

Camping Provision Commercial Models and Charging Considerations

Camping Management Objectives

- To ensure that the camping provision provided by the National Park balances affordability for the customer and financial sustainability for the Authority with limited resources
- To ensure a high quality camping experience for everyone
- To safeguard the natural environment
- To ensure camping within areas of high demand is managed in a sustainable way

A. Commercial Models for Campsites

Existing Forestry Commission Site Salloch - East Loch Lomond

- Semi-formal 30 pitch campsite
- Currently managed by Forestry Commission
- Open between 24th March - 29th October
- 3x members of staff working morning and afternoon shift patterns (20% of their costs are allocated to managing Rowardennan)

Existing Forestry Commission Site Sallochay – East Loch Lomond

- Cost per adult is currently £5.00 – charge has remained static since 2011
- Campsite generates £25K pa revenue
- Plus £5K pa from car park charging
- In 2015 the site made a loss of £13K
- Monthly occupancy levels in July/August reach 60% and fall back to 25/30% on shoulder months
- Very little marketing or promotion of site
- Potential for site to be operated in partnership with NPA

Campsite Management Model Options

1. NPA site staff
2. Campsite host
3. 3rd party operator/partnerships
4. Community interest

Option 1 – NPA site staff

- Minimum cost to staff a single site - £33K – (7 months)
- Minimum of two full time equivalents working shift patterns
 - Morning 8.30am – 2.30pm (6hrs)
 - Back shift 2.00pm – 8.00pm (6hrs)
- Supported by volunteer and bank staff during weekends and busy periods
- Undertake various site management/maintenance duties
- Staff maybe be deployed elsewhere to undertake other duties during quieter periods

Option 2 – Campsite Host

- Self-employed person(s) that will live on site
- Site management delivered through a service level agreement
- NPA will provide on-site accommodation if required – Caravan (cost £6-8K) or host may bring own accommodation
- Undertake all site duties i.e. site maintenance, litter picking, cleaning and general management

Option 2 – Campsite Host

- Opportunity for hosts to develop their own on-site business selling; activities, fire pits, fire wood, fishing tackle, camping equipment ect
- Profit-share basis including end of season bonus – estimated 30%-40% of net revenue
- A proportion of the total estimated profit-share will be paid monthly in advance and adjustments made at the end of the season
- Will require a robust recruitment and selection process

Option 3 – 3rd Party operator/partnerships

- Commercial operators may benefit from additional camping provision and be prepared to operate smaller sites to supplement their existing business
- Difficultly attracting a commercial operator for remote/standalone sites with low pitch numbers without significantly increasing the amount that is charged
- Partnerships will be suited to sites that have good access to existing facilities or land not owned by NPA (existing landowners)

Option 4 – Community Groups

- Site managed by local community groups
- Where appropriate we would encourage community run campsites
- Remote sites may be problematic for communities to manage effectively
- It is not envisaged that there will be a lot of interest from these groups however we will provide support to them if sites are proposed

Recommended models for each site:

Loch Chon - Host or NPA staff

Rowardennan - Partnership

Loch Earn - 3rd Party operator/partnership

3 Lochs Drive - Host or NPA/FCS staff

Inveruglas - 3rd Party operator/partnership

Venachar North - 3rd Party operator/partnership

Loch Achray West - Host or NPA staff

Firkin Point – 3rd Party operator/partnership

Loch Chon example

Assumptions

- Site capacity - 33 pitches
- Site operational between March/April – September
- NPA staffing model is for 2 full time equivalents working day and evening shift patterns over 6 days
- Cost per adult - £7.50* (two adult customers per pitch)
- The proposed pricing structure is the minimum amount required to ensure that site running costs are met
- Occupancy levels ranging from 20% (April) -80% (August)
- No budget for external marketing/promotion included

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Loch Chon – NPA Staff

Pros:

- Staff are contracted under our terms of employment
- Flexibility to increase or decrease deployment
- Staff can be deployed at other locations during quieter periods
- Staff are likely to be known to us through the annual seasonal recruitment process
- Straight forward recruitment and selection process in time for March 17

Cons:

- Staff costs high at 75% of revenue for the minimum deployment requirement
- Lone working issues if only two full time members of staff
- Backup support required from volunteers and bank staff
- Management of holidays and sick days
- Staff have limited incentive to increase revenue or provide added services
- Campsite will have no staff presence after 8pm

Loch Chon – Campsite Host

Pros

- On-site presence day and night
- Improved site security
- No staffing costs
- Enhanced visitor experience
- Sense of ownership that will have a positive impact on customer interactions

Cons

- Recruitment and selection process will take longer
- More robust selection process which will include submission of a business plan
- Separate public liability insurance
- Legal contract
- Quality monitoring and site audits

Recommendation

- Run a concurrent recruitment process for hosts and NPA staff to ensure there is a management structure in place for Loch Chon (March 17)
- Finalise model once a review of potential candidates has been undertaken
- Recruitment process to run from now until Dec/Jan with either host or NPA seasonal staff appointed early February

B. Permits

Objectives



- Ensure camping in areas of high demand is sustainable
- To promote good behaviours
- Ensure that camping provision is managed effectively
- To support the implementation of the bylaw
- Ensure camping is accessible to all

Camping Management Zones

Permit Area Pricing Overview



1) Implement a charge

- Total number of permits – 227
- Permit areas will generally have limited or no on-site facilities
- Charge would need to be affordable and significantly lower than campsite charges
- Charge in the region of £3-£5 per pitch (approx 1/3 the cost of a semi-formal campsite pitch)
- Taking the above into consideration the total net revenue forecasted based on occupancy levels of between 20%-90% would be in the region of £6K pa

Camping Management Zones Permit Area Pricing Overview



2) No charge

- Permit will be issued free of charge
- Potential to accept donation payments at point of issue
- At locations where parking or toilet facilities are provided charging to use these facilities may apply – FCS currently charge for car parking at their campsites

Charging for permits

Pros:

- Income generator
- Provides evidence of purchaser info

Cons:

- Cost of administering a charge will outweigh any benefits of any income generated
- Significant practical problems for Rangers in the field who may be issuing permits in person and in particular cash handling
- Processes and procedures required for taking payments/refunds
- Higher administration costs
- Potential for negative publicity - charging to use the countryside with no formal facility or site management

Accepting donations only

Pros:

- Donations taken online or at specific donation points limiting cash handing issues
- Less complaints if the visitor experience is free
- Less customer facing procedures required
- Rangers can easily issue a permit at location without the need to process a payment

Cons:

- Alternative customer verification process required
- May not be able to recover VAT on the camping booking system
- Difficult to forecast income generation by accepting donation payments only

Recommendation

- Implement Permit system on a donation only basis
- Online booking system to include a donation payment option
- Donation boxes located at key sites where permits are issued
- Ensure systems reduce likelihood of customers providing false info