The Loch Chon con goes to planning

Description



Part of the proposed camping area at Loch Chon. Instead of being able to choose where to camp pe have to use fixed pitches covered in woodchip

Today, the LLTNPA will decide its planning application to itself for a campsite at Loch Chon. There are now 54 documents associated with this proposal and I hope the members of the Planning Committee read the objections as well as the Committee Report.

There are several issues about the campsite which are very relevant to the application and which I have not picked up previously (see here):

- While the proposal to place some of the camping pitches on wooden platforms has been dropped, its been replaced by something just as stupid: *â??The camping proposal would involve the formation of 26 camping pitches. Apart from the scraping of the soil by hand where necessary (to form a level area),and the laying of chipped bark, no physical development is required to form the pitches.â?*• It appears no-one in the LLTNPA knows a thing about camping and has simply not bothered to ask campers what its like camping on bark chip. As every camper knows grass would be infinitely preferable but it appears the LLTNPA is going to clear the grass to make the whole site look like a suburban play area.
- Also up for approval is â??*The construction of new access roads (compacted hardcore gravel surfacing), parking areas (grid with gravel infill) and footpaths (compacted hardcore gravel or bark surface with natural edge) will be sympathetic to the rural setting.â?*• Instead of people wandering alongside the loch creating minimal damage to find a place to camp it appears the LLTNPA is going to construct paths to every pitch.
-

default watermark

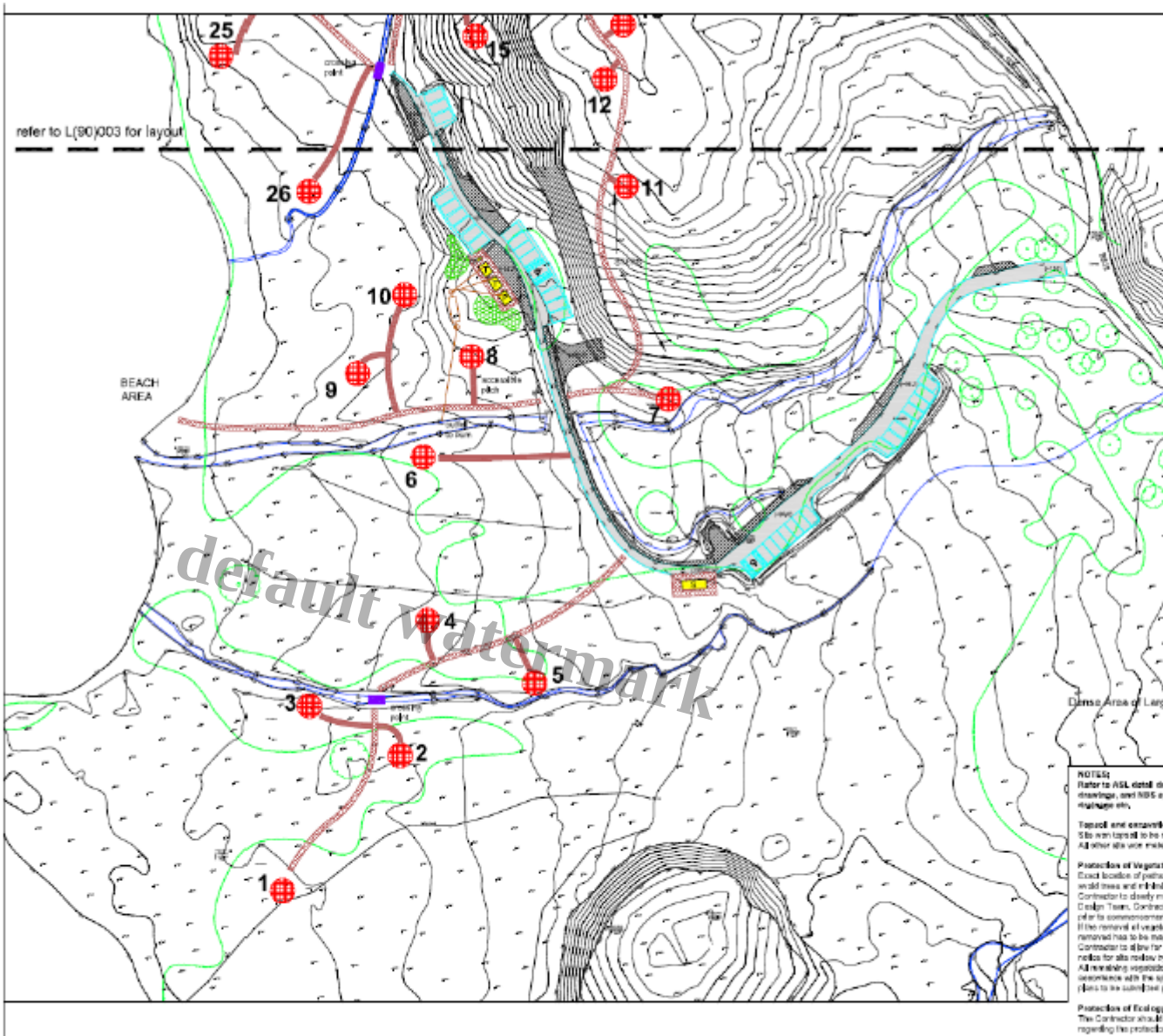

Figure 3: Site Layout of Southern Part of Site

Dark brown is hard core, dotted brown woodchip tracks

- Consider the amount of vegetation that will be lost through all this path and pitch creation, not to mention new car parking areas, and compare this to the small bare patches created by people camping in the same spot which the LLTNPA claimed was so significant that it justified removing rights of access and the introduction of its proposed camping byelaws. The Loch Chon campsite will destroy more vegetation than wild campers have ever done within the four proposed management zones. Now this impact might not matter â?? the smaller impacts of wild campers are completely irrelevant and should have never been used by the Minister at the time, Aileen McLeod, as reason to approve the proposed camping byelaws â?? if there was demand for a campsite of this size but there isnâ??t (see here). For the LLTNPA to blame campers for destroying vegetation and then to destroy a lot more itself, for a facility in the wrong place, is complete hyprocrisy.

I hope the Planning Committee will discuss the physical impacts on the land earmarked for the campsite and minute why they believe the impacts of this development are of so little concern compared to the impact of wild campers, why they believe campers want to camp on woodchip and why all the pathwork is necessary .

In doing so they would be well advised to consider this contribution from Ross MacBeath commenting on the application:

> *Campers know best*
>
> *Over decades of camping in the National Park a number of preferred sites have been selected by campers as desirable for their own particular outdoor pursuit. This natural spread out camping model is undoubtedly the best for the environment, best for outdoor recreation and the best for communities. To that end if it is the Park Authority intention to ignore the wishes of Park Users and to implement formal campsites instead of the preferred informal camping currently enjoyed then they should consider creating smaller sized spread out developments to both protect the environment and provide choice for the many different outdoor pursuits that require to use tents in different geographic locations. The Park Authority have failed to consult the users of camping facilities as so fail to understand camping is not merely about staying overnight in a tent and that it is important to have the ability to pitch a tent in an area that suits your outdoor pursuit or personal preference.*

default watermark

I also believe it would be in the public interest that individual Board members on the Planning Committee declare whether they have been involved in any discussion on campsite design, size or financing at the secret Board â??Briefing Sessionsâ?• they attend. I also think the Committee should ask and minute whether the LLTNPA has signed a contract to purchase the shipping containers that will serve as a storage area and as toilets. Although the toilet blocks will now be clad in larch, thanks to pressure from Strathard Community Council, there has been no explanation of why ex-shipping containers are required or suitable for this site. I suspect the reason Gordon Watson has refused to budge on this is that the LLTNPA may have already agreed to purchase the containers. If true, its very difficult to see how the Planning Committee could take an objective decision.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. camping
2. LLTNPA
3. planning

Date Created
September 26, 2016
Author
nickkempe

default watermark