

# Delivery Group Meeting

Agenda Item 5.3



## High Priority Project: Camping Development Strategy

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### *Paper for discussion*

#### 1. Purpose

This update presents the status and progress of the Camping Development Strategy which was approved on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 2016 as part of the Your Park project.

Presently the Camping Development Strategy is being revised in line with the National Park Partnership Plan 2018-23 and Our 5-year Plan. This update will focus on the preparation and delivery elements of the Your Park project related to the 2<sup>nd</sup> operational season of the Camping Management Byelaws 2017 (the Byelaws). In addition this update will explain the reasons for reviewing the strategy and the key new elements that will be included in the revision.

#### 2. Recommendation

The Delivery Group are invited to note and discuss the update on the progress of this project.

#### 3. Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan and/or Our 5-year Plan

The Camping Development Strategy contributes to the following outcomes of the National Park Partnership Plan 2018-23:

- Outcome 1: Natural Capital
- Outcome 5: Recreation Opportunities
- Outcome 7: Visitor Economy
- Outcome 8: Visitor Management
- Outcome 9: Health & Learning
- Outcome 10: Placemaking

#### 4. Introduction

4.1 As part of the approval process for the Camping Management Byelaws 2017 the following undertaking was made:

*“Within these proposals we are committing to delivering 300 camping places in the first year of the byelaws operating, with more to be added in subsequent years. We ...will ensure that within the proposed Management Zones there are a good range of sustainable informal camping opportunities.*

*The proposed byelaws are essential to enable us to deliver:*

# Delivery Group Meeting

Agenda Item 5.3

## High Priority Project: Camping Development Strategy

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1. *A permit system to allow informal camping within defined areas of the Management Zones*
  2. *Campsites with low-cost bookable pitches and basic facilities*
- 4.2. To support the key outcomes of the Your Park project and the implementation of the Byelaws, the Camping Development Strategy was developed. It set out how the Park Authority would provide better managed camping opportunities where previously high camping volumes coupled with irresponsible and antisocial camping were degrading the Park's environment and creating a very poor visitor experience. The strategy outlined the following:
- The Park Authority's vision for camping;
  - The approach to improving the camping experience through the use of education, infrastructure and enforcement;
  - Descriptions of the four Camping Management Zones that the Byelaws operated within, with their landscape characteristics and existing camping provision;
  - A description of how the low cost campsites and the different types of permit area would operate and how suitable sites were selected;
  - The Park Authorities approach to investing in camping and encouraging other providers to increase the abundance and type of camping;
  - Park Authority investment priorities for 2017 in each of the Camping Management Zones with priorities for further investigation beyond 2017.
- 4.3. In 2018 it was decided that the strategy needed to be reviewed for the following reasons;
- The majority of the investment priorities identified within the strategy have been delivered;
  - During the first two operational seasons of the Byelaws a continuous process of learning and adaptation has been ongoing and this operational knowledge can help influence the direction of a revised strategy;
  - A large amount of customer feedback has been received from people who have used the permit area scheme or Loch Chon campsite, along with input from people who live and work within the Park. The feedback received has helped to build up a better understanding of the camping experience and needs, and areas for further development;
  - In some areas of the Park we have not been able to reach agreements with landowners on solutions to alleviate camping related pressures and these areas will require an alternative approaches;

# Delivery Group Meeting

Agenda Item 5.3

## High Priority Project: Camping Development Strategy

---

- The National Park Partnership Plan and Our 5 Year Plan have both been renewed and run from 2019 - 2023. This presents an opportunity for the Camping Development Strategy review to synchronise fully with the most current strategic outcomes and priorities.
- 4.4. A refreshed Camping Development Strategy will build on the current document, concentrating on providing camping opportunities at a sustainable level within Camping Management Zones in the context of the wider Park. The new strategy will aim to strike a greater balance between the provision of new infrastructure with other management interventions to increase the sustainability and experience of camping within the National Park. These will include;
- **Information:** Visitor focussed information on signage, in print and online will be improved and expanded into new areas such as new online information for motorhome/campervan users. We will also look to work with manufacturers and suppliers of camping related products to help bring key messages to targeted audiences. As well as providing visitor focussed information we will look to provide support and guidance to communities and businesses to help remove barriers to providing camping and motorhome provision and complementary services.
  - **Education and Engagement:** Face to face communication will remain our key engagement method with our Ranger Service leading the way. The focus will be reducing littering, inappropriate toileting and fire damage related to camping. As well as continuing our stakeholder forums we will undertake more targeted, localised engagement. We will engage with partners to explore ways of making camping more accessible to all.
  - **Enforcement:** If required to do so, we will continue to use both the Byelaws and our powers under the Environmental Protection Act.
  - **Monitoring:** Existing sustainability monitoring methods associated with the Byelaws will be adapted to ensure that we are able to continue to understand the environmental and socio-economic effects of camping activity within the National Park. Research will be undertaken and where there are knowledge gaps these will be addressed. A user focussed survey to understand requirements and ensure informed decisions can be made when considering any investments in new provision for motorhome users would be a key first step. As monitoring techniques are refined and research undertaken, where appropriate, we will look to make this accessible and to share best practice.

# Delivery Group Meeting

Agenda Item 5.3

## High Priority Project: Camping Development Strategy

---

- **Infrastructure:** Is still important and key locations for low camping provision remain Loch Earn, Loch Long, Loch Venachar and the west shore of Loch Lomond. Increased parking spaces and waste disposal services for motorhomes will be required to meet demand. The delivery of this infrastructure will not be for the Park Authority alone and working in partnership with existing partners, communities and private enterprise will be essential. Improving essential visitor services that can support both campers and day visitors on the Park Authority estate will be a focus for our investment.

### 5. Reporting Period

This report covers the period from the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2017 to the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2018.

### 6. Overall Project Status

This project is: ***On track***

### 7. Project Summary

Summary	<p>Your Park delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The 1<sup>st</sup> annual update on the operation of the Camping Management Byelaws 2017 to Scottish Government was approved by Scottish Ministers.</li><li>• Improvements were made to the pitches at the Loch Chon campsite prior to the second season.</li><li>• The water supply at Loch Chon developed further problems leading to an intermittent supply and the provision of bottled water at certain times.</li><li>• The Loch Achray campsite planning was approved and the site was constructed.</li><li>• Additional signage has been installed at key locations outside of permit areas where camping persisted.</li><li>• With just over a 50% increase in people using the permit scheme and campsite at Loch Chon the visitor satisfaction rates remained high.</li><li>• The lessons learnt from the 2017 end of season review have resulted in increased efficiencies for 2018.</li></ul>
Where do we need to focus attention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The revision of the Camping Development Strategy and prioritisation of subsequent actions, as highlighted above</li><li>• Finding a permanent solution to ensure a sustainable water supply at the Loch Chon campsite.</li></ul>

# Delivery Group Meeting

Agenda Item 5.3

## High Priority Project: Camping Development Strategy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that the Loch Achray campsite is fully operational and ready to open on the 01.03.19.</li> <li>• Bringing new permit areas available for 2019 at Ardgarten, Loch Achray and Loch Venachar.</li> <li>• Creating a 2019 deployment plan for the Ranger Service and campsite wardens.</li> <li>• Finalising the 19/20 budget.</li> <li>• Continuing to address the issues of littering, inappropriate toileting and irresponsible fires related to camping, trialling alternative techniques and messages.</li> <li>• Undertaking the user focussed research and clarifying legal positions to inform the requirement for motorhome provision.</li> <li>• Refining the Sustainability Monitoring Programme, including the development of a socio-economic framework.</li> <li>• Ensuring the preparations are made for the 3 year Scottish Government report on the Byelaws with a focus on the monitoring programme.</li> </ul>
Changes (major only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2017 seasonal toilet and parking provision at south Loch Earn was not possible to progress as no agreement could be reached with the land owner.</li> <li>• Inveruglas funding was diverted to Tarbet car park improvements due to reassessment of the value of the investment and placement of full motorhome facilities.</li> <li>• Loch Achray campsite was scheduled to open in 2018 but due to adverse weather, technical and contractual issues it will now open in 2019.</li> <li>• Improvements to the Loch Chon buildings, new permit areas and bespoke signage is currently being costed which if approved will be above existing budget due to the overspend associated with the Loch Achray Campsite.</li> </ul>

### 8. Financial Update

<b>Project costs</b>			
<b>Project element</b>	<b>2018/19 Budget allocation</b>	<b>2018/19 Predicted actual full year</b>	<b>7 months to 31 October 2019</b>
Visitor Management Research	£7,000 (Revenue)	£7,000	£0

# Delivery Group Meeting

Agenda Item 5.3

## High Priority Project: Camping Development Strategy

<b>Project costs</b>			
<b>Project element</b>	<b>2018/19 Budget allocation</b>	<b>2018/19 Predicted actual full year</b>	<b>7 months to 31 October 2019</b>
YP Other (permit areas, signage and campsite improvements)	£75,000 (Capital)	£25,000	£7,104
YP Loch Achray Campsite	£75,000 (Capital)	£125,000	£107,536
	£157,000	£157,000	£114,641
<p>Increased costs associated with the Loch Achray campsite due to weather related delays, design and contractual issues have led to a predicted overspend and as such only essential signage work has been taken forward to date from other aspects of the capital allocation. This had been intended to cover bespoke signage, permit area infrastructure and improvements to the buildings at Loch Chon campsite with a covered area being installed above the dish washing area. As such, the budget is being managed across the two lines and overall the forecast is to come in on budget. The team are currently costing works to include these areas as well as some new areas (e.g. spare signs, bore hole, remedial works etc.) which would be above and beyond the existing budget. Costs can be reduced by undertaking some work on new permit areas with our Land Operations team.</p>			
<b>Operational Costs (Loch Chon)</b>			
<b>Operational Cost</b>	<b>2018/19 Budget</b>	<b>2018/19 Predicted actual full year</b>	
Pitch income	£30,000	£23,400	
Gross Profit on sale of goods	£2,500	£4,600	
Total Income	£32,500	£28,000	
Staff costs (seasonal wardens)	£31,000	£30,000	
Gross Profit / (Loss)	£1,500	(£2,000)	
<p>This calculation of the profitability is based only on the direct costs attributed to the site. This excludes other costs, such as system costs including the camping booking system, staff costs for administering the booking system, bank charges, satellite broadband, rates and maintenance costs. The operation of the Loch Chon campsite will be reviewed and potential cost savings and additional ways of generating income will be explored for the 2019 season.</p>			
<b>Permit Areas</b>			
<b>Operational Income</b>	<b>2018/19 Budget</b>	<b>2018/19 Predicted actual full year</b>	
Permit Fees	£35,000	£29,000	

# Delivery Group Meeting

Agenda Item 5.3

## High Priority Project: Camping Development Strategy

### 9. Progress against Milestones

Milestone	Due Date	Status	Comments
Complete Loch Achray campsite build and make operational	Quarter 1 2018/19	Complete	Water and power issues have now been resolved and are operational and the campsite will be fully operational for the start of the 2019 season.
Complete first phase of new permit area identification & make operational	Quarter 1 2018/19	Behind Schedule	New permit areas have been identified and 1 was opened in August. 3 identified areas require infrastructure investment which the team are currently costing and are subject to budget approval and have involved protracted landowner engagement.
Update existing road threshold signage	Quarter 1 2018/19	Behind Schedule	Designed and agreed, to be erected prior to 2019 season and ordered with the bespoke and hotspot signage.
Undertake a review of Camping Development Strategy and present an update to NPA Board in September 2018	Quarter 2 2018/19	Behind Schedule	The strategy deadline was reassessed by the Your Park Project Board to ensure that the document was able to be assessed fully internally and externally before completion. A first text draft was completed on the 31.10.18. A new date for presenting to the NPA Board is to be agreed.
Handover Loch Achray Campsite	Quarter 3 2018/19	On track	Estates team and Capital Projects Team are working closely on the winterisation of the campsite and improvements needed for the handover prior to opening for the start of the 2019 season.
Install signage (new permit areas/ bespoke)	Quarter 3 2018/19	Behind Schedule	To be completed for start of 2019 season. Additional signage requirements through the season and development of messaging combined with a diminishing season led to a reassessment of the timing of this action.

# Delivery Group Meeting

Agenda Item 5.3

## High Priority Project: Camping Development Strategy

Milestone	Due Date	Status	Comments
Provide Ministers with an annual update on the implementation of the byelaws.	Quarter 3 2018/19	On Track	1st draft completed 31.10.18.
Development of motorhome/waste disposal provision, including encouraging and supporting private businesses and local communities to develop overnight camping and motorhome provision.	Quarter 4 2018/19	On Track	Relationships have been built with a major motorhome publication and the Camping and Caravanning club who will act as vehicles for a user focussed survey. Licencing and legal barriers will be investigated and clarified to enable discussions to address gaps in this provision.
Undertake agreed improvements on existing permit areas based on assessments completed by Ranger Service.	Quarter 4 2018/19	On Track	Part of Ranger Service winter work programme
Investigate 2nd tranche of permit areas to become operation for the third operational season of the Camping Management Byelaws 2017.	Quarter 4 2018/19	On Track	To be included with the ongoing work on the new permit areas that have already been identified. At this point any new permit areas are likely to require some infrastructure investment to make them sustainable.

### 10. Key Risks/Opportunities

Risk/Opportunity	Mitigation	Progress
There is a potential risk that visitor management issues may be displaced into other areas.	Design monitoring plan to be flexible enough to gather the information to inform operational activity and design systems, processes & communications to mitigate. Build in close working with partner organisations and communities to support with information gathering.	Project Board comments accepted, Visitor Operations Manager to work with GIS & Volunteer Manager to complete template over winter period & build into Volunteer Ranger tasks for 2019 season.



# Delivery Group Meeting

Agenda Item 5.3

## High Priority Project: Camping Development Strategy

Risk/Opportunity	Mitigation	Progress
<p>Staff resource - availability/time allocation for project impacts ability to fulfil other post objectives.</p>	<p>Work-stream Chairs are to report any concerns through YP Project Manager to project board, for a decision on how to approach the issue.</p> <p>Identify options for additional capacity. This has been identified in other work groups particularly around system development.</p>	<p>Callander Landscape Partnership is now in delivery stage so some key resource is being allocated to this, currently an unknown how much this will increase.</p> <p>Works associated with Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (West Loch Lomond improvements &amp; Falls of Leny) have the potential to pull resource away from the delivery of YP. The 3rd year of YP is a critical year so the Visitor Operations Team will need to allocate adequate time in 19.20 to focus on the review.</p>
<p>Staff resource - changes in staff, staff leaving, illness and managing leave impacts on project timetable.</p>	<p>Work-stream Chairs to report any concerns through YP Project Manager to project board, for a decision on how to approach the issue.</p> <p>Ensure decisions are clearly documented, ensure information shared amongst work group members so understanding of work is spread across groups rather than resting with individuals. Monitoring of flexi hours and any additional time worked, ensuring leave is able to be taken - some degree of flexibility in management of flexi, TOIL and annual leave to ensure work/life balance maintained.</p>	<p>Your Park project manager's work programme has to allow sufficient time for leading on the monitoring programme which is essential for year 3 of the project.</p>

# Delivery Group Meeting

Agenda Item 5.3

## High Priority Project: Camping Development Strategy

Risk/Opportunity	Mitigation	Progress
<p>That ongoing revenue costs associated with the operation and management of sites and infrastructure developed under this project are not adequately budgeted for, resulting in the organisation being unable to comply with their responsibilities beyond the initial capital development phase of the project.</p>	<p>Budget correctly at outset on basis of specification and whole-project lifecycle, including people resource. Refer to lessons learned from previous capital projects.</p>	<p>Waste contract to be procured over winter period to alleviate unknown costs related maintain permit areas to ensure an appropriate visitor experience.</p> <p>The budget process in hand and two years of operational delivery is beginning to inform regular costs associated with the operational delivery of the Byelaws and associated activities.</p>
<p>Number of camping permits drops below 300.</p>	<p>Ensure ongoing number review, including identification &amp; making operational new permit areas, maintenance &amp; upgrading of existing permits areas &amp; sites.</p> <p>Ongoing landowner discussions need to be raised in priority.</p>	<p>The new permit areas that have been identified and are being developed for 2019 will mitigate this. Loch Achray campsite will also provide an additional 17 pitches providing low cost camping opportunities.</p>
<p>Environmental impact of permits issued is unsustainable.</p>	<p>Work with RAFF partners re sustainability modelling. Implement recommendations in a timely manner. Have more contingency in permit areas available.</p>	<p>The environmental sustainability framework has been developed and is being used to make informed operation decisions. A socioeconomic framework is being developed to perform a similar function for these monitoring indicators.</p>

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