

Report to:	Council	File #
Date:	September 19	
Subject:	Responsible Freedom Camping summer management and bylaw implementation plan	
Prepared by:	Libby Clifford, Communications and Engagement Manager	
Input sought from:	Jacob Turnbull – Planner, Matt Hoggard –Strategy, Policy and District Plan Manager, Mark Mitchel – Building and Regulatory Manager	
Authorised by:	Angela Oosthuizen – CEO	

1 SUMMARY

This paper provides a summary of the work being planned to help manage freedom camping this summer. Council is currently consulting on a Responsible Freedom camping bylaw. The bylaw will be a key tool for allowing council to manage freedom camping in the district. Assuming changes arising from the consultation process currently underway do not require the bylaw to be re-notified and that the bylaw is not subject to legal challenge, it should be in place by the end of November.

2019/2020 is year one of the bylaw and there are significant one-off costs.

To ensure the bylaw is as successful as possible and that staff and the community have the tools needed to help encourage responsible freedom camping, other tools will include education, enforcement, site development and research.

Council has secured \$271,300 funding from central government to help cover operational costs associated with managing freedom camping in 2019/20.

Council also allocated \$ 140,000 from rates. This provides a total amount of \$411,300 funding to address freedom camping.

The central government funding was applied to on the basis of the following use of funds:

Anticipated expense	Forecast cost
Bylaw development	25,000
Legal review or advice	5,000
Community meetings	-
Hearings & minutes	-
Development of Comms Plan	-
Survey production, carry out and report	36,000
Public relations & education	6,000
Signage (capital)	-
Erecting/maintaining signs	43,000
Portaloos hire, cleaning, delivery	32,800
Recycling stations (new)	-
Recycling station emptying/maint	-
Rubbish bins (new)	-
Rubbish bins (emptying/maint)	-
Enforcement officers	64,000
Add on an assumption for extra costs (grant funded)	-
PPE gear	-
Mobile phones	-
Mobile phones (purchase)	-
Office furniture (new)	-
Computer/laptop/software licence	-
Vehicle purchase	-
Vehicle running costs	15,400
Training for enforcement officers	14,000
Clean-ups & fly-tipping	20,000
Infringement book printing	2,600
Wheel clamps	-
Fencing new camping areas	15,500
Ground improvements	-
	279,300

Future years will incorporate lessons learned this year and should require substantially reduced budget although some ongoing costs will remain.

2 RECOMMENDATION

That the Council:

1. Receives the report

3 BACKGROUND

Freedom camping has grown in significance as both a local and national issues over the last several years. Council has trialled several approaches to managing the issue including advisory signs, education and promoting designated sites for use by freedom campers.

In early 2019 Council resolved to begin developing a bylaw to build on this work and strengthen councils ability to manage the impacts of freedom camping on our environment, residents and businesses. Provided there are no legal challenges and any changes made as a result of the consultation process do not result in the need to renotify, the bylaw should be adopted by the end of November 2019.

The bylaw will be a key tool for allowing council to manage freedom camping in the district. Other tools will include education, enforcement and communications and engagement.

For the purposes of this report, key terms/roles are defined as follows.

Enforcement officers – core regulatory role – warranted officers able to issue and take payment for fines, monitor sites, report, record and respond to issues. Will use a graduated enforcement approach where tools from education to prosecution are applied depending on the severity of the situation.

Ambassadors – ‘hearts and minds’ and education/communication focused roles – promoting awareness of the rules as well as promoting environment and community. Promoting participation in research, connecting visitors to local amenities, businesses, services and experiences

4 DISCUSSION

The total budget of just over \$411,000 allows for;

- completing the bylaw development and adoption process
- a team of enforcement officers/ambassadors to ensure bylaw rules are followed, the visitor experience is enhanced and residents are well connected and supported. The intention is to resource the team enough to allow every designated site and every prohibited site to be visited twice daily. To ensure staff safety enforcement officers /ambassadors will generally work in teams of two. Two teams of two (four staff total) will work from 5am-9am and again from 6pm-10pm seven days a week. Exact rostering/staffing will be adjusted over the season as needed.
- development of designated freedom camping sites and/or prohibited sites with planting, painting, fencing, environmental design. sensors, cctv and improved access to help encourage positive camping behaviours and encourage positive environmental impact. This work will begin in October to ensure it is well underway before the peak of the season.
- research into the economic impact, spending habits and behaviour drivers for campers in kaikoura. This will be carried out between November and January.
- research into community and business perceptions and experiences of campers in kaikoura. This will be carried out in January.
- regulatory signs across the district. This will be installed in stages with essential signs in key areas installed before Christmas and the remainder installed early in the new year
- information boards in key areas. The frames installed last year will be reused.

Risks, benefits and issues

The overall effect of this approach may give rise to the following.

Benefits;

- By starting development of signs, preparation of sites and recruitment of staff in October, Council will be able to use a proactive education/ambassador approach from early November and should be able to have the tools in place to fully support and enforce the bylaw as soon as it is adopted
- The ambassador/enforcement staffing levels will ensure visitors are aware the bylaw is in place and being enforced, deterring non-compliance and allow for staff to help enhance the visitor experience and proactively manage issues. Recruitment will be structured as flexibly as possible to allow ambassadors to also act as enforcement officers and vice versa. Exact hours of work for both roles will be adjusted over the season to allow for changing visitor behaviours, light and site conditions and community needs and perceptions.
- Site preparation and protection works will protect and enhance areas of the district, allowing for a better experience for both residents and visitors
- Effective spending and reporting on use of government funding will build government trust and confidence for future funding rounds
- Most likely of possible approaches to result in neutral or positive community perception and visitor experience reducing likelihood of negative media/social media coverage
- Appropriately manages staff workload.

Risk/issue	Mitigation
Bylaw work overlaps with the work to develop a masterplan for the future of kiwa road affecting timelines or ability to deliver	Clear communication with all parties
Some aspects of the community view the approach as 'overkill'	Ensure quantity of external funding and 'one off' costs is well communicated Focus on positive messages around the desire to improve on last years services and 'get it right' for the first year of the bylaw
Possible lag between bylaw adoption and completion of sign installation, site preparation and officer recruitment means the bylaw is slow to change camper behaviour and address problem areas such as overcrowding/overuse of designated sites, unhygienic toileting practices or misuse of public facilities	'Front load' work wherever possible to get key sites completed first with less popular/sensitive sites completed later Manage expectations with stakeholders and community through frequent proactive communication Apply conditions within the bylaw to close sites if necessary
Service requests around freedom camping are not dealt with in a way that inspires trust and confidence	Ensure correct pathways and resources are in place to escalate requests. Proactively manage the expectations of those submitting requests Use as a case study/example to continue improving the wider customer service request system.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council has secured \$271,300 funding from central government to help cover operational costs associated with managing freedom camping in 2019/20. It also allocated \$140,000 from rates for the 2019/2020 year. All the above proposed options can be delivered within this existing funding.

Council can opt to spend less than what was budgeted given that greater external funding was achieved. Operating expenditure budgets cannot be carried forward and this would represent a favourable variance to budget.

6 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

6.1 Policy

This matter is not a matter of significance in terms of the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

6.2 Legislation

Proposed options are consistent with the local government act and the Freedom Camping Act 2011.

6.3 Community Outcomes Supported

The work is in support of the following community outcomes.



We value, protect and enhance Kaikōura unique natural environment and biodiversity and sustainably manage disposal of waste.



Our community is resilient, safe and well and has their essential needs met



Residents and visitors enjoy an improved quality of life in our District.

7 COMMUNITY VIEWS

Community expectations are that an active approach (enforcement, education, ambassadors) should be taken to manage the negative impacts associated with freedom camping.

Feedback from the annual plan 2019/2020 consultation was heavily in favour of an enforcement based approach supported with signs, enforcement officers and wider education.

Anecdotal evidence through staff engagements, media and social media and through the responsible camping working group suggests a strong community desire for council to be proactive around managing freedom camping.