

**National Park Authority**

**Camping Development Framework 2019-2023**



# **Camping Development Framework 2019-2023**



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### 1. Executive Summary

The Camping Development Framework 2019-2023 builds on the Camping Development Strategy 2016, expanding the focus to the whole National Park.

The Framework is guided by the outcomes of the National Park Partnership Plan 2018-2023.

The vision set out in the Framework is that:

***Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is an area that offers a wide variety of sustainable, high quality camping experiences for people from a wide range of backgrounds.***

It sets out the key challenges to achieving this vision including volume and behaviour of campers and the infrastructure in place to support camping.

It identifies that achieving this vision requires input from not only the National Park Authority itself but also partners, landowners and communities.

The National Park Authority's primary focus will be on continuing to manage camping numbers and behaviours in certain areas of the National Park which experience these pressures.

We will also focus on refining and improving the camping provision and infrastructure we own or manage to further improve the experience of all visitors.

The Framework also explores ways in which we can work with and support other partners, landowners and communities to develop and further improve camping provision and associated services throughout the National Park.

Six distinctive geographical areas of the National Park have been identified and examined to assess the current camping provision, as well as recreation opportunities, special landscape qualities and transport links. From this information, opportunities for the creation of new camping provision and associated facilities have been identified.

The National Park Authority will also look beyond the National Park's boundaries to work with partners from across Scotland to share best practice and develop solutions together.



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While the Camping Management Byelaws 2017 are helping to address volume and behavioural pressures in certain areas, the Framework identifies some issues which require more targeted approaches such as irresponsible toileting and fire lighting.

The increasing use of motorhomes is a trend that requires more detailed work. This will include research to understand the needs and journeys of motorhome users visiting the National Park; identifying gaps in services including overnight motorhome spaces and waste disposal facilities; advice and support for those looking to create motorhome accommodation or services.

Taking into account guiding principles and key considerations, Section 3 of the Framework sets out the areas of activity the National Park Authority will focus on over the next four years in order to achieve our vision for camping in the National Park. These are based on the following management responses; infrastructure, information, education and engagement, enforcement and monitoring. Section 3.2 sets clear actions and targets to enable resources to be focussed effectively and progress to be measured.

## 2. Position, Principles and Pressures

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park was formed in 2002 under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. The core National Park aims in relation to the designated area of the Park are:

- a) to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area,
- b) to promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area,
- c) to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public, and
- d) to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

These aims are to be pursued collectively. However, if there is conflict between the first aim and any of the others then greater weight must be given to the first aim (section 9.6 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act).

### 2.1. Position

Our Vision:

***Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is an area that offers a wide variety of sustainable, high quality camping experiences for people from a wide range of backgrounds.***



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This document sets out how the National Park Authority aim to work with partners, communities and landowners to achieve this vision and support delivery of the following outcomes in the [National Park Partnership Plan 2018-2023](#):

- **Outcome 5:** The National Park has a wide variety of well promoted and managed outdoor recreation opportunities providing for a range of abilities and interests.
- **Outcome 8:** The most popular parts of the National Park which experience pressures are managed to ensure that the quality of the environment, visitor experience and community life are protected and enhanced.
- **Outcome 9:** People from a wider range of backgrounds are enjoying, valuing and helping manage the National Park. It is used more as a place for people to realise the personal health and benefits of active recreation and connecting with nature.

Its designation as a National Park recognises the importance of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs in terms of its special landscapes, ecosystems and wildlife, its multiple recreation opportunities and its significance as an asset to Scotland's economy as a tourism destination.

With 50% of Scotland's population living within an hour's drive of the National Park and a wide range of recreation opportunities available across its 720 square miles, the area offers an accessible way for people to enjoy the many benefits of being outdoors and connecting with nature.

Camping is not only a popular outdoor recreation activity in its own right, but is often linked in with the many other pursuits that can be enjoyed in and around the hills, woodland, and lochs of the National Park. This means that camping can provide multiple benefits not only to those coming to camp but also to the communities and businesses of the National Park.

Building on the previous Camping Development Strategy, published in 2016, this document identifies opportunities to improve the camping experience throughout the whole National Park and all year round. This will include the National Park Authority's approach to managing camping numbers and behaviours in certain areas of the National Park which experience pressures, but also ways in which we can work with and support others to develop and further improve camping provision and associated services throughout the National Park.

This will be achieved through the use of Infrastructure, Information, Education and Engagement, Enforcement and Monitoring.

Whilst we recognise that the term camping can be used to cover a range of accommodation including but not exclusive to caravans, hammocks and 'glamping' pods, this framework will focus on the two of the most popular forms of overnighting outdoors in the National Park; camping by tent and the use of motorhomes. These types of camping currently have the biggest environmental and socioeconomic impact on the National Park and are the most accessible to a wide range of visitors. The provision of alternative types of camping provision will be managed through the Local Development Plan.



### 2.2 Principles

In working towards achieving our vision, in addition to adhering to the four National Park aims and the spirit of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, we will follow these principles:

**Camping in the National Park will complement what makes this place special.** Camping should cause minimal impact to the landscape and ecology and fit aesthetically into the landscape. Camping activity should also not be detrimental to the experience or safety of people who live and work within the National Park or to other visitors.

**Camping in the National Park will be accessible to people from all backgrounds.** There should be a mix of camping experiences available for all budgets. There should be high quality opportunities for campers of all ages and abilities. Sustainable transport links should be promoted and influenced where possible.

**Camping in the National Park will provide a high quality of visitor experience.** Campers should feel welcome, safe, catered for and should be encouraged to feel a sense of stewardship for the area and connection to nature. Camping should offer good opportunities to experience the landscape of the National Park and be balanced with recreational visitor experiences on offer in the same areas.

**Camping in the National Park will provide opportunities for socio-economic benefits to local communities.** An increase in camping provision and associated services should be used to encourage sustainable development in areas of the National Park where evidence shows there is a clearly identified need.

### 2.3 Pressures

We have identified four main challenges to overcome in order to achieve our vision for camping in the National Park. These challenges are not exclusive to the National Park and are faced in other areas of Scotland and internationally.

**Volume** - The phrase 'overtourism' refers to a volume of visitors and behaviours having a detrimental effect on the experience that attracts them there in the first place, as well as on the local environment and community life. Within the context of camping in the National Park, this type of pressure is mainly concentrated around popular lochshore destinations that are easily accessible by car. A high volume and frequency of use can damage these often sensitive locations.

Managing this pressure needs to be carefully balanced with the economic benefit of tourism in the National Park. This particular pressure does therefore provide opportunities to potentially develop new markets in other areas that would benefit from new investment and spread the visitor footfall more widely across the National Park.



**Behaviour** - While the majority of people camping and visiting the National Park do share a sense of respect and stewardship for this special place, unfortunately irresponsible behaviour by a minority of visitors continues to be an issue. This behaviour includes damage to the environment through the destruction of flora and fauna, littering, inappropriate toileting, poorly sited fires, unsafe parking, excessive noise and general antisocial behaviour which is often amplified through the misuse of alcohol and illegal drugs. As well as impacting on the physical environment this is also detrimental to the sense of place and the experience for other visitors and residents. The majority of these issues coincide with the high volume of visitors to the most accessible parts of the National Park.

The National Park Authority has worked hard to address this over many years through education and engagement, both on the ground and through dedicated education programmes, as well as close working with partners including Police Scotland. More recently the National Park Authority has invested heavily in further addressing these behaviours with the introduction of Camping Management Byelaws and the creation of camping permit areas and low cost campsites at Loch Chon and Loch Achray in the Trossachs, in addition to those at Loch Lubnaig, north of Callander, and the Forestry Commission Scotland's campsite at Salloch on East Loch Lomond. While initial signs are that these measures are having an impact on easing these pressures, it is important to recognise that it will take time to change negative behaviours and additional measures need to be employed alongside the byelaws to tackle specific behaviours.

**Infrastructure** - There has been some positive investment in camping provision within the National Park in recent years by the National Park Authority and others, both in low cost opportunities and the luxury end of the market. However longer term, the number of private low cost, formal campsites has declined over time as result of market conditions. This means that currently demand can exceed supply in the busiest periods in some areas where there has been a reduction in low cost touring tent spaces, often replaced by luxury 'glamping' offers such as pods and cabins. We will seek opportunities to support landowners, communities and partners to increase provision in these areas as long as this is carefully balanced with impact on the environment and local community. We will also look to provide advice and guidance on areas such as campsite and motorhome licensing and planning to allow others to overcome potential barriers to creating new camping provision or diversification of existing businesses to incorporate camping and motorhome use.

The variable quality and provision of visitor infrastructure can also have an impact on the experience of visitors including those coming to camp. For example, over time there has been a reduction of some visitor facilities such as public toilets, even at popular visitor hubs like Balmaha and Duck Bay on Loch Lomond. For motorhome users, there are very few places to empty waste and grey water as a standalone service. As the National Park Authority does not have responsibility for all visitor sites and facilities we need to continue to work in partnership to raise the quality of visitor infrastructure across the National Park.



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### 2.4 How we will make our vision a reality

Ensuring the National Park offers a wide variety of sustainable, high quality camping experiences for people from a wide range of backgrounds requires input from a range of organisations, businesses, landowners and communities all of whom play a part in welcoming and facilitating campers.

The National Park Authority recognises that it has an important role in this and under the previous Camping Development Strategy we invested in the creation of camping permit areas for tents and motorhomes and two campsites offering basic facilities at popular lochshore locations. As well as this investment in new infrastructure, substantial resources have been allocated to managing the visitor pressures that camping can bring through the introduction of the Camping Management Byelaws 2017.

Under this new framework, the National Park Authority will shift its primary focus from the creation of new infrastructure to refining what has been developed and working with others to identify appropriate opportunities to increase and improve camping provision and associated facilities.

Where we will invest in camping it will primarily be in low cost options to improve the economic sustainability of existing facilities. We will continue to monitor the investments that we have made to ensure that we are providing the best experience for campers and the people who live and work in the National Park. It is hoped that these facilities can be used as exemplars for future developments by others. We will look at ways to support private and community investment in camping provision through advice and the sharing of information.

We will continue to refine our camping management measures and explore innovative solutions to addressing the associated pressures such as littering and irresponsible toileting. Where there are gaps in our knowledge we will promote or aim to undertake relevant research to ensure that the information base is improved.

### **3. Provision and Place**

There is a wide range of camping provision on offer across the National Park, however the spread of accommodation types varies across different areas. While the most popular locations for people camping are areas such as Loch Lomond or lochshores in the Trossachs, there are other camping opportunities available throughout the National Park.

The National Park boasts a world renowned and diverse landscape famed for its rural beauty and tranquillity and many forms of water. Understanding the varied landscapes within the National Park, with their own qualities, experiences and sensitivities and associated recreational opportunities, is important when considering where and what form of investment in camping provision may be appropriate.



It is also important to look outside the National Park, to ensure that unnecessary investments are not made or that management measures do not have a detrimental impact on neighbouring communities.

### 3.1 Exploring the current offer

Whether camping solo on a mountain or by a beautiful lochshore with friends and family, there are many ways to enjoy camping in the National Park:

**Wild camping** - This is defined in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code as lightweight camping, in small numbers, for two or three nights in any one place. The freedom to 'wild camp' is provided by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 which put into law opportunities for people to experience Scotland's landscape. It is typified by activities such as hillwalkers back-packing over the mountains, kayakers on otherwise inaccessible loch shores and cycle tourists stopping for the night. Here there will be no infrastructure or facilities, merely enough space to pitch a tent. The Code advises campers to leave no trace by:

- Taking away all your litter.
- Removing all traces of your tent pitch and of any open fire following the guidance for lighting fires.
- Not causing any pollution.

Whilst a car might be used to get to the start of a destination, the wild camper is generally not found near to their vehicle. Wild camping is permissible under access legislation throughout the majority of the National Park, with seasonal camping byelaws in effect in some limited areas of the National Park between March and September.

**Informal camping** - A large number of people coming to camp in the National Park do want something akin to a wild camping experience but also want to stay in accessible lochshore locations close to their vehicles. While there has long been a history of people enjoying this sort of informal camping across Scotland, within the National Park it is often concentrated on the same popular locations, where high volumes of use can cause detrimental impacts. Additionally this type of camping is not always undertaken in the spirit of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code with some campers causing damage to the environment and diminishing the experience of other visitors and people who live and work in the National Park.

Following the success of the East Loch Lomond Camping Management Byelaws 2011 in addressing these issues, seasonal Camping Management Byelaws were introduced in 2017 in order to protect some of the National Park's most popular lochshores from environmental damage caused by the high volume of visitors and long-standing issues with antisocial behaviour from some campers.

The current byelaws create Camping Management Zones, where, between March and September, campers need to camp in a designated permit area or a campsite. For people





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looking for informal camping experiences in the National Park, the areas covered by the Camping Management Zones continue to be the most popular destinations.

Camping permit areas have no formal facilities but have basic onsite signage to delineate the area. Some of these permit areas may have services available close by. In return for a small administrative fee, a camping permit provides a temporary exemption from the byelaws allowing informal camping for people looking for a wilder experience in popular parts of the National Park.

**Campsites** - There are a range of campsites throughout the National Park offering different levels of facilities, from those with hot showers, shops, play parks and electric hook ups, to those with only basic facilities such as fresh water and toilets. Campsites also vary in capacity from small sites with four to 10 pitches in the grounds of a bunkhouse/ hostel or camping pod provision, to very large multi-use sites with the largest offering more than 110 pitches. The level of facilities, size of the site, number, type, spacing of pitches and the style of landscaping determine how a site feels.

Campsites are evolving and many existing sites are diversifying with alternatives such as yurts and wigwams. Some of the static caravan sites are also improving their visual impact with the introduction of timber chalet style caravans.

Other sites are bringing users an outdoor experience similar to wild camping but still providing basic facilities such as fresh water, toilets and car parking. The National Park offers this type of campsite at Loch Chon, Loch Achray, Loch Lubnaig, Salloch with even fewer facilities at the small Inchcailloch island campsite, accessible only by boat and providing composting toilets but no running water supply.

With a lower density of camping pitches often set into existing woodland to give campers their own space, these sites bridge the gap between campsites with a high level of facilities and true wild camping.

In 2017, Visit Scotland identified this type of adventurous camping as a growing trend, saying it *'could be identified as an ample opportunity for landowners in Scotland's rural landscape to create incremental gains within the Scottish visitor economy, by offering basic amenities on their land to attract tourists to partake in their own 'wild camping' experience in Scotland at a premium. It could also offer existing campsites the opportunity to rebrand themselves as a wild camping destination to attract a new market or consumers, who are seeking cultural and adventure experiences, without overspending to improve their product to cater for an existing market'*.

**Motorhomes and Campervans** - The popularity of campervans and motorhomes has significantly increased in recent years. In Europe, where the use of motorhomes and campervans is far more established, they are often well catered for with information available and services such as Aires. These are specific places, such as car parks and farms, which allow motorhomes and campervans to stop overnight, often for free. The picture in the UK is



very different, often leading to confusion for motorhome and campervan users about where they can stop and where they will be able to drop off waste and take on water. Some campsites cater for motorhomes and campervans but not all offer the option of allowing the disposal of waste for those who aren't staying in the campsite overnight. The National Park Authority provides some bookable 'wild' motorhome and campervan permit spaces in the Trossachs and on the west side of Loch Lomond along arterial roads in suitable off-road locations for short stays of up to three nights, similar to the camping permit areas for tents.

### 3.2 Camping by area

The following looks at key areas of the National Park where camping is particularly popular or where there is scope to improve or increase camping provision.

#### **West Loch Lomond and surrounding area**

**Visitor sites:** Luss, Firkin Point, Tarbet, Inveruglas, Falls of Falloch, Arrochar Alps and Loch Long.

**Recreation:** The Arrochar Alps and Luss hills are popular for walking, while water activities for powered and non-powered craft and loch cruises are available on Loch Lomond and Loch Long. The Route 40 cycleway runs up the west of Loch Lomond from Balloch to Tarbet.

**Special Landscape Qualities:** This area is recognised for the immensity of the loch and landscape and multitude of beautiful islands. It also boasts distinctive mountain groups such as the Luss Hills and Arrochar Alps, offering views to Ben Lomond and banks of broadleaved woodland. There are also the peaceful side glens of Glen Luss and Glen Douglas.

**Transport:** The A82 major trunk road corridor runs up the west side of Loch Lomond. Public transport links include buses and trains from Glasgow and Balloch stopping at Luss, Arrochar and Tarbet and Ardlui.

#### **Current camping provision:**

<b>Campsites for tents, motorhomes and campervans</b>	<b>Campsites for motorhomes and campervans</b>	<b>Campsites for tents</b>	<b>Camping permit areas</b>
Glen Loin House	Loch Lomond Holiday Park	None	Culag
Beinglas Farm campsite	Lomond Woods		Suie Field
Luss caravan			Firkin Point (tents and motorhomes)
			Tarbet Isle



and camping			
Ardlui Holiday Park			

**Opportunities:** The motorhome and tent permit areas in this area have high occupancy rates which would suggest that there may be a demand for additional low cost camping provision at some of the key visitor destinations such as Firkin Point and Inveruglas and the area around Arrochar. As part of any Arrochar and Tarbet master planning<sup>ii</sup> low cost tent camping provision and overnight motorhome parking should be considered. The planned upgrade to the A82 from Tarbet to Inverarnan may provide additional low cost camping opportunities for tents and motorhomes especially if road realignments leave stretches of the old carriageway unused. Balloch, at the south of Loch Lomond, has been highlighted as a town with strategic tourism opportunities but at present there is no provision for tent camping in or around the town.

### East Loch Lomond and surrounding area

**Visitor sites:** Drymen, Balmaha, Milarrochy Bay, Salloch Bay, Rowardennan.

**Recreation:** East Loch Lomond offers lots of opportunities for walking with the West Highland Way, Conic Hill and Ben Lomond. Visitors can also enjoy the Ben Lomond National Memorial Landscape, the island of Inchcailloch and other parts of the Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve which can be accessed by a short boat ride. Water activities are also on offer including the water bus.

**Special Landscape Qualities:** East Loch Lomond is also known for the immensity of the loch and landscape, multitude of beautiful islands, banks of broadleaved woodland, peaceful side glens and distinctive mountains. The most widely known of these is the popular Ben Lomond.

**Transport:** The major visitor issue on the east side of Loch Lomond is the high volume of visitors arriving by car along narrow country roads. On peak weekends car parks are often completely full with cars with some parked inappropriately. This affects the quality of the visitor experience and inconveniences local residents and businesses. Public transport is limited to a bus service that runs from Balloch as far as Balmaha and a water bus service that runs from Luss to Balmaha and Rowardennan. The proposed improvements to the cycleway running from Drymen to Balmaha will deliver a safer active travel route for cyclists.

### Current camping Provision:

Campsites for tents, motorhomes and	Campsites for motorhomes and campervans	Campsites for tents	Camping permit areas



campervans			
Cashel (tents and motorhomes)	Gartfairn Farm	Rowardennan Youth Hostel	Lochan Maol Dhuinne
Milarrochy Bay Camping and Caravanning Club		Sallochy	
Lagganbeg Caravan Park		Inchcailloch	

**Opportunities:** There is a relatively high level of camping provision in the area and any new provision should take the associated traffic into consideration. As the road narrows significantly beyond Balmaha an increase in larger vehicles such as motorhomes may not be considered sustainable. The single camping permit area on East Loch Lomond has a very high occupancy rate which suggests there may be a demand for some additional low cost camping provision. The destinations of Balmaha and Rowardennan both have existing visitor service and recreational opportunities that could support this type of development.

### Trossachs West and surrounding area

**Visitor sites:** Loch Ard, Loch Chon, Aberfoyle, Inversnaid

**Recreation:** This area is popular for walking and cycling in Loch Ard forest and the Great Trossachs Path, as well as waymarked trails at RSPB Inversnaid. There are good cycling routes at Loch Katrine, on the Old Military Road from Stronachlachar to Inversnaid and the Old Statute Road Path connecting to Aberfoyle. Non-powered water based activities and fishing are available on Loch Chon and Loch Ard, while the historic Sir Walter Scott steamship runs loch cruises on Loch Katrine.

**Special Landscape Qualities:** The area boasts a landscape of beautiful lochs including Loch Ard, Loch Chon and Loch Arklet and a harmonious concentration of lochs, woods and hills. There is also the village of Aberfoyle and the scenic Duke's Pass.

**Transport:** The Waterbus service, running from March to September, links Inversnaid to Inveruglas and Tarbet and includes the Sir Walter Scott Steamship between Stronachlachar and the Trossachs Pier on Loch Katrine. There is also a Demand Response Taxi (DRT) service in this area.



### Camping Provision:

Campsites for tents, motorhomes and campervans	Campsites for motorhomes and campervans	Campsites for tents	Camping permit areas
Trossachs Holiday Park  Cobleland campsite  Loch Katrine Eco Camp	None	Loch Chon campsite  Loch Achray campsite	Three Lochs Forest Drive (8 permit areas for tents, 5 permit areas for tents and motorhomes and 3 permit areas for motorhomes)  Loch Venachar North (2 permit areas)  Loch Venachar South  Loch Ard

**Opportunities:** Loch Chon campsite has formalised an area that was heavily used for informal camping and helped to fill a gap in provision which will hopefully increase custom to the small number of businesses operating in the area. The Local Development Plan supports the principle of new visitor accommodation, including camping, motorhomes or glamping options such as wigwams, in the Aberfoyle and Strathard area. However the main constraint to developing visitor attractions is the narrow nature of the road which at multiple points requires passing places. There are also limited parking opportunities and public toilet facilities in the area, meaning that future provision without additional infrastructure would need to be considered very carefully.

### Trossachs North and surrounding area

**Visitor Sites:** Loch Katrine, the Three Lochs Forest Drive, Loch Achray, Loch Drunkie, Loch Venachar, Loch Earn, Brig o’Turk, Callander and Balquhiddier Glen.

**Recreation:** This is a great area for walking with Ben Venue, Ben A’an, Ben Vorlich and Ben Ledi, long distance walking routes, and waymarked trails at Glen Finglas all providing opportunities. Fishing is particularly popular, along with powered water activities on Loch Earn and loch cruises are available on Loch Katrine. Cycling and camping is offered on the Three Lochs Forest Drive. Loch Lubnaig and Balquhiddier Glen are both popular for camping and day visits.



**Special Landscape Qualities:** Trossachs North boasts a harmonious concentration of lochs, woods and hills, including the rugged Ben Venue, the centrepiece of the Trossachs. It is home to many beautiful lochs including Loch Katrine, Loch Achray, Loch Venachar Loch Drunkie and Loch Lubnaig and the villages of Aberfoyle, Strathyre and Balquhider.

**Transport links:** The A821 running over the Duke’s Pass and through Brig o’ Turk to Kilmahog offers a scenic drive but is not serviced by public transport. Parking is limited at Loch Lubnaig and with the A85 being so close to the lochshore there are limited opportunities to expand camping facilities. Bus services from Stirling and Perth serve the A84 and A85 respectively. There is also a Demand Response Taxi (DRT) service in this area.

### Current camping Provision:

Campsites for tents, motorhomes and campervans	Campsites for motorhomes and campervans	Campsites for tents	Camping permit areas
<p>Keltie Bridge Caravan Park</p> <p>The Cabin at Loch Lubnaig</p> <p>Immervoulin Caravan and Camping Park</p>	<p>Callander Woods Holiday Park</p> <p>Balquhider Braes Holiday Park</p> <p>Drummond Trout Farm</p> <p>Loch Earn Leisure Park</p>	None	<p>Falls of Leny</p> <p>Balquhider Glen</p> <p>Loch Earn North Shore (4 permit areas)</p> <p>Loch Earn South Shore (2 permit areas)</p>

**Opportunities:** The Three Lochs Forest Drive allows vehicular access through a forest landscape to the shores of Lochs Drunkie and Achray and is now popular for tent and motorhomes users, who have booked camping permits. The new Loch Achray campsite, also situated on the drive, provides an additional 17 camping pitches. The popularity of this area, demonstrated by the sales of camping permits, and of the new camping facilities at Loch Katrine suggests that there could still be further opportunities for the provision of low cost camping for tents and motorhomes. The Three Lochs Forest Drive has provided a unique camping opportunity and there may be scope to increase this whilst taking care to balance the needs of day visitors within a working forest environment.

Loch Earn is a very popular area for fishing, walkers climbing Ben Vorlich and exploring Glen Ogle and for powered water activities. However, the south shore of Loch Earn has suffered from pressures including people parking irresponsibly and the continued issue of irresponsible toileting due to the high volume of people with no facilities available. The road is narrow with



sharp bends and also experiences traffic pressures so any increase in camping or motorhome provision would need to be carefully considered. The North shore of Loch Earn is serviced by a number of large laybys which make it attractive for informal camping. The laybys have over the years been used by groups forming encampments that have often been associated with antisocial behaviour. With limited visitor facilities and campsites, there is still a need for an investment in both camping provision and essential visitor facilities such as toilets to protect the environment and improve the visitor experience.

Balquidder Glen has a remote feel with a narrow single track road running along Lochs Voil and Doine to a small car park at Inverlochlarig which provides the starting point for adventures into the Crianlarich hills. The Local Development Plan supports new visitor accommodation up to Balquidder Village and due to the nature of road, increasing camping provision in the area should be considered very carefully with larger vehicles such as motorhomes discouraged.

### The Cowal Peninsula and surrounding area

**Visitor sites:** Loch Eck, Benmore Botanic Gardens, Lochgoilhead, Carrick Castle, Glenbranter, Strone, Kilmun and Blairmore, Dunoon, Ardentinny.

**Recreation:** The Loch Lomond and Cowal Way long distance walking route runs through this area, while Benmore Gardens provides a unique experience with its mountainside setting and large number of specimen trees. Puck's Glen is an enchanting gorge with two walking trails. Loch Eck provides a great place for a picnic or fishing while Lochgoilhead provides opportunities for powered and non-powered water activities. Ardentinny is home to Cowal's longest sandy beach.

**Special Landscape Qualities:** Cowal offers water in its many forms including the jewel of Loch Eck, a landscape of forests and trees and the seaside architecture of Kilmun and Blairmore.

**Transport:** The area is serviced by public transport in the form of bus services that can be connected to Glasgow. The main road access into the area is from the A83 but is also accessed through the car ferry that connects Gourock and Dunoon.

### Current camping provision:

Campsites for tents, motorhomes and campervans	Campsites for motorhomes and campervans	Campsites for tents	Camping permit areas
Cot House Caravan Park	None	None	None



**Opportunities:** Camping provision in this area is very limited, particularly for tents. Many sites that used to service touring camping have been updated offering cabins and static caravans. With increasing pressures being felt at Carrick Castle and Ardentinny, from car campers and motorhomes, early indications suggest that there does seem to be demand for this type of touring provision. Use of day visitor areas to expand camping provision may be appropriate but clear delineations should be made to ensure that day visitors are not put off by perceived exclusivity. Motorhome waste disposal facilities that can be used without purchasing an overnight stay would also be welcome to reduce pressure on existing public toilet facilities. This type of motorhome provision could be provided at gateways into the National Park such as Dunoon.

### Strathfillan and Glen Dochart and the surrounding area

**Visitor sites:** Tyndrum, Crianlarich, Killin.

**Recreation:** Walking is very popular in this area with Munros at Crianlarich, Ben Lui and Glen Dochart and Glen Lochay as well as the West Highland Way long distance walking route. There is also the aspiration for the cross-Scotland Pilgrims Way to connect across the National Park from Tyndrum to St Fillans.

**Special Landscape Qualities:** This area is rich in pastoral quality with the expansive Glen Dochart, the summit of Ben More, River Dochart, intimate Lochs Dochart and Lubhair, and wide Strathfillan. There are also the Falls of Dochart in Killin.

**Transport:** A82 major trunk road passes through Crianlarich and Tyndrum while the A85 goes through Glen Dochart to Killin. Both Crianlarich and Tyndrum are serviced by train stations that link to Glasgow, Oban and Fort William. Bus services from Glasgow service Crianlarich and Tyndrum and bus routes serve Glen Dochart from Crieff and Callander. There is also a Demand Response Taxi (DRT) service in this area.

### Current camping provision:

Campsites for tents, motorhomes and campervans	Campsites for motorhomes and campervans	Campsites for tents	Camping permit areas





By the Way Hostel and campsite	Maragowan Caravan Park	None	None
Pine Trees Leisure Park	Clachan Caravan Park		
Strathfillan Wigwams			
Glendochart Holiday Park			

**Opportunities:** The West Highland Way has had a big influence on the camping provision available in and around Tyndrum with opportunities lower cost tent camping and touring motorhome well catered for. Although there are touring motorhome and caravan pitches, there are no tent camping options in the village of Killin. However, Loch Tay does have formal camping opportunities for tents approximately three miles from the village centre. With its train link and location on the intersection with the West Highland Way and the future Pilgrims Way, Crianlarich offers a potentially suitable location for basic tent and motorhome provision. Another location that could be considered for future provision is Glenoglehead; a low cost camping facility here could help to serve Locheearnhead and Killin, but due to lack of existing services may not be cost effective. An area such as Glenoglehead could be developed sympathetically within the landscape and may be considered in the future as a private/public partnership.

### 3.3 Outside the National Park

When working to achieve our vision for camping, looking beyond the National Park boundary is key to building knowledge and considering the causes and effects of management practices. Outside the National Park there are other recreation hubs that offer high quality visitor experiences similar to those that can be found here which will often face the same associated pressures.

Beyond the north-eastern boundary of the National Park, Loch Tay and Ben Lawers provide this experience. To the north there is Glen Coe, to the west Loch Awe. Working with partners in these areas, for example through the sharing of data, monitoring of any potential displacement and cross promotion, could help understand the effects of camping and alleviate pressures.

Motorhomes and campervans often visit many different locations within Scotland on just one trip. Understanding their journeys will help identify partners to work with to ensure that messages, information and facilities are provided in the right way, at the right places.



### 3.4 Key considerations for future camping provision

When looking to explore these opportunities further and achieve our vision for camping in the National Park there are a number of factors to consider:

**Understanding our visitors** - It is vital that we understand who is coming to camp in the National Park, how they plan their trip, who with, and their choice of camping accommodation and location. It is also important to understand and identify any potential barriers to people camping in the National Park. We know from our 2015 visitor survey that 85% of visitors to the National Park arrived by car but that they tend to explore more on foot or on the water. It is also useful to understand where people start their journeys to allow information to be tailored to specific audiences. For users of motorhomes and campervans this is particularly important as users will often be travelling through the National Park as part of a wider journey and this might have a bearing on where services are provided, for example, waste disposal facilities. We may also be able to influence visitor journeys through the suggested itineraries and the promotion of active travel routes and the public transport network. Specific user surveys related to campers alongside our visitor survey in 2019 will help us to better understand how people travel through the National Park.

**Accessibility** – Camping is not only a great way to enjoy and connect with the outdoors, it can also support health and wellbeing so camping in the National Park should be accessible to people from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities. Ensuring there is a broad range of camping options is part of this and it is important that that even basic facilities provide a high quality experience. Accessible camping pitches are available at Loch Chon and Loch Achray campsites but presently none of the camping permit areas are fully accessible. The aim of these camping permit areas is to provide as close to a wild camping experience as possible. For that reason minimal physical interventions were made to the landscape of these sites. Gaining a better understanding of what prospective campers with disabilities require will allow us to broaden the camping experience to as many people as possible and we will engage with appropriate organisations and governing bodies to plan next steps in this area.

Affordability, although subjective, is also a factor when it comes to accessibility. When designing the permit system and the campsites at Loch Chon and Loch Achray the cost of camping was carefully considered so as not to be prohibitive, with charges for tent and motorhome permits set at £3 per night, and National Park campsites at £7 per person per night, with under 16s going free.

**Community Engagement and Empowerment** - Camping can have both positive and negative impacts on communities within the National Park so they have an important role to play in the Camping Development Strategy. Regular engagement with communities through face to face meetings, written updates or stakeholder forums will continue and be used to inform the development of camping management measures.

Engaging with communities will also be key when exploring opportunities for increasing camping provision. The introduction of the Community Empowerment Act may also provide



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opportunities for communities to develop camping provision and related services themselves with the potential for sustained income generation. Advice and guidance for communities on this could be provided by the National Park Authority as well as through local authority economic development teams and the Community Partnership.

**Camping infrastructure** - As identified in the previous section, there are opportunities to increase camping provision in certain areas of the National Park. While the National Park Authority will focus on refining and improving existing camping infrastructure; landowners, businesses and communities have an important role to play in developing the camping opportunities on offer. The National Park Authority could help facilitate others to develop potential business cases by providing case studies and advice on areas such as licensing and economic viability. The opportunities for development and the policies that are used to guide and determine planning applications are set out in our Local Development Plan. The three Visitor Experience Policies within the [Local Development Plan Policies](#) section can support appropriate camping.

Alongside these policies, supplementary guidance and planning guidance can be found for camping provision in the form of ['Design and Placemaking'](#) and ['Visitor Experience'](#) guidance. With the increased use of motorhomes and the expansion of the glamping industry the creation of further advice for this may also be appropriate.

The licensing process for campsites and motorhome provision is often complex and varied across local authorities, including requirements that are prohibitive due to cost or the need for planning consent. Working with the four local authorities within the National Park to explore ways to streamline and align licensing processes and provide clear guidance to prospective businesses would help to encourage provision. There are also alternative organisations which are authorised to issue exemption certificates to small non-commercial sites so that they can operate as a campsite. For smaller camping provision, which could include business diversification or community-run facilities, we will work with these independent licensing authorities to raise awareness of their services.

**Visitor conflicts and over occupancy** - When it comes to managing camping, the needs of day visitors and local residents who enjoy the same areas also need to be considered. A tent next to a picnic bench, even when the person camping is not present, can give a sense of exclusivity that may lead other people to feel they are not welcome. It is therefore important to balance the provision and distribution of camping opportunities with the need to allow day visitors to be able to enjoy the National Park. The creation of camping permit areas provides one way of managing this balance by designating areas where people can camp at locations that are also popular for day visits. In areas that are not covered by the Camping Management Byelaws it is still possible to influence this balance through the use of landscape design management rules and the provision of alternative spaces for campers. We will continue to explore ways of managing this balance.

Careful consideration needs to be given as to how much camping provision is too much to be sustainable. The Camping Management Byelaws were introduced to manage the impact



caused by the high volume of campers in popular areas, as well as their behaviour. The associated monitoring of the byelaws will help to answer this question but it should be recognised that this is not a simple task. As well as the physical effects on the natural environment, people's perceptions also play a major factor in defining over-occupancy in relation to camping. It should also be recognised that these pressures are not constant and occur at peak times, meaning that management solutions need to be nuanced, considering the economic benefits of these visitors to the local economy. Over the life of this framework further investigation into over-occupancy and camping will be required to help make effective visitor management decisions.

**Designing with the landscape and ecology** - The beauty of the National Park and the nature that it supports, provide many opportunities for unique camping experiences that complement the landscape. When looking at new and existing camping provision, the potential impacts on the natural environment and choice of design and materials to be used should be carefully considered. The requirements for provision of parking, footpaths, water supply, sewage treatment, power supply, and health and safety considerations such as phone signal for emergencies, flood risk, livestock management and unsafe trees also all need to be taken into account. Moreover, some users may have additional expectations such as lighting, hot showers and internet connectivity. These can all result in pressures for additional infrastructure with environmental impacts if not fully considered at the outset. Careful siting, design and use of materials, taking cues from the surroundings, can soften and even add interest to a site.

#### 4. Practice and Performance

##### 4.1. What has been achieved so far?

A great deal has already been achieved in improving the camping experience in the National Park over a number of years, particularly through education and engagement work and partnership working. This has included the creation of new campsites at popular sites Loch Lubnaig and Sallochy and installing visitor facilities including composting toilets on Inchcailloch. These have gone some way to providing people with the high quality camping opportunities.

Under the previous Camping Development Strategy, this work has been taken much further with the National Park providing for sustainable camping through permit areas and low cost campsites at Loch Chon and Loch Achray. These have been very positively received by campers. Further new low cost camping provision has been established by others at Scottish Youth Hostel Association Rowardennan and the Steamship Sir Walter Scot Ltd at Loch Katrine.

A new dedicated camping section of the National Park website has been created and continues to be adapted based on feedback to provide a wealth of information on all types of camping. Social media is regularly used to promote camping and responsible behaviour and regular opportunities for stakeholder engagement are provided. Monitoring procedures have



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also been put in place to allow us to make evidence based decisions to continually improve our service.

#### 4.2. Where we will focus our efforts

Over the next four years our efforts will focus on:

**Infrastructure:** The National Park Authority will continue to assess and refine the camping provision that we manage to ensure that the quality of the visitor experience remains high whilst being affordable. We will also focus on improvements in visitor services and sites that are owned or managed by the National Park Authority which support camping as well as other visitor and recreation activities.

As identified, there are also opportunities to increase the level of camping provision in some areas of the National Park. To deliver this we will actively work with partners, communities and private enterprise to seek out opportunities for establishing new provision and to ensure that any new facilities are sustainable and high quality with minimal impact on the landscape and ecology, even enhancing it where possible. Key locations for additional low cost camping provision remain Loch Earn, Loch Long, Loch Venachar and the west shore of Loch Lomond with potential opportunities in Cowal and Strathfillan The National Park Authority will also support partners and communities to improve essential visitor services that could help achieve our vision for camping and we will work with partners to explore ways of making camping in the National Park accessible to all.

With increasing pressure being caused by motorhomes across Scotland, understanding the needs of motorhome users, providing clear information to them and the businesses that support them, identifying gaps in provision and the barriers to those offering these services will be necessary. We will explore opportunities to pilot approaches to managing motorhome pressures moving forward.

**Information:** We will continue to develop the information available for campers on our website and on the ground to help visitors plan and enjoy their trips responsibly. For example, new online information for motorhome and campervan users will be provided. Where appropriate, orientation and interpretation signage will be enhanced to provide essential information.

Tailored tools and guidance will be produced and promoted to support communities, landowners and businesses to provide appropriate and sustainable camping and motorhome provision and complementary services in the National Park. The pressures that come from camping are not unique to the National Park and where appropriate we will host events for communities, landowners and businesses to come together and share best practice and help solve common issues together. We will also look to work with others, including through potential sponsorship to broaden the reach of our messaging, particularly around responsible camping and environmental sustainability.



**Education and engagement:** Face to face communication will remain our key method of engaging with visitors. This will be led by our Ranger Service, assisting campers to ensure that their experience in the National Park is positive and they understand their part in the stewardship of this special place. We will also continue our education and engagement work with schools and other groups to ensure that we are supporting future generations of campers to understand responsible behaviour in the outdoors. Staff and volunteer training will continue to be developed to keep skills at a high standard to ensure engagement with visitors, communities and partners is consistent, respectful and helpful.

We will explore new and innovative ways of delivering messages and starting conversations around specific behaviours such as littering, inappropriate toileting and fire damage related to camping. Regular opportunities for two way dialogue will continue with all stakeholders around camping and other visitor management issues.

We will also ensure that we look beyond the National Park boundary to work with partners to ensure that management decisions taken around camping development are joined up, increasing socioeconomic opportunities both inside and outside of the National Park and providing positive experiences, whilst protecting the wider natural environment of Scotland.

**Enforcement:** While our approach will continue to be focused on positive engagement and education first and foremost, we will continue to use the Camping Management Byelaws 2017 and Environmental Protection Act 1990, using the principles set out in our Visitor Management Engagement and Enforcement Policy, to ensure that the environmental and behavioural pressures linked to camping activity are addressed effectively. We will meet our commitments to report on the operational effectiveness of the Camping Management Byelaws in 2020 and undertake any subsequent actions agreed with Scottish Government.

**Monitoring:** Existing monitoring methods associated with the Camping Management Byelaws will be reviewed in 2020. Where appropriate these will be adapted, enhanced and continued to ensure that we understand the relevant environmental and socioeconomic effects of camping activity and adapt our management practices accordingly. We will look to build our knowledge around the use of motorhomes, focussing on understanding the requirements of this growing user group to establish how their needs can be met sustainably. As we develop peer reviewed and tested monitoring systems we will endeavour to make them accessible to others to share best practice and develop consistent approaches to visitor management where possible.

### 4.3 Performance

Ensuring the success of this framework will require careful monitoring and tracking of progress. It is also important to be able to react to new information to adapt management responses if appropriate. The following review structure will apply:

- The actions coming from the framework will be reviewed annually and updated if appropriate



- The framework will be revised in line with the 2024-29 National Park Partnership Plan and the next Five Year Plan

Monitoring does not have to be passive and may be complemented by research, gathering feedback and learning through experience. Where appropriate, we will share this information publicly to allow others to understand how we are progressing and to use our data to inform their own actions.

### 5. Action Plan

We will measure progress against the following actions and indicators:

Actions	Indicators
<b>A1</b> - Increase provision of dedicated, promoted overnight motorhome spaces in the National Park	<b>I1</b> - A minimum of ten new spaces in each of the six identified areas of the National Park, based on the opportunities identified in section 2.4.
<b>A2</b> - Increase provision of waste disposal and water points for motorhomes and campervans	<b>I2</b> - The provision of waste disposal facilities and water provision at or close to each of the key gateways to the National Park and other sites along key journey routes where appropriate.
<b>A3</b> - Create a new motorhome information webpage on the National Park Authority website and assist in the development and of a Scotland wide Code of practice for motorhome and campervan users	<b>I3</b> - Number of unique visits to the motorhome webpage. Inclusion of links to the new Code of practice with promotion across Scotland by land managers and the organisations and authorities associated with the promotion of tourism.
<b>A4</b> - Targeted communications and on the ground activity to reduce the volume of litter related to informal camping.	<b>I4</b> - A decrease in the amount of litter recorded in each of the four Camping Management Zones from the introduction of the Camping Management Byelaws 2017. (measured against the associated monitoring programme)
<b>A5</b> - Targeted communications and on the ground activity to reduce the volume of inappropriate toileting related to informal camping.	<b>I5</b> - A decrease in recorded instances of inappropriate toileting in each of the four Camping Management Zones from the introduction of the Camping Management Byelaws 2017. (measured against the associated monitoring programme)
<b>A6</b> - Targeted communications and on the ground activity to reduce the number of non-compliant fire sites associated with informal camping	<b>I6</b> - A reduction in fires camping related to that do not comply with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code within each of the Camping Management Zones from the introduction of the Camping Management Byelaws 2017.(measured against the associated monitoring programme)
<b>A7</b> - The provision of promoted fully	<b>I7</b> - An increase in fully accessible camping



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accessible camping opportunities in the National Park.	provision in each of the six identified areas of the National Park, based on the opportunities identified in section 2.4.
<b>A8</b> - Increase private and/or community-owned sustainable campsite provision.	<b>I8</b> - An increase in high quality, sustainable and affordable tent campsite provision in areas where there are clear gaps in provision in each of the six identified areas of the National Park.
<b>A9</b> - Increase infrastructure to facilitate responsible informal and wild camping, e.g. designated 24 hour parking and 24 hour toilets.	<b>I9</b> - An increase in infrastructure to facilitate responsible informal and wild camping in each of the six identified areas of the National Park.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.visitscotland.org/binaries/content/assets/dot-org/pdf/research-papers/insights-trends-2017.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> See page 83 of the LDP