



FOI 2016/028

9<sup>th</sup> January 2017

### REQUEST UNDER FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002

I refer to your request for information, received by email on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016. Your specific requests and the Park Authority's response are provided below.

**“Please provide a full list of all those non-NPA organisations to which the LL&TNPA has provided meeting room facilities either on an ad hoc, or recurring basis, since 5th April 2016 until now. Please include in the list for each organisation, the classification category, or other group/type identifier by which the NPA distinguishes between them”**

The external organisations that have booked the use of meeting room facilities; John Muir Suite, Robert Grieve Suite and the Breadalbane Room, at the Park Authority headquarters in 2016 according to category are as follows:

Type of organisation	No.
Local Association	1
Charity	7
Charity and partner organisation	5
Community council	1
Council	1
Councillor	1
Fitness class	4
Housing association	1
Local Access forum	1
Local group	4
Partner organisation	2
Political party	3
RAFE partner	2
Tenants association	1
Tourism business	1

A list of all external organisations who have booked meeting room facilities with the Park Authority has not been provided as this information is considered to be commercially sensitive and is therefore exempt from release under S33(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. It is considered that release of the information in question would be likely to prejudice substantially the ability of the Park Authority to generate income, as organisations have made

#### LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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these room bookings with no expectations that their details would be made public, and who may be dissuaded from making further bookings in future if their details were released.

The Public Interest Test was carried out in relation to the information to be withheld under S33(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Requests for such information are considered by the Park Authority on a case by case basis. In this case, it was determined that the public interest would not be served by the release of the information.

**“Please provide a full explanatory description of each classification category/group/type, relating each to the new scheme of NPA room rate charges.”**

If a discount is requested by a customer, they will be assessed on a case by case basis. In general the following framework will apply:-

- RAFF Partners will be given up to 100% discount;
- Registered Charities will be given up to 50% discount
- Local Groups will be given up to 25% discount;
- Partners will be given up to 100% discount;

The activity and work of the booking organisation or the particular circumstances of the request for facilities will inform whether they qualify for a discount, which will be at the Park Authority's discretion.

**“Please state by organisation, both the published NPA room rate, and the actual room rate being charged, and include a full detailed explanation for any differences between these two rates including applicable rate discount schemes in operation.”**

Details of the rates charged by the Park Authority for booking rooms can be found on our website at:

<http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/park-authority/doing-business-here/conference-venue-hire/>

Discounts are applied to some organisations, as explained above.

A list of the room rates paid by specific organisations has not been provided as this information is considered to be commercially sensitive and is therefore exempt from release under S33(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. It is considered that release of the information in question would be likely to prejudice substantially the ability of the Park Authority to generate income, as organisations have made these room bookings with no expectations that their details would be made public, and may be dissuaded from making bookings in future if their details were released.

The Public Interest Test was carried out in relation to the information to be withheld under S33(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Requests for such information are considered by the Park Authority on a case by case basis. In this case, it was determined that the public interest would not be served by the release of the information.

**“Please specifically list all organisations receiving free use of any rooms or abated (sub-commercial) rates for space they occupy in NPA buildings for whatever purpose, or which benefit from free or subsidised use of NPA 'office support services' or receive any other comparable benefits in kind.”**

The criteria applied by the Park Authority for room bookings has been explained above. Over and above the rooms that are available for external use (John Muir Suite, Robert Grieve Suite and the Breadalbane Room) we have some partner organisations that have staff located in the National Park Headquarters building at Carrochan.

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Details of arrangements with partner organisations are considered to be commercially sensitive and therefore exempt from release under S33(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. It is considered that release of the information in question would be likely to prejudice substantially the agreements between the Park Authority and these organisations.

The Public Interest Test was carried out in relation to the information to be withheld under S33(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Requests for such information are considered by the Park Authority on a case by case basis. In this case, it was determined that the public interest would not be served by the release of the information.

**“Please include any and all such arrangements where similar *quid pro quo* agreements may exist, and state the quantity and commercial value of such subsidies, and explain in detail the resulting loss of revenue to the taxpayer arising from these unpublished NPA arrangements, and why these have been selectively applied to some, but to the exclusion of other organisations. Please ensure that, inter alia, coverage of these situations include those specifically of Friends of Loch Lomond, and Love Loch Lomond. Please identify the responsible NPA executive officer who approves such concessions.”**

The use of space in Park Authority premises by partner organisations who are delivering projects that benefit the National Park is not a commercial arrangement. The benefit to the Park Authority and the National Park overrides commercial considerations. Accordingly, I have to advise you under section 17(1)(b) of the Act, that the Authority holds no information on this subject.

Categories of room hire charges and discount rates, as well as partnership working agreements whereby external organisations have staff located on Park Authority premises are approved by the Park Authority Executive team.

Yours sincerely

Governance & Legal Team  
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority

#### Review Procedure

If you are dissatisfied with this decision, or the way in which the Authority has dealt with your request, you are entitled to require the Authority to review its decision. Please note that in order for a review to take place you are required to:

- Send your request for review in writing, setting out in full the reasons why you are requesting a review.
- Submit your review request within 40 working days of either the date on which you received a response from the Authority or the date by which you should have received a response under the terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, whichever is the later.
- address your review request to:

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The review will be handled by staff who were not involved in the original decision. You will receive notice of the result of your review within 20 working days.

If you are not satisfied with the response to your request for review, you can contact the Scottish Information Commissioner, the independent body which oversees the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, at:

Scottish Information Commissioner  
Kinburn Castle  
Doubledykes Road  
St Andrews  
Fife  
KY16 9DS  
Tel: 01334 464610  
Website: [www.itspublicknowledge.info](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info)  
E-mail: [enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info)  
Online appeal portal: [www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal)

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