

Agenda Item	4
Report No	TC-04-21

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Tourism Committee

**Date:** 21 April 2021

**Report Title:** Highland Council Visitor Management Plan

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides Members with a final draft of the Highland Council Visitor Management Plan. This is the culmination of meetings of officers from various services that have dealt with issues and complaints regarding the challenges supporting the increase of visitors to the Highland area last summer.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:-

- i. Approve the final draft of the Highland Council Visitor Management Plan for 2021;
- ii. Note the information outlined by each Service in the appendices that gives additional detail on the initial range of activities to be undertaken for the 2021 season; and
- iii. Agree that where further activities are required that need an immediate solution.

### 3. Implications

3.1 Resources - The resources required for the group to meet and to produce of the draft plan have been met from the relevant Services budgets. The implementation of some solutions has associated resource requirements that have been agreed at the Council budget meeting on 4 March 2021. Some investments in new facilities such as public conveniences or motorhome waste facilities could have ongoing revenue funding requirements, and these will need to be considered by the service concerned.

3.2 Legal - There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. However, existing legislation and Covid requirements are used in resolving many of the issues identified in this report. The cross-service group has considered any new legislation or national guidance affecting the Council or other public bodies with a role to support tourism and environmental protection.

- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) implications - Tourism benefits communities through being a major part of the Highland economy and through helping sustain local facilities and services. Projects designed to address some of the issues described would be expected to produce positive benefits for communities as well as for visitors. Place-based community engagement is also deemed critical in resolving the issues in the Plan.
- 3.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever - There are no Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications arising directly from this report, but a number of the potential projects likely to be proposed, should they be undertaken, would help reduce climate change impacts. Many of the visitors to the Highlands are vehicle-based and the Plan does attempt to reduce the environmental impact of these visitors by reducing vegetation damage and active travel opportunities
- 3.5 Risk - There is a risk that without a visitor management plan the challenges and issues felt last season will be repeated this year.
- 3.6 Gaelic - There are no Gaelic implications arising directly from this report. However, in keeping with agreed Council policy there would be a Gaelic element to projects subsequently undertaken as a result of being identified in this plan.

#### **4. Background to Visitor Management**

- 4.1 Visitor Management in this report refers to the increasing numbers of visitors to the Highlands. Volume tourism creates pressure on the existing infrastructure at visitor attractions, beauty spots, towns and villages, and increasingly rural roads, remote glens and trail heads where visitor numbers have often not created issues previously.
- 4.2 Last summer, after a quiet spring due to Lockdown, COVID-19 travel restrictions caused large numbers of people to holiday in the UK with particular increases in certain types of tourism, e.g. campervan/motorhomes, informal camping, short breaks and day trippers. Recent announcements regarding the removal of domestic travel restrictions and the reopening of tourism businesses while overseas travel is expected to remain curtailed suggest similar interest in Highland during summer 2021. The fact that the initial reopening will not be during school holidays as in 2020 may lead to a less abrupt increase but it is still appropriate that preparations are made for the anticipated effects that this reopening will have.

#### **5. Highland Council Visitor Management Plan**

- 5.1 The Highland Council's Visitor Management Plan has attempted to recognise the issues that occurred due to the increased numbers of visitors to the Highlands and their activities. A copy of the draft plan that outlined the headline areas of activity was presented to this committee at their meeting on 17 March 2021. Since then officers have continued to meet and a number of meetings have been held with Members at a local level to develop some of the details on what activities would be delivered for each of the subject areas identified. A comprehensive presentation will be given to Committee setting out the latest position. In addition, detailed discussions are underway in every Ward through the programme of Ward Business meetings, and feedback is being collated. An update on progress with this will be given at the Committee meeting.
- 5.2 Some minor changes have been made to the more strategic element of the plan to produce a final draft. However, in order to ensure the plan remains dynamic and can respond to issues or opportunities that may arise during the summer season a series of

appendices to the main plan have been produced by the key Council Services involved. These describe in more detail some of the activities that will be delivered to contribute to the overall aims of the plan and, as they are produced at individual service level they can be more easily and quickly adapted where circumstances require this. In particular, the discussions at ward level and in local resilience groups will be integrated into these appendices as the tourist season continues. A copy of the final draft of the Visitor Management Plan along with the more detailed appendices are attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.

- 5.3 In order to further improve this plan, the Council has begun to engage with public sector partners and other interest groups. This is intended to continue and establish a wider visitor management group. In producing this plan there will be a need to take on board the views of a variety of stakeholders including tourism businesses and communities affected.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment

Date: 16 April 2021

Author: Colin Simpson, Principal Officer – Europe, Tourism & Film



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**Visitor Management Plan 2021**  
**Plana Stiùireadh Luchd-tadhail 2021**

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**Final Draft**  
**Dreachd Dheireannach**

**April 2021**  
**An Giblean 2021**

## Background

### Cùl-raon

Sustainable tourism is one of Scotland's key growth sectors identified in the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy and is the Highlands' most important industry generating significant economic benefits for all areas of Highland. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic tourism had seen a number of years of consistent growth so that by 2019 Highland's 7.5m visitors generated: -

- £1.13Bn of direct spend by those visiting the area.
- a further £265m of indirect expenditure by the tourism industry purchasing local goods and services
- over 25,000 jobs (including the self-employed)

However, in addition to the benefits those visitors brought, a number of challenges were becoming evident in some of the more popular areas. Notable examples of this were the Isle of Skye, Glencoe & Glen Etive, West Lochaber, Loch Ness and the Glenmore corridor. Many other areas, while not seeing the same overall numbers, did see similar impacts as visitor numbers were high in relation to the carrying capacity and infrastructure available in those areas. Notable examples of this included destinations along the North Coast 500 such as Applecross, the Gairloch area, Assynt and Durness.

Following the first lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a sudden rebound in tourism numbers as pent-up demand and barriers to overseas travel saw large numbers of UK residents holidaying in the UK. Concerns about virus transmission led to rural areas which were seen to have plenty of space and a low incidence of the disease seeing far greater demand than cities. The Highlands was no exception, quickly becoming one of the most popular destinations in the UK. At the same time many businesses and some infrastructure were not available or at least not with the same capacity as previously and this meant many of the challenges seen in previous years were even more evident in summer 2020. Some areas also saw new challenges as for example visitors unfamiliar with camping and the behaviour expected took up informal camping in tents or visited in motorhomes.



## Visitor Management

### Stiùireadh Luchd-tadhail

In their guidance on sustainable tourism, UNESCO stresses that managing visitor movements and influencing visitor behaviour are critical aspects of developing sustainable tourism. By managing visitors, a destination can minimize the negative effects on the host community and maximize the opportunities for them to benefit. From the visitor's perspective, it is not about controlling or spoiling the visitor's experiences but rather it is about creating a good experience for them. In

successful destinations, this is achieved through planning to ensure the visitors are well informed, efforts are made to influence when they go there, and what they do there, and a suitable range of facilities and services are provided for them.

At a destination level (and this can be anything from Highland to an individual community within Highland) this will require contributions from a range of partners. Influencing the time that a visit takes place will depend in part on the marketing activities of VisitScotland, destination organisations, local tourism groups and individual businesses. Similarly, the amount and quality of information provided by those organisations as well as by third party providers like travel websites, guidebooks and social media groups can have a significant impact on visitor behaviour.



Finally, the range of facilities and services provided will also depend on the actions of a variety of partners.

Many services such as accommodation, visitor attractions or travel and transport services and infrastructure such as some car parks are provided by the commercial sector.

Paths and other infrastructure used for leisure purposes or to access natural attractions may be provided by NGOs and public or private landowners and other infrastructure or services such as public toilets, parking and waste facilities are commonly provided by local authorities or communities themselves. Effective visitor management in any given location or destination is likely to require partners in all those sectors to contribute.

## The Highland Council's role Dreuchd Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd

While the Highland Council may provide some commercial services and may assist others who undertake marketing activity, those are not core Council roles so the Council's activity should be focussed on the provision of some of the underlying infrastructure and associated services as well as on informing and educating visitors on good practice. While some tourism activity and much of the engagement with businesses and business groups is undertaken by tourism officers within the Council's Economy team, most of the services provided directly to tourism and visitors come from a number of teams across different Council services.

In order to address some of the challenges seen in summer 2020 a visitor management group was set up and while initially seen as a short life working group a decision was taken in autumn 2020 to continue with this cross-service working group. In particular this group was tasked with producing a Visitor Management Plan for Highland Council services for 2021 with the expectation that the plan would continue to evolve to support visitor management in the years beyond.

This Visitor Management Plan is the result of that groups efforts. The plan focusses on service delivery rather than tourism infrastructure. While it is recognised that new or improved tourism infrastructure will have an important role to play, this will need capital funds and will require different regulatory processes to be gone through first, so this is considered a longer-term aim. A separate and complementary Tourism Infrastructure Plan is being developed with some longer-term ambitions and in time this may be able to be combined with this Visitor Management Plan to form a single Visitor Management strategy. However, in view of the more pressing need to

address some challenges for summer 2021, current activity is concentrated on the production of and subsequent delivery of the services in this Visitor Management Plan.

## Particular challenges to be addressed by this plan

### Dùbhlain sònraichte ris an cuirear aghaidh sa phlana seo

While the summer of 2020 undoubtedly saw communities across Highland face a number of challenges, many of these were not new, but were an escalation of issues already being experienced to some degree in other areas or in previous years. Some others were, however exacerbated by the circumstances at the time. Informal camping is one such example with increased numbers due to a variety of factors including some sites being closed or having restricted capacity, “party camping” by people who would typically have holidayed overseas or attended events such as music festivals that didn’t take place in 2020. The particular challenges this plan seeks to mitigate are a mix of those that have become apparent in recent years as well as some of those more specific to 2020 in recognition of the fact that 2021 is still likely to see some of the restrictions seen in 2020 e.g. reduced levels of overseas travel. The key challenges to be addressed are:

#### Roads, Parking and Transport issues

- Insufficient capacity on some narrow rural and single-track roads to cope with large numbers of vehicles; large motorhomes/campervans causing congestion
- Insufficient parking provision in tourist hotspots leading to safety issues - parking congestion, obstruction of the carriageway, and inappropriate use of laybys
- Parking overnight in non-designated areas
- Parking on soft verges causing damage to verge and road edges
- Community tolerance of large visitor volumes and behaviour leading to inappropriate responses e.g. erection of signage, barriers across some public roads, introduction of roadside hazards such as placement of boulders/rubble/logs on the verge or in lay-bys



#### Amenity and Waste issues

- Lack of awareness of Council operated public convenience facilities and Comfort Schemes available
- Inappropriate use of public toilets; disposal of chemical waste, increased water consumption due to topping up of motorhome containers
- Lack of suitable motorhome waste disposal facilities
- Existing bin volume / numbers in key locations not coping with high volumes of waste
- Littering and other unauthorised waste disposal issues



### Outdoor Access issues

- Informal camping and associated anti-social issues; fires, litter, toilet, noise, overuse and congregating
- Landowners and communities trying their own solutions which can disperse the problem to other sites – including non-compliant signs or obstructions
- Lack of awareness of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code by newcomers to the countryside
- Increased pressure and erosion on some popular paths
- Limited numbers of Countryside Rangers available to provide advice and guidance or monitor visitor hotspot pressures

### Environmental and Public Health issues

- Informal camping leading to public health issues with human waste
- Outdoor toileting and risk to private water supplies
- Investigating fly-tipping and taking enforcement action

### Public information

- Limited promotion of some key services e.g. locations of public toilets or motorhome waste facilities
- Dissemination of unhelpful and sometimes inaccurate information – particularly on social media

## Additional visitor management activity undertaken in 2020

### Nithean a bharrachd a rinneadh gus luchd-tadhail a stiùireadh ann an 2020

As described above the 2020 summer season saw some particular challenges and a number of activities were undertaken to try and address some of these. However, the immediacy of some issues, lack of preparation time and Covid related restrictions did limit what could be done with limited notice. Some of the key activities undertaken were as described below, and these form a useful start points for defining what might be done for the 2021 season and beyond.

- Production of a Community and Business guide giving guidance on reopening.
- Investing £60,000 in increased bin capacity and collections at key tourism sites. Support was given to some community litter patrols
- Amenity Services were able to work quickly to open all public toilets
- Access team provided Scottish Outdoor Access Code advice when requested
- Roads teams implemented temporary 'No parking' measures
- Parking regulation signs and officer engagement
- New car parks partially opened
- Engagement with stakeholders, Members and local representatives





## Proposed actions for 2021

### Gnìomhan gam moladh airson 2021

Activity		Indicative budget
<b>Road management and improvements</b>		
Improved passing places and lay-bys, road signs, road verge protection, road traffic orders		£280,000
Passing places and lay-bys	Replacement of damaged or missing Passing place signs and some road strengthening	
road signs	Additional advanced warning signs where required	
road verge protection	Strengthening and marker posts	
traffic orders	Additional restrictions such as clearways and waiting prohibitions to address safety concerns	
Any other activity	Liaising with stakeholders about additional parking	
<b>Parking management</b>		
Install charging at tourist dominated car parks. Improved signs & regulation. Additional officers for fee collection & enforcement.		£250,000
Parking charge schemes	A list of approximately 21 sites is to be considered by the E&I committee for early intervention with further sites to be proposed in longer term rollout	
Parking Enforcement Officers	Employment of 4 additional temporary Parking Enforcement Officers for 12 months with a view to fund permanent posts from enforcement income in future years	
Parking enforcement	Review of regulations & improved enforcement / liaison with enforcement agencies	
Signs	Upgrade of Car Park signage and information for users	
<b>Access rangers</b>		
New seasonal access rangers		£300,000
Promotion of responsible behaviour	10 x seasonal ranger posts to promote responsible behaviour and possible enforcement (litter, parking, fires, dogs). Reduce the amount of, and damage from, open fires, littering and outdoor toileting. Posts to include weekend and evening work to address informal camping issues.	
Partnership working	Ranger team to work in co-operation & co-ordinate with communities, land managers and other organisations, such as Highlife Highland, NatureScot, Forestry & Land Scotland, National Trust for Scotland and Nevis Landscape Partnership to arrange joint or overlapping patrols & monitoring and ensure consistent messaging. Working with Police & Fire services.	
Monitoring and maintenance	Monitor the use of countryside car parks and roadside parking. Monitoring informal camping and related issues. Ranger activity to include minor improvements to, and maintenance of, countryside sites & paths.	
Work with volunteers	Work with local communities to establish and train a local volunteer warden scheme to assist with monitoring and liaison with visitors.	

Signage	Installing and maintaining temporary signage and other communications on safe and considerate visits to the countryside, particularly regarding any Covid 19 restrictions and guidance.	
<b>Public Toilets</b>		
Increase provision of improvements	comfort schemes, investment in public toilet	£60,000
Comfort schemes	Provide additional comfort scheme provision at key locations, including the offer of a seasonal comfort scheme if required	
Council operated facility improvements	Improvements to interior facilities and installation of motion sensor lighting	
Promotion	Promotion of the current network of public toilets and comfort scheme locations through tourism groups, visitor websites etc.	
Any other activity	Installation of additional footfall counters and increasing provision of charging at some locations	
<b>Waste Management</b>		
Increased bin capacity and collections for key visitor sites		£180,000
Increased bin capacity bins	This will be achieved through a combination of larger 1100 litre bins with lid design to reduce the risk of fly-tipping and a larger number of 240/360 litre litter bins. The bins will be combination of both general waste and where possible recycling bins. The bins will be clearly marked with information on responsible waste disposal. There will be increased bins within all Highland areas with improved focus on areas of high risk.	
Litter bin collection	The collection frequency of litter bins will increase by a combination of swapping bins over using additional seasonal staff and pick-up vehicles and existing refuse collection vehicles and staff.	
Fly-tipping and Litter	Additional seasonal staff and pick-up vehicles will be used in the North West, North Coast, East and Central Sutherland, West Coast, Dornoch/Tain areas, Skye, Lochaber, B&S and Loch Ness areas; the staff will be used for swapping over full litter bins, increasing litter picking and providing a fast response for any reported incident of fly-tipping.	
<b>Motorhomes</b>		
Improved provision and promotion of services for motorhomes		£200,000
Additional motorhome waste disposal points	Investigate options for installation of a new facility in Ullapool alongside planned car park improvement work	
Additional motorhome waste disposal points	Creation of template design for future sites based on current project at Bayfield car park, Portree.	
Bid in grant scheme for commercial caravan & campsites	Operate a bid in grant scheme to assist / encourage third party commercial caravan & campsites to allow waste disposal by non-residents. Locations to be selected to create a strategic network of opportunities across Highland.	
Promotion of network of disposal sites	Production and distribution of a guide to motorhome waste disposal sites. To be circulated through business groups, online and via social media groups	
Supporting commercial provision of motorhome stopover sites	Production of a guide to planning and licencing requirements for small scale overnight facilities to assist landowners seeking to create those facilities	

<b>Public Transport</b>	
Enhanced bus services	£60,000
Enhanced bus service - Skye	Bus services from Portree and, if feasible, Broadford to visitor sites on Skye to run for three peak months. Timetables to be defined but will be designed to provide new routes and/or enhance frequencies when buses are not committed to school journeys. These would include a park & ride provision to reduce car traffic to congested locations. Fares income to defray some costs. Dedicated publicity would be produced.
Promotion of bus services	Development of tourist-oriented transport publicity and a multi-journey or multi-operator ticketing scheme.
Bus Partnership Fund bid	Bus Partnership Fund bids to Transport Scotland are being prepared for infrastructure provision which will enable improved bus services, with the specific target of reducing congestion. One bid will be focused on tourist-related services covering Skye and the Cairngorms National Park and can include quick wins (for completion in 2021/22) and longer-term projects. This will include adding bus stop / turning facilities to planned car park provision where relevant, as well as park & ride sites.
<b>Other activities</b>	
Joint initiative with Cairngorms National Park Authority to improve visitor management in the Glenmore corridor.	£125,000
<b>Partner Engagement</b>	
Engagement with other partners involved in visitor management	costs met from existing budgets
National Visitor Management Strategy	Continued engagement with national visitor management strategy group where Highland Council is Local Authority representative.
Highlands & Islands Strategic Visitor Management Group	Establishment of a Visitor Management Partners group for the wider Highlands & Islands area - evolving from the existing Highlands and Islands Local Resilience Partnership Visitor Management Group involving Police Scotland Scottish Fire & Rescue and other Local Authorities. Activities to include helping share information and provide consistent messages to the visiting public.
Local Delivery Groups	Formation of 3 sub-regional groups in Highland to act as a delivery arm of the Local Resilience Partnership Visitor Management Group – anticipated to be one for each Police Scotland Area Command.  Continued engagement with existing partnerships including: - National Trust for Scotland - Glencoe & Glen Etive. Members and local representatives in the Arisaig/ Morar /Mallaig area. Additional partnerships will be added as required



## Project and activity details

### Mion-fhiosrachadh pròiseict is dèanadais

For each of the areas of activity outlined above more detailed plans are being developed by the Council Service responsible for their delivery. These plans are designed to provide more details on aspects such as locations, level of provision or frequency of service, but also to be more dynamic plans than this strategic document. This is intended to allow changes to them to be made quickly in response to changing demand or opportunities that arise. The more detailed delivery plans for each area of activity are included as appendices to this document.

## Projects under way during 2021

### Pròiseactan a thathar a' gabhail os làimh ann an 2021

In addition to the visitor management plans described, a number of capital projects have been completed during winter 2020/2021 or are under way that are expected to be completed during spring / summer 2021. By providing new and improved tourism infrastructure these will provide further support to ongoing visitor management.

Those new projects that will be ready during the 2021 season are: -

- Lochinver motorhome waste disposal
- Falls of Shin motorhome parking and waste disposal
- Brora motorhome waste disposal and signage
- Golspie, tourism signage
- Dornoch visitor parking; phase 1
- Tain Rose Garden public toilet improvements
- Invergordon Shore Road laybys to support cruise sector
- Cromarty motorhome site and facilities
- Rosemarkie public toilet improvements
- Cromarty and Nigg; new ferry slipways
- Uig Fairy Glen parking
- Staffin, Quiraing parking
- Staffin Kilt Rock parking extension
- Storr new public toilets, motorhome waste disposal and additional parking
- Dunvegan Coral Beach parking
- Portree car park extension and motorhome facilities
- Bealach na Ba layby/viewpoint improvements
- North Kessock motorhome parking and waste disposal unit
- Inverness motorhome waste disposal unit
- Isle of Eigg public toilets
- Mallaig public toilets
- Glenfinnan footbridge linking the new car park to the viaduct viewpoint
- Corpach, Fort William Puffer Pier slipway
- Fort Augustus – Car Park extension



## Members Briefing Note

### Title: Visitor Management – Seasonal Access Rangers

**Date:** 30th March 2021

A VERBAL UPDATE WILL BE GIVEN AT COMMITTEE ON FURTHER PROGRESS.

#### **Background**

As a result of a particularly busy summer season in 2020, a need for staff to engage with visitors to the Highlands has been recognised. The use of Rangers dealing specifically with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code is a proposed solution. These differ from the Highlife Highland Countryside Ranger team which have a wider remit, have no presence in some busy areas and were on furlough in 2020 and will only be part-time in 2021 with limited capability.

Visitor numbers have been steadily increasing over many years but the situation caused by Covid 19 has increased issues with irresponsible access and created a number of anti-social issues related to informal camping, such as; overcrowding, dirty camping, bad parking, littering, fires, damage to trees, outdoor toileting and overflowing bins, creating resentment from local communities and land managers. The Council received numerous complaints and there are high expectations in many areas that Highland Council will assist communities and land managers in dealing with the problems. These new posts will liaise with other services & partners and take a co-ordinated approach to visitor management particularly in honeypot sites. They will be the eyes and ears of the Council and report back to relevant services. This briefing provides Members with details of Outdoor Access team's response to the anticipated high numbers of visitors to Highland in 2021. The planned Outdoor Access tourism action contributes to a cross-service Visitor Management Plan that was detailed at the Tourism Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

#### **Seasonal Access Rangers**

The Rangers will;

- Engage face-to-face with visitors to explain and encourage the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.
- Monitor visitor use, impacts & incidents and reporting on a weekly basis.
- Speak to informal campers to explain responsible access and leave no trace
- Reduce the number of open fires by explaining the impacts which cause damage to vegetation and alarm to residents and improve awareness of risks and how to mitigate the if fires are used
- Reduce the amount of litter by encouraging visitors to take home what they bring. They will also collect it when it has been left and report large quantities. They may also issue fixed penalty notices if appropriate
- Encourage responsible parking and prevent obstructive parking. They will assist with parking enforcement if necessary.
- Liaise with communities and landowners when issues arise, working together on solutions. Establish local volunteer rangers to assist in busy periods
- Improve and maintain the council owned or managed countryside sites
- Improve and maintain some of the most heavily used paths particularly to popular natural visitor attractions

#### **Deployment**

**The new Access Rangers will cover the following areas;**

- Skye

- **West Lochaber**
- **North West Sutherland** (Assynt to Tongue)
- **Caithness & N Sutherland** (Tongue to Whalligoe)
- **SW Ross including Lochalsh** (Glenelg to Gairloch)
- **North West Ross** (Gairloch to Assynt)
- **East Sutherland & E. Ross** (Nigg to Helmsdale\_)
- **Inner Moray Firth** (Black Isle, Mid Ross & Nairn)

The priority has been to fill in the gaps in Highlife Highland Countryside Ranger team, which also coincide with popular visitor areas and THC managed sites. I have then considered what other Rangers are available in an area, internally I have asked the Long Distance Routes rangers to extend their remit to cover visitor sites close to the Great Glen Way and West Highland Way. The Cairngorms National Park, Forestry & Land Scotland, Naturescot, National Trust for Scotland, John Muir Trust and Nevis Landscape Partnership are employing extra rangers this season.

Eight posts will be recruited for 6 months and two posts will also be recruited for four months. The 2 x 4 month posts will be assigned to areas assessed to have most need with some consideration of the location of the best candidates. **A senior post** will collate monitoring information, advise the team and deal with day-to-day management issues. The shorter period for two posts is to address a budgetary issue on grading.

#### **Other areas of high visitor pressure;**

- **Glens Coe & Etive**- covered by 3 NTS rangers and volunteers. West Highland Way Rangers will patrol on Mondays, Fridays & occasional weekends.
- **Glen Nevis** – covered by 2 Forestry and Land Scotland rangers, John Muir Trust staff, Jahama Estates staff and NLP applying for funding (poss.4 posts)
- **Loch Ness** – covered by 2 FLS rangers, the Great Glen Way Rangers will patrol on Mondays, Fridays & occasional weekends. New Inner Moray Firth Ranger will include Does. VILN applying for ranger funding
- **Cairngorms National Park**- covered by CPNA ranger team 8 seasonals, now recruiting 4 permanent posts.

I am assisting with applications to Naturescot's Better Places 2 fund for rangers which may also become part of the THC team, in the following places;

- **Skye Connect- 2 posts**
- **The Applecross Trust – 1 post**
- **Visit Inverness/Loch Ness- 1 post**

#### **Training**

West Highland College is putting together a short programme on appropriate topics derived from their 6 month ranger training course. An enquiry has been made to Learning & Development Team for the 'Dealing with challenging behavior' course. They will be given training on Litter prevention & FPNs by Keep Scotland Beautiful. The Access Officers will deliver a course on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

#### **Equipment**

Each ranger will be provided with a van with 'Ranger' livery, smart phone, tool kit, bin bags, gloves, water tub. They will be provided with an identifiable uniform and we are considering body cams.

#### **Contacts**

They will be provided with contact numbers for appropriate Council staff, i.e Access officers, Parking enforcement, Waste operatives, Dog Wardens, Roads and Amenity Services. They will also have contacts

for local Police, Fire Service and other organisation's Ranger services. They will work with Highlife Highland rangers for ½ day per week.

#### Area Access & Countryside Sites Contacts

Area	Name	Email	Phone
Main Contact, plus Ross & Skye	Philip Waite	<a href="mailto:Philip.waite@highland.gov.uk">Philip.waite@highland.gov.uk</a>	07818 588214
Caithness & Sutherland	Matt Dent	<a href="mailto:matt.dent@highland.gov.uk">matt.dent@highland.gov.uk</a>	07825 116480
Inverness, Nairn & Lochaber	Stewart Eastaugh	<a href="mailto:stewart.eastaugh@highland.gov.uk">stewart.eastaugh@highland.gov.uk</a>	07884 752289
Countryside sites	Alastair Stewart	<a href="mailto:alastair.stewart@highland.gov.uk">alastair.stewart@highland.gov.uk</a>	07825 117647

Draft - March 2021

## Members Briefing Note

### Title: Visitor Management – Waste

**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> of March

#### **Background**

After lockdown restriction were lifted in 2020, areas experienced unprecedented levels of visitor numbers during the summer period. The environmental problems most commonly experienced within communities were directly attributable to certain types of tourism, e.g. campervan/motorhomes, informal camping, short breaks and day trippers. Problems included overflowing bins, areas that were heavily littered, fly-tipping and all types of mess connected to dirty camping. The problems were well reported throughout last year. Although the expected visitor numbers for this year are not certain, it is reasonable to expect a further increase in 2021.

This briefing provides Members with details of Waste Management's planned response to the anticipated high numbers of visitors to Highland in 2021. The planned Waste Management tourism action contributes to a cross-service Visitor Management Plan that was detailed at the Tourism Committee on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March 2021.

#### **Enhanced Service**

The enhanced service will be achieved through a combination of providing larger 1100 litre bins with lid design to reduce the risk of fly-tipping and a larger number of smaller 240/360 litre litter bins. The bins will be both general waste and where possible recycling bins. The bins will be clearly marked with information on responsible waste disposal. There will be increased bins and/or an increased frequency of collection within all Highland areas with focus on areas of high risk locations.

The most significant element of the response will be the use of 8 seasonal staff. The 8 additional staff will be operational between May and September. The staff will use pick-up vehicles to exchange full litter bins and through an increased frequency of service, keep the hotspot areas clear of litter and refuse. The staff will be mobile and will cover areas where they are most needed, the anticipated base of the additional seasonal staff is set out below:

- North West Coast – Base is Lochinver
- West - Base is Ullapool
- Lochcarron
- Portree
- Brora/Golspie
- Fort William
- Aviemore
- Inverness – Loch Ness areas

#### **Volunteer Community Clean-ups**

A positive response to the tourism problems experienced in 2020 was the noted increase in volunteer community led litter picks. The number of requests from Community Groups to carry out litter picks has remained encouraging into this year. The Council will support as much as possible any group wishing to carry out a clean-up of accessible public areas and open spaces. Groups can request litter-picking sticks,



bags and arrange for the waste to be collected by the Council after the event. Area Waste Management Officers are the point of contact for Community Groups:

#### Area Contacts

Area	Name	Email	Phone
Caithness	Kenny Gow	<a href="mailto:Kenny.Gow@highland.gov.uk">Kenny.Gow@highland.gov.uk</a>	01955 641284
Sutherland	Andy Shaw	<a href="mailto:Andy.Shaw@highland.gov.uk">Andy.Shaw@highland.gov.uk</a>	01408 635202
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### Members Briefing Note

#### Title: Public Conveniences

**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> April

- Proposal is for additional seasonal or one year comfort schemes and some additional charging as below;
- Ullapool (Ward 5) charging (including showers) – one paddle gate system (cash and card) and contactless for showers (£12k for the paddle gate system, we are getting shower charging free of charge)
- Shower charging (Aviemore, Kingussie, Grantown, all three in Ward 20) £7k per site (total of £21k)

In terms of new comfort schemes, interest has been positive to date - 18 different providers out of which the following are being considered;

- Dalwhinnie service station (Ward 19);
- Salen, Acharacle (Ward 21);
- Torridon Community Hall (Ward 5);
- Canna Café (Ward 11);
- Armadale Village Hall (Ward 1);
- Traigh beach (Ward 11); site is a composting toilet therefore only eligible for amended version of the scheme;
- Rum Enterprise (Ward 11); awaiting confirmation on sites on offer, suggested two facilities in their email; propose to support one
- Staxigoe Village Hall (Ward 3);
- Sea View Hotel, John O'Groats (Ward 3);
- Altnaharra Hotel (Ward 1);
- Roybridge Hotel (Ward 11);
- Cleadale, Eigg (Ward 11); site is a composting toilet therefore only eligible for amended version of the scheme;