

Annual Operational Plan 2017-18

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Introduction

The National Park Authority Annual Operational Plan 2017-18 sets out our priorities for delivery for the year. Specifically, it sets out:

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

This Annual Operational Plan is prepared during another year of change for the National Park. It sets out what the National Park Authority will do during 2017-18 to deliver the current National Park Partnership Plan (2012-17), now in its final stages of delivery before the new 2017-2022 National Park Partnership Plan setting out new priorities for the Park Authority and its partners, taking account of changing national priorities, while responding to local issues and opportunities consulted on and approved by Ministers.

For 2017-18 there are a number of specific drivers for change that have shaped our priorities;

- [A plan for Scotland 2016 -17](#) – The government’s Programme for Scotland which articulates that “The Scotland we want to see has a resilient and growing economy, ...public services that are efficient, fair, flexible and valued, and a vibrant, open and inclusive cultural life.” “Growing a productive, sustainable economy with more jobs and fair work”
- **Climate Change** – National Parks are regarded as major players in the drive to tackle climate change and contribute to achieving national targets with the imperative that the Public Sector leads by example.
- **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015** – This Act aims to encourage decision making at community level. It will give communities more powers to take on land and buildings and to have a say on how their services are delivered. The Act aims to increase the pace and scale of public service reform through a focus on outcomes and community planning partnerships. It includes new statutory duties for National Park Authorities and will further influence our work through new duties for our Public Sector partners and new rights for our communities.

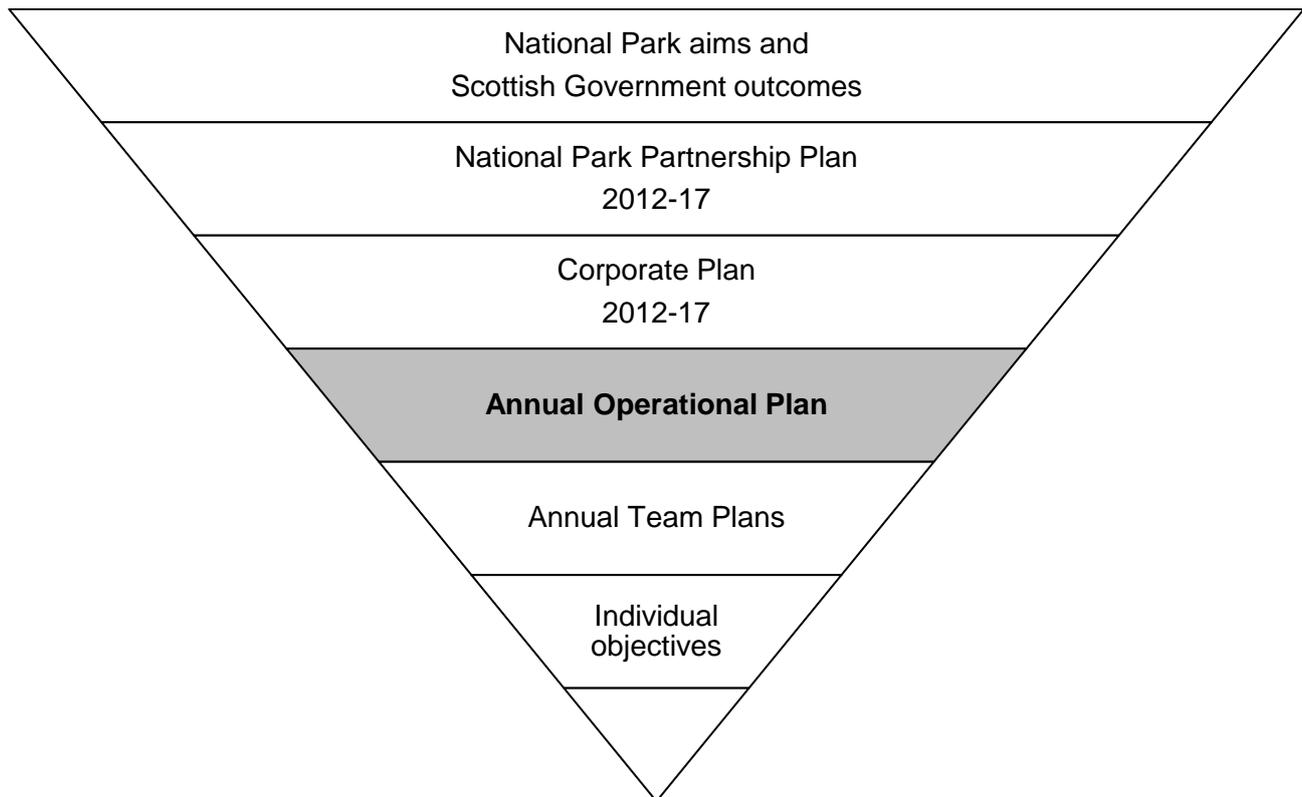
In the context of delivering against Public Service Reform and declining budgets, we will continue to effectively manage our finances, prioritise and innovatively deploy our resources to maximise the contribution we make.

Along with our partner organisations we will drive alignment, shared priorities and joint delivery to secure maximum public good. This will include finding new ways to share or deliver better services to customers and communities.

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Our Annual Operational Plan in context



Strategic context:

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

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

We contribute to the [national outcomes](#) and strategic objectives of the Scottish Government. The extent to which we contribute to Scottish Government's priorities and outcomes is fundamental to our own success as a Park Authority in delivering for Scotland. The 2016-17 [Plan for Scotland](#) clearly sets out Scottish Government's expectations for Scotland.

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

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

This [Annual Operational Plan](#) (2017-18) describes the specific business priorities and objectives for the year ahead.

The priority objectives included within this Annual Operational Plan (2017-18) will be used as the basis of monitoring and reporting progress to the Delivery Group and Board.

Our Priorities in 2017-18

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

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Our priorities are focused within our key themes of:

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

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

1. Conservation

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

Priority Outcome for this year:

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

Activities	Measurement of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement 'Wild Park' to contribute to the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mid-term review of Wild Park 2020 completed and agreed with Partners by December 2017 - Improving Red squirrel sightings and populations and reductions in Grey squirrel sightings in targeted areas by November 2017 - Review of Black grouse Wild Challenge project by December 2017, as part of the mid-term review of Wild Park 2020 - Complete initial treatment of <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> on Scottish Water land at Letter in the Loch Katrine catchment by March 2018 - Complete Woodland Habitat Network Opportunities Mapping exercise by July 2017 and initiate work on a Trees & Woodlands Strategy by March 2018. - Facilitate 4 holdings entering into SRDP applications through Forestry Grant Scheme applications or Agri-Environment and Climate Change Scheme by March 2018

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<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with local Deer Management Groups, promote and facilitate 3 applications to SRDP Agri-Environment and Climate Change Scheme for Upland Habitat Impact Assessments for Deer Management by March 2018. - Develop four sites for peatland restoration and secure funding to deliver on the ground works by March 2018.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop whole farm and estate plans for reduction of diffuse pollution, habitat enhancement and achieving favourable condition of SSSIs in the Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with local land managers develop and complete 3 Integrated Land Management Plans by March 2018.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscape scale projects delivering National Park Conservation Outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strathard Project Phase 2 objectives agreed with partners by July 2017. - Park Authority role in Great Trossachs Forest NNR formalised in an MOU by December 2017 - Incorporate Park Authority landscape objectives into proposed design of A82 upgrade from Tarbet to Inverarnan by March 2018.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support delivery of National Park conservation outcomes by third parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite proposals for grant assistance, through a revised National Park Grant Scheme by August 2017

2. Visitor Experience

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

Priority Outcome for this year:

Encouraging and supporting improvement in the consistency and quality of recreation and service offerings to visitors to the Park and transforming the quality of visitor experience, including by continuing to deliver the camping development strategy.

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maximise the use of our public assets to provide a high quality visitor experience, generate income and stimulate private investment and economic growth, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handover a landlord responsibility fitted out Gateway Centre to the new sub-tenant by June 2017. (Tenants fit-out will take place thereafter.)

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Activities	Measurement of Success
<p>particularly targeting the Gateway Centre, Luss Visitor Centre, Tarbet, Rowardennan Kiosk, Milarrochy Bay and Balmaha, Firkin Point and Inveruglas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secure an appropriate use/tenant for Luss Visitor Centre within 12 months of receiving vacant possession. - Secure an appropriate use/tenant for Tarbet Kiosk by June 2017. - Secure an appropriate use/tenant for Rowardennan Kiosk by March 2018 - Secure an appropriate use/tenant for Milarrochy Bay Kiosk by March 2018 - Have reduced the number of complaints received in relation to our tenanted properties at Inveruglas and Tarbet compared to 2016/17 - Have introduced payment-friendly car park charging at Inveruglas, Tarbet and Milarrochy Bay by June 2017 and consideration of further sites. - In conjunction with Stirling Council, and engagement with the Community Development Trust and Community Council finalise the operational arrangement of Balmaha car park by July 2017 - Undertake rent reviews on our tenanted sites by end of March 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Realise the potential of our recreational opportunities including walking, cycling and water routes to maximise health and well-being benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Core paths plan informal review by March 2018 - Outdoor Recreation Plan refreshed by March 2018. - West Highland Way management strategy developed and agreed with partners by December 2017. - Waterbus plan implemented with project review at end of season, October 2017. - Stable or increased path usage figures from people counter network compared to 2016/17 - New web-based content developed for outdoor recreation opportunities with priority on all-abilities, healthy choices, open water swimming and kayak trails. - Facilitate feasibility and funding applications for Community links and Improving Public Access path development projects create 2km of new path in Strathfillan, Drymen/Balmaha and

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<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
	<p>St Fillans west and on the Rob Roy Way by March 2018.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Park Mobility scooter scheme expanded into two new sites in the Aberfoyle and Callander areas, by March 2018. - Develop a Natural Health Service project proposal by March 2018. - The Mountains and the People project elements for the National Park are completed including 6 path improvement projects and completion of the 2nd training programme.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and promote a programme of signature events including optimising the benefit of the Great Scottish Swims, and plan for a successful 2017 Year of History & Heritage and 2018's European Open Water Swimming Championships. 	<p><u>Great Scottish Swim (2017)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10% increased participation in the Great Scottish Swim by September 2017 <p><u>Year of History & Heritage (2017)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support and promote Year of History & Heritage events in conjunction with others. - Promote events within the National Park to help achieve growth in attendees and increased profile measured through media coverage. <p><u>European Open Water Championships (Preparations for 2018)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using Scottish Enterprise Destination Development Funding develop a programme for Balloch to maximise opportunities from 2018's European Championships by March 2018. - Deliver workshops for up to 30 businesses to support event readiness by March 2018 - Establish local working group with partners/communities and businesses by April 2017.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement and development of the visitor experience product. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism Strategy review by March 2018 - Conduct visitor and industry research to inform Tourism Strategy and priorities including: STEAM until 2018, non-visitor survey during summer 2017, user specific (camping research) during summer 2017. Refresh and re-launch business in the park tool kit by March 2018 - Annual business conference held in autumn 2017.

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<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
<u>Your Park</u>	
Future infrastructure development work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New seasonal toilet provision in place at Three Lochs Forest Drive and South Loch Earn by June 2017. - Further investment in camping or motorhome facilities in at least two locations. - Encourage and support private business and local communities to develop overnight camping and motorhome provision.
Operation of Loch Chon campsite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly report on levels of Loch Chon occupancy throughout the season.
Install phase 2 signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Installation of Phase 2 signage by August 2017.
Implement communications plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribution of Your Park visitor materials over 2017 season. - Delivery of quarterly reports on Your Park/camping related web traffic, social media metrics and engagement activities through 2017/18.
Operation of on-line permit booking system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bi-weekly reports generated on permit allocations during 2017 season.
Ongoing delivery of monitoring programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivery of the Your Park monitoring plan priorities by March 2018. - Provide Ministers with an annual update on the implementation of the byelaws.

3. Visitor Experience - engagement

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

Priority Outcome for this year:

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

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver Ranger Service Operational Deployment Plan including land, island and water based patrolling and management of the visitor facilities at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over 1,000 land based patrols undertaken by Ranger Service by March 2018 - Over 400 water and island patrols undertaken by Ranger Service by March

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<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway, Balmaha and Loch Chon campsite.	2018 - Over 1,000 staff days used to support management of visitor facilities by Ranger Service by March 2018
- Continue to develop, expand and deliver well planned, strategically aligned and transformational volunteering opportunities, education and outreach.	- Over 1,500 Volunteer Ranger visitor engagement days achieved by March 2018 - Over 1,000 Practical Conservation Volunteer days achieved by March 2018 - Work with at least 10 partners to ensure that a wide range of volunteer projects are available by March 2018 - Delivery of a Junior Ranger programme with 2 High Schools by the end of June 2017 - Celebrate 5,000 John Muir Awards achieved (over project life) by October 2017 - 4 'Backbone' groups supported to visit the National Park by the end of March 2018 - Create a plan with partners for participation in the Year of Young People (2018) by end March 2018.

4. Rural Development

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

Priority Outcome for this year¹:

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

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
- Delivery, monitor and raise awareness of the new Local Development Plan.	- Supplementary and Planning Guidance Adopted by June 2017 - Action Programme to coordinate promotion, awareness and delivery support reviewed by September 2017 - Monitoring Framework in place by September 2017

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

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<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support delivery of key areas of future growth, including Callander South, Balloch and Arrochar area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contribute to Stirling Council's preparation of detailed proposals for the City Deal - Support Callander Partnership, Arrochar Forum and Balloch Community's work in the ongoing regeneration of key sites and public spaces and support to local business community - Contribute to active travel based place making improvements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop community capacity to deliver projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite proposals for grant assistance, through a revised National Park Grant Scheme, from community organisations by August 2017 - Provide core funding to the Community Partnership that supports the empowerment and structured support for our communities - With the Community Partnership, undertake a review of Community Action Plans to make them more place/spatially based. Support a minimum of 2 communities to refresh their Community Action Plan by March 2018. - With the Community Partnership, undertake an audit of Skills gaps within the National Park and prepare a National Park Skills Strategy by July 2018. - Continue to represent the NPA on the two LEADER Local Action Groups and submit 2 National Park cooperation projects by end March 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Built Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite proposals for grant assistance through a revised National Park Grant Scheme by August 2017. - Work with Historic Environment Scotland to consider application for a new Conservation Area Regeneration Project, or similar, by March 2018.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support Callander Pass Landscape Partnership Scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead the involvement and engagement of public bodies - Ensure the Partnership Board is supported to submit the Stage 2 Bid – due August 2017 - Maximise the opportunities and benefits this project will deliver across access, recreation, heritage, conservation and

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<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
	infrastructure.

5. Excellent Regulatory and Statutory Services & Good Governance

Priority Outcome for this year:

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

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>	
Statutory Functions	- Target continual improvement in the management of, compliance with and delivery of accessible and high performing statutory and regulatory functions and reporting thereof;	
	- Planning	- Legacy cases are to be reduced so as to comprise no more than 10% of 'live' cases at any one time. ² - Planning decision timescales to be consistent with national average for local and householder applications - Conclude a 'Service Design' review of Development Management, including processes, templates and communication by March 2018
	- Access	- Core paths plan scoping and assessment completed and draft plan prepared for consultation by March 2018 (subject to scoping findings) - Access cases reporting integrated into UNIFORM system by September 2017 - Land Reform Act issues recorded and progressed within NPA procedural timelines. - Four Local Access Forum meetings facilitated by March 2018
	- Enforcement of Byelaws (Loch Lomond 2013 and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Camping Management Byelaws 2017)	- Tracking level of recorded byelaw contraventions on Loch Lomond between March 2017 levels and March 2018 levels - Tracking level of recorded camping byelaw contraventions and outcomes March to September 2018
Litter	- Number of Fixed Penalty Notices	

² A 'live' case is an application currently pending consideration.

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Activities	Measurement of Success	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fixed Penalty Notices - National Park-wide Litter Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> issued resulting in payment of fine within allowable period of policy - Utilising support from our Local Authority nominated Board members, advocate the development of a cross-boundary National Park Litter Strategy with the four local authorities covering the Park 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of the 2017-2022 National Park Partnership Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft consultation plan to Board by March 2017 - National Park Partnership Plan approved by Park Authority Board and submitted to Scottish Ministers by December 2017 	
Regulatory Requirements & Good Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target continual improvement in the management of, compliance with and delivery of 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best Value 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Accounting 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal Audit 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk Management 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial and Budget Management 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procurement 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Freedom of Information/Environmental Information Regulations/Data Protection Subject Access Requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation for introduction of General Data Protection Regulations in May 2018
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complaints 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Empowerment 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public Records Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approval of Records Management Plan and/or implementation of any recommendations made by the Keeper of the Records
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equalities & Diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publish a Mainstreaming Report (2017-2021)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health & Safety 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human Resource Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop an Organisational Workforce Plan by December 2017 - Develop wellbeing “Park Views” and associated actions by March 2018 - Reverse short-term sickness absence upward trend
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carbon Management & Climate Change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of year 1 of new Climate Change Action Plan 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legal Agreements and 		

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	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Measurement of Success</u>
	Memorandums of Understandings	
	- Litigation	- Successful conclusion of court proceedings
	- Board Administration and Good Governance	- Support the drive towards 50:50 gender balance on Boards by 2020 - Support the recruitment of replacement Board member(s) and explore co-option opportunities - Deliver effective induction to new Board member(s) and new Convener within 3 months of start date - Provide Board development opportunities and refresher On Board training annually
	- Development of an Asset Management Plan and an Asset Management Database	- Draft Asset Management Plan, for all Park Authority land, buildings and fleet developed by December 2017 - Maintenance Management Plan to be updated and finalised by October 2017 - Functioning Asset Management Database by July 2018 - Increase income by £80K (net of associated costs) by March 2018
Organisational Excellence	- Develop a Commercial Strategy	- Refreshed commercial strategy approved by the Board by June 2017 - Achievement of budgeted income targets/in-kind generated from assets and commercial initiatives
	- Delivery of the multiple benefits of shared services working, in particular, with our RAFF and Local Authorities partners.	- Maximising opportunities for sharing services and expertise, effective partnership working and joint procurement to increase efficiency, enhance service delivery and support appropriate operational alignment. - Adoption of best practises in alignment with the Scottish Public Sector Data Hosting Strategy. Resulting in the relocation of existing data centres into public or partner shared facilities. - Development of ICT Strategy in alignment with Scottish Public Sector Data Hosting Strategy.
	- Continue to roll out the 'Scottish Approach to Service Design' principles and learning throughout the organisation.	- Service Design Champions to complete their individual projects. - Adopt one new organisational project to showcase service design principles.

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