

Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

Petition Number: [PE01678](#)

Main Petitioner: Robert Reid on behalf of the Scottish Countryside Ranger Association

SUBJECT: NATIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR COUNTRYSIDE RANGER SERVICES IN SCOTLAND

Calls on the Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to implement the strategic framework for the network of Countryside Ranger Services set out in the document *Rangers in Scotland* (SNH 2008).

Background

Countryside Rangers work mostly outdoors, managing land and water, with an emphasis on conservation and recreation. They provide a link between visitors and local communities, farmers, game keepers and many others. They help look after flora and fauna in many settings, including National, Regional and Country Parks, National Nature Reserves, forests, coastal areas, estates and urban green spaces.

Countryside Rangers are employed by around sixty different organisations in Scotland, including local authorities, community organisations and private landowners. [According to Scottish Natural Heritage](#) (SNH) figures (the most recent national figures available), rangers were employed in more than 300 full time equivalent (FTE) posts in 2008.

Prior to 2008, most countryside ranger posts were funded through SNH grants. This situation was changed by the 2009 [Local Government Finance Distribution Review](#), SNH grant funding was integrated into the main settlement allocated to local authorities. The Scottish Countryside Rangers Association (SCRA) reports that this reform, and subsequent “cuts to public expenditure” have “led to fewer Countryside Ranger posts and has had an adverse impact on the partnership working between Ranger Services.” A 2009 Aberdeen City Council [area report](#) on ranger services in Aberdeen notes that this funding was not specifically ring-fenced for the provision of ranger services. [Highland Council](#) opted in summer 2017 to transfer the management of its ranger services to High Life Highland (the council’s leisure service). In announcing the decision, the council noted that the number of countryside ranger posts funded by the council had fallen from 22 to 10.5 FTEs “over the last few years.”

National Strategic Framework

The petition calls for the implementation of the national strategic framework proposed by SNH in its 2008 [Rangers in Scotland](#) document. The framework aims to better define the

role of rangers, and to enhance recognition for the role of rangers among the public, key stakeholders and their employers. SNH specifically calls for local authorities and other employers to be more consistent in their use of 'ranger' in job titles and descriptions, and encourages deployment of the national 'Ranger' logo to help identify rangers. Further, the framework calls for greater reporting locally and nationally of ranger activities. The framework also proposes co-ordinated work between SNH, the SCRA and the Convention of Scottish local Authorities (COSLA) to support continuing professional development programmes and opportunities for rangers.

Scottish Government Action

The Scottish Government has not taken any action on this issue.

Scottish Parliament Action

The Scottish Parliament has not taken any action on this issue.

James Walker

SPICe

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