West Dunbartonshire Council
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FAO all Planning Committee Members
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Planning Authority
(Sent by email to planning@lochlomond-trossachs.org)

25th April 2024

Dear Sir / Madam

Formal Objection to Lomond Banks LLTNP Planning Application - 2022/0157/PPP

I am emailing this objection to you as the Planning Portal's character limit is too restrictive for the length of my comments.

I would also like to request to speak at the hearing regarding my objection to the application.

As a local elected member of West Dunbartonshire Council for Ward 1 (Lomond), I formally object to the planning application on the following grounds:

The application is not in keeping with the Park Authority's primary and overriding policy objective of 'Conserving and Enhancing the natural and cultural heritage of the area.'

This development will bring significant economic risk for the local area and local businesses. While it might be considered that the permanent and seasonal jobs being created would be a real boost to the West Dunbartonshire economy, given the type of development being proposed, it is more likely that the site will be in direct competition with local accommodation, hospitality and leisure facilities; the risk to local jobs and businesses is unacceptable.

The proposed development site is embedded within an established road and access network and will be principally accessed by the A82 and A811 and locally by Balloch Road, Old Luss Road, Pier Road and Ben Lomond Way.

While it is recognised that users of the facilities will be encouraged to use public transport, it is accepted that the majority of people will come by car thus having a significant impact on the local road network. The Council's Roads Authority's formal response to the planning application opens by saying, *"Whilst the applicant is promoting and enhancing more sustainable modes of transport, it is acknowledged the development will be a significant travel generator"*.

The applicant has accepted at several meetings since 2018 that they will be adding to an existing problem of congestion and most recently were unable to provide sufficient comfort to the public, Councillors or Community Councillors at recent meetings of Balloch and Haldane Community Council.

Given the scale of the existing roads capacity problem during peak visitor times, standard mitigation measures such as an Access and Parking Management Strategy and enhanced Signage and Variable Message Signage (VMS) installed at key approaches to the site will do little to assist in reducing the impact of the development on the road network.
The promise to work with Transport Scotland to mitigate the issues is extremely vague and given nothing has been done in the last 30+ years to resolve existing issues, it is unlikely that anything will change for the better as a result of this promise.

I believe that the scale of the problem is such that the development being proposed would cause unacceptable disruption, not only to local people, but also to commuters and visitors travelling north on the A82, who already suffer serious delays at these peak times.

The application proposes to remove the existing parking provision opposite Balloch Train Station and provide some parking within the site. The applicant describes the existing car park as informal, but having been in use for more than two decades, I consider it well established and in a perfect location to encourage park and ride use and short-medium stay use for visitors to Balloch village. Car parking in Balloch is extremely limited and the loss of this facility without suitable, easily accessible provision is an unacceptable loss of amenity.

The ecology of Loch Lomond's woodland is internationally unique due to the combined effects of glacial geology of this part of West Scotland and windy, wet conditions. This attracts renowned scientists and amateur naturalists from all over the world. 78% of Loch Lomond visitors come for its natural assets (Visit Scotland survey 2016). To damage its ecology is an act of grievous economic and scientific self-harm.

While the updated plans reduce the proposed environmental damage, some of the remaining specific ecological impacts include the following:

- Negative impacts of partial loss of habitat and damage to woodland and intact hedgerow, resulting in significant negative effects on local flora and fauna.

- Negative impacts of pollution to standing water and running water.

- Negative impacts of habitat loss, disturbance, displacement, injury and fatality to red squirrels; this being one of the few sites where they are still clinging on.

- Negative impacts of significantly increased use and pollution of woodland and inundation vegetation, resulting in significant effects at a local level.

- Negative impacts of injury and fatality, disturbance and displacement to otters.

- Negative impacts of injury and fatality, disturbance and displacement to pine marten.

- Positive impacts of increased roosting and foraging resources to bats, resulting in significant population increase that would impact significantly on the local fauna food chain.

Finally, while not a ground for refusal in planning terms, the level of public objection to this application is unprecedented. The local objections alone show the strength of feeling against this application. The public would very much support a decision to object and welcome a decision that reflects the Park Authority's primary and overriding policy objective of 'Conserving and Enhancing the natural and cultural heritage of the area.'

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing back from you re' my request to address the planning hearing.

Yours Sincerely

[redacted]

Cllr Jonathan McColl – Ward 1 (Lomond)