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Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority  
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22 July 2021

Our ref: CDM161260

Dear Vivien

Town and Country planning (Scotland) Act 1997

Formation of new footpath and installation of lookout structures near to Trossachs Pier in Trossachs Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/ Ben A'an and Brenachoile Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Thank you for the useful site meeting and subsequent discussions which have allowed us to better understand the nature of proposal and its impacts on the protected areas.

This letter updates our advice contained in our letter of 22 February 2021. In summary, it is our view a Habitats Regulations Appraisal could conclude that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the European site. We therefore do not object to this proposal.

We have re-visited the site with both the applicant, their agents and the Park's planners and ecologists. This has given us the opportunity to better understand the proposal and the nature of the potential impacts. On the basis of these on-site discussions and additional advice we have concluded that the proposal will not undermine the conservation objectives of the Trossachs Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Our advice is based on our view that the path and/or its construction will not result in any loss of extent of qualifying habitat (the key conservation objective). No functioning woodland habitat will

be lost. The proposal will result in changes in the qualities of the habitat; some loss of structure and ground flora, in a very limited area within the protected area, but in our view these changes are *de minimis* in relation to the functioning of the woodland ecosystem within the overall site. Furthermore, we consider that a hand-built footpath could be constructed in such a way as to minimise the loss of ground flora and woodland function, by minimising impacts on both tree roots and the hydrology of the site. For example by incorporating a raised boardwalk for some sections of the path. We also note that no trees will be lost. We also believe that further impacts from people trampling the ground flora are unlikely to undermine conservation objectives due to the proposed design of the watchtower and the wet and boggy nature of the ground adjacent to the path.

We have also concluded that disturbance to woodland mammals and birds is unlikely to be significant enough to undermine this conservation objective, a substantial part of the path route is close to the existing car park and the species already are disturbed. This car park, pre-dates the designation of the SAC and therefore part of the baseline condition. The remaining area which may be disturbed is very small and therefore any additional disturbance will be of very limited extent in relation to the overall site.

If you have any questions about this response, please contact Paul Roberts ([paul.roberts@nature.scot](mailto:paul.roberts@nature.scot)). This advice is provided by Scottish Natural Heritage, acting under its operating name NatureScot.

Yours sincerely,

[by email]

**Ian Bray**

Area Manager - Forth

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