

AUDIT GLASGOW

**Loch Lomond & The Trossachs
National Park Authority**
Workforce and Succession
Planning Arrangements
Final Report
September 2023



FS 57095



1 Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the agreed 2023/24 Internal Audit plan, we have carried out a review of the Workforce and Succession Planning Arrangements within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority (the Park Authority).
 - 1.2 Employee turnover and movement, whether through retirement or opportunities elsewhere, can impact the ability of the organisation to effectively deliver services and achieve its strategic aims. This increases the risk of disruption and uncertainty around service delivery and the objectives of the Park Authority being achieved. Workforce planning is concerned with the number and skills of the workforce, whereas succession planning involves an integrated, systemic approach to identify, develop and retain/recruit talent for key positions and areas across the Park Authority. Efficient and effective workforce and succession planning is imperative to service delivery and responding to changes that occur.
 - 1.3 The purpose of the audit was to gain assurance that there are robust workforce and succession planning arrangements in place. The scope of the audit included:
 - Ensuring that workforce and succession planning needs are incorporated within the strategic planning process.
 - Reviewing the process for undertaking and utilising analysis of the current workforce profile and future workforce needs, including any skills gaps.
 - Confirming that there are strategies and plans to address current and/or future gaps through recruiting, developing, and retaining staff.
- Ensuring there are action plans to implement workforce and succession planning strategies, and
 - Reviewing the monitoring and scrutiny arrangements for the agreed strategies and action plans.

2 Audit Opinion

- 2.1 Based on the 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 three recommendations which management should address.

3 Main Findings

- 3.1 We found that some key controls are in place and generally operating effectively. Workforce planning is incorporated into the strategic plan, 'Our 5 Year Plan'. There is a workforce strategy, 'Our People Strategy 2022-25', in place that has been rolled out to all operational managers. The workforce strategy sets out clear strategies for the recruitment, development and retention of key staff and is aligned to the Park Authority's financial strategy and budgeting arrangements in place.
- 3.2 The responsibility for monitoring workforce and succession planning arrangements lies with the Executive Team and HR and are subject to regular discussions during the weekly Executive Team meetings.
- 3.3 There are arrangements in place for the development of staff and leadership skills, for example performance reviews and leadership coaching are both undertaken regularly.
- 3.4 We found that the risks in relation to staff retention and resilience have been considered and included in the Park Authority's Corporate Risk Register which is reported to the Board, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Executive Team regularly.
- 3.5 However, we also identified some opportunities for improvement. Succession planning arrangements are currently not documented. Although an action plan (the Delivery Plan) was created to facilitate the delivery of the workforce strategy, the document is still in draft. From review of the plan, it is not clear when actions listed in the workforce strategy are expected to be completed and which officers are responsible for their implementation.
- 3.6 Although an analysis of the current structure has been undertaken across all staffing groups, the analysis did not include a review of the actual number of staff required in order to effectively deliver services and achieve strategic aims. An analysis has also not been undertaken to determine how changes to the way services are provided and the demographic of service users will impact the number and type of staff employed within the Park Authority.
- 3.7 An action plan is provided at section four outlining our observations, risks and recommendations. We have made

three 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.	3
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

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

3 Action Plan

No.	Observation and Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management Response
Key Control: Formal succession plans are in place which cover all areas of the Park Authority.				
1	<p>We found that the Executive Team discuss and deal with any succession issues as and when required, however there is currently no documented succession strategy/plan in place.</p> <p>This increases the risk that an integrated, systemic approach to identify, develop and retain/recruit talent for key positions and areas across the Park Authority is not in place.</p>	<p>Management should develop and agree a succession plan which will identify all leadership and business critical positions within the Park Authority and a process and strategy to replace these roles when they become temporarily or permanently vacant.</p> <p>Once finalised, the document should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be approved at an appropriate level. • Include a version control confirming the approval and review process. • Be rolled out across the organisation. • Have a corresponding action plan to facilitate the implementation of the strategy objectives. 	Medium	<p>Response: Accepted</p> <p>Succession Plan to be developed which will identify all leadership and business critical positions within the Park Authority and action to be taken to replace these roles when they become temporarily or permanently vacant.</p> <p>Officer Responsible for Implementation:</p> <p>HR Business Partner</p> <p>Timescales for Implementation:</p> <p>30 September 2024</p>
Key Control: Action plans are in place to implement the workforce strategy.				
2	<p>We noted that 'Our People Strategy 2022-25' (the workforce strategy) did not have any document control in place. This makes it more difficult to manage amendments and approval of the strategy.</p>	<p>Management should ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Delivery Plan is updated to include a timetable detailing the planned implementation date and responsible officer for all actions noted within the workforce strategy. 	Medium	<p>Response: Accepted</p> <p>People Strategy Delivery Plan to be updated to include timescales/responsibility against each of the actions. Version control also will be added to the document.</p>

We found that a Delivery Plan 2023-24 to facilitate the implementation of the workforce strategy is in place, however the document is still in draft. We also found that although the plan covers the four main themes included in the workforce strategy ((i) Recognising Everyone's Contribution, (ii) Effective Leaders and Managers, (iii) A Thriving and Inclusive Environment and (iv) Recruitment, Retention and Talent Management), it is not clear when all actions listed under the themes are expected to be completed and which officers are responsible for their implementation.

This increases the risk that the Park Authority fails to deliver on the workforce strategy and management/officers are unclear of their responsibilities in relation to implementing the required actions.

- Once the Delivery Plan is finalised, the progress of the plan is regularly monitored and reported to the Executive Team and/or the Board.
- A version control detailing the approval/review arrangements is added to the workforce strategy.

Officer Responsible for Implementation:

HR Business Partner

Timescales for Implementation:

31 March 2024

Key Control: An analysis of the current workforce profile and future workforce needs has been undertaken.

3 We found that an analysis has been undertaken within the current staffing structure which confirms current staff numbers in all areas of the Park Authority. However, it is not clear from the documentation provided how many staff the Park Authority needs in each area compared to what is currently in place.

Management should ensure that:

- The optimal staffing numbers for each area is confirmed to ensure that these can be considered when making workforce decisions.
- An analysis is undertaken of how changes in the way that services are provided and how demographic of service users will impact the number

Medium

Response: Accepted

Team/Service staffing levels to be discussed and agreed with Operational Managers/Executive to support delivery of the new National Park Partnership Plan/Corporate Plan. Any areas of risk to be flagged and actioned accordingly.

We also found that no analysis has been undertaken to consider how changes in the way that services are provided and how demographic of service users will impact the number and type of staff employed within the Park Authority. We were advised that this analysis will be undertaken as part of the development of the new strategic National Park Partnership Plan.

This increases the risk that the Park Authority is not fully aware of all current and future challenges and needs of its workforce.

and type of staff employed within the Park Authority.

- Any risks identified as a result of the analysis should be considered for inclusion in the Corporate Risk Register.

Officer Responsible for Implementation:

HR Business Partner

Timescales for Implementation:

30 September 2024