

Active Park, Healthy People

Outdoor Recreation Delivery Plan

Q1. Do you agree with the overall direction of the plan?

Yes

Policy context

Q2. Is the policy context found on pages 5 – 9 clear?

Yes

Q3. Is there anything you would change/add? Please specify.

We support the NPAs commitments to Inclusion, Health and wellbeing, and Efforts to tackle the Global Climate Emergency as stated on page 5, and the six Key Themes cover the main topic areas with respect to informal active outdoor recreation.
The emphasis is clearly focused on health and activity, but we would like to see more detail on how the National Park will be addressing the climate emergency.
We think that there is not sufficient emphasis or detail on 'decarbonising' the park. EV charging points in all car parks with mains electricity is a must. We would like to see the ambition for LLTNP to be a carbon negative national park, taking the lead in the UK in this.

Overview

Q4. Is the strategic overview map found on page 11 clear?

Yes

Q5. Is there anything you feel would improve this element of the plan?

As an infographic it gives a general indication of the Key Themes delivery focus.

A Park for All

Q6. Do you agree with the vision for A Park for All found on page 13?

No

Q7. If 'no', please explain why and provide alternative wording.

The intention of the vision for A Park for All, to remove physical and confidence barriers for visitors to the Park, is one that we support. We encourage the Park Authority to help visitors take a progressive approach to more active outdoor recreation, to build up fitness and stamina, and knowledge and experience, as well as confidence. The potential of enabling accessibility for visitors to explore further may result in them exceeding their skills set and we think that is something that needs to be acknowledged.

Q8. Do you agree with the key focus areas and delivery principles outlined under A Park for All on pages 14 – 17?

No

Q9. If 'no', please explain why or suggest alternatives.

The priority initiatives seem reasonable steps to take to maintain A Park for All. We support the idea of Delivery Principles as a way of doing things. We have a couple of comments to make on the key focus areas.

1. Promote and protect the public's right to responsible access and remove barriers where they exist. We are completely behind this idea, that access is for all, and should be maintained. The Park Access team and Local Access Forum are essential in delivering this point. We do wish to point out the use of the phrase 'responsible access' and suggest that it could be made more explicit what it means. What Scotland has are access rights and responsibilities. We think it important to stress that the responsible part of this refers to the behaviour of people engaged in exercising their access rights and that separating 'access' and 'responsible' makes this clearer. We think 'responsible access' is a shorthand expression in use by access professionals. We suggest for clarity to the people reading the document, for both access takers and landowners, that it be amended to: "Promote and protect the public's access rights and responsibilities and remove barriers where they exist."

We also think that the Local Access Forum needs to feature more prominently as the advisory group for the Park as Access Authority. A clear recognition in the descriptive text of its role and potential would be welcome.

3. Creative, effective and sustainable path monitoring and maintenance programmes. We think this is an essential part of an outdoor recreation strategy as encouraging increasing numbers of feet and wheels will have environmental impacts. It is important that routes and paths outwith the statutory Core Path network are maintained, especially hill paths, in order to protect the environment.

Maintenance suggests that funds will be required to fix eroded and degraded path or route surfaces and infrastructure, and effective monitoring would be able to pinpoint the type of maintenance required, its scale, and lead to an indication of resources required to fix it.

Q10. Do you think the right delivery partners for A Park for All have been highlighted on pages 14 – 17?

No

Q11. If 'no', please explain why and recommend alternative partners.

We think that No.3 requires representation from private landowning interests.

Active and Vibrant Places

Q12. Do you agree with the vision for Active and Vibrant Places found on pages 18 – 19?

Yes

Q13. If 'no', please explain why and provide alternative wording.

Initiatives to encourage more physically active recreation are welcome.

Q14. Do you agree with the key focus areas and delivery principles outlined under Active and Vibrant Places on pages 20 – 23?

Yes

Q15. If 'no', please explain why or suggest alternatives.

We suggest for No. 8 Support the development of outdoor activity hubs at key locations, that the proposed hubs could be places helping visitors take a progressive approach to more active outdoor recreation, to build up fitness and stamina, and knowledge and experience as well as confidence.

Q16. Do you think the right delivery partners have been highlighted for Active and Vibrant Places on pages 20 – 23?

This isn't relevant to me

Happy and Healthy People

Q18. Do you agree with the vision for Happy and Healthy People found on pages 24 – 25?

Yes

Q19. If 'no', please explain why and provide alternative wording.

Initiatives to encourage more physically active recreation are welcome. Mountaineering Scotland recommends linking indoor climbing centres with a transition to outdoor bouldering and crag climbing.

Q20. Do you agree with the key focus areas and delivery principles outlined under Happy and Healthy People on pages 26 – 29?

No

Q21. If 'no', please explain why or suggest alternatives.

More adventurous active outdoor recreation pursuits need some emphasis / recognition in the priorities stated, and helping equip people with the knowledge and understanding of how to go about it safely. We think that an active outdoor recreation strategy for a National Park needs to recognise all-season activity including climbing higher level hill and mountain walking in all seasons, and snowsport touring in winter. These activities including the ascent of lower level tops make an important contribution to both physical and mental health and wellbeing. As mountains and the landscape are a key attraction of the park, we believe enjoyment of this type of recreation should be recognised.

Q22. Do you think the right delivery partners have been highlighted for Happy and Healthy People on pages 26 – 28?

Yes

Connecting Places

Q24. Do you agree with the vision for Connecting Places found on pages 30 – 31?

No

Q25. If 'no', please explain why and provide alternative wording.

Mountaineering Scotland supports the intention to connect transport hubs within the Park to reduce the need for personal vehicular transport, and contribute toward mitigation for climate change. From the hillwalking, climbing and snowsport touring perspective, public transport is limited in the popular upland areas of the Park and reliance on cars is often necessary despite the best of intentions to use public transport. The volume of traffic at popular walking and climbing destinations can lead to pressure on rural roads and car parks. We suggest that the Delivery Plan recognises this and that a strategic path network may not necessarily address this challenge. Car parking management maintenance and the roll-out of EV charging points needs to be part of the Delivery Plan.

Q26. Do you agree with the key focus areas and delivery principles outlined under Connecting Places on pages 32 – 35?

No

Q27. If 'no', please explain why or suggest alternatives.

On the Connecting Places map Aberfoyle is a key visitor destination for outdoor recreation, but appears to be unconnected to other centres with a lack of transport arrows linking to Callander and Drymen. We think that the Mobility as a Service initiative is a fine idea but not an inspiring name for it. It may possibly benefit from a more user-friendly name as it may give the impression that it is for those with a mobility disability

Q28. Do you think the right delivery partners have been highlighted for Connecting Places on pages 32 – 34?

This isn't relevant to me

Exploring Further

Q30. Do you agree with the vision for Exploring Further found on pages 36 – 37?

Yes

Q31. If 'no', please explain why and provide alternative wording.

We think that the Vision and its accompanying explanatory text is a key theme for the National Park.

Q32. Do you agree with the key focus areas and delivery principles outlined under Exploring Further on pages 38 – 41?

No

Q33. If 'no', please explain why or suggest alternatives.

We support the intention in No 18 to reconnect people with cultural and natural heritage on historic routes and hill paths.

We think No19 Develop a suite of full-day route cards and Itineraries, is one aspect of expanding the experience of exploring further, but we wish to highlight the potential consequences of Route Cards which could have the effect of 'honey-potting' with visitors following set routes and the challenges that this will bring for path erosion and maintenance and car parking. We suggest that the Delivery Plan could benefit from more emphasis on the adventures into the wilder places, with the focus on exploration and self-reliance. This would help visitors with more specific guidance on tackling your first big hill, which need not be a Munro but promoting Corbetts or Grahams too.

We suggest 'Area Cards' rather than specific route cards, eg, Cowal Tops, Arrochar Alps, the Northern Peaks, etc. A range of potential routes are available from websites and through sharing on social media. The addition of specific routes developed by the National Park Authority is unlikely to add anything new to this activity. We suggest that information of what to explore and how to do it in specific areas of the Park could help visitors with more self-reliant exploration, with notes on key starting and finishing points and public transport links.

Q34. Do you think the right delivery partners have been highlighted for Exploring Further on pages 38 – 40?

Yes

Coasts and Water

Q36. Do you agree with the vision for Coasts and Water found on pages 42 – 43?

This isn't relevant to me

Q38. Do you agree with the key focus areas and delivery principles outlined under Coasts and Water on pages 44 – 47?

This isn't relevant to me

Q40. Do you think the right delivery partners have been highlighted for Coasts and Water on pages 44 – 46?

This isn't relevant to me

How will we measure success?

Q42. Do you have any comments on the indicators for success, or suggestions on how we can measure our success?

Yes. The suggested indicators are very high level and strategic outcomes – projects arising from the themes need outcome indicators built in.

Other comments

Q43. Are there any other comments you wish to make on the draft Active Park, Healthy People: Outdoor Recreation Delivery Plan?

Mountaineering Scotland supports initiatives that allow people to walk, climb and ski by public transport and/or active travel. We note that the climate change commitment perhaps doesn't come through as strongly as Inclusion and Health and Wellbeing. We would support initiatives that result in information that is readily available, allowing people to make informed decisions on where to go and what to do when they are there –enabling those wishing to take more adventurous active outdoor recreation to equip themselves physically and mentally for increasingly wild walking and climbing.

Your details

Q44. Full name:

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Organisation (please only list if you are responding on behalf of the organisation as a body):

Mountaineering Scotland

Q46. Do you provide your consent for us to process your personal information?

I consent to the National Park Authority processing my personal information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018; specifically its storage and use by members of staff working on the Active Park, Healthy People: Outdoor Recreation Delivery Plan, who may contact me regarding my response or to update me on the progress of the strategy.