy.
Natural capital	Natural capital can be defined as the world's stocks of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things. It is from this Natural capital that humans derive a wide range of services, often called ecosystem services, which make human life possible.	Species isolation	Events such as habitat fragmentation or disappearance leading to species being unable to maintain sustainable populations across landscapes.
Conservation management	Management aimed at protecting and enhancing natural and semi-natural ecosystems, including key habitats and species.	UN Aichi targets	Targets within a 2010 international strategic plan for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.
Placemaking Priority	An area where there is a particular focus on improving the overall public space through design, for example through infrastructure and/or aesthetics.	Adaptive ecosystem restoration	Management designed to restore degraded ecosystems, which includes monitoring in order to learn and influence subsequent management.
Adaptation and mitigation of climate change effects	Climate change mitigation addresses the root causes, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while adaptation seeks to lower the risks posed by the consequences of climatic changes, such as increased flooding.	Designed Landscapes	An area of land which has been modified by people for primarily aesthetic effect.
Integrated land management	Involves long-term collaboration among different groups of land managers and stakeholders to achieve their multiple objectives and expectations within the landscape for local livelihoods, wildlife, health and well-being.	Ecosystem restoration	The process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged or destroyed.
		Multiple benefits	Producing a range of socio-economic and environmental benefits, such as health, recreation, livelihoods, wildlife.
		Habitat enhancement	The process of improving natural habitats for wildlife or other benefits.
		Local Development Plan	A document that guides development and investment in the National Park and used by the National Park Authority to determine planning applications.
		Rural Development Frameworks	Supplementary guidance to the Local Development Plan which help guide future development in the countryside to help support and diversify the rural economy.

Mapping & data source acknowledgements

General Disclaimers

The information shown on the maps in this plan is for illustrative purposes only.

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Map 1 - Data derived from combination of FCS National Forest Inventory (NFI) and Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS) datasets. Modified with input from NPA officers to show recent native woodland replanting schemes. Data is indicative only and may not be fully representative of actual woodland type.

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For further information please contact the National Park GIS team at the National Park HQ – Carrochan, Balloch on gis@lochlomond-trossachs.org or 01389 722 600.



Pucks Glen, Cowal



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