

Visitor Management Action Plan – 2025

Introduction

The Visitor Management Plan for 2025 has a refreshed structure for this season whilst work is underway to progress a new national strategy being led by VisitScotland and following on from the visitor summit held in Aviemore on 31 March. The action plan highlights priority areas for consideration in the new strategy recognising that there are still challenges requiring further action, and new ones resulting from changes in activity and the impacts.

Overall aim: working together to ensure visitors can experience and enjoy Scotland's most popular areas in a responsible way that brings benefits to local communities and minimises any negative impacts on the environment, nature and those working or living there.

Strategic priorities:

- Resources and investment – operational and capital
- Sustainability and impact reduction – dispersal of visitors and mitigation of pressure
- Co-operation and partnerships – co-ordinated approaches, support, sharing information and knowledge
- Inclusive opportunities to experience Scotland – removing barriers and identifying opportunities for a wider and more diverse audience to enjoy Scotland's natural places.

The plan covers the following topic areas:

- Communications and information –
 - Informing and Educating visitors – behaviour and safety
 - Capacity and skills building through sharing knowledge and developing expertise
- Investing in the improvement of visitor management infrastructure, services and operational activities
- Evidence, data and research

This is the 5th year of national visitor management action planning delivered in a collaborative way by partners from across the sectors.

Governance and Group Structures

		Lead
VMS Steering Group – (inc Strategic Framework)		VisitScotland (Vicki Miller)
VM Co-ordination Group – (inc Action Plan)		NatureScot (Pete Rawcliffe)
Sub-groups	Education and Marketing	VisitScotland (Cat Leaver)
	Operational	Forestry and Land Scotland (Stuart Chalmers)
Working groups	Campervans and Motorhomes	Cairngorms National Park Authority (Colin Simpson)
	Digital	Interface (Lesley Judge)
	Transport	Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority (Kenny Auld)

Communication and Information

Informing and educating our current and future visitors – responsible behaviour and visitor safety

Action	Lead (support)
<p>1. Ensure an agreed national approach is in place and functioning to deliver co-ordinated and complimentary responsible visitor behaviour campaigns that reach target audiences. Focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fires (recreational) – national message framework • Camping and safe stove use • Wildlife disturbance • Campervan/motorhome users • SOAC 20 years of public access to Scotland’s outdoors • Sustainable travel choices • Education and learning – on-line resource pack 	<p>Education & Marketing sub-group</p> <p>VisitScotland NatureScot NAF RAS NPAs LAs</p>
<p>2. Support the delivery of public safety campaigns relating to visitor safety in the outdoors in conjunction with lead agencies, safety groups and partnerships. Focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water safety (in/on and water’s edge) • foreign drivers • outdoor activity safety 	<p>Education & Marketing sub-group</p> <p>NatureScot TransportScotland Sportscotland</p>

<p>And including, as appropriate, messaging about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • biosecurity • blue/green algae • avian flu • ticks and Lyme disease 	<p>SAPOE LLTNPA Scottish Water</p>
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Capacity and skills building through sharing knowledge and developing expertise

Action	Lead (support)
<p>3. Share knowledge, good practice and information through the Visitor Operational Sub-group in-season meetings representing organisations and hot spot areas from across Scotland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice to the Co-ordination group/Steering Group • Reviewing the seasons operations • Knowledge sharing 	<p>Forestry and Land Scotland Local authorities NPA's NGOs Community Trusts SW/TS/PS/NatureScot</p>
<p>4. Learn from others and share good practice in sustainable visitor management and development through the creation of a web-based "information hub".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies • Guidance and advice • Useful contacts/other resources 	<p>NatureScot/VisitScotland Operational Sub-group VisitScotland - RTIF</p>
<p>5. Develop the digital knowledge and skills of staff involved in site and visitor management to maximise effectiveness and facilitate data gathering, analysis and sharing.</p>	<p>Digital Working Group</p>
<p>6. Share VMS activity with stakeholders, through the Visitor Management webpages on visitscotland.org and by e-newsletters.</p>	<p>VisitScotland NatureScot</p>
<p>7. Develop guidance on enforcement options, law and regulations relevant to visitor management for use by operational staff and managers including police, rangers, visitor managers and other staff.</p>	<p>PoliceScotland Operational Sub-group</p>

Investing in the improvement of visitor management infrastructure, services and operational activities

Action	Lead (support)
8. Make the case for the investment in rangers and operational staff as an essential mechanism for delivering improvements to visitor management.	VM Co-ordination Group
9. Secure stakeholder capacity/support to deliver recommendations from the Transport Working Group which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increasing knowledge and insights around car dependency at outdoor visitor hotspots - increasing understanding of journey demand and trips generation of outdoor visitor hotspots - testing the viability of improved active travel and public transport/shuttle bus services to and around Scotland's most popular visitor destinations. 	Transport Working Group National Park Authorities Local authorities TransportScotland ScotRail RTPs
10. Explore and develop ways of working with the wider private sector interest in visitor management, in relation to the funding and provision of facilities and services on privately owned land.	VisitScotland SE/HIE/SSDA (tbc)
11. Improve knowledge and understanding of design and implementation requirements associated with the development of new "Aires" type provision, public sector "Stay the Night" schemes and services for campervans and motorhomes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory requirements and legislation • Service and site design options (waste, water etc) • Resources and case studies 	Campervan and Motorhome Working Group CNPA FCCT CAMPRA VisitScotland ScottishWater Forestry and Land Scotland Local authorities/visitor destination orgs
12. Explore new or existing mechanisms, including promoting the opportunities from the visitor levy to fund measures aimed at mitigating and fixing the negative impacts of visitors on the environment to maintain a quality visitor experience. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The case for investment • Strategic Tourism Development Plans • Visitor Levy Forums • RTIF • Other funds/investments 	VMS Steering Group VM Co-ordination Group VisitScotland Enterprise/Destination/STA(tbc) Local authorities NPAs

Evidence, data and research

Action	Lead (support)
13. Implement the national monitoring framework, core metrics and RAG (inc. heat chart), to demonstrate the impact of visitors and the status of VM activity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting to SG and ministers • Data from managing organisations (national and regional) 	NatureScot Operational sub-group area and organisational members
14. Develop a national “hot spot area” and “RAG” data reporting and mapping methodology to spatially demonstrate where Scotland’s rural visitor management “hot spots” are, linked to action 14.	Interface/VisitScotland/NatureScot/SG
15. Consider existing visitor activity and pressures, including capacity issues, and develop strategic approaches that lead to more sustainable levels of visitation and managed approaches to dispersal.	VisitScotland Local Authorities Visitor Destination Groups
16. Promote the use of digital solutions, Civtech project outputs, for the capture of field-based data on visitor pressures and issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data capture app for national core metrics and insight, and local/area field-based recording • Reporting mechanism(s) and link to national reporting action 12. 	Digital Working Group National Parks Local authorities