The Loch Chon campsite and the LLTNPA camping plan

Description

Following the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authorityâ??s planning approval of the Loch Chon campsite (https://parkswatchscotland.co.uk/2016/09/26/loch-chon-con-goes-planning/) I submitted further FOI requests to try and understand better what I believe is a stupid decision and a waste of resources.

For a long time now been treating all my queries about the management of the National Park either as Freedom of Information/Enviromental Information requests or as complaints. Their normal practice has been to divulge as little information as possible but sometimes they add commentary in order to justify what they are doing (which to me shows they are misusing the FOI/EIR rules to suit their own purposes). Both approaches are evident in their latest FOI/EIR response on Loch Chon eir-2016-054-response.

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On the one hand the Response says that the Park hold NO information about why the LLTNPA rather than Forestry Commission Scotland are developing the Loch Chon campsite. I must say I find this incredible. There must have been some discussion with FCS about the use of their land by the LLTNPA but the Park, rather than being open about their discussions with FCS, have chosen to interpret my question in the narrowest possible sense as being about why FCS chose not to develop the campsite. I will ask again for all correspondence between FCS and LLTNPA about the development of Loch Chon and also ask FCS. I believe its in the public interest to know what FCS think of the development of a 26 place campsite on their land where there is no evidence a campsite of this size is needed and believe its unacceptable that our public authorities are not being open about this.

On the other hand while the Response confirms that the shipping containers which will be used for the toilet blocks at Loch Chon had been bought PRIOR to the decision about the planning application, the Park adds the comment that if the planning application had been refused, the containers would have been used elsewhere. The LLTNPA are obviously keen to avoid any legal challenge that the planning decision was prejudiced because the Park Board had already decided that this campsite should go ahead. To cover their back the Park have also written into their Board report on the camping plan that the shipping containers could be moved in future if better used elsewhere. It is not clear though from the Response whether the Park has bought other shipping containers than those destined for Loch Chon for Â£16,512 but I think this prior purchase explains why the Park refused to consider alternatives to shipping containers for this site as suggested by the Strathard Community Council. As importantly there has been no consultation at all with the people who actually camp on the lochshores about what they think.

The LLTNPA is about to convene a stakeholder group to consult on future camping plans. I hope that that group insists from the start that the LLTNPA needs to be transparent about all decision making on their camping plans and engage with the people who actually camp in the National Park.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. camping
2. Forestry Commission Scotland
3. LLTNPA

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Author
nickkempe

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