The costs of enforcing camping byelaws

Description

Another interesting revelation from the Board Strategy Group minutes see post 2nd March) is about the the failure of the LLTNP Authority to consider properly the cost of enforcing the proposed camping byelaws.

At the meeting of 7th May: â??FL (Fiona Logan, their then Chief Exec) advised that the patrol of East Loch Lomond has taken considerable Ranger resource to implementâ?• and the â??Chair recommended that cognisance is given to the costs of resourcing, implementation, budgets and prioritisation of project spend in relation to visitor management in due courseâ?• By the August meeting however it was decided that â??The resource implications relating to introduction of any byelaw will be considered more fully when the project moves into the operational phaseâ?•. In other words no consideration would be given to costs until the byelaws were approved.

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This is appalling in terms of governance â?? the Scottish Government has to consider the resource implications of every new law introduced by the Scottish Parliament so why should this also not apply to National Park? There was not a mention of all this in the Parkâ??s recommendations to Ministers. It is further evidence that the byelaws have been driven by political and personal interests rather than the public interest.

One of the 

elaws was that prevention of problems associated with rogue pposite has happened and the number of ranger patrols has increased significantly since the bye-laws were

introduced as is shown by FOI 2015 009 Response:

2011 208
2012 670
2013 321
2014 389

I discussed the reasons for this in section 4 of my Report on Your Park consultation process and critique of proposals 150618 (corrected version) but its partly because the Park is playing a game of cat and mouse with backpackers walking the West Highland Way. The proposed new management zones

will be about ten times the size of east Loch Lomond â?? the resource implications are incredible, unless of course the Park can persuade people to accept the byelaws. I think this is highly unlikely because the byelaws are so contrary to the spirit of our access legislation and the Park has failed to listen to recreational organisations.

No consideration either has been given to the resource implications of people simply ignoring the byelaws â?? see the piece by Michael Donnelly at http://www.robedwards.com/2015/11/fury-over-proposal-to-ban-camping-by-roads.html It took the resources of four police officers to charge Jason Maclean, who everyone accepted had nothing wrong except ignore the camping ban, and the case against him was dropped after he refused to plead either guilty or not guilty. Now of course there is no guarantee that the Procurator Fiscal will not prosecute people in future who refuse to plead, but the resource implications of the courts trying to enforce the camping byelaws are significant and they are likely to have better things to do with their timeâ?¦â?¦â?¦..like prosecuting people for anti-social behaviour which is all that has ever been needed to deal with rogue camping.

The local communities who asked questions in their responses to the Your Park consultation about whether sufficient resources would be available to enforce a camping ban were right to do so. The Park has never answered these questions and whatever figures they have needs to be made public. The truth is no-one has any idea of what resource might be needed, as that depends in part how people respond, but we can predict that if the byelaws are not to collapse complete from Day 1 that significant resources will need to be diverted from other aspects of visitor management â?? recall the reference above by the Parkâ??s convener Linda McKayâ??s on â??prioritisation of project spendâ?•.

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I predict that the camping byelaws will be unenforceable and that the Park will waste a large amount of scarce resources that would be much better spent elsewhere before this becomes apparent. We need a full cost benefit analysis now â?? a case for Audit Scotland.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. Camping bye laws
2. Governance
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