

INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES

REPORT REF No S.028.18

(February 2018)

**Loch Lomond and The Trossachs
National Park
Camping Management
Byelaws 2017 Audit**

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Personnel referred to in this report :

Jaki Carnegie: Director of Corporate Services (Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park)

Matt Buckland: Visitor Operations Manager (Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park)

Colin McDougall: Audit and Risk Manager (West Dunbartonshire Council)

Lutfun Rahman: Internal Auditor (West Dunbartonshire Council)

Auditor: Lutfun Rahman

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

General

An audit was conducted on Camping Management Byelaws 2017 and we are pleased to report that the systems examined are working effectively.

The review highlighted that opportunities exist to strengthen internal controls and enhance the service provided, as listed below:

- Public and campers awareness, with regard to signage, of the implementation of Camping Management Byelaws 2017; and
- Additional officers should be trained in the Procurator Fiscal system in order to ensure that daily operations can be continued in the event of staff absence, either planned or unplanned.

The audit also highlighted areas of good practice as follows:

- The first annual update report has been submitted to the Scottish Ministers on the implementations of the Camping Management Byelaws 2017 on its first year of operation from March to September 2017;
- There is a number of policy and procedures documents in place indicating effective governance;
- Extensive training is provided to Rangers;
- There is an established system in place to report to the Procurator Fiscal for instances of non-compliance; and
- There is a National Park Website and various leaflets to provide detailed information to the public and campers regarding Camping Management Byelaws. In addition, there was media coverage and stakeholder presentation at the start of the last season informing the public and campers of the Camping Byelaws.

Full details of these opportunities and any other points that arose during the audit are included in the Action Plan, which forms Section 3 of this report.

2. MAIN REPORT

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 An audit was carried out on Camping Management Byelaws 2017 as part of Internal Audit's Planned Programme of Audits for 2017/18.

2.2 Scope and Objectives

2.2.1 The audit launch meeting was held with Jaki Carnegie, Matt Buckland, Colin McDougall and Lutfun Rahman to agree the scope and objectives of the audit. The scope was signed off by Jaki Carnegie, Director of Corporate Services of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority. The scope is detailed below.

2.2.2 In relation to Camping Management Byelaws the following areas were included within the scope:

- Policies, Procedures and Legislations;
- Education and Enforcement;
- Recording of non-compliance and reporting; and
- Public awareness arrangements.

2.2.3 The detailed work undertaken as part of the Camping Management Byelaws audit included:

- Review of the first Annual Update Report submitted to the Scottish Ministers;
- Review of the Camping Management Byelaws 2017, the Visitor Management Engagement and Enforcement Policy, the Scheme of Delegation, Camping Byelaws authorisation and enforcement flowchart;
- Review of the process of enforcing byelaws, understanding what triggers byelaws, non-compliance and the systems and procedures for reporting to the Procurator Fiscal;
- Ascertain training arrangements for the Rangers and the office staff. Also understand how the safety of the Rangers is ensured;
- Ascertain how the public and specifically campers are being made aware of the requirements of the Camping Management Byelaws 2017 including review of the National Park Website; and
- Various discussions with Rangers, the seconded police officer from Police Scotland and office staff as appropriate were held.

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2.3 Findings

- 2.3.1 The findings are based upon evidence obtained from sampling/substantive testing.
- 2.3.2 The audit was conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).
- 2.3.3 This report details all points arising during the audit review, full details of which are included in the Action plan contained within Section 3 of this report. We stress that these are the points arising via the planned programme of work and are not necessarily all of the issues that may exist.
- 2.3.4 The factual accuracy of this report has been verified by the officers involved in the audit.
- 2.3.5 From 1 March to 30 September 2017 was the first season of the Camping Management Byelaws 2017 being in operation covering 41 permit areas across the Camping Management Zones within the National Park geographical area. Permit areas are defined using signage showing the layout of the permit area and marker posts for boundaries. Large size threshold signs are used on the main road to inform campers that byelaws are in force.
- 2.3.6 The review of the various policies and documents mentioned at 2.2.3 and discussions held with Visitor Operations Manager, Office staff and Rangers indicates significant progress have been made in terms of development and management of permit areas across the Camping Management Zones, permit booking system, education about responsible camping and enforcement of the byelaws by Rangers.
- 2.3.7 In the first season of operation (1st of March to the 30th of September 2017) a total of 828 people's details were taken for contraventions of the byelaws. Of those whose details were taken for Unauthorised Camping the majority agreed to comply and no further action was taken, with some permit holders' details were taken for other byelaw contraventions. A walkthrough of a sample was carried out on instances which resulted in the matter being reported to the Procurator Fiscal. This process was found to be satisfactory.
- 2.3.8 The audit highlighted that only one Officer has access to the Procurator Fiscal Web System and this may cause delays in processing during either planned or unplanned absences. Therefore, at present the ability to use this system is at risk should this member of staff be unavailable. It is understood that there is a plan for other Officers to be trained on the Procurator Fiscal system. A recommendation has been raised in Section 3 of this report to monitor the progress of this.
- 2.3.9 The audit established there is suitable training in place for the Rangers. They go through various in house trainings such as Conflict & Resolution, Notebook Training, Scenario and the Refresher Training every year. They also have received specific training on the Camping Management Byelaws.

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2.3.10 In terms of public awareness there are significant contents in the National Park's own Website. Also various hard copy leaflets are available containing information about Camping in the National Park. However, the Audit established, through considering feedback received, that some issues were raised with regards to:

- The large road threshold signs were in some instances not properly understood;
- Orientation and marker signage could be better placed in some of the permit areas; and
- Campers did not always understand what Camping Management Byelaws are.

The auditor understands the rectification of these is under review. A recommendation has been raised in the Section 3 of this report to monitor the progress of this.

2.3.11 The Auditor would like to thank all staff involved in the audit process for their time and assistance.

| 3. Action Plan: Camping Management Byelaws 2017 S.028.18 | | | | | | |
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| Ref. No. | Finding | Recommendation | Priority | Management Comment | Manager Responsible | Date to be Completed |
| 1. | <p><u>Camping Management Byelaws Signage</u></p> <p>The Audit established, through considering feedback received and actively sought by the Park Authority through online feedback and stakeholder forum that some issues were raised with regards to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The large road threshold signs were in some instances not properly understood; • Orientation and marker signage could be better placed in some of the permit areas ; and • Anecdotally through feedback captured by the Rangers on the ground Campers did not always understand what Camping Management Byelaws are. <p>The auditor understands the rectification of these is under review.</p> | <p>It is recommended that the issues related to signage are reviewed and dealt with as soon as possible.</p> | Low Risk | <p>The large road threshold signs are scheduled to be revised to make the messaging clearer with the inclusion of the dates that the Camping Management Byelaws operate within and additional text to clarify that camping within the Camping Management Zones is permissible by permit only.</p> <p>A review of our existing permits areas is underway. Recommendations for improvements will be assessed and a programme of improvements undertaken. Signage placement and orientation will form part of this review.</p> <p>Some bespoke signage will be installed at key visitor hubs with more detailed messaging on the byelaws.</p> <p>It should be noted that as important as the signage is to Camping Management Byelaws 2017 that improvement that we are making to our webpages and the continued public engagement through our Ranger Service are key to helping visitors understand the byelaws.</p> | <p>Matt Buckland Visitor Operations Manager</p> | <p>July 2018</p> |

| 3. Action Plan: Camping Management Byelaws 2017 S.028.18 | | | | | | |
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| Ref. No. | Finding | Recommendation | Priority | Management Comment | Manager Responsible | Date to be Completed |
| 2. | <p><u>Access to the Procurator Fiscal Website</u></p> <p>The audit highlighted that only one Officer has access to the Procurator Fiscal Web System. This may cause delays in processing during either planned or unplanned absences. Therefore, at present the ability to use this system is at risk should this member of staff be unavailable.</p> | <p>It is recommended that at least one other member of staff is trained on the Procurator Fiscal system.</p> | Low Risk | <p>The Visitor Operations Manager will be trained on this system by the Visitor Operations Advisor. The Visitor Operations Manager will subsequently shadow the next two live reports and undertake the lead on the third to consolidate this training.</p> | <p>Matt Buckland Visitor Operations Manager</p> | June 2018 |

Appendix 1. Priority Levels

Recommendations have timescales for completion in line with the following priorities.

| Priority | Expected Implementation Timescale |
|--|---|
| <u>High Risk:</u> Material observations requiring immediate action. These require to be added to the risk register of a service. (Council context) | Generally, implementation of recommendations should start immediately and be fully completed within three months of action plan being agreed. |
| <u>Medium Risk:</u> Significant observations requiring reasonably urgent action. | Generally, complete implementation of recommendations within six months of action plan being agreed. |
| <u>Low Risk:</u> Minor observations which require action to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of operations or which otherwise require to be brought to the attention of senior management. | Generally, complete implementation of recommendations within twelve months of action plan being agreed. |

Note: About this report

This Report has been prepared on the basis set out in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the National Park Authority as the Client and West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) as the provider of Internal Audit services. Nothing in this report constitutes a valuation or legal advice. We have not verified the reliability or accuracy of any information obtained in the course of our work, other than in the limited circumstances set out in the MOU. This Report has been prepared for the benefit of the Client only. This Report has not been designed to be of benefit to anyone except the Client. In preparing this Report we have not taken into account the interests, needs or circumstances of anyone apart from the Client, even though we may have been aware that others might read this Report. This Report is not suitable to be relied on by any party wishing to acquire rights against WDC, other than the Client for any purpose or in any context. Any party other than the Client that obtains access to this Report or a copy (under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 through the Client's Publication Scheme or otherwise) and chooses to rely on this Report (or any part of it) does so at its own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, WDC does not assume any responsibility and will not accept any liability in respect of this Report to any party other than the Client. In particular, and without limiting the general statement above, since we have prepared this Report for the benefit of the Client alone, this Report has not been prepared for the benefit of any other public sector body nor for any other person or organisation who might have an interest in the matters discussed in this Report, including for example those who work in the public sector or those who provide goods or services to those who operate in the public sector.