

Flamingo Land – why would SE want to transfer land to the National Park Authority?

Description

In my two posts on the Flamingo Land story ([see here](#)) I covered some of the history of the pier head area in Balloch: how the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) in 2015 had offered up the land it leased from Scottish Enterprise (SE) there to the preferred developer for the West Riverside site; how the land the LLTNPA owned at the pier head was included in Flamingo Land's first planning application without protest; how this June LLTNPA staff recommended a master plan for the area and costing £2.4m without explaining what this money was for or whether it includes land that SE could, under its "Exclusivity Agreement", transfer to Flamingo Land.

That something untoward is going on is suggested by this email which I obtained through an FOI request in 2022:

From: Emma Yendell
Sent: 13 April 2022 20:35
To: XXXXXX <XXXXXXXX@streets-uk.com>
Subject: RE: Lomond Banks, Update for LLTNP as Land Owner

Hi XXXXX

I'm emailing to confirm that we have received your emails, apologies for the delay in confirming this and we appreciate your updates.

At the moment we continue to focus on working through the (hopefully final) details around the land transfer from Scottish Enterprise to the Park Authority of that part of the Slipway car park which is in their ownership. As previously intimated, our intention is to secure this land ownership before taking forward any significant appraisal of the whole pierhead site, which as you know involves careful consideration of a range of stakeholders and partnership interests. We are continuing to work very closely with Scottish Enterprise on the transfer and our overriding interest remains to ensure that suitable and sufficient public access to the pierhead area associated with all of its current uses is maintained, as well as ensuring that all legal rights of access and egress held by the various parties are upheld.

I am just finishing up for leave now that our financial year end is over and will be back at the beginning of May. I understand that the planning application is likely to be submitted by or

The email is addressed to someone at Streets UK, who act as agents for Flamingo Land, and the first paragraph is a reference to a meeting they had been trying to organise with adjacent landowners and managers.

The interesting bit, however, is the revelation that the LLTNPA were working to have the land they leased from SE at the pier head transferred to their ownership. Moreover this was “hopefully” at the “final details” stage. That has never been reported to publicly to a LLTNPA board meeting.

So who authorised this and for what purpose? And why have the agents of Flamingo Land been told but not the public?

In principle I believe no enterprise agency should be allowed to own land in a National Park, the aims of the two are incompatible. Scottish Enterprise at Balloch and Highlands and Islands Enterprise at Cairn Gorm have both caused nothing but trouble and, as long documented on parkswatch, have played an active role in subverting the statutory aims of both National Parks.

In hindsight the land the enterprise agencies own at Balloch and Cairn Gorm should have been transferred to the new National Park Authorities on their creation. In principle therefore the transfer of SE’s land at the pier head to the LLTNPA should be a good thing.

HOWEVER, this is a National Park Authority that has a long history of supporting SE and the fact these negotiations have been kept secret should make everyone suspicious.

Related to these concerns are a number of questions:

- What’s happened since 2022? Have negotiations collapsed, as they did when West Dunbartonshire Council asked SE to transfer the rights to the River Leven voluntarily? Or have SE and the LLTNPA reached a secret deal, as they did with the appointment of Flamingo Land as the preferred developer for the West Riverside site, and deliberately delayed the announcement until after the Lomond Banks planning application is decided?
- What was the cost of the transfer going to be to the LLTNPA? Was it free, in which case would the same apply if the new local community development trust requested it, or was the LLTNPA going to have to pay? If so, how much and how? And was the finance going to be raised by selling another asset?

It will be interesting to see if the report in the Flamingo Land application due to be published on Monday explains the 2022 negotiations on the land transfer and what the position is now. If it doesn’t it will indicate that the LLTNPA has a major conflict of interest in the Flamingo Land planning application which it has failed to declare.

Could LLTNPA staff, for example, be under the impression the transfer of the land from SE dependant on the Flamingo Land application be passed? Unless and until the LLTNPA explains everything – and if there is nothing to hide that should be easy – they should not be allowed by Scottish Ministers to determine the Flamingo Land planning application on 16th September as planned.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. Cairn Gorm
2. flamingo land
3. HIE
4. LLTNPA
5. Local communities
6. planning
7. Scottish Enterprise
8. Scottish Government

Date Created

September 1, 2024

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