

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority

Reputation Management

Final Report

AUDIT GLASGOW

August 2022



**Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority
Reputation Management**

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FS 57095
Management System Certification

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority Reputation Management

1. Introduction

1.1 As part of the 2021/22 Internal Audit plan we have carried out a review of the reputation management arrangements within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority (the Park Authority).

1.2 Strong reputation management is critical to increasing confidence among the wider stakeholders of the Park Authority and ensuring that the organisation can achieve its strategic objectives. A designated Communications Team is in place that is responsible for dealing with all marketing and communications related issues, including media and public relations and reputational risk management.

1.3 The purpose of the audit was to gain assurance that there are sufficient and appropriate controls in place covering reputation management. The scope included:

- Reviewing the way in which marketing and communications arrangements are aligned to wider strategic objectives including the aim and vision of the Park Authority;
- Reviewing the documented policies and procedures in place in relation to marketing, communications and managing reputational risk more generally;
- Ensuring that policies are in place to ensure that social media is used responsibly by staff and that the Park Authorities social media is restricted to authorised and trained personnel;
- Ensuring that there are processes in place for identifying reputational risk in key processes and that appropriate

arrangements are in place to measure, monitor and report on these risks as well as the associated mitigating actions;

- Ensuring that reputational risk management is embedded within the culture of the Park Authority, and within key processes (proactive and reactive), including stakeholder engagement, engaging with third parties and contractors and procurement;
- Reviewing the arrangements in place to provide staff with appropriate training in relation to reputation management; and
- Reviewing the arrangements in relation to external stakeholder engagement and communications, including those in relation to the complaints and performance management processes.

2. Audit opinion

2.1 Based on the audit work carried out a reasonable level of assurance can be placed upon the control environment. The audit has identified some scope for improvement in the existing arrangements and two recommendations which management should address.

3. Main Findings

3.1 We are pleased to report that we found a number of the key controls in relation to reputation management were in place and were operating effectively, including:

- A National Park Authority Communications Strategy 2022/23, which is aligned to the wider strategic objectives of the Park Authority, is in place. The Strategy informs the Communications Team Plan which sets out the Communications Team's specific objectives and workplan

for the year. Roles and responsibilities of key officers are also clearly outlined in the Plan;

- A Social Media Policy is in place that provides guidance on the acceptable use of social media. The Policy was last updated in 2018, however a review of this Policy is scheduled in the next few months as part of the Corporate Policy Review Plan therefore no recommendation will be made in relation to this. The Employee Code of Conduct also includes guidance in relation to the use of social media and the document is available to staff on the Park Authority's intranet;
- The Park Authority's social media channels are restricted to officers within the Communications Team and planned social media activity is agreed by the Communications Manager in advance of posting;
- Reputational risk is a category outlined in the Risk Management Framework, therefore is considered when categorising risks. From review, we found that the Corporate Risk Register contains several reputational risks and there are arrangements in place to ensure that these are reviewed and reported regularly;
- Reputational risk management is embedded within the culture of the Park Authority. The Communications Team is involved in all key processes involving reputational risk, including stakeholder engagement, engaging with third parties and contractors, project management and procurement. Staff are made aware of the Communications Team and their role through the induction process and are encouraged to contact the team for support/to report any reputational issues;
- Reputational management is covered as part of the induction process and Media Handling training is provided to staff who regularly deal with the media/general public;
- There are adequate arrangements in place in relation to gathering, recording and actioning feedback from

customers and dealing with complaints in an appropriate and timely manner; and

- We were advised that in almost all cases, high-profile media stories are linked to a specific event/project or activity. Lessons learned exercises are carried as part of project management arrangements and staff within the Communications Team are involved in these exercises.

3.2 However, our audit testing found that there are some areas where controls could be improved. Although we were informed of various reputational management processes that were in place within the Park Authority, we found that most of the processes have not been formally documented. Although we were advised that staff are equipped to provide good quality service, no evidence to support this was provided.

3.3 We found some areas of improvement within the current reputational risk management arrangements, for example there is no specific Communications Team Risk Register in place that manages the risks within the team. However all risk management related issues have been addressed as part of the 2021/22 Risk Management audit findings and therefore no specific recommendation has been made in this report.

3.4 An action plan is provided at section four outlining our observations, risks and recommendations. We have made two recommendations for improvement. The priority of each recommendation is:

Priority	Definition	Total
High	Key controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved. Urgent attention required.	0
Medium	Less critically important controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved.	2
Low	Lower level controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved.	0
Service Improvement	Opportunities for business improvement and/or efficiencies have been identified.	0

- 3.5 The audit has been undertaken in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
- 3.6 We would like to thank officers involved in this audit for their cooperation and assistance.
- 3.7 It is recommended that the Chief Internal Auditor submits a further report to the Audit and Risk Committee on the implementation of the actions contained in the attached Action Plan.

4. Action Plan

Title of the Audit: Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority – Reputation Management

No.	Observation and Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management Response
Key Control: Documented procedures in relation to reputation management are in place and available to all relevant staff.				
1	<p>We were informed that processes in relation to reputation management have been agreed, however we found that the following ones have not been documented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process for regularly searching social media for references to the Park Authority; • The process to deal with offensive post/comments (including examples of posts/comments that are deemed offensive); • The process for issuing press releases and comments to the media; • The process for adding / removing access to the Park Authority's social media accounts; • The arrangements for authorising social media posts being made by the Communications Team officers (including the arrangements for out of hours posts being made on any of the Park Authority's accounts); and • The arrangements for ensuring that positive and negative social media comments identified through social media channels are 	<p>Arrangements should be developed to ensure that any incidents that could lead to negative publicity for the Park Authority are reported to the Communications Team.</p> <p>Management should ensure that all key processes in relation to reputation management are documented. These should include, but not limited to, the processes noted in the observation.</p> <p>All documents should contain version control and be made available to all relevant staff.</p>	Medium	<p>Response: Accepted.</p> <p>Procedures are in place to ensure incidents are escalated to the Communications Team – this will be reshared with all staff.</p> <p>Key processes are known and embedded within Communications Team; these will be documented, with version control, and shared appropriately.</p> <p>Officer Responsible for Implementation:</p> <p>Communication Team Manager</p> <p>Timescale for Implementation:</p> <p>31 March 2023</p>

	<p>communicated to the relevant team to ensure action can be taken where required.</p> <p>We found that arrangements are not in place to ensure that any incidents that could lead to negative publicity for the Park Authority are logged and managed appropriately.</p> <p>A lack of documented procedures increases the risk that incorrect processes are followed, and errors are made.</p>			
Key Control: Customer procedures and training are available to staff to ensure good quality service.				
2	<p>We were advised that staff are well equipped to provide good quality service, however we were unable to verify this as evidence to support this (for example core customer procedures or a report of all employees who completed the online customer training) has not been provided.</p> <p>This increases the risk that staff are unaware of the Park Authority's approach to customer service.</p>	<p>Senior management should ensure that appropriate customer service procedures are in place and available to all relevant staff. A register of all staff who have completed the online customer training should be in place and kept up to date.</p>	Medium	<p>Response: Accepted.</p> <p>Where appropriate, Customer Service procedures will be documented.</p> <p>All relevant staff will be asked to complete Customer Service Training.</p> <p>Officer Responsible for Implementation:</p> <p>Ranger Service Managers / Exec & Business Support Manager</p> <p>Timescale for Implementation:</p> <p>3 February 2023</p>