

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Report No</b>	<b>ECI/26/2022</b>

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Economy and Infrastructure

**Date:** 10 November 2022

**Report Title:** Visitor Management Plan

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

### 1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the delivery of the activities outlined in the Highland Council Visitor Management Plan for 2022, together with a detailed Access Ranger Season report from the Outdoor Access Manager.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:-
- i. **Note** the information provided by each Service and the Access Rangers on progress in delivering the 2022 Visitor Management Plan actions and associated budget spend as detailed in **Appendices 1 & 2**;
  - ii. **Note** that there may be a need to vire funds between activities; and
  - iii. **Agree** that a further report on future proposals will be brought to the next Economy & Infrastructure Committee.

### 3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – The resources required to produce the plan and for the officer group to meet have been met from the relevant Service's budgets. The implementation of the activities described in the 2022 plan have additional resource requirements with these met largely from the £1.5m funding allocation for Visitor Management, agreed at the Council budget meeting in early 2022. Where additional internal costs such as staffing to plan or deliver some of the activities are required, these have been met from existing service budgets or from specific visitor management grant funds made available through the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government have stated that funds will not be available in 2023.

- 3.2 **Legal** – There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. However, existing legislation and guidance such as traffic regulations and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code are used in resolving some of the issues identified in the Visitor Management Plan.
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)** – Tourism benefits communities by directly supporting the Highland economy and helping sustain local facilities and services although some tourism pressures disproportionately affect some of our rural communities. Projects designed to address some of the visitor management issues described are expected to produce positive benefits for those communities as well as for visitors. Place-based community engagement by individual services is also deemed critical in resolving some of the issues being addressed through the Visitor Management Plan.
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** – There are no Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications arising directly from this report, but some projects included in the plan 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 through actions to protect the natural environment and by promoting additional public transport opportunities.
- 3.5 **Risk** – There is a risk that without a long-term visitor management plan and the delivery of the actions within it, most particularly the access ranger service, the previous challenges, problems and issues will return to the high levels experienced during 2020. The activities undertaken during the 2021 and 2022 seasons, particularly the ability to have 'boots on the ground' has been recognised by both stakeholders and the Scottish Government as a key factor in mitigating those risks.
- 3.6 **Gaelic** – There are no Gaelic implications arising directly from this report. However, in keeping with agreed Council policy, Gaelic will be included into all relevant projects and communications.

## **4 Visitor Management Plan**

- 4.1 A draft Highland Council Visitor Management Plan 2022 was approved by the Council's Tourism Committee on 6 December 2021. This plan continues the work and success of the 2021 plan, which was created to address the issues that were anticipated to continue as visitor numbers increased as Covid restrictions were relaxed.
- 4.2 Previous reports were made to the Tourism Committee at their meetings on 28 September 2021, 6 December 2021 and 16 February 2022, and to this Committee on 25 August 2022 indicating that these activities were largely successful in reducing many of the visitor pressures (although not preventing them completely). Section 5 of this report and **Appendices 1 & 2** provides an update on the 2022 activities.

## 5 Delivery of the 2022 Visitor Management Plan activities

- 5.1 The activities detailed in the Visitor Management Plan are delivered by teams from across the Council most notably those dealing with roads, parking, public transport, countryside, waste, public conveniences and tourism. In some cases, activities are delivered through a partnership with external partners. To help plan and co-ordinate delivery the Council's cross-service officer group continue to meet throughout the season and some members also engaged with other national groups and public sector partners to assist in the delivery of Visitor Management activities.
- 5.2 In order to keep Members informed of progress a reporting system was established which involved each service contributing updates on their particular activities to a dynamic document as and when they took place. The most recent version of this document is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report. Future reporting on the 2022 Plan will pick up on progress with any projects yet to be initiated/completed and the report will start to identify priorities for the future. There is the likelihood that some activities will underspend, whilst others may overspend, and so some transferring of amounts between activities may be necessary.

Summaries from those services are detailed below.

### 5.3 Access Rangers

In 2022, the Council employed 18 Access Rangers, patrolling large areas across the Highlands and 4 Visitor Site Wardens focussing on key visitor hotspots. There was a phased intake of staff from 1 April to 1 June with staff numbers increasing as areas became busier. An interim summary of the collated data is included as **Appendix 2** to this report.

Over the summer, there appeared to be an alternating pattern of a busy weekend followed by a quieter one although key weekends were exceptionally busy coinciding with bank holidays and schools breaking up and returning. The Glasgow Fair weekend had a very noticeable impact in Lochaber. The weather also acted as a key determining factor in visitor numbers.

This year there was a higher percentage of European registered vehicles, and an increased numbers of coach tours. Whilst the vast majority of visitors welcome the advice and information from the Access Rangers there still continues to be a high number of irresponsible and occasionally confrontational behaviours encountered. Key points to note include:-

- The areas with the highest informal camping numbers and associated problems, particularly fires, litter and toileting, continue to be North-West Sutherland and Lochaber, with Loch Ness and South Skye not far behind. East Lochaber, Caithness and Loch Ness were far busier than last year. Forty-five abandoned tents were found, most commonly in Loch Ness, East Lochaber and South-West Ross. Over 6800 off-site tents were recorded this year compared with 8600 last year.

- High motorhome numbers were recorded in Lochaber and Skye and around the NC500. A total over 30,000 were recorded this year, compared to 25,000 last year.
- Fire marks & damage are most commonly found around Loch Ness (463) and East Lochaber (651). Nearly 3000 fire marks were recorded Highland wide, slightly lower than 2021 (3463) with 92 fires put out by Rangers (183 in 2021) that may have posed a risk of spreading.
- The problem of blackwater toilet waste dumping was most often found in North Sutherland and Lochalsh. Seventy-five incidents Highland wide have been recorded.
- Lochalsh continues to suffer from high levels of outdoor toileting issues. This contrasts with its lower camping numbers and so may often be due to people stopping to relieve themselves in laybys rather than overnighting.
- Parking issues appear most prevalent in North-West Sutherland and Skye, with most warning notices issued for inconsiderate or obstructive parking. Three hundred and fifty Notices issued Highland wide.
- The number of dogs seen not under control was highest in Inverness & Nairn, although it is also a significant issue in North Wester Ross and South Skye.
- The Rangers collected nearly 2000 bags of litter to date, reported 203 waste issues and 75 incidents of motorhome waste dumping.
- To the end of September, the Rangers have engaged with 20,672 people mostly to inform them of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and facilities available.

The presence of the Access Rangers has had a significant impact in reducing the irresponsible or inconsiderate behaviour of many visitors and potential causes of distress to Highland communities and other visitors. With Access Rangers patrolling countryside sites, their presence increased compliance within Invitation to Pay car parks, increased responsible behaviour and the work that they carry out in removing litter and immediate repairs ensures ongoing visitor enjoyment of our countryside, increasing the likelihood of repeat visits and positive reviews to increase the economic benefit gained from tourism.

This summer some of the Access Rangers were filmed by TV company Purple Productions for a series on the North Coast 500, to be shown on Channel 4, in spring 2023.

#### 5.4 **Public Toilets**

Amenities have supported an additional 16 Comfort Schemes with the funding support from the Visitor Management Plan funding. All year-round facilities at; Salen Jetty Acharacle, Sea View Hotel John O Groats, Loch Ness Hub Drumnadrochit, Glendale Hall Skye, Chocolates of Glenshiel Kyle, Traigh Beach Morar, Lybster PC and Helmsdale Community Centre.

Seasonal facilities have been supported at; Kinlochleven Community Trust, Ardnamurchan Natural History Visitor Centre, Rum Enterprise, Portree Pier, RSPB Forsinard Flows, Castle Moil Restaurant Kyleakin, Invercassey Tearooms and Eden Court Theatre and Cinema Inverness.

There has also been support offered to two community portaloos schemes one in Foyers and one at Falls of Shin. This has allowed the community to install, service and operate portaloos whilst they prepare for installation of new toilet facilities in the areas.

Eight old parking meters have been recommissioned into honesty boxes and installed at various locations and new low energy hand driers are purchased and are currently being installed across 24 facilities. Improvement works have also been scheduled or carried out with painting at Castletown and Portmahomack, shower upgrades at Ullapool and Aviemore, upgraded doors at Dunbeath and Gairloch and plumbing upgrades at Ullapool.

## 5.5 **Roads**

The visitor management improvements programmed under the road's allocation for the 22/23 financial year are at various stages. A budget allocation of £240,000 was made which was to be used for small scale, general improvements such as signs, roadside parking, passing places and edge strengthening.

- In Ross and Cromarty, improvements have been completed on the Tornapress, Liathach (Torridon Glen) and Gairloch car parks. This has provided surfaced areas for visitors to stop and enjoy the stunning scenery in the Highlands.
- Passing place sign installations for Caithness and Sutherland are programmed to be completed before the end of financial year. This continues the work started last financial year.
- In the Inverness area, passing place sign installations were being undertaken at the time of writing the committee report. On the B861 South Loch Ness, passing place improvement works have started. Following this, works on the B9006 to Clava Cairns Link Road will be programmed.
- In Skye, passing place sign installations have been completed. The Quiraing lay-by improvement works will commence in October 2022.
- In Lochaber, sign installations for Glen Nevis and Achintee are complete. Improvement works at Bracara, North Loch Morar, will be programmed before the end of the financial year. One project, Hilton of Delnies, West of Nairn has been postponed while permissions are sought.

The Area teams have stated that the improvements made have been well received, especially for signage and resurfacing existing car parking areas. There has been positive engagement between Council Roads staff and others, creating partnership working to facilitate local enhancements.

## 5.6 **Parking**

The element of the 2022/23 plan has allocated £160,000 plus £67,000 rollover from 2021/22 to continue resourcing visitor related parking improvements.

### **Current programme**

- complete existing and extend Invitation to Pay Car Parks;
- refresh Signing & Lining at multiple locations;
- improvements to Chanonry Point - vehicle passing places, signage and repairs to access road;
- roll all 100 Council Cemetery Car Parks into the Off-Street Traffic Regulation Order to prohibit any vehicles from overnight stays (9pm to 8am) and limit stay to 2 hours unless involved in a burial or service;
- maintain the additional enforcement posts in Wester Ross and Mallaig;
  
- fund additional patrols in evenings through overtime; and
- deliver partnerships with 3<sup>rd</sup> party organisations such as Forestry & Land Scotland regarding parking services.

Members will be receiving update reports on the existing Invitation to Pay sites at the end of the financial year and will receive details of any additional sites proposed in their wards.

## 5.7 **Waste Management**

The service has employed 9 Visitor Management Operatives (VMOs) who were employed on a fixed contract basis from May to October. The VMOs have been provided with 3.5 tonne box van vehicles for their operational work. The service has also provided additional bins, bin stands and bin stickers. The 2022/23 VMO's are based in Lochinver, Ullapool, Lochcarron, Portree, Brora, Fort William, Aviemore, Inverness (Loch Ness) and Black Isle.

Provision of additional litter bins, bin stands and stickers improve rural skip areas to manage increased use.

The VM funding has been used by Waste Management to provide a seasonally enhanced service in areas of known high visitor numbers. The service includes providing additional public litter bins, an increased frequency for emptying litter bins and responding quickly to clear litter and fly-tipping.

## 5.8 **Motorhomes**

A small proportion of the allocation for Motorhome activity in the Visitor Management Plan in 2022/23 has been committed to five community groups that are in the process of delivering a motorhome waste unit in their area to add to the increasing network across Highland. This list is an expansion to the seven community groups that were awarded funding in the 2021/22 Visitor Management Motorhome allocation.

Now with an official motorhome sign for depositing waste which has been approved by Transport Scotland, the Highland Council tourism team are now working with internal services to implement official motorhome/campervan waste disposal signs for these funded units, as well as for existing operators around Highland that open their facilities to non-residents. This move has been welcomed by the communities and existing operators and will create a better experience for the visitor in 2023. In addition to this the PDU team have been working to deliver a standalone Chemical Waste Unit in Ullapool and the Latheron Car Park and are now in the delivery phase of this project. This service is expected to be in place for the 2023 visitor season.

## 5.9 **Public Transport**

The priority has been on ensuring shuttle bus service to Fairy Pools, which was by far the most popular destination last summer with VM-supported journeys. Saturday service commenced from 28 May and will continue to late October, with a Monday-Friday service during summer school holidays.

A Permit was secured from OATS, the car park operator, to ensure access issues at Fairy Pools car park are addressed.

The Council has worked with Shiel buses to increase journey frequency to/from destinations and areas with higher visitor traffic during the summer months. The focus has been primarily on Mallaig and connections.

## 5.10 **Communications**

The 2022/23 plan allocated £15,000 for Corporate Communications & Graphic Design related Visitor Management/Tourism related communications and social media.

Visitor Management related national and localised campaigns programmed throughout the spring, summer and autumn months. Daily and weekly awareness and good practice social media posts/infographics relating to litter, human waste, fire risk, water safety and parking. Supporting key partners e.g., Visit Scotland, Keep Scotland Beautiful, NatureScot/SOAC on tourism/visitor related topics.

Corporate Communications Officers participate at regional and local visitor management group meetings and liaise across council services to ensure any developing visitor issues are promptly communicated to the public.

Facebook on tourism/visitor related social media posts records the highest reach to the public, posts are also shared on twitter and Instagram. Drone footage has been captured by the communications team in 87 key locations across Highland and the film footage and shots used for various Council projects including tourism/visitor management campaigns. Tourism related videos produced are available on THC YouTube channel.

Regular press releases issued to all media throughout the spring/summer/autumn season on tourism related topics such as: Scottish Outdoor Access Code, engagement & education, responsible behaviour, wildfires/BBQ and campfires and pressure points.

## 6 Future Funding

The cross service working group believe that with the likely introduction of a Visitor Levy charge in the future, the Council should consider whether to sustain the existing effort with core funding, even at a reduced level, until a more permanent source of funding is secured. Some funding may be able to be identified in the Invitation to Pay income, Coastal Communities Fund or renewable energy community funds. However, this will be dependent upon area committees agreeing to fund and a very piecemeal approach. This will be considered and will be the subject of a future report to the Committee.

Invitation to Pay income in visitor locations could be used to fund visitor management activities. It has been shown that in some areas, such as Chanonry Point and Gruinard Bay, the presence of a ranger has increased the level of income received. Visitors are either appreciative of the Council's service or are more likely to believe that they will be issued with a Parking Warning or Penalty Charge Notice if they see staff present.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Date: 4 October 2022

Authors: Malcolm Macleod  
Philip Waite, Outdoor Access Manager

Background Papers: Appendix 1 - VMP Progress Report  
Appendix 2 – Interim Summary - Access Ranger Data



RAG status descriptions	Project complete (Where staff posts are concerned, officer is in post and employment continues)				
	Project under way but yet to be completed				
	Progress behind schedule or no longer proceeding				
Visitor Management Plan Activity	Progress	Budget			Comments / RAG Status
Roads Management	£240,000				
	Original allocation	Committed	Actual spend		
Allocations made to each roads area to cover small scale activities including: - - Signage (passing place signs / road signs / variable message signs) - Roadside parking/ lay-by improvements - Verge protection/ edge strengthening/ marker posts					
Caithness & Sutherland	Passing Place signs	£10,000	£10,000	£0	Sign installations programmed before end of financial year.
Ross & Cromarty	Passing place improvements	£60,000	£0	£60,000	Tornapress, Llaithaic Torridon Glen and Gairloch improvements completed. Gruinard car park deferred until end of season.
Skye	Passing place signs and layby works	£20,000	£10,000	£10,000	Quiraing lay-by - starting in October. Signs - completed.
Inverness	Passing place signs and minor improvement works in various locations.	£75,000	£55,000	£20,000	Signs - currently being undertaken. B861 South Loch Ness - started works. B9006 to Clava Cairns - Link Road not yet started.
Lochaber, Nairn B&S	Passing place signs and minor improvement works in various locations.	£68,000	£44,881	£23,119	Glen Nevis & Achintee signs complete. Bracara improvement works - not started yet.
	Remaining funds to be used as a contingency, then reallocated to projects near end of financial year.	£7,000	£7,000	£0	Contingency to be used to fund any overspends when works finalised.
Carry forward from 2021 plan	Carry forward will be used as a contingency, then reallocated to projects near end of financial year.	£9,668	£9,668	£0	Contingency to be used to fund any overspends when works finalised.
<b>Roads management sub total</b>		<b>£249,668</b>	<b>£136,549</b>	<b>£113,119</b>	
<b>Parking management</b>		<b>£160,000</b>			
Complete Ph1 Invitation to pay/signing	Installed at 20 locations	£18,000		£18,000.00	complete
Short stay overnight parking for motorhomes	Additional lining & Signing	£22,000		£12,000.00	works ongoing
Improved passing places/ safety improvements at Chanonry Point	CCTV installed, VMS sign installed	£25,000	£17,000	£25,000.00	complete
Daytime motorhome parking in Inverness	Torvean & Shore Road	£10,000		£5,000.00	underway
Traffic regulation orders for cemetery car parks	100 sites identified	£40,000	£5,000		work progressing
Increased Enforcement Resource - seasonal posts for Ullapool & Mallaig	Officers in post and active, Additional patrols	£52,708		£22,000.00	complete
Continue rollout of ITP Ph2	Colaboration with Countryside Rangers to identify locations	£60,000	£40,000		
<b>Parking management sub total</b>		<b>£227,708</b>	<b>£22,000</b>	<b>£82,000</b>	
<b>Public Transport</b>		<b>£110,000</b>			
Enhanced public transport provision in Skye	Priority has been on ensuring shuttle bus service to Fairy Pools, which was by far the most popular destination last summer with VM-supported journeys. Saturday service commenced from 28 May, will continue to late October. Monday-Friday service during Summer school holidays.	£35,000	£9,380	£2,672.00	Shuttle bus service to Fairy Pools is up and running. HC is only paying Stagecoach for Saturday service at £259/day. Total of £5180.00 May-Oct. Arrangements are also in the works to extend service 608 (Fiscavaig - Portree) to Saturday operation for the remainder of the season, at £350/day.
Enhanced public transport provision in Lochaber	Working with Shiel buses to increase journey frequency to/from destinations and areas with higher visitor traffic during the Summer months. Focus primarily on Mallaig and connections.	£75,000	£0	£0.00	bus service improvement are under discussion, part of BSIP project meetings.
Enhanced public transport provision in the Cairngorms		£0	£0	£0.00	bus service improvement are under discussion, part of BSIP project meetings.
Promotion of bus services and ticketing scheme(s)	Permit secured from OATS to ensure access issues at Fairy Pools car park are addressed; publicity and promotion.	£750		£600.00	Services publicised.
<b>Public Transport sub total</b>		<b>£110,000</b>	<b>£9,380</b>	<b>£2,672.00</b>	
<b>Access Rangers</b>		<b>£350,000 (+£150,000 BPF3 &amp; £20K VILN)</b>			
Employment of 18 seasonal Rangers, including van hire, equipment and uniform.	Secured Better Places 3 funding to increase Ranger team from 14 to 18. Start dates have been phased as season progresses. 1st April = 7, 25th April= +5 FTE, 1st June= +5, 7th July= +1	£370,000	£25,490	£324,665.00	complete
Continue employment of 5 FTE of the seasonal rangers over winter 2022/23	Expressions of interest from team. Consideration of 8 part time posts and 1 full time senior ranger. Decisions made on geographic spread, location of required work, suitability to tasks.	£75,000	£20,000		
Employ Ranger Manager to manage, supervise and coordinate team					
Work with communities to establish and train volunteer wardens	Established volunteer group on Skye. Arranging Beach cleans in Lochalsh. Arranging volunteer work days near Gairloch				
Employ 4 peak season site-based Wardens at hotspot locations	Currently reduced to 2 FTE;= 1 FTE @ Chanonry Point, 0.5 @ Durness- shared with N Sutherland ranger. 0.5 @ Glenbrittle covering Ranger days off. Arisaig Warden requested early end to contract.	£50,000		Included in 1. above	
Employ Information Ranger for 4 months to provide in person information, social media monitoring and other communications					
Upgrade & Improvement of North Kessock Ranger Base	Cannot apply for infrastructure improvements this year				
Visitor Site improvements and installing and maintaining temporary signage	Signs have been ordered and in process of installing. This includes; 30x Nearest Toilet sign, 30x No Camping, 100x No Fires/Leave No Trace signs. More permanent camping restriction signs have also been ordered for Arisaig and Durness.	£25,000	£5,643	£13,521.00	
Monitoring the use of countryside car parks, roadside parking and informal camping	This is carried out by all Rangers on 3 days per week				
		<b>£520,000</b>	<b>£51,133</b>	<b>£338,186.00</b>	

Activities above with a shaded background will be undertaken if additional funding is obtained from NatureScot managed Better Places fund

Public Toilets		£190,000			
Supporting additional Comfort Schemes	16 additional comfort schemes in place for the year, 2 community portaloos projects supported (Foyers and Falls of Shin)	£34,500	£13,600	£20,900.00	complete spend committed (actual spend up to 30/09/22)
Installation of additional charging schemes	Recommissioning of old parking meters, painting and signage for 8 new honesty boxes	£5,000	£2,610	£2,390.00	using for honesty boxes
Facility improvements - hand driers installed to improve service and reduce vandalism	being rolled out, hand driers all purchased, install being done by street lighting colleagues	£115,000	£59,119	£55,880.72	£30300 hand dryer purchase, £25580.72 installation (up to 28/9/22)
Minor improvement works to bring sub-standard facilities up to an acceptable level	Painting at Castletown and Portmahomack, shower upgrades at Ullapool and Aviemore, replumbing work at Ullapool, upgraded doors at Gairloch and Dunbeath	£35,500	£14,870	£20,630.00	works ongoing
Glencoe Public toilets upgrade - match funding for RTIF funded project	Architect appointed and initial designs underway, total project cost is £110k	£27,500	£21,140	£6,360.00	Additional funds carried forward from 2021 motorhome allocation
Storr Costs	Operating and running Storr PC and motorhome waste point			£10,325.00	Costs up to 31/07/22, no budget for this but instructed to charge costs to this fund by Allan Gunn
		£217,500	£111,339	£116,485.72	amendment to total due to addition of carry forward sum
Waste Management		£220,000			
Employ 9 seasonal waste staff to increase frequency for bin emptying and to keep known hotspots clear	The service has employed nine Visitor Management Operatives (VMO) who were employed on a fixed contract basis, (May to October). The VMO's have been provided with 3.5 tonne box van vehicles for their operational work. The service has also provided additional bins, bin stands and bin stickers. The 2022/23 VMO's are based in: 1. Lochinver 2. Ullapool, 3. Lochcarron, 4. Portree, 5. Brora, 6. Fort William, 7. Aviemore, 8. Invenress (Loch Ness), 9. Black Isle	£165,000	£118,199	£138,199*	* estimated outturn Committed spend to the 21/09/22
Provision of additional litter bins, bin stands and stickers. Improve rural skip areas to manage increased use		£55,000	£52,198	£52,198.00	no additional spend planned
		£220,000	£170,397	£52,198.00	
Motorhome Activity		£55,000			
Support community provision of motorhome waste disposal points	Portree & Braes Trust for Bayfield, Portree - £700 Raasay Development Trust - £3,500 Loch Ness Visitor Facilities - £7,000 (Fort Augustus & Foyers) Kilmuir Development Trust - £3,500 Cromarty Community Development Trust £3,500	£45,000	£18,200	£7,700.00	
Production & installation of new approved road signage for waste disposal points	Motorhome symbol for road signage has been approved and there is now a piece of work ongoing to install these signs around key sites in Highland.	£8,000	TBC		
Piloting online information on congested sites	Support provided to Assynt Development Trust to help fund online and social media based information service for NW Sutherland to reduce pressure at busy sites	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000.00	
Ullapool Motorhome Waste Disposal Point	Project manager appointed to complete work; budget needs confirmed please				
		£55,000	£20,200	£9,700.00	
Communications		£15,000			
Production of social media animations etc. with good practice messaging	Litter/Waste/Motorhome guidance animation created and scheduled to promote throughout August, Sept & Oct	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	
Refresh and reprint leaflet with guidance for motorhome visitors	Motorhome guidance revised and printed for distribution via the Rangers team, also available online and promoted via PR and frequent social media.	£1,000	£1,000		
Online promotional activity / paid social media posts with key behavioural messages	Consistent weekly/daily social media messaging-programmed good practice and behavioural messaging on Visitor Management topics: waste, litter, water safety, fire, road safety, avian bird flu, toilet vandalism, support local and plan-ahead at key hotspots/high season	£7,000	£7,000		
Dedicated officer time to deliver good practice messaging	Press Release written examples - Planning ahead is key to enjoying the Highlands in 2022, Spring and Summer x2 'Welcome/Visit the Highlands responsibly', Overnight parking for MH in THC designated Car Parks, B8008 Limited parking signs Morar-Arisaig, Inverness - Top 16 European City to visit in 2022, Visiting the Highland in your MH/Campervan guidance, Localised Action Plan, Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan, VMG multi-agency approach, Highland Pictish Trail launch, VMG & Police joint patrols and short term let license and control area pilot.	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	
		£15,000	£15,000	£7,000.00	
Joint Activity with Cairngorms National Park Authority		160000 + (£163K from CNPA)			
Roads / transport activity in Glenmore corridor		£100,000			Work delayed due to environmental concerns. Probable re-assessment. Slippage will occur.
Glenmore Public Conveniences	Match funded with £60k from CNPA, additional funding required to complete drainage works (estimated at £10k)	£60,000		£96,786.00	Additional funds required to complete drainage works (£10k)
Additional Police Patrols Glenmore	Joint project with CNPA/FLS 3k contribution each	£3,000	£3,000		
		£163,000	£3,000	£96,786.00	
Partner Engagement		£0 (staff participation only)			
National Visitor Management Strategy	Continued engagement with national visitor management strategy groups where Highland Council is Local Authority representative.	£0	£0	£0.00	
Highlands & Islands Strategic Visitor Management Group	Continued engagement with the existing Highlands and Islands Local Resilience Partnership and Visitor Management Groups involving Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue and other Local Authorities.	£0	£0	£0.00	
Local Delivery Groups	Continued engagement with 3 sub-regional Visitor Management Operational Groups (VMOGs) that lead on delivery of activities and with local Glencoe / Glen Etive and Arisaig / B8008 Road to the Isles Working Group	£0	£0	£0.00	
	<b>Commitment / Spend totals</b>		<b>£538,998</b>	<b>£818,146.72</b>	

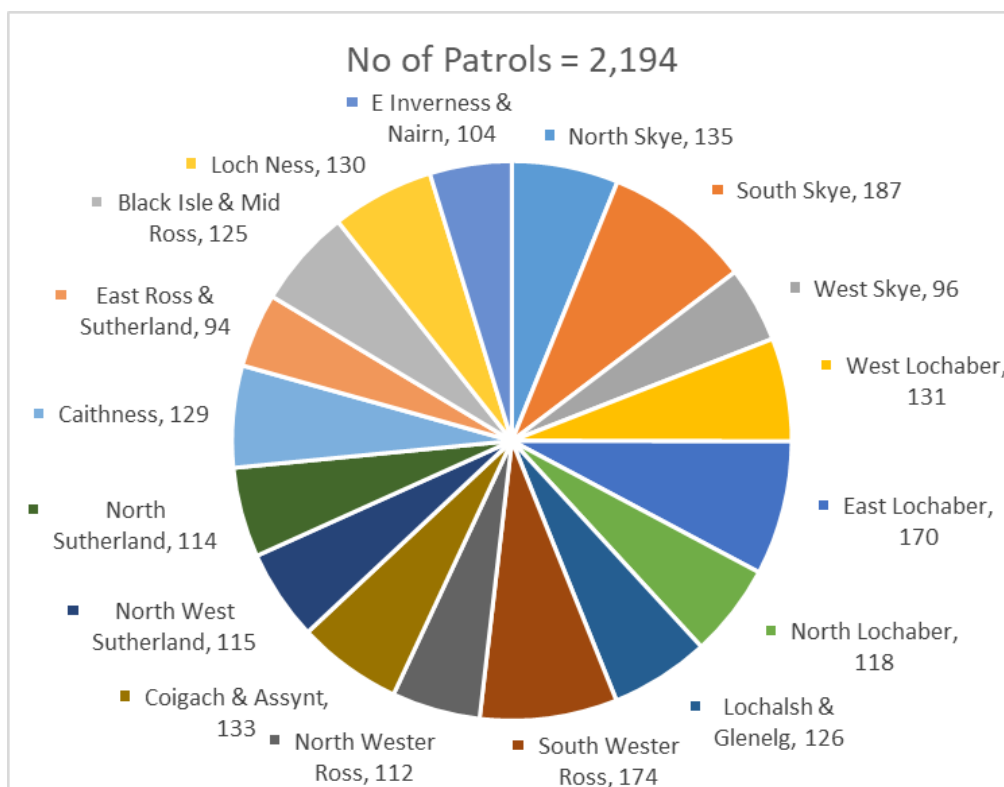
### The Highland Council Access Rangers Collated Data 2022- Interim Report

The following data was collected by the team of Access Rangers and Visitor Site Wardens between April and October 2022. This will form the basis of a Season Report to be produced and distributed by late November 2022.

In addition to this data the Access Ranger team held a de-briefing session on Friday 28 October in which they assessed and put forward suggestions for service improvements within The Highland Council and how the team could work with other partners in communities and organisations. There were also suggestions made for specific visitor site improvements given the Rangers considerable detailed knowledge of site and people using them, this would be useful information for future funding applications.

#### 1. Access Ranger Patrols

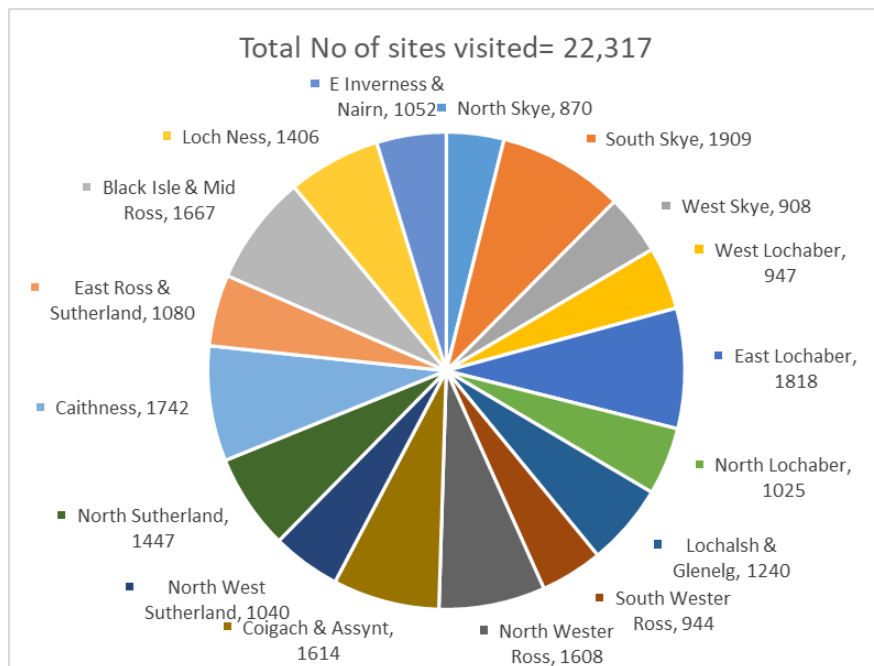
The Highland Council area ( not including the Cairngorm National Park Authority area, which operates its own Ranger service) was divided into 17 patrol areas. Most were patrolled by a single ranger but some did have cover by two rangers. The size of these patrol areas vary from 900 to 1700 sq km but average 1400 sq km. The number of patrols was more evenly divided this year with a larger team whereas in 2021 some areas only had sparse coverage.





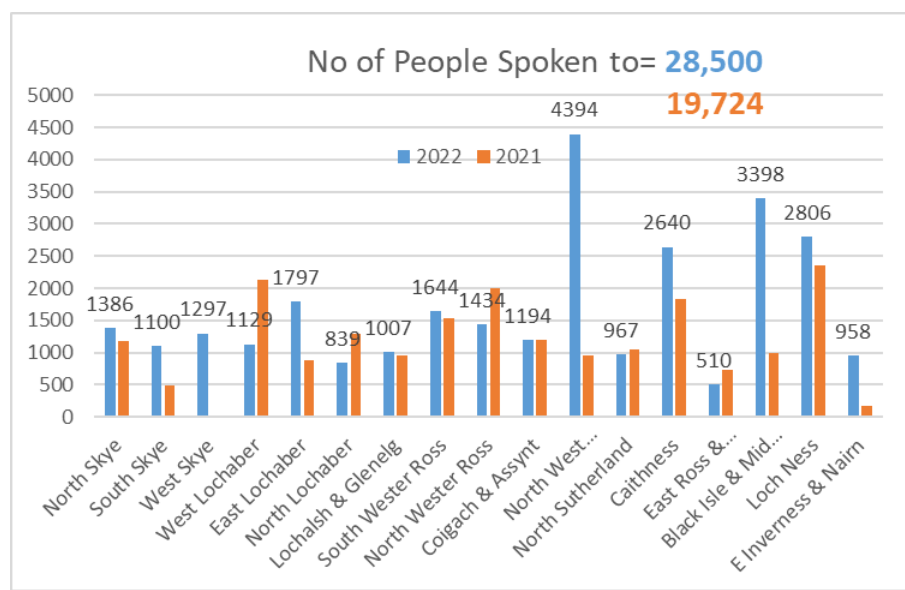
## 2. Visitor Sites

The number of sites in a patrol area can vary due to size, attractions and popularity. The chart below shows their distribution. Areas with fewer sites can allow the ranger more time on a site to talk to people or carry out maintenance.



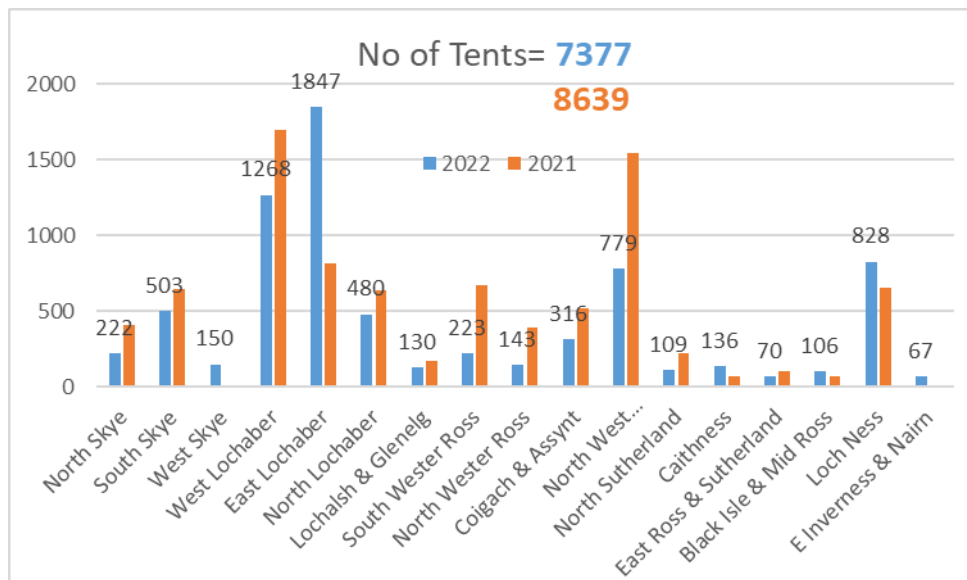
## 3. Visitor Engagement

The Access Ranger role is primarily to engage and educate people on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code but they will also welcome people with advice and information about the countryside, landscape and the area they are visiting. This year the Rangers were able to engage with almost 10,000 more people, a 30% increase on 2021. This was helped by a larger team and significantly so, with the Visitor Site Wardens in Durness and Chanony Point.

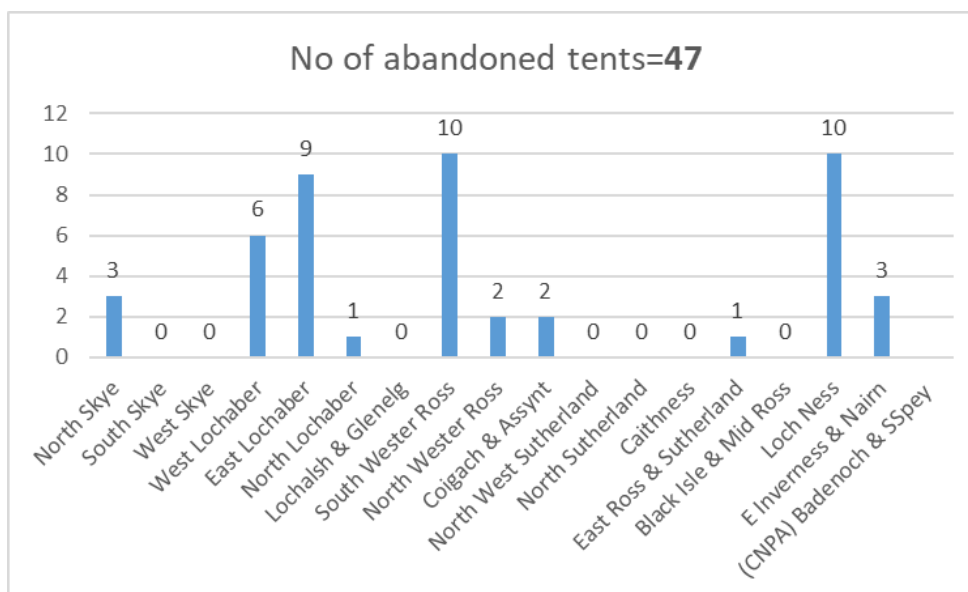


#### 4. Number of Tents

These are the number of tents observed camping off a formal campsite. They are often by the roadside or in close vicinity to a vehicle, and not true wild camping. Rangers will engage with the people seen to ensure that they are aware of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and show consideration for both the environment and people living or working locally.



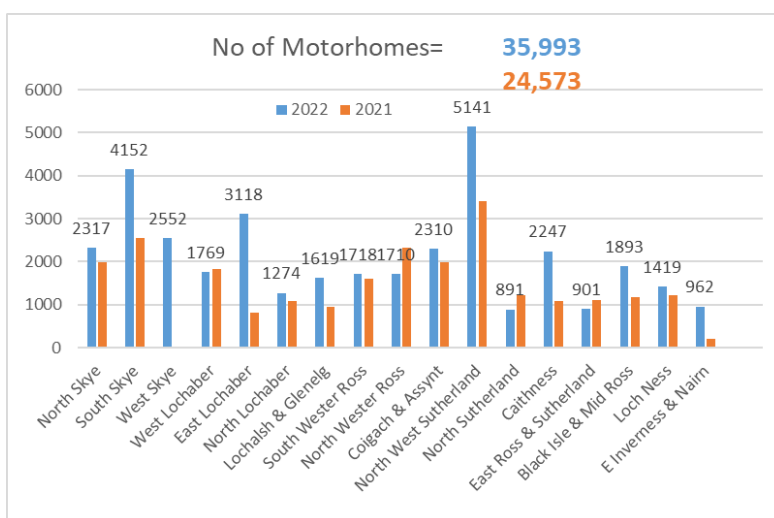
These figures show a change from 2021 with a roughly 15% decrease in the number of tents seen but still a relatively high figure considerably higher anecdotal than pre-covid numbers. There also appears to be a change in the distribution with last years hotspots of Arisaig, Durness, Assynt and Applecross showing decreases but an increase in Glen Etive, Loch Ness and other east coast areas. There were also a number of abandoned campsites discovered



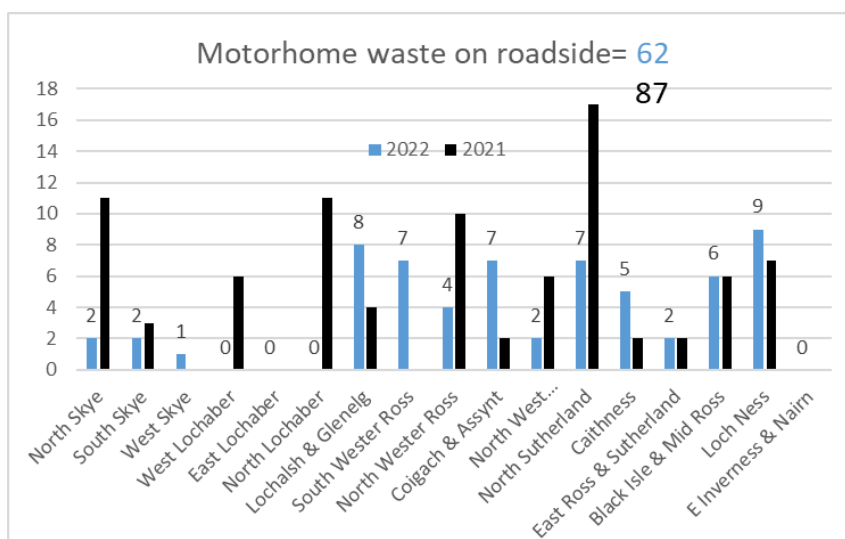
## 5. Number of Motorhomes

These are the numbers of motorhomes, campervans and roof-top tents observed parked up, mostly overnight but some may be in daytime car parks. There is no distinction made between types of vehicle other than 'adapted for sleeping purposes'. It also include roof-top tents as an increasing phenomenon this year. Being on a vehicle they do not have access rights and so are more akin to motorhomes although overnight parking without 'encamping' is not possible in this type of vehicle.

There has been a huge increase in visiting motorhomes in the Highland area, almost a 33% rise. The main hotspots remain Durness area and Isle of Skye but there were big increases in East Lochaber, Caithness and the Black Isle & Mid Ross. Some areas showed small declines.

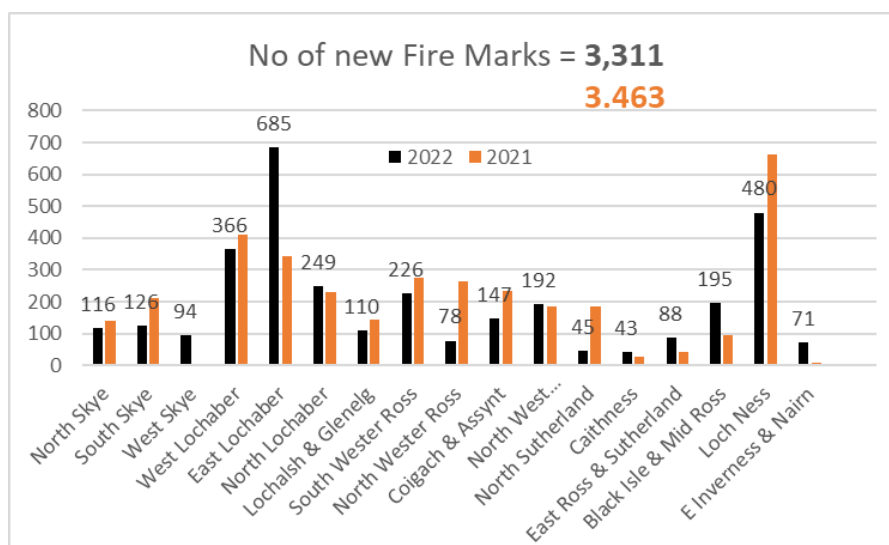


Incidents of motorhome black waste dumping were reduced this years but it is still a problem that causes great concern. Being a mixture of chemicals and human waste it can cause great harm in water courses and to vegetation, and distress to anyone, or their pet, that steps in it. Currently the Council do not have an effective method of clearing these spills.



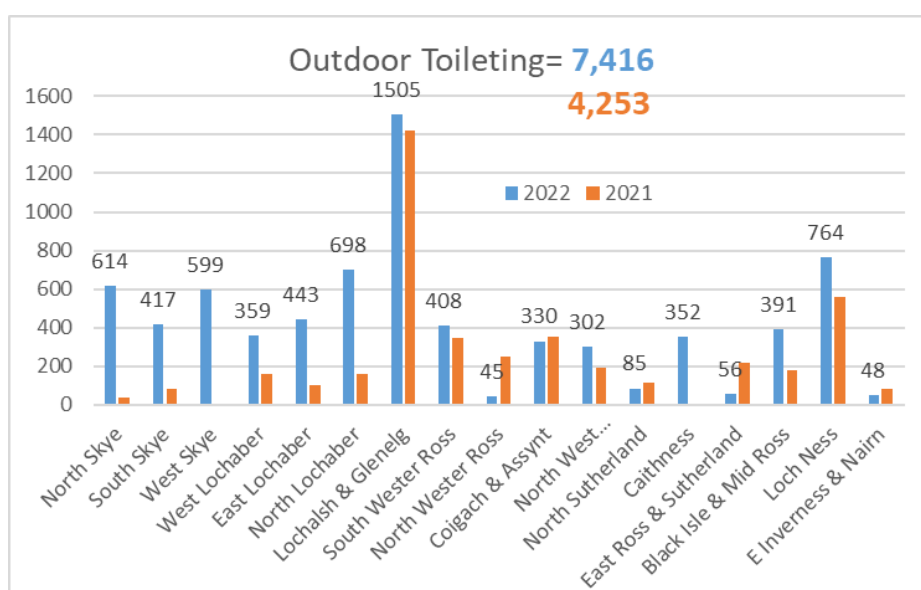
## 6. Camping Behaviours

Associated with tent camping and to a lesser extent motorhomes are a number of activities that may cause concern to communities or land managers. These are fires, outdoor toileting and litter.



Camp fires are often seen by many as essential accompaniment to camping. However, many people do not consider the risks and damage that they can cause. There is potential to spark a wildfire in prolonged dry periods and especially in woodlands or on peaty ground. Even in other areas damage to the ground or vegetation used to fuel the fire can take years to recover. The evidence of previous fires often encourages others to light their own. The Rangers do discourage fires unless it is raised off the ground and it is likely to leave no trace. Disposable barbecues are counted here too as they scorch the ground and are often left behind as they remain hot for a long time. If buried in sand have been known to burn feet.

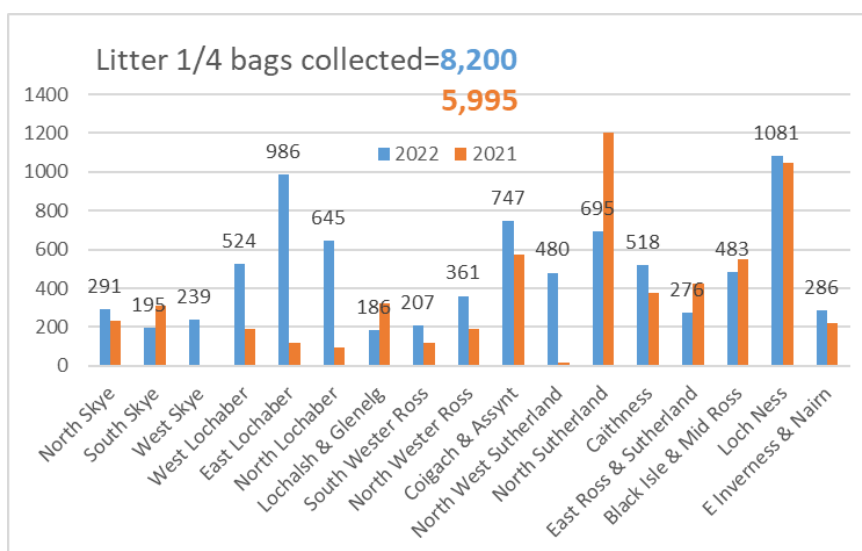
The numbers seen this year is similar to last year.



Outdoor toileting is often found in association with campsites but also on roadsides, in laybys. There is a considerable increase in this in 2022. Lochalsh shows a particular area problem. There is relatively low camping numbers here and so this is mainly in laybys.

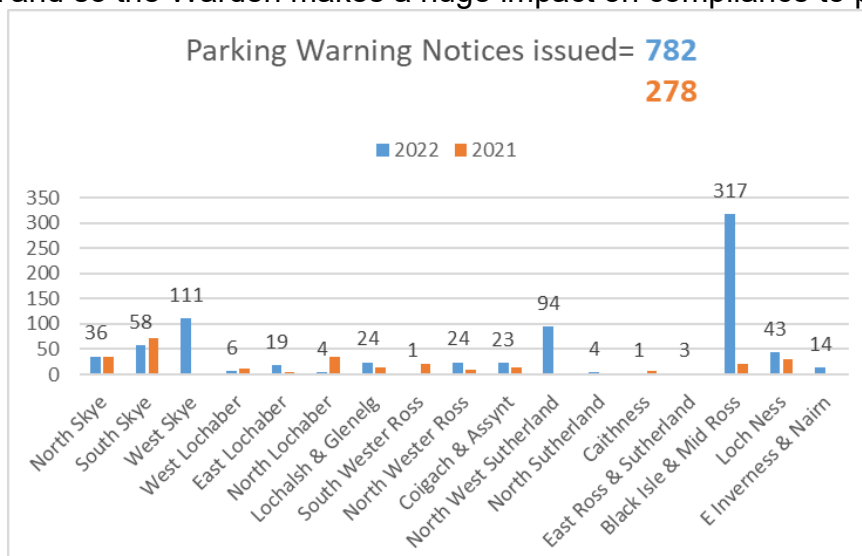
Litter is collected by the Access Rangers at popular countryside sites around the Highland area. This is usually litter beyond the road verge that otherwise would not be collected the Waste team. However, sometimes the rangers will collect overflow rubbish outwith bins that may be spread by animals or wind.

The data shows a sizeable increase in the amount collected over last year. It is noticeable so in Lochaber where there was not a Seasonal Waste Operative this year. Over 2000 full bin bags were collected, being 500 more than 2021.



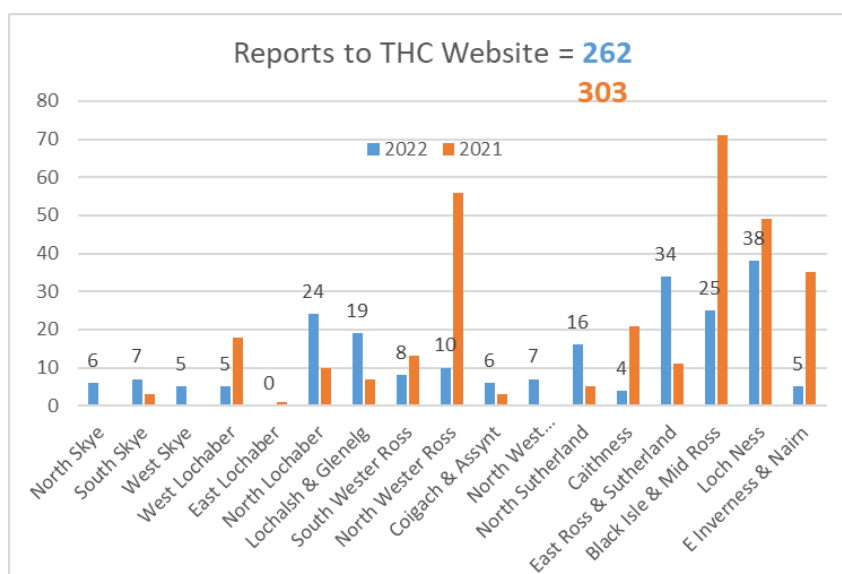
## 7. Other Council Services

As well as additional litter collection the Access Rangers undertake a few other activities that assist other Council services. One of these is parking where the Rangers issue Parking Warning Notices, provided by Parking Services to advise that someone is illegally parked and that they should move and may risk receiving a penalty charge. This often has the desired effect and discourages others from similar parking. The areas with highest figures coincide with Visitor Site Wardens at Chanonry Point, Durness and Glen Brittle. At Chanonry Point this often is for failure buy a ticket and so the Warden makes a huge impact on compliance to pay.





The Rangers will often make reports on the The Highland Council’s website ‘Report a Problem’ to advise other services of something that requires attention. This most often will be Waste for full/overflowing bins, Environmental Health for fly-tipping or Roads for issues seen.



These figures and charts give an initial picture of the issues and their distribution around the Highland Council area in 2022 and how that compares to 2021. These will be included in a full Season Report, to be distributed in late November, along with a full description on how the team operated and suggestions for improvements in operation, working with others and on specific visitor sites.