



**National
Landscapes
Association**

Business plan 2024/25

Overview

2023/4 was a significant year for AONBs and for The National Association for AONBs. In November 2023 the AONBs across England and Wales, and the NAAONB, relaunched as National Landscapes and National Landscapes Association. This signalled a renewed ambition and confidence across the National Landscapes network, to deliver for nature, climate and people.

This is the first Business Plan for the National Landscapes Association. It is also the last in the current format. During 2024/5 the National Landscapes Association will **publish a new strategy** document. This will articulate a direction of travel which has been emerging over the last 2-3 years, supporting our vision for beautiful, thriving landscapes that all people can feel a part of. Alongside this a revised structure and style for delivery planning will be developed.

Key activities during 2024/25 will include:

- Boosting knowledge, confidence and engagement with **green finance** across the National Landscapes network, we will develop a strategy and a pipeline of investible nature-based solution propositions by March 2025.
- We will develop a strategy for **income diversification and growth** for the National Landscapes Association and create a roadmap for implementation, identifying opportunities in the short, medium, and long-term for both individual projects as well as for the National Landscapes Association as a whole
- Working collaboratively with our partners, we will position **Big Chalk** as a vital contribution to England's Nature Recovery Network, developing a delivery programme and associated funding mechanisms with the potential to turn the vision into reality
- Using a hub and spoke model across England we will work collaboratively with partners as part of the **Nature Calling** project to deliver using the arts to engage under-served audiences with protected landscapes: rolling out training across all protected landscapes and developing a season of artworks for delivery in 2025
- To apportion the **Outcomes and Targets Framework** across Protected Landscapes, Individual National Landscapes will be required to develop offers towards the wildlife-rich habitats, peat and tree canopy/ woodland cover Targets (1, 7 & 8). We will support Individual National Landscape Teams to develop ambitious offers by March 2025, with the targets being embedded in the next round of Management Plans. We will work with individual National Landscapes to deliver in areas not covered by the Framework indicators, and seek visibility of this work across Defra and other government departments

In addition we will gather evidence, develop communications products, and engage relevant stakeholders to inform **policy development** across National Landscapes on high priority issues including:

- building the rationale for a **funding formula** which will provide long-term security for National Landscapes
- ensuring that the legislative duty for relevant authorities to ***seek to further the purposes*** of the designation is fit for purpose and supported by an effective statutory instrument
- generating evidence for the continuation of **Farming in Protected Landscapes** as part of the wider Environmental Land Management Scheme

Success in all these areas will depend on **strong resource management**, both human and financial. During 2023/4 the National Landscapes Association was pleased to secure funding from Defra to support work under the banner of the Protected Landscapes Partnership (to support Big Chalk and Nature Calling), to develop pathways for private sector investment in nature, and to develop an income diversification strategy. The Association was also delighted to be successful in a funding bid to Arts Council England for Nature Calling.

These funding streams, in addition to our core grant, enable us to set a **budget** for 2024/25 of £1.495m. This has enabled the National Landscapes Association to recruit to new roles, with the complement now standing at 14.2 FTE, compared with 6.4 FTE at the start of 2023/24. For the most part these are fixed term, project-specific appointments to March 2025 and plans will need to be developed during the year for continuation or transition in 2025/26.

During the course of the year we expect a **General Election**, and a change of First Minister in Wales. We do not expect that these will impact our broad direction of travel for the year. However, we will want to remain flexible to respond should any policy positions change or new initiatives emerge.

Governance and legislative basis

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB), operating as National Landscapes Association, is a Charitable Company limited by guarantee. It operates under Memorandum and Articles of Association and is governed by a board of trustees. It has three objects for **Place, People, & Partnerships**:

- to promote the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty including the physical, natural, cultural and built environment in and around Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, other Protected Areas, and those areas for which such designation might be pursued,
- to advance the education, understanding and appreciation of the public in relation to the conservation and enhancement natural beauty including the physical, natural, cultural and built environment of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, other Protected Areas and those areas for which such designation might be pursued, and
- to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of those organisations promoting or representing Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, other Protected Areas and those areas for which such designation might be pursued.

As a charitable company, the NAAONB is required to apply Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) for accounting and reporting – including reporting on public benefit with regards its charitable objects.

Membership

Members of the National Landscapes Association are involved in the planning and management of 8000 square miles of the UK's most beautiful and cherished landscapes. Membership includes all of the National Landscapes partnerships¹ in England and Wales, the two independent National Landscape Conservation Boards, as well as some of those Local Authorities with statutory responsibility for National Landscapes, and a number of voluntary bodies and individuals with an interest in the future of these iconic landscapes.

Strategic Framework

The Board of the National Landscapes Association will adopt a new strategy during 2024/5. For the last 2-3 years the Board's thinking has been evolving and the Guiding Framework in Diagram 1 presents an over-arching rationale for the Board's approach.

¹ Partnership in this instance includes any management Partnership, Conservation Board, Joint Advisory Committee or Joint Committee.

Diagram 1: Guiding Framework



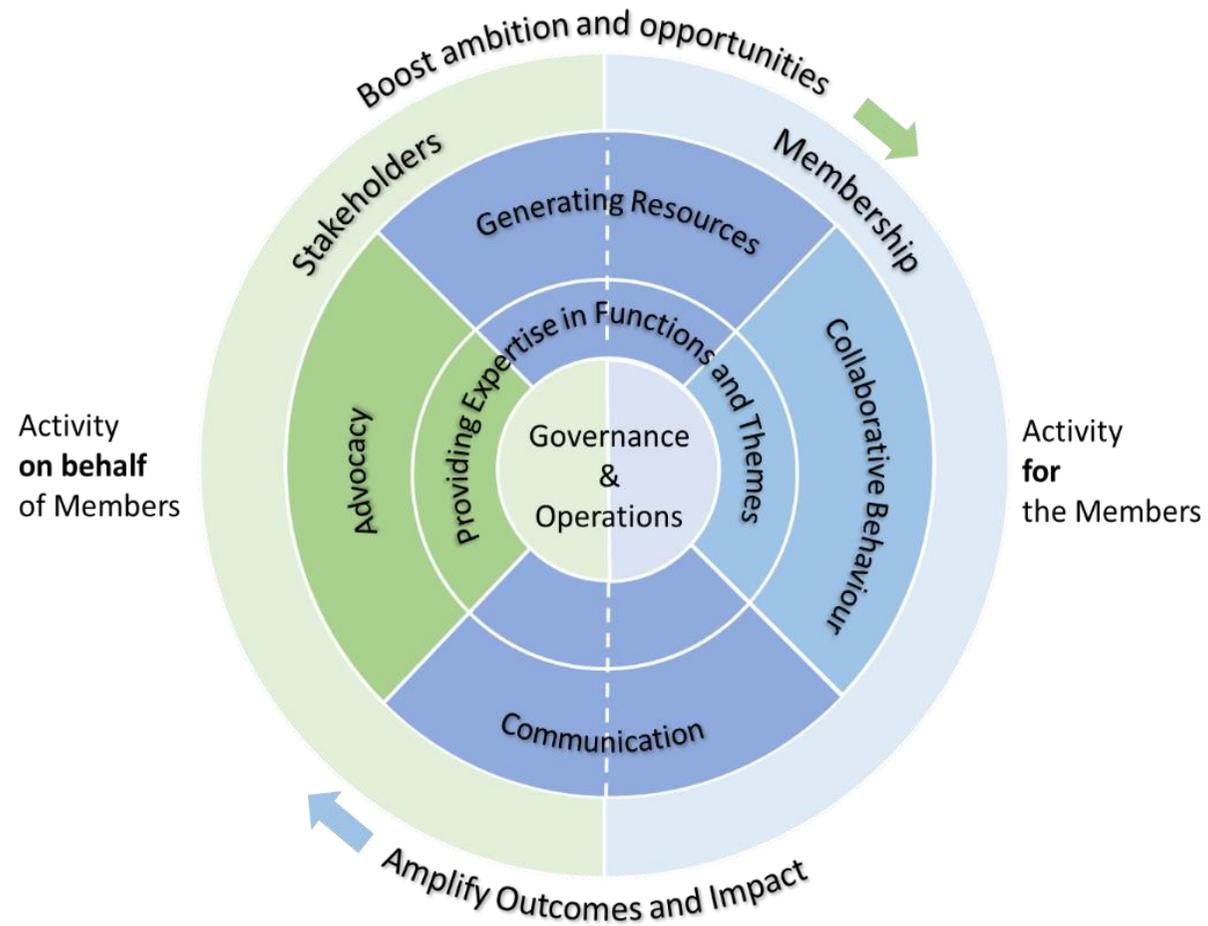
Corporate Risk

The National Landscapes Association prepares a risk register and reviews this at each board meeting. This allows the charity to assess and monitor potential and possible risks in its day-to-day activities, project work and within the wider context of the National Landscapes network.

Delivery plan

The functional activity of the National Landscapes Association is illustrated in Diagram 2. This demonstrates the relationship between the national and local delivery context, with the execution of the functions enabling the National Landscapes Association to amplify the outcomes and impact of its membership which in turn boosts their ambition and opportunities.

Diagram 2 Functional activity



Planned activity for 2024/25 is set out as follows:

Building and Sustaining Collaborative Behaviour

Activity	Milestone	By when
Work with individual National Landscapes to develop Target and Outcomes Framework offers	Offers made to Natural England	Phase 1 - August 2024 Phase 2 – March 2025
Support work towards 30 x 30 delivery across National Landscapes teams	Simplified version of 30x30 deep dive rolled out across all National Landscapes and Big Chalk	September 2024
	Estimated resources required to deliver 30x30 across all National Landscapes work shared with Defra and across National Landscapes teams	November 2024
Contribute to strengthened partnership working across National Landscapes, Parks and Trails through the Protected Landscapes Partnership	Coordinate ongoing delivery needs across the Partnership, including reporting quarterly to Defra	Ongoing/ quarterly
	Develop plans for any further PLP funding for 25/26	January 2025
Facilitate cross National Landscape team working through the communities of practice model to support national level policy and delivery work	Complete review of current phase by March 2025, including lead officer consultation	March 2025
Rollout out the 21 st century National Landscape officer development programme	Implement activities / projects set out in the programme	Ongoing
	Explore opportunities for external funding for programme	March 2025
	Review and evaluate programme	March 2025

Nature Calling		
Launch Nature Calling and develop programme of activity	Nature Calling launched publicly via national media	April 2024
	Nature Calling programme announced and promoted via website and national media piece	February 2025
Big Chalk		
Develop Big Chalk Partnership and engage key stakeholders to facilitate delivery of the vision	Finalise communications/engagement plan and launch website	June 2024
	Deliver Big Chalk conference for c.140 delegates	September 2024
Develop Big Chalk strategy and delivery plan	Develop costed delivery plan to 2028 with Partnership Board, and Protected Landscape Partnership as appropriate	November 2024

Policy, Advocacy and Communications

Activity	Milestone	By when
Introduce new format for regular communications with members	e-bulletin issued in new format	June 2024
	Further e-bulletins issued, including topic focused editions	At least quarterly
Develop Year in Review document in collaboration with National Landscapes teams	Publish on website	September 2024
Advocate for a strong application of the new duty to 'seek to further the purposes'	Gather intelligence from across National Landscapes and engage with Defra on implications, to inform drafting of the statutory instrument	March 2025

	Create communications and advocacy outputs as appropriate to support strong application of the duty	
Organise an annual National Landscapes conference to explore key issues	Deliver a 3 day event in Shropshire	July 2024
Engage, update and exchange with Lead Officers on an ongoing basis throughout the year	Hold regular online briefings for lead officers across the year	ongoing
	Facilitate regular thematic discussions for lead officers across the year	ongoing
	Deliver an in-person event for Lead Officers	February 2025
Establish top-priority policy asks for the National Landscapes for 25/26	Gather intelligence, engage National Landscape staff and facilitate deliberative prioritisation and direction-setting processes	March 2025
Advocate for and communicate about top-priority asks for 24/25, i.e. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more sustainable post-March 25 funding settlement; • A longer-term future for PL-specific ELM support/FiPL; • Mandate relevant authorities to co-deliver the EIP targets via Management Plans/the new duty. 	Gather evidence and argument to support the top-priority asks Create advocacy and communications products and promotion around the top-priority asks Engage (and enable others to engage) stakeholders and actors relevant to the top-priority asks	March 2025

Generating Resources

Activity	Milestone	By when
Provide green finance training opportunities for National Landscapes teams regularly throughout the year	Regular training session held in person and online.	ongoing
Create and promote a National Landscapes Green Finance strategy	Green Finance strategy developed	July 2024
	Launch a microsite	August 2024
Develop a strategy for income diversification	Adopt and implement income diversification strategy and work plan for agreement with the Board	June 2024
Refresh the membership categories and benefits to provide a strong member offer to both retain and grow the membership in support of income resilience and diversification	Review categories and benefits of membership of the National Landscapes Association, bringing recommendations to the Board for approval at the AGM	September 2024
Explore opportunities for corporate partnership to broaden and boost the funding for Nature Calling	Secure at least one corporate sponsor for Nature Calling	November 2024
Exploring corporate volunteering opportunities within different National Landscapes	Identify how to package and present volunteering opportunities for the corporate sector and identify price points. Design at least one corporate volunteering opportunity with one of the National Landscapes	December 2024

Governance and Operations

Activity	Milestone	By when
Develop and communicate National Landscapes future strategy	Present final draft of strategic framework to Board	June 2024
Ensure National Landscapes Association governance is fit for the future and supports strategic direction	Complete a light touch governance review and report to Board	December 2024
Set up National Landscape Association GIS systems	ArcGIS system in place, including associated hardware and licences.	July 2024
Set up and deliver the AGM and Chairs' Conference	Deliver events	November 2024
Support the Board in transition running up to and in early months of appointment of a new Chair	New chair of trustees appointed at the board meeting following the AGM	November 2024

Wales

Activity	Milestone	By when
Engage Welsh stakeholders at a national level in celebrating National Landscapes	Hold event at the Senedd	April 2024
Support collaborative working across the Wales National Landscapes teams	Deliver a national seminar and associated workshops	July 2024
Engage with the Welsh Government and Senedd to advocate for and communicate about top-priority asks	Gather evidence and argument to support the top-priority asks, seeking opportunities via communications, events, inquiries and consultations to amplify the voice of National Landscapes in Wales.	Ongoing

Seek a favourable settlement for Wales National Landscapes in the new funding cycle	Develop a proposal on future funding arrangements for National Landscapes for Welsh Government	October 2024
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Monitoring and review of the delivery plan

Progress on this plan will be reported to the National Landscapes Association Board quarterly. An annual review of progress will be reported to the full membership at the AGM.

Budget 2024/25

The budget summary for 2024/25 is at Annex 1. Expenditure has been forecast against implementing the Delivery Plan. The summary shows that:

- the work programme as outlined is affordable,
- the uncertainties of the near future around income have been taken into account so far as is possible and reasonable, and
- against current assumptions, a prudent level of reserves will be maintained.

National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
operating as

National Landscapes Association

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