



# Carlisle City Council Report to Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel

## Report details

Meeting Date:	24 February 2022
Portfolio:	Environment and Transport
Key Decision:	No
Policy and Budget Framework	No
Public / Private	Public
Title:	Talkin Tarn Management Arrangements
Report of:	Deputy Chief Executive
Report Number:	CS 06 22

## Purpose / Summary:

The purpose of this report to give an overview of the current management arrangements for Talkin Tarn Country Park and to seek the panels views on alternative and/or additional arrangements, that could be explored, to maximise the sites potential in delivering the Council's priorities.

## Recommendations:

To review the current management arrangements and provide guidance on the scope and content of any future options appraisal for the future operation of the site.

## Tracking

Executive:	
Scrutiny:	<b>BTSP 24 February 2022</b>
Council:	

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 In 2005 Carlisle City Council took responsibility for the management of Talkin Tarn following a transfer from Cumbria County Council.
- 1.2 Talkin Tarn is a 74 Hectare Country Park with a natural glacial tarn, woodland and grazing fields with formal and informal paths. There is a pay and display car park, camping field, toilet block, office/workshop building, two boathouses, education cabin and a building with tearoom, shop, kiosk and changing facilities for water sports users. There is a separate boat storage facility for Talkin Tarn rowing club and temporary wooden building that the water sports provider operates from.
- 1.3 One million pounds was invested by the Council at Talkin Tarn in 2005/6 including the construction of the Education Cabin, toilet block and site office alongside structural improvements to the tearoom building.

## **2. CURRENT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

- 2.1 Carlisle City Council owns the freehold for Talkin Tarn and the operational management is through a series of internal and external arrangements.

### **2.2 Healthy City Team**

#### **Green Spaces Staff**

- Oversee operation of catering facilities
- Site H&S surveys
- Tree Surveys
- Play area safety surveys
- Water quality surveys
- Bin emptying
- Winter maintenance
- Fire checks
- Site development work
- Water sport club liaison
- Liaising with contractors
- Partnership working opportunities I.e. Fellfoot Forward
- Business development and grant funding

#### **Tearoom Catering Staff**

- Responding to on site public & tourism related enquires and customer liaison in terms of on-site presence.
- Issuing of permits – fishing/open water swimming/boat launch/group water sport permits
- First Aid cover and filling in accident/incident forms.
- First point of contact for incidents/emergencies.
- Liaising with contractors to grant access to buildings on behalf of property services

- Taking bookings for campsite/ education cabin / Alex Boathouse
- Checking insurance documents of visiting 3<sup>rd</sup> parties
- Liaison between water sport provider and customers
- Event management and catering i.e. outdoor theatre, weddings, birthday parties etc.
- Catering related cleaning of premises.

### 2.3 Property Services

- Building/asset maintenance Management
- Klargestor (sewage treatment) management
- Legionella (water) Monitoring
- Equipment serving Boilers/Burglar alarms/Fire alarms
- PAT testing
- Repairs

### 2.4 Neighbourhood Services

- Maintenance of ticket machines in the car park.

### 2.5 Within Talkin Tarn there are also lease/contract arrangements:

- Water sports – Contract (£1,000 income per year plus profit share)
- Sailing Club – Lease (£990 income per year)
- Talkin Rowing Club – Lease. (£1,000 income per year)
- Grazing land – annual agricultural lets c. £1,300 income per year
- Grant income – c.£1,500 income per year

### 2.6 Water safety

- Water safety is managed through internal risk assessments, which are reviewed annually, and individual arrangements with the clubs and water sports provider.
- The on-site catering team are responsible for issuing permits.

2.7 The Green Spaces Team and Tearoom Staff have implemented changes to the operation of the catering service during lockdown and the following period of restrictions. They are currently operating services from the downstairs kiosk, only offering a takeaway service.

2.8 Operating from the downstairs kiosk has allowed service to continue whilst adhering to Covid-19 restrictions. As a result, operating costs have reduced and at the same time increasing the surplus. This type of service has been popular during the pandemic as it allowed a catering service to continue, whilst adhering to restrictions.

### 3. FINANCE

3.1 The budgets for Talkin Tarn are split into two areas; Talkin Tarn (site and property management) and the Boathouse Tearoom (BHTR). Where surpluses in income are achieved, they are re-invested on site as appropriate.

#### 3.2 2021/22 Budget

Talkin Tarn income expectation	(51,500)
Talkin Tarn expenditure expectation	158,600
Talkin Tarn (surplus)/Cost expectation	107,100
BHTR income expectation	(204,700)
BHTR expenditure expectation	185,700
BHTR (surplus)/Cost expectation	(19,000)
Combined (surplus)/Cost expectation	88,100

#### 3.3 Previous actual combined (surplus)/cost expectation

Year	(surplus)/cost	Recharges (included in surplus/cost	Comments
2020/21	69,175.55	83,900.04	Includes reduced opening due to Covid
2019/20	66,776.73	55,099.92	Includes c £50k of additional site improvements
2018/19	27,248.39	55,000.00	Includes c £19k of additional site improvements
2017/18	32,610.60	57,000.00	Includes c £60k of additional site improvements
2016/17	7,548.57	50,100.00	

3.4 The current projected out turn position for 2021/22 before any re-investment into the site is a surplus of c. £47,000. The current plans for re-investment into the site are £11,000 for Dark Sky accreditation and £15,000 for various site improvements. The net surplus is £33,000.

### 4. STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 The site is managed through the Green Spaces staff within the Healthy City Team.

4.2 The general site management forms part of the duties of Green Spaces staff. These staff are not based at Talkin Tarn, but visit when required.

4.3 The catering staff, based at Talkin Tarn, are made up of the Visitor and Catering Manager (0.92 fte), Kitchen Supervisor (0.65 fte), Waiter/Waitress (1.14 fte).

4.4 Catering staff currently play a multi-functional role and act as a first point of contact for visitors and any on site management /safety issues.

## 5. DEVELOPING FUTURE OPTIONS

5.1 Potential next steps to consider:

- Carry out consultation to determine demand for services and potential to deliver Council priorities.
- Explore costs to reconfigure the modernisation of the current building infrastructure in order to allow expansion of the current takeaway service, whilst increasing the outdoor seating and preparation / serving area.
- Assess if there are any further lease opportunities within the management of the site.
- Review Marketing Strategy
- BTSP to set up a task and finish group to look at the issue

## 6. Contribution to the Carlisle Plan Priorities

6.1 “Continue to improve the quality of our local environment and green spaces so that everyone can enjoy living, working in and visiting Carlisle”

### Contact details:

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### Appendices attached to report:

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

### Corporate Implications:

Legal	
Property Services	
Finance	
Equality	
Information Governance	