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Dear James

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017: Three Year Report

Thank you for submitting the Park Authority's report on the operation of its Camping Management Byelaws three years after their implementation on 1 March 2017, fulfilling one of the administrative conditions set by Scottish Ministers on approval of the Byelaws in January 2016.

The report helpfully builds on the narrative and information contained in the Park Authority's annual update reports to Ministers over the past three years, fulfilling the second condition of approval of the Byelaws. These have been helpful in tracking the positive progress made by the Park Authority since the Byelaws' introduction.

I wish to acknowledge the commitment and hard work by the Park Authority staff in implementing the Byelaws and in preparing a comprehensive and very helpful three year report. The report reflects the considerable achievement by them, with the support and cooperation of communities, partners and visitors, to deliver a major programme of work. This has enabled the successful introduction of the Byelaws and camping management measures in their first three years of operation.

I am pleased that the findings of the report generally show a number of positive impacts in terms of both the environment and behaviour, demonstrating how effective the byelaws and associated camping management measures have been in reducing instances of environmental damage and irresponsible behaviour in the National Park as a direct result of implementation. It is particularly encouraging that one of the key aims of the Byelaws and

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supporting measures has been achieved in managing down the very high volume of people camping in popular lochshore areas in order to protect these fragile environments to lower levels than before the Byelaws were introduced.

I do note that whilst improvements in both environmental quality and camping behaviour have been seen over the three seasons so far, it is, understandably, still relatively early to show long term trends. The report also recognises that there are some specific issues such as litter, in areas such as Loch Earn, and that enhancing camping provision may need more time or further action in addition to the Byelaws.

However, the report's recommendations represent a cogent and pragmatic plan of action for the Park Authority and its partners to take forward in the next few years to address the issues recognised in the report. I am therefore content to endorse them as the next steps in building upon the first three years of the successful operation of the Byelaws and camping management measures.

It is good to see that stakeholder and community engagement will remain a priority, and will continue to be seen as an important way of enabling discussion and feedback on the future operation of the Byelaws and on wider visitor management pressures. I am sure that this, as part of the implementation of the recommendations, will help strengthen the widespread acceptance of the Byelaws by the majority of campers, residents and businesses in the National Park, ensuring that future sustainable management of camping remains an important element of visitor management to protect the Park's environmentally sensitive areas and promote responsible access and enjoyment.



MAIRI GOUGEON

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