

Mr Rob Gibson MSP  
Convener, RACCE  
The Scottish Parliament  
EDINBURGH  
EH99 1SP

---

26 January 2016

Dear Rob

## **LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY CAMPING MANAGEMENT BYELAWS**

I am writing to inform the committee that today I will be announcing my decision, taken after very careful consideration, to approve, subject to modification, the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority's application for new camping management byelaws across four management zones within the National Park.

Having visited the National Park over the summer months to see for myself the range of issues being faced, and from meeting key representatives on both sides of the debate, many of whom acknowledge the existence of problems, I was left in absolutely no doubt that steps must be taken to manage issues more effectively and that proportionate camping management byelaws are an appropriate and necessary part of the solution alongside additional camping provision.

I am satisfied that the measures will provide the means to manage camping on a long-term basis to safeguard fragile environmental areas of the Park via a more sustainable approach to visitor management. The ability to camp by a range of users will be enhanced via investment in improved facilities, bookable pitches and the availability of permits within the camping management zones, and the ability to 'wild camp' outside the limited management zones all-year and in the management zones out of season are unaffected by the measures. I do not consider that the measures are incompatible with the right to responsible access provided via the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, which is clear that access rights are dependent on responsible behaviour, respect for privacy, safety, livelihoods and Scotland's environment.

As the committee will be aware, this issue has generated a lot of interest and a broad range of views. Some will, of course, be disappointed by the decision, but many will welcome it,

including community councils, local residents and businesses and a number of national organisations.

In addition to formally modifying the byelaws to reduce the period of operation by 1 month and to delay implementation until 1 March 2017 to allow the initial provision of 300 camping places as part of the Park's longer-term camping development plans (with the addition of more provision in subsequent years), I have asked the Park to provide a formal report of a review of the operation of the byelaws no later than 3 years after implementation and to provide an annual update to Ministers.

I would be happy to update the committee in due course on the implementation of these arrangements.

Kind regards

**AILEEN MCLEOD**